FEAST OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, MOTHER OF GOD OF THE PIous SCHOOLS
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Today, we celebrate the feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Dios of the Pious Schools. In the context of this feast, the Order wants to celebrate its consecration to Mary.

Known by everyone is the presence of Mary in the charismatic and spiritual itinerary of Calasanz. Already as a child, he is imbued - especially by her mother - in devotion and filial love for Mary. This filial relationship with Mary will accompany him always. From Mary, Calasanz receives the intuition of the ministry and of consecration.

According to witnesses in the process of beatification, it was on a visit to the Madonna dei Monti, where he decides that his life will be tied to the education of children and young people when reading the psalm “To you the power has been entrusted, you will be the help for the orphan”. Before his death, when this “work of the Virgin” was destroyed, the same Madonna dei Monti went to comfort him and give him encouragement about the future of the Pious Schools.

Calasanz devotes to Mary his person and work of the Pious Schools.

“Saint Joseph Calasanz’ life and apostolate of are consecrated through an intimate and filial devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, to whom he offered himself as a perpetual slave; wishing the same from all his children, he established that the profession in the Order would be done, not only to God, but also to the Virgin Mother of God. And to appear more clearly that she was Mother and Teacher of all, with deep theological sense, he gave to the Order of the Pious Schools the name of the Most Holy Mother of God. He called her the mother of his Work, and to her maternal care he entrusted both the Christian instruction of the children and the restoration of the destroyed Order” (DD, 170, 349).

“And in particular I can say that when he was looking at the image of the Virgin, he fixed the eyes with so much affection, that he didn’t move ever and seemed engrossed in it, and he used to say that he was undeservedly a slave of the Virgin, and this I can say it for having observed his behavior with mere attention, and having asked him to the same Father Joseph how is called the congregation that you founded?” He replied in Spanish language “it is called the Poor of the Mother of God, of which I am an unworthy slave” (Declaration on Calasanctian spirituality, Rome, 1969, note 33)

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1 In his Spanish period, from visits to the shrines in Peralta de la Sal, Estadilla, in his infancy, through the Virgin of Desamparados in Valencia, the Virgin of Romeral in Monzon, the Virgin of Montserrat in Barcelona, Our Lady of Sorrows in la Seu d’Urgell, la Virgin De “Vall de Flors” in Tremp... and the Virgin del Pilar in Zaragoza, although there is no record of that visit. In Italy, he was devoted to the Madonna dei Monti, Santa Maria della Scala, Our Lady of Suffrage, Santa Maria in Portico, the Virgin of the Snow, the image of Mary of Fr. Dragonetti, in Rome, the Frascati Madonna, our Lady of the Manger in Naples, St. Mary of Angels in Assisi...
The formula of the profession in which the religious makes his vows to God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and to Mary, the Virgin Mother de God, appears in the point 31 of the Constitutions of Calasanz. The consecration is not only the offer of what one is and possesses, but also the recognition and acceptance of Mary rights to own the consecrated person. This consecration, Calasanz will live it as a slave of Mary, as symbolized in the medal that he which orders coin for his religious profession (see annex 1).

Special mention deserves the Crown of 12 stars, extraordinary gift of Calasanz to the Pious Schools and the Church.

CELEBRATIVE PROPOSALS

Since today we have our own liturgy of this Mary feast, there are three models of celebration:

- In the Eucharist of the feast
- In Morning or Evening Prayer
- At the time of the common prayer. apart

EUCHARIST:
- Use the introduction as invitation to the Eucharist (the explanatory part of the medal can be read personally outside of the celebration)
- Follow the liturgy of the Eucharist
- Use these Intercessions
- After communion
  - Read some text of the constitutions (see annex)
  - Pray together the prayer of Consecration to Mary.

LAUDS OR VESPERS:
- Use the introduction as invitation to the corresponding Hour (the explanatory part of the medal can be read personally outside of the celebration)
- After the brief reading and the response:
  - Read some text of the constitutions (see annex)
  - Pray together the prayer of Consecration to Mary.

MOMENT OF PRAYER:
- Follow the proposal of the brochure
THE WORD OF GOD
A reading from the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, 1, 14. 2, 44-47

All these devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one’s need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

R./ My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant. R./

From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.
He has mercy on those who fear him
in every generation. R./

He has shown the strength of his arm,
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty. R./

He has come to the help of his servant Israel
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children for ever. R./
A reading from the holy Gospel according to St. John, 19, 25-27

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son.” Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took her into his home

HOMILY
(with the possibility a fraternal sharing around Mary).

INTERCESSIONS
(the second Vespers of the feast)

Let us praise God the Father Almighty, that preserved Mary from all stain in his Immaculate Conception, and favored her with his gifts, saying:

Look at the full of grace and listen to us.

You, who have given us in Mary a mother who loves us, make us always live under her protection.

Look at the full of grace and listen to us.

You, who have given us in Mary a model of teacher and educator, make us effective Cooperators of the Truth so that we always proclaim Jesus to the children and young people.

Look at the full of grace and listen to us.

You, who have given us in Mary the mother of mercy and Saint Patroness of graces, make us resort to her intercession in all circumstances, especially in moments of temptation and danger.

Look at the full of grace and listen to us.

You, who have given us in Mary the cause of our joy, make us every day proclaim with joy your greatness.

Look at the full of grace and listen to us.

You, who have given to the children Mary as mother and protector, make them always feel her company and her love.
Look at the full of grace and listen to us.

You, who have given to the Pious Schools Mary as mother and Queen, make our brothers Piarist deceased to celebrate you eternally in heaven.

Look at the full of grace and listen to us.

You, who wanted that your Son was educated in the family of Nazareth, welcome and bless our families, educational communities and our works, that we can be faithful to the mission received.

Look at the full of grace and listen to us.

You, who inspired in Calasanz through Mary the Piarist vocation, grant us vocations for your own glory and for the good of children.

Look at the full of grace and listen to us.

Our Father

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION
(In the case of the religious, the best prayer is to renew our vows together)

Either:
Mary, Mother of God, like Calasanz we recognize ourselves yours children.
He entrusted you our vocation and our works, for God’s glory and usefulness of the neighbor.
Thank you for your maternal protection in our life and our history, and today, freely and with all our heart, We renew our consecration to you as your own servants. Welcome our smallness, enrich it with your poverty and make this Work of yours a ferment for the Kingdom, especially among children and the poor.
Amen

FINAL BLESSING

SONG TO MARY
ANNEX 1: THE VOWS MEDAL

The Medal in question is circular in shape and its diameter is 35 mm. Let’s look at both sides.

a) The Face. In the central space and occupying the left half, Mary is sitting on a cloud, crowned of stars; she has on her left arm the Divine Child, who holds the globe topped with a cross on his left. Mary extends her right arm to a kneeling religious giving him a ring from which hangs a circular label or marking.

In front of the Virgin, a winged angel wearing helmet and a kind of military skirt holds an elongated phylactery in which we can read these words: “Foedus perpetuae servitutis” (pledge of perpetual slavery).

All this central part described is surrounded by a circle of three chains, which are supported by three maidens, with arms extended and who are distributed as occupying the vertices of a triangle.

At the same time this circle is involved in another outermost formed by these cleverly distributed words: «Vinculo indissolubili votorum». 
The kneeling Piarist dress a short coat knee-long and has the bonnet left on the ground.

The maiden who occupies the top central front looks at the viewer: the other two have their faces returned to her and are fine workmanship.

b) back. The Center is occupied by a sun of lightning flashes, in which appears the anagram of Mary topped with a cross; below is the well known abbreviation, in Greek, *Mary Mother de God*; below it the sacred heart of Mary pierced by seven swords attracts our sight.

Wrapping everything, and in a circle, this legend appears: « *Professus Congregatio-nis Paulinae Pauperum Matris Dei Scholarum Piarum* ».

This is the description of the medal. Alone it speaks eloquently. (Vilá, *Eph Cal* 5, 1988, 244-245).
ANNEX 2: MARY IN OUR CONSTITUTIONS

2. Saint Joseph Calasanz, an inspired interpreter of the signs of his time, founded a clerical institute, which the Church acknowledged to be of pontifical right, received into its bosom, and approved as the ORDER OF POOR CLERICS REGULAR OF THE MOTHER OF GOD OF THE PIous SCHOOLS. Thus, he created a new school, intimately connected with the founding charism, the first model of integral, popular and Christian education through which he wanted to free children and youth from the bondage of sin and ignorance.

7. And since we profess to be truly the Poor of the Mother of God, we shall never look down on poor children, but, with great patience and love, we shall try to enrich them with every virtue, especially encouraged by the words of the Lord: “What you did to one of the least of my little ones, this you did to me”.

11. The Pious Schools, under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother and educator of Christ, tested through the centuries and always sensitive to the needs and hopes of humankind, feels sent by the Church in our time and intends to contribute toward the building of a more just and fraternal world.

23. The Virgin Mary, intimately united with her Son by a perfect communion of love, a faithful partner in His Passion and the first to share in His resurrection, lights the way for us to follow Christ. She will always be present so that we may show in ourselves the image of her Son, and our students may form in themselves the image of Him whom she made known and educated.

25. Joined together by a bond of love which the Father gave us and by the same Piarist vocation into a community of faith imitating the way of life which Jesus carried out with His disciples and which the early Church together with Mary also followed, we become, in some way, ministers of hope of the kingdom to come and of fraternal union among all people.

42. We shall draw an intimate knowledge of God and His Will from assiduous familiarity with Sacred Scripture, just as the Virgin Mary, who, keeping faithfully and pondering always in her heart the divine words, penetrated deeper and deeper into the mystery of Christ and gave ever increasing praise to the Father.
49. With the Church, we celebrate faithfully and devoutly the mysteries of Christ throughout the Liturgical Year. We imitate with filial love the Blessed Virgin Mary in her participation in the mystery of Christ, and, in order to foster devotion to her, we meticulously keep those special prayers consecrated by our tradition. We both cultivate in ourselves and promote among children and adolescents devotion to our Holy Founder.

53. **Chastity** for the sake of the Kingdom of God is an exceptional gift of love given by our Heavenly Father to us who are in the Church. By following Christ with an undivided heart and by imitating the Blessed Virgin Mary, we are united more intimately with God and embrace all people with a very special love.

58. This **intimacy with God**, nourished by the reading of Holy Scripture, prayer, and the Sacraments, fashions our hearts in such a way that our oblation to the Lord and men becomes more complete day by day. Our filial devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the protection we implore from her will increase our strength to follow courageously the example of her fidelity.

64. The Lord Jesus chose for Himself from among the poor and the humble His mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, who excelled all others in poverty and humility. Saint Joseph Calasanz, who learned humility and the other virtues from experiencing holy poverty in his own life, wanted us to be truly “The Poor of the Mother of God.”.

67. Our attire should be always appropriate to our vocation as the Poor of the Mother of God. The Piarist habit, according to our tradition, consists of a cassock and cincture, but in each region our religious must follow the rules issued by the local Church and the norms given by the Major Superior with the consent of his Council. However, our religious must never hide their religious identity.

89. Following this life and always ready for the service of the Kingdom, we live our religious obedience in faith in the midst of the world as a Mystery of the cross and resurrection, and, having before our eyes the pre-eminent example of the fidelity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the handmaid of the Lord, we carry out the plan of the Father with a willing heart.
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