

PRESENTATION

*Four years ago, the First General Assembly of the Lay Claretian Movement approved its **Lay Claretian Sourcebook and Organization**.*

While the document had the merit of being the first serious attempt by the Lay Claretians to describe their own vocation and mission, it also had the inevitable deficiencies that attend every pioneering effort.

*The **Lay Claretian Sourcebook and Organization** expresses the Lay Claretian Movement's self-understanding at the time it was drafted (1983). But since we have in the intervening four years acquired a deeper insight into who we are, we have felt a growing need to perfect the Sourcebook as an expression of that insight.*

The general Assembly held in Florencio Varela (Buenos Aires), July 22-31, 1987, after studying the proposals sent in from all the groups, carried out this task of perfecting the Sourcebook

The Assembly also revised the organizational part that appeared in the approved text of 1983.

*In the revised text that this Second Assembly now offers to all the Lay Claretians, the **Sourcebook and Statutes** (Organization) are presented separately. Our purpose in doing so was to underscore the fact that our rule of life is not the set of institutional norms, but the Sourcebook itself.*

There is no doubt that the only norm of life for a follower of Jesus is the Gospel. But the Sourcebook is nothing more than a reading of the Gospel and its most radical demands from the viewpoint of our vocation and mission; a reading of the whole Gospel which highlights certain aspects that are most directly related to the mission of the Lay Claretians, that is, to what God wants us to be and do in the Church, in service to the Kingdom.

Florencio Varela, July 25, 1987.

OUR IDENTITY

1. Lay Claretians are Christians who are striving to make our own the mission of Jesus in the world¹, living the demands of the Kingdom, and -always within the framework of our lay identity- offering a service of evangelization in the Church, according to the charism and spirit of St. Anthony Mary Claret.
2. We take St. Anthony Mary Claret as our inspiration and father and, together with the institutes he founded, make up the Claretian Family.

I. VOCATION

1. We are Claretians

1.1. The vocation of Claret

3. Within his broad conception of evangelization, Claret identified himself as an **Apostolic Missionary**², a

¹ Cf. Lk 4:16-19

² Cf. The Misión of the Claretian Today (MCT) 56

reality which was above all a gift of the Spirit, which conformed him in a special way with certain aspects of the unfathomable mystery of Christ.

In virtue of this gift, Claret felt identified with Christ as:

- the Son, concerned with his "Father's business"³,
- the One anointed by the Spirit and sent to bring glad tidings to the poor⁴
- the Son of Mary⁵
- the itinerant missionary, who had nowhere to lay his head⁶
- a sign of contradiction, persecuted to death, which was his victory⁷
- who shared his life and mission with his apostles⁸

4. Claret responded to the gift he received and made it the key whereby he lived the whole Gospel, placing himself without reserve in the service of God's plan of salvation. In this way, he converted the gift he had received into his own style of life.

- His only concern is how he can best follow Jesus Christ and imitate Him in working, suffering, and striving constantly and singlemindedly for the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls⁹.
- With great sensitivity to the signs of the times¹⁰, he committed himself to combat social evils by practicing poverty and renouncing all power, especially the power of money and ambition¹¹
- He set his missionary service in line with the redemption, promotion and liberation of his neighbor¹², even at the risk of his own life, thus continuing in time the saving love of God and Christ¹³.
- He felt called to evangelization rather than to other forms of ecclesial service¹⁴ and, moved by the irrepressible passion to evangelize, which the Spirit had unleashed in him¹⁵, he committed himself to missionary evangelization through the ministry of the Word¹⁶, never letting himself be held back by tiredness, difficulties or persecutions¹⁷.
- Like Jesus, he was itinerant and poor¹⁸, and so was ever-ready to respond to the most urgent needs of evangelization¹⁹.
- He experienced the maternal presence of Mary, by whom he felt that he was sent as an instrument of evangelization²⁰.
- He lived in communion with those who had received from the Lord the same spirit that animated him²¹.
- He raised up new apostles, especially among the laity, who could complement his own broad

³ Cf. Lk 2:49; Autobiography (Aut) 752

⁴ Cf. Lk 4:18, Aut 118

⁵ Cf. Lk 2:7; Aut 272.

⁶ Cf. Lk 9:58; Aut 431

⁷ Cf. Lk 2:34; Aut 222

⁸ Cf. Mk 3:14-15; Aut 489

⁹ Cf. Aut 494

¹⁰ Cf. Aut 357; Popular Parish Lending Libraries (PPLL), p. 18

¹¹ Cf. Aut 359, 363

¹² Cf. Aut 563, 572

¹³ Cf. Aut 448

¹⁴ Cf. Aut 112, 120

¹⁵ Cf. Aut 687

¹⁶ Cf. Aut 112, 120, 543

¹⁷ Cf. Aut 494

¹⁸ Cf. Mt 9:35; Lk 4:42-43; Aut 359 ff.

¹⁹ Cf. Aut 221

²⁰ Cf. Aut 156

²¹ Cf. Aut 489

vision of evangelization²².

1.2. The Lay Claretian Vocation

5. Through the Claretian charism, which qualifies our whole being, the Holy Spirit empowers and destines us for a special service in the Church.

Identified through this gift with Christ the Missionary, we continue, as lay persons, the mission for which the Holy Spirit raised up St. Anthony Mary Claret in the Church.

The Lord has called us to be evangelizers, to proclaim and spread the Kingdom of God among people by means of the word in all its forms, especially by our witness and transforming action in the world, thus bringing the Good News to all human environments and transforming humanity from within²³.

2. We are laypersons

6. All Christians are called to follow Christ, each of us according to the gift we have received²⁴. As our gift from the Spirit, we have received the lay vocation, which empowers and destines us to cooperate in the upbuilding of the Church and the spread of the Kingdom of God by our engagement in temporal affairs²⁵.

For us, following Jesus as laypersons means a distinctive way of being Church, and of being in the world at the service of the Kingdom of God.

2.1. A distinctive way of being Church

7. Our baptismal consecration conforms us with Christ, and makes us members of His Body and sharers both in His being and in His priestly, prophetic and kingly roles. In virtue of this consecration and of the anointing of the Spirit which we receive in Confirmation, we become a new humanity through which Christ continues His mission in the world today²⁶.

We cooperate in the growth of the Body of Christ²⁷ and the spread of the Kingdom of God, by carrying out, in the framework of evangelization and as laypersons, the threefold priestly, prophetic and kingly service of Christ²⁸.

8. Through our sharing in the priesthood of Christ, we are especially empowered to consecrate the world to God by offering our evangelizing commitments, our prayer, our married and family life, our work, our rest and our trials, to the Father, through Jesus Christ and by our life in the Spirit. We unite all of these things to the offering of the Body of Christ in the Eucharist, wherein we ourselves are offered to the Father, together with the Sacred Victim²⁹.

9. United to Christ the Prophet and invested with the power of the Spirit³⁰, we are enabled and destined:

- to proclaim by our life-witness and word, that the Lord Jesus is risen and is alive³¹;
- to confess our faith in the midst of ongoing temporal realities³²;

²² Cf. PPLL p. 18

²³ Cf. Lumen Gentium (LG) 33b; Evangelii Nuntiandi (EN) 18

²⁴ Cf. LG 41a

²⁵ Cf. LG 31b

²⁶ Cf. LG 34a, 35a

²⁷ Cf. Eph 4:15-16

²⁸ Cf. *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (AA) 10a

²⁹ Cf. LG 34b, 11a

³⁰ Cf. LG 11a

³¹ Cf. LG 38

³² Cf. LG 11^a, 35b

- to announce the absoluteness of God and of lasting goods, and to proclaim the provisional character of all things³³;
- to denounce the mystery of evil, and to struggle untiringly and non-violently against the dominators of this world³⁴ and against the idols of society.

10. Our participation in Christ's Kingship leads us to make a radical option for His cause: the reign of God. It puts us in His service and in the service of all people, in order to renew humanity from within³⁵ and change the inhuman structures of the world, so that all may be governed by justice, peace and charity³⁶.

2.2. A distinctive way of being in the world at the service of the Kingdom

11. Part of our secular vocation is to live a life of full involvement in the world, that is, in the ordinary circumstances of married, family and social life; exercising our secular professions as competently as we can³⁷, and being occupied in affairs of the domestic, social, economic, political and cultural orders³⁸.

We are, and feel that we are, part of the people and, as citizens, we take part in all our responsibilities³⁹

3. We are Christians

3.1. Dimensions of Christian Vocation

12. Even before we existed, the Father chose us in the person of Christ to be holy in love, and destined us in Christ to be His children⁴⁰.

In baptism, which makes the Father's plan explicit and puts it into effect, we have truly become God's children and sharers in the divine nature⁴¹; we have put on Christ⁴² and have been united with Him to form one Body⁴³; we have received the Holy Spirit, who seals and bears witness to our status as sons⁴⁴, dwells in us, makes us temples of God⁴⁵ and enriches us with His gifts, especially with charity, the highest charism⁴⁶, which impels us to love God and our neighbor⁴⁷.

Through baptism, we have been incorporated into the Church, the new People of God⁴⁸. Through this election and these gifts of God, we are all called to the perfection of Christian life⁴⁹ by following Jesus under the action of the Spirit, and to share one day in the definitive inheritance of Christ⁵⁰.

3.2. Gospel Radicalism

³³ Cf. 1Jn 2:15-17; 1Cor 7:31

³⁴ Cf. LG 35a

³⁵ Cf. EN 18

³⁶ Cf. LG 36; EN 31, 36

³⁷ Cf. LG 36b; AA 7e

³⁸ Cf. LG 31b; EN 70

³⁹ Cf. AA 7e

⁴⁰ Cf. Eph 1:4-5

⁴¹ Cf. Gal 4:5; 1 Jn 3:1; LG 40a

⁴² Cf. Gal 3:27

⁴³ Cf. 1 Cor 13:12; Gal 3:28

⁴⁴ Cf. Rom 8:15-16; Gal 4:6-7

⁴⁵ Cf. Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 6:19; Eph 2:22

⁴⁶ Cf. 1 Cor 12:13

⁴⁷ Cf. Rom 5:5; LG 40a, 42a

⁴⁸ Cf. LG 14a

⁴⁹ Cf. LG 40b

⁵⁰ Cf. Rom 8:17; Col 1:12

13. Like all Christians, we are called to make the Beatitudes our own rule of life⁵¹. This entails that we make a radical option for Christ⁵² and accept the Kingdom of God as our highest value⁵³, placing at its service all that we are: our life, our capacity for love, our liberty and our relationship to earthly goods.

Life according to the Beatitudes also demands that we renounce all those securities that would tie us down or form an obstacle to our following Jesus and spreading the Kingdom of God⁵⁴.

14. The awareness of our creaturely condition, our limitations and weaknesses, makes us humble before God. Knowing that we can do nothing of ourselves, we place our hope and our security in Him⁵⁵.

The new commandment of Jesus⁵⁶ leads us to seek solidarity and the sharing of our goods with those who suffer misery and injustice, and to help them find a way out of such conditions by promoting human advancement.

A Gospel sense of poverty impels us to work⁵⁷, to carefully administer our goods and to use them according to the criteria of simplicity and generous service to our brothers and sisters⁵⁸, and to the work of evangelization.

We thankfully proclaim the goodness of all created beings⁵⁹ and the relativity of earthly goods in comparison with the absolute goodness of God and His Kingdom⁶⁰. We reject every form of attachment to riches, consumerism and ostentation, as being contrary to the love of God and neighbor. This attitude allows us to grow in inner freedom and to become more available for the following of Jesus and the service of our brothers and sisters⁶¹.

15. We submit to God's sovereignty and the demands of following Jesus, all dimensions of our affectivity and sexuality, and we strive to carry out God's design for us by living a love of total oblation, whether in matrimony or in celibacy.

Renouncing every form of egoism in this dimension of our being, we grow as persons in openness and self-giving to others, and feel more liberated in order to struggle for the cause of the Kingdom⁶².

The witness of oblation love that we bear by living Christian chastity within the various forms of secular life, becomes transformed into a denunciation of erotism and hedonism.

16. Like Jesus, we unceasingly seek the will of the Father; we discover it in his Word, in prayer, in the Church's teachings, in dialogue with our brothers and sisters, in events, in the signs of the times and in the projects of our group; and His will becomes our food⁶³.

The will of God enlightens and sustains us in the fulfilment of our family duties and professional commitments.

Through obedience, accepted in faith as a following of Christ who was obedient even to death on a cross⁶⁴, we unite ourselves with the divine plan of salvation, always aware that we are acting as God's envoys and as collaborators with His will, which is that all people be saved⁶⁵.

⁵¹ Cf. LG 39; AA 4f

⁵² Cf. Mt 10:37

⁵³ Cf. Mt 13:44-45; Lk 9:60

⁵⁴ Cf. Mk 10:21-22; Lk 9:57-2, 14:33

⁵⁵ Cf. Mt 6:32-33; 2 Cor 1:3-4

⁵⁶ Cf. Jn 13:34

⁵⁷ Cf. Acts 20:33-3s; 1 Cor 4:12

⁵⁸ Cf. Acts 2:44-45, 20:3s; Aut 359

⁵⁹ Cf. *Gaudium et Spes* (GS) 37c

⁶⁰ Cf. Mt 6:33

⁶¹ Cf. Lk 12:33-34; AA 4e

⁶² Cf. 1 Cor 6:12-20

⁶³ Cf. Jn 4:34

⁶⁴ Cf. Phil 2:8

⁶⁵ Cf. 1 Tim 2:4

17. The gift we have received and the experience of it which we share, are bonds of a charismatic communion which is above all a grace which we express and develop in friendship, mutual help, teamwork, assemblies, days of reflection, review and prayer, in other encounters planned by the community, and above all in the Eucharist.

18. Within the pluralism that is proper of a charismatic communion, Lay Claretian groups are generally small ecclesial communities, which may even have all things in common, like Christian communities⁶⁶.

We achieve the community dimension of our charism not only within our own group, but also in our relationships with the local Church and in dialogue with people of other confessions.

II. MISSION

1. Ecclesial Thrust of Our Mission

19. As members of the Body of Christ, we share in the mission which the Father entrusted to the Son, which He in turn entrusted to the Church⁶⁷.

The risen Lord sent the Holy Spirit from the Father to impel and sustain the Church in its mission⁶⁸. He guides it in truth, unifies it in communion, and governs and dynamizes it with manifold gifts⁶⁹.

The mission entrusted to the Church is to proclaim and spread the Kingdom of God⁷⁰, that is, to announce salvation in Jesus Christ and bring others to encounter Him⁷¹, to help the seed of the Kingdom develop in the world, so as to renew the human race and create a new humanity in conformity with the newness of the Gospel⁷².

2. The Mission of Claret and of the Claretian Family

20. The mission of St. Anthony Mary Claret was evangelization and, within the scope of evangelization, "the missionary service of the Word"⁷³.

By means of Claret, and for the same service of evangelization, the Holy Spirit raised up an entire family of laypersons, priests and religious, which Claret conceived of as a great army of evangelizers, under the banner of the Heart of Mary⁷⁴.

Communicating the whole mystery of Christ to others through the service of the Word, holds a key place in the charism of the Claretian family.

The Word plays a leading role in our family spirit. Listened to and received, it evangelizes us; proclaimed to others -by all means possible, in all forms, an bolstered by guarantee of our own life-witness- it leads them to an encounter with the Word made flesh⁷⁵.

3. The Mission of the Lay Claretian

⁶⁶ Cf. Acts 4:42

⁶⁷ Cf. LG 31a, 33b; AA 3a

⁶⁸ Cf. *Ad Gentes* (AG) 4 and 5

⁶⁹ Cf. LG 4a

⁷⁰ Cf. LG 5b

⁷¹ Cf. AG 5a

⁷² Cf. EN 18

⁷³ Cf. *Declaration on our Charism* (DC), 1967 CMF Claretian Missionaries General Chapter, 10

⁷⁴ Cf. Claret, *Rules for Secular Clergy Living in Community*, pp. 3-8

⁷⁵ Cf. DC 20

21. We Lay Claretian carry out our evangelizing mission in these two ways:

- through Christian animation and action to transform temporal realities;
- through cooperating, as laypersons, to build up the Church into a community of faith, hope and charity⁷⁶.

3.1. Christian animation and action to transform temporal realities

22. As laypersons, we find a very specific field of action in the Christian animation of temporal realities: "in the vast and complex world of politics, society, economics, culture, science and art, international life, the mass-media of communication, as well as other realities open to evangelization, such as love, the family, the education of children and youth, professional work, suffering, etc."⁷⁷

We animate these realities by living them ourselves with a gospel awareness and by impregnating them with the spirit of Christ, so that they may all be brought into order "according to the justice of God's reign"⁷⁸.

23. Action to transform the world, as a form of evangelization, leads us to commit ourselves to act for justice and for human promotion.

Action on behalf of justice, which is a constitutive dimension of the Church's mission⁷⁹, and one which most directly corresponds to the task of the laity⁸⁰, demands that we commit ourselves to the struggle to eliminate situations of injustice and to remedy the structures that produce them⁸¹, so as to build the kind of world that God wishes.

Our commitment is not only limited to denouncing injustices, but demands above all that we become witnesses to and agents of justice⁸².

As members of the People of God, we cooperate with that people and with all who seek the truth, for human promotion and for the liberation of the many millions of people who are condemned by various forms of enslavement to live on the margin of life⁸³.

3.2. The Upbuilding of the Local Church

24. As members of Church and of the ecclesial communities that make it up, we cooperate coresponsibly toward its growth and dynamism; we strive to create a model of Church committed to the promotion of justice among our peoples⁸⁴.

Our relationships with bishops and priests are characterized by a spirit of communion, collaboration and initiative.

25. As Claretians, we attach special attention to everything relating to the service of the Word in all its forms, ranging from familiar conversations to the most advanced mass media of communication⁸⁵.

We feel urgently called to collaborate in pastoral programs for youth, marriage and the family, in the manifold forms of catechesis and the catechumenate, in the mass media, in the promotion of the laity, in the

⁷⁶ Cf. LG 8a

⁷⁷ Cf. EN 70

⁷⁸ Cf. AA 7e; *Populorum Progressio* (PP) 81

⁷⁹ Cf. *Justice in the World* (JW) 1971 Synod of Bishops, Introduction; EN 31

⁸⁰ Cf. CELAM *Puebla Document* (DP) 827

⁸¹ Cf. LG 36c

⁸² Cf. Address of John Paul II to the Workers of Guadalajara

⁸³ Cf. EN 30

⁸⁴ Cf. DP 777

⁸⁵ Cf. *El Apóstol Claretiano Seglar* (ACS), p. 178

formation of new evangelizers and in the development of all the possibilities afforded us by lay ministries.

26. We cooperate especially in the formation and development of small ecclesial communities, which express the reality of the Church as a mystery of communion⁸⁶.

We strive to make our own family a true “domestic Church”⁸⁷.

4.. Characteristics of the Mission of the Lay Claretian

27. The options in principle that inspire our ecclesial commitment and, as permanent attitudes, orient all our actions, are:

- full involvement in the world;
- professional competency, which qualifies our service to others;
- commitment to the cause of the poor and action on behalf of justice;
- incarnation in the local Church and collaboration to see that it begins and grows in inculturation;
- the promotion of a more community-oriented and participative model of Church, in which all the faithful can fully develop the responsibilities and demands of their own ecclesial mission;
- an endeavor to multiply agents of evangelization;
- missionary evangelization that keeps us ever alert and available for whatever seems most urgent and necessary in our service for the sake of the reign of God.

III. SPIRITUALITY

1. Characteristics of our Spirituality

28. Our spirituality is the generous response we make, under the action of the Spirit, to the concrete way of following Jesus that is expressed in the vocation and mission we have received from God.

Our spiritual life is the point where God's call and our personal response become one. This response is expressed:

- in a life style in keeping with the Beatitudes (cf nn. 13-18);
- in commitments to evangelization that are rooted in and nourished by our spiritual life and, in turn, nourish it (cf. nn. 28-40);
- in the options in principle and permanent attitudes which qualify our life and our evangelization service.

The Holy Spirit himself, who has been poured out in our hearts⁸⁸, is the One who impels and dynamizes our spiritual life.

29. Life according to the Spirit leads us to full human development and to the perfect integration of all dimensions of our person.

In our spiritual life, all dimensions of our existence can be in perfect unity: our involvement in the world, our temporal responsibilities and tasks, our action, our prayer and our sacramental life, as inseparable expressions of the one, indivisible reality of the love we have for God and human beings.

30. Ours is lay spirituality, hence:

- the carrying out of temporal affairs in keeping with the will of God is, for us, a place of en

⁸⁶ Cf. DP 239

⁸⁷ Cf. LG 11b, 35c

⁸⁸ Cf. Rom 5:5

- counter with God and of identification with His plans⁸⁹;
- we carry out our secular tasks and struggle for the transformation of the world, in communion with Christ and invested with the power of the Spirit⁹⁰;
- the Eucharist, prayer and other expressions of our spirituality, are strongly shaped by the situations, problems, struggles and hopes of our people, and lead us into solidarity with them;
- our state of life, as well as the professional service we offer, also characterize our spirituality⁹¹.

2. Dimensions of Spirituality

31. Our spiritual life like that of Jesus, has two points of reference: God and human beings. For that reason it has two fundamental dimensions: one mystical, the other political. Both are inseparably united in their origin -love- and in their goal God and His reign.

In the mystical dimension, thanks to the action of the Spirit in us, we take God and His reign as the only absolute of our life, and we live the following of Christ, both as the only way to the Father and as the manner in which we build up the Kingdom.

Led by the Spirit, we fulfill the political dimension of our spirituality by committing ourselves to the Christian animation of temporal realities⁹² and to action for the transformation of the world⁹³ (cf. nn. 22-23).

32. The Father, by His free decision to make us sons in His Son⁹⁴ and to send the Holy Spirit into our hearts⁹⁵, is the origin of our spiritual life. And He is also its goal because, in the power of the Spirit, we strive like sons, loving Him above all things⁹⁶, placing all our trust in Him⁹⁷, joyfully accepting His will and committing ourselves without reserve to carry out His plan of salvation.

As sons, we try to imitate His perfection⁹⁸, His love for all⁹⁹ and His preference for the humble and the poor¹⁰⁰. In this way we are an expression of the love with which God loves them¹⁰¹.

33. In baptism, the Father unites us by means of the Spirit with Christ, and makes us living members of his Body¹⁰².

Called by Jesus to follow him¹⁰³, we wish to do so by living in a radical way the demands he requires of his followers¹⁰⁴.

From our remaining actively united to Christ depends both our progress in the way of the Lord and the effectiveness of our life and our activities¹⁰⁵.

34. With joy and docility we live our communion with the Holy Spirit whom Jesus promised to his

⁸⁹ Cf. LG 416; AA 4a; DP 797

⁹⁰ Cf. M3a,3b

⁹¹ Cf. LG 41e; AA 4g

⁹² Cf. AA 7; PP 81

⁹³ Cf. LG 36c; EN 30

⁹⁴ Cf. Eph 1:5; 1 Jn 3:1

⁹⁵ Cf. Gal 4:6

⁹⁶ Cf. Mt 22:37-38

⁹⁷ Cf. Mt 6:30-32

⁹⁸ Cf. Mt 5:48

⁹⁹ Cf. Eph 2:4

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Lk 1:52-53

¹⁰¹ Cf. LG 43

¹⁰² Cf. 1 Cor 12:13

¹⁰³ Cf. Mk 1:17, 2:14

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Lk 9 62; Mt 8:20-22, 16:24

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Jn 15:4-5

disciples¹⁰⁶ and whom he has sent into our hearts specially in baptism and confirmation.

The Spirit spurs on in our progressive conformity with Christ and our following of Jesus; He gives life to our prayer and to our liturgical and sacramental practice; He sustains us in the carrying out of our mission and evangelizes others through us¹⁰⁷.

35. Within the overall mystery of Christ, we live the maternal mystery of Mary always from a missionary perspective.

With childlike love we contemplate her as model follower of Jesus and collaborator in His mission. So for us, as for Claret, her presence in our lives stamps our apostolic living: she forms us for mission¹⁰⁸, sends us¹⁰⁹, and, with her maternal presence, makes our evangelizing efforts fruitful¹¹⁰.

For this reason, we entrust ourselves to her and consecrate ourselves in a special way to her Heart¹¹¹

3. Sources of our Spirituality

36. Our spiritual life is nourished, expressed and developed by the Word of God, liturgical praise, prayer and the sacraments, above all by the Eucharist and the sacrament of our brothers and sisters.

37. The Word of God is the primary source of our spirituality¹¹². It discloses God's saving plan to us, and fortifies and encourages us in building up the Kingdom. Accepted with docility, it demands that we constantly change our lives in order to fulfill the Father's will and Jesus Christ¹¹³.

38. The sacraments are a privileged place of encounter with God in the risen Lord, and they are therefore irreplaceable sources of our spirituality.

In Baptism we receive new life in Christ¹¹⁴, are united to Him and to the community of the faithful, and begin our walk as followers of Jesus. Included in this same baptismal journey is Confirmation, in which the Spirit strengthens to continue Christ's mission, to confess Him and bear witness to Him¹¹⁵. Our encounter with the Lord in the sacrament of Penance, besides reconciling us with God and with the Church¹¹⁶ activates within us the baptismal process of death and resurrection.

In the Eucharist we unite ourselves to the Lord in His paschal mystery, so that His sovereignty may destroy in us the power of the "flesh" and may strengthen the new life that began in our baptism¹¹⁷. The Eucharist leads us to identify with the patient Christ, the Victim of his struggle to announce and spread the reign of God. It creates and nourishes fraternal communion¹¹⁸.

This sacrament has for us, as it had for Claret, a markedly apostolic meaning, since it nourishes in us that charity which urges us on to evangelization¹¹⁹ and makes every Claretian a person "who set fire wherever he passes"¹²⁰.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Jn 16:7

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Mt 10:20; LG 11a; EN 75

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Aut 270

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Aut 160

¹¹⁰ Cf. Aut 161

¹¹¹ Cf. ACS pp. 110, 113, 164

¹¹² Cf. *Dei Verbum* 21

¹¹³ Cf. Mk 1:15; Lk 8:21

¹¹⁴ Cf. Rom 6:11, Gal 2:20

¹¹⁵ Cf. LG 11a

¹¹⁶ Cf. LG 11b.

¹¹⁷ Cf. LG 46a; *Presbyterorum Ordinis* 5b

¹¹⁸ Cf. 1 Cor 10:17

¹¹⁹ Cf. LG 33b

¹²⁰ Cf. Aut 494

Those of us who have received the Sacrament of Matrimony, by giving one another and experiencing the sacramental presence of Christ in our love, are united more closely to the Lord each day and help one another along the road of holiness and the apostolate¹²¹.

39. Moved by the Spirit, we seek in prayer to encounter God in Christ, and we ask the Father to lead us to accept His will and place ourselves without reserve at the service of His plan of salvation. In our prayer, liturgical praise holds a preeminent place.

Our prayer always has both a secular and apostolic thrust. In order to pray, we do not leave the world or forget it. Rather, our own situation in the world and our efforts to animate and order all things according to the plan of God, is itself a part of our prayer. In dialogue with the Lord, we share the problems and needs of our brothers and sisters, and our dedication to their service.

40. Because the Father has always shown himself to be the God of the poor¹²², and because the Son who identified himself with them continues to be present in the poor, they are a sacrament of the presence of God and an unequivocal place for encounter with Him¹²³.

The Spirit, who is deep force acting behind the historical processes of all oppressed peoples, impels us toward communion with them and with their struggle for liberation.

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III. SPIRITUALITY

1. Characteristics of our Spirituality
2. Dimensions of Spirituality
3. Sources of our Spirituality

¹²¹ Cf. LG 41e; GS 48

¹²² Cf. Lk 1:52-53

¹²³ Cf. Mk 25:35-40