Romana is the bulletin of the Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei. These pages reprint documents of the Holy See directed to the entire Church, as well as those referring specifically to Opus Dei. It also provides news about the activities of the Prelate and the Prelature in the service of the Church and the local dioceses. Brief articles are included about some of the apostolic initiatives fostered by faithful of the Prelature within their profession and in society at large in their endeavor to infuse a Christian spirit into the secular sphere.

The contents of the bulletin do not provide an entire picture of Opus Dei’s activities, since the Prelature’s fundamental apostolate is that which its faithful carry out personally, guided by the Christian formation and spiritual assistance they receive from the Prelature. This apostolate takes place in the context of each person’s professional, social, and family setting, and its variety and creativity naturally cannot be reduced to a set of statistics.

Romana’s publication fulfills an express desire of St. Josemaría Escrivá. In choosing the title Romana for the future bulletin, St. Josemaría wished to emphasize the catholic and universal character of Opus Dei’s pastoral mission.
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Editorial

Of great significance for the Prelature in this half-year was the beginning of the diocesan phase of the canonical investigation into the life and virtues of Saint Josemaría’s first successor as head of Opus Dei, the Servant of God, Bishop Alvaro del Portillo, who died in Rome on March 23, 1994.

The opening of a Cause of canonization always stems from spontaneous devotion rooted in the living faith of the people of God. The Church, by her investigation, seeks to establish that this devotion is authentic and well-founded.

As Bishop Javier Echevarría recalled on March 20, 2004, during the opening session of the Prelature’s tribunal, “Bishop Alvaro del Portillo has truly left behind him ‘a particular legacy of admiration and affection’ (Apostolic Exhortation Pastores Gregis, no. 25),” which very quickly produced “eloquent signs of a wide-spread reputation for sanctity,” especially in the form of thousands of signed statements attributing spiritual and material favors to his intercession.

Having completed the requirements foreseen by the Normae servandae in inquisitionibus ab episcopis faciendis (February 7, 1983), nos. 10-14, and having verified the solidity of the evidence for the Christian exemplariness of Bishop Del Portillo’s life, the Prelate decided to begin the juridical investigation into his life and virtues. His address given at the opening of the tribunal on March 20 is found in this issue of Romana.[1] Several of its points are worth highlighting here.

First of all, we can note the rigor with which the requirements of the first phase of the investigation were carried out, and the decision to work in an unhurried manner, allowing ten years to pass since Bishop Del Portillo’s death before beginning the investigation, rather than being governed by the five-year waiting period foreseen by the canonical norms. During these years, publications have been prepared on his reputation for sanctity while still living, on favors granted after his death, on the biographical details of his life, and on his spiritual personality.
Secondly, Bishop Echevarría decided to ask his eminence Cardinal Camilo Ruini, the Vicar of His Holiness for the Diocese of Rome, to designate a tribunal from the Vicariate to hear certain witnesses, among them the Prelate himself, various members of the Prelature, and persons attached to the Roman Curia. Cardinal Ruini, after examining the documentation gathered during the past decade, in his address at the opening session of the Vicariate’s tribunal expressed his conviction that “this Cause of Canonization is well-founded. Bishop Del Portillo’s reputation for holiness, which gave all indications of being solidly based, precluded the need to wait any longer. Therefore I have given my approval to this project without any hesitation. The Bishop’s Conference of the province of Lazio, which I consulted, also gave its unanimous approval.”

On November 21, 2003, the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints authorized that the diocesan investigation would be carried out *aequaliter*, that is to say, with the same degree of competence, by the Vicariate of Rome’s tribunal and that of the Prelature. This explains why there were two opening ceremonies for the work of the tribunals: the first for the Vicariate’s tribunal, on March 5, 2004, in the Lateran Palace, and the second for the Prelature’s tribunal, on March 20, in the Palazzo dell’Apollinare.

Since many of the witnesses reside far from Rome, other tribunals will also be called upon to intervene. Thus tribunals from dioceses throughout the world will take part in the inquiry, which will make evident another characteristic note of Bishop Del Portillo and his work: that is, his services to the entire Church and his spirit of communion. In this regard some words of Cardinal Ruini in the address just mentioned are quite relevant: “We can highlight here the multi-faceted activity carried out by Bishop Del Portillo in the service of the Holy See. His deep pastoral experience gained at the side of Saint Josemaría, his proven human qualities, and his theological and juridical competence fitted him for multiple tasks. Thus, as far back as the pontificate of Pope Pius XII, he was named Consultor to the Sacred Congregation for the Religious. Pope John XXIII named him Consultor to the Sacred Congregation of the Council (1959-1966) and Qualifier of the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office (1960). During the Council he was chosen as one of the first ‘peritos’ or experts. He was
Secretary of the Commission on the Discipline of the Clergy and the Christian People, which drafted the decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, and Consultor for other Conciliar Commissions.

“Paul VI named him Consultor to the Pontifical Commission for the Revision of Canon Law, and later Consultor and Judge of the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office, in addition to confirming him as a Consultor to the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy. Pope John Paul II name him Consultor to the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of the Saints and to the Pontifical Counsel for Social Communication, as well as a member of the Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops in 1983. As a Pontifical appointee, he participated in the ordinary general assemblies of the Synod of Bishops ‘on the vocation and mission of the laity in the Church and in the world’ (1987) and ‘on the formation of priests’ (1990)... Another notable aspect of the work of Bishop Del Portillo in the service of the Church is the activity that he carried out during his numerous pastoral trips all over the world.”

We can be sure, as the Prelate of Opus Dei stated, that “the Cause of canonization of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo will bring many tangible benefits to Christians,” and that “through his life many people will discover the fatherly face of God, smiling on them, encouraging them, forgiving them.” This is the deepest significance of any Cause of canonization: the edification of souls, the good of the Church. This Cause will enable us to better appreciate the one who, as Cardinal Ruini said, was “the most faithful son” of Saint Josemaría, and who transformed his daily life into a continuous offering to God.

HOLY SEE

- The Roman Pontiff
- Review of Other Documents
The Roman Pontiff

Address to the Pontifical Academy for Life on the Tenth Anniversary of its Foundation (February 22, 2004)

"We wish to see Jesus" (Jn 12:21)

My dear young people!

1. This year 2004 is the final stage before the great event in Cologne, where the 20th World Youth Day will be celebrated in 2005. I therefore invite you to intensify your path of spiritual preparation by reflecting on the theme I have chosen for this 19th World Youth Day: "We wish to see Jesus" (Jn 12:21).

This is a request made to the Apostles one day by some "Greeks". They wanted to know who Jesus was. They had come not simply to see what kind of impression the man Jesus would make. Moved by great curiosity and a presentiment that they had found the answer to their deepest questions, they wanted to know who he really was and whence he came.

2. My dear young people, I want you too to imitate those "Greeks" who spoke to Philip, moved by a desire to "see Jesus". May your search be motivated not simply by intellectual curiosity, though that too is something positive, but be stimulated above all by an inner urge to find the answer to the question about the meaning of your life. Like the rich young man in the Gospel, you too should go in search of Jesus to ask him: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" (Mk 10:17). Mark the Evangelist states clearly that Jesus looked at him and loved him. You may remember another episode in which Jesus says to Nathaniel: "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you", drawing from the heart of that Israelite, in whom there was no guile (cf. Jn 1:47), a fine profession of faith: "Rabbi, you are the Son of God!" (Jn 1:49). Those who approach Jesus with a heart free of prejudice can quite easily come to have faith because Jesus himself has already seen them and loved them first. The most
sublime aspect of human dignity is precisely man's vocation to communicate with God in a profound exchange of glances that is life transforming. In order to see Jesus, we first need to let him look at us!

The desire to see Jesus dwells deep in the heart of each man and each woman. My dear young people, allow Jesus to gaze into your eyes so that the desire to see the Light, and to experience the splendour of the Truth, may grow within you. Whether we are aware of it or not, God has created us because he loves us and so that we in turn may love him. This is the reason for the unquenchable nostalgia for God that man preserves in his heart: "Your face, Lord, do I seek. Do not hide your face from me" (Ps 27: 8-9). That Face — we know — was revealed to us by God in Jesus Christ.

3. My dear young people, don't you too wish to contemplate the beauty of that Face? That is the question I address to you on this World Youth Day 2004. Don't be too hasty in your reply. First of all, create a silence within yourselves. Allow this ardent desire to see God emerge from the depth of your hearts, a desire that is sometimes stifled by the distractions of the world and by the allurements of pleasures. Allow this desire to emerge and you will have the wonderful experience of meeting Jesus. Christianity is not simply a doctrine: it is an encounter in faith with God made present in our history through the incarnation of Jesus.

Try by every means to make this encounter possible, and look towards Jesus who is passionately seeking you. Seek him with the eyes of the flesh through the events of life and in the faces of others; but seek him too with the eyes of the soul through prayer and meditation on the Word of God, because "The contemplation of Christ's face cannot fail to be inspired by all that we are told about him in Sacred Scripture" (Novo millennio ineunte, 17).

4. To see Jesus, to contemplate his Face, is an unquenchable desire, but it is a desire that man unfortunately may also deform. This is what happens with sin, because it is the very essence of sin to draw our eyes away from the Creator and to turn them towards what he has created.

Those "Greeks" in search of the truth would not have been able to approach Christ if their desire, animated by a free and voluntary act, had not been expressed through a clear decision: "We wish to see Jesus". To be
truly free means having the strength to choose the One for whom we were created and accepting his lordship over our lives. You perceive it in the depths of your heart: all that is good on earth, all professional success, even the human love that you dream of, can never fully satisfy your deepest and most intimate desires. Only an encounter with Jesus can give full meaning to your lives: "for you made us for yourself, and our heart finds no peace until it rests in you" (Saint Augustine, *The Confessions*, book 1, chapter 1). Do not let yourselves be distracted from this search. Persevere in it because it is your fulfilment and your joy that is at stake.

5. Dear friends, if you learn to discover Jesus in the Eucharist, you will also know how to discover him in your brothers and sisters, particularly in the very poor. The Eucharist received with love and adored with fervour becomes a school of freedom and charity in order to fulfil the commandment to love. Jesus speaks to us in the wonderful language of the gift of self and of love so great as to give our own life for it. Is that an easy thing? You know very well that it is not! It is not easy to forget our self, but if we do, it draws us away from possessive and narcissistic love and opens us up to the joy of a love that is self-giving. This Eucharistic school of freedom and charity teaches us to overcome superficial emotions in order to be rooted firmly in what is true and good; it frees us from self-attachment in order to open ourselves to others. It teaches us to make the transition from an *affective* love to an *effective* love. For love is not merely a feeling; it is an act of will that consists of preferring, in a constant manner, the good of others to the good of oneself: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lays down his life for his friends" (Jn 15:13).

It is with such inner freedom and such burning charity that Jesus teaches us to find him in others, first of all in the disfigured face of the poor. Blessed Teresa of Calcutta loved to distribute her "visiting card" on which were written the words: "The fruit of silence is prayer; the fruit of prayer is faith, the fruit of faith is love, the fruit of love is service, the fruit of service is peace". This is the way to meet Christ. Go out to meet all of human suffering spurred on by your generosity and with the love that God instils in your hearts by means of the Holy Spirit: "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Mt 25:40). The world is in urgent need of a great prophetic sign of fraternal
charity! It is not enough to "speak" of Jesus. We must also let him be "seen" somehow through the eloquent witness of our own life (cf. *Novo millennio ineunte*, 16).

Do not forget to seek Christ and to recognise his presence in the Church, which is like the continuation of his saving action in time and space. It is in the Church and through her that Jesus continues to make himself visible today and to allow humanity to come to him. In your parishes, movements and communities, be welcoming to one another in order to build communion among yourselves. This is the visible sign of the presence of Christ in the Church, in spite of being so often blurred by human sin.

6. Do not be surprised, then, when you meet the Cross on your way. Did not Jesus say to his disciples that the grain of wheat must fall into the earth and die in order to bear much fruit (cf. *Jn* 12:23-26)? He was indicating in this way that his life given unto death would bear fruit. You know this: after the resurrection of Christ, death shall no longer have the last word. Love is stronger than death. If Jesus accepted death on the cross, thus making it the source of life and the sign of love, he did so not out of weakness, or because he wished to suffer. He did so to gain our salvation and to allow us henceforth to take part in his divine life.

It is just this truth that I wished to bring to the minds of the young people of the world when I entrusted them with a large wooden Cross at the end of the Holy Year of the Redemption in 1984. Ever since then, it has traveled through different countries in preparation for your World Days. Hundreds of thousands of young people have prayed around this Cross. By laying at the feet of the Cross the burdens that had lain heavily upon them, they discovered that they were loved by God. Many of them also found the strength to change their lives.

This year, on the 20th anniversary of that event, the Cross will be solemnly welcomed in Berlin. From there it will commence its pilgrimage throughout Germany, concluding in Cologne next year. Today I wish to repeat the words I said to you back then: "My dear young people,... I entrust to you the Cross of Christ! Carry it throughout the world as a symbol of Christ's love for humanity, and announce to everyone that only
in the death and resurrection of Christ can we find salvation and redemption”.

7. Your contemporaries expect you to be witnesses of the One whom you have met and who gives you life. In your daily lives, be intrepid witnesses of a love that is stronger than death. It is up to you to accept this challenge! Put your talents and your youthful enthusiasm at the service of the proclamation of the Good News. Be the enthusiastic friends of Jesus who present the Lord to all those who wish to see him, especially those who are farthest away from him. Philip and Andrew brought those "Greeks" to Jesus: God uses human friendship to lead hearts to the source of divine charity. Feel responsible for the evangelisation of your friends and all your contemporaries.

Throughout her life, the Blessed Virgin Mary steadfastly contemplated the face of Christ. May she keep you forever under the gaze of her Son (cf. Rosarium Virginis Mariae, 10) and sustain you as you prepare for World Youth Day in Cologne. I ask you to set out towards it from now with responsible and active enthusiasm. The Virgin of Nazareth, the compassionate and patient Mother, will mould within you a contemplative heart, and teach you to fix your gaze on Jesus so that, in this world that passes away, you shall be prophets of a world that does not die.

With affection I impart a special blessing upon you that will accompany you on your way.

Torna ai contenuti

Message for the Thirty-Seventh World Day of Peace (January 1, 2004)

My words are addressed to you, the Leaders of the nations, who have the duty of promoting peace!

To you, Jurists, committed to tracing paths to peaceful agreement, preparing conventions and treaties which strengthen international legality!
To you, Teachers of the young, who on all continents work tirelessly to form consciences in the ways of understanding and dialogue!

And to you too, men and women tempted to turn to the unacceptable means of terrorism and thus compromise at its root the very cause for which you are fighting!

All of you, hear the humble appeal of the Successor of Peter who cries out: today too, at the beginning of the New Year 2004, peace remains possible. And if peace is possible, it is also a duty!

A practical initiative

1. My first Message for the World Day of Peace, in the beginning of January 1979, was centred on the theme: "To Reach Peace, Teach Peace".

That New Year’s Message followed in the path traced by Pope Paul VI of venerable memory, who had wished to celebrate on January 1 each year a World Day of Prayer for Peace. I recall the words of the late Pontiff for the New Year 1968: "It would be Our desire, then, that this celebration take place each year as a sign of hope and promise, at the beginning of the calendar which measures and guides the journey of human life through time, in order that Peace, with its just and salutary equilibrium, will dominate the unfolding of history yet to come".[1]

Faithful to the wishes expressed by my venerable Predecessor on the Chair of Peter, each year I have continued this noble tradition by dedicating the first day of the civil year to reflection and to prayer for peace in the world.

In the twenty-five years of Pontificate which the Lord has thus far granted me, I have not failed to speak out before the Church and the world, inviting believers and all persons of good will to take up the cause of peace and to help bring about this fundamental good, thereby assuring the world a better future, one marked by peaceful coexistence and mutual respect.

Once more this year I feel bound to invite all men and women, on every continent, to celebrate a new World Day of Peace. Humanity needs now more than ever to rediscover the path of concord, overwhelmed as it is
by selfishness and hatred, by the thirst for power and the lust for vengeance.

The science of peace

2. The eleven Messages addressed to the world by Pope Paul VI progressively mapped out the path to be followed in attaining the ideal of peace. Slowly but surely the great Pontiff set forth the various chapters of a true "science of peace". It can be helpful to recall the themes of the Messages bequeathed to us by Pope Paul VI for this occasion. Each of these Messages continues to be timely today. Indeed, before the tragedy of the wars which at the beginning of the Third Millennium are still causing bloodshed throughout the world, especially in the Middle East, they take on at times the tone of prophetic admonishments.

A primer of peace

3. For my part, throughout these twenty-five years of my Pontificate, I have sought to advance along the path marked out by my venerable Predecessor. At the dawn of each new year I have invited people of good will to reflect, in the light of reason and of faith, on different aspects of an orderly coexistence.

The result has been a synthesis of teaching about peace which is a kind of primer on this fundamental theme: a primer easy to understand by those who are well-disposed, but at the same time quite demanding for anyone concerned for the future of humanity.

The various colours of the prism of peace have now been amply illustrated. What remains now is to work to ensure that the ideal of a peaceful coexistence, with its specific requirements, will become part of the consciousness of individuals and peoples. We Christians see the commitment to educate ourselves and others to peace as something at the very heart of our religion. For Christians, in fact, to proclaim peace is to announce Christ who is "our peace" (Eph 2:14); it is to announce his Gospel, which is a "Gospel of peace" (Eph 6:15); it is to call all people to the beatitude of being "peacemakers" (cf. Mt 5:9).

Teaching peace
4. In my Message for the World Day of Peace on 1 January 1979 I made this appeal: To Reach Peace, Teach Peace. Today that appeal is more urgent than ever, because men and women, in the face of the tragedies which continue to afflict humanity, are tempted to yield to fatalism, as if peace were an unattainable ideal.

The Church, on the other hand, has always taught and continues today to teach a very simple axiom: peace is possible. Indeed, the Church does not tire of repeating that peace is a duty. It must be built on the four pillars indicated by Blessed John XXIII in his Encyclical Pacem in Terris: truth, justice, love and freedom. A duty is thus imposed upon all those who love peace: that of teaching these ideals to new generations, in order to prepare a better future for all mankind.

Teaching legality

5. In this task of teaching peace, there is a particularly urgent need to lead individuals and peoples to respect the international order and to respect the commitments assumed by the Authorities which legitimately represent them. Peace and international law are closely linked to each another: law favours peace.

From the very dawn of civilization, developing human communities sought to establish agreements and pacts which would avoid the arbitrary use of force and enable them to seek a peaceful solution of any controversies which might arise. Alongside the legal systems of the individual peoples there progressively grew up another set of norms which came to be known as ius gentium (the law of the nations). With the passage of time, this body of law gradually expanded and was refined in the light of the historical experiences of the different peoples.

This process was greatly accelerated with the birth of modern States. From the sixteenth century on, jurists, philosophers and theologians were engaged in developing the various headings of international law and in grounding it in the fundamental postulates of the natural law. This process led with increasing force to the formulation of universal principles which are prior to and superior to the internal law of States, and which take into account the unity and the common vocation of the human family.
Central among all these is surely the principle that *pacta sunt servanda*: accords freely signed must be honoured. This is the pivotal and exceptionless presupposition of every relationship between responsible contracting parties. The violation of this principle necessarily leads to a situation of illegality and consequently to friction and disputes which would not fail to have lasting negative repercussions. It is appropriate to recall this fundamental rule, especially at times when there is a temptation to appeal to the *law of force* rather than to the *force of law*.

One of these moments was surely the drama which humanity experienced during the Second World War: an abyss of violence, destruction and death unlike anything previously known.

*Respect for law*

6. That war, with the horrors and the appalling violations of human dignity which it occasioned, led to *a profound renewal of the international legal order*. The defence and promotion of peace were set at the centre of a broadly modernized system of norms and institutions. The task of watching over global peace and security and with encouraging the efforts of States to preserve and guarantee these fundamental goods of humanity was entrusted by Governments to an organization established for this purpose — the *United Nations Organization* — with a *Security Council* invested with broad discretionary power. Pivotal to the system was *the prohibition of the use of force*. This prohibition, according to the well-known Chapter VII of the *United Nations Charter*, makes provision for only two exceptions. The first confirms the *natural right to legitimate defence*, to be exercised in specific ways and in the context of the United Nations: and consequently also within the traditional limits of *necessity* and *proportionality*.

The other exception is represented by the *system of collective security*, which gives the Security Council competence and responsibility for the preservation of peace, with power of decision and ample discretion.

The system developed with the *United Nations Charter* was meant "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind".[4] In the decades which followed, however, the division of the international community into opposing blocs, the cold war in one part of the world, the outbreak of
violent conflicts in other areas and the phenomenon of terrorism produced a growing break with the ideas and expectations of the immediate post-war period.

* A new international order*

7. It must be acknowledged, however, that the United Nations Organization, even with limitations and delays due in great part to the failures of its members, has made a notable contribution to the promotion of respect for human dignity, the freedom of peoples and the requirements of development, thus preparing the cultural and institutional soil for the building of peace.

The activity of national Governments will be greatly encouraged by the realization that the ideals of the United Nations have become widely diffused, particularly through the practical gestures of solidarity and peace made by the many individuals also involved in *Non-Governmental Organizations* and in *Movements* for human rights.

This represents a significant incentive for a reform which would enable the United Nations Organization to function effectively for the pursuit of its own stated ends, which remain valid: "humanity today is in a new and more difficult phase of its genuine development. It needs a *greater degree of international ordering* ".[5] States must consider this objective as a clear moral and political obligation which calls for prudence and determination. Here I would repeat the words of encouragement which I spoke in 1995: "The United Nations Organization needs to rise more and more above the cold status of an administrative institution and to become a moral centre where all the nations of the world feel at home and develop a shared awareness of being, as it were, a *family of nations* ".[6]

*The deadly scourge of terrorism*

8. Today international law is hard pressed to provide solutions to situations of conflict arising from the changed landscape of the contemporary world. These situations of conflict frequently involve *agents which are not themselves States* but rather entities derived from the collapse of States, or connected to independence movements, or linked to trained criminal organizations. A legal system made up of norms established down the centuries *as a means of disciplining relations between sovereign States* finds
it difficult to deal with conflicts which also involve entitites incapable of being considered States in the traditional sense. This is particularly the case with terrorist groups.

The scourge of terrorism has become more virulent in recent years and has produced brutal massacres which have in turn put even greater obstacles in the way of dialogue and negotiation, increasing tensions and aggravating problems, especially in the Middle East.

Even so, if it is to be won, the fight against terrorism cannot be limited solely to repressive and punitive operations. It is essential that the use of force, even when necessary, be accompanied by a courageous and lucid analysis of the reasons behind terrorist attacks. The fight against terrorism must be conducted also on the political and educational levels: on the one hand, by eliminating the underlying causes of situations of injustice which frequently drive people to more desperate and violent acts; and on the other hand, by insisting on an education inspired by respect for human life in every situation: the unity of the human race is a more powerful reality than any contingent divisions separating individuals and people.

In the necessary fight against terrorism, international law is now called to develop legal instruments provided with effective means for the prevention, monitoring and suppression of crime. In any event, democratic governments know well that the use of force against terrorists cannot justify a renunciation of the principles of the rule of law. Political decisions would be unacceptable were they to seek success without consideration for fundamental human rights, since the end never justifies the means.

The contribution of the Church

9. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Mt 5:9). How could this saying, which is a summons to work in the immense field of peace, find such a powerful echo in the human heart if it did not correspond to an irrepressible yearning and hope dwelling within us? And why else would peacemakers be called children of God, if not because God is by nature the God of peace? Precisely for this reason, in the message of salvation which the Church proclaims throughout the world, there are doctrinal elements of fundamental importance for the
development of the principles needed for peaceful coexistence between nations.

History teaches that the building of peace cannot prescind from respect for an ethical and juridical order, in accordance with the ancient adage: "Serva ordinem et ordo servabit te" (preserve order and order will preserve you). International law must ensure that the law of the more powerful does not prevail. Its essential purpose is to replace "the material force of arms with the moral force of law",\footnote{[7]} providing appropriate sanctions for transgressors and adequate reparation for victims. This must also be applicable to those government leaders who violate with impunity human dignity and rights while hiding behind the unacceptable pretext that it is a matter of questions internal to their State.

In an Address which I gave to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See on 13 January 1997, I observed that international law is a primary means for pursuing peace: "For a long time international law has been a law of war and peace. I believe that it is called more and more to become exclusively a law of peace, conceived in justice and solidarity. And in this context morality must inspire law; morality can even assume a preparatory role in the making of law, to the extent that it shows the path of what is right and good".\footnote{[8]}

Down the centuries, the teaching of the Church, drawing upon the philosophical and theological reflection of many Christian thinkers, has made a significant contribution in directing international law to the common good of the whole human family. Especially in more recent times the Popes have not hesitated to stress the importance of international law as a pledge of peace, in the conviction that "the harvest of justice is sown in peace by those who make peace" (\textit{Jas} 3:18). This is the path which the Church, employing the means proper to her, is committed to following, in the perennial light of the Gospel and with the indispensable help of prayer.

\textit{The civilization of love}

10. At the conclusion of these considerations, I feel it necessary to repeat that, for the establishment of true peace in the world, \textit{justice must find its fulfilment in charity}. Certainly law is the first road leading to peace, and people need to be taught to respect that law. Yet one does not arrive at
the end of this road unless justice is complemented by love. Justice and love sometimes appear to be opposing forces. In fact they are but two faces of a single reality, two dimensions of human life needing to be mutually integrated. Historical experience shows this to be true. It shows how justice is frequently unable to free itself from rancour, hatred and even cruelty. By itself, justice is not enough. Indeed, it can even betray itself, unless it is open to that deeper power which is love.

For this reason I have often reminded Christians and all persons of good will that forgiveness is needed for solving the problems of individuals and peoples. There is no peace without forgiveness! I say it again here, as my thoughts turn in particular to the continuing crisis in Palestine and the Middle East: a solution to the grave problems which for too long have caused suffering for the peoples of those regions will not be found until a decision is made to transcend the logic of simple justice and to be open also to the logic of forgiveness.

Christians know that love is the reason for God's entering into relationship with man. And it is love which he awaits as man's response. Consequently, love is also the loftiest and most noble form of relationship possible between human beings. Love must thus enliven every sector of human life and extend to the international order. Only a humanity in which there reigns the "civilization of love" will be able to enjoy authentic and lasting peace.

At the beginning of a New Year I wish to repeat to women and men of every language, religion and culture the ancient maxim: "Omnia vincit amor" (Love conquers all). Yes, dear Brothers and Sisters throughout the world, in the end love will be victorious! Let everyone be committed to hastening this victory. For it is the deepest hope of every human heart.


[7] (7) BENEDICT XV, Appeal to the Leaders of the Warring Nations, 1 August 1917: AAS 9 (1917), 422.


Torna ai contenuti

The Holy Father's Holy Thursday Letter to Priests (March 28, 2004)

Dear Priests!
1. It is with great joy and affection that I write you this Holy Thursday Letter, following a tradition which began with my first Easter as the Bishop of Rome twenty-five years ago. Our annual encounter through this Letter is a particularly fraternal one, thanks to our common sharing in the Priesthood of Christ, and it takes place in the liturgical setting of this holy day marked by its two significant celebrations: the morning Chrism Mass, and the evening Mass in Cena Domini.

I think of you first as you gather in the cathedrals of your different Dioceses around your respective Ordinaries for the renewal of your priestly promises. This eloquent rite (which) takes place before the blessing of the Holy Oils, especially the Chrism, and is a most fitting part of the Chrism Mass, which highlights the image of the Church as a priestly people made holy by the sacraments and sent forth to spread throughout the world the good odour of Christ the Saviour (2 Cor 2:14-16).

At dusk I see you entering the Upper Room for the beginning of the Easter Triduum. It is precisely to that "large room upstairs" (Lk 22:12) that Jesus invites us to return each Holy Thursday, and it is there above all that I most cherish meeting you, my dear brothers in the priesthood. At the Last Supper, we were born as priests: for this reason it is both a pleasure and a duty to gather once again in the Upper Room and to remind one another with heartfelt gratitude of the lofty mission which we share.

2. We were born from the Eucharist. If we can truly say that the whole Church lives from the Eucharist ("Ecclesia de Eucharistia vivit"), as I reaffirmed in my recent Encyclical, we can say the same thing about the ministerial priesthood: it is born, lives, works and bears fruit "de Eucharistia" (cf. Council of Trent, Sess. XXII, canon 2: DS 1752). "There can be no Eucharist without the priesthood, just as there can be no priesthood without the Eucharist" (cf. Gift and Mystery. On the Fiftieth Anniversary of My Priestly Ordination, New York, 1996, pp.77-78).

The ordained ministry, which may never be reduced to its merely functional aspect since it belongs on the level of "being", enables the priest to act in persona Christi and culminates in the moment when he consecrates the bread and wine, repeating the actions and words of Jesus during the Last Supper.
Before this extraordinary reality we find ourselves amazed and overwhelmed, so deep is the humility by which God "stoops" in order to unite himself with man! If we feel moved before the Christmas crib, when we contemplate the Incarnation of the Word, what must we feel before the altar where, by the poor hands of the priest, Christ makes his Sacrifice present in time? We can only fall to our knees and silently adore this supreme mystery of faith.

3. "Mysterium fidei ", the priest proclaims after the consecration. The Eucharist is a mystery of faith, yet the priesthood itself, by reflection, is also a mystery of faith (cf. ibid., p.78). The same mystery of sanctification and love, the work of the Holy Spirit, which makes the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ, is at work in the person of the minister at the moment of priestly ordination. There is a particular interplay between the Eucharist and the priesthood, an interplay which goes back to the Upper Room: these two Sacraments were born together and their destiny is indissolubly linked until the end of the world.

Here we touch on what I have called the "apostolicity of the Eucharist " (cf. Encyclical Ecclesia de Eucharistia, 26-33). The sacrament of the Eucharist-like the sacrament of Reconciliation-was entrusted by Christ to the Apostles and has been passed down by them and their successors in every generation. At the beginning of his public life, the Messiah called the Twelve, appointed them " to be with him " and sent them out on mission (cf. Mk 3:14-15). At the Last Supper, this "being with" Jesus on the part of the Apostles reached its culmination. By celebrating the Passover meal and instituting the Eucharist, the divine Master brought their vocation to its fulfilment. By saying " Do this in memory of me ", he put a Eucharistic seal on their mission and, by uniting them to himself in sacramental communion, he charged them to perpetuate that most holy act in his memory.

As he pronounced the words "Do this..." Jesus' thoughts extended to the successors of the Apostles, to those who would continue their mission by distributing the food of life to the very ends of the earth. In some way, then, dear brother priests, in the Upper Room we too were called personally, each one of us, "with brotherly love" ( Preface of the Chrism Mass ), to receive from the Lord's sacred hands the Eucharistic Bread and to
break it as food for the People of God on their pilgrim way through time towards our heavenly homeland.

4. The Eucharist, like the priesthood, is a gift from God "which radically transcends the power of the assembly" and which the assembly "receives through episcopal succession going back to the Apostles" (Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 29). The Second Vatican Council teaches that "the ministerial priest, by the sacred power that he enjoys... effects the Eucharistic Sacrifice in the person of Christ and offers it to God in the name of all the people" (Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 10). The assembly of the faithful, united in faith and in the Spirit and enriched by a variety of gifts, even though it is the place where Christ "is present in his Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations (Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 7), is not by itself able to celebrate the Eucharist or to provide the ordained minister.

Quite rightly, then, the Christian people gives thanks to God for the gift of the Eucharist and the priesthood, while praying unceasingly that priests will never be lacking in the Church. The number of priests is never sufficient to meet the constantly increasing demands of evangelization and the pastoral care of the faithful. In some places of the world the shortage of priests is all the more urgently felt since today the number of priests is dwindling without sufficient replacements from the younger generation. In other places, thank God, we see a promising spring-time of vocations. There is also a growing awareness among the People of God of the need to pray and work actively to promote vocations to the priesthood and to the consecrated life.

5. Vocations are indeed a gift from God for which we must pray unceasingly. Following the invitation of Jesus, we need to pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest (cf. *Mt* 9:37). Prayer, enriched by the silent offering of suffering, remains the first and most effective means of pastoral work for vocations. To pray means to keep our gaze fixed on Christ, confident that from him, the one High Priest, and from his divine oblation, there will be an abundant growth, by the work of the Holy Spirit, of the seeds of those vocations needed in every age for the Church's life and mission.
Let us pause in the Upper Room and contemplate the Redeemer who instituted the Eucharist and the priesthood at the Last Supper. On that holy night he called by name each and every priest in every time. He looked at each one of them with the same look of loving encouragement with which he looked at Simon and Andrew, at James and John, at Nathanael beneath the fig tree, and at Matthew sitting at the tax office. Jesus has called us and, along a variety of paths, he continues to call many others to be his ministers.

From the Upper Room Christ tirelessly seeks and calls. Here we find the origin and the perennial source of an authentic pastoral promotion of priestly vocations. Let us consider ourselves, my brothers, the first ones responsible in this area, ready to help all those whom Christ wishes to associate to his priesthood to respond generously to his call.

First, however, and more than any other effort on behalf of vocations, our personal fidelity is indispensable. What counts is our personal commitment to Christ, our love for the Eucharist, our fervour in celebrating it, our devotion in adoring it and our zeal in offering it to our brothers and sisters, especially to the sick. Jesus the High Priest continues personally to call new workers for his vineyard, but he wishes from the first to count on our active cooperation. Priests in love with the Eucharist are capable of communicating to children and young people that "Eucharistic amazement" which I have sought to rekindle with my Encyclical Ecclesia de Eucharistia (cf. No. 6). Generally these are the priests who lead them to the path of the priesthood, as the history of our own vocations might easily show.

6. In the light of this, dear brother priests, I would ask you, among other initiatives, to show special care for altar servers, who represent a kind of "garden" of priestly vocations. The group of altar servers, under your guidance as part of the parish community, can be given a valuable experience of Christian education and become a kind of pre-seminary. Help the parish, as a family made up of families, to look upon the altar servers as their own children, like "olive shoots around the table" of Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life (cf. Ps. 127:3).
With the help of the families most involved and catechists, be particularly concerned for the group of servers so that, through their service at the altar, each of them will learn to grow in love for the Lord Jesus, to recognize him truly present in the Eucharist and to experience the beauty of the liturgy. Initiatives for altar servers on the diocesan or local level should be promoted and encouraged, with attention to the different age groups. During my years of episcopal ministry in Krakow I was able to see the great benefits which can accrue from a concern for their human, spiritual and liturgical training. When children and young people serve at the altar with joy and enthusiasm, they offer their peers an eloquent witness to the importance and beauty of the Eucharist. Thanks to their own lively imagination and the explanations and example given by priests and their older friends, even very young children can grow in faith and develop a love for spiritual realities.

Finally, never forget that you yourselves are the first "Apostles" of Jesus the High Priest. Your own witness counts more than anything else. Altar servers see you at the regular Sunday and weekday celebrations; in your hands they see the Eucharist "take place", on your face they see its mystery reflected, and in your heart they sense the summons of a greater love. May you be for them fathers, teachers and witnesses of Eucharistic piety and holiness of life!

7. Dear brother priests, your particular mission in the Church requires that you be "friends" of Christ, constantly contemplating his face with docility at the school of Mary Most Holy. Pray unceasingly, as the Apostle exhorts (cf. 1 Th 5:17), and encourage the faithful to pray for vocations, for the perseverance of those called to the priestly life and for the sanctification of all priests. Help your communities to love ever more fully that unique "gift and mystery" which is the ministerial priesthood.

In the prayerful setting of Holy Thursday, I would recall once again some invocations of the Litany of Jesus Christ Priest and Victim (cf. Gift and Mystery, pp.108-114), which I have recited for many years with great spiritual profit:

_Iesu, Sacerdos et Victima, Iesu, Sacerdos qui in novissima Cena formam sacrificii perennis instituisti, Iesu, Pontifex ex hominibus assumpte, Iesu,_
Address to Participants in UNIV 2004 (April 5, 2004)

Dear Young People,

1. I am pleased to greet you again this year and offer each one of you my most cordial welcome.

You have come to Rome from various countries and many universities to spend Holy Week together and to take part in the international UNIV meeting. Thus, you have been able to compare the experiences you have
acquired by taking part in the activities of Christian formation that the Prelature of Opus Dei promotes in your respective cities and nations.

I greet you with affection, and I greet those who have accompanied you, as well as the priests who are your spiritual directors. Yesterday, Palm Sunday, we heard these words ring out in St Peter's Square: "We wish to see Jesus". This is the theme of the Message that I wanted to write to young people of the whole world on the occasion of World Youth Day.

Dear friends, may you always cherish in the depths of your heart the desire to see Christ! May you be able to overcome every superficial emotion, resisting the seduction of pleasure and the ambitions of selfishness and comforts!

2. At your International Congress you are addressing a very timely theme: "Projecting culture: the language of advertising". There is a real need to know how to use suitable language in order to transmit positive messages and make their ideals and noble initiatives known and attractive. It is also necessary to be able to discern the limits and pitfalls of the language which the media propose to us. Sometimes, in fact, advertisements present a superficial and inadequate vision of life, of the individual person or the family, and of morality.

3. To carry out this demanding mission, it is necessary to follow Jesus closely in prayer and contemplation. Being his friends in the world in which we live also demands the effort to swim against the tide.

At university, in school and wherever you may find yourselves living, do not be afraid when necessary to be anti-conformist! I especially ask you to spread the Christian vision of the virtue of purity and to show your peers that it "comes from love; and the strength and gaiety of youth are no obstacle for noble love" (St Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, Christ Is Passing By, 40, 6).

4. Dear young people of UNIV, in this world which is seeking Jesus, sometimes without even knowing it you are the leaven of hope. I repeat to you today what I said to your friends in one of our first meetings: to improve the world, strive first of all to change yourselves through recourse to the sacrament of Penance and intimate identification with Christ in the Eucharist.
To Mary, who never lifted her eyes from the Face of her Son Jesus, I entrust each one of you and your families. I invoke upon each one of you the protection of St Josemaría and of all the saints of your countries, and I cordially bless you.

Address to the Pontifical Academy for the Tenth Anniversary of its Foundation
(February 21, 2004)

Venerable Brothers, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. With pleasure I send you my Message on the occasion of the day on which you are commemorating the 10th anniversary of the foundation of the Pontifical Academy for Life. Once again I express my gratitude to each one of you for the Academy's high-quality service of spreading the "Gospel of life". I greet in particular Prof. Juan de Dios Vial Correa, President, Bishop Elio Sgreccia, Vice-President, and the entire Administrative Council.

First of all, I thank the Lord with you for your useful Institution which was added 10 years ago to the others created after the Council. The doctrinal and pastoral Bodies of the Apostolic See are the first to benefit from your collaboration with regard to the knowledge and facts that decisions in the area of moral norms regarding life require. This is the case with the Pontifical Councils for the Family and for Health Pastoral Care, as well as in response to requests from the Section for Relations with States of the Secretariat of State, from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and from other Dicasteries and Offices.

2. As the years have passed, the importance of the Pontifical Academy for Life has become more and more evident. However, while progress in the biomedical sciences gives us a glimpse of promising prospects for the good of humanity and the treatment of chronic and distressing diseases, it also frequently presents serious problems concerning the respect for human life and the dignity of the person.
The growing control of medical technology in the process of human procreation, discoveries in the fields of genetics and molecular biology, changes in the therapeutic treatment of seriously-ill patients as well as the spread of currents of thought of a utilitarian or hedonistic inspiration are factors that can lead to aberrant conduct as well as to drafting laws which are unjust with regard to the dignity of the person and the respect that the inviolability of innocent life requires.

3. Your contribution is also invaluable to intellectuals, especially Catholics, "who are called to be present and active in the leading centres where culture is formed, in schools and universities, in places of scientific and technological research..." (Encyclical Letter Evangelium Vitae, n. 98). The Pontifical Academy for Life was set up for this purpose, with the specific task "to study and to provide information and training about the principal problems of law and biomedicine pertaining to the promotion and protection of life, especially in the direct relationship they have with Christian morality and the directives of the Church's Magisterium" (Motu Proprio Vitae Mysterium, n. 4; L'Osservatore Romano English edition [ORE], 9 March 1994, p. 3).

In a word, your highly responsible role includes the complex subject known today as "bioethics". I thank you for your commitment to examining specific issues of great interest and likewise for furthering the dialogue between scientific investigation and philosophical and theological reflection, guided by the Magisterium. Researchers, especially those who work in the field of biomedicine, must be made more and more aware of the beneficial enrichment that can derive from combining scientific rigour and the claims of anthropology and Christian ethics.

4. Dear brothers and sisters, may your service now with 10 years of experience continue to be increasingly appreciated and supported and provide the desired results in the field of the humanization of biomedical science and the convergence of scientific research and faith.

To this end, I invoke upon the Academy for Life continuous divine assistance through its Patroness, the Virgin Mary, and as I assure my remembrance in prayer to each one, I impart a special Apostolic Blessing to you all, which I willingly extend to your collaborators and your loved ones.
New Book by the Holy Father

A Book by the Holy Father

On May 18, the 84th birthday of the Holy Father, there was a presentation in Rome of the first copy of John Paul II’s new book entitled: *Rise, Let us be going!* This new book by the Pope presents reflections on his years as Auxiliary Bishop and later Archbishop of Krakow, from 1958 to 1978. Written in Polish, it has been translated into Italian, Spanish, German, French, English and Portuguese. The book is made up of six parts which follow a basically chronological order.

In a number of passages, the Pope recalls past events or circumstances that have a parallel with later events. Especially noteworthy in those years of the Pope’s life is the trust that he put, like many other Poles, in Our Lady of Czestochowa. The book frequently emphasizes the important role played by the various pilgrimages to this Shrine in difficult moments.
Another characteristic note of the book is the emphasis on the example of holiness given by people from all walks of life (in particular, by many bishops who are his fellow protagonists in the book).
PRELATE

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New Circumscriptions

Establishment of New Circumscriptions

On March 31, 2004, the Prelate of Opus Dei, Bishop Javier Echevarría established the Delegation of São Paulo by the following decree:

Nos Dr. D. XAVERIUS ECHEVARRIA
Dei et Apostolicæ Sedis gratia Prælatus
DECRETUM
Perspecto n. 153 Codicis iuris particularis Operis Dei.
Auditis Consilio Generali et Assessoratu Centrali, Prælaturæ Delegationem
Sancti Pauli a Commissione Regionis Brazilianæ dependentem erigo atque erectam declaro.
Datum Romæ, ex Aedibus Curiae Prælatiæ, die 31, mense martio, anno 2004.
+ Xaverius Echevarría
Franciscus Vives
Curiae Prælatitiae Cancellarius
Reg. Gen. R. Lib. VI pag. 16

Decrees

A Decree
Decree of appointment of the Vicar of the Delegation of Jerusalem

Nos Dr. D. XAVERIUS ECHEVARRÍA
Dei et Apostolicæ Sedis gratia Prælatus

D E C R E T U M

Præsentibus his litteris te, Rev.dum D.num D.rem Didacum Daza Bertrand,

ad quinquennium nominamus atque constituimus Vicarium Nostrum pro Delegatione Hierosolymæ, cum omnibus et singulis iuribus et obligationibus huic officio adnexis.

Dum enixas preces effundimus ut Deus tibi in huiusmodi munere ad suam gloriam et Ecclesiæ bonum propitius adsit, Nostram benedictionem in Domino tibi libentissime impertimus.

Datum Romæ, ex Aedibus Curiæ Prælatiæ, die 15, mense martio, anno 2004.

+ Xaverius Echevarría
Franciscus Vives
Curiæ Prælatitiae Cancellarius
Reg. Gen. R. lib. VI pag. 15

Torna ai contenuti

Activities of the Prelate
Pastoral Trips: Canary Islands, Bratislava, Bari

From February 5 to 9, Bishop Echevarría visited the Canary Islands. It was his first pastoral visit to these islands as Prelate. He arrived in Tenerife shortly after noon on the fifth.

His first act on arriving was to visit Our Lady of the Presentation. Bishop Echevarría met with the rector of the Basilica, and when he was invited to sign the guest book he expressed his “gratitude to our Mother of the Presentation” and asked her to intercede to help us “to do an unceasing apostolate, and to be very Marian and go to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit with great confidence.”

On the sixth, the Prelate of Opus Dei had a get-together with faithful of the Prelature, cooperators, and friends. Some twelve hundred people took part. The Prelate encouraged them to make frequent use of the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist. Referring to Brother Pedro, the first Canarian saint, he asked them to be “committed Christians, teachers of service to those around them, who do not turn their back on social problems.”

The second half of his pastoral trip, the seventh, eighth, and ninth, was spent on the island of Gran Canaria. In a family-like atmosphere at Guaydil School in Tafira Baja, a gathering was held of about two thousand people from many parts of the island, and from Lanzarote and Fuerteventura. Questions and answers on Christian life followed one another for almost an hour. Bishop Echevarría answered, among others, the question of Nacaray, a girl of eleven, born in Schaman and sick with epiphysiolysis, and that of Rosa, of Russian origin, who had recently converted to Catholicism. The Prelate spoke about the responsibility to exercise one’s duties and rights, the need to be good citizens and good Christians, fostering a social climate of understanding. He also asked those present to be consistent in living their faith in their personal conduct and to show an active concern for the education of youth.

In addition to meeting with the local bishops and with those taking part in the formative activities of Opus Dei, Bishop Echevarría visited
various apostolic works started by the Prelature in the islands. He also received the visits of many families of faithful of the Work, Cooperators and friends.

On March 26, at noon, the Prelate of Opus Dei left for Bratislava from Vienna, where he had taken part in the funeral of Cardinal Koenig. At 4:30 in the afternoon, he had a get-together with faithful of the Prelature from Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

Bishop Echevarría began the meeting with words of affection and gratitude: “My children, it gives me great happiness to be here with you, and at the same time I am very moved. As you can well imagine, I am always thinking of our Father, and also of Don Alvaro, and I know that from the time that he made his first trip to Austria, Saint Josemaria was already praying for these countries. His petition intensifed when he placed the lands of Eastern Europe under the advocation Sancta Maria Stella Orientis.” After the get-together, he returned to Vienna.

Fifty years after the fact, Bishop Echevarría retraced the footsteps of Saint Josemaría, who on July 7, 1954 went to Bari to pray at the tomb of Saint Nicholas, and to entrust to his intercession the solution of the serious financial difficulties Opus Dei was undergoing at that time.

On May 13, the Prelate arrived at Bari and prayed before the remains of the saint for the needs of the Church throughout the world. In the crypt he also greeted the Rector of the Basilica.

In the evening he had a get-together in the Levante University Residence with over a hundred students, devoting forty minutes to answering their questions.

On the morning of the fourteenth he visited Archbishop Francesco Cacucci. Later he had an informal get-together with the students, teachers and administrative personal of Miralta, a school for girls, during which he was asked a number of questions on educational and apostolic themes. After receiving a group of members of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross, the Prelate of Opus Dei met with almost a thousand people in the gymnasium of Miralta School. It was a family-like conversation during which the Prelate stressed the importance of a life of prayer and of personal dialogue with God.
The Prelate had a number of meetings with smaller groups that same day. He returned to Rome on the morning of the fifteenth.

Priestly Ordinations

Thirty-seven faithful of Opus Dei were ordained as priests by Bishop Echevarría on Saturday, May 22, in the Basilica of St. Eugene in Rome. The new priests are from 16 countries: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, Italy, Ivory Coast, Korea, Mexico, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Venezuela.

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Other Activities

The Prelate of Opus Dei arrived in Bologna, Italy, at noon on Sunday, February 15. In the afternoon, together with a number of bishops and public officials, he took part in the official welcome to the new Archbishop, Most Rev. Carlo Caffarra, in the main square of the city. They then went to the Cathedral of St. Peter to concelebrate Solemn Mass.

The following morning Bishop Echevarría returned to Rome.

The Prelate traveled to Vienna on March 26. On Saturday the 27th he celebrated Mass in the Center of the Regional Commission. That morning he had a meeting with faithful of the Prelature from Austria and Hungary in the crypt of the Church of St. Peter, which is entrusted to priests of Opus Dei.

At one in the afternoon the solemn funeral Mass for Cardinal König took place. After the funeral, the Prelate was able to greet many of the
concelebrants who had come from various nations of Europe, as well as the civil authorities of the country.

On Sunday the 28th, he visited with a number of families and afterwards had a get-together with faithful of Opus Dei.

The Congregation for Catholic Education, accepting an initiative of Cardinal Angelo Scola, established in Venice, as of October 9, 2003, the St. Pius X Institute of Canon Law as an institution attached to the Roman Pontifical University of the Holy Cross.

In connection with the academic ceremony inaugurating the “Studium Generale Marcianum,” of which the St. Pius X Institute of Canon Law will form part, the Prelate of Opus Dei arrived in Venice on Saturday, April 24, at midday. In the afternoon ceremony in the main auditorium of the Basilica of Our Lady of Good Health, the chief speakers were Cardinal Angelo Sodano, the Holy See’s Secretary of State and the Patriarch of Venice, Cardinal Angelo Scola. Bishop Echevarría took part as the Chancellor of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross.

On the morning of Sunday, the 25th, the Prelate of Opus Dei concelebrated solemn Mass in the Basilica of St. Mark in honor of the Patron Saint of Venice. Early in the afternoon he returned to Rome. During his two days in Venice the Prelate was able to get together with faithful of Opus Dei and with a number of families.

Torna ai contenuti

Homilies

At the ordination to the priesthood of deacons of the Prelature Basilica of St. Eugene, Rome (May 22, 2004)
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Dearest Sons of mine who are about to be ordained priests,

1. Every time Holy Mass is celebrated, the mystery of Holy Thursday is put before the Christian people once again. The entire Church is summoned by our Lord to the Cenacle of Jerusalem where Jesus—before having offered the Sacrifice of the Cross— instituted the sensible and efficacious sign of that immolation: the most Holy Eucharist, the sacramental sacrifice of His Body and Blood. Then, by ordering the Apostles, Do this in memory of me (Lk 22:19), our Lord Himself instituted the sacrament of Holy Orders making it possible to fulfill that mandate till the end of time.

If the wonder of Holy Thursday is made present each time Holy Mass is celebrated, all the more is it made present in today’s liturgy. Thirty-seven deacons of the Prelature of Opus Dei are to be ordained priests. The same Christ who called the first Twelve has now called them, and today He gathers them in the Cenacle in order to confer the priesthood upon them. In his last letter to priests, the Holy Father writes, «In that holy night, He called by name the priests of all time. His look, an affectionate and encouraging look, has fallen upon each one; it is the same look that gazed upon Simon and Andrew, James and John...»[1]

Dear Deacon Sons of mine! The Lord Himself has called you through your Ordinary. You, in full freedom, have answered Adsum, «I am willing». After a careful doctrinal and pastoral preparation, the long awaited moment has arrived. From now on and for the rest of your lives, you will be transformed into ministers of Christ, visible instruments of the High Priest in order to perpetuate His Sacrifice on earth. You will not simply be entrusted the task of conducting sacred services; above all, rather, you will be transformed interiorly. As John Paul II recalls, priestly ordination «affects the realm of 'being'. It empowers the priest to act in persona Christi, and it culminates in the moment in which he consecrates the bread and the wine, while repeating the actions and words of Jesus in the Last Supper»[2]

How could we not remain in awe and amazement before such reality? If, as Saint Josemaría wrote, the humility and love of Christ is something boundless—more than in the Stable, more than in Nazareth and more
than on the Cross[3]—«what should our attitude be like before the altar where Christ makes His Sacrifice present in time through the poor hands of the priest? There is room for no other attitude—I repeat to you in words of the Pope—except for one that leads us to kneel and adore in silence this great mystery of faith»[4]

2. In instituting the Sacred Orders, our Lord provided the Church the necessary means in order to fulfill the mission that He entrusted to her. In effect, before ascending into Heaven, Jesus reminded His Apostles what had been prophesied regarding Himself: And so it is written that the Christ must suffer and resurrect from among the dead on the third day; and all people shall be preached in his name the conversion for the forgiveness of sins beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of all these things (Lk 24:46-48). If sacred ministers are lacking, the Church would not exist as Christ has wanted it. But it is also true that the ministerial priesthood is at the service of all the faithful and that in that service it finds its primary purpose.

In this way, through the organic cooperation of all her members—priests and laymen—, the Church is capable of accomplishing the mission she received: that of taking to the entire world, even to the remotest corner of the earth, the Redemption obtained by the Death and Resurrection of Christ. Jesus has gone up to Heaven, but each Christian should speak and deal with Him through prayer and through the Eucharist in order to be strengthened and set on fire with His zeal for saving all souls. In this solemnity, and within the context of this most intimate ceremony, I would like to invite you to ask yourselves: how do I deal with Jesus? Do I truly strive to get to know Him better, to love Him more, to make Him known to others? Am I aware that through Baptism I have received the duty to bring all people I find along my path closer to God? With some heartfelt words of the Founder of Opus Dei, I would like to remind you that each one of us has to be ipse Christus (Christ Himself). Our calling to be children of God, in the midst of the world, requires us not only to seek our own personal holiness, but also to go out onto all the ways of the earth, to convert them into roads that will carry souls over all obstacles and lead them to the Lord. As we take part in all temporal activities, as ordinary
citizens, we are to become leaven (Cf. Mt 13:33) acting on the whole of the dough (Cf. 1 Cor 5:6)\[5\]

3. A great task awaits us. A quick glance around us is enough to realize that the world is in dire need of the love of Christ. From all around we can smell the stinking fruits of hatred, of violence, and of the ramming of men over one another. As Christians, we should always bear with us the sweet fragrance of Christ (cf. 2 Cor 2:15-16), sowing peace and joy. We will succeed if, with unbreakable trust in His goodness and power, we remain truly united to our Lord.

Perhaps at times, before the constant bad news that the media give us, the same question posed by the Apostles to Jesus before His Ascension comes to our lips: Lord, will you now restore the Kingdom of Israel? Lord, when will the moment come when all men and women open wide the doors of their hearts to You and Your kingdom be extended throughout the earth? Let us listen to the always relevant answer our Lord gives us: It does not concern you to know the times or moments that the Father has established with His Might; but you shall receive the power from the Holy Spirit, who will descend upon you and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all of Judea and Samaria, and even to all the ends of the earth (Acts 1:6-8).

My dearest Brothers and Sisters! The Spirit of the Lord is with us, within each one of us. We can be sure that Christ's victory has been declared and that it is now up to us to thrust it forward with our apostolic cooperation which should be humble and tenacious at the same time. I would like to bring to mind a few recently pronounced words addressed by the Holy Father to a group of young priests yet pertinent to all. John Paul II stated, «You are being ordained priests during a time in which ( ) strong cultural tendencies are trying to make all, especially young people and families, forget God. But do not be afraid! God will always be with you! With His help you shall be able to go through all the paths that lead to the heart of each person; you shall be able to proclaim to each of them that the Good Shepherd has given his life for him or for her and that He wishes for each of them to take part in the mystery of His love and salvation»\[6\]

Let us carefully prepare ourselves for the upcoming Solemnity of
Pentecost when the strength of the Paraclete shall come down upon our souls once again. I invite you to do it along with Mary by stepping inside the Cenacle of Jerusalem, the privileged place of the greatest marvels carried out by God in favor of humanity.

I would like to express my best wishes to the parents and to all the relatives of the new priests. Pray for them and for all sacred ministers: the Pope, whose 84th birthday we have just celebrated a few days ago; for the Cardinal Vicar of Rome, the Bishops and all priests around the world. May God bless you!

[2] Ibid., no. 2.
[5] Saint Josemaría, Christ is Passing By, no. 120.

At the Mass for the repose of the soul of the Servant of God Alvaro del Portillo, Rome (March 23, 2004)

My dear brothers and sisters:

1. In the telegram John Paul II sent me ten years ago upon receiving news of the unexpected departure of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo, the Pope applied to my predecessor Jesus’ words in the Gospel: “a good and faithful servant.” With gratitude to God, the Holy Father recalled “the diligent life of Don Alvaro as priest and bishop, his constant example of courage and trust in divine providence, his fidelity to the See of Peter and his generous service to the Church.”
These words of the Roman Pontiff, which capture very well the most important features of my predecessor; have often come to mind during recent days. Besides the approach of today’s date, the opening of Don Alvaro’s cause of canonization has helped make his memory more constant. Now I would like to pause over one aspect of his life that the Pope’s words, just cited, especially emphasized: fidelity.

2. A few days before being called into God’s presence, Bishop del Portillo reflected on this virtue. He was undertaking days of prayer in the Holy Land, where he followed the footsteps of Jesus with great piety. Among the greetings he sent from there to various persons was one addressed to Msgr. Stanislaw Dziwisz, the secretary of John Paul II. Reading it today takes on a special meaning for us. I cite this episode with the explicit authorization of the recipient of the postcard.

Don Alvaro wrote: My esteemed friend: in these holy places, I have prayed—we have prayed—a great deal for you, vir fidelis, with the request that you present to the Holy Father our desire to be fideles usque ad mortem, faithful unto death, in the service of the Church and the Holy Father.

This memory is a fitting framework for the Holy Mass we are celebrating for the repose of the soul of a Pastor who, right to the end of his life, left us a testimony of great fidelity to God, to the Church and to the Roman Pontiff.

3. Fidelity to God in the first place. Born and educated within a deeply Christian family, Don Alvaro learned from his parents a conduct in full conformity with the faith he had received. With naturalness, without sanctimoniousness, he combined the normal activities of a young man—study, sport, friendship, etc.—with a sincere and deep piety. Thus God prepared him for his encounter with St. Josemaría Escrivá, which took place when Don Alvaro was twenty-one, and which was to give full meaning to his life.

From then on, with the help of grace, under the direct guidance of the Founder of Opus Dei, Don Alvaro strove with all his strength to carry out the mission providence had chosen for him: to learn the spirit of Opus Dei from St. Josemaría, to make it the marrow of his life, and then to transmit it with extraordinary faithfulness to many other people.
Don Alvaro’s earthly path could be defined as a constant progress in fidelity to God, which means a daily struggle for personal conversion. This invitation is addressed to us as well, especially during the liturgical period of Lent. With words from St. Josemaría, and taking as a backdrop the words of my predecessor cited above, we can ask ourselves: “Am I advancing in my faithfulness to Christ, in my desire for holiness, in a generous apostolate in my daily life, in my ordinary work among my colleagues? Each one of us, silently, should answer these questions, and he will see that he needs to change again if Christ is to live in him, if Jesus’ image is to be reflected clearly in his behavior.”[1]

4. Inseparably joined to his fidelity to God was Bishop del Portillo’s fidelity to the Church and the Roman Pontiff. In this respect his many years of service to the Holy See, beginning with his arrival in Rome in 1946 and continuing right up to his death, speaks for itself. For almost fifty years, in so many ways, Don Alvaro poured his energy into serving efficaciously the Church, the Pope and all souls.

From his first assignments in the offices of the Holy See, to his intervention in the work of the Second Vatican Council and his participation in episcopal synods, the course of those long years in Rome was characterized by silent and fruitful service to the Church and the Pope. He never said no when his help was requested. He took on everything with a smiling peace that eased the burden of others.

His fidelity to the Church and the Roman Pontiff shone forth with renewed light at particular moments. This was especially so when the Holy Father expressed his wishes in regard to the new evangelization that had to be carried out in countries with an ancient Christian tradition. Or when the same Roman Pontiff manifested his concern for the cause of peace in various parts of the world.

We don’t have time to go into all this here. But we all remember specific deeds by Bishop del Portillo, gestures of support and solidarity with the Holy Father that showed his dedication and loyalty. As I mentioned a few days ago, in the opening session of the Tribunal of the Prelature set up for his cause of canonization, Don Alvaro’s conduct was
always inspired by the motto he learned from St. Josemaría: to make the noise of three while doing the work of three thousand.

5. My dear brothers and sisters! We see here a shining example of faithfulness to one’s vocation in carrying out the tasks God entrusts to each person. Don Alvaro put all his human and supernatural qualities, and they were truly many, at the service of the mission he had received.

Today, as we recall at the altar this good and faithful servant of God, I invite you to go to his intercession. Our Lord wants the human and Christian virtue of fidelity to shine in our daily life as it did in Don Alvaro’s. This possibility is within the reach of all of us, with God’s help, if we truly decide to make a daily conversion in big things and in little ones, because everything is great when done for God’s love.

So let us follow what St. Josemaría teaches us in one of his homilies: “When you sincerely desire to live by faith, hope and love, the renewal of your commitment is not a matter of picking up again something neglected. When there really is faith, hope and love, renewal means staying in God’s hands, despite our personal faults, mistakes and defects. It is a confirmation of our faithfulness. Renewing our commitment means renewing our fidelity to what God wants of us: it means expressing our love in deeds.”[2]

Let us entrust these resolutions to our Lady, Virgo Fidelis, and to her spouse, St. Joseph, whose feast we celebrated a few days ago. Through their intercession we too will be faithful to our Christian vocation. And we will be happy. For, as St. Josemaría assures us, faithfulness is synonymous with happiness: happiness in this world, within the limits of our present condition, and complete happiness in heaven. Amen.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

1. A few days ago, in the Liturgy of the Hours, we priests meditated once again on the choice God made of David as King of Israel.[1] The description of the scene is simple and clear. The sacred text says that David was a boy of pleasant aspect, and looked a very good person. When the prophet Samuel saw him he was somewhat perplexed, but the Lord told him to have no fear, for this was the chosen man.

This passage from sacred scripture brought to my mind the outstanding figure of Saint Josemaría Escrivá, who was called by God when he was fifteen or sixteen for a disproportionate mission. He was chosen, as the Collect of the Mass puts it, to “proclaim the universal call to sanctity and apostolate”. Think what a marvelous thing that is: all the men and women living in the middle of the world are called to make their lives into an epic of holiness.

In the years which have gone by since his dies natalis, the day of his departure for Heaven, our beloved Father’s stature has only increased. He is now known in very many countries and invoked by millions of people throughout the world, who see him not only as an intercessor to have recourse to in all sorts of different needs, but also as a teacher of the spiritual life and an example to follow.

It made us very happy to read some words about Opus Dei and its founder in Pope John Paul II’s recent book, which has the evocative title Alzatevi, andiamo! (“Get up, let us go!”). Among other things the Pope thanks God for having had the joy of adding Josemaría Escrivá, “a zealous priest, an apostle of the laity for these new times”[2] to the canon of the Saints. Let us too thank the Blessed Trinity for the gifts granted by God to the world through our Father, and let us make the resolution to have
recourse to his intercession with ever greater trust, to learn from his teachings and put them into practise following his own shining example.

These are the basic points that today’s liturgy invites us to consider. In the Preface of the Mass the Church expresses her joy at celebrating the feast of a holy Pastor (today, the feast of Saint Josemaría), and sums up the reasons for rejoicing as follows: “You inspire us by his holy life, instruct us by his preaching, and give us your protection in answer to his prayers.” We can reflect briefly on these three aspects.

2. You inspire us by his holy life. How often Saint Josemaría stressed the fact that apostolate always begins with good example! He had learnt this in the Gospel, as he meditated on the life of our Lord, who, as the Acts of the Apostles tells us, before enlightening people with his teachings, taught them by his example: cœpit Iesus facere et docere, Jesus began to do and to teach” (Acts 1:1). That is what Saint Josemaría did too. He never taught anything which he himself had not first tried to reproduce, with the help of God’s grace and his personal efforts, in his own life. That is why people find him and his message so attractive. His proposal for “holiness through daily work and the ordinary duties of a Christian”, as we are reminded at the end of the Prayer of the Faithful, is not merely a theory but a very definite reality, verified by his spiritual struggle to identify himself with Christ, imitating the divine Teacher especially in his years in Nazareth.

If it is always important to set a good example, it is especially so in our times. As Pope John Paul II reminds us, “People today put more trust in witnesses than in teachers, in experience than in teaching, and in life and action than in theories. The witness of a Christian life is the first and irreplaceable form of mission: Christ, whose mission we continue, is the ‘witness’ par excellence (Rv 1:5; 3:14) and the model of all Christian witness.”[3]

Dear brothers and sisters, these words offer us a first opportunity for self-examination and meditation. I invite you to ask yourselves, in the silence of your hearts, “Am I a credible witness of Christ in the middle of the world? Do I really make the effort to live up to my faith in every circumstance? Can those who observe the way I behave in my family, social life or workplace, see in me a reflection of Christ?”
Only if our lives are modeled on the example of Jesus will we be in a position to bring others to our Lord. “How will we show him to souls?” asked Saint Josemaría. “By our example. Through our voluntary service of Jesus Christ, we should be witnesses to him in all our activities, for he is the Lord of our entire lives, the only and ultimate reason for our existence. Then, once we have given this witness of service, we will be able to give instruction by our word. That was how Christ acted. ‘He began to do and to teach’ (Acts 1:1) he first taught by his action, and then by his divine preaching.”[4]

3. And so we come to another characteristic feature of Saint Josemaría’s life. The Lord made use of him and will continue to make use of his teaching, preached untiringly in words too, to make Christians aware that we are all called to holiness. As the Preface of the Mass says, You instruct us by his preaching. Because it is not enough to behave in an exemplary way: we also need to speak about God, to make him known to others through our words. “Dumb witnesses are no use at all,” exclaimed the founder of Opus Dei.

Saint Josemaría preached extensively, with frequent journeys which took him to many different countries in Europe and Central and South America to speak about God, in a real apostolic marathon. Driven by his love for God and souls, he spoke about the rationale of the Christian faith to huge multitudes and small groups, exhorting them to be faithful.

His message was addressed to all Christians, and also to all men and women of good will. Everyone who approached him received a powerful spiritual stimulus. He had encouraging words for all, like those we read in one of his homilies: “The Christian apostolate […] is a great work of teaching. Through real, personal, loyal friendship, you create in others a hunger for God and you help them to discover new horizons — naturally, simply. With the example of your faith lived to the full, with a loving word which is full of the force of divine truth.”[5]

Now, in the twenty-first century, we can see how people hunger and thirst for God, like those crowds we read about in the Gospel, who pressed around Jesus to hear the word of God (cf. Lk 5:1). And how can they hear it today if we Christians do not proclaim it with our example and our
words? Nobody can absolve themselves from this duty, no matter what their personal limitations may be. Because we don’t do it by virtue of our own eloquence or merits, which we don’t have, but by virtue of a definite command from our Lord. “Proclaim the Good News... I shall be with you...’ It is Jesus who has said this... and he has said it to you.”[6] Let us aim first and foremost to help many people to go to the Sacraments regularly: the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and Holy Communion. Let us teach them how to pray. The Bread and the Word, the Eucharist and prayer, are the essential food for every soul.

Let’s make a specific resolution as the fruit of today’s celebration, entrusting our petitions to Saint Josemaría. But let’s appeal to him with faith, persistently, in the conviction that — and I quote the Preface of the Mass again — in answer to his prayers, God protects us and the whole Church. Like a good son, Saint Josemaría will deposit our petitions in our Lady’s hands. And so, as Bishop Alvaro del Portillo liked to say, perfumed by our Lady’s hands, our prayers will unfailingly arrive in God’s presence, and he will hear them. Amen.

[1] Cf. 1 Sam 16:1-13
[4] Saint Josemaría, Christ is Passing By, 182
[5] Saint Josemaría, Christ is Passing By, 149

Addresses
Message for the inauguration of the chapel dedicated to St. Josemaría in Pescia, Italy (May 13, 2004)

In the first place I want to express my deep gratitude and an affectionate and fraternal greeting to Bishop Giovanni De Vivo of Pescia, to your pastor Fr. Alessandro Pasquinelli, to the civil authorities, to the faithful of the parish of Our Lady of the Martyrs, and to all who have wanted to be present at this ceremony. I express my regrets that I have not been able to take part except with my heart.

It is a source of great happiness for me to see the ever more widespread devotion to St. Josemaría in Italy and throughout the world. My joy is even more intense when I see devotion to this saint, at whose side I had the undeserved privilege of working for twenty-five years, so deeply rooted in the land of Tuscany. St. Josemaría truly loved Tuscany and prayed a lot for this region, not only during the brief periods that he spent here, or the many trips that provided him with the opportunity to travel through its provinces, but also because, knowing the deep Christian roots of this land, he desired—or better, he desires—that this land be an auspicious setting for the spread of the message of sanctity that God inspired in him on October 2, 1928—a message directed to all men and women of good will. The fruit of his prayer, and above all of divine grace, were evident in the thousands of Tuscans who on October 6, 2002 took part in the canonization of the Founder of Opus Dei, and before this, in the numerous commemorative gatherings on the centennial of his birth. All this bears witness to a sincere veneration for the “saint of the ordinary,” as John Paul II described him in his audience in St. Peter’s Square.

In particular, the living presence of devotion to St. Josemaría in the parish of Our Lady of the Martyrs in Marginone de Altopascio, with this dedication of a chapel enriched with a beautiful statue by the sculptor Barsanti, is a symbol of how the message of holiness that he spread by means of the Prelature of Opus Dei is attracting men and women of all places and walks of life, awakening in them the desire to be consistent with the demands of their Christian life, striving to give witness to Christ and to
serve the Church, of which the Prelature is a small portion. It gives me
special pleasure that the parish of Marginone is dedicated to our Lady. St.
Josemaría told us never to forget that Mary is, at the same time, Mother of
God and our Mother, the Mother of each one of us. He invited us to love
her tenderly. He often said that Mary is the easiest and quickest path to
reach Christ. And he wrote: “To Jesus we always go, and to him we always
return, through Mary” (The Way, no. 495).

I unite myself spiritually to your intentions in this Eucharistic
celebration, and especially to your prayers for peace, to which the Holy
Father has called the world so insistently in recent times.

At the opening of the Cause of
Canonization of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo,
Rome (March 20, 2004)

Allow me to begin with a personal recollection of our beloved Don
Alvaro. It was March 17, 1994, less than a week before his sudden and
saintly departure. From Jerusalem, one of the stages in the pilgrimage he
was carrying out in the Holy Land, my predecessor sent some postcards to
people for whom he had prayed with special intensity and affection during
those days. One of them was addressed to Msgr. Stanislaw Dziwisz, the
Holy Father’s personal secretary.

Today, on re-reading that brief hand-written note of Don Alvaro, it
takes on a special meaning in light of what was to happen a few days later:
My esteemed friend: in these holy places, I have prayed—we have prayed—a
great deal for you, vir fidelis, with the request that you present to the Holy
Father our desire to be fideles usque ad mortem, faithful unto death, in the
service of the Church and the Holy Father. One might say that our Lord
listened closely to his words, usque ad mortem. A few hours after returning
to Rome, this good and faithful servant, as John Paul II described him, was
indeed called into God’s presence.

This episode, which I have cited with the explicit permission of the
recipient of that postcard, provides a very fitting framework for the ceremony that has brought us here today. For it has as its protagonist a shepherd who, right to the end of his life, left us an unequivocal testimony of faithfulness.

The procedures provided for by the current canonical legislation had already been in effect for some time, when the Apostolic Exhortation Pastores Gregis, resulting from the Tenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, and dedicated to reflections on the figure and role of the bishop, first saw the light of day. In this document, the Holy Father recalls the perennial timeliness of the program set forth in the fifth chapter of Lumen Gentium, with its proclamation of the “universal call to sanctity.” In this context the Pope offers reflections on the “pedagogy of sanctity,” which he had previously indicated as a pastoral priority for the new millennium (cf. Apostolic Letter Novo Millennio Ineunte, nos. 29-41).

In regard to this pedagogy, John Paul II emphasizes, among other things, a very specific application: “As a means of highlighting the witness of holiness, I urge my brother bishops to recognize and to call attention to the signs of holiness and heroic virtue which are also appearing in our own days” (Apostolic exhortation Pastores Gregis, no. 41). Then he sets forth the function of these initiatives that stem from the bishop’s pastoral ministry: “This will prove a sign of hope for everyone and a source of encouragement for the pilgrim People of God in its witness before the world to the permanent presence of grace in the fabric of human history” (Ibid.).

In another point of the document, he stresses that the Church has had bishops who were true saints, “who handed down to their people a particular legacy of admiration and affection…They are spiritual sentinels who from heaven guide the way of the pilgrim Church through time” (no. 25). And he recalls how, in order to keep always alive the memory of the faithfulness of eminent bishops in the exercise of their ministry, the Synodal Assembly recommended that they should be made known to the faithful and, if it seems suitable, that their causes of canonization should be introduced (cf. Ibid.).

Reading these texts has confirmed for me that the path chosen by beginning my predecessor’s Cause of canonization is in full accord with the
pastoral program recommended by the Pope. Indeed, all of the testimonies that have reached us, in the ten years since his death, have shown that Bishop Alvaro del Portillo has truly left behind him “a particular legacy of admiration and affection.”

This reality began to be evident immediately after his death on March 23, 1994. Since that day there have been eloquent signs of the widespread reputation for sanctity that has grown steadily. In addition, I soon began receiving signed accounts of spiritual and material favors attributed to his intercession, which now number in the thousands. I also received numerous written testimonies confirming the spread of Bishop del Portillo’s reputation for sanctity while still alive, and expressing the desire that his cause of canonization be quickly opened. Included among these testimonies are some 200 letters from bishops (among them 35 cardinals), from twenty-five countries.

Taking note of all this, and following the rules set forth in the Apostolic constitution *Divinus Perfectionis Magister*, I, no. 1, an *ex officio* investigation of the life and virtues of Bishop del Portillo was begun. I was quickly able to verify the consistency of the elements that little by little emerged from the Postulator’s work, in conformity with the law of the Church (cf. *Normae servandae in inquisitionibus a Episcopis faciendis in Causis Sanctorum*, nos. 10-14). The reputation for sanctity of the first Prelate of Opus Dei has been attested to by a very ample array of solid documentary evidence.

When five years had passed since the Servant of God’s death, I appointed two theological censors (cf. *Normae*, no. 13), whose opinion on the written works of Bishop del Portillo have emphasized their complete correspondence with the Church’s teaching and the richness of the spiritual personality of their author. In addition, research into the archives (cf. *Normae*, n. 14) has brought to light beyond any reasonable doubt the Christian exemplariness of the biographical trajectory of Bishop del Portillo.

Together with the results of the edict that I promulgated on December 6, 2002, directed to all of the faithful of the Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei (cf. *Normae*, no. 11b), these investigations have enabled us
to show the absolute lack of obstacles of any form against the Cause (cf. 

Thus, at the beginning of 2003, I sent to his Eminence Cardinal 
Camilo Ruini, Vicar General for the Diocese of Rome, a copy of the 
documents that led to my decision to introduce this Cause of canonization, 
with the proposal to set up a Tribunal of the Vicariate to examine some of 
the witnesses residing in Rome, among them, myself, some members of the 
Roman Curia and other members of the General Council of the Prelature 
who worked closely with Bishop del Portillo for years. Other witnesses 
living here or in other places could be questioned by a Tribunal of the 
Prelature or by other Tribunals. Thus I would have the faculty to ask the 
respective bishops to undertake the investigative process required.

Cardinal Ruini accepted the proposal and, in accord with current laws 
(cf. *Normae*, no. 11 a), he submitted the question of the advisability of 
opening the Cause to the Bishops’ Conference of Lazio. Having received 
an answer in the affirmative on June 10, 2003, he therefore (cf. *Normae*, no. 
1 b), on July 4, 2003, published a decree inviting the faithful of the diocese 
of Rome to send information relative to the Cause and any unpublished 
manuscripts in their possession.

On December 21, 2003 the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints 
authorized that the instruction of the diocesan investigation be carried out 
aequaliter, that is, with the same level of competence, by the Vicariate of 
Rome’s Tribunal and by that of the Prelature. Finally, on January 21, 2004, 
I was formally told that there were no objections to the Cause of the 
Servant of God Alvaro del Portillo on the part of the Holy See.

As a result, the Vicariate’s Tribunal began its work this past March 5, 
while the Tribunal named by myself will do so within a few minutes. 
Before going on to the required swearing in, I would like to add a few brief 
considerations.

In the first place, I would like to state that the fact that the canonical 
investigation began ten years after the death of the Servant of God instead 
of the five years foreseen as the minimum by the current norms, is not in 
any way due to negligence, but was due to the fact that until only a little 
over a year ago we were busy with preparations for the canonization of St.
Josemaría Escrivá. This work absorbed all our available energy. What great joy Don Alvaro would have experienced on hearing both the Holy Father and Cardinal Ratzinger in their Christmas greeting to the Roman Curia on December 21, 2002, cite this as one of the notable events of that year.

It also seems appropriate to explain the reasons that led me to ask the Cardinal Vicar of Rome to designate a Tribunal of the Vicariate. The investigative tribunals have only an informative function, that is, one of simply collecting evidence. After this step the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints intervenes and, in its various phases, in the first place evaluates the exhaustiveness of the process of investigation, ordering, if necessary, the required supplementary investigations. Later, and this is the essential point, the same Congregation gives the judgment it deems fitting. The definitive decision is the exclusive competence of the Holy Father. Although all this is perfectly well known, I preferred that a Tribunal external to the Prelature, and one that is universally esteemed for its rigor, should have the task of questioning persons in the Curia, as well as myself and the other members of the General Council of the Prelature.

I would like the Tribunal which today begins its investigation to also carry out its work with the most scrupulous observance of the procedures fixed by law, in their most rigorous interpretation.

Permit me to share with you a personal memory, which in no way seeks, even indirectly, to anticipate the Church’s future judgment about the virtues of Bishop del Portillo, nor to condition the work of anyone who has been called to carry out a task of canonical investigation. For me Don Alvaro was always an example of fidelity to the spirit of St. Josemaría. During the Founder’s lifetime, two Causes of canonization of members of the Work were opened: for Isidoro Zorzano and for Montse Grases. Whenever the conversation turned to this topic, St. Josemaría never failed to remind us that sanctity consists in the faithful fulfillment, out of love, of one’s daily duties. The spirit of the Work, he said, leads us to try to sanctify ourselves in a life that is hidden, without any spectacle, doing the work of three thousand while making the noise of three.

When he began to work on preparations for St. Josemaría’s Cause of canonization, Don Alvaro, faithful to this teaching, never omitted an
opportunity to point out to us that the purpose was not to seek human glory for Opus Dei, but the good of the Church, the edification of souls. This was the goal that he always had present. Don Alvaro was certain that the Cause would contribute to spreading knowledge of the Founder, of his spiritual writings and his message of sanctification in work. He was sure that many conversions would take place, people returning to the practice of the faith, all types of vocations… And indeed the history of that Cause can be summed up as an uninterrupted series of grace-filled events, such as those just mentioned. This is the principal reason why the Church elevates to the altars so many of her exemplary children: for the good of souls.

I also trust that the Cause of canonization of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo will bring many tangible benefits to Christians. I am sure that through his life many people will discover the fatherly face of God, smiling on them, encouraging them, forgiving them.

At the end of his address at the opening ceremony for the diocesan part of the investigation to be carried out by the Vicariate of Rome’s Tribunal, Cardinal Ruini invoked the protection of St. Josemaría for the Tribunal’s work. With all my heart I also entrust the work of this Tribunal to the intercession of the one of whom Bishop del Portillo was the most faithful son.

Torna ai contenuti

Articles and Interviews

Commentaries on Holy Week broadcast by the EWTN radio network (April 4-11, 2004)

Holy Week is beginning, and we recall Christ’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem. St. Luke tells us: As they approached Bethpage and Bethany, near
the hill named after the Olive Trees, he sent two of his disciples telling them: Go to the village opposite you. As you enter, you will find a young donkey on which no one has ridden yet. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you why you are untying it, say to them: the Lord needs it. They went and found everything as the Lord had told them.

What a humble animal our Lord chose to ride upon! Perhaps we, in our conceit, would have chosen a spirited stallion. But Jesus does not let himself be guided by purely human reasoning, but by divine criteria. *This happened*, St. Matthew notes, *so that the words of the prophet might be fulfilled: Tell the daughter of Zion, behold your king is coming to you, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.*

Jesus, who is God, is happy with a young donkey for a throne. We, who are nothing, are so often vain and proud, seeking to stand out, to attract attention. We want others to admire and praise us. St. Josemaría Escrivá, canonized by John Paul II two years ago, made use of this scene from the Gospel.

He assured us that he was a worthless, mangy donkey. But since humility is truth, he also recognized that he was the depositary of many gifts from God, especially that of opening up divine paths on earth, showing millions of men and women that they could be saints in the fulfillment of their professional work and their ordinary duties.

Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey. We need to draw conclusions from this. Every Christian can and should become a throne for Christ. Here some words of St. Josemaría are very appropriate: “If Jesus reign in my soul, in your soul, meant that he should find it a perfect dwelling place, then indeed would we have reason to despair. But Jesus makes do with a poor animal for a throne...There are hundreds of animals more beautiful, more deft and strong. But it was a donkey Christ chose when he presented himself to the people as king in response to their acclamation. For Jesus has no time for calculations, for astuteness, for the cruelty of cold hearts, for attractive but empty beauty. What he likes is the cheerfulness of a young heart, a simple step, a natural voice, clean eyes, attention to his affectionate word of advice. That is how he reigns in the soul.”
Let us allow him to take possession of our thoughts, words and deeds. Above all, let us free ourselves of self-love, the greatest obstacle to Christ’s reign. Let us be humble, without assuming merits that don’t belong to us. Imagine how ridiculous it would have been for the donkey to appropriate to himself the acclaim and applause that the people were directing to the Master!

Commenting on this Gospel scene, John Paul II recalls, “Jesus didn’t see his earthly existence as a search for power, as a means to worldly success and a career, seeking to dominate others. On the contrary, he gave up the privileges of his equality with God, and took the form of a servant, becoming like us men. And he was obedient to the Father’s plan, even unto death on the cross” (Homily, April 8, 2001).

The enthusiasm of the crowd usually doesn’t last. A few days later, those who had received him with acclaim, were crying out for his death. And we, do we let ourselves be carried along by a momentary enthusiasm? If during these days we sense God’s grace passing close to us, let us make room for it in our souls. Rather than palms or olive branches, let us spread our hearts on the ground. Let us be humble, mortified, understanding towards others. This is the homage that Jesus expects from us.

Holy Week offers us an occasion to relive the most important moments of our redemption. But let us not forget that, as St. Josemaria wrote, “If we are to accompany Christ in his glory at the end of Holy Week, we must first enter into his holocaust and be truly united to him, as he lies dead on Calvary.” To attain this, there is no better path than walking hand in hand with Mary. May our Lady obtain the grace we need so that these days will leave a deep imprint on our souls. Let this week be, for each of us, an opportunity to grow in God’s love, so we may make that Love known to many others.

Monday of Holy Week, April 5, 2004

Yesterday we recalled Christ’s triumphal entrance into Jerusalem. A great crowd of his disciples and other persons acclaimed him as the Messiah and King of Israel. At the end of the day, exhausted, he returned to Bethany, a village close to the capital, where he was accustomed to stay on his visits to Jerusalem.
A family of friends living there always had a place for him and his companions. Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead, is the head of the family. With him live his sisters Martha and Mary, who fondly await the Master’s arrival, happy to be able to serve him.

In the last days of his life on earth, Jesus spent long hours in Jerusalem preaching intensely. In the evening, he recovered his strength in the home of his friends. And in Bethany there took place an episode described in the Gospel of today’s Mass.

_Six days before the Passover, St. John tells us, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at table with him. Mary took a pound of costly ointment of pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair, and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment._

We immediately see the generosity of this woman. She wanted to show her gratitude to the Master for having restored her brother to life, and for so many other gifts they had received. And she spared no expense. Judas, present at the supper, carefully calculated the price of the perfume. Instead of praising Mary’s refinement, he voiced a criticism: “Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” In reality, as St. John notes, he was not concerned about the poor. His interest was in handling the money of the common purse, and stealing from it.

“But Jesus own reaction is completely different,” writes John Paul II. “While in no way detracting from the duty of charity towards the needy, for whom the disciples must always show special care—the poor you will always have with you (Mt 26, 11; Mk 14:7; cf. Jn 12:8)—he looks towards his imminent death and burial, and sees this act of anointing as an anticipation of the honor which his body will continue to merit even after his death, indissolubly bound as it is to the mystery of his person” (_Ecclesia de Eucharistia_, 47).

To be a true virtue, charity has to be ordered. And God holds first place: _You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. The second is like unto it: you shall love your neighbor as yourself._
On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the prophets. Therefore, it is a mistake to overlook the needs of the Church and her sacred ministers, using as an excuse the desire to alleviate the material needs of men. As St. Josemaría writes:

“That woman in the house of Simon the leper in Bethany, who anoints the Master's head with precious ointment, reminds us of our duty to be generous in the worship of God.

—All beauty, richness and majesty seem little to me. —And against those who attack the richness of sacred vessels, of vestments and altars, stands the praise given by Jesus: opus enim bonum operata est in me —she has acted well towards me.”

How many people act like Judas. They see the good that others are doing, but they don’t want to acknowledge it. They try to find twisted intentions, to criticize, to gossip, to make rash judgments. They reduce charity to the purely material—giving a few coins to the needy, perhaps to quiet their conscience—forgetting that, as St. Josemaría also wrote, “Christian charity cannot be limited to giving things or money to the needy. It seeks, above all, to respect and understand each person for what he is, in his intrinsic dignity as a man and child of God.”

The Virgin Mary dedicated herself completely to our Lord, and was always concerned about the needs of those around her. Today we ask her to intercede for us, so that, in our own lives, love for God and love for neighbor will merge into a single reality, like the two sides of a coin.

Tuesday of Holy Week, April 6, 2004

The Gospel of today’s Mass ends with the announcement that the apostles will desert Jesus during the Passion. When Simon Peter, filled with presumption, tells him that I will lay down my life for you. Jesus answered, Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the cock will not crow, till you have denied me three times.

Within a few days the prediction was fulfilled. Nevertheless, a few hours earlier, the Master had given them a clear lesson, as if preparing them for the approaching moments of darkness.

This was on the day after his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Jesus and
the apostles hurriedly left Bethany very early in the morning, perhaps without bringing any food. And, as St. Mark tells us, our Lord was hungry. And seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see if he could find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. And he said to it, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And his disciples heard it.

In the evening they returned to the village. It must have been late and they didn't notice the cursed fig tree. But the following day, Tuesday, as they were returning to Jerusalem, they all saw the tree, which before had been so leafy, now with its branches bare and dried up. Peter called Jesus’ attention to it: “Master, look! The fig tree which you cursed has withered.” And Jesus answered them, “Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him.”

During his public life, to perform miracles, Jesus asked for only one thing: faith. To the two blind men who asked him to cure them, he said: Do you believe that I can do this? —Yes, Lord, they answered. Then he touched their eyes saying: let it be done to you according to your faith. And their eyes were opened. The Gospels tell us that in many places he could hardly perform any miracles, because the people lacked faith.

We also must ask ourselves: How goes our faith? Do we truly believe in the word of God? Do we ask for what we need in prayer, sure that we will obtain it if it is for our good? Do we insist in our petitions as much as necessary, without discouragement?

St. Josemaria comments on this scene from the Gospel. “Jesus approaches the fig tree. He approaches you, he approaches me. Jesus hungers, he thirsts for souls. On the Cross he cried out, Sínto!, I thirst (Jn 19:28). He thirsts for us, for our love, for our souls, and for all the souls we must bring to him, along the way of the Cross, which is the way to immortality and heavenly glory.”

He approaches the fig tree, finding nothing but leaves (Mt 21:19). What a shame. Does the same thing happen in our lives? Do we lack faith, and a vibrant humility; do we offer neither sacrifices nor deeds? The disciples marveled at the miracle, but they fail to draw profit from it. A few
days later they denied their Master. Faith has to inform our whole life. “Christ lays down one condition,” St. Josemaria continues, “we must live by faith; then we will be able to move mountains. And so many things need moving... in the world, but, first of all, in our own hearts. So many obstacles placed in the way of grace! We have to have faith, therefore: faith and deeds, faith and sacrifice, faith and humility.”

Mary, through her faith, made possible the work of redemption. John Paul II notes that “at the center of this mystery, in the midst of this wonderment of faith, stands Mary...the loving Mother of the Redeemer” (Redemptoris Mater, 51). Mary constantly accompanies all men and women along the paths that lead to eternal life. The Church, writes the Pope, “sees Mary deeply rooted in humanity’s history, in man’s eternal vocation according to the providential plan which God has made for him from eternity. She sees Mary maternally present and sharing in the many complicated problems which today beset the lives of individuals, families and nations; she sees her helping the Christian people in the constant struggle between good and evil, to ensure that it ‘does not fall,’ or, if it has fallen, that it ‘rises again’” (Redemptoris Mater, 52).

Mary, our Mother: win for us, by your powerful intercession, a sincere faith, a sure hope, a burning love.

Wednesday of Holy Week, April 7, 2004

Wednesday of Holy Week recalls the sad story of one who was an apostle of Christ, Judas. As St. Matthew tells us in his gospel: Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, “What will you give me if I deliver him to you?” And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him.

Why does the Church recall this event? So that we realize that we all might behave as Judas did. So that we ask our Lord that, on our part, there be no treachery, nor distancing, nor abandonment. Not only because of the great harm this could bring to our personal lives, but because we could drag along others who need the help of our good example, of our support, of our friendship.

In some places in Latin America, the images of Christ crucified show a deep bruise on our Lord’s left cheek. People say this represents Judas’ kiss.
So great is the pain that our sins cause Jesus. Let us tell him that we want to be faithful, that we don’t want to sell him, as Judas did, for thirty coins, for a trifle, for that’s what our sins are: pride, envy, impurity, hatred, resentment… When a temptation threatens to overwhelm us, let’s remember that it is not worthwhile to exchange the happiness of God’s children, which is what we are, for a pleasure that ends right away, leaving the bitter aftertaste of defeat and infidelity.

We have to feel on our shoulders the weight of the Church and of all humanity. Isn’t it marvelous to know that each of us can influence the whole world. In that place where we are, doing our work well, caring for our family, serving our friends, we can help make so many people happy. As St. Josemaria wrote, through the fulfillment of our duties, we Christians have to be like the stone fallen into the lake. With your word and your example you produce a first circle... and it another... and another, and another... Until you reach the furthest sites.

Let us ask our Lord that there be no more betrayals; that we learn, with his grace, how to reject the temptations that the devil presents us with, trying to trick us. We have to say no, firmly, to all that would separate us from God. Thus the sad story of Judas will not be repeated in our own lives.

And if we feel ourselves weak, let us hurry to the holy Sacrament of Penance! There our Lord is waiting, like the father in the parable of the prodigal son, to give us an embrace and offer us his friendship. He is continually going forth to meet us, even if we have fallen low, very low. It’s always time to return to God! We should never react with discouragement or pessimism. Don’t think: What can I do, if I’m just a pile of wretchedness? God’s mercy is even greater. What can I do, if I fall again and again through my weakness? God’s power to lift us from our falls is even greater.

The sins of Judas and of Peter were great. Both of them betrayed the Master: one by handing him over to his persecutors, the other by denying him three times. And nevertheless, how differently each reacted. Our Lord longed to show mercy towards both. Peter repented; he wept over his sin, he asked for forgiveness, and Christ strengthened him in his faith and love.
In time, he came to give his life for our Lord. But Judas failed to trust in Christ’s mercy. Up till the last moment, God held the doors of forgiveness open for him, but he didn’t want to enter them through penance.

In his first encyclical, John Paul II spoke of Christ’s “right to meet each one of us in that key moment in the soul’s life constituted by the moment of conversion and forgiveness” (Redemptor Hominis, 20). Let’s not deprive Jesus of that right! Let’s not take away from God the Father the joy of giving us a welcoming embrace! Let’s not sadden the Holy Spirit, who wants to give supernatural life back to souls!

Let’s ask Blessed Mary, the Hope of Christians, to prevent us from becoming discouraged on seeing our mistakes and sins, perhaps repeated ones. May she win for us from her Son the grace of conversion, an efficacious desire to go humbly and contritely to Confession, the sacrament of divine mercy, beginning and beginning again as often as necessary.

Holy Thursday, April 8, 2004

The Holy Thursday liturgy is very rich in content. It is the great day when the Holy Eucharist was instituted, a gift of heaven for mankind. It is also the day of the institution of the priesthood, a new divine gift that assures the real and effective presence of the Sacrifice of Calvary in all times and places, enabling us to receive its fruits.

The moment when Jesus was to offer his life for mankind was approaching. So great was his love that, in his infinite wisdom, he found a way of going and remaining at the same time. St. Josemaría, reflecting on people who are obliged to leave their home and family to earn their living elsewhere, notes that human love makes use of a symbol. Those who are parting exchange a remembrance, perhaps a photograph. Jesus, perfect God and perfect man, does not leave a symbol, but the reality. He himself remains. He goes to the Father, but he remains with us men. He is there, under the species of bread and wine, really present, with his Body, his Blood, his Soul and his Divinity.

How do we correspond to his immense love? By attending Holy Mass, the living and true memorial of the Sacrifice of Calvary, with faith and devotion. By preparing ourselves very well to receive Communion, with our soul well cleansed. By frequently visiting Jesus hidden in the tabernacle.
The first reading from today’s Mass recalls what God stipulated for the people of Israel, so they would not forget the gifts they had received. It goes into great detail, from how the paschal lamb should be prepared, to small observances to help recall the passage of the Lord. If this was prescribed to commemorate events that were only an image of the liberation from sin worked by Jesus, how should we behave now, when we have truly been rescued from the slavery of sin and made children of God.

This is why the Church insists on great care in all that refers to the Eucharist. Do we take part in the Holy Sacrifice every Sunday and on Holy Days of Obligation with the realization that we are participating in a divine action?

St. John relates that Jesus washed the feet of his disciples before the Last Supper. One has to be clean in soul and body to receive Him worthily. That is why He left us the sacrament of Penance.

We also commemorate the institution of the priesthood. Let us ask, with full sincerity, what St. Josemaría Escrivá used to pray: *Lord, put into my heart the love with which you want me to love you.*

In today’s scene, our Lady is not physically present, although she was in Jerusalem during those days. We will find her tomorrow at the foot of the Cross. But today, with her discreet and silent presence, she accompanies her Son very closely, in a deep union of prayer, sacrifice and dedication. John Paul II writes that, after our Lord’s ascension into heaven, she took part intensely in the Eucharistic celebration of the early Christians: “The body given up for us and made present under sacramental signs was the same body which she had conceived in her womb! For Mary, receiving the Eucharist must have somehow meant welcoming once more into her womb that heart which had beat in unison with hers” (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 56).

Now as well Mary keeps Jesus company in all the world’s tabernacles. We ask her to teach us to be Eucharistic souls, men and women of sure faith and upright piety, who strive never to leave Jesus alone. May we learn how to adore Him, to ask for his forgiveness, to thank Him for his gifts, to keep Him company.

Good Friday, April 9, 2004
Today we want to accompany Jesus on the Cross. I recall some word of St. Josemaría Escrivá on a Good Friday. He invited us to relive personally the hours of the Passion: from Christ’s agony in the Garden of Olives to the scourging, the crowning with thorns and his death on the Cross. He said: “With the omnipotence of God bound by the hand of man, they lead my Jesus from place to place, among the insults and the shoves of the crowd.”

Each of us has to see himself in the midst of that crowd, because it was our sins that caused the immense pain that crushed our Lord’s soul and body. Yes, each of us pushes Jesus, made into an object of ridicule, from one place to another. It is we who, with our sins, cry out loudly for his death. And He, perfect God and perfect man, lets it be done. The prophet Isaiah had foretold it all: He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb.

It is only right that we feel the responsibility for our sins. It is logical that we are deeply grateful to Jesus. It is natural that we seek reparation, because of our failures to love. He himself always responds with a total love. During these days of Holy Week, we see our Lord as though closer to us, more like us, who are his brothers and sisters. Let us meditate on some words of John Paul II: “Those who believe in Jesus, crucified and risen, carry the Cross in triumph as an indisputable proof that God is love...However, faith in Christ can never be taken for granted...The Easter Mystery that we will relive during the days of Holy Week is always present” (Homily, March 24, 2002).

Let us ask Jesus, during this Holy Week, to awaken in our soul the awareness of being men and women who are truly Christian, because we live facing God, and, with God, facing all people.

We can’t let our Lord carry the Cross alone. Let us accept joyfully little daily sacrifices.

Let us take advantage of the ability to love that God has given us, in order to make specific resolutions, and not be satisfied with mere feelings. Let us say sincerely: Lord, never again, never again! Let us ask with faith
that we and everyone on earth will learn to hate moral sin and to abhor deliberate venial sin, which has caused our God so much suffering.

How great is the power of the Cross. When Christ is the object of everyone’s derision and ridicule. When He is on the wood without wanting to escape from those nails. When no one would give a cent for his life, the good thief—a man like us—discovers the love of the agonizing Christ, and asks for forgiveness. Today you shall be with me in paradise. What power there is in suffering, when it is accepted in union with our Lord. It is capable of drawing glory and life from the saddest situation. That one who addressed the agonizing Christ found remission for his sins, eternal happiness.

We must do the same. If we lose our fear of the Cross, if we unite ourselves to Christ on the Cross, we will receive his grace, his power, his effectiveness. And we will be filled with peace.

At the foot of the Cross we find Mary, the most faithful Virgin. Let us ask her, on this Good Friday, to give us her love and her strength, so that we too will learn how to accompany Jesus. We go to her with words of St. Josemaría Escrivá that have helped millions of people. Say to her: Mother, my Mother—yours, because you are hers on many counts—may your love bind me to your Son’s Cross: may I not lack the faith, nor the courage, nor the daring, to carry out the will of our Jesus.

Holy Saturday, April 10, 2004

Today is a day of silence in the Church. Christ lies in the sepulcher while the Church meditates, marveling at what this Lord of ours has done for us. She observes silence in order to learn from the Master, contemplating his bruised and battered body.

Each of us can and should unite ourselves to the Church’s silence. And on realizing that we are responsible for his death, we will strive to bring it about that our passions, our rebelliousness, everything that separates us from God, also keep silent. But not by merely being passive: it is a grace that God grants us when we ask for it before the dead Body of his Son, when we make an effort to uproot from our life everything that distances us from Him.
Holy Saturday is not a sad day. Our Lord has conquered the devil and sin, and within a few hours He will also conquer death with his glorious resurrection. He has reconciled us with his heavenly Father: now we are God’s children! Let us resolve to be grateful, certain that we will overcome all obstacles, of whatever form, if we stay closely united to Jesus through prayer and the sacraments.

The earth has a hunger for God, although often it doesn’t realize it. People want us to speak to them about this joyful reality, about getting to know our Lord. That is the mission of us Christians. Let us have the courage of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, who during Christ’s life paid deference to human respects, but who at the definitive moment dared to ask Pilate for Jesus’ dead body, in order to bury it. Or the courage of the holy women who, when Jesus is already a cadaver, buy fragrances to anoint his body, without fearing the soldiers who guard the sepulcher.

At the moment when everyone flees, when all feel the right to insult, ridicule and jeer at Jesus, they go and demand: give us the Body, it belongs to us. We ask for forgiveness and we say, in words of St. Josemaria: With them I too will go up to the foot of the Cross; I will press my arms tightly round the cold Body, the corpse of Christ, with the fire of my love; I will unnail it, with my reparation and mortifications; I will wrap it in the new winding-sheet of my clean life, and I will bury it in the living rock of my breast, where no one can tear it away from me. And there, Lord, take your rest!

We understand why they place the dead body of her Son in the arms of his Mother, before burying him. Mary was the only creature who could tell him that she understood perfectly his love for mankind, because she didn’t cause his suffering. The most pure Virgin speaks for us; but she speaks so that we react, so that we experience her suffering, made one and the same with the suffering of Christ.

We draw out resolutions of conversion and apostolate, determined to identify ourselves more closely with Christ, to be more fully concerned about souls. Let us ask our Lord to transmit to us the saving efficacy of his passion and death. The people around us are waiting for us Christians to reveal to them the marvel of finding God. This Holy Week, and afterwards every day, has to be a leap of quality for us, asking our Lord to completely
fill our lives. We have to communicate to many people the new life that Jesus gained for us by the Redemption.

Let us go to holy Mary: Lady of Solitude, Mother of God and our Mother, help us understand, as St. Josemaria wrote, that we must bring into our life, to make them our own, the life and death of Christ. We must die through mortification and penance, so that Christ may live in us through Love. And then follow in the footsteps of Christ, with a zeal to co redeem all mankind. We must give our life for others. That is the only way to live the life of Jesus Christ and to become one and the same thing with Him.

Easter Sunday, April 11, 2004

And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week they went to the tomb when the sun had risen. This is how St. Mark begins his narration of what happened that morning, two thousand years ago on the first Christian Easter.

Jesus had been buried. To the eyes of men, his life and message had ended in the most abject failure. His disciples, confused and frightened, had scattered. Even the women coming to anoint him piously, asked one another: “Who will roll away the stone for us, from the door of the tomb?” Nevertheless, St. Josemaria points out, they continue on. You and I, how much do we vacillate? Do we have the same holy determination, or do we have to confess that we feel ashamed as we contemplate the decisiveness, the courage, the daring of those women? Fulfilling God’s will, being faithful to Christ’s law, living our faith consistently, can at times seem quite difficult. Obstacles present themselves that seem insuperable. Nevertheless, God always conquers.

The epic of Jesus of Nazareth did not end with his ignominious death on the Cross. The last word is that of his glorious Resurrection. And Christians, in Baptism, have died and been resurrected with Christ: dead to sin and alive towards God. “O Christ,” we say with our Holy Father John Paul II, “how can we fail to thank you for the ineffable gift which, on this night, you lavish upon us? The mystery of your death and resurrection descends into the baptismal water that receive the old, carnal man, and makes him clean with divine youthfulness itself” (Homily, April 15, 2001).
Today the Church, filled with joy, exclaims: *this is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it!* This cry of jubilation is prolonged for fifty days throughout Easter time, echoing of the words of St. Paul: *If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hid with Christ in God.*

It is logical to think—and this is what the Church’s tradition holds—that Jesus, when he rose, first appeared to his Blessed Mother. The fact that she does not appear in the Gospel narratives, with the other women, is, as John Paul II points out, an indication that our Lady had already met with Jesus. “This deduction is also confirmed,” the Pope adds, “by the fact that the first witnesses of the resurrection were, by Christ’s will, the women who had remained faithful at the foot of the Cross, and who therefore were firmer in their faith” (Audience, May 21, 1997). Only Mary had kept her faith fully intact during the bitter hours of the Passion; therefore it seems only natural that our Lord would appear first to her.

We have to always stay close to our Lady, even more at Easter time, and learn from her. With what eagerness she had awaited the Resurrection! Mary knew that Jesus had come to save the world and that, therefore, he had to suffer and die; but she also knew that he could not remain subject to death, because he is Life.

A good way to live the time of Easter is to strive to help others share in Christ’s life, fulfilling with great diligence the new commandment of charity that our Lord gave us on the eve of his passion: *By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.* The risen Christ now repeats this to each of us. He tells us: truly love one another; strive every day to serve the others; be concerned about the slightest details to make life agreeable to those who live with you.

But let us return to the scene of Jesus as He appears to his Blessed Mother. How happy must our Lady have been to contemplate that most Holy Humanity—flesh of her flesh and life of her life—now fully glorified! Let us ask her to teach us to sacrifice ourselves for the others without being noticed, without even looking for thanks. May we have a hunger to pass
unnoticed, so as to possess God’s life and communicate it to others. Today let us address the Queen of Heaven with the greeting proper to the Easter season. Queen of heaven, rejoice, alleluia. / For he whom you did merit to bear, alleluia. / Has risen as he said, alleluia. / Rejoice and be glad O Virgin Mary, Alleluia. / For the Lord is truly risen, alleluia.

Interview by the Zenit news agency, Rome (April 5, 2004)

1. In your statement regarding March 11, you invited people to pray for the terrorists. Is it possible to pray for people who are capable of such savage acts?

All we need to do is look at Jesus Christ, our model at all times. His example leads us to say, yes, it is possible to pray when one knows how to distinguish between the crime and its perpetrator. When we pray for those who kill so savagely, we don’t deny the evil of their deeds or the need to bring them to judgment before the law. There is no justification for evil. Violence is indefensible. But intransigence with evil is surely compatible with something that goes to the heart of the Church’s mission--pardoning sinners. Justice is not in conflict with mercy.

2. Christ says in the Gospel: “Love your enemies.” What does it mean to love terrorists?

Jesus invites us to practice mercy not only towards those we love, but also towards our enemies, even those who cause us direct and unjustified harm. Here we confront an indecipherable mystery, although one that can be understood to some extent through the marvelous prism of charity. How is it to be applied to a terrorist? By praying for his conversion, that is, for his redemption, raising our sights above his just punishment in this life.

3. Is it possible to forgive someone who doesn’t want to be forgiven? How do we put this forgiveness into practice?

I think we need to begin by practicing the spirit of forgiveness in our daily life. We need to learn to forgive, and to ask for forgiveness, on a small
scale, in our family, professional and social relationships. Paraphrasing the Gospel, a person who forgives in small things will be able to forgive in great ones. I saw this very clearly in St. Josemaría Escrivá, who never felt himself to be the enemy of anyone, not even of those who mistreated him.

4. In Spain, in recent decades, I imagine that members of the Prelature, or persons close to it, have been affected by terrorism. What has been your own experience?

I have shared that terrible experience with members of the Prelature and with other Catholics, not only in Spain but also in countries such as Colombia, to cite only one example. It is an experience that causes great devastation and pain. The blow is so great that it can lead to a loss of emotional control. But I have witnessed, thanks be to God, how persons affected in their family, or personally, have been able to rise above themselves and react with heroism. They refuse to base their life on hatred. Planting the seed of hatred is perhaps the most diabolical effect of terrorism. Instead these persons decided to continue on their Christian path, perhaps even more firmly than before. I am convinced that those who are victims of terrorism can count on a special grace from God to give them strength. Thus they can be a light shining in the darkness for those around them.

5. What do you see as the key elements of a Christian response to Islamic terrorism?

It is important not to mistake a part for the whole, or to blame a group of countries made up of hundreds of millions of people, an entire culture, for the actions of a minority. Therefore I don’t like to use the expression “Islamic terrorism.” I think the Muslims themselves, the many peaceful citizens who love freedom and life—their own and that of others—and who practice their religion sincerely and without fanaticism, should play an important role in the victory over terrorism. I also see Catholic Arabs playing an essential role, because they can provide bridges of understanding.
About Saint Josemaría
Other News

On April 25, in Mlawa, Poland, the solemn ceremony of consecration of the chapel dedicated to St. Josemaría in the city’s new high school was held. Mlawa is thus the second Polish city to have a sacred place dedicated to the founder of Opus Dei. The first was Morzyca. The ceremony took place in the presence of a large audience (teachers, students and their families) presided over by Auxiliary Bishop Roman Marcinkowski of Plock. The promoter and first president of the high school, Fr. Roman Jankowski, asked the bishop for permission to have the chapel dedicated to St. Josemaría. A painting by the artist Malgorzata Wrochna, showing Opus Dei’s founder surrounded by children of various races, presides over the chapel.

Other recent editions of books by St. Josemaría include: *Christ Is Passing By* (audio book), first Mexican audio edition; *Passionately Loving the World*, published in Guatemala City with a printing of 1,000 copies. Also, the informative bulletin on the canonization has been published in the Estonian and Czech languages.

On May 20, a new interactive CD-Rom for children went on sale in the collection entitled “Al encuentro de los amigos de Jesús” (“Meeting Jesus’ friends”). In this multimedia material, children can find a simple summary of St. Josemaría’s life, together with various games that teach them the prayers he prayed at their age and ways of living the virtues right from their early years. The elementary school teacher, Rosana Muñoz, author of the collection, which includes the lives of other 20th century saints, sees it as an effective way to teach children to be true friends of Jesus in their daily lives.

The first biography of St. Josemaría in the Slovenian language is a translation of the book written in Italian by the journalist Andrea Tornielli, *Escrivá, Fondatore dell’Opus Dei*, published on the occasion of the canonization of St. Josemaría on October 6, 2002. The work, based on
testimonies and other documents from the process of canonization, includes numerous quotations from the saint that reflect the spirit of Opus Dei.

The book was presented to the public at the offices of the Druzina publishing company, producer of the Slovenian translation. After words from the publisher, Fr. Feliu Torra, Vicar of the Prelature of Opus Dei in Slovenia, expressed his gratitude to all those who had made possible the publication of the book, only a half year after the first faithful of the Work arrived in Ljubljana.

Ricardo Estarriol, Vienna correspondent for La Vanguardia, stressed the importance of the lay faithful participating in public and social life, with the same duties and rights as any other citizen, and with the intention of contributing to the common good of society, in accord with the Gospel teachings of truth and love.

Finally, Dr. Anna Francesconi, spoke about how a doctor who is also the mother of a family, lives the spirit of Opus Dei.

The publishing house of the Marian Fathers (MIC) has published the book Alvaro del Portillo, O Zalożycielu Opus Dei, an interview with the first Prelate of Opus Dei about his predecessor, St. Josemaría Escrivá, by Cesare Cavalleri (English title Immerged in God). The printing was of 2,000 copies. Presentation of the book took place during the Catholic Book fair celebrated in Warsaw during Easter Week. Taking part in the ceremony were Jaroslaw Sellin, a member of the National Council of Polish television; Pawel Zuchniewicz, a well-known journalist; and Father Stefan Moszoro, the first Regional Vicar of Opus Dei in Poland.

The publishing houses Ksiegarnia sw.Jacka, of Katowice, and Apostolicum of Warsaw have jointly published a new edition of Rozaniec swiety—Droga Krzyzowa (Holy Rosary—The Way of the Cross ) of St. Josemaría. The new edition contains for the first time the Polish translation of the commentaries on the Mysteries of Light, taken from various writings of the founder of Opus Dei. The printing totaled 5,000 copies.
Before a large audience, in the Leopoldo Lugones Hall of the Book Fair, the first Argentinian edition of the book *El Fundador del Opus Dei* by Andres Vazquez de Prada, was presented to the public by the publisher, Ediciones Homely. A discussion of the book took place, with Father Patricio Olmos and Drs. Paola Delbosco and Cristina Viñuela contributing.

Fr. Olmos, Regional Vicar of Opus Dei, pointed out in reference to St. Josemaría Escrivá: “One mustn’t think that the divine ideal that he saw, incarnated and communicated was something for supermen or superwomen. It is an ideal meant for all men and women, for we are all called to work, and all upright jobs, no matter how apparently humble, can be sanctified.”

Dr. Paola Delbosco emphasized some aspects of the saint’s childhood, describing him as “a normal child, with a character inclined to generosity and to contemplation, who grew into a young man whose basic characteristic was abandonment to the action of God—not in a passive way, but in an active availability to do God’s will.”

Why should one read this biography of St. Josemaría?, Dr. Viñuela asked. “I would like to answer this question,” she said, “in the framework of the Apostolic letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*. There Christ, through his Vicar on earth, exhorts us: *Put out into the deep* . ‘The missionary mandate accompanies us into the Third Millennium and urges us to share the enthusiasm of the very first Christians’ (no. 58). So let us set out. We need to acquire the virtues demanded by ‘the high seas,’ virtues that help us to live our faith and to be daring in love.”

The Torreciudad Board of Patrons has edited a new book entitled *Semblanzas aragonesas de San Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer* (An Aragonese Sketch of St. Josemaría Escrivá). The book consists of seven chapters and almost a hundred photographs, in addition to seventeen short testimonies and a documentary appendix. The foreword is written by Bishop Javier Echevarría, Prelate of Opus Dei.
The first two chapters, written by the historian, Martín Ibarra, deal with Saint Josemaría’s childhood and his stay at the seminary of Saragossa. José Orlandis, a former professor at the University of Saragossa, recalls in chapter three some moments that he spent with the founder of Opus Dei and the founder’s stay in Saragossa in 1951.

Manuel Garrido, a journalist, wrote chapter four, entitled “of St. Josemaría’s correspondence with people in Aragon.” Fr. Fernando Mendoza, a canon of the Basilica of the Pillar, wrote chapter five: “The Aragonese Marian devotion of St. Josemaría Escrivá.” A lawyer, Ascensión Fornés, is the author of chapter six: “The Apostolic Work of Opus Dei in Aragon: some aspects of the early days (1940-1951).” In chapter seven, Joaquin Mantecón, as the Commissioner of the Centennial of Josemaría Escrivá in Aragón, describes the various stages of that event.

The section of testimonies gathers seventeen contributions from a wide variety of people. Most of them are from people who knew the founder of Opus Dei personally. An abundant documentary appendix follows, and the book closes with a photographic album that includes about a hundred pictures connected with the life of Opus Dei’s founder.

On the Feast of June 26th

On or around June 26th, the day on which St. Josemaría departed for heaven, commemorative ceremonies were held in many parts of the world. The attendance of thousands of people at these Masses in honor of the saint, show how widespread devotion to the founder of Opus Dei has become and the affection and love for him all over the world.

The ceremony in St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York was presided over by Cardinal Edward Egan. In his homily, the Cardinal emphasized St. Josemaría’s complete docility to the inspirations he received from God. He recalled his readiness to dedicate himself fully to God when he saw footsteps in the snow left by a discalced Carmelite, and how later, in October 1928, he understood by divine inspiration that all men and women
are called to be saints in the middle of the world. “We are called to seek holiness in the middle of the world, in the place where our Lord has placed us. We have to be another Christ in the midst of the world. We have to be his ambassadors. This was the message of St. Josemaría,” Cardinal Egan said. At the end of his homily he expressed his thanks for the service that Opus Dei is providing to the Archdiocese of New York and throughout the whole world.

The Mass of St. Josemaría was celebrated for the first time in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, on June 25th in the Cathedral of Our Lady, officiated by the Vietnamese priest, Father Joseph Tuan. There was also a Mass in Taipei, Taiwan, on June 24, in Hwa Shan Cathedral, celebrated by the recently appointed Bishop Joseph Cheng.

In Africa, Masses were celebrated, among other places, in Nairobi and Mombasa, Kenya; in Kampala, Uganda; in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania; in Abidjan and Yamoussoukro, Ivory Coast; and in Cameroon. In this last country there were two Masses: the first took place in the Cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul in Douala, and the second in the Cathedral of Our Lady of Victory in Yaoundé, presided over by Bishop Jean-Bosco Ntep of Eséka. A Mass was also scheduled, for the first time, in Accra, Ghana, in the early days of July.

Bishop Henry Howaniec OFM, of the Diocese of the Most Holy Trinity in Almaty, Kazakhstan, presided over a Eucharistic concelebration in honor of St. Josemaría in the Cathedral of Almaty. Among the concelebrants were the priests of the prelature and two diocesan priests recently arrived from Argentina who are beginning ministry there on a stable basis.

In the celebration in Maastricht, the Netherlands, music for a special Mass composed for the saint was performed. In Jerusalem, about 70 people attended the Mass of St. Josemaría celebrated on June 25 in the Church of the Cenacle. Concelebrating with the Vicar of the Delegation, Fr. Diego Daza, was the Vicar Secretary, Fr. Laurence Richardson. The ceremony was in English, with readings and prayers of the faithful in Hebrew, Arabic, English and French. The songs were in Latin and Arabic. At the end of the Mass there was veneration of a relic ex ossibus of the Founder of
Opus Dei, which was exposed in the sanctuary for the ceremony, at the foot of a framed silkscreen printing.

Torna ai contenuti

Proper texts of Saints Josemaria for the Liturgy of the Hours

On February 12, 2004, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments approved the following Latin texts for the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours for the feast of St. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, priest (cf. Prot. N. 1308/02/L):

Die 26 iunii

S. IOSEPHMARiae ESCRIVÁ

DE BALAGUER, PRESBYTERI


De Communi pastorum, præter sequentia.

Ad I Vesperas

Hymnus

Laudámus te cum cántico,
impénsius, Iosephmaría,
qui nobis vetus filiis,
sed novum das præcónium
ut nupti sive cœlibes
senésve sive iúvenes,
labórem sanctum fácerent
diébus suum singulis
Christo quæsíto íllico,
invénto et super ómnia
dilécto, possent cónsequi
corónam vitæ et præ´mium.
Quæ docuísti, quæ´sumus,
fac nos implére opéribus;
vocántem omnes Dóminum
gressu sequámur álacri.
Deo Patri sit glória
et Fílio ac Paráclito,
largítis tibi præ´mia,
in sempitérna sæ´cula. Amen.
Ad Officium lectionis
Hymnus
Ipse magíster, rector, almus pater,
dux, pastor doctus fuit et sacérdos,
cui tu, Christe, fú lgidum donásti
péctoris visum:
Dei a viris feminísque adiútus,
culmen in mundi crucem ad altándam
Christus triú mphans et sic ad seípsum
ómnia trahens.
Fac nos, ab ævo iúgiter vocátos,
iam ante mundi constitutionem,
álteros Christos, sal, ferméntum, lumen,
cómptis orbis:
Sal, quod præservet a corruptióné,
lumen, humána péctora collú strans,
vivum ferméntum, ferens Panem Vivum
omni labóri.
Gló riae summum decus atque laudis,
sit soli Tibi, Déitas perénnis,
Pater et Fili, Spíritu cum Almo
nunc et in ævum. Amen.

Lectio altera
Ex Homilíis sancti Iosephmaríæ Escrivá de Balaguer presbêteri
(Ex Homilia Hacia la santidad, Ed. Palabra, Matriti, 1973, pp. 7-9, 12-13, 20-21, 23-24, 32-33, 40-41, 52)

Vitam degens vere contemplativam medio in mundo

Nos pénitus commó tos et cor nostrum vehéméntius pulsáre sentímus,
cum diligénter atténdimus ad Sanctum Paulum clamántem: Hæc est volúntas Dei, sanctificátio vestra. Hó die hæc verba recó lere iterum mihi ipsi propó no, atque vobis et ómnibus homínibus cù pio in memó riam redígere hanc esse voluntátem Dei, ut scélific sancti simus. Vitæ sánctitas prorsus necessária est ad pacem ánimis afferéndam, quæ vera pax sit, ad terram transformándam, et ad Dóminum Deum nostrum in mundo Eúmque per rés huius mundi quæréndum. Omnes ad sanctitátem vocántur, et Dóminus ab unoquóque nostrum amó rem expó stat: a iú vene scélificet et a sene, a cœlibe et a nupto, a sano et ab ægró to, a docto et ab indócto, quemcúmque hi labó rem exércent, ubicú mque versántur. Unica via est, qua cum Deo intimitáte et fidú cia in dies magis coniungámur: nempe precatió ne Deum frequénter có lere, có - lloqui cum Ipso, ex imo corde in Eum amórem nostrum significáre.
In primis áliqua prex iaculató ria, ália dein, deínde ália... donec talis ánimi fervor impar vidétur, quia verba paupertáte labó rant... et tunc intimitas divína succédit, cordis ó culi in Deo defigú ntur, nulla interiécta mora, ánimo numquam defatigáto. Tunc velut in captivitáte vivimus, quasi in vínculis deténti. Dum máxima, qua pó ssumus, perfectió ne nostræ condiciónis nostríque labó ris officia persó lvimus, prout sinunt erró res et deféctus nostri, ánimus fú gere pércupit. Ad Deum nos vértimus, quemádmodum ferrum vi magnétis attráhitur. Incípimus Iesum modo efficació re dilígere, dulci amó ris pálpito.

Esse tamen cum Christo quod numquam est obliviscéndum absque ulla dubitatió ne impó rtat eius Crucem nancísci. Si nos in Dei manus trádimus, frequenté accidit, ut Ipse sinat nos gustáre doló rem, solitú dinem, res adversas, calú mnias, diffamatió nes, derísum, intus et foris; vult enim ad imáginem et similitú dinem suam nos conformári, et étiam permíttit ut álii nos deméntes vocent et stultos existimént. Si re vera humanitátem sanctíssimam Dómini nostri admirábimur et amábimus, tunc nos súngula euis vú lnera discernémus. Et inter hæc passívae purificació nis témpora, acérba quidem et fó rtia, dú lcium símul que trístium lacrímárumb plena, quas celáre conábimur, nos necessitátem sentiémus abscondéndi nos ipsos in súngulis illis sanctíssimis vulnéribus, ut purificémur, ut illo redemptó re ságuine perfruámur, ut corroborémur.

Tunc cor necessitátem advértit
distinguéndi Persó nas Divínas éasque
súngulas adorándi. Et hæc est nova
quodámmodo invéntio, quam ánimus
asséquitur in vitæ supernaturális itínere.
Et ídeo amánter conversátur
cum Patre, cum Fílio, cum Spíritu
Sancto; et libénter se submíttit actió -
ni Parácliti vivificántis, qui nobis datur
absque ullo mérito nostro. Tunc
verba desunt, língua dícere quæ sentímus non valet. Quiéscit iam et intelléctus.
Non ratiocinátur mens: intuétur tantum! Et ánimus dénuo in cánticum novum erúmpit, quia se sentit et scit a Deo mú tuo redamári, quó libet diéi moménto.
In hac donatió ne, zelus apostó licús incénditur et in dies magis augéscit, ítemque inter álios huiú smodi desidérium propagátur, quia bonum est diffusívum sui. Fíeri non potest, ut nostra hú milis natú ra, tam Deo pró xima, desidério non árdeat gáudii et pacis gérmína per mundum universum seminándi, ómnia irritandí aquis redemptrícibus quæ ab apérto Christi látere pró fluunt, atque officia ómnia ex amó re incipiéndi et absolvéndi.
Pró tegat nos Virgo Beatíssima, Mater Dei et Mater nostra, ut unusquísque nostrum in plenitú dine fídei per Spíritus Sancti dona et vitam contemplatívam, Ecclésiæ inservíre possit.

*Responsorium* Eph 1, 4; 1 Pt 2, 21
R. Deus elégit nos in Christo
ante mundi constitutiónem, * Ut essémus
sancti et immaculátii in conspéctu
V. Christus passus est pro vobis,
vobis relínquens exémplum ut
sequámìni vestígia eius. * Ut essémus
sancti et immaculátii in conspéctu
eius in caritáte.
Ad Laudes matutinas

Hymnus
Sanctum laudémus, vias qui monstrávit,
áditum dedit limináque pandit,
ábditæ in Christo vitæ, contemplátus
frémitu in mundi.
Dómini vultum mitem requiréntes
vicos per medios præteréuntis
ab exemplári fíngimus divínis
lineaméntis.
Hoc est ætérni spéculum colló qui
pignus divínæ conversatiónis,
qua sanctus ipse frú itur in astris
per ævum lætus.
Gáudio plenis córdibus canámus
gló riae laudes Tríadi beátæ,
quæ sancto dedit cælitem corónam
Iosephmaríæ. Amen.
Ad Benedictus, ant.
Non vos me elegístis, sed ego élégi
vos et pósui vos, ut vos eátis et fructum
afferátis, et fructus vester máneat.

Oratio
Deus, qui sanctum Iosephmaríam,
presbêterum, universális vocatiónis ad
sanctitátem et ad apostolátum in Ecclésia
præcónem effecísti, eius interces-
siónem et exémplo concéde, ut, per cotidiánum
labórem Iesu Fílio tuo configurémur
et redemptionis óperi ardénti
amóre serviámus. Per Dóminum.

Ad II Vesperas

Hymnus
Tu cotidiánas vias demonstrásti
exémplum Christi docens imitári
infú ndens lumen quod clare vidísti
obœ´diens Luci.
Silénte vita atque sine spectáclo,
exercuísti munus sacerdó tis
præcépta Dei vere prædicándo
humilitáte.
María Virgo te semper protéxit
amó ris pulchri veneránda Mater
Ancílla Dómini, sapiéntiæ sedes,
A love that is ever young: The family in the teachings of Saint Josemaria

“One of the most striking aspects of the personality of St. Josemaría Escrivá, and one which represents a major contribution to the Church’s spiritual patrimony, is the special emphasis found in his life and writings on the family, a reality so beloved by God.” These words of Cardinal Alfonso Lopez Trujillo, President of the Pontifical Council for the Family, appear in the presentation of the book Un amor siempre joven. Enseñanzas de San Josemaría Escrivá sobre la familia, a selection of texts and studies compiled by Alfonso Mendiz and Juan Angel Brage, put out by Palabra publishers.

The book is divided into four chapters. The first chapter contains a number of preliminary studies. The second has a selection of texts from the
oral preaching of St. Josemaría on the family. The third goes more deeply into the teachings of the founder of Opus Dei. And the fourth brings together a group of personal testimonies from writers, persons in public life, and ordinary fathers and mothers who knew St. Josemaría, or who experienced the power of his message in their own lives.

Web page on the writings of Saint Josemaria

The web page www.Escriváworks.org offers the internet user access to the nine published works of St. Josemaría Escrivá. These includes books for meditation such as *The Way*, *Furrow*, *The Forge*, *Holy Rosary* and *Via Crucis*; volumes of homilies, such as *Friends of God*, *Christ Is Passing By*, and *In Love with the Church*, and a collection of interviews: *Conversations with Josemaría Escrivá*. The works of St. Josemaría can now be consulted in nine languages: Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Polish, Portuguese (with a separate version for Brazil), Spanish, and Swedish. Japanese and Russian versions are currently in preparation. Besides the complete text, the web page offers a brief synopsis of each book, a subject index, and an index for scriptural citations.

The web page also includes a search engine for specific words or phrases in the writings of the founder of Opus Dei. Thus one can search for specific texts, for example, on prayer, the Eucharist, marriage preparation, or help for the needy. In addition, the visitor can create a private folder on the web to hold the brief texts of the saint that he wishes to keep grouped together. There are also links to other related pages, such as the official web page of Opus Dei, the Bulletin *Romana*, and the one dedicated to St. Josemaría.

Address by Msgr. Joaquin Alonso at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross
On May 27 a talk entitled *The Founder of Opus Dei and Priests* was given by Msgr. Joaquin Alonso in the Höffner Auditorium of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross. The conference was organized by the university chaplaincy.

Msgr. Alonso gave an overview of the life of St. Josemaría, focussing on his great love for priests. This love, shown in deeds, led, among other things, to the creation of the CRIS (*Centro Romano di Incontri Sacerdotali*). Msgr. Alonso told various anecdotes about how this center for priests’ gatherings came into being, a process in which he played a direct role. At the end of the conference a question and answer session was held.
NEWS
Masses for the Servant of God Bishop Alvaro del Portillo throughout the world

March 23 marked the tenth anniversary of the death of Don Alvaro. For this occasion Masses were said throughout the world in suffrage for his soul. In many cities, the celebrants were the local ordinaries, bishops and archbishops, who wanted to show their affection for Bishop del Portillo. Many priests also celebrated the Eucharist for his eternal rest. Before and during the Eucharistic celebrations those attending had the opportunity to receive the sacrament of Penance.

In Italy Masses were celebrated in the Basilica of St. Ambrose in Milan, in the Cathedral of Palermo, where the ceremony was officiated by Cardinal Salvatore De Giorgi, and in the church of San Fernando in Bari, among other places, in addition to the parish of St. Josemaría in Rome.

All over Chile, Masses were said in suffrage for the soul of Don Alvaro, with large numbers of people in attendance. In Santiago, Mass was concelebrated with other priests in the parish of San Ramon by the Regional Vicar; in Viña del Mar, Mass was said in the Naval Church of Las Salinas; in Concepción, in the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes; in Antofagasta, in the military chapel; and in Temuco, in the chapel of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Home for the Aged.

Other places in Latin America where Masses were celebrated include: Argentina, in Buenos Aires, Mendoza, Tucuman and Santa Fe; Brazil, in São Paulo, Curitaba and Rio de Janeiro; Colombia, in Bogotá, Medellín, Cali, Barranquilla, Cartagena de Indias, Bucaramanga and Manizales; Ecuador, in Guayaquil and Quito; El Salvador, in San Salvador; Honduras, en Tegucigalpa; Mexico, in Monterrey, San Luis Potosi, Chihuahua, Torreon, Mexico City, Hermosillo, Culiacan, Aguascalientes and Guadalajara; Paraguay, in Asuncion; Peru, in Lima, Arequipa, Chiclayo, Piura and Cañete; Puerto Rico, in San Juan; The Dominican Republic, in Santo Domingo; Uruguay, in Montevideo.

In Stockholm, Masses were celebrated in two student residences, both corporate works of the Prelature. In addition to the residents, various friends and cooperators of Opus Dei were in attendance. There was also a
Eucharistic celebration in Jerusalem in suffrage for Don Alvaro attended by university and high school students who frequent the means of formation. In Brussels, Holy Mass was celebrated in the church of Our Lady of the Annunciation, presided over by the Regional Vicar of Opus Dei. In Germany the Regional Vicar, Father Christoph Bockamp, celebrated a Mass for Don Alvaro in Cologne on March 23. In Portugal there was a Mass for Bishop del Portillo in the oratory of St. Josemaria in the Montes Claros residence, and in the city of Viseu, in the church of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel.

In the chapel of Strathmore University, Nairobi, Kenya, a solemn Mass was celebrated on March 23. In Kinshasa, there was a Mass in the Cathedral of our Lady of the Congo, with Msgr. Xavier Hervas presiding. In his homily, he said that those who knew Don Alvaro “recall that in our meetings with him, our faith was illumined, our hope fortified and our love for God enkindled, leading us to consider the transcendence of our Christian vocation.” Around March 23, in Spain a great number of Masses in suffrage for the soul of the Servant of God Bishop Alvaro del Portillo were celebrated in various Spanish cities. The large gatherings in the Cathedrals of Almería, Burgos, Ciudad Real, Granada, León, Malaga, Palencia, Salamanca, Santander, Seville, Valladolid and many parish churches throughout Spain were a true testimony to the affection and veneration for the first successor of St. Josemaria on this important anniversary. Masses for Don Alvaro were also celebrated in many youth clubs, high schools and university residences, and other corporate works of Opus Dei.

Pontifical appointments

Rev. Miquel Delgado Galindo has been appointed a Chaplain of His Holiness (monsignor).

The Holy Father has also appointed:

Rev. Jaume Pujol, as Archbishop of Tarragona, Spain
The Cause of Canonization of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo: Opening ceremonies of the ecclesiastical tribunals

On March 5 in the Tribunal of the diocese of Rome and on the 20th of that month in the Tribunal of the Prelature, the opening sessions of the “instructive process” on the life of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo were held, with both tribunals enjoying equal competence. This phase consists in the simple compilation of evidence,

The first session of the Vicariate of Rome’s process took place in the “Hall of Conciliation” at the Lateran Palace, in the presence of some 400 people, among them the Prelate of Opus Dei, Bishop Javier Echevarría. Cardinal Ruini, Vicar of the Holy Father for the Diocese of Rome, opened the session. After recital of the Our Father, those involved in the process were sworn in, in accordance with their respective roles, beginning with Cardinal Ruini and followed by the delegated judge, the promoter of justice, the clerk of the court, the deputy clerk, and finally the postulator of the Cause.

When the first session of the process was concluded with the signing of the minutes, Cardinal Ruini addressed those present. After giving a brief sketch of Don Alvaro’s life, he spoke of the prestige he enjoyed in the Roman Curia. “We can highlight here the multi-faceted activity carried out by Bishop Del Portillo in the service of the Holy See. His deep pastoral experience gained at the side of Saint Josemaría, his proven human qualities, and his theological and juridical competence fitted him for multiple tasks.” And he continued: “The occasions that I had of meeting with Bishop del Portillo convinced me that I was in the presence of an exemplary pastor: the firmness of his adhesion to the doctrine of the Church, his union with the Pope, his pastoral charity, his humility, his
balance, all clearly evinced an interior richness that was not at all common.” He concluded by saying: “to guarantee the success of the work we are beginning, let us call upon the assistance of the Holy Spirit, the principal cause of holiness in the Church. Let me also call upon the intercession of St. Josemaría, of whom Bishop Alvaro del Portillo was the most faithful son and afterwards his first successor. The service that Don Alvaro always provided to the Church of Rome, the prompt diligence with which he supported the Holy Father’s pastoral initiatives for the diocese, were part of the love for the Church that he had learned from St. Josemaría.”

On March 20, there took place in the Höfﬁner Auditorium of the Palazzo di Sant’Apollinare, seat of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, the opening session of the Tribunal of the Prelature for the process of canonization of Bishop del Portillo. The ceremony was very similar to the one that had taken place two weeks earlier in the Lateran. Msgr. Francisco Vives, as Chancellor of the Prelatic Tribunal read the official authorization. The Prelate of Opus Dei, the members of the Tribunal and the Postulator of the cause took the oaths required for the carrying out of their respective duties. At the end Bishop Javier Echevarría, as President of the Tribunal, addressed those present.

He recalled how “one week before his departure for heaven, Don Alvaro, during his prayerful trip to the Holy Land, sent a post card from Jerusalem to the Pope’s personal secretary, Msgr. Stanislaw Dziwisz, in which among other things he told him, ‘I would greatly appreciate it if you would let the Holy Father know of our desire to be fideles usque ad mortem, faithful unto death in the service of the Church and the Holy Father.’ Today, Bishop Echevarría continued, “the reading of this brief handwritten text of Don Alvaro takes on special relevance because of what happened a few days later. One might say that our Lord listened closely to those words, usque ad mortem. Because a few days after his return, this good and faithful servant, as John Paul II described him, was called into God’s presence. This episode provides a very fitting framework for the ceremony that has brought us here today. For it has as its protagonist a shepherd who, right to the end of his life, left us an unequivocal testimony of faithfulness.”

The Prelate then referred to various paragraphs of the apostolic letter
Novo Millennio Ineunte, in which the Pope speaks of the “pedagogical value” of holiness (see nos. 29-41). And he said that “they constitute an invitation, directed to the shepherds of the Church, to set before the faithful the example of so many Christians who, even in recent times, have known how to put their faith into practice in a heroic manner, in environments and situations that are close to us. Their lives are, at the same time, a sign of hope.” In continuation he added “I also trust that the Cause of canonization of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo will bring many tangible benefits to Christians. I am sure that through his life many people will discover the fatherly face of God, smiling on them, encouraging them, forgiving them.” Bishop Echevarría concluded by saying: “At the end of his address at the opening ceremony for the diocesan part of the investigation to be carried out by the Vicariate of Rome’s Tribunal, Cardinal Ruini invoked the protection of St. Josemaría for the Tribunal’s work. With all my heart I also entrust the work of this Tribunal to the intercession of the one of whom Bishop del Portillo was the most faithful son.”

Establishment of new centers of the Prelature

The regional vicars have established new centers of the Prelature in the following cities:

Douala, Cameroon; Madrid, Spain; Ponta Delgada, Azores; Porto Alegre, Brazil; Riga, Latvia (two centers); Santiago de Compostela, Spain.

Conference at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross

“The judicial process requires well-balanced people, dedicated and technically well prepared.” “The application of administrative penalties
should respect the essential elements of due process.” These two sentences sum up the conclusions of the conference on “The Penal Process and the Protection of Personal Rights in Canon Law,” organized by the School of Canon Law of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, which took place in Rome on March 25 and 26.

Participating in the conference, among others, was Msgr. Joaquin Llobell, professor of Procedural Law at the University of the Holy Cross; Professor Carlo Gullo, a jurist on the Rota; Professor Kenneth Pennington from the Catholic University of America; and Msgr. Velasio De Paolis, C.S., Secretary of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signature. The work of the conference concluded with a round table that discussed experiences in the application of norms and sanctions in recent judicial cases.
INITIATIVES

• In Brief
The University of Navarre’s 25th International Theological Symposium was dedicated to the theme “Sacred Scripture: the ever-relevant Word.” The symposium, held in Pamplona from April 21 to 23, was directed both to theologians and those interested in Biblical studies.

More than a hundred people attended the conferences given by speakers from various universities in Europe and the Near East. One well-known speaker was Jean-Michel Poffet, OP, Director of the French Biblical School of Jerusalem. As its organizer, Professor Gonzalo Aranda, explained, the symposium had as its aims “to reflect on the fact that the Sacred Books, though documents of the past, are contemporaneous with all epochs in the Church,” and “to highlight the Bible’s continuing influence in various sectors of culture, and to explain in so far as possible the reasons for this.”

Professor Aranda reminded his listeners that “the Bible is the most widely distributed book throughout the world. Few families in western civilization are without a copy. Often the Bible is valued for its antiquity, for its moral teachings, and for the history that it narrates. But for the Christian, the Bible should be and is something more. It is the instrument through which one hears today what God tells us about himself and his acting in human history. The reader is invited to become a protagonist in the narrative, which is oriented towards a very hopeful end for man and for the world, symbolically described in the final book of the Bible, the Apocalypse.”

The conferences were organized according to three different ways in which the Sacred Books can be studied: as literary texts, as shapers of the Church’s faith and liturgy, and as an impelling force in Christian spirituality.

Among those taking part in the opening ceremony were Professor Manuel Casado, Vice-rector of the University of Navarre, and Professor Francisco Varo, dean of the School of Theology. The first session focused on the Bible’s presence in literature, art and the theater. Lecturers were
Professors Miguel Angel Garrido, from the Committee for Advanced Scientific Research in Madrid; Jean-Michel Poffet, O.P., Director of the French Biblical School of Jerusalem; Enrique Banus, Director of European Studies at the University of Navarre, and Juan Orellana, from the School of Humanities and Communication in the San Pablo-CEU University in Madrid.

The second day of the symposium confronted such topics as Sacred Scripture and the formulation of the faith; the influence of Sacred Scripture on the liturgy; the Bible in the configuration of Judaism and in the first centuries of Christianity. Presenting papers were Professors Ermenegildo Manicardi, President of the Academy of Theological Studies in Bologna; Juan Chapa, Professor of the School of Theology in the University of Navarre; Miguel Perez, President of the Spanish Association of Hebraic and Judaic Studies; Marcelo Merino, Professor of the School of Theology in the University of Navarre; and Paul O’Callaghan, Dean of the School of Theology at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome.

The final day was centered on Sacred Scripture’s influence on liturgical spirituality, as well as its repercussions for moral theology and Christian conduct. Taking part in the sessions were Professor Bernardo Estrada, from the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross; Professor Alfredo Lopez-Vallejos, Director of the Delegation for Ecumenism and Interreligious Relations of the Archdiocese of Pamplona; and Theodoro Lopez, Professor of the School of Theology in the University of Navarre.

The closing conference, “The Bible in the Writings of St. Josemaría Escriva,” was given by Professor Francisco Varo, dean of the School of Theology at Navarre, the organizer of the symposium. Professor Varo said that “for St. Josemaría the Gospel is a book that allows one to view deeds of the past which are still active in the present and which the reader is called upon to involve himself in, listening attentively to the words directed to him. St. Josemaría,” he added, “didn’t approach the Bible like a researcher entering a room full of antiquities. When reading the texts he didn’t limit himself to reconstructing past times. On the contrary, he strove to make them come alive and to insert them fully into the cultural and religious debate of each moment.”
The dean concluded by pointing out that for St. Josemaria “Jesus is not merely a person to be admired, whom only a creative imagination could reconstruct amidst the archeological remains of more than two thousand years. Rather He is the risen Christ, who lives now and seeks in our day and age disciples who will live and work at his side, men and women who, identified with Christ, can make him present in the world.”

In Brief

Curitaba, (Brazil) -- Theater for the moral formation of adolescents

Ecclesiastical authorities, politicians, doctors and Catholic educators have joined in denouncing the intensification of a national campaign of immoral propaganda in Brazil directed at adolescents and children, while doing everything possible to provide sound guidelines for the consciences of parents, educators and youth.

An interesting initiative in this regard, in the city of Curitiba, is that of a young theater director Pierre Ruthes, who has helped out in various apostolic undertakings that faithful and cooperators of Opus Dei carry out in the capital of the Brazilian state of Paraná. Seeking to provide moral guidelines to high school students, he wrote a theatrical piece entitled O que é que eu vou dizer lá em casa? [What am I going to say when I get home?] With clarity and refinement, this short play confronts the sophisms of current campaigns and tries to help adolescents understand that it is necessary to say “yes” to right values and “no” to wrong decisions.

This theater piece has been shown to more than 3,000 students in the high schools of Curitiba and other towns in the region. It will also be shown to an audience of 1,000 teachers and principals of schools in the state of Paraná. Hopefully a good number of them will ask to have the
Balgo, (Australia) -- Work Camp

Balgo, in the Kimberly desert region of Western Australia, is the most isolated community of aborigines in Australia.

The parish priest of Balgo, Fr. Matt Digges, invited the students of Warrane College to restore some badly deteriorated parish buildings. Fr. Matt depends on volunteers to maintain the parish property. A group of 18 boys flew from Sydney and spent two weeks in Balgo—a wonderful experience for them.

Their first stop was Alice Springs in the heart of the continent, where the temperature was 106 degrees Fahrenheit. There two vehicles used to transport troops picked them up and took them 500 miles on dirt roads. The job they found waiting for them when they reached Balgo was a big one: scrubbing floors to get rid of accumulated dirt; preparing walls to be painted, etc. They concentrated their efforts on the building that had been the first chapel of the Catholic mission in Balgo.

From the first day they got up at five each morning to attend Mass. On the last Sunday of their stay in Balgo, they attended Mass with all the local natives, celebrated in the local language, “Guguya.” During the prayers of the faithful, one of the readers prayed for the students who had worked even under the midday sun. The pastor thanked them wholeheartedly, above all for teaching those working with them to seek sanctity through work well done.

Valencia, (Spain) -- Theological Dialogues

The sixth annual Theological Dialogues program was held from January 13 to April 20 at the Almudi Priests’ Library, under the title: “Marriage
and the Family, Keys to the New Evangelization.” One of the objectives of the work carried out during these months was to help prepare for the World Conference on the Family, scheduled for Valencia in 2006.

In the first conference, Bishop Juan Antonio Reig of Segorbe-Castellón presented a panorama of the present situation of the family in Spain and the Church’s evangelizing mission. He emphasized the importance of the Spanish bishops’ new Pastoral Directory for the Family in connection with this mission. Following his address, Juan Perez Soba, Vice-Dean of the San Damasus School of Theology in Madrid spoke on the pan-sexualism of contemporary culture.

The presentation by Jose Noriega Bastos from the Lateran University’s John Paul II Institute in Rome was entitled “The Holy Spirit in Christ and in Spouses.” José Alfredo Peris, Dean of the “Edetania” School of Human Sciences, spoke on “Sexual and Reproductive Rights.”

Juan Andres Talens, from the John Paul II Institute on the Family in Valencia, spoke on contraception and natural methods of regulating fertility, and Father Ignacio Carrasco, Professor of Bioethics at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Rome, spoke on prenatal diagnostics.

Also speaking were Professor Jutta Burggraf from the School of Theology in the University of Navarre and Miguel Villalba, President of the Diocesan Commission on Life and the Family in Valencia.

Torna ai contenuti

Madrid -- Tenth Anniversary of the Senara Communications Workshop

Senara High School, a corporate work of Opus Dei in Madrid, has celebrated the tenth anniversary of its “Communications Media Workshop.” Since the 1993/94 school year, more than 300 girls aged 16 and 17 have taken part in the workshop. A number of them have gone on to get degrees in the field of Communications Science and are now working in the media. Others are studying journalism and advertising in
various Spanish universities.

This initiative seeks to foster in young people an intelligent and critical attitude towards the means of communication, and above all to show them the importance of a solid human, ethical, intellectual and technical formation to be a good professional in the information sciences. Students receive theoretical and practical classes and visit various media: a national newspaper, a prestigious radio broadcasting company, and a television chain. These visits enable them to get to know the work of journalists from close-up. “In addition to learning how to read a newspaper and to have good criteria when selecting television programs,” one of them said, “it’s very interesting to meet journalists at first hand and see how they work.”

During the year they also prepare a radio program entitled *The spontaneous hour*, which is taped at the school and broadcast on the Madrid student network *Radio Enlace*. The students write the informational material, narrate the program, conduct the interviews and select the music. They learn the importance of timing in radio, the need for correct and pleasant diction, and the value of a good title. At the end of the workshop, a professional journalist comes to the school to hand out the diplomas to the students and to provide some good advice for the future journalists.

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**Hobart, (Tasmania) -- Volunteer Program**

Southmore Study Centre is continuing its volunteer social work program for primary school students at Herdsman’s Cove Primary School. The project involves university women who dedicate time to activities for disadvantaged children in the sixth grade of primary school. One of the purposes of the program is to have a positive influence as role models for the students and provide guidelines for their secondary school studies and their lives as adults.

In 2004 Southmore expanded the project to remain in contact with the girls during their high school years, when they are more vulnerable to external pressures and require closer attention.
In recognition of their work with disadvantaged children and by recommendation of the principal of the school, the program has received the “Learning Together” prize for Educational Excellence in the local school district. The Herdsman’s Cove project also received a state prize for Educational Excellence, presented by Mrs. Paula Wriedt, the Minister of Education for the State of Tasmania.

Cologne, (Germany) -- A debate on human dignity

“How much am I worth? For how much can I be sold?” With these questions, Dr. Barbara Dohr began the Frühjahrsseminar [spring seminar] at the Müngersdorf International Residence, held in Cologne from May 7 to 9.

Dr. Dohr, a physician and specialist in Logotherapy, a school of psychiatry, provided food for reflection on the value of each person on the existential level. The forty students listening to her, from all parts of Germany, took an active part in the discussion following the presentation.

Professor Albert Zimmermann, a philosopher and honorary member of the Müngersdorf Board, guided those present to a more rational and consistent basis for theoretical discussions on the dignity of the person.

Doctor Ana Otte, a physician and professor at the John Paul II Institute in Valencia, and author of various publications on questions of ethics and human sexuality, focused on the context of human relations.

Death is also an aspect of a dignified life, said Dr. Ingeborg Jonen-Theilemann in her presentation, which she illustrated with slides. Dr. Jonen-Theilemann is the founder of the first Palliative Care Unit at the University Hospital of Cologne. The unit is now located in the Mildred-Scheel Haus.

The image of the person in advertising was the object of a critical analysis carried out by the students in a work session under the direction of
The reflections on the dignity of the person emphasized that divine filiation is its ultimate basis.

The roundtable ending the seminar included presentations by a number of students. Annika described her experiences in a rural development project in Peru. Julia spoke about helping out in a home for the aged in the former East Germany. Christine related her experiences as an English teacher for immigrants in Westerwald.

The motto of the seminar, “It’s up to you too,” made it clear that human dignity is not only a principle that has to be defended, but also a goal that demands of each person a true personal involvement.

Gudalajara, (Mexico) -- Preparation for the Eucharistic Congress

In preparation for the 48th International Eucharistic Congress, a conference was held at La Fontana Cultural Center on March 27. Some 600 people attended. Professor Enrique Moreno Garcia, a philosopher and well-known author, gave a brief history of the international Eucharistic Congresses and their objectives. He was happy to recall that at the closing of the last Congress, held in Rome, His Holiness John Paul II had asked the whole Church to join in the one to be held in 2004 in the city of Guadalajara, under the title: “The Eucharist: Light and Life of the New Millennium.”

The Secretary General of the Congress expressed his joy at seeing so many families and young people preparing to take part in the activities scheduled for this coming October, thus manifesting their faith in the Eucharist and their commitment towards the evangelization of the world. At the end many of the participants bought the basic texts for the upcoming Eucharistic Congress and other books related to the theme, for reflection and study.
Tegucigalpa, (Honduras) -- Central American project assisting the needy

During Holy Week of 2004, sixty young men from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, both university and high school students, took part in a solidarity project and gave classes of human and Christian formation to a group of children in the impoverished areas of Tegucigalpa. They also visited an institution for handicapped children and distributed food to the needy.

This was an opportunity to live with people from other countries and exercise a spirit of service during Holy Week. One of the highlights was a visit to the Shrine of Our Lady of Suyapa. The participants stayed at the Guaymura University Center, where they took part in various cultural activities, including a conference on the Holy Shroud of Turin.

The project received support from many people and from governmental agencies that provided school material for the children and access to sports facilities.

Bogota, (Colombia) -- A roof for Colombia

A student group called *A roof for Colombia* began a little over a year ago to seek solutions for the living problems that many thousands of Colombian families now face.

They built their first house in the low income district of San Cristobal, south of Bogota, and since then have completed 41 more houses in other poor areas of the capital and nearby towns. The students themselves carry up the mountainsides the tools and materials needed to build with their own hands small houses for families that had been living in shacks of corrugated metal and plastic. In addition to their work, the students provide help based on their fields of study and take part in organizing each project: from finding donations and doing studies of the families benefited, to encouraging other initiatives to help the community. They also work on
strategies for spreading their message, part of which involves an official Internet page.

At the present time about 70 students from various schools in the University of La Sabana are involved in the project. The university, through its student fund, provides resources for the project, and its Office of Solidarity and Welfare channels students who want to take part in the effort.

Rosario, (Argentina) -- Litoral University Center

Litoral University Center sponsored a seminar on business management problems in the areas of human resources, finance and commercialization. A number of prominent businessmen from the city of Rosario spoke to the fifty economics students attending about their experience in these areas.

Many of the same students take part in visits to the sick at the Roque Saenz Peña Hospital. This hospital specializes in care for patients with limited financial resources, many of whom do not have families. Every Saturday, in groups of seven or eight, the students visit patients who have spent a long time in the hospital without receiving visits. The patients are always very grateful for the students’ company and cheerfulness.

Mexico City -- Initiatives with Social Repercussions

On May 13, 2004, a meeting was held at the IPADE business school in Mexico City to study the promotion of initiatives with social repercussions. 70 promoters of projects of this type in Mexico were represented. In introducing the conference, Fr. Ramon Salas Cacho, Vicar
of the Prelature of Opus Dei for Mexico City, emphasized the need for a clear Christian focus in these initiatives if they are to be an instrument for the new evangelization to which His Holiness John Paul II is calling all the faithful. Promoters of initiatives in the fields of education, social assistance, medical aid, etc., passed on to those present their experience. The goal of the meeting was to give a greater impetus to these projects throughout the country.

Rio de Janeiro -- The Papers Project

A group of university professors in Rio de Janeiro decided to combine efforts in order to put into operation the Papers Project, aimed at encouraging and assisting graduates in various fields, including medicine, economics and business management, to write scientific articles under a professor’s direction, which would later be sent to specialized journals or academic congresses. The working sessions are held every two weeks in the Laranjeiras Cultural Center.

Thirty students are involved in the first session of the project. Many of them have taken on topics with an ethical aspect, such as the social responsibility of companies, fundamental human rights, techniques for evaluating patients in intensive care units, the concept of justice, and other such topics.

For some of the students, the project has meant the discovery of the social responsibility their profession entails and of the need to use their professional competence to work for the common good. The goal of the founders of the Papers Project is to blend scientific rigor with ethical reflection.

Vancouver, (Canada) -- Preparing Leaders For Tomorrow
A leadership course at Crestwell Center, which ran from January to the end of May, was directed towards girls from the ages of 14 to 16. Professionals from various fields shared their experiences and offered considerations on the virtues needed for roles of leadership, happiness and the meaning of life, the dignity of the human person, the capacity to think critically, and the importance of focusing clearly on one’s goals.

After each talk a working session was held. The last sessions were dedicated to preparing a service project, since leadership as service, and giving as the supreme expression of the person, especially in the case of a woman, as St. Josemaria taught, are some of the basic principals that gave direction to the course.

In one of the classes, participants reflected on the virtue of modesty as an important element in preserving human dignity. With the conviction that modesty and elegance are perfectly compatible, a fashion show was organized with the aim of promoting a true concept of elegance.

Sydney, (Australia) -- Truth or Sensation

Miranda Devine, a journalist for the Sydney Morning Herald, spoke to a group of 70 people in Creston College on the subject: “Truth or Sensation: the role of the media in the modern world.”

Miss Devine spoke on the journalist’s duty to investigate and report events with professional honesty, overcoming the postmodern skeptical focus in which truth is often viewed today. “Given the accelerated pace of technology,” she said, “journalists are tempted to fabricate news, quotes and even complete stories.” In her opinion column, Miss Devine said, she tries to give a balanced point of view. When writing about subjects that are technically or ethically complex, she said that as a non-specialist in these matters she first seeks advice and reads recommended background material. Then she puts down in writing what in conscience she sees as the two sides of the coin, concluding with her own opinion.
The speaker invited those present to respond to what they read by writing to journalists and editors. She considers her articles successful when she receives hundreds of e-mails, even if they are critical. “At least,” she said, “people have read the article, thought about it and taken part in the debate.” At times her positions in favor of Christian morality has made her unpopular in some circles.

Students of journalism, law, economics, letters, and medicine, as well as educators and parents, were among those present. The public conferences organized by Creston offer those attending the opportunity to broaden their outlook, develop a critical attitude towards the media, and reaffirm their commitment to search for the truth. They are also an opportunity to serve others, since all the residents take part in organizing the conferences.
IN PACE
Suffrages for the deceased

In the first six months of 2004, 264 faithful of the Prelature and 16 members of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross passed away.

The suffrages stipulated by Saint Josemaría have been offered for these deceased. As we continue to pray for them, let us thank God for the example they left us through their fidelity in striving to transform their professional work and the ordinary circumstances of their lives into an occasion for loving God and serving the Church and all souls. Their love for God constitutes the meaning and value of their lives, whether outstanding in the eyes of others, or whether quite ordinary, as was true in most cases.

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A STUDY
"Professional Ethics and Sanctification of Work"
by Prof. Carlos Llano

Professional Ethics and Sanctification of Work

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In this study we will discuss how the message of sanctification of work, spread among persons of all walks of life by St. Josemaría, the founder of Opus Dei, helps clarify many of the central questions of professional ethics in the contemporary world.[1]

St. Josemaría summed up this message as follows: “Those who want to live their faith fully and do apostolate according to the spirit of Opus Dei, must sanctify themselves with their work, sanctify their work, and sanctify others through their work.”[2]

1. Sanctifying professional work

Beginning with the second of these three points, work is the primary and permanent material that the ordinary Christian has to sanctify. The founder of Opus Dei speaks of “ordinary work,” but he usually made the term more precise by adding the adjective “professional.”[3]

Certainly, the ordinary duties of the Christian cannot be reduced to what would today be called professional work by a sociologist. Work is an essential element in the constitution of civil society, but it cannot “be reduced to its professional dimension, but rather transcends this restricted sphere...We can think of the work duties of the mother of a family who devotes herself to domestic tasks and the education of her children on a full-time basis.”[4]

Thus even though “a reduction in the number of hours of work may continue in the future, as history has shown from the beginning of the industrial revolution until today, the message of Opus Dei will continue to exist in a permanent and ever timely way.”[5] St. Josemaría's concept of
work “places before us a primary anthropological concept, with a permanent philosophical meaning.”[6]

The term “professional” has acquired progressive importance throughout the past century. In his encyclical *Mater et Magistra* (part 2), Pope John XXIII, described the professionalization of human tasks as a phenomenon according to which one placed greater confidence in the income and rights obtained through work than in those derived from capital. One might say that if nineteenth century society was centered on owners and the proletariat, the twentieth century was centered on the professional. Along these lines Pierpaolo Donati observes that the kind of work that is emerging in today’s society is to a large extent made up of relationships.[7] This web of personal relationships in work facilitates the sanctification of tasks, which are thus made more properly human.

The moral code of every profession includes the obligation to carry out a work that is well done. This basic ethical imperative to work well becomes, for the person trying to sanctify his work, an ideal of perfection, since to sanctify something means in the first place to make of it an offering to God. “It is no good offering to God something that is less perfect than our poor human limitations permit. The work that we offer must be without blemish and it must be done as carefully as possible, even in its smallest details, for God will not accept shoddy workmanship.”[8] “If you consider the many compliments paid to Jesus by those who witnessed his life, you will find one which in a way embraces all of them. I am thinking of the spontaneous exclamation of wonder and enthusiasm which arose from the crowd at the astonishing sight of his miracles: *bene omnia fécit* (Mk 7:37), he has done everything exceedingly well: not only the great miracles, but also the little everyday things that didn’t dazzle anyone, but which Christ performed with the accomplishment of one who is *perfectus Deus, perfectus homo*, perfect God and perfect man.”[9] Thus our service to God is not true service if “we don’t put as much effort and self-sacrifice as others do into the fulfillment of professional commitments; if we can be called careless, unreliable, frivolous, disorganized, lazy, or useless.”[10]

The ethical imperative to carry out a work that is well done has, for Josemaría Escrivá, ultimately a divine origin, because “work is a command from God.”[11] “After two thousand years, we have reminded all humanity
that man was created to work: *homo nascitur ad laborem, et avis ad volatum* (Job 5:7), man was born to work, and the bird to fly.”[12]

Because of the moral decay that has occurred in our time in many professional practices, it is becoming ever more necessary to clearly explain the basic moral rules that are a condition *sine qua non* for a particular activity to be qualified as professional. Thereby one can help clarify that immoral behavior, for example, lying, falsifying the evidence supporting a hypothesis, or presenting as one’s own someone else’s ideas, cannot be part of the demands of a profession. These ways of acting are not “professional.” What is more, if they are permitted, one could say that the activity is “de-professionalized.”

Anyone seeking to sanctify his work should consider it indispensable to maintain and strengthen the consistency between his profession and morality. Work, besides being a way of supporting oneself and one’s family, is for St. Josemaría, “an opportunity to develop one’s personality.”[13] Pope John Paul II gives great importance to this quality of work throughout his encyclical *Laborem Exercens*: “Work is a good thing for man—a good thing for his humanity—because through work, man not only transforms nature, adapting it to his own needs, but he also achieves fulfillment as a human being, and indeed in a sense becomes ‘more a human being.’”[14]

This effort entails a great respect for each one’s personal freedom. One should strive to live one’s faith while respecting and trying to understand the points of view and choices of one’s colleagues. In this respect the teaching of the founder of Opus Dei is clear: “Avoid an abuse that seems to be exaggerated in our times...which shows the desire, contrary to the licit freedom of mankind, to try to oblige all men and women to form a single group in regard to matters of opinion, to create as it were dogmas in temporal questions.”[15]

1) *Finishing tasks well*

The ethical importance of professional work being well-done is indisputable.[16] But someone might ask: What do you mean in this context by “work that is well done?” What are the criteria by which one can judge about “professional” goodness in carrying out a task?

It is not enough to consider the opinion of others, although it would be
imprudent to ignore this.\(^{[17]}\) First of all, for a task to be well done it has to be finished and not left half done. As the founder of Opus Dei said: “You asked me what you could offer God. I don’t have to think twice about the answer: offer the same things as before, but do them better, finishing them with love.”\(^{[18]}\)

As the social scientist Peter Drucker has said felicitously, to do good one first has to do something well.\(^{[19]}\) This play on words recalls one used much earlier by St. Josemaría: para servir, servir: if you want to be useful, serve. In order to perform a service, to benefit others, one has to serve: to know how to do things, to be useful. “As the motto of your work, I can give you this one: ‘If you want to be useful, serve.’ For, in the first place, in order to do things properly, you must know how to do them. I cannot see the integrity of a person who does not strive to attain professional skills and to carry out properly the task entrusted to his care. It’s not enough to want to do good; we must know how to do it.”\(^{[20]}\)

If sanctity is found in the heroic exercise of the virtues, “heroism at work is found in finishing each task.”\(^{[21]}\) In many of his writings, St. Josemaría emphasized the requirement to finishing tasks well with italics or even exclamation points. Such emphasis is very understandable if one takes into account that the Christian concept of sanctity implies the “fullness of charity.”\(^{[22]}\) This fullness has as its necessary corollary fulfilling as perfectly as possible one’s particular professional duties. It is perhaps here that one can see most graphically the consequences for professional ethics when the person performing a task takes as his goal not merely to fulfill certain minimal ethical rules, but to achieve the fullness of Christian life all his actions.\(^{[23]}\)

2) Care in the details

The importance of finishing work well for it to be perfect, and hence suitable material for the attainment of sanctity—“Be perfect as my heavenly Father is perfect”—is closely related to another basic idea in the message of St. Josemaría: putting care into little things, into details. Speaking of his apostolic work in the early years of Opus Dei, he said: “I liked to climb up into the cathedral tower, to look closely at the stonework, a real lacework of stone, the fruit of costly labor.” He would point out that this marvelous
craftsmanship could not be seen from below: “That is working for God, the work of God! To fulfill one’s personal task with perfection, with beauty, with the loveliness of that delicate stone tracery.”[25]

This teaching of Josemaría Escrivá is reflected in our ordinary language when we speak, for example, of putting the finishing touches on a building. In fact, today material objects are appreciated and given greater value precisely on the basis of such *finishing touches*.

3) *Ordinary work*

St. Josemaría's emphasis on the importance of details is well suited to those at whom his message is aimed: ordinary Christians called to sanctify their *ordinary* work. Sanctity is identified not with extraordinary actions but with a life in which, as the founder of Opus Dei repeatedly said, one does *ordinary things extraordinarily well*. “It is very much our mission to transform the prose of this life into poetry, into heroic verse.”[26]

Another quality of work that St. Josemaría emphasizes is the need for cheerfulness. “Msgr. Escrivá, with Gospel in hand, constantly taught: God does not want us simply to be good; he wants us to be saints, through and through. However, he wants us to attain that sanctity, not by doing extraordinary things, but rather through *ordinary* common activities. It is the way they are done which must be uncommon. There in the middle of the street, in the office, in the factory, we can be holy, provided we do our job competently, for love of God and cheerfully, so that everyday work becomes, not ‘a daily tragedy,’ but ‘a daily smile.’”[27]

Finally, the ethical requirement of working well necessarily entails the obligation, also ethical, of continuous education, even more necessary today because of the accelerated advance of science and technology.

4) *Duties of justice in one’s work*

The ethical imperative of work that is well done is explicitly related to duties of justice. The “exact fulfillment of one’s obligations”[28] is the best means at hand for a Christian to contribute what he owes to society, making a positive impact on it and ordering it in accord with Christian ends. “While Christians enjoy the fullest freedom in finding and applying various solutions to these problems, they should be united in having one
and the same desire to serve mankind.”[29] This is not just a question of a human service to society, but also the effort to ensure that temporal institutions and structures “are in accordance with the principles which govern a Christian view of life.”[30]

St. Josemaría Escrivá founded Opus Dei by divine will as a path of sanctification in professional work and in the fulfillment of the ordinary duties of the Christian. Its faithful strive to live this message in the midst of the activities of the world. In these activities, each one works and moves “with the full rights of a citizen,”[31] and thus carries out a beneficial influence on the real Christianization of temporal structures from within, at their very source and origin. Therefore exemplarity in the exercise of one’s profession contributes “to the sanctification of the world, as from within like leaven.”[32] Many years prior to the Second Vatican Council, Josemaría Escrivá taught that involvement in the world and intimacy with God were perfectly compatible.[33]

This way of fostering the Christianization of the world brings with it “a concern to perfect this world” and to “improve the ordering of human society;” while at the same time contributing to its “temporal progress.” This ordering is “of vital concern to the kingdom of God,” as one reads in the pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world.[34]

The ordering of human society to God is brought about, according to Gaudium et Spes, through work: “Individual and collective activity, that monumental effort of man through the centuries to improve the circumstances of the world, presents no problem to believers: considered in itself, it corresponds to the plan of God.”[35]

2. Sanctifying oneself in professional work

One’s particular profession or job represents the material that has to be sanctified, but in addition and simultaneously, it is the means by which one can attain sanctity. Professional work that is well done contributes positively to the growth of the spiritual life in many ways. In first place, work is an indispensable means for the development of the natural virtues, which are the foundation for the supernatural ones.
Work, for the founder of opus Dei, is undoubtedly “a chance to develop one’s own personality”[36] and “to draw fruit from the few or many talents God has given to each person,”[37] and is thus a “witness to the worth of the human creature.”[38] This perfecting of the person who is working goes hand in hand with the reality that is being perfected through one’s work, as Pope John Paul II has stressed. Employing the concepts objective work and subjective work developed in his encyclical Laborem Exercens, he stresses the need both to sanctify work and to sanctify oneself in that work.

One can say that the first and most basic contribution of the Christian to society is to Christianize the world by means of his own work, which constitutes his most noble mission: “Work is a participation in the creative work of God,”[39] who upon creating and blessing man gave him dominion over the earth and all of its creatures.[40] In this context John Paul II wrote: “As man, through his work, becomes more and more the master of the earth, and as he confirms his dominion over the visible world, again through his work, he nevertheless remains in every case and at every phase of this process within the Creator’s original ordering.”[41]

1) Priestly soul

Work is the privileged milieu for Christians to exercise the supernatural virtues: “to live their faith perfectly,”[42] to engage in “filial contemplation, in a constant dialogue with God,”[43] converting their ordinary activities into an “encounter with God,”[44] into “constant opportunities of meeting God, and of praising him and glorifying him through our intellectual or manual work.”[45]

St. Josemaría emphasizes the intimate relationship between work as a means of sanctification and the priestly soul that every Christian has by reason of baptism, which confers the common priesthood that all the faithful possess. “Acting in this way, in the presence of God, for reasons of love and of service, with a priestly soul, all our actions take on a true supernatural meaning, which keeps our life united to the fount of all graces.”[46] So much so that we can become “contemplative souls in the midst of the world.”[47] Hence our work cannot be done haphazardly or left
half-finished, since then it would not be in harmony with the practical requirements of our “priestly soul.”

The common priesthood of the faithful is united, without being confused, with the ministerial priesthood in the sacrifice of the Mass, where the natural elements cultivated by man (the bread and the wine) are converted into the Body and Blood of Christ. As St. Josemaría taught, the worktable of a Christian can be considered as an altar of offerings to God. Since all Christians are “priests of our lives,” and since work constitutes an essential element of human dignity, by offering our work to God at Mass we offer him our entire lives.

2) Synthesis of the finis operis and the finis operantis

The consideration of work as the material we are called to sanctify and the environment for seeking sanctity constitutes, in our judgment, one of the most important contributions of the founder of Opus Dei.

In human work “sometimes the end of the worker differs from the end of the work.” In ethical considerations of human work there have been those who identify or superimpose both ends, so that the one who carries out the work cannot have any end other than the institutional or objective end of the work itself—as in the case of some socialist interpretations of human work. Others see a complete divorce between the subjective ends of the worker and the objective ends of the work, in what could be called “paleoliberalism.” Here the selfish aim of the individual can be enough to produce a good work, that is, something which is socially useful.

St. Josemaría Escrivá points out the danger of a double life. We can’t have a split personality if we want to be Christians, because “we discover the invisible God in the most visible and material things.” Objective work, visible and material, cannot be indifferent to the life of a Christian, since it “is a participation in the creative work of God.” In addition, work has been taken up by Christ “as something both redeemed and redeeming,” and made into “a means, a way of holiness, a specific task which sanctifies and can be sanctified.”

But the moral goodness of the work done—which should be carried out, as we have said, with the greatest possible human perfection—is
assured and increased by the supernatural intention with which it is carried out.[56] The intention has always been important in Christian ethics to attain moral rectitude in one’s actions, which are judged good if they are so ex toto genere suo, in all their aspects. Josemaría Escrivá never stopped stressing that a job poorly done cannot be offered to God. But now we can add that the intention of offering it to God is the fundamental incentive for a Christian to do a good job.[57]

An upright finis operantis, a right intention, is not limited then to merely human goals: “feeding one’s self-esteem,” “assuring peace of mind,”[58] or being concerned about what people will say. “First of all you should worry about what God will say: then, very much in the second place, and sometimes not at all, you may consider what others might think.”[59] In line with this, Antonio Aranda has stated from a theological perspective: “Sanctified work (in its double dimension, objective and subjective, that is to say as a work done and the intended action in doing it, both in Christ), has a meaning of its own: it means something in itself and by itself; it is something substantive and not only accidental or instrumental in the plane of the economy of salvation, that is, in the mystery of Christ…Sanctified work (in its objective and subjective dimension) is the essential internal moment of that dynamism of sanctification, and not simple an external or accidental framework or instrument for carrying it out.”[60]

In addition, rectitude of intention leads us to remain vigilant so that professional successes or failures do not make us forget, “even for a moment,” what the true aim of our work is: “the glory of God.”[61] The desire to attain sanctity in our work even leads us to give up, if the Kingdom of God requires this, goals that in themselves are good and licit: “Being a Christian means rising above petty objectives of personal prestige and ambition and even possibly nobler aims, like philanthropy…It means setting our mind and heart on reaching the fullness of love which Jesus Christ showed by dying for us.”[62] This is so because “being a Christian is not something incidental; it is a divine reality that takes root deep in our life. It gives us a clear vision and strengthens our will to act as God wants.”[63]

Striving for rectitude of intention is part of the continuous ascetical
effort a zeal for holiness brings with it. Although this is a totally supernatural endeavor, it leads us to fulfill faithfully the natural and even material demands entailed in any human work. Thus the divine reality of the Christian vocation to sanctity is deeply immersed in the realities of our human life. As St. Josemaría said forcefully, “the Christian is no expatriate. He is a citizen of the city of men, while his soul longs for God.”[64]

3. Sanctifying others through one’s profession

Work, besides being the environment for our sanctification, is also converted into an “instrument” of apostolate. This is both an ethical requirement implied in every profession or job and a consequence of our priestly soul, stemming from the common priesthood of the faithful.

“Our Lord wants men and women of his own in all walks of life. Some he calls away from society, asking them to give up involvement in the world, so that they remind the rest of us by their example that God exists. To others he entrusts the priestly ministry. But he wants the vast majority to stay right where they are, in all earthly occupations in which they work: the factory, the laboratory, the farm, the trades, the streets of the big cities and the trails of the mountains.”[65]

The ethical requirements that human work entails are stressed clearly in the papal encyclicals on social questions: Rerum Novarum, Quadragesimo Anno, Populorum Progessio, Centesimus Annus, and specifically in this case, Laborem Exercens. Evident in all of them is a concern for the state of man the midst of the ever more complex realities of industrial society.

1) Human development through work

Work can never be allowed to become more important than the persons carrying out the work. To use the terminology employed by John Paul II, objective work can never be allowed to supercede subjective work. Men and women have to be helped to grow as persons while engaged in producing products or performing services. Fostering this human development is undoubtedly part of the apostolate we are called to carry out.[66]

“The apostolic concern which burns in the heart of ordinary Christians is not something separate from their everyday work. It is part and parcel of one’s work, which becomes a source of opportunities for meeting Christ.
As we work at our job, side by side with our colleagues, friends and relatives and sharing their interests, we can help them come closer to Christ."[67] An apostolate of this kind, aside from its clear personal character, rests firmly on the value of human freedom, which our Lord does not destroy. “That is why he does not want to wring obedience from us. He wants our decisions to come from the depths of our heart.”[68]

It would be a simplistic reduction to think that the problem of human development in work is restricted to mere worker-owner relationships, as if the directors, owners or executives of organizations were the only ones responsible for solving the problem. On the contrary, human development is attained through relationships with one’s colleagues, subordinates and superiors, providers and clients, patients and students… In the network of connections through which contemporary work has developed (which in Mater et Magistra is called socialization), the expansion of our anthropological possibilities is many sided and multi-dimensional and is conditioned in all directions.[69]

The “socialization” of work means that no one can carry it out by himself. Professional ethics makes a mistake if it thinks that each individual, although having work relationships with others, is in reality isolated. A fundamental principal of the ethics of work consists in seeing to it that “individuals” grow as “persons” in their relationships with other men and women.

2) Supernatural development through work

In affirming that work is a means for helping other men and women attain sanctity, we confront the need to foster their development in all aspects. Consequently, apostolate cannot be absent in work, nor should it be considered as an accidental juxtaposition.

For St. Josemaría “professional work is also an apostolate, an opportunity to give ourselves to others, to reveal Christ to them and lead them to God the Father—all of which is the overflow of the charity which the Holy Spirit pours into our hearts. When St. Paul explained to the Ephesians how their conversion to Christianity should affect their lives, one of the things he said was: ‘Anyone who was a thief must stop stealing;
he should try to find some useful manual work instead and be able to do some good by helping others that are in need’ (Eph 4:28).”[70]

In addition to being an ethical requirement, sanctification of others through work arises, we might say, as a consequence of the “priestly soul” of the ordinary faithful. The real and effective ordering of temporal structures to the ends foreseen by God—the “effort to build up the earthly city”[71]—is not an individualistic task, carried out atomically or in isolation by each individual: it is a social task. Hence the ordering of temporal structures is not only impossible without apostolate, but constitutes part of the apostolate itself.

3) The associative character of work and apostolate

Sanctifying others in daily work requires, in the first place, being conscious of the social value of work. St. Josemaría points to the consequences of a certain type of individualism: “If you occupy a position of responsibility, you should remember as you do your job that personal achievement perishes with the person who made himself indispensable.”[72] The need for dividing up work[73] and delegating responsibility,[74] makes it even more indispensable to “work side by side with our companions, sharing their interests.”[75]

Studies of industrial psychology have made it clear that the required division of functions has to be complemented by the coordination of efforts. This double aspect of work is not foreign to its ethical dimensions. “In our ordinary work, we have to always foster an ordered charity, the desire and reality of making our task perfect by love. We have to strive to get along with all men and women, in order to bring them ‘in season and out of season’ (2 Tim 4:2), with God’s help and with human refinement, to Christian life, and even to Christian perfection in the world.”[76] This social character of work becomes evident when one considers its purpose as service to the social community: “That is one of the battles of peace we have to win: to find God in our work and, with Him and like Him, serve others.”[77]

4) Work ethics and Christian asceticism

The recognition of the associative character of work has important consequences for the moral behavior of the worker, fighting against overly
individualistic tendencies in one’s work. For example, overcoming the rivalries, suspicions and envies that can easily arise,[78] the tendency to belittle the importance of the work of others,[79] mistrust,[80] disparaging one’s subordinates,[81] etc.

A deep moral effort is required to tear down the barriers between people that impede the carrying out of joint work. This ethical effort can be focussed not only from a Christian vision of man but also from a purely natural and professional perspective on work. From this perspective it has been said, and rightly so, that work is the best therapy for selfishness. According to Fritz Schumacher, traditional wisdom teaches us that the basic function of work is simply to give a person the possibility of developing his faculties, of producing the goods and services that we all need for a dignified life, “permitting a person to overcome his innate egocentrism by uniting with other men and women in a common task.”[82]

This requires shared purposes and the interrelationship of efforts, which facilitates apostolate. “The apostolic concern... is not something separate from their everyday work. It is part and parcel of one’s work, which becomes a source of opportunities for meeting Christ.”[83] St. Josemaría anticipated the Second Vatican Council’s teaching on the intrinsic nobility of human work: “Moreover, we believe by faith that through the homage of work offered to God man is associated with the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, whose labor with his hands at Nazareth greatly ennobled the dignity of work.”[84]

Work relationships result in the apostolate of an ordinary citizen becoming “a great work of teaching. Through real, personal, loyal friendship, you create in others a hunger for God.”[85] The practice of the virtues that work favors, as we have seen, leads to apostolate. “In fact it already is apostolate. For when people try to live in this way in the middle of their daily work, their Christian behavior becomes good example, witness, something which is a real and effective help to others. They learn to follow in the footsteps of Christ, who ‘began to do and to teach’ (Acts 1:1), joining example to word. That is why, for these past forty years, I have been calling this apostolate an ‘apostolate of friendship and confidence.’”[86]
Thus work groups become true communities of persons among whom there arises a mutual enrichment, in place of the mutual impoverishment which results when work is detached from the moral values by which it is intrinsically constituted.

Every kind of work brings with it a social praxis, a tradition, a collective context with ethical and religious implications. It is significant that no current book of “management” fails to emphasize transparency, honesty in presentations, sincerity in leadership, and truth in advertising. Mutual trust constitutes what has become known as “social capital,” which is more important than monetary capital.

St. Josemaría always opposed the separation of private and social virtues, just as today the separation between private and public morality proclaimed by ideological liberalism is being refuted.

5) The apostolate of witness and of word

This apostolate of example, of witness, of friendship and trust contributes to the effective spread, from person to person, of the Christian criterion of life: “Through your professional work, which you bring to completion with all the human and supernatural perfection that is possible, you can and should give Christian standards in the places where you carry out your profession or job.”

One can clearly see that this open and logical (we might say inevitable) apostolic way of acting is not the result of a tactic: it is simply naturalness. “Let your lives as Christian men, as Christian women—your salt and your light—flow spontaneously, without anything odd or foolish: always carry with you our spirit of simplicity.” The question remains as to what is the principal content of the apostolic message that the ordinary Christian can transmit in his work. The answer is simple. The principal content of the message is precisely that of sanctifying what one is doing in the very dynamics of one’s activity of working. The ethics of work necessarily includes doing good to the persons with whom we are working, for whom we are working, under the direction of whom we are working… But for those who are eager to sanctify their work, this ethical imperative leads to its ultimate consequence: encouraging the others to seek sanctity in that which unites them, in their work.
“We have to remember and remind people around us that we are children of God, who have received the same invitation from our Father as the two brothers in the parable: ‘Son, go and work in my vineyard’ (Mt 21:28). I give you my word that if we make a daily effort to see our personal duties in this light, that is, as a divine summons, we will learn to carry them through to completion with the greatest human and supernatural perfection of which we are capable.”[90]

[1] Regarding the nature and spirit of Opus Dei, see Pedro Rodriguez, Fernando Ocáris, and Jose Luis Illanes, Opus Dei in the Church, Scepter, Princeton, 1994, pp 4ff.

[2] Conversations with Josemaría Escrivá, Scepter Publishers, New York, 2002, no. 70. For a brief study on the sanctification of work, see: Jose Luis Illanes, The Sanctification of Work, Scepter, New York, 2003. “Work has become for us a redeemed and redemptive reality. Not only is it the background of man’s life, it is a means and path of holiness. It is something to be sanctified and something which sanctifies” (St. Josemaría Escrivá, Christ Is Passing By, no. 47). “Our Lord has called us so that, each remaining in his own state of life and the exercise of his own profession and job, we might sanctify ourselves in our work, sanctifying the work and sanctifying others through our work” (St. Josemaría Escrivá, Letter March 11, 1940, no. 13).

[3] Cf. Maria Pia Chirinos, “Antropología y trabajos. Hacia una fundamentación filosófica de los trabajos manuales y domésticos,” Cuadernos de Anuario Filosófico, no. 157, University of Navarre, Pamplona, 2002, p. 102. According to this author “to speak simply of work today would be overly generic. Rather we can speak of professional work, as a reality distinct from mere intellectual or manual activity, or even of work considered as a force that transforms nature. It is, undoubtedly, a richer concept, one related to professional vocation, which a person has regarding a particular kind of work rooted in his or her aptitudes, tastes, gifts, virtues, etc.”


[5] Ibid., p. 142


[9] Ibid., no. 56

[10] Ibid., no. 62.


[12] St. Josemaría Escrivá, Letter May 31, 1954, no. 17, citing The Vulgate. In a similar vein, P. Donati says: “In this way one overcomes the ambivalence that has always been found in Western thought when doubt is placed on the positive character of worldly activities, which are seen as potentially dangerous to Christian salvation or, at least, as circumstances foreign to one’s possible sanctification. To find something similar in Catholic tradition, aside from St. Benedict for whom the terms ora et labora (prayer and work), figure as distinct and separate activities, we have to look to Bernadine of Siena, who emphasized the importance of work as vita activa civilis, that is to say, as a place for the exercise of natural and supernatural virtues ordered to the creation of healthy, legitimate, fruitful riches without any contrast to the desire for perfection and the possibility of Christian sanctification” (Donati, “El significado del trabajo en la investigación actual y el espíritu del Opus Dei,” in Romana, no. 22 (1996), p. 128).


[16] The first thing that one has to ask of the person acting is that he know how to act (cf. St. Thomas Aquinas. Quaestio disputata de virtutibus cardinalibus. Quaestio unica, art.1, c).


[21] St. Josemaría, *Furrow*, no. 488. “In our work we are asked for the heroism of finishing properly the tasks committed to us” (*Furrow*, no. 529); “… in the first place, in order to do things properly, you must know how to do [finish] them…., And, if our desire is real, it will show itself in the effort we make to use the right methods, finishing things well, achieving human perfection” (*Christ Is Passing By*, no. 50). “The interior struggle doesn’t take us away from our temporal business—it makes us finish it off better!” (*The Forge*, no. 735); professional work should be brought to completion “with all the human and supernatural perfection that is possible.” (*The Forge*, no. 713).

[22] *Furrow*, no. 739.

[23] In his anthropological analysis of work, Rafael Corazón illustrates this fullness. It is only when work is done as a gift to God that it can fulfill the infinite longings of the human heart. If work is the “initial vocation of man,” its ultimate purpose is that man give himself to his Creator” (Rafael Corazón González, “Fundamentos para una filosofía del trabajo,” *Cuadernos de Anuario Filosófico*, no. 72, University of Navarre, Pamplona, 1999, p. 116).


[26] *Furrow*, no. 500. “Your task of holiness… depends on… your everyday, obscure, normal, ordinary work.” “When a Christian carries out with love the most insignificant everyday action, that action overflows with the transcendence of God” (*Conversations*, no. 116).


*The Forge*, no. 718.

Vatican II, Dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium*, no. 31.

“Continue where you are, my son... how much you’ll be able to work for the true kingdom of our Lord!” (*The Way*, no. 832).

Vatican II, Pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 39.

The document does not refer to specifically ecclesial activities but to the “most ordinary duties,” which when done with a Christian spirit contribute “to the fulfillment in history of the divine plan” (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 34).

*The Forge*, no. 702.

*Friends of God*, no. 46.

*The Forge*, no. 702.

*Christ Is Passing By*, no. 47.


*Conversations*, no. 70.


*Furrow*, no. 526.

*Friends of God*, no. 881.


Ibid.


Cf. *Furrow*, no. 499.

[51] *Christ Is Passing By*, no. 96.

[52] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q. 141, a.6, ad 1. St. Thomas gives the following example: “the end of building is a house, whereas sometimes the end of the builder is profit.”

[53] *Conversations*, n. 114.

[54] *Christ Is Passing By*, no. 47.


[56] “Before God, no occupation is in itself great or small. Everything gains the value of the Love with which it is done.” (*Furrow*, no. 487).


[58] *Furrow*, no. 526.

[59] *Furrow*, no. 970.


[63] Ibid., no. 98.

[64] Ibid., no. 99.

[65] Ibid., no. 105.

[66] In his homily given at the celebration of the beatification Mass of Josemaría Escrivá on May 17, 1992, Pope John Paul II said: “Blessed Josemaría untiringly preached the universal call to holiness and apostolate. Christ calls everyone to become holy in the realities of everyday life. Hence, work too is a means of personal holiness and apostolate, when it is done in
union with Jesus Christ.”

[67] Friends of God, no. 264.

[68] Christ Is Passing By, no. 100.

[69] In this regard, Rafael Corazón writes: “The meaning of human life can never be auto-possession, or auto-realization, or anything similar. Man’s only ultimate end is his destiny to to give himself to the Creator. In growing and becoming more perfect he does not seek something personal, something exclusively his own, because he would always fail. The meaning of life cannot be other than coexistence with a personal being capable of freely accepting the self-giving of the person.” (Rafael Corazón, op. cit., pp. 118-119).

[70] Christ Is Passing By, no. 49.

[71] The Forge, no. 703.

[72] Furrow, no. 971.


[74] Cf. Furrow, no. 972.


[77] Furrow, no. 520.


[80] Furrow, no. 520: “Some people act out of prejudice in their work: on principle they trust nobody.”

[81] Furrow, no. 975: “Never say of anybody under you: he is no good. —It is you who are no good, for you cannot find a place where he will be of use.”


[85] Christ Is Passing By, no. 149.

[86] Conversations, no. 62.

[87] “I am not convinced either when I hear people making a great distinction between personal and social virtues. No virtue worthy of its name can foster selfishness. Every virtue necessarily works to the good both of our own soul and to the good of those around us. We are all of us men and all likewise children of God, and we cannot think that life consists in building up a brilliant *curriculum vitae* or an outstanding career. Ties of solidarity should bind us all and, besides, in the order of grace we are united by supernatural bonds.” (*Friends of God*, no. 76).

[88] The Forge, no. 713.

[89] The Way, no. 379; “That’s why you have to be formed in such a way that you can carry your own environment about with you in a natural manner, and so give your own ‘tone’ to the society in which you live” (*The Way*, no. 376).

[90] Friends of God, no. 57.

Torna ai contenuti