

“THE LAITY IN THE PIOUS SCHOOLS”

Introduction

1. Presentation

The document we present has its origin in the progressive reflection and valoration of the Church to the Laity and in the life and real experience of the Pious Schools. It comes from the conviction that the Spirit of Jesus and the Founder's own charism, Joseph Calasanz', have to be lived in each epoch in different manners. In this current period, the Lord is calling many lay people to participate in the charism, the spirituality and in the mission of the Order.

2. Addressees

In the perspective of participation, the addressees of this Document are the Piarist religious and the lay people¹ who, in a variety of ways and in different fields, are in contact with the Pious Schools.

It is addressed to the lay people who feel called to live the Christian path attuning to the spirit and the mission of Calasanz. It is addressed to those who have been fascinated by the Founder's person or by the mission God gave him, and want to follow him according to their strength and possibilities, in order to work in this field. It is addressed to those who are in connection with the Order and wish to know better its project of the following of Jesus and the service of liberation of men. It is addressed to all those people who approach the Piarist works for the first time and wish to know where they are bound to go. It is addressed to all the lay people of good will who would like to know what the Pious Schools are and do in the field of their relationship with seglars.

The document is also addressed to the Piarist religious who, following Calasanz and having listened to his innovating message, want to be alert to the movements of the Spirit. To the Piarist religious watchful to what He is doing in the life of the Order and want to interpretate and carry out His wishes.

3. Motivation

The principal purposes that lie in the origin of this Document are:

- a) To clarify the Piarist consciousness in this important issue, by explaining the germ which is already present in many sites of the Order, and by discerning the different experiences that are being carried out.
- b) To give a response to all those lay people who ask about the project the Pious Schools have in reference to them.
- c) To accept, as a sign of the times that interpellate us profoundly and make us unavoidable questions, the aperture to the laity which is a constant in many Orders and Congregations, quite frequently as the laity's own initiative.

4. Finality

The purposes or finalities this Document pursues, are the following:

- a) To lay out, in a general way, how the Pious Schools set forth their relationship with the laity.
- b) To manifest to the laity the different modalities of relationship with the charism of the Pious Schools, so that each one, according to the measurement of the gift of the Spirit of Jesus and in discernment of each case, can decide about it.

- c) To point out ways towards the integration of the laity in the charism of the Pious Schools, so that the Piarist lay person and the Piarist religious can meet, by close collaboration and participation of the same charism.

5. Fundamental criteria

It is important to understand some fundamental criteria that the Pious Schools have, which lie beneath this Document. Thus no mistake or misunderstanding will be given. Let us consider some:

- a) The wish of aperture to the lay people who somehow feel called to live the Piarist spirituality and mission or to participate in their charism.
- b) The offer of various modalities of participation in the charism, designing a broad scope of possibilities.
- c) The proposition, as a goal, even though for some few, to become a laical Piarist which configurate those few, in a very special way.
- d) The willingness that the laity keep their own laical identity.

The Document wants to preserve two fundamental elements:

- To be respectful of the freedom of the different groups today existing in the Pious Schools, which possess their own life and wish to walk along their own Christian option.
- To avoid indefiniton: not to be a space where anything can fit.

Therefore, some general lines are given. In these patterns a variety of ways of participation in the charism, in the spiritual experience and in the mission of the Pious School, can fit.

PART I: THEOLOGICAL ASPECTS

6. The Christian community, People of God

Among all the peoples, jewish and gentile God has chosen a People, the new People of God, already prepared for, in the Old Covenant. In the old covenant, sealed at the Sinai, He constituted a people to know Him and serve Him. This People of God was succeeded by a new one: “Behold the days shall come, saith the Lord, and I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judá. I will give my law in their bowels and I will write it in their heart”.

This new People, the People of God, is “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people...You who in times past were not a people, now you are the people of God”.³ Therefore, it is a people of priests who have “as heritage, the dignity and freedom of the children of God”; “by law, the commandment of love” and “as goal, the broadening of the kingdom of God established by God himself on earth”.⁴

This people is “the Church of God”, St. Paul speaks about.⁵ In her, all human beings are “brothers”⁶, “disciples”, “faithfuls”⁷ and “Christians”.⁸ The Church “is the congregation of all believers who turn to Jesus as the author of salvation and the beginning of unity and peace”.⁹

In this community, a diversity of ministries are carried out, instituted by the Lord Himself, to serve the community. Thus some of its members help the others during the time of the Church.

7. The importance of the laity

The Church sense of community and ministry have suffered different vicissitudes throughout history. One of them, the one that concerns us now, was the accentuation of the dimensions of ministerial priesthood, covering or reducing the priesthood of the remaining faithfuls and the importance of the other ministries. Little by little, throughout centuries, this situation left those who did not participate in the ministerial priesthood, in a secondary level.

The Second Vatican Council marked an important landmark in the ecclesiastical consciousness of the significance and importance of the laical vocation. On placing the chapter about the People of God before that of the hierarchy, the Council made a theological revolution, establishing, in the first place, the common dignity of all Christians. What is fundamental in the Church is simply the Christian, the baptized, the lay man. In this sense, the laical vocation is the prototype and reference of all Christian life. The laity, along with the pastors, collaborate in the mission of the Church.¹⁰

8. The universal call to sanctity

One of the most significative consequences of having re-discovered the laical vocation, is the conviction that there is a universal call to sanctity. The conviction that everybody has been equally called to perfection of charity. Sanctity is no longer a proper or specific dimension of religious life or the ministerial priesthood, but it is common to all the members of the people of God. Everybody has been “consecrated” by the baptism and in the baptism lies the last and fundamental reason of the call to the identification with Christ in plenitude. The Christian is a person called to participate in the life of God with plenitude; called to be son in the Son; to live within the trinitarian intimacy. Christian is he who follows Christ throughout the development of his personal and community life.¹¹

9. The laity’s apostolate

Around the middle of this century and starting from the tendencies to re-valorate laical autonomy, the collaboration of the laity with the hierarchy has been increasing and new forms of integration have appeared in associations and movements whose goal is to spread the message of Jesus and the Kingdom of God. All this movement of reflection and practice flowed into the Vatican II with the recognition of the sacramental base of the laical identity, their ecclesiastic protagonism and the possible ways of collaboration with the hierarchy. As member of the body of Christ, the lay man not only walks towards the perfection of charity in the ever closer and closer imitation of Christ Jesus, but he has been called to procure the growth of the Church with all his forces. These possibilities will be emphasized by Pope John Paul II in **Christifideles laici**.¹²

10. The sense of the laical vocation

The road towards the perfection of charity and the lay man’s collaboration in the salvific mission of the Church through an apostolate, must be made by the lay man himself, according to his own laical vocation to which he has been called by the grace. Therefore, “the laity’s own and peculiar secular character”¹³ will have to be preserved in any circumstance. The fact is that “the laity have their vocation to seek for the Kingdom of God dealing with, and trying to ordain temporal matters in concordance with God. They live in the “century”, that is in all and each one of the activities and professions, as well as in the common conditions of family and social life with which their lives are interwoven. They are called by God to fulfill their task there, in the “century”, guiding themselves by the evangelical spirit, like leaven, contributing from within to the

sanctification of the world. Thus they reveal Christ to others, shining, above all, by bearing witness by means of the faith, hope and charity in their lives".¹⁴

11. Concretion of the laical vocation

In the achievement of this laical vocation within the already mentioned ecclesiastical text, the following fact has started manifesting itself with increasing force: a growing number of lay people ask for participation of the charism of the different religious institutes. That is, they are not satisfied with a simple apostolic collaboration in the environment where they carry out their activity. They look for a more profound belonging to an Institute, participating of a determined Founder's Charism, but within the most exquisite respect towards their own limits of their laical vocation.

12. Transformation of the life of the religious Institutes

On the other hand, there is no doubt that the laity's participation in the charisms of the religious Institutes is going to make an internal transformation in such institutes.¹⁵ Living the charism in the laical style of life, may lead to a new re-discovery of many of its virtualities. At the same time, the living force of the laity's incorporation can wake up from their lethargy to many sleepy consciences and may encourage others to take a more radical decision of the following of Jesus.

PART II: PIARIST CONSCIOUSNESS (OR CONSCIENZIATION)

13. The way of consciousness (or conscienziation)

The Pious Schools are conscious of the importance of the charism that the Spirit awakened in Calasanz and how properly it fits in this time. Many people participate in and are responsible of that charism that pays special attention to the integral Christian education of a person, particularly the children and youths of the poor. For those many people who participate in that charism, education becomes a fundamental goal of their existence whatever the environment in which it is carried out. They feel themselves sent to work for the person, to make him reach his human and Christian status. That is the goal to achieve, principally, through education.

The following, are the most important landmarks of this process of institutional consciousness (or conscienziation), since the Special General Chapter held in 1967-69. In such occasion a "**Decree about the relation of our Order with the laity**" was approved. That was the first opportunity in which the most important organism of the Order dealt about the laical issue.

The Decree establishes a first approach to this topic more at a working level than in a charismatic sense. It confesses the desire to keep with the laity "a relation full of evangelic and ecclesiastic spirit".¹⁶ It focusses seglar teachers and professors of the schools, above all, and requires that they be considered "as brothers and co-operators the divine providence has granted us".¹⁷

The fundamental preoccupation of the Order, at that time, regarding the laity, was their continuous formation¹⁸, their spiritual improvement¹⁹ and the preparation of prospective cooperators with the schools, caring for the formation of good Catholic professors and teachers. The Chapter determines that, in the school field, they should be equalled to Piarist religious.²⁰

In 1979, the General Chapter in the document entitled **“For a more evangelical education”**, backed up the Christian Educational Communities, and insisted on the active and responsible presence of the laity in those communities.²¹

Four years later, Father-General Angel Ruiz addressed a Letter to the whole Order. This Letter meant a decisive step in the laical matter, when he stated: “The Piarist charism does not belong to the Piarists. It is not the Order’s property. It belongs to the People of God, there are and there will always be persons of both sexes and all ages, besides the Piarists, who have the charism and vocation to evangelize the youths. If this were so, those persons would participate of the Calasanzian Charism”.²²

From this perspective, the Calasanzian Ecclesiastic Communities (CEC) were born. They are formed by those who wish to live the gospel of Jesus following Calasanz’s style.²³ In them, the profile of the Piarist seglar is described as follows: “The Piarist seglar:

- participates in the charism and mission that Calasanz laid at the service of the Church;
- lives the spirit of the Calasanzian charism, which leads him fundamentally to evangelize from the socio-political reality and to make his, Christ’s option for the poor, especially children and youths;
- is a Christian who, in communion with the Calasanzian charism, interpellated by the necessity of evangelizing children and youths, allows himself to be led by the Spirit, trying to live the following of Christ starting from his family; sharing their anxieties with the Calasanzian Family; inserting himself in it, with a well-defined commitment;
- develops his own seglar condition in his priestly, prophetic and royal dimension received in the baptism to resume all things in Christ;
- lives secularity bearing witness to God in everything;
- must have an autonomy of style and structure, always in communion and participation in the life of the Piarist Religious Family”.²⁴

These Communities, who were supposed to be arising in the Pious Schools, were a fundamental element of the profound renovation of the Order. For that reason, Father Angel Ruiz made a very serious appeal to all the Superiors at that time to promote and help, within their possibilities, the birth of such Communities.²⁵ To that union of laymen who felt themselves committed to such undertaking, Father-General Ruiz denominated it the “Piarist Seglar Fraternity” (or Fraternity of Piarist Seglars).²⁶

Two years later (1985), preparing the General Chapter, the same Father-General launched a poll to feel the pulse of the Order in different aspects. As far as the integration of the laity was concerned, the results showed that the Letter had not rooted too deeply in the life of the Institute.²⁷

The General Chapter of 1985, issued a document entitled “The seglars in the Pious Schools”. It recognized that Father Angel Ruiz’ Letter had been heading the north and that such a line was to be followed in the future. It was revealed that the topic of the integration of the laity in the Order was getting more and more adept²⁸, and that such was the path to incarnate the biblical figure of the People of God in the Order.²⁹ Therefore, it was not just a pragmatic element, but an ecclesiastical verification that obliged to use the key of faith to read the history of the time.³⁰

The document made three petitions: the creation of the Piarist Seglar Branch³¹, the institutionalization of a program of Christian and Calasanzian formation of the laity³² and the particular attention to be paid to the family parents.³³

Once the integration path was open, the Order backed it up. The Council of Major Superiors, held in Czestochowa in 1987, asked for the continuation of this trend³⁴ and to favor it by working in the change of mentality of some religious.

The General Congregation thought the moment had come to design the figure of what the “Fraternity of the Pious Schools” should be and published a document to introduce and present such Fraternity³⁵. It focussed on those lay people who –remaining as such- wished to participate in the Piarist charism. In other words: those who wished to live the Christian vocation “according to a specifically Piarist spirit and life”.³⁶ The invitation to join this Fraternity was addressed to the different laical groups somehow connected to the Order.³⁷

The new Father-General, Joseph M. Balcells, in a Letter addressed to some Calasanzian groups and communities, offered some lines along which some fields could be ploughed in the future about this topic: “As far as closer levels of insertion are concerned, there are two very clear and separate perspectives, though susceptible of having a relationship between them. One, is –via laical vocation- that which could lead, as mentioned before, to the possible existence of a parallel Secular Institute of the Pious Schools, with an independent structure although linked to the Religious Order of the Pious Schools. Right now it seems a rather distant possibility. Or else, there could be a relationship at juridical, in community, in presence, and in activity levels of connection with our community or with what we consider the works “of ours”.³⁸

Facing the future, a verification was absolutely necessary: “the difference between the Piarist religious and the Piarist of the fraternities, is a matter of belonging (or appurtenance), but not of contents”.

So, we come to the last intervention of the maximal authority of the Order, the General Chapter, which took place in 1991. The Chapter required “To proceed gradually in the integration of seglars and to prepare the mentality for the changes that must take place in actuality...To act in such way that prevention and fear be substituted by the active wish to create “seglar Piarists” side by side and close collaboration with the religious Piarists”.³⁹

14. The present Piarist legislation

The Constitutions and Rules only timidly peep in this topic. It is normal that reflection and life develop much faster than what legislation is able to regulate them.

The Rules contemplate the existence of Christian communities that participate in the Calasanzian spirit and point to their invaluable richness for the Order.⁴⁰ However, they look with much attention and care to the field of the ministerial work and to whom collaborate in the education of the students to them encomended. The religious must consider them as brothers⁴¹ and must work to form with them the educational community⁴², to which all the different levels present in the schools should be integrated.⁴³

15. Attitudes of the religious

The General Chapter of 1985 demanded to propitiate in all the religious, some attitudes towards the approaching of the laity to the different manners of participation in the Piarist charism as easily and fruitfully as possible.

- a. Simplicity and aperture to listen to and to inform to the laity about their lives, works, situation (including economical aspects, personal situations...) listening to the collaborations and criticism that from their laical viewpoint they may and should make.

- b. A new style in their relationship. This leads to deepen in the field of interpersonal relations, paying special attention to the professors: to come out so as to have a mutual encounter during the working hours; to worry about and to get nearer their families, especially in significant events; to open them their communities.
- c. Evangelical hospitality, resigning to the tranquility of living their community life with much regularity, to welcome professors, family parents, former students, etc.
- d. The laity's participation in expressions and experiences of faith in the religious communities, inviting them to live together moments of evangelization and catechesis, of communication of the faith, of liturgical celebrations and apostolic anxieties derived from the charism.
- e. To go deep into their mission in the Church starting from Calasanz' response, in the actual entourage of today, with the professors, students' parents, former students, etc. thus sharing the Calasanzian spirit.
- f. Community of goods, sharing them with the laity and opening them to their needs.
- g. Incorporation of the laity to the evangelizing mission of the Pious Schools, keeping an attitude of evangelical service from the religious' side. Thus, a response will be provided to the professors' wish of being systematically evangelized and by trusting them an evangelizing responsibility not only in their school but also in their extra-curricular activities".⁴⁴
- h. An ever increasing knowledge of Calasanz, his historical background, events, spirituality and pedagogy, and the significance of his living presence for the Church.
- i. Preparation of religious to accompany the Calasanzian groups and communities as they go on rising in the different Demarcations.

PART III: MODALITIES OF BELONGING (OR APPURTENANCE)

16. The Mission

Love took God to create man⁴⁵, to make him a child of His⁴⁶ and, therefore, destine him to everlasting life: "that they may know thee, the only true God and Him who thou has sent, Jesus Christ".⁴⁷

But man did not accept the project of God and rebelled against Him.⁴⁸ He sent, then, His only begotten Son to re-establish His Covenant of love and to renew His primitive project.⁴⁹ Jesus gathered the dispersed children⁵⁰ and established through His death⁵¹ and resurrection a final and definitive Covenant between God and the man. Jesus died for the instauration of the Kingdom of God in the world, in all peoples.⁵²

Back to the Father⁵³ and by His side, the Holy Spirit, love between the Father and the Son, was sent so that He may lead all people "to the plenified Truth"⁵⁴ and to communicate people all that is His.⁵⁵ The Holy Spirit is the great missionary of the Father and the Son throughout history.

On the day of Pentecost, the Spirit made the Church stand up so that the call of the Father, turned into mission within the Church, could reach everywhere: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"⁵⁶

The Church feels herself constantly animated by the Spirit⁵⁷, who guides her activity and her life.⁵⁸ According to the Master's promise, throughout the time of mission, the Church knows her advocate is the Spirit⁵⁹, who keeps the message of the Lord alive⁶⁰, who makes Christ and the Father present in each Christian.⁶¹ The Church knows it is the Spirit who discovers her new horizons of truth and who will interpret them in the new circumstances in which she will find herself. Amidst the hardships and problems she will be passing through, the Church experiments that the Spirit is Jesus' great witness.⁶³

In the meantime⁶⁴, the great commandment of the Lord is to proclaim "the good news to all mankind"⁶⁵; to make the world know the love of the Father for the man, in such a way that "he who believes and is baptized shall be saved"⁶⁶. The Church is sent by Jesus to evangelize, as He himself, has been sent by the Father.⁶⁷ The Mission lies in the center of the history of the Church, and in her heart, the last words of the Lord. From Her, everything derives and in her, all the baptized must participate. "The Church exists to evangelize, that is, to preach and teach".⁶⁸ To be Christian is to be sent in mission to the whole world, to evangelize it until everybody recognizes, loves and lives for God Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

17. Many charisms in the same Mission.

Therefore, all Christians have been called to proclaim and to restore the Kingdom of God Father. Within the Church, the responsibility of the mission falls on each baptized and the mutual collaboration of all faithfuls is required. But each one has to carry out the task from his own charism, received from God in the Church to build up the Body of Christ. So, within the single Mission, there is the specific mission of each one of the different ecclesiastic lives and of the various Institutes of religious life.⁶⁹

Religious life is just another charism, among many others that "the Church has received from the Lord and which, with His grace, is perpetually kept".⁷⁰ It is a charism, that is, "an experience from the Spirit transmitted to (the Founder's) own disciples to be constantly lived, kept, deepened and developed by them attuning with the Body of Christ in perennial growth....

The proper characteristic takes along, besides, a particular style of sanctification and apostolate which creates a typical tradition whose objective elements can easily be individualized".⁷¹ "The charism implies a specific way of being, a specific mission and spirituality, a fraternal style of life and structure of the Institute, at the service of the ecclesiastic mission"⁷². When we say "charism", we also mean "the fruit of the Holy Spirit who always acts in the Church"⁷³, a gift "received from God and approved by the Church".⁷⁴

In this sense, the charism affects all those aspects in which each style of religious life makes itself visible; it concerns its essence and its doing. That is why it is necessary to remember that the charism of an Institute does not identify itself with the work it does, nor does it identify with the self-donation service. It rather requires in its totality the complementary help of three elements:

- The spirituality: a peculiar way of conceiving and living the mystery of God in Christ Jesus, since that mystery is not capable of being wholly embraced. Each founder has perceived it from a very particular viewpoint: that received by grace.
- Fraternal life in community: a peculiar style of fraternal relationship among the members of the Institute.
- The ministry: a particular way of "diakonia" or service in the mission of the Church, which is expressed in a determined work.

The charism, in its integral richness, progressively tends to the synthesis of the three aspects or slopes afore-mentioned. To forget or to marginate one of them, means its impoverishment.

18. Manifestation in the Piarist life

“Due to new situations, not few Institutes have come to the conviction that their charism may be shared with the laity”.⁷⁵ In the last times numerous lay people have felt the call to participate in the mission of the Church through the Piarist charism, living the spirituality and mission that Calasanz received.⁷⁶

There are three outstanding elements in this fact:

- a) There is a call from the Lord in the decision of those lay people. They want to live the following of Jesus and their collaboration to proclaim the Kingdom in the school and with Calasanz charism, but in their laical life.
- b) In the omniscient freedom of the Holy Spirit who distributes His charisms as He wishes, where He wishes, when He wishes and whom He wishes, many lay people can be called to participate in the same Piarist charism as the religious though they live it in another kind of life.
- c) The same charism can be lived and carried out in different ways. This situation induces to distinguish in the charism some substantial ever present elements. There are other contingent elements which can be expressed in a variety of manners at the moment of incarnating the same charism.⁷⁷

19. The process of living the Calasanzian charism

The participation in the charism requires living experiences in its three slopes: spirituality, community and mission.

These three slopes have a nucleus of charismatic content – always the same – which can manifest itself in different ways of incarnation.

Therefore, the content of “the living experiences of spirituality-community-mission” that Joseph Calasanz has received and which he incarnated in the way of religious life –poverty, chastity, obedience and religious community- can be and should be incarnated in the manner of laical life. It is the same charism lived in a different way of Christian existence.

The living experience of the charism constitutes a process in which there are various manners of progressive belonging (or appuntenance) and identification (co-operation, participation and integration).

Four modalities can be presented: the first three already exist in some places, while the fourth contemplates a possible future horizon, considering some experiences in existence and of course the corresponding legal mechanisms and the approval of the competent authority. In each of these modalities, but above all in those that incarnate in their personal and groupal experience the three aspects of the charism (integration), different manners of commitment can also be given.

They are here described with the following purposes:

- a. to favor the reflection and getting into the depth of the topic;
- b. to inspire and orientate the current or other experiences that can be given thanks to an open interpretation of the present legislation;
- c. to take the institutional commitment to evaluate them throughout the sexennial period, to turn them in to the next General Chapter.

20. First modality: co-operation with the Piarist action and with the institutions and works of the Order.

Any collaboration with the Piarist action somehow starts the relationship with the charism that inspires such action. Included in this modality, are all those persons who take part in the work of the Pious School, be it schools, parishes or others, and are humanly stimulating and educationally efficacious, in open line with the proper character.

All of them are co-operators with the Pious action.⁷⁸ The Pious Schools must pay attention to all of them so that their co-operation serves for the good and the mission encomended to the Order by the Church.⁷⁹

The General Chapter of 1985 already stated that 90% of the education in the Schools, were in the hands of the laity. Only when they are Christians, incorporated to the essence and the work of the Piarists, the Order will be able to go on existing in its institutions.⁸⁰ There lies, the importance and urgency of this indispensable laical co-operation. Without them, the activities of the Order would be reduced in such high percentage.

21. Second modality: participation in the shared mission

It means a greater belonging to the charism of the Pious Schools. On the side of the person, it requires the voluntary decision to go on ahead, in his connection with the Order. On the Order's side, it requires that it call the laity to assume their responsibility within the specific mission of the Order and that the Order be in attitude of sharing it with them.

Among those who participate in this shared mission, there are different groups:

a. Teachers and professors who, besides their professional work, feel themselves called to participate in the mission of the Pious Schools. This participation becomes a real self-donation to the integral Christian education of children and youths, especially the needy, task they want to carry out, and actually do so, throughout the school.⁸¹ To those people, many others are added. They are not teachers but collaborate in the global Piarist mission of the Center, actively.

This means those people live their profession from a perspective of faith, because they try to live the Christian essence in their place of work.

- b. Catechists, preceptors and pastoral agents in general, who want to configurate their educational-pastoral activity with the Piarist mission. They also want to develop and to shape, to mold their own Christian existence in a specific manner, through their pastoral work.
- c. Family parents who feel active protagonists of this education, being the first educators of their children. They want, together with the missional and charismatic dynamics of the Work, take part in it.
- d. Youths who feel motivated to participate in the mission the Order carries out, and who are invited to live it as subjects who share what they receive.
- e. Other persons who, from different areas, endeavor to perform other educational environments. They want to participate from their knowledge, learning and competence in the Piarist mission. They have a sincere commitment to favor the lower and unprotected classes of society, as far as Christian education is concerned.

22. Third modality: charismatic integration in the Pious Schools

In this case there is a quality jump. From sharing the mission to understanding the mission, there is a charisma that embraces it all. It is the participation in the three dimensions, already mentioned, concerning the Piarist religious. They are:

- participation in the Calasanzian mission;
- participation in St. Joseph Calasanz' spirituality;
- participation in the fundamental features of the community life as Calasanz understands it.⁸²

In the living experience of these dimensions, it is convenient to keep in mind that:

- a. The fact is to live and incarnate secularly, the nucleus of the charismatic gift of the Piarist religious.
- b. This participation has to be structured in a path-like manner: initial stages with weaker participation in intensity or in time, which become more and more consistent until reaching a full attuning to Calasanz' intuition.
- c. The normal situation is that this participation is lived in community with other persons who are in similar or equal circumstances, even though in some cases it has to be lived individually. This community experience may be of laymen alone or laymen and religious together.
- d. The way to incarnate these three elements will be different in the various communities. It may also be different among the persons of the same community.
- e. A concrete institutional way in which this charismatic integration can be attained, is the Fraternity of the Pious Schools (FPS) approved by the General Chapter of 1991. In this case the community adopts the structural form which has been described by the General Congregation in the document about the Fraternity.

23. Fourth modality: charismatic and juridical integration in the Pious Schools.

A special step in this path would be the juridical integration of the laity in the Pious Schools. That is, not only a charismatic integration but, at the same time, a juridical one, that would allow to reach the point of a true laical Piarist in a full sense. Such integration:

- will be always personal and will be able to be accomplished in community;
- will take a long process of knowledge and experience of the Piarist charism and of the life and mission of the Order;
- will be applied for, after an adequate discernment;
- will include rights and duties towards the Pious Schools;
- will be sustained by an agreement signed with the Order, in which the fundamental aspects of the relation between the laical Piarist and the Order of the Pious Schools will be regulated.

PART IV: WAYS OF ACCESS TO THESE MODALITIES

24. Co-operation with the humane-educational Piarist action.

In order to be able to offer ways of access to this first modality, the Pious Schools must transform themselves. Such transformation has to be carried out from the

administration management and co-responsibility in all the Piarist Works. Therefore the Pious Schools must:

- transform their administration in the sense of co-responsibility;
- announce and communicate clear criteria in their selection of personnel;
- provide enough information about the human, Christian and Calasanzian aspects, establishing patterns for the educational and pastoral agents, etc.

25. Participation in the shared mission

In order to favor the access to this second modality, the Pious Schools are to offer means so that the laity may:

- know, love and incarnate the values of the Calasanzian pedagogy;
- mold and shape in their work, the most fundamental lines of the Calasanzian school, without setting aside the pastoral aspects which ought not to be separated from the pedagogical-educational field.
- incarnate, therefore, the characteristics of the Piarist mission.

26. Charismatic integration in the Pious Schools

To facilitate the access of this third modality, many elements must be interwoven: an itinerary or formative process of the community, an experience of personal path along which different elements of the charism are attained; and personal discernment to guarantee the steps being taken. The Pious Schools will have to offer the processes for each one of them:

a. Community itinerary

- To build up a Christian community with living experience of the Calasanzian aspects, it is necessary to have a group who learns how to live and get acquainted as a group, as well as to have a learning time.
- From a process of vocational discernment, a path is made towards a Christian community. Its model, its components, the options it incarnates, the process of growth, the relationship the Christian community lives with God and the commitment to the Kingdom it has, will be different according to the options of the various communities.
- To take a further step, which consists of the real way of living the following of Jesus and the dedication to work for the Kingdom, in accordance with the Calasanzian spirit. The Calasanzian charism will have to be discovered in all its richness of self-donation to God, to the little ones and to the unprotected.

b. Experience of personal path

The personal path that each member of the Calasanzian community is making, consists of the intellectual discovery and above all, of the three elements of the charismatic nucleus:

- the spiritual vision or the Calasanzian spirituality, that is, the peculiar way of carrying out the evangelic life Calasanz led. It is the peculiar manner our Founder left as heritage, of being in relationship with the mystery of God in Christ Jesus. The rhythm of the proper process in each one of the cases, must be respected;
- the Calasanzian community, with the characteristics that define it. The way in which each person is to live those characteristics in the community in which he is, must be discerned;

- the Calasanzian mission. Likewise, the concrete way according to which, each one has to live and achieve that mission, will have to be discovered.

c. Discernment:

Discernment is the mediation which a person uses to decide over each step he takes, not only in the community itinerary, but also in the experience of his personal path.

V. CONCLUSION

All the process indicated in the present document starts from the deep spiritual conviction that God continues calling religious and lay people to the following of Jesus, behind the steps of Calasanz, in accordance with the state of life each one has been called to, and from where he wants to give a response to that call.

Therefore, it is an irreversible institutional option that calls for a renewed ecclesiastic vision, a permanent discernment and a great respect ful attitude to diversity within the unity of the Order.

It could not be carried out without the sincere endeavor and availability of everybody to accompany one another in that ecclesiastic itinerary, under the motion of the Spirit.

We call all the persons, either religious or lay people, congregated in the Pious Schools, to collaborate in the aperture of new paths, with decision and prophetic spirit, so that the charism received from St. Joseph Calasanz can revive in the Church, at the service of children and youths, **“for a greater increment of piety”**.

APPENDIX

As examples, some possible formulae in which the fourth modality could become a reality, are indicated. The next General Chapter, after an evaluation, may gather them in a statute to be approved.

1. Reception in our communities of persons who wish to live the charism, life and mission with us;
 - It is sketched in the Rules, n. 222, in the issue “aggregates”.
 - More aspects of the relation between the Institute and the aggregates would have to be determined.
 - They participate in what the Piarist is.
 - They are adscribed to a local Piarist community, with some juridical effects.
2. Creation of Piarist communities of religious and lay people:
 - a) Communities of life and housing:
 - At least two religious with many non-religious lay men.
 - Piarist communities with their own rights and duties.

- With juridical bonds which have civil law validity, in which rights and duties are indicated, as well as a total clarification in regard to the economical aspect.
- b) Communities of experience and mission. With men and women, in celibacy, married or presbyters.
- With at least three religious.
 - Piarist communities with their own rights and obligations.
 - With juridical bonds which have civil law validity, in which rights and duties are indicated as well as with full clarification of the economical aspect.
- c) Piarist communities of lay men. Lay men who live in community by themselves and participate in communities of experience and mission with religious.

SEQUENCE OF FOOTNOTES

“The Laity in The Pious Schools”

1. “By the name of laity it is understood all the Christian faithfuls with the exception of the members who have received a sacred order and those who are in religious state recognized by the Church. That is, all the Christians who incorporated to Christ by means of the baptism, are constituted in people of God and have been made participants, in their way, of the sacerdotal, prophetic and royal function of Jesus Christ. Therefore, they exercise, on their part, the mission of all the Christian people in the Church and in the world” (LG 31).

We have to admit that the term “lay” is ambiguous. On one hand, “lay man” is just the Christian man, that is, anyone who is a member of the People of God, a baptized. Lay man is he who lives and represents the Christian condition; he who wholly assumes all the implications of the baptism and confirmation. The second chapter of LG teaches us about it. Lay man means what the primitive Christian is. In this sense, it is not the lay man what is defined in contraposition and after the clergy or religious, but just the other way round.

Lay man has also been defined as the member of the People of God who fully lives his secular vocation (hence, sometimes he is referred to as “seglar”). In chapter IV of the LG we can see it. In this chapter “no theological definition is given, nor a dogmatic base is presented to serve as a starting point to define it. The secularity is indicated as something specific and characteristic of the laity”. (J. A. Estrada, **La identidad de los laicos**, Paulinas, Madrid 1990, p. 158).

2. Jer 31, 31.
3. 1 Pet 2, 9-10.
4. LG 96.
5. Cf 1 Cor 1, 2; 2 Cor 1, 1; Gal 1, 3; Eph. 3, 21...
6. Cf Rom 7, 1, 4; 8, 12; 10, 1; 11, 25; 12, 1....
7. Cf Eph 1, 2; Col 1, 2.
8. Cf Acts 11,26.
9. LG 9c.

10. “The sacred pastors know very well the importance of the laity’s contribution to the good of the Church. Because all the sacred pastors know that they were not constituted by Christ to assume the salvific mission of the Church close to the world all by themselves. They know their sublime office is to appease the faithful in such a way, as to be able to recognize their services and charisms so that everybody, in their own manner, unanimously co-operate with the common work” (LG 32).
11. Cf LG 33 b, AA 1b.
12. Cf Chl n. 23 a.
13. LG 31 b.
14. LG 31 b. These words of the Vatican II must be well-understood. We can point out the following elements for a better comprehension:
 - a) It is necessary to keep in mind that the dualist mentality has already been overpassed. In accordance with that mentality, the laity was supposed to take charge of the world while the ministers were to take charge of the Church life. In an ecclesiology of communion, proper of the Vatican II, there is no place for such positions.
 - b) The secular character is not the seglars’ monopoly; religious and ministers also live and act in the world; the “fuga mundi” position with which the religious life used to be specified, has been surpassed.
 - c) Therefore, secularity is a distinctive, and not an exclusive characteristic of the laity. Cf. LG 31, GS 43, Chl 35-36.
15. This new phenomenon which is getting stronger and stronger in many Institutes, obliges, on one hand, to give the identity of the religious and that of the lay man himself with greater clarity. If the same charism can be participated in consecrated life and in laical life, what is then, the proper of the religious, and what the proper of the lay people ? What is the difference between a religious and a lay man if both follow Jesus with all their heart, in the radicality of their lives, within the same spiritual and charismatic tradition ? Thus, problems of identity, of appurtenance and relation are presented. They must be clarified; otherwise, the confusion between these two forms of living the following of Jesus will be great.
16. “Our Order, recognizing the specific and absolutely necessary mission of the laity, wants to keep with them relations full of evangelical and ecclesiastic spirit, and that those relations continually give evidence of our dealing with them”. (Declaraciones y Decretos del Capítulo General Especial, n. 981)
17. Cf. Ibid, n. 999.
18. “With due diligence their continuous education and formation must also been pursued. Moreover, it is highly convenient we take special care to form good Catholic professors and teachers, mainly among our former students, with enough previous time, so as to be able to count, later on, on adequate co-operators with the schools. The laity’s co-operation, which will always take place according to legislation and circumstances in each place, sometime will be able to become participation, if the involved Superiors consider it appropriate”. (Ibid. N. 1004).
19. “Driven, besides, by the pastoral solicitude of our office, we have to carefully procure their spiritual profit, bearing witness, exercising our sacerdotal ministry, if necessary, with spiritual exercises, books, counseling and the like. (Ibid, n. 1002).
20. “As far as possible, let us consider them as equivalent to our Religious in the school ministry” (Ibid., n. 1000).
21. “We say YES to school, but as a Christian educational community, integrated by religious, seglar professors, students, family parents and non-teaching personnel. In order to get these educational communities to be alive and fruitful, it is necessary to

- reach an authentic participation and co-responsibility in all the members”. (Los escolapios se interrogan. Salamanca, 1980, p. 236).
22. Comunidades Eclesiales Calasancias, Salamanca 1983, p. 64.
 23. “The CEC, as a community, integrates families, adults and youths in intimate interpersonal relationship in the faith. As **ecclesiastic**, it is a community of faith, hope and charity. It celebrates the Eucharist and carries out the Word of God in life through solidarity and commitment to the new commandment of the Lord. It makes the ecclesiastic mission present and active and it also makes communion visible with the legitimate pastors through the service of approved co-ordinators. It is **Calasanzian**, because it is constituted by members who, permanently plan their mission in Christian education and try to live the Gospel as St. Joseph Calasanz did”. (Ibid, p. 41).
 24. AA 20; Ibid p. 67-68.
 25. Cf Ibid, p. 48. It is noteworthy that he calls it, prophetically, “utopic alternative”, that is, another way of being of the Pious Schools.
 26. It is the association of faithfuls -Piarist seglars- who participate in and attune to the Piarist charism and mission”. (Ibid. P. 78).
 27. Cf. Memoria al XLII Capítulo General, 1979-1985. Lectura teológica de la realidad escolapia, Salamanca 1985, p.49).
 28. Documentos del 42 Capítulo General de los PP. Escolapios, Ed. Calasancias 1986: “The number of religious prone to change in favor of the incorporation of seglars to the Order, increases everyday (1, 3).
 29. “Our works will not be the Church’s works unless all Christian people are maturely present in them, since all joined together make up the People of God. Consequently, the presence of seglars side by side with religious, turns out to be constitutive for our works” (1.4). (Ibid. P. 10).
 30. Cf Ibid. p. 10.
 31. “To create the Seglar Piarist branch, according to the spirit of canons 298 and 327 and ‘Letter to the brothers about Calasanzian Ecclesiastic Communities’ (Salamanca 1983, pp. 77-80), would not imply any change about the essence of the Order, and would require the establishment of a process for the formation of the Piarist seglar” (Ibid, 4.7).
 32. Cf Ibid, 4.8.
 33. Cf Ibid, 4.11.
 34. **Presencia religiosa, educativa y misionera de las Escuelas Pías**, Salamanca 1987, IV. 7.
 35. “The Fraternity of the Pious Schools (FPS), this document deals about, is an association of faithfuls linked to the spirit of St. Joseph Calasanz and with the Order of the Pious Schools.
Fundamentally, its aim is to offer to the laity, who every day becomes more aware of their dignity as members of the People of God and of their vocation and mission in the Church and the world, the opportunity of fully helping this specific call in the furrow of a spirituality and tradition that can provide a peculiar support to those who want to work in the educational field” (n. 1) (**La Fraternidad de las Escuelas Pías**, Salamanca 1988).
 36. “The organized group of persons (lay people and priests) who engage themselves to share the Piarist charism, constitutes the Fraternity of the Pious Schools. Fundamentally, it is a seglar association recognized by the Order, whose members wish to live the exigencies of Christian vocation according to a typically Piarist spirit and style”. (n. 11).

37. Cf. Ibid, n. 10. For further explanation about the FPS, see G. Gramignoli's, **Laici sulla via del Calasanzio**, Edizioni Calasanziane, Rome 1992.
38. Eph Cal LVIII (1988) 324.
39. Policies 3.3 and 3.4 in **Las Escuelas Pías en el tercer milenio. Memoria y profecía**, Madrid 1991.
40. Cf. **Constituciones y Reglas de la Orden de las Escuelas Pías**, Salamanca 1986, RR, n. 223.
41. Cf. Ibid, RR n. 130.
42. "The education –work and primordial duty of the family- requires the help of society as a whole and of the local community in particular. Therefore, we promote in our centers the collaboration of all those who constitute the educational community. On our part, we co-operate with this common educational undertaking with all the institutions of the Church and of Society". (Ibid RR. 91; 99).
43. Cf. Ibid, RR. N. 118.
44. **Los seglares en la Escuela Pía**, in "Documentos del 42 Capítulo General de los PP. Escolapios", Salamanca 1986, pp. 12-13.
45. Cf. Gen. 1, 26-27.
46. Cf. 1 John 3, 1.
47. John 17, 3.
48. Cf. Gen 3, 6-7.
49. Cf. John 3, 16-17.
50. Cf. John 11, 52.
51. Cf. Lk. 22, 20.
52. Cf. Mt. 26, 28.
53. Cf. Mk. 16, 19.
54. John 16, 13.
55. Cf. John 16, 15.
56. Mt. 28, 20.
57. Cf. Acts 9, 31.
58. Cf. Acts 8, 29, 39; 10, 19...
59. Cf. John 15, 26; 16, 7.
60. Cf. John 14, 26; 16, 13.
61. Cf. John 14, 23.
62. Cf. John 16, 13.
63. Cf. John 15, 26-27.
64. Cf. Acts 1, 9-11.
65. Acts 16, 15.
66. Mk 16, 16.
67. Cf. John 20, 21.
68. "We want to confirm, once again, that the task of evangelization of all men constitutes the essential mission of the Church; a task and a mission that the broad and deep changes of the society of today make more urgent. To evangelize constitutes, in fact, the proper joy and vocation of the Church; her deepest identity. She exists to evangelize, that is, to preach and to teach, to be a channel for the gift of the grace, to reconcile sinners with God; to perpetuate the sacrifice of Christ in the Holy Mass, memorial of His Death and glorious Resurrection". (Evangelii Nuntiandi, Paul VI, n. 14).
69. Cf. LG 46 a.
70. LG 43 a.
71. MR 11.

- 72. La vida consagrada hoy. Carismas en la Iglesia para el mundo. Convicciones y propuestas de la Unión de Superiores Generales.** International Congress, Rome 22-27 Nov. 1993, p. 10.
- 73.** ET 11.
- 74.** RD 15.
- 75.** VC 54.
- 76.** When we speak of **Calasanz' charism** or **Calasanzian charism** in its substantial nucleus, we mean that experience of the Spirit of which we referred to when dealing about the charism which includes the three aspects already mentioned. It is centered in the integral Christian education of children and youths, preferably the poor. Within the Church and bestowed by the Spirit; under the mandate and guidance of the Church, the Pious Schools want to manifest Christ to faithfuls and unfaithfuls....by blessing the children” (LG 46 a) principally the poor. This substantial nucleus (gift of God to Calasanz) is historically attained in the holy Father by means of a concrete mediation. That is, it is expressed in the form of religious life which is explicitated through religious vows and in a precise religious manner of community. This way of religious life is constitutive for the living experience of the Piarist charism in religious life, but in itself, it is contingent. For that reason it is changeable and susceptible to adaptation in the course of time. Today the Spirit is calling to live the Calasanzian charismatic nucleus in diversified and complementary forms, which is what we want to indicate here. A step farther would be the relationship existing between these two different manners of living the charismatic nucleus and, even more, if such relation could come to be a new form of the Order of the Pious Schools in the Church.
- 77.** This means that the integral Christian education of children and youths, mainly the poor, lies in the Piarist charism within the substantial nucleus that can never be missing.
- 78.** In this level we come across an extensive phenomenological scope of persons:
- those with teaching vocation, who do not fit in charismatic or institutional aspects;
 - those who wish and are ready for a sincere and committed collaboration in the humane, educational and Christian fields in the school they belong to;
 - those who collaborate in different ways with the every day action of our works.
- 79.** Cf. **Declaraciones y Decretos**, n. 999.
- 80.** “The historical dynamics that rules the present world, foretells that at least for a period of time quite proximal, the existence of the Catholic school in some traditionally Catholic countries, will fundamentally depend on the laity as it fruitfully depended and depends now in so many newer Churches” (**El laico católico, testigo en la escuela**, n. 45).
- 81.** In all the cases mentioned in this number, the differential hue in relation to the preceding number, does not always lie in what they do, but in the level of consciousness they have (**from where** they do it), as well as in assuming the finalities that can and must qualify what they do.
- 82.** What is **substantial** and **historical** is also given in these dimensions. For instance, in community life there are substantial elements which must appear in all the ways of life in which the Calasanzian charism incarnates itself. Others depend on a concrete way of incarnating in, v.g, religious life. The challenge which faces the Calasanzian discernment, is to determine the substantial and distinguish it from the historical, and to know how to incarnate the fundamental nucleus in forms of religious life or in laical ways.

ABBREVIATIONS

AA

Apostolicam Actuositatem (Second Vatican Council)

ChL

Chistifideles Laici (John Paul II, 1988)

EN

Evangelii Nuntiandi (Paul VI, 1974)

Eph Cal

Ephemerides Calasancianae (Official Journal of the Order, Roma)

ET

Evangelica Testificatio (Paul VI, 1971)

FEP

Fraternidad de la Orden de las Escuelas Pías (General Congregation, 1988)

GS

Gaudium et Spes (Second Vatican Council)

LG

Lumen Gentium (Second Vatican Council)

RD

Redemptionis Donum (John Paul II, 1984)

VC

Vita Consecrata (John Paul II, 1996)