

BULLETIN ON THE LIFE OF MSGR. ESCRIVA
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The Servant of God
JOSEMARIA ESCRIVA
Founder of Opus Dei

BULLETIN No. 7, NEW YORK

Monsignor Josemaria Escriva was born on January 9, 1902, in Barbastro, Spain. His schooling took place in Barbastro and Logrono. 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. Escriva 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. Escriva 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. Escriva 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. Escriva 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. Escriva 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 cause of beatification and canonization of Msgr. Escriva was introduced in Rome on February 19, 1981.

First Phase in Canonization Process Concludes in Rome

The process investigating the life and virtues of Msgr. Josemaria Escriva was brought to a close by the tribunal of the Vicariate of Rome on November 8, 1986. Thus was concluded the first phase of the cause of beatification and canonization of Opus Dei's founder.

More than six years have passed since the Vicar of Rome, Cardinal Ugo Poletti, promulgated the decree introducing the cause (Feb. 19, 1981). During this time the ecclesiastical judges met 374 times to hear and gather testimonies. In June 1984, a parallel tribunal set up by the Madrid archdiocese to examine a large number of Spanish-speaking witnesses finished its task. Also completed in Madrid were two inquiries into cures of an extraordinary character attributed to the intercession of Msgr. Escriva: the instantaneous disappearance of a tumor and the cure of a malignant lymphoma.

The closing session in Rome, celebrated in the Conciliation Hall of the



Cardinal Poletti, papal vicar for the diocese of Rome, signs the declaration of the final session of the process as president of the tribunal, in Rome, November 1986.

Lateran Palace, met under the presidency of Cardinal Poletti, papal vicar for the diocese of Rome and head of the tribunal entrusted with gathering the declarations. Besides other members of the tribunal, present were both ecclesiastical and civil dignitaries, including several cardinals, various bishops and the dean of the Holy See's diplomatic corps. Opus Dei's Prelate, Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo, was also present.

As the session was officially opened, a notary read a declaration certifying that the investigative phase had been finished. Members of the tribunal then signed the declaration and ordered the remittance to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints of all pertinent documents in three sealed boxes. Then the postulator of the cause, Rev. Flavio Capucci, briefly thanked tribunal members and alluded to some pertinent words of Opus Dei's Prelate: "Basing himself on a teaching of Msgr. Escriva, Msgr. del Portillo reminded me that with this process Opus Dei is not seeking any human glory, since its glory ought to consist always in fulfilling God's will and not in shining in men's eyes. He also added that the only aim the Work seeks in sponsoring the cause of canonization of its beloved founder is the good of the Church. His message about sanctifying all human realities has stirred up in countless souls a desire to achieve an intimate union with Christ amidst the most ordinary circumstances." Father Capucci also commented on how widespread is his fame of sanctity and how many letters are received claiming favors obtained by Opus Dei's founder from heaven.

At the ceremony's end Cardinal Poletti offered a brief summary of Msgr. Josemaria Escriva's life and then pointed out: "In a time such as ours, awash in a worldliness that seems to drown spiritual life in indifference, the Servant of God's message takes on a providentially fertile role. In effect, it provides a permanent source of inspiration for those who would project Christ's light onto all of society and enliven from within all fields of human endeavor." He recalled what he had said in the opening decree: "For having proclaimed the universal call to holiness, since 1928 when he founded Opus Dei, Msgr. Josemaria Escriva has been recognized by all as a forerunner of the Council in what was precisely the marrow of its teaching."

The Cardinal added, "In defending the demand of reaching the fullness of contemplation in the middle of the world, Msgr. Escriva has shown man's intrinsic dependence on God and the orientation of all creation to God. Any break between man's condition and the life of grace has been healed. Everything thus becomes a means to encounter God, matter for personal sanctification, and an occasion to serve one's neighbor generously. In this way all of man's activity is taken up into the mystery of redemption.



Opus Dei's Prelate, Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo, greets Cardinals Poletti, Poupard and Bafile in the final session of the process.

"Love for freedom plays a big part in his teachings, especially in everything to do with the laity's activity in the temporal sphere. He wanted this freedom to be exercised along with a like responsibility for achieving truth and goodness, fully coherent with the faith and loyally faithful to the teaching authority of the Church."

The Cardinal concluded his remarks in saying, "There are many faithful throughout the world — among whom I happily count myself — who invoke with faith the intercession of the Servant of God in their spiritual and material needs. The hope of all of us is to see him soon honored in being raised to the altars and proposed as a model of Christian life for the universal Church. Let our prayers go forth to solicit this grace from the Lord." Thus did the first phase end.

Mother of God and Our Mother

“The Virgin is our mother. That’s a truth I have tried to make my own, one I have preached continually and that every Catholic has heard and echoed a thousand times, till it has lodged in the very depths of his heart”(1). So did Opus Dei’s founder speak of holy Mary in 1970.

Throughout the life of the Servant of God his intimate union with our Lady grew to an incredible extent. He was moved to say, “The love God shows us through Mary has all the depth of something divine and, at the same time, all the familiarity and warmth of something human”(2). From his earliest years this devotion took root and blossomed in his soul, becoming inseparable from his ardent love for Jesus Christ. It accompanied him through all the trials and challenges of founding Opus Dei, till the moment of his death on June 26, 1975.

The blessed Virgin came into his life early and notably when he fell sick with a disease that brought him to death’s door. When the doctors had exhausted their remedies, Josemaría’s mother promised to bring him to our Lady of Torreciudad if he were cured. He was two years old when his parents, fulfilling their promise, made a pilgrimage in 1904 to the Torreciudad shrine to offer their son to our Lady. His mother, referring to his cure, later told him, “My son, you were more dead than alive. If God kept you on earth, it must be for something great”(3).

In a deeply Christian home Josemaría, as a young boy, nourished his piety with the teaching and example of those around him.

From his parents he learned — never to forget — some simple prayers: “Each morning and night, not once but many times, I too repeat, ‘O my Lady, mother of mine, I give myself completely to you. And as proof of my filial affection, I consecrate to you my eyes, my ears, my tongue, my heart’”(4).

From 16 years of age, when there cropped up the first inklings of a vocation that would be fully spelled out a decade later, his interior life and activities were closely linked to holy Mary. From his youthful years date daily visits to our Lady of the Pillar (Saragossa) and thousands of insistent, persevering and heartfelt short prayers: *Domine, ut videam; Domine, ut sit!*: “Lord, may I see; may there be accomplished whatever God is signaling he wants of me.” Thus in a wholehearted attitude of dedication and expectation, clutching all the while to the Virgin’s hand, there dawned for the Servant of God October 2, 1928, when he “saw” the Work the Lord wanted him to found.

He placed Opus Dei and its apostolates under our Lady’s protection. Of her he could say, making reference to February 14, 1930, when he founded the Women’s Branch, “You women have not had a foundress; your only foundress was the most holy Virgin”(5). With Mary leading the way, Msgr. Escrivá spent his life serving God and the Church. Therefore, many years later, a glance at the past led him to exclaim, “I never thought that bringing the Work along would entail so much pain, so



The Servant of God kisses the feet of an image of Saint Mary, Mother of Fair love, in a shrine on the campus of the University of Navarre Spain in April, 1967.

much suffering, both physical and moral — especially moral . . . *Iter para tutum!* Mother of mine, mother! I had no one but you. Thank you, mother”(6).

To record all the events showing how love for the Virgin filled his life would require volumes. Once in 1931 he devoutly rescued from the ground in a Madrid slum a page ripped from a catechism. Printed on it was an image of our Lady. Desirous to make amends, he had it framed against a rich background to preside over a small library in Academy DYA, Opus Dei’s first center. And those rosaries, one after the other, prayed in his busy comings and goings, in the center or outskirts of Madrid, in search of souls to comfort physically and spiritually As he went about he delighted in discovering new images of our Lady that evoked from him a prayerful greeting: high on the facade of a building, in the niche of a monument, built into a wall, such as the statue of our Lady of Almudena, before

which he knelt to pray on a major thoroughfare.

From the first, in the company of the young men he was introducing to the Christian life, he would visit “the Virgin’s poor,” as he called them. In her honor they sought to be helpful to the needy in the forgotten neighborhoods of the Spanish capital. Our Lady’s life had so embedded itself in his mind and heart that one day in 1931, following Mass, he wrote in one sitting *Holy Rosary*. The book reflects the freshness and originality of his contemplation of Mary. Says its prologue in part: “The beginning of the way, at the end of which you will find yourself completely carried away by love for Jesus, is a trusting love for Mary.”

He was aware that the Redeemer’s Mother is the straightest and most secure path to reach God, for he had personally benefited on many occasions from her maternal care. Thus in all simplicity he could say, “If in anything I want you to imi-

tate me, it's in my love for the Virgin." This was, explains Opus Dei's Vicar General, who spent many years at his side, "the only area in which he put himself forward as an example. One did not have to deal at length with Opus Dei's founder to realize that his comment arose, as a logical consequence, from his experience of living in God"(7).

Our Lady appears in his words, his gestures and glances, his writings, his sentiments and in all traces of his earthly activity. To her he turned in all his difficulties, such as in 1946, when in Barcelona he entrusted to our Lady of Mercy negotiations he was about to undertake in Rome to win pontifical approval for Opus Dei. In its spiritual, apostolic and structural dimensions, this pastoral phenomenon represented such a novelty that it was extremely doubtful whether it could fit into any of the existing juridical categories of the Church. But the Virgin's help showed itself here, too. After reaching a satisfactory solution in just a few months, the Servant of God could affirm, "Each step in the juridical path of the Work has been taken under the protection of God's Mother"(8).

The path was rocky, to be sure. Sometime in 1951 the founder had a foreboding that a threat to the Work was at hand — one that could spell its undoing. "Not knowing to whom to turn on earth," he wrote, "I turned, as always, to heaven. On August 15, 1951, after a trip I'm not ashamed to call penitential, I consecrated the Work to the most sweet heart of Mary, in Loretto"(9). His faith was again rewarded, for the most holy Virgin soon overcame the danger.

There followed the years of Opus Dei's expansion as it spread to the six continents. When he sent the pioneers to a new country, the Father, having no money to offer them, gave them instead his blessing and an image of our Lady. He was certain that she would not let her children down. Even when the beginnings were trying, never missing were the good humor and determination the founder inspired from Rome with his prayers and

vigorous devotion to Mary. "Devotion to the Virgin is not something sentimental or less than manly. It fills the soul with consolation and joy insofar as it calls for putting faith fully and deeply into practice. In turn, such faith gets us outside of ourselves, so we can hope in the Lord"(10), in imitation of Jesus' Mother.

"I have filled the roads of Europe with Hail Marys and songs,"(11) claimed Msgr. Escriva, in reference to his trips to start or consolidate apostolic work in various countries. He also renewed the consecration of the Work at a host of Marian shrines: Lourdes, Fatima, the basilica of our Lady of the Pillar (Spain), Einsiedeln (Switzerland), Willesden (England) . . .

In the last years of his life, seeing so many Christians disoriented, he greatly suffered for the Church. To entrust their salvation to our Lady, he carried out a novena to the Virgin of Guadalupe, in Mexico City, in 1970. Surrounded by a few sons, he prayed the mysteries of the rosary and stopped now and then to voice extemporaneous prayer. Recalling the May flowers he offered to the Virgin as a child in Barbastro, he said to her: "Our Lady, since I have nothing else, I bring you thorns, thorns I bear in my heart. But I am sure you will turn them into roses. I had to come to Mexico, with my mouth and soul filled with trust, to tell you once again that with you we are very secure . . . Our only ambition is to serve your Son and, for his sake and with your help, all souls. Now I can tell you with my heart afire: *monstra te esse Matrem* (show yourself to be a mother)! And please don't answer, *monstra te esse filium* (show yourself to be a son). While conscious of my littleness, I don't know what more I can do. If there is something more, just say so, and I will carry it out with your help. For alone I am not able . . . Pray for us sinners, for that's what we are. But we also know that you are Refuge of Sinners, Help of Christians"(12).

Further apostolic trips led him, as usual, to more of our Lady's shrines. While reaf-



Fatima, November, 1972: The Servant of God, surrounded by members of Opus Dei, prays the holy rosary on the esplanade of the shrine.

firming the faith of many in visits to Latin America in 1974-75, he visited renowned pilgrimage sites in Brazil, Argentina and Chile, among others.

Msgr. Escriva was a most grateful man. And he had many reasons to thank God's Mother with words and deeds of devotion. From the start this devotion was wedded to the Work's spirit. He encouraged members of Opus Dei to deal with the Virgin by making their own various manifestations of popular piety: short aspirations, greeting her images, daily recitation of the rosary and Angelus, three Hail Marys each night for purity, celebrating Saturdays and other feasts dedicated to Mary, visiting the poor, May pilgrimages to shrines or churches dedicated to her, and so on.

With clear supernatural conviction he wrote, "To Jesus one always goes and 'returns' through Mary"(13). Toward the end of his life he added, "With the same certainty I can affirm that we ought not to be

surprised if those who don't want Christians to go to Jesus or 'return' to him (if unfortunately they have lost him) downplay union with our Lady or, in their ingratitude, maintain that traditional practices of piety are outdated . . . If conversation with Mary wanes in a Christian's soul, it can easily stray so far as to lose God's love"(14).

One day in 1970 the Servant of God while in Mexico was gazing at a painting of our Lady of Guadalupe handing a rose to the Indian Juan Diego. Meanwhile he prayed aloud, "That's the way I'd like to die: looking at the most holy Virgin giving me a flower"(15). And so it happened at midday on June 26, 1975. As he entered his office, he glanced as usual at an image of our Lady of Guadalupe before falling unconscious to the floor. The Virgin had heard his prayer.

(1) Msgr. Escriva, "Memories of Saragossa's Cathedral 'El Pilar,'" in *El Noticiero*, Saragossa, Oct. 11, 1970.

(2) Ibid.

(3) A. Vasquez de Prada, *El Fundador del Opus Dei*, Madrid 1983, p. 495, note 35.

(4) Historical Archives of the Founder (HAF), 20589, p. 18.

(5) HAF 20168, p. 109.

(6) HAF 20589, p. 124.

(7) Javier Echevarria, "Love of Most Holy Mary in the Teachings of Monsignor Josemaria Escriva de Balaguer," in *Palabra*, nn. 156-57, p. 30.

(8) HAF 20754, p. 8.

(9) HAF 20755, p. 128.

(10) *Christ is Passing By*, n. 143.

(11) HAF 20589, p. 451.

(12) HAF 20166, pp. 788-91.

(13) *The Way*, n. 495.

(14) Msgr. Escriva, "The Virgin of the Pillar," in *Libro de Aragon*, Saragossa 1976.

(15) *Postulation of the Cause of Beatification and Canonization of the Servant of God, Josemaria Escriva de Balaguer, Priest, Founder of Opus Dei, Articles of the Postulator*, Rome 1979, n. 402.



Students gather in one of the Institute's classrooms.

Official recognition was granted to its diploma in 1984, five years after the new buildings were inaugurated.

The Institute is also active in adult education and extension work, offering to a broader public such courses as home management, decorating, medicine, psychology, and nutrition in major cities and towns throughout the country. It also cooperates with other institutions dedicated to furthering education for women in other Central American countries.

Besides the technical facet, the Institute likewise concerns itself with the spiritual growth of its students, encouraging them to work toward Christian answers to the problems afflicting the family and society at large.

Echoing the Servant of God's concern for the disadvantaged, the Institute carries out much needed educational work with peasants and Indians. Teachers and students alike reach into distant villages to offer instruction in cooking local foodstuffs, hygiene, first aid and so forth, while teaching catechism to young children. Thus its radius reaches thousands of rural families.

It is no wonder that the Institute enjoys a

high level of public recognition both in Guatemala and neighboring countries. Besides its regular offerings the Institute is well known for the quality of its conferences and seminars.

What in 1975 was but a bare plot of land has become a few years later a vigorous instrument for the advancement of women. The desire to put Christ as a solid foundation for all human activities inspired the life and teachings of Msgr. Escriva since 1928. Since 1953 that program has also characterized the efforts of members of Opus Dei in Central America. In fact it is the common denominator of all apostolic undertakings where — like the Institute in Guatemala — the spirit of Opus Dei breathes life into a service that reaches people of every social condition.

(1) *Conversations with Monsignor Escriva de Balaguer, n. 87.*

Letters Received

CHANGE OF HEART

A friend of mine is a nurse. One of her patients had a serious drug problem that was tearing his family apart. He was not a Catholic, but agreed to use the prayer card. When he returned to the hospital for a check-up, he told my friend that since praying the prayer card he realized that he had wasted his life and hurt those he loved. He was now trying to change. We attribute this change of heart to Msgr. Escriva's intercession.

L.G., Jackson Heights, New York

GRANTED MANY FAVORS

For some time now I have been wanting to write to let the world know how grateful I am to Msgr. Escriva for the many favors that have been granted to me through his intercession. I pray the prayer on the card every day and it seems that almost everything that I ask for is granted to me. Of course, I understand that I cannot have *everything* that I ask for, but I feel like I understand why the prayer is not granted — it's kind of weird.

I gave a prayer card to a friend and she tells me that everything that she asks of him he has answered. She was having some trouble with her marriage and since she started praying to Msgr. Escriva, it seems that her husband did a complete about turn and they now seem to have a very stable relationship.

I would like to have a few more cards, if it is possible, as I would like to give some out to my friends and family.

I am enclosing a little something hoping that it is of some help.

A.P., El Paso, Texas

RECEIVED THE LAST SACRAMENT

In the hospital where I work there was a patient with stomach cancer. His condition worsened day by day, and he had to be fed intravenously. The elderly man was a Catholic, but he didn't practice. He refused to believe he was getting worse and would soon die. When his family offered him the last sacrament, he refused.

I began to entrust the matter to Msgr. Escriva, regularly praying the prayer card for the sick man. Meanwhile he grew weaker, the end being only days away. After praying intensely to the Servant of God, I went to see the patient one evening to speak of the supernatural meaning of his illness and imminent death. He reacted very well and agreed to receive the last sacrament. That same evening he called the hospital chaplain and received the anointing of the sick. The following day he died.

M.H., Essen, Germany

PARALYSIS OVERCOME

I received the prayer card of Msgr. Escriva in December 1982. Since then I have prayed earnestly. Many things have miraculously occurred.

First: A sick person for whom I prayed overcame a paralysis that his relatives and friends thought to be incurable and eventually lethal. After his recovery the patient recognized that God's

grace was behind it all.

Second: I prayed for a cousin of mine so that he could find a decent job. At the end of January 1983, he received an offer from a respectable agency that hired him.

Third: I've fervently prayed for several personal needs. In January I obtained a large sum of money that allowed me to meet some of those needs. Seeing the results, my colleagues took up saying, "God helps his own."

Now I continue to trust that God will grant me many favors through the blessed father. These include my requests to be able to continue my studies in Economics and Political-Social Affairs and to travel so I can take care of various obligations, intentions and desires for my own good and that of others.

C.K.D., Kampala, Uganda

GOOD-BYE TO SPEECH DEFECT

I have reasons to write this letter. I'm in the second year of mining engineering. From my youngest years I have had a speech defect. My parents had me treated for this condition, and I tried lots of speech exercises. At times I seemed to be making progress, but the gains were short-lived. In any environment I felt shunned. I was treated, especially by my teachers, as though I were retarded. I attended a regular school, but because when called upon to participate I grew nervous, the words would never come out properly. Nearly two years ago my sister gave me a prayer card of Msgr. Josemaria Escriva. At first I doubted whether I would improve. I recited the prayer nearly every evening with the slight hope that my prayer would be heard. In no time at all my life greatly changed. Little by little my pronunciation improved until it became normal. This was due to Msgr. Josemaria Escriva, who heard my prayer and helped me. I want to thank him for the rest of my life. I always carry the prayer card with me so he may guide me through the difficulties and problems of everyday life.

S.Z., Cracow, Poland

BABY'S ILLNESS DISAPPEARS

Our baby was born recently, a beautiful baby girl. However, we were very anxious and concerned because she began to turn blue, and required continuous oxygen and constant monitoring of her heart and oxygen-blood level. She was listless and had to be tube-fed. The doctors did not know why this was happening, because the x-ray and all tests taken registered normal.

This situation continued for 36 hours without any improvement. It was then I was given a relic of Monsignor Escriva which I placed under the baby's blanket in the nursery. Within an hour, the doctor again came in to examine her. He removed the oxygen and was happy to tell us that her color was very good, and she indeed looked the best since she was born. She no longer had any need of the oxygen, and was removed from the monitoring devices.

We know and believe that it was due to the intercession of Monsignor Escriva that Our Lord, in His love, made our baby completely well and healthy again for which we will be ever grateful.

M.M., San Francisco, California

ASTONISHING RECOVERY

From five years of age my sister had suffered from epileptic seizures. Ten years later, after turning to many doctors without finding an effective medical treatment, she continued subject to the same attacks, always very painful.

When I learned of the favors granted to many people through the intercession of Msgr. Josemaria Escriva, I thought of my sister and I gave her a card with the prayer for private devotion. All the family began to pray, asking for a cure. After two months my sister was completely well; there were no more seizures; all in all, an astonishing recovery. My family and I attribute this cure to Msgr. Escriva.

E.A.S., Mazatlan, Mexico

I have obtained from God, through the intercession of Msgr. Josemaria Escriva, the favor that my husband has recovered his sight after having been certified blind for many years.

M.A.N., Enugu, Nigeria

The house we were temporarily renting had a stairway of very modern design without a railing. In spite of my efforts to have the children be very careful, one morning my two-and-a-half year old fell from the second floor to the first, hitting his head. When I picked him up he neither spoke nor cried, and had lost his vision. Not knowing what to do I prayed, "Father, help me!" My husband also started praying to Msgr. Escriva.

Little by little the boy began to revive and in less than 10 minutes he was as if nothing had happened. Two days later the doctor made a complete examination and found absolutely no injury.

I am sure this was a favor from Msgr. Escriva and I am writing in order to express my appreciation.

C.V., Champaign, Illinois

I had an aunt who had stomach cancer, for which she was operated on several times. She didn't practice her religion and had last gone to confession when she was a young girl.

I told her daughter I was very worried about her mother's spiritual health, and I offered her a prayer card of Msgr. Escriva. It turns out my cousin hadn't been to confession herself in five years. As a result she went to confession and we made a novena together, asking Msgr. Escriva to intercede for the soul of her mother, so she would go to confession.

The day before her death in the hospital she went to confession. We're very grateful to Msgr. Escriva for his intercession.

C.C., Puerto Rico

I would like to give an account of a favor that Msgr. Escriva granted me on December 27, 1986.

I work as a baby sitter to two children of a mixed marriage couple. The wife is Vietnamese (Buddhist) and the husband is American (Catholic, but not practicing).

On the eve of the feast of the Immaculate Conception, I went to a center of Opus Dei where it was suggested I pray to Msgr. Escriva for the intention of having the baby that I am taking care of

baptized. This has been my wish since I started working for them. I prayed the prayer card and to my surprise the baby was baptized. I consider this a miracle because they were not intending to have this baby baptized.

V.C., Bethesda, Maryland

I was recently heading for an Opus Dei center to attend a day of recollection. While crossing a street I noticed something suspicious about a man on the sidewalk in front of me. I prayed to my guardian angel and kept on walking. Suddenly I noticed he was following me. Pulling alongside he grabbed my arm and asked me for everything, adding that I wouldn't be hurt if I complied. My first reaction was to call upon Msgr. Escriva, exclaiming, "Father!" The young fellow replies, "What are you saying?" I gave him my earrings, watch, ring . . . "And now for the bills," he added. Since I was carrying in my hands a copy of *The Way of the Cross* by Msgr. Escriva, I asked him to hold it so I could show him that my purse contained only a rosary and some other writings by Opus Dei's founder. As I tried to display the purse's contents, his eyes were fixed on a prayer card of Msgr. Escriva sticking out of the book.

His objective achieved, the thief gave me a push that landed me on the sidewalk and set off running. I thought the best thing would be for me to pray to Msgr. Escriva and leave everything in his hands. So I did.

I crossed the next street, when suddenly I noticed that someone was breathlessly approaching me from behind. I was terrified when I saw that it was my assailant. "Here," he said. I stuck out my hand, and he returned everything to me. "It was that priest in the picture," he added. Before parting I managed to give him the prayer card of Msgr. Josemaria Escriva, to whom I certainly attribute this favor.

P.N.V., Valencia, Spain

One day last summer while playing, my two-year-old daughter suddenly began to wail. Her left hand was inflamed and even began to turn purple. I took her to the emergency ward of a nearby hospital, where a nurse examined her. To get her to extend her hand, she held out a toy, but the little girl, all in pain, refused to move her hand at all.

The nurse said some X-rays would be taken. While waiting for half an hour I did nothing more than repeat the prayer of private devotion the the Servant of God, Josemaria Escriva, asking him to cure my daughter.

I returned to the emergency ward, where the nurse again showed the toy to the girl who, without giving it a thought, reached for it. The pain had disappeared. Surprised, the nurse began to move her hand, with nary a peep from the child. Thinking that a physician had already seen her, she asked what medicine the girl had taken. When I told her none, the nurse gave me an unbelieving look, unable to explain what had happened. I knew: Msgr. Escriva had cured my daughter.

Since then, whenever the child sees me with the prayer card of the Servant of God in my hand, she says to me, "This daddy cured me."

E.O., Chicago, Illinois

I would like to share an event that can only be explained as an answer to my prayer for Msgr. Escriva's intercession. For several years I hadn't gone to confession; for my wife it had been a year and a half. Although we talked now and then about the need for confession and its impor-

tance, in fact we didn't make up our minds to avail ourselves of the sacrament of reconciliation.

This year as Lent began, I asked Msgr. Escriva to intercede so that both of us would make a good confession. I recited the prayer card nearly every day. But Lent was moving along, and still we hadn't made a move.

During the night of Good Friday I woke up all at once with the absolute conviction that the following day, Holy Saturday, I would go to confession. This was no mere ineffectual wish, but an unshakable decision to go — a gift pure and simple. I woke up my wife and told her of my decision, with which she concurred. The next morning we both went to confession.

W.F., Germany

My cousin had lost his job and was looking for a new one. One day he spotted the prayer card of Opus Dei's founder in the room of his youngest sister. He then began to pray it every night, asking for employment and promising to make a contribution.

Several days later a friend of his told him he had a job for him. Five days ago he began to work as a carpenter in his friend's company, and he has already made the donation.

G.M. Palermo, Italy

Everyday my husband found his way to a bar that had a bad effect on him. When he left work, he'd stop off there before coming home. He almost seemed drugged, although he always denied there was anything wrong. On weekends he spent nearly all day there. He'd only come home for dinner, always after three o'clock. How often on arrival and without provocation he would begin to abuse our children and me.

There reached me a prayer card of Msgr. Escriva, and I soon entrusted to him this family problem. And what a surprise: shortly afterwards my husband stopped frequenting the bar and began to treat us better. Now he is an ideal spouse.

C.E.B., Brazil

My sister and her husband had an argument. While they had fought before, this one was so serious that my sister took their two children and moved in with our parents. A month went by without any contact between them, and my sister began to plan on a definitive separation. As soon as I knew of it, I began to pray devoutly to the Servant of God, Josemaria Escriva, using the prayer card to pray for them.

About a week later things began to mend and, finally, my sister decided to be reconciled with her husband and to return home. Now everything is going well again.

R.R.B., Philippines

Some years ago my sister became involved with a very radical religious sect in Texas. As soon as I learned about this I began seeking the intercession of Msgr. Escriva. Shortly thereafter, while visiting with her at my parents' home, I could see clearly that she was about to leave that strange sect and return to normal life. Now everything is fine and she has returned to her regular university studies.

T.W., Cambridge, Massachusetts

The originals of these letters with the writers' names and addresses are kept in the files of the Postulation of the Cause in Rome.

The Way

"Msgr. Escriva has written more than a masterpiece; he has written straight from the heart, and straight to the heart go the short paragraphs that make up *The Way*. . . ." It displays "the warm brotherly understanding of the author, 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 appeared in February, 1934, under the title of *Consideraciones Espirituales*. To date there have been 216 printings in 37 languages, with a total of 3,409,000 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 76 printings in 18 languages have appeared, with a total of 475,000 copies.

Conversations with Msgr. Escriva

Msgr. Escriva answers questions raised by a number of magazines and newspapers dealing with topics of greatest interest to their respective readers. First published in 1968, it has since seen 40 printings in seven languages for a total of 284,000 copies.

Christ Is Passing By

The book is composed of some of the many homilies preached by Msgr. Escriva 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 1973. It has since gone through 51 printings in eight languages, with a total pressrun of 343,000. The preface is written by Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo, Opus Dei's current prelate.

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 preceding one, was issued in 1977. Currently 32 printings have been made in seven languages for a total of 246,000. Opus Dei's current prelate also writes the preface.

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. In Spanish. First published in 1944, it was reissued in 1974.

The Way of the Cross

A posthumous work by Msgr. Escriva, fruit of his contemplating the scenes of Our Lord's passion. It is intended to aid prayer and to arouse sorrow for sins and thanksgiving to Jesus Christ, who, in his mercy, ransomed mankind by his blood. Since its appearance in 1981, this devotional work has gone through 27 printings in eight languages for a total of 217,000 copies.

Furrow

A new posthumous work. "Like *The Way*, *Furrow* is born of Msgr. Escriva's interior life and experience of souls. It is written with the intention of fostering and facilitating personal prayer. Its character and style are not those of a treatise in systematic theology, although its rich and profound spiritually encaptures a soaring theology" (from Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo's foreword). It first appeared in fall, 1986. Over 140,000 copies have been made in 12 printings in five languages.

The Forge

Msgr. Escriva's most recent posthumous work. "*The Forge* is a book of fire. Reading it and meditating on it can bring many souls to the forge of divine love and enkindle within them a zeal for holiness and apostolate. That was the desire of Msgr. Escriva . . ." (from Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo's foreword).

(Available at Scepter Publishers, 481 Main Street, New Rochelle, NY 10801)

PRAYER

for private devotion

O, God, You granted your servant and priest Josemaria 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 Josemaria; 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 judgement 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. Escriva. 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. Escriva's love for souls. Tax deductible contributions should be sent to the *Bulletin on the Life of Msgr. Escriva*, 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.