

CIRCULAR LETTER
Announcement of the XXVII General Chapter



*Without the Holy Spirit, Christ remains in the past, the Gospel a dead letter, the Church merely an organization, and mission a propaganda.
But in the Holy Spirit, the Risen Christ is present, the Gospel is the power of life, the Church shows forth the life of the Trinity, and mission is a Pentecost.*

— Metropolitan Ignatius IV Hazim (1968)

Fr. Mathew Vattamattam, C.M.F.
Superior General

Claretian Missionaries - General Curia
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ONE MISSION, ONE IN MISSION

Prophetic and Mystical Missionaries on the Synodal Path

Prot. SG 120/2026

Dear Claretians in our Communities,

1. The gift of the Spirit, who gathers us into a Congregation of missionary sons of the Heart of Mary, is the charism our Founder received and expressed in the words: *Caritas Christi urget nos* — “The love of Christ impels us.” Without the Spirit of Christ animating our lives and communities, we would have no mission and no meaning within the Church. It is the Spirit who forms us into one body in mission, sustaining our fraternity, renewing our hope, and sending us forth to proclaim the Gospel.
2. On this Solemnity of Pentecost, as the Church celebrates the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples gathered with Mary in the Cenacle, I am pleased to announce the XXVII General Chapter, which will be held from 15 August to 10 September 2027. The preparation for this Chapter began with the initial discernment carried out during the meeting of the Major Superiors and the General Government held in Sri Lanka from 1 to 8 March 2026. We continue to follow the orientations discerned during that meeting.
3. You may remember that the last General Chapter was prepared and celebrated during the COVID-19 pandemic. It became a profound lesson for us: even when we walk through the darkest valley, we fear no evil, for the Lord is with us; His rod and His staff comfort us (cf. Ps 23:4). At that time, I addressed each Claretian personally in the announcement letter. In this letter, however, I wish to address our missionaries within the context of their communities, where each Claretian lives, celebrates, and shares his vocation and mission as part of the larger Claretian and ecclesial family.
4. I want to situate the theme of preparation for the XXVII General Chapter — One Mission, One in Mission — within the Church's call to deepen our communion with the Lord and with one another, building together a just and fraternal world as one human family. This theme resonates with the motto of Pope Leo XIV, inscribed on his pontifical shield: “In the one Christ, we are one.”
5. In a world that still struggles to live in unity amid diversity, we are called to be witnesses of communion amid the diversity of cultures, traditions, languages, and personalities with which God has blessed our Congregation. This communion was Jesus' desire for His disciples, expressed in His final prayer as attested in the Gospel of John: “that they may be one, as we are one” (Jn 17:22).

Our Journey after the XXVI General Chapter: Learning to Walk the Synodal Path

6. The XXVI General Chapter (2021) was prepared and celebrated through an initial and still developing experience of the synodal method and Conversations in the Spirit, even before the Holy See officially proposed the methodology for the Synod on Synodality on 7 September 2021. Subsequently, the whole Church adopted a more articulated and refined process in preparation for the two Synod sessions held in 2023 and 2024.
7. Inspired by the experience of the Synod on Synodality, we enriched what we had called “Generative Conversations” by giving greater attention to communal discernment through Conversations in the Spirit. In the last General Chapter, a threefold approach to conversation was proposed: appreciative, narrative, and synodal (cf. *Conversations on the Road*, Animator’s Guide, pp. 7–14). Following the Synod on Synodality, we integrated a fourth dimension: discerning.
8. Over the past five years, we have learned valuable lessons from the Church’s synodal journey and have progressively applied them in our Chapters and Assemblies. Rather than changing the method, we are now called to deepen it by learning together the art of discerning God’s will in every situation. Pope Francis affirmed that “it is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium.” Hence, as we prepare for the XXVII General Chapter, let us deepen together the practice of discerning through Conversations in the Spirit and integrate it more fully into our congregational culture. We will be better prepared to embrace this fourfold approach — appreciative, narrative, synodal, and discerning — through attentive listening to one another and to the Holy Spirit in the shared search for what the Lord is asking of us today.

Keeping God’s Dream before Us

9. The question, “What is God’s dream for us today?” guided the conversations of the last General Chapter and found expression in *Querida Congregación* no. 43. It challenged us at various levels of our life and mission. At a personal level, it led me to ask myself: What is God’s dream for me as Superior General when I am called to this service? Perhaps many of you have asked similar questions within your own vocation and mission. The journey after the Chapter became, in many places, a shared effort to “dream God’s dream together,” with each Major Organism incarnating that dream according to its own context through Chapters and Assemblies.
10. Yet a dream without concrete commitments risks becoming merely a castle built in the air. The Chapter, therefore, invited us not only to dream, but also to give wings to those dreams through concrete designs and commitments translated into action plans by the leadership teams of the Major Organisms and local communities.
11. Now is the time to ask ourselves: Where are we in relation to the dreams, designs, and commitments we embraced? What is the next phase of our journey together? Let us explore these questions in the Spirit during the preparation for and celebration of the XXVII General Chapter. The dream of Jesus for humanity — the Kingdom of God — fills us with hope and keeps us moving forward. Its concrete expressions, discerned for our times in *Querida Congregación*, continue to guide us. Let us therefore walk on the synodal path, striving to realize God’s dream for us today.

One Mission, One in Mission

12. The theme *One Mission, One in Mission* captures God’s call for us today. In this rapidly changing world — what Pope Francis has called a “change of epoch” — humanity faces profound challenges, especially with the advent of artificial intelligence and the accelerated transformation of society. These developments bring immense possibilities for human progress and even evangelization. Yet, like every powerful human tool, they can also be used to manipulate consciences, deepen inequality, fuel conflict, and distance people from authentic relationships and the deeper meaning of life. Amid these rapid changes, one can easily lose sight of the fundamental values of being human and of the very purpose of life on earth.
13. At the root of many of today’s crises lies a distorted understanding of power, wealth, and freedom. The excessive pursuit of profit often feeds wars, human trafficking, the drug trade, corruption, and the reckless exploitation of nature. Many seek false fulfilment in addictions and forms of pleasure that wound human dignity and relationships. Entire peoples are pushed to the margins by systems that exclude rather than integrate. At the same time, the culture of consumption and waste continues to burden our common home and people experiencing poverty who suffer its gravest consequences.
14. Humanity’s failure to recognize the interconnectedness of all beings and to work together for the common good has deepened fragmentation, polarization, and ecological destruction. In many parts of the world, guns speak more loudly when hearts and institutions fail to dialogue and seek reconciliation. Increasing military expenditures reveal how fear, mistrust, and the pursuit of domination continue to shape global priorities. At the same time, millions still suffer from poverty, displacement, hunger, and the denial of basic human dignity.
15. It is increasingly clear that no single person, institution, or force can control what happens in the world. Yet, when we walk and work together, we can make a meaningful difference. The cry of people with low incomes and the cry of the earth call us to rediscover our vocation to fraternity, responsible stewardship, and communion. In this context, God’s call to be *One Mission, One in Mission* becomes both urgent and prophetic for our Congregation and for the Church today.
16. Indeed, the whole creation continues “groaning in labor pains,” waiting in eager longing for the revelation and liberation of the children of God (cf. Rom 8:19–22). The art of building communion amid diversity and transforming conflicts into grace and growth is learned in the school of the Spirit. As collaborators with the Holy Spirit, we must begin this work within ourselves and within our communities. Peace and unity are works of the Spirit, born in persons willing to walk the path of Jesus, who loved us to the very end.
17. *One Mission, One in Mission* expresses the unity of our life, vocation, fraternity, and ministry within the one Mission of Christ (*Missio Dei*). The Church exists in service of Christ’s Mission, and within the Church the Holy Spirit raises different charisms, including our own, for the proclamation of the Gospel and the building up of the Kingdom. It is this shared participation in the Mission of Christ that shapes our

spirituality, community life, and apostolic ministry. Our mission is therefore never isolated or self-referential, but always a participation, together with others, in God's saving work for the glory of the Father and the salvation of all. This call demands not only structural collaboration, but also a profound spiritual renewal. To live this mission authentically in today's world, we are invited to deepen both the mystical and prophetic dimensions of our vocation.

To Be Mystical Missionaries: Being Present to the Presence of God

18. The Spirituality Congress, held at the conclusion of the 175th anniversary of the Congregation's founding, highlighted the urgent need to live the mystical and prophetic dimensions of our charism to remain relevant in today's world.
19. The mystical dimension calls us to deepen our communion with the Lord, from which all our relationships flow. In our Founder, mysticism was never a flight from reality, but the source of an intense missionary life. Saint Anthony Mary Claret was a mystic in action — a man deeply rooted in God and totally dedicated to the mission. The Eucharistic grace he received in 1861 at La Granja (Aut. 694) deepened his awareness of the Lord's abiding presence in his heart and gave him the strength to face the most difficult moments of his life with integrity, freedom, and apostolic courage. His life reminds us that authentic mysticism does not distance us from the world but impels us to love and serve God and others more deeply.
20. Our charism invites us to live in awareness of the abiding presence of the Lord within us and among us, radiating love and joy wherever we are sent. Claret desired his missionaries to be “men on fire with love,” burning with the fire of God's Word and tirelessly proclaiming the Gospel. The source of this missionary zeal was his profound union with God, nourished through prayer, the Eucharist, the Word of God, filial devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and attentive closeness to the poor and suffering, in whom he recognized the living presence of Christ. As Claretians, listeners, and servants of the Word, we are called to allow the light of the Word and the “cry of the poor and cry of the earth” (*Laudato Si'*, 49) to shape our discernment, fraternity, and mission. The Word contemplated in prayer becomes missionary zeal and prophecy in mission.

Claretian Community as a House of Communion

21. A Claretian community is called to be a home of holiness and a house of communion where the Lord dwells and shapes hearts through the action of His Spirit. Claret experienced something of this in the episcopal community he formed in Santiago de Cuba. Reflecting on the peace, joy, and harmony that prevailed there for a long time, he wrote: *Digitus Dei est hic* — “the finger of God is here” (Aut. 609). Our communities, too, are called to become places where the presence of God is tangible: welcoming homes where brothers feel accepted, accompanied, and inspired to grow in holiness and mission together.

22. At the root of many difficulties we face in communities and groups lies broken communion and poor communication within, more than pressures coming from outside. If I were to identify one factor that most adversely affects our life and mission, it would be the fragmentation of relationships in our communities. Communities that joyfully celebrate fraternal life experience a free flow of energy and remarkable vitality in mission. At the same time, I have also witnessed the painful erosion of energy and the inability to resolve conflicts simply because brothers are unable to sit together, listen to one another, and seek solutions in a spirit of discernment. When mistrust and suspicion overshadow relationships, people become blind to the good in others and to their own limitations. In such moments, the story of Eden is enacted once again.
23. Communion with God and with one another is both a grace and a task. It is like learning a language in the school of the Spirit — a gift first given at Pentecost, when Babel was reversed, and the disciples spoke in languages that all could understand. If our communities are to become cenacles that receive the Spirit as tongues of fire — the fire of God’s love — they must become homes of prayer, listening, and authentic communication. Communities that radiate this spirit of communion naturally become fertile soil for new vocations.

Responding to the Whisper of the Spirit: Vocation and Formation

24. An essential element for the life and future of the Congregation, closely linked to our spirituality and mission, is the attentive care for vocations and for the integral formation of our missionaries. Throughout our history, the Lord has continued to call young people to follow Christ in the Claretian way of life. Joyfully lived and fruitful Claretian vocations awaken and nurture God’s call in others. Hence, fostering a vocational culture and accompanying vocations with authentic, integral, and transformative formation — one that continues throughout life — must become a vital part of our personal, community, and congregational culture.
25. Our vocation ministry and formation processes are called to form mystical and prophetic missionaries: men deeply rooted in God and passionately committed to God’s people and mission. Formation must help us grow in communion with Christ, in attentive listening to the Word, in discernment in the Spirit, in fraternal living in intercultural communities, and in compassionate closeness to the poor and wounded of our world. In caring for one’s own vocation and helping others grow in theirs, we participate in God’s ongoing work of shaping missionaries for the service of the Church and the world.

Schooled in the Heart of Mary

26. An authentic Claretian community is the home of Mother Mary, who forms her sons in the forge of her Immaculate Heart. Hearts formed in the forge of her Heart are capable of a faithful *Fiat* to God’s will and of tender, compassionate love toward others. When this divine fire — like the burning bush that was aflame yet not consumed (cf. Ex 3:2-5) — is absent from our lives, other destructive fires take its place and gradually burn out both ourselves and others. To be a mystical missionary is to burn with the fire of love without burning out.

To Be Prophetic Missionaries: Seeing Reality from God's Perspective

27. Prophetic missionaries contemplate the world from God's perspective. In the biblical tradition, the prophet is primarily one who speaks on behalf of God. He sees reality through the eyes of God and helps others discern God's presence and call within history. Prophets stand before God in contemplation and before the people in compassion. They denounce whatever dehumanizes life and announce the newness that God desires for humanity.
28. Jesus formed His disciples in this prophetic way of seeing. He called them to the mountain to share the Beatitudes and took them to Tabor to witness the Transfiguration. There, they learned to see reality through the Father's perspective and to acquire the mind and heart of Christ. The core of our vocation is to be conformed to Christ so deeply that we learn to look at others through His eyes and love them with His Heart. All our ministries must flow from this Christ-centered love if they are to be authentically Claretian.
29. Saint Anthony Mary Claret lived this prophetic dimension with remarkable clarity and courage. Rooted in prayer and attentive to the signs of his times, he contemplated the painful realities of society from God's perspective. In Cuba, he was deeply moved by the suffering caused by slavery, exploitation, racism, and moral degradation, and he sought to become an instrument of God's compassion and justice through preaching, education, social initiatives, and pastoral reform. Likewise, in Spain, he confronted the social, political, and religious crises of his time with evangelical courage and missionary creativity. For Claret, pastoral action always flowed from a prophetic vision enlightened by the Gospel and animated by love for God and people.

Becoming a Prophetic Sign

30. The prophetic dimension of consecrated life is born from this contemplative gaze upon Christ and the world. Consecrated persons are called to become prophetic signs. Pope Francis often reminded consecrated persons that prophecy is at the heart of consecrated life. A prophetic life challenges complacency, un.masks structures of sin, and keeps alive God's dream for humanity. Today, our prophetic witness is expressed through communion in a fragmented world, simplicity in a culture of consumption, hope amid despair, and fraternity in societies marked by polarization and indifference.

Living Our Wounds and Vulnerabilities in the Paschal Light

31. A prophetic missionary also learns to live human vulnerability and woundedness in the light of the Paschal Mystery. We carry within ourselves and within our communities the wounds, fragility, and limitations that are part of the human condition and of the world in which we live. At times, these wounds manifest themselves in our communities through infidelities, worldliness, individualism, groupism, mistrust, and failures in fraternal charity. Yet, following Jesus, we are called neither to hide nor to deny them, but to place them before the Lord who embraced the Cross and transformed suffering and death into new life. In Him, our wounds can become openings through which God's healing grace enters and reaches others. Thus, we become wounded healers, capable of accompanying people with humility, compassion, and hope. While we share in the struggles and pain of humanity, we are invited to live

them in a new way — with the confidence that the Risen Lord continues to bring light out of darkness and life out of suffering.

32. The logic of the world will always seek to shape human life according to standards of power, self-interest, and exclusion. Yet Jesus continues to lead His disciples to the mountain so that they may not lose sight of the horizon of the Kingdom. A new world becomes possible when human hearts open themselves to the logic of heaven — the logic of the Beatitudes, mercy, communion, and self-giving love. A prophetic missionary, therefore, lives deeply rooted in God while remaining fully present to humanity's cries, struggles, and hopes. It is only by dwelling deeply in God's love that we become capable of speaking words and embodying gestures that generate hope, reconciliation, courage, and new life for the world.

Walking on the Synodal Path: Appreciative, Narrative, Synodal, and Discerning Approaches

33. Drawing from the rich reflections and generative praxis of synodal spirituality, let us make the preparation for and celebration of the XXVII General Chapter a profound synodal experience involving all of us. Together, let us grow through appreciative, narrative, synodal, and discerning conversations. Let us share the beautiful stories of God at work in our midst: grace enabling us to embrace our vulnerabilities and fragility, compassion growing into communion, and communities becoming channels of hope and strength for others.
34. I have witnessed situations in which the enduring presence of Claretians has gradually transformed inhuman realities over time. Among the many life-giving missionary initiatives of our Congregation, I recall experiences where Claretians made a profound difference: helping to end the practice of female infanticide through Mercy Home and education; sustained care and accompaniment of persons abandoned on the streets; accompanying children and youth trapped in drug addiction through *Hogares Claret*; building homes for the poorest through the participatory spirit of *Project Vision*; welcoming and caring for migrants and displaced persons; and many other hidden acts of missionary service across the world. Through these and countless other initiatives, the Congregation remains alive and present through the lives of missionaries and communities serving in the intellectual, social, and existential peripheries of human struggle. The true wealth of the Congregation lies in our humble missionaries who radiate joy in places where many struggle to find meaning and hope in life.

Doing Mission Together

35. Walking together and carrying out the mission together were essential parts of Saint Anthony Mary Claret's missionary style. Aware of the limitations of isolated individual efforts, he constantly sought to involve others in the evangelizing mission. He founded the Congregation so that missionaries could evangelize in community. He encouraged associations, supported and empowered consecrated women, accompanied new congregations, and promoted lay participation through initiatives such as the Academy of Saint Michael. Claret understood mission as God's work carried out together under the guidance of the Spirit. Today, this missionary intuition becomes even more relevant for us in the synodal journey of the Church.

Weaving Differences into Communion

36. Walking together as missionaries formed in community requires that we care for one another along the journey and rejoice in each other's growth and achievements. No one is an orphan, and no one needs to remain alone in the Congregation. Every voice count, every gift matters, and every perspective contributes to the richness of the whole. Our intercultural and intergenerational reality, lived in the light of the Gospel, is not a burden but a gift of the Spirit that enriches our communities and broadens our understanding of God's mission.
37. We are therefore called to learn the art of building fraternity amid diversity and integrating different cultures, sensitivities, experiences, and perspectives into a deeper vision of reality. This effort requires humility, patience, and the willingness to recognize the value of the other. It also calls for the inner freedom to hold the tensions that accompany growth and transformation. The love of God enlarges the heart and creates the inner space necessary to weave communion among the diverse persons whom God places on our journey.

Conversations in the Spirit

38. As we move toward the Chapter, our conversations should also involve lay persons, consecrated women and men, diocesan priests, and all those who share our mission and spirituality within the Claretian Family. Listening to their voices will help us discern more clearly what the Lord is asking of the Congregation today. We have learned much by walking together with them, and we thank the Lord for the many ways they enrich our vocation and mission through their witness, commitment, and accompaniment.
39. The centenary celebration in 2027 of the martyrdom of Blessed Andrés Solá and companions — together with a diocesan priest and a layman — reminds us that mission, witness, and even the offering of one's life for Christ are often lived in communion with others. We are therefore called to strengthen our way of carrying out mission together, not merely as collaborators in projects, but as companions on the journey and co-workers with the Holy Spirit in God's mission. I warmly invite each of you to offer your best so that, together, we may become our best for the Lord, allowing Him to guide and lead us throughout this Chapter journey.

The Chapter Process

40. The General Government has appointed a commission of five members to coordinate the preparation process for the XXVII General Chapter: Fr. Henry Omonisaye (Coordinator), Fr. Pedro Belderrain, Fr. Carlos Sánchez, Fr. Antony Bhyju, and Fr. Jude Langeh. Each Major Organism will also constitute its own commission to animate and accompany the preparation process in coordination with the General Commission. The General Commission will prepare a guide to facilitate participation throughout the Congregation. As part of this journey, there will be at least three rounds of Conversations in the Spirit in every community, as well as other conversations at other congregational levels.

Conclusion

41. Dear brothers, the General Chapter is a privileged moment of grace, discernment, and renewal for the Congregation. Our Constitutions describe six principal functions of the General Chapter. The first three concern the renewal and updating of the life and mission of the Congregation; the next two relate to offering orientations on practical matters and questions concerning our common life; and the sixth concerns the election of the Superior General and his Consultors (cf. CC 155).
42. According to our Constitutions, the General Chapter must address matters concerning the whole Congregation “with a spirit attentive to the Lord and to the needs of the entire community” (cf. CC 155). As we prepare for the XXVII General Chapter, let us therefore ask ourselves: What situations weaken our communion and unity in mission? What calls of the Spirit do we hear through the voices of our brothers and within our communities, inviting us to grow in a communion that bears witness to ever deeper unity in mission? What wounds of the world are we called to heal with the balm of communion? What bridges of reconciliation, fraternity, and hope are we invited to build for the good of the People of God and the mission of the Church?
43. May these questions remain alive within us throughout this Chapter journey. Let this become for all of us a time of deeper listening, sincere encounter, renewed fraternity, and courageous discernment. Let us walk together with hope, trusting that the One who has guided the Congregation throughout its history continues to lead us today through the creative fidelity of the Spirit. May this Chapter renew in us the joy of our vocation and the courage to respond creatively and prophetically to the challenges of our times.
44. I entrust our Chapter journey to the Holy Spirit, whom the Risen Lord gives us as companion and guide on the way. May the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church and Mother of our Congregation, help us prepare the cenacle of the Chapter so that it may become a space open to a new Pentecost — a new outpouring of grace, communion, and missionary fire for the whole Congregation.



Fr. Mathew Vattamattam, C.M.F.
Superior General



Rome, 24 May 2026
Solemnity of Pentecost

PRAYER FOR THE XXVII GENERAL CHAPTER

*Come, Holy Spirit,
breath of the Father
and living fire of the Risen Son,
renew our Congregation.*

*Make the preparation for the XXVII General Chapter
a time of grace, listening, and discernment.*

*Pour out upon us a new Pentecost
that we may walk together in communion,
as mystical and prophetic missionaries
at the service of the one Mission of Christ.*

*United with Mary, our Mother,
Saint Anthony Mary Claret,
and the faithful witness of our Martyrs,
teach us to hear Your voice in the cry of the poor,
in the wounds of the world,
and in the life of our communities.*

*Form us in the forge of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
so that, guided by Your Spirit,
we may become signs of fraternity,
hope, and missionary fire for the Church and the world.*

Amen.