

Helena SCOTT – Ethel TOLANSKY, *Alvaro del Portillo: The Power of Humility*, London, Catholic Truth Society, 2014, 64 pp. = Helena SCOTT – Ethel TOLANSKY, *Álvaro del Portillo: el poder de la humildad. Prelado del Opus Dei 1914-1994*, Madrid, Palabra, 2014, 92 pp.

*Alvaro del Portillo: The Power of Humility* by Helena Scott and Ethel Tolansky is a brief biography of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo and one of the first books published in English about his life. This short pamphlet is written in a concise and clear style that provides sketches of Alvaro del Portillo's life from his childhood through his death, documenting his service to God in Opus Dei and to the Church. Scott and Tolansky have mainly used content and information found in Javier Medina Bayo's *Un hombre fiel* (Madrid, Rialp, 2012) the most extensive and best documented biography of Alvaro del Portillo to date, which they have translated in summary format in an easy-to-read and engaging way. This small book (4" x 6") includes six full page key photos of Alvaro del Portillo's life, several in color.

The eight chapters the authors have chosen make the person of Alvaro del Portillo come alive and highlight the main events of his life emphasizing the many virtues lived by this fatherly priest of God. The first chapters document del Portillo's early life and family; and how he met the Founder, St. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer and joined Opus Dei almost immediately. He lived the virtues of fortitude and fidelity during the war period and emerged from it, a mere four years after joining Opus Dei, as St. Josemaría's loyal and faithful son, his 'Rock' who later became one of the first three priests of Opus Dei.

The middle chapters outline the extensive contributions that del Portillo made to the Church before, during and after Vatican Council II especially promoting the role of the laity. His friendly collaborative spirit and his prudent and tenacious work are evident in this serene and dedicated service.

"Prelate of Opus Dei" is the most extensive chapter in the booklet as it summarizes the 19 years Alvaro del Portillo served as the head of Opus Dei. His sense of responsibility and fidelity are evident as he preserves the legacy of St. Josemaría Escrivá by annotating all of his publications and submitting everything required to the Congregation of the Cause of the Saints to lead to his beatification in 1992 (and his canonization in 2002). Alvaro's initiative and apostolic zeal led him to start Opus Dei in many new countries and to begin new apostolic works in the countries in which Opus Dei members reside. His only goal was to faithfully strive to fulfill all the desires and plans of St. Josemaría; he was able to procure the erection of Opus Dei by St. John Paul II as a personal prelature, the definitive canonical form that the Founder sought for years. Scott and Tolansky give a concise explanation of a personal prelature in this chapter. "A prelature is an institution within the Church set up for a specific pastoral and apostolic purpose. It is 'personal' because, unlike a diocese, it is not defined by territory, but by personal commitment".

The final chapters tell of Del Portillo's loving concern for the sick and needy throughout his life and his dedication to promote apostolic works that would provide social, economic and educational formation for the poor. Alvaro del Portillo was a good and loving friend to many, from Popes to gardeners! He was dedicated to helping the Church in the way that the Church needed to be helped, as he had learned from St. Josemaría and this meant that he helped priests, religious and other Church groups whenever they asked him. In his final years, he experienced the culmination of his years of work in the joyous Beatification of the Founder of Opus Dei, Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer. A final caress of God's providence allowed Alvaro del Portillo to take a pilgrimage trip to the Holy Land which concluded with his death on the night that he returned to Rome.

Helena Scott and Ethel Tolansky wrote and published *Alvaro del Portillo: The Power of Humility* at a propitious time. It was printed in January, 2014, a few months before the beatification of Alvaro del Portillo in Madrid on September 27, 2014. One of the strengths of this book was that it was published in an inexpensive pamphlet format by The Catholic Truth Society and was available for purchase and dissemination to all the English speaking participants to the beatification of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo.

A critique of the book *Alvaro del Portillo: The Power of Humility* would be its lack of footnotes with sources for the many quotes included in the book, although the sources are mentioned in the bibliography. Another comment would be that this is a popular work for the general public reader. It contains good information about the life and work of Alvaro del Portillo, but it cannot be considered a complete or definitive source as it does not relate all the facts of certain events; these omissions are understandable because of the brief nature of this work.

Helena Scott currently works as a research assistant at the University of Westminster (London) and as a freelance translator and Ethel Tolansky is former Head of French at the University of Westminster. The authors have written several other biographical books for the Truth Society some of which are: *Sophie Scholl and the White Rose: Resistance to the Nazis*, 2012; *A Pope of Surprises: The First Five Years of Pope Benedict XVI's Papacy*, 2010; and *Josemaría Escrivá*, 2001.

Madonna M. Murphy

Héctor ZAGAL, *Carlos Llano*, México D.F., Nostra Ediciones, 2014, 108 pp.

Carlos Llano (1932-2010) nació y pasó los primeros años de su vida en México. Luego se trasladó a Madrid, donde pidió la admisión en el Opus Dei en 1949. Después de vivir dos años en Roma, formándose junto a san Josemaría, regresó a su país natal en 1952. Colaboró con don Pedro Casciaro y los demás miembros del Opus Dei que llegaron a México a partir de 1949, en la implantación y desarrollo de la Obra en el país, también ocupando, durante muchos años, cargos de gobierno en la institución.