

they help us to be better disposed to go to receive grace in the sacrament of Confession, and to do so with greater ease and docility.

In Confession Christ completely forgives us our mortal sins. There is no other means of having our mortal sins forgiven, except in extraordinary circumstances, though the Church does teach that an act of perfect contrition remits sins, including mortal sins. However, who can be certain that his contrition is perfect? We need to know for certain that God has forgiven us, who listens to us, who cares for us, and who takes away the sadness of our failures through the sacrament of Confession.

What message does St. Josemaría give to the young people who have been in Cologne these days?

I would summarize St. Josemaría's message in a few words he wrote as a very young priest. He was writing for everybody, adults and older people as well as young people, because any age is a good time to find God. But if he were alive today he would remind young people of what he wrote in those early years of the life of Opus Dei, when difficulties abounded. He wrote: "Upon whether you and I live our lives as God wants—don't forget it!—many great things depend."

Many great things depend on the good behavior of the young people who have been in Cologne these days: many great things for their souls and for the souls of the people who are in touch with them, and also for their

countries and for souls all over the world.

Madrid August 26, 2005

Interview granted to the COPE radio network.

After the pilgrimage of so many young people from all over Germany, the Pope will meet with them today. What stands out among your experiences during these days?

What stands out, in the first place, is a reality that we can almost touch with our hands: that the Church is alive, that the Church is young. Not that we have to consider only the young people, because those who are older, the mature, the elderly, the sick, are equally young. But it is also a marvelous reality that young people from all over the world want to find and follow Christ.

What are the positive results that we can expect from this gathering with young people?

I think it will bear a lot of fruit. In the first place, a personal conversion is taking place in each of them because they have set out to seek the truth. Specifically, after having lived through such a moving experience, being so close to the Pope, who is a great servant of the Church, they should be apostles of what they have seen here, in the places where they live.

Today's youth are the victims of a relativism that runs counter to the defense of life, marriage and the family. How should an ordinary Catholic confront this situation?

He has to be, as any other Catholic, loyal to the faith. Each of us clearly has a great need to get to know Catholic doctrine, because we can't hold fast to what we don't know.

In any case, even though we don't digest everything, I specifically recommend that people should study the Catechism of the Catholic Church. If it seems too large or extensive to someone, we now have the Compendium, which is a beautiful source book for attaining a solid and rich formation. This doctrinal formation equips us very well for dealing with those around us. Not only in order to defend Catholic doctrine but also to defend the life and dignity of those who are in error.

Suppose that a friend comes up to us and says: "Listen, I want to change, I want to get closer to God but I don't know how to do it. What do I have to do?" What should we tell him?

To look at the one who is his true friend, at Jesus. To strive to get to know him. I, in the words of a saint that I had the privilege of living alongside for twenty-five years, would tell him: Get to know Jesus, who is your best Friend, the Friend who never betrays, the Friend who understands you, the Friend who forgives you, the Friend who is constantly coming to seek you. In that way, by getting to know him in the Gospel, you will realize that you are

one more person in the Gospel scene, and that you can live as close to Christ as did those who listened to him and followed in his footsteps, even in the most difficult moments.

The listeners to the Cope network are following closely all the news from World Youth Day. What message would you like to send to the Spanish audience?

I think that we all uphold one another. I would like to tell the listeners of Cope that, precisely because they want to have a solid Christian formation, a human formation consistent with Christianity, they should support these young people with their prayer, with their mortification—which is not a matter of doing extraordinary things, although at times our Lord can ask for that. Specifically, with their ordinary life, their work, their life lived face to face with God, they can help these young people in the meeting they are now having with Christ through the dedication of the Pope, who is completely generous. He has come to Germany specifically to seek out these young people, as did John Paul II. He came to seek them so that they can also answer consistently, responsibly. The Pope relies on them. May they learn to rely on Christ, who is the one the Pope represents.

Thank you very much, Bishop Javier.

Rome
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Interview granted to La Gaceta de los Negocios.