



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
TO RELIGIOUS MEMBERS OF THE CALASANZIAN FAMILY

Consistory Hall Thursday, 28 November 2024

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning and welcome!

I am pleased to meet you on the occasion of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Calasanzian Family, which brings you together in the educational charism of the universal Patron of all Christian popular schools in the world, Saint Joseph Calasanz, and also in view of the centenary of the death of two of your founders, Saint Faustino Míguez and Blessed Celestina Donati.

The Lord inspired Saint Joseph Calasanz to dedicate his life to the education of the young, especially the small and the poor, as their “guardian angel”, to use the expression with which he himself loved to define the mission of the “master”: “guardian angel” is beautiful. And you continue his work, which in the meantime, throughout the centuries, has spread to as many as four continents. I would therefore like to underline, on this happy occasion, two aspects of your origins that I consider important for you and your future: the first aspect, courageous docility to Providence; the second aspect, care for the integral growth of the person. Courageous docility to Providence, care for the integral growth of the person.

First: courageous docility to Providence. Your Founder, from an affluent family, probably destined for an ecclesiastical career – I loathe this term, “ecclesiastical career”, we must get rid of it – who came to Rome with offices of a certain level, did not hesitate to upturn the plans and prospects of his life to dedicate himself to the street children he encountered in the city. This is how the Pious Schools came into being: not so much as the result of a predefined and guaranteed plan, but because of the courage of a good priest who allowed himself to get involved in the needs of his neighbour, when the Lord placed them before him. This is truly beautiful, and I would like to invite you too to maintain, in your choices, the same openness and the same readiness, without over-calculating, overcoming fears and hesitations, especially in the face of the many new forms of poverty of our times (cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 210). The new forms of poverty... and it would be good if today or tomorrow, one of these days, in your meeting, you tried to describe the new forms of poverty, what these new kinds of poverty are. Do not be afraid to venture out, to respond to the needs of the poor, on paths different to those you have travelled in the past, even at the cost of revising models and resizing expectations. It is in this trustful abandonment that your roots lie, and by being faithful to them you will keep your charism alive.





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Second aspect: care for the integral growth of the person. The great novelty of the Pious Schools was to teach to the young poor, along with the truths of faith, also the subjects of general education, integrating spiritual and intellectual formation to prepare mature and capable adults. It was a prophetic decision in those times, and fully valid even now. I like to speak, in this regard, of making unity, in the person, between the “three intelligences” - you know we don’t have three intelligences! [laughing] - between the “three intelligences”: that of the mind, that of the heart and that of the hands - the hands are intelligent! -, and so we can do with our hands what we feel and think, feel what we think and do, think what we feel and do. The three intelligences. Today it is very urgent to help young people to make this kind of synthesis, a harmonic unity of the three intelligences, to “make unity” in themselves and with others, in a world that instead pushes them increasingly in the direction of fragmentariness in feelings and cognition, and individualism in relationships. And on this insistence on “normal” relationships, looking each other in the eye, and not virtual relationships via the mobile phone. A bishop told me that his cousins came and invited him to lunch at a restaurant one Sunday, and at the next table there was a family: father, mother, son and daughter, all of them with their mobile phones, not speaking to each other. The bishop, very imprudent, got up, approached them and said: “Look, you are beautiful family, but why do you talk with your mobile phones, why don’t you talk to each other, which is much nicer?”. They listened to him, they sent him away, and carried on talking as before. This is terrible, a lack of humanity. The three forms of intelligence. And it is important that young people make this unity in themselves, with others, and with the world. The integrative educational style is a very important “charismatic talent” that God has entrusted to you, so that you may make it bear fruit to the best of your abilities, for the good of all.

Dear friends, I would like to conclude by emphasizing a last positive aspect of your presence here: walking together. It gives me great pleasure to see how all of you – men and women, consecrated men and women, and laypeople – listening to the Spirit, have felt the need to “be a family”, to join forces and share your experiences in a network of charity, in the service of your brothers and sisters (cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Christus vivit*, 222). It is the style of Jesus (cf. Mk 3:14-15; Mt 18:20), and it is also the style of the Church (cf. Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*, 7; Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, 92). Thank you, for this and for everything you do. I bless you from my heart, and I ask you to pray for me.

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