



Saint Josemaría Escrivá

Founder of Opus Dei

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Guatemala and Panama join the list of countries with special issues of postage stamps commemorating the canonization and centenary of the birth of Josemaría Escrivá.

On August 29 2003, 600,000 postage stamps were issued by the Guatemala Postal Service commemorating the centenary of the birth of Saint Josemaría Escrivá and his canonization.

The official ceremony held at the Postal Service central offices in Guatemala City to mark the issue was attended by Flora Escobar de Ramos, Minister for Communications; His Eminence Rodolfo Quezada, Metropolitan Archbishop; and Mgr Francis Wurmser, Regional Vicar of Opus Dei in Guatemala, among others.

Some of the stamps featuring Saint Josemaría show him against unmistakable Guatemala backgrounds – Lake Atitlan, and a centuries-old tower in the countryside. Others show him with a fisherman at work, or with a sugar-cane harvester.

The Minister for Communications officially presented the stamps, with a speech underlining the different social projects which have set up in Guatemala as a result of Saint Josemaría's teachings. She outlined the benefits received from these projects by very many Guatemalans and said how pleased she was, accordingly, to make the official presentation of this new commemorative issue.

Mgr Francis Wurmser highlighted Saint Josemaría's longstanding love for Guatemala, accentuated from 1953 onwards when, in response to a request from the Archbishop of Guatemala Mgr Mariano Rosell, the first faithful of Opus Dei came to Guatemala to start their apostolate. He recalled how Saint Josemaría followed the development of Opus Dei's apostolate there very closely, and himself suggested certain apostolic projects such as the Ciudad Vieja University Center,

Kinal Technical College, and Junkabal and Zunil centers for women's education, which are now fully functional.

In Panama

Panama Postal Services issued a set of 150,000 postage stamps commemorating the canonization of Saint Josemaría and the centenary of his birth. . The stamps were presented at an official ceremony at the Panama Ministry of Government and Justice on August 13, 2003. Arnulfo Escalona, Minister of Government and Justice, led the ceremony, which was also attended by Mgr Luis Baura, Opus Dei Regional Vicar in Panama. The special issue was sponsored by the Panama Association for Cultural Cooperation.