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The Prelate with Young People at UNIV: “Jesus Christ is always at our side”

In the days leading up to the Easter Triduum in Rome, Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz met with young people from around the world to speak about faith, work, and citizenship.

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On Monday afternoon, hundreds of young women from around the world gathered in Rome for a get-

together with Monsignor Ocariz during UNIV. At the start, the Prelate invited them to give thanks “for the letter the Pope wrote to you. He wrote it for all of you. I'm sure it has led you to pray a lot for the Holy Father: for his health, that he may continue to improve, and also for his intentions and his work.”

Speaking about Holy Week, he reminded them: “It’s good that, amid the joy and all the activities of these days, you also centre your thoughts and prayer on the overwhelming mystery of the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, drawing strength from these days so that, going forward, the reality that Christ is alive may be more deeply present in your lives.”

This year, the theme of UNIV is “Citizens of our world.” The Prelate took the opportunity to encourage everyone to “pray a lot for the many

people who are suffering around the world in wars, earthquakes, tragedies that are reported in the media, and many others that are not.” He reminded them, with St. Paul, that “the whole world is ours. It truly belongs to us, and we can help in everything. When you hear news about a war, say a prayer. It’s incredibly valuable.”

What it means to sanctify work

Several young women shared personal experiences and asked for prayers or advice. Among them was Jimena, a 23-year-old from Mexico who studies Industrial Engineering and is graduating this summer. She is currently working in the operations department of an electronic components distributor: “My job is to coordinate timely shipments and communication between departments.” Lately, she and her colleagues have been feeling

unmotivated because their work is becoming repetitive and monotonous, and she feels she's not making a meaningful contribution to society. She told the Prelate, "I'm excited to better understand what it means to sanctify work, because sometimes my professional life feels like sitting at a desk answering emails."

And he responded: "Work is central to the spirit of the Work. Saint Josemaría put it very clearly: 'Add a supernatural motive to your ordinary work and you will have sanctified it' (*The Way*, no. 359). We might think that this is really simple: 'I'll go to work, tell God that I'm offering it to Him, and that's it.' It's good to do that, but it isn't enough. The supernatural motive of our work isn't something added on, but rather the thing that moves us, that provides meaning, that is the deepest reason for our work. That motive is

love for God and service to others. And with it, monotony disappears. We can always make what we do new again. (...) Love is not repetitive. Love doesn't get tired, even if it often involves effort and sacrifice. Keep going!"

Loving Jesus in the Eucharist

On Wednesday 16 April, the Prelate had another gathering, this time with around 1,500 young men from around the world. Over the course of the conversation young men from Korea, Iraq, the Americas, and Europe asked a variety of questions.

In response to a question about discerning God's will, the Prelate said that when we ask something of God and don't receive it, it may be because we are not asking well, or because we need to keep asking patiently, "or because God is preparing something for us that we cannot yet imagine."

Msgr. Ocariz also encouraged the young people to go deeper into the mystery and great gift of the Eucharist during Holy Week: “Christian life is not only about following a set of ideas or rules of conduct, or holding certain convictions. It includes that, yes, but above all it’s about Someone: Jesus Christ, alive, who is waiting for us in the Tabernacle, in Holy Communion, and who is always at our side from heaven.” And he added: “Our life finds its balance when we put the Eucharist at the centre.”

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