

BULLETIN ON THE LIFE OF MSGR. ESCRIVÁ
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The Servant of God JOSEMARÍA ESCRIVÁ DE BALAGUER

Founder of Opus Dei

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The Pardoning Sacrament

Monsignor Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer was born on January 9, 1902 in Barbastro, Spain. 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, in Madrid, he founded Opus Dei. This institution has opened up a way for the faithful to sanctify themselves in the world; in this way they become a leaven of intense Christian life in all environments. 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. On November 28, 1982, as Msgr. Escrivá had wished, it was erected as a Personal Prelature, a juridical form that was introduced into the law of the Church by the Second Vatican Council.

For forty-seven years Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer guided and inspired the growth of Opus Dei with constant prayer and penance, exemplary virtue and loving dedication. His sons and daughters, as well as countless others in every walk of life, called him simply Father. As a result, when its Founder yielded up his soul to God, Opus Dei had spread throughout the world with over 60,000 members of 80 nationalities, serving the Church with the same veneration and complete union with the Pope and bishops that Msgr. Escrivá always lived and taught his children.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was the root and center of his interior life. His profound awareness of being a son of God moved him to seek complete identification with Jesus Christ in everything, to live a deep and tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph, and to enjoy a constant and confident friendship with the holy guardian angels; it made him a sower of peace and joy along all the ways of the earth.

Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer had repeatedly offered his life for the Church and the Pope. Our Lord accepted this offering, and on June 26, 1975, in Rome, in the room where he worked, the Father surrendered his soul to God with the same holy simplicity that characterized his entire life.

His body rests in the crypt of Our Lady of Peace oratory at Viale Bruno Buozzi 75, Rome. There it is accompanied by the constant prayer and gratitude of his sons and daughters and countless others who have come closer to God through his example and teaching. The process of beatification and canonization of Msgr. Escrivá began in Rome on May 12, 1981.

Msgr. Escrivá was entrusted by God with the mission of founding Opus Dei, in order to remind all men that they are called to holiness. Now the path to that sanctity, taught Opus Dei's founder, is found precisely in the daily struggle that each must carry on within himself, "against everything in his life that is not God's way" (1), in order to be filled with Christ's charity. "I have never liked biographies of saints that naively – but also with a lack of sound doctrine – present their deeds as if they had been confirmed in grace from birth. No. The true lives of Christian heroes resemble our own experience: they fought and won; they fought and lost. And then, repentant, they returned to the fray" (2). God wants us holy, but he also knows our limitations and offers us the means to overcome them. "Jesus understands our weakness and draws us to himself on an inclined plane. He wants us to persist in our effort to climb a little each day" (3).

This effort on the part of a Christian calls for humility: the acknowledgement of our insufficiency, coupled with a profound trust in God's grace. In his preaching Opus Dei's founder tirelessly insisted on the importance and necessity of the sacrament of penance if one is to aspire to sanctity. With his example and teaching, he fruitfully made this sacrament, an undeniable treasure of divine mercy entrusted to the Church, an object of the living faith and love of many thousands of persons the world over.

"As we walk along inevitably we raise dust; we are creatures and full of defects. I would almost say that we will always need defects. They are the shadow that shows up the light of God's grace and our resolve to respond to God's kindness. And this chiaroscuro will make us human, humble, understanding and generous" (4). The experience of so much personal weakness ought to lead us not to lose heart, but to trust the more in the mercy of our Father God. "God can put up with all our infidelities. Our Father in heaven pardons any offense when his child returns to him, when he repents and asks forgiveness. The Lord is such a good Father that he anticipates our desire to be pardoned and comes forward to us, opening up his arms to us with grace ..."

"Human life is in some way a constant returning to our Father's house. We return through contrition, through the conversion of heart, which means a desire to change, a firm decision to improve our life and which, therefore, is expressed in sacrifice and self-giving. We return to our Father's house by means of the sacrament of pardon in which, by confessing our sins, we put on Jesus Christ again and become his brothers, members of God's family" (5).

Whoever knows himself to be God's child can never give way to discouragement. "Forward, no matter what happens! Cling tightly to our Lord's hand and remember that God does not lose battles. If you should stray from him for any reason, react with the humility that will lead you to begin again and again; to play the role of the prodigal son every day, repeatedly even during the twenty-four hours of the same day; to correct your contrite heart in confession, which is a real miracle of God's love. In this wonderful sacrament our Lord cleanses your soul and fills you with joy and strength to prevent you from giving up the fight, and to help you turn back to God unwearied, when everything seems dark" (6).

The Servant of God encouraged everyone to approach confession with reawakened faith, knowing full well that because it is a sacrament it is no simple human recourse, merely an unburdening of our psychological problems, but a divine reality: a trusting conversation with God our Lord. "Sacramental confession is not a human but divine dialogue. It is a tribunal of divine justice and especially of mercy" (7). "It is a most tender manifestation of divine goodness, of the mercy of Jesus Christ, who is our father and brother and who knows how to forgive, to pardon. Isn't it wonderful to kneel down and listen to our Lord – for the priest is Christ himself – saying: I absolve you from your sins, I pardon you?" (8).

The Servant of God reminded us that "just as sanctity is personal, so too is sin; accordingly the medicine must be taken personally" (9) in that intimate encounter with the Lord which we should prepare diligently. Msgr. Escrivá would always explain each one of the acts that go to make up the sacrament of penance: examination of conscience, sorrow for our sins, purpose of amendment and of avoiding further occasions, personal private confession, and sacramental penance. He gave his assurance that whoever went to confession with the right dispositions would enter progressively into a deeper and more intimate knowledge of the tenderness with which God follows our every step on earth. "How grateful to God our Lord we should be for this sacrament of mercy! I'm amazed, thrilled. A God who forgives seems to me like such a father and mother rolled into one that it's all I can do to keep from crying, out of gratitude and joy. What would we possibly do without his pardon?" (10).

He was always encouraging people to go to confession frequently. He did so himself every week and at times more often – not out of scruples, but out of refinement of love. "A God who purifies us, who cleanses us, who lifts us up...doesn't that soften you? Have recourse to confession; it's not there merely to pardon grave sins or venial sins or even faults. It's also there to strengthen us, to fill the soul with grace and hasten us along, so that we might travel the road more quickly. It will also show us how to be more adept in struggling and to win, how to behave in such a way that we live virtuously and detest sin" (11).

On the other hand, a soul that stays away from confession becomes dull; its conscience grows so dark that it can no longer distinguish right from wrong. Faith and love grow cold, and the creature is left defenseless in the face of the onslaughts of passion.

Msgr. Escrivá especially emphasized the need for sincerity. "When you go to confession, get to the bottom of things right away. Prepare your confessions so they are concise, concrete, clear and complete" (12). "As soon as we open our heart, allowing a good housecleaning, telling what the matter is, what we didn't want to be known – and all that with contrition and a good resolution, what peace and joy ensue!" (13).

Opus Dei's founder taught us to remember the close relationship between the sacrament of penance and the soul's divine food, which is the Eucharist. "Don't fail to get to communion frequently; but if something is bothering your soul, go to confession first. Without a clear mind, without a clean conscience, never receive communion – that would be horrible" (14).



The Servant of God at fifteen.

Many people recall how the Servant of God invited them to consider the fruits of peace and optimism with which God rewards those who seek his sacramental pardon. "Afterwards we should forget, because God our Lord also forgets" (15); "God triumphs over this poor flesh of mine, over this poor soul of mine, over this poor heart of mine" (16). "Those who haven't visited a confessional in some time will come out so happy once they've been cleansed; they'll understand that life has another meaning, that they're here on earth for something greater" (17).

With God's grace in their souls, Christians can then become "sowers of peace and joy" (18) among men. Apostolate – that duty urging us all to bring others to encounter Christ – thus finds in the sacrament of penance a sure guarantee of fruitfulness and a very clear target. Indeed one of the great works a Christian can do for a friend is to help him to go to sacramental confession – where we all experience the joy of being pardoned by God.

- (1) *Christ Is Passing By*, no. 73.
- (2) *Ibid.*, no. 76.
- (3) *Ibid.*, no. 75.
- (4) *Ibid.*, no. 76.
- (5) *Ibid.*, no. 64.
- (6) *Friends of God*, no. 214.
- (7) *Christ Is Passing By*, no. 78.
- (8) *Registro Historico Fundador* 20760, p. 672.
- (9) *Ibid.*, p. 674.

- (10) *Ibid.*, p. 669.
- (11) *Ibid.*
- (12) RHF 20101, p. 19.
- (13) RHF 20760, p. 667.
- (14) RHF 20771, p. 284.
- (15) RHF 20161, p. 419.
- (16) RHF 20760, p. 418.
- (17) RHF 20771, p. 290.
- (18) *Christ Is Passing By*, no. 168.

cover of that ripped catechism.

A few days before, despite a heavy snowfall that was unusual for Madrid, Fr. Josemaría went to the Divine Redeemer School to arrange for those catechism classes. One of the eight nuns who ran the school relates: "One morning – I remember it very well, because it had snowed heavily and everything was covered with white – from our recreation room on the upper floor we saw two priests approach dressed in cassocks and capes. It was early, for everything that would soon become a big mud puddle was still white and clean. It was Fr. Josemaría, accompanied by another priest named Fr. Lino, who had come to ask if we could let him organize catechism classes in the school" (7).

The students who went to teach catechism that first Sunday were greeted by a heavy rainfall. That, plus the melted snow, made the muddy lanes of that place almost impassable.

Fr. Josemaría had sought out the most needy and difficult neighborhood he knew for the catechism classes. This is confirmed by one of the students who then attended that school: "The Divine Redeemer School was started in 1927 by the Sisters of Christian Doctrine....It was located in a neighborhood called *Los Pinos*. The intention was to find an abandoned area where the nuns could assist families who had the slimmest of means. The whole neighborhood was destitute: most of the residents lived in shacks made of tin rescued from canned food. The school was located in a low-lying area. Whenever it rained, the surrounding hills dumped the water there, creating a creek. That's why the people thereabout used to refer to it as the 'School of the Creek'. With all this I mean to point out that it was both hard to get to and to find. You couldn't go by car and the nearest subway stop was far away" (8).

But the difficulties weren't only physical. "The environment of *Los Pinos* was very hostile," recalls the nun quoted earlier. "Because of the taunts and threats it was very

heroic for a priest to walk through those parts" (9).

Fr. Josemaría used to arrive at the school punctually at eleven on Sunday mornings and remain there two hours. During the Mass celebrated by the school's chaplain he would explain some points of doctrine. When the Mass was over he continued the explanation. Then the students who accompanied him – almost all of them medical students during that first year – would give the classes they had prepared during the week. They themselves were the first to benefit from their efforts to enlighten the children's faith. In addition to improving their knowledge of doctrine, they were growing in generosity and desires to be apostolic.

The Servant of God encouraged those young men to invite their friends to join in teaching catechism. The following year there was a surge in the number of those who came to help out. That's why the Father, as they had started to call him, looked for new places to teach, places that resembled the first. On August 12, 1934, he wrote Fr. Francisco Moran, Vicar General of Madrid's diocese:

"I beg the Vicar to reserve for us another place for catechism; better yet if it's in an undesirable location which entails sacrifice, because the young men will happily offer to the Lord any inconveniences. Of course, just as in *Los Pinos*, it will have to be only on Sunday. We cannot forget that these 'big boys' are the kinds of students who study" (10).

Thus under the Father's impulse, more catechism classes were added throughout the now distant thirties, as Opus Dei took its first steps. Among them was one recommended by the Vicar General at Fr. Josemaría's request, which began in March, 1935 in the so-called "Popular Colony."

Those were the beginnings of a fruitful service to the Church, personally started by its



In this photo of the time (1929), we see the Servant of God in the doorway on the left, during First Holy Communion in the Foundation of the Sick.

founder, which Opus Dei continues to develop wherever it is established throughout the world. The life of Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer was a great unfolding of Christian teaching, a ceaseless sowing of doctrine, in which he spared no efforts. Through his teachings the seed of God's love took root in ever so many hearts: "To give doctrine is our great mission. That is what Opus Dei's apostolate is all about: to show the waiting crowd the path that leads straight to the Lord" (11).

A consequence of his heroic example is the gamut of apostolic activities carried out by his

sons and daughters among people of the most varied backgrounds. In these apostolic initiatives the emphasis is primarily doctrinal. As the founder wrote: "The Christian apostolate – and I'm talking about an ordinary Christian, living as just one more man or woman among equals – is a great work of teaching. Through real personal, loyal friendship, you create in others a hunger for God and you help them discover new horizons, naturally, simply, with the example of a faith lived to the full, with a loving word which is full of the power of divine truth" (12).

(1) *The Way*, no. 182.

(2) Letter, March 11, 1940

(3) Letter, March 28, 1973.

(4) RHF 20591, p. 452.

(5) Testimony of Sister Benita Casado Yague, Servant of Mary.

(6) Salvador Bernal, *A Profile of Msgr. Escrivá, Founder of Opus Dei*, New York, 1977, p. 176.

(7) Testimony of Sister St. Paul Lemos, Missionary of Christian Doctrine.

(8) Testimony of Sister Pilar Angela Hernando Carretero, Missionary of Christian Doctrine.

(9) Testimony of Sister St. Paul Lemos.

(10) Letter, August 12, 1934.

(11) Letter, March 24, 1930.

(12) *Christ Is Passing By*, no. 149.

The effects of his spiritual impulse

With heroic faithfulness to God's will and fortified by constant prayer and mortification, Msgr. Josemaria 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 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.

TORRECIUDAD: A Shrine for the Virgin

The city of Barbastro, Spain, is left behind. The road winds along the right bank of the Cinca River. Upon reaching the foothills, the landscape takes on a severe aspect. Beyond the El Grado Dam, the river becomes a reservoir encircled by hilltops left exposed. On the left bank atop a crag is found the old shrine; nearby, a landmark tower half in ruins. Still higher up rises the new shrine: a group of buildings that house the spiritual activities of which Opus Dei's founder dreamt. In the background against a gleaming blue sky sits the vast bulk of the Pyrenees.

The silence invites contemplation. Here took place something that is part of the history of Opus Dei. It happened in 1904



Interior of the Shrine of Torreciudad.



when the Servant of God was two years old. He fell so sick that the doctors lost hope of his recovery. His mother turned to the Virgin in intense prayer. Soon after she took the child, surprisingly cured, in a pilgrimage of thanksgiving to the shrine of our Lady of Torreciudad. "My parents took me," the Servant of God would often recall. "My mother carried me in her arms to the Virgin. She went on horseback seated in a side saddle, as was the custom then. Since the trail was rough, she was afraid" (1).

From time immemorial Torreciudad has been a focus for the Marian piety of the inhabitants of upper Aragon. Historians have traced this popular devotion back to the eleventh century. Over those nine hundred years thousands upon thousands of pilgrims have prostrated themselves at the feet of the Virgin of Torreciudad.

Msgr. Escrivá wanted to be part of this long tradition. With his spiritual backing, the necessary steps were taken to build a shrine. Church authorities approved the plan to restore the image and give it a home, which would become a place for conversions — beneath the mantle of the most holy Virgin.

"I rejoice in the devotion shown to the Virgin in Fatima and Lourdes. I'm delighted that they honor our heavenly Mother with so much love. We will contribute to spreading that love" (2).

What did the Servant of God hope to achieve by building a shrine to the Virgin?

As he wrote in a letter: "I hope for an outpouring of spiritual graces, which the Lord will want to grant to those who have recourse to his blessed Mother before this tiny image, so venerated over the centuries. That's why I want to see many confessionals, where people might purify themselves in the holy sacrament of penance and, having cleansed their souls, confirm or renew their Christian life. They will thus learn to sanctify and love their work, bringing to their homes the peace and joy of Jesus Christ: my peace I give you, my peace I leave you. Then they will gratefully receive the children heaven sends them, making noble use of conjugal love, which allows them to participate in the creative power of God. And God will not fail in those homes when he honors them by choosing from their midst souls to dedicate themselves, with a personal and free dedication, to serve divine interests" (3).

After that trip in his mother's arms in 1904, the Servant of God had two further opportunities to visit Torreciudad as a pilgrim.

The first was on April 7, 1970. Construction of the new shrine had just begun. That day, referring to the time elapsed since his mother had brought him to Torreciudad, he said to the Virgin: "Forgive me, my Mother. From age 2 to 68: what a poor creature I am! But I dearly love you, with all my soul. How happy it makes me to come and kiss you, and I rejoice thinking of the thousands of souls who have venerated you and come to tell you that they love you—and of the thousands yet to come" (4).

At around eleven o'clock that morning he stopped a kilometer away from the old shrine, at a stop today marked by a stone cross. He removed his shoes and stockings and covered the remaining distance barefoot. The road was not yet paved, and the gravel hurt his feet. He walked slowly; rain was falling.

Msgr. Escrivá went along, obviously recollected and praying the fifteen mysteries of the holy rosary. Every so often he would stop. Before getting under way again he was overheard to say: "I love God the Father, I love God the Son, I love God the Holy Spirit. I love the most blessed Trinity. I believe in God the Father, I believe in God the Son, I believe in God the Holy Spirit. I believe in the most blessed Trinity. I hope in God the Father, I hope in God the Son, I hope in God the Holy Spirit. I hope in the most blessed Trinity. I love my Mother the Virgin. I believe in my Mother the Virgin. I

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Msgr. Escrivá's prayer, and sent it to him. And when his son saw me, he said, "My father said to thank you very much; he's happy that you sent him the card." I told him to tell his father to keep it near him.

His mother was there a couple of nights, because he (her husband) was very bad, and they thought he was going to pass away. The son had to take a day off, and was home from work, over at the hospital. And then all of a sudden, he started to get better, and he went home. And he was mowing his lawn, and he was able to do things that he hadn't been able to do in a long time.

Finally, my granddaughter came with the son, Matt, and he said, "Nana, we have good news today" and I said, "What do you mean?" and he said, "My father went for an examination and they told him that his blood corpuscles were better; that he has all red (corpuscles) now, that they are all right." The doctor said, "I don't know how this happened, I don't know why. It's amazing; it's just like a miracle." I said, "Those are the prayers that we were saying."

R. C., Chicago, IL

THERE WAS NO EXPLANATION

For eleven years I had a defective eye: a membrane that had formed in the front of the retina in the inside of the eye was pulling the retina downwards. I had had an operation in Bogotá for a blood-clot that obstructed the artery of the retina, and that was the cause of the defect; they couldn't do anything with the membrane that was attached to the retina. It was impossible to remove due to its position as they ran the risk of damaging the retina.

The doctor told me that the pressure of that membrane on the retina, were it increased, could cause the detachment of the retina and a total loss of sight. He added that in any case the advances in surgery might one day permit an operation without endangering the retina.

In 1971 all medication was stopped. For ten years I went periodically for a check up to the ophthalmologist who always encouraged me to avoid any violent exertions in the hope that some day they could operate. A little more than a year ago he told me that they were already doing this type of operation but it would be better to wait a little more until they perfected the technique.

On October 5, a friend of mine suggested that I pray to Msgr. Escrivá for the cure of my eye. The next day I did so at around eight o'clock in the morning and then touched the affected eye with the prayer card. At six o'clock that evening in my office I realized that the membrane had broken and that I had almost perfect vision. I was sure it was a miracle due to the intercession of Msgr. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer.

The doctor could not explain how the membrane had broken but he told me that the folds that formed on the retina could not disappear. Without giving any prescription he told me to return within a month. When I did he told me that the retina had returned to its normal condition and that there was no longer any danger of possible detachment and that the folds had disappeared.

S. C., Guayaquil, Ecuador

BEFORE FINISHING THE NOVENA

I am happy to inform you that my prayers to Msgr. Josemaría have not been in vain. I heard of him first through an alumna of Kianda College, but it did not awaken much interest in me.

Last month my uncle was kidnapped. They told us that they were going to kill him if he did not pay a certain amount of money. We were very worried. Then I remembered having read various favors received through the intercession of Msgr. Josemaría. We started a novena. Before finishing it, my uncle was freed.

It was a miracle. Nothing similar had ever happened to us and it surprised us. After this, my family and I decided to pray to Msgr. Josemaría for the rest of our lives, on account of the great things he had done for us.

Many thanks to the good and holy Msgr. Josemaría for having helped us so marvelously. We know that anything we ask for, through his intercession, we will get.

A. N., Kampala, Uganda

CONTRARY TO ALL DIAGNOSIS

During the academic year 1975-76 I was studying in a place near the city of Córdoba. In December I started to feel slight pains in my left knee. It appeared to me that it was caused by a blow I had received while playing soccer. While I was playing on December 12, I realized that I could barely run. I went out of the game and from that moment on I began to limp until finally I could no longer move my leg.

During Christmas vacation at home, the pain kept growing. I returned to Córdoba to begin classes again. A few days afterwards I went to the family doctor who, upon seeing the knee, sent me to a traumatologist. The doctor asked for some X-rays and for the result of a blood analysis. Once he had this data he told me that I should return home. On the eighth of February they diagnosed a cancer on the left femur. Without my knowing anything but with the knowledge of my family, I was sent to Valencia, although they did not give me any chance of survival.

In this city they performed a biopsy that served to confirm the original diagnosis, a malignant hemangiopericitoma. According to the doctors I had little time left: if they cut off the leg, six months at the most.

Still I did not know what was happening when the traumatologist told me that the only solution was to amputate the leg as soon as possible. I had moments of desperation and discouragement but in approximately fifteen minutes I gave permission for the operation.

After the operation I thought the worst had happened but it was not so; the treatment still remained: 54 sessions of chemotherapy that left me full of anguish and pain after each one.

Soon after starting the treatment I found out what I had. In fact, I read a lot about my case. I was ready to die; I was very calm. During this time I know that many people were praying for me. I also prayed a lot to live and I often sought the intercession of Msgr. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer.

Time went by, and after a year I once again began to be enthusiastic about life. Now I have been released for good.

I continue to give thanks to the Lord for the grace that he has granted to me through the intercession of Msgr. Escrivá to whom I continue to pray.

J. R., Alicante, Spain

THE PROBLEM WITH THE HOUSE

We were looking for a house outside of London near Wimbledon, where my wife had gotten a teaching post in a high school. After various unsuccessful attempts, we prayed urgently to Msgr. Escrivá. That same day I called various real estate agencies to get information.

The next day we received information on three houses. Upon visiting the house that seemed most appropriate, we met the owner, a widow who lived alone. She had been trying to sell the house for a while so that she could return to her native country. As she showed us the house we liked it more and more. We particularly liked the presence of a crucifix and of various images of the Blessed Mother. Perhaps on account of this we were not too surprised to see on her night-table a prayer card for the private devotion of

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Msgr. Escrivá that was obviously well used. My wife exclaimed, "We have been praying to that priest to find a house." "And I, in order to sell it," she replied right away. Needless to say we rapidly made a deal.

A. S., London, England

AFTER TWENTY SEVEN YEARS

I am a twenty seven year old Ugandan, although I now live in Kenya. When I arrived here in June of 1981, I heard about the favors that Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer had obtained for so many souls throughout the world.

My uncle, my family and I began a novena asking Msgr. Escrivá to help me to get over a serious problem of asthmatic attacks from which I suffered.

As soon as I finished the novena, in the last week of July, there was a great improvement in my health. For the first time in twenty seven years of suffering, I could take a daily shower without suffering asthmatic attacks that night.

Many thanks for the intercession of Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer. My family and I prayed that I recover completely.

P. M-A., Nairobi, Kenya

Six months ago, more or less, I took care of the defense of a young girl accused of a drug charge. As I learned more about the case I found the situation stranger and stranger. There was almost a complete contradiction between what she told me and what was written on the case. Before finishing my interrogation I gave her the prayer card of Msgr. Escrivá and told her to pray with lots of faith, so that the situation be cleared up.

Two months later, before the trial began, she told me, "After reading the prayer to the priest that you gave me, I felt a great need to draw nearer to God. I asked a religious who helped in the prison to prepare me to be able to make my First Communion. Fifteen days afterwards I went to communion. I want to change my life, go to work and support my family."

Two months ago she was released from jail because there was a lack of proof against her.

E. B., Caracas, Venezuela

My husband has been suffering for a while from an infection of the spinal column. Recently he has had some palpitations accompanied by asphyxiation, that leaves him purple and without breath. He had the last two attacks within an interval of fifteen days. The doctor advised against drugs and he did not take any.

One night around 12:30 he seemed to be asphyxiated. Desperately I tried to make him breathe. I went to the house of my sister-in-law, which is very near to mine, dragging him along as best as I could. Upon seeing his condition, she said there was no time for treatment; the only thing we could do was to pray to Fr. Josemaría. She pulled out the prayer card for private devotion and put it on his chest; at the same time we prayed with lots of faith. When we finished praying he exhaled deeply and breathed freely. From that time on it has not happened again.

We continue to pray with faith to the Monsignor for the various problems that come up.

I want to express my thanksgiving to Fr. Josemaría for this favor.

C. de M., La Ceja, Colombia

My cousin had not been to confession for thirty years. Some time ago my parents lent him the book *Profile* on the life of the Founder of Opus Dei. After reading it he decided to change his life. He went to a priest, confessed, and went to communion. I attribute this grace to the intercession of Msgr. Escrivá who moves people with the example of his holy life.

X. X., Curitiba, Brazil

My son was without work for three months. He was turned down at every place where he went for a job. He was very discouraged until one day a friend of mine gave me the Bulletin about the Servant of God, Josemaría, founder of the Work. I made the resolution to pray for my son. It was not long before suddenly he found an incredible job. It was totally undreamed of and out of the blue, for which I am very grateful to Msgr. Escrivá.

J. P., Chojnice, Poland

I lost my job and two months later my husband lost his when they introduced computers into the company. I was desperate and I prayed for this intention to Msgr. Escrivá and my husband found work. I enclose a contribution for his apostolic work.

G. C., Matraville, Australia

I tried to educate my sons in a Christian manner and I believed that I had achieved it. But one day I realized that one of my daughters did not want to baptize her children until they were older and asked for it.

A friend of mine offered me a card with the prayer for private devotion and I asked with all my faith to Msgr. Escrivá that he intercede for these two grand-children. I had only been praying to him for two months when the two children were baptized. Now I pray the prayer card every day giving a thousand thanks for the favor that God has given me through his intercession.

S. R., X, Puerto Rico

Several months ago, my niece suffered a serious nervous and mental crisis, so much that she had to be hospitalized. We prayed to Msgr. Escrivá, and thanks to God, she was able to return home much improved, to the point that she now can work outside the house. We continue asking the Lord, through the intercession of his servant, Msgr. Escrivá, to give her total recuperation with emotional equilibrium.

I enclose a modest donation for the expenses of printing and mailing the bulletin which I have received recently. Would that Msgr. Escrivá were raised to the altars rapidly!

R. B., Miami, FL

NEWS ABOUT THE CAUSE OF BEATIFICATION OF MSGR. JOSEMARÍA ESCRIVÁ DE BALAGUER

On May 12, 1981, the proceedings to gather information on the life and virtues of the Servant of God was opened in the Vicariate of Rome. Six days later in the archdiocese of Madrid the tribunal established to hear the testimony of Spanish-speaking witnesses held its first session.

The postulation office of the cause of beatification and canonization of Msgr. Josemaría Escrivá had submitted a lengthy list of witnesses who had personal knowledge of Opus Dei's founder. Their eye-witness accounts cover the entire life of the Servant of God, from his infancy to his holy death. By the summer of 1982 nearly half of the witnesses selected by the postulation office had given their testimony to one or the other tribunal.

Likewise in Madrid, from January 21 to April 3, 1982, a fact-finding enquiry was held on an extraordinary cure attributed to the intercession of the Servant of God, of a nun who was instantaneously cured of a tumor. The tribunal gathered all the opportune medical testimonies and documents and has forwarded them to the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints in Rome for further study.

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. Up to now, there have been 169 printings in 34 languages, with a total of 2,983,000 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 60 printings in 12 languages have appeared, with a total of 375,000 copies.

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 31 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 39 printings in 8 languages.

Friends of God

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 has now appeared in 21 printings in 6 languages.

The preface is written by Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo, Prelate of Opus Dei.

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).

Via Crucis

A new, posthumous work by Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer, the fruit of his contemplation of the scenes of Our Lord's Passion. It was prepared as an aid to prayer and a stimulus to sorrow for our sins and thanksgiving to Jesus Christ who redeemed us at the cost of his Blood.

The first edition was published in Spanish in February, 1981. English edition in preparation.

(Available at Scepter Publishers, 481 Main Street, New Rochelle, N.Y. 10801)

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 are grateful for the many letters we receive. They are a testimony of a private devotion with which so many persons the world over pray to God through the intercession of Msgr. Escrivá. We are able to include in the *Bulletin* only a few selections from among them, which describe events of vital importance as well as simple anecdotes.

We also wish to express our appreciation to those who send contributions, since it is impossible to thank everyone individually. These contributions are used to defray printing and distribution costs of the *Bulletin* which is free of charge, and to further those apostolates stemming from Msgr. Escrivá's love for souls. Tax deductible contributions should be sent to the *Bulletin on the Life of Msgr. Escrivá*, 330 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10025.

Make checks payable to *Woodlawn Foundation*.

Our readers are invited to send us the names and addresses of other persons whom they think would like to receive the *Bulletin* or prayer cards with the prayer for private devotion.

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330 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10025