



Saint Josemaria Escriva

Founder of Opus Dei

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His whole day was a Mass

Msgr. Jose Maria Garcia Lahiguera

Memories of the Servant of God Msgr. Garcia Lahiguera, Bishop of Valencia. He was a close friend of Saint Josemaría from 1932 onwards, and for some years was his confessor.

His whole day was a Mass, an offering that he joined to the one he celebrated each morning at the altar, presenting to our Lord continuously, day and night, every single part, large or small, of every moment. This he would do naturally, without drawing attention to himself, without oddities, but with a permanent smile of total surrender to God's Will that was heroic. His extraordinary love for the sacred liturgy constitutes a demonstration of the way he centred everything on the Holy Mass.

The care that I have seen him take – and make his children take – with all the details of worship, was for me a living expression of a robust faith, full of tenderness towards the Sacred Eucharist, towards Christ truly present under the sacramental species. His faithfulness to the liturgical norms was undoubtedly due to his habitual attitude of devoted obedience to the Church's authority. But in addition – and I would dare to say even before that – it came from his piety, from the love of God, which is not true love and piety unless it is manifested through the way and manner in which men express their love – kisses, glances, precious gifts.

I remember that Don Josemaría had to make a great effort to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice without distractions under the new rubrics, after the first change in the *Ordo Missae*. He was already over seventy years old and he had, therefore, been saying the Mass for forty-seven years under the old rubrics. He had always celebrated the Mass so intensely that even the most apparently insignificant rubric had an enormous value for him, because he had considered all of them in his meditation and he found in all of them subject for profound prayer.

***Blessed Josemaría– A Man of God, 1*, Jose María García Lahiguera and Jose María Bueno, Scepter, 1992, pp. 125 – 126**