

Meditations: May 2, Dedication of the Prelatic Church Our Lady of Peace

Some reflections that can assist our prayer on the feast of the dedication of the prelatric church of Opus Dei.

- God dwells in our midst
- Being living stones
- Building up the Church

THROUGH THE APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTION *Ut sit*, by which Opus Dei was erected as a personal prelature, the Roman Pontiff also erected Our Lady of Peace as its

prelatic church, which until then had been an oratory. Blessed Alvaro del Portillo presided over its dedication ceremony on May 2, 1986.

The Most High does not dwell in houses built by human hands, Saint Stephen says in his defense before the high priest, while recounting the entire history of salvation. And he continued, with words from the prophet Hosea: *Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? Did not my hand make all these things?* (Acts 7:48-50). Despite these words, in the times of King Solomon God allowed the people to build a house for Him: the Temple of Jerusalem. The Church has always seen the Temple as an image of the Most Holy Humanity of Christ, the true temple in which the fullness of divinity dwells bodily (cf. *Col 2:9*). And the Temple of Jerusalem was

also an anticipation and symbol of Christian churches, which are places of prayer and encounter with God, since in the heart of each one of them – in the Tabernacle – the Church safeguards Jesus himself in the Holy Eucharist.

“A church is the only thing worthy of representing the soul of a people, for religion is the most elevated human reality.”^[1] — Each church is a spiritual center in which our Lord, under the sacramental species preserved in the Tabernacle, “is in the midst of us day and night. He dwells with us full of grace and truth (cf. *Jn* 1:14).”^[2] — “God has decided to stay in the Tabernacle to nourish us, strengthen us, make us divine and give effectiveness to our work and efforts,” Saint Josemaría said. “Jesus is at one and the same time the sower, the seed and the final result of the sowing: the Bread of eternal life.”^[3] —

IN ADDITION TO reserving the body of Christ, the true temple of divinity, the visible churches built by human hands are a sign of the invisible Church formed by all the baptized as “living and chosen stones.”^[4] Our Lord has made us living stones in the Church, “instructed in the faith, strengthened by hope and united by charity.”^[5] —

Hence we need to unite ourselves in our daily lives to Christ, who is the true *cornerstone, rejected by men but chosen and precious before God* (1 Pet 2:4.6). “By uniting ourselves to this stone,” Saint Augustine said, “we find peace; by resting upon it, we find strength. It is both the foundation that upholds us, and the cornerstone that unites us. It is the stone upon which the prudent man builds his house, and thus can confront with complete security all the trials of this

world: torrential rain cannot undermine it; overflowing rivers cannot sweep it away nor violent winds topple it.”^[6] —

While a Christian church is a sign of the faithful united around the cornerstone that is Christ, the prelatric church of Our Lady of Peace is a sign especially of the faithful of Opus Dei and those who draw close to its apostolates. They are called to share “the desire to pursue Christian perfection and to do apostolate, seeking to sanctify their own professional work; living immersed in secular reality and respecting its proper autonomy, doing so with the spirit and love of contemplative souls.”^[7] — As Blessed Alvaro stressed in his homily on that day, “We have been chosen by God without any merit on our part, to be a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy people, to announce the wonders of

God, who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.”^[8] —

THE CHURCH IS CATHOLIC because it has been sent by Jesus to reach all men and women on earth. The Second Vatican Council described our Lord’s command with these words: “All men are called to belong to the new People of God. This People therefore, while remaining one and only one, is to be spread throughout the whole world and to all ages in order that the design of God’s will may be fulfilled.”^[9] —

Blessed Alvaro concluded his homily during the dedication of the prelatial church of Our Lady of Peace by saying, “Our Lord makes use of us, as living stones, to build up his Church day by day in the midst of human society . . . Despite our littleness,

through God's goodness we will be strength for others, resting always on the cornerstone who is Christ Jesus, and also on the strong rock – the foundation for the Church – who is Peter, the Roman Pontiff.”^[10] To be faithful to our Lord is to be faithful to the Church, and thus, a good son or daughter of the Pope. Saint Josemaría, right from 1928, wanted Opus Dei to be very “Roman” and to be closely united to the See of Peter, sharing the same desire to bring the warmth of Christ to every corner of the world.

We can entrust our desires to serve the Church to the intercession of Our Lady of Peace. And we can also ask her for the gift of peace for our souls and for the whole world: “Hear, O Mother, our prayer . . . May you, our ‘living fountain of hope,’ water the dryness of our hearts. You who formed the humanity of Jesus, makes us builders of communion. You who

once journeyed on the paths of our world, lead us now on the paths of peace. Amen.”^[11]
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^[1] — Gaudí, cited by Benedict XVI, Homily, 7 November 2010.

^[2] — Saint Paul VI, *Mysterium fidei*, no. 67. Cf. Blessed Alvaro del Portillo, Homily, 2 May 1986.

^[3] — Saint Josemaría, *Christ is Passing By*, no. 151.

^[4] — *Roman Missal*, Common of the Dedication of a Church (outside of the dedicated church), Collect Prayer.

^[5] — Saint Augustine, Sermon 337.

^[6] — Ibid.

^[7] — Saint Josemaría, *Conversations*, no. 22.

^[8] — Blessed Alvaro del Portillo, Homily, 2 May 1986.

^[9] Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 13.

^[10] Blessed Alvaro del Portillo, Homily, 2 May 1986.

^[11] Francis, Act of Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, 25 March 2022.

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