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Blessed JOSEMARÍA ESCRIVÁ

Founder of Opus Dei

NEWSLETTER No. 16

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 in the fulfilment of one's family, social and personal obligations. Thus it has been a haven 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 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 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 Blessed Josemaría 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, Blessed Josemaría 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. His Cause of Canonisation 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.

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 the paths of the earth with faith and love. Deign to grant the canonisation of Blessed Josemaría and through his intercession grant me the favour I request... (here make your petition). Amen.

Our Father, Hall 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.

Cover: Pope John Paul II, Cardinal Ruini (left), and Bishop Echevarría, the Prelate of Opus Dei, at the entrance of the parish church of Blessed Josemaría.

MAY ONLY JESUS SHINE FORTH!

It is nine o'clock on the morning of 10 March 1996. The Holy Father is about to dedicate the new parish church in Rome built in honour of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá. Inside the church, he stops for a moment to look at the reredos which depicts scenes from the life of our Lord. High up on the reredos, there is a painting of Blessed Josemaría in glory with the Blessed Trinity, surrounded by angels and venerating the Most Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph.

While thanking God for the immense gifts he gave to the Founder of Opus Dei, and for the heroic faithfulness of Blessed Josemaría's response, we recall the expressions of sincere humility which frequently sprang from his heart. He saw himself as a **mangy donkey, a sinner who loves Jesus Christ, an inept and deaf instrument**. He said that he was a **founder without foundation**, because he was convinced that God had chosen him because he could find no one more inadequate. Towards the end of his life when the fruits of his priesthood filled the world, he said he was like a **faltering child**, who was taking his first steps in Love.

DEO OMNIS GLORIA!

The solemn recognition of his Christian example, proclaimed by the Vicar of Christ, and with him by the whole Church, is a compelling call to meditate once again on the deepest and ultimate meaning of the virtue of humility, which is a sure path to reach God. The sole ambition Blessed Josemaría had is summarised in his own words: **my role is to hide away and stay in the background: may only**



The Prelate of Opus Dei, following an ancient tradition, places relics of Blessed Josemaría within the altar.

Jesus shine forth! From the early years of his priesthood he expressed that desire in an aspiration which amounts to a programme for Christian living: *Deo omnis gloria!*, all glory to God.

The Second Vatican Council¹ reminds us that the Church's veneration of the Saints and the Blessed is directed towards God, and enriches the adoration we owe him: "God shows to men, in a vivid way, his presence and his face in the lives of those companions of ours in the human condition who are more perfectly transformed into the Image of Christ (cf. 2 Cor 3:18)."²

The life and teachings of Blessed Josemaría lead us to fix our gaze on Christ. Only the love of the Son will lead us, in the Holy Spirit, to feel that we are children of God the Father and to offer him our lives, the apostolate we do with those around us, and the daily work which we turn into service to the Church.

¹ Cf Dogmatic Const. *Lumen gentium*, no. 51

² *Ibid*, no. 50

Official document of dedication of the church of Blessed Josemaría

In the name of the Blessed Trinity. To-day, the 10th of March in the year 1996 of our salvation, I, Pope John Paul II, celebrated the dedication of this parish church erected in honour of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá, and beneath the altar I have reverently placed relics of his body and of items that he used.

At my invitation my beloved brothers in the Episcopate, Cardinal Camillo Ruini and Bishop Javier Echevarría, took part in this liturgical celebration with me.

It gives me great joy, and I give thanks to the Blessed Trinity, that in my beloved diocese of Rome, there should arise a new "House of God", for the celebration of the holy mysteries and the building up of the Christian people in faith and in love.

In dedicating this church I also thank God that on 2nd of October 1928, he let Blessed Josemaría see Opus Dei, which reminds all people of the universality of the calling to the fullness of union with Christ.

Trusting in the mediation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and our Mother, and in the intercession of Saint Joseph, our Father and Lord, of the Holy Guardian Angels, of the Apostles Peter and Paul and of Blessed Josemaría, I have begged the almighty and eternal God to grant abundant grace to all the faithful who come to this church to invoke his holy Name, to listen to his divine Word, to be nourished with the sacred food of the Eucharist, to build up their spiritual lives through participation in the sacraments entrusted by his Divine Son to the Holy Church, and to benefit from the apostolic activities that are organised here.

I have also prayed fervently to the Lord for the people from the five continents who, through their generosity, have made possible the construction of this church. I prayed particularly for the faithful of the Prelature of Opus Dei, that they may carry out an ever more abundant sowing of joy and peace, all over the world, following the example of faithfulness to the spirit of Blessed Josemaría given by Bishop Alvaro del Portillo, of venerable memory, under whose encouragement and direction this church was built.

To all of which, as a permanent record, I bear witness. *Laus Deo!*

Rome, on the day, month and year stated above.

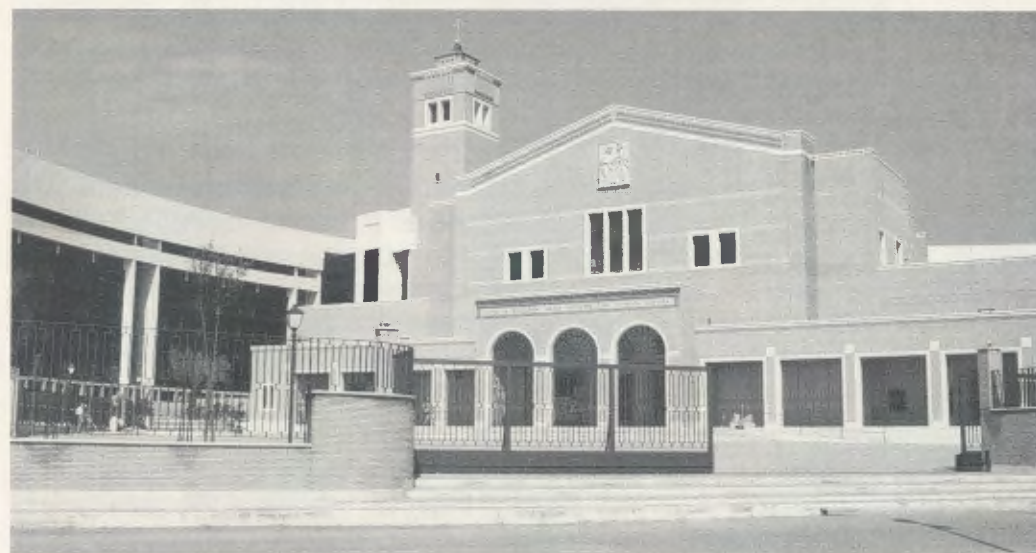
PARISH CHURCH OF BLESSED JOSEMARÍA

A NEW DISTRICT IN ROME

One of the important targets the diocese of Rome has set itself for the year 2000 is the building of 50 new churches to allow God to be worshipped in those areas that have grown up on the outskirts of the city.

It is customary for those who have promoted Causes of beatification and canonisation to offer the Holy Father a token gift. Bearing in mind both the needs of the Pope's diocese and the teachings of the Founder of the Work, on 17 May 1992 Bishop Alvaro del Portillo offered to build a church in Rome, which would be funded by contributions from thousands of Catholics all over the world who venerate Blessed Josemaría and experience in their own lives the help of his intercession.

Cardinal Camillo Ruini, Vicar to His Holiness in the diocese of Rome, sent the Prelate of Opus Dei details of the various possibilities that there were in the diocese. A recently developed area, Ardeatino, in the south of Rome, not far from the place of martyrdom of St Paul, was the place chosen. On 9 November 1992 the Vicariate of Rome entrusted priests of the Prelature with the pastoral care of the parish, which was then based in a small prefabricated building. The first Mass was celebrated on 6 June 1993.



*The buildings of the parish of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá,
in the new Ardeatino district of Rome.*



Detail of the reredos. Blessed Josemaría in Heaven.

From that time the work of the parish has been steadily increasing, with the administration of sacraments, catechesis for young people of different ages, doctrine classes for adults, blessings of houses, help for the needy, care of the sick, and so on. The foundation stone of the new building was laid on 15 May 1994. The ceremony, a Mass celebrated by Cardinal Ruini on the site of the future church, was attended by more than 1000 people, including the Prelate of Opus Dei, Mgr. Javier Echevarría.

WITH THE HELP OF MANY

Thanks to the generosity with which people from many different countries joined in this very specific intention of the Prelate of Opus Dei and contributed – often with amounts that were not very large but that were always a sign of personal sacrifice and of love for the Church – the building works progressed rapidly. On 10 March 1996 Pope John Paul II celebrated the solemn dedication of the church in honour of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá.

The concelebrants were Cardinal Ruini, Bishop Javier Echevarría, Bishop Julián Herranz, President of the Pontifical Council for the Interpretation of Legal Texts, Bishop Clemente Riva, auxiliary bishop of Rome, Fr. Alberto Ortolani, the parish priest, and Fr. Carlos Carrasco, the curate. Thousands of people attended.

THE POPE'S HOMILY

In his homily, the Holy Father commented on the liturgical texts of the day, and went on to recall the Christian example set by Blessed Josemaría: "Today we dedicate your parish to the Founder of Opus Dei, who worked so hard to spread the ideal of *holiness*. Dear brothers and sisters, may you know how to make your own his programme of life and pastoral commitment: *to live by striving for holiness* and to let every person you meet, whether man or woman, understand that they are called to full communion with God."

The proclamation of the universal call to holiness, the core of Blessed Josemaría's spiritual message, was taken up by the Second Vatican Council as "the most characteristic element of the entire teaching of the Council and as its ultimate goal"¹. The Pope stressed the fruitfulness of this contribution of Blessed Josemaría to the life of the Church: "*Every Christian is called to be holy, like his heavenly Father*. This truth, so clearly proclaimed by Jesus in the Gospel, was witnessed to by Blessed Josemaría Escrivá through his life and

constant teaching. *God waits for us every day*, he loved to repeat. *Understand this well: there is something holy, something divine hidden in the most ordinary situations, and it is up to each one of you to discover it*. And he used to add: *There is no other way. Either we learn to find our Lord in ordinary, everyday life, or else we shall never find him.*"²

The source of the efficacy of the saving activity of the Church is to be found in the personal commitment of Christians who seek identification with Christ. Hence the Pope's forceful insistence on the duty of every baptised person to carry the message of Christ to his or her equals. Each one should know well and make known the Christian teaching on faith and morals, and rely above all on the help of grace: "Do not abandon this fundamental apostolate; the concrete fruits, even though slow in coming, will certainly not fail to arrive. I entrust you all to the maternal hands of the Blessed Virgin Mary and to the intercession of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá."

LIVING STONES

At the end of the ceremony the Pope repeated the same ideas in inviting the parishioners to be living stones to build up the Church each day: stones that are often worked by God with the chisel of the Cross, in order to make them like Christ; stones that the Lord lovingly puts in place, one by one. In that place, hidden and humble, but made perfectly one within the divine plan, they are effective and give solidity to the whole building.

The Prelate of Opus Dei placed a casket containing the relics of Blessed Josemaría beneath the altar. This was another way of making clear to everyone the active role that every person has in the Church, which is what the liturgical ceremony of the dedication of a church symbolises.

- 1 Paul VI, *Motu proprio Sanctitas Clarior*, 19 March 1969
- 2 *Conversations with Monsignor Escrivá de Balaguer*, 114



On 17 May 1992, after the Beatification of the Founder of Opus Dei, Mgr. Alvaro del Portillo presented to the Holy Father the project for the future church of Blessed Josemaría.



The Holy Father during his visit to the new parish complex.

THE PRELATE OF OPUS DEI GREETES THE HOLY FATHER

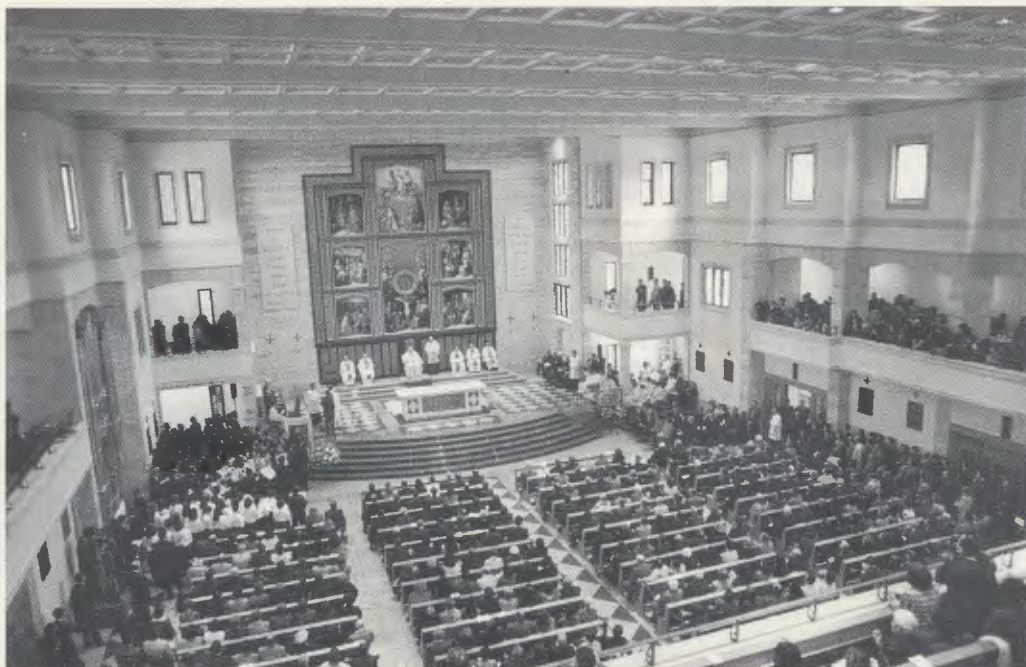
Holy Father,

As we join you with all our heart in giving thanks to the Lord our God for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass we have just offered, allow me also, in the name of all here present, to show my own deep gratitude to Your Holiness for having celebrated the solemn dedication of this church built in honour of Blessed Josemaría.

I am moved to consider that within a few weeks it will be 50 years since, under the impulse of his love for the Vicar of Christ, Blessed Josemaría first came to Rome, with a view to *romanising* – that was the expression he used – Opus Dei, so that it could serve the Church and the Pope better. This was the longing which filled his whole life, and which from the beginning he transmitted to the faithful of the Prelature of Opus Dei.

For this reason, when Bishop Alvaro del Portillo, whom the Lord called to his presence two years ago, offered Your Holiness a church in Rome, the members and Co-operators of the Prelature joined wholeheartedly in that offer, in the joy of being able, through their donations – big or small, but always the fruit of some personal sacrifice – to play a part in this service to the diocese of the Pope.

We have tried to make this church reflect the message God entrusted to Blessed Josemaría: the pursuit of holiness through ordinary work, carried



View of the interior of the church during the Mass of dedication.



The Holy Father prays before the Blessed Sacrament as it is reserved for the first time in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel.

out with the greatest possible human perfection, for love of God, and for the service of men and women of every class and social position. As Your Holiness recalled on 17 May 1992 in the homily during the solemn rite of Beatification of the Founder of Opus Dei, *work too is a means of personal holiness and apostolate when it is lived in union with Jesus Christ, for the Son of God, in the incarnation, has united himself in a certain way with the whole reality of man and with the whole of creation.*

Through the mediation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the intercession of St Joseph, of the Guardian Angels, of the Apostles Peter and Paul, and of Blessed Josemaría, and uniting my own prayers to those of the Pope for the whole Church, I ask Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that the Christian faithful who come to this church in search of Christ, may find him in the Sacrament of Penance, may love him in the Eucharist, and may become identified with him, faithfully carrying out their daily work and all their activities for love of God and mankind, thus contributing to the work of Redemption.

I also ask the Blessed Trinity to continue to bless and pour abundant graces on our beloved Pope John Paul II, always to listen to his prayers, and to reward with supernatural fruits his untiring efforts to sow peace and love among mankind. Amen.

UNDER HIS SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE

METRO ACHIEVEMENT CENTER

Chicago

Metro Achievement Center, an educational centre for girls from the most socially deprived area of Chicago, began its activities just over ten years ago.

When Blessed Josemaría spoke about the Christian formation of women, he used to emphasise the need to encourage women to develop their individual skills and talents, and their capacity to give themselves to others, to acquire a spirit of service, to look after the weakest and most needy people, etc. All these are aspects of the Christian vocation that women are called to follow, each in accordance with her own personality.

In *Conversations* Blessed Josemaría wrote: **Women are called to bring to the family, to society and to the Church, characteristics which are their own and which they alone can give: their gentle warmth and untiring generosity, their love for detail, their quick-wittedness and intuition, their simple and deep piety, their constancy...** A woman's femininity is genuine only if she is aware of the beauty of this contribution for which there is no substitute - and if she



In Metro parents are helped to take an active part in their daughters' education.

incorporates it into her own life. Each woman in her own sphere of life, if she is faithful to her human and divine vocation can and, in fact, does achieve the fulness of her feminine personality.¹

A group of educators and other professional people were inspired by the need (which occupies a key position in Blessed Josemaría's spirit) to harmonise the human and the divine within the task of education. In 1985, in response to a pressing social need, they began this educational programme for girls in districts where violence, unstable marriages, the use of drugs, etc., are habitual phenomena.

The activities offered by *Metro* aim to help the students acquire a type of formation that includes not only the full development of their intellectual capacity, but also the acquisition of and growth in human and Christian virtues, which are the indispensable basis of their formation. In this way the girls discover the value of life and the joy that comes as a result of their effort to carry out a task in the service of God and of other people.

Metro achieves this target through its triple objective:

Firstly, through a broad range of educational activities, it encourages the girls to develop their study skills and character formation, and to acquire a Christian attitude of service towards others.

At the same time, it builds up regular contact with the girls' parents, helping them to take an active part in their daughters' education. *Metro* offers classes, meetings, and family and personal guidance sessions, aimed at strengthening the parents' qualities as educators and to reinforce their function as the primary educators in the family. It provides assistance in various specific aspects of the formation of their children, ranging from information regarding possible ways of financing their studies, to suggestions as to how to create a learning atmosphere in the home.

Lastly, *Metro* encourages the co-operation of hundreds of voluntary helpers. These are professional women and university students, to whom it offers the opportunity to place their time and their knowledge at the disposal of people and families in need.



Whilst preparing for University, the girls acquire and grow in human and Christian virtues.



High School students in a practical class.

¹ *Conversations with Monsignor Escrivá de Balaguer*, 87



Hundreds of volunteers come each week to receive formation and to help the students.

The volunteers go to the centre weekly, to give tutorials and to organise cultural visits, social activities, sports, etc. In *Metro* a variety of classes, seminars, spiritual retreats, and the like, provide them with the possibility of adding to their own formation and of learning how to respond more effectively to the specific needs of the students.

Metro works with girls aged 9 to 17 and offers three programmes:

- *One-on-One* personal tutorials for girls from 9 to 11 years of age. This programme was chosen from among the 44 programmes selected as a model for the International Youth Foundation. It is a plan of formation for the whole person, which as well as creating positive study habits, sets out practical objectives in order to acquire the Christian virtues.

- The *Achievement Program*, for girls of 12 and 13, to help them prepare for entry to High School, and at the same time to ensure that they mature as people. This programme takes place over two weekly sessions in term-time, plus five intensive weeks during the summer. The students are given

classes in Mathematics, English, Art, and Character Formation. Each girl is assisted by a tutor.

- The *College Orientation Program*, for High School girls who want to go on to University. Their academic studies are complemented by activities of a social nature. The girls can choose from different areas: giving tutorials to younger girls, caring for the elderly or the sick in hospital, helping in communities or parishes, etc.

Metro started its activities with 40 girls during a summer programme that took place in a borrowed building in a commercial centre. Over these ten years the centre has grown considerably. Currently more than 600 students participate in its different programmes during term-time and vacations. In a few months' time, *Metro* will transfer to a new, larger building, provided by *Midtown Educational Foundation*, the institution that sponsors the *Metro Achievement Center*. This new locality will enable many more girls to be admitted from the waiting list, and new programmes for parents and educators will be initiated.

Thanks to the generous co-operation of many people, *Metro* is an instrument serving in the formation of many children, young girls and mothers of families. As Blessed Josemaría wrote in *The Way of the Cross: Think first about others. That way you will pass your life on this earth, making mistakes certainly, for they are inevitable, but leaving behind you a trail of good.*² Drawing inspiration from this lesson, *Metro* teaches that happiness is found only by learning to love other people and to give oneself generously in the service of others.

² *The Way of the Cross*, Fourteenth Station, no. 4

WRITINGS OF BLESSED JOSEMARÍA

THE AIM OF THE CHURCH

This, and no other, is the aim of the Church: the salvation of souls, one by one. For this reason the Father sent his Son, and now I am sending you out in my turn (John 20:21). This is the origin of the command to teach his doctrine to everyone and to baptise them, so that, through grace, the most Blessed Trinity may dwell in their souls. *All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the close of the age* (Matt 28:18-20). In those simple and sublime words that conclude Saint Matthew's gospel we find the obligation to preach the truths of faith, the need for sacramental life, the promise of Christ's continual assistance to his Church. You cannot be faithful to Our Lord if you neglect these supernatural demands: to instruct in Christian faith and morality and to frequent the sacraments. It is with this mandate that Christ founded his Church. Everything else is secondary. (The Supernatural Aim of the Church, 4)

THE CHURCH IS ONE

To defend the unity of the Church is to live very united to Jesus Christ who is our vine. How? By growing in fidelity to the perennial Magisterium of the Church: *For the Holy Spirit was promised to the successors of Peter not that they should manifest a new doctrine by his revelation, but rather that with his assistance, they should religiously safeguard and faithfully teach the revelation that was handed down through the Apostles – the deposit of faith.* (First Vatican Council, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, Dz-Sch 3070 (1836)). By venerating this Mother of ours without stain, and loving the Roman Pontiff, we will preserve unity.

I ask Our Lord each day to expand my heart, that he may continue to supernaturalise the love he has put in my soul for everyone, without distinction of race, nationality, cultural condition or wealth. I sincerely esteem all men and women, Catholics or not, those who do believe in something and those who do not. I feel sorry for these unbelievers. But Christ founded only one Church: he has only one Spouse. The union of all Christians? Yes. Even more: the union of all those who believe in God. But there exists only one true Church. (Loyalty to the Church, 2)

THE APOSTOLIC MISSION OF ALL CHRISTIANS

In the Church there is a diversity of ministries, but there is only one aim: our sanctification. And in this task all Christians participate in some way, through the character imprinted by the sacraments of baptism and confirmation. We must all feel responsible for the mission of the Church, which is the mission of Christ. The one who does not have zeal for the salvation of souls, who does not strive with all his or her strength to make the name and doctrine of Christ known and loved, will not understand the apostolicity of the Church.

A passive Christian has failed to understand what Christ wants from all of us. A Christian *who goes his own way*, unconcerned about the salvation of others, does not love with the heart of Jesus. Apostolate is not a mission reserved for the hierarchy, priests and religious. The Lord calls all of us to be, with our example and word, instruments of the stream of grace which springs up to eternal life.

We are contemplating the mystery of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. It is time to ask ourselves: Do I share with Christ his zeal for souls? Do I pray for the Church of which I form part, in which I must carry out a specific mission which no one else can do for me? To be in the Church is already much, but it is not enough. We must *be* the Church, because our Mother must never be a stranger to us, something external, foreign to our deepest thoughts. (Loyalty to the Church, 6)

LETTERS RECEIVED

A BENIGN TUMOUR

My sister was diagnosed as having had breast cancer for several months. All the tests – carried out by three different doctors – indicated that the tumour was malignant.

From before the operation we began to say the prayer to Blessed Josemaría. A friend of my sister gave her a prayer card with a relic of the Founder of Opus Dei, and she took it with her wherever she went.

We asked the surgeon, before he went into the operating theatre, whether there was any chance that it might be a benign tumour, but he said no, it looked very bad, and the results of the tests did not leave any room for hope.

They cut out the lump and sent it for analysis: it turned out to be a benign tumour, much to the surprise of the three doctors, especially one of them who claimed to be an atheist.

Thanks to the intercession of Blessed Josemaría my sister is now recovered.

H.F., California 12.3.1993

BACK TO CONFESSION

Last Sunday I invited a friend of mine – a young chap who has just finished his university degree this month – to a day of recollection. On the way there we spoke about confession and he mentioned he had not been for a long time; the impression he gave me was that it was years rather than months.

After the tea and biscuits at the end of the recollection, I asked him whether he would like to go to confession but he was unsure about it. I told him it was entirely up to him; it was not a "compulsory" part of the day of recollection. He seemed to be unsure but rather inclined to leave it for another occasion. I then invited him to think about it whilst I "paid a visit" to the bathroom. I explained where the priest's room was and left him in the living room.

Whilst in the bathroom I recited one prayer card to Blessed Josemaría – rather distractedly – telling him that if my friend went to confession I would write it down as a favour. When I came out of the bathroom my friend was no longer in the living room, nor in the Chapel. I recognised that he must have gone upstairs to see the priest. He reappeared a little while later and in the car on our way back he mentioned that he had been to confession and that it had gone very well.

W.W., Aberystwyth 23.6.1996

IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

I am a policeman and I work in a remote spot in the Solomon Islands.

The wife of an officer suffered a very serious injury to the back of her head as the result of an accident. Although she was rushed to hospital, she was half-dead on arrival.

At that moment of vital importance, we placed a prayer card of Blessed Josemaría on the affected area, and at the same time we said the prayer, asking him to intercede for her cure.

In an almost instantaneous way, she recovered consciousness. After three days she was considerably better, and after three weeks she had completely recovered.

I thank God for this favour, granted through the intercession of Blessed Josemaría.

F.S., Korovon, Solomon Islands 4.10.1994

I KNEW I WAS CURED

Some years ago I had a very serious operation on the bile duct. After several weeks in hospital, the duct which leads into the intestine was not healing and bile was leaking out. In despair, I began to pray a novena to Blessed Josemaría Escrivá, and on the ninth day, during the night, I felt three great shivers from my head down to my feet. At that moment I knew I was cured.

The next day the surgeon confirmed that this was indeed the case. I had been keeping him informed of my prayers, and although at first he had been somewhat sceptical, it seemed to me that he had been thinking it over.

On many occasions since the cure, I have implored Blessed Josemaría's spiritual help, referring also to my health. I always feel I am listened to and helped by a supernatural force.

I am happy to be able in this way to add my little grain of sand to help further his cause of canonisation.

M.F., Paris 21.1.1994

UNSCATHED IN THE EARTHQUAKE

A young girl had just made the resolution, at the start of the year, to use the prayer card of Blessed Josemaría more often. On the very night prior to the 17th January – the date of the catastrophe – she had said the prayer with greater devotion.

In the morning, when the earthquake happened, the glass in the windows shattered, and in the room the shelves loaded with books, the chests of drawers, and the wardrobes, all came crashing down. As she was covered by blankets and the eiderdown, she was not injured by the glass which fell on top of her, and what is even more astonishing, she awoke to find her face covered by an open book – none other than *The Way*. This prevented her from suffering injuries to her head, and so she emerged completely unscathed.

She is sure that Blessed Josemaría protected her, and she promised to offer up her study and to carry on praying the prayer card so that Blessed Josemaría might continue to help us.

H.T., Ashiya 7.5.1995

MARRIAGE SAVED

About two years ago in the Summer of 1994, I received the news that my cousin, a young mother with three children aged 2 years, 4 years and 6 years had left her husband and children and was in a situation which made it almost impossible for her to return. Her character changed dramatically and she became more and more determined to seek a divorce.

We had grown up together and had always been fairly close. I began praying to Blessed Josemaría Escrivá for her and her family and have not stopped doing so for the last two years.

Very early on I spoke to her and we arranged to meet at her home. Despite

having made a special journey to see her she did not turn up for the appointment. Instead, I spoke a while to her husband, who though not a Catholic is a deep Christian and was convinced that only by prayer would she return.

After several attempts to reach her by phone she made it clear that she did not want our help and that she was much happier now in her new life. I could do nothing but to keep in touch from time to time and hope and pray that the impossible would happen. Although she herself kept in touch with the children her relationship with her husband became more and more strained.

Back in May of this year, I had an opportunity to go to Rome and was able to pray specially for her and her husband at the tomb of Blessed Josemaría. On my return the first news I received was that my cousin had returned home and was reconciled with her husband. I am convinced that her change in attitude was due to the power of prayer and most particularly to the intercession of Blessed Josemaría.

M.H., London 20.8.1996

HAND MOVEMENT RESTORED

About a year ago I was involved in a car accident, in which I broke my left arm. After four months I was left with hardly any movement in my left hand. The doctors were alarmed at this and suggested I receive intensive therapy in hospital, to try to recover the movement in my hand.

After three weeks of powerful electrical stimulation to the hand, the results were negative. The doctors feared the worst and decided to carry out an exploratory operation on the radial nerve of the arm to try to repair it. In a sense the operation could be described as a success, but after three months I was still unable to move my hand. The physiotherapist concluded that the nerve was seriously damaged and that I was not going to be able to recover any movement.

A priest friend of mine was in Rome around that time and brought me back a prayer card of Blessed Josemaría containing a relic. I immediately began to pray it, and one night I was awoken by a pain in my hand, but as I was so tired I did not pay any attention to it.

The next morning I tried to move my hand, and, incredibly, it responded. When I went to the hospital and the physiotherapist saw the movements I could now make with the hand, he told me he had to accept it as a miracle. I am certain that this favour was granted to me through Blessed Josemaría.

A.C.L., Puerto Rico 25.4.1994

"SHOW ME YOUR POWER OF INTERCESSION"

A friend of mine who is a doctor, and who is now quite elderly, came to Paraguay from the United States on his retirement, so that he could carry on helping the needy with his work.

During a visit to the city of his birth he decided to have a check-up. He was examined by a doctor friend of his, who on inspecting his neck found that he had an almost total blockage of the carotid artery. After a week of treatment, the doctor friend decided to perform an arterial transplant. The operation lasted five hours, after which the patient did not recover consciousness: he went into shock and was totally paralysed. The doctor said to himself: "I can't let a colleague and friend die", and he repeated the

operation again from the beginning. The patient spent a total of ten hours in the operating theatre, but again failed to recover consciousness at the end of the operation.

In desperation the surgeon telephoned the family in Paraguay to inform them of the situation and to ask them to pray for a miracle. When I heard the news, I recalled that, a short while beforehand, the Holy Father had beatified Blessed Josemaría. I prayed to the newly beatified Josemaría and said: "show me your power of intercession and bring my friend back to life." And indeed, the patient suddenly awoke. The doctor asked him who he was, and he replied with his name. Then he found he could move his whole body: he had come back to life. The surgeon considered it to be a palpable miracle.

The doctors, the family, and all those who know the case, are very grateful to God for bringing my friend back to life: there were even Masses of thanksgiving said. I write this testimony to thank Blessed Josemaría for his intercession.

D.M., Asunción, Paraguay 30.6.1992

EXAM SUCCESS

I write to tell you of a favour I believe I have received from God through the intercession of Mgr Escrivá earlier this year.

I am a postgraduate student on a Master of Science course at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh. However, I have found this course very difficult, lacking some of the normal prerequisite knowledge for the course and having trouble finding suitable accommodation away from home, in Edinburgh.

Therefore, when it came to the exams I had to pass at Easter I was concerned that I wouldn't be allowed to continue my studies if I failed them. However, I did well enough to be allowed to continue and, also, was placed with a company I wanted to gain work experience with in Glasgow. These things I prayed to Blessed Josemaría Escrivá for and duly received, by God's grace.

A.G., Glasgow 7.8.1996

SUCCESSFUL JOB INTERVIEW

I promised publication if my request was granted. I was going for a job interview and was feeling rather nervous. During the interview a former friend passed by and saluted me. This seemed to impress the interviewer who was more than impressed when my friend said that I was a good salesman. I feel sure this helped me to get the job, and I am certain that Blessed Josemaría Escrivá played a large part in this.

Even more impressive was what happened one week later when the whole project folded up, and we were all laid off. Once again I prayed and promised publication knowing that it would indeed be a miracle if I were reinstated. Well!, miraculously I was, and was greeted by a secretary who said "so you are the one who survived".

P.J.M., London 1.5.1996

A PERMANENT POST

I am writing to tell you of a favour I received through the intercession of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá.

My unmarried daughter, who is 40 years old, has been living in another country for five years now. Financially it has been a great struggle for her

and she has just been able to make ends meet. The employment situation there is even bleaker than in this country and so she was only able to get temporary posts and at times rely on government aid. She qualified as a medical secretary and was held in high esteem by the doctors she worked for. I prayed to Blessed Josemaría that she would find a permanent post that would allow her to live with some dignity. I have been praying for this favour for several years.

While working for a doctor who has a high position in the Health Service in that country, she was offered a post similar to what she had held here. There were a few obstacles but thank God all turned out well in the end and her post was ratified last week. It also means she will be working in a more pleasant environment and will have less travelling. I am extremely grateful to Blessed Josemaría for his intercession on her behalf.

B.McD., Coatbridge 27.2.1996

SAVED FROM THE FIRING SQUAD

I would like to place on record a favour obtained through the intercession of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer.

One day we were violently awoken at our chicken-farm, at one o'clock in the morning. A group of heavily armed men arrived, firing shots. From that moment we began to pray to Blessed Josemaría.

The raiders identified themselves as guerrillas, and took me out of the house with my hands in the air. The leader ordered them to kill me. As I walked to the wall where they were about to shoot me, I prayed more intensely to our Blessed Josemaría.

I thanked them, because they would be sending me straight away to Heaven. The only thing that worried me was the future of my eleven children, who would be left without any means of support.

In the meantime my wife was praying the prayer card over and over again. Suddenly the leader said to the men: "You lot, return him and don't kill him." They got very nervous, and they tied me up beside my wife and got hold of all the chickens they could. One of them said to us: "You're obviously very devout people." And they left.

J.L.G., Antigua, Guatemala 30.7.1994

HELP FOR THE PARISH PRIEST

A few months ago I came across your Newsletter about Josemaría Escrivá and the prayer card for private devotion. I used the prayer and God helped me in my financial problems and in my prayer life. Please send me more cards as I want to increase prayer life, by distributing the cards, in the parish where I am the parish priest. Josemaría is doing a lot for me, especially in my prayer life, which is becoming better.

P.B., Ibanda-Mbara, Uganda 22.9.1994

The originals of these letters, including names and addresses, are kept in the Archives of the Postulation of the Cause.

We are grateful for all the many letters we receive. They bear witness to the devotion with which so many people all over the world pray to God our Lord, invoking Blessed Josemaría as their intercessor. Owing to limits of space we have printed in this *Newsletter* only a few paragraphs from some that relate important events or simple anecdotes.

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 3,978,000 copies have appeared in 41 languages.

FURROW. "Like *The Way* (...), *Furrow* is 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. 371,000 copies in 13 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 with 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. 343,000 copies have been printed in 10 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 661,000 copies have been published in 21 languages.

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 372,000 copies.

CONVERSATIONS. 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 constitute a profound and attractive exposition of Christian doctrine and life. Foreword by Bishop Alvaro del Portillo. First published in 1973, over 445,000 copies have appeared in 13 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 340,000 copies have appeared in 9 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 41,000 copies.

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