

guided by the Holy Spirit, and therefore has a permanent vitality, which does not need to manifest itself in striking or extraordinary events.

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*Complete text of the interview
granted to Mariano de Vedia*

*Does Opus Dei represent the most
conservative sector in the Church?*

It seems very simplistic to me to think in those terms. But since you ask, I would say the reality is just the opposite. The message that all men and women, from every walk of life, are called to seek holiness in the middle of the world, continues to be revolutionary, on the "cutting edge," so to speak. As Pope Paul VI said, this message represents the central teaching of the Second Vatican Council, and a lot still remains to be done to put it into practice.

*Why is Opus Dei often seen as
elitist?*

Perhaps it's due to a short-sighted view that lacks perspective. I recall that some years ago a taxi driver thought Opus Dei was only for taxi drivers. Perhaps not everyone is pleased with God's logic, which asks Catholics to be leaven in the world.

*To what do you attribute the
criticisms you receive?*

To God's goodness, who blesses with the Cross, and to the miseries of men, mine as well. And to a lack of information on the part of those who criticize us. In any case, those who appreciate Opus Dei are incomparably more numerous than those who criticize. But praise should not lead to self-complacency; we are no better than others. Nor should criticism lead to nervousness or discouragement. With God's help, one can draw good from everything. I love and respect the few people who do criticize us, and never consider them as enemies.

*What are the principal challenges
facing the Church in the 21st century?*

I would highlight the defense and promotion of the sanctity of the family, the formation of priests, and a greater awareness of the laity's call to apostolate.

*What influence has Opus Dei had
during the pontificate of John Paul II?*

More historical perspective will be required to answer this question, since the pontificate of John Paul II continues on its course. In any case, more than what has taken place in the last 25 years, I would stress the influence of St. Josemaría's teachings on the importance of the Gospel message of the sanctification of work. The most important thing in the Church is what God does, in spite of our personal limitations and errors.

*How do you view the level of religious
practice in today's society?*

What "religion" means today is a broad concept. But now when

practical atheism is growing as perhaps never before in history, vendors of the empty idols of money, pleasure and power are also proliferating. However, just as twenty centuries ago in the Roman empire, there are many young and not so young people who are radicals, who see the world from a transcendental perspective and refuse to accept being treated merely as consumers.

How can the advance of religious indifferentism be reconciled with the increase of religious fundamentalism, often associated with the expansion of terrorism?

Who could answer that question? The great number of young people present at the World Youth Days is to a certain extent a denial of the advance of religious indifferentism. Undoubtedly, the abundance of material goods can suffocate and often does suffocate the spirit. We Christians are called to live in the world, but without being worldly. The moral disintegration in today's society shows in so many ways how a society without God flounders. Fundamentalism represents the other face of the same coin. It is a danger lying in ambush when one fails to preach the freedom with which Christ has freed us.