

always offering his work to our Lord. When he was consecrated bishop, he chose for his coat of arms the motto: *Regnare Christum volumus!* We want Christ to reign! It is a summary of his path: he worked a lot and very well, always for the glory of God. It is thus that the faithful of the Prelature, with the human and supernatural quality of their activities in the world, contribute to the Church's mission: sanctifying the world through their professional work, raising it up to God, saving souls.

In this task the saints are our guide. As St. Josemaría was, and continues to be, so also was, and continues to be, Don Álvaro, his most faithful son. Without trying to anticipate the Church's judgment, we have and foster the conviction that he is in heaven, and we entrust ourselves with all our heart to his intercession.

The Church is built up in the Eucharist and thanks to the Eucharist. Opus Dei, "a tiny part of the Church," as St. Josemaría used to say, is included in this dynamic of grace. We have mentioned the sanctification of work, but it is God's grace, in first place, and therefore in a special way the Eucharist, that furthers its growth. Here also Don Álvaro, following our Founder's example, taught us to live as persons in love, making the Eucharist "the center and root of our interior life."

May Don Álvaro, with his unforgettable smile, his unshakable interior peace, his firmness in doing the good, and his deep humility, help us

to make Christ's life shine forth in the world through an unwavering apostolate that brings souls the joy of finding Christ. Remember his teaching and example: make the truth lovable, he always recommended to us.

Mary, present when Christ was raised up on the Cross, will be at our side, if we truly commit ourselves—with our limitations—to serve Christ according to the spirit left to us by our Founder, and so faithfully incarnated by Don Álvaro.

Vatican City October 14, 2008

*Intervention in the Assembly
of the Synod of Bishops,
L'Osservatore Romano*

In relation to the reflections in the *Instrumentum laboris* (nos. 24 and 41) on the Word of God in the life of believers, I think it is important to consider the lives of the saints. In them, the encounter with the Word of God through reading Sacred Scripture was not only an intellectual light, but radically changed their lives. How can we fail to recall that a passage from the letter to the Romans (13:13-14) played a decisive role in the conversion of St. Augustine, as he himself tells us in the famous episode of the "*tolle, lege*" (cf. St. Augustine, *Confessions*, 8, 12, 29-30)? I think that we, as shepherds, are called every day to put into practice the Bible and in particular the Gospel. We ourselves, and also our

priests and the laity, need to foster a deep hunger to know Jesus Christ, living each of the Gospel scenes as though we were another person present there.

We see this reality in many of those who listened to Jesus. In the Eucharistic discourse at Capernaum, for example, the intellectual content of Jesus' words presents a challenge to the listeners' lives. While many were scandalized and separated themselves from Christ, Peter was moved to profess: You have the words of eternal life (*Jn* 6:68). In an analogous way, the fact that the Word of God is directed not only to the intellect but also to the heart, is clear in the episode at Emmaus: Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures? (*Lk* 24:32).

The Bible asks for a response on the part of the believer: the response of prayer, as the Conciliar Constitution *Dei Verbum* (no. 25) reminds us. Anyone who listens to the Word of God in an attitude of prayer (both in common, which reaches its highest expression in the liturgical celebration, as well as personally, in the intimacy of one's heart) not only acquires an intellectual knowledge of the great events and persons in salvation history. He or she also strives to assimilate these teachings and events in order to apply them to his or her personal life, and to be ready to transmit them to others. We who are shepherds should frequently recommend in the sacrament of Confession that the faithful read the

Gospels, teaching them to enter into the narrative and inviting the penitents to offer this same advice to their friends, colleagues and family members.

It is not enough to meditate on certain ideas or episodes that arouse our admiration for the truth, goodness or beauty that they reflect. All of us Christians need to strive, as did the saints, to bring these texts into our daily life, in order to transform it. Naturally this is true of the whole Bible, but especially of the New Testament, because it spurs us to act and to change our life.

Man, unlike other living beings, needs to know who he is in order to be able to be so fully. In other words, he has to find the meaning of his life, which illumines the multiple aspects of his activity. For this reason he is a being who listens. Men and women today are ever more aware of the need to listen to words of eternal life, that is to say, to the Word of God, which alone can give true meaning to our life. And they have to be not only hearers of the Word, but also to contemplate it and put it into practice.

I also think it's important to put care into doing the readings at Mass very well, as the reading of something that is truly alive, without converting it into a kind of theatrical performance. The priest, the deacon, the lector have to "put themselves" into the text with the certitude that God is speaking to them and to the entire community.