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Video Highlights of the Prelate in Argentina

Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz has concluded his pastoral visit to Argentina. We offer a video summary and an article describing the trip.

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August 8

On his final day in Argentina, the Prelate said good bye to Our Lady at the Sanctuary of Luján, just as Saint Josemaria did in 1974.

Before entering the basilica, he stopped to greet a group of women who look after the Marangatú Center, an initiative begun by members of Opus Dei together with cooperators that seeks to foster the integral development of women and the family. The women showed him a collage of photos from the various projects they are carrying out. Monsignor Ocáriz wrote a brief dedication on it: "Always faithful, always joyful."

The Prelate also greeted the board of the Marzano Foundation, an institution that, since 1974, promotes rural development and social inclusion through nine schools in the provinces of Mendoza, Santa Fe and

Buenos Aires. Monsignor Ocariz congratulated them on a new project that was recently launched in Luján: the Aromos Training Center. He also encouraged them to keep going in the face of challenges; he assured them that they were doing important work and advised them to work together very closely. When offered a picture showing the chronology of the Rural Training Centers, the Prelate wrote these words: "With my most affectionate blessing for all those who carry out this magnificent work in the Rural Training Centers."

Inside the Basilica of Our Lady of Luján, the Prelate prayed silently for a few minutes. He also prayed the *Salve Regina* before the famed statue of Our Lady of Luján, which has been in Argentina since 1630. Later on, he paid a visit to one of the lateral chapels where an image of Saint Josemaria was placed in 2009. The image includes a quote from the

Founder of Opus Dei, spoken on 26 June 1974 during his visit to Argentina: “I long to stay with you all. And when I leave, I will remain at the feet of Our Lady of Luján: that's where I'm leaving my heart. My children: thank you. I give thanks to God, to you and to Our Lady of Luján. Because I came here and because I am leaving, but I will come back; and what's more, I will stay here.”

In the Basilica's visitor book, the Prelate wrote the following words: “With the joy of having prayed in this sanctuary of Our Lady of Luján, following in the footsteps of Saint Josemaria, I place my intentions before Mary's intercession, praying for the whole nation of Argentina.” Fr. Lucas, the priest at the basilica, offered him several prayer cards of Our Lady of Luján with pieces of a shawl that was once placed around her image.

In the afternoon, the Prelate went to the Ezeiza airport to head to Bolivia, where he will continue his pastoral trip in Latin America.

August 7

Today, Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz visited the Pilar Campus of Universidad Austral (Austral University), of which he is the honorary Rector. Just a few meters away from the entrance of the university, the Prelate was affectionately greeted by families, teachers and students from the nearby Los Candiles and Los Caminos schools and the Cauquén kindergarden.

The Prelate visited the Austral Hospital, and then the Graduate School and the Business School, where he spoke with representatives

from all the academic departments of the University.

During the encounter, the Prelate was introduced to a student from the Faculty of Communication who went deeper in her faith while at the University. On behalf of the Health Sciences faculty, Dr. Ernesto Beruti, head of Obstetrics at Austral's Hospital, offered the Prelate a synthesis of the contribution made by the University in the recent abortion debates. Carolina Dams, the first doctoral student at IAE Business School, spoke about the happiness that comes from working each day for love and to give glory to God.

Monsignor Ocariz highlighted the good work being done by the University: "The concept of a university implies a unity, not a group of independent elements. It is a universality of fields of learning, professors and students forming a

unity. The interdisciplinary character of the faculties, hospital and business school make up a whole, as does the unity among all of you, at all levels. I have seen this here, and this unity and interdisciplinary work gives me a lot of joy. Strive to achieve this, because it is an essential condition to be effective and make progress; help each other, share things, and strive to support one another so that nobody feels isolated."

He also highlighted the importance of having a spirit of overcoming obstacles, "not for one's personal affirmation, but in order to serve the others better."

Afterward, the Prelate of Opus Dei received a diploma as the Honorary Rector of the University, a title that was given to him by the Superior Council in March 2017.

During the visit, Monsignor Ocariz also greeted a number of families,

including Enrique and Lili who were waiting for him in front of the hospital chaplaincy, with their eight-year-old twins. Enrique, a professor of Economics at the University of San Andrés, suffers from an advanced form of cancer. He wanted to thank the Prelate for his closeness and offer him a book containing all the academic papers he has published since 2005. Enrique remarked that Saint Josemaría had insisted on putting the last stones in one's professional work and that, for an academic, to publish articles is to put the last stone.

In the Neonatology unit, the Prelate spoke with Caroline and Juan, parents of a new-born baby, Clementina, who suffers from a severe genetic syndrome. Also Analía, the mother of twins who were born before the 30th week of gestation and are recovering in the hospital, had the opportunity to talk

with the Prelate and share her experience.

Throughout the day, the Prelate greeted students, teachers, professors, and administrative staff who came by to show him photos of their families, give him letters and gifts, or just to ask for prayers.

Upon leaving the campus, after an emblematic photo in front of IAE's main building, the Prelate crossed the Austral Park and greeted people from the Arboleda center, located close-by.

With the sunset as the backdrop, about twenty families from Buenos Aires had the opportunity to spend time with the Prelate in La Chacra, taking home with them joyful words of advice.

August 6

In the morning, Monsignor Ocariz visited Cardinal Poli before making his way to Barracas, where he greeted the school communities connected to Cross of the South and Good Counsel schools.

Boys from Cross of the South school received the Prelate singing a song called "*Siempre alegres*" ("Always joyful"), a song that has a Salesian origin. At the end of the song, the Father asked for the lyrics to be able to read them later in the car on the way to their next encounter. The refrain of the song says, "We seek a holiness that consists in always being happy," and another verse says, "A saint who is sad is a sad saint; our sanctity is to serve God with joy."

Martin, one of the boys at the school, presented the Prelate with drawings done by his classmates during "Saint Josemaría Week." These drawings

had been on display in one of the principal hallways of the school. On behalf of the whole school, he also gave the Prelate a chess set, a favorite pastime among the students.

These schools carry out an educational project open to students from all social levels, in constant contact with the families. Good Counsel school recently celebrated its 100th anniversary, and Pope Francis sent a letter of congratulations via the school chaplain, Father Pedro Velasco Suárez. Years ago, the then-cardinal Bergoglio blessed an image of Our Lady in the school, and the girls presented that image to the Prelate today. Afterward, Monsignor Ocáriz gave them a relic of Saint Josemaría to have in their chapel.

"I asked him for a piece of advice for all the teachers at the school," said Sofia, one of the teachers, following the get-together, "and he told me to

never forget to enkindle Christ's love in the heart of each student." The gathering also included songs, violins, flutes, guitars, greetings, a bouquet of flowers for Our Lady and questions posed to the Prelate by the students.

In the afternoon, the Prelate paid a visit to the nunciature for a cordial visit with Monsignor Léon Kalenga Badikebele, who arrived in the country last June.

Finally, Monsignor Ocariz presided over the concelebration of the Eucharist for the Feast of the Transfiguration, at Saint Benedict Parish in Buenos Aires. In the homily, he reflected on the importance of the centrality of Jesus Christ, both in the history of humanity and in the life-story of each person: "God's entire plan prior to Christ is fulfilled in Christ. All of history converges in

Jesus, and acquires its meaning in Jesus."

Recalling the words of Saint Paul, "for me, to live is Christ," the Prelate said that "our life acquires its true meaning in Jesus Christ." And he reminded everyone of the three steps in the spiritual life that Saint Josemaria often pointed out: "May you seek Christ; may you find Christ; may you love Christ."

In order to put Christ truly at the center, he invited everyone "to seek Him in ordinary life: in your work, in your family, in your rest." And he urged them to listen to Him in a way that transforms their life, nourished by the Gospel and the sacraments, especially the Eucharist.

Following Pope Francis' lead, the Prelate considered how we need faith "to see the others as they are, as loved by God. We need to see others as our Lord sees them." And he

underlined how "apostolic strength is born from our union with Christ."

He concluded with an appeal to evangelize the family: "How important it is to help families! Christian families are and should be the domestic Church, where faith grows and where seeking Jesus, dialoguing with Him, and learning to love Him also grows."

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August 5

For the Prelate, Sunday was a day filled with young people. He began mid-morning by paying a visit to the Buen Ayre School, where hundreds of girls from different provinces in Argentina and other countries surprised him with a song composed especially for him. He in turn encouraged them to transmit the joy of knowing Jesus Christ and, as he

has been doing these past few days, he also asked for prayers for the Church and for Pope Francis. One of the girls described the joy they felt for the school's 50th anniversary. Monsignor Ocariz praised the work that both teachers and families are doing there.

Another student, Valentina, asked about dealing with the challenge of building bridges and giving witness to charity when the environment does not seem favorable to it.

Monsignor Ocariz recommended giving witness with serenity and learning to love others; he recalled some words of Saint Josemaría, who used to say: "I have not needed to learn to forgive, because the Lord has taught me to love."

Thanks to questions posed by Anita, Cata, Mirna, April and Maria, the Prelate spoke about sanctifying

work, dating, solidarity and using one's free time well.

It was particularly moving for everyone when Caro, a non-believer, confided to the Prelate that she has always felt loved and that her freedom is respected at the CECU residence (Ciudad de La Plata), where she has lived for the past five years. She then asked him what she could do to help the people of the Work. The Prelate replied, "Even if you do not know it or believe it, God loves you very much, and it is He who gives you the strength to have the desire to help others."

Another one of those present asked, "Father, what would you advise those of us who are hyperactive and who, when it comes to stopping to pray and to listen to what Jesus wants to tell us, tend to maintain such high velocity that we don't even let Him talk?" The Prelate suggested that she

"look at Jesus in the tabernacle. To look at Him with a gaze of faith, to know that He is there for you. You should dedicate a part of your time in prayer to saying nothing at all, but to listening, looking."

Later on, Monsignor Ocariz greeted a group of Venezuelans with a lot of affection. They expressed their pain and concern for the situation in their country, and he spoke to them about the need for forgiveness.

In the afternoon, the organizers of a variety of initiatives for accompanying and supporting the family met and spoke with the Prelate, who in turn encouraged them to keep on going in their important mission.

Later in the day, he met with another large group of young people. The get-together started with the rhythm of guitars and clapping. Monsignor Ocariz referred to the next Synod of

Bishops on young people and vocational discernment. He said: "We all have a vocation, in the sense that all of us receive a call from God. He has a plan for each one of us, and that's holiness."

During the get-together, someone brought up the question of how to help one's peers to pray. The Prelate encouraged them all to give witness: "Transmit your own experience. This doesn't mean giving a lesson or a theoretical class. You encourage others by sharing your own enthusiasm."

One of the participants, Felipe, who is 21 years old and studies law at the University of Buenos Aires, asked how to take up in a more specific way the invitation of Pope Francis to find Jesus in his friends, companions and especially those who are most in need. The Prelate advised him to cultivate "an interior attitude of

openness to the needs of others." And he recalled how the Pope had asked him at a recent audience "that Opus Dei should develop a work of evangelisation especially for the peripheries of the middle classes." The Prelate explained that "there is a material periphery, and there is also a spiritual one. People who are materially in need must be helped as much as possible, and we can also learn from them."

The day once again drew to a close in La Chacra, where the Prelate greeted many families, several of them coming from Rosario.

August 4

Today, the Prelate had multiple encounters at the North Park Auditorium with Argentinian members of Opus Dei and their

friends. Before and after the get-togethers, several families were able to greet him. Monsignor Ocariz stopped to spend time with Alejandro (pictured above), a member of Opus Dei whose wife, Mechi, passed away recently.

During the get-togethers, the Prelate of Opus Dei spoke about hope. He recalled a story that Saint Josemaría liked to tell about Alexander the Great who, when he spoke with some of his friends, said: "Seeing you, my hope is strengthened." The Prelate added, "The same thing is happening to me here in Argentina. The love of Christ impels us all, and it needs to be what moves us."

The first question for the Prelate was by Adrián. Referring to the letter of February 14, 2017, he asked how he could put Jesus Christ more at the center of his spiritual life. The Prelate suggested that he use these

words when addressing Our Lord:
"Jesus, let's do this between the two
of us."

Throughout the conversation, the topic of the family came up a number of times. Responding to one father of a family, the Prelate recommended that he try smiling even before entering the door of his house after a long day's work. "Do it even if you're alone. Sometimes smiling costs effort, because of worries or tiredness. You might arrive exhausted and maybe you don't have the strength to say wonderful things, but if you smile, it helps. You not only help your wife and your children, but you also help yourself." Following this, Guillermo, from Santa Fe, wanted to know how to improve his relationship with his children, as did Nacho from Tucumán who asked a similar question. The Father advised them to really try to be friends of their

children: "Friendship is not only that a child trusts his father or that he tells him things, that he opens his heart about the difficulties or questions that he has. Friendship is always mutual, and this mutual sympathy between you and your children needs to be felt."

Later on in the get-together, Rolando opened up about the challenge of preserving affection within the family when its members are spread out in several countries. In his case, his parents are in El Salvador and his siblings in Argentina, Spain, Guatemala, the United States. Monsignor Ocariz suggested taking special advantage of birthdays and anniversaries to be attentive to one another.

In the afternoon, the Father returned to North Park to talk with other faithful of the Work and cooperators. In an atmosphere full of joy, they

welcomed him with songs and applause. In his opening words, the Prelate encouraged them all to pray a lot for the Pope, "not only because he is Argentinian, but because he is the Pope: he is the Vicar of Christ for the whole Church. And because he needs it and asks for it: he has great faith in the effectiveness of our prayer."

When the time came for questions, Marina asked about the transformative power of work. The Prelate advised putting Christ at the center of any task and, in this way, turning everything into prayer. Responding to another question, he also encouraged everyone to cultivate friendship with people who think differently from them, making the effort to discover common ground.

After hearing about the experiences of Goldi and Alejandra, the Prelate encouraged them to help families

early on in their development, and to share lived experiences. He stressed that "the key is to see Jesus Christ in others, and to love everyone as they are." In addition, he added: "We should always be happy, and when we aren't happy, we shouldn't just wait for joy to come back to us: we have to gain it back. Recover the presence of God, and make an act of faith in God's love for us and the reality that we are with Him, and that we are His."

Among those who shared stories, Ana was thrilled to tell the Prelate about the work she does together with a group of people in a difficult neighborhood in Rosario. Monsignor Ocariz stressed the need to be always more merciful and to enlarge one's heart to be able to carry the needs and miseries of all those who suffer.

Remembering a question that someone asked Saint Josemaría

when he visited Argentina in 1974, Veronica asked the Prelate if he would like to leave behind a message for all Argentinians. Echoing the response given by the Founder of Opus Dei, the Prelate said: "May you love one another; may you be understanding with one another; may you know how to forgive if necessary. Loving one another doesn't mean sentimentality, but true concern for the others. And how is this possible? From Jesus Christ: by seeing Jesus in the others."

Monsignor Ocariz finished the day at La Chacra Conference Center, where he greeted families from different parts of the country. Joys and sorrows, projects and blessings were aired by the dozens of people who opened their hearts to the Prelate. There was also silence, as in the case of Luis and Inés, who were so moved that they could barely speak. In different moments, the Prelate

insisted that prayer is the most important thing. After stopping for a few minutes with each family, the Father blessed those present, encouraging them to transform all their tasks into an opportunity to live presence of God, with joy.

August 3

This morning, the Prelate arrived to Argentina from Madrid. The regional vicar, Fr. Víctor Urrestarazu, received him in the airport together with other friends.

Monsignor Ocáriz arrived to La Chacra Conference Center later on in the morning. Some of the first Argentinian members of the Work were there waiting for him, along with others from different provinces and a team of young people who will help out during the activities with families that will go on during the visit.

The Prelate then celebrated Holy Mass, using the same chalice that Saint Josemaria used in Argentina when he celebrated Mass here, on 26 June 1974. In a brief homily, Monsignor Ocáriz invited those present to react with faith when facing difficulties: a faith that enables Christians to be filled with hope and joy.

At the Chacra Center of Study and Work, the Prelate also had an encounter with university students from Venezuela, Bolivia, Paraguay and many different cities throughout Argentina. Luisa from Venezuela spoke about the difficulties they are experiencing in her country, and the Prelate asked everyone to pray for the situation of both Venezuela and Nicaragua, repeating the request of Pope Francis.

At the end of the get-together, the Prelate prayed before an image of

Our Lady found in one of the hallways of La Chacra. Saint Josemaria prayed before the same image when he visited Argentina in 1974, as this commemorative plaque recalls.

August 2

During the next few days, the Prelate of Opus Dei will be in Argentina, meeting with members of the Work and their friends, and spending time with a number of families from different provinces. He will also visit some of the social and educational initiatives inspired by Saint Josemaria in Argentina.

The Prelate will have the opportunity to visit two schools: Good Counsel and Cross of the South, both located in the Porteño neighborhood of Barracas. Together, the schools carry

out a project of social integration for close to a thousand students coming from this neighborhood known for its many social problems.

Monsignor Ocáriz will also celebrate a Mass for families at Saint Benedict Church and will receive the title of Honorary Rector at the University of Austral.

Before making his way to Bolivia, the Prelate will make a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Luján, following in the footsteps of Saint Josemaria and Blessed Alvaro who, in 1974, visited this same shrine. Our Lady of Luján is hailed as the Mother of all Argentinians. The Prelate will also visit the people bringing forward the Marangatú Center, an initiative that seeks to provide an integral formation to women through professional training.

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