

The "presence model" from the Piarist Province of Hungary.

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The Church manifests herself in a community with a mission: to live and proclaim the Gospel, the message that our life is sustained by God Trinity Community.

The community does not make sense in itself but connected to Jesus. The Church as a living community is the Gospel itself, proclaiming the life and presence of God.

The Piarists make community in the Piarist style, that is, living the charism of Saint Joseph Calasanz among children and young people, especially among the poorest. The Piarist ecclesial community is therefore a community that has a mission, lives the life of God, unfolds the charism of the treasurer, and reveals the Kingdom of God in its own style. It is the community of all those who want to live their Christianity from the charism of Calasanz.

The Piarist ecclesial community is organized into "presences". It develops in a concrete place, living the mission in many forms of service, creating formal and non-formal spaces for education. The "presence" is the place of the Piarist ecclesial community. It is not a structure by itself or something that coordinates institutes and activities, but the place where the Kingdom of God can unfold in the Piarist mission through our communities as well. It is not possible, therefore, to separate the Piarist ecclesial community from the Piarist mission and we cannot build and care for one without the other.

Therefore, when thinking about "presences", we express our intention to seek a "space" where committed people with a missionary spirit, religious and lay gathered around the charism of the Founder, can live their Christian vocation and belonging, grow their community and live their mission of evangelizing by educating.



The 2019 Provincial Chapter of our province of Hungary recognized and expressed the importance of knowing, understanding, and encouraging the functioning of "presence". For the capitular period of 2019-2023, it decided to elaborate and implement a "presence model" in the following steps:

- appoint a person and team responsible for face-to-face reflection
- formulate a "presence model" (structure, responsibilities, etc.)
- introduce the face-to-face model

On April 29, 2021, we organized an online conference at the Province level to reach a common understanding on the issue. The superiors of the communities, the directors of the educational institutions, the directors of the Piarist churches, the pastoral leaders, the coordinators of the Calasanz Movement, the representatives of the groups of the Fraternity from all the Presences, in addition to the leaders and representatives of all these areas in the provincial territory participated.

After the conference, between May and July 2021, a committee on authorization from the Provincial was commissioned to process the conclusions, consolidate the ideas, and prepare a plan for the 2021-2022 school year. The members of the Committee were László Szabó SP, Roland Márkus SP and László Lázár.

In the summer of 2021, the Provincial Congregation, based on a proposal from Father General, identified seven lines of action for the rest of the chapter period. Among them is the *operation by presences*. The lines of action and the plan on presence were presented by the Committee to the Provincial Congregation on August 18, 2021. In this connection, we have developed the following guidelines:

- We accept that (regarding the understanding and introduction of the Presence) there will be different dynamics in different places.
- We accept that we are in a common learning process, our understanding and functioning will evolve during the practice.
- We collect common experiences that help you see more clearly.
- We would like to accompany the local processes as a Provincial Coordination Team.



The key elements of the plan are:

1. Create a Provincial Coordination Team with the following tasks:
 - be constituted by the end of October
 - identify its functions
 - become more familiar with the subject and learn about local realities
 - welcome the experiences of other Provinces
 - develop a plan
 - accompany local processes
 - prepare basic documents during its operation:
 - adapt the definition of Presence based on the particularities of the Province
 - transform the objectives of the Future Plan of the Province into a face-to-face plan
2. Launch a provincial process:
 - creating local Presence teams
 - receive recommendations from the provincial level for its meetings, possible topics, methods, and content of cooperation
 - the Provincial Coordinating Team meets regularly with the coordinators of the local teams

Meanwhile, at the end of the 2020-2021 school year, the leaders of the Piarist institutions held an evaluation and planning session in which they affirmed that face-to-face operation could help the full development of our mission. For those responsible for the Educational Service, the construction of face-to-face operation includes the construction of the Piarist ecclesial community and small communities (Calasanz Movement, Shared Mission groups, Fraternity groups, etc.). We also need to collaborate with the Committees created to support this development and to coordinate the work (Shared Mission Committee, Fraternity Council, Provincial Coordinating Team of the Calasanz Movement) in introducing face-to-face operation.

So, there is a need for face-to-face operation. However, it is true that, for the time being, they interpret, justify, and name it in many ways, and that the intended operation is also imagined in different ways by the corresponding agents. Our intention, as stated in the guidelines, is to approach understanding through a common learning process, and clarify during the operation what is not yet fully understood.

There are two critical issues to consider in planning:

- Resource requirement:
 - human resources: Who and how intensely do they work at the provincial and local levels?
 - financial resources: What financial resources will the provincial support team need and how will an institution or mission element (project) be financed in the new face-to-face operation?
- Challenges: what factors hinder face-to-face operation?
 1. lack of understanding and information: it is necessary to train the leaders, religious, corresponding collaborators (face-to-face) in the theme of Presence
 2. What is the relationship between the leaders of face-to-face projects?

We are committed to continue working. We have an exciting school year ahead of us.

