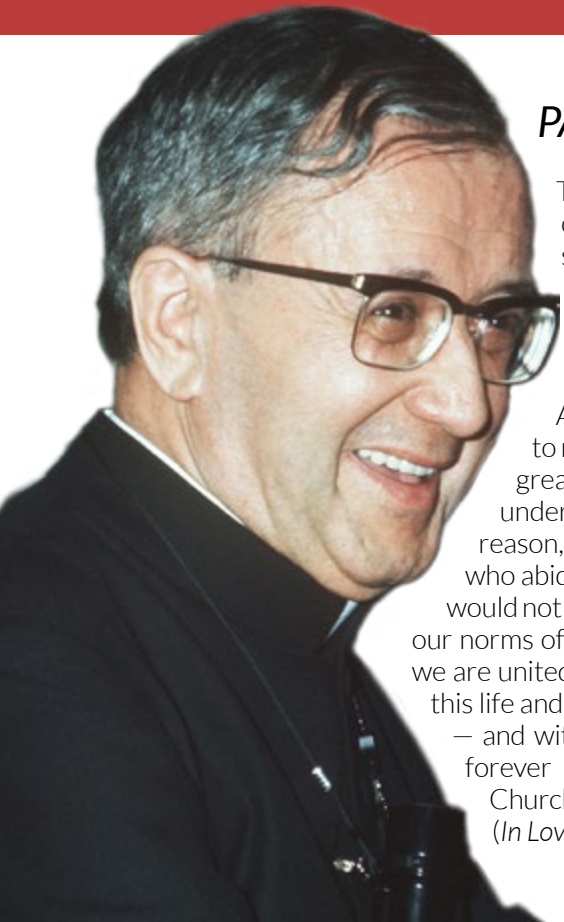


ST JOSEMARÍA, ^{Nº27} Today



PASSIONATELY LOVING THE CHURCH

Throughout his life, St. Josemaría reflected an attitude of complete fidelity and service to the Church, “the same one Christ founded. It cannot be any other” (*In Love with the Church*, 2). Much of his teaching on the Bride of Christ is contained in this book, which brings together three of his homilies: *Loyalty to the Church*, *The Supernatural Aim of the Church*, and *A Priest Forever*.

A paragraph from that book is very significant: “We need to meditate frequently on the fact that the Church is a deep, great mystery, so that we never forget it. We cannot fully understand the Church on this earth. If men, using only their reason, were to analyse it, they would see only a group of people who abide by certain precepts and think in a similar way. But that would not be the Church. In the Church, we Catholics find our faith, our norms of conduct, our prayer, our sense of fraternity. Through it we are united with all our brothers and sisters who have already left this life and are being cleansed in Purgatory – the Church suffering – and with those who already enjoy the beatific vision and love forever the thrice holy God – the Church triumphant. The Church is in our midst and at the same time transcends history” (*In Love with the Church*, 18).

He promoted among the laity the awareness that they are Church

St. Josemaría’s dedication to the Church was total. He invited Christians, priests and laity, to respond to the call of the Holy Spirit through charity. The vocation to holiness in the midst of the world brought about a great transformation among the laity to feel part of the Church. From the everyday ordinariness of their lives, every priest or layman is called to be a saint, as his words convey: “God’s call, the character conferred by Baptism and grace, mean that every Christian can and should be a living expression of the faith ... This brings with it a deeper vision of the Church, as a community formed by all the faithful, where all of us share in one same mission, which each should fulfil according to his personal circumstances. Lay people, thanks to promptings of the Holy Spirit, are becoming ever more aware that they are Church, that they have a specific mission, which is sublime and necessary, since it has been willed by God” (*Conversations with Monsignor Escrivá*, 58-59).



THREE SNAPSHOTS THAT TELL US ABOUT HIS UNION WITH THE CHURCH

St. Josemaría was always an example of filial union with the Church, and there are many anecdotes that reflect this. Here we have selected three very eloquent ones.

He spent his first night in Rome in vigil praying for the Church and the Holy Father

On 23 June 1946 St. Josemaría arrived in Rome for the first time with some members of Opus Dei. "Views of Rome came into sight. When the Father saw the dome of St Peter's looming on the horizon in the twilight, he was visibly moved and recited the words of the Creed aloud" (cf. Alvaro del Portillo, *Sum.* 247; José Orlandis Rovira, *ob. cit.*, pp. 133-135 and 137).

At last he was in the Eternal City, and from the attic of their small flat he could see the Apostolic Palace and the papal apartments. Suddenly many memories came flooding back, feelings of gratitude overflowed and he was moved. And he began to pray. He stayed awake all night praying for the Church and the Holy Father, *il dolce Cristo in terra* (the sweet Christ on earth), as he liked to call him, using an expression of St Catherine of Siena..



He prayed intensely for the Second Vatican Council

The founder of Opus Dei followed the development of the Second Vatican Council with full attention and interest. He prayed for the Council Fathers, offered up his work and mortifications for their work.

During the years of the Council (1962-1965), St Josemaría made or received some 235 visits from cardinals and other Council Fathers, with whom he prayed and conversed about the present and future of the Church.

“All, with Peter, to Jesus through Mary”

From an early age he had a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, thanks above all to his parents, who taught him to pray to Our Lady. In September 1932 he wrote in his *Intimate Notes*: “Yesterday ... I discovered a Mediterranean – another one – namely, that if I am a son of my Father God, I am also a son of my Mother Mary ... Let me explain: it was through Mary that I went to Jesus, and I have always considered her as my Mother, although I have been a bad son. (From now on I will be good.) But I saw this concept of my maternal filiation in a clearer light, and I felt it with a different taste yesterday. That is why, during the Holy Communion of my Mass, I said to the Lady my Mother: ‘Put a new suit on me.’ Mine was a very fair request, because I was celebrating one of her feasts” (*Intimate Notes*, 820, 5 September 1932).

Our Lady’s role as intercessor, as the way to go and return to Christ, was a grateful way of seeing her as the Mother of all Christians, of the whole Church.



In 1958, in the face of the proximate election of a new Pope, St. Josemaría urged us to love him with all our strength, and he repeated the aspiration: *Omnes cum Petro ad Iesum per Mariam* (All, with Peter, to Jesus through Mary). “Pray, offer Our Lord even your times of entertainment. We are offering even that to Our Lord for the Pope who is coming, as we have been offering the Mass during these days, as we have been offering... even our breathing” (Words of St. Josemaría, 26 October 1958; quoted by Bishop Javier Echevarría, Letter, 1 March 2013).

St. Josemaría always affirmed that “Love for the Roman Pontiff must be in us a delightful passion, for in him we see Christ” (*In Love with the Church*, 13).



FAVOURS OF ST JOSEMARÍA

Gratitude for finding me a job

I live in Barcelona. For a few years I went to stay at my parents' house in Castile-La Mancha, as they needed help. I had rented out my flat during this time but, because of Covid, the students I had were leaving. So I went back to Barcelona to clean the flat and look for new tenants. One day before returning, I saw an ad for a job in the kitchen of a women's residence in Barcelona. At first I didn't think anything of it, but the ad kept popping into my head, so I decided to call. Two days later, I started working there as a substitute. After two months, the person I had replaced returned and I had to leave. I loved that job. I was in very good hands at all times, I felt happy. Downstairs they have a beautiful oratory. Every day I visited Our Lord, Our Lady, St Josemaría... I was in heaven, even though I was working. I set out to find another similar job: I did a novena to St Josemaría for work, for me and for my son. My son found a job on the third day, and on the seventh and ninth day of the Novena I received two offers: I took the one that interested me most, and I'm working in another women's residence in Barcelona. I have now been a Cooperator since 8 December, the feast of the Immaculate Conception. **(A.M. – Spain)**

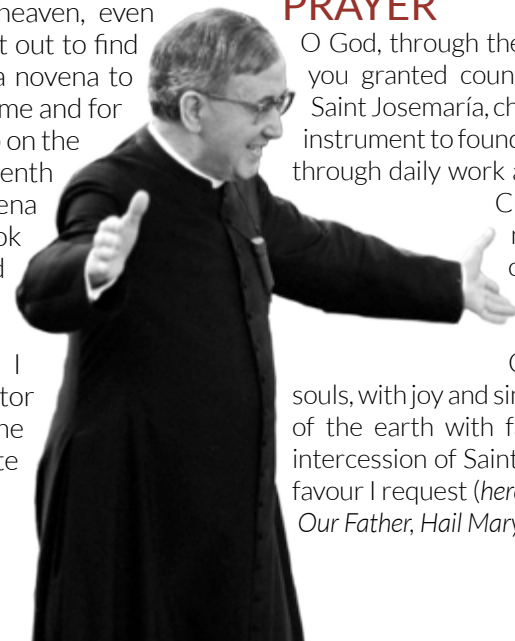
I was out of work and I won the lottery

I had been fired from my job and I turned to St Josemaría. I had been praying for a few months, and on the very day I was due to attend the relevant conciliation meeting and without receiving a single euro for it, I won the lottery. It solved all the problems that had been accumulating for more than two months. **(S.T. – Spain)**

He granted health to four Covid-19 patients

I have been a devotee of St Josemaría Escrivá for many years. He always grants me favours, but this year he granted me the health of four very seriously ill people from Covid-19. All four have recovered their health. **(M.B.V. – Paraguay)**

PRAYER



O God, through the most Blessed Virgin Mary, you granted countless graces to your priest Saint Josemaría, choosing him as a most faithful instrument to found Opus Dei, a way to holiness through daily work and the ordinary duties of a Christian. Grant that I also may learn to turn all the circumstances and events of my life into opportunities to love you and serve the Church, the Pope and all souls, with joy and simplicity, lighting up the paths of the earth with faith and love. Through the intercession of Saint Josemaría please grant the favour I request (*here make your petition*). Amen.
Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be.

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