

in the eagerness to serve others, in smiling at everyone, in the professionalism with which we perform our tasks... And all this with the primary desire to give glory to God and to serve others, who are also children of the same God. "This is why man ought not to limit himself to material production," Saint Josemaría commented. "Work is born of love; it is a manifestation of love and is directed toward love. We see the hand of God, not only in the wonders of nature, but also in our experience of work and effort. Work thus becomes prayer and thanksgiving, because we know we are placed on earth by God, that we are loved by him and made heirs to his promises" (*Christ Is Passing By*, no. 48).

Let us turn to the maternal intercession of Holy Mary, asking her to help us always know and feel like beloved children of God and to find her Son in our work done with love.

Amen.

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## Articles and Interviews

### Interview in the Newspaper El Debate, Madrid (June 22, 2024)

*What has remained the same and what has changed in the Work over the years?*

In Opus Dei there is an underlying spirit, an important message about holiness in the middle of the world, which has not changed. This is the unchanging nucleus that gives it meaning, because, as happens in institutions, Opus Dei exists to preserve and spread a specific message over time. At the same time, the founder, St. Josemaría, while being very clear about the need to keep this spirit intact, said that over time the external forms can and should change. In a hundred years, society and the Church have evolved a lot, and so has Opus Dei, since it is part of the Church and of society.

The transformations implied by phenomena such as globalization, the feminine conquest of public space, new family dynamics, etc., are reflected in Opus Dei as an institution and in the real life of its members. Knowing how to change – basing any change on what is essential – is a requirement in order to remain faithful to its mission.

*How do the new papal indications affect Opus Dei and the day-to-day running of the institution?*

Juridical forms and daily life are areas that go hand in hand; and, at the same time, they have their distinctions. In the day-to-day life of the laity, who are immersed in the affairs of this world, the new indications do not change the way they live their vocation to the Work. As regards Opus Dei as an institution, we are working with the Dicastery for the Clergy to make the adjustments to the Statutes requested by the Holy Father in the motu proprio *Ad charisma tuendum*. Since we are still in the process of studying these adjustments, I cannot tell you the result. I can assure you that, in carrying out this work, an atmosphere of dialogue and trust has been present, proper to the Church as the family of God.

*Doesn't this clericalize a Church institution whose raison d'être is the laity? To what extent can these measures affect the goal of the laity to be saints in the middle of the world?*

The message of Opus Dei is addressed primarily to the laity, men and women in the middle of the world, who from the beginning make up the vast majority within the Work, and are its reason for being.

Just as one should not absolutize charisms, neither should one do so with the law. That is why Opus Dei has gone through various institutional solutions to find the most appropriate formula, which integrates, on the one hand, safeguarding the charism and, on the other, a juridical format that gives it a place in the Church and reflects its nature without constricting or stifling it.

*Will the Opus Dei of the 21st century seek a new juridical mold, instead of a personal prelature, that is better adapted to the new forms of Christian life?*

The juridical figure of personal prelature adapted very well to the spirit of Opus Dei and its apostolates. As I mentioned earlier, we are in the midst

of a dialogue with the Holy See for the adaptation of the Statutes. As you will understand, it would not be prudent for me to refer to a possible new juridical mold before completing the process we have been working on for almost two years.

The elasticity of canon law can help to combine the desire of the Holy See and of the Work itself to further the mission of the Church in a changing world, finding adequate solutions without institutional breakdown.

*On the path to the centenary, since Opus Dei has bishops and archbishops all over the world, wouldn't it be appropriate for the Prelate to also be a bishop?*

If I may clarify, it should be noted that the few bishops and archbishops in the world who come from Opus Dei belong to their own particular churches, and therefore answer only to the Pope, who is their only superior.

I think the fact that Blessed Alvaro and Bishop Javier Echevarría received episcopal consecration was very good for strengthening ecclesial communion during those years, from 1991 to 2016. At present, the question is to faithfully follow the indications of the Holy Father, rather than to dwell on whether it is more or less adequate.

*Why has a part of the ecclesiastical hierarchy seen Opus Dei as a rival movement or a parallel church when the faithful of the Work are also faithful of the territorial dioceses?*

In general, I have seen appreciation on the part of the hierarchy and the other institutions in the Church. We in the Work are aware that we are sailing in the same boat of the Church, in which different spiritualities and sensibilities coexist. All have their place in that boat and each one brings the charism received from God and confirmed by the Church's authority. I would rather emphasize the fraternal relationship between institutions and the aspiration for true ecclesial communion, first and foremost with the Holy Father.

If there have been frictions with any institution in the Church, perhaps it is due to imperfect human relationships, which we should try to resolve day by day, in a normal way. Sometimes misunderstandings also come from the understandable historical difficulty of making room for new realities that are

bearers of a newness that at first may seem surprising. I like to think that these frictions are a thing of the past.

*What is the current situation of Opus Dei's development in the world? Are there specific plans for expansion in view of the centennial? In which countries do you encounter more difficulties?*

We could say that the development of Opus Dei is like that of the rest of the Church in the world. The Work as a whole has grown in recent years, but that does not mean that it is growing everywhere or that it is growing in the same way.

For example, the Work is growing in countries such as Nigeria, the United States and Brazil, while its apostolate is more difficult in other places, such as Europe and Asia. External obstacles sometimes come from an atmosphere of secularization, from certain lifestyles that make it difficult to form lasting families or to understand celibacy or vocations dedicated to service and care. There are also obstacles that every Christian in the middle of the world must face, such as the danger of worldliness. Since there is no shared context of faith, a special refinement of heart is required to be consistent with one's family or vocational commitments.

From a geographical point of view, cultural and religious diversity is very wide. Living a Christian vocation is not the same in Muslim-majority cities like Mombasa (Kenya) or Surabaya (Indonesia) as in Lisbon or Warsaw. As the members of the Work who live in these places know very well, sowing the seed of the Gospel confronts a situation that has evolved over many years, as in China or South Korea. In these countries, along with the difficulties, there are also many signs of life in the Church seen in conversions, baptisms of young people and adults, etc.

On the other hand, for some years now the Work has been restructuring its circumscriptions in order to improve its governance and apostolic action. In any case, regardless of programs and structures, it is God himself who makes his way into every type of society, touching the hearts of people, because he alone is the answer to mankind's yearnings and hopes.

*Opus Dei was the first Catholic organization to admit non-Catholics as co-operators. Is it, above all, a sign of ecumenism?*

In 1950, when St. Josemaría obtained authorization from the Holy See to admit non-Catholic men and women to Opus Dei as cooperators, the ecumenical movement had already been underway for some time, both within the Catholic Church and within the framework of the other Christian confessions. It was one more sign of the natural impulse to seek union among all believers in Christ. Since then, there have been many manifestations of friendship and dialogue with people of other religious confessions.

*How should Christians act in the face of the growing atmosphere of political and social polarization in so many parts of the world?*

In matters of opinion, they should do so with great freedom. As Christians, with charity and understanding. And as St. Josemaría often said: “Always as sowers of peace and joy,” even though at times it is difficult to do so in a heated and polarized environment. It is important to love and understand people, even if they sometimes think differently.

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## Interview in *Avvenire* Newspaper, Milan (June 30, 2024)

*Opus Dei is embarking on a real “journey,” at the Pope’s invitation, to rediscover the freshness and strength of its origins. On this journey, what is coming to light?*

In all the countries where Opus Dei is present, so-called “regional assemblies” are held every 10 years. They are precious moments of dialogue and reflection. One discovers the desire to go to what is essential, to the charism, finding ways to live it and communicate it better in the present circumstances. For example, one issue that emerges from these assemblies is the desire to base the apostolic effort of the Work more and more on sincere friendship and the transformation of hearts, rather than on structures, projects or activities.

*The method you have mentioned for this reflection is a broad consultation in which all the members of Opus Dei and also other people who are not part of the*