

VICE-POSTULATION OF OPUS DEI IN THE UNITED STATES
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JOSEMARÍA ESCRIVÁ DE BALAGUER

Founder of Opus Dei

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Talking with God

Monsignor Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer was born in Barbastro (Spain) on January 9, 1902. His schooling took place in Barbastro and Logroño. He carried out his ecclesiastical studies in the Pontifical University of Saragossa, where he received his licentiate in sacred theology. Later, in Rome, he earned the corresponding doctor's degree.

He also studied civil law in the University of Saragossa, and later obtained his doctorate at the University of Madrid. In 1960 he was awarded an honorary doctorate in Philosophy and letters by the University of Saragossa. He was the first chancellor of the Universities of Navarre, in Spain, and of Piura, in Peru.

Ordained to the priesthood on March 28, 1925, he began his pastoral work in rural parishes and, from 1927 on, worked among the poor and sick in the slums and hospitals of Madrid. Several years later he was appointed rector of the Royal Foundation of St. Elizabeth in Madrid, a position he held until 1946, when he moved to Rome.

He served as consultor to various pontifical commissions and congregations of the Holy See, as domestic prelate to the Holy Father and as a member of the Pontifical Roman Academy of Theology.

On October 2, 1928, while in Madrid, he founded Opus Dei, a way of sanctification in the midst of the world and a source of intense Christian life in the most diverse walks of life. On February 14, 1930 Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer founded the women's branch of Opus Dei and on February 14, 1943, within Opus Dei, the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross. Opus Dei received the definitive approval of the Holy See on June 16, 1950.

For 47 years the Father — as he was called by his sons and daughters and thousands of other people — inspired and guided the growth of Opus Dei through his constant prayer, penance and unconditional dedication to God's will. Today the association is established on six continents, with more than 70,000 members of 80 nationalities.

The holy Mass was the root and center of the interior life of Opus Dei's founder. A deep appreciation of his divine sonship moved him to seek in everything a most complete identification with Jesus Christ, to live a deep and tender devotion to the blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph, and to enjoy a constant and trusting friendship with the holy guardian angels. All of this filled him with the desire to sow peace and joy along all the ways on the earth.

Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer repeatedly offered his life for the Church and the Roman Pontiff. The Lord accepted that offering on June 26, 1975 when, in Rome in the room where he worked, the Father surrendered his soul to God with the same holy simplicity that permeated his whole life.

His body rests in the crypt of the oratory of Our Lady of Peace (Viale Bruno Buozzi 75, Rome), accompanied day and night by the prayer and gratitude of his sons and daughters and countless others who have come closer to God through the example and teachings of the founder of Opus Dei.

Cover: *Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer after a gathering in a university center in São Paulo, in Brazil on May 25, 1974.*

My children, Jesus Christ gives us an example and teaches us to pray. "And rising up long before daybreak, he went out into a desert place, and there he prayed" (Mk 1:35). I am moved by his eagerness — "long before daybreak," notes St. Mark — to converse with his eternal Father.

Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer contemplated Jesus at prayer and translated the lesson into his own life. In his daily struggle he had a single desire: to seek friendly and continuous intimacy with God our Lord, to be a contemplative soul, a soul of prayer.

Although he no longer walks among us, his biography will have as its refrain those "steps" he mentions in *The Way: When I made you a present of that Life of Jesus, I wrote in it this inscription: "May you seek Christ. May you find Christ. May you love Christ."*¹

The Founder of Opus Dei was a priest who spent his life either speaking with God or about him. His example, his word, his writings brought millions of souls to the paths of prayer.

You and I, he would say, wish to attain holiness. And therefore we must identify ourselves with Christ, put on Christ: *induimini Dominum Iesum Christum!* (Rom 13:14). Children of my soul, all of us must become *ipse Christus: Christ himself*. But to clothe ourselves with him as the Apostle suggests requires personal effort. Each one of us, individually, must speak with our Lord.

How are you and I to do it? Converse often with the Lord; seek him, like Peter, so as to speak intimately with him. Note well that I say conversation: a dialogue of two, face to face, without losing yourself in anonymity. How we need personal prayer, dealing directly, intimately with God our Lord!

Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer never gave stock suggestions about how to speak with God. He taught that personal prayer cannot be modeled on some abstract ideal. Each soul, according to his temperament and the needs of the moment, has his own way of praying. **I never lay down rules on how you are to pray; that is something very personal. I only give you general pointers; then it's up to you to follow your own way, different perhaps from that of others.**



Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer praying in the shrine of Our Lady of Lujan (Argentina) on June 12, 1974. At right is the current President-General of Opus Dei, Very Rev. Alvaro del Portillo, and at left, Rev. Javier Echevarría, Secretary-General of the Work.

Nonetheless, Opus Dei's founder was often asked how to pray. In a homily given April 4, 1955, he tells us this much:

How are we to pray? I dare to say, without fear of exaggeration, that there are many, even infinite, ways to pray. But I desire for all of us the authentic prayer of God's children, not the pious verbosity of hypocrites. Note how Jesus rebukes them, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 7:21): Those infected with hypocrisy can perhaps achieve "the noise of prayer," writes St. Augustine, "but not its voice, because it lacks life."² Absent from their prayer is the burning desire to fulfill the Father's will. Every time we call out "Lord!", may our petition be united with the effective desire to make a reality the interior motions of the Holy Spirit in our souls.

We must do everything within our power to rid ourselves of even the traces of deceit. The first step in banishing the insincerity our Lord so severely condemns is to try to summon forth a clear, habitual and lively attitude of aversion to sin. Both in our heart and mind, we must feel strongly a sincere horror for grave sin. We must also have a deeply rooted determination to abhor deliberate venial sin, which does not take away divine grace, but clogs up its sources.

I have never tired of speaking of prayer, and with God's grace, I never shall. In the early thirties, when just a young priest, I was approached by all kinds of people — college students, workers, priests and lay people, healthy and sick, rich and poor — who sought to accompany our Lord more closely. My advice was always the same: pray. And if any of them replied, "I don't even know how to begin," I recommended that he place himself before God and voice his uneasiness, his awkwardness, with that very same complaint, "Lord, I just don't know how." And so many times as a result of that humble outpouring, the "beginner" would be ushered into Christ's intimacy, the beginning of a lasting friendship with him.

So many years have gone by, yet I know no other formula. If you don't feel ready or worthy, turn to Jesus as the disciples did and say, "Teach us to pray" (Lk 11:1). Then you will experience how the Holy Spirit "helps our weakness: For we do not know what we should pray for, nor how, but the Spirit himself pleads for us with unutterable groanings" (Rom 8:26). His help is such that we cannot describe it; we lack words to express its depth.

What steadfastness should the divine Word bring us! I invented nothing when, throughout my priestly ministry, I tirelessly repeated the advice I repeat to you now. You can find it in Sacred Scripture, just as I did: Lord, I don't know how to go about talking with you! Lord, teach us to pray. And then comes over us all the loving help — light, fire, impetuous wind — of the Holy Spirit, who sparks the flame and makes our blaze big enough to set off a conflagration of love.

"To pray is to talk with God. But about what?" About what? About him, about yourself, joys, sorrows, successes and failures, great ambitions, daily worries — even your weaknesses! And acts of thanksgiving and petitions — and love and reparation.

In short, to get to know him and to get to know yourself — to get acquainted."³

¹ *The Way*, no. 382.

² *En in Ps.*, 139, 10.

³ *The Way*, no. 91.

Among the Poor and Sick of Madrid

On October 2, 1928 Msgr. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer received in his soul the seed of Opus Dei. From then on he unstintingly dedicated himself to the task that would consume the rest of his life, nearly 50 years spent opening up paths of service to our Lord and the Church. On occasions, in his conversations, he would recall the foundations of the edifice that God had called him to build. On March 16, 1975, while speaking with a group of his children in Rome, he asked:

What means did I use? I went to seek strength in the poorest sections of Madrid. I spent hours and hours going from one place to another, every day, on foot, to visit poor people who tried to hide their poverty, and wretched and pitiful poor, who didn't have anything. Hours spent with dirty children with runny noses, but children — which means souls pleasing to God. What indignation fills my priestly soul when today some people claim that small children ought not to go to confession! That's not true. They need

to make a personal, secret confession to the ear of the priest, just like everybody else. What a boon, what joy! I spent many hours in that ministry, and my only regret is that I couldn't spend more. And in the hospital wards and houses of sick people — if I can call those hovels houses. They were helpless and sick persons, some afflicted by tuberculosis, which was incurable then.

I sought in all those places the means to carry out the Work of God. Meanwhile, I worked with and formed the first persons attracted to our spirit. There were all kinds: college students, workers, shopkeepers, artists....

Those were intense years when Opus Dei was growing on the inside without our realizing it. But what I wanted to tell you — some day they'll give you a full, documented account — is that the human strength of the Work was made up by the hospitalized sick of Madrid, the most miserable, those who lay hopeless in their shacks, the most ignorant

dwellers in the worst slums. The treasures of Opus Dei, the means we used, were the incurably ill, the abandoned poor, homeless and unschooled children, homes bereft of heat, warmth, love. And I had to form the first few, speaking to them with an absolute certainty of the work we would do, as if it already existed....

Moreover, God was leading us along the paths of our interior life, the one meant for us. What did I seek? *Cor Mariae Dulcissimum, iter para tutum!* I sought the power of the Mother of God, as a little child, becoming ever smaller. I turned to St. Joseph, my father and my lord. I liked to envisage him strong and powerful, chief of a great divine clan, whom God himself obeyed: "he was subject to them!" With simplicity I sought the interces-

sion of the saints. I turned confidently to the holy angels in a childlike way, without realizing that God was leading me along the ways of spiritual childhood. But you need not imitate me. Long live freedom!

What can a child do to carry out a mission if he hasn't the means, or the age or the knowledge, or the virtues — if he has nothing at all? He turns to his mother and father, he goes to enlist the help of the powerful, he asks his friends to help. That's what I did in the spiritual life. And all of that to the beat of my disciplines: penance and expiation marking the rhythm.

Today it is difficult to imagine the squalor that beset the outlying areas of a city such as Madrid, which, like many other European



Madrid, the Foundation for the Sick.

capitals, had seen its population double in a few years. A good part of the estimated 800,000 souls living in the slums were uprooted peasants living in desperate poverty.

During those years, besides his tasks as Opus Dei's founder, Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer served as chaplain to a charitable undertaking known as the Foundation for the Sick. It had been started several years before by a group of dedicated Catholic women to care for the sick and poor, providing them with both material and spiritual help, including the minimum knowledge necessary to receive the sacraments.

One of those women recently wrote: "It was a blessing for us to have Father Escrivá as chaplain. I remember well our apostolic activities in the impoverished areas of Madrid. The hospitals were overcrowded and many of the sick died at home. We sought out the gravest and neediest cases in order to help both spiritually and materially.

"In that environment Fr. Escrivá was indispensable. He took charge of our liturgical needs: Mass, Benediction, Rosary. His duties as chaplain ended there, but he didn't stop there. Fr. Escrivá thought nothing of sacrificing his time and himself to attend to the enormous number of sick and poor whom his priestly heart could not ignore. Whenever we came across someone about to die outside of God's grace, we always called on Fr. Escrivá, convinced that he would bring things around. I cannot recall a single case in which the person died without the sacraments.

"A hard worker without an idle moment, he dedicated himself to each soul with no sign of haste, as if he had nothing else to do. He visited them, he brought them communion and administered the other sacraments. To give you an idea of the extent of our charitable activities in which Fr. Escrivá played such a big role, let me quote from an issue of our quarterly bulletin. We read that in 1927 we

visited between four and five thousand sick persons; there were over 3,000 confessions and as many communions; nearly 500 persons received Extreme Unction; and there were between 700 and 800 weddings.

"Moreover, Fr. Escrivá would visit our schools, located in the slums: 58 of them with some 12,000 children. He would give talks and speak winningly with the children, engaging all his personal charm and all his energy as an apostle to bring them to the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. Fr. Escrivá would also speak with all those who frequented our charity kitchen. In a simple way he would spell out the fundamentals of Christian doctrine and concern himself with their problems. He was a friend and a holy priest."

The Foundation for the Sick was indeed a great work of charity of which the Father always retained affectionate memories.

Another person who knew him then writes: "Fr. Escrivá would take communion wherever he was needed, with no limits. He heard many confessions in the Foundation. On Sundays he would gather there the children from our far-flung schools to hear more confessions. Several times a year he would oversee first communion. There were years when more than 4,000 children received communion for the first time."

In May, 1974, in a gathering in Sao Paulo during one of the catechetical trips he made in his last years, the Father recalled his work with the poor and sick of Madrid:

I am going to tell you a story, my son, directing himself to a physician who had asked about how to treat his patients. There was a young priest who had to carry out a mission...a worldwide mission. He wasn't virtuous; he isn't now either, after almost 50 years — 47, to be more precise. He had neither virtue nor money. All he had was youth, good humor and God's grace. He very much liked



There are hundreds of notes like these addressed to Father Escrivá, advising him of persons in need of his attention. One can still see on some of them the numbers he wrote in organizing his trips through the streets of Madrid.

to visit the poor who were sick. Once he found himself, like so many other times, at the bedside of a young boy on the point of dying — one of those who make you suffer so. I also suffer, but that time I was envious. That soul, fully purified, was headed straight to heaven, and I said to him, "I envy you!" He left this world very consoled, very happy.

Several hours later, referring to work, the Father completed the story: It's too convenient to die. The only time I ever desired it was at the bedside of a dying boy, when I was just a young priest. I envied him. I said, "Truly this one is going to heaven!" Besides I thought that those words would console him, as they

did. The Lord rewarded me because I prayed as I made my way on foot from that desolate, outlying gully to downtown Madrid.

(Subsequent issues of this *Bulletin* will describe the priestly work of Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer in Madrid's hospitals, where during those years his dedication knew no bounds.)

One can well think that Opus Dei's founder spoke from personal experience when he wrote point 419 of *The Way: Children...the sick...* As you write these words, don't you feel tempted to write them with capitals?

The reason is that in little children and in the sick a soul in love sees Him!

The Effects of his Spiritual Impulse

With heroic faithfulness to the divine will and fortified by constant prayer and mortification, Msgr. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer filled his work with effort and with hope. Thus, for 47 years, he inspired and directed the apostolic development of Opus Dei throughout the world.

The principal task of Opus Dei is to foster the spiritual growth of its members so that they, in turn, may personally become effective, apostolic Christians in the world and in society.

The essential apostolate of Opus Dei, in words of the Founder, is carried out personally by each member at his place of work, with his family, among his friends. It is a work that goes unnoticed, that doesn't lend itself to statistics, but which gives rise to fruits of sanctity in thousands of souls. They thus learn to follow Christ, quietly but effectively, while engaged in their everyday professional occupations. (*Conversations with Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer*, no. 71).

Nevertheless, as the Founder pointed out in a response to a journalist's question, **Opus Dei, as a body, also sponsors "corporate" apostolates, with the help of so many people not belonging to the Work and often not even Christian. These undertakings address themselves to the many problems confronting contemporary society. They range from educational to charitable centers, from trade to professional schools, etc.** (*Conversations...*, no. 84).

This *Bulletin* will review briefly some of the many apostolic works that have come into being, thanks to the spiritual impulse of Opus Dei's Founder. Each is endowed with its own personality in keeping with the needs of place and time.

SEIDO GAIKOKUGO KENKYUSHO Ashiya, Japan

A few hours before our Lord called him to his side, Msgr. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer was gathered with a group of members of the Work from different countries. In that get-together, the last of his life, he told Michito, a young Japanese woman:

God our Lord, with baptism, has given you a concern for the Church. Pray for your fellow Japanese, who are so marvelous, so that they may come to know and love and serve Jesus Christ.



Working in Seido's language lab.



Rome, March, 1970: Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer with a group of Japanese members of the Work.

You already know that your Japanese sisters are going to start a school in Nagasaki. We must pray that the obstacles disappear, so they can begin to work there as soon as possible.

Seventeen years before, at the advice of a Roman cardinal, the bishop of Osaka had asked Opus Dei's founder to begin the work of the association in Japan. Soon thereafter, Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer sent a priest of Opus Dei to Japan to prepare the ground for apostolic work in that country. In subsequent years other members of the Work went to Japan from the United States, Ireland and Spain. On July 15, 1960 the first women of Opus Dei to reach Japan disembarked in Kobe.

The first goal of those small groups of Opus Dei members was to familiarize themselves with Japanese society, to meet people, to develop friendships. In the astounding economic and cultural development that swept Japan after World War II they discerned an opportunity to do so. The Japanese were keen to learn Western languages, especially English.

That is how Seido Language Institute

(or Seido Gaikokugo Kenkyusho, as they say in Japanese) was born, the first corporate work of Opus Dei in that country.

Seido is located in Ashiya, a small city nestled between populous Osaka and equally large Kobe. Add to that more than 15 suburban communities and the metropolitan population approaches eight million, served by nearly 20 universities.

Seido's first locale was a typical Japanese house: a wooden structure with *tatami* floors and sliding partitions of wood and decorated paper. The chapel occupied a simple, well-appointed, quiet room. The tabernacle and some of the sacred vessels were a gift of Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer. He thus united his love for the Eucharist with his affection for that great nation of the Far East.

Seido soon outgrew its first home. In 1962 the language school moved to a larger building, expressly built to house it.

I'm following closely and affectionately all that you do, the Father wrote them, and I always pray for you. What joy to learn of those conversions and the others that will follow!



The baptism ceremony of a student performed by Rev. Soichiro Nitta, one of the first Japanese members of the Work to have been ordained a priest.

God could not ignore so much prayer and sacrifice. Persons from the most diverse religious and irreligious backgrounds began to come to learn about the Christian religion. The first Japanese member of the Work, now a priest, was converted to Catholicism at Seido, attracted at first by the human qualities he found there. The Lord gave him the gift of faith and of a vocation to Opus Dei as well. **I love my first-born Japanese son very much, Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer told him in Rome in 1968. You occupy a special place in the heart of your Father. I'm not saying that I don't have great affection for the other Japanese, but, let's face it, the first born is the first. God in his grace has been very generous with you. Jesus is your brother, your God. To think that those you dealt with were foreigners, with a foreign religion..., but the grace of God is so powerful! How much you owe God and how much you love him — and how he loves you! May God bless you.**

By 1973 the enrollment at Seido had grown to over 1,200, necessitating another move — this time to the present location. In addition to the language institute, Seido Cultural Center was opened, with more directly apostolic activities: classes in introduction to Sacred Scripture (the Bible is a best seller in Japan), days of recollection attended even by non-Catholics, catechism classes, opportunities to chat with a priest....

Meanwhile, Seido had given rise to similar language institutes, known as Seido System Schools, all 50 of which receive their teaching materials from Seido.

In Kyoto the men's branch set up Yoshida Gakusei Senta, while the women's branch opened Shimogamo Academy, also in Kyoto, and Ohara Bunka Senta, in Ashiya.

Opus Dei's founder solicitously kept abreast of the Work's development in Japan to which he felt so personally committed. He would frequently send suggestions and indications which, over the years, have been a constant source of encouragement and direction for the developing apostolic work in Japan. To the first member of Opus Dei headed for Japan, Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer had said evoking the very first Christian communities in the Far East: **When you reach Nagasaki, kneel down in my name and kiss the ground hallowed by so many martyrs.**

The desire of Opus Dei's founder expressed to his Japanese daughter in his last get-together has since been fulfilled. In October, 1975, Nagasaki Seido opened its doors. In April, 1978, a girls' school is scheduled to get under way, also in Nagasaki — the one Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer referred to the morning of his last day on earth. Plans are also afoot to establish a boys' school in Nagasaki.

Letters Received

NO MORE WHEELCHAIR

In June, 1974, M.L. had an abdominal tumor removed. Six months later the ailment reappeared, calling for another operation. Months later, awakening before dawn on July 18, 1975, she realized she was paralyzed. She accepted the fact with great peace: praying and waiting for daybreak.

The physicians diagnosed another tumor in the spinal column and prescribed immediate surgery. After the operation she was left without leg movement. Despite five months of physical therapy, she did not regain use of her legs and she resigned herself to spending the rest of her life in a wheelchair.

Some time afterwards, during a visit to São Paulo, she heard about the holy life of Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer and obtained a copy of the prayer for private devotion. Convinced she would be heard, she began to pray it.

Ten or twelve days later, she was about to return to Rio de Janeiro. When her wheelchair reached the steps leading up to the airplane, M.L. says she felt an interior impulse to walk. Then she announced in no uncertain terms to the attendant who was about to carry her up the stairs, "I'm going to walk up by myself." And raising herself up and gripping the handrails, she slowly made her way to the plane's entrance. A week later she had recovered full leg movement, and now she walks as if nothing had happened.

The surgeon who performed the last operation was astounded one day when, by chance, he came across her walking in the hospital. He simply couldn't believe his eyes.

(P.B., São Paulo, Brazil)

THE FEVER LEFT HER

M.R. fell sick and was soon hospitalized. One night the girl's temperature suddenly shot up to a dangerous level, accompanied by a severe headache. The situation was so critical that everyone believed she was about to die, especially since her ailment had not yet been diagnosed. At that point her aunt remembered she had in her purse the prayer card for private devotion to Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer. She took it and placed it in the girl's hands, imploring her niece to repeat with her the words of the Hail Mary. Three minutes later her fever and the headache began receding, until both disappeared.

Later the girl's sickness was diagnosed as meningitis. Several days ago, M.R. left the hospital. During her stay, she kept the prayer card beneath her pillow.

(I.M., London, England)

25 TONS

My husband had just washed his nine-ton truck, which was loaded down with lard. The truck was parked next to the house on a steep decline. When my husband got into the cab and started the engine to take it to the garage, the truck suddenly began to roll down the hill out of control. The brakes failed. He tried to stop it by using the gearshift, but with a 25 ton load, this proved useless.

Seeing all this from the house, I was terror-stricken. But instead of going out to see what would happen, I ran to my bedroom to find the Father's prayer card. I said to him, "Father, save him since he's your son. Remember that not long ago you yourself helped him to find this job, after we had prayed so much." I prayed to him, as always, with great fervor and faith.

Within half a minute the neighbors were all on my doorstep to tell me, amid interjections of surprise and amazement, how my husband had come out unscathed, not having injured anyone or damaged houses or vehicles lying in the truck's path. None of them could find an explanation for how the truck suddenly stopped in its tracks. They asked me why I hadn't come out to see what was going to happen. I told them that first I had turned to the Father to ask him in that moment to be the truck's driver, so that nothing would happen.

That evening I gave out several prayer cards to my neighbors who maintained they had seen a miracle: such a heavily laden truck careening down the hill could have proven disastrous.

After all this, a mechanic inspected the truck. He discovered that the universal joint had given way so that besides losing its air brakes the truck had also lost the braking power of the engine.

(E.M.A., Medellin, Colombia)

THE PAIN STOPPED

For years my mother had suffered from great pains caused by a hernia in the spinal column. A little over a year ago she underwent surgery to fuse two vertebrae in the lower back with a bone graft taken from one of her legs.

Following the operation, her symptoms disappeared for a while. But several months ago the pain reappeared and got progressively worse. Without consulting the doctor, she decided to remain in bed. But her state deteriorated to such a point that she could not shift her position or get out of bed. I was seriously worried, thinking that perhaps she might be suffering from a malignant tumor. Anguished as I was, I belatedly suggested to her that she pray to the Father and offer her sufferings for his intentions, whatever they might be. I sent her a prayer card for private devotion.

The result was truly extraordinary. The very day she began to pray to the Father, she was able to get out of bed in the afternoon and devote some time to preparing dinner. The following day she was up and around early in the day. From that time on she has led a completely normal life.

(E.B.M., Santiago, Chile)

FROM THE FATHER'S TOMB

My father is a virtuous man, a baptized Catholic, but never one to get involved in religious practices. Not long ago I had the opportunity to visit the crypt containing the mortal remains of Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer. I intensely prayed for my father's conversion. It was noonday. Since the Philippines are seven hours ahead of Rome time, it must have been about seven in the evening back home when I asked for that grace. About nine o'clock my father surprised my mother by asking her if there would be Mass the following day, Holy Thursday. They both went to Mass the next day and, on the following, to Good Friday services.

From then on my father has been taking his religious duties seriously.

(X.X., Manila, Philippines)

UNEXPECTED RECOVERY

My brother broke a vertebra in his neck. He was left totally paralyzed with no bodily sensations. A total cure seemed completely out of the question. Many friends and acquaintances began to seek the intercession of Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer. Some of them were even able to go to Rome to pray before the tomb of Opus Dei's founder. Unexpectedly but progressively, my brother began to improve, to the point that he has totally recovered his full physical and mental powers. For me this has been like a miracle.

(M.D., Cologne, Germany)

HE CAME BACK SPONTANEOUSLY

Distraught by the mental condition of my son who had fled from a psychiatric hospital where he was being treated, I begged the help of Mary most holy and I prayed with deep faith to Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer. It was three o'clock in the afternoon. At 3:10, my brother, who knew nothing of the disappearance, called the hospital to inquire about his nephew's condition. He received the unexpected news that only five minutes before he had returned to the hospital on his own. I am praying the rosary to give thanks and will continue the novena to Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer.

(X.X., Milan, Italy)

Letters Received

For an important favor in my spiritual life, which I received through the intercession of Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer, I enclose a contribution for the continued publication of the *Bulletin*.

R.C., Madrid, Spain

My request to Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer: "May the number of true religious vocations increase in my Congregation to take care of the many parishes where we are needed." And the grace received: "Thirty excellent young women have joined us and more are on the way. Praise be to God!"

M.N., Arequipa, Peru

My father was about to leave the family. That possibility filled my mother and us six children with anguish. My mother and I began to call on Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer to solve the problem. Within a few days my father changed his mind and attitude.

X.X., Maracaibo, Venezuela

For seven years I had been away from the sacraments. After praying to Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer, I went to confession, and now I go regularly.

X.X., Ibadan, Nigeria

My husband was unemployed for quite some time. I entrusted the matter to Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer. Providentially my husband obtained a new job. I gratefully enclose a donation for your apostolic works.

M.S., Chicago

I made a novena to Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer for my son, a priest, who seemed to be making a series of wrong moves. On the fourth day of the novena, he called me to say that he had a complete change of heart and that he wanted to be very faithful. He continues to be a changed man. May Monsignor be glorified.

X.X., Dublin, Ireland

It had been 37 years since my husband had gone to confession, and 18 for my son. I invoked the intercession of Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer with all my heart. They not only both went willingly to confession, but have since devoutly received Communion.

X.X., Guatemala City

Twenty-five years into their marriage, a couple were beset by a grave problem which was leading toward a legal separation. We had recourse to the Father, and, miraculously, the husband changed his mind and was reconciled with his wife.

A.A., Oporto, Portugal

I gave my aunt, who had stopped going to the sacraments, a prayer card of Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer. Sometime afterwards she confided to me, "Have you heard about the miracle performed by the Father? Last Saturday I went to confession and communion, the first time in 48 years."

X.X., Montevideo, Uruguay

A very dear friend of mine was living like St. Augustine before his conversion. I asked the Father to help. Now my friend has changed so much that he was married in the Church and has begun to do apostolate.

J.P. de C., Paris, France

My family and I were so worried about a problem that we could barely sleep. A relative gave us a card with the prayer to Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer. We prayed one

novena, and another...and another. On the point of losing hope, that relative told us to ask Monsignor for a gift on January 9th, his birthday. On the following day, the 10th, we received the gift and the solution to our problem. I enclose a contribution and recommend to all troubled persons that they turn to him for help and protection.

A.G., Quito, Ecuador

One of my sisters had undergone surgery on her spinal column three times. The surgeon forewarned us that no further operations were possible and that, if her condition worsened, she would be confined to a wheelchair. Not long ago, we noticed that her back was aching again to such an extent that she couldn't sit in a normal chair. We immediately began a novena to Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer. On the last day of the novena, my sister told us that the pain had gone away and she felt cured. Since then we have been distributing many prayer cards so that others learn to invoke the intercession of Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer.

X.X., Montreal

Some of my friends and I, all young women, wanted to help some Catholic girls in a school, but the principal, who is opposed to the Catholic Church, always created problems. She didn't allow them time to go to confession; she changed supper time so they couldn't attend Mass, etc. I asked Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer to intervene. The principal has since seen fit to change the schedule to allow them to attend Mass on Sundays and to give them enough time to go to confession.

U.O., Nairobi, Kenya

For years my husband has been far from the Church. Yet during all this time I have prayed for him. Lately I began a novena to Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer. Last Sunday, out of the blue he said to me, "I'm going to go to Mass with you." It was like a miracle.

X.X., Zurich, Switzerland

In 1975 my husband was laid off for several months. Problems began to mount and everywhere we turned we saw dead-end streets. That's when I began a novena to Msgr. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer. A day after finishing it, he was offered a new position.

Again this year my husband was left unemployed. Again I began a novena, fully believing that our Lord, by means of the most holy Virgin and Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer, would hear my prayer. When it appeared that things had turned definitively against us, my husband was offered a good job, just as we desired.

M.V. de R., Mexico City

Almost all the parishioners of Momoyama have received the *Bulletin*. After a series of coincidences, a lady who, along with her family, had stopped going to church, decided to read the whole first issue. The following Sunday she appeared with her family in the church, eager to return to the sacraments. The pastor is still amazed.

L.L., Kyoto, Japan

We request that those who obtain favors through the intercession of Msgr. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer inform the Office of Vice-Postulation.

We are most grateful for the many letters reaching us. They bear witness to the private devotion with which so many people, throughout the world, are praying to God our Lord through the intercession of Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer. For reasons of space, we are limited to reprinting only a few paragraphs from some of the letters, all of which tell of important events or small favors.

In the impossibility of doing it personally, we also wish to thank those whose contributions go toward the publication and distribution of this *Bulletin* and toward the growth of the apostolic undertakings set in motion by the love for souls of Msgr. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer.

Published Works of Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer

The Way

“Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer has written something more than a masterpiece; he has written straight from the heart, and straight to the heart go the short paragraphs which, like a string of pearls, which is broken but yet complete, make up *The Way*.... This is a code of sanctity, but there is none of the formal rigidity of a code in the warm brotherly understanding of the author, in the paternal concern with which he sees, understands and corrects, persuading, not threatening.” (*L'Osservatore Romano*, March 24, 1950)

The first version of this book was published in February, 1934 under the title of *Consideraciones Espirituales*. From then on the number of printings has been multiplying ever more rapidly. By April, 1977 there had been 138 printings in 34 languages, with a total of 2,637,000 copies.

Holy Rosary

A book of meditations on each of the 15 mysteries of the life of Christ and the blessed Virgin that are contemplated when saying the holy rosary.

The book was first published also in 1934. Since then 40 printings in 10 languages have appeared.

Conversations with Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer

A number of magazines and newspapers asked Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer specific questions dealing with the topics of greatest interest to their respective readers. Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer answered fully in writing the questions they had formulated. The book brings together the complete text of those interviews.

First published in 1968, it has since seen 27 printings in 7 languages.

Christ Is Passing By

The book is composed of some of the many homilies preached by Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer throughout his life. They constitute a profound and attractive exposition of Christian doctrine and life. His style joins theological depth to clarity of expression.

The book was first published in March, 1973. It has since gone through 26 printings in 6 languages.

La Abadesa de las Huelgas

Penetrating research into an extraordinary case of quasi-episcopal jurisdiction exercised by the abbess of a famous convent in Burgos, Spain, based on original sources and documents.

(Published in 1944, reprinted in 1974).

(Available at Scepter Publishers, 505 5th Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017)

PRAYER

for private devotion

O God, You granted your servant and priest Josemaría countless graces, choosing him as a most faithful instrument to found Opus Dei, a way of sanctification in daily work and in the fulfillment of the Christian's ordinary duties. Grant that I too may learn to turn all the circumstances and events of my life into occasions of loving You and of serving the Church, the Roman Pontiff and all souls with joy and simplicity, lighting up the pathways of this earth with faith and love. Deign to glorify your servant Josemaría; and, through his intercession, grant me the favor of . . . (here make your request). Amen.

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

In accordance 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.

We would appreciate our readers sending us names and addresses of persons who might be interested in receiving this *Bulletin*.

This *Bulletin* is distributed free. Those who wish can help with their aims in the publication of this bulletin and the development of the works of apostolate which the spiritual impulse of the Founder of Opus Dei of holy memory made possible.

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