

October 24, 2024

Daily Reflections



Center for Spiritual Development

FIRE OF LOVE

By Lucy Dominguez

A Quote

"Love in a man who preaches the Word of God is like fire in a musket. If a man were to throw a bullet with his hands, he would hardly make a dent in anything; but if he takes this same bullet and ignites some gunpowder behind it, it can kill. It is much the same with the Word of God. If God's Word is spoken only naturally, it does very little; but if it is spoken by a priest who is filled with the fire of charity—the fire of love of God and neighbor—it will wound vices, kill sins, convert sinners, and work wonders."

FROM THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF SAINT ANTHONY MARY CLARET (#439)

Reflection

St. Anthony Mary Claret was born in Sallent, Barcelona, in 1807 to a deeply Christian family. Despite his early calling to the priesthood, he initially worked in textile manufacturing due to the closure of his Latin school. At 22, he

entered the seminary in Vic and was ordained in 1835. He felt a strong missionary calling, preaching across Catalonia and later in the Canary Islands, where he became known as "el Padrito."

In 1849 he founded the Congregation of the Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Appointed Archbishop of Santiago de Cuba in 1850, he focused on missionary work, education, and social reforms, including fighting slavery. In 1857, Queen Isabel II appointed him her Confessor, leading to his influence in Madrid.

St. Anthony's later years were marked by his efforts in church reform, founding educational institutions, and promoting the arts and sciences. He later participated in the First Vatican Council, advocating for papal infallibility. Claret died in 1870, was beatified in 1934, and canonized in 1950.

As I read about St. Anthony's life, I couldn't help but think, "This sounds so familiar—who does this remind me of?" St. Anthony's journey closely mirrors that of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange, a group of women who have dedicated their lives to responding to the needs of the Dear Neighbor. Today, they are transforming their Motherhouse into affordable housing for seniors, embodying the same spirit of service that St. Anthony exemplified.

The effectiveness of the Sisters' mission—to bring all people into union with God and one another, serving according to their needs and unique gifts through both spiritual and corporal works of mercy—lies in their ability to sustain the spiritual growth of those they serve. By addressing both spiritual and practical needs, they ensure that their ministry is impactful and lasting.

In today's world, the legacy of St. Anthony and the example of the Sisters of St. Joseph invite us to approach our ministries with the same fiery love and dedication. They remind us that when our words and actions are infused with love, they carry the power to bring about real and meaningful change. By embodying this love and dedication, we continue their mission of building a compassionate and united body of Christ.



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For Pondering

- How does the analogy of God's Word as a bullet ignited by fire of love challenge my current approach to sharing my faith with others?
- In what areas of my life or ministry might I need to rekindle the fire of love and charity to serve those in need more effectively?
- What steps can I take to embody the Sisters of St. Joseph's dedication to their

mission in my own daily actions and decisions?

For Prayer

*O my God and my Father,
may I know you and make you known;
love you and make you loved;
serve you and make you served;
praise you and make all creatures praise you.
Amen.*

ADAPTED FROM FR. MATTHEW VATTAMATTAM, CMF

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