



Saint Josemaria Escriva

Founder of Opus Dei

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Holy See

1982.11.28

JOHN PAUL BISHOP
SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD
FOR A PERMANENT RECORD OF THE MATTER

With very great hope, the Church directs its attention and maternal care to Opus Dei, which -- by divine inspiration -- the Servant of God Josemaria Escriva de Balaguer founded in Madrid on October 2, 1928, so that it may always be an apt and effective instrument of the salvific mission which the Church carries out for the life of the world.

From its beginnings, this Institution has in fact striven, not only to illuminate with new lights the mission of the laity in the Church and in society, but also to put it into practice; it has also endeavored to put into practice the teaching of the universal call to sanctity, and to promote at all levels of society the sanctification of ordinary work, and by means of ordinary work. Furthermore, through the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross, it has helped diocesan priests to live this teaching, in the exercise of their sacred ministry.

Since Opus Dei has grown, with the help of divine grace, to the extent that it has spread and works in a large number of dioceses throughout the world, as an apostolic organism made up of priests and laity, both men and women, which is at the same time organic and undivided -- that is to say, as an institution endowed with a unity of spirit, of aims, of government and of formation -- it has become necessary to give it a juridical configuration which is suited to its specific characteristics. It was the Founder of Opus Dei himself who, in 1962, in a humble and trusting petition, asked the Holy See to grant an appropriate ecclesial configuration to the Institution, bearing in mind its true nature and theological

characteristics, and with a view to a greater apostolic effectiveness.

From the time when the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council introduced into the legislation of the Church, by means of the Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, n. 10--which was made effective by the *Motu proprio Ecclesiae Sanctae*, I, n. 4--, the figure of the personal Prelatures, to carry out specific pastoral activities, it was seen clearly that this juridical figure was perfectly suited to Opus Dei. Therefore, in 1969, Our Predecessor Paul VI, of beloved memory, graciously accepting the petition of the Servant of God Josemaria Escriva de Balaguer, authorized him to convoke a special General Congress to begin, under his guidance, the study necessary for a transformation of Opus Dei, in keeping with its nature and with the norms of the Second Vatican Council.

We ourselves expressly ordered that this study should continue, and in 1979, We requested the Sacred Congregation for Bishops, which was the competent Congregation, by virtue of the matter involved, to examine the formal petition presented by Opus Dei, following a careful study of all the relevant facts and legal data.

In carrying out the task entrusted to it, the Sacred Congregation carefully examined the matter, taking into account the historical, and also the juridical and pastoral aspects. Thus, having completely eliminated all doubts about the basis, and the possibility, and the specific manner of granting the petition, it became abundantly clear that the desired transformation of Opus Dei into a personal Prelature was opportune and useful.

Therefore, We, with the plenitude of Our apostolic power, having accepted the opinion which Our Venerable Brother the Most Eminent and Most Reverend Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Bishops had expressed to Us, and making good, in so far as it is necessary, the consent of those who have, or think they have some competence in this matter, command and desire the following to be put into practice.

I

Opus Dei is erected as a personal Prelature, international in ambit, with the name of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei, or, in abbreviated form, Opus Dei. The Sacerdotal Society of the Holy Cross is erected as a clerical Association intrinsically united to the Prelature.

II

The Prelature is governed by the norms of general law, by those of this Constitution, and by its own Statutes, which receive the name "Code of particular law of Opus Dei".

III

The jurisdiction of the personal Prelature extends to the clergy incardinated in it, and also only in what refers to the fulfillment of the specific obligations undertaken through the juridical bond, by means of a contract with the Prelature to the laity who dedicate themselves to the apostolic activities of the Prelature: both clergy and laity are under the authority of the Prelate in carrying out the pastoral task of the Prelature, as established in the preceding article.

IV

The Ordinary of the Prelature Opus Dei is its Prelate, whose election, which has to be carried out as established in general and particular law, has to be confirmed by the Roman Pontiff.

V

The Prelature is under the Sacred Congregation for Bishops, and will also deal directly with the other Congregations or Departments of the Roman Curia, according to the nature of the matter involved.

VI

Through the Sacred Congregation for Bishops, the Prelate will present to the Roman Pontiff, every five years, a report on the state of the Prelature, and on the development of its apostolic work.

VII

The central Government of the Prelature has its offices in Rome. The oratory of Our Lady of Peace, which is in the central offices of the Prelature, is erected as a prelatric church.

The Most Reverend Monsignor Alvaro del Portillo, canonically elected President General of Opus Dei on September 15, 1975, is confirmed and is appointed Prelate of the personal Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei, which has been

erected.

Finally, We designate the Venerable Brother Romolo Carboni, Titular Archbishop of Sidone and Apostolic Nuncio in Italy, for the opportune execution of all the above, and confer on him the necessary and opportune faculties, including that of subdelegating--in the matter in question -- in any ecclesiastical dignitary, with the obligation of sending, as soon as possible, to the Sacred Congregation for Bishops, an authentic copy of the act which testifies to the fact that the mandate has been carried out.

All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given in Rome at Saint Peter's, on the 28th of November, 1982, the fifth of Our Pontificate.

AUGUSTINUS Card. CASAROLI

Secretary of State

+ SEBASTIANUS Card. BAGGIO

Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Bishops

Iosephus Del Ton, Protonotary Apostolic

Marcellus Rossetti, Protonotary Apostolic

Loco + Plumbi