

**JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Constitution, November 28, 1982, establishing the Prelature of Opus Dei (AAS, 75, [1983], May 2, 1983, pp. 423–425; CLD 10 [1982-1983] 133).**

CONSTITUTIO APOSTOLICA  
SANCTÆ CRUCIS ET OPERIS DEI

Opus Dei in Prælaturam personalem  
ambitus internationalis erigitur

IOANNES PAULUS EPISCOPUS  
SERVUS SERVORUM DEI  
AD PERPETUAM REI MEMORIAM

Ut sit validum et efficax instrumentum suæ ipsius salvificæ missionis pro mundi vita, Ecclesia maternas curas cogitationesque suas maxima cum spe confert in Opus Dei, quod Servus Dei Joseph Maria Escriva de Balaguer divina ductus inspiratione die II Octobris anno MCMXXVIII Matriri inivit. Hæc sane Institutio inde a suis primordiis satagit missionem laicorum in Ecclesia et in humana societate non modo illuminare sed etiam ad effectum adducere necnon doctrinam de universali vocatione ad sanctitatem re exprimere atque sanctificationem in labore et per laborem professionalem in quolibet sociali cœtu promovere. Idem pariter efficiendum curavit per Societatem Sacerdotalem Sanctæ Crucis quoad sacerdotes diœcesibus incardinatos in sacri ministerii exercitio. Cum Opus Dei divina opitulante gratia adeo crevisset ut in pluribus orbis terrarum diœcesibus extaret atque operaretur quasi apostolica compages quæ sacerdotibus et laicis sive viris sive mulieribus constabat eratque simul organica et indivisa, una scilicet spiritu fine regimine et spirituali institutione, necesse fuit aptam formam iuridicam ipsi tribui quæ peculiaribus eius notis responderet. Idemque Operis Dei Conditor, anno MCMLXII, a Sancta Sede humili cum fiducia suppliciter postulavit ut, natura theologica et primigenia Institutionis perspecta eiusque maiore apostolica efficacia considerata, consentanea configuratio ei inveniretur. Ex quo autem tempore Concilium Œcumenicum Vaticanum Secundum, Decreto *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, n. 10 per Litteras “motu proprio” datas *Ecclesiæ Sanctæ*, I n. 4 rite in actum deducto, in ordinationem Ecclesiæ figuram Prælaturæ personalis ad peculiariora opera pastoralia perficienda induxit, visa est ea ipsa Operis Dei apprimè aptari. Quapropter anno MCMLXIX Decessor Noster felicissimæ recordationis Paulus Sextus petitioni Servi Dei Joseph Mariæ Escriva de Balaguer benigne annuens potestatem illi dedit Congressum generalem specialem convocandi, cui cura esset, ipso duce, ut studium iniretur de Operis Dei transformatione, eius ipsius indoli et Concilii Vaticani Secundi normis magis consentanea. Quod omnino studium explicate iussimus Nos ipsi continuari atque anno

**APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTION  
SANCTÆ CRUCIS ET OPERIS DEI**

To erect Opus Dei as a personal Prelature  
International in ambit

**JOHN PAUL BISHOP  
SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD  
FOR A PERMANENT RECORD OF THE MATTER**

With very great hope, the Church directs its attention and maternal care to Opus Dei, which—by divine inspiration—the Servant of God Josemaria Escriva de Balaguer founded in Madrid on October 2, 1928, so that it may always be an apt and effective instrument of the salvific mission which the Church carries out for the life of the world. From its beginnings, this Institution has in fact striven, not only to illuminate with new lights the mission of the laity in the Church and in society, but also to put it into practice; it has also endeavoured to put into practice the teaching of the universal call to sanctity, and to promote at all levels of society the sanctification of ordinary work, and by means of ordinary work. Furthermore, through the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross, it has helped diocesan priests to live this teaching, in the exercise of their sacred ministry. Since Opus Dei has grown, with the help of divine grace, to the extent that it has spread and works in a large number of dioceses throughout the world, as an apostolic organism made up of priests and laity, both men and women, which is at the same time organic and undivided—that is to say, as an institution endowed with a unity of spirit, of aims, of government and of formation—it has become necessary to give it a juridical configuration which is suited to its specific characteristics. It was the founder of Opus Dei himself who, in 1962, in a humble and trusting petition, asked the Holy See to grant an appropriate ecclesial configuration to the Institution, bearing in mind its true nature and theological characteristics, and with a view to a greater apostolic effectiveness. From the time when the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council introduced into the legislation of the Church, by means of the Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, n. 10—which was made effective by the Motu proprio *Ecclesiae Sanctæ*, I, n. 4—, the figure of the personal prelatures, to carry out specific pastoral activities, it was seen clearly that this juridical figure was perfectly suited to Opus Dei. Therefore, in 1969, Our Predecessor Paul VI, of beloved memory, graciously accepting the petition of the Servant of God Josemaria Escriva de Balaguer, authorized him to convoke a special General Congress to begin, under his guidance, the study necessary for a transformation of Opus Dei, in keeping with its nature and with the norms of the Second Vatican Council. We ourselves expressly ordered that this study should continue, and in 1979, We requested the Sacred

MCMLXXIX Sacrae Congregationi pro Episcopis, ad quam res suapte pertinebat natura, mandatum dedimus ut, cunctis elementis sive iuris sive facti attente consideratis, formalem petitionem ab Opere Dei exhibitam examini subiceret. Profecto eadem Congregatio huic negotio vacans quaestionem sibi propositam accurate investigavit ratione cum historica tum iuridica et pastorali ita ut, quolibet sublato dubio circa fundamentum possibilitatem et concretam rationem postulationi obsecundandi, plane pateret opportunitas atque utilitas optatae transformationis Operis Dei in Praelaturam personalem. Idcirco Nos de apostolica plenitudine potestatis Nostrae, adsensi interea consilio, Nobis dato, Venerabilis Fratris Nostri S.R.E. Cardinalis Praefecti Sacrae Congregationis pro Episcopis ac suppleto, quatenus necessarium sit, eorum consensu quorum interest vel qui sua interesse existimaverint, haec quae sequuntur decernimus fierique volumus.

I. Opus Dei in Praelaturam personalem ambitus internationalis erigitur sub nomine Sanctae Crucis et Operis Dei, breviato autem nomine Operis Dei. Simul vero erigitur Societas sacerdotalis Sanctae Crucis qua Adsociatio Clericorum Praelaturae intrinsecus coniuncta.

II. Praelatura regitur normis iuris generalis et huius Constitutionis necnon propriis Statutis, quae *Codex iuris particularis Operis Dei* nuncupantur.

III. Praelaturae iurisdictio personalis afficit clericos incardinatos necnon, tantum quoad peculiarium obligationum adimplerionem quas ipsi sumpserunt vinculo iuridico, ope conventionis cum Praelatura initae, laicos qui operibus apostolicis Praelaturae sese dedicant, qui omnes ad operam pastoraalem Praelaturae perficiendam sub auctoritate Praelati exstant iuxta praescripti articuli praecedentis.

IV. Praelaturae Operis Dei Ordinarius proprius est eius Praelatus cuius electio iuxta praescripta iuris generalis et particularis facta Romani Pontificis confirmatione eget.

V. Praelatura a Sacra Congregatione pro Episcopis dependet et pro rei diversitate quaestiones pertractabit cum ceteris Romanae Curiae Dicasteriis.

VI. Praelatus singulis quinquenniis per Sacram Congregationem pro Episcopis relationem Romano Pontifici exhibebit de Praelaturae statu deque modo quo eius apostolatus procedit.

VII. Praelaturae sedes gubernii centralis in Urbe posita est. In ecclesiam praelatitiam erigitur oratorium Sanctae Mariae de Pace apud sedem centralem Praelaturae.

Præterea Reverendissimus Alvarus del Portillo, die XV mensis Septembris anno MCMLXXV Praeses Generalis Operis Dei rite electus,

Congregation for Bishops, which was the competent Congregation, by virtue of the matter involved, to examine the formal petition presented by Opus Dei, following a careful study of all the relevant facts and legal data. In carrying out the task entrusted to it, the Sacred Congregation carefully examined the matter, taking into account the historical, and also the juridical and pastoral aspects. Thus, having completely eliminated all doubts about the basis, and the possibility, and the specific manner of granting the petition, it became abundantly clear that the desired transformation of Opus Dei into a personal Prelature was opportune and useful. Therefore, We, with the plenitude of Our apostolic power, having accepted the opinion which Our Venerable Brother the Most Eminent and Most Reverend Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Bishops had expressed to Us, and making good, in so far as it is necessary, the consent of those who have, or think they have some competence in this matter, command and desire the following to be put into practice.

I. Opus Dei is erected as a personal Prelature, international in ambit, with the name of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei, or, in abbreviated form, Opus Dei. The Priestly Society of the Holy Cross is erected as a clerical Association intrinsically united to the Prelature.

II. The Prelature is governed by the norms of general law, by those of this Constitution, and by its own Statutes, which receive the name "Code of particular law of Opus Dei."

III. The jurisdiction of the personal Prelature extends to the clergy incardinated in it, and also only in what refers to the fulfillment of the specific obligations undertaken through the juridical bond, by means of a contract with the Prelature to the laity who dedicate themselves to the apostolic activities of the Prelature: both clergy and laity are under the authority of the Prelate in carrying out the pastoral task of the Prelature, as established in the preceding article.

IV. The Ordinary of the Prelature Opus Dei is its Prelate, whose election, which has to be carried out as established in general and particular law, has to be confirmed by the Roman Pontiff.

V. The Prelature is under the Sacred Congregation for Bishops, and will also deal directly with the other Congregations or Departments of the Roman Curia, according to the nature of the matter involved.

VI. Through the Sacred Congregation for Bishops, the Prelate will present to the Roman Pontiff, every five years, a report on the state of the Prelature, and on the development of its apostolic work.

VII. The central Government of the Prelature has its offices in Rome. The Oratory of Our Lady of Peace, which is in the central offices of the Prelature, is erected as a Prelatic Church.

confirmatur atque nominatur Prælati erectæ Prælaturæ personalis Sanctæ Crucis et Operis Dei.

Denique ad hæc omnia convenienter exsequenda destinamus Nos Venerabilem Fratrem Romulum Carboni, Archiepiscopum titulo Sidoniensem et in Italia Apostolicum Nuntium, dum necessarias ei atque opportunas tribuimus facultates, etiam subdelegandi ad effectum de quo agitur quemlibet virum in ecclesiastica dignitate constitutum, onere imposito ad Sacram Congregationem pro Episcopis quam primum remittendi verum exemplar actus ita impletæ executionis. Contrariis quibusvis rebus minime obstantibus.

Datum Romæ, apud S. Petrum, die XXVIII mensis Novembris, anno MCMLXXXII, Pontificatus Nostri quinto.

AUGUSTINUS Card. CASAROLI  
a publicis Ecclesiæ negotiis

† SEBASTIANUS Card. BAGGIO  
S. Congr. pro Episc. Præfectus

Iosephus Del Ton, Proton. Apost.  
Marcellus Rossetti, Proton. Apost.

Loco † Plumbi  
In Secret. Status tab., n. 101486.

The Most Reverend Monsignor Alvaro del Portillo, canonically elected President General of Opus Dei on September 15, 1975, is confirmed and is appointed Prelate of the personal Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei, which has been erected.

Finally, We designate the Venerable Brother Romolo Carboni, Titular Archbishop of Sidone and Apostolic Nuncio in Italy, for the opportune execution of all the above, and confer on him the necessary and opportune faculties, including that of sub-delegating—in the matter in question—in any ecclesiastical dignitary, with the obligation of sending, as soon as possible, to the Sacred Congregation for Bishops, an authentic copy of the act which testifies to the fact that the mandate has been carried out.

All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given in Rome at Saint Peter's, on the 28th of November, 1982, the fifth of Our Pontificate.

AUGUSTINUS Card. CASAROLI, Secretary of State

† SEBASTIANUS Card. BAGGIO, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Bishops

Iosephus Del Ton, Protonotary Apostolic

Marcellus Rossetti, Protonotary Apostolic

Loco † Plumbi

*Castro, inque Nos, pro manibus tenentes libere, eademque  
Prelato personali Operis Dei Reverendissimo Domino Alvaro del Portillo,  
officio fungentes, status offerentes, ipsam Praelaturam personalem, ut  
statutum est, constitutam declaramus cum omnibus iuribus et privilegiis  
quae, ad normam iuris communis, Praelatores personales,  
simulque Reverendissimum Dominum Alvarum del Portillo Praelatis  
dignitate et gradu insignitum, iuribus et privilegiis ornam, omnibusque  
pariter et obligacionibus legem, ad normam iuris generalis et praedictae  
Constitutionis Apostolicae, necnon propriorum Statutorum, quae—Colo-  
ris particularis Operis Dei—accipiuntur, renunciamus.*

*Mandamus denique ut quae constituta et declarata sunt, ab in-  
quorum interest, admissum serventur.*

*Datum, Romae, in Basilica Sancti Petri, die 19 mensis Novem-  
bris, Anno Domini MCMXXXIII.*

*† Romulus Carboni  
Archiepiscopus Urbis Sidoniensis  
in Italia Nuntius Apostolicus*