



Saint Josemaria Escriva

Founder of Opus Dei

[Home](#) - [Documentation](#) - [Articles and studies](#) - [St Josemaria's book The Way of the Cross – Foreword](#)

St Josemaria's book The Way of the Cross – Foreword

Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo

“Enter into the wounds of Christ Crucified.” When Monsignor Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer proposed this way, to those who asked him for advice on how to deepen their interior life, he was doing no more than pass on his own experience, pointing out the short cut he had been using throughout his life, and which led him to the highest peaks of spiritual life. His love for Jesus was always something real, tangible and strong; it was tender, filial and very moving.

The Founder of Opus Dei used to say, with such encouraging persuasiveness, that being a Christian comes down to following Christ: that is the secret. And he would add: “We must accompany him so closely that we come to live with Him, like the first Twelve did; so closely, that we become identified with Him.” That is why he advised people to meditate constantly on the passages of the Gospel, and those who had the good fortune to hear him comment on some of the scenes of the life of [Christ](#), have felt themselves reliving those scenes, actually there, and they have learned to take part in those passages as just one more person there.

Among all the Gospel narratives, Msgr. Escrivá used to dwell with special attention and love on those which tell of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus. There, among many other considerations he made, he would contemplate the Sacred Humanity of Christ, who—in his great yearning to come close to each one of us—reveals himself to us with all the weakness of men and with all the magnificence of God. “That is why,” he would say, “I have always advised people to read books on Our Lord’s Passion. Such works, full of true piety, bring to our minds the Son of God, a Man like ourselves and also true God, who in his flesh loves and suffers to redeem the world. Truly, a Christian matures and becomes strong beside the Cross, where he also finds Mary, his Mother.”

The Founder of Opus Dei prepared this [Way of the Cross](#) as a result of his contemplation on the scenes of Calvary. His desire was that it should serve to

help people meditate on the Passion of Jesus, but he never wished to impose it on anyone as a text with which to carry out this very Christian devotion. This was because of his great love for the freedom of people's consciences and the deep respect he felt towards the interior life of each soul, so much so that he never obliged even his own children to adopt specific ways of piety, except, naturally, those which form an essential part of the spirituality that God has wanted for Opus Dei.

This new posthumous work of Msgr. Escrivá, like the previous ones, has been prepared to help people to pray and, with the grace of God, to grow in a spirit of reparation —of love-sorrow— and of gratitude to Our Lord, who has rescued us at the cost of his Blood. For this same reason, there have been included, as points for meditation, some words of Msgr. Escrivá, taken from his preaching and his conversation which reflected his zeal to speak only about God and about nothing but God.

The Stations of the Cross is not a sad devotion. Msgr. Escrivá taught many times that Christian joy has its roots in the shape of a cross. If the Passion of Christ is a way of pain, it is also a path of hope leading to certain victory. As he explained in one of his homilies: "You should realise that God wants you to be glad and that, if you do all you can, you will be happy, very, very happy, although you will never for a moment be without the Cross. But that Cross is no longer a gallows. It is the throne from which Christ reigns. And at his side is his Mother, our Mother too. The Blessed Virgin will obtain for you the strength that you need to walk decisively in the footsteps of her Son."

Rome, 14 September 1980, feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross