

Parish Church of Saint Josemaria in the Philippines

Built largely through the work of the local people, the parish church of Saint Josemaria Escriva was formally dedicated by the bishop of Tarlac and declared a diocesan shrine.

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Photo Gallery of the Church of Saint Josemaria and Dedication Ceremony

On February 14, 2014, in Tarlac, the Philippines, the “Parokya ni San

Josemaria Escriva" (as the local people call it) was formally dedicated to Saint Josemaria Escriva and declared a diosesan shrine. Presiding over the ceremony was Most Reverend Florentino Cinense, bishop of Tarlac. The concelebrants were the Vicar of Opus Dei in the Philippines and other bishops and priests. The Mass repertoire was courtesy of "Koro de San Josemaria," made up mostly of young parishioners.

The homilist stressed that Mary is the Mother of Fair Love, which was the Mass celebrated that day. He also explained that the altar-piece, which shows the Holy Family at work, testifies to Saint Josemaria's teaching on the sanctification of work. He told the congregation that the church of Saint Josemaria is not a church of Opus Dei nor for Opus Dei, but for everyone, primarily for the residents of Tarlac. In fact, while the church was still being built, many of the

local people who were helping out in the construction tried to explain the message of the universal call to sanctity, and to spread devotion to Saint Josemaria by giving out prayer cards to all who came to the church. Some of the town people have even memorized the prayer to Saint Josemaria in the Tagalog language.

The building of the church has helped the local people grow in their practices of piety. For example, with the pealing of the bells at midday and at six o'clock in the evening, people are reminded to take a brief halt from whatever they are doing to say the Angelus. The church also has a window at the back of the main altar, so that the Tabernacle can be seen from one's car, and people can pray with the Tabernacle in view without having to enter the church. Bishop Cinense urged everyone to visit the Blessed Sacrament frequently.

Before concluding the Mass, the bishop of Tarlac thanked all those who generously helped in the construction of the church of Saint Josemaria, including the simple townsfolk who could not afford to give donations in cash but who contributed so much in actual manual labor.

“Many of the people here are farmers who could not give much materially; but what they do have in abundance is work,” the bishop said. “Parokya ni San Josemaria Escriva,” he concluded, “is now one of the most aesthetically notable churches in the diocese of Tarlac.”
