



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.

This newsletter is issued free of charge and is for private circulation only. Those who wish to give alms to help its publication and the development of the apostolic activities stemming from the spiritual influence of the founder of Opus Dei, may send donations by cheque or postal order to the address below.

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

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Blessed
**JOSEMARÍA
 ESCRIVÁ**

Founder
 of Opus Dei

HIS LIFE

The parents of Escrivá and his early life

INITIATIVES

Reaching out in inner Manchester

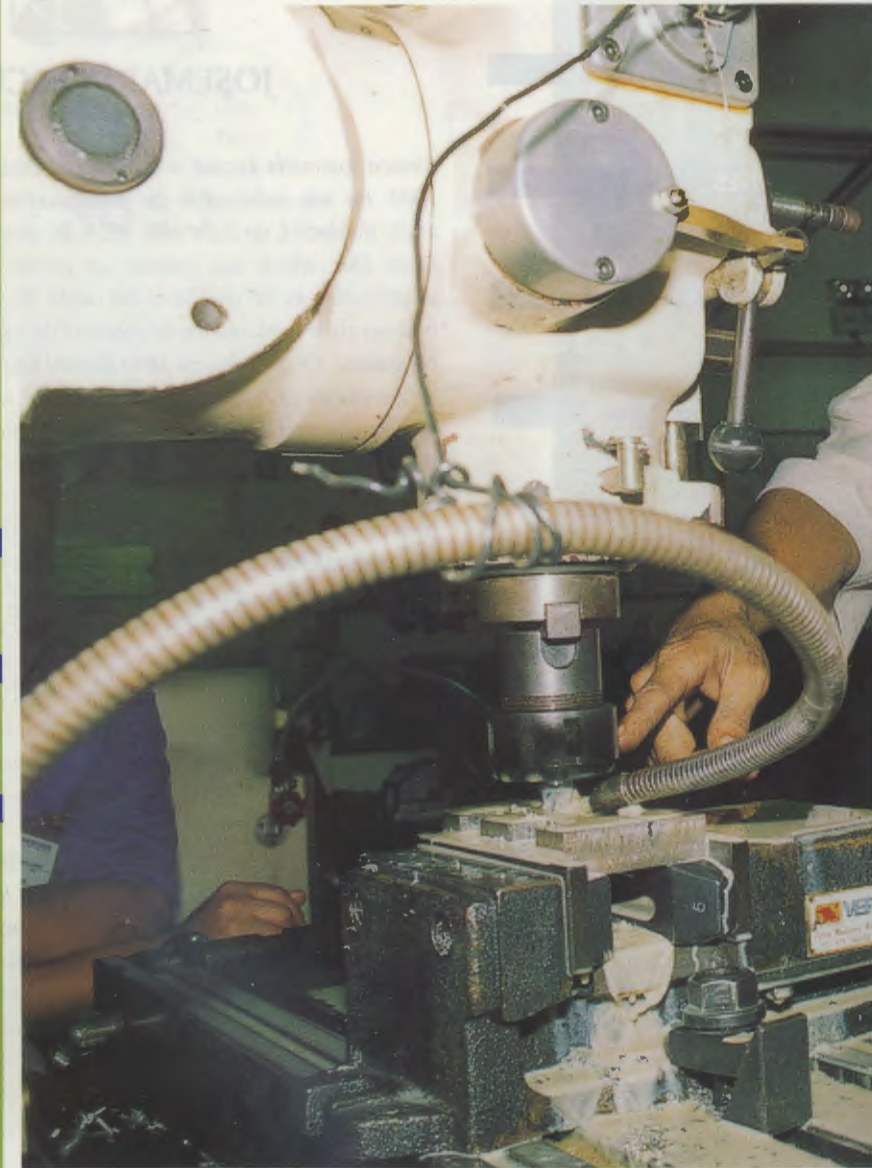
A STORY

Hellen Katty is miraculously cured

Newsletter

Nº 20

2001



**Finding God
 in your daily work**

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Further information on Blessed Josemaría and Opus Dei can be found on www.opusdei.org. A free news service is also available via e-mail.

Cover photo: Workshop machining at Dualtech, a technical school in the Philippines



JOSEMARÍA ESCRIVÁ
CENTENARY OF HIS BIRTH

Blessed Josemaría Escrivá 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 the exercise of their ordinary daily work and the fulfilment of their family, social and personal obligations. On 14 February 1930 Blessed Josemaría Escrivá understood, by the grace of God, that Opus Dei should also 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 definitive approval from the Holy See on 16 June 1950; and on 28 November 1982 it was established as a personal Prelature, the legal framework desired and foreseen by Blessed Josemaría Escrivá. 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 in that spirit of total unity with and veneration for the Pope and the Bishops which Blessed Josemaría Escrivá had always practised. The founder of Opus Dei was beatified by His Holiness John Paul II in Rome on 17 May 1992. His body now rests in the prelatial Church of Our Lady of Peace (Viale Bruno Buozzi, 75, Rome).

9 January 2002 will be the Centenary of the birth of Blessed Josemaría, and between that date and 9 January of the following year, a series of commemorative events will be organised all across the world. In January 2002 a congress entitled "The Greatness of Ordinary Life" will be held in Rome, organised by the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross; and throughout 2001 there will be a number of activities to prepare for the Centenary itself.

Apart from offering an opportunity to reflect on the teachings of Blessed Josemaría, the Centenary will also be characterised by a strong sense of solidarity. To mention just one example, some members of the Prelature, together with other people, have decided to mark the occasion by starting up a technical school in Lagos, Nigeria, with a view to helping young people of limited resources obtain access to the job market.

The principal aim of all the Centenary activities is to enable many people to come closer to God and to discover the joy of Christian life.

"Put out into the deep and lower your nets"

Just a few months before the Centenary of the birth of Blessed Josemaría

Next 9 January will be the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá. I give thanks to the most Blessed Trinity for this outstanding personality in the Church, to whom God entrusted the task of carrying out some of his merciful plans for mankind.



sanctification in daily work and in the fulfilment of the ordinary duties of a Christian, to quote the words of the prayer to his intercession said by millions of people every day.

This novelty of the Work is not the novelty of a merely human event. It is the novelty of the things of God, who like a good Father provides his family

Indeed, in making use of Blessed Josemaría as a most faithful instrument, God has once again reminded the men and women of the century just passed, and those to come, that he calls us all, without exception, to holiness: each one in the particular circumstances in which our human vocation has placed us. Not to a watered-down kind of holiness but to the perfection of love. The founder of Opus Dei, under the inspiration of grace, has brought a really new message – as old as the Gospel and like the Gospel new, he used to say – capable of moving many noble souls, reminding them that they are called to be not just *alter Christus*, but *ipse Christus*, Christ himself in their professional work and family occupations, in the ordinary circumstances of their lives.

with things old and new (cf. Mt 13:52). A novelty ... that does not grow old, as it is the announcement of the one and only good news, and which entails – like a social phenomenon of the Christian faithful – the marvellous return to the spirit with which the early Christians lived the message of salvation.

(Letter 25 January 1961, 13)

TRUE GRATITUDE

How could we fail to break into thanksgiving when we see God's mercy towards his people? This gratitude, however, cannot be limited to a mere feeling: it tries to show itself in specific actions. As the old proverb says, *love means deeds, not sweet words*.

This exemplary priest did not limit himself to passing on this 'news'. Through the spirit of Opus Dei – which by divine love came to light on 2 October 1928 – he initiated a specific and effective way on this earth of carrying out the universal saving will of God: a way of

from Blessed

Josemaría Escrivá

Asleep, as if without faith

"The Lord wanted to raise up his Work when in most countries the elites and entire populations seemed to be fleeing from the source of all grace; when even in long-standing Christian countries people were using the Sacraments less frequently; when vast numbers of the laity seemed to be asleep as if their active faith had disappeared."

(Letter 25 January 1961, 13)

Using their own voices

"Quiet and modest, but vibrant with a divine spirit, the Work became our Lord's instrument: God wished to awaken sleeping men, using their own voices. And these ordinary men would say to the others – to their fellow workers, to their brothers or to their children – hora est iam nos de somno surgere (Rom 13:11): it is time to wake up; in novitate vitae ambulemus (Rom 6:4): let us walk in the newness of life."

(Letter 25 January 1961, 13)

already exists: it is the plan found in the Gospel and in the living Tradition, it is the same as ever. Ultimately, it has its centre in Christ himself, who is to be known, loved and imitated so that in him we may live the life of the Trinity, and with him transform history until its fulfilment in the heavenly Jerusalem' (Novo millennio ineunte, 29).

The Most Blessed Virgin, *Star of the new evangelisation*, who lights up the new millennium with her radiance, is the quickest and surest way to find Christ, and to follow him and love him. As Blessed Josemaría wrote in *The Way* more than sixty years ago, and reasserted throughout his life as the fruit of his happy experience: *To Jesus we always go, and to him we always 'return', through Mary* (The Way, 495).

Rome, 28 February 2001.

+ Javier Echevarría
Prelate of Opus Dei



This is the second reflection that the proximity of this anniversary brings to my mind. Using other words taken from Blessed Josemaría's preaching, I would like to recall *that when God marks us out and gives us his grace to strive for sanctity in the everyday world, he also puts us under an obligation to do apostolate. I want you to realise that, even looking at things humanly, concern for souls follows naturally from the fact that God has chosen us* (Friends of God, 5). As John Paul II writes in his recent Apostolic Letter, in which he outlines the Church's pastoral programme for the new century, *those who have come into genuine contact with Christ cannot keep him all for themselves, they must proclaim him. A new apostolic outreach is needed which will be lived as an everyday commitment* (Novo millennio ineunte, 40).

Duc in altum! – so the Holy Father encourages us, urging us to abandon the calm harbour of inactivity – of comfort – which so often holds Christians back. It is time to launch out courageously into all the seas of the world, taking

part personally – without fear of anything or of anyone – in the new evangelisation of society. The Master himself urgently invites us to take part in this reaching out to souls, as he commanded Peter and the first twelve: *Put out into the deep and lower your nets for a catch* (Lk 5:4). It is time for apostolate; it is the moment to show, with our everyday actions, that we are zealous for the salvation of souls. Such zeal is a distinguishing mark of Christ's disciples, and a sure sign that we are really determined to achieve union with God: holiness.

THE PRIMACY OF PRAYER

In order to bring an abundant catch to the feet of Christ – to bring souls close to God – it is essential for us to have a constant relationship with the Blessed Trinity. Let us listen once again to the Holy Father: *We have to learn to pray ... Prayer develops that conversation with Christ which makes us his intimate friends: 'Abide in me and I in you' (Jn 15:4). This reciprocity is the very substance and soul of the Christian life, and the condition of all true pastoral life. Wrought in us by the Holy Spirit, this reciprocity opens us, through Christ and in Christ, to contemplation of the Father's face. Learning this Trinitarian shape*

The photographs on this page were taken during the Jubilee year just ended, during which many people travelling to Rome as pilgrims also visited the prelate Church of Our Lady of Peace, where Blessed Josemaría is buried.



of Christian prayer and living it fully, above all in the liturgy, the summit and source of the Church's life, but also in personal experience is the secret of a truly vital Christianity, which has no reason to fear the future, because it returns continually to the sources and finds in them new life (Novo millennio ineunte, 32).

The founder of Opus Dei, on the basis of his own personal experience and that of thousands of souls, assures us that that journey, which ends in the loving contemplation of the Blessed Trinity, usually begins with vocal prayer. The person who prays with love and perseverance, who does not give up trying to pray well in moments of difficulty or dryness, who regularly frequents the living sources of grace – Confession and the Eucharist – and who strives to live in the presence of God throughout the day, ends up having a true interior life. *First one brief aspiration, and then another, and another..., until our fervour seems insufficient, because words are too poor...: and then this gives way to intimacy with God, looking at God without needing rest or feeling tired* (Friends of God, 296).

Perhaps some will think that these reflections are the same as always. And they are right. A personal relationship with God in prayer; frequenting the sacraments; concern for souls... these are what provide the backbone to a Christian life. But they have to be put into practice more tenaciously, more faithfully; in a word, with more love. John Paul II's words in the Apostolic Letter *Novo millennio ineunte* will always be up to date: *It is therefore not a matter of inventing a 'new programme'. The programme*



Christian Parents

Josemaría Escrivá was born in Barbastro at about 10 pm on 9 January 1902. His parents were called José and Dolores.

The Escrivá family came originally from Narbonne (France) but had settled some centuries back in the Catalan district of Balaguer. José's parents were landowners, but José came to Barbastro in northern Spain as a young man to set himself up as a shopkeeper. He started out in the cloth trade and later on with two other shopkeepers he set up a company which eventually became "Juncosa & Escrivá".

Dolores' family were originally from Ainsa, in the low Pyrenees. Her paternal grandfather had moved to Barbastro and had married there. He had four children; the eldest, Pascual Albás married Florencia Blanc, and they had fifteen children. The second last was Dolores and she would become the mother of the founder of Opus Dei.

IN BARBASTRO

José Escrivá and Dolores Albás were married on 19 September 1898 in the Cathedral of Barbastro, and went to live in a house on the corner of Main Street and Market Square. Their first child, María del Carmen, was born there, as was their second, José María. (Years later he joined the two names together as a sign of his devotion to St Joseph and Our Lady.) Three other girls were born later: María Asunción, María de los Dolores, and María del Rosario; and after they had moved to Logroño a second son, Santiago, was born.

The Escrivá family had a good reputation in Barbastro. They had many friends there and Dolores had a lot of relatives. Their financial situation was comfortable and their future bright.

OFFERED TO OUR LADY

Blessed Josemaría was a normal healthy baby, but when he was two, he became very ill. He was so bad that one night the doctors told José that his son would not live for more than a few hours. The child's parents then prayed with great intensity to Our Lady. Dolores promised Our Lady of Torreciudad (Our Lady is venerated in the area under this title) to take Josemaría to visit her on a pilgrimage if he got better. The next morning the doctor asked, "What time did the baby die?" José answered, "Not only has he not died, but he is fit and well." So they took him to the shrine and offered him to Our Lady. Referring to this episode and the great favour granted by Our Lady, Dolores used to say, "My son, you were more dead than alive. Since Our Lord has let you stay here on earth, it must be for something big."

from Blessed Josemaría Escrivá

You should only be ashamed of sin

"There were two things which bothered me a lot when I was small. One was having to kiss my mother's friends when they came to visit, and the other was wearing new clothes ... I would hide under the bed and would refuse to come out. I was very stubborn. My mother would hit the floor softly but repeatedly



with one of my father's walking sticks and then I would come out simply because I was afraid of the stick ... Then, she would say to me, lovingly: Josemaría, you should only be ashamed of sin. Many years later I realised that there was a profound depth of meaning in her words."

Letter, 24 March 1931
and Meditation, 14 February 1964

FIRST PRAYERS

The Escrivás were a Christian family. They would go to Mass together on Sundays, say the family Rosary, go to Devotions on Saturdays in a nearby church, and to midnight Mass at Christmas... From a tender age, Josemaría learnt his childhood prayers from his parents. Dolores herself prepared her son for his first Confession, and on the big day she went to the church with him.

As a young boy Josemaría was a great friend of his father's. He would wait impatiently for his return from work, open the door and go out to greet him. He would put his hand in his father's overcoat pocket looking for some sweets, or, in the wintertime, hot chestnuts. José would take Josemaría to the fair in Barbastro or other places nearby or they would simply go for walks around the city.

from Blessed

Teachings from his mother

"I remember my mother. Even now, at the age of seven – you know I have taken off the zero – I still recite the prayers my mother taught me every morning and every night. So much so that even at this stage I owe her the piety she instilled into me. My mother took me to her confessor when I was six or seven and I was delighted. I do not remember ever having seen her doing nothing, she was always doing something. She would be knitting, sewing or mending clothes, or maybe she would be reading... I have no record of ever having seen her idle. And there was nothing odd about her. She was an ordinary woman. She was kind. A good mother, the mother of a Christian family who did not waste time."

Letter, 29 July 1965

Get-togethers, 21 October 1972
and 3 November 1972

Josemaría Escrivá

They were intimate father-and-son walks where they would talk over confidential matters and the father would answer the boy's questions.

THE DEATH OF HIS YOUNGER SISTERS

At a certain point deep sorrow entered the Escrivá household. Between 1910 and 1913 the three youngest

sisters died: first the youngest of all, then the second youngest, then the third youngest. Josemaría began to realise something of the depths of suffering, while at the same time learning to confront it in a Christian way, thanks to the example of his parents. He became more pensive, until one day, mulling over the sequence of death of his sisters he said to his mother, "Next year it will be my turn." To console him she reminded him, "I have offered you up to Our Lady. She will take care of you."

FINANCIAL TROUBLES

On top of all this sorrow, José's business collapsed. This forced him to find another job, within the textile trade, away from Barbastro, in Logroño. The whole family moved there in 1915.

Blessed Josemaría's early years in Logroño were spent between school and home. The move brought with it certain difficulties, but he managed to adjust, thanks largely to the example and good advice of his father, but also to his own ability to make friends. He was an avid reader, and during those years he acquired an extensive general knowledge. He spent a lot of time studying history and literary classics. He finished secondary school in 1918, obtaining excellent marks.

E. Toranzo

Illustrations from a children's book on the founder of Opus Dei by P. Monckeberg



from Blessed

Short of money but free

"I was never hit at home. My father slapped me only once and not very hard. They never forced me to do anything. They kept me very short of money, I was penniless, but I was free!"

Meditation, 14 February 1964

Josemaría Escrivá

Josemaría Escrivá

At home more than at school

"Our Lord prepared things in such a way that my life was quite normal, with nothing remarkable. I was born into a Catholic family, as were most of us in my country. My parents were exemplary. They practised their religion and lived by it. They gave me great freedom from an early age, but at the same time keeping a close eye on me. They did their best to give me a Christian formation, but it was in the home that I acquired it rather than at school, even though they sent me to a convent school at the age of three and later on, when I was seven, to a school run by monks."

Meditation, 14 February 1964

Smiling, in spite of everything

"It has been my lot to make the people around me suffer. I did not provoke catastrophes on purpose, but Our Lord, to purify me, being as I am the nail (forgive me, Lord), would hit the nail once and the horseshoe a hundred times. I thought of my father as the personification of Job. They lost three daughters, one after the other, one year after another, and they were left penniless.

But we managed. My father behaved heroically. He had become ill with the typical illness (I realise that now) which doctors say is caused by stress. My mother and two children were all that he had left. He put on a brave face and did not spare himself any humiliation to provide for us. He could have held out and kept a brilliant position for those days had he not been a gentleman and a Christian, as they say in my part of the country ... I do not remember ever seeing him stern. On the contrary I remember him as being always serene, with a cheerful countenance. He was totally spent when he died. He died worn out at fifty-seven. But he was always cheerful.

I am very proud of my father. I love him with all my heart. I do believe he is high in heaven because he was able to carry the humiliation of becoming redundant. He behaved in such a dignified Christian way ... I do not think he needs to have suffrages. If he does, I offer them at this moment. I have seen him suffer cheerfully, not showing his sorrow at all. I saw his courage and it has been a lesson for me."

Meditation, 14 February 1964

Get-together, 18 May 1970

Dolores Albás

(1877–1941)

was a devout, well-bred, elegant woman; she was serenely beautiful. Those who knew her described her as kind and patient. She was friendly and approachable; a strong woman, hardworking, and endowed with great common sense.

José Escrivá

(1867–1924)

was an enterprising individual; a man who was methodical, diligent and honest. At home he was easy-going and affectionate. He had many friends, and was known for his sincerity, generosity and cheerful nature. He took great care of the way he dressed and was calm in his dealings with others. Blessed Josemaría used to describe him as much given to almsgiving. He was particularly kind towards his employees and looked after their spiritual needs, even organising Lenten talks for them and bearing the expenses himself, although he left them entirely free to attend or not.



"Learning can be fun"

Reach Out! enthuses young people in their schooling and raises their educational sights, whilst it helps students develop leadership qualities

"Brilliant!" was the adjective used by the deputy head of the Moss Side school after one year of **Reach Out!** working there. She went on, "This has been a very positive experience for our school; we have never experienced anything like it".

Reach Out! is an inner-city youth achievement programme run by university students in Manchester. The students volunteer their time and talents to help children who may be in some way disadvantaged because of their unstable family background, poverty, illness or disability, or simply because they are refugees and do not have English as their first language.

The students work in teams in schools and youth clubs outside of school hours, tutoring the children in English, Maths or Science or any other subject that is needed, in a fun and informal way. Alongside these study activities, art, sports, music, games and outings also form part of the enjoyment for the children.

The project is sufficiently flexible to adapt to working in different environments – youth clubs, libraries, schools – and takes on slightly different characteristics depending on the needs of the children and the place. **Reach**



Out! is open to all young people. It targets neither "problem" nor "prodigy" children. Students endeavour to adapt to the level of whoever they are working with.

Older sister relationship

Since its inception in the summer of 1994, the philosophy of **Reach Out!** has been that learning can be fun and demonstrating this to the children. Four objectives drive the project, which apply to both volunteers and children in some way:

- to achieve academic potential
- to develop confidence and social skills
- to broaden cultural horizons
- to instil a spirit of service and citizenship

Personalised tuition by one leader with two or three children provides considerable learning support as well as positive role-models

Personalised tuition by one leader with two or three children provides considerable learning support as well as positive role-models for the children. The continuity of the project offered throughout the year also provides a valuable stability for children who often have little stability in their lives. The student volunteers are seen as "older sister" figures for the children. The girls benefit strongly from having a female tutor who is a responsible, hard-working and caring young woman. The significance of a project which encourages learning and work is easy to appreciate in an area where 56% of children are from single parent families who have no earners.

It is also very much a part of the philosophy of **Reach Out!** to believe in the capacity of each person and nurture all the positivity that is within him or her. This allows the children – and everyone associated with the scheme – to thrive.

Volunteers registering during the university's freshers fair



Training Programme for Volunteers

There are more than 45,000 students in Manchester between the four Universities so finding volunteers for the project is not difficult. Coniston Hall, a residence for women students co-ordinates the activity. Coniston Hall of Residence is a corporate work of Opus Dei and as such is run according to Christian principles. **Reach Out!** however, welcomes student tutors of all faiths or none, echoing the words of Blessed Josemaría, founder of Opus Dei, "In a word, the universities should be open to all and should educate their students so that their future work may be of service to all".

Blessed Josemaría also said, "Frequently students' concern for social problems is limited to oral or written demonstrations, and at times it degenerates into useless or harmful outbursts. I myself measure the sincerity of concern for others in terms of works of service, and I know of thousands of cases of students in many countries who have refused to build their own little private worlds. They are giving themselves to others through their professional work, which they try to carry out with human perfection, through educational endeavours, through social and welfare activities, in a spirit of youth and cheerfulness." It was this vision that inspired the residents of Coniston Hall to start the **Reach Out!** project for girls. A parallel project for boys in Moss Side and Hulme is run by residents of Greygarth Hall, a university Hall of Residence for

It is the philosophy of **Reach Out!** to believe in the capacity of each person and nurture all the positivity that is within her



men students which is also a corporate work of Opus Dei.

Professional training is essential if volunteers are to be able to deliver all that is expected of them in the **Reach Out!** sessions. Students are provided with training throughout the academic year, with guest speakers and experts giving the fruit of their experience in fields such as education or child psychology, sports or music. Students always work as a team wherever they go in **Reach Out!** Each team attends the residence to prepare as a group.

The collaboration of so many people in the project is invaluable. One dedicated contributor is Francesca Wheeler, who was Physics Teacher of the Year in Britain in 1998. She has inspired everyone year after year with her preparatory sessions, demonstrating to the students the enormous potential that they have to offer to others, and the corresponding potential the children have to learn.

Another memorable contributor is Leszek Iwaskow, a specialist advisor in humanities education. Leszek had the student volunteers doing learning exercises designed for 8 year olds – and loving it! He teaches the students how to teach more effectively in the limited time available to them.

This sort of training is an unexpected bonus for **Reach Out!** volunteers, who expect to be giving their time and effort without reward. The rewards from working in this kind of scheme are however, enormous. Students can



sometimes find themselves in a position where they only have to think about themselves, and they realise that they are privileged to be able to attend university and want to "give something back" to the community. This is the most frequent reason given by students when asked about their motivation for working on the project. One student wrote after leaving University: "I had no idea when I arrived in Manchester that I would eventually become a Management Consultant, but with hindsight, **Reach Out!** gave me the ideal preparation for almost any career. I met a huge diversity of people among the students, youth workers and **Reach Out!** young people, and I learned to work and communicate with all of them". The skills learnt from working on a project like this one are invaluable, and provide an excellent preparation for



many situations in life. Students are also encouraged to take part in the Millennium Volunteers programme which is promoted by the Government and provides some recognition for the work they do.

Coniston Hall provides continuity in the project, as the student population changes each year, and gives the project its special character. The link with the local community which is vital, is therefore provided by the residence.

One aspect of the project is to provide a challenge for those involved. Student volunteers are challenged because they often have no experience of this sort of work previously. Children are challenged in an unthreatening way, so that they don't get bored, reach further with their talents, and grow in confidence.

How is it financed?

Funds are raised from private individuals, companies and other charitable organisations. Fund raising

events are also organised for the benefit of **Reach Out!**

Activities are offered free of charge to all participants.

For further information contact:
Coniston Hall
67-77 Hathersage Road
Manchester M13 0EW
(0161) 248 5585

What the children say

"Reach Out! has the best students ever!"
Tieema A. Aged 12

"I like Reach Out! because it shows how much I have learned plus it will help me achieve the best I can"
Declan T. Aged 9

"There are lots of different clubs in the world, but not one like this!"
Cherelle J. Aged 11

"We only have a small amount of time at Reach Out! so we have to make the most of it!"
Stacey G. Aged 10

"I will now try to be good and stop being moody"
Sydonia K. Aged 12

What the students say

"Reach Out! is an excellent scheme and a valuable opportunity for the children and helpers alike. Many thanks for letting us help"
Katie Clark

"I got as much education and enjoyment out of being with the girls as they got out of being with us. It was the most rewarding week of my summer holiday"
Juliet Sinfield

Wherever You Are

Three new videos bring Blessed Josemaría closer

Three new English-language videos have been produced to prepare for the Centenary of his birth. The first of them, **The Joy of Holiness**, 18 minutes long, is a short documentary on the life of Blessed Josemaría. An ideal introduction to his life and message, it features film clips taken from his catechetical meetings in the 1970s, together with photographs and period prints from his early life.

The second video covers the teachings of Blessed Josemaría on the Christian meaning of work. **Wherever You Are** is a unique collection of archive footage of the founder of Opus Dei talking about the sanctification of work. Among the topics covered in this 24 minute video are: discovering God in our work; work as prayer; the divine value of hidden work; work as a service to others (serving with joy and fostering happiness around us through our work). Blessed Josemaría teaches that the best job in the eyes of God is the one carried out with most love; that love makes our work divine; that everything in our work should lead us to God; and that we are never alone when we work for God.

A Cause for Celebration is the record of an

interview with the Postulator of the Cause of Canonisation of Blessed Josemaría – the first (and, so far, only) filmed interview he has given in English. In the 20 minute documentary he describes his own relationship with the founder, and the steps taken in the Cause of Canonisation since the death of Blessed Josemaría in 1975. "Paternity was one of the most evident gifts that God gave to him," Mgr Flavio Capucci says of Blessed Josemaría. "He was the man that loved me more than anyone else on this earth... when you were with him, you were touching the presence of God." The documentary includes details of the miracle studied by the Holy See for his Beatification, and also explains the various steps in a Cause of Canonisation. Mgr Capucci concludes the interview with a quick summary of the teachings of the founder of Opus Dei: "The message of Blessed Josemaría shows the divine value of human virtues. Divine filiation, sanctification of work, spirit of service... These things will never be old-fashioned because Christ will never be old-fashioned. And that's why Blessed Josemaría is a very modern saint."



“I asked Josemaría even though I didn't know him”

The story of a Peruvian girl and her immediate cure

Hellen Katty is the eldest of four children. Her mother, Elena Gallo de Flores, is employed by the Waste Disposal Services of Piura, and her father, Enrique Flores, is a warrant officer in the Peruvian Air Force (FAP). In 1994 Hellen Katty was a pupil at the Primary School in the

Educational Centre of the FAP village in Piura where she lives. One day Elena noticed that Hellen had a persistent itch on her leg. She examined it closely and saw some little red spots. She thought it was an ordinary allergy and that it would soon go away. The child went to bed, but deep down Elena was worried and during the night she got up to check on her daughter, being careful not to

waken or frighten her. She discovered that Hellen's pillow was stained with blood coming from her mouth and head.

The next day her husband took the child to the FAP surgery. The doctor spoke of capillary weakness and recommended an immediate blood test. The result was not good. The test revealed a low platelet count, hence her blood was not clotting properly.

Enrique was worried when he got back home. After discussing the situation with his wife, they decided that Elena should take the child to the FAP hospital in Lima. Elena got time off from her job and set out for Lima with Hellen.

AT THE HOSPITAL

Doctor Consuelo Astete was on duty at the Accident and Emergency Centre and after examining the child decided to admit her.

Dr. Jorge Vargas took over and ordered more blood analysis. The platelet count was still falling and had gone way below the normal limits. The child was diagnosed as having “severe idiopathic thrombo-

cytopenic purpura”. Dr. Vargas explained the gravity of the situation to Elena and suggested she call her husband to come from Piura. Elena spent the night at the child's bedside. The doctor had asked her to keep an eye on Hellen who appeared to be getting steadily weaker.

They carried out new tests the next day and the doctor was alarmed. On his rounds to check the child at 11 a.m., he gave a prayer card of Blessed Josemaría to Elena. The A & E doctor, Consuelo Astete, had sent it to him two days earlier, but he had forgotten to hand it over.

THE CURE

As soon as she got the card with the prayer to Blessed Josemaría, Elena said the prayer fervently, over and over again, asking for her daughter's cure. Every once in a while she would place the prayer card under Hellen's pillow. Although she did not know Blessed Josemaría at all, she felt her faith renewed just looking at the prayer card.

As far as Elena can remember, Hellen was spiritually ready and they expected her to die that day. On 22 September they took a blood sample in the morning, and another at 3 p.m. on the same day. Dr. Vargas came with the results of the second test. The news was good. He said to Elena, “Your faith has saved your daughter. The platelets have increased to

140,000. Tell Dr. Astete that praying the prayer card has worked a miracle.”

It was not just a question of a simple increase in the platelets but of a sudden total cure. The child did not need any further treatment. She was completely healthy.

Her mother Elena is convinced that she owes the cure to the intercession of Blessed Josemaría. She never doubted it. On the contrary, she shows her gratitude by telling people about it. Before returning to Piura she took her daughter to Mass to thank God for her cure.

A PRAYER CARD IN HER BAG

Hellen Katty is seventeen now. She has regular blood tests and the number of platelets is normal. Right now she is getting ready to go to the National University of Piura to study Information Technology. She always carries a prayer card in her bag. She calls it “the prayer card of the miracle.” She has it with her everywhere and all her friends know the story. She asks Blessed Josemaría to help her at her exams, and she relies on his intercession for many other things too.

Elena says she is very pleased to have received this favour. Even though she is having a tough time financially, she is happy because she realises that there are other things that are far more important than merely material ones.



A recent photo of Hellen Katty. She has completely recovered and is very grateful to Blessed Josemaría.

Escrivá, a champion of ecumenism

Talking with Evgeny Pazukhin, author of "Life and Work of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá"



With fifty-six years and an adventurous life behind him, he is the first Orthodox Christian to write about Blessed Josemaría.

How did you know about the ideas of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá and what influence have they had on you?

When my wife translated *Friends of God* into Russian eight years ago, I was able to read the first homily she translated: Working for God. Before that I had only heard calumnies about Opus Dei in the Soviet press, but I had never heard about Josemaría Escrivá. A key idea in

that homily, work as a creative cooperation of man with God, is one of the fundamental aspects of the Christian life. The idea entered my heart and my

mind so easily that I decided to write a short essay on the subject that very day. After that I was able to take in all the teachings of the founder of Opus Dei very easily, without any problem. In this way, Mgr Escrivá confirmed me considerably in my Christian faith.

What reasons led you to write a book on the founder of Opus Dei?

I felt the need to make the great Christian idea



Who is Evgeny Pazukhin?

The author of "Life and Work of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá" was born in St Petersburg in 1945. He took a degree in Russian Language and Literature. From the early 1970s, and until the fall of communism in Russia, he was a clandestine teacher of philosophy, exegesis, history of the Church, Christianity and culture, etc. while at the same time working as a stoker to maintain his family. During the 1990s he and other Russian thinkers have started the Vladimir Soloviev Religious Philosophical Society. The cover of his book is shown here.

of the Work of God (sanctified work and creative prayer) known to the Russian reader. This key idea, as felt and lived with great strength and expressed with extraordinary depth by this Catholic priest, was a great way to foster true Christian life. I was also attracted by the immense ecumenical potential of his personality and his works.

What would you say are the characteristics of your book in comparison with other published biographies?

I have tried to explain, locate and analyse the context of the message of Blessed Josemaría so that the Russian reader may realise its antiquity and, at the same time, its novelty.

What interest has your book for the Russian reader?

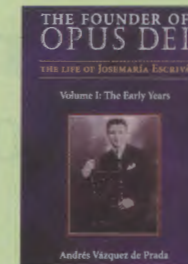
In Russia, as in many other countries, we are subject to a general malaise which is not unusual in the modern religious conscience and which consists in a the tendency to live a kind of "double life", a conflict between ordinary life and the spiritual life. Contemplation in the middle of the world, lay spirituality, and Christian materialism, are intuitions developed by Blessed Josemaría which can help in an effective way to combat this tragic rupture.

Russia was present in the mind of Blessed Josemaría, when he used to meditate on the painful destiny of the countries in the Eastern bloc, where atheism was imposed in a violent and cruel manner. He always prayed so that the peoples of the East might regain the basic right to seek God, to contemplate him and to fulfil his will. And God heard his prayer. With his detailed knowledge of both Western and Eastern theology and his rich spiritual

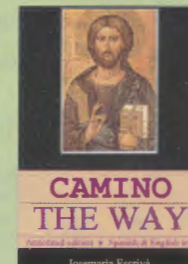
experience, Blessed Josemaría was open to all the children of God, to all people of good will, regardless of creed or nationality. Russian people can learn from Mgr Escrivá to respect the freedom and dignity of each human person – we need this in Russia.

What personality traits of the founder of Opus Dei does your book bring out?

In the personality of Blessed Josemaría, the most important trait is his identification with Christ. The main lesson we learn from the life of the founder is that man is called to put on the Humanity of Christ, to be deified in his humanity, to live all human realities – except sin – in a holy way, according to the teachings of St Paul. And Blessed Josemaría Escrivá reminds each one of us: "We should all be holy!"



Andrés Vázquez de Prada
The life of Josemaría Escrivá
Volume I: The Early Years
New York, 2001



Blessed Josemaría Escrivá
Camino—The Way
Bilingual annotated edition
Edited by Fr A Byrne
London, 2001



Helena Scott & Ethel Tolanski
Blessed Josemaría
CTS Booklet, 2001

Both mother and son are saved

When my sister delivered her baby, she bled and went into a coma.

The vital sign monitor for the heart went flat. The priest administered the sacrament of anointing of the sick. The husband (my brother in law) had the prayer card for Opus Dei's founder and asked the intercession of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá. My sister finally recovered – and she felt she had really been helped by that prayer. She was safe, and the baby also, and she called him Leonardo Ardyani Escrivá Pamungkas in gratitude to Blessed Josemaría. We have been copying the prayer card and it has been prayed by hundreds of people around us.

Jakarta, Indonesia

CHILD'S LEUKAEMIA CURED

I am a doctor. One day, and I remember it exactly because of what happened, I noticed a certain lump, a near-certain telltale symptom of leukaemia, in my eight-year-old son. We got him to the hospital where they confirmed this. The news left us devastated.

I go to evenings of recollection given by a priest of Opus Dei. He consoled us and gave us a relic of Blessed Josemaría. I thought the worst. I placed the relic under his pillow. I knew his life depended on Blessed Josemaría's intercession. Only too well did I know the devastating effect of this disease, as twenty years earlier I had lost my five – year – old sister with acute lymphatic leukaemia. My son was diagnosed with T-cell



Out of the many letters we have received, we publish here accounts of favours coming from Australasia, Africa and Europe.

leukaemia, which I understood was always fatal. How eternally grateful we are that God heard our prayers through the intercession of Blessed Josemaría! He needed only one and a half courses of chemotherapy, instead of the three initially planned. Over a period of three years he made a full recovery. He has now celebrated his eighteenth birthday, and this year thanks to other fatherly help from Blessed Josemaría my two sons were able to go to Rome for the Jubilee world youth days.

And almost as if to tell us how much he has been looking after us long before we realised it, just this year I discovered that the day on which I first noticed the lump and got such a dreadful shock was also Blessed Josemaría's birthday – 9th January.

Cork, Ireland

I WON A SCHOLARSHIP

I first knew about Opus Dei as a secondary school boy through the Newsletters which my

uncle used to bring home. The part that used to fascinate me then was the testimony section where people write to tell others of what God has done for them through the Founder of Opus Dei. It never occurred to me that I would one day join the league.

I went to sit for a scholarship examination. The tests were tough, and I had no hope of making it. Nevertheless, I used Blessed Josemaría's prayer card, and forgot about the scholarship. But when I least expected any news at all, my name appeared in the papers: I had won the scholarship

Praised be God through His most faithful servant, Blessed Josemaría Escrivá.

Ibadan, Nigeria

IN REHABILITATION FROM DRUGS

This is a highlight of an ongoing favour of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá. It concerns the rehabilitation of my son from drugs. He was already in a drug rehabilitation centre when I

started a novena in June. The very first day I received a long-awaited letter from my son. Amongst other things he requested seeing a priest of the Prelature. This request seemed impossible to fulfil, due to his impending move from Sydney and because he would be allowed no visitors. He was transferring rehabilitation centres and I was anxious to hear from him again, after the move. I received the definitive letter on June 26th, saying he had arrived at the new centre. The letter had been written six days previously and also contained the news that he had managed to see the priest prior to his departure. The delay by the post office kept me praying harder! I was insisting to Blessed Josemaría that I simply must have news by his feast-day. My son had

Washington DC, the chapel of the Catholic Information Center has been dedicated to Blessed Josemaría.



Chapel of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá



FAVOURS

in fact written as soon as possible, a fact which I also attribute to Blessed Josemaría. It was for me an extra special celebration that night (June 26th) at St. Mary's Cathedral Mass.

NSW, Australia

EXAMINATIONS SUCCESS

I am a second-year college student and would like to thank Blessed Josemaría for helping me pass all my exams in school and in college up till now. I hope he will help me pass all my exams in the future too. I enclose a donation.

Galway, Ireland

HE ENDED THE RELATIONSHIP

In great happiness and gratitude I write to tell you of a wonderful favour and grace received through the intercession of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá. I am the elderly mother of nine grown-up children; one of my sons was for several years in a relationship which involved a woman addicted to drugs. My son eventually took drugs himself, lost his job as a highly skilled and qualified builder. Things looked black and hopeless. I turned to Blessed Josemaría to whom I fervently prayed daily for about two years. Last week my son phoned to say his relationship was over and has been for some months – he lives in a different part of Scotland – and that he is back working at his trade and away from any drug scene or influence. I will continue my prayers for the speedy canonisation of our blessed benefactor. With grateful thanks.

Glasgow, UK

A DOUBLE FAVOUR

I would like to convey my special thanks to Blessed Josemaría. My mother has been sick for a very long time. In June this year, she was admitted in one of the Nairobi hospitals. Her condition became worse and she was transferred to the Intensive Care Unit. The doctors could not diagnose what she was suffering from.

My sister and I decided to pray through the intercession of Blessed Josemaría. We put a card next to her pillow so that anybody who went to see her could pray through his intercession. After twelve days, she became conscious again. This

Cambridge, New Zealand

HE FOUND A JOB

On April 6th I had an appointment with my Ear, Nose and Throat Surgeon in Hamilton. While he was writing the prescription he asked me about my husband as during my previous visit a year prior I had mentioned he had lost his job. My husband had been out of work for 15 months, the job situation looked very bleak for him and things were getting on top of me.

The surgeon then handed me a prayer card of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá. I am a practising Anglican but was losing my faith and hope of my husband ever finding a job at his age but I was grateful for the thought.

At 11.30 a.m. I said the prayer on the card and then again in the afternoon. When I arrived home that night, my husband was all excited as he had been rung out of the blue and asked to go for an interview. (It was a job he had applied for many months before but had missed out on.) He ultimately got the job and started this job last week. It seemed like a miracle to me the way it all worked out.

Statue of Blessed Josemaría in the Catholic Information Center in Washington DC.



was a great miracle because even the doctors had already given up. She was later taken back to the ward where her disease was diagnosed.

Her bill amounted to so much money that we could not raise it on our own as a family. A fundraising was organised and we continued to pray through the intercession of Blessed Josemaría. The money collected was enough to settle the hospital bill. We as a family were certain that these favours were granted through the intercession of Blessed Josemaría.

Ruiru, Kenya

RECONCILED AFTER 34 YEARS

My parents separated in 1966. Neither remarried, but relations remained strained. I began praying to Blessed Josemaría for their reconciliation about 10 years ago. For the 2000 Jubilee Year my wife joined me in making this our special intention and I asked a number of family members and friends from around the world to join us in prayer. As my father's health began to deteriorate last year my mother began visiting him regularly. After one of these visits my father told me that he and my mother were friends again. He died a few days later, in peace. My wife and I give thanks for this miracle of reconciliation, obtained through the intercession of Blessed Josemaría.

London, UK

We would like to express our thanks for the many letters we receive. They are a witness to the devotion of very many people who, in all parts of the world, pray to God through the intercession of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá. In this Newsletter, for reasons of space, we can only print paragraphs from some of them, which give significant events or straightforward accounts. Since it is impossible for us to thank everyone by name, we would also like to express our thanks here for the donations people send us to help cover the costs of producing and distributing this Newsletter, and to help with the development of apostolic projects which take their inspiration from Blessed Josemaría's love for souls.

TESTIMONY: Ngina Kenyatta

MY 30 YEARS' COOPERATION WITH OPUS DEI



In October 1967 I Her Excellency, Mama Ngina Kenyatta, First Lady of Kenya, is the wife of the Founding Father and First President of the Republic of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta (President of Kenya from 1963–1978).

officially opened Kianda Students' Residence, where I met some of the young people of Opus Dei who had come to Kenya to pass on the teachings of their founder, Blessed Josemaría Escrivá. Over the years I have seen how the spirit of these teachings has affected the lives of very many young people. They have not only been given academic and professional training, but especially spiritual values, so important for our society.

Students who have passed through their hands know how to look for God in the ordinary things of daily life, working well because they see him everywhere. I have also taken those values and offer my day to him as best I can.

What I most appreciate is how this spirit doesn't stay with the people of Opus Dei but spreads out to reach many others.

I am happy to continue cooperating with this Work of God with which I have been bonded for thirty years.