

BLESSED ALVARO DEL PORTILLO

Newsletter No. 10 - 2022

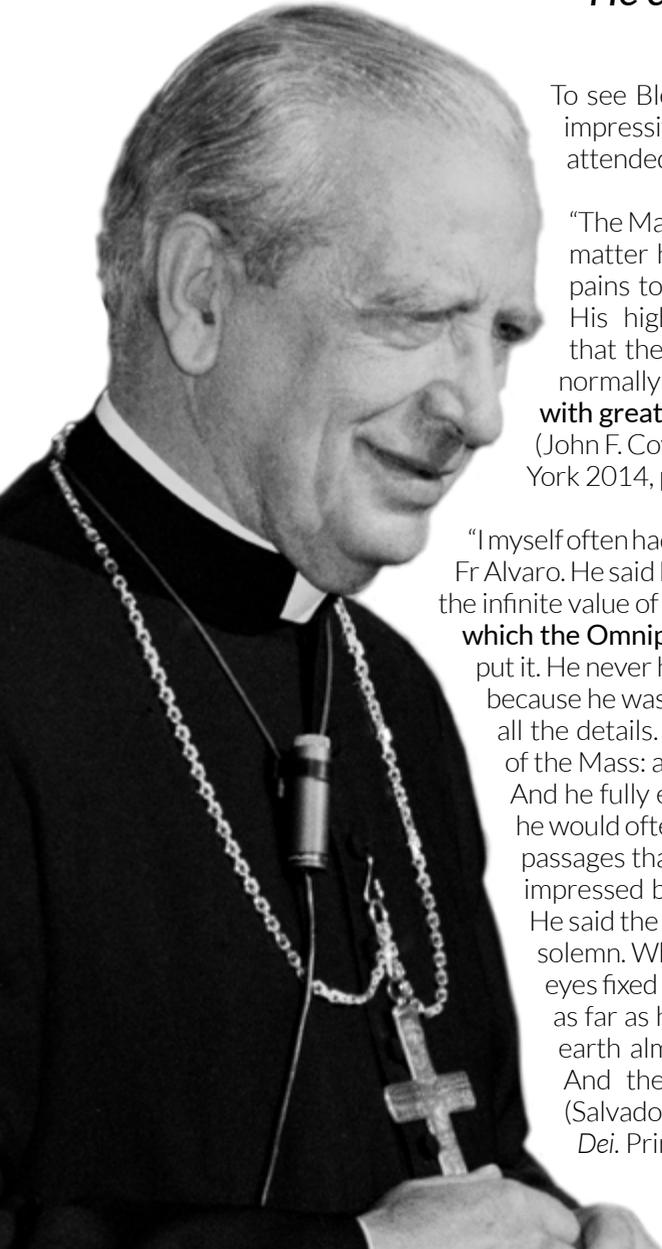
He celebrated the Mass unhurriedly, immersed in God

To see Blessed Alvaro celebrate the Eucharist was very impressive. Here are the testimonies of people who attended his daily Mass many times.

“The Mass was the centre and root of his interior life. No matter how pressing the demands of his time, he took pains to celebrate it each day in a recollected manner. His highest priority when making travel plans was that there be adequate time for Mass. The priest who normally served his Mass described him as celebrating it **with great recollection, slowly, absorbed in the mystery**” (John F. Coverdale, *Saxum. The Life of Alvaro del Portillo*. New York 2014, pg. 147).

“I myself often had the privilege of attending Masses celebrated by Fr Alvaro. He said Mass slowly and attentively, obviously savouring the infinite value of the Eucharistic Sacrifice – **the ineffable miracle which the Omnipotence of God renews each day**, as he used to put it. He never hurried, not even when he had to say Mass early, because he was going on a long trip. He paid loving attention to all the details. He put his whole self into the four dimensions of the Mass: adoration, thanksgiving, atonement and petition. And he fully entered into the liturgical texts. In fact, later on, he would often allude to the readings or prayers of the day, to passages that he found particularly striking. Above all, I was impressed by his intensity at the moment of Consecration. He said the words slowly, in a way that was both natural and solemn. When he elevated the Body and Blood, he kept his eyes fixed upon the Eucharistic Species, and lifted his arms as far as he could. It made me feel as though heaven and earth almost physically came together at that moment. And then he made a slow, prolonged genuflection.” (Salvador Bernal, *Alvaro del Portillo. Bishop Prelate of Opus Dei*. Princeton 1996, pgs. 89-90).

“Let us never get into the habit of celebrating or attending Holy Mass”



THE VALUE OF THE HOLY MASS



Convinced of the importance of Holy Mass, **Blessed Alvaro preached and wrote a great deal about it.** Here are three of his texts on the value of the Eucharist.

“The Mass. Let us never get used to celebrating or participating in the Holy Sacrifice: A soul which has faith recognises in the Sacrifice of the Altar **the most extraordinary wonder to be carried out in this world of ours.** To attend the Mass – for priests, to celebrate it – means in effect to detach oneself from the perishable bonds of time and place, which are proper to our human nature, in order to situate ourselves at the summit of Golgotha, beside the Cross where Jesus is dying for our sins, and actively to share in his redemptive Sacrifice” (Alvaro del Portillo, *Like Salt and like Light*. London 2014, no. 241).

“How would we have behaved, if we had received the grace of accompanying Christ in those bitter hours, beside our Blessed Lady, St John and the holy women, knowing that the liberation of the human race, the redemption of our souls and bodies, was being accomplished? Doubtless we would have sought an intense and immediate union with our Redeemer, in the adoration, thanksgiving, reparation and petition which Jesus Christ was presenting for us to God the Father during those moments. Well then, **that is how our Mass has to be, every day:** meditate well on this. Because in the Sacrifice of the Altar it is Christ our Lord Himself who, having died and risen again and ascended into heaven, continues immolating himself to God, now through means of the priest, and he applies to us the infinite merits which he won for us on the Cross.” (Alvaro del Portillo, *Like Salt and like Light*. London 2014, no. 242).

“Let us pause and ask ourselves: How do I live the Holy Mass, and how does it influence my day? Do I prepare for it intensely during the night period, so as to take part consciously, with devotion and with full collaboration in the ineffable wonder of the Mass, which is renewed each day through the Omnipotence of God? Do I make a real effort also to take care of my outward appearance, and with even greater reason, to be attentive during the Holy Sacrifice? Do I unite myself to the liturgical dialogue – Christ is on the altar! – following the liturgical prayers *digne, attente ac devote*, without rushing, savouring every word? Do I struggle to improve the way I live in Christ’s presence, and through him, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, in the Holy Mass each day?... What is my thanksgiving like, after I have received our Lord?” (Alvaro del Portillo, *Like Salt and like Light*. London 2014, no. 249).

The parish of Saint Ramon Nonato

dedicates its social work to blessed Alvaro del Portillo



As a young student in Madrid, Alvaro devoted much of his free time to helping others.

In the 1930s he went to the parish of Saint Ramón Nonato, located in the populous Puente de Vallecas neighbourhood.

He became a catechist in that church in 1934 and continued to help families in the area through his social work.

At the beginning of 2014, following the publication of Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, the Caritas group in the parish caught the spirit of this document and created the "St Joseph" soup kitchen to distribute meals to disadvantaged families and beggars.

Shortly afterwards, in the context of the beatification of Bishop Alvaro, they gave their institution a new name: Blessed Alvaro Social and Family Initiative.

With this gesture, they wanted to dedicate their ordinary work to the figure of that young student and catechist who ninety years earlier had invited people to pray and to attend daily Mass.

Today this institution is one of the most important social service centres in the area.

Some of its activities, such as the daily distribution of food to over 1,000 people during the 2020 lockdown, were broadcast all over the world, including the BBC News channel.





FAVOURS

She suffered no injury after her fall

I was in charge of my three-month-old granddaughter when she suddenly fell from the car to the ground. I took a relic of Blessed Alvaro and together with the baby's mother we prayed the prayer from his prayer card. My friends at Charwick Study Center in the San Francisco Bay Area, as well as my family, prayed through Blessed Alvaro. The doctor found that the child was unharmed and had no evidence of even a bruise. Thank you, Blessed Alvaro

S.A. (United States)

He helped me sell the crop

We are producers of fruit-bearing trees, vegetables and free-range chickens. The tomato harvest was very abundant and I had nowhere to sell that quantity. For a reason we all know, I couldn't leave the house. Blessed Alvaro is a patron in the business. "Alvarito, Alvarito, sell the tomatoes," I said to him. And the same day I received a message asking for the entire production of tomatoes. A person came to pick them up and was happy with the quality of the tomatoes.

E.S.D. (Chile)



PRAYER

O God, merciful Father, you granted your bishop Blessed Alvaro the grace of being, with our Lady's help, an exemplary pastor in the service of the Church and a most faithful son and successor of Saint Josemaría, the Founder of Opus Dei. Grant that I also may respond faithfully to the demands of the Christian vocation, turning all the circumstances and events of my life into opportunities to love you and to serve the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Deign to grant the canonisation of Blessed Alvaro, and through his intercession grant me the favour I request... *(here make your petition)*. Amen.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father.

Those who have obtained favours through the intercession of Blessed Alvaro del Portillo are asked to notify the Prelature of Opus Dei, Office for the Causes of Saints in East & Southern Africa. Email: info.ke@opusdei.org

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