

Addresses

Asturias (Spain)

July 4, 2008

*In the Holy Grotto of
Our Lady of Covadonga*

I am very grateful to His Excellency the Archbishop for the opportunity to pray at the feet of this statue of our Lady, before whom St. Josemaría prayed with such devotion on various occasions.

Our Founder asked Holy Mary to make a reality in each of us what he so often, with his words and writings, pointed to as the deepest meaning of our life: to find Jesus, to follow him very closely, to converse with him, and to make him known.

If we want a shortcut that will bring us safely to our Lord, to the only way which is our Lord Jesus Christ (for he himself said that he is *the Way, the Truth and the Life*¹), let us have recourse to holy Mary. She is the person who had the great privilege, the great responsibility and the great good fortune of dealing most closely with our Lord. Be very Marian, and you will be much closer to Christ. We need to learn the lesson that, at every moment, she leads us to seek Christ. Also when for any reason we have lost him or not stayed as close to him as we should. She has all the gentleness of fidelity, all the decisiveness of dedication, all the joy that comes from fulfilling one's duty.

Therefore placing ourselves in her hands is a sure path for drawing closer to Jesus, and for recognizing the need—without allowing any human respects—to make our whole life apostolic. In today's world we Catholics have to be aware of the responsibility that we bear, because, without any greater merits than the goodness and mercy of Jesus, he has chosen us so he could count on us in this one true Church of his; therefore these are moments to live with consistency.

Yes, it is a moment to live with consistency and to preach by our life. This doesn't mean doing anything strange. If we look at our daily response, we will see so many small points where we could be closer to Christ, live more closely to him. This Archdiocese is currently celebrating the Year of the Cross. Let us not fear the Cross. St. Josemaría, that great "traveling contemplative," as the Holy See called him, in the decrees of beatification and canonization, has shown us a marvelous path: *lux in cruce, requies in cruce, gaudium in cruce*, light, rest and joy in the cross.

The true light brings us the saving cross. At times it is hard, but it is so lovable to find oneself on Jesus' throne. *Requies in cruce*.... Here we can rest, laying aside the small and great concerns that we have. Sense our Lord's goodness, place yourself in his wounds, and you will feel understood. And finally, *gaudium in cruce*. May we always experience that

1. Cf. *Jn* 14:6.

to be with Christ is to be close to the cross, and to be close to the cross is to be with Christ, which is the infinite happiness that he wants to bring us, asking us to learn how to renounce our "I," our ego. An "I" that, as St. Josemaría used to say, is the greatest friend that we have, and at the same time also our greatest enemy. So let us strive to reject everything that separates us from God and to carry this God of ours with us.

I don't want to end without asking you for something, and not only now, but constantly: that you accompany the Pope, that you love him with your whole soul, that you feel yourselves children of such a good common Father, and that you also accompany him on the trip he is about to undertake. He did not expect our Lord to place this burden on his shoulders. He has accepted it with full generosity, and this acceptance has led him to want to serve the souls who are awaiting him.

On this long, tiring trip that he is about to make, which requires a change of schedule with respect to Rome, he needs our affection and our prayer, and he needs our small sacrifices offered up for the Pope. I can tell you that he holds all of us in his soul, and looks for a generous response from each of us. He wants us to help him to carry the weight of the Church; remember what he said in his homily at the beginning of his Pontificate: my program is not to do my own will, but to do God's will.²

For with Mary, with the saints in heaven and (I say this with all sincerity and also with necessity) with the intercession of St. Josemaría, we pray for the Church, for the Pope, for the bishops, for priests, for seminarians, and for the people of God. All of us here are the Church! No one here is more a part of the Church than the others. You too are the Church and have the responsibility of wanting to sanctify yourselves in order to sanctify, to sanctify yourselves in order to help, to sanctify yourselves in order to fill this world of ours with God's joy.

May God bless you. I am now going to spend some time in prayer.

Rome

August 7, 2008

*At the closing of the sessions
of the Tribunal of the Prelature
on the Cause of Bishop Álvaro
del Portillo, Pontifical University
of the Holy Cross*

After the death of Bishop Álvaro del Portillo, the existence of a clear and consistent reputation for holiness was immediately evident. From all parts of the world we received hundreds of personally signed accounts of spiritual and material favors received through his intercession. Many people from all over the world, including persons who do not belong to the Prelature, are thus convinced that Don Álvaro is in heaven,

2. Cf. Benedict XVI, Homily at the Inaugural Mass of the Petrine ministry, April 24, 2005.