

**Homily for the Feast of Saint Josemaría Escrivá  
Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception  
Springfield, Illinois**

**June 26, 2017**

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My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, today we celebrate the feast day of Saint Josemaría Escrivá. It is quite fitting that we gather here to give thanks and praise to God for the gift of his Saints, but also for the gift of the grace that the Lord gives to us in our daily lives through this most perfect form of thanksgiving, the Eucharist.

Saint Josemaría was born in Barbastro, Spain on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 1902. He was the second of six children and was born into a devoutly Catholic family. Throughout his formative years, Josemaría's parents taught him many important lessons regarding his faith, but especially about the importance of seeking the grace of God in his daily life through frequent reception of Holy Communion and a close relationship with the Blessed Mother. As Josemaría grew up, he soon experienced great loss and hardship through the death of two brothers and the financial ruin of his family. Despite what many would see as a difficult situation that would

lack hope, Josemaría clung to our Lord and His Blessed Mother, and eventually discerned that the Lord was calling him to serve the Church as a priest.

In 1928, while Josemaría was spending time on retreat, he devoted some of his prayer to meditation on the movement of the spirit in his life over the past several years. Through this prayer, the Lord revealed the mission with which he was to be entrusted: that of founding Opus Dei, Latin for “The Work of God,” an institution within the Church aimed at helping people from all walks of life to seek personal holiness through the sanctification of ordinary work in the midst of the world. After this transformative experience, Saint Josemaría dedicated much of his time and energy into the growth and development of Opus Dei, as well as writing a number of books to help the members of Opus Dei live the charism of the institution in their lives, the most well-known of these books being *The Way*, a book made up of short writings that are intended for reflection and prayer.

Following the founding of Opus Dei, Saint Josemaría untiringly taught that ordinary life is the very place and means of our sanctification.

An example of his urging the faithful to live the discipleship way of life was his homily at the University of Navarra, when he taught that

Everyday life is the true setting for your lives as Christians. Your ordinary contact with God takes place where your fellow men, your yearnings, your work and your affections are. There you have your daily encounter with Christ. It is in the midst of the most material things of the earth that we must sanctify ourselves, serving God and all mankind.<sup>1</sup>

This and similar messages found in the many writings and homilies of Saint Josemaría have become the basis of understanding discipleship in the midst of the world today. As a matter of fact, the Fathers of the Second Vatican council embraced the teachings of Saint Josemaría as they relate to this topic of ordinary people living in the world being called to sainthood. This influence can clearly be seen in the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* which states:

A secular quality is proper and special to laymen...the laity, by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God. They live in the world, that is, in each and all of the secular professions and occupations. They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven. They are called there by God so that by

exercising their proper function and being led by the spirit of the gospel they can work for the sanctification of the world from within, in the manner of leaven. In this way they can make Christ known to others, especially by the testimony of a life resplendent in faith, hope, and charity.<sup>2</sup>

My dear brothers and sisters, it is my hope as we make our way through the process of discerning the Lord's call for us as His disciples through our Diocesan Synod here in the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois, that we, like the council fathers, might reflect on the teachings of Saint Josemaría and come to seek the Lord in the ordinary aspects of our daily lives. May we always seek to sanctify ourselves through our service of God and those around us.

May God give us this grace. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Saint Josemaría Escrivá, "Passionately Loving the World," n. 113.

<sup>2</sup> Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*, n. 31.