

Homily by Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz at the Mass for the Feast of Saint Josemaria in the Prelatic Church of Our Lady of Peace in Rome (26 June 2020).

Today, on the liturgical feast day of Saint Josemaria, here beside his mortal remains in the Prelatic Church of Our Lady of Peace, we have recourse to his intercession for all those who are suffering the consequences of the coronavirus, especially for the deceased and their families. Now, we especially remember the countries where the pandemic is still very active. The Communion of Saints leads us to make our own what affects others, because “if one member suffers, all suffer with him.” “All of us are on this boat,” Pope Francis said. We are “called to row together, each of us in need of comforting the other.”¹

The readings from today’s Mass remind us of three realities that Saint Josemaria held very dear in his heart: the Eucharist, the aspiration *omnia in bonum* (everything is for the good!), and the sense of mission.

“The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (*Mt 20:28*). These words, which we will read in the communion antiphon, summarize Jesus’ earthly journey, which was marked by his self-giving for others. “He himself bore our sins in his body upon the cross, so that, free from sin, we might live for righteousness” (*1 Pet 2:24*). And this sacrifice is made present again in the Holy Mass, where Christ gives Himself to us totally. He offers Himself as the food that sustains us, and he fills us with His mercy and love, as He did on Calvary.

During these months of confinement, we are learning to value even more our participation in the Eucharistic Sacrifice. In the midst of this difficult situation, the first thing many families did each day was to follow the Holy Mass on television. From this time they drew the strength needed to face the day, while their desire to receive Our Lord sacramentally also was being increased.

In these difficult circumstances now, in this world that we are a part of and that we love as God’s creation, we are consoled by the words in the second reading that Saint Josemaria so often meditated on: “You received a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, ‘Abba, Father!’” (*Rom 8:15*). To know that we are daughters and sons of an all-knowing and all-powerful God should give us a deep joy that is the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

¹ Francis, Extraordinary Moment of Prayer, 27 March 2020.

This does not mean that we won't encounter difficulties and suffering. Saint Paul ends the passage we have just read with these words: we are "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him" (*Rom* 8:17). These words help us to understand the meaning of pain. When something makes us suffer, we can unite ourselves to the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross, with our hope placed in the resurrection. As Benedict XVI said: "it is not by sidestepping or fleeing from suffering that we are healed, but rather by our capacity for accepting it, maturing through it and finding meaning through union with Christ, who suffered with infinite love."²

Faith gives us the assurance that everything is for the good: *Omnia in bonum!* as Saint Josemaria liked to pray with words of Saint Paul (cf. *Rom* 8:28). Yes, everything is for the good, although at times it is difficult to understand the good that a situation like the one we are going through can bring. But what is certain is that, during this time, we have witnessed countless examples of generosity, creativity, initiative and the selfless work of so many people, even risking their own lives: health workers, law enforcement personnel, priests, volunteers... We have also heard stories of mothers and fathers struggling to make ends meet during confinement. These examples of self-giving have led us to be more closely united, to be more aware that we need others and that others need us.

In today's Gospel, we read about this invitation of Jesus to Simon Peter, urging him to take up his mission: "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch" (*Lk* 5:4). These same words are addressed today to each one of us as well: to leave aside our own comfort and go out to bring others the joy of the Gospel, the joy of a life close to Jesus, who has given his life out of love for each of us.

To set out upon the sea what is needed is daring, desires to change the world. But above all, we need a heart that is in love, to let Christ be the center of our life, so that He becomes "the only driving force behind all our activities."³

After Jesus' invitation to put out into the deep, we read: "They caught a great number of fish and their nets were tearing" (*Lk* 5:6). Also the supernatural effectiveness of our work does not depend on our own abilities, but rather on letting Our Lord work. "When we place ourselves generously in his service," Pope Francis said, "he accomplishes great things in us. This is what he does in each of us: he asks us to welcome him on the boat of our life, in order to set out anew with

² Benedict XVI, Message on the occasion of the World Day of the Sick, 11 February 2013.

³ Saint Josemaria, *Intimate Notes*, no. 1289 (5 October 1935).

him and to sail a new sea, one which proves to be full of surprises.”⁴ This was the ideal that inspired Saint Josemaria’s life. He realized that “the Work was born to spread throughout the world the message of love and peace that Our Lord has bequeathed to us.”⁵ May we too set forth with the same confidence to carry out whatever Our Lord asks of us.

Those of us taking part in this Holy Mass, either in person or online, unite ourselves with affection and prayer to all those who are suffering in the world, and we entrust ourselves to the deceased so that from heaven, with Saint Josemaria on his feast day, they may intercede for all of us.

Let us go very especially to Holy Mary, Mother of God and our Mother. Our Lady, Comforter of the afflicted, will help us to see – with eyes of faith – her Son’s love in the difficulties we are passing through. Mary, the Morning Star, will guide us on the path of love and trust in God.

⁴ Francis, *Angelus*, 10 February 2019

⁵ Saint Josemaria, *Letter*, 16 July 1933, no. 3.

[Speaking in Italian]

I turn now to those who, under normal conditions, would have taken part in this celebration in the Basilica of Saint Eugene. Although in Italy we have already overcome the most critical moment of the pandemic, in other parts of the world the isolation caused **by** the coronavirus continues. Let us now join in prayer for these countries, and let us also pray for all those who have left us in recent months as well as for their families.

It is hard to understand why God has allowed this situation. Saint Paul said that “all things work for good for those who love God.” Saint Josemaria summed this up in an aspiration: *Omnia in bonum!* Everything is for the good! God draws good from every situation however painful, as we have seen in many ways in recent months.

On the feast of Saint Josemaria, here alongside his mortal remains, we can have recourse to his intercession so that we remain always closely united among ourselves and with all those who are suffering. Let us support one another through prayer, affection and selfless service. As Pope Francis said during the extraordinary moment of prayer for the pandemic, “All of us called to row together, each of us in need of comforting the other. All of us are on this boat.” Let us never forget to pray for the Holy Father and his ministry in the Church.

Amen.