

Elmar J. KREMER – Teresa A. TOMORY (eds.), *Passionately Loving the World: The Message of Saint Josemaria Escriva*, New York, Ottawa & Toronto, Legas, 2004, 146 pp.

Framed by St. Josemaría's homily "Passionately Loving the World," and the late Pope John Paul II's homily at the St. Josemaría's canonization mass, this collection of articles negotiates the ways in which the saint's message not only has been received, but how it has been made a living reality in the world. Based on papers delivered at different conferences in Canada—at St. Michael's College in Toronto, in Vancouver, Ottawa, and Montreal—the volume presents a diversity of perspectives on how some of the basic tenets of Opus Dei are realized. The collection strives to be comprehensive by presenting a historical introduction to St. Josemaría and the work of Opus Dei, as well as locating the Prelature within Spanish history, and that of the Catholic Church. The combination of personal and historical perspectives provides a coherent understanding of the place of the Work in the evolving religious, cultural, and social context of the twentieth century.

The book's structure reflects not only the breadth but also the depth of different people's understanding of St. Josemaría's teaching: articles explore how persons who live the spirit of Opus Dei make this the driving force in family, business, education, social service, and in the defence of women's rights. One cannot but be impressed with the way in which, for example, Cecilia Royals envisions the purpose of the National Institute for Womanhood and the success that this organization has had, or Sharon Hefferan's perspective on the work done with inner-city children at the Metro Achievement Center in Chicago as works of mercy rather than just as a (albeit significant) gesture towards social justice. A similar piece by Anthony Yeow describes an academic enrichment program for boys in Toronto. These articles, among others, illustrate how profoundly St. Josemaría's teachings have inspired people to perceive deep theological aspects in daily life, and change society from within. The personal testimonies from people from many countries supports the claim that this message is not just a dream, but a daily reality all over the world.

Interestingly, the book reproduces some of the conversations that arose from the presentation of these papers. The Respondents invite the presenters to rethink the discourse they use and deepen into the faith they try to live in the workplace. The honest spirit behind the book outshines any perceived shortcomings, and its message is clear. Moreover, as the first collection of essays published in Canada on St. Josemaría, the book illustrates, by its very existence, the extent and effectiveness of the work of members of Opus Dei in North America. It also revisits the history of the work of Opus Dei in many English-speaking countries, a vital gesture that celebrates in significant ways the legacy of St. Josemaría on the occasion of his canonization.

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