

*Lord, You granted
St. Anthony Mary Claret, our father,
a great love for the Lord
and an apostolic concern
for the salvation of all the peoples of the earth.
From childhood on, you led him
to an ever deeper knowledge of the mystery of Christ.
Impelled by charity, he dedicated himself to proclaiming the Gospel.
He bore both hard work and slander patiently,
and he sealed his life, in exile, with his blood.
In order to continue his work, and through the
intervention of the Virgin Mary,
he founded our Congregation and gave us his spirit.
Today as we recall our origin in the Church,
we ask you, through the intercession of our Mother,
to make us his faithful sons
in the ministry of the Word.
May your heart continue to be for us
the staff of our confidence;
that blesses with new vocations
this Claretian family you founded
and that gives preserving love for Jesus and for you
to all of us who call ourselves, and truly are,
sons of the Immaculate Heart
and who work for the glory of God in the Church.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.*





1839. Through a certificate with this date we know that Claret, being Administrator of the parish in Sallent, taught theology for one year to the seminarian Jose Camps.

1841. In the first days of this month Claret preaches mission in Vidra (Girona).

1862. Claret leaves Madrid towards Gracia (Barcelona), to preside over the First General Chapter of his missionaries.

IN GABON

During the Macias dictatorship, many Guineans fled to the neighboring Republic of Gabon. In the middle of the '70s there were already more than 60,000 refugees. The Congregation could not remain indifferent to the tragedy of so many people fleeing from Equatorial Guinea. That is why there was a desire to found in Gabon another Mission in an African country where we could work in favor of the Gospel. The Province of Italy took on the missionary venture in December 1974, and would carry it forward until Gabon became part of Central Africa

with the Congo and Cameroon. The Mission was certainly a challenge, with 20,000 square kilometers and 23,000 inhabitants, mostly Catholics, in the Diocese of Franceville but with few catechists of their own, since three-quarters of the evangelizers were still European. The high illiteracy rate was an obstacle to evangelization, and this was where they directed their first efforts. With the socio-cultural program Mingara, a two-year course was established to teach elementary classes for human development, hygiene and social relationships.

CIRILO ALAMEDA BREA Archbishop of Toledo (1781-1872)



Torrejón de Velasco (Toledo, Spain). He studied Latin and philosophy at the San Isidro Seminary in Madrid. He entered the Order of Saint Francis. In 1811 he went to America leading a group of missionaries. He was Minister General of his Order (1824-1831). In 1832 he was appointed Archbishop of Santiago, Cuba. He arrived in Cuba at the end of that same year. In 1837 he had to flee to England. He returned to Spain and was appointed President of the State Council for Carlos Maria Isidro de Bourbon of Navarra. He then went to France and Italy. In 1849 he was named Archbishop of Burgos and in 1857 Archbishop of Toledo and Cardinal the following year. He died in Toledo. Claret replaced him as Archbishop of Cuba after 13 years of a vacant seat. He later encountered him in his Archdiocese of Toledo, to which Madrid belonged. The relations between them were not very good, in particular because of issues related to the Monastery of El Escorial. We can see them together in the portrait of the baptism of the future **Alfonso XII** by **Benjumea**.

ORIGIN AND TITLE

FUNDAMENTAL CONSTITUTION

1. Our Congregation of Missionaries was founded by Archbishop Saint Anthony Mary Claret in Vic, Spain on July 16, 1849 and was approved by Pius IX on December 22, 1865. We are called Sons of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or Claretian Missionaries.



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

The first paragraph of the Constitutions begins with two names (Claret and Pius IX), two dates and one place. Call to mind two decisive people in your Claretian vocation, two important dates and a significant place. They are places and sacramental times in which you were visited by the Lord who called you to be a Son of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

"I have learned that men live not by selfishness, but by love."
(Leo Tolstoy)



1857. Claret begins personal Spiritual Exercises in Madrid, in the house of the Vincentians. They will last until the 11th.

1861. Claret preaches and confirms people in Pinto, a town near Madrid; a few days later he will do the same in Alcala de Henares.

1864. Having left Madrid on the 30th at night, by train through Zaragoza and Lleida, Claret arrives today in Gracia (Barcelona) to preside over the Second General Chapter of his missionaries.



MORE PERSECUTIONS

THE RENEWAL (1967 - 1979)

Beginning in 1975, persecutions began in Angola, a mission that had to be abandoned by the Missionaries, some of whom were detained in prison.

In December 1977, the Moro rebel groups in the Philippines set fire to the Lamitan hospital on the island of Basilan, run by Br. **Jose Maria Torres**. It would be the beginning of a nightmare that would continue to affect

the Missionaries even today. The in the same island of Basilan Fr. Eduardo Monge suffered an assassination attempt in 1987.

Other Claretians also experienced various types of adversity while carrying out their mission. Despite all this, the Claretians continue to work for interreligious dialogue and social development of the Muslim communities in the area.



TOMAS SESE, CMF
Provincial of Chile (1865-1934)



Barbastro (Huesca, Spain). He professed in the Congregation in 1881. Once ordained, he accompanied the formators **Pablo Vallier** and **Martin Alsina** as an assistant. In 1891 he left for Chile in the expedition presided by Fr. Dalmau, becoming a companion at the last minute. At first, he dedicated himself to popular missions in Santiago and La Serena. He was endowed with qualities for government. In 1905 he was elected Vice-Provincial of Chile, a position he held until 1909. In 1919 he was appointed as Provincial Superior because of the death of Fr. Ignacio Moreno. He entered Bolivia opening a house in Oruro. When he was named bishop, Fr. **Ramon Font**, accompanied him as Secretary to Tarija (Bolivia). He attended the General Chapters of 1906 in Aranda de Duero and 1922 in Vic. He raised the seminary Santo Toribio in Lima to a high stature. He founded and sustained the magazine *La Estrella de Andacollo* [The Star of Andacollo] and acquired the Claret printing company. He died on July 5th in Cochabamba.

AIM



2. The aim of our Congregation is to seek in all things the glory of God, the sanctification of our members and the salvation of people throughout the world, in keeping with our missionary charism in the Church.



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

Our goal is threefold: the glory of God, our sanctification and the salvation of all.

- Look around you and look for spaces in which you recognize the presence and glory of God. Praise him and bless him.
- Repeat at some point the prayer "Soul of Christ, Sanctify me."
- Offer yourself to the Lord once again to be an instrument of salvation for many.

"God does not give us everything we want,
but He does fulfill all His promises...
leading us along the best and straightest paths to Himself."
(Dietrich Bonhoeffer)



1847. In his forced retirement to Vic, Claret dedicates himself to writing and giving lectures to young priests. He is translating *El Amante de Jesucristo [The Lover of Jesus Christ]*, which he affirms is *the most beautiful thing I have read in my life*.

1851. Claret vigorously defends the mixed marriages already carried out or about to be carried out, before the governor of Santiago, Cuba, in the face of accusations from the Commander of El Cobre, citing civil and ecclesiastical legislation.

1864. Inaugural session of the Second General Chapter of Claret's missionaries.



THE HEART OF MARY AND THE CONGREGATION

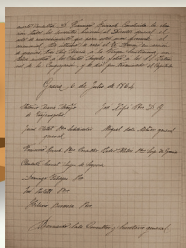
THE RENEWAL (1967 - 1979)

On April 3, 1978, Fr. General, Antonio Leghisa, wrote the Circular Letter entitled *The Heart of Mary and the Congregation Today*, which was a very important step in the renewal of our Cordimarian spirituality. Its main objective was to help the Congregation overcome a certain disorientation that many Claretians were going through, after the Second Vatican Council, in relation to the Cordimarian aspect of our spirituality, and to promote the experience of this important aspect of the Claretian charism. The Circular

Letter had three parts, which Fr. Leghisa himself presented saying: *In the first place, we will try to offer a panoramic vision of Cordimarian spirituality as it was lived by the Father Founder. The second part will deal with the place the Heart of Mary has in the charism of the Congregation, in its spirit and religious-apostolic life, and in evangelization. The third part will be dedicated to the renewal of our filial piety and adaptation, according to the diverse cultural and apostolic situations in which the Congregation currently finds itself.*



THIRD GENERAL CHAPTER (1864)



It was celebrated July 3-6, 1864 in Gracia (Barcelona). Its members were: His Excellency Anthony Mary Claret, Archbishop of Traianoupoli, Founder of the Congregation, and **Joseph Xifre, Jaime Clotet, Bernardo Sala, Miguel Rota, Francisco Reixach, Pedro Alibes, Clement Serrat, Dominic Fabregas, Jose Portell and Hilario Brossosa**. It began with a spiritual retreat led by Claret. The contents of the Chapter were the questions of community life and apostolate: superiors, administrators, dedication to the spiritual direction of seminaries and teaching in the Schools of Theology, visiting the Blessed Sacrament, patrons of the Congregation, and the Constitutions. Finally, they moved on to the elections, Joseph Xifre being elected General Director, Jaime Clotet Consultor and Superior of Vic, Pedro Alibes Superior of Gracia, Clement Serrat Superior of Segovia, Bernardo Sala Consultor and Secretary General, Miguel Rota Consultor and General Administrator, and Francisco Reixach 4th Consultor.

EVANGELICAL-CHARISMATIC FOUNDATION



3. Our Lord Jesus Christ, who was sent from the Father and became incarnate of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit, was anointed by that same Spirit to proclaim glad tidings to the poor. In complete dedication to the concerns of his Father, he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom.

Since it was his will to associate people with him in this saving work, he called together those he desired, appointed twelve of them to be with him, and sent them out to proclaim his message. Then, when he himself had accomplished the work of our redemption, he founded the Church as the universal sacrament of salvation and sent the Apostles and others to bear witness to the resurrection.

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, some of these others began to manifest in the Church the kind of life Jesus had chosen for himself, as their way of witnessing to the Gospel.



Foundation Room (Vic)

FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

In this paragraph we distinguish: Jesus' being from his actions, contemplated through the eyes of Claret.

- With what names - titles - do you usually address Jesus in your personal prayer? Which names do you repeat more often? Which emotions do they contain?
- Write the names of all those people who have constituted a "chain of callings" in your vocational experience. Bless them. Pray for each of them.



"I shall preach, write, and circulate good books and pamphlets in abundance, so as to drown evil in a flood of good."

(Aut 453)



1862. After sailing all night from Valencia, Claret arrives at the port of Barcelona, and continues his journey to Vic. He carries his autobiography, completed a month and a half ago.

1867. Claret asks Fr. **Jose Fernandez Montaña**, a priest trained in El Escorial, at this time a professor of oriental languages there, to prepare notes for him on *Arte de Canto Llano* [The Art of Liturgical Chant].

1869. Claret tells Fr. **Joseph Xifre** that he agrees with the decision to found in Algiers. He has many places in mind in America where they can make agreements with their bishops when they arrive soon for the council.



THE CONTINENTAL MISSIONARY ENCOUNTERS

THE RENEWAL (1967 - 1979)

In 1978, the first Missionary Encounters took place in regions throughout the history of the Congregation. There had already been a proposal in 1976 by the General Prefecture of Apostolate to hold a World Congress on Claretian Missions. Taken to the Assembly in Costa Rica, held that same year, the idea was transformed into a project of congresses or encounters of Missionaries by zones. The first was held in February 1978, in Cordoba (Argentina). The second, in March, in Cali (Colombia). The third, in November,

in Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo). In February 1979, the fourth was held in Zamboanga City (Philippines). The objective was to highlight the missionary work of the Congregation, rediscovering its prophetic meaning and the preferential option for the poor. The high response of Claretians to these calls showed the missionary fervor they lived at that time, which also corresponded with the most considerable fact that the number of Claretians assigned in mission areas had gone from 10% in 1973 to 13% six years later.



PAUL DE JESUS CORCUERA CASERTA

Bishop of Vic (1776-1835)

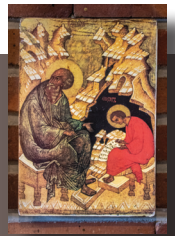
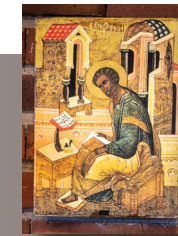
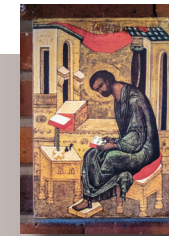
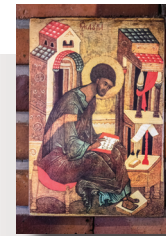


Cadiz (Spain). He was Rector of the seminary in Sigüenza (Guadalajara). He was consecrated Bishop of Vic in 1825. He was a man with a profound interior life and an active shepherd who was admired for his virtues. Father Claret looked to him as a model for his episcopal actions, especially in the formation of seminarians. He had a holy death in Vic. He was the one who received Claret when he decided to enter the seminary in Vic, being captivated by the beautiful qualities of the young man. Seeing that Claret stood out because of his effort, talent, knowledge and exemplary conduct, he told the priest that Claret was living with, Fr. **Fortian Bres: Fr. Fortunato**, I want to ordain Anthony, because there is something extraordinary there. He, who was so demanding in the preparation of the seminarians, pushed up Claret's minor orders. Corcuera, prevented by the illness that took him to the tomb on July 3rd, could not ordain Claret as a priest. Years later, Claret was ordained Archbishop wearing his miter.

OUR GIFT IN THE CHURCH

4. We, the Sons of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, have also received a calling like that of the Apostles and have been granted the gift to follow Christ in a communion of life and to go out into the whole world to proclaim the good news to every creature.

Therefore the following of Christ as set forth in the gospel is our supreme rule. And so we listen to the Lord's words, eager to learn from him as he calls his disciples to be perfect as their Father is perfect, as he gives them the new commandment of fraternal love, as he urges them to pray, as he gives them rules for apostolic life and as he proclaims that the poor in spirit, the sorrowing, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for justice, the merciful, the single-hearted, the peacemakers, those who suffer persecution for the cause of right and endure slander for his sake, are all sharers in his own blessedness.



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

Here is the description of the transmission of the spiritual experience of the Founder to the Congregation. The Christ of Claret is the Christ of the Claretians.

- Review the verbs that refer to Christ. Would you add some more verbs from your own experience?
- Write the 4 key words: word-love-rules-blessedness. And use them to compose a prayer that expresses your intention to "be with Him" and "be sent."

"Prophecy only become persuasive when there is a coherence between our announcement and our life.
Our personal and community life is, then, our first prophetic act."
(IPM 19)



1862. Claret celebrates Mass in Vic, in the chapel-room where the newly canonized Saint Michael de Sanctis was born.

1864. On this day there were tensions during the Second General Chapter of his missionaries, which Claret solves with a time of prayer and a talk. It will conclude the next day.

1867. Claret writes to the Abbess of Las Huelgas (Burgos) sending her the Government's approval of her recent election.



IN PARAGUAY

THE RENEWAL (1967 - 1979)

At the beginning of 1979, the first 6 Claretians of the Province of Aragon arrived in Yhu. The Department of Caaguazu is located between the great rivers Paraguay and Parana, almost in the center of the country, and within this Department are the districts of Yhu, which means *black river*, and Vaqueria, both served by the Claretians with the close collaboration of the Missionary Sisters of the Claretian Institute (founded in Vic, in 1951, by Fr. **Luis Pujol**) and the Misioneras de Jesus Crucificado [Missionary Sisters of the Crucified Jesus]. The Parish in Yhu which

was comprised 35,000 parishioners, with 3,000 in the center and the rest scattered in 58 villages within an area of 2,400 square kilometers. The people being this spread out hindered pastoral work. They were poor, but religious people and the missionaries had to address them in Guaraní rather than in Spanish, which was another significant difficulty for apostolic work. The bad roads were also difficult, because of the frequent rains, and were only passable with a jeep. The main hope was in the catechists. Fortunately, they were numerous, although they lacked formation.



RAFAEL MARIA NZE ABUY, CMF
First Archbishop of Malabo (1926-1991)



Akanabot (Equatorial Guinea). After he joined the Congregation, he studied in Guinea, Spain and Rome, where he received his doctorate. Later he graduated in Canon Law from the University of Salamanca. In 1965 he was named Apostolic Vicar of Rio Muni and Titular Bishop of Sutunurca, the first black bishop of Equatorial Guinea. The following year he was appointed Bishop of Bata. He continued in office after the independence of Equatorial Guinea (1968), but was forced into exile in 1970 and to resign from office in 1974. In 1980 he was reinstated in office until his appointment as the first Archbishop of Malabo in 1982, a position he held until his death in 1991. He died in Madrid on July 7th. The literary work of Mons. Nze Abuy is extensive, especially his *Gramatica fang* [*Fang Grammar Book*] of 1974. His tales from when he was a young seminarian are well-known and were published in 1950 in *La Guinea Española*, a Claretian magazine about most of the colonial period.

A TRULY APOSTOLIC INSTITUTE



5. We answer this divine call by adopting Jesus' way of life, a way which the Virgin Mary, too, embraced in faith. And so in the Church we have to manifest Christ's virginity, poverty and obedience in proclaiming the Good News. Through our profession of the evangelical counsels by public vows we dedicate ourselves to God and are consecrated by him, and thus we form in the Church an Institute which is truly and fully apostolic.



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

This paragraph describes the acceptance of our vocational gift and our committed response in the Church.

- *Your vocation is not merely a professional job, why not?*
- *Your vocation is "truly and fully apostolic" and not monastic. In your opinion, what distinguishes them?*
- *In a moment during your day, try to renew your missionary profession. Do it alone, in front of a tabernacle and under the gaze of the Heart of Mary.*

"Great importance must be attached to the Personal Project, in which Scripture holds a privileged place, becomes a point of reference in personal accompaniment and allows us to evaluate the degree of assimilation of the Word of God."
(Initiation in the Ministry of the Word)



1851. Claret asks Fr. **Joseph Caixal** to send him plenty of copies of the *Straight Path* and the *Illustrated Catechism*, to Cuba and to have them bound in striking colors, as Cubans like them.

1858. Claret writes to his four collaborators in Cuba about the governance of the diocese. He has rejected the proposal to be Archbishop of Zaragoza because he sees it as incompatible with living in Madrid. He prefers to be an *Archbishop in partibus* and thus be freer to devote myself to writing, preaching and confessing, going on missions, etc.

1868. Fr. **Clement Serrat** travels from Segovia to La Granja to visit Claret; he is accompanied by another priest and two Castilian aspirants who will soon go to Vic.



THE CLARETIAN ASSOCIATES

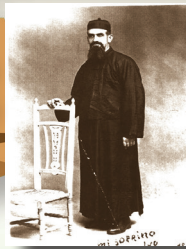
THE RENEWAL (1967 - 1979)

In April 1979, the first International Encounter of the *Claretian Associates* was held in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), which today is considered as the First World Congress of *Lay Claretians*. Father Claret's apostolic dream was finally being realized, according to which the laity should play an important role in the salvation of souls.

The process of reorganization of the Claretian laity began in 1938 through the work of the Superior General who created the Association of *Claretian Collaborators*. This association, conceived as the Congregation's proper

work, was approved by the Holy See in 1943. After 1972 they were called *Claretian Associates*. In 1979 they took the name of *Lay Claretians*. The General Chapter of this year gave a new direction to the Claretian laity. It affirmed that the promotion must be done, not because of the needs or interests of the Congregation, but because of the value that the Claretian lay vocation has in itself, that is, to support the action of the Spirit who has also called lay people from the beginning to carry out the Claretian mission.

ANASTASIO ROJAS, CMF Missionary in China (1885-1953)



Aranda de Duero (Burgos, Spain). Ordained in 1909, he obtained his doctorate in Theology in Rome. His first years in Spain were spent in formation. In 1927 he was in charge of the seminarians of the Diocese of Santander. It was in 1929 that *Propaganda Fide* offered the Congregation the direction of the Kaifen Regional Seminary in China. The General Government chose Fr. Rojas for this delicate mission. He was 45 years old. Fr. **Joseph Fogued** would accompany him. When he arrived in China, he wrote to the Fr. General, portraying the harsh reality: war, bandits, kidnappings, robberies, death threats. At the same time, his weak health worsened, so he was directed by the superiors to return to Spain. There he continued his work as a formator in the seminaries in Zamora and Santander. In 1933 he was appointed as Superior in the Spanish mission in Paris and then to Segovia, Madrid and Bilbao. Returning to Paris, he was named Visitor of the French-Belgian Visitorship. Elderly and ill, he died in Aranda de Duero.



IN MISSIONARY SERVICE OF THE WORD IN THE CHURCH



6. In the Church we are steadfast helpers of its Shepherds in the ministry of the word, using all means possible to spread the good news of the kingdom throughout the world. For the good of the whole Body of Christ, we profess love and obedience, even by vow, toward the Church's Supreme Shepherd. In communion with the bishops and under their leadership, we strive to serve in the building up and growth of the Church.



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

This is the paragraph about the missionary dimension of our being. Meditate slowly on the three most striking aspects. Ask yourself:

- How does being "helpers of its Shepherds" affect me?
- How do I assume "ministry of the Word" and make it concrete in my life?
- All means "possible" or all "adequate" means?

"We are convinced that our ministry only acquires great prophetic power when the Word we proclaim is backed by our apostolic poverty, an authentic option for the poor, an economy in solidarity, and our own hard work."
(IPM 25)



1845. Claret preaches Spiritual Exercises for some 200 priests in Vic.

1852. Claret asks Fr. **Paladio Currius** to give a gentle admonition to Fr. Aldenaro Berti because he heard him speak about Italian politics.

1862. Claret arrives in Gracia (Barcelona) from Vic, to have the preparatory meeting that same afternoon for the **First General Chapter** of his missionaries.



STATISTICS FROM 1977

THE RENEWAL (1967 - 1979)

At the end of 1977 the Congregation had 1,939 Priests, 89 Students with perpetual vows, 302 Students with temporary vows, 395 Brothers with perpetual vows, 25 Brothers with temporary vows and 130 Novices. In total, the members of the Congregation were 2,880 distributed among 368 houses belonging to 34 Major Organisms. At that time the Congregation was 39.5% involved in parish ministry, 17.5% in missions, 16.7% in educational ministry, 10.3% in

preaching centers, 9.1 % in specialized ministry, 5.3% in communications and 1.3% in retreat houses and itinerant missionary teams. The total number of apostolic sites was 502. Some people expressed concern about the lack of apostolic zeal, the scarce development of the community model, the weakening of the Claretian identity and belonging and the lack of meaning of the Mission. These points would be the ones that would guide the themes of future chapters.



SECOND GENERAL CHAPTER (1862)



It was held in Gracia (Barcelona) July 7-14, 1862. Those present were: His Excellency Anthony Mary Claret, Archbishop of Traianoupoli, Founder of the Congregation, and **Joseph Xifre, Jaime Clotet, Bernardo Sala, Francisco Reixach, Sebastian Michel, Pedro Alibes, Clement Serrat, Dominic Fabregas, Miguel Rota and Hilario Brossosa**. Theme: corrections to the Rules and Decrees on Government. Although there was no talk in this Chapter about the Oath of Permanence and not accepting ecclesiastical dignities without permission of the Holy See or the Superior General, shortly after the Chapter the Founder wrote an Appendix where they were included. After this General Chapter no one was admitted without the Oath of Permanence. Also discussed was the Consecration to God and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, written by the Founder and to be used by all the individuals of the Congregation at the end of their Novitiate Year. At that time Claret also wrote the Rules for Students and for the Prefect.

SHARING THE SAME VOCATION



7. We form a Congregation of priests, deacons, brothers and students who share the same vocation. All of us belong to the same Community, fulfill the same mission and, in keeping with our own gift of order and the special role we perform in our Congregation, we all share the same rights and duties deriving from our profession.

Others have also received an apostolic gift and are in various ways in communion with our Congregation.



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

Our Congregation is a communion of diverse people. We are united by the same vocation: we are missionaries. We are also in communion in different ways with those who have received the same gift.

- Call to mind the figure of an exemplary Missionary that you have known personally. Highlight their missionary virtues.
- We all have the same rights and duties. What benefits does this affirmation bring to us all?
- The charism is greater than the Congregation. How do you dream of the future of the charism within your context?

"I said to the almond tree: *Speak to me of God.*
And the almond tree blossomed."
(Kazantzakis)



1849. Claret tells Dr. **Joaquin Masmitja** about the Spiritual Exercises for the clergy that will begin in the middle of the month, and which will be the foundation of the Congregation of missionaries.

1851. Claret counsels his missionaries in Cuba, Fr. **Paladio Currius** and Fr. **Esteban de Adoain**, not to go too fast jumping from one parish to another.

1863. Claret asks Fr. **Joseph Xifre**, who is in Segovia and plans to visit Claret tomorrow at La Granja, if he could bring a Brother cook from the Congregation and leave him with Claret for a while, since the one he has is elderly and sickly.



THE XIX GENERAL CHAPTER (1979)

THE MISSION TODAY - MCT (1979-1985)

This Chapter was celebrated from September 3 to October 13, 1979 at the General Curia House of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, in Via Aurelia (Rome). 78 Claretians participated and it was presided over by Fr. Antonio Leghisa. The participants of the Chapter came from 18 different nationalities. A rereading of the Claretian mission with a strong Latin American tone was made, urging a more missionary, inculturated and liberating community. Some preferences were made more concrete: missionary evangelization, from the perspective of the poor, with

preferential dedication to the formation and incorporation of lay evangelizers, to young people and to the area of family ministry. The Position Paper *The Mission of the Claretian Today* (MCT) was later published, and a new Superior General was elected, an Argentinian, Fr. Gustavo Alonso (1979-1991), the first Latin American General and also the first non-European General. In this Chapter work continued to finalize the updating of the *Constitutions* and the *Directory*. For the first time, three Students, invited by the General Government, participated in the Chapter.



ANTHONY PALAU TERMENS

Bishop of Barcelona (1806-1862)



Valls (Tarragona, Spain). Ordained in 1831, he obtained a degree from the University of Cervera. He was professor in the seminary in Vic. He energetically encouraged all kinds of Marian devotions: month of Mary, Heart of Mary and the Court of Mary. He was a correspondent for all the Catholic newspapers of the time: *La Cruz* [The Cross], *El Catolico* [The Catholic], etc. As a friend of Father Claret, he joined him and Fr. **Joseph Caixal** in the founding of the *Libreria Religiosa*. In 1842 he founded *La Revista Catolica* [The Catholic Magazine]. Sent to the Diocese of Vic, he was consecrated in 1854. In 1857 he was appointed Bishop of Barcelona. He died in Barcelona on July 8, 1862. When Father Claret was there, presiding over the Second General Chapter in Gracia, he officiated at the funeral of this good friend. In his Autobiography (No. 329) Claret tells how he came up with the idea of creating a Religious Press to make books cheaper: *I shared my plans with Fathers Caixal and Palau, who were then canons of the cathedral at Tarragona.*



OUR IDENTITY AS SONS OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY



Claretian Spirituality Center (Vic)

8. We attribute the founding of our Congregation to the intervention of the Blessed Virgin Mary, whom we honour as our Patroness under the title of her Immaculate Heart. Since we are called and truly are Sons of her Heart, we accompany her in love and trust and commit ourselves to her that we may be conformed to the mystery of Christ and may cooperate with her in her maternal role in our apostolic mission.



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Have an imaginary conversation with Mary. Ask her questions and imagine she answers you. Conclude your dialogue with a brief prayer.
- Bring to mind some of your most intense personal Marian experiences that have touched you.
- From those memories compose a personal Cordimarian litany of about eight or ten invocations. At each invocation, respond: *Pray for us, Mother of the Congregation.*

“The Christian life is not a constant high.
I have my moments of deep discouragement.
I have to go to God in prayer with tears in my eyes, and say,
‘O God, forgive me,’ or ‘Help me.’”
(Billy Graham)



1841. The Congregation of *Propaganda Fide* grants Claret the pontifical title of *Apostolic Missionary*.

1859. Claret asks Fr. **Joseph Xifre** to work with Fr. **Jaime Passarell** to dissuade his nephew Valerio Claret from becoming a residential seminarian; he thinks it preferable for him to live with his brother Mauricio and be a day student.

1862. While presiding over the **First General Chapter** of his missionaries, Claret takes care of some purchases for El Escorial: some 200 bedspreads and curtains for the seminary rooms.



ENCOUNTER OF MISSIONARY BROTHERS

In June of 1980 the First Encounter of Missionary Brothers was held in the *Claretianum* (Rome), and others followed. The vocational crisis that affected the Congregation in general was becoming more pressing in the lay charism. These Encounters studied and reviewed the situation of the Brother within the Congregation and discovered possible lines of action for their future promotion.

In March 1981, Fr. Gustavo Alonso, Superior General, wrote the Circular Letter *The Brothers and the Claretian*

Mission Today; and, later, in 1997, the new Superior General, Fr. Aquilino Bocos, elected in 1991, published another Circular Letter *The Missionary Brothers: A Challenge for the Life and Mission of the Congregation*. These documents affirmed that without Brothers our Claretian community is not complete. Fr. Bocos said: *This Circular Letter... is, above all, an invitation to live in dynamic fidelity the grace of our vocation in the Congregation. It is not only a letter about the Brothers, but about the whole missionary community.*

THE MISSION TODAY - MCT (1979-1985)



SERVANT OF GOD ANGEL CANTONS, CMF

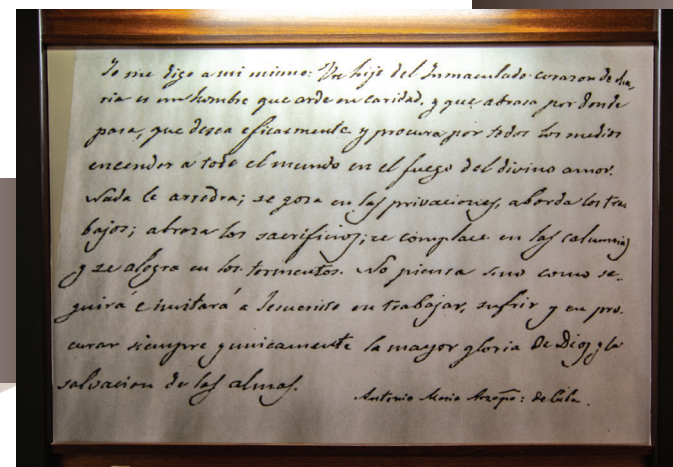
Missionary in Italy (1895-1967)



Mollerussa (Lleida, Spain). In 1912 he consecrated himself to the Lord with religious profession and in 1920 he received the priestly ordination. Assigned to the Italian Province in 1921, he was sent to Monfalcone and then to Tricarico. But where he left his biggest mark was in the seminary in Palermo. For ten years he was the spiritual father of the seminarians. The work of the priestly ministry brought him much physical and moral suffering. Returning to Spain in 1965, he underwent a delicate surgery. After a year, he returned to Palermo where his condition worsened and he died in 1967. He wrote a touching spiritual testament, a sincere expression of his soul as a Christian, priest and son of the Heart of Mary. He had an impartial and pleasant nature. As a devotee of the Virgin and of the Fr. Founder, he was distinguished above all by a particular and sincere devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, a topic on which he wrote several books. With an artist's soul, he displayed his good aptitudes for painting and sculpture. His cause for beatification was introduced in 1983.

THE MODEL OF A MISSIONARY

9. We should always keep this model of a missionary before us: "A Son of the Immaculate Heart of Mary is a man on fire with love, who spreads its flames wherever he goes. He desires mightily and strives by all means possible to set everyone on fire with God's love. Nothing daunts him: he delights in privations, welcomes work, embraces sacrifices, smiles at slander, rejoices in all the torments and sorrows he suffers, and glories in the cross of Jesus Christ. His only concern is how he may follow Christ and imitate him in praying, working, enduring and striving constantly and solely for the greater glory of God and the salvation of humankind.



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

The Founder wanted all of his missionaries to carry this Memorial in our wallet. Today could be a good occasion for you to write it out by hand if you have not done it yet.

- Review the content of this text, no doubt Claret's self-portrait, and repeat it, slowly and with pauses, changing the subject of the verb to yourself. "I, (your name) am a man who is on fire with love, who spreads its flames..."

"My God...

I wish that I could make you known, loved, and served by all creation.
This is my only desire; the rest is not worth bothering about."

(Aut 641)



1844. Claret begins Spiritual Exercises for some 200 priests in Vic.

1857. Claret concludes his first Spiritual Exercises in Madrid, held in the house of the Vincentians. He signs some resolutions that were not very specific since he is not sure about staying in Madrid.

1863. He announces to Fr. **Dionisio Gonzalez**, well in advance so that it is not burdensome, that the King and Queen will pass through El Escorial in mid-September, and that he would like some performance by the seminarians and the students of the school.



CLARETIAN SPIRITUALITY COURSES

THE MISSION TODAY - MCT (1979-1985)

On September 15, 1981, the *Claretian Spirituality Center* was inaugurated, based in the *Claretianum* in Rome. The first course was given to 32 Major Superiors, with the aim of helping them fulfill their role of teaching and sanctification. The first Director was Fr. Alfredo M. Perez Oliver. Then came many other courses directed toward different Claretian groups in order to internalize the new Constitutions. Among the professors we highlight the contribution of Fr. **Joseph Maria Viñas**, Fr. **Jesus Alvarez Gomez**,

Fr. Jose Cristo Rey Garcia Paredes, Fr. Aquilino Bocos, Fr. Jesus Maria Palacios, Fr. Jose Rovira, etc. These courses would later be joined with *Semanas Sacerdotales Claretianas* [Claretian Priestly Weeks] in Vic, and other Claretian Spirituality Courses in India, Latin America, USA, etc., in an attempt to intensify and recover aspects of our proper spirituality. In addition, the publications on Claretian themes increased and, as a sign of this concern to safeguard the spirit of Claret, the Claretian Museum in Vic was renovated, in 1991.



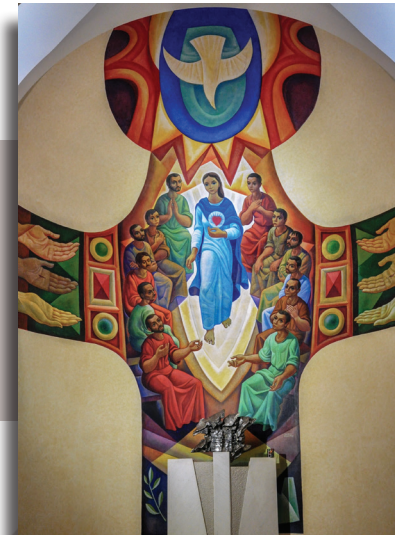
PEDRO CASAS SOUTO Bishop of Plasencia (1826-1906)



Sobrado del Obispo (Ourense, Spain). He studied Philosophy at the seminary in Ourense. In 1843 he tried to enter the Dominican Order. In 1857 he received a doctorate in Theology in Toledo. Between 1861 and 1872 he attended to the parish of San Ciprian de Cobas (Ourense). In 1872 he acted as the penitentiary canon of Ourense and as a professor of Moral Theology in the Seminary. He was consecrated Bishop of Plasencia in 1876. Although at the beginning he wanted to resign, in the end he accepted, not without first going through Santiago de Compostela and pledging to the Saint that he would even offer his life in defense of the truth. He had a strong temperament, extraordinary Christian strength, continuous pastoral concern, and he even published 43 pastoral works. He was called the *Hammer of Liberalism*. In Claret's cause for beatification, he testified that Claret's deep humility, with other virtues, always impelled him to have a kind of veneration for him and moved him to take advantage of Claret's writings and works. Pedro Casas was a Senator for the Province of Guipuzcoa and for the Office of the Archbishop of Toledo. He died on July 26th.

THE EVANGELICAL FOUNDATION OF THE COMMUNITY

PART ONE: MISSIONARY LIFE OF THE CONGREGATION Chapter I: Missionary Community



Mural in the chapel of the General Curia painted by Cerezo Barredo (Rome)

10. As Jesus Christ is one with the Father and the Spirit, we missionaries should be one with Them, so that the world may come to believe in Christ. We should imitate the communion of life that prevailed among Christ and the Apostles, and among the faithful of the early Church, who were united, heart and soul.

Love for God and for our brothers and sisters has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit and builds up our communion. It is the first and most necessary gift which marks us out as true disciples of Christ. Hence our entire missionary life is governed and shaped by this love.



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

This paragraph places the foundation of our missionary community as the Trinity, the community of the Twelve and the first Christian community.

- Think about what is most significant to you from these three "communities." Towards which horizons do they guide you?
- Write the names of your community brothers on a sheet of paper. And complete this sentence with several answers: "To love these brothers, for me, is ..."

"Our prophetic lifestyle receives a distinctive imprint from the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Mother of the Congregation."
(IPM 20)



1850. The construction of the convent of La Merced (Vic) is almost finished, with a part being assigned as a house for Spiritual Exercises. Claret himself pays for part of the construction with his savings.

1864. Having left Barcelona the day before, Claret spends the day in Lleida, where he meets with the bishop, his friend Dr. Puigllat, and with Mother **Esperanza Gonzalez**, whom he encourages in the foundation of the Missionary Handmaids of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

1867. Claret responds to several questions from Fr. **Joseph Xifre**, including one regarding the foundation in Jaca (Huesca).



NEW CONSTITUTIONS AND DIRECTORY

THE MISSION TODAY - MCT (1979 - 1985)

At the Chapter of renewal in 1967, work had begun on the adoption of the *Constitutions* and the *Directory* according to the new norms issued by the *Second Vatican Council* (1962-1965) and the new *Code of Canon Law* (1983). On February 11, 1982, the Decree of approval of the new *Constitutions* was published. Finally, by a Decree on May 15, 1986, they were definitively approved by the Holy See. The *Directory* was approved by the General Government on October 24, 1986, and its latest update was on

October 24, 2011.

To deepen our understanding of the history and spirit of the new text, the General Government promoted the publication of *Our Project of Missionary Life. Commentary on the Constitutions*. The first volume focused on the *Fundamental Constitution* (Rome-Quezon City, 1992). The second, on the *Fundamental Constitution and Part One* (Rome, 1991). The third volume, on *The Conciliar Renewal* (Buenos Aires, 2007). The first two volumes were translated into English.



FELIPE MAROTO, CMF
VII Superior General (1875-1937)



Garcillan (Segovia, Spain). In 1900 he arrived in Rome to study canon and civil law in San Apolinar. Eugenio Pacelli, future Pope Pius XII, was the most famous of his classmates. In 1904 he was appointed professor of Canon Law in San Apolinar. He became a world-renowned Canon Lawyer. He had other positions: Procurator General, Consultor of the Congregation for Religious, Consultor of the Holy Office, Postulator of the cause of beatification of the Venerable Father Claret, etc. He gave a canonical structure to several Congregations, among them the Claretian Missionary Sisters. With the help of his Claretian disciples **Arcadio Larraona** and **Siervo Goyeneche**, in 1918 he published the book *Institutiones Iuris Canonici*, a fundamental manual. In 1920 he was one of the initiators of the magazine *Commentarium pro Religiosis*. On April 23, 1934, he was elected Superior General. He was deeply affected by the dramatic events of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), in which 271 Claretians died. He died in Rome.

THE CONGREGATION AS "COMMUNITY"

11. As we have all embraced a common calling, so our Congregation embraces all its members and communities. In turn, each of us, while having that readiness of will which befits the universal outreach of our Congregation, shares family life and ministry with his brothers in a local community.



The CESC and Forge Center Teams with Fr. Gonzalo Fernandez, General Prefect of Spirituality, preparing the Claretian Year



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

Remember all those local communities where you have lived throughout your missionary journey. Try to remember the positive things - in terms of family life or the ministry performed there - you received in each of them. Give thanks to God for all the communities in which you have lived as a Claretian.

"How important it is nowadays to circulate good books to counteract the flood of bad ones!"
(Aut 708)



1850. Claret sends Fr. **Joseph Caixal** a short note in which he *pleads and requests* that he go to Vic on the 16th to accompany the missionaries at the first anniversary celebration.

1855. *The Blessed Virgin* deigned to approve the Pastoral Letter I wrote in Cuba on the Immaculate Conception. She told him: "bene scripsisti."

1862. While Claret presides over the **First General Chapter** of his Congregation, the Bishop of Barcelona dies, his friend **Anthony Palau**; Claret presides over the funeral and burial in the Cathedral of Barcelona.



REVISION OF POSITIONS

Beginning in 1982, a collective reflection on the revision of positions (works, structures, services, etc.) also began in the Congregation which concluded at the General Assembly in Los Teques (Venezuela), January 8-22, 1983. The General Government and all the Major Superiors of the Congregation participated.

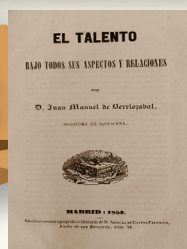
The fundamental objective was to make possible the implementation of the objectives and options of the General Chapter in 1979. The final document

had two parts. The first focused on the revision of missionary life, which dealt with issues such as the sense of belonging, availability, prayer, lifestyle and poverty, community planning and community animation and the role of the local superior. The second part focused on the revision of positions. The document ends by saying: *We want to continue this process of revision because we believe it will help us to find the way to conform our lives and our positions to the model of an apostolic missionary that our Fr. Founder embodied.*

THE MISSION TODAY - MCT (1979 - 1985)



JOHN MANUEL DE BERRIOZABAL Peruvian Writer (1815-1895)



Cuzco (Peru). Peruvian writer and Marquis of Casajara. From a wealthy family, he settled very soon in the capital of Spain, where he devoted himself fully to humanities and literature. His main works include the three dedicated to His Excellency, the Archbishop of Cuba: *El talento bajo todos sus aspectos y relaciones* [Talent Under all its Aspects and Relationships], *La felicidad del pensamiento* [The Happiness of Thought] and *Los seres invisibles* [The Invisible Beings]. It was a sign of the appreciation and veneration which he had for Claret. Appreciation and veneration had been awakened in him by the Claretian work directed towards intellectuals, artists and writers, called **Academy of St. Michael**, of which Berriozabal was one of the most enthusiastic sympathizers. The Academy was created to *combat religious errors and vices through truth and virtue. Defend religion through the Press in any of its vast branches.* It consisted of three hierarchies, the first two were exclusively made up of artists and writers.

MISSIONARY COMMUNITY "AD INTRA"



12. Fraternal life is best symbolized and brought to perfection in the Eucharist, which is the sign of unity and the bond of love. Our fraternity is also nourished by prayer, especially liturgical prayer. It is fostered by a prevailing tone of family life in which we all live together sincerely and openly. It is also expressed by our sharing in the governance and orderly operation of the community. Strengthened by all these helps we can move forward in missionary community to achieve that personal fullness to which we have been called.



Motherhouse Community Chapel (Vic)



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

The four fundamental means of expressing and nurturing fraternal life are: the Eucharist, common prayer, family life and sharing in the governance.

- *Imagine you have to explain them to someone who asks about them. What would you say?*
- *From your experience, which of these means is the most apt and effective to build community in your current circumstances?*
- *In what dimensions does belonging to your community help you grow? You know that everything works for the good of those who love God.*

"Think of your own history when you pray, and there you will find much mercy. This will also increase your awareness that the Lord is ever mindful of you; he never forgets you."
(Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, 153)



1859. They give Claret the royal approval of the *Constitutions* of his missionaries, dated the 9th, and he explains to Fr. **Joseph Xifre**, through a letter, the enormous difficulties that he has had to overcome.

1860. Claret is granted the title of Archbishop of Traianoupoli *in partibus infidelium*.

1863. Given the difficulties caused by the Archbishop of Toledo, Claret asks the Bishop of Salamanca to enroll the seminarians of El Escorial (there are already about 90) in his seminary so they can obtain academic degrees, a request to which the bishop will gladly agree.



THE CLARETIAN MISSION

THE MISSION TODAY - MCT (1979 - 1985)

In 1982 the annual publication of *The Claretian Mission* began, under the responsibility of the Secretariat for the Churches in Formation. Later it was assumed by the General Secretariat in collaboration with the General Prefecture of Apostolate. This bilingual publication, in Spanish and English, became a mosaic where the progress of the various pastoral activities of the Congregation can be observed. Its main objective is to make the Claretian mission known to lay people who may be interested, among them young people who wish to get to know

the Congregation and discern their vocation. The publication has always been annual, except between 2001 and 2004, when it was published every two years. The theme of the publication has been varied, sometimes focused on the presentation of experiences of missionaries, apostolic positions, the presence of young people, social work, etc. The annual's style favors photos over text, making it a flexible and attractive publication. In addition, the texts are intended to be brief, direct and simple to communicate the strength and joy of the Claretian charism.



ALFONSO SANCHEZ, CMF
First Bishop of Alto Sinu (1913-1997)



Bogota (Colombia). He was one of the first students of the Claretian seminary in Bosa. He finished his studies in Spain and Italy. He received his doctorate in Law from the Xavierian University in Bogota. He was a formator of young Claretian seminarians for many years. He was Rector of the School of Guanenta in San Gil. He also stood out as a musician. He was the first Provincial of Colombian origin (1958-1964). At the end of his time as Provincial, two Provinces were created in Colombia: East, with its Curia in Bogota and West, with its Curia in Medellin. He coordinated the Colombian religious life. In 1969 he was appointed Bishop of the Prelature of Alto Sinu (Montelibano), in the Department of Cordoba, with the mission of giving birth to a local church in difficult lands with complex social and agrarian problems. With the help of the Claretians of both Provinces he worked toward this goal until his retirement in 1989. He was welcomed by the community of Girardot, from where he traveled to his pastoral activities. He died on July 11th.

COMMUNITY OF LIFE IN THE MINISTRY



13. Collaboration in the ministry of the word pertains to the very origins of our common life. However, there are many ways in which we can share in the mission of our Community: as members of a team associated in a common task, as individuals working on a project entrusted to us by the community, or as persons who pray and suffer on behalf of the Church. Therefore, whenever a ministry is entrusted to an individual, it should be carried out in such a way that we all feel we have a share in it. Conversely, each individual should feel that the work he is performing is one he has received from the community.



Shoes of Claret on display at the Claretian Museum (Vic)



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Call to mind the Institute in which you are currently developing your missionary life. Identify:
 - The existing apostolic teams.
 - The Claretians who have an assignment and do not work with others.
 - The Claretians who pray and suffer (elderly, sick, etc.)
 - Pray for each of them. And pray, if possible, for these intentions in the areas where you live (community) or develop your apostolic service.

“Three kinds of souls, three kinds of prayers:
I am a bow in your hands, Lord, draw me, lest I rot.
Do not overdraw me, Lord, I shall break.
Overdraw me, Lord, and who cares if I break.”
(Nikos Kazantzakis)



1839. Claret no longer resides in Sallent as Administrator.

1851. Claret advises his missionaries, Fr. **Paladio Currius** and Fr. **Esteban de Adoain**, to use caution when defending the rights of the slaves in their preaching.

1857. Fr. **Francisco Coll** writes to Claret for him to process the recognition of the schools of the *Dominican Sisters of the Annunciation*.



THE MISSION TODAY - MCT (1979-1985)

IN SOUTH KOREA

In September 1982, the first two Claretians arrived from the Philippines to Seoul (South Korea): Fr. Jose Ruiz Marquez and Fr. Manuel Tardio. They were welcomed by the Maryknoll Fathers. Very soon they settled with the Franciscans because of their closeness to the language school, after having lived two months in the Presbyterian Seminary. The situation was favorable because of the growth of the Korean Church. In 1983 they obtained their own residence in Seoul for the first time, as a house of formation, while the Missionaries helped in neighboring

parishes, practicing the language until they could lead their own parish. With 40,000,000 inhabitants and 1,800,000 Catholics at that time, South Korea was called to become a focus of evangelization in Asia, because conversions were increasing and vocations were numerous. In 1985, together with Japan, they formed the East Asia Independent Delegation. Since June 2010, Korea has become an Independent Delegation, with four houses and twenty missionaries dedicated mainly to preaching, biblical apostolate, working with immigrants and attending to a house of spirituality.

JESUS SERRANO, CMF

Apostolic Vicar of Darien (1902-1997)



Corella (Navarre, Spain). He succeeded Bishop **Preciado** as the head of the Vicariate of Darien in 1956. He had arrived in Panama in 1928 with less than two years as a priest. His gifts led him to be Secretary of Mons. **Maiztegui**, of Mons. Preciado and of the Apostolic Nunciature, without hindering his devotion to the evangelization of the indigenous people of Darien and the black people of Costa Abajo. In 1942 he was appointed Dependent Visitor of the Province of the United States and for the Vicariate of Darien which became independent in 1952. In 1953 he founded the Retreat House in San Jose, Costa Rica, of which he was the first Director. His main concern was to strengthen the apostolic positions and the social communications media, with the help of the Claretian Missionary Sisters and those of Mother **Laura Montoya**. He entrusted part of the Vicariate to the Province of Castilla, considerably increasing the personnel. He resigned from his position in 1981.

THE COMMUNITY'S ECCLESIAL AND SOCIOCULTURAL SETTING



Claretian Museum (Vic)

14. Both in their lifestyle and in the way they perform their ministry, our local communities should so develop and unfold our original gift for serving the Church and the world that they become truly rooted in the conditions and needs of the local Church and of the world around them.



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Take a contemplative walk around the house where you live. Try to observe the faces of people, the way they dress, etc. Imagine their conversations. Try to guess their needs.
- Ask yourself what kind of people tend to frequent your community. What do they ask from her? What do they ask from you? Let that thought settle in your mind.

"Always, everywhere God is present,
and always He seeks to discover Himself to each one."
(A.W. Tozer)



1851. Claret sends the Governor of the province of Santiago, Cuba a reasoned plea in favor of marriages between people of different races or social classes.

1861. Claret leaves Madrid in the direction of Santander, accompanying the Queen.

1865. The Queen, coerced by the government, who arrived in full at La Granja the night before, signs the recognition of the Kingdom of Italy. On the same day Claret goes before the Queen and condemns her decision. The Queen gives him permission to go to Catalonia to recover his health.



IN AUSTRALIA

THE MISSION TODAY - MCT (1979 - 1985)

In 1983 the decree was signed allowing the Philippine Province to found a House in Darwin (Australia), in order to serve the immigrants from Timor who were arriving in that region. To begin with, they took charge of the parish of La Sagrada Familia, which already had a Primary School run by religious sisters, and the City Prison also fell within its limits where the Missionaries went on Sundays to celebrate Mass. They found another area which was very appropriate for them: the parish, which, besides being

territorial, was also the personal parish of the Spanish, Portuguese and South American immigrants, who could now have priests who would take good care of them. Moreover, there was a strong colony of Filipinos, as well as many refugees from Timor Leste, who fled their land when Indonesia annexed the island. They started by building the house, with a chapel within the premises, until they had an appropriate church. A new parish was expected as soon as the government built the anticipated University.



PEDRO JOSE SANCHEZ CARRASCOSA

Bishop of Avila (1823-1896)



Manzanares (Ciudad Real, Spain). Oratorian. He was appointed Bishop of Avila in 1875 and Senator of the Kingdom in 1876. He was a great admirer of Claret as evidenced by the various letters he wrote to him, full of devotion and enthusiasm in praise of him, as well as by making a visit to his tomb in Fontfroide on April 29, 1881. He said that he received great consolation for his spirit and shared with him all his burdens with his arms outstretched and with many tears poured on the simple tombstone that hid Claret's mortal remains. He left these words written with a pencil on the wall, which humidity and weather conditions have not managed to erase over the years: *In this monastery I left half of my soul and carried in my heart the pledge of my love. Holy brother, pray for your Brothers. With you I find advice and example. I will keep your commandments ... The righteous will shine ... The Bishop of Avila.*

COMMUNITY OF FRATERNAL LOVE



15. As images of God and members of one body, we should love one another, thus fulfilling the Lord's precept; "This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you." Fraternal love such as this involves the practice of all virtues: "love is patient and kind; love is not jealous; love is not boastful or conceited, it is never rude and never seeks its own advantage; it does not take offense or store up grievances. Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing but finds its joy in the truth. It is always ready to make allowances, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes." Let us be concerned for one another, then, and help bear one another's burdens.



Claretian Museum (Vic)



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

Fraternal love is central to the missionary. It is not an instinctive force, nor spontaneous sympathy, nor a tacit agreement. It's a gift.

- *Pray for it ardently.*
- *And from the perspective of awareness of the gift received, repeat each of the aspects of that love in the first person singular, telling yourself:*
 - *I have received the gift of patience ... thank you, Lord!*
 - *I have received the gift of kindness... thank you, Lord!*
- *And so on...*

"Jesus and Mary are my only support and guide,
the models I propose to follow and imitate."
(Aut 642)



1849. Claret meets with the five co-founders and another two or three friends and begins the foundational Spiritual Exercises of the Congregation of Missionaries.

1850. They festively celebrate the first anniversary of the Congregation; Claret invites Fr. **Joseph Caixal**.

1869. Claret writes his famous letter to Fr. **Joseph Xifre** about teaching as a proper ministry of the Congregation.



INDEPENDENT POLSKA AND NIGERIA

THE MISSION TODAY - MCT (1979 - 1985)

In 1982 the new Major Organism of Poland was erected and in 1984 that of Nigeria, an intense growth later brought them to become Provinces in a short time in 1990.

In the Decree erecting Polska Independent Delegation on November 16, 1982, Father General highlighted the strength of the Claretians during forty years of persecution and war. Given the accelerated growth in vocations, the new Independent Delegation was created with the four existing Houses. There were 15 young Priests, 5 Perpetually Professed,

12 temporarily professed Students, 2 Brothers and 11 Novices.

In the Decree erecting Nigeria Independent Delegation of May 13, 1984, Father General recalled that the emergence of the first Nigerian vocation in Equatorial Guinea was the occasion for our entry into Nigeria and the starting point for other vocations. In 1974 a Novitiate was created in the city of Nekede. It had the help of the USA-West Province. At the time of the creation of the new Organism, there were already about 70 Nigerian Claretians.



FOUNDATION OF THE CONGREGATION (1849)



Claret had already tried to create associations and brotherhoods, but it was around three in the afternoon of July 16, 1849 when he summoned Fr. **Stephen Sala**, Fr. **Joseph Xifre**, Fr. **Dominic Fabregas**, Fr. **Manuel Vilaro** and Fr. **Jaime Clotet** to the seminary in Vic. He wanted to found a congregation of priests who were and would be called *Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary*. He had already spoken with them about the foundation, and on July 16th, everyone gathered in his room. They began the Spiritual Exercises in which the Congregation would be founded: *At 3:00 P.M. we were gathered together at the seminary. Before starting the Spiritual Exercises, Father Claret said: TODAY BEGINS A GREAT ENTERPRISE. Fr. Manuel Vilaro responded smiling: "How important can it be, since we are so young and so few?" "You will soon see," said Father Claret; "If we are few and young, then God's great power will shine forth even more resplendently."*

CHARITY BUILDS COMMUNITY



16. Each and every one of us should continually work together to build community. Our speech should always be humble and charitable. Avoiding whatever might wound friendship, we should refrain from sowing discord, from quarreling among ourselves or grumbling about anything. We should never judge one another, for the Lord is the one who is to judge us, nor should we dare be suspicious of one another. Even when we cannot excuse others' actions, we should excuse their intentions. Let us learn to be generous toward anyone against whom we may have some cause for grievance.



Foundation Room (Claretian Museum - Vic)



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Review the seven attitudes necessary to form community. Translate them to your situation adding a motive:
 1. I will use humble and charitable speech, because...
 2. I will never wound friendships, even if...
 3. I will not sow discord, so that...
 4. I will not quarrel with others, since...
 5. I will not grumble, otherwise...
 6. I will not judge or be suspicious of others, and consequently...
 7. I will forgive everyone, especially when...

"We will endeavor to discern the voice that comes to us from new social movements and to welcome the spurs to change that may come to us, whether from inside or outside the Church."

(IPM 50.2)



1854. Based on the royal decree of November 1852, Claret asks the Captain General of Cuba that the church of the Franciscan Observants, in Puerto Principe, enter into the budget like those of regular churches.

1861. On the way to Santander, they stop in Villacastin (Segovia), and Claret preaches to the people in the parish, to the priests in the large sacristy, and then to the Poor Clares in their convent.

1865. In the discernment of whether or not to continue as Confessor, he feels that the Christ of Pardon tells him: *Anthony, leave.*



SYMPOSIA AND ENCOUNTERS OF THE CLARETIAN FAMILY

THE MISSION TODAY - MCT (1979 - 1985)

In October 1984, the first World Encounter of the *Claretian Family* took place in Rome. The objective was to deepen the understanding of the charismatic gift of St. Anthony Mary Claret, to share the experiences of the different branches of the *Claretian Family* and to propose common future objectives. The Second Encounter was held in Vic, September 1 to 9, 1988. The third, in Lajas de Yaroa (Dominican Republic), in December 1992, within the time line of the celebration of the 500th Anniversary

of the Evangelization of America. The fourth, in Cuxac d'Aude (France), near the monastery of Fontfroide, in 1996. The fifth, in El Cobre (Cuba) February 18 to 24, 2001, in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of Claret's arrival in Cuba. The sixth, in Bangalore (India), July 20 to 25, 2005. The seventh, in Vic, May 12 to 16, 2009, where the first Coordinator of the *Claretian Family* was elected. The eighth, in Bata (Equatorial Guinea), in 2013. The ninth, in Mülberg (Germany) in December 2017.



FRANCISCO ONETTI, CMF
Missionary in Colombia (1880-1958)



Cordoba (Spain). The biography of Fr. Onetti was printed one year after his death: *Un heroe de la selva [A Hero of the Jungle]*, by Angel de Maria Canals. In 1905 he left for the missions of Guinea and Fernando Poo, where he spent twelve long years devoted to his ministries. The Fr. General sent him to the missions of the Colombian Choco in 1918. He gave his beloved Choco 40 years of the most generous and sacrificial service. Fr. Canals wrote: *Many times I was amazed at his heroism, worthy of a Francis Xavier or a Peter Claver.* In 1953, when the Vicariate of Istmina and Quibdo was created, he went to Tutunendo to live the last five years of his life. He wrote the novel *Alma Española [Spanish Soul]* that was published in 1952 in Madrid, and a lovely tale *El tesoro del Dabaibe [The Treasure of Dabaibe]*. Among his notes is found this farewell: *I have suffered a lot during my life as a missionary, for more than half a century; but those sufferings were the mark of my happiness and satisfaction.* He died on July 14th.

COMMUNION OF UNITY IN DIVERSITY

17. In dealing with any of our brothers whose origins, age, cultural background or opinions differ from our own, let us preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds us together. However, we should freely use the variety of gifts and ministries we have received from one and the same Spirit for the common good. We should offer a warm, fraternal welcome to any member who visits our house. When we ourselves are visiting another house, we should bring the Lord's peace to it.



Courtyard of the former seminary of Vic



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

This paragraph reflects the unity in diversity of people, charisms and ministries. Considering this reality:

- *Thank God for the diversity you find among your brothers because of their race, language, culture, formation, missionary journey, etc.*
- *What paths of growth are open to you to live truly and concretely as an interdependent person, who fully assumes diversity and is open to communication with those who are different culturally?*

“Initiation in the Ministry of the Word, understood as a way of being, acting and signifying, must be one of the hinges of the formation of our young missionaries.”
(*Initiation in the Ministry of the Word*, 1.2)



1841. Claret starts a novena to Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Ribas de Freser (Girona).

1844. Claret concludes Spiritual Exercises in Vic and writes brief resolutions.

1870. Claret attends the General Congregation where the Council is put on hold, supposedly for the moment.



THE XX GENERAL CHAPTER (1985)

THE CLARETIAN TODAY (1985 - 1991)

August 25 - September 24, 1985, the XX General Chapter was celebrated in Rome. There were 78 participants, and it was presided over by Fr. Gustavo Alonso. It focused on the person of the Claretian in their process of renewal, and bore the fruit of the document entitled *The Claretian in the Process of Congregational Renewal* (CPR). The Chapter also devoted itself to the accommodation of the *Constitutions* to the new *Code of Canon Law* (1983), authorizing the General Government to present it to the Holy See, so that they could be definitively approved,

which was the case with the *Decree* of May 15, 1986. Fr. Gustavo Alonso was re-elected Superior General. If the previous Chapters had focused on the community and the mission, the one in 1985 focused on the person of the Claretian: *As we see it, it is not the institutional or legislative dimension that claims the main attention of our missionary community today. Rather, it is precisely the person of the Claretian Missionary that forms the central link joining our discernment of the present with our hopes and aspirations for the future.*



ISABEL OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Abbess (1832-1902)



Cabañas de Yepes (Toledo, Spain). She entered the Poor Clares in Ocaña in 1852. She was Novice Mistress and Abbess. On May 18, 1862, Father Claret visited their convent. In one of her notebooks this religious sister wrote her impressions: *He gave us a talk in the parlor, in which he exhorted us to exercise the virtues and to the exact fulfillment of our duties: he gave this talk with the zeal and fervor which moves his heart, then a light shone inside my soul that revealed to me the zeal with which this Archbishop sought the greatest honor of God in all things: I understood him to be a very great soul and of much merit before God ...* Then she writes how the Blessed Mother told her in a message: *It was not chance that brought this Holy man into this house, which you contemplate in your soul to have a state of great virtue and holiness...for he was providentially sent from the Lord.*

THOSE WHO ARE FAVORED BY FRATERNAL LOVE



18. We should treat with love and respect the elderly or those who have spent their lives in God's service, hoping to be enriched by their experience. In turn, these veteran missionaries should always strive to show that they are ever young at heart.

We should treat our sick brothers with special love, as members of the suffering Christ, and should gladly visit and help them.



Motherhouse (Vic)



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Add to your calendar a visit to a hospitalized, sick or elderly Claretian.
- Incorporate into your personal routine sending condolences by e-mail, telephone or letter to the Claretians you know, on the occasion of the death of a relative.

"Love—caritas—will always prove necessary, even in the most just society.
There is no ordering of the State so just that it can eliminate the need for a service of love.
Whoever wants to eliminate love is preparing to eliminate man as such."
(Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 28)



1853. The hardship created by the Cuban climate is noticeable. In these days the missionaries **Anthony M. de Galdacano**, **Francisco Coca** and **Manuel Subirana**, and the boy Felipe Vila are sick. At their doctor's advice, they will return to the Peninsula.

1858. Claret informs Fr. **Joseph Xifre** about his activity in Madrid: he hears confessions until past 12 o'clock and most days he preaches one or two sermons.

1861. On the way to Santander, they stop in Palencia. Claret gives numerous sermons: to the seminarians, to the people in the cathedral and to the religious in their convents.



THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING AREA OF CAMEROON

THE CLARETIAN TODAY (1985 - 1991)

In 1986 the Claretians of USA West Province, after having collaborated in the development of the Claretians in Nigeria, opened a new missionary field in Cameroon, in the Diocese of Bamenda, with two missions: Babanki-Tungo and Batibo. Afterwards they left the latter and took on the parish of Ndog was for reasons related to community life.

It is the English-speaking area of Cameroon, on the border of Nigeria. It has 30,000 inhabitants, of whom 10,000 are Catholic. The geography of the

place is mountainous, with forests, and is 900 meters above sea level, enjoying a mild and not very humid climate. In general, the dusty roads are relatively good except in the rainy season. The Christian communities are quite young, barely 15 or 20 years old, and the customs of traditional African religions are predominant. The missionary work is an almost initial evangelization, to present the Good News with simplicity.

In 1993 the mission transferred to the jurisdiction of the Province of Nigeria, currently East Nigeria.



ANTONIO GOMES SARDINHA, CMF Brazilian Missionary Brother (1909-1985)



Cagiuru (Brazil). He entered the Congregation as an aspiring Brother at the age of 34 in Ribeirão Preto. He belonged to the first group of Brazilian Claretian missionaries. He was always busy in jobs such as porter, preparing the dining room, helping in the laundry, in the garden or on the farm. He was never idle. He won the affection of those inside and outside the community. The last years of his life in Rio Claro he received frequent visits from people who asked him for spiritual direction, some advice or some prayer. He had a smile, a loving word or a gesture of welcome for everyone, without discriminating anyone. Of his 95 years of life, 61 were spent in the Congregation, which he loved as a mother. His love for the Heart of Mary stood out. Someone said that *Brother Sardinha was mercy itself, he was truly a prayer for others*. He died in Rio Claro on July 14th. His canonization process is underway.

THE ESCHATOLOGICAL COMMUNITY



Claretian Museum (Vic)

19. When a missionary dies, we should celebrate the last rites with devotion, fraternal love and simplicity. We should remember all our brothers who have gone before us in the service of the Gospel, commending them to the Lord with the prescribed prayers, especially in the celebration of the Eucharist.

We should show the same reverence and respect for our departed parents and for deceased collaborators of the Congregation.



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Recall the Claretians who have passed away that were most significant in your vocation. Ask for their intercession.
- Ask God for the gift of a "good death" for all of us. Pause to consider what that means. What would be a "bad death" for a missionary?
- When you participate in the Eucharist today, pray for our relatives and benefactors.

"Guilt comes from the life we have not used, from what we have not lived."
(Ernest Becker)



1858. They leave for Leon, Asturias and Galicia. It is the first of the great royal excursions, which will give Claret the opportunity for much preaching.

1861. Claret preaches in Reinosa (Cantabria), where he has spent the night, on their way to Santander. In Caldas de Besaya, he preaches from the train window to the people on the platform.

1868. Claret writes to Mother **Paris** that he is very busy working on *Notes to Preserve the Beauty of the Church, which I already have in embryo. I have proposed it to Their Majesties, to the Minister of Grace and Justice, to the new Nuncio, and everyone has thought very well of it.*



CORDIMARIAN SPIRITUALITY

THE CLARETIAN TODAY (1985 - 1991)

Driven by the intense moment created by the *Marian Year* convened by Pope John Paul II in 1988, and the congregational concern about their own Cordimarian identity being somewhat blurred, the General Government, in light of the indications of the General Chapter of 1985, proposed asking all the individuals of the Congregation about their Cordimarian experience. This survey was carried out starting in April 1987. The answers were numerous. Some were published in a small book and their study and

reflection resulted in another broader publication. This initiative, added to the *Cordimarian Spirituality Week* of 1988 in Vic, spiritual exercises, courses and several other publications, meant a new emphasis on the Cordimarian identity of the Claretian. In this regard, the Superior General, Fr. Gustavo Alonso, said: *we can expect a precious fruit: that Mary, far from being a simple devotional juxtaposition, will constitute for the Claretians an inspiring and unifying presence of our following of Christ on the missionary journey.*



FORTIAN BRES

Claret's Benefactor (1771-1855)



Sant Hipòlit de Voltrega (Barcelona, Spain). He was the steward of the bishops of Vic. He received Claret as *famulus* and, despite the age difference, he became a close friend of his. The Saint repaid this love of his benefactor by making what was considered a miraculous trip on January 15, 1844 from Olost to Vic to help him when he broke his leg on that snowy day while on his way to celebrate Mass in the cathedral. Fr. Fortian lived in a house on Dos Solas Street, now known as Tortades. In the small garden of the house there is a small chapel dedicated to the Virgin, where they would go to practice their devotions. Both lived on the second floor. Passing through there when Claret was a bishop, he told **Claret**: *Do you see that little chapel to the Virgin? When I was a student, I lived with Fr. Fortian Bres, we would go see her every day and pray to her.* He died in Vic on July 31st.

BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION OF CHASTITY



Chapter II. Chastity

20. Imitating Jesus Christ, who by his words and even more by the witness of his life recommended chastity for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, and following the example of the Virgin Mary, we too embrace chastity as a gift which enables us to devote ourselves wholeheartedly to the concerns of the Father. For through this gift of chastity, the Lord Jesus manifests the power of his glory in the weakness of our flesh, thus drawing all people to hope in the life to come.



Claretian Museum (Vic)



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

"Draw near and carry this yoke, which sensual people consider impossible; but Jesus Christ says that it is easy, and those who really receive it, experience that it is true and that it is easier than they thought, as Saint Augustine affirms about himself." (Well-Instructed Seminarian, II, p.123)

- *Considering this affirmation by Father Claret, can you identify with it? Remember an episode in your life in which you experienced the "ease" of chastity.*

"There is no one who is insignificant in the purpose of God."
(Alistair Begg)



1861. In Santander Claret preaches to the Sisters in the Convent of La Enseñanza. The following days he will continue preaching in other convents, St. Vincent de Paul houses of charity, shelters and conferences.

1867. Claret expresses his satisfaction that Mother **Paris** and her nuns are already settled in Reus. He also exhorts them in a way which, strangely, he finds rather comical, and explains: *you will laugh at my simplicity. It doesn't matter. I'm happy; just as David danced in front of the Ark, I also say these simple things before the Blessed One who is in that little cave.*



THE MOSAIC OF FATHER CLARET IN THE VATICAN BASILICA

THE CLARETIAN TODAY (1985 - 1991)

On December 6, 1988, a mosaic with the figure of Saint Anthony Mary Claret was installed next to the altar of the Martyr Saints Proceso and Martiniano in St. Peter's Basilica prepared by the Vatican Mosaic School. It is on the right wing of the basilica, where the First Vatican Council (1869-1870) was celebrated, which Father Claret attended. As of today, he is the only Conciliar Father to be canonized. The image is of half a bust in episcopal vestments; in his left hand he has the

Gospel and the verse Mark 1:14. It has an inscription in Latin that says: *S. Antonius Maria Claret Fundator CMF - Pater Conc. Vati. I - 1807-1870*. The Vatican authorities offered us this possibility and asked us to look for a saint related to Claret for the counterpart of the altar. By mutual agreement, a mosaic of Saint **Joaquina Vedruna** was placed there. The mosaic of Claret reminds us, not only of his participation in that Council, but also of his beatification (1934) and his canonization (1950) in that basilica.

RAMON FLUVIA, CMF
General Econome (1850-1928)



Hostalets de'En bas (Girona, Spain). He began his studies in the seminary of the Diocese of Girona. After completing the three years of Philosophy, he entered the Claretian Novitiate in Prades. His health was weak but he managed to profess in 1871, being ordained in 1874. He was soon sent to Segovia to give missions as a companion of Fr. **Villaro**. But he soon moved to the formation of the young Claretians of Catalunya. As assistant to the Econome and the General Secretary of the Congregation, he spent many years visiting the communities of Spain, America and Fernando Poo, being elected General Minister in the Chapter in Vic in 1899, replacing Fr. Jose Mata. He remained in office until the General Chapter of 1922. He earned the trust of **Xifre, Serrat** and **Alsina**. Fr. Xifre said: *Fr. Fluvia never asks me for money to support the Students, Fathers and Brothers, and even pays me for my trip when I visit them.* He died on July 14th in Barcelona.



CHASTITY AND ITS INFLUENCE ON COMMUNITY AND MISSION



21. The chastity we profess fosters a new kind of fraternal communion in Christ; it builds up a community based neither on blood nor on carnal desire, but on the will of God. As a symbol of perfect love, it becomes a special source of spiritual fruitfulness in the world. In a unique way it frees us to love God and all human beings, and strengthens us to struggle in our apostolic ministry against the powers of evil.

Claret's bundle and cross on display at the Claretian Museum (Vic)



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Take some time to remember which specific people have benefited from the gift of your consecrated chastity.
- In addition, what personal, apostolic, or community benefits has your consecrated celibacy provided?

"I resolve to keep an even temper and disposition, never allowing myself to be carried away by anger, impatience, sadness, or exaggerated joy."

(Aut 650)



1844. Claret offers himself to the exiled Bishop of Plasencia, Cipriano de Varela, to preach in his diocese when there is an opportunity. Claret plans to go out to preach throughout Spain.

1847. Claret is very busy in his retirement in Vic, preparing several books, among them the one of *Daughters of the Heart of Mary*, and giving conferences for young priests.

1849. On the feast day of St. Mary Magdalene, Claret resolves to live the second degree of humility.

IN INDONESIA

The Claretians arrived in Indonesia in 1991 from Timor Leste, which at that time was an annexed province of Indonesia. In 1992 the first Major Seminary was established in Kupang (Indonesia). In 1995 the first thirteen Claretian students professed. In 1997 these territories comprised within Indonesia and Timor Leste constituted a Dependent Delegation of the Philippine Province.

Due to the flowering of vocations, the need became apparent to open a new Formation Center. In May 2001, the new

Major Seminary for Theology students was inaugurated in Yogyakarta. In this same year the Novitiate in Fohorem was moved to Benlutu.

In 2003, the foundation was approved in Medan, on the island of Sumatra, one of the five large islands of Indonesia, where they assumed the parish of Onan Runggu, one of the three on the island, on the shores of Lake Toba, with about 9,000 Catholics living in 22 substations. In 2005, Indonesia-Timor Leste Independent Delegation was erected.

LEONIA MILITO Foundress (1913-1980)



Sapri (Italy). She entered religious life on June 18, 1935. In 1954 she was sent by her superiors to Brazil. Her great concern for evangelization and the poorest people made her start a religious congregation on March 19, 1958, together with Msgr. **Geraldo Fernandes, CMF**, called *Missionary Sisters of Saint Anthony Mary Claret*. With her sisters she traveled the world and created apostolic and social action centers on five continents. In her writings she expresses her concern about the Lord's harvest: *The missionary sister is the answer to the lament of Christ about the shortage of workers for his vineyard, and in response to the dream of unity among the peoples, she makes an appeal to open our arms to embrace all creatures with the tenderness of Jesus Christ*. She died in a car accident. In 2003, her beatification process was introduced in the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

INTEGRATING THE GIFT OF CHASTITY IN THE PERSON



House of Tortades (Vic)

22. We should therefore cherish chastity as a gift from God, one which we gladly accept and earnestly cultivate. By virtue of our profession we bind ourselves by vow to perfect continence in celibacy.

Since the observance of this chastity touches upon some of our deepest natural inclinations and places several renunciations upon us, we should put our trust in the Lord and humbly ask his help in prayer. We should likewise foster community life since true fraternal love preserves and perfects chastity.

Not presuming on our own strength we should avoid dangerous situations with a sort of spiritual instinct and make use of such helpful means as hard work, pastoral prudence and taking care of our mental and physical health.

FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Try to complete these sentences with answers taken from your personal experience:
 - What helps me the most to live as a celibate is ...
 - Chastity is not a charism for isolation but for communion if ...
 - I cope better with the renunciations that chastity demands when ...

“The Spirit of Jesus is on each and every one of us.”
(IPM 16)



1840. During these days, the Pastor of Viladrau is indisposed, and Claret, as Vicar, signs a certificate of good conduct in his name in favor of a parishioner.

1865. Claret arrives in Gracia (Barcelona) and stays four days with his missionaries, hoping to speak with the bishop, who is in Montserrat, and making several visits and preaching.

1870. Accompanied by Fr. **Joseph Xifre**, Fr. Lorenzo Puig and Br. **Jose Saladich**, Claret leaves Rome towards Prades (France). He arrives the next day, with very poor health.



IN IVORY COAST

THE CLARETIAN TODAY (1985 - 1991)

On June 17, 1990, the first Claretian Missionaries arrived from Polska Province to take charge of two mission posts in Ivory Coast: one in the Abidjan District (Vridi), Diocese of Grand Bassam, and, once they were familiar with the language, another in Bouafle, a rural area of the Diocese of Daloa, in the interior of the country with 135,000 inhabitants and 22 tribes, mostly Animists. The *Missionary Sisters of Saint Anthony Mary Claret* have been working in Ivory Coast since 1970. The Claretian

Missionaries faced the difficulties of bringing the Word of God to these people with patience and courage. There are many who have embraced the Christian faith since then. We must not forget that evangelization in Ivory Coast began scarcely a hundred years ago and, in some regions, less than fifty years ago. In 1993, the first Claretians from Ivory Coast professed. In 1997 the first native Claretian was ordained. And in 2001 the Congregation took over a new parish in Soubre, called Our Lady of the Rosary.



BLESSED JESUS ANIBAL GOMEZ, CMF Colombian Martyr (1914-1936)



Tarso (Colombia). He entered the Claretian seminary very young, professing in 1929. He suffered from a painful sinusitis which he endured with admirable patience. In 1935, with another 27 seminarians, he left for Spain to finish his priestly studies. He studied in Santo Domingo de la Calzada and Segovia, ending up in Zafra for health reasons. He had to leave in May 1936, due to threats, and made his way to Seville and Ciudad Real. Very near there, at Fernan Caballero railway station, on the way to Madrid, he met his death along with 13 other companions on July 28th. He was the only foreigner of the Claretian martyrs of the Spanish Civil War. He wrote to his people: *We have not gone out on a walk once since we arrived: in fact, we keep a strictly papal cloister; this is what circumstances demand of us. Therefore, you can see that we are not in Jauja and that we have to offer the Lord something.* He was beatified in Tarragona on October 13, 2013 together with his martyr companions.

BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION OF POVERTY



Chapter III: Poverty

23. Imitating Jesus Christ we profess the poverty of the gospel. For our sake he made himself poor though he was rich that we might become rich by his poverty. As he went about proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom he had nowhere to lay his head.

Through our profession we share in his poverty and keeping in mind the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary who was foremost among the poor of Yahweh, we leave all things behind and like the Apostles follow the Lord thus reminding our brothers and sisters of the good things of the world to come.



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Look at Jesus: Point out which are the three characteristics of his poverty that are most attractive to you.
- Now look at Mary: Complete this sentence with several affirmations, inspired by the gospel: "She was foremost among the poor because she was ..."

"The best thing about the future is that it comes one day at a time."
(Abraham Lincoln)



1846. Claret finishes Spiritual Exercises in Vic and writes two brief resolutions.

1855. Claret agrees with the Captain General of Cuba that the land behind the military hospital of Nuestra Señora de Belen could be used for a market.

1862. Claret writes from La Granja to Fr. **Dionisio Gonzalez** the *letter of displeasure*, with so many warnings about order and cleanliness, the behavior of the seminarians and the students, etc., that Fr. Dionisio feels overwhelmed, incapable and about to resign. Mutual requests for forgiveness will follow.

IN KENYA

Since January 1991, Nigerian Claretians have been working in Mombasa. At first, their main activity consisted of learning the *Swahili* language, learning about the reality of the country and pastoral work. In 1992 they were in charge of the parish of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Shanzu, on the outskirts of Mombasa, with 50,000 inhabitants, 3,000 of whom were Catholics; later the parish in Kiembeni was added. There is great dedication to the tourists who visit Mombasa, the second industrial city in Kenya and its main port. The diocese

in which this community is based has a good number of diocesan priests, most of them natives. The men and women religious are almost all foreigners. In 2001 the second foundation was created, taking on the parish of Kerwa, 15 minutes from Nairobi, which is among the Kikuyi, a large tribe, and Juja, 30 kilometers from the capital. Later they would buy a plot of land in Langata, on the outskirts of Nairobi, where the Curia of Saint Charles Lwanga Independent Delegation is currently located, which includes Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya.

THE CLARETIAN TODAY (1985 - 1991)



BLESSED TEOFILO CASAJUS, CMF
Martyr from Lleida (1914-1936)



Murchante (Navarre, Spain). His parents were Jacinto Casajus, carpenter, and Agustina Alduan, who had seven children. Two of his mother's brothers were Claretian Missionaries. When he was three years old, he started going to the school of the Sisters of Our Lady of Consolation. In that environment his religious vocation arose. On July 2, 1926, he entered the postulancy in Alagon. There he studied Humanities. In August 1928 he went to Cervera. In 1930 he went to Vic for his novitiate under the guidance of Fr. **Ramon Ribera**. He studied his first course in theology from 1934 to 1935 in the seminary in Solsona. On August 26, 1935 he moved to Cervera to finish his studies, separating from his brother Jose, who was in Solsona studying philosophy. He was martyred with the group of Fr. Manuel Jove and had the same fate as the whole group. He was shot on July 26th against the wall of the cemetery in Lleida. He was one of the 109 Claretian Martyrs beatified on October 21, 2017 by Pope Francis.

COMMUNITY-MISSIONARY ASPECT OF POVERTY

24. Placing all our trust in the Lord and not at in domination or wealth, we seek before all else the kingdom of God, which belongs to the poor. Voluntary poverty builds up a fraternal community that is one in heart and mind: a community which is expressed in sharing its material and spiritual goods with the poor and in serving them.



Claretian Spirituality Center (Vic)



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Poverty as trust in God is felt in difficulty and scarcity. Remember some fact of your life that is evidence of that truth.
- Poverty as fraternal love builds communion. What do you think you are contributing to the construction of your community with your voluntary poverty? Try to specify what material or immaterial goods you contribute. Who thanks you the most?
- Who are the poor you have contact with most often? Do you feel that you serve them?

“Prayer, as a means of drawing ever new strength from Christ, is concretely and urgently needed.
People who pray are not wasting their time, even though the situation appears desperate and seems to call for action alone.”
(Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 36)



1851. Claret asks the Captain General of Cuba for a pardon for seven people condemned to death for an independentist uprising, showing him that the execution would be detrimental to Spain.

1865. From Barcelona Claret sends a *Press Release* to the newspaper *La Esperanza*, in which he states that his rejection of the recognition of the Kingdom of Italy is identical to that expressed by the other bishops and that he is not on the side of the Government, as the Newspaper of Barcelona and some other newspaper have said.



IN SRI LANKA

THE CLARETIAN TODAY (1985 - 1991)

Sri Lanka was originally linked to the Indian zone of Tamil Nadu, all dependent on Deutschland. There were already several native Claretians before the Claretian presence became stable in June 1991 in this Asian island which during colonial times was called Ceylon. This country is mostly of Buddhist religion (69.5%), but it has a good percentage of Christians, more than other countries in Asia. With 7.5% of Christians (6.8% Catholics), it ranks third as a country with the most Christians in Asia, after the Philippines and Vietnam. The Congregation owns a house in Jaffna,

in the north of the country. Work quickly started in the capital and surroundings, and in the center among tea plantation workers, in Madulsima. In 1994, a formation community was founded in Gurudeniya (Kandy), and in 1997 the first Novitiate was started in Kurunegala. Until 1993, when Chennai Province (Madras) was created, it remained the only mission of Deutschland with the category of Dependent Delegation. It then became St. Joseph Vaz Independent Delegation on October 24, 2019 with the Curia located in Ragama, same site of its Claretian Publications.



BLESSED FEDERICO CODINA AND 10 COMPANIONS *Claretian Martyrs of Lleida*



On the morning of July 21st, the entire community was at home, with the exception of Br. Grau. Very early they began Masses behind closed doors. The Fr. Superior had to suspend the 8 o'clock Mass in the face of the threat of setting fire to the building. He quickly ordered everyone to take off their cassocks and disperse. Br. Juan Garriga was arrested a few steps from home and Br. Bergua could not even get out. He hid, which saved his life. Soon they were discovered and taken in two groups, some being killed on July 25th and others on August 20th. Fr. Federico Codina, after having been interrogated separately, was taken on foot to the prison, but after a short distance, the platoon of militiamen who were leading him distanced themselves from the prisoner and a shot was heard. Fr. Codina dropped dead, raising the number of Claretian martyrs. They were beatified in Barcelona on October 21, 2017.

APOSTOLIC POVERTY IN A MISSIONARY COMMUNITY



Church of St. Anthony Mary Claret (Vic)

25. Our poverty is apostolic, which means that our life and activities should be imbued with the spirit of poverty. Moreover, the forms our poverty takes should truly respond to our missionary life and should constitute a personal and communal sign of the Gospel. Therefore our Congregation and our communities, considering the conditions of each place, should strive to give a collective witness to poverty. Avoiding every appearance of luxury or of immoderate accumulation of wealth and possessions, we should see to it that our furnishings, food and clothing are in keeping with those of the poor. We should always regard our goods as being at the disposal of others, especially for the needs of our Congregation and those of the People of God.



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

"I believed that this dreadful giant, which worldlings call all-powerful, had to be confronted with the holy virtue of poverty. So wherever I encountered greed, I countered it with poverty. I had nothing, wanted nothing, and refused everything." (Aut 359)

- Why did Father Claret see in poverty the most powerful weapon against worldliness?
- Why was not it a problem for him to be poor and to manage many assets?
- Can one identify with being poor only through sharing? Explain your answer.

"All men are in need of help and depend on one another.
Human solidarity is the necessary condition
for the unfolding of any one individual."
(Erich Fromm)



1853. After the visit to Nuevitas (Cuba), where Claret has arranged for 70 marriages of cohabitating couples and of those 50 foreigners, he goes on to make his second pastoral visit to Puerto Principe.

1854. Claret writes to Fr. **Paladio Currius** asking him to settle the economic accounts so that they can start the house of charity in Puerto Principe as soon as possible.

1865. Claret is in agreement with Fr. **Joseph Xifre** to expel Antonio Vilaseca from the Congregation, from the community of Segovia.



THE TIRELESS MISSIONARY SPIRIT

THE CLARETIAN TODAY (1985 - 1991)

Inspired by the MCT (1979), the CPR (1985) and the SW (1991), the Claretians strengthened their identity as hearers and servants of the Word and were invigorated as they went out to the universal mission in Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe. They discovered new places that challenged them as missionaries and new ways of reaching all men and women. Both in reflection (Encounters, Conferences, Workshops, Weeks, etc.), and in searching for new methods (popular missions, work with immigrants, missions on the front

lines, work with drug addicts, youth, leadership formation, presence in suburbs, commitments for peace and justice, dialogue with Muslims, social communications media, presence in universities, promotion of indigenous, promotion of women, etc.), they found no limits. The Congregation felt called to begin a new cycle of evangelization, marked by a more lively relationship with the cultures of the peoples in which it was present to announce and bear witness to Christ with his proposed Kingdom, which means integral liberation for all, especially for the poor.

PABLO VALLIER, CMF
Visitor of Chile (1833-1895)



Huesca (Spain). Ordained a priest in 1857. He was a professor in the seminary until 1860. After an experience with the Dominicans of Ocaña, he joined the Congregation in 1864. He was a novice in Vic, where he met the Founder, who relied on him to give Spiritual Exercises for the priests. He was a Novice Master in Vic and in Prades (France). He was the founder of the Congregation in Chile in 1869, where he had to overcome many difficulties. He was Visitor for 19 years and attended two General Chapters. He founded the houses of La Serena, Valparaiso and Curico. In 1886 he was appointed formator in the seminary of Santo Domingo de la Calzada. He returned to Chile in 1888. He was an advisor of bishops and a formator, a man of great human fortitude and invincible apostolic boldness. His love for the Congregation had no limits, just like his devotion to the Virgin and to the Founder. He gave his soul to the Lord in Valparaiso in 1895. He enjoyed a profound reputation for holiness.

ASPECTS OF PERSONAL ASCETICS

26. Our missionaries should aim at being truly poor both in reality and in spirit. We should neither keep nor acquire anything counter to our profession of poverty, nor use anything as if we owned it. All of us should feel bound by the common law of work, thus sharing the lot of the poor. We should never undertake sacred ministries for the sake of gain.

We should rejoice when we experience some of the effects of poverty, never doubting the providence of the One who said: "Set your hearts on his Kingdom first, and on God's saving justice, and all these other things will be given you as well."

In order to foster religious poverty, perpetually professed members may be allowed by their lawful superior to make a free renunciation of their inheritance, in keeping with the norms of the law.



Courtyard of the Claretian Spirituality Center (Vic)



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Try to remember a Claretian who has surprised you by the trust he had in God's Providence. What did you admire most about him?
- Try to put yourself in his place and imagine why he lived that way, what moved him to do it and why that made him feel good.
- Have you renounced your inheritance? What has moved you to do so?

"Relying on God has to begin all over again every day
as if nothing had yet been done."
(C. S. Lewis)



1858. Traveling with the King and Queen, Claret preaches in Medina de Rioseco (Valladolid) to the people in the church in Santiago and the Carmelite Sisters in their convent.

1861. Claret preaches or directs a retreat for the seminarians in Santander.

1864. While at La Granja, Fr. **Clement Serrat** visits Claret. He brings Claret a letter informing him that Fr. **Jose Reig** has requested the addition of the Congregation of his Missionaries to *Propaganda Fide*, an honorary title, and in Rome they request a report from the nuncio; Claret will have no trouble getting it.



STATISTICS AND FOUNDATIONS IN 1991

THE CLARETIAN TODAY (1985 - 1991)

The statistics of January 1, 1991 gave us the following data: 1,917 Priests, 3 Permanent Deacons, 297 Brothers, 623 Students, and 108 Novices. Total Claretians: 2,995. Hailing from 48 different nationalities. By then we had a new Archbishop, Fr. Jose Saraiva, Secretary of the Congregation for Catholic Education, and two new Bishops, ordained in 1988: Fr. Luis Gutierrez, Auxiliary Bishop of Madrid-Alcala, and Romulo Emiliani, Apostolic Vicar of Darien. The resurgence of vocations in some of the Major

Organisms, such as India, Nigeria and Polska, and later Indonesia-Timor Leste and Sri Lanka Dependent Delegation, brought the light of a hope made reality for the future of the Congregation. The Claretian Missionary charism has reached new spaces to support certain Local Churches in their capacity for evangelization while enriching itself in its sense of catholicity. The rapid flowering of vocations has meant that native personnel will move from a passive mission experience to assuming a leading role.



BLESSED CANDIDO CASALS AND 7 COMPANIONS

Claretian Martyrs of Barcelona



Fr. Candido Casals was arrested on July 27th. He was forced onto a truck with blows from rifle butts and disappeared. The student Adolfo de Esteban was murdered on July 31st, behind San Pablo Hospital. Fr. Tomas Planas did not deny his priesthood at all in his statements. On August 18th, Fr. Anton Junyent left for his sister's house. His body was found in Pedralbes. Fr. Jacinto Blanch was arrested at the home of Eugenio Bofill and what they did with him is unknown. Br. Juan Capdevila was taken from COCULSA on July 25th and murdered. Fr. Cirilo Montaner was taken prisoner on November 25th and taken to San Elias prison where he was martyred shortly afterwards. Fr. Gumersindo Valtierra left on the 26th with the intention of going to Sarria, but when he left, he was arrested and killed. All were beatified in Barcelona on October 21, 2017.

LEGAL ASPECTS

27. By their vow of poverty, the members of the Congregation forgo their right of disposing of their temporal goods and of using them without the permission of their superiors.

Before their first profession, they are to cede the administration of their goods to whomever they prefer and in keeping with the norm of our law, they are freely to make disposition for their use and their revenues. Before their perpetual profession, they are to draw up a civil will, freely disposing of the goods they presently or subsequently may possess. They may not lawfully exercise any act of ownership over goods to which they retain radical title, or over the acceptance of goods that might in any way accrue to them after profession, without permission from their superiors.



Relics of the brain of
St. Anthony Mary Claret (Vic)



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

The Constitutions must necessarily present the legal aspects of our vow of poverty. Considering them, reflect and express your opinion, which you can share with other people:

- What specifically do these statements protect?
- What hazards or abuses do they avoid?
- How do you perceive the evangelical radicalness that they preserve?
- Have you already made your civil will?

“Faced with a choice of two goods,
each of which would give God equal glory,
I feel called to choose the poorer, the humbler, and the more painful.”
(Aut 699)



1841. The political authority prevents Claret from continuing to preach in Ribas de Freser (Girona) and he returns to Vic.

1858. Claret is with the Court in Leon. On this day he preaches four times: in three convents and in the collegiate church of San Isidoro.

1862. Claret visits the missionaries in Segovia, preaches and delivers the rules for Novices and Students to Fr. **Clement Serrat**, as agreed in the **General Chapter** in Gracia; Fr. Serrat will send them to Fr. **Joseph Xifre**.



THE XXI GENERAL CHAPTER (1991)

IDENTITY AND MISSION (1991 - 1997)

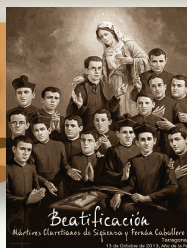
Servants of the Word (SW) was the title of the document of the XXI General Chapter, with 80 participants, presided by Fr. Gustavo Alonso, and which lasted from August 26 to September 22, 1991, in Rome. This document summarized the key to understanding the future of the Claretians. Given the challenge posed by the fact that two thirds of humanity do not know Christ, the response of the Claretians was: to be hearers and servants of the Word. All within the unity and diversity of a new face of the

Congregation, increasingly varied in race, language and latitudes. For the first time a Chapter guided the Congregation according to the various geographical and cultural areas. The so-called *New Evangelization* had a new face in the Congregation, a new impulse, a new method. In this Chapter, Spaniard Fr. Aquilino Bocos, was elected as the new Superior General. In his greeting to the Chapter, he stated: *The renewal that has been undertaken has to continue... This is requiring us to become more qualified in all aspects of our missionary life.*



BLESSED TOMAS CORDERO AND 14 COMPANIONS

Claretian Martyrs of Fernan Caballero



On July 23, 1936, the milicias populares [people's militias] seized the Claretian seminary in Ciudad Real. In the early hours of the 24th, the missionaries had to leave the convent of the Carmelite Sisters where they had taken refuge. Before they had finished eating, one of the Fathers spoke with the Governor, but he was not able to clear anything up. A few hours later, a delegate from the Government arrived saying on its behalf that they were all on house arrest. They were held there for four days. Finally, they received letters of safe-passage to leave Ciudad Real in the direction of Madrid, where they would be better controlled. When they arrived at the train station, a great uproar arose. Shouting was heard: *They are priests, don't let them board the train, kill them...* The train left, but arriving at the Fernan Caballero station, two militiamen ordered them to stop the engines. They forced the 14 students off the train, they were lined up and 37 shots rang out. They were beatified in Tarragona on October 13, 2013.

THE EVANGELICAL FOUNDATION OF OBEDIENCE



Chapter IV: Obedience



Claretian Spirituality Center (Vic)

28. Imitating Jesus Christ, who was sent to do the Father's will, and following the example of the Virgin Mary who, as the Lord's servant, devoted herself totally to the Son and to his work, we too, moved by the power of the Holy Spirit, strive to fulfill the will of the Father in our Congregation.

Through our profession of obedience we offer to God the free ability to arrange the course of our lives, and we bind ourselves by vow to obey the commands of our lawful superior in those matters that pertain directly or indirectly to the life of our Institute, that is, to the attainment of our mission and to the observance of the vows and Constitutions. Thus we are made conformable to Jesus Christ, who for our sake became obedient even to death, death on a cross, and are united in all we do with the saving will of God.



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

Father Claret fully identified with the title of missionary. Consequently, obedience was for him - who was sent - constitutive of his being and personality. This paragraph presents the evangelical foundation of obedience. It gives rise to a profitable exercise:

- Call to mind those biblical passages that in your personal experience motivate you to live obedience.
- Also think about some other texts that expressly reject a type of obedience that is servile, childish, submissive or demeaning.

"The prophecy of ordinary life, which is frequent among us, is what makes possible the great prophecy of extraordinary moments."
(IPM 24)



1859. Claret asks the nuncio if the seminarians who enter without finishing their studies can finish them in the houses of the Congregation.

1861. Claret directs the monthly retreat for the seminarians in Corban (Santander), both the residential and day students. He dislikes the uniform they wear.



IN BELARUS

IDENTITY AND MISSION (1991-1997)

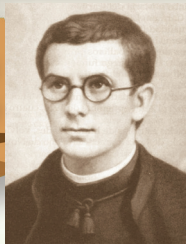
The Polska Province started working in Privalka, Diocese of Grodno. Later the pastoral work was extended to Aziory and Zélva, where the church was restored, and in 2001 they founded in Viciebsk, in the northeast of the country. The main task consisted of catechesis at all levels due to the total absence of formation after the relentless religious persecution of the Soviet era. One of the great difficulties which came up was that of the language, since the elderly speak Polish, the middle-aged, Russian

and children, Belarusian. The other difficulty was the absence of priests and religious infrastructure, such as churches, etc. In 2008 they founded in Mohilev, 100 kilometers from the Russian border. A city of almost half a million inhabitants with a single church, the cathedral, and two priests. *We were entrusted with half of the city, which forced us to build our own church, which entailed a remarkable economic and pastoral effort.* The Catholic presence is scarce, with the orthodox community prevailing.



BLESSED JOSE MARIA RUIZ CANO, CMF

Martyr of Sigüenza



On July 25, 1936 at night, before dispersing from the seminary, the Fathers, Brothers and Postulants met in the seminary chapel in Sigüenza (Guadalajara). Fr. Jose Maria Ruiz, Prefect of the Postulants, eagerly exhorted the boys to trust in the divine providence and in the protection of Mary. At the end of the talk, in an outburst of fervor, he fell to his knees saying: *Lord, if you want a victim, here I am. Choose me. But do not let anything happen to these innocent ones who have done evil to no one.* Then they dispersed. Fr. Ruiz took the larger group of about 35 with him to Guijosa. Then they divided up. On the 26th Fr. Ruiz' group was discovered. The next day they arrested him and took him to the hill Otero de Sigüenza, where he was shot. He was beatified in Tarragona on October 13, 2013.

ECCLESIAL DIMENSION OF OBEDIENCE AND AVAILABILITY

29. Since a true missionary may be known by his obedience, all of us, sharing as we do in the same vocation, jointly seek to know and do God's will so that we may be able to fulfill our common mission in the Church amid the changing circumstances of times, places and persons. In searching for and carrying out God's will, we are all obliged to help our brothers by prayer, advice and fraternal dialogue.



House of Tortades (Vic)



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

True obedience implies personal and relational responsibility. It is about knowing God's will in order to fulfill it. According to this:

- *How are you seeking God's will in your life?*
- *How do you distinguish that will from your own criteria and plans?*
- *What part do you leave for others to do in seeking God's will that should be done together?*

"Prayer is the privileged moment for receiving and meditating on the Word of God: a fire that melts the heart and molds it into the image of Christ, looking at and studying Jesus in order to commit ourselves to Him and do as He would do, begging Him to make us fitting ministers of the Word."
(*Initiation in the Ministry of the Word* 66)



1859. Claret writes a plea to the Pope for the approval of the rules of the nuns of Cuba; Fr. **Paladio Currius** will be the bearer of the text.

1861. Claret begins a triduum behind closed doors, in the cathedral, for the clergy of Santander.

1866. Claret congratulates Fr. **Joseph Gras Granollers** for success in his exams to be Canon of Sacro Monte (Granada). It may be a certain reparation for not being admitted as chaplain of El Escorial.



THE BEATIFICATION OF THE 51 MARTYRS OF BARBASTRO

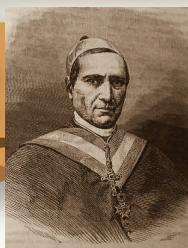
IDENTITY AND MISSION (1991-1997)

Being able to see the 51 martyrs of Barbastro raised to the altars on October 25, 1992 was a privilege and an unparalleled reason for thanksgiving for the Congregation. Specifically, it was those who were shot in Barbastro during the Spanish Civil War of 1936. They had inspired countless heroics with their generosity and missionary eagerness which they themselves could not make a reality. Almost all of them died very young and aware of their heroic deed of martyrdom; we must only remember the writings that they left us during

the time of their imprisonment in the hall in the school of the Piarists in the city. Pope St. John Paul II, at the end of the beatification Mass, during the Angelus, said: *We are deeply moved by the fact that they have been called to give witness to Christ not as individuals but as a community, thus constituting, in a certain sense, a martyr seminary.* The Congregation experienced this event with special spiritual intensity. In 1990 the book *This is our Blood* was published and in May 1992 the Circular Letter *Missionary Testament of our Martyrs* came out by Fr. Aquilino Bocos.



FRANCISCO FLEIX SOLANS Bishop of Havana (1804-1870)

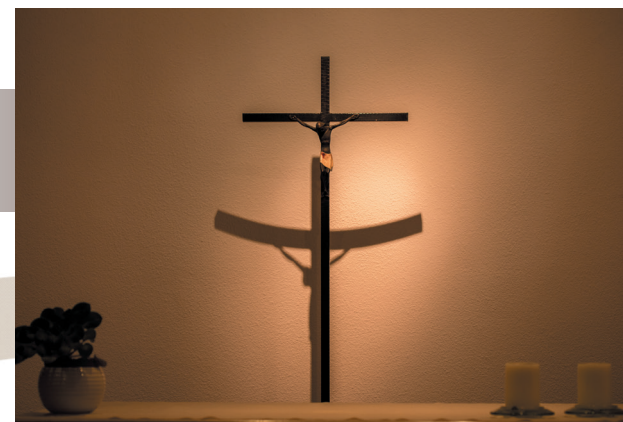


Leida (Spain). He studied humanities with the Piarists in Barbastro. He obtained a doctorate in Law in Bologna (Italy). He was ordained in 1834. He was appointed Vicar General of Salamanca in 1837. He was appointed Bishop of Puerto Rico in 1845, and the following year he was appointed Bishop of Havana. In 1865 he took possession of the Office of Bishop of Tarragona. He died in Vichy, France, on July 27th. During his stay in Puerto Principe, Father Claret had to defend him from accusations of being *compliant, accommodating, without character and weak, of letting himself be dominated.* Claret responded to the Nuncio of Madrid: *I cannot assure you of anything; I have heard something said, but I do not pay attention to things said in a country where there is a lot of talk about everyone, both what is true and what is not; they even say things about me that I have not thought nor dreamed of, thank God. Through ecclesiastical history and experience we know that those who live poorly are those who speak ill of the Prelates and still persecute them.*

THE FIGURE OF THE SUPERIOR IN THE COMMUNITY



30. The unity of love and mission that prevails and the Church, without prejudice to their in our communities is visibly expressed in own authority to discern and prescribe what our superiors, who should strive above all is actually to be done. They should, however, else to discern the Father's will, and then exercise their authority in keeping with the propose it to others. Superiors should gladly norms of the Constitutions and in a spirit of listen to what the other members have to say, service, spending their own lives for the sake and should encourage their collaboration in of their brothers. working for the good of the Congregation



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Call to mind the superiors you have had in your community up until now.
- Try to remember what they did to encourage your growth as a missionary.
- Thank God for them, because they were mediators of his presence.
- Imagine what you can do for your current superior to help him in his task, which is sometimes complicated and always modest and burdensome.
- If you are a superior, how are you exercising your mission? Do you do it "according to God's heart" (PTV)?

"When Jesus speaks in his parables of the shepherd who goes after the lost sheep, of the woman who looks for the lost coin, of the father who goes to meet and embrace his prodigal son, these are no mere words: they constitute an explanation of his very being and activity."
(Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 12)



1844. Claret addressed a letter to Fr. Jacinto Coma, a Minim friar, with whom he had great friendship and whose work *Maximas de la moral mas pura* [Maxims of the Purest Morality] inspired his *Avisos a los Jovenes* [Advice for Young Men].

1853. With the improved economy of the diocese, Claret begins with the erection of new parishes. He sends the documentation for San Miguel, in Nuevitás (Cuba).

1868. After tedious struggle, and thanks to the influence of Claret, the municipality of Vic receives a government order to deliver the wing of the residence to the Missionaries.



IN RUSSIA, FINALLY

IDENTIDAD Y MISION (1991 - 1997)

In 1991, after the collapse of the USSR, a Claretian from Polska Province, accompanied by a Postulant from Siberia, entered the vast region of Siberia in order to connect with this entire area where there was still a Catholic presence. After further visits and an extensive dialogue with the Bishop of Novosibirsk, the mission in Krasnoyarsk was accepted in 1992. There was no stable priest or religious in the area. The work that is done through the Editorial *Claretianum* is important, with publications and distribution of Catholic books, to

the point that the Claretians were the first to publish the *Liturgy of the Hours* and the *Lectionary of the Mass* in the Russian language. In 1997 the community-parish was divided into two: Krasnoyarsk and Atschinsk-Bagatol. In 2003, a new foundation was created in Bratsk, 900 kilometers from Krasnoyarsk, on the way to Irkutsk, an industrial city of 250,000 inhabitants that has small Catholic communities and has a small prefabricated church. In 2010 the houses of Siberia became dependent on Polska Province.



SAINT IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA Co-Patron (1491-1556)



Azpeitia (Gipuzkoa, Spain). Destined to the military life, his leg was wounded in the battle of Pamplona. During his convalescence he read the *Life of Christ* and the *Golden Legend*. When reading those old books he said to himself: *If these men were made of the same mud as I, surely I can do what they did.* He decided to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1522. Due to a plague, he stopped at Manresa. There he received a great inspiration and decided to found the *Society of Jesus*. In a cave he began to write what would become the book of the *Spiritual Exercises*. Ignatius spent the rest of his life dedicated to governing his Order and preaching the Gospel. He died in Rome and was canonized in 1622. Saint Ignatius was an important model for the life and spirituality of Claret. For a brief time, Claret was a Jesuit novice, he admired Saint Ignatius' great love for Jesus Christ and his ardent apostolic zeal. He was inspired by him when writing his *Spiritual Exercises*.

THE PRACTICE OF OBEDIENCE

31. Our missionaries should grow accustomed to obeying the Lord promptly and perfectly out of love, subjecting themselves to others for the Lord's sake.

They should not oppose, but rather should support, whatever has been determined by their superiors. But if it should seem right to them in the Lord to offer some suggestion to the contrary, let them do so freely, always bringing the matter first to God and being ready in spirit to abide by whatever is decided. In carrying out these decisions and in fulfilling the duties assigned them, they should bring their personal talents and resources to bear.



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

This paragraph highlights that obedience must be an *expression of love*, conveyed through *dialogue* and assumed with *discipline*.

- According to this, how do you think you should obey?
- And, what should you do in particular in the case of disagreeing with what was ordered by your superior?

"I believe that love is the main key to open the doors to the growth of man.
Love and union with someone or something outside of oneself,
union that allows one to put oneself into relationship with others,
to feel one with others, without limiting the sense of integrity and independence."
(Erich Fromm)