

YOUTH, FAITH AND VOCATION DISCERNMENT

*Intervention of Fr. Pedro AGUADO CUESTA SCH. P.
Part II of the Instrumentum Laboris.*

Holy Father, dear brothers and sisters:

I speak as a religious and Piarist priest, General of the Order of the Pious Schools, founded by St. Joseph Calasanz at the service of integral education, from the Gospel, of children and young people. I want to share with you two convictions, three proposals: and a suggestion:

1. **What is the main objective of the SYNOD?** Without a doubt, one very important is to listen to young people. But there is one more important. To listen, together with the young people, the Holy Spirit. We need to offer and find - together with youth - something much larger than themselves: the actual encounter with Jesus, our Lord.

We seek not just a document as a result of the Synod. We are looking for a new way of living and announcing Jesus, linking young people with the life of the Church and with the construction, all together, of the proposal of the Gospel. We seek to change the dynamics from which the Church stands before young people and to invite young people to be the protagonists of this change. We seek to change our relationship with the youth, making it more close, open, committed, companion, Evangelical, welcoming, exacting, convener and purposeful. We want young people to change us, we want young people to help us to be the witnesses, fathers and teachers whom they need and expect.

2. **What do young people expect from us?** I am spokesperson, quoting one of the young people I met before coming here: "What we need from you is not only to listen to us or to help us with your accompanying, reflections and counsels. What we really need is to see that you, at any age, can be excited about the encounter with Jesus and with the vocation that, when young, you received from Him. Everything else, we can get it by our means; we can do it". This young man gave the nail on the head.

Three proposals

1. Only **complete pastoral processes**, which seek and propose the centrality of Christ and the construction of the community, will produce the fruits we seek. One of the great challenges that we have as a Church is to generate processes that will accompany the young person to adulthood and to build, with them, stable and missionary Christian Communities. It's not just about offering them,

but about building them with them. They're capable. they've shown it. Only in this way will they be lasting, they will reach their goal, which is no other than the community that builds and awaits the Kingdom, and summons more young people.

2. There are **three dynamisms that cannot be missed** if we want to invite young people to a serious vocational discernment. God calls the young man, each one according to his vocation. But He does so especially in spiritual experience, in fraternal sharing and in giving himself to the poor. This is etched in the hearts of Christians: prayer and spiritual life, Community and Service to the Poor. A young man who lives them, and who assumes a process to grow in them, will discover what God expects of Him. This is the Christian Vocation.
3. I am Piarist. Like many other religious congregations, we work in Education. The **Christian Popular School** is a platform that welcomes all kinds of young people in the world: Catholics, Christians of any confession, of all kinds of religions, of all kinds of postures before the faith in God. We offer the school, and all the dynamisms that the school is able to generate to overcome its own borders, as a formidable platform to accompany the young man and build with him. And to announce that there is Someone greater than him, waiting for him, holding him and accompanying him. If we do well, education is a laboratory of convocation, process, accompaniment and common search. and community building

A final Suggestion. We say that young people are the future of the Church. and it's true. But it's not the whole truth. Young people are not just the future. They are the present. As long as we don't change our minds, we won't move forward. Young people are the present, they are the Church. The young person's soul is generous, but he needs to experience that faith widens it and makes it grow. When a young person experiences that his heart burns because he has discovered Christ, there is nothing that can stop him from his desire to find his vocation. What he needs, like Emmaus ' walkers, is a community to help him consolidate that meeting. This is our Challenge. Let's build it.

THANKS A LOT.

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