

fable presence of Mary Most Holy. In entrusting to her this new academic year, I make my own the Holy Father's invocation on the feast of Corpus Christi this year, which fell on June 13. May our Lady, who in the Year of the Rosary helped us to contemplate Christ with her glance and her heart, also make our academic community during the Year of the Eucharist grow in faith and love for the mystery of the Body and Blood of our Lord.

With the help of the Blessed Virgin Mary, whom we have the custom of addressing as *Sedes Sapientiae*, and through the intercession of St. Josemaría, I declare the opening of the academic year 2004–2005.

## Rome

November 30, 2004

*At the ceremony for laying the first stone of the Campus Biomedico, in Trigatoria, Rome*

Saint Josemaría Escrivá used to say that Opus Dei was born in the hospitals of Madrid. He said that the strength to fulfill God's will had come to him through the prayers of the sick, to whom he dedicated no small part of his time—helping them, consoling them, administering the sacraments. At the same time, with great faith and convinced of the supernatural value of suffering, he asked them to offer their suffering for an intention that would give great glory to God.

Thus you can understand my joy in taking part today in this ceremony marking the start of construction of the new University Hospital, where it will be possible to carry out, with greater means and efficiency, the work that has been carried out now for a number of years in the service of the sick in the building on Via Longoni.

I also feel that I should note with special gratitude our debt to Bishop Alvaro del Portillo, my predecessor of holy memory, who encouraged the birth of this initiative with particular affection.

It has already been mentioned that this first stone of the University Hospital is also a point of departure for the definitive seat of the Campus Biomedico University, an initiative that—like all the projects that receive the spiritual assistance of the Prelature of Opus Dei—is a professional and civic entity, but at the same time one with a clear Christian identity. I am sure that everyone in this university, each in his or her own field, is making an effort to offer a loyal and effective service to society and to bringing light to the life of the men and women of our time through the effort of work well done, of serious and rigorous study, and especially of scientific research motivated by a sincere love for the truth, showing the harmony between reason and faith—always with the maximum respect for a legitimate pluralism of opinion. Such research will contribute to the building up of a more human society, one with greater solidarity, as well as to the great work of re-evangelization to which the Holy

6. Cf. John Paul II, Marian prayer of the Angelus, June 13, 2004.

Father John Paul II has called all Christians.

Finally let me refer once again to Saint Josemaría. We learned from him to have a special love for last stones. Be-

ginning is certainly important, but what is essential is to finish. I ask our Lord that we might find ourselves here once more within some months, the number of months scheduled for concluding the construction work.

## Pastoral Letter

Rome

October 6, 2004

*A pastoral letter to the faithful of the Prelature and its cooperators on the occasion of the Eucharistic Year, published on the Internet at [www.opusdei.org](http://www.opusdei.org).*

“In the most blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself our Pasch and the living Bread which gives life to men through his flesh—that flesh which is given life and gives life through the Holy Spirit.”<sup>1</sup> This mysterious and inexpressible manifestation of God’s love for mankind occupies a privileged place in the hearts of all Catholics and, expressly, of God’s children in Opus Dei. This is what our beloved Father taught us by his example, his preaching and his writings. He always told us that the Eucharist constitutes “the center and the source of a Christian’s spiritual life.”<sup>2</sup>

Therefore we were filled with joy by the Holy Father’s decision, an-

nounced on the Solemnity of Corpus Christi, to celebrate a Year of the Eucharist for the universal Church. As you will recall, this period begins during this month of October, with the International Eucharistic Congress being held in Guadalajara, Mexico, and will end in October 2005, with the Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, which will be dedicated to this great Sacrament.

In perfect continuity with the Jubilee of the Year 2000 and in the spirit of the Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, I would like the faithful of the Prelature, its Cooperators, and all those receiving the warmth of the spirit of the Work, to back up the Holy Father’s initiatives every day, and to strive with all our strength to place the Holy Eucharist ever more at the center of our whole life. I also suggest that, during this Year of the Eucharist, staying close to our Lady by praying the Rosary, and moved by St. Josemaría’s example, we make a point of going to the tabernacle to tell Jesus, who has become the Sacred Host, with deep sincerity: “*Adoro te devote!* I adore you devoutly!”

1. Vatican II, Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 5.

2. St. Josemaría, *Christ Is Passing By*, 87. Cf. Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 11; Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 14.