

SOWERS OF PEACE AND JOY

St Josemaría always preached, in word and in writing, what we read in one of his homilies: "We Christians should launch out along all the paths of the earth to be sowers of peace and joy with what we say and what we do" (Christ is passing by, 168).

Bishop Javier Echevarría, the previous Prelate of Opus Dei, lived with the St Josemaría in Rome for twenty-five years. In his book *Memoria del Beato Josemaría Escrivá* ("Memories of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá") he described him as follows: "He stood out as a perennially serene person, without sudden ups and downs or changes of mood. He always maintained perfect control over the impulses of his character. Of course, he was not insensitive to events, but he acted with peace and strength, no matter how pressing the problems, joys or sufferings."

He added later: "He declared – and this was no mere formula – that he only had friends: friends on the right and friends on the left. And he insisted that we could not close the doors of our hearts against those who came to us, wherever they came from. He never refused to shake hands with people he knew, if they were involved in unpleasant situations, motivated by malice, slander or misunderstanding. I remember several clerics, fallen from favour and abandoned by their companions and by those who had served them, who found companionship in Monsignor Escrivá. He did not hide his friendship with these people even from those who had created the unpleasantness for them."



ANECDOTES

“We have an inner peace that we have received from our conversation with Monsignor Escrivá”

Bishop Echevarría also tells some small but very significant stories. One took place at an international airport. “At the end of one of his trips to South America, in a spontaneous conversation, the cabin crew told Bishop del Portillo and me that their work on this trip had been different. And they explained, each in their own way, this same feature: ‘This route lasts more than eleven hours, with stopovers, and we have to attend to so many needs of the flight officers and passengers. Normally we end up exhausted, just wanting to finish, and we find it hard to be nice. We have to say that today’s journey has been completely different: We feel humanly rested, because we have an inner peace that we have received from our conversation with Monsignor Escrivá.’”

Another story, this time set in a working-class neighbourhood: “During his catechesis in Spain and Portugal in 1972, he received some workmen in Madrid, two of whom belonged to Opus Dei. They had formed a trio of clowns in their free time to entertain the people of the poorest districts. They told him that on many occasions, when it was time to perform, they would get there tired out by the day’s work. He listened to them affectionately and, on saying goodbye to them, he confirmed that those of us who are in love with God must be constantly concerned to make life pleasant for others: **‘You can make it even more pleasant by your job, giving a supernatural meaning to those antics that entertain people, and offering all your efforts so that they have the joy that belongs by right to the children of God.’**”



Advertising and product improvement

And now a comment related to advertising. “In 1973, a pharmaceutical company brought out a new medicine in place of one that had an unpleasant taste. The advertisement explained that it was now orange-flavoured. He remarked, ‘I’m glad: it’s humanizing things, because we are men and women, and trying to make it pleasant for people to fulfil their duty must be something pleasing to God.’”

FAVOURS

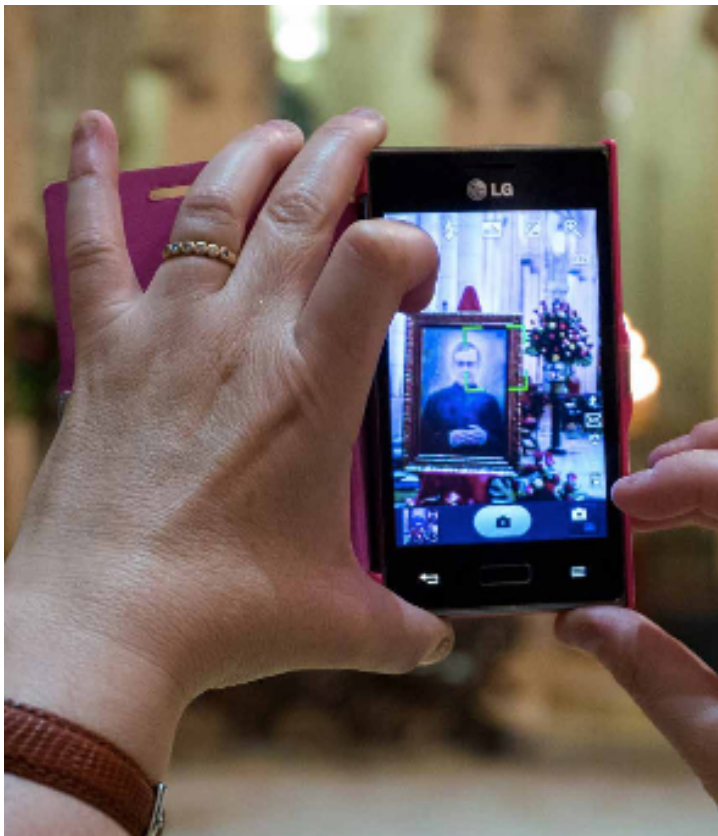
Prayer group

On 27 February 2023 my sister had an operation. The next day her condition was complicated by an internal haemorrhage and became so serious that she was admitted to the ICU.

In the family we have a WhatsApp group of about 40 relatives. It occurred to me to propose to them to pray the novena of Saint Josemaría for the sick. We all agreed to pray it at 23:00 every day.

That was ten days ago. My sister has been discharged, and is now recovering at home. The whole family realises that, given the seriousness of my sister's condition, it was a miracle of St Josemaría. We will be eternally grateful.

D.G.M. (Spain)



A difficult transfer

I am a dentist and I retired on 1 December 2022. I had a private practice in my town. With about two years to go before retirement, I started to look into the possibility of transferring it to another owner. The dentists' association told me that it was difficult at this time. I placed an advertisement through the association, and found that it hardly got any responses.

As time went by, I became more discouraged and tired. One day as I was returning home from work, perhaps especially tired and discouraged because I didn't see that the practice could continue in other hands, I saw a new prayer-card of Saint Josemaría on the ground, in the middle of the hustle and bustle of the city at rush hour. What's more, it was raining that day. I picked it up and thought: he's telling me to entrust all this to him. So, "Let's get on with it." I began to pray to him for this intention. Time went on and six months later I had a tax inspection, which made my work much more complicated. I continued to pray for the transfer. The inspection went well, and enabled me to put a higher price on the transfer.

At that moment a potential buyer appeared, who studied my proposal little by little. She ended by accepting it one hundred percent. She is a good professional. She has taken over my practice. She paid for it without any problems. The patients are very happy with her. She has also kept the staff: two assistants with more than thirty years at the practice. This had been a problem or a "pipe dream", because we never thought that she would agree straight out to keep both of them on, with the same salaries and working hours.

M.B.Z. (Spain)

SOME THOUGHTS FROM SAINT JOSEMARÍA

Furrow, 864

The task for a Christian is to drown evil in an abundance of good. It is not a question of negative campaigns, or of being anti anything. On the contrary, we should live positively, full of optimism, with youthfulness, joy and peace. We should be understanding with everybody, with the followers of Christ and with those who abandon him, or do not know him at all.

–But understanding does not mean holding back, or remaining indifferent, but being active.

The Way of the Cross, Eighth Station, 3

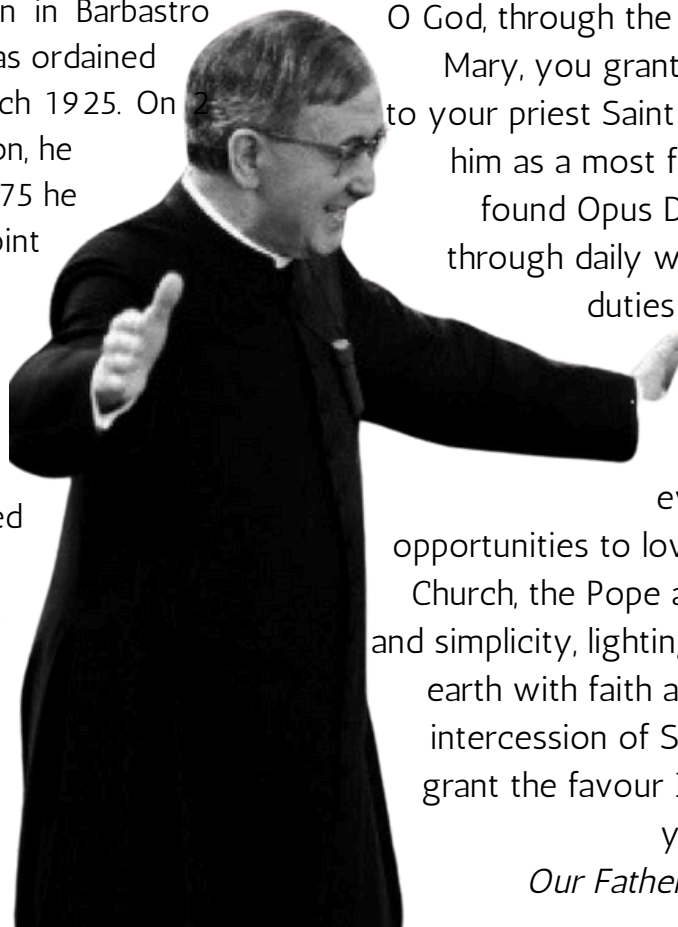
We must bring people together, we must understand others, we must make allowances.

Never put up a cross just to keep alive the memory that some people have killed others. Such a cross would betoken the devil.

Christ's Cross is to keep silent, to forgive and to pray for those on both sides, so that all may attain peace.

BIOGRAPHY

Saint Josemaría Escrivá was born in Barbaastro (Spain) on 9 January 1902. He was ordained a priest in Saragossa on 28 March 1925. On 2 October 1928, by divine inspiration, he founded Opus Dei. On 26 June 1975 he died suddenly in Rome. At that point Opus Dei had spread to the five continents, serving the Church with the same spirit of full union with the Pope and the bishops that Saint Josemaría always practised. St. John Paul II canonised him in Rome on 6 October 2002. His feast is celebrated on 26 June. The mortal remains of Saint Josemaría Escrivá rest in the Prelatic Church of Our Lady of Peace, Viale Bruno Buozzi 75, 00197 Rome, Italy.



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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