

The leadership role in the Calasanz school

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The ultimate responsibility in the Pious Schools was in the hands of the local minister or president of the Institute. He was the personification of power, order, and school discipline and was responsible for everything in front of everyone. Such a local minister had to be a person of maturity, prudence, and spirit, a man of action, discreet, of an authoritarian and energetic character, but benevolent and humane, a virtuous, exemplary, and faithful man. He had to be at least thirty years old, with at least seven years in the community, priest and teacher at least three. His office lasted three years, but he could be confirmed again for another three-year term.

Not only was he in charge of the selection of personnel and teachers, but he was also in charge of the weekly pedagogical conferences in which he gathered the opinions and concerns of the educators, took cognizance of the general state of the school, especially its problems, and contributed his guidance and his spiritual and pedagogical outlook: "I wish that at least once a week, during

recreation time, they would have a small congregation on the things of the school and the way to manage them, listening to the opinion of all, because often the Holy Spirit speaks through the mouth of the one who is least thought of" (EP 0132).

The prefect was the practical and operative Superior of the schools, the immediate guardian and custodian of morality and regulations, and the soul of all the studies; he was the one who watched over the order of everything in the teaching, controlling the conduct of the students and of the teachers.

1. He was to take care of order when the children were entering the classes and then in the schools (or classrooms), visiting them frequently and observing how the teachers and pupils conducted themselves in them: "Be very attentive so that the schools run well, which is our ministry. And be the *prefect*, visiting them frequently, so that you will fulfill your office" (EP 2684).
2. Supervise the teachers and students about punctuality, attendance, quality of work, and the class program.
3. Received newcomers, examined them, and placed them in the appropriate class.
4. He conducted the corresponding examinations twice a year and transferred the most successful students to the higher classes.
5. He established the timetables and saw to their strict observance: "See to it that the timetables are punctually observed by ringing the little school bell, morning and evening,

entrusting the office to someone responsible and imitating, as far as possible, the manner of Rome" (EP 203).

6. To take care of the books provided for use.
7. He was responsible for the good order of the institute as a guarantor of the excellent discipline of the students through vigilance over the teachers, permanent control over the students, and contact with the parents: "Order that the schools go well and that no one punishes without his knowledge" (EP 160).
8. He ensured uniformity and identity as regards both method and discipline in all the schools: "He must see to it that the same teaching is given in all the schools and that the same method is observed" (Constitutions, no. 212).
9. To relate to parents and other persons outside the school.
10. To visit the classrooms every day
11. To see to the care and cleanliness of the facilities.

The local minister had to be free from classes to exercise such a mission.

The profile that Calasanz demanded of the local minister of the schools was very demanding. He had to be a man with a true spirit of prayer and with gifts of government. He had to govern with the strength of character, more with affability than rigor, not as absolute superiors but with prudence, trying to grasp, understand and encourage everyone, particularly the weak. There are many texts in which Calasanz addresses the local ministers to guide them in their critical mission in the school.

May the Lord give you light to know the duty you have and strength to practice what the office demands for the good of the subjects of the house, the benefit of the students, and the excellent example of the laity: So that with diligence and working more than anyone else, you have to make up for the lack of age. I warn you that the faults of the superiors, however minor they may be, are known and pointed out by the subjects (EP 0424).

The school divided into grades required that there be only one director, and to this one corresponded the opening and closing of the schools (and the right to authorize admissions and dismissals), the classification of the children at their entrance, the preparation of programs, the supervision over the assistant teachers, the inspection of all grades, the implementation of the best pedagogical procedures, the coordination of all classes and the maintenance of relations between the school and the home. These were the tasks and attributions that Calasanz attributed to the Prefect in his organization.