

CLARETIAN DIRECTORY (2011)

Introduction: The Directory as a Theological Architecture

The Claretian Directory is often approached as a juridical document, yet its deeper nature is theological and formative. It is not a mere collection of regulations; it is the concrete embodiment of the Congregation's understanding of itself as a missionary body in the Church. If the Constitutions articulate the foundational project of life, the Directory ensures that this project becomes lived reality. Across its four Parts, it weaves together identity, community, formation, governance, and stewardship into a coherent vision. It safeguards charismatic fidelity, structures apostolic life, and protects ecclesial communion so that the Congregation may remain a living continuation of the missionary spirit of St. Anthony Mary Claret.

I. Foundation: Law at the Service of Charism

Ecclesial Belonging and Proper Law

The Directory begins by grounding the Congregation within the broader framework of the Church. It affirms that the Congregation lives under universal Church law and its own proper law. These dual belonging expresses both ecclesial communion and charismatic specificity. The law of the Church guarantees doctrinal and canonical unity, while the proper law of the Congregation preserves the uniqueness of its missionary vocation. Far from being restrictive, law becomes a means of safeguarding identity and ensuring that the charism remains authentic and transmissible across generations.

The Constitutions as Covenant

At the heart of this foundation stand the Constitutions, recognized as the central rule of life. They are not merely institutional guidelines but the ecclesially approved expression of the Spirit's gift to the Church through Claret. The Directory exists to protect their integrity and guide their practical implementation. In this way, legislation becomes covenantal: it preserves the missionary project entrusted to the Congregation and prevents subjective reinterpretation or fragmentation.

Authority as Service

Governance is presented not as control but as service. Authority ensures unity, fosters discernment, and coordinates mission. Through structured participation and clearly defined competencies, the Directory guarantees transparency and accountability. In this vision, authority reflects Christ's own servant leadership and protects the Congregation from arbitrariness, division, or mission drift.

PRELIMINARY CHAPTER (Nos. 1–34)

Article 1 – General Norms (Nos. 1–20)

The Preliminary Chapter establishes the **juridical, spiritual, and organizational foundation** of the Congregation. It clarifies **how the Congregation is governed**, how authority functions, and how its legislation must be understood and lived.

It is not merely administrative. It safeguards the **ecclesial identity, charismatic fidelity, and missionary unity** of the Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

I. The Law of the Congregation (Nos. 1–3)

A Dual Source of Governance: The Congregation is governed by a dual juridical foundation: the universal law of the Church and its own proper law. This dual belonging is not merely administrative; it expresses an ecclesiological truth. The Congregation is never autonomous or self-referential. It lives, acts, and discerns within the canonical structure of the People of God, sharing fully in the Church's juridical and sacramental communion.

Universal Law: Ecclesial Communion and Legitimacy: The universal law includes the 1983 Code of Canon Law, decrees of the Holy See, papal instructions, and other authoritative documents of the Church. Through this framework, the Congregation remains anchored in ecclesial communion, canonical legitimacy, and doctrinal fidelity. Universal law safeguards unity with the Church and ensures that the missionary charism is exercised within the broader order of ecclesial life.

Proper Law: The Concrete Form of the Charism: The proper law of the Congregation includes the Constitutions, the Directory, General Decrees, Statutes, legitimate traditions and customs, and administrative acts of the Holy See addressed specifically to the Congregation. This body of law concretizes the charism within history. It protects identity, shapes structures, and translates spiritual inspiration into stable and recognizable form.

Obligation to Know and Live the Law: All members are obliged to study Congregational legislation, to discover the evangelical values embedded within it, and to understand the commitments that flow from religious profession. Superiors bear a particular responsibility to promote this knowledge. Legislation is not a bureaucratic mechanism; it is a spiritual pedagogy. It forms conscience, shapes apostolic maturity, and sustains communal fidelity. For this reason, before significant acts of governance—such as Chapters, elections, or appointments—the relevant norms are to be read and reviewed, ensuring transparency, accountability, and fidelity to the common rule.

II. The Constitutions (Nos. 4–11)

The Central Rule of Life: The Constitutions occupy a unique and privileged place within the Congregation. They are the central rule of life, the normative expression of the charism, and the Congregation's Gospel-shaped project. They articulate the identity, mission, and spiritual horizon that define the Congregation's existence.

Expression of the Spirit in the Church: The Constitutions are not the result of mere human organization. They are the fruit of communal discernment, ecclesial recognition of the Spirit's gift, and the stable formulation of the Founder's charism. Their approval by the Apostolic See confirms their authenticity and situates them within the life of the universal Church. They represent a covenantal commitment, binding the Congregation to a concrete form of evangelical life.

Authentic Text and Unity of Meaning: The Latin text is the only authentic version of the Constitutions. Vernacular translations must be approved by the Superior General with his Council. This provision safeguards unity and prevents interpretative fragmentation, ensuring that the Congregation speaks with one juridical and spiritual voice.

Interpretation and Authority: Definitive interpretation of the Constitutions belongs exclusively to the General Chapter. In urgent cases, the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, may offer a provisional interpretation until the next Chapter. This structure protects the integrity of meaning and prevents private or subjective reinterpretations.

Limits of Dispensation: Dispensation from the Constitutions is carefully restricted. It is forbidden to dispense from essential elements of religious life, norms regulating incorporation and formation, and the fundamental structures of governance such as offices, Chapters, Councils, and elections. These elements safeguard the sacramental nature of profession, apostolic communion, and institutional stability. The Constitutions cannot be altered by custom or convenience; they are not flexible guidelines but binding covenantal commitments.

III. The Directory (Nos. 12–15)

Normative Implementation of Identity: The Directory functions as a systematic complement to the Constitutions. If the Constitutions define identity, the Directory structures daily life. It provides practical criteria, norms of application, clarifications for governance, and organizational regulations. In this way, it translates principles into procedures and spirituality into practice.

Stability and Organic Development: The Directory has indefinite duration. It remains in force until explicitly revoked or modified by competent authority. This ensures both stability and the possibility of organic development as new missionary contexts emerge.

Interpretation and Unity: Authentic interpretation of the Directory belongs to the General Chapter and, after consultation with his Council, to the Superior General. This provision preserves unity of understanding and prevents fragmentation.

Dispensation with Justice: Major Superiors may dispense individuals from certain norms, while only the Superior General may dispense an entire Province or the Congregation. Such dispensations must always be just, proportionate, and respectful of higher law. The Directory exists to serve unity, not to justify exception or division.

IV. Chapter Documents (No. 16)

Living Discernment in History: Chapter Documents are not mere historical records. They are authoritative expressions of congregational discernment, evaluations of the Congregation's state, and programmatic orientations for mission and renewal. They function as an official commentary on the Constitutions and as a living interpretation of the charism within concrete historical contexts.

They are to be studied, assimilated, and integrated into planning and formation processes. Through them, the Congregation renews itself in fidelity, allowing the Spirit to reinterpret the founding inspiration in new missionary circumstances.

V. Decrees, Statutes, and Circular Letters (Nos. 17–20)

Instruments of Governance and Animation

General Decrees: General Decrees are issued by the Superior General with the deliberative vote of his Council. They are normative, binding, and of general character. Unless renewed, they expire when the issuing Superior General leaves office. Promulgated officially and published in the *Annales*, they provide concrete juridical direction for the life of the Congregation.

Statutes: Statutes regulate institutions, foundations, juridical persons, apostolic sectors, and internal structures. They define purpose, constitution, governance, and functioning. Approval belongs to the authority that erects the entity. Through statutes, diversity is organized within unity, and institutional clarity is maintained.

Circular Letters: Circular letters are instruments not only of governance but also of animation. They develop doctrinal themes, interpret the charism, propose pastoral initiatives, announce decisions, and guide renewal processes. Far from being merely administrative, they are formative and visionary. They foster unity of spirit, doctrinal depth, and apostolic coherence.

VI. Theological–Formative Synthesis

Structured Communion for Mission

Article 1 of the Directory establishes a framework of ecclesial belonging, charismatic fidelity, juridical clarity, participative governance, and structured communion. It prevents arbitrary authority, subjective reinterpretation, fragmentation of identity, and institutional instability.

Through this ordered juridical life, the Congregation remains apostolic in mission, Marian in spirit, ecclesial in communion, legally coherent in structure, and spiritually united in purpose. Law thus becomes not a constraint but a guarantee that the missionary fire entrusted to the Congregation burns in harmony with the Church and in fidelity to the charism received from the Spirit.

Final Synthesis

The Preliminary Chapter teaches that law within the Congregation is never an end in itself. Law serves communion; structure exists for the sake of mission; authority safeguards and animates the charism; and governance ultimately serves the Gospel. Norms, therefore, are not instruments of control but expressions of shared fidelity, ensuring that the life received from the Spirit is lived in harmony, clarity, and missionary dynamism.

Without proper law, charism easily dissolves into mere sentiment, losing its concrete and ecclesial form. Without the Constitutions, identity becomes fluid and vulnerable to personal interpretation. Without the Directory, mission risks becoming uncoordinated and fragmented. Without decrees and statutes, government turns improvised, lacking continuity and accountability.

But when legislation is understood and lived in its true spirit, it becomes a school of fidelity, a path of communion, and a guarantee of apostolic fruitfulness. It protects the integrity of the charism, strengthens unity in diversity, and ensures that the missionary fire entrusted to the Congregation burns with clarity, order, and evangelical freedom.

Article 2 – The Fundamental Constitution (Nos. 21–34)

The Spiritual Heart of the Congregation: If Article 1 establishes the juridical framework of the Congregation, Article 2 reveals its spiritual and charismatic foundation. It answers the essential questions of identity: Who are we? From where do we come? What shapes our missionary life? What sustains our unity? How does Mary form us? This section is not administrative but vocational and theological. It grounds everything that follows.

1. Charismatic Origin (No. 21)

A Gift of the Spirit to the Church: The Congregation understands itself as born in the Church, called together by the Holy Spirit, and mediated through St. Anthony Mary Claret. It is not a human initiative, pastoral strategy, or functional association, but a gift of the Spirit entrusted to the Church.

The Founder is not merely an organizer of works; he is a charismatic father and mediator of missionary fire. The Congregation inherits his apostolic passion, daring, and universal availability. This inheritance carries historical responsibility: the charism must continue, deepen, and expand beyond what he himself accomplished. Charism is dynamic, not static.

2. The Founder's Spiritual Experience (No. 22)

Formative Inheritance: Claret's missionary experience was the organizing principle of his life and the inner force behind all his activity. For the Congregation, this is not biographical admiration but formative inheritance. His experience becomes inspiration, paradigm, and spiritual template.

Fidelity does not mean repeating the nineteenth century but living the same Spirit in new historical contexts with creative courage. Superiors have the responsibility to safeguard and renew this experience, exercising true ecclesial stewardship.

3. Ecclesial Status (No. 23)

An Apostolic Institute of Pontifical Right: The Congregation is an apostolic religious institute of pontifical right. This establishes a direct relationship with the Holy See and confers universal ecclesial responsibility. The Congregation exists for the good of the whole Church, not for local interests alone. Its missionary identity is universal by nature.

4. Official Name and Identity (Nos. 24–25)

Sons of the Heart of Mary: The official name, Congregation of Missionaries, Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, emphasizes Marian filiation and theological identity. The commonly used name, Claretian Missionaries (Missionarii Claretiani), highlights historical continuity and charismatic lineage.

The initials C.M.F. (Cordis Mariae Filius) express filial belonging and Marian configuration. They signify covenantal identity, not decorative formality.

5. Missionary Identity (No. 26)

Anointed and sent by the Spirit: The defining word of the Congregation is "Missionary." This identity reflects the apostolic style: communion with Christ and being sent by the Spirit. The Founder's title "Apostolic Missionary" unites discipleship, community, evangelical counsels, universal availability, and proclamation of the Kingdom.

Participation in Christ's prophetic mission implies proclamation, courage, discernment, and readiness to confront evil. Mission is not secondary activity; it is constitutive identity.

6. Relationship with Bishops (Nos. 27–28)

Ecclesial Collaboration: The Congregation is called to be a steadfast helper of bishops in the ministry of the Word. Claretians are not independent agents but are inserted into the life of the local Church. This requires obedience, collaboration, pastoral creativity, and communion with diocesan clergy and other religious families. Mission is always ecclesial, never private.

7. Universality and Rites (No. 29)

Catholic Breadth: The Congregation lives its vocation within the Latin Church or any Church *sui iuris*. While rite is personal, mission is universal. Respect for liturgical traditions and openness to intercultural mission express Catholic universality and missionary adaptability.

8. The Claretian Family (Nos. 30–31)

Shared Charismatic Communion: Together with the Claretian Sisters, Cordimarian Filiation, and Lay Claretians, the Congregation forms the Claretian Family. This unity is expressed through shared

mission, collaboration, and spiritual kinship. The charism extends beyond juridical boundaries, fostering apostolic co-responsibility.

9. Marian Consecration (Nos. 32–34)

Formed in the Forge of Mary’s Heart: Marian consecration stands at the centre of Claretian spirituality. Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary is not sentimental devotion but theological configuration. The Congregation understands itself as formed in the forge of Mary’s Heart, where fire purifies, shapes, and strengthens.

Marian filiation cultivates humility, meekness, compassion, and maternal tenderness. It guards against harsh activism and ideological rigidity. Marian devotion must permeate liturgical life, personal prayer, and apostolic style. Being Sons of the Heart of Mary is charismatic essence.

Theological–Formative Synthesis

Identity Before Activity

Article 2 ensures that the Congregation remains Spirit-born, Founder-shaped, ecclesially inserted, mission-defined, and Marian-formed. It safeguards identity before activity, charism before structure, and communion before efficiency.

Without this foundation, mission becomes activism, identity grows vague, Marian devotion becomes optional, and governance loses its soul. When fully lived, the missionary becomes apostolic in zeal, Marian in tenderness, ecclesial in obedience, prophetic in courage, and formed in the Heart of Mary.

Final Formation Insight

Sent in the Spirit, Formed by Mary

The Fundamental Constitution reminds the Congregation that it is not primarily an administrator of works but a community of Sons and Missionaries, formed in fire, sent by the Spirit of Christ, guarded by Mary, and given to the Church for the salvation of the world.

Here the deepest truth emerges: law protects the charism; charism animates the law. Mary forms the missionary, Christ sends him, the Church receives him, and the world awaits him.

PART ONE MISSIONARY LIFE OF THE CONGREGATION

The Concrete Shape of Claretian Life

Part One of the Directory describes the living core of Claretian identity. If the Preliminary Chapter clarifies who we are, Part One explains how we live that identity concretely. Missionary life is not divided into compartments but lived as one integrated reality: community, evangelical counsels, prayer, mission, and ongoing growth converge toward a single goal — to follow Christ in apostolic communion for the glory of God and the salvation of the world.

I. Missionary Community

A Theological Reality

Claretian community is not a logistical arrangement but a participation in divine communion. Rooted in the Trinity — the mutual self-giving love of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — community

reflects unity without uniformity, diversity without division, authority without domination, and love without possessiveness. It is not optional or secondary to mission; it is its foundation.

The apostolic model is Christ with the Twelve and the early Church in Jerusalem. Community is both a place of being with Jesus and a space of being sent. Thus, fraternity is inherently missionary.

Eucharist: Source of Unity

The Eucharist is the sign of unity, the bond of charity, and the summit of fraternity. Without it, community becomes sociological and mission degenerates into activism. With it, fraternity becomes sacramental and mission flows from communion.

Shared Responsibility and Fraternal Charity

Every ministry entrusted to one is received from and carried out in the name of the community. Missionary individualism contradicts Claretian identity. Unity requires disciplined charity: humility in speech, courage for fraternal correction, forgiveness, and mutual support. Cultural and generational differences are to be harmonized, not suppressed.

Community must also be inserted into the local Church and attentive to pastoral realities. Isolation contradicts missionary vocation.

II. The Evangelical Counsels

Chastity, Poverty, and Obedience

Chastity: Undivided Availability: Consecrated celibacy is not repression but total availability for mission. It universalizes love and expands freedom, enabling apostolic mobility and spiritual fatherhood. Chastity demands affective maturity, psychological balance, and clear relational boundaries. Prudence and safeguarding are essential in today's context. Healthy community life supports joyful and integrated chastity.

Poverty: Freedom and Solidarity: Evangelical poverty expresses freedom from possession and trust in Providence. It calls for simplicity of lifestyle and visible solidarity with the poor. Goods are shared; no one claims personal ownership. Transparent administration and accountability are necessary for credibility. Poverty stands as a prophetic critique of consumerism and demands real proximity to the marginalized.

Obedience: Apostolic Listening: Obedience is not passivity but faith-filled listening in imitation of Christ who obeyed the Father. It is exercised through discernment, consultation, and dialogue. Members speak freely yet accept decisions loyally. Claretian obedience avoids both authoritarianism and individual autonomy; it safeguards communion and directs mission coherently.

III. Prayer

The Missionary's Oxygen: Prayer sustains every dimension of missionary life. Scripture is daily nourishment; missionaries must be listeners before preachers. The Eucharist remains the source and summit of life and mission, shaping sacrifice and strengthening fraternity.

Marian devotion, especially to the Heart of Mary, forms tenderness and purifies zeal. Annual retreat renews vocation and restores balance. Fidelity to the Liturgy of the Hours and sacramental life ensures that prayer is not a formality but the living heart of mission.

IV. Conformity with Christ

The Ultimate Model: The missionary's deepest reference point is Christ. Conformity to Him includes sharing His prayer, poverty, obedience, and compassion. Apostolic virtues — charity, humility, meekness, and disciplined self-mastery — purify zeal and prevent self-centred activism. This conformity is progressive and demands ongoing conversion and self-examination.

V. Our Mission

Ministry of the Word: The primary mission is the ministry of the Word: preaching, catechesis, biblical formation, and evangelization through media. This proclamation includes a preferential love for the poor and a prophetic commitment to justice, dignity, and hope.

Structured and Communal Evangelization: Mission is carried out in team ministry and requires discerned planning, coordination, and evaluation. Collaboration with the laity reflects co-responsibility in evangelization. Apostolic initiatives must be preceded by consultation and followed by accountability. Mission requires both fire and structure.

VI. Progress in Missionary Life

Ongoing Renewal: Missionary life demands continuous growth. Each member develops a personal project of life integrating spirituality, mission, and health. Spiritual direction fosters discernment and stability. Continuous formation in theology, pastoral practice, and social teaching ensures competence and credibility.

Communities engage in annual programming, set goals, and evaluate regularly. Shared responsibility replaces passive membership. Renewal is lifelong and essential.

Final Synthesis

Integrated Apostolic Life: Part One ensures that missionary life remains Christ-centred, Marian, communitarian, evangelical, structured, accountable, and prophetic. Without integration, community becomes mere housing, vows remain theoretical, mission turns activist, and prayer becomes formalism.

When fully lived, the Claretian emerges as a man on fire — formed in communion, free in poverty, obedient in mission, pure in heart, rooted in prayer, prophetic in word, and continually renewed in Christ.

PART TWO MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION

Vocational Authenticity and Formative Integrity: Part Two of the Directory addresses a decisive question: who becomes a Claretian, and how is he formed? Formation is not recruitment but a transformative journey of conformity with Christ in the style of Claret. It safeguards vocational authenticity, integrity in discernment, quality formation, ministerial readiness, and perseverance in fidelity. The Directory insists that a missionary is never improvised; he is patiently and thoroughly formed.

IX. Those Called to Our Missionary Life

Integral Formation (Art. 1)

Formation is integral, embracing human, Christian, and Claretian dimensions as interwoven aspects of a single process.

Human Formation: Human maturity is foundational. Emotional balance, relational capacity, sexual integration, responsibility, and accountability ensure interior freedom and resilience. Without human maturity, vows become fragile, mission unstable, and community life weakened.

Christian Formation: Christian formation deepens a living relationship with Christ through sacramental life, Scripture, and ecclesial belonging. It is not devotional training alone but Christ-centred transformation that shapes identity and mission.

Claretian Formation: Candidates must internalize the Founder's missionary spirit, Marian filiation, apostolic charity, community identity, and prophetic availability. The goal is not admiration of Claret but configuration to his charism.

Discernment as Ongoing Process: Discernment accompanies every stage. Questions of freedom, stability, communal capacity, and apostolic readiness must be honestly addressed. Discernment protects the individual, the Congregation, and the Church.

Vocation Promotion (Art. 2)

Vocation promotion is evangelization, not marketing. It arises from missionary witness in youth ministry, parishes, education, and media presence. A culture of accompaniment — marked by listening, spiritual conversation, and patience — allows vocations to mature authentically. Superficial entry is avoided through careful relational guidance.

Reception and Postulancy (Arts. 3–4)

Reception of vocations requires prudence and clarity. Psychological evaluation, health assessment, moral integrity, and safeguarding vigilance are essential. Flexibility in educational or age backgrounds is possible, but standards remain firm.

Postulancy serves as structured discernment and gradual integration into community life. It bridges secular life and religious initiation, fostering clarity rather than premature commitment.

X. Novices and the Novice Master

The Novitiate (Art. 1)

The novitiate is a canonically required year of spiritual immersion. Protected from distractions, it focuses on prayer, silence, community discipline, and apostolic virtues. Study of the Constitutions, Directory, and Founder's writings is not merely intellectual but existential assimilation.

The Novice Master (Art. 2)

The Novice Master must embody spiritual maturity, psychological balance, and fidelity to the charism. As formator and discernor, he carries direct responsibility for evaluating suitability and preparing candidates for profession. His role cannot be delegated lightly.

Profession and Incorporation (Art. 3)

Temporary vows allow continued integration and testing of perseverance. Perpetual profession follows only after clear discernment, demonstrated stability, and moral certitude of vocation. Transparent canonical procedures protect integrity and freedom.

XI. Missionaries in Formation

The Prefect of Formation coordinates the entire process, ensuring integration of academic, pastoral, spiritual, and communal dimensions. Formation is structured, not improvised. Periodic evaluation fosters growth and clarification of vocation. Immediate preparation for perpetual profession includes deep retreat and honest discernment, guaranteeing that final commitment is free, conscious, and stable.

XII. Brothers, Deacons, and Priests

Unity in Mission, Diversity in Expression: The Congregation embraces diverse ministries within a unified missionary identity.

Missionary Brothers: Brothers embody a fully Claretian and missionary lay vocation. Their ministries may include education, social service, technical professions, pastoral work, or administration. Professional competence strengthens credibility and apostolic effectiveness.

Deacons: Whether transitional or permanent, deacons serve in proclamation, liturgy, and charity. They are visible signs of diakonia within the community and the Church.

Priests: Priests serve through preaching, Eucharist, reconciliation, and spiritual guidance. Their priesthood is missionary before administrative, marked by apostolic availability and faithful collaboration with bishops.

Final Theological Synthesis

Formation for Apostolic Fire

Part Two ensures authentic vocations, integral formation, diversified yet unified ministries, and enduring missionary identity. Without proper formation, community weakens, mission falters, and charism erodes. With mature formation, the Congregation receives stable brothers, zealous priests, faithful deacons, and resilient missionaries.

The Church, in turn, receives men formed in the forge of Mary's Heart, capable of proclaiming the Word with competence, integrity, and apostolic fire.

PART THREE GOVERNMENT OF THE CONGREGATION

Authority at the Service of Charism and Mission

Part Three of the Directory addresses a delicate and decisive question: how is authority exercised so that the charism remains alive, communion remains intact, and mission remains coordinated? Government in the Congregation is not merely administrative. It is ecclesial, charismatic, mission-oriented, and communitarian. Authority exists not to control but to safeguard the charism, promote unity, coordinate mission, protect the vulnerable, and ensure fidelity to the Constitutions. The Claretian style of governance must therefore reflect apostolic zeal, Marian tenderness, participative discernment, and juridical clarity.

XIII. Organizational Structure of the Congregation

Unity in Structured Communion

The Congregation is organized in a hierarchical yet communitarian manner. It is divided into Provinces, Independent Delegations, Dependent Delegations, and Missions. Where applicable, these major organisms possess juridical personality and internal governance structures while participating in the universal mission of the Congregation.

Minor organisms, such as local communities, apostolic institutions, and mission centres, function within the broader provincial framework. Each member is enrolled in the Congregation, assigned to a Province, and inserted into a local community. This ascription prevents missionary isolation, ambiguous belonging, and jurisdictional confusion, ensuring accountability and communion.

The structure is not competitive. Provinces and Delegations are called to mutual aid through economic solidarity, personnel sharing, and missionary collaboration. The Congregation remains one body serving one mission.

XIV. Norms and Organs of Government

Participative and Regulated Authority

Participation in governance is guaranteed through active voice (the right to vote) and passive voice (the right to be elected), exercised according to canonical norms and Congregational legislation. This fosters shared responsibility, transparency, and synodal spirit.

Offices are clearly defined, limited in duration, and regulated in appointment procedures. Rotation prevents concentration of power and encourages renewal. Elections and nominations must follow strict procedural norms, ensuring freedom from coercion and safeguarding institutional credibility.

Organic Exercise of Government

Chapters represent the highest moments of collective discernment. The General Chapter is the supreme authority of the Congregation, exercising legislative, elective, and deliberative functions. The Provincial Chapter serves as the highest authority within a Province, evaluating life and mission and defining priorities. Chapters are not political gatherings but ecclesial events of discernment and renewal.

Authority is exercised personally by the Superior and collegially with his Council. Distinctions between consultative and deliberative votes prevent arbitrariness and promote shared discernment. Administrative offices and properly maintained archives safeguard institutional memory and legal integrity.

XV. Government of the Local Community

Authority as Fraternal Animation

The local community is the primary space where authority is lived daily. The Local Superior acts as a brother among brothers, a servant leader who promotes unity and guards mission. His authority is pastoral, fraternal, and coordinative; he animates rather than dominates.

Consultors and officials assist in financial decisions, community programming, and apostolic coordination. Regular plenary meetings ensure evaluation, dialogue, and collective discernment. Local governance fosters transparency, participation, and trust.

XVI. Government of the Provincial Community

Coordinating Mission and Communion

The Provincial Superior represents unity within the Province and serves as a link with the General Government. He oversees personnel assignments, mission coordination, economic administration, and safeguarding standards. Authority must be exercised firmly, justly, transparently, and pastorally.

The Provincial Council assists in discernment and major decisions, preventing individualistic governance. The Provincial Chapter renews missionary direction by evaluating life, electing leadership, and setting priorities.

XVII. Visitors

Pastoral Oversight and Renewal

Visitation is a canonical right and pastoral necessity. Visitors evaluate fidelity, encourage renewal, identify difficulties, and promote correction. Visitation is not surveillance but care for communion and mission.

XVIII. Government of the General Community

Universal Service of Unity

At the universal level, the Superior General is the sign of unity and principal animator of the Congregation. He safeguards the Constitutions, promotes fidelity to the charism, coordinates global mission, and represents the Congregation before the Holy See. His authority must combine apostolic zeal, Marian tenderness, and administrative competence.

The Vicar General and Consultors assist in governance, strategic planning, and evaluation of Provinces. General Officials — including the Econome, Secretary, Procurator, Postulator, and various Secretariats — ensure functional efficiency, documentation integrity, and financial accountability.

The General Chapter remains the highest authority, electing the Superior General, interpreting the Constitutions, setting global priorities, and evaluating congregational life. It is a privileged moment of communal discernment and prophetic reorientation.

Theological–Formative Synthesis

Governance for Evangelization: Part Three ensures that authority serves mission, governance protects charism, participation fosters communion, and structure supports evangelization. Without structured governance, mission fragments, authority becomes arbitrary, economy grows opaque, and communion weakens. With mature governance, the Congregation becomes transparent, participative, accountable, mission-coordinated, and charismatically faithful.

Final Integration

Evangelical Authority in Action

Claretian government must remain evangelical, Marian, apostolic, and ecclesial. Authority is credible only when rooted in prayer, exercised in humility, guided by discernment, oriented toward mission, and lived in charity.

When governance functions properly, community remains united, mission coherent, economy transparent, formation safeguarded, and charism alive. In fidelity to St. Anthony Mary Claret, the

Congregation continues as a body of men on fire with love — ecclesially rooted, communally united, and prophetically sent for the glory of God and the salvation of the world.

PART FOUR

THE TEMPORAL GOODS OF THE CONGREGATION

Temporal Goods at the Service of Mission

Part Four addresses a sensitive yet essential dimension of missionary life: how a Congregation vowed to poverty acquires, administers, and uses material goods. This is not merely financial regulation but a spiritual, ecclesial, and missionary discipline. Temporal goods are necessary for mission, yet potentially dangerous for vocation; powerful for evangelization, yet risky for credibility. The Directory therefore establishes norms to ensure that goods serve mission, poverty remains evangelical, administration is transparent, and solidarity is concrete.

General Principles

Stewardship Ordered to Evangelization

The Directory affirms that the Congregation has juridical capacity, according to Canon Law, to acquire and administer goods. However, all goods are ordered to mission, and evangelical poverty remains normative. Transparency is required at every level, and solidarity among Provinces is mandatory.

Temporal goods are never ends in themselves. They are instruments for evangelization, formation, community sustenance, and service to the poor. Economic life must therefore reflect stewardship rather than ownership.

XIX. Ability to Acquire, Possess, Administer, and Alienate Goods

Ecclesial Stewardship

The Congregation, its Provinces, and other juridical entities possess canonical capacity to acquire, administer, and, under defined conditions, alienate goods. This right does not imply private ownership but ecclesial stewardship.

Goods belong to the juridical person, never to individual members. Through the vow of poverty, members renounce personal ownership, and all earnings are surrendered to the community. This safeguards equality, communion, and apostolic availability.

Financial decisions are regulated by competencies and authorization thresholds. Major transactions, especially alienation of significant assets or contracting debts, require careful discernment, appropriate consultation, and, in certain cases, approval from higher authority or the Holy See. Such regulation prevents imprudence, misuse, and speculative risk.

Accumulation of goods must be justified by mission and sustainability, never by anxiety or attachment. Growth in patrimony is legitimate only when it strengthens evangelization and respects evangelical simplicity.

XX. Economies and Administrators

Responsible Service

Administration of goods is entrusted to designated offices at each level.

The General Econome oversees global finances, coordinates solidarity, ensures compliance with norms, and presents financial reports. Provincial Economes manage budgets, investments, and planning in collaboration with the Provincial Superior and Council. Local Economes administer community expenses and implement budgets at the grassroots level.

Those entrusted with economic responsibilities must combine competence, honesty, organization, discretion, and spiritual maturity. Financial mismanagement harms both mission and witness.

XXI. Administrative Management

Structure and Accountability

Economic life must be organized, not improvised. The Directory requires structured accounting systems, regular bookkeeping, and annual budget preparation. Budgets ensure discipline, clarity, and accountability.

Annual financial statements, balance sheets, and inventories of properties, vehicles, equipment, and investments are mandatory. Proper documentation and secure archiving protect institutional memory, legal security, and continuity of governance. Accurate record-keeping is an expression of responsible stewardship.

XXII. Sharing of Goods

Structural Solidarity

The sharing of goods expresses the deepest evangelical spirit of the Congregation. Wealthier Provinces are called to assist poorer Provinces, new missions, formation centres, and emergency needs. Solidarity is not optional generosity but structural communion.

Economic resources must prioritize evangelization, formation, support of the poor, and sustainable mission. Comfort-centred expenditure contradicts the charism. The Congregation must function as one missionary family and one economic organism.

XXIII. Economic Information and Accountability

Transparency as Witness

Transparency protects credibility. Superiors are required to provide periodic financial reports and maintain openness within appropriate limits. Administrators are accountable to their Superiors, Councils, and ultimately to the Congregation.

Clear procedures prevent misuse of funds, conflicts of interest, and legal complications. Integrity in financial administration is part of missionary witness.

Theological–Formative Integration

Poverty with Responsibility

Part Four integrates poverty, responsibility, transparency, solidarity, and missionary focus. It ensures that economic life does not contradict vowed poverty, undermine trust, damage credibility, or obscure missionary priorities.

Without regulation, poverty becomes rhetoric, goods become private, mission is compromised, and witness weakens. With proper regulation, economic life becomes evangelically disciplined, communally shared, mission-driven, and accountable.

Final Spiritual Synthesis

Stewardship in the Spirit of Claret

Temporal goods must always remain instruments of evangelization, expressions of solidarity, signs of simplicity, and means of service. A Claretian community faithful to these norms becomes poor but not negligent, structured but not materialistic, transparent but not anxious, responsible yet unattached.

Thus, even in its economic life, the Congregation continues the spirit of St. Anthony Mary Claret: free from possession, bold in mission, transparent in stewardship, and entirely ordered to the greater glory of God and the salvation of humankind.

Conclusion: An Integrated Vision of Missionary Communion

Taken as a whole, the Directory presents a unified theological vision. It integrates identity and structure, charism and law, mission and governance, poverty and stewardship. Each Part complements the others: foundational law protects identity; missionary life expresses vocation; formation transmits charism; governance sustains communion; stewardship ensures sustainability.

The Directory ultimately seeks to form a Congregation that is Christ-centred, Marian in spirit, communitarian in life, participative in governance, and transparent in stewardship. When faithfully lived, it safeguards the missionary fire entrusted to the Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and ensures that the Congregation remains historically faithful, ecclesially obedient, pastorally intelligent, and prophetically alive.

In this way, the Directory becomes not merely a document of regulation but a living framework of missionary communion—ordered entirely to the glory of God and the salvation of the world.

Supplement

Creative Approaches to the Ongoing Study and Assimilation of the Claretian Directory

Introduction

The Claretian Directory is more than a collection of regulations. It is the practical expression of the Congregation's missionary identity, translating the vision of the Constitutions into the concrete realities of community life, formation, governance, mission, and stewardship. Studying the Directory, therefore, is not simply acquiring juridical knowledge but learning how the Claretian vocation is lived in daily life.

Although the novitiate is the privileged time for the systematic study of the Constitutions and the Directory, their assimilation continues throughout initial and ongoing formation. Each stage of formation invites the missionary to rediscover the Directory from a new perspective, integrating its wisdom with increasing responsibility, pastoral experience, and missionary maturity.

A Progressive Formation Approach

Rather than studying the Directory only once, it should accompany the missionary throughout formation.

Formation Stage	Primary Focus
Postulancy	Introduction to the Congregation, its identity, missionary vocation, and Marian spirit.

Novitiate	Systematic study of the Constitutions and Directory, emphasizing community life, evangelical counsels, prayer, and missionary identity.
Post-Novitiate	Application of the Directory to apostolic ministry, intercultural living, leadership, safeguarding, pastoral planning, and collaborative mission.
Preparation for Perpetual Profession	Re-reading the Directory as a lifelong covenant, focusing on missionary commitment, apostolic availability, and mature participation in the Congregation.
Ongoing Formation	Periodic renewal through study of themes related to governance, leadership, stewardship, community renewal, and emerging missionary challenges.

Creative Learning Methods

1. Constitution–Directory Companion Reading

For every article of the Constitutions studied, read the corresponding Directory numbers. Reflect together:

- What value is presented in the Constitutions?
- How does the Directory help us live this value concretely?
- What challenges arise in applying it today?

As formation progresses, this exercise naturally shifts from understanding principles to discerning their practical application in ministry and community leadership.

2. Directory Reflection Groups

Small groups meet regularly to study one section of the Directory.

Each session includes:

- prayer;
- summary of the text;
- identification of its underlying values;
- discussion of contemporary missionary implications; and
- one practical commitment.

In the novitiate the emphasis is understanding; during post-novitiate formation the emphasis shifts to pastoral application and community leadership.

3. Discovering the Value Behind the Norm

Instead of beginning with regulations, begin with experience.

For example: *"Why are regular community meetings important?"*

Participants first identify the values involved:

- communion;
- participation;
- discernment;
- accountability;
- missionary coordination.

Only afterwards is the corresponding Directory passage read, revealing how the norm protects these evangelical values.

This method develops conviction rather than mere compliance.

4. Missionary Case Studies

Present real situations drawn from missionary life.

Examples include:

- accepting a new missionary assignment;
- intercultural tensions within the community;
- safeguarding concerns;
- stewardship of community resources;
- pastoral planning;
- exercise of authority;
- community discernment.

Participants identify:

- the relevant Directory principles;
- the values being safeguarded;
- possible pastoral responses; and
- implications for missionary life.

As the missionary advances in formation, the case studies should become progressively more complex and closer to real apostolic situations.

5. The Directory in Daily Life

Choose one theme each month:

- community life;
- prayer;
- poverty;
- obedience;
- mission;
- leadership;
- stewardship.

Observe how this aspect is lived within the community.

Reflect together:

- Where do we see this lived well?
- What challenges remain?
- What concrete improvements can we make?

The Directory thus becomes a tool for community renewal rather than merely personal study.

6. Visual Mapping of the Directory

Participants prepare a thematic map showing the relationship between:

- Identity
- Missionary Life
- Formation
- Government
- Stewardship

For each section they identify:

- key values;
- principal responsibilities;
- links with the Constitutions; and
- implications for missionary life.

This provides an integrated understanding of the Directory as a unified vision rather than a collection of independent regulations.

8. Formation Journal

Throughout initial formation each participant maintains a personal journal.

For every major section studied, record:

- one new insight;
- one personal challenge;
- one concrete resolution;
- one question for further reflection.

These reflections can become part of regular dialogue with the formator or spiritual accompanier.

9. Community Learning Activities

Learning may also take place through interactive methods such as:

- community quizzes;
- group presentations;
- thematic seminars;
- debates on pastoral situations;
- collaborative workshops; and
- role plays based on real missionary experiences.

These methods encourage participation and deepen communal learning.

10. Integration Projects

At significant stages of formation, participants prepare an integration project entitled: "Living the Directory in My Missionary Vocation."

The project may include:

- the Directory themes that have most influenced their formation;
- their relationship with the Constitutions;
- practical applications in community and mission;
- personal commitments for future missionary life.

For those preparing for perpetual profession, the project becomes an opportunity to express how the Directory has shaped their understanding of lifelong missionary commitment.

Role of the Formator

At every stage of formation, the formator's task is to help missionaries move:

- from **knowledge** to **assimilation**;
- from **rules** to **values**;
- from **external observance** to **interior conviction**;
- from **individual formation** to **communal responsibility**;
- from **legal understanding** to **missionary discernment**.

As responsibilities increase, so too should familiarity with the Directory. What begins in the novitiate as the study of missionary identity should mature during post-novitiate into competent participation in apostolic life, collaborative leadership, governance, and stewardship. In this way, the Directory becomes a lifelong companion that continually forms missionaries to live the Claretian charism with fidelity, responsibility, and creative commitment.