

CALASANCTIAN JUBILE YEAR . JULY 16, 2017

CELEBRATION IN THE PRAYER DAY
FOR THE GIFT OF
HOLINESS IN THE
PIOUS SCHOOLS



INTRODUCTION

Pope Clement XIII with the bull “*Admirabilis sane*” proclaimed Blessed Joseph Calasanz a Saint in 1767. His canonization took place on July 16 of the same year along with other Saints: St. Jan Kanty, St. Joseph Cupertino, St. Geronimo Emiliano, St. Firmino di Ascoli di Monte Granario and St. Joan Francis Frémiot of Chantal. As Fr. Severino Giner writes in his book *San José de Calasanz*: “In this day appeared to for the second time in the lavish glory of Bernini the figure of Calasanz. And - the Chronicles say - that night was lit up with typical torches the dome, the façade and the colonnade of the Vatican Basilica. It was the final apotheosis, the ultimate glorification”.

Recalling this event and the life of our Holy Father as a path to holiness, we seize this day for a moment of reflection on our life and the invitation to be holy, asking at the same time the gift of Holiness in the Pious Schools.

THE WORD OF GOD

“Be holy, for I, the LORD your God, am holy”. (Lev 19,2)

“You should put away the old self of your former way of life, corrupted through deceitful desires, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new self, created in God’s way in righteousness and holiness of truth.” (Eph 4,22-24)

“This is the will of God, your holiness: that you refrain from immorality, that each of you know how to acquire a wife for himself in holiness and honor, not in lustful passion as do the Gentiles who do not know God; not to take advantage of or exploit a brother in this matter, for the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you before and solemnly affirmed. For God did not call us to impurity but to holiness. (1 Tes, 4,3-7)

“So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Mt 5,48).

WORDS OF THE CHURCH

From the dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, chapter V, Universal Vocation to Holiness in the Church

The classes and duties of life are many, but holiness is one—that sanctity which is cultivated by all who are moved by the Spirit of God, and who obey the voice of the Father and worship God the Father in spirit and in truth. These people follow the poor Christ, the humble and cross-bearing Christ in order to be worthy of being sharers in His glory. Every person must walk unhesitatingly according to his own personal gifts and duties in the path of living faith, which arouses hope and works through charity.

Therefore, all the faithful of Christ are invited to strive for the holiness and perfection of their own proper state. Indeed they have an obligation to so strive, whatever be the conditions, duties and circumstances of their lives—and indeed through all these, will daily increase in holiness, if they receive all things with faith from the hand of their heavenly Father and if they cooperate with the divine will. In this temporal service, they will manifest to all men the love with which God loved the world..

From the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Vita Consecrata*, chapter IV, Guided by the Spirit of Holiness, ‘Transfigured’ existence: called to Holiness

Holy men and women have always been the source and origin of renewal in the most difficult circumstances throughout the Church’s history. Today we have a tremendous need of saints,

The Church has always seen in the profession of the evangelical counsels a special path to holiness. The very expressions used to describe it — the school of the Lord’s service, the school of love and holiness, the way or state of perfection — indicate the effectiveness and the wealth of means which are proper to this form of evangelical life, and the particular commitment made by those who embrace it.

Today a renewed commitment to holiness by consecrated persons is more necessary than ever, also *as a means of promoting and supporting every Christian's desire for perfection*. „It is therefore necessary to inspire in all the faithful a true longing for holiness, a deep desire for conversion and personal renewal in a context of ever more intense prayer and of solidarity with one's neighbour, especially the most needy”.

From the message of Pope Francis in the Calasanctian Jubilee Year:

On the anniversary we celebrate and you will live as *Calasanctian Jubilee Year*, I hope you will remember what you are and what you are called to be. I ask the Lord to grant you to live those dispositions that made your Founder a saint. In this way, the Pious Schools will be what San Calasanz wanted and what children and young people need.

Words of St. Joseph Calasanz and from our Rules

Woe to the religious who want more health than Holiness!

The servant of Christ seeks to be holy and does not want to appear so.

[The Piarist religious] By his incorporation into the Order, he contracts the obligation of assuming the lifestyle of Calasanz himself, and of acquiring the virtues that most helped him to attain holiness: love and contemplation of Christ crucified, devotion to Mary, humility and poverty, simplicity of life, patience, respect for persons, fidelity to the Church and the Sovereign Pontiff, and an attitude of permanent conversion. (*Rules*, 36)

Fr. General's reflection on his Salutatio of December 2016

What made Calasanz a Saint? This question would give matter for a book, but I think that it also can be explained shortly, especially if the protagonist himself explains it. We can approach the response from many points of view, but I have chosen the one provided by the letter 1236 that Calasanz writes to a Piarist of Naples. I chose it because I believe it summarizes in a wonderful way what Calasanz wanted to live, what he lived and what he wants us to live.

“The briefest and easiest street or way to be exalted to self knowledge and from it to the attributes of mercy, prudence and infinite patience and goodness of God is lowering oneself to give light to the children, and in particular to those who are as abandoned by all, because since this is a low and vile trade to the eyes of all, few want to get down to it, and often God gives a hundredfold, especially if doing it well, we suffer persecution or trials in which, if taken with patience from the hand of God, there is hundredfold of spirit”.

In the first place, Calasanz wants us to live **a deep experience of God**, which will help us to experience in our heart how God loves us: with mercy, prudence, and infinite patience and kindness. Calasanz wants this experience for each Piarist, because only that can make of us witnesses of that love among the children and youth to whom we are dedicated. Piarist life style is not simply the result of the nature of each (which always helps or hinders, of course), but the depth from which we live our being children of God, which produces fruits of love and goodness, because we feel that we receive love and goodness. Only in that way we can pass on the love of God. And just for this reason.

Secondly, **Calasanz proposes us lowering**. Lowering ourselves in order to bring light to children, especially the most underprivileged. In a world like ours, where the temptation of “climbing” is rampant, Calasanz proposes us “lowering”. It is a spiritual dynamism, be sure of that. Not to search any own purpose, no recognition, no promotion. Searching only “to be at the height of children”. Calasanz is aware that “very few want it”, because the human tendency is the opposite. It is very clear that “in the eyes of the world” his project is “low and vile”.

The spiritual dynamic that Calasanz proposes is kenotic. It is therefore profoundly Christian. Any responsibility that we are entrusted with, any recognition we receive, any feedback that others may have of us, any charge that we assume, everything is useless, unless we experience it from this spiritual dynamism. This is one of the more profound Calasanctian truths.

One of the fruits of the Calasanzian Jubilee Year that I expect the most is that we grow in our understanding of this proposal of Calasanz: *lowering to illuminate*. There is no other way. We are talking about one of the keys in which most we have to help each other, because the temptation to “climbing” is still present in our lives. Never forget that.

Calasanz speaks to us, thirdly, of the difficulties, which he calls “tribulations and persecutions”. We all know what this means, because we all have the experience that things are not always easy and not always go well. But the proposal of Calasanz is deeper, and I express it clearly: ***the Piarist gives his life for children and youth, for the assignment received***. He is giving it every day, and every day he wears, from the verb to wear, for the cause to which he decided to consecrate himself. And in this daily giving himself, in this “positive wearing”, lived from God, shared with the brothers and experienced with deep joy, is the “hundredfold” of which the Gospel speaks and that Calasanz recalls.

INTERCESSIONS

For children to grow up in Piety and Letters,

Lord, give us Holy Piarists.

For the youth to know and follow Christ,

Lord, give us Holy Piarists.

For the adults, that they make up their lives according to the law of God,

Lord, give us Holy Piarists.

That they bear witness to the truth as cooperators,

Lord, give us Holy Piarists.

That they preach Christ, and a crucified Christ,

Lord, give us Holy Piarists.

That they guide us to God under the protection of Mary, Queen of the Pious Schools,

Lord, give us Holy Piarists.

For the Piarist communities, that they become places of fraternal love,

Lord, give us Holy Piarists.

For the people of God to grow in faith, hope and love,

Lord, give us Holy Piarists.

FINAL PRAYER

God, our Father, we praise you and we thank you for the gift of the holiness of our Holy Father Joseph Calasanz, for his example of life, in humility, perseverance and love, which led him to the Father's House to be Saint among the Saints.

We ask you for the gift of Holiness in the Pious Schools so that we can be effective tools in the sanctification of souls according to our Piarist Ministry. Help us to make our communities places of sanctification, to seek and fulfill the will of God. Help us to live our vocation in fullness and joy, being authentic disciples and witnesses of the Lord who is holy and wants us to be also holy Amen.

ANNUS
IUBILÆI
SCHOLARUM
PIARUM

400 ANNI
1617-2017