

# Addresses and interviews

Loreto

March 1, 2008

*At the inauguration of the Walkway of St. Josemaría. Before beginning the Stations of the Cross*

I would like to thank with all my heart the ecclesiastical and civil officials who promoted this initiative. Permit me to say that "it was something that ought to have been done," because St. Josemaría felt himself to be fully Italian. He loved Italy, and I mean no offense here, even more than Italians do, and this city of Loreto always had a special place in his heart. The reasons are obvious: this is where the Holy House of Nazareth is located, where the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph lived for so many years. He came here frequently to abandon all his concerns in the heart of the Mother of God and our Mother, in the most varied circumstances.

In reliving the Way of the Cross along this walkway that will now be called San Josemaría, I can't help recalling that this saint was chosen by God to remind people of all walks of life that "the divine pathways of the earth have been opened up." Every honest human situation, every type of work, every profession, every ordinary state in life, can be turned into a "pathway of sanctity," a pathway to heaven, a place for meeting God and serving one's brothers and sisters. St. Josemaría liked the words way (he made it the title of one of his first books) and street (he often said that

Christians have to be saints *nell bel mezzo della strada*, in the middle of the street). He also liked to contemplate Christ who is passing by along the pathways of the world, doing good.

On this pathway in Loreto one can also contemplate the Stations of the Cross. How often he told us that if we wanted to be consistent Christians, and therefore also apostles, we had to find the cross on our path! How many people were taught to love and embrace the holy Cross of Christ as the only path to the Resurrection, to Pentecost and the glory of heaven! He personally lived and encouraged so many people to love the devotion of the Way of the Cross as a means to unite themselves to Christ's passion and death, and therefore to identify themselves with him. I remember reciting with him and Msgr.

Ivario del Portillo, his first successor as head of Opus Dei, the texts of the Stations of the Cross. And I can still vividly picture his exemplary devotion. He carried with him, written in his notebook, the fourteen Stations of the Cross so that he could often meditate on them, especially during the days of Lent.

He encouraged us to store in our memory, as in a film we can watch whenever we want, the moments during which the redemption of humanity was accomplished, so that we could always put ourselves into those scenes as one more person there, to foster repentance for our faults, to be close to Jesus, to love him, to listen to God's call to be co-redeemers with Christ together with Mary. I recall how one

day he showed us, with great devotion, a relic of the Holy Cross, and he spoke movingly of our Lord's passion and death. He told us: "We love the Cross; we should love it sincerely, because where the Cross is Christ is present, with his Love, with his presence that embraces all realities."

In the prologue to his book on the Holy Rosary he wrote: "The beginning of the way, at the end of which you will find yourself completely carried away with love for Jesus, is a trusting love for Mary." In the middle of the Way of the Cross, tradition has always found the presence of Mary; and at its end, beneath the Cross, *stabat Mater*, there stood the Mother of Jesus, the new Eve, with a strength as great as her sorrow, to engender us in the faith and the Christian life. At the start, along the way and at the end of our life, Mary never abandons us. Therefore I am especially happy that this Way of the Cross leads to the shrine of the Holy House.

It makes me happy to think that, in the joy of heaven, today's event will also make St. Josemaría happy, on seeing that his devotion to the Cross, his love for Mary Most Holy, and his words filled with faith in Christ who suffered for our salvation, will help many pilgrims to rise up towards the altar of God: the God who, in the Holy Mass, fills with joy the perennial youth of the Christian soul. This is the petition and the prayer that, united to St. Josemaría, we direct today to the Mother of God, praying in a special way for all of the people of Loreto.

## Rome March 10, 2008

*"The canonical configuration of Opus Dei as foreseen by Saint Josemaría," on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Opus Dei Prelature*

To describe the juridical structure foreseen by Saint Josemaría for Opus Dei, I must first set out the defining characteristics of what he saw (this is the verb he normally used when referring to it)<sup>1</sup> on October 2, 1928, the date on which the panorama of the Work the Lord wanted of him opened up before his eyes. With this clearly in mind I will follow two threads which we find constantly intertwined throughout the years leading up to the holy death of the Founder. On the one hand, there are the different organizational forms which, without betraying the substance of Opus Dei, and though only of a provisional nature, Saint Josemaría had to accept in order to allow the Work to receive public recognition in the Church, within the limits of the possibilities offered by the law then in force, and to enable him to tackle the organizational needs arising out of the interdiocesan, and later international, scope of the Work; while on the other hand—this is the "intertwining" I was talking about—I will go on to mention the numerous specific points which Saint Josemaría was careful to clarify in relation to the configurations he was forced to accept out of necessity, but always in anticipation of a definitive juridical

1. Sometimes there appear expressions such as receiving a light or illumination, etc.