

“ There is something holy,
something divine, hidden in
the most ordinary situations,
and it is up to each one
of you to discover it. Our
ordinary everyday life can be
a path to holiness.”

ST. JOSEMARIA

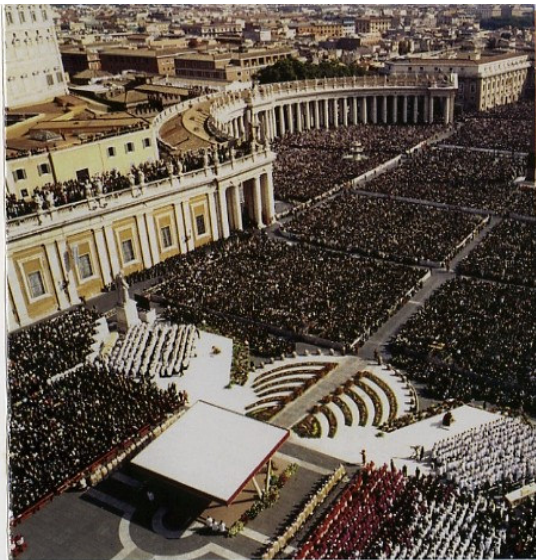
Seeking Holiness in Daily Life

AN INTRODUCTION TO OPUS DEI

Opus Dei *and its Mission*

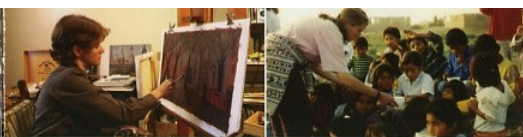
St. Josemaria Escriva was divinely inspired to found Opus Dei in 1928. The name is Latin for “Work of God” and is often shortened to “the Work”. Pope John Paul II established the Work as a personal prelature in 1982. Such institutions exist to carry out a specific pastoral mission in the Catholic Church and share in its hierarchical structure.

Opus Dei’s mission is to spread the message that each and every person - regardless of race, creed, education, marital status, or profession - is called to become a saint in his or her daily life. The Work provides people the spiritual and practical help they need to become close personal friends and followers of Jesus Christ in and through the varied and changing circumstances of modern life.



“ Your institution has as its aim the sanctification of one’s life, while remaining within the world at one’s place of work and profession: to live the Gospel in the world... This is truly a great ideal.”

POPE JOHN PAUL II



“Heaven and earth seem to merge, my children, on the horizon. But where they really meet is in your hearts, when you sanctify your everyday lives.”

ST. JOSEMARIA

Becoming a Saint in Everyday Life

St. Josemaria taught that all work carried out competently and honestly can bring the individual and those around him or her closer to God, sanctifying that very work. Whether you are a lawyer, an opera singer, a vendor, or a full time mother and homemaker, it is the love with which the work is done, rather than its public profile, that determines its true value.

Opus Dei offers support and guidance to all people, regardless of their faith, who are interested in finding God in their daily lives, especially through their everyday work, family life and social obligations. Everyone is welcome to attend Opus Dei's spiritual activities, and anyone who wants to help out or pursue spiritual enrichment may become a cooperator.

Joining Opus Dei

A Catholic joins Opus Dei when both the individual in question and the prelatore believe that he or she has a specific, personal divine vocation to seek holiness according to the spirit of the Work. The faithful of Opus Dei make a lifelong commitment to serve God and all people. An individual becomes a member of Opus Dei by a voluntary personal choice.

Although there are practical differences in the way they live their vocation in Opus Dei, supernumeraries (usually married members), associates and numeraries (celibate members) receive one and the same call.

There are over 85,000 men and women who belong to the Work spread out over all five continents of the globe. Members of Opus Dei can be found in every honest profession, manual and intellectual. About 98 per cent are lay men and women, most of whom are married, while two per cent are priests.



Commitments

Opus Dei members receive the help they need to accomplish their mission primarily through a program of spiritual, religious and apostolic formation tailored to their personal circumstances and needs. This includes instruction in philosophy and theology.

The faithful of the prelate also attend weekly and monthly meetings, as well as a yearly retreat and an annual workshop. On a daily basis, they attend Mass, read the Holy Scriptures and another spiritual book, recite the Rosary, and spend time in personal prayer.

Along with God's help and one's personal effort to live the vocation with love and freedom, these practices tend to produce above all an inner change in the faithful of Opus Dei.

Members continue in the same jobs, social settings and family situations as before, while receiving new strength and inspiration to seek and find Christ in all the aspects of their lives.

Transforming the World from Within

The faithful of Opus Dei realize that they need to bear witness to their Christian faith coherently, wherever they are and whatever they are doing. They strive to serve others and change the world for the better through their ordinary work and activities.

Many members and cooperators of the Work also channel their interest in helping others by organizing and working in social projects and institutions that aim to meet specific material, health and educational needs. One such program is *Monkole Medical Centre*, which provides medical treatment and basic health educational services to impoverished women and children in war-torn Congo. Another is the *Midtown Achievement Program*, which has been offering professional training, personal tutoring and support to underprivileged young men in the inner city of Chicago since the 1960s. *Condonay Professional Formation Centre* enables struggling native Peruvian women to improve their own educational and economic situations by learning a wide variety of life and work skills. Over 150 Canadian students have collaborated in this concrete project.

The faithful carry out hundreds of such programs worldwide. Though greatly diverse, these projects share a vision of Christian ideals put to the service of the person.



Information on the web

Many of St. Josemaría's writings can be found at www.escrivaworks.org. *The Way*, the first and most famous of his books, offers brief incisive points for reflection and prayer. More than four million copies in 45 languages have been sold. This site also contains a search tool for quick access to the passages you want to find.

Biographical and other information about St. Josemaría can be obtained at www.stjosemaria.ca.

More in-depth explanations, up-to-date news, reports on its apostolates, addresses and interviews with the Prelate can be found at www.opusdei.ca.

Current and archived editions of *Romana*, the Prelature's official periodical, can be accessed on www.en.romana.org.

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