



03-B-12

SAINT PIUS X INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED CATECHETICAL STUDIES

A SHORT HISTORY

The Saint Pius X Institute for advanced Catechetical Studies was founded by the Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools on 12 October 1955. The Sacred Congregation Religious approved it and declared it Pontifical on 25 March 1960.

Under the patronage of His Holiness Pope Paul VI, the Sacred Congregation for Seminaries and Universities raised its academic status by incorporating it into the Pontifical University of Salamanca on 18th April, 1965, and declaring it part of the theological faculty, under the title of The Pontifical Institute of Religious Sciences, with power to award the Baccalaureate and Licenciante of the Institute. In 1965 a Board of Governors was formed composed of Visitors who had student Brothers at the centre.

By the decree "Sacrae Catecheseos" of 18 April 1965, the Institute was incorporated in the Theological Faculty under the title of "The Saint Pius X Institute for Advanced Catechetical Studies" and subjected to the statutes of the said faculty besides its own statutes.

The academic year 1977-78 saw it transferred to its new site in Madrid, a move which had become necessary for various reasons. The negotiations with the ecclesiastical hierarchy for this move had painful results. It was granted on condition that the courses were reduced and the Baccalaureate or basic course in Theology were suppressed and the centre limited to the second grade: licenciante in two years.

THE INSTITUTE'S OBJECTIVES

From the beginning the Institute proposed objectives which are still valid today. a) The training of experts in the Catechetical Sciences. b) Producing people qualified to educate in the faith in state and private schools at all levels. c) The training of research workers in the disciplines more directly connected with Catechesis and Education. To attain these objectives, the Institute includes fundamental and scientific studies of the Human Sciences, of Theology and of Catechetics which are necessary for teachers of the faith in all places where the Church is to be found.

THE BROTHERS' CONSIDERABLE EFFORTS

From the very beginning, the Saint Pius X Institute has required a great effort on the part of the Spanish Brothers. On speaking of effort, the question of expense immediately springs to mind, but one must also consider the great strain of providing a group of Brothers for the running and for the academic responsibility of the centre.

Many a time it has been asked whether the effort was worth while. Economically no. But yes in all other respects. Many are the Brothers who have studied at Saint Pius X and whose pastoral and catechetical activities are significant in their respective regions. Numerous also are the members of other religious orders who have passed through our classes. And perhaps we have obtained other benefits none the less real for being less evident such as new thinking on the theological studies of the Brothers, a re-evaluation of our mission as educators in the faith, a revitalization of our own catechetical and pastoral charism, etc.

We complain about the present situation because there are not many young Brothers studying at the Institute. Times of crisis are not inducive to large numbers. In spite of everything, the quantity and, above all, the quality of the Brothers is quite representative and their option for catechetics and pastoral work is unmistakable and specifically Lasallian.

The Brothers of C.E.L. (Spanish Lasallian Centre) follow a course of both theology and catechetics. This is an additional motive for hope and a renewed consciousness of our efficacy.

THE ACADEMIC AND CREATIVE ASPECT

In this Institute, besides the academic courses, we direct our attention definitely towards creativity. Our vitality as an Institute depends on our creativity. Realising this, we take account of the catechetical needs of the moment so as to provide suitable answers. It is thus that various courses have been inaugurated: courses for the qualification of teachers of religion, correspondence courses in theology and Catechetics, school for the training of parish catechists, summer courses, various sessions throughout the year, etc...

We try, through our review "SINITE" as well as through the other publications of Saint Pius X Press, to make a modest contribution to a service of catechetical and pastoral reflection and action.

All this means that the spirit of this educational community of professors is always open to current catechetical thought, to the directives of the authorities and, above all, to the needs of those who devote themselves to one or other form of catechesis. Besides this, I think that the long years of work of the Saint Pius X Institute have contributed to creative thinking as regards catechetics, have taken the lead in the doctrinal and practical aspects of catechetics. Having considered anthropological catechetics and catechesis of experience, we have written books of religion on these as a basis, and provided catechetical directives for the education of children and young people in the faith.

The problems we have to face and the uncertainties which disturb us are numerous. But what is clear to us is our mission within the Church, the fact that we are able to meet the urgent need of training catechists, of educators in the faith, of leaders in the evangelizing action of the Church. We are committed to it and we hope that many others will undertake this task with enthusiasm.

Bro. José María MARTINEZ BELTRAN
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