God, our Father,
You brought Felipe de Jesus,
priest and his companions,
religious and martyrs,
with the help of the Mother of God,
to the imitation of Christ
to the shedding of their blood,
grant that through their example and intercession,
we may confess our faith with fortitude, word and deed.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord,
Your Son, who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit
and it is God for ever and ever.
Amen.



February

FEBRUARY

1



1856. Having opened his pastoral visit in the city of Holguin (Cuba), when Claret was leaving to preach a sermon in the church, he was seriously wounded. The aggressor is Antonio Abad Torres, who cut part of his left cheek and right arm with a knife.

1869. In exile in Paris, the local archbishop *appreciates Claret very much and has granted him all his faculties*; therefore, he has several apostolic projects.



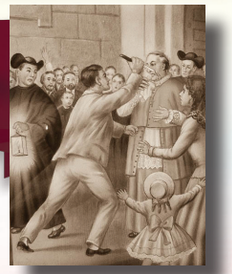
THE DEATH OF THE FOUNDER

CONSTITUTION OF THE INSTITUTE (1858-1870)

Father Claret arrived at the house in Prades on July 23, 1870, after the suspension of the First Vatican Council. This must have been an oasis of peace and joy in the midst of his sufferings. He saw prophetically how the Congregation would slowly spread throughout the world, but soon, on August 6th, he had to secretly leave his brothers due to the persecution and take refuge in the Cistercian monastery of Fontfroide, near Narbonne. He sensed that his death was already near. After several days of great uncertainty and slow and painful agony, he gave his soul in that monastery on October 24, 1870, at 8:45 in the morning. He could not even be buried in the church because of the French government's prohibition. Providentially Claret was the first to die after the definitive approval of the Institute with the official votes cast and after having made the profession himself on October 8th. On his grave, now empty, it still reads: *I loved justice and hated iniquity; for this I die in exile.*



ATTACK IN HOLGUIN



On February 1, 1856, in the city of Holguin (Cuba), Saint Anthony Mary Claret was the victim of a failed attempt on his life. His pastoral visit to the area began that day. Although the attack was perpetrated by only one person, the investigations determined that it was a conspiracy to end his life. The experience of Holguin was the consequence of a life dedicated to following Christ, full of apostolic zeal, so that God would be known, loved and served by all creatures. Zeal for the Father's house consumed Claret, persecuted for the cause of the Son, including even the razor of Holguin. After this, his blood having been shed, like a *seal on the truths of the Gospel that he preached*, made him grow in fidelity in the midst of persecutions and slanders that, as he himself said, would sculpt, carve, chisel, forge... his charismatic figure, capable of rejoicing in the torments of each day, for the glory of God and salvation of all men.



SPIRITUAL DRYNESS

During those first three years in Barcelona, the fervor that I had had at home began to cool. True, I received the sacraments frequently during the year. I attended Mass on all feasts and holy days of obligation and daily prayed the rosary to Mary Most Holy and kept up my other devotions, but with none of my former fervor. My only goal and all my anxieties were about manufacturing. I can't overstate it – my obsession approached delirium... **(Aut 66)**

Toward the end of my third year in Barcelona, obsessed as I was, whenever I was at Mass on holy days, I experienced the greatest difficulty in overcoming the thoughts that came to me. It is true that I loved to think and dwell on my projects… My efforts seemed useless, like trying to bring a swiftly rotating wheel to a sudden stop. I was tormented during Mass with new ideas, discoveries, etc. There seemed to be more machines in my head than saints on the altar. **(Aut 67)**





FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- *Have you experienced some periods of spiritual dryness throughout your life?*
- *What are your main distractions when you meditate?*
- *What are the resources you usually use to overcome inner distraction?*
- *Share with a friend what you are most passionate about, what attracts you, what you care for most and what you neglect the most.*

"In the union and transformation of love each gives possession of self to the other, and each leaves and exchanges self for the other. Thus each one lives in the other and is the other, and both are one in the transformation of love."
(St. John of the Cross, *Spiritual Canticle,* XII.7)

FEBRUARY

2



1832. Claret receives the clerical Tonsure in the synod hall of the Bishop's palace in Vic, with the conferment of the benefice of the *Monjia* in the parish of Sallent.

1858. Claret preaches at an event for the congregation of the *Blue Scapular* in the church of the Italians (Madrid).

1864. Claret asks Fr. **Joseph Xifre** and Fr. **Jaime Clotet**, who submit their resignation of their general positions, to continue in them until a few months later when the elective chapter is held.



EARLY EXPANSION (1870-1899)

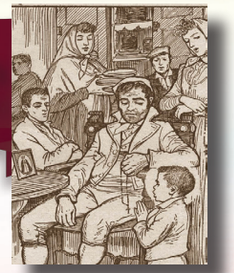
THE CONGREGATION IN FRANCE

There were Fathers, Students and Novices in the house in Prades. Little by little they realized that there was not enough space for so many; in addition, the persecution arrived there. But, shortly after, in May of 1872, they were able to find a house in Thuir (in the south of France), thanks to Fr. **Clotet**. The School-Novitiate was installed there, being at the same time the seat of the General Government. Fr. Clotet acted as Superior and Fr. **Clement Serrat** as Novice Master. Soon the number of Priests and Students increased in the Congregation, in ten years going from 100 to 400. Fr. **Diego Gavin** and Fr. **Ramon Genover**, great missionaries, were there while Fr. Bernardo Bech was in charge of gathering new vocations in Spain. The community in Thuir was dedicated mainly to formation, but also worked in those lands, knowing how to adapt pretty well to the French environment, given that many people spoke in Catalan. It was then, in 1871, when the first biography of Claret appeared, written by his friend Bishop **Francisco de Asis Aguilar**.



JOHN CLARET CLARA

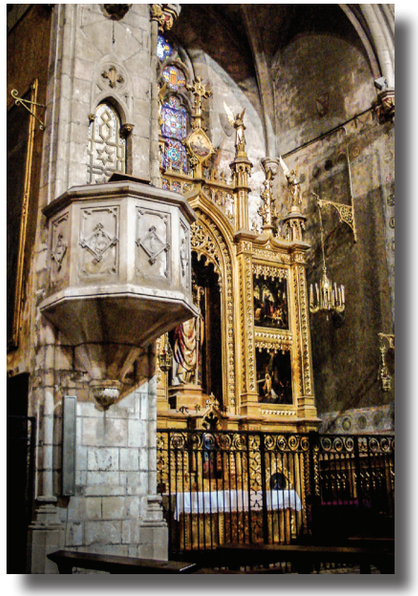
Claret's Brother (1804-1871)



Sallent (Barcelona, Spain). Claret's oldest brother and heir. He married Maria Casajoana in 1828, settling in the house of her parents, from a wealthier family. They had four children, all somewhat adventurous. Juan was the one who showed up in Madrid to get a placement from his uncle. Domingo ventured to go to Cuba so that his uncle could save him from military service. The other children were Valerio and Mauricio. Both were seminarians in Vic, but Father Claret, who tried to follow them closely, did not have high hopes for them. Indeed, the first ended up as a teacher and the second as a merchant. John, after his wife died, remarried Antonia Sellares, with whom he had no children. He continued working until his death as a humble cotton manufacturer in Sallent. In May 1870, shortly before his death, Claret wrote: *I have written to the Rector of Sallent to give my brother John whatever he needs.*



THE IMPACT OF THE GOSPEL



Basilica of Saints Justus and Pastor (Barcelona)

In the midst of this whirling of ideas, while I was at Mass one day, I remembered reading as a small boy those words of the Gospel: For what does it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul? This phrase impressed me deeply and went like an arrow that pierced my heart. I tried to think and reason what to do, but to no avail. **(Aut 68)**

I was like Saul on the (road) to Damascus, but I was in need of an Ananias to tell me what to do. I went to the house of the Fathers of St. Philip Neri, walked through the cloisters, saw an open door, knocked and entered. There I met a Brother Paul, who was very fervent and devout, and I told him simply about my resolves. The good brother patiently and charitably heard me out… He took me to Father Amigo, who listened to me, approved of my decision, and counseled me to study Latin. I obeyed him. **(Aut 69)**



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- *Have there been biblical texts that have helped you discover the Lord's call?*
- *Who have been the "Ananias" of your vocational path?*
- *Have you had and do you still have spiritual accompaniment today in your missionary life? Do you value personal accompaniment?*
- *Write and narrate your encounter with your vocational text.*

"Technological society has succeeded in multiplying the opportunities for pleasure, but it has great difficulty in generating joy."
(Paul VI, *Gaudete in domino*)

FEBRUARY

3



1847. Claret travels from Poboleda to Tarragona to present himself before the commander, because of some anonymous slander. He is declared innocent.

1865. The newspaper *La Esperanza* comes out in his defense against the fake edition of the book *The Golden Key*.

1866. Claret supports the decision of the General Government of the Congregation to leave the precarious foundation of Huesca; however, it will be preserved and will even resist the onslaught of the revolution.



EARLY EXPANSION (1870-1899)

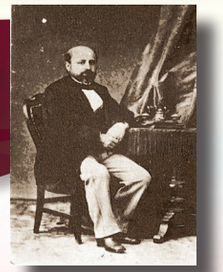
RESTORATION IN SPAIN

On October 5, 1875, the copy of the Royal Order by which the Missionaries could return to their former possessions in Spain arrived in Thuir, sent by Fr. **Xifre.** The King **Alfonso XII** had already entered Madrid. The houses of Vic, Segovia and La Selva del Camp were recovered. Those of the latter soon founded in Tarragona, where they had been since 1872, but had to leave. The houses of Gracia and Huesca were also recovered. In 1876, from July 9th to 13th, the IV General Chapter took place, in which Fr. Xifre and the same auxiliaries of the Government were re-elected: Fr. **Clotet** as Assistant Director and Fr. **Clement Serrat**, Fr. **Lorenzo Font** and Fr. **Domingo Sola** as Consultors. Fr. Xifre thought that the Congregation was not yet ready to be divided into Provinces, so he preferred to keep it centralized. Some decisions were made regarding the Visitors of the houses in America.



JOAQUIN DE ISLA FERNANDEZ PANTOJA

Marquis of Arco (1822-1912)



Madrid (Spain). He was the IX Marquis of Arco and the VI Count of Isla Fernandez. Claret was his spiritual director. And he was one of those who most used Claret's accurate guidance during his visits to Segovia. He consulted with Father Claret about a case of conscience after his arrival from Cuba, having received such an excellent impression. After that he treated him as a friend and for seven or eight years, he followed him as spiritual director. When Claret was staying in the house of the Marquis, he received a message from a crucifix: *You have to teach your Missionaries mortification, Anthony*. This crucifix is preserved in the Santuario del Corazon de Maria in Madrid. He died on February 2nd in Madrid. When he was already an old man, small and stooped under the weight of many years, he was still seen in the Segovian convent of San Gabriel where the Claretians resided, whom he loved so much and with whom he liked to live in community.



ABOUT TO LOSE HIS LIFE

That last summer, the Blessed Virgin saved me from drowning in the sea. Because I had been working so hard, I didn't feel very well during the summer. I began to lose all appetite, and the only relief I could find was to go down to the sea, wade in it, and drink a few drops of the salt water. One day as I was walking along the beach on my way to the "old sea" on the other side of La Barceloneta, a huge wave suddenly engulfed me and carried me out to sea. I saw in a moment that I was far from shore, and I was amazed to see that I was floating on the surface, although I didn't know how to swim. I called out to the Blessed Virgin and found myself on shore without having swallowed even a drop of water. While I was in the water, I had felt exceedingly calm, but afterwards, on shore, I was horrified at the thought of the danger I had escaped through the help of the Blessed Virgin. **(Aut 71)**



Barceloneta (Barcelona)



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- *Have you ever been about to lose your life? Have you overcome any spiritual danger that could jeopardize your missionary life?*
- *Did you think you perceived God's Providence and Mary's protection at that time?*
- *In an attitude of prayer, pray with the words of the psalmist: "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me." Consider the "do not fear" moments that you have lived and heard from the Lord, because he walks with you.*

"I tell you quite frankly that whenever I see sinners,
I grow restless, I cannot quiet down, I cannot be consoled,
my heart goes out to them." (*Aut* 211)

FEBRUARY

4



1846. Claret concludes the long mission of Valls (21 days) and moves to Tarragona.

1850. Claret arrives in Vic after his hospitalization for three months in Barcelona because of a complicated knee operation. Claret goes through Tarragona and returns through Barcelona with **Caixal**, dealing with securing the *Libreria Religiosa*.

1868. During these days Claret has to deny Mother **Paris** financial aid because he has given everything to Fr. **Xifre** for the foundation of the house of Jaca (Huesca).



FIRST FOUNDATIONS IN SPAIN

EARLY EXPANSION (1870-1899)

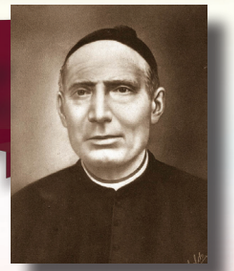
There were foundations in Alfaro and Alagon (1875), Solsona and Calahorra (1878) and Pamplona (1880). On September 3, 1876, Fr. **Antonio Pueyo**, future Bishop of Pasto (Colombia), was sent to Cordoba to create the first foundation in southern Spain.

In 1877 Fr. **Domingo Sola** was in charge of the foundation in Madrid, on Toledo Street, no. 42. The interest of founding in the capital of Spain was great on the part of the General Superior; it was about being able to conduct business with the government of the nation. Fr. Jose Mata would succeed Fr. Sola and in 20 years would guide the works in Madrid, the magazine *Iris de Paz*, which lasted until 2017, and those of the Congregation to a great splendor. Fr. **John Postius** and Fr. **Jose Dueso** worked there tirelessly. From there they also attended to the Collegiate Church of San Isidro, with the Archconfraternity of the Heart of Mary, and later the Diocesan Seminary.



VENERABLE JAIME CLOTET, CMF

Co-founder (1822-1898)

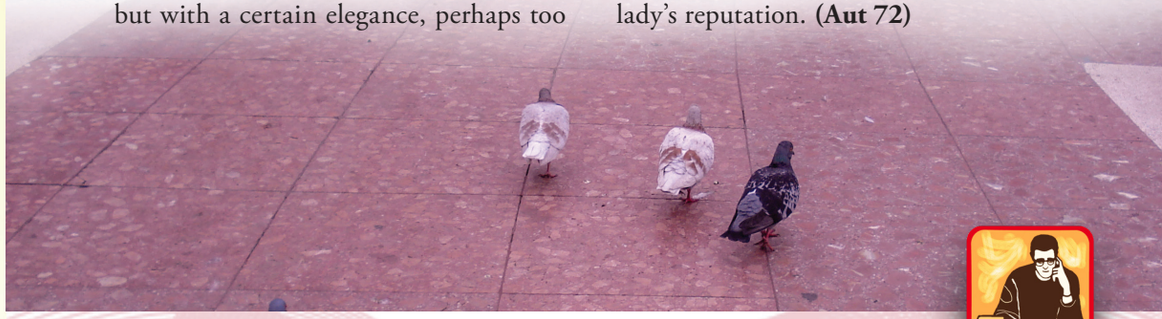


Manresa (Barcelona, Spain). He studied Philosophy and Theology in Barcelona, moving later to Vic where he studied Moral Theology. He went to Rome to receive the priestly ordination. Returning to Spain, he held various pastoral positions, but soon realized that it was not his vocation to cure souls. Advised by Mr. **Passarell**, Secretary of the Bishop of Vic, he met with Father Claret, whom he only knew by reputation. It was June 1849. In July he joined Father Claret to found the Congregation. Soon he was in charge of the first Brothers of the Congregation. In 1858 he was appointed Sub-Director General of the Congregation. In 1870 he accompanied Father Claret in Fontfroide during his last days and later wrote a *Summary of his Life*. In 1888 he ceased to be Sub-Director General and became Secretary. He wrote books on the catechesis for the deaf-mute and promoted the cause of beatification of Father Claret. In 1898 he died in the house in Gracia (Barcelona) with a reputation for holiness. His cause for beatification has been introduced in Rome.



HIS VALUES ARE PUT TO THE TEST

Mary also saved me from another worse danger, not unlike that of the chaste patriarch, Joseph. While I was in Barcelona, I used to visit a fellow townsman of mine from time to time. I never spoke with anyone else in the house except him. When I arrived there, I would go straight to his room and talk only with him, but the others in the house always saw me coming and going. I was fairly young then, and although it's true that I had to buy my own clothes, I liked to dress – I won't say luxuriously – but with a certain elegance, perhaps too much. Who knows? Maybe the Lord will take me to task for this on judgment day. One day I went to the house and asked after my friend. The lady of the house, a young woman, asked me to wait for him, as he was coming back soon. I had waited a little while when I realized that her intentions were passionate, as her words and gestures made clear. I called out to the Blessed Virgin and escaping from her hands, ran out of that house, never to return. I didn't tell anyone about what had happened, for fear of ruining the lady's reputation. **(Aut 72)**



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- *What is your reaction to situations that may jeopardize your chastity?*
- *Do you avoid the dangers as if by a certain spiritual instinct without showing off your own strength? (cf. CC 22).*
- *Do you invoke Mary in order to live with a heart centered on God?*

Going through trials refines missionary life.

- *How have you lived and embraced your trials? Have you asked for help?*

"The missionary brother is a constituent member of the Claretian congregation, called to it personally by Christ and, as one fully consecrated to God, receives from Christ the lay Claretian charism."
(General Chapter XVIII. *The Missionary Brothers,* 11)

FEBRUARY

5



1852. On Claret's first pastoral visit, he arrives in Las Tunas (Cuba), where he receives a grand reception.

1861. Claret walks through the farms that El Escorial owns in Gozquez (south-east of Madrid) in order to see the economic possibilities of the monastery.

1869. From Paris Claret warns Fr. **Joseph Xifre** that the Carmelite Sisters of Charity in Madrid are holding on to his money destined for the Congregation.



EARLY EXPANSION (1870-1899)

THE DISASTEROUS FOUNDATION IN CUBA

It was an offer from the Archbishop of Santiago, Cuba. It had always been a dream of the missionaries to continue the work of Father Claret in that diocese. In May 1880 Fr. **Xifre** sent the first expedition, led by Fr. Juan Manent. Everything started well, but tragedy soon followed. A few months later three of the members of the expedition died in three days, victims of yellow fever. Two weeks later, two others died. Faced with this sight, Fr. Antonio Sola became very discouraged. When Fr. Xifre ordered Fr. **Sola**'s return to the peninsula, a telegram crossed the message saying: *Sola, Masoliver, Parer, died, Xuriach gravely ill:* quid? Urgent. Manent. Fr. Xifre's answer was: *Come first steamboat. Xifre.* Of the 6 Fathers and 5 Brothers (as always, a mixed group) only two remained alive: Fr. Manent and Br. Domingo Sese. However, the reaction throughout the Congregation was a general offer to go to Cuba.



AUGUSTO ANDRES ORTEGA, CMF

Missionary and Theologian (1904-1983)



Villavedon (Burgos, Spain). He completed his theological studies in Spain, Italy, France, Belgium and Germany. He received a PhD in Philosophy at the Roman universities, with his doctoral thesis on the *Analogy of Being.* He devoted himself to teaching in several ecclesiastical centers: Sigüenza, Zafra, Burgos, Granada, Seville, Salamanca and Rome. He was a professor and member of the Institute of Political Studies and organized seminars at the Menendez Pelayo University in Santander. He was a friend of Eugenio d'Ors, Zubiri, Conde, Ridruejo, Lain Entralgo, Sopeña, Aranguren, Valverde, Panero, etc. His writings offer us a good lesson on how to do theology and philosophy in our time. In them he encourages rationality as the source of modernity and traditional Catholic thought. His writings have been published in three volumes in the prestigious Editorial BAC (Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos [Library of Christian Authors]). The work consists of three volumes: I: *Theological reason and mystical experience. God encountering man*; II: *Life in Christ Christian life as divinization of man;* III: *The philosophical perspective. Man, world, God.*



A Friend's Betrayal

A young man of my own age suggested that we pool our interests, and I agreed. We began by entering a lottery and were quite lucky at it… **(Aut 73)**



I already had a large number of receipts that added up to a pretty sum when one day, lo and behold, he came and told me that one of our tickets had won… but that when he went to collect the money he found that he'd lost the ticket. And he was telling the truth…because he had gambled it all away and lost. But that wasn't all. He went to my room while I was away…and took all the receipts of our partnership…Finally, in an attempt to recoup his losses, and finding that he had nothing more to gamble with, he broke into the house of an acquaintance, stole the jewels of the lady of the house, and sold them. He gambled the money and lost again. **(Aut 74)**

Meanwhile the lady discovered that her jewels were missing…She reported him to the authorities, who captured the thief. He confessed his crime, was prosecuted and sentenced to two years in prison. I simply can't describe how great a blow this was to me – and not just because of my financial loss, although that was great enough, but because of my loss of honor… **(Aut 75)**



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- *Have you experienced the betrayal of a friend?*
- *Has this caused you to question the value of friendship?*
- *What does honor mean to you?*

Given the value of friendship and of love, there are only two options: fidelity or betrayal.

- *What do you say?*

"Love helps you to grow. But love and the cross go together.
Accepting the cross is a sign of love and fruitfulness.
If we want to grow the Congregation, we must be willing
to sacrifice our life for our brothers."
(Aquilino Bocos Merino, *Herencia y profecia,* 50)

FEBRUARY

6



1848. From Vic Claret sets out on a trip to Madrid to attend the consecration of Bishop **Codina** and travel with him to the Canary Islands.

1855. A priest and a group of 12 seminarians from the Peninsula arrive in Santiago; Claret draws up a plan of formation for them until their ordination.

1859. Claret receives word of the appointment of Fr. Felix de Cadiz as his successor in Santiago; however, the appointment was unsuccessful.



EARLY EXPANSION (1870-1899)

THE EXPULSION FROM FRANCE

In March of 1880 a decree from the government of the French Republic established the obligation for all the religious communities to regularize their situation by requesting their legal recognition. It was just a pretext. During the month of October, the government proceeded, through a premeditated and well-organized plan, to close the religious houses. The great complaint or pretext of the republicans was that the Congregations were hostile to the regime, and should be combated and annihilated. The General Secretary of the Prefecture of the Eastern Pyrenees, accompanied by some police officers, appeared at the house of the Missionaries on October 26th and ordered them to leave the house in a few hours. After the useless protests of Fr. **Clotet**, the approximately 80 members of the community left Thuir on foot the next day to Elne where they took a train to Spain. Three or four Brothers stayed with a Priest to take care of the house. The scholasticate was installed in Gracia, while the novices joined the novitiate which already existed in Vic since 1878.



ANTHONY M. DE GALDACANO

Capuchin Friar (1812-1863)



Galdacano, (Vizcaya, Spain). Capuchin friar who traveled as a missionary to Venezuela, the United States, Puerto Rico and finally to Cuba. In 1853 he received the appointment as missionary from Father Claret and later that as professor of Theology at the seminary in Santiago, Cuba. In 1860 he went on to manage the same chair in the seminary of El Escorial (Spain), receiving the title of chaplain. He died on February 2, 1863 of jaundice. About him Claret wrote: *This priest joined my company after two years in Cuba. A religious exclaustrated by the Revolution, he went first to the United States and later to Puerto Rico as a pastor. As he found Puerto Rico unsuitable to him, he came to Cuba, where he did better. He is a very well educated and zealous religious and has accompanied me on numerous mission campaigns, helping with confessions. I gave him a teaching position in the seminary and, after the arrival of my successor, he came to Spain, where I appointed him to the chair of theology in the seminary of the Escorial.*



THE ATTRACTION FOR CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE



Barcelona

Disenchanted, weary, and bored with the world, I considered leaving it for the solitary life of a Carthusian and pursued my studies with this end in view. I felt that I would be failing in my duty if I didn't tell my father of this decision, and the first chance I had, I did so, during one of his many business trips to Barcelona. He was deeply disappointed when I told him that I wanted to give up manufacturing. He told me of all the fond hopes he had for me and his business and for the partnership we might have entered. When I mentioned that I wanted to become a Carthusian, his sorrow reached its peak. **(Aut 77)**

But since he was a good Christian, he told me, I don't want to thwart your vocation, God forbid. Think it over carefully, commend it to God, and consult with your spiritual director. If he says that this is God's will, then I respect and worship it, however it may pain me. Even so, I'd rather see you become a secular priest than a monk. Whatever happens, may God's will be done. **(Aut 78)**



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- *Have you experienced any strong disenchantment with the "world" that has influenced your vocation?*
- *Were there proposals that you had to set aside to follow Jesus the missionary?*
- *What was your family's reaction to your vocational decision?*

Father Claret came to many different crossroads in his life. He made continuous choices and renunciations.

- *What have your crossroads been?*

"In asceticism, Claretian Christocentrism
translates into an ardent desire to imitate Christ...
The imitation of Christ was, therefore, his great obsession."
(Juan M. Lozano, *Mystic and Man of Action*)

FEBRUARY

7



1845. Claret is preaching during Lent in Mataro (Barcelona).

1853. Claret directs a lively defense to the Captain General of Cuba about the apostolic action of the slandered Capuchin Fr. **Esteban de Adoain**, and, incidentally, the other missionaries.

1867. Fr. **Carmelo Sala**, his former chaplain and now canon of Cadiz, serves as a link for the distribution of books, which *at present it is one of the means that the mercy of God is providing.*



EARLY EXPANSION (1870-1899)

THE FAMOUS PAINTING FROM THUIR

In 1871 the Jesuit Brother Sebastian Galles, who had requested to stay in our house in Thuir (France), painted the image of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, called *Thuir*, for the novices' chapel and donated it to the Congregation. After a bizarre and not entirely clear history, the painting arrived in Italy, probably to be reproduced. In 1934 the painting was placed on the main altar of the crypt of the Basilica of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Rome. In 1952, once the Basilica was inaugurated, the painting was placed on the main altar of the great basilica. This painting would later be used for the processions around the Basilica on the Feast Day of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In 1955 the painting from Thuir was replaced by a mosaic inspired by it and the painting was placed permanently in the chapel of the recently inaugurated General Curia, in an arched niche where today it is displayed for the veneration of the community.



BLESSED PIUS IX

Pope (1792-1878)



Senigallia (Italy). He was elected Pope in 1846. He had to face the *Italian question* and years later the *Roman question*. In the year 1848 he had to take refuge in Gaeta and Portici. He was able to return to Rome in 1850. He experienced a fall from temporal power in 1870. He proclaimed the dogma of the Immaculate Conception and published the *Syllabus*. He celebrated the First Vatican Council (1869-1870), which defined pontifical infallibility. On November 7 and 23, 1865, he received the Fr. Founder at an audience to gather information about the Constitutions and his relationship with the Queen of Spain after the recognition of the Kingdom of Italy. On April 24, 1869 he received Claret again. He summarized Claret's behavior in this way: *I saw Bishop Claret, and I recognized in him a worthy clergyman; a man dedicated to God, and, although detached from politics, knows only too well its lack of feverishness and the malice of men who are Catholics only by name.*



THE IMPORTANCE OF SPIRITUAL ACCOMPANIMENT



My older brother John married Mary Casajuana, the daughter of Maurice Casajuana, whom the bishop of Vich had placed in charge of collecting the rents of certain properties and seigniories in Sallent. This man was very highly esteemed by the bishop and frequently went to see him. On one of these visits he spoke of my insignificant self. Who knows what it was he said, but it caused the bishop to want to meet me. **(Aut 80)**

I was told that I should go to Vich, but I didn't want to because I was afraid that he might upset my plans for becoming a Carthusian, a life that I yearned for so much. I told my teacher this and he answered, I'll go with you to see a Father of the Oratory, Father Canti, a man of wisdom, prudence, and experience, who will tell you what you should do. We presented ourselves to the good father, and after hearing all my reasons for not going to Vich, he told me, Go, and if the Lord Bishop knows that it is God's will that you enter the Carthusians, far from opposing you, he will be your protector. **(Aut 81)**



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- *Is your missionary life informed by searching for God's will?*
- *What role does spiritual accompaniment play in this regard?*
- *What trust do you have in human mediations for the discernment of God's will?*
- *List and thank the people who have guided you in the ways of the Lord.*
- *Who walks with you as a "spiritual director"?*

"Our faith demands of us a certain sparingness in use,
and the Church is obliged to live and administer its own goods
in such a way that the Gospel is proclaimed to the poor.
If instead the Church appears to be among the rich and the powerful of this
world its credibility is diminished." (*Justitia in Mundo,* 47)

FEBRUARY

8



1844. Claret receives the religious profession of the first two Carmelite Sisters of Charity.

1848. Claret arrives in Madrid on the way to the Canary Islands. He stays at the home of Mr. **Jose Maria Ramirez Cotes,** with whom Fr. Fermin de la Cruz lives, both closely related to the nunciature. There he also meets Fr. **John N. Lobo,** Jesuit Fr. Carasa, Mother **Micaela of the Blessed Sacrament** and he meets with his friend Fr. **Jaime Balmes** for the last time, who was already seriously ill.

1858. From Madrid Claret informs his family of the great indecision in which he finds himself. He does not know whether to continue in Madrid or what direction he will take.



EARLY EXPANSION (1870-1899)

THE MISSIONS IN THE GULF OF GUINEA

Since 1858 the Jesuits were in charge of this Vicariate. In 1868 the state subsidy was withdrawn, and they left definitively in 1872. Things went badly in that mission until, finally, in 1882 Fr. **Xifre** was invited to take it over. By accepting he obtained, in addition, the exemption from military service, which lasted three years, for young missionaries in formation, an exemption Fr. Xifre greatly desired. Once he accepted, the first expedition of 12 volunteer missionaries was sent in 1883. Fr. **Ciriaco Ramirez** was designated as Apostolic Prefect.

Something similar to what happened in Cuba was repeated here. Many young Missionaries died, even a few days or weeks after arriving. And in Spain there were many Claretians who offered to replace those who died. It was a great example, we could say, of martyrdom, because, in effect, then many of them continued to die. So much so that Fr. Xifre had to put a stop to it because there were too many who wanted to go to that mission.



JOÃO DE CASTRO ENGLER, CMF

General Consultor (1910-1992)



Campinas (Brazil). He made his first studies in Campinas, and from 1922 to 1925, in the Claretian seminary of Guarulhos. He devoted himself fundamentally to teaching theology. He studied in Brazil and Rome, where he was ordained a priest in 1936. He earned a PhD in Dogmatics at the Gregorian University, he taught theology in the Claretian seminary of Albano-Laziale (Italy) and later in those of Garulhos and Curitiba (Brazil) where he was Rector. From 1954 to 1960 he was Provincial of Brasil Meridional. At this time, he was chair (founder) of Latin Language and Literature in the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters of Parana (federal). In 1961 he was named member of the General Government until 1967. At the same time, he was Director of the *Claretianum* in Rome and professor. Returning to Brazil, he was appointed Director of *Studium Theologicum* in Curitiba and professor. After nine years of illness, he died in Rio Claro.



The bell tower, Vic Cathedral



Providential Encounters

At the beginning of September, 1829, I left Barcelona and because my parents wanted me to go to Sallent…I stayed with them until September 29, the feast of St. Michael, when we left after hearing Mass… We reached Vich that night, completely soaked. **(Aut 83)**

On the following day we went to see the bishop, Paul de Jesus Corcuera, who received us kindly. …I was stationed with the Steward of the Bishop's Palace, Msgr. Fortian Bres, a very good priest who showed me a great deal of affection. I lived with him throughout my stay in Vich… **(Aut 84)**

In the early days of my stay in Vich, I asked whether anyone could recommend a good priest to hear my general confession. I was advised to go to a priest of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri, Father Peter Bach. I made a general confession of my whole life to him and afterward always made my weekly confessions with this very good director. It is worth noting that God has used three Fathers of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri to counsel and direct me at the most crucial moments in my spiritual life… **(Aut 85)**



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

Claret recognizes that God put several significant people in his path to help him on his formative journey.

- *Who are the people who most marked your initial formation?*
- *What do you remember from those first experiences?*
- *Call to mind the mediations that God has used with you.*
- *Write a prayer of thanksgiving.*

"Those who are already rich are bound to accept a less material way of life, with less waste, in order to avoid the destruction of the heritage which they are obliged by absolute justice to share with all other members of the human race." (*Justitia in Mundo,* 70. 7)

FEBRUARY

9



1844. Dr. **Jaime Soler** writes that he has just spoken with Claret, who has informed him about a long list of towns where he needs to give missions.

1848. Claret accompanies Bishop **Codina** on visits to several bishops and the nuncio **Brunelli**; through him he learns that Fr. **Luciano Casadevall** has been appointed Bishop of Vic, a seat that was vacant for 13 years. On the same day Claret writes to congratulate him.

1860. Claret accompanies the royals to a thanksgiving event in the Church of Atocha (Madrid) for a Spanish victory in the Moroccan war.



EARLY EXPANSION (1870-1899)

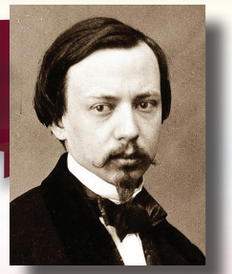
THE FOUNDATION IN MEXICO

The idea of founding in Mexico had already passed through the mind of Father Claret while he was in Rome for the occasion of the Council. But his enthusiasm was limited due to the political situation. It was in 1883 when this situation had improved that he could talk seriously about the subject. A nephew of the Archbishop of Mexico City, a canon, met with Fr. **Xifre** in Barcelona and proposed the foundation. Once accepted, it was Fr. **Domingo Sola** who was in charge of carrying it out, on November 15th. The first city chosen was Toluca. On August 3, 1884, they took possession of the church and the house. In order to avoid the drawback of the legal norm on the number of members per community, Fr. Sola planned the erection of a school and another house adjoining the church. The missions still took precedence in the apostolate. And in 1889 a house of Spiritual Exercises was inaugurated. In 1887 the house of Jesus Maria was founded in the Mexican capital, and in 1892 that of San Hipolito.



LUIS DE MADRAZO

Court Painter (1825-1897)



Madrid (Spain). Painter, son of the painter Jose de Madrazo and brother of Federico. He painted portraits and thematic and religious paintings. In Rome he met one of the creators of the Nazarene movement, Friedrich Overbeck, in whose aesthetic parameters he developed his art. He lived in Paris, Munich, Venice and Berlin. In the last decade of the 19th century he settled in Pompeii together with painters Bernardino Montañes and Francisco Sainz. Returning to Madrid, he devoted himself basically to teaching and painting portraits for noblemen, and Father Claret among others. Princess **Isabella**, who so many times personally visited the community of the Claretian Missionaries of Segovia and who boasted of having gone to confession many times with them as a child, gave them the valuable picture of the Founder from Madrazo in 1888, probably the most valuable at present. It is conserved in the Provincial Curia of the Claretians of Santiago, in Madrid.



AN INTENSE SPIRITUAL LIFE

After arriving in Vich, I confessed and received Communion every week, but after a while the director had me confess twice a week and receive Communion four times a week. I served Mass daily for Father Fortian Bres. Every day I made a half-hour of mental prayer, visited the Blessed Sacrament during Forty Hours' Devotion, and also visited the shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary in the Dominican Church of the same city, rain or shine. And even though the streets were filled with snow, I never omitted my visits to the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin Mary. **(Aut 86)**

Every day at table we read the life of the saint of the day. Furthermore, with the director's approval, on three days, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, I took the discipline and on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday I wore the cilice. Through all these devotional practices I returned to my first fervor, without slacking off in my studies to which I applied myself to the utmost of my ability, always with the purest and most upright intention possible. **(Aut 87)**



Church of the Our Lady of Sorrows (Vic)



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

Claret, in his time as a seminarian, led a very intense and disciplined rhythm of spiritual life.

- *What methods did you use to cultivate your spiritual life during your initial formation? What is the spiritual rhythm of your daily life now?*

The personal project is a means for advancing in the different dimensions of missionary life.

- *Do you value it? Do you make it? Do you review it? Do you update it?*

"Thus ... for being free and purified,
and also united to God, none of these can molest it.
Thus, then, the soul is in the enjoyment now of habitual sweetness and tranquility that never fail it."
(St. John of the Cross, *Spiritual Canticle*, XXIV. 5)

FEBRUARY

10



1847. Claret begins a mission in Alforja (Tarragona), where he will have to deal with the heretical leader Miguel Ribas.

1848. In Madrid, on the way to the Canary Islands, Jesuit Fr. Carasa, takes him to preach at Salesas and the hospice of San Juan de Dios.

1865. Claret begins Spiritual Exercises for men and women in Madrid.



EARLY EXPANSION (1870-1899)

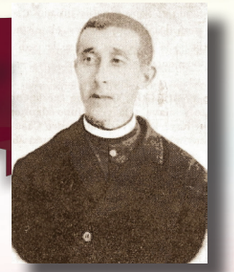
THE FOUNDATION IN ROME

Founding in Rome is usually the hope of every Institute. It took 14 years after the Founder's death before the Claretian Missionaries made a stable presence in the Eternal City. This happened on December 30, 1884, following the decision of the General Chapter of 1876 and the absence of Fr. **Jose Reig,** a Mercedarian religious, who was the one who handled all the affairs of the Congregation in Rome. The occasion was prompted by the Archbishop of Santander, **Vicente Calvo Valero,** who had founded the Spanish Ecclesiastical College in 1882 so that seminarians from his diocese and others could study in San Apolinar. When the archbishop was transferred to Cadiz, he offered Fr. **Xifre**, Superior General, the possibility for the Claretian missionaries to direct the College, still under his responsibility. In 1884 the contract was signed and the first Claretians were sent for this purpose and to take the legal costs to the Holy See. This was the first work of the Claretian Missionaries in Rome.

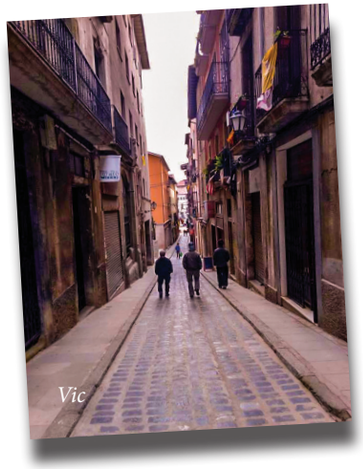


PEDRO GUEVARA, CMF

Provincial of Castilla (1863-1941)



Cervera del Rio Alhama (La Rioja, Spain). He entered the Claretian postulancy in Alagon in 1876 and made his nov=itiate in Thuir, making his profession in 1879. Exiled from France with all the members of his community in 1880, he went to Barcelona, where he continued his studies, being ordained a priest in 1885 in Segovia with a dispensation for his age. He devoted himself at first to teaching and to missions. He soon became a Novice Master, and in 1907 he was appointed Provincial Superior of Castilla. He was a member of the General Chapters of 1912 and 1922. During the Spanish Civil War, he greatly edified the family that offered him lodging and they considered him a saint. In 1940 he went to Ciudad Real to be confessor of the young Fathers. He died there with a reputation as a saint in the Congregation. His last words were: *To restore the world, let us begin with ourselves. Let us reform ourselves and then reform others, everyone else.*





A Temporary Vocation

During my first year of philosophy…I never lost sight of my longing for the Carthusian life. I had a large picture of St. Bruno on my desk. Nearly every time I went to confession I spoke to my director of my desire to enter the Carthusians… **(Aut 88)**

Quite content, I undertook the journey to Barcelona, Badalona, and Monte-Alegre. Shortly before my arrival at Barcelona, a hurricane came up, so dreadful that I was terrified. I had studied so much that year that I was a little weak in the chest, and as we ran for shelter from the great sheets of rain, the strain of running and the clouds of dust that rose from the parched earth began to suffocate me severely. I thought, Perhaps God doesn't want you to join the Carthusians. This thought alarmed me greatly. What is certain is that I didn't have the will to go on, and so I returned to Vich… **(Aut 89)**

After that first year of philosophy I no longer thought about becoming a Carthusian and realized that that vocation had only been temporary… **(Aut 93)**



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- *Do you discover God's calls through signs of the times and the daily situations of life?*
- *Have you ever experienced attraction to another type of consecrated life?*
- *What helped you discover God's call to be a Claretian?*
- *Have you seen your vocational desires fulfilled? Call to mind the stages through which your vocational journey has gone and give thanks for each of them.*

"Another force that drives me to preach and hear confessions is my desire to make my neighbors happy."
(*Aut* 213)

FEBRUARY

11



1865. It is a joy for Claret that on this day the Holy See has granted a rescript according to which the Director General of the Congregation may issue dimissorial letters for ordination.

1867. Today, and almost every day this month, Claret goes to the Ministry about the foundation of Mother **Paris** in Reus.

1870. Claret speaks at the meeting of the Spanish bishops in Rome about a single and universal catechism.



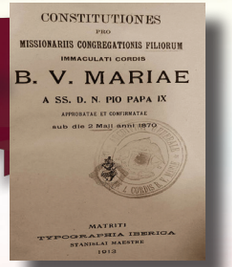
EARLY EXPANSION (1870-1899)

THE FOUNDATION IN SANTO DOMINGO DE LA CALZADA

The church and the College-University of the Franciscans were the basis for the foundation in Santo Domingo de la Calzada (La Rioja) in 1885. It was the first great College of the Congregation in Spain. The other large group was previously that of France: Prades and Thuir. All the theologians traveled there from Gracia; the novitiate also moved. Fr. **Isaac Burgos** intervened in the foundation. Its first Superior was Fr. **Clement Serrat**. Fr. **Pablo Vallier**, having recently arrived from Chile, was the Novice Master. The condition had been placed on the authorities to repair the building. Since it had not been fulfilled, Fr. **Xifre** ordered the community to leave Santo Domingo, but with the intervention of Fr. Felipe Amigo, a priest from the city, things were settled and the transfer was revoked. Soon the Hospital and the schools were built. The community grew and the new facilities were also occupied. With the scholasticate, the General Government moved there too. On September 1, 1906, the Minor Seminary was inaugurated.



APPROVAL OF THE CONSTITUTIONS



On this date of 1870, and after the petition personally taken to Rome by Fathe**r Claret, our** *Constitutions* **were approved by Pope Pius IX.** In turn, and as a sign of historical continuity, February 11, 1982 was also the date on which the Decree of the Congregation for Religious and for Secular Institutes was published, by which the post-conciliar revision of our Constitutions was approved. They are our book of life, which we are meant to incarnate in our missionary lives and experience. As such, it helps us first of all to remember the journey as a disciple of the Founder Father and many brothers: an experience worth sharing by his side in following Jesus. This small book condenses and articulates the Gospel experience described in the Founder's *Autobiography*. By gratefully calling to mind our *Constitutions,* we celebrate our greatest gift, which is the implantation of Jesus of the Gospel at the center of our existence.



WORDS THAT MARK HIS LIFE

Every year in the chapel, during Lent, we made an eight-day retreat, from Sunday to Sunday. The bishop attended all the morning and evening exercises. I recall that during a sermon one day he said, Perhaps someone will ask why the bishop is spending so much time with the students. I would tell him that I know what I'm doing. If I can have good students now, I'll have good priests and good pastors later. Think how much more rest I'll have then! It is very important for students to be continually nourished spiritually during their studies; otherwise they will grow up to be proud, which is the worst they can bring upon themselves and pride is the source of all sin. I would rather have them know a little less and be pious, than to know a great deal with little or no piety and be puffed up with the wind of vanity. **(Aut 92)**



Façade of the former seminary chapel (Vic)



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

Claret, after several decades, still remembers the wise words of his bishop.

- *Are there words that you have either heard or read, that have marked your life and that you still remember with gratitude?*
- *What place do study and piety occupy in your missionary life even today?*

Words have power for life and transformation.

- *List the words that have most marked your life and mission.*

"In order to be faithful to the present moment, Claretian formation must be living, creative and effective within a strict fidelity to our mission."
(General Chapter XVIII. *Formation,* 8)

FEBRUARY

12



1849. Claret continues preaching a mission in Tejeda (Canary Islands).

1850. Claret is preaching Spiritual Exercises in the Convent of Santa Catalina (Vic).

1868. With the bull *Singularis Natura*, **Pius IX** commissioned Claret to deliver *The Golden Rose* to the queen.



EARLY EXPANSION (1870-1899)

THE FOUNDATION IN CERVERA

The initial difficulties in Santo Domingo and the growth in the number of formandi in the Congregation led to the acceptance of the providential offer that was made in 1887 to occupy the grandiose building of the former University of Cervera (Lleida), even larger than the Santo Domingo building. Fr. **Pedro Mulleras** was the first Superior, followed by Fr. **Antonio Naval**. Soon works began and the novitiate and the scholasticate for philosophy students were opened.

Despite the enormous expenses involved in preparing the spacious building, which had been used as barracks for troops, Fr. **Xifre** moved forward trusting in Providence and making painful cuts. Thanks to the Coadjutor Brothers, it was prepared, moving the staff in August 1888. Fr. Xifre himself moved his residence there. The community was growing, reaching 322 members in one year. The royal chapel went from having four small altars to sixteen new altars. A Physics laboratory and a Natural History museum were also built.



BASILIO GIL BUENO

Bishop of Huesca (1811-1870)

Palazuelos (Guadalajara, Spain). He was Dean of Barbastro and restored the Seminary. Later, he was named Chapter Vicar and Ecclesiastical Governor *sede vacante*. In 1861 he was promoted to be Bishop of Huesca. Banished in 1868 by the revolutionary junta, he was able to return to his diocese after a year of grief and hardship. He was a man of recognized virtue and science who was mainly concerned with the formation of the clergy. He went to Rome in 1869 to the First Vatican Council. While seriously ill in Rome, he received the last sacraments from the Archbishop of Zaragoza, Fray Manuel Garcia Gil. On February 12, 1870, Claret visited him ten minutes before he died at his residence on Via Giulia 118. Claret also attended his funeral on February 15th in Santa Maria Vallicella. The bishop's secretary was Venerable Saturnino Lopez Novoa, co-founder of the Congregation of the Little Sisters of the Abandoned Elderly together with Saint Teresa de Jesus Jornet.



VICTORY WITH MARY'S STRENGTH

I had the following experience while I was in my second year of philosophy at Vich. That winter I had caught a bad cold and was ordered to bed; so I obeyed. One day as I lay there…I felt a terrible temptation. I turned to Mary, called on my guardian angel, and prayed to all my name-saints… **(Aut 95)**

Finally I turned over on my other side, to see if the temptation would go away, when suddenly I saw the Blessed Virgin Mary, very beautiful and gracious… and in her arms I saw a huge garland of the most beautiful roses… **(Aut 96)**

I also saw a band of saints standing at her right hand, in an attitude of prayer…I believed…that those were my patron saints praying and interceding for me so that I wouldn't fall into the temptation… **(Aut 97)**

…What made me believe that what had happened was real, and a special grace from Mary, was the fact that from that moment on I was free from temptation and for many years stayed free of any temptation against chastity. If later there have been any such temptations, they have been so insignificant that they hardly deserve to be called temptations. Glory to Mary! Victory through Mary! **(Aut 98)**



Painting depicting the temptation of Claret



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- *Were there temptations that you still remember because they marked your spiritual journey during your process of formation?*
- *What resources did you use and do you use now to deal with them positively?*
- *Do you turn to Mary, "the victorious woman," to overcome temptations?*

For Claret, Mary is Mother, Teacher and Formator. His relationship with her is decisive at critical moments.

- *Call to mind your temptations in Mary's presence and discover the victory of Grace over sin.*

"In our brother Martyrs we contemplate the paradigm
of what we are called to be, that is,
children of the Heart of Mary, from the Magnificat to Calvary."
(Aquilino Bocos Merino, *Missionary Testament of our Martyrs*)

FEBRUARY

13



1859. Claret concludes a session of Spiritual Exercises for men in the San Isidro collegiate church (Madrid).

1868. Claret starts Spiritual Exercises for the Sisters of the Pious Schools in Madrid.

1869. Fr. **Dionisio Gonzalez** appears in court of Colmenar Viejo (Madrid) representing Claret, who was exiled in Paris, to account for the supposed theft of jewelry from El Escorial.



EARLY EXPANSION (1870-1899)

OTHER FOUNDATIONS IN SPAIN THROUGH 1888

In 1881 the house was founded in Las Palmas, Canary Islands. The foundation was carried out by Fr. Jose Prim, an engaging missionary of those islands. Fr. **Hilario Brossosa** strengthened his work. On July 14, 1881, the house of Zafra was founded. Fr. **Ramon Genover** was in charge of this foundation. In 1882 the house was founded in Balmaseda (Biscay), despite being a population of only 2,500 inhabitants, and in Tarragona in 1883. The Bishop of Lleida insistently requested a foundation in his diocese: in 1885 Fr. **Pedro Mulleras** arrived to organize this foundation, at the same time that cholera was raging in the city. The foundation in Jaen was also at the request of its Bishop, in 1885. In 1886 the house in Bilbao was founded, where Fr. **Diego Gavin** went as Superior. Plasencia was another foundation helped by the Bishop; Fr. Jose Navarro took possession of it in 1886. There were many foundations in just a few years, with many formandi.



JOSE DUESO, CMF

Missionary and Publisher (1869-1943)



Plan (Huesca, Spain). Propagator of the Catholic press. Immediately after his priestly ordination he was assigned to Madrid. And with him came countless initiatives for the dissemination of the Catholic press. He intended to create a prestigious and strong Catholic press that would confront the liberal press of the time. In 1899 he took over the magazine *Iris de Paz*. In 1909 Fr. Dueso led two projects of great importance: the foundation of a national Catholic newspaper, which could compete with the liberal newspapers of the capital, and the maintenance of the *Associated Press*, a *Catholic Information Agency* promoted by him, which had been created the previous year under the protection of the bishops. In 1920 there were 64 newspapers that received the *Associated Press* service. Fr. Dueso began to imagine a second era. It would include cinema, radio, posters, flyers, books, brochures, workshops and conferences, etc. With these new projects his exciting life came to an end.



A Particular Rhythm of Formation

The bishop would not ordain anyone who was enrolled in the complete course of studies until he was well-advanced in the course. He followed a regular procedure. After four years of theology, he conferred the four minor orders, preceded by a ten-day retreat. After the fifth year, he conferred the sub-diaconate, preceded by a twenty-day retreat. After the sixth year, he conferred the diaconate, preceded by a thirty-day retreat. Finally, after the seventh year, he conferred the priesthood, preceded by a forty-day retreat. **(Aut 99)**

Although this was his constant procedure, he altered it in my case, wanting to see me ordained sooner... **(Aut 100)**



View from the window of the Motherhouse (Vic)



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

The Bishop took into account Claret's particular rhythm of formation, that is why he moved the ordination closer.

- *How do you judge the help and respect of your formators in terms of your own personal rate of growth?*
- *Are you, on your part, understanding and flexible about the particular rhythms of others?*

"Apostle of Mary, Anthony Claret is, therefore, eminently in the passive sense of the expression: a missionary sent and supported by the Virgin."
(Juan M. Lozano, *Mystic and Man of Action*)

FEBRUARY

14



1846. Claret starts a mission in Valls (Tarragona).

1860. Claret attends the event chaired by the nuncio in San Isidro (Madrid) as a thanksgiving for the triumphs in the war in Africa.

1868. The administration of the farms of El Escorial brings *new disappointments every day*. They have sold the house in Madrid which the monastery owned to the local government to pay for another property.



EARLY EXPANSION (1870-1899)

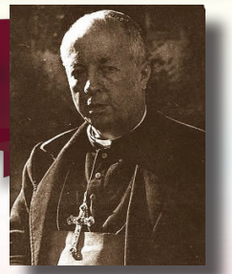
THE MINISTRY OF TEACHING

In 1885, when the Spanish civil authorities granted permission to the Congregation to be able to teach, there were already schools in Segovia (1884), Toluca (1884), Gracia (1885), and in the following years schools were created in other houses such as Zafra, Alfaro, Calatayud, Medina de Rioseco, Las Palmas, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, etc. As we said before, Father Claret wrote in 1869 to Fr. **Xifre** showing his agreement to be open to teaching, and he had thought that the Brothers could carry out this ministry, but Fr. Xifre thought it more convenient to also appoint Priests. At the beginning, Fr. Xifre was not very enthusiastic about the idea, thinking that our apostolate should concentrate on preaching. This was probably one of the reasons for the strong increase in Brothers in those years: the remodeling of old buildings and teaching. Indeed, we see in the statistics how in the 80s and 90s of the 19th century there were more Brothers than Fathers in the Congregation.



LEONCIO FERNANDEZ, CMF

Apostolic Vicar of Fernando Poo (1892-1957)



Tosos (Zaragoza, Spain). Destined to the Missions of Fernando Poo in 1917, his motto was always: *I will most gladly spend and be utterly spent for your souls.* Soon Fr. **Nicolas Gonzalez** wanted him at his side to visit the mission of Bata. And there he stayed. Later he was appointed Superior of Rio Benito and of Bata. With his good knowledge of the *fang* language, he soon began to advance into the continent in search of new foundations. In 1930 he was appointed member of the Provincial Government and had to move to Santa Isabel. And from there to Spain upon receiving the appointment of Apostolic Vicar. He received his episcopal consecration in Barcelona. He was a great reformer in every way, also materially speaking, and he founded the missions of Ebebiyin and Aconibe. He promoted native vocations. The Spanish Government decorated him with the Cross of Isabella the Catholic and the Cross of Africa. He was a poor, charitable and compassionate bishop.

MINISTER OF THE WORD



During the Ember Days of St. Thomas in that same year of 1834, 1 received the diaconate. At the ordination the bishop read those words of St. Paul in the Pontifical: For it is not against human enemies that we have to struggle, but against the Sovereignties and the Powers who originate the darkness in this world... At that moment the Lord made me understand clearly the meaning of the demons I saw during the temptation I described in the preceding chapter. **(Aut 101)**





FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

Claret understood in his diaconal ordination that God made him minister of the Word.

- *How important is the Word of God in your life?*
- *Is your ministry focused on the proclamation of the Word of God?*
- *How is your attitude of "diakonia" today?*

"Natural resources are limited; some are not, as it is said, renewable. Using them as if they were inexhaustible, with absolute dominion, seriously endangers their availability not only for the present generation but above all for generations to come."
(John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei Socialis,* 34)

FEBRUARY

15



1850. Claret is so overwhelmed by various jobs, that on this day he has *felt tempted to die... [because of] the storm I am in.*

1853. On his first pastoral visit, Claret arrives from Tiguabos to Saltadero (now Guantanamo); in both places he has found that the oils were from before 1837.

1856. He manages to sign his name with his arm still bandaged after the attack.



EARLY EXPANSION (1870-1899)

ANNALES CONGREGATIONIS

At the beginning the chronicles of the missions and other ministries were published in the magazine *La Lectura Catolica [Catholic Reading]*, published in Madrid and directed by Fr. Jose Salamero, a great friend and benefactor of the missionaries. All the houses were subscribed. Fr. Jose Mata also collaborated in it. But it did not fulfill the needs of the Congregation. On November 20, 1885, the General Government published the first issue of *Boletin Religioso de la Congregacion [Religious Bulletin of the Congregation]*, which later, in January 1889, would be called *Annales de la Congregacion [Annals of the Congregation]*, until the General Chapter of 1934, which included the official documents in Latin and it was renamed *Annales Congregationis*. Its purpose was to inform about everything that happened in the Congregation, but also to fill the void caused by the prohibition of the habitual reading of newspapers and magazines, publishing a selection of the most important news from all over the world. At first, subscribers outside the Congregation were admitted, but soon the General Government became aware of inappropriateness and it became an exclusively internal bulletin.



MANUEL JOSE MIURA

Collaborator of Claret (1815-?)



Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic). He was born on February 12, 1815. In 1827 he emigrated to Santiago, Cuba. He was ordained in 1839. He was the pastor of the Church of Santo Tomas Apostol. In 1852 he was entrusted with the position of public prosecutor. Father Claret wrote of him: *He is a good man who I trust completely...very zealous and virtuous.* He took over as canon of Santiago, Cuba in 1857. The Saint appreciated him very much, as seen by these expressions addressed to him: *You already know that there has always been, is and will be the best peace and harmony of opinions between us.* When the Dean of Santiago, Cuba died, the Archbishop Primo Calvo Lope asked Father Claret to propose Miura. And the Saint, according to his own confession, did it *instantly, because it was the will of the current Archbishop, and also because it was my will, you know well that I love him very much.* Mother **Paris** appointed him as executor of her property in Cuba.

PRESBYTERAL ORDINATION





Cathedral of Saint Peter of Vic

On the thirteenth of June, 1835, I was ordained to the priesthood, not by the bishop of Vich, who had an illness of which he was to die on July 5, but by the bishop of Solsona. Before my priestly ordination I made a forty-day retreat. I have never made a retreat so full of sufferings and trials but neither, perhaps, so replete with great graces. I realized this on the day I said my First Mass, June 21, the feast of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, a patron of the Congregation, as well as on my ordination day, the feast of St. Anthony, my own patron saint. **(Aut 102)**



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- *Have any of your most important experiences been accompanied by grief and temptations?*
- *Did you think you recognized in them the abundant grace of the Lord?*
- *Pray with the words of St. Paul: "Stir into flame the gift of God that you have through the imposition of my hands."*
- *Invite others to be "fishers of men."*

"The perfect union in this life through grace and love demands that they live in darkness to all the objects of sight, hearing, and imagination, and to everything comprehensible to the heart, which signifies the soul."
(St. John of the Cross, *The Ascent of Mount Carmel,* II.4.4.)

FEBRUARY

16



1851. Claret arrives in Santiago, Cuba after sailing for a month and a half.

1862. On this Sunday Claret preaches in Villaverde, a town near Madrid.

1866. The approved Constitutions of the missionaries reach Claret's hands *ad quinquennium*. He sends them to Fr. **Joseph Xifre**.



EARLY EXPANSION (1870-1899)

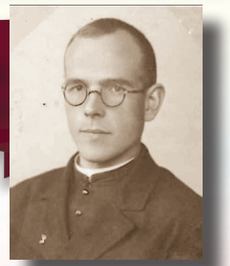
CORDIS MARIAE FILIUS (CMF)

Early practices offered a great variety of acronyms at the end of the signatures of the Claretian Missionaries: *Pbro.* (Presbyter), *Mro.* (Missionary), *P. del C. de M^{a}*. (Father of the Heart of Mary), of the *I.C. de M^{a}*., etc. This is what the missionaries of Segovia did: **Berenguer**, **Casanovas** and **Fabregas**. The current acronym CMF began to be used around 1878, and continued to spread until 1887 when Fr. **Xifre** in the *Boletin Religioso* offered a ruling that read: *Attach the initials CMF (Cordis Mariae Filius) to your last names since this is the true hallmark with which we the individuals of the Congregation are honored.* Later the custom was introduced that the applicants added to their last names: CMP (*Cordis Mariae Postulans*) and the novices CMFolus (*Cordis Mariae Filiolus*).



JOAN SIDERA, CMF

Claret Scholar (1918-2018)



La Cellera de Ter (Girona, Spain). He entered the Congregation at only 9 years old. He was a companion during the studies of many of those who were later martyred in the Spanish civil war and later beatified. He was involved in the war like so many young people of his age, although in auxiliary services. His pastoral dedication was, fundamentally, educational. He had a degree in Chemical Sciences. He was founder and director of the Junior College in Cervera. In 1979, his life changed when he was assigned to the community of Vic. There, thanks to his interest in historical subjects, almost up until his death, he developed intense research work on the Founder and the Congregation, especially for 30 years as the person responsible for the *Axiu Pairal* and the *Arxiu Claret*. It would be impossible to name here his numerous private and congregational investigations and publications. In June 2017, on the occasion of his 75th anniversary of ordination, an interesting book-tribute was published on Claret's family entitled *Enamoraos de Cristo…y de Claret [Fall in love with Christ ... and with Claret]*. He died on February 4, weeks before his 100th birthday.

MINISTRY AND FORMATION





Interior of the Santa Maria Parish (Sallent)

I sang my First Mass in my home town… On August 2, Feast of the Portciuncula, I began to hear confessions. I was in the confessional for six straight hours, from five until eleven in the morning. I gave my first sermon in September of that year, a panegyric for the feast day of the patron saint of the town. The next day I gave another sermon, on the faithful departed of the town… **(Aut 103)**

After I had performed these functions in my home town, I returned to my studies in Vich, but because of the civil war the students were unable to gather in the seminary and had to pursue their studies in private conferences. At this time, as the Ecclesiastical Governor and Vicar Capitular had no one to fill the post of assistant pastor in my parish, he wanted me by all means to go there and study in conference, as I was doing in Vich, for the remainder of my training. I did so out of obedience and finished my studies, as the certificate I received from the Seminary of Vich attests… **(Aut 104)**



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

The first four years of Claret's priesthood were marked by ministry and study; the latter performed in the midst of strong adversities.

- *Do you find difficulties in living out your necessary permanent formation?*
- *Do you commit to overcome them and thus obtain the essential formation that is current for our time?*
- *What place does permanent renewal have in your missionary formation in order to better respond to the challenges of the mission?*

"Jesus can also break through the dull categories with which we would enclose him and he constantly amazes us by his divine creativity."
(Francisco, *Evangelii gaudium,* 11)

FEBRUARY

17



1839. Claret, Administrator of Sallent, already begins to work as a team. He demands the salaries owed to him from the diocesan finance council.

1852. In the year that he has been Archbishop, he has already administered some 2,000 confirmations.

1862. Around this date, Claret finances the edition of an extract of *Constitutions* for Mother **Paris** and her nuns, while still waiting for the approval of Rome.



EARLY EXPANSION (1870-1899)

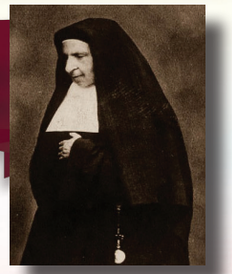
V GENERAL CHAPTER (1888)

In 1888 the V General Chapter was held in Madrid from June 8-17. In it, Fr. **Xifre** was re-elected as Superior General. The apostolate of the Congregation was revised and the ministry of teaching, without any further reservations, was fully and officially adopted, understood as ancillary. The teaching ministry, although it did not seem to be restricted, very soon began to be practiced, thanks to the clarifications to the *Rule* given by the Founder himself and because of his apostolic suggestions. In his letter to Fr. Xifre from July 10, 1869, he wrote: *As Superior General, when circumstances permit and you believe it opportune, appoint one or two qualified members to establish a school for children like those the Brothers of the Christian Schools have established throughout France, Italy and other countries. I believe they are doing exceptionally good work on behalf of the Church and will meet with even greater success in the future.*



PAULA DELPUIG

Carmelite Sister of Charity (1811-1889)



Malgrat de Mar (Girona, Spain). Meeting with Saint **Joaquina Vedruna** in La Rambla de las Flores in Barcelona, she entered the Carmelite Sisters of Charity in 1830. She made religious vows in the presence of Father Claret, in Vic, in 1844. She was named Superior General. She was in contact with Father Claret, whom she greatly appreciated, especially in the time before the First Vatican Council and during its celebration, when the Saint was in Rome working on the approval of their Constitutions. In the circular letter that Mother Paula addressed to the Congregation following the approval of the Constitutions in 1880, without saying the name of the Saint, indicated that there had been *some modifications, not substantial ones, by a zealous missionary and exemplary Prelate, who with good reason we hope will one day be venerated on the altars and in the Catalog of Saints*. Mother Paula died with a reputation for holiness in Vic on February 23, 1889.

PARISH MINISTRY



Once I had settled in the parish of St. Mary in Sallent, I was occupied both with daily studies and matters of the ministry. The pastor and I divided the work of preaching between us, alternating on the Sundays of Advent and Lent, and on Corpus Christi and other major feasts, when we preached from the pulpit at the principal High Mass. On other feast days we preached in the evening after we had finished teaching the catechism class. After two years as assistant, my superior made me administrator since the pastor had left for political reasons and I was left alone in administering the parish. **(Aut 106)**



Blessed Sacrament Chapel of Santa Maria Parish (Sallent)



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

In Claret's days, appointments of pastors and parochial vicars were forbidden, for that reason, they were called "priest assistant" and "priest administrator", respectively.

- *How do you remember your first assignments?*
- *What mark have they left on your missionary life?*
- *Do you share the mission you have received?*

"From the very beginning I have been thrilled by the preaching style of Jesus.
What comparisons! What parables!
I decided to imitate him with comparisons, similes and a simple style."
(*Aut* 222)

FEBRUARY

18



1851. Claret takes possession of the diocese with a solemn entrance into the cathedral. He appoints Fr. **John N. Lobo** as Vicar General.

1860. Claret recommends the Constitutions of the Sisters Adorers (*Handmaids of the Blessed Sacrament and of Charity*) to the Pope.

1867. Claret begins to send to all the bishops of Spain the catechism he presented to the Pope in November 1865 and which he wanted to implement as a single catechism.



EARLY EXPANSION (1870-1899)

NEW FOUNDATIONS THROUGH 1895

During these years, many foundations were realized, including one in Almendralejo (1889), thanks to the prestige of Fr. **Inocencio Heredero** and of the Countess of Oliva. In Don Benito (1893), thanks to Don Jose Antonio Carrasco y Martin, and where they soon began to think about the teaching ministry; in Ciudad Rodrigo (1894), at the request of Bishop Mazarrasa; in Calatayud (1894), where they had already met the great preachers Fr. **Gavin** and Fr. Heredero; in Medina de Rioseco (1894), achievement of the bishop of Palencia Enrique Almaraz, former Dean of the Cathedral of Madrid, where he had met the Missionaries. In Valladolid (1894), work of the Prelate Mr. Cascajares, unconditional friend of the missionaries in Calahorra and Santo Domingo; in Ecija (1895), begun with certain economic difficulties; in Ciudad Real (1895), whose soul and support was Fr. Inocencio Heredero, who at that time attended simultaneously to the new foundations of Almendralejo, Don Benito, Ciudad Real and Zafra, of which he was Superior. His death, a month before signing the agreement, prevented the foundation in Manzanares.



FRANCISCO DE SALES CRESPO BAUTISTA

Bishop of Mondoñedo (1812-1877)

Toledo (Spain). He was a professor of Canon Law and Moral Theology at the Toledo Seminary. In 1861, he was appointed as Titular Bishop of Archis and Auxiliary Bishop of Toledo. Archbishop Claret attended his episcopal consecration in the Church of Las Salesas in Madrid. He was mainly concerned with confirming and conferring holy orders, visiting parishes and instructing the people. He participated in the First Vatican Council. He was then appointed as Bishop of Mondoñedo, where he died on February 18, 1877. Together with Claret and Bishop **Tomas Iglesias Barcones**, he was one of the three bishops who resided in Madrid at that time. He belonged, during the period of the First Vatican Council, to the Board or permanent commission of censorship with Manuel Obeso, Auditor of the Sacred Rota. Both considered, referring to Father Claret's *Catechism of Christian Doctrine*, *not having found anything contrary to Catholic dogma and healthy morality and considering it as recommended in many respects.*



Santa Maria Parish altar (Sallent)



LIFE PLAN

I followed a regular plan of life. Every year I made a ten-day retreat, a practice I have followed ever since I joined the seminary. Every eight days I received the sacrament of reconciliation. I fasted on Thursdays and Saturdays, took the discipline on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and wore the cilice on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. **(Aut 107)**

Every day before leaving the house I made my mental prayer alone…After meditation, we said the rosary together. **(Aut 108)**

I preached on all Sundays and feast days… **(Aut 109)**

Every day I celebrated Mass very early and went to the confessional, where I stayed as long as there were penitents. Every evening I walked through the main streets of the town, especially those where there were sick people. I visited them every day to bring them the Viaticum, until they either died or got better. **(Aut 110)**



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- *Do you have a "personal project" that guides your life and mission every day?*
- *What elements of this project do you need to reinforce in order to live with more fidelity and apostolic fruitfulness?*

"The Church must live out its universal mission as a project, with all the tensions implicit in the confrontation of the present moment of salvation and the future coming of the Lord." (*MCT* 110)



1858. Claret has a serious conversation with the Queen, in which he poses, as an ultimatum, his cessation as confessor if she does not dismiss the favored Ruiz de Arana.

1860. Claret begins a triduum of preaching about reparation in the church of Montserrat on the occasion of the carnival.

1862. Claret begins Spiritual Exercises for women in the Church of Montserrat (Madrid). Meanwhile, he is busy writing his autobiography.



EARLY EXPANSION (1870-1899)

FOUNDATION IN SPOLETO (ITALY)

On October 19, 1896 Fr. **Jeronimo Batllo**, accompanied by Br. Ramon Otal and Fr. Nicolas N., Missionary of the Precious Blood, visited first the Convent and Church of San Felice, bishop and martyr, located in the parish of Giano, Archdiocese and Province of Spoleto (Perugia), and the Shrine of Our Lady of Fosco, 4 ½ kms from San Felice. Both shrines had belonged to the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. Fr. **Xifre** had already gone to see them on his own in the company of Fr. Batllo, although he could not visit the Shrine of the Virgin of Fosco since his ailments did not permit him. On March 17th, the Congregation for Religious Orders approved the agreement of cession and on April 6, 1897 on the 6 a.m. train Fr. **Antonio Naval** and Brothers Angel Salas and Julian Escudero traveled to Spoleto, arriving at the Shrine of Fosco in the afternoon on the 8th. Due to the difficulties they encountered, the foundation was abolished just one year later.



GREGORIO MARTINEZ DE ANTOÑANA, CMF

Missionary and Liturgist (1885-1971)



Santa Cruz de Kanpezu (Alava, Spain). Liturgist and writer. The first part of his life was spent as a professor of Theology and a contributor to the magazine *Ilustracion del Clero [Enlightenment of the Clergy]* (1911-1918). From 1934 to 1939 he lived in Rome where he perfected his law studies at the Gregorian University and came into contact with the Roman liturgical movements. From 1939 until the year of his death (1971), Fr. Antoñana devoted himself completely to liturgical studies and to their pastoral dissemination from the community Buen Suceso, 22 in Madrid. Ignacio Oñatibia, famous Guipuzcoan liturgist, came to say of him: *One can only admire the exemplariness of a life dedicated to the vocation of study like the one of Father Antoñana.* At 85 years old he retired to the community in Agurain, Alava where he died on February 13th. His best known work was *Manual de Liturgia Sagrada [Manual of Sacred Liturgy]* (1921), with ten editions, and the Antoñana missals, which also had several editions.



FULLNESS OF HIS VOCATIONAL DISCOVERY

Ever since I lost the desire to become a Carthusian—which God had used to uproot me from worldliness—I not only thought about becoming holy myself, but I was continuously trying to imagine what I could do to save the souls of my neighbors. Hence I prayed continuously to Jesus and Mary, offering myself to them for this purpose. The lives of the saints, which we read daily at table, and my own spiritual reading all contributed to this. But what moved and stimulated me most was reading the Holy Bible, to which I have always been very strongly attracted. **(Aut 113)**

There were passages that impressed me so deeply that I seemed to hear a voice telling me the message I was reading. There were many such passages, but the following stand out: *Apprehendi te ab extremis terrae et a longinquis ejus vocavi te et dixi: servus es tu, elegi te et non abjeci te* (Is XLI, 9) "You whom I brought out from the confines of the earth and called from the ends of the world." By these words I understood how the Lord had called me without any merit on the part of my birthplace, my parents, or myself. You to whom I said, you are my servant, I have chosen you, not rejected you. **(Aut 114)**



Santa Maria Parish (Sallent)



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

Finally, after a long search, Claret finds, in light of the Word, his missionary vocational identity.

- *What are the means that have helped you discover your missionary vocation?*
- *Which texts of Sacred Scripture are most important to you?*

"We must learn, then, how to re-read and re-express this charism in each historic moment and in distinct cultural contexts, so that it can continue to be meaningful and life-giving, both for those who have been graced with it and for those who receive the fruits of the missionary action that it raises up."
(Josep M. Abella Batlle, *Witnesses and Messengers of the God of Life,* 3)

FEBRUARY

20



1847. Claret obtains the retraction of Miguel Ribas, the famous heretical leader from Alforja (Tarragona).

1848. Claret attends the episcopal consecration in Madrid of **Buenaventura Codina**, Bishop of the Canary Islands, in the collegiate church of San Isidro, with whom he will then travel to the islands.

1857. Claret resumes, beginning with Baracoa (Cuba), the pastoral visit that had been interrupted a year before because of the attack. Curiously, the same day the royal order was signed for him to go to Madrid, which will arrive a month later.



EARLY EXPANSION (1870-1899)

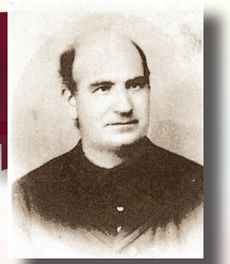
THE *IRIS DE PAZ [IRIS OF PEACE]*

In 1889 the future *Iris de Paz* or *El Inmaculado Corazon de Maria [The Immaculate Heart of Mary]*, was born in Bilbao which was originally called *Boletin del Corazon de Maria*. It was the first and exclusive publication of the Congregation. It was going to be the unofficial publication of the Congregation (the official one was *Annales*). The first director was Fr. **Diego Gavin**. It was very appreciated from the beginning, although Fr. **Xifre** had some reluctance. Soon the work surpassed the possibilities of Fr. Gavin, in 1891 Fr. Jose Mata was appointed as director and the magazine was transferred to Madrid. In 1892 it began to be called *Iris de Paz*. In 1897 it grew in format and became bimonthly. It became the most appreciated and widespread religious magazine in Spain with nearly a thousand new subscriptions at the beginning of 1897. From this magazine, another no less important one in the history of the Congregation would split off: *Ilustracion del Clero*. After several difficulties, *La Iris de Paz* ceased permanently with the December 2017 edition.



RAMON GENOVER, CMF

General Consultor (1853-1927)



Seriña (Girona, Spain). He entered the Claretian novitiate in Thuir. After having held several positions of responsibility in Spain (Huesca, Segovia, Alagon, Gracia, Zafra, Madrid), Fr. Genover was chosen to found the Congregation first in Brazil (São Paulo, Campinas and Pouso Alegre) and then in Argentina (Buenos Aires, Tucuman, Catamarca and Rosario), being named Visitor of both of them and of Chile (Talca, Temuco, Coquimbo and Antofagasta). He shared in his *memorandum* that he rode the Andes mountain range seven times on horseback. It would be impossible to narrate his plethora of activity. Returning to Spain, he was elected General Consultor in 1906 by the Province of Castilla. He pioneered the presence of the Congregation in England, then was present with his missionary energy in Portugal and Fernando Poo, and reopened new congregational routes in Germany, Austria and Italy. He returned to Brazil as Vice-Provincial (Ribeirão Preto), until in 1922 when he returned definitively to Spain, where his dizzying missionary life ended this day at the novitiate in Vic.

TRUST IN THE LORD'S PRESENCE





Santa Maria Parish (Sallent)

Do not be afraid, for I am with you; stop being anxious and watchful, for I am your God. I give you strength, I bring you help, I uphold you with my victorious right hand (ibid, 10). Here I understood how the Lord had drawn me safely out of the narrow escapes to which I have referred in Part One, and of the means He used to do so. **(Aut 115)**

I understood what great enemies I would have to face and the awful and terrifying persecutions that would arise against me, but the Lord told me, All those who raged against you shall be put to shame and confusion; they who fought against you shall be destroyed and perish... For I, Yahweh, your God, I am holding you by the right hand; I tell you: Do not be afraid, I will help you. (ibid, 11 and 13) **(Aut 116)**



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- *Read and meditate on these biblical texts that aroused Claret's missionary vocation.*
- *Do you feel the trust that comes from knowing that God has called you and is present in your life?*
- *What are the "enemies" that the Lord helps you overcome?*

"The humility of Saint Anthony Mary is a typical apostolic humility.
It is established in a tension between the desire to go unnoticed
and the living desire to give glory to God."
(Juan M. Lozano, *Mystic and Man of Action*)

FEBRUARY

21



1853. Claret travels, today and tomorrow, from Saltadero to Baracoa (Cuba), with his famous passage through *Las Cuchillas*.

1857. Claret begins a visit and mission in Baracoa (Cuba), which will last until March 5th.

1864. Claret starts a mission in the parish of San Andres (Madrid).



CHRONICLE OF THE CONGREGATION

EARLY EXPANSION (1870-1899)

In the General Archive of the Congregation, and among the papers of Fr. **Joseph Xifre**, a priceless Codex entitled *Cronica de la Congregacion [Chronicle of the Congregation]* of the Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This manuscript, together with the unpublished Notes of Fr. **Jaime Clotet**, would be enough to make an Institute proud, because few Institutes have had the joy of having chronicles written by their founders with the amount of data found in ours. No more authoritative testimony of the virtues of our Father Founder or of the Providence of God over the Congregation can be presented. Fr. Xifre started writing this historical *Chronicle of the Congregation* on January 13, 1893, aboard the English ship Mendoza while sailing from Panama to Guayaquil, in Pacific waters. It is unknown when it was finished. The manuscript was published for the first time in *Annales* in 1915. It has two parts: the first about the Founder and the origins of the Congregation and the second about its development until 1885.



GIOVANNI BRUNELLI

Nuncio in Spain (1795-1861)

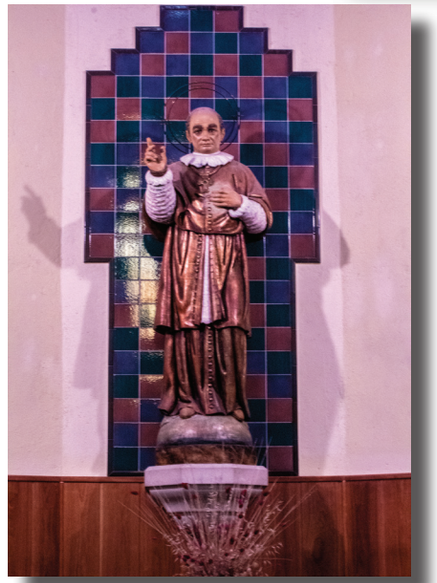


Rome (Italy). Apostolic Delegate of the Holy See in Spain since 1847. He was later named Apostolic Nuncio in 1848. Queen **Isabella II** granted him the Grand Cross of the Order of Charles III. He solved the problem of vacant dioceses, and with Archbishop Jose Domingo Costa y Borras, he prepared the Concordat between the Holy See and Spain of 1851. Cardinal in 1853 and Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Studies. He died in Osimo (Italy). He was Nuncio when Claret was appointed Archbishop of Cuba and he was the one who urged him to accept the position and to resolve the situation in which the newborn Congregation was left. From his hands Claret received the metropolitan pallium. On the trip to Andalusia with the Queen in 1862, in which he participated, he was able to observe Father Claret closely in the midst of the splendor, agitation, banquets and receptions. The expression that he used in a solemn phrase was: *His Excellency Archbishop Claret is a saint, but a Catalan saint.*



THE EFFECT OF THE MISSION

See, I turn you into a threshing sled, new, with doubled teeth; you shall thresh and crush the mountains and turn the hills to chaff (ibid, 15). Through these words the Lord made me understand the effect that my preaching and the mission He had entrusted to me were to have. The "mountains" are the proud, the rationalists, and others of that sort, and the "hills" are the lustful, both of which loom above the place where all sinners pass. I shall argue with them and convince them of their sin, and hence the Lord tells me, You shall winnow them and the wind will blow them away, the gale will scatter them. But you yourself will rejoice in Yahweh, and glory in the Holy One of Israel (ibid, 16). **(Aut 117)**



Statue of Claret in the Santa Maria Parish (Sallent)



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- *Do you meditate often on being an instrument of the Lord to transmit his message of life to his people?*
- *Have you ever felt the effects of your missionary life?*
- *What are the most difficult challenges you encounter in your mission?*
- *What words and signs accompany your preaching?*

"We are the heirs of earlier generations, and we reap benefits
from the efforts of our contemporaries;
we are under obligation to all men. Therefore we cannot disregard the welfare
of those who will come after us to increase the human family."
(Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio,* 17)

FEBRUARY

22



1855. Claret arrives in Guiza (Cuba) to start a mission.

1863. Claret is leading Spiritual Exercises for the Carmelite Sisters of Charity of the school Plaza de San Francisco (Madrid).

1865. Claret patiently endures delays in his payments, because the country goes through a certain bankruptcy, and the Queen herself has sold part of her assets to meet government payments.



EARLY EXPANSION (1870-1899)

DIVISION INTO PROVINCES: CATALUNYA AND CASTILLA

In 1895 the VI General Chapter was celebrated in Cervera (September 3-16), this time an extraordinary Chapter. In it the Congregation was divided into two Provinces: Catalunya and Castilla. But, lacking precise legislation on the powers of the Provincial Governments, there continued to be excessive intervention by the General Government, especially by the Superior General. There were no elections of a new General Government.

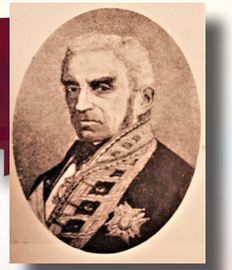
The Province of Catalunya included: Catalonia, Aragon, Valencia and Murcia; the Balearic and Canary Islands; USA, Mexico and other Central American Republics. Fr. **Felix Alejandro Cepeda**, a Chilean, was elected as the first Provincial. The first foundations of the Province were: Santa Cruz de Tenerife (1896), Sabadell and Olesa de Montserrat (1899); all in Spain.

The Province of Castilla included: the two former Castillas, Extremadura, Andalusia, Leon, Navarre, Galicia, Asturias, the Basque Country and the Republics of South America. Fr. **Isaac Burgos** was elected as the first Provincial. The first foundation of the Province was that of Aranda de Duero (1897), in Spain.



LORENZO ARRAZOLA

Minister of the Government of Spain (1797-1857)



Checa (Guadalajara, Spain). He was one of the most outstanding political figures of the 19th century in Spain. He studied at the seminary in Leon. He left the seminary to enter the army when he was 26 years old. He earned a doctorate in Jurisprudence in Valladolid. He belonged to the moderate party. He was a royal adviser, President of the Supreme Court, Representative and Senator. He served as the Minister of Grace and Justice for 7 terms. He distinguished himself as an orator and writer. He was the author of an *Enciclopedia de Derecho y Administracion [Encyclopedia of Law and Administration]* and of other literary works in prose and verse: a philosophy booklet and a memoir about earthquakes. As Minister in 1849, he insisted that Father Claret accept the appointment as Archbishop of Santiago, Cuba. They had a good correspondence and a true friendship. During Claret's stay in Madrid as confessor of **Isabella II**, Arrazola frequented his house. He was a member of the first hierarchy of the ***Academy of St. Michael***. He died on February 23, 1857 in Madrid.



SENT TO EVANGELIZE THE POOR

The Lord made me understand that I would not only have to preach to sinners but that I would also have to preach to and catechize simple farmers and villagers. Hence He said to me: *The poor and needy ask for water, and there is none, their tongue is parched with thirst. I, Yahweh, will answer them. I, the God of Israel, will not abandon them* (ibid, 17). *I will make rivers well up on barren heights, and fountains in the midst of valleys; turn the wilderness into a lake, and dry ground into a water spring* (ibid., 18). And God our Lord made me to understand in a very special way those words: *Spiritus Dominis super me et evangelizare pauperibus misit me Dominus et sanare contritos corde*. **(Aut 118)**





FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- *Do you keep in mind that you have been anointed by the Spirit to be a missionary?*
- *Who are the "poor" to whom the Spirit sends you to evangelize?*
- *What are the geographical and existential peripheries that await the proclamation of the Gospel today in the environment in which you find yourself?*

"To reach satisfaction in all, desire satisfaction in nothing.
To come to possess all, desire the possession of nothing.
To arrive at being all, desire to be nothing.
To come to the knowledge of all, desire the knowledge of nothing."
(St. John of the Cross, *The Ascent of Mount Carmel,* I.13.11)

FEBRUARY

23



1853. Claret arrives in Baracoa (Cuba), after a difficult two-day trip by land. It had been 60 years since any bishop had visited this city.

1856. Claret writes a letter to the Pope asking him whether to continue in Cuba or return to the Peninsula.

1867. Claret speaks to the minister **Arrazola** to speed up the foundation of the convent of Mother **Paris** in Reus.



EARLY EXPANSION (1870-1899)

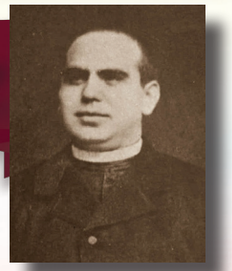
CREATION OF VISITORSHIPS

Two new Apostolic Prefects who succeeded Fr. **Ciriaco Ramirez** were assigned to the Visitorship of Guinea. First, Fr. **Pedro Vall-Llovera**, who died a year and a half later due to gangrene. Soon after Fr. **Armengol Coll** arrived, a great missionary, who was named the first Apostolic Vicar and first Bishop of the Congregation after the Founder. In the Chapter of 1895, the new Visitorships of America were created, dependent on the new Provinces of Spain: that of Mexico, on Catalunya; and that of Chile, on Castilla. As for the Visitorship of South America, it had already been founded in Valparaiso and Curico (1880), and in Linares (1895). At the helm of the North American Visitorship was Fr. **Domingo Sola** until Fr. **Juan Mele** was appointed. The foundations in Guanajuato (1895), Leon (1895), Puebla (1896) and Orizaba (1900), were established, all in Mexico.



JUAN GIL, CMF

First Apostolic Prefect of Choco (1867-1912)



Navares de Enmedio (Segovia, Spain). On April 28, 1908, the Holy See created the Apostolic Prefecture of Choco, in Colombia, entrusted to the Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and Fr. Juan Gil was named the first Prefect. His great vocation was that of a preacher. In April of 1894 he was assigned to the community of Almendralejo where the following year he would follow Fr. **Inocencio Heredero** as Superior. The foundation of the house-school in Jerez was thanks to Fr. Gil. In 1906 he was appointed Superior of Plasencia. While there, in 1908 he was appointed as the first Apostolic Prefect of Choco. On the occasion of his visit to Bogota, the Archbishop Bernardo Herrera Restrepo offered the Congregation the Basilica del Sagrado Corazon (also known as the Church of the Voto Nacional). In 1911 he met with Saint **Laura Montoya** in Medellin with whom he worked on her foundation of the *Missionary Sisters of Mary Immaculate and St Catherine of Siena*. He suffered and worked until exhaustion, dying at 45 years old and after three years in Colombia.



PROPHETS AND SENTRIES

I had the same experience on reading the prophet Ezekiel, especially chapter 3, at these words: *Son of man, I have appointed you as sentry to the House of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from me, warn them in my Name. If I say to a wicked man: You are to die, and you do not warn him; if you do not speak and warn him to renounce his evil ways and so live, then he shall die for his sin. But I will hold you responsible for his death.*

If, however, you do warn a wicked man and he does not renounce his wickedness and his evil ways, then he shall die for his sins, but you yourself will have saved your life (Ezek 3:18-19). **(Aut 119)**



One of the presidential guards at the Quirinale Palace (Rome)



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- *Do you feel like a sentry and a prophet of the Lord or a simple religious official?*
- *What realities of the world and of your brothers and sisters concern you and challenge your missionary life?*
- *What should we denounce in order to be authentic prophets?*

"The only thing we have to decide is what to do with the time we are given."
(Film, *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*)

FEBRUARY

24



1848. On the way to the Canary Islands, Claret visits the cathedral-mosque of Cordoba for the first time.

1851. Claret begins Spiritual Exercises for the clergy of Santiago, Cuba; they will last until March 1st.

1852. In his first pastoral visit, Claret arrives in Holguin, where he is received with grand celebrations, including the flying balloon, whose failure led Claret to deduce how it should be modified to work well.



EARLY EXPANSION (1870-1899)

FIRST STEPS IN BRAZIL

When the Province of Castilla took over the Visitorship of South America, only Brazil was part of the project and a foundation had been accepted in São Paulo, which would be constituted in 1895. The foundation was presided over by Fr. **Ramon Genover** and Fr. **Eusebio Sacristan**. One of the members of this community was Fr. **Francisco Ozamis**, future Bishop of San Jose in Tocantins. They were provisionally installed in the church and premises of San Francisco, beginning immediately with pastoral activities in Portuguese. Soon the Province, through Fr. Ramon Genover's persistence, began looking for ways to expand their presence in that immense country, until he found the right place: Campinas. In September of 1899 a community was installed there permanently, presided over by Fr. Eusebio Sacristan. The house and the church were remodeled extensively while the apostolic activities and works of charity among the poorest multiplied.



NICOLAS GARCIA, CMF

VI Superior General (1869-1950)



Hormicedo (Burgos, Spain). He spent time with the co-founders Fr. **Xifre** and Fr. **Clotet**, and with Fr. **Serrat**. Among his first assignments we must underline that of the brief foundation of Spoleto, Italy. In 1912, Fr. **Martin Alsina** appointed him Provincial Superior of the Province of Betica. He was elected Superior General in Vic on October 11, 1922 and re-elected for the same office on December 4, 1937. He died in Rome nine months after leaving office as Superior General. During his two terms of office, with a total of 24 years, the Congregation grew by almost a hundred foundations. He accepted the Vicariate of Darien, the Prelature of Tocantins, the missions in China. He accentuated the teaching character of the Congregation, outlined its legal structure, its technique of promotion and organization, and indoctrinated his sons with remarkable circular letters full of doctrine. In his time appeared the remarkable magazines *Palaestra Latina* and *Vida Religiosa*.



THE DIFFICULTIES OF MISSIONARY "GOING FORTH"

Before I could leave the parish I had to contend with a great many difficulties both on the part of church superiors and the townspeople, but with God's help I managed it. I set out for Barcelona with the intention of obtaining a visa and embarking for Rome, but in Barcelona they wouldn't grant me one and I had to turn back. I went to Olost…From there I traveled to la Tria de Perafita, where I met an Oratorian, Father Matavera, a man of great experience, learning, and virtue, whom I told of my voyage…The good father listened to me with great patience and charity and encouraged me to continue in my purpose. I listened to him as if he were an oracle and presently resumed my travels. Having obtained a passport for the Spanish interior, I headed for Castellar de Nuch… **(Aut 121)**

My itinerary took me through Castellar de Nuch, Tosas, Puerto, Font del Picaso, Osseja, Olette, Prades, Perpignan, Narbonne, Montpellier, Nimes, and Marseilles, where I sailed on the steamer Tancrede. I landed at Civitavecchia and finally I arrived in Rome. **(Aut 122)**





FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

Claret encountered difficulties both in leaving the parish and during the trip to Rome.

- *What are the main difficulties you encounter in "going forth" as a missionary?*
- *Have you ever felt blocked, impeded, persecuted, etc?*
- *Recall and express thanks for your journeys, the assignments where you have been sent.*

"Nothing tired me...
Everything was sweet to me, as long as I could win souls for Jesus Christ and heaven and save them from hell."
(*Aut 227*)

FEBRUARY

25



1847. The Second Carlist War and persecutions expressly against Claret force him to conclude his preaching in the Archdiocese of Tarragona.

1848. In Seville Claret visits and preaches in the Cathedral and sees the *Los Seises* dance (Perhaps they were his inspiration for the future liturgy in El Escorial).

1854. During these days Claret writes to the Captain General of Cuba, lamenting the little support received for fixing irregular marriages; he threatens once again to leave and take his missionaries.



EARLY EXPANSION (1870-1899)

AVE MARIA MAGAZINE

A Brazilian Catholic, Tiburtino Martin, great devotee of the Virgin, founded the magazine *Ave Maria [Hail Mary]* in São Paulo in 1898 with which he intended to christianize all of Brazil. It was a bimonthly, four-page magazine with a circulation of 300 copies. It would have been short-lived if it had not been taken over the following year by the Claretian Missionaries who had arrived in São Paulo. The growth of the magazine was spectacular. In less than six months it had already grown to a circulation of 3,000 copies. In 1908 it was already the magazine with the most subscribers of all Brazil with 8,500 copies eventually reaching 50,000 a week. It also became a great medium for Catholic information, which made the prestige of the Congregation spread throughout the republic. There was effective collaboration with the Brazilian ecclesiastical hierarchy, helping the rest of the Catholic press technically and economically. After more than a century of existence, it has become a large publishing emporium, focusing primarily on the dissemination of the Bible.



BEATIFICATION OF FATHER CLARET



On February 25, 1934, the first fruit of the efforts of the Claretians was obtained when they saw their Founder beatified. Once the clergy gathered before the altar of St. Peter's Basilica, the Postulator, Fr. **Felipe Maroto**, presented the apostolic brief. The *Te Deum* was sung and after the unveiling of the saint's image in front of Bernini's Glory, Claret's sons were able to contemplate their father and founder raised to the altars. Pio XI's voice resounded loudly: *We have a new Blessed...A great figure indeed...A tireless Apostle... and moreover, a modern organizer.* There were many decrees, speeches and congratulations that came from everywhere. But the most expressive was undoubtedly the address of Pope Pius XI and his words addressed to the people and the Congregation. Here are some of them: *Congratulations to Spain… for this hero of holiness who so well knew his Spain, to which he consecrated his entire life under all circumstances, even in the midst of the turbulence and dangers of the preludes of a revolution.*

HOSPITALITY AND KINDNESS



On the evening of that same Saturday when our Lord and the Blessed Virgin had freed me from the thieves, I entered the first city inside France, Osseja, where I had a warm welcome… **(Aut 126)**

As I was nearing Marseilles a person joined me on the road. He took me to a house where I was very well lodged for the five days I had to wait for my boat in Marseilles… **(Aut 127)**

Finally the hour for my sailing arrived. It was one o'clock in the afternoon. Shortly before this, the gentleman came to my room, took my little bundle of things, and steadfastly insisted on carrying it. And so we went, the two of us, to the port and said our farewells at shipside. All five days he had been so courteous, attentive, friendly, and preoccupied with my welfare that it seemed to me some great lord had sent him to look after me with all care. He seemed more like an angel than a man—modest, happy, and at the same time, serious. He was so religious and devout… **(Aut 128)**



Remnants of an ancient Roman road in Narbonne (France)



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- *Have you recognized God's Providence over your life in some experience of hospitality and kindness?*
- *What is your attitude towards foreigners and immigrants?*
- *Recall the immigrants you have offered help and hospitality to.*
- *Movie: "The Good Lie".*

"Our missionary vocation in the Church is a grace,
a fruit of the Holy Spirit, who pours forth his manifold gifts freely."
(MCT 126)

FEBRUARY

26



1846. Claret starts an especially fruitful mission in La Selva del Camp (Tarragona).

1858. Claret preaches to an association of men in the crypt of the Church of San Gines (Madrid).

1860. Like every Sunday of Lent, Claret directs an event on Christian doctrine: recitation, exposition and response to objections, in the church of Montserrat (Madrid).



EARLY EXPANSION (1870-1899)

THE FIRST FOUNDATION IN PORTUGAL

One of the houses in Spain allotted to the Province of Castilla was Ciudad Rodrigo (Salamanca), and from the pastoral work there arose the idea of founding in Portugal, specifically in Aldeia da Ponte, a small town near the Spanish border. The foundation became effective in May of 1898 by Fr. **Xifre**'s decision, although the first inhabitants were accompanied by the Provincial Superior, Fr. **Isaac Burgos**. Despite the difficulty of the language, the missionaries knew how to adapt to the new reality, soon extending their activity to a large area of the country until the political situation, starting in 1901, plunged the community into great tribulations.

Fr. **Julian Butron** arrived in June of 1900 at Aldeia da Ponte. The second mission he gave was in Vila Cha de Cangueiros. It was February 24, 1901. On March 3rd pleurisy ended his young life; he was 27 years old. He soon began to be venerated as a saint throughout the region, his grave being a place of pilgrimage.



SAINT PAULA MONTAL

Foundress (1799-1889)



Arenys de Mar (Barcelona, Spain). She was born into a simple family of artisans. It was a large and very Christian family. She spent her childhood and youth in her hometown, working since she was 10 years old and actively collaborating in the parish catechetical ministry with girls and young women. In 1829, at the age of 30, she founded the Congregation of the *Daughters of Mary*, Sisters of the Pious Schools, opening a school for girls in Figueras (Girona). Another seven personal foundations followed the Figueras school. She died in Olesa de Montserrat (Barcelona), on February 26, 1889. Although there is no evidence that Father Claret had a personal relationship with the foundress, despite being Catalan, there is evidence of the influence he had, during the life of the foundress, in the convent of Santa Isabel in Madrid, where Father Claret led Spiritual Exercises for the religious sisters all the years that he resided in the Hospital of Montserrat in the Plaza Anton Martin.

IMITATION OF JESUS CHRIST IN POVERTY





Since my voyage to Rome was not intended as a pleasure trip but one in which to work and suffer for Jesus Christ, I felt that I ought to look for the humblest and poorest place aboard so as to have a better chance of suffering. With this in mind, I bought a ticket for standing-room on the deck near the bow, which was the poorest and cheapest passage. After I had gone off by myself to say my rosary and other devotions, I looked for a place where I could rest a bit and could find nothing more suitable than a pile of coiled rope, which I sat on, resting my head on an artillery piece in the battery on one side of the ship. **(Aut 130)**

Thus I passed the whole night until the dawn came and with it a rain that stilled the tempest. First I had been drenched with seawater and now I was being drenched with sweet rain-water. My entire luggage consisted of a shirt, a pair of socks, a handkerchief, a folding razor, a comb, my breviary, and a very small edition of the Bible… **(Aut 132)**



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- *How do you live your evangelical poverty?*
- *Does your simple and austere life express your trust in God's Providence?*
- *What do you carry in your "bundle" on missionary trips?*

"He emptied himself" "He humbled himself" "Taking the form of a slave" …

- *Does this existential attitude shape who you are and what you do as a missionary?*

"The center that integrates our lives is Christ,
his passion for the Kingdom – the great project of the Father—
and his compassion for humanity."
(Josep M. Abella Batlle, *Witnesses and Messengers of the God of Life,* 7)

FEBRUARY

27



1850. Claret communicates to Fr. **Stephen Sala**, who is preaching in Tarragona, his plans to found a house in Barcelona soon, in which Fr. **Joseph Caixal** will live and also attend to the *Libreria Religiosa*.

1854. It is probably on this date that he addresses his final plea in favor of mixed marriages to the Captain General of Cuba.

1863. During these days, at the request of the nuncio, Claret fights bravely with the queen to not accept the resignation of Fr. Felix de Cadiz as Bishop of said city.



EARLY EXPANSION (1870-1899)

SITUATION OF THE INSTITUTE AT THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY

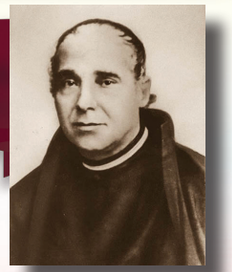
Fr. **Clotet** embodied the tendency to form Provinces in the Congregation. Fr. **Xifre,** however, was in favor of a more centralized Congregation. The Chapter of 1888 had raised the issue and such formation had been rejected. However, the subject returned in the 8th extraordinary General Chapter of 1895, celebrated in Santo Domingo de la Calzada, resulting in the division into two Provinces unanimously: Catalunya and Castilla. In any case, the powers of the Provincials were not clearly determined. There was a new extraordinary General Chapter in May 1896 where it was discussed, but the situation was still not clarified.

By then co-founder, Fr. **Dominic Fabregas** had died. And the remains of Father Claret (1897) had been transferred from Fontfroide to Vic. On this occasion a great tribute was celebrated for the then Servant of God, with funeral rites presided over by the Bishop of Vic in the Cathedral, accompanied by the Bishop of Segorbe, **Francisco de Asis Aguilar** and the Abbot of Fontfroide, **Marie-Jean L. Bousquet**.



BLESSED JOSEPH TOUS

Founder (1811-1871)



Igualada (Barcelona, Spain). He saw his ideals realized in the Capuchin Order. In 1835, due to exclaustrations and exile, Friar Josep headed for Italy. Later he settled in Toulouse (France) where he exercised his apostolic ministry as chaplain of the Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament for seven years. In 1843 the political situation allowed him to return to Catalonia. His feelings of compassion towards children and young people converged with the wishes of the young women Isabel Jubal, Marta Suñol and Remedio Palos in Ripoll. After consulting the project with Father Claret, Fr. Tous' childhood friend, he accepted guiding them as *Capuchin Sisters of the Mother of the Divine Shepherd.* Later he collaborated with the General Superior, Blessed **Maria Ana Mogas** in the foundation in Madrid of what was later named the *Franciscan Missionaries of the Mother of the Divine Shepherd*, encouraged by both Father Claret and Fr. **Stephen Sala**. He died while celebrating the Eucharist in the chapel of the school that the Capuchin Sisters had in Barcelona.

THE IMPACT OF APOSTOLIC POVERTY



On our second day out…When I had finished my prayers, an English gentleman walked over…After we had chatted awhile he went to his cabin, and in a short time I saw him coming toward me with some silver coins on a tray. When I saw him, I thought, What are you going to do? Will you accept the money or not? I said to myself, You don't need it, but those poor Spaniards do; so take it and give it to them. And that is just what I did… **(Aut 133)**

This whole adventure confirmed what I had already believed: that the best and most effective means to edify and move people is good example, poverty, detachment, fasting, mortification, and self-denial. Since this English gentleman was traveling in Oriental luxury, with his coach, servants, birds, and dogs aboard, one might imagine that my appearance would move him to contempt. But the sight of a priest who was poor, detached, and mortified moved him so deeply that he couldn't do enough for me. And not only he but all the passengers showed me great respect and veneration… **(Aut 135)**





FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- *Does the austerity of your life impact the people around you?*
- *In what way do you live in solidarity with the poor in the environment in which you find yourself?*
- *In what sense are the poor favored in your mission?*
- *Narrate an experience of your encounter with the world of poverty.*
- *Do you talk to the poor or just about them? When was the last time you were in contact with one of them?*
- *Read and pray with Mt. 25.*

"Like for Saint Paul, corporal sufferings for the love of Christ had been accompanied by the grace of spiritual stigmatization: grace of consecration to the Redeemer, of communion with his sufferings."
(Juan M. Lozano, *Mystic and Man of Action*)

FEBRUARY

28



1850. Claret complains to **Caixal** that some books from the Religious Library of the previous month were badly bound; he will always be very demanding about this.

1858. Finally, after wishing for so long, Claret begins preaching missions in Madrid, in the church of San Cayetano.

1868. In a letter with today's date, Claret advises Fr. **Joseph Xifre**, just as he has done many times, to found a house in Algiers that will serve as a refuge in case of religious persecution in Spain.



EARLY EXPANSION (1870-1899)

DEATH OF FR. JOSEPH XIFRE

For their part, the Provincials, mainly Fr. **Isaac Burgos**, began to prepare the Ordinary Chapter of 1900 ahead of time. There was an attempt to decentralize the government of the Congregation. However, Fr. **Xifre** died on November 3, 1899, after having governed the Congregation for 41 years. He had done a tremendous job. He took over the Congregation with 1 house (Vic) and 15 members, and at the time of his death there were 61 houses and 1,368 Professed, 104 Novices and 249 Postulants.

At this point, it is fitting to highlight how much Fr. Xifre did for the Congregation, despite the criticisms by some and his limitations that he himself recognized. He can truly be called the second founder of the Congregation. Without him, our Congregation would not have reached the expansion it did. On November 4, 1899, at 8 a.m., in the Chapel of the University of Cervera, the Office for the Dead was prayed, followed by a solemn sung Mass.



JULIAN MUNARRIZ, CMF

General Consultor (1871-1962)



Allo (Navarre, Spain). Member of a family of seven children, three of which were Claretian Missionaries: Fr. Julian, the eldest, Blessed Fr. **Felipe de Jesus**, Superior of the martyr community of Barbastro, and Fr. Saturnino, who died very young in a mission in Equatorial Guinea. He made his profession in the hands of Fr. **Xifre**. Barely ordained, the superiors directed him towards formation. In 1913 he was promoted to the position of Provincial Superior of Castilla. In 1937 he was appointed General Consultor and Assistant for Castilla, Betica and Fernando Poo. He attended all the General Chapters from 1922 to 1949. He suffered the ups and downs of both the Spanish Civil War and World War II. After his term in the General Government, he was assigned to the Italian Province, moving to Rome-Via Giulia and then to *Claretianum* of Via Aurelia as confessor. He wrote *Recuerdos edificantes de la Congregacion [Uplifting Memories of the Congregation]*. He died in Rome at the age of 91 and laid to rest at the Campo Verano cemetery.

THE FRUSTRATED DESIRE TO GO TO THE MISSIONS





Saint Andrew of Montecavallo (Church of Saint Andrew at the Quirinale - Rome)

I began immediately to apply myself to the task for which I had made my journey. The only letter of recommendation I had was addressed to His Excellency, Bishop Vilardell, a Catalan, who had recently been consecrated bishop of Lebanon and had just left for his new post when I arrived in Rome. I then applied to the Cardinal Prefect of the Propaganda Fide, but he had just left for a stay in the country and they told me that he would be gone for the whole month of October. I believed that this was providential since it gave me time to make the retreat… **(Aut 138)**

With this in mind, I went to visit one of the fathers of the professed house of the Company of Jesus…On the days he appointed, I gave him an account of my spirit, and during the closing days he remarked, Since God our Lord is calling you to the foreign missions, it would be better for you to join the Company of Jesus because it would be the means whereby you could both be sent and accompanied by others. For it is a very dangerous business going it alone. I answered, As for me, I know well enough that it would be better, but what could I do that the Company would admit me? **(Aut 139)**



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

In Rome Claret experiences three failures: he could neither go to Lebanon nor offer himself to Propaganda Fide nor profess as a Jesuit.

- *What is your attitude towards the experiences that you consider frustrating in your life?*
- *Do you believe that God guides your life even along unsuspected paths?*

"The question of truth is really a question of memory, deep memory, for it deals with something prior to ourselves and can succeed in uniting us in a way that transcends our petty and limited individual consciousness. It is a question about the origin of all that is, in whose light we can glimpse the goal and thus the meaning of our common path." (Francis, *Lumen Fidei*, 25)

FEBRUARY

29



1831. Without being able to specify the exact day, in the month of February, Claret experiences the Temptation-Vision against chastity in Casa Tortades, in Vic.

1840. After discerning about his case with the General Superior of the Jesuits, Fr. **Juan Felipe Roothaam**, Claret leaves the Jesuit Novitiate to return to his homeland.

1844. Claret continues his Lenten preaching in La Seu de Manresa (Barcelona). This was the second of the four times he preached in this city.



EARLY EXPANSION (1870-1899)

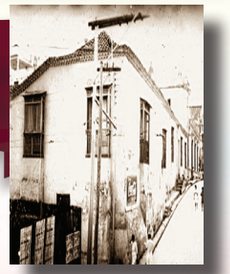
JOSEPH XIFRE'S TESTAMENT

In his last words (a brief testament), Fr. **Xifre** recognized his limitations and his love for the Congregation. On November 4, 1899, at 8 a.m., after the response was sung, Fr. **Martin Alsina** climbed to the pulpit and he exhorted everyone to listen attentively to the last farewell that Fr. Xifre addressed to the Congregation: *My dearest Congregation: I have loved you as much as I could until the end, and I will not forget you in eternity. I have lived exclusively for you, without avoiding sacrifices or dangers. However, as a miserable man with many defects, not a few times I have put down and offended several individuals. That is the only thing that upsets me, that I deplore. I ask everyone for forgiveness and I hope to obtain it, as I forgive everyone, loving everyone in God, as I love myself. Pray for the one who loved you, apply a plenary indulgence, and it will be appreciated by the one named Joseph Xifre.*



JUAN BAUTISTA FONTE

Collaborator of Claret (1822-1896)



Sancti Spiritus (Cuba). He studied ecclesiastical studies at the San Basilio seminary in Santiago, Cuba. Ordained in 1848, he held various positions in Las Tunas, Baracoa, in the parish of Los Dolores, where he established the *Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*, and later the *Apostolate of Prayer*. Claret said of him that *he was one of the most respectable priests among those native of the diocese, for his virtue, for his zeal and for his aptitude for the care of souls.* In 1863 he traveled to Spain and joined the Society of Jesus in El Puerto de Santa Maria, Cadiz. In January 1864, before finishing the novitiate, he was assigned to the school of Belen, in Havana, where he made his profession. He was Prefect of Discipline and professor. When he became ill, he went to Puebla (Mexico) and then to Jalapa, where he demonstrated his love for teaching and charity towards the poor. He had a holy death in this city on February 25th.

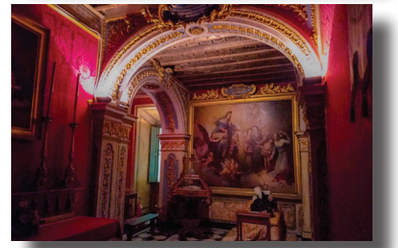


FOUR MONTHS IN THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

He did as he said, and on the day after he had received the request, the General asked to see me. I went, and as I arrived at his door, the Father Provincial was leaving. The General spoke to me for some time and then said, That father who was leaving as you entered was the Father Provincial, and he lives at Saint Andrea de Monte Cavallo. Go there and tell him that I'm sending you, and that whatever he may do for you I will consider a favor. I went there directly, was very well received, and on November 2 was already living in the novitiate, so that I found myself a Jesuit overnight… **(Aut 141)**

The Lord did me a great favor in bringing me to Rome and introducing me for however short a time to those virtuous fathers and brothers…It was there that I learned how to give the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, and methods for preaching, catechizing, hearing confessions usefully and effectively, as well as many other things that have stood me in good stead… **(Aut 152)**





Saint Andrew of Montecavallo (Church of Saint Andrew at the Quirinale - Rome)



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- *Have you had any experiences that, although they did not appear successful, have enriched you?*
- *What significant learning have you experienced in these cases?*

"The soul must forget about [understanding]...,
and abandon itself into the arms of love,
and His Majesty will teach it what to do next."
(St. Teresa of Avila, *Interior Castle, Fourth Mansions,* 3.8)