

Feast days in February



FEBRUARY 2
Presentation of the Lord



FEBRUARY 11
Our Lady of Lourdes



FEBRUARY 23
Chair of Peter

FROM THE CHAPLAINCY



Dear Woodrose Parents

In the January newsletter, we informed you about the Elective Congress on January 23 to elect the new prelate of Opus Dei. Thanks to your prayers, Msgr. Fernando Ocariz, the Auxiliary Vicar of Opus Dei and *custos* of the previous prelate, Bishop Javier Echevarria for 22 years, was elected. Pope Francis confirmed his election on the same day.

The Prelate with a roman family.
(Photograph: Ismael Martínez Sánchez)

Two days after his election, the new Prelate of Opus Dei, Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz, answered questions from journalists at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross about the challenges the Church faces and the upcoming General Congress of Opus Dei. He said that he felt *"calm and at peace"* with his appointment as Prelate, convinced that *"if God has willed it, He will give me the help I need to carry it out, with the prayer of the Prelature's faithful and of so many friends."*

"Youth, family, and poverty are challenges for today's Christians."

"IF GOD HAS WILLED IT, HE WILL GIVE ME THE HELP I NEED TO CARRY IT OUT."

He gave thanks to God, to the electors, and to Pope Francis for the "confidence" they have shown in him. *"When I stop and think about the treasures passed on to us by Saint Josemaría, Blessed Alvaro and the most recent Prelate, all of whom were of such great human and supernatural stature, I feel very unworthy. I trust in the prayer of so many people and I am sure that God will help me."*

Speaking about Opus Dei's apostolic work over the next few years, the Prelate said that *"we face the same challenges as all of today's Christians."* He specifically referred to the youth, family, the fight against poverty, and care for the sick. *"In the Prelature, a wide-ranging effort is being made to help families,"* he said. *"Pope Francis continually insists on pastoral care for the family, as we've seen with the Synod and the apostolic letter Amoris Laetitia. We want to follow his exhortations."*

"WE SHOULDN'T BE PEOPLE WHO LOOK FOR CONFRONTATION WHICH LEADS NOWHERE AND CAN EVEN BE UNCHARITABLE."

Monsignor Ocáriz pointed out that the timing of his appointment coincides with the week the Church traditionally dedicates to praying for Christian unity. *"This brings to mind something Pope Francis often says: we need to build bridges. We shouldn't be people who look for confrontation, which leads nowhere and can even be uncharitable. I am not talking about 'irenicism': it is*

Who is the new Prelate of Opus Dei?



Msgr. Ocariz was born in Paris in 1944 to a Spanish family who had been exiled because of the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s.

He studied physical sciences at the University of Barcelona, and received a licentiate in theology from the Pontifical Lateran University in 1969. In 1971 he was ordained a priest, and earned a doctorate in theology from the University of Navarre.

The new prelate was among the founding professors of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, and has served as a consultor to several dicasteries of the Roman Curia. He has authored several works on theology and philosophy.

possible to be friends and have different ideas. The bridge of friendship can also lead to a communion of ideas."



Monsignor Mariano Fazio accompanied the new Prelate at the press conference. In the afternoon of January 23, he was the one who communicated the decision of the elective congress to the Holy Father. As Monsignor Fazio related: *"Pope Francis signed the appointment immediately. He said it was an important moment for Opus Dei, because it would be the first time that someone who had not worked closely with Saint Josemaria would be guiding it. He asked us to be very faithful to the Founder's spirit, and to courageously confront the challenges of the future."* Pope Francis sent the new Prelate a medallion of our Lady as a gift.

First pastoral letter of Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz for the faithful of the prelature of Opus Dei.

My dear children: may Jesus watch over my daughters and sons for me!

You will understand how moved I am in writing you, and calling you my daughters and sons for the first time. Right from the evening of Monday the 23rd, your sisters and brothers in Rome began to call me Father. They did so with a naturalness and spontaneity that surprised and moved me. While it has taken me almost a week to bring myself to call them my daughters and sons, for I feel some confusion, at the same time that I give thanks for their courageous and simple fidelity. We are all sisters and brothers in Jesus Christ, at the same time that I am now Father of the multitude of people in Opus Dei throughout the whole world: an immense number of laity, men and women from the most varied walks of life, and many priests, some incardinated in the prelature, others in a great variety of dioceses where they depend only on their respective bishops, but who also form part of this little family that is closely united in serving the Church.

During these days those words of Saint Paul to the Corinthians have come to mind, which emphasize that God's call always precedes us, that he doesn't pay heed to our foolishness and weakness (see 1 Cor 1:27). I give thanks to God for the serenity he has given me and that I can find no explanation for if not for your prayers and closeness. I ask—and you should also ask—our Lady that we all may always be closely united, with the unity that the Holy Spirit, infinite Love, grants us.

The memory of Don Javier, second successor of Saint Josemaría, is constantly with me. It is not a thought about the past; it is part of the history of God's mercies, which in some way are always alive in the Church. To recall Don Javier is right away to call to mind Saint Josemaría and Blessed Alvaro. It is to recall with deep gratitude a man who gave his life to carry out the Work as the good son of two

saints, and who now continues helping us from heaven.

“Every generation of Christians needs to redeem, to sanctify its own time. To do so, it must understand and share the concerns of other men and women—one's equals—in order to make known to them, with a gift of tongues, how they are to correspond to the action of the Holy Spirit, to the permanent outflow of the riches in Christ's heart. We Christians are called upon to announce, in our own time, to this world of ours in which we live, the message—old and at the same time new—of the Gospel” (Christ is

Passing By, no. 132). My daughters and sons, it is up to us, every day, to incarnate these apostolic yearnings of our Founder, to make a reality of that motto of his: *Omnes cum Petro ad Iesum per Mariam*.

With all my affection, I bless you,

Your Father

Fernando

Rome, January 31, 2017

