

Articles, Addresses, Statements, and Interviews

Declaration on Blessed John Paul II and John XXIII, and the Venerable Alvaro del Portillo (July 5, 2013)

A happy coincidence

A statement of Bishop Javier Echevarría, Prelate of Opus Dei, on hearing the news of the approval of miracles attributed to John Paul II and to Alvaro del Portillo, and of the decision of the Holy Father on the canonization of John XXIII, and on other processes.

The announcement of the forthcoming canonizations of Blessed John Paul II and Blessed John XXIII, and the future beatification of the venerable Alvaro del Portillo is a happy coincidence and a cause of deep joy. We should be profoundly grateful to God for Pope Francis' decision.

Blessed John Paul II spent himself with untiring generosity in the service of mankind. He brought us closer to God with his rich teaching, through his words and writings, with images and so many gestures charged with meaning. His whole life was based

on intimate union with Jesus Christ. You needed only to see him pray to understand the fruitfulness of his ministry.

John Paul II and John XXIII were truly fathers close to all the faithful, to the Church, and particularly, I can say, to this part of the Church which is the Prelature of Opus Dei. I think they helped millions of people to feel that they were the Pope's "much-loved sons and daughters."

Bishop Alvaro del Portillo was Saint Josemaría's best support, and a most faithful collaborator of John Paul II. Many churchmen and lay people from all over the world have told me how much good this faithful priest did to them. And they all agree in this: that it was easy for them to love him, to trust his advice, because they sensed his sincere and priestly interest for their souls.

Earlier the Church referred to Bishop Alvaro del Portillo as a "profoundly good and amiable man, able to transmit peace and serenity to souls." At this time of joy, I turn to the intercession of this good and faithful servant, and I ask him to "infect" us with his loyalty to God, the Church, the Pope, Saint Josemaría, and to his friends. I ask him to win for us a share in his social concern, which was shown in

the many initiatives around the world for people in need which he encouraged. I ask that he may transmit to us his special love for the family and his passionate love for the priesthood, as well as his tender and simple piety, which had such a Marian flavor.

Address at the dedication of a plaza in honor of St. Josemaría, Ovindoli, Italy (October 1, 2013)

It is a great honor for me to take part in this celebration in honor of St. Josemaría, who so greatly loved this land of Abruzzi and who visited this plaza on November 5, 1949.

St. Josemaría used to say that, for ordinary Christians, daily life is the place where we encounter God. Now, in this plaza in the heart of Ovindoli, we are here to recall that each of us is called to live the Gospel “right in the middle of the world sanctifying our profession or job, our home life and social relations—in fact all of our activities” (*Friends of God*, no. 54).

These sites were also dear to Blessed John Paul II, who sometimes spent time relaxing and praying among the beautiful mountains of the Abruzzi region, also here in Ovindoli. He himself described St.

Josemaría as the “saint of the ordinary,” and pointed to him as an example to remind all the baptized that they are called to holiness in their work and in daily life. All of us have been called to holiness. And holiness means loving God and our neighbor. All work can be turned into prayer, because it can be an act of love. In fact the majority of the faithful of Opus Dei carry out work or jobs that might be considered of little importance. But this is not so, since what really makes work important is the love with which it is carried out.

The goal of the Prelature of Opus Dei is precisely to spread this message, at the service of and in collaboration with each diocese. Therefore, I ask all of you that you support with your prayer the work that the faithful of the Prelature of Opus Dei, priests and laity, are carrying out in Abruzzo, in Italy and throughout the world.

Thousands of people in the past forty years have come to the Casali delle Rocche, to take part in a time of prayer and study, and also quiet hours of relaxation. The property was first given as a gift to Centro ELIS. It was a very simple building, little more than a ruin. But it was turned into the Casale Antico, and later what is now the Conference Center was added on, thanks to the work of renovation and reconstruction carried out over a number of years by the teachers and students from the ELIS Professional School in Rome.