

opusdei.org

"Holiness Through Work": A Book With Reflections By The Prelate

Edited by Maria Aparecida Ferrari, it includes a discussion between Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz and scholars regarding St. Josemaría's teachings on work.

06/01/2020

Holiness through Work. A Dialogue with Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz about the Teachings of Saint

Josemaría offers reflections on the sanctification of work. It includes:

- The transcript of a discussion between university professors and Monsignor Ocáriz
- An introduction by Maria Ferrari, Professor of Applied Ethics at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross
- A brief "Historical and Theological Note" by Rev. Professor Javier López Díaz
- A bibliography with texts on the Christian vision of work and the sanctification of professional activity

This book is fruit of an international congress entitled "The Heart of Work. The Future of Work and its Meaning: New Christian Perspectives 500 Years after the Reformation" that took place in Rome in October 2017. The volume has also been published in

Italian, French, Portuguese and Spanish.

The discussion with Monsignor Ocáriz makes reference to a video, "The Heart of Work: Saint Josemaria's Vision" that presents the idea of sanctifying one's work and includes clips of St. Josemaría preaching on the topic in 1974.

What follows is an extract from the book corresponding to the commentary Mons. Fernando Ocáriz made on the video:

OCÁRIZ: "The sanctification of work can be explained in different ways. In one point of *The Way*, St. Josemaría wrote: 'Add a supernatural motive to your ordinary work and you will have sanctified it.' (no. 359).

This does not mean simply adding an external ornament of devotion to one's work. It is the very purpose of work: the why and the wherefore that determine the way we carry it out.

"What, then, is the 'supernatural motive' on which the sanctification of work depends? It can be none other than the love of God and, as an inseparable part of this love, service to others. Sanctifying work is this: doing it for love of God and to serve others, and this requires doing it well, with professionalism, a term that St. Josemaría often uses. We need to work well – we heard this in the video – because "God will not accept shoddy workmanship."

(Friends of God, 55) We cannot offer him things that are consciously done badly, that is, without taking care of the details, without seeking the perfection of what one is doing. [...] Work is "born of love; it is a

manifestation of love and is directed toward love." (*Christ Is Passing By*, 48). This is the foundation upon which work is made into –it can be made into– something truly holy and sanctifying."

QUESTION: "Would it be fair to point out, according to the teaching of St. Josemaría, that God watches us as a spectator while we work?"

OCÁRIZ: "God, a spectator? If the idea of a spectator is understood in an extrinsic way, I think that God is much more than a spectator. In the deepest sense, He is always a protagonist, the main actor, even when we don't know it or don't want to know it, since, in everything, we depend on Him, who sustains us in being. Moreover, if we speak of the sanctification of work, God's presence is not only that of someone who is outside, to whom we offer

what we do. God is with us and within us. We work with Christ and in Christ. St. Paul says, "If we live, we live for the Lord; if we die, we die for the Lord; whether we live or die, we are the Lord's" (Rom 14:8). So our relationship with God is never like the one we could have with someone who simply observes us. But if we do not consider the figure of the spectator as someone who observes from outside, but understanding it in the way in which, in the Blessed Trinity, the Father looks at the Son and at those who are "sons in the Son" (Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 22), then it is legitimate to speak in those terms."

book-reflections-fernando-ocariz-
university-professors/ (07/12/2025)