

ST. JOSEMARIA INSTITUTE PODCAST

## DIVINE FILIATION: OUR CAUSE FOR JOY

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In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. My Lord and my God, I firmly believe that you are here, that you see me, that you hear me. I adore you with profound reverence. I ask your pardon for my sins, and the grace to make this time of prayer fruitful. My Immaculate Mother, St. Joseph my father and lord, my guardian angel, intercede for me.

This time of prayer during this day of recollection is tremendously important for us. After all, it is our chance to prepare ourselves for the feast of Christmas, for the coming of the Christ child. It is a perfect time for us to consider one of the deepest realities of our life, which is our divine filiation. That phrase, divine filiation, means something as basic as it can get, our affiliation, the fact that we are children of God. This is not just a topic, but rather the deepest truth about our identity. We are children of God, children of our Creator, our Father, our Redeemer, our Sanctifier.

Consider the words, these thrilling words that we will hear on Christmas Day. In the first place, words in the Divine Office, where St. Leo the Great says, “Christian, acknowledge your dignity, becoming a partaker in the divine nature.” Acknowledge your dignity. “Remember the head and the body of which you are a member. By the mystery of baptism, you were made a temple of the Holy Spirit.” These words really are thrilling.

Acknowledge, recognize, bask in your dignity, because you are a child of God, because you share in the divine nature. On Christmas Day, we will read these words from what used to be called the last gospel. Some of you might be old enough to remember that leading up until the mid 60s, this Gospel of St. John was read at the end of each Mass.

Where John begins by saying, “in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him. But to those who did accept him, he gave power to become children of God. Born not by natural generation, nor by human choice, nor by a man’s decision, but of God. And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.”

“He gave power to become children of God.” It is not just a nice, soothing phrase, but it is the deepest reality. This is the very core of our identity. We are His beloved children. This is the strength, the source of great strength, and great trust regardless of the appearances. This is especially important for us these days, as we continue to grapple with the pandemic. We are His beloved children. As St. Paul reminds us, for those who love God, all things, absolutely everything, works to the good.

Our divine filiation is a truth that the founder of Opus Dei, St. Josemaria, experienced in what you could call an earth-shattering way back in 1931, when he was all of 29 years old, alone in Madrid, very difficult circumstances. One day, the Lord showed him in a very, very intimate way, all that meant, all the consequences of being God’s child.

Later that, during those days, he was to write in his own personal diary, "It is necessary to be convinced that God is always near us. Too often we live as though Our Lord were somewhere far off where the stars shine. We fail to realize that he is also by our side, always."

And later, he was to elaborate on this point on this experience of his and it would become a point in that book of his called *The Way*, where he says, "For He is a loving Father. He loves each one of us more than all the mothers in the world can love their children, helping us and inspiring us, blessing, and forgiving. We have to be completely convinced, realizing it to the full, that Our Lord who is close to us and in Heaven is a Father and very much our Father."

So, what do we do with this, well, this earth-shattering fact? It's so very important that we see ourselves from God's point of view. As far as he is concerned, we are His delight. You recall those words of Jesus, the 15th chapter of St. John's gospel, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Remain in my love." We are called to set up permanent residence in His abode. And never stray from there.

The Lord goes on to say, "If you keep my commandments, you will abide in My love. Just as I have kept My Father's commandment and abide in his love, these things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you, and your joy may be full." Well, this imposes on us a very important obligation, which is to be permanently joyful.

We have not meant that not that many days leading up to Christmas, not that many days to get ready. This is the chance, this day of collection, to prepare ourselves to reject any, any anxiety, any of these bad vibes, so to speak. Because God the Father has every right to say to us, "Well, what about my love for you? What about my divine providence? Don't you trust me?"

We have to say to him, "I do trust you." We are His delight. One of the objections we could raise, we could say, "Yeah, but what about my faults? My limitations? What about this vision that I have of God, of being very so very stern, waiting to catch me making a mistake?" Well, that is what is known as a mistaken notion of God.

We're talking about an all merciful, all loving, all knowing, father of ours with an unfathomable depth of love for us, a love that is utterly unconditional. That is why it's so important that we acquire a whole new logic. That is to say, the logic that our personal worth does not depend on an impressive CV. On our brand, as we say now.

It does not have does not depend on what we have, how many talents we might have, the successes we've accumulated. Our personal worth depends on this love who has created us and who has big dreams for us. We ask the Lord right now in our own prayer to help us to absorb this logic, this way of looking at our lives, because it is so very important.

One of the consequences of dwelling on our divine filiation will be to acquire what is referred to as supernatural vision. In other words, learning how to see God's providence in everything. As we said just a few minutes ago, quoting St. Paul, "for those who love God, all things work towards the good."

Even if the appearances say the contrary to us, even if right now we're saying, "How can these things possibly work towards the good?" That is why the Lord wants us to make this resolution to have our eyes wide open, in order to discover all the growth that must be taking place on the inside these days.

This supernatural vision of ours will lead us to have a whole new approach to asking questions. For example, "How should I handle this or that situation?" Or even more basically, "What should I do with my life?" When we ask those questions, we have to realize we are not alone. Those questions necessarily have to lead us to turn to the One who created us, knowing that his plans are the best. Which is why even now during this time of prayer, we can be saying to him, "Jesus, what do you have in mind for me?"

There's a book that you probably have come across by Eugene Boylan, called *This Tremendous Lover*. It's a very important book. And at one point, he says, "The whole trouble is that we do not know what is good for us. What makes the trouble worse is that we think we do. We have our own plans for our happiness, and too often we merely regard God as somebody who will help us to accomplish them."

"The true state of affairs is just the opposite. God has his plans for our happiness and he is waiting for us to help him to accomplish those plans. And let us be quite clear about it: we cannot improve on God's plans." We ask the Lord right now, "What are you up to in my life, the life of all those in my household? Because that is the path that will lead to the greatest fruitfulness."

We ask the Lord to help us to develop the habit of thinking about this often, not just once a year, but often throughout the day. How interesting for us to realize that if we want to, we can spend much of the day, every day, responding to his presence, turning to him for wisdom, turning to him to please Him, responding to his love.

Furthermore, we have to realize that God is always following us. He's always accompanying us with his fidelity, even when it might seem that he has forgotten about us. God doesn't forget about anyone. Very important that we develop this deep, deep, permanent joy because joy is a necessary consequence of our divine filiation. It makes all the sense in the world.

We can hear St. Paul crying out to us, "If God is with us, who can be against us?" and here's someone who during his mission, living out his vocation, came up against unbelievable opposition. And yet he's crying out, "who can be against us?" It is the very same St. Paul who said to us, "Be filled with joy. I say it again, be joyful." Those who know that they are children of God, beloved children, they enjoy that dignity and that love immensely. St. Josemaria in this book that he wrote, called *Furrow*, says very simply, "Happy? The question made me think. Words have not yet been invented to express all that we feel – in the heart and in the will – when we know ourselves to be children of God."

Well, we ask Our Lady, our Mother, who's always accompanying us, to do whatever it takes to remind us often throughout the day, of our immense dignity, of our immense, immensely joyful and wonderful identity. We are God's children. Mary, obtain for us from your Spouse, the Holy Spirit, that joy that knows no bounds.

I thank you, my God, for the good resolutions, affections, and inspirations that you have communicated to me in this meditation. I ask your help in putting them into effect. My Immaculate Mother, St. Joseph my father and lord, my guardian angel, intercede for me. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. God bless you.



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