

ST. JOSEMARIA INSTITUTE PODCAST

OUR LADY, QUEEN OF PEACE

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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 you for pardon of my sins, and grace to make this time of prayer fruitful. My Mother Immaculate, St. Joseph my father and lord, my guardian angel intercede for me.

Today we begin our prayer focusing on the person of Our Lady as Our Lady Queen of Peace because today, on the second of May, we mark the anniversary of the dedication of the Church of Our Lady of Peace, which is the Prelatic Church of the Opus Dei Prelature in Rome.

St. Josemaria decided that this Church would be, as it were, the heart of the Prelature, the central church of the Prelature. And he also decided that it would be dedicated to Our Lady, Our Lady of Peace, Holy Mary of Peace. Or we might say: Our Lady, Queen of Peace.

So, we begin our prayer by looking to you, our Mother, you who are Queen of Peace, we've just begun the month of May, a month which is so beautiful, so fresh, so bright, because it's the month of our Mother. And during this month, we can, of course, contemplate Our Lady's person, Our Lady's personality, from many points of view.

We can meditate on Scripture, on Our Lady's vocation, above all her vocation as Mother, Our Lady's privileges, the different aspects of her personality, Our Lady as immaculately conceived, Our Lady as ever virgin, Our Lady assumed into Heaven, Our Lady, Queen. All of these privileges or all of these aspects of Our Lady's personality, stem from her motherhood, that you Mary are the Mother of God.

And in, and with, and through Christ, you're also our Mother, my Mother, and that, ultimately, is why you are the Queen of Peace. Because Christ Himself is our peace. True peace is Jesus. This actually is what St. Paul tells us in his letter to the Ephesians, chapter two. He says, "Christ, he is our peace."

So, when we look at you, Our Lady, Queen of Peace, we see in the contours of your face, we see in your smile, we see in the peace that you radiate, we see Christ, we see the mystery of Christ, we see the victory of love over hatred, we see the victory of life over death of goodness over sin. And that victory is definitive. It's forever. It's the great victory we're all celebrating these days, during the season of Easter.

And so, when we think of Our Lady, Queen of Peace, and when we contemplate you, we see you just full of joy, full of peace. And that joy and that peace is the peace that comes from Redemption, from salvation, from Our Lord's Cross and Death and Resurrection. And that's a peace that can never, ever be taken away. And that's also our peace.

As St. John Paul II said, "We are an Easter people, and alleluia is our song." So, we can say that the title of Our Lady, Queen of Peace, or Holy Mary of Peace, expresses the Paschal faith of the Church. It expresses our firm hope, our joy, our serenity, our conviction, our firmness in the faith that Jesus has truly triumphed.

Resurrexit sicut dixit, "he has risen, as he said," and that's why we share in the joy of Mary during this Easter season. We say, *Regina caeli, laetare, alleluia*, "Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia." Alleluia. So, in this advocacy of Mary, Queen of Peace, we read, we sense, we feel, we understand, all the joy of Redemption because Christ is our Peace.

Yes, indeed, Lord, You are our Peace. And in the spirit of prayer, we want to be close to You. We want to enter into intimate dialogue, trusting conversation with You, You who are truly our Peace. In fact, only in You does the human heart find Peace.

We all remember those classic words of St. Augustine, which are autobiographical, not only for him, but for all of us: "You have made us for yourself, Oh Lord, and our hearts are restless, until they rest in you." Jesus, that is so true for me and for everybody.

St. Paul, as I mentioned already, in the second chapter of the Ephesians, he talks about You, Lord, being our Peace. And in doing this, he is addressing those people who have come to the faith from outside of the Church. He says:

"But now, in Christ Jesus, you who once were far off, have been brought near in the Blood of Christ. For He is our Peace who has made us both one and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing in His flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that He might create in Himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the Cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end."

In some ways, we could say that, in this passage, St. Paul is giving us a portrait of the Church. The Church is the place, the space in which peace is effected by Christ's Redemption. The Church is the place of peace, the place of reconciliation. We might remember the phrase of St. Augustine. He talks about the Church as *mundus reconciliatus*, "the Church is the world reconciled."

The Church is the world insofar as the world has been reconciled with God. And Vatican II talks about the Church precisely in terms of peace, of reconciliation, of communion. The Church is the communion of God with men, and of men, of people, among themselves.

So, when we celebrate the feast of the dedication of a church, such as the Prelatic Church of Opus Dei, it seems to be very suitable that the title of the church would be “Our Lady, Queen of Peace” because what is the Church is not the place of peace, the place where the peace that You Lord, merited for us on the Cross pours forth. It pours forth.

What is the Church? The Church Universal is Christ’s peace, emanating down through history, down through the world. That’s what it is. Lord Jesus, as St. Paul says, You Yourself are our peace. Jesus, may I never get tired of contemplating you, of getting to know you, of deepening in your mystery, deepening in your beauty, deepening in your love.

To say that Jesus Christ is our Peace could give us many hours probably of fruitful prayer or fruitful contemplation. To call Jesus our Peace is to speak of an inexhaustible mystery, an immense and infinite ocean of love.

But we also notice, it’s important to bear it in mind, that the Lord brings us His Peace, as St. Paul says, through the Cross. “Strangers have been brought near in the blood of Christ,” he says. “You broke down the dividing wall of people through the Cross, and You did so in Your flesh.”

So, this peace is bought at a price, we might say. This peace is a fruit of Our Lord’s self-giving love. It’s a fruit of Our Lord’s oblation, of His offering. So, a church dedicated to Our Lady Queen of Peace is a church dedicated ultimately to that Redemption which comes about through the Cross.

And you might say the peace of Christ, the peace who is Christ, is made present every day in that church, in the Prelatic Church of Opus Dei and so many other churches throughout the world, that peaceful oblation, that saving offering. Jesus, you make peace through your Cross, and that gift of peace, that offering is made present in every celebration of the Eucharist, in every Mass.

And that’s what churches are dedicated for, so that they can be places of the sacred, of the Holy of Holies. And there’s nothing more holy, and more wonderful, or more sacred, Lord, than You in the mystery of your sacrifice, than the Eucharist.

Today on this feast of the dedication of the Church of Our Lady of Peace, of Holy Mary of Peace, of Our Lady, Queen of Peace, of course, we think too of St. Josemaria with gratitude, with affection, with warmth because he’s the one who designated that Church.

He built that Church, you might say, to be the central church of Opus Dei within the world. And It’s he who chose Our Lady as Queen of Peace to be the titular of the Church or the advocacy of that church. Today is a day therefore also to pray for the family of Opus Dei, to pray for the Work, which is just one, if you like, one little family within the much greater family of the Church.

And in that Prelatic Church, there are many things that speak to us of the family of Opus Dei. For example, the holy water font, on entering the Prelatic Church, is none other than the baptismal font in which St. Josemaria was baptized. In fact, his mother, and his sister, Carmen, were also baptized in that font.

There are also many other nice little personal details in the Prelatic Church. There's a candelabrum, which has fourteen votive candles lit, in the presence of the image of Our Lady, Queen of Peace. And St. Josemaria wanted those candles always to be lit, always to be lit, as a sign of reverence and love for Our Lady.

Interestingly, that candelabra was brought to St. Peter's Square and was on the altar when St. Josemaria was beatified and also when he was canonized. Beautiful mosaic above the main altar, which is a mosaic of Our Lady and the Child Jesus, surrounded by the Twelve Apostles, and two holy women, St. Martha, and St. Mary, two great friends of Our Lord.

And at the heart of the Prelatic Church under the main altar, is, of course, the tomb, the remains of St. Josemaria, of the father of the family. So, yeah, today we pray with gratitude for Opus Dei, for that family within the greater family of the Work, which is not a family closed in on itself, but rather, is there to support and to give life to the whole Church.

Like each one of the faithful of Opus Dei and each Christian, whether they have a vocation to Opus Dei or not, every single person is called to be leaven, is called to be a sower of peace and joy, somebody who spreads peace. St. Josemaria at times used to speak about the apostolic effect of Christians as being like a river of peace.

And he was echoing there some words of the prophet Isaiah in chapter 48, of the prophecy of Isaiah. In the Vulgate, the Latin term used is quasi fluvium pacis, "like a river of peace." And at times, as I say, St. Josemaria used to talk about our mission in the world, all of us, all the baptized, as being like that river of peace, to bring Christ's peace to the world.

That's what we all want to do. That's what we all want to share with other people, each in our own way, each in our own way. Our Lady Queen of Peace. Interesting, I was rereading recently the homily that the current Prelate of Opus Dei, Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz, gave when he entered the Prelatic Church for the first time as Prelate, at that Mass, a very special Mass.

And, in his homily, he glassed the Scripture and readings. And he started by saying, "Blessed be God, who has given peace to his people." He says, "These words that we have just heard in the first reading refer to the people of Israel. We can make use of them now to give thanks to God for the peace that is for us the unity of the work, the unity of the work that he grants us, and that we thank him for; a unity that is the font of true peace."

Well, indeed, Lord, we thank you for the unity that exists in the family of Opus Dei. And, indeed, the unity that exists in the whole Church. They're both parts of the one same mystery. It is, at the end of the day, it's the one unity. It's the unity, Lord, that You make through the Blood of your Cross.

And then the Prelate went on saying, "At the same time, we realize, and we should frequently reflect on it, that this peace is Jesus himself. As St. Paul writes, *ipse est enim pax nostra*, 'He is our peace.' That's Ephesians 2:14. Unity depends fundamentally on God's grace, which will never be lacking to us, but also on ourselves, and how closely united we are to Christ. He is our peace. He is the source of our unity in the Holy Spirit."

Well, Jesus, once again, I'm brought back to You in my prayer. I'm brought back to You as the cornerstone of every Church, and of the Church universal. You build unity on the mystery of your Passion, Death and Resurrection. And from Your open side, from Your pierced heart, flows out rivers of divine life, the water and the blood, the river of peace, we might say, that Isaiah speaks about.

Lord, I would like to be, and may we all be, sowers of peace and joy, wherever we are, in our own environment, in our own situation, in our own families. We all have our own way of spreading peace, of avoiding conflict. I suppose one way is simply praying for peace and praying for one another, perhaps praying especially for people who are, who we find difficult or who have a different point of view to us, praying for them.

And that way, overcoming any sense of negativity or judgmentalism on our part, and what could potentially be a negative reaction can become a work of charity. And even just a smile, how wonderful it is to smile. It might seem like a very simple thing to do, but well, as C.S. Lewis says somewhere, "The shortest line which unites two persons is a smile."

And that's true, to smile a lot. There's a holy man, a priest, Fr. Willie Doyle, a Jesuit who was an Army chaplain in the First World War whose cause for canonization has just been opened recently, in Ireland, St. Josemaria had a certain veneration for Willie Doyle.

And in one of his writings, Fr. Doyle says, "Keep smiling. It is a grand thing to cultivate a smile. Keep the corners of your mouth up, especially if you're in for an attack of the dumps. There are three D's to be avoided: the devil, the doctor, and the dumps. The devil, we all know, is bad enough. The doctor is very little better. And the dumps are the devil himself.

"So, I repeat, keep smiling. It is the very best remedy for gloom. The devil loves nothing better than a gloomy soul. It is his plaything." That's the typical humorless spiritual advice from Fr. Willie Doyle. And he's talking, when he talks about the dumps, he's referring to that expression, "Down in the dumps." When one is feeling sad. So, we can finish our meditation by gazing upon the smile of Our Lady.

There is a beautiful homily of Pope Benedict given at Lourdes on the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows in 2008, which is well worth praying about, the 15th of September, 2008. Our Lady's smile: he dwells on that in that homily. But in our prayer, we look at Our Lady, Queen of Peace. And we see in her smile, in the peacefulness of her smile, we see the triumph of Easter, we see the glory of the Resurrection. And let's finish our prayer now with some words from St. Josemaria himself, in one of his homilies:

"Mary, the holy Mother of our King, the queen of our heart, looks after us as only she knows how. Mother of mercy, throne of grace: we ask you to help us compose, verse by verse, the simple poem of charity in our own life and the lives of the people around us; it is 'like a river of peace.' For you are a sea of inexhaustible mercy: 'All streams run to the sea, but the sea is never full.'"

I thank you, my God, for the good resolutions, affections, and inspirations you have communicated to me in this time of prayer. I ask you for help to put them into effect. My Mother Immaculate, St. Joseph my father and lord, my guardian angel, intercede for me.



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