

The Prelate in Costa Rica and Nicaragua

From July 28 to August 3, as part of his pastoral trip to 6 countries in Central America, Bishop Echevarria visited Nicaragua and Costa Rica and met with thousands of people.

08/04/2014

Catechetical Get-together in San José, Costa Rica

On Sunday August 3, in the Pedregal Auditorium, Bishop Echevarría had the opportunity to speak with the

thousands of people present there and answer their questions.

He began the get-together by saying that when the trip to Central America was being planned, they hadn't realized they would be in Costa Rica for the feast of Our Lady of the Angels, patroness of Costa Rica, which is celebrated on August 2. He suggested that those present ask themselves this question: "What gift can I give to 'La Negrita'"? (the 'Black Madonna,' as people affectionately call Our Lady of the Angels in Costa Rica). "What can we do for her to thank her for constantly watching over us?" And he told them: "Don't be content with going to Mass only on Sundays. Let's try to go more frequently, since our Lord is waiting for us in the Eucharist every day."

He also mentioned the Gospel reading from that day's Mass about the multiplication of loaves, and

pointed to Jesus' words: *gather up the fragments left over*. “We can reflect on the fact that Jesus might have said this to show us how to live poverty, since many of our brothers and sisters are trying to survive with the bare minimum in life.”

The Prelate told them the story of a poor beggar woman who, in the early years of Opus Dei, came up to St. Josemaria in the street and asked him for money. He didn't have any money in his pocket, but he gave her his priestly blessing and asked her to pray for a special intention. Years later he found her in a hospital for the poor. The woman recognized him and told him she was offering her life for the intention he had asked her to pray for. This intention was the future apostolic work of Opus Dei.

Ramon, who with his wife helps organize a family orientation group, asked him what recommendations

he had for helping to strengthen the family, the foundation of society and the Church. “We can’t let others impose on us what isn’t good for our families. Marriage is between a man and a woman and is indissoluble, and families have to welcome the children God sends them.” He invited the married couples present to not shut off the sources of life.

Nicaragua

On Monday July 28, Bishop Echevarría arrived in Nicaragua to begin the second stage of his trip, after his stay in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. Opus Dei began its apostolic activities in Nicaragua in 1992.

On the 29th he met with families in the Crowne Plaza Convention Hall in Managua. About 900 people took part.

The Prelate began the get-together by saying that he felt very much a Nicaraguan himself and that “since arriving I’ve been praying for you and with you.” He encouraged those present to realize their obligation to help everyone in their country.

Mireya, the mother of a family, asked him how to prevent materialism from damaging her children. He encouraged her to teach her children “the importance of becoming aware of the needs of others and to not let themselves be overcome by whims.”

Alejandro, an architect, asked him how to sanctify his work and help those who work with him to find God. “Everything we do can be a place for encountering God. I recommend that you place a crucifix on the table where you work,” the Prelate told him.

At the end, he told those present: “Love the Pope and the bishops of

Nicaragua a lot,” and he asked them to help him too with their prayers.

The Prelate also had the opportunity to visit the Vega Baja Social Center, about 35 miles from Managua. This center seeks to address the needs of underprivileged women in the district of Diriamba.

Vega Baja teaches the basic skills of hotel management and cooking, along with the skills needed to start a small business. It also offers human and spiritual formation.

The Prelate advised those present to strive to understand the needs of other people in order to serve them better. At the end he planted a palm tree with the help of the organizing committee.

For a photo gallery with pictures from his visit to Vega Baja Center, click [here](#).

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