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# Video: Prelate's Trip to Poland

Video highlights of the Prelate of Opus Dei's pastoral visit to Poland, from 21 to 27 June, 2022.

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## Monday, June 27

In the morning, the Prelate celebrated Mass in the Polish Commission. He prayed especially for the Holy Father, on the 30th anniversary of his episcopal consecration.

During a time of prayer prior to the celebration of the Eucharist, one of those present read some excerpts that recalled Saint Josemaría's stay in Brazil in June 1974. On that occasion, the founder had told the Brazilians that he expected something of them: "That you multiply: like the sands of your beaches, like the trees of your immense forests, like the flowers of your gardens, like the aromatic grains of your coffee, like the stars that shine in the night..." These words had been recalled by Monsignor Ocariz the day before, when he was asked what he expected of the Poles

After Mass, he briefly greeted some of the those present. He then left for the Modlin airport near Warsaw for his flight to Spain, where the next stage of his summer pastoral trips will take place.

**Sunday, June 26**

Along with the Sunday liturgical celebration, today was also the feast of Saint Josemaría. Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz led the meditation and celebrated Mass at the Regional Commission of Poland.

After breakfast, he went to greet Cardinal Kazimierz Nycz, Archbishop of Warsaw, who thanked him especially for two things: the educational work offered by the Prelature which has led to the promotion of schools inspired by Christian values, and the spiritual accompaniment given to so many lay faithful. The Cardinal said that religious practice in Poland is, in a sense, a “Sunday practice,” and that Opus Dei encourages many people to seek a “daily sanctity” that includes their work, family life and many other concerns. He also pointed out with a smile that in his curia the chancellor and the notary both studied at the department of Canon

Law in the University of Navarra, and the Archdiocese's spokesperson studied at the School of Communications in the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome, both of which are inspired by Saint Josemaría's message.

After the visit, the Prelate had two long get-togethers with young people who take part in the Work's apostolic activities: in the morning with young women at the Klub Filary and in the afternoon with young men at the Filtrowa university center.

Basia from Poznan told him about her efforts to defend life and asked for advice on how to raise this issue in environments where other ideas predominate. The Prelate spoke about the light that faith sheds here. Already with human reasoning we can understand that each human life has an infinite value. But in the light of faith its full value appears, since

each human life is seen as a gift from God, who loves each man and woman personally.

Marcelina recounted her experiences from attending several years of formational activities in a center of Opus Dei and the difficulty she finds in spreading what she learns there among her classmates, who are focused on academic results and often dream of a future that does not include a family.

“There is no greater dedication than caring for people, because the human person is the most valuable reality on earth,” Monsignor Ocariz said. “It is much more ennobling to take care of a child than to produce washing machines or boats. In fact, all occupations have value only if they are carried out in service to people. Therefore both professional work and the family need to be

focused on caring for the human person.”

At the end of the morning, Monsignor Ocáriz stopped in at a center of Opus Dei to greet Andrzej Syfel, a dentist and one of the people who began the Prelature’s apostolic work in Poland, and who now suffers from Parkinson’s.

In the afternoon he spent time with the young men in Filtrowa. Tymoteusz asked for advice on how to discern his vocation and also about the Prelate’s own experience in finding his vocation. Monsignor Ocáriz stressed that God counts on human freedom by entrusting each person with a particular vocation, and suggested that instead of asking oneself: “Why yes?”, one can ask: “Why not?”, without any fear of the plans God may have for us. He then spoke about how he discovered his own vocation to Opus Dei.

Staszek, a doctoral candidate in computer science, said that his own experience had taught him that friendship is already apostolate. He recounted how by sharing times of study, meals and rest with his university classmates he was finding many opportunities to have conversations, sometimes deep ones, even though most of the people do not practice the faith.

Mateusz, a Ph.D. student in physics, shared some stories of the volunteer work he is trying to organize, inspired by the teachings of Saint Josemaría.

Sunday and the feast of Saint Josemaría concluded with Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament at the Klub Filary. At the end, with his trip coming to an end, Monsignor Ocariz reminded them of how Saint Josemaría used to insist that we don't say goodbye because

we are always united in prayer, regardless of the distance. "United in Christ, united in the Spirit and united in apostolic zeal."

## **Saturday, June 25**

For the feast of Saint Josemaría, a Mass was celebrated at 10 am, presided over by the Prelate of Opus Dei in the Church of Divine Providence in Warsaw, which was built in gratitude for God's protection of the Polish people. The Prelate's entire homily is available in English **[here](#)**.

In the afternoon, Monsignor Ocariz had several get-togethers with faithful of the Prelature and friends, who came from Warsaw and other cities including Gdansk, Krakow, Katowice and Białystok.

In the first get-together, Ania welcomed him to Warsaw and spoke about the difficulties experienced by

many people in personally attending the Christian means of formation. During the pandemic, online meetings made this easier, but the return to normality has not proved easy. Monsignor Ocáriz stressed that personal contact is irreplaceable, since not everything can be transmitted by screens, for example, the ways of showing that one is not in a hurry. He also reminded them that in the centers of the Prelature our Lord is personally present in the tabernacle and that seeing this on a screen is quite different from being personally present there with Him.

Hania spoke about her discovery of the path of her vocation as a numerary assistant. Her vocation in Opus Dei entails living celibacy and taking particular care to ensure that the Work is a family. Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz reminded them that the work of the Administration can be defined as “the apostolate of

apostolates,” since it makes possible the evangelizing efforts of the faithful of Opus Dei. He compared this work to the spine that supports the entire body.

Asia asked about the role of cooperators in Opus Dei’s mission within the Church. The Prelate encouraged her to collaborate in first place with her prayer, then to feel the responsibility of transmitting to others what she receives in the means of formation and also to offer her time to help out in an apostolic project in a center of the Prelature.

In another get-together, Maksymilian told him that he is 24 years old and a supernumerary. He spoke about living in a university residence that he will leave shortly as he is getting married next month. He recounted how in reading an article in “Studia et Documenta” about the beginnings of Opus Dei’s apostolic work in the

United States he had learned that one of the first American supernumeraries had been an aeronautical engineering student, a career he himself is studying. This made him wonder if this might not also be his vocational path.

Tymoteusz and Krzysztof asked for advice on how to live fraternity well within the spiritual family that is Opus Dei. The Prelate suggested prayer as the first means and also taking an interest in the concerns of others, seeing these as their own, beginning with those closest to us.

At the end of the day, Monsignor Ocariz went to Patria, a center of Opus Dei from which families are being helped in their efforts to give their children a solid human and Christian formation.

**Friday, June 24**

On the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Monsignor Fernando Ocariz celebrated Mass in the oratory of the Sołek center. A group of Opus Dei faithful attended, who at the end gave him the coat of arms of their city Poznan as a souvenir of his visit during these days.

He also came to say goodbye to those who are in touch with the Antrejka center for women. There was time for questions and brief work-related anecdotes. Agata, a veterinarian, asked him for ideas on how to bring colleagues at work and those who come to her clinic with their pets closer to God. “Friendship requires showing interest in what is important to others. If we are sincerely interested in the lives of others, they will also be interested in what is important to us,” the Prelate said.

Ewa, an architect, spoke about her doctoral thesis on beauty and how it can be a tool for evangelization.

Monsignor Ocariz agreed with her and stressed that “beauty is always closely related to truth.” Zuzia, who works as a psychiatrist in a clinic, asked for prayers for her colleagues, who are really putting their heart into their work.

Karolina showed him a photo album of the Antrejka club, which promotes various social initiatives and activities for young people. This year, among other things, they carried out volunteer work in a soup kitchen for homeless people in Wroclaw.

At the end there was time to sing together a song that Saint Josemaría liked a lot that speaks about fidelity. One of the verses of this song says that “it is worthwhile being faithful.” The Father mentioned that he had heard Saint Josemaría repeat in a

low voice those words, “it is worthwhile, it is worthwhile being faithful,” when that song was being sung for him. At the end, Monsignor Fernando Ocariz gave everyone a blessing.

He then went to Filtrowa , an Opus Dei center for men where human and Christian formation is offered to university and high school students.

Mateusz, a doctoral candidate in physics (a field Monsignor Ocariz also studied at the university) spoke about the research he is carrying out. Marcin shared his experience as a radio journalist during the pandemic time, while Adam, Michał and Tymoteusz shared some stories from the Starter Program, a series of activities to help high school students grow academically and personally. They also talked about the volunteer work carried out by participants in the program during the school year

and holidays with needy persons in their city. They also mentioned how happy they were to see young people show great interest in culture, art, history and philosophy, disciplines that in today's "culture of success" are often considered of little use. The Prelate encouraged them to continue developing these activities and said that it is very important to help people grow in wisdom.

At the end of the get-together, the Prelate of Opus Dei referred to the liturgical feast that was being celebrated in the Church and suggested praying together to ask for peace with the aspiration *Cor Iesu Sacratissimum et misericors, dona nobis pacem* ("Most Sacred and Merciful Heart of Jesus, grant us peace"), which Saint Josemaría often prayed. He stressed the need to pray for peace not only in a time of war, but also for peace in families and in our own hearts. Christ, he said, is the

source from which true peace flows, and he reminded them of Saint Paul's words referring to Christ: *Ipsa est pax nostra* (cf. *Eph 2:14*), He is our peace. He also advised them to turn to our Lord when their heart is agitated, to regain peace.

In the afternoon, the Prelate of Opus Dei, accompanied by the regional vicar Stefan Moszoro-Dąbrowski, led a working meeting at the headquarters of the Regional Advisory, the governing body of the women of Opus Dei in Poland.

The day ended with Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament for the liturgical feast day and a brief get-together at the men's center.

## **Thursday, June 23**

Monsignor Fernando Ocariz spent the day in Poznan, an entrepreneurial and university city where Opus Dei has been offering

Christian formation for 25 years. The day began with Mass at Antrejka, a center of the Prelature. Some married couples who have taken part in the apostolic activities for many years attended.

In the morning, the Prelate met with a group of priests who receive spiritual assistance thanks to the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross. He also visited *Fara*, one of the main churches in the city, where some relics of Saint Josemaría are kept.

At noon, he went to visit the Archbishop of Poznan and president of the Polish Bishops Conference, Archbishop Stanislaw Gadecki.

In the afternoon, he met with faithful of Opus Dei and their families. Agnieszka right away congratulated him for Father's Day, which is celebrated in Poland on June 23.

Alluding to the recent successes of a Polish tennis player, a sport he enjoys playing, Monsignor Ocariz spoke about the need to have a person who accompanies us in the spiritual life, so that “we learn to run not only sprints, but also marathons.” He stressed that the goal of all Christians is to imitate Christ in their reactions and way of working and interacting with people. He also pointed to the figure of Saint John the Baptist as a model of an apostle. Just as the Precursor had said, referring to Jesus: *He must increase, but I must decrease (Jn 3:30)*, so Christians should not be self-referential in their evangelizing efforts, but always direct people to our Lord.

Łukasz recounted how it has been a great lesson in generosity for his family to welcome a family of Ukrainian refugees. The impact reached beyond his home, as even

distant relatives and neighbors became involved in helping out. He also spoke about how receiving Christian formation had helped him live his marriage better. The Prelate stressed the importance of spouses loving each other ever more, even if as time goes by some aspects of love become secondary

Beata told him the story of her own family and asked for advice on how to build a multigenerational family, when you are the oldest person among all the relatives.

Olena, of Ukrainian origin, asked about how to love your neighbor when it seems especially hard to do so and you experience rejection by the other person.

The day ended with a get-together at Sołek, a center of the Prelature, with people coming from a number of other cities. Finally, some songs that

Saint Josemaría particularly liked  
were sung.

## **Wednesday, June 22**

Bishop Józef Kupny, Bishop of Wrocław (Poland), presided over the Mass celebrated at 9 a.m. in the city's cathedral. Monsignor Fernando Ocariz, among others, concelebrated. The academic authorities of the University of Wrocław and numerous faithful participated in the Eucharist.

In the homily, Bishop Damian Bryl (bishop of Kalisz, a town near Wrocław) spoke about the fruits by which those who faithfully announce the word of God will be known. He referred to the analysis found in Monsignor Ocariz's published works of the challenges presented by today's world. He pointed out that the Prelate of Opus Dei doesn't confront these critically, but rather tries to identify the fundamental

questions that people are concerned about today and find ways to open their heart to the light of the Gospel.

After the Mass, the academic act of investiture of the *Honoris Causa* doctorate took place in the nearby Pontifical Faculty of Theology. After the official welcome to the academic community and the *laudatio* (the traditional words of praise for the candidate) by the rector Prof. Włodzimierz Wołyniec, the faculty authorities presented the honorary title to the Prelate of Opus Dei.

The faculty counts among its honorary doctors Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Cardinal Gerhard Müller and other well-known theologians. In his address, Monsignor Ocariz stressed the need for an adequate philosophy in a theology that seeks to place Christ at the center of its reflections. Especially important here are the concepts of “person”

and “act of being,” which made possible the successive dogmatic definitions about the reality of Christ. He also stressed that the work of theologians is carried out within the Church’s faith, and therefore needs to be in communion with the Magisterium in service to the Church’s salvific mission. He also pointed to the special challenges presented today in striving to spread the truth of Christ’s message in a post-Christian culture.

After the investiture ceremony, the Prelate traveled to Poznań, where he went to pray at the Sanctuary of Saint Hyacinth in Legnica, the place where a Eucharistic miracle recognized by the Holy See took place in 2013. After a time of personal prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, he greeted a group of faithful. The parish priest, Father Andrzej Ziombra, told him about the spiritual fruits that the Eucharistic

miracle is bringing to his parish. He also shared his joy and gratitude for the formational activities in his parish that are nourished by the spirit of Saint Josemaría.

The trip then continued to *Solek*, a center of Opus Dei near Poznań, where the Prelate will stay for the next few days.

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On June 25, the Prelate will celebrate Mass in Warsaw for the feast of Saint Josemaría. Before and after that date, he will meet with faithful and friends of the Prelature.

He will also pray at the tomb of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, beatified in September 2021, who played a decisive role in defending the Church and the country during the Cold War and the years of communist rule.

In addition, he will pay a visit to the president of the Episcopal Conference, Archbishop Stanisław Gądecki.

*Some photos from his visit:*

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