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Apostolic Nuncio's homily, Ottawa, Canada , at the commemoration of Saint Josémaria, June 22

The nuncio, Archbishop Ivan Jurkovic, highlights some of Saint Josémaria's traits and includes a few words about Father Joseph Escribano a priest of the Work who joyfully carried out his work for souls, following in Saint Josémaria's footsteps.

07/03/2024

Dear Monsignori,

Dear Fathers,

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Thank you for the invitation once again, to preside over this Eucharistic Celebration on the occasion of the Commemoration of your heavenly founder (whose actual feast is June 26).

The closeness and affection of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross to the Apostolic See is one of its outstanding characteristics and this emphasis on that relationship is the source of immense fruitfulness and efficacy on the part of 'the Work'.

It has been this way from the very beginning and was key to the

originating charisms of both your founder and those who joined with him in establishing and building up this great movement. Its spirit is thoroughly 'Petrine'. So, it is most appropriate that the Holy Father's representative can be with you this evening. I bring with me his prayerful greetings and solicitude.

This loyalty and obedience to the Holy Father was very much in evidence when making the necessary adaptations of the Statutes of *Opus Dei* in conformity with the provisions of the Motu proprio *Ad charisma tuendum* whose goal and objective was to help the members enter more deeply into the charism of 'the Work', promoting the evangelizing activity of its members throughout the world. Entering more deeply: this spirit re-echoes the instruction of Jesus to the disciples in today's Gospel, so fitting given the challenges

of proclaiming the Gospel in our time.

In keeping with that spirit, I would like to make a personal reference this evening. We are soon approaching the 'year's mind' of one of the great priests of your community, a priest who was instrumental in the establishment of *Opus Dei* in Canada. I am speaking of the late Fr. José María Escribano Esteban, affectionately known as Fr. Joe! What enormous good he carried out for souls.

When discouragement or despair was often the mood of many sectors within the Church, Fr. Joe was always willing to cast the net further and deeper to win souls for Christ and to keep them continuously close to the Lord. He had overcome serious illness in his earlier life but came through the same by the powerful intercession offered up on his behalf.

His medical training as also his ecclesiastical education, especially in the area of Canon Law, made his service and outreach invaluable. His work of spiritual direction and as a confessor was outstanding as so many could attest. Having completed the earthly portion of his priestly ministry, I believe that we can say, in a spirit of Christian hope, that he will continue his ministry to the faithful from his place in heaven (although he would want us to continue to pray for him)!

À bien des égards, il s'agit là d'une des particularités de l'*Opus Dei*: l'Œuvre, comme on l'appelle communément, refuse de s'associer aux prophètes de malheur, cherchant plutôt à se conformer, dans un esprit de confiance, à l'exhortation du Seigneur à Pierre de lancer le filet toujours plus loin. Votre fondateur était fermement convaincu que tout travail est futile

s'il n'est pas conforme à la volonté divine et fondé sur une aspiration à la sainteté personnelle. Il a toujours insisté pour que cette vision s'applique non seulement aux prêtres appelés à faire partie de la Prélature, mais aussi à tous les membres et à tous ceux qui sont susceptibles de bénéficier de leurs services.

Il convient de rappeler ici les paroles du Seigneur : « Sans moi vous ne pouvez rien faire. »(cf. *Jean 1:5*) Nos efforts demeurent stériles tant qu'ils ne sont pas soutenus par la grâce de Dieu.

Cette vérité était profondément inscrite dans l'âme et le cœur de saint Josémaria. Il a été un témoin privilégié des difficultés auxquelles l'Église se heurtait dans son pays dans l'entre-deux-guerres et auxquelles elle se heurte encore aujourd'hui un peu partout dans le

monde. Son ministère auprès des âmes débuta au beau milieu de la Guerre civile espagnole et de persécutions ouvertes contre l'Église. Ce qui aurait découragé la plupart d'entre nous ne fit que le convaincre davantage de la nécessité d'un ministère auprès des âmes, et notamment de celles exerçant un métier ou une profession au milieu du monde. Il comprenait que ces âmes pouvaient, avec la grâce de Dieu, sanctifier leur travail, se sanctifier elles-mêmes et sanctifier les autres. Concernant la sanctification du travail, l'esprit de l'Opus Dei est plein d'optimisme puisqu'il conçoit le travail comme un moyen de ramener le monde à sa bonté originelle, comme l'a voulu le Créateur : « **Dieu vit tout ce qu'il avait fait et voici, cela était très bon** » (*cf. Gen. 1:31*).

As we commemorate the feast day of your founder, we recall his example,

we are guided by his teaching and we are encouraged by his virtues. We also rejoice that we can avail of his powerful intercession. Furthermore, we also have cause for rejoicing in those members of 'the Work' who have gone before us and have been raised to the glory of the altars, beatified, declared venerable or named servants of God! This is a source of joy and inspiration and it helps to lift us up from discouragement and despair, to a trusting confidence and serenity as we carry out our various works and apostolates (*Cf. Heb. 12:1*).

As Pope St. John Paul II reminded us in his Apostolic Exhortation at the beginning of this Third Millennium:

Cette audace, cette volonté de s'engager sur un chemin de renouveau et de sainteté, et ce, sans craindre de faire les choses différemment, correspondent

parfaitement à l'attitude de saint Josémaria. En cela il est un modèle pour chacun de nous.

As we endeavour to sanctify our lives and our world through our labor, may we take inspiration from that ancient prayer often said at the beginning of assemblies and undertakings, *Actiones nostras*:

Direct, we beseech Thee, O Lord, our prayers and our actions by Thy holy inspirations and carry them on by Thy gracious assistance, so that every work of ours may always begin with Thee, and through Thee come to completion.

Amen.

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