



Saint Josemaria Escriva

Founder of Opus Dei

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To foster the sanctification of the people of God, the Church commends to the veneration of Christ's faithful the Blessed Mary ever-Virgin, and the other Saints.(1)

As Pope John Paul II said, "The lives of the saints, as a reflection of the goodness of God — the One who 'alone is good' — constitute not only a genuine profession of faith and an incentive for sharing it with others, but also a glorification of God and his infinite holiness."(2) They "display to the faithful fitting examples for their imitation".(3) What is more, the Saints, "already in possession of eternal salvation, sing God's perfect praise in heaven and [offer prayers for us](#)."(4)

God chose St Josemaria specifically to announce the universal call to holiness and apostolate in the Church. May all pictures and statues of him, as Benedict XVI said when he blessed the [statue of the Founder of Opus Dei in St Peter's Basilica](#) statue of the Founder of Opus Dei in St Peter's Basilica, encourage all who look at them "to carry out their daily work in the spirit of Christ and to further the work of redemption with an ardent love."(5)

Paintings and sculptures are relevant not only to art history but to the history of civilization in general, and of human thought. They reflect the progress of thought, the shades of feeling of each stage in history; and thus, just as a word can have several different meanings at the same time or successively, a picture or statue may suggest very different ideas in different eras.

The same thing is true of Christian art: it is a projection of a meditative, lived faith. Contemplating it helps people to understand the beauty of the faith. As Pope John Paul II said, God lets himself be glimpsed in our spirit through the longing for beauty and the delight we take in it.(6)

(1) Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, 1186.

- (2) John Paul II, Encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, no. 107.
- (3) Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 111.
- (4) *Ibid.*, no. 104
- (5) *Saint Josemaria in the Basilica of Saint Peter*, Florence: Pacini, 2008, p. 1
- (6) Cf. John Paul II, *Letter to Artists*, 1999