

**THE CLARETAN LAY "COMMUNITY OF CONTRAST"  
CONVOKED FOR THE PROPHETIC MISSION**

**V GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CLARETAN LAY MOVEMENT  
SANTO DOMINGO, 13-24 JULY, 1999**

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor; to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.

To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”

Luke, 4, 18-19

In this text St. Anthony Claret discovered his identity and his mission, a charismatic inheritance for all the Claretan Family.

Dear sisters and brothers:

In the city of Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic), the representatives of the Claretan Lay Movement for the following Regions met in General Assembly: Argentina-Uruguay, Betica, Brasil-Paraguay, Colombia, Chile, Caribbean (Cuba, Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic), Northern Spain, Sin Fronteras (Bolivia and Humahuaca), Venezuela, and USA, to reflect on the life, mission and reality of the Movement, and its compromise with the Universal Church. The creation of the new Region, the Caribbean, was particularly pleasing and moving.

Following the Campinas document (Claretan Lay Community of Contrast), and dealing with it creatively, during the ten days of this Assembly we have recalled and felt the affection and the accompaniment of the prayers of all the brothers and sisters of the Claretan Lay Movement and the other members of the Claretan Family.

We have had the great pleasure of sharing our faith, both in community Prayer and in the Eucharist, which have enabled us to confirm the enormous richness and variety that exist within the Movement.

During this time we have reflected upon the need to provide the Movement with a fuller rule structure, in line with Canon Law, which will ensure for us all a reliable reference as the Movement grows on the different continents. The result of our reflections has been the approval of the Applicable Rules, which in the future will regulate the functioning of the CLM.

We have experienced the presence, the closeness and the support of the CMFs in this Assembly, which for us has been a blessing from God, an encouragement to strengthen our fraternal links, and palpable proof of their witnessing power and their missionary commitment.

Of the results of our communal reflections, the following points are particularly important:

## **1.- Analysis of Reality**

### **I.1.- World**

The Claretan Laymen, urged by the Spirit of Jesus, feel impelled to address the reality of an interdependent, globalized world, which nevertheless excludes the immense majority from the world markets.

We observe with great concern efforts to impose a single cultural model, which endeavours to silence autochthonous and minority cultures, and in the process flagrantly encourages racism and discrimination.

At the same time, in the field of economy, the neo-liberal pretension to set itself up as the exclusive economic model is equally shocking, resulting in the growing impoverishment and exclusion of the majority, the sacramentalisation of the market, and the destruction of the environment through uncontrolled economic growth.

We also observe that political reality is conditioned by an excluding inter-dependence, which smothers utopias, annuls alternatives, increases the growth of neo-conservatism, and weakens popular and trade-union movements in those countries where democracy is a mere formality.

We are united in hope with all those formations—groups, NGOs, movements, popular organizations, ecclesially-based communities, movements in support of human rights, of justice and peace, ecological groups... which resist, and search for alternatives to, the neo-liberal and other dehumanizing models.

In this distressing reality, characterised by “love of riches, love of honours, and love of sensual pleasures..... where the thirst for material goods is drying the hearts of modern society” (Autobiog. 357), we must work to open paths to the Kingdom, as a “community of contrast” in lay society and in the Church, thus providing alternative ways of life.

### **I.2.- Church**

We are concerned to find signs of involution and retrogression which cast shadows over the face of the Church, while at the same we are filled with hope by the witnessing of Christian communities in their efforts to consolidate a model of the Church as handmaid of the Kingdom, with a maternal, Samaritan aspect, made up of small communities and open to an inter-religious dialogue of faith-culture.

In practice, the simultaneity of divers models of the Church in the Claretan Lay Movement makes it difficult to assume a proposed missionary role, and waters down pastoral projects.

The memory of so many martyrs for the Kingdom in the Church is an inheritance and a prophecy, inviting us to be faithful and to bear witness.

### **1.3.- Claretan Lay Movement**

#### **1.3.1.- Identity**

The participants in this Assembly find that the Claretan lay identity is not accepted with sufficient clarity, and adequate processes are lacking for the integration of groups and communities.

We are worried that in spite of double membership having been discussed and clarified in the IV General Assembly, held in Campinas, there still exist lay Claretans committed to different ecclesial pietist Movements.

Some brothers and sisters of the Claretan Lay Movement feel themselves to be of little use, by reason of their age or state of health, which tends to distance them from the Movement.

#### **1.3.2.- Quality growth of the CLM**

We are pleased to see an increase in the number of groups in discernment, and a clear commitment on the part of the CMFs in the tasks of promotion and accompaniment of the CLM. There has been an enormous change, both qualitative and quantitative, in respect of the situation observed at the IV General Assembly. However, we are preoccupied to find that some Religious Advisers are not clear about how to carry out this accompaniment, because of their lack of knowledge of who we are.

It is obvious that some of these groups in discernment do not become consolidated because of inadequate accompaniment by groups/communities already admitted to the Movement, and the lack of a methodology of formation adapted to their needs.

In general, the groups admitted to membership are not sufficiently committed to the promotion of the Movement or to the other branches of the Claretan Family.

A great part of the management has been carried out thanks to the economic support of the CMFs.

#### **1.3.3.- Mission**

The missions carried out by the majority of the lay people integrated in the various groups fall fundamentally into three intra-ecclesial fields:

- Catechism
- Liturgy
- Parochial activities

However, we are filled with satisfaction to find that some lay people carry out their evangelical mission in such areas as:

- Accompaniment to social processes and organizations
- Biblical classes for ecclesial persons and groups
- Pastoral prison visiting
- Work with street children and youths
- Teaching school non-attenders
- Support for popular missions
- Work with support groups for alcoholics and drug addicts
- Musical and painting projects
- Active participation in 'culture and faith' encounter forums
- Active participation in politics
- Mission work in other countries
- Human and social advancement through projects such as Fair Commerce
- Involvement in concrete options of Justice and Peace
- Active cooperation in the organization, management, and financing of PROCLADE (Claretan Promotion for Development)

Finally, there are different pastoral models in the various dioceses of the Church, and this sometimes causes difficulties in the full introduction of the Claretan Laymen and their evangelizing commitment.

## **II.- Challenges which emerge on analyzing reality**

### **II.1.- World**

How to ensure that "God shall be known, loved and served" (Autobiog. 202-233) in the world of unbelief and in face of the suffering of the excluded.

### **II.2.- Church**

How to take on the mission of the poor, liberating, Samaritan, and maternal Church, articulating adequately the realities World, Kingdom and Church.

### **II.3.- CLM**

#### **II.3.1.- Identity**

How to clarify and strengthen the Claretan lay identity and the integration of the groups and communities in the CLM.

#### **II.3.2.- Quality growth of the CLM**

- a.- How to ensure that this growth is oriented towards the increase in evangelizers in line with our specific charisma within the Church.

- b.- How to work towards the involvement of the groups in the furtherance of the CLM and of the other branches of the Claretan Family.
- c.- How to help the Religious Advisers to be clear about the identity of the Claretan Laymen and their own mission as Advisers.
- d.- How to achieve a co-responsible and supportive auto-funding.

### **II.3.3.- Mission**

- a.- What actions to take to ensure that our intra-ecclesial efforts will strengthen the missionary dimension of the Church.
- b.- How to be continually aware of the signs of the times, so as to react as missionaries to situations of injustice, disbelief, and exclusion as they occur.
- c.- How to achieve integration in the pastoral work of the Local Church, within the identity of our charisma, and respecting the pluralities.

## **III.- Lines of Action**

### **III.1.- World**

In the Project of each group/community, to have a clear appreciation of the urgencies of the mission, and to search creatively for a pastoral alternative.

### **III.2.- Church**

To opt for a Church, the people of God, of communion and participation, without cults, and committed to the defense of life.

### **III.3.- CLM**

#### **III.3.1.- Identity**

- a. During the next four years to take the Ideology and the Commentary on the Ideology as an essential element in the formative process of groups and communities.

- b. Clarify and strengthen the sense of identity and feeling of belonging, including these aims in the group/community Projects, so as to be able to evaluate them.
- c. Establish criteria for admission, formation and continuity of the groups in discernment, so as to resolve the existing problems, including double membership.

### **III.3.2.- Quality growth of the CLM**

- a. The General Council to take part in both the initial and the on-going process of formation, providing specific material, and further including the different requests of the CLM and its groups/ communities.
- b. To forward the process of maturation in order to pass from group to community, achieving communities strengthened with the fundamental features of the Claretan charisma: prophetic service of the Word in the forefront of mission work.
- c. To produce material for the promotion and popularizing of the CLM.
- d. Reinforcement, by the General Council and the Regions, of the formative processes for the groups.
- e. To clarify the role of the Religious Advisers.
- f. To motivate the groups/communities so that they actively assume a creative role in the formative processes of their members.
- g. To be responsible for the contribution of quotas of groups/communities and individuals.
- h. To give creative encouragement to activities which will help us to set up supporting funds.

### **III.3.3.- Mission**

- a. Constant evaluation of pastoral and group Projects, to ensure that these correspond to the most urgent, apposite and effective requirements in the construction of the Kingdom.
- b. To involve ourselves decidedly in those places and situations where there are threats to life, to the image of the God of Jesus, to the dignity of individuals and peoples, to human rights, and to the conservation of the environment and natural resources.

- c. To take part in the pastoral work of the Local Church, respecting its pluralism and contributing the richness of our own charisma.

### **OPERATIVE DECISIONS APPROVED IN THE V ASSEMBLY**

- 1.- The reform of the Statutes and the Applied Rules.
- 2.- The publication of the new edition of the Statutes when they have been approved by the Pontifical Council for Laymen.
- 3.- The publication of the Applied Rules.
- 4.- The General Council is authorised to approve the Acts of the V Assembly.
- 5.- The General Council is authorised by the Assembly to name the person or persons who will take the necessary steps to constitute the CLM as a legal entity.
- 6.- The General Council is authorised by the V Assembly to nominate suitable persons to negotiate the viability of the proposal of USA East. These same persons are to solicit from the Provinces of the CMFs at world level, and from the General Governments of the other branches of the Claretan Family, donations to increase the possible funds.
- 7.- The Assembly, in the name of all the Regions present, has undertaken that its members will provide an extra-ordinary quota in support of the USA proposal. The quota must be paid and put at the disposition of the General Council before 30 October of this year.
- 8.- The General Council is authorised to constitute Working Commissions, in areas such as: Internet, teaching material, magazine and audiovisual material, in accordance with the needs of the CLM and the available funds.
- 9.- The General Council will have an economic item in the budget for the payment of the above services, to be carried out by qualified people (preferably Claretan Laymen).
- 10.- The 24<sup>th</sup> day of each month is set aside for prayers to be said for one another, in order to encourage a sense of belonging and brotherhood.
- 11.- We pledge ourselves to care for the elderly and sick.

