



Prot. SG 336/2024

## LETTER OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL AFTER THE INTENSIVE SESSIONS

Dear brothers,

Warm fraternal greetings to you all.

Three years have passed since our XXVI General Chapter. The midpoint of the sexennium invites us to pause and reflect on our congregational journey. During the October sessions of the General Government, we carefully evaluated our ministry of animation in pursuing the Dream, Designs, and Commitments (QC 43-95) that emerged from our Chapter discernment and the Action Plan of the General Government to accompany the process of their implementation.

### **Mid-term evaluation**

The General Government engaged in a two-day evaluation of our leadership ministry, guided by a facilitator Mrs. Sarah Broscombe. We asked ourselves:

- *Are we fulfilling our responsibilities effectively?*
- *Where have we seen the most progress and vitality?*
- *Which areas require additional growth, attention, and support?*
- *How well are we balancing being "rooted" and "audacious"?*
- *What challenges might we face in the next three years and how we address them?*

This reflection provided an opportunity to evaluate our teamwork, and the animation of the Major Organisms, and renew our objectives in each process of transformation for the coming three years. The Dream remains a guiding inspiration, urging us to deepen our roots in our charism and embrace audacious outreach in our mission.

We have much to be grateful for. We thank the Lord for the many young men who courageously embrace the missionary vocation each year across the globe. During our visits, we have witnessed countless inspiring examples of our brothers joyfully living out our charism—whether serving in the harsh winters of Russia, the interior of the Amazonia, remote villages in Africa, innovative social ministries in Asia, or offering their suffering for the missions from their sickbeds. At the same time, we humbly recognize the ongoing need for conversion, especially when the failures and negligence of some members cause pain to others and leave wounds in the soul of our Congregation.

I encourage all Major Superiors and their councils to evaluate the progress of their Organisms and communities in alignment with the orientations of the last General Chapter and your respective Chapters or Assemblies. Use this opportunity to review and, where needed, refine your action plans to ensure they actively contribute to the realization of our shared Dream.

### **Living the Jubilee Spirit: A Call to Missionary Mysticism**

We uniquely celebrated the jubilee year through the different activities of the Organisms, the videos of the history of the Congregation, and the videos of the different missions of the Congregation. I hope the Jubilee Year was a valuable opportunity to rekindle the flame of our charism within you and your community mission. The Church's Jubilee in 2025 is a wonderful opportunity for us to build upon and carry forward the fruits of the Jubilee of our Foundation. The reports from the Major Superiors highlight that the Major Organisms celebrated this milestone in a truly meaningful way, deepening our rootedness in the charism. I wholeheartedly thank and commend you for your creativity and dedication in making these celebrations impactful. A key insight from the Spirituality Congress and the Jubilee Year's conclusion in Vic (July 2024) is our shared calling to be missionary mystics in the spirit of our Founder—an essential aspect of living out our Claretian missionary vocation today.

On October 24, I had the joy of being present in the Canary Islands for the conclusion of the Jubilee year of 175 years of Claret's mission that he preached months before the Foundation of the Congregation. The incredible mission of "el padrito" was such a transforming experience for the islanders in a troubled time that its memory is passed on even after seven generations! I perceived a beautiful missionary synergy enjoyed by our brothers there with the bishops, religious, clergy, and lay people. This is an authentic homage to the missionary Spirit of our Founder.

### **Canonical visits in Africa**

This year, the General Government dedicated considerable time to canonical visits in Africa. The commitment of our brothers and the growth occurring in this beloved continent bring us great joy, made possible by the entire congregation's generosity. This progress also places a significant responsibility on our African missionaries to serve the Church there with excellence. We look forward to the meeting of the General Government with the Governments of Major Organisms and missions in December 2024 to envision the Claretian presence and contribution to the Church on the continent.



## **Our journey in the Synodal Church**

The General Government closely followed the Synod on Synodality held in the Vatican in October in which two Claretians, Mons. Rubén Antonio González Medina CMF, and Mons Juan Domingo Beka Esono CMF were also participants. They shared their experience of the Synod and their hope for its impact on the future of the Church with us in the General Curia. We shall welcome the discernment and conclusions of the Synod to enrich our life and mission in the Synodal Church. The conversion of relationships is the key element to enhance communion, mission, and participation, and to walk together in unity as God's family. Let us learn the art of weaving together differences and building unity in the Spirit of the Risen Lord in the style of our Founder.

## **Workshop "United we serve better" for the Curia members**

In the first week of November, a leadership seminar titled: "United we serve better" was conducted for the General Government and Curial Service Team for five days facilitated by Fr. Gonzalo Fernandez CMF. It was an enriching experience of learning together to better serve the Congregation. We are aware of the importance of working together as a team in the synodal spirit and want to have occasional moments of continued formation.

## **Major decisions of the General Government**

### *General House*

1. In support of the revision of positions of the Province of Santus Paulus, We formally erected the Basilica of Sacro Cuore di Maria in Parioli, Rome as a General House last October 24, 2024. We have also constituted a new international team of missionaries entrusted with advancing its pastoral mission while implementing the vision outlined in our General Chapter.

### *Meetings/Encounters*

2. We had a meeting with Mons. Samuele Sagalli and Mons. Erwin Jose Balagapo from the Dicastery for Evangelization, Section for the First Evangelization and New Particular Churches during which we explored areas of collaboration, and formation of the clergy and inquired about the responsibility of religious Congregations for vicariates entrusted to them. We offered our collaboration through the General Prefecture of Formation and our Institutes of Consecrated Life for the formation for mission and training of formators.
3. We have finalized the preparations for the meeting of the governments of ACLA with the General Government in Yaoundé, Cameroon from December 4-14, 2024. Included are representatives from the mission in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, South Sudan, and the Dependent Delegation of Jean-Paul II.

4. Various encounters for 2025 are planned: the encounter of Claretian Bishops in Rome on June 26-28, 2025, the Jubilee Claret Way Global on July 27-August 4, 2025, and the encounter of Missionary Brothers on September 8-14, 2025. The encounter of Prefects of Formation will be held in Vic from 3-12 November 2025.
5. Regular online meetings with the Major Superiors will be institutionalized as part of the intensive sessions of the General Government in March and October every year. This means that a day shall be allotted for it starting in March 2025.

#### *Approval of Documents*

6. We have approved the document entitled *Vademecum of the Claretian Missionaries, Manual for the protection of minors and vulnerable adults, and protocol for intervention in the event of a sexual abuse offense*. The definitive text will be sent to the Congregation by December 2024 and will be effective from January 1, 2025.
7. We have approved the SOMI Guidelines for the entire Congregation. The definitive text will be disseminated in the Congregation soon after its translation.
8. We have approved the Stable Patrimony of the General Government along with its essential components. We encourage each Organism to make the Declaration of Stable Patrimony. This document needs to be reviewed every six years and when the government of the Organism deems it necessary. The continuous updating of such declaration aims to guarantee the continuity and protection of the Congregation about its assets.
9. Together with the general government of Claretian Sisters (RMI), we have reviewed the proposed contract with the Diocese of Farafangana, Madagascar, to be presented to the Bishop for his approval. Despite difficulties, the mission continues with close accompaniment and support. Young missionaries will also be sent to reignite the impetus for the mission in Madagascar.



### *Courses and renewal programs*

10. We have decided to launch *La Fragua* in French from 22 April to 10 July 2025. The Encounter with Claret will be from 25 April to 25 May 2025 in Spanish.
11. The School of the Heart of Mary, the course for formators, will be held from 1st June to 31st July 2025 in English. Please see that the formators who have not done this course and those whom you plan to assign in formation benefit from this course.

### *Books to be published*

12. To build on the outcomes of the Spirituality Congress, its various contributions are currently being reviewed and revised by a team of translators from the USA-Canada Province. Once finalized, they will be made available online for wider access. The final document, the collated conversations, and the edited materials will be published in book form in three languages: Spanish, English, and French. A booklet on the method of Spiritual Conversations will be made available for our communities to benefit recollections and plenary meetings.
13. The booklet on the "Criteria and Lines of Action for Youth Ministry and Vocations of the Claretian Family" is already printed in English and Spanish. These books were published by Editorial Claretiana of Buenos Aires, Argentina, and will be arriving at the different Organisms of the Congregation in the next few days to be distributed by the communities and teams of Youth and Vocations Ministry (YVM).
14. The Claretian liturgical book, the Missal & Rite of Religious Profession, and the Liturgy of the Hours for Claretian Feasts have been sent to Claretian Publications in Madrid. The English version awaits the approval of the Holy See.
15. The translations of the books Apostolic Prayer and Dreaming with God are already complete. Its printing is being coordinated with Claretian Publications in the Philippines. The English version of the books History of the Conciliar Renewal, and Definition of the Missionary are in the process.

### *Appointments and other decisions*

16. Carlos E. Sánchez Miranda CMF, General Prefect of Spirituality, is designated as Major Superior delegate of 3<sup>rd</sup> General Houses of Claretianum, Iuridicum, and the Basilica of the Immaculate Heart of Mary effective on November 20, 2024.

17. Seventeen Claretian missionaries from eight Major Organisms are assigned in Universal mission to seven Organisms, especially to those in Europe.
18. The communication team (*iClaret*) of the General Curia has been reconstituted with a new coordinator, Fr. Nelson Puthanparambil, replacing Fr. Louie Guades, who returned to the Fr. Rhoel Gallardo Province after nine years of commendable service in the communication department. Fr. Joël Nkongolo, Fr. José Enrique García Rizo, and Fr. Joseph Ikemefuna Iwobi form part of *iClaret*.
19. Our Institute *Iuridicum* in Rome renders qualified service to the Church. For many years, it has afforded service to various Vatican Dicastery, the Pontifical Lateran University, and the Congregation. We will ensure a stable team of Claretian experts who will dedicate themselves to serious academic research and offer academic and Curial services to the Church in Rome and other parts of the world.
20. The core group tasked to study the possible revision and updating of the Claretian Constitutions has presented its proposed work plan and methodology along with certain suggestions for consideration. An amplified group of experts from various competencies will soon be constituted to help the core group.

Dear brothers, we are living in an epoch of profound change, a time of grace and abundant opportunities. The Spirit of the Lord is knocking at our doors, inviting us to step beyond our limited horizons and discover the hidden treasures of the Kingdom. Now is the moment to awaken from complacency and journey together as one family of God's people, weaving unity and fraternity from our diversity. Our world urgently needs missionaries imbued with the Spirit, like Claret, to bring hope and transformation.

Fraternally in CM,

  
**Fr. Mathew Vattamattam, CMF**  
*Superior General*



Rome, November 20, 2024