



Saint Josemaría Escrivá

Founder of Opus Dei

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A statue blessed by Pope John Paul II on 6 October 2002 at the end of the canonization ceremony of Saint Josemaría has been taken through the whole of Paraguay, travelling from the north to the south of the country in a journey lasting nearly two years.

Many towns and villages turned out in style to receive the statue of the saint when it came their way, including Caacupé, Encarnación, Carapegua, San Lorenzo, Asunción, San Juan Bautista, Ciudad del Este, Villarrica del Espíritu Santo, San Pedro de Ycuamandiyú and Concepción.

The statue, by Juan José Schmeda Hugo Esquive, a sculptor from the country town of Tobatí, is made from cedar-wood in the style of the Guaraní Indians in the Jesuit missions in the late seventeenth century. It is a “dressed statue”, wearing a black cassock, a white surplice and a green stole embroidered in gold thread by nuns of the Convent of Discalced Carmelites in Caacupé. It also has a silver halo made by Bogado, a Paraguayan artist from the same region.

In Ciudad del Este, Msgr Ignacio Gogorza recalled in his homily that “it is by doing our daily work, the occupation our Lord asks of us every day, that we become holy. Through work, prayer and penance.”

On the day that the statue of Saint Josemaría arrived in Encarnación, Mayor Rogelio Benítez said:

“It is a high honour to be able to receive the travelling statue here. We are sure that it will bring abundant blessings to our town too. On his journey through Encarnación the Founder of Opus Dei will leave blessings that will lead to greater understanding, harmony and fraternity among the men and women who live in this town.”