Romana is the bulletin of the Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei. These pages reprint documents of the Holy See directed to the entire Church, as well as those referring specifically to Opus Dei. It also provides news about the activities of the Prelate and the Prelature in the service of the Church and the local dioceses. Brief articles are included about some of the apostolic initiatives fostered by faithful of the Prelature within their profession and in society at large in their endeavor to infuse a Christian spirit into the secular sphere.

The contents of the bulletin do not provide an entire picture of Opus Dei’s activities, since the Prelature’s fundamental apostolate is that which its faithful carry out personally, guided by the Christian formation and spiritual assistance they receive from the Prelature. This apostolate takes place in the context of each person’s professional, social, and family setting, and its variety and creativity naturally cannot be reduced to a set of statistics.

Romana’s publication fulfills an express desire of St. Josemaría Escrivá. In choosing the title Romana for the future bulletin, St. Josemaría wished to emphasize the catholic and universal character of Opus Dei’s pastoral mission.
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EDITORIAL
Blessed Guadalupe An Ovation to God

On Sunday May 19, as the Thanksgiving Mass for the beatification of the Spanish chemist Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri was ending in Madrid, Pope Francis led the praying of the Regina Coeli from the window of the pontifical apartments overlooking St. Peter's Square in Rome.

The Pope announced that this “lay faithful of Opus Dei who gladly served her brothers and sisters by teaching and proclaiming the Gospel,” had just been beatified in Madrid. The Roman Pontiff said that the witness of the new Blessed is “an example for Christian women engaged in social activities and in scientific research.” And he concluded: “Let’s give an applause to the new Blessed!”

This issue of Romana is filled with gratitude to the Holy Father for his decision to beatify Guadalupe, who strove to respond to God’s call to seek sanctity in her ordinary tasks and to serve others through her work, friendships, and social relationships.

It is also meant to be a message of special thanks to Blessed Guadalupe, who leaves us a living example of holiness in everyday life. Her deep Christian joy, also when faced with difficulties in her life, including the execution of her father during the civil war in Spain, and her other virtues open an attractive path that can inspire many other Christians.

But this issue is above all a grateful ovation to God, the architect of all holiness. As Pope Francis often reminds us, holiness is not attainable by our own strength, but is the fruit of God’s grace and of our free response.

We conclude with the petition found in the collect prayer for the Mass of Beatification: “O God, who gave Blessed Guadalupe the grace to transform her daily work into a place of encounter with Christ and service to others, grant, we pray, that, following her example, we may transmit faith and joy to our brothers and sisters. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever.”

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The Roman Pontiff

Homily at the Mass of World Youth Day, Metro Park, Panama City (January 27, 2019)

“The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them: ‘Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing’” (Lk 4:20-21).

With these words, the Gospel presents the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry. It started in the synagogue that saw him grow up; he was in the midst of neighbors and people he knew, and perhaps even some of his childhood “catechists” who had taught him the Law. It was an important moment in the life of the Master: the child who was educated and grew up in that community, stood up and took the floor to proclaim and put into action God’s dream. A word previously proclaimed only as a future promise, but now, on the lips of Jesus alone, could be spoken in the present tense, as it became a reality: “Today it has been fulfilled.”

Jesus reveals the now of God, who comes to meet us and call us to take part in his now of “proclaiming good news to the poor… bringing liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, setting at liberty those who are oppressed, announcing the year of the Lord’s favor” (Lk 4:18-19). This is the now of God. It becomes present with Jesus: it has a face, it is flesh. It is a merciful love that does not wait for ideal or perfect situations to show itself, nor does it accept excuses for its appearance. It is God’s time, that makes every situation and place both right and proper. In Jesus, the promised future begins and becomes life.

When? Now. Yet not everyone who was listening felt invited or called. Not all the residents of Nazareth were prepared to believe in someone they knew and had seen grow up, and who was now inviting them to realize a long-awaited dream. Not only that, but “they said, ‘Is not this Joseph’s son?’” (Lk 4:22).
The same thing can also happen with us. We do not always believe that God can be that concrete and commonplace, that close and real, and much less that he can become so present and work through somebody like a neighbor, a friend, a relative. We do not always believe that the Lord can invite us to work and soil our hands with him in his Kingdom in that simple and blunt a way. It is hard to accept that “God’s love can become concrete and can almost be experienced in history with all its painful and glorious vicissitudes.”

Often we too behave like the neighbors in Nazareth: we prefer a distant God: nice, good, generous but far-off, a God who does not inconvenience us. Because a close and everyday God, a friend and brother, demands that we be concerned with our surroundings, everyday affairs and above all fraternity. God chose not to reveal himself as an angel or in some spectacular way, but to give us a face that is fraternal and friendly, concrete and familiar. God is real because love is real; God is concrete because love is concrete. Indeed, this “concrete manifestation of love is one of the essential elements in the life of Christians.”

We can also run the same risks as the neighbors at Nazareth, when within our communities the Gospel seeks to be lived concretely. We begin to say: But these young people, aren't they the children of Mary, Joseph, aren't they the brothers and sisters of so and so? Are these not the youngsters we saw grow up? That one over there, wasn't he the one who kept breaking windows with his ball? What was born as prophecy and proclamation of the kingdom of God gets domesticated and impoverished. Attempts to domesticate the word of God occur daily.

You too, dear young people, can experience this whenever you think that your mission, your vocation, even your life itself, is a promise far off in the future, having nothing to do with the present. As if being young were a kind of waiting room, where we sit around until we are called. And in the “meantime,” we adults or you yourselves invent an hygienically-sealed future, without consequences, where everything is safe, secure and “well insured.” A “make-believe” happiness. So we “tranquilize” you, we numb you into keeping quiet, not asking or questioning; and in that “meantime” your dreams lose their buoyancy, they begin to become flat and dreary, petty and plaintive. Only because we think, or you think, that your now has
not yet come, that you are too young to be involved in dreaming about and working for the future.

One of the fruits of the last Synod was the enrichment that came from being able to meet and above all to listen to one another. The enrichment of intergenerational dialogue, the enrichment of exchange and the value of realizing that we need one another, that we have to work to create channels and spaces that encourage dreaming of and working for tomorrow, starting today. And this, not in isolation, but rather side by side, creating a common space. A space that is not simply taken for granted, or won in a lottery, but a space for which you too must fight.

You, dear young people, are not the future but the now of God. He invites you and calls you in your communities and cities to go out and find your grandparents, your elders; to stand up and with them to speak out and realize the dream that the Lord has dreamed for you.

Not tomorrow but now, for wherever your treasure is, there will your heart also be (see Mt 6:21). Whatever you fall in love with, it will win over not only your imagination, it will affect everything. It will be what makes you get up in the morning, what keeps you going at times of fatigue, what will break open your hearts and fill you with wonder, joy, and gratitude. Realize that you have a mission and fall in love; that will decide everything. We may possess everything, but if we lack the passion of love, we will have nothing. Let us allow the Lord to make us fall in love!

For Jesus, there is no “meantime,” but only a merciful love that wants to enter into and win over our hearts. He wants to be our treasure, because he is not a “meantime,” an interval in life or a passing fad; he is generous love that invites us to entrust ourselves.

He is concrete, close, real love. He is festive joy, born of opting for and taking part in the miraculous draught of hope and charity, solidarity and fraternity, despite the paralyzed and paralyzing gaze born of fear and exclusion, speculation, and manipulation.

Brothers and sisters, the Lord and his mission are not a “meantime” in our life, something temporary; they are our life!
In a special way throughout these days, Mary’s fiat has been whispering like a kind of music in the background. She not only believed in God and in his promises as something possible, she believed God himself and dared to say “yes” to taking part in this “now” of the Lord. She felt she had a mission; she fell in love and that decided everything. the Lord stands up again among us his friends and acquaintances; he takes the book and says to us “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (Lk 4:21).

Do you want to live out your love in a practical way? May your “yes” continue to be the gateway for the Holy Spirit to give us a new Pentecost for the world and for the Church.

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Summary of the Post-Syndodal Apostolic Exhortation "Christus Vivit" of the Holy Father Francis (April 2, 2019)

[Summary prepared by the Press Office of the Holy See]

Christus vivit

“Christ is alive! He is our hope, and in a wonderful way he brings youth to our world. The very first words, then, that I would like to say to every young Christian are these: Christ is alive and he wants you to be alive!”

Thus begins the post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation, Christus vivit, by Pope Francis, signed on Monday March 25 in the Holy House of Loreto and addressed to young people, and to “the entire People of God.” In the document, composed of nine chapters divided into 299 paragraphs, the Pope explains that he allowed himself to be “inspired by the wealth of reflections and conversations of the Synod” on young people, celebrated at the Vatican in October 2018.

Chapter one: “What does the Word of God have to say about young people?”
Francis recalls that “in an age when young people were not highly regarded, some texts show that God sees them differently” (6). He briefly presents figures of young people from the Old Testament: Joseph, Gideon (7), Samuel (8), King David (9), Solomon and Jeremiah (10), the very young Jewish servant of Naaman, and the young Ruth (11). Then he moves on to the New Testament. The Pope recalls that “Jesus, who is eternally young, wants to give us hearts that are ever young” (13) and adds: “Let us also keep in mind that Jesus had no use for adults who looked down on the young or lorded it over them. On the contrary, he insisted that “the greatest among you must become like the youngest” (Lk 22:26). For him age did not establish privileges, and being young did not imply lesser worth or dignity.” Francis affirms: “We should never repent of spending our youth being good, opening our heart to the Lord, and living differently.” (17)

Chapter two: “Jesus, ever young”

The Pope addresses the theme of Jesus’ youthful years and remembers the Gospel story that describes Jesus “as an adolescent, when he had returned with his parents to Nazareth, after being lost and found in the Temple.” (26) We should not think, Francis writes, that “Jesus was a withdrawn adolescent or a self-absorbed youth. His relationships were those of a young person who shared fully in the life of his family and his people,” “no one regarded him as unusual or set apart from others” (28). The Pope points out that, “thanks to the trust of his parents,” the adolescent Jesus, “can move freely and learn to journey with others.” (29) These aspects of Jesus’ life should not be ignored in youth ministry, “lest we create projects that isolate young people from their family and the larger community, or turn them into a select few, protected from all contamination.” Rather, we need “projects that can strengthen them, accompany them and impel them to encounter others, to engage in generous service, in mission.” (30)

Jesus “does not teach you, young people, from afar or from without, but from within your very youth, a youth he shares with you” and in him many aspects typical of young hearts can be recognized. (31) With “him at our side, we can drink from the true wellspring that keeps alive all our dreams, our projects, our great ideals, while impelling us to proclaim what makes
life truly worthwhile; (32) “The Lord is calling us to enkindle stars in the night of other young people.” (33)

Francis then speaks of the youth of the Church and writes: “Let us ask the Lord to free the Church from those who would make her grow old, encase her in the past, hold her back or keep her at a standstill. But let us also ask him to free her from another temptation: that of thinking she is young because she accepts everything the world offers her, thinking that she is renewed because she sets her message aside and acts like everybody else. No! The Church is young when she is herself, when she receives ever anew the strength born of God’s word, the Eucharist, and the daily presence of Christ and the power of his Spirit in our lives.” (35)

It is true that “as members of the Church, we should not stand apart from others,” yet at the same time, “we must dare to be different, to point to ideals other than those of this world, testifying to the beauty of generosity, service, purity, perseverance, forgiveness, fidelity to our personal vocation, prayer, the pursuit of justice and the common good, love for the poor, and social friendship.” (36) The Church can be tempted to lose her enthusiasm and revert “to seeking a false, worldly form of security. Young people can help keep her young.” (37)

The Pope then goes back to one of the teachings most dear to him and, explaining that the figure of Jesus must be presented “in an attractive and effective way,” says: “the Church should not be excessively caught up in herself but instead, and above all, reflect Jesus Christ. This means humbly acknowledging that some things concretely need to change.” (39)

The Exhortation recognizes that there are young people who feel the presence of the Church “a nuisance, even an irritant.” This attitude that has its roots “in serious and understandable reasons: sexual and financial scandals; a clergy ill-prepared to engage effectively with the sensitivities of the young;… the passive role assigned to the young within the Christian community; the Church’s difficulty in explaining her doctrine and ethical positions to contemporary society.” (40)

There are young people who “want a Church that listens more, that does more than simply condemn the world. They do not want to see a Church that is silent and afraid to speak, but neither one that is always
battling obsessively over two or three issues. To be credible to young people, there are times when she needs to regain her humility and simply listen, recognizing that what others have to say can provide some light to help her better understand the Gospel.” (41) For example, a Church that is too fearful can be constantly critical of “efforts to defend the rights of women, and constantly point out the risks and the potential errors of those demands,” while a Church that is “a living Church, can react by being attentive to the legitimate claims of women,” while “not agreeing with everything some feminist groups propose.” (42)

Francis then presents “Mary, the young woman from Nazareth,” and her Yes as that of “someone willing to take a risk, ready to stake everything she had, with no more security than the certainty of knowing that she was the bearer of a promise. So I ask each one of you: do you see yourselves as the bearers of a promise?” (44) For Mary, “challenges were no reason to say ‘no’,” and thus putting herself at stake, she became “the influencer of God.” The heart of the Church is also full of young saints. The Pope remembers Saint Sebastian, Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Joan of Arc, Blessed Martyr Andrew Phủ Yến, Saint Kateri Tekakwitha, Saint Dominic Savio, Saint Teresa of the Child Jesus, Blessed Ceferino Namuncurá, Blessed Isidoro Bakanja, Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, Blessed Marcel Callo, the young Blessed Chiara Badano.

Chapter three: “You are the ‘now’ of God”

We cannot just say that “young people are the future of our world,” says Pope Francis. “They are its present; even now, they are helping to enrich it.” (64) For this reason it is necessary to listen to them even if “there is a tendency to provide prepackaged answers and ready-made solutions, without allowing their real questions to emerge and facing the challenges they pose.” (65)

“Today, we adults can often be tempted to list all the problems and failings of today’s young people… But what would be the result of such an attitude? Greater distance, less closeness, less mutual assistance.” (66) Whoever is called to be a father, pastor, and youth guide should have the ability “to discern pathways where others only see walls, to recognize potential where others see only peril. That is how God the Father sees
things; He knows how to cherish and nurture the seeds of goodness sown in the hearts of the young. Each young person's heart should thus be considered ‘holy ground.’” (67) Francis also invites us not to generalize, because “the worlds of today’s ‘youth’ are so many.” (68)

Speaking of what happens to young people, the Pope recalls those who live in contexts of war, those who are exploited, the victims of kidnappings, organized crime, human trafficking, slavery and sexual exploitation, rape. And also those who live by committing crimes and acts of violence. (72)

“Many young people are taken in by ideologies, used and exploited as cannon fodder or a strike force to destroy, terrify or ridicule others. Worse yet, many of them end up as individualists, hostile and distrustful of others; in this way, they become an easy target for the brutal and destructive strategies of political groups or economic powers.” (73) Even more numerous are those who suffer forms of marginalization and social exclusion for religious, ethnic or economic reasons. Pope Francis cites adolescents and young people who “become pregnant, the scourge of abortion, the spread of HIV, various forms of addiction (drugs, gambling, pornography and so forth), and the plight of street children without homes, families or economic resources,” (74) situations that are made doubly painful and difficult for women. “As a Church, may we never fail to weep before these tragedies of our young. May we never become inured to them… The worst thing we can do is adopt that worldly spirit whose solution is simply to anesthetize young people with other messages, with other distractions, with trivial pursuits.” (75) The Pope invites young people to learn to weep for their peers who are worse off than they are. (76)

It is true, Pope Francis explains, “that people in power offer some assistance, but often it comes at a high price. In many poor countries, economic aid provided by some richer countries or international agencies is usually tied to the acceptance of Western views of sexuality, marriage, life or social justice. This ideological colonization is especially harmful to the young.” (78) The Pope also warns against today’s culture that presents the youthful model of beauty and uses young bodies in advertising: “it has very little to do with young people. It only means that adults want to snatch youth for themselves.” (79)

Referring to “desires, hurts, and longings,” Pope Francis speaks about
sexuality and its “essential importance” for young peoples’ lives and for their “process of growth in identity.” The Pope writes that: “in a world that constantly exalts sexuality, maintaining a healthy relationship with one’s body and a serene affective life is not easy.” For this and other reasons, sexual morality often tends to be a source of “incomprehension and alienation from the Church, inasmuch as she is viewed as a place of judgment and condemnation,” despite the fact there are young people who want to discuss these issues. (81) Faced with developments in science, biomedical technologies and neuroscience, the Pope recalls how these can “make us forget that life is a gift, and that we are creatures with innate limits, open to exploitation by those who wield technological power.” (82)

The Exhortation then turns to the theme of the “digital world” which has created “a new way to communicate,” and which can “facilitate the circulation of independent information”. In many countries, the web and social networks “already represent a firmly established forum for reaching and involving young people.” (87) But they can also be a place of “loneliness, manipulation, exploitation and violence, up to the extreme case of the ‘dark web..Digital media can expose people to the risk of addiction, isolation and gradual loss of contact with concrete reality... New forms of violence are spreading through social media, for example cyber-bullying. The internet is also a channel for spreading pornography and the exploitation of persons for sexual purposes or through gambling.” (88) It should not be forgotten that in the digital world “there are huge economic interests,” capable of creating “mechanisms for the manipulation of consciences and of the democratic process.” There are closed circuits that “facilitate the spread of fake news and false information, fomenting prejudice and hate... The reputation of individuals is put in jeopardy through summary trials conducted online. The Church and her pastors are not exempt from this phenomenon” (89). In a document prepared by 300 young people from all over the world before the Synod it is stated that “online relationships can become inhuman,” and immersion in the virtual world has favored “a kind of “digital migration,” involving withdrawal from their families and their cultural and religious values, and entrance into a world of loneliness.” (90)
The Pope goes on to present “migrants as an epitome of our time,” and recalls the many young people involved in migration. “The Church’s concern is focused especially on those fleeing from war, violence, political or religious persecution, from natural disasters including those caused by climate change, and from extreme poverty:” (91) they search for an opportunity, a dream of a better future. Other migrants are “attracted by Western culture, sometimes with unrealistic expectations that expose them to grave disappointments. Unscrupulous traffickers, frequently linked to drug cartels or arms cartels, exploit the weakness of migrants... The particular vulnerability of migrants who are unaccompanied minors is worth noting... In some host countries, migration causes fear and alarm, often fomented and exploited for political ends. This can lead to a xenophobic mentality, as people close in on themselves, and this needs to be addressed decisively.” (92) Young migrants often also experience a cultural and religious uprooting. (93) Francis asks young people “not to play into the hands of those who would set them against other young people, newly arrived in their countries, and who would encourage them to view the latter as a threat.” (94)

The Pope also speaks of child abuse, makes the Synod’s commitment to the adoption of rigorous measures of prevention his own, and expresses gratitude “to those who had the courage to report the evil they experienced.” (99) He recalls that, “thank God,” those who committed these horrible crimes are not the majority of priests, who carry out their ministry with fidelity and generosity.” He asks young people, if they see a priest at risk because he has taken the wrong path, to have the courage to remind him of his commitment to God and to his people. (100)

Abuse, however, is not the only sin in the Church. “Our sins are before the eyes of everyone; they appear all too clearly in the lines on the age-old face of the Church, our Mother and Teacher,” but the Church does not resort to any cosmetic surgery, “she is not afraid to reveal the sins of her members”. “Let us never forget that we must not abandon our Mother when she is wounded,” (101) but stand beside her, so that she can summon up all her strength and all her ability to begin ever anew. This dark moment, with the help of the young people, “can truly be an opportunity
for a reform of epoch-making significance,” opening us to a new Pentecost.
(102)

Pope Francis reminds young people that “there is a way out” in all dark
and painful situations. He recalls the Good News given on the morning of
the Resurrection. He explains that even though the digital world can
expose us to many risks, there are young people who know how to be
creative and brilliant in these areas. Like the Venerable Carlo Acutis, who
“knew how to use the new communication technologies to transmit the
Gospel,” (105) he did not fall into the trap and said: “Everyone is born as
an original, but many people end up dying as photocopies.” “Don’t let that
happen to you,” (106) warns the Pope. “Don’t let them rob you of hope
and joy, or drug you into becoming a slave to their interests,” (107) seek
the great goal of holiness. “Being young is not only about pursuing fleeting
pleasures and superficial achievements. If the years of your youth are to
serve their purpose in life, they must be a time of generous commitment,
whole-hearted dedication.” (108) “If you are young in years, but feel weak,
weary or disillusioned, ask Jesus to renew you.” (109) But always remember
that “it is very difficult to fight against…the snares and temptations of the
devil, and the selfishness of the world…if we grow too isolated.” (110)
That’s when we need a life of community.

**Chapter four: “A great message for all young people”**

To all young people the Pope announces three great truths. A “God
who is love.” “God loves you, never doubt this.” (112) You can “find
security in the embrace of your heavenly Father.” (113) Pope Francis
affirms that the memory of the Father “is not a ‘hard disk’ that ‘saves’ and
‘archives’ all our data. His memory is a heart filled with tender compassion,
one that finds joy in ‘deleting’ from us every trace of evil… Because he loves
you. Try to keep still for a moment and let yourself feel his love.” (115) His
love is one that “has to do more with raising up than knocking down, with
reconciling than forbidding, with offering new changes than condemning,
with the future than the past.” (116)

The second truth is that “Christ saves you.” Never forget that “he
forgives us seventy times seven. Time and time again, he bears us on his
shoulders.” (119) Jesus loves us and saves us because “only what is loved can
be saved. Only what is embraced can be transformed. The Lord’s love is greater than all our problems, frailties and flaws.” (120) And “his forgiveness and salvation are not something we can buy, or that we have to acquire by our own works or efforts. He forgives us and sets us free without cost.” (121)

The third truth is that “He is alive!” “We need to keep reminding ourselves of this…because we can risk seeing Jesus Christ simply as a fine model from the distant past, as a memory, as someone who saved us two thousand years ago. But that would be of no use to us: it would leave us unchanged, it would not set us free.” (124) If he lives, “there can be no doubt that goodness will have the upper hand in your life… then we can stop complaining and look to the future, for with him this is always possible.” (127)

In these truths, the Father appears and Jesus appears. And where they are, there is also the Holy Spirit. “Invoke the Holy Spirit each day… You have nothing to lose, and He can change your life, fill it with light and lead it along a better path. He takes nothing away from you, but instead helps you to find all that you need, and in the best possible way.” (131)

Chapter five: Paths of Youth

“The love of God and our relationship with the living Christ do not hold us back from dreaming; they do not require us to narrow our horizons. On the contrary, that love elevates us, encourages us and inspires us to a better and more beautiful life. Much of the longing present in the hearts of young people can be summed up in the word ‘restlessness.’ ” (138) Thinking of a young person, the Pope sees him or her as someone “who wants to fly on their two feet, always with one foot forward, ready to set out, to spring ahead. Always racing onward.” (139) Youth cannot remain “on hold,” because it is the “age of choice” in the professional, social, political spheres, and also in the choice of the partner or in having one’s first children. “Anxiety can work against us by making us give up whenever we do not see instant results. Our best dreams are only attained through hope, patience and commitment, and not in haste. At the same time, we should not be hesitant, afraid to take chances or make mistakes.” (142) Pope Francis invites young people not to observe life from the balcony, not
to spend their lives in front of a screen, not to be reduced to abandoned vehicles and not to look at the world as tourists: “Make a ruckus! Cast out the fears that paralyze you...live!” (143) He invites them to “live the present” enjoying with gratitude every little gift of life without “being insatiable” and “obsessively seeking new pleasures” (146). In fact, living the present “is not the same as embarking irresponsibly on a life of dissipation that can only leave us empty and perpetually dissatisfied.” (147)

“No matter how much you live the experience of these years of your youth, you will never know their deepest and fullest meaning unless you encounter each day your best friend, the friend who is Jesus.” (150) Friendship with him is indissoluble because he does not abandon us. (154) “With a friend, we can speak and share our deepest secrets. With Jesus too, we can always have a conversation”. When we pray, “we open everything we do” to him, and we give him room “so that He can act, enter and claim victory.” (155) “Do not deprive your youth of this friendship. You will be able to feel him at your side;”. That is what the disciples of Emmaus experienced (156). Saint Oscar Romero said: “Christianity is not a collection of truths to be believed, rules to be followed, or prohibitions. Seen that way, it puts us off. Christianity is a person who loved me immensely, who demands and asks for my love. Christianity is Christ.”

The Pope, speaking of growth and maturity, indicates the importance of seeking “a spiritual development,” of “seeking the Lord and keeping his Word,” of maintaining the “connection” with Jesus... since you will not grow happy and holy by your own efforts and intelligence alone. (158)

Adults too must mature without losing the values of youth: “In every moment of life we can renew and increase our youth. When I began my ministry as Pope, the Lord broadened my horizons and granted me renewed youth. The same can happen to a couple married for many years, or to a monk in his monastery.” (160) Growing older means “preserving and cherishing the most precious things about our youth, but it also involves having to purify those things that are not good.” (161) “But I would also remind you that you won’t become holy and find fulfillment by copying others... You have to discover who you are and develop your own way of being holy” (162). Pope Francis proposes “paths of fraternity” to live the faith, remembering that “the Holy Spirit wants to make us come out of
ourselves, to embrace others... That is why it is always better to live the faith together and to show our love by living in community,” (164) overcoming the temptation “to dwell on ourselves and our problems, our hurt feelings and our grievances.” (166) “God loves the joy of young people. He wants them especially to share in the joy of fraternal communion.” (167)

The Pope then speaks of being “young and committed,” stating that young people can sometimes be “tempted to withdraw into small groups... They may feel that they are experiencing fraternity and love, but their small group may in fact become nothing other than an extension of their own ego. This is even more serious if they think of the lay vocation simply as a form of service inside the Church... They forget that the lay vocation is directed above all to charity within the family and to social and political charity.” (168)

Pope Francis proposes that young people “go beyond their small groups and to build social friendship, where everyone works for the common good. Social enmity, on the other hand, is destructive. Families are destroyed by enmity. Countries are destroyed by enmity. The world is destroyed by enmity. And the greatest enmity of all is war. Today we see that the world is destroying itself by war” because we are unable to sit down and speak.” (169)

“Social engagement and direct contact with the poor remain fundamental ways of finding or deepening one’s faith and the discernment of one’s vocation/” (170) The Pope cites the positive example of young people from parishes, schools, and movements who “often go out to spend time with the elderly and the infirm, or to visit poor neighborhoods.” (171)

“Other young people take part in social programs that build houses for the homeless, or reclaim contaminated areas or offer various kinds of assistance to the needy. It would be helpful if this shared energy could be channeled and organized in a more stable way.” University students “can apply their knowledge in an interdisciplinary way, together with young people of other churches or religions.” (172) Pope Francis encourages young people to make this commitment: “I have been following news reports of the many young people throughout the world who have taken to
the streets to express the desire for a more just and fraternal society... The young want to be protagonists of change. Please, do not leave it to others to be protagonists of change!” (174)

Young people are called to be “courageous missionaries,” witnessing everywhere to the Gospel with their own lives, which does not mean “speaking about the truth, but living it.” (175) The word, however, must not be silenced: “Learn to swim against the tide, learn how to share Jesus and the faith he has given you.” (176) Where does Jesus send us? “There are no borders, no limits: he sends us everywhere. The Gospel is for everyone, not just for some. It is not only for those who seem closer to us, more receptive, more welcoming. It is for everyone.” (177) And one cannot expect “the mission to be soft and easy.” (178)

Chapter six: “Young people with roots”

Pope Francis says that it hurts him to see “young people sometimes being encouraged to build a future without roots, as if the world were just starting now.” (179). “If someone tells young people to ignore their history, to reject the experiences of their elders, to look down on the past and to look forward to a future that he holds out, doesn’t it then become easy to draw them along so that they only do what he tells them? He needs the young to be shallow, uprooted and distrustful, so that they can trust only in his promises and act according to his plans. That is how various ideologies operate: they destroy (or deconstruct) all differences so that they can reign unopposed.” (181)

The manipulators also use the cult of youth: “The youthful body becomes the symbol of this new cult; everything associated with that body is idolized and lusted after, while whatever is not young is despised. But this cult of youth is simply an expedient that ultimately proves degrading to the young.” (182) “Dear young friends, do not let them exploit your youth to promote a shallow life that confuses beauty with appearances.” (183) Because there is beauty in the laborer who returns home grimy and unkempt, in the elderly wife who takes care of her sick husband, in the fidelity of couples who love each other in the autumn of life.

Today instead we promote “a spirituality without God, an affectivity without community or concern for those who suffer, a fear of the poor,
viewed as dangerous and a variety of claims to offer a future paradise that nonetheless seems increasingly distant.” (184) The Pope invites young people not to allow themselves to be dominated by this ideology which leads to “cultural colonization” (185) which eradicates young people from the cultural and religious affiliations from which they come and tends to homogenize them by transforming them into “a new line of malleable goods.” (186)

Fundamental is “your relationship with the elderly,” says the Pope, which helps young people to discover the living richness of the past. “The Word of God encourages us to remain close to the elderly, so that we can benefit from their experience.” (188) “This does not mean having to agree with everything adults say or approving all their actions.” “It is really a matter of being open to receiving a wisdom passed down from generation to generation.” (190) “The world has never benefitted, nor will it ever benefit, from a rupture between generations… It is the lie that would have you believe that only what is new is good and beautiful.” (191)

Speaking of “dreams and visions,” Pope Francis observes: “When young and old alike are open to the Holy Spirit, they make a wonderful combination. The old dream dreams, and the young see visions.” (192). “If young people sink roots in those dreams, they can peer into the future.” (193) That is why we need “to take risks together,” walking together, young and old. “Roots are not anchors chaining us” but “a fixed point from which we can grow and meet new challenges.” (200)

Chapter seven: “Youth ministry”

The Pope explains that youth ministry has been affected by social and cultural changes and “young people frequently fail to find in our usual programs a response to their concerns, their needs, their problems and issues.” (202) The young people themselves “are agents of youth ministry. Certainly they need to he helped and guided, but at the same time left free to develop new approaches, with creativity and a certain audacity.” We need to help young people to “use their insight, ingenuity and knowledge to address the issues and concerns of other young people in their own language.” (203)
Youth ministry needs to be flexible, and it is necessary to invite “young people to events or occasions that provide an opportunity not only for learning, but also for conversing, celebrating, singing, listening to real stories and experiencing a shared encounter with the living God.” (204)

Youth ministry has to be synodal, that is, capable of shaping a “journey together” and this involves two broad lines of action: the first is outreach, the second is growth. For the first, Pope Francis trusts in the ability of young people themselves to “find appealing ways to come together.” “They only have to be encouraged and given the freedom to be enthused.” What is most important, though, “is that each young person can be daring enough to sow the seed of the message on that fertile terrain that is the heart of another young person.” (210) Priority should be given to “the language of closeness, the language of generous, relational and existential love that touches the heart.” Young people need to be approached “with the grammar of love, not by being preached at.” (211)

As far as growth is concerned, Pope Francis warns against proposing to young people touched by an intense experience of God “meetings of ‘formation’ in which only doctrinal and moral questions are dealt with... The result is that many young people get bored, they lose the fire of their encounter with Christ and the joy of following him.” (212)

Any educational project or path of growth for young people “must certainly include formation in Christian doctrine and morality,” that must be centered on the kerygma, “the foundational experience of encounter with God through Jesus’ death and resurrection,” and on “growth in fraternal love, community life and service.” (213)

Therefore, “youth ministry should always include occasions for renewing and deepening our personal experience of the love of God and the living Christ.” (214) It should help young people “to live as brothers and sisters, to help one another, to build community, to be of service to others, to be close to the poor.” (215)

Church institutions should therefore provide “suitable environments,” “places young people can make their own, where they can come and go freely, feel welcome and readily meet other young people, whether at times of difficulty and frustration, or of joy and celebration.” (218)
Pope Francis then describes “Youth ministry in educational institutions,” affirming that schools are in “urgent need of self-criticism.” He recalls that “some Catholic schools seem to be structured only for the sake of self-preservation… A school that becomes a ‘bunker,’ protecting its students from errors ‘from without’ is a caricature of this tendency.” When young people leave, they feel “an insurmountable disconnect between what they were taught and the world in which they live,” while “one of the greatest joys that any educator can have is to see a student turn into a strong, well-integrated person.” (221)

We cannot separate spiritual from cultural formation… “This, then, is your great challenge: to respond to the crippling refrains of cultural consumerism with thoughtful and firm decisions, with research, knowledge and sharing.” (223) Among the areas of “pastoral development,” the Pope indicates the “importance of the arts,” (226) the “potential of sports,” (227) and “care for the environment.” (228)

There is a need for “popular youth ministry,” “broader and more flexible, which stimulates those natural guides and charisms which the Holy Spirit has already sown among young people, in the different places in which young people concretely move. It tries to avoid imposing obstacles, rules, controls, and obligatory structures on these young believers who are natural leaders in their neighborhoods and in other settings. We need only to accompany and encourage them,” (230)

By focusing on a “pure and perfect youth ministry, marked by abstract ideas, protected from the world and free of every flaw, we can turn the Gospel into a dull, meaningless and unattractive proposition. Such a youth ministry ends up completely removed from the world of young people and suited only to an elite Christian youth that sees itself as different, while living in an empty and unproductive isolation.” (232)

Pope Francis invites us to be a “Church with open doors. Nor does one have to accept fully all the teachings of the Church to take part in certain of our activities for young people. (234) Room should also be made for “all those who have other visions of life, who belong to other religions or who distance themselves from religion altogether.” (235) The icon for this approach is offered to us by the Gospel episode of the disciples at Emmaus:
Jesus questions them, listens to them patiently, helps them to recognize what they are living, to interpret in the light of Scripture what they have lived, accepts their invitation to stay with them, enters their night. It is they themselves who choose to resume without delay the journey in the opposite direction. (237)

“Always missionaries”. For young people to become missionaries there is no need to make “a long journey.” “A young person who makes a pilgrimage to ask Our Lady for help, and invites a friend or companion along, by that single gesture is being a good missionary.” (239) “Youth ministry is always missionary.” (240) Young people need to have their freedom respected, “yet they also need to be accompanied.” The family should be the first place of accompaniment (242), and then the community. “All should regard young people with understanding, appreciation, and affection, and avoid constantly judging them or demanding of them a perfection beyond their years.” (243) There is a lack of experienced people dedicated to accompaniment (244) and “some young women feel that there is a lack of leading female role models within the Church.” (245) The same young people “described to us” the qualities they hope to find in a mentor: “being a faithful Christian who engages with the Church and the world; someone who constantly seeks holiness; someone who is a confidant without judgment. Similarly, someone who actively listens to the needs of young people and responds in kind; someone deeply loving and self-aware; someone who recognizes his or her limits and knows the joys and sorrows of the spiritual journey. An especially important quality in mentors is the acknowledgement of their own humanity—the fact that they are human beings who make mistakes: not perfect people but forgiven sinners” (246). They should know how to “walk alongside the young people,” respecting their freedom.

Chapter eight: “Vocation”

“The first thing we need to discern and discover is this: Jesus wants to be a friend to every young person.” (250) Vocation is a call to missionary service to others, “for our life on earth reaches full stature when it becomes an offering” (254). “To respond to our vocation, we need to foster and develop all that we are. This has nothing to do with inventing ourselves or creating ourselves out of nothing. It has to do with finding our true selves
in the light of God and letting our lives flourish and bear fruit.” (257) “This ‘being there for others’ normally has to do with two basic issues: forming a new family and working.” (258)

As for “love and family,” the Pope writes that: “Young people intensely feel the call to love; they dream of meeting the right person with whom they can form a family.” (259) The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony “envelops this love in the grace of God; it roots it in God Himself.” (260) God created us as sexual beings. He himself created sexuality, which is a marvellous gift. “It is not taboo.” It is a gift the Lord gives us. It has “two purposes: to love and to generate life. It is passion... True love is passionate.” (262)

Pope Francis observes that the “increase of separations, divorces... can cause great suffering and a crisis of identity in young people. Sometimes they must take on responsibilities that are not proportioned to their age.” (262) Despite all the difficulties, “it is worth your every effort to invest in the family; there you will find the best incentives to mature and the greatest joys to experience and share. Don’t let yourselves be robbed of a great love.” (263)

“To think that nothing can be definitive is a deceptive lie... I ask you, instead, to be revolutionaries, I ask you to swim against the tide.” (264)

As for work, the Pope writes: “I ask young people not to expect to live without working, depending on others for help. This is not good, because work is a necessity, part of the meaning of life on this earth, a path to growth, human development and personal fulfilment. In this sense, helping the poor financially must always be a provisional solution in the face of pressing needs.” (269)

After noting how young people in the world of work experience forms of exclusion and marginalization, (270) the Pope affirms with regard to youth unemployment: “This is a highly complex and sensitive issue that politics must make a priority, especially at present, when the speed of technological advances and the concern to reduce labor costs can lead quickly to the replacement of many jobs by machines.” (271) To young people he says: “It is true that you cannot live without working, and that sometimes you have to accept whatever is available, but I ask you never to
give up on your dreams, never completely bury a calling, and never accept defeat.” (272)

Pope Francis concludes this chapter by talking about “the vocation to special consecration.” “In discerning your vocation, do not dismiss the possibility of devoting yourself to God… Why not? You can be sure that, if you do recognize and follow a call from God, there you will find complete fulfillment.” (276)

Chapter nine: “Discernment”

The Pope recalls that: “Without the wisdom of discernment, we can easily become prey to every passing trend.” (279) “A particular form of discernment involves the effort to discover our own vocation. Since this is a very personal decision that others cannot make for us, it requires a certain degree of solitude and silence.” (283)

“A vocation, while a gift, will undoubtedly also be demanding. God’s gifts are interactive; to enjoy them we have to be ready to take risks.” (289)

Three sensitivities are required of those who help young people in their discernment. “The first kind of sensitivity is directed to the individual. It is a matter of listening to someone who is sharing his very self in what he says.” (292) “The second kind of sensitivity is marked by discernment. It tries to grasp exactly where grace or temptation is present.” (293) “The third kind of sensitivity is the ability to perceive what is driving the other person,” discerning “the direction in which that person truly wants to move.” (294) “When we listen to others in this way, at a certain moment we ourselves have to disappear in order to let the other person follow the path he or she has discovered. We have to vanish as the Lord did from the sight of his disciples in Emmaus.” (296) We need “to encourage and accompany processes, without imposing our own roadmaps. For those processes have to do with persons who remain always unique and free. There are no easy recipes.” (297)

The exhortation concludes with “a wish” from Pope Francis: “Dear young people, my joyful hope is to see you keep running the race before you, outstripping all those who are slow or fearful. Keep running, “attracted by the face of Christ, whom we love so much, whom we adore in the Holy Eucharist and acknowledge in the flesh of our suffering brothers
and sisters. The Church needs your momentum, your intuitions, your faith... And when you arrive where we have not yet reached, have the patience to wait for us.”

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Pope Francis Greets Participants in UNIV During the General Audience in St. Peter's Square, The Vatican (April 17, 2019)

In his greetings at the end of his catechesis to the Spanish language pilgrims from Spain and Latin America, the Pope said: “Let us ask our Lord that the celebration of Easter not be just one more moment in our life, but that it give us impetus to live each day for the glory of God, confiding to the Father the trials that afflict us and finding in him the merciful embrace that animates us to forgive others. May God bless you!”

He also recalled in Italian to the participants in the 2019 UNIV gathering. “My dear young people, who are living these days of formation following the example of St. Josemaría, base your lives more and more on the values of the Faith on the model of Christ, transforming the world that surrounds you.”

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FROM THE PRELATE

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Activities

Panama, World Youth Day

A trip to Panama to participate in World Youth Day from January 24 to 27

Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz landed in Panama City on January 24th. Some faithful of Opus Dei and WYD volunteers accompanied him to the chapel, where a few days before, on the 21st, the Metropolitan Archbishop José Domingo Ulloa had inaugurated a plaque at the Tocumen International Airport commemorating the saints and blessed who arrived in the country through this airport.

The text reads: “In memory of the passage through this International Airport of Tocumen in Panama of Saint John Paul II, Pope; Saint Oscar Arnulfo Romero, Archbishop; Saint Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, Founder; Saint Mother Theresa of Calcuta, Founder; Blessed María Romero Meneses, religious sister; Blessed Alvaro del Portillo, Bishop, and other illustrious people who made their lives a service to humanity.”

“Now it will be remembered in our history that very distinguished people have passed through this airport,” the Archbishop said at the ceremony.
The plaque continues: “Under His Emminence Monsignor José Domingo Ulloa Mendieta, Archbishop of Panama, this plaque is being unveiled to commemorate the visit of His Holiness Pope Francis from January 23 to 27, 2019, together with the first pilgrim image of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima, on the occasion of the World Youth Day.”

St. Josemaría passed through Panama in February 1975. He was traveling from Venezuela to Guatemala on a catechetical trip when the plane landed at Tocumen International Airport. The work of the Prelature in Panama had not yet begun. Blessed Alvaro del Portillo was also traveling with St. Josemaría.

Afterwards, Msgr. Ocáriz prayed before an image of the patronness of Panama, Our Lady La Antigua, and went to the Cerro Azul conference center. Upon arrival, he greeted the faithful of Opus Dei who were awaiting him at the Tagua Training Center, which organizes educational initiatives for the benefit of Panamanian women.

On the 25th, the Prelate went to the Entremares University Center, close to Our Lady La Antigua Field, where many of the the main World Youth Day events were to take place.

In Entremares he celebrated Holy Mass. In his homily he made reference to the day’s feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul. He encouraged those present to ask the Apostle to the Gentiles for the conversion of each one of those taking part in the events with the Holy Father: “Not only for the conversion of those who don’t have faith but also so that each one of us takes another step closer to our Lord.”

We need to desire “a permanent conversion,” he said. “Like Saint Paul, we find ourselves constantly facing our Lord, who tells us, ‘What are you waiting for? Why do you delay?’ Let us ask our Lord to make us react.” He also asked for prayers for persecuted Christians and for those facing special difficulties.

Msgr. Ocáriz then went to the Vasco Núñez de Balboa Conventions Center, where he had his first catechetical get-together during World Youth Day. At the beginning, he spent a few minutes with a group of
young people from Venezuela. The first get-together was attended by over 1,500 young women from countries as far away as the Philippines.

As soon as he began, the Prelate asked for prayers for Pope Francis. He also spoke about joy, saying “our goal in life is to love God more each day” and that happiness awaits each one of us right where we are. “It’s possible that we might suffer, it’s possible that we might cry. But that we be sad?—no,” the Prelate said. He also spoke about the vocation that God has in mind for each person. “You need courage to want it, not only to see it. When we say ‘yes’ to the Lord, it’s because of an interior grace. We shouldn’t be afraid because a vocation, any vocation, is a gift that he grants us.”

Therefore “on our part, we have to reply ‘yes, I want to.’ Then we need to seek advice, to pray and to go as frequently as possible to the Eucharist.” He also spoke about freedom: “Because to commit yourself to something, you have to do it freely. Making a commitment is a way of exercising our freedom,” he reminded them.

Finally, he mentioned the importance of friendship. “When there is true friendship, there is concern for the other person. If the person is truly a friend,” Monsignor Ocáriz said, responding to a young woman who asked a question, “she will be interested in your life, and you in hers. This is a starting point and, little by little, the friendship will become apostolate; and together, you will draw closer to our Lord.”

After receiving some families, the Prelate had another catechetical encounter in the afternoon. Over 900 young men, the majority from Central America, filled the auditorium.

In the get-together, Msgr. Ocáriz recalled how “Saint Josemaria reminded us that we can find our Lord in daily events in our lives. Holiness is within everyone’s reach: at work, doing sports, in our families… in everything.” And he added: “Sometimes we don’t understand the things that happen to us or what’s happening in the world. So it helps to have faith.”

One of the fellows there asked the Prelate for advice for young people who are considering a vocation of apostolic celibacy. “If a person sees that this is the path that God is showing him – because of the circumstances,
signs, and advice from those who know him – then he should go for it,” he responded. “We don't do God a favor with apostolic celibacy. It’s he who is giving us a gift. Remember what Jesus told the Samaritan woman: ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that gives it to you…’.”

A young Nicaraguan mentioned the difficulties his country is going through. “You shouldn’t lose hope,” the Prelate responded. “Pray, because by praying we are already doing a lot. The Cross is mysterious, we don't understand it. It's a question of faith.”

The Prelate ended with a call to optimism: “We mustn’t get discouraged. Saint Josemaria taught us to begin and begin again. Begin again in the first place by going to where our strength lies: in confession and the Eucharist; in good friendships; in seeking advice…”

Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Puerto Rico

Costa Rica, January 27–29

The Prelate arrived in San José on January 27. At the Miravalles University Center several families were waiting to welcome him.

In one of the get-togethers with members and friends of Opus Dei, he spoke about the need to never be afraid of God and to speak to him like a friend. “Sacred Scripture often tells us not to fear God, and to realize we are always accompanied by him. Saint Josemaria said that a person who fears does not yet know how to love. Let us not be afraid if he asks us for more than we want to give.”

On Monday January 28th, Msgr. Ocáriz held several catechetical meetings in which he stressed, among other things, the importance of joy: “God wants us to be happy, and that our joy may be full; this is achieved by his grace and help. To be happy, we need a heart in love with God and he will give us the strength to love everyone: our family, friends and peers.”

Answering the question of a mother about the role of the family, the Prelate said: “You yourself have realized that the greatest thing that we can
do is to make Christ known, get to know him and bring him everywhere in response to everything that he has given us, especially in our own family.”

He also stressed the great value of fraternity in families and among friends: “To be a friend, a spouse or a mother requires a spiritual effort. To understand those who are at our side, we should first try to see the good and positive things in them, the best side of each one. We are all worth a lot and so there is no room for distinctions; the differences we see should lead us to love and appreciate each other more.”

Responding to a question about how to talk to young newlyweds about persevering in their marriage, he said that “when a marriage breaks up quickly, it’s because there is a lack of love. Love is not the initial excitement, which is passing; love is to want the good of another person. We should teach young people what love is.”

On the 29th, Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz took part in a discussion with university students and young professionals at the Miravalles University Center. He suggested that those present “give thanks to God for the Christian formation you receive, knowing that our formation never ends. The goal of this formation is to identify ourselves with Christ and we should receive it with an active attitude, so that we can come to have the same sentiments as Christ.”

The Prelate reminded them to keep praying for Pope Francis. “Pray also for those who are suffering hardships all over the world. This reality should lead us to treat others better and to live fraternity well, in our own family and with our friends.”

One of those present asked how to discover the beauty of the virtue of purity. “Sex is not something dark,” the Prelate replied. “But since it is such a great and noble reality, its corruption is even worse. If instead, we struggle to live this gift in an ordered way, we are filled with joy, and are able to be concerned about others. We all have to struggle, without getting discouraged. It will be like that right to the end of our life.”

When someone asked about how to live one’s vocation with love, he replied: “We all have a vocation. Our Lord is concerned about everyone. God has a plan for everyone. It doesn’t depend on enthusiasm; we shouldn’t confuse sureness in our vocation with enthusiasm. It is the
response to God’s call."

Other questions raised included how to better protect the dignity of women in a society where they are not sufficiently respected and how to include care for creation in our path to holiness.

Msgr. Ocáriz also met with some women who attend the activities of formation offered by Opus Dei. The Prelate spoke to them about the importance of “facing all the situations in our life, joys and sorrows, in the same way that Jesus would have done.”

A young woman studying preschool education asked about the use of social media. “You can have a very positive presence there. At the same time, it requires a lot of self-control to not devote more time than is necessary to it.”

One of those present, who came from Guatemala, asked about how to trust God’s will when it is not easy to accept. “God has a plan for each one that can be difficult for us to understand, because our Lord permits setbacks and failures. Saint Josemaria, who suffered a lot, taught us that we may cry or have trouble understanding things, but that we should not give in to sadness. If we have faith, we believe in the great love that God has for us. God wants us to be saints, which doesn’t mean being perfect. He loves us with our defects, but always struggling to be better.”

Another young woman studying at the university said that she took part in WYD in Panama and that it impressed her to see so many young people from different parts of the world who love the Church. “This should help us,” Msgr. Ocáriz said, “to see in the others the love that God has for each one. We should try to see them with His eyes. Sometimes this can be a bit complicated, but it can be achieved by asking God for the charity we need to treat every person well.”

The Prelate also reminded them that when they are with people who don’t share our faith, we first have to love them and think that God wants to reach them through us, “not because we are better but because we have received more from God. We should pray for people who are far from him.”

Nicaragua, January 30th
The Prelate arrived in Nicaragua early in the morning, for two catechetical get-togethers in Managua, in La Rivera and Villa Fontana cultural centers.

In the get-together with women faithful and cooperators of Opus Dei, he stressed that “our faith and love for God should fill us with security, hope and joy, and that when suffering comes—small or big setbacks—we should unite ourselves to Christ’s Cross. Any situation, when offered to our Lord, is taken on by Jesus as his own and he gives it immense value.”

One of the women who helped begin the educational center in Diriamba told the Prelate that they had been working there for 19 years now. The Prelate encouraged them to continue offering human and Christian formation to many women, “because everything that is done for God is effective. He takes into account our difficulties and the fruit often comes without our realizing it.” One of the young women studying in that center said that she was helped to discover God there, since she wasn’t practicing any religion at the time. On 26 May 2018, when Nicaragua was undergoing a serious political crisis, she was baptized, and her life was filled with a new hope.

When asked if a mother of a family can discover her vocation among her many daily chores, Msgr. Ocáriz replied: “Certainly it’s possible. God is the one who gives a vocation and for him nothing is impossible. As Saint Josemaría used to say, God is especially interested in people who have a lot to do and don’t have time, since they are dedicated people who give themselves to others.”

At the end, the Prelate assured them that he prays daily for their country, so that the people come closer to God and desire peace.

In the second get-together, Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz invited the people there “to never lose their joy and hope. Saint Josemaría used to say that to be happy what we need is not a comfortable life, but a heart in love. A heart in love is the source of hope.”

When considering the broad horizons for the work of evangelization needed in Nicaragua, he said that “it might seem that we are few for so much that needs to be done. But God’s strength is greater. May all the
work that needs to be done and all the peace that needs to be sown lead you to pray more, to forgive more.”

In this regard, someone asked the Prelate how to forgive others when it is difficult to do so. “By having the same sentiments as Christ Jesus for other people. In times that were also difficult, Saint Josemaría prayed: ‘May I see with your eyes, my Christ.’ You can always find the strength you need to forgive in the Eucharist.”

**Puerto Rico, January 31 – February 3**

The Prelate of Opus Dei arrived in San Juan on January 31st. The first catechetical get-together was held at the Monteclaro Hospitality School, with young women who are studying and training there. Recalling the recent World Youth Day in Panama, he said that “a good resolution for any young person who had the opportunity to be there is to pray a lot for the Pope.”

On Friday, February 1, after celebrating Holy Mass at the Monteclaro School, Msgr. Ocáriz went to San Juan, where he greeted a group of families. Later, in the atrium of the Puertorreal School, he met with priests and seminarians from various dioceses.

One of those present asked how to overcome moments of tiredness and discouragement. “We mustn’t confuse joy with enthusiasm,” he said. “We need to strive to deepen our relationship with Christ.” He concluded by reminding them of the need to seek many vocations for the priesthood.

In the late afternoon, about a hundred young people met with the Prelate. One of the fellows asked how we can know what God wants from us: “what God wants from us is first of all that we do what we have to do; that is, that we fulfill our duties.” He encouraged them to have a schedule so they could live order better: “if you have a plan of life, you’ll have more strength, serenity and joy.”

On Saturday, February 2, feast of the Presentation of the Lord, the Prelate celebrated Mass in the oratory of the Paloblanco conference center. He made reference to some words of Simeon in the Gospel reading: “Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation.” We too need to have the desire to
see God: “to see him in the Eucharist, to see him in daily circumstances, to see him in the people around us… Thus we will place Christ at the summit of human activities.”

At 11.30 am, in the conference center of Puerto Rico, he met with women of the Prelature and their friends. They told him that it was the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of the apostolic work in Puerto Rico, and they asked him what he would like from them. “The important thing is what God wants from us, and what he wants is that we be faithful to our own vocation.”

At the end of the afternoon, in another catechetical meeting, Msgr. Ocáriz spoke about the opportunity to find God’s will also in moments of difficult, pain and illness: “faith is needed for what we don’t understand or see. And nevertheless, there too we find God’s love.”

One of those present, who along with others is trying to bring forward two schools, the Sonsoles and Summit Academies, asked for advice on how to overcome all the challenges. Msgr. Ocáriz said that “the first means is to have faith.” Then, that we shouldn’t become discouraged if some people respond negatively when asked to help out in these initiatives. He said jokingly: “if they don’t want to help, they are the ones who lose out.”

Between get-togethers, Msgr. Ocáriz had the opportunity to greet several families who expressed their gratitude for the help they receive from the formation and spiritual activities offered by the Prelature’s centers.

On February 3, his last day in Puerto Rico, the Prelate celebrated Mass in Montecarlo. In his homily, he spoke about the serenity that comes from knowing that we are a child of God. Afterwards, he met with the benefactors and directive boards of various initiatives. He thanked them for all their efforts, and then some of them recounted anecdotes about the struggle to recover from Hurricane Maria on the island.

When imparting his blessing he said that “we are never separate from one another because Christ himself unites us.” As he left Paloblanco, he went past a group of teachers, students and families wearing straw hats and playing maracas.
Zaragoza (Spain)

On March 29, Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz began a pastoral trip to Saragossa, the city where St. Josemaría's vocation to the priesthood was forged. After first going to pray before the image of our Lady in the Holy Chapel, he went to the Archbishop’s Palace to greet Archbishop Vicente Jiménez.

The Prelate was invited to kiss the image and given a warm welcome by the penitentiary, Fr. Pedro José Gracia, who addressed some affectionate words to him before the people present there.

Msgr. Ocáriz also wrote a dedicatory message in the Basilica's guestbook: “With immense gratitude to Our Lady of the Pillar, I have prayed for the Holy Church, for the Pope and for everyone in Opus Dei, having recourse also to Saint Josemaría's intercession. Remembering the years that Saint Josemaría lived in this city and how much he prayed here, I also pray to our Lady for everyone in Saragossa.”

On Saturday, March 30, the Prelate concelebrated the Eucharist in the church of the former seminary of San Carlos, where St. Josemaría was ordained a priest on March 28, 1925. Some five hundred people attended the Mass.

The hymn to Our Lady of the Pillar, sung by the choir of the Basilica, concluded the solemn ceremony. Among other concelebrants were Carlos Palomero, director of the Priestly House of San Carlos; the rector of the church, Don Carlos Tartaj; Ramón Herrando, regional vicar of Opus Dei; and Pablo Lacorte, vicar of Opus Dei in Saragossa.

In his homily, the Prelate gave the example of St. Josemaría’s life of persevering prayer, and encouraged those present to foster in their prayer acts of thanksgiving and petitions for forgiveness.

In the afternoon, the Prelate met with several groups of young people from Saragossa and the surrounding areas. He asked them to pray for Pope Francis, and specifically his trip to Morocco. And he also encouraged them
to take advantage of the Christian formation they receive through Opus Dei to identify themselves with Christ, to be cheerful and consistent with their faith, even when it involves going against the current.

“Our Lord wants us to be happy. Our Lord is concerned about each of us personally. He has a plan, a hope for everyone. He wants us to be happy,” said Monsignor Ocáriz. The secret of that happiness, he said, is service. “Serving is what makes people happy. Selfishness doesn't lead to happiness. Saint Josemaría said that sadness is the end product of selfishness; in contrast, to serve, to give oneself to others, produces great joy.”

The Prelate encouraged the young people to live joyfully even when they make mistakes and have defects, “because God loves us as we are.” He also told them, “Jesus was counter-cultural. The apostles were counter-cultural, and so are all those who have wanted to be faithful to our Lord. Counter-cultural, not through our own strength but because our Lord is with us.”

The dean of the Peñalba residence asked the Prelate how to deepen in her faith. Msgr. Ocáriz reminded her that faith is a gift from God, and that “we all experience some darkness in our faith. The apostles feel their need for more faith and they ask our Lord for it. When you feel your faith is a bit weak, you can pray: Lord, increase my faith.”

Several interventions came from residents or former residents of the Miraflores residence. One of them, a Muslim from Morocco, said he was thankful for the formation given through Opus Dei to the volunteers in a social project called International Cooperation.

A sick person suffering from a serious disability expressed gratitude for the affection he receives at the Jumara Club, “my second family,” and asked what he could do in return. The Prelate told him: “pray very much, offer up your difficulties, which our Lord transforms into something of great value. He wants you very close to the Cross so you can be very effective. May God bless you.”

Msgr. Ocáriz continued meeting with various groups of people on Sunday the 31st. He spoke to them about the importance of always being joyful, and regaining one’s interior freedom to love and to do good. The
Prelate also greeted the directive committees of two secondary schools: Montearagón and Sansueña. He also spent time with representatives from several agricultural training schools and associations of parents, chatting with a number of families.

The get-togethers were held at the Montearagón school, decorated for the occasion with an illustration of Our Lady of the Pillar and other motifs alluding to cities in Aragon and La Rioja.

In the get-togethers, the Prelate shared his joy about the previous day’s experience celebrating Mass in the place where Saint Josemaría was ordained a priest. He recalled how the founder of Opus Dei repeated the same simple prayer during those years: “Domina ut sit!” (“My Lady, may it be!”) and “Domine ut videam!” (“Lord, that I might see!”). Without knowing what God wanted from him, Saint Josemaría “put his future and doubts in God’s hands.”

On Sunday afternoon, Msgr. Ocáriz met with more faithful of the Prelature as well as priests of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross. The Prelate once again asked for prayers for the Pope and, in response to a question from a diocesan priest from Saragossa, he said that “the Church is above all Jesus Christ, with all his salvific power.” He also asked everyone to pray for priestly vocations, “without being afraid to suggest to someone the possibility of a vocation,” and keeping in mind that “without the Eucharist there is no Church, and without priests there is no Eucharist.”

In the mid-afternoon he went to the Sansueña school, where he was received by the school board. The Prelate blessed the Early Childhood Education facilities, wrote a dedication and chatted with the heads of associations of parents..

The Prelate took advantage of the liturgical celebration of “Laetare Sunday” to talk once more about the need to live joyfully. "All our life has to be imbued with joy, also when a time of penance comes, when there is cause for suffering, and when things are difficult. An expression of Saint Josemaría comes to mind: we shouldn’t think that the only work we can do joyfully is what we find pleasing. We can and we should do everything with joy," he said.
Although Christians have to go against the current, the Prelate pointed out that "this is normal." He also recalled how Bishop Javier Echevarría often said: "How many good people there are in the world! There is also a lot of ignorance, but many good people are waiting for us."

Msgr. Ocáriz took advantage of one of the questions to explain why freedom is compatible with having a commitment to God. "When we face difficulties and setbacks, when we consider what our Lord is asking of us and the effort it involves—because humanly speaking we would prefer to do something else—in that moment we need to recover our freedom, not feeling ourselves to be obligated, but rather doing things for love."

He also said that Pope Francis has great hopes that Opus Dei will reach “the ‘periphery’ of the immense middle classes of society, which is the majority of people.”

Naples (Italy)

The Prelate of Opus Dei traveled to Naples, where he visited with members and friends of Opus Dei. People also came from Calabria and Puglia to see him.

As usual on his catechetical trips, Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz listened to people talking about their work and family life, and answered questions addressed to him.

For example, one person asked: “How can I help a friend of mine come closer to God?” The Prelate replied: “Normally to help people, what we have to do is pray more. Sometimes we may ask ourselves, what does this or that person need? What more can I do for them? And the answer is almost always the same: let us pray more.”

A young woman said she was finding it hard to make compatible her work outside the home with caring for her family. Monsignor Ocáriz said that “this is a problem everyone encounters who has a lot to do, but we have to accept that we can’t always do everything we would like to.”
“It can be helpful,” the Prelate continued, “to establish a hierarchy of priorities: the family, in general, is the most important, but work too is necessary. Therefore an order has to be set up: when our day is ordered, we find time to do more things. It’s like packing a suitcase: if you just throw things in carelessly, not much will fit. So, order with flexibility.”

One young fellow asked how we can bring our friends to the faith by using social media. The Prelate said that Saint Josemaria used to speak about the “letter-writing apostolate.” Although few people send written letters today, Whatsapp or emails can be very useful tools for keeping in contact with our friends: asking how they are doing, requesting prayers, greeting them on important anniversaries, etc. “When there is sincere affection among friends, friendship will always be deep and true.”

**Homilies**

In the Church of the Former Seminary of San Carlos, Zaragoza (March 30, 2019)

“*Two men went up to the Temple to pray...*” (*Lk* 18:9-14)

Listening to this parable today prompts us to consider Saint Josemaría’s persevering prayer here where he so often begged God for light to see the path he knew he was called to, without yet knowing its specific form. In the rectory of San Carlos, a commemorative plaque states that Saint Josemaría “lived, was formed and was ordained a priest here.” Our gratitude goes out to Fr. Carlos Palomero for having put up this plaque that gives us great joy.

In 1960, when Saint Josemaria received an honorary doctorate from the University of Saragossa, he made reference to the “unforgettable memories of times long ago: the years spent in the shadow of the San Carlos
Seminary, on my path to the priesthood.” Doubtless those memories would have included the first time he gave Holy Communion to his mother in this church, as a deacon.

Those years for Saint Josemaría were marked by many hours of prayer, here before the Blessed Sacrament, in the upper part of the presbytery on the right. His prayer would intensify progressively throughout his life, especially after God gave him the mission to open up and develop the path of Opus Dei. He shared his own experience in a homily—and on many other occasions—when he said: “Prayer is the foundation of any supernatural endeavor. With prayer we are all powerful; without it, if we were to neglect it, we would accomplish nothing” (Friends of God, 238).

How is our prayer going? “Two men went up to the Temple to pray...” The Pharisee thanks God; he recognizes that his qualities and good deeds would not be possible without God’s help. It is very good to give thanks. However, this man was really praising himself and, above all, despising others while lacking something very necessary: acknowledging his need for mercy and forgiveness. In contrast, the publican simply confesses that he is a sinner and in need of God’s mercy, and he is forgiven.

We can briefly consider two elements of our relationship with God: gratitude and asking for forgiveness. Both aspects are based on faith, especially faith in God’s love for each and every one of us. Saint John offers a wonderful summary when he describes the Apostles’ experience alongside Jesus: “We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us” (1 Jn 4:16). As Pope Francis writes, “Faith also means believing in God, believing that he truly loves us, that he is alive, that he is mysteriously capable of intervening, that he does not abandon us and that he brings good out of evil by his power and his infinite creativity” (Evangelii gaudium, 278).

We have so many reasons to thank God and to ask him for forgiveness! With faith in his love, we can trustingly ask for help as well, because we always need it. The prayer addressed to God by Blessed Alvaro del Portillo, who so faithfully followed the founder of Opus Dei’s teachings, sums all this up: “Thank you, forgive me, help me more.”
Together with prayer, we need the Eucharist. Today, on the anniversary of Saint Josemaría’s first Mass, I cannot help but remember how he always insisted to his daughters and sons in Opus Dei on the need to be “Eucharistic souls, souls of prayer.” And also his teaching, embodied in his own life, on the Holy Mass as the “center and root” of the spiritual life.

In Saint Josemaría’s first Mass, together with joy and gratitude, our Lord also wanted the Holy Cross to be present in the form of painful family circumstances. When suffering enters our lives in one way or another, let us turn our eyes to the Cross of Jesus: let us go to him in the Eucharist. And our suffering, united to our Lord’s sacrifice, will be transformed into spiritual strength and a source of joy.

We are celebrating the Eucharist. In a few minutes, Christ’s sacrifice will be present on the altar. Let us renew our gratitude to our Lord, who has wanted to give himself to us as food for eternal life in Holy Communion. As Saint Leo the Great taught many centuries ago: “Sharing in the Body and Blood of Christ transforms us into what we receive” (Sermon 12 on the Lord’s Passion). It is above all through this that one truly becomes ipse Christus, Christ himself, which Saint Josemaría so often spoke and wrote about.

Becoming Christ himself because, as our Lord tells us: “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood, remains in me and I in him” (Jn 6: 56). Thus we can see and react to people, circumstances, the positive and the negative of this world and our own life, as Jesus sees and reacts. And therefore, we can think and act with real concern, affection and service to others.

When he finishes explaining the parable of the two men who went up to the Temple to pray, Jesus concludes: “Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.” God does not rejoice in our humiliation. He wants us to be humble in order to exalt us, so that—by emptying ourselves of disordered self-love—we can open up space in our life for the action of his grace and love. Humiliation, like everything in Christian life, also refers to the Eucharist, and therefore to the Cross.
At the Easter Triduum, Prelatic Church of Our Lady of Peace, Rome (April, 2019)

Homily for Holy Thursday, April 18, 2019

1. In the first reading of the Mass, we have recalled the institution of the Jewish Passover, which commemorated the freeing of the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt. Centuries later, Jesus chose the days when this liberation was remembered to celebrate, during the Last Supper, his Passover in instituting the Eucharist. Saint Paul gives an account of this in the second reading. The words Christ pronounced that night, and that we priests repeat in each Mass, changed the bread and wine into his Body and Blood. “This is my body which is given for you … This cup is the new covenant in my blood” (1 Cor 11:24-5). What does all this have to do with our own lives? Isn’t it something distant, far removed from our own problems?

2. We are beginning the Paschal Triduum. You have come to Rome to take part, with greater intensity, in these three days that are the most important ones in the year for a Christian. The freeing of the people of Israel, under Moses’s guidance, was an image of what later the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus would mean for all mankind. So it has a lot to do with each one of us. In the slavery imposed on the Jewish people we can see an image of the slavery of sin. And Israel’s freedom foretold a new and higher freedom: the freedom of the children of God, which Christ’s grace attains for each one of us.

3. But we can ask ourselves another question: do I truly need to be freed? Don’t I usually do what I want? Saint Paul, who from his youth sought God by paths other than Christian ones, wrote: “I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do
not want is what I do (Rom 7:18-19). It is the experience of the lack of strength to do all the good that needs to be done. Chesterton, with his typical British humor, said that the overwhelming evidence of human weakness shows that the action of sin is the part of Christian doctrine that can be proven even scientifically. We need Christ to definitively heal our own freedom. And it is on the Cross where he has attained for us the deepest liberation: the liberation from sin, which purifies our heart so that we can discover our true identity as God’s children.

4. The Eucharist “is the sacrifice of the Cross perpetuated down through the ages” (Enc. Ecclesia de Eucharistia, no. 11). At each Mass, whose institution we celebrate today, this sacrifice of salvation becomes present in a sacramental way. So the freedom that Christ won for us by his Passion, Death and Resurrection is not distant from us, neither in time nor geographically. Moreover, the Eucharist is already a pledge of eternal life. As Saint Josemaria said: “Receiving the Body and Blood of our Lord in communion is, in a certain sense, like loosening the bonds of earth and time, in order to be already with God in heaven” (Conversations, no. 113).

5. We can experience the freedom that Christ won for us in the strength we are given especially through the sacraments. As a Father of the Church wrote many centuries ago, when the first Christians met to celebrate the Eucharist, amid fierce persecution, truly present there was “the sign of freedom” (Irenaeus of Lyon, Adversus Haereses, IV, 18, 2). Tonight, when visiting Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament in the churches of Rome, we can reflect: in the Eucharist is my true freedom.

On this night, when we also recall the institution of the priesthood and the washing of the apostles’ feet, let us ask our Mother Holy Mary to help us contemplate, marvel at, give thanks for, and approach with faith and love our encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist. Amen.

Homily on Good Friday, April 19, 2019

In the account we have read of the Passion, written by St. John, an eyewitness to the events, we find four scenes in which we can hear words spoken directly by Jesus: in the Garden of Olives, when being questioned in the house of Annas, in his conversations with Pilate, and finally when on the Cross. The Gospels record many moments when God made man
spoke our language: from that first conversation with his Mother, when he was only twelve years old, to the long farewell speech at the Last Supper. We have sermons, parables, explanations, which will always tell us new things. However, the words that come from Jesus’ heart on the Cross reach us especially. Here I would like to focus on one of those phrases: “I am thirsty” (Jn 19:28).

From the physical point of view, with a shattered body like Jesus’, the thirst would surely have come much earlier. Besides, he probably hadn’t eaten or drunk since he was captured. And above all we know that, minutes before being crucified, he had been offered a narcotic drink to alleviate a little of the pain, but Christ did not take it (Mt 27:34; Mk 15:23). Why now, already nailed to the wood out of love of us, a few moments before dying, does Jesus again manifest his thirst?

On the one hand, St. John himself tells us: so that the Scripture might be fulfilled (see Jn 19:28). These are moments in which Jesus had wanted to take on our sins, our sufferings, our weaknesses. The Gospel tells us that our Lord, in saying “I thirst,” knew that everything was already accomplished (see Jn 19:28). In those moments of maximum pain, Jesus thought of each one of us. St. Thomas Aquinas comments that, with the intense thirst of someone who is almost completely dehydrated, Jesus wanted to manifest his ardent desire to save us (see Super Ioan., chapter 19, l. 5). In other words, this thirst of someone who is between life and death is the image of how much Jesus loves us, how much he wants us to open our hearts to him. It is difficult to hear these words, to understand their meaning, and to not give them importance. Let us take advantage of this Holy Week in Rome, where we can even admire some relics of the Holy Cross, to let ourselves be challenged by these words of Christ. May we be able to say in the depths of our soul: Jesus, I really want to quench your thirst a little! Jesus, help me to correspond to your love!

We have asked ourselves: Why did Jesus manifest his thirst? The Gospel of John shows us another scene in which the theme of Christ’s thirst is also central: when, tired from his journey, Christ asks a Samaritan woman for water. If we read the whole passage we realize that Jesus is thinking about the salvation of that woman. The thirst of our Lord is a thirst that is only quenched by the peace of the soul that he meets on his
The scene ends with the conversion of the Samaritan woman. And not only that; later, she returns to her city, saying: “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?” (Jn 4:29). Jesus’ thirst quickly transformed into an apostle a woman who did not even fully share Israel’s faith.

The thirst for Christ extends to everyone equally, even to those who do not yet know him or who are somewhat distant: from the Cross it is impossible to view people in a superficial way. The thirst for Jesus extends to our friends, to our families, to all the people around us. It is significant that the inscription that Pilate had placed on the Cross, as the cause of the condemnation, was written in the three main languages of that time: Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. It is an image of Christ’s love on the Cross, which cannot be contained in one language alone.

We are people here from very different places, but the Cross of Christ speaks equally to all of us. St. Josemaría said: “On the Cross he cried out Sitio!, ‘I thirst.’ He thirsts for us, for our love, for our souls and for all the souls we ought to be bringing to him” (Friends of God, no. 202). We are here, in this liturgical celebration, because God wanted to bring us closer to him. Let us thank our Lord for calling us to this great task of quenching his thirst, despite all our weaknesses.

In a few minutes we will have the adoration of the Cross; let us accompany our gesture of kneeling down and kissing it with a strong inner desire not to forget what Jesus has done for us. May the images that we see of the Cross throughout our day, at our work table, in our room, in a painting, remind us of those words of Christ that we have meditated on “I am thirsty,” and the task of bringing to our Lord the people we encounter on our path. To do so we ask the help of Mary, our Mother, who listened directly to Jesus’ words. We are comforted by the conviction that, just as she never separated herself from her Son, even in the most difficult moments, she never separates herself from us. Amen.

Homily at the Easter Vigil, April 20, 2019

The Gospel we have just heard points to the approximate time when the women ran to the tomb: “very early in the morning” (Lk 24:1). Jesus, whom they loved so much, had died; the One who from the moment they
had first found him had filled their lives with meaning, had been crucified. The world for these women had suddenly become an empty and confusing place again. The last few nights they may have been afraid of being discovered as followers of the One who had been condemned to death. The Pope during last year’s Easter Vigil called these difficult moments “the hours of the silent disciple.” And that may be the same feeling we too will have if we are a little distant from God or if we feel that the problems of our family, of the Church or of the world are too great; in short: if we are overcome by some insecurity.

However, in the Easter proclamation we have joined in the exclamation of the whole Church: *Haec nox sicut dies illuminabitur*. This night will be as clear as day. Without depending on our own strength, a light comes to dissipate the darkness, just as the fire of the Easter candle, an image of Christ, little by little through each one’s small candles restored light to this church of Our Lady of Peace.

“Christ, who has been raised from the dead, dies no more” (*Rom* 6:9), St. Paul tells us in the epistle we have read. Therefore the women who came to the tomb, after so many hours of solitude, can be reassured: Jesus will never abandon them. And that’s what makes this night brighter than any other. There is no darkness that Christ’s resurrection cannot illuminate. There is no worry so great that it makes us forget that Christ is stronger than evil, sin and death. As St. Josemaría wrote: “Christ always conquers” (*The Forge*, no. 660). We can ask ourselves: do I often remember the resurrection of our Lord, which is the foundation of our faith? Am I aware, in the midst of my personal difficulties, that Christ is alive and is close to me?

Jesus is alive. That is what the angels help the women at the tomb to understand. “Why do you seek the living among the dead?” (*Lk* 24:6). At that moment, perhaps they remember the Master’s own words and make their own the truth of the announcement: Jesus is alive. Then their attitude changes completely: from being “speechless,” as though they had nothing inside to share, their hearts overflow with joy. As the prophet Ezekiel says in one of the readings, their heart of stone is exchanged for a heart of flesh (see *Ez* 11:19), for a heart that immediately thinks of others. They need to run. They need to communicat this news to the apostles as soon as
possible. Let us ask our Lord that this Easter may be for us the same as it was for those holy women. May we find in the risen Christ the joy to awaken the people around us to happiness. God counts on our life to dispel the fear of those who, for one reason or another, doubt Jesus’ power to overcome death and evil.

And what is the first reaction of the apostles? How do those men react who, over time, will have the courage to go all over the world announcing the resurrection of Jesus until they are martyred? Surprisingly, they think the women’s words are an “idle tale” (see Lk 24:11). That’s how deep their discouragement is. They think it is impossible that this could have happened. But the risen Christ himself destroyed all these pessimistic calculations. Soon they were talking about Jesus openly in their homes, at their jobs, in the public squares. Over the years they would travel along many roads until they reached Rome, from where the news of the Resurrection spread to all the known world, although certainly with many difficulties and persecutions.

_Haec nox sicut dies illuminabitur_. We have said, joining the whole Church in the Easter proclamation, that this night will be as clear as day. Tonight is not night. Let us be filled with joy like those women because Jesus is alive, because we will never be alone again. Let us be filled with a joy like that of the apostles, which is renewed every day, and which allows us to take the message of the Resurrection, from Rome, to every corner of the world, especially to the people who are closest to us. St. Josemaría liked to think that the first person that the risen Christ visited will have been his Mother. Let us ask Mary, when discouragement threatens to darken our path, when “the hour of the silent disciple” arrives, to remind us that Jesus always conquers. Amen.

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On the Feast of St. Josemaria, Basilica of St. Eugene, Rome (June 26, 2019)
In the Gospel that we have just heard, Saint Luke tells us that “the multitude gathered around Jesus to hear the word of God” (*Lk* 5:1). On that day, many people crowded around Christ, so many that it was difficult for everyone to hear him clearly. They were on the shore of a lake, and there was no hill nearby for Jesus to speak from, as he had done on other occasions. So he decided to get into a boat and move a little away from the shore. Our Lord knew the hearts of those people perfectly well; although some came out of curiosity, others by chance, and still others with a real thirst for God, Jesus knew that all of them needed his word to discover the meaning of their lives.

In contemplating Christ and his desire to be seen by the multitude seeking him, we can ask ourselves: is this just a scene from the past? Jesus surrounded by so many people: isn’t this just an image of a world that no longer exists today?

Saint Josemaría, whose feast we are celebrating today, meditated on this same passage and concluded that what happened two thousand years old continues happening today. Everyone “wants to hear God's message, even though outwardly they may not show it”; all men and women, although they often lack the words or the strength to express that desire, are “longing to quench their thirst with the teachings of our Lord” (*Friends of God*, no. 260 ff.). Recent Popes have expressed themselves in similar ways. Pope Francis, for example, invites us to make Jesus known to those who are “quietly seeking God, led by a yearning to see his face” (*Evangelii gaudium*, no. 15). Benedict XVI, after comparing our day and age to a desert that longs to refresh itself with living water, said that “there are innumerable signs, often expressed implicitly or negatively, of the thirst for God, for the ultimate meaning of life” (*Homily, October 11, 2012*).

There are so many testimonies of people who, when they discover the joy that comes from the Christian way of life, react by saying: “But I never knew about it! No one ever told me! I thought Christianity was something else!” That is why the scene Saint Luke describes for us does not belong to the world of the past. People want to crowd around Jesus because they are constantly looking for good and beautiful things to fill their hearts; in the depths of our soul, we all have longings that only he is able to satisfy. Let us ask God to enable us to recognize that longing for his face, those signs of
thirst for Christ in other men and women. Let us ask God that we may know how to make present his true image to those around us; the image of that Christ who moves away from the shore so that everyone, even the furthest away, can see and hear him.

At the end of this Gospel passage, Jesus invites Peter, James and John to follow him as disciples. It is impressive to think that, just a few years later, their apostolic zeal will have taken the Good News to many important places of their world, including Rome. The first Christians, despite facing persecutions and misunderstandings, knew that the world belonged to them. In the second reading, Saint Paul clearly proclaims the conviction that filled them with confidence: “We are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God” (Rom 8: 16-17).

Indeed, this world is part of our inheritance. In the first reading, we heard that God placed man in the world “to cultivate and care for it” (Gen 2:15). And in the psalm that we sang (and that Saint Josemaría prayed every week) we are told that, through Christ, we have all the nations as our inheritance and that the whole earth is ours (cf. Ps 2:8). Sacred Scripture tells us clearly: this world is ours; it is our home, our task, our homeland.

Therefore, knowing that we are children of God, we cannot feel like strangers in our own home; we cannot go through life as visitors in a strange place, or walk the streets with fear, as though treading on uncharted territory. The world is ours because it belongs to our Father God. As Saint Thomas Aquinas taught, everything is subject to God’s all-powerful government; nothing escapes his mercy, even though often we cannot see this (Summa, I, q. 103, a.5). We are called to love this world, not another one that we might prefer; we can only love the specific people around us, the actual challenges that we face. An apostolic task cannot be undertaken with the resignation of a person who says they would prefer something else.

When Saint Josemaría invited us to love the world passionately, he often warned against the “mystical wishful thinking” of placing conditions on the field one needs to evangelize, thinking: “I wish things were different.” Let us ask our Lord for the capacity to be hopeful in the mission
he has entrusted to us, like a son or daughter who is enthused to carry out
the work needed in their own home.

On this day when we look in a special way to Saint Josemaría, we can
be inspired by his example of faith in launching seemingly impossible
enterprises, in a situation that, in many respects, was more complicated and
difficult than ours. Let us allow Saint Josemaría’s trust in God to enter our
hearts, in order to love the world that we have received as an inheritance,
and strive to satisfy the longing for Christ in so many people around us. To
do so, we rely especially on the mediation of our Mother Mary, who
watches over the happiness of all her children with motherly love and
patience. Amen.

In Memory of Blessed Alvaro del Portillo,
Basilica of St. Eugene, Rome (May 11, 2019)

We are celebrating the feast of Blessed Alvaro del Portillo, our beloved
Don Alvaro. More than five years have gone by since his beatification.
Time passes quickly, but we still remember very well those joyful days
spent in Madrid.

There are many aspects of the life of Saint Josemaría’s first successor
that we could focus on. Today I want to reflect on his trust in God.

The texts from today’s Mass speak to us of this aspect when presenting
the figure of the Good Shepherd. In the first reading, we listened to the
words of the prophet Ezekiel. The situation of the people of Israel was at a
critical moment. Jerusalem had been destroyed and most of the people had
been sent into exile. The Israelites awaited someone capable of bringing
them back to their own land. But God’s plans always exceed our
calculations. He says through Ezekiel: “I myself will search for my sheep ...
I myself will pasture my sheep ... the injured I will bind up, and the sick I
will heal” (Ezek 34:11-16). The prophet surpasses all the expectations of
his contemporaries: he invites the people to place their hope directly in
God instead of in merely human solutions.

Don Alvaro was a person who possessed great natural and supernatural traits. He knew that God’s grace could do more in his life than he himself could ever imagine. When he was chosen to lead Opus Dei, he said: “I have serious difficulties: all my sins, inadequacies and miseries. But I know that God our Lord gives sufficient grace for whatever he asks of us.”

In the Gospel we just heard, Jesus presents himself as the Good Shepherd. In addition to the reasons given by the prophet for trusting lives, both in our desires to do the good and in our good works (cf. Phil 2:13). Sometimes, especially in moments of discouragement, it can happen that we trust little in God’s grace, relying instead on other sources of security (see Gaudete et exultate, no. 50), such as our own strength, ideas, or plans. The Lord knows all of this and yet tells us: I am the Shepherd that you can trust. Can there be anything more effective than God’s own strength?

Blessed Alvaro often prayed an aspiration along these lines, a clear outpouring of his trust in God: “Thank you, forgive me, help me more.” These words express gratitude for the good things we do not deserve, recognition of our personal weakness, and a humble request for the strength needed to reach the greatest happiness possible, union with God. These words are also among the first that mothers teach their children. Let us ask God for a childlike heart, knowing ourselves incapable of doing anything without the help of our Father God. During a family gathering, Saint Josemaria once referred to his personal need for God’s grace, saying that he lived “with outstretched hands,” begging our Lord for alms.

Let us pray, through the intercession of Don Alvaro, that our trust in God’s love for us may grow deeper every day, just as his did. Thus we can better understand that the Lord Jesus, the Good Shepherd, is the one who guides us and fills our life with supernatural fruit, which always come to us through the motherly mediation of Holy Mary.

Amen.
Interview about World Youth Day in Panama, Zenit Italy (January 28, 2019)

The Prelate of Opus Dei didn’t want to miss the great gathering of young Catholics from all over the world in World Youth Day, celebrated in Panama from January 22nd to 27th, 2019.

The Prelate had a catechetical get-together with many young people, mainly from the Prelature, on Friday, January 25, 2019, at the Hotel Panama. Opus Dei was founded by St. Josemaría Escrivá in Spain in 1928, and is present in 68 countries.

Msgr. Ocáriz participated in the Way of the Cross, presided over by the Holy Father on Friday, in the Santa María la Antigua Camp, among a number of other events during these days.

The Argentinean priest Claudio Caruso, who was present at the historic world meeting in Panama, interviewed Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz exclusively for Zenit. The interview is reproduced below:

In public discussions today, religion sometimes seems to be presented as something of the past, old-fashioned. What do you think is the best way to show young people that happiness lies in focusing their lives on imitating Christ?

Perhaps that perception is born of a vision of Christianity as a set of precepts and obligations, or as the commemoration of past events. On the contrary, Christianity is a personal encounter with Christ’s love, a love that gives the deepest meaning to each one’s life. Certainly some people present religion as outdated. However, we see in our day and age many people thirsting for peace, for happiness, thirsting for God. God’s action in the world is silent; it takes place in the intimacy of people’s hearts, in personal relationships. I think that giving testimony to this very personal encounter with Jesus and the profound joy it produces, is a good way for young people—and for any person—to discover the happiness of living close to Christ. This has been the case since the very beginning of Christianity, as
St. John wrote: “We have known and believed in the love that God has for us.”

*How can we make known the marvelous virtues of our Lady, Queen of Peace, better known to young people today?*

Although only a few passages in the New Testament explicitly mention our Lady, a careful and meditative reading of these texts can teach us a lot about our Mother. On the occasion of World Youth Day, Pope Francis is highlighting for young people Mary’s “yes” to God’s invitation: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word” (*Lk* 1:38). It is a “yes” that implies an attitude of listening to God’s will, a determination to put oneself at his service and the service of our fellow men and women. The Virgin Mary is a mother, she is our Mother. We will learn from her by getting to know her. In one of his books, St. Josemaria advises us to have a personal experience of Mary’s motherly love: “It is not enough just to know she is our Mother and to think and to talk about her as such. She is your Mother and you are her son. She loves you as if you were her only child in this world. Treat her accordingly: tell her about everything that happens to you, honor her and love her. No one will do it for you or as well as you, if you do not do it yourself.”

*How can we help young people not to become discouraged at the lack of unity among Catholics or when reading certain news items, sometimes scandalous, that have as protagonists pastors of the Church? How can we help people not to lose their peace and instead spread serenity and hope?*

On other occasions I have reminded people that it can help us to consider that the Church is not only the group of men and women who have joined her, but above all, as St. Josemaría said, it is “Christ present in our midst; God who comes down to us to save us, calling us with his revelation, sanctifying us with his grace, sustaining us with his constant help” (*Christ is Passing By*, no. 131). Even if we, the men and women who are part of the People of God, make mistakes and err, God is with us, in his Church.

In the face of these difficulties, which are evident to everyone, Pope Francis invited all Catholics, in the month of October, to recite the Rosary daily, ending it with the invocation *Sub Tuum Praesidium,* and with the
prayer to St. Michael the Archangel. This is another key aspect: offering prayer and penance is a wonderful way to love the Church and the Pope ever more effectively.

*You are urging us to ask for light to see and strength to want to do God’s will. How can we help channel the enthusiasm of young people and lead them to dream high?*

Indeed, World Youth Days are a sign of the joy that marks young people who have ideals, a joy they should spread throughout the whole Church. The Pope encouraged them to transmit this enthusiasm with his famous remark, “Make a mess!” So it is something positive.

At the same time, each young person will also need help so that these days in Panama don’t remain an isolated event in their lives, but rather help enkindle in each person the desire to deepen the true origin of that joy, which is being close to Christ. Ordinary life— with its good and less good moments— can sometimes seem arid, a desert for those whose faith is enkindled only in moments of enthusiasm. But as St. Josemaría reminds us: “There where your fellow men and women are, where your aspirations are, your work, your loves, there is the place of your daily encounter with Christ.”

Young people live their lives with great intensity, so sometimes they may find it difficult to “see” Christ who is accompanying them. Some simple and practical advice might be to read the Gospel every day for a few minutes. If they don’t have that habit, they can start with the Gospel of St. Mark, which is short and direct. Those few minutes can have a great impact on their life.
“When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him?” (Ps 8:3-4). These words of the psalmist reflect the amazement awakened in the person who contemplates the immensity of the universe, and at the same time discovers that, despite their own smallness, they are unconditionally loved by God for who they are in themselves.

Sometimes we may view this as a beautiful but unattainable ideal. We may have the impression, as St. Josemaría warned us, that God is far away, where the stars shine, and not truly close to us, that we are immersed in the turmoil of daily life, with so many jobs and things to do. And the doubt may arise: what is the point of all this, what do I want to achieve, what am I really looking for? These are longings that are awakened in a soul who is seeking something more in his or her life, and with the assistance of the Holy Spirit they can open up for us great horizons.

Youth is an especially opportune time to ask these questions, since it is a time filled with possibilities, with great challenges and decisions that will mark one’s entire life. One wants to make the most of one’s time and set one’s life on the right track. Hence one needs time for reflection, for maturing, for considering one’s life up to this moment, for rediscovering the present—what each one truly is—and for planning the future.

None of us is here by accident. God has put us on this earth to take part in something great, to collaborate with him in human history. He is concerned about each of us and has a plan for each of us.

But this can give rise to fear, since it means setting aside what we are used to and that makes us feel safe. In his message in preparation for World Youth Day, which is taking place in Panama, Pope Francis told young people: “I invite all of you to look within yourselves and to ‘name’ your fears. Ask yourselves: what upsets me, what do I fear most in this specific moment of my life today? What blocks me and prevents me from moving forward? Why do I lack the courage to make the important choices I need to make?” And he encouraged them: “Fear must never have the last word but rather should be an occasion to make an act of faith in God… and in life! This means believing in the fundamental goodness of the existence that God has given us and trusting
that he will lead us to a good end, even through circumstances and vicissitudes which often bewilder us.”

*God wants to open up for us a great and beautiful panorama, which perhaps is hidden from our eyes. We need to trust him and take a decisive step towards him, overcoming the fear that, if we do so, we will lose many good things in life. His capacity to surprise us is much greater than any of our own expectations.*

*God’s plans for us, like those he announced to Mary, are not meant to extinguish our dreams, but to enkindle our desires, to make our lives fruitful and bring joy to many hearts. As the Pope also said in his video message for World Youth Day, where he pointed to the example of our Lady, with her generous “yes” to God Mary changed forever the course of human history.*
and upon returning to Spain worked as a teacher again, starting and completing a doctoral thesis in her later years.

Guadalupe’s example can give us light as well as encouragement to undertake our ordinary life as a path to holiness – our daily efforts, dreams, challenges and plans, where we also encounter unexpected difficulties and problems. Guadalupe stands out for her attitude of loving whatever God wanted of her, accepting his will, trusting and hoping in him, and living completely in the present, exactly as it is, leaving the future in God’s hands.

Guadalupe was a joyful, courageous, decisive, enterprising and affectionate person. Her certainty of God’s closeness and love led her to a simplicity and peace that allowed her not to be afraid of her mistakes and defects, but to keep going forward no matter what, seeking to love God and others in everything. Often we might be tempted to avoid aspiring to great things, to renounce our dreams, simply because we experience our own errors and limitations all too clearly. Guadalupe teaches us that, despite all the difficulties, we can dream and go far if we trust in God and in his love for us.

Guadalupe made compatible an intense professional life as a chemist with her relationship with God and service to others. Her many letters illustrate how she strove to give God priority in her life and, when things didn’t work out the way she wanted, how she would begin again with renewed determination. She dedicated time to a personal encounter with God in prayer each day, where she drew strength to find him again later amid daily events and circumstances. We too can find God amid our daily tasks, knowing that he waits for us patiently at every moment, especially in the Eucharist. The fact that the date of Guadalupe’s beatification, May 18th, is also the anniversary of her First Holy Communion seems to me a divine coincidence that highlights the close union between the Eucharist and personal holiness.

The future Blessed is also a model of how to discover God in our work that is done as well as possible. Guadalupe found God in her professional activity, and in it and through it made him known to others. Her love for God and her professional enthusiasm led her to be generously involved in the social issues of her time. She was never indifferent to the suffering of
others and helped begin projects for the advancement of the poor both in her own country and in Mexico, making use of all her knowledge and talents. Guadalupe was passionate about chemistry, but for her, work was not just a question of professional achievement but above all an opportunity to seek God and to serve others.

Many people who knew her remember her joy and contagious laughter, how she made life pleasant for those around her. Although her cheerful and open character was partly a matter of temperament, it was also the result of her struggle and hidden sacrifice. She suffered for many years from a heart disease that often left her tired and exhausted, but she accepted it cheerfully and always strove to smile, without giving importance to her suffering. Thinking of Guadalupe, I am reminded of something Saint Josemaría often said: “To give oneself sincerely to serving others is so effective that God rewards it with a humility filled with cheerfulness” (The Forge, 591).

During this month of May especially dedicated to Mary, we can ask our Lady that Guadalupe’s example may inspire us to always accept God’s invitations for our life, so that like her we too will be happy—”blessed”—as the Church will declare in a few days’ time.

Addresses and Other Statements

At the Ceremony for the Awarding of Honorary Doctorates, University of Navarra, Pamplona, Spain (June 28, 2019)

My first words are congratulations for the new doctors honoris causa. As Chancellor of the University of Navarra, I am pleased to have awarded this distinction to Professors Fine, Picard, Moneo, and Archer, to whom I
extend my warmest congratulations. The respective sponsors have already adequately described their outstanding and fruitful academic paths. We are honored to have these distinguished people become part of our faculty. By recognizing their merits in such diverse fields, we pay homage to the richness of university learning, to the value of the teaching vocation in the contemporary world, and to the service that academics provide society.

Twenty-five years ago, on an occasion such as this, Blessed Alvaro del Portillo invited teachers and students to “the adventure of bringing new enthusiasm to a tired world.” His successor, Bishop Javier Echevarría, reminded us that the future belongs to young people. Today, on this festive day, I join in this double invitation, which can be summed up as helping to making the university a place of hope.

We often hear people say that we are living in times of crisis and uncertainty. Paradoxically, in the midst of progress and well-being never before achieved, we see the energy that impels people and societies forward running out. Where can we find the new “sap” needed to nourish and invigorate them? An important part of the answer can be found in a genuine education, in the transforming power of people who think for themselves, without being dominated by fashions, and who set the course for their own lives, going forward with a clear goal: “as pilgrims and not as wanderers.” We all realize that structural and legal changes have a limited impact on shaping society. The decisive factor is always the people. Hence university institutions are called to be places of hope.

Those of us who are linked to this University also find a decisive reason for hope. Because of its Christian inspiration, the formation offered by the University cultivates all fields of knowledge, including theological knowledge. The latter teaches us that any explanation of cultural and social change is incomplete if it does not take into account Christ, Lord of History. God guides the destinies of this world in a way that always surprises us and always respects us: God wants free children, not slaves. This fatherly providence fills us with hope, frees us from all pessimism, and invites us to love the world.

The search for peace, the promotion of social justice and care for our common home are sustained and strengthened by an understanding of the
world and the human person that is grounded in the Gospel. We cannot ignore the current problems related to respect for the life of each person, and for the importance of the family and freedom of education. We need to strive, together with all men and women of good will, to help make charity and justice reign in society. The university must be a beacon that, through a deeper grasp of the truth, illuminates the whole world, and provides the “sap” that, through coexistence and friendship, nourishes the souls of young people who pass through this campus year after year. Herein lies a source of vitality that can restore enthusiasm to a tired world.

A few months ago, Ismael Sánchez-Bella, the first Rector of this University, passed away. Along with the pain of his loss, we have the consolation that, thanks to him, St. Josemaría’s dreams for this institution are becoming a reality. Prof. Sanchez-Bella was a magnanimous person with a great love for freedom, who put his best qualities at the service of a place of hope like this. Some have described him as an optimist. He, on the other hand, described himself as “a person unaware of the difficulties,” which perhaps explains his tenacity in the face of what seemed humanly impossible. In reality, he was moved by a firm faith in God and an unwavering trust in St. Josemaría. This is the vitality that he transmitted to this institution right from its beginnings and that we wish to continue offering.

St. Josemaría decided that this University should begin in Pamplona. It was born rooted in this land and will always have its home here. In recent years, efforts to obtain scholarships and funding opportunities, as well as the notable increase in international students, have gradually made the Founder’s dreams come true: that anyone who wishes to study here will be able to do so, and that the service provided by the University will reach people from every corner of the world.

Since the beginning of this university, we have tried to foster a way of understanding academic life that is reflected, as Blessed Alvaro said, in “an atmosphere of love for truth and freedom; of care for a job well done; of kindness, joy and forgiveness which makes getting along with others easier.” In fact, the harmonious coexistence of students and teachers offers a strong framework for learning to live one’s freedom fully. A first step is respect, because, as St. Josemaría said, “to be able to demand respect for
[one’s own] freedom, [each one] must know how to respect the freedom of others.” Freedom is fully realized in love, in service to others. That is why the university is a source of freedom. There we need to learn to respect, love, and understand others. Only in a free environment is a genuine education possible. As one experienced professor pointed out, “education is not about colonizing the minds of students: it is about assisting the emergence of their own souls.” Young people come into the classroom at a time when they have to make decisions that will mark the rest of their lives. In a situation of uncertainty like the present, they are grateful to find at the university guidance and direction. Counting on their freedom, they are invited to promote just causes, to care for the most needy, and are helped to understand their future profession as a service to society.

I have referred very briefly to the university as a place of hope and freedom. I once again congratulate the four doctors who are becoming honorary members of our faculty today, because in their professional careers you can discover these fundamental values.

All of us will find it helpful to always keep in mind that the decisive source of our hope is God, who became man in Christ, and who walks alongside each of us, accompanying our freedom. To Him and to Holy Mary, Mother of Fairest Love, we entrust our desire to serve society.

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Message on the Anniversary of the Birth of St. Josemaria (January 9, 2019)

My dear children: may Jesus watch over my daughters and sons for me!

Each year that begins is a new opportunity—”a new year, a new struggle,” as Saint Josemaria liked to say—to renew our eagerness to listen to God who speaks to us in our daily circumstances, to clean what clouds our vision and makes it hard for us to see Jesus. Let us strive to go forward in novitate sensus (Rom 12:2), with a new outlook, with a serene and joyful struggle, in order to get to know and love Christ better, and to welcome the gift of an ever new life: his Life in us.

We don’t rely on our strength alone but, above all, on God’s grace and the help of the others. The entire Church on earth and in heaven sustains us—in a true communion of saints—in our renewed and hope-filled determination to continue forward. We also support the others by our prayer and our struggle, filling our heart with faces and names. During this year, we will also seek in a special way the intercession of the future blessed Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri.

I end by uniting myself to the desires Saint Josemaria expressed at the end of 1958: “I hope that in the year that is about to begin you will be very happy and very faithful.”

Message on the Anniversary of the Beginning of the Apostolic Work with Women and with Priests (February 14, 2019)

My dear children: may Jesus watch over my daughters and sons for me!
During my recent trip to several countries in Central America, I once again had the opportunity to experience the blessed unity of the Work. We should never grow accustomed to this mercy that God has shown us. Making reference to February 14, 1930 and February 14, 1943, our Father once said: “It is not by chance that God wanted these two manifestations of his goodness to fall on the same date ... Ask our Lord to teach you to love the unity of the Work as he wanted it from the first moment” (February 14, 1958).

Our Lord at the Last Supper prayed for the unity of those who would be his disciples: Ut omnes unum sint (Jn 17:21)—that we all may be one. This is not simply the unity of an organization that is well structured humanly, but rather the unity of Love: “even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee” (Ibid.). Here, the first Christians are a clear example: “Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul” (Acts 4:32).

Precisely since it is the result of love, this unity is not uniformity, but rather communion. It is a unity in diversity that is shown in the joy of living alongside those who are quite different from us, where we learn to grow through what the others have to offer and we foster an atmosphere of affection around us. Jesus made clear that this unity is a requirement for being effective in passing on the Gospel: “so that the world may believe” (Jn 7:21). It is a unity, therefore, that does not enclose us in a group, but rather, as part of the Church, opens us to offer our friendship to every person in this marvelous mission of evangelizing.

Let us strive with new effort to live in unity with others, beginning with those closest to us. Then, with the grace of God, who is the source of this unity, we will be able to overcome the obstacles that we encounter along the way.

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Message for Lent (March 7, 2019)

My dear children: may Jesus watch over my daughters and sons for me!

Saint Josemaría used to exhort us, with his word and example, to sentire
cum Ecclesia—to live fully in harmony with the Church. This harmony leads us to rejoice with her joys and to suffer with her sufferings.

During those difficult years, when Saint Paul VI even said that “the smoke of Satan” had entered through cracks into the Church, our Father insisted to us that this was a “time to pray” and a “time to make reparation.” I would like this same exhortation to resound again now in our souls, faced with the current situation—different but no less difficult—in which along with doctrinal confusion and mistaken practices, one sadly sees divisions. Also for this reason, let us strive to be good children of the Church and assist the Pope with our prayer in his mission to be the visible principle of the unity of faith and communion in the Church.

My daughters and sons, seeing all the difficulties today, certainly grave, cannot lead us to become pessimistic or to lose hope. The chief reason for this is that the Church, while made up of men and women who are weak, is the People of God, the Body of Christ and universal Sacrament of Salvation. Besides, as Don Javier would tell us (and which we all have experienced), “How many good people there are in the world!”

In our prayer for the Church, let us go often to Saint Michael the Archangel, as Pope Francis asked us to do some months ago; to Saint Joseph, patron of the universal Church, especially on the upcoming 19th; and always to Holy Mary, Mater Ecclesiae.

Message for Holy Week (April 9, 2019)

My dear children: may Jesus watch over my daughters and sons for me!

On Good Friday, soon upon us, we will contemplate in Christ crucified the immensity of his redeeming love. This love led him to be fully available and obedient to the will of God the Father.

Following Jesus and identifying with him also leads us, within our personal circumstances, to an unrestricted availability for the challenges and requirements of our apostolic mission. In our daily life, we want to discover
the voice of Christ who calls and invites us to broaden our horizons. Like Saint Paul, we want to become “all things to all men” (1 Cor 9:22).

With regard to availability, I think that it will help us, in these weeks preceding Guadalupe’s beatification, to reflect on how her life was greatly expanded when it became part of the divine plan. Guadalupe let herself be led by God, with joy and spontaneity, from one place to another, from one job to another. Our Lord strengthened her abilities and talents, enriched her personality, and multiplied the fruitfulness of her life.

Despite our shortcomings and mistakes, God will also do great good to many people through us. He will do this by our availability to listen, to serve, to help and let ourselves be helped: in a word, to love whatever He wants. As Saint Josemaria wrote, “It is the divine adventure of self-giving” (Letter, February 14, 1974, no. 5), carried out always and in everything with the freedom and joy of the daughters and sons of God.

Message for the Month of May (May 8, 2019)

My dear children: may Jesus watch over my daughters and sons for me!

We recall very clearly how Saint Josemaria encouraged us always to be giving thanks to God “for everything, because everything is good” (The Way, no. 268). It is a simple and very valuable way to pray.

Let us give thanks to God for all the good things he places in our life and for so many gifts that often we aren't even aware of. Also in the midst of problems, suffering or the experience of our own weakness, God offers us the opportunity to raise our eyes above immediate concerns and trust in his love. “If you give thanks to God for everything, you will have made great progress in your spiritual life,” Saint Josemaria once told us (March 28, 1971).

A few days ago, we especially thanked our Lord for the ordination of 34 new priests of the Prelature. May this act of thanksgiving lead us to pray
for all the Church’s priests so that they respond to the Pope’s urging: “do not fear spending your life for your people” (November 15, 2018).

The beatification of Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri is now imminent. Besides continuing to give thanks, let us ask our Lord to help us understand and live more deeply our ordinary life as a path to sanctity: loving God and others with deeds of service. As we always do, and especially in this month of May, let us have recourse in our prayer to the motherly mediation of Holy Mary.

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Message for the Celebrations and Feasts of June (June 14, 2019)

My dear children: may Jesus watch over my daughters and sons for me!

During this month of June, we celebrate solemnities and feasts central to our faith: from the Ascension of the Lord, on the 2nd, to Saints Peter and Paul on the upcoming 29th. All of them, each with its own special tones, give us an opportunity to grow in our thanksgiving to God for his immense love. Consequently, these celebrations invite us to share our joy, including through a more intense family life, both in the centers of the Work and in the homes of the Associates and Supernumeraries.

Although our joy will not be expressed in the same way in every moment and circumstance, we should always be happy, both when we experience what is humanly pleasant and also when we confront suffering. As he said to his apostles, Jesus is saying to all of us: “These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full” (Jn 15:11). And Saint Paul exhorts us: “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice” (Phil 4:4).

Therefore the experience of our own weakness and our sins shouldn’t make us fall into sadness, because, as happened to the prodigal son (see Lk 15:22-24), authentic joy is born of the certainty that we are always infinitely loved by God, who is preparing for us “a great feast: the deep joy of repentance” (Letter, February 14, 1974, no. 7). In this way we can always
be, with Jesus, sowers of peace and joy.
ABOUT SAINT JOSEMARÍA
Masses of June 26th

_Around June 26th, Masses in honor of St. Josemaría were celebrated throughout the world, organized by faithful of the Prelature, cooperators and friends. Here are some of them:_

_Almaty, Kazakhstan (June 22, 2019)_

On June 22, Bishop José Luis Mumbiela Sierra, bishop of the diocese of the Holy Trinity in Almaty, presided over the concelebration of the Holy Mass in honor of St. Josemaría in the cathedral. During the celebration, the bishop expressed his gratitude for the beginning of the stable apostolic work of Opus Dei in Kazakhstan twenty-two years ago. The Regional Vicar of Opus Dei in Kazakhstan and several other priests participated in the concelebration.

_The Hague, Netherlands (June 26, 2019)_

For the first time, a Mass was celebrated in honor of St. Josemaría in a centrally located church in The Hague. The city is the seat of the Dutch government, the diplomatic corps, and various international institutions, including the International Court of Justice. Although there is no center of the Prelature in that city, some of its faithful live there and carry out apostolic activities.

_Casablanca, Morocco (June 26, 2019)_

On June 26, also for the first time, a Mass in memory of St. Josemaría was celebrated in Casablanca, in the church of Anfa Maârif.

_Various other celebrations on the African continent_

In addition to the celebrations in countries where stable apostolic work of the Prelature is present, news of other Masses around June 26 have reached the _Romana_ editorial office: in Cotonou (Benin), in the church of _Bon Pasteur_; in Accra (Ghana), in the church of _Mary Mother of Good Counsel_; in Bissau (Guinea Bissau), in the Cathedral _Nossa Senhora da Candelária_; in Dakar (Senegal), in the church of _Sacre-Cœur in rue Malenfant_; in Lomé (Togo), in the _Sanctuaire du Très Saint Sacrement_; and in other countries in the various regions of Africa.
St. Josemaría "Returns' to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (May 25, 2019)

St. Josemaría first arrived in Rio de Janeiro on May 22, 1974. 45 years later, at the desire of the Archdiocese of Rio de Janeiro, this date was recalled with a projection of images of St. Josemaría on the sculpture of Christ of Corcovado, visible from the city. The Cardinal Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro, Archbishop Orani, sent a few words of support, as did Father Omar, Rector of the Shrine of Christ the Redeemer in Corcovado.

The Vicar of the Opus Dei delegation in Rio de Janeiro gave the blessing with a relic of the founder next to the base of Christ the Redeemer. “I want to invoke his intercession,” said Father Fabio Carvalheiro, “so that many will hear the call to holiness that Christ addresses to all men and women, and that St. Josemaría encouraged us to spread.”

Among the faithful who attended the blessing was a group of seminarians from the seminary of San José in Rio de Janeiro, who placed their future ministry under the protection of the saint.

The Vicar reminded them that “St. Josemaría always had a great sensitivity for the most needy and for those who suffer. Throughout his life he promoted and encouraged innumerable social initiatives to alleviate poverty. May today’s blessing with his relics bring comfort and relief to all those who suffer, and awaken in many hearts the generous desire to remedy the suffering of so many Cariocas.”

In 1974, when St. Josemaría was traveling by plane to São Paulo, he saw the shrine of Our Lady of Penha from above. In memory of his visit, under the Christ of Corcovado, the prayer to our Lady that was recited by the founder on that occasion was repeated: “Remember, Virgin Mother of God, when you are with the Lord, to speak well of us.”

“At the feet of Christ the Redeemer,” the Vicar concluded, “who welcomes us all with open arms, we ask St. Josemaría’s blessing so that the
Brazilian people may continue to live fraternally, as children of God.”

The Prelate Blesses a Statue in the Parish of San Giovanni Battista al Collatino, Rome (January 13, 2019)

On the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz celebrated Mass in the parish church of San Giovanni Battista al Collatino. For the parish community in the heart of Rome’s Tiburtino district, the celebration was twofold: after the Mass, Msgr. Ocáriz blessed the children baptized in the parish in 2018 and a statue of St. Josemaría.

Commenting on the Gospel passage of the day, the Prelate invited them to “remember our Baptism, the moment when Jesus came to dwell in our hearts.” During the homily he highlighted two gifts for which we should be very grateful to God: our divine filiation and the possibility of speaking with Him. By virtue of Baptism “whatever happens we can say: I am a child of God.” And he invited each of those present to ask themselves: “Do I live every moment of the day, my family life and work, as a child of God?”

Referring to the recent catechesis of Pope Francis on the Lord's Prayer, Monsignor Ocáriz reminded them that “our Baptism teaches us a new way of speaking with God, the prayer of children.” And he suggested a small resolution: to find time each day to speak with God, perhaps by going to “the nearest church to speak with God the Father as his children, to entrust to him all the concerns in our hearts.”

The Prelate ended his homily by inviting everyone to thank, by praying for them, “those who made it possible for us to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and in fire.”

At the end of the celebration, the parish priest, Father Nicola Zenoni, thanked the Prelate and explained the bond of affection between their parish and St. Josemaría. In the 1960s, the founder of Opus Dei, at the
suggestion of St. John XXIII, found the people with the right skills to construct the parish and the adjacent ELIS center. On November 21, 1965, St. Paul VI, the successor to St. John XXIII, celebrated the Mass inaugurating the parish, with St. Josemaría being present.

Advent Oratorio, Burgos, Spain (January 24, 2019)

To commemorate the 80th anniversary of St. Josemaría's stay in this city, an “oratorio” reflecting the spirit of Opus Dei and based on the saint’s life was held throughout the year in the parish of Saints Cosmas and Damian in the city of Burgos. The “oratorio” is a dramatic musical genre without staging, costumes, or sets. Usually composed for solo voices, choir and symphony orchestra, and at times with a narrator, its theme is often religious (stories from the Bible or the Gospel, the life of Jesus, or the lives of saints).

A Painting in the Basilica of Suyapa, Tegucigalpa, Honduras (June 8, 2019)

On the afternoon of Saturday, June 8, in the Basilica of Our Lady of Suyapa, a portrait of St. Josemaría was blessed. The ceremony was presided over by the Cardinal Archbishop of Tegucigalpa, Archbishop Oscar Andrés Rodríguez Maradiaga, who was accompanied by the Vicar Delegate of Opus Dei in Honduras, the pastor and rector of the Basilica, and other priests, along with many faithful with a devotion to St. Josemaría in Honduras.

The painting, by Mexican painter Arturo Guerrero, was placed for the veneration of the faithful in the church's right transept, where portraits of
other recent saints such as St. John XXIII, St. John Paul II and St. Oscar Arnulfo Romero were already present.

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In the Cathedral of Guatemala City (June 26, 2019)

At the end of the Mass for the feast of St. Josemaria, on June 26, the Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Santiago, Guatemala, Bishop Raul Antonio Martinez, blessed a painting of St. Josemaria that was placed in the right-hand nave of the cathedral for the veneration of the faithful, along with portraits of other 20th century saints, including St. John Paul II and St. Teresa of Calcutta. The artist is the Mexican painter Arturo Guerrero.

In blessing the painting, the bishop referred to St. Josemaría’s stay in Guatemala in February 1975 and the widespread devotion to the saint throughout the country.

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Publications of Interest

Books by St. Josemaría:

St. Josemaría Escrivá, Camino, Minos, 75th printing, 2019, Spanish, Mexico City.


Books about St. Josemaría
Pedro Casciaro, *Soñad y os quedaréis cortos (Dream and Your Dreams will Fall Short)*, Rialp, 2019, Spanish.

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Pontifical Appointments

On June 7, 2019 the Holy Father Francis appointed Fr. Rafael García de la Serrana Villalobos as Director of Infrastructure and Services for the Vatican City State.

New Centers of the Prelature

The vicars of the respective circumscriptions have established new centers of the Prelature in the following cities: Lima (Peru) and London (England).

Some Diocesan Assignments Received by Priests of the Prelature

*With the permission of the Ordinary of the Prelature, the following appointments have been made by the respective authorities of the local churches:*

Rev. Volker Hildebrandt, Parish Priest of St. Pantaleon Church

*Member of the Priests Council (Priesterrat) of the Diocese of Cologne, Germany;*

Rev. Enrique Miquel Aguayo,

*Administrator of the Parish of the Transfiguration of the Lord, in the Archdiocese of Santiago, Chile;*

Rev. Armando Ruiz Castellanos,

*Professor of Artistic Education at the Conciliar Seminary of the Archdiocese of Mexico City, Mexico;*

Rev. Manuel Martínez Gallardo
Some Initiatives Concerning Blessed Guadalupe

Presentation of “Letters to a Saint,” Rome, Italy (January 15, 2019)

On January 15, a new book about Guadalupe’s life was presented to a group of journalists in Rome: Letters to a Saint: Letters from Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri to St. Josemaría Escrivá.

The event took place at the International Information Office of Opus Dei in Rome. María Del Rincón and María Teresa Escobar, co-editors of the book, and Rev. Francesco Russo, director of the office for the causes of saints of the Opus Dei Prelature, made the presentation.

“Letters to a Saint was born after the announcement of her imminent beatification, because of the need to make the life of the future Blessed better known. We knew that the Prelature’s General Archives kept her letters (more than a thousand), and reading them was a great discovery. Three hundred of these letters were addressed to St. Josemaría. It seemed to us a very specific way of getting to know her life, without intermediaries,” explained Escobar. A digital edition was chosen to facilitate making this material known.

As the prologue points out, the book contains extracts from that correspondence. In it, the future Blessed opens her soul to St. Josemaría, showing him her joys, difficulties and hopes in the path of holiness she is traveling on. Although these letters were written more than half a century ago, they challenge people today. “I myself,” Escobar said, “have felt identified with, and moved by, Guadalupe. A woman who is passionate about her profession of chemistry, and who with the same passion dedicates herself to carrying out the projects that God placed before her, without getting bogged down by the obstacles. She was a very realistic woman, who had to contend with a serious disease when still quite young,
and who recognized her defects and learned to laugh at them. She never stopped going forward and was happy, living every minute intensely.”

The book can be downloaded from iTunes, Apple Books and Google Play Books. The authors said that the eBook was having a very good reception, and in less than a month it had reached 38,800 downloads. It is also being translated into various languages, including English, Italian, French, and Portuguese.

“Guadalupe spent her life,” Rev. Francesco Russo concluded, ‘nel bel mezzo della strada [in the middle of the world],’ as St. Josemaría liked to say in Italian. She shared the duties, occupations, and noble aspirations of her contemporaries. Therefore she committed herself to making society more human and more just, and she did it for love of Christ. The saints, as Pope Francis wrote, are the most attractive face of the Church. Each new blessed or saint is an injection of hope and an encouraging companion on every Christian’s journey.”

Novena for Students (June 7, 2019)

“At the School of Chemistry in the Complutense University, Madrid (April 24, 2019)

On April 24th a round table was held about Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri at the School of Chemistry in the Complutense University. The dean, Prof. Francisco Ortega Gómez, presided. Speakers included the vice-dean of academic and postgraduate affairs, Luis Sánchez Martín; the chaplain of the school, Rev. José María Sierra Carrizo; the journalist Cristina Abad; and Rev. José Carlos Martín de la Hoz, vice-postulator of the cause of beatification, Rev. Ortega Gómez opened the event by
welcoming the attendees and saying it was an honor for the school to hold this round table about a former student on the occasion of her beatification, and especially in the International Year of the Periodic Table.

Among the audience were several vice-deans and the general secretary of the school; professors and lecturer from this and other schools; the vicar of the Opus Dei Prelature in Madrid-West, Rev. Pedro Álvarez de Toledo; the vice-rector for students at the University of Navarra, Tomás Gómez-Acebo, a former student of chemistry at the Complutense University; professors from other universities; Prof. Miguel Alario, former president of the Royal Academy of Sciences, and students and former students.

Prof. Luis Sánchez Martín’s focused on Guadalupe’s professional activity as a chemist and read the record of Guadalupe’s academic work that is kept in the School of Science.

Next the chaplain, Rev. José María Sierra Carrizo, spoke. He emphasized that the University was a place of welcome, a meeting point and place for debate in which, citing Pope Benedict XVI, truth is sought with freedom and without prejudice. The journalist Cristina Abad, author of the biographical sketch, *The Freedom to Love*, spoke next, highlighting Guadalupe as a woman from Madrid.

The Rev. José Carlos Martín de la Hoz focused his intervention on Guadalupe’s reputation for holiness and the many favors she has granted to people.

The dean closed the event. He invited everyone to visit the exhibition on Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri’s life located next to the School of Chemistry. There they could view Guadalupe’s academic record (from high school and university), a copy of her doctoral thesis and unpublished books and documents about her life. The exhibition included four large display panels about her life. The “Multimedia of Guadalupe,” produced by journalist María Villarino, was also displayed on a large screen.
Priestly Ordination of 34 Faithful of Opus Dei, St. Eugene's Basilica, Rome (May 4, 2019)

34 faithful of Opus Dei received priestly ordination on Saturday, May 4, in the Basilica of St. Eugene, from the hands of Cardinal Antonio Cañizares. The new priests come from 16 countries and now form part of the clergy of the Prelature.

In his homily, addressing the soon-to-be-priests, the Cardinal said: “Never forget: the good shepherd is the one who, like Christ, always thinks of the good of souls rather than his own personal interests. Thus he is capable of the greatest sacrifices, because he knows how to love.”

The Prelate of Opus Dei, Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz, participated in the ceremony from the presbytery. Many relatives and friends of the new priests were in attendance.

“Only love,” Cardinal Cañizares said, “can give meaning to a life of dedication: a love that we want to endure 'to the end,' to the point of forgetting ourselves, and that leads us to live happily, working wherever God wants us, carrying out his will with loving care.”

Citing Pope Francis, Cañizares stressed: “Accompaniment is the key to being pastors today. We need ministers who embody the closeness of the Good Shepherd, priests who are living icons of closeness.”

The Cardinal also encouraged the new priests to take special care of the Mass as well as the sacrament of Penance: “Faced with the marvel of being a confessor, of being a minister of God’s grace, you should consider that we all need forgiveness: may you be good confessors as well as good penitents. Accompanying others means you are also striving to go forward, fighting against your own shortcomings while counting on God's grace.”

The celebrant imagined what St. Josemaría might have said to the families of the ordinands: “Fill yourselves with joy because the Lord has deigned to choose one of your family as his minister, so that he might bring God’s peace to the whole world.” “God always promises a future,” he said, “and today he is announcing to us once again that he will never stop
sending us shepherds and that the assistance of the priestly ministry will never be lacking."

The new priests came from Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, New Zealand, Spain, Venezuela, Chile, United States, Kenya, France, Paraguay, El Salvador, Uganda, Philippines, Peru, and Italy.

These are the new priests: Sérgio Sardinha de Azevedo of Brazil; Luis Miguel Bravo Álvarez of Colombia; José María Cerveró García of Spain; Miguel Ángel de Fuentes Guillén, from Spain; Ernesto de la Peña González of Mexico; José Luis de Prada Llusá of Spain; Javier María Erburu Calvo of Spain; Samuel Thomas Harold Fancourt of New Zealand; Gerardo Andrés Febres-Cordero Carrillo from Venezuela; José Nicolás Garcés Lira of Chile; Óscar Garza Aincioa of Spain; Pedro González-Aller Gross of Spain; John Paul Graells Antón of the United States; Diego Guerrero Gil from Spain; Jorge Iriarte Franco of Spain; Paul Muleli Kioko of Kenya; Yann Le Bras of France; Cristhian Alcides Lezcano Vicencini of Paraguay; Álvaro Linares Rodríguez of Spain; Miguel Llamas Diez of Spain; Eduardo Andrés Marín Perna of El Salvador; Javier Martínez González of Spain; Luis María Martínez Otero of Spain; Bernardo José Montes Arraztoa from Chile; Bernard Kagunda Nderito of Kenya; Deogratias Gumisiriza Nyamutale of Uganda; Nathaniel Peña Baluda of the Philippines; Rafael Quinto Pojol of the Philippines; César Augusto Risco Benites of Peru; Rafael de Freitas Sartori of Brazil; David Saumell Ocáriz of Spain; Cayetano Taberner Navarro of Spain; Claudio Tagliapietra of Italy; Fernando María Valdés López of Spain.

Publications of Interest

*Homage to Monsignor Javier Echevarría,* Chancellor of the University of Navarra (1994-2016)

“That's how Don Javier was. His priestly heart had room for everyone. He made each person feel as if they alone existed in the world: both in a more leisurely personal conversation and in a chance meeting. What moved
him, what was the deepest source of his concern for others? The answer can only be his intimate, personal, living relationship with Jesus Christ in the Bread and in the Word” (From an address by Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz, Prelate of Opus Dei).

The book gathers together the addresses from the academic act honoring Bishop Javier Echevarría, which took place in the Museum of the University of Navarra on January 18, 2018:


Transformar el mundo desde dentro [Transforming the World from Within], by Msgr. Mariano Fazio.

In his review of the book, José Carlos Martín de la Hoz points out that a radical change took place in the ancient world with the irruption of Jesus Christ into history. Among other things, when the years passed and the first intellectuals arrived in the Church, one could see the radical differences that existed, for example, in the concept of religion.

This can be seen in two authors as different and important as Cicero and Lactantius. For the former, the concept and term “religion” came from the Latin word relegere, that is, it was a matter of rereading the whole of existence, but from the perspective of life under the power of God or of the gods.

For Lactantius, the author of some of the first learned works on the Christian faith, religion was viewed not as something extrinsic, but radically intrinsic, that is to say, that the concept of religion would come from religere, from being tied to a personal commitment to Christ, to God made man.
When Mariano Fazio, auxiliary vicar of the Opus Dei Prelature, historian and essayist, a specialist in the history of contemporary ideas, takes up his pen to address the core of the spirit of Opus Dei, he is recalling the focus of Lactantius, but expressing it in a contemporary way, with many references to Pope Francis, the Second Vatican Council, Saint John Paul II, Benedict XVI, Saint Josemaría, and the current Prelate of Opus Dei, Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz.

Msgr. Fazio reminds us that in a Christian’s life everything comes from the encounter with Christ, from his impact on our life. Thus, with our hearts enkindled by him, we are able to raise the spiritual temperature around us and transform the world. The author points out a precondition for this to happen: “we need to look at it with eyes of love.”

Our personal relationship with God transforms us and, through us, others. “Little by little God’s love is felt—although it is not a matter of feelings—leaving a strong impact on our soul.”

Unsuspected Horizons, memories of Marlies Kücking

Marlies Kücking (Cologne, 1936) has lived in Rome for more than 50 years. As she recalls in Horizontes insospechados (Rialp, 2019), she worked alongside St. Josemaría, Blessed Alvaro del Portillo and Bishop Javier Echevarría. From 1964 to 2017 she was involved in the central government of Opus Dei.

In her book, which was introduced at the Garbí bookstore in Barcelona, Kücking first takes a look at her family history. Then she recounts her encounter with Opus Dei in 1954, the discovery of her vocation, her collaboration in the first steps of the Work in Germany and the Netherlands, and her time spent in Rome during her university years.

In the second part she reviews her work in the Central Advisory of Opus Dei, a body that together with the General Council helps the Prelate in governing the Prelature. This work enabled her to get to know first-hand many people and initiatives of the Prelature all over the world. Since 1964, when the author began working in the Central Advisory, Opus Dei has established a stable presence in 39 new countries, including Nigeria,
Singapore, Bolivia, Kazakhstan, Korea, Lebanon, Romania, Panama, Russia, and South Africa.

She is currently working in the Prelature's general archives.

*Salvador Canals, a life spent opening up a path*

*Salvador Canals: Una biografía (1920-1975)* is the title of the book written by historian Alfredo Méndiz and published by Rialp. It provides a sketch of the life of one of the faithful of Opus Dei who helped St. Josemaría when the institution was taking its first steps.

Canals’ life was brief but rich in experiences. For this reason, and because of the intricate historical context in which he found himself immersed, it sheds light on some key events in the history of his time: above all, on the history of Opus Dei and, due to his intense activity in the Vatican, also on that of the Church in general. He was a priest of Opus Dei, a canonist, an auditor of the Roman Rota, an editor, and a spiritual author.

Salvador Canals was born in Valencia, Spain, on December 3, 1920. He met St. Josemaría on March 8, 1940. He belongs to a generation of members of Opus Dei who, born around 1920, followed Escrivá shortly after the Spanish Civil War, and in many cases, later helped bring Opus Dei to countries outside of Spain.

In the precarious circumstances of the Second World War, it was not opportune for Opus Dei to establish itself in Italy, but Escrivá was interested in having a member reside in the city of the Pope, so that his presence, as Orlandis later wrote, would help “undo prejudices and show the true face of Opus Dei in its simple and genuine reality.” Canals remained in Rome until his death in 1975. Thus he became the person who had spent the most time in a country other than his own to bring the seed of Opus Dei to it. Among the fruits of his sowing were the Croatian Vladimir Vince and the Italian Francesco Angelicchio, the first two vocations to Opus Dei outside of Spanish soil.

Since the foundation of *Studi Cattolici*, Salvador Canals had been publishing in the magazine a section of spirituality entitled *Ascetica meditata*. It was composed of short articles that came from outlines of his
preaching for young people, workers, professionals, mothers, priests... In 1962, Canals published twenty-six of these texts in a book. To date, *Ascetica Meditata* has been published in Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, English, French, Chinese, Japanese, Polish, Croatian, Estonian, Dutch, and Czech.

His health had always been fragile. A progressive worsening of his liver ailments led to his premature death on May 24, 1975. The next day, Escrivá, who was in Barbastro to receive a tribute from his hometown, interrupted his official speech to remember with emotion this son of his. “A clean soul, an outstanding intelligence. . . He has served the Church with his virtues, with his talent, with his effort, with his sacrifice, with his joy, with this spirit of Opus Dei that is one of service,” he said in his improvised remarks. Before returning to Rome, while passing through Madrid, on the 27th he went to offer his condolences to Canals's family. Ángeles Canals, Salvador's sister, has never forgotten St. Josemaría’s words. “I remember that he told us: ‘Salvador went to Rome to open the way for me, and now he has gone to heaven to open the way there for me too.’ And a month later he too died.”

*A Gospel commentary app*

The *eScrivaLite App* is an application that provides the user with an easy and attractive way to read the Gospel of the day and to access the published writings of St. Josemaría related to that passage.

It offers a tool to approach God in the midst of one’s ordinary tasks and to meet Jesus there.

Clicking on “Today” provides the Gospel of the day, with texts from the published works of St. Josemaria. It may be a passing reference, or form the basis of a deeper and more devout reflection, but it always offers a clue to apply the Gospel to personal circumstances.

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INITIATIVES

- In Brief
A Conference on Lay Holiness, Rome, Italy (April 30, 2019)

The initiatives described in this section are educational, social, and cultural activities brought forward by faithful of the Prelature and cooperators together with many other people, both Catholics and non-Catholics. Those who undertake and direct these activities (taking on full responsibility for them, including their financial aspects) are trying to respond to specific local needs without any discrimination regarding race, religion, or social condition.

The Prelature of Opus Dei, through agreements with the organizers, or through the guidelines established by the statutes of each entity, contributes to the development of these social initiatives by providing Christian doctrinal and moral orientation, and priestly service, always with full respect for the freedom of people’s consciences.

On April 30, 2019, the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross hosted a day of reflection on lay sanctity, in the context of the beatification of Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri.

In addition to Guadalupe, other lay faithful in the process of canonization were highlighted: Blessed Chiara Luce Badano, the young man Carlo Acutis, businessman Enrique Shaw, young mother Chiara Corbella Petrillo, and students Marta Obregon and Angelica Tiraboschi.

Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz, Prelate of Opus Dei, introduced the conference. Referring to the seven lay men and women, he said that “in their lives, we find so many common traits that stem from their identification with Christ. I am thinking especially of their love for the Eucharist, their peaceful acceptance of illness, their selfless charity towards their neighbors, and their diligence in carrying out their duties of study and work.”

“Each new blessed or saint,” the Prelate continued, “helps all of us Christians to increase our hope and to live with a deeper faithfulness to the Gospel. I am convinced that, with God’s help, the upcoming beatification of Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri will be an occasion of grace, not only for those who seek her intercession but for all the faithful. It will be an
opportunity to give thanks to God as we once again see how all the efforts of the Church are aimed at furthering the sanctification of mankind in Christ and God’s glory.”

Next, Pilar Rio, professor in the Faculty of Theology, offered some theological reflections on lay sanctity and its characteristics. “Observing the lives of these lay people, we can recognize some distinctive features of the portrait of holiness: it is an integral holiness that is lived in the company of others, in ordinary life—a holiness that is open as well as missionary.” These features served as a guide for her academic presentation.

*Chiara Luce, Carlo, Enrique, Marta, Angelica, Chiara Corbella, and Guadalupe*

A girl like so many others.” This is how Franz Coriasco, journalist, friend and biographer of the Italian Blessed Chiara Luce, defined his friend. Blessed Chiara found inspiration for her life in the exemplary life of Chiara Lubic, founder of the Focolare Movement. “Chiara was born at a time when people were starting to care more about how they appear instead of how they really are. Her illness did not initiate a change of direction in her life; it simply accelerated the process she had already started.”

Federico Piana, a journalist from Vatican Radio, spoke about the young man Carlo Acutis. “At Carlo’s funeral, many young people whom the family didn’t know, including non-believers and adherents of other creeds, came to pay their respects: these people were friends that Carlo had helped at some point. Carlo would go at night and accompany poor people, bringing them sleeping bags. ‘Everyone is born as an original, but many people end up dying as photocopies’ – this was a favorite phrase of Carlo. Where did he get all this strength? From the Eucharist, which he called his highway to Heaven.”

The life of Argentine businessman Enrique Shaw was outlined by the postulator of his cause, Silvia Correale. “Enrique lived the virtues of patience and courage in the world of business. He understood the universal call to holiness. He was honest and competent in his family business, where he was always at the service of his workers. He was someone who transmitted the Church’s Social Doctrine. He understood the unity that exists between economic well-being and evangelization. Enrique was
against the culture of waste and also opposed speculation. He was keenly interested in the productive aspect of business. He loved his workers very much, and he spoke to them clearly, something that was not normal at the time. Enrique also had eight children and he passed on the faith to them.”

Romano Gambalunga, postulator of the cause of Chiara Corbella, a young Roman woman, shared some thoughts about her: “The word that helps you understand some moments of Chiara’s life is ‘luminosity.’ At one point she wrote, ‘What God wants for us is much better than what we could ever have imagined.’ Chiara carried to term two very difficult pregnancies, and refused to have an abortion even though her life was at risk. Gambalunga explained how Chiara’s faith wavered during a night of intense suffering in the hospital, but that she found strength in Christ’s example. “It can happen to us too. Chiara lived her life, which was hers alone. But God makes himself known through the saints. Any one of us can come to know God and live out our own holiness, taking light from Chiara’s example.”

Antonio Riquelme, from the Neocatechumenal Way, spoke about the life of the Servant of God Marta Obregón Rodríguez, who is known as the “martyr of purity.” “After a teenage crisis that led her away from the faith, Marta came to believe once more, with a lot of strength. She offered herself as a volunteer to do missions with the Neocatechumenal Way, but in the end she continued with her university studies. On her way home one day, Marta was kidnapped by a rapist who eventually left her on the side of a highway with 14 stab wounds, one of them in her heart. Marta refused her perpetrator with strength, striving to defend her life and integrity. Days before, she confided to a friend: ‘I feel freer the more I abandon myself in the Lord.’”

“Jesus’ cross weighed more than my cross.” This is what the young Angelica Tiraboschi told her father on their return from the hospital, after receiving the diagnosis of an aggressive breast tumor. Marcello, Angelica’s father, spoke about how his daughter had learned to follow God’s will in the Charismatic Renewal movement. “The cross will weigh on me; that’s why I’ll only ask you and mom to carry it for me from time to time.” Marcello said his daughter “knew how to accept God’s will, and she left us
with the message of not wasting our time: we have to live in hope. The best is yet to come.”

A digital beatification and scholarships for African women scientists

The third part of the conference described the events planned for the beatification of Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri, the first lay person in Opus Dei to be beatified.

Carla Vasallo, member of the International Committee in charge of organizing Guadalupe’s beatification, presented the life of Guadalupe and also commented on the events that would be held in Madrid. Gema Bellido and Juan Narbona described the efforts to make the beatification as accessible as possible through digital channels, while Rosalinda Corbi, international coordinator of the NGO Harambee Africa International, presented the Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri Scholarship Project, which will grant a total of one hundred research scholarships in the next ten years for women researchers in Africa, in Guadalupe’s memory. At the end of the event, an exhibition on Blessed Guadalupe’s was inaugurated.

In Brief

Honorary doctorates at the University of Navarra, Pamplona, Spain, (June 28, 2019)

The University of Navarra awarded honorary doctorates to Navarrese architect Rafael Moneo, British sociologist Margaret S. Archer, Israeli philologist Ruth Fine, and American media expert Robert Picard.

In a ceremony uniting modernity and tradition held at the school’s Contemporary Art Museum, the University of Navarra awarded its highest academic distinction to four scholars.
For the first time, the current Prelate of Opus Dei and the University Chancellor, Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz, presided over the event. About 700 people filled the museum’s theater space, designed by one of the day’s honorees, the architect and Navarra-native Rafael Moneo.

Since 1964, the University of Navarra has awarded 39 honorary doctorates for outstanding academic and professional contributions in various fields. Recipients include the former Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, who was honored in 1998.

*The new doctors*

Hispanic scholar and professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Ruth Fine, an expert in the Spanish Golden Age, expressed her gratitude for the award and highlighted the need to build bridges of intercultural dialogue between the Hispanic and Hebrew worlds.

Robert Picard, an expert in media company management and a professor at several different academic centers, said that “communication is essential for building healthy societies,” and that “institutions of communication should serve the needs of everyone.”

British sociologist Margaret S. Archer, a pioneer in her field and internationally recognized for her academic work, stressed the importance of the contribution from social sciences for the creation of more just environments, an objective that in her opinion is not assisted by the “painfully weak” relationship between these sciences and their philosophical foundations.

Spanish architect Rafael Moneo is the holder of outstanding awards in his field, including the Pritzker Prize (1996), Prince of Asturias of the Arts (2012), and National Prize for Architecture in Spain (2015). He dedicated a good part of his speech to thanking the University of Navarra for all it has done since its beginnings in 1952, and especially his School of Architecture.

In his closing speech, the University Chancellor, Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz, made reference to one of his predecessors, Blessed Alvaro del Portillo. “Twenty-five years ago, on a similar occasion, Bishop del Portillo
invited teachers and students to ‘undertake the adventure of renewing the enthusiasm of a tired world.’"

Describing the personality of the first rector of the University of Navarra, Ismael Sánchez Bella, the Prelate highlighted the importance of grounding the university’s activity on its Christian identity. “Seeking peace, promoting social justice, or caring for our common home are sustained and strengthened through an understanding of the world and the person grounded in the Gospel.” This is how universities can become wellsprings of freedom and hope, he said.

At the School and Association of Chemists in Madrid (March 5, 2019)

On March 5th, a round table was held at the School and Association of Chemists in Madrid. Taking part were the dean of the School, Ricardo Díaz Martín; the president of the Association of Chemists, Valentín González García; Juana Bellanato, researcher and doctor in Chemistry; Carmen Puelles, former student of Guadalupe at the Instituto Escuela de Santa Engracia and later director of that institution; and Rev. José Carlos Martín de la Hoz, vice-postulator of Guadalupe’s cause of beatification.

Second World Day of Help for the Poor, Tondo, Philippines (January 18, 2019)

In response to Pope Francis’ message on the occasion of the Second World Day of the Poor and the celebration of the Year of Youth in the Philippines convoked by the Episcopal Conference, young professionals, teachers, students and families carried out a social cooperation project in the district of Tondo (Manila) on November 18, 2018.

Dubbed the Pakikipagkapwa project (“anyone can help”), it brought
together more than 200 volunteers, including two medical teams made up of 80 doctors and medical students and 30 dentists and dental students. They provided assistance to 2,000 families, who were also offered catechism classes, storytelling for children, talks on adolescent education, and oral health and hygiene information for parents, while waiting for their turn to receive medical and dental care.

The project was organized by the *Family Cooperation Health Services Foundation*, a non-profit organization founded in 1991 by professionals from various fields in response to a challenge posed by Blessed Alvaro del Portillo.

Their efforts were also motivated by Pope Francis’ invitation to share in the World Day of the Poor through his apostolic letter *Misericordia et Misera*, during the closing of the Year of Mercy.

75th Anniversary of the Colegio Mayor Moncloa, Madrid, Spain (February 16, 2019)

Founded at the initiative of St. Josemaría and attached to the Complutense University, more than 3,000 residents have passed through this university residence and thousands of other students have attended activities organized there.

Colegio Mayor Moncloa opened in September 1943, in continuity with the university residences of Ferraz (1934-1936) and Jenner (1939-1943), which were begun by the founder of Opus Dei. The spirit that St. Josemaría imprinted on these first residences has led to the birth of hundreds of university institutions throughout the world.

On February 16, the main event for the 75th anniversary was held for residents, former residents and their families. The celebration began with Holy Mass presided over by Msgr. Ramón Herrando, Vicar of Opus Dei in Spain; Rev. Pedro Álvarez de Toledo, Vicar of the Madrid-West
Delegation of Opus Dei; and former chaplains or residents who have been ordained priests.

In his homily, Bishop Herrando stressed the need to be grateful to God for all that has been accomplished there in the 75 years of its history. He said they should also be grateful to many other people who made all this possible, beginning with St. Josemaría, and so many others who worked at the Moncloa residence, including the first two chaplains, Rev. José María Hernandez Garnica and Rev. José Luis Múzquiz, whose processes of beatification have begun. He said their gratitude should also extend to the first women who worked in the Administration and who strove to give it its characteristic family air, including Dora del Hoyo, whose processes of beatification has been opened, and Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri, who was beatified on May 18, 2019.

At the end of the Mass, Pablo Martínez Ávila, the current director of the residence, read the letter that the Prelate of Opus Dei had sent on the occasion of this celebration.

More than 600 people attended the ceremony. It concluded with words from Daniel Arenas, head of the board of trustees, who announced the creation of the new association of former residents: MAR (Moncloa Antiguos Residentes).

Social Projects in Kenya: The Harambee-Polska Foundation

The Harambee-Polska Foundation is carrying out several social assistance projects in Sub-Saharan Africa.

One of the projects involves university students from Poland, who along with other students from Ireland and Italy have provided assistance to several needy villages in Kenya.

A documentary about their efforts, *Journey Through the Savannah*, which was produced by students of film-making, shows many aspects of
daily life in these lands and is finalist in a contest for the best documentary of the year.

The second project, in collaboration with several medical institutions, encourages doctors to do part of their training in Kenyan hospitals.
IN PACE
In the first half of 2019, 490 faithful of the Prelature died and, besides the priests incardinated in it, 15 members of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross. As we continue to pray for them, let us thank God for the example they left us through their fidelity in striving to transform their professional work—their pastoral ministry in the case of the priests—their family lives, and their social relationships into an occasion for loving God and serving the Church and all souls. Their love for God and neighbor constitutes the meaning and value of their lives, whether outstanding in the eyes of others, or whether quite ordinary, as was true in most cases.

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A STUDY
Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri: The Santification of Work as Seen in her Letters to St. Josemaría, Adelaida Sagarra Gamazo, University of Burgos

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Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri was beatified in Madrid on May 18, 2019. She is the first lay member of Opus Dei set forth by the Church as an intercessor and example of holiness for all Christians. This study focuses on her awareness of the importance of sanctifying her daily work, a key element in the message of Saint Josemaría. It considers some of the key concepts involved in the call to sanctity in professional work, and describes the historical sources available for understanding Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri’s life. We will also consider how her awareness of the importance of sanctifying her work is reflected in her letters to St. Josemaría, and how her life embodies the vocation to sanctity in the midst of one’s daily professional tasks.

Woman and man are a divine creation.[1] Both are called to live freely in perfect harmony with God, and both have received the mission to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it,” which includes as a gift the vocation to work as a form of relationship with God and other men and women.[2] Created in the image and likeness of the triune God, they are called to see all men and women as persons who deserve to be loved, and to engage creatively in the transformation of the world around them, in service to the common good through their free personal initiative.

After our first parents’ sin, the order of creation was disrupted. Work began to be seen more as a punishment than as a path for personal fulfillment and for contributing to the good of society. In some cases work even became a form of domination rather than service. But our focus here is not on the history of the philosophical and theological perception of work.[3] Rather we are going to consider the call to work as a gift received by all men and women, and specifically by Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri
at a specific time and place, through her vocation to holiness in Opus Dei. In doing so, we will consider her loving response, in both great and small things, to God’s love.[4]

On October 2, 1928, the date of Opus Dei’s founding, the universal call to holiness, which had gradually been forgotten by Christians themselves, reappeared clearly on the horizon of history. The divine nature of this message and its transforming power, perceived by the young priest Josemaría Escrivá, led him to kneel down gratefully in his room, with the determination to carry it out.[5] He saw that his specific calling within his priestly vocation was to extend to all men and women the invitation to be saints in the middle of the world through their work and the fulfillment of their ordinary daily duties. [6] Each was to do so freely and faithfully, in their own environment, daily circumstances and family. It was a call not to human “perfectionism,” but to holiness.

_A universal invitation: to be saints working in the middle of the world._

The extensive study by Burkhart and López mentioned above provides a clear overview of what it means to sanctify work, to sanctify oneself through work, and to sanctify others through one’s work. Thus human history acquires its deepest meaning as part of the history of salvation, which God brings about in Christ through the free acts of men and women. “God himself wants to ‘provoke’ our freedom, in the midst of our daily work and endeavors.”[7]

Christians are called to live Christ’s life in today’s world. To the extent that the process of secularization has been implanted in developed societies as a substitute for modernity, and has presented Christianity as a lack of understanding of progress, the greater the need there is to contribute to the history of salvation by furthering the salvation of history.[8] Christians are called to perfect the world and help bring about temporal progress, fostering the common good. Christ saves history with the collaboration of Christians. However the redemptive value of work is the love for God that each person puts into their work, not success or human recognition. The Kingdom of God consists not “in a better state of affairs in the world, but in a better state of hearts.”[9] As Maria Aparecida Ferrari writes, “to sanctify oneself is to unite oneself to God, to cooperate with the grace that enriches each person and transforms the world.”[10]
And usually what enables a person to make this contribution to society is one’s professional work and the training one has received. Certainly one’s family obligations and work in the home are also included here, as well as one’s duties as a citizen. But in general, every individual is recognized or identified in terms of the work one carries out. Jesus of Nazareth was known as the son of the carpenter or craftsman, as Rabbi or as the prophet of Galilee.[11]

St. Josemaría understood that to sanctify our daily work means to convert it into prayer, which comes about by carrying out our daily tasks with love for God.[12] Redeemed and redeeming work reconfigures any task as a gift from God. Moreover, it encourages the creative dimension of human life, enhances one’s personality and places each person in a specific environment. There each Christian is present in the world by his or her own right, and contributes to the creation of a “we.” The “salvation of history” through work consists in placing Christ at the summit of each one’s daily activities with free and personal decisions, with a passionate love for the world, with a lay mentality and a priestly soul.

In 1930, when Guadalupe was still in high school, Josemaría Escrivá received the light that God also wanted women to be in Opus Dei, who would sanctify their daily work and teach many others to sanctify it. Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri (1916–75). Bibliography and documentary sources for her life.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the vast majority of women who earned a salary worked manually or in occupations viewed as a social projection of the family: teachers, nurses, dressmakers... Many women also worked as homemakers without remuneration, carrying out domestic tasks within their own family environment. Not infrequently, the talents of women were also employed in works of charity and cultural activities, as well as in political and civil rights organizations.

But this view of the role of women in society was changing rapidly. In 1872, the first Spanish woman had enrolled in university classes. By the end of the century, forty-four women were studying at a university. The Royal Order issued on March 16, 1910 opened the doors of the university to all the women who wanted to study there. Guadalupe Ortiz de
Landázuri enrolled in the Faculty of Chemistry at the Central University of Madrid in 1933, with the goal of dedicating herself to research and teaching.

Guadalupe’s working life was quite varied. She earned a degree in Chemistry and worked as a teacher in both public and private schools; she directed the domestic work in a university residence in Bilbao; she was the director of Zurbarán,[13] the first residence for university women organized by Opus Dei in Madrid, while also working in the Regional Advisory.[14] Between 1950-56 she lived in Mexico. There, together with Manolita Ortiz and Esther Ciancas she started a university residence named Copenhagen, in Mexico City. She promoted educational initiatives for indigenous women and women from rural areas, such as Montefalco.[15] In 1956 she returned to Rome to work in the Central Advisory.[16] Her health problems soon forced her to return to Madrid, where she began working again in research and teaching. Her doctoral thesis, directed by Piedad de la Cierva,[17] was on the topic of “Insulating Refractory Properties of Rice Husks,” which she defended in 1965. She received the Juan de la Cierva Research Award for this work, together with Piedad de la Cierva and Antonia Muñoz, in whose research project she had been involved. She also helped begin a School for Domestic Sciences in Madrid.[18]

Any reader of this brief overview of her professional career, without any knowledge of the spirituality of Opus Dei, might imagine Guadalupe as a nervous person, a “multitasker” who needed to change her environment frequently, jumping from one job to another. Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri could even give the impression of being a disordered person whose life was subject to dispersion. Nothing could be further from the truth and the reality of her vocation, which consists not in doing, but in being and loving steadily. The spirit of Opus Dei vivified Guadalupe’s life and imbued it with a deep unity, based on the following virtues: availability, service, self-denial, responsibility, industriousness, initiative, broad-mindedness, and sensitivity.

That is to say, we see in Guadalupe a “unity of life,” a consistency that turned every corner of her life into correspondence to God’s love. Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri was not a dispersed, inconstant person, but
a soul in love. This view of vocation as a reality that integrates all the dimensions of one’s life and gives them meaning is found at the heart of St. Josemaría’s teachings: “Our calling discloses to us the meaning of our existence. It means being convinced, through faith, of the reason for our life on earth. Our life, the present, past and future, acquires a new dimension, a depth we did not perceive before. All happenings and events now fall within their true perspective: we understand where God is leading us, and we feel ourselves borne along by this task entrusted to us.”[19]

The first published biography of Guadalupe was by Mercedes Eguíbar Galarza,[20] who later brought out a shorter version.[21] In booklet format, there is another brief biography by Amparo Catret and Mar Sánchez.[22] Cristina Abad[23] and Mercedes Montero[24] have authored two recent books about her. Guadalupe appears in the printed edition of the Diccionario Biográfico Español, in an entry by Brocos Fernández;[25] in Ecclesia;[26] and in the Diccionario de San Josemaría.[27] A brief profile is also found in an article by Martin de la Hoz on the causes of canonization of some members of Opus Dei.[28]

These works are for the most part all based on the same sources: the General Archive of the Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei (with documentation about and from Guadalupe herself, her brother Eduardo, and her sister-in-law Laura Busca Otaegui); written testimonies for her cause of beatification by those who knew her in Spain, in Mexico and in Rome; interviews conducted by Mercedes Eguíbar; memories of her family members and of other people, including Margarita Murillo.[29] Other sources include press articles, official bulletins, military and academic documentation in various archives, etc. All these sources for the most part show us Gaulupe “from the outside.” Hence we need to get to know her own interior world better in her published letters to Saint Josemaria, where she opens up her heart to the founder of Opus Dei.

*The sanctification of work in* Letters to a Saint

The General Archives of the Prelature in Rome also preserves the letters Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri wrote to St. Josemaria over the years. Maria del Rincon and Maria Teresa Escobar have published excerpts from these 350 letters written between March 19, 1944 and June 22, 1975.[30] In them we get to know Guadalupe “from the inside.”[31] As she tells St.
Josemaría: “I’d like to become more sensitive and faithful every day … in what everyone can see, which helps others, and in what is only seen by God and my directors and you, because it makes me really happy that they and my Father know me as well as Our Lord does.”[32]

The arrangement of these notes is chronological, due to the demands of historical methodology, and to show the inner growth of Guadalupe. But before tackling, with delicacy, the intimacy shown in these letters that were not addressed to us, we can review some ideas already expressed above. Man and woman, created in the image and likeness of the Triune God, are relational individuals. Any aspect of who we are and what we do can become a liberation from self-absorption and a joyful acceptance of our relational condition. The human meaning of work makes possible the creation of the otherness proper to the common good. The Christian meaning deepens this dimension, since work becomes a matter of sanctification because it puts us in a relationship of communion with God and others. And that relationship implies two profound realities that are combined in the first person singular: love and freedom.

Guadalupe requested admission to Opus Dei on March 19, 1944. At that time she was teaching in two educational centers. Soon after, she began to live in Jorge Manrique, the first women’s center in Madrid. She liked working both as a teacher and a researcher. But soon she realized that in her new supernatural family, her ability to do housework was needed too, the same work that she had seen her mother, Eulogia Fernández de Heredia, carry out at home. Guadalupe left behind her comfort zone to tackle a new task for which she was not particularly gifted. But she saw it as a way to express her freedom by loving and serving. As she told the Father: “Now I’m in charge of the laundry and cleaning, which I’ve never done before. I get a lot of things badly wrong, and I’m so silly that although I’ve got nothing to go on, I lay down the law about things quite offensively, usually without even realizing it. Then afterwards I understand what I’ve done and say I’m sorry.”[33]

From Madrid, she went to Bilbao to carry out the same job and direct the domestic administration of a residence for university students: “Father: How happy it makes me to tell you ‘Here I am,’ now at the head of things, and tomorrow in the last place of all, always happy, because I’m serving
Our Lord.”[34] Guadalupe makes clear her eagerness to serve and the joy it gives her. Her new tasks were not simple. She wanted to do things as well as possible but sometimes made mistakes. This is how she expressed it: “I’m still basically disastrous; the other day I was preparing material for making purificators and I drew out the threads all wrong (one of the others managed to put it right, but it was a big nuisance).”[35] And she confided: “I sew really badly because I don’t focus my mind on it, and try to get it done too quickly.”[36]

A short while later, once again back in Madrid and director of the Zurbaran Residence (and also now a member of the Advisory), she opened her heart again to the founder: “I want to spend everything God has given me (health, cheerfulness, etc.) in working very very hard. I only know that wherever you want me to be, I’m ready to obey, think, and work as much as I’m able to.”[37] The words “wherever you want me to be” were not a question of arbitrary requests on the founder’s part, but of a triple alignment of wills: God’s, Saint Josemaría’s and her own. Guadalupe was clearly growing in self-knowledge: “I feel that then is precisely when I am truly getting to know myself as our Lord sees me. Father, pray a lot for me, and for all these things – for the residence to be full this year and for the girls to be good ones! … For the girls we’re doing apostolate with, and who could be holy, to make up their minds!”[38]

Guadalupe’s joyful dedication to the Residence didn’t mean that she had given up hope of finishing her doctorate in the near future. In the same letter, she also asked the founder to pray “for me to finish my doctorate now, although I’m studying so little!”[39] In fact, with all the other work she now had in hand, she would only obtain it twenty years later. Almost a year later, she wrote again: “I’m writing my thesis in my spare moments (I don’t have many), and, God willing, I’ll finish it in October … I have to go to the laboratory; there are also some girls there to do apostolate with, so I make good use of the short times I’m there. Pray for them.”[40]

Guadalupe never stopped evangelizing, while also trying to improve in her work as director of the Zurbaran Residence: “I think we’re gaining experience in running the residence and many of the difficulties of this past year can be solved satisfactorily. We’re making notes about everything.”[41] She never lost her peace when she didn’t have time for her
research, and she enjoyed doing other jobs with the same intention and intensity: “We’ve begun to get the house a bit better organized. I’ve been looking after the [household] administration these days. I started doing the cooking and enjoyed myself enormously; it’s such a long time since I last did it – in Bilbao in fact. Father, now I’m sure that it doesn’t matter to me in the slightest whether I’m the one in charge or obeying and working at whatever job it may be.”[42]

Guadalupe’s sincerity before God led her to face squarely the danger that all the work in her hands could undermine her life of piety: “I missed out some of the norms of piety, what with moving to a different center and doing a different job I lost track of things, but I’m already making resolutions so that it won’t happen again”[43] A year and a half later, now from Mexico, she showed again her free determination to serve God in her work, family life and apostolate: “I want so much to serve Him! Materially, by working as much as my body is capable of; and spiritually, by giving myself totally and helping my sisters and all the people I do apostolate with, to give their utmost!”[44]

Three years later, three centers of Opus Dei had been opened in Mexico City and one in Monterrey, with the consequent accumulation of work. She told the founder: “We’ve been through some terrible months because the people in all three houses in Mexico City, plus the one in Monterrey, changed at the same time: it looked like we were crazy! . . . Ever since we had our oratory everything’s been going better...”[45] We also see signs of Guadalupe’s growing detachment from all the work she has in her hands (in the good sense of “detachment”), and the clear realization that this work should never become a matter of personal affirmation or a “territorial possession” that makes one indispensable. As Guadalupe wrote: “I’m giving each person their own field of responsibility. I’ve been left with giving formation to the people of the Work, and the money problems (because there’s nobody else who can sort them out for me).”[46] She freely affirms the abilities of others by giving them responsibilities, while keeping the more difficult or less pleasant work for herself.

She confronted the daily difficulties and challenges with determination, trying to always put others at the center of her concerns: “It’s very difficult,
after I’ve been carrying the weight of everything a bit – guidance of the people in the Work, household administration, apostolate etc. – just to eliminate myself. I’m determined to try.” [47] Her determination not to put herself at the center of things is clear: “Father, I’ve now been at the head of things for many years; wouldn’t it be good for me to start being ‘at the foot’ instead? But you know that here, or wherever you put me, I’ll be happy serving God in the Work.” [48] Detachment, joy, service, God’s will seen in the founder’s indications: “Up till now I’ve prayed for, and tried to achieve, the virtues that are indispensable in the Work (piety, work, cheerfulness, apostolate, spirit of sacrifice, etc.), and that’s what I’ve also prayed for and tried to develop in everyone.” [49]

In 1956, Josemaría Escrivá asked Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri to be part of the Central Advisory in Rome. Her way to “be at the foot” was once again to “be at the head.” But a serious heart condition, intermittent since adolescence, manifested itself openly in her second year in Rome, and she was forced to return to Madrid to undergo surgery. She overcame the crisis, recovered and returned to teaching and research in Spain, while assuring the founder that she was ready to take on any job he wanted: “I’m feeling very strong, Father, and I think that where I had the operation there won’t be any further problems, so lay any burden on me – that’s what this donkey is for.” [50]

Guadalupe also confided to him that “I love teaching, and it’s amazing how much one can do.” [51] “Whether it’s the philosophy classes, where I’m a student, or the physics and chemistry classes I teach in my job, I enjoy it all very much indeed.” [52] With the mutual trust between them, Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri knows that she can express all her professional enthusiasm, because it will not be an impediment for the founder, when the need arises, to ask her to dedicate herself to other tasks. For example, on December 30, 1964, she wrote: “If things go on as they should I will soon defend my thesis (my supervisor is Piedad de la Cierva) … We’ve worked very hard on it. If they announce a competitive examination for Work Training at the place where I’m teaching at the moment, I’ll apply for it, and I’m equally ready to drop it all whenever I’m asked to.” [53] The professional advances that she describes are linked to the faces of specific people she can help to grow in their Christian life: “I’m
thrilled at all the apostolate there is to be done there – they have about 1,000 girls and women between 12 and 20 or older, and there are still some subjects that haven’t started up yet.”[54]

Any job done out of love for God, freely and to the best of one’s ability, leads to holiness. Once again she gives St. Josemaría a brief summary of her life: “I work, do apostolate, and pray as well as I can. I want to do it better, and if you remember to pray for me, perhaps I’ll manage.”[55] The day she defended her thesis, she wrote: “Father, these pages contain the result of many hours’ work. It’s just been awarded ‘cum laude’ and I want to place it in your hands straight away, with everything I am and have, to be useful.”[56] Two years later, she recounts in a long letter that she has passed her Professional Education exams, which will allow her to stay in Madrid and teach at an institute for women there. And she adds: “I just want to tell you that, as with everything else, this new step in my professional work is in your hands. (Nothing ties me down, thank God).”[57]

Guadalupe is not a person self-absorbed in her work, quite the contrary: “Father, I’m really keen to serve now in this new job: the Faculty of Domestic Sciences ... I’ve been teaching both groups, and I put everything I could into my teaching. It’s a new joy that I have to thank God and you for – that my profession could be useful for something we love so much in the Work: household administration.”[58] And she writes in a later letter: “I’m happy, I pray, I do apostolate with quite a lot of people, and I study as well as teach.”[59] Two years later she once again speaks about her personal and professional goals: “In the coming academic year I want to concern myself thoroughly with my sisters, the apostolate and the house. At work I also have several goals: to take another step towards a professorship in Official Professional Teaching, and the possibility of a research award by publication of a book on textiles... all focused on domestic science.”[60]

In 1974, after obtaining a state teaching position through a competitive examination, the faculty senate voted to name her director of the Institute. She explained to the founder why she turned down the appointment: “I honestly wasn’t expecting it; in fact I thought that I didn’t fit in and that my overall influence was nil. I was extremely sorry to be
obliged to turn down the offer. I could have done such splendid apostolate (over 1,000 women students between 15 and 25). If only it had happened a few years ago! Now I’m not up to it physically.”[61] Guadalupe, who gave up many professional opportunities to dedicate herself to her family of Opus Dei, now realized she didn’t have the strength needed to take on this new position. As always, her first concern was for souls: “I could have done such splendid apostolate” with over a thousand students. “Pray a lot, Father, for me and this house, for all of us ... to give our utmost, not to be ungenerous in anything, and for me to be able to take the lead and help them. I want to pray for all the intentions that you are concerned about: the Church, her teachings, priests; and to do it well, by being cheerful and helping others by my good example.”[62]

Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri sanctified her final illness with this same spirit. She tried to keep working to the extent that she could (in some of her hospital stays, she tested chemical stains on textiles in the sink in her room), to pray, and to offer her life for the salvation of all men and women.

Conclusions.

What can the beatification of Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri offer to the men and women of good will and intellectual honesty today, no matter what their job and religious beliefs? We live in a confusing time, which tries to fetter real life with ideological constructs. Post-modernism, post-truth and transhumanism are theoretically its great achievements, but these ideologies are closed systems that often fail to connect with the real world. But the Truth doesn’t change, since it is immutable. And even if no one were to recognize it now—which is not the case—it would still offer itself to all men and women in the being of things, accessible to all who seek it. Guadalupe was a great lover of God, and therefore of the Truth, of the Truth that she sought in her professional work and that made her free and “blessed” in the end, with a happiness that, as the Church has now declared, she can never lose.

At the beginning of this article I pointed out how Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri, with the great variety of jobs she took on, could seem to be someone with a “scattered” soul. Nothing could be further from the truth, or from the unifying reality of the Christian vocation, which does not
consist in doing, but in being and loving, also in one’s work. Guadalupe was not a dispersed soul but a soul in love, with a great love for God and for all men and women. That is why she was beatified last May 18 in Madrid. And that is why it is easy to recognize her in these words of Saint John Paul II’s Letter to Women: “Thank you, women who work! You are present and active in every area of life – social, economic, cultural, artistic and political. In this way you make an indispensable contribution to the growth of a culture which unites reason and feeling, to a model of life ever open to the sense of ‘mystery,’ to the establishment of economic and political structures ever more worthy of humanity.”[63]


[2] Ernst Burkhart – Javier López, Ordinary Life and Holiness in the Teachings of St. Josemaria Escriva, Vol 1 (Scepter 2017). Volume 1 of this three-volume work has been translated and published by Scepter in English. Volume 3, in chapter 7, section 1.4, The Sanctification of Temporal Realities, presents the theological teachings of St. Josemaria needed to understand that the vocation to work is a gift from God.


[4] The spirituality of Opus Dei is based on the sanctification of one’s daily work and obligations.

[5] Josemaría Escriva was making a spiritual retreat in Madrid. He had been praying for over ten years that God would let him see what he wanted from him.

[6] St. Josemaría said that he had become a priest sensing that God had a specific plan for him -- alongside his priestly vocation – that would involve more than simply following an ecclesiastical career.


[11] In a recent article by Professor López Díaz, J. “Nota histórica y teológica sobre la santificación del trabajo,” the author mentions some lay people who responded to the call to sanctify their work and are in the process of beatification and identifies them by their profession “Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri, professor of Chemistry ... the engineer Isidoro Zorzano ... the student Montserrat Grases ... the Swiss engineer Toni Zweifel.... Cf. Holiness Through Work , edited by Maria Ferrari.


[14] The Regional Advisory is made up of a group of women who work alongside the Regional Vicar and the Regional Priest Secretary in the organization and government of the formative and apostolic initiatives of Opus Dei in the various regions. A region is a circumscription governed by a Vicar delegated by the Prelate.


[16] The Central Advisory is made up of a small group of women who work alongside the Prelate, the Assistant Vicar, the Vicar General, and the Central Priest Scretary in the organization and governance of the formative and apostolic initiatives of Opus Dei. It is located in Rome.
Piedad de la Cierva was an outstanding Spanish scientist. After graduating from the University of Valencia in 1932, she completed her doctoral thesis in Madrid at the Rockefeller Institute. She won a scholarship for further studies at the Niels Bohr Institute in Copenhagen. After the Spanish Civil War she continued her scientific research in fields of study in which she was a pioneer, including optical glass and the manufacture of refractory bricks. She was one of the first women in Opus Dei. Cf. Inmaculada Alva Rodríguez, *Piedad de la Cierva: una sorprendente trayectoria profesional durante la segunda república y el franquismo*, Arbor, 2016.

The Center for Studies and Research in Domestic Sciences offers quality training to those who would like to make caring for the family their professional work, in the home environment or in communities such as residences, schools, clinics, etc. In 2006, a Peruvian philosopher, Mª Pía Chirinos Montalbetti, published her book *Claves para una antropología del trabajo* [*Keys to an Anthropology of Work*] in which she highlights the importance of domestic work for building strong families. A warm family atmosphere and pleasant home is a source of balance, self-esteem and inner freedom that helps people grow and mature.

Saint Josemaría, *Christ Is Passing By*, no. 45.


Cristina Abad Cadenas, 2018, *La libertad de amar*, Palabra, 2018


[31] They will be quoted with reference to the book, since it is the original source. The authors, in turn, carefully cite the archival reference of each document.


[35] María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *Bilbao, August 1946.* “Purificators are small linen cloths with which the celebrant at Mass cleans and purifies the chalice.


[47] María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, Cuautla (Mexico), September 14, 1953.


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Beatification of the Venerable Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri

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Letter of Pope Francis to the Prelate of Opus Dei for the Beatification (May 18, 2019)

Dear Don Fernando,

The beatification of the Servant of God Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri, the first layperson of this Prelature to be beatified, is soon to take place, and I wish to unite myself to your joy and thanksgiving for this witness of holiness, which she lived out in the ordinary circumstances of her Christian life.

It is right to rejoice and to thank God, because he never abandons his Church—not even in the darkest moments—and with spousal love he continues to inspire examples of holiness in the Church that bring beauty to her face, fill us with hope, and show us clearly the path we are to follow.

Holiness means opening one’s heart to God and allowing him to transform us with his love; it also means going out of ourselves so as to meet others where Jesus awaits us, to bring them a word of encouragement, a helping hand, a look of tenderness and consolation.

With the joy that came from knowing she was a daughter of God, as she had learned from Saint Josemaría himself, Guadalupe Ortiz placed her many human and spiritual qualities at the service of others, helping in a particular way other women and families in need of education and development. She did all this not with a proselytizing attitude but simply through her prayer and witness.

I encourage all the faithful of the Prelature, and all who take part in their apostolates, always to aspire to this holiness of “normality,” which burns within our hearts with the fire of Christ’s love, and which the world and the Church are so in need of today.

I also ask you not to stop praying for me, while at the same time I impart my Apostolic Blessing to you all. May Jesus bless you and may Our Lady look after you.

Fraternally,

Francis
Chronicle of the Beatification

May 18th. Beatification Day, Vistalegre Arena, Madrid

Madrid hosted the beatification of the Spanish chemist and researcher Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri (1916-1975), who, among many other accomplishments, brought the message of Opus Dei to Mexico. In a letter sent for the beatification, Pope Francis held her up as an example of “the holiness of ‘normality.’”

The Holy Father’s delegate was Cardinal Angelo Becciu, prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints. Concelebrating with him were the Cardinal Archbishop of Madrid, Carlos Osoro, the Prelate of Opus Dei, Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz, as well as six cardinals, nine archbishops, sixteen bishops and some 150 priests.

Pope Francis said he wanted to “unite myself to your joy and thanksgiving” for the beatification of Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri through the letter published above, which was read by the auxiliary vicar of the Prelature, Msgr. Mariano Fazio, at the end of the ceremony.

The new Blessed, we read in the Pope’s letter, “placed her many human and spiritual qualities at the service of others, helping in a particular way other women and families in need of education and development.” The Pontiff emphasized that Guadalupe did this “with her prayer and example,” “with the joy that came from knowing she was a daughter of God, as she had learned from Saint Josemaría himself.”

Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz, after thanking God for the beatification of Guadalupe, asked Cardinal Becciu to convey to the Roman Pontiff his gratitude and that of the entire Prelature of Opus Dei. “Tell him that we are grateful for the message that he sent us and that we listened to today;
that we express our filial affection and pray for his pastoral ministry as the successor of Peter.”

The Prelate entrusted to Blessed Guadalupe’s intercession the resolution of all the faithful of the Work “to always be good children of the Church; and that the Prelature of Opus Dei, as St. Josemaría wanted, might always serve the Church as the Church wants to be served. With God’s grace, the motherly mediation of our Lady, and the example of the new Blessed, may we discover each day that our ordinary life is the place where Christ awaits us and an opportunity to share the joy of the Gospel with others.”

Cardinal Becciu stressed the Blessed’s ability to teach us “that it is possible to harmonize prayer and action, contemplation and work.” Furthermore, “her life also teaches us that the ability to listen and to always be cheerful even in the most painful situations is something beautiful and attractive.”

“Guadalupe,” continued the cardinal, “is presented before our eyes as a model of the Christian woman, always faithful to where God’s plan wants her to be, especially in the social sphere and in scientific research. In short, Guadalupe was a gift for the whole Church and is a valuable example to follow.”

At 9 am on Saturday, the Palacio Vistalegre Arena opened its doors. There were greetings, reunions and selfies, with participants coming from distant and exotic places such as Nigeria, New Zealand, Singapore, India and Japan, with some dressed in regional attire.

Over 11,000 people from 60 nationalities filled the Vistalegre Arenda in Madrid to take part in the beatification, and many more followed it virtually through television or streaming, from their homes or in the screenings organized in different cities around the world. It was a very digital and international beatification.

Among those present were relatives of the new Blessed. Luis Cruz, a great-nephew of hers and a university chaplain in Madrid, said that his aunt “was a woman who knew how to share in God’s vision of the world to see the good in whatever happened to her and the good in each person.” He emphasized that “she had a joyful smile for everyone and one enjoyed
being with her.”

The three sons of Antonio Sedano, who was cured of a carcinoma through Guadalupe’s intercession, were also in attendance. They were “very grateful and excited to be there. She continues helping us in many small things,” they said. The first ophthalmologist who treated their father, Dr. José Ramón Fontenla, also was there. He said that “being in Vistalegre today is a great joy and an opportunity to ask the Blessed for new favors.”

Faithful prayed in the chapel installed for the occasion, while penitents waited in the area of confessional to go to confession; liturgical items lined the sacristy, most of them coming from the beatification ceremony of Alvaro del Portillo, which also took place in Madrid. The sacred linens for the ceremony were prepared by volunteers in Spain, Switzerland and Lebanon. The Perdiguera wine came from the Agrarian Family School (EFA) Molino de Viento, an educational initiative in Campo de Criptana (Ciudad Real, Spain). The roses were a gift from Uruguay.

As the celebrants entered, the choir intoned Il Signore terra tutta, by Italian composer Marco Frisina. The singers form part of the professional choir “Grupo Alborada,” under the direction of the baritone Gonzalo Burgos.

Almost 200 concelebrants processed towards the altar. After the initial rites, the central moment of the ceremony took place. After hearing the words of petition by the Prelate, and a biographical sketch of the future Blessed, Cardinal Becciu read the apostolic letter with the solemn formula of beatification: “We grant that the Venerable Servant of God Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri and Fernández de Heredia, lay faithful of the Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei, who dedicated her life generously to the Lord, joyfully serving her brothers and sisters in the carrying out of her daily tasks, may from this hour be called Blessed.”

Following these words, the image of the Blessed was unveiled while the hymn Christus Vincit sounded forth amid strong applause. From that moment, Guadalupe can be venerated throughout the Prelature of Opus Dei and the diocese of Madrid. Her feast day will be celebrated on May 18, a day she appreciated for being the anniversary of her First Communion.
The relics of the new Blessed were brought to the altar by relatives of Guadalupe and members of Antonio Sedano’s family.

The time for the Liturgy of the Word arrived. During the homily, Cardinal Becciu reflected upon the biography of the new Blessed and stressed that “she teaches us how beautiful and attractive it is to have the ability to listen and be cheerful even in the most painful situations.” “Her heart was always open to the needs of others, reaching out with welcome and understanding.”

“We find ourselves,” he added, “before a woman whose life has been enlightened simply by being faithful to the Gospel. Multi-faceted and insightful, she was a light for those who knew her.”

At the end of the Mass, the Archbishop of Madrid, Cardinal Osoro, spoke about the new Blessed. Referring to the 25th anniversary of the consecration of the Almudena Cathedral by Saint John Paul II, the Cardinal declared that “among these graces from heaven that we are receiving from our Lady is God’s gift of the beatification of Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri.”

Osoro described the new Blessed as “one of us.” Born in Madrid, baptized in the parish of St. Ildefonso, she discovered God’s call in the church of the Immaculate Conception and is buried on the Gran Via in the Royal Oratory of the Knight of Grace.

“All this,” he said, “reminds us how our Lady guided the steps of the new Blessed and sustained her on the path to holiness with abundant graces in and throughout her life. Saint Josemaría Escrivá used to say to his children, especially to the first people in the Work like Blessed Guadalupe, that if they wanted them to imitate him in anything, it should be in love for freedom and in love and devotion to Mary Most Holy. We entrust ourselves to the new Blessed to help us to be faithful like her, living God’s will joyfully, and to teach us to trust like her in the intercession of our Lady.”

#FestGol: a Festive Gathering to Celebrate the New Blessed (May 18, 2019)
In the evening, at 7 pm, the Vistalegre Arena became a huge living room. Many of those who had attended the beatification of Guadalupe met with the Prelate of Opus Dei in a friendly and festive gathering.

At the beginning, Monsignor Ocáriz spoke briefly about Guadalupe, of her joy and the need to thank God. He encouraged those present to understand what had happened in the morning as a call: “Holiness is not a utopia. It is within everyone’s reach, with God’s grace.”

The presenters of the event introduced Luis Cruz, a priest and great-nephew of Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri. He recalled the new Blessed’s “unforgettable smile,” her joyful relationship with God, her drive and wide horizons, her capacity for friendship. At least that is how she is remembered in his own family. He said that all of Guadalupe’s relatives are living these days with a special joy.

“Guadalupe,” said Luis, “was a woman with many friends whom she cared for. She encouraged you to dream and to fill your heart with dreams. It was her way of reflecting God’s life within her.” Luis then asked the Prelate about the connection between friendship and “being apostles,” to which Monsignor Ocáriz responded: “Authentic friendship is true apostolate; it’s an expression of our desire for the others’ good.”

Anjelica, from Nigeria, recalled Guadalupe’s concern for social development. She praised the Harambee Foundation’s initiative to finance one hundred scholarships for African women scientists in the next ten years in honor of the beatification. And then she asked the Prelate how those with ample financial resources can keep very much in mind those who do not have them. He encouraged those present to live temperately, to flee from the superfluous. This detachment enables us to think less about ourselves and more about our neighbor, a concern shown in specific deeds.

At a certain point, Vistalegre connected with Mexico. Through a video conference call, people in Mexico reminded the Father that in 2020 it will be the 50th anniversary of Saint Josemaría’s visit to Mexico and his novena to Our Lady of Guadalupe. “No pressure, but it is the golden anniversary, in case you want to come and see us.”

Another intervention is by Teresa, 20 years old. She is from San Sebastian and is studying for a degree in gastronomy at the Basque Culinary
Center, since she has decided to dedicate her life to serving others as a numerary assistant. She is giving clear example to the importance of work in the home, and is moved by Guadalupe’s joyful and consistent life.

Msgr. Ocáriz stressed the importance of freedom and love in giving direction to each person’s life. Love “isn’t a feeling, but a free decision of the will, which is sometimes accompanied by feelings.” A spontaneous dialogue opened up between the Prelate and Teresa: “Form yourself, study, have clear ideas, and strengthen your freedom.”

Next, another Teresa spoke, standing next to her husband, Iñigo. They have been married for 21 years and have seven children. Two of their children have disabilities and their youngest one, Josemaría, has Down’s syndrome and leukemia. Josemaría is the protagonist in an Instagram account (@ponundownentuvida -- “put a down in your life”) with more than 25,000 followers.

Msgr. Ocáriz looked at them with admiration, and thanked them for their example, integrity, and eagerness to take advantage of a cross to sow joy. He told them, “We don’t like suffering, but as Christians, we see an opportunity to unite ourselves to the Cross of Christ.” And he added, “You can suffer. You can cry. But you can’t be sad. Our faith in God, who wants us to be happy, tells us that this attitude is absurd.”

Ana, who lives in Madrid, is the last to speak. When she read the letters of Guadalupe to St. Josemaría, she was captivated by her naturalness, enthusiasm, courage and happiness. She said she wants to always have that in her own life, and to transmit it authentically to future generations.

At the end, the Prelate said that “the joy we feel now has to be kept alive. There are always reasons to be joyful, despite the difficulties. God wants us to be happy.”

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May 19th. Thanksgiving Mass, Vistalegre Arena and words of Pope Francis at the “Regina Coeli”

The Prelate of Opus Dei, Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz, presided over a Mass of Thanksgiving and encouraged those present to open themselves “more fully to the works that God wants to accomplish through each one of us.” In his homily, he referred to one of the letters written by Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri to St. Josemaría from Mexico in 1954, in which the new Blessed opened her heart to the founder of Opus Dei and expressed to him her desire to be holy.

“Wanting to be holy is the challenge that Guadalupe accepted for her life and that filled her with happiness,” the Prelate stressed. And to achieve this she did not have to do extraordinary things: “In the eyes of the people around her she was an ordinary person: concerned about her family, going from place to place, finishing one task and starting another, trying to correct her defects little by little.”

“Each saint is a work of God, a way of making himself present in our world, and ‘the most attractive face of the Church.’” The beatification of Guadalupe—the first lay faithful of Opus Dei to be set forth by the Church as a model of sanctity—reminds all the Christian faithful of God’s call to be holy, as St. Josemaría preached since 1928 and which was one of the main teachings of the Second Vatican Council.

Guadalupe traveled widely to make that mission a reality, from Madrid to Bilbao, to Mexico, to Rome... And as with the first apostles, she had a lot of work and faced many difficulties, including the heart disease that robbed her of strength and eventually led to her death in 1975.

“We too will face difficulties along our path: moments of fatigue, physical pain, misunderstandings... In these moments, we can remember the attitude of the saints, seeking in our relationship with Jesus the way to encourage, console and do good to those around us.”

The Prelate encouraged those present to let our Lord transform them in order to continue “writing the true history of our world,” the history of
Before the ceremony, a niece of the new Blessed who is named after her, Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri, gave thanks on behalf of the family. “We are moved and very grateful. How many people have devotion to our beloved aunt,” she said with deep emotion. She recalled that for the family “aunt Guadalupe” was always exceptional, and thanked the Holy Father, St. Josemaría, Cardinal Angelo Becciu and the Prelate of Opus Dei, Fernando Ocáriz.

Words of Pope Francis about the beatification of Guadalupe, St. Peter’s Square, the Vatican

My dear brothers and sisters!

Yesterday in Madrid, María Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri, a lay faithful of Opus Dei who gladly served her brothers and sisters by teaching and proclaiming the Gospel, was beatified. Her witness is an example for Christian women engaged in social activities and in scientific research. Let’s give a round of applause to the newBblessed, all together!

May 21st. Thanksgiving Mass in Rome.

The basilica of St. Eugene in Rome was the scene of a thanksgiving Mass celebrated on May 21 by Msgr. Fernándo Ocariz, Prelate of Opus Dei, in which numerous Roman families and other persons from many countries who had come to Europe to attend the beatification ceremony took part.

On looking at Guadalupe’s life, Msgr. Ocáriz said, what especially stands out is her joy: “This was not a superficial but a deep joy, which made her serene in trying moments and enabled her to show affection to so many different people. It was a joy compatible with both hard work and rest.”
Guadalupe’s joy, the Prelate continued, was based on her union with Christ, which led her to forget about herself and to strive to understand every person in order to help them better. And it led her to seek out work she found less pleasant in order to facilitate that of the others.

The Prelate also stressed that “these past few days of Guadalupe’s beatification have reminded us that holiness, which is what God’s love calls us to, is a real possibility for all men and women.”

Pope Francis referred to the new blessed, Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri, twice in the days following May 18th, both in the letter that was read at the beatification ceremony in Madrid, and at the prayer of the Regina Coeli in St. Peter’s Square.

The organizing committee for the beatification wanted to make solidarity a feature of the ceremony. Through the NGO Harambee, it was able to provide fellowships, thanks to donations from those taking part in the various ceremonies, so that during the next decade one hundred African women scientists will be able to improve their professional formation in European countries and provide leadership for social progress in their own countries of origin.

In the days following the beatification, Masses of thanksgiving were celebrated in various parts of the world, including the Basilica of Our Lady of Lujan in Argentina, in Barcelona, Spain, and in the parish of St. Thomas More in London. In the Mass celebrated in this city, the principal concelebrant was Msgr. Nichols Morris, Regional Vicar of Opus Dei in Great Britain. An exhibition about the life of the new Blessed was set up in the church’s antechamber. “We were surprised how many people took with them novena and prayer cards of the Blessed,” the organizer of the exhibition remarked.

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Other Events Surrounding the Beatification

_A Portrait of Guadalupe in the Royal Oratory of the Knight of Grace, Madrid, Spain (May 18, 2019)_)
Since October 6, 2018, the remains of Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri have reposed in a wooden chest engraved with her name, in the Royal Oratory of the Knight of Grace in Madrid.

The chest with Guadalupe’s remains is normally kept at a side altar, but during the days of the beatification it was placed in front of the main altar, to make it easier for all the pilgrims who have come to Madrid to pray before it, ask for favors and give thanks for her holy life.

Ignacio Valdés, a painter from the Sacred Art School in Florence, produced the portrait, which was exhibited on May 18 in the sacristy of this oratory. Guadalupe is shown standing next to an open window with light streaming in; some elements of her biography are depicted in the painting, including here love for her studies and chemisty, and her time spent in Mexico.

*At the Santa Engracia Institute, Madrid (May 9, 2019)*

The twelve years that Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri taught at the Santa Engracia School of Industrial Education (1964-1975) left a deep mark on many students.

Therefore on Thursday, May 9, a round table presided over by the director, Almudena Marcos Ortiz, was held, in which former students of Guadalupe took part, as well as Mercedes Montero Díaz, a historian at the School of Communication in the University of Navarra and the author of a biography about Guadalupe entitled *En Vanguardi*.

*Exhibition “Guadalupe. Live the Experience,” a sensory journey to holiness*

Can you touch holiness? The exhibition inaugurated at the Tajamar School in Madrid tries to answer this question. With a contemporary visual language captured on wooden cubes, various sound and audiovisual resources are used to enable visitors to enter into the historical era and personality of Blessed Guadalupe, as well as to reveal some of the secrets of her life.

The exhibition’s curator, Ana Sánchez de la Nieta, explained: “Most saints do not appear in history books; they have to be discovered, as Pope Francis says in his exhortation *Gaudete et exsultate*. Guadalupe belonged to this ‘middle class’ of holiness the Pope alludes to, and this exhibition took
up the challenge of making her life known through a contemporary visual language addressed to people from all over the world, who would gather these days in Madrid for her beatification.”

The exhibition seeks to enable each visitor to take away more than just facts. “Guadalupe had a rich and multifaceted personality. We wanted to tell everything about her life and at the same time let people introduce themselves into the world of Guadalupe by establishing a dialogue with her,” the person responsible for the design, Amaya Sánchez Ostiz, said.

The exhibition, a “time tunnel” with personal objects from Guadalupe, offered visitors reproductions of her letters to the founder of Opus Dei, her original diaries with notes on her inner life, and even a refractory brick made from rice husk ashes used for research for her doctoral thesis.

The head of the agency that set up the show, Penelope Benito, from *Light House*, confided that this endeavor helped her to connect in a special way with Guadalupe. “There has always been a lot of chemistry between us. Some projects are quite special, and without a doubt this has been the most special one I’ve been involved in so far,” she said.

The director of the Tajamar School, Ignacio San Román, said that hosting the exhibition allowed many people tied to the school’s educational community to forge a more personal connection with the new Blessed from Madrid.

The opening was also attended by the Secretary General of the Community of Madrid, Manuel Quintanar, who congratulated the organizers on behalf of the President of the Madrid Government and highlighted the “human, professional and Christian excellence” of Guadalupe. Quintanar also expressed pleasure that Madrid was chosen as the site for the beatification, and stressed that the new Blessed provided an example of joyful sanctity: “things that are worthwhile are always done with joy.”
“You are the light of the world” (Mt 5:14)

Dear brothers and sisters,

Listening to these words of Christ to his disciples proclaimed to us today, we have almost been overcome with fear. We want to respond to the Master right away saying, “The light of the world is you!” In fact, what comes to mind is what he told us about himself: “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me … will have the light of life.” (Jn 8:12). Nevertheless, this passage in the Gospel also reminds us of what Christ told us, that we too are the light of the world, because we have received it from him, who came into the world not only to “be the light” but to “give light,” to communicate it to the minds and hearts of those who believe in him. This is exactly what Jesus wants from us, when he says, “You are the light of the world.” In fact, he adds: “A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lamp stand, where it gives light to all in the house” (Mt 5:14-15).

We therefore have a task. We have a responsibility towards the gift received: responsibility for the light that has been transmitted to us. We cannot just consider it our own property and keep it for ourselves alone; rather, we are called to communicate it to others, to give it, and we should make it shine “before men” (Mt 5:16).

Blessed Guadalupe was aware of this truth. She is a model for us of how to manifest this light that is Christ and how to share it with our brothers and sisters. We find ourselves before a woman whose life has been enlightened simply by being faithful to the Gospel. Multi-faceted and insightful, she was a light for those who knew her, demonstrating courage and a joy in her life that came from abandonment in God, to whose will
she sought to conform her life day after day, and whose discovery made her a brave witness and announcer of the Word of God. The source of her fruitful Christian life was her intimate and constant union with Christ.

Her dialogue with God, starting at a young age, was continuous and carried out simply through an intense sacramental life and extended moments of recollection: the Holy Mass and confession were the pillars of her spiritual life. The recitation of the rosary, prayed with great devotion, was a clear sign of a deep unity with the Mother of God, to whose intercession she would often entrust herself. Guadalupe followed a path of integral and mature prayer, which led her to experience God's presence and his merciful love in a deep and mystical way. Indeed, it was through contemplation of the Paschal Mystery that the light of truth that guided her steps shone forth. This same light turned her into a “lamp” placed ”on a lamp stand, where it gives light to all in the house” (Mt 5:15).

The Cross did not take long in making its appearance in her life. In the terrible period of the civil war, she accepted with heroic fortitude—fruit of her faith, hope and charity, which were also heroic—the tragic shooting of her father, the dangers of armed conflict, the need to flee Madrid, poverty and the interruption of her studies. In the midst of such spiritual and material desertion, an encounter happened that would lead to the complete turning around of her life. Touched by a grace that she experienced during Sunday Mass, she felt the need to find someone who could help her find deeper answers to her spiritual aspirations; and thus, through a friend, she entered in contact with the founder of Opus Dei.

This encounter was a decisive step towards a loving and total dedication to God. Joining the Work, she was available, with enthusiastic and generous spirit, to communicate to everyone and everywhere the joy of discovering the precious pearl—the Gospel. And she began carrying out an intense apostolate, easily forming bonds of friendship with young people everywhere, bonds that were built with her faith, piety, charity and her healthy and contagious joy. She understood that union with God cannot be limited to a moment of prayer in a chapel, but that the whole day provided an opportunity to intensify her relationship with the Lord. In fact, one of her spiritual characteristics was transforming everything she did into prayer. In this regard, she liked to say that it was necessary to walk with “our feet
on the ground, but always looking at Heaven, so that afterwards we can see more clearly what's going on around us" (Informatio, Sec. II, Documented Biography, p. 46).

When the founder, Escrivá de Balaguer, asked her if she was willing to go to Mexico to begin the Work there, she immediately accepted with joy. She had no other interest than that of being a docile instrument in God’s hands. To overcome the understandable family difficulties, and to prepare herself spiritually to do whatever God asked, she entrusted her petitions to Our Lady of Guadalupe. In Mexico, her apostolic work was based on love for God, which was expressed in a life of piety and abandonment in his hands and in missionary zeal. Her big concern was forming very well those who had just joined the Work; and she insisted on the need for perseverance, edifying others with her spirit of prayer, temperance and penance. It was clear that she was working for the glory of God alone and for the extension of his Kingdom.

Destined to Rome with responsibilities of government, she was obedient, humble and cheerful as always, dedicating herself to office work and to prayer. Upon returning to Spain, she resumed her teaching and tasks of formation of young women in the Work. It was the moment for a determined, constant, generous and joyful commitment to live the Gospel ever more radically, a conscious response to God’s love, in which she felt herself immersed, especially in the most tragic moments of her existence, with the resolution to be holy and, following the spirituality of Opus Dei, inspired by a strong desire to involve as many brothers and sisters as possible in the same adventure.

In every circumstance, Blessed Guadalupe has been a gift for others, especially in looking after the formation of students and in dedicating herself to scientific research to foster the progress of humanity. Her heart was always open to the needs of others, shown in a welcoming and understanding attitude. In all circumstances, she showed herself to be a strong woman. Her strength was particularly evident in the difficulties she faced, in the carrying out of new apostolic works and evangelizing places not yet reached, and above all in accepting patiently the physical sufferings that seriously conditioned her daily life. She was able to accept everything without conditions and without self-pity, transforming her illness into a
precious offering to the Most High and an opportunity for deep union with the Crucified One.

To us Christians today, the new Blessed tells us that it is possible to harmonize prayer and action, contemplation and work, according to a lifestyle that leads us to trust in God and to see our life as an expression of his will, which we are to live at all times. Her life also teaches us that the ability to listen and to always be cheerful even in the most painful situations is something beautiful and attractive. Guadalupe is presented before our eyes as a model of the Christian woman, always faithful to where God's plan wants her to be, especially in the social sphere and in scientific research. In short, Guadalupe was a gift for the whole Church and is a valuable example to follow.

Her wealth of faith, hope and charity is an admirable demonstration of what the Second Vatican Council has taught about the call of all the faithful to holiness, making clear that each person should pursue this goal “following his or her own path” (Lumen Gentium, 41). Today, this teaching of the Council finds fulfillment with the beatification of this woman, to whose prayer and intercession we have recourse so that we may always be better witnesses of the light of Christ and lamps that illuminate the darkness of our time.

Yes, let us invoke her: Blessed Guadalupe, pray for us!

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Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz at the Mass of Thanksgiving, Vistalegre Arena, Madrid (May 19, 2019)

The liturgical season now is marked by joy at Christ’s resurrection. We still remember the experience of that young disciple who, standing before Jesus’ empty tomb, “saw and believed” (Jn 20:8). This is the most decisive moment in history: God who becomes man overcomes sin and death. It is an event that changes everything for the lives of each one of us. And today, with this Easter joy, we give thanks to God for the beatification of
Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri, proclaimed as a model of holiness by Pope Francis.

In the Psalm from today’s Mass, we raised a song of joy: “All your works give you thanks, Lord ... They speak of the glory of your reign and tell of your mighty works” (Ps 145:10-11). The mighty works that God has performed throughout history are beyond number, above all the redemptive Incarnation of the Son of God in Christ Jesus, who has fully revealed to us that “God is love” (1 Jn 4:8).

God’s works have not ended. His power continues to shine forth throughout history. Saint Josemaría liked to remind us, using words from the prophet Isaiah: Non est abbreviata manus Domini (Is 59:1): “The arm of the Lord has not been shortened.’ God is no less powerful today than he was in other times” (Christ is Passing By, 130). The same Lord wants to keep showing himself to us in different ways, including through the saints. Each saint is a work of God, a way of making himself present in our world, and “the most attractive face of the Church” (Pope Francis, Gaudete et exsultate, 9).

Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri is the first lay person of Opus Dei to be set forth as a model of holiness by the Church. This was already the case with the founder, Saint Josemaría, and his first successor, Blessed Alvaro. Thus we are especially reminded of the call that God makes to all of us to be holy, as Saint Josemaría preached since 1928 and which was one of the main teachings of the Second Vatican Council (see Lumen Gentium, ch. 5). The new blessed sought to bring this conviction to the people around her, insisting that, with divine grace, union with God is within everyone’s reach in the circumstances of ordinary life.

When she was thirty-seven years old, Guadalupe wrote in a letter to the founder of Opus Dei from Mexico: “I want to be faithful, I want to be useful, and I want to be holy. But the reality is that I still have a long way to go . . . But I’m not discouraged, and with God’s help and your support and everyone’s, I hope I’ll win through in the end” (Letter, February 1, 1954). This brief phrase — “I want to be holy”— is the challenge that Guadalupe accepted for her life and that filled her with happiness. To achieve it, she did not have to do extraordinary things. In the eyes of the
people around her, she was an ordinary person: worried about her family, going from place to place, finishing one task and starting another, trying to correct her defects little by little. Right there, in those struggles that seem small, God performs great works. And he wants to do likewise in the life of each and every one of us.

The readings from today’s Mass also lead us to consider some of the dispositions that a Christian should possess. In the first reading, we see Paul and Barnabas visiting some of the early Christian communities. The two of them had only recently started to make Christ known among all kinds of people. Their listeners reacted with surprise at their testimony: some were excited, even believing them to be gods (Acts 14:11), while others rejected them violently. In this particular instance, Paul had just been stoned in Lystra by a crowd urged on by people from Iconium and Antioch. After beating Paul, they dragged him out of the city and abandoned him there, thinking he was dead (Acts 14:19). But today’s reading surprises us by telling us: “[Paul and Barnabas] returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch. They strengthened the spirits of the disciples and exhorted them to persevere in the faith” (Acts 14:21-22). They were not satisfied with keeping for themselves the joy of having received Christ in their lives. They needed to tell the whole world that a deeper peace existed and that they had found it at last with Jesus. They saw this mission as the most important reality in their life, more than their material well-being, their comfort, or their social situation. And this spurs them to return to the city, despite the opposition that their message would surely face there. They return to console the people, to pray and to offer sacrifice (Acts 14:22-23). They do not go to repay evil with evil, but—as Saint Josemaria liked to say—to “drown evil in an abundance of good” (Furrow, 864).

Blessed Guadalupe also discovered the importance and joy of bringing the consolation of Christ’s friendship to others, inspired by her encounter with Saint Josemaria and Opus Dei. From that point on, her story (similar to our own in many ways) began to be seen more clearly as a work of God. She had to make many trips as well: Madrid, Bilbao, Mexico, Culiacan, Monterrey, Tacambaro, Rome... She faced tasks that were labor-intensive, a heart disease that weakened her, and a multitude of daily difficulties. But
she understood that the best thing she could do was the same as Saint Paul: to reach identification with Christ, and with him and in him, to comfort the people she encountered along her way with the joy of the Gospel, being available for others. One day, thinking about all the tasks lying ahead of her, she wrote to Saint Josemaría, “Knowing me as you do, you can see that it’s all much too much for me, can’t you? But I don’t get discouraged or scared; I only ask for your prayers that I may never fail to do what God wants in anything, big or small” (Letter, March 15, 1951).

We too will face difficulties along our path: moments of fatigue, physical pain, misunderstandings... In these moments, we can remember the attitude of the saints, seeking in our relationship with Jesus the way to encourage, console and do good to those around us. In the second reading, we hear these words of the Lord: “Behold, I make all things new” (Rev 21:5). It is by leaning on him that we can, despite our inadequacy and weakness, be the “consolation of God” for others.

In the Gospel of the Mass, we find the “new commandment”: “Love one another as I have loved you.” Jesus says this will be how Christians will be identified down through the centuries: by being bearers of his love, a selfless love towards all men and women as children of the same Father. This is the main mark of the saints. God enabled the new Blessed Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri to build bridges and offer friendship to all kinds of people, including those far from the faith, from different countries and all ages.

Within a few minutes, the words that Jesus spoke at the Last Supper will be repeated. He will then be present in his Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. Let us prepare ourselves to receive Him and thus be able to open ourselves more fully to the works that God wants to accomplish through each of us. We need to let the Lord transform us through the Eucharist and continue to write the true history of our world. Let us also ask our Mother, Regina Coeli, Queen of Heaven, for help, so we never lack the desire for holiness that moved Guadalupe to want to carry Christ’s love and consolation to the whole world. Amen.
“Bless the Lord, O my soul; and do not forget all his gifts” (Ps 102:2). This psalm that we sang a few minutes ago also expresses our joy at the beatification of Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri. And while we thank God and also Pope Francis for having set forth Guadalupe as a model of holiness, let us not forget—as the psalmist reminds us—all the gifts and mercies that the Lord has bestowed on us.

When considering the life of Guadalupe, among the variety of aspects that stand out, the one that especially calls our attention is her joy. Guadalupe'sjoy was deep: it was not something superficial. It brought her peace at trying moments, and enabled her to show affection to so many different people. It was a joy compatible with both hard work and rest. What can we do to make joy a permanent part of our own lives? Supernatural joy is born of union with God.

In the first reading, we see the first Christians placing all their belongingsthe apostles’ disposal: we can easily imagine them offering not just their material possessions but their personal talents as well. This attitude can only follow from the conviction that our plans do not have the last word: God always knows more than we do.

The joy and fruitfulness of those who trust in God has always been a hallmark of salvation history. Abraham surrendered his future to God and became the father of an innumerable progeny (Gen 12:1-2). Moses placed his future in God’s hands and freed his people from slavery (Ex 3:10). The prophets gave up their future to God and became his voice to the people (Jer 1:9).

The apostles abandoned their future in God and became the pillars of the Church (Mt 4:19). All of them in one way or another had to overcome their human calculations in order to respond to the Lord’s call. None of them started out with everything under control. Saint Josemaría, who also sought to follow God’s will in founding Opus Dei with no human resources at his disposal, wrote early on that supernatural joy “comes from
the abandonment of everything, including yourself, into the loving arms of our Father God” (*The Way*, 659).

Guadalupe was always cheerful because she let Jesus guide her and be in charge of filling her heart. From the moment she understood that God was calling her to seek holiness through Opus Dei, she was aware that this mission wasn’t just a new earthly plan for her, exciting to say the least. She realized that it was something supernatural, prepared by God from all eternity for her. As she allowed herself to be led by this certitude of faith, God blessed her with a fruitfulness that she could never have imagined, and with a happiness—the hundredfold that Jesus promises his disciples—that we see described in her recently published letters.

The Pope writes that when we discover—through faith—the greatness of God’s love, “we gain fresh vision, new eyes to see; we realize that it contains a great promise of fulfilment, and that a vision of the future opens up before us” (*Lumen Fidei*, 4). Recalling the first time she met Saint Josemaría, Guadalupe wrote, “I clearly sensed that God was speaking to me through that priest … I felt a great faith—a clear reflection of his own” (Mercedes Eguíbar, *Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri*, 2001, p. 271). Let us ask our Lord, through Guadalupe’s intercession, that he grant us these new eyes of faith so that we might look at our future the way he does.

Another source of this supernatural joy that characterized Guadalupe was her decision to serve others. Seeking our own preferences and comfort in everything might seem to be the route to happiness. But this is not the case. Christ said that whoever wishes to be first should be the servant of all (*Mk* 9:35); that he himself came down to earth to serve (*Mt* 20:28); and at another moment, that his place among men was “as the one who serves” (*Lk* 22:27). During the Last Supper, he knelt down before his Apostles, washing the feet of each one, and said: “You also ought to wash one another’s feet … If you understand this, blessed are you if you do it” (*Jn* 13:14-17).

Guadalupe was able to keep this joy that we see in her writings and throughout her life, also because every morning upon waking up her first word addressed to God was *Serviam*, “I will serve!” It was a resolution she wanted to keep alive every moment of her day. Guadalupe’s joy was
founded on union with Christ, which led her to forget about herself and to strive to understand each person, proactively seeking out less pleasant tasks in order to facilitate the work of her colleagues. In the second reading, we listened to Saint Paul's words, “I even consider everything as a loss because of the supreme good of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord” (Phil 3:8). A very direct way of getting to know Christ is service. Saint Josemaría knew this by experience, as he made reference to when he wrote, “Only by serving can we know and love Christ and make Him known and loved” (Christ is Passing By, 182).

May we not be fooled by trying to find joy in our own comfort: let us dare to serve others! Through great or small acts of service, we will become more and more like Christ Jesus, and come to have a supernatural joy, even in the midst of difficulties and suffering.

Finally, let us consider another aspect underlined in today’s Gospel and that also sheds light on Guadalupe’s life. After having shown us the path to true happiness in the beatitudes, Jesus invites each one of us to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Mt 5:13-14). We are destined to a mission no less important or all-encompassing than this: to be salt and light. Like the flame of the Easter candle that shines in the darkness at the Easter Vigil, Jesus wants each one of us to drive out the shadows around us, so that, like Guadalupe, we can bring the joyful light of our friendship and affection to others. May we not lose this salt of the Gospel, fruit of a deep faith, so that by entrusting our future to God, we may rejoice in serving those around us.

Once in a meditation Saint Josemaría invited us to thank God specifically for this invitation to be salt and light, “because he has deigned to seek us out as a small grain of salt, a bit of light, so as to put there all of his salt, all of his light, and achieve wonders in the service of souls, in the service of the Church, throughout the whole world” (Meditation, 2 October 1964). These past few days of Guadalupe's beatification have reminded us that holiness, which is what God's love calls us to, is a real possibility for all men and women. The path to this goal is found in service to others, with the strength of the Holy Spirit who identifies us with Christ.
We ask the help of our Mother, Holy Mary, who after speaking those words, “may it be done to me according to your word,” set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to serve her cousin Elizabeth (cf. Lk 1:38-39).

Amen.

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