

Opening Address - Jubilee year

Dear brothers, friends, and Claretian family: all of you present here at this moment of prayer and those who participate online,

Today at the Congregational level, we open the 175th anniversary of the foundation of our beloved Congregation. On July 16, the Major Organisms and communities will have specific events to launch the jubilee year at the local level.

This is a year of grace, a Kairos moment for us to enkindle in us the fire of God's love that the Spirit inflamed our Founder St. Anthony Mary Claret and his companions. St. Claret discovered the depth of his missionary vocation in the same passage of Isaiah that Luke uses to present Jesus' vocation: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to proclaim the Good News to the poor."

Our Founder started the Congregation because he was convinced that this spirit was given also to others and his work was not a solitary mission, but a mission "to do with others".

This charismatic gift spread throughout the world and widened the Claretian family in the Church with several branches in it. We have received the same spirit of our Founder, and today it is we who are to be on fire with God's love and radiate the light of the Gospel around us in a Claretian way together with all those who have the same gift.

Jubilee is a time to be grateful for the gift of the charism and for the great missionaries whose lives bloomed in the charism for the glory of God, the salvation of souls, and their own sanctification. We think of our Founder, Co-founders, the Claretian martyrs, Superiors General, and a great multitude of missionaries who form a community in heaven interceding for us. We thank the Lord for every missionary of the Claretian family who keeps alive the fire of God's love in their hearts and let it shine brightly in the various peripheries of human struggles.

We live in an epoch of amazing technological advancement, globalization and inter-connectedness, information accessibility, environmental awareness as well as the growing social fragmentation, confusion of values, dehumanizing poverty, irrational exploitation of nature, and other ills of our times.

Amidst this complex reality marked by volatility, uncertainty, and ambiguity, the only way to be true to our missionary vocation is to be rooted in Christ and our missionary charism, and have the courage to walk through the uncertainties of our times with the light of Christ. Such a journey cannot be one of isolation, but together on the synodal path.

I would like to begin this prayer session with a symbolic action which I hope would represent what the Lord would allow to happen in this jubilee year: that each Claretian, every community and all Major Organisms and the whole Claretian family be on fire with God's love. Without that fire, we will be like a collection of candles gathered in a candle store. With his fire burning in us, we become beams of light radiating its brightness without being burnt out. The only way to fight darkness is by lighting the lamps.

Let this be the primary aim of this Jubilee year. That we are aflame with Christ's love and walk forth courageously together, spreading its flames wherever the Lord sends us in mission.