



# Saint Josemaria Escriva

Founder of Opus Dei

[Home](#) - [Documentation](#) - [Homilies](#) - Homily by Robert Finn, Bishop of Kansas City-St. Joseph

## Homily by Robert Finn, Bishop of Kansas City-St. Joseph

*Most Reverend Robert W. Finn, Bishop of Kansas City-St. Joseph*

Kansas City-St. Joseph - 2010.7.5

### Homily for Mass of St. Josemaria Escriva

June 26, 2010 – Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish

Dear Friends,

Once again we come together in praise and thanks to God on this Feast of St. Josemaria Escriva, to thank God for the prayers and example of this simple priest – a man of our own time, who nonetheless is a saint for all ages.

I know that one of the primary things that has attracted me to St. Josemaria is his humble devotion, his fidelity to the Church at a time when there was much upheaval, and his simple plan to help us see all of our most everyday tasks and efforts, our daily work, as a path to holiness.

You know so well, you who have read *The Way, Furrow, The Forge*, that these little bits of sage wisdom – always consonant with the Gospel – represent a thousand little ways to holiness in the midst of the world. St. Josemaria, as a young priest, prayed fervently, “*ut videam!*” Lord, that I may see! And he was given such a profound God’s-eye view of the way that ordinary men and women, lay faithful, family men and women, and diocesan priests as well, could be holy in accord with God’s plan: not by leaving the world but precisely by living close to God in the world – and offering all that happens, and all they do as a gift to God for the end of sanctification.

The unique insight of our saint was that he knew quickly and with a supernatural resolution that all were called to holiness. We need not go to a monastery – though some may indeed be called by God to go there. We need not become ordained, though we ought not resist if God calls us to the clerical state. We can reach heaven surely and safely by being contemplatives in the middle of the

world. This is so important because, in fact it is the vocation of probably 95% of humanity!

Yes, understandably we give a lot of prayer and attention to the vocations of priesthood and consecrated life. Please don't stop praying for these vocations. But what is God's plan for the spiritual transformation of the world? It is for all of us to live a way, a path, a '*plan of life*' which constantly reminds us of God's presence, steeps us in prayer, many small mortifications and loving sacrifices, interior conversion, sound direction, growth in virtue, life of the Sacraments, good reading of Sacred Scripture and other holy books.

Emblematic of the simplicity and depth of St. Josemaria's vision for holiness is the truth that God is our Father. You recall perhaps the story of St. Josemaria, traveling on the streetcar after a long day with many challenges, In mid-October, 1931, while in a streetcar, "I felt the action of God, bringing forth in my heart and on my lips, with the force of something imperatively necessary, this tender invocation: *Abba! Pater!* ('Abba! Father!'). Probably I made that prayer out loud. And I walked the streets of Madrid for maybe an hour, maybe two, I can't say; time passed without my being aware of it.

People must have thought I was crazy. I was contemplating, with lights that were not mine, that amazing truth. It was like a lighted coal burning in my soul, never to be extinguished."

Dear friends, Jesus, of course, gave this to the world. One of His greatest revelations was that He has a Father, and that we can call Him "Our Father". But in this moment the power of this light struck the Founder, and He could never be the same. But this truth is not for a few. It is for all the sons and daughters. It is for you and me. WE have a Father. We must never forget it. We must, again and again, surrender ourselves onto His lap, into His arms.

One of the virtues that St. Josemaria talks about frequently is "naturalness." It is not exactly in St. Thomas Aquinas' list of virtues, but it is a combination of humility and joy, detachment and generosity. We should live and work within the world, not thinking it evil, but desiring to make it holy. We don't want or need any extravagant things, but always beautiful and well-ordered. We don't cultivate any idiosyncrasies. We don't want to appear odd or flamboyant. We are just quietly at home in doing our work, in caring for others' needs, in reaching out in apostolate, in being cheerful and not giving in to self-pity or sadness.

Think about how you can grow in this virtue of naturalness so that God can use

you without drawing any attention to yourself. In our holiness we must have zeal and piety, but never in such a way that we want to draw attention to our self. We are, as St. Josemaria said, like God's donkey, quietly pulling the load and doing the work.

Pope Benedict has used this same image in the bear tamed by St. Corbinian. An ancient tradition tells that the first Bishop of Freising, St Corbinian (died in 730), set out for Rome on horseback. While riding through a forest he was attacked by a bear that tore his horse to pieces. Corbinian not only managed to tame the animal but also to make it carry his baggage to Rome.

Bishop Joseph Ratzinger placed this image on his coat of arms, saying he himself was that bear. The pack saddle is the burden of his Episcopate. You and I must be willing to carry the load for love of God and love of the Church. We are God's pack animals, his donkey, St. Corbinian's bear.

Our gathering for Holy Mass this morning is a joyful praise to God for a Godly man who taught so many everyday folks a way to work for God. His name "Josemaria" makes us think of the Holy Family, Joseph and Mary, who, in obedience to God's plan, made a home for the Savior of the world. With the prayers of Mary and Joseph and of our patron St. Josemaria Escriva, may we persevere in whatever God asks of us. Let us renew our joy in doing always the *Work of God*.  
St. Josemaria, pray for us!

[Most Reverend Robert W. Finn, Bishop of Kansas City-St. Joseph](#)

June 26, 2010 – Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish