

FEBRUARY 6, 2017 / SANTA DOROTEA

CELEBRATION OF THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRY





OPENING HYMN

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

INTRODUCTION

Dear brothers, sisters and friends:

The entry point of today's celebration is the Parish of Santa Dorotea in Rome. In the sacristy of this Parish, Joseph Calasanz with three lay people, companions in the Confraternity of the Christian Doctrine, starts a new way of teaching.

These first steps in the education of the poor children, taken by Calasanz in Trastevere, became the trigger that complicated his life, as ever since he started to open schools and to work in education until very close to his death. This led him to identify education as an Ecclesial Ministry.

For Piarists, the educational activity is evangelization in the full meaning outlined by Paul VI in his Exhortation "Evangelii Nuntiandi". Our Ministry is not reduced to the work of teaching, which constitutes only a part of it. Piarist educational Ministry is understood in line with the following statement: "Every Ministry in the Church is a particular way of cooperating in the mission of announcing and planting the Gospel of the Kingdom that Jesus entrusted to his disciples. **Moved by the peculiar charism received**

from the Spirit, the pioneer Calasanz enriched the Church in its specific mission of evangelizing.”¹

Let us celebrate the gift granted to us by the Lord through Calasanz. Let us ask that this particular mission of evangelizing, which constitutes the Piarist Ministry, may remain alive in the Church and throughout...all over the world.

WE ASK FOR FORGIVENESS

Self-knowledge includes the experience of human weakness, leading human beings to live in an attitude of humility and trust. These were two distinctive virtues of Calasanz, who speaks of them saying: *“The Lord will grant us strength and spirit if we are humble, as the Psalm says: He will give understanding to little ones, to the last (Psalm 118: 130), and the more **one looks down in self-knowledge**, the more will one receive the knowledge not only of earthly things but of those that are invisible and remain forever...”*²

To know what we are, to be aware of ourselves, means to recognize our sin and weakness. Let us ask our Lord for forgiveness.

A MOMENT OF SILENCE

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

Matthew 20: 24-28 or Matthew 25: 34-40

A few minutes for personal meditation

.....
1 “Misión compartida en las Escuelas Pías” “El Ministerio Escolapio” Cuadernos, 23, p. 27, I. A. 7. ICCE, 1999, Madrid.

2 EP 4392,

WORDS OF CALASANZ

Before receiving the Charism

In 1592, Calasanz wrote a letter from Rome to Mosen Teixidor, parish priest of Peralta, saying: "...parents should make their children learn letters as it is the best legacy they can receive"³.

First place of his Ministry

"Regarding the first steps of the Pious Schools, I found two or three (lay members) of the Christian Doctrine going to Trastevere to teach in some local schools. Calasanz' cooperators were Juan Francisco Fiammelli, Fco. de Rustici and Gelio Ghellini. Their purpose was to teach catechism to boys and girls on Sundays and feast days. Reading, writing and arithmetic were also taught in Sta. Dorotea".⁴

Based on the Gospel

As we profess to be true Poor of the Mother of God, under no circumstances we despise the poor children but, rather, we undertake to qualify them showing great patience and love in their regard, moved by the Word of the Lord: «Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.»⁵

A Ministry instituted in the Church by Calasanz

And if the Holy Church grants this gift to so many other ministries, why not to this, which can be considered as a compendium of all the ministries, not only to help the neighbor in areas in which they are supported by others, but also to prepare the souls, through a good education, to receive the service of others? *A good beginning bodes well.* Indeed, the whole life relies on the education received in

.....
3 EP 0004

4 EP4185, To Fr. Vicente Berro . Naples.

5 Memorial to Cardinal Tonti n.4

childhood —a good bouquet is never lost, as in the bottle of a fine liquor—; who is not able to see that religious Institutions prove greater benefit and less difficulty or confusion in their ministries with an accurate preparation of well educated persons?⁶

WORDS OF THE CHURCH

“The role of evangelization is precisely to educate people in the faith in such a way as to lead each individual Christian to live the sacraments as true sacraments of faith- and not to receive them passively or reluctantly.”⁷

“The Catholic school does not transmit culture for the purpose of gaining power but as an aid towards a fuller understanding of, and communion with man, events and things. Knowledge is not to be considered as a means of material prosperity and success, but as a call to serve and to be responsible for others.”⁸

“Because **first and foremost the Church** offers its educational service to the poor or those who are deprived of family help and affection, or those who are far from the faith.”⁹

“Education to freedom is a humanizing action, because it aims at the full development of personality. In fact, education itself must be seen as the acquisition, growth and possession of freedom. It is a matter of educating each student to free him/herself from the conditionings that prevent him/her from fully living as a person, to form him/herself into a strong and responsible personality, capable of making free and consistent choices.”¹⁰

“Consecrated persons can reveal, to those who so desire, the richness of the spirituality that characterizes them and of the cha-

6 Memorial to Cardinal Tonti n. 24

7 *Evangelii Nuntiandi* n. 57

8 THE SACRED CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION, *The Catholic School*, Rome 1977, n° 25.

9 Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et spes* 9 .

10 THE SACRED CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION, *The Catholic School*, n. 31.

rism of their Institute, encouraging them to live them in the educational ministry according to the lay identity and in forms that are suitable and accessible to young people.”¹¹

“To educate is an act of love, it is to give life. And love is demanding, it calls for the best resources, for a reawakening of the passion to begin this path patiently with young people. The educator in Catholic schools must be, first and foremost, competent and qualified but, at the same time, someone who is rich in humanity and capable of being with young people in a style of pedagogy that helps promote their human and spiritual growth.”¹²

Testimonies of our former students

I’m a former student of the “Calasanz” in Bogotá (Colombia) and I’m currently studying in the university. In my early childhood, I didn’t really imagine what was under the motto “educating in piety and letters”. Nowadays, looking at my life I cannot figure it out without Calasanz. On the one hand, I feel that my academic formation was very good, and enabled me to choose my professional career and to study in one of the best institutions in the country. On the other hand, the Piarists showed me Calasanz’ lifestyle, of full dedication to the others, in particular to the least and the poor. Without realizing it, in less than a year I became member of a youth group, going to missions in the month of December, and I even engaged in a Piarist vocational accompaniment. Ever since Calasanz started to permeate what I am and do. Today I’m not only a university student; I’m also a youth group’s adviser in another Calasanz’ school in the city, as well as a Calasanctian missionary, and a member of a Christian Calasanctian community in which I continue to be attentive to the inner voice of Jesus and of Calasanz. (David Ernesto Acuña Villalobos. Calasancio Bogotá)

.....
11 THE SACRED CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION. *Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools* n. 59

12 *Address of Pope Francis to Participants in the Plenary Session of the Congregation for Catholic Education. February 13, 2014*

First and foremost, I feel very proud of being part of the Pious Schools, because they consistently helped me to become a person. What I have learned in my early childhood, through the marvelous individuals that God placed on my path to educate me, makes me feel called to give back what I have received..

Thanks to what the Piarist Fathers showed me day by day, today I can share the Calasanctian mission of educating children in piety and letters. This is a great gift that I have received and that I choose to live from where I happen to be.

As a former student I share many projects, groups and initiatives consistently proposed by the school. As a Piarist I am, therefore, ready and available for any proposal coming from the Piarist Fathers to share talents and God's gifts with the others, and to cooperate with the work that the Lord is doing through my life.

I dare to say that the Piarist Fathers are the main leaders in all this, not only because they are a key instrument in my life but also because they make me feel at home. (*Selene Curto Argentina 2016*)

When I was five years old I went to school to San José de Calasanz (Valencia), where I was trained in all the areas of my life. The academic area turned out pretty well, but in the "Calasanz" they were not satisfied teaching me only reading and arithmetic: formation was to go far beyond.

Since my early childhood, at the **oratory** I was proposed the figure of Jesus and Calasanz in celebrations and the morning prayer. I remember the oratory as one of the best experiences in the week.

In ESO I joined **Hinenni** (currently called **Calasanz Movement**, where I continue as a catechist). Through weekly meetings, summer experiences and **retreats**, I have built and kept friendships, which I still cultivate and give great sense to my life, while I could go deeper in faith matters and self-knowledge. I keep a special remembrance

of the **piarists** who accompanied me during this period.

However, the impact of the school was felt also by other companions with no special interest in religious matters. Through awareness events, as the Peace Day or the visits to the neighborhoods and the **volunteering** that we practiced in the second year of the secondary school, we could come out from the bubble in which wealthy people often lives and we could start seeing beyond our noses, developing a special sensitivity to inequalities and make our contribution in order to improve things.

Piarist ministry is fully rooted in me (in spite of being already in the university), meaning that I can see both in the **children** and in the **youth**, as well as in the **disadvantaged**, a chance of encountering **Jesus Christ**, and of giving back at least something of what I have received during the last few years, a chance of loving the others and of being less self-centered, and I hope and trust I never forget what in the “Calasanz” I learned and continue to learn. (*Manu Contell, former student and catechist of the Calsanctian Movement. Colegio San José de Calasanz, Valencia*)

Undoubtedly, if I had to list the persons who marked my life and enabled me to be what I am today, the Piarist Fathers would be in an utmost important place. I may say that they have been responsible of my education at school, where I started to go when I was four years old. But I feel this statement is reductive, and that it is unfair to just give thanks for such a great service provided to me. The Piarist Fathers granted me the greatest gift they could offer: to love as Calasanz loved. Through daily dedication, perennial joy, fidelity, hope against hope, fortitude, humility, including material poverty that generates spiritual wealth. They have taught me, as well as accompanied, guided, protected and invited me to live intensely and full of virtues for the service of the others “to the greater glory of God and the good of the neighbor”. (Franco Tartarelli. Former student. Argentina)

RENOVATION OF OUR MINISTERIAL COMMITMENT

(Each one says his/her name and all together recite the form)

I ask the Lord to grant me the spirit that is required for our Ministry¹³ and the capacity to lower myself to the level of the children, as the Church has sent us for their education¹⁴. In the Calasanz and with the help of God I renew my dedication to the Christian Education. For the Glory of the Lord and a help to the poor¹⁵.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Let us raise our prayer to the Father, through the intercession of Jesus Christ, our Brother and our Lord.

At each petition we answer: **Lord, hear our prayers!**

1. *For the Church of God.* That She be a true mother and teacher of all. **Let us pray to the Lord!**

2. *For the Leaders of all the Nations of the Earth.* That daily bread and the bread of education reach all.

3. *For all of us, lay and religious piarists.* That leaving our concerns in the hands of Mary and of Calasanz, we may feel encouraged and find the strengths that we need to continue our Ministry among the poorest.

4. *For all those who celebrate this Jubilee with us.* That they may follow the Lord with enthusiasm, living and updating the path followed by Calasanz

5. *For all who are here present.* That in this Jubilee Year we may be transfor-

.....

13 EP 2175

14 EP 2577

15 EP 0871

med by the Lord to become Peacebuilders in our world. **Let us pray.**
Hear, Father, our prayers and make us more and more faithful. Through
Jesus Christ our Lord.

BLESSING

MARIAN SONG

ANNUS
IUBILÆI
SCHOLARUM
PIARUM

400 ANNI
1617-2017