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Msgr. Ocáriz: only God quenches our thirst for the infinite and the desires of our hearts

Homily by the Prelate of Opus Dei, Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz, on the liturgical feast of Saint Josemaría, delivered at the parish of Saint Eugene (Rome).

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We just heard in the Gospel that “the crowd was pressing in on Jesus to

hear the word of God” (Lk 5:1). They were standing by the lake, and Christ chose to step into a boat and move a little way from the shore. The Lord knew the hearts of those people perfectly; He understood that each of them, in one way or another, needed his teaching to shed light on their lives.

Reflecting on this passage, Saint Josemaría remarked that what happened two thousand years ago continues to happen today: all people “want to hear God's message, even though outwardly they may not show it;” everyone, even those who lack the words or the strength to express it, feel a “longing to quench their thirst with the teachings of our Lord” (*Friends of God*, no. 260). This thirst for the infinite shows itself in many ways, though not all attempts to quench it truly satisfy the heart. We may have had the experience of wasting time pursuing a kind of

happiness built solely on material goods, success, or comfort. Yet we know that only God gives meaning to all things and fulfils the deepest desires of our hearts.

Countless people, upon discovering the Christian life, have found a joy that is profound and enduring. That is why the scene narrated in the Gospel is not merely a moment of the past. Each of us carries within our soul a deep longing that only the Lord can fulfil. We can ask God to help us recognise in ourselves and in others this yearning for his face, these signs of a thirst for Christ. And we can ask for the grace to convey his true image to those around us: the image of that Christ who steps away slightly from the shore so that everyone, even those furthest away, might see Him and hear his voice.

At the end of this Gospel passage, Jesus calls Peter, James, and John to

follow Him. It is striking to realise that just a few years later, their apostolic zeal had carried the Good News to many of the major centres of the ancient world, including Rome itself. Even while facing persecution and misunderstanding, the first Christians knew that the world belonged to them. “This is the missionary spirit that must animate us,” Pope Leo XIV comments, “not closing ourselves off in our small groups, nor feeling superior to the world. We are called to offer God’s love to everyone, in order to achieve that unity which does not cancel out differences but values the personal history of each person and the social and religious culture of every people” (Pope Leo XIV, Homily, 18 May 2025).

In the second reading, Saint Paul clearly expresses the conviction that filled the early Christians with confidence: “If we are children, then

we are heirs as well” (Rom 8:17). Indeed, this world is part of our inheritance. In the first reading, we are told that God placed man in the world “to till it and take care of it” (Gen 2:15). This world is ours; it is at once our home and our task.

For this reason, knowing ourselves to be children of God, we cannot walk through this life as strangers in a strange land, nor roam our streets as if treading on unknown ground. The world is ours because it belongs to our Father God. We are called to love this world, not some hypothetical one in which we might think we would be more comfortable. Beside us there may be people who seem somewhat unfamiliar to us, because we have not been able to give them the attention they deserve. Perhaps there is the first place to begin turning back toward those people, as Jesus would.

When Saint Josemaría urged us to passionately love the world, he often warned against that “mystical wishful thinking” that sets conditions on the ground it wishes to evangelise, thinking: “If only things were different.” We can ask the Lord to grant us the ability to embrace the mission He has entrusted to us with enthusiasm, with the eagerness of a child working alongside their brothers and sisters to take care of their own home.

Today, as we especially turn our gaze to Saint Josemaría, we can take as our example his faith and boldness in undertaking ventures that seemed impossible, at a time that in many respects was far more complicated and difficult than our own. Let us allow ourselves to be inspired by that confidence, which leads us to love this world we have received as an inheritance, and to strive to satisfy

the longing for Christ in so many of the people we encounter.

For this, as for everything, we rely particularly on the mediation of our Mother, Holy Mary, who watches over the happiness of all her children with loving and patient care.

Amen.

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