

PRAYER

O God, through the most Blessed Virgin Mary, you granted countless graces to your priest Saint Josemaría, choosing him as a most faithful instrument to found Opus Dei, a way to holiness through daily work and 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 serve the Church, the Pope and all souls, with joy and simplicity, lighting up the paths of the earth with faith and love. Through the intercession of Saint Josemaría please grant the favour I request
(here make your petition).

Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.

This newsletter is issued free of charge and is for private circulation only. 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 to: **Prelature of Opus Dei, Office for the Causes of Saints, 4 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 Saint Josemaría.

Further Information

On Saint Josemaría: www.josemariaescriva.info

On the writings of Saint Josemaría:

www.escrivaworks.org

On Opus Dei: www.opusdei.org.uk

On the bulletin of the prelature: www.romana.org

For more information about Opus Dei or its founder, Saint Josemaría, contact:

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Saint Josemaría today



LOVE FOR FREEDOM

The book Conversations with Monsignor Escrivá contains several interviews which the Founder of Opus Dei had with journalists from various countries. The following exchange is an extract from the interview first published in L'Osservatore della Domenica, Vatican City, May/June 1968.

I would like to ask you now what characteristics of the spiritual formation of the members make it impossible for anyone to derive any temporal advantage from belonging to Opus Dei?

Any advantage which is not exclusively spiritual is completely ruled out, because the Work demands a great deal — detachment, sacrifice, self-denial, unceasing work in the service of souls — and gives nothing. Nothing, that is, in terms of material advantages, because in the spiritual sphere it gives very much. It offers the means to fight and win in the ascetical struggle. It leads one along ways of prayer. It teaches one to treat Jesus as a brother, to see God in all the circumstances of one's life, to see oneself as a son of God and therefore to feel committed to spreading His teaching.

Anyone who does not progress along the way of the interior life, to the extent of realising it is worthwhile to give oneself in everything, will find it impossible to persevere in Opus Dei, because holiness is not just a nice-sounding phrase to be bandied about. It is a very demanding affair.

And besides, Opus Dei has no activity with political, financial or ideological aims. It has no temporal action.

Up to 6 October 2002, 22 issues of the Newsletter were published to inform of progress in the process of canonisation of Josemaría Escrivá and of favours obtained through his intercession. Since then many people have asked us to continue sending information about the life and message of the founder of Opus Dei, and so we are resuming printing of this newsletter on an occasional basis under the title ***Saint Josemaría Today.***

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Its only activities are the supernatural formation of its members and the works of apostolate — in other words, the constant spiritual attention it gives to the members and the corporate apostolic undertakings in the area of social welfare, education, etc.

The members of Opus Dei have come together only for the purpose of following a clearly defined way of holiness and of cooperating in specific works of apostolate. What binds them together is something exclusively spiritual and therefore rules out all temporal interests, because in the temporal

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area all the members of Opus Dei are free and so each goes his own way, with aims and interests which are different and sometimes opposite.

Because the Work's aims are exclusively supernatural, its spirit is one of freedom, of love for the personal freedom of all. And since this is a sincere love for freedom and not a mere theoretical statement, we love the necessary consequence of freedom which is pluralism. In

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Opus Dei pluralism is not simply tolerated. It is desired and loved, and in no way hindered. When I see among the members of the Work so many different ideas, such a variety of points of view in political, economic, social or cultural matters, I am overjoyed at the sight, because it is a sign that everything is being done for God, as it should be.

Spiritual unity is compatible with variety in temporal matters when extremism and intolerance are shunned and above all when people live up to the Faith and realise that men are united not so much by links of sympathy or mutual interest but above all by the action of the one Spirit, who in making us brothers of Christ is leading us towards God the Father.

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A true Christian never thinks that unity in the Faith, fidelity to the teaching authority and tradition of the Church, and concern for the spreading of the saving message of Christ, run counter to the existence of variety in the attitudes of people as regards the things which God has left, as the phrase goes, to the free discussion of people.



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In fact, he is fully aware that this variety forms part of God's plan. It is something desired by God, who distributes His gifts and His lights as He wishes. The Christian should love other people and therefore respect opinions contrary to his own, and live in harmony and full brotherhood with people who do not think as he does.

Precisely because this is the spirit which the members of the Work have learnt, none of them would dream of using the fact that they belong to Opus Dei to obtain any personal advantage or to try to impose their political or cultural opinions on others: the others just wouldn't put up with it and would ask them to change their attitude or leave the Work. This is a point on which no one in Opus Dei would ever permit the least deviation, because it is their duty to defend not only their own freedom but also the supernatural character of the activity to which they have dedicated their lives. That's why I think that personal freedom and responsibility are the best guarantee of the supernatural purpose of the Work of God. (*Conversations with Monsignor Escrivá*. Scepter, New York, 1993, no.67).

MEMORIES OF SAINT JOSEMARÍA

Pedro Casciaro remembers the atmosphere of the first students' residence that started up in Madrid in 1934. "Among the members of the Work and the undergraduates whom his apostolate reached there were, of course, very diverse political views. The Father taught us to have a great respect for each person's freedom. As the Father said to one of the boys, 'Look,

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nobody here will ask you about your political views. People from all sectors come here: Carlists, people from Popular Action, Spanish Renewal Monarchists. Yesterday, the President and Secretary of the Basque National Students' Association were here,' he remarked by way of example." (Pedro Casciaro, *Dream and your dreams will fall short*. Scepter, London 1997, p.90).

This same spirit was maintained after the Civil War in the Jenner Residence. "In the study room," writes Francisco Ponz, "on a framed parchment on the wall, one could read in Latin the commandment of love: 'A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.' (John 13:34-35). That parchment, which had already been in the Ferraz Residence before the civil war, had been rescued by the Father from the rubble of the building that had been destroyed by bombs." (Francisco Ponz, *Mi encuentro con el Fundador del Opus Dei*. Eunsa, Pamplona, 2000, p.42).

Also from this time, José María Casciaro remembers a journey with St Josemaría: "When the train had started I asked him, 'Father, what can I do in Madrid now?' His reply was swift: he said immediately, 'In Madrid you are to do whatever you like.' I did not actually understand his answer in its fullness. I did not have any plan but was just looking forward to going back to the Jenner Street residence for a few days to be there, quite simply, with the Father, Pedro, and the other people of the Work. Although I did not understand his reply, it made such an impression on me that I have never forgotten it.

"Later on I began to understand those spontaneous words. They showed his respect for everyone's freedom, and especially that of his sons in the Work, and also something really admirable, which is the trust the Father had in us. 'I trust the word of a son of mine more than the unanimous testimony of a hundred notaries,' I heard him say on several occasions. Later, too, I was able to appreciate the theological depths of his attitude: he



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trusted his sons' truthfulness, our integrity in living our lives in God's sight, and the fact that we were seeking the Good for completely supernatural reasons." (José María Casciaro, *It is worthwhile*. Scepter, London, 1999, pp.117-118).

"The first women of Opus Dei," Esther Toranzo has written, "arrived in Kenya in 1960, a few years before independence. They had an educational project in mind for young women which included all religions and races. This was in contrast with the generally accepted idea of the time which favoured segregation. Nairobi was then divided into three residential zones: one for Europeans, one for families coming from Asia and one for African families. This last zone was confined to the outskirts of the city, with precarious buildings and living conditions." (Esther Toranzo, *En el corazón de Kenia*. Rialp, Madrid, 1994, pages 37-38).

SAINT JOSEMARÍA IN BRITAIN

A beautiful new signboard at the entrance to the church which houses the statue of Our Lady of Willesden, long venerated as the Protector of London, shows two saints at prayer before Mary, the Mother of God.

They are St Thomas More, the sixteenth-century Lord Chancellor of England and Saint Josemaría Escrivá, the twentieth-century Spanish priest and founder of Opus Dei.

Many might wonder what these two canonised saints from different times and different nations have in common. The answer is very much indeed.

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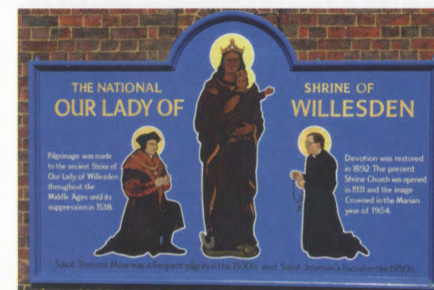
First and foremost is their great love for Our Lady. Thomas More often made the pilgrimage to Willesden, both to the shrine of Our Lady and to see his step-daughter, Alice, who lived nearby. His last visit to the shrine was in April 1534, just before his arrest, trial and his decision to die rather than deny that the Pope was the head of the universal Church. St Josemaría made many pilgrimages to shrines of Our Lady throughout the world. Twice when visiting England he made pilgrimages to Our Lady of Willesden.

The first was fifty years ago, on Friday 15th August 1958. He then renewed the consecration of Opus Dei to the Most Sweet Heart of Mary. He prayed: "We consecrate to you our being and our life, everything that is ours: all that we love and all that we are. Our bodies, our hearts and our souls are for you; we are yours. And to make this consecration truly effective and lasting, today at your feet, O Mary, we renew the dedication that we made to God in Opus Dei. Inspire us with a deep love for the Church and the Pope, and make us live in full submission to all their teachings." This consecration is renewed in the same words on every 15th August in all centres of Opus Dei.

St Josemaría's second visit was on 17th August 1962, accompanied by his future successor, now the Servant of God Alvaro del Portillo. They recited the Holy Rosary and bought pictures of the statue of Our Lady of Willesden for members of Opus Dei in London.



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Other things the two saints have in common is that they both trained as lawyers and both understood the dignity of the lay vocation.

St Josemaría's principal concern was to help people become saints in the midst of the modern world. He would say: "Your duty is to sanctify yourself. Yes, even you. Who thinks that this task is only for priests and religious? To everyone, without exception, Our Lord said: Be ye perfect, as my heavenly Father is perfect" (*The Way*, no.291). And in 1928, he founded Opus Dei to help men and women sanctify their work and themselves "in the world."

St Thomas More sanctified himself in the world as a husband, father, intellectual and politician. St Josemaría greatly admired him and made him one of the special intercessors of Opus Dei. St Thomas More's famous last words summed up the meaning of his life: "the King's good servant but God's first".

SOME FAVOURS RECEIVED BY PEOPLE IN BRITAIN

I was getting ready to attempt my driving test for the fourth time and was really not very hopeful of passing. I hadn't prepared as well as I could have and on the morning of my test I came across the prayer of St Josemaría Escrivá. I said the prayer straight away and again just before doing my test. To my amazement the test went extremely well and I passed. I truly believe that my prayers were answered that day.

GF (November 2005)

Since receiving a prayer card from my surgeon (I donated a kidney to my brother) I have prayed daily

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to St Josemaría asking for healing for my mother who was diagnosed with lung cancer, gland cancer and suspected bone cancer. I also prayed for a lady who had cancer of the womb and was going through an operation. She is now clear. The large tumour and some glands had been removed from my mother through surgery but some cancer remained. After 8 weeks she was re-examined by a specialist and told she was cancer-free. I put this down to intervention from the above saint.

FM (May 2007)

Grateful thanks to St Josemaría. This is the e-mail that I have longed to send to you saying that our prayers have been answered and our son's temporary job has been made permanent. I do not have the vocabulary to say thank you in an appropriate way and cannot overestimate what your prayerful support has meant to us in our dark days.

BW (August 2007)

In May, earlier this year, my mother had a fall, making her rather less mobile. She was already having difficulties, with a knee replacement and arthritis. It was urgent that she should move home – especially as there were 12 steps up to the front door, and another 18 once inside. There were also other factors involved which made the move vital.

The choice and availability of a suitable replacement was, however, restricted due to certain complications. I entrusted the matter to St Josemaría immediately. Not long afterwards, my mother received an offer of a transfer. She was happy with this offer although the flat needed some repair work before she could move in. It was also on the first floor with access only via heavy swing doors and a lift; not ideal. After



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several weeks, there was still no sign of improvement to the property and my mother's situation was becoming worse, plus both the housing manager and surveyor had left their jobs. I continued praying.

Unexpectedly, an entirely new offer was made for a much nicer flat in another area, on the ground floor. It was within walking distance for me, it was familiar to my mother as we had visited friends there before, and it fulfilled all the other requirements.

DG (August 2005)

In my first night in hospital, where I had gone for an operation, there were four of us in the ward. As soon as the lights went out the people began to sleep. Immediately one of them began to snore, not far from me. I tried to make nothing of it, thinking that in this way I would manage to get to sleep, but the snoring was prolonged and gave every impression of continuing indefinitely. Time passed and the problem remained. Then it occurred to me to entrust myself to our Father, using the prayer on the prayercard. At the very moment I reached the end of the prayer the snoring ceased completely.

GG (June 2005)

I recently started praying to Saint Josemaría to intercede with our Lord on behalf of my girlfriend and me so that she could find work in London. She has been living in Italy and needed to find a three month internship to complete her Master's degree in International Marketing and Communications. Within a couple of days of praying for this



intercession, she received a phone call with a job offer in Marketing for the next three months. We are both delighted and very grateful for Saint Josemaría's help in making this goal come true.

JW (June 2005)

My husband, an agnostic, asked me in desperation to pray to Saint Josemaría for a miracle that would keep a business which has been in the family for many years, employing people. After asking Saint Josemaría for his intercession (in the prayer card) the orders have begun to come in.

CP (May 2005)

My daughter suffered a brain trauma due to alcohol abuse. This brought her to near death in July 2000. All our prayers were answered and she recovered, to the amazement of the medics, as her whole system had almost shut down. She was aged 26 years. However, after a year in hospital and six months in a wheelchair she regained her faculties, learning to read and write again. Unfortunately she began to drift back down the horrible path towards alcohol and had a few breakouts. To our horror we saw the old pattern emerging once again.

I started to pray to Bishop Alvaro del Portillo last April, almost in despair. I asked my daughter to pray to Josemaría Escrivá. My daughter now has the strength to resist alcohol and hasn't drunk since April 2004. This is really a miracle and the answer to all our prayers. I thank God every day at Mass for the blessings he has bestowed on my family.

MM (March 2005)

