



# **Priestly ministry and Calasanctian charism**

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# Introduction

In 1983 we celebrate the fourth centenary of the priestly ordination of St. Joseph Calasanz in his diocese of Urgell. It is an opportunity to deepen the priestly facet of Calasanz' life, to whom the post-conciliar saints' calendar of the Church - as in the similar cases of Ignatius of Loyola, John Bosco, etc. - gives the simple and expressive title of priest. And it is also an opportunity to reflect corporately on the priestly aspect of our Piarist vocation, complex and rich in nuances, and of which the pastoral ministry is an inalienable constitutive element.

It is not strange, however, that in our secular history the priestly aspect has often been one of the reasons for tension and crisis when it comes to clearly outlining the identity of the Piarist vocation. Suffice it to recall two examples. During the life of the Founder, one of the causes of the uneasiness in the Order and the subsequent Innocentian Reduction must be attributed to "certain indefinities regarding the scholastic priesthood, that is, the exercise of the priestly ministry of our religious priests".<sup>1</sup> Another example, contemporary, was experienced during the conciliar period, in the crisis that shook our Order regarding the relationship between priestly ministry and scholastic work, a situation that motivated an important circular of Father Vincent Tomek, published in 1965.<sup>2</sup>

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1 F. Guíllén, E. P., today. Ensayo de diagnóstico, in "Catalaunia" 240 (1981), p. 2.

2 "Ephemerides Calasancianae" XXXIV (1965), pp. 269-287. It was edited also in Spanish, Madrid 1966, 19 pp., 2nd ed. Madrid, 1966, 48 pp.

To what should we attribute this repeated lack of integration of the priestly element, both theoretically and practically, in the Piarist vocation? In advance of what I hope will be deduced from the reading of this booklet, I believe that the fundamental reason has been the different way of understanding and living the ministry among us, which in turn is the fruit of an evolution of the theology of the priesthood, which in the post-Tridentine period had certain characteristics against which Calasanz partly reacted, and which today accentuates other nuances of the ministry more in harmony with the Church's tradition as a whole.

The following pages aim to clarify the relationship between the priestly ministry and the Calasanzian charism, basing the reflection on the first of the two elements less studied among us. They are presented to Piarist readers without any pretension of being a definitive synthesis. On the contrary, they reflect an opinion, long thought of course, but which aspires to arouse other complementary and even contrary opinions, so that among all of us we may come to understand and live more committedly our integral Piarist vocation in the bosom of the Church.

## **Priesthood and ministry in the light of the New Testament**

It is not possible to speak of a theology of ministry that is identical throughout the New Testament. In this, as in many other topics, there is an evolution in the various books according to the time of the books and the perspective of the respective authors. I limit myself to the two most important New Testament traditions on this question, the Pauline and the Synoptic.<sup>3</sup>

As far as the apostolic ministry is concerned, the oldest testimony is that of the Pauline letters. The first time he speaks of his ministry, the Apostle describes it essentially as the preaching and proclamation of the Gospel (1 Thess 2:1-12). A few years later, he also characterizes it as a ministry of unity in the midst of divisions; a ministry that constitutes those who exercise it as servants of Christ and dispensers of the mysteries of God and that requires them to be faithful and humble (1Cor 3:1-4, 21); ministry of a new alliance; ministry of the Spirit and justice, a treasure that is carried in fragile vessels of clay and that brings both difficulties and hopes; ministry of reconciliation and embassy of Christ (2 Cor 3:1-4:21); sacred ministry that presents to Jesus Christ the proclama-

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3 For this section cf. J. Delorme (dir.), *El ministerio y los ministerios según el Nuevo Testamento*, Madrid, 1975, pp. 40-225; J. J. Hernández Alonso, *La nueva creación. Teología de la Iglesia del Señor*, Salamanca, 1976, pp. 371-395; J. Geweiss, *Ministerio*, in "Conceptos fundamentales de la teología", III, Madrid, 1967, pp. 49-60.

tion of the Gospel as a sacrifice so that the people may become a pleasing offering to God (Rom 15:16; cf. 1:9 and 12:1).<sup>4</sup>

Along with the texts that reflect Paul's ministerial experience, in other passages he lists various gifts and services existing in the community, among which the well-defined triad of apostles, prophets and teachers stands out (1Cor 12:28; cf. Rom 12:6-7), whose functions were respectively: to be missionaries sent by the community to evangelize, to be leaders of the local communities and animators of their liturgical assemblies, and to be teachers or catechists of the believers based on the methodical teaching of the Bible. The inclusion of this triad of ministries at the head of a catalogue of gifts or charisms shows us that, for Paul, they are the most important charisms, although not all charisms are ministries, since there are many other gifts of God for the edification of the community. The ministries are like charisms or fundamental and institutionalized services.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, in these same letters, St. Paul speaks of ministers of the local churches who direct them (1 Thess 5:12-13), serve them (Rom 16:1-2; 1 Cor 16:15-16) and supervise them (Phil 1:1). In these last texts the titles of episcopus and deacon are already cited as applied to some ministers, although they do not yet have the meaning that they will later assume in the ecclesial tradition. On the other hand, the title of presbyter, so important later on, does not appear.

The theology of the ministries is enriched extraordinarily in those considered today by many as post-Pauline epistles. First of all, in the epistle to the Ephesians, whose main characteristic is its ecclesial content and the catholic horizon it imprints on the early faith. In the realization of God's plan, the Church, in the universal sense, occupies a fundamental place as the pléroma of Christ and the historical realization of universal reconciliation. The writer of the letter divides it into two parts, the first on the identity of the Church in the mystery of Christ (ch. 1.-3), and the second on the growth and unity of the Church according to God's plan (ch. 4-6)<sup>6</sup>. In both the

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4 C. Wiener, Los que aseguran el servicio sagrado del evangelio, in "Los sacerdotes", Madrid, 1969, pp. 303-306.

5 H. Küng, Sacerdotes ¿para qué?, Barcelona, 1972, pp. 33-37, 90-91.

6 M. Carrez, La lettera agli Efesini, in "Introduzione al nuovo vo testamento", III, Rome, 1978, pp. 151-165.

essential role of ministries is underlined. Apostles and prophets are the foundation of the ecclesial construction whose cornerstone is Christ (Eph 2:20), they are the means through which God has manifested his salvific plan to the rest of the Church (Eph 3:5-6)<sup>7</sup>, they are gifts of Christ at the service of the growth and unity of his body (Eph 4:11-12). “The Epistle to the Ephesians, -writes P. Bony- places the ministries at the center of a Church that is itself at the center of creation and of history”<sup>8</sup>.

The pastoral letters develop at length the functions of Timothy and Titus to whom their ministry was entrusted by the laying on of hands (1 Tim 1:18; 4:14; 6:12; 2 Tim 1:6). These are functions mainly related to the Word and the direction of the community: to watch over the purity of the faith, to teach and exhort, to reprove, to organize the community and its liturgy (1Tim 4:13,16; Tit 2:1; 2Tim 1:14; 4:2). They also mention the pastoral letters to the ministers of the local church: bishops, presbyters and deacons. Presbyter (elder) and bishop (episcopus, overseer) seem almost equivalent ministries designated with different nomenclature: the first in more ancient and reflects Jewish language, the second more modern and secular. But an evolution and a certain specialization of services is already noticeable: in the bishop (episcopus) the ministry of presiding stands out (1 Tim 3:1-7), in the presbyters that of preaching (1 Tim 5:17-22). The concrete service of the deacons is less clearly described (1 Tim 3:8-13). The designation of the ministries in the pastorals will later lead to the trilogy of degrees of the sacrament of Orders.

Within the literature of Pauline inspiration, something must be said, finally, of the letter to the Hebrews. In it, the priestly theme appears explicitly in the New Testament, but only when speaking of Jesus Christ (Heb 3:1-10:39), and in such a way that it can be understood, either by underlining the aspect of continuity in relation to the priesthood of the Old Testament, or by highlighting the discontinuity or rupture of the priesthood of Christ, which is radically new. In general, this epistle has been read in the first sense, which

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7 See the inspiring Pauline text: Col 1:26, similar but different.

8 In J. Delorme (ed.), o. c., p. 90.

made possible the integration of the priestly mentality of the Old Testament in the Church, but today it tends more to an understanding in discontinuity from which some analogical applications to the life and ministry of priests are inadequate. In Hebrews, in addition to the priestly theme, the ministerial theme is also insinuated, but timidly and without apparent connection with the previous one. It speaks of the guides of the community whose ministry consists in the proclamation of the work and the direction (Heb 13:7,17,24).

Along with the Pauline tradition, in the New Testament there are two other great traditions: the synoptic and the Johannine. Being both evangelical traditions, they are centered on the person of Jesus. In principle, the Church should not occupy an explicit important place in them; even less in everything that refers to its structure, as it is the case of the ministries. However, the Gospels, in transmitting to us not only the Good News of Jesus, but also the experience of the same in the communities in which they were formed, reflect different understandings and experiences of “the ecclesial”.

With respect to the *synoptic tradition*, to enter into the study of themes such as: the twelve, the apostles, the disciples... is beyond the objectives and possibilities of this booklet<sup>9</sup>. But we can cite as details that reflect the ministerial reality of the communities the following.

In *Mark*, the very special connection between Jesus and his disciples, which prefigures the union of the ministers with the Lord (Mc 3-6 and 11-14); the distinction between two types of teaching and of listeners, which hint at different functions of the Church: evangelization and catechesis (Mc 4); the questions of pre-eminence and authority, which clarify the place of the ministers in the community (Mc 9 and 10); and the active role of the disciples in the accounts of the multiplication of the loaves and in the institution of the Eucharist (Mc 6; 8 and 14).

In *Matthew*, the preponderant place of the function of the teachers and prophets is characteristic (Mt 5-7; 13 and 23); also the teachings on ecclesial life and the relationships among its members (Mt 18).

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9 Taylor, *Evangelio según San Marcos*, Madrid, 1979, pp. 749-756; J. Mateos, *Los Doce y otros seguidores de Jesús en el evangelio de Marcos*, Madrid, 1982, pp. 9-258.

In *Luke's* work, it is characteristic of his gospel to frequently call apostles the group of the twelve (6 times); the mission of the seventy-two disciples, different from that entrusted to the twelve (Lk 10 and 9); and the universalist sense and the presence of women in the mission (Lk 3; 4; 8 and 14).

In the book of *Acts*, they appear related to the ministries: the rite of the laying on of hands (Acts 6 and 12); the name of different ministers: apostles, elders, prophets (passim), the seven (Acts 6); the organization of the churches of Jerusalem and Antioch (Acts 2-5; 11 and 13); and the ministry of Paul and his collaborators (Acts 13 and following).

Summarizing what can be deduced from the reading of the Pauline and Synoptic traditions with regard to the priesthood and ministries, the following can be concluded.

In the *Pauline tradition*, the Apostle presents himself as one sent by Jesus Christ to proclaim the Gospel, to serve the unity of the community and to communicate the message of reconciliation of the world with God. From the epistles we can deduce the existence of various ministerial roles: evangelizers sent to the world; leaders, servants of unity and catechists of the communities; defenders and animators of the faith. They are co-opted (belatedly?) by the imposition of hands. And they are designated by these names: apostles, prophets, doctors, evangelists, pastors, bishops, deacons, deaconesses, presbyters, guides...

The *synoptic tradition* reflects the presence of particular functions with these characteristics: those who carry them out are united especially with the Lord; they are ministers of the Word in different ways; distributors of the Bread; servants of the community without pre-eminence; sent on mission and to the communities. They are co-opted (lately) by the imposition of hands. They are called: the twelve, disciples, apostles, doctors, prophets, the seventy-two, some women, presbyters, the seven...

Finally, in *both traditions*, an ecclesial climate of communion and participation is manifested in which the vocabulary referring to the ministries already underlines the sense of diakonia and service, privileging the charisms of direction: the service of evangelization in the first apostolic period and pastoral government in later

times<sup>10</sup>. “In all the stages of the New Testament, the ministry did not develop around the Eucharist or the liturgy but in relation to the apostolic construction of the community through preaching, exhortation and leadership”<sup>11</sup>.

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10 F. Casal, *Comunitat i ministeri*, Barcelona, 1978, p. 12.

11 E. Schillebeeckx, *Le ministère dans l’Eglise. Service de présidence de la communauté de Jésus-Christ*, Paris, 1981, p. 50.

## **Theology of the priesthood in the II century and in the Tridentine age**

In our brief tour through the New Testament concerning the ministries we have not seen priestly language applied to them. The episcopus or presbyter is never called a priest. The New Testament ministries are largely designated by profane names (inspector, elder, servant) to mark the differences with the Jewish and pagan sacerdotal class, and to underline the break of the Christian faith with the synagogue<sup>12</sup>.

But in the second century we find a return to pre-Christian ministerial denominations. First the Didaché and then Clement Romanus analogically compare the ministers of the Christian community with those of the temple of Jerusalem. And from here on a priestly language will develop more and more in a kind of regression that obscures the radical novelty of Christianity<sup>13</sup>. On the other hand, and simultaneously, we are moving towards a convergence of ecclesial ministries. The Didaché, Clement Romanus and Ignatius of Antioch still present distinct ministerial structures: apostles and prophets, collegial government of episcopoi-presbyters, and monarchical episcopacy respectively. But the various organizations are becoming more and more similar, with the ministry of the word coinciding in the same persons with the presidency of the community, the presidency of the liturgical celebration and the government of the Church. It can be affirmed that at the beginning of the third

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12 Cf. P. Grelot, *Le ministère de la nouvelle alliance*, Paris, 1967, pp. 122-140.

13 Cf. Father Fransen, *Sacerdocio*, in "Conceptos fundamenta les de la teología", IV, Madrid, 1967, pp. 149-150.

century the ecclesial ministry is already articulated in the three hierarchical degrees of episcopate, presbyterate and diaconate, with the figure of the bishop standing out among the others for his liturgical and priestly functions<sup>14</sup>. The clear evolution of the vocabulary reflects an evolution in ecclesial life and in the consequent theological reflection. The New Testament, both with regard to the subject of the ministries and to its predicate, is expressed in non-priestly language. In the patristic period the New Testament names are still used to designate the subjects of the ministries, but they are already attributed sacerdotal functions. Finally, in the Middle Ages the subjects of the ministries are also designated with sacred and priestly names, and the category of the priesthood is taken as the focal point of the whole theology of the ministries.

It is in the late Middle Ages that this process of “*priestlyzation*” of ministries reaches its climax. The era of the expansion of the Gospel in Europe and the catechization of the barbarian peoples was over. The known world had been transformed in Christianity. The Church lost its missionary impulse and withdrew into its inner life. On the other hand, the cult and theology of the Eucharist developed greatly, but in a one-sided sense. As a consequence, the ministers of the gospel were limited, by a process of ontological reduction, to being priests of the altar<sup>15</sup>. Peter Lombard (+1160), in the first definition given of the sacrament of Orders, still describes it in a broad way as: *signaculum, id est sacrum quiddam, quo spiritualis potestas traditur ordinato et officium*<sup>16</sup>. But St. Thomas (+ 1274), and all those who followed him, already centres the office of the presbyter above all on the offering of the sacrifice of the Eucharist. The priest, he says, has two functions: one, fundamental, is exercised over the true body of Christ; the other, derived, over his mystical body<sup>17</sup>. Somewhat later, Duns Scotus (+1308) defines the sacrament

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14 German Episcopal Conference, *El ministerio sacerdo tal*, Salamanca, 1971, pp. 66-69.

15 V. Codina, *Renéixer a la solidaritat*, Barcelona, 1982, pp. 27-28 and 78-79. 39.

16 Cited by L. Ott, *El sacramento del Orden*, in “*Historia de los dogmas*”, IV, cuaderno V, Madrid, 1976, p. 49.

17 *Summa Theologica*, IIIa, q.22. Cf. J. Galot, *Teologia del sacerdozio*, Firenze, 1981, p. 135.

of Orders as follows: *est gradus preeminens in Ecclesia disponens ad consecrationem vel dispensationem Eucharistiae*<sup>18</sup>.

A well illustrative fact of this shift in the way of living and understanding the ministries is the explanation that theology has given on the matter of the sacrament of Orders and on the sacramentality of the episcopate. Until the high Middle Ages, it was understood that the matter was the New Testament gesture of the laying on of hands. From the 13th century on, it was explained that it was the handing over of the instruments (chalice and paten), and it was denied that the episcopate was a sacrament because bishops and priests did not differ in any way with respect to the celebration of the Eucharist. In the nineteenth century, with the beginning of liturgical renewal and a better understanding of the patristics, a return to the traditional view began, culminating in the authoritative statement of Pius XII regarding the laying on of hands as the matter of the sacrament, and in the clear expression of the sacramentality of the episcopate by Vatican II.

The Protestant Reformation emphasized the common sacrament of the faithful and denied the priestly aspect of the ministry. Luther understood ordination as a kind of rite to call someone to perform an ecclesiastical ministry, fundamentally that of the Word. This circumstance conditioned the determinations of the Council of Trent. Some bishops struggled for a more balanced statement that would have been able to overcome both the extreme assertions of the reformers and the incomplete practice of an exclusively cultic priesthood. But what the council ultimately sanctioned was a dogmatic declaration on the visible priesthood, connected only with the power to consecrate and forgive sins, while in its reform decrees it insisted on the need to preach and instruct the people<sup>19</sup>. The post-conciliar liturgical reform of Pius V emphasized the ritualistic character of the priest, and the development of spiritual theology in the 18th-19th centuries contributed to the creation of a priestly

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18 In L. Ott, *op. cit.*

19 H. Jedin, *La imagen de sacerdote en Trento*, in "Sacer docio y celibato", Madrid, 1971, pp. 92-101; S. Dianich, *Ministerio*, in "Diccionario enciclopédico de teología moral", Madrid, 1978, pp. 669-670.

theological identity detached from the realities of men, better identified with the service of angels, set under the sign of dignity, and centered on mediation between God and men. It must be said that pastoral praxis embraced other aspects as well, but unfortunately, kept aside from theological reflection.

The result was a sacralised image that until recently was almost exclusive in the project of priestly life and its theology. All of us who were ordained before Vatican II were formed in this environment. Subsequent events show both the current crisis of this incomplete and spiritualistic vision and the failure to assimilate in practice the new perspectives outlined by the last Council.

## The experience and thought of Calasanz

St. Joseph Calasanz was ordained priest in the castle of Sanauja on December 17, 1583. Before going to Rome, he actively participated in the post-Tridentine reform, particularly during the years of curial and pastoral service in his diocese of Urgell (1587-1591), to which he remained attached until 1617. He was in contact with the harsh reality of the Church of his country and of his time. His priestly life was marked by his relationship with his bishop, Andrew Capilla, a post-conciliar and suggestive personality, who was the one who placed him in more pastoral situations<sup>20</sup>. He appointed him archpriest of Tremp and, together with Peter Gervás de les Eres, visitor and reformer of the officialates of Tremp, Sort, Tírvia and Cardòs. Both Capilla and Gervás wanted to promote the reform of the diocese by encouraging Christian education and cultural promotion through schools and study centres strategically placed in the diocesan geography, some of which were actually created or strengthened<sup>21</sup>.

From this renovating environment, and moved by Capilla, Calasanz went to Rome as a business agent of his diocese and to seek an ecclesiastical appointment that would allow him to act more ef-

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20 J. de Guibert, Capella, Andró, in "Dictionnaire de spi ritualité", II, Paris, 1953, pp. 117-119; I. Gómez, Capella, Andrés, in "Diccionario de Historia Eclesiástica de España", I, Madrid, 1972, pp. 337-338; J. Castells, Josep de Calassang, prevere de l'Església d'Urgell, in "Església d'Urgell" 107 (1982), pp. 12-14.

21 J. Poch, Mossén Josep Calassang a la diócesi d'Urgell, in "Catalaunia" 195 (1977), pp. 12 and 13.

fectively in the reform initiated<sup>22</sup>. A series of causes contributed to change the direction of his life<sup>23</sup>: his progressive interior maturity, brought about by contact with living currents of spirituality and by a new solidarity with the poor; the disappointment that arose in his mind as he came to know more closely the bureaucracy and the politics in which he found himself immersed; the new understanding that arose in him regarding the reform promoted by Trent, conceived in a more global sense, less paternalistic, promoted from the work at the base and not imposed from power; the progressive discovery of the educational mission as a dedication proper to the priesthood, understood in a broader sense than the simply cultic one, which was common at the time; the overcoming of a certain allergy against the formalisms of the institutionalized religious life he had known, as he experienced that, with a new style, he could be a channel for living the Gospel; finally, his own psychological situation, which -we can put- it was of interior crisis, since he was around forty years old. Through these causes God moved him to undertake a different style of priestly life by means of which he aspired to obtain the conciliar objectives he had always desired, but with more adequate and evangelical means.

Calasanz discovered this new sense for his life and ministry. He lived it for fifty years until his death in 1648, and transmitted it to his companions, with whom he formed the Institute of the Pious Schools. During this long period, he had occasion to formulate his thought repeatedly, either in solemn documents or in more occasional letters, always influenced by his long pastoral and reforming experience, begun before his arrival in Rome<sup>24</sup>.

In the Constitutions, written in Narni between September 1620 and February 1621, he speaks of the specific ministry of the Pious School particularly in the preamble and in nn. 175 and 203. In addition to the functions of the superiors, who are always priests, he emphasizes those proper to the priests who form the novices (nn. 17 and

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22 J. Poch, o. c., pp. 27-29.

23 Cf. M. A. Asiain, *El camino de José de Calasanz*, Salamanca, 1981, pp. 29-78.

24 Cf. M. A. Asiain, o. c., pp. 319-379; Id., *La experiencia religiosa de Calasanz*, Salamanca, 1979, pp. 215-240; Id., *La experiencia cristiana de Calasanz*, Salamanca, 1980, pp. 199-250.

25) and the action of the confessor and another priest who directs continuous prayer (nn. 193-194). He does not forget the projection of our ministry to families through public catechetical sessions and school texts (nn. 200 and 213)<sup>25</sup>. In a more extensive way he speaks about priestly ministry in liturgical worship (nn. 55-71), confessions (nn. 316-325) and preaching (nn. 326-334), presenting the exercise of the same on behalf of our students as a specialization of the priesthood, as a specific or principal ministry, although not exclusive, as can be deduced from the reading of these chapters<sup>26</sup>.

The Memorandum to Cardinal Tonti<sup>27</sup>, written in 1621, is an exceptional document in favour of the Piarist ministry, “irreplaceable ministry... and perhaps the main one for the reform of the corrupt customs; ministry that consists in the good education of the boys inasmuch as the rest of the good or bad life of the future man depends on it” (n. 5). Calasanz explains in detail, in the following paragraphs, the peculiarities and excellence of this ministry, in order to deduce with rigorous consistency, the necessity of constituting this work as a religious Order. “If the Holy Church is accustomed to grant this grace to so many other ministries, why not to this one, which can be considered a compendium of all of them, not only for helping the neighbour in case of need in everything that the others help him, but also for preparing and disposing souls by means of a good education to be capable of receiving the service of all the other ministries? (n. 25). “If the Holy Church has granted this grace to so many institutes of general and common ministry, why not to a specific and peculiar one? If it has been granted to many specific ones, perhaps not so necessary and at least not so much in demand, why not to this one, most necessary and most requested? why... not be granted to those who, from the earliest years, help to live well, on which depends... the peace and tranquillity of peoples..., the propagation of the faith, the conversion and preservation of heresies... and, finally, the reformation of all Christendom” (n. 26). This was the thought of Calasanz in his maturity regarding the particular

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25 G. Ausenda, *La Pedagogia Calasanziana*, in “*Esperienze di Pedagogia Cristiana nella storia*”, I, Rome, 1981, pp. 348-350.

26 G. Santha, *San José de Calasanz. His work. Escritos*, Madrid, 1956, pp. 120-132.

27 See in *Documentos fundacionales de las Escuelas Pías*, Salamanca, 1979, pp. 183-193.

Piarist ministry, irreplaceable, compendium of all the others, and fundamental for the reform of the Church proclaimed at Trento. Until the end of his life he did not cease to repeat in his letters his vision of our specific ministry, especially when subtle temptations arose among the Piarists themselves to dedicate themselves to other apostolates in the name of a narrower and perhaps easier conception of the priestly mission<sup>28</sup>. He will explain his thinking by speaking of priests who have to attend to the education of children as the principal realization of their ministry<sup>29</sup>, leaving aside, if necessary, other possible priestly activities with people other than our pupils<sup>30</sup>. However, it also admits the ministry of preaching carried out with simplicity, and that of adult confessions, one and the other especially on feast days<sup>31</sup>. During the last period of his life, Calasanz places particular emphasis on the celebration of the Eucharist<sup>32</sup>. Years before he had stated: "It would be better not to have been born than not to be a good priest"<sup>33</sup>. To a Piarist, in one of his last letters a few days before his death, he wrote: "May the Lord reward you with spiritual goods and give you the grace to know the priestly dignity and give you the humility and reverence that such a high ministry and sacrament deserves"<sup>34</sup>.

In conclusion, one could summarize Calasanz' thinking about the relationship between priesthood and education in his Institute as follows: "The priesthood of the religious educator is understood by Calasanz as the foundation of the educational mission. The priestly ministry is, according to him, magisterium, but not of solemn preaching but of continuous teaching, normally in the school, of human and divine doctrines organized in harmonic synthesis... Its educational work (the Pious School), although limited to the young and with profane means, attains values of universality and sacredness since it seeks, as its ultimate object, the formation and progres-

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28 EP 247, 557, 793, 807, 1035, 1068, 1332, 1442, 2876, 3036, 3125, 3206, 3742...

29 EP 829, 1201, 1419, 2602, 2811, 2812, 3625, 3663, 3672, 3692, 3700, 4108.

30 EP 1332, 1334, 1523, 2263, 2276, 2577, 3043, 3087, 3112, 3431, 3871.

31 EP 58, 1294, 1410, 1415, 2908, 2947, 3112.

32 EP 1350, 2954, 3621, 3647, 3669, 3683, 3706, 3781, 4239.

33 EP 1932.

34 EP 4572.

sive ordering of the whole of Christian society as such. The authority of the Church has attributed to this particular priestly structure, the sense of an official *missio* and has recognized a necessary and irreplaceable role within the multiform hierarchical apostolate<sup>35</sup>. With this approach, Calasanz was, as it would say today, a *dissident* with respect to the priestly praxis of his time, an advanced person in the way of understanding the apostolic ministry.

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35 G. Cianfrocca, Giuseppe Calasanzio, in “Dizionario degli Istituti di perfezione”, IV, Rome, 1977, pp. 1346-1347.



## The identity crisis of the clerics regular

By the brief *In supremo apostolatus* of Gregory XV, the Pauline Congregation was recognized, in 1621, as the Order of Clerics Regular. With this act, the Church incorporated the charism of the Poor of the Mother of God of the Pious Schools into the structure of religious life that emerged, as a novelty, in the 16th century. The ten religious orders that were approved with this name - eight of them still exist today - were founded in a little more than a century, in the midst of the Tridentine reform and with a marked Roman style.<sup>36</sup>

Their appearance on the horizon of ecclesial religious life represented a true revolution with respect to the concept and practice of consecrated life that existed until then. In their origin they were groups of priests, intellectually very well formed as opposed to the majority of the clerics of their time, who dedicated themselves to any type of priestly activity, assuming at the same time the essential obligations of religious life, but organized with the primary purpose of the exercise of apostolic zeal<sup>37</sup>. All this gave them a characteristic identity in terms of the style of their consecrated life and the originality of their apostolate.

With regard to the consecrated life, the religious clerics are distinguished by the fact that they do not profess a Rule in the tradition-

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36 R. Hostie, *Vida y muerte de las órdenes religiosas*, Bilbao, 1973, pp. 193-225; J. C. R. García Paredes, *Misión de la vida religiosa*, Madrid, 1982, pp. 224-230.

37 A. Carminati, *Finì della Religione*, in "Dizionario degli Istituti di perfezione", IV, Rome, 1977, p. 43.

al sense, although theoretically they follow the spirit of that of St. Augustine; they do not recite the divine office in choir; they do not wear the habit but the common dress of the Roman priests; they do not live in monasteries or convents but in houses; they do not abandon the world but live in it; they do not practice contemplation like the monks, nor the solemnity of worship like the canons regular, nor poverty and fraternity like the mendicants. They have a sense of union and cohesion that stems in large part from their specialized work and their universal sense; the organization of their government is very centralized but dynamic; and the religious can be changed with great mobility, according to the pastoral needs of the universal church<sup>38</sup>.

As for the apostolate, the clerics regular assume the ancient *vita apostolica* in its pluralistic concept, which embraces both personal and community life as well as the pastoral ministries entrusted to them. It is not, in many cases, that the action is greater than that of previous religious families. It is the approach to the apostolate that varies. For the first time, apostolic action became an inseparable component of the religious vocation, something that was not basically the case with the mendicants, and which the clerics regular transmitted to the congregations that arose later. In the clerical-regular religious life, the priestly quality and dynamism are part of the same religious consecration, distinguishing especially among them the dedication to the ministry of the Word in its various forms, some new, such as biblical formation or well-organized catechesis, and traditional: preaching, popular missions, etc.<sup>39</sup>.

The identity of the clerics regular has not always remained clear from the theoretical and juridical point of view. In the process of levelling that took place until Vatican II in all forms of religious life, and that now seems to want to resurface again, the style and goals of the clerical-regular institutes were overly identified with those of

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38 F. Andreu, Chierici Regotari, in "Dizionario degli Istituti di perfezione", II, Rome, 1975, pp. 897-909; M. A. Véliz, Los Clérigos Regulares (typescript), Mexico, 1981, pp. 7-9.

39 J. Alvarez Gómez, La vida religiosa ante los retos de la historia, Madrid, 1979, pp. 145-147; V. Macea, Apostolato, Apostolato, Madrid, 1979, pp. 145-147. Macea, Apostolato, in "Dizionario degli Istituti di perfezione", I, Rome, 1974, p. 723.

the canonical, conventual and apostolic communities<sup>40</sup>. According to the studies carried out to prepare the new law of religious, the purpose of the *Canon Regulars* “consists in the particularly solemn worship of divine praise and in the parochial ministry”. The characteristic notes of the *Conventual or Mendicants* are these four: “an intense common life, sign and bond of fraternity; apostolic activity which must conform to the demands of the common life which must always be observed; the regular observances which are nothing other than certain specific elements of conventual life; and the witness of austerity of life”. *Apostolic Institutes* have as their essential note “the entire dedication to the apostolate in the sense that the way of life of the institute and of the members is totally ordered to the development of the apostolic mission. They are founded primarily for the exercise of certain ministries proper to them. They are obliged to establish their way of life in such a way that the religious can dedicate their entire existence to the apostolate. Among apostolic institutes, a *clerical* institute is one “which by particular right assumes the exercise of sacred orders and is recognized as such by the authority of the Church. Clerical institutes should give first place to those sacred ministries which are linked to the sacrament of Holy Orders.

The old draft of the new law of the religious dealt with *Clerics Regular* under the heading of apostolic institutes, identifying them with clerical apostolic institutes. I believe that this identification is correct as far as the style of life is concerned, since the latter imitated it from the former. However, as far as their mission is concerned, they must be distinguished by their *priestly nature*. The mission which the Church has conferred upon them - education, for example - has been entrusted to them as a peculiar form of priestly ministry, and she does not entrust to them as a specific mission anything other than priestly functions. “The priesthood is not something adventitious among them, introduced little by little as it happened in the monasteries, but is necessary for their purpose”<sup>41</sup>. Apostolic insti-

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40 The following quotations are taken from J. Beyer, *Los institutos de vida consagrada*, Madrid, 1978, pp. 161-182.

41 R. Lemoine, *Le monde des religieux*, in “Histoire du Droit et des institutions de l’Eglise en Occident”, XV-2, Paris, 1976, p. 111.

tutes are not, therefore, by definition, clerical; those of clerics regular are, even if some of their members do not receive the sacrament of Holy Orders.

At the practical level, the identity of clerics regular has also often been blurred. To a certain extent it is normal that this has happened because these religious families were founded not on theoretical pre-suppositions, previously defined, but from praxis. The characteristics of the life and mission of the clerics regular are a deduction and generalization of the dynamics of these orders, which have mutually influenced and enriched each other in their secular relationships<sup>42</sup>.

In our Piarist history we also find that we do not fully identify with the ideal image of the clerical-regular institutes. St. Joseph of Calasanz gave the first Piarists a style of religious life that, in some points, seems to me to have been more proper to the mendicants. This is explained by the influence exerted on him, before his arrival in Rome, by a spiritual current -minoritarian and temperamental in the heart of the Society of Jesus- represented by the Jesuit Antony Cordeses who was in Gandia formator of the future bishop Capilla<sup>43</sup>; and already in the Eternal City by his relationship, better known and studied, with the Franciscan Conventual and some Carmelites. In certain external observances, it could be said that Calasanz regresses to previous religious forms. But as far as the mission is concerned, our Founder assumes the most progressive lines of his time with respect to the priestly ministry, specializing it, both by directing his service primarily towards a particular group of the People of God, and by dedicating it mainly to the evangelizing aspect of the same, then little valued.

This foundational mismatch, if we can call it that, explains - leaving aside other less edifying reasons - the confrontation after Calasanz' death of two currents within the Pious School. One, conservative,

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42 M. Dortel-Claudot, *Le genre de vie extérieur de la Compagnie de Jésus*, Rome, 1971, pp. 9-18.

43 A. Yanguas, Cordeses, Antoine, in "Dictionnaire de spiritualité", 2-il, Paris, 1953, pp. 2310-2322; M. Andrés, Pensamiento teológico y vivencia religiosa en la reforma española, in "Historia de la Iglesia en España", 11-2, Madrid, 1980, pp. 321-322 and 355-356; J. Poch, o. c., p. 48.

represented by Frs. General Garcia (second) and Chiara (fourth), which sought to implant the primitive Calasanctian observance. And another trend, innovative, defended by Frs. General Scassellati (third) and Fedele (fifth), who wanted to adapt our religious observance to the practical needs of the Piarist ministry. It was the sixth General, Fr. Charles J. Pirroni, who succeeded to make a synthesis of the best of both currents<sup>44</sup>.

But if in the religious aspect progress was made by accommodating the observance to the needs of the apostolate in accordance with the approach of the clerics regular, in the ministerial aspect it regressed by losing part of the unitary and reforming sense of Calasanz. Clearly, in the 18th century, a dualism began to be created in our mission by separating teaching and priestly work, for reasons of both theological mentality regarding the priesthood, and personal inclinations and prestige of the Order<sup>45</sup>. From then on, some of our priests, based on a conception that saw the ministry as something related to the administration of the sacraments, preaching, etc., did not feel fulfilled in tasks that correspond more directly to the specific purpose of the Order. Others, the majority, felt identified with the primary purpose of the institute and subordinated the priesthood, understood culturally, to the characteristic charism of the Order. In both cases, a crisis of identity arose because was created a dualism in our mission, separating priestly ministry from the calasanzian charism<sup>46</sup>.

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44 G. Santha, *La fidelidad a Calasanz*. Juan García del Castillo, Salamanca, 1982, pp. 47-54; Id., *Humanista y ambicioso*. Camillo Scassellati, Salamanca, 1982, pp. 14-26 and 42-43 (Translation of Santha's historical studies on Frs. Chiara, Fedele and Pirroni in preparation). G. Ausenda, *Chierici Regolari Poveri della Madre di Dio delle Scuole Pie*, in "Dizionario degli Istituti di perfezione", II, Rome, 1975, pp. 931-932.

45 S. Giner, *La vocación escolapia*, in "Escuelas Pías. Ser e historia", Salamanca, 1978, pp. 326-327, cf. 320-321.

46 Cf. G. Rocca, *Finí della Religione*, in "Dizionario degli Istituti di perfezione", IV, Rome, 1977, p. 57.



## The pastoral ministry according to Vatican II

From the post-Tridentine period until the time of Vatican II there existed in the Church two different ways of understanding the ministerial priesthood. One, ontological, based on medieval theology and the dogmatic decrees of Trent, defined the priesthood by its relationship to the Eucharist. Another tendency, pastoral, based on the witness of the New Testament and the reform decrees of Trent, defined the ministry by its relationship with the mission, especially with the proclamation of the Word<sup>47</sup>. Of these two visions, the first was the majority, but the second increasingly sensitized the clergy in the last decades. Both converged, not without difficulty, in the deliberations of Vatican II and resulted in a conciliar doctrine on ministry that includes, without a doubt, its priestly and liturgical dimension, but which goes far beyond it in the description of an apostolic ministry with evangelizing dimensions, theologically one but varied in its pastoral functions (cf. LG 28).

In this section, I present some simple reading notes of some numbers of the decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis* that clarify the meaning and praxis of our ministry of presbyteral nature in the Church<sup>48</sup>.

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47 Y. Congar, *El sacerdocio del Nuevo Testamento. Mission and worship*, in “Los sacerdotes”, Madrid, 1969, pp. 269-281.

48 J. Frisque, *Decree Presbyterorum Ordinis. History and commentary*, in “The Priests”, o. c., pp. 127-209; A. Favaie (dir), *I sacerdoti nello spirito del Vaticano II*, Torno, 1969, pp. 345-883.

Number 2 offers us a doctrinal vision of the presbyteral ministry in the mission of the Church. Starting from the mission of Jesus, he explains how all the faithful share in his priesthood and how he constitutes some of them ministers in order to make Christians one body (paragraph 1). The service of priests is, therefore, first of all a service of unity and reconciliation in the community<sup>49</sup>. They do not assume the whole of the charisms, but they have the charism of the whole; that is, their specific role is to bring about the convergence towards unity of the various ministries that the Spirit raises up in the Church<sup>50</sup>. To this purpose, priestly power is conferred on them - the only doctrinal citation of Trent in the decree - and they are made sharers in the consecration and mission of Christ through the apostles and the bishops (paragraph 2), all this by means of the sacrament of Holy Orders which configures them to Christ the Priest so that they can act in his name (paragraph 3).

The nature of the presbyterate is thus essentially defined. But the Council added in the last draft two other points to clarify and relate the characteristic nuances of the two converging visions in the assembly. What is the priority in priestly existence, worship or evangelization, the theocentric dimension or the anthropological dimension? The conciliar answer is clear: the priestly ministry is ordered jointly to both; and priests must integrate evangelization and worship in their vocation, because the service of the Word culminates in the Eucharist (paragraph 4) and because the glory of God consists in the salvation of man (paragraph 5)<sup>51</sup>.

Having described the nature of the presbyterate, Vatican II specifies more concretely its functions, while following the already classic order of the ministries of the word, the sacraments, and the direction of the community. There was reticence regarding this order of functions on the part of those who prioritized the priestly, basing themselves on Tridentine doctrine. But the Second Vatican Council itself had established that priests participate in the ministry of

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49 L. Boff, *The Destiny of Man and the World*, Santander, 1980, pp. 138-156.

50 M. Magrasi, *Il Prete. Una identità da riscoprire e vivere*, Noci, 1977, p. 21.

51 S. Lyonnet, *Le ministère et la vie du prêtre a la lumière du mystère du Christ*, Rome, 1976, pp. 9-23.

bishops in a subordinate rank, and the functions of the latter had already been described in the constitution on the Church by the order cited (LG 25-27. Cf. 28).

Number 4 is about the *ministry of the Word*. It is a fulfilment of the Lord's command to preach the Gospel to every creature and is to be carried out in many ways: as witness, by proclamation to non-believers, by catechesis of the faithful, by exposition of the Church's teaching, by illumination of current problems in the light of Christ, by application of the truth of the Gospel to the concrete circumstances of life (paragraph 1). And all this according to the different needs of the people and the diverse charisms of the priests. This ministry necessarily culminates in the liturgy of the Word, the Sacraments and the Eucharist (paragraph 2) according to the principle of integration enunciated in n. 2 above.

No. 5 deals with the *properly priestly ministry* of priests. It describes the priestly function in each sacrament and the purpose of each sacrament. It affirms that all the sacraments as well as every apostolate in the Church culminate in the Eucharist (paragraphs 1 and 2). It is also part of the properly priestly ministry: to teach the faithful to integrate in the Eucharist the offering of one's own life and to orient liturgy, prayer, and personal commitment to God (paragraph 3).

Finally, priests carry out the *ministry of gathering and building up the community* as explained in n. 6. This is the properly pastoral function which they exercise by participating in the office of Christ the Head and Shepherd and which summarizes and integrates all the other aspects of the ministry (paragraph 1). The first pastoral function is education in the faith, a specifically priestly aspect of the ministry of the Word, which priests should carry out by themselves or through others. Through this education, each one of the faithful should be helped to allow himself to be led by the Spirit, to cultivate his own vocation, to attain Christian maturity, to live the demands of charity, and to commit himself to the human community (paragraph 2). Priests, who owe a duty to all, are entrusted in a special pastoral way to the poor, the young, parents, religious, the sick and the dying (paragraph 3). The pastoral ministry is furthermore not limited to the individual care of the faithful but must attend to the formation of the Christian community in its local dimension but open to the universal Church and to non-believ-

ers (paragraphs 4 and 6), a community which is founded and culminates in the Eucharist (paragraph 5). All this demands that the priest be above ideologies and parties inasmuch as he is a servant of unity (paragraph 6).

The functions described up to this point, following the teachings of the Council, are intimately related and, in a certain sense, are encompassed in the expression *pastoral ministry*, which includes the ministry of the Word and the worship ministry which, in turn, converge one in the other because evangelization leads to the liturgy, and the praise of God is incarnated in the liberation of man. In practice, all these functions cannot be performed in the same way everywhere, or by all priests in every place. There is a specialization and plurality of services even though there is only one priestly ministry, as stated in n. 8 of the Decree, which cites, by way of example: parochial or inter-parochial ministry, research and teaching, dedication to manual work, directly apostolic works or others ordered to the apostolate, and the many different tasks that require adaptations of the ministry to the needs of our day. These pluralistic functions call for unity and fraternal cooperation within the one presbytery so that all its members may be co-operators with the truth (paragraphs 1-4).

A final teaching of the Council which is of interest to our theme, is that of the projection of the demands of the ministry in the dynamics of the spiritual growth of priests<sup>52</sup>. Configured to Christ by the sacrament of Holy Orders, “they become living instruments of the eternal Priest so that they may continue through time his admirable work of giving unity to the whole human race... and they present in their own way the person of Christ himself” (n. 12). This requires them to aspire to holiness of life, which they will attain “by exercising sincerely and untiringly in the Spirit of Christ their threefold function” (n. 13). However, there is a danger of dispersion because of the many obligations of their ministry, and of a lack of unity between interior life and external action. The integral coherence of their vocation is to be achieved by imitating and unit-

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52 J. Esquerda, *Teología de la espiritualidad sacerdotal* (Theology of priestly spirituality), Madrid, 1977, pp. 177-200.

ing themselves to Christ in the knowledge of the Father's will and in dedication to others in the exercise of "pastoral charity", all of which is manifested in "fidelity to the Church" (n. 14).

From the Council's teachings on the priestly ministry, a new light is shed on the relationship between the priesthood and our own charism. Difficulties have arisen from a too narrow understanding of ministry, centered for centuries on its liturgical dimension. The priestly element is essential to the priesthood, but it is only one characteristic of the total ministry<sup>53</sup> that involves many other tasks, which must also be carried out taking into account the different charisms of the priests (nn. 4-8). In the unitarian and full conception of pastoral ministry, the category of priesthood can be relegated to the background, since it expresses only one of the dimensions or functions of the ministry of the new covenant. For this reason, it seems preferable to express this dimension using an adjective. It is more accurate to speak of priestly ministry than of ministerial priesthood<sup>54</sup>. But on the other hand, the inter-penetration of all the dimensions of ministry as aspects of service to the ecclesial unity makes it possible to designate the priesthood by the ontologically superior function, that is, as *priestly ministry* (cf. nn. 2 and 13-14).

From all this we can deduce the erroneousness of the theological approach of simply opposing pastoral ministry to work in the field of education. We have already seen how St. Joseph Calasanz also intuited the partiality of the disjunctive between priesthood and teaching, as can be seen in surprising texts such as this one: "I am amazed that Fr. William has become, not to say so negligent, so miserly of his talent - the gift of the priesthood according to the context - which does not consist in saying Mass but in teaching, together with the letters, the holy fear of God"<sup>55</sup>.

It will be another matter, at the practical level, to discern how we should carry out our ministry today in the different places and what concrete functions we should prioritize.

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53 Germany Bishops Conference, o.c. p. 103.

54 B. Sesboue, in J. Delorme (dir.), o. c., p. 445.

55 EP 3098.



## **Reference framework of the Piarist vocation**

Up to this point I have presented the relationship between my priestly ministry and the Calasanzian charism from the New Testament, the history of the Church, the life of Calasanz and the teachings of Vatican II. I consider, however, that it would be insufficient to study the ecclesial phenomenon of our ministry in its pure objectivity, defining it exclusively by theoretical concepts. It is not only a matter of delineating our theological and historical identity; we must arrive at a social and psychological identity, assumed by religious and communities and developed by the praxis of our Piarist ministry today.

In this line, I believe that, first of all, we must qualify the traditional definition of the Piarist as teacher, religious, and priest. I consider this description inadequate today because it contrasts in practice, as distinct elements, the magisterium and the priesthood. As we have seen, this is not the mind of Calasanz with regard to our specific ministry, nor that of the Church with regard to the apostolate of the Clerics Regular. Neither is it a current approach, although sometimes we speak of our mission distinguishing professionalism on the one hand and pastoral on the other, because in this way we dissociate, without admitting it, human promotion and evangelization, when in reality the first is part of the second. We must effectively re-position our apostolate in the global mission of the Church, breaking the artificial limits we have imposed on ourselves.

The new frame of reference of our vocation must be the following of Jesus Christ as proposed to us in the Gospel, realized in a concrete way in the commitment of our consecrated life, lived in the Piarist community, at the service of the evangelization entrusted to us by

the Church<sup>56</sup>. *Consecration, communion, and mission* constitute a more coherent and integrating trilogy than the traditional one of religious life, magisterium, and priesthood to describe our charism. Indeed, in this new trilogy: a) the dynamics of consecration and ministry converge complementarily in the unity of our own experience; b) the community dimension becomes a fundamental element of unity, since we live consecrated *in communion* and we are a *community* for the mission; c) the one Piarist mission vitally synthesizes all the possible tasks of our plural ministry.

Regarding the complementarity between consecration and ministry, it is evident that both religious life and the priesthood are two total forms of Christian existence that many believers live separately and in fullness. But in our concrete case “the religious presbyter must know how to live his specific vocation “*inconfuse et indivise*”, without confusing the two dimensions but also without separating them... The distinction is made at the methodological level in order to understand the nature of each element; but in concrete life, both dimensions must be mutually fruitful, giving a sense of consecrated life to ministry, and revealing the ministerial vocation of consecrated life... The religious-priest is called to show the complementarity of these charisms in the indissoluble unity of his own life”<sup>57</sup>. In a schematic way this complementarity can be expressed by saying that the characteristic of the dynamic of consecration is to be founded in life in order to project oneself in the mission - *to live serving* -, while the characteristic of the dynamic of ministry is to start from the mission to involve life - *to serve by living* -. They are two spiritual dynamics of opposite sense that are added and strengthened in the concrete experience of the Piarist priest.

As far as the community environment is concerned, our participation in the life and mission of Jesus Christ is found and experienced as a unit<sup>58</sup>. The Piarist community has to be a concrete realization of the ecclesial *alternative* proposed by Jesus, an alternative society

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56 J. A. Miró, *Claves de lectura de las Constituciones de las Escuelas Pías*, Salamanca, 1980.

57 Latin American Confederation of Religious, *Espiritualidad del sacerdote religioso*, Bogotá, 1981, pp. 12, 24-35 and 56.

58 Cf. G. Sánchez Mielgo, *Biblia y vida religiosa*, Valencia, 1981, pp. 153-254.

totally different from the one promoted by the world, and which is based on fraternal conviviality and sharing, in the communion of persons living the spirit of the beatitudes, and in the mutual service of its members and of the whole group to other persons<sup>59</sup>. In this sense “the religious community is not *of* this world insofar as it rejects the structures and principles that govern the existing world; but it is *for* this world, understood as a world that wants to be born through birth pangs. Its place of insertion is the point of rupture between the existing world and the possible world... The segregation of the religious community is meaningful not when it is inspired by the escape from the world but when it expresses the total service to the world that wants to be born, searched and intuited in the light of the promises of God”<sup>60</sup>. In the Piarist community, the characteristic values of the following of Christ are lived and configure the religious being, a dynamic being that is built in doing, giving witness and communicating life from the community itself. Thus community life, besides being a moral support for each religious and the natural sphere of his or her experience of God, is also a source of inspiration for communion among believers and leaven of various concrete ecclesial and human communities. In the specific case of priests, whose characteristic role - as explained in section 5 - is to build community and foster solidarity among men, belonging to a religious community enhances their ministerial service of communitarianism, bringing in addition a characteristic perspective of universality, proper to the religious vocation, which enriches the particular churches they serve<sup>61</sup>. The community environment is, in short, a fundamental integrating element of the Piarist vocation. And the activities of its ordained members, although perhaps not directly at the service of a local community, serve communion among men and between them and God through prayer, teaching, testimony, fraternal love and liturgical celebration in a specialized ministry within the organic pastoral<sup>62</sup>.

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59 Cf. J. M. Castillo, *La alternativa cristiana*, Salamanca, 1973, pp. 25-59.

60 E. Balducci, *Gli Scolopi, oggi*, Rome, 1980, p. 4.

61 Confederacion Latinoamericana de Religiosos, o.c. pp. 16-17 and 62.

62 M. Midali, *Religiosi e ministeri nella Chiesa locale*, Rome, 1980, pp. 83-97; L. Boff, o. c., pp. 152-153. 63.

Finally, with respect to the mission, it is sufficiently explained in the previous sections how unfocused the dialectical approach is between priestly and educational functions. “The ancient Church did not separate the ministries of charity from those of the word and the liturgy, as if the former were *profane* in relation to the latter, which were considered *sacred*<sup>63</sup>. The specific Piarist ministry is a concrete function of the pastoral ministry. It includes, integrating them, all the tasks of the same but within some characteristic specializations that we carry out from the platform of our consecrated life in community. For this reason, although in the Church the figure of the worker or the teacher who is a priest is possible, I believe that the Piarist must be a *priest-teacher* and not a teacher-priest<sup>64</sup>. In the future, there may indeed be ministers of local communities who do not differ in their way of life from that of the faithful as a whole, including marriage and secular profession. But there will be other ministers dedicated full time to the service of the universal Church, totally available to the various needs of evangelization. The Piarist priest prefigures this model of ministry committed exclusively to the proclamation of the Gospel among children and young people, even through the witness of his own consecrated life<sup>65</sup>.

In the practical order, given the variety and multiple possibilities of our Piarist mission as well as the growing needs that demand our apostolic attention, it will be necessary an authentic sense and exercise of collective spiritual discernment to discover what is the most convenient dedication at each moment and in each place to assume it as a community task, but also keeping in mind the personal vocation of each religious, the autonomy of temporal values and the specific tasks of priests and laity indicated by Vatican II (cf. GS 42b and 43b; AA 6a; AG 5 and 6; CD 28-30 and 34-35).

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63 L. Sartori, *Carismas y ministerios*, in “Diccionario Teo lógico Interdisciplinar”, II, Salamanca, 1982, p. 21; cf. V. Codina, o. c., pp. 18-19.

64 H. Küng, o. c., p. 77; L. Boff, o. c., pp. 145-146; cf. V. Tomek, o. c., p. 274.

65 E. Balducci, o. c., p. 5.

## The mission of the Piarist priest today

Having outlined the new referential framework that allows to overcome experientially the dichotomy between priestly ministry and Calasanzian charism, we should expose, finally, the characteristic specializations of the Piarist mission in our time in the light of the post-conciliar understanding of the pastoral ministry<sup>66</sup>. The topic, because of its importance, would require a space that I do not have now. I will limit myself to pointing out these specializations following the Rules of the Pious Schools which indicate the following:

- a. Dedication to the world of youth and its environment** (n. 89). A very clear specialization in all our history that we must zealously maintain; but keeping in mind that the circumstances of our time are very different from those of the time of Calasanz, and that therefore, in accord with the life of the Church, “we must intensify our apostolate among the faithful more than was necessary in the time of our holy Founder or in times past”<sup>67</sup>.
- b. Particular attention to the poor** (n. 90). Unquestionable preferential option of Calasanz, qualified by the hierarchy of his time, but that the post-conciliar Church underlines again with prophetic insistence, especially in Latin Amer-

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66 Cf. J. Esquerda, o. c., pp. 105-113; E. Balducci, *Siervos inútiles*, Salamanca, 1971, pp. 159-221; J. García Velasco, *El sacerdocio en el plan de salvación*, Salamanca, 1974, pp. 88-114; A. Ballestrero, *En comunión con Dios*, Salamanca, 1981, pp. 100-214; I. Előd, *Vallas és Egyház*, Budapest, 1981, pp. 315-318.

67 V. Tomek, o. c., p. 285; cf. Memorial to Cardinal Tonti, n. 25; EP 3871; A. Sapa, *Teologia Sprituale Pedagogica di San Giuseppe Calasanzio*, Firenze, 1951, pp. 81-93.

ica. This option is not a point of arrival because the Gospel is not only for the poor, but a point of departure for evangelization since the Gospel excludes no one, it is for everyone. Therefore, it does not necessarily imply an exclusivity of service or a single type of works, but in any mission we must speak and act from the perspective of the poor and this specialization of our charism must be present in every Piarist action and work<sup>68</sup>.

- c. **Education enlightened by faith** (n. 91). It is a function proper to the pastoral ministry repeatedly pointed out by Vatican II that confirms the clarity of Calasanz. The conciliar vision puts in crisis the idea so many times repeated of the simple function of supplying the ecclesial educational activities. At times it has been done or is being done in a justified way. But its objective goes beyond this merely social purpose from which it derives neither its specificity nor its *raison d'être*<sup>69</sup>.
- d. **Evangelization of culture and inculturation of the faith** (n. 92). This is another characteristic note of our charism. By vocation we must live and act in a secular situation, promoting mutual inter-penetration - a kind of osmosis - between faith and culture, understanding the latter in the sense explained by Vatican II (GS 53) and by UNESCO<sup>70</sup>. It is a ministry at the cutting edge, on the frontier between the Church and the world, not without risks. I believe that many of the difficulties and misunderstandings of the Society of Jesus in recent years stem from the audacity of its paradigm, similar to ours on this point.
- e. **Creation of living Christian communities** (n. 91). Specialization already commented on in which flow the

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68 Cf. E. Bonnin (dir.), *Espiritualidad y Liberación en América Latina*, San José, 1982, pp. 103-152; J. M. Guerrero, *La opción preferencial por los pobres, un desafío para la vida religiosa*, in "Ecclesia" 2089 (1982), p. 1021.

69 Cf. M. Midali, o. c., pp. 65-67 and 76; V. Codina, o. c., pp. 65-67 and 76. Codina, o. c., pp. 62 and 95-97.

70 World Conference on Cultural Policies. Mexico, July-August 1982.

priestly ministry, ordered to the building of the Church as a community in solidarity, and religious life as a center of animation of broader lay communities, especially for us in the educational world<sup>71</sup>.

Putting into practice the specializations indicated requires serenity and balance in the concrete options. I point out two issues that must be kept very much in mind in collective discernment.

The first refers to the danger of giving polarized and closed answers. Our vocation is like a crossroads of different elements, so rich in nuances that it is easy to fall into simplification, valuing a certain aspect in an exclusive way to the point of suppressing the others. The option for the poor can lead to the exclusion of the educational aspect; the priority of the scholastic aspect can make the social dimension fall into oblivion; the cultural concern, to marginalize the catechetical aspect; catechesis, the global educational aspect; the educational aspect, the priestly mission; the worshiping priesthood, to deny meaning to a broader pastoral ministry; religious consecration, to undervalue the apostolic function; the functional aspect of our vocation, to drown the meaningful and communitarian aspect of it, etcetera. As a religious order we must embrace all aspects of our charism without eliminating any. Religious and individual communities can emphasize some aspects more than others, and this will be a source of collective enrichment as long as the aspects prioritized by others are valued and assumed positively.

The second practical question is the choice of means and works to carry out the specializations of our ministry. Works are not the charism, but neither are they mere accidental instruments of it. It is in the works that our specific mission is incarnated and manifested. It is, therefore, very important everything that has to do with creating, choosing, locating, renewing, transforming, suppressing, etc. our institutions<sup>72</sup>. In particular, I believe that we must seek at the present time, with imagination, varied and valid alternatives to our traditional works: new types of schools, groups, associations, homes, movements, communities... I do not doubt that our schools

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71 V. Codina, o. c., p. 79; E. Balducci, *Gli Scolopi*, oggi. Rome, 1980, p. 5.

72 J. C. R. García Paredes, o. c., pp. 263-268.

can make sense even today. However, in my opinion, it would not make sense to consider the parish as the *only* modern alternative to these schools based on a misunderstood pastoral care of the community. More than one voice has already been raised in the Church pointing out the disadvantages of “the process of the growing *dedication to parishes* of the orders in recent times”<sup>73</sup>. Priestly ministry is not synonymous with parish ministry. The Piarist priesthood is a frontier priesthood and must be exercised also in structures that are not directly ecclesial. It would be an impoverishment of the Calasanzian charism if we were to abandon, *systematically or by principle*, secular works (schools) in order to take responsibility for ecclesiastical institutions (parishes). Both will make sense for us if we assume them not as a substitute function of other educators or other priests but in the measure that they are suitable means of expressing and carrying out the integral Piarist mission among children and young people.

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73 J. B. Metz, *Las órdenes religiosas*, Barcelona, 1978, pp. 20 and 105; cf. M. Vacca, *Parrocchie affidate a religiosi: suppienza o spazio per una specificità di anuncio?*, Tormo, 1978, pp. 3-15.