

DORA DEL HOYO

A PROFESSIONAL HOME-MAKER

BIOGRAPHY

On June 18, 2012, the process of canonization of Dora del Hoyo was opened in Rome – eight years after her death. Dora was born in Boca de Huerfano, Spain, on January 11, 1914. She was the fifth of six children born to their parents, who were farm-workers. In this deeply Christian family, she learned to love work that is well done, and acquired a decided taste for all aspects of work in the home.

At 26 she moved to Madrid to work as a home help. She soon gained an outstanding reputation for her intelligence, skills, capacity for work, and keenness to learn. In 1945 she started work in the university residence hall *La Moncloa*, where she learned the spirit of Opus Dei and got to know St Josemaria Escriva, the founder of Opus Dei. This was a turning-point in her life: she discovered a new dimension to her Christian calling, realizing that she could offer God her excellently-done work as a way of becoming holy and helping others to do the same. On March 14, 1946, she asked for admission to Opus Dei so that, through her work, she could spread the universal call to holiness in all walks of life.

WE ARE ALL CALLED TO BE SAINTS



It is precisely in living with love and offering one's own Christian witness in everyday affairs that we are called to become saints.

In your home, on the street, at work, at church, in that moment and in your state of life, the path to sainthood has been opened. Don't be discouraged to pursue this path. It is God alone who gives us the grace. The Lord asks only this: to be in communion with Him and at the service of our brothers and sisters.

*Pope Francis, general audience,
November 2014*



**There is nothing better than having
used my hands to serve others.**

Dora del Hoyo

St Josemaria found Dora invaluable in creating the family atmosphere that he wanted those residence halls for students to have. Drawing on her experience she was able to improve the laundry-work, housework and cooking, and the atmosphere of the residence hall gained notably in calm and cheerfulness as a result.

Soon she moved to Rome, which was her home until her death on January 10, 2004. With her high standards of work and faithfulness she was a great support for the founder of Opus Dei. She showed plenty of initiative in her work, together with self-denial, and many young people learned from her example how to sanctify their daily work – plus the joy that comes of knowing that they have God for their Father.

Her mortal remains rest in the crypt of Our Lady of Peace, Opus Dei's prelate church, in Rome. The fact that this is also where the remains of the St Josemaria and his first successor, Blessed Alvaro del Portillo, are venerated, reflects Dora's importance in the service entrusted by the Church to Opus Dei.

Since her death very many people have spoken and written spontaneously about how Dora influenced their lives. Their recollections of her demonstrate her intense relationship with God, her fortitude, and her love for others. There are also written records of many favors attributed to her intercession.



Rome, 1981.



Rome, 1982.

REMEMBERING DORA

■ Dora created a family atmosphere



Dora was someone who really loved the work she did: home-making, which she did to a very high professional standard, serving others without thinking of herself. I think that was one of the greatest things about her.

I worked with her a lot, especially in the servery. We were looking after a dining-room for 180 people, so there was a large quantity of plates. I was often in the dishwashing zone and in the morning she would dry and sort the cutlery. The way she worked was incredible, she was always exactly where she ought to be, doing her job.

She was very demanding, because she was very good at her work. She knew everything there was to know about the service industry, she was very experienced as she had worked in it since she was very young. She taught me how to put love and commitment into the work we were doing. In a small outfit it may be easier. But in a residence where many people live it is quite a challenge to create a home.

She always put a lot of effort and affection into it, thinking of the people on the receiving end of her work. She did it for them, but she also worked for something – Someone – higher.

Dora had a lot of faith in the teachings of St Josemaria on the importance of making a home, these days when so many people are deprived

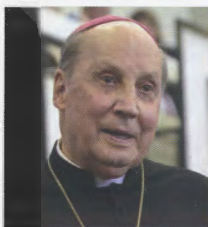
WHY HOLD A PROCESS OF CANONIZATION?

The Church wishes to offer models and intercessors to stimulate and accompany us here on earth on our path to holiness, to which, as we know, we are all called, each in our own particular circumstances.

Saints are people who have tried to respond fully to God's grace, to love him and serve him with their whole lives, battling to overcome their defects, and now they are in the joy of heaven, they don't need the incense we burn in their honor: we are the ones who benefit from their canonization.

*Mons. Jose Luis Gutierrez,
Postulator for Dora's cause of canonization.*

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A RELEVANT ROLE IN THE CHURCH AND IN SOCIETY

God our Lord called Dora del Hoyo to devote herself to work that was very like the work done by the Blessed Virgin Mary at her home in Nazareth. I am sure that Dora's Christian example, with her total faithfulness to Christian life, will help to keep the ideal of the spirit of service alive, and to spread throughout society the appreciation of the importance of the family as a genuine domestic church, which she brought to life with her daily, generous, cheerful work, following St Josemaria's teachings.

Bishop Javier Echevarria, Prelate of Opus Dei, June 18, 2012



Rome, 1967.



With one of her sisters in Madrid, 1945.

of one. She believed that it is possible to be happy here on earth, by teaching more and more people about caring for the home, which is crucial because that is where people develop their personalities.

Paula Assen, Australia

Dora's cheerfulness and resilience



Dora came to my dental surgery for treatment when she was 87. I was struck by her cheerfulness and resilience.

She was an elegant-looking lady, serene and

smiling, in spite of a large abscess which had been causing her torment for several days. She was a high-risk patient as she had had a recent heart attack.

I operated on her to extract the tooth. After the operation she was still smiling, even though I had removed her last teeth, she still had stitches in her gum, and was walking with a crutch, having fallen some days previously and been fitted with a splint.

By her smile – with or without teeth! – she spread a sense of serenity to those around her by chance or for work reasons.

Gianluigi Fiorillo, Italy

All jobs have the same status



I first met Dora in Rome in 1957, and we worked together for over thirty years. Dora had learned about the importance of work from

St Josemaria, and she did every kind of job with the same intensity and zest; she gave as much importance to cooking a good meal, or making a sweet, as to ironing a shirt or washing the dishes. She was very mindful of something she had heard from St Josemaria: "Every job has the same status; the status depends on how much love of God is put into it."

In the middle of her intense work, Dora paid great attention to the little details – not obsessively, but out of love for God. She was a very patient teacher, and knew exactly what she could demand of different people. When you were working with Dora you felt really at home, and at the same time you prayed, because she had learned from St Josemaria to turn her work into prayer by taking care of all the details.

Seeing the zest Dora put into everything she did, and her cheerfulness, strengthened my desire to be faithful to the path I have chosen – the same as Dora's – and I'm really happy in it.

Conchita del Moral, Spain

FAVOR



Dora and my family

One day I found a prayer card (similar to St. Josemaria's prayer card that I am familiar with), but with a different picture – a picture of a lady named “Dora”. It was the first time I saw this card, so I read it, and found myself actually praying it as certain phrases struck me... “work at the same tasks as the Blessed Virgin Mary in Nazareth” and “spread all around me the family warmth... cheerful, selfless work...”. These phrases touched me and inspired me to do the same in my own very home as a wife, when we were both longing to have a child. I continued reading the prayer card and for the part that says “here make your request” I asked Dora to help us have a child (of course only if that's what God willed for us too).

Then later I asked a person of Opus Dei who this lady “Dora” was and she told me all about her wonderful life. Three months later I found out I was pregnant. From then on we prayed to Dora for the safeguarding of my pregnancy. As the pregnancy progressed, we experienced a couple of minor incidents leading to bed rest each time. My blood pressure went up moderately and I needed hospitalization. Eventually I needed to be induced. My husband and I continued to pray to Dora and on April 23, 2012, our first baby, Alexander Xavier, was born. A healthy, smiley and beautiful baby boy!

My husband, baby and I went to the Prelatic Church in Rome in March 2013 to thank Dora personally for her intercession. It brought a lot of joy to our family to give Alexander an opportunity to kiss the tomb of his intercessor before he turns 1 year old. Thank You Dora!

M. R. (Canada), May 8, 2013

Universidad de Navarra

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PROFESSIONAL VOCATION

Be convinced that our professional vocation is an essential and inseparable part of our condition as Christians. Our Lord wants you to be holy in the place where you are, in the job you have chosen for whatever reason. To me, every job that is not opposed to the divine law is good and noble, and capable of being raised to the supernatural plane, that is, inserted into the constant flow of Love which defines the life of a child of God.

St Josemaria Escriva, Friends of God, no. 60



PRAYER FOR DORA'S INTERCESSION

O Lord, you called your servant Dora to work at the tasks that the Blessed Virgin Mary carried out in her home at Nazareth. Help me find you in the ordinary events of daily life, and to fill my surroundings with the same family warmth that Dora brought to hers with her cheerful and selfless work, following the teachings of St Josemaria. Glorify your servant Dora, and grant me the favour that I ask (*here make your petition*). 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.

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