



Toni (left) with some friends on a mountain-climbing trip.  
(August 1979)



## TONI ZWEIFEL

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The Prelature of Opus Dei in Switzerland.  
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## ► SANCTIFYING ALL HUMAN WORK

*"Work is one of the highest human values and the way in which men contribute to the progress of society. But even more, it is a way to holiness."*

St. Josemaría Escrivá, *Conversations with Josemaría Escrivá*, nr. 24.

For Toni Zweifel, his meeting with Opus Dei meant the discovery that one's daily work was an integral part of one's life of faith. Illumined and ennobled by faith, work is a path for encountering the Son of God who became man. Christian perfection cannot be separated from union with Christ in one's professional life. Separating faith and love from one's daily activities is opposed to the Christian vocation.

From the moment of this discovery, Toni put God ever more fully into the center of all his activity. Through his work he expressed his love for God and his eagerness to serve others.

### **Working with professional competence**

Toni put his whole heart into his daily tasks. Once he began something he carried it through to its goal, with tenacity and patience, whether it was easy or difficult, remarkable or commonplace. For a number of years he put a large part of his time and energy into the development of an international conference center. When after years of searching he found and purchased a suitable piece of property, the planned construction was blocked by local political factionalism and a massive press campaign. This was perhaps the greatest disappointment in his life. Nevertheless he carried it through to the end. He administered the property despite all the complications and eventually sold it, without a loss, for agricultural purposes. And he right away began to search for a new piece of property.

Toni knew that real service required not only action but also quality. Therefore he strove for the greatest possible professional competence. As an en-

gineer he had come up with a number of discoveries and his accomplishments opened up good prospects for an academic career. As Secretary of the Limmat Foundation he also acquired a high degree of competence in development projects and the administration of donated funds. His discovery of new solutions to the problems he encountered would lead him to become an authority in an area that was quite new to him.

### **With an upright intention**

Toni always fulfilled his tasks with complete honesty. This was evident not only in major projects like the one just mentioned, but also in the many small tasks that living alongside others occasioned each day. He was convinced that there he encountered God just as much as in professional work and that it was a marvelous way to serve the others. He strove to react with good humor when something turned out differently than expected, or when he had to change his plans.

Money, with which he was daily involved for the last 17 years of his life as Secretary of the Foundation, was for him just a tool, like the broom for a street sweeper. Favoritism and any kind of questionable arrangements were simply unthinkable to him. At one point a construction person offered him a piece of property in a prime location at a very good price, but with the condition that Toni give him the contract for renovating the property and also help circumvent the sales tax. Toni reacted at once by breaking off the negotiations.



### **Cooperation with superiors and subordinates**

Toni sanctified not only his personal work, but also his “collaborative work” with superiors, partners, and subordinates. The ETH-Professor who Toni worked for as an assistant provides the following testimony: “He carried out every project with great dedication and care to the very end. With his quiet, modest, and winning manner one always had full confidence in whatever he did or said. My collaboration with the deceased remains with me as a shining example of a human relationship.” The governing board of the Limmat Foundation could also count on an absolutely loyal secretary, who carried out their decisions with full dedication even when he at first had a different point of view.

An intense worker with strong principles and a drive for efficiency, Toni was not only demanding on himself but also on others, and he did not let any mistake go uncorrected. His strong reactions, even though never lacking in propriety, could at times rub people the wrong way. Toni saw clearly that this was an area he had to struggle in, and he fought to control his temperament. And he was successful in this effort, since his fellow workers all describe

him as a warm and courteous superior, who always took into account their views and ways of working.

Toni never made people wait for him. Punctuality seemed to be something he was born with, but in reality it was the result of his interior struggle.

Toni always did everything possible to pass on his experience to his fellow workers, also after he learned he had leukemia. He never tried to keep his professional expertise to himself and thereby make himself indispensable. When he was brought to the hospital for the last time a few weeks before his death, he had finished all pending matters. To his carefully trained successor he not only left everything in perfect order, but also passed on detailed notes of experience and the formal authorizations needed to continue his work.

In all these details we see reflected Toni’s struggle to attain sanctity in his daily occupations and particularly in the exercise of his profession.

**Toni in conversation with Mgr Álvaro del Portillo, the first Successor of St. Josemaría Escrivá, in 1981.**



## ► ABOUT THE PROCESS OF BEATIFICATION

*The Diocesan Process for the Servant of God Toni Zweifel was opened on February 22, 2001 in the presence of Bishop Amédée Grab of the Diocese of Chur. For this occasion, all the writings that he left behind, especially his correspondence, were collected, as well as information about his life and work from various archival sources. The bishop's representative felt that it was advisable to take testimonies from a number of witnesses who were of advanced age. This involved about 15 people from Zürich and Verona where Toni had spent his youth. Numerous testimonies of favors received through the intercession of Toni Zweifel have been received. On October 7, 2005 the Roman Congregation gave its Nihil Obstat for the Beatification and Canonization process.*

## ► FAVORS RECEIVED

### After my company was restructured

In the spring of 1998 I learned that our company, Swiss Federal Railroad, would be restructured as of January 1, 1999. This meant eliminating some 2,300 jobs, the breaking up of the company into divisions and the setting up of a central office in Bern to replace the three regional headquarters then existing, including the one in Lausanne where I was working.

I was given four days to decide whether I would accept a position in Bern, where part of my work was to be transferred. No alternative was offered. If I refused, I would be unemployed.

For various personal and family reasons, I was unable to accept the offer. At that time I had to take care of my 91-year-old father and would also have had to give up some non-professional activities.

I immediately began to pray about this. At first I had recourse to Mary and Joseph, but then, together

with my wife and daughter, we began to pray every day through the intercession of Toni Zweifel (something that we still do). As time went by we asked others to join us in our prayer, among them various nephews.

Since many of my colleagues were in the same situation, I joined a special network set up by the Swiss Federal Railroad for seeking internal and external jobs. My experience was similar to being fully unemployed with the important difference, however, that my salary would largely continue to be paid for the next two years.

... Thanks to the help of some colleagues and old friends in the personnel department, I was able to put in a two-month internship in Bern. I wanted to do this to show my good will and flexibility . . .

Back in Lausanne, in October 2000, I was offered a training course to become an "administrative officer."

My command of German was tested, as was my knowledge of the Swiss railway system. At the end of the course, in May 2001, I was advised to apply for a position in the accounting department. Although I had no experience in bookkeeping, I saw this as a chance to obtain a new position. I applied and was accepted.

I am very thankful to Toni for this important help.

**D.F., Lausanne**

### Computer system unblocks itself

I work as a computer technician for a company in Lebanon that markets a software program. One day I had to make an emergency trip to a customer where the computer system that we delivered had aborted and the workers were sitting at their desks unable to work. I went there without knowing what I should do, since the problem was new to me.

It turned out to be a serious problem. The whole system was crippled. I made three or four unsuccessful attempts to restore it, as my customer became more and more nervous. Then I remembered that Lukas, a person from Switzerland who lived with us for a while, had once told us that Toni Zweifel was very efficient at solving technical problems. So I prayed to Toni to help me. At exactly that moment, the system began to work perfectly. My customer asked me how I had done it, and since I could not really give him the exact reason, I just said: "I don't know myself." That obviously did not satisfy him. He asked me to investigate the matter thoroughly so that if the problem arose again they could solve it without any loss of time.

Back at the office, the engineer in charge said that in the 25 years that he had worked with this software he had never seen a problem solve itself. He said I must be hiding something from him. I could only assure him of my honesty. But one thing was

clear: we couldn't provide the customer with the explanation he was demanding.

Then I turned to Toni again: "Since you already solved the technical problem for me, please now tell me how I can solve this situation." And just then the customer called me and said that he had found the cause. It was a series of quite simple factors that together caused the computer failure. With this information we were able to correct the program error and prevent a future blockage.

**I.P. de A., Beirut**

### Disneyland ride repaired

I took my children to Disneyland. We were standing in line for one of the most popular rides. After we had been waiting for an hour, the ride broke down. We waited another hour for it to be repaired. Finally my children began to get restless, so I told them that if it wasn't repaired in another five minutes, we would leave. At that moment I remembered Toni and asked him to help. Exactly five minutes later, the ride began functioning again. We climbed in and had a great time. But as soon as we left, the ride shut down again.

**M.C. de R., Guadalajara (Mexico)**



## ► PRAYER

God our Father, you have entrusted the earth to mankind to build it up and so give you glory. Through your grace your servant Toni imbued his work with professional quality and a Christian spirit.

Help me also to carry out my work in a way that gives you glory; and grant that my example will lead many people to discover the dignity and divine meaning of their daily activity.

Deign to glorify your servant Toni and through his intercession grant me the favor I ask of You . . . Amen.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father.

*In conformity with the decrees of Pope Urban VIII, we declare that there is no intention of anticipating in any way the judgment of the Church, and that this prayer is not intended for public use.*

## ► TONI'S LIFE

Toni Zweifel was born on February 15, 1938 in Verona, Italy. His mother Antonia was Italian and his father, Giusto Zweifel, was a Swiss textile manufacturer. He was baptized on February 26.

He spent the first years of World War II in Switzerland with his mother and younger sister Anna Rosa. In 1944 he started school at San Giovanni Lupatota near Verona. In 1948 he received his First Holy Communion on May 2, and Confirmation on May 31. Between 1949 and 1957 he attended primary and secondary school in Verona. After graduating, he went to Zürich to study mechanical engineering at the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule (ETH) [Swiss Federal Institute of Technology].

Towards the end of his studies, through some fellow students, he came into contact with the newly opened Fluntern Student Residence, whose spiritual direction was entrusted to Opus Dei. He moved into the residence at the beginning of 1962. On March 19 of that year, he requested admission to Opus Dei. In June he finished his studies and immediately thereafter began his first job in private industry in Zürich.

In 1964 Toni became a member of the scientific team at the ETH Institute for Thermodynamics. Two years

later he was also made director of the student residence. As part of his work there he organized annual introductory courses in the two Zürich colleges for graduates of the public high schools. During a workshop in Rome in 1970 he met Saint Josemaría, the founder of Opus Dei.

In 1972 his professional career took a new direction, when he became the first head of the newly set up Limmatt Stiftung [Limmatt Foundation] in Zürich. In the following 17 years, until his death, this Foundation helped in the development of hundreds of educational and social service initiatives in more than 30 countries on five continents.

In 1985 both of his parents died, his father in May and his mother in August. In the following year, on February 19, Toni learned that he was suffering from leukemia, for which he underwent chemotherapy treatment. After a temporary return to health, he suffered a first relapse in February 1988 and a second in the following November. In June 1989 he had to enter the hospital once more and undergo more chemotherapy. Toni died on November 24, 1989, and was interred in the Fluntern Cemetery in Zürich.