



Congregational Apostolic Project

**Religious of Mary Immaculate
Claretian Missionary Sisters**

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APOSTOLIC
PROJECT**

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Roma - April 2015

***“and as they
journey,***

***...let them strive to
make the same path
easy”***

Maria Antonia Paris

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PRESENTATION

**"Our reason for being
in the Church is that God ...
may be known and loved by all men".**

(Const. 10)

With joy I present "**The Congregational Apostolic Project**," that you have in your hands; welcome it with a prayerful and thankful heart. While reading it, hopefully our hearts will burn like the hearts of those walking to Emmaus and will be filled with joy contemplating the beauty of the vocation to which the Lord with his mercy has called us.

The CAP is the fruit of the work, reflection, prayer, discernment, and search of the entire Congregation. We have been invited in several occasions and moments to participate, and we have collaborated in its preparation with our experience and capacities, with contributions, suggestions and ideas that have enriched it along the process of redaction.

Undoubtedly, this path has been guided by the Spirit, who from the beginning inspires and accompanies the life of the Congregation¹. He inspires and supports the search for answers at every moment of its history. Yesterday and today, God leads us through the Spirit, through the humble mediation of sisters who listen to the reality of the world, of the Church, society, and search for evangelical responses.

The **CAP** has been shaped and was born with sacrifice and

¹ Cf. Const. 2.

enthusiasm, with the wish to become a "**framework**" in which all our energies and evangelical enthusiasm converge. Everyone has to bring it to life in their daily life. It is also good to recognize that the CAP, although promulgated, will continue to be a "work in progress." It is not the beginning nor the end of our work, since history does not begin nor end with us. It is an important step forward that strengthens and impels us to embrace our present moment and journey ahead.

The CAP is a comprehensive, global instrument that defines the **identity of the Congregation**, expresses who we **are**, who we want to be, what we want **to do** and how. It grounds and motivates our life and mission as a unifying **principle and axis**. It guides and orients the direction towards which **we all**, as family, walk in these years. It **makes easy the way** for those who have been called to be "Apostles of Jesus Christ", conducting the efforts and resources to achieve the missionary ideal of evangelization. When put into practice, the CAP, unifies the responses we have to give to the challenges of the world, society and those proposed by the Church. It helps to **organize more clearly** our evangelizing action in the Church, to contribute consistently out of our specific charismatic identity.

The CAP is **ADDRESSED** to all the sisters of the Congregation, to the **LAY** with whom we share in the mission at all its levels, and involves those to whom our pastoral action is directed. The CAP is like a score that each instrument plays in its specific sounds, tones and intensity, making harmonically resound the Claretian melody for the construction of the Kingdom.

As you will see, **Christ** is at the beginning and **center** of the CAP, as the origin and aim of our existence and vocation.

We must pray with it, contemplate it, and "eat it;" so that it may become food and inspiration, and turn into light in our discernment. By "tasting it", we shall discover the variety of possibilities open in our living practice and pastoral work.

We need to value the importance of the CAP in the entire process of **reorganization of the Congregation**. It should challenge and mobilize us, be a source of renewal and revitalization of the Congregation that we so wish for the Glory of God. The structures are means that can help with more or less results, as channels of water, cannot be confused with water itself. They are transitory containers, either favoring or hindering the conduction. They are important, but they do not have the same relevance.

We ask Mary Immaculate, the "*Mother of the living Gospel to intercede for us so the invitation to this new stage of evangelization be welcome*"² and "internalized" with joy in each community and each Claretian apostolic center.

Fraternal greeting

Rome 25 of April 2015.
Feast of Mark the Evangelist

Maria Soledad Galerón
Superior General

² EG 287.

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

A long journey has preceded the elaboration of the CAP and, as reality changes; we need to constantly discern our life and the apostolic responses we give. That is why we will keep re-making the project, as we continue walking.

In preparation for the XVI General Chapter, we held the **XV Meeting of Major Superiors**³ as an important step in reflection, sharing, and collaboration, regarding both community and apostolic life. In this meeting, we made a **call to congregational co-responsibility**, in the sense of being a *congregational body*. We felt the need to **reflect together** in light of our charism and of the reality, on the calls that the Congregation hears today and to find responses to situations most urgently needing us to live and proclaim the Gospel.

The XVI General Chapter initiates an "itinerary of restructuring at a personal, community, and Congregational Apostolic Body level in order to renew our life and mission."⁴

In the Plan of the General Government, the Chapter decisions were adopted, emphasizing the task: "*To define and design the Apostolic Congregational Project*"⁵

³ Barcelona, Sarriá 8-12 of January of 2010.

⁴ Chapter Document, 5.

⁵ Objective 3, Planification of the General Government 2011-2017, 7.

The **XVI Meeting of Major Superiors and Delegates** (December 2012) elaborated the "**Congregational Reorganization Project**" seeking ways to "*implement the restructuring process regarding the reorganization of the Congregational body.*" In the area of Mission of this Project there is a request to "Elaboration of Congregational Apostolic Project."

In order to know better our reality, three types of questionnaires were prepared and responded. The results were discussed in the **Continental Meetings** (December 2013 - April 2014). In developing the CAP, we did not ignore the urgent calls that were coming from the **Synthesis of the Questionnaires**. We also took into account the contributions of the Entities in response to the questions the General Prefect of Apostolate addressed on January 23, 2014.

The Congregation commissioned a group of sisters to prepare a draft which was sent to the Governments of the Entities, and through them, to the communities and lay people for "appropriation," contribution, and suggestions. The received contributions were studied, discerned, and included in the XVII Meeting of the General Government with the Major Superiors and Delegates of Entities (March-April 2015), and the result was presented to the General Government for their approval.

The General Government approved the CAP in the council meeting of April 14, 2015.

MISSION

Our MISSION today, as Religious of Mary Immaculate Claretian Missionary Sisters, is to live and announce with joy the Good News of Jesus seeking the Kingdom of God and its justice and to contribute to the renewal of the Church in fraternity and evangelical poverty. To this purpose we commit to:

1. Choose Christ as the true center of our lives.
2. Renew in practice our way of living fraternity among us and with others.
3. Share and make our own the joys and sufferings of the peoples we serve.
4. Orient our life and apostolic mission to the preferential option for poor and excluded.
5. Use all the means available to bring the Word to all creatures.
6. Promote and consolidate efforts of corresponsibility and subsidiarity in our work with others.

PRIORITY OPTIONS (PO)

- 1. Rekindle the desire of a PROFOUND ENCOUNTER WITH GOD who called us together, transforms us and sends us.**
 - 1.1 Developing a contemplative attitude that allows us to embrace our own reality, that of others, and the world, as places of encounter with God.
 - 1.2 Privileging quality spaces and times for this encounter in our personal, community, and apostolic projects.
 - 1.3 Taking care, as individuals and communities, of our inner harmony, seeking to balance a life of prayer, mission, community, and rest.
 - 1.4 Using all the resources that may help us in our personal growth and maturity, in processes of healing -both at personal and community levels, according to the needs of each stage of life.
 - 1.5 Accompanying each other in our search and community discernment of God's will, as a freely chosen way of living our obedience in family.
 - 1.6 Offering experiences and encounters that may cultivate and transmit our congregational identity and sense of belonging, and promote a missionary "fraternity that is mystical and contemplative" (EG 92).

2. To practice poverty as to conform our lives with that of CHRIST, POOR AND MISSIONARY, who commits us in favor of the POOR AND EXCLUDED.

- 2.1 Allowing Christ, in his Humanity, to continue to change our criteria and values, our way of relating with others, with things, and with all creation.
- 2.2 Living in detachment as a form of liberation from all that hinders our process of humanization
- 2.3 Working to earn our living, care for the poor and live in solidarity with all.
- 2.4 Choosing gestures, words, and actions that are compassionate and show solidarity, in the style of the Beatitudes, relinquishing attitudes of power in our relationships.
- 2.5 Identifying concrete situations of poverty and exclusion where we can commit to respond.

3. To generate processes that help us care for our fraternal life and help us transform our relationships.

- 3.1 To recreate quality shared spaces and means to promote family life affectively.
- 3.2 Fostering attitudes that make the way easier for others, discovering and affirming the best in each person and the richness of diversity, in and outside our communities.

- 3.3 Discerning in community the apostolic commitments that each sister can accept; prioritizing the common good and teamwork against personal interests and individual styles.
- 3.4 Learning –at a personal and community level- to recognize, accept, and transform conflicts, being reconciled persons and reconciling communities.
- 3.5 Accompanying sisters in life’s transitions from civil to religious state, from initial formation to apostolic life, from active life to retirement, from health to infirmity.

4. To make the Word, that is listened, contemplated, lived, and celebrated, the center of our evangelizing mission.

- 4.1 To provide solid biblical-theological education in the formation and missionary processes to reinforce listening as a vital attitude, and the ability to contemplate and practice what has been contemplated.
- 4.2 Creating times and spaces to listen and share the Word among us and with others as habitual practices of our missionary life.
- 4.3 Bringing the words and gestures of Jesus closer to the hearts of men and women, as sources that enable a path of humanization and hope.
- 4.4 Privileging the announcement of the Gospel among those who have lost faith, those who do not know Jesus, and in places where there is no Church presence.

4.5 Discovering and valuing the seeds of the Word present in every culture, as to make possible the incarnation of the faith.

5. To actively contribute with our life and mission to the RENEWAL OF THE CHURCH so that it is more missionary, inclusive, participative, and service oriented.

5.1 Giving public testimony of evangelical poverty with a lifestyle that is simple, fraternal, and welcoming within our communities and in our apostolic work.

5.2 Praying for the ills of the Church and the world.

5.3 Offering celebrative spaces to nourish faith, express the beauty of the encounter with God and commitment to the world.

5.4 Dedicating sisters to study theology and spirituality in service of the Church and the Congregation.

5.5 Motivating the missionary zeal of a Church “in exodus” to geographic and human peripheries.

5.6 Denouncing situations of injustice and making a contribution in the search for solutions through dialogue and discernment.

5.7 Welcoming and accompanying individuals and groups that find difficult their experience of belonging to the Church.

5.8 Promoting solid Christian communities among the people with whom we share the mission.

6. Revitalizing our service to the Universal Mission as APOSTOLIC CONGREGATIONAL BODY.

- 6.1 Promoting interculturality in our apostolic communities through missionary experiences and greater exchange of sisters among Entities.
- 6.2 Making structures more agile to respond to missionary needs.
- 6.3 Using with quality the new languages and all possible means to spread the Gospel: online presence, social networks, image, music, and others.
- 6.4 Learning several languages (at least Spanish as the foundational language and English as the most used language in the world today).
- 6.5 Taking part in the mission in another country for an extended period of time prior to final profession.

7. To promote a VOCATIONAL CULTURE.

- 7.1 Elaborating pastoral itineraries for all ages to foster a holistic formation, explore vocational options, and promote social commitment with a marked Claretian identity.
- 7.2 Promoting our presence in a meaningful way among young people and prioritizing our efforts to accompany them.
- 7.3 Offering and accompanying young people in service/solidarity experiences that challenge them to look beyond themselves, ask questions about the meaning of life, and move them to decisions.

- 7.4 Forming persons and dedicating them -in terms of time and resources- to youth and vocational ministry.
- 7.5 Constituting apostolic communities that welcome young people in their vocational search, especially young women who feel called to Claretian life.

8. To advance JUSTICE, PEACE and INTEGRITY OF CREATION (JPIC) as a distinctive feature of our life and mission.

- 8.1 Examining the daily practices of our community (use of energy, water, respect for the environment, expenses, ways of budgeting...), and making decisions that reflect our effective commitment to JPIC.
- 8.2 Forming ourselves in social and ecological ethics with special attention to Catholic Social Teaching (CST).
- 8.3 Studying possible new ways of managing our assets: socially responsible accounts, micro-credits, etc.
- 8.4 Programming JPIC guidelines in all our institutions and apostolic activities.
- 8.5 Dedicating people, time, and resources to work in favor of a wounded humanity by participating in organizations that are committed to JPIC.
- 8.6 Promoting communities where excluded people may be welcomed in a responsible manner and in attitude of discernment.

- 8.7 Proposing missionary experiences, volunteer and solidarity service experiences.
- 8.8 Supporting and boosting initiatives that promote dialogue with the culture and make present the values of the Gospel in society.
- 8.9 Joining the struggle on behalf of women's rights and dignity, wherever we are.

9. TO “WORK WITH OTHERS” according to our missionary charism.

- 9.1 Conducting formation programs for religious and lay people about our charism.
- 9.2 Caring for the charismatic and spiritual identity of our institutions and apostolates.
- 9.3 Establishing and accompanying processes that help religious and lay people embrace together the integration of lay people in leadership positions.
- 9.4 Collaborating in ecclesial and civil initiatives with especial attention to human rights, immigrants, refugees, and displaced peoples.
- 9.5 Proposing the lay Claretian vocation as a form of living one's Christian identity.

VISION

Our Vision as CLARETIAN MISSIONARY SISTERS FOR THE NEXT 8 YEARS

1. Women who live with joy and integrity their consecration to God and their dedication to the mission. They are identified with the charism and live with fullness their personal vocation.
2. Women of faith, friendly, humane, with a simple lifestyle, poor, hardworking, like Mary.
3. Women of the Church and for the Church, open to all without distinction, who spread the desire to know and love Christ and to proclaim the Gospel, sharing the mission with others.
4. Open communities that are welcoming, family like, who favor holistic personal growth and diversity, building fraternity in a divided world.
5. Missionary communities “in exodus,” involved with creativity and boldness in the life of the People, especially in favor of the poorest and excluded.
6. Communities with apostolic projects that make it a priority to be present among young people, accompanying them in their personal quest, integral human growth, and life options.
7. Apostolic body that is universal, agile, with clear Claretian identity, at the service of the most urgent, opportune, and efficient, attentive to the signs of time in universal mission.

CONCLUSION

The PAC is a binding instrument, addressed to the whole **Apostolic Body**, both in geographical and organizational dimensions (countries, entities, communities, individuals), and in institutions or apostolic fields.

The governments of all Entities shall **develop the dynamics to follow** to integrate, set down, and make concrete the CAP in the Planning of each personal, community, and pastoral project. It is a temporary project, for our "today" of about 8 years. All temporality requires a **periodical evaluation and adaptation**.

Rome, April 2015.

