

Divine paths of the earth

Father Roy Cimagala comments on this expression coined by St. Josemaria Escriva. It refers to the fact that all human and world affairs, if seen and handled with faith, can truly become pathways to God.

11/01/2012

That's an expression coined by St. Josemaria Escriva, the Opus Dei founder whose 10th anniversary of his canonization was celebrated recently. It refers to the fact that all

human and world affairs, if seen and handled with faith, can truly become pathways to God.

St. Josemaria was not just indulging in cheap rhetoric when he said and wrote it. He was convinced God, our Creator and Father, is very much in the middle of our very existence in all its aspects-personal, social, economic, political, material, spiritual, etc.-and is just waiting for us to deal with him. As corollaries to this, St. Josemaria taught that God is in the little things of the day-our work, our duties and chores-and in the most material and mundane things. He liked materializing what was spiritual and told everyone that unless one finds God in the little things, he most likely would not find God in the big things.

Another similar expression he used a lot was "passionately loving the world," precisely the title of one of

his famous homilies. It shows how he so discerns God's presence in the things of the world that loving God is loving the world also, and vice versa.

His faith was such that he was constantly aware of God's continuing providence-his governance over the world and the whole of creation-and he was also continually finding out what role he had to play in that ever unfolding providence. He always wanted to be in synch with God.

That's simply because as image and likeness of God and, in fact, children of his, we are treated the way God treats himself. As someone said, for us the sky is not the limit. It's God. God is the limit for us.

St. Josemaria lived presence of God all the time and was forever trying to conform his will to the will of God, no matter what it cost. And so he was no stranger to great sufferings-misunderstandings, persecutions not

only by "bad" people but even by the "good" ones, and all kinds of privations.

He considered all these as part of the territory, an unavoidable feature in the life of someone bent in following Christ whose life was filled with suffering all the way to the cross. He never wavered in his charity in all these trials.

And so he coined another expression, "at God's pace," which served as some kind of motto of his. He used it to encourage others to be more mindful of God's constant invitation to live and work with him. He referred to such invitation and joint venture as a kind of adventure, full of great and marvelous expectations, albeit with trials. Truth is our life is always a life with God, whether we are aware of it or not, whether we cooperate with him or not. Our relationship with him is first of all

that of the Creator and his creature, and as such, he is the support of our very existence. Without him, we simply would cease to exist, we simply would revert to nothing. It's a truth that we need to know and understand as soon as we can, capturing its endless implications, both theoretical and practical. It's something that is supposed to shape our life, inspire our thoughts and desires, leaven our acts.

Being aware of this truth, and more, making it a guiding conviction of our life, will surely give us a full picture of what our life here on earth is all about, removing us from a narrow, if not erroneous view of life. It will give us the basis to be invincibly confident in spite of the dizzying and sometimes ugly twists and turns of life. Being aware of it will certainly show us we are meant to love the way God is love. And that's because our relationship with God is not just

that of a cold Creator-and-creature thing. It is supposed to be always warmed up by love.

Our relationship with God is that of a father and a son, the father loving the son no end, all the way to an endless promise of forgiveness, while the son, being completely free, can choose to love the father in return or not.

It's indeed very important that we learn to see God in everything. In short, it is to make ourselves real contemplatives in the middle of the world so that we see that our ordinary affairs are actually divine paths of the earth.

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(07/17/2025)