

**OFFICIAL PRAYER OF THE
BICENTENARY OF THE BIRTH OF
SAINT ANTHONY MARY CLARET**

Our Father, you anointed
St. Anthony Mary Claret
with your Spirit
and made him an ardent listener
and faithful servant of your Word.
In this second centenary of his birth
we give you thanks for the gift of his life
and the fruitfulness of his mission.
Raise in the Church many evangelizers
who, driven by the love of Christ,
spread its flames wherever they pass
and succeed by all means possible to set
the whole world ablaze
with the fire of your love.
Grant to us, O Lord, with the help of St.
Anthony Mary Claret
and the intercession of the
Heart of Mary, our Mother,
to grow in faith, hope and total dedication
to you and to all our
brothers and sisters so that one day
we can enjoy together
the holy dwelling place of your Kingdom.
Through Christ Our Lord, Amen.



Resources for this Pamphlet:

- *L'Osservatore Romano*, 2 January 2008
- www.bible.claret.org
- www.americancatholic.org
- www.claretians.org

“How can we live today what was essential for Claret? In summary, it was discovered that he lived during a difficult time but knew how to enlighten it with his faith; he was sensitive to his world but maintained a critical relationship with it; he encountered strenuous challenges but he never lost his bearings; he was a man with limitations but also one convinced that he could do something; he had weaknesses but he always had hope in the principles passed on to him and in the practice of the virtues; temptation was present in his life but he knew how to oppose it with strength and grace. He was a man who, like the Master, desired that *everyone have life*, who was of a particular era, but whose spirit has the force to inspire men and women of every time and place.” Antonio Bellella Cardiel, CMF.



**Evangelization
and the Lives of
the Saints:
St. Anthony Mary
Claret**

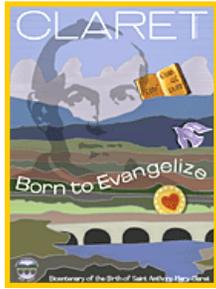


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St. Anthony Mary Claret was born in the town of Sallent, Spain, as an early “Christmas present” to his family on Dec. 23, 1807. He grew up working in the small textile factory located within the family home, and became an accomplished weaver. But even as a child he came to truly believe that he was called to prayer and to the salvation of souls. After some family setbacks, he was ordained a diocesan priest when he was 27. Fr. Anthony was an enthusiastic young priest who loved preaching the Gospel. He would travel on foot throughout Spain, preaching sermons and hearing confessions for hours at a time. He understood that many people were hungry for the Word of God: “If (God’s Word) is spoken by someone who is filled with the fire of charity — the fire of love of God and neighbor — it will work wonders.” (Autobiography #438-439).

But St. Anthony longed to travel to other mission countries; soon his wish was granted and he was sent to minister in the Canary Islands. It was here that he also began publishing books and pamphlets as a way of evangelizing. He then went on to found a religious institute of missionaries, the Congregation of Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

(today known as the Claretians).

By now his fame was spreading, and he was next named Archbishop of Santiago de Cuba. He found the Cuban people in desperate need, and he reacted quickly. He set up trade schools and credit unions for the poor, worked closely with the agricultural community and continued to write and publish evangelical materials. He was making great progress, even though he was often opposed by the “powers that be”, when he was asked to return to Spain to be the confessor to Queen Isabella II. He remained there for eleven years, probably the unhappiest of his life, as he was continually slandered and ridiculed for his beliefs. Still, he preached throughout Spain whenever he could, and always walked with God. When the Queen was dethroned he went into exile in France with his missionaries; there he died in 1870 at 62. The words on his tombstone read: “I have loved justice and hated iniquity; therefore I die in exile.”

Some thoughts on his spirituality are:

- St. Anthony Claret suffered much from persecution and personal attacks; still he maintained his integrity and did not return evil for evil. He truly lived the beatitude: “Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me...” When others misunderstand us or slander us without just cause, let us remember, as St. Anthony did, that our reward for our faithfulness lies with Christ.
- Evangelization was always in the forefront of St. Anthony’s mind. He used every opportunity to preach about the love of God, and wrote and published books and pamphlets so others could

have access to the Good News of Christ. While we are not all preachers, we all have the opportunity to evangelize through our actions, through our conversation, and through the day-to-day interactions of our life. To spread “the fragrance of Christ” wherever we go with a kind word and an understanding heart is to show others the hope we have in our faith. Let us endeavor to make each day an offering to God and neighbor.

- When St. Anthony was asked by Queen Isabella what favor he would request from her, he replied: “that you let me resign”! But although he was very unhappy in his present situation, he continued to be obedient to God. In our own lives, there are times when we question why we are in a certain situation, and we want our own way. But God asks for our obedience, and it is only through loving trust in Him that we will find peace. God’s ways are higher than ours, and what He asks us to accept is always for our good and the good of those around us.

Today the Claretians are a “religious community of priests, brothers and sisters dedicated to the mission of living and spreading the Gospel of Jesus in more than sixty countries on five continents. Their ministries are devoted to social concerns and issues of justice and peace in parishes, foreign missions, and publishing. The Claretians are dedicated to seeing the world through the eyes of the poor. They strive to respond to the most urgent and timely needs, trying to care for the spiritual and material needs of others.” From: www.claretians.org.