

THE SERVANT OF GOD

Joseph Muzquiz



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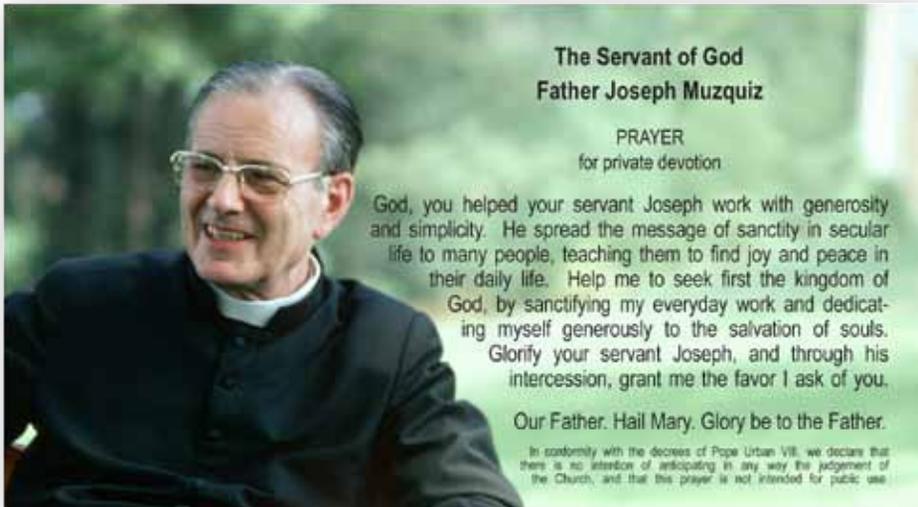


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Prelature of Opus Dei
Office for the Causes of Saints
139 E 34th Street
New York, NY 10016
ocs@opusdei.org

Related Publications

John F. Coverdale, *Putting Down Roots: Father Joseph Muzquiz and the Growth of Opus Dei*, Scepter Publishers, 2009.

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The First Session of the Inquiry in the Cause of Beatification of the Servant of God, Joseph Muzquiz, priest of the Prelature of Opus Dei, took place on June 2, 2011 in the Pastoral Center of the Archdiocese of Boston. Very Rev. Bryan K. Parrish, acting as the representative for Cardinal Sean O'Malley, presided over the ceremony.

From this moment on and in accordance with current legislation the diocesan tribunal will take testimonies of witnesses. Previously it had verified that the Servant of God enjoys an authentic and widespread reputation of holiness and had gathered his writings and other documentary proofs. These will be sent to the Holy See along with the remaining required documentation so that it can determine whether the Servant of God lived the Christian virtues to a heroic degree. ◀

Brief Biography

“There is no greater love than Love [of God]. All other loves are little loves.” Joseph Muzquiz had just met St. Josemaría Escrivá, the Founder of Opus Dei, and his words deeply impressed the young engineering student. But he little suspected that this encounter would change his life. It was the 1934-35 school year, Joseph was a 22 year old handsome, athletic young man and an outstanding student with a bright future and nothing further from his mind than a life totally dedicated to the service of God.

The Servant of God Joseph (José Luis) Muzquiz was born on October 14, 1912, in Badajoz, Spain, the first child of his parents. His father, a colonel in the infantry, was born in Havana, Cuba, and his mother was from Badajoz. He was raised in a home that combined deep piety with a sense of freedom. He had one younger sister, Sagrario. “José Luis was the heart and soul of family gatherings,” she says. “Always very affable, he teased people and encouraged everyone.” José Luis spent his childhood in Toledo and Madrid. He finished first in his high school class, enjoyed sports and taught catechism to children.

A classmate, Fernando Labrada, recalls that he was “mature, cool-headed, affectionate and very pious.” In 1930 he began studying civil engineering at the university.

After his initial meeting with St. Josemaría, Muzquiz decided to attend classes which the former gave once a week to small groups of university students.

In July 1936, six months after he graduated from the university, the Spanish Civil War broke out. The Servant of God spent the next three years in the army as an engineering officer. In July 1937, he met up with an Opus Dei member who had just escaped across the lines from the Republican zone, and learned that Saint Josemaría was still alive, though many other priests had been killed. In 1938, a letter from St. Josemaría caught up with him at the Guadalajara front. “At that point, I completely changed. I saw clearly that the Work was something our Lord wanted, which God had protected with a special Providence.” And he added: “I continued to speculate and I thought that I would end up in the Work. In fact, that was the day I dedicated myself internally.”

In January 1940, shortly after leaving the army, he joined

Opus Dei. Muzquiz’s human and supernatural maturity led Saint Josemaría to rely heavily on him from the start and to entrust him with many responsibilities. For the next few years he sought to sanctify his work as a civil engineer and helped bring many colleagues and friends closer to God.

When Saint Josemaría asked him if he would begin preparing for the priesthood, Muzquiz agreed. After a rigorous preparation, on June 25, 1944, in Madrid, Joseph Muzquiz, Alvaro del Portillo and José María Hernández Garnica became the first three men ordained as priests for Opus Dei. From that moment on, Father Joseph poured himself into his pastoral work.

In 1949 Saint Josemaría sent Father Joseph to begin Opus Dei in the United States. Father Joseph arrived in Chicago without money and knowing almost no English, but with deep supernatural confidence.

Within six months of his arrival, he purchased a student residence in Chicago, persuading his real estate agent to donate the commission towards a down payment. Richard Rieman, a former naval aviator, became the first American to join Opus Dei.



Soon Father Joseph began work on expanding to other cities. With only a handful of people available to staff the new centers, he fully appreciated the increased burdens that would fall to him, accepting them cheerfully. He had an exceptional capacity for using time well, with intense, effective work. He always pushed himself hard, while at the same time being very solicitous of the others, frequently asking if they were tired or needed a rest.

The source of his seemingly inexhaustible energy was the Holy Eucharist. "His piety and devotion were extraordinary... He didn't 'say' the Mass; Father Joseph 'lived' the Mass," recalls Robert Stepp, who lived at the Woodlawn Residence in the early 50s.

In 1961 Saint Josemaría called Father Joseph to work with him in the international government of Opus Dei in Rome. By that time there were centers in Boston, Chicago,

South Bend, Milwaukee, Madison, Saint Louis, and Washington, D.C. Father Joseph had also been instrumental in starting Opus Dei's work in Canada and Japan.

After working in Rome for three years, he moved to Switzerland as the head of Opus Dei in that country. Subsequently, Saint Josemaría, concerned that the 54-year-old Father Joseph was aging rapidly from so much intense work, decided to return him to a less stressful position. Father Joseph became the chaplain of Pozoalbero, a conference center in southwestern Spain.

Despite having worked for many years in more senior positions, Father Joseph cheerfully accepted the change. He then threw himself into the new assignment, generating a very demanding schedule of pastoral activity: preaching retreats, giving spiritual direction, and hearing confessions in nearby parishes. Besides, he devoted time to visiting priests scattered around the towns and villages of the area. His generous work embraced people of all social classes and economic conditions, and his cheerful, humble guidance has led many to lives of deep commitment to our Lord.

He returned to the United States in 1976, serving first as the U.S. head of Opus Dei, and later as the chaplain of Arnold Hall Conference Center, near Boston. His deep love and concern for priests led him to keep up until the end of his life his custom of regular brief visits to many priests, as a way of befriending them and making himself available to help them in any way possible.

On June 21, 1983, Father Joseph died after suffering a heart attack while teaching a class at Arnold Hall. His last day, before and after the heart attack, and through his hours in the hospital, was filled with what had filled each of his days for many years: constant acts of concern, of service, for the others, for the sake of our Lord.

Among the mourners at his wake were Boston's Cardinal Humberto Sousa Medeiros and several auxiliary bishops. Father Joseph is buried at Saint Joseph's Cemetery in Boston.

There were many witnesses of Father Joseph's reputation for holiness during his lifetime, and since his death this reputation has continued to grow around the world. The postulator has been receiving many testimonies of favors granted through his intercession.

Opening of the Cause



THE OPENING session of the cause of canonization of Father Joseph Muzquiz took place on June 2, 2011, in the Pastoral Center of the Archdiocese of Boston. Very Rev. Bryan K. Parrish, acting as the representative for Cardinal Sean O'Malley, presided over the ceremony.

Cardinal O'Malley wrote about the opening of the cause the following week in his blog, noting that Father Joseph had been a close collaborator with the founder of Opus Dei, Saint Josemaría Escrivá, and was instrumental in bringing Opus Dei to the United States and other countries.

"We pray that the inspiration of his life and holiness will have an impact on the lives of people

here in Boston who knew of him and were beneficiaries of his ministry," the Cardinal wrote. "We look forward to hearing more about the process as it moves forward."

During the opening session, the postulator of the cause, Father David Cavanagh, said that Father Joseph had died with a widespread reputation of holiness among those who knew him.

"Father Joseph was known for his gentle and patient manner as well as for his serene and undaunted cheerfulness," Father Cavanagh said. "Is the Servant of God Joseph Muzquiz one of those persons who has lived the virtues to a heroic degree? Today marks the first official step in this long process which will, without doubt, give

the response to this question."

As part of the opening session, the materials gathered so far—including Father Joseph's writings—were entered into the record. Officials of the inquiry took their oath of office.

Now that the cause has been opened, the tribunal will question witnesses about the life and virtues of Father Joseph.

The Boston diocesan newspaper *The Pilot* estimated that about 150 people attended the session, including many who knew Father Joseph.

Among those present were John Coverdale (author of a biography about Father Joseph, *Putting Down Roots*) and Monsignor Thomas G. Bohlin, the U.S. Vicar for Opus Dei. ◀

Favors Obtained



An Apartment for My Growing Family

We had been married three and a half years when our third child was due to be born. Concerned that our landlord might object to a third child in a two-bedroom apartment, we approached him and were delighted when he said that would be no problem. Two months later, out of the blue, he posted an eviction notice on our door. Anything we could afford would mean moving to the outermost suburbs, far from work, family and friends. Father Joseph had died just a few weeks before, and we had been told of his way of getting houses for the Work when it first was starting in the States and there was very little money available. We turned to him for help.

Within two weeks our prayers had been more than answered. Friends in Washington D.C. told an older couple of our search, and they

said we were the answer to their prayers: they had a house to rent out, were looking for a couple with children, rather than a group of students, even though they knew a family could not afford the rents in that neighborhood. We ended up in a lovely little home in the exact part of Washington we had dreamed of, paying a rent that was far below market rates and that permitted us to save a down-payment for our own home. Our next five children were born there. We all have the most pleasant of memories of our life when that house was our home. —*P.F., Maryland, USA*

Rain Comes and the Farm is Saved

I have a small piece of farmland and last year I made a larger investment than normal. Because very little rain had fallen, I feared that the whole investment was endangered. For me this was quite important and I was worried.

Around that time someone

gave me Father Joseph Muzquiz's prayer card, and I prayed to him that, if it was God's will, he intercede for me so that everything would turn out well. After a little while the weather changed completely and it began to rain and everything was alright.

I thank God for this and for the intercession of his servant Father Joseph Muzquiz.

—*M.R., Mérida, Spain*

Help Finishing My Economic Research

In the beginning of 2010, I was supposed to finish an economic research at my job. Unfortunately, one in my family had some health problems and I had to diminish the number of work hours at my job to help him. In this new situation I would not finish the research by the deadline. So, through the intercession of Father Joseph Muzquiz, I requested the favor to help me to finish my research. Few days later the deadline was



postponed two months, and I had enough time to finish it. Since then, I am requesting his intercession, mainly to do a good work. —*L.S., São Paulo, Brazil*

Triplets — Three Healthy Babies Born

In August of 2007 my son and daughter-in-law became the parents of triplets — three healthy boys. The previous February, the doctor strongly urged the ecstatic nervous parents to abort one. Possibly she could carry two. Because of her rather delicate health — at times severe asthma, migraines and frequent seizures, he reasoned thusly. He also warned that economically the medical bills would cause a serious financial strain. He painted a very bleak picture.

They promptly found another doctor, supportive and excellent. He would do his best... And so we began to pray very hard to Father Joseph... A friend of ours asked countless people to pray to

him. We are convinced that it was through Father Joseph's intercession that the mother went so far, and that the babies were very healthy.

After the successful birth, the doctor confided to the parents that he was absolutely amazed that the mother had gone as long as she did in her pregnancy — thirty-four weeks. He said he had no hope she could go beyond twenty-two weeks, creating great risk for the babies' health/survival!

We are all so grateful to Father Joseph's intercession!!
—*E.B., Massachusetts, USA*

Money for a Family Celebration

I am writing to inform you of a favor obtained thanks to Father José Luis Múzquiz.

I am the head of a small business consulting firm. Eighteen months ago one of our clients failed to pay us a large sum of money owed to us. Part of my salary comes from this amount and thus I found

myself "short on cash."

On June 6 my family celebrated my father's 80th birthday. We were planning a big celebration, with many relatives attending. I offered to cover the cost of the event, and on June 3 I asked Father Joseph to help me obtain the required funds.

On June 5, the day before the family celebration was to be held, there appeared in my bank account not only the amount that this client owed me but also more than double the amount I asked Father Joseph for, thanks to other outstanding accounts that were paid the same day.

We were thus able to hold our family celebration with great joy, and without worrying about the expenses.

My father had the time of his life! I want to express my thanks to Father Joseph. I've named him the "patron saint" of my business.

—*N.A., San Sebastián, Spain*

Biographical Chronology

- 1912 **October 14** The Servant of God is born in Badajoz, Spain.
October 20 Baptized at the parish of Sagrario de la Catedral in Badajoz.
- 1926 **October** His family moves to Madrid. He begins attending Colegio de Areneros.
- 1929 **October** Begins his studies in Civil Engineering in Madrid.
- 1934–35 Meets St. Josemaría Escrivá, the founder of Opus Dei, in the student residence on Ferraz Street in Madrid.
- 1936 **January 29** Graduates with a degree in Civil Engineering. He is second in his class.
July 18 The Spanish Civil War breaks out while he is in Germany on a study trip. He joins his family in Lisbon.
August The Muzquiz family reenters Spain and moves to Badajoz. He joins the Nationalist army.
- 1938 **June** He receives a letter from St. Josemaría that has a deep impact on him. He begins to see that God is calling him to serve Him in Opus Dei.
- 1940 **January 21** He asks to be admitted to Opus Dei in Madrid. He works as a civil engineer for the Compañía del Norte (railroads).
- 1941 With several other engineers he sets up in Madrid a technical office for engineering consulting.
- 1944 **May 12** Presents thesis for his doctorate in History in the University of Madrid. It is awarded the “Premio Extraordinario de Doctorado.”
June 25 Receives priestly ordination from Bishop Leopoldo Eijo y Garay, of Madrid, in the chapel of the Episcopal Palace.
- June '44** He devotes himself to his priestly ministry. Makes numerous trips to assist in the development of Opus Dei’s apostolates, mainly in southern Spain and Portugal. He continues doing some engineering work.
- Feb '49 **June 30** Received in an audience by Pope Pius XII.
- 1949 **February 17** Arrives in the United States to begin the apostolate of Opus Dei sent by St. Josemaría.
August 26 First center of Opus Dei opens in Chicago.
- 1954 **September** Sends first group of American members of Opus Dei to Rome to receive formation directly from the Founder.
- 1956 **December** Travels to Canada to prepare the beginning of Opus Dei’s work in that country.
- 1958 **March–April** Makes his first trip to Japan to prepare the beginning of the apostolic work in that country.
- 1961 **September 30** He is named to the Permanent Commission of the General Council of Opus Dei and moves to Rome.
- 1964 **July 13** Appointed Counselor of Switzerland.
- 1965 **February 16** Receives a Doctorate in Canon Law from the University of Navarre.
- 1966–76 Chaplain of Pozoalbero Conference Center in Jerez, Spain. Carries out extensive pastoral work in southern Spain.
- 1968 **April 29** Receives doctorate in civil engineering from the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid.
- 1975 **September** Attends General Elective Congress in Opus Dei that elects Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo as successor of St. Josemaría.
- 1976 **October 4** Appointed Counselor of the United States; moves to New York.
- 1980 **September 13** Ceases as Counselor of Opus Dei in the United States.
- 1981 **February** Moves to Boston where he dedicates himself to pastoral work.
- 1983 **June 20** Suffers heart attack while teaching a class on Canon Law at Arnold Hall Conference Center, North Pembroke, Massachusetts. Receives last sacraments.
June 21 He is pronounced dead at 3:08 a.m. at Jordan Hospital in Plymouth, MA. Hundreds of people pray before his remains.
June 23 Funeral Mass at St. Aidan’s church in Brookline is attended by a large crowd.