



## PRAYER

O God, merciful Father,  
you granted your servant Bishop Álvaro, the grace  
of being an exemplary pastor in the service  
of the Church, and a most faithful son and  
successor

of Saint Josemaría, the founder of Opus Dei.

Grant that I also may respond faithfully  
to the demands of the Christian vocation,  
turning all the circumstances and events of my life  
into opportunities to love you  
and serve the kingdom of Jesus Christ.  
Deign to glorify your servant Álvaro, and  
through his intercession grant me  
the favor I request . . .  
(here make your petition). Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be to the Father.

In conformity with the decrees of Pope Urban VIII, we declare that there is no intention of anticipating in any way the judgment of the Church, and that this prayer is not intended for public use.

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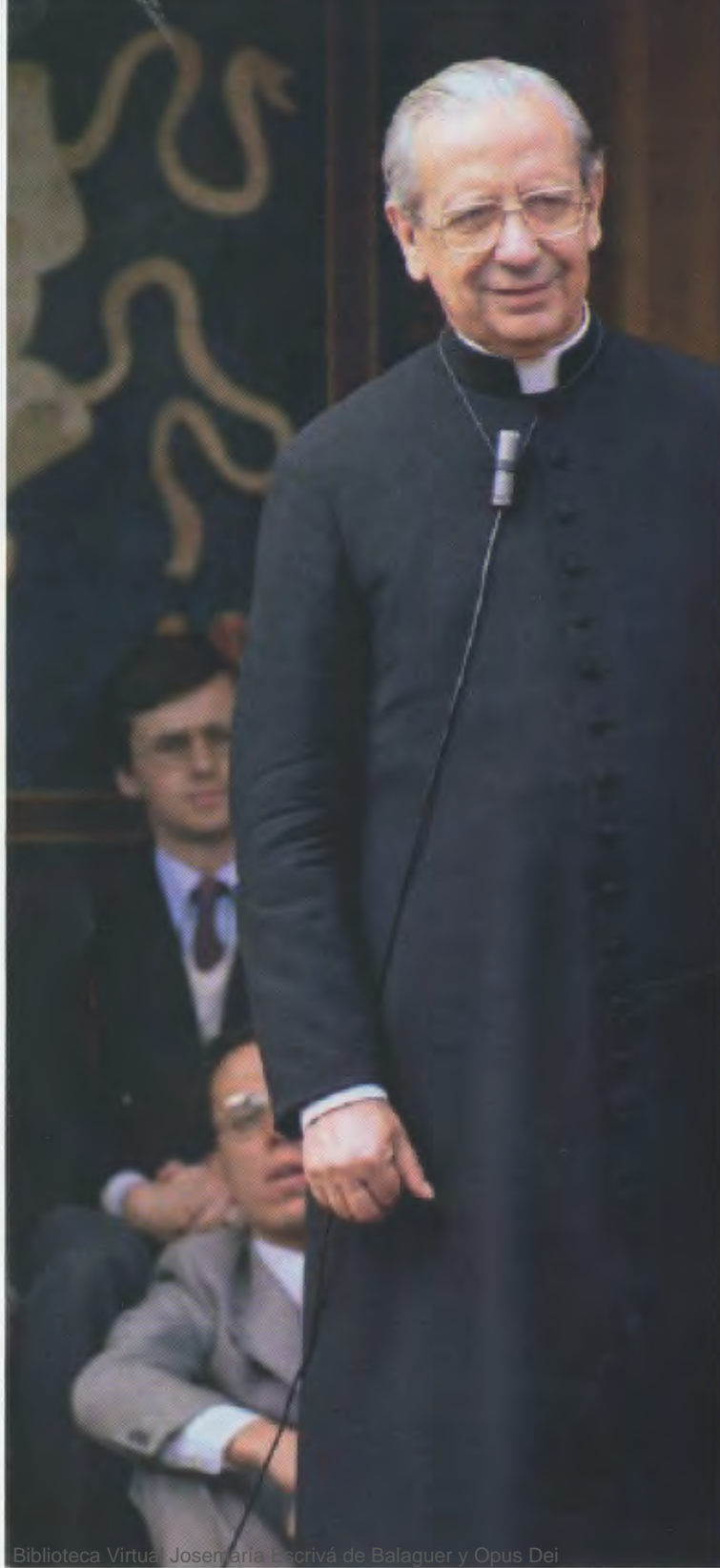
# Álvaro del Portillo

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Bishop Álvaro del Portillo was born in Madrid, Spain, on March 11, 1914. He was a civil engineer and also held doctorates in philosophy and canon law. On June 25, 1944, he was ordained a priest. Two years later, he moved to Rome, where he worked directly with St. Josemaría Escrivá, the founder of Opus Dei. His service to the Church was also shown in his dedicated work in tasks entrusted to him by the Holy See and especially in his active participation in the work of the Second Vatican Council. In 1975, after the death of St. Josemaría, he was elected to succeed him as head of Opus Dei. On January 6, 1991, Pope John Paul II ordained him as bishop. The Servant of God's pastoral work was characterized by fidelity to the spirit of Opus Dei's founder and by zeal in extending the apostolates of the Prelature and the call to holiness in ordinary life throughout the world. On the morning of March 23, 1994, a few hours after returning from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, our Lord called to himself this good and faithful servant of his. That same day, the Holy Father John Paul II went to pray before his mortal remains, which now repose in the crypt of the Prelatic Church of Our Lady of Peace, in Rome.

editorial

## EDITORIAL

The first edition of the Bulletin of the Servant of God, Álvaro del Portillo, is published nearly twelve years after his death and more than a year after the opening session of the tribunals that are currently carrying out the diocesan phase of the examination of his life and virtues.

His reputation for sanctity has already spread throughout the world. Today thousands of people seek to obtain God's favor through the intercession of Don Álvaro, a good and faithful priest and exemplary bishop in the service of the Church and souls. These pages seek to bear witness to the spread of private devotion to Don Álvaro and to the action of God's mercy for the benefit of mankind.

We feel sure that readers of this Bulletin will find help for their Christian lives in Don Álvaro's life and example. As the Prelate of Opus Dei said in the opening session of the Tribunal of the Cause on March 20, 2004, they will "discover, through Don Álvaro, the fatherly face of God smiling upon us."





## THE CAUSE OF CANONIZATION: FIRST SESSION OF THE TRIBUNALS

Opening ceremonies of the tribunals; Cardinal Ruini's address; words from the Prelate of Opus Dei

The Congregation for the Causes of the Saints approved two tribunals of equal competence for the diocesan investigation of the life, virtues and reputation for sanctity of Bishop Álvaro del Portillo: one from the Vicariate of Rome and the other from the Prelature of Opus Dei.

The opening session of the Vicariate of Rome's tribunal was held on March 5, 2004, in the Lateran Palace's Hall of Conciliation,

and was presided over by Cardinal Camillo Ruini, the Holy Father's vicar for the Diocese of Rome.

In his address, Cardinal Ruini gave a biographical sketch of Bishop del Portillo. "The deep pastoral experience he gained working alongside St. Josemaría, his proven human qualities and his theological and juridical competence enabled him to undertake many different tasks," he said.

The Pope's vicar emphasized "the long and multifaceted activity that he carried out in the service of the Apostolic See" as a consultant for various congregations, as secretary of the Second Vatican Council commission that prepared *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, as a consultant for other Conciliar commissions, and as a synod Father.

"The frequent occasions that I had to meet Bishop del Portillo," recalled Cardinal Ruini, "imprinted on my soul the conviction that I found myself in the presence of an exemplary pastor." He went on: "In his firm adherence to the doctrine of the Church, in his union with the Pope, in his pastoral charity, in his humility, and in his balanced character, he exhibited an extraordinary interior richness."

According to the Cardinal, "the service that Don Álvaro provided to the Church of Rome, and the prompt and effective way he supported the Holy Father's pastoral initiatives in this diocese, showed the love for the Church that he had learned from St. Josemaría."

The swearing in ceremony for the members of the Tribunal and the Postulator of the cause was held in the presence of the Cardinal.

A few days later, on March 20, the opening session of the Tribunal of the Prelature of Opus Dei was held in the Höffner Hall of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, in Rome, with four hundred people present.

The Prelate of Opus Dei, Bishop Javier Echevarría, noted that "shortly after his death I received many written testimonies confirming how widespread Don Álvaro's reputation for holiness was even during his lifetime. The writers expressed the wish that his cause of canonization be opened. Among these documents were some 200 letters from bishops (35 of them cardinals) from 25 countries."



- Cardinal Camillo Ruini presiding over the opening session of the Tribunal of the Vicariate of Rome
- View of Höffner Hall during the ceremony on March 20
- Bishop Javier Echevarría during the session

Bishop Echevarría recalled that when work began on St. Josemaría's cause of canonization, Don Álvaro "never missed the opportunity to help us understand that the aim was not to seek the human glory of Opus Dei, but the good of the whole Church, the good of souls." The Prelate of Opus Dei expressed his hope that the cause of Bishop del Portillo would also be an opportunity for many souls, "to discover," through Don Álvaro, "the fatherly face of God, who smiles on us, encourages us, and forgives us." ▲



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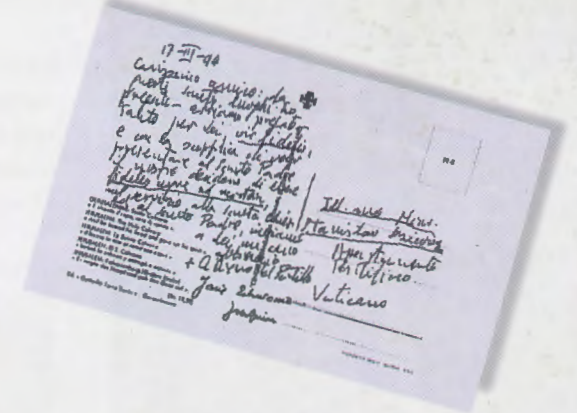
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• My dear friend:

In these holy places I have prayed—I  
have prayed—so much for you, vir fidelis.  
With the request that you present to the  
Holy Father our desire to be fideles usque  
ad mortem, in the service of the Church and  
the Holy Father, we send you a cordial  
embrace

Postcard from Don Álvaro to  
Msgr. Stanislaw Dziwisz,  
written in the Holy Land  
on March 17, 1994



place in the following days. That evening  
in Nazareth, Don Álvaro celebrated Holy  
Mass in the Basilica of the Annunciation. In  
his homily he spoke of the mystery of the  
Incarnation and of suffering as God's gift,  
undoubtedly thinking of Anibal, who was  
suffering from a serious illness and who  
attended the Mass with his wife.

On the morning of the 16th we went to  
the Church of the Primacy of Peter, and  
later to the Mount of the Beatitudes, where  
Don Álvaro celebrated Mass. Afterwards we  
went to Capernaum. In the afternoon we  
spent half an hour praying on the shore of  
the Sea of Galilee. Don Álvaro, Fr. Javier  
and Fr. Joaquín sat on a fallen tree trunk,  
and Fr. Joaquín read some Gospel pas-  
sages recounting times when Jesus was

present at that place. I sat on a rock behind  
Don Álvaro, with Fr. Alberto Steinworth, one  
of the priests of Opus Dei who lived in  
Jerusalem. Trying not to distract them, I took  
some videos of the scene. Close to the  
shore we saw a nun and in another place,  
a monk. As we left, four boys of different  
races came and began to pray quietly. On  
the way back we picked a few leaves from  
some plants as a souvenir.

On the following day, March 17th, we  
drove from Nazareth to Jerusalem, with a  
stop at Mount Tabor, where Don Álvaro said  
Mass. In Jerusalem, after praying at the Holy  
Sepulcher and at Calvary, Don Álvaro visited  
the two Opus Dei centers in the city. During  
the next few days he returned at various  
times to both centers and said Mass on



A good and faithful servant: Your memories of the Holy Land are now joined to your memories of Bishop Álvaro del Portillo.... God allowed him to carry out a pilgrimage to the places where Jesus spent his life on earth. They were days of intense prayer that united him closely to Christ and prepared him for his definitive encounter with the Blessed Trinity. The memory of this "good and faithful servant" should strengthen in each of you your zeal for the service of the Gospel. Pope John Paul II to the participants in the UNIV Congress, March 29, 1994, Rome



Pope John Paul II praying before the remains of Don Álvaro

March 20th in one and on March 21st in the other. On the 18th he celebrated Mass at one of the altars of the Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher and on the 19th in the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem. The 19th, Saturday, was my saint's day, and Don Álvaro congratulated me as soon as he saw me at breakfast. That day there was a gathering in the afternoon at the Paradise Hotel in Bethlehem, with more than a hundred people attending, among them Christians, Jews and Muslims. It was a very cordial get-together. Don Álvaro responded with great affection and tact to the questions he was asked. He insisted on the need for Arabs and Jews to live together peacefully. Later, in Jerusalem, he visited the Latin Patriarch. Two days later he also visited the Apostolic Delegation.

#### In the Cenacle

On Sunday the 20th we went to Bethany in the morning and to Ain-karin in the after-

For more information on Don Álvaro:  
[www.opusdei.org](http://www.opusdei.org)

noon. At 11:00 a.m. on March 22nd, Don Álvaro concelebrated Mass in the Cenacle with Fr. Javier, Fr. Joaquín, Fr. Alberto and Fr. Lawrence Richardson, another priest of Opus Dei living in Jerusalem. This was to be the last Mass of his pilgrimage to the Holy Land. But it was also, and who could have imagined it, Don Álvaro's final Mass on earth. Fr. Javier preached the homily and Don Álvaro gave us Communion.

A few hours later we were on the plane, returning to Rome. During the flight I trained the video camera on Don Álvaro and began to film him. He smiled for the camera and then gave a wave of greeting, or of farewell, with his hand. Around eight in the evening, the youngest of the crew offered us something to drink. Don Álvaro and Fr. Javier asked him about his family, his work, and his interests, and then told him a bit about the spirit of the Work.

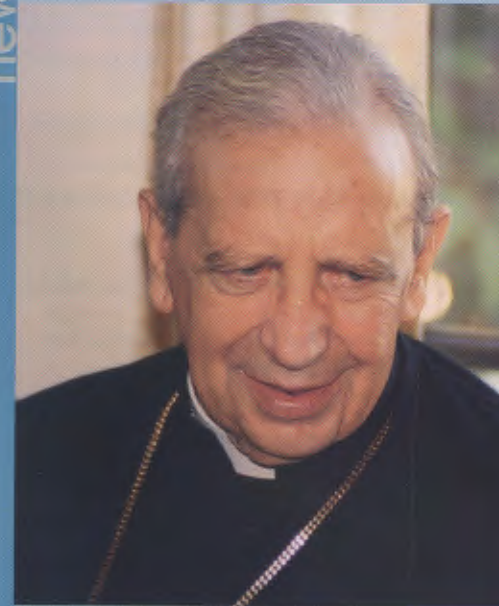
At the Ciampino airport some families were waiting with bouquets of flowers. Don Álvaro was very affectionate with everyone.

#### During the night

I went to bed shortly after arriving home, and about three in the morning Don Javier called me: Don Álvaro didn't feel well. When I reached his room, he was having difficulty breathing. He immediately lost consciousness. I gave him oxygen; he had hardly any pulse. After treatment with medications, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation efforts were initiated, but without success. I had to tell Fr. Javier that Don Álvaro was dying. Don Javier gave him absolution several times and administered the Anointing of the Sick. Around 4:00 in the morning, when Fr. Javier asked whether Don Álvaro had died, I could only answer that he had. I kissed the kind and now lifeless face of Don Álvaro, sure that he was smiling at me from heaven. ▲

Dr. José María Araquistain

## RACES OBTAINED THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF DON ÁLVARO



#### Kidney donor and transplant

I had been visiting the sick mother-in-law of my youngest sister in Asian Renal Center. Whenever there were new patients, my sister had been giving out prayer cards of St. Josemaría, which I regularly gave her. In one visit, I made friends with the other patients, among them was Cielo, a young professional working in a well-known television channel. She was around 30 years old. Her kidneys had collapsed and were damaged. She had been undergoing dialysis thrice a week, waiting for a kidney donor for her transplant operation. Since Cielo started praying to the Founder of Opus Dei for her illness, I thought of asking Don Álvaro for the

suitable donor and for the kidney transplant to be done soon. Some time later, there was prospective donor but issue of incompatibility arose. Aside from this, the financial costs were also high. We continued to pray and after several months, a donor was found. She was able to have her kidney transplant which came out successful.

L.I.L., Manila (Philippines)

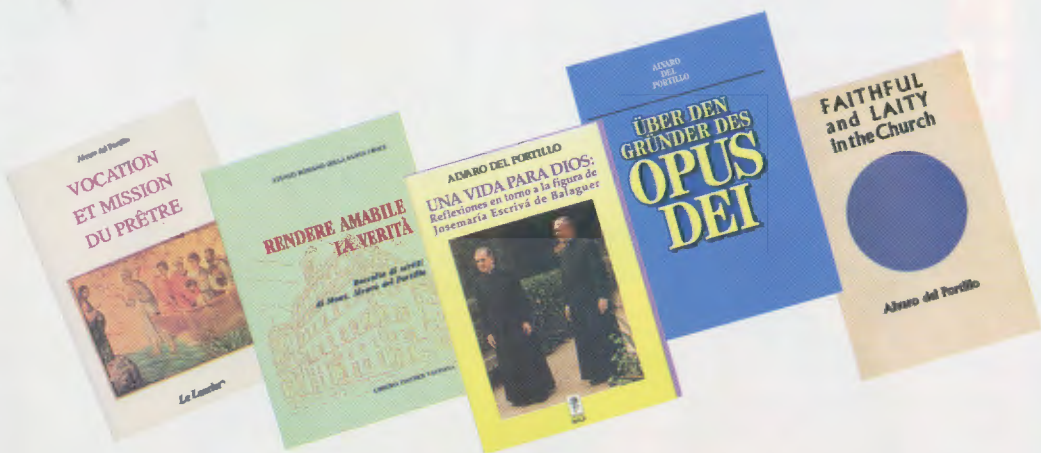
#### Impossible university bills

Again and again our financial situation made it impossible to pay the bills for our three children at the University of Rome. Often only an intervention from heaven enabled us to pay the bills when they came due. We put ourselves under the patronage of Don Álvaro, saying the prayer on his prayer card, and by God's grace we somehow got the money together each time. We have obtained many other favors through Don Álvaro's intercession, including peace and harmony in our family, six people always struggling with thousands of temptations. For all this I give thanks to the good God who has given us such a marvelous intercessor.

P.M., San Giovanni La Punta (Italy)

#### Money for a plane ticket

I am of Japanese origin and had always dreamed of going to Japan. I was finally able, due to some unexpected circum-



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stances, to get a grant to study for a year in Okinawa. For me, attending the Work's means of formation is an important matter, but the closest center was Nagasaki and the only way to get there was by plane, which required great sacrifices to obtain the necessary funds. At the tightest moment, when the time for my trip came but I didn't have the money for a ticket, I asked Bishop Álvaro del Portillo to intercede for me...I prayed insistently and each time a relative appeared with the cash or a check.

M.K.I., Kyoto (Japan)

**Help in finding a job**

Despite having degrees in Economics and Business Administration, I was unable

to get a job. I submitted applications, sent out resumé's and had interviews with various companies, all to no avail. I told an aunt about my situation and she gave me some prayer cards of Don Álvaro del Portillo and told me to distribute them and to say the prayer with faith.

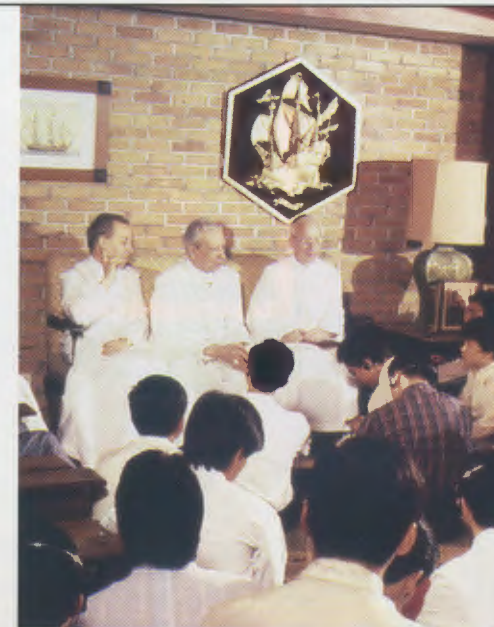
I did this, and to my surprise, my cell phone rang right away and a friend told me that somebody she knew urgently needed an administrator he could rely on. I immediately made the contact. We had an interview, and within a week I was working. I'm now very happy in my job and want to bear witness to the favor that I've received. I tell my story to anyone I can and continue to say the prayer on the card. I thank God very much for having given me this favor I was so anxious

initiatives

With Don Álvaro del Portillo's encouragement and prompting, a great number of educational projects and undertakings of social and Christian development were begun.

These initiatives, in addition to their social purposes, also served to bring souls to God through the spirit of Opus Dei.

In the photo, Don Álvaro is shown in a get-together with a group of his sons in Samar Study Center, a university student center in Quezon City (Manila), during a catechetical trip to the Philippines in January 1987.



for: finding honest work.

L.G.P., Maracaibo (Venezuela)

**Three years of migraine headaches**

In November 1998, I began to suffer migraine headaches, something I had never had before. During the first year they occurred four or five times a month. Later they grew worse and increased to around ten times a month. I was forced to give up doing part of my regular work.

In September 2001 the pain became even more frequent. In November I had migraine headaches every other day. Each time I suffered the attacks I took some medicine that alleviated the pain but made me feel very ill. In agreement with the company doctor, it was decided

that I should give up my job, because even the two hours I had been working were a great effort for me.

Not knowing what to do, I began a novena to God, using the prayer card of Don Álvaro. During the first two weeks I didn't obtain a cure, but there was a "spiritual cure" of two friends, something that gave me consolation and strength. On the day after finishing the third novena, December 12, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, I had my last attack of pain. I attribute this miraculous and rapid cure after three years to the intercession of Don Álvaro del Portillo.

Now that I no longer have the migraine headaches, my life is as it was before. I can work, travel, read, listen to music, etc.

M.S., Utrecht (The Netherlands)