

Passionately Loving the World:
The Central Role of "Secularity" in the Message of St. Josemaria Escriva

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Introduction

The title of this lecture is taken from a homily given by St. Josemaria on October 8, 1967, at the University of Navarre in Spain. The idea of passionately loving the world is a fundamental concept in Escrivá's message and in the spirit of Opus Dei, which he founded in 1928. A word he used to signify this attitude toward the world is secularity. For Escrivá secularity is being in, feeling at home in, and passionately loving the world. By "world" I mean the whole created reality that comes to us from the hands of a loving Father-God as well as all the noble fruits of human creativity.

In this lecture, I will briefly discuss the relationship of secularity to the universal call to sanctity, some bases for this relationship in Christian revelation, and a few historical factors that may have obscured a full understanding of sanctification in the world. Then I will describe some aspects of secular spirit as St. Josemaria portrays it in his writings and preaching. I will close with some thoughts about how St. Josemaria made sanctification of ordinary life so accessible to so many.

Secularity and Sanctity

The world as I described it above—the result of divine and human creativity—is the reality in which the lay person finds himself or herself immersed, in which we are to be sanctified, and which we are to sanctify. This reference to sanctity is crucial. Secularity is not an end in itself—it is not secularism, which is like a religion that defies the world. In St. Josemaria's message secularity is always addressed in the context of sanctity. The idea that all lay Christians are called to sanctify themselves in and through their ordinary activities in the middle of the world is the central message of Opus Dei; secularity refers to a particular spirit or attitude characterizing a path to sanctity that is especially appropriate for lay people. This, as far as I can see, constitutes the truly unique and novel characteristic of Opus Dei and its Founder: an intuitive and comprehensive understanding of what it means to seek sanctity in the middle of the world with a secular spirit, or using another phrase of St. Josemaria, with a lay mentality. The Church has always taught that Christ's words, "Be perfect as my heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt. 5:48), are directed to everyone—we are all called to be saints. But this teaching has not always been manifested in the practical convictions of Christians. To my knowledge no one since the very earliest Christians articulated the possibility—indeed the necessity—of lay people achieving this sanctity precisely through secular activities and with a secular spirit as cogently as St. Josemaria. And no world-wide institution in the Church has ever been solely dedicated to spreading this message and to providing the practical means to help the lay faithful fulfill this vocation, as Opus Dei is.

To understand the significance of secularity, I think it is important to look at exactly how St. Josemaria formulated the relationship between sanctity and the world for a person with this secular spirit. He said that those who want to live according to this spirit "must sanctify themselves with their work, must sanctify their work and sanctify others through their work." (Conversations, point 70) Work in this formulation is a fundamental aspect of life in the middle of the world, something essential to a secular existence. I find it nearly impossible to discuss secularity without discussing work, but since we've already had a lecture on that topic I will go no further. However, to bring us back to a broader sense

of secularity, I think it would be fair to rephrase this formulation to say that we must sanctify ourselves through the world, sanctify others in the world, and sanctify the world itself .

This three-fold sanctification is significant because it indicates secularity is not essential simply because we happen to be in the world—the world is not simply our biological and sociological habitat. Nor are the things of the world merely an occasion for evangelization (if we want to spread the good news, after all, we must be where the people are). Secularity is essential also because we must sanctify the world itself. This is part of our mission as laity as the second Vatican Council taught. St. Paul in the letter to the Romans puts it this way:

For the eager longing of creation awaits the revelation of the sons of God. For creation was made subject to vanity—not by its own will but by reason of him who made it subject—in hope, because creation itself also will be delivered from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the sons of God. For we know that all creation groans and travails until now. (Romans 8: 19-24)

All of creation and all of human culture and activity is to be made holy. This is part of the mystery of redemption and grace: each of us is called to participate in this aspect of redemption. But we can only bring the world to Christ if we ourselves are authentically engaged in the world, in family life, social life, public life, politics, the arts, entertainment, law, finance, technology, education, business—everything . This is not a theoretical ideal; we have to be willing dig in to the sometimes messy and ambiguous milieu of human activities. A spirit of secularity does not negate the Christian tradition that we are viatores, wayfarers or pilgrims who do not have a lasting home here on earth. We are wayfarers; but so is the whole world, and it is our task to bring all the noble things of the world along with us on our pilgrimage to full union with God.

Theological Basis of Secularity

Whole treatises could be written analyzing the lay vocation from a theological point of view. I would like simply to touch upon a few ideas to show the theological legitimacy and depth of the secular spirit underlying the lay vocation as portrayed in the message of St. Josemaria Escriva.

Scripture

The Scriptural basis for secularity, for a vocation to sanctity in and through the world, begins in Genesis:

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the cattle and all the animals that crawl on the earth." God saw that all he had made was very good. (Genesis 1:28, 31)

In this passage, we learn that God created the world and saw that it was good. We also learn that Adam and Eve were given certain tasks by God: to care for the earth (what we would call work) and to multiply (that is, to have a family). These very things—marriage and work—that have so often been considered obstacles to sanctity were the specific tasks God commanded of Adam and Eve before original sin. The fall of our first parents made these tasks more difficult, but it did not change the fundamental fact that the world is good and that it is the place in which God intends us to fulfill the two-fold mission—family life and work—which is eminently secular.

The most striking Scriptural basis for a spirit of secularity in the lay vocation to sanctity is the example of Jesus Christ himself who spent the vast majority of his time on this earth living and working as an ordinary citizen of a small town. Scripture says practically nothing about the hidden life of Christ, but the fact of the Incarnation—that the Son of God, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, chose to be born as a normal baby, grow up as a normal child, and spend many years working as an ordinary citizen of his town—speaks volumes about the value of ordinary, hidden life in the eyes of God. For the majority of Christians, this is the part of Christ's life that we will mostly imitate, as we too engage in the unspec-

secular events of everyday family, professional, and social life. St. Josemaria was particularly devoted to the hidden life of Christ:

Our Lord's whole life fills me with love for him, but I have a special weakness for his thirty hidden years spent in Bethlehem, Egypt and Nazareth. That period, so long in comparison with his public life and which the Gospels hardly mention, might seem empty of any special meaning to a person who views it superficially. And yet, I have always maintained that this silence about Our Lord's early life speaks eloquently for itself, and contains a wonderful lesson for us Christians. They were years of intense work and prayer, years during which Jesus led an ordinary life, a life like ours, we might say, which was both divine and human at the same time. In his simple workshop, unnoticed, he did everything to perfection, just as he was later to do before the multitudes. (Friends of God, 56)

In addition to His example, we have Christ's explicit prayer to His Father during the Last Supper: "I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from evil." (Jn. 17:15)

Sacraments

Another important place to look for theological support for the universal call to sanctity is in the Sacraments of the Church. A few highlights from this area will suffice: Everyone who is baptized becomes a child of God, identified with Christ. Every baptized person receives sanctifying grace, which is a participation in the life of the Trinity, the beginning on this earth of the life we are called to share for eternity—the life that is synonymous with sanctity. So the call to sanctity is inherent in Baptism and is therefore a universal vocation.

Confirmation confirms the vocation received in Baptism and gives us the graces and gifts necessary to take on our responsibilities as soldiers of Christ and witnesses to the Gospel. If these tasks were only for priests and religious, then the laity would not need Confirmation. So clearly Christ and His Church expect lay people to require and to use these gifts of the Holy Spirit in the circumstances in which we ordinarily find ourselves.

With respect to the Eucharist, it is interesting to note that Jesus Christ chose bread and wine—not wheat and grapes—to become his body and blood. The words of the offertory at Mass indicate that we offer bread "which earth has given and human hands have made" and wine that is "fruit of the vine and work of human hands." The Eucharist does not take place (as Baptism does) with a naturally occurring substance, but with a product of human work.

What relationship could be more ordinary, natural, and secular than marriage? Therefore, it is significant to a secular spirit of lay sanctity that this relationship was made a sacrament by Jesus Christ—that is, a grace-giving, sanctifying reality.

The Second Vatican Council

The second Vatican Council is very clear about the specifically secular nature of the lay vocation. While several documents deal with the relationship of the Church to the world and the mission and apostolate of the laity, I will simply present one passage from the document *Lumen gentium* that relates specifically to secularity:

What specifically characterizes the laity is their secular nature. "[T]he laity, by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God. They live in the world, that is in each and in all of the secular professions and occupations. They are called there by God that by exercising their proper function and led by the spirit of the Gospel they may work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven. Therefore, since they are tightly bound up in all types of temporal affairs it is their special task to order and to throw light upon these affairs in such a way that they may come into being and then continually increase according to Christ to the praise of the Creator and the Redeemer." (LG 31)

Historical Background

Despite this rich theological foundation for sanctity in the world, for many centuries the essence of Christ's message and purpose as it applies to the majority of Christians, had been forgotten or misunderstood, not by official Church teaching but by attitudes or public opinion in the Church.

In the earliest years of the Church there were the ordained (bishops, priests, and deacons) and the non-ordained Christians. In the New Testament, especially the epistles of St. Paul, we can see that all were considered "the saints" the sacred people of God. The ordained had special responsibilities and powers in the areas of preaching, administering the sacraments, and governing the people of God so Paul gave them certain special instructions. But he addresses himself to numerous non-ordained Christians as clearly "active" members of the Church. He talks about their diversity of gifts and their unity and complementarity in one Body. There was no sense of "second class Christians." The standard was holiness and the model was Christ for everyone.

Eventually, however, an attitude developed that equated the Church with its ordained members and associated true sanctity with those faithful who had a special vocation to separate themselves in some way from the ordinary life of the majority of people. How did this happen? Historians can analyze the factors that may have contributed to this confusion about the universal call to holiness. I will limit myself to a few comments in this area:

Within a few centuries of the birth of Christianity, some people lay and ordained felt the need to separate themselves from the mainstream of daily life and devote themselves entirely to prayer and penance. At first this was clearly seen as an unusual vocation for the few, but as more of these hermits or monks became ordained, separation from the world became identified with the clergy and, by contrast, remaining in the world became identified with the laity and with a less demanding Christian life (Shaw 1993).

Throughout the history of the Church, there was the threat of dualism or Manicheism: the belief that the spiritual is good and that the material (the world) is evil. This system of thought has preyed on Christianity right up to our own day (for example, in the influence of Jansenism and some aspects of the New Age movement), causing people to think that holiness has nothing to do with life in this material world of ours.

For a number of reasons, the religious education of the laity, and not infrequently of secular priests, left much to be desired. Poor doctrinal knowledge, admixtures of old pagan beliefs, doubtful moral orientation (and worse) could certainly have contributed to the "second class" status of those Christians who were immersed in the world.

Confusion of the sacred and the secular may also have contributed to the problem. From the time Constantine made Christianity legal, the Church has struggled with the dominating demands of temporal rulers and the ambitions of the worldly who infiltrated the hierarchy. The legitimate autonomy of temporal and religious spheres has been an elusive goal when it hasn't been rejected outright by one side or the other. Eventually, tensions in this area led to secularism. To the secularist way of thinking, religion is at best something private; worse, an emotional crutch for the intellectually weak; and worst of all, an impediment to the fulfillment of man.

It's no wonder that these trends caused many devout Christians to think that the secular world was intrinsically incompatible with a holy life. If the world threatened to taint religion or to destroy it, then it would be best to avoid the world. If one must live in the world, it is best not to engage it too deeply. If one must engage, it is best to keep the worldly part of life hermetically sealed off from the religious part.

Of course, there are positive historical developments as well. For example, in the late 19th and early

20th century various lay movements arose. St. Therese of Lisieux, the Little Flower, a religious herself spoke of the sanctifying value of the ordinary, little things, a message welcomed by many lay people whose lives are full of these things. Catholic Action provided an opportunity for the laity to participate in apostolates carried out under the mandate and oversight of the hierarchy. John Henry Newman spoke out strongly about the role of the laity in the Church. In the United States, there was some experimentation with novel forms of lay involvement in the work of parishes and dioceses. And other examples could be given. But none of these efforts hit the bulls eye of a truly lay vocation to sanctity and apostolate in the middle of the world.

This is the historical background upon which Opus Dei came into existence in 1928. It championed the baptismal vocation to holiness of every lay faithful in the Church, a vocation to sanctify ourselves in the world, sanctify secular realities in themselves, and do an active apostolate in and through our ordinary family, social, and professional relationships. It is a vocation that does not require a modified form of the religious life or activities approximating those of the ordained priest. It recognizes the possibility of a real vocational commitment that nevertheless does not change the lay person's state in life or in the Church. It provides for membership of both married and single persons (including some with a life-long calling to celibacy) and secular priests. Its fundamental mission is to promote the sanctity of ordinary lay people and the exercise of their own apostolate in ordinary secular environments, without any special mandate or oversight from the hierarchy. As a result of the historical realities described above, there was no juridical category appropriate to Opus Dei, only religious orders and associated institutions (third orders), lay groups assisting the hierarchy in its apostolic activities (Catholic Action), other lay groups without any vocational commitment (pious associations, sodalities) and eventually secular institutes (which involve a kind of consecration in the world). Officials in the Vatican, in the 1940s, said that Opus Dei had come a century too early.

Well, perhaps not a whole century, because two decades later the second Vatican Council affirmed the basic message of Opus Dei. As often happens in the Church, the Holy Spirit inspires individuals and raises up saints to do a particular work, and then moves the institutional aspects of the Church into alignment with the inspiration. The process can be messy and produce both good ideas and poor ideas, but that is generally why the Church moves slowly, examining all things and holding fast to what is good (cf. 1 Th. 5:21). After a century of lay movements and related ideas percolating in the Church in various forms and after almost 60 years of a true lay vocation to sanctity being preached and lived in Opus Dei, the second Vatican Council officially proclaimed the universal call to sanctity and the specific vocation of the laity to sanctify the world and themselves in the world, being witnesses of Christ in their ordinary situations.

What Does it Mean to Be Secular?

The Founder of Opus Dei emphasized several particular characteristics of a secular spirit, which I will describe here briefly .

Passionately loving the world

To me the essence of secularity is found in this phrase. What does it mean to love and to love passionately? Love involves knowing someone or something very well, accepting the loved one with all his or her strengths and weaknesses, seeing the hidden treasures and sensing the essential mystery and goodness beneath what others would consider ordinary and unremarkable; it involves a closeness and being-at-home with the one loved and a genuine concern for his or her well-being; it means self-giving. To do all of this passionately means to do it not as a duty or an intellectual exercise, but with all the energy of one's person. To love the world passionately means all of this. As I mentioned earlier, it is the vocation of the laity to sanctify the world. In large part we do this by loving the world because through love we incorporate the world into our own interior path to God.

I believe that all of the characteristics of a secular spirit are ultimately derived from this idea of loving the world. A person with a secular spirit does not harbor a distrust of human goods, because love is built on trust; although neither is such a person naive. He is not a reactionary who rails against the use of the human intellect or technology to assess and address the needs of our times because love leads him to appreciate these things in the context of the human good they serve, neither undervaluing them nor overvaluing them. A secular person doesn't consider involvement with temporal things to be intrinsically corrupting but is willing to roll up her sleeves and get her hands dirty with the issues of her times. Passionately loving the world means genuinely enjoying all the good that nature and human creativity can provide (natural beauty, literature, entertainment, science, etc.) and seeing the glimmer of good struggling to show itself through the aspects of culture and society that may leave much to be desired by Christian standards.

St. Josemaria explained the basis for this love of the world and its result very concisely when he said:

The Lord wants his children, those of us who have received the gift of faith, to proclaim the original optimistic view of creation, the love for the world which is at the heart of the Christian message. So there should always be enthusiasm in your professional work, and in your effort to build up the earthly city. (The Forge, point 703)

He even talked about having a "Christian materialism" (PLW, point 53) in which we "give back to matter and to the apparently trivial events of life their noble, original meaning" to place them at the service of the Kingdom of God "to spiritualize them, turning them into a means and an occasion for a continuous meeting with Jesus Christ." (PLW, point 52)

Respect for the legitimate autonomy of temporal things

This phrase means that we respect the order inherent in things from their being created by God and from the legitimate use of human reason and creativity. The second Vatican Council puts it this way:

[B]y the autonomy of earthly affairs we mean that created things and societies themselves enjoy their own laws and values which must be gradually deciphered, put to use, and regulated by men. For by the very circumstance of their having been created, all things are endowed with their own stability, truth, goodness, proper laws and order. Man must respect these as he isolates them by the appropriate methods of the individual sciences or arts. Therefore if methodical investigation within every branch of learning is carried out in a genuinely scientific manner and in accord with moral norms, it never truly conflicts with faith, for earthly matters and the concerns of faith derive from the same God. Consequently, we cannot but deplore certain habits of mind, which are sometimes found too among Christians, which do not sufficiently attend to the rightful independence of science and which, from the arguments and controversies they spark, lead many minds to conclude that faith and science are mutually oppose. (GS 36)

The legitimate autonomy of temporal things means that they do not require directives or validation from religious authority (whether scriptural or human). Science, politics, philosophy, art, law, engineering, etc., follow their own standards within the limits of their own authority. The legitimacy of these standards is determined by the logic and objectives of the respective fields. At the same time, since all creation and all human creativity is part of a larger reality intended to serve the good of the human person and the common good, there are moral standards to which all fields must adhere. But a secular spirit does not look for a theocracy or for an official Catholic position on temporal matters. We are not fideists who what every truth to be proclaimed a dogma and every problem to have an official Christian solution so we do not have to think for ourselves and take risks and make mistakes.

Respect for Freedom and Personal Responsibility

Because temporal things are not the subject of dogma, and because they are temporal, that is, they exist in and develop over time, there are usually a number of opinions and potential approaches and

solutions for temporal situations many of which are entirely compatible with Christian belief and morals. A secular spirit respects this legitimate diversity of opinions and solutions. It does not require that all Christians be of a particular party or school of thought or frame of mind on any particular issue (cf. Furrow 356, for example). It does require that each person consider important matters seriously and formulate his or her own opinions, respecting the rights of others to do the same.

A sense of personal responsibility is inseparably connected to this respect for freedom and for legitimate plurality. If temporal matters are left to the careful consideration of each person, then each one carries the corresponding responsibility to form opinions and take action according to his or her own well-formed conscience. While appropriate sources may be consulted for facts, reasoning, and moral standards, the ultimate decisions and actions of a Christian in temporal matters—professional, family, social, economic, political—belong to that person. One cannot seek to hide behind or blame the Church for a particular position on an exclusively temporal matter or portray such a position as being the only or the best position for a committed Christian.

Apostolate of friendship and confidence

Secularity also implies a certain bias toward carrying out one's Christian apostolate in and through ordinary circumstances. Lay Christians may occasionally give talks on religious topics or be in situations requiring heroic example, but for the most part our apostolate is not to preach or to become missionaries or martyrs. We find Christ in our family, work, and social activities and that is where we expect to introduce others to Him as well. We may engage in social service projects (such as soup kitchens, for example), but we should not think that this type of activity exhausts our Christian service or witness. To begin with, we should strive to carry out our professional, personal, and social lives so as to avoid and alleviate social injustices in the first place. More fundamentally, all our ordinary relationships should be occasions for others to encounter Christ, through our example, our virtues, our words, and especially through our love and friendship. St. Josemaria liked to call the apostolate of ordinary Christians an apostolate of friendship and confidence: as a person comes to know us, there should also be a gradual and spontaneous revealing of Christ to them through the depth of the human relationship, whatever it might be. Ordinary parental duties, a well-timed word of advice to a colleague, or an ordinary social engagement are all occasions for bringing Christ's light to others.

Naturalness and Unity of Life

St. Josemaria liked to talk about a virtue he called "naturalness." A person with a secular spirit behaves naturally. She doesn't need to call attention to her Christianity, nor is she embarrassed about it. She doesn't need to wear a distinctive dress or insignia. She fits in to her ordinary environment even when she needs to do something differently than others because her Christian convictions call for it (cf. *The Way*, point 380, and *The Forge*, point 723, for example). She is natural—or genuine—because she knows who she is and what her values are and acts accordingly, with grace and charm.

The secret to this naturalness, to living a truly Christian life with a genuinely secular spirit is to achieve a deep integration in one's personality such that one's beliefs and convictions are manifested in a consistent and natural way in all one's actions. This integrity—which St. Josemaria called unity of life—implies that everything is guided by a single, unifying principle: to seek union with God in and through everything we encounter in the course of our lives. If we really love the world, and all that is good in it, and are convinced that there is a "divine something" (*PLW*, point 54, and many other places) in all these encounters, we will develop an eye for this divine something and we will not be afraid of anything because we will be able to distinguish the things that lead to God from those that do not. We develop a kind of supernatural sixth sense about the things of the world.

Education of the Laity

Part of secularity is being practical about the means necessary to achieve an end. The goal of sanctity

in the world according to a secular spirit is a simple, but ambitious goal and requires the proper means if it is to be achieved. In this area, I believe St. Josemaria had a particular genius because he was able to develop and institutionalize a system for the Christian growth and formation that has effectively helped lay people from all over the world, in many different cultures and of various social and educational levels, to follow this path to sanctity. I will not be able to describe all the facets of the system, however I would like to focus on some elements that I believe are particularly relevant to the idea of secularity. St. Josemaria believed that there are five types of formation that the laity need to effectively carry out their vocation in the secular world:

Doctrinal/religious formation. Certainly the laity must know what the Church teaches. They must understand and be able to recognize the distinction between dogma and discipline and among various levels of theological certitude. They should have a grounding in basic philosophical and theological concepts underlying the exposition of the faith. In addition, each person should seek specialized knowledge in particular areas that may be appropriate to his or her professional or personal situation, such as knowledge of medical or business ethics, the Church's social teachings, etc.

Apostolic formation. Although our apostolate generally takes place through ordinary, natural relationships acquired through family, social, and professional situations, we still need to learn how to be daring but also prudent, to respect freedom while challenging people to go deeper in their Christian life, and to have a gift of tongues—that is, to be able to explain the truths of faith and morals in attractive ways that are meaningful to the people we deal with.

Spiritual formation. Spiritual formation is learning to know ourselves and to know God so as to engage in an ever-deepening relationship with Him. It involves learning how to pray, to make good use of the Sacraments, to grow in virtue and correct our bad habits, and to overcome the various manifestations of sin in our lives. Some of this formation can be given to groups of people, but the most essential aspect of spiritual formation is that which is tailored to the individual. This has traditionally been called spiritual direction and is a kind of coaching that applies the general principles of spiritual growth to our personal needs and situation. This is particularly important for the lay person since each one's life situation is unique and general rules do not easily apply.

These three types of formation or Christian development are fairly traditional in the Church so I have focused on how they can help a person in the middle of the world to pursue sanctity. St. Josemaria also emphasized two aspects of formation that are more specifically tailored to following this path with a secular spirit:

Human formation. If laity are to sanctify the world and ourselves in the world, we need to recognize, appreciate, and respond to all human values. This can include: good manners or etiquette and well as good grooming and dress so that we and our apostolate are attractive; cultural knowledge (both popular and classical); awareness of current events and the concerns of our fellow citizens and colleagues. We can not believe, or give the impression that we believe, that serious Christians are above all this. On the contrary, we must demonstrate the proper use of the things of this world.

Professional formation. Excellent preparation in our respective professions is necessary if we are to sanctify that portion of our cooperation in creation that is represented by our professional work. If we respect the elements of divine and human creativity in work, we will try to perfect our contribution to this work as much as we are personally able to. This will mean different things for different professions: manual work, intellectual work, work with people, leadership, etc. In any case it will include all three components that St. Josemaria indicated: sanctifying ourselves in our work (through the love and virtues we put into it); sanctifying the work itself (by performing the work tasks themselves very well); and sanctifying others through our work (through the service and fruits of our work and the relationships we develop through our work).

Conclusion

If there is one thing I hope you will come away from this lecture with, it is St. Josemaría's eminently positive message of the accessibility of sanctity through passionately loving the world. In the end, all of this boils down to the most fundamental vocation of the human person, which is love: Man's great privilege is to be able to love and to transcend what is fleeting and ephemeral. He can love other creatures, pronounce and live a life which are full of meaning. And he can love God, who opens heaven's gates to us, makes us members of his family and allows us also to talk to him in friendship, face to face. (Christ is Passing By, point 48)

The world awaits us. Yes, we love the world passionately because God has taught us to: Sic Deus dilexit mundum ... ó God so loved the world. And we love it because it is there that we fight our battles in a most beautiful war of charity, so that everyone may find the peace that Christ has come to establish. (Furrow, point 290)

References

Escrivá's works

(All are available at www.escrivaworks.org.)

Abbreviation

CIPB 1981. Christ is Passing By. Scepter, Princeton.

Conversations 1981. Conversations with Msgr. Escrivá. Sinag-Tala Publishers, Inc., Manila.

1998. The Forge. Sinag-Tala Publishers, Manila.

FOG 1981. Friends of God. Scepter, Princeton.

1998. Furrow. Sinag-Tala Publishers, Manila.

PLW 1989. Passionately Loving the World. In Love With The Church. Scepter, New York, 1989.

1998. The Way. Sinag-Tala Publishers, Manila.

Other works

(Church documents are available at www.vatican.va.)

CL Christifidelis Laici. Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Vocation and the mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World. December 30, 1988. St. Paul Books and Media.

GS Gaudium et Spes. Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. Vatican Council II. December 7, 1965. St. Paul Books and Media.

LG Lumen Gentium. Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. Vatican Council II. November 21, 1964.

Rodríguez, Pedro, Fernando Oc-riz, and José Luis Illanes. 1994. Opus Dei in the Church. Scepter Publishers, Princeton.

Shaw, Russell. 1993. To Hunt, To Shoot, To Entertain: Clericalism and the Catholic Laity. Ignatius Press, San Francisco.

A secular spirit can also characterize the approach to sanctity for a secular priest, although this paper focuses on secularity as it pertains to the lay person. Of course, lay faithful and priests can also pursue sanctity by means of paths characterized by other spirits.

In fact, Escriva does use the phrase "sanctify the world," for instance in Conversations, points 60 and 61.

St. Josemaria, as he often does, puts this rich theological reality into a very concise and accessible form: "We must love the world and work and all human things. For the world is good. Adam's sin destroyed the divine balance of creation; but God the Father sent his only Son to re-establish peace, so that we, his children by adoption, might free creation from disorder and reconcile all things to God." (CIPB, point 112)

The Church itself is secular: in the world and for the world, but not of the world. Christifideles Laici (cf. CL 15 and LG 31) uses the phrase "secular character" regarding the laity vs. secular dimension regarding the whole Church's mission. Secularity is the defining characteristic of the lay vocation, though all vocations in the Church have a secular dimension since the Church is sent by Christ into the world to save it and all in it. (cf. Opus Dei in the Church, Section III)

This section benefits greatly from Illanes, "The Church in the world: The Secularity of Members of Opus Dei," Chapter III in (Rodriguez et al 1994).