



# **Joaquín Erviti**

*His life and his voice  
among the little ones*

José Pascual Burgués



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*His life and his voice among the little ones*

Joaquín Erviti. His life and his voice among the little ones  
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Publicaciones ICCE  
(Instituto Calasanz de Ciencias de la Educación)  
Conde de Vilches, 4 - 28028 Madrid  
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## Introduction

- “He was born into a very Christian family”
- “He studied at the local school of the Piarist Fathers”
- “He entered the postulancy; then he went into the novitiate and after his simple profession continued his studies in philosophy and theology in the juniorate”
- “After his ordination he was sent to the schools of ... where he faithfully and enthusiastically fulfilled the task of educator”.
- “He prepared his lessons very well, as well as his sermons and other activities.”
- “The children loved him very much; the former students remembered him with affection”.
- “He was very faithful to prayer and other activities of the community”.
- “He was humble, jovial, lived modestly and always obeyed his superiors.”
- “In the end, he contracted a serious illness from which he died in the peace of God.”
- “He was a saint”
- ...

Of how many Piarists could one make these claims? I believe of many, of the great majority. But only a few are particularly remembered and raised to the altars. Perhaps because, although they share 90% of the characteristics of the others, there was a special 10% in

their lives, such as founding a religious community or dying a martyr's death, which made them a special person. Perhaps because, without being superheroes, they stood out among their confreres with an intensity of life, of virtues that attracted attention. Which made them an example to be known and shown to others, whether Piarists or not, of later generations.

It is easy to describe the life of a Piarist and expand the Piarist necrology with these 90% common elements (even if they are specific to each individual). It is not so easy to single out the 10% that are different and make him special. When this happens, as in the case of Father Pedro Díez of Zaragoza (about whom Fr. Dionisio Cueva has written beautifully<sup>1</sup>), or Fr. Joaquín Erviti, I will try to fulfill to the best of my ability the task that has been entrusted to me.

I did not have the good fortune to meet Father Joaquín. So, to write about him I will have to rely on what others have said about him (and what they have recently told me) and on what he has written about himself and his way of thinking.

*José P. Burgués Sch. P.*

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1 CUEVAD., *Sacerdote y maestro. Biografía del P. Pedro Díez*. Zaragoza, 2000.

## Some biographical data

Father Joaquín Erviti was born on October 12, 1912 in Estella-Lizarra. Estella is the head of the district of the same name in the mid-west of Navarre. At that time, the town had around 5,500 inhabitants. It is the third most populous town in Navarre after Pamplona and Tudela. It is a city with a glorious past and a privileged location on the Way of Santiago. People work in the countryside and in small local businesses. In fact, there is little work and many young people emigrate in search of better opportunities<sup>2</sup>. But Estella has something that other towns in Navarre (Pamplona, Tafalla, Vera de Bidasoa) also have: a school run by the Piarist Fathers.

In fact, the Piarists of the province of Aragon arrived in Estella in 1893. They had actually arrived in the neighboring monastery of Irache in 1885. In 1888, they had set up some primary school and Latin classes there, which were attended by many children from the surrounding towns, but mainly from Estella. They therefore decided to found a branch school in this town in 1893. With the help of the Marquise of Dicastillo, they were able to buy a building on Paseo de los Llanos, next to the Saint Benedict convent, and started classes there on September 1<sup>st</sup> with 160 primary school children at the time. Classes were initially held in makeshift rooms until 1897, when it was possible to build a school building thanks to the generous help of the Marquise de Dicastillo. From 1898, secondary school classes could also be taught there. Joaquín Erviti would study there.

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2 Wikipedia, 2.3.2023.



Joaquín's parents were called Vicente and Martina. Vicente, who came from Cirauqui, had gone to Estella to work in a pharmacy. He was widowed. He met a young widow who had a daughter called Margarita. The new marriage produced five children: Victorina (she worked in a sewing shop; she did not marry, she was a Franciscan tertiary, very devout, died in 2004), Matilde (she worked in a shoe store, died before Joaquín), Paco (employee, married, several children; 1916-2007) and María Jesús (married, several children, 1920-2003).

His parents lovingly took care of his early education, as Joaquín recalls in a poem dated January 30, 1948, which he dedicates to his mother:

*I was an open child: / I dreamed of lilies and stars, / and  
your most beautiful songs / lulled me with love. With what a  
delicate garment / you clothed me! And to heaven, / in holy  
longing, / you directed my prayer, / like the first sacrifice / that  
lifted its flight.*

*And to the all-beautiful Virgin, / who sends gentle rays to  
poor sinners, / you consecrated me, pious one, / to her miracu-  
lous image. / And I looked with satisfaction / at the medal on my  
chest / as a pledge you had placed / that at the end of the battle /  
to heaven I would ascend.*

*Today my affection is bursting / for you, because is your feast, / I would like to flatter you / with the memory of the medal.*

*Your Joaquín can't find a better gift / who with determination / Instills in the little ones / the saving devotion / Which in its exercise preserves / the most joyful future.*

Father Erviti remembers his mother, now deceased, in a poem dated March 27, 1958:

*Your life was extinguishing / like a lamp in the altar... / Your dream was to work / with such excessive passion / that, thinking to be exhausted, / only you found rest / in the tiring labor / that God ended with the death. / He awarded you with the gladness / of enjoying the lovely sky!*

The tenderness towards his father is shown in a beautiful poem, dated January 14, 1956.

*Father, since you lost the cardelina / through no fault of your own, / you have found no medicine / to cure your sad image. / I want you to give birdseed / to another singing bird, / to pour around you / waterfalls of joy / and change night into day, / to drive away the bad mood. /*

*In my happy kindergarten, / which is orchard and school, / a small one has been admitted, / who is canary, not child. / His two friends lull him to sleep / every day with their singing. / When he has learned the lesson / of his melodious trilling, / he will go to his new place, / to Estella and your spot.*

He also remembers his deceased father in a 1961 poem:

*Martina's husband was good, / the father of Matilda and Victorina, / like a wild thyme bush, / like a spring of fresh car-amillo.*

*He was good... the twelve springs / in Estella distill their streams, / weeping lonely: white rosemary / of the hermitage, the ivy and the goldfinch... / Old friend of the shade and pine forests... / you carried my songs to heaven.*

*You loved me, O Father, more than the lily, / which in the mountain hides its delirium, / more than the pure crystal of the brook, / more than the song of the rutting bird.*

*I was the guide of your paths, / strewn with footprints  
already tired, / spring of dreams and stars, / in the summer  
nights, always beautiful.*

*You were good... Fragrant as a child, / for the home a fur-  
nace of affection... / and for God the soul always watchful, /  
suspicious of the hellish world...*

*Hippocrates and the physician Galen / saw your days full  
of labor... / And you left without giving me a pat, / not even a  
farewell with your gaze, / without kissing your lily cheeks / with  
the stinging ice of my sorrow...*

*The minister of God, prayer and laughter, / opened the heav-  
ens to you. / When you entered... you hurried / and closed your  
eyes for this life, / without waiting for my goodbye and farewell.*

Joaquín was born on October 12, 1912. He was baptized a few days after his birth, on 15<sup>th</sup> October, in the parish of San Juan of Estella by D. Juan Zugarramundi. A few months later (on May 28, 1913) he was confirmed in Estella by the Illustrious Friar José de Mendoza. His parents took him to the school of the Piarist Fathers, where he made his First Communion on May 13, 1920.

And here we have to talk about something that probably shaped the child Joaquín through the education he received at the Piarist Fathers. Saint Joseph Calasanz, their founder, wanted the students of his schools to attend Mass every day and receive Communion once a month (those who were old enough and prepared), as was the custom at the time. But Pope Pius X, in his decree *Quam Singularis* (August 8, 1910), spoke out in favor of frequent communion for children and advanced the age of reception. A Piarist, Father Juan Arimón from the school of Calella in Catalonia, had the idea of creating the “Eucharistic shifts”, made up of groups of voluntary children who, divided into shifts, would receive communion more frequently in the daily Eucharist of the children on the day of the week when it was their turn, in order to create a kind of “continuous communion”, following the example of the “continuous prayer” created by Calasanz. Father Tomás Viñas, General of the Order, approved the idea in October 1913 and the initiative was well received, especially in the Spanish provinces. In Estella, according to a notebook kept in our Provincial Archives, they began to work in February 1914 and remained active until April 1923 (resignation of Fr. Viñas and beginning of the Apostolic Visitation of Bishop Pasetto).

We find the name of the child Joaquín Erviti from December 1922, and as he regularly attended communion when it was his turn, he was appointed leader of one of the groups in February 1923, a position he held until this activity was no longer mentioned in the notebook cited above. The practice was gradually abandoned because it was not supported by the Vatican: The authorities consulted considered that some points in the statutes of the Association founded by the Piarists could violate the children's freedom of conscience, although the frequent communion of children was encouraged.

In this devotion we see that Joaquín Erviti had a great love for the Eucharist from childhood. Perhaps it was this practice that fostered his priestly vocation. Even before he was 12 years old, he expressed his desire to enter the seminary. Certainly, moved by the example of his Piarist formators, however, he changed his mind and decided to become a Piarist. Father Echarri, a witness to the Process in Pamplona, tells us that Father Pallares, a Piarist, asked him in class: "Who wants to become a Piarist?" and Joaquín raised his hand. On September 17, 1924, he was admitted to the postulancy of Cascajo in Zaragoza in the Piarist province of Aragon, to which the schools in Navarre belonged at the time. From there, he wrote several letters to his parents. He told them that he was happy and that they were eating very well: lots of fruit, such as peaches, melons, grapes... produced on the farm itself. And he slept very well in those beds. But best of all, he said, it was when they went down to see Our Lady of Pilar, which is in a beautiful temple, of which there is no other in the world!

Two years later, he was sent to the novitiate in Peralta de la Sal, where he received the Piarist habit on October 13, 1927. His novice master was Father Faustino Oteiza, who was martyred in 1936 and has been blessed since 1995. At that time, in addition to religious formation, the novitiate also included scientific and literary training: Latin and Spanish history (humanities), and mathematics. Joaquín was more gifted in the former (Notable, B) than in the latter (Aprobado, C). He made his simple profession in Peralta on October 14, 1928, after receiving a dispensation from the second year of the novitiate (like all his companions). He was 16 years old. And he immediately set off for the interprovincial Piarist juniorate, which was located in the monastery of Irache, very close to his parents'

house. However, this did not mean that he had much contact with his family. In those years, the juniors were “cut off” from the world. His parents could visit him, and they did, but they could not speak to him.



Joaquín Erviti spent three years in Irache, where he studied philosophy according to the Piarist curriculum, which also served to obtain a teaching diploma. At the end of the semester, the juniors received their grades, both for their studies and for their religious inclinations. Joachim’s normal grades were “C” and “B”, between “pass” and “excellent”. In 1929, at the end of the first year, Father Valentín Caballero, his teacher, described his character as “complacent” and his

behavior as “very good” (the best of the course), as recorded in the minutes in our Provincial Archives.

At the end of his three years, he went to the recently founded juniorate of Albelda de Iregua in La Rioja, also near his hometown of Estella. It had been instituted a few years earlier at the suggestion of the Apostolic Visitor, Bishop Pasetto, so that all the juniors of the Spanish provinces could study theology together after completing their philosophy studies, with Piarist professors, as in Irache. Previously, each Piarist province had its own juniorate for theology. He spent another two and a half years there, from 1931 to 1933, studying theology. His qualifications were the same as in Irache. And here he received the only outstanding grade of his career, in rhetoric, with a preponderance of “B”s. So, we can say that Fr. Joaquín was a good student; he was not brilliant, but he worked diligently and received a good philosophical-theological formation for his future priesthood. He left the juniorate of Albelda on December 24, 1933.

Those who knew him describe him as lean, of medium height (1.70 to 1.75 m. tall), with a thick beard, black or white hair, upright or

slightly stooped... Of course, it depends on the age they are referring to. But his expression always radiated affection, peace and tenderness. A witness who lived with him says that he walked a little shrunken, immersed in an absolute and constant presence of God. You could see that he had something in him that made him happy. Another witness said that he gave the impression of being older than his age. The painter Eslava, who painted his portrait, said that Father Joaquín had a halo of beauty because of his inner image.



We have a memory from his years in Albelda: in one of his notebooks<sup>3</sup>, he writes: “I recited this poem by Luis Carrión<sup>4</sup>, the great reciter and poet, in Albelda de Iregua, as if it were a premonition of my forthcoming apostolate with the children”. And not only that, let us add: he also saw it as an invitation to express his love for children in verse. This is what it says in the poem entitled “Piarist Vocation”:

*White and pure souls! Beloved children, / who will crowd  
the school that I long greatly! / Children, in whose souls I see my  
laurels / and the chest of my treasure united!*

*Like a merry flock of nightingales, / warbling to the  
branches of a tree, / I will see you, smiling and enchanted, / enter  
the enclosure of this school.*

*Of murky streams in the current, / do not stain your wings  
when you come; / if you want pure water, there is a fountain /  
in my school garden that gives life.*

3 No. 2 of Box 345 of the Provincial Archives of Emmaus, Province of Vasconia.

4 Father Luis Carrión (1913-1977) was a Piarist religious of the Province of Valencia, one year after Father Erviti in Irache and Albelda. His necrology, in EC 1979, pp. 128-129.

*Smiling buds of spring...! / Come splendid and spotless, / for you are lilies growing on the banks / of the stream of the world. Beloved children!*

*I desire no greater happiness on earth, / nor do I ask you, my God, for new favors / than that you sweeten me with the sweetness of children, / the object of my love.*

*I want to be surrounded all my life / by a happy and laughing crowd of children, / that the love of my heart has been captured / by their purity, their grace, and their affection.*

*I want to hear the boisterous lively merriment / of the happy hours of their playtimes, / which sounds to me like the murmur / of clear fountains, with rumors of winds and gurgles.*

*I want to see in my children the glittering waves / and look at the gilded flowing curls / crowning the temples of their white choir.*

*And forgetting in the earth all enjoyments, / seeing myself in the mirror of their eyes, / when they look to me, black, rapid, / like a swift flock of swallows.*

*Oh, my school, my tabernacle / where my soul finds joy, light and purity...! / My sorrows and pains she calms, / and through her my heaven begins on earth.*

*Lord! If you suffer contempt among men... / if no one loves you, nor comforts you, / come, Jesus, to my children; among them you will have / one who truly loves you... Come to my school!*

*Come and instill in their breast the holy fire! / Come and kindle in their minds the light of dawn! / I want to see in my children the faith of a crusader / and angelic souls with wings of sun and snow!*

*White and pure souls! My dear children, / that you populate the school for which I much long for; / let I may behold your souls united, / my laurels and the chest of my treasure.*

On December 26<sup>th</sup>, he was transferred to Pamplona-Iruña. Pamplona is the capital of the historic kingdom of Navarre. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the city had around 30,000 inhabitants, but it began to grow. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in 1888, the expansion of the city had begun with the design of the “Primer Ensanche” (First Expansion), which was carried out between the city and the citadel

with the demolition of two of its bastions and in which the most important local architects participated. This extension did not succeed in breaking the encirclement of the walls, which remained in place until 1915, as the city was considered a “fortress”. The fact that the walls remained standing for so long meant that the city grew in height. Many old buildings are relatively tall compared to buildings from the same period in other cities.

After long negotiations with the military and given the uselessness of the walls in modern warfare, a royal decree in 1901 ordered the demolition of the southern walls of the city and their subsequent urbanization. In 1915, the demolition of the walls began, allowing the construction of the second urban extension, which opened up to the south, with new streets laid out according to a strict scheme, as Cerdá had done in the Ensanche of Barcelona in the previous century<sup>5</sup>.

The city’s population grew. In 1930, shortly before Father Joaquín arrived in Pamplona, the city had around 38,000 inhabitants. By 1940, it was already more than 50,000; between 1950 and 1980, the population doubled, reaching 180,000 by the end of the century. And it was not only the number of inhabitants that changed, but also their mentality, with the end of the Franco regime, the Second Vatican Council, the introduction of democracy... The traditional Catholic Carlist mentality is giving way to a progressive process of secularization and Euskaldunization. While Opus Dei became strong in Pamplona, the churches emptied. San Fermin, the patron saint of the city, went from being a religious symbol to something folkloristic - bullfighting, which was more in line with the general mentality, not only in Navarre but throughout Spain. And Father Erviti was there when this process took place. With his efforts, he tried to maintain the firmness of Christian values in the generations of children entrusted to him. But he could not ignore the changes that were taking place, and indeed he alludes to them in some of his sermons. Like all Christian educators aware of their responsibilities, he fought for the kingdom of God, with the wind for or against the socio-political circumstances of the moment.

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5 Wikipedia, 13.3.2023.

The School of the Pious Schools in Pamplona was an imposing building that had just been built when Father Erviti arrived there. The Piarist Fathers arrived in Pamplona in 1894 and began his ministry in temporary premises. In 1928 a piece of land was purchased and in 1929 the construction of a school building began. On December 24, 1931, the new building, still unfinished, begun to be used. Built by the architect Victor Eusa, it was the beloved work of Father Patricio Mozota, the provincial of Aragon, who was the driving force behind the construction. It was “one of the most characteristic buildings in Pamplona: its graceful lines, its combination of cement, glass and red brick and, above all, its slender and peculiar tower, crowned by the Angel of Aralar, “Saint Michael in excelsis”<sup>6</sup>. Father Joaquín says of it: “With elegant lines and expressionist style, it marks out luminous paths of hope with its cement finger, the mast of St. Michael and the Cross”.



In 1933 the Piarist Province of Vasconia was created, with the six schools that were in Navarre and the Basque Country. Joaquín Erviti was incardinated in it. And already at the beginning of 1934, after

the Christmas vacation, he was assigned to the kindergarten class at the school. It was then the usual practice among the Piarists that the youngest were assigned to the classes of the little children, to be promoted over the years to higher classes.

In 1934 he had to do his military service in Pamplona for six months. In the morning he went to the barracks, and in the afternoon he worked with the kindergartens. Father Miguel Lezáun, who knew him well, says that in the barracks he suffered a lot: he was not good at gymnastics. On the other hand, he sang very well. Already that first year he dedicated himself to preparing the children for First Communion. He tells how he asked for a postponement of the last two months of his military service in order to prepare the children intensively. He obtained the postponement, but then he was left without vacation.

In 1934 he received the tonsure and minor orders in the seminary of Pamplona, an impressive building, also the work of the architect Eusa. On March 25, 1935, he made his solemn profession in the hands of the Provincial Superior of Vasconia, Pantaleón Galdeano, in Pamplona. Later, also in 1935, he received the Subdiaconate and the Diaconate. He was ordained a priest on June 14, 1936, by Bishop Marcelino Olaechea, Bishop of Pamplona<sup>7</sup>, also in the seminary of Pamplona. He felt a strong affection for him. Father Ramón Castellort, a Piarist from Catalonia who did his priestly studies in Albelda, and once a priest, was assigned to the school in Estella during the Civil War, dedicated a beautiful poem to him on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. We reproduce it here, because of the admiration that Fr. Erviti felt for his religious brother three years younger, and that must have been his inspiration to dedicate himself to versify on his own. Although he did not reach the quality of his master... The fact is that Fr. Joaquín carefully copied and kept the poem “Recuerdo” (Remembrance):

*It was a day of whiteness, / of snow... And in your gaze /  
was a trembling of tears / and an intense glow of peace; / and  
your virginal soul had / crystalline transparency.*

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7 Bishop of Pamplona from 1935 to 1946. He then moved to the diocese of Valencia, where he died in 1972.

*You wanted to climb the steps / of the holy altar! / You wanted to take Christ / into your hands, with compassion, / with all your piety!... You wanted / to learn to shepherd / the flock of ewes / that His Majesty has given you!*

*And it was the day of the Night / Good Night... Eternity / was made in songs / and proclamations of eternal peace. / Little stars filled / the path of a portal, / and have perfumed the paths / the angels as they have passed / breaking the air with laughter / and a glint, glint of crystal.*

*And the heavens were rent / and to the scene they descended / a child with golden locks / and eyes of such gentleness / that they thinned the strands / of the soul with their gaze.*

*And you were that night / the bringer of peace, because you lowered Christ / from heaven to the altar...*

*What a memory, this memory / of so much happiness! / To be the minister of this child / on the night of peace!*

*That is why you have - no doubt /, you have copied it from Him / this gesture, this look, / and this smile of peace, / with which you look at us and laugh / and bless us as you pass by!*

He celebrated his first mass on June 21, 1936 in his home parish of Saint John the Baptist in Estella.

These were difficult times for the Pious Schools (and the Church in general) in Spain at the time. With the beginning of the Second Republic in 1931, successive governments began to adopt a series of restrictive measures and even attacks such as the burning of churches. On July 18<sup>th</sup> of the same year, the beginning of the Civil War, which lasted until 1939, things became much more difficult in some regions of Spain. In almost all the regions controlled by the Republican government, a harsh religious persecution began, to which thousands of priests and religious fell victim (including more than two hundred Piarists), many churches were destroyed or alienated and public worship was suppressed. Father Erviti was fortunate to be in “national” territory: In much of Navarre, religious activities continued as normal, although the confusion and horror caused by the wartime environment affected many facets of life.

But Father Erviti’s activity changed: in 1937 he was called to the military and appointed chaplain of “Pelayos” in Echauri. There,

he writes, “I was with them all day long. I said Mass with them, prayed the rosary and had a simple chat with them in the afternoon. I watched over them during breaks, when they bathed and when they went to bed and got up. However, as there was a shortage of chaplains in the Southern Army, he was later appointed chaplain of the 230<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Oviedo Regiment in Málaga, which he joined on August 28, 1937, and as such he was present on the fronts of Granada, Extremadura, Córdoba and in the Battle of the Ebro. His main task as chaplain was to celebrate the Eucharist for the soldiers and to administer the sacrament of confession. And to administer the last rites to the seriously wounded. But he did not limit himself to this. In his diary of 1939, we can read that on February 1<sup>st</sup>, he “talked with the soldiers about “Piedad y Letras” (Piety and Letters). On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, in the afternoon, he was at position 37 and “distributed Piety and Letters to the soldiers”. On the 3<sup>rd</sup>, after lunch, he is “in conversation with the soldiers on religious topics”. On March 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, he speaks to the soldiers of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> companies, and on the other days as well. He even gives the topic of his lectures: “de peccatis et Gratia”.



As a “war souvenir” of his stay in Malaga, he wrote a short and beautiful poem entitled “Gaucin”:

*John of God, next to a fountain, / found the Child Jesus... /  
He kissed the Child on his forehead, / and sweetly said to him... /  
Grenada will be your Cross!*

A longer poem-letter is the one he wrote, during his stay at the front, in Doña Rama (Córdoba), dated June 11, 1938.

It is entitled “Pax Christi”<sup>8</sup>:

*I wrote it without a draft, / on the typewriter that was / in the poor and cold house / of the Minister of the Lord, / and the lines sprouted / without erasures or amendments. / Now I ask your forgiveness / for so much blood on the paths, / For so much death, Lord.*

*With the love of a brother / and the tenderness of a son, / Joaquín Erviti Lazcano, / from this village, which is a farm, / who gives the Chaplain his hand / of affection and good turns, / writes to you with great pleasure; / although the home of a patient / could fill with sorrow and pain / the atmosphere of this office...*

*Here he prayed and fulfilled / his religious obligations / the priest who one day / left his tender souls / for the sad and cold prison, / prelude to an honorable death, / which he suffered as a strong man / for his idolized homeland, / with God as his gaze, / as his sweetest fate.*

*What deep emotions / overwhelm the hearts / with such attractive examples / in the corners of Cordoba, / that relight with flashes / of love of Spain, my cradle, / and love of God, my fortune!*

After the end of the war on April 1, 1939, he remained mobilized, as did a large part of the army. He is transferred to Almargen (Málaga) for a time. There, in May, he organizes a school for illiterate adults. In May, he is given a two-week leave and travels to his family in Estella, returning later to Almargen, where he helps the parish priest of the town and other neighboring towns. From Almargen, he goes to Ronda with his battalion. Finally, in July, he was discharged. He was sent to the Piarist school in Bilbao for a few months to help with the celebration of masses. But on September 1<sup>st</sup>, he returned to Pamplona to take over the management of the kindergarten. At the same time, he was appointed secretary of the house, a position he would hold for many years. Later, he would also be responsible for the Book of Masses.

He remained in his kindergarten class until 1942. In the 1942-43 school year, following the Piarist tradition, he was promoted to teacher for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year of High School and the 1<sup>st</sup> year of Com-

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8 Box 345, notebook 2, Provincial Archives of Emmaus, Province of Vasconia.

merce, while continuing to be in charge of the catechism of infants. But during this course he discovered that his vocation was the kindergarten and he asked to return there, which was granted to him by his superiors. And in September 1943 he returned to the kindergarten, which he did not leave until 1971, at the age of 59, when his mental health showed signs of some weakness. On this occasion, he wrote a short poem entitled “Everything is grace”:

*“All went down the drain!” / Do you think you’re still young? /  
Be simple, without shawl, / Offer in pledge that piece / of life that  
is dungeon, / Until it breaks in joy / of God, eternal exhilaration.”*

From this year onwards, he is replaced in his class by a teacher and he remains responsible for the catechesis of the kindergarten and the first years of the EGB. Of course, it must have been difficult for him to give up the class at first, but then he understood that this gave him the opportunity to go to the other classes, where the students knew and loved him and the teachers did not make it difficult for him to convey his religious teachings. He continued this activity until 1982. During his active time, he took part in various courses for theological and catechetical formation, etc. These were offered by the Order or other institutions. He always wanted to keep up to date, especially after the Second Vatican Council, which he accepted with full obedience.

One thing he was known for was bullfighting; he knew a lot about bullfighting. He collected posters of the bullfights in San Fermín, read the bullfighting chronicles, sometimes watched a bullfight on television... But he never went to the bullring, which was right outside the school. Some say he never climbed the tower of the school from where you could see the bullfights. Others say he did go...

Before he left the kindergarten, on the occasion of his silver jubilee as a priest (June 21, 1961) we read the “Toast to my silver jubilee” (it could also be called “I want to live!”):

*Twenty-five years! A life / with its best smiling face, / in a  
hint of taking leave, / is already telling us: Wake up!*

*While the roses of my illusion / are covered with snow, / my  
heart still dares / to premiere a new song.*

*I want to live with more fire; / I want to stop fantasizing; /  
to be cypress and lavender; / to touch God, and to carpet / the*

*streets with perfume / I want to leave my tired limbs / on the cross of daily work / and use the shortcut / that God offers me in his cross. / I want to live! I want to rejoice / before the day come to an end, / with grapes in the winepress!*

*I want to live! To God I go, / and God wants me to awake, / I want to be what I am now, / and not the shadow of a dead.*

*I want to live! The chains / I must boldly break. / I want to pray lilies! / School does not frighten me.*

*I want to live! And enjoy / being a sower of light; / I want to embrace the wood / of my cross to the end.*

*I want to live! And to rise / like a flowering vine, / I want to be like love, / that goes away laughing.*

*I toast to everybody! My wish / after a warm hug, / to summons you to heaven... / We will meet again in the end! / The wedding will be eternal!*

Joaquín “recycles” this vital poem at Christmas 1986. He begins with “Seventy-four” (his age at the time). He replaces the last stanza with the following:

*One more year... Christmas! / And the stars moaning... / One year less... Shut up! / I'm a little boy!*

In the 1983 diary he begins to write down some health problems. We read on February 25<sup>th</sup>:

*I get up at 10:15 in the morning. The night's rest is riddled with nightmares and worries. I had to go to the books to distract myself. It turns out that the time of rest is still equated for me with the dark night. It is not for nothing that the spirit of evil is called the angel of darkness. Fortunately, the sun veiled by the clouds has been replaced by the distant stars, and the psalms and the readings of the breviary have been melody for the lips and ambrosia for the heart. And the Gospel of the Mass I just celebrated alone put a drop of balm in my heart, inviting me to keep loving and forgiving those who wound us with the sting of their words. It's all grace, like the fact that I am stronger than I was yesterday.*

A month later, on March 23<sup>rd</sup> of the same year, he began to talk about the vertigo, which he would refer to several more times in the future:

*Around 7 o' clock in the evening, a severe dizziness (cervical osteoarthritis) threw me sitting up on Fr. Alvarez's bed. There I did the flexion and rotation exercises and recovered from the dizziness.*

This was repeated on several days in the same year: April 22<sup>nd</sup>, August 5<sup>th</sup>, August 31<sup>st</sup>, September 18<sup>th</sup>, September 19<sup>th</sup>, September 26<sup>th</sup>. On October 15<sup>th</sup> he writes:

*On the way back along Amaya Street, dizziness from arthritis. I leaned against a door frame, made movements of the cervical spine and recovered immediately.*

The next day he writes:

*After praying the breviary in the corridor, I opened my study table and tidied it. As I began to write the sermon, I was overcome by a strong dizziness which prevented me from making the movements of the neck. I completely lost my footing and it seemed as if the room was spinning around me. I slumped down on the floor and stayed there for a few minutes until the discomfort (bitterness in my saliva) subsided and I was able to perform the bending and twisting movements. When I got up, the chair had tipped over and the door was locked. I opened it immediately and promised not to lock myself in.*

On December 2<sup>nd</sup>, he writes:

*Around 10:15 p.m., coming out from the Quiete (recreation room), after greeting Father General, in the corridor, already blinded by the tubular light, I felt the dizziness in my neck again, forcing me to lean against the wall until I fell hopelessly to the floor and lost my footing (in the corner of the telephone). Already in the floor, I laboriously tried to do the cervical exercises until I gradually regained my normal state and when I came into the room, I immediately took a SERC pill (anti-vertigo medication).*

And these dizzy spells continue. On January 22, 1986, he writes:

*Very severe arthritic vertigo when lying down. Without the strength to make vertical movements, I fell on the bed and had the feeling that the room and the bed were spinning around me*

*while my body drifted without oars and lost stability because of the vertigo. Long minutes that I will never forget. Thank God I was able to sleep and rest and get up at half past seven.*

Due to his illness, he does not rest well at night. On March 24, 1986, he wrote in his diary:

*'The night was stormy, restless and restless... I slept very little... and the night is more night when sleep does not come. During the day I endeavored to find something to do at any cost before the night came again. I faced the night during the day, and so I hope that this time the hours of night rest will be filled with the peace of sweet awakening and effective medicine.*

It is Father Erviti's cross, which will become heavier and heavier until the end of his life. He accepted it and on March 21 of this year he wrote:

*Give me the strength, Lord, to carry this cross as long as my life lasts!*

In 1986, he celebrated his golden jubilee as a priest. His health has deteriorated. The dizziness continued. We read in his diary for 1986, July 2<sup>nd</sup>:

*Around a quarter past eleven in the morning, after confessing to Fr. José Pardo in the Oratory of the Children, I felt a very strong attack of cervical arthritis. I felt myself slump in my seat, and although I tried, I could not get up. Like an earthquake, I saw the ceiling and walls spinning around me and I was doubled over like a weakling. Severe dizziness and bitter saliva. When I could - it would take fifteen minutes - I got up from my seat and lay down on my bed until half past one.*

These dizzy spells recurred in the following days and logically caused Father Joaquín concern. He had already felt them in earlier years, although not with this intensity.

Nevertheless, he continued to attend classes at the beginning of the 1986-87 school year to give religious instruction. On November 17<sup>th</sup>, we read in his diary:

*'After praying the Office of Readings and Lauds, I go to Don Fermín Unanua's class and spend most of the morning*

*drawing the nativity scene on the blackboard with simple strokes so that the children can copy a similar one, as there are only two weeks left until Advent.*

And in the afternoon of the same day, he still has time to indulge in one of his favorite pastimes (noted by several witnesses to his Process): a visit to Manantial bookstore, where he spends his time browsing new releases:

*I go to Manantial and buy an Ordo for the church. From the books I browse through in the bookshop, I choose the ones that interest me. One by Delibes, without bad words, thank God. Another by Jesus Christ, the poet, and another written so that we can talk more about the poor and those who need affection and love.*

In his diary from 1987, we read on March 4<sup>th</sup>:

*‘Today, Ash Wednesday, I have had a full day. 9 and a half o’ clock I was in the sacristy with the children after the preparatory talk with Brother Francisco Gorriti, waiting for the grace of some ash. As soon as it was obtained, I began with the third graders, with each group in their class; then with the second graders, with each group in their class; and then with the first graders, with each group in their class; and it was 12 and a half o’ clock, time to leave school. In the afternoon, until 4 and a half o’ clock, starting at 3 fifteen o’ clock, I began the ceremony of ashes with preschool group A. Preschool group B was visited by me at 12 o’ clock.*

*This time Ash Wednesday will have two sides, let us see if we can catch up! I blame Monday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, which we overlooked. Yes, I was tired on Ash Wednesday because I had kids to deal with all day. But that does not mean I did not have a lot of joy with them. But thank God I was able to speak to eleven groups of children on this beautiful day about the goodness of God, emphasizing especially the olive branches clothed in pearl and light, and the palms of the sun and glory... “Be good and a friend of Jesus”. That was the melody that resounded in their souls filled with innocence and love. The night was something else. Dizziness and bitter sleeplessness reminded me again that “I am dust and to dust I shall return”.*

In the same diary we read a few weeks later (April 10<sup>th</sup>):

*‘Today I spent the whole day preparing the children for their first confession. The preparation took place in the chap-*

*el, in groups of ten. First, all together, for the ten. Then individually. "Hail Mary, most pure... This is the first time I have confessed... I have remembered my sins. My sins hurt me, and I do not want to sin anymore. My sins are these..." The confessor asks the penitent to look at the crucifix and listen with open eyes and ears to the priest, who says: "This is Jesus, nailed to the cross for our sins. He was born poor and died even poorer, nailed to the cross by the four nails. You did not kill him, but you make him sad when you disobey your parents, when you beat your brother and do not know how to forgive; when you do not want to give your parents the flower of your smile. Do not make Jesus Christ, who is your best friend, sad. Ask him for forgiveness. And promise him that from now on you will be kind to your parents, a friend of the children and above all a friend of Jesus". A kiss on the crucifix and I absolve them. Today I heard the confessions of 35 boys and girls.*

In one of his diaries (1987, February 28<sup>th</sup>), he describes his room:

*'Saturday morning is usually quiet, even more so than Sunday morning. My room has been waiting a long time for me to lend a hand and make it simpler, tidier and more comfortable. There are no books on my table other than the Ordo, the catalog and the breviary.*

*The statuette of St. Joseph Calasanz in the corner of my table, next to his namesake, St. Joseph the Bridegroom, in the precious small altarpiece of the family tree, where I always want to see St. Joachim, even if he does not appear in the canonical Gospels.*

*St. Vicenta<sup>9</sup> is already seated on her well-deserved throne. Behind the wooden cross with the facsimile of the crucifix of John Paul II, and Pompilio Maria<sup>10</sup> with two children, a boy and a girl, so that we remember that he also loved children.*

*Before my eyes the precious painting by Leonardo da Vinci. The figures seem to be speaking, not shouting, but in the harmony of their groups, two to the right and two to the left of Je-*

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9 It refers to St. Vicenta María López y Vicuña (1847-1890), a nun from Navarre, foundress of the Sisters of Domestic Service, to whom Fr. Erviti served so well. She was beatified in 1950 by Pius XII and canonized in 1975 by Paul VI.

10 St. Pompilio Maria Pirrotti, Piarist (1710-1766), canonized in 1934 by Pius XI.

*sus. It seems as if the apostles are excusing each other with their group, while the Master, with a lowered gaze, full of tenderness and pain, murmurs softly: "One of you will give me up..." And his hands open like two lilies, spreading the fragrance of his love to the twelve. Peter, Andrew and James the Less look at the Lord with fearful eyes. Judas Iscariot leans back while holding the bag with his right hand. And John does not dare to look at the Master and leans against Peter, who hides the knife with his right hand so as not to frighten his beloved disciple, whom he caresses with the strands of his beard. Thomas is the one who is closest to Jesus so that he can touch him with his hands. And James the Greater... he wants to drink the cup of passion and opens his chest in an attitude of welcome and love. Philip in a trance of adoration, contemplating the Father in Jesus. Matthew, Thaddeus and Simon, like three friends who want to leave Jesus alone so as not to disturb him, and who reflect on the words they have heard and keep them in their hearts.*

In 1990, doctors diagnosed degenerative dementia and probably Alzheimer's disease, which was confirmed in 1994. His last years were very quiet: he no longer spoke or went for walks. He spent them in his room. Until the time came for his return to the Father, on March 21, 1999, a glorious spring that put an end to a life of generous apostolate in favor of the youngest and a long and painful illness.

Pedro Lozano Bartolozzi, a disciple of his, wrote about his death in the *Diario de Navarra* (March 24, 1999):

*'The unmistakable building of the Calasanz School stands orphan, deserted like an empty box. The good Piarist, Father Joaquín, has gone to heaven. He left on the very day that spring arrived. He was 86 years old, but his figure is inseparable from the children. We will always imagine him surrounded by unruly children.*

*Father Joaquín Erviti is not dead, he is still alive in the minds of his thousands of pupils. As if by a strange surprise, his absence has brought us all back to childhood (...).*

*Time and space become fleeting, but reality returns and imposes itself. Father Joaquín, who taught us how to read and pray, was also a poet. Surely, he will now have time to write magnificent verses with the exquisite calligraphy of the venerable saints.*



## **Joaquín Erviti, Religious**

After getting to know the Piarists of Estella, he wanted to be like them: a priest, yes, but also a religious. With the characteristic features of this kind of life: life with the brothers, the vows, a greater dedication to prayer...

The witnesses for the Process of canonization declare that he had a great love for the Eucharist (which, as we have seen, was instilled in him from childhood, when he took part in Eucharistic shifts). He always participated in the common prayers and attached great importance to the recitation of the Divine Office, so much so that if he could foresee that he would not be able to pray it because of an outing or some other activity, he would get up very early to say all the prayers. He prayed the three parts of the rosary daily (it was common to see him walking through the school cloister with the rosary in his hand). He left 31 written visits to the Blessed Sacrament, one for each day of the month, and we cannot resist copying one of them, that of the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the month:

*“If you knew the gift of God”*  
(Jn 4:10)

*Jesus also says to me from the tabernacle the same he told to the Samaritan woman: “If you only knew the gift of God, O Christian soul! If you only knew what this Blessed Sacrament is; this holy, pure and immaculate Host, this sacrifice of reconciliation, which constantly offers itself for you, for your salvation and your lasting happiness!*

*If only you knew with what love it offers itself, with what mercy it is animated, with what great goodness and generosity it places itself at your disposal!*

*If only you knew what treasures are contained here, the wealth of goodness and wisdom, of grace and virtue, of peace and consolation, of immortal merit and hope!*

*If you only knew how great the one who has been given to you is, how good, how rich, how sovereignly beautiful and generous!*

*How overwhelmed you would be, how incapable of returning such a great boon as you should! How you would be at a loss for words to reflect on his infinite mercy!*

*With more right than Moses, you would exclaim like him: "My God and my Lord, merciful and gracious, patient and of great mercy, and true, who keeps your mercy without end".*

*Your whole attitude before the Blessed Sacrament will be that of the Holy Angels, who constantly stand before the throne of the Lord and unceasingly exclaim: "Blessing and clarity and wisdom and fullness of graces, honor, virtue and strength to our God forever and ever. Amen."*

*Your whole endeavor would be to possess such a great good by renouncing all the goods of the earth and detaching yourself from yourself.*

*Your whole interest would be to return so much kindness and mercy by giving yourself to Jesus resolutely, completely and unconditionally.*

*What could He ask of you that you would refuse Him? What could He want from you that you would not grant Him? What could He dispose of your person that you would not willingly accept?*

*If only you knew the gift of God! And how can I know it, Lord, if you do not show it to me yourself? Make it known to me, Lord. Let me not be like the marbles and bronzes, who know not the hand that chiseled them, nor appreciate the benefit they have received thereby.*

*Purify my heart, O Lord. Dispel the dense mists of passions that cloud it. And then, with Your grace and for my happiness, I will begin to recognize the great good that You are for me in this adorable sacrament.*

*Proposal: I will prepare myself for the acts of piety, remembering who God is and who I am.*

*Supplication: O Jesus, make me yours, always yours, all yours".*

Those who lived with him remember that he frequently visited the Blessed Sacrament. And this experience, which was so rich for him, he wanted to give to others.

His devotion to Mary was also very great. Especially to the invocation of Our Lady of El Puy, whose name he chose as his own name of religion and whom he visited every day when he was on vacation in Estella. He also wanted to have a copy of her image in the community of Pamplona as a sign of his special devotion.



He also had an image of Our Lady of the Twelve Stars (Our Lady of the Pious Schools) in his classroom, to which he often prayed with his students. She stood in a privileged corner of the classroom, like a little chapel, and he invited the children to get up and go to her whenever they wanted. They also prayed to Our Lady of La Portería (Entrance), to whom he wrote a poem that was kept there for many years: “*Virgen de la Portería, / jardinera del Señor; / que los niños cada día / por tu corazón, María, / lleguen al trono de Dios*”

*(Our Lady of the Entrance, / gardener of the Lord; / make the children, everyday / by your heart, Mary, / could reach the throne of God).*

He also wrote a series of 31 Marian visitations, like those of the Blessed Sacrament, one for each day of the month. They are shorter than those of the Blessed Sacrament, and we will reproduce one of them as an example for this devotion. It is the 5<sup>th</sup>:

***“Immaculate Mother”***

*Flower of the divine orchards, white rose of Nazareth, only without blemish in the universal shipwreck. I have come today to honor Your Immaculate Conception.*

*When all was night on earth, You were the dawn that brightened the sad days of the corrupt world.*

*“He who is to come, will come” ... the elders repeated to the children, like a life-giving hope. And the one who was to come was Christ, the Son of your womb.*

*God was preparing his entry into the world, and you were to be his silver bridge. That is why you were always pure as the light. And sin did not put the slime of disgust on your purity.*

*Holy Mother of God! You were never under the cursed power of Satan. Before your dazzling purity my misery seems more nasty.*

*Queen full of grace, pray for me, who am exposed to the constant misery of my passions.*

*O sea of whiteness! Sprinkle your beauty on my wounded soul. For I thirst for your springs, Immaculate Mother.*

*Supplication: “O Mary, who was conceived without sin, pray for us who turn to you”.*



Those who knew him say that he always lived in accordance with religious poverty. He spent the meager stipend he received for personal expenses mainly on buying books on poetry and spirituality, to the point of building up a sizable personal library, which he unhesitatingly shared with those who visited him. He spent little on clothing: He always wore the cassock, whereas most religious discarded it after the Second Vatican Coun-

cil. He had two cassocks, a little worn but in good condition and always clean. When he went out on the street, when it was cool, he wore a coat and the “teja” or prescribed hat, so it was not difficult to recognize (and caricature) him.

His gait was reserved and focused. He had no problem chatting with those who stopped him on the street. His interaction with women (especially the mothers of his students) was always natural and correct. His character was very familiar, simple, very close and acceptable to all. He was peaceful, self-controlled and showed no signs of anger. He was not exuberant with older people, but with children he was completely at ease. He treated all religious people equally and had no special friends.

Those who treated him as a sick person say that even then (unlike other sick people) he radiated peace. Despite his illness, he smiled and prayed constantly. He ate sparingly, even on festive occasions. He did not drink wine or liquor and did not smoke. The same person says that the students considered him a saint because he radiated calmness and kindness... holiness.

He was very humble in the sense that he never aspired to have older students, and he did all the services he had to do for the younger ones with humility. When he presented his ideas in a debate, he did so with humility. He stuck to his ideas when he saw them clearly, but when the superior ordered otherwise, he obeyed and submitted. In everything he tried to imitate his founder, St. Joseph Calasanz.

Because of his simplicity, it seemed as if he lived in an eternal childhood. He had a very good sense of irony and understood things very well. He could give the impression of not amount to much, but it was not. He was full of goodness and joy at the same time. You could see that he had something inside him that made him happy. He was warm and not dismissive. He stood up for the sick religious who lived in the house when the infirmary was set up in the community to care for the elderly and sick Piarists.

In his diaries, he carefully noted the activities of each day. In 1972 diary, he noted the following on March 3<sup>rd</sup>:

*I keep watch for Fr. Nagore all night. At 1:40 a.m. the fourth bottle of serum was finished. Shortly afterwards, Broth-*

*er Gorriti left me alone. I prayed, read and nodded on the table. At about a quarter past three, while I was making the offering of the works in complete darkness, I feel the sick man rise. I turn on the light and see Father Nagore pacing around the room in confusion, on the brink to hurt himself on the table. I help him to lie down again. At four o' clock he is fast asleep. At a quarter past four, I start the Matins prayer (25 minutes). In between, the sick man sleeps and cannot find a comfortable position. Lauds and Terce begin at half past five. Meanwhile, Father Nagore sleeps the best sleep of the night. He has not urinated all night. At a quarter past six I wake up the community. I wash and shave. Prayer and mass in the Sisters of Domestic Service.*

We copy down what he says on an ordinary day, April 1, 1986 (it had been years since he had left the classroom):

*The morning passed quietly, busy with the prayers of the Liturgy of the Hours and Lauds and with a visit to Father Filomeno in his room.*

*I spent the afternoon twice with Father Jesús Martínez, who made me a living radio announcer until he gave me a smile.*

*At 5 o' clock, María Jesús Iraizoz<sup>11</sup> was waiting for me. One hour and 20 minutes. Luckily, I had taken a walk through the less busy streets of Pamplona an hour earlier.*

*With Father Orcoyen, for half an hour. He was lying on the bed because his legs did not want to walk anymore. I brought dinner to Father Orcoyen and Father Jesús Martínez.*

As an example of his devotion to St. Joseph Calasanz, one of his students, Francisco Javier Arregui (lawyer), remembers a prayer that Father Erviti taught them:

*Gracious Father, Saint Joseph of Calasanz, saint of children, who opened the first schools in the world, so that all children may come to know and love my dear Jesus; pour into my soul the seeds of piety and letters, and into my dear parents and teachers the spirit of charity and patience that embraced your heart, so that, following your teachings and imitating your examples, we may enjoy with you in the glory of paradise.*

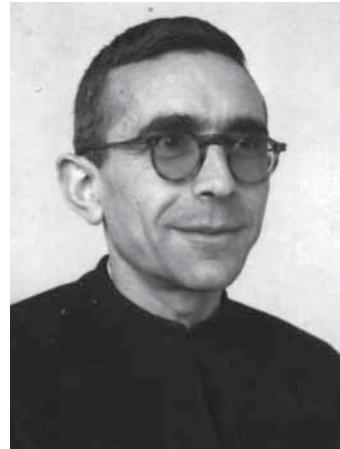
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11 A lady, spiritually advised by him.

Arregui himself remembers: *“When he had to reprimand a student, he led us to the sideboard, a kind of shelf on which the coats and gowns were hung. The shelf was 40 cm high. He sat us on the shelf until the child had calmed down, and soon after he put him on the floor.”*

Whenever there was a circumstance that upset him, he always said: *“How good the Lord is!”* This attitude stemmed from his deep mysticism. He really saw the Lord’s will in this difficulty.

He did not speak ill of people. If he heard someone being criticized, he would break off the conversation and say: *Let us focus on the good things about him!* He always strove for harmony and understanding between everyone. Under any criticism he received, he would say: *Thank you, I deserve it, let us thank God!* On the other hand, he did not like being praised. If someone started to praise him, he would change the subject. He was very careful when he spoke, especially when he spoke about people. He did not make hasty judgments; he thought about things before he said them. He did not make snap judgments; he thought things through before he said them. He was not disrespectful; he did not make remarks on the spur of the moment. He was neither risky nor decisive. In community life, he made his opinions known.



His former students emphasize that Father Joaquín stood out from the others. There was something special about him. We have to emphasize the love he had for everyone and his dedication. Everything was love in him, he did everything out of love. For him, his neighbor was Christ and for this reason he loved everyone. He gave everything. He showed this love above all to the little ones. Love and devotion for others. For him, there were no set times; at any time of the day or night, he cared for those who needed him. He was a kind of spiritual guide for all the little ones. Many people from different environments knew Father Joaquín well because of his services.

He observed all the liturgical norms and kept up to date with innovations. He calmly received the changes brought about by the Second Vatican Council. Concelebration was not a problem for him. He concelebrated with everyone. When the Liturgy of the Hours was translated into Spanish, he began to use the corresponding books in this language; he left Latin behind without any problems. He did not comment on the Constitutions of the Council, he read and followed them. When changes occurred within the Order, he adapted perfectly.

A sister of Immaculate Mary (Domestic Service), a community where he went to confession for many years, a witness to the Diocesan Process, says that he had *a look that conveyed "something", he communicated "something". He had an attitude of absorption. He always had a smile on his face. He conveyed peace, he conveyed a sense of trust. He had a wisdom that enabled him to understand things. It was the wisdom of God. He was not afraid of anything; he was not troubled by anything. He had the ability to accept what he was told. He was a great listener, but when he had listened, he had a formulation or a recommendation. He got to the bottom of it. He communicated God. He had something that communicated God. When you talked to him, you felt very close to God. He conveyed happiness and encouraged us to enjoy God. It was even more striking that he emphasized this, because back then, people talked more about the fear of God. He was obsessed with loving God. He used to say: What counts is to love him! He moved in the sphere of worshipping God, of praising God who is love. He came to confess to the community until it became clear that he was losing his faculties, but even in this state he enthusiastically shared what he held so deeply. His desire that we should live only for God and for our brothers was very strong. He was very grateful. He emphasized his gratitude and his humility. He recommended self-forgetfulness as a sure way to be more and more of God.*

### ***Some meditations of his, taken from his diaries***

In the 1989 diary (as of May 12<sup>th</sup>) we read the following:

*Difficulties with the Church.*

*The Church confesses that in her and through her the Spirit of Jesus Christ continues to work in history. She believes that she is the place and even the sacrament, i.e. the sign and instrument of the work of the Holy Spirit.*

*Perhaps no other statement evokes so much incomprehension, resistance and even hostility. There are even many practicing Catholics who have difficulties with the Church. Quite a few say: "Jesus, yes; the Church, no!" The main objection to the Church is that in the course of its history it has betrayed the original message of Jesus. Jesus, it is objected, was indeed poor and fought poor; the Church is rich, makes pacts with the rich and powerful and has failed on the social issue. Jesus preached love to the point of loving one's enemies. The church is intolerant and persecutes its enemies with brutal cruelty, as the history of the Inquisition shows. Jesus called on people to follow in his footsteps and above all to practice love of neighbor; the Church demands obedience to infallible dogmas. Jesus was natural, open and understanding in his dealings with women; the Church belittled women and saw something demonic in sexuality, thus darkening man's happiness while comforting him with the hope of the afterlife. According to others, the Church is intellectually, culturally and scientifically backward and, in short, old-fashioned. What can a Catholic say in response to this catalog of accusations? There is no need to pretend or hide anything. The Church, which preaches the forgiveness of sins, can admit its own mistakes and profess God's forgiveness.*

Among his homilies we find the following, on March 25<sup>th</sup>, the feast of the Annunciation, the day on which the religious of Pamplona renewed their vows. He says the following to his confreres in the community:

*'One more year we want to renew with a new spirit our integral consecration and the total dedication we once gave to the Lord.*

*We are well aware that while we were, or thought we were, sincere and faithful in previous renewals, we must recognize that they were all incomplete and very short-lived. Incomplete because we have agreed to a conscious or unconscious limitation, withholding something from ourselves and perhaps what was most convenient for us to give; it may be what grace most urgently required of us or what we felt most attached to. They were short-lived, for what we thought we had given wholeheartedly and forever, we gradually received back; what we thought we had given away, we wanted to possess again.*

*In an unnoticeable way, as if we were not aware of it, we return to the same point, which is to live more or less for ourselves instead of living for God. No doubt we must attribute part of this to our human imperfection and the weaknesses of our will, but there are also other causes which, on careful reflection, lead us to the conviction that something in us needs to be corrected.*

*And why this renewal on the holy day of the Annunciation? Because this feast, in the depths of its religious essence, contains intimate and salutary lessons for anyone who wants to remain at the service of God.*

*In the Blessed Virgin, the angel's "full of grace" and Mary's "behold, the handmaid of the Lord" are wonderfully united. In another way: Mary bases her holiness on the deepest humility.*

*The zeal and inexperience of youth made us believe that it was up to us alone to keep the promises we had made. The more sincere and heartfelt our desire, the more we presumed upon ourselves and the more we trusted in our own strength. It seemed to us that everything would give way to our courage and that there would be no obstacle that we could not easily overcome. Then came the disappointments, which were all the deeper the stronger our illusion and self-confidence were, and as a result, the discouragement.*

*Therefore, let this be our first lesson and our first goal on this day: to be dissatisfied with ourselves and to base ourselves on true humility. In the supernatural order, we will accomplish nothing if we do not start from the full conviction of our utter powerlessness. God does not want us to rob him of his glory, and we rob him of it if we believe that we can achieve, by our own strength, a good that belongs to the order of grace.*

*Humility is truth, and we will build nothing on lies alone. To consecrate ourselves to God is to enter the path of holiness, a path that can only be opened by certain special graces, graces that are constantly renewed. "God resists the proud and gives his grace only to the humble". Let us realize that we can do nothing with our own strength and that only grace can give strength and effectiveness to our decisions.*

*The Blessed Virgin adds: "Let it be done to me as you will". This submission and surrender to God's will lasts as long as her*

*life, regardless of her pure feelings and consolations, and she always acts according to the goals of her faith in Jesus.*

*A very important lesson for our renewal. The inexperienced soul feels moved and glows with faith in the stability of her sensitive dispositions, believing them to be firm and permanent, unaware of the existence of a false humility and a great presumption. One of the dangers of sensitive piety is that everything that belongs to the order of feelings is changeable, fickle and deceptive. In a moment of fervor, under the impression of very sweet and pure joys that God sometimes makes us taste, everything already seems easy and simple to us, so that nothing then costs us to make the most beautiful promise and we do not hesitate to commit ourselves to the most generous sacrifices.*

*We will not doubt that such movements are noble and beautiful and help us to a more complete devotion to God. But herein may be a grave error: to believe that this detachment and this divine gift are already a reality within us, which is nothing more than a simple inspiration. So, if the next day, after these hours of consolation, we realize that we are the same as before, with the same cowardice before duty, the same weakness before trials and the same shyness before sacrifices, we run the risk of falling into the greatest bitterness and discouragement of spirit, abandoning our good intentions and resigning ourselves to continuing to live in imperfection.*

*So, what should we do? To strengthen our life of faith, which is not like a fickle and changeable feeling, but firm and constant. It is enough if we expose our will to the action of this light of truth and this law of good, so that we know how to resolve to make generous efforts, despite a palpable reluctance, despite dryness. It is above all in meditation that we attain that deep conviction which orders our lives. The Blessed Virgin kept in her heart everything she heard from the mouth of her Son, according to the Gospel.*

*Hence our second goal: to strengthen the spirit of faith, which is reinforced by the conviction of the utmost importance of prayer, which we must never abandon, and thus, to curb our sensitivity.*

*The Archangel Gabriel prophesies to Mary in his greeting: "The Holy Spirit will descend upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you". As if to say that grace and di-*

*vine assistance would never abandon her, so that the great supernatural law, life in union with God, would be fulfilled in her to a much more obvious degree than in other creatures.*

*The most essential condition for true renewal is the energy of the proposal which constitutes its essence, and its strength is the measure of it. This assertion is not, in the least, inconsistent with what we have said about the self-mistrust. On the contrary, this lack of trust must accompany the intention; and be the more sincere and conscious the firmer the intention. We must expect everything from God, as if everything depended only on God, and yet we must strive as if everything depended on our own will.*

*In us there will always be the life of God in our soul and the life of the soul in God. In this life of union, which is so mysterious and sublime, God is indeed the main actor and gives our actions all the strength and fruitfulness they have. But he does nothing of his own accord, but demands our cooperation, a cooperation as full and generous as it is in our power. Moreover, the measure of our generosity is the measure of the help of grace that God gives us in return. In other words, the energy of our intention is not the cause of the result achieved - it is grace - but it comes from our generosity, even if in truth we have to admit that we can do nothing in our own strength. And yet God requires of us an act of our will to continue to help us with his grace and to increase it as he sees fit until we have achieved the good he expects of us.*

*This is also how the saints acted. There was a moment in their lives when they converted, to put it in their own language. In other words, they finally detached themselves from the world and gave themselves to God. This is not to say that through this conversion they were already perfect and sinless, but that the faults and imperfections that afterwards may have escaped them, were soon and satisfactorily atoned for and sufficiently compensated for, so that they became for them a reason for sacrifice and victory, a reason for progress, and not a reason for backsliding and failure.*

*Here we have our third resolution: that our proposals should not be occasional and temporary, but habitual and permanent, renewing ourselves unceasingly and returning to them with persevering effort.*

*Summarizing what has been said, we must be convinced that neither a goal prospers nor is renewed if we do not take*

*care of it and if we do not take care of ourselves. If we seek consecration of our person and effective renewal, this must be done with great vigilance, and this must be supported by a daily examination which must be clean, clear and precise, like a true statement of accounts in which we properly observe our progress and setbacks, our gains and losses. The result of the daily audit is recapitulated at regular intervals in our confession. And a true balance sheet must be drawn up in our retreats and exercises.*

*With a little good will, with a certain energy of character, we will be able to exercise this vigilance which will bring us an abundance of fruits, a true progress in perfection, a life exclusively for God and a necessarily supernatural activity.*

*May these be our resolutions on this very special and longed-for day of Our Lady's Annunciation. Let us remain with what is most useful and necessary for our souls, entrusting ourselves to her frequently. Mary, who knows so well the greatness of the religious state and the difficulties inherent in it, knows even better how necessary the help of grace is for us. It is true that she neither knew sin nor was exposed to our misery, but nevertheless she sees our needs very well, and for this very reason she shows herself full of condescension towards us.*

*She is our mother. It is right that we prostrate ourselves at her feet and say to her from the depths of our souls: "Look, I am a religious and as such I have many high duties to fulfill. Turn your merciful eyes towards me. Help me to submit to Jesus in everything, to follow his counsel faithfully and to imitate his example without hesitation".*

*May the "Do whatever he tells you" of the wedding at Cana be our firm and effective aim, as the everlasting fruit of the renewal of the vows we will make before Christ, his divine Son.*

In one of his notebooks, we read some interesting reflections on prayer. They may have been written by him or he may have taken them from a book, but if he copied them, it certainly shows that he agrees with them, because they express well what he thinks about prayer:

*Praying is not only asking God for comfort, but also for his criticism. Nowadays, we do not go to God to get his approval, or*

*certificates of good behavior, but also his criticism. So, praying means that we allow God to criticize our lives, that we accept to be discussed by him. The curious case of our Church today, where everyone is looking for the one they like, to listen to him or to listen to himself.*

*My credo on prayer. A monk in the world.*

*I believe that prayer is not everything, but that everything must begin with prayer. For human wisdom is too short, and the will of man is too weak. For the man who acts without God does not make the best of himself.*

*I believe that Jesus Christ wanted to teach us with the "Our Father" that prayer is love.*

*I believe that prayer today no longer needs words, because love needs no words.*

*I believe that you can pray suffering and working in silence. But silence is only prayer if you love; suffering is only prayer if you love; work is only prayer if you love.*

*I believe that we will never know for sure whether our prayer is prayer or not, but there is an infallible test for prayer: if we are growing in love, if we are growing in turning away from evil, if we are progressing in faithfulness to the Gospel.*

*I believe that only learn to pray those who learn to be silent before God.*

*I believe that only learn to pray those who learn to withstand themselves before God.*

*I believe that we must ask the Lord every day for the gift of prayer, because he who learns to pray learns to live.*

*The man of prayer is the man of encounter. By encountering God, or rather by allowing himself to be encountered by God, he encounters himself and thus also his brothers and sisters.*

*The man of prayer is a united being. We often go through a process of reification. "I live divided, lost here, lost there", we often say.*

*The man of prayer is regained piece by piece and made whole again. He is led back to his original harmony and become a unified being.*

*This is the original meaning of the term “recollection”. An indispensable prerequisite for prayer, according to the masters of the spirit.*

*This word is often understood in a negative sense to denote a process of detachment, separation, elimination, exclusion of all foreign elements. But it is not so much about throwing away, but about collection; not about separating, but about adapting. Recollection in the positive sense means, strictly speaking, finding oneself again, taking care of the integrity of one’s own being.*

*The man of prayer is a responsible and lonely man. There is nothing more personal than prayer. But there is also anything less individualistic than prayer, which on the other hand postulates a fraternity and presupposes and is based on solidarity. It is not enough to answer the question “Where is God?”, because in prayer God asks man another crucial question: “Where is your brother?”*

*If it is true that I find myself through the encounter with God, then this authentic self is not isolated, not detached from others. I am myself to the extent that I do not reject the relationship, the welding with my brothers and sisters. Only the egoist is a diminished man when he prays.*

*The man of prayer is a consistent man who decides what is urgent in life, and he will not make a caricature of prayer. He is necessarily committed to simplicity and purity of soul, he will open his hands for generosity and embrace, in a gesture of devotion and health, and making of the joined hands with which he prays silver links for reconciliation and love.*

*Purity of hands in the one who prays, and purity of tongue in the one who speaks with God.*

*Cursing the brother and blessing God is a contradiction, for a tongue that does not work properly with men will not be transformed by a miracle in prayer. It will grimace before God. And what can we say about so much gossip in religious and community life?*

*Certainly, inner peace is also necessary in order to be able to pray. It is difficult to make contact with God in the disorder, in the turmoil. Because we have to come out of ourselves and the noise is a fetter for our spirit.*

*But let us not delude ourselves. The peace of mind we think we have is sometimes short-lived. It will be God himself who will tear it to pieces. Authentic prayer is never numbing, it is not soothing. The God of our prayer is not only the God of peace, but also the God of battle. The God of comfort and the God of remorse. The God who lets us rest and who sometimes does not let us sleep.*

*We must therefore realize that praying often means accepting the risk of God's disruptive action. We must recognize that God has the right to disturb our rest, to shake our relaxed mediocrity, to overturn our comfortable projects and exchange them for those of self-conquest and the cross.*

*The man of prayer must radiate joy. Devotion must not be at odds with joy. How often our liturgical celebrations are a sad procession of frowning faces, of tense people, of lowered eyes, of darkened faces! John Sullivan says: "Any truth that does not sing is a truth betrayed". This also applies to prayer. A prayer that does not sing, that does not break out in joy, is a prayer betrayed. In prayer, people experience joy. The joy of the encounter between lovers. The man in prayer becomes an expert in joy. "The joy that a husband finds in his wife, your God will find in you" (Is 62 5).*

*Jesus prayed to the Father that his disciples might have the fullness of his joy. Let us not be afraid to share it with others.*

*The Christian who prays realizes that this is not a joke. It is not possible to cheat in this game. He is obliged to live his own prayer.*

*If we want to make it difficult for a Christian, we should surprise him with our prayer:*

- You have prayed for peace, so you must set out to build peace, harmony and solidarity around you.*
- You have prayed for the coming of the kingdom of God. Make an effort, roll up your sleeves, do something to build up the kingdom of God.*
- You have prayed for justice. Now you are obliged to ensure justice.*
- You have prayed for those who are suffering. Be aware that they are waiting for you.*
- You have prayed for those who are far away. Now you can do nothing but to close all distances... to come closer, to bring nearer.*

- *You have prayed the Lord’s Prayer. You have taken on a great task: to build fraternal relationships with all people. Share your bread with those who have none. Love your friends. Hand out forgiveness. And, as if that were not enough, do the will of God.*

*The true man of prayer is not someone who just talks. He is someone who keeps his word. And he deserves all our respect.*

*The man who makes you to have “hunger of God”.*

*At the funeral of a good priest, I heard a comment from someone: “He was a man who made you want God”.*

*With this, we are able to complete the identity card of the man of prayer: He is someone who makes you want God.*

*And this is a daunting task, especially in today’s world, which is completely dominated by other desires.*

*One priest justified his ministry in this way: “So that the rumor of God does not completely disappear.*

*God’s voice is reduced to a rumor. And a rumor which is not given much attention. “God? I don’t have time to worry about that, do you? I have to work.”*

*Among people who have everything, who flaunt their security, the man of prayer senses a flaw.*

*In his prison cell, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote: “It is not in our power to predict the day. But the day will surely come when some men will again be called upon to speak the word of God in such a way that the world will be changed and renewed”.*

*And there is no doubt that these will be the men of prayer.*

*Illusions and dangers of prayer:*

1. *Believing to be very advanced in the inner life.*
2. *To rise above others.*
3. *Seeking the pleasure of union with God and not God himself.*
4. *Surrendering to these consolations.*
5. *To feed on God.*
6. *To stop forgetting oneself and to return to oneself.*
7. *To become physically exhausted in the search for God.*
8. *Forgetting that it is God who takes the initiative.*

9. *Confusing the images, the light itself, with God.*
10. *Confusing sensory impressions with the call of God.*
11. *Confusing sensitivity with the intimate will of God.*
12. *To neglect the obligations of one's position.*
13. *Closing ourselves in any way to the mercy of God.*
14. *Letting the poor cry at our door.*
15. *Refusing to take orders and refusing to work.*
16. *Leaving the care of the house to others.*
17. *Having a spirit of caste.*
18. *To despise the simple.*
19. *Thinking that God has no other ways of giving Himself.  
Lord, teach us to pray!*

Father Joaquín collaborated in DENES II with two biographical entries: those of Father Andrés Chávarri and Teodoro Iriarte. He felt great affection for the latter, a compatriot of his (1878-1964) whom he appreciated as an orator and poet. He wrote his Necrology, which we find among his papers<sup>12</sup> and which was published in *Ephemerides Calasanctianae* (1982, pp. 437-440, somewhat simplified). We reproduce it because it shows his talent as a biographer as well as his admiration and affection for the biographee, which perhaps inspired his poetic instinct:

*The "singer of Our Lady of El Puy" was born on December 7, 1878 at three o' clock in the afternoon in Estella, in the street Tecendería, which was later called Del Puy. He received baptismal grace the following day, December 8<sup>th</sup>, and confirmation on May 27, 1881, in the parish of Saint John the Baptist in Estella<sup>13</sup>. He would later emphasize his two relevant titles of nobility: On the one hand, he came from a modest and simple family of farmers, and on the other, he was an altar boy in El Puy. He valued this more than all the honorary titles in the world. "We were three altar boys of "cuatrena" (coin of five cents) and, no doubt for reasons of economy, we helped at mass, only one every day, in the order of the misteries of the rosary. On*

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12 Notebook 8, Box 345 of Vasconia, Provincial Archives of Emmaus.

13 The same one in which he himself would be baptized.

*Tuesdays and Fridays it was my turn. On Sundays, three of us went to the altar and were given a “cuatrena” each, as we used to say in those days. On Thursdays, when there was no school, we spent the whole afternoon in El Puy, sweeping the church, cleaning the altars and dusting the carpets, and they gave us “chanflones”, fake coins that they found in the alms boxes”.*

*In Estella he went to his first communion on April 13, 1881 (sic) and in Irache he studied one year of Primary School and three more years of Latin. There he took the Calasanzian cassock on August 27, 1892, where he studied philosophy and made his first profession on January 27, 1895. He entered the second juniorate of Cardeña (Burgos), where he studied theology (August 18, 1895 to July 24, 1898). He then consecrated himself to the Lord with solemn profession (November 1, 1900) and received the Minor Orders between 1887 and 1888; the subdiaconate and the diaconate in Pamplona (December 20, 1900; December 21, 1901). He was also ordained a priest in Pamplona (December 20, 1902). He sang his first mass on December 28, 1902 in the Pious Schools of Tafalla.*

*He worked for 33 years as a Piarist teacher in Tafalla (from 1898 to 1931); in Tolosa from 1931 to 1934 and in Pamplona (1934 to 1978). From 1898 to 1906 with the children of Primary Education. From 1906 to 1928 with those of the High School. Although he explained almost all subjects competently, he stood out as a true teacher in the literary genres, both Spanish and world literature. He taught the following subjects: mathematics, physics and chemistry, biology, agriculture, algebra and trigonometry, philosophy and the French language. From 1928 to 1931 he taught dogmatics and morals to our juniors, and from 1931 he taught literature in the commerce courses and in the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh years of the High School. At the age of 78, he continued to devote himself to his teaching duties.*

*He was procurator and treasurer in Tafalla and held the office of rector in the schools of Tafalla and Tolosa. He was assistant and secretary of the province for 21 years.*

*Father Teodoro Iriarte, endowed by God with a strong intellect, knew how to cultivate it with study and love of work, and nothing could resist him in teaching and apostolate. The only thing he could not do was draw, as he confessed with simple ingenuity.*

*“Now, this man of good size, stuffed into a “balandran”<sup>14</sup> of thick cloth, this man who lets the air escape from his lungs through his white handkerchief, this man with the bald head of a wise man and the deep voice of an old teacher, has an “angel”. He is of exquisite simplicity and friendliness. Seeing him, hearing him and loving him are one and the same. For Father Iriarte, the prayer, the school, the books, his verses! Father Teodoro is a poet: a poet who carries within him the supreme poetry of a life that he dedicates without ceasing and without bargaining entirely to the good of others. In his simplicity, as someone who does nothing and earns nothing, the deeper his life sinks, the faster he rises to God”. This is how Bishop Marcelino Olaechea described him.*

*Father Teodoro was a true writer who influenced many generations of young people to appreciate good literary taste. In prose and verse, he spoke the truth, the great truth, as a religious of profound virtue. He had seriousness and earnestness... And he conquered an authority through his long and fruitful teaching and literary work. He was a brilliant orator, musician and poet, creator of works of great merit, comedies, zarzuelas and historical dramas. All this and much more. His anchored life, his devotion to souls and to the confessional, especially with the Religious Servants of Jesus, the Daughters of the Cross and the Little Sisters of the Forsaken.*

*Until the Lord called him to Himself in Pamplona at the age of 85 and 72 years of religion, after crowning his long life as a priest, educator and apostle with the cross of a long and painful illness that transformed his body into a living wound, which he offered to the Lord without the slightest complaint, comforted by the sacraments of forgiveness and the anointing of the sick.*

A few years earlier, he had written this prayer to Our Lady:

*“I was born in the shadow of your shrine / in the street of Puy, dearest Virgin; / You illuminated the path of my life, / and my love for you was a censor.*

*I still want to strike my eighty-year-old plectrum / in my last fiery poem, / and at the end to leave my muted lyre / on your altar, wrapped in my shroud.*

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14 Loose cassock or coat used by clergy

*You, my shining star, north and guide, / have enchanted my young imagination, / and my burning breast has raved for you.*

*I am already dying, and I long only / loving you, to fly from Estella to heaven, / to sing your glory forever."*

What Father Joaquín said of Father Teodoro could also be said of him with absolute certainty; the words that Bishop Olaechea said of Father Iriarte: "a poet who carries within him the supreme poetry of a life he has dedicated entirely to the good of others, without ceasing and without bargaining".

Father Erviti wrote, as we see in the notebook mentioned above: about Brother Juan Francisco Javier Tapiz Sesma, Father Francisco Azcona San Martín, Father Enrique López Araíz and Father Alejandro Pérez.

The Commission of History Specialists for the Canonization Process in Pamplona, after reading all of Father Joaquín's surviving writings, points out that three characteristics stand out in all of them:

1. His intense spiritual life, manifested in his devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, the Virgin Mary, the inner joy of Christmas and the spirit of prayer, which can be found in most of his writings.
2. Community life. His sense of community is evident in his almost daily visits to the sick Piarists at home or in the hospitals. He spent a lot of time with them, encouraging them, making them smile and praying. He stood by many of them in their last moments.
3. Love of his vocation, the children.

### ***Father Joaquín, poet***

He was a great admirer of another Piarist poet, Fr. Ramón Castellort (1915-1966), of the Province of Catalonia (he made his solemn vows in Pamplona in 1937). To him he dedicates some simple verses in his 1988 diary, copying a text of January 1948

*"Good brother: poet / with angelic wings... / You have touched the crystals / of my being. My restless soul / was satiated in your streams..."*



Without a doubt, we can say that Father Joaquín was a poet. He was not a great poet with masterful compositions (although some of them can be considered successful in their simplicity). He was a poet because poetry came naturally from his heart, like his love for children, like his devotion to Mary, like his fervent piety... Father Joaquín breathed poetry. In his verses, which he wrote with a certain lightness, he let the tenderness of his heart shine through. That tenderness that made him a special being. That tenderness that comes as close to holiness as his portraitist Eslava knew how to see.

He wrote poems with great ease to congratulate people at Christmas or on their birthdays, to thank them for a gift or for other reasons. To many people, religious, relatives and friends. We will only reproduce some of them as an example of his sensitivity.

To Brother Laureano Asurmendi, the tailor of the community, he wrote a beautiful composition in 1948 that shows his fraternal affection:

*'You are an excellent artist / of the needle and the thimble, / making from the vile material / a cladding that covers us / of God. Work well seen / by the heaven, dear brother! / May your hand not lose strength / to follow with your stitches, / because the time will come / for the reckoning, Laureano.*

Also in 1948, he dedicated a composition to his beloved teacher, Father Valentín Caballero (1869-1957), with whom he lived for many years in Pamplona:

*Father Valentín: Fragrance / of the Irache Juniorate... / Ascetic soul of a Trappist, / wrapped in infantile candor. / The Calasanzian beehive / its rich honey elaborates / With the nectar that ennobles / your always outstanding virtue. / Let me offer you this gift / in this time of my affection.*

*In the jubilant spring / of my scholastic life / you sowed in my flower-garden / the most captivating virtue: / it was piety, messenger / of a profound apostolate... / Today, that have turned to fruit / the enthusiasm of your seed, / receive this simple gift / that sprouted from my love.*

*The children, flower of goodness / of my garden of illusions, / offer their prayer to you / with singular satisfaction / May God receive in his grace / my prayer, though despicable, / Of this, the benjaminite / of this swarm of juniors / who are the best children / of the good Father Valentín.*

In 1948, he dedicated another composition to Father Juan Manuel Diez, the provincial of Vasconia (1946-1952), in which we can admire his astonishing ability to string verses together beautifully:

*The children, flower of goodness / of this garden of illusion, / Spell out with their song / the best riches of their being / of the Provincial Superior. / Preserve, Father, in honeycomb / of your child-like heart / all the immeasurable affection / of this angelic choir.*

*Pamplona lulled your cradle / with a thousand cheerful songs, / and in its most beautiful corners / you enjoyed moonlit dreams; / you had the good luck to spend / your tender childhood / intoxicated by the scent / of the orchards of Estella. / There you were floodlit by the star / of the Calasanzian mission.*

*And in the welcoming shadow / of Our Lady of the Pilar, / you initiated to spread / the seeds of education. / Your work was so beneficial / that you went to the New World / to leave a profound seal / of your outstanding virtue. / And in Chile became clear / your fruitful apostolate.*

*And in the land of your birth / God placed on your temples / the patriarchal aureola / of the provincial superior. / You, who steer the small boat / with spectacular ardor, / will gladly accept this prayer / from this pure and simple soul.”*



*Photo from 1948, with Father General V. Tomek and Father Provincial Juan M. Díez*

Father Felipe Esparza (1915-2014) returned to Pamplona from Chile, very ill. Father Erviti dedicated a composition to him. Later, Father Esparza was cured and lived to be almost a hundred years old:

*Father Felipe Esparza / is a martyr of discomfort / like  
Moses, next to the bush, / who in the flame always curls / his  
smile and his love.*

*The flame is altar and heaven... / It is a throne of the  
Lord... / From there he catechizes, / sowing God in the contest /  
Of the flower and of thorns.*

Father Josep Almirall, Provincial of Catalonia (1970-76), took part in a course in Salamanca in July 1974, which Father Erviti. To him he dedicated the following composition on the occasion of his silver jubilee as a priest:

*Sow peacetime and enjoyment / In your continuous ser-  
vice / Fill with love every moment / And the epiphany may  
come / of your Diamond Jubilee.*

*And forgive I put aside/ the one who is Father General. /  
To have accompanied you / because in you was poured, / and  
to you the honor declined / In a fraternal gesture.*

*Salamanca... Stone and gold / of the Spanish Plat-  
eresque... / Of treasures of art and science / Within your walls,  
without scorn, / You anointed us with sun.*

*From here, Father Almirall, / simplicity and sympathy, /  
revels in the Pious Schools / his priestly jubilee fiesta. / Kind  
Provincial: / on your happy celebration / as a child, I am bab-  
bling / my warmest congratulations.*

*To your Province, bathed by / the Latin sea with its love, /  
God sets aside a destiny / the most important of Spain: / to sow  
Christ, who entails / with him truth, and way, and life.*

During the same Course, on July 26, the feast of St. Joachim, he made a toast to his saint at lunch:

*Today is my saint and yours... / of the grandfather of God. /  
If Jesus is our God... / if Miriam, mother of God... / would it be  
too much thing / if we give St. Joachim / the honor of the grand-  
father / of the Messiah, the Savior?*

*We congratulate ourselves, / brothers we all in the Lord; /  
we grandchildren celebrate / today, the grandfather of God.*

*Christology is no here... / only here is one heart... / I speak  
as children do, / who are the closest to God.*

*To St. Joachim and St. Anne, / dawn of blessing; / I toast  
with voice of bell, / to the one who this morning / became Host  
of Salvation.*

There are several compositions in which he expresses his enthusiasm and joy at the mission that God has entrusted to him, such as the following one from October 1953<sup>15</sup>

### ***The kindergarten Teacher***

*In the peace of the rest after dinner / three o'clock  
sounds... and the uproar breaks out / of white souls, foam of  
great river / that in the school will be the rumor of a dam.*

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15 In notebook 9, box 344 of Vasconia, Provincial Archives of Emmaus.

*On the forehead of the pedagogue weighs / the terrible  
pressure of the wild will / of the children who cry out the empti-  
ness / of the mother who caresses and kisses.*

*But the flower laughs. And distills honey / the word full of  
light of the teacher, / and transforms the posters into poetry, /  
and gives himself in love to the egotistic*

*And sowing with God the pure orchards / Makes in the  
child his best conquest.*

Or the following, from March 1954<sup>16</sup>:

### **My Nest**

*How many innocent children / Have passed through my  
nest! / How many unfinished buds / From my blooming rose  
bush!*

*White souls as stars / On the snow of my altar! / If I could  
make of them / a shining necklace!*

*And let hang in the light / the angelic purity / of my Virgin  
conceived / without original sin!*

On February 15, 1962<sup>17</sup>, we find a composition with the flavor of Psalm 118, the praise of the child... They are not brilliant verses, but they are like a spring bubbling up from the depths of Fr. Joaquín:

### **The child**

*A child is a smile, / a lily, a song; / the grace of the breeze, /  
that blooms by the sea.*

*The child is a promise, / an ear of grain, a spring... / wax  
that keeps printed / the face of good or evil.*

*The child is a flowerpot / with more flowers than an altar, /  
with more brilliance than a comet, / with more color than a  
fair.*

*The child is a sprinkling / of stars and blessings; / a blonde  
glow that fuses / two souls and one heart.*

---

16 In the same place.

17 In the same place.

*The child is a hope, / the child an illusion; / the child gets from God to balance / the scales of crime and compassion.*

*A child is a fragrant rose, / red with blood and modesty; / where his petals rest, / the lily of candor sprouts.*

*A child is a lily in the midst of thorns, / a dove in the storm, / a flock of swallows / kissing the Holy Face.*

*The child is a paradise, / the sun shines in his eyes, / Jesus wanted into his lips / to place the honey of love.*

*The child is always a model / of purity and simplicity; / that is why he finds in heaven / both the throne and the angel.*

*The child is a seed / that has just sprouted; / with a soul, wonder / of heaven, earth and sea.*

*The child is the gold of harvest / in the wasteland of the earth; / he softens the setbacks / that are inside the fortune.*

*The child is fountain and laughter, / he is waterfall and light, / he is the sunbeam that glitters / the obscurity of the cross.*

*The child sees God in all... / Faith is not blind to him... / As with God, side by side, / it plays in the same groove.*

*The child is a rosebud / and a star of the future... / He is a joyful butterfly... / in the nectar of the life.*

*The child is a lily / of constant luxuriance; / is a harp always full / of heavenly symphony.*

*The child is the water of May / and the new rose of April; / moon no waning or fainting, / painted in indigo sky.*

*The child is a garland; / the child is a song; / the child settles accounts, / and to man he offers pardon.*

*The child is a divine harp, / tabernacle of the house... / is an adamant crown... / is the arpeggio of a song.*

*The child is a dawning / and the awakening of life... / is the joyful stroke of bell / that invites to resurrection.*

*In the child take a seat / the majesty of the Lord; / he is the breeze, he is the breath, / the message of the love.*

*The child is a candy / mint and strawberry for the palate... / is a little piece of heaven... / is the white orange flower.*

*The child is snow dust / that whitens our house; / a feather that rests lightly; / the heart of dovecot.*

*The child is a poppy flower... / a scream in the hurricane; / a feather tuft as a flag, / a greenish branch of peace.*

*The child is the innocence, / that laughs with the affections, / and cheers with its presence / the snow of my ermines.*

*The child is a censer, / the incense, its song, / the ember, the reliquary, / that preserves its heart.*

*The child is a forest; / he is the face of the Lord; / he is a Sunday of feast; / he is the flower of men.*

*The child is a bell tower, / inviting us to the prayer; / the star of the sanctuary, / palpitating in the altar.*

*The child is the living rock / of the fortress of the glory; / he is the joyful evergreen; / he is the fleuron of the history.*

*The child is graceful lily; / He is the grace of the orchard; / In heaven he is a new lily; / On earth milk and honey.*

*The child is a flower of prayer, / an arrow reaching the sky, / the new light of Candlemas, / and the earthly tenebrary.*

*The child is a primer / of shining crystal... / his body is not pure clay... / it is a soul in a beacon.*

*The child is a great poet, / he dreams of stars and the sea, / and he interprets the verses / with the grace of a minstrel.*

*He is the child Marcellino, / bread and wine, the one in the attic, / who in the cross found the way, / to go to heaven with mom.*

*The child is the bicycle, / the ball and the cornet; / the drum with the shotgun / and the Indians of the fort.*

*The child is an amethyst / of unique beauty; / always conquering the heart, / changing the home into heaven.*

*Children are my fascination; / the children, my vocation; / in them I leave with a kiss / the flower of my heart.*

Another beautiful composition is the one from February 26, 1962 on the occasion of the screening in Pamplona of the film based on the story by Sánchez Silva “Marcelino Pan y Vino”, to which the previous poem refers<sup>18</sup>:

---

18 In the same place.

### **Hallelujah for my little ones**

*Marcelino Bread and Wine / lost his mother on the way; /  
and at the door of a convent / he found love and sustenance.*

*Friar Door brought to the prior / this flower bud; / and the  
grace of baptism / received the baby right there.*

*The good Friar Porridge / gave him milk and custard; /  
and Friar Naughty frightened him / when he came into his  
room.*

*He asked for his mother, / and was told: she is in heaven /  
with the children, / who are disguised as stoats.*

*And when laying on his coat, / he thought he would be a  
saint. / The little goat and the kitten / loved Marcellino.*

*And though he was a naughty child, / Friar Ding-Dong  
left a kiss / on the flower that smiled / as the little one slept.*

*He enlivened up the corners / with his laughter and his song;  
/ and he dreamed of his Manuel / like a bee dreams of honey.*

*Marcellino only saw him / in his dreams, not in the day... /  
At the end of the stairs / in an attic it was there / a graceful Holy  
Christ. / He had never seen it.*

*One fine day Friar Ding-Dong / said to the boy: "In the  
attic / I never want to see you". / And he always backed away  
/ when he was climbing the stairs, / for fear to be scolded / by  
Friar Ding-Dong the sacristan, / Ding-Dong, Ding-Dong,*

*On a clear summer's day / The monastery is empty / Ma-  
nuel calls out: "Marcellino, / You are alone with the cat! / Climb  
the stairs soon, / No one is waiting for you!"*

*And gradually and contentedly / the child came into the  
room. / He opens the door... and what horror! / There he found  
the Lord / nailed to a cross. / He let the light to enter in / from  
the window and looked firmly / at the holy crucifix.*

*Saw him broken, covered in blood, / with an emaciated  
face... / What a hungry face you have!" / And without waiting  
for reason, / he ran into the dining room / and took for the Lord /  
a piece of bread and a glass / of wine... he went up in a rush!*

*Quickly the monks could arrive... / Jesus, with a friendly  
gesture, / caressed Marcellino... / "Here is the bread and wine," /  
said the boy. And laughing, / he ran out of the room.*

*It was a very cold night... / The whole convent was asleep... / Not all were, that Marcellino / went out to his new post. / With two white baskets / of wine and bread, on tiptoe / the child reached the attic.*

*"Here you have wine and bread!" / Jesus was not crucified. / Now, he found him sitting / on a wooden armchair. / He became like wax, / the little one... And full of affection / Jesus said to the child:*

*"Come to me. Would you like to see / your mother and mine / or do you prefer the convent?" / The child immediately said: / "I want my mother and yours." / "Now then, before I end / the silence of this night, / I will give you the brooch, / as a reward for your basket. / Come and climb to sit on this chair!"*

*The child climbed up; an embrace / and fell asleep on the lap / of the children's friend. / His soul, clothed in ermine, / reached the smiling sky. / And the next day, when the bells / of the convent, / carried by the wind, / called to wake up, / Friar Ding-Dong climbed at random / to the attic of the Christ, / and admired what never seen: / in the arms of the Lord, / sleeping like a flower, / the good Marcellino.*

*The Prior went up in a hurry / with the brothers to the threshold / of this heavenly corner, / and with folded arms / gazed at the hedge of light / that enveloped the orphan.*

*And the sacristan, very quietly, / said: "Lord! / Who could eat of this bread! / Friar Ding-Dong, Friar Ding-Dong, / who could drink of this wine, / Marcellino bread and wine!"*

There are numerous poems that he wrote for his children, imitating their words and feelings. We will reproduce some of them. The first, entitled "El buzón de mi calle" (The mailbox of my street), is a simple ballad and dates from January 1954:

*To the Magian Kings / I wrote a letter, / and immediately / ran to the mailbox to post it, / without thinking that the envelope / was without stamps, / but the little angels / on their white wings / to the Magian Kings / must have carried it, / for in my shoes / I found another letter, / with the three toys / I longed for so much. / So, when I look at you / from my window, / letterbox always open / to my hopes, / I send you thanks / with all my soul. / Mailbox of my street, / Silver Star, / which you brought / the Magian Kings / to my house: / for the little soldiers / with*

*the gun and sword, / the wind-up car / and the fairy tale. / I thank you / with all my soul... / And while the Magian Kings / go to the East, / tender letterbox, / my scarlet lips / leave you a thousand kisses / instead of a letter.*

Other examples of poems for kindergarten children:

*Giants and big heads, / heads made of cardboard, / While dancing the children sing / with the bagpipes and the drum.*

*Let the bagpipes sound, / let the drum sound, / sing for joy / my heart.*

One more little poem:

*Wooden sword, paper cap... / soldier of Spain, / five and one six.*

*Drum of tin plate, / ribbon and bell, / soldier of Spain, / five and one six.*

*Little bay horse, / Take me to the barracks, / I'll be a soldier, / five and one six.*

But verses also serve him to express his religious feelings, such as the following sonnet, dated Sunday, April 5, 1987:

*Sunday morning in my room... / Alone with my God, my peace and breath... / Clippings from the press... discouragement... / the ragged one does not wear pearls....*

*They go in the basket for ever falling, / leaves that weep their imprisonment, / between teeth of staples and torment... / the life is sad in the tremendous attic.*

*Four o'clock in the afternoon... In solitude, / I contemplate my Lord, and I begin to love Him, / and I want to be the praise of His glory.*

*I caress the beads of the Rosary... / and little by little, without tiring him, / I recite the Litany by heart.*

To Brother Vicente Iriso, who accompanied him during his long illness, and who later testified in the diocesan Process of his canonization, he dedicated the following verses, dated June 26, 1987:

*José Vicente, nurse / of superior stature, / cypress that scales the sky / cauterizing the pain. / José Vicente, you should /*

*be called "Annunciation", / if on the twenty-fifth of March / you opened like a flower, / and you were taken by this name / to seal your vocation.*

*"Annunciation", hope / of Life and Resurrection; / José Vicente in the wound, / balm, breeze, song.*

*In Bethlehem, Brother Iriso, / Jesus was born because He wanted... / And in the arms of a Cross, / He died to give us the Light. / And He gave us life in death, / And in pain, the great fortune / To resemble Him, / Changing pain into honey. / That is your mission, pioneer / in your nursing office... / Sow light, honey and caresses... / never be in a hurry... / And fill the solitude / in sittings of goodness. / Pray and in the Eucharist / participate every day, / that words are love / as well as a thousand favors. / Forgive me if I tire you... / I only find rest / sowing verses and flowers.*

In 1984 he dedicates a poem to Father Enrique Rivero, who after many years working in Japan (Yokkaichi), returned to Spain:

*To Father Enrique Rivero, / who left the Sun of the East / where he sowed the seed / of faith in Christ... Pioneer / of the Calasanzian mission.*

*Be inebriated in the fragrance / of Spain, palm and rosemary... / Rest... Sow joy / in this Community, / which grows older day by day.*

*May God give you freshness, / simplicity and charity.*

In a poem, dated April 30, 1986 (agenda 1987, June 28), he describes his activities on an ordinary day:

*After the fold of the program / of the fiftieth anniversary, / at the end of the calendar, / I boost the flame of prayer.*

*Then I arrive at Manantial... / I glance at the news... / Few are, I leave the portal / and go to my solitudes.*

*In the afternoon, the room / of the good father San Martín / gives me peace and serenity, / and in the Media Luna<sup>19</sup>, at the end, / the Seminary is a magnet / that spurs my walk; / I visit it and my fortune / warms my eagerness.*

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19 Beautiful Pamplona promenade, close to the School.

*Thank you, Lord, who give me / so many comforts in life! /  
Thank you for this welcome / which is called Charity... / and  
heals my wounds / with smiles of kindness!*

In a sonnet entitled “Via Crucis”, which we find in the 1988 diary, August 20<sup>th</sup>, he expresses his religious sentiments. We must emphasize this desire of his to express himself in sonnets, a poetic composition that is not easy:

*My malice, Lord, has condemned you / for I burdened my  
conscience with sins, / and I despised, falling into indolence /  
the motherly tenderness you have given me.*

*I shall be a Cyrenian. Always at your side, / I will cleanse  
with sincere penitence / of my sad falls the insistence / while I  
cry, contrite, my past.*

*Triumphant, I will fall after the battle, / Naked of carnal  
ambitions / And nailed to the Cross of the narrow path.*

*And I will die, lulled in your pardons, / while your Mother  
and mine commends me, / burying my mad occasions.*

Joaquín dedicated many compositions to Our Lady. He felt a particular devotion, because of his origin, to Our Lady of El Puy. He obtained, from the people from Estella living in Pamplona, a reproduction of the precious image, which he was able to venerate in the school of Pamplona, and which is still venerated there. To her he dedicated the following couplets:

*Little Lady of Estella... / do not go away from here. / We lacked  
a star / and the most beautiful one was born / at Easter of Ruby<sup>20</sup>.*

*Virgin of El Puy, sovereign / of the Estella region, / from  
today you will be the princess / of this orchard of illusion.*

*On the burning hill / the shepherds lulled you to sleep /  
and here the best children / will offer you their candor.*

*The great colony of Estella / ordered a sculpture be made, /  
to enjoy the tenderness / and the spell of your love.*

*And the Mother Pious School / that was formed in your lap,  
/ wants to live from your embrace / and offers you this mansion.*

---

20 In the margin: Pentecost.



*Among necklaces of stars / You  
were born already crowned. / In this new  
abode / You will shed more radiance. /  
Here you will live happily, / for the city of  
Pamplona / Crowns its virgins / With gar-  
lands of fervor.*

*You who are beautiful and dark /  
You will steal the hearts. / Soon in every  
corner / You will have altar and song.*

*You are my Mother of heaven... /  
You are the most beautiful Virgin /  
Pamplona brought from Estella / the  
most valuable pearl.*

*You are the silver plated Virgin... /  
You are the eternal smile... / You are the  
kiss and the breeze... / You are the grace  
of God.*

*You, the Mother of the children /  
and of the blond shepherds... / these give  
you madrigals... / I, in a kiss, the heart.*

*Receive this bouquet of flowers... / They have given me for  
You... / May their brightness ever die... / The shepherds made  
it to me / for Our Lady of El Puy.*

*Little Lady of Estella... / do not go away from here. / We lacked  
a star / and the most beautiful one was born / at Easter of Ruby.*

*(At the bottom: On the occasion of the enthronement in our church of  
San Joseph Calasanz, of the image of Our Lady of El Puy, carved by  
Rebollé, with wood from Abárzuza. It was recited from the pulpit by  
the student Ramiro Aramburu, May 1956).*

A beautiful sonnet dedicated to Mary, to all the Advocations of Spain:

*In Seville I saw you as Macarena, / squandering your  
beauty among the pearls... / and in Granada I wept with bit-  
terness / your anguish and loneliness of Nazarena.*

*I dreamed thrones of light in the Almudena, / and I prayed  
by the murmuring Ebro / kissing your Pilar with the purest  
faith / and absorbed in your face, beautiful and dark.*

*Lady of Montserrat, I became a  
spokesman / of the crystalline harp  
of your monks. / Roncesvalles gave  
me grit of steel.*

*And the Puy of Estella, morning  
star, / That in its rays first my love  
was kindled, / Gave me the most di-  
vine smile.*

Another sonnet, “Artists of Our  
Lady” recalls the apparition of  
the Virgin to St. Joseph Calasanz  
in Rome. Dated March 1954:

*Murillo with the light of his  
colors / plucked your beauty from the  
skies, / and slid among honeys your  
sweetness / Friar Bernard singing  
your praises.*



*Dominic de Guzmán sowed with flowers / the footstool  
that felt your pure plant... / Calasanz chiseled your sculpture, /  
asking the stars for their brightness.*

*And in the workshop of the old sacristy / he carved dia-  
monds with careful eagerness, / to adorn Mary's temples.*

*And the Mother rewarded the love of the son... / She de-  
scended accompanied with Jesus, / And blessed Joseph and his  
little children.*

Let us look at another sonnet, dedicated to St. Joseph Calasanz, on the  
occasion of the trip of his relics to Spain in 1948-49, and dated April 1,  
1950. As title, “La Lengua y el Corazón” (The Tongue and the Heart):

*The spring was awaking with love, / spreading the gar-  
dens with emerald, / and Navarre rejoiced its borders, / with  
the carrier voice of a great triumph.*

*The Tongue and Heart, harp and bonfire / of the school of  
poor little children / would fill with light of seraphs / its moun-  
tain and its placid riverside.*

*And extending your maternal arms / to the Saint who re-  
wards the children / with the first fruits of heavenly love,*

*You would place, most noble Pamplona, / among palms  
and triumphal cheers, / with the pride of a Queen, your crown.*

On his visit to Peralta de la Sal, birthplace of Calasanz, on April 22, 1857, he wrote a poem “In the visitors Book of Peralta de la Sal”:

*Morning dew / anointed with candors, / kisses of light and  
flowers / a crystal soul. / Priestly cradle, / Golgotha of a life / for the  
lost childhood. / Peralta de la Sal. / Ganza, Vilet, la Mora, charm-  
ing Queen / the nectar of the lantern; / dawn of a Saint, / who  
sowed with his weeping / the celestial school. / Peralta de la Sal!*

Another saint of Father Joaquín’s devotion, of course, was Saint Francis Xavier. To him he dedicates several poems. Let’s look at some of them:

*I was then a choirboy, / I dreamed of lilies and stars, / and  
before your Altar I said / my rosary of cadences.*

*Your image painted in red / nostalgias of spring / in the  
gardens of the East, / hungry for a planted field.*

*In the brilliance of your eyes / the stars became extin-  
guished, / and your arms were a garland / connecting heaven  
and earth.*

*In them the crucifix / softened the stones, / caressed the  
wounds / and chased away the darkness...*

*Francis Xavier who lives / in the heart of Estella, / in that  
throne lulled / by songs of innocence...*

*Francis of my parish, / who unfolded the sails / of my mis-  
sionary yearnings / in the blue of my school,*

*You who enjoyed as a child / the songs of my land, / the  
laughter of my Virgin / and the honey of her legends;*

*Francis: by that blood / with which you watered the paths, /  
may Estella never lack / the root of your beliefs.*

We also copy a sonnet dedicated also to Xavier, with the title “The Apostle”:

*You carry staff and you are not a pilgrim; / you cross the  
sea not being an adventurer; / you prophesy and you are not  
doomsayer; / you are not light and you enlighten his path.*

*You are a conqueror divine style, / And the whole world is  
your field of action. / Of King Jesus you were armed Knight, /  
And to save the infidel your destination.*

*O divine impatience of your longing, / You melt in love the  
solid ice, / And on land and sea the glory of God you sing.*

*You fertilize with your blood, step by step, / The steppe of  
the east, and in your sunset / The orchards smile at your feet.*

(At the bottom: *In memory of the Mass I celebrated in Rome at the altar of the Church of Jesus where the arm of St. Francis Xavier is venerated.* 1950)

It also tells a curious story of two saints of antiquity, in a small ballad dated January 15, 1961, and titled “January 17<sup>th</sup>” (day of St. Anthony Abbot):

*St. Anthony anchorite / pay a visit to Saint Paul, / and found  
him in a cave, / conversing with his God. / The shade of a palm  
tree / soon sheltered them both. / While the fountain laughed, /  
the raven brought them a loaf. / They gave thanks to God the Father; /  
Anthony took his leave, / and ran to bring the cloak / that  
his friend asked for. / When he returned, he was dead / the best  
friend of God. / They acted as gravediggers / The panther and  
the lion. / As coffin the old cloak / of ashes and splendor... / And  
here concludes the story / of St. Paul and St. Anton.*

One of his last poems, dated March 29, 1987, portrays his room. He titles it “Revolted Table,” and it reflects his personality very well:

*My table is a confusion / of pencils and brushes... / A veritable  
jumble / of folders and papers...*

*Luckily someone told me / that a table without clothes, /  
with nothing else to stash, / will neither conquer laurels, / nor  
be sold for a fixed price.*

To a clown that he himself drew, he congratulates Christmas:

*Silent Night... Christmas... / Night in which Life was born. /  
Night in which the star lit up / in the melted snow. / Merry Christmas,  
Clown, / that you go sowing joys / and announce with the  
bells / peace and welcome... / Sing, jump, dance and laugh... / God  
dressed himself in clay, / and left us in the manger / the pearl of His*

*smile. / Merry Christmas, Clown, / faithful brother of the Messiah, / who the poor and the children / you conquer with your heart!*



Through poetry he describes himself; for example when he writes the following composition in five-lined and six-lined stanzas:

*“And the rose was shed / In the Ara of the Lord... / Who could be like that flower! / To lead a joyful life, / And die of love for God!*

*Bell, silver tongue! / At dawn you cut my sleep / With your joyful serenade / And my soul does not untie itself / To sing to its Owner!*

*I climbed the January slope / Joyfully, Lord; / Don't give me a white path, / Don't give me the path / That leads me to Tabor.*

*The good book is the honeycomb / that recreates and nourishes... / It is the friend that encourages... / It is the flower in the beacon..., / It is the compass that orients / in the storms of evil.*

*The snowflake descends / slowly. Meekly... / Like a bird that does not dare / to stain its lightly feather / in the putrid current. / I want to live like the snow, / meekly, chastely!*

To conclude with this poetic facet of Fr. Joaquín, we will copy the lyrics he composed in quartets for the Hymn to the Novitiate of Orendain, with music by D. Silvestre Peñas, on February 16, 1962:



*Knights of Christ, in the breach / of the paladins of the  
King of Love, / to burn the world with the fiery arrow / of holy  
fear and humble work.*

*On earth, hives of children / spread their wings, hungry  
for light: / to guide them, radiant with ermine, / bared the  
dust, anointed with Cross.*

*Knights of Christ, on the summit / of the holy retreat, with  
sun of Tabor, / we want to bathe in the multitude / and chaste  
loves of Our Lord.*

*Dovecote of Basque skies, / holy novitiate, orchard of  
peace; / if our hearts dream of children / the School of Charity  
will live.*

*Fountain of laughing gardens, / emerald throne, moun-  
tain of the Lord; / to sow the souls of young children / with  
lights of science, and kisses of love.*

Joaquín wrote numerous Christmas carols, among other poems. Here is a sample, from 1962:

***From heaven a star came***

*From the sky a star came down / and an angel chased her... / At the portal he found her / warming the Child God.*

*The child dreams about the star... / the Angel winked the star... / "Without fire was the firewood, / and to give it I turned up.*

*"I desire, star, your fire... / cherub, preserve it for me... ÷ that my ember becomes dust, / and my Love is being born".*

Dated December 23, 1974, we have the following:

***My carol***

*By the sun, stream and earth... / there the carnation blooms...*

*That Bethlehem is not so distant / that we cannot see it. / Farther away is the star / and even the Kings as well.*

*By the sun, stream and earth... / there the carnation blooms...*

*If you give love and joy / you will have reached Bethlehem / and you will find the Messiah / between Mary and Joseph.*

*By the sun, stream and earth... / there the carnation blooms...*

*Bethlehem is in poverty, / sun that reflects Emmanuel, / brook that sings and weeps, / earth that dies of thirst.*

*By the sun, stream and earth... / there the carnation blooms...*

*Bethlehem is everywhere / and you don't want to see it.*

## **Joaquín Erviti, priest**

Joaquín exercised his priesthood above all in the school (according to the ideal of St. Joseph Calasanz), but not only there. We have already seen that he was a military chaplain for more than two years during the war, serving the soldiers and the wounded and helping in the villages where his battalion was quartered. In Pamplona, as long as his health permitted, he went to confession to the Daughters of Charity of the Red Cross and the Daughters of Mary Immaculate.

His nephew Luis Garbayo Erviti says: *“He was very mystical, very holy. When he celebrated, he put himself in another sphere; he made the Mass something very special, something sacred”*.



In his apostolate with children, in addition to the one he carried out in his kindergarten class, he was involved for many years in preparing older children for First Communion. In one of his notebooks<sup>21</sup> we find a talk to the parents of First Communion children about the initiation into the Eucharist, which perfectly reflects his way of thinking based on the teachings of the Church:

*Theoretically, we all know: parents are the first educators of the child's faith. The school can and must help them, but must never supplant them. Once again, we must work together. It is necessary that the family and the school combine their efforts and criteria for the initiation of children into the Eucharist. This initiation or preparation for First Communion cannot be seen as something separate from the child's overall religious education. The religious education of the child must be carried out jointly by the school and the family. Therefore, the family and the school must be aware that the participation of their children or their students in the Eucharist requires*

- *a minimum level of Christian maturity*
- *an awakening of the sense of God. God is discovered as a person (awakening of attitudes)*
- *the experience of what it means to be in communion with God (experience of personal prayer)*
- *a series of attitudes and human-Christian experiences that go beyond knowledge and enable the celebration of a feast and a banquet of thanksgiving to which God invites them.*

*The following cannot be criteria for admission to the first Eucharist*

- *chronological age: he is already 6, 7, or 8 years old.*
- *belonging to a certain course (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade of elementary school)*
- *a brother or sister who is making their First Communion this year.*
- *the family's financial situation: we may or may not be able to organize a good party this year.*

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21 No. 8, from box 345, Emmaus Provincial Archives.

*Family and school: We must avoid two dangers;*

1. *That the child becomes fixated on the external or profane part of the feast. If it is true that it is a feast, then it is basically a religious feast, a feast celebrated in the church with those who believe in Jesus and want to be his friends. All this becomes theory when the child sees that his parents' main concern these days is to find a restaurant or a café to celebrate his First Communion with a snack or a meal. Let us not turn this day into a gift fair either.*
2. *Do not let the child focus solely on the communion. The very name of First Communion will entice it if we are not constantly striving to overcome it. Communion is only one moment, one part of the faith to which Jesus invites him. The Eucharist is much more: it is the preparation that begins even before the child is born, when Christian parents (especially the mother), who live by faith and trust in God, sow habits of patience, sacrifice and love and address the infant's first sounds to God through prayer. A zealous mother will not wait to draw the cross on her son's forehead until he knows what she is doing, nor will she wait to speak to him until she is sure he understands. When parents truly live the Gospel and the celebration of the Eucharist is not a habit, a routine, a burden or a rule for them, but a normal and joyful expression of their faith and their Christian life, then, almost without realizing it, they will make a real introduction of their children to the Eucharistic meal. It was not for nothing that John XX-III said that the faith of the little ones originates and develops in the family. It is the favorable environment, it is the air that they constantly breathe. It is not necessary to turn talks in the family into sermons or inappropriate discourses. What is most important, besides the example, are the usual occasional allusions, the thanks to God for some family event, the prayer we address to him when we bless the food, when we praise our deceased... But above all, the example of your Christian life.*

*Today there is much confusion about the age of First Communion and First Confession for children. Since the first centuries, the Church has endeavored to*

*bring children closer to Christ through the Eucharistic communion of his Body and Blood, as Jesus himself requested.*

*Thus, before the thirteenth century, it was customary to serve them communion in the form of wine directly at baptism. It was also common for a long time to give the children the remains of the Eucharistic bread at communion after the clergy and the adult faithful had received communion at Mass. However, these customs disappeared in the Latin Church, and so by the middle of the thirteenth century only children who had reached a certain level of understanding and showed a clear discernment of the Blessed Sacrament came to the Eucharistic table. And so, we come to the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), which decreed that all children who had attained the use of reason should receive communion and confession at least once a year, at Easter time. This decree was confirmed by the Council of Trent, which condemned those who denied it.*

*And we come to our century, to the year 1910, when St. Pius X promulgated the decree “Quam singulari”, in view of the abuses that were taking place in determining the age of reason suitable for first access to confession or to the Eucharist. Some held that for penance, the age at which the child could distinguish between good and evil was sufficient for him to sin. But for communion, a higher age was required. And so, depending on local custom, children under 10, 12, 14 and even older were excluded from First Communion. This practice was justified by the fact that it gave the child time to acquire a greater knowledge of the truths of the faith and to prepare better for receiving the bread of angels. With these customs, it happened that many children, or rather young people, lost their innocence from baptism and fell into various vices before they had tasted the body of the Lord. These were remnants of the Jansenist errors that demanded an extraordinary preparation of the child, since they considered the Eucharist to be a reward and not a medicine or “an antidote to free us from daily errors and save us from mortal sins”.*

*Another practical error that the Pope condemned was, as the text of the same decree states, “the habit*

*existing in some places of refusing confession to children who are not admitted to the Holy Table or of not granting them absolution, whereby it was very easy for them to persist for a long time, perhaps in mortal sin, with very great danger for their salvation". To correct such abuses, St. Pius X established a uniform age for both Confession and Communion: the age at which the child begins to think. If for confession the age of discernment is the age at which the child can distinguish between good and evil, for Communion it must be the age at which the child can also distinguish between the ordinary material bread and the bread of the Eucharist, according to the Pope. The Pope did not leave the concrete determination of the age of discretion in each individual case to the parish priests, contrary to what is commonly thought. Nor did he leave it to some hierarchical body or person, such as a commission of catechists or psychologists acting on behalf of the bishop, but chose a much more personal criterion that respects the subjective rights of the child and is much more in keeping with the delicacy of his tender soul, pointing out that his parents and his confessor must make the decision.*

*St. Pius X also stipulated that a complete knowledge of Christian doctrine is not required for First Confession and First Communion; it is sufficient for the child to know, according to his abilities, the mysteries of the faith, which are necessary as a means, and the difference between the Eucharistic bread and ordinary bread.*

*After the Second Vatican Council, in some regions and nations, in most cases with the approval of the bishops or episcopal conferences, various experiments were made, almost all of which agree in postponing the first confession until some time after the child's First Communion. And in some places, going back to the abuses condemned by St. Pius X, children are systematically kept away from Holy Confession until several years after receiving Holy Communion.*

*The Bishop of Barcelona has protested against this practice: "It is inaccurate to claim without further ado that the child has no awareness of sin. It is not permissible to establish criteria or general norms in the sense*

*that children preparing for First Communion are kept away from confession. The general norm must be the opposite”.*

*All this until the publication of the General Catechetical Directory (April 11, 1971, three years ago). In its Appendix, the norm of Pius X was declared to be in force: “The custom of not admitting children to confession or never granting them absolution, even if they have attained the use of reason, is to be absolutely rejected”.*

*Finally, on May 24, 1973, a declaration of the Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments was published, forbidding any experience of children going to First Communion without first having had confession and ordering strict adherence to the teaching of St. Pius X in the sense that the age for First Communion is the age at which the child has acquired the use of reason, i.e. around the age of 7.*

*To form the child’s conscience, the following factors come into play*

- a. the family, in an atmosphere of understanding, affection and discipline*
- b. the example of the Christian life of the community or school in which the child is brought up*
- c. and finally, Christian catechesis, which illustrates the faith so that the child learns to defend and live it.*

*We must speak to children in a simple and clear way about God as Father and Lord... about his love for us, and our love for him... about Jesus who, without ceasing to be God, became man for us... about Jesus, who suffered death on the cross to redeem us from sin.*

*Here is the catechetical plan for the first Eucharist:*

- 1. The Church is our home where God gathers us. We belong to the family of God.*
- 2. Jesus invites us to a banquet. How happy we are!*
- 3. Jesus gathers us in his house to celebrate a feast. We say yes to Jesus’ invitation.*
- 4. When we gather to celebrate the banquet, we remember that we have not been good and ask Jesus for forgiveness.*

5. *When we gather to celebrate the banquet, Jesus is with us. We sing for Jesus.*
6. *Jesus wants to be with us. We must prepare ourselves to receive Jesus.*
7. *Jesus speaks to us when we are gathered in his house. We listen to the word of God.*
8. *At our banquet with Jesus, we thank God for the good he has been and for the great things he has done for us.*
9. *Jesus celebrated the Last Supper before his death and resurrection. We remember the Lord's Supper.*
10. *At our banquet, Jesus will do the same as He did at the Last Supper. He will transform our bread and wine into his body and blood.*
11. *The body of Jesus in the form of bread gives us the strength to continue on God's path.*
12. *Jesus tells us: "Take and eat: This is my body. We prepare our hearts to receive the bread of God."*

*We already know that the confession of children at the age of 7 or 8 is in most cases a confession of devotion rather than a compulsory confession. They can hardly commit a mortal sin. This is the opinion of authors who have studied the psychological aspect of sin in children. Certainly children, especially when tempted to evil, can do things that are obviously grave sins, but given the thoughtlessness inherent in this age and their dependence on momentary sensitivity, they can hardly see through the wickedness of an act, even if it is very wicked. But calling the child "kid" or "brat" or "little angel" is an abyss. These expressions: "they are incapable of committing a sin", "he is an angel of goodness", from the mouths of parents or educators, reveal a very great infantilism in those who use them. The child who misbehaves feels guilt and has a deep desire for forgiveness and reconciliation with his parents, teachers and God. This is why confession of venial sins is so important.*

*Some children are reluctant to open up to the priest; they are instinctively ashamed to reveal their own faults. If confession is not made from an early age, this resistance increases during the difficult years of puberty, when the child is even more aware of his or her limitations and adopts a defensive attitude. If he is accustomed to confession during*

*this period of childhood, if he is instilled with confidence in the mercy of Jesus, if he is shown that confession means embracing Jesus Christ so that he forgives us... that confession means giving God our Father the greatest joy, then he will see the sacrament of penance as the sacrament of peace and the greatest happiness.*

*Above all, it is of great benefit for the child to confess his venial sins. It will be the only opportunity for him to examine and repent of the sins he has committed. And by confessing them to God in repentance, he can free himself from the evil he has done in the most determined way. At the same time, it is a very favorable opportunity for an advice, a heartfelt warning, or a word of encouragement by the confessor.*

*The motives for legitimate sorrow are shame before God, whose eye sees everything; ingratitude to our Father God, who has done us so much good, who gives us everything we have: the sun, the flowers, the water, the food, our parents; the stain on the garment of the soul that makes Daddy God not love me (this motive, for the youngest children).*

As you can see, we are in 1973 and Father Joaquín is following the instructions of the ecclesiastical authorities and working out a modern catechetical plan. But many years earlier, according to the mandate of St. Pius X, the child should “*learn the mysteries of the faith according to his abilities; mysteries absolute necessary to know*”. Since St. Joseph Calasanz, the Piarists have written catechisms for young children, and one of the most published in Spain was that of Father Cayetano Ramo<sup>22</sup>.

Father Joaquín also wrote his catechism in preparation for First Communion<sup>23</sup>. We have it in two slightly different versions: one handwritten and photocopied by Father Joaquín himself and the other typewritten and printed, compiled by Ángel Munárriz.

These are very short catechisms with simple vocabulary, which young children could memorize. We reproduce the first one:

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22 Father Cajetan Ramo (1713-1795) was Superior General of the Pious Schools in 1772-1784.

23 Box 345, 11, Provincial Archives of Emmaus, Province of Vasconia.

***First Communion Catechism***

1. *Who is God?*  
*God is our Father who is in heaven.*
2. *What has God done?*  
*God made heaven and earth.*
3. *Does God have a body like us?*  
*God does not have a body like us, because he is spirit.*
4. *Where is God?*  
*God is everywhere: in the house, on the street, on the mountain, in the fire, and in the sea.*
5. *Does he burn in the fire or drown in the sea?*  
*No, because he is spirit.*
6. *Is God extraordinarily good?*  
*Yes, God is extremely good.*
7. *How many gods are there?*  
*There is only one true God.*
8. *How many persons are there in God?*  
*There are three different persons in God.*
9. *What are the names of the three persons in God?*  
*The first person is called the Father, the second the Son and the third the Holy Spirit.*
10. *Is the Father God?*  
*Yes, the Father is God.*
11. *Is the Son God?*  
*Yes, the Son is God.*
12. *Is the Holy Spirit God?*  
*Yes, the Holy Spirit is God.*
13. *Did God create the angels?*  
*Yes, God created the angels.*
14. *Do the angels have a body like us?*  
*Angels do not have a body like us, because they are spirits.*
15. *What are called the angels who care about us?*  
*The angels who protect us are called Guardian Angels.*
16. *Who is Jesus Christ?*  
*Jesus Christ is the incarnate Son of God.*

17. *Where was Jesus Christ born?*  
*Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem of Judah.*
18. *How did Jesus Christ die?*  
*Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose again on the third day.*
19. *Why did Jesus Christ die on the cross?*  
*Jesus Christ died on the cross to forgive our sins and thus save us.*
20. *Does Jesus Christ have a body like ours?*  
*Yes, Jesus Christ has a body like ours.*
21. *Where is Jesus Christ?*  
*Jesus Christ is in heaven, in the consecrated host and in the consecrated wine.*
22. *Who is the Virgin Mary?*  
*She is the mother of Jesus Christ and our mother in heaven.*
23. *Who created man?*  
*God created man.*
24. *Why did God create man?*  
*God created man to love and serve him on earth and then to rejoice with him in heaven.*
25. *What is heaven?*  
*Heaven means seeing God forever and rejoicing with him.*
26. *Where is the Virgin Mary?*  
*The Virgin Mary is in heaven with body and soul.*
27. *Are you a Christian?*  
*Yes, I am a Christian, by the grace of God.*
28. *How do we become Christians?*  
*We become Christians through baptism.*
29. *What does Christian mean?*  
*Christian means a disciple of Jesus Christ.*
30. *Who is a good Christian?*  
*A good Christian is someone who does what Jesus Christ taught us.*
31. *What is sin?*  
*To sin is to disobey God.*

32. *Who disobeys God?*

*The one who disobeys God is the one who does not do what the commandments of God's law and the Church command.*

33. *How many types of sins are there?*

*Original sin, venial sin, and mortal sin.*

34. *What is original sin?*

*Original sin is the sin we all have at birth.*

35. *How is original sin removed?*

*Original sin is removed through baptism.*

36. *Did the Virgin Mary have original sin?*

*No. The Virgin Mary had no original sin, and that is why we call her Immaculate.*

37. *What is venial sin?*

*Venial sin is what makes Jesus Christ sad.*

38. *How is venial sin removed?*

*Venial sin is removed by simply asking God for forgiveness.*

39. *What is mortal sin?*

*Mortal sin is the sin through which Jesus Christ died.*

40. *How is mortal sin removed?*

*Mortal sin is removed by going to confession.*

41. *How many things are necessary to go to confession properly?*

*Five things are necessary:*

- *to think about your sins*
- *to be remorseful about your sins*
- *not to want to sin again*
- *tell the priest about our sins*
- *to pray or do what the priest commands.*

42. *How do you think about sins?*

*You think about sins by remembering the commandments of God's law and the commandments of the Church.*

43. *Or by answering these questions<sup>24</sup>:*

- *Do I already pray every day / to God and to St. Mary?*
- *Do I bless the name of God / or do I say it without respect?*
- *Do I listen to Mass on Sundays / attentively and without haste?*
- *Do I obey my parents / and give them my affection?*
- *Have I fought to the children, / and have I wished them evil?*
- *Was I pure in my thoughts, / my words and my behavior?*
- *How often have I stolen, / without giving back what I have taken?*
- *Have I lied shamelessly / and spoken ill of the one who is absent?*
- *Do I do my duty well / or am I a great comfort-loving?*
- *Have I received the Eucharist / while the time of Easter?*
- *Did I receive the heavenly bread / with a mortal sin?*
- *Did I confess this great sin / before the year ended?*
- *Have I atoned well / or have I lacked diligence?*

44. *What is the regret of sins?*

*The regret of sins is the sorrow of having displeased God.*

45. *What is good sorrow?*

*The good sorrow is the regret of having displeased God out of fear of punishment.*

46. *What is the best sorrow?*

*The best sorrow is the regret of having displeased the Lord, because he is so good that he died on the cross to save us.*

47. *What sins must we confess?*

*There is an obligation to confess all mortal sins. There is no obligation to confess all venial sins.*

48. *What is communion?*

*To receive communion means to eat the consecrated host.*

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24 This simple examination of conscience for little children is (in the Spanish original) in the form of couplets, so to be easily remembered by children.

49. *What is consecration?*

*Consecration means transforming the bread into the body of Jesus Christ, and the wine into the blood of Jesus Christ.*

50. *Who can consecrate?*

*Only the priest can consecrate.*

51. *Where does the priest consecrate?*

*The priest consecrates during Mass.*

52. *What is the Mass?*

*The Mass is the renewal of Jesus' death on the cross and his offering of himself to us in the consecrated host.*

53. *What do we need to receive Communion well?*

*To receive Communion well, three things are necessary:*

- To know that Jesus Christ is in the consecrated host.*
- You must not have committed a mortal sin.*
- You must not eat or drink anything from one hour before Communion until after Communion.*

54. *Who is the Pope?*

*The Pope is the person who takes the place of Jesus Christ on earth.*

55. *What is the Catholic Church?*

*The Catholic Church is the assembly of all faithful Christians who have the Pope as their father and shepherd.*

56. *Pray this prayer slowly before confession and it will help you to do the best mourning:*

*“My Lord Jesus Christ, / God and true man: / It weighs heavily on my soul, / That I have displeased You so much. / For You are infinitely good... / Because to forgive me and save me, / You wanted to die on the cross. / I acknowledge that I have been bad, / and I ask Your forgiveness and I promise / to be Your friend from now on.”*

*Consecration to Our Lady:*

*Into the precious ciborium / Of the heart of my childhood, / Jesus has placed today / with great affection His room.*

*Adorn my heart / with your flowers, my Mother... / Take me in your company / by the hand before the altar, / And that I receive communion / as you know, Mary... / With this faith and with this joy... / Without losing my pure soul / the fragrance and whiteness / of this happy communion.*

The witness Javier Gonzalez, whom he prepared for first Communion, recounts:



*Father Joaquín prepared me for my First Communion and confessed me for the first time. He placed great emphasis on the miracle that took place at the consecration, which allowed us to eat the body of Christ and drink his blood. Father Joaquín explained the catechism to us; that by Father Astete. He explained to us the meaning of receiving First Communion, he told us that Jesus entered us because he loved us so much. He always emphasized prayer and, above all, he always showed us how much devotion he had for Our Lady.*

*In his lessons, he always took us to the chapel to pray to Our Lady. I remember that Father Joaquín always wore his chalk-stained cassock in the morning and put on his surplice and stole in the afternoon.*

*Sometimes he had us pray a mystery of the rosary. We had mass almost every day. On Thursdays we had a break in the afternoon and movies were shown. When the movies were over, he would take us to the chapel to pray. He told us that we have enjoyed seeing the movies, but that Our Lady had been alone. He took us there that Our Lady smiled. He also pointed to the crucifix and told us that he was very lonely. He told us that Our Lady was happy about our visit and our prayers, and also Our Lady was happy receiving a kiss from us. When another Father brought us into the chapel, we tried to sneak away, but when it was Father Joaquín, we were all happy. In the classroom there was a picture of Our Lady with a crown. Father Joaquín was very fond of Our Lady with a crown of twelve stars. He often opened the classroom door and brought us out to pray in front of the image, that was in a corridor of the school.*

Fernando Español, a student and later his co-worker, tells us about it:

*Everyone will remember this procession from the church of Pious Schools to the Cathedral to accompany, with living allegorical figures of the Old and New Testaments, those who had received their First Communion that year. For some years,*

*it was celebrated in the parish church of Saint Francis Xavier (this was his signature writing from distant lands), in which the public chapel of the school was integrated.*

*Between Eucharistic chants and the hymn of the day: "Sing, O pure children...!" they arrived in front of the altar of Santa María la Real del Sagrario to perform their Marian consecration through the mouth of a chosen one and to lay down the personal donation of flowers on the main altar of the cathedral.*

*When it was already done at school due to traffic problems, he suggested that I could help him prepare the act of family and social commitment.*

*He was responsible for the catechetical part and I for the main event of these beautiful and unforgettable days. I suggested and he accepted, after consulting with Father Director, that the children should go to Communion alone to avoid the sacrileges of separated parents and fictitiously united on such a happy day for their children. Likewise, it was accepted the idea that they could dress as they wished: in street clothes, in habit, as sailors or admirals, etc. etc. I will never forget the student who told me, "I will not go to First Communion if I do not go in Pamplona traditional dress." "That's all I need!" and so he did.*

*I went further and we suggested by mutual agreement that they should receive their First Communion under the two sacramental species.*

*The First Communion was done in two groups and on several consecutive Sundays and at different times, depending on whether they wanted to have breakfast or a family dinner afterwards.*

*As for communion under both species, he suggested that I hold the chalice with the sanguis in my hands and on his right side. I went to the episcopal palace to ask the archbishop for permission. The concession was granted immediately, accompanied by a heartfelt blessing for the commitment made.*

*What a fervor in his conversations with the children and with the Jesus he would place in their mouths, hidden among the species of bread and wine, to be the food and drink of these pure souls!*

*With a simple glance, agreed beforehand, we knew at every moment which of us two was speaking to the communicants.*

*Father Joaquín repeated to them what he had taught them in the previous months and in the week before their day of joy, alternating the two groups every Sunday.*

*I used to give them a hint after Holy Communion: “I am very interested in what you have just done, that you have united with Jesus, but I am more interested in your next Communion, alone or in company, and then the next one, until Christ comes on a distant day to accompany you to enter with Him into eternal communion”.*

*Since the formula for the consecration to the Blessed Virgin was very beautiful but long and came from the mouth of a single child, I suggested to him that it would be replaced with the declamation of all communicants “Blessed be your purity...”, and so it was done from then on, without the fear that the formula might be canceled due to illness or indisposition of the child previously chosen to recite it.*

This is the beautiful (and long) formula of the consecration of the First Communion children, as it appears in one of Father Joaquín’s notebooks:

*Mother of Pamplona, Queen of Navarre, bless your children who implore your gifts and graces.*

*On behalf of the children of the Pious Schools of Pamplona who have made their First Communion, as a sign of sincere devotion, I place at your feet this consecration that comes spontaneously from our hearts.*

*We are your children, good Mother: we were born in the shadow of your mantle, and at our birth our loving mothers sheltered us in your arms so that you could give us your tenderness. We will be yours forever.*



*The Pious Schools, our second mother, nourished us with the richest honey of piety and made our souls thrones of angelic charm so that we could receive Jesus with dignity on this beautiful day of our First Communion.*

*Made gods... by partaking of the Eucharistic Bread, we bear the new title of your children and brothers of Jesus Christ.*

*What do you want from us, beautiful Mother? Do you want our heart? There you have it, adorned with the garments of openness, with the whiteness of purity, with the fragrances of love.*

*This morning our heart was a living monstrosity of the most holy body of your Son Jesus.*

*We consecrate it to you. It will be yours forever.*

*Dearest Mother, do you not see how these children smile, who today are angels with joyful souls, with wings of innocence?*

*Their jasmine lips have drawn a kiss, a kiss of the heart. Accept it, dearest mother. We want to love you very much; we want to be your favorite children.*

*Mother of Pamplona, Queen of Navarre, take us into your bosom, give us your caresses so that we, who are angels on earth today, may one day enjoy your sweetest kisses in glory. So be it.*

The following is one of the poems recited by a selected child, after his First Communion:

*The longed-for day has finally come, my Jesus, / to be able to receive you / as my brothers do. / And you are in my heart / and I, full of emotion, / worship you with reverence, / Lord of my heart.*

*I would like to be a little bird... / a singing goldfinch... / to cheer you up / with my songs of love. / But I am so small / that I can only say: / Thank you, Jesus! / because you wanted to come / to stay with love / in my child's heart.*

*And since I know that You listen / and desire that I ask, / I request, divine Jesus, / to hear my prayer. / Keep me always close to You... / Do not leave my side / and never allow me / to consent to sin.*

*May I be very obedient... / love my parents very much / and be a comfort to them / by being really good. / For them, God of love, / and for my little brethren / I ask with all my soul / for your favorite gifts... / Health, if it suits to them... / means to live... / but above all I ask / that they love You very much.*

*Jesus, for your faithful minister, / which joyful has given me You, / I ask you with all my soul, / that he may always live by your side.*

*I know that now surround me / many, many little angels, / who adore You in my bosom... / Oh, God of infinite love! / Other angels too, / united with those in heaven, / accompany me with*

*love... / My friends of the school / Reward their affection, / Their kindness, their illusion / To sow happiness and contentment / Into my tender heart.*

*Spring of my life ... / Ever blooming age, / Full of light and love / Today with divine rapture / asks me for my first kiss / The Lord of Lords.*

*You kissed me once before, / At the baptismal font. / Today, heavenly bread, / you give yourself to my soul. / I could not taste any more, / such happiness even in heaven. / How much I love you, how much, my God! / Because you have given me your heart.*

In his diary from 1955, he wrote the sermon he had to give to the children at a First Communion Mass:



*'What an enchanting spectacle, beloved children, that presents itself to our eyes today! Your souls, full of emotions, which preserve the purity of angels, and your bodies, temples of the Holy Spirit, adorned with those wonderful garments that look like scraps of heaven and petals of fragrant lilies, you have entered the house of our God, while angelic voices intoned*

*the song of triumph with which the innocent children are welcomed into the heavenly abode.*

*And between the kisses of light, the enchanting image of our St. Francis Xavier, who once again offers us the volcano of his heart to light the divine fire of God's love in the lamp of your souls.*

*Children, you are about to receive the first kiss of Jesus in the embrace of your First Communion. Do not let the Holy Missionary out of your sight. May he prepare you, as he prepared the Indians of the East, so that this embrace with Jesus will never be interrupted by mortal sin. Adorn the cradle of your soul with flowers of purity.*

*He was almost a child. Not much more than you. With blue eyes, like the seas of Oceania. With a broad forehead roasted by the sun. He was an altar boy and companion of St. Francis Xavier on the archipelago of the Moluccas. And do you know what his favorite toy was? The crucifix of the holy missionary. The boy's name was Manuel and he was proud when he walked in front of Xavier and hugged the crucifix. When his angelic soul was truly united with Jesus at his First Communion, he earnestly promised that he would rather be killed than deny Jesus Christ. The years passed... Manuel was no longer with Francis Xavier. He was walking alone through the forest when suddenly the bandits came onto the road; they stopped him and pointed their guns at him at the same time. Right next to the road was a wooden cross that St. Francis Xavier had erected. "Wait a moment," Manuel called out to the assassins. The boy approached the cross, stretched out his arms on it and calmly said to them: "Father Francis told us that a Christian should die on the cross, Go ahead, shoot". The criminals were ashamed of this virtue. They lowered their weapons and left the brave catechist of St. Francis Xavier in peace.*

*Today, as the bells ring with you, today, as the altar shines in beauty with these white flowers like the purity of your hearts, promise before St. Francis Xavier, like the child Manuel, that mortal sin will never separate you from Jesus Christ.*

*Adorn the cradle of your soul with the flowers of faith. The Lord is coming... the same one who with a word sowed the sky with stars and adorned the gardens with flowers. The Lord is coming... the same one who received the caresses of the Virgin in Bethlehem and the gifts and adoration of the shepherds and the Magi. Jesus is coming, the one who looked at the children*

*with unspeakable love and showered them with the honey of his affection, while he embraced her and blessed her with oaths of love. Like the children of Jerusalem who lined the path of Jesus with foliage and shouted enthusiastically: "Long live the Son of David, Hosanna to him who comes in the name of the Lord!" Go forth to meet the King of Kings. Bind him with the radiant sighs of your prayers. Form with your hearts the triumphal chariot in which he will find his delight. Jesus joyfully awaits the opening of the tabernacle to rest in the little cradle of lilies of your heart...*

*(Now he gave other examples: the little Chinese girl who broke out her milk teeth after the priest told her that she was too small to receive Jesus because she had milk teeth... Or he gave the example of Zacchaeus or St. Tarcisius or St. Christopher, etc.).*

*After communion.*

*At this moment, it would be my duty to be silent and, on my knees, to adore the divine Jesus who already lives in your souls. Say to Jesus with faith and love: "I firmly believe, more than if I saw him with my own eyes, that You are in me, my Jesus, my God, my Lord and my All; with your hands and your wounded feet, with your kind and merciful Heart. Since You were so good as to ally Yourself with me, little one and poor one, I give You my soul so that I may think only of You. I give You my soul so that You can always reign in me. I give You my body so that it may always be God's holy temple. My God! May the devil never get hold of my soul, which was sanctified this morning with the purest flesh of Christ. I would rather die than commit a single mortal sin! Remember that Jesus is smiling at you right now because your heart has not been soiled by the filthy mud of mortal sin. Promise Jesus that you will receive Communion many times so that your soul will not be weakened and the devil will not tempt you to commit a mortal sin.*

*Ask Jesus also for your parents, in gratitude for their love, care and sacrifice. Ask him that they may be good Christians and that peace may reign in your home, which is always permeated by the blessing of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Ask him for the elderly and sick Pope, that the Lord may sustain him in his endeavors and allow him to complete his reign of peace and reconciliation on earth. Ask him for sinners, that they may return to the Father of Mercy in repentance. Ask him for the poor un-*

*believers, that they may come to know Jesus as soon as possible and experience the inexpressible joy of First Communion. Ask him for the souls in purgatory, that they may soon go to heaven.*

*And you, beloved parents, may you keep the souls of these little angels of God, who are your children, with all your strength. May their foreheads, which today have received the kiss of God, never have to be lowered in shame, disfigured by the blackness of vice, of sin. May their homes therefore always be the antechamber of paradise. May your behavior be for them a mirror of purity, mutual fidelity and self-sacrificing love for the Lord. And if you fear that tomorrow your maternal care will no longer be able to protect the lily of their innocence, because they will be drawn away by the flesh, captivated by cinemas and spectacles, and subjugated by the pleasures of the world and evil companions, then from now on bring them frequently to the source of grace, to the tabernacle. Let them eat with you the purest flesh of Christ, and the bread of the Strong One will make them invincible to the enemy. Consecrate them every day to the Blessed Virgin, the ideal of pure souls. May she pour into the amphora of their pure hearts the richest honey of her caresses. May she make them feel the magic of virtues, the delights of the presence of Jesus in their souls, the gentleness of his yoke, even if it is that of the cross. Yes, even if it is that of the cross! Let us accept with love this farewell lesson given to us by our St. Francis Xavier, the apostle and standard bearer of the cross. Let us follow Christ on the only way: the way of the cross!*

We copy another First Communion homily, dated May 3, 1970, in which Father Joaquín's narrative style is very evident:

*A few years ago, Bishop Miguel Erbiñi returned from Russia. He told us this edifying story: a bishop came to a small village one day on one of his journeys through southern Russia. He went to the house of God, i.e. the church. But the doors were locked. Not knowing what to do, he stood there, his eyes fixed on the church. He wanted to remain unnoticed, because he was a Catholic priest. He was dressed in civilian clothes and wore a cap on his head, as is customary in Russia, so that he would not be mistaken for a foreigner. The bishop was praying, praying to his guardian angel. At that moment, a window of a house overlooking the church square opened. A girl about 14 years old said to him: "Are you a priest? Please come upstairs. How could they have recognized him? The bishop bravely made his*

*way to the house and climbed the stairs to the second floor. And do you know what he found there? There he found two children kneading wafers. "What are you doing there, my children?" "Sir, our priest died six months ago. Before that, he taught us how to make wafers so that when a priest comes, we can celebrate Holy Mass and receive communion. We are so hungry for the Lord! Every month we knead new hosts because they can not be kept for more than a month. Now we were busy with this and begged the Lord that a priest would come soon, and when we saw you at the door of the church, we thought: The priest is here! We are so hungry to eat the body of Jesus, the body of God! Give us communion!" The children wept with joy. And the bishop, who was also weeping, celebrated Mass, consecrated the hosts kneaded with tears of love and gave Communion to the Russian children.*

*When I look at you now, dear children, who are waiting with trust for the visit of the King of Kings, Jesus Christ our God, your souls adorned with the fragrance of innocence and your bodies, temples of the Holy Spirit, adorned with these white robes that smell like the flowers of spring, I imagine that you share the hunger for God of those Russian children who at all times longed to eat the Body and Blood of God.*

*Children, open wide the doors of your hearts to Jesus. For you are the angels of the earth and the best friends of the Heart of Christ. "Let the little children come to me... and do not hinder them... for theirs is the kingdom of heaven". That is why he smiled at you, that is why he embraced you and blessed you as he walked on earth. From today, from your First Communion onwards, Jesus Christ will enter your soul to take possession of it. It is true that he already took possession of your soul at your baptism, when the Holy Spirit came through grace. But now it is Jesus Christ in person who immediately connects with your soul. And not the little child Jesus, but Jesus Christ, true God and true man, with his body, with his blood, with his soul, with his divinity. Born, died, resurrected, glorified. This above all... Jesus Christ, already man, risen and glorified.*

*As the Gospel tells us today, when Jesus lived on earth, he embraced the children and said to the apostles: "Let the children come to me". At the Communion, it is not the children who come to Christ... it is Christ who goes to the children and enters their hearts. It is not the children who lean on the heart of Christ... It is Christ who lovingly rests in the hearts of the children.*

*You, dear children, surround the altar of God. Once again, the miracle of the Last Supper will be repeated. "This is my body..." and the bread will become the body of the Lord. "This is my blood..." And the wine will become the blood of God. When the priest lifts the consecrated host, say to Jesus with faith and trust, with love: "I believe, I am more certain than if I had seen it with my own eyes, that You are alive in the sacred host, that there is no bread in it, that it is You Yourself who sees me, who hears me, who waits for me. I am not worthy to receive You, for You are God Himself, who created heaven and earth, and I am a poor child who is worthless without You, and I upset You without ceasing". Speak to Jesus like this, open the doors of your soul to him.*

*You see, Jesus entered the original womb of His mother and made it the tabernacle of the Holy Spirit. He came into the house of Zacharias and sanctified St. John. He came into a stable at His birth and made it a paradise of angels. He went to Egypt, fleeing from Herod, and destroyed the idols. He entered the Jordan and sanctified its waters. He went into the desert to fast and turned it into a nursery of angels. He entered the house of Jairus and raised his daughter from the dead. He entered the house of Martha and Mary and made them his disciples. He entered the house of Zacchaeus and filled him with virtue. He entered the Upper Room and made it a tabernacle. He entered the garden and watered it with his blood. He entered the tomb and made it glorious. He entered limbo and transferred it to heaven. Joyfully open your hearts to him without blemish, for Jesus can and will surely do all these things with you.*

*And you, the happy parents of these children, remember that First Communion is not only a possession and a consecration of the child's soul by Jesus. It is also and above all a source of strength in the face of the struggles ahead. In the face of the scandals of the world, the invitations of the devil and the snares of the flesh. Your children are like the buds of roses that open to life and need special help to preserve their innocence and beauty. There are no better means than the Eucharist, which is the infinite innocence, the immaculate beauty of Christ.*

*The Eucharist is the first source of a holy life, of a pure life. Young people often complain that they cannot resist temptation. They let themselves be carried away by the flesh, they are captivated by shows and spectacles, they are subjugated by the pleasures of the world and by bad company.*

*They need graces, many graces from God, so that their souls can live. Let them go to the source, to the tabernacle, where the author of grace is. Let them eat often the purest flesh of Christ, and the bread of the Strong One will make them invincible to the enemy. The Eucharist is food, it is the bread of heaven, and the bread is there to be eaten, not displayed. The best fruit of your children's First Communion will be that they will never stop receiving Communion. Accompany them to the altar now, while they are still small, because the example of parents is the life or death of children. May they see in you an example of fidelity and mutual love, of love for Christ and for the Church, manifested in the fervor and frequency with which you receive the holy sacraments. Only in this way can your children be living grafts of Jesus that can be transplanted into the orchards of heaven.*

### **Golden Priestly Anniversary (1986)**

Father Erviti prepared all his celebrations carefully. He often wrote his homilies, especially those for important celebrations, and in the years when he perhaps already felt less sure of his memory<sup>25</sup>. He took as much time for this as was necessary. This was also the case when preparing for his golden jubilee as a priest. We take a few sentences from his sermon on that day:

*...Today the best prayer must be that of gratitude. Today is the day on which we sing of the Lord's mercy. Remember that gratitude is true love... It radiates from our hearts like the fragrance of a flower that opens its corolla at night. I, too, have no choice but to say: Thank you for everything, to God, the good Father; to my mother, the Pious Schols, who sheltered me on the banks of the Ega, in whose orchard my Piarist vocation, my love for Our Lady and my devotion to the saint of children, Joseph Calasanz, germinated. I thank the Lord for the vocation to the priestly apostolate... because he blessed me from the cradle with parents who loved home and Christian piety. Thank you for the countless benefits I have received through your kindness...*

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25 We have his diaries for the years 1955, 1963, 1971, 1972, 1974, 1978, 1980, 1981, 1983, 1984, 1986, 1988, 1989 (2), 1990 (2). The last ones are more extensive. He had more time to rewrite, and he copied in them previous writings, such as poems, homilies...

*For the celebrations with the children for the sacrament of joy and God's forgiveness. For the hundreds of children who were able to go to First Communion and offer Jesus the innocence of their hearts, which throbbed with love. Thanks for we carried the body of Christ to the dying and were able to raise his last, already glassy gaze to heaven. Thanks, above all, because I spent the most joyful years of my life in those blessed Pious Schools of Pamplona, discovering the treasure of their immortal souls behind those childlike eyes with their deep gaze and making them feel as if Jesus himself had appeared before them.*

*But since we are of brittle clay, and the Lord has immersed us in the sea of his mercy, barefoot like our Holy Father, pray with me that the tears of sincere contrition may purify our souls so that the Body and Blood of Christ may find fertile soil and become the seed of immortality. A prayer for our pious parents who, with the heroism of their austere example, prepared our souls for this beautiful feast. A remembrance for our companions in the school and in the houses of formation. The many who have already triumphed in Christ and the few who carry the cross of sickness or old age in this valley of tears...*



*In the photo, from left to right, Fr. Demetrio Díaz, Fr. Filomeno Mendioroz, Fr. Joaquín and Fr. José María Ciáurriz, Provincial, during the celebration of the Golden Anniversary of Priestly Ordination in the school chapel.*

*And as you kiss these hands that have so often been raised for forgiveness and grace, I will ask the Lord to send you the strength of the Father, the virtues of the Son and the love of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

And on this occasion, he wrote a beautiful sonnet, a sample of his spiritual and poetic fineness, at an age when his health was beginning to fail:

*Already fifty waterfalls of happiness / have fallen in the furrows of my life... / and fifty poppies in the wound / that the hand of God anointed with whiteness.*

*Blood of Christ that quenched my thirst / for the hungry and helpless childhood! / God's wrath by Christ transformed / into a source of light and tenderness!*

*Take, Lord, my heart that is anchored / In the blue sea of a thousand cherubs / That turned the earth into a heaven / Make it simple, virginal, cloudless; / Hide it piously on your side... / May I die while you ascend in glory!*

### ***Homilies of Father Joaquín***

Carefully handwritten in several notebooks, most of them typewritten, we have many homilies by Father Joaquín. His careful preparation is obvious. Father Joaquín did not improvise, he considered each celebration as something unique, sacred and precious. We will reproduce some of them so that we can recognize his thoughts and style. As part of the Christmas cycle, we read the following:

#### ***The Poverty of Mary.***

*As we contemplate the mystery of the birth of Jesus these days, one of the virtues that most amazes and confuses us is Mary's poverty. In today's Gospel episode, Mary, chosen by God, offers the gift of the poor. God chose poverty for his mother, and this is enough to understand the esteem in which God holds this virtue. We are speaking here of the poverty that is accepted and sought after, because the misery against which the powerless poor rebel is just as dangerous as wealth. That is why Solomon asked the Lord to deliver him from it.*

*Mary's poverty was completely voluntary. Mary, who knew of no wealth to absorb her attention, would probably*

*have seen an obstacle in anything that would have meant an improvement in her social position. She had to live detached from things in order to follow poor Jesus. An example for us. So that wealth or caprice or the business of the world do not cloud our minds. Only in poverty and detachment will we find peace, and in peace we will find God.*

*Christ, our Lord, died to give us life and suffered poverty to obtain for us the true riches of the Spirit. This is why Mary, our Co-Redemptrix, who is united to the cross on Golgotha, united her whole life to poverty. May we not lack the courage to renounce everything. May God reward those who sacrifice what is most precious to humanity with the highest reward of the elect. To some fishermen apostles and a carpenter Messiah correspond a poor mother. And if it was a great miracle that the world bowed its knees before one who was crucified, then it was also a great miracle that heaven and earth sang the praises of the one in whom God was so humble “because she was the humblest”.*

*Poverty springs from the innermost filial fear. And this fear subjects man entirely to God. And has there ever been a soul more submitted to God than Mary? Because Mary gave herself completely to God. Because Mary laid herself at God’s feet without seeking herself. She neither cared about her own well-being nor did she become hindered with riches. She became the mother of the poor.*

*Let us not be blinded by pride, honor and riches with their apparent fragrance. They should not even capture our attention. Mary spurned honors, just as she spurned the advantages that a more comfortable situation could bring her. Today, let us contemplate Mary in the poverty of the manger, in the holiness of the temple. And let us learn this difficult lesson of detachment. We must love and desire the goods of this world insofar as they can lead us to God. And it is so difficult and illusory that wealth can serve us! May those of us who have left everything to serve the Lord be encouraged not to turn back, and follow the example of Jesus and Mary.*

Let us now look at a sermon from the third Sunday after Pentecost (as it was called then):

*The whole history of salvation is the fruit of God’s mercy. That is why all the Holy Scripture is a hymn to this divine*

*mercy. And this hymn also resounds in the liturgy: "Praise the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever.*

*The feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is the feast of God's mercy, because, as the preface to this feast says, the Eternal Father wanted his "only begotten Son, hanging on the cross, to be pierced by the soldier's lance, so that his open heart, the treasure of divine generosity, be poured out on us in streams of mercy and grace and, because he never ceased to burn for our love, be a place of rest for pious souls and an open refuge for the penitent.*

*It is this mercy of God, offered to us in the heart of Christ, what we invoke again and again in today's liturgy: "Protector of those who hope in You... multiply your mercy upon us... and grant that in passing through temporal goods we may not lose our heavenly ones." "Cast your cares on the Lord, for he will protect you," says the apostle to comfort us. "You will not abandon those who seek you. The Lord is not deaf to the desperate cry of the unfortunate," we say at the offertory. And since the greatest misery of this life is sin, we fervently plead in the offertory: "Forgive me all my sins". And in response to this cry of anguish, the Church presents us in the Gospel the image of the merciful love, the image of the Good Shepherd who seeks the lost sheep among so many thousands of souls. It is because Christ comes to us without asking about our merits or virtues. He only looks for the wound of our soul in order to lay his redeeming hand on it.*

*And in the Gospel, we also find the woman who gives up the treasure of her coins to search for a single one that she has lost. How beautiful everything is! She only cares about the lost coin and gets tired searching for it. This woman is the bride of Christ, she is the Church, our mother. We, the redeemed, are her precious treasure, the bridal jewel of her head, which is Christ. And she seeks in us the one who is lost through sin. And she seeks in us the heavenly drachma, the divine life, the Holy Spirit, who has perhaps abandoned us because we have sinned, or whose radiance is at least dimmed.*

*All this is beautiful. Christ comes and does not ask for our wealth, but seeks the good that we have lost. This is what the Second Vatican Council ratified in the Constitution on the Church: "Christ was sent by the Father to evangelize the poor and raise up the oppressed, to seek and save what was lost.*

*In a similar way, the Church takes care of all those who are afflicted by human weakness. Moreover, she recognizes in the poor and suffering the image of her Founder, who was poor and patient, and strives to alleviate their needs and to serve Christ in them”.*

*So good is the heart of Jesus, patient and full of mercy! So great is the heart of our Mother, the Church! The love of God follows the sinner and calls him constantly. He invites him with the voice of repentance, he invites him with the voice of his good deeds, and also with the voice of punishment. When Jesus came to the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw a man possessed by an unclean spirit approaching him. As the Lord approached him, he cried out with a loud voice: “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me.” And Jesus commanded the demon to leave his prey by the power of his love. And the young man was freed from the demon. We always want to say to God, “Do not leave me in the tomb of my evil inclinations... do not stop tormenting me with repentance and with the calls of your mercy... It is never too late for me while I still have a breath of life. Make my soul a trophy of your goodness, another proof of your great mercy. Lord, do not listen to our cries of horror and passion. See that we do not know ourselves... that we do not know what we want. Do not stop calling us with the whistles of your love.*

*Now Christ offers himself to the Father and the Church offers his sacrifice for the lost to forgive us our sins. At the altar table we meet again, and Christ meets us again, no matter how far we may have strayed from the Lord’s flock in the past week. At Holy Mass, we are all given back the gift of the Holy Spirit that we had lost, or at least partially lost. Christ’s sacrifice has brought those of us who were divided to unity. Let us live in such a way that we appreciate all that is here below and that nothing separates us from the flock of the Good Shepherd. Fiat.*

Another beautiful sermon is the one he gives on the 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost. He says the following:

*All of us, religious included, have been discouraged by the experience of the difficulties we encounter in keeping the Rules or the Commandments. In the fervor of our devotion to*

*the Lord, when we receive communion or made our Profession, keeping the Constitutions or the commandments seemed easy to us. But in the moment of truth, what is easy becomes difficult for us... if being good consisted only in not sinning. What discourages and depresses us is that we have to do everything right. There are too many tasks. And so, we get discouraged and give up, we do not feel strong enough. That is why, dear brothers and sisters, it is important that we listen to the Word of God. In today's Gospel, when the Lord heals ten lepers, he emphasizes the attitude of one of them, the Samaritan... he, who feels healed, returns to thank Jesus. And he hears these comforting words: "Your faith has saved you". And this is exactly what St. Paul tells us in his letter to the Galatians, that "it is not the law or its fulfillment that saves us, but the promise of God. Faith in the promise of God. That is why the Lord liked to repeat here, as on many other occasions, "your faith has saved you". God is the one who will save us. He promised this to our first forefathers and his promise was passed on through Abraham and the patriarchs until it was fulfilled in Christ, in whom God saved us and freed us from the power and slavery of the devil. For salvation, heaven, is something so extraordinarily beyond our human desire that it is never earned by man's effort, but is generously granted by the infinite goodness of our Father.*

*However, in order not to fall into the Protestant error, we must not understand that we no longer have to worry about fulfilling the law, since it is God who saves us. It is true that we cannot put our trust in the fulfillment of our duty. We know from experience with what carelessness and coldness we fail to fulfill it. But the law plays an important role in our lives. It is the law that determines how we should behave so that our trust in God's promises is a genuine trust and not a vain gullibility. Hence the words of God: "Faith without works is dead".*

*The doctrinal core of this Sunday is this: rules, regulations, laws without faith are of very little value in Christianity. Christianity is not a set of laws that save us by themselves. "Life is not given to us by the law," says Paul in his letter today.*

*Christianity means that God freely saves us in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the Descendant of the Promise that God made to Abraham. It is faith in this descendant that leads us to salvation, not the cold fulfillment of the law.*

*Faith is just that: a surrender to the message of the gospel, the acceptance of God's free gift that conforms our lives to our Father's will. This can be seen today in the attitude of the Samaritan leper who expresses his gratitude to the one who healed him. He knew how to accept the free gift of healing. That is why he is justified. Our Christianity today is very fulfilling. The precept, the law, is more interesting as a dead standard to be fulfilled than as a response we must give to the favor, the grace we have received from God. That is why, my brothers and sisters, today's Gospel is great news for us. It is a message that dispels our fears and removes all our doubts. We are saved, not because salvation depends on us, but because salvation depends on God. And it is far better to feel that we are in God's hands than in the hands of men. Even better than being in our own hands, because we all know the difficulties we encounter in fulfilling our laws. Let us learn once again the lesson of confidence. To surrender ourselves like little children in the arms of our heavenly Father. "Unless you become like little children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven". "I can do all things in him who comforts me". "Cast your cares and worries on the Lord, and he will fill you with greatness and peace." "What do I care if I fall at every step?... so I recognize my weakness and profit greatly from it".*

*Will we celebrate the Eucharist with the attitude of the Jewish lepers, just to fulfill the commandment and believe that we are justified by it, or with the attitude of the Samaritan, as a response of thanksgiving for the great gift we have received from the Father? Let us once again be Samaritan lepers. Only with this attitude can we listen to Christ who tells us: "Go... your faith has saved you".*

Joachim's priesthood was mainly exercised, as we have already said, in the school. But he was also called from time to time, especially by his family, to celebrate some special events, such as weddings, baptisms... Let us look at what he said in a "wedding speech" that he may have given to other couples, and then on the occasion of the silver wedding anniversary of a couple, perhaps relatives or friends of his.

### ***Wedding speech (in Pamplona, October 13, 1974)***

*The life of each of us must always be a response to the call of God. In the conviction that only in this response will we find true happiness.*

*As you can see, you, Javier and Feli, and I have followed different paths, different vocations, and in these vocations our obligation is to always seek God's way, which is the way to our own happiness.*

*Man is insatiable for happiness. He always seeks it. And it is impossible that, when he seeks it with a simple and pure heart, he does not in turn encounter God, who, as St. John says, is love.*

*This response to God, which men have called everyone's vocation, manifests itself in different ways. But they all have one common element: love. To speak of love seems incredible, but it is difficult. Love is not a concept, it is something more, it is a reality. To love means to give oneself to others. Like the love of God, which is total dedication. From the love of God the Father for his Son, the Word, comes the Holy Spirit, the greatest mystery of our Christian religion... a mystery of love.*

*Jesus Christ said that there is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends, and he laid it down for all people: a mystery of love.*

*Your marriage is also a mystery of love. Because the initiative for your love does not come from you: God himself put it in you; God prepared the paths of your lives and made sure that you reach to know and love each other.*

*May your love, like that of Christ, be a self-giving without measure, a simple acceptance of the other, an embrace of crosses and joys.*

*For this reason, marriage is a sacrament that is equivalent to an encounter with God in the decisive moments of human life.*

*God comes to meet you today. God embraces you. From now on, God will make your love stronger. God will give you a great capacity for self-giving, for mutual understanding, for tender care for the needs of others, and will project your love into your children and into the lives of those around you.*

*God will give you the grace to suffer patiently and to be silent about each other's faults, to correct them with gentleness, to share your joys and sorrows with each other, to work together in communion.*

*Be, Javier, the educator of your wife and make of this conjugal spring a school of work and honor, so that your family*

*may spend in order, become accustomed to simplicity and be strangers to vanity and useless relationships. May you, Feli, be a mirror of honesty and sensual balance, the innocent caress of your husband, a sincere prayer that places God at the center of your life and your home.*

*May God bless you with your children, with those whom the Lord wants to give you, for this is the purpose of marriage, the prolongation of life. May you not let the source of life dry up.*

*The Church has spoken to us of responsible parenthood, which must not depend on whims, much less on selfishness, but on the good of the spouses themselves, of the children and of the Church of God. Conscious, responsible fatherhood and motherhood. This means sacrificed, offered, anointed with love and indescribable joy.*

*The help of the Lord, under whose gaze you must always surrender, must not be missing.*

*Together now at the banquet of the Eucharist, where your parents, brothers, uncles, aunts, and friends will accompany you with their prayers.*

*Then together in the house and in the Church of God.*

*Together in prayer, together in rest, together in the fulfillment of the law of the Lord, bearing each other's faults, going forward in service, in devotion, in love.*

*May Our Lady of El Puy bless you from the Starry Hill, and Our Lady of La Calva from the graceful dome of the Cathedral of Zamora.*

*May you now enjoy a honeymoon filled with the blessings of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.*

And this is the sermon on the occasion of a silver jubilee:

*It seems like yesterday, you will say, dear brothers. Twenty-five years ago, you heard the same words that the Lord spoke to Abraham and that we read in the first reading: "Go from your country and from your father's house to the land that I will show you", and you entered the church, accompanied by family and friends, on your way to the altar, where you met a priest and swore before him, as witnesses of Christ, those two admirable things that were to form the basis of your marital happiness for a quarter of a century: love and fidelity.*

*You were forever bound together by the bond of a sacrament that from then on only God could break. The priest, remember, asked for the blessing of heaven for you and your future family, which helped you to face day after day with courage and generosity the work involved in running the house on the one hand, and on the other hand to endure sacrificially and patiently all the trials and upheavals that the constant devotion of the mother of a family entails. And all this not occasionally, not sporadically, but over a period of 25 long years.*

*“Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever...” These words of the psalm flow into our hearts, just on the occasion of the joyous celebration of a silver jubilee of dear brothers and friends who, as now, enjoy the fullness of esteem, of peace, of interior happiness, of virtue, of piety, of charity, of full union, and above all exalted by the crown of glory, which are the children to whom they have devoted a constant and loving care, sparing no pains in their education and training, religious as well as intellectual and civil. How perfectly the words of Sirach fit this case, “God honors the father of children and confirms in them the judgment of the mother.”*

*Far be it from me to pretend that the following sentences sound like a hymn of praise to these two dear brothers. In the second reading, reference was made to two elderly couples, Zechariah and Elizabeth, of whom we read in the Gospel: “They were both righteous in the eyes of God, for they had always kept the way of the commandments and laws of the Lord. Similarly, in the years of your marriage, your domestic life has conformed in its entirety to this sentence, which is your greatest glory, nobility and happiness, for the nobility of faith and the glory of piety are the only lasting glory and nobility for every Christian.*

*We know very well that not everyone is offered a favorable opportunity to perform heroic deeds worthy to be recorded in the annals of history, but you must agree with me that there is no greater heroism than to submit day after day all the actions and habits of life to the divine commandments without wavering, and to make the laws and precepts of the Church the immutable rule of one’s home, to walk steadily in the way of justice and honor, to remain unalterably and on every occasion faithful to the cause of right and one’s own convictions in divine*

*and human matters, without weakening and without allowing oneself to be influenced by the crooked teachings and bad examples full of evasions that have become so fashionable, especially in these last times. And, what is worse, even with people in whom we had placed our trust. I do not wish to offend your modesty, but if this is the truth, and those present will confirm it. In your union there were, if not all, at least many of the positive conditions listed, which you were able to impose on your own existence and instill in your large family. That is indeed heroism.*

*Being a bit of a music lover, it will not surprise you that this phrase from the Book of Wisdom is etched in my memory: "As in the psaltery the strings are tuned so that their sound makes an unchanging harmony, so must all our powers be tuned to exercise righteousness and holiness". Let us admit that married life is a psaltery with five strings, and if we want the harmony of peace to emerge from them, all five must be well stretched and tuned to produce a perfect harmony: love and fidelity as the fruit and compendium of five consonant chords that should be enumerated as a moral lesson for all:*

- 1. The harmony of faith. If the husband is a practical believer, the wife should be as devout and pious as he is. A religious wife is always able to put her husband back on the right track when he has lost his way. A Christian mother of a family, supported by the goodness of the father, will receive the blessing of God upon her children and her home.*
- 2. Harmony of manners. If the wife conforms to her husband's manners, she will eventually win him to hers. She should not only be upright and holy, but also know how to unite her life with that of her husband and give him pleasure in everything that pleases him and is always in harmony with the law of God.*
- 3. The harmony of love. This must be the bond and the unbreakable knot of the soul in marriage. The wise wife should love no one more than her husband. What he loves will also be loved by her, and with this mutual love God lives in the midst of the family.*
- 4. Harmony of feelings. The sensible wife knows how to restrain too much joy in good times and too much sadness in bad times in her husband. With her kindness and gentle words, she will soften the sorrow and bad moments caused*

*by the own work and involuntary failures, which are due to our natural limitations more than anything else.*

5. *The harmony of peace. A prudent mother, who watches over total harmony inside and outside the home, ensures that all members of the household have one soul and one spirit, all under the prudent guidance of the Father.*

*Since this fivefold harmony has always prevailed in your married life, it will surprise no one that you offer those present here the good example of 25 years of happiness and peace. Peace and happiness that God has granted and reserved for Christian married couples as a foretaste of the peace and happiness He has in store for them in heaven.*

*So, place your ardent and tender hearts on this altar where Christ will offer himself for all present and especially for you. Sing together a song of gratitude for the benefits you have received over these long years, for the cross of your marriage and for the joys of love.*

Father Joaquín also celebrated some baptisms, probably of a family nature. He also carefully prepared what he wanted to say, thought about it and wrote it down. He took every opportunity to “catechize” the adults, because it was not a simple rite performed on a baby. As we will see in the words he spoke at a baptism in Grocin, near Estella.

### **Greeting.**

*I have come with joy to participate in this baptism, which is truly communal, even though it is the baptism of a single girl, because the prior preparation and the concrete performance have a truly ecclesial character, as the parish community of St. Michael de Grocin gathers in the awareness of its faith to joyfully welcome a new member into its bosom. All of us, united in one family, will envelop the little one with our affection, our prayers and above all with our Faith.*

### **Homily.**

*The Church is the sacrament of Christ, the sacrament of salvation. And as the sacrament that it is, the Church also administers the sacraments. And what are the sacraments? Magical acts? Superstitious things for ignorant people? Religious*

*customs, such as the habit of making the sign of the cross? Sacred things that impart holiness, just as food imparts its power to those who eat it?*

*Nothing of the sort. The sacraments are actions of Christ and the Church. God acts in salvation history through Christ, through his deeds, through his preaching, through his miracles. In the sacraments, the Lord is the main actor. In the sacraments we are given the life of Jesus Christ himself. The main sacraments are seven, but there is a whole complex world of visible actions of the Lord in his Church, for example what we are doing now. An assembly in the name of Jesus is a sacrament of Christ: "Where two or more are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them". The word church means assembly, and her most important moment is when she is gathered in an assembly convened by the Holy Spirit and over which Christ invisibly presides. For this reason, baptism is administered in the presence of the parish community.*

*Just as the sacrament not only has a visible face, but also an invisible reality, so when a person receives the sacrament from the outside, they need an interior attitude that responds to this external reality. And this interior attitude is Faith. Faith in the risen Christ and Savior, in whom we trust and in whom we believe. He sends us his Spirit to incorporate us into him and into the community of salvation that is the Church. That is why we say that the sacraments are signs of Faith. Faith leads to the sacraments and the sacraments require Faith.*

*So, what do we do with children? How can they receive baptism if they have no opportunity to express their Faith?*

*The Church has always baptized young children when asked, but on one condition: that their parents commit to raising them in the Christian Faith. This means that the parents must have the Faith. If the parents live this Faith, it is quite normal that they want to transmit it to their children at the beginning of their Christian life; just as they now transmit to them the human life that they possess, but which must be nurtured and nourished for many years so that it can reach full maturity in the newborn child. So now, through the sacrament of baptism, they are given the seed of faith, but this Faith must be nurtured for years until they will possess it through an attitude and a personal and free response.*

*This is also known as “responsible parenthood”. The Church is anxious to administer the sacrament because she wants to welcome children into the Christian family. But she wants this to happen in freedom and truth.*

*The freedom to ask or not to ask for baptism if the parents are not convinced of what it means; if they are not currently interested in being baptized or not; or in living as such.*

*And they do so truthfully before themselves, before their children and before the Church. They do not do to publicly manifest a Faith that they do not have inwardly. The Church does not demand that this Faith is perfect, but that there is one. The Church does not only want to involve parents in the future Christian education of their children, but she is prepared to help them with her catechetical schools. She does not put all the burden on the parents, but she insists that the first and fundamental educator of the faith is the parental home, not only with a doctrine, but with a testimony of life.*

*I know you want the best for your daughter, but you will not be able to give her everything at once. By giving her life, you must give her all rights from now on. Rights that will develop as the child needs them and as you are able to care for her.*

*You have heard the gospel. God loves all things, that’s why he creates and preserves them. But he loves you even more. God loves people even more, because he had decided that the Son of God would become a person like us. Our head, our leader, our elder brother. Connected to Jesus, like the vine to the branch, we are all children of God. The blood of God flows through our hearts; the life of God. Baptism is precisely the visible sign of this incorporation, of this becoming one mystical body with Christ, one body of Faith.*

*Today’s great celebration is only a beginning. We must continue to take care of the human and divine life of this child. God is counting on you for this task, and we are counting on God. Fiat.*

Joaquín also dedicated several sermons to St. Joseph Calasanz, the founder of the Piarists. We transcribe one of them here:

*Of St. Leonidas, the father of Origen, the great apologist of Carthage, it is said that he often approached the little room*

*where his little one was resting and, kissing his breast affectionately, said to him these ardent words, "I kiss on your breast the sublime tabernacle, the temple of God, purified with the blood of Jesus Christ." Words imbued with divine tenderness that would never have come from pagan peoples who would not have discovered in the weakness of the child the hidden pearl that only the goodness of our God could find at the cost of the greatest sacrifices. It was our Lord Jesus Christ who revealed to men the precious treasure of the innocent child.*

*In the centuries before Christianity, and even now among the pagans, the child was subjected to inhuman laws, despised, sold in the markets and killed for any reason. Criminals are punished with death," said Seneca, "with the same right with which rabid dogs and wild bulls are killed with one blow. With the same right with which monsters and children are drowned if they are born weak or deformed". That was paganism! Criminals and scoundrels were on an equal footing with poor, defenseless children. And this was prescribed in the laws of Solon and Lycurgus, the Law of the 12 Tables, the Forum Romanum, the laws of Greece and Rome. The most cultured peoples on earth. And even today the missionaries tell us that, wrapped in garbage and dung, little children's bodies are found to serve as food for the filthy pigs.*

*Our Lord Jesus had to come to glorify and bless the children and thus teach us the appreciation and respect they deserve. We remembered the scene from the Gospel in which Jesus blessed the children. These words also came from the mouth of Jesus: "Do not despise one of these little ones, for I tell you that their guardian angels always see the face of my Father in heaven. Woe to him who desecrates the children! It would be better for him if a millstone were tied to his neck and he were thrown into the sea". But here is the greatest proof of the esteem in which the Son of God held children: children embody or represent Jesus Christ. "Whoever welcomes a child for my sake welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me". And the Church, which emerged from the side of Christ, had the same feelings of love and tenderness for children as the loving Jesus. And she opened for them the school of catechumens, a nursery of religious instruction as well as of general culture. It is a pure merit of the Church to have opened the doors of the school to all. She has founded parish, monastery, cathedral, guild and even palace and court schools. She*

*has such eminent teachers and educators as Parthenus, the founder of the School of Alexandria, Didymus the Blind, who could read with his fingers using a method he invented himself, St. Augustine, who is considered the creator of Catholic pedagogy, St. Anselm, who wrote against the corporal punishment used by teachers of the time, and the pious Gerson, who enthusiastically wrote little works for children and had the consolation of dying in the company of the children of his school.*

*“Whoever welcomes children out of love for me welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me”. These were also the words that captured the heart of the saint of the children, Joseph Calasanz, for whose feast we prepare ourselves with devout prayers, songs of joy and fervent Eucharistic assemblies. Joseph Calasanz, an exalted figure of the Church and his country, who despised the glory of the world and the honors of the episcopate, found consolation and peace as he pondered the words of the Holy Books in the neglected quarters of Trastevere in Rome: “The poor child is entrusted to you, you will be the support of the orphan”. And for the children, for the beloved of Jesus, Joseph opened his Pious Schools, the first schools for the people to be opened in the world, where the poor and humble would learn to love God and strengthen their innocent souls with the bread of piety and letters. The Pious Schools, a beautiful name because it simultaneously embraces faith and charity, intelligence and heart, word and deed, compassion and love, man and God.*

*“The child,” says De Maistre, “is an angel who needs people”. This need was felt like no other in the soul of Joseph, who found in the bosom of the school the refuge for so many little angels who saw themselves alone in the murky streams of the world, waiting for a caress to fly from here below to the higher regions. And by sweeping his schools at night, preparing the sheets and cutting the feathers, begging from door to door to procure the necessary sustenance for his pious and ragged children, and above all, by teaching the youngest children the prayers of Christians and the sublime truths of our faith with the love of an apostle and the patience of a martyr, Joseph acquired that wealth of merit which earned him the gratitude of men in this world and the imperishable fame of the saints in the other.*

*Divine Providence has shown itself once again by sending to the earth the apostle of children, who left in the Pious*

*Schools the continuity of his work of love and charity. Do not be surprised that the author of “The Genius of Christianity”<sup>26</sup> praised the work of Joseph Calasanz thus: “The omniscient Benedictine, the Jesuit who knows the science of the world, the doctor of the university, probably deserve less of our gratitude than these religious men who have dedicated themselves to teaching the poor of Jesus Christ”. And it is that our saint, in opening his schools, only wanted to save the precious daisy that is in the poor abandoned child. The soul of the children! The magnet that drew a whole God from the palaces of heaven to the humility of the manger and the shame of the cross. Brothers, we must love the child as St. Joseph Calasanz loved him. Because he is a child, as the Gospel says.*

We transcribe further pages about Calasanz, possibly a sermon, without date<sup>27</sup>.

*A statesman went so far as to say that all people can be dragged with a silken thread, if at the end of that thread there is an interest for the merchant, a ray of glory for the military, a pittance for the poor, and for the rich the happy enjoyment of his wealth. Put at the end of this mysterious thread a soul to be saved, an intelligence to be taught, a heart to be chiseled, and you have the apostle of education. Put there a child to be educated (saved), and St. Joseph Calasanz will be there, wiping away the tears of sorrow, anchoring the pearl of knowledge in his mind, and lighting the living lamp of divine love in his heart.*



*Children, although they are the most angelic creatures, are endowed with a powerful imagination for all kinds of devil-*

26 François-René, viscount of Chateaubriand (Saint-Malo, 1768-Paris, 1848).

27 Box 345, notebook 2, Provincial Archives of Emmaus, Province of Vasconia.

*ry, and their cohabitation and upbringing constitute one of the heaviest burdens imaginable. That is why, although the child is such a heavy being, God has given him the immeasurable love of his parents, who are the only ones capable of carrying and educating him, when he enters this world. The immensity of parental love shows how great the weight of a child is. Only the one who has the heart of a father will be called to polish the pearl of his heart. Saint Paul, who knew the difficulty of finding true educators, wrote: "You will have ten thousand teachers and educators, but very few fathers". And Saint Joseph Calasanz is the saint of children, because in his long life of 92 years he was the Father of Childhood.*

*Will St. Matthew's text in today's Gospel stop us from calling Joseph Calasanz Father: "You shall call no one on earth your father, for you have only one true Father, the one in heaven"? Not at all. Rather, he gives us the key to his deep spiritual fatherhood of childhood. What the Lord wanted to tell us in this passage is simple: call God Father, for in him is true fatherhood. Call others only insofar as they share in it.*

*Let us rejoice in the marvelous unfolding of the fatherhood of God in the soul of the Saint of Educators, Joseph Calasanz. This fatherhood of God, which the little bird cradling its chicks and the pollen grains flying on the wings of the wind, share in the great heart of the saint of children, is an even more sublime fatherhood because it resembles the fatherhood of God. And the fatherly caress of the heart of Joseph Calasanz was a beat of that other heart that still blossoms in the pages of the Gospel: Jesus gazing with tender love on the little ones, giving them the honey of his affection as he embraces them and blesses them with transports of love. And the children running to Jesus, drawn by the gentle look of his eyes, by the smile on his face, by the sweet words of his honeyed lips: "Let the children come to me...".*

*And Joseph Calasanz opens for the children the Pious Schools, the first schools for the people opened in the world, where the poor and humble will learn to love God and strengthen their innocent souls with the bread of piety and letters. And Joseph Calasanz, the father of the children, wanted to live the life of the children so that the children would live the life of God. And how he lived the life of the children! Fifty years with the little ones! Until he had used up all his possessions. Until he could no longer put a morsel in his mouth. Until he spends nights*

*and nights without going to bed. Until he sits at the doors of the school as an old man, surrounded by them. Walking the streets with the children, even though he was General of the Order. He could have been a canon, a bishop or a cardinal... he just wanted to be a child.*

*His word was for the children, lovingly distributed in the conversations in the school that he reserved for himself. To them it was his beautiful handwriting: What a beautiful picture to see him in his old age, leafing through their notebooks and stamping in them a sentence revealing the greatness of God! For the children, his tireless waiting at the school gates or his impatient running after them on the street. For them, his arms, the warmth of a nest for the weak and timid. His arms able to lift tables and steer brooms. For them, his science and his talents, hidden in the dust of a school, to honor the teaching of the humble.*

*To hear them, he needed his ears, and even on his death-bed he took pleasure in listening to the children's explanations and the soft melodies of their innocent songs. To praise them and call them God's little angels, he needed his tongue, and any tactlessness less worthy of an angelic nature would have tasted like blasphemy. For the children, his best miracles, the reanimation of inert little bodies and youthful souls stifled by sin. To love them, and to love them vehemently, he gave them his whole heart.*

*If Joseph of Calasanz is such a father, if God is such a father, how wicked we are if we do not know how to live with God, with our souls are always clothed with grace, so that we may be worthy to bear with pride the glorious epithet of children of God.*

*Yes, my brothers and sisters, let us begin today to think and live Christianly. Let us remember that our Lord came for this and that this is the redemption of Jesus Christ: that we have life, and life in abundance. May the first grace we have received with tenderness and kisses through the faith and piety of our Christian parents grow and flourish and multiply, and may we be faithful religious in the eyes of God. Friends of prayer, in love with the school and detached from the comforts and friendships of the world.*

*Joseph Calasanz, Father of teachers, Father of the poor, Father above all of innocent children and pure youth. Father,*

*Father, Father. We always want to be your children. You are no longer with us and spend your nights in vigilance and your days in battle. From heaven you protect us. Hear our cry: Look, Joseph, at the world overflowing with materialism, flesh, frivolity and passions. Look, Joseph, at the youth who are beset by temptations. Help us, Father, with the impetus of your faith, with the light of your example, to heal the leprosy of our hearts. May your Spirit come upon us so that, as a mirror of purity and evangelical simplicity, we may follow in the footsteps of your light until death. Fiat.*

Consciously or unconsciously, Father Joaquín speaks of his own life when he speaks of the dedication of Calasanz to the little ones. No doubt he wanted to be as similar to him as possible. And he succeeded to a large extent.

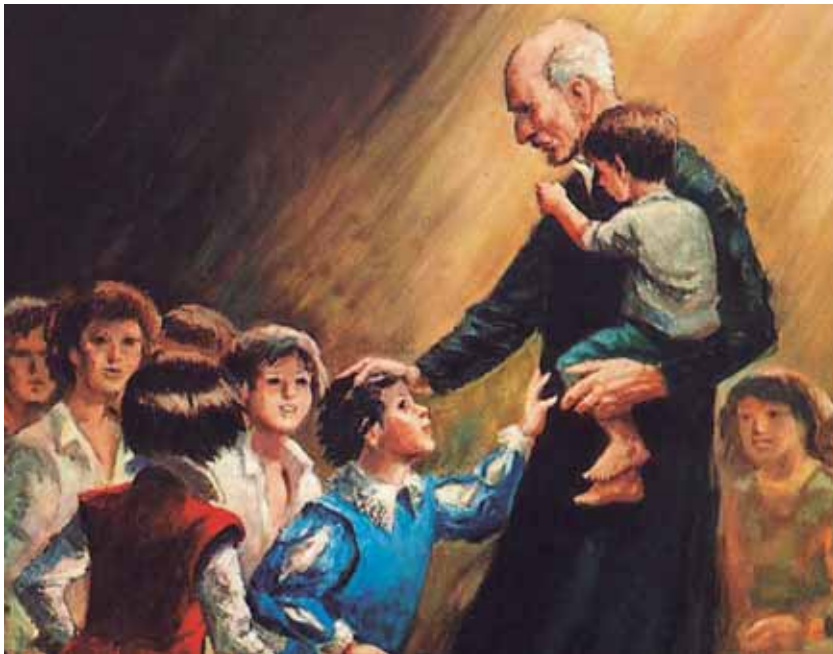
Father Joaquín not only preached sermons on Calasanz. He was also requested for radio interventions. We transcribe one that was broadcast on November 26, 1948 in Tolosa and later on November 27, 1956 in Pamplona, Radio Requeté, adapted and slightly modified. In the first case on the occasion of the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Calasanz's death, in the second on the occasion of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth. It is perhaps one of the most beautiful syntheses of Calasanz's life.

*Dear listeners, before we begin this broadcast in honor of the Father of Childhood, St. Joseph Calasanz, it is only fair that we take a few minutes to put together a few snippets from his nearly century-long life.*

*Who was Joseph Calasanz? Some people may be familiar with him. There will be those who heard about him in their childhood and retain a vague memory of him now that the first gray hairs are appearing on their heads. But there will also be those who have never heard the echo of such a name in the course of their lives. Let me tell you in a few words: a madman for the world and a saint for the Church.*

*A madman, because as the son of nobles, descendant of warriors and almogávares, through whose veins the blood of ancient conquerors flowed, he showed no sign of possessing any of it in his 92 years of life. A madman because he did not want to add to the glory of his ancestors with warlike deeds. A mad-*

*man because he rejected the splendor of arms, the promises of ambition, the glory of the captains of Flanders and the gold of the conquerors of America. A madman because he knew how to make a denial to free and unbridled love. A madman because he could have been rich, but he became poor. He is honored today with the deserved and just name of Universal Patron Saint of the Popular School, if you look at him through the material prism.*



*But let us now see him through the Catholic lens, under the powerful lens of history, and we will see that the illustrious Aragonese deserves the honorable title of saint. Let us leave aside the cathedra of Rome, which includes him in its catalog of heroes, and follow in the footsteps of his life. We will see a tall, strong, athletic man, with a broad back, a steely body, blond and luxuriant hair, sailing across the seas on one of those icy days, sad days of winter, when nature appears covered with white snow and the trees, stripped of their leaves, present their skeletal form and the rivers freeze under the cold breath of the winds that kiss the surface of the globe.*

*It was a January sunset. The city of Barcelona, shrouded in a thin gauze, a mixture of smoke and clouds, watches a ship leave the harbor. Those who remain ashore bid farewell to the tourist who leaves home to increase the arsenal of his knowledge; the soldier who leaves home to join the army; the laborer who seeks to enrich himself in distant lands; the missionary who leaves house, home, family to win souls for Christ. The merchant who strives for wealth, for those pieces of coin that pass through sweaty and bloodstained hands every day and leave again, those round and tough printed pieces of the mints that everyone covets, seeks, steals, envies, loves more than love and even than life. All these and many others, as they leave their homes, can be seen by the curious wanderer walking along the shore of the port of Barcelona at this time of day on an afternoon in 1592. The ship is barely visible. Tears like pearls fall from the eyes of the mother, the wife, the sister, the bride. Tears that remain hidden between the folds of a perfumed handkerchief or between the enraptured fingers of loving hands. And there on the ship, nostalgia, sadness, muffled sobs, apparent smiles and... a cheerful face. A tall, lanky young man with a broad, clear forehead, slanted eyes and a strong body covered in a priest's robe. He is not a foreigner, he is a full-grown Spaniard, from the top of his head to the soles of his feet.*

*Where is he going and what is the destination of his journey? For days he has heard an inner voice telling him: Joseph, go to Rome.*

*Why? He still does not know. Subject to the divine will in everything, he has given up his rich inheritance. He has renounced honorary posts, and here we have him as a penitent saying farewell to his homeland and setting off for the capital of the Catholic world.*

*He arrives in Noli - today a deserted beach - and the port of Civitavecchia is presented to him as the end of his journey. But he still has leagues to go, and then the penitent exchanges his clothes for the rough pilgrim's garb to enter the thousand-year-old city of Rome.*

*As a stranger and pilgrim, he walks through the cobbled streets of the city of the popes; he lies reverently at the feet of the Prince of the Apostles; he visits the seven basilicas of Rome and flees from the worldly noise in order to remain untouched in the cosmopolitan city.*

*The sick, the afflicted, the ashamed find in him a comfort, a help, a father, a pious and merciful heart. He knows neither weariness nor the inclemency of the weather. Everything seems insignificant to him. He feels the living flame of love rising in his breast, and like another Samuel he cries out: Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.*

*It was a fall day. When all nature seems to assume that air of gentle sadness which is characteristic of all good things that come to an end; when in the veins of the earth freezes the crystalline blood that irrigates the vast fields; when the flowers of the gardens wither their petals; and when the soul is flooded with a certain melancholic feeling; and when it finds secret analogies between these scenes of nature and those of human life. Then the paradox arises. The city of the Caesars - the center of the Catholic world - sees, amidst the perfumes of incense and the vapors of sacristy, a tree sprouting, in whose shade - like weary birds - a cloud of helpless children, orphans of all piety and all instruction, seek refuge.*

*The penitent who sailed the seas years before to follow the will of God, the pilgrim who had penetrated the catacombs to hear the voice of God better, has now become a lover of children. He gives himself body and soul for them. He lives and works for them. And he spends the hours of the day and night thinking, working and praying for them. Their joy is to be among them and to live with them.*

*Crowds of small children crowd the streets, shouting, fighting and blaspheming. Some have mocked him. But Calasanz wants revenge by opening schools for them. The words of the divine master: "Let the children come to me" have reached his ears, and his heart was torn by sorrow and pain when he saw that the children were asking for bread and there was no one to break it for them.*

*He renounces miters and cardinal's hats to remain shrouded in the dust of a school. He is not attracted by worldly fame. All his work consists of going into the depths and winning the souls of innocent children for Christ. He was rightly called Christ's co-worker in spreading the truth. And consequently, with divine help, he searched for the appropriate means that would make us suitable co-workers of the truth. He worked tirelessly, day and night, for the children who were his inheritance*

*and became the organizer of popular education. It is true that he did not write or leave books for posterity, but he produced standards when circumstances presented themselves. What was the basis for these schools? The name he gave them is very clear: Pious Schools. His motto was none other than For the Greater Increase of Piety.*

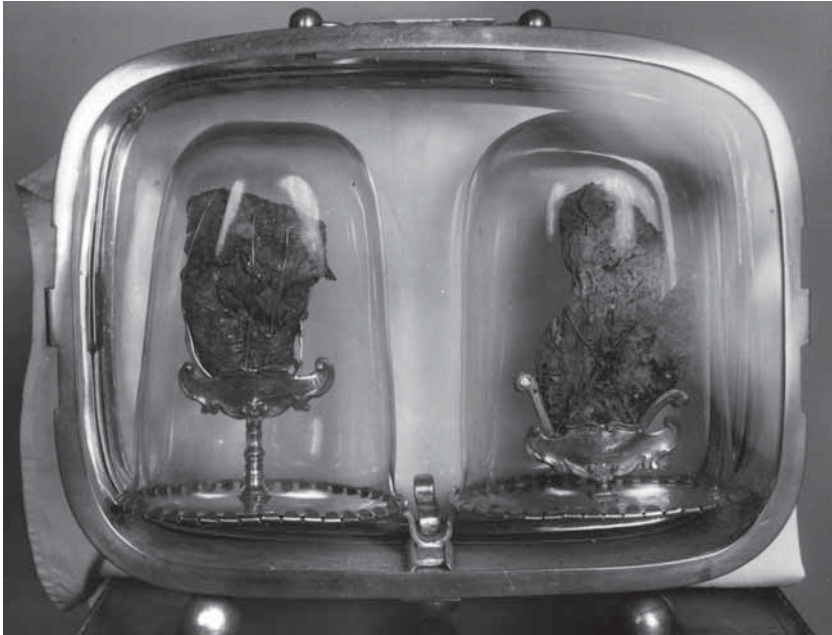
*Piety and letters! These are the two strong pillars of a solid education. That is why these schools could not fail. Their foundations were embedded in the solid cement of piety, and so their walls remained unshaken and unimpressed by the hurricane-like fluctuations of persecution. Thus, the tree that sprouted in the sacristy of a church was later able to shelter under its branches a vast host of children scattered across the European continent, and then, sailed the seas to take root in the New World.*

*And it was Germany, Hungary and Poland that opened their doors and borders to the new institution. And although the devastating lightning of slander, of envy, came to suppress such a worthy Order with a stroke of the pen, Calasanz did not lose heart because of it. On the contrary, he exclaimed with the Job of the old Law: The Lord has given it to me, the Lord has taken it from me; blessed be the name of the Lord.*

*And his prophetic vision was more powerful than the calumnies, because ten years later the Pious Schools revived, the fame and innocence of the Founder were consolidated and his work, based on the phrase "Love and do what you will", once again broke through the barriers and in the fall of 1683, Spain gave entrance to the great work of Calasanz.*

*It is true that Joseph could not see with his physical eyes how his schools returned to the land where he was born. God had already called him into the ranks of the elect at that time. Spain was therefore unable to see the gaunt face, marked by the patina of time and the constant suffering of this penitent, this pilgrim, this priest who had said goodbye to it on a winter's day in the port of Barcelona.*

*But now, after three centuries in which the world has been without such an illustrious figure, Spain has the joy of receiving his visit. And if he left us then as a humble stranger, today he comes to his homeland enveloped in a trace of sanctity that no one can take away from him.*



*The course of Calasanz' life, which took shape in the sands of the port of Barcelona, finds its apex in historic Rome, where, after forging heroes, it turns its other end towards its homeland. And it is in the same city that the Tongue and the Heart of Calasanz begin their triumphant journey through Spain. For these two relics will walk the streets of our homeland in this same year. The same villages, the same towns, the same mountains, the same roads that three centuries ago knew the priest who was so faithful to them, will see this tongue that moved only to teach them true science, this heart that beat only to love the goodness.*

*And they will see it as fresh and uncorrupted as it was 300 years ago. They have returned to speak to us once again and also to show us the selfless love he had for humanity. And when you, listeners, have the opportunity to venerate these two relics, after listening to his voice, after learning to love as he loved, after meditating on whatever they have taught you, after deepening the scope of this miracle of incorruption, and after remembering that in the tomb even the bones*

*are calcined, then answer me: was Calasanz a madman or a saint?*

*Listener, whoever you are, intellectual, spiritualist, materialist, wait a few days and then... answer.*

Finally, to finish with Calasanz, a short collaboration by him for a magazine, half article, half prayer:

*A voice from heaven, Joseph Calasanz, directed your gaze, lost in the infinite of deep meditations in the streets of Rome, to the children.*

*-Look, Joseph, look! said the voice.*

*And your whole life was inflamed with love for these poor people.*

*And the Pious School became a model for the Christian school.*

*In our world today, there are no children who are separated from the letters by class prejudice. They all have classrooms where they can learn piety with letters.*

*You are no longer among us, José de Calasanz, to spend your nights waking and your days fighting.*

*There are already children, Joseph Calasanz, who are following in your footsteps, and many generations are blessing the Calasanzian spirit, and great men in knowledge and great Christians in life have emerged from the classrooms of the Pious Schools.*

*But now, Joseph Calasanz, as we venerate your heart and tongue, uncorrupted by the divine will, as God tells us through these relics that you still speak to us, that you still beat with our troubles, let us say to you on our knees:*

*Hear our cry from heaven, from where you protect us. Look Joseph, look...! The ways of today's world, flooded with materialism, flesh, passions, frivolity. Look, Joseph, at the youth who are beset by temptations! Help us, Calasanz, with the impetus of your faith, with the light of your spirit, with the power of the thaumaturges, to heal the leprosy of hearts and souls.*

*We have no other weapon than prayer. That is why we pray to you, Father...*

*That is why we prostrate ourselves every day at the feet of your image and raise our hearts to heaven, and we sing to the Queen of the Pious Schools, praying for our children of today the prayers and antiphons and psalms of the Parvum Office...*

*Therefore, we ask you, Joseph Calasanz, on the occasion of the Centenary, that your apostolic spirit may come to us, so that we may be a weapon of purification, a fire of love, so that the young people who already receive piety and letters in the classrooms may, through your help and our poor effort, have the courage to overcome temptation, to be the vanguard of Christianity...*

*Bless, Joseph of Calasanz, Holy Founder of the Pious School, your work, which is spread under various names throughout the world.*

*Bless us who teach.*

*Bless those who learn.*

*Bless those who live with us and all those who care for the humble children, giving them the bread of the body, the bread of the letter, the bread of the soul.*

*Bless, Joseph of Calasanz, in a very special way our Church, which cares for the future of our youth.*

*Bless the prelates, the religious congregations and the families.*

*Hear from heaven, Joseph of Calasanz, our cry. Hear that we implore you and show you the youth of today so that you may help us.*

*Look, Joseph, look...!*

*We, with our weak strength, with our weaknesses, will follow in the footsteps of your light.*

*But do not forget, Joseph of Calasanz, that we pray to you for the youth of today.*

*That from the earth, which is full of vices, sins and misery, we look up to heaven and speak to you in prayer and supplication:*

*Look, Joseph, look!*

Father Joaquín had a special devotion to Our Lady of El Puy, the patron saint of his town of Estella. We are copying one of his sermons in her honor:

### **To Our Lady**

*Holy Mary of El Puy! Lady of our homes, patroness of our feasts, queen of our hearts, arm of our warriors, mirror of our virgins, lullaby of our little ones.*

*On this joyous day of apparitions, we come once again to take refuge in the loving embrace of your maternal heart. We come to thank you for the visit to those innocent little shepherds who watched over their flocks and contemplated the magic of your beauty amidst the kisses of the stars. We come above all to offer you the pearl of our heart, with the same illusion with which we offered it on the happy hill on the white day of our First Communion.*

*For I have no intention of singing the praises of the beauty and perfection of Mary of El Puy at this moment. I do not feel able to do so. To speak of Mary, the special creature who is in herself greater than all creation, when man is not worthy to touch her white robe, when the earth is not worthy to serve as her pedestal! Her whiteness surpasses even the snow that settles on the mountains; her splendor surpasses the splendor of the sky; her splendor surpasses the splendor of the stars...*

*Mary, loved by God, honored by men, served by angels... The Father calls her daughter, and sends messengers to her! The Son calls her Mother, and settles in her holy womb! The Holy Spirit calls her Bride, and enfolds her with his wings! ... Of Mary, who was born without blemish, who saved the world, who died without pain, who lived without sin ... The seraphs form her court! The heaven calls her Queen! We humans call her Mother, Mother of Mercy!...*

*But I have no intention, I said, of singing the beauties of Mary. I have only come to ask you, her devotees, a favor: that you, who are proud to have Our Lady, the Virgin of El Puy, as your mother, praise and honor God by offering him the purity of your body and soul every day...*

*He was almost a child. He will have been no older than 13. He had just finished the communion and was reading his favorite prayers to thank God. In the book he carried a prayer card of the Blessed Virgin. From time to time, he would look at it with love and say a prayer. Then he would take it in his hand and kiss it with affection. But the prayer card was so dirty that the spiritual*

*father, who was standing behind him, asked him as he was leaving: "Don't you have a better prayer card of Our Lady? And the boy replied: "I have many pictures of Our Lady, but none like this one. And when the Father marveled at this, he added: "This little card was given to me by my mother on the day of my First Communion. I consecrated myself to her love on that great day, and since then I have renewed my consecration to her every day and kissed her. That's why it is so, so dirty. But I would not change it for anything in this world. The prayer card is very dirty, but my soul preserves the whiteness of my First Communion..."*

*The example of this young man, who still retains the fragrance of piety and openness, should lead us to consecrate our bodies and souls to our heavenly Mother every day. Don't you still have the prayer card of Our Lady of El Puy that was given to us as a reminder of our consecration to her on the day of our First Communion?*

*Brother, you go through life with your soul full of illusions and your heart full of sparks of love. Your heavenly Mother, Mary, asks you to give her the most beautiful flowers of your garden. Will you refuse them to your Mother, who has protected you so much, who has forgiven you so much? Offer Our Lady the sublime beauty of the garden of your soul in blooming spiritual blossom. From now on, offer her daily Mass, participated with greater fervor; Communion at least once a week, which you receive with the openness of an angel; a behavior that becomes more and more worthy of the gaze of God, the love of your parents, the affection of your brothers and sisters and friends. Offer all this to Mary. She deserves all this and much more.*

*See that she is also your mother. And if perhaps you feel that your heart is freezing, that the flowers in your garden are withering, that you find it difficult to be good because of this friend who captivates and corrupts you, because of this spectacle that subjugates you, then knock at the doors of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and offer her, even if it costs you a lot and makes you bleed, the sacrifice of all these things, in a sacrifice of total abandonment. Is not that what you say to Our Lady every day when you offer her your works: "I give you my eyes, my ears, my tongue, my heart"?"*

*Surely you have read the episode of the Yankee soldier who risked his life by throwing himself into the sea and passing as a defector in order to save a blouse containing the portrait of his mother. In your soul you carry the image of your mother, Our Lady of El Puy.*

*Will you know how to sacrifice yourself for her, like a sailor for his mother's portrait? Will you dare to defile your soul and desecrate the image of Our Lady who weeps for you with the pain of a mother?*

*People of Estella, as the fruit of this homage of affection that you offer to Our Lady of El Puy, do not miss a single day to consecrate yourselves to our Queen.*

*Give her your heart so that she may embrace it with the love of Jesus. Give her your tongue so that she will not defile it with words of slander and impurity. Give her your eyes, so that they may not be stained by unworthy spectacles or corrupt reading. Give yourself completely to Mary.*

*Our Lady will remember you when the black storm envelops the whiteness of your soul. Will you not crown Our Lady every day with the pearls of your hearts burning with love?*

*On the hill you were crowned  
by blonde lads with ivy necklaces;  
crowned by the pilgrim star  
caressing cistus and brambles.  
The stone crowned you, pure lace,  
in arcades of incense and barcarolle;  
the rose and the poppy crowned you,  
the nightingale, the fountain and the grove.  
With wreaths of arms and handkerchiefs  
the young men wove your crown,  
by the laughter of the bagpipes that capture  
hearts and lilies in their flights.  
You were crowned with a bouquet of wallflowers,  
snow and crimson of a Friday of giants;  
silk and diamonds crowned you,  
cataract of sun among rubies.  
Virgin Del Puy, mistress of flowers,  
maiden betrothed to the stars,  
Estella looks at you today,  
and on your forehead their love flows  
and crowns you, Immaculate Queen<sup>28</sup>.*

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28 It is a poem on the occasion of the canonical coronation of Our Lady of Le Puy on May 19, 1958.

*Father Theodore Iriarte, the singer of Our Lady of El Puy, marked by years, work, and illness, asks me from his bed of pain to speak to you in his name and of Our Lady, and to ask you for a prayer. And I cannot refuse. The one who made the best poem of his life for our mother deserves everything.*

We said above that a replica of Our Lady of El Puy de Estella was placed in Pamplona school in 1956. On May 25, 1972, Father Joaquín gave a beautiful homily, which we reproduce here<sup>29</sup>:

*Sixteen years have passed, Holy Mary of El Puy, since we received you in this church with tears of emotion. Since we opened the doors of our poor but loving hearts to you forever. It is true that you do not feel here the scent of rosemary and thyme embalming your hill of El Puy. But day after day, the scent of the lilies of hundreds of children, goblets from the garden of Calasanz, rises up to you. And in the protective shadow of your image, our boys learn to fight the battles of their youth bravely. And in the shadow of your blessed image, all of us who have been torn from our small homeland and from your maternal womb feel more united and as if we were in our own home.*

*And since 1956, when the silvery voice of a 7-year-old child greeted you ("Little Virgin of Estella, / today the sky is here, / we were missing a star, / and the most beautiful one was born / in the Easter of ruby"), an inextinguishable lamp always burns before your blessed image: the immeasurable affection of the colony of Estella and its district, will not be lacking because you deserve it as Mother, as Queen, and as ours.*

*On the threshold of the month of May, the month of our Mother of El Puy, we will reaffirm our attachment and devotion to Mary. It is precisely the time when the frightened spirits seem to fear to corner Jesus in the sanctuary of their souls because of their passionate devotion to Mary.*

*The true lover of Jesus knows that he will do Him no harm if he always proves to be a true lover of Mary. And he is proud to live spontaneously in Mary's company because he remembers her and loves her. To feel that Mary sees us and contemplates our triumphs and our failures, our victories and our sins. To be aware*

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29 Notebook 6, box 345, Provincial Archives of Emmaus, Province of Vasconia.

*of her concern for us; of her maternal love, which is far greater than that of all the mothers on earth put together; of her power to protect us; of her goodness to give us only what is good for us.*

*What else did the saints teach us, especially those who loved God the most and who made devotion to the Blessed Mother the best springboard to climb the heights of holiness?*

*It will be St. Joseph Calasanz, who defended his children with the emblem “Mary, Mother of God” and gave them the daily recitation of the rosary as a testament. Or St. John Eudes, who kissed Mary’s medal at every step. It would be St. Leonard of Port Mauritius, who wore a large medallion on his chest and pressed it to his heart at every moment, in living dialog with Mary. It would be St. Vincent de Paul, who wore his rosary on his hip with the same intention. Or the holy priest of Ars, who had a statue of Mary before his eyes as he worked.*

*It is true that all these practices of Marian devotion would mean nothing if they did not spring from a sincere love of God, a desire to revive the memory and virtues of Mary. But let us not blame the materialism that overwhelms us on the most humble and innocent being, on Mary, who, after Christ, most deserves the gift of our sincere feelings.*

*Let us remain steadfast in our constant and trusting devotion to the Blessed Mother. Let us call her by the nickname of Mother of El Puy, a name that recalls the white dawn of our childhood. Let us offer her the rosary, the three Hail Mary and the month of May, which is dedicated to her memory. Let our behavior become the praise of our Mother and the honor and glory of Our Lord, to whom we finally come with our devotion to Our Lady.*

*Like the young Dutchman who, badly wounded in the war, died with the medal of Our Lady on his chest. In his knapsack was found a letter addressed to his mother in which he told her: “For your consolation and because I may not be able to see you again in this life, I would like to let you know, my mother, that with the help of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist and the protection of Mary Immaculate, I have always kept my conscience clear. I cannot remember having missing any commandment of the Decalogue. Farewell, I will remember you in heaven”. Is it not true that we are envious of these souls who are so pure and so good-composed? Souls who know how to draw from this inexhaustible source of strength that is Mary.*

*We must all make Mary the center of our lives... because devotion to the Blessed Mother is not an ornament or a poem of Christianity, but an integral part of it. Mary is above devotional songs, above lights, above flowers, above Romanesque, Gothic and modern art, above discourses. Mary is the Mother of God, and her throne is up in heaven, above the court of angels. She is the daughter of the Father, the mother of the Son, the spouse of the Holy Spirit. Mary is also the mother of all people.*

*So let us live as her true children... let us go to her at all times and entrust to her our joy, sorrow, purity, struggles, work, entertainment, love, emptiness, fear and anguish. Let us make of our lives a divine novel (Raymond). A novel that ends well... in which at the end, when we see Christ coming to judge us, we also see our mother, who is his, and intercedes for us.*

*May our inner life be reflected in the way we act, in our manners, in our language, in our clothes... with naturalness, with modesty, with humility, with simplicity. The simplicity of Our Lady.*

*Holy Mary of El Puy! Mistress of our homes... Patroness of our feasts... Queen of our hearts... Mirror of our maidens... Lullaby for our little ones! On this joyful day of the apparition<sup>30</sup>, we want to thank You for the visit to the little shepherds who watched over their flocks... we want to take refuge once again in Your maternal bosom... we want above all to offer You the pearl of our hearts, with the illusion of the white day of our First Communion. Preserve us until death, without the mud of sin splashing on the whiteness of our souls.*

*May we be like the raindrops, blended of heaven, gliding on the leaves without clinging to them, without gathering dust. Make us like you, Mary.*

*Loving Mother, / Glory of the sad, / Love of the miserable, / Seed of good, / Divine Virgin, / Jasmine of the snow, / Star of the seas, / Beacon of the dawn / Morning star, / Life... Sweetness... our hope.*

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30 A legend tells that in 1085, shortly before the creation of the new city of Estella, some shepherds from Abárzuza went to a high point attracted by the stars and there they found an image of the Virgin and Child in a cave. It was called Our Lady of El Puy, because it was found on a hill, in the likeness of a very venerated invocation in France: Nôtre Dame du Puy, from Le Puy-en-Velay. King Sancho Ramírez had a hermitage built in her honor. (Wikipedia, 18.3.2023).



## **Joaquín Erviti, teacher**

Inside the Order, Father Joaquín is venerated as a special religious, a saint. And as a poet. For those who enjoyed his priestly gifts, as a holy priest. But those who were his students (and there were several thousand of them during the fifty years of his ministry) considered him not only a saint, but also a very gifted teacher who was unique, especially when teaching the youngest. As a Piarist, it was the school where he cultivated his vocation that made him grow as a person and as a religious. And he was an active teacher who wanted to perfect his pedagogy with the best of his intuition and the available resources.

Unlike most Piarists, he was able to spend almost his entire teaching life in one and the same class, in one and the same school. And that was no reason for him to be bored, which is a result of routine, but a constant incentive: the children were different every year. He took materials from his wealth of experience and added new ones in order to lead successive generations to the desired human and Christian maturity. We can say, without doubt, that Father Joaquín was a great teacher in the truest sense of the word, and the children who got to know him at a very early age understood this.

### ***A day at school***

The life of a teacher (or a student) can seem very monotonous: the same thing every day, year after year... But it can also be a succession of special moments that make time pass without us realizing it, building the person up step by step, with each lesson, each song, each prayer. Let us listen to what several witnesses have to say about Father Joaquín's school work.



Father Miguel Lezáun, his companion in the community for 22 years:

*Father Joaquín arrived before classes began. He helped the children take off their coats and hang them on. He had at least fifty students. There was only one kindergarten class and it was always full. There were cases when some parents brought their children to the kindergarten to be taught by Father Joaquín and then took them to another school. They started the lessons with a prayer. In the classroom there was a small altar with Our Lady and a small kneeler. The Virgin was the one of the Pious Schools. Father Joaquín was very good at drawing. He began the lessons by explaining religious things to them according to the liturgical season. After, he went to the primer. Every day he interrogated them all. After the break, the first thing he did was let them rest for 8 or 10 minutes, telling them: Let us go to sleep! That would get them to calm down. Then he would give them the topic he wanted to talk about. He would talk to them about everything: history, social studies, geography... He would draw them a map of Navarre and show them the different cities. At the end of the day, he accompanied home the children through the different*

*streets. At their age, he took her umbrella and hat and walked the children home twice a day, at lunchtime and after school in the afternoon. When the children went home, they kissed Father Joaquín's hand, while to other Fathers they did not. Father Joaquín had to clean the children on many occasions because, as I said, they were still very young. He did not ask for help, but did it with humility.*

A student of his, Fernando Español, later a teacher at the school and author of a manuscript entitled "*Father Joaquín Erviti. Example of Piarist priest*", writes about his teaching method:

*'What a kindergarten teacher! What a pedagogue! The Lord had prepared a special mold for him and did not want there to be "reps".*

*With what naturalness he introduced reading and writing, making them progress according to the greater or lesser personal eagerness of his little angels!*

*If the "letters" went beyond his particular writing (those who have kept them will agree with me), he lagged no less in "piety".*

*The secret of the assimilation by the children, I repeat in writing, was that he accompanied the spelling of each letter drawn on the grid of his blackboard with its name, thus penetrating simultaneously through the eyes and the ears (...).*

*But he did not confine himself to teaching them to read and write, first on gridded sheets of paper, and then to write his original dictations and phrases of varying cognitive and penetrating content in these virginal intelligences of his lily garden.*

*It was interesting to see them kneeling spontaneously on the kneeler placed in front of the carved image, done with the heart by the unforgettable sculptor Eduardo Carretero.*

*Father Joaquín did not limit himself teaching his children to read and write, but perfected both with the ease with which he knew how to master the difficulties. He seemed to penetrate the self of each child.*

*At the appropriate time, he would show them the places and names of the towns on the map of Navarre that he had drawn on his blessed blackboard or on the tarpaulin that he*

*had previously prepared with suitable paint. The most important cities of the ancient kingdom, the mountains from which they could glimpse the horizon of the greatness of their blessed land, and the rivers that descended from the impressive heights to enrich the fertile lands of the Ribera.*

*They learned and repeated everything at home, to the admiration of those who did not know him, and to the confirmation of his faith in those who had given him their children because they had passed through his class before. They reached to repeat the squares of the first 10 numbers, as well as small additions and subtractions; and he paid no attention, because he knew he was doing his duty!*

*What drawings the chalk traced in the artist's hands! Not a single line was missing or had been overlooked. He held the outstretched right hand of his little ones and drew the sign of the cross on their foreheads, mouths and chests. Starting from the simplest prayers, he sublimated them in the declamation of simple poems, going through that one of "Doña Pitu, Piturra..."; etc. It was not surprising when the little kindergarten children said with the greatest naturalness: "Father Joaquín knows everything". As for the image they had of him, there were those who thought he was an angel and those who thought he was a saint. I accepted both.*

Another of his pupils, Pedro Lozano Bartolozzi, says about him:

*He had a tremendous ability to teach through play. This devotion to the children could give the false impression of a certain childishness, but for me that impression was unfounded, because he had a great inner richness. Father Joaquín knew how to put himself in the children's world, and perhaps that has diminished the image that some people have of him. Father Joaquín continued to develop in his teaching methods; he had great intellectual maturity.*

Father Joaquín was very meticulous in the preparation of his courses and classes. We can see this in one of his notebooks (1975-76), in which he wrote down the religious program entrusted to him for the first years of elementary school, with the objectives (general and specific), content, experiences and attitudes to be achieved. He writes down the topics, with some indications, for the succes-

sive weeks of the course. She does the same with the kindergarten course, although she is no longer directly involved with them. She gives the objectives and content for language and math. In the same notebook, she copies some of M. Teresa Zaratain's reflections in her work *Psicopedagogía religiosa diferencial*. We can see that he is interested in continuing his training as a teacher, with the theory of other authors strengthening his own practice.

In one of his notebooks<sup>31</sup> we find a conference on education, which we reproduce here because it reflects Father Joaquín's thinking very well:

*The theme of this simple talk is summarized in the following points:*

1. *Parental responsibility*
2. *Responsibility of the children*
3. *Educational principles to create habits of responsibility in the child.*

### ***Parental responsibility***

*Parents are primarily responsible for the upbringing and holistic education of their children at school. For this reason, there must be a close and frequent relationship between them and the teachers. This is one of the most important points in the new Educational Law. The educational community is made up of the teachers and the parents of the students.*

*Mothers and fathers should take an interest in their children's progress at school and ask for their cooperation, especially in religious and moral education, without neglecting their interest in the students' performance. Only through the parents can one know the conditions of inheritance and the family environment, both physical and moral.*

*The instruction of parents on basic educational norms is essential on many occasions. In the absence of this, many parents can mislead even with the best of intentions, leading to the twin extreme examples of spoiled children and children persecuted by their own parents.*

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31 No. 8, from box 345, Emmaus Provincial Archives.

*The origin of many behaviors in older people is that the child has become a person with a psychic tumor in his or her soul, either from being treated as a “prodigy” or as a “despicable being”.*

*The hereditary conditions and the family environment must be taken into account in order to adapt the education of each child accordingly. It is therefore necessary to build relationships with the parents of our students. This does not mean that they should be regular. The teacher should always feel like an educator, and no special eloquence is needed to speak from heart to heart with simplicity, because that is the language that is best understood.*

### **Responsibility of the children**

*“Make the child responsible” (Montessori).*

*The adult is often more of a hindrance than a help to the child’s development. The hardest thing for our mind to accept is that it is precisely excessive care that prevents the child from carrying out his own activities and developing his responsibility. The child should be helped to act and express himself, but the parent or teacher should never act in his place, but only when it is absolutely necessary. Every time an adult gives the child help that is not needed, it stops or distracts the child’s development. And this is what happens when we seek him out with the best of intentions and dress him the class coat, nail him to the same desk, saturate him with intellectual encouragement, twist his will without a second thought, believing that they will get better that way. We are mistaken if we believe that we have to do everything for the child. We have the impression that we want to create his intelligence, his feelings and his character. Creation belongs to God, as it is the Providence that preserves it. To us, the charity and help. We must free the child from obstacles and dangers... and help it to live. We must help the child to do everything by himself whenever possible. For example, any action that leads the child to use objects and thus change their place, must end not only by putting them back in their place, but also by returning them in good condition and putting them back the way they found them... If the carpet has become dusty, he will brush it before putting it back in its place. And if he has wet a pot to change the water of the flowers, he will dry it carefully afterwards. The teacher does not*

*impose ideas on the child, but directs him towards the needs of his age. Through active methods, the child makes his choice and practices exercises with the material that will lead him step by step to his development. The great problem of education is to respect the child's responsibility and to give free rein to his spontaneous activity rather than to contain and control it. This does not mean that we leave the child to its own mind to do as he pleases, but that we respect the child's freedom by first creating an environment that is appropriate to his development. In this way, the child can be compared to the germ of life enclosed in a cocoon that God has given him for protection, without restricting or suppressing his vital needs.*

*Let us not make children so childlike that we spare them any responsibility. Children are human beings who deserve our respect and are superior to us because of their innocence and vitality for the future. What we want, they also want.*

*If we want them to be submissive and reserved, we should not be too overbearing. Let us always treat them with that kindness which consists in courteous and respectful treatment and, above all, in interpreting the wishes of others, complying with them and, if necessary, sacrificing our own wishes.*

### ***Educational principles to inculcate the habit of responsibility in the child***

*It is good to have a tendency towards benevolence without running the risk of agreeing to everything and sinning out of weakness.*

*If we want to raise good and responsible people, we must not only model our behavior down to the smallest detail, but also treat our children as if they were good. This does not mean that we close our eyes to the bad in them, but that we must have a broad spirit of forgiveness that leads them to trustingly open up to us.*

*Instead of repressing, the educator must take a stimulating action; instead of taking away the bad, he must enable them to do the good. Often, we follow the path of evil because we ignore the path of good.*

*Raising a child means making a person and a Christian out of him in the truest sense of the word.*

*Education is all a matter of tact, common sense and heart. It requires more skill than strength, more love than knowledge.*

*Education is the work of two: educating a child means helping him to educate himself. Raising a child essentially means teaching him to get along without us. Therefore, we should teach the child not to be led, but to lead himself. We will make the child a responsible being if we succeed in making his instincts subject to reason (we must make him understand the reasons for our commands), and his reason subject to faith.*

*The educator is not like the artist who creates and can say: "This is my work". The educator is more like the gardener who digs around the new plant, waters it, straightens it, protects it... But the plant develops from the inside out, thanks to the sap. Let us not force with our authority the spontaneity, the joy, the vital and creative impulse of the child; that would be to stifle the source of his responsibility. It has been written that the moral person is formed at the age of ten. And that the first years of life, the years before school, are the most decisive for the formation of character (responsibility).*

*It is not at all necessary to be able to recognize a vice in order to acquire it. A mother's imprudence is enough to fill a lifetime with temptations and struggles.*

*Parental discord fragments the souls of children.*

*A happy environment is a healthy environment for the education of the child... Sadness is the school of vice.*

*You educate a child not by taming him, but by winning him over. "Make you be loved if you want to be obeyed". St. Bosco.*

*If you command under the impulse of nervousness, you are not offering authority, but tyranny.*

*A fatal excess in the education of responsibility: to do everything for the child, even to the point of replacing him.*

*An order given in anger, bad temper or impatience will no longer be understood or accepted.*

*Do not mock your children or pupils, do not ridicule them... that would be a great clumsiness and cowardice.*

*Guide your children's instinctive impulses, restrain them if necessary... do not suppress them. Suppressing or taming does not mean educating for life.*

*To listen to your child, to understand and love him, you have to bend down.*

*You have to teach the child to propose a goal for himself and to choose, under his responsibility, the best means to achieve it.*

*It is not our advice that children take into their lives, but our examples.*

*You do not teach what you want; you do not teach what you know... You teach what you are. You correct children by going straight.*

*The foundation of all education in purity is the fear of God.*

*You will never raise your children if you give them everything they want and indulge their every whim. If you praise them in front of your friends. If you let them listen to your quarrels or discussions. If you allow them to go where they want, listen to what they want, read what they want to read and play with who they want to play with. If you allow them criticize the lessons, the pedagogical methods of their teachers or professors in your presence.*

*You will also not educate them by defending or excusing them when their teachers want to punish them. Or by allowing them to neglect their religious duties, not going to school or not doing their homework when they feel like it. Or by giving them the impression that the most important thing, the essential thing in life, is to earn a lot of money. Or by repeating to them all day long that they will never reach anything, that they will never improve. Above all, if you fail to make them true Christians.*

*Your faithfulness to God as husband and wife and as parents in the fulfillment of your religious duties will be the greatest guarantee for the temporal and eternal future of your children.*

### ***The “Chiquitín” primers and the phonomimic method***

Father Dionisio Cueva writes the following in the aforementioned work:

*In 1944, having seen the success of the Encyclopaedia, the Pious Schools of Spain decided to prepare high school texts and reading books. The Editorial Bibliográfica Española will launch from Madrid all the books under the common title of “Textos E.P.”.*

*In December 1945, the Piarist kindergarten school teachers met, exchanged experiences and made decisions. A syllabary, an initiation to language and a first reading book were to be prepared. The three productions, the superiors told them, must be published before the beginning of the 1947-48 school year. An early homage of the little children to Calasanz, who will celebrate in 1948 the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death and the 200<sup>th</sup> of his beatification? Perhaps.*

*Father Joaquín Erviti is in charge of preparing the syllabary. He will be the responsible and the main author. He was assisted in his undertaking by Fr. Pedro Díez, with all his friendship and experience. The two friends<sup>32</sup> had been involved in kindergarten for many years, and they were both concerned about finding a formula for a method of reading, and consequently of writing, that would combine scientific advances with the child's awakened psychology. They found it, they say, "based on the most modern procedures, contrasted with a long experience". And two systems have been the preferred ones in its composition: the ideological and the phonymic. In the Introduction they give practical rules of application. Father Erviti, before submitting the result to the printer, baptized it with a suggestive name. He called it Chiquitín (Little Child).*

*The method entered all the Piarist schools, was adopted by public schools, by the Ministry of Education, crossed the seas. The army chose the reading cards to wake up the dazed recruits. If you want to see the cards and methods in action, go to the Piarist schools of Zaragoza and Pamplona.*

Father Joaquín dedicated a poem to his friend Fr. Pedro Díez, during the last Christmas that the later lived. We take it from the book by Fr. Dionisio Cueva:

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32 Fr. Erviti was a year older than Fr. Díez. Both coincided, within a year of each other, in the different houses of formation: the postulancy of Cascajo, the novitiate of Peralta and the juniorates of Irache and Albelda. Erviti's diary (April 30, 1987, a few years after Fr. Pedro's death): Blessed are you, Fr. Pedro, for your evangelical poverty and humility of heart... for your gentle goodness and quiet hope... for your serene patience in hidden tears... for your thirst for justice and your affection for the poor... for your laughing understanding and paternal heart... for your purity of soul and innocent joy... for your optimistic love and the peace you poured out... for your smile on the Cross and your song in sorrow, may the Lord grant you Eternal Blessedness. Fr. Pedro died in the early hours of December 14, 1983.

*To my dear brother, / Pedro Díez, workmate, / apostle of the dearest children of Jesus, / angel of the moribund, simple and poor, / humble and detached, / custodian of the sacristy and of the House of the Lord, / soul of the kindergarten, / small in stature and giant in love, / the memory of my constant prayer, / Merry Christmas.*



Professor José Ignacio Martín, a disciple of Fr. Pedro Díez and his collaborator in Zaragoza, writes about the phonomimic method<sup>33</sup>:

*The child at five and six years of age is active. He likes to move. He is practical and concrete. Taking advantage of these conditions, we develop our reading method.*

*We say that it is a phonomimic method because it is based, as its name indicates, on learning through sounds and gestures.*

*We start from the most elementary units of our language, the phonemes, and each one is associated with a drawing so that, using onomatopoeic sounds in almost all cases, the child begins to emit with pleasure the sound that is provided, while making certain gestures related to a picture that is shown to him. This drawing will be presented in full color posters or slides.*

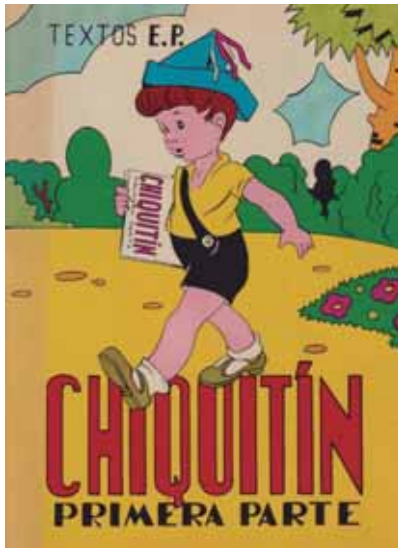
*The study of each phoneme is done in such a way that they cannot be confused with each other either by their shape or by their sound.*

*The initial learning is done, above all, on the blackboard, using the slides mentioned above or, failing that, posters.*

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33 <https://docplayer.es/69931852-Metodo-fonomimico-para-el-aprendizaje-de-la-lectura-complementos-de-lectura.html>. 6 de marzo de 2023.





*The children should be facing the screen and the blackboard, avoiding reflections that prevent them from seeing clearly.*

*The size of the letters we show must be large enough for the child to see them from any distance.*

*The writing of the letters should be simple and schematic. At the beginning, only lowercase letters will be used, and as the children learn, we will intersperse uppercase letters and different typefaces.*

*Each of the phonemes will be explained, pronounced first by the person teaching, very clearly, out loud and facing the children and, in all cases, showing the characteristic of the sound we are studying: if it is nasal, bilabial, dental, guttural... and if it is occlusive, (it comes out suddenly), fricative (it comes out brushing), vibrant (the tongue dances). The child only has to mimic and imitate.*

*The corresponding gesture is associated with the pronunciation so that, later, with sound and gesture or only with the sound or with the gesture, the child identifies the letters.*

*Once they recognize all of them, you can eliminate gestures and tell them to say it only once. It is not difficult to make them read without gestures. And you can read words, phrases and short texts, giving intonation to the reading. Question marks and exclamation points can be introduced.*

*Sessions of 15 minutes are dedicated to the large group and another 15 minutes to individual practice. Early in the morning and early in the afternoon.*

*The method follows an order of presentation of the phonemes we are going to point out.*

*The order is:*

- Vowels
- Direct syllables (consonant + vowel)
- Inverse syllables (vowel + consonant)
- Mixed syllables (direct syllable + consonant)
- Contracted syllables (consonant + consonant + vowel)
- Difficult to pronounce syllables (contracted + inverse syllables)
- Diphthongs.



*For each phoneme, a short story is told to make its presentation more pleasant for the child and to help him/her remember it later.*

*Under the same story, all the phonemes can be presented. We do it with a child named Luisito who has some friends in his grandparents' village and others in the school in the city.*

*As an example, we will take the vowel "u".*

*The picture or slide shows a small dog running and barking. It shows two teeth. And we say to the children:*

*"Luisito and his friends are in the village. He says he has seen some peach trees full of good fruit. But the orchard where they are is not theirs, it belongs to Mr. Nicolás. The children like peaches very much. He proposes to his friends to go and pick a few. The field has a fence that they jump over. They head for the trees, and just as they are about to get there, a little dog comes running after them. It is Mr. Nicolas' dog. He keeps him there to watch that the peaches are not taken away. The children manage to escape by a miracle" (the stories are modifiable).*

*We will ask: How did the little dog bark? And, before they say it, we will emit the sound: "u", "u", "u", "u", "u", "u", "u", "u",... We will place the index and middle fingers as if they were the dog's teeth and we will throw them repeatedly outwards repeating the sound and inviting the children to do the same. As they say it, we will write the letter "u" on the blackboard.*

*From now on, when we say: How did the doggie do? The children will repeat this sound and gesture. In successive sessions, just by saying "doggy" they will remember the "u".*

*The same is done with each of the vowels. The "i" is associated with a train and its whistle, the "o" with a gentleman commanding a horse to stop....*

In the introduction of the two primers we read the same introduction, by the same author (or authors), signed by "Textos E.P.":

*We offer to the kindergarten teachers in these children's pages of CHIQUITÍN our method of reading, based on the most modern procedures, contrasted with long experience.*

*Two are the preferred systems in the composition of CHIQUITÍN, the ideological and the phonomimic.*

*In the first, the child, starting from a standard word that corresponds to the drawing of the lesson, forms very simple sentences, familiar to the little child, which are perfectly related to the illustration at the top of the page<sup>34</sup>.*

*Thus, from the very beginning, children are introduced to themes full of life and meaning. Then comes the decomposition into syllables and letters. Through the phonomimic system, the child remembers the sound of the letters by the drawing on the left at the bottom of the page, and imitates with his gesture (mimicry), according to the drawing on the right, the movement of the animated being that produces the sound. The teacher will take care that the child accompanies with the gesture the emission of the sound in each letter in the first babbling of the reading.*

*The reading is short so as not to tire the child, but enough to make in each lesson the mental effort needed to record in memory the shape of the letters.*

*In order for the little ones to effortlessly remember the meaning of the letters, meaningful drawings have been placed at the bottom of each lesson; thus the letters will be for the child animate beings that emit sounds.*

*The order of the letters has been carefully studied, so that they cannot be confused either by their sound or by their form.*

*The typeface used is the easiest to be reproduced by the child, linking reading with writing from the beginning.*

*In the first lessons, the letters are played on the basis of small letters of the same type, thus making the reading process smoother. For this reason, we use the capital letters very sparingly at the beginning, giving preference to those of a similar shape to the lower-case letters, to facilitate learning and retention.*

*In each exercise the child will only find one difficulty to overcome.*

*As a complement to CHIQUITÍN we offer to the children EL JUGUETE DE LAS LETRAS (THE LETTERS TOY), in which the drawings-phonemes that will intensely captivate their im-*

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34 According to Miguel Lezáun, the drawings of the primers were by Francis Bartolozzi, who with her husband Pedro Lozano also decorated the walls of Father Joaquin's classroom.

*agination are represented in a larger size, serving them as a delightful recreation in the study of letters.*

*If the Master becomes a child with the children and pours into their pure hearts the honey of affection and patient and sacrificial love, we have no doubt that he will obtain with our method unsuspected results, which, besides his own satisfaction, will make him worthy of the magnificent promise of Jesus Christ made child for us: "What you have done for one of these little ones, you have done for me".*

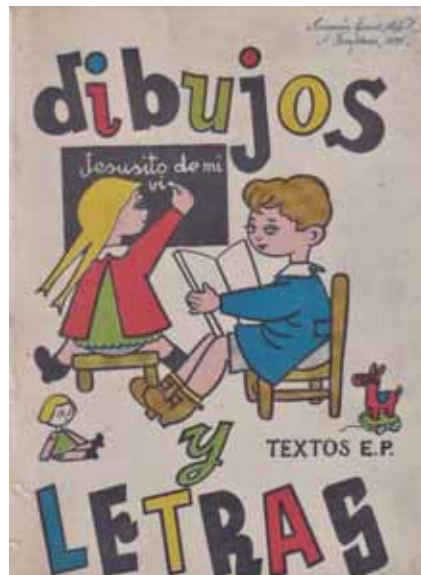
The book had great acceptance, and not only in the Piarist schools. Some witnesses say that half a million copies of the primers were sold.

In the same way that **Chiquitín** is an initiation to reading, Father Joaquín prepared another booklet, **Dibujos y letras**, which is an "initiation to writing, drawing and reading in kindergatens". Also published by the Compañía Bibliográfica Española de Madrid, in the collection Textos E. P. The name of the author or authors does not appear either, but looking at the drawings and letters in the diaries of Fr. P. Joaquín, it is not difficult to attribute the authorship to him. We read in the introduction:

*The booklet that we offer to teachers is intended to be a method of initiation to drawing and writing in kindergatens, as well as for learning to read.*

*In this new booklet the maximum importance is given to the drawing and tracing of letters, convinced that the exercise of the pulse must be parallel to the knowledge of the phoneme of the letters.*

*Based on the principle that words are not written, but drawn, the child should begin by reproducing the easiest drawings on non-grid paper; so, he enjoys filling sheets of paper with spontaneous drawings, which give ease to his movements.*



*After these drawing exercises without any guideline, we will teach the child to reproduce it following the direction of the grid; in this way, he will find ease in the first borders that entertain the little artist so much.*

*With the mastery of the simplest borders, the writing of the first alphabet, with very elementary rectilinear elements, will be very easy and pleasant.*

*In the exercise of copying the first pages, the child should not be expected to reproduce the outlines with the perfection of the model. Their first letters will always be hesitant or of uncertain features.*

*With the constant reproduction of these elementary signs on the grid, the child will find it easy to write the first models of round letter. The child should be able to reproduce the very simple outline drawings at the bottom of the page.*

*The reading system we use in “Dibujos y Letras” is phonomimic. That is, the child remembers the sound of the letters by the drawing on the left at the top of each page, and imitates with his gesture (mimicry), according to the drawing on the right, the movement of the animated being that produces the sound.*

*According to this phonomimic system, the teacher will take care that the child accompanies with the gesture the emission of the sound of each letter in the first babbling of the reading. In order to follow this method, the child needs sheets of squared paper.*

*It is with great enthusiasm that we offer our method to the kindergarten teachers, backed by long experience and excellent results.*

We note the insistence of the author(s) on the importance of experience as the foundation of his method. It is not a laboratory product, or a consequence of a pedagogical theory: only after a good number of years of practicing it personally in his class, and seeing its effectiveness, does he (or they) dare to propose it to the public.

After the previous primers, he intervened in the preparation of another series of three primers for language initiation, “Sonrisas”. Again published by the Compañía Bibliográfica Española, within the series Textos E.P., here the names of the authors do appear.

There is a team formed by Frs. Joaquín Erviti, Pedro Díez, Isidro Gallo, José M<sup>a</sup> Iborra and José M<sup>a</sup> Balcells (we assume that they are cited in order of religious profession); the editor-in-chief is Luis Maté, and the coordinator, Jesús Ramo. In the third booklet, a work of the same authors, it is said that the person in charge of the readings (the essential part of the work) is Father Joaquín Erviti. The author of the illustrations, José Ramón Jiménez, a teacher at the school in Bilbao, author and collaborator of religious works, and a novel to work with adolescents on the sacraments. The introduction more or less repeats the ideas of the previous primers.

Fr. Joaquín explains in detail the option for his method in his diary, February 7, 1988. He says the following:

*It pleases me first of all to recall these words of the eminent pedagogue Adolfo Maílo: "There are pedagogues and teachers who postulate from the very beginning of learning a rational reading, that is to say, with full awareness of what is read. This is a psychological absurdity. The child's vocabulary, that is, the number of words whose meaning he knows, is very limited. But not even this wealth of words is understood when it comes to reading, much less the words unknown to him. For one thing is to understand spoken language, and quite another, and much more complicated, to understand written language. Language is voice, sound; that is why spoken language does not require, as in written language, a previous task of interpretation or translation. The spoken word and sentence are immediately understood when they are among the words we know. In the written word and sentence, they are not. The signs detain the attention in the isolated interpretation of each one of them. After, on the whole, in order to give a complete sense to the sentence. This makes rational reading very difficult, which the infant can hardly access, dedicated, as he has to be by force, to the mechanical interpretation of the signs, that is to say, mechanical reading, the obligatory antecedent of rational reading, although the ill-informed think otherwise".*

*I have quoted this text at some length in case anyone blames the "Chiquitín" syllabaries, which have been around for 40 years, for an excess of mechanism or childishness. Let us agree that learning to read, for most students, will always be unpleasant and boring. The infant will be interested in the pinturesque (with a colored pencil he is in his element), in*

*the fantastic of stories, in the rhythm of dance or verse. But, as in reading, the relationship between sign and signification is pure artificial, the interest in reading, in its first steps, will necessarily always be very scarce, due to the inherent difficulties. In the case of infants, who live in a playful environment, the bitterness of the first phonemes can be sweetened, making them a playful toy, full of life and chromatism. That is why I use in Chiquitín and in Dibujos y Letras the synthetic phonomimic method, because I find it simpler, more susceptible to captivate the fantasy of children, and within the sensorial type, which is so much in vogue in modern pedagogy. Andres Macho, with his method based on a purely phonetic conception (he uses the phonetic screen, the phonetic tape and the phonetic cards), and the Palau system, with its rhythmic words and its photosyllabic cards, fall into the classification, in spite of their variants, of the method adopted by us. Without discrediting the analytical methods (graphic or visual), both that of the normal words and the ideo-visual, also called "global", as Decroly maintains, that the child perceives first and best the sets formed by the phrase, from which one descends to the word and from there, by the syllable, to the letter.*

*I respect this system, which I would only dare to use with children of six years of age and with very small groups. In our syllabaries, monotonous exercises of incoherent words are banished, giving each lesson a unit of thought, forming very simple sentences, familiar to the infant, which are perfectly related to the drawing that heads each page. The reading, as I explain in the prologue, is brief so as not to tire the child, but sufficient to make in each lesson the mental effort needed to engrave in his or her memory the letter's structure.*

*The expressive pictures on the bottom of the lesson will help the toddler to remember the phonemes of the words almost effortlessly. These will be for him animated beings, which emit sounds. The teacher will take care that the child accompanies with the gesture the emission of the sound of each letter in the first babbling of the reading. By this method, children exercise and develop attention by teaching them, for example, the envelope of the letters, or by asking them to distinguish phonetically a particular sound with only mimicry, which recalls the drawing of phonemes. Let us keep in mind that "five minutes of lively concentration will give more beneficial results than whole days of wandering distractedly in mental stupor".*

*The child has fundamentally senses and faculties of acquisition. It is very interesting that children have made the most appropriate exercises of education of senses, eyes, ears and muscles and training of the hand. The first to perceive the direction, size and shape of things; the second to clearly distinguish the various phonemes. And the hand to be trained to obey the orders of the corresponding nerve centers. This is the real work in kindergartens: senses and vocabulary. We believe that with our method we value the sensations of the infant to the maximum. Mimicry also comes into play, which is like a whip that awakens dormant ideas.*

*Is the typeface used in the Chiquitín syllabaries correct? My first idea was to publish them in vertical manuscript. This is what Palau does in his primers, although he also uses Roman type from the beginning. Father Profitós<sup>35</sup>, a solvent in the matter, dissuaded me from doing so, without completely convincing me with the reasons he gave me. That is why I chose, in the first part, the intermediate type between the Roman and the manuscript, because I considered it clearer and more similar to the manuscript. It was the ideal type in the storybooks for the little children. But, in spite of everything, I would be happier to see the syllabaries with vertical manuscript type, very studied in its features and size, even if I had to take a new cliché out of all the pages of Chiquitín. It has always been my opinion that in the composition of the letters of the Primer there must be a care and a demand bordering on scrupulousness. It is not the prefabricated printing types that must burst into the syllabaries, but rather the syllabaries that must enter the photoengraving, like the pen drawings of an artist, full of personality, childlike grace and fragrant poetry. Not only in the illustrations, but*

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35 Joan Profitós Fontá (1892-1954), a Piarist religious of the Province of Catalonia. The DENES says of him: "As a kindergarten teacher he saw the phonemic method he advocated for reading very widespread, taking advantage of the advantages of globalization that Decroly and Claparède so much encouraged. His syllabary is rich in multicolored illustrations. He deserved the praise of the great Catalan writer and pedagogue Luis Folch y Torres. Following the theory of the child's interests, he wrote a graduated series of readings. An erudite man of fine artistic taste, he easily adapted to the child's capacity. He maintained a scientific relationship with several national and foreign pedagogues, making several trips, giving lectures, courses, etc. He always gave primacy to the Catechism. He started a pedagogical library for the Province in San Antón (Barcelona). He always enjoyed the respect of those who were his students one day.

*also in the naive features of their graphics or letters. If I prefer the manuscript, it is to twin reading with writing from the beginning, in children of school age. For in 4-year-olds and in 5-year-olds just turned 5, I consider the simultaneity that many would like to see a utopia. "Except in the case of children who are especially gifted at drawing -Maíllo writes- writing always follows reading. And this in conformity to the reading that can be done in kindergarten, which cannot be called a rational reading, but predominantly mechanical and hesitant". And unintentionally we have entered into the system that I use in "Drawings and Letters" to initiate even the smallest children in writing. Starting from the assumption that, from four to eight years of age, before drawings and letters, what they have to do is to color, with the ingenuity and grace with which they are endowed in the years of innocence. Let us keep in mind that handwriting is a difficult drawing, and that the child has to begin by reproducing the easiest drawings on non-grid paper, once he has taken delight in filling up sheets of paper with monkeys and spontaneous drawings that give ease to his movements. Then come the tracing drawings on white and transparent paper. I use very simple drawings pasted on cardboard as models. And after these exercises without any guideline, I start the children in the game of borders on grid paper, which I do not see it as difficult as many impatient imagine. Soon the child will find ease in the first borders, which entertain the little artist so much. With the mastery of the border, it is easier to write the first alphabet of very elementary rectilinear elements: it will be very easy and pleasant. In the exercise of copying the first pages, the child should not be expected to reproduce the outlines with the perfection of the model. His or her first letters will always be indecisive or with vague features. With the constant reproduction of these elementary signs on the grid, the child will find it easy to write the first round-letter patterns.*

In one of his diaries, the one for 1989, on March 1<sup>st</sup>, Fr. Joaquín writes:

*Sunday morning. Very punctual in the recitation of the Office of Readings, Lauds and Prima. So, at 10 o'clock in the morning, I was able to please Monreal and Fr. Jesús Echarri. What they wanted? Simply that I could answer these questions... The questions and answers will be published in the Vasconia magazine in issue 49.*

And this is the interview, published in the mentioned number of the magazine:

*Looking for some things in our archive, I have found these three texts: “Chiquitín segunda parte”, “Dibujos y Letras” and “Sonrisas 3”. None of them have the author’s name, but all of them are titled “Textos E.P.”. Many of us have studied with the Textos E.P., then we have taught many students with them. Also, if I remember correctly, some Fathers of our Province worked as authors, for example, Father Jesús Sesma, mathematics texts, and Father Julio Campos, history texts.*

*Now I have been curious to know what role Fr. Joaquín Erviti played in the preparation of the texts for the little ones, and I also wanted to spend some time with him to see what happened to “Chiquitín primera parte” and the other volumes of the book “Sonrisas”, since I was surprised that we only have volume 3 in the archives. It is not difficult to find Father Joaquín in his room, praying or reading, or passing on to small notebooks the thousand news of his life. Those notebooks are a living archive of news, anecdotes, newspaper and magazine clippings, of the most varied and holy things (don’t let him hear this, because he will get angry. Well, we don’t know).*

*So, I went into his room and had a dialogue with him and asked him these questions:*

1. *How did the book Chiquitín come about?*

*In 1947 the publishing house Compañía Bibliográfica published the first E.P. books by order of the person in charge of the texts, Father Andrés Moreno, born in Úbeda.*

*Father Pedro Díez and I were entrusted with the production of the “Chiquitín” primers. I had some meetings at the Santo Tomás School in Zaragoza to study the plan for the primer. We chose the ideological and the phonomimic method. By the first method, the child, starting from a*



*standard word, which responds to the drawing of the lesson, forms very simple sentences, familiar to the infant, which are perfectly related to the illustration at the top of the page*

*By the phonomimic method, the toy of letters intensely captivates the child's imagination. It involves phonemes and mimicry. This method requires primarily that in the first weeks the lesson be a group lesson, not an individual one, turning it into a game by having the students point to the syllables with the pointer, perform the corresponding mimicry and make sounds for each letter. They will only learn the names of the five vowels.*

*The primer "Chiquitín" (two parts) I wrote it definitively in Pamplona, in vertical handwriting. For me it would have been like this. I believe that Father Profitós recommended that I would do it in "script" type, as was done in other countries.*

2. *When did the first edition come out?*

*The first edition of the "Chiquitín" primer was published in 1947. When the "Chiquitín" went on sale, Mr. Rafael Agulló was the director of the Compañía Bibliográfica Española. In the first copy I received from Madrid, I stamped this tenth:*

*To the one who excels in love / for childhood, my Primer / will it be a new wonder? / Vain endeavor!... But in it / I put my most beautiful illusion.*

*In the souls of my children / those who are dressed in ermine, / pouring, hour after hour, / all the honey that treasures / the honeycomb of my affection.*

*February 14, 1947.*

3. *I went down to the kindergarten class and only found the second part of "Chiquitín". I have checked the number of the edition. It is the third one.*

*I show to Fr. Erviti the book "Sonrisas 3". What can you tell me about this book?*

*The second booklet had 3 parts, and was published under the name "Sonrisas" (Smiles). It was put together as a team by the following religious: Pedro Díez, Isidro Gallo, Luis Maté, Jesús Ramo, José M. Iborra and José M. Balcells. I did the readings for the third part.*

*I would say that the soul and the artist of this booklet “Sonrisas” was Father Jesús Ramo<sup>36</sup>. I refer to the presentation and quality of the drawings. The booklet “Sonrisas” has three parts, each one illustrated by a different painter-drawer. Only one edition was made and copies are nowhere to be found.*

*Why was it not published again? Did it fail for lack of unity of criteria in its elaboration, and did the richness in art and coloring prevail to the detriment of simplicity and uniformity in the method of reading? Were there not too many heads in its conception?*

*I will also tell you that a book of readings entitled “Sonrisas” was published, but I do not know who made it, nor do I have any copies.*

4. *Father Joaquín, in this book “Dibujos y letras” that was in the archive, on the second page someone has written (I think Fr. Xabier Ortigosa) the following: “Text by Fr. Joaquín Erviti; drawings by Francis Bartolozzi. Father Joaquín finished the booklet on May 14, 1951, the birthday of one of his sisters to whom he addressed the letter on the last page”. Are you the author of the book?*

*Nobody suggested the publication of “Dibujos y Letras” to me. I decided to do it when I listened to a professor from Vitoria in a talk he gave us in Pamplona, at school, about the system he used in the methodology of writing. I do not know the name of the professor, and I do not know that he published any book on this subject.*

*The prologue is mine, as well as Chiquitín’s, and also the calligraphy and text. The drawings on the first pages? the rest of the drawings are by Francis Bartolozzi.*

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36 Jesús Ramo (1926-2020). He studied at the Escuela de Artes y Oficios (1940-42), and then entered the novitiate in Peralta, where he was professed in 1944. Ordained a priest in 1950. He was assigned to the kindergarten classes in his first years of community. He then stood out for his manual skills, creating models in the Biblical Museum of the Colegio Scio, and in that of the juniorate of Yaoundé. He was an outstanding nativity scene maker, creating works in Rome, Saragossa, etc. He spent his last years in the Betania residence in Zaragoza, where he died in 2020.

*Joaquín opens his desk drawer and takes out the book “Dibujos y Letras” (Drawings and Letters). He opens the last page and we both read the letter to his sister.*

*When I took out the book, I saw another one with “Enciclopedia Infantil” (Children’s Encyclopedia) on the cover. It is also from Textos E. P. What is this book?*

*It is an encyclopedia of primary education for children. It came out in 1946, the year of Chiquitín. Father Pedro Díaz and myself took part in it. I couldn’t say more about it. These pages are mine... and these... The drawings are by Lalinde, a famous illustrator who also has drawings in other books.*

*I turn the pages and on one of them I read: “When you reach the confessor, you will say: “Hail Mary Most Pure. My spiritual Father, it is... since... I have not gone to confession; I have done my penance; I have done...”. And I let myself be carried away by nostalgia and memory. This is how Fr. Joaquín prepared us to go to confession a few years ago. And he, in the meantime, opens page 22 of Sonrisas and begins to recite:*

*Lord, You who said / “come to me the children” ... /  
Lord, You who looked / upon everyone with compassion ... /  
and being the greatest / made Yourself small, / so that I could  
tell You my love ... / Lord do not leave me ... / Do not leave this  
place ... / You who from the cradle, / Lord, are with me ....*

*And the Father stops and tells me that this is not by A. Machado, as it says in the book, but by his brother Manuel, that they both loved each other very much, and he continues talking to me about literature, about Machado and Unamuno.*

*And between books and poetry, there is also the preparation of the children for their first communion, how we are going to prepare them, also for the sacrament of Reconciliation... And so the time has flown by. He is not too tired, is he?*

*Jesús Echarri.*

### ***Father Joaquín’s classroom***

As we have seen above, Father Erviti almost inaugurated the school in Pamplona when he arrived there at the end of 1934. It had a beau-

tiful new and spacious kindergarten room where he worked for a while. Until he decided to remodel it, especially in the decoration and a little in the furniture. A classroom reflects very well the temperament of the teacher who uses it, especially if he uses it for many years. Let us listen to the description of the classroom by some of the witnesses of his canonization Process in Pamplona. His nephew César (teacher) says:

*Father Joaquín's classroom was very colorful, with lots of light. Its pictures were very attractive and suitable for children. The design of the classroom was very innovative for the time and would still be effective today. With all the decorative elements, it had a "Bambi", a blackboard with drawings and calligraphy. The classroom was on the second floor. He built a bathroom for the children into the classroom. That was totally innovative. He had an image of Our Lady of the Twelve Stars. The size of the desks and chairs were adapted to the children. Everything was suitable for small children. It was a spacious classroom where the children could move around freely. I assume the student body was large, as was usual at the time.*



In one of his diaries, he himself poetically describes his new classroom:

*‘The new kindergarten, cheerful and dazzling with grace, light and color, looks like a many-colored page from the fairy tale of Snow White. It is a wonderful little playroom where the children find motherly warmth and the scent of roses and jasmine. The blue sky of the four large blinds, which have a very sophisticated and modern design, transforms the room into a wonderful garden. The small tables and chairs are covered in colorful plastic and serve as flowers. In the middle of the walls, a graceful canopy spreads out its inviting arms to give the kindergarteners’ work the intimacy of a home. And on it: toys of illusion: Bambi, a giraffe, a bull, a squirrel, a stork and a little white dog that barks and jumps at the same time. On the upper part of the wall are modern and childlike paintings in beautiful style and color by the brilliant artist Francis Bartolozzi and her husband Lozano de Sotés. The subjects are ingeniously charming and highly instructive, three allegories: that of God the Creator, that of Jesus the Redeemer and that of the Holy Spirit. In one corner of the classroom there is a small oratory; there is the precious bas-relief of Our Lady of the Twelve Stars, modern and carved in wood, a beautiful image of Mary, almost youthful, with the child in her arms looking at the first page of the primer.*

*The classroom is dominated by a large blackboard lit by fluorescent tubes, which also serves as a projection screen. Between the tiled walls and under the shade of the canopy are fifteen individual blackboards with their modern light bulbs, which fill the moving squares of different sizes, beautiful and artistic drawings, with life.*

*And behind the large blackboard are the storage room, the lavatory and the bathroom. The latter with its bathtub, shower, washbasin and toilet. Both with carefully thought-out details, such as the arrangement of the doors so that the children cannot get their fingers trapped. This is the new kindergarten class, a true garden of love, a gift from the Three Wise Men on Epiphany 1955.*

Someone who knew and treated him says: *His “trick” was drawing. He drew while he told stories and captivated the children. This worked especially well with the little ones, who saw a kind of magic in these beautiful pictures that came from Father Joaquín’s hand.*

Juan José Martinena, a student of his and later a University professor, says:

*The class was exemplary because it anticipated by thirty or forty years what later became crèches or kindergartens. The classroom was designed by the architect Gortari according to the recommendations and suggestions of Father Joaquín. It was designed to be perfectly suitable for small children. The chairs matched the colors of the tables. There were small blackboards on which the students wrote; they were also placed on the wall. There were paintings by Francis Bartolozzi and Pedro Lozano. One depicted the Holy Trinity. There were also Walt Disney dolls, Bambi and a fire engine on a shelf above the windows. There was a cage with a small bird. Next to the large table was a small altar with Our Lady of the Twelve Stars. Father Joaquín dedicated one of his poems to the Virgin. Under Our Lady was a small tabernacle with a crib containing the baby Jesus. If a child misbehaved, Father Joaquín would send us to the baby Jesus to ask for forgiveness. The cathedra was shaped like a little house from a fairy tale. Behind the blackboard were the toilets and a changing room. It was a very cheerful, colorful classroom.*

The poem to Our Lady of the Twelve Stars from 1955 quoted above (with certain echoes of Rubén Darío) reads as follows:

*Little Virgin Girl of the twelve stars / carved among technical lullabies / in the rainbow of my kindergarten / You are the rose bathed in sunshine.*

*Little virgin girl of silver stars / nest of openness open to love / you keep the fragrance of these lilies / in the white wings of your heart.*

*The golden night of the Magi / lit my school with the light of dawn... / was a paradise of grace and color / and the shelter was an arm and a flower.*

*You are more beautiful, Little Virgin girl, / than the canopy, the birds, the flower; / your image captivates the purest eyes / of the little ones who always see God.*

*Giraffe that dreams with ribbons of roses, / squirrel that leap with a huge broom; / sparkling Bambi, do not be so jealous, / when the Little Virgin steals the heart.*

*His lips distill honeycomb of sweetness; / his blue eyes, childlike candor; / his face is a heaven reflecting / all the tenderness of his Creator.*

*Toast, children, kisses and prayers / To divine child that shows you the primer / He is the teacher. The Virgin, the cathedra; / All of you, approach the throne of God.*

*Weave starry necklaces with lot of affection, / put into the embers of your prayer / the richest incense of the flower of innocence / and the divine breath of ardent song.*

Martinena himself writes about Father Erviti in *Pregón del Siglo XXI*, No. 16, 2000:

*Father Joaquín was for many years something like the living symbol of the school. He was the embodiment of patience, humility and gentleness. He was the priest and the good teacher in the fullness of his talent. Saint Joseph Calasanz must have been something like that, albeit without glasses and with a greyish goatee, as he was depicted on the saint cards. At least that's how I imagined, when I was a kindergarten child, the holy founder, when we sang at the top of our voices on his feast day: "Father, who always sought the good of children, today the candid childhood sings your greatness".*

*One of us, who is now fifty years old, remembers with nostalgia the cheerful and colorful kindergarten which was inaugurated in 1955 and which was the envy of all the schools in Pamplona. At that time, no one had a facility like this in the style of what would later be called kindergartens. This large and bright classroom had the miraculous effect that, at the age of four or five, the first encounter with school, a world that was still unknown and strange to us, was not only less traumatic, as they say today, but even happy and entertaining.*

*An excellent kindergartener, fully dedicated to teaching, he elaborated his own didactic materials of remarkable pedagogical quality, based on the videographic and phonomimic method, which were later abundantly published, imitated and used in many places. I keep with veneration, like a relic, those dear "Chiquitín" primers, the first and second parts, on whose pages are still written in pencil in his handwriting the control notes he made us as we progressed in our first learning process.*

*Like a true teacher, better, like a father, he taught us the first letters with these syllabary cards and how to count, add and subtract with this big abacus with small two-colored balls. And he knew how to do it, wise and holy as he was.*

*You had to see him at the blackboard, writing with chalk those letters that were so much his own, based on straight lines, which we imitated with more or less luck on some square sheets - the "planas", as he called them - that he handed out to us at the beginning of class. For Mother's Day or Christmas greetings, we decorated them with borders and edges, which was almost as attractive as a diploma. When we had already acquired some skill in the downstrokes, he would give us other rounded handwriting models, which usually turned out a little egg-shaped at first; but by going from table to table, and sometimes taking us by the hand with his inexhaustible patience, he got us to copy the set with an acceptable quality for our four or five years. At other times he drew admirably, with a determined and sure stroke, with colored chalk, little houses, trees, boats and animals which left us speechless. This varied repertoire also included some pictures of Our Lady, simple and naïve, but of great expressive power.*

*When it was time to tell stories, each of us took our own chair and formed a circle around him and we listened spellbound. He gave voice to the different characters, played with his hands and let us experience what he was telling us like an excellent storyteller.*

*He memorized the names and faces of all his students. Later, many years later, I found out that he kept a small notebook among his belongings in which he had meticulously noted, in his neat and calligraphic handwriting, every single class that had passed through his classroom in his forty years as a kindergarten teacher.*

*I do not know if Father Joaquín will end up being a saint. I mean if one day we will see his sainthood recognized after a long process with papers from offices, signatures from monsignors and seals from the Curia. I believe that all of us who have learned to read with him and pray with him have already canonized him at the bottom of our hearts. Personally, I consider him to be a saint through and through, a man of God and a great Piarist, but above all someone who is dear and close to us.*

*And that is why I sometimes pray to him, because I am convinced that in the heaven he has rightly earned, he will still*

*be listening to me, as he did back then, with that kind and fatherly smile that all of us who passed through his kindergarten will always remember.*

Julio Gúrpide, Inspector of Primary Education, wrote about him in *El Pensamiento Navarro* (1961, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of Father Erviti's ordination) as follows:

*Father Joaquín, a kindergarten educator, with a unique category. Is not that perhaps disturbing? Does not this apparent contrast lead to a confirmation of his exceptional stature? For that a man should be an incomparable kindergarten teacher, while this task requires a tender feminine treatment and a self-sacrificing love, a devotion that can only be demanded of women to a considerable degree, is something that always gives rise to doubts. And yet the astonishing reality is what we have pointed out: Father Joaquín is exceptional in the field of children education.*

*And what is the secret of this reality? Pius XII said: "The teacher is the one who establishes a relationship of intimacy between his own soul and that of the child, the one who forms in the pupil his intelligence and his will in order to obtain a being of human and Christian perfection". Because Father Joaquín is just one more among his children, because he has this simple humility, because he manages to establish a communication of life with his students, because he has put into practice the evangelical words "to become like children", he has miraculously resolved the antinomies that arise in the field of education.*

*But that is not all. Father Joaquín is not only a pedagogue out of love. He is also an educator because he has a special preparation. He has his own didactic tools which have been scientifically developed, special school techniques which are obviously effective, elements of work which he has worked out that earn him the recognition and appreciation of the teaching staff. His phonomimic process of reading, his specific process of writing, his primer and his children's encyclopedia are valuable formative elements with which he achieves the best results. All this has led to the highest authorities in the field of education visiting his class several times.*

*Do you want more? Father Joaquín's work is complete. The student leaves his class fully initiated. He will have his*

*reasons for an exquisite reading, for a written expression that is even calligraphic, for an artistic refinement which is evident in some formative recitations, for a religious fervor that is contagious, and for some cultural elements that are a beautiful ornament in his great work.*

*Two thousand children of kindergarten age have passed through his class. Two thousand little children who, in their adult lives, will be able to take advantage of the formative elements that Father Joaquín so patiently planted in their souls. And perhaps for some who have gone astray, they will be the ones to give them light and strength in difficult moments. It was a fruitful life of this holy priest-educator.*

Rosana Ubanell conducted an interview with him that was later published in *DEIA Nafarroa* in 1982. In it she writes, among other things:

*Small as his incredibly small handwriting, sharp and clear, eyes that illuminate everything when he speaks of children, slow voice, therapeutic calm and peace, eternal smile, poet and angel is the Piarist Father Joaquín, teacher of kindergarten children in Pamplona school for 48 years. He sits on the edge, almost in the air, of a flowered armchair, speaks without being asked and shows his book, in which he has gathered his entire life to teaching since 1934, group photos glued to the glossy pages and poems surrounded by flowers, which he recites with feeling without any affectation. “The kindergarten children have an incredible absorption and understanding of lyrical poetry, not the corny; they grasp Juan Ramón Jiménez and Alberti much better than any adult”, explains the gentle Father Joaquín, through whose love more than 40 generations of students have passed.*

*“Children are not scientists, not philosophers, not lovers of the natural sciences; they are born artists and poets in a way that older children are not. When they first come to school, they are virgins, they paint and mix colors incredibly well. Over the years, as they grow up, they lose that spontaneity and I see that in their drawings, they copy more than they create”, explains Father Joaquín, who speaks as the ideas are coming to him.*

*He gets angry, sometimes, when he is asked the children to write poems for Christmas, as his children not only learn to read, play and write from the beginning of the school year, but also to declaim and write poetry. “I immediately see the artist*

*in the child, just by the way his body and arms move when he recites a poem”.*

*Joaquín is a born pedagogue who is satisfied with his work because he believes that what he sows in the children’s minds in the early years is fundamental and has a decisive influence on their later years. Father Joaquín may not have read Freud, but he knows him instinctively. His modesty makes him to tell “not write that down” when he speaks of his qualities. “God has given me the power to control children, although I found it difficult at first, but with love and affection it is possible to do what would be impossible by other means.”*

*If Father Joaquín ever went too far in his educational tasks, the solution came immediately, a sweet and a smile. “The children soon forget the scolding and make peace”.*

*Father Joaquín knows that he is kind and that kindness with adolescents can lead to cruelty, because youth is cheerful but not magnanimous. “One day I was called to give a talk on poetry to the students at COU (Pre-University Course) and I was a little afraid to ask if they would respect me, but when I got to their class, I was thrilled because they listened to me silently and attentively.”*

*The “law of silence” is very important to Father Joaquín and is part of his pedagogy: “If a teacher shouts at his students, they will shout louder than he does. Children are grateful for silence, which gives them peace and security”.*

Eduardo Lacasta, Professor of Didactics of Mathematics at the UPNA, wrote about him in *Diario de Noticias* in 1999:

*‘He taught how to read to many hundreds of people in Pamplona. And he taught us much more: the joy of learning and the joy of understanding; and he did it kindly, without shouting, without irony, without an angry gesture or a reproach. He drew children, holy virgins and landscapes with a sure hand and a single stroke of chalk, which appeared to us as if by magic. He wrote with a round and perfect handwriting and recited poems that captivated us four-year-olds. In Father Joaquín’s class, letters and sentences appeared peacefully and without haste; the numbers appeared on the abacus beads and on the fingers of our hands, without us ever hearing one word louder than another.*

*On a shelf we saw puzzles and bendable pieces of brightly painted, polished wood. I do not think he ever used them, but his picture later helped me understand that when I left kindergarten, classes and teachers were something else, a sad memory for me, with a few exceptions.*

*I am one of those who believes that there is everything in the celestial payroll, as in the supposed inhabitants of the Inferno. So, I do not think it's of much interest to know if Fr. Joaquín was a saint. I do not know. What I do know is that he performed a miracle. Not one of those instant healings, "My husband was sick and was given up by the doctors; I prayed the novena of Blessed So-and-so or Fr. So-and-so and he was healed." Nothing of the sort. It was a miracle that was renewed every time when we woke up on school days and intensified on Mondays, and when we returned from vacation: we kids were excited to go to school and happy to be back. Since I left his class, the miracle has never happened again. Not even after being a student I became a teacher.*

*Father Joaquín did not perform miracles by chance or just because he was naturally good-natured. He did it above all because, in addition to having a balanced personality and a passion for his profession, he was well prepared intellectually; for example, he designed a primer for teaching reading and was up to date with the latest pedagogical trends of his time.*

*The principles of classical education, which made a strong comeback in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and not only in Spain, were aimed at filling empty heads or shaping misshapen minds. Today we still have the image that the child's mind is like a pot that is being filled. Today, one gets the impression that Father Joaquín is more on the side of those who see the spirit of the child as a light to be kindled, on the side of the principles that go back to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, much more respectful of children and human beings, which have been reinforced by recent advances in the field of the psychology of learning.*

### ***Catechesis for children***

In the 1988 agenda, on February 27 (although most probably copied from a few years earlier), we read Fr. Erviti's idea on catechesis for children. We read:

*You are in kindergarten not only to teach how to read, but above all to sow... To sow the word of God in the most fertile soil... To form the image of Jesus in the virgin soil. The greatest honor of a kindergarten teacher is to be like a Christian mother who, through her example, her words and her exemplary prayer, constantly sows into the soft wax of the purest hearts. For this reason, we must give the greatest importance to catechism classes, or the formation of religious feeling in the little ones, and devote the most careful preparation to it. In my school curriculum I have devoted the first three-quarters of an hour of the day to it. I have always been delighted with these words of Vasconcelos: "It is urgent that the child learns at the earliest possible age the most important thing that can be taught to him by his peers: the Christian message". Before we play with the cubes and the alphabet, before we count with the abacus and play with rulers, and before we talk about "Little Red Riding Hood and Little Thumbling", mediocre infantilism, we should tell the story of the child who was born as God through the mercy of the Father and the mediation of the Holy Spirit.*

*The example of this is our St. Joseph Calasanz, whom we could call the Saint of the little ones. Before he founded the Pious Schools, he belonged to the Congregation for Christian Doctrine. As a teacher of catechism, he aroused the admiration of the most important personalities in Rome. To this end, he wrote a catechism in dialog form for use by the youngest children. Through him they learned the doctrine with such ease that there were distinguished personalities present who admired the precision and fidelity of the answers. We know that he explained Christian truths through the facts of Sacred History and the examples of the saints.*

*Let the kindergarten class always be filled with the atmosphere of God; of God the Father who loves us and cares for us; of God the Father who enlightens us, who feeds us, who gives us the tenderness of our parents, with the brightness of the stars, with the beauty of the fields and gardens...*

*Let us talk to the child of God. It does not matter if the image they have of him is too childlike. The child will imagine God in the form of his father, just as we must form an image of God when we think of him. But this image is only a symbol. And if the child does not yet know this at its tender age, it will learn it in due course.*

*And then he will not have to give up either the idea or the feeling he began to have in his earliest childhood about God, namely that he is Father and worthy of all his love. The saying of Thomaseo is very illustrative: "If a child waited to eat until he knew what was eating, he would die of hunger".*

*We know very well that the first catechist should be the mother; but we also know how family pressures, the care of the household and, what is worse, the lack of true Christian mothers who live according to the faith and the Gospel, lead them to dump the obligation of educating their children for heaven on us, who are thought to have a more deeply rooted faith. This, then, is the most important task of the kindergarten teacher.*

*All the catechetical instruction of the children should aim at this: to awaken in them feelings of gratitude and love for God, a desire to please Him, a taste for piety, a tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin, a respect for the house of God, docility and obedience to parents. The following prayers and formulas must be memorized: Our Father, Hail Mary, Creed, Commandments of the Law of God, Sacraments and these rhymed prayers:*

*Come to my bedside! Give me a kiss... and I will see you tomorrow!*

*My bed has four little corners, four little angels who guard it.*

*Little virgin of all children, / who are in heaven and pray for me; / if one day your child is not good, / take in your arms and keep it in you...*

*When I get up in the morning, / I always think of you first, / and I pray three Hail Mary, / so you will think of me during the day.*

*Children are waiting for me at school, / I will play with platicine... and on the papers I will paint / small boats and clouds, / castles and stars with colors.*

*At night, when I sleep, / come to my bed, come and kiss me... / in your cloak of clouds and stars, / with much love, snuggle me in.*

*Or this one, fitting for Christmas:*

*I am tiny... / You are small... / I have come to see you... / Shall we play? Tell me! / I have a zambomba! / I have a tambourine! / And then, to the kings / I have already written...! / They will bring me more things... / Balls, globes / And a train! / And gold,*

*silk and myrrh / They will bring to you! / But when they come by, / Mostly you go away! / Stay a few days! / Do not be like that!*

*When we say the prayers, we should stimulate the fervor of the children by praying fervently ourselves. In this way we will awaken in them the habit of prayer. Let prayer always be a lifting up of the heart to God, not a recitation of words. Let us use these means to stimulate the presence of God, the habitual climate of prayer... "How would you feel if Our Lady came in with the Child Jesus in her arms?" "Let us look towards the church, Jesus is really there". "Let us look up to heaven. There is the palace of Jesus". Let us avoid singing prayers from the very first moment. To do this, we have to go very slowly. We must be very careful and attentive so that the little ones do not make mistakes when reciting the prayers, because later it is very difficult to correct them. The recitation should be slow, intelligent and from the heart. Do not make them memorize like parrots. Let them know to whom they are speaking. Let us always flee from moralism in the catechetical education of children. Let us imitate the supernatural and at the same time psychological approach of St. John Baptist Vianney and St. Joseph Calasanz. Just one example: the contrition necessary for confession. Of course, my little ones do not know this difficult word. They only know the greatest sorrow and the small sorrow. The greatest sorrow is the sadness of having displeased Jesus, who is so good that he died for us on the cross. The small sorrow is being sad for having displeased Jesus for fear of punishment. In practice, I show them the crucifix, very expressive... "Children, - I tell them- look what I am holding in my hands... It is Jesus, our God, nailed to the cross. And why did he let himself be nailed to the cross if he did nothing wrong? He is on the cross because we were evil... He suffers for us! How good Jesus is! Look at his hands and feet pierced with nails... And he has committed no sin! It's because we constantly beat and fight... Because we take what does not belong to us... Good Jesus! I will never hit again... I will never steal again... Look at the feet of Jesus... Also nailed. Jesus' feet are dripping with blood because our feet do not follow the path to heaven... We walk with bad companions. We do not go where our parents send us... We do not go to mass on Sundays... Forgive me, Jesus... I will go where you send me... Look at the heart of Jesus, who loves us so much, opened by a lance... Every sin is a lance. Do not let this good heart bleed! Forgive me, Lord! I am very sorry to see you suffer so much! I want to be very good, very obedient, very loving... I do not want you to suffer for me".*

*Above all, let us create a climate of prayer in our classroom... Prayer is the breath of the soul. Let us teach our children to breath with it. Prayer is talking to Jesus. Let them talk to their best friend. Praying means thanking God. We owe Him so much! The sweetest kisses, the most precious fruits, the sun that gives us life, the stars that watch over our dreams. To pray means to ask. We need so many things... May grandma get well again... May it be less difficult for us to be good... May we learn our lessons better. And let us set up an altar in the kindergarten where the image of Our Lady is always present, where our little ones go spontaneously. So that their pure eyes meet those of Mary and the Child.*

In the same diary, on the page of April 5<sup>th</sup>, Father Joaquín writes the following:

### **The History of Salvation**

*Let us call it that rather than Holy History. It is the story that should interest us all the most, because the Savior came to save us all. Let us not just tell this history anecdotally. We must discover God's action in this history without losing ourselves like strangers in the superfluous.*

*And we must also be careful not to present the Bible with its oriental language, especially at the beginning, in a literal style that kills the spirit. When our children are teenagers and belong to the student or working class world, they will hear the worst jibes and nonsense about what people call "Bible stories" (the apple, the parade of the animals before Noah, the bloody Nile, the passage through the Red Sea). If they have been misinformed now, they will encounter huge objections later that can bring down the edifice of their religious faith. They will equate this with mythology, and it will not be the dazzling depictions of cinema that will save them.*

*It would be impermissible and gravely culpable if, through inconsistency and negligence, we were to make our children believe that all the stories of the Bible must be taken equally literally. It is imperative that we warn them of the danger they will later find themselves in. So perhaps we can raise some objections on behalf of some parents who follow their children's catechism. Let us not forget that the great events described in the Bible are historical events that are confirmed by all modern discoveries... History of neighboring peoples, papyri... That*

*these historical events are written in the style of the time. The care of God for his people is depicted in the form of stories. All colored in the oriental way that suited these people. As for the interpretation of natural facts, we know that the Bible is not a book of profane science; it speaks of phenomena according to the mentality of the time, in popular formulas. So, we must distinguish the core from the shell.*

*Let us show the children that God can certainly do these amazing deeds, and even greater ones. But He usually uses second causes to develop His plan of redemption.*

*It is true that these books are inspired by God. But the material authors are not copyists writing from dictation.*

*So, what is left of the Bible? What is there to believe? Fortunately, we have a sure and infallible interpreter: the Church. It passes judgment on what concerns faith and morals and leaves room for special interpretations.*

*The fact remains that history is real. All religious teachings remain. God's protection of his people remains. His providence over them remains. What counts is the religious message conveyed through revealed words.*

## **Appendix A**

*There are religious educators who reject the Old Testament narratives in the education of young children and take only some of the Gospel narratives as good. They prefer the child to learn about God from the spectacle of nature and the events of life. They fear that if they are imbued with religion from an early age, they will feel a certain aversion to it when they grow up. We believe that this fear is unfounded as long as we know how to present these examples in a way that nurtures the child's faith and charity.*

*The child is particularly receptive to all that is great and mysterious when it is presented to him in a suitable environment. If we add to this greatness of the Lord his love as a Father who cares for each one of us, the presence of God will enrich the little one and satisfy all his needs. We will choose the most appropriate narratives to introduce them to the supernatural world. And let us always present the Old Testament in the light of the Gospel. May the stories of God's people have a truly Christian meaning for the child. May they reveal to*

*them the same God of love that the Gospel presents to us. Let us always try, and this is the most important thing, to surround these stories with a climate of faith and prayer, of real contact with God.*

## **Appendix B**

*Let us tell the children about scenes in which God appears in person to someone and speaks to them or comes to their aid... Samuel, David, Moses, Abraham, Jacob... And let us let the child live in the certainty that he is always loved by God. Let us no longer associate the name of God in the child's mind with the idea of fear of punishment and even less with the idea of threat. Let us banish phrases like: "If you do not do this, God will punish you". "God has punished you". "God is angry with you. "Jesus does not love you". The child must live with the idea that God loves him. His religion must be a religion of love.*

*Let us remove the terror religious images from the child's mind...the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the one of Abraham with the knife at his son's neck. In the facts of the Bible, let us emphasize the love of God shining in them rather than the fear.*

*If we put the idea of an avenging and terrible God in his head, the child will always look for a way to get rid of the angry presence of such a merciless God. No longer let the child feel the idea of being condemned or rejected by God. "Children are not condemned. Whatever happens, the child needs be loved by God. In God's lap, he will always find the heart of a father. May he never have to ask himself whether his actions are sinful, and even less whether he deserve to be condemned. The way we talk to the children about God should always give them the sense of peace they need. To achieve this, we should talk to him much more about the New Testament than about the Old Testament... About our Lord Jesus, "the most lovable of all the sons of men," "who had a word of honey for all... who cared for the outcasts and said to the children, "Come to me". Let them reflect on how Jesus laid his hands on the sick to comfort and heal them. How he had compassion on those who mourned... how he forgave those who had sinned... how he had compassion on a mother who mourned the death of her son and comforted her by raising him from the dead. How he told them the parable of the prodigal son to show them the heart of God, who is a fa-*

*ther to all his children. Or the parable of the Good Samaritan to teach us to be good to all.*

*God is love. And we cannot invalidate the image of God incarnate that the Gospels offer us. When we sow in this way in the souls of our little ones, they are drawn to God and to virtue. It is true that no man, however holy he may be, can impart faith to a child by his own influence. Even our good examples are not enough.*

*The educator will sow by his words and example. But it is God who makes the seed grow. We must all be men of prayer so that God may enlighten our students and touch their hearts. Let us pray without ceasing so that we can fulfill our task as educators and grow in faith, hope and love.*

### ***Prayers for children***

Father Joaquín knew how to empathize with the children, to the point that he became one of them and offered them children's prayers to help them in their relationship with God. Many prayers, which are at the same time small poetic catechesis, moral and religious teachings, adapted to the spirit of his kindergarten children. Trinitarian prayers, born from the pure and childlike soul of Father Joachim. We copy some of the prayers he wrote for them:

*Father God. You have given me legs to walk. I thank you. Grant that I may run to all the people who are sad to cheer them up. Make me want to help all people and do them the favor they ask of me.*

*Father God. You have given me hands to do many things. I thank you. Grant that I may not keep everything to myself. Grant that I may know how to give my things to others. I write things that I can give to others.*

*Dear God. You have given me the intelligence to think, to know and to understand. I thank you. I am thinking of going to play. I know my parents and my siblings. I understand when my parents scold me and when they hug and smile at me.*

*Dear God. You have done everything for us. I thank you. Let me recognize and understand all the things that are so good and so beautiful that you have created... The stars that shine*

*in the night. The flowers and the fruit. The lamb and the little donkey. The fountain and the river. The rain and the snow. The wheat, the rose and the orange.*

*Father God. We love each other very much. I thank you. I have a great heart, a very great heart. You have given it to me so big, so that I can love you very much. I thank you, Father God. May I love You and all people. I thank you.*

*Lord, teach me to pray. To pray means to talk to God. May I talk to You many times. Praying means listening to God and loving Him very much. May I listen to you in silence so that I can hear you better. Praying means thinking of God and thanking him. Praying means giving our hearts to God. Lord, teach me to pray.*

*God the Father. Thank you for this new day... Thank you for my parents... Thank you for this joy that I share with others... Father God... I want to play with everyone and work hard and well to please you and my friends. Thank you, Lord.*

*Today we offer You, Lord, the work of the day: the dictation, the reading, the accounts and the calligraphy... I count on you, Lord, and on the Virgin Mary.*

*Little Virgin of all children, you who are in heaven and pray for me... If one day your little child is not good, take him in your arms and keep him in you... During the day, when I get up, my first prayer is always for you, and I pray three Hail Marys so that you will not forget me during the day.*

*Little Virgin of all children... The children are waiting for me at school and I will play with plasticine... and I will color the sheet of paper with little boats and clouds, castles and stars.*

*Little virgin of all children... At night when I sleep, come to my bedside, come and kiss me... and in your cloak of clouds and stars, with lots of love, cuddle me.*

*At school, the teacher looks at me with love and helps me... Father God, thank you for my teacher. I have fun playing with my friends. Dear God, thank you for my friends.*

*Dear God. All people are very kind... Everyone takes care of us... the teacher teaches us to sing, to draw, to read, to write... and she never gets tired. Thank you, Lord.*

*She does not want me to be lazy or selfish. She teaches me to forgive and she always forgives me. Thank you, Lord.*

*Father God. I am very happy because you are very good and give me many people who love me. Teach me to always say thank you. I thank you, Lord, because you love me so much... I thank you, Lord, because you give me life, smiles and sunshine. I thank you, Lord, for my friends. I thank you, Lord, for love.*

*Today I ask you, Jesus, for the children who do not know you... for the children who have not received the water of baptism... the water that gives us the life of God. Thank you, Jesus, that I have come to know you. Thank You, Jesus, for making me Your child.*

*Today I ask You, Jesus, to be a missionary in the school and to lead my companions to You... To love them all as brothers and sisters, to always forgive them and never be angry with anyone. I want to be a missionary in the school, helping those who need it and giving them my smile, my joy and my love.*

*I ask You, Jesus, that I love others very much. Not only those who love me very much, but also those who have beaten and scolded me. Not only those in my home or school, but also those around the world. And above all, I ask you to love the children who suffer, who live alone and abandoned and who die of hunger, hunger for bread and hunger for God. I pray to you, Jesus, for the children who do not know you.*

*Jesus, may I look at all children with the eyes of a brother. Jesus, may I get to know you better every day, may I love you more every day, may I not be ashamed to speak of you. Jesus, may I learn to thank you every day. Thank you because we live at home as a family and God is our Father and Mary is our Mother. Thank you because we take so much joy in giving to others. Thank you because we live as a family at school and pray and experience forgiveness with everyone in the playground and in the classroom.*

*Lord Jesus Christ, you want all people to be saved. Hear our wishes: May all people recognize you as the Son of God. May all people greet you as Savior. May all people enter the Church through baptism and receive forgiveness of sins through the sacrament of reconciliation: For this we pray, O Lord. May all people nourish their souls with the body and blood of Christ, we pray, O Lord.*

*O Jesus, you were born as a child so that all children may feel that you love them... We always want to resemble you, in*

*mind and heart, in life. But most of the children who were born with us do not know you yet... they do not know that you are looking and waiting for them. For them we pray to You, Jesus, as for ourselves... Let the Hosanna, which the children of Jerusalem sang to You in your former triumph, resound throughout the world to the glory of your name... And may our tongue sing to You as brother, friend and teacher the praise that the pride of men denies You. Amen (Pius XII).*

*Lord, I want to be like St. Francis Xavier. Where there is the darkness of sin, I want to kindle the light of Jesus. Where there is hatred and war, I want to bring goodness and peace. Where there is sadness and death, I want to sow joy and life. May my study efforts, O Lord, alleviate the suffering of those who sow your word and love; may my small sacrifices help to anchor the cross throughout the world. So be it.*

*Lord, we pray that all people may form the great family of God. Lord, we pray that all people may form one flock and that the Pope may be our shepherd. Lord, you have said that the harvest is plentiful and the laborers few, send missionaries to the unbelievers. Lord, may your blood reach all souls. May all peoples praise you; may all peoples serve you. St. Francis Xavier and Therese of Child Jesus, lead all the unbelievers to the light of the Gospel.*

*God, good Father, we pray to you today for the many heathen people and children who do not know you. You are the King of the continent of Australia. May it know you, Lord. Yours are the children of the mountain ranges and steppes of Asia. May they know you, Lord. The inhabitants of the polar regions are yours. Lead them into the warmth of Your house. The peoples of Africa and America are yours: gather them under your fatherly gaze and send them the gentleness of your grace. So be it.*

*Lord, we commit ourselves to save the poor children who have no faith. The life of the body and above all the life of their soul. Lord, we want for them the water of baptism and the spiritual life of the grace. We are their friends and we love them as brothers and sisters. We want to enter with them into the glory of the Father. Virgin Mary, pray for us and for the poor unfaithful children.*

*Four angels / my bed has / Four angels / who tend it for me /  
Four angels / my table has / Four angels / who tend it / Four  
angels / my plow has / Four angels / for the work / Four angels /  
the cart that carries me / Four angels / move its wheels / But  
only one angel / has my spirit / One angel / the best friend.*

*Jesus. The angels were the first to sing for you when you were born and when you came to us on Christmas night. May my guardian angel in him repeat this song and carry my voice to you when I speak to him: Glory to God in the highest, peace to men on earth, to men of good will...! My will is good, my Jesus, glory be to God, how beautiful is the earth! I thank you for the flowers and the trees, for the birds and the lambs, for the blue sky and the precious stars. I thank you, Lord.*

*My Jesus, I always hear with joy what people say about your life. How grateful I am that you came into this world! You walked the streets, just like me. You saw the flowers and the animals and the beautiful stars. How much you loved us children! And you called us to you. You still do today. Come... here I am. Take me in Your arms and bless me.*

*Arms of my Christ... / with outstretched arms / without any rejection. / Since I have seen you, / there is my embrace, / the side of Christ... / still an open lip, / watering life.../ Since I have seen you, / I have torn open my wounds! / Body of my Christ... / I look at you, / still crucified. / I will sing when / they have removed your nails!*

*My Jesus: Every sadness has an end. You did not remain in the tomb. You have risen again. You have conquered death. Will you teach me never to let myself be defeated? I want to defeat myself when I am angry. I want to defeat myself when I am sad. I want to defeat myself when I suffer. I want to defeat myself when I do not want to study or pray. I want to defeat myself when I am afraid. I want to be courageous like you.*

*May all we do and everything we say please You, my God. May all we say and everything we do please our parents and our friends. At the end of the year, God, our Father, give us the joy of being united very closely with you. Amen.*

*The day begins. May your love, Jesus, fill our hearts. May we help each other. And when evening comes, You, Holy Spirit, Spirit of love, will inspire us with a beautiful prayer. So be it.*

*You see each and every one of us. You bend over the inhabitants of the earth, over us humans, with love. You know everything we do. Together we will always say: You are faithful, O Lord, and great is your love for us. So be it.*

*Blessed are you, Lord. You love us and know us. Not only do you know our name and our face, you also know the secrets*

*of our heart. You know our good sides and, above all, what we lack. You teach us to recognize all that is good and beautiful. Blessed are you, Lord. You love us and know us. So be it.*

*We believe in you, Lord; you love us and forgive us. You know our tantrums, our laziness, our lack of love. We trust in you, Lord. For You love us and forgive us always.*

*Holy Spirit, you are here with me. You make me grow as a child of God. You are here with me... when I pray and when I work... when I play and when I sleep... At home, at school, everywhere, you know I need you to do what Jesus asks of me. You are here with mom and dad, with my brothers and sisters. You are here with everyone. You are with us, and you are making us to grow as children of God.*

*Lord, our God, what wonders you do! Blessed are you for the sun that shines on us. Praise be to you for the water that refreshes us. Glory be to you for the earth that nourishes us. Lord, our God, what wonders you do! Glory and praise be to you for the people who love one another. Glory and praise be to you for the people who forgive one another. Glory and praise be to you for people who seek peace. Lord, our God, what wonders you do!*

*Lord, you have given me hands to work: I thank You. Please teach me to stretch them out to You when I pray and when I sing... Lord, you have given me a mouth to eat: Thank You. Please teach me to always say thanks you with a smile for everything that is given to me and that helps me to grow. Teach me to always say kind and good words to everyone. So be it.*

*Lord, you have given me legs to walk on: Thank you. Teach me to run towards those who are alone in the game and have no friends. So be it.*

*Lord, you have given me eyes to see: Thank you. Please teach me to look around and see what I can do to spread joy. Let it be so.*

*You have given me eyes to see. I thank you. Father God: Let me see what I can do to help others and make them very happy, because they are very good. Let me see the good in everyone and learn to be good. Thank you, Lord!*

*I know that You love me and that You know me by name. I like to draw... I like books that are so beautiful, full of drawings... I want to learn to draw and paint... And finally, teach me to talk to You as Jesus spoke to You when He lived with us on earth. Amen.*

### ***A well-deserved medal***

in 1972, Father Joaquín received a Medal for his pedagogical work from the Union of Educators. He did not attach the slightest importance to it: he believed that the merit of education belonged to everyone. This is how he tells it in his diary:

*On November 10, 1972, I received a letter from Father Ángel Martínez Fuertes, President of the Union of Teaching Centers, informing me that I had been awarded the Union's Bronze Medal for Professional Teaching on the occasion of the feast of Saint Joseph Calasanz. And on the same day, the same message from the President of the National Union of Teachers, Mr. Jesús López-Medel. On this occasion, I have sent them this letter:*

*I accept this award from the teachers' union with emotion and embarrassment. I give it to God and my Holy Father Joseph Calasanz, because it belongs to them. To them and to all my fellow teachers who have promoted my work through their encouragement, their help and their example. I have given myself to the children by vocation to sow virtue and science in the virginal wax of their pure hearts. And with God's grace, I will continue with more illusion and sacrifice myself until He calls me. With my gratitude for this honor, that I do not deserve.*

*To receive it in the patronage of St. Joseph Calasanz, Patron Saint of the Spanish Magisterium and of all the popular Christian schools in the world, I would like to evoke one of the fragrant little flowers of his life:*

*How many innocent children / passed through my nest /  
How many pending buds / on my blooming rosebush! / White  
souls like stars / in the snow on my altar! / If I could make them  
a burning chain... / and attach in their light / the angelic purity  
of Mary, / all anointed of virginal grace!*

## History of a portrait

The portrait of a person is more than just a work of art, it is a spiritual encounter in which the artist and the person portrayed come into contact. If the artist is good, he succeeds in transferring something intimate, genuine and spiritual about the portrayed person to his work. This is what happened when the painter Antonio Eslava, who had been a student of his and knew him, painted his portrait. The painter wanted to keep it, but the former students of Fr. Joaquín persuaded him to sell it to them and they donated it to the school on the occasion of the centenary of its opening. We will share their impressions during this artistic and spiritual adventure.

Father Erviti tells us:

*In response to Antonio Eslava's request, a master painter, that I pose for a portrait in front of him, I tried to please him on September 24<sup>th</sup> of this year. His wife wanted it too. It was a pleasure to watch how Antonio paints while he had a great chat with me.*

*I am sitting and he is standing, brush in hand and next to him on a low table the colors... The canvas of white linen, leaning against the easel, with his back to me. All I can see is the artist, who keeps looking at me and smiling his everlasting smile. When I stand up after an hour and a half, I am stunned by the painting on the canvas, the sketched portrait; I am struck by the colors and the resemblance to the model, even though it is still the first sketch. And amazing for me. He did not use pencils or chalks, just the colors of the brush. He had nothing to erase.*

*I was back in Eslava's studio on the 27<sup>th</sup> from 11 to 12:30 in the morning. The face has gained in authenticity. The congested nose that I had found when I arrived had regained its freshness when I got up from my seat.*



*Today, on September 28<sup>th</sup>, I find the portrait full of nature and life. I believe that Antonio has achieved the most important thing with his magical brush of a master... the head from which the fire of the soul springs, and the serenity of the smile... The overcoat, with harmonious folds and very delicate dark black tones.*

*On September 29<sup>th</sup>, the fourth visit to Eslava... the day of the hands. When I sat down on the armchair and put my hands together on my knee, spontaneously, without the slightest intention, that was enough to make the artist exclaim: "Your hands are very good". And that was enough for the portrait to be considered almost finished that morning.*

*24<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> September. And Antonio Eslava and wife's wish will soon become a reality. In the meantime, the painter will let a few days pass, make a few small corrections and, if necessary, ask me to pose in front of him again, as he needs to look at the painting when the colors are dry.*

*For the artist, the head of the portrayed person must be the focal point of the painting, because there is he wants to draw the viewer's attention to. He therefore contented himself with sketching only the two hands and the wood of the armchair. The bright colors of the painting's luminous background and the dark stripe evoke a joyful soul in the midst of its world of deep inner richness.*

The painter Eslava told about this experience:

*I began to learn more about his life when I asked him to pose for a portrait I wanted to do. He was very amused by the suggestion. We got to work and he started telling me things. As he posed, he moved around a lot. I did this portrait in 1994 - 1995<sup>37</sup>. He did a tremendous amount of introspection. He stopped being Father Joaquín and appeared a Joaquín Erviti with a more baritone voice, more relaxed. The poetry lover told me that he had been in the war, things about his family. As a result of his illness, he moved around a lot, immersed in himself with enormous ease. His posture changed; his voice changed.*

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37 The date is erroneous. The portrait appears in the 1993 Yearbook of the Pious Schools. The diary in which Fr. Erviti writes his impressions is from 1993.

*He had created a personality for himself in front of the children. I discovered another personality in which his voice was more "baritone". He talked about poets, about the world, about the war. He told me that he had been on two fronts with the Republic and then had been in the Battle of the Ebro. He had also been in the interior of the peninsula. He told me all this as if nothing had happened. I think he left this world, leaving all the terrible images he had of the war, the unwanted memory he left here to go to heaven, even cleaner. The children, his students, were always safe from the horrors he experienced. I think he cared all these before the children. He had such devotion to the children that he gave up his identity and adopted the attitude, the tone of voice, even the way he walked, and adapted it to the children's world. With him, I learned the joy of reading, of phantasy and of narration. For me, it was a complete success. He kept the complete balance. Father Joaquín was different from the others in the school. The classroom was beautiful, decorated by the Bartolozzis. I remember that he kept clippings of the hosts and gave them to us because he knew the children liked them. When he entered the classroom, he immediately attracted the attention of all the children. I remember on one occasion when I heard him telling "Ali Baba and the Four Thieves", he not only told but also interpreted, using the cloak, sitting on the table. There was a special attention around him.*

*His hands were delicate, but much stronger than they looked. His face had a look that was hidden behind his eyebrows and the lenses of his glasses. His eyes were two small dots that looked at you demurely and with an air of innocence and sympathy, accompanied by his smile. They conveyed friendliness. He was intelligent and innocent. I traced his personality as I portrayed him. To my surprise, I realized that he had two sides, but one common element, balance, which I perceived in the way he sat, in the stillness of his hand. There was a common place, a balance that allowed him to be Father Joaquín and Joaquín Erviti. I understood the holiness in him. When I painted Father Joaquín, I told another painter named Jesús Lastera about it, and he said to me: "Did you understand his holiness? I answered him: I tried! When I portrayed him, I noticed the balance; he had the physique of a strong man with a tender spirit. I was surprised by his fondness for poetry. His poetry was steeped in dialog for children. He was a man who walked with long strides, but at the same time on tiptoe, on the other hand, as an expression of agility. There was also some-*

*thing theatrical about him that was very effective for children. When I portrayed him, I think he still had a lot of inner life.*

*In his lessons he drew, he used communicative graphics, he drew to communicate. Father Joaquín did not scare the child, he did not frighten him, he did not intimidate him, he did not mark him with a personality. He let the child recognize himself in happiness. All of this makes him a timeless personality for me. He was very unique; everyone who knew him agrees on what I said. A personality who turned to the child with love, with devotion, to the point of symbiosis with him at the level of understanding; but he never imitated the child, he never infantilized himself, so he never ceased to be a point of reference for him. His priestly presence was very pronounced in him. His other personality was the profound Joaquín, the poet. When I did his portrait, he was extremely punctual at the meetings. I had to have several appointments because he moved so much. All of us who knew him are convinced of his holiness. I fully agree that he should be canonized, in the sense that I consider him a "canon" of conduct, a reference to be emulated. I think he was an extraordinary person.*

Camino Paredes, an expert in painting, visited an exhibition by the painter Eslava, which included the portrait of Fr. Erviti. She writes, among other things:

*As soon as I arrived at the exhibition, I noticed an elderly priest in a black cassock, thin, wiry, standing next to me and looking at the paintings with restless attention. I was almost unconsciously attracted by the liveliness of his gaze, hidden behind horn-rimmed glasses, and because this liveliness contrasted with his elderly body (...).*

*Immersed in this world of colors and shapes, I managed to forget the visiting priest, somewhat amazed by this fusion. I went into the second room, where I immediately noticed a large painting which, although it did not occupy the preferred place and despite its austere framing, attracted attention by the strength and proportion of the black, a color that was not very common in the entire exhibition.*

*In front of this particular painting, the first thing that struck me was the sobriety and simplicity of the treatment, as well as the author's choice of a more realistic and introspective style.*

*I also recognized in the person depicted the attentive visitor who had so strongly attracted my attention when I arrived. I liked this because it allowed me to have two images of the same person at the same time, the real one and the one captured by the artist on the canvas. With this double vision, I began to carefully analyze the painting. The father appears seated on a bamboo chair, leaning slightly, looking at the viewer, centering the space and thus breaking a possible sense of weightlessness. The entire background is greenish-blue, except for a vertical black stripe that takes up a little less than the left third and a whitish-gray ground. I was standing in front of a simple painting, with no distracting props to divert attention.*

*I was quickly drawn to his hands and face. The hands, drawn with a loose technique and broad brushstrokes, are delicate but strong, calm yet full of movement. The face, with the same technique but more detailed, furrowed by wrinkles and hindered by the glasses, which nevertheless do not manage to erase the expressiveness of the sparkling, lively and vibrant eyes, balanced and confirmed by the slack and restless chin and the rictus of the stern and friendly lips. The treatment of the face and hands is somewhat surprising: Eslava wanted to capture the character and personality of the Father with the face, leaving the hands in the background, although they are not resigned to remaining idle.*

*The black but well-modeled color of the cassock does not manage to overshadow the light emanating from both the hands and the face. They blend well with the three-part fragmentation of the background, in which the greenish blue, the black and the whitish gray stand side by side, maintaining their independence in a way that is not without symbolism.*

*Precisely because I was interested in the content or meaning of these colors, I took advantage of Eslava's presence in the room to ask him about the reason for these seemingly arbitrary colors. His answer was clear: there is a whole intention behind these tones. Thus, he said that with the greenish blue, he had tried to capture a part of the character's world: his work, the educational work dedicated to children. The sharp black color would symbolize the inner life (and I think at the same time it has a kinship with the black of the cassock, which symbolizes the commitment to the Order and religious life). Finally, with the whitish gray, he wanted to place the Father in an aerial world, where the snow becomes the carpet on which the figure*

*is supported. A color that, in my opinion, represents the greatest contribution to the subjectivity of Eslava, the artist who not only paints a portrait, but recreates the image of a person close to him: his childhood teacher.*

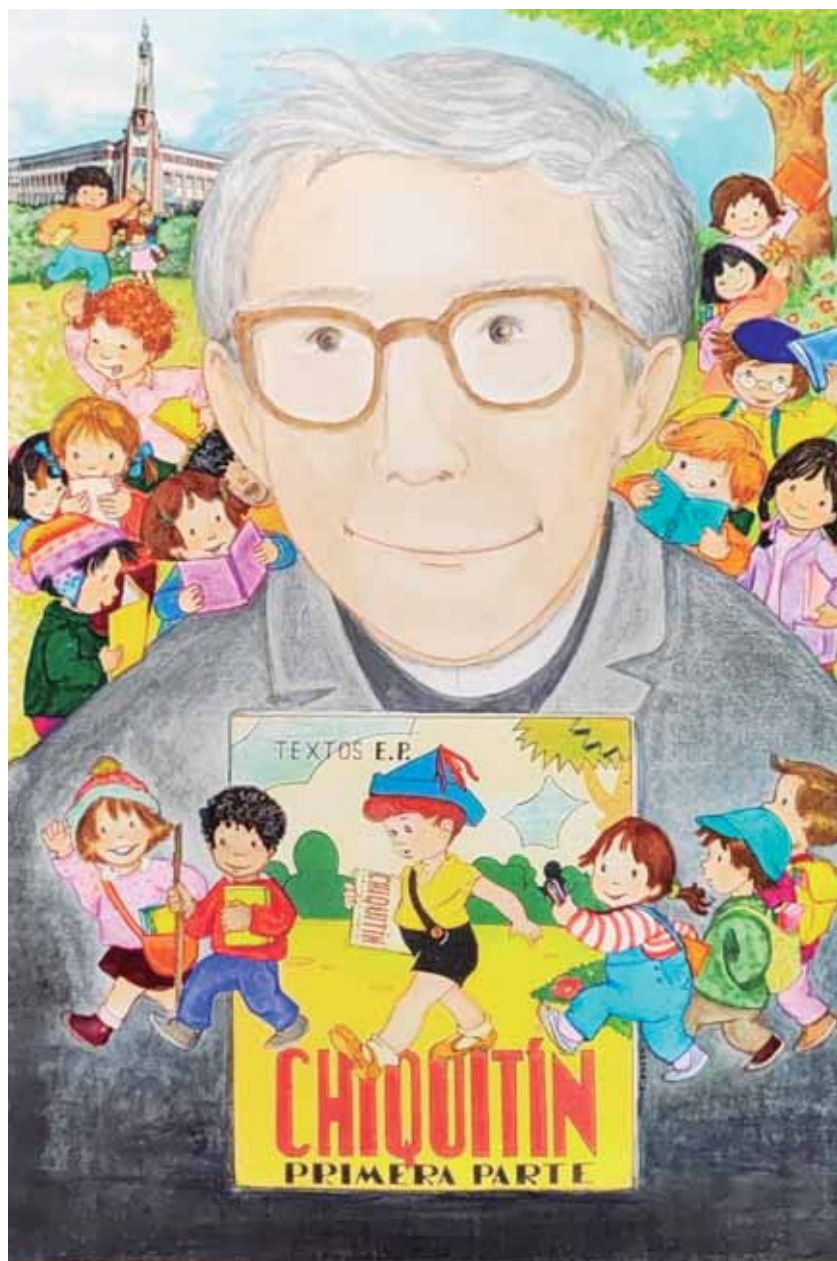
*The painting is balanced in its entirety, despite the shock caused by the colors, which nevertheless manage to create a suggestive atmosphere that embraces the figure that becomes the protagonist of the work and achieves such a personality that it can even make us forget the author.*

After meeting Camino, Father Joaquín dedicated some verses to her, dated December 9, 1984:

*I do not know you, Camino, / but seeding goodness... / You are enraptured by painting / and your pen is an orange blossom, / when you write and draw / they are an incomparable delicacy.*

*Fill your life with flowers; / do good without fainting... / Be modest, humble, and active, / when you paint and study. / Your two best friends: / Prayer and home.*

*In the snow of this Christmas, / my affection made song.*



## **Subsequent testimonies**

### ***Fr. Pedro Aguado, Superior General of the Pious Schools***

#### ***Memories of Fr. Joaquín***

Father Joaquín Erviti Lazcano Sch.P., known to all as “Father Joaquín”, died in March 1999 in Pamplona, in his beloved Calasanz School in Calle Olite. He was 86 years old at the time. He had dedicated most of his Piarist life to the children, the ‘kindergarten class’ of the school, which is still preserved today as he left it, with those precious paintings that made the children’s eyes light up when they entered his classroom.

I never lived in the same community with him, but I had known him since I was a junior, when I took my first steps as a teacher in Pamplona school. He was present at my ordination to the priesthood in Pamplona. I often talked to him, especially every October 12, his birthday, when I would go to his room and talk to him for a while. Several times I received the sacramental pardon from his hands. As Provincial, I had the honor of presiding at his funeral in the school church he loved so much. I already knew that I was celebrating the funeral of a saint.

I remember that when we buried him in the Pantheon of the Piarists in Pamplona cemetery, one of the assistants, father of a family with students at the school and also a former student of Fr. Joaquín, looked at me and spontaneously said, “This one, right on the pedestal”. It is impossible to express in a more graphic way the feeling that we all had. Father Joaquín was a saint, a Piarist saint, a simple and good man who transmitted the love of God.

There is an image that expresses in a precious way who Father Joaquín was, and that all of us who were with him at school saw frequently. At that time, the students always walked through the school corridors in lines. They were orderly and quiet corridors, well-guarded by the watchful eye of the “prefect” (later renamed “coordinator”) and the efforts of the individual teachers.

But from time to time, Father Joaquín appeared in the corridor. At that moment, the students always broke the line and went up to Father Joaquín to kiss his hand. Many Piarists passed by this corridor (we were more than twenty religious at the school), but this only happened when Father Joaquín appeared. The children’s teachers said nothing; they simply waited for their students to return to the classroom because they knew that nothing could prevent this “holy and Piarist disorder” caused by the children’s love for this humble and simple priest who welcomed them to the school when they were little children and entered the school for the first time.

Father Joaquín was unique. In the penitential celebrations we held with the students, his line was always the longest, because many of the boys wanted to confess to him because he instilled so much confidence in them. His sobriety and gentleness were commonplace, as it was his intelligence in knowing us all and saying a word of peace and greeting. Once a year, the literature teacher at the High School would bring him into his class when it was time to talk about Juan Ramón Jiménez, because he knew that no one like Father Joaquín - poet and deep connoisseur of Spanish poetry - could get the students to like his “Platero y yo” (Platero and I).

The news of his death moved many people, as Pamplona is a city where many of his former students lived and where he was loved and appreciated by everyone. When the deadline set by Canon Law expired, I had the privilege of asking the then Archbishop of Pamplona, D. Fernando Sebastian, to open the diocesan phase of his canonization Process. There were many witnesses who participated in this Process and gave their testimony of Father Joaquín’s holiness. The kindergarten and primary school teachers who had worked with him told me with joy and emotion: *“I am deeply moved to have worked as an educator with a saint”*.

I am fully confident that one day we will see the canonization of Fr. Joaquín, a Piarist saint with a profoundly Calasanzian soul, a hum-

ble and credible witness of God's preferential love for children. We know that the Lord has given the children the keys to the kingdom of heaven ("only those who are like them will enter the kingdom of heaven"). That is why I am sure that Father Joaquín is there with them, because he has always accompanied them everywhere. Amen.

*Fr. Pedro Aguado Sch. P.*  
*Father General of the Order of the Pious Schools*

### ***Fr. Jesús Elizari, Provincial of Emmaus***

Studying with the Piarists of Pamplona-Iruña in my time, when I entered in the academic year 1970/71 at the age of 6, meant that I got to know Father Joaquín when he was 58 years old. He seemed very old to us then, with a certain timeless aura that his cassock and his way of being gave him.

And then all the experiences I had as a student for twelve years, and later the years as a Piarist in the other community of the town, that of the younger Piarists.

And it is true, the memory of the school is linked to that of Father Joaquín. With his presence, his way of being, the many anecdotes... with a certain special respect, linked to the collective conviction that we were dealing with a unique person, a sensitive and refined educator, a Piarist whom we all respected and loved.

I choose four memories, childhood experiences that left their mark on me;

- They could be in the first courses, the first or second of elementary school. The moments of silence in the classroom. A few minutes of silence between activities, where we rested on the same table, leaning on our arms, half in silence, half in the echo of his words. Today we would call it relaxation, with a touch of visualization... I think I later tried to imitate his style as a teacher. I remember that it was a pleasant experience and with an added bonus: at the end of this moment-activity, one of us -every day a different one- found a piece of fruit next to him that Father Joaquín had left us. I remember very well the day I found

an orange... Then she invited us to pray and give thanks for that moment...

- First Communion. I am sure that many of us remember this moment as a real religious experience. The preparation, the moment of “the poem” that had to be said “in a silver voice”, the celebration itself. It was 1972, and some traditions had passed, some formalisms were beginning to be questioned, and our communion combined “classical style” with authenticity.
- Poems and stories in the classroom. Certainly, the most common and original remembrance. His way of telling biblical passages and reciting poems - we did not know, at the time, that many of them were his - while he drew on the blackboard. The stories came to life, and the poems and tales amused us. I still remember one of them by heart, the one about Serafin the cat. Did he tell it several times? Did he ask us to learn it? I did not find it in his papers (I wrote it down so as not to forget it). There was something light-hearted about it, as if it had been daring for him..., I do not know if anyone noticed the certain mischievousness of Father Joaquín in many of his comments and appreciations...
- And the experience that has been most useful for me in my life after the story. The most valuable. As with so many things, I have discovered its depth and meaning over the years. To contemplate the cross of the Lord in adversity and in hard times. To rest in it. One of the times I drew on this comfort as an adult, I remembered who had taught it to me, with what words... and it helped me to give deepness to the memory of my childhood.

As I write, it occurs to me that it would be a good exercise to enrich those memories among all of us who knew him. Surely the personal experiences will surprise us as well as the coincidences.

Also to discover that near Father Joaquín, there was a community that enriched our lives, even in less easy moments, in the airs of adolescence and early youth, that continued to accompany us, giving

us their time, offering us experiences ... Piarists, whose lives we will not write about, of whom we may not empathize so much, but to whom we owe much of what we are. They knew how to show us the best sides of life, the face and the traces of a God who is not visible at all in some environments. I would like to write down their names here, their story... in the conviction that they are already written in the book of the Lord of life.

### ***Fr. Juan Ruiz, rector of the community of San Fermín in Pamplona-Iruña***

Father Joaquín would appear from time to time in our third grade classroom, telling us stories, sitting in his chair in the middle and telling us... I cannot remember exactly what, but sometimes about the war... It was always an “expectant” moment because we knew this man was special (he was not very old then, but the attitude of the priests of that time made them “elders” (if we liked them), “old” if they belonged to the other guild. I remember our tutor at the time talking to us about him with admiration... I remember him telling us how he asked him how he could understand “the Trinity” and that he had talked to him about “the three plates together”.... At the end of those sessions, he gave a small gift (a ruler, a prayer card...) which we assumed would fall to the most attentive of us, but we all did and hoped - at least I did - that the gift would fall to me. I never received it. But in one of the missals kept in my mother’s house, there is a little prayer card and on the back it says “Gift from Father Joaquín” with a child’s handwriting; my mother had received it from the child from the house where she worked - we would say today - as a “housemaid”.

Father Joaquín was the “revered one”, the only priest we kissed the hand. My friends jokingly said he would put on perfume so we would go; he was special. When I was a boy, we used to come to the courtyard on Sundays to play ball and the sacristan would take us to be altar boys at Father Joaquín’s mass; I remember bringing the communion or viaticum with him to another Piarist, I think Father Casiano Ocariz... I accompanied him with a lighted candle. Once I asked him about the symbols of each evangelist for the religious education assignment and he brought them to me written on a piece of paper.

At C.O.U. (Pre-University Course), the literature teacher would bring Father Joaquín in, from time to time, to talk to us about poetry; we were very attentive, it was Father Joaquín: one of those hooligans who are always there wanted to make noise and a friend of mine stood up two seats back and shook him, saying, “You do not do that with Father Joaquín”.

Already a Piarist, I returned to Pamplona at the age of twenty-two to study theology; I worked in the afternoons at the school, as a tutor and teacher of the seventh grade of E.G.B. (Primary School) and in those years we began to notice the beginning of his decline, because that custom he had of going through the classes telling stories, making biblical drawings while he narrated, he began to go to those older classes... and it was no longer appropriate to make those drawings in those years. Or he came to remember who he had confessed to write down their names.

Everyone you met, when you talked about the school, they would remember his name as the best in the school and ask about him.

Among his Piarist brethren, he might be considered naïve or innocent (which he was not). One Piarist of those who knew him well said, “Father Joaquín also carries his cross”; and I always thought he was referring to the coarseness of the Piarist environment that surrounded him, someone with such a cultured and elegant spirit, but without attachments, in maximum simplicity and plainness, surrounded by those “men” who, as he wrote in his diary, “... Christmas Eve, the Fathers drink, smoke and play cards... little Christmas atmosphere”. In that diary, which I could see in the photocopier in Father Echarri’s hands, I also read how he had gone to confess a child student of the school because he was dying of leukemia; I remember his death very well because we were on the school bus together.

We knew that he was not only pedagogically, but also literarily and theologically clever; on his bookshelf were the books of H. Kung and also the later censored book “Human Sexuality; New Perspectives on Catholic Thought”. One day he told me how he had left one of H. Kung’s books to Father Leorza (this Father, whom we mocked in philosophy classes, told us that it was full of heresies) and he did not give it back to him, not daring to claim it, “I will look naïve if

I read those theologians”. He was very interested in moral issues because he was a sought-after “confessor” to diocesan priests and nuns. I remember the friendly picture of one of those priests, Casimiro Saralegui, a very abertzal priest with “seersucker” pants and big beret, walking with Father Joaquín in his modest habit to one of the bookstores in town.

Every day, Antonio Eslava, the most famous painter in the city, passes in front of our house and wanted to paint him in a canvas. When he came to vote in the elections, I was at the polling station. I told him that the day before I had shown his painting of Fr. Joaquín to several people; he told me that he told to another painter, his friend, that he had painted it and he said, “You have already expressed his holiness! About this painter Eslava, I remember how one of the judges of the Diocesan Tribunal who heard the testimonies, Julio Gorricho - our professor of Church History - said to me: “One of the testimonies that impressed me the most was A. Eslava’s answer to the question “Where did he see his holiness? “In his gaze”.

We knew that he was a saint, and so I remember that José Mari Ciauriz - the most lively, intelligent and quick Piarist; the most human and reasonable I have ever known, the best provincial - confirmed it with a powerful and confident voice when the speaker Fernando Negro asked us, “... was he a saint?”. “Of course,” declared José Mari with his powerful voice and tone.

### ***Raúl González, Provincial Delegate of Presencia Emaús***

I remember the feeling of joy, of pleasant surprise, of illusion, when coming back from the break, we entered the class and found Father Joaquín drawing on the blackboard... “*Good! Father Joaquín has come!*” (we said quietly to each other... the 45 kindergarten children in that class...) It was the 82-83 school year, my first year at school. I was 5 years old... Father Joaquín was in his 70s....

There was silence. Father Joaquín did not greet us... As if he had not heard that we had arrived... He continued drawing, with his back to us... We all sat down on the floor... And we tried to guess the final result of the drawing... At first the strokes were soft, the chalk lines were barely visible... From time to time, Father Joaquín would take a few steps back to take a closer look at the picture... And when

he had finished the drawing, he went over it again, this time with a bold stroke... I remember the intense white of the chalk, which stood out against the black background of the blackboard... And we could see the result of the drawing more and more clearly... And when he had finished, Father Joaquín turned around, looked at us and smiled at us... Without saying anything... That was his greeting... And I smiled... I smiled at him... And the rest of the kindergarten children, I am sure, too... I remember his face... As a child, I always felt safe and secure in his face, I knew I was with a good man... And in his gestures, I also discovered other nuances that I did not know how to put into words... But they made me laugh, I liked them, especially when he told us stories... Now, as an adult, forty years later, I would call him a rascal, a crook... With that charisma, that magnetism that a good teacher has, a good teacher, for a tender age... He was a great kindergarten teacher, a special man for the little ones... Like Calasanz...

He always told us stories... He captured our attention with a tremendous ability... I was impressed when he wrote words in pencil with a calligraphy that seemed unique and perfect to me... I thought to myself: Will he write like that in his notebooks...? Will I learn to write with such beautiful handwriting...?

And he taught us to pray... I liked it... He gave us prayer cards, he helped us to make the sign of the cross well... We always walked by his side to practice... Some days some, and other days others... We all wanted it... He told us stories about Jesus... And he was moved when he did... An contagious emotion with which he managed to make us understand the essence of what he said and lived; and we enjoyed those moments with him very much... And he with us...

Just one year with Fr. Joaquín... My year as a kindergarten student... And a special imprint...

I remember this halo of kindness that he radiated, like a kind grandfather, like a man of God... *“Good! Father Joaquín has come!”*

## Conclusion

The painter Antonio Eslava tried to capture the holiness of Fr. Joaquín Erviti in his portrait... The experts in painting (and in spirituality) will say if he succeeded or not.

With my many limitations, I have tried to do the same in the previous pages. I do not know if I have come very close or not very close to my objective; the reader will decide.

I speak, of course, of the holiness that normal people, the people, the children, detect and sing of; the Church will decide later whether there is also in him the official holiness, that of the altars of the churches (because of the altar of his heart each one is master and lord).

Selecting some of the pages written by Father Joaquín, I have tried to capture something of his personality; those who knew him will say that I have fallen short in some aspects, or have ignored others. I am sorry; that is as far as the available texts have allowed me to go. I believe that some elements of his personality have been made clear: his deep love for God and Our Lady; his exemplary religious and priestly life; his unconditional dedication to children; his pedagogical mastery; the tenderness of his soul, which was expressed in poems... All this makes Father Joaquín Erviti an exemplary choice, worthy of being known and imitated in what can be imitated.

And let us not lose sight of the fact that when we honor one of our own, we are honoring the whole Pious Schools, our carism, the legacy of St. Joseph Calasanz.









