

Office of the Vice-postulator of Opus Dei in Britain, 6 Orme Court, London W2 4RL

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The Servant of God
JOSEMARÍA ESCRIVÁ
Founder of Opus Dei

NEWSLETTER No. 6

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 licence 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 received the definitive approval of the Holy See on 16 June 1950; and on 28 November 1982 it was established as a personal Prelature. This legal framework, introduced into Church Law by the Second Vatican Council, had been desired and foreseen by Monsignor Escrivá.

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 other thousands of people 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 over 60,000 members, of 80 nationalities, serving the Church with the same spirit of complete union with, and deep veneration for, the Pope and the Bishops which Monsignor Escrivá had always practised and instilled in his sons and daughters.

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.

The centre and root of the Christian Life

The Founder of Opus Dei lived the Holy Mass with immense faith. For him it was the deepest of realities, the sacramental renewal of the Sacrifice of the Cross, carried out, in an unbloody manner, by Jesus Christ himself by means of the priest: **It is the Sacrifice of Christ, offered to the Father with the cooperation of the Holy Spirit: an oblation of infinite value, which eternalises the work of the Redemption in us.**¹

From the early times of his priestly ministry, when he was beginning Opus Dei, the Servant of God referred to the Mass as the **centre and root of the interior life**. The Sacrifice of the Altar is the source and summit of Christian living, for in this Holocaust, Christ himself, perfect God and perfect Man, offers himself to the Father on our behalf and gives himself to us to be our food: **Thus, the Holy Mass places us before the principal mysteries of the faith, for it is the Trinity's giving itself to the Church. And so we can understand how the Mass is the centre and root of the spiritual life of Christians. It is the end of all the Sacraments** (cf. St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, 3, q.65, a.3). **In the Mass, the life of grace, which was deposited in us by Baptism and which grows, strengthened by Confirmation, is guided towards its fulfilment.**²

In the Mass, our union with God in Christ encompasses all love's ways of expressing itself – adoration, supplication, gratitude, reparation – and guides them to their fulfilment: **To live the Holy Mass is to remain in continuous prayer; to convince ourselves that, for each one of us, there is a personal meeting with God: we adore, we praise, we ask, we give thanks, we make reparation for our sins, we are purified, we feel made one in Christ with each and every Christian.**³

In uniting himself to Jesus Christ's self-surrender to the Father for the salvation of all mankind, the Christian learns to share in the longing to redeem, which filled the heart of the Son of God. Effective desires to serve his neighbour well up in his soul; to the sacrifice of Jesus he unites



The Founder of Opus Dei during Holy Mass, on 21 March 1964, in Rome.

Cover: Monsignor Escrivá de Balaguer at a get-together in Castelldefels Conference Centre, Barcelona (Spain), on 21 November 1972.

the offering of his life, his work, his joys, his sorrows: **In this Sacrifice is contained all that Christ wants of us.**⁴ In this Sacrifice the People of God are gathered together in the Love of Christ, and we Christians everywhere become and remain *consummati in unum*,⁵ perfectly made one, forming one single body, one single soul with Christ in his Holy Church.

So great is this mystery of Love that we must approach the Altar with our souls really clean, purified beforehand of our sins through the Sacrament of Penance. The Holy Father, John Paul II, emphasising that "in the Eucharist there is a special need for purity" and speaking of "those who may have a mortal sin on their consciences", has reaffirmed the centuries old teaching of the Church: "In such cases it is necessary to have recourse to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, so as to approach eucharistic Communion worthily."⁶

¹ *Christ is passing by*, 86.

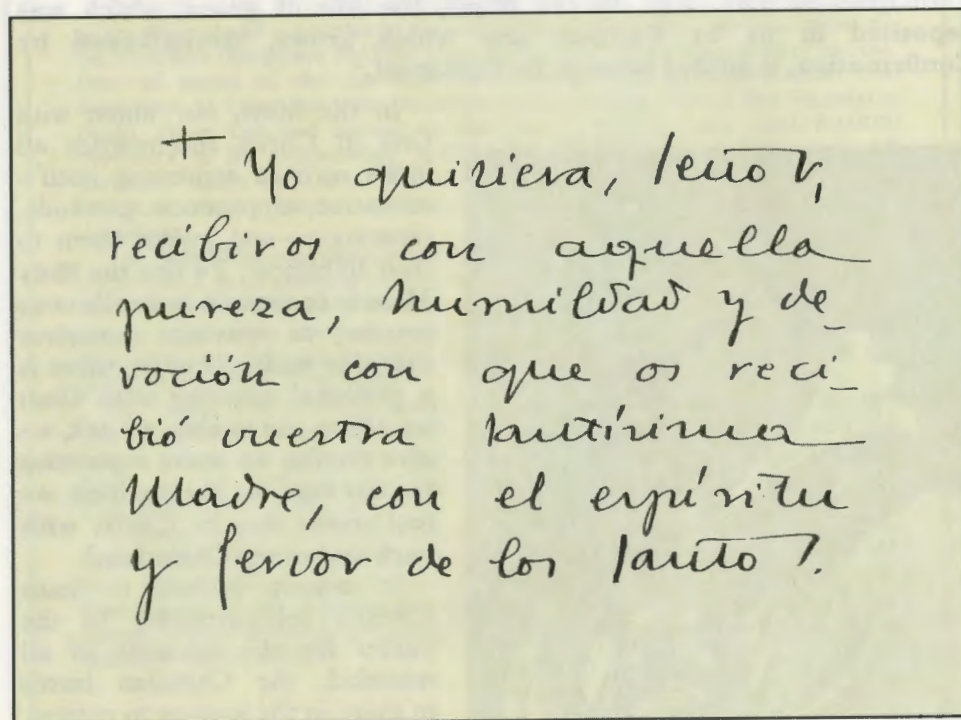
² *Ibid.*, 87.

³ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ John 17:23.

⁶ John Paul II, general audience of 15 June 1983.



The text of a spiritual communion which the Servant of God learnt when he was preparing for his First Communion. He repeated it throughout his life. Translated it reads: "I wish, Lord, to receive you with the purity, humility and devotion with which your most Holy Mother received you, with the spirit and fervour of the saints."

Passages from the writings of Monsignor Escrivá

He is Love! There is no other explanation for it. How far human words fall short when speaking of Christ's Love! He lowers himself in every way, accepts every kind of treatment, exposes himself to everything – to sacrilege, to blasphemies, to the cold indifference of so many men – so as to be able to offer, even to just one man, the possibility of discovering the beating of his Heart pounding in his wounded breast (*A Priest Forever*, a homily given on 13 April 1973).

The humility of Jesus: in Bethlehem, in Nazareth, on Calvary... But more humiliation and more self-abasement still in the Sacred Host: more than in the stable, more than in Nazareth, more than on the Cross.

That is why I must love the Mass so much! (*Our Mass, Jesus... (The Way*, 533).

Our hearts, mean as they are, are capable of bringing routine into this greatest self-giving of God to men (...). To correspond to so great a love requires of us a total self-surrender, in body and in soul: we hear God, we talk to him, we see him, we taste him (*Christ is passing by*, 87).

Son: tell Our Lord that henceforth, each time you celebrate or attend Holy Mass, and administer or receive the Eucharistic Sacrament, you will do so with a great faith, with a burning love, as if it were the last time in your life (*HRF (Historical Records of the Founder)* 20133, p.10).

Aman cannot love Christ if he does not love the Holy Mass, if he does not strive to live it calmly and serenely, with devotion, with affection (...). Love for Christ, who offers himself for us, will prompt us to find a few minutes, after Mass is ended, in which to make our own, intimate, thanksgiving, which will prolong in the silence of our heart that other act of thanksgiving which is the Eucharist (*Christ is passing by*, 92).

My son, think now about the Holy Mass: about how we should celebrate it or how we should attend it. Consider that the Angels are present. Realise that you are carrying out or taking part in a divine reality. Look, there on the altar, Christ is offering himself again for you. And you will feel a great desire to imitate his humility, his self-abasement in the Host; and you will become filled with acts of thanksgiving, with adoration, with desires of reparation, with petitions. And you will offer yourself, your arms opened wide, like any other Christ, *ipse Christus*, ready to nail yourself to the sweet wood, for love of souls (*HRF* 20133, p. 11).

God and Daring

Opus Dei was founded on 2 October 1928, and from that day on Monsignor Escrivá de Balaguer devoted himself fully to providing the many people whom Our Lord placed along his path (workers, students, artists, academics, priests) with spiritual and apostolic formation.

One area of apostolic activity in which he had a particular interest in those years was work with university students. He realised that, precisely because it was God's will that he should reach all sectors of society, this objective could be attained sooner working with young university students. He used to talk to them walking in the streets of Madrid or invite them to meet in his mother's flat. When they were out of town, in holiday periods, he would keep in touch with them by letter. Here, for example, are a few lines from a letter to one of those young men: **Trust entirely in Jesus. Speak to him, as he is, a loving Friend. Tell him about yourself, and about us. Parade us all before you: the 'oldies' and the new ones... and all those who are to come, to the end of time. Be convinced that he is listening to you, because it's true. Fill yourself with faith. With faith and Love. Turn to Our Lady and to Saint Joseph, our Father and Lord. Keep always on close terms with your Guardian Angel. All this is solid and sturdy devotion. If it should happen (or happen often) that you are dry and arid before the Tabernacle, and don't know what to say to Jesus... act as if you were on sentry duty guarding him: persevere as usual, to the last minute: faithful, like a little dog at the feet of its master.**¹



The DYA Academy had its premises on the first floor of this building in Luchana Street, Madrid, from the end of 1933 until the beginning of the academic year 1934-35.

By 1933, he had managed to gather together a fair number of university students and he decided to look for a place in which he could offer them more continuous and deeper formation, and which could also serve as a means of reaching more people. And so, in December of that year, after all kinds of difficulties, he opened the DYA Academy in a modest flat in Luchana Street, in Madrid.

The Centre was fitted out with items of furniture which Father Josemaría brought along from his mother's house or which had been generously donated by other people; but they had to make do with very little. Some of the young men who used to come along may have wondered, as they saw the plaque at the entrance, where the name *DYA Academy* came from. The Founder had in fact chosen an apostolic motto for this enterprise: **God and Daring!** (In Spanish – *Dios y Audacia*.) And, as the present Prelate of Opus Dei, Mgr. Alvaro del Portillo, has said: "The Father got the name for the first house from the initials of those three words, and it was also used later for the first residence in Ferraz Street – DYA. There were some people who used to translate it as 'Law and Architecture' (in Spanish – *Derecho y Arquitectura*). The Father would often just smile and say nothing, no doubt raising his heart to Our Lord using those very words as an aspiration – God and Daring!"²

In the Academy the students learned to work very hard and take good care of their spiritual and professional

development, so as to be able to serve the Church and society in a fruitful and Christian way.

Father Josemaría put his best energies into this work, which involved a great effort on his part and many long hours of work. He taught the young men the importance of order, how to make good use of their time, to be cheerful, to be sincere and have true piety, to love sacrifice such as that of faithfully fulfilling one's duty... Father Josemaría had a tiny study, simply furnished, where he used to receive the many persons who came to him for advice and guidance. On one of its walls there was a plain wooden cross, without its crucified; and from time to time they would hear the priest explain something which was later written in *The Way*: **When you see a poor wooden Cross, alone, uncared for and of no value... and without its Crucified, don't forget that that Cross is your Cross: the Cross of each day, the hidden Cross, without splendour or consolation..., the Cross which is awaiting the Crucified it lacks: and that Crucified must be you.**³

Apart from this spiritual guidance



The Servant of God with some students from DYA.

through personal conversations, he used to give them classes of formation in the apostolate and hear their confessions. In the evenings, which was when most of the students used to go along to the Academy, the Servant of God, who had already had a full day of priestly duties, would cheerfully forget his tiredness and make himself immediately available to these young people. Since space was in short supply in the Academy, he sometimes had to leave his room to allow it to be used for other activities and then he would go to hear confessions in the kitchen (which in fact wasn't used as a kitchen) and he would tell them jokingly that he felt as if he was in a cathedral, because so many were coming along for confession.

The DYA Academy had only been open a few weeks when the Founder, on 5 January 1934, got together several of the people who were involved in this apostolic undertaking and put to them the idea of expanding the work, setting up the Academy on a new site and also opening a university residence for the next academic year 1934-35. Some of those present thought the scheme madness, in view of the many difficulties they were already having to contend with, a bit like jumping off the fifth floor of a building with only an umbrella as a parachute. But, true to his apostolic motto, the Founder had meditated deep on the gulf that divides the projects of men from those of God: **God and daring! Daring is not imprudence. Daring is not recklessness.**⁴

Day after day was spent forming these students, both in the Academy and outside it, with days of recollection, visits to the poor and to sick people, teaching catechism to children. . . Judging by what he wrote to one of the young men of DYA Academy, it is not difficult to get an idea of the main topics on his mind: **And now for the most important things:**

1) Prayer: in your first letter, tell me, very simply, how your prayer is going. 2) Are you trying to nail yourself to the Cross of Christ a little each day,

living a life of expiation? Don't despise little things: they are the very things Our Lord is asking of you. 3) Study. How many hours are you putting in?⁵

Father Josemaría's watchful care suffered no interruptions, not even during the long summer holidays. Then his apostolic encouragement reached his friends by letter. The following lines are taken from a letter of his written in August 1934: **Try not to slacken in your life of piety: above all, lots of presence of God; and, Prayer: I was delighted when you told me how you were 'collecting' the prayers of grown-ups and young alike! We are two of a kind: God bless you!**⁶

At the end of September 1934 he managed to rent three flats at number 50 Ferraz Street, two on the second floor (which were to be used for the student residence) and another on the third floor (which was for the Academy). And so it was that nine months after that meeting on 5 January, in which his resolve to move to larger premises had been described as sheer madness, the Founder could give his followers the following piece of supernatural counsel, backed up by his own experience: **Take no notice. Madness has always been the term 'prudent' people apply to God's works. Forward! Without fear!**⁷

The DYA Academy and Residence opened in October 1934. This is how Father Josemaría described it to Mgr. Francisco Morán, Vicar General of the diocese of Madrid: **The academic year has started in DYA and I am hoping that the supernatural fruits we shall obtain in this house will be many, and also the results in terms of general culture and Catholic formation. My hope is firm, because the foundations of our work are prayer and sacrifice: I can say without exaggerating that our boys here are heroic. If you could only see how they make themselves available – university lecturers, working on the floor; engineers,**



From October 1934 the DYA Residence occupied two flats on the second floor of this building at 50 Ferraz Street, Madrid. The Academy was in another flat on the top floor.

painting walls; lawyers, medics and students (of the kind that really study) doing the work of carpenters – and the way they hand in their savings, for this apostolate!⁸

The difficulties the Servant of God had to go through were many. Bills kept coming in, and he had no idea how he was going to pay them; getting residents was a slow and difficult process; Father Josemaría for long periods had to do the cleaning himself. . .

The Servant of God drew interior strength from close contact with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. He used to spend long hours day and night close to Our Lord in the oratory of the Academy-cum-Residence, an oratory which had been difficult to set up and where he said the first Mass on 31 March 1935. It was the first Centre of Opus Dei to have a Tabernacle, something which the Founder had been longing for since 2 October 1928. This comes out in one of his letters

to the Vicar General, where he describes the much awaited event: **At long last, as I had the honour of telling your Reverence over the 'phone last Saturday, on Sunday, the day before yesterday, Holy Mass was celebrated in the Oratory of this House and his Divine Majesty was reserved in the tabernacle afterwards, thus amply fulfilling desires I have had for many years (since 1928).**⁹

His constant prayer and severe corporal mortifications, his zeal and dedication in the formation of these young university students, in spite of having to struggle tirelessly against the lack of time and the hostile environment in Spain at the time, was rewarded by God with great flowering of his apostolate. Simultaneously, the Servant of God was also carrying out a fruitful work of spiritual direction, through the confessional in the church of the Santa Isabel Foundation, in order to communicate this same spirit to women; and it was from among these women that the first vocations of the Women's Section of Opus Dei came. In the early months of 1936 he was already thinking of extending the number of Centres in Spain and was also dreaming of going to other countries.

The tiny seed that Our Lord had placed in the soul of the Founder was now taking root in other hearts, in which the following words of the Servant of God were coming true: **The closer an apostle is to God, the more universal his desires. His heart expands and takes in everybody and everything in its longing to lay the universe at the feet of Jesus.**¹⁰

¹ Letter, 25 January 1932.

² HRF 21504, no. 110, note 81.

³ The Way, 178.

⁴ The Way, 401.

⁵ Letter, 14 January 1934.

⁶ Letters, August 1934 and 20 August 1934.

⁷ The Way, 479.

⁸ Letter, 30 October 1934.

⁹ Letter, 2 April 1935.

¹⁰ The Way, 764.

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, 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, 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.

PIURA UNIVERSITY

Piura is an attractive Peruvian city, some six hundred miles north of Lima. It is the capital of the Department that bears the same name and has a hot, dry climate. Its principal source of wealth is agriculture although, thanks to a series of long term projects, Piura is now turning into a flourishing centre of industry and education.

Piura University began in 1968, on a sand-covered site dotted here and there



One of the University buildings.

with carob trees. It came into being through the apostolic initiative of a group of members and cooperators of Opus Dei, who received much encouragement and help from the city. What they wanted was to give a Christian response to the educational needs of this rapidly developing region of Peru. The University now has a three hundred acre campus, where the white-coloured university buildings are a clear sign of its steady growth.

The Founder of Opus Dei was the first Chancellor of Piura University. Here are some of the things he said in 1974 in Lima, when he met a number of people connected with the University: **I love the University and the whole population of Piura. I have a special love for the teaching staff, the students, the university employees, for you all: it's my duty to do so, as I'm the Chancellor! (. . .) Piura University is doing much good, to souls, to minds, to the entire people of Peru. . .**

His words brought a round of applause, which the Father immediately redirected: **This applause is for the teaching staff. It's for the student body, who never ever go on strike. What's the point of striking? Why? Staff and students are not two opposing forces. They are forces pulling in the same direction, pulling the same cart along, with a marvellous spirit of sacrifice. So our thoughts should be that, with God's blessing, this work will grow, will increase: we shall little by little set up all sorts of faculties...¹**

These words are indicative of the constant encouragement which the Founder gave to Piura University. Following his guidance an educational plan was drawn up which seeks to meet the requirements of the region and, especially, the demand for properly trained professional men and women. At present Piura University has over fifteen hundred students attending the following faculties: Liberal Arts, Engineering Science, Industrial Engineering, Journalism and Business Administration. As well as providing the normal degree courses, the University has set up a Department of Extramural Studies which runs programmes for local people in subjects such as Industry, Commerce, Secondary Education and Economics. Aided by its favourable geographical situation, Piura University also runs international



The Servant of God on 29 July 1974 in Larboleda, a conference centre near Lima. Lecturers and students from Piura University took part in the get-together.

cultural and educational programmes open to students from the countries of the Andes Pact.

The University offers its students an all-round programme of education, comprising not only academic but also human and spiritual formation. The atmosphere can be described as one of personal freedom and responsibility, of getting on with one another and genuine cooperation. Each and every one feels encouraged to put his or her abilities and efforts at the service of others.

In keeping with this policy of offering students a complete education is the generous staff-student ratio of one member of staff for every nine students. This means that all students are assured of the direct assistance of a member of staff throughout their course of studies.

Only 13% of the students pay full fees. A further small percentage pay reduced fees. The great majority of students receive free tuition, bearing in mind their financial circumstances. The University therefore relies on the support of many generous



In the chemistry laboratory.

people; income is also received from work done for industry in the university's engineering workshops.

Enough has been said to give an idea of the scope of the task of human and Christian development which the University of Piura has set itself, under the inspiration of its first Chancellor. A recent event can serve as an example of what the University is trying to achieve. In the early part of 1983 hurricanes devastated this region of Peru. For months Piura was in a state of emergency. The University itself did not escape, some of its buildings were flooded. The opportunity was taken to place at the service of others the combined expertise of the academic staff, the enthusiasm of the students and the skills of the university workshops, through an Emergency Committee which channelled aid programmes while the disaster lasted. Piura University had been putting into practice a

much repeated teaching of the Founder of Opus Dei: **The University must educate its students to have a sense of service: of service to society, promoting the common good with their professional work and their civic activity. University people need to have a sense of responsibility, with a healthy concern for the problems of other people and a generous spirit which brings them to face these problems and to try to find the best solution to them. It is up to the University to give all this to its students.**²

¹ HRF 20771, pp. 336-339.

² *Conversations with Mgr. Escrivá de Balaguer*, 74.

Letters received

THE TUMOUR DISAPPEARED

We live in Juanacatlán, a village about an hour away from Guadalajara. My sister was suffering from cancer and we had taken her to hospital in Guadalajara. She had been there for some time and we, the members of the family, were taking it in turns to be with her. But her condition got much worse, till one day the doctor called to tell us that nothing more could be done. He could not operate, and it would be better for us to take her home and let her die peacefully.

We were all very concerned, but we still hoped for a miracle from Mgr. Escrivá and so we began to pray even more intensely for him to intercede for her cure.

The day we brought her home, she was very uncomfortable and was unable to sleep for many hours. The next day we asked the parish priest to bring her Holy Communion, but she was unable to swallow even a drop of water or a tiny particle. We were even more upset at the thought of her dying without her having received Communion, so we redoubled our prayers. I decided to place the prayer card of the Servant of God directly over the tumour: she fell asleep at once and slept for almost two hours. When she opened her eyes, she asked for some milk and drank it without any difficulty. She slept again, this time for a longer stretch. When she awoke the second time, she asked for a normal meal and was no longer in pain; and when I touched the spot where a large tumour had been clearly noticeable, it had completely disappeared. We went back to the doctor who had given her up and he was amazed to see her. He told her clearly that he had been sure she was already dead.

M. C. S., Juanacatlán (Mexico)

A BAD SCARE

My eldest son was bitten on the hand by a funnel-web spider while lying in his bed. This spider is one of the most deadly in the world and shortly before several people, both adults and children, had been killed by funnel-web bites.

The immediate effect was one of intense pain and my son screamed loudly. His hand and lower arm quickly swelled. I caught the spider in a glass jar and we rushed my son and the spider to the District hospital. During this time we were praying continually to Monsignor Escrivá, hoping that all might be well.

At the hospital the spider was identified as a male funnel-web. I was told that its venom is six times more deadly than that of the female and that on a weight for weight basis it was the most toxic poison in the world. The hospital had no experience of anyone surviving.

Meanwhile, my son was admitted to the hospital and almost immediately the pain and symptoms began to disappear. After three hours observation and no medical treatment, he was released from hospital.

The doctors could give no satisfactory explanation. We attribute the outcome to the intercession of Monsignor Escrivá.

J. A. W. (Australia)

GOOD EXAMINATION RESULTS

My nephew had failed virtually every exam since he entered secondary school. The principal of his school said he had no chance of getting his Leaving Certificate examination. So six weeks before his exam I decided to make a final effort. I told him that our family were praying to Monsignor Escrivá for him. Shortly afterwards John, my nephew, surprised everybody by beginning to study hard. He sat his exam and on the morning the results were released he telephoned the college. "A miracle has happened" the teacher exclaimed, "You have passed your examination". Within a week, with renewed confidence in himself, John obtained a place on a course which will train him for a good career. The family and I gave thanks to Monsignor Escrivá.

T. R., Sligo (Ireland)

AN 'IMPOSSIBLE' FIND

One day on the beach I dropped a contact lens as I was trying to put it on. As it was very windy, I thought it would be impossible to find it since it could have been blown far away. My friends and I prayed hard for Mgr. Escrivá de Balaguer to intercede, but suddenly a wave flooded the area where we were. I had almost given up hope when a friend of mine, who is short-sighted and was not wearing her glasses at the time, found the lens.

Not only did she find it a long way from where I had dropped it but, in spite of having been covered with sand, it had not the slightest scratch on it.

M. B. (Peru)

UNHURT IN ACCIDENT

I am a lawyer, and on the morning of June 1st I had gone to the Law Courts. I had left there to go to a government office to see about some papers. I had walked some six blocks when I entered the Church of the Saviour to make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament. As I left I was repeating to myself the words of the prayer to Mgr. Escrivá. When the traffic lights changed I began to cross Tucuman Street. Suddenly I saw a Fiat 600 coming towards me. I tried to reach the kerb, and managed it, but the car kept coming towards me. I fell to the ground and one of the front wheels of the car ran over my body. The car then crashed into a shop front.

The driver of the car jumped out, screaming; he thought he had killed me. But his astonishment was even greater when he saw me getting up unaided from under his car. Seconds later I was on my feet and trying to clean my jacket. I began to give thanks, for what happened was a miracle. The only traces of the accident were some oil stains on my trousers and some turquoise paint left on my leather belt where the car had passed over me.

When I reached my parents' house and told them what had happened, they said it was a miracle of Father Josemaría.

A. P., Buenos Aires (Argentina)

I am suffering from the painful disease of hernia for more than one year. Sometimes it was giving more pain to me and prevented my work. One day I felt particularly bad. Just then an old man came to my house and gave me the Newsletter of Mgr. Escrivá, and went away. I read the Newsletter and the many favours reported in it. I prayed to God through the powerful intercession of Mgr. Escrivá with great confidence. Next day when I woke from my bed I was O.K. and I am able to do even heavy work. I am very grateful to my kind and merciful Father Mgr. Josemaría Escrivá.

A. S. F., Tuticorin (South India)

On 22nd February I was called to Stoke Mandeville Hospital at about 11.00 p.m. to the Childrens ward where there was a seriously ill baby of 3½ months. I was told that she would not survive the night. I baptised her and also gave her the Blessing for Sick children and placed her under the protection of Mgr. Escrivá. It was thought that she had an abscess on the brain and she was in an incubator. In later tests after a brain scan and a lumbar puncture she was found to be clear. Thank God she is now feeding normally and seems to have made a complete recovery. As a result of this the mother is back to the practice of her faith and her other little girl has been baptised.

Fr G. R., Aylesbury (England)

One of my grandchildren struck his head on the metal hinge of his cradle. The result was a two inch gash that bled profusely. His mother was so dismayed that all she could do was weep. I immediately took the prayer card of Mgr. Escrivá out of my handbag and placed it on the head of the child while praying for the terrible bleeding to cease through the intercession of the Servant of God. The wound stopped bleeding immediately and we were able to take him into hospital where the surgeon gave him an anaesthetic and put stitches in the wound. The raw flesh could be seen, but there was no bleeding.

A. H. (Singapore)

I gave the prayer card of Mgr. Escrivá to a friend of mine. She told me she had got a number of acquaintances of hers to pray for another friend who had a lung infection that required an operation. However, there was a problem: if he had the operation he would be unable to sit some examinations which were quite important for him. So these people decided to pray to Mgr. Josemaría for him. When the patient went to the doctor, he was told that the X-rays showed that the infection had disappeared. He was perfectly well and did not need the operation.

V. M. (Zambia)

I prayed to Mgr. Escrivá for three and a half years about a matter that worried me a lot. My daughter had fallen in love with a divorced man. I tried to tell her she was making a mistake, but couldn't persuade her to give up her idea of marrying him. I continued asking Mgr. Escrivá to make her understand, but it seemed to get more and more difficult. They had even fixed the date of the wedding. With just a month to go, we don't know how, she suddenly broke off the engagement. We just couldn't explain how this seemingly impossible thing came about. I am sure that we owe it to the most powerful intercession of Monsignor Josemaría Escrivá.

X. X., Columbia (United States)

Letters received

Last anniversary of the Founder of Opus Dei's death, my husband got some invitation cards and newsletters. He being a non-Catholic, he gave them to me. When I read the newsletter and saw the prayercard, I was convinced that several novenas to the Founder would surely make my husband to become a Catholic. I had tried sometime back but nothing happened.

I am a mother of three, so with my two older children we offered several novenas with all the faith. It is hard to believe but during these novena days I decided to check with him again if he would like to be converted so that we get married in church. "Yes, Margaret, we better go ahead." From that time he started his catechism classes at St Paul's University Chapel. Friends were amazed to see him going almost every evening for classes. So on 11th February, on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, my husband was baptised, received his First Holy Communion, and we got married, witnessed by Rev Fr X before he left for his new post in New York.

M. N. K., Gilgil (Kenya)

I prayed to the Servant of God, Mgr. Escrivá de Balaguer, asking him to intercede with God for me and solve a very serious situation in which I found myself. My prayers have been heard. Everything has turned out very well. Thanks. I send a donation as an offering for the Cause of Beatification.

X. X., Manchester (England)

My grandmother had been ill for some time when the doctors said she had cancer and didn't have long to live. My mother and I were very worried about the way she would be approaching death. From the days of her youth my grandmother had shown a deep aversion for the Church and never received the sacraments or went to Mass.

Whenever we spoke about this we had been unable to convince her. It seemed humanly impossible to bring about a change in so short a time.

So my mother and I made a novena to Mgr. Escrivá de Balaguer for my grandmother to be reconciled with God before her death.

A month after the cancer had been diagnosed she got worse and had to be taken into hospital. One day the hospital chaplain came in, and my grandmother spontaneously asked for confession and communion. She died that same day.

Her sudden change of attitude was undoubtedly due to a special grace that God granted my grandmother through the intercession of Monsignor Escrivá. Since then I have frequent recourse to his intercession.

X. X., Saragossa (Spain)

I had a sharp pain in my chest and lower abdomen for some time. I had recourse to the intercession of Mgr. Josemaría Escrivá, asking him to cure me in body and, spiritually, to draw me closer to God.

One morning I woke up with a feeling of well-being I had never felt before. The pain in my chest had disappeared and so had the troublesome swelling that had been bothering me. I said nothing about this to anyone for a week, because I wanted to be sure. I can confirm that the pain has not returned. I am sure that it was due to Mgr. Escrivá. I have no doubt that he is a Saint and will soon be canonized.

X. X., (Nigeria)

Two very close friends of mine had not been practising their faith for twenty years. I tried to help them in several ways, hoping that one day they would fulfil their duties again.

I then gave them the prayer card of Mgr. Escrivá and some time later they went to confession and received Holy Communion. Now they are praying for their children.

A. R. W., (Wales)

Tuesday. Ten days ago my husband brought me your Newsletter, which he had found in a church. I read it and when I saw the favours obtained through the intercession of Mgr. Josemaría, I said to myself, "I am going to begin a novena for my son." He is a schoolteacher, but is at present unemployed. I began last Monday and this morning we received a telephone call from the Prefect of the Region. . . offering my son a post. . . and he begins tomorrow. . . , exactly nine days after I began my prayers. I wanted to tell you about it, to contribute to the glorification of the Servant of God Josemaría and to give thanks.

Y. B., (Belgium)

I am thirty-five now and I was eighteen when I got married. From that time my 'hell on earth' began. My husband was an alcoholic. I did not know this before we married, as he was very careful to hide his vice from me. He drank too much and came home very drunk. It was very difficult to put up with him.

We have three children and no one can imagine the dreadful time we went through. I wept and implored my husband, when he was well, to change, to give up drinking for our sake and the sake of the children. But he did nothing to change. I even considered taking the children and leaving him.

Finally, my father gave me a prayer card of Monsignor Escrivá. My children and I began to pray devoutly and sincerely for the conversion of my husband, for him to give up drinking. I have been astounded at the change in my husband – not a sudden change, but little by little. I could see that he wanted to be a good husband and that he was drinking less. We continued praying even harder. Since then, in a few months, my husband has changed completely. He has stopped drinking and has become my beloved husband and a good father to his children.

K. P., Tarnow (Poland)

THE CAUSE OF CANONIZATION OF MONSIGNOR JOSEMARÍA ESCRIVÁ

On 12 May 1981 the Process of inquiry into the life and virtues of the Servant of God began in the Vicariate of Rome. Six days later a similar tribunal, set up in the Archdiocese of Madrid to receive the testimonies of some of the witnesses, held its first session. The Madrid Process ended on 26 June 1984.

The Postulator of the Cause of Canonization of Monsignor Escrivá de Balaguer has presented a lengthy list of witnesses who knew the Founder of Opus Dei personally and whose memories cover the whole lifespan of the Servant of God, from his early childhood until his holy death.

Also in Madrid, in 1982 and 1983, Processes of inquiry were conducted into two extraordinary cures, attributed to the intercession of Monsignor Josemaría Escrivá. One concerned a nun who had been cured instantaneously of a tumour, and the other a Catalan woman who had complications from a malignant lymphoma. The Tribunals collected the relevant medical documents and testimonies and then sent them for study to the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of the Saints.

Published works of Mgr. Escrivá

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: over 3,100,000 copies have been published in 192 editions in thirty-six languages. English editions currently published by Scepter (London and 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 391,000 copies in 65 editions have been published in fourteen languages. English editions by Scepter.

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 32 editions have been published in seven languages and a total of 258,000 copies. 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 45 editions have appeared in eight languages and a total of 325,000 copies. Published in English by Scepter.

Friends of God

A second 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 27 editions, with a total of 230,000 copies in six languages. English editions published by Scepter.

The foreword is by Monsignor Alvaro del Portillo, the present Prelate of Opus Dei.

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. To date, 19 editions in 8 languages have been published with a total of 177,000 copies. Published in English by Scepter.

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.

(All the above are available from booksellers or through Scepter Ltd., 1 Leopold Road, London W5 3PB.)

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.

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