

The Prelate of Opus Dei, in the Shrine of Covadonga

Invited by Jesús Sanz Montes, the Archbishop of Oviedo, Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz went on pilgrimage to the shrine of Covadonga to participate in the Marian Jubilee Year of the Coronation of the Virgin. He prayed before the Virgin in the Holy Cave and concelebrated Mass with Archbishop Sanz Montes and Don Adolfo Mariño, abbot of Covadonga.

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In the Holy Cave, the heart of the sanctuary, the archbishop welcomed the prelate and led the Angelus prayer. Monsignor Ocáriz thanked the archbishop for his welcoming remarks and asked for prayers for the Church and for the intentions of Pope Francis. *The Santina*, as the statue of Our Lady of Covadonga is popularly known, wore for the first time a mantle given by the families of the Cares Association of Oviedo.

About forty priests concelebrated the Eucharist, which began with a greeting of welcome from Archbishop Sanz Montes. Among the concelebrants were the abbot, the vicar general Jorge Fernández Sangrador, the regional vicar of the prelature for Spain, Ramón Herrando, several episcopal vicars,

priests of Covadonga and priests from various points of the diocese. The *Harmonía* Choir from Gijón was present for the ceremony, which concluded with the Hymn of Covadonga.

In his words of welcome the Archbishop expressed his gratitude for Opus Dei's work in his diocese. He said this work is carried out "with true availability and sincere dedication in so many areas: education, teaching, apostolate, family, professional work. All this is done in the midst of the various circumstances of everyday life, sanctifying work as an unfinished work of God that He wants to trust to our little hands."

Pray for the upcoming synod about young people

During the homily, the prelate of Opus Dei highlighted his joy at kneeling before the Santina and

encouraged those present to pray for the fruits of the upcoming synod about young people, their faith and vocational discernment, so that many young people might feel the joy of dedicating their lives to God and others.

Monsignor Ocáriz referred to the Santina as "all-powerful intercessor," "the woman of the 'yes,'" "cause of our joy," and the "believer par excellence," who had "a faith that pushes us to go out to meet others" with the joy "experienced by generous people who are attentive to the needs of others."

The prelate gave thanks for the fruits of the Jubilee Year, as "many people have come seeking forgiveness and protection and have returned with a renewed heart and a horizon of hope that fills life with joy in God, despite the difficulties."

Following in the footprints of pilgrims

Monseñor Ocáriz also said that his pilgrimage follows "in the footprints left by so many pilgrims who have come to seek consolation over the centuries." He mentioned the visits to the Santina of Saint John XXIII and Saint John Paul II, as well as those of St. Josemaría, Blessed Álvaro del Portillo and Bishop Javier Echevarría, and he referred in a special way to San Pedro Poveda, who between 1905 and 1913 remained in Covadonga, and during that time originated the ideal of the Teresian Association.

Through September 8th, Covadonga celebrates the centenary of the Coronation of the Virgin, whose statue is venerated in the Holy Cave (Santa Cueva), very close to the neo-Romanesque basilica inaugurated in 1901. Thousands of pilgrims come to

pray before the Santina with the invocation "Mother and Queen," motto of this Jubilee.

- Homily of Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz in the sanctuary of Covadonga.

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