Reflections of the life of St. Anthony Mary Claret

Reflections on the early life of St. Anthony Mary Claret
by Monica Walton

1111111111111111111111111111111 - “evangelical and apostolic preacher,”
As I wanted to get to know a bit more about the personality of Claret, I started to read… A Life at the Service of the Gospel’ by John M Lozano, cmf.
One of the first descriptions of him in the book states:
’He never would have made it into an anthology of sacred oratory. His ideas were not profound (they were the commonplaces used by everyone, as his sermon outlines show). His images were neither brilliant nor particularly captivating,. His prose was not a masterpiece of construction, not were his words elegantly chosen. In fact, he would smile at what we have just said, because he only wanted to be an “evangelical and apostolic preacher,” that is, someone who proclaimed with simplicity (so as to be understood by listeners who were not very well educated) and insistently (with images people could easily grasp), what we would have called “Gospel truths.” In this he was outstanding. His words flowed with great ease, especially when he himself was emotionally moved; and simple but very apt comparisons streamed from his lips. One salient characteristic on which all witnesses concur – and it was a most important thing in those days before the existence of electrophonic equipment – was that he had a “vibrant voice”.’

Also:
‘Claret preached with great simplicity and clarity, repeating the most fundamental ideas, so that they would penetrate into the mind and conscience of his hearers. He came up with a host of very concrete comparisons, which made doctrinal statements more accessible.’

Already this appealed to me, i.e. this was a man who shared the gospel with ordinary people in ordinary ways, not someone who was ‘preaching’ in a highly intellectual fashion, beyond the grasp of ordinary folk like me.

Monica Walton