



# TRIDUUM

SAINT ANTHONY MARY CLARET 2023

On the occasion of the Jubilee Year, we have chosen to offer some extensive meditations that help activate our grateful memory to God for the gift of our holy Founder.

May each community see at their convenience of abbreviating them by choosing the most appropriate parts, offering them as they are presented or distributing their content at various sequenced moments.

## **FIRST DAY**

### **WHAT “WAS NOT CLEAR” FOR FR. CLARET**

#### **Opening Invitation**

We begin the Triduum in the middle of the Jubilee Year for the 175th anniversary of the founding of the Congregation. The Triduum will center us on the personality of our Founder. When we approach any canonized saint is not the same as witnessing an impeccable and most perfect history, free of efforts, struggles or enemies. The holiness of Father Claret, like that of all saints, did not have that perfect and impossible architecture. He had shadows and darkness. He was aware of this when he resolved to have for himself “the heart of a judge.” Nor should we hide them or make up for them. They precisely give him credibility and elevate him to the category of model and example for everyone who listens to the Lord’s call amid the discouragement caused by his/her own weakness. God, who looked at Mary’s littleness, also makes grace shine in his sons and daughters who, as humans, know that only He can make luminous our shadows and darkness. This Jubilee Year it is a call to hope.

## Hymn or entrance song

### Greeting

The Lord who visits us with the splendor of light and vanishes the shadows of our sins, be with all of you.

### Oración

Open, Oh Lord, our minds, and hearts  
to acknowledge the great love that you have for us,  
so that our whole life may be to the praise of your glory,  
as the life of your servant St Anthony Claret was.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord,  
Who lives and reign with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God for ever and ever. Amen.

### Reading from the First Letter of St Paul to the Corinthians (2:1-7)

Brothers and sisters when I came to you, I did not come as someone superior in speaking ability or wisdom, as I proclaimed to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. I also was with you in weakness and fear, and in great trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of mankind, but on the power of God. Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory.

### The Word of the Lord.

## Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 33:2-9)

### **R. The Lord listens the cry of the poor.**

I will bless the Lord at all times;  
His praise shall continually be in my mouth.  
My soul will make its boast in the Lord;  
The humble will hear it and rejoice.

### **R. The Lord listens the cry of the poor.**

Exalt the Lord with me,  
And let's exalt His name together.  
I sought the Lord and He answered me,  
And rescued me from all my fears.

### **R. The Lord listens the cry of the poor.**

They looked to Him and were radiant,  
And their faces will never be ashamed.  
This wretched man cried out, and the Lord heard him,  
And saved him out of all his troubles.

### **R. The Lord listens the cry of the poor.**

The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him,  
And rescues them.  
Taste and see that the Lord is good;  
How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!

### **R. The Lord listens the cry of the poor.**

## Claretian Meditation

During these days we approach the figure of Claret trying to contemplate his persona with realism, and, at the same time, with the affection that he deserves. He was a “unworthy

servant who did what he had to do.” Being a saint is not the same as being a superman. Holiness is not a synonym of acquired perfection, instead it is a journey towards the ideal that Christ is.

We are not uncomfortable to acknowledge some of the shadows of his life. They do not diminish him. On the contrary, they give him a credible stature because they show him more human. Claret was a man like we are. He had a heart like ours, he lived and was educated in a family like ours. He was a boy, a teenager, a young man, an adult, and an elder, with his own crisis and challenges. He had a temperament with limitations and shortcomings, which never defeated him. His “defects” and limitations confirm that his holiness is a viable path. Some details confirm it to us.

**I don't have a good physical appearance, nor my health is the best.** He was not tall in stature -1,55 meters-, his body with rounded shapes that became more obvious with aging and a light sallow skin color. A complexion that is not precisely sculptural, although it wasn't disgusting at all. His serene look and his gracious speech made him approachable. As a seminarian he suffered hemoptysis. A persistent pain in the knee made him leave the novitiate; he underwent surgery, with some complications in December 1849. We know that during his time in Madrid he had a hernia and wore a special suspender belt. His eyesight was also suffering, and, in his last years, wore glasses; the accounting book in his Madrid house mentioned the expense of 24 reales “*for some glasses for H.E.*” (*El Beato* II, 715). He even forgot his glasses in a Church at Daimiel (Prov. of Royal City), upon his trip returning from Lisbon, accompanying the kings, in December 1866; this relic has been recovered. Other pair of glasses were in the Vic Museum prior to the Spanish

civil war. In Madrid he suffered dropsy, severe migraines, and suffered a lot with his teeth.

**Claret went through long vocational uncertainties.** He was not always clear about his vocation. He did not have reassuring evidence. He alternated throughout his life with moments of darkness and disorientation. He wanted to be a professional weaver, then a Carthusian; then as soon as he finished his studies -June 1839- he requested not to have any parochial responsibility but instead to be a missionary priest; he wanted to be an *ad gentes* missionary, then a Jesuit... Nor did he have immediate certainty to determined himself for the miter in Cuba. It took him two months (August 4th to October 4th, 1849) to accept this call, and finally he accepted trusting in what his spiritual director has resolved. (cf. EC I, 321). After the first two years in Cuba, he practically took the decision to resign: "*I am tired of being Archbishop and I already had accomplished my mission in this island.*" (EC III, 130); but people he trusted must have made him desist from such resolution: "*I have to accept entirely the will of God not even thinking nor requesting my resignation...*". (Resolution 1 of 1854). After five months of reflection and consulting (July-December 1865), he prolonged his discernment about continuing or not in the court after the recognition of the Kingdom of Italy.

What is marvelous is that these questions did not take away his serenity to keep giving himself to his daily apostolates while he was waited for new light. Perhaps only towards his final days he seemed to have vocational certainty: "*It seems to me that I have fulfilled my mission*" (EC II, 1423). But this did not free him from living an authentic anguish at the end of his life in connection with the Congregation: "*You and I hurt each other*



*mutually without wanting it... I am a mysterious entity... I am a fugitive...*" (EC II, 1485).

**Living the gospel with coherence entailed for Claret a long struggle.** According to his own words, Claret struggled with meekness and humility. For this reason, he talked so much of them as personal goals and he proposed them for his daily personal examination (cf. Aut. No. 351 & No. 383). He was, specially, worried about practicing meekness in front of his infrequent attacks of indignation. The most known case is his reaction when someone tried to impersonate him: a "faker" made himself called Francisco Claret, he was trying to make him passed as a brother of the famous missionary and he dedicated himself to mislead others. Claret was fulminating: "*this guy is a fake and he deserves to be arrested by the authorities*" (EC I, 212). He was also preoccupied for his humility, and this was not strange, because of the overwhelming success of his preaching, that even made politicians be afraid of Claret: "*attended to the universal prestige that I had...*" (Aut No. 458). Active and passionate temperament and predisposition to pride that naturally are twined. He was worried about his image, the opinion that others would have about him. When he was named pastor of Sallent he tried to avoid the appointment by exposing among many motives, his short stature: "*V.S. you see that I am short, how will my parishioners respect me?*" (PIV<sup>1</sup> ses. 51, PAV<sup>2</sup> ses. 76). His shyness then was notorious. During his youth, he felt humiliated when he was deceived by his business partner (Aut N. 73-75). As a Royal confessor he questioned a lot what people would say if they saw him at the service of a Queen

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<sup>1</sup> PIV is an abbreviation for "Proceso informativo de Vic" (Vic's informative process).

<sup>2</sup> PAV is an abbreviation for "Proceso apostólico de Vic" (Vic's apostolic process).



with a turbid life. His precaution in front of possible critiques about his finances led him to have his personal accounting under a different name: D Pedro, administrator of Librería Religiosa. When he was called by a Peace Judge from El Escorial, he went through “days of so much affliction and shame” and he requested to the administrator from the monastery to present himself as Claret and “*to freed him as soon as possible of that embarrassment*” (EC II, p. 1231s).

There would be more things. After this journey, let us come to the conclusion of being a little more “devoted to the defects of the saints.” Let us not fall into the trap of improperly connect the idea of holiness to that of acquired perfection. To be holy, no one has to be rigorously perfect anymore. Only God is. To live our lives with ardor, we will not be asked for iron health, excellent qualities, eminent intelligence, or lack of trauma. We will be asked to try to love with the personal size of the heart we were given at birth, knowing that the main goal is precisely that: to love with our heart of flesh. And to achieve this we will always have to follow a path of healthy integration of evil, which involves recognizing and accepting it, forgiving it in ourselves and in others, correcting it and converting it. And that path can only be traveled with the strength that God’s grace gives.

This is the first lesson that this triduum wants to emphasize. Today we ask, through Claret’s intercession, that we be granted the grace of self-acceptance: to learn to reconcile with our own shadows and take advantage of life’s circumstances to turn those wickedness into occasions of love.

## Petitions

Let us pray, brothers, to God the Father, who counts on us to think about our fragility and calls us to be witnesses of the Kingdom. May God lovingly attend to our petitions and prayers.

- For the Church, that she feels more and more the every day calling of the Lord, who pushes her to evangelize despite her sinful and limited condition. LET US PRAY TO THE LORD.
- For the world leaders, that they strive to work for peace, justice, freedom and good for all. LET US PRAY TO THE LORD.
- For all who suffer, especially, those who feel physically or morally poor and do not yet find a motivation to continue fighting, so they discover that God counts on them to extend the Kingdom and gives them the strength to carry it out. LET US PRAY TO THE LORD.
- For young people who have concerns about serving God and dedicating themselves to the good of their sisters and brothers, so that they open themselves generously to a possible call from the Lord to a missionary life. LET US PRAY TO THE LORD.
- For the whole Claretian Family, so that, following the example of Saint Anthony Mary Claret, we may live in holiness and have missionary service as the reason for our existence in the Church and in the world. LET US PRAY TO THE LORD.

*More petitions could be added...*

Let us say together the prayer that Christ taught us and ask the Father to free us from evil: **Our Father...**

## **Final Prayer**

Our God and Father,  
That we know you, and make you known  
That we love you and make you loved  
That we serve you and make you served;  
That we praise you and make you praised with all creatures.  
Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

## **Final Song: HYMN OF ST ANTHONY MARY CLARET**

Jesus passed along your path one morning,  
and seeing you He called you by your name;  
He would make you a witness of His kingdom,  
you would bring the good news throughout His reign.  
And you set out traversing seas and mountains,  
to all you preached the message of the Lord;  
You reached the farthest islands and their peoples,  
showing them God's forgiveness and His love.

**CLARET!**

**YOU ARE A PILGRIM, YOU ARE A SOWER,  
THE SEED YOU SCATTER IS THE GOOD NEWS.  
YOU REACH ALL COLORS AND RACES:  
THERE'S ONLY ONE FATHER, ONLY ONE LORD!**

**CLARET!**

**THROUGH YOUR EXAMPLE WE SEE OUR MISSION;  
WE MUST BE WITNESSES, WE MUST BRING HOPE;  
WE WANT TO FOLLOW YOUR FOOTSTEPS AND  
TELL THE PEOPLE THAT GOD IS LOVE!**

Your aim to spread the Gospel of your Kingdom;  
Your life was filled with Jesus and His word;  
And you brought Him to villages and peoples,  
just like Mary her Son gave to the world.  
We too will follow closely your example,  
the new Claretian family in Christ;  
We wish to be a beacon in the darkness  
and to all bring the hope of a new life.

## SECOND DAY

### WHAT “WAS CLEAR” FOR FR. CLARET

#### Opening Invitation

On this second day of the Triduum, we will admire Claret's clean and clear personality. He was also, without a doubt, an accomplished man. Not because he did not have defects or setbacks, nor because he had been spared in the struggle of living uphill. No. His vocation was not all life and sweetness. He also had “dark nights.” But, despite them, he also enjoyed many very clear days and understood that in the darkness of the night the stars shine brighter. For Claret, God was not a complicated puzzle. He was his good Father. A good friend is always easy to understand. From that friendship he understood that shadows are only the other side of the light zone. That was precisely what led him to bring out the best in himself to offer it to the service of God. This challenges those of us who have received “*the same Spirit to be part of God's Dream for the Congregation implanted in the heart of Claret.*”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Beginning of the “Announcement Letter from the Superior General on the 175th anniversary of the founding of the Congregation.”

## Hymn or entrance song

### Greeting

The Lord who is the light that illumines those who are living in darkness and in the shadows of death be with you.

### Prayer

Almighty and eternal God,  
you wanted to give us  
a proof of your love  
in the glorification of your servant  
Saint Anthony Mary Claret,  
grant to us who remember him  
in this triduum  
that his intercession help us  
and his example moves us  
to faithfully imitate your Son Jesus Christ.  
He, who lives and reigns with you.  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit  
forever and ever. Amen.

### A Reading of the Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (4:7-14)

Brothers we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the extraordinary greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying around in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who live are constantly being

handed over to death because of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our mortal flesh. So death works in us, but life in you. But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written: “*I believed; therefore I spoke,*” we also believe, therefore we also speak, knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will also raise us with Jesus, and will present us with you.

## **The Word of the Lord.**

### **Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 112: 1-2. 3-4. 5-7<sup>a</sup>. 7bc-8. 9)**

#### **V. Blessed is the one who loves wholeheartedly the law of the Lord.**

Blessed the man who fears the LORD,  
who greatly delights in his commands.  
His descendants shall be mighty in the land,  
a generation of the upright will be blessed.

#### **V. Blessed is the one who loves wholeheartedly the law of the Lord.**

Wealth and riches shall be in his house;  
his righteousness shall endure forever.  
Light shines through the darkness for the upright;  
gracious, compassionate, and righteous.

#### **V. Blessed is the one who loves wholeheartedly the law of the Lord.**

It is good for the man gracious in lending,  
who conducts his affairs with justice.  
For he shall never be shaken;  
the righteous shall be remembered forever.



## **V. Blessed is the one who loves wholeheartedly the law of the Lord.**

He shall not fear an ill report;  
his heart is steadfast, trusting the LORD.  
His heart is tranquil, without fear,  
till at last he looks down on his foes.

## **V. Blessed is the one who loves wholeheartedly the law of the Lord.**

Lavishly he gives to the poor;  
his righteousness shall endure forever;  
his horn shall be exalted in honor.

## **V. Blessed is the one who loves wholeheartedly the law of the Lord.**

### **Claretian Meditation**

On this second day of the triduum, we pause to contemplate the human virtues that elevated Claret to the highest peaks. What human base made it possible for him to strive towards excellence? Answering that question is crucial. Because every man and woman must discover two essential things in his/her life to walk: on what columns and at the service of what goals they put their life. Like everyone, Claret was not thrown into the adventure of living unarmed and deprived.

Claret felt formed in the forge of the Heart of Mary. And he knew how to show it with that frankness that led him to say on one occasion: *“I am Claret and I speak clearly.”*<sup>4</sup> Undeniable human virtues shine in his life. Let us point out only three of them in this order: His laboriousness, natural kindness, and self-

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<sup>4</sup> PAV ses. 54.

control – the saint will call it “modesty” -. His life, as if it were a mirror, teaches us to put the best of ourselves at the service of the best of causes.

1. The first of these brilliant claretian qualities was his **laboriousness**. God had endowed him with an extraordinary capacity for work that he knew how to improve and direct towards his service early on. Even as a child, he himself tells us that he “*worked as much as he could*” (Aut. 31.50). His schedules were always intense, reducing his hours of rest to miraculous limits in some stages of his life. In his spiritual exercises of 1843 and 1850 he made the resolution not to waste a minute of time<sup>5</sup>, a resolution he fulfilled with extreme fidelity. The desire to take advantage of it led him to do spiritual exercises in Rome while he waited for the Prefect of Propaganda Fide to return from vacation. In the Canary Islands he says that he goes alone from one place to another “*like a desperate man*” (EC I, p. 280). To be a royal confessor, one of the conditions he set was not having to waste time in lobbying. This is the only way to explain the lists of apostolic works that leave him breathless.

He gave himself to the apostolate, then, with the same dedication with which he previously gave himself to the industry. As “delirium” he defined his youthful passion for work: “*My whole goal, my whole desire was manufacturing*” (Aut. 66). Then, the idea of the apostolate focused him completely: “*He continually thought about what he would do and how he would do it to save souls. To this end I begged... and continually offered myself to this same goal...*” (Aut. 113).

Not only that. He also felt urged by an ideal of excellence: “*he worked as hard as he could, and did it as well as he knew*”

<sup>5</sup> Prop. 1843., n. 11. Prop. 1850, n. 16.

how.” (Aut. 31). The same thing is confirmed in the chapters dedicated to the stimuli: He was enthusiastic about the apostles and decided to equal them: “*Won’t you do what these men and women do?*” (Aut. 226). In his scale of values, that of a worker was one of the highest. And always at the service of the Lord and his cause. This is what he knew how to foster in his missionaries, turning the community into an apostolic “hive.”

2. Claret also talk expressly of his **natural kindness**. He confesses it himself. “*I received from God a natural good or nature, as a pure effect of His goodness*” (Aut. 18). His apostolic zeal was the fruit of that powerful emotional feeling towards others, whom he wanted to free from any evil, and above all from eternal damnation, seeking to have a “mother’s heart” for others.

He exhibited that good nature on countless occasions. In the details and attention that he showed to his colleagues; he didn’t let the opportunity pass. In June 1850 the members of the Congregation were already twelve, and he gave each one an image of an apostle as a patron or model; he did not even forget Don José Caixal, who, being a canon of Tarragona, did not live with the group. Years later he again gave each member of the Congregation a “*Breviarium marianum*” and expressly asked the editor to send them to him unbound, so that each one “would do it at his convenience.” He remembered the onomastic of loved ones, and congratulated them (M. Antonia Paris, for Saint Anthony of Padua, and Fr. Xifré for Saint Joseph). Visited in La Granja by two parents and two aspirants from the community of Segovia, he told them: “*I usually give to those who come to my house, in penance, chocolate,*” and he had it served to them. He maintained the same attitude in Cuba, arranging to unconditionally welcome all passersby, whether or not he was in the episcopal palace.

In his letters he lavished affectionate expressions; like the one he wrote to the Bishop of Palencia, D. Cipriano Valer. “*You cannot imagine the great love I have for you, when I see you adorned with persecutions. Who would give me the ability to see you and hang around your neck like a son does to his loving father*” (July 22, 1844). Time and time again he expresses his affection for Fr. Juan N. Lobo; “The love and affection that I have for you open my heart to this freedom that I take, and I am sure that You will conceal my audacity.” (EC I, p. 1377).

3. Let’s look at the third claretian virtue: **self-control**. Although many features of his life confirm his inner energy, he was never sudden and spontaneous in his reactions. D. Carmelo Sala, Claret’s chaplain, and confessor for several years, testified: “*I observed in him an unalterable peace of soul and a constant and modest cheerfulness even in the greatest disappointments. He was not disturbed by slander or presumption, and I could assure you that not once did I hear him utter complaints against his enemies... he used to say very joyfully: if they knew the good, they did to me, they would stop slandering me or persecuting me... “He dominated so by complete his bilious sanguine temperament and his naturally lively character that was always found full of meekness.”*<sup>6</sup> Thus it is understandable that he proposed “modesty” to his missionaries – the name given to self-control at the time. Balmes accurately said of Claret: “*Little terror, softness in everything... He does not want to exasperate.*”

His relatives also spoke highly of his accuracy in punctuality and keeping his word. He was careful in order for himself and for others. Fr. Serrat assured that when the saint entered the room

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<sup>6</sup> Private Witness, singed by the author April 29th 1880, arx. Vic

of that or another missionary, if he saw a book out of his place, he would notice it immediately.

At the end we ask a truly decisive question: On what columns do I construct and sustain the building of my vocation? This reflection clearly relies on a certainty: if the missionaries, if at least many of them, built their lives on pillars like Claret's - love, compassion, work, tenacity, ideals, simplicity, etc. - This world would be different. And lively. That worldliness that binds us would break. We would enter the common market of apostolic fraternity. Christ would always be the ideal and model to follow.

## **Petitions**

Let us now present our prayer to the Lord with the confidence that He hears the supplications of those who gather in his name.

- For the Church, so that, strengthened in faith, hope and charity, it may experience greater commitment and greater dedication to the men and women of our world. LET US PRAY TO THE LORD.
- For the world in which we live, so that its leaders and rulers promote the right to life, dignity and development of all people. LET US PRAY TO THE LORD.
- For the excluded and marginalized of this world, for the poor, the migrants and the oppressed, so that they find people who announce the Good News to them and doors of hope are opened to them. LET US PRAY TO THE LORD.
- For the entire Claretian Family and for the apostolic work we carry out, so that we know how to show everyone the

love of God, which is a source of life and salvation. LET US PRAY TO THE LORD.

- For the youth, so that by listening the voice of those who suffer and those who are lost or disoriented, they know how to listen the voice of God, who calls them to live with total dedication in following the virgin, poor and obedient Christ. LET US PRAY TO THE LORD.

*Other petitions can be added...*

May the Spirit who dwells in us and unites us in God's love help us to say: **Our Father...**

### **Final Prayer**

You, Lord, invite us  
to participate in your life and your mission,  
and you give us your body as food:  
make that, in imitation of Saint Anthony Mary Claret,  
We do not want anything other than your will,  
and that, loving you as you love us  
and how you want us to love you,  
We only wish to live for You and by You  
and You be enough for us.  
You who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

## **Final Song: Hymn to St. Anthony Mary Claret**

Jesus passed along your path one morning,  
and seeing you He called you by your name;  
He would make you a witness of His kingdom,  
you would bring the good news throughout His reign.  
And you set out traversing seas and mountains,  
to all you preached the message of the Lord;  
You reached the farthest islands and their peoples,  
showing them God's forgiveness and His love.

**CLARET!**

**YOU ARE A PILGRIM, YOU ARE A SOWER,  
THE SEED YOU SCATTER IS THE GOOD NEWS.  
YOU REACH ALL COLORS AND RACES:  
THERE'S ONLY ONE FATHER, ONLY ONE LORD!**

**CLARET!**

**THROUGH YOUR EXAMPLE WE SEE OUR MISSION;  
WE MUST BE WITNESSES, WE MUST BRING HOPE;  
WE WANT TO FOLLOW YOUR FOOTSTEPS AND  
TELL THE PEOPLE THAT GOD IS LOVE!**

Your aim to spread the Gospel of your Kingdom;  
Your life was filled with Jesus and His word;  
And you brought Him to villages and peoples,  
just like Mary her Son gave to the world.  
We too will follow closely your example,  
the new Claretian family in Christ;  
We wish to be a beacon in the darkness  
and to all bring the hope of a new life.



## THIRD DAY

### THE “CLARITY” OF FR. CLARET

#### Opening Invitation

On the third day of our Triduum, more than in Claret, we will fix our eyes on Him who made the missionary heart of our Founder shine with a living light of holiness. The Jubilee is a time of grace, which makes us look more closely at how we are living our charism, “*What we are today is the fruit of God’s amazing grace*”<sup>7</sup> that began in Claret. We thank God because he did great things in this son of Sallent, missionary of two worlds, founder of religious families, father and our intercessor. We admire in his figure that tremble that vibrates in the soul of the chosen creatures, cracked clay that sheltered within himself his eternal battle in which, with the help of grace, good crushed evil. May his life continue to be a permanent lamp for many of us who need a light that guides our missionary steps, centers them on God and directs them towards our brothers and sisters.

#### Hymn or entrance song

#### Greeting

The Lord who is loyal to his words and powerful in all his actions, be with all of you.

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<sup>7</sup> From the “Announcement Letter from the Superior General on the 175th anniversary of the founding of the Congregation.”

## Prayer

Communicate to us, good Father,  
the Spirit that you granted to Saint Anthony Mary Claret,  
so that with the gift of your grace  
we enrich the life of the Church,  
and make her mission in the world more fruitful.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God forever and ever. Amen.

## A Reading of the Letter of St Paul to the Romans (8, 14-19)

Brothers, in effect, for those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, “Abba, Father!” The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him. **The Word of the Lord.**

## Responsorial Psalm (Sal 26, 1. 4. 13-14)

**R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.**

The Lord is my light and my salvation,  
whom should I fear?

The LORD is my life's refuge;  
of whom should I be afraid?

**R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.**

One thing I ask of the LORD;  
this I seek: To dwell in the LORD's house

all the days of my life,  
To gaze on the LORD's beauty,  
to visit his temple.

### **R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.**

I believe I shall see the LORD's goodness  
in the land of the living.

Wait for the LORD, take courage;  
be stouthearted, wait for the LORD!

### **R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.**

## **Claretian Meditation**

Claret's life has been showing us in the previous days of the triduum that the path to holiness is strangely constituted by a mixture of good and evil. What would become of Claret and any saint if we tried to remove from them every trace of weakness and misery? Like every human being, Claret knew the temptation of evil and the attraction of good. And on that background he projected the luminous clarity of his holiness.

There are those who confuse sainthood with a kind of Nobel Prize or a doctorate obtained at a prestigious university, which selects students, chooses them from among the gifted and then subjects them to a very tough apprenticeship, finally rewarding only the best. What harm has this aristocratic concept of holiness done to us! Because with this we have "canonized" mediocrity as a normal situation for everyone.

In this line, what does the brilliance that Claret projects from the lights and shades of his life and his missionary action consist of? What makes his figure so seductive and attractive? Let's say it without giving it too much thought: he was reached by God

and carried away by God's strength he became a man of fire. Some snapshots show the effects of that fire on his soul:

- He was a **free man** to listen and to follow the Word that came from elsewhere and took him out of himself; free man to let himself be seduce by the love of God; free man to convert in human gestures his first and permanent experience of compassion too, so he could live a permanent surrender to an ideal, so he could face the setbacks and difficulties, so he could turn the other cheek, so he could enjoy the good he did to others, so he could give all he had, and die to give his life to others,... He never let his own ego restrain him. He was free because he shed all he had. The absence of pretensions for prestige, wealth or power allowed him to act with great freedom in Cuba, when asking for pardon of the independentists condemned to death (cf. EC I, p. 579), recovering the best of the antislavery legislation<sup>8</sup> or the equality of races for marriage (cf. EC I, p. 634s); and in Madrid he felt equally free to put conditions to the queen or to demand her an orderly life, always “threatening” that “*otherwise I will leave by resignation*”; *three times he interrupted his ministry as royal confessor*.
- He was a **motivated man**. He left everything, but he found everything. God was for Claret “*more than enough*” (Aut 445). In this way he experienced in his own flesh what Jesus promises to those who follow him: hundreds of brothers and sisters; an unlimited supply of creativity, and amazing vitality. What was the secret of his incombustible vitality? He confessed himself to some young students at the doors

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<sup>8</sup> Shortly after arriving on the island, he published the *Charter containing the main laws of the Indies*, which, according to witnesses, notably softened the condition of the slaves.

of St. Mary of Sea Church in Barcelona: *“Fell in love with Jesus Christ and your neighbor, and you will do the same things I do and even greater ones”*. It was a carefully cultivated love relationship; D. Carmelo Sala, full of admiration, would say to Fr. Xifre in September 1862: *“All these preachings don’t take away from him even the littlest tiny part of the time he dedicates to prayer, spiritual reading, and the various pious exercises he practices daily”* (EC II, p. 545).

- He was a **man in awe**. Since the beginning of his life and all along Claret was in awe. Amazement thrilled him because of God’s passing through his life, the religious excitement contemplating reality inhabited by the Almighty, to whom he encountered everywhere, particularly in difficulties and setbacks that he kept finding in his adventures and wanderings. He repeats it over and over again as a ceaseless echo of panting jubilation: *“Oh God, how good You have been to me!”* (Aut.35).
- He was a **man in love**. One night, when he was a boy, Claret discovered that God was not invisible, that his face multiply in the unhappy and suffering faces of his sons and daughters. And, in silence, he decided to sacrifice his life for the salvation of lives of others. Claret would always feel in his temples the heartbeats of his heat of fire. His resolutions for 1860 he said to himself: *“I will only live for the love of God. I will always work out of love. I will die everyday out of love. I don’t pretend other thing through my work than the pure love of God.”*<sup>9</sup> Immersed in the thickets of life, he was able to love friends and enemies, lights and shadows with the same intensity. He never set the sun on his heart, tireless in drawing perfect rounds of compass.

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<sup>9</sup> Mss. Claret, II, 67.

- He was a **radical man**. He never surrendered to mediocrity. He loved life, but he was always in love with the impossible. For this reason he ended up expropriated from his earthly life. Although he was made of flesh and blood, he lived so intensely that it was always Christ who lived in him. His love urged him so much that he opted for Him. That decision turned him into a man against the current, capable of listening to and following the inner voice among the tumult of confusing voices that stun minds and souls. And because he was free in the essential, he was also free from attachments: he never had a permanent home.
- He was a **fearless man**. Prayer, action, and passion were the components of his apostolic vocation as the expression of the definition of a missionary. He understood that to love was not so much about “feeling” but more about “*working and suffering*” (Aut. 424) for God and his brothers and sisters. In the appendix of his pocket book “*The lover of Jesus Christ*”, which Claret translated into Spanish, he wrote from his own harvest that holiness consists of three things: *praying heroically, working heroically and suffering heroically*. Pain was not a sad surprise that knock him down, instead it was that purified his missionary soul. He burnt fully his life in the performance of his ministry asking nothing in exchange, it was an exercise of generosity that has never ceased to amaze us.
- Finally, he was a **saint in a community of saints**. Claret felt the urgency to socialize his sanctity. He had this burning thought of “*to form a Congregation of priests to be and to be named Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary*” (Aut. 488). He found those that God has given the same spirit that animate him. And the experience of communion that

makes him proclaim his own personal Magnificat: *“Oh my God, blessed are You for having deigned to choose your humble servants as sons of the Immaculate Heart of your Most Holy Mother!”* (Aut. 492). The greatest brilliance of holiness is radiated by communion. He, separated from his community of missionaries due to his episcopal assignment, always aspired to live with his brothers of vocation, or in a community similar to that of Vic: *“...to give myself to the Missions with my companions from the Merced in Vich, but I will not live there, but in this one in Madrid where we will set up a house formed by some from there and we will leave...”* [EC I, p. 1361; June 1857]. In 1864, in a report to the nuncio on the development of the Congregation, Claret states in the third person from Madrid *“effectively protects the Congregation with the deepest desire to be able to retire there and die among his brothers”* (EC III, p. 447).

We finish our triduum with immense grateful joy in our hearts. In front of the clarity of Claret, and under the maternal action of Mary our mother, we feel ourselves growing. We can make ours Claret’s own experience. We can convince ourselves that it is possible for God to be known, loved, served and praised by many men and women today. Something new and good can be born within each of us, as long as we strive to be what we truly are: a divine shine over a little shadow and a little light. The time has come to decline holiness again, intertwining evangelical and ordinary life. This is where our shine ignites and where it serves best. The Lord said it: “You are the light of the world.” And Claret convinces us that this is still possible.



## Petitions

Giving thanks to God for the wonders he does in us, we ask that we know how to put them at the service of his Kingdom and correspond to him, just as he deserves. We present to You our prayers and petitions.

- For all those present here, so that we know how to contemplate in Jesus Christ the greatness and dignity of the human being and welcome the Lord as the true and only Way to achieve true Life. LET US PRAY TO THE LORD.
- That, like Mary, we open ourselves to God so he can work wonders in our littleness. LET US PRAY TO THE LORD.
- That we seek to live united to Jesus Christ, faithful to his example and his word; so that in obedience to God we find our happiness and fulfillment. LET US PRAY TO THE LORD.
- That we always live united to God in following Jesus Christ who makes us free to serve selflessly by collaborating in the construction of a new world. Let us pray to the Lord.
- In a moment of silence, we put our personal and family needs in the hands of God (silence...) LET US PRAY TO THE LORD.

*More petitions could be added...*

Let us ask our Father to give us the strength we need to not fall into temptation: **Our Father...**

## Final Prayer

Give us, Oh Lord, the faith that inflamed Prophets, Apostles, and Martyrs, so that imitating St. Anthony Mary Claret we will be able to embrace with happy encouragement poverty, abnegation, and sacrifice

to expand the Kingdom of Christ,  
who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

### **Final Song: Hymn to St. Anthony Mary Claret**

Jesus passed along your path one morning,  
and seeing you He called you by your name;  
He would make you a witness of His kingdom,  
you would bring the good news throughout His reign.  
And you set out traversing seas and mountains,  
to all you preached the message of the Lord;  
You reached the farthest islands and their peoples,  
showing them God's forgiveness and His love.

**CLARET! YOU ARE A PILGRIM, YOU ARE A SOWER,  
THE SEED YOU SCATTER IS THE GOOD NEWS.  
YOU REACH ALL COLORS AND RACES:  
THERE'S ONLY ONE FATHER, ONLY ONE LORD!**

**CLARET! THROUGH YOUR EXAMPLE WE SEE OUR MISSION;  
WE MUST BE WITNESSES, WE MUST BRING HOPE;  
WE WANT TO FOLLOW YOUR FOOTSTEPS AND  
TELL THE PEOPLE THAT GOD IS LOVE!**

Your aim to spread the Gospel of your Kingdom;  
Your life was filled with Jesus and His word;  
And you brought Him to villages and peoples,  
just like Mary her Son gave to the world.  
We too will follow closely your example,  
the new Claretian family in Christ;  
We wish to be a beacon in the darkness  
and to all bring the hope of a new life.

