

“THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE”

DECLARATION OF THE XXIII GENERAL CHAPTER

FOR THE SEXENNIUM 2003-2009

“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (Jn 10:10).

“God created all things for us. He himself acted and taught so that all may have life, and have it to the full. For this same reason he sends and will always send apostles and disciples.”

(St. Anthony Mary Claret, Mss Claret, Vol. VII, p.6.)

1. Dear Brothers in the Congregation: We are happy to share with you the reflections and proposals of our XXIII General Chapter. We have felt renewed in our identity as servants of the Word in prophetic mission. As from the beginning, we have been in agreement with the theme “That They May Have Life”, because in recent years the threats to life have been and continue to be very serious, the outcome of which we still cannot predict. We all feel vulnerable before the threats of death, but the large majorities of poor and excluded are they who suffer the most. Like Jesus, we also want the world to have life. This is a theme that should inspire the Congregation during the next sexennium.
2. In this General Chapter we have focused our discernment on the matters that most concern the Congregation. We have discussed them freely in a spirit of openness and fraternity.
3. Our declaration is divided into three parts: 1) Missionaries at the Service of Life; 2) The Congregation Today and Its Nine Priorities; 3) Guidelines and Proposals.

I. MISSIONARIES AT THE SERVICE OF LIFE

4. At the dawn of the 21st century the Church invites us to “start afresh from Christ”, “to put out into the deep”, to enter into a “time of renewed ‘creativity’ in charity” (cf *NMI*, 50; *SAC*, 10). Jesus’ words “That they may have life” inspire our response to the Church’s call. Our vocation and prophetic mission places us at the service of life.

1. Passion for life in a threatened world

5. Life is exuberant and fruitful in nature and in humanity: “God saw all he had made, and indeed it was very good” (*Gen* 1:31). The Creator, “lover of life” (*Wis* 11:26), has entrusted us to defend it and cultivate it. The appreciation, defence and passion for life is manifested today in many ways, as for example, in those persons and organizations that work on behalf of the poor, for human rights, and for peace.
6. We also observe in our world many *signs of violence and death*:

- The life of the planet is under a terrible threat. The selfish and indiscriminate exploitation of nature and the lack of concern for its integrity will have deadly repercussions for the future of humanity.
 - The disregard towards human life—from conception to death—has many expressions: abortion, violence against women and children, domestic violence, sexual violence; all kinds of totalitarianism, terrorism, different forms of open warfare among nations, peoples and ethnic groups; the death penalty, the elimination—sometimes under the protection of law—of those considered an obstacle to the common welfare: the elderly, the terminally ill, the handicapped.
 - The neoliberal economic system, through the poverty and inequities it generates, brings with it a form of structural violence and gives rise to other forms of violence.
 - Endemic illnesses, aids, hunger, poverty, unemployment, and addictions hinder proper human development.
7. Would we be able to live as missionaries without feeling ourselves deeply affected by this situation? Are we not responsible—at times—for that “culture of death”? Would our Chapter Guidelines have any meaning if they did not motivate us to serve with more dedication those whose lives are diminished, to make our contribution to the establishment a true “culture of life”?

2. The Meaning of Life: “I am the Life”

8. The *loss of life’s meaning* and the disregard for *the person* are at the root of these signs of death. The glory of God, which is one of the basic aims of our Congregation (cf *CC* 2), is the human person fully alive (Ireaneus of Lyon), the poor fully alive (Oscar Romero), nature fully alive (Paul of Tarsus). We give glory to God, proclaiming that “the Gospel of God’s love for people, the Gospel of the dignity of the person and the Gospel of life are one, indivisible Gospel” (*EV* 2). The passion for life thus belongs at the very heart of our missionary vocation.
9. Jesus reveals to us the meaning of life:
- After having made his whole existence a service to life, he could say in all truth “I am the Life” (cf *Jn* 14:6).
 - Through words and signs He reveals to us the God of life (cf *Mk* 12:27), who wants all his sons and daughters to live and who, when the prodigal son returns home, is filled with joy and orders a feast because his son was dead and “has come to life” (*Lk* 15:32).
 - He declared finally, “It is the spirit that gives life” (*Jn* 6:63; cf 2 *Cor* 3:6). The Spirit is a law of freedom that gives us life in Christ Jesus (cf *Rom* 8:2).
 - Communion with the crucified and risen Lord impels us to defend life, and gives meaning to all human situations, especially those most painful: tragedies brought on by natural disasters, situations arising from injustice and ambition, illness, aging and death itself. He tells us that “Anyone who loves his life loses it” (*Jn* 12:25) and whoever gives his flesh and life for the salvation of the world—like he himself in the Eucharist— “will keep it for eternal life”.
10. Mary is the Mother of Life. Elizabeth called her blessed because of the fruit of her womb and because of her faith. As people of God we acclaim her as “*our life*, our sweetness and

our hope” (*Salve Regina*). We also beg her to pray for us “now and at the hour of our death” (*Ave Maria*). We give ourselves to her in our Profession (cf *CC* 159). Through her we receive life in abundance. She is the Woman of the Apocalypse who gives birth amidst the dragon’s threats and who is reflected in the Church, also a mother in the midst of threats to life (cf *Ap* 12:1-2). The Magnificat proclaims her commitment to a world where life is held sovereign (cf *Lk* 1:46-55). The definition of a Son of the Immaculate Heart of Mary shows us how we can be like her, proclaim life and fight against all that threatens it (cf *CC* 9).

11. Like Peter at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, we also, witnesses to so many threats to life, humbly confess: “I have neither silver nor gold, but will give you what I have: in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, walk!” (*Acts* 3:6). We have received the vocation to be ministers of that Word, spoken and served “in the name of Jesus”, is the source of life: it heals, liberates, resurrects, gives vision and meaning. Do we not find here the Gospel key needed to understand what it truly means to serve life?

3. The Word of Life

12. The Word to which we have been entrusted (cf *Acts* 20:32) and which we serve:
 - *Proclaims* the Gospel of life: it discovers, accompanies and empowers all the bursts of life that the Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, gives rise to in our world. In this sense, our ministry of the word becomes God’s *consolation* for people who most suffer the degradation of life. It becomes a “*mercy principle*” for those torn apart by hurts, failure, guilt and sin. It presents a *horizon of hope* to those who believe that human life has no meaning: we are children of the God of Life, who will not allow his faithful ones to experience decay (cf *Ps* 16; *Acts* 2:27, 31-36).
 - *Denounces* the many threats against life, which we discover in each context. The force of the Word does not give in to prejudices, fashions, fears or pressures, nor accepts as normal the culture of death presented in many cases as progress in human history.
 - Is accompanied by *signs of life* (cf *1 Th* 1:5; *2 Cor* 12:12). In a globalized world, often indifferent to the signs of death, the Word of God, of which we are servants, defends life at all its stages and in all its forms. The power of the Spirit defends and recreates life through individuals and groups, organisms and associations that work on its behalf. We and our communities collaborate with them in order to give a total and credible Yes to life and life in abundance.
13. “What has come into being in him was life and life that was the light of men” (*Jn* 1:4). Life is the “first book” of God’s revelation. Sacred Scripture is that “second book” in which God reveals his plan of salvation for life threatened by death because of sin. Both books mutually interpret one another. As servants of the Word in all its amplitude, the commitment to justice, peace, and the integrity of creation is not for us a matter of discretion; it is a genuine obligation and also a fundamental right of all Christians (cf *CIC* 222) that obliges us particularly as religious and ordained ministers (cf *CIC* 287/672).

4. Servants of Life

14. We have been invited by the Master to “enter into Life” (*Mt* 19:17) and to live it fully: to be with him, and to be sent to preach with the power to overcome evil (cf *Mk* 3:14-15). If we are not united with Jesus, if we do not walk with Him, we will not have life (cf *Jn* 15:5).

All missionaries (brothers, students and ordained ministers) are servants of life within our own particular ministry and status. We serve life when:

- We enjoy it and celebrate it as a gift of God;
 - We attend to others by giving them the best of ourselves in the “prophecy of ordinary life”;
 - We defend it, contribute to its development and education, and proclaim its ultimate purpose in our missionary service;
 - We commit our own life, in work, in prayer, and in suffering, so that others may live.
15. The Church symbolically, through Word and Sacrament, accompanies the whole journey of human life from birth to death. As members of God’s people each one of us (laity and ordained ministers) is an authentic “servant of Life” that is:
- born and grows in the sacraments of Initiation,
 - nourished in the Word and by the Bread and Wine of the Eucharist,
 - reconciled in Penance,
 - healed in the Anointing of the sick,
 - betrothed and made fruitful in Matrimony,
 - given in service through Holy Orders.
16. Our Father Founder was that good shepherd who gives his life. He received the gift of permanent communion with Jesus in the Eucharist, which spurred him to fight against the evils of his time and to offer himself as an oblation (cf *Aut* 694). Our Martyrs of Barbastro were also transformed into a Eucharistic community, capable of surrendering its life and of giving life.
17. Our communities are called to be “places of life” where we find our personal fulfilment (cf CC 12). They are “places of life” when:
- they help us to continually recreate the bonds that nourish our identity and sense of belonging: prayer, dialogue, service, collaboration in the missionary task.
 - they are places of welcome, of search for God, of solidarity and of hope.

II. THE CONGREGATION TODAY AND ITS NINE PRIORITIES

18. We have examined the state of the Congregation: 1) the demographic, geographic and institutional situation; 2) the missionary and apostolic situation; 3) the spiritual and community situation; 4) the vocation and formation situation; and 5) the economic situation. As fruit of our discernment we present in this second part the *nine priorities* that should guide the life and mission of the Congregation during the next six years.

1. The demographic, geographic and organizational situation

1.1. The People

19. We are a small group in our world of more than six billion people, in our Church with more than one billion Catholics and within the religious or consecrated life itself who number more than a million persons in institutes of pontifical right. As of 31 December 2002 our Congregation consisted of 3,063 members: 15 bishops, 2,027 priests, 4 permanent deacons,

239 brothers, 633 students, and 145 novices. The demographic data for 2002, compared with that presented in the Chapter of 1997, makes us moderately optimistic with respect to the number of priests and students—which has slightly increased—but still leaves us with a serious preoccupation for the progressive and constant decrease in the number of brothers. The number of novices, when viewed all together, has remained constant within the 18 novitiates currently in the Congregation.

20. Our average age is 49.7. And from a ministerial perspective the Congregation presents the following picture:
- 26% of the members of the Congregation are in a period of initial formation or in special studies;
 - 20.6% in parishes;
 - 10.2% in missions;
 - 8.39% are elderly or infirmed;
 - 6.8% in education;
 - 4.5% in formation work
 - 4.34% in government and administration;
 - 3.8% in congregational services;
 - 2.9% in itinerant service of the Word;
 - 2.5% in exclaustation;
 - 9% in other activities such as youth ministry, social communications media, or healing ministry.
21. While in some parts of the Congregation (Europe and America) the average age is increasing, in others (like Asia and Africa) they are experiencing promising growth: the Claretian charism is being incarnated in new cultures, at the same time it is in danger of becoming extinct in geographic areas that have had special missionary and economic relevance for the entire Congregation.

1.2. Places and structures

22. We are present on five continents and in sixty three countries and organized into:
- 34 major organisms (21 Provinces and 13 Independent Delegations), 3 Dependent Delegations and 10 General Houses.
 - 6 Conferences: ACLA (Africa), ASCLA (Asia), IBERIA (Portugal and Spain), CEC (the other European countries), CICLA (Latin America and the Caribbean), NACLA (United States and Canada).
23. The revision of positions continues to be needed for better missionary service by the Congregation and by its Organisms.
24. The current organizational structure does not provide the necessary balance between Organisms that are expanding and those that are declining, nor does it foster the strengthening of those that are weakest.
25. We believe that it is important for the Congregation to maintain a presence in some countries in spite of the aging and decreasing numbers of the Major Organisms there, provided that our contribution to the mission is still needed and responds to our missionary options.

26. *Therefore, we choose as a priority in the government of the Congregation a more balanced and effective organization of our Organisms and the revision of apostolic positions.*

1.3. Cultural diversity

27. The increase in vocations in some places has enriched the Congregation with the presence of many cultures and introduces the need for inculturation of the Claretian charism. The formation processes, living together in community and apostolic collaboration, as a consequence, have become more complex and challenging.
28. Among ourselves, while we feel enriched by the values of so many cultures, we also suffer the negative consequences of the prevalence in the world, in the Church and in the Congregation, of the dominance of some cultures over others, in the areas of thought, law, and behaviour.

29. *Therefore, we choose as a priority in the Congregation—in its structures, institutions and lifestyle—the necessary process of intercultural dialogue.*

2. Missionary and Apostolic Situation

30. The General Chapter verified a series of relevant data on the missionary situation of the Congregation. It then focused its attention on three priority matters: 1) shared mission; 2) solidarity with the poor, the excluded and those whose right to life is threatened; 3) dialogue with other religions, cultures and Christian traditions.

2.1. Relevant Data

31. We, Claretian Missionaries, are contributing—out of our small size and limitations—to the great mission of the Kingdom of God in our day. We generally feel appreciated by the local churches and satisfied with the work we are doing.
32. Our presence has considerably increased in places where Christians are in the minority, especially in Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe. Most Organisms are responsible for some mission of their own or collaborate in those of others. Some mission areas have been living through moments of social violence that have put the prophetic vigour of our missionaries to the test. For their part, societies that are well off challenge us with new forms of religiosity and unbelief becoming areas of new missionary evangelization. While we are present in the world of communications media, we recognize that this presence needs to be more significant and coordinated.
33. Among ourselves we reaffirm those convictions that arise from our charism in the Church and that shape our life and missionary service:
- The centrality of the Word of God;
 - The Eucharistic dimension;
 - The Cordi-Marian dimension;
 - The commitment to peace, justice and the integrity of creation;
 - The option for solidarity with the poor;
 - Openness and respect with regard to cultural differences;
 - Dialogue, in its various forms;

- The need for a new prophetic way of communicating the Gospel.
34. Based on these convictions, missionary plans have been elaborated in Africa, Europe and CICLA. This still needs to be done in ASCLA and NACLA.

2.2. In Shared Mission

35. The term "shared mission", relatively new in the Church and among ourselves, arises from a radically communal understanding of mission and from the necessary interrelationship among all states of life and ministry in order to confront the challenges to evangelisation presented by our world. Our Father Founder intuited this in some way when he invited us to "do with others" and not to consider ourselves self-sufficient.
36. This way of understanding mission presupposes a change in mentality that requires avoiding unilateral attitudes (self-sufficiency, authoritarianism, mistrust, imposition, male domination, institutional interests) and in favour of collaboration with all the charisms, joint responsibility, trust, fraternity, and humble service.

37. *Therefore, we choose as a priority that shared mission be our normal way of carrying out our mission and that we all, as Claretians, accept the consequences this has for our spirituality, vocation ministry, formation processes, community life, apostolic work and institutions of government and economy.*

2.3. Solidarity with the poor, the excluded and those whose right to life is threatened

38. Exclusion is one of the main consequences of today's process of globalisation: it creates shortages and new types of poverty (cf NMI 50) that surely lead towards a progressive disregard for life.
39. Solidarity with the poor, the excluded and those whose right to life is threatened and a commitment to their liberation are essential aspects of our faith in Christ and the prophetic dimension of our missionary life.

40. *Therefore, we choose as priority solidarity with the poor, the excluded and those whose right to life is threatened so that this impacts our personal and community lifestyle, in our apostolic mission and our institutions.*

2.4. Ecumenical, interreligious and intercultural dialogue

41. There is a growing awareness among us that God is present and active in all peoples, cultures, religions and Christian traditions. Our experience of God in the Word incarnated invites us to discover his face in every human being and work with others on behalf of life in all its dimensions.
42. On the other hand, the present trend towards globalization and its consequent effect marginalizes certain groups and cultures and this often leads to acts of religious and cultural fundamentalism.
43. The presence of a good number of Claretian missions in non-Christian and de-christianised contexts encourages us to enter into a creative dialogue with others. This dialogue helps us to better understand our faith, purify our values, and leads us to a new way of evangelisation.

44. The Congregation carries out various projects related to social communications: publications, recording media, radio, television, and Internet. Our work in publications is sufficiently organised. The new challenge comes from the world of the Internet, which makes possible the use of new ways of expressing our evangelisation, is easily accessible, reaches many places and people and is relatively inexpensive. We see the need for more coordination of the existing initiatives and to take advantage of the possibilities that the Internet offers as a special opportunity for intercultural dialogue, shared mission with professional laity, and the promotion of the culture of life.

45. *Therefore, we choose as a priority the inculturation of the Gospel through ecumenical, interreligious, and intercultural dialogue in all our missionary works.*

3. The Spiritual and Community Situation (Our Lifestyle)

3.1. Fidelity to Vocation

46. The Chapter recognized that:

- While most Claretians are well-integrated vocationally, we know that in some there exist a certain lack of integration as a consequence of the separation between faith and life, action and contemplation; the life of prayer and the sense of belonging are very weak;
- There are communities whose prayer seems routine and disconnected from life (the world situation, community relationships, pastoral activities, commitment to the social and ecclesial reality).

47. There are cases of personal dissatisfaction that lead to facile abandonment of one's vocation. As an indicator of the low level of vocational identification, we are concerned with: the many permissions for leaves of absence or exclaustations and the ease with which some pass to the secular clergy; the seriousness and unpredictability of certain vocation crises (despite the fact that their overall number has decreased) that in general have their origin in the individual himself and at times in the lack of attention to fraternal life by the community.

48. *Therefore, we choose as a priority the cultivation of one's own vocation in fidelity to our evangelical and charismatic roots expressed in the Constitutions.*

3.2. Community Life

49. Many of us, Claretian Missionaries, feel a deep gratitude toward the Congregation as our life-giving environment: we value the people, we appreciate its works, and we are moved by its symbols.

50. Nevertheless, the Chapter has detected a considerable degree of dissatisfaction in regard to the development of community life. Generally, we are satisfied with what we are doing, but not so much with our fraternal life. Dissatisfaction with community leads us to look for other types of belonging or to lock ourselves into our responsibilities, assuming individualistic and competitive attitudes. It is also not easy to find adequate ways to translate the ideal of missionary community into the varied situations in which we live today. We have not sufficiently made our own "the prophecy of ordinary life" (cf *IPM* 24).

51. *Therefore, we choose as a priority to strengthen the community as an environment that fosters life and missionary commitment.*

4. The Vocation and Formation Situation

52. On 31 December 2002 the Congregation has 655 professed students in initial formation:

- 43.9% in Asia,
- 34.5% in Africa,
- 14.7% in Latin America and the Caribbean,
- 3.8% in Portugal and Spain,
- 1.9% in other European countries,
- 1.2% in Canada and the United States.

And there were 145 novices:

- 56.8% in Asia,
- 21.3% in Africa,
- 13.7% in Latin America and the Caribbean,
- 5.5% in Europe (CEC),
- 2.7% in Canada and the United States,
- None in Portugal and Spain.

53. The Chapter has positively evaluated the formation provided in our Centres since, despite the variety of styles (due to different cultural contexts), the basic aspects of the General Plan of Formation are faithfully carried out in all of them.

54. Vocational promotion and discernment, and proper formation are some of the most serious preoccupations in the Congregation today. They affect our survival and the credibility of our life and mission. We should improve our work in vocation ministry, especially in the promotion of missionary brothers.

55. We are concerned about the deficiencies and lack of attention to spiritual accompaniment of the formandi, the little attention given to human and affective maturity and the consequent lack of vocational consistency.

56. *Therefore, we choose as a priority improvement in our vocation ministry and formation: the consolidation of the formation process, the formation of the formators and spiritual accompaniment to better assure vocational consistency in all the stages of life.*

5. Economic Situation

57. In the documents of the last thirty years, our Congregation has clearly shown its option for the poor and the excluded and, also for justice, peace and the integrity of creation (cf *MCT* 224; *Dir* 113). The preoccupation for the economy, expressed in the Chapter, is situated in this context.

58. In this world, marked by an unjust and divisive economic system, our Congregation tries to model a system in which all participate in the communion of goods. We understand that

goods belong to everyone and have the basic purpose of attending to persons and communities and serving the mission. This is possible thanks:

- To evangelical poverty and austerity of life,
- To work and economic transparency,
- To efforts to find resources and make them income producing,
- And to trust in Providence

59. The circumstances in the different places where we live condition our style of poverty and our economy (cf *CC* 25). But we perceive the differences that still exist between self-sufficient Organisms or those that enjoy economic support and other Organisms that need aid and are in a situation of dependency. This, in addition to affecting integral development, is a preoccupation for the Congregation.
60. We need a more ordered exercise of solidarity based on the principle of subsidiarity. The General Government is responsible for the equitable and joint sharing of goods (cf *Dir* 306-307). For this, besides relying on its own resources, it depends on the annual quotas given by the Major Organisms and General Houses. This practice channels the sharing of goods. But there are some difficulties with this due to the meagre patrimony administered by the General Government in relation to the vast size of the Congregation, which in large part is dependent upon the contributions of the Organisms.
61. There has been good administration of the Congregation's patrimony, the scholarships funds, missions and formation, the aid for the self-sufficiency of Major Organisms, and the investments made. The Congregation acknowledges and is grateful to the many people, who by their contributions make our projects viable.
62. Nonetheless, we are concerned:
- About the inability of some Major Organisms to become self-sufficient;
 - That the balance sheets of some Provinces and Independent Delegations do not show their true economic reality;
 - About the economic independence of some individuals in relation to their communities and the lack of solidarity with the members in community;
 - And the need for Claretians prepared in economy
63. *Therefore, we choose as a priority more solidarity by the Major Organisms with the General Government and that the General Government increase as much as possible its own patrimony and funds so as to respond to the global needs of the Congregation.*

III. CHAPTER GUIDELINES AND PROPOSALS

64. We propose certain guidelines for action that respond to the priorities indicated above and that situate them under the theme “That all may have life”.

1. Proclaiming the Gospel of Life

65. The “Good News” of life that Jesus gives to the world is made credible and effective when we proclaim it with others in shared mission, when we enter into solidarity with the poor and the excluded and when we make the effort to inculturate it, through dialogue, in the different contexts.

1.1. In Shared Mission

66. In order to advance along the lines of shared mission we propose:

66.1. That those communities with apostolic works decisively promote and open up *new avenues of shared mission*, and regulate their operation.

66.2. That the General Government and those responsible for the apostolate in Major Organisms promote and support *structures* (formation centres, volunteer groups, etc.) and *formation programs* that shape our commitment to shared mission.

66.3. That superiors and those responsible for apostolic works in the Congregation, after due consultation with the community, promote the *presence of lay people* on the pastoral councils of the Organisms, on animation teams and in apostolic positions.

1.2. In Solidarity with the Poor and the Excluded

67. In order to incarnate our option for the poor, the excluded and for justice, peace and the right to life we propose:

67.1. To make sure that this option decisively *affect our lifestyle, all our works and our activities of evangelisation*. For this it is essential to “allow ourselves to be touched” by the poor and enter into personal contact with them.

67.2. That the General Government study the advisability of creating a General Commission for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC), to address all the issues related to threats against life; and to foster coordination in the Major Organisms and the interprovincial conferences.

67.3. To carry out in the Congregation *a common project* that helps us assimilate and put into practice this essential dimension of our evangelizing mission. This project must be contextualized in the different regions of the Congregation.

67.4. To actively participate in the *defence and promotion of life, justice, and peace*, collaborating with other religious or civic organizations.

1.3. Committed to ecumenical, interreligious, and intercultural dialogue

68. In order to advance toward a mission that is ever more inculturated and in dialogue, we propose:

- 68.1. To initiate and cultivate a *dialogue of life and faith* with other Christian churches and religious groups; to participate in forums of dialogue and collaboration.
- 68.2. To seek *new ways to awaken the faith and to accompany its development* in those who are alienated from the Church or who consider themselves disbelievers.
- 68.3. To promote "*basic human communities*" in multi-religious mission contexts.
- 68.4. To keep or include within our formation curriculum the issue of *interculturalization* and the *dialogue among cultures and religions, to create* experiences in this area, and to have some Claretians thus specialized.
- 68.5. That the General Government consider our *presence on the Internet* as a new apostolic position and encourage, support and coordinate initiatives in this area.

2. Living According to the Spirit

- 69. We need a spirituality that sustains and expresses our commitment to life. For this we will stress: the dynamics of spiritual growth, community life and the necessary process of intercultural dialogue.

2.1. Dynamics for spiritual growth

- 70. To continue to grow in our missionary spirituality we propose:
 - 70.1. To practice the *lectio divina*, to continue the Word-mission project and to do a more situational and existential reading of the Word;
 - 70.2. That the General Government, in dialogue with the major superiors, put into place a plan to intensify the *Eucharistic dimension* of our charism.
 - 70.3. To encourage spiritual accompaniment and the personal life project as dynamics for personal growth.
 - 70.4. To study in depth the contents of our recent *Spirituality Congress* and put them into practice. For this, the General Government will offer to the Organisms and individuals appropriate guidelines and materials.
 - 70.5. That the General Government organize regular *continental or interprovincial programs of continuing education* for Claretian renewal which will be systematic, intense, integral and inculturated.

2.2. Community life

- 71. To foster the quality of life for persons and communities, we ask that:
 - 71.1. Each community *elaborate its project* linking it to the pastoral projects of the local churches and of the Congregation, and making this project a constant reference for the progress of the community life and for its periodic evaluation.
 - 71.2. All community members carefully *attend to planning meetings*, evaluation and community life especially when, for apostolic reasons, they live in diverse locations.

- 71.3. *Local superiors*, conscious of their responsibility in this new context, give priority to animating the missionary spirit of the community, to harmonizing its common life and mission, and to attending to the persons. It corresponds to major superiors to assure appropriate programs of support and formation.

2.3. *The necessary process of intercultural dialogue*

72. To advance along the path of intercultural dialogue, we propose:

- 72.1. To foster an *attitude of openness* to the multicultural nature of the Congregation right from initial formation.
- 72.2. To consolidate and organize new *multicultural formation communities* in the Congregation.
- 72.3. To recognize our own *cultural prejudices and cultural wounds* that alienate some of our members from one another and find ways to overcome them.
- 72.4. To include the *theme of intercultural dialogue* in the renewal courses and to offer input on the theology of pluralism.

3. Forming Ourselves and Inviting Others to Serve the Gospel of Life

73. The proclamation of the Gospel and vocation ministry today requires an ongoing process of formation. In order to respond to these challenges we rely on very complete and up-to-date references such as the Vocation Directory and the General Plan of Formation. The Chapter proposes that:

- 73.1. The Organisms assign a sufficient number of *persons to vocation ministry* in those places where it is not adequate and, following the Guidelines on the Vocation Directory, explicit invitations are to be made to those who show signs of a Claretian vocation and that a good selection be made of the same.
- 73.2. A serious study be made that might lead to *new ways and possibilities for vocation ministry* in western countries.
- 73.3. Formators strengthen the *accompaniment and personalised formation* of those being formed and give special attention to the experience of faith, affective and sexual integration, and human relationships; Superiors should assure the formative care of the young men after initial formation and during their first years of incorporation into the communities.
- 73.4. Major Organisms put into place a *plan for vocation promotion of missionary brothers*, specifying the stages of formation and their proper role in the Congregation.

4. Organizing Ourselves to Better Live and Proclaim the Gospel

74. In order to strengthen the missionary vigour of our Congregation, the Chapter considers it indispensable to move towards a better organization of our structures at their various levels. For this:

- 74.1. It expresses its firm support for the General Government to act decisively and to lead *the processes of reorganizing the Major Organisms and the revision of*

positions within each Organism, according to the criteria contained in our legislation.

- 74.2. The General Government will see that *each Organism has sufficient personnel and the resources necessary* to adequately develop its own project of life and mission, in accord with these Chapter guidelines.
- 74.3. In *personnel assistance* of some Organisms to others, the General Government will take special care to assure that the missionaries assigned go through appropriate process of inculturation. These assignments will normally be done in view to incardination that, in principle, will take place after two years of arrival of the person to his place of destination. The Claretians in the receiving community are to fraternally welcome him and help him in the process of inculturation.
75. To better realize our vocation as servants of the Word, we propose that those missionary plans already developed by some Conferences and those yet to be done, inspire and guide the apostolic planning of their Organisms and positions in the coming years.

5. Economic Administration of Our Goods

76. The sense of co-responsibility leads us to feel as our own the needs of the entire Congregation. In order that our economy better serve all Claretians and the mission, we proposes that:
- 76.1. The General Government with the strong support of the Major Organisms work to increase its *patrimony and the capital in the Aid Fund*.
- 76.2. The General Government reorganize the *General Economic Council*, appointing Claretians prepared in business administration and finance, and if necessary professional lay people that can help in the control, auditing and assessing of investments and the management of funds.
- 76.3. The General Government reinforce and better organize the *General Mission Procure* so that it can access financial agencies and promote better development and coordination of the mission procures of the Major Organisms.
- 76.4. The Major Organisms in need of economic assistance prepare with the aid of the General Government, an *economic development plan* in order to achieve self-sufficiency.

CONCLUSION

77. We pass on to you brothers the results of our discernment. We have tried to be docile to the Spirit and sensitive to the situation of our world. We hope that each Claretian together with his community, in his ministry and shared mission, in communion in his Organism and region, and open to its culture, will accept this declaration and cooperate in its creative implementation.

78. May Mary of Pentecost send us forward, at the beginning of this new century, towards a renewed mission so “that they may have life”.