

Para profundizar en el carisma de la Obra, Illanes tuvo que buscar una herramienta especulativa en que apoyar su reflexión. Aunque criticándola, eligió la teología de la historia maritainiana. El francés, sumido en el debate sobre el sentido de la modernidad y víctima del segundo embate liberal, quiso salvar la autonomía del orden creado, pero pagó un alto precio... Don José Luis, que también deseó salvar esa autonomía, pero en dialéctica con el teocratismo y el clericalismo y, en definitiva, contra una concepción del laico entendido como *longa manus* de la Jerarquía, salió mejor parado.

Otros teólogos que han reflexionado sobre el espíritu del Opus Dei sobre la base de una buena comprensión del carisma, también han tenido que buscar herramientas adecuadas para desarrollar el rico fondo teológico que subyace en ese mensaje primordial. El «primer» Panikkar llegó a su brillante noción de «teandrismo cristiano», criticando a Baruch Spinoza; y Alfredo García Suárez abocó a su noción de «teología de la secularidad», rebatiendo la teología de la radicalidad cristiana de Hans Urs von Balthasar, basada en una comprensión muy sesgada de los «consejos evangélicos».

En definitiva, un único carisma, una misma realidad, rica y fecunda en sí, explorada desde perspectivas distintas y con herramientas diferentes. Por eso, en este punto, y en tantos otros, la contribución de Illanes constituye un notable servicio a la Iglesia y al Opus Dei. Este libro, tan familiar y amigable, pero tan serio y profundo a la vez, se lo reconoce.

A los editores: *Gratias vobis ago!*

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José Luis GONZÁLEZ-GULLÓN – John F. COVERDALE, *Opus Dei: A History (1928-2016)*. Volume One, New York, Scepter Publishers, 2022, 241 pp. • José Luis GONZÁLEZ-GULLÓN – John F. COVERDALE, *Opus Dei: A History (1928-2016)*. Volume Two, New York, Scepter Publishers, 2022, 410 pp.

Is a general history of Opus Dei, currently a personal prelature of the Roman Catholic Church, necessarily an ecclesiastical history? Perhaps, yet the two volumes of *Opus Dei: A History (1928-2016)*, a translation of the 2021 *Historia del Opus Dei* by the same authors, can be read as an intellectual history of the most recent variety—those that emphasize the embeddedness of ideas in specific social contexts, coexisting with particular people, places, and institutions. Indeed, the authors affirm that the “goal of this historical monograph is to analyze how the message of Opus Dei spread in the Church and in society through the institution and its members” (pg. x). This rich account of *the message* of Opus Dei, and the people who absorbed and gave personal

and institutional expression to its ideal of Christian sanctity in secular life, advances a dynamic understanding of the past, present, and future of this pastoral phenomenon.

Unlike the single-volume Spanish predecessor, the translation is divided into two volumes: the first, “From the Foundation to the second Vatican Council” and the latter “From the Second Vatican Council to 2016”. Each volume is divided into three sections and the aggregate six sections correspond roughly to the decades of the twentieth century starting around the 1930’s, with the final two sections each covering the approximately twenty-year spans corresponding to the tenures of the founder’s first two successors. This patterning reveals an underlying logic of this work: it is heavily structured around the internal successions of leadership within Opus Dei, while the chronology of events in the wider Church or society serves an ancillary role. Thus, while the Second Vatican Council sits nominally at the split of the volumes, it only appears in chapter five of the second volume and, while of course of great significance for Opus Dei as for the whole Church, the death of the founder in 1975 stands out as the more pivotal point of transition in the narrative. Relations with the Pope, the Roman Curia, bishops, and religious orders of course appear regularly throughout the work, however the authors seem less preoccupied with fitting Opus Dei into the history of Catholicism and the Church in the 20th century, instead centering on the message of Opus Dei and the ways it was progressively made present in different settings.

The transparent affiliation of both authors as members of Opus Dei serves as a significant asset in this attempt to follow and analyze the configurations of key ideas, projects, and conflicts in the life of Opus Dei. Indeed, one of the greatest strengths of this book is to highlight the wealth of information available in the documents of the General Archive of the Prelature of Opus Dei (AGP). While the AGP is as of yet inaccessible to the wider academic community this work models the rich results promised for future researchers. The authors’ insider advantage was not limited to special access to AGP records, as they were furthermore able to conduct interviews with over two hundred individuals from around the world, some of whom had participated directly in the principal events recounted. This general history provides a great service to future scholars by aggregating plentiful primary and secondary sources on the history of Opus Dei. The cited materials are in several languages, include sources with antagonistic and critical perspectives, and reference specialized research (for example a number of articles published in this very journal), providing a comprehensive account of the most recent academic literature.

Opus Dei as an institution is one of the main themes of both volumes. The organization of its governance, activities, and membership in the context of both ecclesiastical and secular jurisdictions is thoroughly covered, and it is likely that this material will be the most recognizable for readers of extant studies on Opus Dei’s juridical evolution into a personal prelature. The book makes greater use of hitherto largely internal nomenclature and subdivisions, e.g. “inscribed members” or the “work of St. Gabriel”, which might be less familiar to some readers. Likewise, the explanations of technical

distinctions, such as differences between “corporate”, “common”, or “personal” works of apostolate, at times require special effort and attention from the reader. While these latter descriptions often make for dense reading, they are crucial for critically engaging some of Opus Dei’s most public apostolic projects, such as schools and universities, from perspectives both internal and external to the institution. The authors choose to review some of the above-mentioned terminology repeatedly at several points throughout the book, which on the one hand ensures subtle and unfamiliar terms are not a source of confusion, but, as the authors acknowledge and apologize for, such reminders lead to a slight repetitiveness in some sections, in spite of noticeable efforts to limit redundancy by redirecting the reader to previous explanations.

If the technicalities of institutional framing are unavoidable, it is the people involved in developing the enterprise of Opus Dei who are unmistakably at the center of this account. The authors are committed to the idea that Opus Dei’s message of holiness in ordinary life plays out primarily in the individual lives of its members, and this commitment is reflected in various ways by the structure and content of the volumes. Importantly, this book goes beyond the genre of biography and giving exclusive attention to the life of the founder or his successors, to rather portray the many collaborators who were involved in the growth of the organization and the spread of its message around the world. A testament to this stance are the indices of both volumes which are almost exclusively lists of personal names. At times the references to individuals, such as those beginning apostolic activities in a particular country or people appointed to governing councils, appear only in passing as lists of names and leave a tantalizing desire for greater detail and contextualization. Such economy of expression, however, is redressed in the final chapter of the second volume, “‘A Sea without Shores:’ Individual Action in Society”, where the authors profile the personal initiatives of over forty individuals, many times in their own words. These profiles show the diversity of men and women whose activities bring Opus Dei’s ideals to a host of different environments. The kaleidoscopic breadth of the profiles is reinforced by a selection of images present in both the Spanish original and the translated volumes. These volumes present in grayscale and reduced size what are full-page, color photographs in the original Spanish edition, but nonetheless bear witness to the primacy of people by presenting snapshots of various group activities carried out by members of Opus Dei across the world and over many years.

Change over time is dear to all historians and these two volumes consider with special interest changes in Opus Dei’s geographical spread and numerical size. The chronological account follows the growth and spread of Opus Dei from the neighborhoods of Madrid, across Spain, gradually into Europe, and throughout the world’s continents. The drama of Opus Dei’s international expansion is a prominent feature of this work and the authors carefully divide their attention between Spain, the first and still most developed region of activity, and the rest of the world’s regions where members reside and organize formational activities. Such a balance reflects

the reality of Opus Dei's transnational mission as well as the inheritance and inertia of its origins in Spain. Information about growth in the size of membership in Opus Dei is aggregated from novel AGP sources as well as from public reports, all of which are synthesized over the course of the work to provide glimpses of changing trends. The jump from initially incremental to bounding new vocations, shifting proportions between the men's and women's sections, decelerating new growth, and aging constituencies all appear as facets of a yet unfolding trajectory at the head of an institutional lifetime of almost one hundred years.

Changes of expansion and growth do not exclude changes of loss and correction. The authors of this work do not shy away from evaluating moments when mistakes, misunderstandings, and failures seemed to result in tensions for Opus Dei, both within and without the organization. These volumes document examples of ineffective apostolic strategies, counterproductive terminology, disaffected members, and political rivalries that at various times required reevaluating practices and working toward reconciliation. Relying on the factual and documentary record appropriate for historical analysis, the authors are able to address notable cases of acrimony or controversy by identifying the individuals and parties involved with a specificity and coolness made possible only recently by the passing of time.

There is little time remaining before the centennial of Opus Dei's founding in 2028 when reflections on the forgoing decades and those yet to come will undoubtedly swell and crest. An excellent initial exposition of the life of Opus Dei's message of holiness in secular life in the lives of many people the world over, these volumes are sure to be an essential reference for years to come.

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San Josemaría ESCRIVÁ DE BALAGUER, *Camino: Edición, introducción y notas de Fidel Sebastián Mediavilla*, Madrid, Centro para la edición de los clásicos españoles, 2023, 368 pp.

Recientemente el Instituto Cervantes señaló que *Camino* es la cuarta obra más traducida del español a otros idiomas. En realidad, si tenemos en cuenta que los tres libros más traducidos (*El Quijote* y dos novelas de García Márquez) son de ficción, se puede afirmar que *Camino* representa la obra de no ficción en lengua castellana más traducida a otras lenguas. No resulta, pues, extraño que el Centro para la Edición de los Clásicos Españoles (CECE) haya publicado una edición de *Camino*, que podríamos apellidar de filológica. Se trata, en efecto, de una edición, con abundante aparato crítico, Introducción y Notas, realizada por un filólogo, Fidel Sebastián