



Saint Josemaria Escriva

Founder of Opus Dei

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Petition to the Pope to canonize the founder of Opus Dei

Cardinal José Saraiva Martins

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Peroratio (Concluding Speech)

Holy Father, our Holy Mother Church asks your Holiness to inscribe Blessed Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer on the canon of Saints that he may be invoked as a Saint by all the Christian faithful.

Blessed Josemaría Escrivá was born in Barbastro, Spain, on January 9 1902, in a deeply Christian family. The family was affected by a number of events which enabled him to mature through the experience of suffering. At about 16 years of age he felt the first inklings of a call from the Lord to some mission whose exact nature he did not yet know.

In order to put himself entirely at the disposal of God's Will, he decided to become a priest. In 1918 he started his ecclesiastical studies at the Logroño Seminary and in 1920 he moved to Zaragoza, where he was ordained to the priesthood on March 28 1925.

In 1927 he moved to Madrid, where he dedicated himself to a wide-ranging apostolate, especially with children, the poor and the sick in the slums of the city. He was truly "a man thirsty for God and hence a great apostle" (John Paul II, address on 17 March 2001).

On October 2 1928 he founded Opus Dei, opening up a new path in the Church whose aim was to spread among people of all social spheres the search for holiness and apostolic zeal through the sanctification of ordinary work and all the other circumstances of everyday life.

Your Holiness described the spirit which inspired this holy priest as follows: "Living

out the Gospel in the world, living immersed in the world, but in order to transform and redeem it, all with the same love for Christ! These are high ideals which from their inception anticipated the theology of the laity which came to characterize the Church of the Council and the post-Conciliar period (...) Living in union with God in the world, in any situation, trying to improve with the help of grace and making Jesus Christ known through the witness of one's own life" (Homily, August 19, 1979).

On February 14 1943 the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross came into being. As well as enabling faithful proceeding from the Prelature of Opus Dei to be incardinated into it as ordained priests, this has also made it possible for priests incardinated into dioceses to share the same spirituality, while continuing to depend exclusively on the Bishops of their respective dioceses. The apostolate carried out by Blessed Josemaría for the benefit of priests makes him a shining example of zeal for the holiness and fraternity of the clergy.

In 1946 he moved to Rome, where he was to live for the rest of his life. Here, impelled by his great apostolic zeal, he did his utmost to bring to fulfillment the mission he had received from the Lord and to spread it throughout all five continents in the service of the local Churches. In this way he set afoot a real mobilization of both men and women, in the service of projects of evangelization and human development, characterized by a lively social conscience.

The message he spread with his preaching, constant pastoral action and spiritual writings has been summed up by your Holiness as follows: "Blessed Josemaría invited men and women from the most diverse walks of life to sanctify themselves and cooperate in the sanctification of others, by sanctifying ordinary life. (...) He reminded today's world of [the universal call to holiness](#) and the Christian value that can be acquired by daily work" (Address, October 14 1993). The permanent applicableness of this message was underlined by the pontifical decree on the heroic nature of his virtues.

From Rome Blessed Josemaría undertook numerous journeys through Europe and Central and South America, in an untiring labor of spreading the teachings of Christ.

On June 26 1975 a sudden heart attack cut short his life on earth. Since his death his reputation for holiness has only increased. Countless graces and spiritual favors are attributed to his intercession. The Founder of Opus Dei was beatified by your Holiness on May 17, 1992.

Holy Father: his canonization will stimulate Christian faithful to become more joyfully and readily aware of the effort to which the Lord calls all his children, and which Blessed Josemaría expressed in these terms: “Get to know Jesus Christ. Make him known to others. Take him everywhere.”

October 6, 2002

José Cardinal Saraiva Martins

Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints

At the end of the rite of canonization the Cardinal Prefect thanked the Holy Father in these words:

“Holy Father, in the name of the Holy Church I thank your Holiness for the proclamation you have made, and I humbly ask you to order the publication of the Apostolic Letter of Canonization.”

The Holy Father answered:

“We so order it.”