



The Venerable Servant of God
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NEWSLETTER No. 12

Holy See recognises miracle of the Venerable Josemaría Escrivá

Monsignor Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer was born in Barbastro, Spain on 9 January 1902. He was ordained to the priesthood in Saragossa on 28 March 1925.

In Madrid, on 2 October 1928, by divine inspiration he founded Opus Dei, which has opened up to the faithful a new way of sanctification in the middle of the world, through exercising one's ordinary professional work and in the fulfilment of one's family, social and personal obligations. Thus it has been a leaven of fervent Christian life in every environment. On 14 February 1930 the Venerable Josemaría Escrivá understood, with the grace of God, that Opus Dei had also to develop its apostolate among women. On 14 February 1943 he founded the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross, inseparably united to Opus Dei. Opus Dei received its definitive approval from the Holy See on 16 June 1950; and, on 28 November 1982 it was established as a personal Prelature. This legal framework had been desired and foreseen by the Venerable Josemaría Escrivá.

Through a life of constant prayer and penance, exercising heroically all the virtues, with loving dedication and untiring concern for all souls, and with a continuous and unconditional self-surrender to the will of God, Monsignor Josemaría Escrivá fostered and directed the expansion of Opus Dei throughout the world. When he rendered up his soul to God, 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. A deep sense of his divine filiation, maintained in the continuous presence of the One and Triune God, 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 Saint Joseph, 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 on 26 June 1975, in a truly saintly way, Monsignor Escrivá gave up his soul to God in Rome, in the room where he worked.

His body lies in the crypt of the prelatial 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 Canonisation of Monsignor Escrivá was presented in Rome on 19 February 1981. On 9 April 1990 the Holy Father Pope John Paul II declared the heroicity of the Christian virtues of the Venerable Servant of God.

On 6 July 1991 at 12.40 pm, there took place before the Holy Father the public reading of the decree recognising as miraculous a cure attributed to the intercession of the Venerable Josemaría Escrivá, founder of Opus Dei. In the presence of various Cardinals, Bishops and officials of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, the Pope formally approved the medical and theological conclusions reached by the Congregation concerning this impressive event. Also present at the ceremony, which took place in the Apostolic Palace, was Bishop Alvaro del Portillo, Prelate of Opus Dei.

The confirmed miracle involved a 70-year-old Spanish Carmelite nun, Sister Concepción Boullón, who was suddenly, completely and permanently cured of tumours. Medical consultants for the Congregation for the Causes of Saints confirmed the diagnosis as being multiple calcific lipomatosis with numerous widespread painful and debilitating deposits, the largest one in the left shoulder being the size of an orange. She was extremely wasted, and had a gastric ulcer and hiatus hernia with a severe iron deficiency anaemia.

Another important step has therefore taken place in the Cause of the Founder of Opus Dei. In praying fervently for the Canonization of the Venerable Josemaría, we are thanking God with all our heart for the countless favours which he has granted abundantly all over the world through the intercession of his Servant.

As was already stated by the Decree on heroic virtues, the spread of private devotion to Venerable Josemaría Escrivá is evidence of "a genuine expression of popular devotion". The decree on the miracle speaks of "tens of thousands of favours, both spiritual and material, including some that are patently extraordinary", attributed to the Founder of Opus Dei and which confirm "the power of his intercession before God".

More than 75,000 signed statements have been submitted from all over the world regarding favours received through his intercession. In addition the Postulation Office has compiled 1,200 pages of documentation on 20 other cures attributed to the Founder of Opus Dei which, according to specialists, cannot be explained scientifically.

Cover: *The Venerable Josemaría Escrivá in La Lloma Conference Centre, Valencia (Spain), 14 November 1972.*

The Pontifical Decree

The Pontifical Decree recognising the miracle attributed to the Venerable Servant of God Josemaría Escrivá

The Venerable Josemaría Escrivá was born in Barbastro, Spain, on the 9th of January 1902. His specific ecclesial charism is to proclaim in strong and clear terms that the call we receive in baptism is really and truly a call to holiness. On the 2nd of October 1928, at God's instigation, he founded Opus Dei. Not long afterwards, on the 14th of

February 1930, he understood, with the help of God's grace, that Opus Dei had also to develop its apostolate among women. On the 14th of February 1943, likewise moved by God, he founded the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross. The result was that faithful in all walks of life – priests and lay persons, men and women – saw opening before their eyes a broad way of sanctification in the midst of the world through the practice of daily work and in the loving fulfilment of their ordinary duties, without changing their state in life. After zealously guiding the expansion of Opus Dei to the five continents, the Venerable Josemaría Escrivá yielded his soul to God in Rome on the 26th of June 1975, with a widespread reputation for holiness.

Throughout the world, his message, incarnated in a solidly structured pastoral institution, is yielding an extraordinary harvest. Christ Our Lord allowed him to see during his lifetime the wonderful redemptive fruitfulness contained

CONGREGATIO DE CAUSIS SANCTORUM

DECRETUM

ROMANA et MATRITEN.

CANONIZATIONIS

VEN. SERVI DEI

Josephmariae Escrivá de Balaguer

SACERDOTIS

FUNDATORIS

SOCIETATIS SACERDOTALIS SANCTAE CRUCIS ET OPERIS DEI

(1902-1975)

SUPER DUBIO

An et de quo miraculo constet, in casu et ad effectum de quo agitur.

Venerabilis Servus Dei Josephmaria Escrivá de Balaguer natus est Barbastrí, in Hispania, die 9 Ianuarii, anno 1902. Peculiare charisma ab eo in Ecclesiae aedificationem acceptum in sollemni consistit proclamatione indolis primigenae, quam praesertim vocatio baptizatorum, utpote ad sanctitatem vocatio. Divina ductus impulsione, die 2 Octobris, anno 1928, Opus Dei condidit, cuius apostolatum paulo post, die nempe 14 Februarii, anno 1930, inter mulieres quoque, divina gratia adiutus, exercendum esse intellexit. Die 14 Februarii, anno 1943, divinitus pariter impulsus, condidit Societatem Sacerdotalem Sanctae

in the search for total union with Christ in one's ordinary activities, when they are carried out with a view to Christianizing the world *from within*.

When he died, countless testimonies, from far and wide, gave witness to the heroism he had displayed throughout his life. Upon completion of all the legal requirements, on the 9th of April 1990, the Holy Father Pope John Paul II deigned to issue the decree on the Servant of God's heroic exercise of the virtues.

Tens of thousands of favours, both spiritual and material, including some that are patently extraordinary, have helped to confirm his growing reputation for sanctity and the power of his intercession before God. Among the prodigious cures attributed to him, is one of a 70 year-old Carmelite Sister of Charity, Sister Concepción Boullón Rubio. After the Servant of God had been invoked, one night in June 1976, the sister, who had been at the point of death, was cured in a sudden, complete and lasting way, of an illness that has been diagnosed by the Medical Committee of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints as: "a tumorous lipocalcinogramulomatosis in a subject of white race with multiple pain-causing and debilitating deposits, and attaining a maximum mass the size of an orange in the area of the left shoulder". Along with the illness, there was a concomitant pathological condition diagnosed by the same Medical Committee as follows: "Cachectic state in a patient with a gastric ulcer and a hiatus hernia, complicated by acute hypochromic anaemia". At the time when the swellings disappeared, this second illness also improved suddenly and inexplicably to the point of disappearing definitively. The same Committee



The Holy Father, Cardinal Edouard Martínez Somalo, and the Prelate of Opus Dei, Monsignor Alvaro del Portillo, on 6 July 1991 after the reading of the Decree.



6 July 1991. After the reading of the Decree of the miracle attributed to the intercession of the Venerable Josemaría Escrivá.

has stated that the prognosis had been seriously inauspicious *quoad vitam* and *quoad valetudinem* (as regards life and health).

A process of enquiry to examine this extraordinary cure was held in the offices of the Archbishop of Madrid, lasting from the 21st January to the 3rd April 1982. This process received the decree of validity from the Congregation for the Causes of Saints on the 20th of November 1984.

As is laid down by law, the case was submitted first to the examination of the aforementioned Medical Committee. In its session of the 30th of June 1990, the Committee gave its unanimous opinion that the cure of Sister Concepción Boullón Rubio could not be attributed to natural causes.

After this the cure was examined from a theological point of view by a Special Congress of Theological Consultors which met on the 14th of July 1990 under the chairmanship of the Promoter-General of the Faith, Monsignor Antonio Petti. It was then examined on the 18th of June 1991 in an Ordinary Congregation of Cardinals and Bishops, held at the Vatican Apostolic Palace, with Cardinal Edouard Gagnon acting as Presenter. Both bodies unanimously gave a positive judgment regarding the existence of a miracle and its attribution to the Venerable Josemaría Escrivá.

Having received from the undersigned Cardinal Prefect an accurate and faithful account of all that is related above, and having accepted and ratified the votes of the Congregation, the Supreme Pontiff Pope John Paul II ordered that the Decree on the aforesaid extraordinary cure be drawn up.

That order having now been carried out, and the Cardinal Prefect, the Presenter of the Cause, the undersigned Secretary and others according to custom having been summoned today, the Holy Father has declared in their presence: *Proofs exist of the miracle performed by God through the intercession of his Venerable Servant Josemaría Escrivá, Priest, Founder of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei: that is, of the instantaneous, complete and lasting cure of Sister Concepción Boullón Rubio, Carmelite Sister of Charity, of a tumorous lipocalcinogranulomatosis in a subject of white race with multiple pain-causing and debilitating deposits, and attaining a maximum mass the size of an orange in the area of the left shoulder; and of a cachectic state in a patient with a gastric ulcer and a hiatus hernia, complicated by acute hypochromic anaemia.*

Voluit autem Sanctitas Sua ut hoc decretum publici iuris fieret et in acta Congregationis de Causis Sanctorum referretur.

Datum Romae, die 6 mensis Iulii A. D. 1991.

Angelo Card. Felici
 Prefectus

+ Eduardus Nowak
 Archiepiscopus Tit. Luniensis
 a Secretis

The Holy Father has indicated that this decree be made public and be recorded in the Acts of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

Given at Rome, on the 6th of July of the year 1991.

L + S

Angelo Card. Felici, *Prefect*

+ Edward Nowak, Titular Archbishop of Luni, *Secretary*.

A miraculous cure

Sister Concepción Boullón Rubio was born in Burbáguena, in the province of Teruel, Spain, on 23 January 1906. In 1929 she made her profession in the Congregation of the Carmelites of Charity, founded in the 19th century by St Joaquina de Vedruna for teaching and charitable works. The nuns who lived with her in the convent of San Lorenzo del Escorial, near Madrid, recall her virtues and were themselves edified by them. Sister Pilar Prieto particularly recalls “her spirit of acceptance of the Will of God, especially in matters of physical suffering. She treated pain as a manifestation of God’s Will and, therefore, as a way of serving him”.

This reference to pain is not gratuitous, since for many years Sister Concepción was afflicted with a number of illnesses so that finally, in the spring of 1976, she was on the verge of death.

The first occasion for alarm was in 1972 when certain acute and persistent gastric symptoms appeared. Afterwards, towards the end of 1974, some very painful lumps appeared on her left shoulder, left foot and right thumb. These tumours grew to a considerable size within a short period; the one on the shoulder, for example, reached the size of an orange. The immobility, sleeplessness, and very intense pain brought her to a state of complete prostration. In their statements, the other nuns make special reference to the frequent haemorrhages and weight loss of their sister in religion, who went from 12 stone 12 pounds to 6 stone 8 pounds. “Sister Concepción looked like a corpse,” they state.

As the tumours grew, the gastric disease also worsened. It was at that time that a hiatus hernia and a gastric ulcer were detected. The latter bled heavily. The two sets of symptoms were independent of each other, but their combined effect on her physical condition made any kind of stomach surgery extremely dangerous. Dr Muñoz, the radiologist in the case, stated: “There was no possible way of carrying out this kind of treatment, due to her precarious physical condition.”



Sister Concepción Boullón Rubio after her miraculous cure.

About the middle of 1976, Sister

Concepción seemed to be terminally ill. The doctors predicted her imminent death: “The general condition of the patient was gradually worsening. The digestive pathology was following an alarming course, and the tumours caused her enormous pain.” The Mother Superior, Sister Leandra Herranz, recalls the verdict of one of the community’s doctors: “He told us not to bother her, that Sister would be with us but a short time.”

The histological examination of a biopsy specimen, using the most advanced techniques, enabled a precise diagnosis of lipomatosis to be made. This is an uncommon disease and little is known about its cause. Clinical experience has shown that the only useful treatment for such tumours is surgical removal. Although her illness was not due to cancer, specialists unanimously agreed that the prognosis of death within a short period, as formulated by the doctors who cared for Sister Concepción, was the correct one. Professor Ortiz de Landázuri, a prestigious Spanish internal medicine specialist, wrote: “These tumour masses were not only not innocuous for the patient, but they caused her general condition to deteriorate as well. This particular combination of medical disorders was definitely life-threatening.”

In anticipation of her death, which was now thought to be imminent, she was given no treatment except for some analgesics “in moderate doses” and with a “very poor” response, according to the attending physician, Dr. José Wangüemert.

Sister Concepción never prayed for her own cure. This fact rules out a possible subconscious psychological influence in the cure. One of the physicians later stated: “Sister Concepción’s abandonment in God was such that she did not consciously wish to improve. She sincerely believed that God our Lord was asking her to offer up that painful condition, and she accepted it with the greatest willingness.”

The other nuns of her convent adopted the same approach, as Sister Pilar Prieto recalls: “Neither did we in the Community feel that we ought to pray for her cure, as Sister Concha’s (Concepción) serenity and acceptance of God’s Will was such that it edified us.”

It was Sister Concepción’s own family, her sisters, who prayed for her through the intercession of the Servant of God Josemaría Escrivá. They turned to the Servant of God in the closing months of 1975, and this recourse to his intercession grew more insistent as the condition of Sister Concepción grew worse. Her sister Felisa explains, “On one occasion we were coming back from a trip, my sisters Josefina and Carmen, and myself. And I recall that we said the Rosary for our sister who is a nun. We prayed for her cure through the intercession of the Servant of God. I remember that day, about the middle of June 1976, as a cousin had given me a present of a book and some prayer-cards of the Servant of God. From that day on, as often as we said the Rosary together, we used to offer it for my sister’s cure, through the intercession of the Servant of God.”

Another sister, Josefina, says that every morning she prayed for Sister Concepción in front of a prayer-card of the Founder of Opus Dei while she cleaned the house.

By mid-June 1976, in spite of the alarming news coming from the convent, Sister Concepción’s sisters did not get discouraged but rather intensified their petitions. And,



At a get-together in Brafa, Barcelona (Spain), on 25 November 1972.

due to their prayers, the cure suddenly happened.

During an especially difficult night, Sister Concepción felt such an acute pain that she believed her last hour had come. The doctor states: "She was resigned to it and was at peace. She saw she was going to die and she offered her life to God." About five o'clock in the morning she finally went to sleep. She rested for about two hours, and at seven, feeling better, decided to take a shower. It was then that she realised that the tumour on her shoulder had disappeared. Even though no wound was visible, she thought the tumour could have ruptured and went to see whether the sheets were stained, but could see nothing. She decided to dress, and as she was putting on her slippers she saw that the tumour on her left foot had also disappeared, leaving no trace.

The recollections of the Mother Superior, Sister Leandra Herranz, help to fix the amazing disappearance of the tumours at about the middle of June 1976: "I can still recall a fact that allows me to be more precise about the date of the cure. On 21 June 1976, due to an injury Sister Pilar Prieto had received, she had to go to the doctor and be X-rayed. I told Sister Concepción to go with her, which means she was already cured by that date."

The cure was absolutely sudden, to the point that immediately after the disappearance of the tumours, Sister Concepción was able not only to get up and go to the shower, but to go to Mass together with the other nuns. A few days later she even went out, to accompany another nun on a visit to the radiologist. In summary, she went in a very short time from death's door to a practically normal life. The other nuns recall that

even on the very morning on which the tumours disappeared, she said she felt very well.

The radiologist, Dr Fermin Muñoz, was very surprised when he examined her: "If I were still a student I would put this case under study, because this is one for the history books!" he exclaimed. A few days later the attending physician, equally stupefied, checked the cure and ordered an X-ray examination and said: "The complete disappearance of the tumour tissue in those pictures is startling." Later series of X-rays confirmed that the cure was total, as Dr Wangüemert himself testifies: "In X-rays taken later, of the hands, feet and shoulders, there is no tumour visible, nor does any X-ray image show any residual signs of the tumours which the patient had in 1975."

Together with the cure of the tumours, a progressive disappearance of the gastric problems Sister Concepción had suffered since 1972 was observed. The haemorrhages suddenly stopped, the anaemia began to resolve, and the X-rays showed no signs of the gastric ulcer. Professor Ortiz de Landázuri has stated: "From that night in June 1976, the patient continued to make remarkable progress. After the disappearance of the tumours, the digestive problems started to recede and the patient's overall condition improved." The radiologist testifies explicitly to the disappearance of the ulcer: "The last X-ray examination which I made of Sister Concepción was of her stomach on 22 October 1977. There was no trace of a gastric ulcer."

The medical experts who visited her in 1982 during the canonical process testified that the cure had been total and that in all that time the illness had not reappeared: "The



During a get-together in Brafa, Barcelona (Spain), on 22 November 1972.



Rome, 26 March 1970.

subjective condition of Sister Concepción is excellent.” “Sister Concepción Boullón Rubio is completely cured.”

Mrs María López Boullón, her niece, was able to personally observe the rapid improvement of Sister Concepción: “I remember that she was with us during Christmas 1976 and even ate spiced sausage, and it agreed with her. That same Christmas I had a baby, and Sister Concepción offered to take on the housework, as well as looking after my other four children. And she helped my mother with everything, being well enough to do so.”

For the doctors there is no doubt that, from the scientific standpoint, the cure is inexplicable, as Dr Muñoz testifies: “All the physicians involved with the case were amazed, and could find no scientific explanation which would explain her cure.” Dr José Wangüemert states the same thing: “Such a sudden disappearance of the tumours described, with no treatment, is not medically explicable.”

During the Process of investigation of the miracle, the tribunal entrusted to two specialists the task of verifying that the cure had been complete. These men declared: “There is no scientific explanation nor is there any similar case to be found in medical literature.”

The experts of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints had no doubt either: “Lipomatosis is a disease which can only be cured by surgery.”

In addition, the physicians not only recognise that the cure of lipomatosis falls completely outside the possibilities of science, but also that the simultaneous normalization of the gastric problems was not a natural occurrence: “In one night in June 1976 the firmly hardened, calcified tumours diagnosed as lipomatosis suddenly disappeared.

From that moment on, there was a spectacular change from her grave condition to one of normal health, with no pharmacological or any other intervention, such that from that moment she was able to lead a normal life. Both the sudden disappearance of the tumours as well as the rapid general improvement are not scientifically explainable.”

This conclusion is also shared by the specialists of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints: “There is no possibility of attributing the cure of either of the two pathologies to any intervention, either medical or surgical. For this reason, due to the rapidity of the cure and the permanence of its effects, no natural logical explanation can be given. According to our scientific knowledge, the cure must be considered inexplicable.”

From the very first moment, Sister Concepción and the nuns of her convent were certain that a miracle had been worked, and that it was owed to the intercession of the Venerable Josemaría Escrivá. In the community they remember how Sister Concepción liked to recall that, forty years earlier, a cousin of hers had asked her to pray for Opus Dei, and from that day she had done so regularly. For this reason she considered the favour received “also like a reward for all her prayers for Opus Dei over the past forty years.” Sister Pilar Prieto and Sister Leandra Herranz have declared: “Sister Concha never had any doubts in that regard. For her, this was something from God. From the time of the extraordinary cure of her disease, which we all attribute to the intercession of the Servant of God Monsignor Escrivá, she felt that if God had prolonged her life, through the intercession of the Servant of God, it was so that she could serve Him more and sanctify herself more fully.”

Sister Concepción Boullón Rubio died on 22 November 1988 at the age of 82 of nephrosclerosis and chronic renal failure. More than twelve years had passed since the marvellous cure of the disease which had brought her to death’s door. The physicians

declared that her death was in no way related to the affliction from which she was miraculously cured.



With farm workers, in June 1970 (Mexico).

Letters received

HE RECEIVED THE LAST SACRAMENTS

My brother developed cancer of the lungs, which came as a shock to him and to all of us.

He had not been to the Sacraments for a very long time, and I had been praying for his conversion through the intercession of Monsignor Escrivá. Now that my brother had become very seriously ill, I intensified my prayers, and I tried to encourage him to make his confession and receive the Sacrament of the Sick – but he would not agree.

After several operations and immense suffering, my brother developed secondaries on his brain, and his days were now counted. I implored God through the intercession of Monsignor Escrivá, to give my brother the grace of conversion before it was too late.

On the 29th of June, the feast of Sts Peter and Paul, early in the morning, I had a 'phone call from the hospital: my brother was dying and he wanted to see me. "He asked me to tell you that he had made his confession and received the last sacraments last night."

He died that evening.

I will be forever grateful to Our Lord for His mercy and to Monsignor Escrivá for his intercession. He is a most helpful and generous friend, and I recommend, very warmly, having recourse to him.

Mrs J.O., London (England)

MY HUSBAND'S REMARKABLE RECOVERY

My husband was suddenly taken ill on November 9th 1989. He was rushed into hospital and, when under surgery, it was found that he had peritonitis and septicemia in an advanced state. Such an advanced state, in fact, that in the words of the surgeon "thirty-two feet of his intestines were like blotting paper". I was told he was fading fast. After the operation he was given three different types of anti-biotics continuously in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and it was two weeks before his wounds began to heal; he was unconscious for two and a half weeks and on a ventilator. I should perhaps mention that during this period his kidneys started to fail and dialysis was suggested. After the operation his heart fibrillated. Also his breathing got weaker and a tracheotomy was suggested.

I started to say the novena to Father Josemaría Escrivá on that very morning in the ICU waiting room, together with two friends. I kept this prayer up every day and a fortnight after the operation I can say, "I got the peace of mind that surpasses all understanding", and I told friends at church that morning that he was going to get better.

My husband has since made an astonishing recovery: he left hospital before Christmas last and has been walking for several miles every day since the end of January. He has continued writing a mathematical paper and he has resumed teaching an "A" level maths student; he started lecturing again in statistics in April.

Although the nursing in the Intensive Care Unit was superb, I put down my husband's recovery to prayer. He would not be here now if it were not for that.

My husband's recovery is all the more remarkable because he is sixty-three years old and he has been regarded in the past as having, at best, indifferent health.

Mrs J.M.H., Ormskirk (England)

THEY DID NOT HAVE POSTULANTS

There is great devotion to the Venerable Josemaría Escrivá in the convent of Trinitarian nuns in Concepcion (Chile). It all started when a historian, a friend of mine, began to study the history of the arrival of this religious community to Chile. After interviewing the Mother Superior of the convent, he gave her a prayer-card with the prayer for private devotion to Monsignor Escrivá.

Soon after that my friend went back to the convent, and the Mother Superior told him that the Venerable Josemaría Escrivá was very 'miraculous'. They had gone to his intercession asking for vocations, since they had not had any postulants in quite a number of years. In a few days, four postulants arrived. Since then, at a fixed hour, all the nuns of the convent pray the prayer-card.

W.L. (Chile)

THE DEFINITIVE STEP

My father lived completely separated from the Church, due to resentment caused by the unjust death of his brother, who was executed at the end of the Spanish Civil War. During all these years, I was scared of speaking with him about the need to go to Confession, about receiving the Sacraments and returning to the Catholic Church.

At the end of last February my father fell ill, and was diagnosed as having lung cancer. The doctor said he would die very soon. We had always been praying to God for him, but after this, we intensified our prayers, asking our Lord, through the intercession of Monsignor Escrivá, for the conversion of my father and his return to the Faith, the Church and the Sacraments.

On the 10th of March, I very clearly received the courage I was lacking to go and speak with him. His immediate response was to ask to see a priest, to speak with him. On the 11th of March, a priest came to see him, and my father made his Confession, and received Holy Communion and the Anointing of the Sick.

His life lasted for another nine days, during which he continuously gripped a crucifix. He died on the 21st of March, full of interior peace. The whole of our family also had this sense of peace, and as a consequence I am sure that thanks to the intercession of Monsignor Escrivá de Balaguer, my father has taken the definitive step from this life to the next in a state of grace, and that he is now in heaven.

A.G., Terrasa (Spain)

HE WAS A PROTESTANT

I have a friend who distributes many Newsletters about Opus Dei among his relatives and friends. One of his cousins received the Newsletter No. 7, read it and left it at home. Some days later a fellow-student, a Protestant, went to visit him. She saw the Newsletter, in which there was a large photograph of Monsignor Escrivá, and she took it home with her. She read it at home and went back to ask the cousin what steps she had to take to become a Catholic. He told her that it was necessary to attend a course about the Catechism and the Catholic religion, after which, if she had faith and it was her wish, she could ask to be received into the Church. She did so.

T.N'D.H., Yamousokro (Ivory Coast)

FROM HER BEST FRIEND

Many non-Catholics or Protestants have come to the faith through the private devotion to the Venerable Servant of God Monsignor Escrivá. A year ago, in 1989, a friend of mine told me that one of her neighbours, an Anglican by religion, was finding great difficulties in selling her house. She had been trying to sell it for more than six months, because she had to move to another state of Australia for family reasons. I recommended her to ask this favour from the Servant of God, and I gave her a prayer-card. She looked at it with suspicion, since she was an Anglican, but she said she liked the look of the Servant of God. When I heard this, I gave her a Newsletter which had on the front-cover a similar photograph to that of the prayer-card. I heard that in a few weeks she managed to sell the house and had moved to Adelaide.

When my friend saw that her neighbour attributed this favour to the intercession of the Servant of God, she gave her as a present for the journey a copy of *The Way*. She rang a number of times from Adelaide asking for more literature about the Work, and a short time ago she phoned telling us that she was being prepared to be received into the Catholic Church. She told us that throughout the year she had allowed Josemaría, her best friend, to tell her what to do. She had prayed daily the prayer for private devotion and he helped her in everything that she asked for. She attributed having found a house in front of a Catholic Church to his intercession. She has insisted that if Opus Dei goes to that town, she will help us in whatever way she can. She hopes to be received in the Catholic Church in a few months time.

I gave the prayer-card to another friend, who, because of a lack of formation and a rationalistic attitude to life, calls herself an agnostic. I did not know how she would react, since she said she only believed in a Supreme Being. She prayed the prayer-card and she was astonished to see that all her prayers were heard. She now goes to Mass every Sunday, and wants to regularise her marriage.

M.F., Killara (Australia)

A SMALL JOB FOR MONSIGNOR ESCRIVÁ

I went to visit my daughter-in-law the day after she had given birth to a little girl. There I found some other people I did not know, and I assumed they were her friends. My son served tea and biscuits and a very nice conversation developed. Suddenly, a woman, who we later found out was not a Catholic, asked when the Baptism of the girl would be. I had not dared to ask that question, since they do not practise. My daughter-in-law said that to believe in original sin was stupid. We did not speak more about that matter. I felt a tremendous sorrow in my heart.

At home that night, I prayed the prayer for the private devotion to Monsignor Escrivá. Next time I attended a morning of recollection, I told N. my worries. She told me this was 'a job' for Monsignor Escrivá, and that he would look after this matter. I thought that her way of expressing this was a bit rough, but nevertheless I put Monsignor Escrivá to work.

Some weeks later, my son phoned me asking me to attend the Baptism of the

little girl in a church. I am extremely thankful to God, because Monsignor Escrivá has listened to my prayers.

E.G.V., Amsterdam (Holland)

HE RECOVERED FROM A COMA

On the third of March 1989, my son Pietro, a dynamic youngster, had a very serious accident. A 'road-pirate' ran him over and escaped, leaving him unconscious on the road. A car stopped, and they took him to the Hospital of Desio. There the doctors said that it was so serious they could not operate on him to try and save him. They transferred him to the reanimation centre in Legnano, where he was diagnosed to be in a state of coma, caused by cranial trauma and several fractures. He was placed in intensive care but he did not show any signs of life. They were maintaining his life artificially and they expected him to die any moment.

When we had lost all hope, my sister invited me to pray intensely to Monsignor Escrivá, and she placed a prayer-card of the Founder of Opus Dei under my son's pillow, so that he may intercede for the healing of my son.

My son spent five months in that situation when suddenly he woke up. The medical team was extremely surprised. Slowly my son began to recover and managed to breathe by himself. Now, after long treatment, he has started to walk slowly, and has begun to speak. The doctors are amazed by the speed of the recovery of his psycho-physical capabilities. My whole family is very thankful, and continues praying, for the favour given to my son who was dead, and has come back to life.

D.M.P., Bari (Italy)

HAPPY ENDING TO TWO PREGNANCIES

We lost our two sons at the same time. They were five and three. They died victims of inexplicable and intractable encephalitis. A few months later, our hopes were shattered by a miscarriage. Soon our confidence returned with a new pregnancy. This pregnancy however was threatened by a number of causes: a danger of miscarriage in the sixth month, higher than usual values of glycaemia – detected for the first time in the mother – and risk of premature birth four weeks before it was due. The child was born without problems, in spite of the umbilical cord having a knot.

After the delivery, we learnt that a friend of ours, a doctor, had often gone to the intercession of the Servant of God Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, asking that everything would work out alright. We had not heard either of Opus Dei, or about that holy priest before.

A few weeks ago, another pregnancy came to a happy ending. This time, we ourselves had gone to the intercession of the Servant of God right from the start. We are convinced, together with our friend the doctor, that both pregnancies came to a good end thanks to the intercession of Josemaría Escrivá. We are very thankful to God and extremely happy!

J.W., Weinitzen (Austria)

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.

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

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 3,700,000 copies in thirty-nine 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 605,000 copies have been published in eighteen languages. English edition 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 313,000 copies have been published in eight languages. English edition by Sinag-Tala (Manila).

Christ is passing by

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

The first edition was published in 1973. It has since had a total printing of over 393,000 copies in eleven 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 297,000 copies have been published in eight languages. 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 eleven languages with a total printing of 325,000 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. 309,000 copies in nine languages have been published to date. 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. 267,000 copies have been printed in seven 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, and a third in 1988.

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

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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