

PREMIO CLARET-VIDA



PARA INICIATIVAS CLARETIANAS DE DEFENSA Y CUIDADO DE LA VIDA

**Project of reception
for immigrants
Claret Enea**

1	PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDACY	3
2	CLARET ENE A GIZARTETXEA	4
3	IMMIGRANT WELCOMING PROJECT: A SIGNIFICANT PRACTICE	5

1 PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDACY

From the community of Bilbao in the province of Sanctus Paulus, this candidacy is presented to participate with other Claretian initiatives in the Claret Life Award.

The Significant Practice is in the area of 'solidarity and mission' concerning the reality of migrants and refugees: the Immigrant Welcoming Project carried out by Claret Enea. This project involves providing initial support to migrants who, in many cases, find themselves in homeless situations, without housing, newly arrived in the city with no reference points and facing many basic needs. Within the project, various resources are offered in collaboration with the public administration (Bilbao City Council, Basque Government, Central Government through CEAR, etc.), but there is a need that we have identified and cover with our own means: the Immigrant Welcoming Project. This project offers initial support to direct individuals to other resources provided by social or public entities through a social worker or educator, as well as the opportunity to participate in various workshops to support this initial vulnerable situation. After offering different workshops (digital skills, general culture, Basque culture, etc.), we currently provide training in literacy and Spanish with volunteer individuals, which is in high demand.

God invites us to care for and defend life as a fundamental dimension of our mission. Our way of continuing to build a world where we truly live as brothers and sisters, children of the same Father, is by welcoming these people in such a challenging situation. With appropriate support and opportunities tailored to their personal process, many of these individuals can integrate into our society. In this way, we seek to build an alternative to the culture of discarding, which in many cases in Europe treats these people in a discriminatory manner and without full respect for their human rights.

2 CLARET ENEA GIZARTETXEA

The Claret Enea project is located in Bilbao, in the neighborhood of San Francisco, an area with significant levels of exclusion and poverty, and it serves as a welcoming space for immigrants arriving in the city. Faced with this situation, the Claretian Missionaries of the former Province of Euskal Herria (currently Sanctus Paulus) decided to strongly commit to social transformation by carrying out a profound renovation of a former school building to house the Claret Enea Comprehensive Social Inclusion Center, while also maintaining the parish. In this way, the solidarity mission of Claret Enea focuses on the commitment to the poorest and most excluded people, seeking to improve their living conditions and provide them with new opportunities. The motivation behind this project is to reaffirm the congregational priority for solidarity with impoverished, excluded, and threatened individuals in their right to life.

The Claretian Missionaries of Sanctus Paulus have embraced this project as a significant and priority option for the Province, demonstrating a firm commitment to the proposed objectives and actions.

This Claret Enea Center is based on the idea of "shared mission," which involves the active participation of Claretian Missionaries, Claretian Laypeople, and other laypeople close to the congregation. The direction of the Center is led by a Claretian Layperson, reflecting this commitment to shared mission. The presence of the Claretian Missionary community in Bilbao is very important. In the same building, several Claretian Laypeople work in three Claretian platforms: Proclade Yanapay, Sortarazi, and Claret Enea itself.

The six-story building accommodates: a first reception area with a day center, basic needs assistance, and food distribution, workshops for learning Spanish and basic skills, a social worker to facilitate access to housing and social assistance, a supervised housing unit for vulnerable families with 20 places, a floor for housing immigrant families who have applied for asylum with more than 20 places, a shelter and soup kitchen for people experiencing homelessness, serving more than 60 individuals, job orientation, and training serving more than 150 people. Additionally, one floor is occupied by the Claretian missionary community, which, besides tending to the parish and other pastoral tasks, hosts and lives with three individuals who were previously homeless.

Some figures support the work carried out with over 340 different people served last year. Since its opening, more than 2,000 individuals have been assisted with their needs for food, basic necessities, shelter, educational support, housing, job orientation, employment training, and spiritual and pastoral care.

3 Immigrant Welcoming Project: A Significant Practice

Within the characteristics that identify us as the Claretian Family, the following are particularly significant:

- (i) The intense feeling of being sons and daughters of a God who makes us brothers and sisters.
- (ii) The anointing of the Spirit received to evangelize the poor and be evangelized by them, paying attention to the signs of the times and desiring to respond to them creatively.
- (iii) The conviction that we are called to share in the Mission of Jesus of Nazareth and his disciples, working with others, contributing to the renewal of the Church, and committing to the common good. This involves concrete responses that express commitment to universal brotherhood (Fratelli tutti) and to justice, peace, and the care of the common home (Laudato Si'), which the latest General Chapter of the Claretian Missionaries emphasized (cf. QC 43).

The workshops are aimed at adults with low qualifications and literacy needs, including digital literacy. The initial plan was to conduct 8 different workshops (Literacy, Spanish, Basic Computing, General Culture). However, the high demand for Spanish language classes, which is essential for the process of integration and social inclusion, led us to focus solely on these Spanish courses at various levels.

Currently, 95% of the applicants for Spanish classes are individuals facing severe social exclusion (homeless) and 5% are people from the neighborhood with economic difficulties that prevent them from enrolling in language schools.

Throughout the years, the workshops have been developed as follows:

- 8 beginner-level Spanish courses, with 64 participants.
- intermediate-level Spanish courses, with 40 participants.
- literacy-level Spanish courses, with 48 participants.
- From January to March: 8 groups / From April to July: 8 groups / From September to December: 3 groups.

Each group has a maximum of 8 participants, allowing for more personalized attention and faster language learning.

The courses are taught by volunteers, a social integration student with a dual contract, and trainees, primarily in social integration. The coordination and organization of the courses are overseen by the Social Worker responsible for the welcoming program.

The distinctive value of volunteering lies in the two different profiles:

- Older people, mostly retired or pre-retired teachers, who live in the neighborhood and want to contribute from the value of gratuitousness to those who need it most.
- Students who, through a program offered by the municipality, come into contact with this reality and undergo processes of personal transformation, moving from empathy to strong commitment by participating in the transformation of this specific reality.

These volunteers become a seed within society, acting from a prophetic dimension in denouncing and questioning the prejudices that exist in society.

Access to the courses is through the social worker, which happens through three different avenues:

- Directly, through awareness of our offerings.
- Detection of the need among participants in the day center or food distribution.
- Referral from the responsible persons of Claret Enea's residential programs (supervised housing, asylum seekers, shelter).

Once the need is detected, a simple level test is conducted, and the groups are organized based on the availability of instructors and the time availability of the participants. To facilitate attendance, we have opened 2 exclusive groups for women.

The profile of the participants in the courses is as follows:

- 90% male.
- 10% female.
- Origin:
 - Morocco 45%.
 - Algeria 25%.
 - Sub-Saharan Africa 10%.
 - Asia 12%.
 - Others 8%.

Assessment:

- This program has significant demand, which we can only partially meet.
- It is a very suitable activity for volunteering, enabling contact between different cultures and helping to build relationships between them.
- Any integration and inclusion plan starts with language learning, making this service extremely important.