

# Resonances of the General Chapter The Calasanzian Ministry

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I share some reflections on the ministry of the Pious Schools based on what was experienced in the General Chapter, coinciding with the celebration of the fourth centenary of the approval of the Order.

In the sessions held in a welcoming Mexican land Piarists from all over the world, religious and laity, together with a group of young people summoned to this instance of discernment, different challenges were raised that were reflected in the concluding documents.

I intend here to stop and highlight some dialogues and contributions, in my opinion more significant, around the Piarist Ministry and the centrality of the school.

The first important observation is precisely that the Piarists continue to be passionate about our ministry among children and young people and we are convinced that we must give ourselves time to talk about it.

I only cite some of the contributions shared in the General Chapter:

- The Pious Schools of the XXI century must make a calm reflection of the process that the school followed in modernity, in the convulsed centuries in which our educational institutions were forced to adapt and remain under the control of the states, so, among other things, we were deprived of the possibility of continuing with free schools for the popular majorities and offering original and innovative proposals from our identity.
- Today's educational or school peripheries are wider than previously considered. The popular school responded at one time to an illiterate majority. At present, according to the contexts, other "illiteracies" abound, such as secularization, lack of meaning, materialism, the absence of critical thinking, the end of utopias, among others.
- The evaluative key that Calasanz expresses in the Memorial to Cardinal Tonti is that his school produced such life changes in the kids "that they did not recognize how they were before" and that is not being seen in the contemporary school focused only or mainly on the theoretical knowledge, fragmented and alien to the lives of children and teenagers.
- As Piarists we must think of and bring to the church today a new Catholic school that is substantially linked to its genuine tradition and up to the challenges and demands of today's world.
- The heart of the school is children and young people, especially the most needy and we must respond to their most genuine needs by creatively overcoming what is posed by pedagogical fashions or previous routine practices.
- The calasanzian mission proposes "pious schools" in various modes and platforms where Piety and Letters are always deeply and dynamically articulated, somehow everything is done as a school. That is why all our works are "Pious Schools".
- The distinction of modernity between formal and non-formal education must be overcome since the calasanzian school cannot be reduced to the education systems validated by the educational officials of each country or framed in the definitions and limitations that governments (local or global) impose on educational centers.
- Pope Francis' call for a new global educational compact cannot leave us who are, since Calasanz, pioneers of the Catholic popular school inactive.

- The family is the most attacked institution in today's societies, at least in the West, and deserves that we consider how to assist and accompany parents, in their task as the first educators of their children.
- The dominant cultural currents are increasingly opposed to valuing the Catholic school and sow suspicion about priests who are close to children.
- In many ways and from various authors there is talk of a cultural war that is being waged even within educational institutions and that undermines the foundations of faith and reason.
- Some voice rose to propose a "virtual calasanzian school" that, from any point of the globe, allows access to proposals where culture, life and faith are integrated in a genuine and profound way.

The capitular experience not only allowed me to see the Piarist passion for the education of children and young people but also increased in me the certainty that God is decidedly involved in their salvation. He will not stop leading us and we must help each other to keep an eye on his inspirations. We have a big task to do.

