

*Claretian
Year*

Claretian Year

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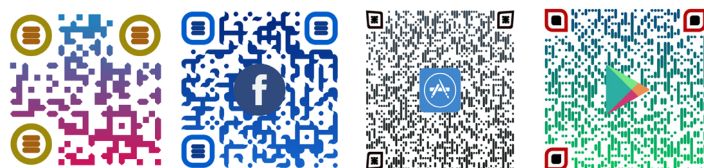
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Layout and Design: Louie Guades III, CMF
English Text Layout Assistant: Novel Bernabe Estillore
Translations: Patti Gutierrez and Tami Urcia

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LET US DRINK DAILY FROM OUR CHARISMATIC WELL

Presentation from Father General

Authentic missionary life is only possible when we extract from our charismatic well that which constituted the source of apostolic vitality for our Founder and several generations of Claretians. Claret speaks of his companions as those who have received the same spirit that encouraged him (cf. Aut 489). We are Claretians because we have also received that same spirit to proclaim the Gospel today. A closer contact with our Founder and with the history of the Congregation will help us fan the flames of our missionary spirit and find urgent, timely and effective ways to carry out our mission in the times in which we are living.

Fidelity to our roots and openness to new realities, demand a fruitful relationship with the elder Claretians who walked before us. Pope Francis, addressing consecrated men and women, reminded us of the importance of this mutual relationship:

For if the young are called to open new doors, the elderly hold the keys. An institute remains youthful by going back to its roots, by listening to its older members. There is no future without this encounter between the old and the young. There is no growth without roots and no flowering without new buds. There is never prophecy without memory, or memory without prophecy. (Homily, World Day for Consecrated Life, 2018)

The project of the Claretian Year is a humble effort that seeks to help the current generation of Claretians to walk according to the spirit of the Founder and to help us all become familiar with our predecessors, whose lives shaped our history.

Fr. Gonzalo Fernandez Sanz, General Prefect of Spirituality, together with his collaborators, undertook this enormous project with much love and dedication. Through these lines, I want to express my gratitude to everyone.

I urge all Claretians to use this instrument to grow joyfully in our Claretian life and to bear fruit in the mission.

The versatility of the project allows us to drink from the well of the various spiritual sources included in it and enjoy its contents at any time and in any place, since we can find them in hard copy, in a digital version, in applications, etc. A motivated Claretian, with a minimum of self-discipline, can easily fit the project within the framework of his daily life by integrating it into the common prayer of the community or in the hour of personal prayer recommended by the Constitutions (cf. CC 37). Let us take this journey together to the charismatic sources and walk towards the peripheries with the joy of the Gospel.

Oriental wisdom affirms: “*Drop by drop is the water pot filled. Likewise, the wise man, gathering it little by little, fills himself with good.*” Rooted in Christ through our charismatic tradition, we will be like “*a watered garden, like a flowing spring whose waters never fail.*” (Is 58:11)

Rome, March 19, 2019

Solemnity of Saint Joseph, Patron of the Congregation

Mathew Vattamattam, CMF
Superior General

INTRODUCTION TO THE CLARETIAN YEAR

We are living in times in which two phenomena coexist that seem contradictory: on the one hand, a growing indifference to the religious phenomenon (especially in some regions of the world) and, on the other, a spiritual awakening that takes many different forms: discovery of spiritual intelligence, revaluation of indigenous spiritualities, searching for silence and new forms of meditation, appreciation of the commitment to solidarity, etc. The Church is influenced by both phenomena, while facing a credibility crisis which is unprecedented in recent decades. We too, sometimes tempted by weariness and inconstancy, are today still looking for what has attracted us from the very beginning of our life of faith. Like the psalmist, we confess that our soul “thirsts for God, the living God.” (Ps 42:3) On the journey with the men and women of our particular churches, we have realized that, without roots, without spirituality, our missionary life dries up and is not credible. How can we propose in this context of plurality, a path that, drinking from the well of our Claretian tradition, helps us to live a spirituality centered on following Christ, open to the new impulses of the Holy Spirit at this time?

In the last decades, the Congregation has proposed to us some itineraries of spiritual growth that are still profitable. Those that stand out, above all, are the *Word-Mission* Project (1993-2000), born in response to the chapter declaration *Servants of the Word* (1991), and *The Forge in Everyday Life* (2011-2014), the result of the chapter declaration *Men on Fire with Love* (2009). In both cases, the emphasis was placed on the importance of processes rather than on specific actions. Although it is very difficult to evaluate their effectiveness, both projects helped the Congregation to “qualify our missionary life as servants of the Word” (*Word-Mission Project*) and to “relive the experience of Fire and grow in missionary zeal.” (*The Forge in Everyday Life Project*) Now, following the guidelines of the XXV General Chapter, the Congregation invites us to take a new path “to help all Claretians, personally and in community, know and live deeply and passionately our beautiful spiritual patrimony.” (MS 74.1) The General Prefecture of Spirituality has assumed the task of designing this formative and spiritual itinerary, whose fruit we offer to the Congregation with the hope that it will be a timely and effective instrument to continue growing in fidelity to the gift of the missionary vocation.

The *Claretian Year* that we present now emphasizes the knowledge and experience of our *beautiful* spiritual patrimony. When the chapter declaration qualifies this patrimony as *beautiful*, it is inviting us to be surprised and attracted by it. Beauty is a privileged way of accessing the mystery of God. The Lord has given us a *beautiful* way of encountering Him through the historical mediation of Saint Anthony Mary Claret and the Congregation. The more we admire it, come to know it and make it our own, the better we will serve the people of God and we will find with more ease new motivations to improve our personal and community life. Our charismatic identity does not consist in a closed formula that we must preserve, but rather in a life experience that we must welcome and recreate. This experience puts us in relationship with those who, throughout our history, have embodied the charism we have received.

As Father General reminded us in his presentation, quoting Pope Francis, “An institute remains youthful by going back to its roots, by listening to its older members... there is no growth without roots and no flowering without new buds.” The Congregation is a living organism in constant evolution. Its human geography has changed a lot in recent decades. We are declining in Europe and America, continents of long Claretian tradition, and we are growing strongly in Africa and Asia. It has not always been easy to come to know, assimilate and enrich this patrimony in the different contexts. The desire for the *Claretian Year* is to be an instrument of daily use that accompanies all the Claretians of the world, throughout every day of the year, in this adventure of getting to know our roots better, in order to revitalize our life.

The project is presented in three complementary formats: a book, a website and an application for mobile devices.

The **book** offers two pages (odd and even) for each day of the year that form a unit. These two pages are divided into several sections that remain fixed throughout the year.

Presented on the even pages are:

- Some *significant dates of Claret's life* taken from the various itineraries that have been rebuilt in recent years. They are a dynamic way to familiarize us, day by day, with the life of the Founder and an invitation to read some of the biographies that have been published about him.

- A *fragment of the history of the Congregation*, articulated in 17 periods that have been considered relevant. In the pages that follow this introduction, these periods are presented concisely so that the reader has an overview.
- The *biography of a person* (Claretian or not) that had a significant role in the life of Claret or the Congregation.

The necessary conciseness prevents extensive developments which, in some cases, are found on the website. In this way, both instruments complement each other. The names of people that appear in bold indicate that there is a biographical profile of them on one of the days of the year, which - whenever possible - has been matched with the date of their death. The specific day can easily be found by consulting the index of names at the end of the book.

The *Odd pages* offer the opportunity to read and apply to one's own life, the two main sources of our spirituality:

- From January to June, the *Autobiography* of the Founder; from July to December, the *Constitutions* and some excerpts from recent chapter declarations.
- The selected texts are accompanied by some questions or exercises that help illuminate one's own life in a section entitled *For Personal Reflection*.
- The section ends with an *inspiring phrase* taken from our Claretian sources or other Christian and secular sources.

The **website**, in addition to containing all the materials of the book, offers expansions, video and audio files and retreat proposals for each month, as well as other supplements for personal and communal prayer and for the celebration of the Claretian feast days. It also facilitates sharing reflections, comments and proposals. It is linked to some social networks to facilitate the speed of communication and, above all, the participation of the Claretians.

The **application** for mobile devices, offers users a reduced menu that allows access to the main contents of the project when the book or website is not available. It is useful, above all, for the missionary who has to travel frequently and cannot always carry the book with him.

The elaboration of the *Claretian Year* has been laborious. Having to handle a lot of data and synthesize it in short and precise texts has taken longer than expected. We hope the reader will excuse any possible errors, inattention or omissions. It is

obvious, for example, that in the gallery of 366 people, not all of the Claretians are there who should be, but we believe that those who appear - singularly our brother martyrs - represent the rich variety of the Congregation throughout its more than 160 years of history. The predominance of Claretians (all of them deceased) of European or American origin is due to the fact that in its first 100 years, the Congregation developed almost exclusively in Europe and America.

We appreciate the work done by the members and collaborators of the *Claretian Spirituality Center* (CESC) in Vic and the *Forge Center* in Los Negrales for their competence and dedication. The Claretians who deserve special mention are Vicente Sanz Tobes (who has prepared the biographical profiles of the people, as well as much of the history of the Congregation), Louie Guades III (who did the layout and the design of the book and the website) and Maximino Cerezo Barredo (who has designed each section's logos). The first two are part of the General Curia community and collaborate in its activities.

A project of these characteristics helps to keep the flame of our spirituality burning, but it does not exempt us from a continuous effort to expand and deepen it. As can be deduced from its nature and purpose, the reader cannot expect to find in it a critical biography of the Founder, a complete history of the Congregation or a systematic treatise on Claretian spirituality. The *Claretian Year* has a more modest but urgent purpose: to help the Congregation of the 21st century, more intercultural than ever, to drink from the same charismatic well in order to enrich our missionary witness in the various regions of the world. The project aims to arouse curiosity, arouse interest, increase love, cultivate gratitude and encourage missionary creativity. It is a beautiful figure, that of a world-wide community on a pilgrimage, meditating on the same contents of our common tradition and enriching them with the variety of our cultures, languages and apostolic experiences. The ongoing translation into the most widely used languages in the Congregation will facilitate its dissemination and habitual use.

Ideally, the Claretians would use this instrument every day of the year, from January 1st to December 31st. Because it follows the style of a year, the *Claretian Year* can be repeated as many times as desired. Annual updates will be offered on the website. It is recommended that, in addition to this book, we also keep a personal notebook to write out some of the exercises proposed in the section *For Personal Reflection*.

The book the *Claretian Year* has an ideal complement in the book *Walking with Claret*, edited by the CESC in Vic, which proposes a text from Claret and a brief meditation inspired by him for each day of the year. In this way, the knowledge of our Founder is enriched. Both books also serve as motivation for the communities. Some sections, for example, can be read during community prayer. They can also serve for other moments of permanent formation or community gathering. The animation by the governments of the Organisms and the local superiors will be essential to ensure that the entire Congregation goes forth joyfully "in the path of the Lord, to proclaim with our life and mission the supremacy of God, following the spiritual life journey of our Founder." (cf. MS 74)

We entrust the fruit of this project to our mother Mary, in whose Immaculate Heart we are forged as missionaries in the style of Saint Anthony Mary Claret. The "revolution of tenderness" that she represents will help us fight the "hardness of heart" (*sclerocardia*) that sometimes makes us hard and paralyzes missionary life. Our Founder, in his Resolutions of 1870, written five months before his death, said: "I have to be like a burning candle: It spends its wax and its light until it dies." We too, moved by the Spirit of Jesus, want to strive to reach the full maturity with Christ to communicate more effectively to others the grace of the Gospel (cf. CC 51).

Rome, March 19, 2019
Solemnity of Saint Joseph, Patron of the Congregation

Gonzalo Fernandez Sanz, CMF
General Prefect of Spirituality

BASIC CHRONOLOGY OF SAINT ANTHONY MARY CLARET

- 1807.** Born in Sallent (Barcelona, Spain) into a family of deeply religious weavers. Fifth of eleven siblings.
- 1819.** At age 12, he senses the priestly vocation, but cannot enter the seminary. He begins working in the family textile shop.
- 1825.** At 18, he travels to Barcelona to improve his skills in the textile industry. He studies at the Institute of La Lonja and works in a shop.
- 1829.** He enters the seminary in Vic. He gives up the idea of becoming a Carthusian monk.
- 1835.** He is ordained a priest in Solsona (Lleida). He is assigned to his native parish, first as Vicar and then Administrator (pastor).
- 1839.** He travels to Rome to offer himself to the universal mission. He tries to do so with *Propaganda Fide* without success. He enters the novitiate of the Society of Jesus.
- 1840.** He returns to Spain. He is sent to the Parish of Viladrau (Barcelona). He begins popular missions.
- 1841.** He moves to Vic, from where he preaches throughout Catalonia. He receives from the Holy See the title of *Apostolic Missionary*.
- 1843.** He writes the devotional *Cami dret i segur per arribar al cel (Straight Path)*, the first of his publications and the most read religious book in Spain in the 19th century.
- 1848.** He travels to the Canary Islands, where he preaches for more than a year. He founds in Barcelona the *Libreria Religiosa [Religious Publishing House and Bookstore]* with Fr. Joseph Caixal. He writes the book *Religiosas en Sus Casas [Nuns in their own Houses]*, seed of the secular Institute Cordimarian Filiation.
- 1849.** After returning to the Peninsula, on July 16th he founded the *Congregation of the Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (Claretian Missionaries)*.

- 1850.** He is consecrated Archbishop of Santiago, Cuba, where he remains almost seven years.
- 1855.** With Mother Antonia Paris, he founds the *Congregation of Teaching Sisters of Mary Immaculate (Claretian Missionary Sisters)*.
- 1856.** On February 1st he suffers a serious attack in Holguin.
- 1857.** Queen Isabella II calls him to Madrid and names him her confessor. He travels throughout Spain preaching to the people, priests and religious sisters. He writes numerous books.
- 1858.** He founds the *Academy of St. Michael*, a secular apostolic association to evangelize the culture.
- 1859.** Isabella II names him President of the Royal Monastery of El Escorial, where he founds a college, a seminary, a university and a society of chaplains.
- 1861.** On August 26th, in the church of Rosario in La Granja (Segovia), he receives the great grace of the conservation of the sacramental species.
- 1862.** He begins writing his *Autobiography*.
- 1864.** He founds the *Popular and Parish Libraries* whose foundational book is the seed of the movement of the *Lay Claretians*.
- 1868.** He goes into exile in France accompanying Queen Isabella II. In Paris he attends to immigrants and founded a charity association for the poor.
- 1869.** He arrives in Rome to participate in the First Vatican Council.
- 1870.** He travels to Prades (France) to meet with his exiled missionaries; however, he has to take refuge in the Cistercian monastery of Fontfroide, where he dies on October 24th.
- 1897.** His remains are transferred to the *Motherhouse* in Vic.
- 1934.** On February 25th he was beatified by Pius XI.
- 1950.** On May 7th he was canonized by Pius XII.

HISTORICAL STAGES OF THE CONGREGATION

1849-1858.

THE FOUNDATION. In a hostile environment, six young priests begin a missionary adventure in a small room in the seminary in Vic, Spain, encouraged by a 41-year-old priest. At the head, the missionary Anthony Claret. It was July 16, 1849. Soon they had to overcome enormous difficulties, aggravated by the absence of the Founder who was in Cuba and their slow initial growth.

1858-1870.

CONSTITUTION OF THE INSTITUTE. Upon the death of Fr. Stephen Sala, the second Superior General of the Congregation, the election of Fr. Joseph Xifre as Superior General, meant a formidable impetus of the internal structure of the Institute and its institutions, and of the first foundations outside of Vic: Gracia and Segovia. Claret's presence, again in Spain, also meant constant support.

1870-1899.

EARLY EXPANSION. The death of the Founder on October 24, 1870 and the situation of the Congregation, seeking refuge in France, did not prevent the regular missionary life and consistency of the Institute. It had already founded houses in Algiers and Chile. Now it was time to continue expanding in Spain, Equatorial Guinea, Mexico, Italy, etc. The Congregation was divided into Provinces. At his death in 1899, Fr. Xifre left a hopeful future.

1899-1906.

THE CONSOLIDATION. A new century was born. Without Fr. Xifre, after more than 40 years as the Superior General, what had been achieved so far had to be consolidated. The Early History of the Congregation is written. America is in turmoil. Everything suggests that the Congregation begins to see itself as a consistent Organism under the guidance of Fr. Clement Serrat.

1906-1922.

EXPANSION. Fr. Serrat dies on January 6, 1906. The General Chapter elects the successor of those years, Fr. Martin Alsina. His energy was going to call to mind the times of Fr. Xifre. There are many offers for foundations that the Congregation has to reject. The fact of its growth in Europe (Portugal, United Kingdom, Germany, France) gives an idea of the validity of the missionary proposal of the Congregation.

1922-1934.

NEW EXPANSION. On March 2, 1922, Fr. Alsina died. The new Fr. General, Nicolas Garcia, would be the one that would govern the Congregation practically until the middle of the century. It was time to continue the expansion in the Republics of America. The Holy See began to entrust Vicariates and Dioceses to the Claretians, a sign of the confidence that they inspired in the top hierarchy of the Church. The foundation in China was a formidable missionary stimulus during this time. The stage closed with the great news of the beatification of the Fr. Founder (February 1934).

1934-1937.

PERIOD OF THE MARTYRS. After the beatification of Claret (1934), the persecutions arrived. They had already begun in Mexico, with the death of Blessed Andres Sola in 1927. Now they affected Spain, the focal point of the Congregation, with its overflowing seminaries. The one who had to suffer the very serious situation in the supreme government was Fr. Felipe Maroto, elected Superior General in 1934. 271 Claretian martyrs, most of them young. They were dark times.

1937-1949.

THE FIRST 100 YEARS. The unexpected death of Fr. Maroto gave way again to the second generalship of Fr. Nicolas Garcia in July 1937. We had to arise from the great tribulation and go through the great test of World War II unscathed. It was an era of names of great ecclesial relevance: Arturo Tabera, Arcadio Larraona and Siervo Goyeneche. Major works were born: the magazine *Vida Religiosa* [Religious Life] and the *Institutum Juridicum*. The publication of the great work of Fr. Cristobal Fernandez, *El Beato Padre Antonio Maria Claret* [The Blessed Father Anthony Mary Claret] (1946) marked a milestone in the celebration of the first 100 years of the Congregation.

1949-1967.

A NEW CENTURY. On July 16, 1949, the first 100 years were celebrated throughout the Congregation. At the head of the Institute, something very new occurs; a German Claretian, Fr. Peter Schweiger is elected Superior General. The following year we see the canonization of our Fr. Founder and the inauguration of the great church in Rome dedicated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the new General Curia (1952). Optimism grows. A great boost is given to the universality of the Congregation, symbolized by foundations in Japan, Canada, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Zaire and the first vocations in India. And the great theologians of Rome and Salamanca arise. It is the great time of the Second Vatican Council and the invitation to renewal. A stage that concludes with the publication of the second great *Historia de la Congregacion* [History of the Congregation], by Fr. Cristobal Fernandez.

1967-1979.

THE RENEWAL. Moved by the Council, the Claretians undertake the great renewal. The person in charge of leading the Congregation at this stage is an Italian-Slovenian, Fr. Antonio Leghisa. This renewal will be accompanied by a particular missionary expansion and also by a profound crisis. The great Provinces assume missions in different areas of the Congregation. Interprovincial Conferences are created. And providential foundations such as those in India and Nigeria arrive. Gradually, the renewal initiated after the Council is consolidated.

1979-1985.

THE MISSION TODAY (MCT). The Chapter Document of 1979, known as the MCT (The Mission of the Claretian Today) had a great impact on the entire Congregation. Fundamentally, the missionary style was reviewed in the light of what was most urgent, timely and effective. But, above all, it influenced what came to be called the *revision of positions*. The new Constitutions and the new Directory were published. At the same time, new paths continued to open: South Korea, Australia, Poland, etc. And the Claretian Family Encounters multiplied.

1985-1991.

THE CLARETIAN TODAY. The year 1985 brought important changes. Among others, the person of a new Superior General, the Argentine Fr. Gustavo Alonso. The Congregation grew, not so much in personnel but in presences: Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Kenya and Sri Lanka. Encounters, Conferences, Workshops, Weeks were multiplying more and more due to the increasing complexity of the Congregation in languages, cultures and religious dialogue.

1991-1997.

IDENTITY AND MISSION. Again, a Spanish Superior General, Fr. Aquilino Bocos. As soon as his term began, a new impetus came on October 25, 1992, the date of the beatification of the 51 Claretian Martyrs of Barbastro. There was not growth in numbers, but in missionary projection. The new blessed accompanied new foundations such as Russia and Taiwan. And new projects emerged such as *Word-Mission* and the commentary to the Constitutions *Our Project of Missionary Life*. The publications of Fr. Founder also multiplied: *Epistolario Pasivo* [*Passive Epistolary*] and *Escritos Pastorales* [*Pastoral Writings*]. Restructuring of Organisms begins.

1997-2003.

IN PROPHETIC MISSION. The Congregation celebrated its 150th anniversary of its Foundation. There was a growing realization in some of the Christian majority areas of the Congregation for the need to unite some Organisms that were experiencing a personnel shortage along with an aging membership. At the same time, the Congregation grew rapidly in other Christian minority areas in need of formation and economic assistance, such as in India, Nigeria, Congo, Southeast Asia, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia.

2003-2009.

THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE. The new Superior General is a Spanish missionary serving in Japan, Fr. Josep M. Abella. New Organisms were growing, dividing and becoming independent. Others whose trend was diminishing were uniting with one another. The long restless passage of Pope Saint John Paul II came to an end in April 2005. In the Congregation, the economy was taking center stage due to the need for a greater sharing of resources among the different Organisms. And the bicentennial of the birth of the Founder arrived in 2007 with the publication of a new revised version of Claret's autobiography (2008) and numerous other commemorative events.

2009-2015.

MEN ON FIRE. New congregational projects emerge, such as *The Forge in Everyday Life*, to facilitate access to our own charismatic sources. The Claretian presence in the UN gives a new universal tone and social commitment to the Congregation. The movie is released *A Forbidden God*, the story of the martyrdom of the Blessed Martyrs of Barbastro. New beatifications of martyrs from the Spanish Civil War are celebrated. The much-anticipated biography of Fr. Xifre is published in three volumes, the work of Fr. Jaume Sidera.

2015-2018.

MISSIONARIII SUMUS. Fr. Mathew Vattamattam, from India, is appointed the new Superior General. One of the legacies received is to reorganize the Congregation in Europe. At the same time, new Organisms emerge, such as the Independent Delegations *Fr. Xifre and Mãe d'Africa in Africa* and the Province of *Fatima* in Europe and new foundations are begun, such as Borneo and New Zealand. Pope Francis continues to contribute Claretian Bishops to the Church, including a new Cardinal, the former Superior General Fr. Aquilino Bocos. And finally, the historical period closes with a new congregational project: the *Claretian Year*.