

work. He was sure that many conversions would take place, people returning to the practice of the faith, all types of vocations... And indeed the history of that Cause can be summed up as an uninterrupted series of grace-filled events, such as those just mentioned. This is the principal reason why the Church elevates to the altars so many of her exemplary children: for the good of souls.

I also trust that the Cause of canonization of Bishop Álvaro del Portillo will bring many tangible benefits to Christians. I am sure that through his life many people will discover the fatherly face of God, smiling on them, encouraging them, forgiving them.

At the end of his address at the opening ceremony for the diocesan part of the investigation to be carried out by the Vicariate of Rome's Tribunal, Cardinal Ruini invoked the protection of Saint Josemaría for the Tribunal's work. With all my heart I also entrust the work of this Tribunal to the intercession of the one of whom Bishop del Portillo was the most faithful son.

Pescia May 13, 2004

Message for the inauguration of the chapel dedicated to St. Josemaría in Pescia, Italy

In the first place I want to express my deep gratitude and an affectionate and fraternal greeting to Bishop Gio-

vanni De Vivo of Pescia, to your pastor Father Alessandro Pasquinelli, to the civil authorities, to the faithful of the parish of Our Lady of the Martyrs, and to all who have wanted to be present at this ceremony. I express my regrets that I have not been able to take part except with my heart.

It is a source of great happiness for me to see the ever more widespread devotion to Saint Josemaría in Italy and throughout the world. My joy is even more intense when I see devotion to this saint, at whose side I had the undeserved privilege of working for twenty-five years, so deeply rooted in the land of Tuscany. Saint Josemaría truly loved Tuscany and prayed a lot for this region, not only during the brief periods that he spent here, or the many trips that provided him with the opportunity to travel through its provinces, but also because, knowing the deep Christian roots of this land, he desired—or better, he desires—that this land be an auspicious setting for the spread of the message of sanctity that God inspired in him on October 2, 1928—a message directed to all men and women of good will. The fruit of his prayer, and above all of divine grace, were evident in the thousands of Tuscans who on October 6, 2002 took part in the canonization of the Founder of Opus Dei, and before this, in the numerous commemorative gatherings on the centennial of his birth. All this bears witness to a sincere veneration for the “saint of the ordinary,” as John Paul II described him in his audience in St. Peter's Square.

In particular, the living presence of devotion to Saint Josemaría in the

parish of Our Lady of the Martyrs in Marginone de Altopascio, with this dedication of a chapel enriched with a beautiful statue by the sculptor Barsanti, is a symbol of how the message of holiness that he spread by means of the Prelature of Opus Dei is attracting men and women of all places and walks of life, awakening in them the desire to be consistent with the demands of their Christian life, striving to give witness to Christ and to serve the Church, of which the Prelature is a small portion. It gives me special pleasure that the parish of Marginone is dedicated to our Lady. Saint

Josemaría told us never to forget that Mary is, at the same time, Mother of God and our Mother, the Mother of each one of us. He invited us to love her tenderly. He often said that Mary is the easiest and quickest path to reach Christ. And he wrote: "To Jesus we always go, and to him we always return, through Mary" (*The Way*, no. 495).

I unite myself spiritually to your intentions in this Eucharistic celebration, and especially to your prayers for peace, to which the Holy Father has called the world so insistently in recent times.

Articles and Interviews

Miami April 4-11, 2004

*Commentaries on Holy Week
broadcast by the EWTN radio
network*

PALM SUNDAY
APRIL 4, 2004

Holy Week is beginning, and we recall Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. St. Luke tells us: "As they approached Bethpage and Bethany, near the hill named after the Olive Trees, he sent two of his disciples telling them: 'Go to the village opposite you. As you enter, you will find a young donkey on which no one has ridden yet. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you why you are untying it, say to them: the Lord needs it.' They went and found everything as the Lord had told them."

What a humble animal our Lord chose to ride upon! Perhaps we, in our conceit, would have chosen a spirited stallion. But Jesus does not let himself be guided by purely human reasoning, but by divine criteria. "This happened," St. Matthew notes, "so that the words of the prophet might be fulfilled: 'Tell the daughter of Zion, behold your king is coming to you, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'"

Jesus, who is God, is happy with a young donkey for a throne. We, who are nothing, are so often vain and proud, seeking to stand out, to attract attention. We want others to admire and praise us. St. Josemaría Escrivá, canonized by John Paul II two years ago, made use of this scene from the Gospel.

He assured us that he was a