

evangelization among their companions, colleagues, neighbors and families, so that we help bring it about that Christ's message reaches everyone in the United Kingdom and the whole world. I would like the faithful of Opus Dei in England to be sowers of peace and joy in their social and professional milieu.

How do you relax?

Although I don't see this as of much interest, I like being with people, and I relax with reading, classical music (especially Beethoven), and with tennis—but not at the level of Wimbledon!

An Interview Granted to *Avvenire*, Milan, Italy (June 27, 2018)

Interviewed by Francesco Ognibene

Ninety years have gone by since the day that St. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer “saw” Opus Dei. Can you say that this “vision” has been fulfilled?

That inspiration regarding the sanctification of ordinary life and the role of the laity is today increasingly present in the heart of the Church, although it is not “exclusive” to anyone. The Work is

carried out through the generous response of each one in every moment of history. Since 1928 it has spread to every continent, and the diversity of its faithful has increased, both in age and in backgrounds, nationalities, etc. But that vision needs to become a reality in the life of each person, and to be present in the changing circumstances of every epoch.

What does it mean for a lay person today to seek holiness in a digital society, which is experiencing unprecedented changes, both in behavior and in culture?

Among other things, it requires sowing friendship in this digital world, thus overcoming the risk of depersonalization. Each person is important, because Christ died and rose for each one of us. Authentic relationships begin when we are able to see specific people at the center of each interaction, although often, in digital conversations, we don't have them in front of us. Also it means sharing with others beneficial content, without reducing culture merely to information. And to do so one needs to study, reflect, pray, listen. Christians should, among other things, instill serenity into the rapid flow of the digital world. Finally, it requires living consistently, with a unity of life, without being “two-faced.” One cannot claim to be a model citizen and a good “offline” Christian and then act “online” in an unbridled way, with actions that

may be lacking in charity and understanding for others.

You have been at the head of Opus Dei for more than a year and have had the opportunity to travel a fair bit. What guidance have you been giving to the Prelature with respect to your predecessors? And what situations do you encounter worldwide?

Personally, I would like to be close to people and live spiritual fatherhood with them, especially with those in Opus Dei, because the Church has entrusted them to me in a special way. I would like to bring them the affection and evangelizing impulse that St. Josemaría and his successors transmitted to us.

The first priority is to help each lay person and each priest of the Prelature to constantly renew their life by contemplating Christ's face—to encourage them to serve the Church in the ordinary circumstances of their lives: at work, in their family, in social relationships, helping others to discover Christ's love there, as witnesses to the joy of the Gospel.

The last General Congress of Opus Dei highlighted, among other priorities, the work of evangelization in the field of the family, the young, and the most needy, both in body and spirit. In Opus Dei we want to continue fostering initiatives that help alleviate the specific needs of this wounded world of ours, and that make present the consolation of God.

As for the situations found in today's world, they are very different. In countries such as Indonesia and Sri Lanka, where Christians are a small minority, it is particularly important to foster trust in God and a deep faith. The Christian commitment of the faithful of Opus Dei is a small seed, whose fruits grow little by little with God's grace. In other countries where the Christian tradition is stronger, perhaps the main challenge is to live the Gospel with joy and authenticity, in the midst of a world that often seems to be ruled by predominantly financial and material interests.

The Pope is urging the Church to go out ever more towards mankind's "peripheries," to go outside the walls, to overcome fears, to open up a dialogue based on a faith lived authentically. What is Opus Dei learning from Francis' teaching and example?

The Pope is teaching everyone the same thing: to live the Gospel, to try to go out to those human peripheries that can sometimes frighten us, but where the Lord is asking us to be present. His example is leading many Catholics, and among them many faithful of Opus Dei, to begin, for example, initiatives to welcome immigrants and refugees, who are now among the people most in need of help. And also, many other apostolic initiatives in difficult areas, to bring the Gospel closer to unbelievers.

What “peripheries” are the members of the Prelature caring for?

Recently, Pope Francis asked that we try to work in the “peripheries of the middle classes.” In our societies based on material comfort, we sometimes tend to reduce the concept of periphery to poor districts in Africa, Asia, or Latin America, or to the large disadvantaged areas in our big cities. I thank God for the generosity of so many people in Opus Dei and their friends who, like many other Catholics, are carrying out educational or support initiatives in these poor peripheries. For example, the Eastlands College of Technology, a vocational school that has just opened in one of the poorest neighborhoods in Nairobi. In Rome, the ELIS Center a year ago opened an evening school for 80 children from the district of Tiburtino and the shelters in the neighborhoods with the most pressing social problems. Most of these young people have serious family and social difficulties, and many are unaccompanied minors who arrived in Italy as migrants from the Mediterranean. But I think that, by that request, the Pope wanted to remind people that the “peripheries” also include that friend or co-worker who is by our side every day, in any Italian city, but who is far from God, or who is going through a family crisis, or who is simply finding no answer to the question: what is the meaning of this life?

The Pope’s recent apostolic exhortation Gaudete et exsultate, on the

call to holiness in today’s world, echoes many points of the founder of Opus Dei’s teachings. What were your thoughts on reading it?

The universal call to holiness is the center of all the founder of Opus Dei’s teachings. He always insisted that sanctity was not just for a few privileged people, right from the beginning of Opus Dei. “God calls everyone,” he said, “he looks for Love from everyone: from all men and women, wherever they are; from all, whatever their situation in life, profession or job.” God is calling the high school teacher to be holy, the artist, the business person, the pizza maker, the farm worker, those working in the home, the journalist, the sports person, those confronting the challenges of unemployment...

During his lifetime, the founder had the great joy of seeing how the Second Vatican Council confirmed and proclaimed the truth that sanctity is for everyone. Therefore you can understand why, in reading *Gaudete et exsultate*, my thoughts quickly went to the joy Saint Josemaría would have experienced on seeing this new expression of the message of the universal call to holiness in Pope Francis’ words.

What surprised you the most about it?

The Pope points to Jesus’ words in the beatitudes as the “identity card” for a person seeking

sanctity in daily life. This path requires that we sometimes go against the current, but it leads in the end to happiness. It is very important to help people see, by our example, that an integral Christian life also leads to human fulfillment already here on earth, despite the difficulties we all confront. The path of the beatitudes is a path to happiness for us and for all men and women.

I also thought it was very beautiful to see how the Pope insisted, throughout the entire exhortation, that holiness is based on small gestures, something we also see Saint Josemaría stressing in his book *The Way*: “Have you noticed how human love consists of little things? Well, divine Love also consists of little things.”

The ninetieth anniversary of Opus Dei coincides with the year that the Church has dedicated to young people, with a view to the October Synod. Many of the apostolates of the Work are directed to the world of youth. What does Opus Dei offer young people today?

I remember the answer that St. Josemaría once gave to a young person: “I look at you, and see that the world needs people like you: in your surroundings, in your workplace, in your family, in the place where you live, where you spend your free time, you need to be Christians who are strong, pleasant to get along with. Your duties as a Christian can be summed up as

being loyal. Those who fail to wage a war against themselves aren’t loyal. You have to resolve to be loyal, to be serious about the way you live. Students have to study, those with a job have to work, and to do so without shirking the effort it requires.” We need to present to young people the ideal of holiness—of following Jesus—in ordinary life, made up of study, friendship, work, service. We have to help them realize that the world, and with it the Church, will soon be in their hands. That is why they need to receive human and Christian formation, and also realize that people are looking at them with hope and confidence. The key point is to help them to come to know Christ, to draw close to Christ, to love Christ, in the circumstances of their ordinary lives.

Another key point for society and the Church is the family, which now seems to be undergoing a crisis and to be growing steadily weaker. What do you ask from members and friends of Opus Dei in this regard?

That they give a positive testimony, above all through their perseverance in love. Being faithful to God or a person is something that needs to be renewed every day. Sometimes we find this easy, and sometimes it requires effort. We need to desire and seek the good of others. In the family, this good requires accepting the other person as he or she is, being able to renounce one’s own opinions, recognizing signs of fatigue, finding

time and reasons to talk, not complaining... These efforts, simple but sometimes heroic, will make it clear that we care about people, that we never want to consider them as “expired” or “defective” objects, to be “replaced” when we no longer need them. A family that doesn’t give up in the face of difficulties, in which parents and children seek God’s help to know and want the good of others, is a great support for the Church and for society.

What does the Prelate of the Work expect from Italy?

That all of us in Opus Dei, by being faithful to the charism of St. Josemaría, let ourselves be guided by the Holy Spirit in a renewed evangelizing impetus. Not only in Italy, but in every country. We need to bring Christ’s warmth to many friends, family members, colleagues, neighbors and acquaintances. This evangelizing impulse in Italy is not so much a question of starting new activities or institutions like those already in existence, which in themselves are something very good and positive, but rather of fostering personal friendship, openness to everyone and a spirit of service. These are deeply evangelical attitudes that are essential for the Christian apostolate, while also being compatible with the defects and weaknesses we all have.

“Sanctifying Everyday Work,” in *Studi Cattolici*, Italy (no. 686)

*A round table moderated
by Maria Aparecida Ferrari*

The Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome hosted on October 19-20 a conference entitled *Quale anima per il lavoro professionale?* Among the speakers were professors Brad S. Gregory, University of Notre Dame (Indiana, U.S.); Benedetta Giovagnola, University of Macerata (Italy); Jens Zimmermann, Trinity Western University (Vancouver, Canada); Ana Marta González, University of Navarra (Spain); Brian Griffiths, Goldman Sachs International; Maria Chiara Carrozza, Scuola Superiore Sant’Anna of Pisa; and from the University organizing the event, Javier López Díaz, Santiago Sanz, and Martin Schlag. On October 21, Msgr. Fernando Ocariz, Prelate of Opus Dei and Chancellor of the University of the Holy Cross, answered some questions that the professors and other participants asked him about the sanctification of work, a central aspect of the spirit of Opus Dei. The roundtable moderator was Professor Maria Aparecida Ferrari.

Prof. Maria Aparecida Ferrari: I would like to start by inviting Msgr. Ocariz to offer some remarks on the