

Prot.S.224.2024

## TO THE WHOLE OF THE PIOUS SCHOOLS THE GRACE AND PEACE OF GOD, OUR FATHER

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As every year, on September 26 we celebrate the Day of Prayer for all the young people who live their process of Initial Formation within the Pious Schools. Along with this letter of greeting I send you the names of all of them: the aspirants and pre-novices, who are beginning their formation journey with hope, questions and confidence; the novices, who have made the decision to become religious and have taken on the challenge of living a particularly important year to base their vocation; the juniors, who year after year renew their commitment in a precious dynamic of fidelity, and those who this year have made their solemn vows or have received ordinations.

All of them, each one of them, are a gift from God to the Pious Schools, to children and young people, to the Church. All of them are called to be a new Calasanz, the Piarist we need. That is why we pray for them, for each one, placing their lives and their vocation in God's hands. There is nothing better we can do for them, and we will do so on this Day of Prayer with deep gratitude for their generosity.

I recall the words of Pope Francis when he invited the Church to pray for young religious in formation: *"that all may grow in their vocational journey through an integral formation (human, intellectual, spiritual, pastoral and communitarian) that leads them to be credible witnesses of the Gospel<sup>1</sup>."* In our prayer we keep in mind their struggles, their efforts, their progressive process of identification with the Lord in the footsteps of Calasanz. We also pray for their formators, so that they may be honest companions of their process and an example of authenticity. We pray for the Pious Schools that we want to build together with them, so that they may be closer and closer to the dream of the founder. Let us pray, above all, in thanksgiving for the vocation that God has sown in your heart.

Initial Formation is very challenging and is directly related to the type of Pious Schools we want and to our response to the challenges of our mission. Let us remember that the 48th General Chapter of the Order, when it thought of initial formation, wanted to highlight some points that seemed especially significant, and which were finally incorporated into our Common Rules. I remind you: *"spirit of service from the least; sensitivity to the poor; giving of themselves to the mission and the community; willingness to educate oneself continuously; transparency of life; availability to be accompanied; overcoming clericalism and secularism; training on the subject of comprehensive child protection and teamwork, etc."*

The Order always thinks about Initial Formation, as Calasanz insisted: *"Since this task that we have in hand is of such transcendence and requires people endowed with the greatest charity, patience and other virtues, it will be necessary to consider with great attention who should be admitted or excluded from formation for our ministry. For if we do not proceed with great*

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Francis. The Pope's prayer for seminarians and men and women religious. May 2024

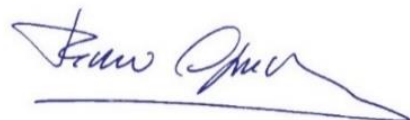
*discernment in the selection and admission of novices and do not give them a very careful formation, our Work, like any other, no matter how holy it may be, will collapse<sup>2</sup>."*

Prayer changes our hearts. God, our Father, already knows what our young people need. For this reason, our prayer of intercession for them expresses, before God, our gratitude for the vocational gift he has given them and, moreover, changes our hearts. Prayer for them helps us to be closer to them and to value, with growing confidence, their Piarist journey.

On behalf of the Pious Schools, thank you very much for your prayers. Receive a fraternal embrace.



Fr. Alex Djoussé Sch.P.  
*General Secretary*



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

Rome, September 26, 2024, Day of Prayer for the Young Piarists in Initial Formation

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<sup>2</sup> San José de CALASANZ. Constitutions of the Pauline Congregation, numbers 6-7