

Interviews and Articles

Australia August 1, 2008

*Interview granted to
"Catholic News Service"
(with Peter Rosengre)*

The Prelate of Opus Dei hopes that young people will follow the invitation of Benedict XVI and "once more pledge themselves to the friendship that God offers to everyone."

He also said that parents who love one another and each of their children "without limit" give a marvelous example.

Bishop Javier Echevarría, Prelate of Opus Dei, made these remarks in an interview granted on July 26 to The Record, the weekly paper of the Archdiocese of Perth, during a visit that coincided with World Youth Day in Sydney. Bishop Echevarría also visited the faithful of Opus Dei in the cities of Melbourne and Victoria, as well as in New Zealand.

He expressed his wish that the young people "continue to practice what they learned during World Youth Day when they return to their own countries. "This includes the desire to get to know the teachings of the Church, to spend periods of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, and to receive the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Confession.

"And, of course, that they live the joyful truth of knowing themselves to be God's children. As Catholics

they should continue to be the happiest young people in the world."

The Prelate said he prayed that the impact of World Youth Day would spread to many others when the young people returned to their families.

"World Youth Day has been an opportunity for hundreds of thousands of young people to be united to the Holy Father and among themselves. This is something that I was able to see in past events as well.

"I hope that all of these young people will follow the inspirations the Holy Spirit has placed in their hearts and struggle to put into practice what they have learned during these days.

"For this to happen they need God's grace, which is communicated to us through the sacraments and through prayer, and also through helping one another."

The Prelate stressed that the formation provided by Catholic families, where parents daily express their mutual love and their love for their children, is very valuable.

"A childhood where one breathes God's love and experiences a lot of affection is a solid foundation for the young people of the future."

He encouraged young people who fear the demands of commitment to follow the advice Benedict XVI gave in the Angelus on July 19, during World Youth Day.

"The Pope cited the Gospel of St. Luke's words addressed to the Blessed Virgin: 'Do not be afraid, Mary.' We should not have any fear when we have the Holy Spirit, who gives us strength. Happiness can only be obtained by a total commitment to God's friendship."

Bishop Echevarría joined Opus Dei while he was quite young, having met it through a relative of his. He was named Prelate of Opus Dei by Pope John Paul II in 1994.

"I was captivated by the idea of being able to aspire to sanctity while I practiced my profession of law, spent time with friends, or took part in sports, something that I enjoyed."

The Prelate did not mention any numbers, but he said that Opus Dei continued growing in the number of its faithful and that it attracted people from all walks of life.

"Thanks be to God, Opus Dei, as part of the Church, continues to be young and growing.

"Many people respond to the message of Opus Dei all over the world. People of all ages, cultures and occupations. This is due to the fact that our message is that of the Gospel: that personal holiness is possible with God's grace and our own efforts."

According to the Opus Dei web page, there are some 500 faithful of Opus Dei in Australia.

Spain

August 14, 2008

*Interview granted to Catalunya
Cristiana (interview by Samuel
Gutiérrez)*

*How is the personal prelature of
Opus Dei observing its 25th anniversary?*

Along with our ordinary occupations, each of us is striving to thank God frequently for the many good things he has given us. Therefore, I have asked that the Prelature of Opus Dei observe 2008 as a Marian Year of thanksgiving, to conclude on November 28. Clearly, this anniversary is also an opportunity for each of us to renew our personal effort to follow Christ more closely, in communion with the Pope and all the bishops.

*To put it in human terms, would it
be correct to say that Opus Dei has
"come of age"?*

In light of the service it is called to render to the Church and souls over the course of time, we could say that it is still just beginning. Certainly not with respect to its mission, which is to remind people that all Christians are called to holiness in their ordinary lives. But it's true that it is just beginning when we consider the scope and depth of the evangelizing task entrusted to it, since what has been accomplished so far is quite small in comparison with the expectations of so many people in the Church. For example, many bishops want us to begin working in their dioceses.