

# **Prelate's Pastoral Visit to Slovenia and Croatia**

From 2-6 June, Bishop Javier Echevarría was in Slovenia and Croatia for a brief pastoral visit. He met with faithful of the Prelature and friends and encouraged them in their apostolic efforts.

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## **Croatia (3-6 June)**

During his stay in Croatia, the Prelate often spoke about Saint's Josemaria's

great affection for this country, which he was well informed about thanks to several Croatian faithful of Opus Dei, including Vladimer Vince and Luka Brajnovic.

Bishop Echevarría recalled that, when in the middle of the twentieth century the political situation in Croatia didn't permit the recognition of basic human rights, the Founder of Opus Dei had assured people with a lot of faith that in the not too distant future the Christian message would once again be spread in these lands.

The Prelate had a chance to visit with Cardinal Josip Bozanić of Zagreb, and stopped in the Cathedral to pray before the mortal remains of Blessed Aloizije Stepinac, well-known for his efforts to defend human and civil rights in Croatia.

He spent most of his time meeting with faithful of the Prelature in Zagreb and many other people who

take part in the formative activities of Opus Dei. He spoke a lot about the Year of Mercy and invited people to have recourse to Saint Josemaria to learn how to be merciful: “as he himself said, he didn’t need to learn how to forgive, since our Lord had taught him how to love.”

He had a chance to speak with a group of families who are starting several primary schools, and also with people who are organizing courses of family orientation to assist married couples in Croatia.

The Prelate also met with a group of priests who are members of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross and some of their friends.

## **Slovenia (2-3 June)**

Bishop Javier Echevarría arrived in Ljubljana on Thursday, June 2. This was his third visit to the city, after a brief stay in 2004 and 2011. In

Ljubljana, he had several get-togethers with faithful of the Prelature and cooperators, as well as with young people taking part in the activities of Christian formation. Opus Dei began its stable apostolic work in Slovenia in 2003.

The Prelate encouraged everyone to live their faith integrally and, echoing Pope Francis, to strive to help so many people who are waiting for someone to speak to them about God: “God wants to make use of you to help many other people come to know Him. Don’t tell Him no!”

On Friday afternoon he visited the Archbishop of Ljubljana, Stanislav Zore, who thanked him for the apostolic work Opus Dei is carrying out in Slovenia, and also met with the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Juliusz Janusz. He also had a chance to stop in the Ljubljana Cathedral to

pray for a few moments and to pass through the holy door.

In the afternoon, he had two get-togethers with families. The Prelate stressed the vocation of all the baptized to holiness, which for most people means striving for sanctity in the middle of the world, in their work, their family setting, and their daily obligations.

On Saturday he visited the *Polzela Conference Center*, an ancient Dominican monastery that was built in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It is currently undergoing remodeling to make it suitable for the activities of spiritual formation organized by the Prelature of Opus Dei.

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