

treat them as we would treat Jesus himself. We will grow in communion with others when we live true charity, which demands loving others as God loves them and because God loves them.

*Korea is the only country in the world that is divided into two. We say that we want peace, but we are not good at reconciliation. What can we do to grow in wisdom to obtain peace and reconciliation above and beyond ideology?*

This seems to me to be a very good question, and it prompts me to renew my desire to pray every day for peace in this wonderful land. The specific solutions correspond rather to the civil sphere; nevertheless as a priest and bishop, I will dare to point out that we can all do something more to love and respect our neighbor, to help them to get closer to God and to respect others. The day that we see in the other man our brother in Christ, we have taken a very important step towards reconciliation. Precisely St. John XXIII, recently canonized together with St. John Paul II, in his well-known encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, spoke of the two pillars of peace being justice and charity. And both of these rest, in turn, on respect for the dignity of the person. Both in Korea and in the rest of the world to attain peace and reconciliation, one needs to get rid of everything that supposes an offense to the dignity of the person.

## Interview granted to *Archisevilla Digital*, Spain (June 20, 2014)

By Ana Capote

*Don Javier, what do you ask of the faithful of the Work in relation to the dioceses?*

I ask that we pull the cart in the same direction as the bishop of the diocese, and that we are ready to learn from others. The fact that a faithful of the diocese is a member of the prelature of Opus Dei has to lead to a closer union, shown in deeds, with the diocesan bishop and the other faithful of that particular Church.

*And more specifically, what do you ask of the faithful of Opus Dei in Seville?*

I ask that the men and women in Seville who are faithful of Opus Dei pray for vocations to the diocesan priesthood, for the catechists and educators, for the holiness of the families in Seville, and for the other intentions of their beloved Archbishop Juan José Basenji. Also I encourage them to increase every day their apostolic zeal, so that the Church in Seville may obtain abundant fruit from the prelature's work of evangelization in this land. We

give thanks to God that the Work's apostolic efforts, by God's grace, are giving rise to many Christian marriages, as well as vocations to the priesthood, religious life, and lay celibacy.

Moreover, as Sevillians, I would also ask that they help transmit to the whole Church the joy and the deep love for our Lady that is so characteristic of this land.

*You were a witness to John Paul II's love for Seville. Could you share any memory about this?*

The Pope was in Seville twice. I recall, among other things, his joy at being able to beatify Sister Angela of the Cross there, whom he later proclaimed a saint in a ceremony that took place years later, in 2003, in Madrid. St. John Paul loved Seville a lot and the love of the Sevillians for the Pope has been made visible in the statue of the new saint now installed next to the Archbishop's residence.

*With his canonization still quite recent, what features would you highlight in the new saint?*

St. John Paul II was a priest, a bishop, and a Pope closely united to Christ's mother, at whose feet he put his pastoral service, under the motto *Totus Tuus*. He summoned the Church to a new evangelization and he led by his example. The Holy Spirit made use of

his words, gestures, writings, and self-giving, to bring millions of men and women to the sources of grace, and to dedication to God in the priesthood, in the religious life, in marriage and in lay apostolic celibacy. He led us into the third millennium, leaving us an imposing legacy on human life and the family, care for the poor and the most needy, the rights of workers, the dignity of women, and so many other points that are central to furthering the good of all mankind.

*And what about John XXIII?*

St. John XXIII is the Pope who convoked the Second Vatican Council, an expression of faith and renewal in the Church that sought to speak to the hearts of the men and women of our era. Pope Roncalli was a sower of peace. Amid very tense historical circumstance, he did all he could to prevent war. Following the example of his predecessors, he left us a rich teaching on the requirements for peace and human dignity. He was a "father" who was very likeable, with a deep devotion to our Lady.

*What image do you retain from your first meeting with Pope Francis?*

The image of a father who receives you with great cordiality and simplicity, and who encourages you in the mission of evangelization. Specifically I have en-

graved on my memory his great interest in spreading the Sacrament of Penance. Pope Francis is another gift of the Holy Spirit to his Church. His zeal to closely accompany everyone (healthy or sick, rich or poor) is a stimulus for all Christians to strive to bring Christ's love and mercy to the furthest corner of the earth.

*What thoughts come to mind when we mention St. Josemaría Escrivá?*

An extraordinary gratitude and a great desire to imitate his joyful and dedicated life, filled with zeal for souls. I could speak to you for hours about St. Josemaría. But I will limit myself here to emphasizing a very typical attitude of his, which I had the grace of witnessing directly: his capacity to imitate Christ on the Cross, with his arms wide open to everyone. He opened his priestly heart to those on the left, in the center, and on the right; to the poor and the rich, to the healthy and the sick; to everyone without exception. He had the openness of Christ, the going out to find souls, about which Pope Francis speaks so often.

*And Alvaro del Portillo?*

In thinking of Alvaro del Portillo, I especially remember his permanent smile, his kindness and constant faithfulness, his spirit of service. Many of the

people in contact with him (from ecclesiastics in the Holy See to farm workers he met in a village near Rome) told me that "Don Alvaro transmitted peace." As we prepare now for his beatification, I am going to his intercession, asking him to "infect" us with a deep Christian peace of soul; with his loyalty to God, to the Church, and to the Pope; and with his social concern shown in spurring forward so many initiatives all over the world for the assistance of the most needy.

*A saint and a blessed: they have set the bar very high for you, haven't they?*

When I look at them, my reaction is: thank you, my God, for these two giants of holiness. More than as unattainable models (a very high bar, as you said), I like to see them as two great allies, two intercessors who are helping us from heaven. And from there they are encouraging and sustaining us with the same heart of a father and of a mother with which they loved us on earth.

*Do we all have the "stuff of saints"?*

St. Josemaría asked himself the same question in a point in *The Way*. And he answered that having the "raw material" to be a saint is not enough. We all have the possibility of following and

imitating Jesus Christ, spreading charity. But to attain this goal—and to obtain happiness with a capital “H”—we need to let God’s grace do its work, normally with the help of others, with docility and obedience to the different calls that our Lord addresses to us.

\* The address of the Prelate of Opus Dei in the conference *Vir fidelis multum laudabitur*, for the hundredth anniversary of Bishop del Portillo’s birth, is printed in full under the heading “Centennial” in the section “On the Venerable Servant of God Alvaro del Portillo.”