

Anniversary Mass of St Josemaría Escrivá

The Mass of the feast day of St Josemaría Escrivá was held on 26 June 2023, at the 1-year-ago renovated St Joseph's Church (Victoria Street). Fr Ralph Valdes, the vicar of the region of East and South Asia, was the main celebrant. Concelebrating with him were the other priests of Opus Dei who carry out their pastoral duties in the region.

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"Today we are celebrating St Josemaría, the saint of ordinary life."

Carrie, who had helped with the flower arrangement, had been very excited over the few days prior to the feast day Mass. St Josemaría's teaching on spiritual childhood was something she held dear. "I will continue to follow your guidance, to do what is given to me with the simplest and purest of heart," she said.

"A saint who told us precisely that what we hear in Church, what we read in spiritual books, are not just nice words in order for us to get amazed. They are words that invite us to go out to the world, to love the world and transform it. St Josemaría would say, 'Have no doubt: any kind of evasion of the honest realities of daily life is for you, men and women of the world, something opposed to the will of God. (...) Understand this well:

there is something holy, something divine, hidden in the most ordinary situations, and it is up to each one of you to discover it," Fr Ralph reminded the faithful attending the Mass of their baptism-derived mission during his homily. Krizia and Dominic were happy to be there for the special occasion. They have derived support and encouragement from the teachings of St Josemaría. Krizia said, "St Josemaría's emphasis on our identity as God's children resonates deeply with me. It reminds me that no matter what happens, God is always in control and that it will always turn out for the best because He loves us." Dominic nodded in agreement, adding, "St Josemaria's teaching that our daily work and family life and even the contradictions, problems and sufferings we face, are precious offerings that we can lift up to God is very inspiring! The formation that Opus Dei provides also encourages

me to try and be faithful to a plan of life, which is a way of keeping in connection with God throughout the day."

The pews in the Gothic-styled church were packed, including the provisional seats set up at the narthex. Families, couples young and old, groups of friends participated in the solemn Mass commemorating the feast day. The building was filled to its maximum capacity. Someone commented, "I am so glad I attended last night's Mass... It was so beautiful to see the splendour, devotion, eagerness to get close to God. Much better than a concert. It was truly heaven on earth."

Fr. Ralph also urged his audience to collaborate and cooperate with others who are working for the same cause. *"...in this sea which is the world we can work together as well in many things with other Christians,*

trying to bring good values to our society. And even non-believers who want to do good in the world. There are many boats in the sea of the world, so many people of good will. We can all work for peace and harmony, to defend the family, human values, and so on."

"There's so much work to do, there's a big amount of fish to be rescued and put at the feet of the Lord. In the apostolate, in bringing improvement to society, let us work together."

"Then, the miracles will happen."