



*Lay Claretians Movement*  
*General Secretariat*

Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 24th October 2020

Dearest family:

With great joy we celebrate one more year the feast of our patron Saint Anthony Mary Claret. This time, with a very special significance because of the commemoration of the 150th anniversary of his death. Everything could have ended there. But the Spirit who inspired his apostolic vocation has continued raising his same evangelizing concern in many people all over the world for several generations. Today, there are many of us who share the same desire that God be known, loved, served and praised by all.

We, Lay Claretians, are a clear example that Claret's charism was not the fruit of a whim, but an inspiration from God. Only this way we can explain that, despite being so strange in his time, Claret's firm conviction about the active participation of the laity in the evangelizing work of the Church remained latent for so long, and crystallized more than a century later with the appearance of our Movement as a branch of the Claretian family. I think this is a sign of God's will that should challenge and encourage us.

It is also very significant that we received a few days ago, as a precious gift, the new encyclical of our Pope Francis, "Fratelli Tutti". It is a very lucky coincidence that his message reaches us precisely in this four-year period in which, as a Movement, we want to promote our evangelizing action by consolidating our fraternity around Christ. This invitation that Pope Francis makes should encourage us to persist to look for a universal fraternity that transcends frontiers, open to everyone and it goes beyond our family, our group, our Movement, and even our Church (FT n° 89). Only a love capable of overcoming differences can make us true agents of communion in the middle of a world in disunity, and make us recognizable as children of God (Mt 5, 9.43-48). As Francis also points out in his encyclical: "...the love of the other for who he is moves us to seek the best for his life... and finally puts us in tension towards universal communion. (FT No. 94-95)

From this communion, as usual, I wanted to take advantage of this opportunity to keep you informed of the work being done by the General Council. But first of all, I would like to invite you to share our prayers for those who continue to suffer the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic , directly or indirectly. Also, within the Movement and our Claretian family, this anomalous situation has been affecting all of us in our routines and living habits. But several of our brothers and loved ones have also had to bear the heavy cross of sickness, pain and loneliness, and some has passed away. Let us pray together for all of them.

In spite of all these difficulties, the activity of the Movement does not stop, although certain aspects of the usual functioning have had to be altered. Several of the Regional Assemblies planned for this year have been postponed, waiting for them to will be able to hold them in safer conditions. This means that the respective Regional Councils have had to extend their time of service in order to continue working for the benefit of the groups and communities. On behalf of all of you, I would like to express our most sincere thanks for their generous availability.

Meanwhile, the General Council had to definitively suspend its face-to-face meeting this year due to the limitations imposed on travel between countries. Although we have been deprived of this intensive time of work, the Council continues meet every month by technological means, trying to develop the programmed plan of action.

The first phase in the restructuring of the Movement's organizational chart has been completed, with the appointment of new zone delegates: Conchita Rodriguez (from the Chicago community), for the USA-Canada zone, Rosario Bravo (from the Guadalupe community in Mexico City) for the Mexico zone and Manuel Barredo (from the Meraki community in Lima) for the Peru zone. A meeting with all the delegates will be convened soon to define work strategies that will facilitate the accompaniment and the interrelation of the communities without region and together we can explore possibilities to advance in the promotion of the Movement and the solidary and missionary action in each zone.

The positive experience of the virtual prayer meeting we held last July on the occasion of the anniversary of the Movement encourages us to continue to hold online meetings on a regular basis to allow us to maintain frequent contact and strengthen our fraternal ties by sharing life. Right now, our challenge will be to find a way for those who have more difficulties in participating, due to language differences or a lack of access to

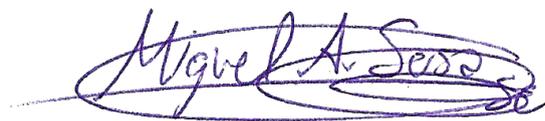
the necessary technological means, to enjoy these initiatives as well. May the Spirit help us to find solutions to overcome these obstacles and may we all feel the closeness and support of our brothers and sisters in the Movement.

On the other hand, the Movement continues participating actively in the different work teams the Claretian family has promoted to develop joint initiatives both in the area of Vocational Youth Pastoral and in that of Solidarity and Mission (SOMI-JPIC). Although the work is complex, progress is being made to help us to know ourselves better and to take advantage of efforts to promote our evangelizing action more.

There are more projects and initiatives underway, but we will report them later, when the fruits of these works begin to take shape.

Last year, in the letter I wrote at around this time, I told you that a film based on the life of Claret was being produced. Today, I can tell you that the film has been completed. Its release has been delayed due to the disruption caused by the pandemic, and it has no definite premiere date yet. It will not take too much time, but we will have to wait a little longer before we can enjoy it. Surely, this approach to his figure will stir the embers of our missionary spirit. Let us keep it always alive and burning with the help of the Heart of Mary, so that faithful to our vocation, we may continue to burn in charity, burning the world with the fire of God's Love.

In the name of the General Council, congratulations to all of you. An immense and cordial greeting. Fraternaly.



Miguel Ángel Sosa, lc  
*General Secretary*  
*Lay Claretians Movement*