




# Heart and Soar

The vocation of Glicerio

Marcelo Benítez

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*For the Glycerios of yesterday and today,  
who give the first fruits of their lives to Christ  
in the Pious Schools.*

## The Ring

The boy ran excitedly through the garden. He kept looking sideways at the golden ring that shone on his ring finger. He took refuge in his favourite corner, where a fountain was bubbling, and gazed at the small, precious jewel. Meanwhile, he remembered the conversation he had had. It had taken place in the main room of the large house he lived in with his parents and siblings. They lived in the most beautiful area of Milan.

“This is a heritage of our family,” his father had told him. “It does not fit you so well yet, but your hand will soon grow. When we think of it least, you can give it to the one to whom you offer your love and your life with it. The ring finger is directly connected to the heart. This one will show you the lady for whom this ring and your life are meant, my Glicerio.

“So it’s not for me,” said the boy with a questioning look.

“We are created to give away, not to hoard, my son. It is useless to have, but to give to those we love. If your heart has an owner, you will give her not only the ring, but your whole life. You will have to choose well. She must be the best woman you can find. A Landriani cannot be satisfied with less.”

Now, in his secret corner next to the fountain, he went over everything his father had told him again.

“I must choose the best,” he said. “Whoever will have my ring will also have my heart”.

Two years had passed since that conversation, his beloved father had died and the golden ring he liked so much again caught his eye and aroused new feelings in him. It was no longer loose, he had

even adjusted it a little. When Glicerio looked at it, he felt as big and important as his father had been. He also felt a certain weight, that of choosing well whom to give it to. He thought of the girls he knew, the ones connected to the family, the ones he used to see at parties and on walks. Which one would be the right one? His fate seemed to depend on this decision.

As always, when he saw himself in trouble, he sought rest in the quiet chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Loreto. He had always fled there with Francis, the faithful companion in all his adventures. This time he was alone. He lit a candle in honour of Our Lady and knelt before the beloved image.

“Holy Virgin, you always listen to me and help me in all my needs and deliver me from all difficulties. I ask you to show me to whom I should give my ring and my heart. Show me to whom I will belong. Let her be, as my father said, the best lady to live and fight for...”

Images from the books he had read and enjoyed since childhood crowded his mind: noble knights in the service of the honour of even nobler ladies; deeds, adventures, battles and glory; greatness and prizes, riches and courtly palaces; songs, dances, feats that inflamed his soul.

Other images and stories also appeared: his maternal relative, Saint Charles Borromeo, a great archbishop who served the afflicted and reformed the customs of the city and the whole region, fighting vices and winning souls for Christ; the other great Milanese pastor after whom he was named, Saint Glicerio; Saint Ambrose, who touched the heart of Saint Augustine with his fiery sermons...

Finally, he was bewitched by the image of the humble Saint Joseph, the chaste husband and protector of the Virgin Mary. How much he had gone through to care for the Lord and his mother! He also remembered another favourite saint, that of the eagle, Saint John the Evangelist. The youngest of the Apostles and the one who was closest to the Lord. The one who conceived his mother at the foot of the cross. And above all, the one who lived the same virginal lifestyle as Christ and Mary.

When he suddenly returned from his reverie, he saw that his little candle had almost burnt out. He lifted his gaze to the eyes of Our

Lady and felt an impulse in his heart that he could not hold back. He took the ring from his hand and left it hidden in a small slit, right there, between the body of the Virgin Mary and that of her divine Son. A prayer sprang from his soul accompanying this gesture.

“There is no lady more beautiful and noble than you. I will not look for another. If you accept the gift to me, Kind Lady, yours will be my hearth and my whole life will be to serve you for the glory of your Son and my Lord.”



## **A young man in front of the mirror**

“This haircut does not suit me as I expected. My hair is never the way I like it and my nose has grown too big,” said Glicerio as he got ready to go out.

At least his new silk dress was well cut. Indeed, it looked very good on him. It emphasised his height and good physique. It had cost him enough. Well spent was the first merit of the title of commendatory abbot he had inherited. Of course, he was not a monk. In his family they were the rightful heirs to an old abbey, now without monks and with excellent land that yielded good crops and even better profits. In addition to the rents, he had received the honorary title of abbot.

“Mr. Abbot.” He liked Francesco calling him that. He was now his most important assistant. They no longer dealt with each other with the same familiarity they had as children. The other servants in his newly opened residence in Rome paid him even more respect. He liked that. The Landriani always flew high and he would prove it. After surveying his radiant reflection and retouching his hair for the umpteenth time, he resolutely made his way to Cardinal Carlo Pio. He was an old family friend and would be thrilled by his grand plans.

Having solemnly announced himself, he entered the prelate’s office with ease and made a rehearsed bow. At that moment he was surprised by the look he received and even more by the words.

“Who are you and what are you doing here?” Said the venerable old man firmly and biting.

Would the good old man allow himself a joke? Glicerio asked himself with growing concern. He gathered his strength and continued.

-”What do you mean by ‘who am I?’ Your Eminence? I am Glicerio Landriani, a nephew of Cardinal Federico Borromeo. I came to Milan after studying in Bologna. I have some plans that I would like to talk about and for which I am counting on you. My uncle, the Archbishop of Milan, told you about them in a letter.

“I do not know you,” he replied sharply, far from his usual friendliness.

“Of course, you know me. Do you feel bad, is it a joke or...?”

“I cannot remember, as I have already clearly told you. The Glicerio I know is a very different young man from the one who now stands before me. He is a simple and devoted boy who wants to serve Christ. He is zealous for the sake of souls. Out of love for them he studies. For them he prays fervently and repents. He is a faithful imitator of his great uncle and great saint of our time, Saint Charles Borromeo. I know my good Glicerio Landriani well. The one I see now, with this suit, these arrangements and this manner, is not like him.”

Glicerio was deeply moved. The rebuke he received struck him deeply. It was a blow to his self-defence and an awakening. Humbly, he acknowledged the hard truth. Almost without realising it, he had given up the pursuit of holiness. He had allowed himself to be seduced by looks and poses. He was ashamed of his innocence and devotion, which seemed childish to him. He was proud of his social position and his future prospects. He felt very important. How foolish!

Through the window open to the street was heard the song sung by a procession:

*“Vanity of vanities and all is vanity.  
All and as much as it is,  
it is vanity.”*

They were the disciples of Philip Neri on a pilgrimage to one of the seven basilicas. It would be well for him now to join the procession of these joyful, detached men. To escape the shame of being rebuked and the even greater horror of the truth behind it.

What does it profit a man to gain the whole world if he loses his own soul? What was the use of all that he had studied in Bologna, the

best university with the most excellent professors, and which he now continued to learn with the Dominicans of Minerva, if he did not lead his life well? A strong clarity spread through his soul and somehow sealed it forever: *Deus super omnia*. God above all things.

In the days that followed, a serene and joyful conviction matured about his identity. It was reflected to him not by any mirror, but by contemplating the Crucified.

“I know who I am. I am Glicerio of Christ.”



## **Exuberant zeal**

Glicerio was not a young man of mediocrity. When he realised that he was wasting the best years of his life on useless things, he devoted himself resolutely and completely to any good work he could find. Vanity turned into exuberant zeal. He no longer lived in anticipation of the applause of others, but conscientiously wanted to be a fool for Christ.

He immediately abandoned palace, clothes and servants. He renounced all comforts. He went to live with a somewhat eccentric Portuguese priest, Father Mendez, who had the reputation of a saint. His faithful Francesco Selvaggi tried to follow him to his new home and life.

“I no longer need servants. I will become a beggar of Christ and a servant of his poor. I cannot keep you with me, Francesco, nor pay you for your work,” he said gravely to his childhood friend, the son of his late father’s groom.”

“So it is well!” Francesco replied with cheerful determination. “Then I can go with you as a friend and see eye to eye again, as when we were children. We will do better deeds for the glory of God.”

Glicerio embraced him and asked his forgiveness for what he had made him endure while at the mercy of his vain pride. They immediately began a new life as poor beggars for Christ. They bubbled over with joy.

Father Mendez led an enthusiastic and extravagant group which the two friends joined. In their house in Rome, to which they had moved, they prayed extensively, sometimes for up to 40 hours at a time, with many showy and somewhat exaggerated displays of

devotion. They also made efforts to rescue women who had been forced into prostitution by poverty or neglect, or who were seriously threatened with prostitution. They helped them to settle down in a good job and to start a Christian family. They provided material and spiritual support. Glicerio used his wealth to support these new homes and help any poor person he could find. When he ran out of coins, he gave away what he had on. He often returned to his new home barefoot and freezing in the winter, but always smiling, happy that he had given everything to Christ's poor.

Every day was a new adventure. Sick, old, prisoners, pilgrims, beggars, orphans and widows, he had for all and gave to all. And when there was nothing left of what was his, he began to beg himself so that he could keep on giving.

*"If you want to follow me, sell everything you have and give it to the poor."* These words of the Lord kept coming to his mind and urging him to do more.

He repeated them many times in letters to his uncle, Cardinal Federico Borromeo, adding: *"My heart will not be satisfied with anything else, because I want to be a dispenser of all that my Lord has given me."*

Once Glicerio set out on a pilgrimage without telling anyone, not even Francesco, lest he be deterred. On the way, he gave away everything he had with him. He arrived at a holy mountain, a place of prayer, barefoot and in the rags of the last beggar with whom he had exchanged clothes.

The hermits of the place recognised by his speech and appearance that he was not what he seemed. They made him spend the night in a secluded little place after seeing him devoutly. On the third day, his friends and family found him after a great fright and reproached him for his carelessness. He accepted the rebuke with humility. It became clear that he needed better guidance for his burning heart.

Such a great soul with such an explosive and bold temperament that tempted him to obvious folly needed a wise and balanced mentor. As the exuberant zeal frightened his closest confidants, Pope Paul V himself, a close friend of his noble family, had to intervene. The pontiff's mandate to Glicerio was very clear.

“Since you were a child you have offered your chastity to the Blessed Virgin, you have recently embraced holy poverty with zeal, it is time for you to learn the way of obedience.”

The Pope placed him under the care of Father Dominic Ruzzola of Jesus and Mary, a Discalced Carmelite. This good friar knew how to guide his soul along the path of perfection and to order his apostolic zeal. He used the teachings of St. Teresa of Jesus and St. John of the Cross.

He was certainly a better guide because he led him as God led him. He supported the working of grace in his soul. He understood that the engine that drove Glicerio was the same one that gave him north and stability. The secret of Glicerio was nothing other than his deep, loving and constant attachment to Jesus Christ, his Lord. From this properly lived love, which corresponded to faith and reason, all other affections and feelings could be ordered.

This was the peace he found under the guidance of Father Dominic, who thought it might be a divine sign. Would God want him to become a Discalced Carmelite? The ideal of belonging to a reformed order, dedicated entirely to Mary, to live in devotion to Jesus Christ, would send him soaring. Father Dominic listened attentively to the voice of God that sounded in Glicerio’s heart. He was very surprised to be told that he sensed that another place was waiting for him. Another mentor, this time the definitive one, would be waiting for him.

Glicero had then learned the value of docility when the guide was sincere and wise. So he entrusted himself to the good judgement of the one who had done him so much good. He made himself ready for what was to come. With the Psalms he sang a prayer that rose from the depths of his soul. *Show me, Lord, your ways, teach me your paths.*



## **This is my place**

It was still hot in Rome, although it was already autumn. After escorting the students home, Glicerio wrote to his uncle Federico on 29 September 1612:

*“Deus super omnia Christus*

*Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Father in Christ:*

*I am in the Pious Schools in Rome, where there are as many as 800 children and young people, and until now I have taught only grammar. And I have come here without wanting to, only out of pure obedience to my superiors. It is true that my heart has longed for it, but I have not expressed it in order to show no affection for anything, but to submit myself in everything to the will of God our Lord and of the superiors. Now I am sure that it is the will of God our Lord, and I hope that the Lord will want to use me for His work, which is so important that it fills me with astonishment, because these children of the poor, who usually run around in the squares without any restraint for fear of God our Lord, run about in the squares and are a prey to all dishonesty in words and ugly deeds, here they withdraw from idleness and evil and with divine help engage in exercises, not only of the mind, but also of the knowledge of Christian doctrine. Here they are given paper, pens, rosaries, Christian doctrines, spiritual books for God’s sake, and little offices of the Virgin, that they may leave vanity behind and be educated in the service of God. And truly it cannot be said how important it is for these children, who have not taken up bad habits, to lead them at the proper time into what is good. Oh, what ease, what sweetness is found! Glory be to the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit....”*

Father Domingo Ruzzola had been right in his orientation and had led him to the Pious Schools. He was now under the care of Father

Joseph Calasanz, who was known in Rome for his life and commitment to the little ones and the poor. Glicerio had not come alone, but had of course brought his faithful Francesco Selvaggi and four other good friends.

The Pious Schools in the heart of Rome sought to educate the children of the people in the Christian life and to give them access to culture. They tried to renew the corrupt customs of the time and to eliminate the vices and evils that weakened Christianity.

Calasanz, who was beginning to age, had received the gift for which he had asked so much. He was expecting a successor whom he could prepare in advance and then put at the head of the work. And this 22-year-old, eager, well-prepared and better-disposed man was the full answer to his wishes. Moreover, he did not come alone, but brought others with him who enthusiastically joined in the task.

Glicerio was worth five and came with five more. Their arrival was a cause for celebration and Calasanz always regarded them as a special gift from the Blessed Virgin Mary. Up to this point, his collaborators were elderly and even remarkably old people like Dragonetti. The venerable Father Gaspar Dragonetti, a Sicilian, had come to the Pious Schools at the age of 90 and taught there until his death at 115. With the young Landriani and his friends, God gave life and a future to the Pious Schools.

Glicerio was not only an unconditional collaborator of Calasanz and generous benefactor of his work, he also became his best disciple and his most beloved son. The two souls felt united by the same passion of the Holy Spirit. They had a kinship and intimacy that came not from flesh and blood but from God. It was enough that they looked at each other to understand each other. They complemented each other in a surprising way. The two of them and old Dragonetti were unstoppable. They proved this by founding the Pious Schools in Frascati as a trio, against all odds.

Glicerio found in Calasanz a master of wisdom who knew how to channel all the current of zeal that flowed from his noble heart. Since he had decided to remain in the Pious Schools and obey Calasanz, there were no more oddities in his youthful enthusiasm, but daily, persevering and loving commitment.

Calasanz found in Father Abbot, as he affectionately called him, his best ally in the struggle to win the hearts of children and young people for Christ. He marvelled at all that his creativity contributed to the enrichment of the Pious Schools.

So it was that from the already Piarist heart of Glicerio sprouted innovations rooted in the Calasanctian trunk: the continuous prayer of the students in shifts during lessons; the escort in rows to their homes at the end of the school day; the extension of teaching through Sunday catechesis in the neighbourhoods... Glicerio made everything he touched flourish and bear fruit.

He even went so far as to devise a plan to train older students as evangelizers through a short course in three years of philosophy and theology. He wrote to his uncle: *“For it seems to us an invention inspired by the Holy Spirit to make these short courses for those who want to know only what is necessary for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.”*

For Glicerio was enlightened and wanted to enlighten many more. He was a born multiplier. He was destined by God to be the first of many young people who would forever find their place alongside Calasanz in the Pious Schools.

Every evening, reaping the harvest of his day’s experiences, Glicerio was seized with gratitude: *How awesome is this place: House of God, gateway to heaven!* And the next morning, when he woke up, he got up, as all Piarists always did, whispering and singing in his heart:

*How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts!  
My soul longs, indeed it faints for the courts of the Lord;  
my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God.  
Even the sparrow finds a home,  
and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young,  
at your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.  
Happy are those who live in your house, ever singing your praise.*

Glicerio had found his place.



## **Permission to go to Heaven**

Every year on 25 March, the Virgin Mary's yes to her vocation as Mother of God and the happy event of the Incarnation of the Lord are celebrated. The one in 1617 was a day of great celebration in the Pious Schools. Glicerio excitedly attended to the donning of the habit of the first Piarist novices. There were fourteen of them, the first companions of Father Calasanz, now Father Joseph of the Mother of God. They belonged to the new religious community that Pope Paul V had established in the Church.

They will be called Poor of the Mother of God. They will live only for Christ, in chastity, extreme poverty, obedience and commitment to the care of children. Calasanz will be their superior.

This is all that Glicerio has longed for. That for which he has been persistently asking for a long time. But he is not in the group of initiators. What had happened? Had his zeal flagged at the crucial moment, had his generosity waned, had his determination waned? None of these things. There is no reason other than the damned shackles of material goods, which are both help and hindrance. At so many times, the wealth of Glicerio had been a great resource for the Pious Schools. It even enabled them to buy the house in which they were housed. But now they were a major obstacle. As long as the procedures for renouncing the many goods and titles he possessed had not been completed in the manner prescribed in Milan, Glicerio was not free to become a Piarist religious.

A few days earlier, when things were not going well and his beloved son's mood was low, Calasanz comforted him as best he could.

-My dear Father Abbot, you will see that you will soon cease to be an abbot and become a brother Glicerio of Christ. You will be a Poor of

the Mother of God in the Pious Schools. What does it mean to wait a few days or months when you have your whole life ahead of you? A little delay and a little setback taken by the hand of God is the occasion for a little sacrifice for greater and more delicious fruits. For years you have been one of us and always will be. My soul recognises you as a whole Piarist. As an angel of the children. Therefore, I will keep yours in my heart. Just as I receive the habit for myself, I will receive it for you in my desire, until I can soon impose it on you myself, just as Elijah passed on his own mantle to Elisha. Glicerio smiled reassuredly, accepted the test and waited.

Three months later, on 2 July 1617, the expected arrived, after all legal claims had been settled and he had been released from all burdens. He was clothed in the black, poor and simple habit of the Pious Schools. Thus began the novitiate with great joy and fervent love. That night, dressed in the Piarist habit, he knelt before his beloved Virgin of Loreto and prayed, happier than he had ever been in expensive silk suits:

“When I was a little boy, you accepted my ring and my heart, beloved Virgin, my Lady. Today you give me something much better than what I gave you: to be a poor of yours and to place myself at the service of your Son, in his smallest and neediest members. Welcome, Mother of Grace, my little offering. Look well upon this creature, full of sin, and protect it. And make me able to obtain from Jesus the forgiveness of all my faults. Help me now and always and at the hour of my death. Amen.

When he saw that the candle was almost used up, he remembered the candles he had lit as a child, and he suspected that he too would soon be used up.

The disease attacked him within a few months. It remained, no matter how much he prayed for a full recovery. Glicerio was tempted to believe that it was his fault. He had gone too far in fasting and sacrifice. He had recklessly eaten badly, slept badly and neglected to dress warmly. Perhaps there was something to it. But the surrender had already been made and the die was cast.

In addition to his ever faithful Francesco, Calasanz visited him frequently. He moved from San Pantaleo to the house of the novitiate. He brought him the greetings of Father Gaspar Dragonetti. They laughed as they recalled the adventures the three of them had had together

when they founded the Pious Schools in Frascati; as if they were grandfather, father and son. Calasanz, Glicerio and Dragonetti had filled that school with family warmth. They had brought with them the precious image of the Queen of the Pious Schools, which now protected not only the Piarist House but the whole town. They also remembered Glicerio's pilgrimage to Loreto. There the Virgin had gently confirmed that she wanted him with Calasanz, and the last reservations that had clouded his decision to become a Piarist had been dispelled. Beyond that, there were so many other joyful stories with the students: Lessons and walks, games, songs and much prayer. In these conversations, the common longing that the community of the Pious Schools be raised from a simple congregation to a religious order, to achieve greater perfection and stability in commitment, emerged again and again.

Calasanz and Glicerio slowly accepted what was happening to his deteriorating health. Hard and painful as it was, it was by the fatherly hand of the blessed God, for the true good. The Father in heaven was so powerful that he would undoubtedly bring forth great blessings from such an evil.

When the weakness was so acute as to make the outcome predictable, Glicerio asked for the grace to make perpetual profession in advance. Calasanz received the long-awaited permission of the Pope. It was the last joy Glicerio had on earth. He would be the first of all, even before the founder himself, to take perpetual vows as a Piarist.

In this way the servant of God declared before the assembled congregation that he belonged wholly to Christ and the Virgin and would serve the children forever. A solemn act preceded by a life in which he had already practised all that he now promised.

After the brothers had withdrawn, and in the intimacy of the dialogue with Calasanz, Glicerio was encouraged to speak with the greatest frankness.

"Father Joseph, you see that I will not be your successor. But I am happy to be your son - and, whispering, he ventured to add with a smile - your first child."

Calasanz, moved, tried to silence him, lest he should become restless or exhausted. But Glicerio, determined as ever, still in the last trance, gathered his strength and continued.

“I have asked the Blessed Virgin for a gift and I know that she will grant it to me. It is not for me, it is for the Pious Schools. Actually, it is for the whole Church of God. I want,” he blushed and lowered his eyes, “if the Lord in his mercy allows me, to be with the Virgin Mary in the glory I long for.”

Then he raised his eyes, which shone brightly, and continued resolutely with his confidence.

“From there, to pass on the same fire that God has put in me to more young hearts, so that there will never be a lack of those who want to be Poor of the Mother of God in the Pious Schools. In this way, the greatest grace, after faith, I have received on earth will be multiplied. I have already made my perpetual vows to God and Our Lady for heaven. And Our Lady is so meek that she has accepted my little sacrifice; once more, forever.”

Calasanz could not answer, he could only nod and squeeze Glicerio's open hand tightly. The same hand that had held the blessed ring so many years ago. After taking a deep breath, he blessed him, kissed him on the forehead and turned to him once more before leaving, already a little more composed.

“Do not go without my permission.”

After midnight, in the house of San Pantaleo, at 1 a.m., Calasanz, who was still awake, heard a knock at his door from his bed.

“Come in,” he said, but no one answered.

They knocked again, as if someone was waiting on the other side. Calasanz again asked to come in and again there was no answer. But before the third knock sounded, the old saint thought it might be his beloved son asking permission. So he answered him with a trembling soul and a firm voice.

“Go with God, my son, you have my permission and my blessing. Pray for us and for all who will come to take the place you now leave empty.”

And he lowered his voice and muttered a soliloquy that became a prayer:

“You are not my successor, but the forerunner of many to come, now I see it. Fly to the top of the sky, Glicerio. Wait for us there, where all

our desires will be fulfilled. *How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord of the Universe!... The sparrow has found a home and the swallow a nest... Blessed are those who live there and praise you for ever!*"

And lowering his voice he muttered a soliloquy that became prayer:

Blessed Glicerio, you have reached the goal and home.

The next morning, very early, the news came from the house of the novitiate. At the same time that Calasanz was responding to the knock at his door with his permission, the servant of God was dying in the Lord for whom he had lived. He was only 30 years old, and had spent the last seven years in the Pious Schools. It happened in Rome on 15 February 1618. He flew to heaven to inaugurate the Piarist choir next to the Virgin Mary, with the angels and saints, before God.



## Of Christ as Glicerio

Two months after Glicerio' death another Piarist novice writes a letter. His name is Santiago Vaquedano, great companion and friend. The recipient is Fr. Dominic of Jesus and Mary, the Carmelite who guided Glicerio to the Pious Schools. The letter reads as follows:

*"... Glicerio was assiduous in the study of the Holy Scriptures and in the reading of the Holy Fathers, and fled from all other profane reading. I recognised in him a special gift of God to understand the meaning of the Holy Scriptures and the holy Doctors, in which he took a certain pleasure.*

*He wrote the sentences of them down in a book with his own hand, so that he could use them in any emergency. Among other things, he loved the teaching of St Thomas Aquinas and that of St Gregory the Pope so much that during his last illness, which lasted five months, he finished reading all the books of St Gregory's Morals.*

*Then he wanted to know from me what else he should read. With the intention of making him fit, as the holy Fathers teach, for what is required for the priesthood, although he thought himself very unworthy and refused it (which I know very well), I told him to read the books on the care of souls by St. Gregory. Just as I had given him to read for this purpose, before he became ill, the book on the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the divine Dionysius. And that afterwards he should read the books on the priesthood by St. John Chrysostom. He obeyed and read the entire pastoral books of St. Gregory and wrote down many things in his own handwriting in a book.*

*Then he wanted to know from me what else he should read. I, who, as the holy Fathers teach, wished to make him fit in that which is desirable for the priesthood, even though, thinking himself very unworthy, he refused it (which I know to be very certain), told him to read the books on the healing of souls by St. Gregory. The same who, for this purpose, before he fell ill, made*

*him read the book of the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the divine Dionysus. And then he was to read the books on the priesthood of St. John Chrysostom. He obeyed and read the pastoral books of St. Gregory and wrote down many things in a book by his own hand.*

*And I was astonished that this sacred study, though he was so ill, did not harm his health; on the contrary, it made him better, as he himself testified several times. And I too can testify to this, for I observed it, as I was with him almost every day at that time. And the doctor had also given him permission to do so. But while waiting for him to recover, I told his paternity to order him to gradually receive the ecclesiastical and sacred ordinations and to practise in each of them as long as the sacred canons prescribed, and in the meantime to wait for the study of sacred theology. God had other plans for him, to take him from us to Himself.*

*And two months before he passed away, he asked me to copy for him all the useful sentences of the holy Fathers, which deal with penance. I did so and cut them down to three or four folios, which he read every day with great emotion. And several times he fell on his knees at my feet, weeping, and thanked me for this benefit, saying that he had learned from these sentences of the Fathers how to do penance, and that he thanked God for this, because he had been allowed to know this before he died, and he asked Him to restore him to health and to give him life to continue weeping over his sins.*

*I recited to him some more sentences of the Holy Fathers about the worthy disposition to receive Communion spiritually and sacramentally, with much fruit, the teaching of which impressed itself on his heart and made him much more eager to receive Communion, as I could see, because he wanted me to say Mass and give him Communion in the chapel of the Pious Schools or in the chapel of the house of Msgr. Vives, where he was going, even though he was ill.*

*Finally, a month before his death, on the advice of his doctor, he moved to the vicinity of Santa Maria in Via, to a house of the Novitiate of the Pious Schools, where he died in this year 1618, on 15 February, Thursday, at 7 of the clock in the evening, having received last rites and communion in the chapel on Wednesday, as he was out of bed.*

*He had been ill since 20 September, the feast of St Eustace. On this day was celebrated in Milan the feast of St. Glycerius, Bishop of Milan, who came from the house of the Landriani, to*

*which our brother of the same name, Glicerio Landriani, also belonged. Therefore, we can assume that this saint desired him and called him to him because he became ill on that day. And because I too, a sinner, was born into this world on that day, I hope that he remembers me, his unworthy brother, all the more to ask divine mercy for me, so that at the end of my life he may make me worthy to enjoy in his company our Love, Jesus Christ.*

*All this is written in obedience to his Paternity, and I call God as my witness that I have done my best to say only those things which I know to be true.*

*The grace of our Lord preserve your most reverend paternity, and I humbly ask for your blessing.*

*From home, 17 April 17 1618.*

*Of your most reverend paternity humble servant in Christ and unworthy son*

*Santiago Vaquedano”*

This portrait shows Glicerio as a man of integrity. He devoted himself earnestly to spiritual life and study, and strove to grow in wisdom and holiness. He hoped to become an ever more suitable co-worker with the truth to educate children and young people in piety and letters. He wanted them to lead their lives happily and attain eternal happiness. In this way, he wanted to contribute from the roots, to the reformation of a divided, beleaguered and weakened Christendom.

While still a child, Glicerio consecrated himself to Mary in order to belong fully to Christ, as she did. In the middle of his youth he went astray and humbly allowed himself to be corrected. When his zeal seemed to overwhelm him, he obeyed his mentors and channelled his ardent and luminous existence into the Piarist harvest, under the paternal guidance of Calasanz.

His short and inspiring life has since encouraged other young people to follow in his footsteps. During his lifetime and after his death. One example is his good friend Francesco Selvaggi, who was an Almoner at the Pious Schools for many years until his old age.

Perhaps there is a new Glicerio reading these pages right now. Perhaps someone wants to belong wholly to Christ, in chastity, poverty and obedience; detached from the world and dedicated to the good of souls; a good friend to his friends, to win them to follow the Lord;

docile to his mentors and capable of noble deeds. People like these, with a great soul that soars to the heights. Perhaps...

*“Jesus and Mary always occupy the whole heart of abbot Glicerio, our most beloved in the Lord,”* Calasanz wrote to his young son.

For whom is your life, what dwells in your heart?

Glicerio Landriani was born in Milan on 1 March 1588, the son of Anna Visconti and Horace Landriani. On his mother’s side he was a relative of Saint Charles Borromeo and Cardinal Frederick Borromeo. On his father’s side he was a descendant of Saint Glycerius of Milan, the three famous archbishops of that great city. His paternal uncle Marsilio Landriani was Papal Nuncio in France, Bishop of Vigevano and Papal Legate in Bologna, and his brother Fabricio Landriani was Archbishop of Pavia.

He studied philosophy, law and theology in Bologna and Rome at the Dominican convent of Santa Maria sopra Minerva.

At the age of nineteen he entered the pious circle of the Portuguese priest Francisco Méndez, a disciple of St. John of Avila. On the orders of Pope Paul V, he was mentored by Father Dominic Ruzzola, a discalced Carmelite, who led him to the Pious Schools. He joined this work in 1612. He participated in the foundation of Frascati in 1616. On 2 July 1617 he received the Piarist habit and had Blessed Pietro Casani as novice master.

He distinguished himself by his extraordinary talent as a catechist and by his love of extreme poverty. With papal permission, he made his religious profession in articulo mortis before the Cardinal Protector of the Pious Schools. He died in the Roman novitiate of Santa Maria in Via on 15 February 1618, at the age of almost thirty, in the odour of sanctity.

Saint Joseph Calasanz initiated his beatification process, at which he appeared as a witness. The process was interrupted due to the general decrees issued by Urban VIII on beatification processes. It was resumed at the end of the 19th century and in 1931 Pope Pius XI signed the Decree on the Heroicity of Virtues.

After the autopsy, Calasanz had his heart placed in a reliquary and kept it in his own room for a long time. This remarkable relic is still kept in Rome, awaiting beatification.



