

SELF-CAPACITIES FOR COMMUNITY LIFE FORMATION

Missionary Situation for Reflection

Living Together, Growing Together

The St. Anthony Mary Claret Formation Community brought together young Claretian missionaries from six countries. They prayed together, studied together, shared meals, and worked in various apostolic ministries. On the surface, community life appeared peaceful. Yet, beneath the routine, tensions slowly began to emerge.

Thomas preferred to work independently and often avoided community discussions. Emmanuel welcomed every new initiative but struggled to complete tasks entrusted to him. David found it difficult to accept corrections and withdrew whenever disagreements arose. Miguel was generous in ministry but became impatient when community decisions differed from his personal preferences. Samuel warmly welcomed visitors but found it difficult to relate to some confreres whose personalities and cultural habits were very different from his own.

The formator noticed that none of these brothers lacked goodwill. Each sincerely desired to become a faithful missionary. Yet the daily challenges of community life revealed something deeper: missionary fraternity requires more than good intentions. It demands interior capacities that enable one to listen, collaborate, forgive, regulate emotions, appreciate differences, and place the common mission above personal preferences.

Instead of treating these situations merely as disciplinary concerns, the formator invited the community to reflect on their experiences. Through personal accompaniment, community dialogue, shared prayer, and regular evaluation, the brothers gradually discovered that living together was itself part of their missionary formation. Community became the place where God was shaping their hearts for mission.

Reflection Questions

1. Which attitudes or behaviours in this story most threaten authentic community life?
2. Which of the brothers do you identify with most, and why?
3. How have community experiences helped you discover both your strengths and your limitations?
4. Which relational capacity do you most need to develop in order to become a better missionary and brother?
5. How can your community become a place where members intentionally help one another grow in these capacities?

In missionary life, community is not simply where missionaries live; it is one of the primary places where God forms them. The quality of fraternity depends not only on external structures or community activities but also on the interior capacities that enable members to build communion, collaborate in mission, and witness credibly to the Gospel. Developing these self-capacities is therefore an essential task of Claretian formation.

Introduction: Self-Capacities for Community Formation

Community life is one of the principal contexts in which a Claretian missionary grows into the likeness of Christ. Living, praying, discerning, and working with others reveals not only one's gifts but also one's limitations. It is within these ordinary experiences of fraternity that the Holy Spirit gradually shapes the missionary into a person capable of communion, collaboration, and apostolic availability.

Community formation, therefore, is not limited to learning community rules or participating in common activities. It involves the gradual development of interior capacities that enable a missionary to relate to others with maturity, generosity, and evangelical freedom. These self-capacities sustain healthy relationships, strengthen missionary fraternity, and make community life a credible witness to the Gospel.

The Claretian tradition understands community as a gift received from God and a mission entrusted to every missionary. The Constitutions describe the community as a communion of persons united by the Spirit for the service of the Kingdom (cf. CC 10, 11, 39–45). Such communion is not achieved automatically. It is built through daily conversion, mutual acceptance, shared responsibility, and the willingness to grow together in love.

Formation must therefore help each formandus cultivate the dispositions necessary for authentic fraternity. These are not merely social skills or personality traits but enduring capacities rooted in Christian discipleship and nourished by prayer, self-awareness, community life, and missionary commitment. As these capacities mature, the formandus becomes increasingly capable of contributing to a community marked by trust, mutual support, reconciliation, intercultural openness, and common mission.

This module focuses on six essential self-capacities that foster healthy missionary community life:

- Openness to Others
- Capacity for Reconciliation
- Ability to Collaborate
- Commitment to the Common Mission
- Hospitality
- Emotional Regulation

These capacities are mutually reinforcing. Together they enable Claretian missionaries not merely to live under the same roof, but to become true brothers who discern together, share responsibility, and bear witness to the communion that Christ desires for his disciples. Their growth is a lifelong process that begins in initial formation and continues throughout missionary life.

I. Biblical Foundation

Christian community is rooted in the very life of the Trinity, where communion, mutual self-giving, and love are perfectly lived. Jesus formed the disciples not merely as individual followers but as a community called to learn, pray, discern, and carry out the mission together. Their life in common became an essential part of their formation. By teaching them to forgive, serve one another, bear each other's burdens, and remain united in love, Jesus showed that fraternity is itself a witness to the Gospel.

The early Christian community embodied this vision by sharing life, prayer, possessions, and mission (Acts 2:42–47). Despite differences in background and personality, believers learned to build communion through mutual respect, reconciliation, and concern for the common good. Saint Paul repeatedly reminds the Christian communities that each member possesses different gifts, yet all belong to one body whose unity depends on love, humility, and collaboration (1 Cor 12:12–27; Eph 4:1–6). Community life, therefore, is not accidental to Christian discipleship but one of its clearest expressions.

The Scriptures highlight many of the capacities that sustain authentic fraternity:

- welcoming one another as Christ has welcomed us (Rom 15:7);
- bearing with one another in patience and love (Col 3:12–15);
- forgiving one another as the Lord has forgiven us (Eph 4:31–32);
- serving one another in humility (Gal 5:13);
- encouraging one another and building each other up (1 Thess 5:11).

These attitudes are not simply moral obligations but signs of lives transformed by the Holy Spirit.

The six self-capacities presented in this module, openness to others, capacity for reconciliation, ability to collaborate, commitment to the common mission, hospitality, and emotional regulation, translate this biblical vision into everyday community life. They are not merely interpersonal competencies but dispositions that allow formandi to grow into missionaries who build communion, strengthen fraternity, and bear credible witness to the Gospel through the way they live together.

II. Essential Self-Capacities for Community Formation

Community life flourishes not merely through good structures or clear regulations but through the personal maturity of those who live it. The following six self-capacities foster authentic fraternity and enable missionaries to live their vocation in communion with others. These capacities develop gradually through prayer, self-awareness, accompaniment, community experiences, and openness to the transforming action of the Holy Spirit.

1. Openness to Others

Meaning

Openness to others is the capacity to welcome people with respect, interest, and trust, recognising each person as a gift of God. It enables a missionary to appreciate differences in personality, culture, age, and experience, while remaining willing to learn from others and to build genuine relationships.

This openness is more than sociability or friendliness. It is an interior disposition rooted in humility and charity. It frees a person from prejudice, excessive self-centredness, defensiveness, and the tendency to judge others quickly. An open missionary listens attentively, values diverse perspectives, and allows relationships to broaden his understanding of God, the Church, and the mission.

Why It Matters

Missionary communities today are increasingly intercultural and intergenerational. Members bring different histories, customs, languages, and ways of thinking. Without openness, these differences easily become sources of misunderstanding, isolation, or conflict. With openness, however, diversity becomes a source of enrichment and creativity for the mission.

Openness also creates an atmosphere of trust in which community members feel respected, understood, and accepted. Such an environment encourages honest dialogue, mutual learning, shared discernment, and collaborative decision-making. It enables the community to become a true school of communion rather than merely a place of residence.

For the Claretian missionary, openness extends beyond the community to the people among whom he serves. A missionary who learns to welcome his brothers with respect will also be better prepared to encounter people of different cultures, traditions, and social realities with the same evangelical spirit.

Formation Practices

The formandus can cultivate openness by:

- intentionally engaging with community members whose personalities or cultures differ from his own;

- listening attentively before expressing opinions or offering judgments;
- participating wholeheartedly in community conversations and activities;
- appreciating different customs and traditions without comparison or prejudice;
- seeking feedback from others with humility and gratitude;
- praying regularly for the grace to see others through the eyes of Christ.

Formation communities should provide opportunities for intercultural interaction, collaborative learning, shared responsibilities, and guided reflection on community experiences so that openness becomes a lived habit rather than merely an ideal.

Reflection Questions

- Do I genuinely welcome people who think, pray, or act differently from me?
- What attitudes or prejudices limit my openness to others?
- How do I normally respond when community members challenge my opinions or expectations?
- In what concrete ways can I become more receptive to the gifts that others bring to the community?

Formation Note: This self-capacity focuses on the interior readiness to encounter others without prejudice, defensiveness, or excessive attachment to one's own way of thinking. It does not require the formandus to agree with everyone or abandon personal convictions. Rather, it enables him to listen respectfully, learn from differences, and remain open to the gifts that each person brings. The practical dimensions of intercultural and intergenerational living are developed more fully in the module on *Intercultural and Intergenerational Community Life*.

2. Capacity for Reconciliation

Meaning

The capacity for reconciliation is the ability to restore relationships after misunderstanding, disagreement, or hurt. It enables a missionary to acknowledge mistakes, seek forgiveness, extend forgiveness to others, and work towards renewed communion. Rather than allowing resentment or division to grow, reconciliation seeks healing through truth, humility, mercy, and dialogue.

Reconciliation does not ignore differences or avoid difficult conversations. Instead, it faces conflicts with honesty and charity, recognising that broken relationships can become opportunities for personal growth and deeper fraternity. This capacity reflects the reconciling love of Christ, who calls his disciples to become ministers of reconciliation (cf. 2 Cor 5:18–20).

Why It Matters

No community is free from misunderstandings. Differences in personality, culture, expectations, or ways of working inevitably lead to tensions. If these tensions remain unresolved, they gradually erode trust, weaken collaboration, and diminish the credibility of the community's missionary witness.

A missionary community grows stronger when its members learn to address conflicts promptly, communicate respectfully, and seek reconciliation with sincerity. Communities that practise forgiveness and reconciliation become places of healing, where members experience acceptance despite their weaknesses and are encouraged to begin again.

The capacity for reconciliation also nurtures emotional freedom. Letting go of resentment, anger, or the desire for retaliation allows missionaries to remain available for community life and mission. Reconciliation is therefore not merely the resolution of conflict but the restoration of communion that enables the community to move forward together.

Formation Practices

The formandus can develop this capacity by:

- examining his conscience regularly regarding relationships within the community;
- addressing misunderstandings early instead of allowing them to accumulate;
- acknowledging mistakes without defensiveness and accepting responsibility for his actions;
- offering and seeking forgiveness with sincerity;
- practising respectful dialogue, especially during moments of disagreement;
- praying for those with whom he experiences difficulties and entrusting broken relationships to the Lord.

Formation communities should foster a culture in which reconciliation is regarded as a normal part of community living. Personal accompaniment, community dialogue, fraternal correction, and common prayer can help members transform conflicts into opportunities for deeper communion.

Reflection Questions

- How do I normally react when I experience conflict or criticism?
- Do I find it difficult to ask for forgiveness or to forgive others?
- Am I holding on to resentment or unresolved hurts within the community?
- What concrete step can I take today to strengthen reconciliation with a brother?

Formation Note: This self-capacity focuses on the personal disposition to forgive, seek forgiveness, and restore relationships. Practical methods of conflict management and mediation are treated more fully in the modules on *Conflict Transformation in Community Life* and *Forgiveness and Reconciliation in Community Life*. Here the emphasis is on cultivating an interior readiness for reconciliation as an essential quality of missionary fraternity.

3. Ability to Collaborate

Meaning

The ability to collaborate is the capacity to work constructively with others in pursuing shared goals. It enables a missionary to contribute his gifts generously, appreciate the contributions of others, share responsibilities, and seek the common good rather than personal recognition or control.

Collaboration is more than simply working alongside others. It involves mutual trust, respectful communication, shared decision-making, accountability, and a willingness to coordinate one's efforts with those of the community. A collaborative missionary understands that the mission belongs to the community and the Congregation, not to any individual.

Why It Matters

The mission entrusted to the Church is too great to be accomplished alone. Jesus formed a community of disciples and sent them on mission together. Likewise, Claretian missionaries are called to evangelize as a missionary community, sharing responsibilities according to each person's gifts and responsibilities.

Communities flourish when members cooperate willingly, communicate openly, and support one another in fulfilling common responsibilities. Collaboration builds trust, strengthens fraternity, and makes the community more effective in responding to pastoral needs. It also provides opportunities for mutual learning, creativity, and shared discernment.

Conversely, excessive individualism, competition, reluctance to share responsibilities, or the desire to dominate others weakens community life and diminishes missionary effectiveness. Genuine

collaboration requires humility, flexibility, and the readiness to place the success of the community above personal preferences.

Formation Practices

The formandus can strengthen this capacity by:

- participating actively and responsibly in community assignments;
- working cooperatively in team ministries and formation projects;
- sharing ideas while remaining open to the contributions of others;
- carrying out entrusted responsibilities faithfully and on time;
- offering assistance to community members without waiting to be asked;
- evaluating team experiences to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

Formation communities should regularly provide opportunities for collaborative learning, shared apostolic activities, common planning, and team leadership so that collaboration becomes a habitual way of living and working.

Reflection Questions

- Do I willingly work with others, or do I prefer to work independently?
- How do I respond when my ideas are not accepted by the community?
- Can others rely on me to fulfil the responsibilities entrusted to me?
- How do my attitudes contribute to—or hinder—the spirit of teamwork within the community?

Formation Note: This self-capacity focuses on the personal disposition to cooperate with others. The practical dimensions of shared decision-making, co-responsibility, leadership, and community planning are explored more fully in the modules on *Shared Responsibility in Community Life*, *Community Project Development*, and *Dialogue in Community Life*. Here the emphasis is on developing the interior attitudes that make genuine collaboration possible.

4. Commitment to the Common Mission

Meaning

Commitment to the common mission is the capacity to place the mission of Christ and the Congregation above personal interests, preferences, or ambitions. It enables a missionary to embrace the community's apostolic vision, participate actively in its shared responsibilities, and contribute generously to its common goals.

This commitment arises from the conviction that every Claretian is called not simply to fulfil an individual ministry but to participate in the evangelizing mission entrusted to the missionary community. Personal talents and initiatives find their fullest meaning when they are integrated into the common mission.

Why It Matters

Missionary communities exist for the proclamation of the Gospel. Their unity is not based merely on friendship or shared residence but on a common vocation and apostolic purpose. When every member identifies with this shared mission, community life becomes more cohesive, purposeful, and fruitful.

A strong commitment to the common mission helps missionaries overcome individualism and self-interest. It encourages members to accept assignments with generosity, support community decisions even when they differ from personal preferences, and persevere through difficulties for the

sake of the mission. Such commitment also strengthens mutual trust, since each member knows that others are working for the same apostolic purpose.

Conversely, when personal agendas, prestige, or individual preferences take precedence over the common mission, fraternity is weakened, collaboration suffers, and the community's evangelical witness loses credibility.

For Claretian missionaries, commitment to the common mission reflects the spirit of St. Anthony Mary Claret, who tirelessly placed the proclamation of the Gospel above personal comfort, honour, or security. His apostolic zeal was always lived in communion with those who shared the same missionary vocation.

Formation Practices

The formandus can deepen this capacity by:

- reflecting regularly on the missionary purpose of community life;
- participating actively in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of community apostolic initiatives;
- accepting community assignments with generosity and responsibility;
- supporting community decisions even when they differ from personal preferences;
- integrating personal gifts and talents into the common mission rather than seeking individual recognition;
- praying regularly for the missionary intentions and apostolic works of the community and the Congregation.

Formation communities should help formandi understand that every aspect of community life, prayer, study, work, recreation, and service, is ordered towards the shared evangelizing mission. Opportunities for collaborative apostolic planning and evaluation can strengthen this missionary outlook.

Reflection Questions

- Do I place the common mission above my personal preferences and interests?
- How willingly do I accept community decisions and apostolic assignments?
- Do I see my talents as gifts for the community or primarily as personal achievements?
- In what concrete ways can I contribute more effectively to the common mission of my community?

Formation Note: This self-capacity emphasises the interior disposition to identify with the community's evangelizing mission. The practical processes of community planning, apostolic programming, and shared responsibility are developed more fully in the modules on *Community Project Development*, *Shared Responsibility in Community Life*, and *Pastoral Discernment and Planning*. Here the emphasis is on forming missionaries whose hearts are united in a common apostolic purpose.

5. Hospitality

Meaning

Hospitality is the capacity to welcome others with openness, respect, and generosity, creating an atmosphere in which every person feels accepted, valued, and at home. Rooted in the Gospel, hospitality goes beyond courteous behaviour. It is an expression of Christian charity that recognises the presence of Christ in every person and reflects God's unconditional welcome.

Within a missionary community, hospitality is expressed through attentiveness to one another, sensitivity to individual needs, respect for cultural diversity, and a willingness to make space for others. It nurtures a climate of belonging where each member can grow in freedom and mutual trust.

Why It Matters

Missionary communities are enriched by differences in culture, language, age, personality, and life experience. Hospitality transforms these differences from potential barriers into opportunities for mutual enrichment. It enables community members to experience fraternity not as mere coexistence but as genuine communion.

A hospitable community is marked by warmth, inclusion, and mutual care. New members are helped to integrate, visitors are received with generosity, and those who are struggling or feel isolated experience acceptance rather than exclusion. Such communities become credible witnesses to the Gospel, reflecting the welcoming love of Christ.

Hospitality also has an apostolic dimension. A community that welcomes one another sincerely is better prepared to welcome the people it serves. The openness experienced within the community naturally extends to those on the peripheries, especially the poor, the excluded, and those seeking hope.

Conversely, indifference, cliques, prejudice, or lack of concern for others create isolation and weaken the spirit of fraternity. Hospitality requires an intentional effort to move beyond comfort zones and to cultivate a culture of welcome.

Formation Practices

The formandus can cultivate hospitality by:

- greeting community members and visitors with warmth and respect;
- taking the initiative to include those who may feel isolated or new to the community;
- showing interest in the cultures, traditions, and experiences of others;
- sharing community life generously through common meals, recreation, prayer, and celebrations;
- offering practical assistance to those who are sick, elderly, or experiencing personal difficulties;
- cultivating an attitude of availability and service in the ordinary events of daily life.

Formation communities should consciously foster a welcoming atmosphere where every member experience respect, acceptance, and belonging. Celebrating cultural diversity, encouraging shared community experiences, and practising attentive care for one another help hospitality become an enduring characteristic of community life.

Reflection Questions

- Do others experience me as welcoming, approachable, and available?
- How do I respond to people who are different from me in culture, personality, or background?
- Am I attentive to members who may feel lonely, excluded, or discouraged?
- What concrete step can I take to make my community a more welcoming and inclusive place?

Formation Note: Hospitality is more than good manners or social courtesy. It is an evangelical disposition that builds communion and reflects God's welcoming love. Within the Claretian community, hospitality strengthens fraternity and prepares missionaries to welcome all people with the same openness and compassion that they experience among their brothers.

6. Emotional Regulation

Meaning

Emotional regulation is the capacity to recognise, understand, and manage one's emotions in healthy and constructive ways. It enables a missionary to respond thoughtfully rather than react impulsively to the challenges of community life. This capacity does not suppress emotions but integrates them, allowing feelings to be expressed appropriately and guided by faith, reason, and charity.

Every person experience joy, disappointment, anger, fear, frustration, and sadness. Emotional maturity lies not in the absence of these emotions but in the ability to acknowledge them honestly, discern their meaning, and respond in ways that strengthen rather than damage relationships.

Why It Matters

Community life inevitably brings moments of misunderstanding, correction, disappointment, and stress. Without emotional regulation, these experiences may lead to impulsive reactions, prolonged resentment, withdrawal, harsh criticism, or unhealthy dependence on others. Such patterns weaken trust and disrupt community harmony.

Missionaries who regulate their emotions effectively remain calm during difficult situations, communicate respectfully, receive correction with humility, and make prudent decisions even under pressure. They contribute to an atmosphere of stability and trust where conflicts can be addressed constructively and relationships strengthened.

Emotional regulation also promotes personal well-being. It helps missionaries cope with the demands of formation, intercultural living, pastoral responsibilities, and personal struggles without becoming overwhelmed. Interior freedom enables them to remain available for both fraternity and mission.

Formation Practices

The formandus can develop emotional regulation by:

- becoming aware of the emotions that arise in daily community interactions;
- taking time for prayer and reflection before responding to emotionally charged situations;
- expressing feelings honestly and respectfully rather than suppressing or exaggerating them;
- seeking personal accompaniment when recurring emotional patterns interfere with community life;
- maintaining healthy habits of prayer, rest, physical exercise, and balanced living;
- practising gratitude, patience, and trust in God's providence during times of stress or disappointment.

Formation communities should encourage an atmosphere where emotions can be discussed openly and respectfully. Regular spiritual accompaniment, personal reflection, community dialogue, and opportunities for constructive feedback help formandi develop greater self-awareness and emotional balance.

Reflection Questions

- How do I usually respond when I experience frustration, criticism, or disappointment?
- Which emotions are most difficult for me to manage in community life?
- Do my emotional reactions strengthen or weaken my relationships with others?
- What practices help me maintain inner peace and respond with greater charity?

Formation Note: Emotional regulation is not simply a psychological skill but a dimension of Christian maturity. As formandi grow in self-awareness, prayer, and emotional integration, they become more capable of loving others with patience, freedom, and stability. This capacity strengthens every aspect of community life and enables missionaries to remain faithful witnesses of Christ even in demanding situations.

Integrative Reflection

These six self-capacities, openness to others, capacity for reconciliation, ability to collaborate, commitment to the common mission, hospitality, and emotional regulation, are deeply interconnected. Growth in one capacity supports growth in the others. Together they foster a community characterised by trust, mutual respect, shared responsibility, and missionary zeal.

These capacities are not acquired overnight. They are gradually formed through daily life in community, personal conversion, prayer, accompaniment, and faithful participation in the ordinary rhythm of missionary living. As they mature, formandi become not only better community members but also more effective missionaries, capable of witnessing to the Gospel through the quality of their fraternity.

III. Role of the Formator

The formation of community self-capacities does not occur automatically through living together. It requires intentional guidance, personal accompaniment, and a community environment that consistently encourages growth in fraternity. The formator plays a decisive role by modelling these capacities, creating opportunities to practise them, and helping each formandus integrate community experiences into his personal and missionary development.

Rather than merely correcting inappropriate behaviour, the formator accompanies formandi in understanding the attitudes, motivations, and emotional patterns that shape their relationships. Through patient guidance, he helps them grow from external conformity to genuine interior transformation.

The formator fulfils this responsibility in several complementary ways:

1. Model Authentic Fraternity

Formandi learn as much from the formator's example as from his teaching. A formator who listens attentively, treats every member with respect, welcomes diversity, manages conflicts peacefully, and collaborates with others demonstrates the very capacities he seeks to cultivate. His witness gives credibility to formation and creates a climate of trust.

2. Foster a Culture of Trust and Openness

A healthy formative community is one in which members feel safe to express ideas, ask questions, admit mistakes, and seek help without fear of ridicule or rejection. The formator promotes respectful dialogue, mutual acceptance, and constructive feedback so that openness becomes a normal characteristic of community life.

3. Accompany Personal Growth

Each formandus develops these capacities at a different pace. Through regular personal accompaniment, the formator helps him recognise both strengths and areas needing growth. Reflection on concrete community experiences enables the formandus to identify recurring relational patterns, emotional reactions, and attitudes that either strengthen or weaken fraternity.

4. Create Intentional Learning Opportunities

Community life itself becomes the primary classroom for developing these capacities. The formator intentionally designs experiences that require cooperation, shared leadership, intercultural interaction, common planning, and mutual responsibility. Community assignments, apostolic projects, household responsibilities, and shared decision-making all become occasions for growth.

5. Transform Community Challenges into Formation Opportunities

Disagreements, misunderstandings, cultural differences, disappointments, and interpersonal tensions should not be viewed simply as problems to eliminate. With appropriate accompaniment, they become valuable opportunities for learning patience, forgiveness, collaboration, emotional regulation, and reconciliation. The formator helps formandi reflect on these experiences and discover how God is forming them through everyday community life.

6. Encourage Regular Reflection and Evaluation

Growth in these capacities requires continuous self-examination. The formator encourages regular personal reflection, community review, and constructive evaluation of relationships and community experiences. Honest feedback helps formandi become more self-aware and more intentional in their ongoing growth.

7. Integrate Formation with Prayer and Mission

The formator continually helps formandi recognise that these capacities are not merely interpersonal competencies but evangelical dispositions rooted in their relationship with Christ. Prayer, the Eucharist, reflection on the Word of God, community discernment, and apostolic experiences should all reinforce the formation of missionaries who build communion and proclaim the Gospel through the witness of their fraternity.

Key Insight for Formators: The goal is not simply to produce well-adjusted community members but missionaries whose hearts have been transformed by Christ. When openness, reconciliation, collaboration, commitment to the common mission, hospitality, and emotional regulation become enduring dispositions, community itself becomes a prophetic witness and a credible sign of the Kingdom of God.

IV. Formation Practices

The development of community self-capacities requires consistent practice rather than occasional instruction. Formation should intentionally provide experiences that help formandi internalise attitudes of openness, reconciliation, collaboration, hospitality, emotional balance, and commitment to the common mission. These practices should be integrated into the ordinary rhythm of community life so that learning occurs through lived experience.

Personal Practices

Each formandus is encouraged to:

- Begin each day by praying for the grace to build communion within the community.
- Practise active listening during community conversations without interrupting or making premature judgments.
- Reflect daily on interactions with community members, identifying attitudes that strengthened or weakened fraternity.

- Make a sincere effort to reconcile promptly after misunderstandings or conflicts.
- Participate responsibly in community responsibilities and apostolic activities.
- Welcome opportunities to interact with members from different cultures, generations, and backgrounds.
- Maintain healthy habits of prayer, rest, recreation, and self-care that foster emotional balance.
- Seek regular spiritual accompaniment to deepen self-awareness and relational maturity.

Community Practices

The formation community can promote these capacities by:

- Creating an atmosphere of mutual respect, openness, and trust.
- Rotating community responsibilities to encourage cooperation and shared ownership.
- Providing opportunities for collaborative planning, apostolic projects, and team ministry.
- Celebrating cultural diversity through community gatherings and shared celebrations.
- Holding regular community evaluations that focus on relationships as well as community life and mission.
- Encouraging respectful dialogue and prompt reconciliation whenever tensions arise.
- Recognising and appreciating the gifts and contributions of individual members.
- Welcoming guests and new members in ways that reflect the community's missionary spirit.

Role of Ongoing Accompaniment

Formation practices become effective when accompanied by regular reflection. Personal accompaniment, spiritual direction, community meetings, and periodic evaluations help formandi recognise patterns of growth, identify areas requiring further development, and establish concrete goals for continued formation.

Community life itself remains the principal formation setting. Every shared prayer, meal, meeting, apostolic activity, celebration, disagreement, and reconciliation provides an opportunity to grow in the self-capacities that sustain missionary fraternity.

Suggested Formation Exercises

Exercise	Capacity Developed
Weekly personal review of community relationships	Emotional regulation, openness
Community sharing on experiences of fraternity	Openness, hospitality
Collaborative apostolic or service projects	Collaboration, commitment to the common mission
Cultural exchange evenings	Openness, hospitality
Guided reflection after community conflicts	Reconciliation, emotional regulation
Periodic appreciation exercise (affirming one another's gifts)	Hospitality, openness, collaboration
Monthly evaluation of community life	All six capacities

These practices are most effective when carried out consistently. Over time, they help transform community life from a place of mere coexistence into a genuine school of communion, where formandi learn to live as brothers united in Christ and committed to the shared mission of evangelization.

V. Assessment

The purpose of assessment is not to judge personality but to accompany growth in the self-capacities that foster authentic missionary fraternity. Assessment should therefore be formative,

continuous, and rooted in honest self-reflection, personal accompaniment, and community feedback. It helps formandi recognise areas of growth, identify attitudes requiring further development, and establish concrete goals for ongoing formation.

A. Personal Reflection

Each formandus is encouraged to reflect regularly on the following questions:

Openness to Others

- Do I welcome people whose personalities, cultures, or viewpoints differ from mine?
- Am I willing to listen before expressing my own opinions?
- What attitudes or prejudices limit my openness to others?

Capacity for Reconciliation

- How do I respond when conflicts or misunderstandings arise?
- Am I able to ask for forgiveness and forgive others sincerely?
- Do I carry unresolved resentment or avoid difficult conversations?

Ability to Collaborate

- Do I work well with others and fulfil my responsibilities faithfully?
- Am I willing to share ideas and accept the contributions of others?
- How do I react when community decisions differ from my preferences?

Commitment to the Common Mission

- Do I place the mission of the community above personal interests?
- How generously do I accept community responsibilities and apostolic assignments?
- Do my decisions contribute to the unity and mission of the community?

Hospitality

- Do others experience me as welcoming, respectful, and approachable?
- Am I attentive to those who may feel excluded or discouraged?
- How do I contribute to creating a spirit of belonging within the community?

Emotional Regulation

- How do I respond to criticism, disappointment, or stress?
- Do my emotional reactions strengthen or weaken community relationships?
- What practices help me maintain inner peace and emotional balance?

B. Community Feedback

At suitable intervals, community members may offer one another constructive feedback in a spirit of charity and mutual growth. Reflection may include questions such as:

- How does this brother contribute to the spirit of fraternity?
- What gifts does he bring to the community?
- In what areas has noticeable growth taken place?
- What one capacity would benefit from greater attention in the coming months?

Such feedback should always be respectful, specific, balanced, and oriented towards encouragement rather than criticism.

C. Formator's Observation

The formator accompanies growth by observing the consistency between attitudes and behaviour over time. Attention may be given to whether the formandus:

- relates respectfully with all members of the community;
- demonstrates openness to diversity and different viewpoints;
- accepts responsibilities with generosity and accountability;

- collaborates effectively in community life and apostolic activities;
- seeks reconciliation when relationships are strained;
- maintains emotional balance during moments of stress or disagreement;
- contributes positively to the unity and missionary spirit of the community.

Assessment should focus on observable patterns rather than isolated incidents, recognising that growth occurs gradually.

D. Personal Growth Plan

Following reflection and dialogue with the formator, each formandus may identify one or two capacities requiring particular attention during the next stage of formation.

A simple growth plan may include:

- **Capacity to strengthen:** _____
- **Concrete practice:** _____
- **Support needed:** _____
- **Review date:** _____

This plan should be reviewed periodically during personal accompaniment and adapted as growth occurs.

Assessment Principle: The ultimate measure of progress is not perfection but gradual transformation into a missionary who builds communion naturally. As these self-capacities mature, the formandus becomes increasingly capable of living the Claretian vocation with generosity, emotional maturity, and a deep commitment to fraternity and the common mission.

VI. Integration into the Stages of Formation

The development of community self-capacities is a lifelong process that unfolds progressively throughout the different stages of formation. While the six capacities remain relevant at every stage, their emphasis and application vary according to the formandi's level of personal, spiritual, and missionary maturity. Formation should therefore provide age-appropriate experiences that gradually deepen these capacities and integrate them into the missionary vocation.

Pre-Novitiate

The Pre-Novitiate introduces candidates to the fundamental values of Christian and community life. The emphasis is on developing basic relational maturity and an openness to living with others.

Formation priorities include:

- Learning respectful communication and active listening.
- Developing openness to people from different backgrounds.
- Participating responsibly in common activities and household responsibilities.
- Beginning to manage emotions constructively.
- Cultivating habits of welcome, cooperation, and mutual respect.

The objective at this stage is to help candidates move from an individualistic outlook towards an appreciation of community as an essential dimension of their vocation.

Novitiate

During the Novitiate, these capacities become more deeply rooted in the evangelical counsels and the Claretian charism. Formandi learn to understand fraternity as a gift of the Spirit and an essential expression of consecrated missionary life.

Formation priorities include:

- Growing in self-awareness through prayer and personal accompaniment.
- Learning to forgive and seek reconciliation promptly.
- Developing emotional balance through spiritual discipline and community living.
- Deepening openness to intercultural and intergenerational fraternity.
- Integrating personal gifts into the common life and mission of the novitiate community.

The emphasis is on interior conversion so that external participation in community life is supported by genuine evangelical attitudes.

Post-Novitiate

As academic formation and apostolic responsibilities increase, community self-capacities become increasingly important for collaborative ministry and missionary leadership.

Formation priorities include:

- Working effectively in teams and apostolic projects.
- Sharing responsibility for community life and mission.
- Balancing personal initiatives with community discernment.
- Managing interpersonal tensions with maturity and charity.
- Strengthening commitment to the common mission through collaborative apostolic experiences.

Formandi are encouraged to exercise increasing responsibility while remaining accountable to the community and its common mission.

Ongoing Formation

These capacities continue to mature throughout missionary life. New assignments, intercultural communities, leadership responsibilities, pastoral challenges, and the different stages of life continually invite renewed growth.

Missionaries should continue to:

- deepen openness to changing people and situations;
- cultivate reconciliation and emotional resilience throughout life's transitions;
- strengthen collaboration through synodal leadership and shared responsibility;
- renew commitment to the common mission in changing pastoral contexts;
- practise hospitality towards confreres, collaborators, and those entrusted to their care;
- engage in regular personal reflection, spiritual accompaniment, and community evaluation.

Ongoing formation reminds missionaries that fraternity is never complete but continually renewed through conversion, prayer, and faithful participation in community life.

Formation Goal

Across all stages of formation, the objective remains the same: to form Claretian missionaries whose personal maturity enables them to build communities characterised by trust, reconciliation, collaboration, hospitality, emotional balance, and unwavering commitment to the common mission.

As these self-capacities mature, community itself becomes a prophetic witness to the Gospel and a credible sign of the communion that Christ desires for his disciples.

Conclusion

Missionary community is not built simply by living together under the same roof but by allowing Christ to shape the hearts of those who share a common vocation and mission. The quality of community life depends largely on the personal dispositions that each member brings to daily relationships. Openness, reconciliation, collaboration, commitment to the common mission, hospitality, and emotional regulation are therefore not optional qualities but essential capacities for every Claretian missionary.

These self-capacities are gradually formed through prayer, self-awareness, personal accompaniment, community living, and apostolic experience. They mature through the ordinary events of daily life—sharing meals, working together, resolving misunderstandings, celebrating successes, and facing challenges as brothers. Every interaction becomes an opportunity to grow in communion and to become more conformed to Christ.

For St. Anthony Mary Claret, missionary fraternity was a source of strength for evangelization. He understood that missionaries who live united in charity bear a more convincing witness to the Gospel than any individual effort alone. Likewise, today's Claretian communities are called to be living signs of communion, where diversity is welcomed, differences are reconciled, gifts are shared, and the common mission takes precedence over personal interests.

The formation of these self-capacities is therefore a lifelong journey of conversion. As formandi and missionaries continue to grow in these dispositions, they become better equipped to build communities marked by trust, mutual support, shared responsibility, and missionary zeal. Such communities not only sustain their members but also become prophetic witnesses to the Kingdom of God, proclaiming through their life together the Gospel they have been sent to preach.