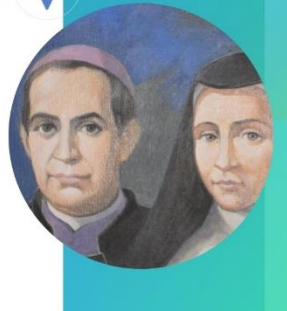


¿QUÉ NOS SUGIEREN HOY CLARET
PARÍS...?



PARA CONTRIBUIR A
RECUPERAR LA PAZ,
LA BELLEZA Y LA
PLENITUD



Towards the Common Home Fraternity and worldwide Solidarity with Claret and París

28-11-2020

I. Introduction - in continuity with the reflection on the common home from the Founders.

We are called to be the instruments of Father God so that our planet would be of his dream when created it and responds to his project of peace, beauty and fullness (cf. LS 53).

The ecological crisis in which we are immersed is presented to us as an opportunity that urges us to conversion and to make concrete and urgent decisions. This requires an educational itinerary that favors the process of integral formation of humanity. In order to seriously address the causes of this problem, we need a true change of direction, based on the awareness that everything is intimately connected, likewise it asks us for a change of spiritual conversion (cf. LS 202) that is expressed in new ways of relating with oneself, society, creation and God (cf. LS 221).

(Ojo: corregir eso, pues no se entiende qué quisieron decir con un cambio de conversión espiritual)

Ecological transformation asks us "to reveal all the consequences of the encounter with Jesus Christ in connection with the world (cf. LS 217) and which demands a process that has a transcendent root, rather than a social or political one.

In the light of Claret and Paris we would like to offer a reflection to encourage our lives to "renew humanity" (LS 216) convinced that more than talking about ideas we would like to nurture a passion for caring for the world, with a mystic that provokes, encourage, motivate and give meaning to personal and community action. (cf. LS 216).

We propose this reflection, divided into three key aspects, which were the expression of prophetic action in response to the clamor of the calls of his time in Claret and París.

We know that the subject in question is not exhaustive, but may it be an invitation from simplicity and fraternity. Therefore, it is about putting a mustard grain in such a way that those who feel involved in this ecological transformation process, accept it as a proposal and put it to produce many fruits.

I. Today on this journey of conversion, What do Claret and Paris suggest us to contribute to the humanity to recover peace, beauty and wholeness?

For this we go to the source of our Founders and depart from their experience, from their awareness that God has called them and that he counts on them for his plan of salvation. In some way they are caretakers of God's work (cf. LS 217). And, their response was that of docility and the constant search for God's will, experiencing oneself as creatures of God the Father.

In the morning prayer, María Antonia constantly asks the Lord for a deep knowledge of God, of herself and of the mission that God had prepared for her: *"My God... I beg you to deign to enlighten me with your infinite wisdom, so that I may know you and myself, and also to know all you want me to do, to serve and love you with all perfection..."*¹

She takes the attitude of a disciple to listen, understand the will of God and carry it out: *"for this I begged him... with much simplicity and good will... he would deign to teach me what to do... well, knowing God's will, no difficulty is offered to me"*².

The life of Father Claret developed as well in a constant search for the will of God in a tireless missionary activity: *"I beg you, Lord and my God, send your divine Spirit upon me to enlighten me and ignite me in divine love. and direct me, direct and govern by the straight path..."*³. *He constantly asks who art thou? Who I am...? ... If I am something, if I have something, I have received everything from God... He is my Creator, he is my Caretaker, he is my motor... without God I can absolutely do nothing..."*⁵.

With this provision, Claret and Paris were responding to the reality of the cry of their time, but their responses were beyond the contingent situation and that is why they enlighten us in the search response, from the call to a universal, fraternal and solidarity ecology.

In the writings of María Antonia and Claret we frequently find the words: "Renewal or Reformation of the Church". "Reform" ... "Reanimate" or "Re-establish"⁶ "to Preserve the beauty of the Church and preserve it from errors and vices"⁷ with typical expressions of their time and especially referring to the Church. In short, it is a process of conversion that they expressed in different facets, they lived it first-hand and - based on their experience - they propose it as an evangelical response to counteract the evils of their time. We will focus in a special way on three key aspects, in tune with the values proposed in the General Chapter 2017. We invite you to reread them from Laudato SI' and Fratelli Tutti; they are:

¹ Cf. MP, Recuerdos y Notas, P. 194

² Cf. Aut. MP, 2-3.7

³ Aut. PC, Notas esp. Confesor de la reina 18, P. 770

⁴ Aut. PC, 343.

⁵ Aut. PC, 345.

⁶ Autores Varios, Ser Claretiana para el mundo de hoy, Madrid 2011.como debe ser la reforma, p. 185.

⁷ Ser Claretiana para el mundo de hoy, Madrid 2011." p. 194.

- 2.1. ***Fidelity to the Gospel and its proclamation***
- 2.2. ***Experience of evangelical poverty***
- 2.3. ***One family***

2.1. Fidelity to the Gospel and its proclamation

According to our Founders, fidelity is personal and community life coherence to Christ and his Gospel; For this reason they live from the critical, prophetic and creative capacity to read the world and the world's reality, denouncing all that is not of Gospel and announcing the values of the Kingdom. "Fidelity is the consequence of " what the Gospel teaches us, for our way of thinking, feeling and living ..., without ridiculing the environment and being passive to the change of habits and become inconsistent" (LS 216,217).

A call is to give response and assuming responsibility as if everything depended on us, but with the confidence of knowing that deep down everything depends on God: Claret would say. *"So faithful, so constant in serving and loving God that I might say with the Apostle that neither death nor life anything else can ever separate me from Him"*⁸. And Maria Antonia reminds us that fidelity is of being poor and the proclamation of the Gospel⁹. *Because the Lord has given us only one Gospel and he has always it present*¹⁰. For lack of the proclamation of the Gospel "souls are lost. Only the light of the Gospel can heal the world"¹¹.

It is proposed to us a culture of care, the proclamation of the Gospel that favors the recognition of God's call to "intervene with others to stop environmental degradation, with the practice of charity in a process of maturity and sanctification" (cf. LS 231).

Father Claret is very explicit and comprehensive in recommending the theme of evangelization: *"They must banish ignorance and promote education"*. He constantly speaks of the duty of preaching¹². In the same way he speaks of the priests, instruction, catechesis and preaching¹³. Likewise, M. Paris calls the Word of God as food, *"The bread of the divine Word"*¹⁴. Our departing point is our fidelity to the Word, and that it can only be given when we time and from it we come into contact with reality. we propose it as an encounter with the Lord, using all the means at our disposal (DC 2017).

2.2. Experience of evangelical poverty

Another value which our Founders insist to respond to the cries of the world is evangelical poverty, as *"a deep attitude of the heart: faith in God the Father, confidence that in Him we have everything: brothers and sisters, common home, meaningful life"* (Dc. 2017), And keeping with a prophetic and contemplative style, capable of profound joy not trusting in possessions or becoming obsessed with consumption (cf. LS 222).

8 Aut. PC, 670

9 Cf. PR, 41, 46, Escritos de Maria Antonia París, P. 325

10 PR, 8, Escritos de Maria Antonia París, p. 311

11 Cf. Ser Claretiana para el mundo de hoy, Nuestra identidad y pertenencia carismática, Madrid 2011. P.208

12 Cf. Ser Claretiana para el mundo de hoy, Nuestra identidad y pertenencia carismática, Madrid 2011. P.209

13 Cf. Ibidem p 209

14 Cf. Ibidem p 209

From faith and love in Christ who is poor and missionary¹⁵ we can say that the experience of poverty is a result of an experience of the encounter with God, capable of conquering the heart, the whole person and reality.

We will deepen it at three levels:

- a) From the call of God
- b) Simplicity of life
- c) In solidarity with the poor

a) From the call of God

Living poverty as God's chosen ones, those who know they need everything and always expect everything from Him. Like Jesus, the Poor of Yahweh, who put his trust totally in Father, emptied himself (Phil. 2, 7)

In María Antonia it appears insistently that following poor Jesús is the key to Evangelical Poverty. She tried to resemble the Poor Christ whom she contemplated, in a continuous attitude of filial love and generous dedication to the divine will, *"the love of your most holy Will, Lord, surrenders me to every sacrifice"*¹⁶, and she seeks it *"even in the smallest and most homely things"*¹⁷. This love is the source and impulse that launches to practice all the virtues with the deep realization.

Like Jesus of Nazareth, her "experience of being daughter" accompanies throughout her journey and is the source of security and joy in the midst of loneliness. she feels called to a radical poverty that is translated as *"an imitation of Christ's bareness and an communion with the poor, not sharing a part of her goods to them but taking their own poverty"*¹⁸, *"...for me, I wanted to be poor with Christ than having income to distribute to poor people"*¹⁹. The great openness of the mother to the poor is striking, allowing herself to be affected by them. It is a way of valuing each reality of human being, learning to make contact and knowing how to enjoy the simplest (cf. LS 223)

The effective and spiritual detachment became such that she could truly write to her confessor Currius, *"As for the detachment of the goods of this world, I have no other goods in this world than the Poverty and Cross of my Lord Jesus Christ , and even of this I cannot boast, because they are goods of my Lord"*²⁰.

In Fr. Claret, evangelical poverty has an explicit reference to the life of Jesus and the Apostles. *I had observed that the holy virtue of poverty not only edified people and upset the idol of gold but also helped me greatly to grow in humility and advance in perfection. I can sum up what I learned by experience in the following comparison: the virtues are like the strings on a harp. Poverty is the shortest and thinnest chord and hence gives the highest sound...*²¹.

16 Aut. MP, 106, p. 108

17 Aut. MP, 85, p. 98

18 Nota de J.M. Lozano en la Autobiografía, 221, p. 150.

19 Aut. MP, 221, p. 150

20 EMP, 165, P. 192

21 Aut. PC, 370.

When speaking of the integrity of ecosystems, one must dare to speak of human life ... and of great values. The disappearance of humility in human causes damage to society and the environment. It is not easy to promote this kind of healthy humility and happy sobriety when we consider ourselves autonomous, when we exclude God from our lives or replace him with our own ego... (cf. LS 224). Claret always has his gaze fixed on Jesus who is the meaning and center of his life and mission. *“Jesus Christ loves Poverty, injuries and pains, so I love them too. I will never say or do anything that has a tendency to riches, honors or pleasures...”*²².

b) Simplicity of life

simplicity of life makes possible and effective our desire to have God as the only good. The simplicity of life allows us to stop and appreciate the small things, to be grateful to the opportunities which life affords us, detaching ourselves from what we possess and not to succumb to sadness for what we lack (cf. LS 222)

“I was so happy to see the house so empty that, jumping for joy, I said: « Long live Holy Poverty, my sisters »”²³. Upon arriving to Cuba, María Antonia and her companions continue to experience trust, abandonment in the Lord, concretized in not having even what is necessary. This is the joy of the simple heart that Maria Antonia reflects in the *“Apostolic Missionary”*²⁴ and that she proposes from the configuration with Christ.

in the Points for the Reform, María Antonia asks to respond to the evils of her time, to renounce income and imitation of the Apostles, *Reform life, home, family, with the most precise and absolutely necessary ... live in community, sharing goods and sharing with the poor because the income belongs to the poor*²⁵. Father Claret shares these same sentiments in his *Notes for a Plan...* He asks to live poorly, detach from one’s income²⁶. Advises to put the goods in common and reminds of the obligation towards the poor.

Claret was poor, he wanted to be, and he enjoyed being so. *“I never carried Money, nor wanted”*. He lived with a great evangelical sense and enjoyed his poverty without ever judging or demanding others, always relating with compassion and mercy to all. *“For all who see me, my food, bed and clothing, I would seem like a miser, stingy and mean; infact, I will be generous to friends and companions and lavish to the poor and needy”*²⁷. Moreover, he emphasizes in his writings, his desire not to be burdensome to anyone, he works to provide to provide for his need, food. *“I do not receive any payment for preaching; I only accept the food that I need to live. In order not to be burdensome, I always go on foot”* ...²⁸. Caring for and encouraging work with generosity and tenderness is to protect this world that God has entrusted to us (cf. LS 242).

The dimension of work to earn a living is also very much present in the life of María Antonia, she works with enthusiasm in household tasks, in her dedication to the teaching when she was in the Company of Mary, and her dedication to the activities and needs of the community, especially attending to the sick.

From the beginning of the Congregation, the desire to live out of the work was clear in both Founders. *“Mon. Claret deigned to reply to the said letter saying that we could go and we would be*

22 Aut PC, Propósitos de EE de 1855, 5 - 6, p. 677.

23 MP Aut. 164, p. 129

24 MA, Escritos María Antonia París, MA p.351-359

25 Cf. Ser Claretiana para el mundo de hoy, Nuestra identidad y pertenencia carismática, Madrid 2011. P.207

26 Cf. Ibidem, 207

27 Aut. PC, Propósitos de 1857, 2, p. 681-682

28 Aut PC, Propósitos de 1843, 6, p.652

very well received; that, although for the moment he could not find a monastery, but working we could eat...²⁹. God “very soon provided us with work to earn our living with the sweat of our brow without bothering anyone else”³⁰.

c) In solidarity with the poor

Evangelical poverty is an expression of solidarity and prophetic witness of freedom in the face of the poorly distributed powers and goods of this world among humanity. “Regarding the urgency of care for the planet, we are invited to become aware of a new and universal solidarity” (cf. LS 14) with holistic actions. Although these do not solve global problems but confirm that human beings are still capable of intervening positively. For all our limitations, gestures of generosity, solidarity and care inevitably well up within us, since we were made for love (cf. LS 58).

Father Claret describes himself as a person very sensitive to the needs and suffering of others: “... I am by nature very compassionate..., so soft hearted and compassionate that I cannot bear a misfortune or a misery without doing something to help. I would take the bread out of my own mouth to give to the poor. In fact I would abstain from putting it into my mouth in order to have something to give to those who are asking for help. I am even scrupulous even spending anything at all on myself when I think of the needs I can remedy”³¹. In the Autobiography, Claret tells us some of the ways in which he dedicated himself to the poor: “I bought a ranch for the poor of Puerto Principe. By the time I left for Cuba I had spent 25000 duros of my savings on it”³². He tried to serve the poor in such a way that they could get out of their poverty, being dignified: “my plan in starting this ranch was to gather together poor boys and girls, many of whom were wandering the streets begging. At the ranch they were fed, clothed, and taught their religion, as well as reading, writing and whatever art or trade they wanted to learn”³³.

He is very attentive and takes care of those most in need: “With the Lord's help I took care of the poor”. More than limiting oneself to welfare, he creates educational and training centres, dedicating time, attention and concrete means: “Every Monday of the year, as long as I was in Cuba, I gathered together the poor of whatever town I happened to be in... I taught them Christian doctrine..., I gave them a talk and urged them to receive the sacraments... the Lord has indeed given me a deep love for the poor”³⁴.

“In the present conditions of global society, where injustices abound and growing numbers of people are deprived of basic human rights, the principle of the common good immediately becomes, logically and inevitably, a summons to solidarity and a preferential option for the poorest” (cf. LS 158).

Another way to help was the establishment “in the Savings Bank of the diocese... for I saw that when the poor have proper direction and are given a decent means to earn their living, they are upright

29 Aut. MP, 126, P. 114-115

30 Aut. MP, 165, P. 130

31 Aut. PC, 9-10.

32 Aut. PC, 563.

33 Aut. PC, 564.

34 Aut. PC, 562.

citizens; it is only otherwise that they become debased. Hence my eagerness to help them was as much spiritual as it was material”³⁵.

“I visited the prisoners in jail; catechizing them and preaching to them frequently.... We took care that the prisoners in jail learned to read, write, religion and a trade of some sort. So we had workshops set up in jail, for experience shown us that men turn to crime because they have no trade and don’t know how to make a honest living”. “I visited the poor in the hospital with the same frequency, and also gave them some help, especially when they were convalescents”³⁶.

María Antonia asked the *Claretian sisters* *“to work for their fellow brothers and sisters...”³⁷, always having “open hands... giving with a long hand according to the community agreement...”³⁸. Also “... The last month of the year... if something remains, it will be given to the poor; and especially to give to the abandoned women ... in our convents we must never accumulate any rent at the expense of the poor of Jesus Christ”³⁹, because in justice it belongs to them⁴⁰. And also recognizes that it is necessary to face the evils of the world, of the Church and that inhabit us, dispelling “ignorance”⁴¹ with the Light of the Gospel.*

Everything is interconnected, and this invites us to develop a spirituality of that global solidarity which flows from the mystery of God's Love (cf. LS 240). Environmental education should prepare us to take that leap towards the transcendent which gives ecological ethics its deepest meaning. "On the other hand, there are educators capable of developing an ethics of ecology, and helping people, through effective pedagogy, to grow in solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care" (LS 210)

2.3. One family and one heart

Besides poverty, M. Paris considered that fraternal union and charity were the other life’s response to the evils of that time. In the Points for the Reform, she proposes a poverty that requires living in community and in communion: *“Bishops must live in community with their conferrers, without having yours or mine among them”⁴²*. This principle can be extended in all realities. Today more than ever is walking towards universal communion. No one matures and reaches their fullness by themselves alone ... despite the diversity of ethnicities, societies and cultures, it is necessary to form a community made up of sisters and brothers who welcome each other and care for each other (cf. FT 95-96).

The importance of charity and unity, Maria Antonia makes it effective in the Congregation, makes it explicit and makes it clear in her Writings and calls them "foundation" or "basis" of poverty. In a letter to Orberá she speaks of *“the goal that our Lord has for our institute is the mutual union of all the Houses, and to form among all one single soul and one heart which is the main basis”⁴³*. And to Father Claret, Archbishop of Cuba, she wrote: *“the main basis of our Institute is mutual union, and*

35 Aut. PC, 569.

36 Aut. PC, 570-571.

37 Cf. Const. 1869, Trat. I, c. 2, 21, p. 398

38 Const. 1869, Trat. I, c. 34, 24, p. 495

39 Const. 1869, Trat. I, c. 34, 26, p. 495

40 Cf. PR, Escritos María Antonia París, 34, p. 320

41 Cf. PR, Escritos María Antonia París, 39, p. 322

42 Cf. PR, Escritos María Antonia París 16, p. 314

43 EMP, 298. P. 370

*the charity that makes us all one family and one heart as the Lord wishes us to be*⁴⁴. With these words, María Antonia expressed the unity that should exist among us, just as in the beginning, when the multitude of believers had only one heart and one soul. No one owned their possessions as their own, but they had everything in common (cf. Acts 4:32). Communion is the place of growth and care.

To the community of Carcaixent she says: *“Above all I recommend Charity among you..., and with it all the virtues would go; you will be five and you will not be more than one; ...”*⁴⁵ The value of charity, other than occupying an important place in our constitutions, is for her a necessary attitude of life for a process of renewal of the entire Church... that is, of each community.

M. Antonia understood the deep need to work to preserve the perfect charity and fine harmony in living as brothers and sisters⁴⁶. The experience of fraternity is an essential part of that practice which makes the evangelical message credible, which attests that the Kingdom of love and justice is possible, because despite the differences in cultures, generations and visions, it is possible to be *one family and one heart, with a charity not feigned and founded on true words*⁴⁷

The measure of love for humanity cannot be other than the evangelical measure: *we must love our brothers and sisters in such a way that we can say that our brother, sister is another self; If this love is made explicit between us, peace and harmony will not be lacking in communities, apostolic centers, families...*⁴⁸ This explains why no one can experience the true beauty of life without having real faces to love. This is the part of mystery of authentic human existence: «life exists where there is bonding, communion, fraternity (cf. FT 87)

The love of God and neighbor brings us together in community, makes us walk with others, because only in this way will we be witnesses of God's compassion in our world ...⁴⁹. The experience of filiation with God the Father made Claret rediscover the gift of the brothers. Because of this filiation, Claret lived a double fraternity: towards the people and towards his companions on mission. And he tells us about his experience of living and working as brothers in Cuba:

*So our residence was the admiration of all the outsiders who came to visit us.... And all of them found a bed and board at my residence. It seemed that God himself brought them just to witness such an agreeable sight. They couldn't help noticing that our house was like a beehive, with everyone coming and going All of them were content and happy.. **So outsiders were amazed at the sight of it and praised God for it.***⁵⁰

Claret cared in the name of God for the brothers. He expressed it in the intentions of 1865: *“I will have the heart of a son and spouse towards God, a judge's heart towards me and a mother's heart towards my neighbor”*⁵¹. It is «love shatters the chains that keeps isolate and separate, it builds bridges; love enables us to build a great family, where all of us feel at home. Love exudes compassion and dignity» (cf. FT 62).

*Claret was concerned about how to help the brothers to live the Love that the Father had for them: Oh my neighbor I love you and for love I will free you from sins ... I love you and for love I will instruct and teach you the evils that you have suffered. to set aside and the virtues that you have to practice and I will accompany you along the paths of good works...*⁵²

44 EMP, 255, p. 317

45 EMP, 326, p. 405

46 Cf. Constituciones 1869, Trat. I, c. 1, 1-2. P. 387

47 Cf. Const. 1984, 39

48 Cf. Constituciones 1869, Trat. I, c. 26, 45 P. 475 y Const. 35.

49 Cf. Const. 35

50 Aut PC 608

51 Aut PC. Propósitos de 1865. P. 708

52 Aut PC 488

When we talk about taking care of the common home, the planet, we keep up that minimum of universal conscience and concern for mutual care that can still remain in people... achieve a moral height that allows them to transcend themselves and the group they belong to. That is wonder of human! This same attitude is required to recognize the rights of every human being, even if they were born beyond their own borders (LS 117).

María Antonia instilled this fraternal experience, lived it and alert of it: *“above all I recommend Charity..., because it is the bond of Evangelical perfection”*⁵³. Behind the word “charity” is appreciation, worth. Being human is “dear” to me, that is, «they are considered of greater value» (FT. 93)

True charity... implies an effective march of transformation of history... and must be expressed in person-to-person encounter; it is also capable of reaching a distant and even forgotten sister or brother... Love of neighbor is realistic and does not waste anything that is necessary for a transformation of history that benefits the least (cf. FT, 165).

II. Conclusions as a starting point

At the end of this enlightened journey through the experience of the Founders, we feel confident in affirming that at the base of the process of ecological conversion is rethinking ourselves from the encounter with Christ, in the light of the joy of the Gospel, in a global fraternity lived in sobriety and simplicity.

EVERYTHING IS INTERCONNECTED ... this intuition also becomes real in the experience of our Founders and gives us light for our pilgrimage.

It is important to return to the origin of the Gospel, where they were inspired and allowed to be moulded and became an instrument of God's plan of Salvation for humanity. With his poor lifestyle, lived in community and communion, passionate for Jesus Christ and for the poor, we find concrete ways of responding to the cry of creation.

Our baptismal vocation and the call that each one has received from God is the fertile ground where the Word is incarnated and makes us feel like “Caretakers of God's work”.

We are grateful to so many sisters who over the years have deepened on Claretian spirituality. We have relied this reflection on theirs. We hope that you too can enjoy the rereading of the text "BEING CLARETIANS FOR TODAY'S WORLD " "TWO PENS MOVED BY THE SAME SPIRIT" other than the writings of the Founders.

Pope Francis has been inspired by many saints: Irenaeus, Francis of Assisi, Bonaventure, Hildegard, Inam... and we add Claret and Paris to this long list, as inspirers for a global and integral ecology.

Our next meeting is scheduled for March, we will send you the date and the link in advance.

Other than recalling some elements reflected and shared in previous meetings, At the meeting, we will share projects or processes that are being carried out based on the multi-year plan proposed in this jubilee year of Laudato Si’.