



## LETTER TO THE CONGREGATION FROM THE BATCH OF FORGE 07/23

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December 14, 2023

Beloved Congregation,

We, the 16 participants of **Forge 7/23**, express gratitude for the transformative journey at the Forge Center from October 1 to December 14, 2023. Emerging from 12 Major Organisms and working across 9 countries, we cherish this gift. This encounter, akin to the disciples' journey to Emmaus, guided us as adorers of the Father, witnesses and messengers of the joy of the Gospel, propelling us as a congregation going forth. Commencing with hearts laden with concerns, Jesus ignited the flame within us.

Similar to Claret, the fire within mirrored the Forge experience, forging us more intensely into the Father's unconditional love. The retreat in the Monastery of Buenafuente del Sistol became a sanctuary, purifying our hearts. Our hearts were burning, ready to be hammered by the Blacksmith. Recalling the joy of Jesus' call, we re-examined our fidelity to our consecration. The pilgrimage to Rome sealed the lesson on following Christ due to the witness of the martyrs and saints. The commitment should first be lived in a community nourished by the Eucharist. God's Dream for the Congregation can be realized only when missionaries engage in ongoing formation, akin to Claret and the Claretian Martyrs of Barbastro. The Caritas Christi phase was an experience of forging ourselves into a community of missionaries who are witnesses and messengers of the joy of the Gospel.

Visiting our roots in Cataluña and Madrid, including El Escorial, unveiled Claret's great works, empowered by prayer and study. The Spirit of God was upon him, challenging us to live as a Spirit-filled community of consecrated missionaries, who, in shared mission, listen and proclaim the Word, especially in the peripheries, in synodality and in prophetic dialogue with the Claretian Family, the Church, and those seeking the transformation of the whole creation.

Just as the Blacksmith forges one arrow at a time, the Dream of the Congregation can be realized only when every Claretian personalizes that dream in his life and mission. While our hearts burn, the Lord is sending us back to our communities and ministries, bringing the light of hope with audacity.

We thank God and the Congregation, recognizing the Forge coordinators (Paulson Veliyannoor, Lawrence Venceslaus, and Ketoglo Kouamé Félix, CMFF), our speakers and mass presiders, Anthony Obikonu Igbokwe, Gonzalo Fernández Sanz, Cardinal Aquilino Bocos Merino, Severiano Blanco, and José Cristo Rey García Paredes, as well as Miguel Ángel Gil Castro and Fernando Torres, CMFF, for their technical and logistical assistance. Our gratitude extends to those who guided our pilgrimages in Rome, the Vatican, Madrid, Cataluña, and France. It was an honor for us to meet in Rome with our Superior General, Mathew Vattamattam, CMF. We thank them for this opportunity to be transformed by the Forge. Additionally, thanks to our cooks and housekeeping staff – Mai, Aida, and Lisa.

Please pray for us that we may grow in holiness, fidelity, and effectiveness as missionaries – Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, ablaze with God's love.

*Your beloved Sons,*

AJAEGBU Antoninus Uzoamaka, ANCLA Angelito Salig, BEDIN, Marselinus, CROOS M.M. Vincent De Paul, FOSUDO Christopher Olusanya, JOHNBOSCO Joe Terry de Bosco, JOSE Sabi, JOSEPH Biju, KERKETTA Cajmir, KUJUR Deonis, LIBOT Felimon Pequit, NDONG Maurice, PAULUS I Yohanes, SAMIDOSS Devadoss, TIGGA Ferdinand, VINCENT Antony Bhyju, CMFF