

"God loves each person infinitely"

The Prelate of Opus Dei concluded his five-day pastoral trip to Barcelona by visiting Terral, an educational center for young women, many of whom are immigrants.

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On July 17, in the morning, Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz visited Terral, an educational center that provides social and educational support for young women, many of whom are immigrants. A group of

the younger girls sang a song for him, and some of the high school girls told him about how they have improved in their studies and their eagerness to begin studying at the university.

The Prelate stressed the need to give thanks to God for the good they can do for others: "There are many reasons, also human ones, for caring for people; and especially from a Christian point of view, since God loves each person infinitely, and Jesus has given his life for each one." And he encouraged them to ask for Saint Josemaría's help, who in the early years of the Work dedicated many hours to caring for the most needy.

Previous days of Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz's pastoral trip to Barcelona

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On July 16, Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz prayed before the tomb of Montse Grases, recently declared venerable by Pope Francis, and greeted a number of Montse's childhood friends.

He also prayed before the tomb of José María Hernández Garnica, one of the first three priests of the Work, in the church of Santa María de Montalegre. The Prelate also greeted volunteers and directors from Braval, an urban outreach program, and a number of families who were there.

How to overcome daily difficulties

In one of his encounters with members of Opus Dei, Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz encouraged people to pray more: “We have to be convinced, because it's true, that God always hears us and nothing is ever

lost." With this in mind, he recalled these words of Saint Paul: "Joyful in hope and persistent in prayer."

Responding to a question about how to be a support for Pope Francis, the Prelate reminded everyone of the reality that prayer is always within our reach. Furthermore, he continued, Catholics have the duty to pray for the Pope, which the Pope himself always asks for explicitly.

In another gathering, a teacher described the difficulties he faces in having to juggle his family, professional and apostolic activities each day. He said that, with a number of adolescent children at home, sometimes his house feels more like a war zone than a "bright and cheerful home" (an expression that Saint Josemaria liked to use to describe the atmosphere that should pervade the homes of Christian

families). With good humor, he asked, "What am I doing wrong, Father?" The Prelate replied that it's important not to be overwhelmed by everything, to focus on the present, and to take care of order.

A constant theme throughout the conversation was concern for others. Monsignor Ocáriz highlighted the need for families who are capable of helping other families.

July 15

"God's help will never be lacking"

Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz went to pray before Our Lady of Mercy, patroness of Barcelona. He also visited the extension of a university campus in Sant Cugat del Vallès, and a support center for youth in Raval, Barcelona. In his encounters with

faithful of the Opus Dei Prelature, he encouraged them to pray for the Pope more and to live with hope and joy.

In the morning, the Prelate visited the Universitat Internacional de Catalunya, where he blessed the new installations for the university dental clinic and had a brief encounter with professors and staff at the university. He encouraged them not to lose their joy and optimism, and to be united.

He also visited Braval, a center of academic and social support for youth and families from the Raval neighborhood in Barcelona. Its directors and beneficiaries explained to him the projects and activities it carries out, mainly for immigrants. The Prelate spoke to them of the need to foster hope, “since as Saint Josemaria said, when working for God nothing is ever lost.”

In the afternoon, Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz went to pray before

Our Lady of Mercy, patroness of Barcelona. He wrote in the remembrance book some words recalling the petitions made there by Saint Josemaria, and asked our Lady to "always stay close to us, especially the Roman Pontiff."

Beginning again

In his meetings with Opus Dei members, he asked them to pray for Pope Francis "a bit more, because he has to make many difficult decisions, and he counts on our prayer." He encouraged people to respond to God's call each day with new enthusiasm, with joy and trust in the Lord, including when things don't go well.

He said that last February's General Congress should be a spur to begin again, "trusting that God's help will never be lacking." He also spoke about the centrality of Jesus Christ in the life of Christians. And he

encouraged them to see Christ in a special way in the sick, to see in them His suffering flesh and to treat them as we we would want to be treated.

One person asked how to say 'yes' each day to what God puts on our path. The Prelate stressed the importance of making a daily "act of faith in God's love for us."

A recently married pharmacist asked for advice on her new stage in life. Monsignor Ocáriz reminded her that, in a Christian marriage, the path to heaven for the husband is the wife, and vice versa. "Marriage has to be grounded on true love, wanting and seeking the good of the other person, and this means being understanding with the other person's defects."

Finally, he gave some general advice for loving others well: to pray, help, understand, ask pardon and forgive, and not to be overly sensitive. He stressed that in order to achieve this,

we need to ask Our Lord for bigger hearts, because love is the deep desire to really want the good of the other person.

July 13 and 14

The Prelate of Opus Dei arrives in Barcelona

Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz visited the Canigó, Xaloc and Pineda schools and greeted the Cardinal of Barcelona. Besides spending time with some families and visiting several sick people, he also had a large gathering with members of Opus Dei.

Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz visited the Archbishop of Barcelona, who was recently made a Cardinal by Pope Francis. He then greeted a number of families and some sick

people, whom he asked to pray for Pope Francis.

In the afternoon, he met with faithful of Opus Dei at the Xaloc School. He said that Saint Josemaria "left us as an inheritance, humanly speaking, love for freedom and good humor," and recalled Saint Josemaria's words: "to lose our good humor is something serious." He also reminded them of the importance of freedom of spirit, which means living our personal commitments out of love for Jesus Christ, and not simply the capacity to choose between different options.

Responding to a question from a university professor (now emeritus and who suffers from a painful illness), Monsignor Ocáriz asked his listeners to pray "for all the world's sick." He said that, when we find it hard to understand "the logic of the cross," we should have the conviction that "in Christ's cross God's love for

us has been manifested to the maximum degree."

Finally, Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz spent time with families, teachers and staff at the Avantis and Pineda educational centers. In Pineda he prayed at the school's new shrine, accompanied by songs by girls in the school's choir. The Prelate encouraged them to give thanks to God for all the good done through the school and for "so many women who have received the seed of sound human and Christian life, that spreads through the world like concentric waves."
