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## **A New Statue of St. Josemaría**

In a small town in Aragon, Spain, the parish church has a new statue of St. Josemaría.

11/06/2008

Conchel is a village of 200 people in Aragon, Spain, in the diocese of Barbastro. Its inhabitants work mainly in nearby factories. From the time of the Templars, in the 12th century, the parish church has preserved a fragment of the True Cross. The pastor, Fr. Amadeo, also takes care of a neighboring parish

and teaches religion in the middle school. Three of his former students went to the seminary and have now been ordained priests. One of them, Fr. José Luis, has been in Kazakhstan for several years. The school has also produced vocations for several religious communities of women. Fr. Amadeo attributes the vocations to the intercession of St. Josemaría, who continues to take good care of his homeland.

In 2002, a church was dedicated to St. Josemaría in Barbastro. The people there have great devotion to St. Josemaría and go frequently to his intercession. Fr. Amadeo also wanted to have a statue of Opus Dei's founder in Conchel. This intention was partly due to the request of Francho, one of the altar servers, who asked, "Father, why doesn't our church have a statue of St. Josemaría?"

Fr. Amadeo found a good sculptor, and provided him with photos and other material to guide his work. The sculptor took several months to finish the statue. It is made of olive wood and is about four-feet-tall. Before placing it in the church, Fr. Amadeo wanted it to be blessed. He took advantage of a trip to the nearby shrine of Torreciudad by the Prelate of Opus Dei, who was coming to ordain a group of priests, to ask that he be the one to do it..

When the agreed upon day came, Fr. Amadeo brought the statue to the shrine, accompanied by three seminarians and another priest. After blessing the statue, the Prelate remained a while to visit with them.

The statue is now in a side chapel of the church in Conchel. The parishioners consider it a treasure and often pray before it for St. Josemaría's intercession. Inscribed

on a small plaque are the words: *This image has been placed here in the parish of Santa María de Conchel for public veneration with the hope that it will contribute to the spiritual growth of all the faithful in this parish and that St. Josemaría will obtain for all who come to pray here abundant graces from the Throne of the Lord our God.*

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