



Prot. PS 292/2023

MESSAGE OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

Dear brothers,

Wish you all a joyful celebration of the feast of our Founder! As we celebrate this feast in the jubilee year of 175 years of the Foundation of our Congregation, let us take this occasion to glance at the current reality in which we live from the perspective of our Founder in the presence of God. Certainly, this is not to flee from the realities that we face today but to gain a bigger perspective to keep our hopes alive amid distressing realities around us.

We cannot ignore the socio-political scenario of the world now afflicted by the wars in East Europe and the Middle East which began with barbaric invasions and killing of innocent civilians, and several other conflicts in the world. We see more fumes of fury rising to the heavens than the incense of thanksgiving and praise of the Creator. Suffering, poverty, and marginalization of people especially children in our increasingly ailing common home is alarming. The Church also is going through its struggles to give credible witness to the joy of the Gospel. Seeing them merely from here below could be very distressing.

The memory of our Founder invites us to complement our view of things here and now with the perspective of eternity which helps us to widen the horizon of our concerns and fix our eyes on what is lasting. From above, walls of separation disappear, small and big do not matter, and what endures is truth and charity that binds all. As St. Paul affirms, *"We are citizens of heaven"* (Phil 2:20). From his younger days, Claret had a sense of eternity (Aut 8). The light of heaven illumined his steps on the earth. He ardently prayed for the gifts of heaven to support his life on earth: *"My Jesus, I ask you for love, for great flames of that fire you brought down from heaven to earth. Come, divine fire; come sacred fire enkindle, burn, melt, and pour me into the mold of God's will"* (Aut 446). Following the mindset of the Founder, our martyrs preferred the citizenship of heaven than abandon their faith, to live a God-less life a little longer here on earth.

This year marks several jubilees in the Congregation: 175 years of Claret's mission in Canarias, 150 anniversary of the mission of Avellana in Chile, 100 years of the presence of Claretians in Santo Domingo, Panama, and Germany, and 50 years of Claretian presence in Nigeria. These memorial celebrations invite us to keep walking on the path that the Lord is leading the Congregation and to remain rooted in Him as we navigate different situations of life. We remember our pioneers and hundreds of committed missionaries who have joined the heavenly community with St. Claret.

We are heirs of the missionary spirit of our Founder. In this jubilee year we keep praying: Lord, grant that each of us and our communities is on fire with your Love, spread its flames wherever we go, and set everyone on that fire.

Fr. Mathew Vattamattam, CMF
Superior General

October 24, 2023.