

La Nación
(San José)
January 30, 2000

Interview granted to Vanessa Barahona, published in the newspaper La Nación, San José, Costa Rica.

Opus Dei seeks to remind us that holiness is within the reach of everyone. How is this possible in such a turbulent world?

This turbulent world of ours is also a good world, because it comes from God. The clearest reason why holiness is within the reach of everyone is that God, in his creative plan, invites all those who believe in him to become his daughters and sons.

Holiness means identifying oneself with Jesus: thinking, loving and acting as he did. This is possible if we open our soul to the Gospel. But it's not an easy path, since this identification takes place through the cross.

Can one find holiness in one's work, with one's family and friends, and in everyday happenings?

The fullness of Christian life comes to us through living uprightly, treading a path that is usually paved with little things. To identify oneself with Jesus, it's not necessary to carry out extraordinary deeds. It's enough to carry out all our activities, even the most ordinary ones, with love for God and others.

Our work, our family and our friendships offer us a thousand opportunities each day to be charitable: during a get-together, a family outing, visiting the bed of a sick friend. All of these daily events offer us an opportunity to be sowers of Christ's peace and joy.

Work is a central reality in our life, no matter what our profession. What does this have to do with holiness and the perfecting of the person who carries it out?

Work is not a way of filling time, of obtaining success or money. It's a contribution to society, a way of supporting our family, an occasion for getting closer to people. Through our work we fulfill God's command to transform the earth.

When we look at work from a Christian point of view, facing God and our neighbor, a great panorama opens before us. Work becomes the basic material with which each of us has to carry out, with God's help, his own work of art. Every upright job is an opportunity of giving glory to God and of serving others.

Each day it seems more difficult for families to remain united, strong and happy. What are the obstacles that have to be confronted and overcome?

It's important not to get discouraged; we can't give in to a negative view of these problems. Pessimism is a bad counselor; it usually fosters sadness and ends up making the difficulties even worse. It is becoming more important each day to maintain the atmosphere proper to a family, an at-

mosphere of trust, of disinterested affection, of joy. In contrast to pessimism, cheerfulness is a good counselor; it knows how to sidestep the difficulties, making them more bearable. We have to discover reasons to be joyful, and savor them within the family. The struggle against selfishness is also important, as selfishness stunts one's capacity for love, for forgiveness, for understanding, for service, all qualities that enrich one's personality.

Home and profession are two areas in which many women struggle daily. How can one attain equilibrium and establish priorities here?

The equilibrium between dedication to one's family and to work outside the home is not a problem exclusive to women. The family should be a shared responsibility, distributing tasks equally between wife and husband. A necessary condition for harmony in the family is the mutual assistance between the spouses, sharing in the desire to raise their children well, transmitting to them their own faith through their word and example.

A husband and wife should be united in confronting obstacles. The two of them should decide together how to distribute the responsibilities in each situation, mutually supporting each other, not as two competitors, but as joint sharers in a holy task.

How can we take advantage of the Jubilee year?

I can answer you in one word: conversion. The Jubilee commemo-

rates the two thousandth anniversary of Christ's birth. And when it's a question of those we love, we don't remember them only on their birthday: they are in our hearts everyday. Conversion means opening wide the doors of our heart to Jesus, so that he can remove whatever is incompatible with our Christian vocation.

And so that the Holy Year does not remain merely a matter of nice feelings, we have to make use of the sacrament of confession. We need to undergo a conversion, with the resolution to begin a new life: a life that demands a new struggle against whatever separates us from Jesus.

Catalunya Cristiana (Barcelona)

May 18, 2000

Interview granted to Miriam Díez i Bosch, published in the magazine Catalunya Cristiana, Barcelona, Spain

Opus Dei was born in Spain. How would you describe "the Work" today in its birthplace?

Opus Dei in today's Spain is a leaven of Christian life. Thanks to God's help, not through any merits of the prelatore's faithful, hundreds of thousands of persons during the 72 years since its founding have encountered Jesus Christ again or for the first