



Saint Josemaría Escrivá

Founder of Opus Dei

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People can help to improve society through their ordinary work, which, as Saint Josemaría saw it, is not only a necessity in order to support oneself and one's family, nor just a means of production, nor merely a way to self-fulfilment. It is much more than all that. It is a personal meeting-place with God and a way of serving others. This view of work has inspired thousands of men and women to make their work serve the spiritual and material good of their fellow-citizens.

Under this stimulus professional projects have been set up to fill real needs in different countries. They are civil projects of benefit to the public such as universities, training-schools, students' halls of residence, schools, clinics, etc. which help to fill the gaps or supply the needs which exist in a country or a particular area, without any kind of racial, religious or social discrimination. "These undertakings spring up in every corner of the world with marvelous spontaneity. Big-hearted people all over the world tell us: 'We need this', or 'that other thing.' And through everyone's efforts it becomes a reality and bears marvelous fruit. But each country gives rise to different undertakings. Even when they look the same, they aren't, because the character and circumstances of the people are different."

"God calls us through what happens during our day: through the suffering and happiness of the people we live with, through the human interests of our colleagues and the things that make up our family life. He also calls us through the great problems, conflicts and challenges of each period of history, which attract the effort and idealism of a large part of mankind. It is easy to understand the impatience, anxiety and uneasiness of people whose naturally christian soul stimulates them to fight the personal and social injustice which the human heart can create."

Here are a few examples out of the many projects which were either directly suggested by Saint Josemaría or were set up as a result of his example and his teachings.

Chile

Nocedal. Primary and secondary education in one of the poorest communities in Santiago

In La Pintana district, Nocedal Technical School provides basic primary and secondary education. La Pintana is one of the poorest districts in the whole of Chile, with the highest social risk and lowest achievement expectations.

At secondary level, as well as the standard science and arts subjects, Nocedal adds technical courses with personalized theory and practice classes, to train pupils in electronics and telecommunications. Since for most of the pupils this is the only training they will receive, Nocedal organizes appropriate work experience with the support of industrial and service-sector firms.

The professional training of these pupils is of fundamental importance for Nocedal. All the teaching focuses on the human virtues, to give school-leavers the chance of all-round character development, and the ability to form stable relationships and raise and support their own families.

The close relationship maintained between pupils' teachers and their parents means that the whole family shares in Nocedal's educational aims.

www.nocedal.cl

Spain

Xaloc School

Xaloc School, situated in Hospitalet de Llobregat, near Barcelona, opened in 1964 during a period of high immigration with its accompanying educational needs. Xaloc was started by people who believed that the best social assistance that could be given to the immigrants was to provide high-quality education for their children.

The courses on offer are regularly updated to match the needs of the job market and the changing educational system. Xaloc currently offers infant, primary and secondary education, including the International Baccalaureat, plus sixth-form and technical courses. The school has an advisory council on professional training formed by local metalworkers' unions and businesses, to promote and streamline employability.

www.xaloc.org

Brazil

Morro Velho Social Center: Professional Training for Women in Brazil

Morro Velho Social Center was set up in 1969 in Jardim Taboão, a poor village on the outskirts of São Paulo, as a craft and dressmaking school. The first classes were on making rugs with cord and wool. This aroused great interest among the local women, since they could work at home while looking after small children. They were thus able to increase the family income by selling the rugs they made.

In the first ten years of the school's functioning, over 2,500 women benefited from courses at Morro Velho.

Over the years the courses have diversified and currently the school offers professional and technical training to school-leavers, with business administration, telesales, IT, hospitality and secretarial courses.

St Josemaria visited Morro Velho Social Center when he made a trip to Brazil in 1974.

www.morrovelho.org.br

Philippines

Dualtech Training Center

To help solve the problems of the shortage of skilled workers and the growing poverty in the country, a group of businessmen in Manila, under the impetus of the teachings of Saint Josemaría Escrivá, set up the Dualtech Training Center in 1982. Dualtech is a vocational training school for high school graduates, workers, and unemployed youths from low-income families.

www.dualtech.org.ph

Australia

Kenvale College

Kenvale College was the first private-initiative catering college in Australia. From its beginnings in the 1970s it has been motivated by the conviction that raising the service industries to a high level is a way of making society more human and more Christian.

www.kenvale.edu.au

USA

Midtown Sports and Cultural Center

Midtown started in 1965 on the western side of Chicago, in a neighborhood with a growing number of Italian Mexican immigrants.

The people who set up Midtown asked the Prelature of Opus Dei to provide religious instruction at the Center. Midtown courses have a double aim: helping boys to set themselves higher goals and get into college, and training them to be good family members and responsible citizens.

www.midtown-metro.org

Nigeria

Lagos Business School

Lagos Business School (LBS), which opened in 1992, runs courses for businessmen, aiming to provide an ethical basis to business and train its students to render more efficient service to their firms and their country. Every year around

3,000 people attend seminars for directors of NGOs that study how to tackle the challenges of business management in the Nigerian context, using the findings of research conducted at LBS and the experience of the seminar leaders, who are active as consultants in many organizations in Nigeria.

www.lbs.edu.ng

Rome, Italy

Pontifical University of the Holy Cross

The Pontifical University of the Holy Cross originated in Saint Josemaría's desire to set up a University dedicated to researching and teaching the various ecclesiastical disciplines in Rome, in order to serve the whole Church. While waiting for the time to be ripe for this, St Josemaría prepared the project with constant prayer and hard work, ensuring that the future lecturers and professors of the University attained a high academic level in their subjects. His successor at the head of Opus Dei, Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo, obtained the requisite approvals from the Holy See and finally brought the project to fulfilment in 1984. Today the University includes faculties of theology, canon law, philosophy and social communications, and a Higher Institute of Religious Studies.

www.pusc.it