

VICE-POSTULATION OF OPUS DEI IN THE UNITED STATES
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**The Servant of God JOSEMARÍA
ESCRIVÁ DE BALAGUER**
Founder of Opus Dei

BULLETIN NO. 3. NEW YORK

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 speaking about God in the Coliseum of Buenos Aires, June 23, 1974, during his catechetical trip in Argentina.*

Finding God in Ordinary Work

The Example of Msgr. Josemaría Escrivá in an Article by Cardinal Luciani

*A month before his election
as Pope John Paul I the Patriarch of Venice
published an article in the newspaper
11 Gazzettino (July 25, 1978) about the
spirit and example of the Servant of God
Josemaría Escrivá.*

*In veneration and as a commemoration
of the late Roman Pontiff
we present some passages from this article.*

God is calling you to paths of contemplation, a young married man, Victor G. Hoz, was told by his confessor one day in 1941. He was amazed. He had always thought that "to be a contemplative" was for holy people given to the mystical way of life, to be aimed at only by a chosen few, by people for the most part withdrawn from the world. "But I," he wrote, "was a married man, with three children, and expecting more — which was indeed what happened — and I had to work hard to support the family."

Who, then, was this revolutionary priest who was vaulting over traditional barriers, pointing out mystical goals even to married people? It was Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, a secular priest who died in Rome in 1975 at the age of seventy-three. He is best known as the founder of Opus Dei... What in fact the members of Opus Dei are, and what they do, has been explained as follows by the Founder:

We are, he said in 1967, **a small percentage of priests, who have worked previously in a secular profession or trade. A large number of secular priests from many dioceses throughout the world; and a great multitude of men and women, of different countries, races and languages, who earn their living with their daily work. Most of them are married; many others are single. They share with their fellow citizens in the important task of making society more human**

and more just. They work on their own responsibility, shoulder to shoulder with their fellow men, experiencing with them successes and failures in the noble struggle to fulfill their duties and exercise their social and civil rights. And all this with naturalness, like any other conscientious Christian, without considering themselves in any way special. Side by side with their companions, they try to detect the flashes of divine splendor which shine through the most common everyday realities.

In less eloquent words, the everyday realities constitute the work which one does every day; and the flashes of divine splendor are those things which lead to a holy life. Msgr. Escrivá, with Gospel in hand, constantly taught: **God does not want us simply to be good...he wants us to be saints, through and through.** However, he wants us to attain that sanctity, not by doing extraordinary things, but rather through ordinary common activities. It is the way they are done which must be uncommon. There, in the middle of the street, in the office, in the factory, we can be holy, provided we do our job competently, for love of God and cheerfully, so that everyday work becomes, not "a daily tragedy," but rather "a daily smile."



God is calling you to serve him in and from the ordinary, material and secular activities of human life. He waits for us every day, in the laboratory, in the operating theater, in the army barracks, in the university chair, in the factory, in the workshop, in the fields, in the home and in all the immense panorama of work. Understand this well: there is something holy, something divine hidden in the most ordinary situations, and it is up to each one of you to discover it.

(Conversations with Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer, no. 114)

More than three hundred years earlier St. Francis of Sales taught something along the same lines.... However, Msgr. Escrivá went further than St. Francis of Sales in many respects. St. Francis proclaimed sanctity for everyone but seems to have taught only a "spirituality for lay people," whereas Msgr. Escrivá wants a "lay spirituality." Francis, in other words, nearly always suggests for the laity the same practical means used by the religious, but with suitable modifications. Escrivá is more radical; he goes as far as talking about **materializing**—in a good sense—the quest for holiness. For him, it is the material work itself which must be turned into prayer and sanctity.

The legendary Baron Munchausen tells a fable of a monstrous hare that had a double set of legs: four normal ones under his belly and four more on his back. Pursued by the hounds and feeling himself about to be overtaken, he flips himself over and continues running on the four fresh legs. For the founder of Opus Dei the life of a Christian would be just as monstrous if he were to go along with a double series of activities: one consisting of prayers, for God; the other made up of work, relaxation and family life, for himself. No, says Escrivá, there is only one life, and it has to be made holy en bloc. That is why he speaks of a **materialized spirituality**....

How, he would ask, can any work be "God's work" if it is done badly, in a hurry, incompetently? How can a bricklayer, an architect, a doctor or a teacher become holy if he is not also trying, as best he can, to be a good bricklayer, a good architect, a good doctor or a good teacher? Gilson wrote in the same vein in 1949: "They tell us that it was faith that built the medieval cathedrals. Agreed,...but geometry also played its part." Faith and geometry, faith and competent work go hand in hand for Msgr. Escrivá. They are the two wings of sanctity.

Do everything for Love. In that way there will be no little things: everything will be big. Perseverance in the little things for Love is heroism.

(The Way, no. 813)

Persevere in the exact fulfillment of the obligations of the moment. That work—humble, monotonous, small—is prayer expressed in action, which prepares you to receive the grace of that other work—great and broad and deep—of which you dream.

(The Way, no. 825)

In the Hospitals of Madrid

In 1931 it had been three years since Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer had received from God the seed for a worldwide mission. He was not yet 30 years of age.

In September of that year he was asked to be the chaplain of the Recollect Nuns of St. Augustine of the *Patronato Real de Santa Isabel*, where he later became rector. His new duties gave Msgr. Escrivá more time to dedicate himself with intensity to that specific vocation in fulfillment of the will of God which he defined for his children as **doing Opus Dei on earth being yourself Opus Dei**.

For almost five years a variety of people from every part of Madrid, from all environments, had been gathering about him. They were not many perhaps, but they were that beginning which Don Josemaría described in *The Way* (no. 820): **Don't judge by the smallness of the beginnings. My attention was once drawn to the fact that there is no difference in size between seeds that produce annual plants and those that will grow into ageless trees.**

Those students, laborers and white collar workers who came to learn from him began to sense more deeply their Christian responsi-

bilities. They were to be **salt and light** where they lived and where they worked, wherever God willed them to be.

It was at that time that Don Josemaría became aware of the needs of the Madrid General Hospital. It was a huge building on the same street as the church of *Santa Isabel*. The Servant of God already had spent long hours caring for sick people who had been abandoned; he immediately saw here an opportunity: to help the patients of this hospital and at the same time to provide a great means of formation for the young men who surrounded him and whom he wanted to form more deeply in the basic truths of the faith. They must not limit themselves to a theoretical affirmation of Christian values, but should grasp the supernatural meaning of life as it is actually lived, with its joys and suffering. Through his own long experience he knew how contact with sickness and suffering could help people discover the deeper reality of each thing and each event. Contact with suffering opens a soul to a forgetfulness of self and a vivid perception of the greatness of Christian ideals, stirring one to give himself generously to others.



Facade of the old General Hospital of Madrid in the 30's. To one side is the church of the Patronato de Santa Isabel of which the Servant of God was the rector.

Over a long period of time he went day after day to the General Hospital with different groups of boys, priests, workers, etc. The work involved self-denial together with a certain sensitivity. The hospital was no model of hygiene. Its halls and corridors teemed with the sick. The atmosphere was hardened and hostile. Ignorance of religion and a constant anti-Catholic campaign caused most of the patients to view a priest or any Christian as their enemy. Distrust could only be conquered with affection and kindness; only thus could prejudice be dispelled and give place to raised spirits and even happiness.

During those first years of Opus Dei, I used to go with your brothers to the hospitals of Madrid, and we would talk with the sick. We

made their beds; we cut their nails; we washed their feet—excuse me for going into these details—and we combed their hair. We used to speak to them affectionately. Slowly, as if savoring the memory, he once said: **I remember someone from a well known family. I can speak about him now because he has been in heaven for many years. He was one of the first members in those earliest years of Opus Dei. He took a chamber pot from the bedside of a tuberculosis patient. It was...well... But I told him, "Go ahead and clean it." But then, because the look of revulsion on his face made me regret what I had said, I followed him out of the room. And I found him cleaning the pot with his bare hand, his face beaming marvelously.**

Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer had this incident in mind when he wrote the following point for meditation: **Isn't it true, Lord, that you were greatly consoled by the child-like remark of that man, who, disconcerted by having to obey in something unpleasant and repulsive, whispered to you: "Jesus, may I put on a good face."** (*The Way*, no. 626).

Once at the General Hospital they showed him a sick bed. "This man is dying. There's nothing to be done." He was an olive skinned gypsy who had suffered a knife wound in a fight. **I got them to leave us alone....I said a few words to the gypsy and he was moved. I told him that he was dying; and he wanted to go to confession. Afterwards, when I gave him my crucifix to kiss, I couldn't keep him from shouting out loud: "With this rotten mouth of mine I cannot kiss the Lord." "But," I told him, "you are going to give him a big embrace and kiss him right away, in heaven."**

Msgr. Escrivá would never forget that gypsy's cry. **Have you ever heard of a more beautiful and powerful act of contrition?** Since then I have sometimes repeated it alone and silently: **"I cannot kiss you, Lord, with this rotten mouth of mine."** I learned an act of contrition from a dying gypsy.

After visiting the General Hospital, Don Josemaría sometimes went with the young men to the park at the *Prado* or at *Recoletos*. Calmly and warmly he would speak to them so that the hours spent in the hospital rooms had an interior impact on their souls, leading to decisions and resolutions that would have a real influence on their lives and on their friends. He could not conceive of Christianity devoid of a living and operative charity, without heroic closeness to the Cross.

In Don Josemaría's mind care for the sick was not going to be limited to certain hours of the week or to specific places. As soon as he learned that someone was suffering, he would promptly present himself to offer words of encouragement and consolation and to give his priestly help.

Years later he occasionally reminisced on those cherished moments when he found in the sick the fortitude he needed at a time that was both difficult and decisive. A student once asked him about point 208 of *The Way*. I don't know the point by heart, he answered, but there's a phrase in it that goes: **"Blessed be pain. Loved be pain. Sanctified be pain....Glorified be pain!"** Do you remember it? I wrote that in a hospital at the bedside of a dying woman to whom I had just administered the sacrament of Extreme Unc-

tion. How I envied her! That woman had had a very good social and economic position in life, and there she was in that wretched hospital bed, alone and dying, with no more company than what I could supply, until she died. And there she was repeating, joyously, savoring the words: **"Let us bless pain"**—and she had every sort of moral and physical pain—"love pain, sanctify pain, glorify pain!"

Another public health care center was the *Hospital de la Princesa*. A doctor who was in residence there at the time recalls the founder of Opus Dei: "From the day I was first introduced to the Father, I used to see him frequently at the hospital in the morning throughout 1933 and 1934. He went from room to room, spoke with the patients, heard their confessions and gave them Communion—and all with a kindness and charm that delighted both the staff and the sick. He was not afraid of catching something contagious even though all the rooms he visited had patients with contagious diseases. More than once he was warned of the risks he was taking in his dealings with the sick, and he always answered, with his charm and his smile, that he was immune from every disease."

He went often as well to King's Hospital, which during the Second Spanish Republic in the early thirties was called the National Hospital. It was perhaps the most modern hospital in Madrid, and it specialized in infectious diseases. It took in large numbers of tuberculosis patients; at the time there was no cure for tuberculosis. A Daughter of Charity still retains this image of Msgr. Escrivá: "Even now I remember clearly how Don Josemaría on any pretext would speak to us about God....The patients said the same....I remem-



King's Hospital (Madrid) after its inauguration in 1925.

ber young women suffering from T.B. who recovered even their human happiness, although they realized they were going to die. I believe that later on many people understood his spirit and followed his teaching in Opus Dei."

The superior of the religious community at King's Hospital at that time, Sister Engracia Echeverría, wrote in her old age, before God called her to his presence, "Don Josemaría Escrivá was the soul of our priests during that period. You could always see how enormously apostolic he was. To my mind, he was a genuine saint....Very courageous in those days when it took courage to stand up against so much opposition....He was very, very hard working. I also saw that his whole spirit was to take care of the patient's soul, to make sure that it would never be without help right to the end."

On September 13, 1933 the first member of Opus Dei's Women's Branch, María Ignacia G. Escobar, died in King's Hospital. A small diary records her thoughts and tells the story of the prayers of the sick and incurable

women who were in the hospital with her. For this priest was a **beggar of prayers** and they were offering up everything—a throat operation, a cough, lack of appetite—for his intention: "It was an intention," wrote María Ignacia, "that needs prayers and sacrifices, today, tomorrow and always."

Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer often alluded to the strength that he had found in those distant beginnings of Opus Dei: **There was a priest who was 26 years of age and had the grace of God, a good sense of humor and nothing else. He had neither virtues nor money. And he had to do Opus Dei. And do you know how he managed? By means of the hospitals. That General Hospital of Madrid, packed with the sick and destitute lying there in the corridors because there just weren't enough beds. That King's Hospital, full of consumptives at a time when consumption was incurable.... Those were the weapons with which to fight and win! That was the treasure with which to pay! And that was the strength with which to go forward!... And the Lord has taken us all over the world, and we are now in Europe, in Asia, in Africa, in America and in Australia thanks to the sick, who are a treasure....**

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.

Montefalco Mexico

Many years have gone by since I first visited an old Mexican hacienda called Montefalco. I am an architect and the purpose of my visit was to study the possibilities of developing the hacienda into a social and apostolic work for the farm workers of the region.



Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer at the Farm School of Montefalco in June of 1970 speaking with a group of girls from the nearby farming area.



View of Montefalco (Jonatepec, Morelos, Mexico) in 1967.

About sixty miles outside of Mexico City we crossed the Amilpas Valley in the state of Morelos; the hard top highway gave way to a dirt road. Several members of Opus Dei who accompanied me spoke excitedly about the offer they had received from the owner, an organization called *Campo Y Deporte, A.C.* (Field and Recreation, Inc.) They wanted Opus Dei to take on the direction of that apostolic work and Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer was keen on accepting the offer.

Upon reaching Montefalco I was left speechless by the sight of enormous, broken down walls, immense piles of charred stones, out of which there rose, still erect, a church that seemed to me to be the size of a cathedral.

"How on earth could you be interested in accepting this place?" I asked. "This is just an enormous ruin."

By way of answer they mentioned a saying of the founder of Opus Dei which at the time I didn't fully understand: **Dream and your dreams will fall short of the mark.**

* * *

The Mexican architect (now a member of Opus Dei) who wrote those lines never forgot the saying, nor the faith with which

it was uttered. Now he is able to see with his own eyes that the dream indeed fell short of the mark.

The work of reconstructing the hacienda began in 1958 **without a penny** as Msgr. Escrivá put it, **with the work of so many of my children who have had to struggle and suffer, and with the kindness and generosity of many people.**

At the very outset, they organized an experimental agrarian training center for farm workers; it was called *El Peñon* and classes began in 1959.

About the same time, in an independent zone of the property, the Women's Branch of Opus Dei started activities for women of the area, with the Farm School of Montefalco.

The volume of activity at Montefalco has grown with time. Every year hundreds of boys have enrolled in the three-year training program of the agrarian center and a two-year high school course as well. Under their teachers' guidance the alumni have organized cooperatives in dairy and pig farming and in the development of animal feed, and their initiatives in marketing these products have flourished.



June 4, 1970. Msgr. Escrivá at the agricultural training center, El Peñon.

At the same time, through youth clubs and related activities Montefalco has become the center of a vast, outreaching program of Christian and cultural formation that extends to 15 towns of the Amilpas Valley.

The Farm School specializes in home economics and enrolls most of the girls of the Valley. With the aid of instruction through closed circuit television, the girls acquire a basic education and also the ways and means to use family resources more efficiently. Along with this they receive a solid Christian training.

Throughout the year from every region of the country people of every age and social condition come to Montefalco, where part of the hacienda has been renovated for seminars and workshops in spiritual formation.

In June, 1970 Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer spent three days in Montefalco. He spoke with members of Opus Dei and spent many hours talking with the farm workers

of the area and many more people who came from far off to see him. What he said then will always serve to encourage this and other undertakings like it throughout the world.

He walked up and down sections of the hacienda that were still unreconstructed and good humoredly spoke this reproach which was also the finest praise for those who began Montefalco:

Montefalco is madness that springs from love of God. I like to say that the pedagogy of Opus Dei can be summed up in two affirmations: act with common sense and act with supernatural sense. In this case, Don Pedro (the first counsellor of Opus Dei in Mexico) and my Mexican sons and daughters have acted only with supernatural sense. Humanly speaking it is absurd to accept happily a pile of ruins that is bigger than the palace of Versailles....But you were thinking of souls and you have made a marvel of love become a reality. May God bless you.

Letters Received

THE FAITH REGAINED

Although my wife and I had been raised as Catholics, we lost our faith more than ten years ago. We became agnostics and were very critical of the Church in many regards.

Not too long ago, I came across Bernal's book (*A Profile of Msgr. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer*) at a bookstore. I felt the urge to buy it in spite of my wife's protest "for such a waste of money." A few weeks later, I read it and by the time I finished it I realized I had recovered the Faith. I prayed to Monsignor Escrivá that my wife regain her faith and also asked some friends to pray for this intention. Within days my wife had an about face. We have returned to the Sacraments and have become devout Catholics. We are extremely grateful for this gift.

(J.P., Joliet, IL)

A NEW LIFE

When our youngest son was 5½ years old, my wife discovered a growth near his abdomen. Immediate diagnosis by medical authorities revealed a malignancy already past the early stages. After two operations, the doctors could give us only the slightest hope; meanwhile a two year program of treatments was begun.

His condition remained serious and uncertain while he received the treatments. We prayed through the intercession of Msgr. Escrivá. After the ninth month we had to stop the treatments because little by little, it had become evident that our son was suffering solely from the side effects of the medical treatments, since all tests taken showed an absence of the disease.

Our son is now almost 9 years old, a healthy, normal and very active boy. We are convinced that we owe our son's life to the Father.

(C.J.B., Mahwah, N.J.)

A NEW JOB

My husband is 53 years old, suffering from chronic bronchitis, and recently had an operation on his spine. He had a job as a night truck driver and had to work the late shift beginning at 3:00 in the morning. This was very hard on him, and I began to pray through the intercession of Msgr. Escrivá that he might find a better job.

After a short time he was laid off with the only explanation that his work was no longer needed. This seemed to me to be the first answer to my prayers. And sure enough, he found another job, even though the employment situation was very tight. In fact, it was like a miracle, because his new job is in an office with air conditioning and working with good people without any night work. And above all, smoking is not permitted, which is the best thing in the world for him.

I am sending a donation to help spread the Bulletin.

(L.J., Florissant, MO)

INDIFFERENCE

I gave a Bulletin to a lady who had cancer and had not been practicing her faith for many years. When she saw a priest at her door she remained quite indifferent. One day while undergoing intense pain she was trying to lie in a position which offered some relief. The Bulletin happened to be at her side and when she saw the picture of Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer on the cover she exclaimed, "I'm sure you can help me!" This was how she began to pray, and in a short time the pain disappeared. She continued praying through the intercession of that priest, and to read some of his writings.

Since it had been years since she had received the Sacraments, I asked her if she wanted to go to confession, but she replied that she didn't think it necessary. Realizing the gravity of her illness, I continued commending her to Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer so that she would receive the Sacrament of Penance before dying.

A few days later she was admitted to the hospital. When I visited her I found her happier and more serene. She told me she had some good news for me: that morning a priest had passed through her part of the hospital; she asked him who had sent him. The priest said, "No one." He was simply walking through the area. She went to confession, received Holy Communion and the Anointing of the Sick.

A few days later she died.

(X.X., Sidney)

BACK TO WORK

Over two years ago, my brother was told that he had an inoperable tumor in his lung. The prognosis was that with Cobalt treatments he might live for a year. Last winter X-rays showed that he had three malignant brain tumors. He was told that, despite the Cobalt treatments, he was dying. The members of our family and other members of the Work have been praying to the Father for him, using the prayer card.

His latest X-rays show that the lung tumor has disappeared and that two of the brain tumors have also disappeared, leaving one small growth, about the size of a pea which is not growing.

My brother is back at work and feeling better than he has in years. I attribute his recovery to the intercession of the Father.

(J.R.M., Saugus, MA)

BAPTISM

My husband, who wasn't Catholic, had a stroke which paralyzed the left part of his body. Around that time I received a Bulletin. Encouraged by the favors which were mentioned, I began to ask for the help of Msgr. Escrivá.

My husband learned the Hail Mary, which he prayed many times especially during his periods of insomnia. He also prayed many aspirations with me. This surprised me very much because up until then he hadn't believed in God. Some priests had tried to bring him closer to the Faith years ago but to no avail.

He eventually recovered from his illness. After receiving his discharge, my husband kept on praying and often he would be seen with the prayer card of Msgr. Escrivá in his hand. I told all this to the pastor and he advised me to ask him if he were willing to be

baptized. For two days I wavered, afraid that he might refuse. I prayed very much and finally I put the question to him. He answered me immediately, "Yes, I want to be baptized." I found all this very moving.

(S.K., Kyoto, Japan)

LESS THAN AN HOUR FROM DEATH

Last December 23rd, my brother went to the hospital. He was suffering from a serious attack of malignant malaria. He had just returned from Africa. That same night I received a call from my mother and I began to pray to Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer.

I went to see him on Christmas Eve and he seemed to be in critical condition since he couldn't see or hear. At the midnight Mass I prayed for him and my mother prayed the prayer for private devotion to the Father.

I didn't see him again until the 27th. That day I found him weak but very much improved. On the 30th all the incoherence had disappeared and he even sat up on his bed and spoke normally. I was awed by the quick recovery.

My mother told me how much she had suffered on Christmas day and how the doctors had told her that my brother was less than an hour away from death that night.

(S.M., London)

SAVED

I'm happy to inform you again that I haven't invoked the help of Msgr. Josemaría, the founder of Opus Dei, in vain. In my work as a midwife, I see some difficult cases. Just a little while ago I was present at a very complicated childbirth. When the infant finally was born, he appeared to be dead. We immediately tried every possible means to bring him to life, but it was all futile. I baptized the baby while the mother wept over the death of her infant. I began to invoke the servant of God, Msgr. Josemaría, while I applied artificial respiration. Suddenly I saw the lungs move a little and after a while the baby started to breathe. He was saved! Our black mother was perplexed. I told her, "I asked for the help of a holy priest who died a short time ago and he helped us." Her spontaneous reaction was as follows. "Mother, give me this prayer card so that I can put it in my house and protect my five children." Yes, our Zairesses do have a lot of faith in God.

Thanks to the good Msgr. Josemaría who helped us so marvelously.

(Sister B.V., Zaire)

THE THIRD FAVOR

The third favor which I have received from God through the intercession of Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer is the following:

My father had to leave his job because he was suffering from an intense vertigo. The doctor told us that he had to be hospitalized on account of a cerebral tumor. After a few days in the hospital, he was moved to a neurological institute where he underwent examinations which included a biopsy of the upper back.

During all this time, we prayed to the Founder of Opus Dei. He also prayed and abandoned himself to the will of God.

After all these tests, the neurologist informed us, "There is no tumor; there is no cancer."

We have already made a novena of thanksgiving for the granting of such a great favor. My mother has distributed many prayer cards and everyone tells her how well written and encouraging the prayer is. My two little brothers will not go to sleep until they have prayed the prayer card to Msgr. Escrivá.

(D.D., Montreal)

AT THE BARBER'S

Last week I went to get my hair cut. As the barber began to work, we started talking. He told me that he had received information about the life of the Founder of Opus Dei. Without a moment's thought I asked him if he had prayed to him. Looking at me through the mirror he replied, "A few days ago my wife came to me with the news that two of my daughters needed eyeglasses. I was worried since I'm not wealthy and I couldn't afford the expense. For that very reason, I went to the Cathedral two blocks away and got hold of the prayer card of Msgr. Escrivá. I prayed it with a lot of faith convinced that he would help me. Afterwards I carried on with my work.

"Sometime later another customer asked me about my family while I was cutting his hair. Even though I did not feel like saying anything, I ended up telling him all about my problem. When his haircut was finished, my customer asked about the price of some of the things in the shop. Then after putting on his jacket he took out his checkbook and wrote out a check covering not only the cost of his purchases but also the eyeglasses. He then told me not to reveal his name.

"As you well understand, sir, I was so grateful that as soon as I could, I went to the church to thank God and his beloved and effective servant, Don Josemaría."

(M.O.T., Medellín, Colombia)

ABLE TO WORK

For two years I have been suffering from a sickness of the vertebral column. Lately the pain has become more intense, especially in my left leg. The treatment I underwent did no good. As a taxi driver I had to use my leg to drive and it got to the point that I could hardly shift gears. The pain was so strong that my wife and son thought that I should retire even though I was the only source of income.

On the 25th of April, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, I felt so bad that I had to stop the car and take a break for a moment. I read the Bulletin of Msgr. Escrivá which someone had given me. When I read the accounts of the various favors, I began to ask Msgr. Escrivá to cure me. I raised my eyes and with great devotion I said, "You, Father Escrivá, to whom the Almighty always listens according to this book, ask him to take away the pain in my leg so that I can work."

Then I felt from head to toe a sort of cramp or tingling. When I moved my leg, I realized that it didn't hurt. I got out of the car and made all kinds of movements without feeling the least bit of pain. I drove the taxi around for a while in order to convince myself that I was cured. I went to the doctor and he advised me to wait a few

days to make sure of a good recovery. I did just that and I carried on without any pain. The doctor then told me that I should write about my experience.

(M. Ch., Madrid)

AGAINST ALL LOGIC

Last Holy Thursday someone told me that a friend of hers hadn't gone to confession for two years. She felt that she never needed to go to confession since it was always sufficient to ask God's forgiveness internally. She told me that she would receive Communion in this manner as well. There was no way to change her opinion.

I told her to insist with her friend one more time, and meanwhile I began to pray to Msgr. Escrivá. I told her that he loved the Holy Eucharist so much, that he wouldn't permit an offense against Our Lord and that Holy Thursday would be an ideal time to teach her to receive this Holy Sacrament properly.

Contrary to all human logic, that person approached the confessional with the willingness to change her conduct.

(A.R., Paris)

A PROBLEM RESOLVED

I received a telephone call from my sister, who was crying in despair because of her critical family situation. We decided to have recourse to Msgr. Escrivá, so that he would grant peace to this family. After three days the problem was resolved and now the family lives in perfect harmony.

(X.X., Rome)

A MOTHER'S PRAYER

One day I realized that one of my children had strayed from the Faith and also from us. Some of his friends led him to follow the teachings of a certain cult. My wife and I were shocked and greatly saddened to see something so important and vital escape from our dealings with our son.

In these circumstances we made a novena to Msgr. Escrivá. Our Lord apparently wanted to listen to the petitions of a mother. Two weeks after finishing the novena, my son found a priest with whom he went to confession and received Holy Communion after being away from the Sacraments for almost three years.

(G.T.C., Manila)

RETURN TO THE SACRAMENTS

According to what's written in the footnote on the prayer card to Msgr. Escrivá, I am writing this communication about the many favors I have received through his intercession.

The first and main favor is the following: For six years I hadn't received the Sacraments. After saying the prayer on the card, I found myself capable of going to confession. Since then I do it regularly.

(W.O., Ibadan, Nigeria)

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 July, 1979 there had been 150 printings in 34 languages, with a total of 2,750,000 copies.

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.

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.

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.

A collection of 18 more homilies in which the author uses the Christian virtues as the thread for his friendly conversation with God. The book, written in the same intimate and direct style as the first volume of homilies, *Christ Is Passing By*, was published in 1977 and presently appears in various languages. The U.S. edition is forthcoming.

The preface is written by the Very Rev. Alvaro del Portillo, the President General of Opus Dei.

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 alms in its publication and the development of the works of apostolate which the spiritual impulse of the founder of Opus Dei of holy memory made possible.