



Blessed
JOSEMARÍA ESCRIVÁ
Founder of Opus Dei

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Blessed 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 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, Blessed 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 Blessed 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, he fostered and directed the expansion of Opus Dei throughout the world. When he rendered up his soul to God, Opus Dei had spread to 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 Blessed Josemaría Escrivá had always practised and instilled in his sons and daughters.

The Holy Sacrifice of the 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 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 rests in 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 Canonization of Monsignor Escrivá was presented on 19 February 1981. On 9 April 1990 Pope John Paul II declared the heroic nature of the Christian virtues, and on 6 July 1991 decreed the miraculous character of a cure attributed to his intercession. The Founder of Opus Dei was beatified by His Holiness John Paul II in Rome on 17 May 1992.

Theological Study Convention on the Teachings of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá

The beatification of the founder of Opus Dei generated so much interest among all sectors of the People of God that the following year saw commemorative events around the world. One of these was a Theological Study Convention on the teaching of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá, which took place in Rome from 12 to 14 October 1993, organized by the Roman Athenaeum of the Holy Cross. Each of the three days focused on a different element of Blessed Josemaría's message: the universal call to holiness; Christian spiritual life; and the sanctification of the world by people sanctifying themselves in the world.

The opening of the Convention included an address by the Right Reverend Alvaro del Portillo, Bishop Prelate of Opus Dei and Grand Chancellor of the Roman Athenaeum of the Holy Cross. This was followed by the reading of an inaugural message from Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

During the Convention, speakers from different countries highlighted the theological significance of certain aspects of Blessed Josemaría's message. They showed its relevance to the life of the Church today, demonstrating its originality and fruitfulness, and its faithful continuity with the heritage of Christian spirituality.

On 14 October the 500 participants in the Convention were received in audience by His Holiness John Paul II. The Holy Father addressed them as follows.



Rome, 14 October 1993. The Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, spoke to those taking part in the Theological Study Convention on the Teaching of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá

The address of the Holy Father

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

1. I am pleased to welcome you on the occasion of the *Theological Study Convention on the Teachings of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá*, which has been taking place these past few days at the Roman Athenaeum of the Holy Cross, a little more than a year since his beatification.

I greet the Grand Chancellor, Bishop Alvaro del Portillo, and the Rector of the Athenaeum, Mons. Ignacio Carrasco de Paula; my greetings go also to the organizing committee, the speakers and all of you who took part in this important study congress.

2. The history of the Church and of the world unfolds through the action of the Holy Spirit who, with the free cooperation of men, directs all things towards the fulfilment of God the Father's saving plan. A clear manifestation of this divine Providence is the constant presence down the centuries of men and women faithful to Christ, who, with their life and their message, shed light on various periods of history. Among these illustrious figures, Blessed Josemaría Escrivá has an eminent place, for as I had occasion to emphasize on the solemn day of his beatification, he reminded the contemporary world of the universal call to holiness and of the Christian value which professional work can have in the ordinary life of each person.

In addition to the sanctification of souls, the action of the Holy Spirit has as its goal the constant renewal of the Church, so that she may effectively carry out the task entrusted to her by Christ. In the recent history of the Church's life, this process of renewal has a fundamental reference point: the Second Vatican Council, during which the Church, assembled together in the person of her Bishops, reflected anew on the essence of her mystery, so as to be able to proclaim the Gospel to the world in a way that would have a decisive influence on the life of individuals, on cultures and on peoples. The conciliar texts and the documents that followed them had as a common characteristic the full awareness of the salvation accomplished for us by Christ. From this awareness stems the sense of mission which the



Bishop Alvaro del Portillo greets the Holy Father during an audience with him in the Sala Clementina.

texts of the Ecumenical Council and the whole subsequent Magisterium emphasize: that sense of mission to which I myself recently referred in the Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor*.

3. The deep awareness with which the Church today is conscious of serving a redemption that concerns every aspect of human existence was prepared, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, by a process of gradual intellectual and spiritual development. The message of Blessed Josemaría, to which you devoted the work of your convention, is one of the most signifi-



Pope John Paul II with some of those attending the closing ceremony of the theological Congress

worked with his hands, knew friendship and obedience, experienced sorrow and death."¹ On the basis of this deep conviction, Blessed Josemaría invited men and women from the most varied social conditions to sanctify themselves and to cooperate in the sanctification of others by sanctifying ordinary life. In his priestly activity, he was deeply aware of every soul's value and of the power the Gospel has to enlighten consciences and to awaken a serious and active Christian commitment to defending the person and his dignity. In *The Way*, Blessed Josemaría wrote: "These world crises are crises of saints. God wants a handful of men 'of his own' in every human activity. Then... 'pax Christi in regno Christi'—the peace of Christ in the kingdom of Christ".²

4. How much power this doctrine has in terms of the arduous and at the same time appealing work of the new evangelization, to which the entire Church is called! In your conference you have had the opportunity to reflect on various aspects of this spiritual teaching. I invite you to continue in this work, because Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, like other great figures in modern Church history, can also be a source of inspiration for theological thought. In fact, theological research, which has an irreplaceable role of mediation in the relationship between faith and culture, progresses and is enriched by drawing on the Gospel source, under the impulse of the experience of Christianity's great witnesses. Blessed Josemaría, without a doubt, should be included among them.

We cannot forget, however, that the importance of the figure of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá derives not only from his message but also from the apostolic reality which he brought into being. In the 65 years since its foundation, the Prelature of Opus Dei, an indissoluble unity of priests and lay people, has contributed to making Christ's saving message resound in many walks of life. As Pastor of the universal Church, echoes of this apostolate reach me. I encourage all the members of the Prelature of Opus Dei to persevere in this work, in faithful continuity with the spirit of service to the Church which always inspired the life of your founder.

With these sentiments, I invoke on all an abundance of heavenly gifts, in pledge of which I most cordially impart my Blessing to you and to all who are inspired by the teachings and example of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer.

(1) Josemaría Escrivá, *Christ Is Passing By*, 112

(2) Josemaría Escrivá, *The Way*, 301

TEXTS BY BLESSED JOSEMARIA ESCRIVA

Many great things depend on the priest: we have God, we bring God, we give God ... Think about this, about how we are divinized, even our bodies; how our tongues bring God; how our hands touch him, how we have the power to work miracles by administering his grace. All the marvels of this world are worthless in comparison with what God has entrusted to the priest. See it in the light of faith, my sons: *Blessed are you, Simon bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven* (Matt 16:17).

The priesthood is the greatest thing in the world. We only need think about what a miracle it is to bring Jesus down to this earth every single day. Our heavenly Mother – how much we should love her! Greater than she, none but God! – brought Our Lord to earth just once: *fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum!* (Lk 1:38) (*Letter*, 8 August 1956, 17).

Some people keep searching for what they call the ‘identity’ of the priest ... What is the identity of the priest? Christ’s. All of us Christians can and should be not just other Christs: *alter Christus*; but Christ himself: *ipse Christus!* But in the priest this happens in a direct way, by virtue of the sacrament ...

The sacrament of Orders in effect equips the priest to lend our Lord his voice, his hands, his whole being; it is Jesus Christ who, in the Holy Mass, through the words of the consecration, changes the substance of the bread and wine into his Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.

This is the source of the priest’s dignity. It is a greatness which is on loan: it is completely compatible with my own littleness. I pray to God our Lord to give all of us priests the grace to perform holy things in a holy way, to reflect in every aspect of our lives the wonders of the greatness of God (Homily *A Priest Forever*, 13 April 1973).

The Church needs priests, and always will. Ask the Blessed Trinity for them each day, through Holy Mary.

And pray that they may be cheerful, hard-working, effective; that they may be well trained; and that they may sacrifice themselves joyfully for their brothers, without feeling that they are victims (*The Forge*, 910).

Apriest who lives the Mass in this way – adoring, atoning, pleading, giving thanks, identifying himself with Christ – and who teaches others to make the Sacrifice of the altar the centre and root of their Christian life, really will show the incomparable value of his vocation, the value of that character with which he has been marked and which he will never lose (Homily *A Priest Forever*, 13 April 1973).

Ordination of the first three priests of Opus Dei

As we were about to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the priestly ordination of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo, Prelate of Opus Dei, our Lord called him to his presence. In the midst of our sorrow at this unexpected bereavement we were consoled by the thought that our most beloved Prelate would celebrate this Jubilee in Heaven, along with Blessed Josemaría, and also with Father José María Hernández de Garnica and Father José Luis Múzquiz. Bishop Alvaro, Father José María and Father José Luis were the first members of Opus Dei to be ordained priests, on 25 June 1944.

Bishop Alvaro’s life was one of total commitment to the service of God and souls. He generously lived up to the obligations stemming from Christian baptism, and those of his priestly ministry, which, providentially, ended in Jerusalem. Just a few hours before his death in Rome, he had celebrated Holy Mass, with great piety, in the church of the Cenacle. God granted him the joy of renewing the sacrifice of the Mass for the last time in the very place in which Christ instituted the Eucharist and conferred on his Apostles the power of consecrating his Body and Blood. There also on



The first three priests of Opus Dei with Bishop Eijo y Garay of Madrid, during the ordination ceremony on 25 June 1944

the day of Pentecost the new-born Church received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

The Founder of Opus Dei was always firmly supported by this most faithful son of his, in whom he found an instrument who placed himself totally at the service of God. From the earliest years of Opus Dei, Blessed Josemaría saw that the priests who were to supply the pastoral needs of the members of the Work would have to come from among its lay members. Years later he wrote to his children: **We needed priests who had a proper knowledge of our specific ascetical spirit and our way of doing apostolate, which are our own; priests with a deep love for the lay character of your vocation and of your work with souls; we needed priests nurtured in the spirit God has given us, who had grown up in the Work.**¹

The urgent need for priests led him to pray intensely over a long period, with great faith in God's power and providence. Years later he was able to write: **For years I prayed with trust and expectation for your brothers who were to be ordained to the priesthood, and for those who would later follow in their footsteps. I prayed so**

much that I can say that all the priests of Opus Dei are sons of my prayer.²

At the end of the Spanish Civil War, without yet having discovered the legal solution which would make it possible for members of Opus Dei to be ordained, Blessed Josemaría began the immediate preparation of his sons Alvaro, José María and José Luis for the priesthood. They were all engineers, with brilliant professional prospects. Some time before, he had of course asked them whether they were freely disposed to receiving the ministerial priesthood.

He looked for the best available teachers for their theological studies. Among them were lecturers from the Roman Pontifical Universities, who found themselves stranded in Spain at the outbreak of the Second World War. Some of them were later ordained bishops.

The Founder wanted to give the Liturgy and Pastoral Theology classes himself. Besides engraving on their hearts a love and respect for the liturgical regulations, which he taught them to observe with deep piety, the Father passed on to them, by means of clear and wise counsels, his own wide-rang-

ing pastoral experience, gained in seminaries and universities, in rural and urban parishes, in charitable and apostolic institutions, and in his dealings with people of all ages and work background, whether practising Catholics or lapsed.

They studied without neglecting their civil professional work, by which they earned their living and supported the apostolic work of Opus Dei. At the same time they helped the Founder in the expansion of the apostolate. Their first examinations were held in the Conciliar Seminary of Madrid in June 1942.

The former Archbishop of Valencia, José María García Lahiguera, at that time spiritual director of the seminary of Madrid, bears witness to how they approached their theological studies: "despite the considerable amount of work these young men had to do, they achieved extraordinary results. The lecturers were full of admiration for their capacity and their progress; but I did not find that at all strange, given the intellectual level demanded by the civil degrees they had obtained, and their dedication to their studies sustained by the Father's untiring zeal."³

Their studies were at quite an advanced stage, and the Founder had still not resolved the legal problem of ordaining them so that they could be incardinated in the service of Opus Dei, when God's light came, on 14 February 1943. Blessed Josemaría wrote: **The Lord, who made use of Balaam's ass, has also made use of this Father of yours as his instrument. On 14 February 1943, I began my Mass seeking the legal solution**

for the incardination of priests in the Work. I had been trying for a long time to find the solution, without success. And that day, *intra missam*, our Lord gave it to me after Communion: the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross. He even gave me the seal, the Cross inscribed on the world. This occurred in Madrid, in a house of your sisters in Jorge Manrique Street.⁴

With the necessary documentation prepared, Alvaro went to Rome, in May 1943, to request the Holy See's *nihil obstat*. It was granted on 11 October, at that time the feast of Mary, Mother of God. Bishop Leopoldo Eijo y Garay of Madrid-Alcalá decreed the establishment of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross on 8 December, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception.

The three candidates gradually completed their examinations and approached the end of their studies. The tonsure ceremony took place on 20 May; on subsequent dates



The Founder of Opus Dei accompanied by the Bishop of Madrid and the first three of his sons to be ordained, on 25 June 1944.



The newly ordained Fr Alvaro del Portillo gives his blessing to Blessed Josemaría Escrivá, on 26 June 1944.

they received the minor orders. The subdiaconate was conferred by the Bishop of Pamplona on 28 May; and on 3 June they were ordained as deacons by the Auxiliary Bishop of Madrid, Casimiro Morcillo.

In the days preceding the ordination Blessed Josemaría received replies from the Spanish bishops for whose respective dioceses he had requested ministerial faculties for the future priests. They were all happy to accede to the request of the Father, who felt encouraged by this display of affection from the Hierarchy.⁵

Sunday, 25 June 1944, was a day of great celebration. As expected, there were so many people attending that they could not all fit into the oratory of the episcopal palace. After Mass, in the sacristy, people came to kiss the newly consecrated hands; many left a tear or two with their kisses.

Meanwhile the Founder was celebrating Mass at the very same time, in the oratory of the Opus Dei Centre on Diego de Leon Street. José María Albareda was his server.



Rome, 6 January 1991. Mgr Alvaro del Portillo is ordained bishop

During lunch that same day in Diego de Leon Street, Bishop Leopoldo, during a brief absence of Blessed Josemaría, spoke to those present of his joy at ordaining the first group of Opus Dei priests. He then spoke of the Founder and of the particular mission he had received from God to direct the Work: *Take good care of the Father. He needs it, and we need him very much.* He then spoke of the burden weighing on the shoulders of the Founder, and of his health, which had been ruined through his work and suffering: *A sign of his tiredness, he said jokingly, is that he did not dare to go to the ordination for fear of losing control of his emotions and letting us see him cry like a loving grandfather. It could also be, though, he continued in a more serious tone, that he made the sacrifice of something he held very dear: "as I would enjoy it so much, I'll stay at home."*⁶

That afternoon they all went to the oratory to pray. They followed the words of Blessed Josemaría who spoke to them of the need to base their entire Christian life on prayer, sacrifice and humility. **When the youngest ones among you are sporting grey hairs (or resplendent bald heads, such as some that can be seen), and I, following nature's course, am long passed away, people will ask you: what did the Father say to you on the day of the ordination of the first three priests? And you will reply: what he said was: may you be men of prayer, men of prayer, and men of prayer.**⁷

He then spoke to them of perseverance and the Cross, announcing that soon some people of the Work would be going to distant countries. He ended with the news that he had received a telegram from the Vatican which said that the Holy Father had given the new priests permission to give the papal blessing in their first Mass, with a plenary indulgence for all the congregation. There followed a Solemn Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, with the singing of the Te Deum.

Thus took place the first ordination of



Jerusalem, 22 March 1994. Bishop del Portillo celebrated his last Mass in the church of the Cenacle.

priests of Opus Dei. Other ordinations, each more numerous than the last, were to follow, with the result that at the Founder's death there were almost a thousand priests—the sons of his prayer, his mortification and his vigilance as a good shepherd. Those priests, and those subsequently ordained during the years in which Bishop Alvaro del Portillo

was Prelate of Opus Dei, can count on the special intercession of Blessed Josemaría and of his son Alvaro, so that, as the two of them would have wished, they can be priests who are learned, sporting and cheerful, priests through and through, untiring servants of the Church and of all souls.

- (1) Letter, 14 February 1944, 10
- (2) Letter, 8 August 1956, 5
- (3) Blessed Josemaría: a man of God, 1, Scepter, 1992, Testimony of Archbishop José M. García, 1-19
- (4) Get-together, 9 July 1967. Cf. AGP, RHF, D-20182, 144
- (5) Cf. AGP, Seccion Expedientes, D-660
- (6) Account of Bishop Alfonso Rodríguez Vidal (25 June 1944), in AGP, D-660
- (7) Ibidem

Under his spiritual influence

KINAL Guatemala

Kinal, a workers' training centre, started up in Guatemala nearly 35 years ago with the apostolic encouragement of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer. The first steps were taken by groups of university students who were concerned at the harsh living conditions of many skilled workers and labourers. They began a social project in Mixco, then a small village just outside the capital, with classes of Christian formation, cultural activities and sports for young people from deprived areas.

Kinal is a Mayan word meaning "the place where fire is born". That is what happened: that first spark of generosity on the part of some university students, inspired by the Founder of Opus Dei's zeal for ser-



Kinal, "the place where fire is born".

vice, has kindled a blaze of love and dedication whose effects have spread to thousands of people.

The history of Kinal, now one of the major technical training centres in Guatemala, is deeply marked by Blessed Josemaría's example. In the first years of its existence Kinal moved from place to place in deprived areas, offering training courses for electricians, carpenters and others. Those running these courses did not have the resources they needed, and the machinery used for training was acquired on an ad hoc basis or on temporary loan.

With the help of many people, including non-Catholics, who are drawn to the apostolate of Opus Dei, the dream gradually came true. Kinal was able to take up the challenge of the serious human and social problems in under-developed sectors, and seek original, Christian solutions for them.

The Founder of Opus Dei went to Guatemala in February 1975, and his visit played an important part in Kinal's history. The few days he spent in Guatemala, intense and full of apostolate as they were, bore abundant fruit which has only increased as time has gone by. At present, over five thousand people attend Kinal's various activities every year. Its



During a printing lesson.

fundamental objective is to teach people to do their work well and give it its full Christian meaning. As well as all-round technical training including specialized instruction and practical experience in advanced technological workshops, trainees are taught to make a constant effort to do their daily work well in God's sight, to be eager to improve, to pay great attention to details, to work in a spirit of service, and to keep going to the very end, "setting the last stone" as Blessed

Josemaría loved to say.

Not for nothing was the sanctification of work one of the lessons he taught us during his stay in Guatemala. In one of his get-togethers with a large audience from all over Central America, someone asked him about St Joseph. Blessed Josemaría Escrivá answered, **"I venerate him with all my soul, and I always call him my Father and my Lord; and I add, 'whom I love so much!' I do love him very much. He teaches us the value of ordinary work, which is the human means to holiness that we have within our reach: doing the ordinary things of every day, of every hour, of every minute, with love. Whether or not we feel like it, but with love and affection. Whether or not we feel like it, but as well as we possibly can. Whether or not we feel like it, but in a way that can be offered to God our Lord. It doesn't matter whether we are building a skyscraper or making a wicker basket. I**



Vaccination programme in the Kinal out-patients' clinic.

value the basket as highly as the skyscraper if they are both done with love."

Today, thanks to self-sacrificing help from many people of every sphere of life, Kinal offers specially designed training equipment for its courses: workshops for electrics, industrial electronics, carpentry, offset printing, and technical drawing. Its car mechanics, industrial refrigeration and welding workshops are all being enlarged at present. The training centre has also a large oratory, lecture theatres, a canteen, a sports complex, and medical and dental clinics.

Over five hundred men take part in the different courses run by the Centre every day. They come from the capital city and from the countryside. By day, two hundred youths do the last two years of secondary education and then take technical courses leading to a job in the future. Besides this vocational training those who so desire can acquire Christian formation: sacramental life, Catechism studies and spiritual help, fostering virtues like orderliness, fraternity, responsibility, truthfulness, service with a smile, and many more which Blessed Josemaría practised to a heroic degree and preached with his own example.



Hundreds of young people receive technical and Christian formation

In the late afternoons and evenings, the buildings fill with workers coming in to improve their skills. They study the theory behind their work and receive a thorough updating in all aspects. Every term more than 100 courses are run to provide them with a Technical Diploma, in areas ranging from boiler-making to production or personnel management, industrial or building maintenance, bricklaying, and so on. These courses are sponsored by firms, who are interested in increasing their own output by improving their employees' training. Over the past few years more than 350 firms have sent their employees to Kinal for training.

The figure of the Founder of Opus Dei is ever present in each of these activities. His spirit, which he transmitted both in words and through his own example, is the guiding principle which stimulates and gives life to Kinal as a force for the human and Christian improvement of skilled workers and labourers in Guatemala.

The workers come to improve their professional skills and their Christian formation.

Letters received

HEALTHY BABY

I have a boy of 18 and in the last two years have had two miscarriages.

On 1st October 1992 I gave birth to a healthy baby girl, something I never thought would happen. I firmly believe that this was a favour granted by praying daily through the intercession of Monsignor Josemaría Escrivá.

Mrs K. M.
Manchester

HAPPY ENGAGEMENT

I am writing to inform you of the very special favour received through the intercession of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá. Daily, I prayed to Blessed Josemaría, for strength and direction for my boyfriend and me, to help us to make the right decision. Two weeks later my now fiancée asked me to marry him. We have both never had such happiness and peace! I will not hesitate to encourage people to pray to Blessed Josemaría, like I do daily. Keep up the good work.

R.C.
Belfast

FINDS FINANCES

After receiving a letter of rejection from the body which I had hoped would fund my continuing career as a student, I found myself at a completely unexpected loss as to what I ought to do with my career at all. In this state of confusion I prayed to Blessed Josemaría that he might intercede for me and give me guidance.

A month later, out of the blue, I received notification that the decision regarding my funding had been reversed following discovery of administrative problems in the selection procedure. Furthermore, a whole host of other difficulties that might have arisen as a result of the long delay also failed to materialise, and, thanks to Mgr Escrivá's intercession, I was able to continue my studies.

A.W.
Oxford

THE WOUND THAT HEALED

I wish to put on record what has happened to me. On July 15, 1993 I was admitted to the casualty department of a hospital. Twelve days later I was operated on for a cancer of the larynx. Within ten days I developed a pharyngostoma. I was given the appropriate treatment but I was not told what was happening. After two weeks I was informed that the pharyngostoma might last days or weeks, or even years, before healing.

From that moment on I prayed to Blessed Josemaría, and to everyone's surprise the wound healed in forty-eight hours and I left hospital four days later.

Recently I have been praying each day for the canonization of Blessed Josemaría.

J.C.N.
Valencia, Spain

A SMALL STEP TOWARDS THE CANONIZATION PROCESS

For some time now I have been meaning to write and let you know about the graces I have received through Blessed Josemaría Escrivá. Some years ago I underwent a serious gall-bladder operation. A few weeks after the operation I was still in hospital because a wound in the bile duct had not healed. In desperation I began a novena to Blessed Josemaría Escrivá. On the evening of the last day of the novena I felt great shivers from head to foot. At that moment I was sure that I had been cured. The surgeon confirmed it the following day. On several occasions afterwards I asked Blessed Josemaría help in both spiritual and material matters. He always helped and took care of me, and I felt the nearness of another world.

I feel relieved now as I wanted this small help, like a little grain of sand, to ask for the canonization of Blessed Josemaría. Please send me some prayer cards for distribution among my friends.

M.F.
Paris

PRAYERS ALWAYS ANSWERED

I am writing to you to say I have received two more favours through Josemaría. I pray daily for his canonization and for the apostolates of Opus Dei. I hope and pray we won't have to wait very long before he is canonized. I don't know why it is but my prayers are always answered.

N.S.
Co. Mayo

SEVENTH CHILD

My wife and I have been blessed with a large family. Our sixth child was born very heavily mentally and physically handicapped. We have always loved him and he has been a great gift to us all. When my wife became pregnant with another child, we were worried because of her age and the handicapped condition of our last baby. We asked Blessed Josemaría to intercede as regards this new little one. He was born fine and healthy.

X.X.
Suffolk

A NOVENA ENDING ON 26TH JUNE

I have a friend who teaches in the university where I work. Her husband has been an alcoholic for years. He spent a period of time in hospital on a number of occasions without improving. They have been separated for years. She had been praying to Blessed Josemaría for some time and finished a novena on 26th June. That very day her husband came to see her; he was completely sober and said he had not taken a drink for some time, and he wanted to go back to their home. She attributes this changed attitude to the intercession of Blessed Josemaría.

M. de L.S.P. da S.
Curitiba, Brazil

I JUST COULDN'T BELIEVE MY EYES

I am 68 years of age. I was hospitalised with asthma which was choking me. One of the religious sisters gave me a prayer card of the priest Josemaría. I prayed intensely asking him to cure me of my illness.

At the beginning of March in the year of his beatification I was carrying a large container full of boiling water and through carelessness and awkwardness I let it fall on one of my legs from the knee down. I was wearing boots which were laced. I felt a burning sensation in my leg. I stood up and thought I would lose my leg since it was already in a poor state and would not heal. I fell down. I thought I would not be able to bear it. The following day I could not raise my leg.

I was brought to the casualty department of a hospital. They removed the boot and dressed my wound. I had to go every morning for treatment and spent the rest of the day home. The worst thing was my foot. I felt as if it were boiling; I couldn't apply any gauze or bandage not to mention any ointment. Right throughout the month there was no improvement. In April I was invited to go to the beatification and had to decline the invitation. One of the religious sisters took my place. I was feeling low and was unable to wear a shoe. My foot was one big wound. Midway through April the doctor looking after me told me that there was no hope. The foot instead of improving was getting worse, gangrene was setting in. He said that they had done all they could but to no avail.

I returned home thinking about what I should do. All of a sudden I felt the urge to ask Blessed Josemaría to cure me. Since I had the invitation I thought God would not let me down. And that is what happened. I stopped going to the hospital and abandoned myself to God's will. I applied the medication myself. April went by with no change. At the beginning of May I noticed a change. The wound grew smaller, especially during the week coming up to the beatification ceremony. I just couldn't believe my eyes that such a deep wound could gradually disappear. By May 17 there was only a scar, which I still have today. My leg improved so much that I could use my shoe again, and go to the Church to thank God for receiving the grace and joyfully be united to the prayer in honour of Blessed Josemaría in Rome. I am grateful for the favour received and I continue to pray to Blessed Josemaría asking him for more favours.

J.K.
Cracow, Poland

PLACE OBTAINED AGAINST THE ODDS

My grateful thanks to Blessed Josemaría for getting my daughter two places as a trainee nurse. I had given up hope of her getting a place as there are only seven training hospitals in Dublin and each hospital had about 5,000 applications for roughly twenty places. As she was the first of my whole extended family to want to do nursing we knew no way of going about it. I started a novena to Blessed Josemaría; the day we started she got an interview for one hospital and on the third day she got a second interview and I have proof that the day we finished she got her first place and a week later she got the second place in a first class hospital and she is taking the second place. My grateful thanks for what I and everyone I have spoken to who is in nursing consider miraculous. I promise to spread devotion to Blessed Josemaría.

M.B.
Dublin

Published works of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá

The Way “Monsignor Escrivá 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*...” (*L'Osservatore Romano*, 24 March 1950). The first edition of this book was published in 1934 entitled *Consideraciones espirituales*. Since then a total of 3,949,000 copies have appeared in 41 languages.

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 646,000 copies have been published in 21 languages.

In Conversations with Monsignor Escrivá Opus Dei's Founder responds in writing to questions put by newspapers and magazines from various countries. The first edition appeared 1968. Since then 328,000 copies have been published in 9 languages.

Christ is passing by This collection of homilies constitutes a profound and attractive exposition of Christian doctrine and life. Foreword by Bishop Alvaro del Portillo. First published in 1973, over 422,000 copies have appeared in 12 languages.

Friends of God A collection of another eighteen homilies in which the author's warm and filial conversation with God is centred on the theme of the Christian virtues. Foreword by Bishop Alvaro del Portillo. Published in 1977, over 319,000 copies have appeared in 9 languages.

La Abadesa de las Huelgas A penetrating theological-legal study, based on original sources and documents, of an unusual case of quasi-episcopal jurisdiction exercised by the abbess of a famous convent in Burgos. First published in 1944; a second edition appeared in 1974 and a third in 1988.

The Way of the Cross Fruit of Monsignor Escrivá's meditation on the scenes of the Passion of Our Lord. The first edition was published in 1981. It is now available in 15 languages, with a total printing of 355,000 copies.

Furrow “Like *The Way* (...), *Furrow* is the fruit of Monsignor's Escrivá's interior life and experience with souls” (from the foreword by Bishop Alvaro del Portillo). The first edition was published in 1986. 347,000 in 11 languages have been printed to date.

The Forge *The Forge* “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” (from the foreword by Bishop Alvaro del Portillo). It was first published in 1987. 332,000 copies have been printed in 10 languages.

In Love with the Church A collection of four homilies on the supernatural mission of the Church, the priesthood, and the Christian's fidelity to the Spouse of Christ. Available in 8 languages with a total printing of 39,000 copies.

The above titles are available from booksellers or through Scepter, 14 Napier Court, The Science Park, Abingdon OX14 3NB.

Prayer

O God, you granted countless graces to your priest, Blessed 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 all the paths of the earth with faith and love. Deign to grant the canonization of Blessed 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.

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 of Blessed Josemaría.

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