



Saint Josemaria Escriva

Founder of Opus Dei

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Opus Dei

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What does “Opus Dei” mean?

Opus Dei means “the Work of God”. Its complete name is the Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei. It is also known as the Opus Dei prelate, or simply, Opus Dei.

What is Opus Dei?

Opus Dei is a personal prelate of the Catholic Church. Its aim is to contribute to the Church’s evangelizing mission by helping all kinds of Christian faithful to live fully in accordance with their faith in life’s ordinary circumstances, and especially to sanctify their daily work.

St Josemaria explained, “God raised up Opus Dei in 1928 to help remind Christians that, as we read in the book of Genesis, God created man in order to work. We have come to point to the example of Jesus, who spent thirty years in Nazareth, working at his job. In Jesus’ hands, work, an ordinary job like that done by millions of people throughout the world, becomes a divine task, a redeeming job, a path of salvation.”

What does sanctifying one’s work mean?

The spirit of Opus Dei reflects the marvellous reality that any honest and worthwhile work can be turned into a divine occupation. Sanctifying one’s work means working in the spirit of Jesus Christ – doing one’s work well and finishing it off, to give glory to God and serve others, and so help sanctify the world, by bringing the spirit of the Gospel into all human activities.

How did Opus Dei start?

On September 30, 1928, Fr Josemaria Escriva began a retreat in Madrid (Spain),

which was going to continue until October 7. The second day of that retreat, on October 2, after Mass, Fr Josemaria returned to his room and began to put his notes in order: resolutions and inspirations taken down during his prayer, and meditated upon many times already. There, suddenly he “saw” Opus Dei. “I received the vision about the whole of the Work while I was reading those notes. Deeply moved, I kneeled down – I was alone in my room – and gave thanks to the Lord, and I remember with emotion the sound of the bells from Our Lady of the Angels church.”

What does the Opus Dei prelatore do?

The prelatore offers to its faithful and to anyone else who wants it, spiritual formation and pastoral help to know and love God in their ordinary surroundings, in the Church and in the world, and to bear witness to their faith and contribute to solving society’s problems in a Christian way.