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Video summary of the Prelate's visit to Chile

From July 24-30, the Prelate met with members and friends of Opus Dei in Chile. On his last day he visited the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, where Saint Josemaría had visited 50 years ago.

08/20/2024

The Prelate of Opus Dei in Chile

From 24-30 July, the Prelate had several encounters with families and

young people who participate in activities inspired by Saint Josemaría's teachings.

- Before the trip
 - 24 July: Arrival to Santiago de Chile
 - 25 July: With the Archbishop of Santiago & gathering with young people
 - 26 July: Class for professors & gathering with young people
 - 27 July: Gatherings with supernumeraries, cooperators, and young people
 - 28 July: Gathering with families
 - 29 July: Visiting Trigales and PuenteMaipo schools
 - 30 July: At the Sanctuary of the Immaculate Conception
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Tuesday 30 July

On his last day in Chile, Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz visited the Sanctuary of the Immaculate Conception atop Cerro San Cristóbal, where a sculpture of the Blessed Virgin watches over and protects the city of Santiago. Fifty years ago, St. Josemaría had prayed the rosary there. As soon as he got out of the car, the Prelate prayed a *Salve Regina* to the Immaculate Conception.

The rector of the Sanctuary, Fr. Jaime Tocornal, then approached him, shared the history of the Sanctuary, and gifted him a book. He mentioned that three saints had visited it: St. Alberto Hurtado (a Chilean saint), St. John Paul II, and St. Josemaría.

After praying before the sculpture of the Immaculate Conception, they took photos and greeted the people present. On the way back, Msgr.

Ocáriz and his companions stopped for a few minutes at the statue of St. Josemaría on the street of the same name. There, he greeted Maribel, there on behalf of the gardeners in charge of the place.

In the mid-afternoon, with the Andes visible from the airplane window, the Prelate of Opus Dei departed for Lima, where he will stay until August 8.

Monday 29 July

On Monday morning, the Prelate visited the Trigales and PuenteMaipo schools, located in the Puente Alto commune, a low-income area of Santiago. These schools opened their doors for the first time in 2018 and 2014, respectively.

Before arriving at Trigales School, Msgr. Ocariz stopped at the Family Center of the Necedal Foundation, which both schools belong to. The center also gathers collaborators and neighbors from the schools in the La Pintana commune, offering courses, a legal clinic, and mental health services. The Father's visit was prompted by an invitation from Ricardo and Millaray (a couple involved in the center) in the gathering with families on Sunday: they invited the Father to visit and bless a statue of the Holy Family.

When he arrived at Trigales, Msgr. Fernando Ocariz was welcomed by the school authorities, the Necedal Foundation, teachers, and administrative staff. Some students presented him with an image of the Virgin of Carmen, painted not with brushes but with 7,300 fingerprints, each accompanied by the recitation of a Hail Mary. A few steps further,

he greeted a group of students preparing to receive their first communion this year. He took the opportunity to tell them that the Lord already accompanies them and will do so in an even more intense way when they receive the sacrament, saying, “He loves you so much, and he is waiting for you in the Eucharist.”

Later, a group of students from the orchestra workshop gave a small performance with classical instruments. At the end, Msgr. Ocariz remarked that music is an expression of beauty “which leads to thinking of God, who is the ultimate beauty.”

He then went to the place where the school's future oratory will be built. There, he blessed an image of St. Joseph and another of our Lady, which will preside over a garden in the school.

At PuenteMaipo, his first meeting was with the robotics team, which recently won a breakthrough award at the World Robotics Championship in the USA. In the courtyard, another group of young people from the school orchestra played a theme from the movie Jurassic Park. Later, during recess, the Prelate planted a Chilean beech tree as a memento of his visit.

Sunday 28 July

People from all over Chile (from Arica, a city on the border with Peru, to Punta Arenas, over two thousand kilometers south of capital) gathered for the Father's meeting with families on Sunday.

It took place against a backdrop of mountains and sea, with a replica of

the image of our Lady from the Sanctuary of Lo Vásquez – the "Purísima" (Most Pure) – which is touring various apostolic initiatives of Opus Dei in thanksgiving for St. Josemaría's pilgrimage there 50 years ago. Thousands of attendees prayed the Angelus before the image, and the orchestra from Necedal School and the choir from Almendral School performed a musical piece.

The main theme of many of the Prelate's responses was the need for prayer: "The first thing for everyone is prayer," he told them. How can we safeguard our children's faith? Prayer. How can we face the difficulties of daily life and raising a family with joy? Prayer. How can we accompany the elderly, sick, and dying? Prayer, both praying for the people and teaching them to pray. He recommended praying the Holy Rosary, emphasizing the great value of repeating this prayer before the

Virgin Mary, the "omnipotent suppliant." He also noted that we draw strength from the Eucharist – the center and root of Christian life – because in it, the redemption of the world is made present.

The Agricultural School Las Garzas presented the Prelate with a bottle of wine they produce there, named "Don Adolfo" in memory of Fr. Adolfo Rodríguez, the first member of Opus Dei in the country and one of the school's main supporters.

A group of families from the Nocedal Foundation's Family Center shared that, inspired by a letter from the Father expressing his closeness and prayers for those affected by the severe fires in Viña del Mar, 40 families from La Pintana and Puente Alto went to help and accompany the victims. Msgr. Ocariz encouraged them to provide understanding and

affection along with material assistance.

Friday 26 July

More than 300 professors listened attentively to the Prelate of Opus Dei in a class he gave at the Universidad de los Andes, at the foot of the mountains the university is named after.

The class was the first activity of Msgr. Ocáriz's third day in Chile. He is honorary rector of the university, and he spoke to its professors about the elements that form a "Christian identity," including putting people first, caring for others, seeking faith and reason in harmony, love for freedom, authority as service, collegiality, and justice and public life.

“Universities were born under the inspiration of Christianity.

Ultimately, the desire to know and to deepen our knowledge of the world and of people is profoundly Christian.” The Prelate explained that Christians come to know God in their search for truth.

Christian identity, a concept that he summarized as “identification with Jesus Christ,” is both institutional and personal. “The primacy of the person is paramount,” he said. In every educational campus with a Christian identity, at least one nucleus of personal Christian life is needed to enliven the structure, he explained.

Speaking about the struggle for professional excellence, the Prelate reminded his listeners that Christ is perfect God and perfect man. “What is Christian is human,” he added, explaining that making an effort to work well is an integral part of a

Christian identity. He also referred to the collegiality, or shared decision-making, that must exist in universities with a Christian identity.

The rector, José Antonio Guzmán, spoke before the class, alluding to the student body (8,900 undergraduates, 2,100 graduate students, and 13,800 students in continuing education) and reminding everyone that St. Josemaria used to say, "dream, and your dreams will fall short."

At the end of the class, the rector presented the prelate with the Gold Medal, a distinction that he said had been awarded to very few people, and that represents their great affection for the prelate of Opus Dei.

In the afternoon, the Father met with hundreds of young people who participate in Opus Dei's formational activities. The get together took place in Tabancura College in Santiago, in the same hall where St. Josemaría

spoke to a group of Chileans about the life of faith, apostolate and the search for sanctity in daily realities 50 years ago.

“We are apostles. We have to love people. *All* people are the object of God's love,” he told the young attendees. He added that there needs to be true friendship if they want to share the experience of prayer with their friends.

He talked to them about the need to place oneself in the presence of God and to pray for others, telling them that the experience of prayer should be shared in a simple, natural way.

The gathering also included traditional Chilean music; a group of students recited “Payas,” a type of improvisational picaresque musical poetry. At the end, they presented the Prelate with a poncho, a traditional sheep's wool blanket with a thick,

dense weave, making it long-lasting and cold- and water-resistant.

When he was asked about the key features of Opus Dei, Msgr. Ocariz talked about the centrality of the Eucharist: “Everything revolves around the Eucharist.” He also spoke about having a relationship with God rooted in a sense of divine filiation, which (among other things) gives rise to the family atmosphere in the centers and homes of people of the Work. And he reminded them that sanctifying work is the hinge of all our tasks.

One of the last young people to speak told him about a social initiative by a group of young people. The prelate told them that the human person naturally tends to seek the good of others, and supernatural grace increases this natural tendency: “We have a great light, therefore; we have the responsibility to go out to others.

The key is to see Jesus Christ in others. Do not stay still, do not sit still. We can usually do more than we think we can.”

[\(go to top\)](#)

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Thursday 25 July

On Thursday morning, Msgr. Ocariz visited the Archbishop of Santiago, Bishop Fernando Chomalí. Also in attendance at the meeting were Msgr. Alberto Lorenzelli, the Vicar General of the Archdiocese, and Fr. Juan Ignacio Schramm, the Episcopal Vicar of the northern zone. Bishop Chomalí gave the Prelate a medal of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and a book.

Afterward, the Father, accompanied by a small group, walked to the

Cathedral, which is adjacent to the Archdiocese's headquarters. He prayed in the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament. While touring the church, they passed by the image of the Apostle James, the patron saint of the city, whose feast day was being celebrated that day. They also met a group of young people from the city of Talca who had traveled to the capital for a gathering that afternoon. The Prelate spent some time with them and took a photo with the group.

Next, they went to the Parish of El Sagrario, where the image of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Patroness of Chile, is located, and he prayed there for a few minutes. Fr. Adolfo Rodríguez, the first priest sent by Saint Josemaría to start Opus Dei in Chile, had prayed in front of the image the day after arriving in the country in 1950.

In the afternoon, Msgr. Ocariz met with more than 350 young women in one of the auditoriums of the Universidad de los Andes.

Responding to questions from the attendees, he explained that the key to happiness in this life is having a heart in love with Jesus Christ. He also pointed out that in the face of difficulties or discouragement, we can turn to God, calling him "*my Father*," trusting that we are his children and members of his family.

The Prelate encouraged the attendees to inspire others to collaborate in works of service to others, because we are all responsible for the world we live in. He invited them to "dream" of the good in their lives and others', encouraging them to live a happy life, full of love for God, even in times of suffering, because thinking of God's love for us helps us face our sorrows.

The gathering including a few songs (one group sang a melody to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and a young woman played "Alfonsina y el mar" on the piano) and gifts (a small donkey representing 1,000 hours of study offered for the fruits of the Father's journey and some handcrafted shoes).

At the end, the Prelate invited the attendees to be generous in their prayers for the Pope, the Church, and the Archbishop of Santiago, who he had visited in the morning.

[\(go to top\)](#)

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Wednesday 24 July

At 7:10 am on Wednesday, the plane carrying Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz, prelate of Opus Dei, landed on

Chilean soil. A group of families awaited him there. "We gave him a big, big wake-up call," commented one of the mothers present. And indeed, they had prepared a couple of songs to welcome him. The first song they sang was "Contracorriente," composed by one of the girls from the family group, with lyrics dedicated to young people. The second was the iconic song "Si vas para Chile," composed by Chito Faró and performed by the group Los Huasos Quincheros, which others sang to Saint Josemaría years ago.

The Father approached each family with great affection to greet and converse with them. Some families gave him homemade cookies, others flowers, and letters. When he came to the Johnson Estévez family (one of the founding families of the newly established Pedregales school), they presented him with a chest

containing stones from the school, asking him to bless the fledgling initiative.

(go to top)

Before the trip

The visit takes place in the context of the 50th anniversary of Saint Josemaría's trip to several Latin American countries.

In a letter dated 15 July, the prelate wrote: "In a few days, I will embark on a trip to some South American countries, starting in Chile. As with everything, I count on the help of your prayer."

Msgr. Ocáriz will meet with families on Sunday, 28 July, at 12:00 pm. This meeting will be presided over by the image of the Virgin of Lo Vásquez,

which will be visiting various social and apostolic works of Opus Dei during those days. This pilgrimage of the "Purísima" ("Mother Most Pure") began when Father César Flores, vice-rector of the Shrine of Lo Vásquez, contacted the vicar of Opus Dei in Chile, Father Álvaro Palacios, to offer a replica of the image for a pilgrimage commemorating the 50th anniversary of Saint Josemaría's visit to Lo Vásquez. "We want the Purísima of Lo Vásquez to visit Saint Josemaría Escrivá and his work today," he explained.

On 30 July, Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz will continue his pastoral journey to Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela.

(go to top)

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