
FROM THE CHAPLAINCY



Dear Woodrose Parents

The month of October has a very special significance in the history of Opus Dei, a Personal Prelature of the Catholic Church. It was on October 2, 1928 when Opus Dei came into this world, founded by St. Josemaria Escriva de Balaguer. *The divine paths on earth have been opened*, St. Josemaria said on many occasions, referring to sanctification of ordinary professional work as a path to holiness for a great majority of Christians.

Another significant date is October 6 2002. It was the day St. Josemaria was canonized in Rome by St. John Paul II. His canonization was also a validation on the part of the Church that the spirit and praxis of Opus Dei is a viable path to holiness.

We would like to dedicate this newsletter to the frequently asked questions (FAQs) about Opus Dei and its activities.

FAQs about Opus Dei*

What is Opus Dei?

Opus Dei is part of the Catholic Church. The name is Latin for “Work of God”. Opus Dei’s mission is to spread the Christian message that every person is called to holiness and that every honest work can be sanctified.

What does Opus Dei offer?

Opus Dei offers support and guidance to help all those who want (whether or not they are members) to aim at holiness in their ordinary lives, especially through their everyday work.

What is holiness?

Holiness means following Jesus Christ, imitating Him in thoughts, feelings, words and deeds. It means loving God and neighbour, with a love that gives rise to other virtues, such as humility, justice, integrity, and solidarity. Holiness is attained only with God’s assistance and our constant striving. The teaching that everyone is called to holiness was at the heart of the Second Vatican Council, which was enormously influential in shaping the Catholic Church’s understanding of what it means to be a follower of Christ in the modern world.

What does sanctifying one's work mean?

It means working like Jesus Christ – working hard and well, honestly and fairly, in order to love and serve God and other people. People who do that are making their work holy, and helping to sanctify the world from the inside. They are making the Gospel present in all their



The marble statue of St. Josemaria Escriva in St. Peter’s Basilica, Rome.

activities, whether brilliant or humble and hidden. In God's eyes, what matters is the love people put into their work, not its success in terms of money or fame.

What are the other main characteristics of the spirituality of Opus Dei?

They are divine filiation (awareness of being a child of God and acting accordingly), ordinary life (finding God in everyday things), charity and apostolate (like the early Christians, giving

witness to their faith and helping others to know Christ), love for freedom (in anything that is not a matter of faith each person makes their own decisions and takes responsibility for them), prayer and sacrifice (trying to have a constant dialogue with God and being ready to put their interests and those of others before their own) and unity of life (trying to live their faith in every aspect of their life)

What activities does Opus Dei organise?

Opus Dei provides training, support and guidance ("spiritual formation") for its members, to help them carry out their

mission in the world. It also offers this formation to anyone else wanting to engage their faith at a deeper level. It organises classes, conferences, days of recollection, spiritual direction, etc. aimed at making the Gospel and Church teachings better known and lived. These formational activities are offered separately for women and men. They are planned in such a way that people can combine them with a busy work schedule and family life.

What activities does Opus Dei hold for young people?

Opus Dei centres organise formational activities for students and young workers, such as Christian doctrine classes, spiritual guidance, cultural events and service projects. Underpinning all these activities is the conviction that any serious attempt to serve the Church and society, to spread peace and joy in the world, and to build a more human, more just and more Christian world, has to be based on study and ordinary work.



Can married people belong to Opus Dei?

Most of the Prelature's faithful are married people, who aim to follow Jesus Christ in the ordinary circumstances of their lives, in home-making as well as outside the home, as they strive to keep their married love young, generously receiving the children God sends them, bringing them up well, and passing on their faith by means of their love and their own good example.

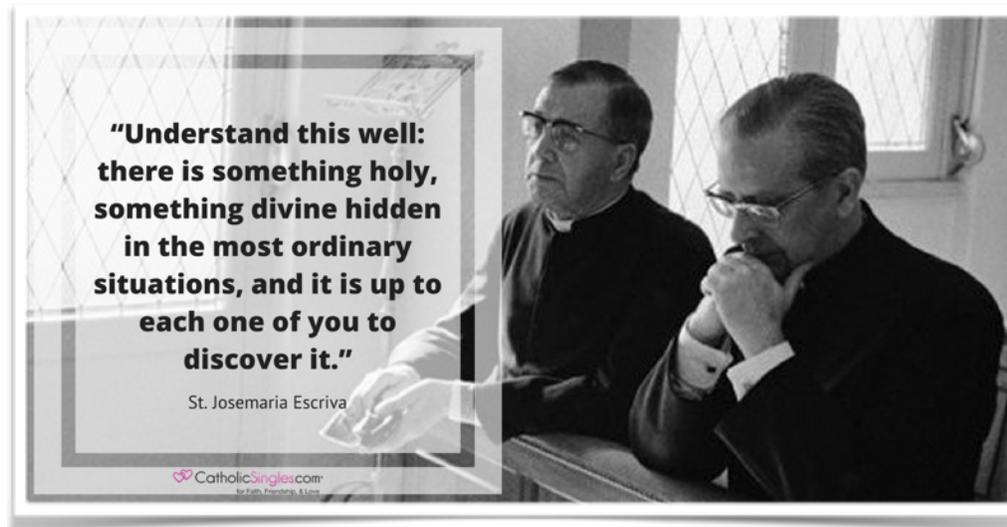
Are some people in Opus Dei celibate?

For the sake of the apostolate, in addition to the priests some lay men and women embrace celibacy as a gift from God. This enables them to dedicate themselves more fully to the formational activities of Opus Dei. They continue to be lay people and to have the same position within the Church as before, and they earn their living through their ordinary work.

Can priests join Opus Dei?

Secular priests who are already incardinated in a diocese cannot belong to the clergy of the Prelature, but they can join the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross, an association that is intrinsically united to the Prelature. Their incorporation into the Priestly Society of the Holy

Cross does not affect their diocesan status. They remain clergy of their diocese, subject to their bishop just as they were before. They commit themselves to strive for holiness in the



exercise of their priesthood, according to the spirit of Opus Dei, while maintaining an especially deep union with their bishop and their fellow priests.

Is Opus Dei conservative?

Opus Dei is conservative if we understand that it keeps in its fullness Jesus Christ's message. But Opus Dei is innovative because it provides a contemporary and modern path to live one's faith in every aspect of ordinary and everyday life.

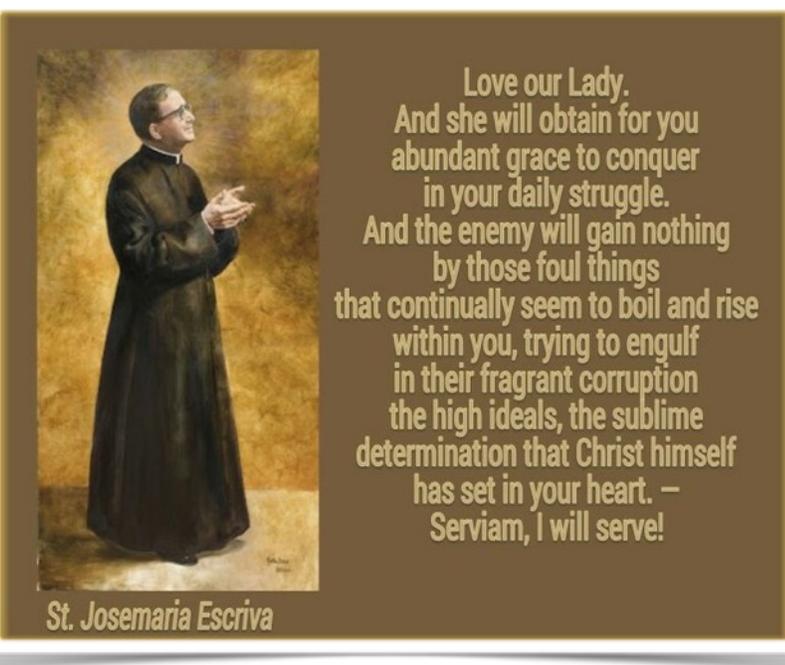
Is Opus Dei elitist or for the elite?

Opus Dei is open to everyone, men and women of all walks of life, either as members (if they are baptized and have a true vocation) or as cooperators. There are all kinds of people in Opus Dei: rich, middle class and poor. There are members who are bus drivers, electricians, hairdressers, professors, tailors, lawyers, doctors and engineers, taxi drivers, etc.

Is Opus Dei a rich institution?

The property used in the apostolates of Opus Dei does not belong to the Prelature. Given their secular and lay character, all the centres and the different initiatives of social or

educational nature are owned and run by autonomous foundations with their own boards of directors. The foundations support, among other aims, the activities given in the centres of Opus Dei. These activities are open to anyone who wants to receive spiritual guidance. Most of the courses and the spiritual activities are free so that anybody can benefit from them. The foundations also help to sustain social assistance projects in developing countries around the world. Members of



Opus Dei are working with many others in promoting and implementing programmes of education and human aid, in the fight against material and spiritual poverty.

*Cf. (<http://opusdei.ph/en-ph/faq/#what-is-opus-dei>)