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Filipino Bishops celebrate "the Saint of the Ordinary"

Here are excerpts from recent homilies of Filipino bishops on Saint Josemaría's message of holiness in daily work and ordinary life.

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On October 6, 2002, Pope John Paul II canonized Josemaría Escrivá in St. Peter's Square. In the Decree of Canonization read during the

ceremony, the Pope called him "the Saint of the Ordinary."

The Decree further reads: "Indeed, his life and message have taught countless Christian faithful, particularly laypeople, engaged in the most varied professions, to transform their ordinary work into prayer, service of others, and a path towards holiness."

Each year, on June 26, devotees throughout the country organize Masses in different churches and chapels to celebrate the feast of Saint Josemaría Escrivá. Some 200 Masses were organized this year. Masses were organized for the first time this year in Basco (Batanes), Infanta (Quezon), and Tacurong (Sultan Kudarat).

<https://opusdei.org/en-ph/article/june-26-masses-in-the-philippines/>

18 bishops celebrated in their respective dioceses. In their homilies, they explained to the faithful present and on livestream Saint Josemaría's message that holiness can be found in work and ordinary life. Excerpts from some of their homilies are presented here.

Most Rev. David William V. Antonio, Bishop of Ilagan

Our Lady of the Visitation Seminary Chapel, Cauayan City (Isabela)

St. Josemaría Escrivá's conviction is that holiness can be realized when we allow Jesus to be part of our everyday lives, that every activity no matter how simple and ordinary, can be a means of sanctification, that everyone can become a saint...

As missionary disciples, we need to follow Jesus' command – duc in altum (go out into the deep) – even when at times we do not meet success. We

need to continue lowering down the nets in order to bring people closer to Christ, to bring our families closer to Jesus; and to create occasions and moments where people can encounter Jesus. We need to remember that mission is primarily the work of God. It is the work of Jesus and we are simply collaborators.

**Most Rev. Jose Palma, Archbishop
of Cebu**

Cebu Metropolitan Cathedral

St. Josemaría's whole life was imbued with that awareness and conviction that because we are children of God, then we are all called to holiness.

**Most Rev. Florentino G. Lavarias,
Archbishop of Pampanga**

Archbishop's private chapel, San
Fernando (Pampanga)

The parents of Josemaría, Dolores and Jose, gave him and his siblings a deep Christian education. That means that Josemaría witnessed not only God's love but the response of his parents to God's love. Day in and day out, he was able to recognize God's love and their response to God's love, and this would have a great impact on his own life.

In one of his writings, Friends of God, he said that the sanctification of ordinary work is as it were the hinge of true spirituality of people who like us have decided to come close to God while being at the same time fully involved in the temporal affairs. And what he noted, what he believed, is also something that the Church teaches.

**Most Rev. John F. Du, Archbishop
of Palo**

St. Josemaría Mission Chapel,
Tacloban City (Leyte)

Your opening prayer is beautiful: “O God, who raised up your priest Saint Josemaría in the Church to proclaim the universal call to holiness” – the call to holiness. We are all called to be holy.

“Grant that by his intercession and example we may, through our daily work, be formed in the likeness of Jesus.” Ang ating trabaho should be the work of Jesus, and we have to be always formed in that way: to serve the work of Redemption, with a burning love of Jesus...

Let us always put into our lives what our patron Josemaría Escrivá is teaching us – we are all called to be holy; hindi lang kami mga pari at obispo. Lahat may magawang holy.

**Most Rev. Jose Araneta Cabantan,
Archbishop of Cagayan de Oro**

St. Augustine Metropolitan Cathedral
(Cagayan de Oro City)

We do not need to look for greater things to do to be holy. Let us do simple acts with great love in whatever profession we have or do.

St. Josemaría Escrivá emphasized the universal call to holiness, which is not exclusive to priests and religious... Holiness is living a life totally dedicated to God every day of our lives.

**Most Rev. Romulo Valles,
Archbishop of Davao**

Archbishop's Palace (Davao City)

Through our daily work, may we be formed into the likeness of Jesus. That is the charisma, the gift that Saint Josemaría offered to the men and women of his day, and continuing today. Your sanctification is in the way you do your daily work...

Are you a tricycle driver? Are you a teacher? Are you a businessman? Are you a mother washing the clothes for your children? Are you a carpenter? Are you an engineer? Are you a peace officer? Are you a police officer? Are you a politician? Your daily work is your way of sanctification.

**Most Rev. Victor Ocampo, Bishop
of the Diocese of Gumaca**

Pastoral Center of Gumaca (Quezon)

Alalahanin natin si Saint Josemaría Escrivá, isang pari at Fundador ng Opus Dei, at naging impluwensya sa maraming tao na para sa tanging

layunin na maging banal at lumahok sa gawain ni Kristo...

He is known as “the Saint of the Ordinary” because he challenged everyone to walk the path of holiness. That is a very encouraging title for many people. There are a lot of ordinary people. They are not known to many. They do not have power. They are not sought by people to do great things. St. Josemaría tells these ordinary people that there is a way for them to become a saint.

Most. Rev. Paciano Aniceto, Bishop-Emeritus of San Fernando

Mother of Good Counsel Seminary,
San Fernando (Pampanga)

Today we look at San Josemaría Escrivá who reached the summit of holiness in an ordinary manner but

performing God's will in an extraordinary way. He is the patron of the sanctification of our daily, monotonous, repeated, [and] humdrum activities in our lives – work, in the fields, in the factory, in the office, in the school, in transportation and even in the common household chores.

Our Lord showed us the dignity and nobility of work. He learned carpentry from Saint Joseph, and he offered this work to his Father in a quiet, obscure and private hidden life in Nazareth... And he also showed us the deep meaning, the redemptive meaning of work when he said: I and my Father continue to work.

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