

Publication of the book

Itinerarios de Vida Cristiana

The publishing house Planeta has issued *Itinerarios de Vida Cristiana* ["Pathways of Christian Life"], a book by Bishop Javier Echevarría that deals with questions relevant to today's Christian. Must one confess one's sins to a priest? Why bother to pray? Should I have another child or rather maintain my standard of living? Is genetic cloning ever moral? Need I obey the Pope in everything? The author of *Itinerarios de Vida Cristiana* avoids neither these questions nor others raised by many ordinary faithful eager for answers in their Christian life.

The book came out in late February in the Spanish market with a press run of 20,000 copies. It forms part of a collection that includes *Praying*, an anthology of texts of Pope John XXIII, and *Gift of Peace*, by Cardinal Joseph Bernardin. To meet demand for *Pathways*, Planeta did two additional printings of the book, in part to address the Latin American market. In its genre, it is one of Planeta's best-sellers for 2001.

"Children of God. That's what we are, as the Gospel makes very clear, although unfortunately not a few Christians are unaware of it." These are the opening words of Bishop Javier Echevarría's book. Its nineteen chapters are divided into three parts: "Sources of Christian life"; "The path to an encounter with God"; and "At Christ's side in history."

"No human creature throughout the length of history has journeyed alone," writes Opus Dei's prelate, "because God is always found alongside his children," even when the going becomes more painful or trying.

The first section of the book deals with God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Church. The second section, "The path to an encounter with God," opens with a chapter on conversion, understood as "the need to get rid of whatever is holding us back, of sin in a word, in order to be clothed in the new commandment of love." From there Bishop Echevarría develops reflections on other elements a Christian may find on his journey: pardon, prayer, the Eucharist, parenthood, suffering, death....

"Contemplating the Cross, we know ourselves accompanied on our journey through life. God is not, nor can he ever be, indifferent to our suffering. Rather, he is a God who has assumed our suffering in Christ and made it his own," one reads in the chapter on suffering. Thus suffering "is no longer seen as punishment, but as a pathway to salvation and deification."

The last section, "At Christ's side in history," offers reflections on time, charity, sanctifying work, generosity, vocation and joy.