

alone: we count on the help of so many people who pray for the Prelature's apostolates throughout the whole world, and also of numerous cloistered religious who without being part of *Opus Dei*—which is characterized by secularity—offer us this marvelous help. Therefore I now dare to ask you and all who read these words of mine to remember to pray for the faithful of the Work and for the fruit of each one's apostolic efforts.

8. *Who can be a member of Opus Dei?*

There is room for everyone in *Opus Dei*: priests and laity, men and women; the married, single, and widows; healthy and sick; poor people and the rich; all those who, sensing the divine call to seek holiness amid earthly realities, are determined to fulfill God's will. We love the religious with our whole heart, but we don't draw them away from their path.

9. *The diocese of Bydgoszcz is one of the newest in Poland. We are happy that Opus Dei is blossoming here slowly from the divine seed. How does your Excellency see the future of this community in our country and what challenges does it face in Poland and in the world?*

A sign of our Founder's great faith was to ask many of the first faithful of the Work, if they freely wanted to, to go to work in various countries of the world, in order to begin—with their professional work and through that work—spreading the spirit of *Opus Dei* in

those places. I say a sign of his faith, in the first place, because he felt sure that the fruit would come, but also because he sent those people without any financial means—since he didn't have any. He could only offer them his blessing and an image of our Lady. I tell you this because the apostolate of *Opus Dei* has always begun small and with few resources. Thanks be to God in this land of Poland the apostolic work is spreading. I ask God, through the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God John Paul II, who so strongly encouraged Don Álvaro del Portillo to begin working for souls in this country, that Poland may continue giving witness to its faith, also in the middle of the world. I am convinced that with the passage of time, many Polish men and women will also be those who begin the work of *Opus Dei* in other countries, just as people from other places have done recently in Indonesia, Romania, and Korea.

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Interview granted to the Alumni Review of the Montevideo Business School (Instituto de Estudios Empresariales de Montevideo—IEEM)

Why did Opus Dei want to start a business school? And specifically, why

in Uruguay?

The aim of the Prelature of Opus Dei is to assist the evangelizing mission of the Catholic Church, fostering among Christians of all walks of life behavior consistent with their faith, by sanctifying their work and their ordinary life.

Naturally, the Prelature endeavors to give formation to its faithful—and also to others who desire it—so that each, with freedom and personal responsibility, can contribute to the development of the Church and society. A member of Opus Dei has to make an effort to put his or her faith into practice and to bring forward, together with colleagues and friends, projects aimed at resolving the material and spiritual needs of their fellow citizens.

The IEEM initiative comes from the interest of some faithful of Opus Dei, Cooperators and friends, who saw a business school in Uruguay as a way to help foster upright behavior and professionalism in those who run businesses, and in the professional world in general.

I have a vivid memory of St. Josemaría Escrivá's supernatural and human eagerness when urging forward initiatives such as this one, because he was very aware of the good that a School of Business Management, inspired by the spirit of the Gospel, could produce in society. He foresaw the development of an institution of great professional prestige, dedicated to the

formation of managers and directors, who would put in first place service to others and the effort to imbue their work with a fully Christian and therefore truly human spirit.

Why in Uruguay? This initiative also comes from the desire of the faithful of Opus Dei in this country, and those who participate to its apostolates, to bring Christ's message into daily activities and to serve all the people of Uruguay. Moreover, and for the same reasons, other social initiatives have also begun in Uruguay such as the Center for the Support of Integral Development (CADI [*Centro de Apoyo al Desarrollo Integral*]), the Los Pinos Educational Center (both located in Montevideo's Casavalle district), and the Los Nogales and Las Camelias family farm schools, etc.

What do you see as the "space" for the Christian faith in the functions of management?

The Christian faith does not occupy "space;" it shouldn't be confused with a book that contains a set of principles and truths, located next to others on a bookshelf. The faith provides a deeper knowledge of the world and of all human activities. With the radiance of the faith, the actions of a Christian take on a new dimension and unsuspected depths. The faith encourages a person to discover in all of one's activities the guiding hand of God, who wants to make us sharers in his divine work (see St. Josemaría, *Christ Is Passing By*, 45).

Being consistent with the faith in management doesn't mean adding a new department of "Christian faith," as though it was a matter of strategic or leadership skills added to various others. It saddened St. Josemaría to see that "many Christians are no longer convinced that the fullness of life that God rightly expects from his children means that they have to have a careful concern for the quality of their everyday work, because it is this work, even in its most minor aspects, which they have to sanctify . . . The work of each one of us, the activities that take up our time and energy, must be an offering worthy of our Creator. It must be *operatio Dei*, a work of God that is done for God: in short, a task that is complete and faultless" (*Friends of God*, 55). Those who are involved in management roles will not have the unity of life their faith requires if they make the fulfillment of their duties towards God an exclusively "personal" matter (even if they are generous in giving material assistance to apostolic initiatives), and fail to imbue their family, professional and social duties with the spirit of the Gospel.

As St. Josemaría said, the great daring of the Christian faith is to proclaim the value and dignity of human nature, and to insist that, through grace, we have been created to attain the dignity of God's children. This same faith leads those involved in business not only to respect everyone (never manipulating them or trying to use them for selfish purposes), but also to love and respect the truth of each person, be-

ginning with those closest to us, and to show our affection with specific acts of service. I recall that, in a dialogue with directors of a school of business management, one of those present asked St. Josemaría what the primary virtue of a businessman should be. His answer was centered on charity, "because justice alone isn't enough." The Founder of Opus Dei said that "the best way of living charity lies in generously outstripping the demands made on us by justice . . . Justice means giving to each his due. I would however go further and say that this is not enough. However much a particular person is due, we must be ready to give him more, because each single soul is a masterpiece of God's making" (*Ibid.*, 83).

A business manager, animated by Christian faith, will know how to seek justice and foster equitable labor relations. He will seek, in carrying out his work, the true good of people and not just perishable material goods. The social doctrine of the Church tells us that economic activity should be aimed not merely at multiplying the goods produced, seeking only to increase profit or power; rather it should be ordained before all else to the service of persons, to the whole person and the entire human community (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2426).

The Christian faith, therefore, in providing a rich and rounded vision of the human being, not only is not foreign to business management, but it provides it with a truly humanizing perspective, attentive

to the service of others, and opening new horizons.

You have visited Uruguay twice in the past; do you think that in a country where laicism has a strong influence, the principles of the social doctrine of the Church can take deep root?

Uruguay was born Catholic and its society has a clear Christian imprint. Certainly laicism has had a strong influence here, as in other places. Nevertheless, even among those without the gift of the faith, one finds ideals with Christian roots that are compatible with the principles of the Church's social doctrine. We should never forget that these principles are an expression of the integral truth about man known by both reason and faith, and that, as has often been shown, they are a point of contact with persons who lack faith. I am referring, for example, to the fundamental equality among all human beings and the rejection of unjust discrimination; to the principle of solidarity, by which each diligently seeks the common good, that is, the good of each and every person, so that we are all truly responsible for everyone (see *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 193); and, especially, that we care for the poorest and most underprivileged in society (see John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, December 30, 1987, 42). This also includes trust in the freedom and responsibility of each person, reflected in the principles of participation and subsidiarity.

Therefore, Christians who act in accord with the principles of the

Church's social doctrine attract others, because their behavior answers to ideals that arise in the hearts of all men and women of good will. Above all, we Christians attract others because of our model, our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the light of the world (*Jn* 8:12), and who came to bring redemption from sin, to restore mankind to friendship with God, and to open the gates to eternal life.

As I said at the beginning, Uruguay was born Catholic, and has to continue being Catholic right to the end of time. Whether the principles of the Church's social doctrine take root depends on Christians striving to know and put into practice the demands of the faith in their personal and social activities.

What Christian grounds can you give for optimism to a world seeking to overcome economic crises and the suffering of so many thousands of people?

A Christian only has motives for optimism in any situation. Perhaps at times we let ourselves be led too much by a simply human outlook and we forget that God has taken on our human condition and become poor for us; that he wanted to suffer an agonizing death out of love for us, to rescue us from the bonds of sin, the only true evil, and thus gain for us eternal happiness. Then our vision is limited to the cross (with a small letter), to the sufferings we face, without remembering that the Cross (with a capital letter) brought salvation to the

world, and that afterwards comes the Resurrection.

Crises are opportunities for Christians to bring light and hope to others. Our faith leads us to be optimistic, and we should transmit that vision to those around us. Crises are overcome by prayer and by work. Christians should be an example for others by their upright action as citizens. Good example helps to overcome selfishness and utilitarianism, and replaces it with reciprocity and self-giving. It is true that the logic of the market is based on the interchange of goods. But “economic activity,” as Benedict XVI recalled in his encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, “cannot solve all social problems through the simple application of commercial logic” (*Caritas in Veritate*, June 29, 2009, 36). The actions of the business manager, as a disciple of Christ, have to be imbued with charity, which will lead him or her not to “prescind from gratuitousness, which fosters and disseminates solidarity and responsibility for justice and the common good among the different economic players” (Ibid., 38).

I know that in the IEEM they are trying to give Uruguayans a

good foundation in business methods, while also fostering a concern to resolve the needs of the community. To assist development and to combat poverty and corruption, a good moral formation is needed, which includes knowing the social doctrine of the Church, as well as a solid education in business methods. It also requires a constant effort to generate jobs and investment, to administer assets with honesty and transparency, to remunerate people with justice and generosity, and to work with the greatest perfection possible.

I recall how, when the first faithful of Opus Dei came to these beloved lands, they encountered many difficulties; their first living conditions were very poor, but they overcame the difficulties with faith in God and with work. The fruit of those first years is now clearly visible in the great variety of apostolic initiatives aimed at the integral development of Uruguayans, also thanks to the help and interest of many business people who have made generous commitments to these initiatives of Christian service to society.