



PRAYER

*O God, merciful Father,
you granted your servant Álvaro, Bishop,
the grace of being an exemplary pastor in the service
of the Church, and a most faithful son and successor
of Saint Josemaría, the founder of Opus Dei.*

*Grant that I too may respond faithfully
to the demands of the Christian vocation,
turning all the circumstances and events of my life
into opportunities to love you
and serve the kingdom of Jesus Christ.
Deign to glorify your servant Álvaro, and
through his intercession grant me
the favor I request . . .
(here make your petition). Amen.*

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be to the Father.

In conformity with the decrees of Pope Urban VIII, we declare that there is no intention of anticipating in any way the judgment of the Church, and that this prayer is not intended for public use.

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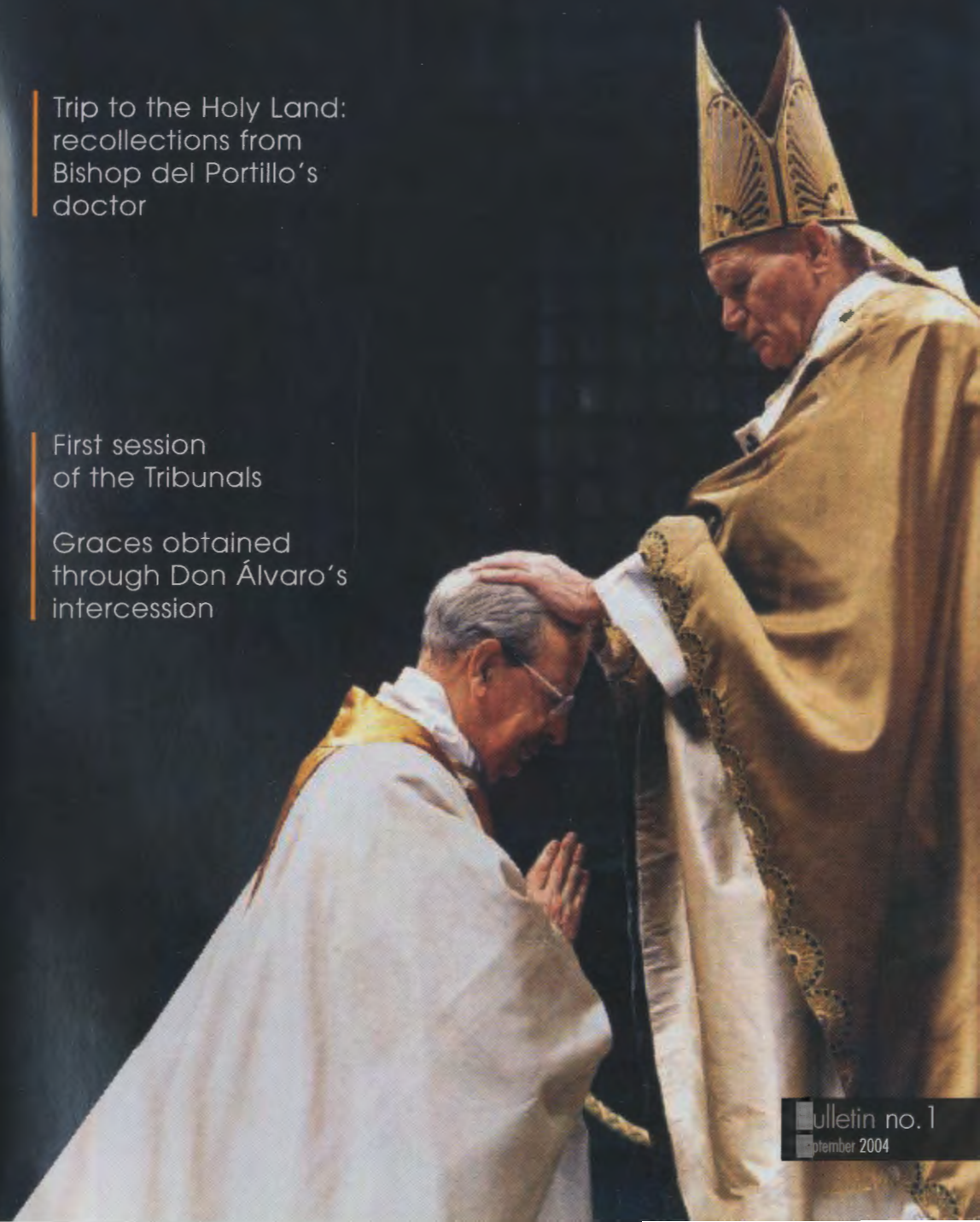
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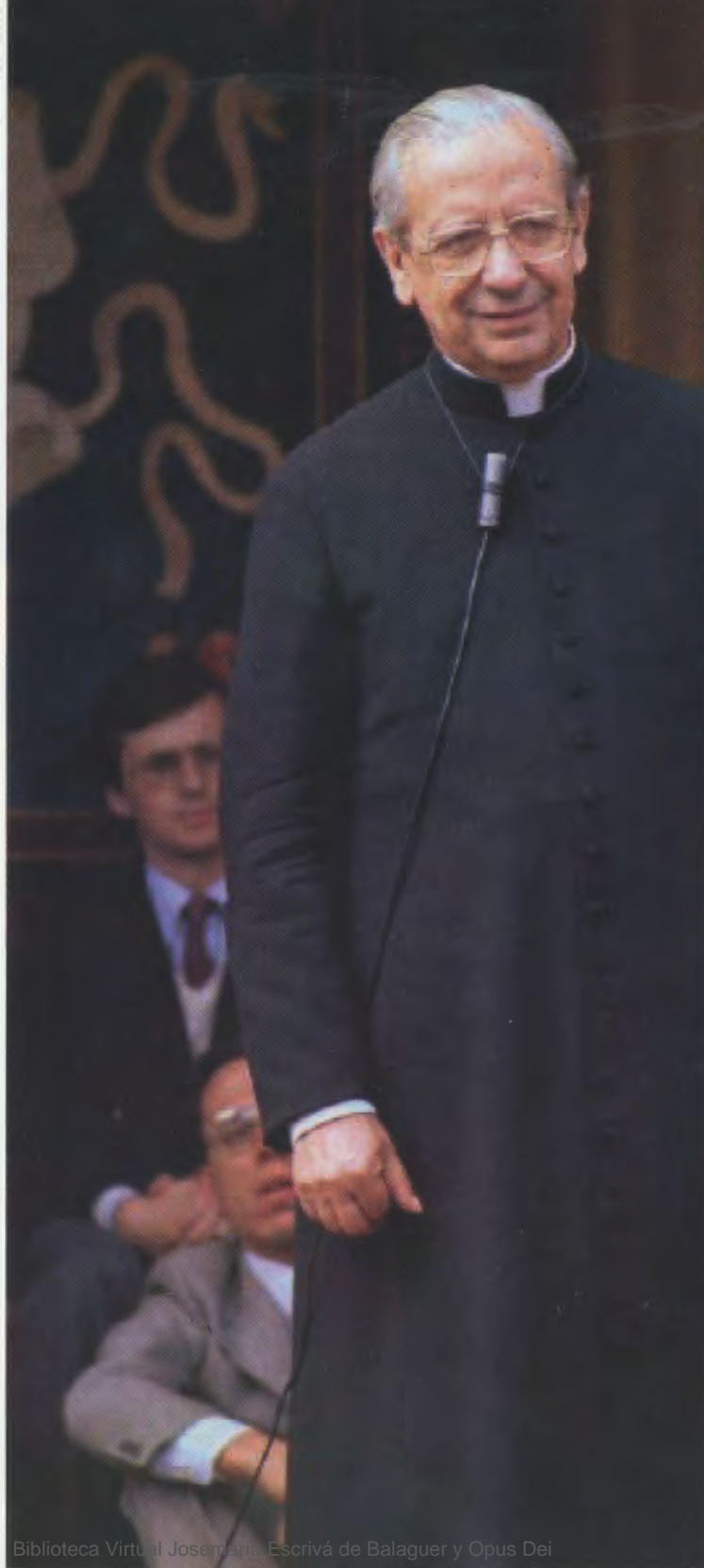
Álvaro del Portillo

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Bishop Álvaro del Portillo was born in Madrid, Spain, on March 11, 1914. He was a civil engineer and also held doctorates in philosophy and canon law. On June 25, 1944, he was ordained a priest. Two years later, he moved to Rome, where he worked directly with St. Josemaría Escrivá, the founder of Opus Dei. His service to the Church was also shown in his dedicated work in tasks entrusted to him by the Holy See and especially in his active participation in the work of the Second Vatican Council. In 1975, after the death of St. Josemaría, he was elected to succeed him as head of Opus Dei. On January 6, 1991, Pope John Paul II ordained him as bishop. The Servant of God's pastoral work was characterized by fidelity to the spirit of Opus Dei's founder and by zeal in extending the apostolates of the Prelature and the call to holiness in ordinary life throughout the world. On the morning of March 23, 1994, a few hours after returning from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, our Lord called to himself this good and faithful servant of his. That same day, the Holy Father John Paul II went to pray before his mortal remains, which now repose in the crypt of the Prelatic Church of Our Lady of Peace, in Rome.

editorial

EDITORIAL

The first edition of the Bulletin of the Servant of God, Álvaro del Portillo, is being published ten years after his death and shortly after the opening session of the tribunals that will carry out the diocesan phase of the examination of his life and virtues.

His reputation for sanctity has already spread throughout the world. Today thousands of people seek to obtain God's favor through the intercession of Don Álvaro, a good and faithful priest and exemplary bishop in the service of the Church and souls. These pages seek to bear witness to the spread of private devotion to Don Álvaro and to the action of God's mercy for the benefit of mankind.

We feel sure that readers of this Bulletin will find help for their Christian lives in Don Álvaro's life and example. As the Prelate of Opus Dei said in the opening session of the Tribunal of the Cause on March 20, 2004, they will "discover, through Don Álvaro, the fatherly face of God smiling upon us."





THE CAUSE OF CANONIZATION: FIRST SESSION OF THE TRIBUNALS

Opening ceremonies of the tribunals; Cardinal Ruini's address; words from the Prelate of Opus Dei

The Congregation for the Causes of the Saints approved two tribunals of equal competence for the diocesan investigation of the life, virtues and reputation for sanctity of Bishop Álvaro del Portillo: one from the Vicariate of Rome and the other from the Prelature of Opus Dei.

The opening session of the Vicariate of Rome's tribunal was held on March 5, 2004, in the Lateran Palace's Hall of Conciliation, and

was presided over by Cardinal Camilo Ruini, the Holy Father's vicar for the Diocese of Rome.

In his address, Cardinal Ruini gave a biographical sketch of Bishop del Portillo. "The deep pastoral experience he gained working alongside St. Josemaría, his proven human qualities and his theological and juridical competence enabled him to undertake many different tasks," he said. The

Pope's vicar emphasized "the long and multifaceted activity that he carried out in the service of the Apostolic See" as a consultor for various congregations, as secretary of the Second Vatican Council commission that prepared *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, as a consultor for other Conciliar commissions, and as a synod Father.

"The frequent occasions that I had to meet Bishop del Portillo," recalled Cardinal Ruini, "imprinted on my soul the conviction that I found myself in the presence of an exemplary pastor." He went on: "In his firm adherence to the doctrine of the Church, in his union with the Pope, in his pastoral charity, in his humility, and in his balanced character, he exhibited an extraordinary interior richness."

According to the Cardinal, "the service that Don Álvaro provided to the Church of Rome, and the prompt and effective way he supported the Holy Father's pastoral initiatives in this diocese, showed the love for the Church that he had learned from St. Josemaría."

The swearing in ceremony for the members of the Tribunal and the Postulator of the cause was held in the presence of the Cardinal.

A few days later, on March 20, the opening session of the Tribunal of the Prelature of Opus Dei was held in the Höffner Hall of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, in Rome, with four hundred people present.

The Prelate of Opus Dei, Bishop Javier Echevarría, noted that "shortly after his death I received many written testimonies confirming how widespread Don Álvaro's reputation for holiness was even during his lifetime. The writers expressed the wish that his cause of canonization be opened. Among these documents were some 200 letters from bishops (35 of them cardinals) from 25 countries."

Bishop Echevarría recalled that when work began on St. Josemaría's cause of canon-



- Cardinal Camilo Ruini presiding over the opening session of the Tribunal of the Vicariate of Rome
- View of Höffner Hall during the ceremony on March 20
- Bishop Javier Echevarría during the session

ization, Don Álvaro "never missed the opportunity to help us understand that the aim was not to seek the human glory of Opus Dei, but the good of the whole Church, the good of souls." The Prelate of Opus Dei expressed his hope that the cause of Bishop del Portillo would also be an opportunity for many souls, "to discover," through Don Álvaro, "the fatherly face of God, who smiles on us, encourages us, and forgives us."

LAST DAYS IN THE HOLY LAND

Recollections from the doctor who shared in the Servant of God's final earthly journey



• Leaving the Shrine of the Beatitudes

Early on the afternoon of March 14, 1994, Don Álvaro, Fr. Javier Echevarría, Fr. Joaquín Alonso and I left the Ciampino airport for Tel Aviv. Don Álvaro was making that trip to the Holy Land because of his great love for Jesus Christ, and also for pastoral reasons. A handful of the Prelature of Opus Dei's faithful had recently begun to work in Jerusalem and carry out their apostolate there. The trip was paid for by one of Don Álvaro's friends as an 80th birthday present.

I can never be thankful enough for the privilege of accompanying Don Álvaro on this trip. He created around him a family atmosphere of human affection and good humor, which made

for an unforgettable experience.

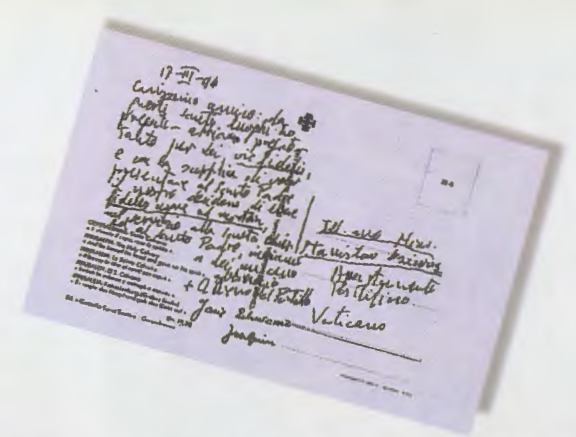
With his eyes fixed on Christ ... and on those around him

The Uruguayan ambassador to Israel, Anibal Diaz, had placed his car at Don Álvaro's disposal. On the 15th we drove from Tel Aviv to Nazareth, passing by Mount Carmel. In Haifa, a Puerto Rican tourist recognized Don Álvaro and asked him to let her husband take a picture of her with him. Don Álvaro agreed. Similar scenes took place in the following days. That evening in Nazareth, Don Álvaro celebrated Holy Mass in the Basilica of the Annunciation. In his homily

• My dear friend:

In these holy places I have prayed—we have prayed—so much for you, *vir fidelis*. With the request that you present to the Holy Father our desire to be *fideles usque ad mortem*, in the service of the Church and the Holy Father, we send you a cordial embrace

Postcard from Don Alvaro to Msgr. Stanislaw Dziwisz, written in the Holy Land on March 17, 1994



he spoke of the mystery of the Incarnation and of suffering as God's gift, undoubtedly thinking of Anibal, who was suffering from a serious illness and who attended the Mass with his wife.

On the morning of the 16th we went to the Church of the Primacy of Peter, and later to the Mount of the Beatitudes, where Don Álvaro celebrated Mass. Afterwards we went to Capernaum. In the afternoon we spent half an hour praying on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Don Álvaro, Fr. Javier and Fr. Joaquín sat on a fallen tree trunk, and Fr. Joaquín read some Gospel passages recounting times when Jesus was present at that place. I sat on a rock behind Don Álvaro, with Fr. Alberto Steinworth, one of the priests of Opus Dei who lived in Jerusalem. Trying not to distract them, I took some videos

of the scene. Close to the shore we saw a nun and in another place, a monk. As we left, four boys of different races came and began to pray quietly. On the way back we picked a few leaves from some plants as a souvenir.

On the following day, March 17th, we drove from Nazareth to Jerusalem, with a stop at Mount Tabor, where Don Álvaro said Mass. In Jerusalem, after praying at the Holy Sepulcher and at Calvary, Don Álvaro visited the two Opus Dei centers in the city. During the next few days he returned at various times to both centers and said Mass on March 20th in one and on March 21st in the other. On the 18th he celebrated Mass at one of the altars of the Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher and on the 19th in the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem. The 19th, Saturday, was



• **A good and faithful servant** Your memories of the Holy Land are now joined to your memories of Bishop Álvaro del Portillo.... God allowed him to carry out a pilgrimage to the places where Jesus spent his life on earth. They were days of intense prayer that united him closely to Christ and prepared him for his definitive encounter with the Blessed Trinity. The memory of this "good and faithful servant" should strengthen in each of you your zeal for the service of the Gospel. Pope John Paul II to the participants in the UNIV Congress, March 29, 1994, Rome



• Pope John Paul II praying before the remains of Don Álvaro

my saint's day, and Don Álvaro congratulated me as soon as he saw me at breakfast. That day there was a gathering in the afternoon at the Paradise Hotel in Bethlehem, with more than a hundred people attending, among them Christians, Jews and Muslims. It was a very cordial get-together. Don Álvaro responded with great affection and tact to the questions he was asked. He insisted on the need for Arabs and Jews to live together peacefully. Later, in Jerusalem, he visited the Latin Patriarch. Two days later he also visited the Apostolic Delegation.

In the Cenacle

On Sunday the 20th we went to Bethany in the morning and to Ain-karin in the afternoon. At 11:00 a.m. on March 22nd, Don Álvaro concelebrated Mass in the Cenacle with Fr. Javier, Fr. Joaquín, Fr. Alberto and Fr. Lawrence Richardson, another priest of Opus Dei living in Jerusalem. This was to be the last Mass of his

pilgrimage to the Holy Land. But it was also, and who could have imagined it, Don Álvaro's final Mass on earth. Fr. Javier preached the homily and Don Álvaro gave us Communion.

A few hours later we were on the plane, returning to Rome. During the flight I trained the video camera on Don Álvaro and began to film him. He smiled for the camera and then gave a wave of greeting, or of farewell, with his hand. Around eight in the evening, the youngest of the crew offered us something to drink. Don Álvaro and Fr. Javier asked him about his family, his work, and his interests, and then told him a bit about the spirit of the Work.

At the Ciampino airport some families were waiting with bouquets of flowers. Don Álvaro was very affectionate with everyone.

During the night

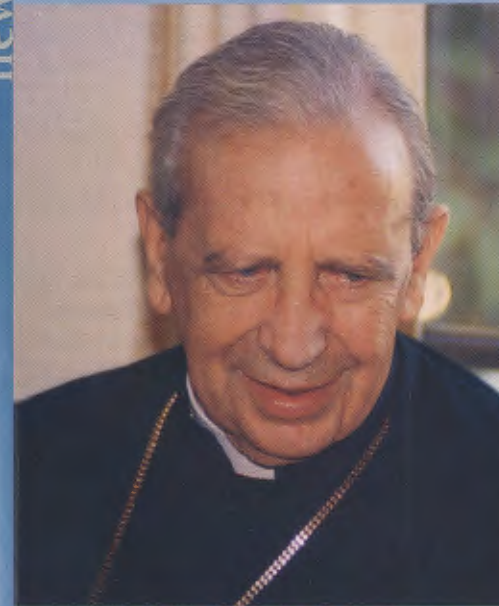
I went to bed shortly after arriving home, and about three in the morning Don Javier called me: Don Álvaro didn't feel well. When I reached his room, he was having difficulty breathing. He immediately lost conscience. I gave him oxygen; he had hardly any pulse. After treatment with medications, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation efforts were initiated, but without success. I had to tell Fr. Javier that Don Álvaro was dying. Don Javier gave him absolution several times and administered the Anointing of the Sick. Around 4:00 in the morning, when Fr. Javier asked whether Don Álvaro had died, I could only answer that he had. I kissed the kind and now lifeless face of Don Álvaro, sure that he was smiling at me from heaven. ▲

Dr. José María Araquistain

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RACES OBTAINED THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF DON ÁLVARO

news



Stranded at Lake Kossou

One Sunday during a service project at Lake Kossou, we decided to go swimming in the lake. There were about 15 of us in total, half of the participants, and we drove there in a mini bus. After half an hour I got out of the water and realized that I had lost the van keys. It was five in the afternoon, the place we were staying was a long way away, and to get a copy of the key we would have to go to Abidjan, more than 150 miles away. We looked in the water for 45 minutes without finding anything. Then I asked Don Álvaro to help. Although I don't like to "bother" him with material things, we were getting very concerned. I told him, after saying the prayer for private devotion, "Get me out of this jam."

Two or three minutes later, Yannick, the smallest member of our expedition, dove into the water and emerged with the keys in his hand and a smile on his face, saying: "I prayed to Don Álvaro."

Ajanon, Abidjan (Ivory Coast)

Impossible university bills

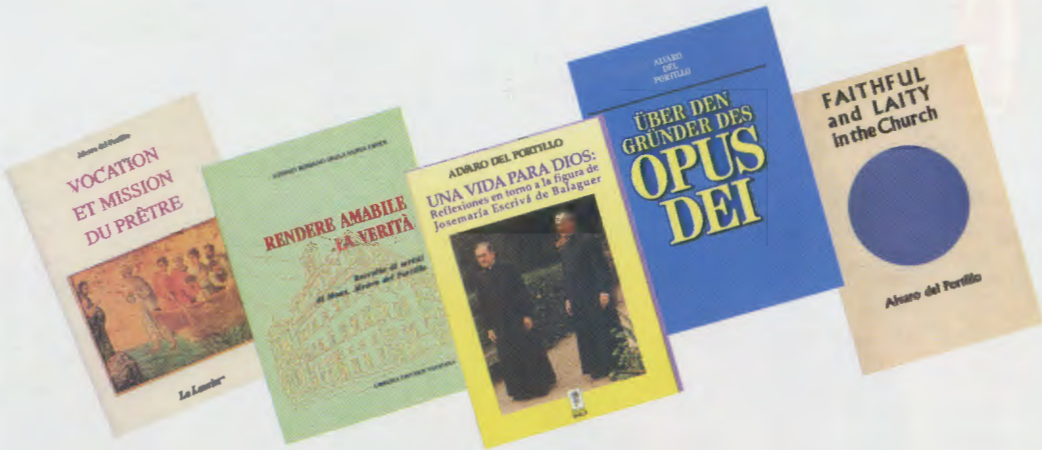
Again and again our financial situation made it impossible to pay the bills for our three children at the University of Rome. Often only an intervention from heaven enabled us to pay the bills when they came due. We put ourselves under the patronage of Don Álvaro, saying the prayer on his prayer card, and by God's grace we somehow got the money together each time. We have obtained many other favors through Don Álvaro's intercession, including peace and harmony in our family, six people always struggling with thousands of temptations. For all this I give thanks to the good God who has given us such a marvelous intercessor.

P.M., San Giovanni La Punta (Italy)

Money for a plane ticket

I am of Japanese origin and had always dreamed of going to Japan. I was finally able, due to some unexpected circumstances, to get a grant to study for a year in Okinawa. For me, attending the Work's means of formation is an important matter, but the closest center was Nagasaki and the only way to get there was by plane, which required great sacrifices to

For more information on Don Álvaro:
www.opusdei.org



VOCATION ET MISSION DU PRÊTRE
Writings on the Priesthood
By Álvaro del Portillo
Le Laurier

RENDERE AMABILE LA VERITÀ
Ateneo Romano della Santa Croce
Libreria editrice vaticana

UNA VIDA PARA DIOS
By Álvaro del Portillo
Rialp

ÜBER DEN GRÜNDER DES OPUS DEI
An Interview About the Founder of Opus Dei
By Álvaro del Portillo
Adamas Verlag

FAITHFUL AND LAITY IN THE CHURCH
By Álvaro del Portillo
Ecclesia Press

obtain the necessary funds. At the tightest moment, when the time for my trip came but I didn't have the money for a ticket, I asked Bishop Álvaro del Portillo to intercede for me...I prayed insistently and each time a relative appeared with the cash or a check.

M.K.I., Kyoto (Japan)

Help in finding a job

Despite having degrees in Economics and Business Administration, I was unable to get a job. I submitted applications, sent out resumé's and had interviews with various companies, all to no avail. I told an aunt about my situation and she gave me some prayer cards of Don Álvaro del Portillo and told me to distribute them and to say the prayer with faith.

I did this, and to my surprise, my cell phone rang right away and a friend told me that somebody she knew urgently needed an administrator he could rely on. I immediately made the contact. We had an interview, and within a week I was working. I'm now very happy in my job and want to bear witness to the favor that I've received. I tell my story to anyone I can and continue to say the prayer on the card. I thank God very much for having given me this favor I was so anxious for: finding honest work.

L.G.P., Maracaibo (Venezuela)

Three years of migraine headaches

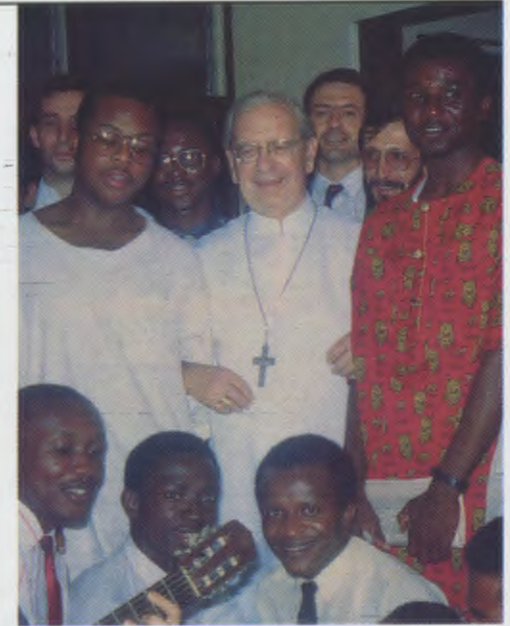
In November 1998, I began to suffer migraine headaches, something I had never had before. During the first year they

initiatives

With Don Álvaro del Portillo's encouragement and prompting, a great number of educational projects and undertakings of social and Christian development were begun.

These initiatives, in addition to their social purposes, also served to bring souls to God through the spirit of Opus Dei.

In the photo, Don Álvaro is shown with a group of his sons in Ugwuoma Study Centre, a university center in Enugu (Nigeria), during a catechetical trip to Africa in 1989.



occurred four or five times a month. Later they grew worse and increased to around ten times a month. I was forced to give up doing part of my regular work.

In September 2001 the pain became even more frequent. In November I had migraine headaches every other day. Each time I suffered the attacks I took some medicine that alleviated the pain but made me feel very ill. In agreement with the company doctor, it was decided that I should give up my job, because even the two hours I had been working were a great effort for me.

Not knowing what to do, I began a novena to God, using the prayer card of Don Álvaro. During the first two weeks I didn't obtain a cure, but there was a "spiritual cure" of two friends, something that gave me consolation and strength.

On the day after finishing the third novena, December 12, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, I had my last attack of pain. I attribute this miraculous and rapid cure after three years to the intercession of Don Álvaro del Portillo.

Now that I no longer have the migraine headaches, my life is as it was before. I can work, travel, read, listen to music, etc.

M.S., Utrecht (The Netherlands)