



Group Facilitator's Guide

Calasanz Movement Day

Material for working with adults



Objectives:

- » The proposal of FAITH that Jesus does not make implies a change of life, a CONVERSION.
- » To discover how God has given us a Christian and educational vocation.
- » To know the personal process that Calasanz follows from the time he arrives in Rome until he founds the Pious Schools (from 1592 to 1602).

Methodology

We read the Word of God: Exodus 3, 1-11

LECTIO. The leader of the meeting highlights some elements of this reading. This can be done in dialogue with the participants.

Several moments appear in this one:

- » Moses is attracted by the mystery of the “burning bush”. He approaches it, seduced by its radiance. At the beginning of every vocation there is an attraction to Jesus, to a way of life, to a particular project.
- » God calls Moses by name. The one who has a vocation has the inner conviction of feeling known and loved by God.
- » God makes known his name, his identity: Yahweh: “I am the God of your father...”. God intervenes in history to bless.
- » Moses covers his face out of fear of God. He has been trapped and impressed by the power and omnipotence of God.
- » God gives Moses a mission: “to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt”.
- » Moses excuses himself. He understands that the mission God has entrusted to him is far beyond his capabilities: “Who am I to go to Pharaoh...?”
- » God encourages Moses and invites him to trust. He will accomplish his mission in God’s strength and power.



MEDITATIO: Now let's apply this reading in two directions:

To our own life (for educators)

- » How have we each discovered our vocation to be educators?
- » What seduced us at the beginning...? What resistance did we put up at the time?
- » what moves us today to be educators with a vocation?
- » Do we feel that God is leading and supporting us?

To our own life (for fathers and mothers of families)

- » Is parenting a vocation - did we choose it or did it choose us?
- » What seduced us at the beginning...? What resistance did we put up at the time?
- » What motivates us most to be good parents?
- » Do we feel that God is leading and supporting us?

To the life of Calasanz

- » We are now going to narrate the process that Calasanz follows from the moment he arrives in Rome until he officially renounces the canonry he longed for.
- » Calasanz travels to Rome with the intention of obtaining a canonry.
- » He stays at the Palazzo Colonna and is tutor to the Cardinal's nephews.
- » He joined several charitable confraternities: Christian Doctrine, Twelve Apostles, Trinity of the Pilgrims, etc... Through them, he learned about the reality of poverty in Rome, especially among children.
- » It experiences some very shocking events with all that they imply: the overflowing of the river Tiber, cholera epidemic...
- » He learns about the work that the confreres of the Christian Doctrine do in the

parish of Santa Dorotea and begins to get involved with the children of the neighbourhood.

- » The Work of Santa Dorotea grows and Calasanz becomes more and more involved. The parish priest dies and he takes over...
- » He wanted to return to Spain with the canonry, so he tried to "leave the school of Santa Dorotea" to some institution in Rome: Jesuits, Dominicans, Christian doctrine, town hall... He was unsuccessful.
- » The Carmelite friars who are his spiritual directors encourage him to continue with the school, because it is a work of God.
- » In 1602 the ambassador informed him that he had already obtained the canonry Calasanz had already discovered the best way to follow God, doing good to the little ones?

The photocopied document is handed out to the laity and the questions are answered.

CONCLUSION

Calasanz is a priest with great pastoral zeal and concern for the Reformation of the Church, even in his ecclesiastical aspirations. At first he understood that his contribution to the Reformation of the Church was from a position of responsibility. In fact, he had experience from the position of secretary to the bishop and visitator.

The contact with poor children changed his inner life and the way he lived his vocation as a priest and "reformed the Church and society".

Poor children" are a special place of God's presence. Working with them helps us to live our Christian and Piarist vocation more radically.

PRAYERS.

Final song.

YOU WILL BE THE ORPHAN'S REFUGE

EXODUS 3, 1-11: MOSES' VOCATION AND TASK

1 Moses was shepherd of the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. Once he led the sheep beyond the wilderness; and he came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

The angel of the LORD appeared to him in the form of a flame of fire in the midst of a bush. He saw that the bush was burning, but the bush was not consumed. So Moses said, "I will go near to see this strange case: why is the bush not consumed?"

When the LORD saw Moses coming near to look, he called to him from the midst of the bush, saying, "Moses, Moses!" He answered, "Here I am."

He said to him, "Do not come near here; take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." And he added, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Moses covered his face, for he feared to see God.

The LORD said, "I have seen the affliction of my people in Egypt, and I have heard their cry in the presence of their oppressors; for I know their affliction. I have come down to deliver him out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring him up out of this land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hittites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

So the cry of the Israelites has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Now therefore go; I am sending you to Pharaoh, that

you may bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt."

Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"

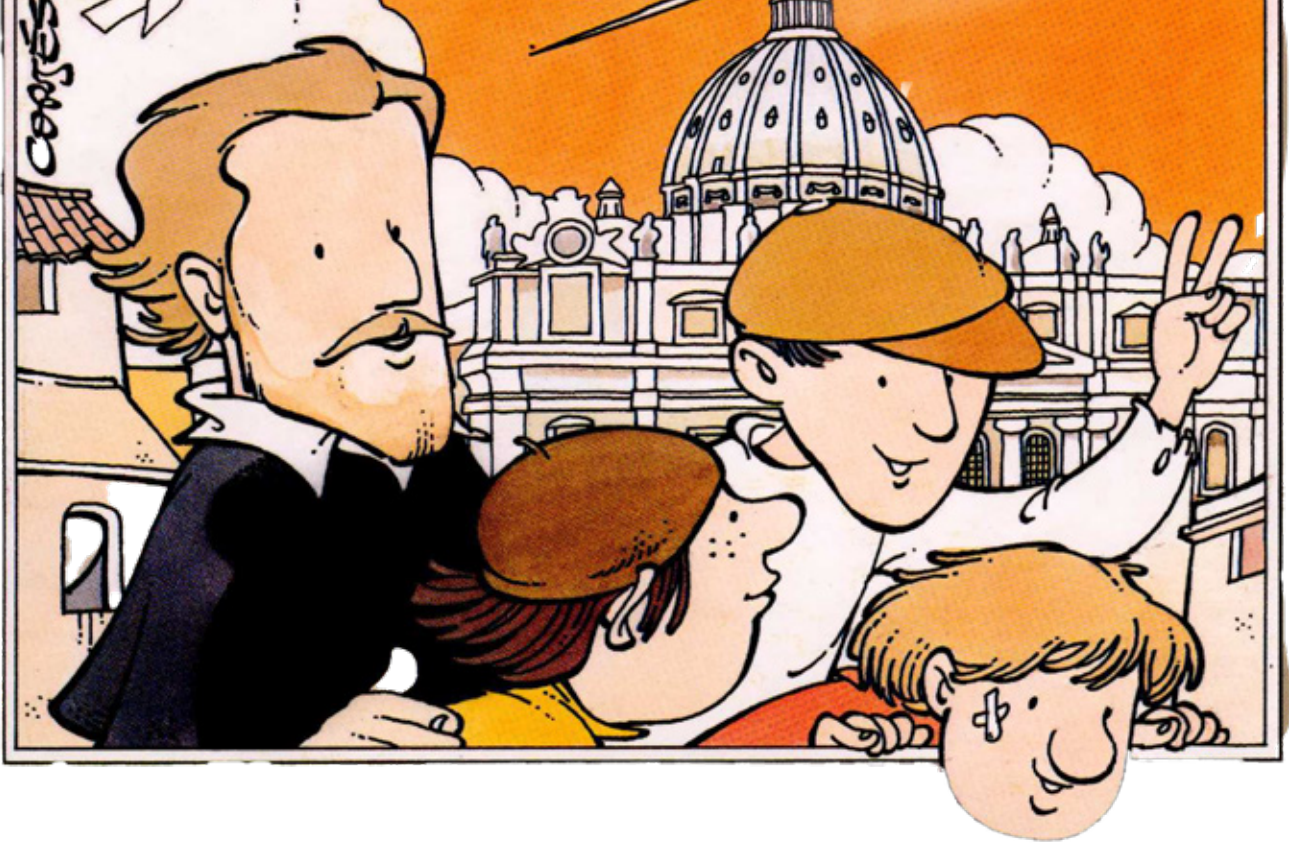
He answered, "I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you that I am sending you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain."

WITH CALASANZ: I HAVE FOUND IN ROME THE BEST WAY TO SERVE GOD

After ten years of stay in Rome, when Calasanz had already started the School in the parish of Santa Dorotea, he receives the visit of the Spanish ambassador offering him the canonry that he was waiting for with so much longing. He answered with certainty: "I have found in Rome the definitive way to serve God by doing good to the little ones and I will not leave it for anything in the world".

Having once asked him for what reason he decided to found this Religion of the Pious Schools, he answered me: The reason I had was none other than the dissolution I had seen in the poor boys of Rome, who, not having a good education because of the poverty and neglect of their parents, reflecting on the words of the psalm which says: "You will be the refuge of the orphan", I considered this sentence as said to myself, and therefore I began to catechise them in Christianity and in letters.

"Certainly our holy Father arrived in Rome not without a large sum of money, naturally



unaware of the length of time he would spend there in the expedition of his affairs” (Santha). According to Jiménez Barber, Calasanz enjoyed an annual income of 2,000 escudos. That the Founder was a rather wealthy priest in Rome can be seen from the fact that he dressed in silk, which at that time was considered ostentatious and worldly. Clement VIII forbade his court to “wear silk and accept gifts”. In the informative process of the saint it is said that “at that time, from what I was told, the said Father Joseph was not yet a religious, but he was dressed in the Spanish way, in long silk dresses” (Declaration in the beatification process).

“They tried hard to have the parish granted to Don José, but he did not want to accept in any way neither this position nor a canonry in the city of Seville of 1,200 escudos, answering that to accept the parish he would have to leave the Pious Schools, and to the secretary of the ambassador of the Catholic King, thanking him for the offer, he replied: I found in Rome the best way to serve God by helping these poor children, and I will not leave it for anything in the world”. (Fr. Vicente Berro, personal secretary of Calasanz).

“He came to Rome... on the pretence of being provided with benefices. But then he re-

solved to live a different kind of life, saying that the life he had begun was not for him, and so he gave himself entirely to the spirit”. (Francisco Motes)

Father Joseph came to Rome to claim some ecclesiastical prebend, but then, touched by God and recognising that everything in this world is vanity, he left the world and founded religion...” (Francisco Gutiérrez). “ (Francisco Gutiérrez)

- » Moses was attracted by the burning bush. What attracted me to the Church; to the Pious School?
- » “I have seen the affliction of my people in Egypt”. What sufferings do we see in the children and young people of today?
- » What relationship do we see between the vocation of Moses and that of Calasanz?
- » Why did I decide to become an educator, catechist or pastoral agent...?
- » Do I feel that my work is a mission that God and the Church have given me...?
- » What obstacles have I encountered in being faithful to my vocation as a teacher?

THE CONVERSION OF CALASANZ

Miguel Ángel Asiain

- a) There is no doubt that in the general sense Calasanz is a convert. Moreover, he is a person who, like every Christian, has had to change constantly, converting himself daily. If this happens with every Christian, much more so with a person whose holiness has been recognised by the Church. The path of fidelity is the path of conversion and, conversely, the path of conversion is a path of unlimited fidelity to the Lord. One cannot be a Christian if one is not a convert; nor, therefore, can one be a disciple, nor a companion, nor a sent one.
- B) There is also no doubt that Calasanz was not a convert in the sense of the first conversion. There have been many saints in whom God's mercy has shone out in bringing them out of a life of estrangement from him. Not so with Calasanz.
- c) But we must speak of a second conversion of Calasanz, why? The second conversion is conceived in different ways, but it always includes a decisive turning point in personal history that marks a person definitively in his encounter with God; a turning point that supposes the rupture of the level of existence in which he found himself to enter a new one; such a turning point is gift and grace. There is therefore a before and an after, divided by the disruptive presence from above, which can manifest itself in many ways. Let us see it in Calasanz.

The before.

What is Calasanz like around the age of 40? Humanly speaking, he is at the age that today is considered the beginning of maturity; more so when life was not so long. He was a mature man. Existentially he seemed to have already found the meaning of his life: a priest devoted to souls, a tireless pastor, a tireless worker for the Kingdom. Spiritually there are aspects to be delimited. He was a zealous, delicate priest, concerned for the good of others:

“As for his interior life, from the few indications we have, we have to consider it alive and active. In the first place, knowing Capilla's spirituality, we can affirm without fear of error, that the trust he placed in Calasanz indicates no little goodness of life in him as well. We have also seen him with an active charity, concerned about the religious formation of his servant, giving unmistakable signs of devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and to Mary Most Holy” (García-Durán).

All of this that refers to the Spanish period is endorsed by the early Roman years. In this regard, we must remember all the intense devotion that for different reasons and in different years, but in the form of a cataract, gave its name to several religious brotherhoods.

But alongside these aspects of light, there are also darker elements in Calasanz in his forties. The Spanish period is summed up in this way:

“Defects? We do not see him practising the virtue of poverty, but rather he seems to follow the rich life of so many ecclesiastics of his time. On the other hand, his continuous life in the curia and high offices, together with his wealth, would certainly not favour his humility, difficult enough for a man of his qualities. Perhaps the common defect of those who frequented the court was not entirely foreign to his soul: ambition” (García-Durán).

And if we enter the first years of the Roman period we find that Calasanz continues with the same defects, without denying anything of what was said before, that he still did not practise poverty? Certainly our holy Father arrived in Rome not without a large sum of money, ignoring naturally the length of time he would spend there in the expedition of his affairs” (Santha). According to Jiménez Barber, Calasanz enjoyed an annual income of 2,000 escudos. That the Founder was a rather wealthy priest in Rome can be seen from the fact that he dressed in silk, which at that time was considered ostentatious and worldly. Clement VIII forbade his court to “wear silk and accept gifts”. In the informative process of the saint it is said that “at that time, from what I was told, the said Father Joseph was not yet a religious, but he was dressed in the Spanish style, in long silk dresses”.

That in Rome he continues his quest for honours and security? There is no doubt that he travelled to Rome in search of a canonry, which does not exclude the possibility that it also entailed some other mission. And he spent the first years of his life in this endeavour. It is enough to review in the saint’s later biographers the feverish itinerary of this search.

The after.

If so far we have seen Joseph in his forties, barely past that age, what is the Joseph of a few years later along the same lines we have indicated? On the one hand, the rich Spanish priest, dressed in silk and with a large annual income, turns out that in 1606 he has to ask the Pope’s permission to beg in Rome for his schools. He has no money, he has spent all his money and he has used it for the work he is doing. It is not that he is a religious, nor does he dream of it, but the poverty he has begun to live is not the fruit of vows; the religious state is still a long way off in time and even more so in the heart. This poverty has no turning back, it is a path of deepening and deepening in his work and in his life throughout all the stages he went through until the “sornma povertá”. At one point God broke his path and he began to live in a way he had never dreamed of before.

But it was not only the road to wealth that broke down for him, but also the road to prestige. Something was happening to him back in 1600 when - as the dead Berro, the parish priest of Santa Dorotea, narrates it

They tried to have the parish granted to Don José, who refused to accept either this position or a canonry in the city of Seville for 1,200 escudos, replying that to accept the parish he would have to leave the Pious Schools, and to the secretary of the ambassador of the Catholic King, thanking him for the offer, he replied: “I found in Rome the best way to serve God by helping these poor children, and I will not leave it for anything in the world”.

Already a year before, in 1599, he had renounced for ever to residential prebends, but not to those that without obligation of residence could provide income to dedicate them to “a pious cause that I intend to do>>> Even more, and already in 1605, he was offered in the

name of the king the archiepiscopal see of Brindis and he did not accept - Caputi-, and later Paul V wanted to offer him the cardinalate capel, and again he renounced -Berro-. From that first attempt at the canonry of Urgell until now, Calasanz's life has undergone a spectacular turnaround. Along the way, God has disrupted his life.

But there is more, it is not that he has given up more than he could ever have dreamed of when he landed in the port of Rome, it is that at the same time he has long been involved in a task - the schools for poor children - which Cardinal Silvio Antoniano had described in these words: " it has turned out that teaching children, although without reason, is a vile and despicable exercise". And the great humanist and pedagogue Luis Vives had once written to Erasmus: "I am so disgusted by schools that I would do anything rather than go back to these filth and deal with children". And that is what Calasanz devoted 50 years of his life to, more than half of it. God had shattered the path of prestige and set him on the path of humility, and there was no turning back.

What has happened?

We distinguish, therefore, in Calasanz two different situations. There has been a great turning point in his Christian spiritual life; the paths of the past have been broken, he has embarked on new ones, which will be forever, which have marked him deeply and definitively, and which have brought him closer to the mystery of Jesus. What has happened? The witnesses interpreted it as an intervention of God in the life of Calasanz.

The priest Francisco Motes confessed: "He determined to abandon his pretensions and give himself wholeheartedly to God". A certain Tomás Simón, a Catalan, who knew the saint because he was in charge of serving the forms at the church of San Pantaleón, said:

"He came to Rome... on the pretence of being provided with benefices. But then he resolved to another tenor of life, saying that the life he had begun was not for him, and so he gave himself wholly to the spirit."

And the painter Francisco Gutiérrez stayed for several months in San Pantaleón, he said:

"Father Joseph came to Rome to claim some ecclesiastical prebend, but then, touched by God and recognising that everything of this world is vanity, he left the world and founded religion.... "

Consequently, we have the elements proper to the second conversion: "giving oneself wholeheartedly to God", resolving "to another tenor of life", "giving oneself totally to the spirit", and, in addition, all this as a gift and grace of the Lord: "touched by God". Along with this, we have seen how Calasanz has broken with the line of the past and has taken a turn that would set him spiritually on the path that has no end. As a way of life, there is still the entry into the religious life, but even if in it he has to convert constantly, he will continue on that new level that has broken with the past, and in fact the significant lines of his future will be those found by grace during this period, poverty and humility.

- What was God's touch?

This is the question we ask ourselves. It is clear that in Calasanz the second conversion was neither spectacular, nor was it momentary, nor was it through a direct intervention of God, nor did it take place in a religious environment (spiritual exercises, retreats, mystical experience). It was rather gradual, in experience and in time, and the means God used were the poor.

The events from 1597 to 1606 - the ten crucial years of his conversion - can be seen in



any modern biographer. We can recall some partial ones. What will destabilise Calasanz's life are several events:

The experience of poverty in all its dimensions. A spectacle new to his eyes that he had never encountered before, which led him to become a member of the Confraternity of the Twelve Apostles. He joined it in 1595, but, according to the documentary evidence we have, he began his visits to the Roman rions in 1596.

2° The experience of the concrete need of the poor children of Rome, which he sees on a daily basis and which has been narrated by Berro.

3.' On April 9, 1597, an Easter Wednesday, he found the little school of St. Dorothea, where on the one hand he saw that children were being taught, but on the other hand it pained him that "rich and poor were commonly taught there", and therefore did not yet satisfy the need he witnessed daily.

All this constitutes a challenge to the life of the saint, and he begins to make a series of

choices in which the hand of God is at work. More specifically, we will see this in theme 20.

Therefore we have seen the change or conversion of Calasanz, and how such a change was operated by the "touch of God" or the mercy of God who uses the poor. The poor - or God through them - changed his life in the two fundamental areas of existence: that of "doing" or work, he left parishes and adult priestly apostolate to dedicate himself to the education of children and youth, mainly poor; and that of "being", they led him little by little to poverty - "somma povertá" - which he had not discovered before, and to humility, forcing him to leave behind canonries, prebends and prestige. That is why the second conversion of Calasanz embraced his whole being.

Hence, the two fundamental lines in Calasanz's personal experience of liberation from evil and sin - from the idols of his life - are poverty and humility.



SC^{OL}LOPI



 **Where
I belong**