



Altar of the prelatial church of Our Lady of Peace, with the casket containing the sacred body of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá.



Blessed
JOSEMARÍA ESCRIVÁ
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A CELEBRATION FOR THE WHOLE CHURCH

On the 17th of May last, the Holy Father Pope John Paul II was chief celebrant at the solemn Mass for the beatification of Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, the Founder of Opus Dei, and of Josephine Bakhita, a Canossian nun. The people of Rome could not remember seeing Saint Peter's Square — with some 300,000 pilgrims — so packed to overflowing.

Every beatification sheds new light on the mystery of the Church. This is the mystery of holiness, of God's special relationship with every individual and with all mankind, which leads Christians to an ever deeper trust in the power of God's grace. Their hope is raised to new levels as they consider how God's infinite mercy elevates man to such a degree that he can share forever in the divine life in Christ, a dignity to which we are all called. The presence of evil in the world, the fact of our own weakness and shortcomings, the existence of suffering and sin, can never lead us to renounce our goal. The example of what God has achieved in the lives of the blessed in heaven, and our confidence in their intercession, encourage us to rekindle our faith, and to respond more decisively to our Christian vocation with commitment and perseverance.

Every beatification, therefore, is a truly ecclesial event. This was particularly evident on the 17th of May. Pope John Paul said so the following day in the audience he gave to the pilgrims who had come to Rome for the Founder of Opus Dei's raising to the altars. "You are filled with joy at the beatification of Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, because you trust that his being raised to the altars, as the Prelate of Opus Dei has just said, will be of great benefit to the Church. I too share that confidence. In fact, I am convinced, as I wrote in the Apostolic Exhortation *The Vocation and Mission of the lay faithful in the Church and in the world*, that 'the entire people of God, and the lay faithful in particular, can find at this moment new models of holiness and new witnesses of heroic virtue lived in the ordinary everyday circumstances of human existence' (cf. *Christifideles laici*, 17). How could one fail to see in the example, teaching and work of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá an eminent witness of Christian heroism in the carrying out of ordinary human activities?"

There are now millions of people throughout the world whose lives have been changed due to the joy of meeting Christ thanks to the personality and message of Blessed Josemaría. And with heartfelt gratitude to God we all feel the duty of being daily more faithful to his example and his teachings. This is what the Church asks of us. This is what the Holy Father asked for, and what was mentioned by all the Cardinals and Bishops who were the chief celebrants at the many thanksgiving Masses concelebrated in a number of Roman Basilicas in the days following the beatification.

In beatifying someone the Church is restating the fact that holiness is not something unreal, a marvellous but inaccessible ideal. Holiness is a goal everyone can reach. Our Lord picked out Blessed Josemaría Escrivá and blessed him with innumerable gifts so that he could proclaim this truth to today's world. His

beatification, therefore, is one more stage in the ecclesial mission to which Our Lord called him when he entrusted him with the founding of Opus Dei. In his homily during the Mass of the 17th of May, John Paul II said: "With supernatural intuition, Blessed Josemaría untiringly preached the universal call to holiness and apostolate. Christ calls everyone to become holy in the realities of everyday life: hence *work too is a means of personal holiness and apostolate*, when it is done in union with Jesus Christ ... The relevance and transcendence of this spiritual message, with its deep roots in the Gospel, are evident, as is also shown in the fruitfulness with which God has blessed the life and work of Josemaría Escrivá."

Some days later, on the 21st of May, the Prelate of Opus Dei underlined these words of the Pope. "The elevation of Blessed Josemaría to the altars represents the beginning of a new expansion in the ecclesial mission for which Our Lord chose him. The universality of the task to which God called him — to announce that all earthly realities are paths of holiness — has been confirmed in a solemn and tangible way. His beatification is for all Christians *a new call to holiness*, a new reason for hope, an example of faithfulness and docility to God in the fulfilment of daily work." And he added: "There can be no doubt either that our Founder's beatification also marks the beginning of a new stage in the life of Opus Dei, and this must also happen in the lives of each one of its members. A stage of deeper love for God, of more constant apostolic endeavour, and of more generous service to the Church and all mankind. It must be a new stage, finally, of greater fidelity to the spirit of seeking holiness in the middle of the world, which our Founder left us as our inheritance."

This is the message of the following pages, which give but a brief picture of the unforgettable days of the beatification of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá. Firstly, the 17th of May itself, with the Holy Father's homily and greeting at the *Regina Caeli* to all the faithful present at the beatification Mass. Then, the 18th of May, when Mass was celebrated by the Prelate of Opus Dei in Saint Peter's Square, followed by an address of the Pope during an audience with pilgrims. We also include some excerpts from homilies of Cardinals of the Roman Curia given during some of the more than twenty thanksgiving Masses celebrated in Rome on the 19th and 20th for different language groups. And then the final concelebrations on the 21st of May, where the chief celebrants were Bishop Alvaro del Portillo and Monsignor Javier Echevarría, the Vicar General of Opus Dei. These took place in the Basilica of Saint Eugene, before a final ceremony in which the holy remains of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá were moved to the prelatic church of Our Lady of Peace.

The purpose of this newsletter is not so much to try to give a graphical description of an historical and ecclesial event, but rather to encourage a renewal of our own love for the Church so as to respond more decisively, more trustingly and more humbly to God's will, inspired by the example of Blessed Josemaría, while confiding in his intercession before the Blessed Trinity.

Panoramic view of St Peter's Square during the beatification ceremony — a meeting point for some three hundred thousand pilgrims.

APOSTOLIC BRIEF

Beatification of the Venerable Servant of God
Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, Priest, Founder of Opus Dei

JOHN PAUL II

IOANNES
PAVLVS
PP-II

ad perpetuam rei memoriam.

*Munere perfungens instaurandi
Christi regnum in omnibus gentibus of
Lumen Gentium, 5. Beatus est - univer-
sale salutis sacramentum, mysterium a-
moris Dei erga hominem manifestans
simul et operans - Gaudium et Spes, 45.
Venerabilis Josemaría Escrivá
nuntium mira congruentia exprimit
universalis mysterii salvifici momentum:
- Omnes vocantur ad sanctitatem; Do-*

As an everlasting memorial. The Church, which is sent to establish the kingdom of Christ among all peoples (cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 5), is "the universal sacrament of salvation, at once manifesting and actualizing the mystery of God's love for men" (Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, 45).

The message of Venerable Josemaría Escrivá expresses, in an admirable and most fitting way, the universal nature of the mystery of salvation: "He calls each and every one to holiness; he asks each and every one to love him: young and old, single and married, healthy and sick, learned and unlearned, no matter where they work, or where they are" (*Friends of God*, 294).

In proclaiming the radical nature of the baptismal vocation, he opened up new ways for a deeper christianization of society. The Founder of Opus Dei pointed out that the universal nature of the call to full union with Christ means that one can find God in any human activity.

Work, therefore, takes on a central role in Christian sanctification and apostolate. The special connection between the dynamism of human actions and supernatural grace shows clearly how the supernatural life of union with Christ occupies a central place, while it also leads the faithful to make a determined effort to transform the world. In this context, Venerable Josemaría Escrivá has highlighted all the redemptive power of the faith, and its capacity to transform both individuals and the social structures in which men and women work out their ideals and their ambitions.

The Founder of Opus Dei saw clearly the unlimited apostolic possibilities of the ordinary life of the faithful, when guided by the desire to sanctify their ordinary work and all human activities and situations. Hence his insistence on the need to blend together, in a harmonious *unity of life*, one's prayer, work and apostolate: "There is just one life, made of flesh and spirit. And it is this life which has to become, in both soul and body, holy and filled with God ... Our age needs to give back to matter and to the most trivial occurrences and situations their noble and original meaning. It needs to restore them to the service of the Kingdom of God" (*Conversations*, 114).

Venerable Josemaría Escrivá was born in Barbastro (Spain) on 9 January 1902. He was ordained to the priesthood on 28 March 1925, and on 2 October 1928, he founded Opus Dei in Madrid. On 14 February 1930, he saw that he should extend his apostolate to include women also. In faithful fulfilment of the task entrusted to him, he brought priests and lay people, men and women, to discover that it is in their daily occupations that they can live out their co-responsibility in the Church's mission, with a full dedication to God in the ordinary circumstances of everyday life. "The divine paths of the world have been opened up", he exclaimed (*Christ is passing by*, 21). He did not restrict himself simply to describing the pastoral opportunities which were opened up by this evangelizing effort, but rather went on to establish it as a stable and organic part of the Church.

Following an intense life dedicated entirely to the heroic fulfilment of that ecclesial service, which was marked by the profound

experience of the mystery of the Cross, in very close union with the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Venerable Servant of God gave up his soul to God on 26 June 1975, in Rome. He was an authentic master of Christian life and he reached the heights of contemplation through continuous prayer, constant mortification, and the daily effort to do his work with exemplary docility to the Holy Spirit, with the aim of "serving the Church as the Church wants to be served".

The considerable reputation for holiness which he enjoyed during his lifetime grew extraordinarily after his death. In 1981, the Vicar General of the diocese of Rome, Cardinal Ugo Poletti, started the Cause of Canonisation of the Servant of God. When the two Investigative Processes in regard to his life and virtues, one in Rome and the other in Madrid, had completed their work, the consideration of the heroicity of his virtues was begun. The decree in regard to the heroic quality of his virtues was issued on 9 April 1990.

Among the many miracles attributed to the Servant of God, the one chosen for his Cause was the miraculous cure of a nun, which took place in 1976, and the appropriate Investigative Process began in 1982. The stipulated enquiries and examinations were carried out, and the decree *super miro* was promulgated on 6 July 1991.

And so we established that the rite of Beatification should take place on 17 May 1992.

Today, therefore, in Rome, in Saint Peter's Square, during a solemn liturgical celebration, we pronounced the following words:

We, acceding to the wishes of our brothers Camillo Ruini, Our Vicar for the city of Rome, and Pietro Giacomo Nonis, Bishop of Vicenza, as well as those of many Brothers in the Episcopate, and of numerous faithful, having heard the opinion of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, by Our Apostolic Authority declare that the Venerable Servants of God Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, priest, Founder of Opus Dei, and Josephine Bakhita, virgin, Daughter of Charity, Canoness, can from now on be called Blessed, and their feasts can be celebrated, in the places and in the manner established by law, each year, on the day of their birth to heaven: 26 June for Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, and 8 February for Josephine Bakhita. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All that we have established by means of this letter, we wish to remain in place now and in the future, notwithstanding anything to the contrary.

Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, and sealed with the Fisherman's ring, 17 May 1992, the fourteenth of Our Pontificate.

Angelo Card. Sodano
Secretary of State

L.S.

Archives of the Secretary of State, no. 304,722

17 May



BEATIFICATION OF BLESSED JOSEMARÍA ESCRIVÁ

Hundreds of thousands of pilgrims filled St Peter's Square and the nearby streets on the sunlit morning of the 17th of May 1992. The universality of the Church was evident as people of all races, ages and social backgrounds gathered in Rome for the beatification.

The Holy Father, during the homily of 17 May 1992.

Tens of millions of viewers in some thirty countries followed the live coverage of the beatification Mass on television. The news media from all over the world sent correspondents to report on this expression of the Church's vitality.

The mystery of the unity of the Church, the People of God united in one faith, was seen by all in the devotion of the pilgrims, the cheerfulness in their faces, and in the air of recollection evident throughout this great mass of people. So many hearts raised the same prayer to heaven, but each with a different story of successes and failures, with different 'crosses' and different hopes. In a united prayer of praise for God were thousands of different shades and colours of thanksgiving and petition.

When the Holy Father John Paul II proclaimed Josemaría Escrivá and Josephine Bakhita blessed, large tapestries with their pictures on the façade of the Basilica were unveiled. Blessed Josemaría Escrivá's smile, his kindly glance, seemed to be gazing at each individual present. The applause that burst forth in the Square, with the singing of the 'Christus vincit,' expressed in an unforgettable manner the Church's delight at the triumph of Christ in his saints and the hope of reaching with them, through this earthly pilgrimage, 'the crown of glory which does not fade'.¹ Now raised to the altars of the Church Blessed Josemaría Escrivá reminds us, more forcefully than ever, that the divine paths of the earth have been opened up for everyone.

¹ Preface of the Saints, 1



Portrait of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá, displayed on the façade of St Peter's Basilica, immediately following the Beatification on 17 May, and on 18 May.

HOMILY OF POPE JOHN PAUL II

1. "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

To the two disciples walking along the road to Emmaus Jesus said "Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" (Luke 24:26).

Moreover, the first reading has enabled us to hear the Apostles — Paul and Barnabas — "strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith" (Acts 14:22). They announce the same truth about which Jesus had spoken on the road to Emmaus, a truth confirmed by his life and death: "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God".

The disciples of the crucified and risen Christ — through the succession of generations down the centuries — choose the same path which he had indicated to them.

"For I have given you an example" (John 13:15).

2. Today we are given an opportunity to fix our gaze once more on this salvific path — the path to holiness — concentrating on the figures of two people who from now

on we will call "Blessed": Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, a priest and the founder of Opus Dei, and Josephine Bakhita, a Daughter of Charity of Canossa.

The Church desires to serve and profess the whole truth about Christ. She wishes to be the *steward of the whole mystery of her Redeemer*. Although the way to the kingdom of God passes through many tribulations, it ends in a sharing in glory — that glory which Christ revealed to us in his resurrection.

The measure of that glory is given by the *new Jerusalem*, announced by the inspired words of the Apocalypse of John: "Behold the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them" (Rev 21:3).

"Behold, I make all things new" (Rev 21:5) — says the Lord of glory. The path towards that definitive "newness" of all things passes, here on earth, through the *new commandment* "that you love one another, even as I have loved you" (John 13:34).

That commandment was at the centre of the lives of two exemplary members of



His Holiness Pope John Paul II, during the incensing of the relics of Blessed Josemaría and of Blessed Josephine Bakhita.

the Church who today, in the joy of Easter, are proclaimed "Blessed".

3. Born of a deeply Christian family, already in adolescence Josemaría perceived God's call to a life of greater commitment. A few years after his ordination to the priesthood he began his mission as founder, a mission to which he would devote 47 years of loving and unfailing care for the priests and laity of what is today the Prelature of Opus Dei.

The spiritual and apostolic life of the new Blessed was based on knowing himself, through faith, to be a son of God in Christ. This faith nourished his love for the Lord, his evangelizing drive, his constant joy, even in the great trials and difficulties he had overcome. "To carry the cross is to find happiness and joy", he tells us in one of his *Meditations*; "to carry the cross is to identify oneself with Christ, to be Christ, and therefore to be a son of God".

With supernatural intuition, Blessed Josemaría untiringly preached the universal call to holiness and apostolate. Christ calls everyone to become holy in the realities of everyday life. Hence, *work too is a means of personal holiness and apostolate*, when it is

done in union with Jesus Christ, for the Son of God, in the Incarnation, has united himself in a certain way with the whole reality of man and with the whole of creation (cf. *Dominum et vivificantem*, 50). In a society in which an unbridled craving for material things turns them into idols and a cause of separation from God, the new *Beatus* reminds us that these same realities, creatures of God and of human industry, if used correctly for the glory of the Creator and the service of one's brothers and sisters, *can be a way for men and women to meet Christ*. "All things of the earth", he taught, "including the earthly and temporal activity of men, must be directed to God" (*Letter*, 19 March 1954).

"I will praise your name for ever, my God and my king." This acclamation which we sang in the responsorial Psalm is, as it were, a summing up of the spiritual life of Blessed Josemaría. His great love of Christ, by whom he is fascinated, impels him to consecrate himself forever to him and to share in the mystery of his passion and resurrection. He likewise has a filial love for the Virgin Mary which leads him to imitate her virtues. "I will praise your name for

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ever": this is the hymn which rose spontaneously in his soul and which led him to offer to God all that was his and all that surrounded him. In fact, his life is marked by Christian humanism, with the unmistakable seal of goodness, meekness of heart, the hidden suffering by which God purifies and sanctifies his chosen ones.

4. The relevance and transcendence of this spiritual message, with its deep roots in the Gospel, are evident, as is also shown in the fruitfulness with which God has blessed the life and work of Josemaría Escrivá. The land of his birth, Spain, is honoured by this son of hers, an exemplary priest, who succeeded in opening up new apostolic horizons of missionary and evangelizing activity. May this joyful celebration be an auspicious occasion that will stimulate all the members of the Prelature of Opus Dei to greater commitment, in their response to the call to holiness and to a more generous participation in ecclesial life, being always *witnesses of genuine evangelical values*, and may this be expressed in an ardent apostolic dynamism, with particular attention to the poorest and most needy.

5. In Blessed Josephine Bakhita too we have an eminent witness of God's fatherly love and a *luminous sign of the perennial modernness of the Beatitudes*. Born in the Sudan, in 1869, kidnapped by slave traders when she was still a child and sold many times in African markets, she experienced the atrocities of a slavery which left on her body the deep marks of human cruelty. In spite of these experiences of suffering, her innocence remained intact, full of hope. "As

Cardinal Edward Idris Cassidy

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Basilica of St Mary Major, 19th May 1992

It is obvious, then, that the world is going to react negatively, even violently, to the idea of men and women who seek "to bring Christ into the heart of human activities", who seek to sanctify themselves and others by the witness they give in their daily lives. We should not be surprised at such opposition, but seek to overcome it with the great Gospel remedy for all opposition: love. The world is very small, writes Blessed Josemaría, when love is great ...

He knew that it was through the Cross that salvation has come into the world, and he never failed to grasp that cross as being the instrument that would bring him to his place in that great multitude from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.

a slave I never despaired", she used to say, "because I felt within me a mysterious power that sustained me". The name Bakhita — as she had been called by her kidnappers — means Fortunate, and such she became, thanks to the God of all consolations who ever held her by the hand and walked at her side.

Having arrived in Venice, through the mysterious workings of Divine Providence, Bakhita soon opened her heart to grace. Baptism, and some years later religious profession among the Canossian Sisters who had taken her in and educated her, were *the logical consequences of the discovery of the treasure of the Gospel*, for which she sacrificed everything, including her return in freedom to her native land. Like Maddalena of Canossa, she too wanted to live for God alone, and with heroic constancy she set out humbly and trustingly along the path of fidelity to a higher love. Her faith was strong, clear and ardent. "If only you knew what a great joy it is to know God!", she used to say.

6. The *new Beata* spent 51 years of religious life as a Canossian Sister, allowing herself to be guided by obedience in a daily commitment, humble and hidden yet abounding in genuine charity and prayer. The people of Schio, where she lived for almost all that time, soon discovered in their "Black Mother" — as they called her — human qualities rich in self-giving, an uncommon interior power which attracted people. Her life was lived in constant missionary prayer, in humble and heroic fidelity to charity, which enabled her to live the freedom of the children of God and to encourage it around her.

In our time, in which the unbridled race for power, money and pleasure is the cause of so much distrust, violence and loneliness, Sister Bakhita has been given to us once more by the Lord as a universal sister, so that she can reveal to us the secret of true happiness: the Beatitudes.

Hers is a *message of heroic goodness* modelled on the goodness of the heavenly Father. She has left us a *witness of evangelical reconciliation and forgiveness*, which will surely bring consolation to the Christians of her homeland, the Sudan, so sorely tried by a conflict that has lasted many years and reaped so many victims.

Their fidelity and their hope are a source of pride and thanksgiving for the whole Church. At this time of great trials, Sister Bakhita goes before them on the path of the imitation of Christ, of the deepening of Christian life and of unshakable attachment to the Church. At this time I desire once more to address a heartfelt appeal to those who control the destiny of the Sudan, that they will put into practice the ideals of peace and harmony which they proclaim; that respect for fundamental human rights — and in the first place the right to religious freedom — will be ensured for everyone, without ethnic or religious discrimination.

A source of grave concern is the situation of the hundreds of thousands of refugees from the South, forced by the war to abandon their homes and work. Recently they have also been compelled to leave the camps where they have found at least some form of assistance and have been transported to desert locations, while the free passage of relief convoys from the international agencies has even been prevented. Theirs is a tragic situation, and it cannot leave us unmoved.

I strongly urge the international welfare agencies to continue to send their timely and urgently needed assistance.

As I greet the delegations from the Church in the Sudan present at this celebration, my thoughts turn with affection accompanied by prayer to the whole Church in that nation: to the Bishops, the diocesan and missionary clergy, the laity involved in pastoral work, and also the catechists, generous and needed cooperators in the spreading of the truth, the word and the love of God.

The people of the Sudan are always present in my heart and my prayers: I entrust them to the intercession of the new *Beata*, Josephine Bakhita.

7. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34-35). With these words of Jesus the Gospel of today's Mass ends. In this saying we find *the summing up of all holiness*; the holiness which Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer and Josephine Bakhita attained, by paths that were different and yet



The Holy Father, Pope John Paul II with the Prelate of Opus Dei, Bishop Alvaro del Portillo, on 17 May 1992 after the beatification ceremony.

met in one and the same goal. They loved God with all the strength of their heart and gave proof of a charity taken to the point of heroism through their works of service to their brothers and sisters. For this reason the Church today raises them to the honour of the altars and holds them up as examples in the imitation of Christ, who loved us and gave himself for each one of us (cf. Gal 2:20).

8. "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and in him God glorified" (John 13:31): *the Paschal Mystery of glory*.

Through the Son of Man this glory extends to all that is seen and unseen:

"All your words shall give thanks to you, O Lord, and all your saints shall bless you!

"*They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom*" (Ps 145 [144]:10-11).

Behold the Son of Man: "Was it not necessary that ... he should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"

Behold those who have followed Christ in every generation: "Through many trials they have entered into the kingdom of God."

"*Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom*" (Ps 145 [144]:13).



ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER BEFORE THE REGINA CAELI

The Holy Father greets the sick who attended the beatification ceremony from around the foot of the altar.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
The time has come to recite the beautiful antiphon "Regina Caeli". It magnificently expresses the joy of the Lord's Mother over the resurrection of her Son, and with her and in her, the Church's joy and ours as well.

Today the Church rejoiced with Mary in a particular way, for she sees Blessed Josemaría Escrivá and Blessed Josephine Bakhita raised to the honours of the altar.

The Church rejoices for the two of them, for the fact that they have been joined together in this beatification today in St Peter's Square. It is a meeting which speaks greatly to us and to the whole world.

This brother and sister of ours in Christ continuously nourished their spiritual life with a fervent and genuine devotion to the Mother of God.

Even in the final moments of his earthly life, Monsignor Escrivá gazed intently at the picture of Our

Lady of Guadalupe which hung in his room, in order to entrust himself to her motherly intercession and to be accompanied by her as he went to meet God. Similarly, the last words of Sister Bakhita were an ecstatic invocation to the Blessed Virgin: "The Madonna! The Madonna!", she exclaimed as a smile illumined her face.

That is why their meeting today for this beatification in St Peter's Square says a great deal to the Church.

In the light of their example, we too are invited to look to and call upon Mary especially in this month dedicated to her, in particular, by reciting the Rosary. In this prayer the Blessed Virgin guides our meditation on the principal mysteries of redemption. May Mary's faith, then, be ours as well; may her joy also be ours.

And as she was the "causa nostrae laetitiae", cause of our joy, so may we in turn strive to be Mary's joy, so that we may join her, the Queen of Heaven, in our blessed homeland.

In the final moments of his earthly life, Monsignor Escrivá gazed intently at the picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe which hung in his room.



MASS OF THANKSGIVING

After every beatification the Church gathers together in prayer to thank God for the wonders he has worked in the lives of his saints. It is traditional for Masses of thanksgiving to be celebrated on the following days, and for the Holy Father to grant an audience to the pilgrims.

Bishop Alvaro del Portillo during the offering of the gifts in the Mass of Thanksgiving held in St Peter's Square on 18 May 1992.

On this occasion the faithful who had gone to Rome for the beatification of Josemaría Escrivá were so numerous that it would have been absolutely impossible for them to fit into any church or basilica in Rome for the first Mass of thanksgiving in honour of the new Blessed. The same was true as regards the audience of the Holy Father, inasmuch as the capacity of the Paul VI Audience Hall would have been clearly insufficient. In these circumstances it was thought that both gatherings could be organised in the Olympic Stadium, and this plan was presented to the Holy See. A few days later the Vatican replied that, as an absolutely extraordinary solution, on Monday the 18th of May, the Prelate of Opus Dei could make use of the papal altar prepared for the two beatifications on the 17th in St Peter's Square. At the same time a request was made for help to be given on the Sunday afternoon to put back in place the seats that would be used that morning for the beatification of Josemaría Escrivá and Josephine Bakhita. Following this plan, His Lordship, Bishop Alvaro del Portillo, Prelate of Opus Dei, concelebrated with the Vicar General and the Vicars of the various Regions of the Prelature, prior to the audience with the Pope.

On the following pages, in chronological order, we have the homily given by the Prelate of Opus Dei, his words of welcome to the Holy Father and the Pope's address to the pilgrims.

Blessed Josemaría always wanted to live for the glory of God, and to direct all earthly realities to that end.

towards the mere infrahuman 'culture of well-being', but rather towards a culture, one might say, of 'integral well-being' of the whole man and of all men, in order to build up the kingdom of Christ on earth — a kingdom of justice, love and peace.¹⁹ This kingdom, which is borne by the Church, begins in the heart of man and spreads from there to family, professional and social life. In the words of the Holy Father, John Paul II, in his first Encyclical, this world of ours of conquests of science and technology ... is also the world 'groaning in travail' (Rom 8:22) that 'waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God' (Rom 8:19).²⁰ Let there be no doubt: **These world crises are crises of saints. God wants a handful of men 'of his own' in every human activity. And then ... pax Christi in regno Christi — the peace of Christ in the kingdom of Christ.**²¹

4. From a very early age Blessed Josemaría understood, with the lights God gave him, that the Creation, Redemption and the Sanctification of the world form the framework of a single eternal plan of the Blessed Trinity, who has ordered all things to the glory of the Father and leads them to that end by means of the Son, with the power of the Holy Spirit. As early as the 1930's he condensed, in brief strokes, the programme of his life and the reason for his being in Opus Dei as follows. **We must give all the glory to God. He wills it: *gloriam meam alteri non dabo, I will not give my glory to another (Is 42:8). And therefore we want Christ to reign, since *per ipsum, et cum ipso, et in ipso, est tibi Deo Patri Omnipotenti in unitate Spiritus Sancti omnis honor et gloria: through Him, with Him, and in Him, all honour and glory is for you, God the Father Almighty, in the****

Cardinal Johannes Willebrands

Emeritus President of the Pontifical Council
for the Promotion of Christian Unity
Basilica of Saint Clement, 19th May 1992

The person of the Founder of Opus Dei has a special significance for the whole Church. Monsignor Escrivá has taught us, in the journey of our life, the Way which is Jesus Christ. He has shown us that way in our own times, he has described it and he has travelled along it with human enthusiasm and spiritual vigour. The description which the Apostle St Paul gives us of his own difficulties, of his joys and of his life with God through Jesus Christ, with the power and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, finds a form and reality of its own in Josemaría.

unity of the Holy Spirit. And a requirement of his glory and of his kingship is that everyone, with Peter, should go to Jesus through Mary.²²

Blessed Josemaría always wanted to live for the glory of God, and to direct all earthly realities to that end. For this reason with all his soul he sought union with Christ through Mary, and he achieved it because he loved the Church and the Pope with all his heart, and he served them with all his life. I cannot but recall the first time he came to Rome, and his emotion when he first caught sight of the dome of St Peter's and recited the Creed. He spent the whole night in a vigil of prayer, with his eyes fixed on the rooms of the Holy Father, visible a short distance away from the terrace of the house where we were staying in the nearby Piazza della Citta Leonina. That spirit of persevering and penitent prayer, that love for the Church and the Roman Pontiff, is what he inculcated in a multitude of souls and what, here today, we wish to manifest in a singular way.

With emotion and gratitude we call on the intercession of Blessed Josemaría, so that we too may reach sanctity following the sure path which is the Blessed Virgin Mary, our Mother. Pope Paul VI proclaimed Our Lady as *Mater Ecclesia*, Mother of the Church,²³ and the Holy Father Pope John Paul II has wanted to brighten up with her image this marvellous Square of St Peter, which opens its arms to the whole of mankind. Through her maternal mediation we receive the grace of the Holy Spirit which makes us members of Christ in the Church.

Christ, Mary, the Pope: three names intimately united in the heart of Blessed Josemaría, who wished to sum up his apostolic zeal in that aspiration he so often repeated, and which we too, now, once again make our own: ***Omnes cum Petro ad Iesum per Mariam!*** — all, with Peter, with the Pope and in the Church, to Jesus through Mary! Amen.

¹⁹ Roman Missal, *Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Universal King*, Preface

²⁰ John Paul II, Encyclical, *Redemptor hominis*, 4 March 1979, 8

²¹ J. Escrivá, *The Way*, 301

²² J. Escrivá, *Instruction*, 19 March 1934, 36-37

²³ Paul VI, *Address at the closing of the third session of the Second Vatican Council*, 21 November 1964, AAS 56 (1964), 1015



AUDIENCE FOR THE PILGRIMS OPUS DEI PRELATE'S GREETING TO THE HOLY FATHER

Holy Father,

I am filled with deep joy as I begin to address Your Holiness. I do so in the name of thousands of faithful people, priests and laity, members of Opus Dei, Cooperators and friends of the Work who have gathered in Rome from the five Continents in order to attend the beatification of Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, Founder of Opus Dei. I know I am also representing many others who, not having been able to come to the Eternal City, are nevertheless present in spirit in St Peter's Square, united to us in their faithful allegiance to and filial affection for the Roman Pontiff.

Allow me, Holy Father, in the name of all of them, and expressing the sentiments of the countless people who have recourse to the intercession of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá, to thank you for the solemn ceremony of the beatification which your Holiness presided over in this very place.

The growing diffusion of the private devotion to the Founder of Opus Dei was defined, in the Decree on his heroic virtues, as "a true phenomenon of popular piety". From now on, after his elevation to the glory of the altars, the number of those receiving effective help through the public veneration, example and teaching of Blessed Josemaría, will increase even more. The principal reason for our joy and of our gratitude to

God and to Your Holiness for the beatification of our most beloved Founder is rooted precisely in the good that this will bring not only to Opus Dei, but to the whole Church. This feeling is a direct consequence of what we have learned and heard repeatedly from the lips of Blessed Josemaría who used to say: **the only ambition, the only desire of Opus Dei and of each one of its members is to serve the Church as She wishes to be served.**¹

Bishop Alvaro del Portillo, Prelate of Opus Dei, greets the Holy Father at the beginning of the Audience of 18 May 1992.

Cardinal Sebastiano Baggio

Chamberlain of the Holy Roman Church
Basilica of Santa Maria in Vallicella, 20th May 1992

Blessed Josemaría Escrivá carried out his foundational work with total rectitude of intention. He was only interested in the glory of God, and this explains his deep love of freedom, which was such a characteristic trait of his life and work...

For Blessed Josemaría Escrivá, union with the Church is not something external but a constituent part of any true work of apostolate. New reasons come to mind for giving thanks to God for this unity of apostolate which, following the way marked out by Blessed Josemaría Escrivá, Opus Dei has lived with such intensity from the beginning. A unity which is now adequately expressed institutionally with the erection of Opus Dei as a Personal Prelature and which is seen, by the ordination of the Prelate as a Bishop, to be rooted in the very source of apostolic unity: the Episcopal College which — *cum Petro et sub Petro* — is the successor of the College of Apostles.



The Holy Father embraces Bishop Alvaro del Portillo just before the Audience of 18 May 1992.

This service, as any truly ecclesial service, demands communion with the Pastors whom *the Holy Spirit has made guardians to feed the Church of God, which he has bought with his own blood,*² and in particular with the Successor of Peter, the principal and visible foundation of the Church.³ Blessed Josemaría Escrivá encouraged us always to consider the union with the Roman Pontiff in all its theological depth and, at the same time, to practise this most lovable demand of union with the mind and heart. Expressing the feelings of all those for whom I am speaking today, I can say to Our Lord, making my own, once again, the exclamation of Blessed Josemaría: **Thank you, my God, for the love of the Pope which you have placed in my heart.**⁴

Blessed Josemaría encouraged us always to consider the union with the Roman Pontiff in all its theological depth.

Holy Father, on this day when, through

a happy coincidence, we are celebrating Your Holiness' seventy-second birthday, and renewing my full personal adhesion and that of all of the Prelature of Opus Dei to the Holy See, allow me to offer you our congratulations with the classical Latin expression, which would like to be an invocation to Our Lord and His Most Blessed Mother: *ad multos annos!* Then, after thanking Your Holiness once again from the bottom of my heart, I ask, for me and for all those who are joyfully taking part in the beatification of Josemaría Escrivá, to be strengthened by your Apostolic Blessing.

¹ J. Escrivá, *Letter*, 31 May 1954, 1

² Acts 20:28

³ Cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 23

⁴ J. Escrivá, *The Way*, 573

Cardinal Angelo Sodano

Secretary of State to His Holiness

Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls, 20th May 1992

It is Peter who guides the ship for the miraculous catch of fish. So it was yesterday and so it is today. The successor of Peter is the one who guides the ship of the Church through the seas of human history; it is the Pope who receives from the Holy Spirit the support of his ministry so as to confirm his brothers in the faith (cf. Luke 22:32). This feeling of adhesion to the Roman Pontiff was deeply rooted in the life of Blessed Josemaría... The Beatification of Monsignor Escrivá, dear brothers and sisters, is a propitious moment which God is offering us to reaffirm our generous dedication to the apostolate of word and example...



THE HOLY FATHER'S ADDRESS TO THE PILGRIMS

1. I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for the filial devotion expressed to me by Bishop Alvaro del Portillo in the name of those who fill St Peter's Square and the many faithful, cooperators and friends of Opus Dei. To him I express a special, affectionate greeting, which I extend to the other members of the Episcopate and to all here present.

You are filled with joy at the beatification of Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer because you trust that his being raised to the altars, as the Prelate of Opus Dei has just said, will be of great benefit to the Church. *I too share this confidence.* In fact, I am convinced, as I wrote in the Apostolic Exhortation *The Vocation and Mission of the lay faithful in the Church and in the world*, that 'the entire People of God, and the lay faithful in particular, can find at this moment new models of holiness and new witnesses of heroic virtue lived in the ordinary everyday circumstances of human existence' (cf. *Christifideles laici*, 17). How could one fail to see in the example, teaching and work of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá an eminent witness of Christian heroism in the carrying out of ordinary human activities?

The universal call to holiness and the apostolate is, as you know, one of the points

which the Magisterium of the Second Vatican Council insisted on most strongly (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 40-42; *Apostolicam actuositatem*, 1-4). Like others before him Blessed Josemaría, thanks to God's light, understood this universal call, not only as a doctrine to be taught and spread particularly among the lay faithful, but also, and above all, as the very centre of an active commitment in his pastoral ministry. The young priest Josemaría Escrivá with a generous response to divine grace found himself working in a field fraught with difficulty. His fidelity allowed the Holy Spirit to lead him to the heights of personal union with God, which resulted in an extraordinarily fruitful apostolate. Indeed, the Lord allowed him, already in his earthly life, to see the comforting fruit of his apostolate, which Josemaría attributed entirely to divine goodness, always considering himself an 'inept and deaf instrument', evidence of an extraordinary humility, to the extent that he saw himself, at the end of his life 'as a stammering child.'

A new call to holiness

2. The beatification of Josemaría Escrivá has given me the joy of meeting all of you, dear priests and laity who have come on pilgrimage to Rome in such large

Pope John Paul II, before the Audience of 18 May 1992, being acclaimed by the pilgrims who attended the beatification.

You are filled with joy at the beatification of Josemaría Escrivá because you trust that his being raised to the altars will be of great benefit to the Church.

Cardinal Camillo Ruini

Cardinal Vicar of Rome
President of the Italian Episcopal Conference
Basilica of St John Lateran, 19th May 1992

Becoming a saint in the middle of the world: Blessed Josemaría personified this ideal perfectly. He taught others with his example to make it possible where the pressing concerns in our time, so sensitive to the value of work as a means of promoting the dignity of man and social progress, come together The message of Blessed Josemaría is profoundly Gospel-based and he is no doubt among those who have given a new dynamism and energy to the Church's mission. As the People of God approaches the third millenium of their earthly pilgrimage, they find a powerful source of light in the teaching of the Founder of Opus Dei.

numbers, to participate in this heartfelt manifestation of faith and ecclesial communion.

First of all, I want to offer my respectful greetings to the worthy authorities of Latin America and Spain who have participated in this solemn ceremony. The figure of a Blessed is a new call to holiness, and this call is neither a privilege nor is it addressed to only a few people; rather, it must be the common goal of all Christians. Indeed, in Baptism, by which we become God's children, we receive grace, that seed of holiness which grows and matures with the help of the other sacraments and the practice of piety; it must be shown in the fruits and witness of life which the Spirit fosters in those who love him. Thus one can reach that fulness which the Apostle Paul

Cardinal Andrzej Maria Deskur

President Emeritus of the Pontifical Council
for Social Communication
Crypt of the Vatican, 19th May 1992

We are here to give thanks to God in the name of the Church, and in a special way in the name of the Church in Poland and of all Slavic churches, where the work of Blessed Josemaría is well known and where it continues to carry out this new evangelization to which we are called... Here, at this burial place of the Popes who have lived through the recent history of the Church and who knew Blessed Josemaría well, we offer God our gratitude for raising him to the altars. We pray that the Work he started — Opus Dei, the Work of God, with its spirit which has been endorsed by the Holy Father, and which promotes the universal call to holiness through ordinary work — will develop and be welcomed by all the faithful as an undertaking supported by the Holy See and blessed by God.

speaks of: 'This is the will of God, your sanctification' (1 *Thess* 4:3).

This call to holiness was repeatedly promoted by Blessed Josemaría. Present here today are many people who often heard from his lips the same exhortation of St Paul; others have received it through his writings or from eyewitnesses. Now, each one, immersed in the specific activity of his or her own life and occupation, can count on the help of the Holy Spirit in following this path towards Christian perfection. This is what the same Blessed reminds us of in one of his *Conversations*: "Christians, working in the midst of the world, must reconcile all things with God, speaking with Christ in the midst of all human activity" (no. 59).

The example of personal, family and social life

3. In this regard the Second Vatican Council urges all Christians, all according to their personal calling, "to perform their duties faithfully in the spirit of the Gospel" (*Gaudium et spes*, 43). When people fail in this obligation, they cease to fulfil the will of God who expects each person to cooperate in the work of creation: however, they also offend their neighbour, with whom we are united by an unbreakable bond of solidarity. Therefore, the Council notes that "one of the gravest errors of our time is the dichotomy between the faith which many profess and the practice of their daily lives" (*ibid*).

Particularly in our day, Christians are called to cooperate in a new evangelization which imbues the home, professional life, centres of culture and work, mass media, and public and private life with those Gospel values which are the source of peace, beauty, understanding and harmony among all people. This apostolic commitment is fulfilled not only by preaching the Christian message, but also by the example of personal, family and social life. At the same time, all evangelizing activity should be coordinated and integrated into the pastoral programme of the dioceses, which in turn are enriched by the variety of charisms with which the saints and blessed have made the evangelizing mission of the universal Church fruitful throughout her two thousand years of history.

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger

Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith
Basilica of the Twelve Apostles, 19th May 1992



We tend to leave holiness to a few unspecified individuals, while we are happy to stay as we are. Josemaría Escrivá has come to wake us up from this spiritual apathy. No! Holiness does not consist in extraordinary things, but in the ordinary things of every baptized person ... Holiness has a thousand forms and can be achieved in every place and in every walk of life. It is a normal everyday thing. It consists in living life face to face with God and filling it with the spirit of faith. In fulfilling this mission Blessed Josemaría became a great man of action, who lived for God's will and who invited his fellow men to love God's will.

A new beginning

4. I now want to express a very cordial welcome to the French-speaking pilgrims. Your participation in the beatification of the Founder of Opus Dei will be for you, I hope, the occasion for a new beginning, in order to respond fully to your vocation as baptized persons: fulfil God's will each day, in all your tasks as men and women of our time; make progress on the path of holiness, that is, let yourselves be seized by the presence of Christ the Saviour, he who calls his disciples to abide in his love (cf. *John* 15:9); take an active part in the life and mission of the Church, in communion with the diocesan Pastors and all your brothers and sisters, so that you may bear witness to the Good News of salvation in a world which needs light and reason to hope, in order to build a society in solidarity that is more worthy of man.

May the example and teachings of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá enlighten you! May his intercession sustain you! With all my heart, I bless you in the name of the Lord.

Leaven in society

5. To those of you who are from English-speaking countries I extend a warm greeting. This visit to Rome, where the Founder of Opus Dei chose to spend a large part of his life, must strengthen even further your faith and your commitment to the life and mission of the Church. Rome is the place of the witness of the Princes of the Apostles, Peter and Paul. It is the place from which the Successor of Saint Peter calls the entire Church to respond to the urgent need for

'a new evangelization' at the approach of the third millennium. In many documents and on many occasions I have exhorted the laity to take a decisive part in bringing the word of God to the millions and millions of men and women who as yet do not know Christ the Redeemer of humanity (cf. *Christifideles laici*, 35; *Redemptoris missio*, 71).

Sustained by the holy zeal which you have learned from the newly Blessed founder, may you be fully committed to the cause of evangelization through your faithful witness to the Church's mission. As leaven in society, bring your talents to bear on public and private life at every level, proclaiming in word and deed the truth about man's transcendent destiny. Following your Founder's teaching, respond generously to the universal call to the fulness of Christian life and the perfection of charity, thus laying the foundation for a more just and equitable earthly society (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 40). May God abundantly fortify you for this task.

Cardinal Edouard Gagnon

President of the Pontifical Commission
for Eucharistic Congresses
Basilica of Santa Maria sopra Minerva, 19th May 1992

Monsignor Escrivá wasn't satisfied with becoming identified with Christ. He understood that he had to draw others towards God too... The presence here of so many faithful is something unbelievable, and is a tribute to the faith of the Founder of Opus Dei. The whole secret of the efficacy of Monsignor Escrivá is rooted here: he knew how to believe in Jesus Christ with extraordinary depth. This faith came alive thanks to his personal conversation with Christ: for Our Lord spoke to him, sometimes in a visible and concrete fashion, and constantly through the Holy Spirit. His faith made him see things as Jesus sees them, and as the Father sees them.

DAYS OF THANKSGIVING

Twenty-three Solemn Masses of Thanksgiving, whose chief celebrants were high-ranking Church dignitaries.

In the solemn celebrations that took place to mark the beatification of Josemaría Escrivá, there were many factors that highlighted the importance of this event in the life of the Church. One of the most significant was the participation of so many representatives of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. In addition to the 46 Cardinals and almost 300 Bishops who attended the beatification on the 17th of May, an even greater number of members of the episcopate throughout the world had written to His Lordship, Bishop Alvaro del Portillo during the preceding months, expressing their gratitude to God for the Holy Father's decision to raise the Founder of Opus Dei to the veneration of the altars.

On the 19th and 20th of May, in various Roman basilicas and churches, 21 Solemn Masses of Thanksgiving, presided by high-ranking dignitaries of the Church's hierarchy, were celebrated for different language groups.

English-speaking groups came together in the Basilica of St Mary Major, in order to take part in the Mass celebrated by Cardinal Edward Idris Cassidy, President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity; in the Basilica of Santa Maria in Vallicella, where Cardinal José Sánchez, Prefect of the Congregation for Clergy, said Mass; and also in the Basilica of St Andrea della Valle, with Cardinal Augustin Mayer. The French speaking groups attended the Masses of Cardinals Edouard Gagnon, President of the Pontifical Committee for Eucharistic Congresses, in

Cardinal José T. Sánchez

Prefect of the Congregation for Clergy

Basilica of Santa Maria in Vallicella, 19th May 1992

Blessed Josemaría Escrivá was God's gift to today's world. The history of the Church points to an unfailing timely intervention of the Holy Spirit at given moments, sending charismatic leaders to meet special needs and situations ... The world desperately needs what Monsignor Escrivá has taught, exemplified and died for: namely, for man to take seriously his Christian vocation to sanctify his work wherever and whatever it is, together with those characteristic virtues of Blessed Escrivá — his love for the Church as a guarantee of the purity of his doctrine.

the Basilica of Santa Maria sopra Minerva, and of Cardinal Paul Poupard, President of the Pontifical Council for Dialogue with Non-Believers, in the Basilica of St Appollinaris.

Spanish-speaking pilgrims filled the Basilicas of St Paul Outside the Walls and Santa Maria in Vallicella, so as to participate in the four concelebrations presided over by Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Secretary of State; Cardinal Sebastiano Baggio, Chamberlain of the Holy Roman Church; Cardinal Eduardo Martínez Somalo, Prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life; and Cardinal Nicolás J. López Rodríguez, Archbishop of Santo Domingo and President of CELAM (the Latin American Episcopal Conference).

Cardinals Angelo Felici, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, in the Basilica of the Twelve Apostles, and Camillo Ruini, Vicar of His Holiness for the Diocese of Rome and President of the Italian Episcopal Conference, in the Basilica of St John Lateran, celebrated Mass for the Italian groups. Cardinal Ugo Poletti who was to officiate in the Basilica of St Mary Major had to be substituted for health reasons by Archbishop Juan Larrea, Archbishop of Guayaquil, who read the homily which Cardinal Poletti, Cardinal Priest of St Mary Major, had prepared.

In the Basilica of the Twelve Apostles Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, presided over a concelebration for German-speaking faithful.

Cardinal Pietro Palazzini celebrated a Mass in Latin for groups from various countries, in the Basilica of St Andrea della Valle. Cardinal Agnelo Rossi, Dean of the College of Cardinals, said Mass in the same church, in Portuguese. Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, former President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity, did so in Dutch in the Basilica of St Clement. Cardinal Andrzej Maria Deskur celebrated Mass in the Crypt of the Vatican, by the tomb of St Peter, for people coming from Poland. Japanese pilgrims were able to attend the Mass said by Bishop Peter Takaaki Hirayama, Bishop of Oita, in the Church of St Jerome della



Carità. Koreans went to the Mass of Bishop Angelo Kim, Bishop of Suwon and President of the Korean Episcopal Conference, in the Church of St John the Baptist al Collatino; the Finns, to that of the Most Reverend Fr Rudolf Larenz, in Santa Maria sopra Minerva; those coming from Sweden gathered in the Church of St Bridget for the Mass of the Most Reverend Fr Johannes L. Bernaldo, Regional Vicar of Opus Dei in that country.

Although space only allows us to reproduce extracts from some of the homilies given at these thanksgiving Masses, the wide range of churchmen taking part in these ceremonies reflects the universal standing of the personality and message of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá, the hopes that the Church places on his intercession and on his example of holiness to illuminate the world with the light of the Gospel on the eve of the third millenium.

In Rome, the liturgical ceremonies related to the beatification of Josemaría Escrivá came to a close on the 21st of May. With the permission of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, on the 14th of May the coffin containing his mortal remains had been taken privately from the crypt of the prelate church of the Opus Dei Prelature — where it had been since the funeral — to the Basilica of St Eugene. The number of pilgrims who wished to venerate the relics of the body of the Founder of Opus Dei had made it necessary to move the coffin to a venue large enough to allow this.

From the 14th onwards, the Basilica of St Eugene was packed throughout the day with people who came to pray before the glass case which was draped with a red cloth. The extension of the private devotion to the Founder of Opus Dei is universally accepted.

The Prelate of Opus Dei, with a group of bishops and priests, during the solemn concelebration in thanksgiving, in the Basilica of St Eugene, on 21 May 1992.

Cardinal Nicolás J. López Rodríguez

Archbishop of Santo Domingo
President of CELAM

Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls, 19th May 1992

By proclaiming the example of his life, of his apostolic zeal and — I would add — the holy daring with which he responded to the divine command to teach all nations the saving doctrine of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Church encourages us to launch out with generosity “into the deep” (Luke 5:4), so as to take the Gospel to all souls. It also offers us, in the teaching of Blessed Josemaría, a way which is providentially relevant to the circumstances of our lives today.

Cardinal Angelo Felici

Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints

Basilica of the Twelve Apostles, 20th May 1992

Josemaría Escrivá's entire life was moved by the desire of exalting Jesus Christ on earth and of giving glory, with Him, to God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit... His preaching was a burning call, addressed to all Christians, to open wide the gates of their souls to Our Lord, so as to know how to understand and accept the vocational meaning of their Christian existence, and collaborate in the universal evangelising mission of the Church... Thanks to his example and his drive, countless people in the Church have given their lives to Christ and have followed their vocation.



21 May 1992: Procession in the prelatial church of Our Lady of Peace, where the holy remains of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá rest.

The Pontifical Decree on the heroicity of his virtues defines it as “a true phenomenon of popular piety”. This was made especially manifest at the beatification. People of all ages, from the most different countries and social backgrounds, gathered together in an orderly and silently fashion, so as to give thanks for favours obtained through his intercession, and to ask him for help with the spiritual and material needs that are always present in the lives of men.

Cardinal Augustin Mayer

Emeritus Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments

Basilica of St Andrea della Valle, 20th May 1992

As one who has tried to serve the Church in the capacity of Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments, I am pleased to reflect upon Blessed Josemaría's great love for the liturgy ... With a deep piety and a faithful obedience to the Church's prescription in these matters, Blessed Josemaría Escrivá has made a significant contribution to the correct implementation of the liturgical renewal mandated by the Second Vatican Council.

Cardinal Eduardo Martínez Somalo

Prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life

Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls, 19th May 1992

How could we fail to praise and thank our God for the gift he has just granted us. It is a gift for the whole Church, as John Paul II has told us. For the whole Church whose dazzling apparel has been decked with the life of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá. A gift for which all of us who were privileged to have known him in this world are particularly grateful; all of us who in one way or another have experienced in our own lives the stimulus of his noble and generous soul.

On the 17th of May, after the beatification, the glass case was uncovered and the coffin could be seen by everyone. Hundreds of Masses, celebrated by priests who had come from all over the world, were said one after another. Outside the Basilica queues about a mile long began to form. Rather than seeing historic buildings, of which there are so many in Rome, people wanted to venerate the mortal remains of the new Blessed. No written record can ever reflect the faith that moved so many thousands of people to make sacrifices, often great sacrifices, in order to be in the Eternal City during those days of May. This is something deeply personal, expressed in hours of intense prayer, that only God knows. Between the Blessed Trinity and these souls only, will remain the decisions of conversion, of self-giving, of being consequent to their Christian faith, of greater generosity in the struggle and in apostolic desires, which welled up in the hearts of those who prayed before the relics of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá.

In the morning of the 21st of May, Bishop Alvaro del Portillo, Prelate of Opus Dei, was chief celebrant at a Mass of thanksgiving in St Eugene, concelebrated with 18 other Bishops and 22 priests of the Prelature. In the afternoon the Vicar General of Opus Dei, Monsignor Javier Echevarría, was chief celebrant at another solemn concelebration. The coffin was then taken in public procession to the prelatial church, in Viale Bruno Buozzi 75, where — according to an ancient Christian custom — it has been placed in a glass case under the altar, as a symbol of his identification with Christ.

Cardinal Paul Poupard

President of the Pontifical Council for Dialogue with Non-Believers

Basilica of St Appolinarius, 20th May 1992

We find here a synthesis of the central nucleus of the spiritual message entrusted by God to the Founder of Opus Dei: to achieve the contemplation of God in all the realities of ordinary life. To build — to use another expression that he himself forged — that *unity of life* that permits us to deal with God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, at every moment of the day and night, and to raise everything to the glory of God, by means of Christ, with Him and in him: in union with the sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary, because the Mass is the *centre and root* of Christian life, according to another expression of Blessed Josemaría which has been taken up in the conciliar teachings of Vatican II.

Bishop Peter Takaaki Hirayama

Bishop of Oita, Japan

Church of Saint Jerome della Carità, 19th May 1992

It was Blessed Josemaría's desire that the lay faithful, without changing their state, and each one in his or her place in the world, should seek holiness. This gives us Catholics of Japan a great light. The first assembly of our National Council of Evangelisation took place in Kioto five years ago. We asked ourselves at that time what could be done to correct the separation that exists in fact between the faith and the daily life of many Catholics... What answer can we give to this question? I was deeply impressed by what I read in the works of Monsignor Escrivá: that each one of us, in his own place, in his mission within society, through his work done with serenity, as leaven amongst men, sanctifies himself and sanctifies others, and we serve the Church.

Cardinal Agnelo Rossi

Dean of the Sacred College of Cardinals

Basilica of St Andrea della Valle, 20th May 1992

Blessed Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer was the apostle of our century... and founded Opus Dei, which has spread prodigiously all over the world, giving the Church devout and holy faithful in the most varied professions, promoting sanctity in all states of life.

Cardinal Pietro Palazzini

Emeritus Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints

Basilica of St Andrea della Valle, 19th May 1992

God called Blessed Josemaría Escrivá to found Opus Dei, that is to carry out on earth a mission that entailed removing a heap of 'impossible' obstacles... And that young priest, who had no more than 26 years of age, the grace of God and good humour, corresponded heroically to this mission which, to human eyes could appear foolish, full of insurmountable difficulties. And, because he knew how to correspond heroically to grace, God has glorified him: since, for 47 years he was a founder at the level of the Heart of Christ, a doer of impossible tasks, a personal and exemplary *opus Dei*, who made Opus Dei possible as an institution of the Church.

PRAYER

O God, you granted countless graces to your priest Blessed Josemaría, choosing him as a most faithful instrument to found Opus Dei, a way of sanctification in daily work and in the fulfilment of the ordinary duties of a Christian. Grant that I also may learn to turn all the circumstances and events of my life into opportunities to love you and to serve the Church, the Pope, and all souls, with joy and simplicity, lighting up the paths of the earth with faith and love. Deign to grant the canonisation of Blessed Josemaría and, through his intercession, grant me the favour I request ... (here make your petition). Amen.

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

Blessed Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer was born in Barbastro, Spain on 9 January 1902. He was ordained to the priesthood in Saragossa on 28 March 1925.

In Madrid, on 2 October 1928, by divine inspiration, he founded Opus Dei, which has opened up to the faithful a new way of sanctification in the middle of the world, through exercising one's ordinary professional work and in the fulfilment of one's family, social and personal obligations. Thus it has been a leaven of fervent Christian life in every environment. On 14 February 1930, Blessed Josemaría Escrivá understood, with the grace of God, that Opus Dei had also to develop its apostolate among women. On 14 February 1943 he founded the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross, inseparably united to Opus Dei. Opus Dei received its definitive approval from the Holy See on 16 June 1950, and on 28 November 1982 it was established as a personal Prelature. This legal framework had been desired and foreseen by Blessed Josemaría Escrivá.

Through a life of constant prayer and penance, exercising heroically all the virtues, with loving dedication and untiring concern for all souls, and with a continuous and unconditional self-surrender to the will of God, he fostered and directed the expansion of Opus Dei throughout the world. When he rendered 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 spirit of complete union with, and deep veneration for, the Pope and the Bishops which Blessed Josemaría Escrivá had always practised and instilled in his sons and daughters.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was the root and centre of the interior life of the Founder. A deep sense of his divine filiation, maintained in the continuous presence of the one and Triune God, moved him to seek in all things the most complete identification with Jesus Christ, to have a tender and strong devotion to Our Lady and Saint Joseph, a continual and confident friendship with the Holy Guardian Angels, and to be a sower of peace and joy along all the paths of the earth.

On repeated occasions Blessed Josemaría Escrivá had offered his life for the Church and the Roman Pontiff. Our Lord accepted that offering, and on 26 June 1975, in a truly saintly way, he gave up his soul to God in Rome, in the room where he worked.

His body rests in the prelatial church of Our Lady of Peace, Viale Bruno Buozzi 75, Rome, continually accompanied by the prayer and gratitude of his sons and daughters, and of the countless people who have come closer to God, drawn by the example and teaching of the Founder of Opus Dei. His cause of Canonisation was presented in Rome on 19 February 1981. On 9 April 1990 the Holy Father Pope John Paul II declared the heroic nature of his Christian virtues, and, on 6 July 1991 decreed the miraculous character of a cure attributed to his intercession. The Founder of Opus Dei was beatified by His Holiness Pope John Paul II in Rome on 17 May 1992.

Those who obtain favours through the intercession of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá are asked to notify the Office of the Vice-postulator of Opus Dei in Britain, 6 Orme Court, London W2 4RL.