LIKE CALASANZ, WE ARE MEN OF PRAYER
LUIS PADILLA
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ABBREVIATIONS


PFE General Congregation of the Pious Schools: Piarist Formation and
FOREWORD

This book is an answer to a request by the Father General, who wants the fundamental concerns of our Constitutions to be carried out as ongoing training (“permanent formation”).

Prayer grows from the most beautiful relationship in the world; from a rapport which exists in every human being. This is the real presence of the Lord, who loves every person. When the Spirit of the Lord makes itself known, an alliance is formed with every human being and with the whole of creation. We discover our common goodness. We discover that we are brothers and sisters and existence is made human.

Calasanz let himself be led by feelings which were kindled by suggestions from the Holy Spirit and he asks us to discover the same feelings in every child and every youngster, to open the way to real education and to find them in every vocation, to open the way for the Pious Schools.

This book consists of four chapters:
- In the first we may understand what praying meant to Calasanz.
- In the second we see what is needed for us to realise that prayer is happening.
- The third shows us various kinds of prayer.
- The fourth allows us to understand the means and the attitude which lead us
on the path to prayer.
So I ask you to read the book as it grew.

I intend to let Calasanz speak, and for this reason the guide lines I give are only to help read and understand his original texts, which are printed in italics. While the book was being written, certain texts by Calasanz came to mind and various notes which helped me to look for some particular expression of his or for a phrase in our Constitutions.

The way in which this book is written requires that it should be read slowly, savouring the words of our Holy Father Calasanz about prayer and making use of the notes which are to be found at the end of every chapter, some of which are very important.

Those texts by Calasanz which I quote express his own experience of the Holy Spirit. This is why they need to be read, not only to know what he said, but also to try to see the way in which God shows himself to us. The Holy Spirit makes us the children of God, our Father, like Jesus Christ our Lord.

In every chapter there are some questions which may help us to understand how we experience our prayer.

Calasanz invites us to:

- Be close to him while we read this book because he wishes to communicate to us the Spirit which the Lord gave him [EP 391].

- To care for the inner voice of man because it represents the real presence of the Lord, and is the source of our ability to love children and poor people and places [Cu 949].

- Listen to the Word of God, which is the Word of the Holy Spirit, which comes and which goes, touching our hearts and giving us human feelings which are like those of our Lord Jesus. This is the result of listening carefully to the Word of God [EP 131].

- Create a relationship with God who is within us because this is the duty of all religious [EP 649].

- Have firm foundations and keep to the path of the Holy Spirit [EP 118].

Every community of Piarist religious and laity, who share the same charism, may use this simple book to improve their own life of prayer, to the glory of God and for the benefit of their neighbour, to render God visible by doing good to others.
Let us pray by invoking the Holy Spirit of Pentecost:

Come, Holy Spirit,
Send us from Heaven
A ray of your light.
Come, Father of the poor,
Come, giver of gifts,
Come, light in our hearts.
Perfect consolation,
Sweet inhabitant of the soul,
Sweetest succour.
In tiredness, you bring rest,
In the heat you bring shelter,
In sadness you bring comfort.
O blessed light,
Enter within
The hearts of your faithful.
Without your strength,
Man has nothing,
Nothing without sin.
Wash the unclean,
Water the arid,
Heal the wounded.
Bend the rigid,
Warm the cold,
Straighten the crooked.
Give your children,
Who trust only in you,
Your Holy gifts.
Give virtue and reward,
Give a Holy death,
Give eternal joy. Amen.

Saraguro, Ecuador, 25 March 2010
The Annunciation

LIKE CALASANZ, WE ARE MEN OF PRAYER

With his words and by his example, our Saviour has taught us that we need to pray constantly. By cultivating assiduously the spirit of prayer and by prayer itself we thus guide our lives and our life as apostles of the Church, towards finding ourselves united, to give praise to the Lord [C 40].
INTRODUCTION

Starting from the Constitutions of Calasanz, from his letters and from the Constitutions of the Order of the Pious Schools, I wish to show the way in which Piarists can experience prayer.

Let us listen to Calasanz:

*If our people were men of prayer, men of the Spirit, their thoughts would be focussed not on the senses but on the voice of the Holy Spirit [EP 2175]. If our people were friends of prayer, their willpower would be immediately healed [EP 2256].

Novices must be instructed well so they know how to pray [EP 2565] and the superior should use all his skill to introduce all members of the community to prayer [EP 2174].

Prayer teaches us:

- to live, *moved by God* [EP 3692]
- to be *men of an apostolic life, very poor and very simple* [Matt 26]
- to be *real apostles or ambassadors* of Christ our Master [EP 1301]
- to be religious who, through our apostolic poverty, *outwardly barefooted*, make visible that treasure which we have within, *reformed in our inner lives* [EP 2685]

Calasanz invites us to be *wise in our inner schools and to let ourselves be swayed* by the voice of the Spirit. *This is the narrow way which leads to life* [EP 2300], *which, once learned, becomes easy and sure* [EP 3913].

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LET THE BOAT BE GUIDED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

*I write you a letter with paternal affection, because in charity I wish to communicate to you that Spirit which the Lord has given to me and, with all possible affection, I ask you to stay with me for a while so that you may learn the narrow way which leads to heaven, which, once learned, becomes easy and sure. I write to you, desirous of your own good* [EP 3913].

**What did praying mean for Calasanz?**

If we can see what praying meant for Calasanz we shall be able to better understand what he says about the different kinds of prayer.

* a. Praying in harmony with the Holy Spirit*
The first and main aspect of life is the continual assistance of the Holy Spirit, so that, consulting Him privately, at least once or twice a day, you know how to guide the boat of your own self towards the path of the love of God for your neighbour, through the talent that God gives you, putting up with the adversities of life with patience, until you see, in the gateway to eternal happiness [EP 3858] the face of the God of Love which you carry in your heart.

Ask yourself: In your own experience of prayer, what does prayer mean for you?

b. The Holy Spirit teaches the humble to pray with groans that cannot be put into words

We cannot have a relationship with the Holy Spirit if the Spirit does not have a relationship with us. In other words, the Holy Spirit dwells within a human being and teaches the humble to pray with groans that cannot be put into words. The Spirit gives what he receives from the Father and the Son. A Novice Master must help a new novice to watch out for the inner talents which the Spirit suggests in this or that direction. The Holy Spirit opens the way along which we must accompany every novice until he is able to love everybody [CC23]. All that which we have learned during our novitiate serves us for the rest of our lives. Today’s Pious Schools, which all we Piarists treasure in our hearts, grew from a place of peace from which we are given the talents suggested by the Holy Spirit. We are speaking of always being the same, one same being, always having a relationship, without being moved by passions [EP 2457]. That is, we give what we have been given.

The Spirit teaches us though groans that cannot be put into words:
– About the way we see reality.
– About our identity as Piarists.
– About our shared mission to evangelise, by educating according to a feeling for the poor.
– About our brotherly ties in our community life.
– About our relationship with God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit; about our relationship with the crucified Christ, with Jesus in the Eucharist, with the Master who identified himself with the youngest and poorest: that which we do to one of them, we do to Him.
– About our relationship with the Virgin Mary, our Mother.
– About our relationship with the saints, like our father St. Joseph Calasanz, like St. Francis of Assisi, St. Teresa…
– About our relationship with transcendental matters such as: Love, Truth, Justice, Solidarity.
– About our ability to understand the light of God and the light of mankind.

• **The Spirit teaches us about the way in which we see reality**

  And because almost everywhere most of the inhabitants are poor [CC 198], because of poverty or the neglect of their parents, most children do not go to school, they live scattered or in laziness and full of vices. These poor youngsters finish up in prison [Letter to the Congregation of the Holy Office – 1626]. The poor must not be abandoned because they make up the majority of the world [1645]. At the present time we are able to see what the real situation in our world is like. Once we have understood this situation, we need to see how the Holy Spirit, which calls out from there, strikes us so that we may make this situation more human.

  Look how the situation he saw struck Calasanz. For delicate reasons of State [Letter to Cardinal Giulio Roma 1645] it is said that the poor must remain workers for manual jobs. According to society, a poor man must be destined for manual labour. However, for Calasanz, the poor must be educated according to their attitudes and their talents [Presentation in defence of the right of the poor to an education, 1645]. Talent is the free ability which influences the whole person and may transform this society.

  When we listen to the Holy Spirit which cries out from this reality, we certainly realise that He is asking us to dedicate ourselves totally, as did our God, and to live in apostolic poverty, which allows us to reach people and peoples, the young and the poor, by means of education. We need to teach all that is necessary, even Latin [Letter to Cardinal Giulio Roma 1645], so that the poor may discover their vocational talents.

  **Ask yourself:** When you look at the situation in the world, what does the Spirit inspire in you?

• **The Spirit teaches us about our identity as Piarists**

  – The Holy Spirit manifests itself in a person, through aptitude, qualities
and sensations.

For Calasanz the qualities and talents of nature are connected with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, God gives the Spirit and we must respect that which God gives us, and this is why he wants each of us to find our place according to our talents, because these talents reflect the Presence of He who has given them [EP 2559].

Calasanz asks us to keep a notebook in which, every year, we record the new qualities and talents which we notice in people, as he did as Father General [CC 262] and he asks us to get to know the inner goodness of people, and the sentiments they feel in their prayers [EP 16].

How wonderful it is to spend time upon that which God gives to each person, and to realise that his Presence has become visible in one face! This is how we experience the Spirit of prayer.

- The Holy Spirit shows itself by giving us our priestly, religious and educational vocations. Calasanz calls these the talents of the Lord.

The talent of the Lord is our vocation. This is a free ability, which is conceded us by the Spirit, which works through our aptitudes and the whole of our personality. We must not reject Divine Grace, and hide the talents of the Lord under the earth [Fr. Giner, Calasanz, Maestro y Fundador, p. 868].

In the following text we can see the importance that Calasanz attributes to aptitude and talent.

Because by the grace of God, amongst our clerical workers there are some who are fit and suitable to receive holy orders, in order that we do not reject Divine Grace by hiding the Lord’s talents underground, thus depriving our religion of this increase in priests which it so much needs, the Father General shall be empowered to promote them as he wishes, should they be suitable [Fr. Giner, p. 868].

When Calasanz speaks of real virtues, we need to understand that these are the fruit of the Holy Spirit, which gives light and strength, so that we are able to live them fully. This does not mean we create ourselves. In any case, Calasanz follows the Holy Fathers when he reveals that practice [praxis] leads to contemplation [theory], to the knowledge of God. It may be expressed thus: “Few know how to practise this doctrine, few people are able to receive the hundredfold increase of their spiritual goods” [EP
With practice the voice of the Spirit allows us to know God, who is only love.

Let us examine three real situations in our Piarist vocations:

These three situations must be experienced in harmony. Each completes the other so that we may live our shared Piarist mission.

**Priestly vocation**

For Calasanz, *Christian perfection does not consist in being a priest, brother, religious or layperson, but in loving God and our neighbour more* [EP 1385]. *This is why he asks the Lord to make our love for God and our neighbour increase* [EP 119]. A vocation is a gift by which we grow in our love for God and for our neighbour. When God makes his voice heard, we hear it by loving people, things, this reality which asks us to be human. This is the way in which God loves us and gives us his own Love, and this is a Love which only regards an Other, another human being.

I wish to make our sharing in the priesthood of Christ much more explicit.

**As Piarist priests, we show the Head of the Body**

*We are in that place which belongs to the Lord who, although he is poor, enriches all of us, his children; we are in the place of the Lord who loves us to the extreme limits of his Crucifixion* [Exhortation to the Ministers of the Community].

By giving our lives to God, by serving Him, we are part of the Body. When we receive Communion, we are told that the Head is in every member of the Body. This is what we have to find in every member so that Life may flow through the whole body.

**As Piarist priests we show free and unconditioned Love**

Calasanz asks us to *divest ourselves of the real garments of our pride, of our selfishness and barefooted, as a good example, dress ourselves from top to toe with the cloak of Holy Charity, which allows us to carry out that admirable saying of the Apostle: Charity does not seek for its own benefit* [Exhortation to the Ministers of the Community].

We should be unburdened of all except that free and unconditioned love which does not seek its own benefit, but rather seeks that of the community and individuals, and of poor and defenceless people. It is by dedicating the whole
of ourselves that we make God’s way of life visible.

In our priesthood, children must be able to see goodness, mercy and love for the Father [EP893], so that they know we love them well [EP 1488].

**As Piarist priests we show the Good Shepherd**

We are good shepherds of the Lord’s flock when we put the bodily and spiritual needs of other people before our own. The sheep are not ours, they have been entrusted to us. The shepherd knows his sheep, he follows those who are lost and rejoices when he finds them. He knows how to bring the guidance of the Holy Spirit [CC 23] to all people, as we have seen, and he knows how to cooperate in order to build the community the Spirit is creating. We must not only see the good in people, but, if we can and when we are responsible people, also provide answers for their bodily and spiritual needs. Jesus identifies himself with healthy needs [Exhortation to the Ministers of the Community].

When he refers to children, Calasanz tells us that we need to take care of them, like shepherds do [Declaration on the Constitutions n. 190] and not like hired hands who care little for the sheep [MT 23].

**As Piarist priests we manifest the Lord, who did not come to be served but to serve**

Our authority was given to us by the Lord to serve the community and the people of God and not ourselves. In this way we are able to follow the Lord himself, because the eternal Father gave him Power over all creatures, and he used this to serve us and not for himself [Exhortation to the Ministers of the Community]. This is why Calasanz also asks us to organise the refectory, to clean the house and to help in those tasks which seem base and ignoble [Cu 449].

**As Piarist priests we manifest the Lord who receives and teaches children and youngsters**

Our priesthood may be summed up as exercising our educational ministry, which is an apostolic office [EP 2394]. Our ministry does not consist in celebrating the Mass but in teaching our pupils [EP 3098]. The students must see goodness, mercy and love for the Father in their Master [EP 893]. I ask the Lord that all may have a great desire to work with their neighbour, through our ministry [Cu 224].
The educating vocation

For Calasanz, educating is dedicating oneself to the study of cases [EP 557] of children and youngsters so as to help them let themselves be led by the voice of the Spirit, not let themselves be guided by the voices of evil, and to develop their intelligence through the light of God and man [MT 9].

We are called to a special vocation. We do not worry about what may be thought of the educational profession. In Calasanz’s time it had a very low reputation and was despicable to the eyes of those who considered the education of poor children to be vile [MT 24].

Education is the foundation, it is a compendium, of all ministries because we prepare and predispose children and youngsters to be able to receive the service of all other ministries, by means of a good education [MT 25]. We are called to work for this most fruitful harvest [MT 16].

We are called to work as gardeners who look after those tender young plants which are easy to straighten and which are our children before they become hardened and difficult, not to say impossible to guide, as we see in men who are already developed: in spite of all the help of prayer, conversations and the sacraments, few grown men change life and those are really a small minority [MT 15].

Every Piarist has a role at work according to the talent given to him by the Spirit. We need to give an occupation to everybody so that each does the job for which he has a talent [EP 1226]. One’s impression is that Calasanz thought that the talent God gives defines the person, who is therefore not to be employed in other posts. It is wise to know the inclinations of each and everyone. It is thus that one is committed through love [EP 1226], and this is why he emphasises that those who are suited to school must not be employed in other fields [EP 1334]. A person may be sent to any part of the world to fulfil through work the talent given to him by the Spirit. Not all are able to control the different qualities of people, nor can all travel at the same pace [EP1910].

There is a great difference in running a house when one is able to apportion tasks according to the individual talents [EP 2983].

The vocation of consecrated life
When we are ready to receive the Spirit, we leave sin behind and live the life of God. For Calasanz, consecrated life is the experience of baptism, a new baptism [EP 1360] which shows us the way in which the Master lived.

The faithful practice of sincere obedience, apostolic poverty and the joy of chastity, show the Love of God, perfect charity. Vows are virtues and gifts or charisms which show the incarnation, which means the divine united with the human and the human united with the divine. We leave all for the Lord, who loves everyone, and in leaving all we are able to follow the Lord more rapidly, in both body and soul [CC 95]. Vows are lived when we walk according to the voice of the Spirit.

**Obedience**: this plants the other virtues in man and keeps them growing. Christ the Saviour said: I have not come to do my will... Therefore it would be extremely stupid for one of our religious to expect to do just what he wants [CC 99].

Obedience will not be influenced by our own judgement and will, which are ideas from intelligence and are not connected to what the Spirit suggests; just as our own will, linked as it is to the passions, leads us to prefer these rather than what the Spirit tells us.

Obedience lets itself be led by the inclinations suggested by the Spirit [CC 23] in any situation, and it allows itself to be governed and led by the Providence of God, through our Superiors.

Anyone who believes he has been allotted a task which is clearly over and above his ability, must not refuse to do it; he must carry on with humility and with faith in the Lord: the strength of the Lord shows itself in weakness. But if the Superior is unaware of his weakness or inability, then he should show him the difficulties he has in that mission in a humble, calm and very simple way; then he should not insist in the matter, but await the Superior's decision in humility [CC 104].

I have read your opinion about the vow concerning the teaching of children, which, when we look at it closely, is not absolute, unlike the other three, but is a consequence of the vow of obedience. Thus, if the Superior wants someone to teach, he must teach; and if the Superior does not want someone to teach, that person is not obliged to do so by his vows [EP 2110].

Without humility, we cannot experience obedience: in time I should really
like him to stay by me so that I can show how great a thing obedience based upon humility is [EP 3275].

You must understand that obedience in individuals does not depend upon a licence from Superiors, but in the example of good works which these do, by working harder than anybody else in everything. Negligence in these things and a desire to command as absolute Superiors, have been the cause of most of our problems. A Superior must work before anyone else, and then teach, and thus one may say that real licence is what I am saying to you, and I shall send it to you in writing [EP 3055].

**Chastity:** it keeps us united to Christ the Lord, as we desire to live only for Him and to please Him only [CC 34].

Chastity throws off disordered affections for relations and friends [CC 34].

Chastity loves relations and friends with an ordered love [CC 34] as it does for every person.

Chastity may not be experienced without humility: humility makes men want to know the truth and love real goodness [EP 4532].

Chastity demonstrates free and unconditional love for the weakest: in their Master the pupils must recognise goodness, mercy and the love of a father [EP 893]. *Our Works are the sign of love more than well expressed words are* [EP 679].

**Apostolic poverty:** Calasanz asks us to love venerable poverty, the mother of exquisite humility and other virtues, as the strongest defence of our Congregation; it must be kept safe in all its integrity and you will have to strengthen yourselves in order to endure its consequences [CC 137 ].

Apostolic poverty has faith in God, who never fails those who confide in Him [EP 3384]. I think that it would be a great insult to Divine Providence, who provides for the needs of the birds of the field, were we not to give it our great trust [EP 1961].

Apostolic poverty detaches itself from worldly things [EP 3384]. We seek only food and clothing, and for the rest we live the apostolic life [EP 1053]. The congregation should observe supreme poverty both as a whole and as individual members, and it absolutely cannot possess any permanent goods or places other than a house, the church and the adjoining garden, as these
things correspond to supreme poverty and it will not have absolute possession of these goods, but only the use thereof [EP 7c]. The more they distance themselves from property and the more they follow holy apostolic poverty, the richer and more abundant will the spiritual gifts of God be [EP 727a].

Apostolic poverty is humble and allows us to educate weak and poor people and peoples: our religion was founded on supreme poverty and supreme humility, in keeping with the ministry and work that it does: teaching little and poor children, who need more than others, someone to break bread for them ... and we shall be unable to understand this low exercise of humility, in teaching the poor, which is not done by other religious, without the existence of supreme poverty [Letter of 1644 – RC 14, 64].

**Calasanz wishes to found a Religion**

We are sometimes asked what Calasanz’s intention was when he founded the Pious Schools. I wish to quote these words of Fr. Alejandro Bernardini, General of the Congregation of Lucca: the Fr. Prefect of the Pious Schools, having long expressed his desire to found a religion [Fr. Giner. Il Calasanzio, maestro e fondatore, p. 459], Calasanz will say of himself in a detached way, that it is God, with the help of His Church, who inspired his servants to a great multiplicity of Orders in various periods, because of great necessities [MT 18].

**Every Piarist must be given his place within the community according to his talents**

Calasanz was disappointed that he was not given a place according to his talent, especially in educating novices and hopes that things will soon get back to what is right [EP 4143].

- **The Spirit teaches us:** about our shared mission to evangelise by educating according to the aptitudes of the weakest and poorest people and peoples

Let us read the following texts of Calasanz slowly, so that we may savour the experience of the Spirit expressed within them. Notice how he refers to Luke 4.

*The poor must not be abandoned because, as has been said, they make up*
the great majority of the Christian Republic, and as they too have been redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, they have been appreciated by His Majesty, who said he was sent into the world by his eternal Father to teach them: ‘Evangelizare Pauperibus misit me. I have been sent to evangelise the poor. This is where we may see how far from Christian piety and the feelings of Christ is that policy which considers teaching the poor to be bad for the Republic, because in this was they will be taken away from mechanical jobs [Esposizione a difesa del diritto dei poveri all’educazione, 1645. I realise that this text was written by Fr. Casani].

And one must not agree with that policy according to which a poor child who is studying Latin, and is unable to go on with his studies, should leave the school and then spend his time in laziness, become a vagabond and a criminal [Letter to the Commission of the Cardinals, 1645].

The ministry of schooling is the most useful because of the numerous changes in lives that come from it, as we may frequently see in youngsters who are unrecognisable compared with what they were like before [MT].

Our vocation was born to teach the poor according to their aptitudes and thus Calasanz tells us: Those who do not have a spirit to teach the poor do not have our vocation, or they have been stolen by the enemy [EP 1319].

The education of children and youngsters, according to their talents, is a real basis of social change: Our Congregation aims for the best education of a child, as a genuine goal for him. As many Ecumenical Councils state, this is the root of reforming society [CC 175].

Our ministry is for the weak and poor people and populations, who represent a majority in the world [MT 23].

Our ministry is very worthy, very noble, very meritorious, very profitable, very useful, very necessary, very deeply rooted in our nature, very in keeping with reason, with many reason for thanks, for God and for men, very pleasant and very glorious [MT 6].

Today, what the Scriptures say is accomplished in us.

**The Spirit teaches us: about our fraternal bonds in community life**

We are brethren because of the action of the Spirit, brothers in the Spirit which is stronger than the flesh [EP 2331].
If we were to speak and act according to the teachings of the Spirit, we should all speak the same language, with similar and complementary gifts. This is why Calasanz tells us that *all must reach towards a unity of sentiment, of expression, of thought and of will. Thus, united by the bonds of fraternal love, we shall commit ourselves more efficiently to the service of God and our neighbour* [CC 171].

- **In life in common, the most important thing is that everyone must let the Spirit speak, so that all may understand together what God’s will is and may put it into practice**

  The Spirit is in communion with every person and it is He who makes a community. The Spirit leads us to leave ourselves and gives us what we need to serve our neighbour. *If we unite for the glory of God and the benefit of our pupils, if we unite to make God visible as we do good for our pupils, these will find that through this practice the Spirit is amongst them “for where two or three meet in my name, I am there among them”* (Matt 18, 20) [EP 2757].

  In meetings, every person must make sure that what is said is suggested by the Spirit. *All together, we make up a body. We need one another* [EP 3990] *to find the will of the Lord through people, through somebody* [Cu 864].

  **We meet:**
  
  – *To check on the running of the house* [RC 13, 47] *or of the school and on ways to improve these* [EP 132].
  
  – *For the glory of God and the benefit of the pupils.* To make God visible by doing good to children and youngsters [EP 1757].
  
  – *To listen to everyone’s opinions, to see what the Holy Spirit inspires, above all, we need to listen to the opinions of ordinary people, for the Lord does not have preferences between people* [RC 13, 47]. And, *listening to the opinions of all, we see that the Holy Spirit frequently speaks through the mouths of those whom one would least expect* [EP 132].
  
  – *To allot the tasks which fall to each, according to their own talents* [Cu 864] *and so that each shall work, according to his talent, for the simple love of God* [EP 3990].
  
  – *To try to reach the union of the body* [Cu 864] *because everyone is placed according to his talent. The Spirit unites and differentiates. Union grows from respect for what the Spirit does in every person and from the fact that the*
whole body devotes itself to the service of its poorest members [Cu 1445].
– For the benefit of our own souls [Cu 864], so that we grow as Piarists who do the will of the Father.
– To serve our religion [Cu 864], the community, the Church and the world as the Body of the Lord.
– To serve poor pupils [Cu 864], and the Lord in the members of his Body, who are the poorest [Cu 1445].
– I am extremely happy for all the good of all of you [Cu 864].

• We live our fraternal bonds as the Body of the Lord

Calasanz tells us that brothers are as necessary to our religion as clerics and priests, because all together make up one body. And they must not say of one another: I do not need your help. Rather, in holy peace and meritoriously, each must work according to his own talent for the simple love of God [EP 3990]. It is necessary that the matters of the religion should be organised both in the head and in the members [EP 1693]. Let you all be there with your souls dedicated to serving the Lord though his members, who are the poor, so that we may hear at the right time: what you have done to one of these brothers, my most defenceless, you have done to me [Cu 1445]. It is clear that for Calasanz our common life together should be lived as the Body of the Lord, as it was for Saint Paul.

Tensions in community life may be resolved if we learn to understand how we live

I am astonished at Calasanz’s power of observation when he speaks of the life which is lived inside the community.

Behind tension or criticism:
– There are the gifts of some people which are not taken into consideration. If individuals are distributed well, according to their own talents and all are kept united in peace, then things can only go well [EP 2559]. Relationships in the community proceed well when people are taken into consideration according to their special talents.
– There are bodily and spiritual needs which are neglected. The superiors, as the good shepherds of the Lord’s flock, before dealing with their own spiritual and bodily necessities, must first deal with those of the flock entrusted to them, so that they may be peaceful and may perform the
service of God with joy [part of the Exhortation of Our Holy Father to the Superiors – RC 13, 47]. Community relationships proceed well when they respect people’s spiritual and bodily needs.

– There are passions which lead people anxiously to expect to receive what they have never received nor will ever receive. *None of you must stick to his own opinion, rather, as servants of God, when somebody proposes something and gives his reasons for doing so, the other must calmly give his opinion and express his own reasons. Then, without any passion involved, they will decide the most convenient outcome. Each must submit his own opinion to that which is most right for the good of the School and this must be discussed in peace and tranquillity without anger. Most important of all, both must remain in Holy fear and not fight, either amongst yourselves or with the laity. In fact, I recommend peace and unity amongst you, just as Christ recommended to the Apostles [EP 1958].*

Community relationships proceed well when we do not allow ourselves to be affected by feelings of passion. Regarding temptations or worries, we must console and treat people with paternal affection, put up with imperfections and help people to free themselves of them gradually, as we express all our inner feeling with spiritual guidance. *It is not possible for anyone to become perfect immediately [EP 899].*

– There exist difficult environments where relationships are based upon force, on greetings which are denied, on distance between people. Calasanz realises that *sometimes it is easier to run a house where there are a few who are united than when there are many and these are not united [EP 132].*

Calasanz speaks of those who *neither say good morning or good evening. The Lord inspires the union of Christ with the Church well [EP 3289].* Community relationships proceed well when we greet each other affectionately, when there are no relationships based upon strength, when people live together united and in peace. *I want all to have one heart and one soul in the service of God [EP 1958]. You do well to have that charity of yours for all. Do not forget those in the house, for properly-ordered charity begins with ourselves [EP 407].*

The impulse of the Spirit, which inhabits every human being, is the true community which pushes us to live a common life, in which we give our lives
freely and unconditionally.

- **The Spirit teaches us**: about our relationship with God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit; about our relationship with the crucified Christ, with the Eucharistic Christ, with Christ who identifies himself with the weakest and the poorest: what we do to one of them we do to Him; about our relationship with Mary, the Mother of God and our Mother; about our relationship with the saints, such as our Holy Father St. Joseph Calasanz, St. Francis of Assisi, Saint Teresa; about our relationship with transcendental life, such as Love, Truth, Justice, Solidarity.

– He wrote about the relationship with God the Father

*The Father is good and loving. All comes to me from His hand.* For Calasanz, being a son means receiving all from the hand of the Father for our good. And putting up with things patiently. And being faithful, ready to die rather than to give up the task [EP 1148].

For Calasanz, his **divine Majesty** is God:

– Because the **Son of God communicates in prayer** [EP 2197]. God is communication.

– Because the **real Presence of the Lord speaks** to every human being through the inner person of man [Cu 949]. God much enjoys speaking to human beings.

– Because He gives Himself totally to us with joy [EP 196].

– Because He is **poor**, he has nothing, everything that exists is given to us, He possesses nothing. The religious of the Pious Schools make do with any house, and they manage with very little, they are incapable of possessing anything, even in common, and they perform acts of charity without any ulterior motive [Antologia Pedagógica, p. 37].

– Because Divine Providence looks after all of us, giving us what is necessary in order to live [EP 1961].

– Because His look is that of a small child who looks at another [EP 912]. It is simple and humble.

– Because He has taken all of Himself, and has divested Himself of Himself, and this is why He gives His closeness and His freedom [Annotazioni, Fr. Berro. T. I., p. 79].

– Because **He is not looking for what is His**, only, **He looks at us with love**
and he loves us much more than we love ourselves [EP 4458] until the final consequences of the Cross [Exhortation to the Ministers of the Community].

– Because he is free and unconditioned, He gives us His grace [EP 4392], He gives us His Spirit [EP 2559] he gives us His Life and He gives us His Love.

– Because in adversity or in prosperity he seeks our well-being [EP 380] and is by our side in tribulation [EP 3933] making us able to love.

– Because He is able to make his great servants out of great sinners [EP 2167], His greatly loved children. He looks for us when we are lost. Lets us carry His presence within us.

– Because He is beauty itself. Infinite wisdom and goodness [Document of the Virtues].

I am joyful and happy that you are Omnipotent, as the creator, of beauty itself, infinite wisdom and goodness [Document of the Virtues].

We note that Calasanz heard these words of Jesus: Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father [John 14, 9]. And we are also like this. Our humanity makes the divinity visible.

I want your goodness to be recognised and loved by all and as far as possible I want to make sure that everybody knows and loves you [Document of the Virtues].

– Relationship with Christ

This is the relationship of a disciple, and one tries to be a good disciple of Christ [EP 2362], a disciple of the school of Christ, our Master [EP 526]. We let ourselves be taught by Him, by His Spirit, so that we receive children and youngsters the same way He receives them.

In this book we express how we follow Christ, our Master, in various ways: we are disciples of the Master when we do the work of the Father, which is our shared mission. We are disciples of the Master when we live in poverty and humility. We are disciples of the Master when we love as much as Christ crucified loved. We are disciples of the Master when we are good shepherds and we share in the Priesthood of Christ. We are disciples of the Master as men of prayer. We are disciples of the Master when we live as His Body, in a community. We are disciples of the Master when we live as he lived.
– Free and unconditional Love

We are able to love because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us [Rm 5, 5]. This is why, when God lets Himself be heard, we hear Him by loving people notwithstanding their behaviour, to the ends of the Cross [John 13, 1]. Because God so loved the world that he gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life [John 3, 16].

Love is patient, so that we may see the inner goodness of people, so that we may know how to use the talents that are revealed, and it is compassionate [EP 1425] and merciful [EP 893] so that faults and imperfections may be resolved with paternal affection, or the love of a Father [EP 3721]. Love is humble so that the truth may be understood and real goodness may be loved [EP 4352], so we may lower ourselves to the level of children's abilities. Love is joyful because there is more joy in giving than in receiving. God loves those who give with joy (2 Cor 9, 7), [EP 196]. Love is an orderly love, it has a universal spirit and does not forget those at home [EP 407], loves the family and friends [CC 34], loves children through goodness [EP 1428]. Love knows how to put up with evil, how to work for good and how to suffer evil, that is the good way to live [EP 1619]. We must all experience many hardships before we enter the kingdom of God [Acts 14, 22]. Love does good because actions and works are the sign of love, more than well-expressed words [EP 679]. Love is. It transforms us. It makes us transparent. It makes us hear the voice of God as we love all people.

The Lord will give strength and spirit to all so they may do His holy will [EP 1619].

• The Spirit teaches us: about our ability to understand the light of god and of men

It is clear that we Piarists must prepare ourselves in many fields of knowledge with the light of God and of the world, so as to teach children and young people, as we lower ourselves to their level of skills and talents. One of the aims of the Pious Schools is to put into practice, in the fullness of the Charity of the Church, a efficacious remedy, which will be destined for all children, to prevent and cure evil and to introduce and encourage goodness
Studying our various subjects, letters and the spirit, good habits and manners, the light of God and of the world [MT 9] according to the aptitude and talent of each Piarist, must be done in harmony with one’s own conscience, in which God reveals Himself. We must unite humility, one’s own conscience, with studying so that great benefit is achieved for our neighbours, as practice will show to those capable of doing this [EP 4557]. Humility allows us to live in peace, in the tranquillity of the soul [EP 4273].

For Calasanz, it was a priority that Piarists should tread the path of spirituality with fervour and joy [EP 1360]. It is not my intention for young people who are in the first year of their novitiate to dedicate themselves to study if they have not first received some benefits of the spirit. We must first teach the things of the spirit, as is appropriate [EP 4120].

The goal of progressing in one’s studies is to make God visible, by finding it easy to help one’s neighbour [EP 4120]. Our own salvation comes from cooperating with God, who is saving our neighbour in body and spirit.

I think that our charism should not only know the light of God and mankind, but must also know human beings; knowledge of oneself is, for a Piarist, an extra subject for schools and it helps us to understand the inner life of children and youngsters.

The Holy Spirit teaches the humble to pray

Calasanz knows that God gives the grace to understand the truth of those things which are invisible to the humble, as the prophet says: He gives intelligence to the little. The humbler one’s conscience is, the higher we elevate God in our knowledge of things which are invisible and eternal [EP 4392].

Being humble and lowering ourselves to get to know ourselves, this is the way in which God reveals Himself to us. This knowledge transforms us. All should dress in humility, each to the other, because God holds back from the proud but gives grace to the humble. Bow down, then, before the power of God now, so that he may raise you up in due time [1 Pet 5, 5-6].

• For this reason, a good principle for spiritual life is to know oneself

A good principle for spiritual life is to know oneself and to understand the
misery into which we are all born and also the ingratitude which, after having received many benefits, we repay God; if we practise this diligently, I can assure you that in this life we shall have some knowledge of God, who is a science which is so great that a speck of Him overshadows all the human sciences on which men and women spend most and the best of their lives; on the contrary, those sciences inflate and make those who are masters in them proud. However, knowledge of God gradually blesses a person, and after having reached a certain level of knowledge, he grows in divine love. I beg you to spend time daily to dedicate yourself to this kind of study first of all, after which, the Lord will give you all those other things of which the world knows nothing. This will be of great comfort to me, but the merit and benefit for you will be immense; may the Lord give you these for a long time, just as I wish for myself [EP 1339].

Spiritual life begins with humility. Calasanz speaks of self-knowledge as if it were an extra subject in school life: I beg you to spend time daily to dedicate yourself to this kind of study first of all.

We need to recognise and accept:

– **God’s benefits** – all those things which, as gifts of God, reside within every human being. *An inclination towards good.*

– **Ingratitude.** I have been ungrateful towards God. I have neglected what the Spirit gave me to experience and have chosen something else. I have neglected His Presence. *I have not reciprocated to God, who loves.*

– **A tendency towards evil:** The misery into which we are all born, our passions, that is to say mean sentiments.

According to Calasanz, human sciences which are experienced without self-knowledge can lead to pride. This is why we must *daily study* this science, which is *knowledge of oneself,* and which will make us wise in the *great science of the knowledge of God.* When we lower ourselves in order to know ourselves, God makes Himself known, He makes us happy, *He blesses man,* transforms him, makes sure that we can see ourselves and see God as he is: only God can give us His love. We are one thing with Him. *We grow in divine love.* We can see ourselves in His beauty, as Saint John of the Cross says. We can help our *weak and poor* neighbour with the aptitudes and the talents given to us by God.
From this point of view, we are able to see more clearly, because Calasanz speaks of harmonising studies: being assiduous in prayer, with a spirit of deep humility and with the fervour of piety [CC 210]. The same must be true for our pupils. The more one is attuned to this, the higher the virtue of the knowledge and love for God and one’s neighbour will be [EP 4557].

May the Lord grant you all great spirit of deep humility, for the deeper that is, the higher and greater will the virtue of the knowledge and love of God and your neighbour be, and if you know how to unite this virtue to your studies, the benefits you will find in your neighbour will be incredible, as he who knows how to practise this will be able to see, and I shall help him in my daily prayers [EP 4557].

- **Calasanz speaks of humility as knowing the benefits of God, and inclination towards good and knowledge of tendencies towards evil**

I have already spoken, and shall continue to do so, of the inclinations suggested by the Holy Spirit, which creates a man who is born from within, divested of himself and attentive to the suggestions of the Spirit in all fields of life. Now I shall take up the other aspect of self-knowledge: the misery into which we are all born. Calasanz says: Those who understand our bad inclinations are easily able to be on guard against them [EP 770]. This tendency towards evil is seen in the passions which are hidden within the inner man, which are difficult to diagnose and are even more difficult to eradicate [CC 16]. It may be seen in unrestrained senses. Evil is the cupidity of insatiable man [EP 1488].

When we allow ourselves to be transported by these tendencies towards evil, we behave like greedy sensual men, animal-like men [EP 2581], carnal men who are only interested in sensual things [EP 112], like men who have managed without the Spirit, and who cannot perceive those things which are of the Spirit of God [EP 2581], we become men who are proprietors, who are not satisfied with that which is only necessary [EP 1488]. Only the Spirit of God can allow us to know the grace which it gives us. A religious must give to the spirit according to his needs and to the body according to its needs and not more to the body, because this wounds the spirit and he becomes, as St. Paul says: an animal-man [EP 2148].

For Calasanz, the heart is the place of the Spirit, whereas passions are
hidden inside the human being. That is how they speak.

We can allow ourselves to be led by the wishes of the Spirit and not by the appetites of the flesh\textsuperscript{11}. The flesh is all the human being with its compulsion towards insatiable greed [EP 1488]. \textit{The flesh is the opposite of the Spirit} [EP 2489]. \textit{For the Spirit it is more joyful to give than to receive}. In giving we receive.

The Spirit gives us a body, our body, which is born from the Spirit. The action of the Spirit gives us our senses and bodily reactions similar to those of Christ our Master, who took our humanity. St. Paul speaks of a \textit{spiritual body}, a body for the action of the Spirit [1 Cor 15, 44].

\textbf{Ask yourself:} The Spirit lives in your heart. Do you hear God outside and find Him within yourself? How do you find Him? Have you had the experience that God the Father is teaching you through His Spirit, making you like Jesus, like a son? Have you ever, in your life, found the fruit of self-knowledge? What do you feel you are asked to do?

\textbf{c. The Holy Spirit teaches us to pray: by touching our hearts. Our prayer is affective}\textsuperscript{12}

Our prayer is affective because the Spirit reaches our inner self by touching our hearts, giving us grace or special sentiments. \textit{In His hands the Lord holds the hearts of people, he inspires} [M 4] that which makes His love visible. We must discover the fruit that it brings, which is human behaviour, similar to the human behaviour of Christ, our Master. \textit{We must ask Him, in everything and for everything, to work his holy will} [M4].

The word of God is the word of the Spirit: \textit{The voice of God is the voice of the Spirit, which comes and goes, touches the heart and passes on, we don’t know where it comes from nor when it will breathe upon us; therefore we need to be ever vigilant in case it arrives without warning and moves on with no harvest} [EP 131]\textsuperscript{13}.

Our Constitutions say: \textit{The spirit of prayer is nourished and maintained through silence and through moderation in speech; these are virtues which allow us to more clearly perceive the voice of our God, who makes Himself heard where he wishes. Therefore it is very important for us to remain ever vigilant, so that He does not come without warning and pass by with no harvest} [C 44].
In his letters, Calasanz says that the Spirit teaches us through:

Groans that cannot be put into words, deeds that the Spirit will suggest, inspiration, the preference for the Spirit, conversations with the inner person, consolation, grace or special sentiments, compulsions of the Spirit, the Spirit touches the heart, touched by the Spirit, an inner light, spiritual benefits, inner consolation, fervour, devotion and spiritual gifts, the Spirit which illuminates and gives strength, words spoke in the heart by the Lord, ardent desire, a feeling that being guided by the Holy Spirit teaches us, benefits lit by spiritual gifts, aptitudes and talents, devotion to the glory of God and need of one’s neighbour and holy thoughts.

All these ways where the Spirit makes itself heard may be found in the quotations used in this book.

**The Spirit of God divests itself of itself**

*The word of God is the word of the Spirit* [EP 131]. The Spirit does not speak of itself, but gives us what it receives from the Father and from the Son, and this is why the key to spiritual life, along with humility, is detachment, *because the Spirit of God is so delicate that it is perceived only by those who are most attentive and have a very pure soul, which is detached from the things of the world and also from itself* [Annotazioni, Fr. Berro. T. I. p. 79].

We remember the loving warning of the Spirit of God, which encourages us to dedicate ourselves to changing reality, by loving weak and poor people and populations.

- **Divested of all worldly things: We live apostolic poverty**

  I return to the subject of apostolic poverty which allows us the see the spiritual good within us. Calasanz tells us:

  *The fewer things you bring with you, the greater will be the sign of your trust in the Cross, and the more things you bring, the less will be your trust. You should bring only Him as your guide and authentic credentials from your Superiors, as did the Apostles themselves when they went out to preach the Holy Gospel* [15]. If the Lord gave you this faith in Him, he would give you a great gift and grace to do great good for your neighbour [EP 1301].

  *The aim of our Institute is to help everybody and not be a burden to any, as we are completely incapable of acquiring or possessing temporal goods. We who profess this, according to the advice of the apostle, shall be content if*
we have food and clothing [EP 3875]. We seek only food and clothing, as for the rest we have the apostolic life [EP 1053].

It would be pure madness if we, working in the way we do, should expect temporal remuneration from mankind. This is especially true because if we did so, it would, I believe, be a great insult to divine providence, which makes sure that the birds of the field have what they need, as if we lacked faith in His providence, although we have, over the years, seen that the Lord takes care of us [EP 1961].

When poverty disappeared, the grace of God soon followed it [EP 1488]. The more you distance yourselves from ownership and imitate holy apostolic poverty, the richer and greater will your spiritual gifts from God be. By His mercy, may He instil this spirit of apostolic poverty in all our religious. Amen. Amen. Amen [EP 727a].

Apostolic poverty allows us to see God as he is. It is given with joy. In the Letter to Cardinal Rome, Calasanz says: if you take supreme poverty away from the Pious Schools, you take away this splendour which, on its own, makes it admired and desired even by the unfaithful, as experience has shown [Founding Documents, p. 211].

- Divested of oneself

We are people who pass on. We allow the Presence given to us to pass on as it was given to us. As we are humble we can help other people. We become transparent: from the way we are, all the world is able to see the Presence that lives with us.

Just as Christ became a Master of humility, expecting us to learn from Him, so you must make sure that these youngsters learn this virtue with Christ as their Master and you as His means. I shall ask the Lord to give you great spirit to teach this and to give those youngsters of ours great love to learn it [EP 3888]. Firstly we must collect it, as in a bowl, so that we may irrigate others, like a canal [EP 4120]. The more we feel favoured by God with grace or special sentiments, the more we must humble ourselves so that we do not lose these, for they are lost with a little presumption or self-satisfaction. Calasanz speaks of self-satisfaction as a lack of humility in those who do not recognise what they have received from God [EP 1817]. As soon as I have been favoured with the Spirit I shall send it to... because then he...
will know how to help the others [EP 1424].

Our prayer is affective because the Spirit touches our hearts in a place of peace and it gives us grace or special sentiments

The Spirit has no other way to act if it wishes to reach everyone.

- The Spirit touches our hearts in a place of peace which is found in all people

Where do you have your place of peace? That is where we can identify the instincts of the Spirit and we can reason freely.

Great servants of God do not worry nor move from their calm in adversity nor in prosperity, but they always stay the same, the same person, without allowing passion to move them from their place. This being the same is what wins a crown. And wherever passion enters, reason will be troubled, and when it is troubled it cannot judge freely [EP 2457].

When I know and I can, I beg you, in whatever circumstance and however serious it is, not to lose your interior peace, but always to try to keep your heart calm and united to God, by using prayer when it is most troubled, for the Lord calms the storm at sea [EP 826].

- The Spirit touches our hearts though sweet invitation

The voice of God is a gentle and delicate breeze; those who are not attentive cannot hear it and perhaps that is where God has places salvation. Woe befall those who miss it and miss their opportunity! [Fr. Giner, p. 253]. This gentle breeze is a subtle sensation and is the silence which speaks. It invites us to follow it.

- The Spirit touches our hearts and gives us action

Calasanz thanked the Secretary of the Ambassador of the Catholic King for the tardy offer of a church prebend and said to him: In Rome I have found the best way to serve God by doing good to children. I shall not leave this world for any reason [Fr. Berro]. Such an attitude is essential for us to be able to donate our whole lives.

- The Spirit touches our hearts by means of an inner light which changes our lives

Finding himself in Rome in the house of Mon. Fabrizio, his brother, the
Venerable Glicerio, dressed in silk and with decorations, was touched by the Holy Spirit and he abandoned all his comforts he previously possessed and gave up himself to an exemplary life of mortification, changing his silk clothing for others which were much poorer and for very simple food. This was a common source of great admiration and he did it because of the great faith and inner light which our Lord God gave him [Calasanz, speaking as a witness at the investigations for the Venerable Glicerio].

• The Spirit touches our hearts through conversations with the inner self, which are special sentiments or grace

As for our inner potential, take care over conversations with the inner self, for they are the true Presence of the Lord, where, as if it were a spring, all the perfection of a religious soul is generated [Cu 949].

The more we feel favoured by God through certain grace or special sentiments, the more we must humiliate ourselves so that we do not lose these, for they are lost when there is a little presumption or self-satisfaction. Let us recognise that we are useless tools of the Lord and more than a help we are an obstacle for His work [1817].

I could write more about the sentiments which Fr. Gelio Ghelini had in his prayers and meditations on the Passion of the Lord, and His gift of tears, as well as on his fervent zeal for the honour of God. But as I have to leave for Frascati, I shall stop here for the time being [EP 16].

• The Spirit touches our inner self though a word uttered by God in our hearts

I know of a person who, for fifteen years joyfully accepted the great works which happened to him because of one word uttered by God to his heart [Fr. Giner, p. 253].

The Spirit touches our hearts giving us His Love, His Presence, which loves to the very end of the Cross. This Orderly Love allows us to remain united with Christ the Lord.

Therefore, try to divest yourselves of every [disorderly] affection with family and friends and make it spiritual. Love them with good and orderly love; and stay united to Christ the Lord, desiring to live only for Him and to please Him only [CC 34].
• The Spirit gives us light and strength when it touches our hearts

The Lord will give you light to understand the duty you have and strength to put into practice what is needed for the task, for the good, not only of those in the house, but also for the benefit of the pupils and as a good example for the laity [EP 424].

I think that Fr... may not be able to carry our such work, unless he has received the light of God [Archive of the Order of the Mother of God. Information process p. 1623].

To my brother... because, after he left, the Holy Spirit has given him the strength to return to our convent, let us help him in this holy illumination [EP 2164].

Calasanz retired from in front of the Blessed Sacrament in the Church of Santi Apostoli and he left his prayers strengthened and illuminated, and said that the Lord makes himself felt in the Holy Sacrament as well as in other places [Fr. Berro].

The Spirit may speak to us in any situation

What Calasanz says about the Venerable Glicerio is very moving. Between the lines he is speaking of himself when he arrived in Rome. Our lives are transformed by the action of the Holy Spirit.

Finding himself in Rome in the house of Mon. Fabrizio, his brother, the Venerable Glicerio, dressed in silk and with decorations, was touched by the Holy Spirit and he abandoned all his comforts he previously possessed and gave up himself to an exemplary life of mortification, changing his silk clothing for others which were much poorer and for very simple food. This was a common source of great admiration and he did it because of the great faith and inner light which our Lord God gave him [Calasanz, speaking as a witness at the investigations for the Venerable Glicerio, Reg. Serv. Dei XLI p. 35].

If we use our intelligence to know what is happening in our hearts, we will be able to understand that the Spirit touches our heart in everything we experience: as we share the life of poor quarters of our towns, investigate the events of the world, read a book about spiritual or scientific life, contemplate a work of art, contemplate nature, give a lesson, take examinations, listen to the
Word of God, meditate on the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, visit the Most Blessed Sacrament, listen to our pupils, talk to a friend, watch a film, use internet, in other words, in every situation of our lives we have subject matter for prayer during prayer time. That light gives us the opportunity for a relationship with others and allows us to understand the human behaviour, which itself lets us respond to the specific needs of our world.

And God, at different times, in order to help His Church, inspired all this multiplicity of Orders for His real servants, mainly because they were faced with a great need for them [MT 18].

**During the time for prayer we must set aside speculation**

During meditation we must concentrate on the subject in question: this will be done more usefully if we try to work our will to include our necessary affections in our practice in an efficient way, and to set aside speculation, which is unsuitable for prayer [Riti comuni 14, 74 p. 9. This text was by Fr. Santiago Graziani, and approved by Calasanz, who thus wrote on the first page in his hand].

**Ask yourself:** What is your prayer like? Can you say that it is of the affections? In your own life, point out how the Spirit touches your heart. Can you list the suggestions of the Spirit which have come to you this year? Can you identify other significant suggestions at other moments during your life?

**d. Do the actions suggested by the Spirit**

With all our effort, and in the name of the Lord, while you are permitted to live in the House, we exhort you to make an effort to do all those outward actions, and above all inner ones, of humility, repentance, giving thanks and other acts suggested by the Spirit. ‘Your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you’ [Matt 6, 6] and will lead you to perfection through practising solid virtues [CC 48]¹⁸.

Our Constitutions say: *Obedient to what our Founder suggests, every time we happen to remain alone, we shall dedicate ourselves to performing some inner or outward action of humility, of repentance or of giving thanks or another kind, according to divine inspiration, so that the heavenly Father, who sees all in secret, will be abundant in His gifts and will lift us up to the*
perfection of solid virtues [C 43].

At prayer time we must do what the Spirit suggests

Calasanz asks us to perform acts of humility, of constraint and of thanksgiving, in our room, according to the words of Saint Matthew:

But when you pray, go to your private room, shut yourself in, and so pray to your Father who is in that secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you [Matt 6, 6].

At the same time, add Calasanz: The Father will take you to perfection through the practice of solid virtues. Practising solid virtues grows from the Spirit’s suggestions, and one must not only practise them in one’s room but also in real life outside. Thus it is that the Father will lift us up to the summit of perfection, which is to love all people. The secret room is the human being who is inhabited by God, who acts within us by loving our neighbour.

In his scholastic language, we are told that the deeds we do, if they are good, are done by God, as the effective cause by means of us. Instead of praising our deeds or our work, we should say that we are useless servants; we have done what we had to do (Lk 17, 10), [EP 2650]19.

Calasanz tells us that: our actions are done to make the glory of the Lord visible [EP 29]; that it is the love of God which does good to our neighbour. When we dedicate our lives to the service of God and to the benefit of our neighbour we keep the Spirit at home [EP 2175]. The spirit is true, false or counterfeit according to our words and actions [EP 1613].

The Gospel of St. Matthew tells us: Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a sensible man who built his house on rock. Rain came down, floods rose, gales blew and hurled themselves against that house, and it did not fall: it was founded on rock [Matt 7, 24-25].

In the letters of Calasanz, we may see how the Spirit touches his heart and the behaviour which it gives to him

When Calasanz speaks of children in poverty, he prays the Liturgy of the Hours, celebrates the Sacraments, listens to the Word of God or reads the Brief of Pope Innocent X, quotes only the sentence which has touched his heart and afterwards writes of the human behaviour that God asks him to do. It is this that he communicates. He communicates the Spirit that the Lord gave him20.
On reading the life of the Master, one sentence touched his heart: The Father sent me to evangelise the poor. He asked me to teach them. **Human behaviour:** Teaching the poor according to their talents not according to the policy whereby the poor must commit themselves only to the mechanical arts [Letter to the Commission of Cardinals, 1645, This text is in the handwriting of Fr. Pietro Casani].

In our Chapters we speak of: teaching the poor, whereas Calasanz says: teaching the poor according to their talents.

If nature has not made a poor child able to learn ‘letters’, as we see in our schools every day, although we use all our diligence to allow into the grammar school only those who we consider able to attend, if perhaps by mistake, or because of the interference of his parents, this person is admitted, even though he is incapable, he himself, very soon asks to be removed, or, after receiving a report from his Schoolmaster, the Prefect removes him [Anonymous Letter to the Commission of Cardinals, 1645].

**While reading the “Divine Office”, a sentence struck his heart:** In the daytime God sends his faithful love, and even at night, the song... [Psalms, 42, 9]. **Human behaviour:** The day must be used for works of mercy and the night for thanksgiving and preparation for the next day [EP 1544].

Celebrating the sacraments: the Eucharist or Confession. Through the sacraments the Holy Spirit moves the intelligence and the will, enlightens the intelligence, resorting to them with devotion they ignite the will. They give us our human behaviour: they make us abhor sin and love virtuous works. The sacraments are all in all in my institute [EP 471].

Meditating on the sayings of the Master, a sentence touches his heart: The path which leads to life is narrow and the door is small. **Human behaviour:** Do not submit to the desires of the senses, but penetrate the desires of the Spirit. Then you will find this path to life easy, because the yoke of God is light for those who wish to live according to the Spirit [EP 2923].

Meditating on the life and passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, a sentence touches his heart: Forgive our enemies. Pray for those who persecute and slander us [EP 1760]. **Human behaviour:** Thus we shall do so here, for the love of the Redeemer, so that the Lord will enlighten him and change him
from an enemy into a friend [EP 1760]. Forgiving an enemy counts more for the forgiveness for our own sins than much repentance, than a lot of prayer, than performing many miracles [EP 2506].

Reading the Papal Brief of Pope Innocent X of 1646, about the destruction of the Pious Schools, he sees how the Spirit touches his heart. Calasanz is well able to recognise exactly what he feels. His sensitivity recognises the stroke, which he had not expected. I do not know what to hold onto. He recognises what the Spirit says to him: do not desire to move to another Religion. He recognises the precise human behaviour which the Spirit asks of him: we shall stay like this as long as God wishes [EP 4346]. We shall continue to work with the gift that God has given me, just as they have left it, as long as God wishes. It is thanks to Calasanz’s faith in the Spirit that our Pious Schools exist.

The Spirit constantly encourages us to dedicate our whole lives through freely-given human behaviour which is dedicated to the good of our neighbour

How did Calasanz move from affective prayer to practical prayer? How did he move from feelings to deeds?21 To the best of my knowledge there is no text which shows how Calasanz moves from prayer in his feelings to prayer in action. Perhaps the key is to be found in the text of the prayer in his room, when he tells us to perform acts of humility, of contrition and of thanksgiving.

– With an act of humility Calasanz looks slowly at the wishes of the Spirit. He realises that it has been given to him. He thinks about it, finds its meaning until he is able to identify the human behaviour that must be given to it. Confess that you have no good in yourself, nor aptitude for good works without His grace; this is to humiliate oneself in the presence of God [EP 1149].22

– With the act of contrition he realises that in the past he has been very ungrateful and unworthy of all the benefits which have been given to him [EP 1149].23 He realises that the light of the Spirit may come up against something which renders that light misty. The Spirit itself makes him aware of the light and of what it is that makes the light invisible for him. With the light touch of the Spirit we may see our sins far more clearly. We can see our lives as they are. Calasanz recognises and accepts the truth: I have been
ungrateful to God the Father, and this is why I start a process where I express all my inner feeling to my spiritual guide, my confessor, to speak to and remain at peace with God. He adds: If we do this, we shall find great inner peace, which is a great treasure. I shall not cease to ask the Lord that He offer you His pious hand. On your part, you should continue to work according to my advice, because I am sure that it will be good for you and you must do so, because our lives are short. May the Lord bless us all [EP 736].

– With the act of thanksgiving. After having performed our act of humility and that of contrition, we feel that we are at one with Love. Through an act of giving thanks we move from receiving to giving, in which we recognise the sensations of what the gift has given us us, and we realise that it was given by a Presence which loves, so that we are able to see how God really is and our only wish is to do His will and that all should recognise the goodness and the beauty of God working humbly for every human being.

What shall I give you, my Lord, for the many acts of grace you have done for me, especially because you died on the Cross for me? I want to offer you a gift of love. Here it is: I rejoice and am much pleased that you are omnipotent, for your beauty itself, for your infinite wisdom and goodness. I value your will more than any other thing and I am prepared to die a thousand times rather than to work against it. I want your goodness to be recognised and loved by all and, as far as is possible, I want to make sure that everybody knows and loves you [Acts of Virtue].

I shall give an example of how to perform an act of humility, of contrition and of thanksgiving, starting from the gift of listening.

If the Spirit has given you the talent to listen, you should perform an act of humility and realise that you have done nothing in order to have this. It came during a certain moment of your life as something which you received, whose origin was in your inner self, but which was not the fruit of any intellectual activity on your part, even though reading books or following courses on how to listen will have done you good.

When you follow the human action of listening, from the same place you receive the gift of clarity for helping others and at the same time you realise what it is that is an obstacle to your listening. And it is thus that you perform the act of contrition and do everything necessary so that the Spirit is able to
move freely, without any obstacles. 

In this way it is possible to understand God’s gift. We are able to see God as He is: he likes listening. Jesus says: *Father, You always hear me* [John 11, 42]. We move from the gift to the giver. **Perform the act of giving thanks.**

**Thus we enter the state of contemplation.** We spend time in contemplation the ways of God the Father, so that we may make him visible with our whole beings. This contemplation makes us more **committed:** **What shall I give you for these benefits you have given me?** Listen to all people, especially to the most poor, so that the Spirit can live through everybody, however they are.

The human behaviour which is engendered from the wishes of the Spirit should be experienced just as it is given to us

We need to experience freely, divested of our own selves, open to the suggestions of the Spirit, and it is then an action done for the love of God and our neighbour, done for the glory of God, to make the ways of God visible, and it is an action which sees others who are vessels of the Spirit, with special gifts. We need to communicate the Spirit which the Lord has given us, not our own opinions, our judgements or our desires, for these are the pride of our intelligence and will.

**It is often necessary to consult,** in order to see whether the action truly comes from the Spirit, or from the imagination, or from a feeling which seems good but which is not, or, furthermore, if the action comes from one’s own judgement or will.

At this point I want to point out how St. Paul, in his letter to the Galatians and the letter to the Philippians, identifies the actions of the Spirit

On the other hand the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control; no law can touch such things as these. All who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified self with all its passions and its desires [Gal 5, 22-24].

So if in Christ there is anything that will move you, any incentive in love, any fellowship in the Spirit, any warmth or sympathy. I appeal to you, make my joy complete by being of a single mind, one in love, one in heart and one in mind. The Spirit unifies and distinguishes us. Then Paul tells us of the
criteria for our work: **Nothing is to be done out of jealousy or vanity; instead, out of humility of mind everyone should give preference to others, everyone pursuing not selfish interests but those of others.** Make your own **the mind of Christ Jesus**: Who, being in the form of God, did not count equality with God something to be grasped. Christ does not keep the life of God within Him, he gives it. **But he emptied himself**, and becoming, like us, a part of humanity he emptied that of any inclination towards evil, and gave us the life of God, **taking the form of a slave, becoming as human beings are; and being in every way like a human being, he was humbler yet**, Calasanz speaks of lowering oneself, to be humble, **even to accepting death, death on a cross.**

**And for this God raised him high, and gave him the name which is above all other names; so that all beings in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld, should bend the knee at the name of Jesus and that every tongue should acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of God the Father** [Phil 2, 1-11].

**At this point I recapitulate:** When the Spirit touches our hearts it touches our feelings, we have the essence of prayer, and have found a suggestion of the Spirit whose content is an action. Our duty during prayer time is to develop that prayer from one of feeling to one of action. That is to say that the desire of the Spirit pushes us towards human behaviour, which we must discover during the time we dedicate to prayer, so that we are able to experience this in the situations we meet in our daily lives. The Spirit is within us, and loves everybody. The Spirit gives himself to us with joy, pushing us to go outwards from ourselves, with all that God has given us, so that we may do good to our weak and poor neighbour.

**How may we follow the suggestions of the Spirit?**

Our work consists in having our **inner strength, memory, intelligence, freedom and will**, always ready so as to follow the **desires of the Holy Spirit**, so that we **put into practice** his actions, which, because they **give light and strength**, is possible for us to do. We need to see whether the whole of our being can experience the clarity of the Spirit in those conditions in which we live.

- Memory: **during the day, remember** grace you have received in prayer. In
this way you will awaken the gift received and the Presence of the one who gave it.

– Intelligence: is attentive, composed, ready, vigilant, watches in order to understand the conversations of the Spirit so that it can discover the human behaviour that it gives us. Intelligence has to learn to concentrate on the tastes of the Spirit because it is also attracted by other external or inner things, as Calasanz says, by a taste for insatiable senses, by sentiments which contain no action of God within them. Intelligence is that which understands sensations which contain the action of the Spirit.

– Freedom: allows itself to be led by the Spirit. Like a magnet, it feels attracted to live according to the voice of the Spirit. It decides in harmony with the Spirit.

– The Will: taking into account the feelings, cooperates so that the desires of the Spirit, as given, are put into practice.

The action of the Spirit is the true Presence of the Lord. The action of the Spirit makes us similar to His incarnate Son. The action of the Spirit opens the way to a true apostolate. Deeds which come from the Spirit are the fruit of the Spirit.

A religious must never listen to gossip nor to idle talk, but must always remain composed, with inner strength, so that, by fleeing from worldly conversations he may listen more closely to those of the inner being, which is the true Presence of the Lord, and where, as from a spring, the perfection of the religious soul is born [Cu 949].

Sensual people lose the gift of prayer, through which the Son of God and his merits communicate with the sober and modest [EP 2197].

Do other things which the Spirit suggests

Calasanz did not only perform acts of humility, contrition and thanksgiving, but, during the most difficult periods of his life, also performed acts of faith, hope and charity.

– Act of Faith: We must believe that God guides all things for His greater glory and for our good, even if we, who are ignorant of and weak in the knowledge of His ways, sometimes consider what is useful and right for us to be against us. Let us then let His divine Majesty pilot the boat, and let us receive from His most holy hand, whatever happens [M 15]. I am most
pleased that you are persevering in the institute and that you trust in God, who has called you to work in this vineyard and who will recompense you at the end of the day, which means at the end of life, and will allow neither wind nor rain, nor any other incidents, to cause us to leave the vineyard [EP 4509].

– Act of Hope: At this very moment, at midnight, we have had the arrival of the Secretary of the Most Excellent Vicar of the Pope, who has published the Brief which states that every house of our Religion must be self-governing, subject to the Ordinary of the place, as in the Congregation of the Oratory of Philip Neri; those of our professed religious wish to move to another Religion ‘etiam laxiorem’, may do so; and in the future members will have to be dressed as at the Chiesa Nuova, with no vows; there will no longer be either a General, nor a Provincial, and each will have to be governed according to the Constitutions, which will be drawn up by certain Prelates, and the Nazarene College will be under the auspices of the Roman Rota. All this will be sent to you in full later, but you should not lose heart, because we trust in the Lord that while we remain united we shall be able to endure this [EP 4344].

– Perform Acts of Charity and Hope: Pax Christi. Since the Brief of Our Lord has been published this evening, the contents of which may be seen in the enclosed note, I am giving a part to you so that you may know how things are in the Religion. However, do not stop following the Institute with joy, and stay united and in peace, hopeful that our Blessed God may set all things right. This is what comes to mind [EP 4342].

Perform acts of repentance, of faith, of hope and charity is what Calasanz tells us to do during the last moments of our lives.

There are those who sit up with the dying and encourage them to perform acts of repentance, of faith, of hope and of charity [CC 64].


e. Let us examine our real behaviour so that we can understand where it
comes from

If prayer comes from the actions of the Holy Spirit, which strikes us so that we see the human behaviour that it gives us, examining our consciences looks at our real behaviour so that we can see the source of our thoughts, words and actions. Examining our conscience means that we work like the Holy Spirit, to touch the loving Presence, which we have perhaps set free in our daily behaviour. *Twice a day analyse your thoughts, words and deeds [CC 46].*

Our Constitutions tell us: *Our whole lives will become an act of worship if we, by all accepting the hand of the heavenly Father in an act of faith, constantly keep ourselves united with Christ who mediates. It will be possible for us to remain faithful to this way of life if our consciences are always vigilant and if, in private and together, we examine our actions [C 48].*

Further ahead I shall speak about how to examine our consciences, but here I wish to underline that it is a fundamental part of prayer.

**What is the source of our real behaviour? Where have we looked in order to act?**

We are vessels for the *good feelings that the Spirit suggests* and we are vessels for the *bad feelings that come* when we repel the voice of the Spirit.

– **We must search for the source of our thoughts:** Do they come from our *own judgments* [EP 3721], that is, from a complete way of thought which is detached from the way the Spirit thinks? Or do they come from our *own will*, that is, from our *will which is united with our passions or imperfections*? [EP 3402]. Or *is their source to be found in looking at the object of thought through imagination or thoughts; is their source the nonsense which goes through your imagination from morning to evening, or is their source your looking at God [EP 912], from the suggestions of the Spirit, from our deep conscience.*

**Our words:** Do they arise from passionate conversations, *from gossip or idle talk* or do they come from *conversing with the inner being* [Cu 949].

*It is said that the language of God is found when amongst religious they speak of mortification, humility, observing the Rules, contempt for worldly vanities. Thus it is said that the language of the devil is that which speaks of relaxation, pastimes, pleasures, self-esteem, in Calasanz self-esteem*
comes when you do not recognise what you have received, quarrels, gossip and justifying one’s mistakes. Where the first language is present, God reigns and where there is the second, it is the devil who is in control [EP 196].

We should not gossip, either about those within the house, not about those outside. Avoid disrespect for people [CC 168].

– **Our deeds:** Do these come from our passionate sentiments which we feel strongly but which do not enlighten us? Calasanz tells us: Do not abandon yourselves to passionate sentiments which, in the guise of good, will deceive you [EP 2394]. Deeds of Pride, which come from Pride, obstruct that grace which we should seek with great humility [EP 2445]. Do they come from our own judgments? Do they come from our own will? Do they come from the action of the Spirit? Calasanz tells us: Do those deeds that the Spirit suggests [CC 48]. Do they come from our deep conscience?

– Calasanz asks us to be simple, like small children. Simplicity means staying alone in the company of God, from where we feel other people and love them.

Those who become able to keep themselves like two-year-old children, who, when not helped, frequently fall over, will always mistrust themselves and invoke God’s help. And this is what the words which are so misunderstood and less practised mean when they say: if you do not become like little children, you will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Learn how to do this and try to achieve this great simplicity because then you will find those words true when they say that God “confides only in the honest” [Prov. 3, 32]. May the Lord give this grace to you and all your companions, whom I ask you to greet on my behalf [EP 912].

**In all our actions we should be guided by conscience**

Calasanz tells us: God knows how sorry I am for Fr. ... who needs to have so many “subjects”, but even the laity have warned me about this, and so I think I should be disobeying my conscience were I not to act thus. He has constantly promised to mend his ways and to observe the rules, but he always falls back into his old ways [bad ones]; I have covered up much in the past, but we can no longer do so; but because I care for his good
reputation and honour as I do for my own, I wish to help him, as I did for Fr. ... and for others of the Scala [EP 173].

Our Constitutions tell us that: Our whole lives will become an act of worship if we, by all accepting the hand of the heavenly Father in an act of faith, constantly keep ourselves united with Christ who mediates. It will be possible for us to remain faithful to this way of life if our consciences are always vigilant and if, in private and together, we examine our actions [C 48].

**Draw up in writing a personal project**

The suggestions of the Spirit and examining our conscience are the right sources for our personal project. I shall indicate a way to do this in chapter III.

Our Rules say: The Superior should make sure that every religious draw up in writing his own Personal Project [Common Rules 60].

**Ask yourself:** Do you examine your conscience? How do you do this? When you look at your behaviour, do you see that you are in line or less in line with the actions of the Holy Spirit? How do you react to the events which happen in your life? What do you feel invited to do so that you may experience examining your conscience better? Do you draw up your Personal Project? What method do you use?

**f. The key to unity in life: actions come from contemplation and actions make visible that Presence, which loves to begin from the way we are**

A unified life comes from following the suggestions of the Spirit. The voice of God is the voice of the Spirit, which comes and goes, touches the heart and passes on, we do not know where it comes from nor when it will breathe upon us; therefore it is very important to stay vigilant, lest it come without warning and without harvest. When we act as the Spirit guides us, and we bear in mind our whole person and concrete situation, we make our merciful God the Father visible as we do good to poor abandoned children. If the Holy Church has given this grace [to be a Religious Order] to those of the general or specific ministry, of only active or only contemplative life, why should we deny those who have either one or other of the ministries, a mixed life, which is greater perfection? [MT 26]. In the active life we are working in the service of God, but without forgetting the contemplative one. In this way we conform to: by day the Lord gives us his grace and by night his song.
Act according to the advice of Saint David: so that by day the Lord gives his grace and by night his song [Psalm 41, 9]. The day must be spent in acts of mercy, and night in preparation for the next day [EP 1544].

Ask yourself: How do you live a unified life? Where is the source of your actions? What do you experience when the source of your actions is in your passions? What do you experience when their source is the action of the Holy Spirit?

Let us pray: We ask You, God of strength and mercy, to send us your Holy Spirit, so that, as it dwells within us, it makes of us temples of Your glory. By Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen [Prayer of the Calasanzian Community, p.2].

Conclusions

I underline the main point of this chapter.

For Calasanz, prayer regards the feelings because it consists in having a relationship with the Holy Spirit, which manifests itself in the form of groans that cannot be put into words, suggestions, consolation, impulses, touches the heart, shows the taste of the Spirit, converses with the inner man, through zeal, devotion, inner light and strength and special grace or feelings.

This means being humble in self-knowledge so that we can hear the breath of the Spirit. The content of prayer is what the Spirit suggests and this may happen in any situation.

Prayer is efficacious when there is a special time for prayer which allows us to discover the behaviour or actions that the voice of the Spirit requires of us. In this way we see the will of God. Thus the Spirit makes us human in a way that approaches the humanity of Christ our Master.

By examining our conscience we assist the action of the Holy Spirit which brings us nearer to Him in our daily lives.

In this way we achieve a unified Life: actions come from contemplation and our actions breathe the loving Presence. One might also say that our actions, practice, lead us to contemplation, or as St. Ignatius says: being contemplative in action. The loving Presence is concealed within every action.

Our Constitutions say: Thus, by constant adoration of the Father in spirit and in truth, through our Apostolic actions we most fruitfully contribute to the salvation of mankind [C 52]²⁸.
Notes to chapter I

1. The text by Calasanz tells us that we are ambassadors of Christ, as St. Paul writes.

   So we are ambassadors for Christ; it is as though God were urging you through us [2 Cor 5, 20].

2. When Calasanz speaks of closed doors, he is referring to the Gospel of St. Matthew.

   But when you pray, go to your private room, shut yourself in, and so pray to your Father who is in that secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you [Matt 6, 6].

   If anybody would like to read the letter [EP 3858] as Calasanz wrote it, this is it:

   God knows with what affection I desire that the Holy Spirit should continue to assist you, so that as you meet it behind closed doors at least once or twice a day, you will understand how to pilot the boat of its soul on the way to religious perfection, until you reach the port of eternal happiness, as this is the first and chief goal that each of us must work for. And if this goes well, all other goals will be successfully reached through the presence of God, even though they will appear in a different way when seen from the viewpoint of human prudence. On this occasion of many problems I should much like you to show great spirit as with patience you put up with everything for the love of God, to whom I shall especially pray that he give grace to do our best for our neighbour, with the talent for doing so that he has given. This is all I need for now. May the Lord bless all of us [EP 3858]. The addressee of the letter did not read it and it was returned to Calasanz, as our archive shows.

3. The text of n. 23 of Calasanz's Constitutions is so significant that I give the full version.

   We wish to strongly draw the attention of the Novice Master to one point, that is that he should look closely into all the inner inclinations and the way in which they follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit, which with inexpressible sighs teaches the humble to pray, so that he may make an effort to put each novice on the same way towards the summit of perfection [CC 23].

   The source of the suggestions of the Spirit is a place of peace.

   Here we see how Calasanz considers mankind. What does being a man mean to Calasanz?

   A Man is only the servant of God, whereas the others are men in name only [EP 1165].

   Man is the servant of God. Today we can say that being a man is to be a friend of God, as we bear in mind what St. John said: You are my friends, if you do what I command you. I shall no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know the master's business; I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father. You did not choose me, no, I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last; so that the Father will give you anything you ask him in my name. My command to you is to love one another [Jn 15, 14-17].

   What does being a servant of God mean? A great servant of God is he who does not get flustered nor moves from his tranquillity in moments of trouble, and even less so in those of prosperity, but who stays the same, which is to say, of the same being, without passion moving him from his place. This constancy is what wins the crown. Wherever passion shows its face, reason is troubled, and when it is troubled it is unable to judge freely [EP 2457]. Calasanz speaks of staying in a place of peace from where we can be the same, one same being.
A religious must listen neither to gossip nor idle words, but must always keep his inner strength composed so that, as he flees from worldly conversations, he is more careful of his conversations with the inner being, which is the true Presence of the Lord, and is the source, as from a spring, of all religious perfection [Cu 949]. In this text he well expresses that we are friends of God because God speaks to us.

At this point, as we are friends, we may ask what it means to be servants of God. The inner strengths of intelligence, freedom, will and memory must be composed, vigilant, at the service of, listening to the conversations of the inner being which is the true presence of the Lord, and it is there that we become the spring, and are able to love all people. All this happens in a place of peace which we discover is within our hearts, our God is dear to us.

I allow myself to adapt a poem by St. Teresa. Everyone may read it with his/her own name.

Luis, you were created for love / splendid, beautiful and like that / painted inside of me, /if you get lost ,my beloved son

Luis, you’ll have to look for yourself in Me and look for Me in you

Because you are my room, / you are my house and my dwelling, / and so I may call at any time, / I find in your thoughts / that the door is closed.

In n. 23 of Calasanz’s Constitutions there are many different kinds of reality:

The Spirit is following us

I see an exact connection between the Calasanzian expression, the Spirit is teaching [CC 23] and the words of St. John on the teaching of the Spirit. From our inner selves, the Spirit teaches us what the Lord experienced in our human form, so that it becomes evident in our behaviour.

Anyone who loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him and make a home in him. Anyone who does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not my own: it is the word of the Father who sent me. I have said these things to you while still with you; but the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you [Jn 14, 23-26].

But as for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you; since the anointing he gave you teaches you everything, and since it is true, not false, remain in him just as he has taught you [1 Jn 2, 27].

This way of speech means that there is no difficulty in communicating with each other or teaching each other. If we speak and act from the same spring, we shall understand each other more easily and do what the Spirit suggests together.

The Spirit is the only thing that knows God intimately.

Only the Spirit knows God intimately. When we follow the stimulus of the Spirit we are following God himself.

St. Paul tells us that nobody knows God except the Spirit of God. We received the Spirit of God to know the grace which he gives us. The Spirit is the mind of the Lord.

But it is as scripture says: What no eye has seen and no ear has heard, what the mind of man cannot visualise; all that God has prepared for those who love him; to us, though, God has given
revelation through the Spirit, for the Spirit explores the depths of everything, even the depths of God. After all, is there anyone who knows the qualities of anyone except his own spirit, within him; and in the same way, nobody knows the qualities of God except the Spirit of God. Now, the Spirit we have received is not the spirit of the world but God’s own Spirit, so that we may understand the lavish gifts God has given us. And these are what we speak of, not in the terms learnt from human philosophy, but in terms learnt from the Spirit, fitting spiritual language to spiritual things. The natural person has no room for the gifts of God’s Spirit; to him they are folly; he cannot recognise them, because their value can be assessed only in the Spirit. The spiritual person, on the other hand, can assess the value of everything, and that person’s value cannot be assessed by anybody else. For: who has ever known the mind of the Lord? Who has ever been his adviser? But we are those who have the mind of Christ [1 Cor 2, 9-16].

The Holy Spirit teaches us with groans that cannot be put into words.

The expression groans that cannot be put into words comes from St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans.

And as well as this, the Spirit too comes to help us in our weakness, for, when we do not know how to pray properly, then the Spirit personally makes our petitions for us in groans that cannot be put into words; and he who can see into all hearts knows what the Spirit means because the prayers that the Spirit makes for God’s holy people are always in accordance with the mind of God [Rom 8, 26-27].

Paul says that because of our weakness, because of our sin, we ask out of interest and do not know how to ask. It is the Spirit who comes in our aid, asking, in a way of speaking, through an utterance of the Spirit which asks something of us. If we peer into the heart (Calasanz uses the same expression in CC 23), if we are humble, if we abase ourselves so that we know ourselves, we may hear what the Holy Spirit asks of us.

The Spirit teaches us through petition. He himself tells us what to say or do.

Another text from St. John comes to mind here: Jesus started talking again and said: In all truth I tell you, by himself the Son can do nothing; he can do only what he sees the Father doing: and whatever the Father does the Son does too. For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he himself does, and he will show him even greater things than these, works that will astonish you. Thus, as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so the Son gives life to anyone he choose [Jn 5, 19-21].

On the other hand, when Calasanz tells us that we must place novices on the path indicated by the Holy Spirit, the words of St. John of the Cross about spiritual guidance may be of help.

These people who guide souls feel and consider that the principal agent and guide of the souls in question are not them, but rather the Holy Spirit, which never leaves them alone, and that they are only tools to be used to straighten them perfectly for the faith and the law of God, according to what the Spirit of God gives to each. Thus all their care is spent not in sinking to their own ways and means, but looking to see if they know where God is leading them; and if they do not know, leave them there undisturbed [The Living Flame of Love, 3.36].

According to Fr. André Rochais, an educator must have that deep vision which is able to awaken the
Life of the Spirit:

An educator is a person who is able to see the positive aspects of every person and his stimuli for improve. Look for long at every person until that deep vision which is capable of calling Life, so that none is lost, is awoken in you [Special message of PRH on André Rochais].

4. The Gospel of St. Matthew tells us that the talents of the Lord must not be hidden for fear

'It is like a man about to go abroad who summoned his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to a third one, each in proportion to his ability. The man who had received the five talents promptly went and traded with them and made five more. The man who had received two made two more in the same way. But the man who had received one went off and dug a hole in the ground... Last came forward the man who had the single talent. And said... I was afraid, and I went off and hid your talent in the ground [Matt 25, 14-30].

Calasanz tells us: There should be nobody who has hidden his talent [EP 3027].

It is important that in religion people should not do as that servant who had one talent and he hid it; but I want them to be like the servant who had two talents and gained another two, and was rewarded by being made lord of two cities. The more talents you acquire so that you may have one to help your neighbour, for love of God, the more you are like God, of greater merit in this life and with greater reward in the next [EP 4453].

Since amongst the working clergy there are, by the grace of God, some who are active and suitable to receive sacred orders, so that it does not seem that we are rejecting divine grace if we hide the talents of the Lord and deprive our religion of this increase of priests which it so greatly needs... the Fr. General will be given the power to promote them at the right time if he finds them suitable [Fr. Giner, p. 868].

Try to use that term with each, and make sure that all perform that work for which they have a talent; for a person cannot easily do work for which he has no talent and it is best to know the inclinations of each and every one; when they can be persuaded to do their tasks with loving kindness, this is much better than giving orders [EP 1226].

And since there are many who do things badly, let’s decide that we shall do things well. And if they take away life and sustenance, we shall give spiritual life and sustenance to youngsters [EP 1723].

5. The Superior of a community lives his priestly ministry. In this way we can live and share in the priesthood of the Lord

By the body of the Lord, we exhort and pray all Ministers to remember that they are in the place of that Lord who, although he was rich, made himself poor so as to enrich his children, and he suffered hunger and thirst, heat and cold, tiredness, suffered also flagellation, thorns, nails and a lance, and in his extreme hour of need wished his thirst to be slaked with gall and vinegar, while for others he changed water into wine, and finally he wanted to die naked on the tree of the Cross. Then, wanting to imitate him by carrying for a short while his holy Cross, the humble disciple of the Apostle [Heraclius] cast off his regal clothing of self-love, and, barefoot, as a good example in everything, dressed himself from head to foot in the Mantle of sacred Charity, which enabled him to admirably fulfil that splendid saying of the Apostle: Charitas non quaerit quae sua sunt. Similarly
good shepherds to the Lord’s flock must firstly look after the spiritual and bodily needs of the sheep with which they have been entrusted, so that they remain quiet and calm and perform the work of God joyfully. For this reason they have abandoned their homes and the comforts thereof, and what is more, their freedom, which, with the power and authority given to them by the Lord above them, they must, in this too, imitate the Lord himself, who is the power given unto them by the Eternal Father, above all creatures, who uses it for our benefit and not for his own [Exhortation of our Holy Father to the Superiors RC 13, 47].

6. In *Pastori dabo vobis* John Paul I describes the vocation and mission of priesthood in a way which is very similar to that which Calasanz uses when speaking of ministers of the communities. Let us see

**Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, His Body.**

Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, His Body. He is “Head” in the new and original meaning of being a “servant”, according to his own words: For the Son of man himself came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mk 10, 45), [n. 21].

The spiritual life of the ministers in the New Testament must be distinctive, thus there is this essential attitude for serving the People of God, which is far from any feeling of presumption or any desire to “lord it over” the entrusted flock [n. 21].

**Jesus Christ is the good shepherd**

The image of Jesus Christ as the shepherd of the Church, his flock, returns with new and evocative nuances; those in the image of Jesus Christ, Head and Servant. Jesus presents himself to us as “the good shepherd”. He feels compassion for people when they are tired or downtrodden, like sheep without a shepherd. He looks for those who are missing or lost and is overjoyed when he finds them; he gathers them to him and defends them, knows who they are and calls them one by one; he leads them to new pastures and calm waters; he prepares a table for them, and nourishes them with his own life [n. 22].

**Jesus Christ loves us with pastoral charity.**

Because of his consecration, the clergy are shaped as Jesus the Good Shepherd and are called to imitate His pastoral charity [n. 22].

The inner principle, the virtue which moves and guides the spiritual life of a clergyman, in so far as he is in the image of Christ, Head and Shepherd, is pastoral Charity, which shares in the same pastoral Charity of Jesus Christ. It is a gift of the Holy Spirit and at the same time a duty of and call to the responsible and free response of the clergyman [n. 23].

The essential aspect of pastoral charity is giving of oneself, the total consecration of oneself to the Church, in which we share the gift of Christ and are also his image. Pastoral charity is that virtue in which we imitate Christ as he gives Himself and in His service. This is not only a matter of what we do, but of the giving of our whole selves, as we show the love of Christ for His flock. Pastoral Charity shapes the way we think and act, our behaviour towards people. It is especially important for us [n. 23].

The Gospel of St. John has something to say about the Good Shepherd.

So Jesus spoke to them again: In all truth I tell you, I am the gate of the sheepfold. All who have come
before me are thieves and bandits, but the sheep took no notice of them. I am the gate. Anyone who enters through me will be safe: such a one will go in and out and will find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full.

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. The hired man, since he is not the shepherd and the sheep do not belong to him, abandons the sheep as soon as he sees a wolf coming, and runs away, and then the wolf attacks and scatters the sheep; he runs away because he is only a hired man and has no concern for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep. And there are other sheep I have that are not of this fold, and I must lead these too. They too will listen to my voice, and there will be only one flock, one shepherd. The Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me; I lay it down of my own free will, and as I have power to lay it down, so I have power to take it up again; and this is the command I have received from my Father [Jn 10, 7-18].

St Luke’s Gospel tells us that we must look for the lost sheep.

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.” So he told them this parable:

“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbours, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.’ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance [Lk 15, 1-7].

One of Calasanz’s fundamental aims is to get to like studying the problems of children.

As far as Fr. Antonio Maria is concerned, I am much consoled that he shall be examined and approved for confession and I shall be pleased for him to work on studying the problems which young people usually have, for this is our main ministry [EP 557].

Try to behave in a way that you keep the peace and unity in that house, and that all are given tasks according to their talents, and that the priests meet at least three times a week for a matter of conscience, during the afternoon recreation period, so that they are all fit for confession [EP 1008].

7. According to St. Luke, St. Paul and the documents of the Church, what is evangelising through education?

Chapter 4 of the Gospel of St. Luke tells us and Calasanz quotes it.

Jesus allows himself to be guided by the strength of the Holy Spirit and it is the Spirit itself which makes him say that he was anointed by the Father to evangelise the poor, by liberating them and curing them, in a permanent way. Today this scripture becomes real through us, we might say through all Piarists. Today we can see what Jesus said in our vocation. I quote the complete text so that we do not have to look for it in the Bible.

And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and a report concerning him went out through all the surrounding country. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.
And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and he went to the synagogue, as his custom was, on the Sabbath day. And he stood up to read; and there was given to him the book of the prophet Isaiah. He opened the book and found the place where it was written, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” [Lk 4, 14-21].

In his letter to the Romans, St. Paul tells us:

Evangelising is the strength of God, and in the same letter he tells us that the power of God is the Holy Spirit. In the eighth chapter of the letter to the Romans, St. Paul himself expresses what the Holy Spirit does when it inhabits a human being. We evangelise through education when we help children and young people identify the actions of the Holy Spirit in their lives. This is the real aim of our pastoral and educational activities. Our prayer is directly related to our mission.

For I am not ashamed of the Gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek [Rom 1, 16]. May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope [Rom 15, 13].

Vatican II speaks forcefully about the mission of priests.

The Holy Spirit leads every one of the faithful to look after his own vocation but at the same time to understand what the real situation needs and what the will of God is. All that we are is at the service of our neighbour.

Priests therefore, as educators in the faith, must see to it either by themselves or through others that the faithful are led individually in the Holy Spirit to a development of their own vocation according to the Gospel, to a sincere and practical charity, and to that freedom with which Christ has made us free. Ceremonies however beautiful, or associations however flourishing, will be of little value if they are not directed toward the education of men to Christian maturity. In furthering this, priests should help men to see what is required and what is God’s will in the important and unimportant events of life. Also, Christians should be taught that they live not only for themselves, but, according to the demands of the new law of charity; as every man has received grace, he must administer the same to others. In this way, all will discharge in a Christian manner their duties in the community of men [Vatican II: Presbyterorum Ordinis 6].

In Pastores dabo vobis, John Paul II describes what the task of educating entails.

From the way he writes, it seems he has read Calasanz. We have to help every person to discover the way in which God himself touches his heart, to help him to accept the gift given to him and to listen to the words that the Spirit of God addresses to him, so that his vocation will appear before him. This is where we must stress the vocational pastoral: through the personal guidance of every youngster who lives in our institutes, or who attends our non-formal education groups, or who assists and celebrates the life of God in our parishes. This is the secret of our pastoral.

In carrying out her educational role, the Church aims with special concern at developing in children, adolescents and young men a desire and a will to follow Jesus Christ in a total and attractive way. This educational work, while addressed to the Christian community as such, must also be aimed at the individual person: Indeed, God with his call reaches the call of each
individual, and the Spirit, who abides deep within each disciple (cf. 1 Jn. 3, 24), gives himself to each Christian with different charisms and special signs. Each one, therefore, must be helped to embrace the gift entrusted to him as a completely unique person, and to hear the words which the Spirit of God personally addresses to him.

From this point of view, the pastoral work of promoting vocations to the priesthood will also be able to find expression in a firm and encouraging invitation to spiritual direction. It is necessary to rediscover the great tradition of personal spiritual guidance which has always brought great and precious fruits to the Church’s life. In certain cases and under precise conditions this work can be assisted, but not replaced, by forms of analysis or psychological help. Children, adolescents and young men are invited to discover and appreciate the gift of spiritual direction, to look for it and experience it, and to ask for it with trusting insistence from those who are their educators in the faith. Priests, for their part, should be the first to devote time and energies to this work of education and personal spiritual guidance: They will never regret having neglected or put in second place so many other things which are themselves good and useful, if this proved necessary for them to be faithful to their ministry as cooperators of the Spirit in enlightening and guiding those who have been called.

Finalidad de la educación del cristiano es llegar, bajo el influjo del Espíritu, a la plena madurez de Cristo (Ef. 4, 13), [PDV n. 40].

The aim of education for a Christian is to attain the “stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4, 13), [PDV n. 40].

The document of the Catholic Schools says

That the mysterious action of the Spirit acts within every human being, and this is why Catholic schools are also intended for non Christians. I am very pleased that Calasanz speaks of inner talents and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Why should we not speak of this also to those who do not believe, through a universal language whose departure point is the harvest of the Holy Spirit in those very people. By so doing, we should be addressing ourselves to the real Presence of the Lord.

In any case, the validity of the results of an education in Catholic Schools should not be measured in terms of immediate effects: in Christian education, as well as the freedom of the educator and that of the pupil is a relationship which is a dialogue, one must take into account the way in which they must also measure the results of another factor, that of “grace”. The fruits of freedom and grace mature according to the rhythms of the spirit and these are not measurable in temporal terms. As it enters human freedom, grace is able to guide it to fulfilment, up to the point where it leads it to the freedom of the Spirit.

By assisting this specific liberating force in an explicit and knowledgeable way, Catholic Schools see themselves as a Christian ferment for the world [La Scuola Cattolica, n. 84].

Certain that in every man the Spirit works in a mysterious way, Catholic Schools offer their particular educational plan with means that are special to them, even to non-Christians, as they recognise, conserve and commit themselves to encourage the spiritual and moral good and socio-cultural values which are proper to different civilisations [La Scuola Cattolica, n. 85].

In the letter to the Romans, St. Paul tells us:

When Gentiles who have not the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or
perhaps excuse them [Rm 2, 14-15].

Paul VI’s Encyclical: *Evangelii Nuntiandi*

This tells us that without the Holy Spirit, even the most convincing arguments are are unable to move a human being.

Techniques of evangelization are good, but even the most advanced ones could not replace the gentle action of the Spirit. The most perfect preparation of the evangelizer has no effect without the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit the most convincing dialectic has no power over the heart of man. Without Him the most highly developed schemas resting on a sociological or psychological basis are quickly seen to be quite valueless [EN n. 75].

8. The way in which Calasanz speaks of the common life of Piarists is the same experienced in the ecclesial life of the Body of the Lord, as St. Paul says

The logic of the people of God is the Body of the Lord. It is the community which makes the Lord, who is within it, visible. I quote the whole text, so that you do not have to look in your Bibles, and print certain expressions in bold.

For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; he who teaches, in his teaching; he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who contributes, in liberality; he who gives aid, with zeal; he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness [Rom 12, 4-8].

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body –Jews or Greeks, slaves or free– and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell?

But as it is, God arranged the organs in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single organ, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.”
This is the paragraph quoted by Calasanz.

On the contrary, the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those parts of the body which we think less honourable we invest with the greater honour; and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior part, that there may be no discord in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together.

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed you in the Church. [1 Cor 12, 4-28].

9. When he speaks of Charity, Calasanz quotes St. Paul in his writings, Charity is humble, and it makes the ways of Christ our Master visible

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends; [1 Cor 13, 1 8].

10. The document of the Chapter speaks about the training and studies of Piarists

The Calasanzian motto “Piety and Word” points out that the life of the Piarist revolves in the harmonious conjunction of the spiritual experience and study. “Harmonize –writes Calasanz– the study with the fire of piety so that both be at their mutual service”. The “mixed” life, of contemplation and action, as our Founder saw the Piarist life, implies a healthy balance between both dimensions; here, between prayer and study. Furthermore, this balance leads to an interrelation of both realities: the study finds motivation and strength in prayer to overcome the difficulties and prayer finds life experience, realism and an experiential sense in study. When in this Directory, as in the fundamental Documents of the Order, we speak about study, we’re not referring to an intellectualism detached from life, or idealistic, but to the better resources and accessibility of the intelligence God has put in each one, as the evangelical “talent” to develop [PFE 125].

Formation and education are two bonded realities. Thinking, however in the shaping of the person, priority attention will be drawn towards the training process, which does not always flow side by side with the curricular development of studies [PFE 128].

In his intellectual formation, the Piarist integrates two realities of his being and mission: teacher and pastor [PFE 130].

The Piarist shows himself to be a lover of culture and knowledge, a servant of the truth and moved by solidarity when it comes to transmitting and sharing his knowledge on behalf of others. His culture and knowledge will not be used for his own interests, nor for self-exaltation, not for self-assurance, or for ambition. He loves culture as one who is a “co-operator with truth”, having a humble and gracious attitude [PFE 155].
As far as this subject is concerned, I should like to underline that Calasanz speaks of *piety and learning / letters*, [CC 2], *Christian piety and human learning* [CC 203], *learning and a spiritual way of life* [EP 688], *learning and good habits* [EP 1442 and 4232]. In the Letter to Cardinal Tonti he uses these words: *learning and the spirit, good habits and manners, the light of God and of the world*, [M 9] in a context which is to be *put into practice, full of charity in the Church, an efficacious preventive and curative remedy for evil, a source and enlightener of good* [M 9].

11. One may state that the whole of chapter 8 of the letter of St. Paul to the Romans and the parallel of the letter to the Galatians, is Calasanzian.

Please note the action of the Holy Spirit. For St. Paul, *the flesh* is the whole human being when it is invested with the Spirit, which inhabits its heart, and it allows itself to be led away from cupidity.

**The Holy Spirit dwells within every human being. What does it do?**

**The Spirit frees us from sin and from death as it gives us life in Jesus Christ.**

*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death* [Rom 8, 1-2].

**The Spirit frees us from sin and from death as it dwells within every person.**

*But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you.*

*For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live* [Rom 8, 9-11.13].

**The action of the Spirit makes us children of God, like Jesus.**

*For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him* [Rom 8, 14-17].

**The Spirit makes us aware of what He is doing within us or what he encourages us to do.**

Only the Spirit allows us to know God. Spiritual life means being aware of what the Spirit does so that we act because of this. According to St. Paul, prayer means praying to ask for what the Spirit suggests. The Spirit teaches and we need a time for prayer in order to understand the behaviour or the actions it suggests.

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness: for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God [Rom 8, 26-27], [Course on St. Paul, by Fr. Gustavo Baena, S.J., at the Javeriana University in Bogotá, Colombia, 1994].

We may continue by reading the whole of chapter 8 of the letter to the Romans:
God is never against us, but always on our side. The world suffers the pains of childbirth because it wants the children of God to appear. Nothing and nobody can separate us from the love of God, if we receive that Love.

St. Paul says that God’s only resource is Love and we can find each other in the same way, in any situation.

And hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us [Rom 5, 5].

In his letter to the Galatians, St. Paul adds:

For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” But if you bite and devour one another take heed that you are not consumed by one another.

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would. But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law.

Now the works of the flesh are plain: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. 26 Let us have no self-conceit, no provoking of one another, no envy of one another [Gal 5, 13-25].

The expression used by Calasanz on “animal man”.

He quotes St. Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, where he speaks of an unspiritual man who cannot feel the action of the Spirit. Only the Spirit can allow Himself to be discerned, through sensations which are the vessels of His action.

The unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned [I Cor 2, 14].

As far as Fr... is concerned, if he does not become spiritual, he will end up like the animals, for sensual men, which St. Paul calls animals, are unable to discern those things which belong to the Spirit of God [EP 2581].

Calasanz also speaks of animals in a positive manner. He is amazed at the way the asses he uses for transport behave. He says: Let yourselves be led like an ass [EP 2300], let yourselves be taken and brought back by Providence by means of your Superiors; like the ass that Christ rode upon on the day of the Palms, which allowed itself to be guided and led everywhere [CC 108]. He speaks to us of man’s obedience to the voice of the Spirit.

For Calasanz the necessities of the body must be provided for. We must also bear in mind the
strength of the body when we decide upon something.

He speaks of the senses in an orderly way. In other words: *We eat to stay fit and so we can serve; we sleep to rest and help our neighbour; we can see in order to understand the needs of our neighbour; we look so we can see goodness in people; things please us so that we may share them.* The senses express our devotion to others. When he speaks of disorderly senses, what is always in the background is *insatiable cupidity.* A person may decide to use his senses by letting himself be carried away by cupidity. It is then that the senses are used inadequately.

On the other hand, use the natural senses to tell us that the Spirit becomes flesh: *The desires of the Spirit, the Spirit touches the heart, God likes speaking to us.* With its senses, the body, the flesh may become spiritual: we try to *look at God* and through his eyes see reality as a whole, we try to be on guard so that we *hear the voice of the Spirit, which touches our hearts,* and allows us to touch the hearts of all mankind. We try to *rejoice in the way God is and people are.* As St. Teresa says, here we may also remain with a *desire for our own desires* instead of doing the work which the Spirit tells us to do.

All the phrases in italic script may be found in this book.

12. According to Fr. Asiain, in his book *Claves de discernimiento para la vida escolapia en San José de Calasanz,* on page 112 he says that: Calasanz read the book by Fr. Antonio Cordeses “Itinerario de la perfección cristiana”, where he explains the practice of affective prayer

I have not been able to find or read a copy of Fr. Antonio Cordeses’s Treatise. However, we know that Calasanz did read St. Teresa’s *Way of Perfection,* in which she explains how affective prayer is also efficient prayer.

13. Concerning the voice of the Spirit which comes and which goes, touches the heart and passes on, without our knowing from where it comes or when it will blow…

This text regards the meeting of the Master with Nicodemus, The Spirit is the source of new things within us whatever our age may be.

Jesus answered [Nicodemus], “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God”. Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born anew’. The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit” [Jn 3, 3-8].

In his book of the Confessions, St. Augustine says: *You were with me but I was not with You.* A human being may experience the most beautiful Relationship in the world. *You were within and I was without.* Being within means living by beginning with the Presence which dwells within us, the Relationship which frees us from our cupidity. Being without means living with cupidity as a basis. *It was late when I loved you, O beauty so old and so new, it was late when I loved you. Now you are the Life of my life* [I quote from memory].

*The Word of God is the Word of the Spirit, which comes and goes and touches the heart.*
In the opinion of Calasanz, the heart is the place where the Spirit acts. He also speaks of a place of peace in the human being. Passions may hide themselves within a person, but not in the heart.

When the Bible speaks to us of the heart, it refers to a person’s inner being. In a person’s heart there dwell the Spirit and also sin; we think and we feel with the heart. In the Bible, sentiments are the fruit of the action of the Spirit and are to be found within. The sentiments of Christ, such as compassion [the pain Jesus feels for the pain of people] and mercy [the actions born of that stimulus], are felt by Him as inner feelings. They are expressions of love, of our loving God. That place of peace which we feel in our very bowels must be where the real heart is.

The expression: The Spirit touches the heart, comes from the Holy Fathers. André Louf says:

You are born again, not from corruptible seed but from incorruptible: the living Word of God which continues throughout eternity. The place of this birth, in which the Word can generate, is the heart. The grace which comes with baptism becomes real when a Word of God communicates with our heart for the first time. To describe this experience, the Holy Fathers used a very rich vocabulary: The Word of God touches our heart, wounds it, pricks it, stabs it, runs it through and opens it. [Louf André. El Espíritu ora en nostro. Ed Narcea].

The Eastern Catholic monks have a simple way in which they describe how the Holy Spirit speaks in our hearts: It is interesting to note how in Greek the word meditation is “prosoché” and prayer is “proseuché”.

Eastern monks express themselves very simply, the Holy Spirit speaks within the heart and man listens with his heart. How does he listen? His heart hears, or rather receives some sort of general intuition which involves all human faculties [Spíldik, Tomas, El Camino del Espíritu. Retiros al papa Juan Pablo II, Ed. PPC, p. 54].

Fr. André Rochais, the founder of Human Personality and Relations, tells us how the Spirit acts.

The Spirit acts through inner movement, which is perceptible, in the intimate being, in the form of inner psychological sensations. The word “psychological” is used here to distinguish these sensations from those which are purely physiological. In this context “psychological” is not the opposite of spiritual. Rather, God acts within us and we feel this through sensations of a psychological kind. Therefore we must catch any sensations which may “contain” an action of the Spirit. We must be on guard for the sensations which dwell within us and stay where the Spirit shows itself in us, that is in our deepest beings. If we decipher those sensations so that we learn something new about ourselves and progress on our way towards growth, we assist the actions of the Spirit. Even if the Spirit may break into ourselves [strong inner illumination, inner speech] His usual method when He presents Himself is to “call” through means of the sensations which are there, and he waits at the door until the cerebral-I “opens”, or deciphers those sensations [Rochais, André, El método del grupo de crecimiento, Madrid, 1981].

St. John of the Cross uses his poetry to tell us:

How well I know that source which springs and flows even when it is night.

In the happy night, / In secret, when none saw me, / Nor I beheld aught, / Without light or guide, / save that which burned in my heart. / This light guided me / More surely than the light of noonday / To the place where he / (well I knew who)/ was awaiting me / A place where none appeared. We let
ourselves be transported by the light and guide which kindles in our hearts. This light is more secure than that of the sun at midday. This Presence is so detached from itself that it is to be found in a place where nobody seems to be.

14. The Spirit, divested of Himself, gives us what He receives from the Father and from the Son. The Gospel of St John says

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you [Jn 16, 13-15].

15. On Apostolic life according to the Gospel of St. Mark

And he called to him the twelve, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics [Mk 6, 7-9].

16. As long as we have food and clothing we shall be happy. This is quoted from St. Paul in his letter to Timothy

There is great gain in godliness with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world; but if we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced their hearts with many pangs [I Tim 6, 6-10].

17. The Spirit teaches us in any situation. Remember what Jesus says about the help of the Holy Spirit

You will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear testimony before them and the Gentiles. When they deliver you up, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you [Matt 10, 18-20].

Nota 18. St. Teresa says that prayer must give rise to works

Oh, my sisters, how forgetful of her ease, how unmindful of honours, and how far from seeking men’s esteem should she be whose soul God thus chooses for His special dwelling-place! For if her mind is fixed on Him, as it ought to be, she must needs forget herself: all her thoughts are bent on how to please Him better and when and how she can show the love she bears Him. This is the end and aim of prayer, my daughters; this is the reason of the spiritual marriage whose children are always good works.

Works are the unmistakable sign which shows these favours come from God, as I told you. It will do me little good to be deeply recollected when alone, making acts of the virtues, planning and promising to do wonders in God’s service, if afterwards, when occasion offers, I do just the opposite.

I did wrong in saying, ‘It will do me little good,’ for all the time we spend with God does us great good. Though afterwards we may weakly fail to perform our good intentions, yet some time or other His Majesty will find a way for us to practise them… I ought to have said, ‘will do us little good’ in
comparison with the far greater good we can gain when our works fulfil our aspirations and our promises. She that cannot do all this at once should do it little by little ... Remember, this is of far more importance than I know how to express. Fix your eyes on the Crucified One, and all will seem easy. If His Majesty proved His love for us by such stupendous labours and sufferings, how can you seek to please Him by words alone? [“The Interior Castle” ch. 4, 9-11].

Calasanz tells us that our union with Christ must beget Works:

The Lord, who has not chosen to give [a religious] bodily children, has been pleased to give him many spiritual children, who will be the good works that will be born from the spiritual marriage of his soul with the spouse, Jesus Christ, which will be blessed with divine grace. In these works he will make sure of frequent celebrations of the holy sacraments and readings of spiritual texts, and shall, because of love for his spouse, take no alms from any poor person whom he knows to be needy, and will continue to pray for me, who, because of my great age of 84, cannot tire myself [EP 3987].

What I am writing, even though not sent because of holy obedience, should be put into practice as if it were the Word of God, which has come from a Superior [EP 2581]. This is the point of a text which ends thus: He should not have been allowed to wear the habit, as he was a native of Bologna and had travelled around various places in Italy, because it is better for us to have youngsters who have learned in our schools, whose good or bad talents can be seen by us, whether they are intelligent or not, and who, by educating them well, give good results [EP 2581].

Saint John of the Cross says it is from within that we are sent to be silent and to work

Not having written was not because of not wanting to, for I desire all good for you, but because I think it has already been said that what is important is work; what is missing, if anything is missing, is not writing or speaking, because we have enough of these, but silence and working. Because, moreover, speaking is a distraction, while silence and work composes and strengthens the spirit. And thus, when a person has listened to what has been said for his benefit, he has no need to hear or speak any more, but to do real work, in silence and with care, in humility, charity and self-abnegation; and has no need to seek then for novelties, which serve only for satisfaction and leave the spirit tired and empty of any inner virtue... Daughters, it happens that a soul who is quick to speak and seek relationships is not very ready for God. This is because when the soul is ready, it is strongly commanded from with to keep silent... [To Mother Ann of Jesus and the Community of Granada, in: la Hendidura de la Roca. Variaciones sobre el Cantar de los Cantares, de Dolores Aleixandre. Ed. PPC 2010, p. 33-34].

Therefore, he who seeks God in a way which suits himself and at rest, seeks him at night and does not find Him, but he who seeks Him through the exercise and works of virtue, leaving in bed his own preferences and pleasures, this person seeks Him by day and will find Him; because that which we do not find by night appears during the day. [Cántico III, 2 and 3. Quoted in Dolores Aleixandre, pp. 20-21]

19. In his letter to the Philippians, St. Paul says

For God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure [Phil 2, 13].

In the Gospel of St. John, Jesus says:

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine,
neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing [Jn 15, 4-5].

20. It would be useful to have a notebook of prayer in which we annotate the touch of the Holy Spirit and the following human actions which we have seen. Thus we should be able to see where the Spirit leads us. This is what we find in the letters of Calasanz.

21. It is useful for us to see how St. Paul moves from the affective to the practical

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ’s sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. Our hope for you is unshaken; for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort [2 Cor 1, 3-7].

22. For St. Paul, performing an act of humility is to recognise all that I am and have has been given

So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth [1 Cor 3, 7].

Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God, who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not in a written code but in the Spirit; for the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life [2 Cor 3, 4-6].

23. In his letter to the Romans, St. Paul speaks of sin and says: we have been ungrateful to God

What can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them... for although they knew God they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened... they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator... foolish, faithless, heartless [Rom 1, 18-32].

24. The inner man is an expression used by St. Paul in his letter to the Corinthians

The outer person is cosmic and prone to avidity. We cannot force ourselves to search for that which the Spirit gives us from within in order to make reality human. A person who is born from within renews himself day by day because he is born of the Spirit.

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison [2 Cor 4, 16-17].

The document of the Chapter on the formation and studies of a Piarist tells us that it is necessary to:

Cultivate the personal faculties of intelligence, freedom and will so that the candidates learn to read their inner self in a realistic way, knowing how to discern that which corresponds to their
deepest identity (inner inclination) and developing the capacity to choose freely that which will lead them to a practice of perfect charity [PFE 19].

25. Now, through the action of the Holy Spirit, we know Christ, who gives us our humanity, which is similar to His own, so that we may live it today.

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation [2 Cor 5, 16-18].

26. John Paul II, speaking to young people from around the world, at a meeting in the USA, spoke of allowing our deepest conscience to guide us in all our actions.

Do not stifle your conscience! Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a man. There he is alone with God [Vatican II, Gaudium et Spes, n. 16]

In the deepest part of his conscience, mankind discovers that there is a law which he has not made himself, but which, nevertheless, he has to obey. This is not an outer human law but is the voice of God, which calls us to free ourselves from the bonds of sin and which stimulates us to seek that which is good and true. Only by listening to this voice of God within us and by acting according to its dictates, shall be freely achieve that which we desire. As Jesus said, only the truth will make you free [1993].

27. The source of our acts is contemplation. St. Teresa tells us that Mary and Martha act together.

I understand that the soul wishes to do great things for the service of our Lord and our neighbour; and for this reason rejoices in the loss of that pleasure and contentment, that, even if life is more active than contemplative and seems that it will be lacking in something if this is not granted. When the soul is in this state, Martha and Mary always work hand in hand, because works are performed by the whole person, and when we perform our works from this starting point, they are admirable because they come from this tree of love for God and only for Him [Mansions, 7, 3].

The Plenaria of the Sacred Congregation for Religious and for Secular Institutes of 1980 issued a document on the Contemplative Dimension of Religious Life, which says:

Integration of activity and contemplation: What kind of “activity”? For religious, it is not a question of any and every kind of activity. The Council speaks of “apostolic and charitable activity” (PC 8), inspired and motivated by the Holy Spirit. This is the only form of activity that “is of the very nature of religious life” since a sacred ministry and a special work of charity have been consigned to the institutes by the Church and must be performed in her name.

The special characteristic of this activity is that it is inspired by the love nourished in the heart of the religious, considered as the most intimate sanctuary of the person where grace unifies interior life and activity.

It is necessary, then, to form a personal and communitarian awareness of the primary source of
apostolic and charitable activity, as a lived participation in that “mission” (of Christ and the Church) which begins with the Father (and) requires that those who are sent exercise their awareness of love in the dialogue of prayer” [CDRL 4].

28. From the chapter on The Voice of God and the voice of the Spirit which comes and goes in Fr. Asiain’s book: La Trinidad en Calasanz. Las Escuelas Pías hacia el nubile, I have gathered a series of letters from Calasanz in which he asks for help, enlightenment from and increase of the Holy Spirit within us

The Spirit assists, comforts, strengthens and enlightens us so that we may live according to the will of God.


With the sentiment of Christ, the Lord increases His divine Spirit in us so we may help our neighbour.

I shall pray that the Lord continually gives us more grace, for the improvement of the Institute [EP 4251]. I praise and give thanks to the Lord and implore Him to strengthen the Holy Spirit in you and in all the others [EP 4530]. May the Lord increase His gifts and grace, so that the splendour of His family and the Roman Church increases [EP 640]. May the Lord confirm them and make them grow in the spirit of the true founders of our Institute in that Province [EP 4257]. I much desire that they should continue to grow in devotion and that they do all their actions in unity and concord, because the Lord is much pleased when there concord reigns amongst the brethren [EP 1248].

The Spirit gives us a new spirit to help our neighbour; gives us His gifts and speaks to us through the simple. The Spirit gives God to everybody.

May God give you His Holy Spirit, with all the riches of His holy gifts [EP 1148]. May the Lord in His mercy fill us with this holy spirit of humility [EP 4544]. The Spirit often speaks through the mouths of simple people [EP 2581]. The Holy Spirit indicates His will through somebody [EP 3198]. May the Lord, with a new place, give everybody a new spirit, so that they become people who all help their neighbour greatly [EP 1485]. The Spirit is given by God to those he wants, which is to say, everyone [EP 2559]. [La Trinidad en Calasanz. pp. 33-55].

Spiritual life is a path for Calasanz: what opens the preference for the Spirit is also spiritual life and growth, because the touch of the Holy Spirit, as we have already said, gives light, tells us what to say or do, and gives us strength, that strength which will enlighten us. On the contrary, ideas also enlighten us but we have to make great efforts to put them into practice. Passionate sentiments are felt strongly, but instead of enlightening us they blind us. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit gives us freedom from sin, as
with its Presence it gives us the Life and Love of God. **We rely on His assistance**, so we are always in good company for doing good to our neighbour.

*May the Lord enlighten you so that you know the need and the strength you have to do what your good deeds require, not only for the benefit of your subjects in the House, but also for the benefit of the scholars and as a good example for lay people* [EP 424].

*As far as Fr... is concerned, I do not know where he wishes to go, but I have left him free to choose. The Lord will be pleased if he does not hide his talent* [EP 3707]. *In order to be worthy, our actions must be freely done. When one is in a place against his will, only to merit praise, then he is often at fault and sometimes loses the way* [EP 2429].

**St. Paul says:**

*Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit* [2 Cor 3, 17-18].

**Calasanz says:**

*I end by asking the Lord that he should increase in blessed love for God and for his neighbour* [EP 119].

**PRAYER IS HAPPENING**

*The voice of God is the voice of the Spirit, which comes and which goes, touches the heart and moves on, we know not whither it comes nor when it blows; therefore it is important to be ever vigilant, in case it comes without warning and moves on with no harvest* [EP 131].

The Spirit prays within us and we must assist Him so that we put his requests into practice. This chapter will deal with those obstacles to a life of prayer. In this matter, Calasanz follows St. Teresa’s *The Way of Perfection*²⁹. He also quotes St. John of the Cross and St. Augustine.

1. **We realise that prayer is happening if we examine and take care of our affections**

*You see, everything which is superfluous, in other words, every little longing for superfluous things, casts a shadow over the intellect and makes us lose that ability to pray mentally. A religious who does not know how to pray mentally is like a body without a soul* [EP 664]. Every kind of attachment³⁰ darkens the intelligence, because its centre is in the creature, in an
egocentric way. He will be well neither in body or spirit until he manages to dominate his senses when eating and drinking, which is the most serious way in which the devil tempts the religious. For if the devil wins in this matter, the rest will be easy, because he takes prayer away from them, which is the channel through which all grace reaches the soul [EP 1410]. If the intelligence is concentrated on the inclinations of the greedy senses, then it annuls prayer because intelligence must concentrate upon the inclinations of the Spirit, or on the senses which are freely open to the Spirit. The Spirit of God is so delicate that it is felt only by he who is most vigilant and has a purified soul which is detached from worldly matters, including itself [Annotations of Fr. Berro, T.I. p. 79]. From the stimuli of the Spirit come the gift of prayer, and where the Son of God communicates. Sensual people lose the gift of prayer, through which the Son of God and his merits communicate with the sober and modest [EP 2197].

Calasanz invites us to love creatures but not to attach ourselves to them

A gentleman of the Quirini family said how pleased he was about the Brief that we are about to receive which recognises our poverty, by which, even if by chance in any town or community whatsoever, somebody wishes to leave us an inheritance, it will be the community itself or a magistrate which will administer that inheritance, and will give us only that small amount which will be necessary for food and clothing, while the rest will be distributed elsewhere or in pious works. And I think that within a few days I shall ask our Lord, because this is what our General Chapter has decided. In this was there will be no suspicion that we might be looking for worldly goods, and, to tell the truth, those who are not satisfied with only those things which are necessary, will never be satisfied with those which are superfluous, because man’s cupidity is insatiable [EP 1750]. If we love God’s creatures, we shall know how to live with the bare necessities.

Ask yourself: Do you love things with an orderly love or, do you get too fond of them? Do you love people with an orderly love, or do you get too fond of them? Sometimes we experience all this together, in which case, which predominates? Do you give all of yourself for the Whole, as the Whole is given to all?

2. We realise that prayer is happening if we are simples
Simplicity asks us to look at all situations from the point of view of our relationship with God\textsuperscript{31}.

**We are simple when, with intelligence and our senses, we see the real Presence of the Lord hidden in our hearts. God is a child who looks at Others**

*If you consider the errors which go through your minds from morning to evening, even though you are always in the presence of God, you will see that you do not know how to walk a few steps without falling, that you have ceased to look upon God, in order to look upon the creature with your thought or imagination. Those who manage to achieve the ability to keep themselves like a two-year-old child, who, without help is always falling, will always doubt their own abilities and invoke the help of God. This is the meaning of that often misunderstood and less practised sentence: unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven [Matt 18, 3]. Learn how to do this so that you achieve this great simplicity, for then that other sentence which goes: he is friends with the simple, will happen [EP 912]. We may see all the world when we start from the most beautiful relationship in the world: his close friendship for the youngest and the most innocent. When we look upon God, we realise that God is not watching us while he is giving us His Love, which is to say, making us capable of loving. St John of the Cross says: looking at God is giving us His Love.*

*Holy simplicity is much loved by the Lord and he loves to communicate regularly with the really simple. Try to close your eyes to other imperfections and imagine you are only in the presence of God, and your scruples will not cause you trouble, nor will the absence of your brethren, for whom you must pray to the Lord fervently, and especially for those who are least observant [EP 862]. Staying simple is to remain alone in the presence of God. It is there that you experience your neighbour and you love him. This is looking at God in order to look at people and events as God sees them.*

**We are simple when we look at events with the eyes of God**

*We are simple when we accept all events, whether adverse or prosperous, from the Paternal hand of God\textsuperscript{32}. We must believe that God guides all things for His greater glory and for our good, even if we, who are weak and...*
ignorant of His ways, sometimes consider what is useful to be adverse and what is bad for us to be favourable. Let us then allow His Divine Majesty to guide the boat and let us accept from his holy hand all that may happen [M 47]. Take everything from the blessed hand of God, who loves us much more than we love ourselves, rather than from the hands of any who disturb the Institute. Please direct your intentions to following the paternal will of God [EP 4458]. The Father will be found where there is adversity and where there is prosperity, considering that the main cause of all our actions is God, our souls must accept with equanimity those things which are favourable or adverse [EP 3877]. The Father who loves us more than we love ourselves makes us stronger until we are able to love and do good in every situation. He is the first who suffers for all that happens to us. We shall accept everything from the hand of God, for the love of whom everything should seem easy for us, because when it is real, love makes all things easy [EP 800]. Make sure that the hearts of all are directed towards our blessed God so that his most holy will shall always be obeyed [EP 4422].

Our Constitutions say: Our whole life will become an act of worship, if, faithfully accepting all from the hand of God, we stay constantly in unity with the action of Christ the mediator [C 48].

Ask yourself: How do you see? Do you look at God and at the most beautiful relationship in the world? Do you see this and interact with the whole world? How do you accept life’s adverse or favourable events?

3. We realise that prayer is happening if we are humble

As we have already stated, humility asks us to lower ourselves and to know ourselves, so that God will lead us to know Himself, and he is only Love.

A good principle in spiritual life is that of knowing oneself and the misery into which we are born and also the ingratitude we have shown to God after having received so many benefits; and if with diligence we practice this, I can assure you that in this life you will know God in some way, and this is a science which is so great that a speck of this is greater than all human science, upon which mankind spends most and the best of his years, and in exchange that science makes those who have it inflated and proud. On the other hand, the knowledge of God blesses mankind as, little by little, after having reached a certain level of knowledge, this grows in divine love. I
pray that the first thing you do every day is to dedicate yourself to this study, after which, the Lord will give you all the other things which the world does not know. This will be of great comfort for me, but the benefit and the merit for you will be enormous. May the Lord allow this for a long time, as I hope for myself [EP 1339].

We are humble when we lower ourselves in order to know ourselves and we accept the truth as it is

Use much diligence when you introduce novices to the holy virtue of humility, so that as you do so they will be more able to practise mental prayer, which is the life of the soul [EP 1386]. I shall pray to the Lord, as I have done so before, that He may give, to you in particular, real illumination in order to know the truth of the invisible things which God keeps ready for those who imitate Him, follow Him in His Most Holy Passion and who by these means reach the state of knowledge and love for these things. God often gives this grace to the humble, as the Prophet says: He gives knowledge to children and the lower one abases himself in his own knowledge, God, who is greater, will lift him up in knowledge of invisible and eternal matters. May the Lord grant us complete harmony with His sacred will [EP 4392]. Please make sure you find help through a special prayer, particularly for the small children, so that the Lord will enlighten you to find the way of holy humility, which is the sure way, where there are many gifts and the grace of God is to be found, while all the rest is vanity and very exhausting [EP 979]. With the especial affection which I always have for him, I asked the Lord to make him His great servant an imitator, firstly inwardly with his sacred humility, where he will discover the mysteries which are “hidden... from the wise and understanding and revealed to babes” [Matt 11, 25], [EP 4521]34.

Ask yourself: Do you abase yourself in order to know yourself? Do you recognise yourself and accept yourself as you are? What difficulties do you find when you look at reality as it truly is? Since God is giving Himself, what obstacles do you feel as you realise that God is giving Himself to you?

4. We realise prayer is happening, if there is silence

Silence is the custodian of Religion and must be observed with the greatest
care [CC 49]. Silence guards Religion and tells us who it is who appears within us. In the House, observe silence, through which you will learn to pray [M 64]. If the necessary silence does not reign in the House, use great care to make sure it is observed, at least according to what is laid down in our Constitutions. Because in a House where silence is observed, there is the right atmosphere for the Holy Spirit to inspire holy thoughts in the religious [EP 1970]. If you want the Holy Spirit to dwell amongst us, forbid conventicles and introduce silence. Otherwise the enemy will always be found in the conventicles, and the small matters which may be resolved by communicating them to the Superior, will otherwise be magnified [EP 2599]. Silence will allow us to realise how the Spirit may be heard in a concrete situation. Silence is needed to identify the feeling that the Spirit has awoken and silence is required in order to listen to what He has to say. It is the intelligence which understands the suggestions of the Spirit, and this is why Calasanz speaks of holy thoughts and of mental prayer.

Calasanz asks us to be silent in various places and at different times: Complete silence will be especially observed at specific times and in specific places, i.e. from nightfall, after the Ave Maria, until sunrise the next day: during this period, everyone will be in his room or in the oratory... [CC 50]. During Advent and Lent, the religious will make sure that they observe complete silence [CC 54]. Try to make all observe silence and make a retreat in their own rooms, where they may read spiritual books and find benefit for their own souls [EP 3898].

Silence allows us to discover the treasures hidden in our hearts: I advise you to make the novices observe silence, so that they learn to speak to God and, through the virtue of silence, they show that they are willing and have undergone an inner change; please consider this detail as a recommendation, since, along with modesty in the eyes, it leads a novice to religious perfection, which is the treasure hidden in the Gospels, and when it is found (even though few find it unless they force themselves), they leave all worldly things and they try to keep it as if it were something which is more important that all the world can give. May the Lord’s grace shine upon you and may he bless you always [EP 1367].

Our Constitutions tell us: the spirit of prayer increases and is kept safe through silence and sobriety of speech; these are virtues which allow us to
more clearly hear the voice of God which speaks to us where it will. Thus it is extremely important that we stay alert, so that it does not catch us unawares and pass on with no harvest [CC 44].

Our Regulations tell us: We shall observe both inner and outer silence, not only because this makes us more receptive to the voice of the Spirit, but also for respect for our brethren; and this must especially be in those places reserved for the Community and during the night, and during the hours established by the community schedule [Rule 72].

Of prayer time, Calasanz says: In the deepest silence and quiet of the body and of the spirit, on your knees or another decent position...[CC 44].

Does silence make the interior life possible?

**Ask yourself:** What is your prayer time like? How do you live in your leisure time? What do you do in order to compose yourself? How do you separate yourself from your inner noise? Can you identify what the Spirit suggests?

5. **We realise that prayer is happening if our love for all people increases, especially for the young and the poor**

When we act according to what the Spirit tells us, and those suggestions may come from obedience or from the needs of our neighbour, we are in the fullness of prayer. We are doing the will of God, behaving to our neighbour as God behaves to us.

Every day, at least once, go into the schools and test four or six pupils, sometimes in writing, sometimes in reading, so that you will give the school a good name and your example will encourage other Fathers and brethren to do the same thing. I can assure you that by so doing out of simple charity, you will find greater merit in God’s eyes than by simple orations, since what perhaps St. Augustine (but I am not completely sure which saint it was) said is true: he who prays does good work, but he who helps his neighbour does better work. And this is why I, old as I am, often go into the schools and give a hand [EP 4204].

We live the fullness of love through our special ministry.

The Ministry of education is, in actual fact, the most valuable, because, with all the Charity of the Church, it establishes and puts into practice an
effective, preventive and curative remedy for evil, as well as encourages and stimulates, by means of learning and the spirit, good habits and manners, the light of God and of the world, and all children in that condition towards goodness—and thus, all men, who all have to go through that period of their lives [MT 26].

Because, through different ministries, in the Church of God all the religious Institutes have as their aim the perfection of charity under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, our own Congregation, too, aims to achieve the same end with all our strength, by means of the ministry approved by His Holiness our late Lord Paul V, who was Vicar of Christ on Earth [CC 1].

Calasanz wants our spirit to be universal, take for our dear brother in Christ any other person who is timorous and a good servant of God, for in the Service of the Lord acceptance of people does not exist. Philosophers and mathematicians tell us that two things which are equal to a third are all equal. Therefore, try to maintain a universal spirit [EP 4439], in other words, he wants us all to be able to love all people and at the same time wants us to love young and poor people and peoples. May you all be there with committed souls, to serve the Lord in the members of His body who are the poor, so that we too may hear at the right time: what you have done for these my weakest brethren, you have done for me [M 94].

Ask yourself: What is your relationship with your neighbour like? Is it one of ulterior motives? Is it freely given? What is the predominant feeling you have? What do you experience in your actions and what is their real source? What do you consider yourself invited to?

6. We realise prayer is happening if we persevere with our prayer with determination

We may persevere with prayer, but our determination is a gift, and this is why Calasanz says: we must urgently ask our Blessed God, how he taught us that parable of the poor man who went at midnight to the house of a friend to ask him to lend him three loaves (Lk 11, 5-8), [EP 4427]. I pray the Lord that where my efforts are not enough, He may supplement them with his abundant grace, so that, full of grace, the road to salvation on which I started may be travelled joyfully, that those who persevere may achieve things, as it is written that it will be not those who begin but those who persevere (Matt 10,
22), [EP 4115]. We must ask this with the faith that what we are asking is what we have already received. As the spiritual father who desires perfection for all his children in the Order, I want to see all of them determined both in their service of God and in the unity they find with him in charity and love [EP 4028].

**Ask yourself:** How determined are you to live in prayer and what is your perseverance in prayer like? Do you really have a will? What methods do you use to persevere in prayer?

*Let us pray:* O Lord, may your Spirit enter us with its strength, so that our thoughts are full of gratitude and our works obey your will. Amen [Prayer of the Calasanzian Community, pp. 20-21].

**Conclusions**

The Spirit is now within us. Prayer is happening. We are aware of this inner event:

– When we love all people, especially the youngest and poorest of people and peoples.

– When we love things without becoming attached to them. We live without possessions. We live apostolic poverty. We practise solidarity. We share who we are and what we have.

– When we are simple and every time we look at God and through Him we see reality.

– When we are humble and we abase ourselves in order to know ourselves. We enter truth. When we realise that many of the things we experience in everyday life or we experience in prayer lead us into the humility of knowing ourselves.

– When we live in that silence which allows us to listen to, as St. John of the Cross says: the silent music, the sonorous solitude, the supper which recreates and makes us love.

– When we persevere with determination on the path of our prayer.

In this chapter, Calasanz follows the writings of St. Teresa, especially in the Way of Perfection, as you will see in the relative notes. He also follows St. John of the Cross in the way he experiences events. We see that he has also read St. Augustine. And for the background he is guided by the Gospels and by
St. Paul.
29. St Teresa speaks of those things that are necessary for prayer

It is about prayer that you have asked me to say something to you. As an acknowledgment of what I shall say, I beg you to read frequently and with a good will what I have said about it thus far, and to put this into practice. Before speaking of the interior life—that is, of prayer— I shall speak of certain things which those who attempt to walk along the way of prayer must of necessity practise. So necessary are these that, even though not greatly given to contemplation, people who have them can advance a long way in the Lord’s service, while, unless they have them, they cannot possibly be great contemplatives, and, if they think they are, they are much mistaken [Way of Perfection, 4, 3].

Do not suppose, my friends and sisters, that I am going to charge you to do a great many things... One of these is love for each other; the second, detachment from all created things; the third, true humility, which, although I put it last, is the most important of the three and embraces all the rest [Way of Perfection, 4, 4].

30. Regarding detachment, St. Teresa says

Let us now come to the detachment which we must practise, for if this is carried out perfectly it includes everything else... Do you suppose, daughters, that it is a small benefit to obtain for ourselves this blessing of giving ourselves wholly to Him, and keeping nothing for ourselves? Since, as I say, all blessings are in Him, let us give Him hearty praise [Way of Perfection, 8, 1].

31. On simplicity in prayer, St. Teresa tells us how important it is to look at the Lord, who never ceases to look upon us and give us His love

I am not asking you now to think of Him, or to form numerous conceptions of Him, or to make long and subtle meditations with... your understanding. I am asking you only to look at Him. ... Your Spouse never takes His eyes off you, daughters. He has borne with thousands of foul and abominable sins which you have committed against Him, yet even they have not been enough to make Him cease looking upon you. Is it such a great matter, then, for you to avert the eyes of your soul from outward things and sometimes to look at Him? ... He longs so much for us to look at Him once more that it will not be for lack of effort on His part if we fail to do so [Way of Perfection, 26, 3].

32. The expression receive all from the hand of God comes from St. John of the Cross

These things are not done by man but by God, who knows what is best for us and orders thus for our good. Do not think otherwise but that God orders all and where there is not love, put love and you will receive love [Letter 26].

People, then, should live with great patience and constancy in all the tribulations and trials God places on them, whether they be exterior or interior, spiritual or bodily, great or small, and they should accept them all as from God’s hand as a good remedy and not flee from them, for they bring health [The Living Flame of Love, 2, 30].

This also comes from the words of St. Paul in his letter to the Romans:

We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called
according to his purpose [Rom 8, 28].

33. St Teresa tells us that where there is humility there is love and at the same time detachment from all that has been created

I cannot understand how humility exists, or can exist, without love, or love without humility, and it is impossible for these two virtues to exist save where there is great detachment from all created things [Way of Perfection, 16, 2].

Calasanz states what St. Teresa says:

If you believe me you will dedicate yourselves to really becoming humbler and poor because with these two virtues it is charity which happily resides and this is the aim of all religions [EP 1622].

34. The mysteries which are hidden from the wise and the prudent of time but are revealed to the humble is a quotation from St. Matthew

This text is a prayer by Jesus. Full of the Holy Spirit, He thanks the Father for the way in which He reveals the way He is with children and those who have no power. This shows that Jesus experiences His relationship with God the Father as a child does, in a spontaneous way; God the Father who gives Himself to the Son and the Son who gives Himself to humankind through the Holy Spirit. It is we who, when we are not humble, create obstacles for His revelation.

At that time Jesus declared, “I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; yea, Father, for such was thy gracious will. All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him” [Matt 11, 25-27].

We may also read the parallel text in the Gospel of St. Luke:

In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, “I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; yea, Father, for such was thy gracious will. All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him” [Lk 10, 21-22].

35. We need to learn how to compose ourselves and to communicate with our inner selves in order to connect with the peaceful place in the heart and to identify the sensations which exist at that most profound moment of our beings

Calasanz tells us that during prayer time we must prepare ourselves: In the deepest silence and quiet of body and spirit, on our knees or in another decent position [CC 44].

I have one or two observations to make on the way we communicate with our inner selves.

In his books, Fr. Tomas Spidlik quotes the Nicephorus the monk, who invites us to commune with our inner selves in this way:

Sit in a quiet cell in a remote place and do what I tell you to do: close the door, lift up your spirit far above all vain and temporary objects. Then, rest your head on your chest, with the power of your mind, concentrate the glance of your bodily eye upon your abdomen, breathe in slowly through your nose, when the air reaches your inside, hold it in and then exhale, so as not to breathe out
easily and seek within you, until you find the place of your heart, where the faculties of the soul
dwell. At first you will find a dense and impenetrable darkness. But is you persevere, if you practise
this day and night, then you will find, O miracle!, happiness unbound.

When the Spirit, your vigilant intelligence, finds the place of the heart, you will immediately see
things you have never seen before, the air which exists in the middle of the heart, you will see
yourself illuminated, full of discernment. From that moment on, any evil thought which comes to you
will be expelled and destroyed by invoking the name of Jesus, before it has time to develop and
take shape... It has been said: Sit in your cell and that will teach you all [El arte de purificar el
corazón. Ed. Monte Carmelo, p. 87].

Alfredo S. Calvo, a teacher of Personality and Human Relations, invites us to commune with
our inner selves in this way:

In order to reach the deepest area, the intelligence needs to distance itself:
– from worries, plans and ideas of the cerebral self;
– from the troubles of the sensibility;
– from the needs of the body; we shall take its needs into consideration from the deep place where we
  are;
– from others; in our depths we shall find others in a much better way;
– from our neighbouring environment; from our depths we shall see our world through God.

For this reason, when a decision has been taken to leave all of this, the intelligence begins to
compose itself towards the inner self, until it reaches that place of the person where he feels free
from all this. This preliminary stage is indispensible. In practical terms, this step is taken by seeking
the optimal environment and moment for communing with one’s inner self. This composure may be
helped by lowering one’s eyes. When this state of detachment has been achieved, it is necessary to
look deeper.

In the deepest part. When the deepest part has been reached, our intelligence pays attention to
what happens to it. That is, it tries to capture the sensations which are alive at that moment. A
sensation is felt in the body, and this kind of sensation is felt in the abdomen and/or more deeply
within our inner body. When the places of the sensations of the body have been found, we call them
by their names and draw up a list of those we find. From the list of sensations found, we choose
one, about which we have a feeling that it will teach us something new about ourselves, and we
analyse it [Alfredo Calvo, Quiero analizar mi positivo, August 1992]. When he says analyse this does not
mean reflecting upon the sensations but understanding what the sensations tells us and all this is done well
when what the sensation tells us is written down.

We must realise that half an hour a day for prayer is a very limited amount of time. Calasanz asks us to
take the utmost care so as not to ever lose the habit of praying inwardly twice a day: an hour at
dawn and half an hour at dusk, before supper [CC 44].

36. St. Paul tells us that God Himself teaches us to love one another. He asks us not to
extinguish the Holy Spirit

God... gives his Holy Spirit to you. But concerning love of the brethren you have no need to have
any one write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another... we exhort
you, brethren, to do so more and more... Do not quench the Spirit [1 Thess 4, 8-10 and 5, 19].
St Teresa tells us that living prayer is not marginal but within events themselves:

The soul is used not when we think much but when we love much. How can we acquire this love? By being determined to work and suffer, and to do so when this is offered to us, when there are things concerning obedience or our neighbours’ pleasure. Either of these two things which are offered us require time for us to leave behind what we so much desire to give God, which, in our opinion, is to be alone and think of Him. In his own words: what you have done to one of these little ones, you have done to me. And as for obedience, I don’t want her who loves Him to follow any other path than that of He himself, who was obedient unto death [Book of the Foundations, 5, 3].

Love shows itself here, not in corners, but in the midst of events; and believe me, even if there may be more faults, and even small breaks, without any comparison our gain is greater. Pay attention, for I always speak supposing that I take this path either for obedience or for charity, and, if these were not here in the midst of things, I maintain that solitude is better. This is why I say that it is a gain for us, because it makes us understand who we are and how far our virtue stretches [Book of the Foundations, 5, 15].

This, as I have said, is love without any degree whatsoever of self-interest; all that this soul wishes and desires is to see the soul [it loves] enriched with blessings from Heaven. This is love, quite unlike our ill-starred earthly affections and is similar to that of Christ; that merits the name of love [Way of Perfection, 7, 1].

37. St. Teresa speaks of determination

The soul has greater determination –and if this is manifested through works, which are not only words of compliments—, the more the Lord takes you with Him [Way of Perfection, 56, 1].

All the effort of one who starts a prayer –and do not forget this, for it is very important– must be to work with determination and to be of a diligent disposition so that the will does that which God desires; and, as I shall say later, you may be quite sure that this is where the greatest spiritual perfection is found [Mansions 2, 8].

**DIFFERENT WAYS TO PRAY**

With constancy in prayer and practice of the presence of God in our daily tasks, we are more effectively disposed to celebrate the sacred liturgy, in which, at its height, there is our sanctification and the glorification of God [C 45].

1. One way to pray: in your room or in solitude

We must look out for what the Spirit tells us and find the practices He gives us. It is notable that in a text which is so short, the expression to perform actions appears seven times. Furthermore, as far as is possible, we call on all in the name of the Lord so that every time it is possible for them to stay in...
their rooms, they commit themselves to performing some action of humility, either outer and above all inner, or of repentance and thanksgiving or other kinds, according to the voice of the Holy Spirit, so that the Father, who sees even when we are secreted, may be abundant in his gifts to them and may raise them to the perfection of solid virtues [CC 48].

The methods which Calasanz suggests:
– In deepest silence with the body and spirit quiet, on one’s knees or in another suitable position.
– Perform outward acts, and above all inner ones, of humility, constraint and thanksgiving.
– Perform other acts suggested by the Spirit.
– The fruits of Prayer: the Father, who sees all that is hidden, will bring you to love all people through the practice of solid virtue.

Our Constitutions say: Obedient to the suggestions of our Founder, every time that we are able to stay on our own, we shall dedicate ourselves to performing either an outer or an inner act of humility, of repentance and of thanksgiving, or of another kind, according to divine inspiration, so that the heavenly Father, who sees all things hidden, may bestow his gifts upon us in abundance and lift us up to the perfection of solid virtues [C 43].

Our Regulations say: First of all, our religious must remember that there cannot be religious life without long and daily prayer, which is a source of the pious life. This certainly grows from within, but, in order to develop, it has to have wise external organisation [Common Rules 57].

In the first chapter we have already seen that at prayer time we must do what the Holy Spirit says to us.

Ask yourself: What is your solitary prayer like? Do you pray alone? What is it that helps you do this? What helps you less? To what do you think the Spirit has called you?

2. Examining our conscience

I remind you that in prayer we start from the action of the Spirit to identify the action that He suggests. When we examine our consciences, we look at our human behaviour, our actions, so that these may be adapted to the action of the Spirit. Twice a day, once in the morning and once before going to bed at
night, a thorough examination of one’s conscience should be carried out, concerning that which has been said, done and thought [CC 46].

Our Constitutions say: Our whole life will become an act of worship if, with everyone accepting faithfully what is given by the hand of the Father, we constantly keep ourselves at one with the mediating action of Christ. It will be possible for us to remain faithful to this plan for life if our conscience is always alert and if we make sure our actions are examined in private and together [C 48].

How should we examine our consciences? It is clear that Calasanz does not tell us the way in which this should be done. The main thing for Calasanz is that we should understand the source of our actions: is their source hidden pride [EP 2445]; is their source insatiable cupidity [EP1488]; is their source a tendency towards evil [EP 770]; or is their source the inclinations suggested by the Spirit? [CC 23]. Bearing in mind these points mentioned by Calasanz, I suggest a way in which this may be done:

– Be aware of the love of God, which has been poured into your heart by the Holy Spirit given to you. Ask the Spirit for enlightenment that you may find the truth and then accept what you find.

– The Spirit has spoken during the day, and has certainly touched your heart. Very slowly, make a list of each of the gifts and benefits which have been given to you by the Spirit, or which you have experienced during today.

– Offer thanks to God for all the gifts you have received and discover what God is like and what you are like when you realise what the Holy Spirit has given you.

– Choose a concrete action you have done so that you may find its origin or think of an event that has happened, in order to see how you reacted:

– Name the action or the event (this may be a way of thinking, of saying, or of doing)

– Ask yourself: Is the source of this action cupidity or has it come freely?

– Reply absolutely sincerely. Is it possible that, within you, you may discover a mixture of cupidity and freely-given actions? What was the main aspect of the action? What did you choose?

– If the source of your action was cupidity, what suggestion of the Holy Spirit did you not follow? Give a name to that stimulus to free-giving that you did
not choose. Discover that it is that is an obstacle to the actions of the Spirit. Ask the Lord for pardon and let yourself be attracted by His mercy, as if you had never been separated from Him. Accept the joy, which has become tears, of doing good from now onwards. Look slowly: what is an action like when it’s source is the wishes of the Spirit?

– If the source of your action was freely given, look carefully at what you experienced. Find within yourself the most beautiful relationship in the world, and start a dialogue of thanksgiving with the Holy Trinity: my life is Your Life, O Lord.

Our Rules tell us: *Every day we must examine our actions, as a community and in private; and, depending upon the schedules of the Community, we shall review together our religious life and our apostolate* [Common Rules 64].

**Ask yourself:** How do you examine your conscience? What is it that most helps you? What helps you least? To what do you feel called?

### 3. One’s personal project

Naturally enough, Calasanz does not tell us anything about our personal projects.

Our Rules say: *The Superior must make sure that every religious should make a written copy of his own Personal Project* [Common Rules 60].

The first chapter said that if we are aware of what the Spirit has to say to us and if we examine our consciences, we shall be in the best condition to draw up our personal projects.

I must begin from what the Spirit suggests, which is in harmony with what is happening in my life. At the same time, I must understand the difficulties I may find in following the wishes of the Spirit. This is what happens when we examine our consciences.

I give a concrete name to the suggestions of the Spirit and, at the same time, to any difficulties. I question myself on any human and spiritual means that I may use in order to follow my yearly personal project and also the motivations that I have for doing it. Write these things down and move on.

Our personal projects must take our Community project into consideration.

**Ask yourself:** Do you draw up an annual personal project? What
difficulties do you come across in doing so? If you do so, can you say what it is that helps you? What method do you use?

4. Spiritual readings

We read spiritual writings of those people who feel God so that we may realise in which way the Spirit touches our hearts: And if there is time at all in which they cannot help children, as our institute orders them to do, and they spent it in reading St. Teresa’s Way of Perfection, then they would see how it would inflame their hearts, for the words of the Saint are very effective when read with devotion [EP 2860].

Ask yourself: What books most nourish your spiritual life? What reading helps you least? What helps you most? To what do you feel called?

5. A way to pray together

By tradition, we begin this prayer by invoking the Holy Spirit so that we are aware of what we are going to experience in the prayer.

Remember that in Calasanz’s time, the school day began with the invocation of the Holy Spirit.

Come, O Holy Spirit. Fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the flame of your love. Send us your Spirit, O Lord, and repopulate the face of the Earth.

Let us pray: O God, who has illumined the hearts of your children with the light of the Holy Spirit, make us obey its desire for following goodness and may enjoy the consolation it gives. In Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

Again, let us pray: O Lord, pour down upon us the strength of the Holy Spirit, so that we may faithfully do Your will and bear witness to You through our works. Amen [Prayer of the Calasanzian Community, pp. 20-21].

We all meet in the oratory, and each separately contemplates the crucified Christ and the various stages of his life, like the example of St. Paul. It is chiefly the Lord who generates the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit gives us what is received from the Father and from the Son. The inspiration given to us by the Spirit knows the ways of our Master, Jesus Christ.

We must approach prayer with the subject matter of prayer. If we do not approach in this way, we should go there by reading a passage from the Bible,
or a devotional work, and it will then be normal for a word or a phrase to touch our hearts. At this point we may interrupt the reading and that suggestion made by the Spirit will be the matter of our prayer so that we may discover the attitude or the behaviour that the Father wants from us, and we may live as His children. Otherwise our minds may wander during prayer time.

*We must take the utmost care not to get out of the habit of praying twice a day: early in the morning for an hour and for half an hour before supper.*

Our religious, in perfect silence and bodily and spiritual composure, on their knees or in another suitable position, should, following St. Paul’s example, make an effort to understand and follow the crucified Christ and His virtues, and should remember these frequently during the day [CC 44].

The method suggested by Calasanz:

– pray together inwardly
– in perfect silence and in spiritual and bodily composure
– on one’s knees or in another suitable position
– contemplate and follow the crucified Christ and the various stages of His life
– the crucified Christ and the stages of His life will be remembered by us throughout the day.

Our Constitutions say: *As we remain constantly faithful to our habit of praying together, we shall first, as St. Paul did, try to understand and to imitate Jesus Christ crucified and His mysteries and shall constantly refer to Him throughout the day* [C 41].

The relationship of Calasanz with the Holy Scriptures was familiar and assiduous. I have given some examples in this book. We have been able to see how often, in his Constitutions and especially in his letters, he quotes St. Paul and other texts of the Old and New Testaments. All of these quotations are linked to our Piarist charism.

Our Constitutions tell us: *From our habitual reading of the Sacred Texts, we shall have an intimate knowledge of God and of His will, like the Virgin Mary, who, in her heart, by assiduously meditating upon the Word of God, tried to enter further into the mystery of Christ and, with greater fullness, magnified the Lord [C 42]*. *Together with the Church and through the Liturgical Year, we shall celebrate the Mysteries of Christ. We venerate the Virgin Mary with filial love, as she shares in the mystery of Christ* [C 49].
Ask yourself: What do you meditate upon during communal prayer? What method do you use? Do you love reading the Word of God? What helps you most? What helps you least? To what do you feel called?

6. Celebrating the sacraments

In the opinion of Calasanz, these are at the heart of the Institute, because the way they are experienced may change the lives of children and young people.

With assiduous prayer and the presence of God found as far as possible in daily actions, the religious will be more effectively disposed to receive the sacraments more frequently and with greater devotion [CC 55]. Religious sacraments usually greatly enlighten the intellect and attending them with devotion usually kindles the will to shun sin and love works of virtue. Insist much upon this for it is the whole of our Institute [EP 471].

If an illness gets worse, the nurse must urgently set to work so that the sick person has all the sacraments administered before losing the use of his reasoning [CC 63].

Our Constitutions say: With assiduous prayer and the presence of God found as far as possible in daily actions, we are more effectively disposed to celebrate the sacred liturgy, the summit of which is reached with our sanctification and the glorification of God [C 45].

Our ministry keeps children in the state of their baptismal innocence

Our ministry is truthfully that which pleases God most, much more than the conversion of a sinner, even if this too makes Heaven joyful; because in the schools, not only do many repent for the many offences to God, but every day many others are kept as innocent as when they were baptised [MT 15]. We cooperate with the action of grace in the souls of innocent children [Fr. Juan de Jesús y María: El libro de la educación en la piedad].

The celebration of the Eucharist

Calasanz asks us to celebrate the Eucharist every day: Every day our priests shall celebrate the sacrifice of the Mass unless they have been exempted from doing so by their superior or their confessor, which we hope will be a rare occurrence [CC 56]. Every day the clerics and the working brethren shall attend the holy Mass and so should those priests who on a particular day, as has been said, may abstain from celebrating [CC 61].
Our Constitutions say: *Every day, we shall take part in the supper of Our Lord and in the manner of the primitive Church continue with the Word of God and the Breaking of Bread, by which the community will be built as a brotherhood. In fact, the genuine sign of this will be our community celebration of the Eucharist* [C 46]. *By means of the Liturgy of the Hours, which is obligatory for priests and deacons, we conserve and prolong throughout the day, that feeling of communion with God and with men which comes with the Holy Eucharist* [C 46].

Our Rules tell us: *We shall encourage the concelebration of the Eucharist, which is a characteristic sign of our union in Christ; in which, from time to time, there will be a homily* [Regole Comuni 61]. *Our religious must know the sacred rites and liturgical rules of the Church well; and they must also observe them faithfully* [Common Rules 65].

As far as the homily is concerned, Calasanz says: *Preachers get better results from the examples of their lives than from the erudition of their words* [CC 326]. *For children, only develop topics which are useful and comprehensible for them. Meditate first on what you are going to say and prepare yourself with humility, asking for the assistance of the Lord* [CC 328]. *Capture the trust of children for the service of God with the example of your life and through simple doctrine, alternating with anecdotes of some of the saints* [CC 333]. *Preaching should not exceed a quarter of an hour nor should you shout in a loud voice. The familiar discourse should be simple and spiritual* [EP 1415].

To tell the truth, during the homily we testify to what the Spirit suggests, which things have been given to us and we have put them into practice. Therefore, we must speak and limit ourselves to that which we have freely received.

**For Calasanz the celebration of the Eucharist is having a family relationship with the Trinity. To the Trinity, we bring an embassy from Earth. We share in the sacrifice of Christ and we go away invigorated, to love.**

**Calasanz speaks of the sacrament of the Eucharist as the Body of the Lord and says, like St. Paul, that we all make up one Body**

It is really as the Body of the Lord that we go to celebrate the Eucharist: *And*
because you know little of such a great mystery and sacrament, you should first study it well so that nobody will be able to say that you do not discern the body of the Lord [Cu 470]. In our religion, our brethren, our clerics and our priests are each so necessary, because they all make up one body. And one must not say to another: I don’t need your help. But in blessed peace, with great merit, each should work according to his talent, for the pure love of God [Cu 426].

**Calasanz insists upon celebrating the Eucharist during Chapter meetings**

Start to think about the election [of the Fr. General] which you have to do, for the good government of the Congregation and to the greater glory of God; prepare for it with prayer and the sacrifice at the altar [CC 219]. The day of the election [of the Fr. General], all shall celebrate the Mass of the Holy Spirit, or shall take Communion, so that the Spirit will guide them towards the best election [CC 224].

**The relationship with the Trinity as the Body of the Church**

In the Eucharistic celebration, the whole Body of the Lord, all the Church, is an embassy to the Trinity. Consider, before you begin the Mass, that you are making an embassy to the Eternal Father on behalf of the whole Holy Church, not only for the exaltation of the Catholic faith and the forgiveness of sinners, but also in succour of the souls of departed faithful. In order to receive such grace, great humility is needed, and it is wise to start well from the beginning [EP 1350].

We speak in a familiar way with the Trinity when we celebrate the Eucharist: I am happy that in Bisignano the two people you sent have been ordained, to whom you will teach the devotion with which they should speak of the Eternal Father and the Trinity, so that they acquire for themselves all possible profit from the Mass, and understand the words they utter and say them with great reverence and humility, and not get into the habit of saying them in a rush [EP 3669]. Learn that inner reverence with which the holy words of the Mass should be said, when we speak to Holy God and to the Most Holy Trinity, for it is not enough to pronounce them with the mouth and little devotion, but it must be with the heart [EP 2954].

In the celebration of the Eucharist, Jesus transforms a situation of unjust violence into a sacred act [sacrifice] and maintains an alliance with all
humankind. All, and especially priests, who every morning speak and should speak familiarly [with the Eternal Father and the Most Holy Trinity] during the holy sacrifice of the Mass, should realise from where they should go most zealously to the service of God [EP 3621].

The celebration of the Eucharist gives us the same love that Christ our Master experienced during His Passion. It is a love that we can communicate to people and peoples who are defenceless and poor. If he wishes to improve the souls of his young pupils, as is the duty of a schoolmaster, he must, with great fervour and humility, ask Blessed God for that grace, for he who does not have the fervour and love of God within himself, is unable to communicate it to others. Therefore, every day, once or twice and when alone, and chiefly during the Mass, he will ask for that grace to be able to harvest that fruit which is necessary in the youngsters who attend our schools [EP 2717]. Always try to be united in the service of the Lord, for in that way you will do much good to your neighbour. May the Lord bestow upon you all His holy grace [EP 168].

Ask yourself: How do you experience the celebration of the Eucharist? Do you study the Biblical texts of the liturgical calendar? What grace do you receive when celebrating the Eucharist?

The celebration of the mystery of Christ throughout the year

By contemplating the mystery of Christ throughout the year we are able to experience permanent formation, a spirit of prayer. For this we need to undertake personal or community lectio divina, the reading of the Gospels; we then experience the celebration as the Body of the Lord, and we understand the meaning of the different times of the liturgy and we pay attention to how the Holy Spirit touches our hearts.

Our Constitutions say: Together with the Church, we celebrate the Mysteries of Christ with fidelity and devotion, through the liturgical year. With filial love we venerate the Virgin Mary in her sharing of the mystery of Christ [C 49].

Our Rules say: We celebrate the mystery of Christ throughout the year. And especially so in our Churches, where possible, we celebrate the Easter Triduum, which culminates with the celebration of the Resurrection of the Lord. As far as the Liturgy of the Hours is concerned during this period, the
customs of the Demarcations must be observed. The whole Community will celebrate the Nativity of the Lord with especial solemnity, after due preparation. The liturgical feasts must be celebrated with especial care in those churches of ours where there is a higher congregation of faithful [Common Rules 66].

**Ask yourself:** Do you enjoy following the liturgical year? Do you understand the meanings of the liturgical calendar? Do you try to experience this according to the prompting of the Holy Spirit?

**The Liturgy of the Hours**

We all know that Calasanz read the “Divine Office” in a personal way, with devotion, like St. Teresa, and he says that when prayer is vocal one must pay attention to whom it is addressed and what it is that we say. In such a situation, as is clear from his letters, the Holy Spirit touched his heart, *work like the holy David: By day the Lord commands his steadfast love; and at night his song is with me* [Psalm 42, 9]. Daytime must be dedicated to acts of mercy and night time for thanksgiving and for preparing for the next day [EP 1544]. Calasanz cooperated to create the human behaviour which the gift of the Spirit wished for him.

Furthermore, he says: *It would do him great credit, as it would all, if he swept the school of the children and taught them the Lord’s Prayer, rather than chant the Liturgy of the Hours* [EP 2646]. Chanting the litany during spiritual exercises with an appropriate melody helps to find the place of the heart.

These days we celebrate the liturgy of the hours as a community. It is important to approach the celebration as the Body of the Lord and to take care about how the Sprit touches our hearts.

Our Constitutions tell us: *By means of the Liturgy of the Hours, which is obligatory for priests and deacons, we conserve and prolong throughout the day, that feeling of communion with God and with men which comes with the Holy Eucharist* [C 46].

Our Rules say: *Priests and Deacons are obliged to celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours faithfully, as prayers of the whole Mystic Body of Christ. In the calendar for the events of each day, the Local Community shall place due importance on the prayers of Lauds and Vespers. And, when possible, it is*
desirable that our pupils and the faithful should join in these prayers of the Church with us [Common Rules 62].

Ask yourself: How do you experience the liturgy of the hours? What difficulties do you find when you perform the liturgy of the hours? Are you aware of in which part of the Psalms your heart is touched by the Spirit?

Visiting the Most Blessed Sacrament

Listen to what Calasanz has to say about visiting the Most Blessed Sacrament: He retired to before the Most Blessed Sacrament in the Church of Santi Apostoli [in Rome]... and after this prayer he left greatly consoled and enlightened. He said that apart from other places, the Lord speaks through the Most Blessed Sacrament [Fr. Berro, vol. 1, part 1, p.19 v.]. From the teaching he gave, as he gave to me on many occasions... recommending acts of humility to be performed alone and also the Most Blessed Sacrament, from which, he said, one received great enlightenment for the way of the Spirit [Fr. Scassellati, Proc. Info. 1650-RC 30, pp. 105 and 111]. One’s impression is that these visits illuminated him to follow our vocation.

In order to follow the path of virtue with a surer step and with ever renewed enthusiasm, we want you to get into the habit of renewing or ratifying your vows daily, on your knees in before the Most Blessed Sacrament [CC 98].

Ask yourself: Do you experience this visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament? What illumination do you receive from the way of the Spirit? How do you feel that the Lord accompanies you through your life? What do you experience when your renew your vows before the Most Blessed Sacrament?

The celebration of the sacrament of forgiveness or of reconciliation

In Calasanz, confession is linked to spiritual guidance, during which all inner sentiments are expressed in order the find what comes from God. This is why it produces such a rich harvest: I feel that the solution that may be used for Brother... is that a confessor who possesses charity should confess him twice a week and should visit him frequently, so that he is induced to uncover all his inner thoughts and discourses, and shall be given the right remedy. And if this charitable exercise should last for two or three months, I
am sure that he would examine himself anew and the pain of having offended God would enter within his heart as would a desire to perform penitence for his sins [EP 3055].

Calasanz asks us to live confession: At least twice a week they should confess to fixed confessors, so that the religious who are established upon the way to perfection should not, because of ignoring minor faults, not fall gradually into those of a more serious kind [CC 58]. And also the Father General, and the Fathers Provincial, should confess to a priest of their choice whom they consider to be a diligent assistant and judge of their role and actions: he must be such a man as may judge the errors of others through his own behaviour and also a faithful interpreter of the will of the subjects before the superior [CC 59].

With pupils things are the same: Apart from the superiors, there will be a Confessor who will hear the confessions of the pupils, who will, with great charity and goodwill, know how to attract the hearts of the young people to him so that all venerate and love him as they would a real father [CC 193]. Make sure that Father... is not intransigent in punishing the pupils, but rather that he confess them and teach them things of the spirit, for he will get better results than by playing the schoolmaster [EP 1427]. They should also be expert in those cases into which young people find themselves; and they should have a simple method of asking questions, and for encouraging them to love chastity, truth, religion and other virtues, as also to hate certain vices; they should use the examples of the Saints, by whose example the children will better learn how to be virtuous [CC 317]. Confessors must be convinced that the faithful exercise of this ministry with children is a work which is greatly appreciated by God [CC 318].

In the sacrament of confession our ministry is a remedy for evil because there, not only do we express our wicked acts towards our neighbour, but also find their source: in our avid sentiments, in our inclination for evil. Therefore, in the method of confession in Calasanz’s period, there were three states together: recognition of the acts, the inclination towards evil at the base of these and the expression of all our inner feelings. The source of our sins is the sin which is within us.

In the present day, the Church asks us to experience three states without substituting one for the other: the sacrament of forgiveness, spiritual
accompaniment and when necessary, psychological assistance.

Our Constitutions say: We are all called to convert and to renew ourselves continually, through penitence, works of charity, the liturgy and especially through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, in which we fully re-establish the bond of peace with the Father of mercy, with the whole Church and with our brethren; we shall often resort to this Sacrament with assiduous fidelity [C 47].

Our Rules say: We shall have recourse to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, so as to strengthen our union with God and our brethren. For their part, the Superiors will encourage frequent access to this Sacrament. Advent and Lent are the liturgical periods in which we are asked to celebrate penitence as a community [Common Rules 63].

Settling the account of the conscience: Make sure you deal with and feel well with God, on whom all our well-being depends. In order to do this properly, the only remedy is to communicate with the superior, who is Fr... all your inner feelings, so that the enemy will not be able to overcome in any matter. If you do this, you will find great inner calm, which is a great treasure. I shall not fail to pray the Lord to keep you in his merciful hands; on your part, you must not fail to follow my advice, for I am sure that you will succeed in doing it well because our lives are short. May the Lord bless you all [EP 736]40.

Ask yourself: Do you take part in the Sacrament of Reconciliation? Do you have a spiritual guide? Do you help others when you accompany them? To what do you feel called?

7. Vocal prayer

Calasanz speaks of praying with devotion. St. Teresa asks us to perform vocal prayer bearing in mind who we are addressing and what we are saying. In this way the Spirit will touch our hearts.

At this point I shall deal with: devotion to the Blessed Virgin, devotion to our Holy Father, continual prayer, universal prayer and the different images of prayer.

Calasanz’s devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin

It is necessary to invoke the help of God and the intercession of the Most
Blessed Virgin, under whose protection this work was founded [EP 4417]. The Most Blessed Virgin is so benevolent that she accepts every devotion, however small it may be, as long as it is done with great love or affection [EP 641]. Try to impress in all pupils devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin, having first acquired it yourselves. You will discover great effects, especially during moments of temptation [EP 1459].

Devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin is linked to our mission. We must experience the significance of being the poor of the Mother of God.

And since we profess to be the poor of the Mother of God, let us never neglect poor children, but, with great patience and charity, we shall try to train them in every virtue, just as the Lord says: “what you have done to the smallest, you have done to me” [CC 4]. And always and in every circumstance and with characteristic commitment you will help the poor, even if they are ragged [Declaration on our Constitutions, Common Rules and Rites, written by Calasanz in 1637].

The crown of the twelve stars

The Virgin Mary is the work of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. She is full of grace: The way to recite the Crown of Twelve Stars of the Most Blessed Virgin. The children in our schools must recite it. The Crown of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin alludes to that mysterious crown of twelve stars with which Saint John the Evangelist saw crowned on the head of that Queen, whom the Holy Fathers agree to identify as the Virgin Mary. It contains twelve Ave Marias, in honour of the twelve graces that the Most Blessed Trinity conceded to her, that is, four, the Eternal Father, four, the Son and four, the Holy Spirit, and then three, Our Fathers [Book by Fr. Salvador López].

The prayer of the Holy Rosary

In this we contemplate the life, the passion and the death of Christ our Saviour and we pray for the needs of the world, of the Church and of the whole Body of the Congregation. Let all know [says Calasanz in the last days of his life] that they must be devoted to the Most Blessed Rosary, in which the life, passion and death of our Redeemer is contained [Memorial of Fr. Berro on St. Joseph Calasanz]. Pray the Rosary according to our first habits: firstly for the Holy Church, and then for the needs of our Religion [EP 1049].
We turn to you for protection

Some afternoons, you should perform some devotions to the Most Blessed Virgin, with a “Salve Regina” or a “Sub tuum praesidium”, so that by her intercession we may be all be freed from adversity [EP 1459]. May the Lord come to help us and thus we shall overcome all the obstacles with which the enemy is committed to disturbing the souls of our religious. To this end, at the end of prayers, make sure that an Ave Maria is recited, for she, as Mother of Mercy, will extend her help to us [EP 2256]. Thus you have the Most Blessed Virgin, who is the Mother of mercy and patron of grace [EP 315].

Our Constitutions say: With filial love we venerate the Virgin Mary as she shares in the mystery of Christ; and to increase this devotion, we religiously observe the particular practices handed down by our traditions [C 49].

Our Rules say: Let us faithfully venerate the Blessed Virgin Mary, Patron Saint of the Order, and with the love of children we shall celebrate her feast days. The principal ones are: Holy Mary Mother of God, the Presentation of the Lord, the Annunciation of the Lord, the Most Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of God of the Pious Schools, the Assumption of the B.V.M., the Most Holy Name of the B.V.M. Titular Saint of our Order, and the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M., according to the Roman calendar and our own. In organising our acts of piety, we shall give due importance to those prayers consecrated by our tradition, and adapt them to new times, principally the Holy Rosary and the Crown of Twelve Stars, written by St. Joseph Calasanz. According to custom, a Marian prayer will close Community prayers [Common Rules 67].

Ask yourself: what is your vocal prayer like? How do you experience the relationship which Mary has with you? What is it that most helps you? What is it that least helps you? To what do you feel called?

Devotion for our Holy Father

All of us Piarists have been created by God to be similar to and complement our Holy Father, and we are his beloved children. This is why, when we see his life or read his writings, we are moved by the Holy Spirit to love Calasanz and to be creative with that very charism given to us by God.

Our Constitutions say: It is also our duty to encourage devotion to our Holy
Founder amongst ourselves and amongst our children and young people [C 49].

Our Rules state: *A Piarist religious must organise his existence along the evangelical guidelines for life which Joseph Calasanz used. Thus he must be aware of the obligation he has accepted to get to know the Founder closely, to accept the sound traditions of our Institute and to make sure that his life conforms to the current Constitutions and Rules of the Order* [Common Rules 35]. *As a member of the Order he has a duty to take on the style of life of Calasanz himself and to acquire the virtues which will help him to achieve sanctity: love for and contemplation of Christ crucified; devotion for Mary; humility and poverty; a life of simplicity; patience; respect for people; faithfulness for the Church and the Supreme Pontiff and an attitude of permanent conversion* [Common Rules 36].

On 25<sup>th</sup> August, with the greatest devotion possible, the whole Order celebrates the liturgical feast day of our Holy Founder; in countries where this coincides with the school holidays, an appropriate liturgical celebration will be performed with the pupils at another suitable date. With due dignity, every Community will honour its own Patron Saint, and the Saints and Blessed of our Order and of the Calasanzian Family [Common Rules 68]. *In order to encourage the celebration of our liturgical feast days, the Superiors will see that the Calendar of our Order is published every year* [Common Rules 69].

**Ask yourself:** How do you experience the relationship which our Holy Father Joseph Calasanz and our Saints and Blessed have with you?

**Prayer continues**

During recent years the Order has made a great effort to update this wish of Calasanz’s. We need to dedicate more time to the smallest children: All that we do here is for the benefit of youth and adult life. From the way in which children address God, we are able to understand the family environment in which they live, as well as the gifts which each child possesses.

*If possible there will also be another priest who will lead continuous prayer. This will be done in shifts for ten or twelve pupils, morning and afternoon during the lessons. To exalt the Holy Roman Church [the triumph of truth], harmony between Catholic Principles and good government and*
the development of our Congregation. That father will teach the young children how to prepare for the sacrament of penitence; the older will be taught to prepare themselves for the Eucharist by means of a simple and easily understood method of prayer and other topics which are suitable for young people [C 194]. All pupils should be taught in school the mysteries of the Passion of Christ, as published in Rome, and together with this that small book of spiritual exercises which contains the acts of faith, hope, humility and constraint, for it is well that the children learn this from their childhood; it must be done very carefully [EP 3920].

The petitions of children

He should find help in the use of a special prayer, above all for small children, so that the Lord will enlighten him to find the way of blessed humility, which is the sure way by which many gifts and the grace of God are to be found, for all the rest is vanity and very exhausting [EP 979]. Get the young pupils to pray, for theirs are prayers which please Holy God very much [EP 2559].

Ask yourself: Have you experienced continuous prayer with children? What life was stimulated within you, the children and youngsters?

Universal prayer

Calasanz asks for all the necessities of the Church and the world; he asks that concrete people should do the will of God, for the glory of God, so that by loving their neighbour God becomes visible. Jesus tells us that we must ask with faith that we have already received what we ask. This is why in actual fact we are very careful about how we express our petitions to God. Through our petition we should open ourselves to God, who has already given us what we ask. We must identify that gift within us so that we may experience the human behaviour which it requires.

Our Constitutions say: We recommend the needs of the Church and of all the human family to our Heavenly Father, along with the people and activities of our Institute. And, remembering our duties, we pray for the parents, the families, the benefactors and the religious families who are close to us [C51].

Our Rules say: We shall pray for the different needs of the Church and society, above all in the common prayers of Lauds and Vespers, using
suitable wording. As a community we shall also frequently ask for the spiritual progress of our Order and of all the Calasanzian Family, for our Superiors and for vocations. In Capitular time, we shall implore help with special prayers [Common Rules 73].

**Prayer for the Church**

Pray, not only for the soul of the deceased Pontiff, to whom we are much indebted, by saying the Mass, according to our Constitutions, but also ask the Lord to send us a Pope who will reform all the errors of the past and be a founder of all the virtues. The Lord will grant this if we pray for it with devotion [EP 168]. I am very happy at the splendid election of the Patriarch. May the Lord always assist him in all the does so that as a good shepherd he will guide all his sheep to pastures, to the delights of Paradise [EP 1619]. He has worked holily to do special things for the needs of the Holy Church in all the houses of this Province, and this exercise will last until Holy Week. Then we shall see the mercy that we shall have used with his Church, for which we shall thank him with all humility [EP 3044]. Recommend the actions of the Superiors to God with great fervour. For by so doing you will do far more than by tiring yourselves in wanting to set right those things which you think are wrong [EP 586]. With special affection I pray the Lord will increase spirit and zeal in the Fathers of that Company, so that in this second century the harvest of the first century will be doubled to the greater glory of His Divine Majesty and for the greater usefulness and increase of the holy Catholic faith [EP 3704]. We shall pray to the Lord to have compassion on the Catholics and good Christians who are there, and in particular on you and all our other religious, so that they are given that spirit and strength to accept with patience and blessed humility this persecution of the enemy, receiving it from the paternal hand of God, who wishes to test the faith and the constancy of His servants, as in the old days he did with the primitive Church [EP 4564].

**Prayer for those who govern and for universal peace**

Here there is continual prayer for universal peace. You will also do so in those regions, with great devotion, that the Lord may send peace to Christianity, which is His people [EP 4080]. I shall not fail to do my duty, for I wish only for the peace and unity of those gentlemen who govern, May
the Lord in His mercy be pleased to enlighten them all, so that to their credit they know how to do His most holy will [EP 1708]. Here you should pray for the cities which are suffering from the plague and from war, since we are all brothers in Christ and it would be an act of charity; waiting to pray until the moment the plague approaches means that it is done more out of fear than for the love of God; it would be wise to pray now for the succour of those who find themselves in such great danger [EP 1432].

Prayer for special needs

Ask that the Lord may enlighten you so that you may know your own imperfections [EP 1598]. I ask the Lord to give you health and spirit so that you may always do His most holy will to your great credit and benefit of your neighbour [EP 4175]. Here we have prayed and shall pray for the health and happiness of our Lord the Archbishop [EP 3233]. Here we shall pray that the decision will be taken that is for the greater glory of God and the Religion [EP 3169].

Believe in the help of God which is never lacking for those who are faithful, wherever they may be [EP 3869].

Ask yourself: How do you experience prayer when you ask for something? What difficulties do you find in asking God our Father for things? What is it that most helps you? What helps you least? To what do you feel you are called?

8. Images in prayer

I simply list some so that they may kindle our own:

Images which show a way of life

A servant of Christ tries to be a saint without wanting to appear one [Cu 674]. You have given nothing to Christ if you have not given Him your whole heart [Cu 655]. The more you work for Christ, the more you owe Christ, for this is your harvest [Cu 637]. He who does not know how to suffer for Christ does not earn Christ [Cu 642]. A good religious is loved by God, whether he is sick or healthy [Cu 643]. He who does not live for himself but for God, lives secure in religion [Cu 612]. How will there be light in the world if you are not light for yourself? [Cu 641].

Images which show the spirit of prayer
As far as I know is possible, I exhort you not to lose your inner calm about any event, however grave it may be, but make sure your heart is kept peaceful and at one with God, by resorting to prayer when it is most troubled, for then the Lord will often calm the storm at sea [EP 826]. I am happy to hear you on prayer, about which all the saints say beautiful things. Blessed are those who know how to pray and, through effective prayer, receive from our Judge the remission of sins and abundance of grace [EP 1755]. Prayer is the only and necessary means by which we may reach the mercy of God, as the prophet says: Blessed be God, because he has not rejected my prayer or removed his steadfast love from me (Psalm 65, 20), [EP 1537].

He is no friend of God who is not one in prayer [Cu 649]. Without prayer it is not possible to be at peace with God; for it is as necessary for the inner life as food is to the outer man [EP 1542]. First of all it must be collected as with a shell [a bowl] so as to spread to others as with a canal [EP 4120]. He who misses morning prayers remains weak to resist the temptations of the day [EP 2249]. If he does not pray, he will be a man disarmed, who may be wounded on all sides. He is a body without a soul. Little by little he will begin to emit the bad smell of himself [EP 2974]. He who is in his room and does not speak to Christ or work for Christ makes a bad use of his room [Cu 619].

Make a great effort to help the very poor, for they keep the Work in their prayers [EP 1943]. Pray a little, for the Lord will find a way for you to have what you want for His glory [EP 1337].

Images which show unconditional consecration

How can a religious who has not worked during his life for the Lord, die in the Lord? [Cu 618]. A true religious is one who truthfully says: my God is my all [Cu 663]. I shall pray that the Lord consoles them inwardly and increases the spirit and knowledge of the judgement of God within them [EP 4273].

Let us pray: That the Holy Spirit which comes from You, Lord, may enlighten our souls and, according to the promise of Your Son, lets us know the whole truth. By Jesus Christ, Our Lord, Amen [Prayer of the Calasanzian Community, p. 20].

Conclusions
The different ways of praying are prayers if we find the desires of the Holy Spirit which touch our hearts so as to make us do His will.

I list different modes of prayer of which Calasanz speaks:

– A way of praying in your room
– Examining your conscience
– Reading spiritual works
– A way of praying together
– The celebration of the sacraments
– The liturgy of the hours
– Visiting the Most Blessed Sacrament
– Devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin: the Rosary, the Crown of 12 Stars and the *Sub tuum Praesidium*
– Continual prayer with children and young people
– Universal prayer
– Various images of prayer.

In addition to these, our Constitutions explicitly include the following:

– Familiarity with the Holy Scriptures
– Celebrating the mysteries of Christ during the liturgical year
– Devotion to our Holy Father.

Notes to chapter III

37. As I am writing this document on the subject of prayer, I realise that we can approach Calasanz’s letters on the matter and see how the Spirit touches his heart and at the same time shows the practice which he is being given.

This is what I ask you to do as you read the texts which follow on Christ crucified.

The Spirit of the resurrected Christ which lives within us becomes visible as we totally divest ourselves of self interest. The cross is others’ rejection of the life of God within us, and for this reason, the loving Presence when it is rejected, lives within its heart. This means choosing the love poured into our hearts so that we may live this in every situation of adversity or prosperity, for it is there that our spirits will be greatly lightened.

*The ways of the Lord to take souls to heaven are all holy and mysterious, and they should be guided with absolute and paternal care. But do not leave anybody without a cross, for sensuality is a heavy burden to some people, but with patience the spirit finds lightness in this* [EP 1565].

*Use knowledge of Christ crucified to identify the wishes of the Spirit which makes us wise with the wisdom of God.*

*I believe that God gives those religious who lack neither clothing or food a magnificent*
opportunity to use their intelligence on God’s own object, which is Christ crucified, in which there are hidden spiritual treasures for those who shun the taste for sensuality and who love that of the Spirit. Let us ask the Lord to give us spirit and zeal to follow Him as far as possible [EP 2921].

The real book, which we must all study, is the passion of Christ, which gives the right wisdom appropriate to each individual [EP 1563].

When Calasanz uses the phrase the passion of Christ gives wisdom, he is quoting St. Paul:

When I came to you, brethren, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in much fear and trembling; and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification. None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory [1 Cor 2, 1-8].

Christ’s cross makes us stronger to share in His suffering. If we stop at the consolation without discovering the human behaviour that this requires, we do not wish to experience the cross, which is the fruit of being faithful to the Lord. We love him in a disinterested way. There is greater joy in giving than receiving.

If we were to patiently and insistently dig deeply into the Passion of the Blessed Christ, every mortification would seem as light as a feather... but our self-love stops impedes this great benefit [EP 2636].

May they pray to the Lord that he grant them the spirit to suffer with Christ a little, in exchange for what he suffered for love of us [EP 81].

For it is written: doing good and suffering evil is a good life. May the Lord give you all strength and the spirit to do His will [EP 1619].

It will be very wise before men and to their great credit before God, if these dear brethren, who have come from Germany with great privations, patiently obey the divine will. As I cannot console them with deeds, then I shall pray that the Lord give them inner consolation and increase within them the spirit and knowledge of the judgement of God, in whose presence it is best and to one’s great credit, to suffer for the love of Him in this life, rather than to enjoy great consolation; for the former is giving and the latter is receiving, and it is true that it is better to give than to receive [EP 4273].

St. Paul says:

But it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has commissioned us; he has put his seal upon us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee [2 Cor 1, 21-22].

The life-force of the resurrected Christ is seen in the weakness of the cross. God Himself is within us and accompanies us in misfortune. He is the first to suffer and he gives us His love so that where there is not love we may provide love.

A time of tribulation and mortification should make virtue and perfection increase. My power is
made perfect in weakness, which is to say, in tribulation [EP 4468].

Again, St. Paul says:

“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities; for when I am weak, then I am strong [2 Cor 12, 9-10].

If you wish to persevere in the service of God and gain eternal reward, you should realise that you will have to go through much tribulation to enter the kingdom of God [Acts 14, 22], and moreover to be sure about what the Prophet said: I am with you in tribulation, therefore take great heart for He who can do all things is on your side [EP 3933].

The passion of Christ teaches us to endure tribulation patiently

In serving God it is best to put up with all things, and with all charity and meekness give back good for evil, so that you may edify your neighbour. All of you together should try to set a good example to your neighbour and show that their journey to Norcia was only for the love of his children, so that they will thus overcome all calumny and their credit will increase [EP 86].

St. Paul says:

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them ... Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good [Rom 12, 14-21].

I endured the aggravations patiently. I was taken to the Holy Office, without having been told why, and when I was later told the reason, I knew that I was innocent in the matter. The Lord wants to put us to the test through the way of tribulations. However, I trusted in Him. So be ready to suffer for God, for we have to go through much tribulation in order to enter the kingdom of God (Acts 14, 22), [EP 4125].

Endure is an expression used by St. Paul, who means that Jesus took our sins upon Himself in order to transform our humanity, giving His life for us, giving His blessing and His goodness:

St. Paul says:

When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we try to conciliate [1 Cor 4, 12-13].

Try to follow the advice of St. Paul, which is to say that everyone should endure the imperfections of others, for by so doing they will live in blessed peace, which is what I would like to give you in deeds rather than in words [EP 2036].

For Calasanz, endure means: love those who injure us, with the strength of the Spirit of God, helping them to gradually free themselves from imperfection, by expressing inner feelings.

Endure all injustices with the Spirit of God [EP 2362].

Brother... writes to me about some of his temptations or troubles; try to console him and treat him with paternal affection, since as the superior he has to suffer the imperfections of his subjects and help them to gradually overcome them. It is not possible for him to suddenly become perfect [EP 899].
Enduring patiently means: finding a solution for defects and imperfections with paternal love, and at the same time, remaining patient in order to see the inner goodness and to use the talent which you discover.

Great patience is needed in order to use the talents you find in your subjects, and also to know how to find a remedy for their defects and imperfections, by encouraging them one by one [EP 3721].

You should not limit those who have a talent for doing two things to doing one only because when there is a need we must do this. There is a great difference in how a House is governed when we know how to apportion work according to people's individual talents [EP 2983].

The cross of Christ teaches how to forgive

It is necessary to forgive everything for the love of God and also for the good of the religion, and give heartfelt love to those who are against us and to pray for them, because this is what is desired by the law of Christ our Master [EP 2593].

When our Redeemer taught us how to effectively be pardoned for our sins, He did not say forgive us Lord because we have been very penitent, not because we have prayed much, nor for miracles, but because we have forgiven our enemies; for when we do this for love of Him, it is an effective remedy for any forgiveness asked [EP 2506].

The delicacy of true virtue consists in suffering calumny and offences from those to whom a person has done good, and who is disposed to do more and this is the target for which we must aim [EP 2646].

The cross of Christ teaches us to cure psychosomatic pains which are the fruit of past wounds.

As we begin to know ourselves, we are able to find the cross within our inner selves, which is to say, though a series of pains which can tell a story about us, a series of sufferings which have not been fully understood. If we begin to understand the sensations which are linked to this pain, with the competent help which is needed, we shall find the Presence which is given joyfully. And that is where we shall find true happiness within us, a happiness which leads us to love all people in every situation, whether of prosperity or adversity.

I shall pray to the Lord, as I did before, so that He may especially give you the true light to know the truth of the invisible things that God has prepared for those who follow Him in His most holy passion, for by doing so they will achieve the knowledge and love of such things. God gives this grace to the humble, as the Prophet says: ‘He gives knowledge to children’ and the more we abase ourselves through our self-knowledge, the higher shall God raise us in the knowledge of invisible and eternal things. May the Lord grant us perfect obedience to His most blessed will [EP 4342].

The cross of Christ, because it is others’ rejection of the God who lives within us, hides the happiness of freely given love.

None of the ancient philosophers knew real happiness and blessedness, and what is worse, few, very few Christians know it either, since Christ, who is our Master, placed it in the cross. And although it will seem difficult to many to practise in this life, nevertheless it contains within itself more wealth of goodness and inner consolation than the earth has [EP 1662].

38. Our Constitutions ask us to follow the Mysteries of Christ throughout the liturgical cycle
Every night, Calasanz read the texts of the Eucharist of the following day.

“He was most devoted to saying the Mass, and every night he had the missal taken to him or rather he used the missal which he kept in his room, and he had the Mass of the next day read to him and often, at night, when I was sleeping in his room [because of his final illness] he called me and asked me how the introit or the epistle or the Gospel started...” [says Brother Lorenzo Ferrari].

So that we may be nourished with the Word of God, we may follow the steps of the lectio divina, bearing in mind what Calasanz had to say.

Preparation.

Reading the Biblical texts with prior interpretation.

Meditation: A Word touches the heart.

Prayer: Perform acts of humility and constraint. with the word which has touched your heart so that its fruit may be found.

Contemplation: Perform acts of thanksgiving as you move from the gift to the giver of the gift.

Action: Do those things desired by the Spirit.

We also need to understand the significance of the different liturgical times.

39. I recall the words of St. John of the Cross on guiding souls

These directors should reflect that they themselves are not the chief agent, guide, and mover of souls in this matter, but the principal guide is the Holy Spirit, who is never neglectful of souls, and they themselves are instruments for directing these souls to perfection through faith and the law of God, according to the spirit given by God to each one. Thus the whole concern of directors should not be to accommodate souls to their own method and condition, but they should observe the road along which God is leading one; if they do not recognize it, they should leave the soul alone and not bother it [The Living Flame of Love, 3, 46].

40. In every chapter of our Constitutions there is a number relating to Mary the Mother of God

Chapter I: the Calasanzian mission

And since we profess to be the poor of the Mother of God, let us never neglect poor children, but, with great patience and charity, we shall try to train them in every virtue, just as the Lord says: “what you have done to the smallest, you have done to me” [CC 7]. The Pious Schools, which were placed under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother and Teacher of Christ, have been corroborated throughout the centuries, always taking care of the needs and hopes of mankind, and are recognised by the Church as having a special mission even in today’s world, and they mean to work to make the world a fairer and more fraternal place [C 11].

Chapter II: We follow Christ

The Virgin Mary, united with the Son in perfect spiritual communion, faithful companion of His Passion and before others, sharer in His Resurrection, is our luminous guide in the sequela Christi. Thanks to her continuous presence, we are able to represent the image of the Son, and our pupils will be able to reproduce in themselves something of Him, He who was born of and educated by Her [C 23].
Chapter III: Our Community Life

As we are reunited in a community of faith by the bonds of love which the Father gave us and by our Calasanzian vocation itself, imitating the kind of life Christ had with His Apostles and which the primitive Church followed with Mary, in a certain way we become ministers of hope in the Kingdom to come and of fraternal unity amongst mankind [C 25].

Chapter IV: A Community of Prayer

From frequently reading Sacred Books, we shall acquire intimate knowledge of God and of His will, following the example of the Virgin Mary, who, by continual meditation within her heart upon the Word of God and by keeping it faithfully, tried to enter more deeply into the mystery of Christ and more completely magnified the Lord [C 42].

With filial love we venerate the Virgin Mary as she shares in the mystery of Christ [C 49].

Chapter V: Consecrated Chastity

Through the Church and as a gift of His love, the heavenly Father has given us chastity, as a vision of the Kingdom of Heaven, by which, following Christ with an undivided heart and in imitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we cling more closely to God and we embrace all mankind with special love [C 53].

Our filial devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and her maternal protection, which is implored confidently, will increase our strength to earnestly follow her example of fidelity [C 58].

Chapter VI: Our Poverty

From amongst the poor and the humble, Lord Jesus chose as His Mother the Blessed Virgin Mary, who is distinguished above all for her humility and poverty. And St. Joseph Calasanz wanted us to be real Poor Clerics of the Mother of God and through his experience of venerable poverty, he acquired humility and other virtues [C 64].

Chapter VII: Consecrated Obedience

In our way of life, in which we are constantly ready to serve the Kingdom of God, in the presence of the world we live our obedience with invincible faith that it is at one with the mystery of the cross and the resurrection of Christ and, with the singular example of fidelity of the Virgin Mary, who was the servant of the Lord, constantly before our eyes, and with a generous heart, conforming to the plan of the Father [C 89].

Chapter VIII: Our Ministry in the Church

There is no number concerning the Virgin Mary. Mary was spoken of in the first chapter: The Calasanzian mission.

Chapter IX: Formation of Religious

I want this profession and these vows, under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary of God and of our Blessed Father Joseph Calasanz, to be irrevocable, canonically ratified and valid for ever [C 119].

41. Here I return to the Synoptic Gospels on the subject of prayer of petition

St. Matthew’s Gospel tells us:

And in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be
heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Pray then like this: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day’s own trouble be sufficient for the day [Matt 6, 7-17, 25-34].

Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them [Matt 18, 19-20].

St Luke’s Gospel tells us the following:

He was praying in a certain place, and when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples’.

And he said to them, When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread; and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us; and lead us not into temptation.

And he said to them, Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; and he will answer from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything?’ I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him whatever he needs.

And I tell you, Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him! [Lk 11, 1-13].

St. Mark’s Gospel
Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against any one; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses [Mk 11, 24-25].

MEANS AND ATTITUDES TO LIVE PRAYER

And although, with humble affection, it is right to expect from Omnipotent God, who has called us to be workers in this field which promises a rich harvest, every means needed to make us ideal co-operators for the truth... [CC 3].

Calasanz indicates the following means:

– Relate to those people who take us towards the talents which the Spirit inspires
– Relate to the Holy Spirit on our own, that we may know how to guide our boat
– Do the deeds that the Spirit suggests
– Forestall and heal evil
– Learn to understand and to express our inner feelings
– Give the Body those things that it needs
– Lower ourselves to enlighten children.

If religious perfection is living in the fullness of love, the appropriate means are those which make us grow in orderly love.

They will work for religious perfection, which is the reason for which they wear the habit, and as that goal is such a high one, they must use the appropriate means with which to reach it [EP 3794]. Take great care to lead these two brothers back to the right way of humility [EP 638].

1. Relating to those people who take us towards the talents which the Spirit inspires

As for Brother... as, with his talent, he is a person who may be good for the religion, you had better treat him in a way by which the religion will harvest the fruit of his talent, and the superior should know how to guide him in such a way as to make him work through love rather than through mortification, and to make him do what his efforts can do, you must make
him work with Brother Marc’Antonio or with Father Gennaro [EP 2336].

Every House will have a Spiritual Director who will help the superior in guiding the subjects towards perfection and he will take special care of young people, as if he were Novice Master [CC 299].

Our Constitutions say: *we shall take spiritual interviews and direction into great account* [C 50].

**Reading Biblical texts**

The Bible stories are the fruit of the action of the Holy Spirit. They awaken our hearts.

Our Constitutions say: *From frequently reading Sacred Books, we shall acquire intimate knowledge of God and of His will, following the example of the Virgin Mary, who, by continual meditation within her heart upon the Word of God and by keeping it faithfully, tried to enter more deeply into the mystery of Christ and more completely magnified the Lord* [C 42].

**Those who have experience of God let the guidance of the Spirit touch their hearts. This is the value of spiritual readings**

If the priests of our religion knew how important it is to work for the love of God, they would not spend their time idly; and if they spent the time during which they cannot help the children in reading the Saint Teresa’s Way of Perfection, they would see how their hearts would be kindled, for the words of the Saint are very effective for those who read them with devotion [EP 2806].

**Life awakens life. What most touches the heart is the testimony of life, which breathes the loving Presence. The Body of the Lord creates the environment in which people are transformed**

For this important role (Novice Master) the person chosen by the General should be one who knows how to lead his novices forward to the summit of perfection, not only with prudence, with doctrine and experience, but also by his example; in other words, a person who willingly and constantly takes on ordinary tasks, who is well-versed in divine matters, in ecclesiastic ritual and in mystic theology, who teaches with the word and demonstrates in his deeds; who will teach how to obey God’s commandments and how to follow advice and the way of perfection [CC 19].
Our Rules state: *As we follow Calasanz’s example, we consider the witness of our lives as the principal and primordial means of evangelising: a witness of life is a silent, powerful and effective proclamation of the Good News* [Common Rules 108].

**Do Spiritual Exercises**

In the meantime, in a silent environment, give the Spirit an opportunity for us to hear His voice.

...and first of all, give them spiritual exercises at least once a month and even more, if the Novice Master thinks it appropriate; during that period they may make a general confession for their whole life [CC 20]. I think it is a good idea for you to make a retreat, with one or two companions, so as to do spiritual exercises in a place which is far from the conversations of men, to communicate alone with God, so that Martha and Mary may remain united [Cu 694, 2006 edition].

Our Constitutions say: *We shall faithfully keep to our annual spiritual exercises, and during the year shall often make spiritual retreats* [C 50].

Our Rules say: *Every year we shall all undertake spiritual exercises, for at least five whole days; during these, ands in the presence of God, we shall very seriously ask personal and community renewal of ourselves* [Common Rules 70]. *We shall hold lectures on spiritual topics with a certain frequency and sometimes hold spiritual retreats. These are aimed at renewing our spirit and reconsidering religious life through prayer and meditation* [Common Rules 71].

**We can add:** contact with nature, contact with simple people, listening to small children, speaking transparently about what we experience, may all awaken the place where the Spirit acts.

**2. Communicate alone with the Holy Spirit so that we know how to guide our boat**

This particular means asks us to live prayer and at the same time to dedicate time to contemplating the Spirit which dwells within us and creates what we are and do.

**The Holy Spirit prays within us**
God knows with what affection I desire that the Holy Spirit will continue to assist you, so that, by communicating with Him behind closed doors at least once or twice a day, you will know how to guide the little boat of your soul on the way to religious perfection and to the port of eternal happiness, since this is the first and principle business of us all. And if this goes well, then all other business will be very successful in the presence of God, even if they may appear otherwise to human prudence. In this period of much trouble, I should be most pleased if you show great heart by patiently enduring it all for the love of God, to whom I shall especially pray that he may give you the grace to use that talent which He has given you to do good to your neighbour. This is all I need. May the Lord bless you all [EP 3858].

During a period of silence, we find a link with the Spirit which dwells within us and which teaches us to grow as human beings.

Our Constitutions say: The spirit of prayer is nourished and maintained by silence and sobriety of speech; these are virtues which allow us the hear more clearly the voice of that God who makes Himself heard where He wishes. Therefore we must remain ever-vigilant, lest he come suddenly and pass by without leaving any fruit. The spirit of prayer is nourished and maintained by silence and sobriety of speech; these are virtues which allow us the hear more clearly the voice of that God who makes Himself heard where He wishes. Therefore we must remain ever-vigilant, lest he come.

Our Rules say: We shall maintain both inner and outer silence, not only because this makes us more receptive to the voice of the Spirit, but also out of respect for our brethren; and this should especially be in those places reserved for the Community, and during the night, and during the hours laid down in the community schedule [Common Rules 72].

And why shouldn’t we contemplate all that the Spirit teaches us so that our whole being is steeped in that loving Presence, and it makes that visible?

I recall that the Spirit teaches us:

– About the way we see reality
– About our Piarist identity
– About the mission we share as Piarists
– About our fraternal relationships in community life
– About our relationship with God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy
Spirit.
– About our relationship with Christ crucified, with Christ in the Eucharist, with Christ who identifies himself with the smallest and poorest: what we do to them we do to Him.
– About our relationship with Mary, our Mother,
– About our relationship with the saints, like our Blessed Father, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Teresa…
– About our relationship with transcendental life, such as: Love, Truth, Justice, Solidarity...
– About our ability to know the light of God and of mankind.

Being faithful to prayer

Our Constitutions say: In scheduling daily prayer times, following the advice of our Book of Prayers, every Community shall give due importance to the reading of Lauds and Vespers. To nourish and increase the piety of the religious, we can make use of a worthy and befitting Oratory, in which the Most Blessed Sacrament is reserved [C 50].

Our Rules state: In any case, at the beginning of the course and taking into consideration the Constitutions, the traditions of the Order and the directives of the Major Superiors, every Local Community will plan its actions of piety and will submit the resulting schedule to their respective Major Superior and his Council for approval. Subsequently, this will be periodically revised [Common Rules 58]. The Superior will also have to make sure that during his day’s work, every religious keeps sufficient time free for individual prayer. He shall also have to see that all are able to take part in community celebrations, during which, apart from reading vocal prayers, time will also be spent on meditating on the Word of God, for at least half an hour, in the deep quietude of body and spirit [Common Rules 59]. And to make the practice of prayer easy for religious, each Community shall have a worthy and befitting Oratory, with easy access near to the individual rooms. This place will also be reserved for the Most Blessed sacrament. Our religious will use it for both community and private prayer [Common Rules 74].

3. Do the deeds which the Spirit suggests
Prayer teaches us to live according to the wishes of the Holy Spirit. When, taking into account the whole and integral person and concrete situations, we act according to the impulse of the Spirit, we can see, through our very selves, the Father, who is merciful to children and youngsters.

All this is possible and contained within those suggestions of the Spirit, which keep us at one with Christ the Lord. Thanks to conversing with the inner being, decisions become apostolically feasible.

*Attaching ourselves to Christ the Lord, for which we make an effort to live and to please Him [CC 34]. May the Father, who sees in secret, bestow His abundant gifts upon them and raise them to the perfection of solid virtue [CC 48]. Be as St. David advised: by day the Lord commands his steadfast love, by night his song is with me [Psalm 41, 9]. Daytime must be spent in acts of mercy and night time in thanksgiving and preparation for the next day [EP 1544].*

This means living one’s daily life following one’s deepest conscience, which, in harmony with the voice of God, takes our whole being and our situation into account. In this way we stay linked to the loving Presence.

4. Forestall and heal evil

As Piarists, we have to learn with ample charity in the Church, to establish and exercise an effective, protective and healing remedy for evil, which is inductive and enlightens goodness [MT 9]. If we experience this ourselves, we shall be able to do it with children and young people.

Those who decide to come to the Pious Schools, promise to dialogue frequently with those responsible for formation, about the temptations which beset them. As time goes by, this method will become a mutual help amongst Piarists.

*The master should make an effort to question the novices frequently but amiably about the temptations which most assiduously beset them, so that he may offer them the best remedy. Keep a close eye on anyone who is not very sincere on this point, for youngsters of this type usually deceive themselves [CC 26]. Since by the grace of the Lord, you have not allowed yourself to be overcome by the passions, you must take great care to help those who are overcome by their passions, and you will be doing work which greatly*
pleases God [EP 2683]. Try to divest yourself of all affection for your family and friends and change it into spiritual affection, and love them only with well-ordered love [CC 34]. You do well to use the charity that the Lord Vicar uses with all, and if you do not receive satisfaction in this life, you will do so in the next. I beg you not to forget your neighbours there, for well-ordered love begins with oneself [EP 907].

Evil may be forstalled and healed by taking as one’s own the desires of the Spirit. Healing means making the loving Presence visible, with all that He is creating within us to make reality human.

With St. John of the Cross we can repeat his spiritual canticle:

Now I occupy my soul and all my energy in his service; I no longer tend the herd, nor have I any other work now that my every act is love.

I have heard the Fr. General speak of a need to put the ministry of spiritual accompaniment into practice in our Order.

Like plants, we grow gradually

No matter how small and weak a plant is, if an expert gardener is skilful and looks after it, in a short time it will grow, and flower and also bear fruit [EP 2367]. In this text, Calasanz asks a Cardinal to take care of the Order as a gardener would. I use this image for the healing of evil, but, as we may see from the following text: Universal reform of corrupt customs must be followed by means of diligent cultivation of the smallest and most easily manageable plants, which are young people, before they become hardy and difficult, or even impossible to guide, as we see with grown men [MT 15].

As for our brother, with the love of a father, make him understand this well in his inner being, for he needs help very badly [EP 1415].

We want the whole person to be saved and not just the soul

It is true to say that the ministry of education is the worthiest of all because it deals with the joint salvation of both the soul and the body [MT 7].

5. Learn to understand and to express our inner feelings

Cultivate the personal faculties of intelligence, freedom and will so that the candidates learn to read their inner self in a realistic way, knowing how
to discern that which corresponds to their deepest identity (inner inclination) and developing the capacity to choose freely that which will lead them to a practice of perfect charity [PFE 19].

We can learn to understand grace or special feelings

It is wise to take care about the way in which we find proof of what the Lord gives us. We realise that it comes freely and encourages us to leave ourselves and follow what we are given. Thus we cooperate with His work.

The more we feel we are in God’s favour because of grace or special feelings, the lower we must humiliate ourselves in order not to lose these, because we lose them with a little presumption or self-love. Let us recognise ourselves as useless tools to the Lord, for whom we are more an obstacle than a help to His work [EP 1817].

We can begin to understand the feelings that come from the passions so that we may name them as they are and gradually remove them from ourselves, to arrive at the root of the matter

Make sure you deal with and feel well with God, on whom all our well-being depends. In order to do this properly, the only remedy is to communicate with the superior, who is Father... all your inner feelings, so that the enemy will not be able to overcome in any matter. If you do this, you will find great inner calm, which is a great treasure. I shall not fail to pray the Lord to keep you in his merciful hands; on your part, you must not fail to follow my advice, for I am sure that you will succeed in doing it well because our lives are short. May the Lord bless you all [EP 736] The brother should first of all care for his spiritual well-being through blessed humility and obedience and, for the good of the youngsters, by leaving all else behind him; nor should he let himself be guided by his senses which, sub specie boni, will deceive him [EP 2394]. I reply to your question, which is based upon an antagonistic view of the spirit, as might a father to a child who asks to have a sword, dagger or a gun, which is an inappropriate request. Thus, for the good of the youngster, do not agree [EP 2498].

If any of our religious have heard, with disgust, that evangelical truth that the way to Paradise is narrow and the door is small, I see how ignorant they are if they think that they can travel this path by means of the senses. They should gradually deprive themselves of their preference for the senses and
acquire a taste for the spirit, and then they will find this path to Paradise easy, for the yoke of God is light for those who wish to live according to the spirit [EP 2923].

A feeling from the passions is strongly felt at the beginning, but it brings no light and becomes an avid and insatiable appetite.

Passion is very strong at first [EP 2581]. Vehement passion blinds people [EP 2183]. To tell the truth, those who are unsatisfied with what is necessary, will not be satisfied with the superfluous, for man’s cupidity is insatiable [EP 1488].

God often makes great sinners into his great servants [EP 2167].

We are able to learn to distinguish passions from the intelligence and will, which are one’s own judgement and will43

In the practice of Piarist training, contradicting one’s own will and one’s own judgement has been understood as going against the novice so as to test him, perhaps because the expression is linked to enduring humiliations and scorn with patience [CC 22]. The power of the expression is in that being simple that Calasanz identifies with looking at God so as to know how to receive everything from His hand.

From the letters of Calasanz, it is clear that one’s personal judgement is a way of thinking which is not linked to the talent desired by the Holy Spirit. This is why he speaks of mortifying personal opinions, not only to the novices but also for all Piarists, including the Fathers Provincial. I wish to see in you a little mortification of your own opinion, and with this office of Fr. Provincial I wish to put you to the test, for if I succeed then I shall be able to confirm you in the role here, or in another province, because those who have such a role need great patience in order to know how to use the talents they find in individuals, and also, with paternal affection, find a remedy for their defects and imperfections by teaching them the only way to reach religious perfection [EP 3721]. This priest did not guide people according to their talents nor did he correct the defects and imperfections of the Piarists with the love of a father. He thought and acted differently. This is what one’s own judgement means.

One’s own will is freedom which is linked to passionate feelings or unrecognised imperfections. Considering his defects, I should like him to
realise his misery and, with deepest humiliation ask God for forgiveness, for those who live for their own will die with it [EP 3402].

In the real world of the Pious Schools during Calasanz’s time, being a Piarist meant being scorned, it was a base and mean office as we learn from his letters and from other documents; this is why we need to learn to be simple and to carry on with all that scorn entails.

Humility is to be found when we are like children, in particular like those who have nothing; for it is bad in the eyes of the world and few people wish to live like this. God gives a hundred for one and even more if persecution and tribulation come from doing good, and these must be taken from the hand of God, for in so doing the Spirit will be a hundredfold, but few people know this teaching and thus few of them receive the hundredfold benefits of the Spirit [EP 1236].

Giano Nicio Eritreo [1577-1647] was a famous Roman humanist and he called the Roman Pious Schools a kind of sewer, for they gathered the excrement, the basest and worst section of the city’s children in order to teach them [Fr. Giner, p. 605].

We can learn to recognise the conversations of the inner self

A religious must never listen to gossip nor to idle talk, but must always remain composed, with inner strength, so that, by fleeing from worldly conversations he may listen more closely to those of the inner being, which is the true Presence of the Lord, and where, as from a spring, the perfection of the religious soul is born [Cu 949].

We can learn to recognise the touch of the Spirit, which is an inner light which changes our lives

Finding himself in Rome in the house of Mon. Fabrizio, his brother, the Venerable Glicerio, dressed in silk and with decorations, was touched by the Holy Spirit and he abandoned all his comforts he previously possessed and gave up himself to an exemplary life of mortification, changing his silk clothing for others which were much poorer and for very simple food. This was a common source of great admiration and he did it because of the great faith and inner light which our Lord God gave him [Calasanz, speaking as a witness at the investigations for the Venerable Glicerio, Reg. Serv. Dei XLI p. 35].
We can learn to recognise a word which God speaks in our hearts because grace is given so that we may face reality. Grace opens the way of the mission

I remember that I often heard him encourage people to sweep the school and do other voluntary work for the love of God, and to add that His Divine Majesty gave special spiritual and inner help to those who labour for Him; and that one simple word said inwardly to the soul would give such energy and strength that he could freely and joyfully endure any arduous task. But the Spirit of God is so delicate that it is only heard by those who are most attentive and whose souls are well purified and detached from all the things of the world and of themselves. On another occasion he said: I know of a person who, for fifteen years joyfully accepted the great works which happened to him because of one word uttered by God to his heart [Fr. Giner, p. 253].

6. Give the body those things that it needs

In spiritual life it is very important to take into account the body and its needs. At the same time we must realise that the actions of the Holy Spirit touch our inner self and it is there that the body makes the human behaviour which is given to us by God evident. In order to act, we have to ask the power of the body. We may drag a foot because we have not asked its strength. We fall into disordered activism.

On the path of spiritual life we have to give the body those things it needs

A religious must give the spirit what the spirit needs and also the body what that needs and not more to the body, for this will harm the spirit and, as St. Paul says, become an animal man [EP 2148].

Bear in mind the strength of the body in order to act

For some days I have had a slight temperature and some catarrh, but now I am beginning to feel better, thanks be to God; in a few days’ time I hope to be strong enough to go there [EP 1764].

The health of the body is to serve God and do good to your neighbour

To write, do not neglect to sleep, for health is more important [EP 456]. If you are healthy, I ask you to use it by serving God and helping your
neighbour [EP 1627]. Try to stay in good health and to help the students as much as you can [EP 164]. I hope that the Lord may soon make you healthy, so that you will be able to help in the schools, for the benefit of the little children and for the glory of His Divine Majesty [EP 519]. A servant of God does not live to eat, but rather eats to live and to serve [Cu 633].

We may add: Today we know that the body needs movement through appropriate exercise. Today we know that the body is wise, its pains may be symptoms of psychosomatic situations. It is important to learn from its wisdom.

7. Lower ourselves to give light to children

This is the place of grace for all of us as Piarists.

The quickest way to know oneself and to know God is to lower oneself to give children light.

There, in the classroom or in the pastoral work that we do, we know ourselves and in this way God shows Himself to us.

The fastest and easiest path or way to rise in self-knowledge, and thus to aspects of the mercy, prudence and infinite patience and goodness of God, consists in lowering ourselves in order to give light to children, especially to those who have nothing; for it is bad in the eyes of the world and few people wish to abase themselves and do this. God gives a hundredfold, but if in doing this there is persecution and tribulation, we must be patient and have faith in God for in so doing the Spirit will be recompensed a hundredfold, but as few people know this teaching few of them will receive the hundredfold benefits of the Spirit [EP 1236].

The way in which Calasanz abases himself to give light to children

Like Calasanz, we must be in touch with the poor areas of the city so that we realise how the guide of the Holy Spirit works in such a situation, This is the source of our vocation.

The vocation was born by seeing and dedicating ourselves to reality. In such a situation the inspiration of the Holy Spirit comes.

[Matteo Judiski to Calasanz]: Having asked him once the reason why he decided to found this religion of the Pious Schools, he replied: The only
reason I had was the dissolute lives that I witnessed amongst the poor children of Rome, who did not have a good education because of their poverty or the neglect of their parents, and as I reflected on the Psalm which says: “the hapless commits himself to thee; thou hast been the helper of the fatherless”, I believed that this sentence had been directed at me and therefore I began to catechise them in the Christian faith and in learning [P. Giner. Proceso informativo sobre la beatificación de San José de Calasanz, p. 670].

After having for many years seen the poor children in the deprived quarters of Rome, the dissolute lives that I witnessed amongst the poor children of Rome, the Spirit touched his heart as he read the “office” before the Most Blessed Sacrament in the Church of the “Santi Apostoli”, with the following sentence of the psalm: the hapless commits himself to thee; thou hast been the helper of the fatherless. In that sentence of the psalmist, which touched his heart, Calasanz discovered the following human action: I believed that this sentence had been directed at me and therefore I began to catechise them in the Christian faith and in learning.

The expression is as I reflected on the Psalm. Calasanz did not say this in his letters.

When the Spirit had touched his heart he could say: It is God who, to help His Church, in various moments inspires his true servants with this multiplicity of Orders, when faced with great needs [MT 18].

[Calasanz] Thanked the Secretary of the Ambassador of the Catholic King for his tardy offer of an ecclesiastical prebend and told him: I have found the best way to serve God in Rome by going good to children. I shall not leave this for anything in the world [Fr. Berro, Biografia di San Giuseppe Calasanzio. Mem. Stor. Volume I c. XII, p. 41].

Ask yourself: What means do you use to live your prayer? How do you experience all these means? To what do you feel you are invited?

8. Attitudes in order to grow in prayer

Calasanz indicates the following:
– Knowing yourself
– Opening yourself to your inner being
– Seeking truth
– Being humble
– Determination on the way to salvation taken.

**Attitudes to know yourself**

A good beginning to spiritual life is that of knowing oneself, the baseness into which we are all born and also the ingratitude given to God after all the benefits we have received; and if we exercise ourselves diligently in the matter, I can assure you that in this life you will have some knowledge of God, who is a science that is so great that a particle of it will be greater than all human sciences [EP 1339].

We have to see whether we put into practice the means to know ourselves.

**Attitudes in order to open ourselves to our inner being**

In order to recognise the wishes of the Spirit, the Novice Master, the Superior, the Confessor or the Master or the Spiritual Director, need to find all that is thought of felt within, so that they may discern the voice of the Spirit. This can be learned.

I have a feeling that the solution that may be used for Brother... is that a confessor who possesses charity should confess him twice a week and visit him frequently, inducing him to reveal all the thoughts and discourses which he feels within, and give him the necessary cure. And if this charitable exercise were to last for two or three continuous months, I am sure that he would review himself and that pain for having offended God and a desire to do repentance would enter his heart [EP 3055].

**Attitudes to seek for the truth through humility**

We cooperate with the truth. Naming reality as it is makes us progress in our spiritual lives. Humility asks us to recognise that the real situation is like this or that at the moment. Both truth and humility ask us to walk with our feet on the ground in our spiritual lives.

[Calasanz tells us] I write you the simple truth about what happens, even if it goes against me [EP 4242].

We can learn to recognise whether what we feel for God is imaginary or whether it really comes from the Spirit
Temptation has gone so far to take you to Spain or to change religion for greater mental tranquillity, which God only knows whether you will really achieve. I do not know what to say to you, for you would take no notice, and I shall only say that I shall pray with the greatest zeal that Our Lord will reach you with His light to see whether we are dealing with “Summa rerum”, or a vocation. I shall write a few lines to the Father Provincial, who has the authority for that which will be necessary. May Our Lord make you holy, as I desire for myself [EP 1236]. I have received your letter in which you tell me that you have received the grace of Our Lord to move to the Fathers of the Reform in Piedmont, and, because I hope that this is the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, I very much desire that you should follow this blessed vocation of yours [EP 3922].

If it is of the heart, the vocation will progress until next Spring and then you will let me know again about your feeling and also that of the Fathers, to whom I shall ask that they pray so that if this is going to be for the glory of God, the business will end well [EP 2503].

Can we recognise if that which we feel is

The desire of the Spirit, of the senses, of sensuality, is a feeling which seems good but is not, is it a desire from our own judgement or our own will?

To this end it is a good idea to consult a person who has already spoken about this means: Learn how to understand and express our inner feelings.

We cooperate with the Truth

God give the humble His grace to know the truth of things which are invisible, according to the Prophet: giving intelligence to children [c.f. Psalm 113, 130]. The humbler we are in knowledge of ourselves, the higher will God raise us in the knowledge of things which are invisible and eternal [EP 4392].

We are humble when we confess that all we have that is good has been received from the Father’s hands and that by being ungrateful we place an obstacle in the path of His grace

If not, may he help himself by humiliating himself in God’s presence, confessing that there is no good in him nor talents for good deeds without His grace, and that during the past he has been very ungrateful and
unworthy of the many benefits He has given him, and if he is able to humiliate himself like this, he will end in victory over our common enemy and will receive great spiritual benefit [EP 1149].

**By being humble we know the way to behave at any time, understand the things of the Spirit with solid foundations and we are able to walk according to the Lord’s Will.**

Make sure they love the virtue of blessed humility, with which they will understand the right way to behave in all they do [EP 1325]. All should make sure that they practise the virtue of Blessed humility is they want to achieve real charity and the holy love of God, and understand the real source of spiritual things [EP 3761]. Let us walk according to His holy will, which is only shown to the humble, and let us make sure that is what we are [EP 4510].

**Fear of God is acquired through deep humility**

The fear of God is not being afraid of God: Here you should pray for the cities which are suffering from the plague and from war, since we are all brothers in Christ and it would be an act of charity; waiting to pray until the moment the plague approaches means that it is done more out of fear than for the love of God; it would be wise to pray now for the succour of those who find themselves in such great danger [EP 1432].

The fear of God consists in being vigilant so that we are not led by the passions, which may lead to sin: The fear of God, which is the principle of wisdom, consists in always being on our guard that we do nothing which may offend God; and since we are so weak by nature, those who always live in this fear will be blessed. We must all have this and always show it to the pupils [EP 1024].

Both must subjugate their own opinions to that which seems best for the college, which must be discussed by you very calmly and without passion, for otherwise you will show little fear of God [EP 1958].

I hope then that you will not lag behind in comforting all the individuals there with the holy love of God, which is acquired through deep humility and understanding of one’s own baseness [EP 4321]. Go on joyfully and, both together, do not lose the blessed fear of God, but may you grow in love, so that everything will turn out happily, as this is the true source of the water
We see that we live humbly through the light and the peace we experience

If light and peace do not exist within us, this is because we do not give a name to the truth as it is, neither do we accept reality as it is. Only by giving a name to truth and accepting truth are we able to change reality.

I should like to see a little more humility in the more elderly Fathers, for if they had this the Lord would give them greater light and raise them up to supernatural things [EP 2385]. May they be steeped in Blessed humility, through which the Lord will give them great light with which they will easily tread the path of the spirit [EP 1448]. I shall try hard to be patient and humble, because this is how, while helping others, we acquire that inner peace of the soul which is an extraordinary gift that the Lord gives to the humble in this life [EP 1226]. Take great care to be the humblest in the House and you will be the favourite of God, for a religious who does not tread the path of blessed humility will in the end find himself deceived by the enemy. However, if you really practice this blessed virtue and you will find real calm and then teach it to the pupils, and you will not be able to console me more. May the Lord bless us always [EP 2390].

Determination on the path to prayer

We have all heard many times that it is we who wish to walk on the paths of prayer. At a certain point in our lives we feel determined to live prayer.

As for renewing vows, I, as a spiritual father who wishes for perfection in all of his children of the Religion, expect to find in all great desire to serve God and to unite themselves to Him through charity and love [EP 4028].

Calasanz prays for us in this way: Where my own powers are insufficient, I ask the Lord to send me His grace in abundance, so that, full of it, I shall be able to joyfully tread the path to salvation on which I have started, which will be achieved by those who persevere, as it is written, not he who begins but he who perseveres (Matt 10, 22), [EP 4115].

Ask yourself: How do you experience these attitudes? To what do you feel you have been called?

Let us pray: O Lord, who enters the hearts and thoughts of mankind and for whom there are no secrets, with Your Holy Spirit purify the instincts of
our hearts, so that we may love and praise you above all other things. For Jesus Christ, Our Lord, Amen [Prayer of the Calasanzian Community, p. 21].

Conclusions

If all of us all together use these means, we shall walk faster towards an increase in prayer. If, at the same time, we manage to live the human attitudes needed, then we shall walk with our feet on the ground, step by step, slowly but surely.

Here are the attitudes and means to tread the paths of prayer.

Means

– Relating to those people who take us towards the talents which the Spirit inspires.
– Relating to the Holy Spirit on our own, that we may know how to guide our boat.
– Doing the deeds that the Spirit suggests.
– Forestalling and healing evil.
– Learning to understand and to express our inner feelings.
– Giving the Body those things that it needs.
– Abasing ourselves to enlighten children.

Attitudes

– Knowing yourself.
– Opening yourself to your inner being.
– Seeking truth.
– Being humble.
– Determination on the way taken to salvation.

At the end of this last chapter on prayer, I have to add that if I had not experienced the training of Fr. André Rochais in Personality and Human Relations, I should not have been able to recognise these means and attitudes in Calasanz, along with many other realities in this book on prayer.

And so here is Calasanz for us:

I praise and thank the Lord and pray to Him that every day, He will increase in you and in all the others, His Holy Spirit and a burning desire to magnify His glory though our Institute [EP 4530].
Note to chapter IV

42. It would be a good idea to share what the texts of the Bible have to say with the Community. This could be done while preparing for the Sunday homily.

43. I quote two authors, Spidlik and Louf, who are knowledgeable about the opinions of the Holy Fathers concerning individual will and judgement.

**Tomas Spidlik says:**

The root of the seven cardinal sins is self will. We are speaking of a bad thought, to which we attach ourselves in such a way that at all costs we wish to put into practice. Our reason does not recognise it but we excuse ourselves [own judgement]. This is constancy and resolution in evil. It can only be overcome through humility. [Tomas Spidlik, El camino del Espíritu. Ed. PPC pp. 75-76].

**André Louf says:**

Individual will or individual wishes. This is not a matter of will as a spiritual faculty, a source of freedom and gift of ourselves. Renunciation of personal will means promoting freedom, but in harmony with man’s authentic self.

Wishes are desires in their wild state, indeterminate, not polarised by love. These many attractions are marked by the dynamism of sin. These greedy desires seethe in an outer zone, which is far from the core of our deepest being. These desires envelope our freedom, which, as it is disorientated, becomes the individual will.

A state of simplicity exists [here we recall what Calasanz says about being simple, like a child looking at God] and also a state of a multiplicity of desires.

Simplicity is the desire of God who lives within us; desire deposited in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

Individual will is a wall between man and God. By learning to give up all desires which keep him far from his deep nature and from the desire for God within him, God will appear in that ‘not clinging to anything’ [La Vida Espiritual].

44. **The word strength** is used by Calasanz for the body: the strength of the body; for passions: at first, passion is strong, and for the talents aroused by the Holy Spirit: He gives us light and strength.

45. **Calasanz feels the influence of St Teresa when she speaks of the holy fear of God in the Way of Perfection:**

Show us, then, O our good Master, some way... love and fear. For love will make us quicken our steps, while fear will make us look where we are setting our feet so that we shall not fall on a road where there are so many obstacles... if we have these two things we shall certainly not be deceived... Love and fear of God! These are two strong castles whence we can wage war on the world and on the devils [Way of Perfection, ch. 40 (69)].
**FINALLY, OF CALASANZ’S WRITINGS ON PRAYER**

The influence of St. Teresa is noticeable in the way Calasanz experiences prayer, especially in the conditions of prayer and effective and affective prayer. Notes will be found in the various chapters.

I was surprised at the influence of the Holy Fathers upon Calasanz. His relationship with them is a subject worthy of more and of deep study. The way in which Calasanz wishes us to be trained is connected to the Holy Fathers.

It is clear that Calasanz follows Pauline spirituality. He quotes him in his Constitutions and also does so frequently in his letters. All those quotations are connected with the Piarist charism and vocation. This is a topic which deserves more study.

We have a safe and complete guide to set all Piarists, both lay and religious, on the way to prayer.

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**FOR FURTHER STUDY**

I recall that all chapters in our Constitutions have numbers which are about the Holy Spirit.

These texts should be read slowly, not only so as to understand what they say, but also to recognise how the voice of the Spirit touches our hearts and to find the human behaviour He gives us. Let’s see:

**Chapter 1: The Calasanzian mission.**

**Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 6**

The Piarist religious family, humble in spirit and deeply grateful, recognises that it is a work of God and of the wise zeal and constant patience of St. Joseph Calasanz. Because of the voice of the Holy Spirit, he dedicated himself to the ministry of Christian education for children, especially the poor, with a spirit of intelligence and piety [C 1]. Calasanz, a sagacious interpreter of the signs of his times, founded that clerical Institute [C 2]. In order to create stability for his inspiration and mission in the Church, inspired by God, he proposed the practise of the
evangelical councils to his followers [C 3]. By means of various ministries, in the Church of God, all the religious Institutes have the perfection of charity as their real aim, guided by the Holy Spirit [C 4]. With humble affection, from Almighty God, we await all the necessary means to make us suitable co-operators with the truth [C 6].

Chapter II: Our sequela Cristi.
Numbers 15 and 22

Our Saviour then called those he wanted to follow Him and created the group of disciples. After His resurrection he sent them the Holy Spirit, as He had promised, so that they should tread the path of the Beatitudes, and, by staying intimately united with Him, would announce the Kingdom of God in words, deeds and the witness of their lives [C 15]. With this way of life of ours we cooperate to build the Body of Christ; we show mankind a clearer image of Him in the Church and, through the witness of our consecration, by means of the Holy Spirit, we become for all a more effective focus of the preeminent value of the riches of the Kingdom [C 22].

Chapter III: Our community life.
Numbers 26, 31, 39

We spur each other to live faithfully and in a spirit of conversion, according to the requirements of our baptism and our religious consecration [C 26]. Community relationships are enlivened by charity and by co-responsibility; that is why each of us forgets himself to collaborate with his brethren [C 31]. It is with this kind of community life that we respond more obediently to the Lord who calls us. And with the help of God this will bring greatest merit to our Institute [C 39].

Chapter IV: Community of prayer.
Numbers 53, 54, 59, 62

We shall dedicate ourselves to performing some inner or outward action of humility, of repentance or of giving thanks or of another kind, according to divine inspiration [C 43]. The spirit of prayer is nourished and maintained through silence and through moderation in speech; these are virtues which allow us to more clearly perceive the voice of our God, who makes Himself heard where he wishes. Therefore it is very important for us to remain ever
vigilant, so that He does not come without warning and pass by with no harvest [C 44]. Thus, by constant adoration of the Father in spirit and in truth, through our Apostolic actions we most fruitfully contribute to the salvation of mankind [C 52].

Chapter V: Religious chastity.

**Numbers 53, 54, 59, 62**

In the Church, the heavenly Father gives us chastity, as a precious gift of His love and in view of the Kingdom of Heaven... [C 54]. Those who, in no way confident of their own strength, keep in continuous contact with God and humbly await the help needed from Him... [C 57]. Sustained by good training in this matter and with a certain spiritual instinct, we shall be able to reject those things which endanger our chastity [C 59]. We already share in the Resurrection of Christ and experience the power of the Spirit in this life [C 62].

Chapter VI: Our poverty. Numbers 66, 69, 75

We live the spirit of poverty with austerity... [C 66]. Responsible practice of religious poverty does not depend only upon the Superiors, but all must be poor in spirit and in reality [C 69]. Such poverty must be loved by us and kept in its purity, as a solid bastion of the Order. Indeed, we must make an effort to practise it—whenever the Spirit suggests this—in new forms which are more appropriate to our charism and to what is expected in our times [C 75],

Chapter VII: Religious obedience.

**Numbers 77, 83, 84, 85, 88, 89**

His will, that is shown to us by means of the illumination of the Holy Spirit, or the wishes of the community or any other sign through our Superiors, brethren or other concrete circumstances [C 77]. Chosen in the name of faith and love, the decision being completely free, such obedience chiefly helps achieve inner freedom, which is that of the children of God, and disposes us to give ourselves in charity and to encourage our personalities to mature [C 83]. The ministry of authority... obedient in our souls we make an effort to understand God’s will for our brethren... [C 84]. As far as is possible, the Superior should apportion assignments according
to the temperament and ability of each [C 85]. Without neglecting prayer or the advice of competent people, try to understand what God’s will is [C 88]. With generous hearts we comply with the plans of the Father [C 89].

Chapter VII: Our ministry in the Church. Numbers 90, 93, 97, 100

With a view to creating the Body of Christ, the Holy Spirit, who gives different gifts to each, has, through our Founder, generated the Order of the Pious Schools. Our Order shares in the evangelising mission, which is a duty of the whole Church...[C 90]. Our very situation as consecrated men and in a special way the prestige of chastity and the witness of our poverty, all add up to make us not only educationally and apostolically effective, but also to give us inner sympathy and active solidarity with poor children [C 93]. Our school, which was created above all as a school for the people, is committed to developing not only the skills of our pupils, but also to offering, in an environment of a school community which is inspired by the evangelical spirit of freedom and love... [C 97]. With our ministry we shall meet, in the spirit of Calasanz... [C 100].

Chapter IX: Formation of religious.
Numbers 104, 119

Those who, under the influence of the Holy Spirit and a wish to share in our life and apostolate, ask to join us... [C 104]. I make my vow to Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit... [C 119].

It is very interesting to read the Capitular document on the Formation and studies of a Piarist [PFE].

This document from the Chapter guides us on the ways that we must train, following the lead of the Holy Spirit, who touches all things.

The whole of the document may be read, but the following numbers are especially significant: 6, 8, 11, 12, 14, 17, 19-21, 23-30, 98, 100, 102, 110, 112, 124, 125, 130, 155.

Introduction

The discovery of the inner inclination that the Spirit of God inspires in each one; the practice to reach a personal understanding of aptitudes and crooked tendencies, “that live in the heart of man... that are difficult to
diagnose and even harder to uproot (CC de 1622, n. 16), to prevent evil and support good” [PFE 6].

Formation is processual, with its corresponding stages and goals. The process of personal growth will always prevail over other aspects such as the “curricula” of education and the length of formative [PFE 8].

The Piarist vocation and its formation

Our vocation in the Church springs from the work that God has done in saint Joseph Calasanz and the answer he gave to the calling of God. Reading the historic reality of his time in the light of the Gospel and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he existentially understood that God was inviting him to fully consecrate himself to him through the ministry of the Pious Schools, as he himself expressed: “I have found in Rome a better way to serve God in these little ones, and I will not leave it for anything in the world” [PFE 11].

The same Holy Spirit that guided saint Joseph Calasanz in the understanding of his vocation and his given response, is the One who has also stirred up other people afterward to choose the way of life, expressed in the Constitutions and Rules of the Order, with astounding fruits of holiness. Today as well our candidates are guided by the Holy Spirit to fully consecrate themselves to Christ, following the experience of our founder and in accordance with the Piarist religious way of life approved by the Church [PFE 12].

The Holy Spirit, who acts in the Church, guides each believer in the building of the Body of Christ and guides him towards a particular consecration with Christ in which he finds his vocation and his way of life, accomplishing this way the Project of Salvation of God the Father for all humanity and each individual [PFE 14].

This formative process involves dialogue: to those He calls to be Piarists, God forms and converts us to Him as we answer to that call. It is a permanent process though which we cooperate with the Holy Spirit who acts in us to follow Jesus Christ according to the Piarist experience of the Gospel, and we are diligent in continuously strengthening our own identity before God, ourselves, the community and the world, progressively achieving our unity of life in Christ by the Spirit [PFE 17].
To have before us an evangelical and Calasanzian model of the “new man” that today’s church and world need; to internalize and assimilate the set of values for which we have opted as a absolute and unitary life model; to know and share the dramas and urgencies of society; to raise awareness and work for the children and youths that most suffer the injustices and their consequences; to live the training process in reference to the Gospel and the Calasanzian charism, as an experience from God, incarnated in the historical reality; to prepare ourselves for the mission entrusted to us through a responsible dedication to study and other training guidelines; to assimilate and identify ourselves with the Piarist way of life –specific, globalizing and unified– given to us by the Constitutions and Rules; to make the way of the religious consecration, which makes us learn the way of life of Jesus Christ poor, chaste and obedient, through the practice of the Piarist ministry; to discover the inner inclination that the Holy Spirit causes in each candidate that carries out the Piarist religious vocation, identifying the content of such a inclination; to exercise the knowing of the self which allows to manifest the aptitudes and the “crooked tendencies” that live in the heart of the candidate when he gets in a conscience contact with reality (personal, social, educational, ecclesiastical, institutional, community) to teach him discern and opt for that which is typical of the action of God inside of him; this way he prevents evil and supports good; to develop the intellectual aptitudes in harmony with the life of the Spirit to guarantee the personal integration of the educational, philosophical and theological content; to cultivate the personal faculties of intelligence, freedom and will so that the candidates learn to read their inner self in a realistic way, knowing how to discern that which corresponds to their deepest identity (inner inclination) and developing the capacity to choose freely that which will lead them to a practice of perfect charity [PFE 19].

By contemplating this world whose signs are transformed into a calling to mission, an urgency is born in the Piarists: to live and proclaim the Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ. They discover, therefore, with greater clarity that the educational ministry is a part of the evangelization of children and young, mainly poor, whose privileged place continues being the Calasanzian school for them; and that the educational task finds its fulfillment in the humane and Christian building of the person [PFE 21].
The mission of the Piarist is done from his Piarist being. The Piarist progressively incarnates the values of Jesus of Nazareth, as has done Calasanz: live only for the Father, try to please only Him, and listen in profound inner silence the voice of the Holy Spirit, arriving this way to a singular familiarity with God. Formation (Ratio Formationis) [PFE 23].

The Piarist responds to the calling of Christ through the religious profession: be chaste, poor and obedient to the service of education for children and youth, and to live his consecration in a Piarist community [PFE 24].

The Piarist accentuates in his own life the traits of the Calasanzian spirituality, which is Christ-centered and ecclesiastical, Marian and educational, underlining a continuous reference to the meditation of Christ crucified along with the special devotion to the Ultimate Sacrament and to the Mother of God. It entails as well a great esteem and the cultivation of the educational virtues: deep humility and simple life, burning charity and serene patience, hope in every trial and joy, with an insistence in encouraging grace and the holy fear of God [PFE 25].

The Piarist loves his Founder deeply and harmonizes his own charism with that of the institution in a spirit of creative fidelity. Like Calasanz, his personality is made from being a religious, a priest and a teacher, which are complementary aspects of his single vocation [PFE 26].

The Piarist vocation demands a constant growth in the Christian-religious experience and in the service of ministerial education. By living this way, the personal vocation itself is sealed, he shares it in the Piarist family and is required to extended with new vocational candidates [PFE 27].

Living the training demands of the Piarist, and of who asks to be one, a progressive integration of diverse dialectic aspects of his personality: body-spirit, sexuality-celibacy “for the Kingdom of God”, affection-celibate love, individual-community, prayer-action, study-inner growth, research-job, intellectual formation-vital experience, personal effort-gift of the Spirit, realism-idealism, particularity-universality, provisional state- permanence, autonomy-obedience, localism-universalism, through the training dynamic that allows the identification, acceptance and assumption of each one of them [PFE 28].

Formation is basically relationship: we are formed together with others.
Because of that, the Piarist will cultivate, as a permanent formative attitude, openness to the relationship with God as a transcendent relationship, source of all vocation; relationship with himself, which gives him the will to know himself, by opening himself with truth towards his inner self; relationship with the one leading the formation process, in order to feel accompanied, helped and confronted in the process of personal human and spiritual growth; relationship with the brothers of the community to strengthen himself in his identity and in mutual fraternity; and the educational relationship with the social world that surrounds him, mainly in the area of his educational and pastoral ministry, which encourages to give oneself freely to others (students, families, etc.) [PFE 29].

The one in formation will be initiated in a relationship of joint responsibility with the lay Piarist, meditating on a journey together, giving steps towards a culture of communion that draws common horizons for the mission, promotes shared experiences of charisma and joins forces in a mutual respect of the vocational, religious and lay identity itself [PFE 30].

Common situations in the learning process of a Piarist

God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit who chooses and calls, is at the same time He who educates and strengthens so that His divine project in this world can be accomplished, as it is confirmed in the Salvation History. Those who feel in themselves the voice of the Lord entrusting them with a special mission in the Church must let themselves be transformed by the Spirit into icons of Jesus, the only Master, and live intimately joined with Him and serve Him from the heart [PFE 98].

An institute, as the Founder had wanted and the Church has approved, has an internal coherence that it receives from its nature, its goal, its spirit, its character and its traditions. This entire heritage constitutes the axis around which are kept both the identity and the unity of the Institute itself and the unity of life of each of its members. It is a gift of the Spirit to the Church who cannot withstand interferences or mixes. The dialogue and the sharing in the bosom of the Church imply that each one has the full awareness of his own identity [PFE 100].

The children and youth form, socially and culturally, a specific world, that for the Piarist acquires the value of a theological place of a calling and
encounter with God. Because of this, every candidate will exercise in keeping in contact with them, opt for them and their world, and trust in their contributions to society and to the Church. This way he will begin to develop a fatherly spiritual conscience towards them in such a way that by his apostolic action he may give life to new men committed to making a better world and to collaborate in the ecclesial community [PFE 102].

The candidate, in his desire to be a part of the Piarist Order, deepens his knowledge of it from a vocational perspective, and in the esteem of the Founder and the charism of the Order. He accepts the Order as it is, accepts it as his own and prepares himself to participate in its life and mission; furthermore, he enriches it with his personal contributions collaborating in its growth and renewal. From the beginning of the formation process, the candidate will receive sufficient information about the process, with the timely instructions about times, places and modalities. In this manner, he will be spiritually and psychologically prepared to walk the path of his training. The candidate himself is an undisputable agent in his training, actively collaborating with the action of the Spirit and the necessary mediation of people, training means and institutions [PFE 110].

It is the mission of the P. Master to: help each trainee discover the path in which God wants to guide them during his life through the inner inclination of guide of the Spirit and the external signs in which is manifested his plan over each one; accompany those in formation in the formation process and evaluate the itinerary they are covering through a constant and trusting dialogue, and discerning the authenticity of his Piarist vocation in the different stages of the Initial Formation [PFE 112].

**Education in Piarist Formation**

In a humble attitude, the Piarist, with the help of God, strives hard to become “a worthy cooperative of the truth” to work with determination in the education of children and young. The Piarist lives the educational task as an exercise of a ministry. Ministry which places itself at the service of the development of potential and the growth of the gifts that these children and youth possess. It is therefore, a ministry that infuses life because it is aimed at a creative reality of a life in growth. Looked at from a standpoint of faith and the vocation to the Piarist life, our educational ministry is sacred and holy, a ministry of grace because whoever carries it out, as a consecration
for life, becomes a worthy collaborator of God to carry forth His project of creation and salvation in the world [PFE 124].

The Calasanzian motto “Piety and Word” points out that the life of the Piarist revolves in the harmonious conjunction of the spiritual experience and study. “Harmonize –writes Calasanz– the study with the fire of piety so that both be at their mutual service”. The “mixed” life, of contemplation and action, as our Founder saw the Piarist life, implies a healthy balance between both dimensions; here, between prayer and study. Furthermore, this balance leads to an interrelation of both realities: the study finds motivation and strength in prayer to overcome the difficulties and prayer finds life experience, realism and an experiential sense in study. When in this Directory, as in the fundamental Documents of the Order, we speak about study, we’re not referring to an intellectualism detached from life, or idealistic, but to the better resources and accessibility of the intelligence God has put in each one, as the evangelical “talent” to develop [PFE 125].

Formation and education are two bonded realities. Thinking, however in the shaping of the person, priority attention will be drawn towards the training process, which does not always flow side by side with the curricular development of studies [PFE 128].

In his intellectual formation, the Piarist integrates two realities of his being and mission: teacher and pastor [PFE 130].

Final considerations regarding the work

The Piarist shows himself to be a lover of culture and knowledge, a servant of the truth and a man of solidarity when it comes to transmitting and sharing his knowledge on behalf of others. His culture and knowledge will not be used for his own interests, nor for self-exaltation, not for self-assurance, or for ambition. He loves culture as one who is a “co-operator with truth,” having a humble and gracious attitude. The Piarist maintains throughout his life a concern and healthy curiosity for learning; he will be a lover of reading, of reflection, and of on-going learning. Why? Because he wants to learn that which he is qualified to teach [PFE 155].
DOCUMENT SIGNED BY LUTHERANS AND CATHOLICS REGARDING THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION

Together we confess that it is not by our own merits but by grace and in our faith in the saving act of Christ, that we are accepted by God and we receive the Holy Spirit, which renews our hearts, enables us and calls us to do good deeds.

Together we confess that by grace God forgives the sins of mankind and that at the same time He liberates him, during his lifetime, from the subjugating power of sin. We are called children of God, and indeed that is what we are. We are really and inwardly renewed by the action of the Holy Spirit, and remain always dependent upon his action in us.

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions [Rom 6, 12].

For Lutherans, concupiscence is the selfish desire of human beings, which is seen as sin in the light of the law.

For Catholics, concupiscence is an inclination for evil, even after baptism, which remains in human beings, comes from sin and leads to it. It is a tendency to oppose oneself to God.

From the moment in which the Holy Spirit begins his work of regeneration and renewal in us by means of the Word and the Blessed Sacrament, it is certain that we can and must cooperate with the power of the Holy Spirit.

It is necessary to practise faith so as not to abandon its call.

Ask yourself: When you have finished reading this document: Write down the most significant thing which has touched your heart. Do you reject anything? What? Does this work help you to recognise the way you pray? It would be interesting to share with the community what the Spirit has given you as you have been reading this work. Perhaps after sharing this with you, the community might be enlightened to live prayer together. To what do you feel you have been called?

Let us pray: Father, full of love, grant that your Church, joined with the Holy Spirit, may fully dedicate itself to Your service and live united in love according to Your will. For Jesus Christ, Our Lord, Amen [Prayer of the Calasanzian Community, p. 21].
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There is a web page where we may continue reading his writings: www.mauricezundel.com
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