

St. Josemaría Escrivá

Short Backgrounder

Saint Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer was born on Thursday, January 9, 1902 –and is the founder of the Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei, popularly, Opus Dei.

He was canonized in 2002 by Pope John Paul II, who declared Saint Josemaría as "counted among the great witnesses of Christianity." His feast day is celebrated on June 26.

St. Josemaría taught that work, family life, and other ordinary activities are occasions for spiritual union with Jesus Christ. And that everyone can be a Saint:

Your duty is to sanctify yourself. Yes, even you. Who thinks that this task is only for priests and religious? To everyone, without exception, our Lord said: 'Be ye perfect, as my heavenly Father is perfect'.

St Josemaria, The Way no. 291

Ordinary life. *"It is in the midst of the most material things of the earth that we must sanctify ourselves, serving God and all mankind,"* said St. Josemaría. Thus family, marriage, work – all of our activities – are opportunities for dealing with and imitating Jesus Christ, trying to practice charity, patience, humility, diligence, integrity, cheerfulness and all the other human and Christian virtues.

Sanctifying work. Sanctifying work means to work with the spirit of Jesus Christ, to work competently and ethically, with the aim of loving God and serving others, and thus to sanctify the world from within, making the Gospel present in all activities whether they be outstanding or humble and hidden. In the eyes of God what matters is the love that is put into work, not its human success.

Unity of life. St Josemaría explained that Christians working in the world should not live "a kind of double life. On the one hand, an interior life, a life of union with God; and on the other, a separate and distinct professional, social and family life." On the contrary: *"There is just one life, made of flesh and spirit. And it is this life which has to become, in both soul and body, holy and filled with God."*

***God is not removing you from your environment.
He is not taking you away from the world, or from your condition in life,
or from your noble human ambitions, or from your professional work...
But he wants you to be a saint – right there!***

Saint Josémaría, The Forge no. 362