

DAY OF CLARETIAN VOCATION

Atmosphere: Video "Dios fiel" (Lc. 1,37) Ain Karem
(CD "Con él la fiesta empezó", nº 1)



Introduction:

We live in a special time. The General chapter process is an opportunity that God gives us for the internalization, the search, the conversion to the Claretian vocation to which we have been called for. The General chapter is a "*kairos*" for the whole congregational body, each and every one of us is invited to live this time of discernment with seriousness and commitment, the new life depends on all that the Congregation is called to live. We are accountable to God for our own fidelity to the vocation, and through the whole Chapter process He is offering us a new opportunity to revitalize it.

In this General chapter context we celebrate the day of the Claretian vocation, we approach the Word of God that is full of the experience of men and women who are surprised by and perceive the novelty of the Visit of God. The Chapter Pilgrimage may be one of those surprises.

We contemplate the wonders of God in Mary. They are wonders that do not make too much noise, that surprise not but those who have simple eyes and know to discover their presence.

Mary is the woman who knew how to listen to God and to reality. In different events in the life of Mary, we discover her ways she knew how to act before reality. We are going to ask each of us to know how to listen to reality, to answer its questions and to work to transform it so that the Kingdom of God may be present in our history.

The love in Mary means total availability to the other, toward God. She has emptied herself and wants to live for God, her Son and her children. This availability includes welcoming and surrendering. Open ears and heart. The Surrender to the care and service of the Word without conditions and without limits.

Mary is the model of faithful community that knows how to listen and practice the Word of God. Luke, in describing Mary's visit to Elizabeth, teaches what communities must do to transform the visit of God into service for the brethren.

Mary goes out, sets out on the journey, makes the way easy to Elizabeth and thus announces Jesus



Reading the Gospel (Lk 1, 39-45)

Mary set out at that time and went as quickly as she could into the hill country to a town in Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now it happened that as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I

be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? Look, the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.

- **1 Moment:** - Again we read the text personally pointing out the verbs, characters, place, time ...
- **2 Moment:** We share the resonance of the text in the form of Echo

Listen to the song: "Palabra" Ain Karem (CD. "A todos los pueblos", nº3)

(Select other songs which can help)

Eres Palabra de Vida, en Ti, la promesa ya anunciada toma carne, y es cumplida. Eres silencio elocuente que sabe proclamar a gritos cuál es el querer del Padre. En tu Palabra Jesús, encontramos la respuesta a tanta pregunta abierta, de tanta esperanza cierta.	Haznos contigo P-palabra, gestada en silencio, tierna, que se ofrece oportuna a nuestra hermana que espera, que se ofrece oportuna a nuestro hermano que espera.
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- **3 Moment:** We deepen the text and we get prepared to listen to what God wants to say to us today in our General Chapter reality. Some reflections can help us:

With the words of Pope Francis we can say that Mary faces the path of her life with great realism, humanity and concreteness, synthesizing in three words her attitude: listen, decide and act.

Listen -Where does Mary's gesture going to her relative Isabel come from? From a word of the angel of God: "*Your sister Elizabeth also conceived a son in spite of his old age*"... (Lk 1:36). Mary knows how to listen to God. It is not a simple superficial "*hearing*", but "*listening*", being attentive, welcoming, availability to God. It is not the distracted way in which we stand before the Lord or the others: we hear the words, but we do not really listen. Mary listens to God.

And Mary also listens to the facts, reads the events of her life, is attentive to concrete reality and does not stop at the surface, but goes to the deep, to grasp the meaning. The relative Elizabeth is already old, expects a son, Mary is attentive to the meaning, she understands: "*because there is nothing impossible for God*" (Lk 1:37).

This is also true for me. My vocational journey has started from a "*listening*" ... and answering... how do I now hear God speaking to me?

The Lord is at the door of our life and knocks in many ways, putting signals in our way. Am I able to hear in the daily reality his presence and his calls?

Decide "*Mary hurried to a town in the mountainous region of Judea*" (Lk 1:39) She does not live in haste, but only when necessary "*she goes without delay*". She gets up and goes ». Mary does not find excuses as many times happens to us. She simply "gets up and goes," showing, all her "*bravery of woman*." Mary does not avoid the fatigue of the decision. And this happens either in the fundamental choice that will change her life: Mary said then: "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "*May your word to me be fulfilled.*" (cf. Lk 1:38), or in the most ordinary decisions, But also rich in meaning.

It is difficult to make decisions, we often tend to postpone them, to let others decide in our place, we often prefer to let ourselves be carried by events by a routine rhythm of life, to follow the fashion of the moment, which is easier or comfortable; Sometimes we know what we have to do, but we do not have the courage or it seems too difficult because it means to go against the current.

Mary in the Visitation goes against the current; she listens to God, reflects and seeks to understand reality, and decides to visit, even when she is pregnant, the elderly relative.

¿Am I ready to respond to the calls that God and our brothers make to me?

Acts- Mary went quickly to a village in the mountainous region of Judea. In spite of the difficulties, the criticisms that would have received by his decision to leave did not stop in front of nothing. In prayer, before God who speaks, she reflects and meditates on the facts of his life.

But when she is clear what God asks of her, what she has to do, she does not delay, but goes "without delay", accepting the fatigue of climbing the mountain, facing the journey (minimum 4 days). The act of Mary is a consequence of her obedience to the words of the angel, but united to the charity, goes to Isabel to be useful; And in this she leaves her house, of herself, out of love, she carries what she has most precious: Jesus, her Son.

We stop to listen, to reflect on what we should do, many times, maybe we are also clear the decision we have to take, but we do not move to action. And above all we do not put ourselves into play by moving "without delay" towards others to bring our help, our understanding, our charity; We are frightened by the "escalations" and imaginary difficulties in which we too can carry Mary, the most precious thing we have received, Jesus and his Gospel, with the word and above all with the concrete testimony of our actions.

The phrase "... *and walking they to make easy the same path for others*", indicates the way also to us, before what the Lord asks us in our life, to go against the current like Her, in the Visitation. Out of love she came out of herself, to carry Jesus.

The praise that Elizabeth makes to Mary: "*Blessed are you for believing that the things which the Lord has told you will be fulfilled!*" It is Luke's message to the Communities: as Mary listens, to believe in the Word of God, because she has the strength to accomplish what she tells us. It is a creative Word. It engenders life in the womb of a virgin, in the heart of the poor and abandoned people who welcome it with faith. Maria prefigures what the community that brings Jesus alive in it's her heart.

- **4 Moment:** sharing prayerfully what the text inspire me.

In community, we all need one another to confirm ourselves in faith by receiving the visit of our God today. We joyfully live the gift of our Claretian vocation and proclaim that the Lord has been great with us and our congregation from generation to generation. And he calls us to be a community witness of his love.

Song of Magnificat or listening (Lk. 1, 46-56)



Prayer

"Mary woman of listening, open our ears; Let us know how to hear the Word of your Son Jesus among the thousand words of this world; Let us know how to listen to the reality in which we live, to each person we meet, especially to the one who is poor, needy, in difficulty.

Mary woman of decision, enlighten our mind and heart, so that we can obey the Word of your Son Jesus without hesitation; give us the courage of decision, not let ourselves be dragged by others to guide our lives.

Mary, woman of action, make our hands and feet move "without delay" towards others, to bring the charity and love of your Son Jesus, to offer, like you, the light of the Gospel in the world. »

God of love who has submerged Mary with your living presence and opened her eyes to the needs of the brothers and inspired, when she carried in her bosom her Son, the desire to visit her cousin Elizabeth, in a delicate situation, grant us in this Chapter time so that docile to the breath of the Spirit, like Mary, we may have the heart to listen the reality from God and go out quickly to meet those who are in need. May our life and service become an invitation to others to follow Jesus. Amen.

The Immaculate Virgin Mary, whose "yes" to God became a service to human beings, should be our strength and model in evangelizing people, because Christ chose to come to humanity through Her. We must make her loved as mother and lady who leads all to her Son. (cont. 62)