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This Newsletter is published with the ecclesiastical approval of the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints.



The Servant of God
JOSEMARÍA ESCRIVÁ
Founder of Opus Dei

NEWSLETTER No. 4

Monsignor Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer y Albás was born in Barbastro (Spain) on 9 January 1902. He attended school in Barbastro and Logroño and did his ecclesiastical studies in the Pontifical University of Saragossa, where he was awarded a licenciante in Theology. He was later to obtain a doctorate in Theology in Rome.

He studied civil law at the University of Saragossa and subsequently gained a doctorate at the University of Madrid. In 1960 he received an honorary doctorate in Philosophy and Letters from the University of Saragossa. He was the first Chancellor of the Universities of Navarre, Spain and of Piura, Peru.

After being ordained on 28 March 1925, he began his work as a priest in country parishes and, from 1927 onwards, he worked among the poor and the sick of the outlying districts and hospitals of Madrid. Some years later, he was appointed Rector of the Real Patronato de Santa Isabel in Madrid, a task which he carried out until 1946 when he moved to Rome.

He was a Consultor to various Pontifical Commissions and Congregations of the Holy See, a Domestic Prelate to the Holy Father and a member of the Pontifical Roman Theological Academy.

On 2 October 1928, in Madrid, he had founded Opus Dei, a way of sanctification in the middle of the world and a leaven of fervent Christian life in every environment. On 14 February 1930, Monsignor Escrivá founded the Women's Section of Opus Dei, and on 14 February 1943, within Opus Dei, the Sacerdotal Society of the Holy Cross. Opus Dei was definitively approved by the Holy See on 16 June 1950.

Through a life of constant prayer and penance, with a continuous and unconditional self-surrender to the will of God, the Father – as he is called by his sons and daughters in Opus Dei and by many thousands of people throughout the world from all walks of life – for forty seven years fostered and directed the expansion of Opus Dei throughout the world. At the time of the Founder's death, Opus Dei had spread to the five continents, with more than 60,000 members, of 80 different nationalities.

The Holy Mass was the root and centre of the interior life of the Founder of Opus Dei. A deep sense of his divine filiation moved him to seek in all things the most complete identification with Jesus Christ, to have a tender and strong devotion to Our Lady and St Joseph and a continual and confident friendship with the Holy Guardian Angels, and to be a sower of peace and joy along all the paths of the earth.

On repeated occasions, Monsignor Escrivá had offered his life for the Church and for the Roman Pontiff. Our Lord accepted that offering and the Father, in a truly saintly way, gave up his soul to God in Rome, on 26 June 1975, in the room where he worked, with the same simplicity which characterized his entire life.

His body lies in the Crypt of the Oratory of Our Lady of Peace, Viale Bruno Buozzi 75, Rome, continually accompanied by the prayer and gratitude of his sons and daughters, and of the countless people who have come closer to God, drawn by the example and teaching of the Founder of Opus Dei. The Cause of Beatification and Canonization of Monsignor Escrivá was opened in Rome on 12 May 1981.

Introduction of the Cause of Beatification and Canonization

On 12 May 1981, the process for the beatification and canonization of the Servant of God Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer was begun in Rome, with the first meeting of the tribunal established by Cardinal Ugo Poletti, the Pope's Vicar for the diocese of Rome. On 18 May, the first session took place in Madrid of the tribunal established by Cardinal Enrique y Tarancón to hear the testimonies of Spanish speaking witnesses. In its March–April 1981 issue, the Rivista Diocesana di Roma published the text of Cardinal Poletti's decree which introduced the Cause. The decree gives a brief summary of the life of the Founder of Opus Dei, his spirituality and the preliminary stages of the process of beatification. There follows a translation of this document.

The Second Vatican Council “insistently exhorted all the faithful, of every level and condition, to seek the fulness of Christian life and the perfection of charity. This strong invitation to holiness can be considered as the most characteristic element of the entire Magisterium of the Council and, so to speak, its ultimate end” (Motu proprio *Sanctitas clarior*, 19–III–1969).

Because he proclaimed the universal call to holiness ever since he founded Opus Dei in 1928, Mgr. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer has been unanimously acknowledged as a forerunner of the Council precisely in what constitutes the basic nucleus of its teaching, which is so fruitful for the life of the Church.

The Servant of God was born on 9 January 1902 in Barbastro, Spain, into a deeply Christian family. As a boy he already showed himself to have a lively intelligence, together with a strong and lovable character. When he was fifteen or thereabouts he had the first intimations that Our Lord was calling him for something, though he still did not know what his mission was to be. He then

decided to enter the priesthood as a way of making himself completely available to God's Will, and undertook a life of very intense penance and piety. Once he had completed his studies, which he did first in the Seminary of Logroño and later in the Seminary of St Francis de Paula and in the Pontifical University of Saragossa, he was ordained priest on 28 March 1925 in Saragossa.

In 1927 he moved to Madrid, where he did a vast amount of apostolic work among the sick, the needy and the young. He was chaplain of the *Patronato de Enfermos* from 1927 to 1931. In 1931 he became chaplain to the *Patronato de Santa Isabel*, of which he was appointed Rector in 1934.

On 2 October 1928, during a retreat, Our Lord showed him clearly what till then he had only had intimations of, and the Servant of God founded Opus Dei. On 14 February 1930, moved once again by Our Lord, he founded the Women's Section of Opus Dei. A new path had been opened in the Church which would foster, among people of all social classes, the search for sanctity and the practice of apostolate through the sanctification of ordinary work, right in the middle of the world and without changing one's situation in life.

The Servant of God immediately set to work, with the blessing and encouragement of the local Bishop. He devoted himself entirely to this mission and Our Lord blessed him with abundant fruits.

During the Spanish Civil War, regardless of the dangers threatening him, he never abandoned his busy programme of priestly activity. When the war ended he returned to Madrid, so as to be able to press forward more effectively with the work of Opus Dei in Spain. Though material means were extremely scarce, he opened new Centres in many cities and prepared the way for expansion outside the Iberian peninsula.

Very many people, priests and laity, went to him for spiritual direction. Besides this, at the request of Bishops and the Provincials of different Religious Orders and Congregations, he preached a great number of retreats to priests and religious, as well as those he gave to lay people. Through his apostolate he fostered countless vocations of all kinds.

On 14 February 1943, Mgr. Escrivá founded, within Opus Dei, the Sacerdotal Society of the Holy Cross. As a result it became possible for some lay members of Opus Dei to be ordained and to devote themselves fully to giving spiritual assistance to the other members and to the apostolic works fostered by Opus Dei. During the lifetime of the Servant of God, nearly a thousand professional men of Opus Dei (doctors, lawyers, engineers, journalists, etc.) received Holy Orders. In doing so they left aside promising professional prospects in order to devote themselves wholeheartedly to the priestly ministry.

In 1946 the Servant of God moved to Rome and made it his permanent residence. In 1947 he obtained from the Holy See the *decretum laudis* (decree of praise) for Opus Dei, which later, on 16 June 1950, received definitive



*Josemaría at
the age of 19.*

approval as an institution of pontifical right. At the same time, approval was given to the Association of Cooperators of Opus Dei, to which non-Catholics can also be admitted.

From Rome, Mgr. Escrivá guided and inspired the development of Opus Dei throughout the world, generously giving his all to provide his daughters and sons with a solid doctrinal, ascetical and apostolic formation. The Founder's dedication to his own mission was exemplary. He was a tireless worker, and his zeal led him to undertake difficult and exhausting journeys all over Europe and in America, even at times when he was seriously ill. He was constantly faced with financial difficulties, but this never discouraged him and he was able to set up effective apostolic instruments both in Rome and in other countries.

His zeal found practical expression in a vast range of apostolic initiatives which have spread like a "sea without shores" to the five continents and, in particular, to areas of human activity which most needed to feel the light of Christian truth shining upon them: technical training centres; primary and secondary schools; universities (Mgr. Escrivá founded and was the first

Chancellor of the University of Navarre in Spain and the University of Piura in Peru); outpatient clinics; youth clubs; hostels for domestic workers, farm workers, university students; cultural centres; research institutes; agricultural schools and so on.

With his teachings the Servant of God has opened up a new chapter in the history of spirituality. His writings have attained a considerable circulation. His book *The Way* has reached the figure of three million copies, in 34 languages. Wide circulations are also a feature of his other published works, such as *Holy Rosary*, *Conversations with Mgr. Escrivá de Balaguer*, *Christ is passing by*, *Friends of God*.

The Servant of God held doctorates in Law and Sacred Theology. He was a Domestic Prelate to His Holiness, Consultor to the Pontifical Commission for the interpretation of the Code of Canon Law and a Member of the Roman Academy of Theology.

It was in Rome, at midday on 26 June 1975, that his earthly life ended, following a sudden heart attack. He died after receiving, while unconscious, absolution and the Anointing of the Sick, a sacrament he had always ardently wanted to receive, having often given his children precise instructions on the matter. That day too, while he was saying Mass four hours before his death, he had once again renewed his offering of his own life for the Church and for the Pope (he mentioned this that morning in a private conversation with four members of the Work).

At the time of his death, Opus Dei had spread to the five continents, with more than 60,000 members of 80 nationalities.

The root cause of this growth can be traced to the fact that the spiritual message of the Founder of Opus Dei answers present day needs and that he was a living example of that message. In proclaiming the call to sanctity through one's everyday occupations, he taught that every action of ours is both sanctifiable and can sanctify others and contributes to the building up of the People of God.

While pointing the way for everyone to become holy precisely in the context of one's ordinary life, Mgr. Escrivá emphasised that work is both an instrument and a setting for holiness; thus, while stressing how important it is to carry out one's everyday duties as perfectly as one can, he also insisted on the need to do them in union with God, with the help of grace and a lively and sincere piety. Hence his constant effort to stress that the Sacraments must come first if one wishes to build a genuinely Christian way of life, and his striving to introduce souls to the practice of prayer.

The spirituality of the Servant of God is founded on a deep awareness of the mystery of Jesus, perfect God and perfect man, an awareness which led him to see the human and the divine interplaying in "unity of life". His own life was a living demonstration of how this intimate fusion of interior life and everyday



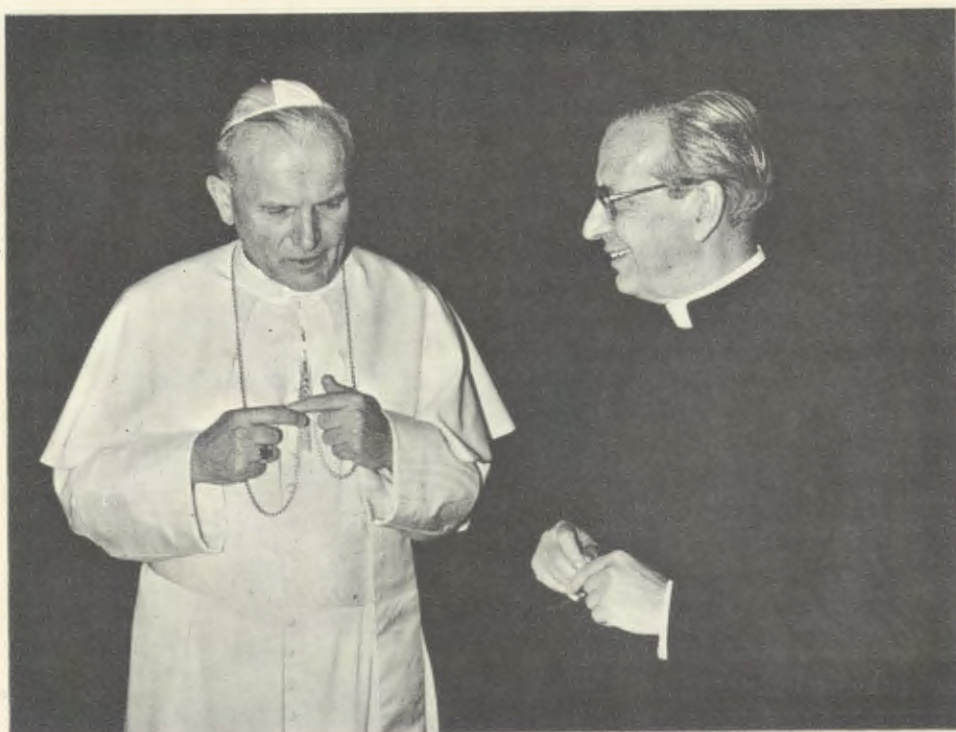
With Fr. Alvaro del Portillo, in Lima (Peru), on 25 July 1974.

activities, of contemplation and action, takes place. In him supernatural virtues linked in with human virtues and he became an example of a holiness that is built upon simplicity and naturalness, and is made up by faithfulness in little things. Very deep in him was the consciousness of his divine filiation, of his being a son of God. It led him to abandon himself with complete trust in God the Father; to give pride of place to prayer over human effort, which thus was able to be turned into work done with God and for God; to a burning love for the Sacred Humanity of Christ, to a tender and firm devotion for Our Lady, St Joseph and the Guardian Angels, and to have a spirit of supernatural optimism and an infectious joy.

Keeping true to this unity of life, the Servant of God did not regard the apostolate as one more activity to be added to others, nor as the preserve of a few specialists in ecclesiastical matters, but as a duty that concerned all the faithful all the time, a duty deriving from the graces received in Baptism and Confirmation and then developed by the other sacraments, and to be practised in every daily situation.

These and other teachings of his – one might mention in particular the way he considered the Holy Mass as the "centre and root of the interior life" and, resulting from this, the love he poured out for the Blessed Sacrament and for the liturgy as a whole – have without doubt benefited priests also, for whom the teachings of the Servant of God are destined to produce countless fruits.

Mgr. Escrivá carried out his own ministry as a selfless service to the Church



On 5 February 1981, His Holiness Pope John Paul II ratified the *Nihil Obstat* of the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints, for the introduction of the Cause of Beatification and Canonization of the Servant of God Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer.

and taught his children all over the world to go about their work in close union with the Hierarchy and to be absolutely faithful to the Church's Magisterium, so much so that in all the dioceses where Opus Dei is working, its unmistakable characteristics are faithfulness to the Roman Pontiff and loyalty to the Hierarchy.

A key point in Mgr. Escrivá's message is his love for true freedom, a keenly appreciated value these days. He laid particular stress on freedom in temporal matters, which is indispensable for Christians who are active in the world. He always wanted to see freedom exercised hand in hand with its counterpart responsibility, and with due regard for the faith and morals as established by the Church's Magisterium. He was scrupulously respectful towards the legitimate options made by all Christians in matters of opinion. In doing this, he was defending a fundamental characteristic of the Christian secular vocation and safeguarded the exclusively spiritual purpose of Opus Dei.

The appeal that the spirituality of the Servant of God had for the intellectual classes deserves a special mention. Students, university teachers and people working in the most varied professions felt attracted by his message calling for parallel efforts in the realm of interior life and in the achievement of high professional standards, as two equally necessary requirements on the road that leads to God. But the same appeal was felt by clerks, farm labourers and

manual workers, by parents and children, by every kind of individual who goes to make up civil society, the "ordinary people in the street" as Mgr. Escrivá used to say. They have all found that this spirit helps them to discover the divine plan of salvation at work in the smallest events of everyday life. This priest offers a message for all times, a beacon shedding the light of Christian apostolate upon the society of any age.

Confirmation of this is found in the widespread reputation for sanctity which accompanied the Servant of God even in his own lifetime, as borne out by many authoritative testimonies. Since his death, his reputation for sanctity has spread progressively, in a noticeably spontaneous manner. Thousands of letters have reached the Holy Father, from all kinds of people, both prominent personalities and ordinary folk, and from the furthest corners of the earth, asking for the opening of the Cause of Beatification and Canonization of the Servant of God. Among these letters, it gives us pleasure to recall the one from the Episcopal Conference of Latium, which expressed gratitude for the fruits which were sown in Rome by Mgr. Escrivá's priestly zeal. People of all social levels and of the most varied nationalities bear witness to a wealth of favours, both large and small, spiritual and material, received from heaven after recourse to the intercession of the Servant of God. The crypt of the oratory of Our Lady of Peace in the central offices of Opus Dei in Rome, where the Founder is buried, draws an uninterrupted flow of pilgrims, who go there to entrust all kinds of needs to his mediation before God or to thank him for favours received.

In view of all this, the President General of Opus Dei, the Very Rev. Alvaro del Portillo named Fr. Flavio Capucci as Postulator of the Cause of Beatification and Canonization of the Servant of God Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer. This appointment received legal recognition on 4 February 1978. At the request of the Postulator, and convinced that the acceptance of our request would be beneficial for Holy Mother Church, on 15 March 1980 we petitioned the Holy See to grant the *Nihil obstat* for the introduction of the said Cause, attaching thereto all the documents required by the *Motu proprio Sanctitas clarior* for these cases.

After a careful examination of the documentary material, the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints, in its ordinary meeting on 30 January 1981, granted the *Nihil obstat* for the introduction of the Cause. On 5 February 1981, the Holy Father, John Paul II, ratified and confirmed the decision of the Sacred Congregation.

By virtue of the above and of the faculties granted us by the Code of Canon Law and the *Motu proprio Sanctitas clarior*, WE HEREBY DECREE the canonical introduction of the Cause of Beatification and Canonization of the Servant of God Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, Priest, Founder of Opus Dei, and the opening of the relevant canonical Process for the 12th day of May 1981.

Ugo Card. Poletti
Vic. Gen.
 Rome, 19 February 1981

Under his spiritual influence

With heroic faithfulness to the Will of God, with constant prayer and penance, with the practice of the human and supernatural virtues and working full of hope, Monsignor Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer inspired and guided the growth of Opus Dei throughout the world for forty seven years.

The principal task of the Work is the formation of its members so that each one, individually, may carry out his Christian apostolic work in the world and in society.

The essential apostolate of Opus Dei, in the words of its Founder, is the apostolate each member carries out in his own place of work, with his family, among his friends – an apostolate which does not attract attention, which cannot easily be expressed in statistics but which yields holiness in thousands of souls who keep on following Christ, quietly and effectively, during their ordinary everyday work. (*Conversations with Monsignor Escrivá de Balaguer*, n.71.)

Nevertheless, as he himself replied when asked by a journalist: **Opus Dei, as a corporation, with the help of very many people who do not belong to the Work and who often are not Christian, also fosters 'corporate' activities through which it seeks to contribute towards solving the many problems which face the world today: educational institutions, welfare centres, schools for professional development and advancement, and so forth.** (*Conversations with Monsignor Escrivá de Balaguer*, n.84.)

We shall be describing here, very briefly, some of the many apostolic works (each with its own characteristics, springing from the needs of a particular place and time) which have arisen through the inspiration of the Founder of Opus Dei.

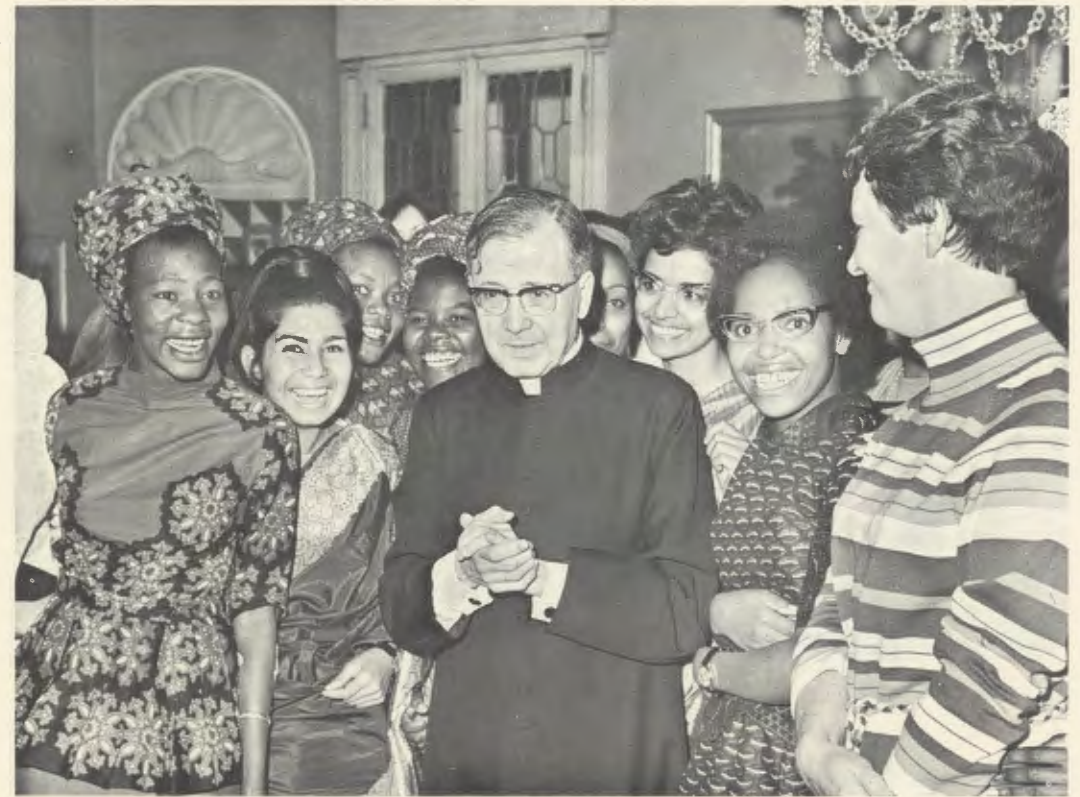
Kianda College Nairobi

Opus Dei feels as much at home in England as in Kenya, in Nigeria as in Japan (...). In each place it is the same theological and pastoral phenomenon which takes root in the souls of the people of that country. It is not anchored in one particular country nor in one specific historical period. (*Conversations with Mgr. Escrivá de Balaguer*, n.42.)

Such was Mgr. Escrivá de Balaguer's reply in 1966, when interviewed by a French journalist. The accuracy of his words



Learning secretarial skills at Kianda College.



Rome, 10 April 1971. Mgr. Escrivá with a group of students from Kianda.

is best seen in the way the Work has developed in countries in all five continents.

In 1958, under the spiritual influence of its Founder, the work of Opus Dei spread to the Far East and to Africa. Two years later the Women's Section of Opus Dei began to work in Kenya. In May 1960, the members who were to go to Kenya and who came from different European and American nations, spent a few days together in Rome, to receive the blessing and encouragement of the Servant of God.

We are going to Kenya, he told them, to seek souls for Jesus Christ.

He reminded them of something which belongs to the very essence of the spirit of Opus Dei: their work in that new country, which they already loved with all their heart, had to be lay, secular. They were not going to be in any way a group of people apart. They were going there to dissolve like yeast in the dough, leavening all the different sectors of society with the spirit of Christianity.

At the time, this attitude of openness

towards everyone, without any sort of discrimination, contrasted with the general atmosphere in a country that was emerging from colonial status. There was no shortage of difficulties, but by February 1961 Kianda College had opened its doors to its first students: seventeen of them, studying to be secretaries. It was the first educational centre for women in East Africa to welcome to its classrooms, without distinction, people from the most diverse races, tribes and religious beliefs. Once again, the words of Mgr. Escrivá were being fulfilled. As he liked to say, **We are brothers of God, because we are brothers of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Blessed Virgin. There is but one race, the race of the children of God. There is but one colour, the colour of the children of God. And there is but one language, that language which speaks in the heart and in the head, the language you are using to speak with Jesus at this moment: the language of contemplative souls.**



Cardinal Maurice Otunga, Archbishop of Nairobi, visiting Kianda College.

A few figures can help to show the rapid development of Kianda College. Already by 1963 it had students from each of the three countries that made up East Africa. By 1967, many other nations of the African continent were represented, such as Nigeria, Ethiopia, Zambia, Ghana, Lesotho. That same year, a hall of residence for one hundred girls was opened. In one wing of the new building, the Kibondeni School of Institutional Management started its courses. In 1973, again thanks to the direct encouragement of Mgr. Escrivá, who did not live to see it become a reality, the foundations of the Kianda High School were laid. At the time of writing, this secondary school for girls has 350 pupils. This initiative was greeted with enthusiastic approval by the three thousand former students of Kianda College, who were keen to see their daughters educated in the same atmosphere that they themselves had known.

In the years following Independence, women's education has been one of the nation's foremost needs. The growth of the apostolic work of Opus Dei in Kenya, through the activities carried out by Kianda, has been a genuine Christian service to the country. As Mrs. J. Gecaga, the first African

woman Member of Parliament, declared in a press interview in 1978: "I have known Kianda right from the beginning. I met the very first people who started this project. And I learnt that they had two important messages which they were ready to give to this country: to train women to have the skill which they could carry on throughout their lives, and help them to be better. And again they had Christianity as the background which will help these women to build their lives in a better way and to be the future leaders, and the mothers to bring up our generation."

Kianda means "fertile valley" in Kikuyu. Through God's grace, in whose hands Mgr. Escrivá was ever a docile instrument, it has yielded abundant fruit. In 1971, a group of students from the College thanked him for the work Opus Dei is doing in Kenya. The Founder's immediate reply was:

It is Our Lord who sent Opus Dei to Africa. I am only a poor instrument of God, and you must pray that I may be a faithful and good instrument. What we need now is for Opus Dei to spread throughout Africa, but with Africans. It is up to you to carry the love of God to all your Continent, with a generous spirit.

Letters received

THREE WEEKS TO LIVE

I have a friend in the Cameroons who was dying of cancer. His doctor is also a good friend of mine and he told me that the patient had only three weeks to live. When I visited him in the hospital we said together the prayer to the Father and I suggested that he keep the prayer card under his pillow. Before leaving for London I visited him three more times. On returning to the Cameroons the doctor told me that he was still alive. Some time later I met the doctor again and this time he told me that my friend was completely cured, and there was no danger of a relapse. I am sure that he was cured through the special intercession of the Father.

A.N., Yaoundé, Cameroons

MARRIAGE PROBLEM SOLVED

A relative came to see me in despair. She told me that her husband had asked for a divorce. So far, she explained, she had not mentioned it to anyone else, so as not to upset her parents.

I gave her the prayer for private devotion to Fr. Josemaría Escrivá, and recommended to her to pray intensely. I also prayed for them.

A week later she came to see me with her husband and children. She thanked me and said that it was Providence that had brought her to me, that she now had a new intercessor in heaven, and that she was convinced that her marriage had been saved thanks to the intercession of the Father and founder of Opus Dei.

Indeed I am of the same opinion, and wish to express my gratitude to the Father and entrust myself to his protection.

A.P., Poland

DIFFICULT DAUGHTER

One of my daughters gave me endless trouble since schooldays, irresponsible, running into debt and running away from jobs, in fact completely unable to manage her life. I asked Mgr. Josemaría to "place her on the right path and keep her on it". I had been praying only a short time when by accident she obtained a position which she hoped to keep for a few weeks before moving on. She has been there nearly a year now, is very happy, well paid, and the strange thing is, it is not a position which normally she would think of taking permanently. From my point of view it is a miracle, knowing the person, all her escapades, her physical and mental breakdowns from malnutrition (having spent her salary on trivial things). I enclose an offering and pray every day for the speedy Beatification and Canonization of Mgr. Escrivá.

X.X., Longford, Ireland

Letters received

THEY FOUND THE FAITH

Fourteen months ago I was in hospital having our baby. I met another mother who was having a baby at the same time. She was not a Catholic and said she'd like me to explain the faith to her as she had always been interested. We arranged to meet each week to feed our babies together and to talk about the Catholic faith.

During all that time I was praying to the Father for her. Nine months after our babies were born she was received into the Church. Her two daughters aged 10 and 11 also asked for instruction and were due to be received into the Church some two months after she was. She said her husband would never be interested.

I gave her a Newsletter and the novena prayer card to Mgr. Escrivá. She rang me up four days later and asked me if I was sure a novena was nine days of intercession. When I asked her why she wanted to know, she said that just four days ago she had started a novena to the Father and on the fourth day of the novena her husband had quite suddenly and unexpectedly asked her for the phone number of the parish priest. He was received into the Church along with his daughters.

M.H., Croydon, Australia

WE HAVE RECEIVED MANY FAVOURS

Some time ago I promised a contribution towards the Newsletter and the prayer cards, and now I'm in a position to fulfil that promise. I enclose 20 dollars. It's not much, but it is all I have. If I get more later on, I'll make a further donation.

Many thanks for your letter and for promising to send on Newsletter No. 3. There is no hurry: it will be very welcome whenever it arrives.

In the meantime we have received many favours: conversions, people who have repented and changed their way of life. We have also been asking for our material needs: water, light, food, money for medicines and provisions for the hospital. Almost without interruption, one novena after another, we pray for so many needs. And the replies come at the right time. I distribute the prayer cards and Newsletters and the people are simply starving for spiritual things. There is so much corruption, bribery, stealing, etc., on all sides and they can't find any solution. The point is that there is only one real solution: to live as Jesus has taught us! And so Opus Dei is truly for us, ordinary people living ordinary lives. That's why God created us and sent us His Son and his doctrine, to guide us along the road to heaven. As you suggest, we can spread devotion to Mgr. Escrivá and that is what we are doing here. We want to obey those things which our Holy Mother the Church teaches us.

Sister S.Z., Berekum, Ghana

THERE WAS NOTHING THEY COULD DO FOR HER

I wish to make it known to all that my daughter was cured by Divine Providence, through the intercession of the Servant of God, Josemaría Escrivá. This is also the opinion of the doctors who were looking after her.

My daughter, who was five, contracted severe leukemia. After intense medical treatment, with its many ups and downs, her condition got so serious that all hope was lost. She lapsed into a deep coma. She was at death's door.

When all treatment had been stopped so as not to make her suffer even more and after 48 long hours when we expected her to die at any moment, inexplicably and to the amazement of us all who were doing nothing but praying, she regained consciousness and recovered so as to be perfectly well.

Since then, apart from a minor lapse a year after her amazing and spontaneous recovery, she has been living a normal life at home and at school, like any other little girl.

Six years have gone by since the leukemia was diagnosed, and five since the serious crisis which was considered medically to be irreversible. That's why I repeat that in my view she was cured by God's Providence, through the intercession of the Servant of God, Josemaría Escrivá. The doctor who was looking after her had entrusted her into his hands.

R.C.G., San Fernando, Spain

NEVER LOST A DAY SINCE

Through the intercession of Monsignor Josemaría Escrivá my sister who had been very ill with asthma and bronchitis has received great relief. She was so ill that she was almost unable to follow her occupation: she would work one day and be unable to walk more than a few steps the next. About last March she became very ill indeed; she was unable to speak to me on the phone, was having very bad bouts of coughing and her breathing was dreadful. I was given your magazine and had taken it to bed with me to read, as I had never seen it before. The prayer to Monsignor Escrivá fell out of it. That was the first time I had even heard of him. I looked at the clock: it was 10.20 p.m. and I said the prayer for my sister. The following evening she phoned me to tell me she was feeling much better and had had a good night's sleep. I asked her when she had started to feel better; she said it was about 10.30 p.m. She still has a drug to help her to breathe, but on the following Monday she returned to the office and has never lost a day from illness since.

T.M.D., Birmingham, England

I DECIDED TO TRY MYSELF

I am most grateful to you for sending on the third issue of the Newsletter of Mgr. Escrivá and also the copies of the prayer card.

The people here have taken an immediate interest in both and I would be very grateful if you could send me more prayer cards in Fijian. There is no limit to the number!

A thing which stirred their interest was the fact that I got a serious bout of illness about six weeks ago. I could not eat and I could not sleep. They saw my state of health deteriorating every day, and some were quite sure that I was not going to recover, especially on one day when I had reached a very low ebb. That was the day your letter arrived. I am a fairly 'hard-boiled' priest but when I read the remarkable things Mgr. Escrivá had done for so many people, I decided to try him myself. I said the prayer that evening; about mid-night I felt a sudden change for the better and after two days I was back to full health again. I told the people of this incident, hence the great interest.

"Catholic Priest", Fiji Island

Letters received

My parents, after a lengthy time of serious disagreement, had decided to separate legally. They had been married for twenty-seven years. With my whole heart I prayed to Monsignor Escrivá de Balaguer to intercede on their behalf.

At the conclusion of the novena to Monsignor Escrivá, my mother, who does not practise any religion, came to me and very serenely explained that she had seen clearly that she could not leave the family and that she knew that God would give her the strength to overcome any difficulties in the future. My parents' home is now a haven of warmth and serenity where previously as long as I can remember the atmosphere had been one of anger and hostility.

X.X., Sydney, Australia

I am a small farmer with eight young children. I have no income of any sort only our few cows. If our cows go wrong or against us we would be for the road side. Last summer our cows would not prove in calf. I was in a terrible state about it. One evening the children brought home a copy of your Newsletter. I read it from cover to cover. I started a special novena night and morning to Mgr. Josemaría. In less than three months all the cows had proved in calf. I enclose a token donation which I promised in thanksgiving.

J.M., Co. Cavan, Ireland

When I heard that a friend of the family was very close to death but that he did not want to go to Confession, I began to pray to Mgr. Escrivá. My mother spoke to his daughter about the question of Confession but she replied: "Impossible. My father was always atheist. However, if he wanted it, I would call a priest." When I heard about this conversation I stepped up my prayer that the dying man would go to Confession. A few days later my mother said to me: "Did you hear that Mr. X has been to Confession? He asked them to get him a priest." Shortly afterwards he died.

D.A., Lisbon, Portugal

My son had not been practising for many years. Over a period of three years he suffered from bone cancer, from which he was never cured despite all the treatment and special medicines he was given. From the beginning of his illness I prayed the prayer to the Father for his conversion and for the salvation of his soul.

My son died and it was a terrible loss for me, but I also feel very happy because, through the Father's intercession, he started going to Holy Communion again and received the sacrament of Extreme Unction before he died. I enclose a donation for the Work.

L.M., Washington, U.S.A.

When my daughter started going to Kianda, a centre of Opus Dei, she gave me a copy of the prayer card to the Founder and said that it would be good to use it. I started using it to pray for my friends, asking for his intercession. My next door neighbours were pagans and didn't practise any religion, and this made me sad. I began to pray for them to the Father.

Meantime, I tried to talk to them and encourage them to go to Church. One of them began to go. Some time later the whole family began to study the catechism and prepare for Baptism, and eventually they were baptised. The parents hope to receive the sacrament of Matrimony shortly.

I believe that their conversion is due to the intercession of the Father, because many people were amazed at the sudden change in my neighbours. We are very grateful to him.

B.W.N., Nairobi, Kenya

For fourteen years I had a skin disease. It was very bad and gave me a lot of trouble (irritation and also socially it caused me a lot of embarrassment). I tried almost every medical treatment going and attended many physicians, but to no avail. Sometimes there would be an improvement, for a while, but soon it would flare up again. Then my sister gave me a prayer card and I prayed through the intercession of Mgr. Escrivá for it to be cleared. I began to notice that I was becoming much calmer in myself and less highly strung. I noticed that after a time my skin had cleared. There have been many incidents of a personal and family nature in which Mgr. Escrivá has and continues to be active in my home. All the members of the household love him and have devotion to him.

G.H., Co. Dublin, Ireland

Our thanks are due to Monsignor Escrivá for a favour we received on the anniversary of his death.

We had been praying for employment for my son. On the anniversary of Monsignor Escrivá's death prayers were said on the hour and in a remarkable way, early in the afternoon, the position we had been praying for was offered to my son and he commenced work the following day.

M.T., Sydney, Australia

My brother who is 35 went into hospital for a simple liver biopsy. Due to this test (wrongly performed by an intern instead of a qualified doctor) he did not recover the next day to return home, but was confined in hospital for a month. During this time he had two operations and suffered a cardiac arrest. He was close to death and we were told by the doctors that it was a 'touch and go' situation – no guarantee for his life. There was a chapel in the hospital where I spent hours praying God to spare his life. All I had was my rosary and Monsignor's prayer card. I truly believe in my heart that this saved his life. To me it is a miracle. Since then, I say the prayer every night, not always to make a petition, but to thank Him for sparing my brother's life. This gives me a sense of peace which overwhelms me and I know it will do the same for many more who have faith in the Monsignor.

S.M.C., London, England

We are very grateful for the great number of letters we have received. They show the private devotion of so many people throughout the world who are praying to God Our Lord through the intercession of Mgr. Escrivá. Shortage of space prevents us from publishing here more than a few paragraphs from some letters which speak of important favours or tell simple anecdotes.

We also gratefully acknowledge (and apologise for not being able to write to everyone individually) the donations sent in towards the costs of publishing and distributing the **Newsletter** and to help further the apostolic activities stemming from Mgr. Escrivá's love for souls.

Published works of Mgr. Escrivá de Balaguer

The Way

"Monsignor Escrivá de Balaguer has written something more than a masterpiece; he has written straight from the heart, and straight to the heart go the short paragraphs that make up *The Way* . . . there is none of the formal rigidity of a code in the warm brotherly understanding of the author, in the paternal concern with which he sees, understands and corrects, persuading, not threatening" (*L'Osservatore Romano*, 24 March 1950).

The first edition of this book was published in February 1934 (Cuenca, Spain) entitled *Consideraciones Espirituales*. Ever since then, the number of editions has steadily increased: a total of 3,000,000 copies have been published in 169 editions in thirty-four languages. English editions currently published by Four Courts Press (Dublin), Sinag-Tala (Manila) and Scepter (New York).

Holy Rosary

A book of meditations on each of the fifteen mysteries of the life of Christ and of the Blessed Virgin which one contemplates when saying the Holy Rosary.

The first edition also appeared in 1934. A total of 314,000 copies in 55 editions have been published in twelve languages. English editions by Four Courts Press (Dublin), Scepter (New York) and Sinag-Tala (Manila).

Conversations with Monsignor Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer

A number of magazines and newspapers put specific questions to Monsignor Escrivá, dealing with the topics of greatest interest to their respective readers. Monsignor Escrivá answered the questions fully in writing. The book brings together the complete text of those interviews.

The first edition was published in 1968. From that time 31 editions have been published in seven languages and a total of 253,000 copies. New English edition by Sinag-Tala (Manila).

Christ is passing by

The book is a collection of some of the many homilies given by Monsignor Escrivá throughout his life. They constitute a profound and attractive exposition of Christian doctrine and life. His style combines theological depth with clarity of exposition.

The first edition was published in March 1973. Since then 36 editions have appeared in eight languages and a total of 270,000 copies. Published in English by Veritas (Dublin) and Sinag-Tala (Manila).

Friends of God

A new collection of eighteen homilies in which the author's warm and friendly conversation with God is centered on the theme of the Christian virtues. This book is in the same intimate and direct style as the earlier collection of homilies. First published in 1977, it has so far seen 18 editions, with a total of 192,000 copies in five languages. English editions published by Scepter (London).

The foreword is by the Very Rev. Alvaro del Portillo, who succeeded Mgr. Escrivá as President General of Opus Dei in September 1975.

The Way of the Cross

A new posthumous work of Mgr. Escrivá, fruit of his meditation on the scenes of the Passion of Our Lord. It has been prepared to help us with prayer, and to increase our spirit of sorrow for our sins and of thanksgiving to Christ who has redeemed us with the price of his blood. The first edition was published in February 1981. The English edition will be available in 1982.

La Abadesa de las Huelgas

A penetrating study of an extraordinary case of quasi-episcopal jurisdiction exercised by the abbess of a famous convent in Burgos, utilizing the original sources and documents.

First published in 1944; a second edition appeared in 1974.

Prayer

for private devotion

*O God, you granted countless graces to your servant and priest Josemaría, choosing him as a most faithful instrument to found Opus Dei, a way of sanctification in daily work and in the fulfilment of the ordinary duties of a Christian. Grant that I also may learn to turn all the circumstances and events of my life into opportunities to love you and to serve the Church, the Pope, and all souls, with joy and simplicity, lighting up the paths of the earth with faith and love. Deign to glorify your servant Josemaría and, through his intercession, grant me the favour I request . . . (here make your petition).
Amen.*

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father.

In conformity with the decrees of Pope Urban VIII, we declare that with this *Newsletter* there is no intention of anticipating in any way the judgement of the Church, and that this prayer is not intended for public use.

This *Newsletter* is issued free of charge. Those who wish to give alms to help its publication and the development of the apostolic activities stemming from the spiritual influence of the Founder of Opus Dei, may send donations by crossed cheque or postal order to the *Office of the Vice-postulator of Opus Dei in Britain, 6 Orme Court, London W2 4RL*.

We would be grateful if our readers would send us names and addresses of others who might be interested in receiving this *Newsletter* or the prayer card with the prayer for private devotion.

March 1982