

# In Montreal

A summary of the days spent in Montreal with Monsignor Ocáriz during his pastoral visit to Canada.

09/16/2019

## Monday, August 19

On his final day in Montreal, the Prelate had several meetings with members of the Prelature where he commented that young families are a great source of hope for the Church. After a song was performed at one of these get-togethers, he recalled how

St. Josemaria would sometimes pray using the lyrics from love songs.

In the evening, he gave his blessing to the members of Opus Dei who were staying with him these days, before heading to Montreal's airport to fly to Madrid. After almost two months in North America, the Prelate bid a final farewell, ending an intense but fruitful pastoral trip.

## **Sunday, August 18**

Some 60 enthusiastic teenage girls and young adults from Montreal, Quebec and Ottawa arrived at the Manoir de Beaujeu for a meeting with the Prelate of Opus Dei. They left a couple of hours later with two main ideas: to make Jesus Christ better known and to discover their role as Christians.

From coast to coast, Mons. Ocariz has insisted that friendship is the key to sharing the love of God with others.

It takes time to develop a true friendship, to know and love each other, even if we don't share all of the same ideas and values. Mutual affection is still possible, along with the possibility of expressing one's thoughts and feelings regarding the faith.

In order to walk upstream like the first Christians did and to find the courage to live like Christ, one must draw strength from Jesus in the Eucharist, and pray to God our Father with childlike trust. Mons. Ocáriz also stressed the importance of discernment, since everyone's greatest happiness lies in doing God's will.

The Prelate received a sweater from a group of campers, while five Ottawa girls gave him a *Tim Hortons* coffee mug, as a reminder to pray for them every morning!

**Saturday, August 17**

The gentle smile and the joy of Mons. Ocáriz, who came to meet some 200 women of Opus Dei and their friends, quickly chased away the clouds that covered the skies of Montreal.

He began by encouraging those present to welcome God into their lives, to spread the message and the joy of the Gospel "from sea to sea," respecting the freedom of each person, according to the spirit of Opus Dei. He reminded the audience that people need joy and are attracted by the generosity and joy of their Christian friends.

The Prelate recalled that this ocean of apostolic efficacy presupposes a soul - a life - given to God, nourished by His grace, who collaborates with Christ, counting on Him and giving Him everything: thoughts, desires, work.

In his answers, the Prelate provided many examples of how to

accompany others by widening one's heart: in conversation with people who have different ideas, the main objective is to cultivate friendship and to express our point of view, while making clear that our disagreements do not separate us; in the face of suffering caused by infertility in a couple, never forget that God loves the couple and asks them to dedicate themselves to helping others, transforming this cross into life; as for grandparents, they have an important role to play in the lives of their grandchildren - to be present in their lives, to give them advice, to be interested in their activities and their problems, and to be a bridge with their parents, facilitating trust.

According to Mons. Ocáriz, the key is to remain united to Christ and to identify oneself with Him, in order to build the Church through our ordinary life, seeking to sanctify our

work and to aim for sanctity wherever we live. After asking everyone to pray for the Holy Father, the Prelate was thanked by a family quartet who played a good Quebec reel (spoons included!): a potpourri of music by Gilles Vigneault. The Negro Spiritual "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands" had preceded the performance.

The Father concluded by inviting the participants to realize the importance of fraternal charity, unity, service, joy and understanding, since this is the content of the New Commandment.

At 3:15 p.m. Mons. Fernando Ocáriz had a get-together with more than a hundred and twenty men at the theatre L'Entrepôt, in Montreal. He started with a consideration about the motto of Canada "A mari usque ad mare" and asked everyone to pray for the Pope and for the Church,

reminding them that Pope Francis always asks people meeting him to pray for him.

The get-together started with an ice-breaking intervention, literally. François, dressed as a hockey player, introduced the Father to one of the most popular sports in Canada, and wished the Father could score many goals at the get together. The Father gave a hug to François and reminded all present that the sporting spirit that St Josemaria recommended for one's spiritual life consists of an ongoing conversion, starting again and again as needed.

## **Friday, August 16**

Mons. Ocáriz had several work meetings with Mons. Fred Dolan, the Vicar for Opus Dei in Canada, and the people who assist him in the governance of Opus Dei in the country.

In the afternoon, he preached a meditation and had get-togethers with members of Opus Dei involved in activities provided by the Prelature in Ottawa, Montreal and Quebec City. After hearing about the apostolates in all three cities, he discussed how being happy is a consequence of Christian life, the result of true freedom oriented towards love. Later on, in the evening, the Father received several families from Montreal and surrounding areas.

## **Thursday, August 15**

The Prelate arrived in Montreal on August 15, the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady. The plane landed at about 5:00 pm. Some families from the Montreal area were there to greet him upon his arrival, including Chairmaine, Matthew with their children, and Alexandre and Michelle with five of

their children. They greeted him with flowers and banners saying "Bienvenue à Montréal (Welcome to Montreal)", and "Padre, joyeux anniversaire" and balloons with the number 48, referring to the 48th anniversary of Mons. Ocáriz's priestly ordination. They brought a garland with Canadian motifs.

The Prelate then went by car to the Manoir de Beaujeu, where he will be staying over the next few days. The Manoir is a conference centre that offers retreats, courses, workshops and seminars on the Catholic faith. Mons. Ocariz will be based at the Manoir and meet members and cooperators of Opus Dei and their friends in Montreal, Ottawa and Quebec City.

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