



Blessed
JOSEMARIA ESCRIVA

Founder of Opus Dei

BULLETIN ON THE LIFE OF BLESSED JOSEMARIA ESCRIVA
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Blessed Josemaria Escriva was born in Barbastro, Spain, on January 9, 1902. He was ordained to the priesthood in Saragossa on March 28, 1925.

On October 2, 1928, in Madrid, by divine inspiration he founded Opus Dei, which has opened up a new way for the faithful to sanctify themselves in the midst of the world, through the practice of their ordinary work and in the fulfillment of their personal, family and social duties. They thus become a leaven of intense Christian life in all environments. On February 14, 1930, Blessed Josemaria Escriva by God's grace understood that Opus Dei was meant to develop its apostolate among women as well. And on February 14, 1943, he founded the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross, inseparably united to Opus Dei. Opus Dei received the definitive approval of the Holy See on June 16, 1950. On November 28, 1982, it was erected as a personal Prelature, a juridical form desired and foreseen by Blessed Josemaria Escriva.

He guided and inspired the growth of Opus Dei throughout the whole world with constant prayer and penance and by the heroic practice of all the virtues. In doing so, he showed loving dedication and untiring concern for all souls, and a continual and unconditional surrender to God's will. When he yielded up his soul to God, Opus Dei had spread to five continents with over 60,000 members of 80 nationalities, serving the Church with the same veneration for and complete union with

the Pope and bishops that Blessed Josemaria Escriva always lived.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was the root and center of his interior life. His deep awareness of being a son of God, expressed in a constant presence of the Holy Trinity, moved him to seek identification with Christ in everything, to live a deep and tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph and to enjoy a continual, confident friendship with the holy guardian angels. This made him a sower of peace and joy along all the ways of the earth.

Msgr. Escriva had repeatedly offered his life for the Church and the Pope. Our Lord accepted this offering, and on June 26, 1975, in Rome in the room where he worked, he surrendered his soul to God with the same holy simplicity that characterized his entire life.

His body rests in the Prelatic Church of Our Lady of Peace at Viale Bruno Buozzi 75, Rome. There it is accompanied by the constant prayer and gratitude of his sons and daughters and countless others who have come closer to God through his example and teaching. His cause of canonization was introduced in Rome on February 19, 1981. Pope John Paul II, on April 9, 1990, declared that he lived the Christian virtues to a heroic degree, and on July 8, 1991, decreed that a cure attributed to his intercession was miraculous. The Founder of Opus Dei was beatified by Pope John Paul II on May 17, 1992, in Rome.

Prayer

O God, You granted your priest Blessed Josemaria countless graces, choosing him as a most faithful instrument to found Opus Dei, a way of sanctification in daily work and in the fulfillment of the Christian's ordinary duties. Grant that I too may learn to turn all the circumstances and events of my life into occasions of loving You and of serving the Church, the Pope and all souls with joy and simplicity, lighting up the pathways of this earth with faith and love. Deign to grant the canonization of Blessed Josemaria and, through his intercession, grant me the favor of . . . (make your request). Amen.

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

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Father of Mercies

THE HOLY FATHER, on dedicating this "third and last preparatory year" of the Great Jubilee to God the Father, has drawn our attention to many important considerations.¹

The Pope reminds us that "the whole Christian life is like a great pilgrimage to the house of the Father."² We owe our life on earth to the act of the loving God who created us and gave us the means to be eternally happy with him in heaven.

In thanking him for his gifts, we should always remember that God "chose us in him before the creation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him."³ The goal is a very high one. But what we could never attain by our own strength, God grants us through his goodness.

We Are Children of God

The greatest gift we have received is the grace that sanctifies us, making us children of God. As St. Leo the Great writes: "This is the gift that exceeds all others: God calls man his son, and man calls God 'Father.'"⁴ For a Christian, God's paternity is revealed above all in his infinite mercy. Christ's redemptive mission could be summed up in this way: to introduce us to "the Father of mercies."⁵ This revelation reached its plenitude on the Cross, where the Father accepted the sacrifice of his own Son for the salvation of mankind.⁶ Each day, John Paul II writes, we discover "his unconditional love for every human being, and in particular for the 'prodigal son.'"⁷

The Return to the Father

In this third year of preparation for the Jubilee, the Church invites us to approach God's mercy, undertaking "a journey of true conversion. This includes both a 'negative' aspect, that of liberation from sin, and a 'positive' aspect, that of choosing good."⁸ This entails a sincere struggle against our defects and a whole-hearted willingness to direct our entire life to God, to love him with all our strength, to serve him unconditionally, discovering our personal vocation.

For us human creatures, inclined towards sin, love shows itself by our sincere contrition for the faults we have committed, which leads to a "more intense celebration of the sacrament of penance in its most profound meaning."⁹ And also, by our effort to communicate to those around us the joy of

knowing that we are forgiven and are beloved children of the Father.¹⁰ As John Paul II has written in the Bull Convoking the Great Jubilee of the Year 2,000: "The embrace which the Father reserves for repentant sinners who go to him will be our just reward for the humble recognition of our own faults and the faults of others, a recognition based on awareness of the profound bond which unites all the members of the Mystical Body of Christ."¹¹

Specific Goals

In holding up this goal to Christians, the Holy Father insists that we men, because we participate in God's life through grace, can and must transform our life into an act of love: "Charity, in its twofold reality as love of God and neighbor, is the summing up of the moral life of the believer."¹² Among the channels for fostering charity with our neighbor, the Pope points to efforts to promote peace, solidarity, justice, and freedom. All of us have to collaborate in this effort by living these demands in the ordinary circumstances of our daily life. For each and every one of us, and not just the powerful of this world, has been entrusted with the task of building up "the civilization of love."

Blessed Josemaria highlights the figure of the prodigal son as a perennial model for our efforts to draw close to the Father: "Forward, no matter what happens! Cling tightly to our Lord's hand and remember that God does not lose battles. If you should stray from him for any reason, react with the humility that will lead you to begin again and again; to play the role of the prodigal son every day, and even repeatedly during the twenty-four hours of the same day; to open your contrite heart in confession, which is a real miracle of God's Love. In this wonderful sacrament our Lord cleanses your soul and fills you with joy and strength to prevent you from giving up the fight, and to help you keep returning to God unwearied, even when everything seems dark."¹³

A Christian's life in the world is a path of continual conversion: beginning and beginning again. Thus, with humble recourse to divine mercy, we will attain the goal of the Jubilee: a deeper union with God. And taking the hand of our Lady, Mother of God and our Mother, we will sow around us the peace that this world cannot give.

1. John Paul II, Apostolic letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, nos. 49-54.
2. *Ibid.*, no. 49.
3. *Eph* 1:4.
4. St. Leo the Great, *Sermo VI in Nativitate*.
5. *2 Cor* 1:3.
6. Cf. John Paul II, Encyc. *Dives in Misericordia*, no. 8.
7. Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, no. 49.
8. *Ibid.*, no. 50.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Cf. *Eph* 5:1.
11. John Paul II, Bull *Incarnationis Mysterium*, Nov. 29; 1998, no. 11.
12. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, no. 49.
13. Blessed Josemaria Escriva, *Friends of God*, no. 214.

Abba! Pater!

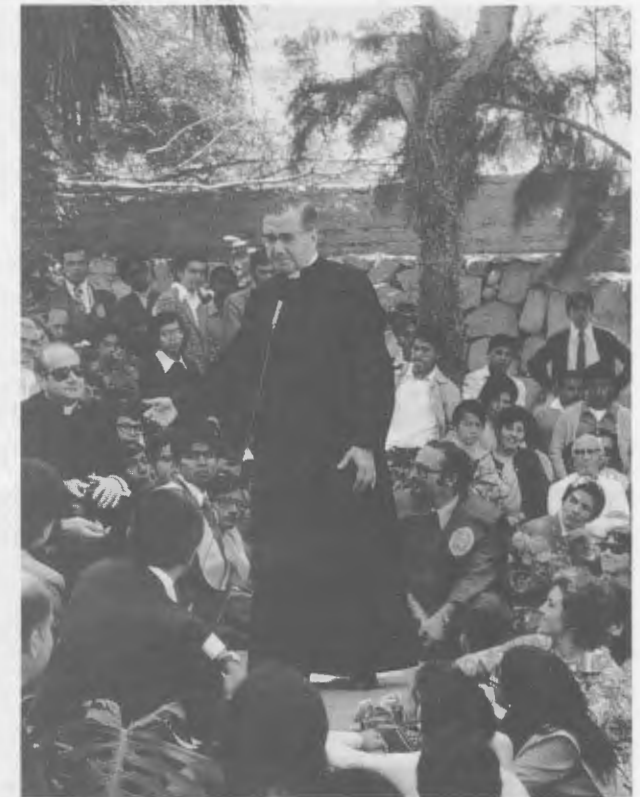
On October 2, 1928, God let Blessed Josemaria Escriva see Opus Dei. From that day on, the founder received abundant light from the Holy Spirit to grasp more clearly the full extent of the mission our Lord had entrusted to him. Thus, in order to engrave indelibly on his soul the reality that the awareness of our divine filiation is the foundation of the spirit of Opus Dei, the Paraclete acted with decisive force, as we see when reading some of Blessed Josemaria's own notes.

An Interior Motion

On September 22, 1931, he wrote: "I was considering God's goodness towards me. And filled with interior joy, I wanted to cry out on the street, letting everyone know my filial gratitude: Father! Father! Although not shouting, as I walked along I called out in a low voice many times, Father! sure that it was pleasing to Him."

A few days later, he observed the third anniversary of the divine call to found Opus Dei. In his notes that day, he records his deep gratitude to our Lord and his sincere resolve to be a good instrument in God's hands. And he does not fail to refer to divine filiation: "I felt an affectionate love for my Mother and my Lady, and right now I feel myself very much a son of my Father-God."

A week later, his notes reveal glimpses of Blessed Josemaria's intense prayer life, showing us the path of love by which the Holy Spirit was leading him: "*qui facit voluntatem Patris mei. . . , ipse intrabit in regnum caelorum*. O that I too might do your will! I want to do it: from now on, this is what I will ask those who pray for me to request."



Blessed Josemaria in a family get-together in Peru on July 29, 1974.

A New Eruption of the Holy Spirit

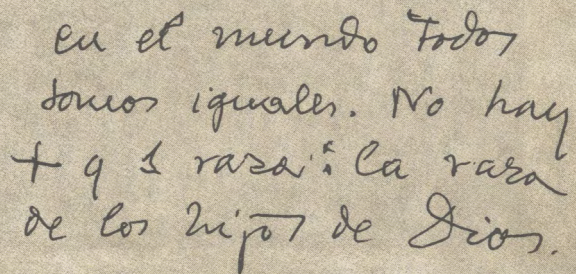
His prayer poured forth without interruption from morning till nightfall. On October 16, 1931, a new intervention by the Holy Spirit impressed even more deeply on his soul his awareness of being a son of God: "The feast of St. Hedwig, 1931. I wanted to pray, after Mass, in the quiet of my Church. But I wasn't able to. I bought a newspaper (the ABC) on Atocha street and took a streetcar. As I write this down, I still haven't been able to read more than a paragraph of the paper. I felt prayer welling up in my heart filled with affections, copious and ardent. I was like this on the streetcar and all the way home."

Subsequent descriptions of this experience by Blessed Josemaria help us understand the importance of this event in his own life and in the spirit of Opus Dei: "I felt our Lord acting within me, bringing forth in my heart and on my lips, with the force of something imperatively necessary, the tender invocation: *Abba! Pater!*"

"I walked through the streets of Madrid, perhaps for an hour, perhaps for two hours, I'm not sure exactly how long, since I lost track of the time. People must have thought I was crazy. With light granted from on high, I contemplated this amazing truth, which was emblazoned like a burning ember into my soul, never to be extinguished. . . . I understood that divine filiation must be a fundamental characteristic of our spirituality: *Abba, Pater!* And that, by living divine filiation, my children would be filled with joy and peace, protected by an impregnable wall. They would be apostles of joy and communicate peace, even amid their own suffering and that of others. And the reason would be precisely this: because we are convinced that God is our Father."

The Meaning of the Message

The message Blessed Josemaria received that day from heaven was intended for all of Opus Dei; and the sense of divine filiation in Christ was clearly revealed as the foundation of its spirit: "The founder, enriched by this special sense of his divine filiation, infused this truth into every aspect of the Work's spirituality. The Christian truth that we have been elevated to the supernatural order and made adopted children of God, deified by grace and called to intimacy with the Blessed Trinity, from then on received a special



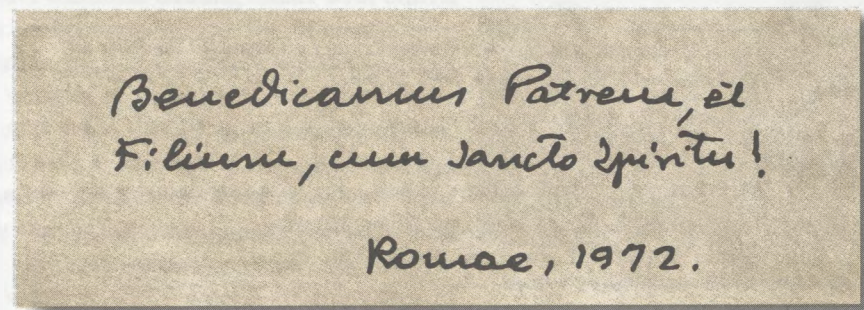
en el mundo todos
somos iguales. No hay
+ q 1 raza: la raza
de los hijos de Dios.

Handwritten text by Blessed Josemaria. "We are all equal. There is only one race in the world: the race of the children of God."

emphasis in Father Josemaria's prayer and interior life. The reality of one's divine filiation came to inform the entire spirit of Opus Dei and the life of piety of each of its members, leading them to the authentic freedom of the children of God. They are called to work not as salaried employees, but as heirs of glory. They strive to speak to God with the intimacy of a child who knows that he is loved. And in their apostolate, they know themselves coredeemers with Christ, helping to bring souls back to the Father. Whether confronting joy or suffering, sickness or death, all is seen as coming from the loving hands of God, our Father."

One could spend many pages showing the richness with which Opus Dei's founder, in his preaching, spoke of the various aspects of Christian life in light of one's divine filiation: the prayer of God's children, the freedom of God's children, the work of God's children, the self-surrender of God's children, the joy of God's children. . . . Here we will present just two paragraphs from a meditation that he gave in 1963, where he situates his spiritual experience of 1931, described in these pages, within the mystery of the Cross: "When God sent me those blows back in 1931, I didn't understand it... Then suddenly, in the midst of such great bitterness, came the words: 'You are my son' (Ps 2:7), you are Christ. And I could only stammer: *Abba, Pater! Abba, Pater! Abba! Abba! Abba!* Now I see it with new light, like a new discovery, just as one sees, after years have passed, the hand of God, of divine Wisdom, of the All-powerful. You've led me, Lord, to understand that to find the Cross is to find happiness, joy. And I see the reason with greater clarity than ever: to find the Cross is to identify oneself with Christ, to be Christ, and therefore to be a son of God.

"Lord, I ask your Mother, St. Joseph our Patron, and my ministerial Archangel, to always preserve this spirit for me and my children. *Ne respicias peccata mea, sed fidem.* May this faith, this love for the Cross be ours till death! This divine light leads us to always understand clearly that it's worthwhile letting ourselves be nailed to the Cross, since it means entering into Life, immersing ourselves in the Life of Christ. The Cross: it is there you find Christ, and you have to lose yourself in him! Then there will be no more sorrow, no more suffering. You mustn't say: Lord, I can't do any more, for I'm so wretched... No! It's not true! On the Cross, you will be Christ, and you will know you are a son of God. And you will exclaim: *Abba, Pater!* What happiness to find you, Lord!"

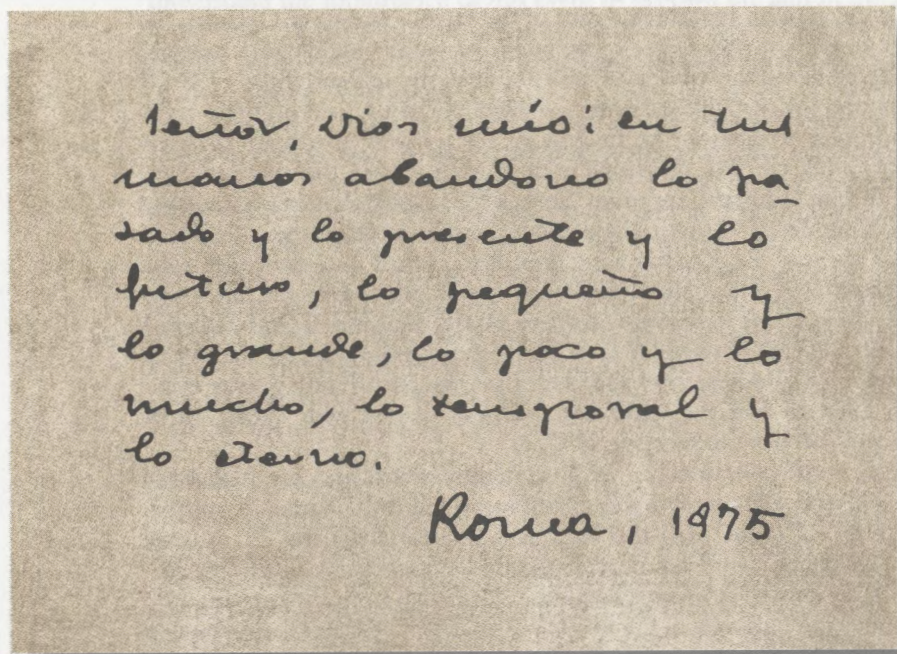


Benedicamus Patri, et
Filium, cum Sancto Spiritu!

Romae, 1972.

Handwritten aspiration, 1972.

Highlighting the joy that is so proper to a Christian, our Holy Father John Paul II writes: "Therefore the cause of our joy is finding ourselves with the strength to defeat evil and receiving the gift of divine filiation, which constitutes the essence of the Good News." This is the "essence" of the Gospel message, since it sums up what Jesus has revealed to us about God and about man. It is a consoling truth in light of the experience of evil, the consequence of sin, that marks our day and age. And it is a truth that we can only fully grasp when we know how to accept the Cross, when we go beyond mere resignation to the Cross and love it as coming from the hands of God our Father.



Handwritten aspiration, 1975: "O Lord, my God: into your hands I abandon the past and the present and the future, what is small and what is great, the temporal and the eternal."

1. Personal notes, no. 296, cited in Andres Vazquez de Prada, *El Fundador del Opus Dei*, vol I, Rialp, Madrid, 1997, p. 388.
2. *Ibid.*, no. 307.
3. *Ibid.*, no. 314.
4. *Ibid.*, no. 334; cited in Andres Vazquez de Prada, *op. cit.*, p. 389.
5. Letter of January 9, 1959, no. 60 and Letter of December 8, 1949, no. 41; cited in Andres Vazquez de Prada, *op. cit.*, pp. 389-391.
6. Andres Vazquez de Prada, *op. cit.*, pp. 391-392.
7. *Meditation of April 28, 1963.*
8. John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, p. 43, response to question no. 3, "The Prayer of the Vicar of Christ," Madrid, 1994.

WITH HIS ENCOURAGEMENT

CONDORAY WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL CENTER IN CAÑETE, PERU

CONDORAY is located in the Valley of Cañete, some 85 miles from Lima in southeastern Peru. The main economic activity of this region is agriculture, and to some extent also cattle raising, fishing, handicrafts and mining. Health conditions in some 70% of the homes are precarious. Life for village women in Cañete is difficult: from an early age they have to help support their family, raise their children, and take care of the elderly.

Traditionally, only a small number of women worked outside the home, on a part-time basis, harvesting cotton, asparagus or fruit, for a completely inadequate wage. Now, more than twenty thousand village women in the valley of Cañete have taken part in different programs of rural development provided by Condoray, and more than three thousand, trained in classes of relatively short duration, are now working in local enterprises or running their own businesses.

One might say that the story of Condoray had its beginning in 1956, when the Holy See told Msgr. Escriva that the Holy Father, Pius XII, wanted to entrust Opus Dei with a *prelature nullius* in Peru. In effect, in 1957, the Holy See established the Prelature of Yauyos-Huachichirí and named as Prelate Msgr. Ignacio Maria de Orbegozo, a priest of Opus Dei. In February of 1962, the Province of Cañete was added to the other two, and the town of San Vicente de Cañete became the seat of the prelate nullius.

The Beginnings

In 1963, with the encouragement of the Founder of Opus Dei, Condoray began its activities. At that time it was only a small school in which classes in handicrafts, sewing and cooking were given. A little later, in 1965, it began to offer technical training classes with official accreditation. In 1981 the programs were expanded, and Condoray became a Special Center of Professional Training, where one could take courses in secretarial studies, hospitality services, tailoring, and in the health services and food industries. Thanks to the professional training, illuminated by a Christian outlook on life, provided at Condoray, many women in the Valley of Cañete have been able to improve their



Condoray's literacy classes have reduced the level of illiteracy in the Valley of Cañete to well below the 51% national average for village women.



Interior of a home in a rural village.

A key to all of this development has been the role of rural promoters who receive their training in Condoray and then become, in turn, educators of others.

Condoray does not aim at solving specific problems, such as those resulting from drought, floods or economic crises, instead it tries to prepare its students to confront these situations with ingenuity and creativity. The change is evident. One notices efforts at improvement in many villages and that people are no longer passive. In addition, thanks to those who work at Condoray, many families have discovered in Christianity the profound meaning of life.

A Visit of Blessed Josemaria Escriva

In Cañete the results of the initiative and teachings of Blessed Josemaria Escriva are noticeable. In August of 1974, a little more than ten years after the beginning of work there, the Founder of Opus Dei traveled to Peru to undertake an intense catechesis. At a gathering in the valley on July 13, there were a great number of village folk from communities throughout the area. It was a mosaic of races: angular faces burned by the sun of the Andes, whites and mestizos, mulattos, and people of Asian features. The first words of Blessed Josemaria were: "I have come to congratulate you on the great work of human development that you are doing here. I say 'human development' for a reason; it is not only professional or material formation, it is also spiritual development."¹



Improving living conditions for village women—some 80% of whom lack health services, water or sewers—is another program of Condoray.

education and their ability to help solve the problems of their family and community. Among other initiatives, 86 experimental farms have been created which now constitute the principal source of food for hundreds of families in the area. The cultivation of garden produce has also been encouraged, thus providing a more nourishing diet. Other projects carried out include shoe manufacturing, and health and sanitation improvements.

The gathering was a catechesis that went directly to the foundations of Christian life. "Don't be satisfied just with material things. . . You should want, in the first place, to live a Christian life, to come closer to Jesus each day, as I want to. Do you know how we get closer? By using the means that he has provided: getting to know his teaching and receiving his sacraments."²



Twice a week, they take care of 1700 children in 22 villages. Shown here is a meal being prepared

Knowing the life of work of these people, Blessed Josemaria directed some words to them to encourage them to make their tasks an occasion of sanctification: "Opus Dei, you know the meaning of these words, is *operatio Dei*, the work of God. That is, it tries to lead people to sanctify themselves in the middle of the street. . . . But if we each have to sanctify ourselves in our place, each of us through our own work, we have to do that work well. We cannot do shoddy work. I don't know what word you use here for shoddy work?" "Criolladas, Father," they answered him. "'Criolladas,' things poorly done, into which one has not put his heart and enthusiasm. We have to put zeal and enthusiasm into our work. You can do this because in this way you will also earn money and improve the situation of your family; but especially to please God, because work is prayer, because work gives one dignity. It turns you into a person of class, it makes you a Christian who is more and more perfect, holy."³

Condoray Today

The work of social and Christian development carried out by Condoray has spread beyond Peru's borders. Since 1985, students from Canada, England, Germany, Ireland, France, Belgium and Spain have come to work in the villages of Cañete. This help is fitted into the framework of the programs carried on throughout the year. The university women who participate give the villagers classes in nutrition, first aid, tailoring and cooking. And they don't go home with empty hands: they discover the greatness of Christian joy and optimism in the face of adversity. They learn that the people of this valley have real virtue in their lives, and that wealth is much more than just simple material well-being. They have seen a Christianity lived in a coherent way.



In the rural areas of the valley of Cañete, 70% of the homes are of thatch or adobe and lack basic facilities.

1. AGP, P05 1974, II, p. 274.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 275.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 279-281.

From the Writings of Blessed Josemaria

GOD THE FATHER

REST AND REPOSE in the fact of being children of God. God is a Father who is full of tenderness, of infinite love. Call him "Father" many times a day and tell him—alone, in your hearts—that you love him, that you adore him, that you feel proud and strong because you are his son. All this implies a genuine program of interior life, which needs to be channeled through your relationship of piety with God, through these acts (which should be few, I insist, but constant) which will enable you to develop the attitudes and manner of a good son. (*Friends of God*, 150)

It's necessary to be convinced that God is always near us. Too often we live as though our Lord were somewhere far off—where the stars shine. We fail to realize that he is also by our side—always.

For he is a loving Father. He loves each one of us more than all the mothers in the world can love their children, helping us and inspiring us, blessing... and forgiving.

How often we've erased the frowns from our parents' brows, telling them after some prank, "I won't do it again!" Maybe that same day we fall again... And our father, with feigned harshness in his voice and a serious face, reproves us, while at the same time his heart is softened because he knows our weakness: "Poor boy," he thinks, "how hard he tries to behave well!"

We have to be completely convinced, realizing it to the full, that our Lord, who is close to us and in heaven, is a Father, and very much *our* Father. (*The Way*, 267)

Once again you had gone back to your old follies! And afterwards, when you returned, you didn't feel very cheerful, because you lacked humility.

It seems as if you obstinately refuse to learn from the second part of the parable of the prodigal son and you still feel attached to the wretched happiness of the pig-sty. With your pride wounded by your weakness, you have not made up your mind to ask for pardon, and you have not realized that, if you humble yourself, the joyful welcome of your Father God awaits you with a feast to mark your return and your new beginning. (*Furrow*, 65)

Jesus prays in the garden. *Pater mi* (Mt 26:39), *Abba, Pater!* (Mk 14:36). God is my Father, even though he may send me suffering. He loves me tenderly, even while wounding me. Jesus suffers, to fulfill the will of the Father... And I, who also wish to fulfill the most holy will of God, following in the footsteps of the Master, can I complain if I too meet suffering as my travelling companion?

It will be a sure sign of my sonship, because God is treating me as he treated his own Divine Son. Then I, just as He did, will be able to groan and weep alone in my Gethsemani; but, as I lie prostrate on the ground, acknowledging my nothingness, there will rise up to the Lord a cry from the depths of my soul: *Pater mi, Abba, Pater, ... fiat!* (*The Way of the Cross*, I)

You are discouraged, why? Is it your sins and miseries? Is it your defeats, at times coming one after the other? A really big fall, which you didn't expect?

Be simple. Open your heart. Look: as yet nothing has been lost. You can still go forward, and with more love, with more affection, with more strength.

Take refuge in your divine sonship: God is your most loving Father. In this lies your security, a haven where you can drop anchor no matter what is happening on the surface of the sea of life. And you will find joy, strength, optimism: victory! (*The Way of the Cross*, VII)

It looks as if the whole world is coming down on top of you. Whichever way you turn you find no way out. This time, it is impossible to overcome the difficulties.

But, have you again forgotten that God is your Father? —all-powerful, infinitely wise, full of mercy. He would never send you anything that is evil. That thing that is worrying you, it's good for you, even though those earthbound eyes of yours may not be able to see it now.

Omnia in bonum! Lord, once again and always, may your most wise Will be done! (*The Way of the Cross*, IX)

This divine filiation is the basis of the spirit of Opus Dei. All men are children of God. But a child can look upon his father in many ways. We must try to be children who realize that the Lord, by loving us as his children, has taken us into his house, in the middle of the world, to be members of his family, so that what is his is ours, and what is ours is his, and to develop that familiarity and confidence which prompts us to ask him, like children, for the moon! (*Christ Is Passing By*, 64)

Draw strength from your divine filiation. God is a Father—your Father!—full of warmth and infinite love.

Call him Father frequently and tell him, when you are alone, that you love him, that you love him very much, and that you feel proud and strong because you are his son. (*The Forge*, 331)

A son of God fears neither life nor death, because his spiritual life is founded on a sense of divine filiation. So he says to himself: God is my Father and he is the Author of all good; he is all Goodness.

But, you and I, do we really act as sons of God? (*The Forge*, 987)

Divine filiation is a joyful truth, a consoling mystery. It fills all our spiritual life, it shows us how to speak to God, to know and to love our Father in heaven. And it makes our interior struggle overflow with hope and gives us the trusting simplicity of little children. More than that: precisely because we are children of God, we can contemplate in love and wonder everything as coming from the hands of our Father, God the creator. And so we become contemplatives in the middle of the world, loving the world. (*Christ Is Passing By*, 65)

Letters Received

ONLY ONE POSSIBILITY

When I was in the mountains of California last summer, I was infected by a parasite whose scientific name is "Giardia." The first doctor I went to made a wrong diagnosis and my health deteriorated for several weeks. I went to see another doctor, who determined that I had "giardiasis." He recommended a strong antibiotic, one that I had taken in the past and to which I am extremely allergic. The doctor consulted a specialist in infectious diseases who told him that there was no alternative but to take the antibiotic and put up with the side effects.

I began to say the prayer to Blessed Josemaria, seeking his intercession so that the medicine would not produce serious side effects. My prayers were heard. I was able to take the entire course of antibiotics without suffering any problems. And although giardiasis usually reappears a few weeks after an apparent recovery, I was fully cured with a single series of antibiotics.

I want to express my thanks to Blessed Josemaria for his intercession in this matter, which for me was no small miracle.

V.M., Greenwich, CT

MUCH TO THE DOCTORS' SURPRISE

Several months ago my sister developed a breast tumor. All the diagnostic tests performed by three doctors indicated that it was malignant.

Before the surgery, we began to pray the prayer to Blessed Josemaria. A friend of my sister gave her a prayer card with a relic of the Founder of Opus Dei, which she carried with her at all times.

We asked the surgeon before entering the operating room if there was any chance the tumor was benign. He said no, that it looked very bad.

They removed the tumor and sent it for analysis. It proved to be benign, much to the surprise of the three doctors, especially one who claims to be an atheist.

Thanks to the intercession of Blessed Josemaria, my sister is doing well.

H.F., Novato, CA

CONTRARY TO ALL EXPECTATIONS

I had a tooth extracted in routine dental surgery. During the next 48 hours I felt the normal discomfort following an extraction, but the next day my face, neck and jaw began to swell up, and I suffered intense pain.

After many medical tests, I was found to have a rapidly spreading infection. The doctors assigned to my case feared for my life, not knowing if the antibiotics would reduce the cellulitis before it attacked the brain, lungs and heart.

Thinking of my two small children, I begged a close friend of mine, who is a member of Opus Dei, to pray for me. The two of us prayed the prayer card to Blessed Josemaria Escriva, asking him to restore my health.

In five days, contrary to all expectations, the intense pain and the infection began to diminish. At the end of a week, I was back with my children again and preparing to return to work.

Two weeks later, the massive cellulitis with gangrene was completely cured. The doctors thought that they might have to remove part of the dam-

aged tissue in my face; but there was no need, since within a month no trace of the disease remained. The specialist in infectious diseases was amazed that no traces of the infection could be found even in the blood. He said that in his 27 years in the profession, he had never seen a more serious case.

Now, four weeks later, my life has completely returned to normal and I have forgotten about the incident, except when I look at the prayer card to give thanks to God and to Blessed Josemaria for his intercession.

E.K.H., St. Louis, MO

A DRASTIC CHANGE

Since his adolescence, Rafael suffered from a depression that lasted for almost eight years. During this period he visited various doctors, took many different medicines and spent some time in hospitals and even an asylum when he could not control himself. We even imported some medicines from abroad, hoping they would produce a better result. Electric shock treatment also failed to help. His life was chiefly spent in bed, but without being able to sleep, without appetite or any desire to do anything. Since he had no interest in learning, school was out of the question.

After two failed suicide attempts, from which he miraculously emerged unharmed, his family had recourse to the intercession of the Founder of Opus Dei, asking for a cure. Shortly afterwards, he began to change drastically; his depression lifted and he started living a normal life, both in his family and at school. He has now finished his studies and is working for a large company.

A.G., Jalisco, Mexico

"LET'S PRAY TO THIS PRIEST OF YOURS"

In 1995 I visited a priest who had been suffering for over ten years from a very painful ailment. The doctors had given him no hope of a cure. While I was with him, his pain was so intense that tears came to his eyes. I suggested to him that we might pray the prayer card to Blessed Josemaria Escriva. But he told me he had suffered so much that he had grown tired of praying and looked forward to relief only after his death. I tried to convince him without much success, and then got up to leave. But when I was almost at the door he said: "Let's pray to this priest of yours." We began to pray and, almost the moment we finished, the pain let up. Since then the pain hasn't returned. His doctor was amazed to hear that the problem had disappeared.

The priest is now living in Rome and, thanks to this favor, he has a great devotion to Blessed Josemaria and does all he can to spread it.

R.S., Kampala, Uganda

ABLE TO READ

I would like to share my great joy and gratitude for the favors we have received from God through the intercession of Blessed Josemaria Escriva.

I have a six-year-old daughter who suffers from autism and hyperactivity. She is now in the first grade. When she began school, her teachers met with us a number of times to discuss the plan to follow with her since she

was unable to learn or to retain what she learned. At the last meeting we agreed that in view of the little that she had accomplished, it would be best for her to repeat the first grade, since she still didn't know the alphabet or the numbers above ten, while her schoolmates could already read, add and subtract. I then decided to pray the prayer card to Blessed Josemaria asking that my daughter reach a level of learning in accord with her age.

Time went by and we slowly began to see a clear improvement. Although her teachers had said that she would never learn to read, she is now reading like the others, has learned her numbers almost to 100, and is taking an ever greater part in school activities.

I give thanks to God for so many favors that he is granting us through Blessed Josemaria.

M.B. R., Mayaguez, Puerto Rico

EARTHQUAKE

A young Japanese girl made the resolution, at the beginning of the year, to say the prayer for the intercession of Blessed Josemaria more frequently. Precisely on the night before January 17, the date of the catastrophic earthquake, she remembers praying it with greater devotion than usual.

On the morning the earthquake hit, the windows in her home were shattered and bookcases and furniture fell over. Since she was covered with blankets and a quilt, she was not cut by the flying glass; and to her surprise, when she recovered from the shock, she realized that her face was covered by an open book: none other than *The Way*. Thus she emerged completely unscathed.

She is sure that it was Blessed Josemaria Escriva who protected her, and has promised to offer up her studies and to keep saying the prayer card so that Blessed Josemaria will continue to help us.

H. T., Ashiya, Japan

"SHOW ME THE POWER OF YOUR INTERCESSION"

A doctor friend of mine came to Paraguay from the United States after retiring, so that he could continue helping the needy with his professional services.

During a visit to his native city, he decided to have a checkup. A doctor who was a friend of his took charge and found on examining his neck an almost total blockage of the carotid artery. After a week of treatment, the doctor decided to do an arterial transplant. The operation lasted five hours, and when it was over, the patient failed to show signs of recovery. He was suffering from shock and was totally paralyzed. The doctor said to himself: "I can't let this friend and colleague of mine die," and he repeated the operation from the beginning. The patient spent a total of ten hours in the operating room, but once again he failed to regain consciousness when it was over.

In desperation, the surgeon telephoned my friend's family, who were in Paraguay, to explain the situation and ask them to pray for a miracle. On learning of this I remembered that the Holy Father had just recently beatified Josemaria Escriva. Commending myself to the new Blessed, I said to him: "Show me the power of your intercession by restoring my friend to life."

I was told later that soon after this my friend suddenly woke up. The doctor asked him who he was and he gave his name. A few quick tests showed that

the paralysis had completely disappeared. The surgeon thinks all of this was a genuine miracle.

My friend and his family are very thankful to God for the restoration of his life. Masses in thanksgiving have been said. I am writing this testimony to thank Blessed Josemaria Escriva for his intercession.

D.M., Asuncion, Paraguay

IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

I am a police officer and work in a remote corner of the Solomon Islands.

The wife of another officer suffered a very serious head injury as a result of an automobile accident. Although she was brought to the hospital quickly, she arrived half dead.

At that grave moment we put a prayer card of Blessed Josemaria on her forehead and said the prayer for his intercession, asking for her recovery. Almost instantaneously, she recovered consciousness. In three days she had improved considerably and, at the end of three weeks she was completely recovered.

I thank God for this favor, granted through the intercession of Blessed Josemaria.

E.S., Korovon, Solomon Islands

REFUSING TO HAVE AN ABORTION

When we were expecting our last baby, the obstetrician treating my wife advised us to have tests made, since there was a history of Down Syndrome in the family.

During this examination a tumor was detected in our child, but they could not determine if it was malignant since the baby was still too small. They told us we would have to wait three more weeks to determine how bad it was. The next twenty-one days were very hard for us; we asked relatives and friends to share our concern. An acquaintance promised to commend the cure to the intercession of Blessed Josemaria Escriva. We also prayed for a cure.

We had to put up with the opinion of those who, contrary to our own feelings, recommended that we terminate the pregnancy, as if the sick or incapacitated did not have the right to a place in the world.

When the three weeks were up, we returned to the hospital for a sonogram examination. The doctors, surprised at the result, asked us if we had prayed a lot: the tumor had disappeared. We wept for joy since this was exactly what we were hoping to hear.

Our child, Ayelen, was born perfectly healthy. No one at the hospital could explain the reason for the disappearance of the tumor. We think that this miracle has been a result of Blessed Josemaria's intercession. And we hope that our experience will be helpful to others who are going through a similar situation.

C.M.D., La Plata, Argentina

"YOU HAVE TO COME THROUGH"

My mother-in-law's sister and her husband came to Mexico for a visit. The husband suffered a stroke a short time later when passing through a small village. An hour later, he could not hold up his head or stay on his feet, and

we couldn't understand his speech. I had never seen anyone in such a state. I took the prayer card of Blessed Josemaria Escriva and gave it to my mother-in-law's sister. We began to say the prayer over and over again. I told Blessed Josemaria: "You have to come through."

Finally a doctor was found, who happened to be a specialist in these cases; he accompanied the patient to a hospital for observation and treatment.

By nightfall, the husband had almost completely recovered; he was able to move his arm, which had been like a rag doll's, and also his leg.

We returned to Mexico City. The doctor there told us he had never seen such a rapid recuperation in a case like this. Four days later, he felt fine, and could speak and walk without difficulty.

The whole family is deeply moved by the miracle that God our Lord has worked for us through Blessed Josemaria.

P.H., Mexico City

"BUT I ALREADY KNOW HIM!"

Every year we organize apostolic activities in the outlying areas of our province, known locally as "the missions." A woman who has lived in the area for more than forty years told me that she helps women to give birth throughout the whole region. She told me that she has seen some very difficult births. I offered her a prayer card of the Founder of Opus Dei so that she could entrust herself to his intercession, both for these cases and for persons with other problems that she might encounter.

When she saw the prayer card she exclaimed: "But I already know him!" I asked her to explain. She told me that on some occasions women with problem pregnancies had traveled twelve hours by horseback to the nearest town to be treated at a medical center. Some of them would return with the diagnosis that there was very little hope for their child.

My new friend told me that in these cases she did not lose her calm. She would take the prayer card of Blessed Josemaria and place it on the woman involved. It had never failed. She could not tell me how many times this situation had arisen, but said that whenever it had, the intercession of Blessed Josemaria Escriva had been very effective. I didn't learn either how the prayer card had reached such a remote area. But I can certainly attest that devotion to him is very widespread in the whole region.

D.E., Ibarra, Ecuador

The originals of these letters with the writer's names and addresses are kept in the files of the Postulation of the Cause in Rome.

We are grateful for the many letters we receive. They are a testimony of the devotion with which so many persons the world over pray to God through the intercession of Blessed Josemaria Escriva. We are able to include in the *Bulletin* only a small selection from among them. They describe events of vital significance as well as simple anecdotes.

We also wish to express our appreciation to all those who send contributions to help defray printing and distribution costs of the *Bulletin*, which is free of charge. These contributions also help further those apostolates that stem from Blessed Josemaria's love for souls.

Published Works of Blessed Josemaria Escriva

The Way. "Monsignor Escriva has written something more than a masterpiece; he has written straight from the heart, and straight to the heart go the short paragraphs that make up *The Way*." (*L'Osservatore Romano*, March 24, 1960). The first edition of this book was published in 1934 entitled *Consideraciones Espirituales*. Since then it has been reprinted many times, with a total of 4,721,000 copies in 42 languages.

Furrow. "Like *The Way*, *Furrow* is born of Msgr. Escriva's interior life and experience with souls." (from the Foreword by Bishop Alvaro del Portillo). The first edition was published in 1986. 430,000 copies in eighteen languages have been published to date.

The Forge. *The Forge* "is a book of fire. Reading it and meditating on it can bring many souls to the forge of divine Love and enkindle within them a zeal for holiness and apostolate because this was the desire of Msgr. Escriva" (from the Foreword by Bishop Alvaro del Portillo). It was first published in 1987. Since then 442,000 copies have been printed in ten languages. Published in English by Scepter.

Holy Rosary. A book of meditations on each of the fifteen mysteries of the life of Christ and the Blessed Virgin, which one contemplates when saying the Holy Rosary. The first edition appeared in 1934. A total of over 686,000 copies have been published in 22 languages.

The Way of the Cross. A work of Msgr. Escriva that is the fruit of his meditation on the scenes of the passion of Our Lord. Since its appearance in 1981, 381,000 copies have been printed in sixteen languages.

Conversations. In *Conversations with Msgr. Escriva*, the founder of Opus Dei answers, in writing, questions formulated by various newspapers and magazines in different countries. The first edition was published in 1968. Since then 330,000 copies have been published in nine languages.

Christ Is Passing By. This book is a collection of eighteen homilies which constitute a profound and attractive exposition of Christian doctrine and life. There is a Foreword by Bishop Alvaro del Portillo. The first edition was published in 1973. It has since had a total printing of some 465,000 copies in thirteen languages.

Friends of God. A second collection of eighteen homilies in which the author's warm and filial conversation with God is centered on the theme of the Christian virtues. Also with a Foreword by Bishop Alvaro del Portillo. It was first published in 1977. Since then a total of 383,000 copies have been published in twelve languages.

In Love with the Church. A short collection of homilies on the supernatural mission of the Church, the priesthood and fidelity of the Christian to the Spouse of Christ. The first edition was published in 1986. Some 41,000 copies have been printed in eight languages.

La Abadesa de las Huelgas. A penetrating study of an extraordinary case of jurisdiction of a quasi-episcopal nature exercised by the abbess of a famous convent in Burgos, using the original sources and documents. First published in 1944; a second edition appeared in 1974 and a third in 1988. (Only available in Spanish).

(The above books are generally available in Catholic bookstores and also from Scepter Publishers, P.O. Box 1270, Princeton, NJ 08542. Tel. 800 322-8773.)