



## PRAYER

*O God, merciful Father,  
you granted your servant Bishop Alvaro  
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 also 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 Alvaro,  
and through his intercession  
grant me the favour 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 judgement of the Church, and that this prayer is not intended for public use.

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**Prelature of Opus Dei  
Office for the Causes of  
Saints**  
4 Orme Court  
London W2 4RL  
e-mail: [info@opusdei.org.uk](mailto:info@opusdei.org.uk)

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We would be grateful if our readers would send us names and addresses of others who might be interested in receiving this Newsletter or the prayer card of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo.

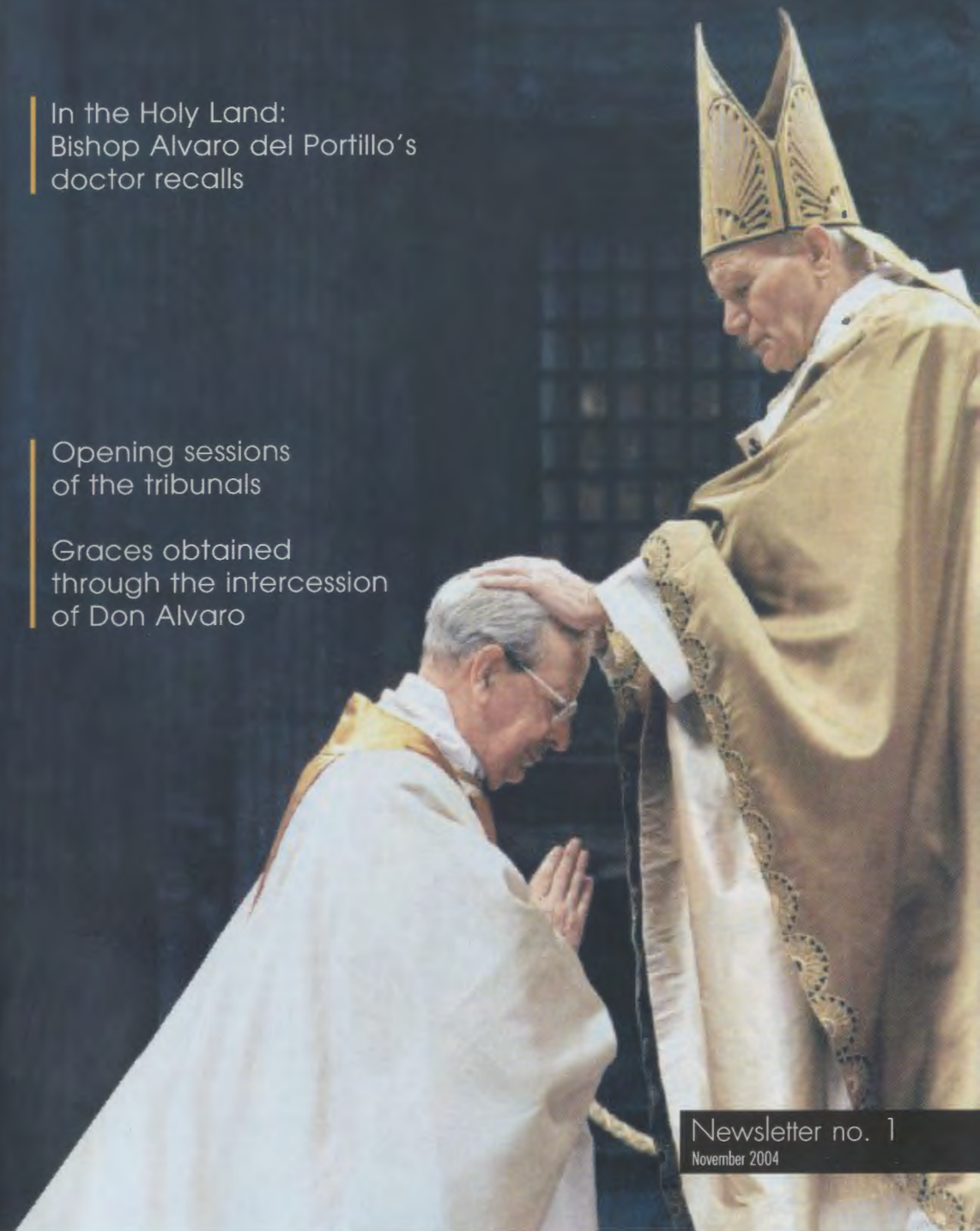
*Imprimatur:*  
Bishop Javier Echevarría  
Prelate of Opus Dei

# Alvaro del Portillo

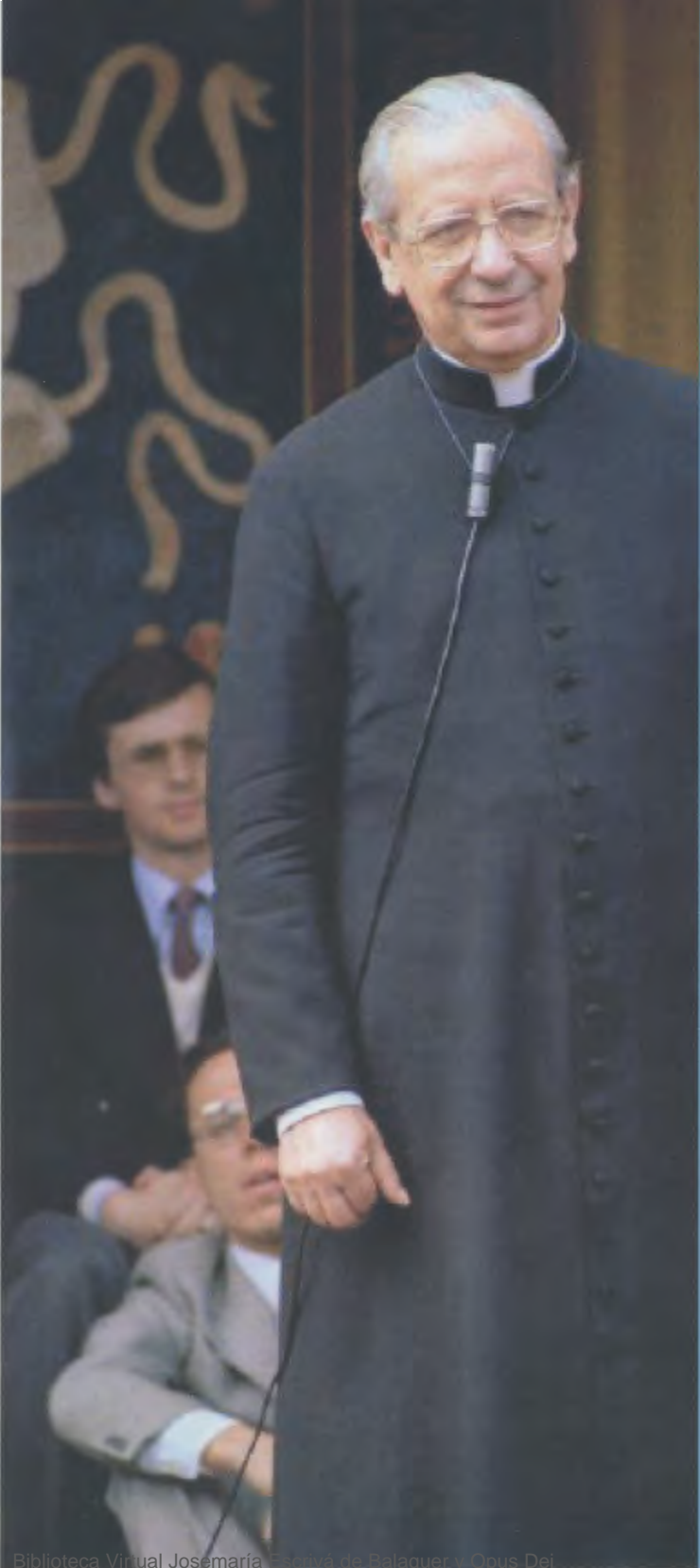
In the Holy Land:  
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doctor recalls

Opening sessions  
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Newsletter no. 1  
November 2004



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Bishop Alvaro del Portillo was born in Madrid (Spain) on 11 March 1914. He held doctorates in Civil Engineering, Philosophy and Canon Law. In 1935 he joined Opus Dei. On 25 June 1944 he was ordained to the priesthood, and two years later moved to Rome, where he worked very closely with Saint Josemaría Escrivá, the founder of Opus Dei. Alvaro del Portillo's service to the Church was shown in his dedication to the tasks which the Holy See entrusted to him, and especially through his active participation in the work of the Second Vatican Council. In 1975, after the death of Saint Josemaría, he was elected as his successor in the government of Opus Dei. On 6 January 1991 Pope John Paul II ordained him a bishop. Bishop del Portillo's way of governing Opus Dei was characterised by his fidelity to the spirit of the Founder and his zeal to extend throughout the world the apostolates of the Prelature and the universal call to holiness. Early in the morning of 23 March 1994, a few hours after his return from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, God called this good and faithful servant to Himself. That same day, the Holy Father went to pray before his mortal remains, which now rest in the crypt of the church of the Prelature, Our Lady of Peace, in Rome.

editorial

# EDITORIAL

This first Newsletter of the Servant of God Alvaro del Portillo is published ten years after his death, following the opening of the tribunals for the diocesan phase of the examination into his life and virtues.

During this decade, his reputation for holiness has spread worldwide. Many thousands of the faithful seek the intercession of Don Alvaro, a good and faithful man, an exemplary priest and bishop in his service to the Church and to souls, to obtain favours from God. The purpose of this Newsletter is to give some account, insofar as is possible, of the spread of private devotion to Don Alvaro and the action of God's mercy for the good of all.

We are confident that the readers of this Newsletter will find help for their Christian life in the life and example of Don Alvaro. Indeed, as the Prelate of Opus Dei said on 20 March 2004, at the opening session of the tribunal for the cause, "They will discover, through Don Alvaro, the fatherly face of God smiling upon us".





## C AUSE OF CANONISATION: OPENING SESSIONS OF THE TRIBUNALS

The opening sessions of the tribunals, Cardinal Ruini's speech and words of the Prelate of Opus Dei

The Congregation for the Causes of Saints has given its approval for the diocesan investigation of the Cause on the life, virtues and reputation for holiness of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo, to take place before two tribunals of equal authority: one in the Vicariate of Rome; the other in the Prelature of Opus Dei.

The opening session of the tribunal of the Vicariate of Rome was on 5 March 2004, in the Conciliation Hall at the Lateran Palace,

presided over by Cardinal Camilo Ruini, the Holy Father's Vicar for the diocese of Rome. In his speech, Cardinal Ruini gave a biographical sketch of Bishop del Portillo, or "Don Alvaro" as he is known to people who have recourse to his intercession all over the world. "His deep pastoral experience, matured next to Saint Josemaría, his proven human qualities and his theological and juridical expertise made him suitable for many tasks", the Cardinal said.

He also spoke of "his prolonged and many-sided activity in the service of the Apostolic See", as consultant to various congregations, secretary of the Second Vatican Council commission which drafted the decree "Presbyterorum Ordinis", consultant of other conciliar commissions, and as a synod father.

"I met Bishop Alvaro del Portillo on quite a few occasions. They impressed upon my soul the conviction that I was in the presence of an exemplary pastor", Cardinal Ruini added. He went on to say: "In his firm adherence to the Church's teaching, in his union with the Pope, in his pastoral charity, in his humility and balance, there showed forth an extraordinary inner richness".

According to the Cardinal, "The service which Don Alvaro always gave, with deeds, to the Church of Rome, and the promptness and diligence with which he seconded the Holy Father's pastoral initiatives on behalf of his diocese, formed part of that love for the Church which he had learned from Saint Josemaría."

The members of the tribunal and the postulator of the Cause took their oaths before the Cardinal.

A few days later, on 20 March, the tribunal of the Prelature of Opus Dei had its opening session before some four hundred people in the Höffner Hall of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, in Rome.

The Prelate of Opus Dei Bishop Javier Echevarría stated that "Shortly after his death, I received numerous written accounts confirming the spread during his lifetime of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo's reputation for holiness, and expressing the desire that his cause of Canonisation should commence. Among these were nearly 200 letters from Bishops – including 35 Cardinals – from 25 countries."

Bishop Echevarría recalled that when work



- Cardinal Ruini presides the opening session of the tribunal of the Vicariate of Rome
- View of the Höffner Hall during the session on 20 March
- Bishop Javier Echevarría at the opening session

began on the cause of Canonisation of Saint Josemaría, Don Alvaro "kept reminding us that the decision (to start this work) was not directed at obtaining human glory, but was for the good of the Church, for the good of souls". The Prelate of Opus Dei said it was his desire that the cause of Bishop del Portillo might also be an opportunity for many people to "discover, through Don Alvaro, the fatherly face of God smiling upon us, encouraging and forgiving".



# HIS LAST DAYS, IN THE HOLY LAND

Memories of the doctor who took part in the last journey on earth of the Servant of God



• Leaving the Church of the Beatitudes

Early in the afternoon of 14 March 1994, Don Alvaro, Fr Javier Echevarría, Fr Joaquín Alonso and myself left Rome from Ciampino Airport. Don Alvaro was making that trip to the Holy Land because of his great love for Jesus Christ, that is, out of devotion, but there was also a pastoral motive. Not long before that date, some members of Opus Dei had gone to live and work in Jerusalem and had started apostolic work there. The journey had been paid for by a friend as an 80th birthday present for Don Alvaro.

I can never thank God enough for the privilege of being able to accompany Don Alvaro during those days, which were for me a unique family

experience in an atmosphere of serene human affection and good humour.

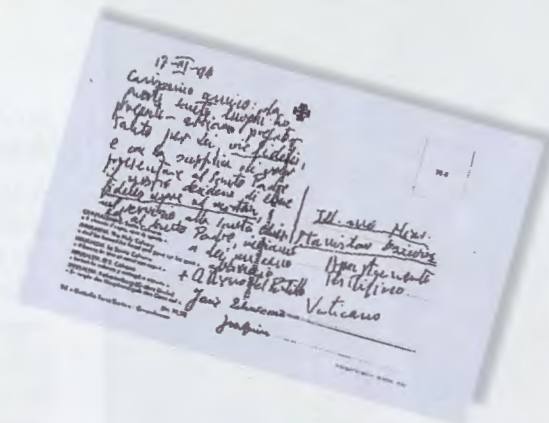
### With eyes directed to Christ ... and to those nearby

The Uruguayan ambassador to Israel, Aníbal Díaz, had lent his car to Don Alvaro. On the 15th we went in that car from Tel Aviv to Nazareth, passing by Mount Carmel. In Haifa, a lady visitor from Puerto Rico recognised Don Alvaro and asked if her husband could take a photograph of herself with Don Alvaro. Don Alvaro agreed. Similar scenes took place on other days. In Nazareth, in the evening, Don Alvaro celebrated

### • My very dear friend,

From these holy places I have prayed – we have prayed – both for yourself, *vir fidelis*, and with the supplication of wishing to present to the Holy Father our desire of being *fideles usque ad mortem*, faithful until death, in serving the Church and the Holy Father. We send you a cordial embrace

Translation of the Italian text of a postcard from Don Alvaro to Mgr. Stanislaw Dziwisz written in the Holy Land on 17 March 1994



Holy Mass in the Basilica of the Annunciation. In his homily he spoke of the Mystery of the Incarnation and mentioned also that suffering is a present from God: undoubtedly he was thinking of Aníbal who was suffering from a serious illness at that time and was at that Mass with his wife.

On the morning of the 16th, we were in the church of the Primacy of Peter; later we went to the Mount of the Beatitudes, where Don Alvaro celebrated Mass. After that to Capharnaum... In the afternoon we did half an hour's prayer by the Sea of Tiberias. Don Alvaro, Fr Javier and Fr Joaquín sat on a fallen tree trunk. Fr Joaquín read some passages of the Gospel referring to our Lord's presence in that place. Fr Alberto Steinworth – one of the priests of Opus Dei then

living in Jerusalem – and I, sat on a rock, behind Don Alvaro. I had a strong sensation that this was an important moment and, trying not to distract them, I filmed some scenes with the video camera. Next to the seashore, we also saw a nun and, in another place, a friar. When we were leaving, four young men of different races arrived and began to pray together in a low voice. On leaving, we picked leaves from some plants as a souvenir. The next day, 17 March, we travelled from Nazareth to Jerusalem, passing by Mount Tabor, where Don Alvaro celebrated Mass. In Jerusalem, after praying at the Holy Sepulchre and at the place of Calvary, Don Alvaro went to the two Centres of Opus Dei in the city. During the following days he returned on several occasions to the two Centres, and said Mass in



• **A good and faithful servant** During these days, your thoughts about the Holy Land are united also to Bishop Alvaro del Portillo (...) God has granted that he should carry out a pilgrimage to the places where Jesus Christ spent his earthly life. They were days of intense prayer which united him closely to Christ and prepared him for the definitive meeting with the Blessed Trinity. Recalling this "good and faithful servant" may each one of you intensify your commitment to serve the Gospel. *John Paul II to the participants at the UNIV Congress, 29 March 1994, Rome*



**VOCATION ET MISSION DU PRÊTRE**  
On priesthood  
by Alvaro del Portillo  
Published by *Le Laurier*

**RENDERE AMABILE LA VERITÀ**  
Making truth lovable  
Ateneo Romano della Santa Croce  
Published by *Libreria editrice vaticana*

**UNA VIDA PARA DIOS**  
A life for God  
by Alvaro del Portillo  
Published by *Rialp*

**ÜBER DEN GRÜNDER DES OPUS DEI**  
Immersed in God – on the Founder of Opus Dei  
by Alvaro del Portillo  
Published by *Adamas Verlag*

**FAITHFUL AND LAITY IN THE CHURCH**  
by Alvaro del Portillo  
Published by *Ecclesia Press*

bursary to a year's study in a place where there was no Centre of the Work. During my stay in Okinawa, every fortnight I would go to Nagasaki for the means of formation. The only way to get there was by air, and I had to make great sacrifices to get money to pay for the fares. When things got really bad, and I had to go and had no money for the ticket, I would turn to Bishop Alvaro del Portillo (...). I asked insistently and some relative would turn up, or a document from the bank would arrive, with the money required.

*M.K.I., Kyoto (Japan)*

**Getting a job**

Even though I had two degrees, one in Economics and the other in Business Administration, I couldn't find employment

even though I had applied and been interviewed by several firms. I told my aunt. She gave me several prayer cards of Don Alvaro, and told me: hand them out to people and pray to him with faith.

I did that and to my surprise my mobile phone immediately rang. It was a girl I knew telling me that a friend of hers, whom I did not know, urgently needed an administrator whom he could trust. I contacted him, was interviewed and, within a week, I was working there. Now I am delighted with my job and I feel a real need to report this favour I've received. I tell my story to everyone I can. I'm still saying the prayer and I am very grateful to God for having granted me this favour I so much wanted: to be allowed to do an honest job of work.

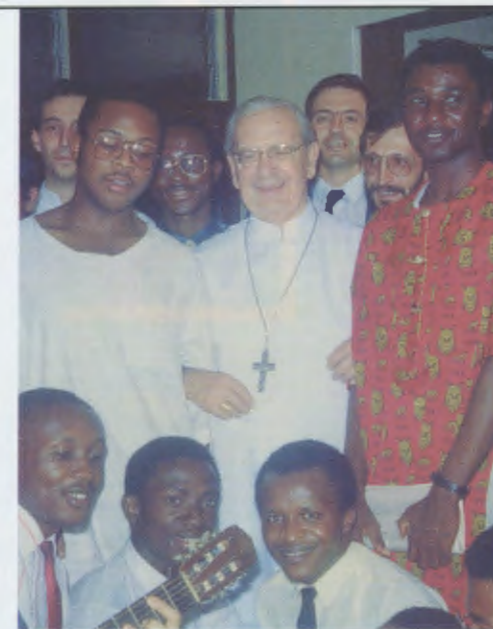
*L.G.P., Maracaibo (Venezuela)*

**Initiatives**

All over the world a great number of educational and welfare initiatives have got under way thanks to the encouragement of Don Alvaro del Portillo

These works, as well as having a social purpose, seek to draw souls closer to God through the spirit of Opus Dei.

The photo shows Bishop Alvaro with a group of sons of his in the Ugwuoma Study Centre, a university centre in Enugu (Nigeria), during a catechetical journey to Africa in 1989.



**Suffering from migraine for three years**

I began to suffer from migraines in November 1998. I'd never had them previously. The first year I'd get it four or five times a month. Afterwards it got worse, up to ten times a month.

I was declared disabled and was not allowed to carry on with part of my job.

In September 2001, the attacks became even more frequent; in November I was getting migraine every couple of days and the procedure was set in motion to check if I was to be declared totally disabled and unable to work at all. From that month, I stopped going to work.

It had been decided, after consulting the medical doctor in my place of work, that I should not even do the couple of hours of work I had been doing till then, because the effort was too much for me. Every time I got the attacks I

took medicine which lessened the pain but made me feel pretty awful.

I didn't know what to do, and then in November I started a novena to God, with the prayer card of Don Alvaro. During the first two weeks I did not get better, though I did obtain the "spiritual cure" of two friends of mine, which consoled me and encouraged me.

The day after I had ended the third novena, on 12 December, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, I had what proved to be my last attack. I want to give thanks for this miraculous and sudden cure, after three years, through the intercession of Don Alvaro del Portillo.

Now that the migraine has gone, my life has got back to normal. Once again I can work, travel, read, listen to music, etc.

*M.S., Utrecht (Holland)*