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“Why look among the dead for someone who is alive?”

Homily of H.E. Archbishop Luis
Mariano Montemayor,
Apostolic Nuncio to Ireland, at a
Mass in honour of St Josemaría
Escrivá, 28th June 2025, in the
parish of Our Lady Queen of
Peace, Dublin.

06/30/2025

**Immaculate Heart of Mary ~
Commemoration of St Josemaría
Escrivá de Balaguer**

*28th June 2025 – Parish of Our Lady
Queen of Peace, Dublin*

What a challenge for this poor preacher! Having barely celebrated, yesterday, the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, he must direct his thoughts, today, to the Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and rise as well to the challenge of commemorating worthily the saintly life of Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer. So much at once is no task for the faint-hearted!

Let us start, nonetheless, from today's Gospel. It tells us that what we consider our deepest human relationships must always be seen in the light of our even more essential relationship with God. Yes, our beginnings bring us intimately close to our parents and forebears, but our

first origin is to be sought in God, our Creator and Father.

This allows us to grasp the full meaning of Jesus' adolescent "escapade" in the Temple. The scene recounted is the last episode we know about Jesus' younger years. At the age of twelve, it was customary for Jewish boys to make their official entry into the community and to begin their study of the Torah, the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. It seems that Jesus had already begun to familiarise himself with Scripture: *"Three days later, they found him in the Temple, sitting among the doctors, listening to them and asking them questions; and all those who heard him were astounded at his intelligence and his replies (Lk 3:46-48)."*

It is not hard to understand the anguish of Mary and Joseph. Jesus should have been safely on his way

home to Galilee, among his relatives and acquaintances, but he was nowhere to be found! What could have happened to him? Where could he be? Retracing their steps, Mary and Joseph find him at last in the Temple. For Jesus, his continued presence there was not the result of a childish whim but a carefully pondered decision. To be at home was to be in the Temple. Before being the son of Mary, Jesus was the Son of God. He expresses that awareness very directly: *“Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be busy with my Father’s affairs?”* For Jesus, this was the absolute priority, and he remained faithful to it throughout his life. Certainly, he would submit to those who had the role of parents in his human life, but he would never lose sight of the fact that he was, first and foremost, the Son of God who had come to reveal his Father to the world.

Later on, we will again see Jesus in the Temple, when he comes “*for the feast of the Passover*”, his last Passover in Jerusalem. This time, it is a messianic event that precedes his Passion. Did not the Prophets announce that, at the end of time, the Lord himself would come to his Temple (Mic 3:1) ? For three days, with his body lying in the tomb, Jesus will again be lost to his own, just as in today’s Gospel episode. The women who come to embalm his body will also experience fear and anguish at their loss, but they will also hear a voice that says “*Why look among the dead for someone who is alive?*”(Lk 24:5). These words seem to echo those of Jesus to Mary and Joseph in today’s Gospel.

Yes, the Risen Jesus is no longer in the Temple of Jerusalem, or walking again the highroads and byroads of Galilee and Judaea. He is now at the right hand of his Father. And this

brings home to us – just as it did to Mary and to the Apostles and other disciples – that Jesus and his Father are intensely and eternally One in the love they share. Jesus did not come, first and foremost, to impart a moral message, as we are sometimes inclined to think. He came primarily to tell us who his Father is and how “*extreme*” his Father’s love is for us.

At the end of the narration in today’s Gospel, we are told that “*His mother stored up all these things in her heart*”. Beyond simple remembrance, Mary ponders the events and experiences of her life with Jesus, and as she ponders them, the mystery of God is gradually revealed to her; the will of God is slowly made known to her. The Heart of Mary is here mentioned by Luke to express all the richness of the Blessed Mother’s interior life. Through her Son, she came closer to his Father and our Father in love and

obedience. She embraced the Will of the Father with the same readiness as her Son. In this, she became the model of perfect discipleship with him.

Similarly, the spiritual life of St. Josemaría, like that of every good disciple of Jesus, led him to be ever “*busy*” with his Father’s affairs and ever engaged in his Father’s “*works*”. Like Mary, he pondered continuously the mystery of God as it was revealed to him through the events and experiences of his own life with Jesus. His heart, like that of Mary, learned to love God more deeply each day and to communicate that love. In a recent letter addressed by Pope Francis to Opus Dei university students, he invites you, too, to experience and communicate that same, shared love of God to others: “*to bring to everyone the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who died and rose again, as a message of hope that fulfils*

promises, leads to glory, and, founded on love, does not disappoint.”

This Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and our commemoration of the life of St Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer invite us to have a contemplative heart, attentive and attune to the living presence of Christ “passing by” in our personal history. In this way, our faith gives us the assurance that we are not “*looking among the dead for someone who is alive*”.

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