

The philosopher continued, "The human person is a rational and free individual, created in the image and likeness of God; and God has left His imprint so to speak in the human creature, giving the creature a built-in capacity which is a longing for God—and a built-in capacity to love others for themselves and not for selfish reasons." Now for a number of years, Adam Smith and your friends (and my friends) have been treating the human person in organizations as a resource, a *resource*, and even sometimes as a less important resource than coal, petrol, energy and other similar things. Well, they never got rid of material energy but they could get rid of people when they were not useful to them.

All this is changing because, even though we lack that hundred years of research on what the human person is, the world is beginning to realize that the materialistic approach to business that you described, which discards religion, is the wrong one. As you were telling me the other day, your father in his business used to act as a Jew. Modern economic theory is beginning to recognize the importance of the human person. An understanding of the human person is needed in order to make the human person the center of economic activity and not simply a natural resource or simply the market, the abstract market in general, as in the past. This is what is really needed, and I believe that the contribution of St. Josemaria in this respect is very important, because for him, there is nothing more important, after God, than the human person.

CECILIA A. ROYALS

## LET THEM VIGOROUSLY CONTRIBUTE THEIR EFFORT:<sup>1</sup> OPUS DEI AND THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

### Introduction

The National Institute of Womanhood is a non-partisan, non-sectarian, civil-society organization that works to meet social challenges by promoting con-



Graeme Hunter, John Hartley, John Murphy, and Cecilia Royals at St. Michael's College, University of Toronto, January 10, 2003.

structive dialogue on issues pertaining to the development of the person, the family, and society through public opinion, policy analysis, and leadership development. It is incorporated in the State of Maryland, is governed by a constitution and a board of directors. It is a free and autonomous social entity.

Neither the Catholic Church nor Opus Dei directs the activities of NIW. Any suggestion of such a link would be a throw-back to a distorted understanding of the laity, when the laity were limited to participating in the apostolic activities of the hierarchy. The autonomy and freedom of NIW to function in the world as it sees fit, not linked to Opus Dei or the Church, are precisely what demonstrate a very important element of Opus Dei and the dynamism of the new evangelization.

<sup>1</sup> Second Vatican council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 36.

I have experienced Opus Dei from the inside. I have been a supernumerary member since 1982. However, I do not claim to represent Opus Dei or to speak for it. I have also experienced the Church from the inside. I am a cradle Catholic and have endeavored to be faithful all my life. However, I neither claim to represent the Church nor to speak for it. I speak for myself and mine and act for myself and mine. My decisions are mine to make and mine to follow through with and mine to be responsible for. I am a free and autonomous person. I am a lay person. As a lay person I strive to live my vocation faithfully. Sometimes that striving is covered up with a lot of ashes; the engine is barely running. Other times, the engine is bright and shiny and full of energy.

In *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Pope Paul VI explains the role of lay people in the new evangelization:

Lay people, whose particular vocation places them in the midst of the world and *in charge* of the most varied temporal tasks, must for this very reason exercise a very special form of evangelization...

Their own field of evangelizing activity is the vast and complicated world of politics, society and economics, but also the world of culture, of the sciences and the arts, of international life, of the mass media. It also includes other realities which are open to evangelization, such as human love, the family, the education of children and adolescents, professional work, suffering.<sup>2</sup>

The universal call to holiness and the consequent implications for the laity at the heart of the "new evangelization" resonate completely with the central teaching of Opus Dei. It is this resonance and the recognition of the dignity, autonomy, and freedom of the laity to vigorously contribute their efforts to the building of the kingdom that link in my person Opus Dei, the new evangelization, and The National Institute of Womanhood.

### New Evangelization

Let me now offer what I have gleaned from church documents about the laity with regard to the new evangelization. This new evangelization is not a new program, but a new era imbued with a special dynamism. Again in the words of Pope Paul VI, it is "a fresh forward impulse, capable of creating within a Church still more firmly rooted in the undying power and strength of Pentecost a new period of evangelization."<sup>3</sup> This new period remains faithful "both to a message whose servants we are and to the people to whom we must transmit it living and intact."<sup>4</sup> It is what it has always been from apostolic times, "the proclamation of Christ by word and the testimony of life."<sup>5</sup> Pope Paul was careful to warn against a partial or fragmentary understanding of this evangelization which may even distort or impoverish "all its richness, complexity and dynamism."<sup>6</sup>

lization which may even distort or impoverish "all its richness, complexity and dynamism."<sup>6</sup>

The special dynamism draws its energy from the exhortation, born out of the Second Vatican Council, especially in *Lumen Gentium*, *Gaudium et Spes*, and *Ad Gentes*, that *all* the faithful, through holiness of life, should imbue culture and human activity with the spirit of Christ. This exhortation underscores the awareness that *the laity have the principal role* in this transformation of culture and human activity: "Therefore, by their competence in secular training and by their activity, elevated from within by the grace of Christ, let them vigorously contribute their effort, so that created goods may be perfected by human labor, technical skill and civic culture for the benefit of all men according to the design of the Creator and the light of His Word."<sup>7</sup>

Pope John Paul II emphasized this point in his apostolic letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, saying that the new evangelization "opened up broad areas for the participation of the laity.... [And] is an expression of the strength which Christ has given to the entire People of God."<sup>8</sup>

### Opus Dei and the New Evangelization

The universal call to holiness and the consequent implications for the laity at the heart of the 'new evangelization' echo the central teaching of Opus Dei, that the laity should participate in its own way in the mission of Christ and his Church. In the words of Saint Josemaria: "The sole objective of Opus Dei has always been to see to it that there be men and women of all races and social conditions who endeavor to love and to serve God and the rest of mankind in and through their ordinary work, in the midst of the realities and interests of the world."<sup>9</sup>

The implication of this spiritual emancipation is that ordinary persons are no longer restricted by customs, traditions and distorted concepts of the laity. It is an extraordinary breakthrough for the average person to have these paths opened. These paths of heroic virtue and extraordinary professionalism in ordinary work, implied in the universal call to sanctity, explode the limits previously imposed on the laity. Henceforth, we are to become men and woman of integrity, capable of "serving [our] fellow citizens and contributing to the solutions of the great problems of mankind."<sup>10</sup>

### Autonomy and Freedom

Persons everywhere are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that they too are meant to reach for the pinnacles of human achievement, in and through their ordinary activities. Not only are we truly free, autonomous, and responsi-

<sup>6</sup> *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 17.

<sup>7</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, 36.

<sup>8</sup> John Paul II, Apostolic Letter. *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 21.

<sup>9</sup> *Conversations with Mgr. Escrivá de Balaguer*, 10.

<sup>10</sup> *Christ is Passing By*, 28.

<sup>2</sup> Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 70.

<sup>3</sup> *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 4.

<sup>5</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, New York, 1994, 905.

ble for our own actions, but we are also encouraged to take actions that are bold, broad, and strong.

St. Josemaria expressed it this way:

Personal freedom is essential to the Christian life. But do not forget, my children, that I always speak of a responsible freedom. Interpret, then, my words as what they are: a call to exercise your rights every day, and not merely in time of emergency. A call to fulfill honorably your commitments as citizens, in all fields — in politics and in financial affairs, in university life and in your job — accepting with courage all the consequences of your free decisions and the personal independence which corresponds to each one of you.<sup>12</sup>

The influence of St. Josemaria on my life has been radical. He has touched the core of my being and explained to me the purpose of my existence. He has taught me to love work as an offering to God, united to the sacrifice of the mass, for my sanctification and the sanctification of the whole world. He has taught me to desire to do it to the best of my capacity for the glory of God and in order for it to be an offering worthy of God. He has taught me to love ordinary work, to devote the time and study necessary to increase my effectiveness. Gradually, I have learned to extend and expand my work, not shrink it. To do more, better, faster.

His influence led me to extend and expand my work from the confines of my family to encompass the greater community. His exhortation to “*fearlessly... strive to play a part in the human developments and decisions on which the present and future of society depend*”<sup>13</sup> propelled me, along with a handful of women and men, to organize The National Institute of Womanhood. The propelling comes from Opus Dei. The wind in the sails is from St. Josemaria. In the words of St. Josemaria “all the activity of [Opus Dei] is directed fundamentally to one task: to provide the members with the spiritual assistance necessary for their life of piety, and an adequate spiritual, doctrinal, religious, and human formation. And then, off you go!”<sup>14</sup> Off we go to use our talents and initiative freely and responsibly for the service of God and our neighbor according to what we can see and can conjure up. Off we go as autonomous persons making use of our grit to exercise our special form of evangelization. Which is, in the words of Paul VI, “affecting and as it were upsetting, through the power of the Gospel, mankind’s criteria of judgment, determining values, points of interest, lines of thought, sources of inspiration and models of life.”<sup>15</sup>

The autonomy and freedom of NIW to affect lines of thought, to function in the world as it sees fit, not directed by Opus Dei or the Church, are precisely what demonstrate a very important element of Opus Dei and the dynamism

<sup>12</sup> *Passionately Loving the World*, 117.

<sup>13</sup> *Forge*, 715.

<sup>14</sup> *Conversations*, 19.

<sup>15</sup> *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 19.

of the new evangelization. That is: the element of trusting the laity to transform man’s culture—and allowing the laity to do so.

### Examples from The National Institute of Womanhood

NIW competes, like many other organizations, for a voice in the market place of ideas, where it vigorously contributes its efforts for the improvement of society. NIW is a pro-active think tank that has participated in key United Nations events such as The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, September, 1994; The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, September, 1995; and The Summit on the Rights of the Child in 2002. The Institute has testified before the United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee, addressed the United Nations Commission of the Status of Women, addressed international conferences in North and South America and Europe, and hosted an international Conference in Beijing. Currently, NIW hosts a web site,<sup>16</sup> continues to monitor the United Nations on social issues, sponsors roundtables and conferences, and speaks to the media on issues pertinent to its mission.

NIW held an international conference on the crisis in the understanding of womanhood in Huairou, China. The event was extremely well attended, standing room only. Over 60 countries were represented among the participants. A contingent from the Lesbian Caucus came prepared to dispute with the panelists. The tension was apparent, but as the representatives of NIW expressed NIW’s understanding of woman the tension noticeably left the room. A member of the Lesbian Caucus remarked during the question and answer period, “I have to admit that I am surprised to find that you are pro-woman.” Later the leader of the Lesbian Caucus, after questioning, one-on-one, an NIW panelist, was moved and asked, “Is there a place in your organization for a woman like me?”

Affecting or, perhaps, upsetting, through the power of sound ideas the lines of thought of these women and other men and women around the globe is the work of NIW. It is up front and spelled out in our mission. We work hard to articulate what is true and enduring about woman.

Following the 4<sup>th</sup> World Conference of Women in Beijing, the Chinese government sent a delegation of over twenty-five women to the US to learn about non-governmental organizations. NIW was selected along with several other organizations. The women who attended NIW’s workshop had many years of experience in the Communist Party and were leaders of major labor organizations. Our information packet included the following introductory paragraph:

The National Institute of Womanhood calls on women of vision to take the cultural domain, women of character who can mold from our heritage the cornerstones of a new culture that will enrich and ennoble all its people. The time has come to define anew our cultural ethos, in order to secure a society that

<sup>16</sup> [www.uniw.org](http://www.uniw.org)

honors its women, and to build a civilization in which the human person can flourish.

Via a simultaneous translator we shared with them our vision of woman and answered many of their questions. And then something unusual happened. They erupted into a lively discussion amongst themselves in Chinese. The translator eagerly explained to us that the women were admitting to each other that NIW's concept of woman was what each had believed about woman; but each had been under the impression she was the only one who thought that way. The translator explained that these women, who were communist philosophers, were, for the first time, having a conversation among themselves about this subject.

In 1994 NIW was the only organization to testify before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee against the ratification of a treaty that NIW considers to be against women and against mothers. Subsequent to that testimony many other US organizations have come out openly and testified against the treaty.

We publish a newsletter that is sent to every state in the nation and reaches over 1800 leaders across the US. It not only reaches local organizations, but also ministers of many denominations, college professors, youth leaders, and heads of families.

### Conclusion

I have shown in general terms that the approach of Opus Dei to the new evangelization is consonant with the recent exhortations of the Church to the laity. In particular, I have explained my contribution to the new evangelization, as a lay, supernumerary woman, through my work with The National Institute of Womanhood.

JOHN K. MURPHY

## OPUS DEI AND THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

### Introduction

The founder of *Opus Dei*, Saint Josemaria Escriva, was a modern apostle who was moved by God's grace and brought to the world a message of great novelty for its time: in his own words "as old as the Gospel and, like the Gospel, new." It is a message that reminds us that we are called to be "not just *alter Christus*, but *ipse Christus*", Christ himself, in our families, in our professional work and in the ordinary circumstances of our lives.

This message was indeed a foreshadowing of things to come as a very concerned Pope John XXIII convoked the Second Vatican Council in an effort to bring the Church to express her teachings in contemporary language because of what he perceived to be a crisis in society. Blessed Pope John XXIII felt that society was evolving in such a way as to exclude God and that every effort had to be made to render the Good News more readily understood and ensure that society was penetrated with "the vivifying and perennial energies of the Gospel."<sup>1</sup> The Council Fathers determined that the most effective way for this to happen would be to mobilize the laity in the task of evangelization.<sup>2</sup> As a result, a renewed theology of mission and evangelization emerged from the Council whereby all Christ's faithful not only have the obligation to spread "the divine message of salvation," they have the right to do so.<sup>3</sup>

As the divide between faith and culture has grown during the intervening years, especially in the West, Pope John Paul II has repeatedly called the faithful to embrace a pastoral vision that he calls the "new evangelization." In his post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in America*,<sup>4</sup> the Holy Father outlined many elements for thought and action on the part of all believers. He drew special attention to the challenge of evangelizing in urban centres, the cities. He says "just as she was able to evangelize rural culture for centuries, the Church is called in the same way today to undertake a methodical and far-reaching urban evangelization."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Humanae Salutis*, 3

<sup>2</sup>cf. Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium* no. 33, *Apostolicam acuositatem* no. 25

<sup>3</sup>cf. Code of Canon Law, can. 211

<sup>4</sup>*The Church in America*, Jan. 22, 1999 (Hereinafter *EA*)

<sup>5</sup>*EA*, 21