



Final document of the Piarist Youth Synod of Europe

Piarist Synod
—www.piaristsynod.org—



EUROPE Salamanca (Sp)

Salamanca, July 29 to August 3, 2018:

Introduction:

The Order of the Piarists, in connection with the whole Church and listening to the call of the Spirit, designed an itinerary for the *Piarist Youth Synod* in four phases: local, provincial, continental and world. The continental meetings of America, Africa, Asia and Europe took place at the same time between July 30 and August 3, 2018. The European meeting was held in Salamanca with the participation of a total of 70 young people from the different Piarist Provinces of Europe (Austria, Catalonia, Bethany, Slovakia, Emmaus, Hungary, Italy, Poland). Despite cultural and language differences (seven different in total), it has been a joy to see the great participation, mutual learning and understanding, the ability to work and discern in mixed groups and to share many moments together, also of fun and prayer.

Next, we share the reflection we have done together in our Synod, our hearts open to the action of the Spirit and in connection with the 'piaristness' that we all share. We divided the conclusions into four sections:

1. Discoveries and opportunities offered to us by the Piarist Youth Synod.
2. The European youth reality that we observe as common for all, despite the differences between the countries.
3. The challenges we find that exist for us young people, for the Order and for the Church.
4. The practical proposals that we want to make, to respond to these challenges.



Discoveries and opportunities offered to us by the Piarist Youth Synod

The Synod has generated great interest among young people, since it has been a call to reflection on our own reality and the whole Church. This is something very significant because, in a world like the West, in which the Church seems to be losing interest, this has been our main theme. The Synod has led young people to think and talk about the Church and our role in it: we can coordinate projects, lead movements in our presences, etc.

In short: it has *empowered* us and has given us *Church awareness*. It has helped us to know each other more, to know more about the Church, to know ourselves part of it and to dream about the changes that we would like to bring about. It has made us see that we are *protagonists*, also in our Piarist reality. We have managed to assess our capacity to contribute, express our opinion and enrich this reality. It has also helped us to internalize our trajectory in the *Piarist world* and to realize that it is *in our hands*, to feel Piarists and to dream as active agents of the dream and mission of Calasanz.

All our reflection has been done from two perspectives: what we want to *ask*, but also what *we can offer*. And we are part of that Church to which we ask for changes, that is, *we are Church* and as such, *we have to be the change we want to bring about*.

Finally, we emphasize that we want this document to be the fruit of the reflection of *all the young people of the Piarist environment in Europe*. In the Synod we have done a common work, knowing that, although there are differences between us, what unites us is *much greater*, and that in all languages, we can speak with one voice of the wonders that God does in us (Acts 2, 5). Therefore, we invite you to read the text with an open heart, pray and meditate it internally and, although some parts you do not live fully in your environment, feel it as yours and you can translate it into your specific Piarist realities.



Our youth reality:

Who are we? How do we young people see ourselves?

1. We young people, are looking for *new forms of participation and leadership*, either in existing projects or in new projects that we develop.
2. We young people, do not believe that faith is something *uniform*, but we consider it *liquid*; i.e. each person has a different vision of it and seeks to find their own way and how to grow in it.
3. *Society and the Church have to go hand in hand*. Due to the changes that have taken place in society, we believe that the Church should adapt to it without leaving aside the values that characterise her.
4. We believe that a challenge for the world should be *the search for the common* among such diversity.
5. We need to *be informed of the injustices* that take place in the world, so that we can undertake transformative actions and thus be coherent with the message that Jesus transmits to us.
6. *Community life* is an important element that makes a difference in our lives and helps us remember the way of life we have chosen.

Our needs, our big questions and what we expect from the faith:

Through the methodology of the *problem tree*, we arrived to these conclusions on this topic:

1. **We seek a Church with which we can feel identified.** In her, we would like to increase our faith, living in group/community, and thus have more happiness, empathy, sensitivity and enthusiasm.
2. One of the central themes is the need for **our Church to evolve towards respect and tolerance**, welcoming everyone unconditionally (without making differences of gender, sexuality, etc.).
3. **We look for references** that can give us **testimony** of their personal experience, and help us live our faith, so that we can be *salt and light* in the world (Mt 5:13). We link this **to the need to feel accompanied**; *How will we live our faith without accompaniment?*
4. Some of the most important *fruits* we want to give are **the commitment and permanence to transform the world with bravery and courage**, allowing us to *fight* for our faith and values.
5. The final conclusion of the dynamic was that for us a fundamental value is the **availability to serve with humility**.



What can give faith to young people?

1. We young people feel that through faith, *we can feel accompanied by God* in all the moments of our lives. It gives us strength and courage to move forward in the complicated moments of life.
2. Faith gives us *confidence* in God. God loves and supports us.
3. Faith helps us *find the love of God*.
4. Faith gives a *purpose* to our live. Our life has meaning, *sense*, from the Gospel. This search for meaning can be reverted in society, thus feeling us sent to the mission. In short: faith guides us in the search for our deepest *vocation*.
5. Through *the glance of faith*, we feel the impulse to *change ourselves and our world*.

What can young people give to the Church? At the Synod of Salamanca, we young people have been able to find a space of leadership that we can continue over time:

1. We can be *the salt and the light of the world*. May our life be a testimony of fraternity for other people who may not

have another way of knowing the Gospel.

2. We live *tolerance and respect*. These values relate to the ability to listen to the one who doesn't think like you. We, the new generations, can speak with respect despite the differences.
3. We dream of an *inclusive Church* that can welcome those who are different and are part of her; Welcome everyone without looking at condition, gender, sexuality, etc. A Church that does not exclude, but *embraces*.
4. We have a *special sensitivity towards equality between men and women*. We seek a more representative role for women in the Church.
5. We want to be an *active part* of the Church, with a positive and proactive attitude.
6. We seek to be *authentic and honest with ourselves*. For this, we are aware that we have to know ourselves better.
7. *We raise an essential question: how will we young people live the faith if we do not have an accompaniment?* We see that it is necessary to discover the faith of those who are a reference for us. Without those close references, it is difficult for us to do it.

Challenges

After talking about the current reality of our youth, and knowing the preparatory process of the different Provinces for the Synod, we were working in groups on the *challenges* we see for young people, for our Order and for the Church. Here we summarize the more than 40 challenges that we raised at the Piarist Youth Synod in Europe.

...FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



In the social networks and on the Web page www.piaristsynod.org, you can see the mobilization that has been in all our Order and you can consult the elaborated documents. In the annexes section we collect some of the initiatives that have been developed in different places of the Order, as well as the development of the demarcational and continental meetings.

1. *To live* in coherence to be able to transmit everything that we are experiencing here outside the Synod and to start putting it into practice from now on in our daily life, both with Christian people and with those who are not.
2. *To spread* our experience to other young people and to learn more testimonies that enliven our faith.
3. *To discover* the common points of our spirituality and style of prayer and empower them. Each one has to be able to discover their journey of faith and prayer, using, in a creative way, diverse tools (even that are *online* and then share them).
4. *Be part* of the Piarist Christian communities, centred on the Eucharist, on a regular basis (with commitment), to support each other in an effective way. We are called to be witnesses of faith in non-believing environments.
5. *To seek* the encounter with God in our lives, being courageous and without fear to show our faith.

...FOR THE PIARIST ORDER

1. *Connection and communication* between Piarist provinces and countries to enrich all the members of the Order. We think it is necessary to develop it.
2. That in each of the different provinces throughout the world we have *the same possibilities and ways* of participating in the life of the Order (volunteering, Calasanz Movement, Fraternity, etc.).
3. To have *clear and close references* to open the heart through person-



al accompaniment. Both Piarists and lay people who can be our monitors and we, young people, have the confidence to open up to them without fear.

4. To teach young and older *the diversity of the Piarist mission*, encouraging the laity to share their mission in order to continue the Piarist mission in the future.
5. Encourage young people *to be committed people*, despite the difficulties, so that they remain in the Piarist environment.

...FOR THE CHURCH

1. We value *the voice* that has been offered to us in this Synod. We would like to continue to have our voice valued from now on.
2. To realize that the Church is *a plural community with different ideas and sensitivities*, but that is united around Jesus. In this way, we can form a more open and egalitarian Church.
3. To encourage *non-Christian people to participate* and have the opportunity to know the Church better
4. We ask for *greater communication* with the highest spheres and transparency on the part of the Church, in order to obtain accurate information. The new media and Social Networks can help.
5. Make *all people part of the Church*, especially those who are or feel marginalized. This can help us reflect more and create a Church according to the times in topics such as the role of women in her, homosexual people, new types of families, etc.



Proposals to act:

After presenting the challenges, we distributed them among the groups to think about *proposals for the future*, proposals for action in line with the first. The twenty proposals that were made were voted by the Provinces and grouped according to the result of the vote. Each Province had 10 points and they had to distribute them between 4 and 10 proposals.

PROPOSALS WITH MORE THAN 6 VOTES:

1. It would be convenient **to improve relations between Provinces** so that young people of all ages can see the magnitude of the *Piarist movement* and that there are many people like them. For example, more shared encounters such as work camps, volunteering, camps, etc... In this way we can reflect the unity of the Calasanz Movement
2. **Strengthen the rhythm of existing international meetings** to increase our Calasanzian identity and to discover our vocation. For the Spanish provinces: participate in the meetings of Central Europe (PYM; *Piarist Youth Meeting*).
3. **Promote personal accompaniment**, so that young people know that they can be accompanied and even have religious life as a possible option in their life. Take steps to reinforce this in our Provinces with training, specific times and concrete persons who have experience in it.
4. **Calasanz Movement:** extend it to the whole Order as a unique pastoral project and instrument to grow, learn to pray and discover what God wants from us in him. In a way that leads to Fraternity and Piarist lives, both religious and secular.
5. We need **experiences that make us discover and live in the “Trastéveres” of our realities**. There we would like to find the way to be Piarists in the world. For example: Itaka-Piarists can help us in this.
6. To make **Eucharist or prayers more didactic and participative** but without ever losing the depth of the message and in which young people can help to prepare them.

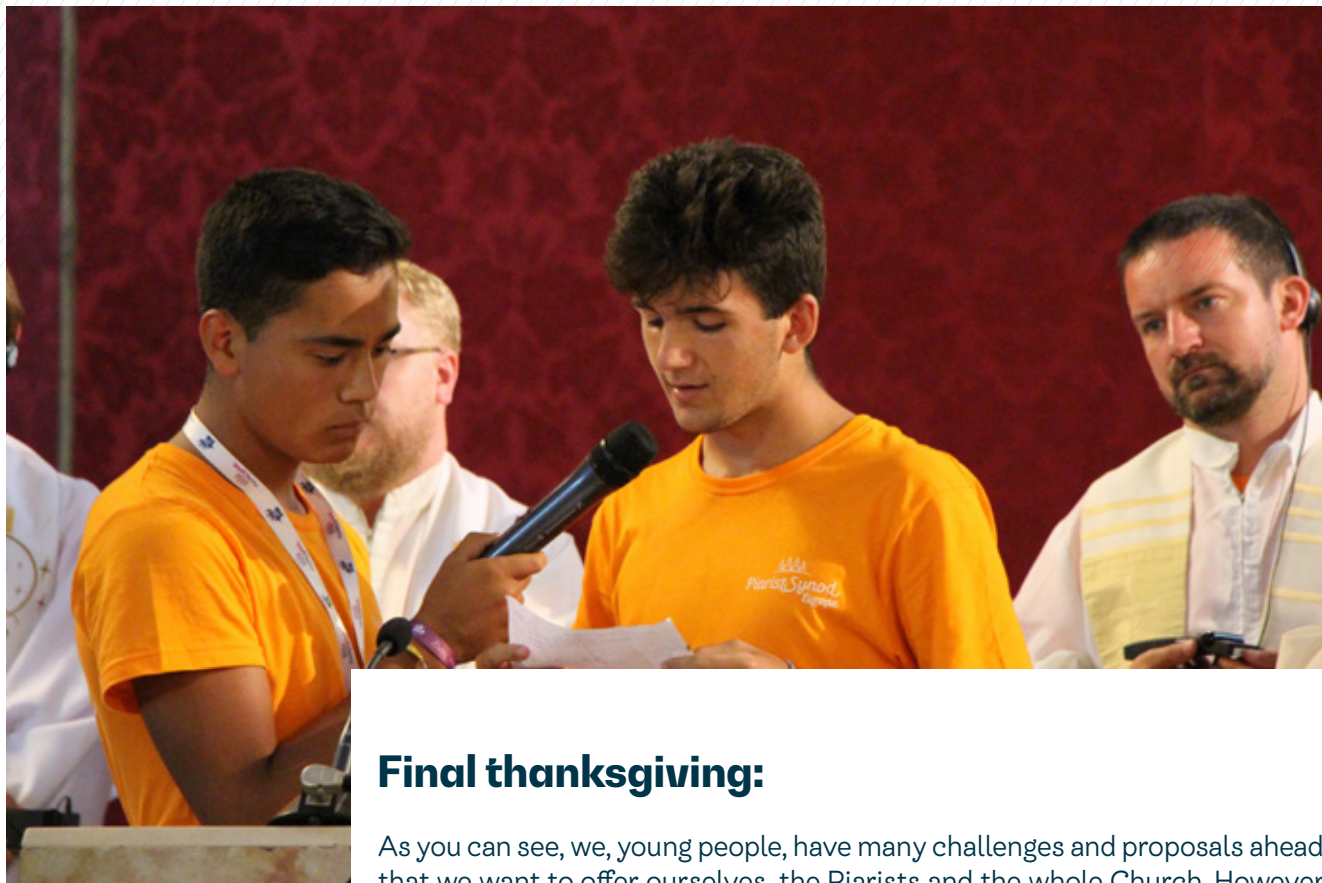


PROPOSALS WITH MORE THAN 2 VOTES:

7. So that the work done can truly reach each place, we want that as soon as possible, a **meeting** is held **by cities (or provinces) with all the members of the Calasanz Movement**, so that representatives that have been able to go to the European Synod can transmit all the proposals to those who have not been and thus put them into practice.
8. We young people need **to have meaningful references** who speak directly to the heart, who excite us, who make us mission proposals in the most vulnerable sites and environments.
9. We young people also want a **wider Piarist community** where we can generate encounters with other young people, other experiences, and other spaces of reflection, prayer and sharing with other persons and groups both faith and personal experiences.
10. **To continue betting for us.** We propose that every 5 years there is a synod of young people. For the Church to evolve as society does.
11. Create **points of encounter and accompaniment between the marginalized people and the Church**, so that she understands their vision and they feel involved in her.
12. To build, through the education of the new generations, **an open and inclusive Church mentality**, the Church that we young people dream of. Make it clear from an early age that we are all part of the Church, so that there are no people who are or feel marginalized.

PROPOSALS WITH 1 OR 0 VOTES:

13. **Take advantage of all the topics** we discuss in the groups to pray.
14. We young people have the **challenge of being courageous**, losing fear, being able to express in freedom what we are, our dreams, concerns and needs in order to work for the Kingdom of God in the way of Jesus.
15. The Order should organise **meetings once a year** for the provinces of Spain and, separately, for the provinces of Central Europe. During this time, we would have to choose people responsible for each province for communication with the rest of them. In addition, a **Synod** should be organized **every three years** for the whole of Europe.
16. Be **involved in a fun and attractive way**. Use art, debates, round tables...
17. **Continue in the dynamics of the Synod**, giving real prominence to young people, in all our activities for the course 18-19.
18. Strengthen and unify **our volunteering experiences** so that all young people have the same offers and possibilities.
19. Create **teams of young people in each diocese with Piarist presence**, to continue developing projects or ideas based on the point of view of young people, with their subsequent European or world meetings.
20. Make **the Church invest in communication and publicity** to reach young people and raise awareness and bring to the Church people who are away from it. May the message of Jesus come to the world in the best possible way.



Final thanksgiving:

As you can see, we, young people, have many challenges and proposals ahead, that we want to offer ourselves, the Piarists and the whole Church. However, greater is our desire for involvement, the joy of feeling united in the way and our inner strength, which comes from Jesus.

Knowing that everything reflected in the Synod has been a *fruit of the Spirit*, of the *flame that we have never extinguished*, in all the moments of meeting, play, prayer, sharing ... we want to finish the text with a prayer of thanks, to which we would like you to join, both personally and as a group.

Lord Jesus, we thank you because you unite us around you in one heart and one soul, like those first disciples. Thank you for the gift of the Synod, for the dream of Calasanz that today the Piarists live with passion and for the Church as your family. You know our desire to get involved and transform things, to give the best of ourselves, to feel protagonists. You give us the bravery and courage to do it, to take steps and to be your witnesses in the midst of the world, for other young people. We ask you to help us with your Spirit, which we know is always present in our hearts, as in that first Pentecost.

We ask you for the intercession of St. Joseph of Calasanz, initiator of this dream, and of Mary, Mother of yours and ours, under whose tender gaze we always want to live.

Amen.