



Fifty years ago, a missionary seed was sown in the fertile soil of Nigeria, which has since burgeoned into a thriving branch of the Claretian Missionaries Congregation. This anniversary beckons us to traverse the vibrant and faith-filled history we have woven in this country—a narrative that began with the vigor and vision of one man and now spans a community of hundreds.

In 1973, a young priest in his early forties, Fr. Christian Mary Ihedoro, CMF, ignited the Gospel spark in this land, just two years after a conflict that shook Nigeria's foundations. What could be seen as an act of Providence, Father Ihedoro, compelled to remain in his homeland due to the loss of his passport, garnered the support of the General Government to gather vocations, inspiring young individuals drawn to share in his missionary zeal.

With missionaries from the United States by his side, on December 24th of that same year, Father Ihedoro witnessed the initiation of the first group of Nigerian novices in Awo-omama. It marked the humble beginnings of what would unfold as a vivid testament to God's love and mercy.

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In 1984 a significant milestone was reached: Nigeria became a Delegation, with the indefatigable Father Ihedoro serving as the first Major Superior. It was evident, as it remains today, that the Claretian presence in Nigeria was a divine design, a unique path laid by God's hand.

The seed that was planted grew into a mission that continued to expand until it eventually became the Province of East Nigeria. Today, East Nigeria has the largest number of members in the Congregation, with 20 houses and 183 professed missionaries. As a testament to the growth, the West Nigeria Dependent Delegation was established in 2004, and later became independent in 2007. Currently, it has 13 houses and 96 members as of 2023.

Claretians in Nigeria have not only consolidated their presence through schools, a university and a clinic, but have also extended their mission to other countries such as English-speaking Cameroon, Kenya, Ghana, Chad and South Africa.

As we celebrate this anniversary, we thank God for the dedication and quality of our missionaries, who have spread and continue to spread the word and love of God in many nations within and outside Africa. Three of our brothers are today Bishops, members of the Episcopal Conference of Nigeria.

Let us entrust the Nigerian mission to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, praying that our missionaries will remain firm and bold in their vocation, blazed by the love of God, emulating Claret and our Blessed Mother and Formator.



UNIVERSAL CHURCH

FR. SIMEON OKEZUO NWABI, CMF, TITULAR BISHOP OF RUSGUNIE AND AUXILIARY TO THE APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATOR OF THE DIOCESE OF AHIARA

Ahiara, Nigeria. On 14 October, the Holy See announced the appointment of Fr. Simeon Okezuu Nwobi, CMF, as Titular Bishop of Rusguniae (Rusguniensis) and Auxiliary to the Apostolic Administrator of the Vacant See of Ahiara (Diocesis Ahiarana) in Nigeria.

Fr. Simeon Okezuu Nwobi, CMF, was born in Ekwereazu, Imo State (Nigeria), in the Diocese of Ahiara, on March 25, 1960. He made his first profession in our Congregation on March 25, 1983, and his perpetual vows on September 11, 1988. He was ordained a priest on July 21, 1990 in Owerri by Bishop Plácido Rodríguez, CMF.

Fr. Nwobi has a solid academic background, received a degree in Missiology from the Pontifical Gregorian University of Rome and then studied in public administration. He has taught at various institutions, teaching philosophy, theology and missiology.

Throughout his life, Fr. Nwobi carried out various animation tasks in East Nigeria, of which he has been Provincial Superior. He has also held responsibilities in various organizations, including the Presidency of the Nigerian Major Superiors Conference and the Conference of Claretian Missionaries of Africa (ACLA).



BIBLE AND COMMUNICATION

SEED SOWN, CYBERMISSIONARIES ARE SENT ON MISSION

Rome, Italy. On October 19, Father General commissioned the Cybermissionaries who participated in the “*Sowing in the Cyberworld*” online formation program to spread the Gospel in the digital world. The program drew inspiration from St. Matthew’s Parable of the Sower in the Gospel and aimed to provide a biblically and scientifically rooted formation program for all involved in this field within the Congregation. An online sending-off celebration was held to mark the occasion.

The Sowing in the Cyberworld course was opened to all members of the Congregation, including the Claretian Missionaries and laity, who are involved in the pastoral care of social networks and institutional communication. Out of 31 Major Organisms, 24 actively participated in the course. On average, 70 to 80 people attended each online formative meeting, which was conducted in both English and Spanish.

During the program, the participants learned about the fundamentals of communication from various perspectives, such as biblical, ecclesiological, sociological, and charismatic

dimensions. One of the sessions focused on comprehending the distinct publishing houses of the Congregation and other pastoral presences in areas like television and radio. Moreover, the participants had a chance to hear from young people and representatives of the Claretian Family and understand the evolution of the media apostolate in the Congregation. On September 21, the course participants met with the Major Superiors and Secretaries of the entire Congregation to discuss their roles and responsibilities and present them to the Congregation.

A total of 29 sessions were delivered, providing 44.5 hours of online lessons. The educational sessions ended on October 17, 2023, while the technical sessions commenced on October 31. Participants interested in acquiring skills in podcasting, video production, live streaming, digital arts, artificial intelligence, web design, and other related fields are required to join the second part of the program.

A commission was later formed to draft the Communication and Mission Plan and Orientations for Claretian communicators and cybermissionaries.

SPIRITUALITY AND COMMUNITY LIFE

FUSSIMANYA APP, THE NEW SPIRITUAL DIRECTORY OF THE CONGREGATION

Rome, Italy. The Fussimanya App was launched in March 2021 as a Claretian prayer app. It was later relaunched on October 24, 2023, by the General Prefect of Spirituality and Community Life. The app is now available in Spanish, English, Polska, Catalan, Bahasa Indonesia, French, Italian, and Portuguese. We are encouraged to download it on our smartphones as it is now the Spiritual Directory of our Congregation. The General Government, open to further enriching the Board, has decided that it will no longer be printed on paper.

Download it here: [ANDROID](#) | [IOS](#)

NEW EDITION OF THE FORGE IN ENGLISH



Madrid, Spain. The seventh edition of the Forge Program in English started on October 1 at Los Negrales. The program began with a Mass of the Holy Spirit led by Rev. Fr. Anthony Obikonu Igboke, CMF. After a break due to the COVID-19 pandemic and a trial edition at Colmenar Viejo last year, the Forge Program returned to Los Negrales with 17 participants from 13 Major Organisms. The 75-day program will end on December 14.

REVIEWING THE FORGE PROGRAM

Madrid, Spain. From September 26-28, a group of seven Claretians gathered at Centro Fragua in Los Negrales to discuss the Forge Project. Fr. Carlos Sanchez, General Prefect of Spirituality and Community Life, led the meeting, while Fr. Gonzalo Fernandez, CMF animated it. The group consisted of both experienced and new members, who brought

fresh perspectives to the project. They analyzed The Forge's history, identified its strengths and areas for improvement, and determined the project's focus. The group decided to extend the project's duration from 75 to 80 days and reinstate four classic stages of the itinerary: *Quid Prodest*, *Patris Mei*, *Caritas Christi*, and *Spiritus Domini*, which had been changed by the three transformation processes outlined in the XXV General Chapter. They also reviewed the contents of each phase and established the most appropriate methodologies for each process. Additionally, they evaluated the most impactful experiences and decided to keep only the two most fundamental ones - the Spiritual Exercises and the pilgrimage to Claretian places - to ensure deepening knowledge and avoid dispersion.

CONSECRATED LIFE

A COMMITMENT TO CONSECRATED LIFE IN CHALLENGING TIMES

Rome, Italy. The Pontifical Institute of Theology of Consecrated Life, Claretianum, recently marked its 52nd academic year and reiterated its commitment to providing theological and spiritual formation. The event commenced with a solemn Eucharist at the Parish Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe and St. Philip, Martyr, presided by Fr. Mathew Vattamattam, CMF. The ceremony continued at the Institute's Aula Magna, where H.E. Mons. Alfonso Vincenzo Amarante, CSsR, the Magnificent Rector of the Pontifical Lateran University, welcomed the attendees. Prof. Bernardo Molina, OFM Cap, gave the inaugural session, highlighting the "*charismatic physiognomy of the Rule of Life of the Friars Minor.*" The session commemorated the 8th centenary of the papal bull "*Solet annuere*" by Pope Honorius III, which approved the Rule of the Friars Minor, a landmark event in the history of consecrated life.

A UNIQUE FORMATIVE ACCOMPANIMENT COURSE BY SANYASA

Bangalore, India. The Institute of Consecrated Life - Sanyasa (ICLS), located in Bengaluru, held an upskilling program called Formative Accompaniment: Theory and Practicum (FATP-2023) for the second year. The program was designed for both experienced formators and those new to the formation ministry. Twenty formators from India, Sri Lanka, and Nepal participated in the FATP-2023. The program consisted of a two-month-long online session starting in June 2023, followed by an 18-day intensive residential workshop from September 7 to 24.

GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATION OF THE CLARETIAN PRESENCE IN NIGERIA (1973-2023)



Nigeria. The 50th anniversary of the Claretian Presence in Nigeria was officially declared on October 30, 2022, by the Superiors of the East Nigeria Province and the West Nigeria Independent Delegation.

The Jubilee Year was eventful, involving every aspect of Claretian life and ministry. In February 2023, many Claretian parishes organized a couples' night to celebrate Jubilee Valentine's Day, which included parish youth groups, choirs, and Claretian students. During May, a quiz competition was held for all schools, which covered topics related to bible knowledge and the history of the Claretians in Nigeria. Additionally, several seminars were conducted in various parishes throughout the Youth Week period between June and July. The Lay Claretian Movement in Nigeria also actively participated in the Jubilee year celebrations, organizing conventions both in the East Nigeria Province and the West Nigeria Independent Delegation, which took place between August and October.

The Jubilee year's highlight was celebrated from October 29 to November 4 with events taking place across East Nigeria Province and the Delegation of West Nigeria. On November 3, the Jubilee Ordination was held in Nigeria, and Most Rev. Lucius Ugorji, the Archbishop of Owerri Ecclesiastical Province, delivered a sermon expressing his joy for the priesthood. He encouraged the twelve ordinands to draw closer to God through prayer.

During the culmination on November 4th, the bishop, as the main presider, thanked the formators who had sowed beautiful seeds in the Nigerian Claretian apostolate. At the end of the Mass, they introduced their Jubilee publication, *"The History and Mission of the Claretians in Nigeria (1973-2023)"*, to the Congregation.

The final mass of the Jubilee was attended by 4 bishops, 129 priests, and 19 religious sisters. Representatives from all Claretian schools and 18 parishes (some from



as far as Ekiti and Adamawa States) came with their parishioners, bringing the total number of attendees to an estimated 1,300.

At the Claretian University of Nigeria field, students and parishioners presented dances and other performances. A tribute was read in honor of the late Fr. Polycarp Opara, CMF, who was the first Claretian priest to be ordained within the 50 years of the Claretian presence in Nigeria. Special recognition awards were also presented to Lay Claretians and workers who have served the Claretians in Nigeria since the beginning.



MOZAMBIQUE MISSION ASSEMBLY CHARTS A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Maputo, Mozambique. The Mozambique Mission Assembly took place from 25 to 27 September in Maputo, with the presence of Father General and the Provincial Superior of St. Thomas, Fr. Siby Njavallikunnel, CMF. Unfortunately, Fr. Eguione Nogueira, CMF, Provincial Superior of Brasil, did not obtain the visa necessary to join the meeting. The event was a significant milestone in the history of our mission in Mozambique, as it brought together all our missionaries working there. The Mozambique Mission is a collaborative effort between two Provinces, St. Thomas and Brasil, that shows the value of inter-organism collaboration.

During the Assembly, the focus was on the Dream of the Mission in Mozambique, reviewing various dimensions: spiritual, pastoral, educational, SOMI,



EMPOWERING CLARETIAN LEADERS: CDLW REECHO CONTINUES

Negombo, Sri Lanka. The Claretians of ASCLA West recently held a reecho of the Claretian Discerning Leadership Workshop (CDLW) from October 2 to 7 at the Pastures Spirituality Center in Negombo. The workshop was attended by 25 participants from various regions, including St. Joseph Vaz, Bangalore, Chennai, St. Thomas, Northeast India, and Kolkata. Facilitators Frs. L. Anthony, Jaison Perumpallioliclal, and Michael Plampampil, CMFF, guided the participants through nine modules, three online and six onsite. Fr. Joseph Jeyaseelan, CMF, Major Superior of St. Joseph Vaz, presided over the inaugural Mass. Father General greeted the participants on the final day and delivered an online session to address their questions and concerns.

ECLA

LIVING MISSIONS AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



Seville, Spain. From 16 to 19 October, the Provincial Government of Fátima Province met with its 21 Local Superiors. The meeting aimed to address the challenges that these communities face, which include advanced age, health conditions, and the ongoing review of positions. During the meeting, the Provincial Prefect of Formation and Spirituality emphasized the characteristics of a “healthy community” and a “living mission” and presented a dynamic for dialogue and reflection. The attendees engaged in individual reflection followed by group discussions, guided by a set of questions. The day ended with a prayer session, during which the Congregational Cross was handed over to the Local Superiors. They were expected to take it back to their respective communities.

The Provincial Government discussed various issues, including the challenges of creating communities, the need to review positions, the search for a better structure of governance that suits the Province’s complex reality, the centralization of the mission in

communication, community and economic. The General Government will consider with both provinces the possibility of constructing a seminary in Nampula and establishing a residence in the capital, Maputo, as part of a concerted effort to extend the Claretian charism throughout the country and expand our impact in previously unexplored territories.

In addition, the Assembly focused on discerning the designs and commitments that will shape the Mission’s trajectory over the next eight years. Father General stressed the importance of fostering missionary spirit, cultural adaptation and transparency in accountability. He also stressed the urgency of cultivating quality local vocations, ready to serve the country’s Christians generously.

ASCLA West

CREATION OF NORTHEAST INDIA PROVINCE, A DREAM COME TRUE

Shillong, India. On October 28, Fr. Mathew Vattamattam, CMF, signed a Decree that elevates the Northeast India Independent Delegation (NEID) to a canonically erected Province effective November 1. Henceforth, it will be known as the Northeast India Province.

The new Province covers the regions of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura in India. The Provincial Curia will be located in Shillong, Meghalaya, India.

As the Province gets ready for its first Provincial Chapter, the last Delegation Government has been transformed into the Provincial Government.

GOVERNMENT OF NORTHEAST INDIA PROVINCE

FR. PIUS THURUTHIYIL, CMF

Provincial Superior

FR. JAISON CYRIAC PERUMPALLIOLICKAL, CMF

Consultor

FR. JOHN ARACKAPARAMPIL, CMF

Consultor and Econome

FR. ARNEST KHARMAWLONG, CMF

Consultor

three focal points, and the new organization of the Zimbabwe Mission. The Prefects provided additional information specific to their prefectures, which made it easier for the Local Superiors to share it with their communities.

MEETING OF RECTORS AND HEADS OF PARISHES IN CATALONIA

Vic, Spain. Rectors and heads of parishes and churches attended by the Claretian Missionaries in Catalonia met in mid-October to share experiences and promote pastoral projects. The meeting focused on two main topics: the parish as the people of God and the youth ministry. A dialogue was held on the challenges facing pastoral centers and the need to be involved in diocesan pastoral plans. The importance of creating new spaces and paths for the proclamation of the Good News from the Claretian missionary charism was emphasized. The need to improve the quality of sound in churches to properly proclaim and listen to the Word was also highlighted. The meeting concluded with a moment of personal reflection before the tabernacle and a prayer in the cell of the Birth of Claret in Sallent. Fr. Gustavo Pez, Prefect of the Apostolate of Sanctus Paulus, emphasized the importance of holding meetings to facilitate the work, to share and review projects, and for the rectors and managers to feel accompanied. The community of Sallent prepared a meal for the participants, who enjoyed a fraternal moment and extended the meeting with joy and brotherhood.

MICLA

3RD SPIRITUALITY CONGRESS OF COLOMBIA ORIENTAL-ECUADOR

Bogota, Colombia. On October 7, the 3rd Claretian Spirituality Congress of Colombia Oriental-Ecuador was held in Bogotá to celebrate the 100 years of presence of the Claretians in the town of Bosa. The Congress was inaugurated by Fr. Josué González, CMF, Provincial Superior, who stressed the importance of deepening the awareness of vocation and mission. Fr. Carlos Sánchez, CMF, General Prefect of Spirituality and Community Life, was invited to speak on the meaning of spirituality as openness to the living presence of the Spirit. He encouraged the listeners to make sure that the mission brings good news to the poor.

Fr. Alfonso Reyes, CMF, presented the evolution of education and pastoral care, highlighting traditional, new and contemporary perspectives. Fr. Carlos

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Rozo and Master Oswaldo Martínez presented a theological-pastoral reading of the missionary action of the Claretians in Bosa, considering seven elements: hermeneutic criteria, formation of a critical conscience, search for the Jesus of history, a missionary and inserted church, articulation with the social and ecclesial movement, persecution and martyrdom as costs of options, and an open conclusion.

Bishop Juan Carlos Barreto of the Diocese of Soacha, expressed his gratitude for the community's contribution to the country and to evangelization. The Congress concluded with a rite of light, a song and a video.

100 YEARS OF CLARETIAN PRESENCE IN THE DIOCESE OF TORREON

Torreon, Mexico. On October 19th, the Diocese of Torreon held a missionary event under the leadership of Bishop Mons. Luis Martín Barraza. The event began with a warm welcome to all attendees, followed by the presentation of a book and the acknowledgment of key individuals who contributed to the development of the parish. A commemorative plaque was then unveiled to mark the 100 years of Claretian presence in the parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe. A Mass was presided over by the Bishop, who emphasized on the value of the human person and Christian values. Finally, the event concluded with a heartwarming gratitude and a fraternal dinner accompanied by mariachi music.



CLARETIAN FAMILY



JOYFUL CELEBRATION OF THE FEAST OF THE FATHER FOUNDER, ST. ANTHONY MARY CLARET

The entire Congregation and the various institutions of the Claretian Family worldwide celebrated with joy the Solemnity of St. Anthony Mary Claret on 24 October. In all the continents, Eucharists were celebrated, different gatherings, and many Major Organisms witnessed religious professions and ordinations.

In Rome a solemn Mass was celebrated at the Parish Basilica of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, presided over by Archbishop José Rodríguez Carballo, O.F.M., Secretary of the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. Some of the bishops who were participating in the Synod joined the celebration, such as Msgr. Rubén Antonio González Medina, CMF, Bishop of Ponce (Puerto Rico); Mgr. Juan Domingo-Beka Esono Ayang, CMF, of Mongomo Diocese (Equatorial Guinea); and Bishop Dante Gustavo Braidá Lorenzón, of the Diocese of La Rioja (Argentina). Likewise, the gathering brought together many members of the five Claretian communities of Rome (three General Houses and two communities of the Province of Sanctus Paulus), several members of the Claretian Family (Religious of Mary Immaculate Claretian Missionary Sisters and the Missionary Sisters of Saint Anthony Mary Claret) and some lay and religious from other congregations.



CALLED TO THE HOUSE OF THE FATHER

OCTOBER 2023

4 Fr. Stane Sikošek, CMF
at age 86 in Maribor, Slovenia
Sanctus Paulus Province

9 Fr. James Nadackal, CMF
at age 66 in Bangalore, India
Bangalore Province

ORDINATIONS

17/06/2023

Fátima

Da Costa Chaves, Adão

24/06/2023

Brasil

De Souza Rodrigues, Eduardo
Henrique

01/07/2023

Santiago

Puerto Gómez, Carlos

15/07/2023

Kolkata

Sahaya Rajan, M.

16/07/2023

Congo

Mawangu Kabeya, Joseph
Mokondi Hussein, Gaston
Munzala Onzal, Barthélemy
Ndombe, Emmanuel

Mãe da África

Fernandes Mateus, Gil Marandino Voto
Kakumbi Soma, Tomás

12/08/2023

St. Charles Lwanga

Kawuki, Derrick Samuel

19/08/2023

Antillas

Joseph, Cassamajor Miguel Michelet J.

26/08/2023

Polska

Kouadio, N'goran Ange Hugues
Yao, Jean Marc Kouakou

08/09/2023

Fr. Rhoel Gallardo

Ho Sy, Nam (John the Baptist)
Nguyen, Hoang Vuong (Joseph)

21/09/2023

West Nigeria

Eze, Emmanuel