

St. Joseph of Calasanz School

VALENCIA (SPAIN)



I am María Muñoz Delhom. Married, with two children. I am part of the Piarist Fraternity. I am not a former student of the Pious Schools, but I have known the Piarists since I was a child because of my father, who is a Piarist. I have a degree in Hispanic Philology, I am a clarinet player and I have studied Theology.

I started at the school in 2002 as a teacher of Spanish and Valencian Language in Secondary School. Since my first years as a tutor I was part of the Pastoral Team of the stage and accompanied groups of extracurricular pastoral. In 2012 I became the head of studies of ESO and in 2016 I became the general director. Since 2021 I have been coordinating the Local Presence.

I live my responsibility as director as a mission and service to the Pious Schools and to my neighbor: students, educators, families and Fraternity brothers and sisters. I try to carry out the task with enthusiasm, enthusiasm and dedication. I like to work as a team, to create community and to promote the positive things that each one brings to the school and to the Pious Schools. Finally, I confess that I live this service with an expiration date: my true vocation is teaching.

THE SCHOOL



In the middle of the 20th century, faced with the need to meet the demand for students and boarders in Valencia, the Piarists bought the land and built the present San José de Calasanz School, with the contributions of the San Joaquín School. On October 4, 1954, the first school year began, with a kindergarten class, primary education and the first two years of high school. The following year it was extended to the rest of the school year. On May 27, 1960 the Archbishop of Valencia, Marcelino Olaechea, inaugurated the church.

At first the school had a large boarding school. Gradually the Piarists opened their doors to the neighborhood that grew around the school. The children of professors from the nearby university faculties, of doctors from the Hospital Clínico and of the military of the area formed the first classes. As time went by, the number of boarders was reduced until the boarding school was finally abolished, and the demand from families living in the area grew. Currently, our student body is made up of residents in the neighborhood of La Exposición and surrounding areas, children of workers in the area and, in some cases, children and young people who live in towns near the city of Valencia. In many cases they are sons and daughters of former students of the center.

One of the peculiarities of the school is its size: the educational community is formed by a large number of students, teachers, PAS and families. It is striking that, even being so many, we live daily in a very close and cordial Piarist family atmosphere. The school is a very good place. This is emphasized by both students and educators, who feel welcomed and accompanied from the first moment, both by the tutors and by the Piarist religious.

Another peculiarity that stands out is the commitment to inclusion: in the year 2000 we were pioneers in Valencia in welcoming students with educational needs in our classrooms, in all of the city's subsidized schools. Since then, the teaching staff has been working for the inclusion of all, with an extraordinary sensitivity and vocation. We are also distinguished by a real individualized attention to students and families, materialized daily in the tutorial and teaching action. Outside school hours, our secondary school students have two hours a week to consult doubts and reinforce or expand their knowledge with the teachers.

Another distinctive point of our school is the commitment to school mediation: we train students as mediators and educate them in prevention and conciliation for conflict resolution.

In addition, the school has a fundamental charismatic richness: three communities of the Fraternity live their faith in our Piarist Presence and several teachers are part of them.

Finally, I would emphasize that in our school we want the best for our students. That is why we work a lot on letters (betting on academic demands) and also on piety (integrating pastoral and social action in the daily life of the school). Our goal is integral education, as Calasanz wanted.

CHALLENGES

In the school we must continue to grow in training and pedagogical innovation, in the diversification of teaching methodologies, to continue adapting to the needs of our students and families. An important challenge is the affective-sexual and emotional education, which we are implementing hand in hand with the Betania province and the Conselleria de Educació.

We also want to grow in networking: it is important that we continue to broaden our vision at the provincial and order level, interacting more with other centers, learning about other possibilities of educational responses, different experiences, which enrich our work.

We need to continue favoring moments of encounter for the whole educational community, strengthening bonds, strengthening the Piarist Christian community and making the school the home of all.

PASTORAL

The pastoral (and social action) are two fundamental pillars in the school. They are part of the Piarist essence and of the daily life of our center. They are integrated into our structure in such a way that the school cannot be understood without them.

Our days begin with morning prayer in all the classrooms and our weeks culminate with the Sunday Eucharist, in which teachers, students and families, members of the Fraternity, neighbors of the neighborhood participate... The school years have three simultaneous rhythms: pedagogical, pastoral and social. Celebrations, prayers, Eucharist, retreats, campaigns, projects, solidarity actions... Everything is integrated in a natural way, inside and outside the school timetable...

I would like to highlight four pastoral initiatives: in Infants and Primary, without a doubt, Continuous Prayer, promoted by Father Javier Brines. We work on the spiritual dimension from the earliest childhood, integrating prayer into the school's daily practice. Students and teachers pray together and also grow in faith.

In Secondary, the school retreats, from 4th ESO to 2nd Bachillerato. For most of the students it is their first strong experience of interiorization and it marks them for life. In our school, the reception of this pastoral initiative is spectacular, as is the involvement of most of the teachers at this stage.

For some years now, before the start of classes, we have been holding a teachers' retreat. It is a privileged moment of encounter with God and with our colleagues, which prepares us for the beginning of a new course and helps us to strengthen our bonds of cordiality and friendship.

Finally, the Calasanz Movement, the treasure of the Pious Schools. In the school, the faith groups have a long tradition and history. Students, educators and families take advantage of the opportunity to live and grow in faith in the Pious Schools. It is worth mentioning the participation of our students in the summer experiences of the Calasanz Movement which, as we have read in some Piarist web page, are life-changing experiences.

MY PASSION

I am passionate about the fidelity of the current proposal to the proposal of Calasanz. In spite of the time that has passed since the foundation of the Order, the center of the Pious Schools continues to be the integral education of boys and girls, especially the poorest. All the documents I read, the initiatives in which I participate, the messages and guidelines I receive from the institution are oriented to work all the dimensions of the person to achieve a happy course of his whole life.

I am passionate about updating the message and the proposal, reading and interpreting the signs of the times in the light of the Gospel and the charism. I see this in the news that reaches us about new foundations but also in the concrete proposals for the daily functioning of the schools.

I am also excited about the new proposal of the Order to work in a network at the national (not only provincial) and international level. Steps are being taken to get to know each other and to bring all the Piarist presences closer.

Finally, years ago I fell in love with the charism and, above all, with St. Joseph Calasanz. His passion for education, school and the Gospel (and that of many religious and lay Piarists I have met and with whom I interact daily) nourishes my vocation and guides my actions, words and decisions.

INNOVATION

We are proud of many! But we share two, one from each area:

Pedagogically I would highlight the service learning project that is being carried out in the upper grades of Secondary, from the subject of Physical E. and the Social Action department: sports volunteering. Our students, teachers and families are trained and participate as volunteers in the races of the city of Valencia (the half marathon, the marathon, the 10k...) It is incredible how almost 300 students are mobilized to perform this service to the city! And also incredible is their response, their desire to help and their learning of the reality: until they live it, they do not imagine how much work there is behind each race and how much their collaboration contributes. This motivates and encourages them to serve others.

Pastorally, I would highlight Continuous Prayer. As I said before, the integration of prayer into the daily practice of the school is carried out from the early years. The children learn together with their teachers to relax, to focus their attention, to listen to themselves, to talk and listen to God. In a simple and natural way, without forcing situations or words, they establish a relationship of friendship with Jesus that helps us and strengthens us as persons. The precious thing about all this is that they learn to do it from a very young age at school, as in the schools of Calasanz's time. And this seed is sown in their hearts for life.

San José de Calasanz School

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The school opened its doors on October 4, 1954.

Number of students: 1456

No. of educators: 119

formal education offer: Pre-school, primary, if there are technical specialties... Pre-school, elementary, ESO and high school.

Other complementary activities: Calasanz Movement, Dual Baccalaureate, Scouts, School canteen, Morning school, Fun afternoons (in September and June), English, Ballet, Speech therapy, Music, Robotics Chess, Judo, ExpresArte, Petit Chef, Urban Dancing, Musical Theater, Pre-sport, Extracurricular psychomotor skills, Indoor SoccerBaloncesto





