



COOPERATORS  
**OF OPUS DEI**



## **CONTENTS**

What is Opus Dei?	<b>4</b>
Cooperators of Opus Dei	<b>6</b>
The joy of giving	<b>14</b>
An unexpected greatness	<b>22</b>
Friends of God	<b>30</b>
St Josemaría, a saint close to us	<b>38</b>



“To know Jesus Christ, to make him known, to take him everywhere”, that’s how St Josemaría expressed one of his deepest, heartfelt desires. Since 1950, cooperators of Opus Dei help to try to make this a reality, together with the faithful of the Prelature, through their prayer and support for so many apostolic ventures across the five continents. “Today this seems like a dream,” said St Josemaría some years later, “a blessed dream which has now become a reality in so many slums on the peripheries of big cities, where we receive people with affection, looking them straight in the eye, because we are all equal.”

Jesus Christ identifies himself with each single person in this world, and especially with those who are most fragile or defenceless. “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.” (Mt 25:40) This teaching is the core reason for our “vocation to safeguard and to care” for each person, something that Pope Francis insists so much on, and which is a challenge for each one of us.

From the beginning, St Josemaría had the joy of being able to count on the help of many cooperators – including some non-Catholics, non-Christians and non-believers – who were moved by his desire to help people everywhere realise how close God is to us. All the faithful of Opus Dei pray daily and gratefully for cooperators, that each one of them may find, through their joyful response to the “vocation to safeguard and to care”, the smiling and grateful face of God.

**Mgr. Fernando Ocáriz**  
Prelate of Opus Dei

# WHAT IS OPUS DEI?

---



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

Its purpose is to contribute to the Church's mission to evangelise the world, promoting among people of all areas of society a life that is consistent with the Christian faith, in the ordinary circumstances of human living and especially through the sanctification of one's work.

The message of Opus Dei is that every worthy and honest job can become an activity that gives honour to God. For St Josemaría, to sanctify work means to act according to the spirit of Jesus Christ: doing one's work conscientiously, seeking to give glory to God and to serve others, and in this way to contribute to the sanctification of the world.

The Work provides spiritual formation and pastoral attention to its faithful and to all the members of the public who want it, so that each one, in his or her own place in the Church and in the world, may get to know God better and love him more, giving witness to the faith and striving with others to give Christian solutions to the problems of society.

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

**The Cooperators of Opus Dei are men and women who help in the activities promoted by the Prelature of Opus Dei with their prayer, almsgiving and work, according to their possibilities. This brochure offers a sample of testimonies explaining how Cooperators help, and why.**

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



**“As our desire for love and peace spreads, as a consequence of the Christian spirit which will vivify all human endeavours, it will help towards solving the great problems which beset mankind.”**

**St Josemaría**

# COOPERATORS OF OPUS DEI

---

Men and women of every race, religion and culture can become Cooperators. They can be Catholic or not, Christian or non-Christian, and unbelievers as well. Together with the faithful of the Prelature and other members of the public they promote many formative and social activities.

Their cooperation can be both spiritual and also material. “We need Cooperators like you, who pray; Cooperators like you, who smile”, St Josemaría once said to a Peruvian village woman when he was in

her country on a trip through Latin America. Material help can be provided through the work they do or in the shape of alms. Referring to those who share the same ideal of helping people to grow and develop with the faithful of Opus Dei, St Josemaría used to say: “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.”



Janaiha Faith Nelson, Washington DC (USA)

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

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

offered the possibility of receiving spiritual assistance. Catholic Cooperators can also profit from the spiritual benefits granted by the Catholic Church to those who cooperate with Opus Dei: on specific dates in the 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 birdsong 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 know more about religion. One day an Opus Dei centre opened near my house, and that was my chance to deepen my knowledge. 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 know get to know God and live a noble life, of work, understanding and respect for others, and healthy entertainment...** After a few years I was baptised. The message of St Josemaría helps me sanctify my work, which takes place largely in a garden among the flowers: when I am watering or fertilising, I think about how the Lord cares for me, and when the flowers are opening and thriving, I pray for the spiritual growth of all men.

**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 join my prayers and other contributions with 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 I became a Cooperator last year. I'm a social worker and what I try to do is 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 doctrine of the sanctification of ordinary life: everything I do, although it may seem trivial, relates to God and has an infinite value; I think that's great.

**Christoph Flaspöhler**

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



---

### LIKE DANCING

Being a Cooperator is **a challenge for me: it is always a good cause, beyond one's capabilities, which motivates you to make an effort.** Sometimes I am asked to give a dance workshop, other times I may supervise a family day, or help out with the activities of the Youth Club, and so on. For several months, I have been giving family counselling 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 get your ballet slippers on, and work on improving your own dancing continually, and I think it is the same with the faith: without depth and without practice, it won't work.



**Judith Gerbrands**

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

---

### GOD AMONG THE SHOES

I repair shoes. I came across Opus Dei thanks to my daughter Agnieszka. It was she who told me that I could bring God into my shoe repairs and that helped me do my job better. Because of my illness I had to reduce my professional commitment (three days a week I have to go to hospital for dialysis, while waiting to receive a kidney transplant). **Above all, I co-operate by offering the difficulties of the 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

I came across 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 that as I was Orthodox, she would not 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**

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



### EVANGELISING CULTURE

I liked the work I saw was being done with young people, including children from poor families, a formation that is often unavailable at home. This builds their moral fibre and helps them overcome the negative pressures of their surroundings. As a Cooperator, I try to help with this as much as possible. **In my professional work, I aim to create good quality graphic novels with messages that encourage and promote a positive vision of the world.** I see this effort as a small way to help evangelise culture.

**Chris Chow**

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

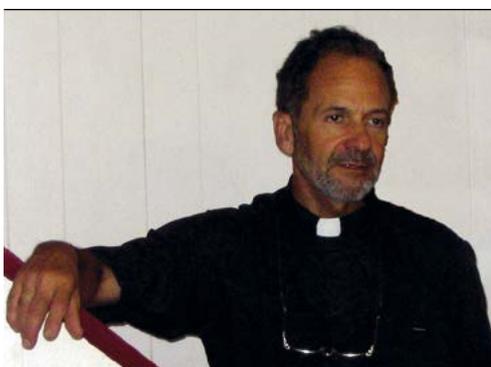


### A NEW HORIZON

I have a congenital disease that causes extremely painful crises and severe permanent anaemia. I still have not recovered from the last crisis, which left me in a coma for six days, and I cannot walk unaided. I offer up these sufferings for the work of Opus Dei and for the holy souls. **Finding meaning in my disease opened 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: to me, it means showing gratitude in some way for the formation which helps me so much to counsel others in the faith that the Lord has given me.

**Suzanne Ngono Ayissi**

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



### IN MY PARISH

Since 2004, a dozen young people from an Opus Dei residence have participated 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 organised for priests near Montreal, where loyalty to the Pope and the teachings of the Church is taught, 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: they strive not 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 centre for boys that Opus Dei has in Jerusalem. Then my daughter started to attend the girls' activities, and then I too started to participate in formation 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, because I've found strength from Opus Dei recollections to continue with my work** – I teach in a primary school where the problems of our time are not lacking – and I've found the wisdom to reach positive solutions with colleagues, and the creativity to reach my students.



**Hanada Nijim Noursi**  
is a school teacher.

## PRAYING FOR THE WORK

We don't yet have an Opus Dei centre in my city, but the Lord opens doors. 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 prayer life.**



**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 through ill health, she went blind and had to stop working. I am working as a home help, but for many years I used to help with the disabled boys at the Don Orione House. It was there that I met a priest of Opus Dei. He was the first to tell me about the Work. I started attending some talks, while my sister stayed at home: I would explain them afterwards to her. But then **we realised we could host 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 Centre

MADRID [SPAIN]



The Laguna Care Centre is housed in a modern three-storey building with almost 10,000 square metres of floor space, situated in the Madrid district of Lucero. It aims to integrate care for older people 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 which the founder of Opus Dei passed on through his life and his writings.

An interdisciplinary team of professionals specialise 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 specialised care can be given in the patient's home, in the inpatient unit, or in the day-care centre, according to the needs of each patient, their illness and their family circumstances.

### Irtysk Cultural Centre

ALMATY [KAZAKHSTAN]



Irtysk was founded in 2007 with aid from many countries. The main activity of the centre is a language school, meeting a vital need of 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 programme 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 centre for educational and family development which 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 Centre provides programmes for parents, designed to help them in the task of educating their children. In addition, there are various courses to help parents without basic primary or secondary education to acquire basic skills to help them improve their work and their job prospects.

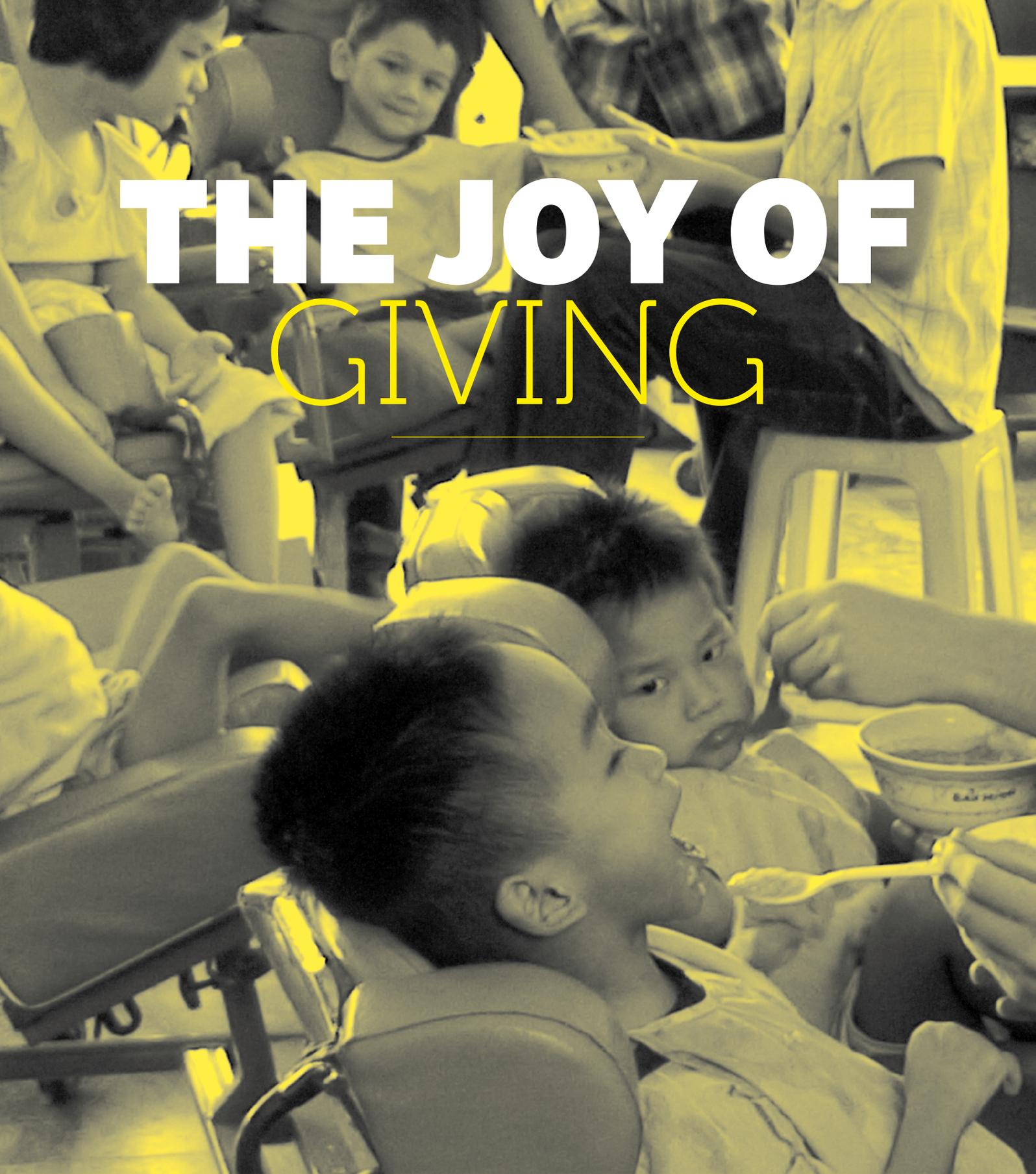
## Terral Social Centre

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 immigrant population and the highest levels of unemployment and school dropout. This neighbourhood is the setting for Terral Social Centre, where people from different cultural and religious backgrounds share daily classroom resources that help provide job placements and integration into society.

One of the programmes on offer is called '1 to 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 programme: university students and postgraduates, retired teachers, housewives and many others. The aim is to help schoolgirls not to leave education before 16, the age at which they can decide whether to enter working life 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, promote educational, social and cultural centres around the world, to provide, in some way, for the needs of each country or environment, without discrimination by 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, formation and training centres for women, student residences, colleges, health centres,



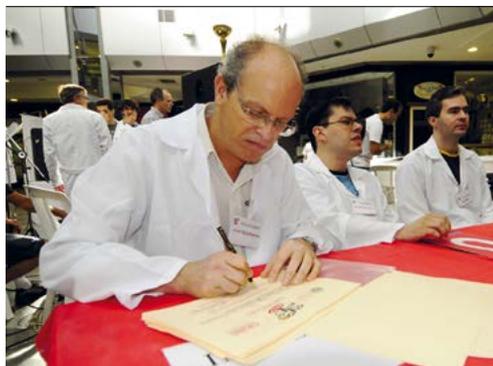
**"We have to act in such a way that others may say, seeing us: here is a Christian, because he does not hate, because he knows how to understand, because he is not a fanatic, because he rises above his passions, because he sacrifices himself, because he communicates peace, because he loves."**

**St Josemaría**

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

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

usually diverse, and peculiar to each group, the apostolic activities organised in each country are those that seem to fit best with local needs, be they a university or a student residence to a clinic or a farm school for rural people."



### FREE 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 free and more duty-bound to work to improve the world.** 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 been involved in Opus Dei 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 Des prêtres pour toutes les nations (Priests for All Nations), 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 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 Club Nerpio, in Albacete. I think this has helped me to get to know the Catholic Church better. I appreciate the Church a lot.** My life has been enriched and my being a Muslim hasn't been an obstacle. Among many things, what has struck me above all is forgiveness in action, 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 help with summer camps for youngsters. **We got food for them at a wholesale market.** I consider myself fortunate to be a Cooperator, because the message of St Josemaría 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 centre of the Work came to see me, and others from the centre also called to see how I was doing. They brought me a prayer card with a relic of St Josemaría 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.

### AN EXPRESSION OF LOVE FOR THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

I pray every day for the Prelate of Opus Dei and the apostolates of the Prelature and, occasionally, workload permitting, I offer my assistance: for example, **this semester I've been happy because my workload has been a little lighter, so I've been helping on Saturdays in an educational program.** Although I am 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: **if 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 work with one of the associations for young professionals at the Niere Centre in Abidjan.** This association organises cultural and sports activities for young people who are beginning their professional life. Although I do not do a huge amount, for me it is a way to help to do Opus Dei and to give thanks for the formation I receive. Plus, I can deepen my training in living the Christian faith. It is also a way of contributing 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. She invited me to a recollection in Kimlea. I decided to be a Cooperator because I realised that I could help with 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 I give milk and garden produce to Kimlea School for cookery classes.

**Mary N. Gichuiru**

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 the love of God, it means fulfilling his desires for me. I firmly believe that what I have is not mine: it is on loan; it belongs to God. So I want to contribute beyond measure, with every means at my disposal. With all I have and all I can do, I will go as far as I can: 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 centre. After a while, I was asked to be a Cooperator, and at first I wondered if I could manage, but finally I decided to. **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. I can truly say that since then, the atmosphere in our home has changed: 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.

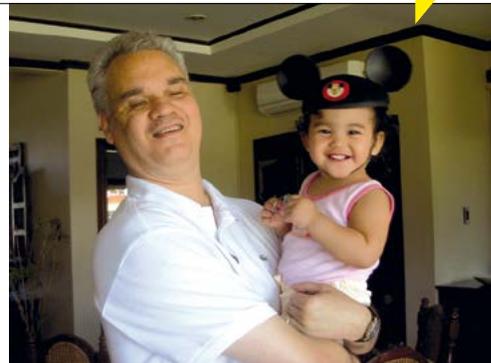


### **A HEART WORKING QUIETLY**

I am blind. I lost my sight in a car accident. Through the formation I have received, I have come to realise that marriage is my way of reaching holiness: trying to be the best husband and father I can. Also, I know that if I fail, by the grace of God, I can always try again. I have learned to sanctify even the small skirmishes of each day. I understand 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 prayers and in their mortification, be the heart that works quietly but steadfastly 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**

Through helping 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 I was told, "Work of God", then I said: this is what I want to do. **Whenever I help with projects aimed at people with limited means, I give thanks to God, and I think I should do more to get closer to the Almighty.** At the same time, I ask myself, how could I do more? This has helped me to improve the fulfilment of my duties at home and at work, thereby 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, Africans ... all nationalities are united, and this strikes me as impressive.

**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 centre and saw that I could get closer to God. **I realised 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 get closer to God. It has also given a meaningful channel to the sense of social concern I have always had.

**Sultani Zegaib Saab Andere**

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





**Baytree**

LONDON [UK]



Baytree Centre is located in Brixton, an area of London listed as the seventh poorest in England, which is 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, regardless of race or social difference, to adapt to society. 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 centre discover the value of family life and how to combine it with a professional job outside the home. They learn to read and write, and are taught basic accounting and computing, skills needed 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. It was a small language institute which grew over the years, until 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 the English classes: all Japanese students 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 Centre TIGONI [KENYA]



Kimlea, located in the Kiambu District in Kenya, is a centre that 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 are provided with education by 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 be unable to access health services.

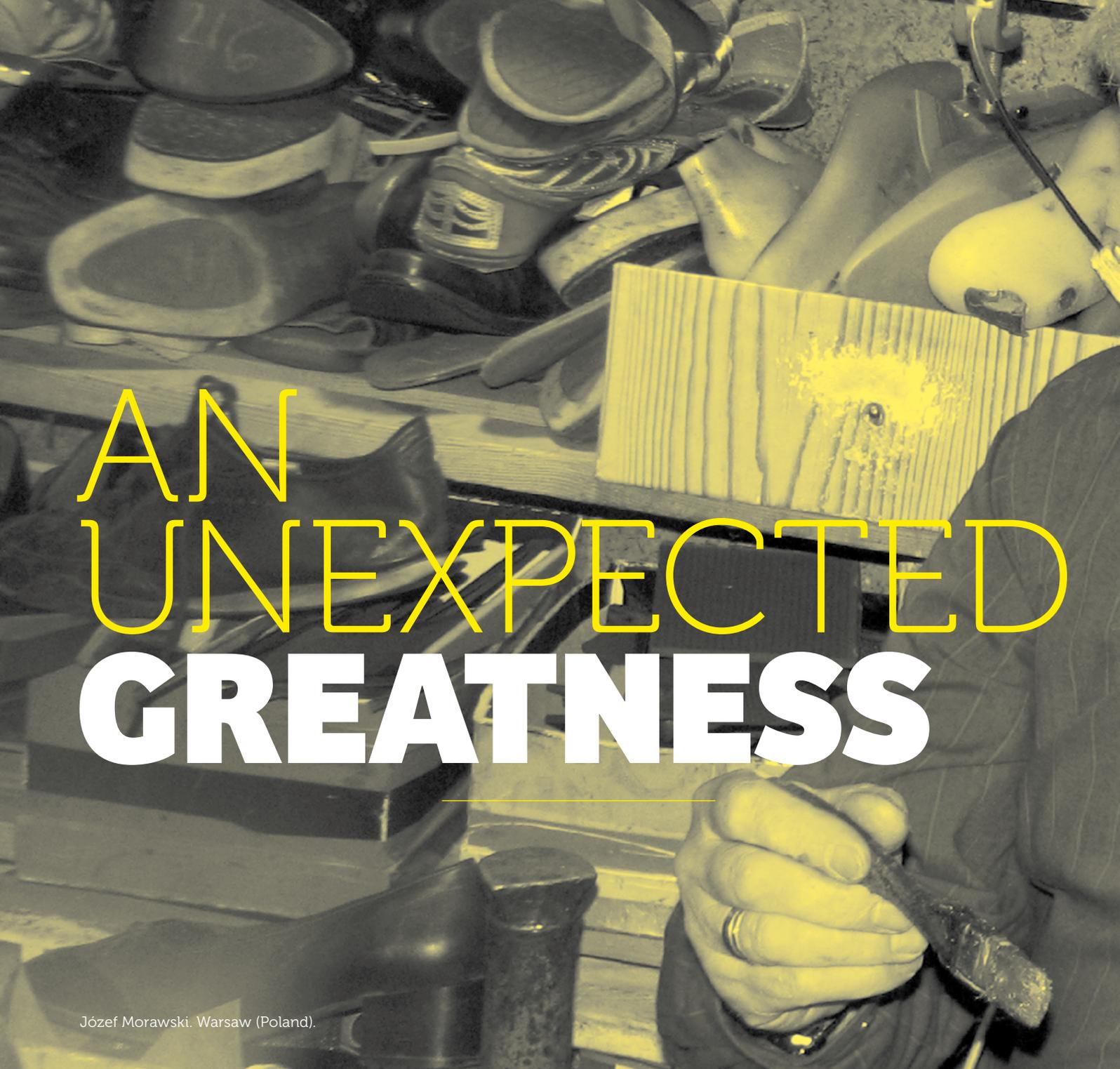
## Campus Bio-Medico University ROME [ITALY]



St Josemaria's first successor, Bishop Alvaro del Portillo, encouraged the foundation of the Campus Bio-Medico in Rome. Today, it occupies 75 hectares, and includes a state of the art Polyclinic and a Centre for Advanced Research in Biomedicine and Bioengineering.

There are seven degree courses on offer. The new Polyclinic, which is organised according to the latest hospital standards, opened in 2008 at the university campus of Trigoria, and also includes the Centre for Geriatric Health, two Outpatient Centres and a Radiotherapy Centre.

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 programme 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 2nd, 1928 by St Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, is a hierarchical institution of the Catholic Church - specifically, a personal prelature - which aims to spread, in every environment, the message that everyone is called to holiness: that work and everyday life are occasions 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 to strengthen 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, initiatives to help the disadvantaged, greater unity with the bishop and the priests of each diocese, and so on.

"Yours is truly a great ideal", Saint John Paul II affirmed, "which anticipated from the outset the theology of the laity that subsequently characterised 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 patron saint of ordinary life. 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.

**Saint 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 fact of being sons and daughters of God as the foundation of 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 centre and root of Christian living in the world; love for our Lady; docility to the Pope and the Church's hierarchy; charity and a desire to get on with others with a spirit of understanding; joy which comes from following Christ; unity of life, bringing together the different aspects of daily life in a way that fits in happily with Christian faith; awareness of the importance of

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

Living the Catholic faith fully carries with it a real concern to contribute, as far as possible, to solve problems 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 drive him to pitch in to support others, motivated by charity, and also by justice." Responding to this demand is a challenge to which members and Cooperators of Opus Dei feel equally committed.



**SEEING CHRIST IN THE SICK**

I met Opus Dei 20 years ago, while studying medicine. I was given advice that has become the driving force of 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**

Odette, a friend of mine, told me about an Opus Dei centre. 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 realise the importance of working for the glory of God, and I see that it 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. This was how I came into contact with Opus Dei. The Christian activities provide structure and support in my formation as a son of God and the struggle for personal holiness in everyday life. I was especially drawn to the idea that I can (and must) **be the same person in all areas of my life; not compartmentalised, depending on where I am or 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, Nagasaki, and decided to study 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, I have 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 small children.



**Sakura Kawaguchi**

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

### REFLECTING CHRIST

I studied 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 Centre for Priestly Meetings). My collaboration is also a response to the help I receive via 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: "my 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 received, I learned to love my profession as a painter, because a job well done gives glory to God, and helps one to practise virtue. For example, **I learned to speak with the Lord when I'm alone, working on a painting, and perhaps having difficulty concentrating.** When I'm struggling with something, I think of someone, perhaps the future owner of the painting, and I offer each mark or stroke of the brush. That way I can ensure that all my painting is done with love and prayers.



**Sunshine Plata**

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



### **BELIEVING IS SEEING**

Since I became a Cooperator, I surprise myself each time I am able to supernaturalise things that might at first glance seem trivial, but with my eyes fixed on God, they are different: this gives life a completely different meaning. **I've learned that you do not need to see to believe, but rather you must decide freely: believing is seeing.** This perspective changes your life; your earthly pilgrimage ceases to be monotonous, and becomes a delightful adventure.

**Juan Pablo Valencia Montero**

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

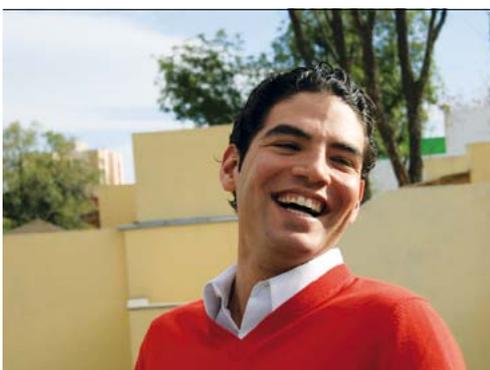


### **WITH MY PATIENTS**

I work as a psychomotor skills specialist for people with Alzheimer's and children who are disabled, autistic or with psychotic disorders, in the 3 to 8 age group. I prescribe physical therapy to help them regain some balance. Since I became a Cooperator, I have tried to entrust these children and elderly people to the Lord. In the morning, I offer up my day and pray for them all. At night, I entrust my experiences to the Lord. So 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 to succeed, but through attending meetings on Christian formation, I became convinced that the most important thing was to do things out of love for God and others. I have realised the same thing with my job as host of a television programme: I no longer care so much about appearing on screen; rather, I am concerned about enabling many people, through the programme, 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 job, and that everything has meaning and is worth the effort, because it's done out of love for God.**

**Arturo García Lourdes**

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



---

### **SURRENDERING TO THE WILL OF GOD**

I became a Cooperator because I wanted to stop living the faith on the defensive. Through the teaching on the universal call to holiness, I realised that **being holy is not about doing great things with your own strength, but about abandoning yourself to the will of God, and then it is God who acts.** With this way of living, we understand that life is not something that we do on our own. Being a Cooperator has helped me see that not only do I have to ask the Lord for what I want, as though I were making demands, but also, he acts upon those who open their 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 cooperate through 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 which 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 baptised at Easter 2008.** Then I realised that when I invite a friend to become a Cooperator, I am 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 I 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.

## AN UNEXPECTED GREATNESS INITIATIVES



### **Applied Medical Research Centre (AMRC), University of Navarre** PAMPLONA [SPAIN]



In 2002, as a result of fifty years of research experience at the Faculty of Medicine and the University Clinic, the Applied Medical Research Centre was established at the University of Navarre. It currently employs over 400 people from some twenty countries. Researchers concur in emphasising that one of the advantages of this centre 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 Centre has had more than 40 fresh discoveries patented in different areas of research: gene therapy and hepatology; cardiovascular sciences; neuroscience and oncology. In these four areas of medicine, it encompasses the study of diseases that cause 90% of deaths in various parts of the world. This research is essential for doctors to provide effective care to their patients.



### **Centre of Integral Development for 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 gain them access to 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 centre which has been granted official status as a Vocational and Alternative Institute of Higher Education. It carries out its mission through a personalised education based on Christian principles and ethics. Thanks to international cooperation, as well as many Bolivian contributors, from July 2009 it established a new centre, including classrooms and workshops, which can accommodate 300 students. In addition to vocational courses in caring for the elderly, hospitality and catering, it provides professional cooking and pastry-making courses, the Accelerated Baccalaureate and other short courses which are open to the general public.



## Nocedal Technical-Professional College

SANTIAGO DE CHILE [CHILE]



Since 1996, Nocedal College has admitted boys from El Castillo, a municipality in the district of La Pintada which is among the poorest and most deprived in Santiago de Chile. There, residents have little hope of improving their living standards: 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. They demonstrate that everyone is capable of benefiting from a broad-based and well-thought-out human and professional education.

## Higher Institute of Nursing (ISSI)

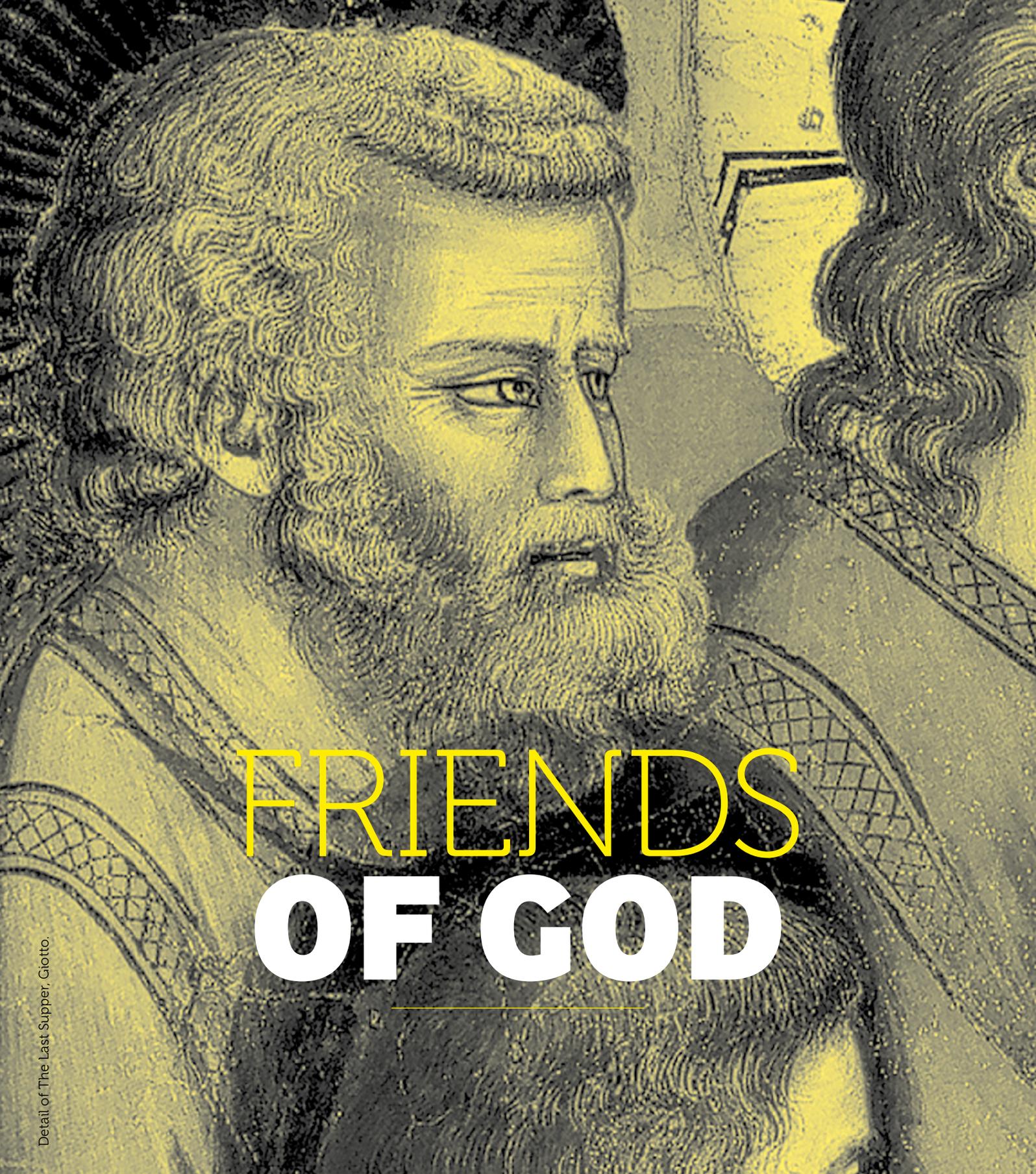
KINSHASA [CONGO]



In 1998 the Institut Supérieur en Sciences Infirmières was opened in a suburb of Kinshasa. The institute teaches a genuine awareness of the role and responsibility of nursing personnel in the Congolese community. The students learn to do their job professionally and – beyond the goal of earning a salary – with the sense of providing a personal service to patients, doctors, family, etc.

The system is based on close mentoring, which accompanies each student through every step of their training. In addition to classes, students undertake placements 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 personal, humane treatment of patients.



Detail of The Last Supper, Giotto.

# FRIENDS OF GOD

To carry out its pastoral work in the service of the Catholic Church, the Prelature of Opus Dei organises Christian and human formation aimed at people from all walks of life. In a practical way, tailored to the individual circumstances of each, all are encouraged to love and follow Jesus Christ, through their personal

efforts, in the midst of ordinary chores. This teaches a deeper perception of the riches of the Catholic faith, the joy of living according to the Gospel, and the fulfilment of baptismal promises.

In this type of formation, a central place is given to the message of the sanctification of work: that is, the



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**

effort to do it as perfectly as possible, with full respect for the law and in accordance with ethical principles, seeking union with God in each task, and acting with the desire 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 at the service of God and neighbour: Catholics who want to be true to the demands of their faith, exemplary citizens, and free and consistent in their professional, family and social life.



**SINCE MY CONVERSION**

In summer 2009 I was received into the Catholic Church and, shortly thereafter, 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 work and ordinary duties, at all times of the day: through 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 notice that sometimes, suffering is an obstacle to understanding God's love. I have 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: 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**

The message of St Josemaría seemed extremely 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 with my prayers and some financial contributions. I attend some means of formation, but more importantly, I have begun to strive to live according to my faith. Certainly it is not easy, but it is possible.

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



### WAITING FOR A CENTRE

When I was little, I went several times to a youth club organised 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. I immediately saw in her a positive and cheerful spirit so characteristic of Catholics. It was only natural that I should support her in every way I could from the start: as there is no Opus Dei centre in Norway, **this friend comes to stay with me when she comes to Oslo to attend 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.

### VELVET AND STEEL

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... Being like steel inside, but on the outside, soft as velvet. I see the message of St Josemaría, which is both modern and attractive, as if he had made it for me, because I am immersed in the world. **My cooperation takes the form of helping with concrete things, with little things, as required.** For example, I help as much as I can each month with the day of recollection in Martin: to me this represents 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 get closer to God, and I arranged things so that I could continue attending circles and Christian doctrine talks. **I've learned to offer the disease 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 sustains me. Rather than focusing on the constant suffering, I try to be happy.



**Chikaodili Rosemary Nnoli**

lives in Lagos, Nigeria.



### THE DETAILS THAT YOU DON'T SEE

I received Baptism and Confirmation when I was young, but had no 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 in every assignment, I pray to God for some particular intention. I often work on parts of the car that are not seen but, as I offer my work as a prayer, I pay great attention to detail in such areas. **Learning how to apply the Catholic faith in a practical way and teaching others is something I find really attractive, and it helps me deepen my relationship with Jesus Christ.**

**Gavin Dixon**

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



### NEVER TOO LATE

My conversion took years to complete. Until then I had lived believing myself to be on the correct road, with a God to fit my size. But through friends I progressively learned what Christian life means. In 2008, a friend in Opus Dei found me a place to learn and prepare for my First Communion and Confirmation with weekly classes for me personally. When I was invited to become a Cooperator, I thought it right to help actively, praying that many people like myself could benefit. For me it's been a gift from God and a marvellous opportunity to help in doing God's work. **Since I received my First Communion at 37 years of age, I can say that it is 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. **It has given me the inner joy of feeling that I am a true son of God.** It has opened my mind and my heart to the wonderful experience of having some moments of direct contact with our Lord every day. Not one day now passes without a brief visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and if I do not have time to accompany God in prayer, I miss it. The occasional free afternoons I have from my work I dedicate to my family: thanks to St Josemaría I came to understand the importance - and the beauty - of helping my wife in her tasks 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 the basic idea of St Josemaría that **all of us can and should become saints through our daily lives, taking many small steps each day.** For this we are generously offered the spiritual support we need.

**Susanne Ruzsics**

lives in Kilchberg, near Zurich, Switzerland.



### CHANCE AND CAUSALITY

I work as a bookbinder. Some copies of *The Way, The Forge, Friends of God* and other works by St Josemaría chanced to come into my hands. And they became the cause, while I restored them, for their contents to become 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 action 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 did not 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, which 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 had not experienced since I was a child. From 2008, some people from the Opus Dei centre in Moscow began to organise 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 to live 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 circumstance.

**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, for example: high levels of serious infections, lack of medical centres and of trained staff, etc.

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 objective 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 others, the areas of internal medicine, general surgery, gynaecology, obstetrics, orthopaedics, 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 Centre and the Conference Centre.

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

The Domestic Management Centre is a professional training centre for students of catering and home economics, which emphasises team work, the importance of the individual, 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 Centre, 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 canonisation of St Josemaría. From 2002 it has promoted 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 programmes 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 has taken to heart the motto: "Making schooling, not just building schools". It doesn't just build buildings, but also seeks to have a positive impact on African teachers.

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

## Pedreira Educational and Welfare Centre (CEAP)



SÃO PAULO [BRAZIL]

The CEAP, or Pedreira Educational and Welfare Centre, started in 1985 and is the fruit of an ideal shared by some professionals and students: 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 were at serious risk of marginalisation, drugs and juvenile delinquency. Over these years CEAP has received 22 awards and is widely recognised 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 programmes 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 9 January 1902 in Barbastro, Spain, to a Christian family. He experienced suffering from an early age: in less than four years his three younger sisters died and the family business was ruined. Nevertheless, these events did not make him lose his joy nor his confidence in God.

On 28 March 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 centred 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 did much priestly work in a charitable institution which worked for the poor and destitute. In this context of giving himself to God and others, God made him see Opus Dei on 2 October 1928, while he was spending some days in spiritual retreat.

The Book of Exodus (33:11) says of Moses that God spoke with him “face to face, as a friend speaks with a friend”. I think that, even if the veil of discretion hides many details from us, still from some small references we can very well apply to Josemaría Escrivá this “speaking as a friend speaks with a friend”, which opens the doors of the world so that God can become present, to work and transform everything.

**Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger**



Gathering in Castelldeu (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 which he loved so much and extended the apostolate of Opus Dei throughout the world.

He died at midday on 26 June 1975. On 6 October 2002 he was canonised by Pope John Paul II. His remains are venerated in the prelate’s church of Our Lady of Peace in Rome.

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



### LIKE A PETROL STATION

I was born and grew up in an area of Lutheran tradition. On 19 April 2005 my uncle mentioned to me that a German had just been elected Pope and, out of curiosity, given that I had never been interested in Catholicism, I turned the television on. For that moment on, I couldn't stop thinking about what the Pope had said and I began to think about faith and the Church. I bought the Catechism of the Catholic Church and I rapidly found answers to questions which have always unsettled me. One day, looking at the website of a big publisher, one book entitled *The Way* attracted 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 I got information about Opus Dei via the internet. By these means I learnt that there was to be a public launch of a biography of St Josemaría in Cologne and I decided to go there with my father. **Sometime later I started to attend various formational activities. I realised that they enriched my life, particularly the recollections. I could describe them as a petrol station where one goes to recharge one's soul so as to progress through ordinary 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.

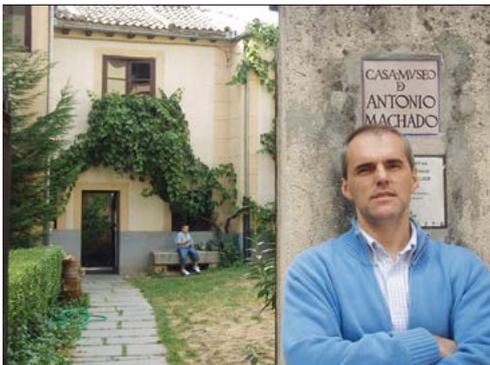
**Christian Wilke** lives in Falkenstein, Germany. He is a nurse who works in a prison.



### EVERYTHING WITH A SMILE

Since I began to attend some means of formation, I often felt I was imbibing constantly and giving nothing in return. Now, as a Cooperator I can contribute, but above all I receive help to sanctify my daily life and do everything with a smile. For me it is a challenge to be faithful to prayer, and organise and order my daily life: getting up, praying, looking after the children, shopping, housework, tackling piles of dirty clothes, cooking... in fact, to work following priorities and in a more orderly way. One of the most important things I have learnt is how to discover God in my neighbour, in the people around me, in those who suffer, in those who are in need, and also in the beauty and happiness of a relationship. **Meditating on the message of St Josemaría I have discovered how people liberated from their selfishness are free, generous and put human richness into their relationships with others.**

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



### I'M THE FIRST BENEFICIARY

It may sound a bit selfish, but as I see it I myself am the first beneficiary in 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 things about him I find specially attractive: courage to face matters which appear beyond our reach and accepting others which we don't like, and confidence to realise we are in God's hands, that we are nothing without Him,** but that with Him we can even take on projects which are beyond us. These two characteristics come down to one, 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 rural promoter of Condoray – a corporate activity of Opus Dei – and so I came to devote my energies to helping people to help themselves and to develop. In addition St Josemaría has granted me many favours. For example, **Naomi, my daughter, was born thanks to a favour of St Josemaría: some doctors recommended abortion as a result of my state of health, but my family and I prayed for a miracle through his intercession,** and God granted it. I'd been made to sign a document which cleared those doctors of any responsibility for what might happen to me: but Naomi came into the world. Another is my son who arrived when I was getting on in age: as thanks for so many favours, 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 sitting my thesis examination, I discovered the Christian faith. Subsequently I obtained two jobs, both quite good, but I realised 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 called my attention and pushed me into taking 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: quality improved and I was more demanding on myself because I realised why I was doing it.** Now it is impossible for me to be slapdash or to finish a task merely to be able to take it off my "to do" list because, above all, it's work done for the Lord.



**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 counsellor: 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 nominated a Cooperator of Opus Dei. Our cooperation consists mainly of prayer. **Every day we offer our lives for the sanctification of priests and in our prayers the apostolic works of Opus Dei are 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 being consecrated religious, we are all seeking the sanctity of life to which God calls us and on this path it is very important that we support each other, 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 be 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" which he gave to our Lord that we are all here. Since then all of my family and my work have changed: when I see two hundred people eating in a restaurant I pray for them and I see that it is a direct way of connecting them with God; **when I prepare a special dish, I ask the Lord to inspire me to make it well and that it satisfies the needs of the diners 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, given to me by my parish priest. Its message that it was possible for me to be a saint through my work touched my heart. This book became my spiritual guide during my time at 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 into Vietnamese the material for the classes of Christian doctrine and also with simultaneous translation 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 IN THE THEATRE

We actors often face problems of conscience and we need fortitude to live according to the faith; saying no to a job with immoral content can mean losing a chance of getting other work in the future. **I usually put myself in St Josemaría's hands when I have to insist on changes in the script of a film and at times I have achieved great improvements.** I also take advantage of the long rehearsals of plays to talk to my colleagues about the meaning of life, the family, successes and failures...

**Adam Woronowicz**

lives in Warsaw, Poland. He is a cinema and theatre 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. **Something happened inside me which I can't describe: a sorrow, a longing for God, a need to find the right path once more, which became so strong and obvious 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 Centre 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 got to know 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

In the Soviet period even though it was forbidden to talk about religion my colleagues and I had the intuition that human work had a divine dimension. **The call of St Josemaría to sanctity through work is of key importance in our society.** Work which is well done is fundamental 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 to perfection, given that only work done in that way can be offered to God and can be converted into a way 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 came across the Nagasaki Seido School four years after it was established. I liked the oratory because although I am not a Christian I studied in a Catholic school and every morning I went there to pray before classes. Nagasaki Seido attracted me through its friendly family environment and by the way in which teachers treated the schoolgirls. At once I wished to work with such people. **The message of St Josemaría has made me see each one 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 people in society.** I give thanks that my two boys have been able to study in Seido. Now they are grown up and they have engraved in their hearts the school motto: Freedom and responsibility: *possumus* (we can)! It amuses me to see them, when taking on any matter, be it 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 project of St Josemaría, the university began its activities in 1984, enjoying the firm support of Blessed John Paul II. At present around 1500 students – priests and candidates for the priesthood, religious and lay people, men and women – from more than 70 countries attend classes in the four faculties – Theology, Philosophy, Canon Law and Church Communications – and the Institute of Religious Studies. Its location in Rome helps to bring out an aspect of the light which inspires Opus Dei: service to the Church worldwide.

Vital to the University are the contributions of many benefactors from all over the world, people of diverse religious beliefs and financial capabilities.



**Kenthurst Study Centre**  
SYDNEY [AUSTRALIA]



Kenthurst Study Centre on the outskirts of Sydney offers different academic, cultural and spiritual activities. It was built with contributions from many people throughout the country who continue helping with their donations. Among the courses which have been held in recent years, "Lights and Shadows" stands out. These are conferences run by Creston College, for women professionals and students. Seminars on subjects like post-modernism, business ethics, the social doctrine of the Catholic Church, communication, the family and fashion have also been organised.

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

The services the Centre 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 house. Kenthurst also offers the possibility of practising their skills to some of the students from Kenvale College studying Hospitality and Event Management.

# 1

## **What is a Cooperator of Opus Dei?**

Cooperators are men or women who, without being members of the Opus Dei prelature, help out in its apostolates in various ways.

Being a Cooperator does not require a specific vocation. Cooperators are often parents, friends, work colleagues or neighbours of the members of the Prelature. Or they may have received some spiritual benefit from the apostolates of Opus Dei, or seen the human and social development fostered by the Prelature's apostolic works. Non-Catholics and non-Christians, or people of no religion at all can also be Cooperators.

# 2

## **What is involved in being a Cooperator of Opus Dei?**

A Cooperator makes a commitment to cooperate spiritually or materially in the apostolates of Opus Dei. The spiritual dimension of being a Cooperator is a commitment to pray, daily if possible, for the Prelature and its apostolic works. The material aspect may be in the form of alms, the dedication of one's own time or the provision of services for some apostolic work of the Prelature. Besides this, those who so wish can take part in the Christian means of formation provided by the Prelature.

# 3

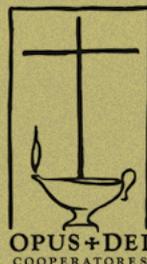
## **What benefits do Cooperators receive?**

The faithful of Opus Dei pray daily for all those who in one way or another help or have helped the Prelature. On certain occasions the priests of the Prelature offer Mass for the eternal repose of Cooperators who have died. In addition, 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 obligations as Cooperators.

# 4

## **How does one become a Cooperator of Opus Dei?**

The Regional Vicar of Opus Dei appoints someone a Cooperator at the proposal of one of the Prelature's faithful. Once the proposal has been approved, the person is informed; they become Cooperators from the day on which they are told of their appointment. That day, a Catholic Cooperator can gain a plenary indulgence, observing the usual conditions established by the Church.



**“You are the ones who do everything and it is 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. God bless you. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!”**

**St Josemaría**





Opus Dei Information Office  
6 Orme Court  
London W2 4RL  
United Kingdom  
(+44) (0)20 7221 9176  
[info.uk@opusdei.org](mailto:info.uk@opusdei.org)  
[www.opusdei.org.uk](http://www.opusdei.org.uk)

© Opus Dei Information Office, 2017