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The Love of Christ Drives Us On

St. Anthony Mary Claret



Saint Antony Claret was born in 1807 in the town of Sallent, Spain. Following his ordination to the priesthood, he travelled throughout the region of Catalonia preaching to the people. After having founded a society of missionaries, he was named a bishop in Cuba and there won great renown for his pastoral zeal. He returned to Spain, continued there his pastoral labors, and died at Frontfroide in France in 1870. The following reading on evangelization and the apostolic zeal characteristic of the missionary spirit, drawn from his book *L'egoismo vinto* (Rome: 1869, p. 60) is used in the Roman Office of Readings for the feast (optional liturgical memorial) of St. Anthony Mary Claret on October 24.

Driven by the fire of the Holy Spirit, the holy apostles travelled throughout the earth. Inflamed with the same fire, apostolic missionaries have reached, are now reaching and will continue to reach the ends of the earth, from one pole to the other, in order to proclaim the word of God. They are deservedly able to apply to themselves those words of the apostle Paul: *The love of Christ drives us on.*

The love of Christ arouses us, urges us to run, and to fly, lifted on the wings of holy zeal. The man who truly loves God also loves his neighbour. The truly zealous man is also one who loves, but he stands on a higher plane of love so that the more he is inflamed by love, the more urgently zeal drives him on. But if anyone lacks this zeal, then it is evident that love and charity have been extinguished in his heart. The zealous man desires and achieves all great things and he labours strenuously so that God may always be better known, loved and served in this world and in the life to come, for this holy love is without end.

Because he is concerned also for his neighbour, the man of zeal works to fulfil his desire that all men be content on this earth and happy and blessed in their heavenly homeland, that all may be saved, and that no one may perish for ever, or offend God, or remain even for a moment in sin. Such are the concerns we observe in the holy apostles and in all who are driven by the apostolic spirit.

For myself, I say this to you: The man who burns with the fire of divine love is a

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son of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and wherever he goes, he enkindles that flame; he desires and works with all his strength to inflame all men with the fire of God's love. Nothing deters him: he rejoices in poverty; he labours strenuously; he welcomes hardships; he laughs off false accusations; he rejoices in anguish. He thinks only of how he might follow Jesus Christ and imitate him by his prayers, his labours, his sufferings, and by caring always and only for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

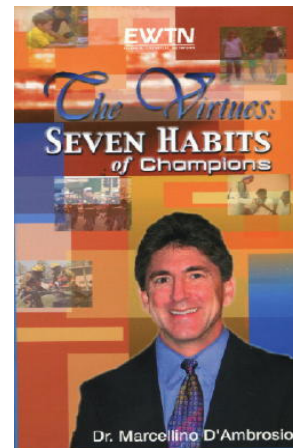
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