

Piarist Christian Community in Vitoria

Juan Carlos de la Riva.



What you mean by PCC?

The Order has already given on several occasions the "official" definition of PCC, so I refer to those paragraphs. However, I think it is important to emphasize something. The first is about people: they are always the most important thing in our presences. Sometimes we run the risk of leaving them aside, and prioritizing projects, whether real or future plans. We have a need for productivity and growth that can stress us out and make us lose our way. The important thing in a presence should always be the people. And to understand them as sought by Jesus and accompanied by Jesus, as followers.

Those of us who animate the presences must be attentive and present in the vital moments of each person, accompanying and illuminating. People will never be at the service of the project, but the other way around. And we will take special care of your feeling like followers of Jesus. We too, animators, will be one more, in that walk after Jesus.

Another underline I make would be that of the surname "Piarist". We must believe that the construction of a Christian community is not a secondary task in relation to the Piarist charism. Calasanz soon senses that his mission is impossible without a strong and committed community, brave and dedicated. That is why it will devote so much effort to structuring it and concretizing it in the most appropriate formulas, which after several years was decanted as a religious Order. Creating a Christian community is also a Piarist mission, as well as educating or evangelizing children and young people.

How the CCE you are in was born?

Our Piarist Christian community in Vitoria was born very little by little from the work at the Calasanz School in Vitoria. In the origin are some religious, few, and a couple sent from Bilbao, who begin to live the experience of joint community back in 2002. Soon a couple of more people will join to form the first community nucleus linked to the S. Joseph Calasanz community.



During the following years, the pastoral care of the school was worked on strongly, especially the Calasanz Movement and its catechumenate. Many young people are moved, although only a few are deciding their life project in a way linked to the community. But the number of brothers and sisters of the fraternity is growing, as is the group of teachers linked to the Shared Mission team. During this time there was another couple sending from Bilbao.

The slow but steady growth at the community level also gives way to other experiences of solidarity work: Aukera project of reception floor for six young migrants, Ojalá project for the literacy of that same population, group of adults of the Calasanz Movement, Errotazarra project for the employability of people with intellectual disabilities ... Few people but with an important degree of development in social commitment, which in turn has been generating a significant number of volunteers.

How it is, groups that exist, how it works?

Today we are two small communities of fraternity, with 20 participants, a shared mission team, with 9 participants, a discernment group, with 6 participants, a youth catechumenate with about 35-40 young people, and a large number of volunteers for the different projects of Itaka-Escolapios.

Recently, we have assumed an adjoining parish, with a numerically scarce parish life, but that offers us greater possibilities of celebratory experience, of presence in the neighborhood and of accompaniment to a community of elderly people, and to another group of spare time, Su Alai.

There are several work teams that we consider strategic for the monitoring and accompaniment of people and projects. The most important is the presence team, which helps us to have a global vision and to feel like shepherds of all people and jobs. We operate with four-year strategic planning, and with annual plans. The life of the fraternity is monitored with the presence in the team of the two animators. Also of the school with the presence of the Order, of Itaka-Escolapios with the presence of the local coordinator, and of all the pastoral, with the presence of all the ministers of pastoral of the presence. Lately, the reflection of the entire CCE has been energized from here for the elaboration of the Pastoral Project that brings together the Holy Spirit Parish, the Itaka-Escolapios Foundation and the Calasanz School in a single evangelizing project.

For the most pastoral care, the team of pastoral ministers was constituted some time ago, where we attend to the evangelizing actions that go beyond the school pastoral (which has its own team linked to the school): we talked then about the celebratory scope, about strategic plans of the Calasanz Movement, the parish and the pastoral of the school, about calls to groups and people, of connection with the diocese and province of Emmaus, of vocation ministry, etc.

Finally, another important team is the Itaka-Escolapios local team because of the link it establishes for the CCE with the people most in need of help and accompaniment, with all the wealth that this implies.

What significance it has in the pastoral project of presence. ?

As has already been deduced from the previous lines, the PCC is the soul of all evangelizing work.

What do you propose so that the PCC consolidates and is the soul of the Piarist mission? What difficulties do you have?

I believe that we are already working in the good direction and that it is about boosting everything that is already moving. It is important that the spiritual experience of following Jesus be nourished by actions and proposals, and accompanied in fraternal dialogue, so that it is this follow-up that dynamizes everything else. As Pope Francis would say, we are not an NGO.

The greatest difficulties come to us from a very secularized environment especially among young people, but also in school families and in town. There are strong prejudices against the Church and against the experience of the faith that greatly condition the acceptance in freedom of the Christian proposal. Our pastoral platforms are environments where special care is taken of the welcome of everyone, wherever they are at the level of faith, and a path of accompaniment and discovery is made with them that needs time and patience, and that we do not want to violate with attitudes of imposition or exclusion. Fraternity is present in these spaces (Calasanz movement, volunteer platforms ...) as a leaven in the dough, taking care of the moments of encounter and accompanying all people.

