

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

**June 26, 2023**

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My dear brothers and sisters in Christ: Today we celebrate the Memorial of Saint Josemaría Escrivá, the founder of Opus Dei. We give thanks and praise to God for the gift of this great saint as we continue our observance of this Year of the Eucharist in our diocese. At this Mass and every time we gather to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we give thanks for the gift of the grace that the Lord gives to us in our daily lives through this most perfect form of thanksgiving, the Holy Eucharist.

In his address to the pilgrims who had gathered for the canonization of St. Josemaría in Rome on October 7, 2002, Pope St. John Paul II offered a concise summary of the philosophy that guided this great saint in his tireless work for the Church. The Holy Father said the following:

St Josemaría was profoundly convinced that the Christian life entails a mission and an apostolate: we are in the world to save it with Christ. He loved the world passionately, with a “redemptive love” (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 604).

Precisely for this reason his teachings have helped so many ordinary members of the faithful to discover the redemptive power of faith, its capacity to transform the earth.<sup>1</sup>

This capacity to transform the earth is not to be found so much in performing extraordinary actions. Rather, it is by doing our ordinary, everyday actions with great love and attention as a way of glorifying God and so inviting Him to multiply the effects of our offerings in the world around us.

St. Josemaría wrote in one of his homilies that “[t]he sanctification of ordinary work is, as it were, the hinge of true spirituality for people who, like us, have decided to come close to God while being at the same time fully involved in temporal affairs.”<sup>2</sup> The Lord does not invite us to abandon the world in order to sanctify it, but, in harmony with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, he wants us to “work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven.”<sup>3</sup>

We see this in the Gospel passage that we just heard. In this account of the calling of the first disciples, we see Christ calling them in the context of their ordinary occupation as fishermen. Before the Lord came to them, the disciples had experienced disappointing results and were ready to give

up for the night. But Jesus encouraged them to not give up, telling Simon Peter: “Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch” (Luke 5:4). Skeptical, yet obedient to the Lord’s command, they did so and experienced an abundant catch.

Even though the Lord would call these disciples from their ordinary lives of catching fish to “catching men” (Luke 5:10), He does not in any way downplay the significance of ordinary work, especially when it is done with an eye toward giving glory to God through that work, thus letting Him multiply what we offer in order to bring about that transformation in the world so that all things, from the ordinary to the extraordinary, are ordered toward Christ and His Kingdom.

Sanctifying our ordinary work is not limited to our professional careers and activities. Every aspect of our lives is an opportunity for us to practice that sanctification. The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council embraced and promoted this teaching that ordinary people living in the world are called to sainthood, explaining this clearly in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *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>4</sup>

My dear brothers and sisters, it is my hope as we continue to implement the call to discipleship and stewardship to which we committed ourselves at our Fourth Diocesan Synod here in the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois, that we would reflect on the teachings of Saint Josemaría and strive for holiness in the ordinary aspects of our daily lives. Following his example, may we seek to become saints through our service of God and those around us.

May God give us this grace. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Pope St. John Paul II, *Address in Praise of St. Josemaría Escrivá – Founder of Opus Dei*, 7 October 2002.

<sup>2</sup> St. Josemaría Escrivá, *Friends of God*, 61.

<sup>3</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, §31.

<sup>4</sup> Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*, n. 31.