



The Servant of God
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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 haven 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 Priestly 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 prelatic Church 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 Canonisation of Monsignor Escrivá was presented in Rome on 19 February 1981.

Opus Dei founded sixty years ago

The Servant of God Josemaría Escrivá and Opus Dei will always be inseparably united because, as we read in the prayer for private devotion, he was *a most faithful instrument* chosen by God to found the Work of God. From the date of its foundation, on 2 October 1928, the Servant of God spent his entire life, with all the zeal and capacity to love which God had given him, in promoting the growth and development of Opus Dei.

Years later he was asked how Opus Dei started. Remembering how he had begun without any resources whatsoever, the Founder humbly replied: **Without any human means. I was a twenty-six year old priest with nothing but God's grace and good humour. The Work was born very small. It was only a young priest's desire to do what God asked of him.**¹

Sixty years have gone by since that 2 October. The message which God put into his priestly heart was, in his own words, **a novelty as old as the Gospel, which enables people of all classes and conditions, without any discrimination of race, nation or language, to make the sweet encounter with Jesus Christ in their daily tasks. It is simple novelty just like the 'good news' of the Lord.**²

In a few short years the divine seed bore abundant fruit; so much so that the Servant of God could say in 1967: **Who are the men and women who have accompanied this poor sinner, following Christ? A small percentage of priests . . . And finally a great multitude of men and women of different nations, and tongues, and races, who earn their living with their professional work. The majority of them are married, many others single. They share with their fellow citizens in the important task of making temporal society more human and more just. And they work, let me repeat, with personal responsibility, shoulder to shoulder with their fellow men and experiencing with them successes and failures in the noble struggle of daily endeavour, as they strive to fulfil their duties and to exercise their social and civic rights. And all this with naturalness, like any other conscientious Christian, without considering themselves special. Blended into the mass of their companions, they try at the same time to detect the flashes of divine splendour which shine through the commonest everyday realities.**³

The message that Father Escrivá was proclaiming was novel: that the vast majority of Christians are called to strive for holiness in and through their ordinary daily work in the midst of the world. That very novelty led to misunderstandings and slander. This has always happened to institutions of divine origin. In the midst of suffering and sorrow, the Founder never lost his cheerfulness and good humour,

Cover: Monsignor Escrivá in Castelldaura Conference Centre, Barcelona (Spain), in November 1972.

which he transmitted to his followers: Do you know why the Work has developed so much? Because they have treated it like a sack of corn; it's been beaten and battered about. But the seeds are so small that they haven't broken. On the contrary, they've been scattered to the four winds; they've landed wherever there have been hearts hungry and ready for the truth. And now we have so many vocations and we are a very large family, and there are millions of souls who admire and love the Work because they see in it a sign of God's presence among men, and recognise the inexhaustible riches of his mercy.⁴

"Since Opus Dei has grown, with the help of divine grace," Pope John Paul II states in the Apostolic Constitution *Ut sit*, "to the extent that it has spread throughout the world and works in many dioceses throughout the world, as an apostolic organism made up of priests and laity, both men and women, which is at the same time organic and undivided – that is to say, as an institution endowed with a unity of spirit, of government and of formation – it has become necessary to give it a juridical configuration which is suited to its specific characteristics."⁵

And so, in 1982, the Pope established this "very large family" – which the Founder of Opus Dei spoke of – as a personal Prelature, following guidelines which came from the spirit of the Second Vatican Council. That was the juridical framework the Founder wanted. He had prayed for it for many years, and had asked others to pray for it, as it would permit Opus Dei to be "an apt and effective instrument of the salvific mission which the Church carries out for the life of the world."⁶

Sixty years have passed since that 2 October. Opus Dei is a reality of apostolic work in the service of the universal Church and of the particular churches. Its growth and development continue, with God's grace, and its members, by the way they live their lives and by their apostolic activity, try to carry on the divine work which God placed in the soul of the Founder. Opus Dei exists solely for the service of the Church and of mankind: its task is to endeavour "to put into practice the teaching of the universal call to holiness, and to promote at all levels of society the sanctification of ordinary work."⁷

What has been achieved so far has been possible, the present Prelate, Mgr Alvaro del Portillo, said with filial gratitude in 1983, because "Opus Dei has always had, throughout its lifetime, the ongoing help of the blessed Virgin Mary, whom our Founder loved passionately. I would say that it is Mary who has been guiding all our steps. We can sense her maternal protection in a tangible way."⁸

¹ *Conversations with Monsignor Escrivá*, 32.

² S. Bernal, *A Profile of the Founder of Opus Dei*, p 108.

³ *Conversations . . .*, 119.

⁴ S. Bernal, *A Profile . . .*, p 303.

⁵ Apostolic Constitution, *Ut sit*, 28 November 1982: AAS 85 (1983) p 423.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *L'Osservatore Romano*, 25 March 1983, p 7.

Don't let your life be barren. Be useful. Make yourself felt. Shine forth with the torch of your faith and your love.

With your apostolic life, wipe out the trail of filth and slime left by the unclean sowers of hatred. And set aflame all the ways of the earth with the fire of Christ that you bear in your heart. (*The Way*, 1)

'P'ray', you said, 'that I may be generous, that I may progress, and be able to change in such a way that one day I may be useful in something.'

Good. But what means are you using so that these resolutions can be effective? (*Furrow*, 3)

'H'he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy.' I know that such thoughts don't fill you with pride nor lead you to think yourself better than other men. That choice, the root of our vocation, should be the basis of our humility. Do we build monuments to an artist's paintbrush? Granted the brush had a part in creating masterpieces, but we give credit only to the painter. We Christians are nothing more than instruments in the hands of the Creator of the world, of the Redeemer of all men. (*Christ is passing by*, 1)

I often feel like crying out to so many men and women in offices and shops, in the world of the media and in the law courts, in schools, on the factory floor, in mines and on farms and telling them that, with the backing of an interior life and by means of the Communion of Saints, they ought to be bringing God into all these different environments, according to that teaching of the Apostle: 'Glorify God by making your bodies the shrines of his presence.' (*The Forge*, 945)

The Lord's calling – vocation – always presents itself like this: 'If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.'

Yes: a vocation demands self-denial, sacrifice. But how pleasant that sacrifice turns out to be – *gaudium cum pace*, joy and peace – if that self-giving is complete. (*Furrow*, 8)

Why don't you try converting your whole life into the service of God – your work and your rest, your tears and your smiles?

You can . . . and you must! (*The Forge*, 679)

Your aim should be that there be many souls in the midst of the world who love God with all their heart.

It's time to do your sums: how many souls have you helped to discover that Love? (*The Forge*, 898)

Intimations of God's Love

On 28 June 1974, the Founder of Opus Dei flies over the peaks of the Andes mountains on his way to Chile. A few hours later he is in Alameda Hall of Residence in the City of Santiago, surrounded by students. He urges them to be better, to commit themselves to the beautiful and arduous task of Christian formation. Mgr Escrivá had been carrying out an intense work of catechesis in South America: first in Brazil, then in Argentina. He had spoken to many thousands of people, from all social backgrounds, answering their questions about how to live the Gospel in their family and in their work; he opened up new horizons of love of God to many souls. Each meeting reminds him of the beginnings of the Work in Madrid.

Out of the blue, a young lad stands up and says:

"Father, I am not in Opus Dei, but what can I do to join?"

The Servant of God was familiar with youthful impatience. Perhaps, for a few seconds, he remembered his own adolescent years . . .

Tell me, how old are you?

"Fifteen, Father."

At your age, I wasn't in Opus Dei either. Nor did I know what Opus Dei was . . . Opus Dei didn't even exist . . . I was searching as you are. At your age, more or less, when our passions are making themselves felt, pulling us here, there, and everywhere, and our eyes see everything, I felt inklings of Love. I'm not embarrassed to tell you; the others here can't hear us. It's just you and me, on our own. I was your age when I felt

inklings of Love. And, with the grace of God, I changed. It's not that I was bad up to then. And who knows, maybe you too are having inklings of Love?

Opus Dei is a way of love. In Opus Dei you can travel all the paths of the earth making them divine, being at the same time very human, because God our Lord doesn't ask inhuman things from us. If I am talking to you with this love of an older brother and of a Father, it is because I am a man just as yourself. And when I talk to our Lord, to God, I talk with my ordinary voice or silently, because some times I pray out aloud and at other times in my heart. And I tell him that I love him, because it's true. I use this human heart, which I could have given in love to a woman; this heart, with which I loved my mother and father, to answer you now, and to love God.

I think you have inklings of something. Allow yourself to be led by grace! Allow your heart to take flight! Though it may be true that man's heart is drawn downwards towards vile things, it is also true that it has wings to fly high, to fly up to the heart of God. Write your own novel, a novel of sacrifices and heroic deeds. With the grace of God, your dreams will fall short.¹

AT THE AGE OF FIFTEEN

That boy's question invites us to go back in history. It is Christmas time in the winter of 1917-18. Thick snow covers the



Statue of our Lady of the Angels, in a chapel in Santa Maria La Redonda, where the Servant of God frequently went to pray.

area around Logroño, capital of the Rioja district in Spain. It is very cold indeed. The temperature has fallen to sixteen degrees below zero, the lowest ever experienced in Logroño. The trees, streets and houses look like the imaginative work of a giant sculptor. The river is a sheet of thick ice. It is dangerous to walk in the streets, despite the straw scattered by the council employees.

Josemaría Escrivá lives with his family in a corner house in Sagasta Street, at the junction with Rúa Vieja, close to the iron bridge over the river Ebro. These last few

days he has gazed on the unusual sight of the city under snow. One morning he comes upon footprints in the snow, the footprints of a Discalced Carmelite, Father José Miguel.

That detail of heroic self-denial stirs up generous longings in the soul of Josemaría: other people are able to live a life of sacrifice for love of God. What am I doing for Him? So many manifestations of the Love of God in my adolescent years come to mind, the Servant of God said, many years later, when I had inklings that God wanted something from me, but I didn't know what it was. God used ordinary, apparently innocent, events and details to sow that divine unease in my soul. That's why I understand so well that love, which is so human and so divine, of Teresa of the Child Jesus, who is moved when she sees a picture of the wounded hand of our Redeemer in a book. Things like that have happened to me too, things which moved me and led me to go to daily Communion, to Confession, to purification and to penance.²

All that time, Josemaría is asking for the light to see the will of God. He prays: it is an eager, trusting prayer, asking that what Providence seemed to want might come about, though he does not know what it is. For about three months he goes to the Carmelites to speak with Father José Miguel. He tells him what is going on inside: the horizons of love which God is opening up in his soul. Father José Miguel realizes that his young man is beginning to savour the love of God, and he suggests that he might think about becoming a Carmelite.

Josemaría meditates on the idea. But having thought about it deeply, he comes to the conclusion that God has other plans for his life. From then on he often goes to a church called Santa María la Redonda; there is a beautiful baroque side-altar in that church dedicated to Our Lady of the Angels. To her loving care he entrusts all that is on his mind.

VOCATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD

He has inklings of God's love, he feels a divine call. To be more available for what our Lord might ask him, he decides to become a priest. Prior to that, the idea had never crossed his mind. Years later he himself spoke about those events:

I had a deep love for priests, because my upbringing at home was deeply religious. I had been taught to respect and to venerate the priesthood. But it wasn't for me; it was for others.

When I was in secondary school, I remember, we studied Latin. I didn't like it. In a silly sort of way, I used to say – I'm sorry about it now – 'Latin is for priests and monks . . .' You see how far I was from thinking about being a priest?³

He is not interested in an ecclesiastical career, but he feels that by being a priest he will be more available to fulfil the will of God; he still does not know what God wants, but it is a determining factor in his life.

In the spring of 1918 he tells his father, José Escrivá, what he has in mind. His father is still working hard to provide for the needs of the family; he has had a number of serious setbacks in business and his financial situation is critical. His son's decision takes him completely by surprise. In a single stroke he sees all the plans he had in mind for his only son come tumbling down. Despite all the hardship and sorrow of the previous years he had never wept, but now, torn by emotion, he felt tears come to his eyes. The Servant of God remembered that day very vividly:

One day I told my father that I wanted to be a priest. It was the only time I saw him cry. He had other plans in mind for me, but he didn't reject my idea. He said:

'Think about it, son, think about it deeply. Priests have to be saints (. . .). Think a bit more about it, but I won't oppose what you decide to do.'⁴

His father fully respects Josemaría's decision. He takes him to see Fr Antolin Oñate, Abbot of Santa María la Redonda,

so that he might advise him and help him to follow his vocation.

Meanwhile, the Servant of God keeps on asking for light to see the will of God: *Domine, ut videam!* Lord, that I may see. He prayed confidently that what God wants of him may become a reality; again and again he repeats the aspiration *Domine, ut sit!* Lord, that it may be. May what you want be done. Many years go by like that, in darkness. He perseveres in prayer, with faith and hope that the seed which our Lord had placed in his mind and heart would grow and bear fruit.

Around that time, Josemaría writes to his aunt, Cruz Albás, a sister of his mother; she was a Carmelite nun in the convent of San Miguel in Huesca. He tells her of his decision to go on for the priesthood and that he needs grace and light to know the plans of God, who has, at sixteen, taken over his whole being. Throughout his life he would often ask contemplative souls to help him do what God was asking of him.

Personally he feels unable to respond properly to God's call. He often recited a litany rooted in deep humility: **I am worth nothing, I have nothing, I can do nothing, I am nothing, I know nothing . . .**⁵ But he feels strong and safe in the arms of his Father God. And with youthful generosity he allows himself to be led by the divine madness which was going to dominate his whole life. That cry which came from the heart of young Samuel, also rises from his: *Ecce ego, quia vocasti me!* **Here I am because you have called me!**⁶

IN THE SEMINARY IN LOGROÑO

In October 1918, Josemaría registers in the seminary of Logroño as an external student, to begin his studies in theology. There are quite a few doing their studies that way.

He has done very well in secondary school; he has a good clear mind, and an open, good-mannered personality. His classmates would remember his natural



Logroño, May 1921. The Servant of God, aged 19, with his brother Santiago.

refinement, his upright behaviour and his spirit of service in friendship.

A period of sacrifice and of joy begins for him: a time of growth in love of God, in generosity, in ascetic struggle.

From that time onwards, and for a period of ten years of trusting and unceasing prayer, in the darkness of intimations of a divine call to something God has not yet revealed to him, the Servant of God keeps on asking that it might become a reality: Lord, that it may be: *Domine, ut sit!* Mary, that it may be: *Domina, ut sit!*



Secondary school in Logroño which the Servant of God attended during his final school years.

¹ HRF (Historical Records of the Founder) 20771, p 45

² HRF 20164, pp 316-317

³ HRF 20164, pp 218-219

⁴ HRF 20164, p 219

⁵ HRF 20164, p 357

⁶ 1 Sam 3:9

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.

NETHERHALL HOUSE

London

Netherhall House is a hall of residence for students attending courses at the University of London and at other places of higher education in London. It began in April 1952. The idea had been prompted by Monsignor Escrivá who, from the very beginning of the apostolic work of Opus Dei in Great Britain, had encouraged his sons to set up this international residence as a way of contributing to the human and spiritual formation of university students. He always had considered London as **a crossroads of the world**, attracting many thousands of students from all over the world. His great love for souls made him realise how much good could be done for



A view of Netherhall House.



The Queen Mother officially opens the new Netherhall House.

the Church's evangelising mission in countries far away by providing a service such as this university hall of residence proposed to offer.

The purpose of Netherhall House and of other university residences imbued with the spirit of Opus Dei was clearly expressed by Monsignor Escrivá in an interview in 1966 with the *New York Times*: **they provide not only a place to stay but numerous activities to complete students' human, spiritual and cultural training. Netherhall House in London is perhaps specially interesting because of its marked international character. Students from more than fifty countries have lived there. Many of them are non-Christian, since Opus Dei's houses are open to all without racial or religious discrimination.**¹

Monsignor Wheeler, who was then Chaplain to London University and later Bishop of Leeds, got to know this centre in those first years. He recalls: "When Netherhall House was started I used to recommend students to go there. This was my first contact with a house of Opus Dei, but since then I have seen

them in many different places. (. . .) The thing that always pleases me about Opus Dei houses is the spirit of civilisation – the right kind of civilisation. There is no excessive grandeur; there is always tasteful understatement, and yet a real Christianising of the civilisation of our time. A family spirit is always noticeable. This is something I appreciated too. It is a spirit of great personal discipline and integrity. The Founder of Opus Dei had got the right balance."²

The popularity of Netherhall grew rapidly with the years, and soon larger buildings were needed. Thanks to the interest and encouragement of Monsignor Escrivá – who visited Netherhall House several times during the journeys he made to London between 1958 and 1962 – a set of new buildings was completed in 1966. They were opened on the first of November that year by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, then Chancellor of London University. In her opening speech the Queen Mother referred to the need there was in London for good residential accommodation for university students, especially those from overseas. Then, referring to the beliefs and standards which typify university life at its best, she added: "I cannot imagine a better place to foster such standards than Netherhall House, which is based on Christian traditions – above all on the tradition of service."

The new buildings doubled the capacity of the house raising it to a hundred places and provided better working areas, such as a study room and library, which are also available to non-resident students. Further facilities were also added for carrying out a varied programme of cultural activities: an auditorium, where lectures, concerts and films can be held, and seminar rooms for meetings and tutorials.

It would have been difficult to imagine in 1952 that in a little over quarter of a century, five thousand residents from a hundred different countries would pass through Netherhall House. People of the most varied religious backgrounds have come to appreciate the values of the Christian faith and have spread throughout the world the message of friendly help and mutual understanding which they saw being practised in the residence. From the start Netherhall was characterised by a friendly family atmosphere in which the Christian spirit of solidarity and brotherly love



London, August 1961. The Servant of God with some members of Opus Dei, when plans were being drawn up for the new Netherhall.

is able to overcome any difference in mentality, culture or race.

Apart from the help they receive and the means that are made available to the students so that they attain a high academic standard, they are also encouraged to render services to other people, by taking part in the running of boys' clubs and in other activities such as visits to the elderly, the sick and the poor. The spirit of service and dedication to others that they experienced during their stay in Netherhall helped many of them, who were non-Christians, to get to know Christ, and in some cases to be received into the Catholic Church. It has led others to take part in apostolic ventures in Britain or as far afield as Japan, Nigeria, Kenya, Hong Kong and Malaysia.

On completing their courses the students have returned to their own countries and many of them manage to keep in touch with Netherhall. When they write, or when they visit the residence again, they invariably express

their deep gratitude and appreciation for the time they spent there and for having experienced the great novelty of the Christian message they shared with their fellow university students. **Here, living together in this way, Monsignor Escrivá had said, personality takes shape. Each individual learns that in order to be able to demand respect for his own freedom he must respect the freedom of others. (...) Each person's individual talents have to be put to the service of others; if not they are of little use. The corporate works which Opus Dei runs throughout the world are always at the service of everyone, because they are a Christian service.**³

¹ *Conversations with Monsignor Escrivá*, 56.

² *Scottish Catholic Observer*, 23 April 1982.

³ *Conversations* . . . , 84.

Letters received

THE WHOLE FAMILY WAS CONVERTED

In May I went on pilgrimage to a shrine of Our Lady with a friend of mine who told me that the father of an ex-pupil of mine was gravely ill and might die very soon.

We decided to take the sick man a prayer card of Mgr. Escrivá and a *Newsletter*, although we knew that neither he nor any of his family were Christians. That is what we did and we suggested to him that he should put the prayer card under his pillow. My friend and I decided to pray for his conversion through the intercession of Mgr. Josemaría Escrivá.

Two or three months later, this friend of mine rang me. The sick man had died two days earlier and the funeral had taken place in the Catholic Church of the town where he lived. He had been baptised the day before his death.

"It is thanks to the intercession of Mgr. Escrivá!" she exclaimed twice, and she explained that whilst he had still been quite lucid he had specifically asked to be baptised.

When I went to offer my condolences to the widow and children, I was surprised at the cheerful atmosphere. In the funeral chapel, arranged Japanese style, next to the photograph of the dead man was a silver cross and a prayer book; in the visitors' room was a picture of Our Lady. They explained to me that the sick man always kept the prayer card of Mgr. Escrivá under his pillow, since he had received it, and that when they changed his bedclothes he had always felt with his hand to make sure it was in its place.

In addition, that grace had not only been for that one soul; his wife, his daughter and her children and his daughter-in-law had all decided to receive instruction to prepare for baptism. In June of this year, the man's wife was baptised and the others are continuing with their preparation and instruction in order to do the same.

A. M. B., Ashiya (Japan)

AFTER A NOVENA

My daughter had a very good job, but the offices where she worked were very far away from our home; it took her three hours by car to get there and back each day. In the evening she was extremely tired.

I decided to do a novena to Mgr. Escrivá, going for nine consecutive days to pray at his tomb. On the ninth day my daughter found a job in a publishing house 20 minutes from home.

In view of the difficulty of finding work which young people have nowadays, I consider this to be a miracle and I am sending this letter in testimony of the fact. I am also enclosing a donation.

I. C., Rome (Italy)

SHE HAS BECOME A CATHOLIC

This letter is long overdue. Earlier this year my friend asked me to pray for her future daughter-in-law who was to marry her son in the summer, but who was not a Catholic and was not even baptised. As this friend is a very good person, I prayed to our Father, using the prayer card.

At the beginning of August she told me that X was being received into the Church a few days before the wedding. And she made her First Holy Communion at the Nuptial Mass! We are sure that this is all due to prayer especially through the intercession of Mgr. Escrivá.

So this letter of thanksgiving is to let you know that our Father is very busy in the Marian year. Kindly accept the enclosed offering.

Mrs. K. D., Manchester (England)

HE CAME BACK TO LIFE

Our eighteen-year-old son was knocked down by a car, the driver of which drove straight on, leaving him lying in the road with a fractured skull. We took him to hospital where they told us there was no hope. However, they were going to operate, simply to close the fracture. After the operation they told us that they had not been able to remove all of the splinters he had (there were many of them) and that he also had a pulmonary oedema but that they were not going to attend to this as he was going to die anyway. He was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit in a deep coma, expected to die at any moment. I was sure our son would not die.

We asked a priest to come and give him the Last Sacraments, which he did. I placed a prayer card of Mgr. Escrivá on the bed. Our son was expected to die between the fifth and the tenth day but when the consultant came to see him he saw that the patient was showing signs of recovery. One of the doctors in the team who did not believe in God, said when he saw him: "Tell me where this Monsignor lives, because I must write and tell him he has performed a miracle."

But this was not all. Our son was in a coma for 26 days. When he began to come round, they moved him to another room, no longer on a drip. They offered him breakfast, which he ate. They told me that we would need a speech therapist to teach him to speak again as he would be unable to do so. But as soon as he saw me he called out, 'Mum!' He told me his name, age, address and even the telephone number. Two years later he went back into hospital to have his skull repaired. But a week later he was home, and a month after that he began a teacher training course and got good marks at the end of the year.

This is a multiple miracle which Mgr. Escrivá has done for our son, who was dead and came back to life. I am writing down this testimony as a sign of my gratitude towards the Founder of Opus Dei and so that it may serve for the Cause of his Beatification.

P. G. A., Santiago de Compostela (Spain)

HE CAME BACK HOME

Out of eternal and devoted gratitude for the mediation before our Lord of Mgr. Josemaría Escrivá, I need to make known a favour which has been granted for me.

Eighteen months ago my husband left home, intending to obtain a legal separation and start a new life.

I prayed the prayer for private devotion to Mgr. Josemaría Escrivá, asking for his Beatification to take place soon and praying for the peace and love of my home to return. I never lost hope or faith in his intercession.

It is now about three months since my husband came back to me. He is a changed man and is now much more understanding. It is a real miracle!

Since then, I always implore Mgr. Escrivá to help me and I too have changed and am secure and optimistic. He guides me in everything and with his help I have achieved happiness for myself and for my children. We will never forget him!

O. B. P., Santiago (Chile)

THEY DECIDED TO BE BAPTISED

I should like to give an account of a favour which I obtained for a friend of mine, thanks to the intercession of Mgr. Escrivá. This friend told me one day that neither she nor her children were baptised. I immediately began to pray to Mgr. Escrivá asking him to help my friend realise the need to receive this sacrament. My prayers were more than heard. Not only were the children baptised Catholics but my friend is receiving instruction to become a Catholic too and will soon be baptised.

B. M. B., Loftus (Australia)

THEY RETURNED TO THE CHURCH

My parents were married in a registry office more than 40 years ago. My father wanted nothing to do with the Church and both he and my mother had abandoned it 11 years ago.

My wife and I began to invoke repeatedly the help and intercession of Mgr. Escrivá. A year ago both my parents became gravely ill. Once again we invoked with insistence the help of Mgr. Escrivá.

Ten days before he died, my father asked to come back into the Church, went to Confession, received the Sacrament of the Sick and Holy Communion. At the same time, my mother also asked to be re-admitted into the Church, went to Confession and asked to receive the sacrament of matrimony. They both died soon after, my father three days later and my mother three weeks after that.

We give thanks to God for these gifts and we are firmly convinced that these conversions are due to the help and the intercession of Mgr. Escrivá.

M. L., Vienna (Austria)

Letters received

Once again my prayers to Josemaría Escrivá have been answered. My son had tried for many months to get a place at the Poly in Brighton; each time he phoned them they told him that they had enough people for the computer course. I began to pray to Josemaría, and today my son phoned us to say he has got a place on the course which begins in September. My thanks to you all and good luck with your work. God bless. Enclosed is a small donation.

Mrs. J. R., Wallasey (England)

At a time when I felt really dejected (unemployed, ill, and with family problems) a friend asked me for my address without explaining why. Some months later I received a *Newsletter* through the post. After having read it with attention and interest, I began to pray trustingly the prayer for private devotion to the Servant of God Mgr. Escrivá. I asked God, through the intercession of His servant Mgr. Josemaría, firstly for interior peace and joy, and little by little I began to feel calmer. Secondly, five months later, I obtained a job in which I occupy a management position similar to my previous job but which is more advantageous as far as conditions go. Finally, my other problems have gradually disappeared. I cannot but attribute these favours to the help and intercession of the Servant of God, to whom I continue to have recourse. I give thanks for all this. Now I can sing: "I will bless the Lord always and in every place". I should like to receive the other *Newsletters*. Thank you.

B. N., Kisangani (Zaire)

I would just like it to be known that I believe that Josemaría Escrivá may have helped me. I am not a very faithful person, but in desperation I prayed and today I received my exam results and I will be returning to University. I had very little hope of passing my exams and I think that I may have obtained the results I needed through the intercession of Monsignor Escrivá.

P. D., Glasgow (Scotland)

I was dying, because the medicines I was taking were producing no improvement. One evening a cousin of mine who hadn't been for two years came to see me and on seeing how bad I was, spoke to me about Mgr. Josemaría. She took me to see the doctor, who told me to go to a hospital for infectious diseases. She also spoke to me about Mgr. Josemaría, gave me a prayer card and told me to say the prayer. I went to the hospital and was admitted the following day.

After having done some tests, they diagnosed leprosy. Four days after having been admitted there was a surprising improvement in my condition, and after two weeks I was discharged.

The doctors at the hospital could not believe it, but I could, because I had a lot of faith in the intercession of Mgr. Josemaría.

S. M. C., Llavallol (Argentina)

I would like to notify you, as requested on a prayer card, that I have received favours through the intercession of Monsignor Escrivá de Balaguer.

I was given this card about 10 years ago when I was very worried about my daughter: she had become very muddled about her values and what she was going to do with her life. I prayed the prayer on the card and have done ever since especially for her.

She is now a wonderful wife and mother and running a very successful business. She is a very gifted person and I feel Josemaría has helped in her realising her God-given potential. Thank you.

X. X., London (England)

In a convent in my own country an elderly nun had had a disease of the legs for a long time, which made her suffer a lot. She had been treated in various hospitals without success. One day she spoke to me about her long illness and the suffering it caused her and I then began a novena to my beloved saint Mgr. Josemaría. After a few days, I went to see her and asked about her pains; she told me they had disappeared and that she no longer had any symptoms of her illness.

This nun also suffered from another problem, in that she had blurred vision and although she had been advised to change her glasses, after several months there was no improvement. I began to pray to Mgr. Josemaría and her sight improved. Now she can read and write without help. She considers these two experiences nothing but miraculous cures.

Ch. B. Singh, Nagar (India)

For more than twenty years I had on my back a sort of spot, black in colour, which was slowly growing and from time to time became inflamed and very painful. In the skin hospital they had advised me against having it removed.

After a time the spot had grown noticeably and was causing me even more pain. I began to pray through the intercession of Mgr. Escrivá. I prayed in the morning and at night. A month later while bathing, I noticed that the swelling had gone down somewhat and was flatter. I had promised that if God wished to hear my prayer and the spot went down, I would write to thank you. Today, with my heart filled with joy, I write to say that the spot has dried up and the scar almost disappeared with no medicine, in five months. I have received many graces from Mgr. Josemaría. I have distributed many prayer cards with the prayer of Mgr. Josemaría to sick people.

H. B., Poznan (Poland)

The original texts of these accounts, with the names and addresses of the writers, are in the archives of the Office of the Postulator of the Cause.

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*. In it appears the warm brotherly understanding of the author, 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 1934 entitled *Consideraciones espirituales*. Since then it has been reprinted many times, with a total of 3,480,000 copies in thirty-eight 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 which one contemplates when saying the Holy Rosary.

The first edition also appeared in 1934. A total of over 525,000 copies have been published in eighteen 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 first edition was published in 1968. From that time a total of 293,000 copies have been published in seven languages. 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 1973. It has since had a total printing of over 360,000 copies in nine languages. Published in English by Scepter.

Friends of God

A second collection of eighteen homilies in which the author's warm and filial conversation with God is centred 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. From that time a total of 267,000 copies have been published in seven languages.

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

The Way of the Cross

A 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; it is now available in nine languages with a total printing of 231,000 copies. Published in English by Scepter.

Furrow

A new posthumous work "like *The Way*, *Furrow* is the fruit of Monsignor Escrivá's interior life and experience with souls. It was written with the intention of encouraging personal prayer and making it easier. Because of its approach and style, then, it cannot be classified as a systematic theological treatise, though its rich and deep spirituality does contain profound theology" (*Foreword* by Monsignor Alvaro del Portillo). The first edition was published in October 1986. 265,000 copies in six languages have been published to date. It is being translated into five other languages. Published in English by Scepter.

The Forge

The Forge is the latest posthumous work to be published. It "is a book of fire. Reading it and meditating on it can bring many souls to the forge of divine Love and enkindle within them a zeal for holiness and apostolate because this was the desire of Monsignor Escrivá" (*Foreword* by Monsignor Alvaro del Portillo).

It was first published in October 1987, with 213,000 copies being printed in six languages. 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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