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“Spend time with Christ, and your life will be changed completely”

At a gathering this past Sunday outside San Francisco, Bishop Javier Echevarría urged 1800 members and friends of Opus Dei to “get to know Christ” better.

09/27/2006

“God wants to dwell within us,” he said. “God wants to be with us. Don’t close the doors of your heart to Him.”

The event took place on September 24 at the Marin Center Veterans' Memorial Auditorium outside San Francisco. It was part of a pastoral visit the Prelate of Opus Dei has been on for the past two weeks, during which he has already been to New York, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver.

The Prelate began with brief remarks, including various practical suggestions for spiritual growth, such as listening to readings of the Gospel on a tape or CD in the car, if you feel like you don't have time for reading. After his opening remarks, he responded to questions from various people in attendance.

Bishop Echevarría is the second successor to St. Josemaría Escrivá, who founded Opus Dei in 1928. At the gathering, he described how much St. Josemaría loved the U.S. and how carefully he followed the

development of Opus Dei's apostolates here. "He was in a hurry to reach this land, which he loved very much," said Echevarría.

Commenting on the Gospel reading of the day's liturgy, in which Jesus chided his disciples for being concerned about which of them was the greatest, Echevarría urged those assembled to be concerned about God and others rather than self. "Our Lord approaches the apostles and he confronts them with the fact that pride and self-satisfaction lead nowhere. Don't think about yourselves in order to get ahead and treat others badly. Think about yourselves —and I will too— in order to have a conversion, so that you come closer to God and to others."

"God wants to embrace us, God wants to be with us. What most distances a man or woman from God is pride," he said. "We must keep on

ridding ourselves of our own egos so that we can become better friends of God and, in consequence, better friends of others.”

The Prelate of Opus Dei also talked about the Pope at length, praising his “brilliant mind” and his “desire to carry out God’s will.” Recalling how Pope Benedict had repeatedly asked for prayers at the time of his inauguration, Echevarría urged the faithful to follow through and pray for him every day. “Let him be able to count on our help, on our prayer.”

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