

PRAYER WITH CLARETIAN TEXTS

Missionary Situation for Reflection

Brother Michael faithfully participates in the daily moments of prayer prescribed in the formation house. He enjoys reading the Scriptures and is diligent in studying the Constitutions, the *Autobiography*, and other Claretian documents during formation classes. Yet he notices a growing gap between study and prayer. The Claretian texts remain objects of intellectual reflection rather than sources of personal encounter with God.

During a monthly spiritual accompaniment session, his formator invites him to spend one week praying slowly with a single paragraph from the *Autobiography* in which St. Anthony Mary Claret speaks of his burning love for God and his desire to save souls. Instead of analysing the text, he is asked simply to listen to what God wishes to say through it.

The experience surprises him. Claret's words gradually become his own prayer. He begins to recognize both his own missionary desires and the fears that prevent him from responding generously. In the following weeks he continues praying with selected articles of the Constitutions and passages from the General Plan of Formation. What had once appeared to be institutional documents slowly become a living dialogue with Christ. He discovers that these texts are not merely to be understood but to be prayed, interiorized, and lived.

Months later, while participating in an apostolic experience, he realizes that his preaching, community relationships, and discernment have become more deeply rooted in the Claretian spirit. Prayer with the Congregation's foundational texts has transformed his understanding of vocation from an external commitment into an interior way of life.

Reflection

1. Do I usually study the Claretian texts, or do I also pray with them?
2. Which Claretian document has most influenced my vocation? Why?
3. How can the Constitutions, the *Autobiography*, or the Directory become a dialogue with God rather than simply texts for formation?
4. What practical steps can I take to integrate prayer with study and missionary life?

1. General Introduction

Praying the Charism: Encountering Christ through Claretian Texts

Prayer occupies the heart of Claretian missionary life. It is not an activity added to ministry but the privileged place where the missionary encounters Christ, listens to the Holy Spirit, and receives anew the apostolic mission. Every authentic missionary initiative is born from prayer, purified through prayer, and sustained by prayer. The missionary who ceases to pray gradually loses the interior fire that gives meaning and fruitfulness to his apostolic service.

For Claretians, prayer is inseparable from the Gospel, our supreme rule of life. At the same time, the Congregation has received a rich spiritual heritage through the Founder, the Constitutions, the Directory, the General Plan of Formation, General Chapter documents, and the broader Claretian tradition. These texts are more than historical or institutional documents. They are privileged expressions of the Spirit's action in the Congregation and continue to illuminate our vocation and mission today. When approached prayerfully, they become living mediations through which Christ forms His missionaries according to the Claretian charism.

Praying with Claretian texts differs from simply reading or studying them. Academic study seeks understanding; prayer seeks transformation. In prayer, the missionary allows these texts to question his attitudes, purify his motivations, strengthen his missionary identity, and deepen his

communion with Christ. The objective is not merely to know what the Congregation teaches but to allow its spiritual vision to become one's own way of thinking, praying, discerning, and acting.

This practice also integrates the essential dimensions of Claretian formation. The General Plan of Formation reminds us that prayer, study, community life, and apostolic engagement are not separate activities but complementary dimensions of one missionary vocation. Prayer with Claretian texts naturally unites these dimensions. Study becomes contemplation; contemplation inspires mission; mission returns to prayer in thanksgiving, discernment, and renewed commitment.

Such prayer is profoundly ecclesial and communal. The missionary prays not as an isolated individual but as a member of a missionary body, sharing the faith, memory, and mission of the Congregation. Whether praying personally or in community, these texts continually remind us that we have been called to participate in a charism that is larger than ourselves—a gift entrusted to the Church through St. Anthony Mary Claret for the evangelization of the world.

This practice accompanies every stage of formation. During postulancy and novitiate it introduces candidates to the spiritual heritage of the Congregation. During post-novitiate it helps integrate theological formation, pastoral experience, and missionary discernment. In ongoing formation it becomes a lifelong source of renewal, enabling missionaries continually to rediscover the freshness of their vocation in changing historical contexts.

Ultimately, praying with Claretian texts is praying with the heart of the Congregation. The Gospel reveals Christ the Missionary; the Founder shows how that Gospel was lived with apostolic passion; the Constitutions and Directory provide the concrete project of missionary life; the General Plan of Formation guides our growth; and the General Chapter documents continually renew the Congregation's response to the needs of the Church and the world. As these texts become the language of our prayer, they gradually shape our hearts, deepen our communion, and strengthen our readiness to proclaim the Gospel with the same missionary fire that animated St. Anthony Mary Claret.

2. THE CHARISMATIC SOURCES FOR PRAYER

Praying with the Living Memory of the Congregation

Every religious family possesses a spiritual heritage through which the Holy Spirit continues to form its members. For the Claretian missionary, this heritage is found not only in Sacred Scripture but also in the principal texts that express the Congregation's identity, spirituality, mission, and discernment. These texts are not merely historical documents or manuals for study. They are privileged mediations through which the Spirit continues to shape missionaries according to the charism received by St. Anthony Mary Claret.

Each source offers a distinct perspective on the missionary vocation. Together they provide a rich and balanced path of prayer that accompanies every stage of formation and every season of missionary life.

2.1. Sacred Scripture: The Primary Source of Claretian Prayer

Every Claretian prayer begins with the Word of God. The Gospel is "our supreme rule of life" and remains the first and indispensable source of all prayer and discernment. All other Claretian texts derive their authority and meaning from the Gospel and continually lead us back to Christ.

Prayer with Scripture seeks not only understanding but encounter. The missionary listens to the Word, allows it to illuminate his life, and responds with generosity to the Lord who continues to call and send.

Suggested Practice

- Daily Lectio Divina with the Gospel.
- Connect the Gospel passage with one Claretian text that echoes its missionary message.
- Conclude by asking: *How is Christ sending me today?*

2.2. The *Autobiography* of St. Anthony Mary Claret: Entering the Heart of the Founder

The *Autobiography* is much more than the story of Claret's life. It is the spiritual testimony of a missionary transformed by the love of Christ and consumed with zeal for the salvation of all. Through prayerful reading, missionaries are invited to enter into the Founder's interior experience and to recognize how the same Spirit continues to work today.

The purpose is not to imitate Claret's historical circumstances but to receive his apostolic spirit. His joys, struggles, discernment, missionary courage, and profound trust in God become a school of prayer that awakens generosity and missionary availability.

Suggested Practice

- Pray with one short passage each week.
- Reflect on the movements of Claret's heart rather than the historical details.
- Ask:
 - What missionary attitude do I admire?
 - Where is God inviting me to grow?
 - How can I embody this same spirit today?

2.3. The Constitutions: Praying Our Project of Life

The Constitutions are not simply juridical norms but the Congregation's project of evangelical life. They express how the Claretian vocation is lived in communion with Christ, the Church, and the Congregation. When prayed rather than merely studied, they become a continual invitation to conversion and missionary renewal.

Each constitutional article invites the missionary to examine his life before God. Prayer with the Constitutions gradually transforms them from external norms into interior convictions that shape daily decisions and relationships.

Suggested Practice

- Read one constitutional article slowly.
- Spend time in silence.
- Ask:
 - What aspect of Christ's life is revealed here?
 - How am I living this article?
 - What concrete invitation does God give me today?

Community prayer with selected constitutional articles is especially valuable during formation meetings, retreats, and recollections.

2.4. The Claretian Directory: Living the Charism in Daily Practice

If the Constitutions present the vision of missionary life, the Directory shows how that vision is embodied in everyday living. Praying with the Directory helps missionaries appreciate that practical norms are not merely administrative requirements but expressions of evangelical wisdom that safeguard communion, mission, and fidelity.

Rather than focusing first on regulations, prayer with the Directory seeks the values that each norm protects: fraternity, accountability, participation, missionary availability, responsible stewardship, and ecclesial communion. In this way, legislation becomes a path of spiritual growth and missionary discernment.

Suggested Practice

- Read one brief Directory section.
- Identify the evangelical value behind the norm.
- Pray:
 - Lord, what attitude are You inviting me to cultivate?
 - How can I live this value more faithfully in community and mission?

2.5. The General Plan of Formation: Praying the Journey of Growth

The General Plan of Formation accompanies the missionary throughout his formative journey. Rather than presenting isolated objectives, it offers an integrated vision of human, spiritual, intellectual, pastoral, community, and Claretian formation.

Prayer with the General Plan of Formation encourages honest self-evaluation and openness to ongoing conversion. It reminds the missionary that formation is lifelong and that every stage offers new opportunities for growth.

Suggested Practice

At regular intervals:

- read one formative dimension;
- review your personal growth;
- identify areas needing attention;
- conclude with a concrete formation commitment.

This practice is particularly fruitful during accompaniment, annual evaluations, and retreats.

2.6. General Chapter Documents: Listening to the Spirit in Our Time

Each General Chapter represents a privileged moment in which the Congregation discerns the action of the Holy Spirit in contemporary history. The Chapter documents renew the Congregation's understanding of its mission and invite every missionary to respond creatively to new pastoral challenges.

Praying with these texts helps missionaries avoid routine and remain attentive to the Spirit's continuing guidance.

Suggested Practice

- Pray with one Chapter message each month.
- Reflect:
 - What is the Spirit saying to the Congregation today?
 - How am I called to respond in my present mission?

2.7. Marian Texts and Cordi-Marian Spirituality: Learning to Pray in the Heart of Mary

As Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Claretians learn to contemplate Christ through Mary's eyes and to share in her total availability to God's saving plan. Marian texts help missionaries cultivate humility, attentive listening, fidelity, compassion, and missionary courage.

Prayer with Marian texts is not merely devotional. It is formative, leading the missionary to become increasingly configured to Christ through the maternal school of Mary.

Suggested Practice

- Pray with Marian passages from Scripture, Claret's writings, or the Congregation's tradition.
- Conclude with the *Magnificat*, an act of consecration, or a moment of silent entrustment to the Heart of Mary.

- Ask:
 - How is Mary teaching me to receive the Word today?
 - Where is she inviting me to greater missionary generosity?

2.8. Other Claretian Spiritual Writings

The writings of St. Anthony Mary Claret, the letters and circulars of the Superior General, documents of the General Government, and other significant Claretian spiritual resources continue to nourish the life of the Congregation. They help missionaries remain connected with the living tradition of the Institute and respond faithfully to new missionary realities.

These texts are especially suitable during ongoing formation, annual retreats, community recollections, and periods of vocational renewal.

Integrating the Sources

Each Claretian source contributes something unique, yet all converge in forming one missionary heart.

Source	Primary Contribution	Suggested Frequency
Sacred Scripture	Encounter with Christ	Daily
<i>Autobiography</i>	Apostolic spirit of the Founder	Weekly
Constitutions	Project of missionary life	Weekly
Directory	Practical missionary living	Monthly
General Plan of Formation	Personal and community growth	Monthly or formation reviews
General Chapter Documents	Renewal of mission	Monthly or community recollections
Marian Texts	Marian configuration	Weekly and Marian feasts
Other Claretian Writings	Ongoing renewal	As appropriate

Together these sources form a rich "school of prayer" in which the missionary learns to contemplate Christ, assimilate the Claretian charism, discern God's will, and renew his apostolic commitment. They ensure that prayer remains deeply rooted in the Gospel while continually nourished by the living tradition of the Congregation. As these texts become familiar companions in personal and community prayer, they gradually shape the missionary's mind, heart, and apostolic life according to the spirit of St. Anthony Mary Claret.

3. METHODS OF PRAYING WITH CLARETIAN TEXTS

From Reading to Transformation

Prayer with Claretian texts is fundamentally different from academic study. While study seeks understanding, prayer seeks encounter with God and transformation of life. The purpose is not simply to know what the Founder, the Constitutions, or the Congregation teach, but to allow the Holy Spirit to speak through these texts and gradually conform the missionary to Christ according to the Claretian charism.

There is no single method suitable for every person or every text. The following approaches offer practical ways of integrating Claretian sources into personal and community prayer throughout initial and ongoing formation.

I. Claretian Lectio Divina

The traditional practice of *Lectio Divina* can be fruitfully adapted to Claretian texts. Just as the Church prayerfully reads Sacred Scripture, the missionary may also prayerfully receive those texts that express the Congregation's lived experience of the Gospel.

Step 1 – Read (*Lectio*)

Read a short passage slowly and attentively.

Notice:

- words that attract your attention;
- phrases that disturb or challenge you;
- images that awaken your imagination.

Avoid analysing the text immediately. Simply listen.

Step 2 – Reflect (*Meditatio*)

Ask:

- What is this text revealing about Christ?
- What aspect of the Claretian vocation does it illuminate?
- Which attitudes does it invite me to cultivate?

Allow the text to dialogue with your present life.

Step 3 – Respond (*Oratio*)

Speak openly with the Lord.

You may:

- thank Him,
- ask forgiveness,
- seek strength,
- express your desires,
- renew your missionary availability.

Allow the text to become your own prayer.

Step 4 – Rest (*Contemplatio*)

- Remain in silence.
- Do not feel obliged to continue speaking.
- Simply remain in God's presence, allowing His grace to shape your heart.

Step 5 – Mission (*Missio*)

Every Claretian prayer ends with mission.

Ask:

- What concrete invitation have I received today?
- What missionary attitude should I practice?
- What small step will I take today?

Prayer naturally leads to missionary action.

II. Gospel–Charism Dialogue

- Every Claretian text should ultimately lead back to the Gospel.
- A fruitful practice is to pray with a Gospel passage alongside a related Claretian text.

For example:

Gospel	Claretian Text
Lk 4:16–21	Mission chapter of the Constitutions
Mt 5:1–12	Apostolic virtues
Jn 15:1–17	Community life
Mk 6:7–13	Missionary availability
Lk 1:26–38	Marian texts

Reflect:

- How does the Claretian text help me understand the Gospel?
- How does the Gospel deepen the meaning of the Claretian text?
- What is Christ asking of me today?

This method ensures that the charism remains continually rooted in the Gospel.

III. Praying with the Founder

The *Autobiography* is especially suitable for contemplative reading.

Rather than asking: "*What happened?*" ask instead:

- What was Claret experiencing?
- What moved his heart?
- What virtues did the Spirit cultivate in him?
- Where do I recognize similar movements within myself?

Imagine sitting beside the Founder and listening to him share his missionary journey.

Conclude by asking: "*Lord, form in me the same apostolic spirit.*"

IV. Praying with the Constitutions

The Constitutions are best prayed one article at a time.

Read the article several times.

Pause after each sentence.

Reflect:

- What image of Christ appears here?
- How is this article already becoming part of my life?
- Where do I experience resistance?
- What invitation is God placing before me?

Finish with a simple prayer asking for the grace to live that constitutional value more faithfully.

V. Praying with the Directory

Prayer with the Directory focuses less on regulations and more on the evangelical values they protect.

Read a short section.

Ask:

- What missionary value does this norm safeguard?
- Why is this important for our community?
- How does it help preserve our charism?
- What conversion is the Lord asking of me?

The Directory thus becomes a source of discernment rather than merely a handbook of procedures.

VI. Prayerful Examen with Claretian Virtues

At the end of the day, review your life in the light of one Claretian virtue.

For example:

- apostolic zeal;
- humility;
- charity;
- missionary availability;
- obedience;
- simplicity;
- joy.

Reflect:

- Where did I live this virtue today?
- Where did I fail?
- What grace do I seek for tomorrow?

Conclude with thanksgiving and a renewed missionary commitment.

VII. Praying in Community

Many Claretian texts are particularly suited for communal prayer.

A simple format may include:

1. Hymn or invocation of the Holy Spirit.
2. Proclamation of a Gospel passage.
3. Reading of a Claretian text.
4. Silent reflection.
5. Faith sharing.
6. Intercessions inspired by the text.
7. Closing Marian prayer.

Community prayer helps the Congregation rediscover its common identity and strengthens missionary communion.

VIII. Journaling After Prayer

Prayer bears greater fruit when its inspirations are preserved.

After each period of prayer, write briefly:

- What touched me?
- What challenged me?
- What invitation did I receive?

- What concrete resolution will I take?

Over time, this journal becomes a valuable record of vocational growth and can enrich dialogue with the formator or spiritual accompanier.

IX. Praying Through the Liturgical Year

Claretian texts can accompany the seasons of the Church.

Liturgical Season	Suggested Claretian Source
Advent	Marian texts and the Founder's reflections on hope
Christmas	Incarnation and missionary availability
Lent	Cross, conversion, apostolic purification
Easter	Mission, joy, resurrection hope
Ordinary Time	Constitutions, Directory, apostolic virtues
Marian Feasts	Heart of Mary, Marian consecration, Cordi-Marian spirituality
Claretian Feasts	<i>Autobiography</i> , Founder, martyrs, General Chapter texts

This rhythm harmonizes the liturgical life of the Church with the spiritual tradition of the Congregation.

Practical Suggestions

To cultivate a stable habit of prayer with Claretian texts:

- begin with short passages rather than long chapters;
- choose one principal source for each week;
- alternate between Scripture and Claretian writings;
- allow sufficient silence after reading;
- conclude every prayer with one concrete missionary resolution;
- revisit important passages periodically, recognizing that the Spirit often reveals new insights at different stages of formation.

Missionary Integration

Prayer with Claretian texts reaches its fullness when it becomes a way of life. Gradually, the missionary no longer approaches these writings merely as documents to be consulted but as companions on the journey of vocation. The Gospel becomes the source of his contemplation, the Founder his guide, the Constitutions his project of life, the Directory his practical wisdom, and the General Plan of Formation his path of continual growth. In this way, prayer forms not only the mind but also the heart, enabling the missionary to think, discern, love, and act with the same apostolic spirit that animated St. Anthony Mary Claret.

4. INTEGRATING PRAYER WITH CLARETIAN TEXTS INTO FORMATION

A Progressive Path from Initial to Ongoing Formation

Prayer with Claretian texts should not be confined to a single stage of formation or regarded merely as an academic exercise during the novitiate. Because the missionary vocation continually matures, the prayerful assimilation of the Congregation's spiritual heritage must accompany every stage of formation. As responsibilities, experiences, and apostolic commitments grow, these texts reveal new meanings and invite deeper conversion.

The objective is not simply to complete the study of the Constitutions, the Directory, or other Claretian documents, but to allow them gradually to shape the missionary's identity, prayer, discernment, community life, and apostolic ministry.

I. Postulancy: Discovering the Claretian Vocation

The postulancy is a period of initial contact with the Congregation's spirituality and missionary identity. Prayer with Claretian texts should awaken interest in the Founder, introduce the principal characteristics of the Claretian vocation, and foster a growing love for the missionary life.

The emphasis is not on systematic study but on becoming familiar with the spiritual atmosphere of the Congregation.

Suitable Texts

- Selected Gospel passages
- Short episodes from the *Autobiography*
- Foundational articles of the Constitutions
- Marian prayers and Claretian traditions

Formation Practices

- Weekly prayer with one episode from Claret's life.
- Introduction to important Claretian feasts.
- Community prayer using simple Claretian texts.
- Personal journal on vocational insights.

Formation Goal: To awaken a joyful sense of belonging to the Claretian missionary family.

II. Novitiate: Interiorizing the Charism

The novitiate is the privileged time for the systematic prayerful assimilation of the Constitutions and the Directory. Here the novice gradually discovers that these texts are not primarily regulations but expressions of a way of following Christ according to the Claretian charism.

Prayer accompanies study so that knowledge may become personal conviction.

Suitable Texts

- Entire Constitutions
- Directory
- *Autobiography*
- Selected writings of St. Anthony Mary Claret
- Marian texts

Formation Practices

- Weekly Constitution prayer.
- Prayerful reading of the Directory.
- Founder evenings.
- Monthly community sharing.
- Journaling after prayer.

Formation Goal: To move from admiration of the charism to personal identification with it.

III. Post-Novitiate: Integrating Prayer, Study, and Apostolic Life

During post-novitiate, academic formation and pastoral experience become increasingly demanding. Prayer with Claretian texts helps integrate theological study, community life, apostolic ministry, and vocational discernment into one unified missionary vocation.

The texts are now read in the light of real pastoral situations and missionary experiences.

Suitable Texts

- General Plan of Formation
- General Chapter Documents
- Constitutions
- Directory
- Letters and Circulars of the Superior General
- Significant Claretian writings

Formation Practices

- Monthly prayer before pastoral evaluation.
- Community reflection on missionary experiences.
- Prayerful discernment before apostolic assignments.
- Reflection on current missionary challenges in the light of Chapter documents.

Formation Goal: To develop the habit of discerning pastoral ministry through the lens of the Claretian charism.

IV. Preparation for Perpetual Profession: Renewing the Missionary Covenant

Preparation for perpetual profession offers an opportunity to revisit the principal Claretian texts with greater maturity and freedom. What was first learned during the novitiate is now reread in the light of lived experience.

This stage is less concerned with learning new material than with deepening one's definitive response to God's call.

Suitable Texts

- Entire Constitutions
- Selected sections of the Directory
- *Autobiography*
- General Plan of Formation
- General Chapter documents

Formation Practices

- Extended retreat using Claretian texts.
- Personal synthesis of the missionary vocation.
- Prayerful review of one's vocational journey.
- Renewal of missionary commitments.

Formation Goal: To embrace lifelong missionary commitment with mature freedom and joyful generosity.

V. Ongoing Formation: Continual Missionary Renewal

The need for prayerful assimilation of the charism does not end with perpetual profession or ordination. Every missionary is called to continual conversion. As pastoral contexts evolve and new missionary challenges arise, the Congregation's spiritual heritage remains a constant source of discernment, renewal, and inspiration.

Prayer with Claretian texts helps experienced missionaries remain rooted in the Gospel while responding creatively to contemporary realities.

Suitable Texts

- General Chapter Documents
- Circular Letters
- General Government documents
- Constitutions
- Directory
- Recent Claretian publications

Formation Practices

- Annual personal retreat with Claretian texts.
- Community recollections.
- Ongoing formation seminars.
- Prayer before major pastoral decisions.
- Community evaluation in the light of the Constitutions.

Formation Goal: To sustain lifelong fidelity, creative missionary renewal, and joyful perseverance in vocation.

A Yearly Rhythm of Prayer with Claretian Texts

Formation communities may adopt a simple annual rhythm that gradually introduces the principal sources of the Claretian tradition.

Period	Suggested Focus
September–October	Gospel and missionary identity
November–December	<i>Autobiography</i> and Founder
January–February	Constitutions
March–April	Directory and community life
May	Marian spirituality
June	Apostolic virtues
July	General Plan of Formation
August	General Chapter documents and missionary renewal

The sequence may be adapted according to local needs, formation stages, and the liturgical calendar.

Role of the Formator

The formator plays a decisive role in helping missionaries discover that Claretian texts are living sources of prayer rather than merely subjects for study. His task is not only to explain the documents but also to model a prayerful approach to them.

He encourages participants to:

- listen before analysing;
- pray before discussing;
- discern before deciding;
- interiorize before teaching;
- live before explaining.

Through regular accompaniment, the formator helps each missionary recognize how God speaks through the Congregation's spiritual tradition and gradually integrates that voice into daily life and ministry.

Missionary Integration

Every stage of formation offers a new opportunity to encounter Christ through the living tradition of the Congregation. The same texts accompany the missionary from his first vocational awakening to the mature exercise of apostolic ministry, continually revealing new depths as experience grows. Thus, the *Autobiography*, the Constitutions, the Directory, the General Plan of Formation, and the General Chapter documents become lifelong companions on the missionary journey. Prayed with faith and openness, they continually renew the missionary's identity, strengthen communion with the Congregation, and sustain the apostolic zeal to proclaim the Gospel with the spirit of St. Anthony Mary Claret.

5. PRACTICAL PRAYER RHYTHMS FOR FORMATION COMMUNITIES

Creating a Culture of Prayer with Claretian Texts

Prayer with Claretian texts bears its greatest fruit when it becomes part of the ordinary rhythm of community life rather than an occasional exercise. A regular pattern of personal and communal prayer enables missionaries gradually to internalize the charism and to integrate it naturally into their discernment, relationships, ministry, and ongoing formation.

The following framework is offered as a flexible guide. Formation communities may adapt it according to their local circumstances, formation stage, apostolic commitments, and cultural context.

I. Daily Rhythm

Each day may highlight a different dimension of the Claretian vocation by integrating Scripture with the Congregation's spiritual heritage.

Time	Prayer Focus	Suggested Text
Morning Meditation	Listening to Christ	Gospel with a brief passage from the <i>Autobiography</i> or Constitutions
Midday Prayer	Renewing the missionary spirit	One constitutional article or a brief quotation from St. Claret
Evening Examen	Reviewing the day	One apostolic virtue or missionary attitude
Night Prayer	Entrustment to Mary	Marian prayer or a Marian Claretian text

The emphasis should always remain on quality rather than quantity. Even a brief passage, prayerfully received, can become a source of lasting transformation.

II. Weekly Rhythm

A weekly rhythm allows different aspects of the Claretian vocation to receive regular attention.

Day	Theme	Suggested Sources
Monday	Apostolic Virtues	General Plan of Formation, Claret's writings
Tuesday	Missionary Identity	Constitutions
Wednesday	Community Life	Constitutions and Directory
Thursday	Mission and Evangelization	General Chapter Documents

Friday	The Cross and Apostolic Perseverance	<i>Autobiography</i> , Passion texts
Saturday	Cordi-Marian Spirituality	Marian writings and prayers
Sunday	Thanksgiving for Mission	Gospel and community sharing

This rhythm helps avoid repetition while gradually exposing missionaries to the richness of the Congregation's spiritual tradition.

III. Monthly Community Prayer

Once each month the community may devote an extended period of prayer to a particular Claretian theme.

Possible themes include:

- A Missionary "on Fire with Love"
- Following Christ the Missionary
- Sons Formed in the Heart of Mary
- Fraternal Communion
- Evangelical Counsels
- Apostolic Discernment
- Missionary Availability
- Intercultural Community
- Hope in Mission
- The Joy of Evangelization

A suggested format:

1. Invocation of the Holy Spirit.
2. Gospel proclamation.
3. Reading from a Claretian source.
4. Silent reflection.
5. Community sharing.
6. Intercessions for the Church and Congregation.
7. Marian prayer and missionary sending.

IV. Quarterly Community Recollection

Every three months the community may organize a half-day recollection centred on one Claretian document.

Examples:

- The *Autobiography*
- The Constitutions
- The Directory
- General Plan of Formation
- Recent General Chapter Documents

Suggested elements:

- conference;
- silent prayer;
- personal reflection;
- Sacrament of Reconciliation (when appropriate);
- Eucharistic Adoration;

- Eucharistic celebration.

V. Annual Retreat

An annual retreat provides an opportunity to pray more deeply with the principal Claretian sources.

A possible five-day structure:

Day	Theme
Day 1	Christ the Missionary in the Gospel
Day 2	The Missionary Experience of St. Anthony Mary Claret
Day 3	Our Project of Life: The Constitutions
Day 4	Living the Charism Today: Directory and General Plan of Formation
Day 5	Sent Forth in the Heart of Mary

Such a retreat enables participants to review their vocational journey and renew their missionary commitment.

VI. Community Celebrations

Important Claretian feasts provide privileged opportunities for praying with the Congregation's texts.

Examples include:

- Feast of St. Anthony Mary Claret.
- Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.
- Profession anniversaries.
- Foundation Day of the Congregation.
- Memorials of Claretian Martyrs.
- Opening and closing of the academic or formation year.

These celebrations may include:

- readings from the *Autobiography*;
- constitutional articles;
- testimonies;
- missionary intercessions;
- renewal of profession or missionary commitment.

Such celebrations strengthen the sense of belonging to the Congregation and renew the missionary spirit.

VII. Personal Prayer Journal

Formation is deepened when prayer is accompanied by regular reflection.

After praying with a Claretian text, participants may record:

- What word or phrase remained with me?
- What did I discover about God?
- What did I discover about myself?
- What missionary invitation did I receive?
- What concrete commitment will I make?

The journal becomes a valuable resource for spiritual accompaniment, annual evaluation, and vocational discernment.

VIII. Integrating Prayer into Apostolic Ministry

Prayer with Claretian texts should accompany the missionary before, during, and after ministry.

Before Ministry

Pray with:

- the Gospel;
- a constitutional article on mission;
- a brief prayer of St. Claret.

Ask: *"Lord, whom are You sending me to serve today?"*

After Ministry

Review the experience.

Ask:

- Where did I encounter Christ?
- What brought joy?
- What challenged me?
- What have I learned about my vocation?
- What calls for further discernment?

This practice gradually transforms pastoral experience into ongoing formation.

Missionary Integration

A stable rhythm of prayer gradually transforms the way missionaries relate to the Claretian tradition. The Congregation's foundational texts cease to be consulted only during classes or meetings; they become trusted companions in daily prayer, communal discernment, pastoral ministry, and vocational renewal. Over time, this regular practice shapes a missionary who not only knows the Claretian charism intellectually but lives it with increasing freedom, conviction, and apostolic joy. Prayer thus becomes the "forge" where the Spirit continually forms the missionary heart according to the Gospel and the spirit of St. Anthony Mary Claret.

6. FORMATIVE OBJECTIVES

The Transformative Aim of Prayer with Claretian Texts

Prayer with Claretian texts is more than spiritual reading; it is a formative path that gradually configures the missionary to Christ according to the Claretian charism. As the Gospel, the *Autobiography*, the Constitutions, the Directory, the General Plan of Formation, and other Claretian sources are prayerfully received, they become instruments of personal conversion, communal growth, and apostolic renewal.

a. Deepening Communion with Christ: The primary objective of prayer is to deepen a personal relationship with Christ the Missionary. Every Claretian text ultimately leads to Him and helps the missionary share His love for the Father, compassion for humanity, and zeal for the Kingdom.

Signs of Growth

- Greater fidelity to personal prayer.
- Deeper love for the Gospel.
- Growing trust in God's providence.
- Readiness to embrace God's will.

b. Interiorizing the Claretian Charism: Prayer enables the missionary to move beyond admiration of St. Anthony Mary Claret toward personal identification with his missionary spirit. The charism gradually becomes an interior way of thinking, discerning, and serving rather than simply a tradition to preserve.

Signs of Growth

- Joyful sense of belonging to the Congregation.
- Love for the Founder and the Claretian heritage.
- Creative fidelity in mission.

c. Integrating Prayer and Mission: Prayer with Claretian texts unites contemplation, study, community life, and apostolic ministry into one missionary vocation. It prevents both activism without prayer and spirituality detached from mission.

Signs of Growth

- Greater harmony between prayer and ministry.
- Prayerful pastoral discernment.
- Balance between contemplation and action.

d. Forming Apostolic Virtues: Regular prayer gradually shapes the missionary's character through the cultivation of humility, charity, simplicity, perseverance, obedience, missionary availability, and apostolic zeal.

Signs of Growth

- Humility and interior freedom.
- Charity in relationships.
- Joyful perseverance in difficulties.
- Increasing missionary generosity.

e. Strengthening Missionary Communion: Praying together with the Congregation's foundational texts renews the community's shared identity and mission. It fosters communion, mutual responsibility, and a common apostolic vision.

Signs of Growth

- Active participation in community prayer.
- Openness to dialogue and discernment.
- Appreciation of intercultural fraternity.
- Shared responsibility for mission.

f. Fostering Lifelong Formation: Prayer with Claretian texts reminds missionaries that formation is an ongoing journey. The same texts continue to offer new insights and inspire continual conversion throughout life.

Signs of Growth

- Commitment to ongoing formation.

- Openness to personal renewal.
- Fidelity sustained with joy and hope.

Missionary Integration

Prayer with Claretian texts forms missionaries whose hearts are rooted in Christ, inspired by St. Anthony Mary Claret, and continually renewed by the living tradition of the Congregation. As these texts shape prayer, discernment, community life, and ministry, they become living expressions of the Claretian charism, ready to proclaim the Gospel with creative fidelity and apostolic zeal.

Conclusion

Praying the Charism, Living the Mission

Prayer with Claretian texts is far more than a devotional practice; it is a lifelong school of missionary formation. Through the Gospel, the *Autobiography*, the Constitutions, the Directory, the General Plan of Formation, and the living tradition of the Congregation, the Holy Spirit continually forms missionaries according to the Heart of Christ and the spirit of St. Anthony Mary Claret.

These texts are not meant simply to be studied, quoted, or preserved. They are meant to be prayed, interiorized, discerned, and lived. As they gradually shape our minds and hearts, they transform our understanding of vocation, deepen our communion with the Congregation, and strengthen our commitment to the Church's evangelizing mission. The charism thus becomes not merely an inheritance from the past but a living gift that inspires creative fidelity in every age.

Prayer with Claretian texts also reminds us that missionary life is an integrated vocation. The Gospel inspires the charism; prayer nourishes community; community strengthens mission; and mission continually returns us to prayer with renewed gratitude and discernment. In this dynamic movement, contemplation and action become one missionary response to God's call.

The practice proposed in this module is therefore not limited to any particular stage of formation. It accompanies the missionary from the first discovery of the Claretian vocation through initial formation, perpetual profession, and the many responsibilities of ongoing missionary life. At every stage, the same texts reveal new depths, offering guidance, encouragement, correction, and renewed apostolic enthusiasm.

Ultimately, to pray with Claretian texts is to enter the spiritual workshop of the Congregation. There, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in the school of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, missionaries are continually configured to Christ, the Missionary of the Father. Formed by the Gospel, inspired by the Founder, sustained by the Constitutions, guided by the Directory, and renewed by the living tradition of the Congregation, they are sent forth to proclaim the Gospel with the same apostolic fire that animated St. Anthony Mary Claret.

May every Claretian discover in these texts not merely words to be read, but the living voice of the Spirit, continually inviting him to grow in holiness, deepen missionary communion, and proclaim the Gospel with joy, courage, and creative fidelity.