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.
SUMMARY
MSGR. FERNANDO OCÁRIZ, PRELATE OF OPUS DEI

The General Elective Congress

The Election of Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz as Prelate of Opus Dei

Biographical Sketch of Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz

Prelate's Solemn Entrance into the Prelatic Church

HOLY SEE

The Roman Pontiff

The Roman Curia

• Decree of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints by which are recognized the heroic virtues and the reputation for sanctity of the Servant of God Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri (May 4, 2016)
PRELATE

Appointments

Activities of the Prelate

Pastoral Letters

Homilies

Articles and Interviews

Messages

ABOUT SAINT JOSEMARÍA

Other Publishing News

Publication of the Book Compañeros de Camino

Volume 11 of Studia et Documenta
• Devotion Throughout The World
• Eucharistic Celebrations for the Feast of St. Josemaría

NEWS
• New Publications of Interest
• Interview with Fr. Antonio Rodríguez de Rivera, Postulator for the Cause of Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri
• Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri Declared Venerable (May 4, 2017)
• Archdiocese of Guayaquil Opens the Process of Beatification for Archbishop Juan Ignacio Larrea Holguín
• Cardinal Bertello Ordains 31 Priests of the Prelature (April 29, 2017)
• Diaconal Ordination Of Faithful of Opus Dei (February 25, 2017)
• Some Diocesan Assignments Received by Priests of the Prelature
• New Centers of the Prelature
• Pontifical Appointments

INITIATIVES
• In Brief
• Fifteen Years of Harambee
• Initiatives

IN PACE
• In Pace

A STUDY
• The Implicit Pedagogy of Saint Josemaría Escrivá
Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz, Prelate of Opus Dei

- The General Elective Congress
- The Election of Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz as Prelate of Opus Dei
- Biographical Sketch of Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz
- Prelate’s Solemn Entrance into the Prelatic Church
On December 22, 2016 (ten days after the death of Bishop Javier Echevarría), Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz, then Auxiliary Vicar of the Prelature, convoked the third Elective Congress of Opus Dei, to be held in Rome starting on January 23, 2017. As foreseen by the particular law of Opus Dei, upon the vacancy of the office of Prelate, the government of the Work falls to the Auxiliary Vicar, who within a month has to convocate an Elective General Congress to designate a new Prelate within three months of the vacancy having arisen (see Statutes, 149, §§ 1-2).

For the designation of the new Prelate, the canonical system of election is followed, regulated by the existing Code of Canon Law (see canons 164-179, and also the Apostolic Constitution Ut sit, art. IV). Given the Prelature’s jurisdictional structure as the hierarchical organization of the Church, the election needs to be confirmed by the Roman Pontiff (see Code of Canon Law, canons 178-179; Ut sit, IV; Statutes, 130, § 1).

The Prelate elected needs to be a priest, at least forty years of age, who is a member of the Congress and who has been incorporated in the Prelature for at least ten years and a priest for five years (see Statutes, 131, 1st). In January 2017, 94 priests from 45 countries fulfilled these requirements. Among them were many regional vicars, as well as priests who had worked in Opus Dei’s pastoral tasks of government, both in Rome and in the 49 circumscriptions that currently make up the Prelature.

The statutes also describe the various human, spiritual, and juridical conditions that the Prelate has to possess in order to guarantee the proper carrying out of his task. In synthesis, he has to stand out in such virtues as charity, love for the Church and its Magisterium, and faithfulness to Opus Dei; he also needs to possess a broad culture, both in the ecclesiastical and secular fields, and have adequate gifts of government (see Statutes, 131, 2nd and 3rd). These are requisites analogous to those canon law requires of candidates for bishop (see Code of Canon Law, c. 378, §1).
The elective process comprises three phases: the plenary reunion of the Central Advisory, the process of the General Elective Congress, and the appointment of the Prelate by the Holy Father.

The first phase involves a plenary gathering of the Council for the women of the Prelature, called the Central Advisory. Each one formulates a proposal with the name or names of the priests deemed best suited for the position of Prelate, which are then conveyed to the General Elective Congress (see Statutes, 130, §3).

The Elective Congress, formed by the faithful of Opus Dei who are members of the congress (see Statutes, 130), then holds a vote for the candidates, taking into account the proposals of the plenary meeting of the Central Advisory. The faithful of Opus Dei who take part in the Elective Congress are priests and laity at least 32 years of age and who have been incorporated in the Prelature a minimum of nine years. They are appointed from among the faithful in the various countries where Opus Dei carries out its pastoral work (see Statutes, 130 §2). The statutes do not set a maximum number of congress members.

Once the election is carried out, and accepted by the one elected, this person (either himself or through another person) has to ask for the Roman Pontiff’s confirmation (see Statutes, 130, §4). Once the Pope confirms the election, the Prelate is appointed and acquires the plenitude of his power (see Statutes 130, §1).

The power of the Prelate is exercised in accord with the general law of the Church and the special law of the Prelature: the apostolic constitution *Ut sit* and the *Codex iuris particularis Operis Dei* or *Statutes*, promulgated by the Roman Pontiff (c. 295 §1), wherein the various juridical and pastoral competencies are clearly set forth. As one reads in the *Statutes*, the Prelate has to be a teacher and father to the faithful of Opus Dei, who truly loves everyone with the heart of Christ, and guides them and enkindles them with ardent charity, joyfully spending his life for them (see Statutes, 132, §3).

Torna ai contenuti
The Election of Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz as Prelate of Opus Dei

Continuation and Conclusion of the Congress

Once the Prelate was elected, the Congress members assembled for several days to select the members of the central councils that assist the Prelate in governing the Prelature. They also examined the state of the Prelature and its apostolic activities around the world. The proposals were studied in plenary sessions, which set guidelines for the government of the Prelature during the eight year period until the next ordinary general Congress.

Appointment of the Vicar General and of the Central Secretary Vicar

On January 25, with the approval of the members of the General Elective Congress, Msgr. Ocáriz appointed Msgr. Mariano Fazio as Vicar General of Opus Dei and Father Antoni Pujals Ginebreda as Central Vicar Secretary.

—Msgr. Mariano Fazio

Mariano Fazio was born in Buenos Aires on April 25, 1960. He studied History at the University of Buenos Aires and received a doctorate in Philosophy from the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross. In 1991 he was ordained a priest by Saint John Paul II, after having worked for seven years in Ecuador as a professor of Philosophy of Law and editorial writer for the newspaper El Teléfono.

From 1996 to 2002, he was the first dean of the School of Church Communications at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome, and then, from 2002 to 2008, the rector of the same university. During these years, he was elected president of the Conference of Rectors of the Pontifical Universities of Rome.

In 2007 he was named an expert for the Fifth General Conference of Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean, which was held in
Aparecida, Brazil.

Several months later, he returned to South America, where he served as the Vicar of Opus Dei in Argentina, Paraguay and Bolivia. In December 2014 he was named Vicar General of Opus Dei by Bishop Javier Echevarría, the Prelate at that time.

He has wide-ranging cultural and philosophical interests. He is a member of the Chesterton Society in Argentina and the National Academy of History in Ecuador. He is the author of more than 20 books on modern society and the process of secularization. These include: Historia de la filosofía contemporánea, Historia de la filosofía moderna, and Historia de las ideas contemporáneas. One of his recent books, Pope Francis: Keys to His Thought, has been translated into English. Other publications include San Juan XXIII; Beato Pablo VI: Gobernar desde el dolor; and De Benedicto XV a Benedicto XVI.

—Fr. Antoni Pujals Ginebreda

He was born in Terrassa, Barcelona, in 1955. He studied Law at the University of Barcelona. Later, he moved to Rome to complete his studies in Theology. From 1980 to 2002 he worked in the Central Offices of Opus Dei, together with Bishop Alvaro del Portillo and Bishop Javier Echevarría.

He obtained his doctorate in Canon Law from the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross with a thesis entitled The Juridical Relationship of Incardination According to the Code of 1983.

From 2002 to 2016 he was the Vicar of Opus Dei for Catalonia.

Constitution of the Councils that Assist the Prelate

In the course of the Congress, the new Prelate appointed the members of the organisms that assist him in the pastoral government of the Prelature: the General Council and the Central Advisory.

—The General Council

During the General Congress, Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz appointed three vice-secretaries, a prefect of studies and a general administrator to oversee Opus Dei’s formative and apostolic work with men: initiatives with youth,
evangelization of the family, theological and spiritual formation, etc. These are: Javier de Juan Pardo (born in Albacete, Spain, in 1975), vice-secretary; Carlos Cavazzoli (Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1962), vice-secretary; Matthew Anthony (St. Louis, United States, 1981), vice-secretary; Luis Romera Oñate (Barcelona, Spain, 1962), prefect of studies; and Julien Nagore (born in Pamplona in 1951 and resident in Paris since his youth), administrator general.

Also appointed were the regional delegates for the various circumscriptions into which the apostolic work of the Prelature is divided geographically, which currently number 49. Those appointed come from more than 30 nations.

—The Central Advisory

With the approval of the Congress members participating in the General Congress of the women of the Prelature, Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz appointed Isabel Sánchez Serrano (Murcia, Spain, 1969), as central secretary, and María Diaz Soloaga (Madrid, Spain, 1970), as secretary of the Advisory.

To help guide the formative and apostolic work with young women, in families, educational and social initiatives, etc., the Prelate appointed as vice-secretaries Nicola Waite (Oxford, Great Britain, 1979), Carla Vassallo (Palermo, Italy, 1976) and Kathryn Elise Plazek (Pittsburgh, United States, 1988); Susana Líoez Palomo (León, Spain, 1971) and María de Rosário Falção Libano Monteiro (Lisbon, Portugal, 1960), as prefects of studies and of assistants respectively, and Inocencia Fernández Fernández Mayoralas (Madrid, Spain, 1954), as central procurator for administration of resources.

In addition, the regional delegates for the various circumscriptions into which the apostolic work of the Prelature is geographically divided were also appointed.

—Other appointments

Once the congress was concluded, the Prelate appointed the priest Javier Yániz Fernández (Barcelona, Spain, 1976) as spiritual director and Msgr. Carlos Nannei (Santa Fe, Argentina, 1945) as procurator before the
Holy See. Both work closely with the Council. The spiritual director helps the Prelate in the spiritual guidance of the Prelature’s faithful and in questions of doctrinal and liturgical formation. Among his commitments is the spiritual accompaniment of the members of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross. On his part, the procurator is more directly concerned with the Prelature’s relations with the Holy See.

**Conclusion of the Congress**

As the new Prelate wrote in a pastoral letter signed on February 14, which is included in full in the *From the Prelate* section, the Congress wanted to put on record its gratitude to Pope Francis, “among many other reasons, for the Jubilee Year of Mercy, his example of piety and austerity, the apostolic stimulus that he is giving to the whole world, and his closeness to people, especially the most needy.” A special gratitude is due to “his decision, in the exercise of his Petrine ministry, to beatify Don Alvaro.” “The Congress also expressed its gratitude to the Pope for having confirmed me as successor of St. Josemaría, Blessed Alvaro, and Don Javier at the head of Opus Dei, and for appointing me as Opus Dei’s Prelate on the very same day as my election,” wrote Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz in that same letter.

The members of the Congress also expressed their gratitude and affection for Bishop Javier Echevarría. As the Prelate wrote in his pastoral letter: “Don Javier was a good son of God by being a faithful son of St Josemaría. That fidelity was the *raison d’être* of his life. He was our Prelate from 1994 to 2016, and the General Congress gave thanks to God for his life and his teachings. It has also echoed the desire of all the faithful of the Prelature, the members of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross and the Cooperators, to highlight Don Javier’s love for the Church and for this portion of the People of God that is Opus Dei. Don Javier left a fruitful example of pastoral charity, which was expressed in his union with the Holy Father and with all of his brothers in the episcopal college, in his zeal for souls, and in his active solicitude for the sick and the most needy. Therefore, certain that it will cause you joy, I want to record here the general opinion of the members of the Congress, and of so many other people, that it will be advisable to collect memories and testimonies about Don Javier and about his self-sacrificing life and teachings.”
As this pastoral letter points out, the Congress members also recognized with gratitude the dedication of those who closely accompanied Bishop Javier Echevarría—as custodies—during the last 22 years, as well as “the great help provided by the elderly and sick faithful of the Prelature, with the joyful and simple offering of their limitations, in spurring forward the continuing efforts of evangelization that the Work is carrying out throughout the world.” Gratitude is also expressed for the work carried out by the Administrations of the Prelature’s centers and for those who “during these years began the apostolic work in new countries, leaving their place of origin to help carry out the Work in other latitudes.”

Other conclusions of the Congress included possible ways to foster the spiritual life of the Prelature’s faithful, taking into account today’s mentality, as well as goals for formation and evangelization in the areas of the family, education, young people, the sick, and the most needy, among others.

All the conclusions on these challenges are included in the February 14 pastoral letter, which is reproduced in this volume of Romana.

Confirmation of the Election and Appointment of the Prelate by the Holy Father

Reproduced here is the official communication of the appointment, signed by the Cardinal Secretary of State, Pietro Parolin.

The Election of the Prelate

The Third Elective Congress began on Monday January 23, with a Mass of the Holy Spirit, concelebrated by Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz with the other priest electors.
In his homily the Auxiliary Vicar referred to the scene of Pentecost, read for the Gospel of the Mass:

“In this Mass, a Votive Mass of the Holy Spirit, we are asking the Paraclete to give us light for the election of our next Father and Prelate and for the work that will follow in the Congress. Our thoughts naturally go to St. Josemaría and Blessed Alvaro and to the one who for the last 22 years has been our Father and Prelate.”

“We should have a great desire to be transmitters of what we have received, making it bear fruit. In the scene of Pentecost that we have just read, the Holy Spirit shows himself visibly in two ways: as an impetuous wind and as a purifying fire. We need to have the Holy Spirit purify us constantly so that each of us may be the continuity, and we recognize the responsibility for the Work that we have in our hands, with an apostolic soul that is “the impetuous wind of Pentecost” St. Josemaría spoke about to us.”

“While acknowledging our own littleness, we also need to realize that the Work is in our hands. But it continues always being the Work of God: it is our Lord who is carrying out the Work. Certainly he counts on our response, on our answer, on our work, on our prayer... With the security that hope gives us, we should be always happy, spe gaudentes (Rom 12:12), as St. Paul says, because Deus nobiscum, God is with us, despite the difficulties that might arise, despite our own limitations. Joyful in hope.”

“Paraclitum autem, Spiritus Sanctus, quem mittet Pater in nomine meo, ille vos docebit omnia (Jn 14:26). The Holy Spirit will teach you all things. Let us ask the Paraclete to teach us, to guide us, so that we choose the person he wants. At the same time we are already asking him to assist the new Father. May the Holy Spirit, who is the infinite personal Love of God, pour forth his gifts on the whole Work: this is the requirement for being united and effective.

“Our Lady, Regina Operis Dei, on Pentecost gave unity to the Church that was coming to birth, uniting the 120 persons in the cenacle, with the Apostles. Let us ask Mary to strengthen in us, in accord with St. Paul’s words, the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph 4:3).”
Early in the afternoon on Monday the 23rd, the Elective Congress began with the plenary meetings. Once the procedures established by the specific rules of the Congress were completed, the proposals of the plenum of the Central Advisory were communicated to the members of the Congress, and following this the voting took place.

The person elected was Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz Braña, till then the Auxiliary Vicar of the Prelature. The one in charge of scrutinizing the ballots, in the name of the Congress, asked him if he accepted. Msgr. Ocáriz responded affirmatively.

On the same day the result of the election was communicated to the Holy Father and his confirmation was requested. Late on that same Monday, January 23rd, Pope Francis appointed Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz Braña as Prelate of Opus Dei. With his appointment, Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz became the third successor of St. Josemaría as head of the Prelature.

Plenary Gathering of the Central Advisory

After the Mass, each member of the Advisory—38 people from twenty countries, including the delegates for the various regional circumscriptions—prepared a proposal with the name or names of the one or more priests in the Congress whom they considered best suited for the position of Prelate.

Each member of the Advisory deposited her proposal in an urn which was then brought to the site where the General Elective Congress was to take place.

Mass of the Holy Spirit

On Saturday January 21, there began in Rome the process foreseen for the election and appointment of the Prelate of Opus Dei, with the first
meeting of the plenary session of the Council for the women of the Prelature, called the Central Advisory.

The first day began with the Mass of the Holy Spirit in the prelatic church of Our Lady of Peace, to place the work of the Congress under Mary’s protection.

During the homily, the then Auxiliary Vicar of the Prelature, Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz, said that “a new page in the history of Opus Dei is being opened. The Holy Spirit is the first protagonist. He infuses charity into our hearts and fills us with joy.”

He also invited his listeners to ask “the Holy Spirit to accompany the new Father and Prelate so that he may guide Opus Dei with full fidelity to the Church and the spirit that St. Josemaría had transmitted.”

The Election of Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz as Prelate of Opus Dei

Convoked by the Auxiliary Vicar of the Prelature, in accord with no. 130 of the Codex iuris particularis Operis Dei (Statutes of the Prelature), in the month of January there was held in Rome the third General Elective Congress[1] of Opus Dei to designate the successor to Bishop Javier Echevarría as head of Opus Dei. In the entire process (the plenary gathering of the Advisory and the Elective Congress), 194 faithful of Opus Dei—94 priests and 100 lay persons—took part.

[1] The first Elective Congress was held in September 1975, after the death of the founder, St. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer; the second took place in April 1994, to elect the successor of Blessed Alvaro del Portillo.
Biographical Sketch of Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz

Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz was born in Paris on October 27, 1944, in a Spanish family exiled in France due to the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). The youngest of eight children, he graduated from the University of Barcelona with a degree in Physical Sciences in 1966. He received a licentiate in Theology from the Pontifical Lateran University in 1969 and a doctorate in Theology from the University of Navarra in 1971, the year he was ordained a priest. In his first years as a priest he was especially involved in ministry to young people and university students.

He is a consultor for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (since 1986), as well as for the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization (since 2011). He was also consultor for the Congregation for the Clergy from 2003 to 2017. He has been a member of the Pontifical Theological Academy since 1989. In the 1980s, he was among the professors who began the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome, where he was a tenured professor (now emeritus) in Fundamental Theology.

He has published two important works on Christology: *Hijos de Dios en Cristo: Introducción a una teología de la participación sobrenatural* and *El misterio de Jesucristo*. The second title (co-authored with Lucas F. Mateo Seco and José Antonio Riestra) is available in English as *The Mystery of Jesus Christ*. Other publications include *Naturaleza, gracia y gloria*, with a preface by Cardinal Ratzinger, and *Amar con obras: a Dios y a los hombres* (available in English as *Love in Action: Loving God and Neighbor, A Twofold Commandment*). In 2013 Rafael Serrano's extensive interview with him was published under the title *Sobre Dios, la Iglesia y el mundo*. He has also published two philosophical works: *El marxismo: teoría y práctica de una revolución* and *Voltaire: tratado sobre la tolerancia*. In addition, he has authored numerous theological and philosophical articles.

Since 1994 he has been the Vicar General of Opus Dei, and in 2014 he was named Auxiliary Vicar of the Prelature. Over the past 22 years he has
accompanied the previous Prelate, Bishop Javier Echevarría, on his pastoral trips to more than 70 countries. In the 1960s, as a theology student, he lived in Rome alongside Saint Josemaría, the Founder of Opus Dei.

### Prelate’s Solemn Entrance into the Prelatic Church

**Record of the Ceremony**


Post venerationem altaris, sub quo conditum est sacrum corpus Sancti Iosephmaría. Escrivá, Fundatoris Operis Dei, Rev.mus Dominus Marianus Fazio verba salutationis dixit, exprimens omnium desiderium vitam agendi fidelissime iuxta spiritum a Sancto Conditore nostro traditum, unum effecti cum Patre ac Pr.lato, prout exemplo suo docuerunt Beatus Alvarus del Portillo atque dilectissimus Xaverius Echevarría, eius pr.decessores, in
Ecclesiae sanctae servitium atque in arcta unione cum Romano Pontifice et Episcopis communionem cum ipso servantes.


Missa celebrata est actionis gratiarum. Post lectum Sanctum Evangelium, Pr.latus homiliam fecit, in cuius initio verba Salomonis Regis recoluit qu. in prima lectione Miss. exstant: *Benedictus Dominus qui dedit requiem populo suo* (*1 Reg* 8,56). Haec verba, commentatus est Pr.latus, apte adhiberi possunt ad gratias Deo agendas propter pacem qu. exoritur ex unitate Operis, qu. pax a Deo confertur qu.que, ut Sanctus Paulus asserit, ipse est Christus: *Ipse est enim pax nostra* (*Eph*. 2,14), sed ab unoquoque nostrum etiam pendet, pro mensura qua cum Iesu Christo coniungimur.

Fons est pacis scire nos filios Dei esse, ut Sanctus Paulus ait in lectione altera: *Elegit nos in Ipso* (*Eph* 1,4). Filiatio divina est fundamentum spiritus Operis Dei et possibile efficit ut eis fideles sint semper seminatores pacis et gaudii, ut aiebat Sanctus Iosephmaría Escrivá de Balaguer.

Dein Praelatus locutus est circa figuram Patris in Praelatura. Virtutes recolens a Sancto Iosephmaría in Statutis enumeratas atque in cathedra huius ecclesi. praelatiti. incisas, mentionem fecit prudenti., pietatis atque amoris erga Ecclesiam et Romanum Pontificem. In mentem revocans unam ex tribus iaculatorii precibus quae aliquo modo complectuntur spiritum Operis Dei, fideles impulit ad orandum ut impensius semper ad actum deducatur Sancti Iosephmaría lemma: *Omnes cum Petro ad Iesum per Mariam!*

Praelatus asseruit plene conscium se esse debere se filias filiosque suos diligere, quapropter orationem postulavit quoque ut Dominus corda Patris omniumque pr.latur. fidelium dilatet sicque adimpleatur desiderium adeo frequenter expressum a carissimo Xaverio, eius praecedessore: *Ut diligatis invicem, ut diligatis invicem!*, qui amor per Iesu Christi Cor transire semper debet.

Cuncta haec desideria Pater in manibus posuit Beatissimae Virginis, Matris Ecclesiae et Operis Dei Reginae, ut nova haec pagina nostrae historiae Dei misericordiarum historia esse pergat.
In fine Missae, Praelatus benedictionem apostolicam impertivit.

Ita est. Testor ac fidem facio. Laus Deo.

Apud ecclesiam praelatitiam Sanctae Mariae de Pace, die, mense et anno ut supra

Iosephus Andreas Carvajal
Curiae praelatitie Cancellarius

The following is a translation of the Latin document:

In nomine Domini. Amen. In Rome, on the 27th of January, 2017 at 10:30 in the morning, the Rev. Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz, thanks to God and the Apostolic See Prelate of Opus Dei, made his solemn entrance into his prelatic church of Our Lady of Peace. After praying before the tabernacle in the chapel of the Most Blessed Sacrament and venerating the remains of his beloved predecessors —Blessed Alvaro del Portillo and Javier Echevarría, bishops— the Most Reverend Prelate kissed the crucifix presented to him by Rev. Msgr. Guillaume Derville and received the “aspersorium” (holy water container and sprinkler), with which he sprinkled the clergy and faithful who filled the church.

He then proceeded to the sacristy where he vested himself for the Holy Mass that he concelebrated with Rev. Mariano Fazio, Vicar General, and with the priests Antonio Pujals, Guillaume Derville, Ignacio Celaya, José Javier Marcos, and José Andrés Cavajal.

After venerating the altar, beneath which reposes the body of St. Josemaría, the founder of Opus Dei, he listened to the words of greeting of Msgr. Mariano Fazio, who recalled the desires that we all have to be very faithful in living the spirit of our founder, united to the Father, following the example left to us by his predecessors, Blessed Alvaro del Portillo and Bishop Javier Echevarría, in order to serve the Church in close union with the Pope and the bishops in communion with him.

All of those present went up one by one to kiss the hand of the Prelate (see St. John Paul II, Post-synodal Apostolic exhort. Pastores gregis, no. 7).

The Mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated. After the reading of the Holy Gospel, the Prelate gave the homily.
Basing himself on the first reading, he cited some words of King Solomon included in the first book of Kings: “Benedictus Dominus qui dedit requiem populi suo” (Blessed be God who gave peace to his people) (1 Kings 8:56). He said that these words could well be applied to giving thanks to God for the peace which the unity of the Work gives, a peace granted by God; a peace that, as St. Paul said, is Christ Himself: “Ipse est enim pax nostra,” for he is our peace (Eph 2:14), but which also depends on each of us in the measure that we are more closely united to Christ.

The reality of being God’s children is a source of peace, as St. Paul says in the second reading: “Elegit nos in Ipso” (He chose us in him) (Eph 1:4). Divine filiation is the foundation of the spirit of Opus Dei, and enables its faithful to always be sowers of peace and joy, as St. Josemaría Escrivá said.

The Prelate then considered the figure of the Father in the Prelature. Recalling the virtues stressed by St. Josemaría in the Statutes and engraved on the cathedra of this prelatic church, he spoke about prudence, piety, love for the Church and the Pope. Recalling one of the three aspirations that sum up in a certain way the spirit of Opus Dei, he asked the faithful to pray that the motto of St. Josemaría may be a reality: Omnes cum Petro ad Iesum per Mariam! (All with Peter to Jesus through Mary!) A love that has to always pass through the heart of Jesus.

The Prelate manifested his deep awareness that he had to love his daughters and sons. He asked them to pray that God would enlarge his heart, and that of everyone, so that the desire his predecessor Don Javier so often expressed may be a reality: May you love one another, may you love one another! A love that has to always pass through the heart of Jesus.

All these intentions have been placed in the hands of our Lady, Mother of the Church and Queen of Opus Dei, so that this new page of the history of the Work may continue being the history of God’s mercies.

At the end of Mass, the Prelate imparted his apostolic blessing.

I am a witness to the truth of all this. Laus Deo.

In the prelatic church of Our Lady of Peace, January 27, 2017

José Andrés Carvajal

Chancellor of the Prelatic Curia
The Prelate’s Homily

“Benedictus Dominus qui dedit requiem populo suo” (1 Kings 8:56). “Blessed be God, who has given peace to his people.” These words that we have just heard in the first reading refer to the people of Israel. We can make use of them now to give thanks to God for the peace that is, for us, the unity of the Work. The unity of the Work that he grants us and that we thank him for; a unity that is the font of true peace.

At the same time we realize, and we should frequently reflect on it, that this peace is Jesus himself. As Saint Paul writes, *Ipse enim est pax nostra* (Eph 2:14). He is our peace. Unity depends fundamentally on God’s grace, which will never be lacking to us, but also on ourselves, on how closely united we are to Christ. He is our peace. He is the source of our unity in the Holy Spirit.

In the second reading, we have heard some words that Saint Josemaría so often meditated on and advised us to do likewise: *elegit nos in Ipso ante mundi constitutionem ut essemus sancti*, he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy (Eph 1:4). *Elegit nos in Ipso*: in Christ. Once again, we see the need to be identified with our Lord, as daughters and sons of God the Father. This is the foundation of our spirit: realizing, truly realizing that we are daughters and sons of God, which brings peace to our soul and helps us to be, in every circumstance, sowers of peace and joy.

It’s only natural that today we reflect on who the Father is in the Work. Among the conditions Saint Josemaría highlighted for the Father, both in our Statutes as well as here, engraved on the chair of this church, is prudence: the prudence that I beseech you to pray to God for me. Prudence is the virtue needed for governing. And prudence also for each and every one of us, because what is good for the Father is good for everyone. The prudence to be, in each moment, very faithful to the spirit of the Work, faced with changing circumstances of time and place. May the Father always have the prudence needed to be faithful, very faithful, to our Father’s spirit, which is the spirit God has wanted for us.
Another characteristic the Father has to have is piety, a deep piety. You will recall that Saint Josemaría assured us that piety is “the remedy of remedies.” So ask that the Father may be pious, that all of you may be pious, and that with your piety you may sustain the piety of the Father, so that all of us may be closely united to our Lord in a unity of thoughts, hearts, intentions.

Another characteristic is love for the Church and the Pope. How often the Father, Don Javier, insisted (as did Blessed Alvaro and Saint Josemaría) that we pray very much for the Church and the Pope. So ask our Lord that the Father, now and always, may make this motto of our Founder a reality: Omnes cum Petro ad Iesum per Mariam! May all of us truly go in close union with the Pope, who is now Francis, to Jesus, through Mary.

Each of these characteristics needs to be considered in more depth, and several homilies would be needed for each one. Another characteristic that Saint Josemaría indicated is the Father’s love for Opus Dei and for all his daughters and sons. Therefore I ask you to pray for me, also so that those words of Scripture may be a reality in my life: Dilatatum est cor meum (2 Cor 6:11), may my heart be enlarged. And this holds for all of us. The Father, Don Javier, so often told us: “may you love one another, may you truly love one another!” True fraternity is what enables all of us to be united: a fraternity that stems from Christ’s heart.

Back in 1933 (you will have read about this in one of the biographies or somewhere else), our Father addressed our Lord with a prayer that we now make our own: “Lord! Make me so much yours that not even the holiest affections enter my heart without passing through your wounded Heart!” (Andres Vázquez de Prada, The Founder of Opus Dei, Scepter, Princeton, 2001, p. 263). And it’s so. To truly love everyone, and first of all those who make up this marvelous family of ours that God has given us, we have to pass through Christ’s Heart.

Let us briefly consider now today’s Gospel, the Visitation. Each day in the Rosary we contemplate this marvelous scene of our Lady’s very generous self-giving. May Mary help us to be like this, generous in service. And also ask that the Father may be such: a servant of everyone, because
authority is for serving, and otherwise it is useless. May it always be for serving.

_Magnificat anima mea, Dominum_, our Lady prayed in the _magnificat_. We praise God with these words of our Lady. And recalling what Benedict XVI once said, we can understand the _magnificat_ as “letting God be great in our souls” (Benedict XVI, Homily, 15 August 2005). May we give God all the space in our heart, and thus we will also have a great apostolic drive, a hunger for souls that constantly spurs us to seek their good out of love for Jesus Christ.

Let us beseech our Lady, Mother of the Church, Queen of Opus Dei: we entrust to your motherly mediation the entire Work, so that this new page of our history may always have your help, and always continue being the history of God’s mercies. Amen.

_Greeting of the Vicar General_

On the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, this past December 12, God our Lord wished to call into his presence his faithful servant Javier Echevarría, bishop and prelate of Opus Dei, a man with a big heart, who had learned from our founder to love the world passionately. With the fatherly and generous witness of his life as a priest and bishop, following the example of St. Josemaría and of Blessed Alvaro del Portillo (whom he succeeded as head of this _pussilus grex_ [little flock] of the Work), he gave his life in a constant service of love for the Church and souls, amid the simplicity of his daily life.

Before his mortal remains, exposed in this prelatic church of Our Lady of Peace, a great number of faithful gave thanks to God for his life of service: first alongside St. Josemaría and Blessed Alvaro, and then in the 22 years he spent as head of Opus Dei. In all those years he followed the example of our Lord, who came _not to be served, but to serve_ 

(_Mt 20:28_).

Comforted, amid our sorrow, by the supernatural certitude that God
protects those who love him (see Rom 8:28), on the 14th of December we interred the body of his servant Javier at the foot of the altar of the crypt of this prelatic church, next to the holy remains of Blessed Alvaro del Portillo.

Having convoked and celebrated the Elective General Congress in accord with the norms of our particular law, on January 23, 2017 Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz was elected Prelate of Opus Dei, and his election was confirmed by our Holy Father Francis on that same day.

Today, the 27th of January, 2017, on celebrating the solemn entrance into the prelatic church of our prelate Fernando, we raise our hearts in thanksgiving to God the Omnipotent and Merciful Father, from whom proceeds all fatherhood in heaven on earth; to God the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ who, before surrendering his life on the Cross, revealed that he would not leave his disciples orphans (see Jn 14:18); and to God the Holy Spirit, the bond of unity and subsistent love of the Father and the Son, for having giving us on earth a father and prelate who cares for and governs this family of Opus Dei, guiding it faithfully as a good shepherd along the path of sanctity that the Most Blessed Trinity wanted to establish in his Church through St. Josemaría.

Now, under the impulse of divine grace, we renew in our souls the firm determination to be faithful to our specific vocation, remaining “consummati in unum” (Jn 17:23) with the Father, with our brothers and sisters spread throughout the whole world, desiring to bring all souls, in union with Peter, to Jesus through Mary.

And so that our desire be acceptable to the Most Blessed Trinity, we go to the powerful intercession of the one who is the Mother of God and our Mother: our Lady, Queen of Opus Dei; and to St Joseph, our father and lord; and to our patrons and intercessors, and St. Josemaría — our most beloved founder—and Blessed Alvaro.

Torna ai contenuti

Prelate's Solemn Entrance into the Prelatic Church
On January 27, Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz made his solemn entrance into the Prelatic Church of Our Lady of Peace.

Before the Eucharistic celebration, he recollected himself in prayer in the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament and in the crypt where the mortal remains of the previous Prelates, Blessed Alvaro del Portillo and Bishop Javier Echevarría, are interred.

At the doors of the prelatic church, Msgr. Ocáriz was received by Msgr. Guillaume Derville, who gave him a crucifix to kiss and offered him a holy water container with a sprinkler for the asperses.

Then the Prelate proceeded to the sacristy to vest himself for Mass, which was concelebrated by Mariano Fazio, the Vicar General; Antoni Pujals, Central Secretary Vicar; and Guillaume Derville, Ignacio de Celaya, José Javier Marcos, and José Andrés Carvajal.

After the veneration of the altar, beneath which repose the holy remains of St. Josemaría, the Prelate sat down in the cathedra and the Vicar General greeted him with the following words.

Torna ai contenuti
HOLY SEE

- The Roman Pontiff
- The Roman Curia
The Roman Pontiff

Pastoral Visit to Genoa: Encounter with the World of Work (May 27, 2017)

Question from manager Ferdinando Garré of the Naval Repairs district: In our work, we find ourselves struggling with so many obstacles – excessive bureaucracy, slowness in public decision-making, lack of services or adequate infrastructure – which often do not allow the best energies of this city to be released. We share this challenging journey with our chaplain and are encouraged by our archbishop, Cardinal Angelo Bagnasco. We turn to you, Holiness, to ask for a word of closeness. A word of comfort to encourage us before the obstacles we businessmen come up against every day.

Pope Francis: Good morning, everyone! It is the first time I have come to Genoa, and being so close to the port reminds me of where my father left … This is very emotional for me. And thank you for your welcome. Mr. Ferdinando Garré: I knew the questions, and for some I wrote down some ideas to respond; and I also keep my pen in my hand to note down something that comes to mind at the time, to answer. But for these questions on the world of work I wanted to think well so as to answer well, because today work is at risk. It is a world where work is not considered with the dignity it has and gives. Therefore, I will answer with the things I have thought about, and some that I will say at the time.

First, a premise. The premise is: the world of work is a human priority. It is, therefore, a Christian priority, our priority, and also a priority of the Pope. Because it comes from that first command that God gave to Adam: “Go, till the earth, work the earth, tame it”. There has always been friendship between the Church and work, starting with a working Jesus. Where there is a worker, there is the interest and the gaze of love of the Lord and of the Church. I think this is clear. It is beautiful that this question that comes from a businessman, an engineer; from his way of speaking about the enterprise, the typical entrepreneur’s virtues emerge. And since this question was posed by a businessman, we will talk about them.
Creativity, love for your business, passion and pride for the work of the hands and intelligence of yourself and your workers. The businessman is a key figure in any good economy: there is no good economy without a good entrepreneur. There is no good business without good entrepreneurs, without your ability to create, to create jobs, to create products. In your words we also perceive your esteem for the city - and we understand this - for its economy, the quality of the workers, and also for the environment, the sea... It is important to recognize the virtues of workers. Their need - workers - is the need to work well so that the job is done well. Sometimes it is thought that a worker works well just because he is paid: this is a serious disrespect towards workers and labor as it denies the dignity of work, which begins precisely in working well for dignity, for honor. The true manager - I will try to make the profile of a good manager - the real manager knows his workers, because he works alongside them, he works with them. Let's not forget that the entrepreneur must be first of all a worker. If he does not have this experience of dignity, he will not be a good manager. He shares the workers’ efforts and shares the joys of work, of solving problems together, of creating something together. If and when he has to lay off someone, this is always a painful decision and he would not do it if possible. No good manager likes to lay off his people - no, he who thinks he can solve the problem of his job by firing people, is not a good entrepreneur, he is a trader, who sells his people today and tomorrow sells his dignity. He always suffers, and sometimes from this suffering new ideas emerge to avoid dismissal. This is the good entrepreneur.

I remember, almost a year ago, a little less, at Mass at Santa Marta at 7 am, at the exit I was greeting the people who were there, and a man approached. He was crying. He said, “I came to ask for a grace: I am at the limit and I have to make a statement of bankruptcy. That would mean firing sixty workers, and I do not want to, because I feel like I am firing myself”. And that man was crying. He was a good manager. He fought and prayed for his people because they were “his”: “They are my family”. They were attached to one another.

A disease of the economy is the progressive transformation of entrepreneurs into speculators. The entrepreneur must not be confused with the speculator: there are two different types. The entrepreneur must
not be confused with the speculator: the speculator is a figure similar to what Jesus in the Gospel calls a “mercenary”, as opposed to the Good Shepherd. The speculator does not love his company, he does not love his workers, but sees business and workers only as a means to make a profit. He uses, uses the company and the workers to make a profit. Firing, closing down, moving the company is not a problem to him, because the speculator uses, exploits, “eats” people and means for to reach profit targets. When the economy is inhabited by good entrepreneurs, businesses are friendly to people and even to the poor. When it falls into the hands of speculators, everything is ruined. With the speculator, the economy loses face and loses its faces. It is a faceless economy. An abstract economy. Behind the speculator’s decisions there are no people, and therefore we do not see the people who are to be dismissed and cut out. When the economy loses contact with the faces of concrete people, it itself becomes a faceless economy and therefore a ruthless economy. We must fear the speculators, not the entrepreneurs; no, do not fear businessmen because there are so many good ones! No. Fear speculators. But paradoxically, sometimes the political system seems to encourage those who speculate on work and not those who invest in and believe in the job. Why? Because it creates bureaucracy and controls, starting from the hypothesis that the agents of the economy are speculators, so those who are not speculators remain disadvantaged, and those who can find the means to circumvent controls and reach their goals. It is known that regulations and laws intended for the dishonest end up penalizing the honest. And today there are so many real entrepreneurs, honest managers who love their workers, who love the company, who work alongside them to carry ahead the business, and these are the most disadvantaged by these policies that favor speculators. But honest and virtuous entrepreneurs go ahead, in the end, despite everything.

I like to quote a good phrase of Luigi Einaudi, economist and president of the Italian Republic. He wrote: “Thousands, millions of individuals work, produce and save despite everything we can invent to molest them, to obstruct them, and to discourage them. It is a natural vocation that drives them, not just the thirst for gain. The taste, the pride of seeing your business thrive, obtain credit, inspire trust in an increasingly broad clientele, expand their factories, are a springboard for progress just as
powerful as profit. If that were not the case, it would not be possible to explain why there are entrepreneurs who in their own companies exhaust all their energies and invest all their capital, often earning an income far more modest what they could surely and comfortably obtain with other efforts”. They have that mystical love...

Thank you for what you said, because you are a representative of these entrepreneurs. Be mindful, entrepreneurs, and also you, workers: beware of speculators, also of the rules and laws that in the end favor speculators and not true entrepreneurs. In the end they leave people without work. Thank you.

Question from Micaela, union representative: _Today we talk about industry again, thanks to the fourth industrial revolution or “Industry 4.0”. Well: the world of work is ready to accept new productive challenges that bring prosperity. Our concern is that this new technological frontier and the economic and productive recovery that sooner or later will come, will not bring with it new quality employment, but will instead contribute to the rise in precariousness and social hardship. Today, the real revolution would be to transform the word “work” into a concrete form of social redemption._

Pope Francis: It first came to mind to me to answer with a play of words... You finished with the word “social redemption” [in Italian — “riscatto”], and I think of “social blackmail” [in Italian — “ricatto”]. What I am about to say is a real thing that happened in Italy about a year ago. There was a queue of unemployed people applying for a job, an interesting job, in an office. The girl who told me this story — an educated girl, who spoke several languages, which was important for that role — said they had told her “Yes, you can start...; there will be 10-11 hours a day …” — “Yes, yes!” she said, immediately, because she needed work — “and it starts with — I think they said, I do not want to make a mistake, but it was no more than 800 euros per month”. And she said, “But... just eight hundred? For eleven hours?”. And the man — the speculator, he was not a businessman, the employee of the speculator — said to her, “Miss, look at the line of people behind you: if you don't like it, you can go”. This is not _riscatto_, redemption, but rather _ricatto_, blackmail!
I will now say what I had written, but your last word reminded me of this. Illegal work. Another person told me that he had a job, but from September to June; he was laid off in June and taken on again in October, September. And this is how it goes — illegal work.

I welcomed the proposal to have this meeting today, in a workplace and workers, because these too are places of the people of God.

Dialogues in workplaces are no less important than the dialogues we have in parishes or solemn conferences, because the places of the Church are the places of life and therefore also squares and factories. Because someone can say, “But this priest, what does he say to us? Go to the parish!” No, the world of work is the world of the people of God: we are all Church, all people of God. Many of the meetings between God and men, spoken of by the Bible and the Gospels, occurred while people were working: Moses hears the voice of God calling him, and revealing his name while grazing his father-in-law’s flock; Jesus’ first disciples were fishermen and were called by Him while working by the lake. It is very true what you say: lack of work is far more than not having a source of income for to live on. Work is also this, but it is much, much more. By working we become a fuller person, our humanity flourishes, young people become adults only by working. The Church’s social doctrine has always seen human work as a participation in creation that continues every day, also thanks to the hands, mind and heart of the workers.

On Earth there are a few joys greater than those we experience working, just as there are fewer pains greater than those of work, when work exploits, crushes, humiliates, kills. Labor can do great harm because it can do great good. Work is the friend of man, and man is the friend of work, and for this reason it is not easy to recognize it as an enemy, because presents itself like a person at home, even when it strikes us and hurts us. Men and women are fed through work: by work they are “anointed with dignity”. For this reason, the entire social pact is built around work. This is the core of the problem. Because when you do not work, or you work badly, you work little or you work too much, it is democracy that enters into crisis, and the entire social pact.
This is also the meaning of Article 1 of the Italian Constitution, which is very beautiful: “Italy is a democratic republic founded on labor”. On this basis we can say that taking work away from people or exploiting people with work that is unworthy, or poorly-paid or whatever, is unconstitutional. If it were not founded on labor, the Italian Republic would not be a democracy, because the place of work is occupied and has always been occupied by privileges, castes, and revenues. It is therefore necessary to look without fear, but with responsibility, to the technological transformations of the economy and life, and not to be resigned to the ideology that is gaining ground everywhere, that imagines a world where only half or maybe two-thirds of the workers will work, and the others will be maintained by social subsidies. It must be clear that the real goal to reach is not that of “income for all” but rather, “work for all”. Because without work, without work for all, there will be no dignity for all. The work of today and that of tomorrow will be different, perhaps very different — we think of the industrial revolution, there has been a change; here too there will be a revolution — it will be different from yesterday’s work, but it will have to be work, not pension, not retirement: work. One retires at the right age, it is an act of justice; but it goes against the dignity of the person to put them in retirement at the age of 35 or 40 years, to give them state benefits, and say, “get by”. “But do I have enough to eat?” Yes. “Can I support my family, with this check?” Yes. “Do I have dignity?” No! Why? Because I do not work. Today’s work will be different. Without work, you can survive; but to live, you need work. The choice is between surviving and living. And there needs to be work for everyone. For young people... Do you know the percentage of young people aged 25 and under, unemployed, in Italy? I will not say it: look for the statistics. And this is a debt on the future. Because these young people grow up without dignity, because they are not “united” by the labor that gives dignity. But the cornerstone of this question is this: a monthly check, a monthly allowance that enables you to support a family does not solve the problem. The problem must be resolved with work for everyone. I think I have answered more or less...

Question from Sergio, a worker on a training course promoted by the Chaplains: Not infrequently in the workplace, competition, career, and economic aspects prevail, but work is a privileged occasion for witnessing and proclaiming the Gospel, lived by adopting attitudes of brotherhood, collaboration, and
solidarity. We ask your Holiness for advice on how to journey better toward these ideals.

Pope Francis: The values of work are changing very fast, and many of these new values of large businesses and big finance are not values in line with the human dimension or, therefore, with Christian humanism. The emphasis on competition within the company, besides being an anthropological and Christian error, is also an economic mistake as it neglects the fact that the business is first of all cooperation, mutual assistance, and reciprocity. When a business scientifically creates a system of individual incentives that put workers in competition with each other, perhaps an advantage can be gained in the short term, but it soon ends up undermining that fabric of trust that is the soul of any organization. And so, when a crisis arises, the company unravels and implodes, because there is no longer any rope to hold it together. It must be said strongly that this competitive culture among workers within a business is a mistake, and is therefore a vision that needs to be changed if we want the good of enterprise, workers and the economy.

Another “value” that is actually a disvalue is the so-called “meritocracy”. Meritocracy is very appealing because it uses a beautiful word: “merit”; but since it is exploited and used ideologically, it is distorted and perverted. Meritocracy, beyond the good faith of the many who invoke it, is becoming a way of ethically legitimizing inequality. The new capitalism, through meritocracy, gives a moral appearance to inequality because it interprets the talents of people not as a gift: talent is not a gift according to this interpretation: it is a merit, determining a system of cumulative advantages and disadvantages. Thus, if two children are born differently in terms of talent or social and economic opportunities, the economic world will interpret the different talents as merits and will pay them otherwise. And so, when those two children retire, the inequality between them will be multiplied.

A second consequence of the so-called “meritocracy” is the change of the culture of poverty. The poor person is considered undeserving and therefore to blame. And if poverty is the fault of the poor, the rich are exonerated from doing anything. This is the old logic of Job's friends, who wanted to convince him that he was guilty of his misfortune. But this is not
the logic of the Gospel, it is not the logic of life: meritocracy in the Gospel is instead found in the figure of the older brother in the parable of the prodigal son. He despises his younger brother and thinks he must remain a failure because he deserves it; instead the father thinks no son deserves the acorns that are for the pigs.

Question from Vittoria, unemployed: We unemployed feel that the Institutions are not only distant, but like stepmothers, more intent on passive assistance than committing themselves to creating the conditions favorable to work. We are comforted by the human warmth with which the Church is close to us and the welcome that each one of us finds at the house of the Chaplains. Your Holiness, where can we find the strength to continue to believe, and never to give up despite all this?

Pope Francis: That’s it! Those who lose their job and cannot find another good job, feels that they lose their dignity, just as those who are forced by necessity to accept bad or unsuitable jobs. Not all jobs are good: there is still too much bad work without dignity, in the illegal trafficking of weapons, pornography, gambling and all those businesses that do not respect the rights of workers or nature. How bad is the work of those who are paid a lot because they do not have timetables, limits, boundaries between work and life because the job becomes the entire life.

A paradox of our society is the presence of a growing share of people who would like to work but are not able to, and others who work too hard, who would like to work less but are unable to because they have been “bought” by businesses. Work, on the other hand, becomes “brother work” when alongside it there is the time for non-work, feast days. Slaves do not have free time: without the feast day, work becomes slavery, even if well-paid; and in order to feast, we have to work. In families where there is unemployment, it is never really Sunday and festivities sometimes become sad days because work is lacking on Monday. To celebrate the feast, you need to celebrate labor. One marks the time and rhythm of the other. They go together.

I also believe that consumption is an idol of our time. Consumption is the center of our society, and therefore also the pleasure that consumption promises. Grand shops, open twenty-four hours a day, every day, new
“temples” that promise salvation, eternal life; cults of pure consumption and therefore of pure pleasure. This is also the root of the labor crisis in our society: work is fatigue, sweat. The Bible knew it very well and reminds us of it. But a hedonistic society, that sees and wants only consumption, does not understand the value of fatigue and sweat and therefore does not understand labor. All idolatries are experiences of pure consumption: idols do not work. Work is labor: there are pains in the generation of joy for what has been generated together. Without regaining a culture that values fatigue and sweat, we will not find a new relationship with work and we will continue to dream of the consumption of pure pleasure.

Work is the center of every social pact: it is not a means for consumption, no. It is the center of every social pact. Between work and consumption there are so many things, all important and beautiful, called dignity, respect, honor, freedom, rights, rights of all, women, children, the elderly... If we sell out labor for consumption, with work we will soon sell out these accompanying words: dignity, respect, honor, freedom. We must not allow this, and we must continue to ask for work, to generate it, to estimate it, to love it. We must also pray for it: many of the most beautiful prayers of our parents and grandparents were prayers of work, learned and recited before, after, and during work. Work is a friend of prayer; work is present every day in the Eucharist, whose gifts are the fruit of man’s land and work. A world that no longer knows the values, and the value, of work does not understand the Eucharist either, the true and humble prayer of workers and workers. The fields, the sea, factories have always been “altars” from which beautiful and pure prayers have been raised, which God has received and gathered. Prayers said and recited by those who knew and wanted to pray, but also prayers said with the hands, with sweat, with the fatigue of work by those who did not know how to pray with their mouth. God has also welcomed them and continues to welcome them today too.

For this reason, I would like to end this dialogue with a prayer: it is an ancient prayer, the “Come, Holy Spirit” which is also a prayer for work and for work.

Greatest comforter, sweet guest of the soul, sweet consolation. In labor, rest, in heat, temperance, in tears, solace. Cleanse that which is unclean, water that which is dry, heal that which is wounded. Bend that which is inflexible, fire that which is chilled, correct what goes astray. Grant the reward of virtue, grant the deliverance of salvation, grant eternal joy. Amen”.

Thank you!

And now, I ask the Lord to bless you all, to bless all workers, businessmen, the unemployed. Each one of us, think of the entrepreneurs who do everything to give work; think of the unemployed, think of workers. And may this blessing descend upon all of us and all of them.

[Blessing]

Many thanks!

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Torna ai contenuti


Dear Young Friends,

Here we are, on the road again, following our great meeting in Kraków, where we celebrated the Thirty-first World Youth Day and the Jubilee for Young People as part of the Holy Year of Mercy. We took as our guides Saint John Paul II and Saint Faustina Kowalska, the apostles of divine mercy, in order to offer a concrete response to the challenges of our time. We had a powerful experience of fraternity and joy, and we gave the world a sign of hope. Our different flags and languages were not a reason for rivalry and division, but an opportunity to open the doors of our hearts and to build bridges.

At the conclusion of the Kraków World Youth Day, I announced the next stop in our pilgrimage, which with God’s help will bring us to Panama in 2019. On this journey we will be accompanied by the Virgin Mary, whom all generations call blessed (cf. Lk 1:48). This new leg of our journey
picks up from the one that preceded it, centered on the Beatitudes, and invites us to press forward. I fervently hope that you young people will continue to press forward, not only cherishing the memory of the past, but also with courage in the present and hope for the future. These attitudes were certainly present in the young Mary of Nazareth and are clearly expressed in the themes chosen for the three coming World Youth Days. This year (2017) we will reflect on the faith of Mary, who says in the Magnificat: “The Mighty One has done great things for me” (Lk 1:49). The theme for next year (2018) — “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God” (Lk 1:30) — will lead us to meditate on the courageous charity with which the Virgin welcomed the message of the angel. The 2019 World Youth Day will be inspired by the words “I am the servant of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38), Mary’s hope-filled reply to the angel.

In October 2018, the Church will celebrate the Synod of Bishops on the theme: Youth, Faith and Vocational Discernment. We will talk about how you, as young people, are experiencing the life of faith amid the challenges of our time. We will also discuss the question of how you can develop a life project by discerning your personal vocation, whether it be to marriage in the secular and professional world, or to the consecrated life and priesthood. It is my hope that the journey towards the World Youth Day in Panama and the process of preparation for the Synod will move forward in tandem.

Our age does not need young people who are “couch-potatoes”

According to Luke’s Gospel, once Mary has received the message of the angel and said “yes” to the call to become the Mother of the Savior, she sets out in haste to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who was in the sixth month of her pregnancy (cf. 1:36, 39). Mary is very young; what she was told is a great gift, but it also entails great challenges. The Lord assured her of his presence and support, yet many things remain obscure in her mind and heart. Yet Mary does not shut herself up at home or let herself be paralyzed by fear or pride. Mary is not the type that, to be comfortable, needs a good sofa where she can feel safe and sound. She is no couch potato! (cf. Address at the Vigil, Kraków, 30 July 2016). If her elderly cousin needs a hand, she does not hesitate, but immediately sets off.
It was a long way to the house of Elizabeth, about 150 kilometers. But the young woman from Nazareth, led by the Holy Spirit, knows no obstacles. Surely, those days of journeying helped her to meditate on the marvelous event of which she was a part. So it is with us, whenever we set out on pilgrimage. Along the way, the events of our own lives come to mind, we learn to appreciate their meaning and we discern our vocation, which then becomes clear in the encounter with God and in service to others.

*The Mighty One has done great things for me*

The meeting of the two women, one young and the other elderly, is filled with the presence of the Holy Spirit and charged with joy and wonder (cf. *Lk* 1:40-45). The two mothers, like the children they bear, practically dance for joy. Elizabeth, impressed by Mary’s faith, cries out: “Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord” (v. 45). One of the great gifts that the Virgin received was certainly that of faith. Belief in God is a priceless gift, but one that has to be received. Elizabeth blesses Mary for this, and she in turn responds with the song of the *Magnificat* (cf. *Lk* 1:46-55), in which we find the words: “The Mighty One has done great things for me” (v. 49).

Mary’s is a revolutionary prayer, the song of a faith-filled young woman conscious of her limits, yet confident in God’s mercy. She gives thanks to God for looking upon her lowliness and for the work of salvation that He has brought about for the people, the poor and the humble. Faith is at the heart of Mary’s entire story. Her song helps us to understand the mercy of the Lord as the driving force of history, the history of each of us and of all humanity.

When God touches the heart of a young man or woman, they become capable of doing tremendous things. The “great things” that the Almighty accomplished in the life of Mary speak also to our own journey in life, which is not a meaningless meandering, but a pilgrimage that, for all its uncertainties and sufferings, can find its fulfilment in God (cf. *Angelus*, 15 August 2015). You may say to me: “But Father, I have my limits, I am a sinner, what can I do?” When the Lord calls us, He doesn’t stop at what we
are or what we have done. On the contrary, at the very moment that He calls us, He is looking ahead to everything we can do, all the love we are capable of giving. Like the young Mary, you can allow your life to become a means for making the world a better place. Jesus is calling you to leave your mark in life, your mark on history, both your own and that of so many others (cf. *Address at the Vigil*, Kraków, 30 July 2016).

**Being young does not mean being disconnected from the past**

Mary was little more than an adolescent, like many of you. Yet in the *Magnificat*, she echoes the praises of her people and their history. This shows us that being young does not mean being disconnected from the past. Our personal history is part of a long trail, a communal journey that has preceded us over the ages. Like Mary, we belong to a people. History teaches us that, even when the Church has to sail on stormy seas, the hand of God guides her and helps her to overcome moments of difficulty. The genuine experience of the Church is not like a flash mob, where people agree to meet, do their thing and then go their separate ways. The Church is heir to a long tradition which, passed down from generation to generation, is further enriched by the experience of each individual. Your personal history has a place within the greater history of the Church.

Being mindful of the past also helps us to be open to the unexpected ways that God acts in us and through us. It also helps us to be open to being chosen as a means by which God brings about his saving plan. As young people, you too can do great things and take on fuller responsibilities, if only you recognize God’s mercy and power at work in your lives.

I would like to ask you some questions. How do you “save” in your memory the events and experiences of your life? What do you do with the facts and the images present in your memory? Some of you, particularly those hurt by certain situations in life, might want to “reset” your own past, to claim the right to forget it all. But I would like to remind you that there is no saint without a past, or a sinner without a future. The pearl is born of a wound in the oyster! Jesus, by His love, can heal our hearts and turn our lives into genuine pearls. As Saint Paul said, the Lord can show His power through our weakness (cf. *2 Cor* 12:9).
Yet our memories should not remain crammed together, as in the memory of a hard drive. Nor can we archive everything in some sort of virtual “cloud”. We need to learn how to make past events a dynamic reality on which to reflect and to draw lessons and meaning for the present and the future. This is no easy task, but one necessary for discovering the thread of God’s love running through the whole of our life.

Many people say that young people are distracted and superficial. They are wrong! Still, we should acknowledge our need to reflect on our lives and direct them towards the future. To have a past is not the same as to have a history. In our life we can have plenty of memories, but how many of them are really a part of our memory? How many are significant for our hearts and help to give meaning to our lives? In the social media, we see faces of young people appearing in any number of pictures recounting more or less real events, but we don’t know how much of all this is really “history”, an experience that can be communicated and endowed with purpose and meaning. Television is full of “reality shows” which are not real stories, but only moments passed before a television camera by characters living from day to day, without a greater plan. Don’t let yourselves be led astray by this false image of reality! Be the protagonists of your history; decide your own future.

How to remain connected, following the example of Mary

It is said of Mary that she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart (cf. Lk 2:19, 51). This unassuming young woman of Nazareth teaches us by her example to preserve the memory of the events of our lives but also to put them together and reconstruct the unity of all the fragments that, put together, can make up a mosaic. How can we learn to do this in practice? Let me offer you some suggestions.

At the end of each day, we can stop for a few minutes to remember the good times and the challenges, the things that went well and those that went wrong. In this way, before God and before ourselves, we can express our gratitude, our regrets and our trust. If you wish, you can also write them down in a notebook as a kind of spiritual journal. This means praying in life, with life and about life, and it will surely help you to recognize the great things that the Lord is doing for each of you. As Saint Augustine
said, we can find God in the vast fields of our memory (cf. *Confessions*, X, 8, 12).

Reading the *Magnificat*, we realize how well Mary knew the word of God. Every verse of her song has a parallel in the Old Testament. The young mother of Jesus knew the prayers of her people by heart. Surely her parents and her grandparents had taught them to her. How important it is for the faith to be passed down from one generation to another! There is a hidden treasure in the prayers that past generations have taught us, in the lived spirituality of ordinary people that we call *popular piety*. Mary inherits the faith of her people and shapes it in a song that is entirely her own, yet at the same time the song of the entire Church, which sings it with her. If you, as young people, want to sing a *Magnificat* all your own, and make your lives a gift for humanity as a whole, it is essential to connect with the historical tradition and the prayer of those who have gone before you. To do so, it is important to be familiar with the Bible, God’s word, reading it daily and letting it speak to your lives, and interpreting everyday events in the light of what the Lord says to you in the sacred Scriptures. In prayer and in the prayerful reading of the Bible (*lectio divina*), Jesus will warm your hearts and illumine your steps, even in the dark moments of life (cf. *Lk* 24:13-35).

Mary also teaches us to live “eucharistically”, that is to learn how to give thanks and praise, and not to fixate on our problems and difficulties alone. In the process of living, today’s prayers become tomorrow’s reasons for thanksgiving. In this way, your participation in Holy Mass and the occasions when you celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be both a high point and new beginning. Your lives will be renewed each day in forgiveness and they will become an act of perennial praise to the Almighty. “Trust the memory of God … His memory is a heart filled with tender compassion, one that rejoices in erasing in us every trace of evil” (cf. *Homily at Mass*, World Youth Day, Kraków, 31 July 2016).

We have seen that the *Magnificat*

wells up in Mary’s heart at the moment when she meets her elderly cousin Elizabeth. With her faith, her keen gaze and her words, Elizabeth helps the Virgin to understand more fully the greatness of what God is
accomplishing in her and the mission that he has entrusted to her. But what about you? Do you realize how extraordinarily enriching the encounter between the young and the elderly can be? How much attention do you pay to the elderly, to your grandparents? With good reason you want to “soar”, your heart is full of great dreams, but you need the wisdom and the vision of the elderly. Spread your wings and fly, but also realize that you need to rediscover your roots and to take up the torch from those who have gone before. To build a meaningful future, you need to know and appreciate the past (cf. *Amoris Laetitia*, 191, 193). Young people have strength, while the elderly have memory and wisdom. As Mary did with Elizabeth, look to the elderly, to your grandparents. They will speak to you of things that can thrill your minds and fill your hearts.

**Creative fidelity for building the future**

It is true that you are still young and so it can be hard for you to appreciate the importance of tradition. But know that this is not the same as being traditionalists. No! When Mary in the Gospel says: “The Mighty One has done great things for me”, she means to say that those “great things” are not over, but are still happening in the present. It is not about the distant past. Being mindful of the past does not mean being nostalgic or remaining attached to a certain period of history, but rather being able to acknowledge where we have come from, so that we can keep going back to essentials and throwing ourselves with creative fidelity into building the future. It would be problematic and ultimately useless to cultivate a paralyzing memory that makes us keep doing the same things in the same way. It is a gift of God to see how many of you, with your questions, dreams and uncertainties, refuse to listen to those who say that things cannot change.

A society that values only the present tends to dismiss everything inherited from the past, as for example the institutions of marriage, consecrated life and priestly mission. These end up being seen as meaningless and outdated forms. People think it is better to live in “open” situations, going through life as if it were a reality show, without aim or purpose. Don’t let yourselves be deceived! God came to enlarge the horizons of our life in every direction. He helps us to give due value to the past so as better to build a future of happiness. Yet this is possible only if
we have authentic experiences of love, which help us concretely to discern the Lord’s call and to respond to it. For only that can bring us true happiness.

Dear young people I entrust our journey towards Panama, together with the process of preparation for the next Synod of Bishops, to the maternal intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary. I ask you to keep in mind two important anniversaries in 2017: the three-hundredth anniversary of the finding of the image of Our Lady of Aparecida in Brazil and the centenary of the apparitions in Fatima, Portugal, where, God willing, I plan to make a pilgrimage this coming May. Saint Martin of Porres, one of the patron saints of Latin America and of the 2019 World Youth Day, in going about his humble daily duties, used to offer the best flowers to Mary, as a sign of his filial love. May you too cultivate a relationship of familiarity and friendship with Our Lady, entrusting to her your joys, your worries and your concerns. I assure you that you will not regret it!

May the maiden of Nazareth, who in the whole world has assumed a thousand names and faces in order to be close to her children, intercede for all of us and help us to sing of the great works that the Lord is accomplishing in us and through us.

From the Vatican,
Francis
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Letter of the Holy Father to Young People on the Occasion of the Presentation of the Preparatory Document of the 15th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (January 13, 2017)

My Dear Young People,
I am pleased to announce that in October 2018 a Synod of Bishops will take place to treat the topic: “Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment.” I wanted you to be the center of attention, because you are in my heart. Today, the Preparatory Document is being presented, a document which I am also entrusting to you as your “compass” on this synodal journey.

I am reminded of the words which God spoke to Abraham: “Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.” (Gen 12.1). These words are now also addressed to you. They are words of a Father who invites you to “go”, to set out towards a future which is unknown but one which will surely lead to fulfilment, a future towards which He Himself accompanies you. I invite you to hear God's voice resounding in your heart through the breath of the Holy Spirit.

When God said to Abram, “Go!”, what did he want to say? He certainly did not say to distance himself from his family or withdraw from the world. Abram received a compelling invitation, a challenge, to leave everything and go to a new land. What is this “new land” for us today, if not a more just and friendly society which you, young people, deeply desire and wish to build to the very ends of the earth?

But unfortunately, today, “Go!” also has a different meaning, namely, that of abuse of power, injustice and war. Many among you are subjected to the real threat of violence and forced to flee their native land. Their cry goes up to God, like that of Israel, when the people were enslaved and oppressed by Pharaoh (cf. Ex 2:23).

I would also remind you of the words that Jesus once said to the disciples who asked him: “Teacher [...] where are you staying?” He replied, “Come and see” (Jn 1:38). Jesus looks at you and invites you to go with him. Dear young people, have you noticed this look towards you? Have you heard this voice? Have you felt this urge to undertake this journey? I am sure that, despite the noise and confusion seemingly prevalent in the world, this call continues to resonate in the depths of your heart so as to open it to joy in its fullness. This will be possible to the extent that, even with professional guides, you will learn how to undertake a journey of discernment to discover God's plan in your life. Even when the journey is
uncertain and you fall, God, rich in mercy, will extend his hand to pick you up.

In Krakow, at the opening of the last World Youth Day, I asked you several times: “Can we change things?” And you shouted: “yes!”. That shout came from your young and youthful hearts, which do not tolerate injustice and cannot bow to a “throw-away culture” nor give in to the globalization of indifference. Listen to the cry arising from your inner selves! Even when you feel, like the prophet Jeremiah, the inexperience of youth, God encourages you to go where He sends you: “Do not be afraid, […], because I am with you to deliver you” (Jer 1:8).

A better world can be built also as a result of your efforts, your desire to change and your generosity. Do not be afraid to listen to the Spirit who proposes bold choices; do not delay when your conscience asks you to take risks in following the Master. The Church also wishes to listen to your voice, your sensitivities and your faith; even your doubts and your criticism. Make your voice heard, let it resonate in communities and let it be heard by your shepherds of souls. St. Benedict urged the abbots to consult, even the young, before any important decision, because “the Lord often reveals to the younger what is best.” (Rule of St. Benedict, III, 3).

Such is the case, even in the journey of this Synod. My brother bishops and I want even more to “work with you for your joy” (2 Cor 1:24). I entrust you to Mary of Nazareth, a young person like yourselves, whom God beheld lovingly, so she might take your hand and guide you to the joy of fully and generously responding to God’s call with the words: “Here I am” (cf. Lk 1:38).

With paternal affection,

Francis

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The Roman Curia

Decree of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints by which are recognized the heroic virtues and the reputation for sanctity of the Servant of God Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri (May 4, 2016)

CONGREGATIO DE CAUSIS SANCTORUM
Matritensis
BEATIFICATIONIS et CANONIZATIONIS
Servae Dei
MARIAE GUADALUPE ORTIZ DE LANDÁZURI
Y FERNÁNDEZ DE HEREDIA
christifidelis laicae
Praelaturae personalis Sanctorum Crucis et Operis Dei
(1916-1975)

DECRETUM SUPER VIRTUTIBUS

«Hilarem enim datorem diligit Deus» (2 Cor 9, 7).

Dei Serva Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri y Fernández de Heredia
laeto animo se dedit totam in Dei eiusque Ecclesiae servitium atque divinum amorem fortiter experta est.

Ultima ex quattuor filiis Emmanuelis et Eulogiae, Guadalupe nata est Matriti, in Hispania, die 12 mensis Decembris anno 1916. Pater eius erat praefectus militum quapropter non semel ab uno in aliud locum translatus est et ab anno 1927 usque ad annum 1932 in Africa Septentrionali sedem habuit cum uxore et filia Guadalupe, quae scholam frequentavit Religiosorum Societatis Mariae in civitate Tetuan. Dei Serva a pueritia forti et alacri animo praeditam sese praebuit.
Anno 1933 lycaeis studia Matriti complevit seque inscripsit Facultati Chimiae in eiusdem civitatis Universitate. Paulo post initium belli civilis Hispaniae, nempe mense Iulio anno 1936, Servae Dei paterprehensus et capite damnatus est in processu summario. Guadalupe, cum matre sua et fratre, patri solacium afferre potuit ante eius ex pyroballiosta internecione eumque iuvavit ut christiano spiritu mortem acciperet. Dei Serva eis ignovit qui patris morti causam dederant.

Bello civili ad finem adducto, Guadalupe studiis diligenter incumbere perrexit, et anno 1941 doctoris gradum adepta est atque in lycaeiss commodum docere coepit. Die 25 mensis Ianuarii anno 1944 ipsa primo novit Sanctum Iosephmariam Escrivá, Operis Dei conditorem, quem suae vitae spiritualis moderatorem habuit. Ex tunc Dei Serva impensius vitae orationis vacavit et, post aliqua dies recessus spiritualis, die 19 mensis Martii eiusdem anni, postulavit ut, “coelibatum apostolicum” servans, in Opere Dei admitteretur. Ipsa bene intellexit se a Deo vocari ut Ecclesiae Sanctae serviret per laborem amore peractum et per apostolatum in ordinariae vitae adiunctis.

Sanctus Iosephmaria munera eidem concredidit moderandi quaedam Operis Dei incepta evangelizationis Matriti et Bilbai. Mense Octobri anno 1947 Guadalupe in Universitatem rediit, ut doctoratum pervestigationis in Chimia adipisceretur. Exeunte vero anno 1949 ab ea quaesitum est an parata esset ad sese in Mexicum transferendam, ut ibi inchoaret actuositatem apostolicam Operis Dei.

Novo huic muneri Guadalupe cum fiducia et animi ardore sese paravit et die 5 mensis Martii anno 1950 cum duabus aliis Operis Dei mulieribus iter inivit Mexicopolim, ubi, mense Aprili eiusdem anni, ipsae domum paraverunt mulieribus Universitatis alumnis hospitio recipiendis, quae alumnae memoria recolunt humanitatem et deditionem quibus Serva Dei christianam formationem eidem imperti curabat. Cum ipsis enim in pauperrimis suburbiis cathechesim pueris tradebat et aegrotis opitulabatur per erraticum quoddam valetudinarium, cui adiutricem operam conferebat Servae Dei amica, quae medici professionem exercebat.

Communi consilio cum Episcopo Tacambarensi promovendis puellis rusticis illius regionis in sociali consortione impense incubuit, curavitque ut ipsae discerent artem quamdam operosam et litterarum ignorantiam
debellarent. Vehicula quaecumque adhibens prout ei in promptu erant, in loca dissita se conferebat ut familias inviseret illarum puellarum, mira fortitudine pericula ac difficultates obiens. Cum affectu et patientia magna, iis puellis impertiebatur formationem fundamentalem et humanam et christianam. Hae apostolicae actuositates cito in alias Mexicanae Rei Publicae civitates propagatae sunt. Anno 1952 Guadalupe adiutricem contulit operam ineedis apostolicis inceptis in vetere quodam fundo dicto Montefalco, qui magno cum sacrificio et obtenta multorum cooperatione, conversus est in domum pro recessibus spiritualibus complectentem quoque scholam cum agris colendis necnon centrum formationis professionalis atque alphabeticae institutionis.


Ab anno 1970 Dei Servae cardiopatia in peius vertere coepit et die 1 mensis Iulii anno 1975 chirurgicam sectionem valde periculosam subire debuit; dum convalescebat subitanea supervenit crisis, et, die 16 eiusdem mensis et anni, Beatissimae Virgini Mariae de Monte Carmelo dicata, animam Deo piissime reddidit.

Eminent in Dei Serva gaudium quod contagionis instar aliis transmittebat, fortitudo ut ardua quaeque oppeteret, christianus optimismus in difficilibus adiunctis et sui donum ad alios. Fides eius theologalis eluebat praeertim in amore erga Sanctissimam Eucharistiam et in laeta acceptatione voluntatis Dei. Spem colebat annorum decursu temperatam et heroice caritatem exercuit erga Deum et erga proximum. Pietatis exercitia devote colebat et frequenter coram tabernaculo orabat. Divina gratia ducta,
ad harmonicam vitae unitatem pervenit et Deo offerebat diversa officia suae vitae quotidianaet. Magna affectu Beatissimam Virginem Mariam alloquebat eamque invocabat praesertim sub titulo de Guadalupe.

Sollicitam se exhibebat erga aliorum necessitates et eadem urbanitate ac comitate erga omnes se gerebat, nempe erga mulieres Universitatis alumnas, puellas rusticas, alumnas scholarum in quibus docuit et amicas.

Parata semper fuit ad agendum in aliorum utilitatem et ad oboediendum. Quamquam multis ornabatur qualitatibus et humanis et professionalibus, numquam tamen se iactavit, immo parata erat ad serviendo alii et humilliora munera suscipere quaererebat. Sobrie admodum vixit et laeto animo accepit privationes quas frequenter passa est cum apostolica incepta in nova aliqua civitate inchoabat. Tenaciter munera sibi commissa perficiebat et subsicivis temporibus utiliter utebatur, manens tamen semper affabilis et parata ad alios adiuvandos. Cum Servae Dei salus infirma evenit ipsa perseveranter munera sua implere perrexit.


Facta de hisce omnibus Summo Pontifici Francisco accurata relatione ab infrascripto Cardinali Praefecto, Beatissimus Pater, accipiens rataque habens Congregationis de Causis Sanctorum vota, hodierna die declaravit: Constare de virtutibus theologalis Fide, Spe et Caritate tum in Deum tum in proximum, necnon de cardinalibus Prudentia, Iustitia, Temperantia, Fortitudine, tisque adnexis in gradu heroico, Servae Dei Mariae Guadalupe
Ortiz de Landázuri y Fernández de Heredia, Christifidelis Laicae Praelaturae Sanctae Crucis et Operis Dei, in casu et ad effectum de quo agitur.

Hoc autem Decretum publici iuris fieri et in acta Congregationis de Causis Sanctorum Summus Pontifex referri mandavit.


Angelus Card. Amato, S.D.B.

Praefectus

L. + S.

X Marcellus Bartolucci

Archiep. tit. Mevaniensis

a Secretis

The following is our translation of the Decree.

CONGREGATION FOR THE CAUSES OF SAINTS

MADRID

BEATIFICATION and CANONIZATION

OF THE SERVANT OF GOD

MARIA GUADALUPE ORTIZ DE LANDAZURI

LAYWOMAN

of the Personal Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei

(1916—1975)

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DECREE ON THE VIRTUES

“God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor 9:7).

The Servant of God Guadalupe Ortiz de Landazuri surrendered herself completely and joyfully to God and to the service of his Church, and intensely experienced divine love.

Guadalupe was born in Madrid, Spain, on 12 December 1916. She was the youngest of the four children of Manuel and Eulogia Ortiz. Her father
was an army officer and as such was repeatedly posted to different places. From 1927 to 1932 he, Eulogia and Guadalupe lived in North Africa; Guadalupe went to the school run by the religious of the Company of Mary in Tétouan, Morocco. From her childhood onwards, the Servant of God was endowed with a strong, courageous character.

In 1933 she completed her secondary schooling in Madrid and enrolled at Madrid University to study Chemistry. In July 1936, shortly after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, her father was arrested and summarily sentenced to death. Guadalupe, her mother and her brother, were able to speak to her father before he was shot, consoling him and helping him to accept death in a Christian spirit. The Servant of God forgave those who had caused her father’s death.

After the Spanish Civil War ended, she continued her studies with great application and diligence. In 1941 she began studying for a doctorate in Chemistry, while teaching at a secondary school. On 25 January 1944 she first met St Josemaría Escrivá, the founder of Opus Dei, who became her spiritual director. From that point on Guadalupe dedicated herself intensely to prayer and, after a spiritual retreat lasting several days, she asked to be admitted to Opus Dei on 19 March that same year, living in apostolic celibacy. She understood clearly that God was calling her to serve Holy Church through work done for love and through apostolate in the circumstances of ordinary life.

St Josemaría put her in charge of some evangelization projects in Madrid and Bilbao. In October 1947 Guadalupe returned to the university to pursue her doctoral studies. At the end of 1949 she was asked whether she would be willing to move to Mexico to begin Opus Dei’s apostolate there.

Guadalupe prepared for this new undertaking with faith and enthusiasm. On 5 March 1950 she and two other women of Opus Dei moved to Mexico City. In April that year they opened a hall of residence for women university students, some of whom still remember the care that the Servant of God dedicated to their Christian formation. With them, she taught catechism classes to children from deprived areas. She also cared for
the sick at a mobile clinic she set up with the help of a friend of hers who was a doctor.

In agreement with the Bishop of Tacambaro, she devoted her best efforts to improving the living conditions of the young countrywomen of the area, enabling them to learn manual skills, reading and writing. Despite the precarious means of transport available, she would travel to different locations to visit these young women's families. She faced dangers and difficulties with admirable fortitude, and showed affection and great patience in providing the young women with basic human and Christian formation. Soon these apostolic activities spread to other townships in Mexico. In 1952 Guadalupe helped with the beginnings of the apostolate being done at an old farming estate called Montefalco. At the cost of great sacrifices, and with the help of many people, the dilapidated estate was transformed into a retreat center, plus a farm-school and a center for job skills training and basic literacy.

In 1956 the Servant of God was called to Rome to help St Josemaría in the governance of the apostolate of the women of Opus Dei. But a few months later Guadalupe fell ill with a serious heart problem, and in July 1957 underwent major surgery. From 1958 onwards she lived in Madrid, Spain, where she taught at a school and afterwards at an industrial training school for women. In 1965 she gained her doctorate in Chemistry and was unanimously awarded a prize for her doctoral thesis. Despite her poor health she continued to dedicate herself with care and enthusiasm to the apostolate with young women. She was also in charge of a catering training center and other projects.

In the early 1970s her heart condition worsened, and on 1 July 1975 she had a high-risk heart operation. During the recovery period she suffered a sudden crisis and on 16 July, the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, she devoutly surrendered her soul to God.

Guadalupe’s outstanding characteristics were her contagious cheerfulness, her fortitude in the face of adversity, her Christian optimism in difficult circumstances, and her self-giving to others. Her theological faith shone out in her love for the Blessed Eucharist and her joyous acceptance of God’s Will. She cultivated the virtue of hope, constantly refining and
purifying it with the passage of time. She practiced charity for God and her neighbor to a heroic degree. She put great piety into devotional exercises and would often spend time in prayer before the Tabernacle. Impelled by divine grace, she achieved a harmoniously unified life and offered all the various tasks of her daily life to God. She prayed with love and affection to the Blessed Virgin Mary, especially under the advocacion “Our Lady of Guadalupe”.

She had a lively concern for the needs of others. She treated university students, farm-girls, schoolgirls and her friends with the same sensitivity and friendliness.

She was always ready to be useful to others and to obey. She was endowed with many human and professional gifts, but never boasted of them; on the contrary, she was quick to serve others and chose the humblest tasks for herself. She lived with great sobriety and cheerfully accepted the privations she often encountered on beginning the apostolate in a new place. She carried out the tasks entrusted to her with tenacity and perfection, and used her free time on worthwhile occupations, being approachable and always ready to make herself available. When she fell ill, she did all she could to persevere in fulfilling her duties.

The diocesan process concerning her life, virtues and reputation for holiness was carried out in the Curia of the Archdiocese of Madrid. It opened on 18 November 2001 and was concluded on 18 March 2005. The Congregation for the Causes of Saints issued a decree of its validity on 17 February 2006. Once the Positio had been completed, the next stage, according to the established procedure, was to examine whether the Servant of God had practiced the virtues heroically. On 7 June 2016 the special Congress of theological consultors took place, and answered this question in the affirmative. The Cardinals and Bishops, in an ordinary session held on 2 May 2017, presided by myself, Cardinal Angelo Amato, recognized that Guadalupe had exercised the theological, cardinal and related virtues to a heroic degree.

The undersigned Cardinal Prefect presented to the Supreme Pontiff Pope Francis a detailed account of all the phases listed above. The Holy Father, receiving and ratifying the evaluation of the Congregation for the
Causes of Saints, with today’s date, has solemnly declared that: *Proofs exist of the theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity, towards both God and neighbor, and also of the cardinal virtues of Prudence, Justice, Temperance and Fortitude, with their annexed virtues, in heroic degree, of the Servant of God Maria Guadalupe Ortiz de Landazuri, laywoman of the Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei, according to the requirements of the case.*

The Holy Father has ordered that this Decree be published and transcribed in the Acts of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

Given at Rome, on the 4th day of the month of May in the year of Our Lord 2017.

ANGELO CARDINAL AMATO, S. D. B.

Prefect

L. + S.

X MARCELLO BARTOLUCCI

Titular Archbishop of Bevagna

Secretary

Torna ai contenuti
PRELATE

• Appointments
• Activities of the Prelate
• Pastoral Letters
• Homilies
• Articles and Interviews
• Messages
Activities of the Prelate

Pastoral Visit to Ireland

Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz made his first pastoral trip outside of Italy to Ireland. It took place from April 18-21. Msgr. Ocáriz chose Ireland because it was the European country that had seen the longest period of time go by since the last pastoral visit of a Prelate of Opus Dei —made by Bishop Javier Echevarría in 2005.

Tuesday, April 18

Msgr. Ocáriz arrived at Dublin’s airport in the early afternoon. He was received by Fr. Justin Gillespie, regional vicar of Opus Dei in Ireland, and by a group of faithful of the Prelature. The Prelate visited the Rosemont School and gave a class to some faithful of Opus Dei there. Afterwards he had the opportunity to speak with a number of faithful of the Prelature, and then had several meetings at the Regional Commission of Opus Dei in Ireland.

Wednesday, April 19

During his second day, Msgr. Ocáriz met with faithful, cooperators and friends of Opus Dei in various centers of the Prelature in Dublin. At 7:30 p.m., he participated in a family gathering with hundreds of people, held in the Rosemont School, a secondary school for girls. Responding to
questions from those present, the Prelate stressed the importance of putting
God at the center of each person’s life and of fostering a personal
relationship with Christ. He also spoke about caring for family life and the
home, and about other topics regarding Christian life.

Thursday, April 20

Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz preached a meditation and celebrated Mass at
the Cleraun Study Centre in Dublin. Then he had a get-together at
Rosemont School with women from various parts of Ireland, who told him
about some of the evangelization initiatives they are carrying out.

Afterwards, the Prelate drove to Lismullin Conference Center in
County Meath, where activities for human and Christian formation are
offered. He had lunch with Bishop Michael Smith, head of the diocese of
Meath, and Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan from the diocese of Waterford and
Lismore. Msgr. Ocáriz also visited Lismullin School of Culinary and
Home Arts and toured the new facilities opened there.

At the end of the day, he gave a class at the Cleraun Study Centre on
the central ideas of his pastoral letter about the conclusions of the third
General Congress of Opus Dei. After dinner, he greeted many families
from various cities and had a get-together with university women.

Friday, April 21

On the last day of his pastoral trip, Msgr. Ocáriz preached a meditation
and celebrated Mass at the Glenard university residence, in Dublin. The
Prelate dedicated the morning to working with the people on the Regional
Commission of Opus Dei, and later with the women on the Regional
Advisory. Before returning to Rome, he had a chance to visit the parish
church of Our Lady Queen of Peace, which the Archbishop of Dublin,
Diarmuid Martin, entrusted to priests of the Opus Dei Prelature in 2007.

Torna ai contenuti

Audience with Pope Francis (March 3, 2017)
At 12:15 on March 3, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the Prelate of Opus Dei, Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz, accompanied by the Vicar General, Msgr. Mariano Fazio.

At the beginning of the meeting, which lasted some 25 minutes, the Pope greeted them with an affectionate hug. The Prelate thanked Pope Francis for the closeness he showed at the death of Bishop Javier Echevarría, his prayers for the elective Congress, and his confirming him as the new Prelate.

Msgr. Ocáriz also expressed the union of all the faithful of the Work with the Holy Father, and spoke about the pastoral priorities the Congress had outlined for the coming years: the family, youth, and an active concern for the most needy,

Pope Francis expressed gratitude for the work that the Prelature is carrying out throughout the world, especially its spiritual attention to each person, its ecumenism in countries where Catholics are a minority, and the social projects underway. He also encouraged the Prelate to give priority to a specific “periphery:” the middle classes and the professionals and intellectuals whose lives are distant from God.

Pope Francis, when giving his blessing to the Prelate and Vicar General, said it was also for all the Prelature’s faithful, and he asked that they pray for him.

Pastoral Letters

Pastoral Letter of February 14, 2017

My dear children: may Jesus watch over my daughters and sons for me!

1. I have been wanting very much to write to you again, now at more length. With this letter I want to let you share in the conclusions of the last
General Congress, held in Rome this past January. I am doing so because, like Don Javier in 2010, I want all of you to feel the weight of the Work, the weight of souls, the responsibility of taking forward this small family that we are. With the whole Church, we aspire, in St Paul’s words, to reconcile the world to God (see 2 Cor 5:19). This is an immense task that would be too much for us if we did not rely on God’s grace.

As I told you in St Josemaría’s words, in my first letter as Father of this small part of the Church, our mission is to redeem and sanctify our time, to understand and share the concerns of our fellow men and women. I now take up the thread of those words: “It is not true that everyone today — in general — is closed or indifferent to what our Christian faith teaches about mankind’s being and destiny. It is not true that people in our time are turned only toward the things of this earth and have forgotten to look up to heaven. There is no lack of narrow ideologies, it is true, or of people who maintain them. But in our time we find both great desires and base attitudes, heroism and cowardice, zeal and disenchantment: men who dream of a new world, more just and more human, and others who, discouraged perhaps by the failure of their youthful idealism, hide themselves in the selfishness of seeking only their own security or remaining immersed in their errors.

“To all these men and women, wherever they may be, in their more exalted moments or in their crises and defeats, we have to bring the solemn and unequivocal message of St Peter in the days that followed Pentecost: Jesus is the cornerstone, the Redeemer, the hope of our lives. ‘For there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12)”.[1]  

All with Peter to Jesus through Mary

2. The Pope is, for the Church, Peter who announces Christ to the world, proclaiming the joy of the Gospel.[2] The General Congress reaffirmed in the first place our filial union with the Roman Pontiff, and once again made its own the prayer that St Josemaría taught us: omnes cum Petro ad Iesum per Mariam.[3]

We are grateful to Pope Francis, among many other reasons, for the Jubilee Year of Mercy, his example of piety and austerity, the apostolic
stimulus that he is giving to the whole world, and his closeness to people, especially the most needy. We are also grateful for his decision, in the exercise of his Petrine ministry, to beatify Don Alvaro. The Congress also expressed its gratitude to the Pope for having confirmed me as successor of St Josemaría, Blessed Alvaro, and Don Javier at the head of Opus Dei, and for appointing me as Opus Dei’s Prelate on the very same day as my election. I wrote to you earlier that I felt somewhat embarrassed, and at the same time joyful for the unity given to us by the Holy Spirit, infinite Love. My only desire in life is to be a good Father to each of you, by sharing, despite my limitations, in God’s loving fatherhood. I am also moved by the fact that, in a letter dated 1st February, the Pope wrote to encourage me and place me under the care of Our Lady

Building upon rock

3. How are we to respond to so many graces, my daughters and sons? Let us renew our desire to incarnate and communicate the spirit of Opus Dei faithfully, as it was passed on to us by St Josemaría, building on a deep sense of our divine filiation in Christ, and determined to seek God in our professional work and in the ordinary circumstances of our life, in order to be salt and light of the world (see Mt 5:13-14). How great is the Christian vocation! It leads to our mysterious identification with the incarnate Word, which St John Paul II once expressed with daring words, taking up an expression from the Second Vatican Council: “Through the grace received in baptism, man participates in the eternal birth of the Son of the Father, for he becomes an adoptive son of God: a son in the Son.”[4]

4. Don Javier was a good son of God by being a faithful son of St Josemaría. That fidelity was the raison d’être of his life. He was our Prelate from 1994 to 2016, and the General Congress gave thanks to God for his life and his teachings. It has also echoed the desire of all the faithful of the Prelature, the members of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross and the Cooperators, to highlight Don Javier’s love for the Church and for this portion of the People of God that is Opus Dei. Don Javier left a fruitful example of pastoral charity, which was expressed in his union with the Holy Father and with all of his brothers in the episcopal college, in his zeal
for souls, and in his active solicitude for the sick and the most needy. Therefore, certain that it will cause you joy, I want to record here the general opinion of the members of the Congress, and of so many other people, that it will be advisable to collect memories and testimonies about Don Javier and about his self-sacrificing life and teachings.

Moreover, the Congress has affirmed the good being done by the causes of beatification and canonization of faithful of the Work in various countries, and the importance of continuing to spread private devotion to them. In this way we will help many souls discover divine love and the joy of living a Christian life in the middle of the world, to which Venerable Isidoro Zorzano and Venerable Montserrat Grases, among others, have given testimony. In crowning the merits of the saints, the Lord crowns his own gifts.\[5\] Through the saints we honor the Thrice-Holy God and we renew our own desires for sanctity: our love for God and for others in Him.

5. The Administrations of the Centers of Opus Dei, the “apostolate of apostolates,” are as it were its “spinal column.” \[6\] The Congress has wanted to underline, once more, the decisive role of their work in making the family atmosphere in the Work real and in helping those who come to our houses to grasp it in a visible way. Let us respond to this gift by praying that our Lord may bless this apostolate with abundant vocations, and that it may be a radiant example of the value and dignity of work in the home. The women of the Prelature will review the services provided by the Administrations according to present circumstances and needs, so that they continue sustaining the atmosphere of a home, the human and family tone that truly makes each Centre a Bethany for us.

6. To those who were Custodes for Don Javier the Congress expressed its gratitude for their dedication in assisting him. In addition, it recognized the great help provided by the elderly and sick faithful of the Prelature, with the joyful and simple offering of their limitations, in spurring forward the continuing efforts of evangelization that the Work is carrying out throughout the world. Part of this quiet assistance, certainly, is the refined care of those who look after them with affection and a spirit of generous service, following the tradition we inherited from St Josemaría as an important part of our family spirit. My daughters and sons, so much depends on how we care for the elderly and the sick!
The General Congress also gave recognition to your brothers and sisters who, during these years, began the apostolic work in new countries, leaving their place of origin to help carry out the Work in other latitudes. You will recall how frequently Don Javier stressed that there are many good people waiting for us everywhere.

<i>Present challenges in the adventure of formation</i>

7. Our apostolic dynamism, the fruit of the Holy Spirit, has been sustained by the deep work of formation that the Prelature offers its faithful, and that constitutes its mission: “the whole world becomes a great catechesis.”[7] The Congress wanted to emphasize some of the content of that formation in present-day circumstances. Allow me to list them below, so that in each circumscription of the Prelature, in each Centre, in each family of my daughters and sons, in each soul, the light and power of grace will make us see what more we can do and, above all, how we can do better what we are already doing.

8. In first place is the centrality of the Person of Jesus Christ, whom we want to get to know, deal with, and love. Putting Jesus at the center of our life means deepening in our contemplative prayer in the middle of the world, and helping others to travel along “paths of contemplation.”[8] It means rediscovering with new light the anthropological and Christian value of the various ascetical means; reaching the person in all of his or her integrity: intellect, will, heart, relations with others; fostering interior freedom, which leads us to do things for love; helping people to think, so that each person can discover what God is asking of them and make decisions with full personal responsibility; nourishing confidence in God’s grace, in order to be on the alert against voluntarism and sentimentalism; expressing the ideal of Christian life without confusing it with perfectionism, and teaching people how to live with and accept their own weakness and that of others; practicing, with all its consequences, a daily attitude of hopeful abandonment to God’s will, grounded on divine filiation.

In this way the sense of mission that our vocation entails will be strengthened along with our complete and joyful self-giving. We are called to contribute, with initiative and spontaneity, to improving the world and
the culture of our times, so that God’s plans for mankind are opened up: *cogitationes cordis eius,* the plans of his heart which are sustained *from generation to generation* (*Ps 33 [32]:11*).

In this regard it is good to encourage everyone to seek to live with their heart set on God, and therefore detached from material things. Free to love: this is the meaning of our spirit of poverty, austerity and detachment, evangelical themes greatly valued by Pope Francis’ magisterium.

Moreover, our love for the Church will spur us to obtain resources for the development of the apostolates, and to foster in everyone a great professional eagerness: in those who are still students and should harbor great desires to build up society, and in those who are carrying out a profession. With a right intention, they should foster the holy ambition of going far in their profession and of making an impact. At the same time, I encourage all Numerary men and women to have an active and generous availability, when necessary, to dedicate themselves with the same professional eagerness to tasks of formation and government.

9. This broad panorama invites us to renew our zeal for expansion, as in the early days of the Work, in order to bring the joy of the Gospel to many souls, so that many people may feel “the attraction of Christ.”[9] Our Father used to tell us: “If we want there to be more of us, let us be better.”[10] I would like this consideration to stir up in us a renewed sense of urgency in seeking, with God’s grace and people’s free and generous response, many vocations — all those that God wants — of Numeraries, Associates, Supernumeraries and priests of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross.

Freedom and vocation: here we have two essential dimensions of our human life, which call out to one another. We are free in order to love God who calls, God who is love and puts love into us so that we can love him and love others.[11] This charity makes us fully aware of our mission, which is not “an apostolate exercised sporadically or occasionally, but habitually and by vocation, taking it as the ideal of our whole life.”[12] This ideal of love of God and others leads us to cultivate friendship with many people: we do not “do apostolate,” we are apostles! This is the path of the “Church that goes forth,” of which the Pope speaks frequently, reminding us of the importance of tenderness, magnanimity, and personal contact.
This “dynamism of ‘going forth’ which God wants to provoke in believers,”[13] is not a strategy, but the actual strength of the Holy Spirit, uncreated Charity. “In a Christian, in a child of God, friendship and charity form a single thing: divine light which gives warmth.”[14] The current situation of evangelization makes it more necessary than ever to give priority to personal contact. This relational aspect is at the heart of the mode of doing apostolate that St Josemaría found in the Gospel narratives. “It can well be said, my dearest children, that the greatest fruit of Opus Dei’s work is the fruit its members obtain personally through their apostolate of example and loyal friendship.”[15]

Giving and receiving formation

10. In preparing and giving the means of formation, we are enthused when we think of their fruitfulness in souls, through the grace of God who gives the growth (see 1 Cor 3:6). In addition to putting the supernatural means very much in first place, we need to make an effort to use clear language, a positive and encouraging tone, and to give a hope-filled view of the world in which we are called to live, which is where we meet God. We should encourage active participation, and show the practical effects of the spirit of Opus Dei on family and social life, so that there is a growth in unity of life — a real, Christian consistency between what people think, the way they pray, and the way they live (see Jn 4:24; Rom 12:1; 2 Thess 3:6-15).

11. For our fraternity and the apostolate of friendship and confidence, certain virtues are of great importance: humility, as well as joy and generosity. Also necessary is a sincere interest in others that takes the form of understanding them, along with respect and appreciation for different opinions. A positive tone in conversation enables us to better focus the questions being discussed. Ultimately, it is a matter of “being sowers of peace and of joy,”[16] as our Father taught us, and of rectifying in a sportsmanlike manner when, instead of peace, we have sown a bit of discord. Our Centers, and the houses of the Associates, the Supernumeraries and the priests of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross, have to radiate the attractive warmth of a home (see Ps 133 [132]:1; Jn 13:34-35).
I remember the peace and serenity that was radiated just by the presence of Don Alvaro, who practiced what he taught us: “This family spirit is so essential for us that every daughter and son of mine carries it always with them; so strong that straight away it can be seen in and around us, making it possible for us to create a family atmosphere in any place where we happen to be. That is why our being and feeling ourselves to be a family is not based on the material fact of living under the same roof, but on the spirit of filiation and fraternity which God has wanted for his Work from the first moment.”[17]

12. I ask our Lord that we may put a special effort into the formation of those who give personal spiritual direction, whether priests or laity, so that they are able to help others with dedication and skill. With the grace of God, they have to lead people to be generous in receiving the touches of the Holy Spirit, who speaks in the depths of their hearts (see Mt 10:20). Good example and the careful fulfillment of our professional, family, and social obligations are indispensable for helping others to follow our Lord. Our Father taught us that good professional standing, seen as authentic service, is “your bait as a fisher of men.”[18] Faith enlightens people’s minds and gives meaning to their lives; it opens up a new dimension that leads them to Life in Christ.

13. We should take specific steps to provide on-going professional formation for those who direct apostolic works. The goal is to improve their capacity to direct and guide individuals and teams. Their responsibility to strengthen the Christian identity of these works, the quality of their functioning, and the service they offer to society, is a great one. Collegiality is an art which cannot be improvised; those involved must learn how to listen, exchange views, share opinions, and bring out the best in each person.

In the Church

14. For the new evangelization to be fruitful, communion among Catholics themselves is decisive. Part of our mission in the great family of God’s sons and daughters is to increase mutual appreciation among the faithful in the Church and all the very varied groups that can exist there. “The principal apostolate we Christians must carry out in the world, and
the best witness we can give of our faith, is to help bring about a climate of genuine charity within the Church.”[19] To do this, we need to strengthen, as appropriate in each case, our relationships with those in other Church institutions and entities. Practicing collective humility, we need to overcome possible misunderstandings and pray for the initiatives promoted by others.

15. The help offered to priests and seminarians is also very important for the good of the Church and of society. The Associate and Supernumerary members of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross, participating fully in the vocation to the Work, are active at the front lines, where they give a new dynamism to all the apostolates. They do so while fully respecting their sole dependence on their own Bishop, and within the context of their pastoral ministry. They normally carry out this ministry entirely and directly at the service of the diocese in which they are incardinated, which they should love more and more.

All the faithful of Opus Dei are called to pray for the Bishops and priests of the area where they live, be close to them and venerate them. The faithful collaborate with them to the extent of their possibilities, but always in ways consistent with the sanctification of their professional work and their family duties.

For the priests, I will limit myself to recalling some words of the Pope regarding the ministry of confession. Let us be welcoming to all, witnesses of the tenderness of God, attentive in helping penitents to reflect on their actions, clear, available, prudent, and generous. With a magnanimous heart, we will celebrate the mystery of the infinite mercy of a God who forgives.[20]

We should continue encouraging some members of the Prelature, Cooperators and young people, to offer to cooperate, with full freedom and personal responsibility, in catechesis, pre-marriage courses, and social works, in the parishes and other places which need them. These activities should be in accordance with their secular condition and lay mentality, and in doing them they do not depend in any way on the authority of the Prelature. At the same time, I would like to mention especially the men and women religious, who have done and are doing so much good for the
Church and the world. “Anyone who does not love and venerate the religious state, is not a good child of mine,”[21] our Father taught us. I rejoice, moreover, when I think of how many religious, in addition to diocesan priests, have seen their own vocation bloom in the warmth of the Work.

For greater service to the Church and solicitous attention to souls, the General Congress indicated that we should study, with creative imagination and flexibility, the best way to encourage and coordinate the apostolates. For example, occasionally some Centers of Opus Dei could be joined together in order to economize energies and facilitate joyful, affectionate family life. Or there can be more places with small, properly fitted out and flexibly organized apartments, so that we can give the means of formation to people right where they are: for example, in the focal points of cities, in areas where many people work, in zones of urban growth, or near high schools and universities.

New apostolic challenges

16. The General Congress reiterated the call made by the 2002 Congress, which Don Javier expressed as follows: to foster “a new culture, new legislation and new fashions, in keeping with the dignity of the human person and with its destiny to the glory of the children of God in Jesus Christ.”[22] All the faithful of the Prelature, the St Raphael people and the Cooperators should feel that they are agents of this new culture, which has to overcome today’s relativistic mentality. This challenge demands deep human, professional and doctrinal formation of everyone, according to their possibilities, and a strong presence in the forums to which they have access, with an open mentality that enables them to dialogue with everyone.

We also need a certain degree of influence, which we acquire if we take others seriously, and a personal gift of tongues, cultivated with a desire for permanent renewal. This will foster the sort of empathy which makes the Christian view of reality convincing, because it makes us aware of the existential questions of our neighbor, and keeps us from becoming strident or falling into a monologue. Respect for the dignity of every person despite their errors, and for the common good of society, plus calm, responsible
work in collaboration with other citizens, make manifest the beauty and attractiveness of Christian values in the various spheres of society.

17. If we are to understand the complexity of certain sectors of social life, we need help from experts. Some examples are: the use of digital information and communication technologies; overseeing educational initiatives; institutional communications; the administration of university projects; the management and functioning of hospitals and clinics; social development projects; setting up and sustaining trusts, endowment funds, etc. The demand for professional competence is part of our lay mentality and is in step with the desires of our priestly soul: to perfect creation and to co-redem.

To foster a new culture, it is necessary to train experts who have good criteria and, based on Christian anthropology, can help to tackle especially complex questions: gender, equality, conscientious objection, religious freedom, freedom of expression, bioethics, and the media, to mention only a few. Universities and research centers are the ideal places to study these subjects.

In addition, we should draw up a prudent, daring plan of formation suitable for each person, beginning with the youngest, to give their ideas solid foundations. We should not enclose ourselves in a merely defensive attitude, but should take on board the positive aspects of different views, dialogue with other people, learn from everyone, and respect their freedom assiduously, especially in matters open to various opinions.

18. A well-known saying of Blessed Paul VI is: “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers.” He continued, “and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.”[23] In today’s culture, we need faces that make a message credible. It is good then, to present attractive witnesses of a Christian life placed at the service of others. In addition to forming opinion-leaders, we need to encourage initiatives that spread information about the Church and, within it, the Opus Dei Prelature, including the use of social networks that can reach thousands of people immediately and effectively. The development of these initiatives depends on the generosity and creativity of those who support or run them.
19. Together with the personal apostolate of friendship and confidence, the Congress expressed its full support for the corporate and personal works of apostolate. Their apostolic fruitfulness is proved by the integral formation that they give: they instruct, they educate, and they teach people to be open to serving others. These initiatives need to be able to reach many more people and introduce them gradually to the riches of the Christian faith, which frees them from fear and from sadness. For this faith to be lived out in daily life, we need to tailor the means of formation to families, to high school and college students, etc. This requires motivating people and preparing them well.

20. For the evangelization of society and the sustained development of the apostolate, it will be useful to have new educational centers where human and Christian formation can be provided for parents and for their children from their earliest childhood. When the creation of these centers is subject to legislation that impedes or makes it difficult for them to be corporate or personal works of apostolate, it may nevertheless be possible for their beneficiaries to receive spiritual attention from priests of the Prelature.

**Importance of the family**

21. The Pope teaches in his second encyclical: “In the family we first learn how to show love and respect for life; we are taught the proper use of things, order and cleanliness, respect for the local ecosystem and care for all creatures. In the family we receive an integral education, which enables us to grow harmoniously in personal maturity.”[24] A person matures with time and by looking to the future with trust, and hence it is necessary to foster in families a deep sense of the virtue of hope.

We need to study practical ways to develop marriage preparation, to sustain the mutual love between spouses and Christian life within the family, and to foster the sacramental life of grandparents, parents and children, especially frequent confession. Christ embraces all ages of man. No one is useless or superfluous.

The Congress commended the activities of study groups focused on the educational, social and financial role of the family, with a view to shaping public opinion in favor of large families. We need to give more attention to
people who are already in contact with the various apostolic instruments (kindergartens, schools, clubs, universities and residences).

Family Enrichment work, which Don Javier encouraged so strongly, continues to be a priority, for it contributes effectively to consolidating the mutual love between spouses and their openness to life. It also helps in leading the reality of the natural family into the joy of the family as a spiritual, Christian space. With many initiatives it is reaching more and more young families and providing formation to a wide range of people. It introduces many people to the beauty of sacramental marriage, which is the image of the union of Christ with his Church (see Eph 5:32). With this sacrament the peace and joy of the Holy Spirit enters into their homes. In the mutual love of the parents, as in the liturgy and in the communion of the Church, God “loves us, he makes us see and experience his love, and since he has ‘loved us first,’ love can also blossom as a response within us.”[25]

22. The Congress pointed out an apostolic field that has gained great importance in recent years: to contribute to the growth of the faith and the formation of the many immigrants coming from countries with a Catholic tradition (for example, the Philippines, Latin America, Poland, etc.) as well as giving them human formation. Besides helping them to develop their own identity, this formation makes them a true leaven for evangelization (see Lk 13:20) in the country which receives them. Throughout the world, the several dozens of churches entrusted by Bishops to priests incardinated in the Prelature can effectively support this work, following the pastoral plans of the diocesan Ordinaries on whom they depend.

The Work is in our hands

23. It is not only the Numeraries and Associates who should be taking our apostolates forward; the Supernumeraries too should be given many responsibilities and helped to carry them out. They need to feel the Work as their own, as if it were one of their own children. Thus, as our Father once said, “all of us together will dry many tears and raise the level of many people’s lives. We will spread a lot of peace, and prevent many quarrels and conflicts. And we will bring people to look each other in the eye with Christian nobility, without hatred.”[26]
My Supernumerary children need to assist wholeheartedly in the St Raphael work, which has as its “immediate aim” to give “integral formation.”[27] It is normal and even habitual in some places that Supernumeraries organize and run clubs for young people and other educational undertakings.

As the result of well-assimilated formation, without rigidity or anxiety, when it is prudent and suitable, the Supernumeraries collaborate with God in the birth of vocations of Numeraries and Associates. Aware of this possibility, they pray particularly for their own children, while with the greatest respect for personal freedom they leave everything in God’s hands.

In St Gabriel work it is recommendable in some places to increase the number of Supernumeraries who are in charge of groups, or are coordinators, or give regular personal spiritual direction. Also we need to rely on them more to take care of retreats, and encourage them to spur forward the apostolate in places where there are not yet any Centers. It will also be good for Associates and Supernumeraries to take a more active part in the leadership groups and teams for specific apostolic initiatives. To facilitate their formation, suitable material will be made available to them in different languages.

Apostolate with youth

24. The General Congress stressed the importance of St Raphael work, “the apple of our eye.”[28]

It suggested giving priority to general and particular measures to develop the apostolate with all types of young people and, with God’s grace, foster abundant vocations of young Numeraries and Associates. All the faithful of the Prelature and members of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross will consider how they can help with prayer, mortification and action to reach many more young people.

In St Raphael work, a clear priority is forming young people to be “prayerful souls,”[29]

by teaching them in practical ways how to talk to God and how to listen to him. They should discover the human and supernatural value of true friendship, as well as the importance of study, reading, and
professional excellence so as to serve the Church and society. Among the 
virtues that should be nurtured in these young people, the Congress 
mentioned fortitude and toughness, temperance (e.g., the sober and 
intelligent use of various technologies), and everything that helps them 
develop a spirit of service. It is important to teach these young people how 
to explain their faith in their families, with their friends in the various social 
media, and to draw out the practical consequences of following our Lord.

25. It is a marvelous thing to help young people and their parents 
discover and appreciate the attractiveness of dedicating oneself totally to 
God with an undivided heart, while at the same time presenting to them 
the beauty of the vocation to form a Christian family. In the St Raphael 
Centers that do apostolate with university students, it is worthwhile 
explaining the different aspects of courtship and marriage. Helpful 
resources in this regard are the testimonies of Supernumeraries, courses of 
Family Enrichment for single people, lectures, movies and readings of 
proven value. The urgent need for the witness of a greater number of 
Christian families calls us to be there for them at the beginning of this 
vocational path, even before they are engaged, with authentic respect and 
deep faith in the evangelizing mission of the Christian family, “a 
community of faith, hope and charity.”[30]

26. Let us enthusiastically continue the apostolate with university 
students and young professionals, both single and recently married. Here 
we can build on the formation that thousands of them have received in so 
many apostolic undertakings, especially the schools, youth clubs and St 
Raphael Centers. In this regard, it is recommendable to make the alumni 
associations more professional, using initiative and creativity to develop 
ways of continuing the apostolate with these people in the context of St 
Gabriel work, and encouraging many of them to become Cooperators.

27. Following the constant teaching of the Church, the experience of 
St Josemaría and the example and words of Pope Francis, we should 
emphasize the spiritual and corporal works of mercy in the St Raphael and 
St Gabriel means of formation. Personal activities and initiatives in the area 
of solidarity, service to those in need, and social responsibility are not 
something passing or marginal, but rather are at the very heart of the 
Gospel. Gaining a deeper understanding of the Church’s social doctrine
through activities like classes and lectures will especially help in situations
where there is greater social inequality.

28. The universities that are apostolic works should continue
promoting research that has an international impact, and creating
opportunities for collaboration with intellectuals with a worldwide
reputation. This work will help to develop scientific paradigms and
conceptual models that are consistent with a Christian view of the human
person, together with a conviction that society needs these perspectives in
order to foster peace and social justice. This attitude of service to everyone
is also expressed in friendship with colleagues from other universities.

Some priorities

29. Besides beginning stable apostolic work in new countries, the
Congress suggested orienting our apostolic expansion toward some of the
places where we are already working, which, because of the international
bodies or centers of intellectual leadership found there, are very important
for the future shape of society.

For the good of the Church and souls, the Congress encouraged the
continuation of the publication and dissemination of the complete works of
St Josemaría, as well as the corresponding historical research. Specifically, it
suggested developing even more, and from different perspectives
(academic, theological, sociological, and spiritual, among others) the
central aspect of St Josemaría’s message: the work of God’s children as the
“hinge” of sanctity and the natural setting for apostolate. This is a message
with very many consequences for the Church and society.

30. Here I am coming to the end. After reading the previous pages, you
might be asking yourselves: among the many conclusions from the
Congress, what are the priorities that our Lord is presenting to us at this
historical moment of the world, the Church and the Work? The answer is
clear: in the first place, to care for our union with God with the refinement
of people in love, beginning with the contemplation of Jesus Christ, the
face of the Father’s Mercy. The program described by St Josemaría is
always valid: “May you seek Christ, may you find Christ, may you love
Christ.”[31] The apostolate of the Work is and always has to be an
overflowing of our interior life. Now is the time, my daughters and sons, to
go deeper and deeper into the paths of contemplation in the middle of the world.

31. For decades the Church has turned her maternal attention to two priorities: the family and young people. As a small part of the Church, we too want to support the efforts of the recent Popes so that families respond with greater fidelity each day to the loving plans which God has laid out for them. At the same time we should help all young people, so that their dreams of love and service become a joyful reality. This idea of accompanying the family and young people provides a guiding principle for the conclusions of the Congress, and from it we can draw out many practical consequences for our daily apostolate.

Along with these priorities, I would like to emphasize the urgency that we all feel of enlarging our hearts — we ask God to give us hearts to his measure — so that there enter into it all the needs, pains and sufferings of the men and women of our time, especially the weakest. In today’s world, poverty presents many faces: sick and elderly people treated with indifference, the loneliness felt by many abandoned people, the drama of refugees, and the destitution in which a large part of mankind lives, often as a result of injustices that cry out to Heaven. I know that all my daughters and all my sons will exercise “the creativity of charity”[32] in order to bring the balm of God’s tenderness to all our brothers and sisters who are in need. “A friend of ours used to say: ‘The poor are my best spiritual book and the main motive of my prayers. It pains me to see them, and in each one of them, Christ. And because it hurts, I realize I love him and love them.’”[33]

32. The Congress placed the conclusions that I have just transmitted to you explicitly into the hands of Our Lady. Only with her maternal mediation will we be able to move ahead in the exciting mission which has been entrusted to us as disciples of Jesus Christ. She is Mater pulchrae dilectionis, the Mother of Fair Love (see Sir 24:24), whose feast-day we celebrate today, 14th February, in the liturgical calendar of the Prelature.[34] On this day in 1930, God gave St Josemaría to see the vocation of women in Opus Dei and, in 1943, the place of priests in the Work. This underlined the unity of the Work, the
unity of a “disorganized organization,”[35] but above all the unity that is born from love, from being attentive to others, the children of her who is the “Mother of God and our Mother.”[36]

Today, when we sang the Te Deum as an act of thanksgiving before our Lord solemnly exposed in the monstrance, I thought of you. “Communion, union, conversation, confidence: word, bread, love.”[37] Considering how Jesus Christ, now hidden “in the Bread and in the Word,” will come at the end of time, I asked him to come to help us and I entrusted all of you to his mercy.

33. My daughters and sons, if in this world, so beautiful and yet so tormented, anyone at any time feels alone, let them know that the Father is praying for them and is truly accompanying them in the Communion of Saints, and that he carries them in his heart. Here I like to recall how the liturgy sings of the Presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple, the liturgical feast that we celebrated on the 2nd of this month. It seemed, the liturgy says, that Simeon was carrying Jesus in his arms; in reality, it was the other way around. Senex Puerum portabat, Puer autem senem regebat.[38] The old man carried the child, but it was the Child who sustained the old man and guided him. That is how God supports us, even though at times we can only perceive the weight of souls. That is how he sustains us, through the “holy Communion of Saints.”[39]

Per singulos dies, benedicimus te. Day after day we bless you, O Lord, with all the Church. “Every day,” as Don Javier, a faithful son of St Josemaría and Blessed Alvaro, loved to repeat. A faithful son, as I say, who was determined to struggle daily to let himself be carried by divine Love. I raise my soul to God, Thrice-Holy, hand in hand with Our Lady, Mother of the Love that gives itself without measure. Grant, O Lord, that from faith in your Love, we may live each day with a love that is always new, in joyful hope.

With all my affection, I bless you.

Your Father,

Fernando

Rome, 14 February 2017
Feast of Our Lady, Mother of Fairest Love

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[1] St. Josemaría, ChriSt. is Passing By, 132.


[9] St. Josemaría, Notes from a meditation, 1 April 1962 (AGP, Library, P09, p. 46).


[16] St. Josemaría, ChriSt. is Passing By, 30.


Blessed Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*, 8 December 1975, 41.


*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2204.


See Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Decree 626/12/L, 10 November 2012.


As we recall today the message of the universal call to holiness and apostolate, of which St Josemaría was a herald during his earthly life, our heart is filled with joy and gratitude to our Lord.

The Collect prayer from the liturgy highlights this truth proclaimed by the Second Vatican Council and, referring to St. Josemaría, adds: “Grant that by his intercession and example we may, through our daily work, be formed in the likeness of Jesus your Son.” This petition sums up our path on earth: to become more like Jesus each day, through an activity as familiar to us as work.

The light of faith widens the horizons of our work: it makes us see that man was created by God, and placed “in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it” (Gen 2:15). The earth is entrusted to mankind as a garden to be cultivated and nurtured every day, a space with enormous possibilities, which we must discover and develop for the glory of God and the service of our brothers and sisters.

The Holy Spirit is the great protagonist on this path of holiness in daily life. As St. Paul says to the Romans: “You have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: ‘Abba, Father!’” (Rom
It is a cry, a prayer, that the Holy Spirit places on our lips, and that we can repeat throughout the day, for example when we experience tiredness in our professional activities, and we have to continue working. Knowing ourselves to be God’s children encourages us to pray and to serve all men and women, and not remain indifferent to those who suffer from various situations such as unemployment or an insecure job.

The light of the Holy Spirit leads us to Jesus, who comes to meet us, as he sought out the first disciples by the Lake of Gennesaret. He enters our lives in the same way that he got into the boat of Peter and his companions. And the same boat that had witnessed a professional failure—a night spent fish when nothing had been caught—becomes the Master’s teaching chair, the place from which he reveals the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. And in that same boat a supernatural adventure begins, prefigured by the miraculous catch of fish. Christ’s presence transforms our work, our old boat, into the place where God acts. And this can be done with gestures that are simple but filled with charity: helping a colleague we find it hard to like, but who needs practical advice to finish well what he is doing; or perhaps dedicating a few minutes to someone, if we know they need to talk because their face reflects some worry.

Our Lord asks us to be instruments in his hands, to bring joy and happiness to this world that is so in need of it. He addresses to us the same invitation he made to Peter: “Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch” (Lk 5:4). The nets, this time, are cast into that work imbued with divine grace, so that it becomes a place of Christian witness, of sincere help to our colleagues and all the people we deal with. We can recall here Pope Francis’ invitation: “When your efforts to reawaken faith in your friends seem to be in vain, like the nocturnal efforts of the fishermen, remember that with Jesus everything changes. The Word of the Lord has filled the nets and the Word of the Lord makes the missionary work of his disciples effective” (Address, 22 September 2013).

The Holy Spirit, who dwells in us, will spur us, if we allow it, to put out into the deep, that is, to enter those apostolic horizons that we discover every day: in our family, in our professional environment, in our relationships with friends and acquaintances. The miracles will be repeated, as Saint Josemaría said: “When Jesus went out to sea with his disciples he
was not thinking only about the catch of fishes. And so when Peter falls down at his feet and humbly confesses: ‘Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man,’ our Lord replies: ‘Do not be afraid; henceforth you shall be a fisher of men’ (Lk 5:10). In this new task of fishing, all the power and effectiveness of God will also be at hand: the apostles are instruments for the working of great wonders, in spite. Let us ask Mary to teach us to actively assist the Church’s mission for the salvation of the world. This was the longing that St. Josemaría treasured in his heart: to place Christ at the center and root of every human activity, in union with the whole Church: omnes cum Petro ad Iesum per Mariam!

Torna ai contenuti

On the Feast of Blessed Alvaro Del Portillo, St. Eugene’s Basilica, Rome (May 12, 2017)

1. We have just prayed Psalm 23, by singing, listening and responding: “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want” (Ps 23:1). Are these words, with which the psalmist invites each of us to trust in God, truly deeply rooted in our heart? Are we convinced that we lack nothing, because he is close to us, because he is our shepherd, because he really knows and understands us? Do we at least ask that he make this conviction grow ever stronger in our own life? How much good it does us to meditate often on these verses overflowing with trust: “He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters, he restores my soul” (Ps 23:2). He, and only he, can provide our heart with the rest it needs.

2. Those of us who knew Blessed Alvaro agree on emphasizing something we immediately perceived: his peace and serenity. This was much more than merely a feature of his personality and temperament. Blessed Alvaro was able to spread peace wherever he was because he took refuge in God’s peace and strength. Don Alvaro was a good shepherd who cared for the flock of Opus Dei because he let himself be guided and protected by Jesus, the Good Shepherd who knows his sheep (see Jn 10:14). Let us ask our Lord, through Blessed Alvaro’s intercession, to help us be men and women of peace. Today, when one so often sees a lack of
peace in society, in the workplace, in family life, it is ever more urgent that we Christians be, as St. Josemaría said, “sowers of peace and joy.” Peace in the world depends, perhaps, more on our personal struggle each day to smile, to forgive others, to overlook things, than on the great negotiations carried out among States, however important these might be.

3. Even in difficult moments in the life of the world and the Church, Blessed Alvaro never lost the serenity that, together with his prudence and strength, enabled him to be a good shepherd. And thus he was, for many people, a sure guide and true Father. We can apply to him the words with which Saint Josemaría once opened his heart to a group of faithful of Opus Dei: “Your worries, your sorrows, your concerns are for me a continuous call. I would like, with this my heart of a father and a mother, to take everything on my own shoulders.”[1]

That is how Don Alvaro lived, with the attitude of which the prophet speaks in the words we just heard: “As a shepherd seeks out his flock when some of his sheep have been scattered abroad, so I will seek out my sheep and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of thick clouds and darkness” (Ezek 34:12).

The many manifestations of his pastoral charity are attested to by a wide variety of people. Everyone found a place in his heart. Everyone received his attention, for he refused to give in to the physical limitations caused by tiredness, illness, or age. The decree recognizing Blessed Alvaro’s heroic virtues points to fidelity as the common thread of his virtues: “Undisputed fidelity, above all, to God in the prompt and generous fulfillment of his will; fidelity to the Church and to the Pope; fidelity to the priesthood; fidelity to the Christian vocation at each moment and in each circumstance of his life.”[2]

4. Jesus expects us to follow him faithfully: faithful to the Christian vocation, to our commitment to grow progressively in identification with Jesus Christ, amid the activities of our ordinary life. He wants us to do so with the strength we receive through listening to the Word of God, through prayer and the reception of the sacraments, especially Penance and the Eucharist. We have to make known to many people the truth that God loves them, that Christ gave his life on the Cross for them —for each one.
As Pope Francis said: “The joy of the encounter with him and with his call does not lead to shutting oneself in but to opening oneself; it leads to service in the Church.”[3]

In January 1989, during a pilgrimage to Fatima, Blessed Alvaro addressed a prayer to our Lady out loud: “I know that you always hear us, but still we have come from Rome to tell you what you already know: that we love you, but want to love you more. Help us to serve the Church as she wants to be served: with our whole heart, with complete self-giving, with loyalty and faithfulness.” We ask you, Blessed Alvaro, to obtain for us from our Lord this grace: to serve the Church out of love for God, each one from his or her own place in the world, with the commitments, projects and difficulties this entails.

I wanted to read you these words of Blessed Alvaro today, on the eve of the centennial of the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima. The Holy Father has traveled to that place so loved by all Catholics. We too can go to the Cova da Iria in this Holy Mass. And during the month of May, especially dedicated to Mary, let us also do so with the Rosary, the favorite prayer of our Lady. While we accompany Pope Francis on this trip, we can tell our Mother the same words the Pope addressed to her in the consecration to our Lady of Fatima, in October 2013: “Hold our life in your arms: bless and strengthen every desire for good; revive and nourish faith; sustain and enlighten hope; awaken and animate charity; guide all of us along the path of holiness.”[4]

Amen.


“Surrexit Dominus vere, alleluia!” The Lord has truly risen, alleluia! This is the cry, full of joy, that the Church raises to Heaven on this holy night. “Life has overcome death,” says Saint Josemaria (Holy Rosary, no. 11). Just as yesterday we saw our Lord die for each one of us, his glorious resurrection is also for each one of us. Victorious over the devil, over sin and death, he wants all men and women to share in his victory.

And to whom is this joyful message entrusted first of all? Not to the Apostles, who had fled—except for Saint John—during the Passion, leaving Jesus alone; but to that group of faithful women who, even after his death, continue loving him with all their heart. We have heard this in the Gospel. After finding the empty tomb, an angel of the Lord tells them: “Do not be afraid; for I know that you seek Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here because he has risen as he said” (Mt 28:4-5). They are asked to communicate this news to the others, and thus they become “apostles of apostles.”

We have received the same mission. During these days in Rome, it has resounded with new strength in our ears. Even humanly it is an exciting adventure. A mission that will become a reality with the power of the Holy Spirit and with our apostolic zeal. Everywhere there are so many young people, and also older people, who have never heard this message. They have to hear it from our lips, and see it reflected in our behavior.

Christ’s Resurrection is an event documented in history. And at the same time, it is an object of our faith. As we recalled during the past few days when contemplating our Lord’s passion and death, each time that Mass is celebrated the sacrifice of the Cross is truly renewed, and the living Christ, the risen Christ truly becomes present. This is the divine way,
which only God’s wisdom and omnipotence can bring about, by which each generation of Christians, until the end of time, can come into direct contact with the mystery of redemption.

How does this happen? Thanks to the sacrament of Baptism. This is what Saint Paul teaches in the letter to the Romans, as we have just heard: “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” (Rom 6:3-4).

We have to preserve and strengthen, by successive conversions, this new life, which is a sharing in God’s life. Today we are presented with the opportunity to reaffirm our decision to follow Jesus, by renewing our baptismal promises. These were made for us by our parents and godparents; or perhaps by ourselves, if we joined the Church as adults. Now our Lord waits to hear our firm, determined, generous promise to be faithful. When, in responding to the celebrant’s questions, you say that you are ready to renounce Satan and all his works and seductions, and that you believe in God the Father almighty, and in his Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit, and in the Catholic Church, do not say it just with your lips. Let the answer come from your heart! Let each and every one of us consider, when doing so, what it means specifically for me, here and now, to renounce sin and to give myself to God. Let it be a sincere answer.

[given in French]

It is not enough to strive personally to be good sons and daughters of God. We are all responsible for the Church’s mission, we all have to do apostolate. This is not a task for specialists. It is a divine task that now has been entrusted to us, as twenty centuries ago it was entrusted to the holy women and the first disciples.

How will we do this? With prayer. With good example. With words said in confidence to that friend, to that classmate or co-worker, who may be a good person but doesn’t practice her faith, because she is lukewarm, because she is disoriented or has followed a mistaken path, or simply because perhaps nobody has talked to her about Christ’s immense love for her.
We have the responsibility to transmit the knowledge of the faith and of God’s love to the people with whom we are in contact. It is the invitation that Jesus is directing to us now, as he did to the apostles: “Duc in altum!”—we have to put out into the deep. Those who are calculating, who are cowards or tepid can’t draw close to our Lord; but those who are sinners—as we all are—can, if they sincerely desire to leave behind their mediocrity, their lukewarmness, in order to be true apostles of our Lord.

[given in Italian]

Walk in a new life. As we conclude these days in Rome, let us ask our Lady, our Mother, to help us take this resolution seriously. Many of you can apply to yourselves in a special way some words of St. John Paul II, because you belong to the “millennial generation,” to the generation of this millennium. As the Holy Father said, when preparing the Church for the year 2000: “A new millennium is opening before the Church like a vast ocean upon which we shall venture, relying on the help of Christ. The Son of God, who became incarnate two thousand years ago out of love for humanity, is at work even today: we need discerning eyes to see this and, above all, a generous heart to become the instruments of his work” (Novo millennio ineunte, no. 58).

When many years have gone by, and future generations think about the time we are now living in, they will be able to count us among the faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, if we really take our Christian vocation seriously. What a marvelous adventure! We have at our disposal the means to go forward in our resolutions: prayer, the sacrament of Penance, the Eucharist. Christ is alive. Not only does he make himself present on the altar during Mass, but he waits for us in the Tabernacle and reaches us with his all-powerful love in every circumstance. Let us go to the Tabernacle—physically if we can, and frequently with our heart—to thank him and ask him to increase our faith, our hope, our charity. Let us go, led by the hand of our Lady, Mother of God and our Mother, because as Saint Josemaría writes in The Way (no. 495): “To Jesus we always go, and to him we always return, through Mary.” Amen.

Torna ai contenuti
At the Good Friday Services, Prelatic Church of Our Lady Of Peace, Rome (April 14, 2017)

[This section was given in French]

We have just listened to the narration of Christ’s Passion and Death. Just before this, we heard the prophecy of Isaiah (see Is 52:13 to 53:12), who several centuries earlier had predicted these events. Isaiah describes for us the “Servant of Yahweh,” that is, Jesus, weighed down with the sins of mankind, dying to expiate our faults.

Jesus’ incarnation and birth, his life, passion, death, resurrection and ascension into heaven, are historical realities that the liturgy makes newly present and current. God’s power transcends the limits of history. Today, on Good Friday, in the liturgical action that we are celebrating, these events become somehow contemporary for each one of us.

[given in Spanish]

Let us look closely at Christ, not as mere spectators. On Golgotha, the disciples and the holy women did not understand what was happening; they would only come to understand it later. Only Lady, amid her tremendous suffering, knew the meaning of that death. We know its meaning and its redeeming effectiveness by faith. Let us each place ourselves in front of the crucified Jesus. Saint Josemaría was deeply stirred by the figure of Christ, still alive, nailed to the Cross, who looks at us as he looked at Saint John and who speaks to us as he spoke to the repentant thief.

Now too he wants us to repent of our missteps, to decide to be faithful disciples of his. We can consider, as directed to ourselves, to each one of us, the words that Saint Josemaría puts on Jesus’ lips in his book The Way of the Cross: “I suffering, and you... a coward. I loving you, and you forgetting me. I begging you, and you... denying me” (Eleventh Station, no. 2). How can we respond to these words? With sorrow for our sins and, at the same time, with immense gratitude to our Lord, who gives his life for us.

[given in Italian]
We can share, distantly, the feelings of our Mother in those hours of the first Good Friday. It was not just the pain of a mother. Certainly, she would have remembered the divine promises that the archangel Gabriel had revealed at the Annunciation: her son, who was the Son of God, would reign eternally over the house of Jacob and his kingdom would have no end (see *Lk* 1:32-33). Instead she saw him there, nailed to the Cross, disfigured to the point of no longer having a human semblance, as we heard in the prophecy of Isaiah (see *Is* 52:14). Despised by the leaders of his people and by the crowd, abandoned by his disciples. But Mary understood that the divine promise was being fulfilled when our Lord suffered to save us from our sins and to give us the possibility of becoming children of God. Besides repenting for our faults and being resolved to have recourse to divine Mercy in the sacrament of Penance, we should live with a deep gratitude because the Cross of Christ is the greatest manifestation of God’s love for each one of us.

[Given in English]

Let us look once more at Calvary. Jesus has just died. At the foot of the Cross is his Mother. She was the first to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, in her Immaculate Conception, at the moment of the Incarnation, and now at the foot of the Cross, when Jesus “bowing his head, gave up his spirit” (*Jn* 19:30). Perhaps we often feel weak or fragile. At those moments we have a wonderful remedy: to go to our Lady, who is our Mother. We have just heard how Jesus gave her as Mother to Saint John, who represents us all. And mothers always know how to forget, to forgive, to encourage. Therefore, let us be very close to our Lady, contemplating these days of Christ’s Passion and Death through her eyes, feeling with her heart. Let us go to the one who is the throne of grace and of God’s glory, <i>ut misericordiam consequamur</i> (*Heb* 4:16), to obtain the mercy that the world, and each one of us, needs so much. Amen
At the Mass In Coena Domini Holy Thursday, Prelatic Church of Our Lady of Peace, Rome (April 13, 2017)

[this section given in Italian]

“Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end” (Jn 13:1). Let us go in our imagination to the Cenacle in Jerusalem, to contemplate the great proof of love our Lord gives us: the institution of the Eucharist.

Our God is always close to us. But in the Eucharist He shows Himself especially close to our heart: with his Body, with his Blood, with his Soul, with his Divinity. Jesus has loved us “to the end.” No one is excluded from this love. For each of us, the eternal Son of God has become man, like us in all things “except sin” (Heb 4:15). Moreover, he has wanted to bear the burden of the sins of all mankind, to make reparation for them and restore us to friendship with God the Father, making us children of God through the power of the Holy Spirit.

We can ask ourselves: how are we responding to this Love. On this Holy Thursday we ask our Lord to help us to grasp more deeply God’s love for each of us and the love with which we need to respond, imitating and uniting ourselves to Jesus.

[given in English]

Our response to God’s love has many manifestations. One way to show our gratitude for so much affection is to have recourse to the sacrament of Confession, in order to prepare ourselves very well to attend Mass and receive Holy Communion. Our participation in the Eucharistic Sacrifice is not simply the memory of our Lord’s self-giving for us. The Mass is much more: it is the sacramental representation of the sacrifice of Calvary, anticipated in the Last Supper. “Do this in memory of me” (Lk 22:19), our Lord said when He instituted the sacrament.

The Church, faithful to his command, makes present Christ’s Passion and Death, through her priests, in each Eucharistic celebration. Saint John
Paul II wrote that the sacrifice of the Cross “is so decisive for the salvation of the human race that Jesus Christ offered it and returned to the Father only after he had left us a means of sharing in it as if we had been present there” (Encyclical Ecclesia de Eucharistia, no. 11).

Thank you, Lord, for the Eucharist. And thank you for faith, for our faith, in the Eucharist. Thank you for the priest, who has perpetuated this love of yours in time. “God’s love for his creatures is so boundless and our response to it should be so great that time ought to stand still when Holy Mass is being said” (Saint Josemaría, The Forge, no. 436).

From the Cross, from the Eucharist, stems the force of the Redemption. There we find the source of all grace, the model of the love with which we have to love one another, the root of apostolic effectiveness. At the Last Supper Jesus gave this express command: “that you love one another as I have loved you” (Jn 15:12). And in order to engrave it deeply on the memory of his disciples and each one of us, he washed the apostles’ feet.

Saint John in his first epistle writes: “By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (I Jn 3:16). How can we do this? There are many ways to put in practice the new commandment of our Lord. Saint Josemaría offers us this advice: “Charity consists not so much in giving as in understanding” (The Way, no. 463).

Forgiving, excusing, sincere interest in others, small details of service in daily life—in one’s family, at the university, at work, when resting, etc.—are so many opportunities to make present and a part of our life our Lord’s commandment.

During the Last Supper, Jesus asked the Father for the unity of those who would be called to be his disciples down through the centuries. “That they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (Jn 17:21).
We will imitate God’s example if we strive to strengthen the unity among us, in the Church, and in so far as we can, among believers. Our Christian vocation, when fully lived, brings our friends and colleagues closer to Jesus, whether they know Him already or not.

“As thou, Father, art in me” (*Jn* 17:21). Sharing in the union among the Persons of the Blessed Trinity: this is a very high goal. But our Lord grants us this participation in an eminent way through the gift of the Eucharist, the sacrament of faith and love. May our Lady, Mother of Fair Love, obtain for us through her maternal mediation the grace of a more intense faith in God’s love for us and a greater charity towards those around us. Amen.

Torna ai contenuti

**Articles and Interviews**

**Interview Granted to the IESE Alumni Magazine Spain (no. 145)**

— *How do you approach this leadership role?*

— Jesus Christ, our Lord and Master, said that he had come not to be served, but to serve. Service is — or should be — the mission of all governance and leadership. In my case, this is obviously about serving the Church and the Pope, leading this group of God’s people, the prelature of Opus Dei. For members of Opus Dei, my mission is to ensure they receive the necessary Christian education and pastoral care, and to enable them to sanctify themselves and contribute to the evangelization of society, each person in his or her own place and situation. This also means giving encouragement and light, in both spoken and written word.

And, knowing that it is God who sanctifies, I carry out my work knowing that I have help from Heaven above. So, from the start, I have
asked the faithful of the prelature and the cooperators to support me with their prayers. I now ask this of the people of the IESE community.

— *What criteria do you consider to determine what is urgent and important, and how do you approach leading an organization in which cultural differences coalesce with a common goal?*

— Saint Josemaría, the founder of Opus Dei — and the founder and first Chancellor of University of Navarra — warned of the danger of neglecting the important matters while focusing on urgent matters. He always said — and led by example — that we must carefully review matters, taking as much time as needed for each one: nothing less and nothing more. Hastiness does not equal diligence, just as procrastination does not equal prudence. To prevent nervousness and haste, which can easily lead a person to decide before having all the relevant information, he used to say: urgent matters can wait, very urgent matters must wait. Moving at the right speed, being agile — this is the result of an intensive, continuous effort, and following up on decisions, to handle each stage without letting things drag out.

All these conditions of good executive leadership are easier to achieve if the governance is collegial, as established in Opus Dei, by prudent provision of the founder. Decision-making and agility improve when multiple people review a given matter. Diligence is not about sidestepping someone who needs to give their opinion; it’s about not becoming stagnant, as Saint Josemaría said. In other words, not holding things up, but examining them and processing them so others may also see and everyone can contribute to the joint decision.

Working that way makes it easier to assess what is important and urgent. A basic guideline here, I think, is that the most important thing is whatever affects people most directly. Organizational matters are obviously important; but these are secondary: people come first. And for a consistent Christian, who has received and values the tremendous gift of faith, that priority service to people is also service to God.

As for how to get cultural diversity to coalesce with a common goal in the prelature of Opus Dei, the key is to encourage freedom. The primary mission of Opus Dei is to help its members to each act freely and
responsibly, in the appropriate place and situation, while striving to embody their Christian faith in what they do. Nobody in Opus Dei will tell them what solution to implement on professional, social or political matters: they must decide conscientiously, based of course on their professional background and their own personal way of being and thinking. The resulting diversity is not chaotic at all: harmony arises from that plurality of voices, where each one contributes to the collective symphony, and to the work of evangelization. It is essentially the same “Catholic” unity as seen in the Church, the common home for all peoples.

— And those who seek to be better people and achieve excellence through their work in business administration, how should they assimilate a daily life as such?

— I am not proposing any specific solution, nor could I. But I will offer some general ideas that, if applied by individuals in their own way, perhaps might be of some use. We all know that executives tend to be under pressure, due to the volume and difficulty of their work, and above all the responsibility that weighs down on them.

First off, I feel it is important for them to share the burden, especially with their immediate peers, and know how to delegate. If you show confidence in people, giving them responsibilities and latitude in their own initiatives, they usually react well, taking ownership of their work and identifying with the collective project.

Secondly, I would advise believers to unload that burden on to God, our Father. A good professional and good Christian works as hard and as well as they can. But they also understand that not everything is within their control and leave what they cannot control in God’s hands. Jesus taught us that God is a loving Father who takes care of the birds of the air and the lilies of the field, and his children far more still. If we face every day with practical and real faith in divine providence, which governs everything for our good — although at times we may not understand it — we shall grow as people in our work and we will do a better job, free from burdens that bring harm and inefficiency. In this respect, it is also important to allow for rest: for ourselves and those working with us. Balancing the demands of our obligations and regaining strength enables us to continue to satisfy them with renewed vigor.
— How can we integrate mercy — which Pope Francis so often speaks of — with the demands of a market that often seems to have no soul? How can we help promote a more social economy?

— How to manifest mercy in the realm of business? Mercy itself will guide us, if we let it come in and shape our life. Pope Francis teaches that mercy is creative; in his closing letter from the Jubilee last year, he encourages us to unleash the “creativity of mercy,” which brings about new undertakings. Mercy is not just for special occasions. It is a permanent attitude of feeling the miseries of others in our own heart, to suffer as if they were our own and seek to alleviate them. With this deeply rooted inclination, Christians who work in the commercial sector, finance, industry, and so on, can help “give a heart and soul” to the market — and all social institutions. In other words, operating in the market with an awareness that interactions involve people, striving to be equitable and meet the needs of others. That in itself contributes, albeit through small contributions, to making the economy more social; I know that IESE encourages this in its management education. IESE also can contribute meaningful studies and proposals, so that business practices and economic and labor policy move in that direction.

In addition, we must practice mercy as a free gift, to help make up for the material and spiritual shortcomings that the market cannot or has not remedied. Many entrepreneurs engage in assistance and human development initiatives, which exemplify the creativity of mercy.

— How does one prevent the desire for success from overshadowing the desire to help others?

— The two are not incompatible, if they come from the same impulse and seek the same outcome. The sanctification of work — a core aspect in the spirit of Opus Dei — materializes by doing good work, with competency and a supernatural motivation. In our work, if we seek to love God and our neighbor, all other intentions become unified, and the activity itself is sanctified. Thus, there is no opposition between success and solidarity. An executive who wants to be a good Christian seeks success to pursue their professional goals while, at the same time, helping others. The two desires are mutually reinforcing.
— Specifically, how can we introduce a more humanistic view of interpersonal relationships at work?

— I’m sure this is something that IESE does constantly, by emphasizing that a company is a community of people and showing how this reality should be reflected in management styles. In turn, those trained at IESE extend that vision and derived practices in countless ways, by inventively applying what they learned to their various professional situations, and always paying particular attention to those most in need.

— What criteria do you think men and women should take into account to address this challenge? What challenges do these changes pose for families, as having two salaries is increasingly necessary?

— It is not only because households need two incomes, but also because a mother with a family can have a career as well. It is a shame to face this dilemma of choosing between family and career. In fact, this issue often arises for men also. Of course, if women can and want to, they may stop working outside the home to focus on caring for their children, particularly when the children are very young. This decision is sometimes necessary and, in any event, worthy of applause. Moreover, many women combine family care with other work, as increasingly more men are doing by reducing their working hours to spend more time with the family. Balancing work and family life is one of the most important issues facing society today in many countries. I know that at IESE you pay close attention to this, and I trust you will continue to help find solutions.

But I would like to emphasize one vital aspect. When mothers and fathers take care of their household and educate their children, with such love and sacrifice, in the face of countless difficulties, even if it does not always go so well or things don’t turn out how they would like, they are doing something wonderful. They are giving the biggest gifts of all: the education and happiness of other human beings. They deserve the gratitude of society, as they are making an irreplaceable contribution to the common good. And, above all, God looks upon them with delight. Saint Josemaría used to remind entrepreneurs that the best and primary “business” they have is their family.
— *What values would you say distinguish an ethical company both in good times and bad, when it must make unpleasant adjustments?*

— Any business leader could answer that question better than I can. I believe it is important to consider that situations sometimes involve great diversity and complexity.

There may be some insensitive people out there, but clearly many executives suffer anytime they are forced to cut staff when no other solution has been found to ensure the company’s continuity. They suffer because they see that those affected include individuals and families who may be at risk of long-term unemployment. They also suffer from the worrying and low morale that can spread among the employees who keep their jobs, as well as their own concerns about the future of the company and, consequently, their own families and those of others who depend on it.

That kind of reaction in tough times is a sign of an executive’s ethics: by focusing on people, which they will know to translate into company policy and practices. In good times, that same attitude leads managers to put their talents into ensuring the prosperity of the company, and not just seek short-term profits. They will take care of their human capital, for example, by investing in employee training. Their practice of focusing on people first also explains their respect for the law or the environment; that respect is part of the company’s mission, to contribute to the common good. Sometimes it is very difficult to integrate all these factors: it is a complicated decision and one that gives rise to mistakes. Ethics is neither a limitation nor an afterthought to good management; it is a vital dimension.

— *Does establishing codes of good conduct and monitoring mechanisms suffice to give a company an ethical foundation?*

— Codes can be helpful, especially if compliance is monitored. They express fundamental ethical guidelines and apply them to the various facets of the business. However, in real life, decisions are made in specific situations, and the incredibly diverse situations that arise in real life are not always covered by a code. To succeed in each situation, managers must have very firmly held ethical and professional principles. But they also need experience, tenacity, the strength to withstand the pressures to give in to
evil, and the flexibility to make adjustments. Learning these attitudes and exercising them is part of an executive’s education.

— You are, of course, familiar with the role IESE plays in the development of management schools in Africa and other emerging economies. How can we help them take greater strides in their role as educators, while respecting their cultural wealth?

— I very much appreciate the great undertaking of IESE in the transfer of knowledge to developing countries. This paves the way for having a core group of entrepreneurs and executives who are well trained and have ideals, something those nations are in such need of. And it does so in the most effective way: by training the people who in turn will train their compatriots, and starting a movement that will endure with its own momentum and a style that is consistent with the characteristics and culture of that location. It will certainly move faster, thanks to the efforts of IESE, although it may take some time for the best fruits of that labor to be reaped.

— As Chancellor of the University of Navarrra, what do you ask of IESE?

Rather than asking for something, I give thanks, to God, because there are thousands of entrepreneurs and executives to whom IESE has given comprehensive education that has helped them grow as people and as professionals. IESE is a center of excellence, humanity, social responsibility and Christian spirit that reaches many realms and locations. Thank you!

Interview granted to Jornal de Noticias, Portugal (March 26, 2017)

Interview by Rosa Ramos

— I have spoken with some of your former students. They told me that you gave your Fundamental Theology classes from memory, without needing to refer to a textbook, walking around the classroom. Is your memory that good?
— Some years have passed since then and I don’t remember many details. Certainly, although memory helps, when teaching Theology you are dealing with realities that are at the center of one’s own life, and not only information to be remembered.

— If I ask you about changes that could occur within the Prelature, is that a paradox? For sometimes people label you as conservatives, immovable, as if you were afraid of changing...

— Institutions in the Church, including Opus Dei, have before them the challenge of being completely faithful to Jesus Christ in every moment in history, through the mission that they have received. With God’s help, they strive to make Christ visible in a way that best fits their circumstances of time and place. That’s why in the Prelature, fidelity to what is essential, to the spirit and mission received, should coexist with the changes required by new circumstances, those that are seen as needed within the wide range of what is not essential. As Saint Josemaría said, over time ways of speaking and acting change, while the nucleus, the spirit needs to remain unchanged.

— How do you view your mission and its requirements?

— In first place, I see the need for full union with the Pope and with the other shepherds, which is essential for a task in the service of the Church. Naturally, I have to show fatherly concern and be close to people, above all those in Opus Dei, as they are the ones the Church has entrusted to me. I realize very well that the mission far surpasses my personal capacity, but I also know that God will help me. I also count on the assistance of my vicars and advisors, and especially on the prayer of the faithful of Opus Dei and many friends.

— You are the third successor of the founder of Opus Dei. Have there been changes in the Work since its beginning? What is the reality of Opus Dei today?

— The general mission of the Church can be summarized as bringing the Gospel to the whole world, helping people to find Jesus in the Word and in the sacraments. The Prelature of Opus Dei shares in this mission, by reminding people of the universal call to sanctity and offering Christian formation directed especially towards sanctifying ordinary life: one’s work, family life, social relations, etc. Since 1928, Opus Dei has spread to all the
continents. It has seen the variety of its faithful increase in terms of age, social conditions, nationalities; it has encouraged the start of numerous social and educational initiatives, etc. But the nucleus, the spirit and mission to which I referred, will continue to be the same, although as I mentioned before, at every moment we have to discover what this message offers to the changing challenges of society, of people, of epochs.

— What is Opus Dei’s situation in Portugal?

— The Portuguese, with their trusting and calm faith, and with their openness, have brought the message of Saint Josemaria to many nations. Portugal was the first country where the founder brought Opus Dei outside of Spain, which he did personally in 1945, encouraged by Sor Lucia. There are about 1500 faithful of the Prelature there, the majority of them married. They are ordinary Catholics and secular priests, who strive to live the Gospel at work and in all aspects of their ordinary life. The Prelature of Opus Dei offers them Christian formation through spiritual retreats, theology classes, study groups, etc., besides the pastoral care provided by priests. These activities are open to everyone and, in fact, many people take part who are not in Opus Dei. Some Portuguese who are members of Opus Dei dedicate themselves to formative projects in the area of education and the family, to which the Prelature provides pastoral assistance in a way that is publicly known.

— Do you know about Portugal’s recent legislative changes? Some people want to include the topic of abortion, which has been legal for years now, in the school curriculum. They are also debating the decriminalization of euthanasia. Portugal, a country with a long Catholic tradition, seems to be becoming less Christian, just as much in its customs as in its laws. How do you see the future of this country?

— The rapid secularization of lifestyles, people growing accustomed to living as if God did not exist, and at times as if we did not have to die, is a cultural evolution that is affecting many countries of the so-called Christian West. Portugal is no exception, in spite of being a country that so greatly loves life, and where people are loved for who they are, independently of their physical or spiritual health. I do not know the Portuguese situation in depth, but you spoke to me about issues that are present in many places. In
first place, there is a need to return to God, who is truly a good Father filled with tenderness; from Him comes the light to know the truth and the strength to do the good. The world's future, including Portugal's, depends on this. It seems to me that here Fatima is like a great magnet for the Portuguese, and a source of security and optimism.

— Europe is immersed in a humanitarian crisis, with political extremism lurking and upcoming elections. Is Opus Dei, sometimes labeled as being very conservative, in agreement with certain extreme positions?

— Opus Dei has no other position than that of the Catholic Church, and so the members enjoy the freedom of any Catholic in all questions open to discussion. But, along with this, all of us Catholics face certain challenges that are ethical before being political. Europe finds itself before the challenge of welcoming and integrating thousands of refugees forced to abandon their countries in search of a better future. For people in Opus Dei, as for all Christians, the needs and sufferings of these brothers and sisters are a constant invitation to service and prayer, since we recognize in them "the suffering body of Christ," as Pope Francis frequently reminds us.

Christian love is a concrete love that follows the model of Jesus: living continuously for the others, clothing them with dignity through works of service, accompanying them in their deepest pain and transmitting to them Christ's consolation. In the address the Pope gave at the end of 2014 in the European parliament, he offered suggestions for how to approach this dramatic situation. Hopefully those who govern will take them into account.

— What do you think of Donald Trump's decision to raise up walls and close doors to immigrants, for example? Pope Francis has often said that we should take them in as our brothers and sisters, but complex questions are at play from a security point of view. How can we achieve the difficult balance between security and freedom?

— The North American bishops are accompanying immigrants closely and share their concerns. They have also shown themselves open to collaboration with authorities, in order to exchange ideas and points of view. Attaining the right balance in specific solutions—particularly between
security and freedom—is not easy and there is certainly room for a variety of approaches. This is an important responsibility for the political authorities. Politicians, regardless of their ideas, can count on the prayers of believers, including when they don’t think the same way. I pray that in all countries there is an atmosphere of welcoming people in need. Now, in particular, this involves immigrants and refugees, regardless of race, religion or social condition.

—Recently I saw a study where Portugal appeared among the countries of Europe with the highest rate of divorce and a significant number of broken marriages. The Work insists a lot on the charism of the family, and on the family as the pillar of society and the spiritual life. Why do so many marriages fail today? What are the greatest threats for the family?

— For a man and a woman to offer themselves to each other, for their whole life, with a commitment to exclusivity and until death, to grow together and have children that are the continuity of that love, is a marvelous reality that is of concern to everyone, not just the Church. And the fact that this project shipwrecks and fails, besides wounding those involved, also has repercussions in society. Christ said that God views this union and respects it as definitive. And for Christians, marriage is a sacrament, through which God acts with his help and blessing for married people and their children.

Many people today are discouraged by the failures around them, by the strenuous rhythm of life, the lack of material means, of space and time, all of which affects families.

I think Pope Francis helps us to avoid this pessimism and to remember that marriage has to be grounded on the joy of love. I want to suggest here the attentive reading of what the Pope calls the heart of Amoris Laetitia: the fourth chapter about love in marriage, and the fifth chapter about love that becomes fruitful. There you can find practical ideas and suggestions, all very accessible, that can strengthen families.

— In your first message, you cited Christ is Passing By, saying that “every generation of Christians has to redeem and sanctify their own time...” How do you see the times in which we are called to live?

— These are times of insecurity and also of a desire for change; of
people distancing themselves from God and also longing for Him; of sadness and tiredness, but also of nostalgia for the good; of fear of conflicts, together with a great desire for peace. These are the times that we have to live in, and they are times to be open to God’s action.

— Some people in public opinion refer to Opus Dei as closed in, almost like a pressure group. When talking about Opus Dei in the public arena, frequent reference is made to money, influence, or wealth. Is Opus Dei really so influential? Does it have so much money or so many goods? Why are there so many important people in Opus Dei and from the upper classes (bankers, for example, in Portugal)? Are there more rich people than poor in the Prelature? Is that because Jesus said that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven?

— The reality is very different, and there is a lot of fiction in the collective imagination sometimes. Among those belonging to Opus Dei you can find all kinds of people: healthy and sick, young and old, poor and those better off, people with stable work, people who are retired, and many unemployed who, in countries suffering from the crisis, suffer together with all those in the same circumstances. It seems important to me to come closer to the reality, to get to know the people. Opus Dei provides a service of Christian accompaniment to everyone, which goes beyond social or economic conditions, and without interfering in the broad area of professional, artistic, political and civil decisions. At the same time, our centers and apostolic works have their doors open to anyone who wants to get to know these realities at first hand. Many people in Opus Dei together with their friends carry out social and educational projects that are at the service of many people and tend not to be newsworthy. I’ll give you an example of one that I learned about recently. Some faithful of Opus Dei in the Ivory Coast have started the Wale Medical Center that offers medical assistance and free treatment to AIDS patients, in both Yamoussoukro and Toumbokro. I ask God that these initiatives, personal or collective, do not cease to multiply, including on Portuguese soil.

— Do you agree with Saint Paul when he says that money is the root of all evil?
— Saint Paul says that love of money is the root of all evil. It is the same warning that Pope Francis gives when he speaks of the idolatry of money. The Pope, in addition to alerting us to great social injustices, also helps us to improve even in the way we give alms: looking in the eyes of the person who is asking, and letting our hands touch the hands of those who receive from us.

— In recent years, Opus Dei has received positions of influence in the Curia and in the Holy See. The University of Santa Croce has also grown significantly. How do you explain this increase in prestige and in the tasks entrusted to Opus Dei?

— There are actually very few people of Opus Dei working in the Vatican Curia. Their appointment is publicly acknowledged in the Prelature's official bulletin, Romana, where anyone can see it. These are people who have responded freely to those who have asked for their collaboration, and who will try to work with an attitude of service and of obedience to their superiors in the Curia. On the other hand, it seems to me crucial to understand that the work of administrative organisms in the Church is a service to the universal Church and not positions of prestige. In any case, I can assure you that the only thing that interests us is serving the Church as the Church wants to be served. That's what Saint Josemaría taught us and that's what we hope to be doing.

— In terms of size, can you compare Opus Dei with the Jesuits? Would you say that Opus Dei today is equally or more important than the Jesuits?

— In the Church we all want to respond to Christ’s missionary mandate, and we all collaborate in this great mission of evangelization. Each one carries this out according to his or her own charism and, even taken altogether, we are few to be helping so many people. That's why we feel united to each other, and there is no room for comparisons. The service to humanity that the Company of Jesus has provided and continues to provide is remarkable, with the dedication and self-giving of so many men who unite prayer, study and a very real service in dramatic human situations. I myself studied at a Jesuit school in Madrid as an adolescent, and I am very grateful for what I received both academically and on the level of human and spiritual formation.
— Have you seen the movie Silence? What did you think about it? If you haven't seen it yet, what have others told you about it?

— I read something about the movie, that it shows how the price for being loyal to God can be very high in some situations. Although we don't want to be tested in that way, we trust that God will help us, in every moment, so that we do not fail to do what is just and good.

— What is it like to interact with a Jesuit Pope? I know that you will respond that the Pope is Pope for the whole Church. Obviously one wouldn't doubt his infallibility. However there are Popes that one can like more than others, for one reason or another. Francis has experienced certain opposition for some positions that conservatives consider a little lax. Is there a worry in the Work that there might be doctrinal changes?

— In a good son or daughter of the Church, one should not find the kind of misgivings you describe. Furthermore, with the current Pope it is very easy to have human affection, to have friendship. Personally I am impressed by his life of prayer and his openness to every person, showing a love of predilection towards the sick. We are talking about a Pope with a great pastoral sense, and who wants an evangelizing Church. This past March 3rd, I was in a private audience with the Pope. Francis was very affectionate, grateful for and interested in the apostolic work of Opus Dei throughout the world. I often recall a motto that Saint Josemaria gave us: Omnes cum Petro, ad Iesum per Mariam: all, with Peter, to Jesus through Mary.

— What can you tell me about the topics discussed in the synod on the family: the access to the sacraments—in some cases—of divorced people who have contracted a new marriages; or certain other declarations—not very conservative—of the Holy Father about not judging homosexuals and instead welcoming them?

The Pope invites the whole Church to accompany, discern, and integrate all men and women, whatever their personal situation might be. It is a new pastoral impulse that calls for concrete responses within the continuity of the doctrine of the Magisterium. In his document on the family, while reminding people that the doctrine of the Church cannot change, the Holy Father encourages us to look for ways to help people who
want to get married, or who want to grow in their conjugal love, or those who encounter difficulties. Therefore, there is a great need for more spiritual directors and counselors to be available and well prepared.

—What do you think of the group of cardinals that wrote Pope Francis indicating a certain disagreement with aspects of his post-synodal exhortation? Do you agree that there has been, perhaps, a mistaken interpretation or erroneous explanation of some points? Which ones?

—You will understand that it is not my role to go into detail here on this topic. In any case, there is clearly a diversity of opinions on important questions, which is why we need to pray for unity.

—Does it make sense for the Church to have so many different movements? Couldn’t the diversity of movements and charisms lead to a more divided Church?

—The Church is a People, the People of God, which is made up of many peoples. It is a great and expansive house, which Christ constructs in order to welcome all people, and where everyone can find the place where they feel at home. Unity and diversity are not in opposition; the opposite of unity is division. If there is union with Christ, through Peter, there is no risk of division. Unity in diversity is what we mean by communion, which brings with it notable enrichment for the Church.

—How would you explain Opus Dei to today’s world?

—The founder, Saint Josemaria Escrivá, used to say that Opus Dei is a great catechesis. It is a very graphic image: each person in Opus Dei, with the naturalness of their Christian life and friendship, in spite of their own limitations and defects, strives to share the joy of the Gospel among their family members, friends, work colleagues, neighbors... and to build up the Church right in these professional, familiar, and social peripheries. Our world is full of wounds and is thirsting for hope. The witness of a Christian life in the most ordinary daily events can help many people to get to know and encounter Christ, and by discovering his Love, to have a deep joy in their lives.

—What expectations do you have about the visit of Pope Francis to Portugal? He has preferred to visit Fatima instead of going to the Sanctuary of
Aparecida in Brazil. What does the Prelate of Opus Dei expect of Pope Francis’ visit to Portugal in May?

The Pope’s deep and living devotion to our Lady is very moving. He will go to Fatima drawn by God through Mary. The theme of the trip is important: "With Mary, pilgrim in hope and peace." In Fatima, the little shepherds learned to passionately love God, who dazzled them. Hopefully, alongside the Pope, we can all discover or rediscover, with Mary’s maternal help, God’s immense love for each of us.

An interview Granted to Palabra, Spain (January 30, 2017)

An interview by Alfonso Riobó the director of

The early years

— You were born in 1944 in Paris to a Spanish family. Why was your family living in France?

— Because of the Spanish civil war. My father was in the military, on the Republican side. He never wanted to talk about it; but I understand that, because of his position as a commander, he had the opportunity to save people, and within the Republican army he ended up in a very risky situation. As he was not a supporter of Franco, he thought it best to head for France, and he went there by way of Catalonia. He was a military veterinarian, but he had dedicated himself primarily to animal biology research. He was not what you might consider a politician, but rather part of the army and a scientist.

— Do you remember anything from that time?

— Everything I know about this period of my life is what has been told to me. When the family left for France, I had not been born yet, nor had the seventh child in my family, the sister that precedes me (I never knew my two oldest sisters, who died when they were little, some time before I was born). The two youngest ones in the family were born in Paris. I was
born in October, just a month after the liberation by American and French troops by General Leclerc.

— *Did you talk politics at your home?*

— I don’t have any memories with regard to Paris. Once we were back in Spain, we didn’t talk much about politics: occasional brief comments (not favorable ones, although not violent either) with regard to Franco’s regime. In any case, one has to recognize that, from that period on, my father and our family led a stable life. My father was re-admitted to an official center of research, dependent on the Ministry of Agriculture in Madrid, where he worked up until his retirement.

— *What about religion? Did you receive the faith through your family?*

— I received the faith mainly through my family, above all through my mother and maternal grandmother, who lived with us. My father was a very good person, but at that time he was quite distanced from religion. With time he would came back to religious practice, and he even became a supernumerary member of Opus Dei. But yes, it was in my family’s home that I learned the basics of Christian piety.

— *From Paris, the family returned to Spain.*

— I was only three years old then, so I only have a vague memory of this, a hazy image in my memory of a train ride from Paris to Madrid.

— *Where did you attend primary school?*

— At Areneros, a Jesuit school. I studied there up until it was time for university. It was a good school, with serious discipline. In contrast with what I have heard about other schools at the time, I never saw any Jesuit hit a child in the eight years that I was there. My schooling is something for which I am very grateful. I remember most of my teachers, above all those I had in the final years; for example, in my last year we had a math professor, a layman and father of a family, whose last name was Castillo Olivares. He was a really outstanding person who we all admired a lot.

**Encounter with Opus Dei**

— *You studied Physical Sciences in Barcelona. Why did you move there?*
— Actually, I did my first year of university in Madrid. It was the “selective” which introduced us to all the engineering and science faculties. There were only five courses, common to all of these fields: mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, and geology. There were many people in our year; a large number of groups, each with over one hundred students.

That first year I had don Francisco Botella [professor, priest and one of the first members of Opus Dei] as one of my math teachers. When he found out later on that I was in Opus Dei, and that I was thinking of studying Physics, he told me, “Why do you want to study Physics? Why not study Mathematics? If you want to make money, become an engineer; but if you are actually interested in the sciences, don’t you want to study Math?”

When I went to Barcelona, I was already a member of Opus Dei. I lived in the Monterols student residence, where I combined my studies in Physics with the theological and spiritual formation received by those who join the Work.

— When did you meet Opus Dei?

— Through conversations between my older siblings and my parents, I had heard the expression “Opus Dei” from a young age. Although I had no idea what it was, the words were familiar to me.

When I was in my last year of high school, I went to a center of the Work that was at number 1, Padilla Street, on the corner with Serrano Street (that’s why the center was called “Serrano,” but it doesn’t exist anymore). I liked the atmosphere there as well as what was being said, but at school we already had spiritual activities, and so I didn’t really see the need for it. I also went once to play soccer with the guys from “Serrano.”

Later on, after high school and before starting the university, in the summer of 1961, my older brother, who worked as a naval engineer at a shipyard in Cadiz (Spain), invited me to spend some weeks with his family. There was an Opus Dei center close to his house, to which I started going. The director there was a marine and an engineer, and he encouraged me to make good use of my time. He even gave me a Chemistry book to study, something that I would have never thought to do in the summer! There you could pray, study, hang-out, and, between one thing and another, I began
to assimilate the spirit of Opus Dei.

Eventually, they spoke to me about the possibility of having a vocation to the Work. I reacted the way many people do, saying, “No. In any case, maybe like my brother, who is a father of a family.” I mulled it over until I finally made up my mind. I remember the exact moment: I was listening to one of Beethoven’s symphonies. Naturally, it’s not that my decision was caused by the symphony, but that the two things coincided: the fact that I was listening to Beethoven when I decided, after having thought and prayed about it a lot. A few days later, I returned to Madrid.

— *Does this mean you like music?*

— Yes.

— *Who is your favorite composer?*

— Beethoven perhaps. I also like others: Vivaldi, Mozart…, but if I had to pick one, I think I’d stick with Beethoven. The truth is that for a number of years I haven’t listened to music very often. I don’t follow a specific plan.

— *Do you mind describing that decision of dedication to God?*

— There wasn’t an exact moment of “encounter” with God. It was a natural, gradual thing, starting from when I was young and I was taught to pray. In a progressive way, I began to grow closer to God in school; there we had the opportunity to receive communion daily, and I think this helped make the subsequent decision to join the Work a relatively quick thing. I asked for admission to the Work just a month before my 17\(^{th}\) birthday, which means I formally joined at 18.

— *What can you tell us about those years in Barcelona?*

— I lived in Barcelona for five years, two as a resident in the center of studies I mentioned earlier and three as part of the staff of the same residence. During those years, I studied the final four years of my degree, and then stayed on an extra year giving lectures as an assistant in the same Faculty. All my memories of Barcelona are wonderful: of friendship, studying… a special memory for me are the visits that we would make to the poor and the sick, something traditionally done in the Work. Many of
us who went, university students at the time, realized that coming in contact with poverty or suffering helped put our own problems in perspective.

— *When did you meet Saint Josemaría Escrivá? What was that like?*

— It was August 23, 1963. We were in Pamplona, in the Belagua Residence, during a formative activity in the summer. We had a very long get-together with him, at least an hour and a half. He made an awesome impression on me. I remember that afterwards a number of us there remarked that we wished we could see the Father (that’s how we called the Founder) much more often.

His sympathy and naturalness were noteworthy; he was not a solemn person, but very spontaneous and had a great sense of humor, often telling stories, anecdotes; and at the same time, he said things that were very deep. It was a wonderful combination: he said profound things in a simple way.

I got to see him again shortly after, a month later I think. I went to spend some days in Madrid, and it turned out that the Father was in Molinoviejo, so we went to see him from various places.

On none of these occasions was I able to speak with him personally. But later on, here in Rome, I got the chance to, many times.

**Fifty years in Rome**

— *You moved to Rome in 1967…*

— I came to do studies in theology, and I also managed to get a scholarship from the Italian government to do research in Physics during the academic course of 1967-1968, at the Sapienza. In the end, I didn’t manage to do that much research, only the minimum required by the scholarship. When I came, the idea of pursuing an academic career in Theology was not exactly on my mind. Things just followed their course. But I didn’t have that as a plan.

— *You were ordained a priest in 1971.*

— Yes. I was ordained on August 15, 1971, in the basilica of Saint Michael, in Madrid. The bishop who ordained us was Don Marcelo
González Martín, the bishop of Barcelona at that time, shortly before he was moved to Toledo.

We jokingly claimed that there were four Frenchmen in our promotion: two were “fully” French, Franck Touzet y Jean-Paul Savignac; and then there was Agustín Romero, a Spaniard who had lived in France for many years; and lastly myself, who was born in Paris and had lived there for three years.

I cannot say that I had always felt a call to the priesthood. When I came to Rome, I made known my openness to the possibility from the very beginning, and later on I told Saint Josemaría more explicitly: “Father, I am open to being ordained.” He took me by the arm, and told me, among other things, more or less: “You give me a lot of joy, my son; but when the moment comes, you should do it with complete freedom.” I think that conversation took place in the Galleria della Campana, at the end of one of the many get-togethers we had with him.

— Did you receive any pastoral assignment in Spain, following the ordination?

— No. Three days after the ordination, I celebrated the first solemn Mass in the Basilica of Saint Michael, and then immediately came back to Rome. Here I had previously helped out in apostolic activities with the youth in Orsini, at that time a center for university students, giving classes of Christian formation and participating in other activities.

Once a priest, here in Rome I helped for a number of years in the parish in Tiburtino (San Giovanni Battista in Collatino), and then in Sant’Eugenio. I also provided priestly attention to a number of centers of the Work, both women’s and men’s; and I also worked here in the offices in the Opus Dei’s central see. In short, a normal trajectory.

— It’s known that you like tennis. When did you take that up?

— I began with tennis early on, in Barcelona. An Italian named Giorgio Carimati, now an elderly priest, taught me a lot — at that time he played really well, almost at a professional level. But I have been on and off with tennis, because I injured my right elbow and at times I would do more
cycling. Now I try to practice tennis; I try to play every week. But it is not always possible, and depends on the weather, work, etc.

— *Do you play “real” games? To win?*

— Of course. In terms of winning, it depends on who I play against.

— *Do you like to read?*

— Yes, but there isn’t always time… I don’t have a favorite author. I like to read classics. For lack of time, it has taken me years to finish longer books; a while back now, it took me a year to get through War and Peace. I have had to read many things in Theology, because I have taught it until 1994, and also for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith I have to study theological topics.

— *In theology, you have studied aspects central to the spirit of Opus Dei such as divine filiation. Do you see deepening these reflections as critical?*

— A lot has been done in this area. It needs to continue, and it will always need to continue. The spirit of Opus Dei is, as the philosopher and theologian Cornelio Fabro said, “the Gospel with no additives.” It is the Gospel placed in ordinary life; and one can always go deeper.

In this sense, we are not in a new period now, because really a lot has been done. It’s enough to read, for example, the three volumes by Ernst Burkhart and Javier Lopez, under the title *Daily Life and Holiness*.

— *In an article published in this same magazine, when describing Bishop Javier Echevarría, you used the expression “dynamic fidelity.” In what sense did you mean that?*

— The expression “dynamic fidelity” is nothing original. It’s something that Saint Josemaría expressly confirmed: the ways of speaking and doing change, although the nucleus and the spirit remain untouchable. So this is not something new for today. One thing is the spirit, and another is the material aspect of the functioning of the accidental aspects, and these are things that can change with the times.

Fidelity is not just mechanical repetition; it is applying the same essence to different circumstances. Many times it is good to maintain the accidental aspects also, and at other times, change them. From there comes
the importance of discerning, above all in order to know what is the boundary between the accidental and the essential.

— *What role did you play in the beginnings of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross?*

— I had nothing to do with the juridical or the institutional aspects. I was just one of the first professors. I had been a professor at the Roman College of the Holy Cross for many years, in connection with the University of Navarre, and from 1980 to 1984 I gave classes at the Pontifical University Urbaniana; as I had enough publications, the competent authority of the Holy See considered my qualifications sufficient for starting out directly as an ordinary professor. There were three of us who began as ordinary professors then, under these conditions: Antonio Miralles, Miguel Ángel Tabet and myself.

— *Who have been your teachers, intellectually speaking?*

— In Philosophy, Cornelio Fabro and Carlos Cardona. In Theology, I wouldn’t be able to name one in particular. Saint Thomas Aquinas, Saint Augustine, and later on, Joseph Ratzinger, have all been big influences. But above all I would point to Saint Josemaría Escrivá himself: naturally, in a non-academic sense, because of his depth and originality. So if I had to select one for Theology, it would be him.

**Memories of three popes**

— *When did you meet Saint John Paul II?*

— In one of these large meetings with the clergy in the Vatican, at the beginning of his pontificate. Later on I saw him on many occasions, and while accompanying Bishop Javier Echevarría, I ate with him a few times, together with three or four other people.

I also had lunch with him two other times, because of my work at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

The first time, we had a meeting in the pontifical apartment with, in addition to the Pope, the Secretary of State, the Substitute, Cardinal Ratzinger as Prefect, and three consultants. After a long conversation, we all went to the dining room, and during the meal, each one of us took turns giving our opinion about the topic under discussion. Meanwhile, on this
occasion and also the second time, the Pope mainly listened. At the beginning he said some words of gratitude for our being there, then he asked Cardinal Ratzinger to lead the meeting, and at the end he gave a synthetic summary and evaluation of everything he had heard.

I think it was on the second occasion when, after listening and thanking everyone who had spoken, he put his hand to his heart and said: “But the responsibility is mine.” One could see that the matter in question particularly weighed on him.

— *And when did you meet Benedict XVI?*

— I met cardinal Ratzinger when I was named consultant for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in 1986. Later on, we crossed paths with some frequency, in small meetings. And I have gone to see him many other times for different reasons.

Do you remember any anecdotes from these encounters?

One thing that I always observed in him is that he listened a lot. He was never the one to end the interview.

I remember various anecdotes. For example, with the famous Lefebvre affaire, I was in conversations with the French bishop, if I remember correctly, in 1988. In one meeting, Cardinal Ratzinger was there (as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith), the Secretary of the Congregation, Lefebvre himself with two advisors, and one or two other consultants. Lefebvre had accepted the invitation to come, but later on he backed out. I was alone with Ratzinger for a moment when he made a heartfelt remark: “How is it they don't realize that, without the Pope, they are nothing!”

Once he was Pope, I was able to greet him a number of times, but never had a proper conversation. Since his stepping down, I have seen him on two occasions, with Bishop Echevarría when we went to see him in the place where he lives now. I noted that he was very affectionate, aged but with his mind completely lucid.

— *Speaking of the problem with the Lefebvrians, do you think it will ever be resolved?*
I have not been in touch with this question since the last theological meetings with them, some time back. But from the news I hear, it seems like a solution could be near.

_When did you first meet Pope Francis?_

I met him in Argentina when he was the auxiliary bishop of Buenos Aires. I was with Bishop Javier Echevarría. I saw him again in 2003, and by that time he was Cardinal Archbishop. The impression he gave was that he was a serious person, friendly, and in touch with people’s concerns. His face has since changed: now we see him with that continuous smile.

I have seen him various times since he was made Pope. Yesterday I received a letter from him. I had sent him a letter thanking him for my appointment, the promptness with which he had carried it out and for the image of Our Lady that he sent me that same day. And he answered my letter with another beautiful letter in which, among other things, he asks me to pray for him, as he usually does.

**Priorities**

_On your first day as Prelate, you referred to three current priorities for Opus Dei: youth, family, and people in need. Let’s start with the youth._

In the work Opus Dei does with young people we see that today’s youth — at least a good number of them — respond with generosity to great ideals, for example when taking part in activities that serve the most needy.

At the same time though, many young people seem to have a lack of hope, because of the lack of work opportunities, or because of family problems, or because of a consumerist mentality or the different addictions that cloud over these great ideals.

It is important that young people ask deep questions, which ultimately find their complete response only in the Gospel. One challenge, then, is to bring them closer to the Gospel, closer to Jesus Christ, to help them discover its attraction. There they will discover reasons for being proud of their Christianity, for living their faith with cheerfulness and serving others.
The challenge is to listen to them more, and understand them better. In this area, parents play a principal role, along with grandparents and educators. It is important to have time for the youth, to be at their side. We need to show affection and patience, and accompany them and know how to challenge them as well.

— *In your opinion, what should be the priority for families?*

— To develop what Pope Francis has called the “heart” of *Amoris Laetitia*, that is chapters 4 and 5 of the Apostolic Exhortation, about love’s foundations and its growth.

In our day and age it is especially important to rediscover the value of commitment in marriage. Living without ties of commitment might seem like a more attractive option, but that kind of attitude tends to lead to loneliness or emptiness. Meanwhile, committing oneself means using one’s freedom in favor of a great and valuable endeavor.

Moreover, for Christians the sacrament of marriage provides the necessary grace for a fruitful commitment, which is not a matter of just two people, because God is also a part of it. Therefore it is important that we help people rediscover the sacramental nature of matrimonial love, especially during the period of marriage preparation.

— *During the pastoral visits you made with Bishop Echevarría, you have gotten to know many initiatives in support of people in need. Have you seen these needs up close?*

— The world’s poverty is heart-rending. There are countries that have, on the one hand, people at a very high level, scientists, etc. and at the same time, real misery, and these two realities coexist in the great cities. In other places, you find yourself in a city that looks like Madrid or London and, a few kilometers down the road, a completely impoverished neighborhood, a whole shanty town formed around the city. The world is different in different places. But what is clear everywhere is the need to serve others, the need to make the Social Doctrine of the Church a reality.

— *In what sense are people in need a priority for the Church and, as a part of that, Opus Dei?*
They are a priority because they are at the center of the Gospel and because they are loved by Jesus Christ in a special way.

In Opus Dei there is an initial aspect that is more institutional in nature: that of the initiatives carried out by individuals within the Prelature together with others in order to respond to specific needs of the moment and of the actual place where they live, to which the Work offers spiritual assistance. Some recent examples include Laguna in Madrid, a health initiative that offers palliative care; Los Pinos, an educational center situated in a marginal area in Montevideo, which promotes social development for youth; or Iwollo Health Clinic, a medical dispensary that offers free health care to hundreds of people in rural areas in Nigeria. These and many other similar initiatives need to continue and grow because Christ's heart leads in that direction.

On another, deeper plane, there is a need to help each and every faithful of the Prelature and each person that comes in contact with its apostolates to discover that one’s Christian life is inseparable from helping those most in need. If we look around us, in our place of work, in our family, we will find plenty of occasions: older people who live alone, families that are going through economic difficulties, poor people, some unemployed for a long period of time, or sick in body or in soul, refugees… Saint Josemaría was concerned about caring for the sick, because he saw in them the suffering flesh of Christ the Redeemer. That’s why he used to refer to them as a “treasure.” These are dramas that we find in ordinary life. As Mother Theresa of Calcutta — now “Saint” — would say, “one does not have to go to India to care for and love others: it can be done right in the street where you live.”

Current society offers new challenges for evangelization, and the Pope often reminds the Church that it should always be “going out.” How does Opus Dei participate in this invitation?

The Pope is calling for a new stage of evangelization, characterized by the joy of those who, having found Jesus, put themselves “out there” in order to share this gift with their fellow men and women.

The only person who can give true joy is the one who has personal experience of Christ. If a Christian dedicates time to his or her personal
relationship with Jesus, he or she will be able to give this witness to the faith in middle of ordinary activities, and help people discover right there the joy of living the Christian message: the worker with fellow workers, an artist with other artists, the university student with fellow classmates…

We in Opus Dei — with all our defects — want to contribute to building up the Church from our own place of work, in our own family… striving to sanctify ordinary life. Many times it will mean areas of professional and social life that have yet to experience the joy of God's love and that, in this sense, are also peripheries we need to reach, one by one, shoulder to shoulder, among our peers.

— *Fostering vocations is a real concern for the Church. What would you suggest, based on your experience in Opus Dei?*

— In Opus Dei we experience the same difficulties as everyone else in the Church, and we ask Our Lord, who is “Lord of the harvest,” that he send “workers for his harvest.” Perhaps a particular challenge is that of fostering generosity among young people, helping them to understand that giving oneself to God is not just a sacrifice but also a gift — a gift that one receives and that makes one happy.

What is the solution? Something the founder of Opus Dei said comes to mind: “If we want to be more, let’s be better.” The Church's vitality does not depend so much on organizational formulas, new or old ones, but rather on a complete openness to the Gospel, that brings with it a change of life. Both Benedict XVI and Pope Francis have reminded us that it is above all the saints who build up the Church. So, if we want to see more vocations for the whole Church, let us each strive to correspond better to the grace of God, who sanctifies us.

— *Since your election you have frequently asked for prayers for the Church and for the Pope. How does one foster this unity with the Holy Father in the life of ordinary people?*

— You’re asking me for a suggestion. Everyone who has personally greeted Pope Francis, and since 2013 there have been thousands, have heard this petition: “Pray for me.” It’s not a cliché. Hopefully in the life of every Catholic there is a daily offering done out of love for the Holy Father, who has a lot of weight to carry: for example, reciting a simple prayer,
making a small sacrifice, etc. It’s not about looking for difficult things, but specific, daily things. I would also encourage parents of families to invite their children, from a young age, to pray a short prayer for the Pope daily.

Torna ai contenuti

Messages

On the occasion of The Holy Father’s Trip to Fatima (May 10, 2017)

The upcoming centennial of our Lady’s apparitions in Cova da Iria and the Pope’s pilgrimage to Fatima awaken once again in our hearts, in a special way, Saint Josemaría’s ardent desire: Omnes cum Petro ad Iesum per Mariam! Let us accompany Pope Francis with the closeness that is made possible by prayer. And let us leave in our Mother’s hands the big intentions of peace and conversion that she made known in her apparitions. Let us also entrust to her the unity of the Church and of Christians, so that—all with Peter!— we may sow peace and joy in the world. To the intercession of the soon to be saints Francisco and Jacinta we entrust all those suffering from the physical and spiritual consequences of violence, war, lack of freedom, discrimination, loneliness, poverty. Our Lady recommended the Rosary at Fatima. Let us pray it with the affection and trust of children who have recourse to their Mother’s heart.

Our prayer will be fruitful if the peace and fraternity that imbue our Lady’s messages become more present in an attentive, open and refined love for those God places at our side. Charity isn’t cold good manners. Let us meditate on it slowly: in our home, at work, in our relationships with everyone, despite our limitations and impatience, can the others recognize in us something of Mary’s maternal look?

Rome, May 10, 2017
On the Occasion Of Holy Week (April 5, 2017)

My dear children: may Jesus watch over my daughters and sons for me!

Holy Week is drawing near. Let us try to live the coming days intensely, so that we can always once again say with Saint Paul: “Mihi vivere Christus est!” For to me to live is Christ! (see Phil 1:21). For us our Lord is not just an example. I recall here some words of the Pope: “I am always struck by something Pope Benedict said, that ‘the faith is not a theory, a philosophy, an idea; it is an encounter. An encounter with Jesus.’” For us, to live is Christ. And if at times, because of weakness, exhaustion, or so many other circumstances in life, we lose sight of this reality, Jesus is always waiting for us, and even goes out to meet those who do not seek Him.

Reading the Gospel with love helps us to grow in Jesus’ friendship, “on which everything depends;” seeking him, finding him, getting to know him, loving him. When contemplating the life of our Lord, God always surprises us with new lights. Although sometimes it might seem that our reading doesn’t leave a trace, afterwards there come to our lips or our thoughts Jesus’ words, his reactions and gestures, which shed light on the ordinary or not so ordinary situations in our life. We need (and it is a gift that I ask God to grant everyone) to “breathe” with the Gospel, with the Word of God. To attain this, we have the help of so many good commentaries on Sacred Scripture, the writings of Saint Josemaría, and also many other works: lives of Christ, writings of the Fathers, etc.

The recent General Congress insisted on the “centrality” of Jesus Christ. We are eager, in this great catechesis that is the Work, to see everything focus more clearly on his Person. With this desire to put yourselves more deeply into the Gospel, when giving talks, classes, meditations, or when speaking about the Christian life with your friends, you will transmit more brightly the marvelous news of God’s love for each
person. Saint Ambrose said: “Draw out the water of Christ... Fill your soul with this water so that your land is well watered;... and once filled, you will provide water to others.”[6] I ask our Lady to teach us to keep and ponder in our heart, as she did, all that refers to Jesus (see Lk 2:19), so that we tread and help others to tread—each person where God is calling them—along paths of contemplation.

Although the letter I wrote you with the conclusions of the General Congress is still recent, perhaps you missed having a letter from the Father last month. After considering it calmly and consulting the Central Advisory and General Council, it has seemed opportune to me to communicate with you by alternating letters with briefer messages, which will reach you through the Work’s website, now that the Internet is another means for staying united.

During Easter week I will make a brief pastoral visit to Ireland: accompany me with your prayer. And don’t forget to pray for the 31 faithful of the Prelature who will receive priestly ordination on the 29th of this month. Finally, I want to thank you for the closeness you have shown me with your letters and prayers. My prayers for all of you accompany you always.

Wishing you a happy Easter, your Father blesses you with all his affection,

Rome, April 5, 2017

Fernando


Torna ai contenuti
About Saint Josemaría
Other Publishing News

Works by St. Josemaría:


*Camino*, Mexico City, Minos, 2017, 70th and 71st Mexican printings.


In addition the following homily has been published:

*Para que todos se salven*  
[That All May be Saved], Mexico City, Minos, 2017, First Mexican edition.

Books about St. Josemaría:

*Alkiddis Josemaría Escrivá*  

*Días de espera en Guerra: San Josemaría en Barcelona, otoño de 1937*  

*Święty Josemaria Escrivá. Historia pewnego marzenia*  

*Au pas de Dieu: Saint Josémaria Escrivá fondateur de l’Opus Dei*  

Torna ai contenuti

Publication of the Book Compañeros de Camino

*Compañeros de Camino* (*Companions of The Way*), by Javier Medina and
Michele Dolz, is a collection of testimonies that hundreds of readers of The Way—the first work by St. Josemaría Escrivá—have sent, moved by gratitude, to the Office for the Causes of Saints of the Prelature of Opus Dei in Rome.

Through a wide variety of personal stories, this electronic book presents decisions of conversion and personal transformation provoked by reading The Way: amid daily work, in the family, among friends, etc. This selection of true stories shows some of the ways the Holy Spirit enters into people’s hearts and changes their lives. Cuba, Korea, the Congo, and Russia are just a few of the countries from which these stories about The Way have come.

Volume 11 of Studia et Documenta

The Saint Josemaría Escrivá Historical Institute has published Volume 11 of Studia et Documenta.

This issue includes a section on the founder of Opus Dei’s trips to Latin America in the years 1974-75. Carmen-José Alejos analyzes the historical and religious context in Latin America during that period. Carlo Pioppi offers an overview of the founder’s trips to Latin America. Two articles, by Alexandre Antosz and María Eugenia Ossandón, focus specifically on St. Josemaría’s trips to Brazil and Chile.

The volume contains an article by Mercedes Montero on the publisher Minerva, an initiative carried out by the first women of Opus Dei, back in the forties. Another work of research, by Alfredo Méndiz, looks at the history and origins of Villa Tevere, the building where the central offices of Opus Dei in Rome are now located.

In addition, Fernando Crovetto gives an overview of the first steps of Opus Dei in Italy through the letters exchanged between José Orlandis and Salvador Canals, sent from Rome, and the faithful of Opus Dei in Madrid during the years 1942-43.

The section Noticiario lists the conferences and studies about Opus Dei carried out in academic circles by members of the Istituto Storico San
**Josemaría Escrivá**, as well as public presentations of the book by José Luis Gonzales Gullón on the DYA Acadamy.

Finally the reader can consult some bibliographical notes, including Josep-Ignasi Saranyana’s review of a biography of Raimon Panikkar by Maciej Bielawski.

This volume also offers analytical indexes to the first ten issues of the publication.

Torna ai contenuti

**Devotion Throughout The World**

On March 10, Bishop José Manuel Lorca Planes, of Cartagena, Spain, blessed a sculpture of the founder of Opus Dei, destined for the church of Our Lady of Grace, in the same city. The ceremony took place in the context of a Eucharistic concelebration with Fr. Jorge Nava Rodríguez, vicar of the Delegation of Opus Dei in Valencia and Murcia. The bronze, life-sized statue was the work of the artist Rebeca Muñoz Carrilero.

*Reredos for an altar in Livorno*

On March 25, a triptych was inaugurated in the church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, in the Italian community of Livorno. The central portion dedicated to Our Lady is flanked by two scenes of adoration that represent St. Josemaría and Blessed Alvaro del Portillo, together with Blessed Pio Alberto del Corona and the Venerable Giovanni Batista Quilici, priests from that locality. The work was carried out by two artists, Elisabetta Carini and Sofia Novelli, from the School of Sacred Art in Florence.

*A bas-relief in the Shrine of Sonsoles*

On June 22, Bishop Jesús García Burillo, of Avila, Spain, blessed a bas-relief in bronze of St. Josemaría installed in the Shrine of Our Lady of Sonsoles. The work of the sculptor Rebecca Muñoz, it represents the founder of Opus Dei praying before Our Lady of Sonsoles, recalling a Marian pilgrimage by St. Josemaría to that shrine on May 2, 1935.

*An organ composition for the Mass of St. Josemaría*
Miguel del Barco, professor emeritus at the Royal Conservatory of Madrid, composed a Mass for organ and four mixed voices with the texts proper to the feast of St. Josemaría and a Gregorian chant typical of the early twentieth century. It premiered on July 26 in the Basilica of St. Michael in Madrid.

Eucharistic Celebrations for the Feast of St. Josemaría

For the feast of St. Josemaría Escrivá on June 26, many Masses were celebrated on or close to this date all over the world. This article contains a brief summary of some of them.

On June 10, at the Franciscan Chapel Center in Tokyo, Archbishop Joseph Chennoth, the apostolic nuncio, celebrated a Mass with Msgr. Ramón López Mondéjar, regional vicar of Opus Dei in Japan, and the secretary of the nunciature. Archbishop Chennoth thanked those present for their involvement in various activities of evangelization that are carried out for “adults and young people, students and professionals; for Catholics, other Christians and non-Christians, for anyone who is interested in getting to know Christ.” The nuncio encouraged them to continue promoting activities that offer “spiritual, doctrinal and religious instruction” along with “human formation in virtues, and values,” so that “the whole person is formed.” “Saint Josemaría,” Archbishop Chennoth stated, “always recommended: First, prayer; then, atonement; in the third place, very much in ‘the third place,’ action (The Way, no. 82). This is not a paradox, but a perennial truth. Apostolic fruit stems, above all, from prayer and an intense and constant sacramental life. This is the secret of sanctity and of the saints’ successes.” Masses were also held in the Japanese cities of Kyoto, Osakal and Nagasaki.

On June 26, Cardinal Angelo Scola celebrated a Mass for the feast of St. Josemaría in the Cathedral of Milan, Italy. During his homily, the cardinal explained how work can become an encounter with God: “All the
faithful are called to find in their daily work a decisive means to configure themselves with Christ. Why? Because work, from the viewpoint of faith, increases freedom. Work is an opportunity to welcome the sacramental gift of Christ and to make it bear fruit amid daily circumstances and relationships. St. Josemaría knew this very well and that’s why he invited everyone to change, through love, the human work of our usual working day into the work of God: something that will last forever (*The Forge*, no. 742). It is significant that he wanted to emphasize the unity between love and work; they are, in fact, key aspects of human experience that, transfigured freely by the encounter with Christ, become an opportunity to proclaim the Gospel to all men and women,” the cardinal said.

In the Cathedral of Madrid, Cardinal Carlos Osoro presided over the Eucharistic concelebration on the feast of the founder of Opus Dei. “What an impressive challenge St. Josemaría presents us with: amid our daily work, configured with Christ, serving with burning love the work of redemption,” Archbishop Osoro said in his homily. “Let us change this land, dear brothers and sisters, and let us do so with unlimited trust in God. Remember those words of St. Josemaría. We need to truly behave like Christians, getting along with everyone, respecting the legitimate freedom of everyone, and making this world of ours more just,” the archbishop of Madrid insisted.

In Vancouver, Canada, during the celebration of the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, on June 23rd, St. Josemaría was also remembered. The main celebrant of the Eucharist was Archbishop John Michael Miller, C.S.B., archbishop of the diocese. Archbishop Miller mentioned the homily that Saint Josemaría gave back in 1966 on the feast of the Sacred Heart. The founder of Opus Dei encouraged his hearers “to ask God to give us a good heart capable of compassion for the sufferings of others; only with a heart like this will we realize that the real balm for the suffering and anguish in this world is love, charity,” the archbishop recalled. “If we want to help others we have to love them,” Archbishop Miller continued, “with a love filled with understanding, dedication, affection and voluntary humility.”

In Lebanon, on June 25, the Bishop of the Curia of the Maronite Patriarchate in Antioch, Bishop Paul Abdel Sater, celebrated a solemn
Mass in the cathedral church in Beirut, for the feast of St. Josemaría. Three hundred people attended. In his homily, Bishop Abdel Sater explained some essential aspects of the spirit of Opus Dei and expressed his gratitude for the evangelizing work that the faithful of the Prelature carry out in the country in union with the local hierarchy. At the end of the Mass the faithful had an opportunity to venerate a relic of St. Josemaría.
NEWS
New Publications of Interest


Interview with Fr. Antonio Rodríguez de Rivera, Postulator for the Cause of Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri

*Who was Guadalupe Ortiz de Landazuri?*

She was a woman of outstanding human qualities, cheerful and humble. She had great professional prestige and always led a life of helping others in their spiritual and material needs. She was a person in love with God, full of faith and hope.

She was born in Madrid, Spain, on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, 1916. She studied Chemistry in Madrid’s Central University. In her class, there were only five women. She stood out for seriousness in her studies and a ready smile. After the Spanish Civil War, she graduated and began to teach Physics and Chemistry in the “Colegio de las Irlandesas” (Loreto Nuns High School) and in the Lycee Francaise (French State High School) in Madrid.

Early in 1944 she became acquainted with Opus Dei. Her first encounter with Saint Josemaría affected her deeply. Later she would say: “I had the very clear idea that God was speaking to me through that priest.” In that same year she asked for admission in that institution of the Church. She directed several centers of Opus Dei in Madrid and Bilbao. In 1950 she moved to Mexico in order to start apostolic work with women there. This
was a great adventure for her, lived with generosity and enormous faith. Among other things, she started a center for human and professional development of peasant women in a rural part of Morelos State.

In 1956 she took up residence in Rome, Italy. There she assisted Saint Josemaría in the internal government of Opus Dei. After two years she returned to Spain for health reasons where she too up teaching and research again. She finished her doctoral thesis with the maximum grade and was awarded the Juan de la Cierva Prize. She was a pioneer of the “Centro de Estudios e Investigacion de Ciencias Domesticas” (CEICID) (Center for Studies and Research in Domestic Sciences). Later she was awarded the medal of the “Comite Intenational de la Rayonne et des Fibres Synthetique” for a research study on textile fibers.

Suffering from a heart ailment, she died in Pamplona, already with a reputation for holiness, on the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, July 16th, 1975, just 20 days after Saint Josemaría’s going to heaven. She was 59 years of age.

Why did the Church decide to open her cause for canonization?

Because those who knew her in Spain, in Mexico and in Italy, are convinced of her holiness, that is, of the exemplary character of her Christian conduct. Many others who, after her death, have heard of her heroic life, go to her intercession before God to ask for favors. What do those people who knew her, say? Here are some quotes:

“We considered her to be an extraordinary person who stood out because of her virtues.” “She left behind an unforgettable memory of holiness.”

“It was obvious that she was a daughter of God, who wished to be faithful to His will.”

“One could see she was in love with Our Lord, being full of a deep joy, which simply on getting to know her was passed on to you.” “She had an overflowing joy, habitually; just by laughing she passed on a part of Heaven to you.”

“I was struck by her intense recollection when attending Mass and receiving Communion every day, by how much she prayed and encouraged
“Her great love for the Church brought her to pray for the Holy Father every day.

She worked “closely united to Our Lord, trying to love and help those around her, and she had an apostolic drive which not even her illness could diminish.”

“I hope for her canonization because I consider her a saint and I believe that her life is an important example in today’s world.”

What does this step signify, that the Church has declared Guadalupe to be “venerable”?

With this step the Church is declaring that Guadalupe lived the virtues to a heroic degree, especially that of charity, and that therefore she is being put forward as an example of a Christian woman who has attained holiness in ordinary life. This declaration is the result of a long study of abundant material assembled by the Madrid Tribunal in a diocesan procedure: that is, the testimonies of 54 witnesses (men and women from several countries), numerous written testimonies and many other documents. These juridical proofs have been evaluated in detail first by theologian consultants and later by the cardinals and bishops of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. All have arrived at the conclusion that Guadalupe responded to divine grace in an extraordinary manner. Afterwards, Pope Francis ratified the opinion of the Congregation and has declared the heroism of the virtues and reputation for holiness of Guadalupe.

You have studied her life in depth. Personally, what impressed you most about Guadalupe?

What has most impressed me has been Guadalupe’s “forgetfulness of herself.” She thought constantly of God and other people. An example of this is what happened in Mexico in 1952. It was during a retreat for university students, in a recently constructed building, still almost without any furniture. On the second-last day, she gave a talk on the Christian virtues. She and the others were sitting on the bare floor. She felt a sharp pain from the sting from a poisonous insect, but did not want to interrupt the talk until the end, so as not to worry the participants, and none of them
realized what had happened. She got sick with a high fever and had to remain in bed for two weeks. At no stage did she complain. Moreover, from her bed she continued performing her various duties until another Opus Dei woman substituted for her. Those looking after her were witnesses to the fact that not once did she complain or speak about her illness, but rather took an interest in those who came to visit her and kept encouraging their apostolate.

She also stood out for her courage and fortitude. This was clearly manifested during the time she spent in Tetuan—because of the assignment of her father, who was in the military—in a school in which she was the only girl. With her mother and brother, on the night of 7-8 September 1936, during the Spanish civil war, she accompanied her father, who was sentenced to be executed by firing squad in the morning. It was Guadalupe who helped him, without a tear, to pray and to prepare himself for his encounter with God.

What features would you emphasize in Guadalupe’s character?

Many people who knew her underline her overflowing cheerfulness, her habitual smile. She was welcoming to everybody. She transmitted peace and confidence to peasant women and university students, to those of any social standing. Her joy was not the result of human effort, but rather of knowing that she was a daughter of God, of her closeness to Christ; that is, a gift of the Holy Spirit. As a consequence she was steady and serene. This helped her a lot in her apostolate and her service to the Church and to society.

A young university woman, who met Guadalupe a year after her arrival in Mexico, remarked: “I must admit I was very curious to meet her, because they all told me about Guadalupe’s laugh and about her constant cheerfulness.” Guadalupe’s own brother Eduardo, describing her last moments, wrote: “This was Guadalupe’s great ‘secret’: to always accept as good whatever happened to her. In those last hours of mortal anguish, all those around her were lost in admiration: that same unforgettable smile.”

If her life was relatively normal, why do you think that she can be a good model for others?

Precisely for that very reason: because her life was normal and at the same time filled with God, it is a good model for all Christians, particularly
for those who are called to sanctify the ordinary circumstances of their life in the middle of the world. In present-day society where there are some who wish to impose an ego-centric and self-referential relativism, Guadalupe’s life is a splendid invitation to open oneself out to others. Her example can encourage anyone to get over their love of comfort and to serve others. In a pessimistic environment, Guadalupe’s optimism helps others to smile. And in a society which seems to be fleeing from God, Guadalupe’s story helps us to discover that it is only with Christ that one can have a joy that is both deep and lasting.

What are the subsequent steps necessary for the beatification and canonization of Guadalupe?

The declaration on the heroic virtues is the conclusion of a deep study of Guadalupe’s life, carried out in the light of the Faith. Following this step, for beatification and canonization the Church asks for something that man cannot provide. Only God can work a miracle, granted through the intercession of Guadalupe, which would open up the path to beatification. And again, only God can work a second miracle, after the beatification, which would open the door for her canonization. We trust that the first door will be opened soon.

Is there popular devotion already? What things are people asking for from Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri?

Private devotion to Guadalupe is spreading more and more. Many people are writing to the postulators office to report graces God has granted them after invoking Guadalupe. In the last 10 years we have received accounts of favors received from Spain, Mexico, Belgium, Italy, Portugal, Lithuania, Kenya, India, Venezuela, Ecuador, Guatemala, Porto Rico, United States and Canada.

Another notable sign of her reputation for holiness is that in Zamora, in the state of Michoacan, Mexico, a primary school has been named “Colegio Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri.” This initiative was promoted by some readers of her biography who were impressed by her holiness, her professionalism and her dedication to education and the formation of young people.

People going to her intercession have received different types of graces:
cures, favors related to pregnancy and childbirth, getting employment, resolving conflicts between work and family obligations, resolution of money problems, family reconciliations, helping friends and colleagues to get close to God.

Soon the Congregation for the Causes of Saints will take up the study of the documentation of an extraordinary event attributed to Guadalupe. It concerns the curing of a basocellular carcinoma over the course of the night of the 28-29th of November, 2002. The man who was suffering the cancer, located in his right eye, invoked Guadalupe with intense faith before going to bed and, on getting up the following day, discovered that he was cured. The lesion had completely disappeared without leaving any trace. The medical experts in the Congregation will have to judge if this fact has, or does not have, a medical explanation. Afterwards, first the theologians and then later the cardinals and bishops will evaluate if it can be attributed to Guadalupe’s intercession.

Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri Declared Venerable (May 4, 2017)

On Thursday, May 4, Pope Francis authorized the Congregation for the Causes of Saints to issue decrees relating to 12 canonization causes. Included among them is the decree proclaiming the heroic virtues of Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri (1916-1975), a faithful of Opus Dei.

Upon hearing the news, the Prelate of Opus Dei, Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz, said: “As Pope Francis has been insisting, the saints are the most beautiful face of the Church. These new decrees thus are a reason for deep gratitude to God, who is the fount of all holiness. He is acting in the souls of so many women and men of our time, and he gives us these examples as light and support for our lives.”

Monsignor Ocáriz stressed that “every cause of canonization helps us to discover the love of God and the joy of the Christian path. Joy is a central feature of Guadalupe’s life. She radiated Christian joy in every area of her
life, including her professional work as a chemist, caring for domestic tasks, teaching, and in her extensive and intense apostolic work in Spain, Mexico and Italy. Guadalupe’s example reminds us that, when God calls us to holiness, even the most ordinary realities acquire a broad and beautiful horizon, and spur us to bring many people closer to the happiness of union with God.”

The Prelate concluded: “I ask God that her example may help us to follow the Christian path, spreading peace and joy to those around us.”

In an interview, the postulator of her cause, Father Antonio Rodriguez de Rivera, describes Guadalupe as “a woman in love with God, filled with faith and hope, who by her work and optimism assisted others in their spiritual and material needs. The joy that imbued everything she did was evident to all, even in more trying situations.”

Brief biography

She was born in Madrid in 1916, on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. She studied chemical sciences at the Central University in her home city, and was one of only five women in her promotion. During the Spanish civil war, she comforted her father, who was a military officer, in the hours leading up to his execution. She forgave those responsible for her father’s death from the first moment. After the war, she finished her university studies and taught physics and chemistry in the Irish School and the Liceo Francés, both in Madrid.

At the beginning of 1944, through a friend, she met the founder of Opus Dei, Saint Josemaría Escrivá, who taught her that professional work and ordinary life can be the place for encountering Christ. Later she would say: “I had the clear sensation that God was speaking to me through that priest.” That same year she joined Opus Dei.

From then on, Guadalupe committed herself unconditionally to seeking holiness and encouraging people to draw closer to God. In Madrid and later in Bilbao, she dedicated herself especially to the Christian formation of young people.

From 1950 to 1956 she was in Mexico, where she helped to begin Opus Dei’s apostolic work. It was an adventure that she undertook with
generosity and great faith. Those who knew her highlight that her priority was fulfilling God’s will and putting herself at the service of others. Moved by Guadalupe’s encouragement, some of her friends helped initiate activities of human and Christian development, including a center for the training and advancement of farm workers in a rural area in the State of Morelos.

In 1956 she moved to Rome, where she assisted Saint Josemaria in Opus Dei’s government. After two years, due to health reasons, she returned to Spain, where she took up teaching and scientific research again. She finished a doctoral thesis in chemistry with the highest marks, and was one of the pioneers in starting the Center for Studies and Research in Domestic Sciences. Later she received a medal from the International Committee of Rayonne et des Fibres Synthétiques, for a research project on textile fibers. At the same time, she continued carrying out the work of Christian formation provided by Opus Dei. All her actions reflected an eagerness to grow in love for God through her work, her friendships, and her example of joy.

After a long battle with heart disease, she died in Pamplona, with a reputation for holiness, on the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in 1975. She was 59 years old.

Ever since, private devotion to Guadalupe has continued to spread. According to the postulator, people who have prayed to her intercession have received a wide variety of favors: cures, favors relating to pregnancy and giving birth, finding work, achieving a better balance between work and family, resolving economic problems, reconciliations among family members, and friends and co-workers growing closer to God.

**Itinerary of the Canonization Cause**

The process of gathering information on the life, virtues and reputation for sanctity of Gaudalupe was opened in Madrid on 18 November 2001 and was finished on 18 March 2005. The tribunal interviewed 32 witnesses in Madrid and 22 witnesses in Mexico City.

On 17 February 2006, the Congregation for the Causes of Saints authorized the decree for the validity of the process, and on 4 August 2009, the *Positio* on the life and virtues of Guadalupe was presented.
On 7 June 2016, the congress of theological consultors gave a positive response to the question on the heroic virtues of Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri. On 2 May 2017, the ordinary session of cardinals and bishops made the same pronouncement.

On 4 May 2017, Pope Francis received from Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, a detailed account of the stages of the cause, ratified by the vote of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, and he authorized the publication of the decree declaring the servant of God Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri venerable.

Archdiocese of Guayaquil Opens the Process of Beatification for Archbishop Juan Ignacio Larrea Holguín

On June 27, the solemn opening of the canonization cause of Archbishop Juan Ignacio Larrea Holguín was held in the parish of El Sagrario, adjoining the Cathedral of Guayaquil. The ceremony was presided over by Archbishop Luis Cabrera. Also taking part were Giovanni Battista Piccioli, Auxiliary Bishop of Guayaquil, the Regional Vicar of Opus Dei in Ecuador, Rev. José Giner, who is the vice-postulator of the Cause, and Fernando Monaj, historical expert.

Archbishop Larrea Holguín was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on August 9, 1927. He had a doctorate in Law from the University of Rome and from the University of Quito, and also in Canon Law from the University of Saint Thomas in Rome. He was also a Professor of Law in the Catholic Universities of Quito and Guayaquil, and at the Central University of Quito.

In 1948 during his university studies in Rome, Juan Larrea met St. Josemaría Escrivá, the founder of Opus Dei. He was the first Ecuadorian to join, in 1949, this institution of the Catholic Church.
In 1952 he returned to Ecuador. Taking advantage of his work as a lawyer and his involvement in public life, he carried out an intense apostolate with people from every walk of life.

He was ordained a priest in 1962. In 1959, Pope Paul VI appointed him as auxiliary bishop of Quito. Later he was appointed as bishop of Ibarra, the first bishop of the Armed Forces, and as Archbishop of Guayaquil from 1989 to 2003. As a priest and later as a bishop he carried out a wide-ranging pastoral work, preaching numerous retreats, visiting the parishes in his diocese, and fostering the work of formation in the diocesan seminaries. Archbishop Larrea spread Catholic doctrine through his numerous publications (over a hundred articles and books about the Law), as well as through frequent radio broadcasts and appearances on television.

In 1996 he learned he had a cancer. With courage and a smile on his lips, he bore that long illness without interrupting his pastoral and intellectual work or his spiritual life. He strove every day to make good use of time, without wasting even a minute. His motto as bishop was *Caritas Christi urget nos* (the love of Christ urges us on), which sums up his intense life of prayer and work.

He gave up his soul to God in a holy death on August 27, 2006, in Quito. His body reposes in the Cathedral of Guayaquil.

The cause of beatification and canonization of Archbishop Larrea Holguín is being promoted by the Archdiocese of Guayaquil. In 2016 the Congregation for the Causes of Saints granted the *nihil obstat* for the investigation of the cause.

Cardinal Bertello Ordains 31 Priests of the Prelature (April 29, 2017)

On April 29, Cardinal Giuseppe Bertello conferred priestly ordination on 31 faithful of the Opus Dei Prelature. The ceremony took place in St. Eugene’s Basilica.
In his homily, Cardinal Bertello—President of the Governorate of Vatican City—reminded those present that “each priest must have the same relationship with Jesus that our Lord has with the Father: remaining united to Christ, without trying to pass on his own ideas, and always remembering that without Him he can do nothing.” “Dear ordinands,” he continued, “I am sure that your ministry will merge into the service of that supreme Word of God, Jesus Christ and his Gospel, in proclaiming the love of the Father and his mercy.”

Cardinal Bertello also reminded the new priests that “in a few moments you will be transformed into Christ. You will be his living instruments, as though your person disappeared into His, so that He may act through you.”

The Cardinal invited the new priests to be “priest-priests, priests one hundred percent, as your holy founder St. Josemaría used to say. Exercise your priesthood with deep joy and ardent faith. The brothers and sisters you will encounter in your ministry expect from you the prophetic testimony that the Eucharist is the heart of the priesthood. It doesn’t matter what type of ministry is entrusted to you; always and everywhere you are called to build up Opus Dei, the Work of God, in humility, obedience and charity.”

During his homily Cardinal Bertello thanked the Prelate of Opus Dei, Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz, for inviting him to preside over the ordinations and said that “this helps me to feel even closer to the Work, and obliges me to always accompany you with my prayer.”

The new priests had received their diaconal ordination from Msgr. Javier Echevarría, Prelate of Opus Dei, who died on December 12, 2016. These are the new priests and their countries of origin: Alejandro Pardo Fernández (Spain), Etienne Montero Redondo (Belgium), Andrés Echevarría Escribens (Peru), Giovanni Manfrini (Italy), Erwin See (the Philippines), Álvaro Ruiz Antón (Spain), Javier Ruiz Antón (Spain), Rafael Peró Baig (Lebanon), Salvador Rego Bárcena (Canada), Carlos Aníbal Valencia Ospina (Colombia), Diogo da Cunha e Lorena de Brito (Portugal), Francisco José Chapa Sancho (Spain), Luigi Vassallo (Italy), Pablo Rojo Mardones (Spain), Martin Mundia Gikonyo (Kenya), Álvaro
Diaconal Ordination Of Faithful of Opus Dei (February 25, 2017)

Bishop Juan Ignacio Arrieta, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts, conferred the diaconate on two faithful of Opus Dei on February 25 in the parish of St. Josemaría in Rome. The new deacons are Ginés José Pérez and Arturo Garralón.

Ginés José Pérez, was born in 1958, in Murcia, Spain. After obtaining a degree in education, he worked for more than 30 years in the field of teaching.

Arturo Garralón was born in 1975, in Guadalajara, Spain. He studied economics at the University of Alcalá de Henares and worked for a banking company.

In a festive atmosphere filled with gratitude, the new deacons were accompanied by many family members, friends and colleagues, as well as by the Prelate of Opus Dei, Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz.

Some Diocesan Assignments Received by Priests of the Prelature
You can read the full text of "Romana" by subscribing to the print edition.

**New Centers of the Prelature**

The vicars of the respective circumscriptions have established new centers of the Prelature in the following cities: Guadalajara, Mexico, and Monterrey, Mexico.

**Pontifical Appointments**

On January 14, the Holy Father Francis appointed Fr. José Luis Gutiérrez Martín as consultor for the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. He is also director of the Institute for Liturgy at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome.

On April 2, Pope Francis appointed Fr. José María La Porte as consultor for the Secretariat for Communication. Fr. La Porte is the Dean of the School of Social Communication at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross.

On June 13, Pope Francis appointed Msgr. Angel Rodriguez Luño as ordinary member of the Pontifical Academy for Life. Msgr. Luño is professor of Fundamental Moral Theology at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross. The Holy Father also appointed Msgr. Ignacio Carrasco de Paula as an honorary member of this Academy, of which he is president emeritus.
INITIATIVES
In Brief

Chía, Colombia

_A Ton of Aid for Mocoa_

During a week of solidarity organized by the University of La Sabana, the university community gathered over a ton of food and other necessities destined for the victims of Mocoa, a community in the southern part of Colombia, buried by an avalanche in the month of April. The commodities were given to the military authorities handling relief efforts for distribution to victims of the avalanche.

University of the Andes, Chile

_A Program for Instructors of Religion_

The University of the Andes has offered for the first time a “Program for High School Teachers of the Catholic Religion,” aimed at professionals and those with degrees in various disciplines. The purpose of the course is to form teachers in a way that responds to the concerns of young people in the twenty-first century, and to provide future religion teachers with an interdisciplinary preparation that enables them to transmit effectively the essential elements of the faith.

Kitui, Kenya

_A Work Camp_

Students from Kianda High School dedicated their Easter vacation—April 18 to 22—to assisting a rural school in Kitui, a village about 120 miles east of Nairobi. The girls taking part gave classes to the primary school pupils. In Nairobi they had previously obtained books to donate to the school and collected food donations for the local people.

Lisbon, Portugal

_A Conference for Cooperators_

On April 22, a conference for cooperators of Opus Dei was held in Lisbon. News about activities carried out by faithful of the Prelature all over the world was presented, and a study session was held on the guidelines for the work of evangelization that were proposed by the
General Congress of Opus Dei, held in Rome the previous January. Mass was also said for deceased cooperators and for the intentions of those taking part.

Rome

Music of Mozart

On Saturday April 8, in the church of Sant’Andrea della Valle in Rome, the Aventino Chorus and the Roma in Canto orchestra interpreted pieces by Mozart to support a project at Centro Elis to assist young people living in difficult circumstances. The project seeks to provide after school activities for immigrant students from the Tiburtino district, boys who live in shelters, and children and teenagers from the poor neighborhoods surrounding Rome. The program is completely free, and offers activities every day, between three and six in the afternoon.

Ibiúna, São Paulo, Brazil

Digital Communication and Public Opinion

In January, a group of Brazilian university students gathered at the Sitio de Ibiúna Conference Center to consider the challenges faced by the communications media in the digital age. Among the speakers were Alexandre Gonçalves, a journalist from the Columbia Journalism School, who spoke about the impact of social media on public opinion. The journalist and writer Marcelo Cavallari, who works for one of the major daily newspapers in Brazil, spoke about forms of journalism existing before and after the advent of the digital era. The conference also included debates on recent movies and documentaries related to the world of communication.

Las Condes, Chile

Visit of Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Jerusalem

The Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Jerusalem, Atalla Hanna, gave a conference at the University of the Andes about the situation of Christians living in Palestine. The archbishop is one of the most recognized voices in the quest for peace between Palestine and Israel. During his visit he was
shown around the university grounds and met with academic authorities and the university chaplain.

**Montevideo, Uruguay**

*Initiatives of Solidarity*

Students from the University of Montevideo took part during Holy Week in a program entitled “Easter: an Encounter with Others.” It was organized by the volunteer center at this university. Students from various fields of study visited homeless people and families in the city to celebrate Easter with them. They offered them hot chocolate and distributed 160 Easter eggs donated by students, teachers and university staff.

During the first half of 2017, another group of students from the university took part in the reconstruction of homes and in other social work in the city of Dolores, partially destroyed by a tornado in 2016.

**São Paulo, Brazil**

*Project “Vepinho”*

Those in charge of Vepinho, a volunteer project aimed at helping boys in the sixth to ninth grades in the district of Pedreia, São Paulo, were invited to a national meeting to present the best educational experiences in the country — *A Map of Education* — in the nation's capital of Brasilia. The Vepinho program has been underway since 2002 and offers classes of educational reinforcement, talks on human virtues, and sporting activities. The majority of the volunteers are university students from São Paulo. The educational results for the boys involved in the program are reflected clearly in the improvement in their school grades.

**Enxomil, Portugal**

*Pastoral Conferences for Priests*

On April 24, at the Enxomil conference center near Oporto, the twenty-first annual pastoral conference for priests was held. The topic for this year was “Ethics and Communication: what you hear whispered, proclaim upon the housetops (Mt 10:27).” About one hundred diocesan priests attended. Among the speakers were José María Pardo, Director of Studies
Rome

Economics and the Church’s Social Doctrine

From May 22-26, a seminar was held on “Economics and the Social Doctrine of the Church” in the classrooms of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross. It was organized by the Markets, Culture & Ethics Research Center at that university, in collaboration with the Notre Dame Center for Ethics and Culture and the Catholic Research Economists Discussion Organization. The participants were graduates in economics, business schools, and related fields.

The key principles of the Church’s social teaching were discussed, including topics such as the dignity of the human person, freedom, subsidiarity, solidarity, and the common good. Speakers then went on to deal with some aspects of the economy that have ethical relevance, such as the theories of maximization of benefits, policies on salaries, the market, globalization, poverty, and development. In the course of the sessions, the participants delved deeply into the content of papal encyclicals that explain the Church’s social doctrine, viewed in relationship with some of the more important texts in the field of economics.

Barcelona, Spain

Twenty Awards from Scholarship Project

Students at the Viaró school in Barcelona collaborated with their personal savings to enable twenty boys in Kenya to enroll in the Eastland College of Technology in Nairobi. This was made possible by the Scholarship project, a program that provides financial help to boys and girls who otherwise would not be able to obtain a basic education. This project, organized by Harambee International, is carried out in Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Kenya, and Ivory Coast. A number of schools in various cities of Spain assist this initiative.

The boys receiving the twenty scholarships to pursue professional training live in the Sinai slum in Nairobi, a large area of tin shacks near the
Fifteen Years of Harambee

Fifteen years have gone by since *Harambee Africa International*, a solidarity initiative in Africa, began its activities in 2002 for the canonization of St. Josemaría. Two clear goals have guided this project from its first steps: supporting educational initiatives in and about Africa, and promoting activities that increase awareness about African culture and the challenges the continent faces.

Harambee was inspired by the founder of Opus Dei’s teaching on the social and educational responsibilities of Christians. As St. Josemaría wrote in one of his books, “Because you are a Christian you cannot turn your back on any concern or any need of your fellow men” (*The Forge*, no. 453).

During these fifteen years Harambee has carried out more than seventy projects in twenty countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Each year new programs providing assistance, education and awareness have begun, for which particular donations are requested. These projects all have a local partner, an African institution in charge of making the specific initiative a reality, so that the people of the continent—who best know its real problems—are the true creators of progress. *Harambee* was involved, for example, in seeking funds for the Marcello Semeraro School, a school in Sierra Leone that offers education and support to some 130 students, in educational projects in Togo to help street children find a path in life, and in training programs for young people in Ethiopia that provide them with the skills needed to find employment.

Besides its efforts in the field of education, Harambee seeks help from the private sector to obtain investments that can create jobs in African countries, stressing the spirit of local enterprise. It also seeks to encourage European enterprises to invest in and become involved in Africa, so that they recognize in the African continent an ally. Referring to the first ten
years of its work, Bishop Javier Echevarría, then Prelate of Opus Dei, told those involved in Harambee: “We have to convince ourselves and help others to be convinced that society is not built up principally through contractual and utilitarian links, but through bonds that are more deeply human and that are based on love. This principle needs to become the main criterion for the development of society, and should be seen as the ‘soul’ of the whole social order.”

In these fifteen years, thanks to the support of many people, Harambee has also been involved in starting medical clinics, maternal-care wards in various hospitals, programs to fight malnutrition, funding micro-enterprises, etc. The NGO, with its offices in Rome, also has branches in Spain, Portugal, France, Switzerland, Poland, and the United States. In each of these countries there is a national committee and various groups of volunteers who carry out the projects that are jointly agreed on.

In 2017 the NGO launched “Harambee Youth,” an international meeting of young volunteers aimed at sharing experiences on volunteer work in Africa, and at seeking creative solutions to the needs faced by those working in some of the sub-Saharan regions. The young people who participated in the meeting agreed that trips to Africa are not the only way of supporting the Harambee projects. They also stressed the need for new forms of volunteering and awareness activities, including the use of the social networks, that highlight Africa as the continent of the future.

Torna ai contenuti

Initiatives

The initiatives described in this section are educational, social, and cultural activities brought forward by faithful of the Prelature and cooperators together with many other people, both Catholics and non-Catholics. Those who undertake and direct these activities (taking on full responsibility for them, including their financial aspects) are trying to respond to specific local needs without any discrimination regarding race, religion, or social condition.
The Prelature of Opus Dei, through agreements with the organizers, or through the guidelines established by the statutes of each entity, contributes to the development of these social initiatives by providing Christian doctrinal and moral orientation, and priestly service, always with full respect for the freedom of people’s consciences.
IN PACE
In the first half of 2017, 465 faithful of the Prelature died and, besides the priests incardinated in it, 18 members of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross. Suffrages have been offered for all of 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—their pastoral ministry in the case of the priests—and the ordinary circumstances of their lives into an occasion for loving God and serving the Church and all souls. Their love for God and neighbor 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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Torna ai contenuti
A study
The Implicit Pedagogy of Saint Josemaría Escrivá

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In August 1977 I attended a course at the University of Navarra in Pamplona for professors and tutors organized by the Institute of the Sciences of Education, then directed by David Isaacs. On that occasion I met José Luis Gonzalez Simancas, who had just published a book on the tutorial system of teaching. Many years earlier, in 1951, after two years spent studying in London, he had helped begin in Bilbao Opus Dei’s first corporate apostolic work of secondary education. In that city a group of families had provided the financial means needed for the establishment of the school.

At that time I was writing a book on experiences regarding the tutorial system in schools, and I asked him whether, when introducing tutoring in Gaztelueta High School in Bilbao, he had been inspired by the British tradition. He said no: that Saint Josemaría had been the one who had suggested to those starting the school that teachers should speak personally with each of the students every two weeks, a concept that, in the Spanish school tradition, was absolutely new. Gonzalez Simancas also said that Opus Dei’s founder had asked them to offer classes in the evening for young people who had to work during the day, in the same building used for daytime classes.

From this encounter we can discern two elements of what we might call an “implicit pedagogy” in Josemaría Escrivá’s approach to education and formation: giving personalized attention to the needs of each student in a relationship based on trust, and trying to ensure that educational opportunities are open to persons from all social backgrounds.

I’ve recalled this anecdote to exemplify how the founder of Opus Dei, although he never wrote any treatises on educational or teaching methods, had indeed offered certain principles that inspired educational and formational activities.

Others have developed these ideas with personal initiative, carrying out
educational and formational initiatives or writing books on teaching methods. Josemaría Escrivá was able to teach the educators because he himself, during his whole life, had personally educated and formed a great number of people, one by one. By his word and through his writings he had communicated his ideas on effective pedagogy to encourage many initiatives aimed at leading each person to maturity and a happy life.[4]

As an example of his guidance to educators, here is the answer he gave to a teacher in a public gathering, on November 21, 1972, at the Viaró High School in Barcelona: “Prepare your classes well, and be loyal to your students, so that, little by little, they become your friends. Finally, don’t stand aloof from them. Meet them halfway, and let them come the other half voluntarily. That way you’ll get to know them very well.”[5]

Over the years, the influence of his ideas has expanded in concentric circles, since the many people who have taken up his “educational model” have in turn educated other persons and given life to new educational and formational centers.

Therefore, I think we can speak of an “implicit pedagogy” in St. Josemaría, which others have later begun to make explicit through putting it into practice over the past eighty years and writing their experiences about it. Victor García Hoz, a pioneer in the study of the educational ideas of Josemaría Escrivá, has shown that the development of so many educational institutions inspired by Escrivá would not have been possible without “a vigorous and clear idea of what education is in all its aspects, and principally as the human person’s search for truth.”[6]

The Sources

St. Josemaría formed men and women who put into operation a wide variety of educational and formational initiatives all over the world. As is well known, Opus Dei, by its specific nature, tries not to have a philosophy, theology or pedagogy of its own. But to grasp Escrivá’s educational ideas, we will certainly need to consider the educational centers that arose through his encouragement, besides looking at his writings and oral explanations.

When Josemaría Escrivá encouraged those responsible for the University of Navarra to organize initiatives for the formation of professors, he advised them to focus the course on practical experiences, and not to
overdo the (also necessary) philosophical presuppositions. Thus began the summer courses of the I.C.E. (*Instituto de Ciencias de la Educación*), run initially by three former teachers from the Gaztelueta school. In this approach, pedagogical methods need to be nourished by reflection on actual educational practices. I don’t want to get into the specific topic of university education here, as Juan Manuel Mora and many others have done,[7]

but I would like to point out the significance of this specific way in which universities can help further the formation of teachers, according to the founder of Opus Dei.

In regard to Escrivá’s ideas on education, Maria Angeles Vitoria states that “it is not exact to say that he gave rise a school of pedagogy or a teaching method proper to the institution that he founded. Certainly, St. Josemaría had his own point of view on the topic of human and Christian formation, as he did on other subjects, but these were his own personal opinions. His contribution is not the fruit of academic work, but rather the reflection of Christian wisdom. But Saint Josemaría clearly did have a very specific view of how education should be carried out to be effective, recognizable in the many formative initiatives his spirit gave rise to.”[8]

For Professor Vitoria, Escrivá’s pedagogical ideas can be seen in the work of the teachers in educational centers animated by the spirit of Opus Dei: fostering human virtues in the students, the effort to instill a love for work well-done through care for small things, and above all love for freedom and personal responsibility.

The anthropological focus

After Josemaría Escrivá’s death, those writing on the topic of his pedagogy, following Victor Garcia Hoz,[9] have devoted a lot of space to his Christian-inspired anthropology, since any educational activity is clearly based the idea of man that underlies it. The central anthropological coordinates of Escrivá are enumerated by Garcia Hoz:[10]

the creation of the human being as the result of God’s love; unity of life, founded on the awareness of being a child of God, which generates joy in the soul and leads one to give importance to the small things of daily life.
and to see work as a means of personal fulfilment, human solidarity and union with God; the conviction that an act is specifically human when it is born of a free decision.

Hence, according to García Hoz, education for Escrivá is aimed at making people free and responsible for their actions through a pedagogy marked by loyalty and sincerity in the relationship between teacher and student, between parent and child, between tutor and the young person, and in general between the educator and the one being educated. And even more so, between the person giving formation and the one who wants to receive formation, since in this case there is a true “pact of formation” between the two people who explicitly choose each other.

As Madonna Murphy recently wrote, “St. Josemaría viewed education from a transcendent point of view, that of the totality of the human person’s being and end, in accord with the Christian meaning of life. His elevated concept of the dignity of the human being, based on an anthropology with clear Christian roots, led him to see each person as created in God’s image and likeness, with an immortal soul, with intellect and free will, and destined to enjoy God eternally as our ultimate end.”[11]

**Value of moral freedom**

According to Saint Josemaría, education should be aimed at instilling the capacity to freely choose the good known and loved as such, or what is the same thing, in fostering moral freedom. Education—an action that at the same time belongs totally to the educator and totally to the person being educated—consists, on the part of the educator, in fostering in the person being educated the capacity for free moral choice, and on the part of those being educated, in striving to become free and responsible for their own acts. This definition is valid for any kind of education, without any specific qualification (later we will see that he adds the adjective “Christian” here). Escrivá viewed education[12]

as a help to construct a society in which laws are respected by citizens interiorly convinced of their fairness and usefulness, without the need for external controls.[13]

Since many people today are confused about what freedom really means, it is useful to quote Escrivá directly to clarify what he understood by
freedom. In a get-together with parents in Guadalaviar, Valencia, on November 17, 1972, he said: “Love your children’s freedom and teach them to use it well. Help them realize that freedom is open to a serious illness: that of not wanting to accept the responsibility that goes with it. Then it’s no longer freedom, but license.”[14]

When he spoke about freedom he also stressed the need for responsibility. In his homily Freedom, a Gift of God, written in 1956, he wrote: “‘My freedom! My freedom!’ they cry. They have their freedom, but they don’t use it. They look at it; they set it up, a clay idol for their petty minds to worship. Is this freedom? What use is this treasure to them, if there is no commitment guiding their whole lives? Such behavior goes against their very dignity and nobility as human beings. They are left aimless, with no clear path to guide their footsteps on this earth... A person who does not choose, with complete freedom, an upright code of conduct, sooner or later ends up being manipulated by others. He will lead a lazy, parasitic existence, at the mercy of what others decide.”[15]

Trying to have freedom without responsibility is the same as wanting to be free of any commitment in order to be open to all future possibilities. But thus one ends up letting others decide for them. If a young person seeks to live in this way, one cannot say that he or she is educated, because “acting freely” is equivalent to “acting morally,” and to desire only to be free of all lasting commitments, linked to a specific end, implies rejecting all responsibility, and thereby renouncing the goal of becoming fully human.[16]

**Education according to Pope Francis**

Pope Francis has an idea of education similar to that of Escrivá. In criticizing the obsession of educators who want to control their own child or pupil in all situations they may encounter, the Pontiff writes: “This is no way to educate, strengthen and prepare their children to face challenges. What is most important is the ability lovingly to help them grow in freedom, maturity, overall discipline and real autonomy. Only in this way will children come to possess the wherewithal needed to fend for themselves and to act intelligently and prudently whenever they meet with difficulties.”[17]
For Pope Francis, as for Escrivá, the goal of education is moral freedom. What gives meaning and unity to the various educational activities is the conquest of a capacity for moral, free decisions to which the young person is called: “Education includes encouraging the responsible use of freedom to face issues with good sense and intelligence. It involves forming persons who readily understand that their own lives, and the life of the community, are in their hands, and that freedom is itself a great gift.”[18]

The Pope, as did Saint Josemaría, offers some specific guidelines for moral education in the different phases of growth. He begins with the suggestion to teach young people to renounce an immediate pleasure for the sake a better and more orderly life in common. Moral education should take place through “active methods and a dialogue that teaches through sensitivity and by using a language children can understand. It should also take place inductively, so that children can learn for themselves the importance of certain values, principles and norms, rather than by imposing these as absolute and unquestionable truths.”[19]

It is not enough that the child, with the help of an educator, learns the natural moral principles that God has sowed in the soul, and thus learns to distinguish good from evil, because “other factors sometimes prove more attractive and powerful. We have to arrive at the point where the good that the intellect grasps can take root in us as a profound affective inclination, as a thirst for the good that outweighs other attractions and helps us to realize that what we consider objectively good is also good ‘for us’ here and now.”[20]

Another similarity between the pedagogical approaches of Escrivá and Bergoglio can be found in the area of social education. For Saint Josemaría, as for the current Pontiff, the opening up to interpersonal relationships and the active participation in the construction of the common good are two basic dimensions of the human persons that need to be fostered in practical ways. “A desire to work for the common good is not enough. The way to make this desire effective is to form competent men and women who can transmit to others the maturity which they themselves have achieved.”[21]
In the educational enterprises that have been inspired by Saint Josemaría’s message, not only is the noble ideal of understanding and serving one’s neighbor, and especially the weakest, fostered in young people, but at the same time they are taught to contribute what they can, with professional competence and out of love for God, to building up the common good.[22]

Saint Josemaría frequently stressed that, if we truly want to help further social justice, first of all we each need to personally practice the virtue of justice in our relations with others: “Remember that justice does not consist exclusively in an exact respect for rights and duties, as in the case of arithmetical problems that are solved simply by addition and subtraction. The Christian virtue of justice is more ambitious. It enjoins us to prove ourselves thankful, friendly and generous. It encourages us to act as loyal and honorable friends, in hard times as well as in good ones; to obey the law and to respect legitimate authority.”[23]

Pope Francis voiced an important concern in an audience he gave on June 3, 2015: “Living conditions in the poorest neighborhoods, with housing and transportation problems, as well as reduced social, health and educational services, bring about further difficulties. Adding to these material factors is the damage caused to the family by the pseudo-models spread by the mass media on the basis of consumerism and the cult of appearances, which influence the poorest social classes.” The consumerist “pseudo-models” introduced by the communication media even to the slums of cardboard and tin, demand of educators active in the poorest districts that they care in a special way for the concern of the students to improve their own community. This is well known by the spiritual children of Escrivá who work with young people in the “peripheries of the world.” The temptation to escape from their own native community to enjoy, in economically better-off districts, the fruit of the professional skills acquired at school is very strong.

Similarly, in the educational centers animated by the spirit of Opus Dei, by express will of the founder, solidarity and social responsibility are fostered, especially among the young people from well-off families, through direct contact with the poor and marginalized.
A climate of friendship in educational relationships

The educator, as imagined by Escrivá, is confident that students accustomed to interior reflection will be able to discover inner moral principles. He also trusts that the good, when presented in a way suitable to the student’s level of development, will gently attract that person’s will. Escrivá never subscribed to “adultism”[24]

or to “moralism.”[25]

He was well aware of the role played by conditioning factors in the environment, inner drives and other habits that may have developed, which at times hinder in the young person a clear vision of the good that makes us happy, the decision to attain it, and the carrying out of the actions necessary to act consistently according to the decision taken.[26]

Saint Josemaría left written in foundational documents—and explained in a thousand ways to those with tasks of formation in Opus Dei—some educational ideas that he called “ideas madres” (bedrock ideas): understanding for the weaknesses of others, the joy that comes from taking part in a work that transcends human capabilities, the optimism of knowing that in the end all will work out for the good, trust in the good will of others and in the attractive force of the good, the constant effort to begin and begin again in one’s personal struggle after every defeat.

Pope Francis too has stressed the joy and optimism that should mark the person who is carrying out educational tasks in the service of others: “Goodness always tends to spread. Every authentic experience of truth and goodness seeks by its very nature to grow within us, and any person who has experienced a profound liberation becomes more sensitive to the needs of others. As it expands, goodness takes root and develops. If we wish to lead a dignified and fulfilling life, we have to reach out to others and seek their good.”[27]

This is exactly what every educator worthy of the name tries to do, since one cannot educate with a stern and tense face.

For Escrivá, a “watched over” freedom is never fully formative. The person being educated should not seek to imitate the educator, since the exemplary causality of the educator is something very different than the
authoritarian imposition of a model. The educator seeks to pass on values, and is not the originating source of them. The educator and the person being educated adhere to values that transcend them both; they share certain goods that, because of age, the educator has mastered earlier, but that are not meant to be jealously kept to oneself.

On this basis friendship can arise, which Escrivá frequently recommended that educators cultivate, although he also noted that the relationship between parent and child, between teacher and pupil, is not one of equality.[28]

“I always advise parents to try to be friends with their children. The parental authority, which the rearing of children requires, can be perfectly harmonized with friendship, which means putting themselves in some way on the same level as their children. The children—even those who seem intractable and unresponsive—always desire this closeness, this fraternity with their parents. It is a question of trust. Parents should bring up their children in an atmosphere of friendship, never giving the impression that they do not trust them. They should give them freedom and teach them how to use it with personal responsibility. It is better for parents to let themselves ‘be fooled’ once in a while, because the trust that they have shown will make the children themselves feel ashamed of having abused it—they will correct themselves. On the other hand, if they have no freedom, if they see that no one trusts them, they will always be inclined to deceive their parents.”[29]

Friendship arises when there is a reciprocal good will between two people who share a common interest. For Escrivá, parents and teachers should become friends of their children and students, breaking down barriers and eliminating as much as possible any distances. In seeking to interpret properly Saint Josemaría’s ideas about the significance of friendship between parents and children, and between teachers and students, Michelangelo Peláez wrote: “The specific relationship of friendship is not, in practice, a secondary matter here; one could even say that it is inherent to all effective education. That is to say, there is no authentic education, with all that this entails, if in the respect for the freedom of the person being educated and the asymmetrical position of the educator, there is lacking reciprocal trust, the full disclosure of the good
that is proper to the relationship between friends and that makes the one being educated, in turn, a person capable of friendship. Thus we can speak of education through friendship and of friendship through education.”[30]

Young people have to learn to be friends of everyone (although not everyone will choose to correspond to their friendship), and therefore they need to be urged to seek new friends throughout their whole life. This desire to improve their own capacity for friendship is born and develops in young people through the experiences lived in their own family and in the centers where they are educated. Therefore it is up to parents and educators to take the first step to enter into friendly relationships with their children or students.

Orientation and Tutoring

In every effort to educate in accord with the teachings of Saint Josemaría Escrivá—first of all, in the family environment—situations are intentionally created in which children are encouraged to make free decisions and to put them into practice on their own responsibility. As Escrivá told the publisher of a Spanish women's magazine: “After giving their advice and suggestions, parents who sincerely love and seek the good of their children should step tactfully into the background so that nothing can stand in the way of the great gift of freedom that makes man capable of loving and serving God. They should remember that God himself has wanted to be loved and served with freedom and He always respects our personal decisions. Scripture tells us: ‘When God created man, He made him subject to his own free choice’ (Sir 15:14).”[31]

During the phase of “apprenticeship in freedom” (if I can use that expression), it is good that young people have at their side a person who can help them to make their first fundamental decisions in life correctly and who, without imposing anything, can provide guidance. If at times young people, in the initial exercise of their freedom, make a mistake, they need to have an adult at their side who can help them to reflect on this experience and learn from it. The initial corrections of the route undertaken to become a mature human being reduces the risk of a bad use of freedom later on as an adult, although never completely eliminating it. If God respects and
loves human freedom, said Escrivá, parents and teachers should also respect and love the freedom of their children or students.\cite{escrivá}

Educational guidance, usually called tutoring, is a feature of the educational centers started through the initiative of faithful of Opus Dei, as the result of a specific indication of the founder. Interacting with a group of students is not sufficient for effective education. A personal relationship needs to be established with each student. Each young person has his or her own specific qualities, and should be seen as a “precious stone” that has to be helped to shine in all its splendor once it has been shaped by an adult, usually referred to as the “tutor” or “advisor.”

Escrivá often said that the most supernatural reason for carrying out a good action is “because I want to,”\cite{escrivá}

and that the educational task consists in fostering good will: helping the person to “want to”\cite{escrivá}

carry out the good. This strong love for freedom, present in the educational centers where teachers are inspired by the “implicit pedagogy” of Saint Josemaría, has two consequences: the atmosphere of reciprocal trust among all the members of the educational community, and the acceptance on the part of the educators of the risk of a bad use of the very freedom they are fostering in their students.

**Reciprocal trust**

In a conference organized by the Pontifical University of Santa Croce in Rome for the centennial of the birth of Josemaría Escrivá, a few months before his canonization, Concepción Naval gave a talk entitled *Trust: a Requirement for Personal Freedom*. Referring to the sphere of education, Naval said: “This appreciation for trust includes everyone, including children; hence its educational importance. Blessed Josemaría usually speaks about trust in the context of family education, but this recommendation can be equally applied to education in schools. Experience shows very clearly all the problems that arise from a suspicious and untrusting attitude between teachers and students: the students, because they see their freedom threatened; the teachers, because they are exasperated by the apparent lack of results.”\cite{naval}
At the same conference, regarding the atmosphere of trust found in the educational centers inspired by the educational ideas of Escrivá, Professor Barrio Maestre said: “The first goal in these centers is to gain the trust of the families so that there is consistency between what the students see and hear at home and what they experience at school. This consistency is fundamental, especially when they are still quite young and when contradictory messages can disconcert the children. The next step is to attain the same environment, of a family we might say, in the school itself. For it is only by obtaining the trust of the students, also by showing trust in them, that we can effectively achieve the educational goals that are sought.”[36]

Indeed, in schools run by teachers and parents allied by a pact of cooperation in the education of their children or students, and who know and try to live the Christian spirit as set forth by St. Josemaría, trust is a clear characteristic of the educational environment. In establishing a new educational center, trust needs to exist between the parents and teachers, between the teachers and students, among the teachers themselves, and among the parents who are sponsoring the school. Later trust is also extended to the new people who enter this educational community, and in a short time that trust is returned.

How far from the teaching of Josemaría Escrivá is an educator who seeks to grant a child a “watched-over freedom”! On the contrary, educators should show a “watchful trust” in their students, as Professor Barrio Maestre[37] says regarding Escrivá’s approach to education. Only in this way can a friendly relationship arise between the educator and the person being educated. Teachers in schools sharing in the “implicit pedagogy” of Saint Josemaría should strive to give all interpersonal relationships an optimistic tone, through an atmosphere of reciprocal trust and friendship.

The educational community

Saint Josemaría Escrivá always stressed the primacy of the parents with respect to the formation and education of their children. Professor García Hoz,[38] who met the founder of Opus Dei in 1939,[39]
was surprised the first time he heard a statement that he later repeated many times in the course of his life: “In a school there are three important things: first, the parents; second, the teaching staff; and third, the students.”

Over time, he came to realize that the primacy of the parents is not only a matter of educational rights, but that it is required for the teachers’ efforts to be effective, and therefore for the good of the students. When speaking to those responsible for schools, whether corporate works of Opus Dei or other professional endeavors directed by members of the Work, Escrivá advised that they strive first of all to get the parents involved in the educational process at their children’s school. A specific pedagogical formation of the parents should be the first concern of the directors of a school.

The idea of an educational community in which parents take an active role was not very widespread in the fifties and sixties of the twentieth century, even in Catholic schools. Escrivá, however, when encouraging faithful of the Work who were teachers to start schools, indicated clearly that they should involve the parents in this process right from the start. Speaking to parents at the Viaró High School in Barcelona, on November 21, 1972, he said: “I insist: these parent-sponsored schools are particularly important, first, for the parents; second, for the teaching staff; and then for the students.”

To grow in freedom and responsibility, students need a certain harmony and consistency between what they are told at home and at school. For the efforts of the school to be effective, a loyal pact of cooperation is needed between parents and teachers. The secret of the success of the educational initiatives that have arisen under the impetus of Josemaría Escrivá is found in the alliance between the family and school. Over seventy years of experience attests to the value of Saint Josemaría’s pedagogical intuition. These schools have been successful when their primary objective has been the formation of the parents; less so, on the other hand, when the promoters fail to pursue this goal with a strong and steadfast determination.

*Christian identity*
Escrivá, as we said, envisioned schools where first the parents will be formed,[44]

then the teachers, and finally the students. Schools open to persons from all walks of life, thanks also to scholarships, who are helped to discover their identity as children of God, and thereby the source of true happiness. Schools that respect the freedom of consciences and the educational rights of parents and that welcome students from all religions, while never hiding their own Christian identity.

In accord with the vocation of lay Christian faithful who seek holiness by exercising their civil rights, the schools run by Saint Josemaría’s spiritual children together with other citizens—not necessarily believers—and which are not officially Catholic,[45]

help their students to acquire a “catholic” mentality, in the original sense of the term, that is, a universal one. As the founder of Opus Dei said in Furrow, a book published after his death: “Since you want to acquire a catholic or universal mentality, here are some characteristics you should aim at: a breadth of vision and a deepening insight into the things that remain alive and unchanged in Catholic orthodoxy; a proper and healthy desire, which should never be frivolous, to present anew the standard teachings of traditional thought in philosophy and the interpretation of history; a careful awareness of trends in science and contemporary thought; and a positive and open attitude towards the current changes in society and in ways of living.”[46]

Separate schools for boys and for girls

At times outside observers find it hard to understand the reasons for the separation based on sex in the schools inspired by Saint Josemaría, since in many countries today this goes strongly against the trend. Single sex schools can be surprising at first glance. But here they are the result of a very clear goal: that of recognizing the specific value of each sex in view of a mutual collaboration based on reciprocity. Escrivá did not oblige anyone to create schools that were only masculine or feminine, but he established that Opus Dei would give priority to providing pastoral assistance and spiritual help to schools that offer a separate educational program for boys and for girls.[47] And the argument can be made that separation based on sex in the
educational and formative activities at these schools (between the ages of six and eighteen approximately) is in line with the Church’s educational tradition since antiquity and consistent with its pastoral experience.\[48\]

It is not difficult to see that the methodological choice to divide students according to sex is based on an underlying anthropology and a specific pedagogy. For a Christian anthropology, the sexual characterization of the person as man or woman has great value, for it stems from human nature, although in every culture it takes on different manifestations. For a personalistic pedagogy, every boy or girl by the fact of being unique and unrepeatable, merits specific attention from educators, shown in a close personal relationship with each student’s growth and education. Escrivá always had a deep appreciation for femininity and masculinity as a gift from God to the human being. And he warmly invited educators to foster each student’s personal qualities through a strong educational relationship based on friendship, which at the same time is respectful of each person’s intimacy.\[49\]

**Education in the human virtues**

The educational centers inspired by the “implicit pedagogy” of Saint Josemaría are not limited to imparting information, but also aspire to imbue children, teenagers and adolescents with noble and great ideals to which it is worthwhile dedicating one’s life. Part of this effort involves helping them acquire the human virtues that Aristotle three hundred and fifty years before the birth of Jesus saw as perfecting the human being, and that the Christian educational tradition has cultivated in youth for twenty centuries as an indispensable basis for acquiring the supernatural virtues.

Before looking at specific virtues, I want to stress that educators seeking to encourage students to acquire a virtue have to first possess it themselves and show that they are trying to live it as well as possible. Indeed, it is well known that for a virtue to take root in a young person’s lifestyle, an exemplary cause is needed to provoke the free decision to acquire it by the intentional repetition of specific acts. The special characteristic of Saint Josemaría’s pedagogy, in regard to acquiring the human virtues, is the stress on trying to live them as lay people, *nel bel mezzo della strada*,\[50\] as he liked
to say in Italian, in the middle of the world and as a child of God thanks to the grace of Baptism.

Some of the principal virtues that, according to Saint Josemaría, educators should strive to foster in their students are: sincerity, loyalty, trust, friendship, refinement in human relationships, optimism, fortitude, temperance, an eagerness to work well. I will refer briefly to each of these below, and at the end consider the value of collegiality for the work of education.

—Sincerity

When anyone asked him which virtue he liked the best, Saint Josemaría always answered: sincerity. “Let our yes be yes. Let our no be no”: this is the motto found at the entrance of the first school started under Saint Josemaría’s direct encouragement. He used to tell those who came to him in search of spiritual advice and guidance that they needed to be sincere with themselves, with God, and with others. In The Forge, for example, he wrote: “Looking at our Lady’s example has confirmed for me a clear rule of conduct: if we want to enjoy peace, and also to live in peace, we must be very sincere with God, with those who direct our souls and with ourselves.”[51]

—Loyalty

On November 12, 1972, in the Andalusian city Jerez de la Frontera, Escrivá told a father that, along with sincerity, loyalty was a key virtue children needed to acquire: “Help them to be loyal and sincere, not to be afraid to tell you things. To do that, you have to be loyal towards them. Treat them as if they were adults, adapting your approach to their needs, their age and their characters. Be their friend. Be kind and honest to them; be sincere and straightforward.”[52]

He recommended reflecting carefully before making any promises or taking on a commitment, in order to respect any “pacts” made, keep one’s word and fulfil commitments that have been freely taken on. In schools inspired by his pedagogical teachings there is a “pact” or “contract,” which is explained as clearly as possible, between the directors of the school and the families of the students, between the directors and the teachers, between the parents and the teachers, between the teachers and the
students, and finally within the teaching staff, and among all the students. “I made a mistake” is a phrase that is heard frequently in these schools, without dramatizing things, without any loss of prestige, without major conflicts. A person who makes this admission whenever necessary finds it easy to tell someone later, face to face, in private: “I think you made a mistake.”

—Trust

Escrivá always said that he would rather be fooled by someone than distrust an honest person. In *Friends of God* he wrote: “I will say it again: we have to be prudent, yes; but not suspicious. Give everyone the utmost credit for what he says. Be very noble. As far as I am concerned, the word of a Christian, of a loyal man—I trust every one of you entirely—is worth more than the official signatures of a hundred notaries who are in unanimous agreement, even though on some occasions I may have been deceived by following this rule. But I prefer to leave myself open to the unscrupulous abuse of this confidence, rather than deprive anyone of the trust he deserves as a person and as a child of God. I can assure you that I have never been disappointed by the consequences of this way of acting.”[53]

Therefore he asked educators to make clear to students their strong trust in them. Teachers need to be ready to run the risk that someone might abuse that trust, but this would pale in comparison with the enormous damage to the growth of their freedom and responsibility if students were denied complete trust, shown in many small details.

—Friendship

The founder of Opus Dei had such a high regard for the human virtue of friendship that he stressed its importance for bringing people to God: “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.”[54]

The capacity for making friends with other persons, and preserving and protecting friendships when misunderstandings or differences of opinion arise, requires a specific educational effort. But for young people to acquire this virtue, even more effective is the experience of living in an educational
community marked by a climate of friendship and getting along well with others.

In the schools inspired by St. Josemaría, friendship is fostered among the families of the students, between the parents and the teachers, among the teachers themselves, among the students, and between the teachers and the students. The friendship between teachers and students does not harm the authority of the educators in the educational relationship, which is asymmetrical insofar as the adult possesses a good that the young person does not possess yet and seeks to acquire with the educator’s help.

This principle is even more important in the context of education in the family. A point in *Furrow* says: “You have had the good fortune to find real teachers, authentic friends, who have taught you everything you wanted to know without holding back. You have had no need to employ any tricks to ‘steal’ their knowledge, because they led you along the easiest path, even though it had cost them a lot of hard work and suffering to discover it. Now, it is your turn to do the same, with one person, and another—with everyone.”[55]

—Good manners

I seemed to be hearing Saint Josemaría’s voice again when the present Pontiff said: “In the family we learn to ask without demanding, to say ‘thank you’ as an expression of genuine gratitude for what we have been given, to control our aggressivity and greed, and to ask forgiveness when we have caused harm.”[56]

The founder of Opus Dei always recommended great refinement in interpersonal relationships, especially from those who direct an educational center. Two points from *The Forge* are quite relevant here: “Try to be considerate, well-mannered. Don’t be boorish! Try to be polite always, which doesn’t mean being affected.”[57]

“When you have to give orders, do not humiliate anyone. Go gently. Respect the intelligence and the will of the one who is obeying.”[58]

—Optimism

We read in *Furrow*: “The task for a Christian is to drown evil in an abundance of good. It is not a question of negative campaigns, or of being
anything. On the contrary, we should live positively, full of optimism, with youthfulness, joy, and peace. We should be understanding with everybody, with the followers of Christ and with those who abandon him, or do not know him at all. —But understanding does not mean holding back, or remaining indifferent, but being active.

In Escrivá’s view, a person afflicted with chronic pessimism and who is reluctant to use the means to overcome that defect, is of no use in educating and forming others. For an educator the virtue of optimism requires the habitual effort to see, first of all, the positive aspects of each student, so that these strong points can then be used to help overcome any negative aspects.

—Fortitude

“Begin and begin again.” Saint Josemaría often used these words to encourage people to react positively when faced with personal and collective failures. “Your interior life has to be just that: to begin... and to begin again.”

This fortitude of soul stems from the humble recognition of one’s own limits and complete trust in God’s all-powerful mercy, who always offers us the means needed to begin again. “Do not be ashamed to discover in your heart the fomes peccati —the inclination to evil, which will be with you as long as you live, for nobody is free from this burden. Do not be ashamed, for the all-powerful and merciful Lord has given us all the means we need for overcoming this inclination: the Sacraments, a life of piety and sanctified work. —Persevere in using these means, ever ready to begin again and again without getting discouraged.”

Adults who, after a personal failure, are able get up again because they are humble, also encourage young people not to accept defeat, but to struggle against difficulties and failures.

—Temperance

Saint Josemaría used to tell parents that they should set an example of temperance in family life and keep their children short on spending money. He wrote in The Way that the only way to be an apostle is to love and
practice poverty of spirit, contenting oneself “with what is sufficient for leading a simple and temperate life.”[63] In *Friends of God*[^64] he dedicated an entire homily to the topic of detachment, another, more secular name for the Christian virtue of poverty. Here his teachings are very close to those of Pope Francis.[^65]

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*Appreciation for well-done work*

Care for small things is perhaps the most direct pedagogical implication of Josemaría Escrivá’s teachings on the sanctification of work.[^66]

Work that is planned and carried out carefully requires that it is also be well finished, for attention to the small details is where the love with which the person has worked is most clearly seen. One grows and matures personally through work that is carried out as well as possible, taking into account the time and means available, and as an act of service to other men and women. For Escrivá, work done with great care stems not from a maniacal perfectionism or from a stoic sense of duty, but from the free intention to serve others joyfully, that is to say, from a spirit of service. Only thus can one avoid the danger of falling into routine, which leads to working negligently and merely to get things done.[^67]

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*Religious formation*

“Children should see in their parents an example of dedication, sincere love, mutual help and understanding. The small trifles of daily life should not be allowed to hide from them the reality of a love that is capable of overcoming all obstacles.”[^68]

When a father or mother asked him how to give religious education to very small children, Escrivá in first place recommended that they love each other, because children sense God’s love when they see that their father and mother truly love one another.[^69]

Parents who want to enroll their children in a school inspired by the spirit of Opus Dei—including those who do not practice the Catholic religion—first receive a clear explanation of the school’s goals and educational program, so that they can decide freely if they want to enroll their children there or not. They are told that religious education is grafted
onto the trunk of the natural human virtues, and that this religious education is specifically Catholic education, which seeks to impart to students the realization that God is our Father, who wants us to share in his divine life attained for us through the incarnation, passion, death and resurrection of Jesus, his only-begotten Son, who has made himself a brother of all mankind.\footnote{70}

The school’s educational ideal is clearly explained to everyone. And naturally, parents can request that their children be exempted from classes on the Catholic religion.

*Collegiality in educational efforts*

The education of a young person is a collegial effort of many artists who, by working in harmony with each other, produce a marvelous symphony. Each teacher tends to perceive in the student positive or negative aspects that reflect one’s own experience and sensitivity. Teachers should never aspire to form young people in their own image and likeness, but rather to ensure that each person develops his or her talents to the full. Personalized educational plans and the correct assessment of each student require the integration of the viewpoints of many teachers. A student should not be guided in accord with one teacher’s views, but in accord with what the team of educational specialists, in agreement with the parents, decide on as the best way to draw out that student’s full potentiality.

Anyone who has read Escrivá’s texts addressed to those with responsibilities of direction in educating and forming others, knows that for him the principle of collegiality\footnote{71}

is a key element at all levels, whether it be for the formation of the members of the Work, for those who seek guidance from Opus Dei, and for the running of educational centers open to everyone, in which faithful of the Prelature work professionally alongside their colleagues.

*Conclusion*

As we said at the beginning, Escrivá was not strictly speaking an educator, but rather a “former” of persons. He never wrote a treatise on education, but throughout his life he formed thousands of persons of all ages and walks of life. From his writings and the centers he inspired some
clear principles can be deduced for education and formation, an “implicit pedagogy” based on the anthropological truth that the human being is a child of God, made in his image and likeness in a unique and irrepeatible way, with a masculine or feminine identity for the good of the reciprocal collaboration between the two sexes.

In order to be truly human, each person needs to acquire, through education, true moral freedom. For Escrivá, the goal of education is the acquisition of the capacity to make free moral decisions, with the corresponding responsibility for the actions carried out. Showing trust in young people is the first recommendation Escrivá gives to educators, who above all should create a friendly and cordial climate where they carry out their work. Collaboration between parents and teachers, collegiality in educational decisions and the building up of a true educational community are three constants found in all the educational centers inspired by Escrivá. The key human virtues that Saint Josemaría encouraged people to practice form the indispensable foundation for a strong supernatural life, open to the sanctifying action of divine grace. This, in summary, is what we have tried to make clear in this article.

[1] This is an expanded version of an article published in the magazine Nuova Secondaria [no. 1, year 2015/1016], La Scuola publisher (Brescia, Italy).


[3] Education here refers to the effort aimed at making young people morally free and responsible for their actions. While formation refers to the effort to help adults improve—if he or she freely desires it—in some aspect of their life. Adults have the duty of educating children, although at times young people may rebel against the authority of their educators. The formative process is gradually injected into the educative one. Formation is possible when a person, to the extent that he or she is free and responsible for their actions, decides to strive to improve in some specific aspect: character, spiritual life, professional activity, religious doctrine, apostolate, culture, politics, art, sports, etc. Formation has to be initially sought; it cannot be merely accepted, as happens in the case of education, when those
being educated realize that the educator has taken the initiative in trying to impart to them something that by themselves they could not obtain and therefore they willingly agree to collaborate. The demand for formation can only come from the one being formed; if it is imposed, it is almost always ineffective: for example, in the case of some obligatory courses of professional updating.

[4] Both published and unpublished works of Saint Josemaría Escrivá will be cited. The unpublished writings are easily recognized by the citation AGP (Archivo General de la Prelatura).


Education is the only way to ensure voluntary adhesion to the moral law, upon which is based the respect shown by citizens for the laws established by the state. As Pope Francis wrote: “The existence of laws and regulations is insufficient in the long run to curb bad conduct, even when effective means of enforcement are present. If the laws are to bring about significant, long-lasting effects, the majority of the members of society must be adequately motivated to accept them, and personally transformed to respond” (Encyclical Laudato si’, no. 211). That personal transformation is the positive result of a successful education.


To make clear the pedagogical reasons implicit in the unbreakable tie between freedom and responsibility found in Escrivá, I want to stress again that the activity of educators consists, simultaneously, in enlightening the moral conscience of those being educated and in stirring up in them to will to act according to moral principles, discovered by means of interior reflection. With these goals in mind, educators should seek to pinpoint the most suitable means for fostering the development of moral freedom in the various stages of growth of the child, the pre-adolescent, and the adolescent youth. The first step is always to help the young person to consider sincerely how he or she currently is, in order to decide what they want to become

Pope Francis, Apostolic exhortation, Amoris laetitia, no. 261.

Ibid., no. 262.

Ibid., no. 264.

Ibid., no. 265.

Conversations with Msgr. Josemaría Escrivá, no. 73.

Saint Josemaría often cited in his encounters with young people the phrase from Isaiah (1:17), discite benefacere — learn to do good.

Friends of God, nos. 168—169.

Knowledge, skills and values need to be presented in a way and with
a language suited to the age of the person being educated. The error of “adultism” is treating children as though they were adults in miniature.

[25] Parents and teachers fall into moralism almost always through laziness, because they fail to consider carefully how they can make an objectively good moral principle be such subjectively also for the one being educated, or, more generally, how to help young people “interiorize” an absolute value. For a child to behave morally it is not enough to set forth objective moral principles external to that person. Rather, young people need to be helped to “conquer” these principles subjectively, to discover them within themselves, with an adhesion to the good that leads them to practice the virtues as an expression of the values understood and accepted by them.

Life in common, stories that are heard or read, movies, all enable the young person to experience the relationship between a good life and struggling to live the virtues. Later, when the ability to reflect and reason grows, there comes the interiorizing of moral principles and the full capacity for free choice. But the child has already been helped to experience in some way the value of a good life.

[26] Upon finishing the educational process, the young person should be capable of habitually acting with freedom, in accord with interiorized moral principles that have been understood and loved. Having attained this interior maturity, the young person can act morally without the need for continual assistance, controls, promises of reward, or warnings of punishment.


[28] Friendship between two persons arises when they share a common interest. In the case of two people united by an educational relationship, the common interest of the educator and the student is the obtaining of full human development on the part of the latter, that is to say, the autonomous capacity to act correctly for a true and just reason, interiorly understood and loved.

[29] Conversations with Msgr. Escrivá, no. 100.

Conversations with Msgr. Escrivá, no. 104.

Naturally the capacity for free moral decisions does not arise suddenly like a mushroom in a forest after a night of rain. The fact that freedom is acquired gradually, and strengthens to the extent that it is used well, is what justifies the guidance students receive in the school, which tries to assist them in their initial exercise of personal freedom.

See Saint Josemaría, Christ is Passing By, Scepter, New York 1974, nos. 17 and 184, and Friends of God, no. 35.


See Ibid., p. 96.


Experience has shown that, in the schools sponsored by parents who are faithful of Opus Dei together with their friends, a new educational center can be established only if there is a group of parents, with a good pedagogical formation, who take on responsibility for its operation. Later on, this center will continue functioning well if, from the beginning, the
group that promoted it is concerned to find and form new parents each year, who in turn will take the place of the initial group in the running of the center, in harmony with the directors of the school. The cycle of completely replacing the group of parent sponsors will usually take about twenty years.

[42] “Bright and Cheerful Homes. Catechesis on the Family,” p. 107. To make this ideal a reality, one first needs to clarify the roles of those running the school, of the members of the board of directors, of the representatives of the parents in the class councils, of each parent and each teacher. If these responsibilities are vague or undefined, conflicts will inevitably arise between families and the school, especially when it comes to evaluating the results obtained by the students, the teachers and directors, and of making timely decisions regarding rewards or corrections.

[43] Only friendship between the parents sponsoring a school and the parents of the new students can assure the continuity of the school. The gradual replacement of those responsible comes about to the extent that the new parents become enthusiastic and get involved in the educational enterprise initiated or developed by others. This also explains why, for Escrivá, in the school it is the parents who come first, then the teachers, and lastly the students. Without parents who, while respecting the professional autonomy of the teachers and directors, take primarily responsibility for the school, it will not be successful.

[44] Escrivá told Catholic parents regarding the education they should try to ensure their children receive: “This is how you will best contribute to making your children become true Christians, men and women of integrity, capable of facing all life’s situations with an open spirit, of serving their fellow men and helping to solve the problems of mankind, of carrying the testimony of Christ to the society of which they will be a part” (Christ is Passing By, no. 28).

[45] These schools are promoted by Catholic citizens, together with others who may non-Catholics, and are civil and not ecclesiastical initiatives. With regard to this fact, Escrivá said: “On the other hand, I must confess, that I do not like the expressions, ‘Catholic schools,’ ‘Church schools,’ etc., even though I respect those who think differently. I prefer to
see things distinguished by their results and not by their names. A school is truly Christian when it strives for excellence, and gives a complete education—which includes Christian ideals—at the same time respecting personal freedom and earnestly furthering social justice. If this is accomplished, the name is of little importance. Personally, I repeat, I prefer to avoid those adjectives” (Conversations with Msgr. Escrivá. no. 81).


[47] In higher level educational institutions inspired by Opus Dei’s charism, for example, in universities, this criterion is not followed.

[48] For Escrivá, pluralism in these question should be fostered and loved by all Catholics. Responding to a question about apostolic activities of Opus Dei for married people (a distinct topic from that of schools promoted by members of the Work), Escrivá once told a Spanish journalist, in regard to other Catholic groups that organize means of spiritual formation that are mixed, for men and women together, that it seemed to him good that they did what they considered most suitable. However, this should not be considered the only possible way of giving spiritual formation nor was it obvious that it was the best way (see Conversations with Msgr. Escrivá, no. 99).

[49] During Escrivá’s lifetime, the results of studies showing that the level of learning is notably higher in single-sex schools than in mixed schools were not yet widespread. Nor can we assume that this educational advantage was his only concern in encouraging these types of schools.


[53] Friends of God, no. 159.

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

[55] Furrow, no. 733.

[56] Pope Francis, Laudato si’, no. 213.
Schools inspired by the educational principles of Escrivá are, in my experience, usually able to impart to students the necessary reference points they need to walk freely in the right direction in life, towards personal happiness. To those teachers who sometimes do not immediately see the effectiveness of their educational efforts and who could become discouraged, it is useful to remind them of what difficult former students so often say about themselves: “I went off the right path. I knew in my heart what the path was that I should follow but I didn’t want to, and now finally I have decided to do so.”

Pope Francis has often spoken about educating in temperance and self-mastery. For example, in the sixth chapter of his encyclical *Laudato si’*, he writes: “If we want to bring about deep change, we need to realize that certain mindsets really do influence our behavior. Our efforts at education will be inadequate and ineffectual unless we strive to promote a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and our relationship with nature. Otherwise, the paradigm of consumerism will continue to advance, with the help of the media and the highly effective workings of the market” (no. 215).


Pope Francis too stresses the importance of the parents’ example: “In the family, faith accompanies every age of life, beginning with childhood: children learn to trust in the love of their parents. This is why it is so important that within their families parents encourage shared expressions of faith which can help children gradually to mature in their own faith. Young people in particular, who are going through a period in their lives which is so complex, rich and important for their faith, ought to feel the constant closeness and support of their families and the Church in their journey of faith” (Pope Francis, Encyclical Lumen Fidei, no. 53).

A person who possesses a good foundation of natural virtues, is prepared to appreciate the greatest gift of God to mankind, moral freedom. God does not revoke this gift even though men and women so often misuse it, damaging themselves and making others suffer. The supernatural virtues, infused into the soul of the baptized person, and strengthened through personal correspondence to divine grace, are grafted onto the natural virtues and perfect them. The adjective “Christian” gives a further dimension of meaning to education, by highlighting the interior struggle between positive and negative tendencies that every man and woman notices within him or herself, and giving the person being educated a clear and firm goal: the goal that God wants us to attain for our complete and unending happiness.

The principle of collegiality was foreseen by him as early as 1936 when, having planned the opening of the first centers of Opus Dei outside of Madrid, specifically in Valencia and in Paris, the founder wrote some guidelines for those who would be directing the formational activities in these cities (see Instruction, May 31, 1936).