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Pastoral Trip to Finland and Estonia

The Prelate of Opus Dei is making a pastoral trip to Finland and Estonia from 22-26 November. In addition to visiting members of the Work and friends in these countries, he will attend the ordination of the new bishop of Helsinki.

11/25/2023

**25 November 2023 (Helsinki,
Finland)**

The Prelate of Opus Dei attended the episcopal ordination of the new bishop of Helsinki, Isä Raimo Goyarrola, which took place at the Lutheran church of St. John in the Finnish capital, where various Christian denominations hold liturgical ceremonies due to its greater capacity.

The celebration was presided over by Cardinal Arborelius O.C.D., Bishop of Stockholm, the Apostolic Nuncio Julio Murati, and the Bishop Emeritus of Helsinki, Teemu Sippo, S.C.I.

Additionally, 16 Catholic bishops, four Orthodox bishops and four from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, along with 20 Protestant pastors and 1,750 faithful from various Christian denominations, attended the event.

During the homily, Cardinal Arborelius emphasized the importance of having a good

shepherd. He encouraged Bishop Goyarrola in the important task ahead of him. He wanted to underscore the role of the laity in ensuring that the Catholic Church continues to be a source of light in the Nordic countries, saying, "As a member of Opus Dei, you will know how to highlight and foster this important mission."

After the ordination, Bishop Goyarrola greeted the clergy of Finland and, quoting Pope Francis, said, "If shepherds 'who smell of the sheep' are needed everywhere, here we need to smell of reindeer and give our lives for everyone." Bishop Goyarrola greeted many of the attendees after the celebration.

24 November 2023 (Helsinki, Finland)

After his time in Estonia, Msgr. Ocáriz returned to Helsinki. In the morning, he had a conversation with

the Apostolic Nuncio, Msgr. Julio Murat, and with the future bishop, Raimo Goyarrola. In the afternoon, he had two catechetical meetings with more than 80 people at centers of Opus Dei in the Finnish capital.

Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz mentioned that he has had the good fortune of having travelled to more than 60 countries now, as the Prelate, and when he accompanied Don Javier Echevarría. He observed that the centers of Opus Dei in each country have their own culture and way of life, "but I have always found a common denominator: in every place, I have enjoyed the same sense of family."

During one of the get togethers, the Prelate recalled that "all Christians have to transmit the joy of the Gospel; each one with the people around them. We can always share the serenity that comes from faith,

without waiting to be perfect. We can give more than we are, because we give Jesus Christ."

One of the attendees noted that Pope Francis often talks about helping the needy, and asked who they are.

"Those who have material or spiritual needs," the Prelate said. "We all need God's help. And spiritual help is received primarily in the sacraments. We receive it in order to give it, to share it with others. That's why the Christian life is opposed to selfishness or indifference."

He also encouraged them to pray with the Gospel: "To better understand the Lord, the first thing is the Gospel. We can't take it for granted. Because every time we read it, we read the living Word. We understand that it is challenging us today, now."

**23 November 2023 (Tallinn,
Estonia)**

The Prelate arrived in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, by boat. Estonia is a small country in northern Europe with around 8,000 Catholics, and Opus Dei's work there began in 1996.

Msgr. Ocariz had lunch with several men of the Work who live in Estonia, Latvia, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Lithuania (who had come to Tallinn for this meeting) at the Tatari Üliõpilaskodu student residence.

Later, at the Rävala Kultuurikeskus university residence, he had a gathering with women from Tallinn, Riga, Vilnius, and Kaunas, who shared their personal experiences of Christian witness and the laity's evangelizing task. He also greeted several families of faithful of Opus Dei, as well as individuals who participate in activities organized by Opus Dei. In the afternoon, he spoke with supernumeraries, cooperators, and some friends.

In all these meetings, he repeatedly asked for prayers for the Pope and his intentions, urging participants to consider how the Holy Father bears not only the weight of the Church but also many of the world's problems. He encouraged them to continue praying for peace, especially in the Holy Land and Ukraine. Faced with the challenge of building the Church in a country where Catholics are a small minority, he emphasized the importance of faith and hope, personal prayer, friendship, and engagement with families. He reminded and encouraged the faithful of Opus Dei to care especially for fraternity, inviting them to meditate on the words of the first letter of Saint John: *We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love our brethren* (1 Jn 3:14).

**22 November 2023 (Helsinki,
Finland)**

On Wednesday at noon, Msgr. Fernando Ocariz arrived in Helsinki, Finland. The following day, he traveled by boat to Tallinn, Estonia, to visit Opus Dei centers, greet members of the Work, and meet with families and friends of those involved in the Catholic formation activities offered there. He will return to Helsinki on Friday.

On Saturday, he will attend the episcopal ordination of Raimo Goyarrola, a priest of Opus Dei who will be consecrated as the bishop of Helsinki at 11:00 in St. John's Church. Several bishops from the area and other regions, as well as representatives of churches and Christian denominations present in the territory, will participate.

Before returning to Rome on Sunday, Msgr. Ocariz will celebrate Eucharistic benediction and renew the consecration of Opus Dei to the

Sacred Heart of Jesus. This act is performed in centers of Opus Dei on the solemnity of Christ the King.

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