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"The freedom and trust of being God's children"

Homily of Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz for the liturgical memorial of Saint Josemaria, given in the basilica of Saint Eugene in Rome on 26 June 2018.

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For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God (*Rom* 8:14). Saint Paul's words express the exalted vocation to which we are called: to

be God's children. As we read in the book of Genesis, at the beginning man received life through the breath of God (cf. *Gen* 2:4). Christ has sent us, from God the Father, the Holy Spirit, who leads us to a new life in which we can recognize the face of the Father and exclaim: *Abba, Father!* (cf. *Rom* 8:15).

How often Saint Josemaria meditated on the words that we read today in the Mass! One day back in 1931, he felt the Holy Spirit placing these words in his heart and on his lips while traveling in a streetcar in Madrid. He himself recalls walking through the streets for a long time saying over and over: *Abba, Father!* The Paraclete engraved on his heart a new and deeper certainty that he was a child of God, and he understood that the sense of divine filiation is the foundation of the spiritual life. Before his eyes there opened up a marvelous panorama.

We are children of God in Christ, sharers in the eternal filiation of the Only-begotten Son of God the Father!

Today we can ask ourselves whether, as Saint Paul suggests, the awareness of being children of God shapes and imbues every dimension of our life. Frequently considering, with faith, our divine filiation will help us to travel with hope, day after day, despite our weakness, along the path towards identification with Christ, towards sanctity, as Saint Josemaria says: "Jesus understands our weakness and draw us to himself on an inclined plane. He wants us to make an effort to climb a little each day"(*Christ is Passing By*, no. 75).

Do we feel the freedom and trust that being daughters and sons of God offers us? For we haven't received *the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear* (*Rom* 8:15): the fear of failure, which sometimes dampens efforts to

undertake new initiatives in the service of others; the fear of losing the false security that comfort and selfishness give. The fear, in short, of going deeper into the marvelous sea of a life of prayer that promises us, along with many joys, real self-giving, *in which the sufferings of this present time* will not be lacking. But these *are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us* (*Rom* 8:18).

Our Lord tells Peter: *Put out into the deep* (*Lk* 5:4). It is as though He were telling us: trust in the deepest truth about yourself, being a child of God, and do not be afraid to travel through a world that, at times, seems a tumultuous sea. It's true that things may not go as we would have liked ideally: that in our work we encounter a setback in a project, that someone we love turns their back on God, that unexpected or adverse events arise… And we may feel

moved to reply as Peter did: *Master, we toiled all night and took nothing* (*Lk* 5:5); *depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord* (*Lk* 5:8). At these moments, we can be greatly helped by doing a good time of prayer, and hearing as really addressed to us too Jesus' words: *Do not be afraid* (*Lk* 5:10).

Pope Francis is telling each one of us: "holiness, in the end, is the fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life (cf. *Gal* 5:22-23). When you feel the temptation to dwell on your own weakness, raise your eyes to Christ crucified and say: 'Lord, I am a poor sinner, but you can work the miracle of making me a little bit better'" (Apost. Exhort. *Gaudete et exsultate*, no. 15).

The Holy Spirit teaches us to live as God's children, and urges us to help the people we encounter on the path of our life to discover this truth. We

all hear, with the Apostles, Jesus' commanding and encouraging voice: *let down your nets for a catch* (*Lk* 5:4). A catch to which all of us Christians are called: helping many people to second the action of the Holy Spirit who, in Christ, leads them to God the Father. And this takes place in ordinary life: in the family, in work, in the relationships of friendship and closeness… For example, when fathers and mothers take up in their arms a small child who has fallen and been hurt, and pour out their affection, they are transmitting the love of God the Father, *from whom all fatherhood in heaven and on earth takes its name* (*Eph* 3:14). In these and many other moments, parents are instruments of the loving care of our Father God.

This marvelous reality can also take place among friends. For example, when we listen attentively, with true interest and affection, to someone in

difficulty, and assist them with our prayer and, if relevant, with the opportune advice, we are helping them realize that they are not alone, that they have a Father in heaven and brothers and sisters here on earth.

To finish, we can make our own the petition of the prayer that we will pray after Communion: “may the mysteries we have received in this celebration of Saint Josemaria, strengthen in us the spirit of adoption as your children, so that, in faithful adherence to your will, we may advance joyfully along the path of holiness.” On this path we will always find our Mother, Holy Mary, who accompanies us.

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