



**Lay Claretian Movement**  
**General Secretariat**

October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Dearest family:

Happy Father Claret Day! As every year, in the framework of this missionary month, we commemorate the feast of our patron saint, which is also the feast of our charism. The feast where we remember the roots of everything that makes us unique in our Christian being. The feast in which we give thanks for everything that characterises us, everything that gives us our own personality within the People of God and defines our identity within the Church. A celebration that from our lay condition we share with the whole Claretian family.

Like Claret, we know well that this charism that identifies us is not our property but belongs to the Holy Spirit. He has given it to us as a gift so that we can "administer" it and put it at the service of the Church, collaborating in its evangelising mission and in the building of the Kingdom. (Sourcebook 4 and 5). In his [address to the Movements and Associations of the Laity](#) on the occasion of the last meeting of leaders held in Rome, Pope Francis reminds us that *"as members of associations of the faithful, of international ecclesial movements and other communities, you have a genuinely ecclesial mission. With devotion you endeavour to live out and make fruitful those charisms that the Holy Spirit, through your founders, granted to all the members of your groups, to the benefit of the Church and of the many men and women to whom you dedicate yourselves in the apostolate"*.

This is our mission: to make our charism bear fruit for the benefit of the Church and the people around us. And as Lay Claretians, this is concretised in what number 21 of our Sourcebook summarises: to animate temporal realities in a Christian way, and to cooperate in the construction of the Church-community.

Precisely, this year the feast of Claret has coincided in dates with the opening of the Synod of Bishops: a unique event with which the Universal Church wants to open the windows to let the wind of the Spirit refresh our house. It will be a process extended in time that will go through several phases, starting from the local reality to a universal vision, which will finally lead to the Assembly of Bishops to be held in 2023. And all the baptised are called to this process of communal listening to the will of the Spirit that will guide our journey as the People of God.

We lay people have often complained about the limited spaces for participation that are offered to us within the hierarchical structure of the Church and how little our voice is taken into account. This Synod not only opens up for us in the Church a space for listening, dialogue and shared prayer to discover together the will of the Spirit. It also invites us to work for a more open and participatory Church, and to find out how to build the communion of the People of God and our mission in the new millennium.

Claret, who passionately shared his intuition of what the Spirit wanted for the Church at the First Vatican Council, our same lay vocation should move us to become actively involved in this process, being "co-responsible for the growth and dynamism" of our Church, in a spirit of "communion, collaboration and initiative" with our pastors. (Sourcebook, 24).

We know that this process comes at a time when our own dynamics may be saturating us. But we sincerely believe that this is an exceptional opportunity that we must not miss. Let us do all we can to get on board this ecclesial current in which the impulse of the Spirit can be felt. Let us join with enthusiasm and responsibility in the work planned in our dioceses. We can do this through our parishes, and perhaps also by seeking representation of our Movement in the coordinating bodies of movements and associations of lay faithful that exist at the diocesan level. Also at a general level, the Dicastery for the Laity has invited us to form a working team as a Movement and we will contribute with our discernment to this synodal process.

All the information about this process, as well as the reflection material available in different languages and the latest news about it, can be found on the web page [www.synod.va](http://www.synod.va).

Our charism only makes sense from the point of view of ecclesial communion. And although our vocation has been personal, none of us can boast of having the exclusive ability to know how to interpret our charism in its entirety. Not even those of us who have

received from our brothers the task of animating the life of the Movement by serving on a Council. On the contrary, we are all together the instrument of the Spirit to make it grow and bear fruit in multiple ways, based on the particular talents - and also the limitations - with which each one of us has been blessed. All of us who make up the Movement have received as a community this charism that the Spirit has given us. And thanks to his action in each one of us, through the work, discernment and responsibility of all, the Movement is growing and maturing, contributing its grain of sand to the mission that Jesus has entrusted to his Church.

The road is not an easy one. Our secular status burdens us with many limitations. Moreover, this pandemic, which has not yet left us, has added many obstacles that have put a major brake on the life of the communities, the regions and the Movement in general. But it is also in these constraints and obstacles that our mission lies. And it is admirable to see the courage, energy and creativity with which all the Lay Claretians try day by day to overcome the difficulties in order to continue building communion and giving witness to the Gospel.

Even with this commitment, many of our brothers and sisters have lived these last months with anguish, discouragement and impotence. How I wish I could be able to transmit to all of them the emotional embrace of their sisters and brothers in the Movement! How I would like them to feel our prayer and communion as a healing caress, a sign of the presence of the Merciful Jesus who offers consolation and hope!

But have no doubt. Even if there are no adequate words or gestures that can express it, He is always there, right beside us. Sailing together as disciples in the boat of the church-God's people-Christ will always be near us. Perhaps, in the midst of the storm, we may believe that he is asleep (Mt 8:24-27). At other times, we may find it difficult to recognise him in the midst of darkness (Mt 14:25-27). Even in the midst of weariness and despair, we may be assailed by doubts and mistrust (Mt 14:28-33). But Jesus never fails. He is the Light that overcomes the darkness, the Water that quenches our thirst, the Calm that overcomes every storm, the Peace that overcomes every restlessness.... He is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Let us never stop working for our mutual communion and for our ecclesial communion. Our fraternal union is a gift, a grace that God offers us as a tangible sign of his plan of salvation and manifestation of his Kingdom in the midst of the world. It is the first visible witness of our evangelising mission. We must take care to nurture and amplify it. It is not easy. There will constantly be reasons for divergence that can lead us to

disagreement or conflict. But we are called to overcome them with the forgiveness, love and humility that we have learned from our Master. Let us persevere together in this endeavour. Because no one is indispensable, but we are all important. And in community it is easier to understand God's will correctly and how it is manifested in the signs of the times. (Jn 21:1-7)

Some of our regions, which have recently held or will be holding their respective Assemblies in the coming months, are currently engaged in the same task. Many of them had to be postponed last year because of the pandemic and, with God's help, will be able to take place this year. The Regional Councils have tried to find suitable alternatives to overcome the difficulties still imposed by prudence and the logical health restrictions in the face of the pandemic. Thank you for all these organisational efforts and also to all the communities for their generous understanding. Let us pray together that the Lord will bless all these efforts, strengthen our unity, and guide the path of the Movement in each of our regions.

I don't want to finish without reminding you that at a general level we are carrying out a campaign to update the Movement's census and database. For our organisation to be more efficient, it is very important to have a picture of the real situation of the Movement (who we are, how many of us there are, what our profile is, how we are geographically distributed...). For this purpose, we are disseminating a very simple form so that the essential data can be incorporated. But this portrait will only be useful and reliable if we all collaborate by providing the requested information. The campaign is being carried out by zones, so some of you will have already received it and others will receive it shortly, and it would be good for each community to check that all its members have filled in the form. We thank you for your help in making this campaign a success.

And on the other hand, on the occasion of the next meeting of the leaders of the branches of the Claretian family to be held in Rome, we wanted to organise a virtual meeting of formation and prayer to live and share together this family spirit. It will take place on Saturday, November 13, and will be guided by Fr. Adrián del Prado cmf. Details of the meeting will be announced soon.

Lots of encouragement to all of us! Let us follow in Claret's footsteps, facing our challenges with determination, courage and hope. Together we will make our charism grow and bear fruit. Each one of us with our own abilities and circumstances, but always with our hearts anchored in God, who is the one who works everything in everyone. He has

called us and is counting on us to continue to leave footprints along the way, with the help of Mary, the forge of our missionary soul.

Warm congratulations to all. May God bless the whole Claretian family and may we thank God for the charism we share. A big hug on behalf of the entire General Council.

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Miguel Ángel Sosa". The signature is stylized and enclosed within a large, loopy oval shape.

Miguel Ángel Sosa, sc

*General Secretariat  
Lay Claretian Movement*

*Translated with [www.DeepL.com/Translator](http://www.DeepL.com/Translator) (free version)*