



# The Venerable Isidoro Zorzano

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## Isidoro's quiet work in times of war

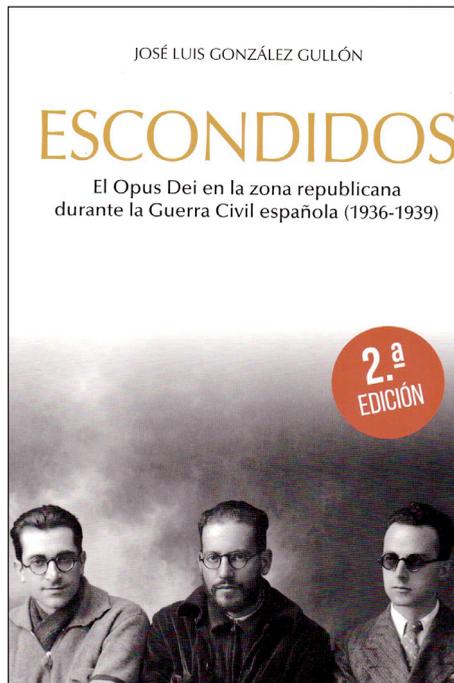
In his book entitled *Escondidos*<sup>1</sup> (Hidden), José Luis González Gullón describes how the members of Opus Dei lived in the Republican zone of Madrid during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). He presents a well-documented narrative of how Isidoro played a key role in maintaining close contact between Saint Josemaría and the members. González was able to do this, since the many letters that they wrote to each other during those times were preserved. These were written in coded language so as not to arouse the suspicion of the military censors. After the Founder of Opus Dei managed to leave Madrid, it was Isidoro who directed the activities of those who remained in the Spanish capital. Despite their deteriorating health, due to hunger and cold, they carried on with their lives with good humour. "When he wrote to those in refuge on the last day of the year, he apologized for his bad handwriting: 'I have such a harvest of chillblains on my hands that I can barely pick up the pencil'.<sup>2</sup>

"In his letters to the members of the Work, Isidoro Zorzano guided each one according to their circumstances, even in matters related to

their dealings with God (...): "This month always reminds us, with greater emphasis, of Our Lady. Let us learn how to make good use of it (...). May she enlighten and sanctify Grandad [that's how they referred to Saint Josemaría in coded language]. Let us ask her for the perseverance of all the little ones – especially those who find themselves isolated, those who are sick, those in morally or materially dangerous situations – and all those who are to come. Let us be generous also in our petitions; universal: let us not curtail or limit our dreams to the narrow confines of one nation. Let us feed our hearts with those great aspirations which, with our Lady's help, we must achieve."<sup>3</sup>

In these circumstances, a supernatural event took place, narrated in great detail in this book. It was regarding the passage of three members of the

Work from the Republican zone to the National zone. Isidoro had authorized it because "in prayer before a Crucifix, at home, he was certain that the right moment had come. As he noted in his diary, 'more than ever before, the circumstances are propitious now.' He knew that the fugitives would arrive in the National zone on 12 October, and this is what happened."<sup>4</sup>



1 J.L. González Gullón, *Escondidos*, Rialp, Madrid 2018, 463 pages. The Index of Persons indicates that Isidoro Zorzano's name appears on 181 pages.  
2 *Ibid.*, p. 376

3 *Ibid.*, p. 382  
4 *Ibid.*, p. 409



### PRAYER

Almighty God, you filled your servant Isidoro with an abundant wealth of grace as he carried out his professional duties in the midst of the world: grant that I also may learn to sanctify my ordinary work and take the light of Christ to my friends and colleagues. Deign to glorify your servant, and, through his intercession, grant me the favour I request . . . (*here make your petition*). Amen.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be.

*In conformity with the decrees of Pope Urban VIII, we declare that there is no intention of anticipating in any way the judgement of the Church, and that this prayer is not intended for public use.*

## Resources

### Biographies

**Daniel Sargent**, *God's Engineer*, Chicago (IL), Scepter, 1954, 191 pages.

**Jose Miguel Pero-Sanz**, *Isidoro Zorzano. Ingeniero Industrial (Buenos Aires, 1902-Madrid, 1943)*, Madrid, Palabra, 2009.

### Video Documentaries

A brief video summary of the life of Isidoro Zorzano is available at <https://opusdei.org/en-uk/video/who-was-isidoro-zorzano/>

*Isidoro Zorzano. El sentido de una vida*, 1999, 31 min on Youtube.

### News of the Cause

Isidoro was declared Venerable on 21 December 2016.

This Newsletter is issued free of charge. Those who wish to support the Office for the Causes of Saints of the Prelature of Opus Dei may send their donations to the Philippine Foundation for C.E.D., Inc. Rm 202 Alexander House, Amoroso St. Legazpi Village, Makati City. Cash donations may be deposited to the Philippine Foundation for C.E.D., Inc, BPI account # 0321-0202-08 at the BPI Legaspi Columns Branch, Makati City, or at any BPI branch.

### Isidoro holds the sword

In the summer of 2017, I had respiratory problems. Before Christmas my arm swelled and I was diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer. The doctor ruled out surgery and radiotherapy, and proposed carrying out tests to choose the most effective among three types of chemotherapy, depending on the type of mutations. On successive visits, all three were dismissed as ineffective. The only solution left was immunotherapy. In short, I have one of the worst cancers, in the most advanced stage, which cannot be operated on or radiated. They were going to boost my immune system, and I would have to cope as best I could from there.

If I am writing this, it is because, aside from applying medical means, I and many people (especially in the Ivory Coast) from the very start have been asking Isidoro to resolve this issue. As I had to come to Madrid, I took the opportunity to make several visits to his tomb in the church of Saint Albert the Great. As the negative results accumulated, my petitions could have taken darker overtones. I have been on treatment for more than a year now and I have almost another year to go. I lead a normal life without negative side-effects, except that the collars of my clothes are quite loose, since the cervical metastases disappeared. I have been able to go back to work and meet great people in Madrid, although I miss my friends from Abidjan very much. The doctor says that I may be back there in less than a year. I sometimes see myself as a Damocles, with Isidoro holding up the sword while filling the table with prawns. **G.H.S.**

### Long-distance family intercessor

Four years ago, I discovered the figure of Isidoro. I read his biography and his life had great impact on me.

Now I pray to him every day, asking him for my little girl who lives 470 km away, so that I may manage to talk to her daily and of course that, above all, she is in good health.

I also petition him for my work, and he always listens to me. I notice his presence in my enthusiasm and I put my trust in him in the most difficult moments, since he was a man full of strength, of good sentiments and, above all, full of faith. **M.H.M.**

### He enlightened the doctor

I decided to entrust to Isidoro some muscular problems that have been worrying me for some time now. I visited several doctors and none of the tests could identify the cause. The day after I prayed to him, I had other tests and I think Isidoro listened to me. He made the doctor notice a detail of my spinal column that had not bothered me before and he scheduled a series of tests. On another plane, Isidoro is helping me to take this situation calmly. I hope that the progress of his canonization process will help many to find God in their normal life, at times worrisome like his, and to be able to accept – like him when he fell ill in middle age – that none of us is essential. **J.M.M.**