

treat house, he had gone to some place offered by other Catholics.

Because of its location and facilities, the organizing committee for World Youth Day chose that place.

I was very happy that some of the faithful of the Prelature in Australia were able to express in a material way the affection that all Catholics have for the successor of Peter.

London (June 18, 2009)

*Interview granted to
"BBC World." By
Christopher Landau*

What is the place of Opus Dei in the Church? What is a personal Prelature?

Opus Dei is a part of the Catholic Church. Its purpose is to remind all Christians that they are called to holiness whatever their state in life.

It helps Catholics to live their faith in their ordinary life: work, family life, social and cultural activities, etc.

A Personal Prelature is a type of organization in the Catholic Church which is ideally suited to Opus Dei. With the Prelate and his priests, it can have members who are men or women, married or single, intellectuals or manual workers.

What is the influence of Opus Dei in the Church and in the world today?

Opus Dei serves the Church and reminds all Christians that they should strive to be holy in everything they do.

It inspires individuals to change the world for the better, serving people with their lives, and striving to make Christ present in all environments.

When St Josemaría was a young priest, he once wrote in a notebook after Mass, that it would be the men and women of God who would place Christ at the summit of all human activities. It would be individuals with their lives of integrity who would make the difference, rather than organizations.

I ask your prayers so that Opus Dei, as a part of the Church, can continue to inspire people to be leaven in society.

What is the program of Opus Dei for the future?

The program of Opus Dei is the program of the Catholic Church.

For instance, one of the main priorities in the Church is to encourage young people to follow Jesus Christ with confidence in his Church and with love for his Sacraments. I remember clearly my trip to Sydney for the World Youth Day last July. When the Pope proposes to young people authentic models of Christian life they always respond, even if it is difficult. And this happens in Australia, in the United Kingdom, in Africa, in the Middle East...

Another priority of the Church is

to help families. To raise a family with joy nowadays is a great challenge: the house, schools for the children, looking after the old and sick members of the family, the pressure of work... But in my view the family needs above all spiritual support, which is also human support. I mean they should not feel alone when facing problems. They should feel the warmth and affection of other families, and of other people. That's why the members of Opus Dei as normal citizens promote so many activities of Christian formation directed to parents.

And another important priority is the culture: we need to have an open dialogue between faith and science. In all professions new challenges are arising, which require answers that are compatible with both faith and reason, as Pope Benedict XVI has spoken about so often.

To which countries is Opus Dei hoping to go in the near future?

I am very happy to say that in these days some members of Opus Dei have gone to live in Indonesia. After that I hope that some men and women of Opus Dei will be able to start stable work in Korea and in Romania in June.

In these countries they will be very happy to work with the local Catholic communities and also to establish very friendly relations with people of other religions.

How important is growth to Opus Dei?

The most important growth is

the spiritual growth of each person. This is the main goal of every Christian: to become more and more like Christ. This is the real growth, the only growth that matters.

But of course, Christ also said that we should pray for "workers for the harvest," so we pray that many people respond to God's call.

So, growth is important for Opus Dei in the same way as for the Church as a whole. At the same time, God is not interested in numbers as such but in souls one by one.

Message on the Occasion of the Year of the Priest (June 19, 2009)

During the Year of the Priesthood declared by Pope Benedict XVI, let us beseech God our Lord for priestly vocations in the Church and for the sanctity of all priests.

While striving to grow in our understanding of the ministerial priesthood, which differs essentially from the common priesthood (cf. Vatican II, Dogmatic Const. *Lumen Gentium*, no. 10), let us ask God that all the faithful may have a vibrant "priestly soul," and that we may know how to spread the joy of this gift to all the people we are in contact with.

Among the many writings of St. Josemaria on the priesthood, we would like to point out: