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Homily of the Prelate in Torreciudad

Homily given by Monsignor Fernando Ocariz on August 20 in the shrine of Torreciudad. He celebrated the 50th anniversary of his priestly ordination on August 15, 2021.

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We have heard in the first reading the prophecy of Isaiah, who announces the coming of the Redeemer, of Jesus, and gives Him a

very special name: Emmanuel, which means “God with us.” God is truly with us, our Lord himself (we have Him here, in the Tabernacle, in the Eucharist), and the Trinity, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in our soul in grace. Truly, Jesus loves us so much that He wanted his very Name to be He is with us.

In the second reading, from Saint Paul, we have heard that we are children of God. He is not only with us. He is with us as Father, as a Father who loves us, who wants us to be identified with his only-begotten Son, with Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit. This should give us great hope and great confidence in drawing close to Him, in our prayer.

And besides confidence, also thanksgiving. May we be people who are grateful to God. Also for special, personal reasons, such as the anniversary of priestly ordination,

for me and for many other priests. Each one of you will also have special reasons for spontaneously giving thanks to God. But our gratitude to God has to be constant. Saint Josemaría, many years ago, on the eve of January 1st, suggested to us a resolution that he expressed in Latin: *Ut in gratiarum semper actione maneamus!* – which means that we should always be giving thanks. We need to always give thanks, in order to recognize the good that God gives us directly in our soul and also the good that He gives us through so many people in our family, at work, in our friendships. We need to recognize the good in order to be grateful. Always giving thanks.

But sometimes not everything in our life is good: there is suffering, illness, setbacks, misfortunes. Well, also in these things we can be grateful to God, we can give thanks because, as Saint Josemaría also said in a point in

The Way: our Lord lets us share then in his sweet Cross (cf. *The Way*, 658). Faith leads us to discover God's love also in suffering. This is only possible with faith and looking at Christ's Cross, striving to identify ourselves with Him. Faith gives us light to grasp this marvelous truth: God is truly Love. He loves us madly, with a "madness" that led Him to the Cross to save us.

Saint John, in one of his epistles, gives us a kind of summary of his experience, the experience of the apostles, in their relationship with Christ. He says in a solemn way: "we (he is referring to the apostles) we have known and believed the love that God has for us." If at times we are somewhat lacking in the faith needed to discover God's love, let us ask Jesus for it, as the apostles did: "increase our faith!" We also need faith in order to be sure that, above and below and in the midst of

everything that happens to us, our Father God is there, who takes care of us, although often we cannot understand it.

Our Lord wants us to be happy, to be happy also here on earth, despite the difficulties we may encounter. He told the apostles, in that very special moment of the Last Supper, as if expressing his greatest desire: “that my joy be in you and that your joy may be full” (*Jn 15:9-11*). This is Christ's desire for us: that we be happy. But we need faith. So let us ask our Lord: increase our faith, today and now; increase our faith, also to have the strength needed to not focus on ourselves, on our own difficulties, and to keep our soul more open to others.

Saint Josemaría also said: Giving ourselves to the service of others is so effective that God rewards it with a humility filled with joy (cf. *The*

Forge, 591). May our Lady help us to have a firmer faith in the reality that we are sons and daughters of God, dearly beloved by God, and give us the assurance that in all the circumstances in our lives God's immense love for us always accompanies us. Amen.

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