

Charting Maps of Hope: From Vic to the Ends of the Earth
Meeting of Prefects of Formation
MESSAGE TO THE CONGREGATION

Beloved Congregation,

Gathered around the tomb of Father Claret and guided by the Spirit who forms us in the Heart of Mary, we send you a greeting of joy and hope. From November 3 to 12, 2025, the Prefects of Formation, together with the General Prefect, met to pause, listen to the Spirit, and renew our shared mission as animators of formation within the Congregation. Inspired by Pope Leo XIV, we wish to chart new maps of hope that inspire us to continue living our vocation in the Church and in the world, guided by our *General Plan of Formation*. During these days, we deepened our reflection on four cardinal points of formation.

1. Transformation

The primary aim of formation is union and configuration with Christ, according to the Claretian charism in the Church, through a personalizing and transformative process that begins with initial formation and continues throughout our lives (*GPF* 10). Just as Moses was called, purified, and transformed for his mission, so too are we called to allow the Holy Spirit to work within our fragile humanity, converting us into His servants (Ex. 3-4; Acts 7:30-36). This transformation unfolds through ongoing processes of discernment and accompaniment. In this regard, *The Forge* remains a privileged spiritual itinerary for understanding our formative journey. We therefore recognize, together with the entire Congregation, the urgent need to continue promoting personalized accompaniment processes as the way we care for each vocation as a precious gift from God.

2. Synodality

Synodality is, above all, our daily way of life. Together, formandi and formators, brothers, deacons, priests, lay people, with the Claretian Family, in communion, participation, and mission, we seek to respond to what the Spirit is asking of the Church. Like an orchestra, we emphasize the importance of appreciating the variety and diversity that each of us brings to the fulfillment of our common mission: to play the symphony of the Kingdom of God in the heart of the world. It is this same symphony that we desire to play together with all the People of God, as a synodal Church. The Spirit invites us to awaken in the new generations a thirst for learning, for listening, for forgiveness, for risking one's life for the mission, for mutual care, for shared discernment, and for planning and evaluating together our community projects, and, above all, for living as brothers in community. The Spirit also calls us to collaborate with lay people, religious men and women, priests, and all the shepherds of the Church. We wish to live in vigilant awareness of the signs of the times, in constant dialogue about formative realities with collaboration from lay people and experts and a greater exchange between the Conferences and Major Organisms. Our local communities are called to commit themselves to improved dialogue, sharing, and the participation of all in the process of community discernment.

3. Identity

Mission is the central key to formation and the core of our vocation (*GPF* 69). Mission and formation are not two separate realities but two dimensions intrinsically united in our missionary identity. From this perspective, we want to keep strengthening our charismatic identity within the formation processes. On the one hand, through the promotion, care, and proper guidance of the specific vocations within the Congregation--brothers, deacons, and priests-- committing ourselves to accompany each *formandus* so that he may discover his vocation in our Congregation. We believe it is urgent to correct language that, in many places, fails to express the charismatic diversity that shapes our Congregation. For example, in the Congregation, we are all *Claretian Missionaries*; our formation centers are *houses of formation*, not *seminaries*, because they welcome a diversity of vocations. On the other hand, as Claretians, we are called to live what is most distinctive of our charism, deeply rooted in the fabric of the church.

4. On the Way

We are disciples on the way, always open to the Word, to the cry of the people, and to the voice of the Spirit (*GPF* 10). In this way, together with the whole Congregation, we feel called to continue fostering an authentic culture of ongoing formation, one that prioritizes personal accompaniment and continually nourishes and renews our missionary vocation. This can be achieved through the reading and study of Church and Congregational documents; the development of provincial plans for ongoing formation; participation in organism meetings, religious conferences, retreats, spiritual exercises, and assemblies; the integration of formation into both community and personal projects; and the promotion of specialization processes according to the needs of each organism and of the Congregation as a whole. As missionaries on the way, we know that only a formation that is solid, coherent, integral, and transformative can serve as the compass guiding us to continue being sowers of hope and credible witnesses of the Gospel in today's world.

As we conclude, we turn our gaze to our martyrs of Barbastro as a radiant and enduring model for formation in every age. Their martyrdom was not the result of chance or a passing impulse; it was the culminating expression of a profound formative process that shaped in them a spirit of total self-giving. We are especially moved by a scene from the film *A Forbidden God*, in which Fr. Felipe de Jesús Munárriz, Superior of that community, expresses his concern: "I fear for their lives and for their souls." Fr. Juan Díaz Nosti, the formator of the martyrs, replies with conviction: "We have educated them well, Father Felipe. They are strong; they will endure." These words resonate deeply in our hearts, reminding us of the seriousness and beauty of the formative mission. With this spirit, we greet you fraternally, with the hope of continuing to chart maps of hope through a formation that is alive, incarnate, and faithful to the Gospel.

Vic, November 12, 2025