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Cardinals Tauran and Herranz installed at their titular churches

Zenit reports on the installation of Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran and Cardinal Julián Herranz at two churches in Rome entrusted to Opus Dei, St. Apollinare and St. Eugenio.

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Sunday was a study in contrasts as two cardinals, named at the October consistory, took possession of their

titular churches in Rome: Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran at St. Apollinare and Cardinal Julián Herranz at St. Eugenio.

Both churches are run by Opus Dei, and in their architecture, congregations and titular cardinals, seem to exemplify the wide range of styles that make up the organization founded in 1928 by St. Josemaría Escrivá.

Bishop Javier Echevarría, prelate of Opus Dei, had his hands full as both Masses began within a half-hour of each other. He greeted Cardinal Tauran at the door of St. Apollinare and then dashed off to St. Eugenio to meet Cardinal Herranz.

St. Apollinare is the church attached to Opus Dei's University of the Holy Cross, and the solemn ceremony of Cardinal Tauran's installation was attended by an attentive, intellectual crowd comprised of the priests and

students of the university and members of the Vatican Secretariat of State.

By contrast, St. Eugenio, the parish church of Opus Dei, reminded me of the Masses I attended as a child, bustling with the activity of young children and parents trying to keep an eye on their wandering tots and an ear toward their cardinal, who clearly has the pastoral touch.

The cardinal spoke with ease to the concerns of his young parishioners, giving them advice on how to avoid "pessimism and sadness."

"It's very simple," said Cardinal Herranz, "a smile, a kind word, showing interest in another with a question, and not making a tragedy out of something of little importance."

Cardinal Herranz is one of two Opus Dei cardinals (the other is Juan Luis

Cipriani Thorne of Peru) and head of the Pontifical Council for the Interpretation of Legislative Texts. Known as a very competent canon lawyer (he is also in charge of the Disciplinary Commission of the Roman Curia), Cardinal Herranz is a kind and approachable Spaniard with an affinity for St. Josemaría Escrivá.

"I have come to take possession of this church," Cardinal Herranz said. "But in reality, this basilica took possession of me long before."

"I have been particularly involved for many years with this church," he said. "I walked on the pavement where you are now sitting, praying the rosary, praying for this basilica."

St. Eugenio was built by Pius XII (Eugenio Pacelli) in 1951 and dedicated to the Pope's patron saint. In 1981 John Paul II entrusted it to the priests of Opus Dei. The body of St.

Josemaría Escrivá was exposed for eight days in the church last October during his canonization celebrations.

At St. Apollinare, meanwhile, Cardinal Tauran, who spent 13 years as the Vatican's secretary for relations with states and is now its head archivist and librarian, spoke of his work in the Secretariat of State and the troubles of modern society.

"I think that -- through the service to the international community by means of the instrument of diplomacy -- we have tried to translate and make resonate, in the context of international relations, the anxieties and teaching, or rather, the witness, of Pope John Paul II," the cardinal told those assembled in the medieval church.

In a reference, perhaps, to some current debate in Italy and France about Christian symbols in public places, the cardinal commented: "In

these days, I have been reflecting on how mistaken are those who would deny a place for God and believers in the public forum of today's society. One can separate church and state, but one can never separate the Church from society!"

Insisting that Catholics must proclaim their convictions, Cardinal Tauran said, "The Muslim faithful have 101 names for God. They are missing only one: Father! This is our treasure!"

Cardinal Tauran, who is French, recalled the long and colorful history of his titular church with an anecdote.

"When you leave this basilica, I invite you to contemplate the beautiful fresco of the Madonna of the Portico which, in 1494, was covered over to protect it from possible profanation by the French soldiers of Charles VIII

who had occupied this temple," he said.

"As a French citizen, I am glad to save something of the honor of my country, inviting you instead to appreciate the way in which Peter and Paul keep their gaze fixed on Christ!"

I am told by a Vatican official that cardinals are allowed to request their titular churches. I do not know whether the churches given to Cardinals Tauran and Herranz were their first choices, but it seemed that in terms of the spirit and the congregations of each place, they are certainly good matches.

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Gallagher

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