

CLARET

FROM CHILD TO CHILD

AUTOBIOGRAPHY: Life of a person, written by oneself.

Father Claret wrote his Autobiography for “mature” people. I asked him to write one for children and a few days later, by e-mail, he sent me these lines that I put in your hands in the form of a book.

I hope they will help you to know him a little better. If you don not understand something, you may ask your catechist or some Claretian friend.

Children and catechists, this is dedicated to you.

Javier Garrido

My name is CLARET.

In reality my full name is:

ANTHONY
ADJUTORIO
JOHN CLARET Y CLARÁ.

Schools, Parishes, Youth Centres, Streets of some cities... carry my family name: CLARET.

Because of this, probably you have heard it or seen it in writing more than once. Perhaps by chance your parish is called that way or you are studying in some Claret school, or living in Claret Street of your hometown... or belong to a Claret Youth Centre. Many children in summer go to CLARET camps.

I suppose you are thinking that a man with so many names must be the son of important parents and must have been born in a rich family.

I'll tell you: If you have a map of Spain, unfold it. Look for CATALONIA – BARCELONA – VIC – SALLENT... and an important river, the Llobregat. By this order.

On a December 23, 1807, I was born in the town of Sallent, crossed by the Llobregat River. It had about two thousand inhabitants, who lived by their work in the many family cloth factories.

My parents' names were John Claret and Josefa Clará.

I was the 5th of 11 children: 5 brothers and 6 sisters.

Of the 11, five died before they were 5 years old.

My eldest sister was Rosa, and she loved me very much.

At the baptismal font of my parish "Saint Mary of Sallent" I was baptized on December 25, Christmas Day.

Since then my full name is:

ANTHONY, like my godfather, my mother's brother.

ADJUTORIO, like the husband of Mary, my father's sister.

JOHN, like my father.

Thus: ANTHONY (...) ADJUTORIO, JOHN.

In the parenthesis we will write **-MARY-**.

I added the name of Mary when I was made a Bishop. Do you know why? Because ever since I was small, the Virgin was very important in my life and the name of Mary was very familiar to me.

MARY, the Mother of the Child Jesus

MARY, the patron of my Parish

MARY, was my godmother

MARY,

The Virgin Mary is my Mother, Godmother, Teacher, my Directress, the most important after Jesus.

Remember the Catechism song that says in Spanish:

DIME, NIÑO, CUANTAS LETRAS
TIENE EL NOMBRE DE MARÍA.
DIME, NIÑO, DIME NIÑA,
DÍMELO CON ALEGRÍA.
LA M DE MADRE,
LA A DE AMIGA
LA R DE ROSA
LA I DE INMACULADA
LA A DE AMOR.

Tell me, child, how many letters
The name of Mary has
Tell me, boy, tell me, girl,
Tell me with joy.
M for Mother,
A for Amiga (friend),
R for Rose,
I for Immaculate
A for Love (amor).

I ALSO WAS A CHILD

My mother always brought up her children by herself, but with me she could not do it because she was sick and I was nursed by a lady in whose house I lived day and night.

When I grew up I was told that one day the man of the house dug a deep excavation within the house, the foundations weakened, the walls cracked and the house collapsed. The lady that nursed me, who was the owner, and her four children were buried inside and died.

That day, thanks to God I was not in the house.

I always had a good heart and I was saddened by the misfortunes of others, especially by their poverty.

I did not like to buy whims for myself, thinking of so many people who had nothing to eat.

When I was five, I remember that I used to wake up at night and think of so many people who did harm to others and did not believe in Jesus. I suffered thinking that, if they did not repent, they would never... never... understand how marvellous it is to love others and to know how good our father God is.

And I was very sorry for them. For this reason, I determined that, when I would grow up, I would dedicate myself to speak, write, and to do everything possible to make Jesus known and to tell everyone how good God is.

I already told you that I was born in 1807; well, in 1808 a war began, which older people call "the Independence War," which lasted till 1814.

The inhabitants of my town were afraid of the French soldiers because they burned the cities and they took away the few things they had at home.

Everyone went away from the town. The first times they carried me on their shoulders but when I was FIVE YEARS old, I also fled by foot and I gave my hand to my grandpa, my mother's father. As it was night and he could not see well, I showed him the way with patience and love so that he would not stumble.

My other brothers and cousins left me with him. I loved him much and also the other old persons of the town.

I grew very sad when I saw some children making fun of them. I also remember that, in the Church, when an old person entered, I got up and very gladly I offered him my seat. In the street I always greeted them and, whenever I could, I stopped to talk with them.

When I became SIX, my parents brought me to school. My first teacher was Don Antonio, a very industrious and religious man. Since I always behaved, he never had to punish me and we became good friends.

The priest's name was Don José Amigó. He taught me the catechism and helped me learn the first prayers.

Three other children and I advanced quite well in the catechism. One day he told us to recite the prayers in the Church in front of all the people. All clapped their hands to us and our parents were very proud of us.

FROM MY PARENTS AND TEACHERS I LEARNED:

****If you find something
you should return it to its owner.***

One day on leaving school I found a coin on the floor under a balcony. I called the owner of the house and I gave it to him.

****Obey your parents and be content with what they do, tell or give you, both in your clothing or in your food.***

I cannot remember having ever said: "I don't want this or I want that"

When I was a priest, my mum, who always loved me, used to tell me:

-Anthony, do you like this?

-I always like what you give me.

-But there are always things that we like more than others.

-I like what you give me more than everything else.

My mum died without knowing what I liked more.

****Don't forget to pray***

Every Sunday and holiday I went to Mass with my dad. I don't remember having ever played, fiddled or spoken in the Church.

I prayed the prayers that I was learning in the catechism.

At the age of TEN, I received my First Communion. It was a very special day for me. I promised Jesus that I would always be his friend. Helped by the example of my dad I attended Mass every feast day and I never omitted attending the catechism that the priest gave us. If I passed in front of a Church that was open, I entered to greet Jesus.

MY LOVE FOR THE BLESSED VIRGIN

I am sure that you have sung more than once in the catechism or in the school:

TENGO EN CASA A MI MAMÁ
PERO MIS MAMÁS SON DOS:
EN EL CIELO ESTÁ LA VIRGEN,
QUE ES TAMBIÉN MAMÁ DE DIOS.

I have my Mama at home
But my mamas are two:
The Virgin is in heaven,
She's also God's Mama.

Do you know what a ROSARY is?
Well, since I was very small, they gave me a rosary and I prayed it with the other children, led by the teacher.

I found a booklet about the rosary and with it I learned how to pray it.

When the teacher knew it, he was very happy and asked me to lead the rosary. The other companions, seeing that this pleased the teacher, they also learned and from then on, we all led the rosary by weekly turns.

When my father put me to work in the factory, I also prayed it with the labourers.

I frequently entered the Church to greet the Blessed Virgin and I talked to her with such confidence that I was sure she heard me. Although the telephone had not yet been invented, I imagined there was a cable that reached heaven where the Virgin was.

In the outskirts of almost every town, there is a shrine of the Blessed Virgin. The shrine of my town is five kilometres away; its name is **FUSIMAÑA**.

From early childhood, I went with my elder sister, Rosa, to visit the Virgin. We knelt before her image and we prayed:

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you, blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.

I am convinced that the Virgin helped me and encouraged me to be always happy, joyful and at peace with everyone.

I never fought or quarrelled with anyone, either as a child or as an elder.

My friends dared not speak evil in front of me.

They used to say: "Anthony, go away: we are going to speak evil." I thanked them and never again joined them.

O Mary, my Mother! How good you are to me! I want to love and praise you always. I will see to it that every one knows that you are the Mother of Jesus and our Mother. I will do my best so that everyone will know you, love you, praise you and pray to you. O Mary, my Mother! How good you are to me!

BARCELONA IS GOOD IF THE PURSE SOUNDS

I was beginning to stop being a child. My head dreamed of machines, drawings and projects. The town was growing small for me.

I asked my father to allow me to go to study in Barcelona, a big, industrial city. It seemed marvellous to my youthful illusions.

I was 18.

At the beginning it was hard to adapt, but I started working day and night. I dedicated so much time to work and to study, that I was even forgetting to say my prayers.

I was only concerned with progressing and being the best in my textile work. When I went to pray, I was very distracted and I had more machines in my head than there were saints in the Church.

Soon I became famous in the whole Barcelona because of my skills for making cloths. And I was proud of my work.

But one day, hearing the Mass, I remembered the words of Jesus in the gospel: “What does it profit a man to win the whole world, if he loses his soul?” I was very impressed.

The reason was that during the four years I was in Barcelona, from age 18 to 22, I had some experiences that made me think.

I will tell you some:

***THE VIRGIN DELIVERED ME FROM DROWNING IN THE SEA**

I worked a lot, I lost my sleep and my appetite. Bathing in the sea relaxed me, although I did not know how to swim.

One day the sea got rough, spat from its entrails an immense wave that involved me and brought me out to sea.

I asked the blessed Virgin to help me and I noticed that I floated over the waves without knowing how to swim.

In a moment I found myself in the seashore without a single drop of water entering my mouth.

***TREASON FROM A FRIEND**

I earned quite a lot of money. Therefore, as I had more than I needed to live, I decided to start saving some money.

A youth of my age proposed to me to do some business with that money. He would take care of everything; I trusted him.

One day we won a lot of money in the lottery. My friend who was keen on gambling told me he had lost the winning ticket and could not cash it.

He was lying. He had lost everything in gambling.

Besides, he entered into my room and stole my personal money, my books and even my clothes. He sold it, and again he lost everything. In despair, he went to a trusted family and he took the jewels of the lady, sold them, gambled and lost them too.

The police arrested him and he confessed his crime. I felt so ashamed that I dared not even go out of the house.

I thought everybody was looking at me and commented pointing out with their finger: "that's the thief's friend."

CHANGE OF COURSE

Disillusioned, tired and bored of everything, I decided to seek the solitude and silence of a Carthusian Monastery.

First I informed my father. With tears in his eyes he told me: "But my child, now that you are the number one in cloth manufacturing in Barcelona, an enterprising and rich young man; now that I was counting on you to set up a great family enterprise, you take this decision."

He remained thoughtful and after a long silence, he continued: "I don't want to oppose your decision, God forbid, though I regret it deeply in my heart, but

- think it well,
- ask the help of God
- and consult with a priest."

And he added another observation: "I would like that, should it be possible, instead of becoming a Carthusian, you would study to become a diocesan priest."

SALLENT - VIC

On September 29, after spending a few days with my family in my town, I started my life as a seminarian in Vic, a city of some 12,000 inhabitants.

Its people were very religious. Imagine, it had more than 20 churches, plus the cathedral, nearly 100 priests, several convents of religious men and women and around one thousand seminarians.

I was 22 years old, I was the eldest of all the seminarians (usually they entered the seminary at an earlier age).

I came from a less religious atmosphere.

For all these reasons, I found it difficult to adapt to the new life of the seminary, although I did not live in it, because a priest who appreciated me very much, received me in his house.

Little by little, not without effort, I began the studies to become a priest.

I continued with the idea of becoming a Carthusian monk.

So then, when I finished the first year Philosophy, after consulting with a priest friend of mine, with great joy I started on my way to the Carthusian Monastery of Monte Alegre, near Mataró.

Before I reached Barcelona there was a heavy storm. I had to run to take refuge from the great downpour that was falling. I was so fatigued that I could hardly breathe.

I got very scared and decided to return to Vic.

I realized that I had no health to be a Carthusian.

And I thought, I will continue studying to be a secular priest. (Remember that this was one of the wishes of my father, who preferred that I would be a secular priest rather than a Carthusian).

ORDAINED PRIEST

The seminarians were ordained priests after ten years of studies, but the Bishop decided to ordain me four years ahead, before I finished my career.

You know how to add and to subtract. So do numbers with me:

*I entered the seminary at age 22, in 1829. The career lasted ten years, so I would have to be ordained at age 32, in 1839. However **I was ordained a priest on June 13, 1835**, four years earlier, at the age of 28.*

In the old days, and even today in some places, when a seminarian was ordained priest, he celebrated the First Mass in the Church of his home town and there was a great feast in which all the people took part.

I celebrated it on June 21.

What a joy for me, for my relatives and for the whole town!

Since then everyone started calling me *MOSEN ANTÓN*, that is how they call the priests in my land.

THE WAR ONCE AGAIN

I already told you how I took care of my grandfather when I was only 4 years old, especially in the days of the *French War*. Twenty years later, I re-live war times.

King Ferdinand VII dies (1833). There is a Civil War. Two bands: Liberals and Carlists. In every war there are always two sides because, as you already know, “two cannot fight if one does not want.” But the worst part of all wars is that the innocent suffer the most.

But I have to stress a very important part of this new phase of war:

THE RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION.

- *The seminaries were closed or changed into military buildings.*
- *The priests were expelled.*
- *Ordinations to the priesthood were forbidden.*
- *The seminarians had to go to study in France and Italy.*
- *The goods of the Church were expropriated.*
- *The people could not go to the Churches even on Sundays.*
- *People were split up.*

During most of this war time I worked in the parish of Saint Mary and I dedicated myself especially to:

- 1.- *Speak of God and the Gospel to those who went to Church.*
- 2.- *Give catechism to children.*
- 3.- *Visit the sick everyday.*
- 4.- *Hear confessions, hear confessions, hear confessions ...*

The poverty of the people, the hatred among the neighbours themselves because of the war and the forgetfulness of everything religious made me very sad.

TRIP TO ROME

I was working in a parish; but in the midst of this atmosphere, I decided to offer myself to the Pope to become a missionary anywhere in the world, even if I had to suffer a lot, be persecuted and die.

My trip to Rome was not easy. My superiors did not want me to go, nor did the people with whom I was working in the parish, because they loved me very much.

When I arrived in Rome, I wanted to become a Jesuit religious, but a serious sickness caused them to advise me to return to Spain. It was in March of 1840.

MY LIVE AS A PARISH PRIEST

On May 13 of that same year I was already a parish priest in the town of Viladrau (Catalonia).

- I explained the Gospel in the mass.
- I gave catechism to the children in the afternoon.
- Everyday I visited the sick and also I acted as a physician because, as we were in time of war, the physicians were persecuted by the politicians and the town was without an official physician.

But before eight months had passed, I asked the Bishop permission to leave the parish and dedicate myself to preach the word of God in any place they offered me.

My concern was to preach the gospel of Jesus. The aim that I set to myself was that God be known, loved and praised by everybody.

And everyday, before going out to preach, I prayed this prayer:

**MY LORD AND FATHER,
MAY I KNOW YOU AND MAKE YOU BE KNOWN,
MAY I LOVE YOU AND MAKE YOU BE LOVED,
MAY I SERVE YOU AND MAKE YOU BE SERVED,
MAY I PRAISE YOU AND MAKE YOU BE PRAISED
BY ALL CREATURES.**

When I see people who are not god, I become sad and think that I can do something for them.

It is as if a very tender and loving mother would see her son about to fall from a window or into a fire. Would she not cry out: My son, watch out!?

These and other thoughts encouraged me to preach the Word of Jesus without rest and to work that everyone be happy accepting God in their lives.

PLACES WHERE I PREACHED AND PERSECUTIONS

As I was telling you, I wanted to be a missionary, to go from town to town teaching the gospel to people.

From the beginning of the year 1840 when I came from Rome till the year 1848 when I went to the Canaries, I preached in very many villages of the entire Catalonia. Just now I could not tell you how many, but it was more than one hundred.

Since some government people were persecuting me because I spoke of God to the people and I gathered many people in my sermons, my bishop used to send me to towns that were very far one from the other, so that they could not follow me. They were never able to arrest me.

These years I always went from one town to the other on foot, with my **bundle** on my shoulder. In it I only carried the Bible, a change of underwear, and little more. I never carried money and asked for nothing for my sermons.

In the morning I walked for five hours, and five more in the afternoon; sometimes with rain, or snow, and in summertime with burning sun.

Since I always went on foot, I joined muleteers and simple people, in order to be able to speak with them about God and instruct them on Religion.

I did not get tired; some day I preached up to twelve sermons.

But I was not satisfied only with speaking. I proposed to use all means available.

*** I prayed and asked others to pray;**

*** That they should participate in the Holy Mass;**

*** That they should receive Communion**, asking Jesus for those who did not believe in Him.

That they should also pray to Jesus so that Christians would not forget Him and He would alleviate the sorrows of all those who suffered.

*** I tried to teach catechism to the children** in all the places I visited, encouraged by the Words of Jesus in the Gospel "Let the children come to me."

*** I wrote a catechism for children.**

I wrote many books and loose leaflets that the children took home so that their parents could also read them, like those you receive in the catechism; I distributed holy pictures, rosaries...

I was forgetting to comment to you that I was also in the Canaries fifteen months, before I went to Cuba as Archbishop.

I already told you that I always went on foot to the towns, except on one occasion, when I went to preach in Lanzarote.

We had to cover several kilometres, and the priest who accompanied me told me that he had some difficulty in walking....

They brought us a big camel and both of us rode it.

A little before we reached the town, we dismounted and entered the town on foot.

After the mission, when we were leaving, a man asked me:

-Are you the same missionary that preached in Grand Canary?
- I told him, yes.
-Then you should know that people say that it was not you, because that one always went on foot and you have come riding, and therefore someone has said: *I will not go to listen to him, because it is not the missionary of the Grand Canary.*

Here they started to call me “**Padrito**” for the first time.

SONS OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

I suppose that this title will not mean anything to you.

I WILL EXPLAIN:

Fr. Claret has spoken to us in the previous pages about his concern for preaching the gospel throughout the world.

Well then, since he realizes that by himself he cannot do much, he decides to talk to some priest friends and invites them to join him, to live together and to go out to preach the gospel from town to town.

On July 16, 1849, feast of Our Lady of Carmel, when he is 41 years of age, he meets with five priest friends and together they found the

CONGREGATION OF MISSIONARIES SONS OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

At the end of the meeting, they all prayed this way:

O God, Blessed are you for choosing your humble servants
to be Sons of the Immaculate Heart of your Mother.

Eventually they came to be called
CLARETIAN (family name)
MISSIONARIES (name).

I bet you understand better now.
I am sure you have heard of them.

It is even possible that you belong to some parish where they are working. I’m sure that some of those who are reading these lines are studying in some **CLARET** school. Or have been part of some **CLARET** camp.

Well then, from **CLARET**, **CLARET-ANS**.

The work that Father Claret started a July 16 of 1849 continues now with the labour of all the Claretians who continue making the first thought of Father Claret a reality.

That day, when Claret met with his companions, he told them that they had to have these qualities:

“A Son of the Immaculate Heart of Mary” (A Claretian) “is a man who loves Jesus very much and is concerned with all people.

Who is illumined by God’s light and passes that light on to others so that they can see.

He does anything to extend the gospel of Jesus.

He only thinks of imitating Jesus in prayer, in work and in his concern for the poor.

He does everything so that God may be praised and all people may know Him.”

This is the ID card that Father Claret left to his Sons, the Claretians.

ARCHBISHOP OF SANTIAGO DE CUBA

Claret begins his great work on July 16, 1849, but his joy was not going to last long. A few days later, on August 4, the man who always wanted to be a simple and humble missionary is appointed Archbishop of Santiago de Cuba.

This means that he has to get out of his country, leave his preaching, and with all the pain of his heart, leave his companions alone with whom he was committed.

After consulting with his Claretian companions and with his Bishop, he accepts being an Archbishop.

Reviewing some dates:

July 16, 1849:

He founds the congregation of Claretian missionaries.

October 4, 1849:

He accepts the appointment of Archbishop of Cuba.

October 6, 1850:

He is ordained Bishop in Vic. There he is accompanied by his father, already old, dressed as a humble craftsman, and by his elder brothers. Exactly one year to prepare his consecration as a Bishop and support his Claretian brothers in starting the great work that was beginning.

He goes to Madrid to receive his appointment, but he takes advantage of those days to continue preaching, so much so that he arrives late to the audience that he had with the King and Queen.

October 22, 1850:

Queen Isabel II grants him the Cross of Isabel la Católica.

Claret goes without receiving it, because he has to pay 3,000 *reales* (Spanish money at that time) and he prefers to use that money to help the poor and to edit more books to give away.

December 28, 1850:

He leaves Barcelona to go to Cuba. He was accompanied by eleven priests and four young helpers in the Frigate "La Nueva Teresa Cubana".

But, don't miss it, he was in Barcelona from November 16 to December 28, when he embarked for Cuba.

And Claret took the opportunity to continue preaching. They say that some days he preached from seven to ten sermons. He also took the chance to print several books.

February 16, 1851

After almost two months of navigation, he arrives in Cuba.

They were very well received by the people of the place, because they had been a long time without priests.

They were not so well received by the ruling class and the landowners of the Island.

In Cuba he finds all sorts of races: the first inhabitants, those who entered the island with Columbus, the black people brought as slaves, each one of them with its own customs and religious convictions.

He soon organizes the group to go around the Island together, and become aware of the problems of the people.

- He fought **against the marginalization** among the races.
- He defended the **dignity of the persons**.
- He installed **workshops** for the prisoners.
- He created **free schools** for the poor, and pay schools for the rich.
- He built **hospitals** and organized medical visit to the houses.
- He started **educational farms** to give work to adolescents and young persons who spent the days lost in the streets.
- **Savings Banks**: to help the poorest ones with loans.

But all these things that Claret does do not please the ruling classes and the rich who were exploiting the poorest ones. Claret is persecuted, insulted, calumniated, wounded.

He had several attempts. The best known was that of Holguín, which he himself narrates:

"On February 1, 1856, on reaching the city of Holguín, I preached about the Blessed Virgin. At the end of the function we went out of the Church to go to my residence, accompanied by four priests and my page Ignatius and a sacristan with a lantern or torch to light up the way, because it was already dark at eight thirty in the evening.

We had already gone out of the Church, we were in the Mayor street, a wide and spacious street; there were many people at one and the other side of the street greeting me. A man approached me as if to kiss my ring, but suddenly he stretched out his arm with a razor and landed a blow with all his strength.

But since I had my head inclined and I was covering my mouth with a handkerchief that I had in my right hand, instead of cutting my throat, as was his intention, he slashed my face or left cheek from the ear to the tip of the chin, and in passing he got and wounded my right arm, with which I covered my mouth, as I have said."

He was condemned to death but Claret forgave him, asked him to be pardoned and paid for his trip to go some other place where he would not be known.

By chance, one year earlier, Claret, at the request of his relatives, had interceded so that the now assassin would be released from jail.

He lived in Cuba six years.

CONFESSOR OF QUEEN ISABEL II

On March 18, 1857 he received a letter from the Queen of Spain, Isabel II, in which she informed him that she had chosen him as her confessor.

It was very painful to have to leave the people of Cuba who asked him, with tears in their eyes, not to leave them alone.

After encouraging his companion priests to continue working, on April 12 he definitely left the Island.

At the beginning of June of 1857 he arrives in Madrid. He who had been born to be a missionary feels in the court like a dog tied to a post or like a bird in a cage that is always looking for a way to escape. Though with much suffering he accepts the situation because it is God's will.

He never interfered with politics and never asked for anything for himself or for others.

Only once, he tells us:

“Yes, I have asked for one thing many times, that is, to let me go from Madrid and get out of the Palace.”

I had or wanted nothing of the things of the Palace, not even a pin.”

He envied the missionaries who were able to go from town to town preaching Jesus' message. What did he do? When he was in Madrid he dedicated his time to write books and loose leaflets, printed and distributed them. When the King and Queen went out on trips throughout the cities of Spain, he accompanied them, but as soon as he could, he escaped to preach.

A friend of his who accompanied him in these trips and preachings counted the sermons of one day and he tells us that he preached more than twelve.

His stay in Madrid was not very pleasant: He was calumniated, persecuted and they even falsified his books to ridicule him.

They wrote verses laughing at him; they made caricatures of him in magazines and even in match boxes.

He also suffered attempts. He himself tells us how on October 15, 1859 the person who was going to assassinate him entered the Church of Saint Joseph of Madrid, in Alcalá Street, approached him and told him crying that he had to kill him or else he himself would be killed.

Fr. Claret writes: "He cried, embraced and kissed me, and went to hide so that they would not kill him for not keeping the task of killing him."

But Jesus also rewarded him in exchange for his works.

Probably many of you have been in La Granja of San Ildefonso, in Segovia. He himself tells us what happened to him.

"The King and Queen frequently visited the palace of Aranjuez and that of La Granja. On August 26, 1861, as I was praying before the image of the Holy Christ of Forgiveness that is in the Church of the Rosary of La Granja, at seven o'clock in the evening, the Lord granted me the great grace of keeping the sacramental species, and having Jesus day and night in my chest."

EXILE TO FRANCE

After eleven years in the Palace, for political causes, he has to abandon the Queen and her Court and goes to Rome. Pope Pius IX advises him to return beside the King and Queen.

He returns, but a while later, on September 18, 1868, the republic triumphs.

On October 30 the royal family, some people closely related and Claret went out exiled to France.

Fr. Claret was 60 years of age.

In Spain the persecution of the Church begins, its possessions are expropriated, Churches are burned, the priests are expelled.

The priest friends of Father Claret (Claretian Missionaries) have to flee too.

Five began with him the Great Work (*founding the Congregation of Missionaries, Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary*) on a July 16, 1849; but they were already many more. They all find themselves together in exile with Father Claret in the city of Prades (France).

But the search for Claret to arrest him continues. They have discovered where he is hiding. He has to flee. He brings with him only two pairs of socks, a shirt and handkerchiefs.

In the darkness of night, very stealthily, like a delinquent who flees, already very sick and tired, he is transferred to the Monastery of the Cistercian Monks of Fontfroid (France), near Narbonne.

The monks receive and take care of him with love, but Claret is very weak.

On October 24, 1870, at 8:45 in the morning, at the age of 62, he dies after kissing the crucifix that had always been with him.

The witnesses say that on the day of his funeral his only companions were the monks of the monastery, a small group of his Claretian brothers who had come from Prades where they were exiled and a little bird that slipped through one of the windows of the Monastery Church and accompanied with its warbles the prayers of the monks.

The original tomb where he was buried in the cemetery by the Monastery is still kept.

The monks engraved on his tombstone these words: "I loved justice and hated evil; therefore I die in exile."

Eighty years later, on May 7, 1950, Pope Pius XII proclaimed him a Saint, an exemplary Christian.

Of humble origin, small in size, Claret passed his life doing good, preaching the gospel of Jesus, and proclaiming with his life and words how good God the Father is.

The body was transferred to Vic (Barcelona), where it rests in the temple of the Claretian Community.

Claret,
You are a pilgrim,
You are a sower,
The seed you scatter
Is the good news,
You reach
All colours and races:
There's only one father,
Only one lord.

Claret,
Through your example
We see our mission;
We must be witnesses,
We must bring hope;
We want to follow
Your footsteps
And tell the people
That God is love.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FATHER CLARET SPEAKS

- 1. My Name is Claret...*
- 2. I also was a child ...*
- 3. My love for the Blessed Virgin ...*
- 4. Barcelona is good if...*
- 5. Change of course ...*
- 6. Sallent - Vic ...*
- 7. Ordained Priest ...*
- 8. The war once again ...*
- 9. Trip to Rome...*
- 10. My life as a Parish Priest ...*
- 11. Places where I preached and persecutions ...*

A CLARETIAN SPEAKS

- 12. Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary ...*
- 13. Archbishop of Santiago de Cuba ...*
- 14. Confessor of Queen Isabel II ...*
- 15. Exile to France ...*

Child-Youth vocational pastoral – Claretian Province of Santiago