

est Good, the highest Wisdom, and highest Peace."¹⁵ And since the cardinal virtues are nothing other than diverse and convergent aspects of the one love of God, the holy Bishop of Hippo concluded by stating that when we love the highest good with our whole heart, "love is preserved from corruption and impurity, which is proper to temperance; it makes us invincible against all our adversities, which is proper to fortitude; it leads us to renounce every other type of subjection, which is proper to justice; and, finally, it puts us always on guard

to discern the truth of things and not to allow ourselves to be deceived by lies and deception, which is proper to prudence."¹⁶

I think that this is a perfect description of the life and work of the founder and first chancellor of this Atheneum. Let us give thanks to God, from whom all good things come, for exemplary pastors like Don Álvaro del Portillo, who enlighten our path with their example and help us to follow that path and to reach heaven.

Articles and Interviews

Avvenire (September 21, 1997)

"Sanctity in ordinary life" is the title of the interview with the Prelate of Opus Dei published in the newspaper Avvenire on the occasion of the Eucharistic Congress celebrated in Bologna, Italy, during the final days of September.

1. *Could you briefly define the "charism" of Opus Dei?*

Right from the start, Blessed Josemaría saw Opus Dei as a profoundly secular reality: a divine invitation, directed to ordinary faithful, to seek sanctity *in* and *through* their daily occupations, without

changing their state in life. The context of their life is everyday existence. Baptism has given them a specific role in the economy of salvation, and the vocation to Opus Dei simply confirms this. The Prelature's configuration emphasizes the ecclesial nature proper to this pastoral phenomenon: a personal jurisdictional structure, essentially secular. Insofar as it is part of the common hierarchical organization of the Church, membership does not change in any way the conditions of life of its faithful, either from the civil or from the ecclesiastical point of view.

The message our Lord entrusted to Blessed Josemaría could be summed up as follows: to remind people that all Christians are called by

15. ST. AUGUSTINE, *Of the customs of the Church and of the Customs of the Manicheans*, 1, 15.

16. *Ibid.*, 1:25.

God to sanctity and apostolate. For the great majority of the baptized, the laity, this means that it is in the place where their daily life unfolds—in their family, at school, at work, in the position they hold in society—that they have to be Christ’s light, Christ’s love for others. They have to identify themselves with Christ and participate actively in his redemptive action.

This charism is based on a deep grasp of the mystery of the Incarnation. Jesus came to save what is human. “Sanctify your work, sanctify yourself in your work, sanctify others with your work.” This is how Opus Dei’s founder liked to sum up the Christian’s mission in the world.

2. How is Opus Dei participating in the National Eucharistic Congress?

The faithful of Opus Dei have been praying for the National Eucharistic Congress for some time now. They have been preparing for it, each in his or her own way, telling relatives, colleagues at work, friends and acquaintances about it with the aim of encouraging a deeper Eucharistic life. Following the teachings of Blessed Josemaría, they have been trying to broaden their own apostolate, encouraging the persons with whom they come in contact to rediscover the joy of encountering divine mercy in confession. In addition, those who are able to will attend the various meetings and prayer sessions in Bologna.

3. You are celebrating the closing Mass for the “Lay Organizations Workshop” at the National Eucharistic Congress. What do you think the function of these organizations should be in the Church, on the threshold of the third millennium?

We are now at the beginning of the second year of preparation for the great Jubilee, a year dedicated to the Holy Spirit. Therefore I will answer your question in this way: by docility to the impulses of the Holy Spirit. Or, which amounts to the same thing, by fidelity to the charism one has received. The variety of charisms is an eloquent confirmation of God’s untiring condescension toward mankind. Our Lord blesses the infinite variety of talents, dispositions, aptitudes; and he directs them to the service of the Redemption. What is more, he makes them a path of holiness and an instrument of apostolate.

In this sense, one could say that the Church advances through continuous renewal. I would even say, if you permit me to use the expression, that the Spirit has much greater imagination than we men, and is constantly bringing forth new saints. But we should add immediately that renewal means fidelity to Christ. The Church listens to the Spirit. And the guarantee of true fidelity, which is not uniformity, is to strengthen the bonds of unity in the Church.