



Calasanctian Jubilee

LETTER TO OUR
BRETHREN
DECEMBER 2016

Dear brothers and sisters, I greet you with affection and joy at the beginning of this year 2017, so special for us. In almost all the Piarist presences –not in all – we are celebrating the New Year. In some places you celebrate it a few weeks later, but let it go to all my best wishes of Piarist life and mission for this year in which we are going to live and celebrate the beginning of the fifth century of life of our Order.

I'd like that all the letters that I will send you this year had a true "Jubilee taste". But of course, this first one will have it, for sure. I want to dedicate this letter to share with you all what we lived and experienced last November 27th at our home in San Pantaleo, when we launched the Piarist Jubilee Year.

It is not easy to tell what happened that day in our General House, but I think that it will be easy for you to understand what we experienced there, simply because what we lived was a genuine, happy and spontaneous experience of Calasanz' charism. And this we all shared it.

Some words for the context: November 27, Saint Joseph Calasanz Patronage Feast; beginning of the Calasanctian Jubilee Year; House and Church of San Pantaleo and Saint Joseph Calasanz; presence of the two persons to whom the Pope entrusted in the Church the care of Consecrated Life and Education; delivery of the message of the Pope Francis to our Pious Schools; reading of the Bull of the Jubilee Year; the centrality of the Eucharist in which we share the reason for our Piarist life; Piarists from fourteen different countries concelebrating; the General Superiors of the Calasanctian Family; the Major Superiors

of Europe; children and the choir of the Calasanzian Sisters; the General Council of the Piarist Fraternity; the communities of the Piarists Fathers and Sisters in Rome; the whole Order connected online sharing this historic moment with joy. And there, silent and convener, Saint Joseph Calasanz, blessing his sons and daughters, sending them to the mission, reminding them of the road.

In that context, we had the opportunity to hear six different testimonials that together confirm **a beautiful expression of what it means to be a Piarist**. A cardinal, a young religious in initial training, a provincial, an elder who has given his life by the Order, a secular Piarist representing the Fraternity, the General Superior of the Piarist Sisters and myself, took the floor. I am pleased to write this salutatio combining some paragraphs of the various interventions, without indicating the authors, although it is very possible that you will guess them. What I want is something very simple: to remind you, at the beginning of this Jubilee Year, **the meaning of being a Piarist**. Here we go.

*I think that what characterizes all of us, we live our vocation in the Pious Schools, is that this vocation is **a dream that becomes a reality through our lives**. Our values, our joys and our questions converge in this dream. In it we live our passion, our follies and also the gift of our life. In it all our concerns, our enthusiasm and our radicalism, manifest themselves to live the charism fully. With it, we want to give life, give life to the world.*

Perhaps here in Rome something new happened also with Calasanz and with his dream. What he dreamed of, was not a simple reform. He created something new, which at the time was unknown, something that was difficult to accept. He proposed some changes and with them he transformed his time, his society, allowing free education, particularly dedicated to the neediest.

*I believe that the new and unknown things that we discover about us and the world, which we dare to dream and dare to take - as Calasanz did - create a new world, because they transform us and thus they also transform the world around us. For us, heirs of his dream, our Calasanzian heritage consists of creating something new, **discovering the needs that exist in the world and new answers that respond to them**. Since the stability of the charism we are giving new - innovative - answers to questions with which the future is surprising us. And we want to make this nurtured by the Gospel, by teaching and education, in order to build the Kingdom of God in the world.*

Our deepest desire is Holiness. *At the bottom of our hearts, we all seek to live according to the will of God. Holiness is born from the encounter with Jesus, there is no other source. Our task is to live our vocation from the dynamics of this encounter. From it, we surrender ourselves to our mission. But we need that everything we live and our work be supported by the only thing that can hold it: the Word, the celebration of the Eucharist extended in the adoration, the faithful service to the brothers, the construction of community and fraternity beyond friendly relations or the social, cultural or racial origin. There is no happiness or holiness outside God.*

*From these convictions, **all of us, religious and lay, we give the best of ourselves to build the Pious Schools**, knowing that in this task we are doing something good*

for the children, for the young, for the poor and for the Kingdom of God. But we are very aware that all our work - that must be intense - only will fructify by the Grace and the Love of God.

*Piarist identity is today a colorful fabric in which we began to weave all together, giving each his own identity threads, stitching each person his own vocational fabric scraps. In the Great Story which Calasanz started 400 years ago and that today is the Pious Schools, the foundational stories, the story of the vocation of each of us, the life stories of every child and every young person that we serve to, are irreplaceable threads that strengthen us and give us identity to everyone else. **No one, young or wise, religious or layman, man or woman, is superfluous in this task of weaving the Piarist identity of our works, to give meaning to everything we do.***

*As a Piarist, I feel that my life has been guided fully by the Lord; in the different stages of my life, He has been the one who has arranged things in such a way that I, answering faithfully to what He was inviting me, I have been happy as a Piarist. **And I go ahead until he will call me; it may be at any time.** Already I have had some notice, and I would like to say that as my life has been a cycle of joy, also his last called will fill me with joy. That is why I want to be prepared. Meanwhile, I go forward, as Calasanz, until the end.*

I wish that many young Piarists be encouraged to follow the voice of the Lord wherever He will call them, convinced that the call of the superior in the Order, is a call from the Lord to the happiness of each one. And among all, let us build a Piarist Order strong in the faith and in the charity, for the good so many children and girls that need us. Yes, the Piarist vocation is a beautiful vocation; and when it is accompanied by the prayer, we feel so happy!

*That is why, of all the verbs that we could conjugate in these moments, there is a privileged one: **to thank**. We are grateful for the gift of Calasanz, for the gift of the Calasanzian Family, for the vocation that we love, for the fraternity that we are called to create, for the mission to which we are sent. And, from that gratitude, we feel the deep desire to renew our Calasanzian commitment. All of us who form part of it feel a deep gratitude, a deep joy and a deep pride when we say: brothers, we are Calasanzian Family! And we hope with joy to celebrate together, as a Family, the already near canonization of Blessed Faustino Miguez.*

*We want that this Jubilee Year be an opportunity to **grow in our vocation, to renew our passion for the Mission to proclaim again our conviction that only the children know the way to the Kingdom of God.** The Pious Schools are a mixture of dreams, work, life devoted to the mission, vocational fidelity, commitment to children and young people, especially the poorest, love for Calasanz, intense experience of the charism, service to the Church. All this Calasanz lived it, and he did so for a very clear reason: because his only center was Jesus Christ, and he always wanted to live for Him and serve only Him.*

*This is the way of the Jubilee Year: **to be authentic disciples and witnesses of the Lord**, allowing that his Spirit be the one to guide and accompany us. For this reason, I am sure that this year things will happen, and things of God. They will have to do with the Mission, with new foundations, with vocations, with children and young people,*

with everything that we try to live. We will not arrive at the end of this year as we are now. Let us pray to the Lord that we get holier, more excited, more committed, more open to the surprises of the Spirit, closer to children and young people, more brothers and more missionaries.

Our dream for the Order of the Pious Schools is that we can become in a significant way into such a community that all those who we accompany and are near us, dare to dream something good next to it. Such a community that next to it they can discover the dream that is done through their lives, next to it they develop their personality, next to it they can become free people to experience and teach the beauty of the world.

I end with a “*small detail*”, deeply Piarist. I have written this letter in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where I was opening the Calasanctian Jubilee Year with our brothers from the communities of Kinshasa and Kikonka. It signed and sent it to Rome the day 30 of November of 2016, the right day in which our Order has begun its mission in Mozambique. Dear brothers Jean de Dieu, Dialomao and Rudy ladies, founders of the presence Piarist in Mozambique, thanks by your Jubilee courage! We have you very present in the prayer. May Saint Joseph Calasanz bless your life and mission in this country.

Brothers and sisters: love deeply Calasanz. But never forget that the charism of Calasanz only is lived in an authentic way if it leads us to Christ, as participants in the construction of his Kingdom. It is worth being Piarist!

Receive a fraternal embrace.

*Fr. Pedro Aguado Sch. P.
Father General*