

The Piarist Christian community in Pereira

A way of living faith in calasanzian key

ALEJANDRO MESA.

Academic coordinator of the Calasanz de Pereira school (Colombia)



What do you mean by Piarist Christian community?

Alejandro Alberto Mesa: The Piarist Christian Community (PCC) is the group of people who in Pereira's presence celebrate and live the faith in the light of the Piarist charism.

How was the Christian community you're in born?

AAM: Even before we explicitly used this name, with the arrival of the Piarist Fathers in Pereira a little over 60 years ago, a group of people from the city began to congregate around the activities related to the school. Today this occurs around the two piarist works in the city: the Calasanz school, work of formal education and *Talentos calasancios*, work of non-formal education. A significant number of people from the educational communities linked to these two works testify to a special harmony with the particular way in which faith is lived in the Calasanzian style.

What is the Christian community you live in like? Make a description of what is done, the groups that are there and how it works.

AAM: The PCC in Pereira is an open community, while the number of members participating in it varies. To the community belong the groups of children, young people and adults linked to The Calasanz Movement (which currently has groups of all ages), also belong a significant number of members of the educational communities of the Calasanz school and of *Talentos calasancios*. They are also part of some people who at the time had some kind of formal link with these works (graduates, parents of graduates, former teachers, etc.) and who still actively participate in the calls that are made such as the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist, the celebration of Holy Week, some solidarity campaigns or events such as the celebration of the calasanzian festival in August.



What significance does the community have in the general pastoral project of presence?

AAM: The PCC occupies a central place in the Pastoral project, in fact, it can be said that the Pastoral project that materializes in the Pereira Calasanz school and in *Talentos Calasancios* is responsible for preparing the seed and the ground in which the formation in the faith germinates, grows, and bears fruit in the Calasanzian style, source of lay and religious vocations and of the children, young people and adults that make up the CCE.

**What do you propose so that the community is consolidated and is the soul of the Piarist mission?
What difficulties do you have?**

AAM: Consolidating the PCC is a task associated with the possibility of continuing the process of visualizing it in the city, of generating new activities that help to summon people around the faith and the Piarist charism. However, the advantage that we pointed out earlier about the open nature of participation in the CCE also constitutes a threat in that it could weaken the quality of the bond between individuals and the community itself. It is necessary, then, to increase the opportunities for communication and participation of those people who for different reasons (work, studies, etc.) temporarily distance themselves from the presence.

