



Saint Josemaria Escriva

Founder of Opus Dei

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Scott Hahn's latest book: his 'spiritual journey' in Opus Dei

2006.12.11

Scott Hahn, the popular Catholic author and speaker, has published a book about Opus Dei and the theological background to the teachings of St Josemaría Escrivá.

Scott Hahn, Professor of Theology at the Franciscan University of Steubenville, USA, and author of *Rome Sweet Home* and many books on Catholic teaching, uses insights from his scriptural studies and his own personal experiences to explain Opus Dei's message of finding God in everyday life. The book, *Ordinary Work, Extraordinary Grace: My Spiritual Journey in Opus Dei*, is published by Doubleday (2006).

In the 155-page book, he provides lively, accessible explanations of key aspects of Opus Dei, such as:

- "divine filiation," the idea that we are sons and daughters of God, which St Josemaría declared to be the foundation of Opus Dei's spirituality;
- St Josemaría's teaching that work is a way of imitating Jesus and sharing in God's creative activity and the redemption of the world;
- Opus Dei as a "personal prelature" and its role in the Catholic Church;
- the role of genuine friendship in spreading Christ's message.

Hahn's first encounter with Opus Dei occurred while his reading of Scripture and the Church Fathers were bringing him closer to the Catholic Church. He was pursuing graduate theological studies at Marquette University, hoping to resolve his questions about the validity of Catholic teaching. At Marquette, Hahn developed friendships with members of Opus Dei, who impressed him with their knowledge of the Bible and the way they embraced their Christian calling in the midst of their ordinary everyday lives.

"Opus Dei became for me a beacon, a lighthouse that promised the end of my long voyage, a first glimpse of a land I had only encountered in books," he writes.

“There were then, as there are now, so many other great movements and institutions in the Church. But for many reasons, Opus Dei was someplace where I could begin to feel at home.”

Hahn describes the key moment when he first “got” Opus Dei. As Hahn grew closer to the Catholic Church, he had long theological arguments with his wife, Kimberly, a devout daughter of Presbyterian minister. Hahn would spend hours preparing explanations for her of Catholic doctrinal points, but his efforts only backfired, placing a strain on their marriage.

Finally, Hahn asked a friend in Opus Dei for counsel. The friend suggested he “turn down the apologetics” and “turn up the romance.” The effect on his marriage was “electric”, Hahn writes, and his wife was eventually received into the Catholic Church. “Turning up the romance’ accomplished what endless debate could never force,” Hahn writes. “And that, to me, is Opus Dei.”