



SANTO DOMINGO-2ND PART

Not only shepherds, but also fishermen

LETTER TO OUR
BRETHREN
MAY 2018

I continue to share the reflections of the Meeting of Persons In Charge for Vocations Ministry of the Pious Schools, held in Santo Domingo last January of this year 2018.

In the previous salutatio I focused on the most personal aspects, which have to do with our experience, as Piarists, in relation to the task of promoting the Vocational Culture. In this second part I want to refer to the most institutional and programmatic aspects that came out of the meeting and that can contribute to our Order advancing in the desired objective of “consolidating an authentic Piarist vocational culture”.

1-It is very important to be clear about our reality. I think that we have gained a shared awareness of our vocational reality, and I believe that the conviction that the renewal of our Vocational Culture will be the fruit of three simultaneous and necessary dynamisms: the first, undoubtedly, the love of God. That is why we should pray. Second, the authenticity and significance of our life testimony. And, third, the options that we promote to improve our reality.

I am sure that the most important thing is not numbers, but I am also sure that numbers are important, because they give us objective information. That is why I believe that it can help us to understand what we live to know the reality of our “vocational numbers”. These are data that help us understand that we are making a progressive growth path. We give thanks to God!

	Aspirants and Prenovices	Novices	Juniors	Solemn Professions and Ordinations	TOTAL
2012	103	35	181	35	354
2013	154	49	222	39	464
2014	203	47	222	48	520
2015	199	61	207	44	511
2016	202	71	223	40	536
2017	236	73	252	32	593

We are growing in number of candidates, although we do so unevenly and with some imbalance, and without enough dynamism in more than one circumscription.

Despite this progressive increase in candidates, the Order is not growing; it is simply maintaining its numbers. It is not little “to maintain”, but it is not the objective. The numbers we have are not enough for the project that we feel called to promote.

I am completely sure of the quality of the young people that God sends us, of the desire that all those in charge of Vocations Ministry have to work hard in this very exciting subject, of our capacity to generate, but I also see lack of a co-responsible conscience in a not small number -I do not know if decreasing- of Piarists to support the vocational. Here is one of the keys to the “step change” we need.

2-As in all institutions, pluralism is one of our characteristics. We have a clear identity, but this does not make us identical. We do not look for it. We live our diversity naturally. **But I think we need some meeting points of the various pluralisms of the Order.** I think that one of the clearest meeting points that we should promote is the one referred to the “*change of mentality in vocations ministry*”. I saw it clearly in Santo Domingo, where communion and mutual understanding were dominant notes.

In this sense, I could see with clarity the clarity with which the conviction emerged in Santo Domingo that the Piarist Vocations Ministry is not just another part of the Youth Ministry, but that it is much larger than this, although it must be in a profound relationship with it. Vocations Ministry is broader, because it affects and encompasses many more things: not only young people, but children and adults; it works explicitly with the educators of our works or with the religious communities; it deals with spaces specific to the Initial and Permanent Formation of the religious; it refers to all the dynamisms of the Vocational Culture, it marks and resizes the priorities from which a Demarcation takes its options, etc. Vocations Ministry, from the perspective in which it is approached by the Church, definitively breaks the boundaries of our mentality and proposes a global vision aimed at activating vocational mechanisms in all our presences.

3-Fifteen theses to build a vocationally fertile demarcation.

I offer fifteen affirmations that claim to mark address. Each one of them deserves an adequate development, but I prefer to leave them like this, in their central statement.

1st thesis: “Piarist Vocations Ministry is a priority when all Piarists live in vocational spirit”.

2nd thesis: “Piarist Vocations Ministry is a priority when each community Piarist places it in the

center of his life and his project”

3rd thesis: “Piarist Vocations Ministry is a priority when its place in the life and the project of the demarcation is clear”

4th thesis: “Piarist Vocations Ministry is a priority when the Demarcation takes care clearly the presentation and the impulse of the Piarist charism in every one of its Works”

5th thesis: “Piarist Vocations Ministry is a priority when it is, really, a transverse line on the Pastoral of all our works”.

6th thesis: “Piarist Vocations Ministry is a priority when there is a responsible person to carry it out in each of the works.

7th thesis: “Piarist Vocations Ministry is a priority when in each work there is a clear and measurable vocational objective”.

8th thesis: “Piarist Vocations Ministry is a priority when the process of Piarist vocational accompaniment (PVA in some places) is clear and is carried out with fidelity.

9th thesis: “Piarist Vocations Ministry is a priority when it allows and facilitates that the PVM itself be the one to renew and enrich it”.

10th thesis: “Piarist Vocations Ministry is a priority when the Demarcation has horizons of life and future; otherwise, it cannot exist or it becomes “activities”.

11th thesis: “Piarist Vocations Ministry is a priority when it promotes that the hosting communities be, truly, communities “pregnant” of a new future.

12th thesis: “Piarist Vocations Ministry is a priority when it is articulated from the offer of three radically essential dynamics: the experience of God, working with the poor and the community”.

13th thesis: “Piarist Vocation Ministry is a priority when it is really related to Initial Formation and Ongoing Formation”

14th thesis: “Piarist Vocations Ministry is a priority if it is approached in depth in the approaches of the Piarist Youth Synod”

15th thesis: “Piarist Vocation Ministry is a priority when, in truth, the Demarcation becomes a” body praying for vocations “.”

4-In Santo Domingo we also talked about the strategic and organizational options that we must take care of. It does not hurt to remember them again, although they have already been published and written on more than one occasion. But Santo Domingo reaffirmed them with force and clarity.

The Pastoral Vocational Piarist needs a good structure, organization and dynamics, own and specific. It cannot be the same as the one we have for the General Pastoral, nor can it be disconnected from it, nor can it be satisfied with the accompaniment of those young people who come to us as a result of that General Pastoral or of other dynamics that can favor the vocational approach of a person. Our Vocation Ministry must work in several directions, which we could summarize in this way: *works of promotion, training, organization and awareness.*¹ Assuming the quality of our General Pastoral, in all areas, the Vocation Ministry must provide **promotion** (dynamics and actions that provoke “call events”); **formation** (especially by supporting Pastoral teams, Vocations Ministry teams and Shared Mission teams, precisely to increase the quality and number of vocational animators); **organization** (working hard with those responsible for our works to generate responsibility) and **awareness** (in all areas in which our educational and pastoral action is created and proposed). To pretend that the Vocations Ministry can function without these dynamics or only with the proper teams of the General Pastoral, is to close our eyes to reality and its challenges.

The specific way in which we carry out the Vocations Ministry specific to the Piarist Religious Life is also part of the Vocational Culture. Moreover,

.....
1.- Juan Carlos Martos: “Abrir el corazón. Animación vocacional en tiempos difíciles y formidables”. Publicaciones Claretianas. Madrid, 2012.

there is no true, mature and responsible Vocations Ministry without a Vocational Culture as a basis. And there is no true Vocational Culture without it culminating in an organic and effective Vocations Ministry. Without the Vocational Culture, the Vocations Ministry can degenerate into disconnected activities, and without the Vocations Ministry, the Vocational Culture can be only a theory without capacity for change and transformation.

It is essential that in all Demarcations we have a basic structure at the service of the Vocations Ministry. That is to say,

- a. There must be demarcational responsible and local leaders in each of the Piarists presences.
- b. We must have a four-year project (statute) and annual programming, both at local and demarcational levels.
- c. We will work with demarcational and local teams.
- d. It will be articulated the link with the Vocations Ministry of the local religious community.
- e. Also, there will be a clear link between the Vocations Ministry with the General Pastoral.
- f. The Major Superiors will attend specifically the subject of Vocations Ministry in their service to the Demarcation. They will take advantage of their visits to the Piarists presences to accompany this important area of our life and mission.
- g. The preparation process of demarcational and local managers of Vocations Ministry shall be designed, and this process will form part of the dynamics of the demarcation.
- h. Vocational Culture will be part of the projects of the religious communities.
- i. We will promote the “culture of evaluation”, so that planning will be always accompanied by the respective evaluations.

j. Where it exists, the Piarist Fraternity will plan its contribution to Vocations Ministry. The Demarcational Congregations will work together with the Councils of the Fraternities to encourage this common challenge.

k. We will strive to share resources and materials of Vocations Ministry among the people that promote it, taking advantage of what exists in every demarcation.

l. We will try to promote the Continuous Prayer for Vocations. We will seek to create and to promote spaces and areas of prayer for vocations

I hope that these two Letters to the Brothers on the Encounter of Santo Domingo can contribute not only to socialize what has been worked on, but to increase the commitment of all of us to the Piarist Vocation Ministry. AMEN.

Receive a fraternal salutation.

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