

## RECENT AND UPCOMING PUBLICATIONS

### **Saxum: The Life of Alvaro del Portillo.**

John F. Coverdale, Scepter Publishers, New York,  
(publication date: July, 2014).  
www.scepterpublishers.org

**Like Salt and Like Light.** A selection of texts from Alvaro del Portillo. Scepter Publishers, New York, London  
(publication date: May, 2014).  
www.scepterpublishers.org

**Saxum: Remembering Bishop Alvaro del Portillo.**  
Fundación Betafilms, Madrid, 2013, DVD, 30 min.  
www.betafilms.org

**A Helping Hand. Social and Educational Projects Inspired by Bishop Alvaro del Portillo.** Romana, Bulletin of the Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei, 2013, Supplement to no. 57.  
www.romana.org

**Alvaro del Portillo: The Power of Humility.**  
Helena Scott and Ethel Tolansky. Catholic Truth Society, London, 2014.  
www.ctsbooks.org

**Alvaro del Portillo. Un hombre fiel.** Javier Medina Bayo. Rialp, Madrid, 2012.  
www.rialp.com

## PRAYER

*O God, merciful Father,  
you granted your servant Alvaro, Bishop,  
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 too 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 Alvaro,  
and through his intercession  
grant me the favor I request ...  
(here make your petition). Amen.*

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

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# Alvaro del Portillo

Awaiting  
the Beatification

Decree  
on the Miracle



Bulletin  
March 2014

- With St. Josemaría, in 1972.
- In Nigeria, November 12, 1989.
- Blessing a sick person, September 3, 1988.

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### 9 FAVORS RECEIVED

Bishop Alvaro del Portillo was born in Madrid, Spain, on March 11, 1914. He held doctorates in Civil Engineering, History and Canon Law.

In 1935 he joined Opus Dei. Very soon he became the closest collaborator of Saint Josemaría.

He was ordained a priest on June 25, 1944 and he dedicated himself to his priestly ministry with generosity. In 1946 he moved to Rome. His service to the Church was also shown in his dedication to the many tasks the Holy See entrusted to him. After the death of St. Josemaría in 1975 he was elected his successor as head of Opus Dei.

When Blessed John Paul II erected the Work as a personal Prelature on November 28, 1982, he appointed him Prelate of Opus Dei, and later ordained him a bishop.

The Servant of God's pastoral government was characterized by fidelity to the founder's spirit and message and by his eagerness to extend the apostolates of the Prelature in the service of the Church.

Our Lord called this good and faithful servant to his side in the early morning hours of March 23, 1994, shortly after his return from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. That same day John Paul II went to pray before his mortal remains, which now rest in the crypt of the church of the Prelature, Our Lady of Peace, in Rome.

On June 28, 2012, Benedict XVI declared that the Venerable Servant of God had lived the Christian virtues to a heroic degree and on July 5, 2013, Pope Francis approved the decree concerning a miracle attributed to Venerable Alvaro del Portillo.



# E DITORIAL



On July 5, 2013, Pope Francis declared that a cure attributed to the intercession of Venerable Alvaro del Portillo was miraculous. In that same audience he made known that the decree for a miracle of Blessed John Paul II would be published and that he had dispensed the need for a second miracle of Blessed John XXIII, opening the path for the canonization of those two Roman Pontiffs on April 27, 2014. He also approved other decrees on miracles, heroic virtues and martyrdoms of various Servants of God.

The Prelate of Opus Dei, Bishop Javier Echevarría, sent a letter to the faithful of the Prelature expressing his gratitude to God and to our Lady for this step, the final one before beatification. He said that we should view this step as a new call from God to grow in our zeal for holiness, in service to the Church.

He also added some suggestions to help each of us prepare personally for Don Alvaro's

beatification: to strive to deepen our piety, and to sanctify our work and grow in our apostolic zeal, struggling to be contemplatives in the middle of the world, following the example of St. Josemaría and of his first successor as Father and Pastor of Opus Dei. He also advised us to "spread devotion to our beloved Don Alvaro, who the Church has described as 'a man of deep goodness and cordiality, who spread peace and serenity to souls.'" And he suggested: "Go to his intercession, with the certainty that God will graciously accept the petitions you direct to him through this good and faithful servant."▲

- The young engineer Alvaro del Portillo, April 10, 1944.
- July 6, 1980, crossing the English Channel with Msgr. Javier Echevarría and Msgr. Joaquín Alonso.
- Blessing a sick person in Madrid, November 24, 1993.

# CONGREGATION FOR THE CAUSES OF SAINTS

ROME

and the PERSONAL PRELATURE of the HOLY CROSS and OPUS DEI

BEATIFICATION AND CANONIZATION

OF THE VENERABLE SERVANT OF GOD

ALVARO DEL PORTILLO Y DIEZ DE SOLLANO

TITULAR BISHOP OF VITA

PRELATE OF THE PERSONAL PRELATURE OF THE HOLY CROSS AND OPUS DEI

(1914 – 1994)

## DECREE ON THE MIRACLE

The Venerable Servant of God Alvaro del Portillo y Diez de Sollano was born in Madrid on March 11, 1914 in a Christian home, the third of eight children. He obtained doctorates in Civil Engineering, History and Canon Law. In 1935, at the age of twenty-one, he requested admission to Opus Dei and came to be, after a prudent time, the closest collaborator of Saint Josemaría. On June 25, 1944 he was ordained a priest and moved to Rome in 1946 to assist Saint Josemaría in the government and expansion of Opus Dei. He generously carried out many tasks for the Holy See: Consultor for several Departments of the Roman Curia, and during the Second Vatican Council, Secretary of

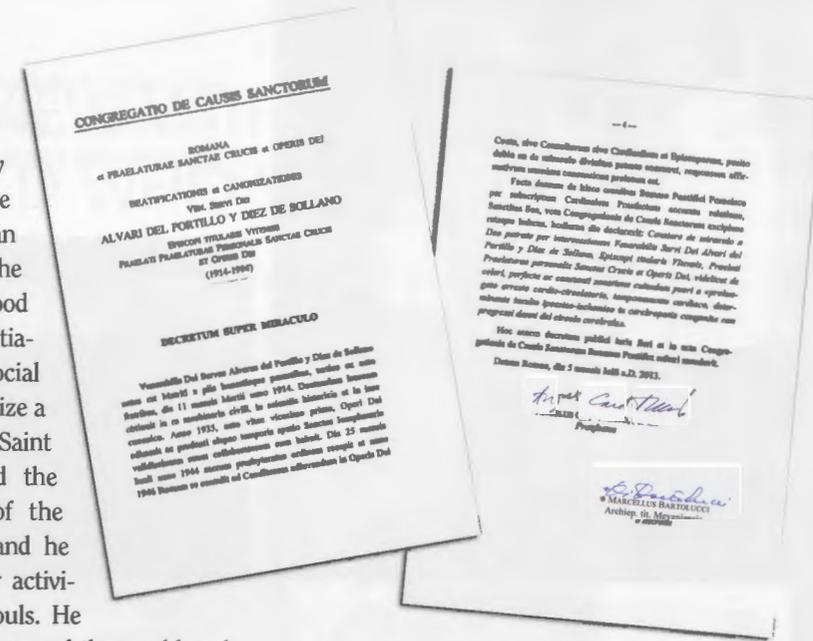
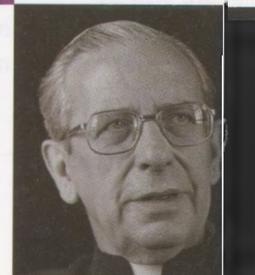
the Commission *De disciplina cleri et populi christiani*, as well as Peritus for several Commissions. On September 15, 1975 he was elected the first successor of Saint Josemaría as the head of Opus Dei. On November 28, 1982 Blessed John Paul II erected Opus Dei as a Personal Prelature and appointed the Venerable Alvaro del Portillo as Prelate. On January 6, 1991, Blessed John Paul II ordained him a bishop. His pastoral ministry was particularly marked by faithfulness to the spirit and message proclaimed by the Founder. He was unstinting in his efforts to extend the apostolic work of the Prelature in the service of the Church. During the nineteen years in which he

directed the Work, it began stable apostolic work in twenty new countries. During those years he called more than a thousand faithful of the Prelature to the priesthood and fostered many initiatives in the area of social services. In order to realize a long-standing desire of Saint Josemaría, he founded the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome, and he encouraged many other activities in the service of souls. He also travelled to all corners of the world and everywhere preached the Gospel with fortitude. Early in the morning of March 23, 1994, just a few hours after returning from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, the Lord called him into His presence. Immediately proofs of his fame of holiness sprang up throughout the world.

Among these, reports of spiritual and mate-



- First page of the decree on the miracle.
- Final page of the decree on the miracle.
- January 15, 1984, during the visit of Blessed John Paul II to Centro ELIS, in Rome.
- Photograph of Don Alvaro in 1975.



rial favors stand out, along with many cures attributed to his intercession. Especially worthy of consideration is the cure of an infant born on July 10, 2003 with congenital (bilateral) cerebral malformation, cyanotic heart disease (Tetralogy of Fallot) and an omphalocele. During his first few days of life the infant suffered repeated hypoxic-ischaemic cerebral lesions, and on 2 August he went into cardiac arrest for between thirty to forty-five minutes due to cardiac tamponade as a result of a massive haemorrhagic pericardial effusion. During this time the doctors attempted to resuscitate the infant without success. When they were about to stop all efforts at resuscitation, the infant's cardiac activity spontaneously resumed.

While this was happening the parents, informed of the situation of their infant, intensified their prayers asking for his cure through the intercession of Venerable Alvaro del Portillo. According to the doctor's assessment, this ischaemic event ought to have caused



- At a ceremony of ordination of priests, in June, 1993.
- Don Alvaro greets a family at the Rome airport on his return from the Holy Land, a few hours before his death.



grave neurological damage or even the death of the infant. However, from a functional point of view, the recovery was both complete and permanent.

The diocesan investigation of this cure took place in the ecclesiastical Curia of Santiago, Chile, between August 5, 2008 and August 6, 2009. On January 15, 2010 this Congregation decreed the juridical validity of that process. On October 18, 2012 the Department of Medical Advisors of the Congregation issued their assessment that medical science could not explain the cure. The Special Congress of Theological Advisors took place on December 15, 2012, and the Ordinary Session of Cardinals and Bishops on June 4, 2013, presided over by Cardinal Angelo Amato. Both of these bodies, those of the Advisors and of the Cardinals and Bishops, responded unanimously in the affirmative to the question of whether this was a miracle accomplished by God.

After having received from the Cardinal Prefect, whose signature is affixed to this decree below, a detailed report of what has just been stated, the Supreme Pontiff Francis accepted

and ratified the votes of the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints and declared today, July 5, 2013: *The proofs of the miracle performed by God through the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God Alvaro del Portillo y Diez de Sollano, Titular Bishop of Vita, Prelate of the Personal Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei, are known, namely the rapid, complete and permanent cure of an infant with 'congenital cerebral malformation and cardiovascular lesions, who suffered a prolonged cardiac arrest secondary to cardiac tamponade which should have caused an anoxic-ischaemic injury to the brain.'*

The Holy Father has ordered that this Decree be made public and be recorded in the acts of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

Given in Rome on the fifth day of July 2013.▲

ANGELO Card. AMATO, S.D.B.

*Prefect*

L. + S.

✠ MARCELLO BARTOLUCCI  
Titular Archbishop of Mevania  
*Secretary*

## INTERVIEW WITH THE MOTHER OF THE CHILD WHO WAS CURED

(see full text at [www.opusdei.org](http://www.opusdei.org))



*When was your son José Ignacio born? Were there complications at his birth?*

He was born on July 10, 2003. Actually the problems became apparent quite a while before his birth. As early as January 2003, when I was expecting José Ignacio, they told us that his birth would not be easy since it was quite possible that he would be born with an intestinal hernia. From that moment on we turned to Don Alvaro saying the prayer for his intercession on his prayer card.

*Didn't they find any defect in his heart?*

Not before his birth. But afterwards, so as to operate as soon as possible on the intestinal hernia, they performed various tests and quickly discovered that José Ignacio had a malformation of the heart with grave consequences for his blood circulation.

At first the plan was to try to stabilize José Ignacio's condition, discharge him, and then perform an operation in about a year. But in view of the situation the doctors decided on an interim operation, and a final one later on. José Ignacio had heart surgery on July 30th, twenty



• Playing with his class brother.

days after his birth, and for the first forty eight hours after the operation everything went well. The doctors seemed happy with his condition.

Then the situation suddenly changed. On August 2nd, around 2:30 pm, we were asked to go to the pediatric intensive care unit at the Catholic University, because José Ignacio was in critical condition. We prayed all the way there. When we arrived I asked to see my son but they told me it was impossible because they were trying to resuscitate him. I almost couldn't walk because of my nervous state. I hugged my father-in-law who had just arrived and began praying the prayer for Don Alvaro's intercession. As soon as I ended it I began praying it again, without stopping.

We called several people and asked them to let everyone know that they should pray to Don Alvaro for José Ignacio.

The heart stoppage lasted more than a half hour. The doctors had already given him up for dead, since he failed to react to cardiac massage or any other measure. But just when they were about to stop trying, José Ignacio's heart started beating again.

#### *Is José Ignacio leading a normal life now?*

He leads a life that is normal for a child of his age. After all that happened at his birth, we thought he would either die, or if he survived he would be permanently confined to bed. Therefore, for us, everything in José Ignacio's

life seems explainable only thanks to God and to Don Alvaro's intercession. He is an enthusiastic soccer player. He also likes tennis, and a teacher with whom he played during our summer vacation says he is very coordinated. He loves dancing and music. At home he sings songs he has composed himself and dances to all kinds of rhythms.

#### *How would you describe the temperament and personality of your son?*

José Ignacio is a very cheerful, enthusiastic and motivated child. He also has a lot of perseverance, and little tolerance for frustration, along with a great self-esteem and sociability. The birth of his little brother, a bit over a year ago, made him very happy. He sings to him, talks with him, and holds him in his arms. If he starts crying he is concerned and tries to protect him.

#### *How has this experience affected you and your husband?*

It has meant a lot for us spiritually. It has also left its imprint in other aspects, but above all it has been important in our spiritual life. When we consider our marital life, we see that for us the "adventure" of José Ignacio has been a process of converting and drawing much closer to God.

#### *Do you think that José Ignacio's story has a message that could be of interest to everyone?*

It is a call to hope for all who are confronting difficulties. José Ignacio is a living reminder of God's great gift in bringing us into this world, and his perseverance shows us what it means to struggle day by day and give the best of ourselves in confronting life's circumstances. When we face adversity, being close to God is what gives us the strength to go forward. ▲

## F AVORS RECEIVED



Recently, when speaking by *Skype*, my brother-in-law told me, with a beaming smile: "you can stop bothering Don Alvaro now, since I've found work."

This new job opens up many professional opportunities and—little by little, with a lot of effort—they should be able to meet their debts and get back on their feet financially. I am very thankful to Don Alvaro for this great favor, and I also want to ask his "pardon" for having spoken to him with such "strong" language.

#### **The big lottery prize**

One of our eight children has a grave mental illness from which he will never recover, in spite of taking medication which has helped him somewhat. Because of the sickness and medicines, his mind is confused and he can't hold a steady job and earn an income to be self-sufficient.

I have struggled with this situation since I want my son to be as independent as possible, so that when I am no longer here, he will be able to take care of himself. After spending five years in a psychiatric hospital, he was considered capable of living in a group home, although he had always expressed the wish to live alone in his own house. His doctors assured us that some day this would be possible. I was concerned that it would never be financially possible, since he didn't earn enough to support himself.

Thanks to Don Alvaro, my son attained his dream. I began to go to his intercession so that my son would find a solution to his financial needs. And the response was overwhelming.

My son was working two days a week washing dishes in a small restaurant. He seemed to enjoy his work, although it was a hard job because the restaurant was very busy and he had to wash the

#### **Work and family peace**

For many years I have been going to Don Alvaro for every need in my family, and I can say that I have always received an answer to my prayers.

Recently I have spent months—almost a year—praying for a job for one of my brothers-in-law. He and my sister have seven children. His company collapsed, and as a result he found himself in a very tight financial situation, which had begun to affect the peace at home, especially between the two of them.

Whenever I asked them about their situation, I received a negative response and saw their worried faces. So I confronted Don Alvaro, in whom I have total trust, and asked him with a lot of faith for this intention, demanding that he find a solution without delay.

plates by hand, bending over a deep industrial sink. I did it myself once and it was very hard on the back. I was sad because of this situation and asked Don Alvaro to free him from it.

One day my son called me and asked if it was a sin to buy a lottery ticket. I asked him why and he explained that his fellow workers had invited him to join a group to share weekly lottery tickets. I told him that it was good to make friends at work and that this would help him be more united to them and be part of the group. Exactly one month later, my son called me and said they had won the lottery. The group of seven people had won 100 dollars and had decided to reinvest it all. Except for the owner of the restaurant, the other six were poor working people.

When my son called me on Mother's Day and told me that he had won the lottery again, I answered, "That's wonderful, dear." He was excited and said it was "the big one," and I repeated, "That's wonderful, dear." My son has a lawyer designated by the court because of his stay in the psychiatric hospital. The lawyer called me to say that my husband and I should organize our schedules because the following day we had to accompany our son to the lottery office. Then I began to realize that this was something serious, so we cancelled our appointments and, the following day, I found myself with my son, his lawyer, his fellow workers and the lottery officials. I was almost in a state of shock when I realized that my son had won three million dollars.

With the help of the lawyer we set up a trust fund for him, so that his money would be wisely invested. This should ensure that he will be well taken care of for the rest of his life.

When I told my son that I didn't want a car, he replied that I could use it to bring my friends to the days of recollection. It was then that I thought of Don Alvaro and that it was all due to him. Then he said he would buy us a large television set, since we only had an old small one. I told

him "no, we don't need a new television." And he replied: "You could use it to show movies for your young people's club," which offers formative activities for some of our other children and their friends. Then I knew for certain that Don Alvaro was responsible for what had happened.

So now my son has his own home and soon will be living there on his own. I will continue praying to Don Alvaro to keep taking care of his financial needs, and to St. Josemaría to watch over his mental and spiritual needs.

### **It cleared up by itself**

In 2008 we had to bring our two-year-old daughter to the emergency room. The diagnosis was salmonella, with severe dysentery and intestinal torsion.

An abdominal ultrasound confirmed the diagnosis. The doctors and gastroenterologist told us that the torsion should be treated immediately since there was the risk of losing part of the intestine. The procedure involved introducing pressurized air into the intestine to try to untangle it. This procedure had to be done in the surgical pavilion with anesthesia and a surgeon present, since a perforation could easily occur, which would require an emergency operation.

Our daughter was in great pain, crying and screaming. My husband and I decided to entrust her to Don Alvaro. We almost had to shout to one another, since our daughter was crying so loudly we could hardly hear ourselves speaking. Each began to pray silently the prayer for his intercession, which we knew by heart.

At that moment my mother arrived and she too began to pray the prayer to Don Alvaro. Fifteen minutes later the surgeon in charge arrived and he asked to have another echograph done so he could personally see the location of the torsion before going into the operating room. When this second echograph began my daughter was writhing in pain; they applied the gel and

tried to get a good image with the machine, which was very difficult because she was moving around so much.

My husband and I looked at each other, and I told him that we should insist one last time with Don Alvaro. Then slowly she began to calm down, crying softly, until she fell asleep.

The surgeon and the ultrasound team continued searching for the torsion, and after a while they concluded that the twisting had cleared up by itself. This is not something unheard of. It was not a miracle, but my husband and I are sure that it was a favor through Don Alvaro's intercession.

### **Seeking a first home**

R., a computer engineer, had worked for several years in the Persian Gulf countries, and had managed to save up some money. One day, speaking with a friend in Opus Dei, he lamented that he couldn't get married because he didn't have his own home yet, since prices were too high. Even though he had a good job here in Lebanon, he had not been able to find a place he could afford. His friend encouraged him to start a novena to Don Alvaro, and gave him a prayer card.

Two days later R. phoned him, in the evening, telling him with great excitement the extraordinary thing that had happened.

He had begun the novena the same day that he received the prayer card. The next morning, reading the advertising pages in the newspaper, he found a home advertised for half the usual price, a figure within his financial possibilities. Thinking that it must be a mistake, he phoned and was told, incredibly, that the price was as advertised. He went to see the house, expecting it to be in poor condition. To his surprise it was a large apartment in a wooded area, with a view of the sea, and relatively close to where he worked.

The owner, in a financial bind, needed money as soon as possible, and therefore had substantially reduced the price.

R., enthused by the offer, went that same day to borrow the money he needed to cover the purchase. Unfortunately none of the three banks he went to would make the loan. But he wasn't discouraged and continued praying to Don Alvaro.

When he went to work the following morning, he stopped to have a cup of coffee and met an old friend who had just returned from Saudi Arabia, whom he hadn't seen for five years. This friend turned out to have an important position in a large bank. While talking to him, the problem of the apartment and the loan he needed came up and his friend said that he could probably help solve the problem.

By that evening he received positive news and couldn't wait to tell his friend in the Work that his problem was almost solved thanks to Don Alvaro's help.

Everything went very quickly and he was soon able to buy the apartment and start furnishing it. And above all, he was able to set the date for the wedding, filled with gratitude for the help of his intercessor. The families of the engaged couple are also very happy and grateful to Don Alvaro.

### **No longer on dialysis**

A friend of mine went to the hospital in order to have his heart checked. In the process they did a test using a special dye that stopped his kidneys from functioning. His kidneys did not function for two months. The doctors thought that he was never going to recover the regular use of his kidneys. Then we prayed to Don Alvaro and his kidneys began to function again much to the surprise of the doctors. My friend is truly grateful not to have to undergo the stressful procedure of frequent dialysis and to have his kidneys regularly functioning again. One year later his kidneys are still functioning thanks to Don Alvaro.

*Note: Out of respect for their privacy, the names of those sending in these reports of favors have been omitted.*