

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY IN COMMUNITY

Missionary Situation for Reflection

“Someone Else Will Do It”

The formation community had recently been entrusted with organizing a missionary outreach to several villages. During the planning meeting, everyone readily agreed that the mission was important. Responsibilities were distributed fairly: one group would prepare the liturgy, another would coordinate transportation, another would organize catechetical materials, and others would oversee logistics and communication.

As the date approached, however, difficulties began to emerge. Some assumed that others had already completed the assigned tasks. A few delayed their work because no one had reminded them. Others fulfilled only the minimum expected, believing that the superior or the coordinator would eventually solve any remaining problems. During the outreach, several activities had to be improvised because important preparations had been overlooked.

After returning, the community evaluated the experience. Surprisingly, no one denied the value of the mission, yet everyone recognized a common pattern: many had participated, but few had truly taken ownership. The superior concluded the meeting with a simple observation: “A missionary community flourishes not because everyone is busy, but because everyone feels responsible for the common mission.”

The conversation led each member to examine a deeper question: Was I simply carrying out assigned tasks, or was I contributing to the life and mission of the community as my own?

Reflection Questions

1. When responsibilities are entrusted to me, do I accept them as part of my missionary vocation or merely as obligations?
2. How do I respond when I notice that an important task has been neglected?
3. Do I contribute only within my assigned role, or do I take initiative for the good of the whole community?
4. In what ways do I strengthen—or weaken—the culture of shared responsibility within my community?
5. What concrete step can I take to become a more reliable and accountable missionary companion?

General Introduction

Every missionary community is sustained by a common vocation, a common mission, and a common responsibility. While each member contributes according to his gifts, ministries, and stage of formation, the mission belongs to all. No individual can fully realize the missionary vocation in isolation, nor can the responsibility for community life and apostolic mission rest on a few members alone.

Shared responsibility is therefore much more than dividing tasks or rotating offices. It is a way of living the missionary vocation in which each member freely accepts ownership of the common life, contributes actively to the mission, and remains accountable for the responsibilities entrusted to him. It reflects the conviction that every Claretian is both a recipient of the Congregation’s mission and a responsible steward of its future.

For missionaries in formation, learning shared responsibility is an essential aspect of human, spiritual, and apostolic growth. It develops initiative without individualism, collaboration without passivity, and accountability without excessive control. As formandi gradually assume responsibility

for prayer, study, community life, pastoral ministry, and administration, they learn that authentic freedom is expressed through faithful service to the common good.

A community marked by shared responsibility does not depend entirely on the superior or on a few gifted members. Rather, each person recognizes that his attitudes, decisions, and actions directly influence the vitality of the whole community. Members encourage one another, fulfil their commitments with integrity, communicate openly, and willingly assist wherever the mission requires.

This module explores shared responsibility as a formative journey towards missionary co-responsibility. It invites every Claretian to move beyond passive participation towards mature ownership of the Congregation's life and mission, becoming a missionary who not only serves faithfully but also helps others to serve together for the proclamation of the Gospel.

I. The Meaning of Shared Responsibility

Shared responsibility is the active and faithful participation of every member in the life, mission, and growth of the community according to his vocation, gifts, and responsibilities. It is rooted in the conviction that the missionary vocation is always shared. No Claretian is merely a beneficiary of the Congregation; each is entrusted with contributing to its communion, mission, and future.

Shared responsibility goes beyond the distribution of tasks. A community may divide work efficiently yet still lack genuine co-responsibility if members remain passive, indifferent, or concerned only with their individual assignments. True shared responsibility arises when every member recognizes the community's mission as his own and freely contributes to its fulfilment.

This understanding is particularly important in formation. Formandi are not simply recipients of formation but active participants in it. Their personal growth, the quality of community life, and the effectiveness of the apostolic mission depend not only on the efforts of formators but also on the willingness of each individual to assume responsibility for himself, for his brothers, and for the common mission.

1. Shared Responsibility Begins with Ownership

Every member is called to develop a sense of ownership for the community and its mission. Ownership does not imply possession or control; rather, it means identifying oneself so deeply with the community that its joys, struggles, successes, and challenges become one's own.

This sense of ownership is expressed when members:

- care for the common good rather than personal convenience;
- protect and wisely use community resources;
- contribute ideas and initiatives for the benefit of all;
- support common decisions even when these differ from personal preferences;
- willingly undertake responsibilities that serve the mission.

Without ownership, participation easily becomes superficial, and responsibility is reduced to fulfilling assigned duties.

2. Shared Responsibility Requires Initiative

Missionary communities cannot flourish if members wait to be constantly reminded or directed. Mature missionaries cultivate the ability to recognize needs, anticipate challenges, and respond generously without expecting continual supervision.

Initiative is not acting independently of others. Rather, it is the readiness to place one's gifts at the service of the community while remaining in dialogue with those entrusted with leadership. It combines creativity with humility and freedom with obedience.

In formation, initiative grows gradually through opportunities to organize community activities, coordinate apostolic projects, assume leadership roles, and evaluate one's own performance with honesty.

3. Shared Responsibility Demands Accountability

Responsibility always includes accountability. Those entrusted with a task are responsible not only for completing it but also for carrying it out with competence, transparency, and reliability.

Accountability includes:

- fulfilling commitments faithfully;
- communicating difficulties promptly;
- evaluating outcomes honestly;
- learning from mistakes;
- accepting correction with openness;
- reporting one's work for the benefit of the community.

Such accountability builds mutual trust and enables communities to function with confidence rather than constant supervision.

4. Shared Responsibility Is Collaboration

Mission is never an individual enterprise. Every Claretian depends upon the gifts, experience, and support of his brothers. Shared responsibility therefore requires collaboration, mutual assistance, and respect for the contributions of others.

Collaboration means working with others rather than merely alongside them. It involves listening, coordinating efforts, sharing information, and valuing diverse competencies. Members avoid both individualism, where one works in isolation, and dependency, where one expects others to carry the greater burden.

Communities that cultivate collaboration become more creative, resilient, and effective in responding to the needs of the mission.

5. Shared Responsibility Serves the Common Mission

The ultimate purpose of shared responsibility is not efficient administration but the advancement of God's Kingdom through the Congregation's missionary service. Every responsibility, whether visible or hidden, pastoral or domestic, intellectual or administrative, contributes to the one missionary vocation.

When each member faithfully assumes his part, the community becomes a credible witness of communion in mission. Responsibilities cease to be burdens imposed from outside and become opportunities to participate in God's saving work.

Thus, shared responsibility is both a formative attitude and a missionary practice. It forms mature Claretians who do not simply perform assigned duties but freely and joyfully assume co-responsibility for the life, mission, and future of the Congregation.

II. The Claretian Vision of Shared Responsibility

Shared responsibility is not simply an organizational principle; it is a constitutive expression of the Claretian vocation. Called by the Lord and gathered into one missionary body, Claretians participate together in the one mission entrusted to the Congregation. Each member contributes according to his vocation, gifts, ministries, and stage of formation, but all share responsibility for the life, communion, and apostolic fruitfulness of the Congregation.

This vision arises from the awareness that the missionary vocation is always lived **with others and for others**. Consequently, no member is merely an observer of community life or a passive recipient of formation. Each is called to be an active builder of missionary communion and a responsible collaborator in the common mission.

1. One Calling, One Mission, One Responsibility

The Constitutions present the Congregation as a community united by a common vocation and missionary purpose. Since all have embraced the same missionary calling, each member shares responsibility for strengthening the unity, vitality, and apostolic effectiveness of the Congregation. At the same time, every Claretian remains available for the universal mission of the Institute, placing personal preferences at the service of the common good (cf. **CC 10–12**).

This common vocation creates a shared commitment. The mission is never “my mission” or “your mission”; it is always “our mission.” Every responsibility entrusted to an individual ultimately serves the missionary life and evangelizing mission of the whole Congregation.

2. Participation as an Expression of Missionary Communion

The Claretian community is built through the active participation of all its members. Community meetings, pastoral planning, domestic responsibilities, formation activities, and apostolic initiatives are not merely administrative necessities; they are privileged moments in which missionary communion is expressed and strengthened.

The General Plan of Formation emphasizes that formation houses should become schools of participation where formandi gradually learn to contribute their gifts, accept responsibilities, work collaboratively, and assume accountability for the common mission. Shared responsibility is therefore not learned primarily through theory but through daily participation in community life and apostolic service.

Formation communities should consciously provide opportunities for every member to:

- participate in common decision-making according to his level of responsibility;
- coordinate community and apostolic initiatives;
- exercise leadership in appropriate contexts;
- collaborate across different ministries;
- evaluate communal commitments honestly and constructively.

Through these experiences, responsibility gradually becomes an interior disposition rather than merely an assigned function.

3. Authority that Generates Co-responsibility

Within the Claretian tradition, authority is exercised not by replacing the responsibility of others but by fostering it. Superiors and formators animate the community so that every member can contribute responsibly according to his vocation and competence. They coordinate, accompany, encourage, and discern with the community, helping each member to grow in freedom and accountability.

Likewise, members respond to authority not with passive dependence but with mature collaboration. They fulfil entrusted responsibilities faithfully, communicate openly, offer their insights respectfully, and support decisions that promote the common mission. Such reciprocal collaboration creates a community where authority and participation enrich one another rather than compete.

4. Stewardship of the Congregation's Life and Mission

Shared responsibility also means recognizing that every Claretian is a steward of the Congregation's spiritual, human, material, and apostolic resources. Time, talents, finances, community facilities, ministries, and relationships are gifts entrusted to the missionary community for the service of the Gospel. Responsible stewardship is expressed by:

- caring for common property with simplicity and gratitude;
- using resources prudently and transparently;
- sharing one's gifts generously for the benefit of others;
- preparing successors by transmitting knowledge and responsibilities;
- promoting the long-term vitality of the Congregation rather than immediate personal interests.

Such stewardship reflects the evangelical conviction that all gifts are received in trust and are to be placed at the service of God's Kingdom.

5. A Witness to the Gospel

A community in which every member willingly shares responsibility becomes a powerful witness to the Gospel. Mutual trust replaces excessive control, initiative overcomes passivity, collaboration surpasses individualism, and accountability strengthens communion. Such a community reveals that missionary life is not sustained by a few capable individuals but by the generous participation of all.

In this way, shared responsibility becomes more than an effective method of organizing community life. It becomes a concrete expression of Claretian missionary spirituality—a community of missionaries who, united in one vocation and one mission, freely place their lives, gifts, and energies at the service of God, the Church, and the world.

III. Human Capacities for Shared Responsibility

Shared responsibility is sustained not merely by goodwill but by mature human qualities that enable individuals to work with others for a common purpose. While every Claretian receives responsibilities through his vocation, he must also develop the personal capacities needed to carry them out faithfully and collaboratively. Formation therefore seeks not only to assign responsibilities but also to cultivate the attitudes and habits that make responsible participation possible.

The following capacities are particularly important for missionary life.

1. Personal Agency

Personal agency is the ability to take initiative rather than wait passively for instructions. Missionaries with a strong sense of agency recognize that they are active participants in their own formation and in the mission of the Congregation. They do not simply ask, "*What am I expected to do?*" but also, "*What can I contribute for the good of the community and the mission?*"

This capacity is expressed by:

- taking initiative within one's responsibilities;
- identifying needs before they become problems;
- seeking solutions rather than assigning blame;
- embracing new opportunities for service.

Agency enables missionaries to become creative collaborators rather than passive recipients of direction.

2. Reliability

Shared responsibility depends upon trust. Communities flourish when members know they can depend on one another. Reliability is demonstrated through consistency in fulfilling commitments, respect for deadlines, careful preparation, and perseverance even when tasks become demanding.

Reliable missionaries:

- complete entrusted responsibilities conscientiously;
- honour their commitments without constant reminders;
- communicate promptly when difficulties arise;
- can be trusted with both small and significant responsibilities.

Reliability builds confidence and allows the community to work with greater freedom and mutual trust.

3. Accountability

Mature responsibility always includes accountability. Missionaries willingly give an account of the responsibilities entrusted to them because they understand that every task contributes to the common mission.

Accountability involves:

- evaluating one's work honestly;
- acknowledging successes and failures with humility;
- accepting fraternal correction;
- learning from experience;
- maintaining transparency in decisions and the use of resources.

Rather than being experienced as external control, accountability becomes an opportunity for continual growth and mutual confidence.

4. Collaborative Spirit

Missionary life is fundamentally collaborative. No individual possesses all the gifts required for the mission. A collaborative spirit enables members to value the contributions of others, share responsibilities generously, and work towards common goals.

This spirit is fostered through:

- attentive listening;
- respectful communication;
- willingness to share information and resources;
- appreciation of diverse talents and perspectives;
- readiness to support the work of others.

Collaboration transforms individual efforts into a shared missionary witness.

5. Stewardship

Everything entrusted to a missionary, time, abilities, relationships, material resources, and apostolic opportunities, is received as a gift to be used for the service of the Gospel. Stewardship is

the capacity to care responsibly for these gifts, recognizing that they belong to the mission rather than to oneself.

Good stewards:

- use community resources wisely and transparently;
- care for common property;
- manage time responsibly;
- develop their talents through continual learning;
- hand over responsibilities carefully to those who succeed them.

Stewardship reflects gratitude for what has been received and commitment to leaving the community stronger for future generations.

6. Commitment to the Common Good

Shared responsibility reaches its maturity when personal interests are integrated into the good of the community and its mission. Missionaries gradually learn to move beyond individual preferences and to ask what best serves the Gospel, the Congregation, and those entrusted to its care.

This commitment is visible when members:

- support community decisions with generosity;
- place communal priorities above personal convenience;
- rejoice in the success of others;
- contribute to a positive community atmosphere;
- willingly make sacrifices for the mission.

Communities marked by this spirit become places where every member experiences both the joy of belonging and the responsibility of contributing.

Formative Integration

These capacities do not develop automatically. They are formed gradually through daily community life, entrusted responsibilities, honest evaluation, and personal accompaniment. Every assignment, whether preparing the liturgy, coordinating a pastoral activity, managing community resources, or leading a meeting, becomes a formative opportunity to grow in initiative, reliability, accountability, collaboration, stewardship, and commitment to the common good.

As these qualities mature, shared responsibility ceases to be merely a distribution of tasks and becomes a stable disposition of the missionary heart. Such missionaries no longer ask only, *“What is my responsibility?”* but increasingly, *“How can I contribute more fully to the life and mission entrusted to us together?”*

IV. Expressions of Shared Responsibility in Missionary Life

Shared responsibility becomes visible through concrete attitudes and practices that sustain the life and mission of the community. It is expressed not only in major decisions or leadership roles but also in the ordinary responsibilities of daily missionary living. Every member, regardless of age, ministry, or stage of formation, contributes to building a community in which all participate actively and responsibly.

The following expressions illustrate how shared responsibility is lived in practice.

1. Taking Ownership of Community Life

Shared responsibility begins with recognizing that the community is *our* home and *our* missionary family. Members therefore care for the quality of community life instead of expecting others to maintain it.

This includes:

- participating faithfully in common prayer and community gatherings;
- contributing to a welcoming and respectful atmosphere;
- caring for common spaces and resources;
- promoting healthy relationships among members;
- taking initiative to address community needs.

Ownership transforms participation from mere compliance into genuine commitment.

2. Participating Actively in the Common Mission

Every Claretian shares responsibility for the missionary mission of the Congregation. While specific ministries differ, all contribute to the same evangelizing purpose.

Active participation is expressed by:

- carrying out assigned ministries responsibly;
- supporting the apostolic initiatives of the community;
- collaborating across different ministries when needed;
- preparing adequately for pastoral responsibilities;
- remaining available for new missionary needs.

Mission thus becomes a common endeavour rather than a collection of individual apostolates.

3. Fulfilling Entrusted Responsibilities Faithfully

Every responsibility, whether large or small, deserves equal integrity because each contributes to the common good. Faithfulness is shown not by the importance of the task but by the spirit in which it is carried out.

Responsible members:

- prepare carefully for entrusted duties;
- complete assignments on time;
- communicate honestly when unforeseen difficulties arise;
- seek help, when necessary, rather than allowing responsibilities to fail;
- evaluate their work with openness and humility.

Reliability in ordinary responsibilities prepares missionaries for greater responsibilities in the future.

4. Collaborating with Others

Missionary life requires cooperation rather than isolated effort. Members willingly share ideas, resources, and responsibilities, recognizing that the mission is accomplished together.

Collaboration involves:

- listening respectfully to different viewpoints;

- coordinating efforts rather than duplicating them;
- offering assistance when others face difficulties;
- sharing knowledge and experience generously;
- appreciating the gifts and competencies of fellow missionaries.

Such collaboration strengthens both fraternity and missionary effectiveness.

5. Supporting Community Decisions

Shared responsibility continues after decisions have been made. Mature participation includes supporting communal decisions with loyalty, even when one's personal preference has not prevailed, provided those decisions are legitimate and directed towards the common good.

This requires:

- trusting the communal process;
- avoiding unnecessary criticism and division;
- implementing agreed decisions faithfully;
- offering constructive feedback through appropriate channels;
- maintaining unity while remaining open to future evaluation.

Communities grow in communion when members move from individual preferences to shared commitment.

6. Caring for the Common Good

Shared responsibility extends beyond one's assigned duties. Members remain attentive to the overall well-being of the community and respond generously whenever additional help is needed.

This is evident when missionaries:

- volunteer when unexpected needs arise;
- support brothers who are overburdened or struggling;
- care responsibly for community resources;
- contribute to a positive and hopeful community climate;
- place the mission above personal convenience.

The common good becomes everyone's responsibility rather than the concern of a few.

7. Promoting a Culture of Co-responsibility

Shared responsibility is strengthened when communities intentionally cultivate it as a way of life. Formators, superiors, and senior members have a particular role in creating an environment where participation, initiative, and accountability are encouraged and appreciated.

Such a culture is fostered when communities:

- entrust meaningful responsibilities to all members;
- encourage initiative within appropriate limits;
- recognize faithful service with gratitude;
- evaluate responsibilities regularly and constructively;
- help members learn from mistakes without fear or humiliation.

In such communities, responsibility is experienced not as a burden imposed from above but as a shared privilege arising from a common missionary vocation.

Missionary Integration

A Claretian community becomes truly missionary when every member sees himself as a co-worker in God's mission rather than a passive participant in community life. Shared responsibility is therefore expressed in countless ordinary acts of fidelity, collaboration, and service. As each member assumes responsibility for the common life and mission, the community becomes a more credible sign of evangelical communion and a more effective instrument for the proclamation of the Gospel.

V. Obstacles to Shared Responsibility

Shared responsibility flourishes where there is trust, initiative, and commitment to the common good. However, it can be weakened by attitudes and behaviours that shift responsibility away from oneself or undermine collaboration. Recognizing these obstacles is an important step in formation, enabling missionaries to cultivate greater maturity and become more dependable collaborators in the mission.

The following obstacles are among the most common in community life.

1. Passive Compliance

Some members do only what is explicitly assigned to them, avoiding any initiative beyond their minimum obligations. They wait to be instructed, reminded, or supervised before acting.

Passive compliance may appear outwardly obedient, but it lacks the proactive spirit necessary for missionary life. A community cannot flourish when responsibility depends solely on the superior or a few committed members.

Formation should therefore encourage missionaries to ask not only, "*What am I required to do?*" but also, "*What does the community need from me?*"

2. Selective Participation

Selective participation occurs when members contribute enthusiastically to activities that match their interests while showing little involvement in less attractive or hidden responsibilities.

This attitude creates an uneven distribution of work, leaving a small number of members carrying a disproportionate share of community responsibilities.

Missionary maturity is demonstrated by a willingness to serve wherever the common good requires, recognizing that every responsibility contributes to the one mission.

3. Individualism in Mission

A subtle obstacle to shared responsibility arises when members become overly attached to their own ministries, projects, or ideas. Ministry gradually becomes "my work" rather than "our mission."

Signs of individualism include:

- working in isolation from the community;
- resisting collaboration;
- protecting one's own projects;
- seeking personal recognition;
- showing little interest in the broader missionary priorities of the community.

The Claretian vocation calls every missionary to place personal gifts and initiatives at the service of the Congregation's common mission.

4. Diffusion of Responsibility

When responsibility belongs to everyone, there is a temptation to assume that someone else will take care of it. As a result, important tasks remain unattended because each person expects another to act.

This attitude is especially harmful in community life, where many responsibilities depend upon voluntary cooperation and mutual attentiveness.

Communities overcome this obstacle by fostering clarity of responsibilities, open communication, and a readiness to intervene when needs arise.

5. Entitlement without Contribution

Some members expect to enjoy the benefits of community life while contributing as little as possible to its responsibilities. They readily receive the support of the community but hesitate to invest their own time, energy, or talents for its growth.

This weakens fraternity because authentic communion is sustained through reciprocal giving rather than passive receiving.

Formation should help missionaries recognize that belonging to the Congregation always entails both privileges and responsibilities.

6. Resistance to Accountability

Another obstacle arises when members become defensive about their responsibilities. They may avoid evaluation, resist constructive feedback, conceal mistakes, or blame circumstances or other people for failures.

Without accountability, trust gradually diminishes and collaboration becomes difficult. Communities grow stronger when members:

- acknowledge mistakes honestly;
- seek help when needed;
- learn from experience;
- welcome fraternal correction;
- view evaluation as an opportunity for growth rather than criticism.

From Obstacles to Opportunities

Every obstacle to shared responsibility also presents an opportunity for growth.

Obstacle	Formative Response
Passive compliance	Cultivate initiative and ownership
Selective participation	Develop generosity in serving the common good
Individualism	Strengthen collaboration and missionary communion
Diffusion of responsibility	Foster personal accountability and proactive service
Entitlement	Grow in stewardship and generous contribution
Resistance to accountability	Embrace evaluation, transparency, and continual learning

Missionary Integration

The purpose of formation is not merely to eliminate these obstacles but to transform attitudes. As missionaries grow in initiative, accountability, collaboration, and generosity, responsibility gradually becomes an interior disposition rather than an external obligation. Communities marked by

this spirit no longer depend on a few individuals to sustain the mission; instead, every member recognizes himself as a co-responsible steward of the Congregation's life and evangelizing mission.

VI. A Developmental Pathway towards Co-responsibility

Shared responsibility is learned gradually. It is not acquired simply by assigning tasks or holding positions of leadership, but through a formative process that helps missionaries grow from dependence to mature stewardship of the common mission. At each stage of formation, responsibilities should correspond to the individual's level of human, spiritual, and missionary maturity while progressively preparing him for greater service.

The journey towards co-responsibility can be understood through five stages of growth.

Stage 1. Accepting Personal Responsibility

The first step is learning to take responsibility for oneself. Before contributing effectively to the community, a missionary must develop habits of personal discipline, integrity, and accountability.

At this stage, the formandus learns to:

- manage his daily responsibilities faithfully;
- be punctual and dependable;
- care for personal belongings and common property;
- complete assigned tasks without constant reminders;
- acknowledge mistakes honestly.

The guiding question is: *Can I be trusted to take responsibility for my own commitments?*

Stage 2. Participating Responsibly in Community Life

As personal responsibility matures, the missionary learns that community life requires the active contribution of every member. Participation is no longer motivated merely by obedience but by a growing sense of belonging.

Growth at this stage is reflected in the ability to:

- participate actively in community prayer, meetings, and common activities;
- contribute to domestic responsibilities willingly;
- collaborate respectfully with others;
- support community decisions;
- recognize that one's attitudes affect the entire community.

The guiding question becomes: *How do my actions contribute to the life of the community?*

Stage 3. Taking Initiative for the Common Good

The next stage marks the transition from participation to ownership. Instead of waiting to be instructed, the missionary begins to recognize needs and respond proactively.

This stage is characterized by:

- proposing constructive solutions;
- volunteering when help is needed;
- anticipating challenges;
- encouraging the participation of others;
- accepting responsibilities beyond personal preferences.

Initiative is exercised with humility and dialogue, always respecting legitimate authority and communal discernment.

The guiding question becomes: *What can I do to strengthen our community and mission?*

Stage 4. Exercising Co-responsible Leadership

As maturity increases, missionaries are entrusted with coordinating people, projects, and apostolic initiatives. Leadership at this stage is understood as service rather than authority for its own sake.

Co-responsible leaders strive to:

- empower others rather than control them;
- delegate responsibilities wisely;
- encourage collaboration;
- communicate clearly;
- accompany and evaluate responsibly;
- create opportunities for others to grow.

Leadership becomes an exercise in fostering participation rather than concentrating responsibility.

The guiding question is: *How can I help others assume responsibility and grow?*

Stage 5. Becoming a Steward of the Mission

The highest stage of development is a stable disposition of stewardship. The missionary no longer sees responsibilities as individual assignments but as participation in God's mission entrusted to the Congregation.

A missionary steward:

- identifies deeply with the charism and mission of the Congregation;
- places personal gifts at the service of the common good;
- cares responsibly for people and resources;
- prepares others to assume future responsibilities;
- seeks the long-term vitality of the Congregation rather than personal success.

Such missionaries inspire responsibility in others through the witness of their own lives.

The guiding question becomes: *How can I leave the community and mission stronger than I found them?*

The Role of the Formator

The development of co-responsibility requires intentional accompaniment. Formators help this growth by gradually entrusting meaningful responsibilities, offering appropriate freedom, providing regular feedback, and encouraging honest evaluation. Rather than solving every problem themselves, they create opportunities for formandi to think, decide, collaborate, and learn from experience.

Likewise, superiors and senior members model shared responsibility by fostering participation, recognizing initiative, and promoting a climate of mutual trust and accountability.

Missionary Integration

Growth in shared responsibility is ultimately a journey from **doing assigned tasks** to **sharing ownership of the mission**. As missionaries mature, responsibility is no longer experienced as an external obligation but as an interior expression of love for Christ, commitment to the Congregation, and service to the People of God. Communities composed of such members become schools of communion where every person contributes actively to the one missionary vocation entrusted to all.

VII. The Shared Responsibility Cycle

Shared responsibility is not a single action but a continuous process that enables a missionary community to work effectively and grow together. Responsibilities are entrusted, carried out, evaluated, and renewed in an ongoing cycle of participation and accountability. When this process is followed consistently, members develop habits of ownership, collaboration, and continual improvement.

The following cycle provides a practical framework for living shared responsibility in formation communities and apostolic settings.

1. Receive the Responsibility

Every responsibility begins with a mission entrusted by the community or by legitimate authority. Receiving a responsibility is more than accepting a task; it is accepting a trust. At this stage, the missionary asks:

- What is being entrusted to me?
- What is the purpose of this responsibility?
- How does it contribute to our common mission?

Responsibilities should be accepted with openness, generosity, and a spirit of service.

2. Clarify Expectations

Before beginning any task, it is important to understand clearly what is expected. Many misunderstandings arise not from unwillingness but from unclear communication. Clarification includes:

- understanding the desired outcome;
- identifying available resources;
- knowing timelines and deadlines;
- recognizing who should be consulted or involved;
- agreeing on the level of accountability.

Clear expectations enable responsible action and prevent unnecessary confusion.

3. Plan Collaboratively

Good intentions alone are insufficient. Responsible service requires thoughtful planning that involves those who share the responsibility. Planning includes:

- identifying priorities;
- distributing responsibilities appropriately;
- anticipating possible difficulties;
- coordinating with other members;
- establishing realistic timelines.

Whenever possible, planning should encourage participation rather than concentrating every decision in one person.

4. Carry Out the Responsibility Faithfully

Execution is the stage where commitment becomes visible. Responsibilities should be carried out with competence, diligence, and respect for those affected by the work. Responsible execution is characterized by:

- fidelity to commitments;
- prudent use of time and resources;
- collaboration with others;
- flexibility when circumstances change;
- perseverance until the task is completed.

Faithfulness in ordinary responsibilities builds credibility for greater responsibilities in the future.

5. Communicate and Collaborate

Shared responsibility requires ongoing communication throughout the process. Members should not work in isolation but remain connected with those involved. Healthy communication includes:

- sharing progress regularly;
- informing others of significant developments;
- seeking assistance when difficulties arise;
- consulting before making major changes;
- encouraging mutual support.

Open communication strengthens trust and prevents unnecessary misunderstandings.

6. Give an Account

Every entrusted responsibility deserves an honest account of what has been accomplished. Accountability is not a sign of mistrust but an expression of respect for the community and its mission. Giving an account includes:

- reporting completed work;
- explaining difficulties encountered;
- acknowledging both successes and shortcomings;
- ensuring transparency in the use of resources;
- handing over responsibilities carefully when appropriate.

Accountability strengthens confidence among members and promotes responsible stewardship.

7. Evaluate Together

Evaluation transforms experience into learning. Rather than asking only whether a task was completed, the community reflects on how it was carried out and what can be improved. Useful questions include:

- Were the objectives achieved?
- What contributed to success?
- What obstacles emerged?

- How well did we collaborate?
- What have we learned for the future?

Evaluation should always be conducted in a spirit of mutual learning rather than personal criticism.

8. Renew the Commitment

Every completed responsibility prepares the community for future service. Reflection leads to renewed commitment, improved practices, and greater confidence. Renewal may involve:

- refining procedures;
- strengthening collaboration;
- developing new competencies;
- entrusting greater responsibilities;
- expressing gratitude for the contributions of members.

Through this continual process, the community grows in maturity and missionary effectiveness.

The Cycle in Practice

Stage	Key Question
Receive	What has been entrusted to me?
Clarify	What is expected of me?
Plan	How shall we accomplish this together?
Carry Out	Am I fulfilling this responsibility faithfully?
Communicate	Are others adequately informed and involved?
Give an Account	What have I accomplished, and what challenges arose?
Evaluate	What have we learned?
Renew	How can we serve more faithfully next time?

Missionary Integration

The Shared Responsibility Cycle forms missionaries who understand that responsibility is more than completing assigned tasks. It is a continual process of receiving a mission, collaborating with others, acting faithfully, learning through evaluation, and renewing one's commitment to the Gospel. Communities that live this cycle consistently develop a culture of trust, accountability, and mutual support, where every member becomes an active steward of the Congregation's life and mission.

VIII. Formative Practices

Shared responsibility is acquired through experience rather than instruction alone. It grows when missionaries are entrusted with meaningful responsibilities, accompanied in carrying them out, and helped to reflect on what they have learned. Formation communities therefore serve as schools of co-responsibility, where daily life itself becomes the primary setting for developing initiative, collaboration, accountability, and stewardship.

The following formative practices help cultivate a lasting culture of shared responsibility.

1. Entrust Real Responsibilities

Learning responsibility requires genuine responsibility. Formandi should be entrusted with tasks that contribute meaningfully to the life and mission of the community rather than merely symbolic assignments.

These responsibilities may include:

- coordinating community prayer or liturgy;
- organizing apostolic activities;
- managing aspects of community administration;
- caring for common facilities and resources;
- coordinating hospitality, recreation, or formation programmes.

Responsibilities should be appropriate to the individual's stage of formation while remaining sufficiently challenging to promote growth.

Reflection: *Do I treat every entrusted responsibility as a privilege to serve the community?*

2. Gradually Increase Responsibility

Formation should follow the principle of gradual growth. As formandi demonstrate reliability and maturity, they should be entrusted with greater freedom and more complex responsibilities.

A gradual progression may include:

- completing individual tasks;
- coordinating small teams;
- leading community projects;
- planning apostolic initiatives;
- mentoring younger members in shared responsibilities.

This progression develops confidence without overwhelming the individual.

Reflection: *Am I becoming capable of assuming greater responsibility with humility and competence?*

3. Foster Collaborative Leadership

Rather than allowing one person to carry every responsibility, communities should encourage collaborative planning and execution. Working together enables members to appreciate different gifts, learn mutual dependence, and develop communication skills.

This practice includes:

- planning projects as a team;
- sharing responsibilities according to competence;
- consulting one another before important decisions;
- reviewing projects together after completion.

Such collaboration teaches that effective leadership strengthens the participation of others rather than replacing it.

Reflection: *How do I encourage others to contribute their gifts to the common mission?*

4. Build a Culture of Accountability

Accountability should be experienced as a normal part of community life rather than an occasional correction. Members grow when they regularly report on entrusted responsibilities, receive constructive feedback, and evaluate their own performance honestly.

Communities can foster this culture by:

- reviewing responsibilities during community meetings;
- encouraging honest self-evaluation;
- providing respectful fraternal feedback;
- acknowledging both achievements and areas for improvement;
- celebrating faithful service with gratitude.

When practiced consistently, accountability strengthens trust and deepens mutual confidence.

Reflection: *Do I welcome evaluation as an opportunity for growth?*

5. Learn through Reflection and Review

Every responsibility offers a formative opportunity when accompanied by reflection. Communities should periodically review not only *what* was accomplished but also *how* members collaborated, communicated, and exercised responsibility.

Helpful questions include:

- What went well?
- What difficulties emerged?
- How did we work together?
- What did we learn about ourselves?
- What can we improve next time?

Reflection transforms experience into wisdom and gradually forms mature missionary judgement.

Reflection: *What have I learned from the responsibilities entrusted to me during the past year?*

6. Practice Responsible Stewardship

Shared responsibility also extends to the care of the community's resources. Formation should cultivate habits of simplicity, transparency, and respect for everything entrusted to the community.

Practical expressions include:

- using time responsibly;
- caring for community property;
- managing financial resources prudently;
- avoiding waste;
- leaving common spaces better than they were found;
- preparing a careful handover when responsibilities change.

These practices foster gratitude and reinforce that all resources are entrusted for the service of the mission.

Reflection: *How do I care for the resources that the community has entrusted to me?*

7. Form through Witness

Perhaps the most effective teacher of shared responsibility is the example of responsible missionaries. Formators, superiors, and senior members communicate more through their attitudes than through instructions. When they fulfil their responsibilities faithfully, collaborate respectfully, admit mistakes, and encourage participation, they create a community culture in which others naturally learn to do the same.

Likewise, every member contributes to the formation of others by modelling initiative, reliability, generosity, and accountability in daily life.

Reflection: *What example of responsibility am I offering to those who live and work with me?*

Missionary Integration

Shared responsibility is learned in the ordinary rhythm of community life. Every assignment, every meeting, every apostolic initiative, and every shared task becomes an opportunity to grow in ownership, collaboration, accountability, and service. Through these daily formative practices, missionaries gradually move from simply carrying out assigned duties to becoming trustworthy co-workers who freely assume responsibility for the life, mission, and future of the Congregation.

IX. Indicators of Growth

Growth in shared responsibility is reflected less in the number of tasks a missionary performs than in the attitudes with which he approaches community life and mission. As missionaries mature, responsibility gradually becomes an interior disposition rather than an external obligation. They no longer participate simply because they are asked to do so, but because they recognize themselves as co-responsible for the life and mission of the Congregation.

The following indicators can help formandi, formators, and communities discern progress in this area.

1. Personal Indicators

A missionary is growing in shared responsibility when he:

- accepts responsibilities willingly rather than reluctantly;
- fulfils commitments faithfully and punctually;
- demonstrates initiative without waiting for constant supervision;
- acknowledges mistakes honestly and learns from them;
- perseveres even when responsibilities become demanding;
- seeks solutions rather than assigning blame.

Such a missionary is increasingly dependable because responsibility has become part of his character.

2. Community Indicators

A community is growing in shared responsibility when:

- responsibilities are shared according to gifts and competencies;
- members participate actively in community meetings and activities;
- communication is open, respectful, and timely;
- members willingly assist one another when needs arise;
- community decisions are implemented with commitment;
- accountability is welcomed as a normal part of community life.

In such communities, participation arises from a shared sense of belonging rather than external pressure.

3. Missionary Indicators

Shared responsibility becomes visible in the apostolate when missionaries:

- collaborate readily across ministries;
- place the common mission above personal preferences;
- adapt generously to changing missionary needs;
- share resources, knowledge, and experience;
- complete entrusted ministries with integrity;
- encourage the participation and growth of others.

Mission is experienced as a common apostolic endeavour rather than a collection of individual ministries.

4. Leadership Indicators

Missionaries entrusted with leadership demonstrate shared responsibility when they:

- delegate responsibilities appropriately;
- encourage participation in planning and implementation;
- trust others with meaningful responsibilities;
- accompany rather than control;
- provide constructive feedback;
- recognize and appreciate the contributions of every member.

Leadership thus becomes a ministry of animation that generates greater participation and ownership within the community.

5. Stewardship Indicators

Responsible stewardship is evident when members:

- care for community property and resources;
- use time and finances responsibly;
- maintain transparency in entrusted responsibilities;
- prepare careful handovers when responsibilities change;
- think beyond immediate needs and contribute to the long-term good of the community and Congregation.

Such stewardship reflects gratitude for what has been received and responsibility for what will be handed on to future generations.

Self-Assessment for Personal Reflection

Reflect on each statement using the following scale:

1 = Rarely 2 = Sometimes 3 = Often 4 = Consistently

Statement	1	2	3	4
I willingly accept responsibilities entrusted to me.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I complete my responsibilities without needing repeated reminders.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I take initiative when I recognize a need in the community.	☐	☐	☐	☐

I collaborate willingly with others and value their contributions.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I communicate honestly when difficulties arise.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I welcome constructive feedback and evaluation.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I support community decisions even when they differ from my preferences.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I care responsibly for community resources.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I contribute actively to building a positive community atmosphere.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I see myself as a co-responsible steward of the Congregation's mission.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Questions for Personal Prayer and Reflection

1. Which aspect of shared responsibility has grown most in my life during the past year?
2. Which responsibilities do I embrace with generosity, and which do I tend to avoid?
3. Do my brothers experience me as a dependable collaborator?
4. How do I respond when my work is evaluated or corrected?
5. What concrete step can I take to become a more trustworthy steward of our common life and mission?

Missionary Integration

The ultimate sign of growth in shared responsibility is not efficiency but **missionary communion**. Communities mature when every member willingly contributes his gifts, accepts accountability, and places the common mission above personal interests. Such missionaries no longer ask, *"Who is responsible for this?"* Instead, they ask, *"How can I contribute?"* In this way, shared responsibility becomes a living expression of Claretian fraternity, missionary availability, and evangelical service.

X. Practical Formation Tools

The following tools are intended to help formandi, formators, and communities cultivate a culture of shared responsibility. They are not instruments of control but aids for reflection, dialogue, evaluation, and growth. Used periodically, they foster greater ownership, accountability, collaboration, and commitment to the common mission.

Tool 1. Personal Responsibility Audit

This exercise helps formandi reflect on how they exercise responsibility in daily missionary life.

Instructions

Rate yourself on the following statements using the scale:

1 = Rarely 2 = Sometimes 3 = Usually 4 = Consistently

Statement	1	2	3	4
I accept responsibilities willingly.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I complete entrusted tasks on time.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I take initiative without waiting to be asked.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I communicate difficulties honestly.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I seek collaboration rather than working alone.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I care for community resources responsibly.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I welcome constructive feedback.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I support decisions made by the community.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I help create a positive community atmosphere.	☐	☐	☐	☐

I see every responsibility as part of my missionary vocation.	☐	☐	☐	☐
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Reflection

- Which area is my greatest strength?
- Which area requires the most attention?
- What concrete habit can I develop during the coming month?

Tool 2. Community Responsibility Review

This exercise may be carried out once or twice each year during a community meeting.

Reflect together on the following questions:

Participation

- Do all members contribute actively to community life?
- Are responsibilities distributed fairly according to abilities and formation needs?
- Do some members consistently carry a heavier workload than others?

Collaboration

- How well do we work together?
- Do we communicate sufficiently while carrying out common responsibilities?
- How readily do we assist one another?

Accountability

- Do we regularly review entrusted responsibilities?
- Are successes and failures discussed openly and respectfully?
- Do members feel safe admitting mistakes?

Stewardship

- Do we use our time, finances, and community resources responsibly?
- Are responsibilities handed over carefully when they change?
- Are we preparing younger members for future responsibilities?

Mission

- Does every member feel responsible for the apostolic mission of the community?
- Are our individual ministries integrated into a common missionary vision?

Conclude by identifying:

- Three strengths to preserve.
- Three areas needing improvement.
- Two concrete commitments before the next evaluation.

Tool 3. Responsibility Planning Sheet

Before beginning a community project or apostolic activity, the following worksheet may be completed.

Area	Notes
Responsibility entrusted	
Purpose	
Person(s) responsible	
Collaborators	
Resources required	
Timeline	
Expected outcome	

Possible challenges	
Means of communication	
Date of evaluation	

Completing this simple worksheet promotes clarity, shared ownership, and accountability.

Tool 4. Responsibility Review after Completion

After completing a responsibility or project, the community or team may use the following questions for evaluation.

Looking Back

- What did we accomplish?
- What contributed to our success?
- What difficulties did we encounter?

Looking Within

- How well did we collaborate?
- Did everyone fulfil his responsibility?
- Where did communication break down?
- How did we support one another?

Looking Ahead

- What have we learned?
- What should we continue?
- What should we change next time?
- What responsibilities should now be entrusted to others?

Tool 5. Personal Growth Plan

At the end of an evaluation period, each formandus identifies one concrete area of growth.

My present strength	
Area needing improvement	
Habit I will develop	
Support I need	
How I will review my progress	
Date for personal evaluation	

This plan should be reviewed periodically with the formator or spiritual accompanier.

Suggestions for Formators

Shared responsibility develops most effectively when formators intentionally create opportunities for growth. They can foster this by:

- entrusting meaningful responsibilities rather than routine chores alone;
- gradually increasing responsibility according to the formandus' maturity;
- encouraging initiative while providing appropriate accompaniment;
- reviewing responsibilities regularly through formative dialogue;
- affirming responsible behaviour and addressing negligence promptly and charitably;
- rotating responsibilities so that formandi experience different dimensions of community and apostolic life;
- modelling transparency, collaboration, and accountability in their own leadership.

The goal is not simply to ensure that tasks are completed, but to form missionaries who willingly assume responsibility for the life, mission, and future of the Congregation.

Missionary Integration

Practical tools are effective only when they foster a genuine interior attitude of co-responsibility. Used regularly, they help communities move beyond merely distributing work to cultivating a shared commitment to the Gospel and the Claretian mission. In this way, every responsibility, whether ordinary or extraordinary, becomes an opportunity to grow in communion, stewardship, and missionary service.

XI. Personal and Community Commitments

Formation reaches its goal only when reflection leads to conversion and concrete action. Shared responsibility becomes a lasting disposition through repeated choices that place the common good above personal convenience and the mission above individual preference. Every Claretian is therefore invited to translate the insights gained from this module into practical commitments that strengthen both personal maturity and missionary communion.

A. Personal Commitment

Take time in prayer before the Lord and reflect on the following questions:

- Which aspect of shared responsibility most challenges me?
- What attitudes or behaviours hinder my full participation in community life?
- Which responsibilities do I embrace generously, and which do I tend to avoid?
- How can I become a more trustworthy collaborator in the mission?
- What concrete step is the Holy Spirit inviting me to take?

My Personal Commitment

Complete the following statement: To grow in shared responsibility, during the next three months I commit myself to:

Means to Support My Commitment

To remain faithful to this commitment, I will:

- cultivate the habit of taking initiative where appropriate;
- fulfil entrusted responsibilities with diligence and punctuality;
- communicate honestly when I encounter difficulties;
- welcome evaluation and fraternal correction;
- review my commitment monthly during personal prayer or spiritual accompaniment.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

B. Community Commitment

After reflecting together on this module, the community may identify two or three concrete commitments that promote a stronger culture of co-responsibility.

Examples include:

- ensuring that every member participates meaningfully in community responsibilities;
- improving communication and accountability in community projects;
- reviewing community responsibilities periodically;
- encouraging greater collaboration across apostolic ministries;
- caring more responsibly for community resources;
- creating opportunities for younger members to exercise leadership.

Our Community Commitments

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Community Review

The community may agree to review these commitments after three or six months by asking:

- What progress have we made?
- What has strengthened our sense of shared responsibility?
- What difficulties have we encountered?
- What new commitments should we make?

Regular review ensures that these commitments remain living practices rather than good intentions.

Conclusion

Shared responsibility is far more than an effective way of organizing community life. It is a way of participating in God's mission together. Rooted in the common vocation we have received in Christ, it invites every Claretian to become an active steward of the Congregation's life, mission, and future.

A missionary community flourishes not because a few members assume most of the responsibilities, but because every member contributes according to his gifts and vocation. When initiative replaces passivity, collaboration overcomes individualism, and accountability strengthens mutual trust, the community becomes a living witness of evangelical communion. Such a community not only functions more effectively but also reflect the very nature of the Church as a communion in mission.

For missionaries in formation, learning shared responsibility is an indispensable part of becoming a mature Claretian. It is through the ordinary responsibilities of daily life, such as, community prayer, study, pastoral ministry, administration, domestic tasks, and fraternity, that missionaries gradually learn to place their gifts at the service of others. These everyday experiences prepare them to assume greater responsibilities within the Congregation and the Church with competence, humility, and generosity.

Shared responsibility also demands continual conversion. Every missionary must resist the temptation to leave responsibility to others, to seek only personal interests, or to withdraw when challenges arise. Instead, each is called to renew daily his willingness to ask not, "*Who will do this?*" but rather, "*How can I contribute to the mission entrusted to us?*"

Ultimately, shared responsibility is an expression of missionary love. It is the practical way in which Claretians live their communion, strengthen one another, and proclaim the Gospel together. Communities formed in this spirit become places where every member experiences both the joy of belonging and the privilege of serving. In this way, the Congregation continues to grow as a

missionary family in which all share one vocation, one mission, and one responsibility for announcing the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

Further Reading

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