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Prelate's Pastoral Visit to Cordoba, Spain

Invited by Bishop José Asenjo, he joined the bishop in blessing a relic of Saint Josemaría in a parish church and gave a conference to priests of the diocese. With gallery of photos from the visit.

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Some photos from the Prelate's visit to Cordoba (click here)

Invited by Bishop José Asenjo, Cordoba's Apostolic Administrator, the Prelate of Opus Dei, Bishop Javier Echevarría, will make a pastoral visit to the diocese on November 20-21. Bishop Echevarría will take part in several public acts with Bishop Asenjo.

On November 20, there will a meeting with priests of the diocese as part of the Year for Priests declared by Pope Benedict XVI. After this meeting, the Prelate will give a lecture at the episcopal palace on "Being saints in order to sanctify others."

Following these acts, both bishops will proceed to the parish church of San Nicolas de la Villa, where there will be a simple ceremony to bless a small altarpiece with a relic of St. Josemaría, the founder of Opus Dei, who visited this church during the first of his five visits to Cordoba.

Cordoba was the first city in Andalucía that St. Josemaría visited, arriving there on April 19, 1938. Later he would make four more pastoral visits, always moved by the desire to give impetus to the apostolic work of Opus Dei in union with the bishop of the city.

In his life of St. Josemaría, Andres Vazques de Prada (vol. II, p. 212) gives a picturesque account of that first visit to Cordoba:

The trip began on April 17 and took quite a while, because of the war. Soon after his arrival in Cordoba, he sent to his sons in Burgos a letter with entertaining descriptions of the places and people he had encountered along the way:

"I went to the hotel. What saluters the people of Cordoba are! Everyone gives the military salute, or tips their big sombrero to this priest they don't even know!.

"In the hotel they gave me room number 9—the number I'm so enamored of. (That theology of mathematics!) In Leon they did even better; they gave me room 309. And I thought: 3, my Father God; and 0, myself, a sinner (

mea culpa!); and 9, my sons. How good Jesus is, to bring us to himself with something so little!" Bishop Asenjo invited the Prelate to bless the relic, which, beginning today, will be available for the veneration of the faithful at the parish of San Nicolas de la Villa.

The reliquary holding the *ex-ossibus* relic is part of a simple altarpiece made in the Carrerra workshop. It comprises the reliquary, a piece of finely worked silver from the well known eighteenth century Cordoban silversmith, Damian de Castro; a painting of St. Josemaría in prayer by the painter, Ignacio Valdes; a plaque

which explains the saint's relationship to the city of Cordoba, and a silver medallion with the words, "St. Josemaría, pray for us."

The Prelate's pastoral visit to Cordoba will conclude with a meeting with families on the morning of Saturday, November 21, in the Ahlzahir school.

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