

endowment of the foundation. He is anxious to conclude the business and depart; she is anxious to prolong the meeting as long as possible. He fears a renewal of the emotional relationship while she looks forward to and welcomes such a renewal.

Writing a full-length play for two characters is a very difficult exercise. I say this with absolute conviction, since it is an exercise on which I have been recently engaged myself. It is hard to avoid monotony when one cannot even introduce a butler to serve the drinks and add a fresh face to the *dramatis personae*. It is hard to ward off that sinking feeling that tends to grip the audience when they suddenly realize that they are going to spend the next two hours looking at and listening to the same two people. It would be idle to suggest that the author solves this problem with complete success and that there is never a moment when the attention flags or the eye strays. But his play has many moments of feeling and drama and it paints a convincing picture of the characters and of the period. The writing is sensitive and eloquent and it makes its points with dignity and restraint and a complete absence of sensationalism.

The play had its first professional production two years ago in the author's home town of Tullamore. I know something of the struggles that lay behind that first production and of the further struggles that lay behind its present appearance at the Gate. The path of the aspiring dramatist in this country is not a smooth one. We should be grateful that we have writers of Hugh Carr's talent and perseverance and give them the support and encouragement they deserve.

Opus Dei: 50 Years of Service to the Church

+Gaetano Alibrandi

This year the international Catholic association Opus Dei celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation. It was born in the mind and heart — full of noble and far-seeing ambitions — of a young secular priest, Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer; and over those fifty years the growth and spread of the association has become enormous. It is now world-wide, and is spreading rays of sanctity throughout the body of the Church.

I had the good fortune of meeting Msgr Escrivá on one occasion in 1966. I clearly remember his winning personality. His simplicity, his

The Most Reverend Gaetano Alibrandi is Apostolic Nuncio to Ireland. Address: 183 Navan Road, Dublin 7.

keen mind and his strength of character impressed me deeply. In the years that followed I came to know him better through his work with which I have had contact for many years in different countries, on both sides of the Atlantic. I am happy to say that my first contact with the apostolates of Opus Dei was here in Ireland, in Nullamore University Residence in Dublin, during the years 1954-56. However, it was in Mexico, some years later, that I was in a position to appreciate, more directly, the spirit which inspires the members of Opus Dei. Holiness of life, effective apostolate at the different social levels of modern society, a touching and filial love for His Holiness the Pope, loyal adherence to the teaching of the magisterium of the Church, humble cooperation with the hierarchy: these are some of the characteristics of the association inspired by the great heart of Msgr Escrivá.

Having given the matter some consideration, I do not think I exaggerate when I suggest that Msgr Escrivá is for the twentieth century what Francis of Assisi and Dominic Guzman were for the twelfth century, and Ignatius of Loyola was for the sixteenth. In the past, whenever the Church seemed about to be shipwrecked in the stormy seas of heresy, whenever hell itself seemed to have broken loose, contaminating the purity of Christ's teaching, on these occasions the Holy Spirit has always raised up men who became the bulwark and the defence of the Church and the papacy.

In our era, when political and intellectual movements of different types are subtly and treacherously attempting to undermine the solid structure of the whole Church, the united and consoling strength of the members of Opus Dei gives reason for hope and encouragement. Following the guidelines given them by their founder, they dispel the darkness of error with the light of Christ, they drown out class hatred and social conflict with the love of Christ, and they undo deceit and falsehood with the truth of Christ.

The epitaph on the tomb of Msgr Josemaría Escrivá in the crypt of the oratory of Our Lady of Peace, Viale Bruno Buozzi, in Rome, reads simply: 'The Father'. Yet, in a certain sense, these two words sum up his entire life as a priest and as a shepherd of souls, and they also inspire his many thousands of sons and daughters throughout the world to follow his saintly example.

Our Last Awakening: Bring us, O Lord, at our last awakening into the house and gate of heaven, to enter into that gate and dwell in that house, where there shall be no darkness nor dazzling, but one equal light; no voice nor silence but one equal music; no fears nor hopes but one equal possession; no ends nor beginnings, but one equal eternity; in the habitation of thy glory and dominion, world without end. Amen.

—JOHN DONNE (1572-1631) quoted in *Millhilliana*, no. 1, 1977.