



COOPERATORS
OF OPUS DEI



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In one of the parables of the Gospel, a lighted lamp symbolises the light of faith expressed in good works (Matt 25:1-13).

The world will always need men and women who bring the light of Christ to others, sowing peace and joy through charitable works. I ask God our Lord that each of the Cooperators may be a source of concord and service in society.

Thanks be to God, many educational and social activities have arisen in countless places with the help of the members of Opus Dei, the Cooperators and many other people of good will. Other initiatives will have to be studied and brought about in the years ahead with the aim of serving specific local needs, for the cultural and spiritual benefit of society.

In praying each day for the Cooperators, as do all the members of Opus Dei, I ask God to reward their generous help and that they may come to an ever deeper knowledge of the consoling Truth of Christ.

+ Javier Echevarría
Prelate of Opus Dei

WHAT IS OPUS DEI?



Saint Josemaría Escrivá founded Opus Dei, an institution of the Catholic Church, on October 2, 1928. Its complete name is the Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei. It is also called simply Opus Dei, or "the Work of God."

Its purpose is to contribute to the Church's mission to evangelize the world, fostering among people of all sectors of society a life consistent with one's faith, in the ordinary circumstances of daily life and especially through the sanctification of work.

The message Opus Dei tries to spread is that all honest human work can give glory to God and be "divinized." For St. Josemaría, to sanctify work means to work with Jesus' spirit: doing our work conscientiously, seeking to give glory to God and to serve others, and thus to contribute to the sanctification of the world.

The Work provides spiritual formation and pastoral attention to its faithful and to everyone else who wants

it, so that each one, in his or her own place in the Church and in the world, may get to know and love God better, giving witness to the faith and striving to help provide Christian solutions to society's problems.

The Prelature of Opus Dei is made up of a Prelate (Bishop Javier Echevarría) with his clergy, and lay faithful, both men and women. Many other people also take part in its activities, and among them many ask to be Cooperators.

Cooperators of Opus Dei are men and women who by their prayer, almsgiving and work help further the activities organized by the Prelature of Opus Dei, each according to their specific possibilities. This brochure offers a few testimonies of how Cooperators help, and why.

Family of Jean-René Philibert,
Cooperator in Quebec (Canada).



"In the measure that our eagerness for love and peace spreads more widely, as a consequence of the Christian spirit that will bit by bit vivify all human endeavors, we will help bring about solutions to the great problems that beset mankind."

St. Josemaría

COOPERATORS OF OPUS DEI

Men and women of every race, religion and culture can become Cooperators: Catholics and non-Catholics, Christians and non-Christians, and unbelievers as well. Together with the faithful of the Prelature and many other men and women, they help further educational and social endeavors all over the world.

Their cooperation can be both spiritual and also material. "We need Cooperators like you, who pray; Cooperators like you, who smile," St. Josemaría once

told a Peruvian village woman when he was in her country on a trip through Latin America. Material help can include both work or alms. Referring to those who share with the faithful of Opus Dei the same ideal of human advancement, St. Josemaría said: "I have so many friends who aren't Catholics. They give us a little of what up till then they thought they needed for themselves; they give it generously for the apostolic works. They give us their time, and a portion of their lives."



Janaíha Faith Nelson, Washington DC (USA)

Catholic Cooperators, and also many non-Catholics, appreciate the spiritual and apostolic dimension of these activities, which are done to serve God, the Church and all souls. Cooperators include not only lay people but also clergy from many dioceses all over the world, and religious communities who cooperate by their prayer.

Cooperators in turn receive the affection, gratitude and daily prayer of the Prelate and all the faithful of Opus Dei. Moreover, if they so wish, they are offered

the possibility of receiving spiritual assistance. Catholic Cooperators also receive the spiritual benefits granted by the Catholic Church to those who assist Opus Dei's apostolic work. On specific dates each year they can obtain indulgences by fulfilling the conditions established by the Church and renewing, out of devotion, their desire to be Cooperators.



SHARED IDEALS

Although I received no religious instruction, the singing of the birds and the beauty of the rivers and mountains of my homeland led me to believe in the existence of a Creator, and I wanted to get to know more about religion. One day an Opus Dei center opened near where I lived. There I could find information, ask questions, read. And I learned to pray. Within a few years, though not a Christian, I decided to become a Cooperator, for **I shared the ideals of those who were teaching young people what I would have liked to learn in my youth: how to get to know God and live a noble life, a life of work, understanding and respect for others, and healthy entertainment.** After a few years I was baptized. The message of St. Josemaria helps me sanctify my work, which takes place largely in a garden among the flowers. When I am watering or fertilizing, I think about how greatly God cares for me, and when the flowers are opening and blooming, I pray for the spiritual growth of all men and women.

Yedik Almasbekovich Mamrainov

lives in Almaty, Kazakhstan, and works as a gardener and maintenance man.



RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

I've heard that **Cooperators are like the relatives and friends of the faithful of Opus Dei**, and that is exactly what I want to be. In regard to spiritual help, I benefit from and share in the formation offered by the Prelature, and on my part, I unite my prayers and other contributions to those of other Cooperators to help the Work.

Marie Jones

lives in Leatherhead, Surrey, England. She is married and has three children.



GIVING ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE SICK

I've known Opus Dei for over thirty years, and became a Cooperator last year. I'm a social worker and try to give encouragement to the sick. I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1991 and was told I had seven years to live. The illness has worsened over the years and now it is a great effort just to take a few steps; recently, I lost the ability to read or write. However, despite the medical prognosis, I have lived almost twenty years since I was diagnosed. **I don't think I have a vocation to Opus Dei, but I do feel connected to the Work, as if I were part of the family.** I am greatly helped by the message of the sanctification of ordinary life. Everything I do, although it may seem trivial, relates to God and has an infinite value. That seems marvelous to me.

Christoph Flaspöhler

lives in Wachtberg near Bonn, Germany. He is a social worker who previously worked in banking.



LIKE DANCING

Being a Cooperator is **a challenge to me to rise above myself and do all I can to help support a good cause.** Sometimes I am asked to give a dance workshop, or to organize a family day, or help out with the activities of the Youth Club, and so on. For several months, I have been giving family counseling courses to families with children aged between two and ten. I have learned that believing is not a complex issue, but you do have to delve more deeply into the faith. When you teach dancing, you have to put your ballet slippers on, and work on improving your own dancing continually, and I think it's the same with the faith. Unless you constantly go deeper and put it into practice, it just won't work.



Judith Gerbrands

lives in Kerkrade, Limburg, Netherlands. She is a dance instructor.

FINDING GOD AMONG THE SHOES

I repair shoes. I came across Opus Dei thanks to my daughter Agnieszka. She was the one who told me that I could bring God into my shoe repair work, which has helped me do my job better. Because of my illness I've had to reduce my professional commitment (three days each week I need to go to the hospital for dialysis, while waiting to receive a kidney transplant). **Above all, I help out by offering the discomforts of my illness and the dialysis sessions, and the rosaries I pray while taking the long walks the doctors have prescribed.**



Józef Morawski

lives in Warsaw, Poland.

FROM BASKETBALL TO KNOWING GOD BETTER

I came to know about Opus Dei through a friend who plays basketball. I was struck by the way she took an interest in the other players, even though they came from different religions. At first I thought, since I was Orthodox, that she wouldn't want to go into deeper matters with me. However, after many basketball training sessions and conversations, I got to know the spirit of the Work and, after several years, I asked to be a Cooperator. For me, to be able to join in this work is wonderful. **The thing I appreciate most is being able to help people to become friends of God, to get to know him better.**



Rania Nicolas

lives in Achrafieh, Beirut, Lebanon. She works in banking as a senior technician.



EVANGELIZING CULTURE

I liked the help I saw being given to young people, including children from poor families, a formation they often don't find at home. This strengthens their moral fiber and helps them overcome the negative pressures from their surroundings. As a Cooperator, I try to assist this effort as much as possible. **My professional work involves trying to create good quality graphic novels with messages that encourage a positive vision of the world.** I see this work as a small contribution to help evangelize culture.

Chris Chow

was born in Port of Spain, Trinidad, now lives in Toronto, Canada, and works as a graphic artist.



A NEW HORIZON

I have a congenital disease that causes very painful crises and permanent anemia. I still haven't recovered from the last crisis, which left me in a coma for six days, and I am unable to walk unaided. I offer up these sufferings for the work of Opus Dei and for the holy souls in Purgatory. **Finding meaning in my disease opened up a new horizon in my life. At the same time, I have felt sustained by the prayers of many people, from my family and from Opus Dei.** I'm alive now thanks to those prayers. When I was asked if I wanted to become a Cooperator, I didn't hesitate. For me, it means showing gratitude in some way for the formation that helps me so much to counsel those God entrusts to me.

Suzanne Ngono Ayissi

lives in Douala, Cameroon, and works as an educational adviser.



IN MY PARISH

Since 2004, a dozen young people from an Opus Dei residence have taken part in a social service project in one of my parishes. I help with my prayers and other contributions, and each year I provide accommodation for these groups. **I attend recollections organized for priests near Montreal, where loyalty to the Pope and the Church's teachings is stressed, and constant encouragement is given to balance work and piety,** making everything a prayer to glorify God. Through Opus Dei my priesthood has been strengthened. I have also witnessed these young people willingly working eight hours a day. When they stop or get exhausted, they usually have a book in their hands, since they don't want to waste time.

Father Rheal Forest

lives in Manitoba, Canada. He ministers to five Indian reservations within his province.



IN JERUSALEM

I am a Palestinian Arab from Ramallah, a Lutheran Christian married to a Greek Orthodox. We live in Jerusalem. I was looking for a place where my children could learn the Christian faith and, with this aim, my son began to participate in the activities of a center for boys that Opus Dei has in Jerusalem. My daughter started to attend the girls' activities, and then I too started to take part in doctrinal classes and other activities for women. **I wanted to be a Cooperator because I understood the need for formation in our community and also because I wanted to spread it among the people of our city, so that it could help them as much as it helps me. In the days of recollection I've found the strength to continue with my work.** (I teach in a primary school where the problems of today's world are very much in evidence). I've also found the wisdom to reach positive solutions with my colleagues, along with the creativity to find the right approach with my students.



Hanada Nijim Noursi
is a school teacher.

PRAYING FOR THE WORK

We don't yet have an Opus Dei center in my city, but God will find a path. This strengthens my responsibility to spread the message of St. Josemaria, which for me is a duty of gratitude. In recent years, my perception of myself, my family and my work has changed. Coming home after a hard day's work and having to meet the needs of my daughters has become a pleasant experience. **In thanks for all this, I always include the apostolates of Opus Dei in my prayers.**



Sunil Thomas
was born in Kuwait and lives in Bangalore, India. He is married and has two daughters.
He is a marketing director.

A ROSARY A DAY

My sister Pilar and I have been Cooperators for more than fifteen years. Pilar was a seamstress, but an illness caused her to lose her sight and she had to stop working. I am working for local families as a home assistant, but for many years I used to help out with the disabled boys at the Don Orione House. It was there that I met a priest of Opus Dei. He was the first person to tell me about the Work. I started attending some talks, while my sister stayed at home. I would explain to her what I had heard in them afterwards. But **we were offered the possibility of holding the talks at our house, and so she too could attend.** Soon these meetings became Cooperators' circles. My sister and I give money each month for the apostolates of Opus Dei, and we offer many prayers each day.



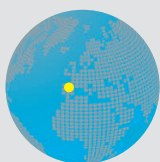
Alicia and Pilar Martínez
live in Rosario, Argentina.

COOPERATORS OF OPUS DEI INITIATIVES



Laguna Care Center

MADRID [SPAIN]



The Laguna Care Center is housed in a modern three-story building with almost 10,000 square meters of floor space, situated in the Madrid district of Lucero. It aims to integrate care for the elderly with palliative and psycho-geriatric services.

This project was set up in 2002 by the Vianorte Foundation to mark the centenary of the birth of St. Josemaría. It is inspired by the teachings the founder of Opus Dei passed on through his life and his writings.

An interdisciplinary team of professionals specializes in palliative care. Doctors, nurses, social workers, volunteers, psychologists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and the chaplain all work closely together to care for the patients. This specialized care can be given in the patient's home, in the inpatient unit, or in the day-care center, according to the needs of each patient, their illness and their family circumstances.



Irtysh Cultural Center

ALMATY [KAZAKHSTAN]



Irtysh was founded in 2007 with aid from many countries. The main activity of the center is a language school, meeting a vital need in Kazakhstan, which is currently involved in a process of increasing openness and development. As part of the training program, the students and others can participate in educational, cultural and recreational activities aimed at communicating values such as friendship, respect, tolerance, sporting spirit, generosity, and openness to spiritual values.

The educational program includes arts and science seminars in annual cycles, lectures on current affairs, social projects, excursions, lunches with guest speakers, discussion forums and cultural trips. Courses in Christian formation and theology are also available.



Ciudad de Los Niños (Children's City)

MONTERREY [MEXICO]



Ciudad de Los Niños is a center for educational and family development that provides academic, technical, human and spiritual support to children and young people of limited means, together with their families. It has two sites: the first started in Ciudad de Guadalupe and the other more recently in the Topo Chico district of Monterrey. Both of these are deprived areas.

The Family Education Center offers programs for parents, designed to help them in the task of educating their children. In addition, various courses help parents without basic primary or secondary education to acquire needed skills and improve their work and job prospects.

Terral Social Center

BARCELONA [SPAIN]



The district of Raval, in Barcelona's old quarter, has the city's highest population density. It also has the highest proportion of immigrants and the highest levels of unemployment and school dropout. This neighborhood is the setting for Terral Social Center, where people from different cultural and religious backgrounds share daily classroom resources that help provide job placements and integration into society.

One of the programs offered is called "1 @ 1." It is a teaching method in which each volunteer takes particular responsibility for a project participant, aiming to facilitate their learning and progress. People of all ages and walks of life help out in the program: university students and postgraduates, retired teachers, housewives and many others. The aim is to help schoolgirls not to abandon their education before they turn 16, the age at which they can decide whether to enter the working world or continue with their studies.



THE JOY OF GIVING

The faithful of the Prelature of Opus Dei and the Cooperators, Catholic or non-Catholic, along with many others, organize educational, social and cultural centers all around the world. These centers seek to help meet the needs of each country or environment, without discrimination of race, religion or social status.

"You have to engage in a great battle," St. Josemaría said, "against want, against ignorance, against disease, against suffering."

These projects include universities, vocational schools, clinics, educational and training centers for women, student residences, high schools, health-care



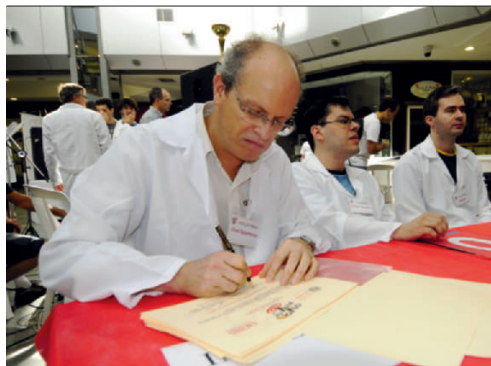
"We have to act in such a way that others may say, seeing us: here is a Christian, because he does not hate, because he knows how to understand, because he is not a fanatic, because he rises above his passions, because he sacrifices himself, because he communicates peace, because he loves."

St. Josemaría

Work-camp, orphanage Phu My in Ho Chi Min City. Organized by Nairana (Australia)

centers, etc. They are secular professional initiatives, with a strong emphasis on caring for people as people. St. Josemaría insisted that "our spirit is precisely to encourage initiatives that are built up from the grassroots; and since the circumstances, needs and possibilities of each country or social group are usually

diverse and specific to each one, the apostolic activities organized in each country are those that seem best suited to local needs, whether a university or a student residence, or a health-care center or farm school for rural people."



FREER TO MAKE THE WORLD BETTER

I learned that through prayer, giving example at work, and speaking charitably wherever I find myself, I can help create a more human environment. **Being a Cooperator has encouraged me to give myself to others, and it has opened up new possibilities for feeling freer and more duty-bound to work to make the world better.** I try to pass on that experience to others, because it has increased my awareness of Christ's love for us, and this leads me to keep trying to become a saint, despite the falls and setbacks we all face.

José Carlos Neves Epiphanio

is an agronomist and researcher. He lives in São José dos Campos, Brazil.



GIVING A LITTLE SOMETHING BACK

I am the sixth of eight children. I've benefitted from Opus Dei's Christian formation activities since childhood. Having received so much, it seemed natural to give a little something back. Above all I pray and, when my family situation allows it, I offer financial support as well. **With my work, I help an association that raises funds to provide scholarships to priests and seminarians studying at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome.** For me, being a Cooperator means that, in a sense, I am part of the great family of Opus Dei. Thanks to the formation I receive, I try to improve my own life, especially my Christian life, and also my role as wife and mother.

Marie Kollen

lives in France. She is married and has three children.



FORGIVING

I am a Muslim. A friend gave me a copy of *The Way*. Reading it made me want to contribute to the Work. I really liked the idea that I too could help others. **I lend a hand in various activities at the Nerpio Club, in Albacete. I think this has helped me to get to know the Catholic Church better, and to have a great appreciation for it.** My life has been enriched and the fact that I'm a Muslim hasn't been an obstacle. Among many other things, what has struck me above all is learning to forgive others, something which is far from easy and which I want to learn to live better.

Habib Moussa Fardoun

was born in Lebanon. He is a Shiite Muslim. He has a degree in Computer Science and lives in Albacete, Spain, where he is finishing a doctoral thesis at the university.



VEGETABLES FOR THE CAMP

When I worked at my grocery store, I used to assist the summer camps for youngsters. **We obtained food for them at a wholesale market.** I consider myself fortunate to be a Cooperator, because St. Josemaria's message encourages me to try to work hard and well, to love the Pope and pray for him, and to turn to our Lady for help. Also, the activities are open to everyone, whatever their politics or religion, or race or financial situation. When I was sick I felt the family spirit of Opus Dei. Every day a doctor who lived in a center of the Work came to see me, and others from the center also called to see how I was doing. They brought me a prayer card with a relic of St. Josemaria when I was unconscious, and from that moment I began to get better.



Manuel Cid Carnero

lives in Montevideo, Uruguay. He is a retired greengrocer.

MY LOVE FOR THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

I pray every day for the Prelate of Opus Dei and the apostolates of the Prelature. And when possible, my workload permitting, I offer my assistance. For example, **this semester I've been happy because my workload has been a bit lighter, so I've been helping on Saturdays in an educational program.** Although I'm not Catholic, my taking part is an expression of my love for the Catholic Church and is also a contribution to Christian unity. Also, the work is personally rewarding, as I see how the girls with whom we work are developing. **When they grow, I grow.**



Janaiha Faith Nelson

lives in Washington D.C., USA. She is studying for a doctorate at the university.

IMPROVING THE COUNTRY BY BEING A BETTER CHRISTIAN

I help out at one of the associations for young professionals at the Niere Center in Abidjan. This association organizes cultural and sports activities for young people who are beginning their professional life. Although my contribution is quite small, for me it is a way to help to do Opus Dei and to give thanks for the formation I receive. It also offers me an opportunity to go deeper in my Christian formation, and to contribute to the good of my country, by trying to be a better Christian.



Nandjui Djidji Brice Bokra

lives in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. He works in a bank as an internal auditor.



SPIRITUAL BENEFITS

I got to know Opus Dei through a friend, who invited me to a recollection in Kimlea. I decided to be a Cooperator because I realized I could assist the work being done for the less fortunate. I understood that **it was my duty to share with the needy the material resources with which God has blessed me, and that this would benefit me spiritually.** Every day I pray the Rosary for the apostolates of Opus Dei, and they are part of my intentions at Holy Mass. I also contribute with a donation each month and give milk and garden produce to Kimlea School for cooking classes.

Mary N. Gichuiri

lives in Nyeri, Kenya. She is a retired teacher who now works on a farm.



EVERYTHING I HAVE IS ON LOAN

I am convinced that if God has given me resources, I have the duty to share them with others. I like the word “cooperate,” because being a Cooperator goes beyond just helping. For me it is how I respond to God’s love; it means fulfilling his desires for me. I firmly believe that what I have isn’t mine: it’s on loan, it belongs to God. So I want to do all I can to help out, with every means at my disposal, with all that I have and can do. I think this is what God expects of me.

Miguel Kalbakgi Xikh

was born in Aleppo, Syria, and now lives in Venezuela. He is a salesman.



THE ATMOSPHERE IN MY FAMILY HAS CHANGED

A few years ago, seeking answers to certain questions about the world and the meaning of life, I began to attend catechism classes in the parish and, through some people I met there, I contacted an Opus Dei center. After a while, I was asked to be a Cooperator. At first I wondered if I could manage it, but finally I decided to try. **I started helping with youth club activities, while also taking part in classes on Christian doctrine and family issues.** These formational activities have given me new strength and experience to transform my daily life. I have learned to devote time and effort to making each member of my large family happier. Truly I can say that, since then, the atmosphere in our home has changed. Now there is a more active concern for one another, and more joy.

Üde Ütt

lives in Tallinn, Estonia. She is a housewife and has six children.



A HEART WORKING QUIETLY

I am blind. I lost my sight in a car accident. Through the formation I have received, I have come to realize that marriage is my way of reaching holiness, by trying to be the best husband and father I can. Also I know that, if I fail, with God's grace I can always try again. I have learned to sanctify even the small skirmishes that each day presents. I have come to realize that the Church is like a body with arms, legs, head and feet. Maybe I lack the means to have an active job, which would be the hands and the feet, but **everyone can, in their love for Christ, in their daily prayer and mortification, be the heart that works quietly but steadily to help give life to the Church.**

Jose Maria Ayesa Cacho

lives in Iloilo, the Philippines. He is an entrepreneur, and works with an NGO that raises funds to support the blind.



WITHOUT DISTINCTIONS

While helping out with initiatives for the neediest, I began to think: why were we created? For God, and to help others. When I asked what Opus Dei means, and was told, "Work of God," I said to myself: that's what I want to do. **Whenever I help in projects aimed at people with limited means, I give thanks to God, and I realize I should do more to get closer to the Almighty.** At the same time, I ask myself, how can I do more? This has helped me to fulfill my duties better at home and at work, serving others better. The unity, kindness, spiritual guidance, humility and diversity of the formation appeals to me very much. No distinctions are made between Asians or Africans.... All nationalities are united, and I find this very moving.

Aisha Badamana

lives in Kilimani, Kenya. She is Muslim. She is the director and proprietor of Little Birds Kindergarten.



FEELING AT HOME

My first contact with Opus Dei was in Lebanon. I started going to the Opus Dei center and saw that I could get closer to God. **I realized that they had many needs and tried to help in various ways; then I found out that I could become a Cooperator.** Now I give a monthly contribution and pray daily for Opus Dei. It has helped me come closer to God. It has also given a meaningful channel to the sense of social concern I've always had.

Sultani Zegaib Saab Andere

lives in Mexico City. She is a Maronite Rite Catholic and does social work.



THE JOY OF GIVING INITIATIVES



Baytree

LONDON [UK]



Baytree Centre is located in Brixton, an area of London listed as the seventh poorest in England, and home to a multiracial community, with a large refugee population and a high percentage of unemployment and crime.

This institution aims to fill a gap in the social fabric, helping the disadvantaged to adapt to society, regardless of race or social difference. With a staff of 40 people and over 100 volunteers, Baytree gives support, year after year, to more than a thousand women of various ages from about 100 different countries.

The women who attend the center discover the value of family life and how to make it compatible with a professional job outside the home. They learn to read and write, and are taught basic accounting and computing skills, how to fill in a form for an interview, how to help their children with school work, how to understand street signs, etc.

Seido Foundation

NAGASAKI [JAPAN]



The Seido Language Institute began in 1959 as a small language institute that grew over the years. In 1971 it was integrated into a larger educational project, the Seido Foundation for the Advancement of Education, which was recognized as an association of public interest.

Now, as then, the main demand is for English classes, since all Japanese students have to study English for several years before going to university.

In addition, the Seido Foundation has promoted other educational initiatives in various parts of Japan, such as schools in the Nagasaki Prefecture, and residences for teachers and students in other cities.



Kimlea Technical Training Center

TIGONI [KENYA]



Kimlea, located in the Kiambu District in Kenya, offers vocational training to women and girls who have worked in the tea and coffee plantations of Limuru without having access to education. Those who cannot attend regular classes have access to the Kimlea Outreach Programme, which offers classes in literacy, home and child care, hygiene, dressmaking, machine sewing, etc.

Kimlea also has a medical clinic that serves about 40 patients each day; it began as a mobile unit and now occupies its own building. Thanks to the help of Cooperators, who also contribute to providing food for children, the clinic offers medicines at very affordable prices. It also provides regular medical care to twenty primary schools through the Kimlea CHEP Project (Children's Health Programme). Each of these schools has about 1,000 students who, due to their lack of resources, would otherwise have no access to health services.

Campus Bio-Medico University

ROME [ITALY]



St. Josemaria's first successor, Bishop Alvaro del Portillo, encouraged the start of the Campus Bio-Medico in Rome. Today, it occupies 185 acres, and includes a state-of-the-art Polyclinic and a Center for Advanced Research in Biomedicine and Bioengineering.

The teaching activity offers seven degree courses. The new Polyclinic, which is organized according to the latest hospital standards, opened in 2008 at the university campus of Trigatoria, and also includes the Center for Geriatric Health, two Outpatient Centers and a Radiotherapy Center.

The aim is to provide quality care, a friendly relationship with patients and a welcoming atmosphere. Among the various research projects undertaken in collaboration with European companies and universities, the Life-Hand program was recently launched, through which doctors and biomedical engineers have managed for the first time to move a bionic prosthetic hand using brain impulses.



AN UNEXPECTED GREATNESS

Józef Morawski. Warsaw (Poland).

Opus Dei, founded on October 2, 1928 by St. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, is a hierarchical institution of the Catholic Church—specifically, a personal Prelature. Its aim is to spread, in every environment, the message that all men and women are called to holiness, that work and everyday life are opportunities for growing closer to God, serving others and improving society. There are currently over 88,000 members of Opus Dei, priests and lay people, men and women, from every continent.

A direct consequence of the work of evangelization done by the faithful of the Prelature is the strengthening of Christian values in the home, the work place and society in general. Thanks to God's grace, this work also benefits local Churches, through increased participation

in the Eucharist and the other Sacraments, spreading the Gospel in places where the faith is not practised, setting up initiatives to help the disadvantaged, fostering greater unity with the bishop and the priests of each diocese, and other fruits.

"Yours is truly a great ideal," Blessed John Paul II said, "which anticipated from the outset the theology of the laity that subsequently characterized the Church of the Council, and the postconciliar period. This is the message and spirituality of Opus Dei: to live united to God in the middle of the world, in any situation, each one striving to be better with the help of grace, and making Jesus Christ known through the testimony of one's own life."



St. Josemaría was chosen by God to proclaim the universal call to holiness and to indicate that everyday life and ordinary activities are a path to sanctification. You could say he was the saint of the ordinary. Indeed, he was convinced that for those who live in a faith perspective, everything offers an opportunity for an encounter with God, everything becomes a stimulus for prayer. Daily life, seen thus, reveals an unexpected greatness. Holiness is truly available to everyone.

Blessed John Paul II

Without trying to draw up an exhaustive list, the following are some of the characteristic features of the spirit of Opus Dei: seeing the reality of being sons and daughters of God as the foundation of one's spiritual life; love for Jesus Christ, who is present in the Church, and meeting him in the Eucharist and in the Word; a desire to make the Mass the center and root of Christian life in the world; love for our Lady; docility to the Pope and the Church's hierarchy; charity and a desire to get along with others in a spirit of understanding; the joy that comes from following Christ closely; unity of life, uniting the various aspects of daily life in an integral way with one's faith; the importance of professional work, carried

out as well as possible, with love for God and a spirit of service; love for freedom and personal responsibility.

Living the Catholic faith in an integral way carries with it a real concern to contribute, as far as possible, to solving the problems we see in the world around us. St. Josemaría wrote that "a Christian cannot be satisfied with working only to provide for himself and his family. His greatness of heart will spur him to do all he can to support others, motivated by charity, and also by justice." Members and Cooperators of Opus Dei feel equally committed to striving to respond to this challenge.



SEEING CHRIST IN THE SICK

I met Opus Dei 20 years ago, while studying medicine. I was given some advice that has become the driving force for my work in a busy hospital, and which I have tried to implement ever since: **to treat each patient as if he were Jesus Christ**. I also try to help the dying to reflect on their lives and, if they wish, to receive a visit from one of the hospital chaplains.

Peter Stevens

lives in Sydney, Australia, with his wife and six children. He works in a rehabilitation hospital.



A GREAT DISCOVERY

Odetta, a friend of mine, told me about an Opus Dei center. Over time, my life has changed. I have found the true faith, and a few months ago I became a Catholic. Knowing that I can offer each of my actions to our Lord was a wonderful discovery in my life; it lifts me up and **helps me to overcome the sorrows that life brings**. The formation I receive helps me to improve my family life and my relationship with friends. I try to realize the importance of working for the glory of God, and I see that this bears fruit.

Marie Louise Nya Finké

lives in Yaoundé, Cameroon. She teaches at a technical institute.



THE SAME PERSON IN ALL AREAS OF MY LIFE

My son was starting university in London and moved to Netherhall House. That was how I came into contact with Opus Dei. The formative activities have strengthened my awareness of being a son of God and helped me to struggle to attain personal holiness in daily life. I was especially drawn to the idea that I can (and must) **be the same person in all areas of my life; not compartmentalized, depending on where I am and who I am with**.

John Devlin

lives in Ipswich, Suffolk, England. He works as a development manager.



MOTHERS' NETWORK

When I was fifteen, I attended a recollection for young people. I was very surprised to hear of the possibility of being a good Christian in the midst of the world. I found out about the Mikawa Cooking School, in Nagasaki, and decided to study there. **There I found an atmosphere of respect for freedom and a practical Christian training, adapted to my circumstances.** Later, along with some former students of Mikawa and several friends, we started a website on the internet, where we talk about issues related to educating our children. It is still small, but I have a dream of starting an association, mothers of Mikawa, to help women with young children.



Sakura Kawaguchi

lives in Nagasaki, Japan. She works as a cook.

REFLECTING CHRIST

I am studying Institutional Communication at the University of the Holy Cross, where I met Opus Dei. As a Cooperator I try to pray for the Work and spread its message. I also try to give a small donation to the Centro Romano di Incontri Sacerdotali (the Roman Center for Priestly Meetings). My collaboration is also a response to the help I receive through spiritual direction, circles, monthly recollections and retreats, which have deepened my awareness of what it means to be a priest. For example, **the recommendation to wear a cassock is a good reminder that the way I dress should reflect "the heart and life of a priest, that is to say, of Christ."**



Robert Bellarmin Sisi

is a priest in the Diocese of Idiofa, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

"COFFEE PAINTING"

Through the formation I receive, I've learned to love my profession as a painter, because a job well done gives glory to God, and helps one to practice virtue. For example, **I learned to speak with God when I'm alone working on a painting, and perhaps having difficulty concentrating.** When my work becomes more difficult, I think of someone, perhaps the future owner of the painting, and I offer up each mark or stroke of the brush. That way I can ensure that all my painting is done with love and prayer.



Sunshine Plata

lives in Marikina City, Philippines. She is a "coffee painter", an artist who paints pictures with coffee.



BELIEVING IN ORDER TO SEE

Since I became a Cooperator, I surprise myself each time I am able to find a supernatural meaning in things that might at first glance seem trivial. With my eyes fixed on God, I see things differently, which gives my life a completely new meaning. **I've learned that you don't need to see in order to believe, but rather you need to decide, freely, to believe in order to see.** This perspective changes your life. Life ceases to be a monotonous passage through this world, and becomes a marvelous adventure.

Juan Pablo Valencia Montero

was born in Santiago, Chile. He now lives in Almaty, Kazakhstan, and works in advertising.



WITH MY PATIENTS

I work as a physical therapist for people with Alzheimer's and children who are disabled, autistic or suffering from psychotic disorders, in the 3 to 8 age group. I try to give them exercises that will help them regain some balance. Since I became a Cooperator, I have tried to entrust these children and elderly people to God. In the morning, I offer up my day and pray for them. At night, I entrust all the day's events to our Lord. I've learned that **every moment, everything I do, is an opportunity to get closer to Christ.**

Aude Durroux

lives in Paris, France.



GOD IN MUSIC

Music has always been my priority. I wanted to be famous, to excel and stand out. But the classes of Christian formation I attend have convinced me that the most important thing is to do things out of love for God and others. It's the same with my job as the host of a television program. The fact that I appear on the screen is no longer what's important; rather, my goal is to enable many people, through the program, to discover the wonders of music. Now I understand that if you know why you do things, for what purpose, life is much more exciting. **I know that I can offer Jesus my work, and that everything has meaning and is worth the effort, when it's done out of love for God.**

Arturo García Lourdes

lives in Mexico City. He hosts a classical music television program.



ACCEPTING GOD'S WILL

I became a Cooperator because I wanted to stop being defensive in the way I lived my faith. Through the teaching on the universal call to holiness, I realized that **being holy is not about doing great things with your own strength, but about abandoning yourself to God's will, and then it is God who acts.** Then one understands that life is not lived on one's own. Being a Cooperator has helped me see that besides asking God for what we need, as though making demands on him, he is the one who acts when we open our hearts to him.

Masao Horikawa

lives in Nagasaki, Japan, and runs his own osteopathic clinic.



EMPHASIS ON FREEDOM

For me, being a Cooperator is **a way to grow in my Catholic faith and take part in the new evangelization of society.** I assist with my prayer and financial contributions. I do it gladly, for the love I have for the faithful of the Prelature, and because I am convinced of the need to bring people to God. I'm a judge and I love my job. I try to do it according to Christian principles and the teachings of St. Josemaría regarding respect for the dignity of each person. What especially appeals to me is the emphasis on freedom in civic and professional life. Through the Christian formation I receive, I gain the strength to begin again and again every day, striving for the faithfulness that God wants from me.

Guadalupe Quijano

lives in Campeche, Mexico. She is President of the High Court in the State of Campeche.



MORE THAN A COFFEE SHOP

I was a fervent Buddhist when I was introduced to Opus Dei by my eldest daughter. She told me about a student residence that was opening in Taipei. I wanted to help with this project and I became a Cooperator. **By the grace of God, my husband and I were baptized at Easter 2008.** Now when I invite a friend to become a Cooperator, I know I'm offering her the opportunity to get closer to God. Another thing that has changed is my coffee shop, the Café Paris. I've been running it for forty years and have made many friends over the years, and many of those who have been here have come closer to God in one way or another.

Huang-Chun Chen

lives in Penghu, Taiwan. She owns a coffee shop.





Center for Applied Medical Research (CIMA), University of Navarra

PAMPLONA [SPAIN]



In 2002, as a result of fifty years of research experience in the Faculty of Medicine and the University Clinic, the Center for Applied Medical Research was established at the University of Navarra. It currently employs over 400 people from some twenty countries. Researchers concur in emphasizing that one of the advantages of this center has been the impetus for multidisciplinary work, so important in science, and the spirit of service that it seeks to embody.

During its first few years, the Center has had more than 40 new discoveries patented in different areas of research: gene therapy and hepatology, cardiovascular sciences, neuroscience and oncology. These areas of medicine encompass the study of diseases that cause 90% of deaths in some parts of the world.



Center for the Integral Development of Women (CEFIM)

LA PAZ [BOLIVIA]



The CEFIM professional training institute in La Paz is aimed at young women across Bolivia. In this country's culture, levels of education among women are lower than those of men. CEFIM emerged as a force for change, to assist in the technical training of women and help them access jobs and professions. At the same time, it responds to the high demand for technical expertise in the manufacturing and service industries.

This is the first educational center that has been granted official status as a Vocational and Alternative Institute of Higher Education. It carries out its mission through a personalized education based on Christian principles and ethics. Thanks to international cooperation, as well as many Bolivian contributors, in July 2009 it opened up a new center, including classrooms and workshops, which can accommodate 300 students. In addition to vocational courses in care for the elderly, hospitality and catering, it provides professional cooking and pastry-making courses, the Accelerated Baccalaureate and other short courses that are open to the general public.



Nocedal Technical and Professional School

SANTIAGO DE CHILE [CHILE]

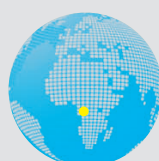


Since 1996, Nocedal has provided education to boys from El Castillo, a municipality in the district of La Pintada which is among the poorest and most deprived in Santiago de Chile. People living there have little hope of improving their living standards, and many young people are forced to give up their studies and go to work to provide for their families.

With the support of those who believe in the Nocedal project, about 1000 students have received high-quality education with Christian values, and have found hope for a better future. Their success demonstrates that everyone is capable of benefiting from a broad-based and well-founded human and professional education.

Higher Institute of Nursing (ISSI)

KINSHASA [CONGO]



In 1998 the Institut Supérieur en Sciences Infirmières was opened, located in a suburb of Kinshasa. The institute seeks to impart an awareness of the role and responsibility of nursing personnel in the Congolese community. The students learn to do their job professionally. Beyond the goal of merely earning a salary, they learn to see their work as a personal service to patients, doctors, families, etc.

The teaching system is based on close mentoring, accompanying each student through every step of their training. In addition to classes, students receive on the job training in various hospitals in Kinshasa. Refresher courses and seminars are also offered to health personnel from other hospitals.

The tuition paid by students covers half the cost of their training, and there are scholarships for those without sufficient financial resources. When they finish, there are plenty of jobs in the capital and elsewhere in the country for these nurses, who are appreciated for their professionalism and their personalized, humane treatment of patients.



FRIENDS OF GOD

To carry out its pastoral work in the service of the Catholic Church, the Prelature of Opus Dei organizes activities for Christian and human formation aimed at people from all walks of life. In a practical way that is tailored to each one's individual circumstances, encouragement is given to love and follow Jesus

Christ, to get to know him better, amid one's daily tasks. People are helped to grasp more deeply the riches of the Catholic faith and the joy of living in accord with the Gospel and one's baptismal promises.

A central place is given to the message of the sanctification of work: that is, the effort to do it as



Detail of The Last Supper, Giotto.

The main activity of Opus Dei is to provide its members, and others who desire them, the spiritual means necessary to live as good Christians in the midst of the world.

St. Josemaría

perfectly as possible, with full respect for ethical principles, seeking union with God in each task, and striving to serve others and contribute to the progress of society.

In short, the aim is to encourage people to develop all their human and supernatural potential, and put it

in the service of God and neighbor. Thus they will be Catholics who seek to be true to the demands of their faith, and exemplary citizens, free and consistent in their professional, family and social life.

FRIENDS OF GOD TESTIMONIES



SINCE MY CONVERSION

In the summer of 2009 I was received into the Catholic Church, and soon after I became a Cooperator. This has helped me grow in my spiritual life and given me the opportunity to remind those I meet that we are all called to holiness, precisely in the performance of our work and ordinary duties, at all times of the day: through our work, family life and social relations. **This spirit has given me a more harmonious and a fuller life.**

Marcus Litzberg
lives in Sweden.



FINDING GOD IN SUFFERING

I work in the intensive care unit of a hospital. I've seen that sometimes suffering is an obstacle to understanding God's love. I've seen many patients who are frustrated by their illness, or who have lost their inner peace when nearing death. In these cases I try to talk with them about faith and hope in God, and often they return to the sacraments. **They discover in suffering, which at first seemed an obstacle, an opportunity to find happiness, to grow in their love for God, and to seek his forgiveness.**

Ciara Mannion
lives in Galway, Ireland. She is a nurse.



A SCARCE COMMODITY

St. Josemaria's message struck me as very logical and practical: to give significance to every day, every minute, and live them in a holy way. It's a way to follow Christ without strange or complicated procedures. I help Opus Dei through my prayers and some financial contributions. I attend some means of formation, but more importantly, I've begun to really try to live according to my faith. It's not easy, certainly, but it's possible.

Rokas Masiulis
lives in Vilnius, Lithuania. He is a businessman.



WAITING FOR A CENTER

When I was little, I went several times to a youth club run by members of Opus Dei, with all sorts of amusing activities and a friendly atmosphere. Many years later, married and living in Norway, I met a member of Opus Dei who came from Stockholm to Oslo from time to time to try to start regular recollections here. I immediately saw in her the positive and cheerful spirit so characteristic of Catholics. It was only natural that I should support her in every way I could right from the start. As there is no center of Opus Dei in Norway yet, **this friend stays with me when she comes to Oslo for the monthly recollections, and I try to invite people to come to them.**



Isabel Hidalgo

lives in Oslo, Norway. She is a representative of the Family Policy Institute of Norway.

STEEL WRAPPED IN VELVET

For various reasons, I was in need of inner strengthening. While browsing the internet, I happened to visit the Opus Dei website, and it immediately interested me; they talked about something I needed. I contacted them and went to a retreat. It greatly enriched me and made me reflect on the spirit of humility, truthfulness, the effort to pass unnoticed.... On the need to be like steel inside, but on the outside wrapped in velvet. I see the message of St. Josemaría, which is both modern and attractive, as though he had made it for me, for my life in the middle of the world. **My cooperation takes the form of helping out in some specific small things, as needed.** For example, I help organize each month the day of recollection in Martin. For me this is a great joy.



Miroslav Mazuch

lives in Martin, Slovakia. He is a judge. He is married with four children.

OFFERING MY ILLNESS

From the start, I knew that my illness would be an opportunity to draw closer to God, and I arranged things so that I could continue attending circles and Christian doctrine talks. **I've learned to offer the sickness to God for various intentions. And I have many: the members of my family, the Holy Father, the Prelate of Opus Dei.** Offering my illness keeps me going. Rather than focusing on the constant suffering, I try to be happy.



Chikaodili Rosemary Nnoli

lives in Lagos, Nigeria.

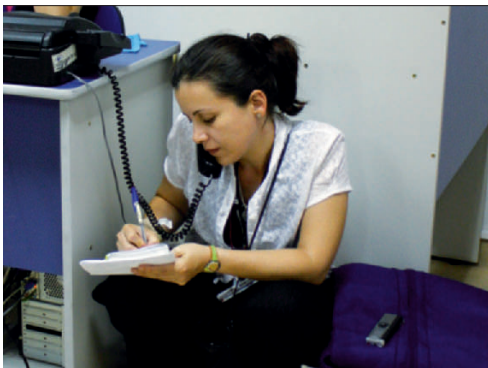


THE DETAILS NO ONE SEES

I received Baptism and Confirmation when I was young, but didn't have a deep understanding of the faith. A friend invited me to attend the monthly recollections and, little by little, I discovered the reasons behind the faith. I work in a garage. I paint many vehicles that have been repaired after an accident and, as I'm working on each one, I ask God for some particular intention. I often work on parts of the car that are not seen but, since I try to offer my work as a prayer, I pay great attention to detail in these areas. **Learning how to apply the Catholic faith in a practical way and teaching others to do so is something I find really attractive, and it helps me deepen my relationship with Christ.**

Gavin Dixon

was born in Sligo, Ireland, and lives in Dublin.



NEVER TOO LATE

My conversion took years to finally come to completion. Until then I had lived believing myself to be on the right road, but with a God made to my measure. Through friends I little by little learned what Christian life means. In 2008, a friend in Opus Dei helped me to prepare for my First Communion and Confirmation, making it possible for me to receive weekly classes given for me personally. When I was invited to become a Cooperator, I thought it only right to help actively, and I prayed that many people like myself might also benefit. For me it's been a gift from God and a marvelous opportunity to help to do God's work. **Since I received my First Communion at 37 years of age, I can say that it's never too late to find true happiness.**

Patricia Lafuente

lives in Asuncion, Paraguay. She is a journalist.



THE ROAD TO CONVERSION

To be a Cooperator had been for me a clear road to conversion, **giving me the inner joy of knowing that I am truly a son of God.** It has opened my mind and heart to the wonderful experience of being for a few minutes each day in direct contact with our Lord. Not one day now goes by without a brief visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and if I don't have time to accompany our Lord for a short while in prayer, I really miss it. The occasional free afternoons I have from my work I now dedicate to my family. Thanks to St. Josemaría I came to understand the importance, and the beauty, of helping my wife in the work of bringing up our six children.

Giuseppe Messina

lives and works in Palermo, Italy. He is an architect.



FOOD FOR MY SOUL

For me, being a Cooperator means trying to improve my life, particularly in spiritual matters. The formation I receive is food for my soul. I find very attractive St. Josemaría's central idea that **all of us can and should become saints through our daily lives, taking many small steps each day.** And we are generously offered the spiritual support we need.

Susanne Ruzsics

lives in Kilchberg, near Zurich, Switzerland.



A CHANCE OCCURRENCE

I work as a bookbinder. Some copies of *The Way, The Forge, Friends of God* and other works of St. Josemaría chanced to come into my hands. And while I was restoring them, their contents became a kind of seed growing inside me. **Often friends come to my workshop and tell me their problems. Maybe I can't give them a solution but I can point them in the right direction.** So, paradoxically, my "battle station" is my bookbinding workshop, always guarded by a picture of St. Josemaría. My friends often go away with some good advice from this saint.

Juan Carlos Bordoli

lives in Montevideo, Uruguay. He binds and restores books.



FROM CURIOSITY TO HAPPINESS

I was born on the outskirts of St. Petersburg. My parents were teachers. They were good and honest people but, like the majority of people who grew up in the Soviet Union, they didn't talk to their children about God. In my first contact with the faith what most attracted me was the trust I felt for people who professed their faith in Jesus Christ, but my internal world changed little. For me, God was just one more item, whom I remembered only when faced with some difficulty. Everything changed in 2007 when the girl who looked after my son began taking him to the Catholic church of St. John the Evangelist in Pushkin. Curious, I soon went along too. Mass gave me a happiness I hadn't experienced since childhood. In 2008, some people from the Opus Dei center in Moscow began holding recollections in our parish. **In the monthly recollections and reading the works of St. Josemaría, I learned that being a Christian doesn't mean only an hour's visit to God on Sundays, but living constantly in the presence of God.** This year I've left my post in a prestigious company to work at the White Stone publishing house, which started as an initiative of two priests and publishes and distributes religious books in Russian. My new company is smaller, but the challenge is much more interesting. Even though difficulties may arise, I have the conviction that God is stronger than any obstacle.

Natasha Zubova

lives in St. Petersburg, Russia. She works in publishing.



FRIENDS OF GOD INITIATIVES



Niger Foundation Hospital

ENUGU [NIGERIA]



The Niger Foundation Hospital, located in Enugu, has as its aim to improve the health of people in southeast Nigeria. For many years, this part of the country has faced serious health problems, including high levels of infection, and lack of medical centers and trained

staff.

The project began in 1993 in temporary buildings. In its first year of operation more than 10,000 patients were treated and this number increased year by year. The increase in the number of patients made it obvious that bigger and more adequate facilities were needed. With this aim a fund raising campaign began in 1996, which was received with enthusiasm and supported both by local benefactors and foreign institutions.

Gradually the new facilities became a reality. At present the hospital provides primary and secondary health services in, among other areas, internal medicine, general surgery, gynecology, obstetrics, orthopedics, urology, radiology and physiotherapy.

Campus Muengersdorf

COLOGNE [GERMANY]



Campus Muengersdorf in Germany embraces three different university institutions inspired by Christian principles: the International College, the Domestic Management Center and the Conference Center.

The first provides student accommodation and promotes cultural formation. It offers the possibility of intellectual exchanges between different fields of knowledge and is a place where teachers and students can meet.

The Domestic Management Center is a professional training center for students in catering and home economics. It emphasizes team work, the importance of each person, efficient use of time and management organization and flexibility. These values, together with the technical training provided, meet the requirements demanded by the service and human resources professions.

Through conferences, get-togethers and seminars open to the general public, the Conference Center, which is also part of the Campus Muengersdorf, offers the opportunity to reflect on current affairs and provides a setting for dialogue with teachers and experts from the world of economics, theology, art, music, etc.



Harambee: “All together for Africa”



The Harambee Africa International association was born at the time of the canonization of St. Josemaría. Since 2002 it has organized educational initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa and activities of communication and awareness in the rest of the world.

In its first decade, thanks to donations from thousands of people, Harambee has supported 33 projects (schools, teacher training programs and other social activities) in Angola, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea Bissau, the Ivory Coast, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan and Uganda.

Inspired by the message of St. Josemaría, Harambee seeks not just to build buildings, but also to have a positive impact on the life of African teachers.

At present the Association is established in Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Holland, Ireland and the United States. (www.harambee-africa.org).

Pedreira Educational and Welfare Center (CEAP)

SÃO PAULO [BRAZIL]



The CEAP, or Pedreira Educational and Welfare Center, started in 1985 and is the fruit of an ideal shared by some professionals and students. The center seeks to improve social conditions in the district of Pedreira in the south of São Paulo, where young people and adolescents between 10 and 18 years of age are at serious risk of marginalization, drugs and juvenile delinquency. Over these years CEAP has received 22 awards and is widely recognized for its work in this field.

CEAP offers basic training courses in Household and Industrial Electricity, Information Technology Assistance, Data Processing and Telecommunications, in addition to a two year course in Administration. 95% of its graduates have obtained employment on finishing their studies, and some 4% have reached management posts or have set up their own businesses. Students trained in CEAP are working in more than 400 companies.

The work of CEAP extends to the families of the students through programs such as “Child and Family Education” and “Adolescent and Family Formation.” In addition, every year over 500 families receive medical and dental treatment.



SAINT JOSEMARÍA

A SAINT CLOSE TO US

St. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer was born on January 9, 1902 in Barbastro, Spain, in a Christian family. He was not spared suffering even at an early age; in less than four years his three younger sisters died and the family business was ruined. Nevertheless, these events did not cause him to lose his joy or his confidence in God.

On March 28, 1925, at 23 years of age, he was ordained to the priesthood in Saragossa. He offered his first Mass for the soul of his father, who had died four

months earlier. From that day his life was centered on the celebration of the Eucharist, from which he gained strength for all his pastoral activities.

In the spring of 1927 he moved to Madrid. He carried out extensive priestly work in a charitable institution for the poor and destitute. Amid this constant giving of himself to God and those around him, God made him see Opus Dei on October 2, 1928, while he was spending some days on a spiritual retreat.

The Book of Exodus (33:11) tells us that God spoke with Moses “face to face, as a friend speaks with a friend.” I think that, even if the veil of discretion hides many details from us, we can very well apply these words to Josemaría Escrivá, “speaking as a friend speaks with a friend,” which opens the doors of the world to God to act and transform everything.

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger



Gathering in Castelldaura (Barcelona, Spain) in 1972.

In 1946 St. Josemaría moved to Rome, in keeping with the worldwide scope of Opus Dei and also as a manifestation of his union with the Pope. From the eternal city he worked with all his heart in the service of the Church he loved so deeply and encouraged the expansion of the apostolate of Opus Dei throughout the world.

He died at midday on June 26, 1975. On October 6, 2002, he was canonized by Pope John Paul II. His remains are venerated in the Prelature's church of Our

Lady of Peace in Rome.

From the day of his death accounts of favors granted through his intercession began to arrive at the seat of the Prelature of Opus Dei in Rome: conversions, decisions to deepen in the practice the Christian faith, cures, material favors.... His life and teachings are an inspiration and help for hundreds of thousands of people who trust in his intercession, as a friend they can approach to strengthen their faith.



LIKE A GAS STATION

I was born and grew up in a part of Germany with a Lutheran tradition. On April 19, 2005, my uncle mentioned to me that a German had just been elected Pope and, out of curiosity, since I had never been interested in Catholicism, I turned on the television. From that moment on, I couldn't stop thinking about what the Pope had said and I began reflecting on the faith and the Church. I bought the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and rapidly found answers to questions that had always unsettled me. One day, looking at the website of a big publisher, a book entitled *The Way* drew my attention. On reading it I knew that my place was in the Catholic Church. I contacted the local parish and in 2007 received the sacrament of Confirmation. I bought more books by St. Josemaría and obtained information about Opus Dei via the internet. I found out about a public launch of a biography of St. Josemaría that was to take place in Cologne, and decided to go there with my father. **Afterwards I started to attend various activities of formation. I saw that they enriched my life, particularly the recollections. For me, they are like a gas station where I can go to recharge my soul so as to go forward in daily life.** I soon felt the need to do more for Opus Dei, and after talking it over with the friends I had made there I decided to become a Cooperator.

Christian Wilke lives in Falkenstein, Germany. He is a nurse who works in a prison.



EVERYTHING WITH A SMILE

Ever since I began to attend some means of formation, I've often felt I was "consuming" goods constantly and giving nothing back in return. Now, as a Cooperator, I can make a contribution, but above all I receive help to sanctify my daily life and do everything with a smile. I find it challenging to be faithful to prayer, and put order into my daily life: getting up, praying, looking after the children at school, shopping, doing housework, tackling piles of dirty clothes, cooking.... I've learned how to set priorities and work in a more orderly way. One of the most important things I've learned is how to discover God in my neighbor, in the people around me, in those who are suffering and are in need, and also in the beauty and happiness of a relationship. **By meditating on the message of St. Josemaría I've discovered how a person liberated from their selfishness becomes freer and more generous, able to provide human richness to relationships with others.**

Maria Spenger lives in Graz, Austria. She is a kindergarten teacher.



I'M THE FIRST TO BENEFIT

It may sound a bit selfish, but as I see it I myself am the first to benefit from being a Cooperator. My life makes almost no sense without doing apostolate, or feeling I'm part of the Work. I often find myself repeating phrases or anecdotes of St. Josemaría. **There are two aspects of his spirit that I find especially attractive: courage to face challenges that appear beyond our reach and accepting things that we don't like; and the confidence that comes from realizing we are in God's hands, that we are nothing without him,** but that with him we can take on endeavors that are beyond our strength. These two characteristics come down to one, which is the most important one: prayer, union with God.

Alejandro Emilio Canale Becker lives in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He works in the community home "El Encuentro" and for the Mapfre Foundation.



WITHOUT EXPECTING ANYTHING IN RETURN

St. Josemaría has had a great impact on my life. His example of serving without expecting anything in return moved me to become a promoter of Condoray, a corporate activity of Opus Dei. So I devote my energies to helping people to grow humanly and spiritually and to develop. In addition St. Josemaría has granted me many favors. For example, **Naomi, my daughter, was born thanks to a favor of St. Josemaría. Some doctors recommended abortion as a result of my health problems, but my family and I prayed for a miracle through his intercession,** and God granted it. I had to sign a document that cleared the doctors of any responsibility for what might happen to me. But Naomi came into the world. Another gift is my son who arrived when I was getting on in age. As thanks for so many favors, he bears the name Josemaría.

Raquel Morán lives in Peru. She is a housewife and has five children.



PHRASES WRITTEN FOR ME

A few months before defending my doctoral thesis, I discovered the Christian faith. Subsequently I obtained two jobs, both quite good, but I realized something was missing. I can do greater and more interesting things, I thought. Looking for a way out of this cul de sac, I found on the internet some quotations of St. Josemaría. They were short paragraphs but they caught my attention and spurred me to take action. Those phrases seemed to have been written just for me. **When I learned to find God in my daily life, my relationship with my work changed. The quality improved and I was more demanding on myself because I realized why I was doing it.** Now it is impossible for me to be slapdash or to finish a task merely to remove it from my “to do list,” because, above all, it’s work done for God.

Sergei Biziukhin lives in Riazan, Russia. He is Orthodox and works as a historian.



IN A RELIGIOUS CONGREGATION

In 1985 I was fortunate to meet Monsignor Alvaro del Portillo, the first successor of St. Josemaría. He became a real father to me and a very valuable adviser. He helped me a lot in the decisive years of our juridical path. In the years following the Council, the Work gave me a lot of support to keep true to our wish to follow faithfully the doctrine of the Church and our religious observance. Seeing how much we benefited from the spiritual assistance of Opus Dei, it seemed to me that the best way of responding and giving thanks was in our formal commitment to pray for the Work. Since then each Community that has been founded has asked to be named a Cooperator of Opus Dei. Our cooperation consists mainly in prayer. **Every day we offer our lives for the sanctification of priests, and in our prayers the apostolic work of Opus Dei is especially present.** For me this cooperation signifies above all supporting a work of God in the Church and receiving its spiritual benefits. Though the orientation of the Work is very different from our life as consecrated religious, we are all seeking the holiness to which God calls us, and it is very important that we support one another on this path, respecting the variety of our particular charisms.

Mother María Jesús Velarde lives in the convent of the Daughters of Holy Mary of the Heart of Jesus in Galapagar, Spain. She is the Founder and Superior General of this Institute of Pontifical Rite.



ST. JOSEMARÍA, A SAINT CLOSE TO US TESTIMONIES



FROM THE KITCHEN

I decided to become a Cooperator on seeing how generously St. Josemaría gave himself to God and the family spirit he spread. I often think that it is thanks to the “yes” he gave to our Lord that we are all here. Since then my family life and my work have completely changed. When I see two hundred people eating in a restaurant, I pray for them and see it as a direct way of connecting them with God. **When I prepare a special dish, I ask God to inspire me to make it well so that it satisfies the people’s needs, and I say to him: This is for you.**

Juan Pedro Espinosa Sánchez

lives in Murcia, Spain. He is a caterer and President of the Association of Chefs in the Region of Murcia..



WAITING IN VIETNAM

The first thing I knew about Opus Dei was *The Way*, the book by its founder. My parish priest gave it to me. Its message that I can be a saint through my work really touched my heart. This book became my spiritual guide during my years at the university. In 1997 I began attending monthly talks and circles in Ho Chi Minh City and I became a Cooperator. At the beginning there were five of us who attended the means of formation. Now we are thirty. We helped to translate the material for the classes on Christian doctrine into Vietnamese, and also help provide simultaneous translations during the recollections and other activities. **I always pray for the Work and hope it will soon be able to begin its stable work in Vietnam.**

Pham Kim Uyen

lives in Tan Bien, Vietnam. She works in a Human Resources department.



IN THE CINEMA AND THEATER

We actors often face problems of conscience and we need fortitude to live up to the faith; rejecting a project with immoral content can mean losing the opportunity to get other work in the future. **I try to put myself in St. Josemaría’s hands when I have to insist on changes in the script of a film, and at times I’ve achieved great improvements.** I also take advantage of the long rehearsals during plays to talk to my colleagues about the meaning of life, the family, successes and failures in life....

Adam Woronowicz

lives in Warsaw, Poland. He is a cinema and theater actor.



FINDING THE RIGHT PATH

I converted to Catholicism in April 2005, having followed the last days of the life of John Paul II on television, and **something happened inside me that I can't describe: a sorrow, a longing for God, a need to find the right path once more, which became so strong and clear that I immediately began my fantastic return voyage to the faith.** One day, in the Catholic Cathedral of Stockholm, I was introduced to a priest who talked to me about Opus Dei. I began going to a Center where I attended recollections, meditations, Mass.... St. Josemaría's message has made me grow a lot as a person, woman, mother, daughter, friend. My life has taken on new meaning since I learned that holiness is within everyone's reach and that we can help other people through our work.



Caroline Israelsson

lives in Stockholm, Sweden. She is an interior designer.

BEYOND UTOPIA

During the Soviet period, even though it was forbidden to talk about religion, my colleagues and I had the intuition that human work has a divine dimension. **St. Josemaría's message of seeking sanctity through work is of great importance in our society.** Work that is well done is key not only to personal development but also for the whole of humanity because it brings people together. St. Josemaría has taught us that every Christian must do his work as perfectly as possible, since only work done in that way can be offered to God and become a path of purification and sanctification. This is what allows us to become co-creators with God.



Yuri Simonov

lives in Moscow, Russia. He is professor of theoretical physics and director of a nuclear physics laboratory.

EVERY SCHOOLGIRL IS A TREASURE

I learned about the Nagasaki Seido School four years after it was established. I liked the oratory because, although I'm not a Christian, I studied in a Catholic school and every morning went there to pray before classes. Nagasaki Seido attracted me through its friendly family environment and by the way the teachers treated the schoolgirls. I right away wanted to help them in their work. **The message of St. Josemaría has made me see each of my schoolgirls as a treasure and has moved me to help them, respecting their personalities so that in the future they can be useful in society.** I give thanks that my two boys were able to study in Seido. Now they are grown up, and they bear engraved on their hearts the school motto: Freedom and responsibility: *possumus!* We can! It moves me to see them, when taking on any challenge, whether big or small, saying: *possumus!*



Mitsuko Hori

lives in Nagasaki, Japan. She is receiving instruction for Baptism.



Pontifical University of the Holy Cross

ROME [ITALY]



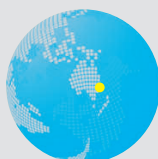
Initiated by Monsignor Alvaro del Portillo, following a long-desired dream of St. Josemaría, the university began its activities in 1984, with the firm support of John Paul II. At present around 1500 students—priests and candidates to the priesthood, religious and lay people, men and women—from more than 70 countries study there. Classes are offered in the faculties of Theology, Philosophy, Canon Law and Church Communications, and in the Institute of Religious Studies. Its location in Rome helps to highlight the service to the universal Church that is intrinsic to Opus Dei's apostolic work.

The work of the University is supported by the contributions of benefactors from all over the world, people of diverse religious beliefs and financial capabilities.



Kenthurst Study Center

SYDNEY [AUSTRALIA]



Kenthurst Study Center on the outskirts of Sydney offers a variety of academic, cultural and spiritual activities. It was built with contributions from many people throughout the country who continue helping with their donations. Courses held in recent years have included Lights and Shadows, a series of conferences run by Creston College for women professionals and students. Seminars on topics such as post-modernism, business ethics, the social doctrine of the Catholic Church, the family and fashion have also been organized.

During the year Kenthurst offers many spiritual retreats for people from every background. There are also seminars for bishops and diocesan clergy on topics of current interest. In 2008 Benedict XVI spent some days at Kenthurst praying and resting before the Sydney World Youth Day.

The services Kenthurst offers are carried out by qualified and expert staff who seek to create a family atmosphere in the meals provided and in the care of the center. Kenthurst also offers students from Kenvale College who are studying Hospitality Management the opportunity to practise their skills.

1

What is a Cooperator of Opus Dei?

Cooperators are men and women who, without forming part of the Prelature of Opus Dei, help its apostolates in various ways.

To be a Cooperator does not require a specific vocation. Cooperators usually are relatives, friends or colleagues of the Prelature's faithful; or persons who have received some spiritual benefit from the apostolate of Opus Dei or who appreciate the great task of human and social development that is carried out by the different apostolic endeavors of the Work. Cooperators can be non-Catholics, non-Christians or persons who profess no religion at all.

2

What is involved in being a Cooperator of Opus Dei?

Cooperators commit themselves to collaborate spiritually or materially with the apostolic initiatives of Opus Dei. Spiritual help may take the form of prayer, daily if possible, for Opus Dei and its apostolates. Material help consists in collaborating by means of one's work in some apostolic work of the Prelature or by means of financial contributions. In addition, those who wish to do so participate in the means of Christian formation that the Prelature offers.

3

What benefits do Cooperators receive?

The faithful of Opus Dei pray daily for all who help or have helped the Prelature in any way. In addition, on certain occasions the priests of the Prelature offer Mass for the souls of deceased Cooperators. Moreover, the Holy See has granted indulgences that Cooperators can gain on particular days of the year, by observing the conditions established by the Church and renewing, out of devotion, their commitments as Cooperators.

4

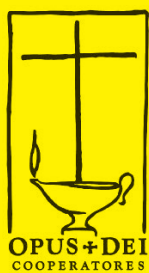
How does one become a Cooperator of Opus Dei?

The Regional Vicar of Opus Dei appoints as a Cooperator a person who desires this, by means of a proposal from a faithful of the Prelature. Once the proposal has been approved, the person is informed; he or she becomes a Cooperator on the date on which the appointment is communicated. That day a Catholic Cooperator can gain a plenary indulgence, under the usual conditions.



"You are the ones who do everything, and it's the same everywhere. You are wonderful. You know how to respond to God, how to please him and give your help, so that we can save souls. May God bless you. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!"

St. Josemaría



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