



Saint Josemaria Escriva

Founder of Opus Dei

[Home](#) - [Documentation](#) - [Accounts](#) - [St Josemaria's visits to France](#)

St Josemaria's visits to France

St Josemaria often crossed France, going from one country to another by car, with Don Alvaro del Portillo and Fr Javier Echevarria. In total there are at least twenty-two trips we know about. Add to that his brief journey through Saint-Gaudens and Lourdes when he crossed the Pyrenees in November-December 1937. On October 7, 1951 he again prayed at the shrine in Lourdes, when there were as yet no Opus Dei centers in this country.

In October and November 1947 three young men, Alvaro Calleja, Fernando Maycas and Julian Urbistondo, stayed in the Collège d'Espagne in the Cité Internationale Universitaire in Paris. Two of them came back at the beginning of the next academic year, October 1948, and stayed till summer 1949. Fernando Maycas came back to Paris with three Numeraries in July 1953. St Josemaria wrote to encourage them to find an apartment to live in. He spurred them on to open up a broad, deep furrow in *la douce France*.

On November 20, 1955, on one of his trips through Europe when he prayed for the apostolate in new countries, St Josemaria visited his sons in their new apartment on the Boulevard Saint-Germain, Paris, on his way from Ars, Lyon and Versailles.

Mass in the first Center of the Work

He came back to Paris on June 28, 1956, and for the first time, celebrated Mass in the first Center of the Work in this city.

In July 1958, St Josemaria celebrated Mass in the first women's Center. On August 12, he met his sons in the Center on the Boulevard Saint-Germain. He made another trip in May 1960, which was when I met him.

In September 1962 he returned to Paris. From there he went on to Grenoble, where he visited the Center that was just being set up. He went there again in November 1964 on his way back from Switzerland.

On January 22, 1958, St Josemaria and Don Alvaro del Portillo visited Marseilles.

Village of Couverelles

In August 1963 Enrique Cavanna took St Josemaria to the village of [Couvrelles](#), not far from Paris, and showed him a château that was going to be a conference center.

In 1966 St Josemaria spent the end of August and the first few days of September in France, in a rented house about 35 km from Paris. On August 30 and September 6 he visited Couvrelles again, during a course of Christian formation with participants from several different countries.

St Josemaria made his last journey to France in 1972, going to Lourdes on April 4 and 5 to pray to our Blessed Lady, and on October 4, praying for his forthcoming two-month catechetical trip through Spain and Portugal.