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Prelate's Pastoral Trip to Sicily: Video Highlights

From May 31st to June 3rd, Monsignor Fernando Ocariz made a pastoral visit to Sicily. In Palermo, he greeted members of Opus Dei and their friends.

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Saturday, June 2nd

On what is a national holiday in Italy (the anniversary of the Republic), the Prelate made his way to Calarossa, a

residence that offers spiritual and human formation near Terrasini, a seaside town in the northeastern part of Sicily.

In a small amphitheater, Monsignor Ocariz listened to the group of people who had come to see him and responded to their questions. He spoke about marriage and the challenges young couples face, and he invited the young people present to begin families courageously, with joy and a lot of trust in God.

In the early afternoon, fourteen families from different parts of Sicily were also able to spend time with the Prelate. Among them was Renato, a cardiologist who explained how his life changed about a year and a half ago when a major heart attack left him in a wheelchair. The Prelate offered some words of encouragement for him, his wife and their two daughters.

The third successor of Saint Josemaria underlined the need to abandon oneself in God in order to undertake daring projects: “To bring the joy of the Gospel to everyone can sometimes feel like an overwhelming task, one that exceeds our capacities. And it does: it's an undertaking that is totally beyond our reach! But it is not beyond God's reach. He can do everything. Let us have faith. Surely you remember how Saint Josemaria, when he spent a day walking through the city of London and observed those buildings towering over him, all the economic power concentrated there... he thought, ‘I can't! I can't transform this world!’ And it was then that he felt in his heart and soul Our Lord saying, ‘You can't, but I can!’ Hopefully we will have the same experience.”

Another topic addressed was the presence of digital technologies and the risks they pose for family life, in

work, and in prayer. “Each of us needs to form ourselves personally in order to discover, in each moment, what is the best way to use these technologies. It's not a matter of not using them, but simply of learning to use them well. The internet has an incredible potential and offers enormous possibilities, to stay informed, to communicate instantly with others, etc. At the same time, however, there is always that risk of exposing oneself to useless content, causing us to lose our time. There are also things that can be very damaging to the soul. So we should develop our capacity of discernment and use these means only when we really need to do so. It is important to transmit this criterion to your friends and children, and that you preach with your example. May we have self-dominion.”

At the end of the day, Monsignor Ocáriz visited Monreal cathedral, an

artistic jewel from the 12th century decorated with Byzantine mosaics. The pastor, Fr. Nicola Gaglio, offered him a tour of the church.

Friday, June 1st

When one of the first women from Palermo to join Opus Dei met Saint Josemaría, he called Sicily the "land of fire." Indeed, the island is as hot as the typical personality of its inhabitants, who have welcomed the Prelate of Opus Dei to the island with much joy, from May 31st to June 3rd.

On Friday, Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz visited the Alberghieran Mediterranean School, a school of hospitality that has been training students for the past 50 years. The directors of the school along with some of the teachers accompanied the Prelate in his visit to see a few of the installations, and he spoke with some of the students in the kitchen classroom and computer lab.

Among other ideas, the Prelate said that "when you offer solid professional and human formation, nothing is lost." Indeed, many people who have studied at the school show their gratitude with the passing of the years, as they come to realize that it has helped them not only to find work, but also in their personal lives and in their faith.

After listening to stories shared by teachers and students, the Prelate remarked, "We should never be discouraged, since Our Lord doesn't lose battles." He also shared some memories from his own youth, his early years in the Work, and the obstacles he faced in daily life. "The important thing is that it's Our Lord who is calling us. The Gospel says, 'You did not choose me, but I chose you.'"

He also recalled the figure of the founder of Opus Dei: "The first time I

met him, I saw a person who was strong, with good humor, cheerful, with a great capacity to love others; he treated each person how they needed to be treated, as mothers do, with the capacity that is born of charity and love for God."

Later on, he met with a group of Sicilians who are working so that young people there do not have to leave Sicily to find a better future, but rather have access to the resources needed to form themselves and find work: "Our Lord works through your hands; we need to advise others in the most opportune way, not to convince them, but to help them discover the truth, which is happiness. When you speak with others, ask God that He be the one to speak to their heart. We are just poor instruments."

Early in the afternoon, the Prelate visited Archbishop Corrado Lorefice

of Palermo. Afterward, he went to the Segesta University Residence to speak with a group of young Sicilians. Replying to a student who asked about how to keep our trust in God alive amid difficulties, the Prelate said: "Faith enables us to overcome all difficulties. With faith, we can move mountains, remove obstacles. Faith helps us be certain about something we can't see. It helps us understand that God not only exists, but that He loves us and wants us to be happy."

Marco, one of the students present, asked about how to respond to people who say the Church is very rich and does not help the poor. The Prelate suggested that the best way to respond is with facts, and to show those who think like this some of the initiatives that are being developed in parishes, in centers run by Caritas, or so many other initiatives carried out by Christians in every continent.

"Those society puts in the last place often have no other consolation than that offered them by a priest, a nun, or a believer who stops to talk with them."

Luigi, from Catania, asked about living a Christian engagement in a culture that places so many difficulties. "In the first place, you need to firmly believe that it is worthwhile to live your courtship in a Christian way by, for example, deciding to have a chaste relationship with your girlfriend. It's not just about 'denying ourselves' something that we would like to have but that we have to put off for later; it's about affirming love in a positive way, trusting that God wants it that way, and that He is happy because this preparation is what makes you happier."

Thursday, May 31st

Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz landed in Sicily in Punta Raisi, close to Palermo in the late afternoon. Some Sicilian families were waiting for him at the terminal, welcoming him to the island with open arms.

Upon arriving at the center of the local delegation of Opus Dei in Sicily, the Prelate greeted Leonardo Urbani, one of the first Sicilian members of Opus Dei, who is 89 years old.

Monsignor Ocáriz also spoke with several groups of people who had come to greet him. They told him about some of their apostolic efforts in Palermo to bring many people to God. The Prelate encouraged them to keep up their evangelizing efforts through their work done well and their ordinary life, "without giving much attention to our own merits but placing all our trust in God."

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