

Priestly life in the writings and example of Venerable Alvaro del Portillo
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Venerable Alvaro del Portillo died about twenty years ago, and that day, March 23, 1994, Blessed John Paul II went to his home, the central house of the Prelature of Opus Dei in Rome, to pray before his mortal remains. He had just celebrated his 80th birthday; friends had given him the present of a few days in the Holy Land, and he celebrated his last Mass in the Cenacle. When Blessed John Paul II visited Villa Tevere, as that house is called, people thanked him profusely for the honor of his visit, and he said, “Era dovuto,” meaning, “It is only right to do it, given his contribution to the life of the Church.”

What had Don Alvaro, as we called him, done in the service of the Church? First, many years before, he had responded to God’s call. His aunt spoke with St Josemaria about young Alvaro, who was a wonderful young man and was working towards two degrees at the same time. St Josemaria Escriva, the founder of Opus Dei, realized he must be outstanding, and he began to pray for him. Because Alvaro was so occupied with studies, St Josemaria did not see much of him, but the young engineering student taught catechism to children in Vallecas, a poor neighborhood in the outskirts of Madrid, with other young men with whom the saint was working. In fact, he was once beaten up when he traveled there, and barely escaped more serious injury, rushing into a subway car as the door was closing. In July of 1935, while taking part in a day of recollection, he asked to be admitted to Opus Dei. Like St Josemaria and the young men who were following him, he lived a precarious existence during the Spanish Civil War, but eventually was able to help the founder of Opus Dei in Burgos.

When the War ended, Alvaro and the others helped St Josemaria to reestablish the work of Opus Dei in Madrid, and to bring it to a number of other Spanish cities. The founder was seeking a way to prepare priests with the spirit God had entrusted to him, and in 1943 he understood how it could be done. Alvaro traveled to Rome to obtain the necessary permission for the diocesan establishment of Opus Dei. He was ordained a priest on June 25, 1944, along with Joseph Muzquiz, who helped to start Opus Dei in this country and is now buried nearby, in Chestnut Hill. A few years later, St Josemaria thought of leaving Opus Dei and founding something to help his brother priests. Eventually, he realized that priests incardinated in the dioceses could benefit from the means of formation offered by the Priestly Society and associate themselves with it.

In 1946, three years after ordination, Venerable Alvaro went to Rome, to prepare the way for the definitive approval of Opus Dei. This was a difficult mission. There were some features in the spirit and way of life God entrusted to St Josemaria very unfamiliar to people at that time. One of the officials in Rome told Alvaro that they had come a century of too soon. He reported that to St Josemaria, as part of his

effort to convince the founder to go to Rome as soon as possible, so that the approval could be obtained. People in Rome began to be aware of Alvaro's gifts. He worked with the founder of Opus Dei in the midst of great poverty, opening centers of formation for young people from around the world, both men and women. Don Alvaro occupied various positions within Opus Dei, and at one time was in charge of the apostolic work in Italy. Most of the time, he worked at St Josemaria's side. In the movies of get-togethers with the saint toward the end of his life, Alvaro was often with him, following with great interest his answers, and occasionally helping with a missing date or name. His desire to be of help and his happiness to pass unnoticed were almost tangible.

A central period for our consideration of his life should be the years of the Second Vatican Council. The organizers invited St Josemaria to take part in the Council, perhaps as an expert of some kind, but he believed that the unsettled juridical situation of Opus Dei—he thought a new formula would be needed, and that that of a secular institute was becoming ever less suitable—made it unwise for him to take part personally, and he suggested that Alvaro, who was accomplished in theology and especially in canon law, would be well-qualified and could be available. He became secretary of the conciliar commission which prepared the documents which led to *Presbyterorum Ordinis*. He wrote a book based in part on his experience, entitled *On Priesthood*. It is a collection of the following papers and talks given just after the end of the Council: 1. The Human Formation of the Priest; 2. The Priest as Described in the Document *Presbyterorum Ordinis*; 3. The Consecration and Mission of the Priest; 4. The Celibacy of the Priest in the Document *Presbyterorum Ordinis*; 5. Jesus Christ in the Priest; 6. The Spirituality of the Priesthood; 7. The Priest's Life as a Dialogue with God and with Man. Unfortunately, this book is not readily available in English, but Spanish copies are easier to obtain.

We could look at his priesthood through the prism of that document he worked on. This could seem a bit anachronistic, because his own priestly formation had come twenty years earlier. This is not really so, because he had been guided by St Josemaria as a young priest, and many of the insights granted to the founder of Opus Dei in 1928 and in the years afterwards were incorporated into the documents of the Second Vatican Council. On October 2, 1928, St Josemaria had seen men and women, priests and lay persons, old and young, sick and healthy, living in the midst of the world with the same dedication as the most dedicated religious. This theme of the universal call to holiness is brought out both in *Lumen Gentium* and in *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, among other documents. In one of his essays in *On Priesthood*, Alvaro urges priests to often pray about this passage from PO: "Although divine grace could use unworthy ministers to effect the work of salvation, yet for the most part he chooses, to show forth his wonders, those who are more open to the power and direction of the Holy Spirit, and who can by reason of their close union with Christ and their holiness of life say with St Paul: 'And yet I am alive; or rather, not I; it is Christ who lives in me.' (Gal 2:20)" (PO, 12) St Josemaria often spoke about the spirit of service, both for priests and lay people. When Josemaria Casciaro was preparing to be ordained, St Josemaria brought him to a chapel in one of the

centers, pointed to the carpet on the step leading up to the altar, and said that's what Pedro had to be: like a carpet, to make the path easier and more pleasant for others. The Council document on priesthood says, "Priests, therefore, must take the lead in seeking the things of Jesus Christ, not the things that are their own. They must work together with the lay faithful, and conduct themselves in their midst after the example of their Master, who among men, 'came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life as redemption for many.' (Matt 20:28)" (PO, 9) The founder of Opus Dei writes, concerning the importance of human virtues, "Remember that your virtue may seem to be that of a saint and yet be worth nothing if it is not joined to the ordinary virtues of a Christian. That would be like adorning yourself with magnificent jewels over your underwear." (*The Way*, 409) The Council document says that if the priest is to be a good shepherd, "certain virtues, which in human affairs are deservedly esteemed, contribute a great deal: such as goodness of heart, sincerity, strength and constancy of mind, zealous pursuit of justice, affability and others. The Apostle Paul commends them saying: 'Whatever things are true, whatever honorable, whatever just, whatever holy, whatever loving, whatever of good repute, if there be any virtue, if anything is worthy of praise, think upon these things' (Phil 4:8)."

The founder of Opus Dei exhorts the Christian to grow in true piety. "First, prayer; then atonement; in the third place—very much 'in the third place'—action." (*The Way*, 82). In PO, we read, "What takes place on the altar of sacrifice, the priestly heart must make his own. This cannot be done unless priests through prayer continue to penetrate more deeply into the mystery of Christ." (PO, 14) St Josemaria writes of the fraternity that should be lived by all Christians. He often quoted a phrase from the Old Testament, "A brother who is helped by his brother is like a strong city." And he invites everyone to a generous attitude towards others: "When you have finished your work, do your brother's, helping him, for Christ's sake, so tactfully and naturally that no one—not even he—will realize that you are doing more than what in justice you ought. This, indeed, is virtue befitting a son of God." (440) PO naturally also stresses this fraternity among priests. "So priests are all united with their brother-priests by the bond of charity, prayer, and total cooperation. In this way is shown forth that unity with which Christ willed his own to be perfected in one, that the world might know that the Son had been sent by the Father." (PO, 8) The saint of ordinary life, as Blessed John Paul II referred to him, urged everyone to a generous effort to win others. "Through the world still echoes that divine cry: 'I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already!' And you see: it has nearly all died out... Will you not help to spread the blaze?" In PO, we read, "The People of God is formed into in the first place by the Word of the living God, which is quite rightly sought from the mouth of priests. For since nobody can be saved who has not first believed, it is the first task of priests as co-workers of the bishops to preach the Gospel of God to all men."

Commentators have often treated PO, 2, as a key element in the development of the Church's teaching about priesthood. The following is taken from that point:

The Lord Jesus, “whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world” (Jn 10:36) makes his whole Mystical Body sharer in the anointing of the Spirit wherewith he has been anointed: for in that Body all the faithful are made a holy and kingly priesthood, they offer spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ, and they proclaim the virtues of him who has called them out of darkness into his admirable light. Therefore there is no such thing as a member that has not a share in the mission of the whole Body. Rather, every single member ought to reverence Jesus in his heart and by the spirit of prophecy give testimony of Jesus.

However, the Lord also appointed certain men as ministers, in order that they might be united in one body in which “all members have not the same function” (Rom 12:4). These men were to hold in the community of the faithful the sacred power of Order, that of offering sacrifice and forgiving sins, and were to exercise the priestly office publically on behalf of men in the name of Christ.

Don Alvaro’s participation in the preparation of *Presbyterorum Ordinis* was a true service to the Church and to the world. In the life of Opus Dei, the priestly ministry is put at the service of the common priesthood of the faithful in a particular way, bringing out the capacities given to the faithful especially in Baptism. Don Alvaro’s personal efforts were directed first to helping Saint Josemaria to carry out this work, and then to bring it forward after his death. He helped obtain the definitive juridical situation of Opus Dei. When sufficient time had passed after the death of the founder of Opus Dei, he worked toward his canonization. Especially during the pontificate of Blessed John Paul II, he sought to live in practice a favorite aspiration of St Josemaria, *Omnes cum Petro ad Iesum per Mariam*. And he put in practice the advice of the founder, that we should all try to die “squeezed out like a lemon,” having put our best effort into the tasks entrusted to us.

These parallel phrases above help to establish that even though Alvaro received his priestly formation long before the Council, he had been formed in a spirit very much in line with the teachings of the Second Vatican Council concerning the Church and the priesthood. The heart of this talk is really how Venerable Alvaro was outstanding and even heroic in his priestly life.

We could consider first Eucharistic devotion. St Josemaria had spoken about this in large get-togethers, sometimes actually showing people how to genuflect: he would bend his knee and pause as it touched the ground, repeating aloud, “Adoro te devote, latens Deitas.” Don Alvaro genuflected deliberately, and never in a hurried way; no doubt he repeated some aspiration to himself as he lived this act of adoration. He celebrated Mass with great devotion and care, following the rubrics exactly. In solemn ceremonies, he insisted on rehearsals and on not leaving anything to improvisation. He had learned this from St Josemaria, but there was not a sense of imitation, but rather something that came from within. Each day he strove to be recollected and to spend some minutes, about ten, in thanksgiving after communion. St Josemaria planned on having a procession with the Blessed Sacrament on the feast of our Lord’s Body and Blood, at the seminary of the Prelature, just outside Rome. This could not be done during his life-time, because the buildings were still

being finished. It was Venerable Alvaro who began to put this into practice, in the early 1980's. He was a big man, and it was often very hot at that time, sometimes late June, in Rome. The procession took place on the campus of Cavabianca, the Seminary of the Prelature, which St Josemaria and the architects working with him had designed with this in mind. The procession would take several hours. On one occasion, perhaps the second year of the procession, when Don Alvaro finished the ceremony, his vestments were completely soaked through with sweat, and he must have been exhausted. He simply remarked that he was happy to have had this opportunity to live this act of adoration towards our Lord.

Don Alvaro's recollected spirit characterized his life. He gave importance to the practice he learned from the founder of Opus Dei to dedicate a half hour in the morning and a half hour in the afternoon to personal meditation. On one occasion, he was going to the Vatican to take part in a ceremony in the afternoon, which involved the celebration of Mass. On such circumstances, people sometimes treat the liturgy as a substitute for the period of meditation, but that afternoon I saw him early in the afternoon, before going to the Vatican City, immersed in prayer. When he preached to us, as happened with a certain frequency, it served as his personal meditation. He would comment ardently details of the liturgy, and often recall the words and the example of St Josemaria. He was not a brilliant speaker, but his words were clear and pointed and helped us all to pray.

Venerable Alvaro's charity towards all the students (some of whom would eventually be ordained) was shown in his way of encouraging us to remember the example of the founder of Opus Dei and to set our sights high. Just after our class arrived in Rome, he came for a get-together, a familiar gathering with questions and answers, and said that as he was entering Cavabianca, he saw the trees, and he remembered how St Josemaria had planted them, commenting that he would not live to see them reach maturity. Don Alvaro pointed out to us this generous outlook, urging us to think of those who would come after us and to have a sense of responsibility to pass on to them the good spirit that God had given to St Josemaria, and to want to prepare the way for them. He often said that Opus Dei was still like a young tree, recently planted. Fifty years is a long time in the life of an individual, but very short in the life of an institution that is meant to last as long as there are people living on earth. It's important the tree grow straight at the beginning, or it will be further and further away from its proper form as time passes.

St Josemaria always had a great devotion to the Pope, the Vicar of Christ. "Catholic, apostolic, Roman! I want you to be very Roman. And to be anxious to make your 'path to Rome', videre Petrum—to see Peter." Venerable Alvaro had lived this from the time he was a young priest. He went ahead of St Josemaria to Rome, being received in an audience by Pope Pius XII. In his early years in Rome, he was welcomed by Msgr Montini, later to be Pope Paul VI. After being elected to succeed St Josemaria at the head of Opus Dei, Alvaro was received in audience by Paul VI. In the course of the conversation, the Pope commented that Saint Josemaria was one of the persons who had received more charisms from God, and who had

responded to them more generously. Alvaro told him about the prayer of the founder of Opus Dei for the Church and the Pope, and about his catechetical efforts. Pope Paul urged him to write these things down, and to understand that the life and writings of St Josemaria now belonged to the whole Church.

During the Second Vatican Council, a friend of his from Poland, Msgr. Andreas Deskur, later a Cardinal, introduced him to his own bishop, Karol Wojtyla. Alvaro and Andreas became good friends. Deskur suffered a stroke just before the election of his Ordinary. You might remember that the very day of his election, Pope John Paul II went to see a friend who was in the hospital, Andreas Deskur. It happened that Don Alvaro was visiting at the same time, and this was his first meeting, naturally, with the newly-elected Pope: he was caught inside the hospital when, for security reasons, no one was allowed to enter or leave, once the Pope had arrived. This was the first of many visits over the course of the years. In his first official visit, he spoke with the Pope about Opus Dei. The Pope had a philosophical mind, and he kept repeated the phrase about which they were speaking "Opus Dei, Opus Dei," which means literally "the work of God." Toward the end of their conversation, he remarked, "The first 'Opus Dei' is the Blessed Virgin Mary. They touched also on the need to solve the juridical situation of Opus Dei.

Don Alvaro's love for the Church and for the Pope was at the same time really human. He realized it was an adjustment to move from Poland to Italy, and he sent a gift of oranges for December 6, the feast of St Nicholas, which is a traditional celebration in Poland. When the Pope was preparing for his first trip to Mexico, he wanted to brush up on his Spanish, and some tapes were brought for him with Spanish songs. When young people from around the world went to Rome in 1979, they welcomed the Pope with an amazing display of youthful affection and enthusiasm. He joked with them about what they applauded for particularly loudly. The following year, when an analogous group of young people gathered in St Peter's Square, he invited them in for an impromptu gathering in Cortile San Damaso. This became a tradition that lasted for years. In 1981, an attempt was made on the Pope's life. Along with everyone in the Church, Venerable Alvaro prayed fervently for the full recovery of the Pope and urged us to do likewise. On one occasion, he expressed his concern that people generally had the impression that the Pope had fully recovered, even though he still suffered a fever as a result of the part of a bullet that remained in his body. In whatever way possible, Venerable Alvaro tried to support the catechetical trips of the Pope to different parts of the world.

As you may recall, Pope John Paul II set up a two-part commission to study the juridical situation of Opus Dei, and eventually the erection of the Work as a personal Prelature. There were three members of the Congregation for the Bishops (Msgrs. Costalunga, Pompedda, and Oles) and three canon lawyers, faithful of the Prelature of Opus Dei (Frs. Fuenmayor, Ayala, and Herranz). A draft of the plan was sent out to bishops around the world, so that they could give their reactions. These suggestions were incorporated, and then the Apostolic Constitution *Ut sit* was promulgated November 28, 1982.

One of my most vivid memories of Don Alvaro, as we referred to him after his death, took place in the spring of 1983. I had been ordained in June of 1982. That in itself was a marvelous experience, with some details that none of us had anticipated, not even Don Alvaro himself. He went to speak with Blessed John Paul II, and he mentioned that a number of us, living in Rome, were preparing for ordination. The initial plan had been for our ordination in August of that year. The Pope said that he was preparing for an ordination in Rome and asked whether we might join the group being prepared for that. There were thirty-two of us, and so we combined with the others to form a group of sixty some. At the same time, the final preparations were being made for the erection of Opus Dei as a personal Prelature. It was announced on August 23 that, due to technical difficulties, the document would not yet be made public, but that the decision had been reached. Blessed John Paul II visited Spain in November of 1982. Some time later in the year, I was invited to return to Rome to work there for some time.

It was in this context that the event I mentioned took place. Saint Josemaria had said that when his special intention was granted—he had prayed for this intention from the 1930's: that Opus Dei would receive a juridical status appropriate to its nature—when that intention was granted, either he or his successor would return to Guadalupe, where he had prayed in 1970, as an expression of thanksgiving for our Lady's intercession. Knowing that, I was expecting that Don Alvaro would leave from one day to the next, when I arrived in January of 1983. But there was no word of this. Then one day, as we gathered for a time of conversation after lunch, Don Alvaro said "Ha llegado la cabra," at least that is what I understood. Literally, this would mean, "The goat has arrived." I think this was meant in the sense that a sheepskin, or parchment, had reached us. This was the apostolic constitution *Ut sit*, which you may have seen framed if you have ever visited the offices of the headquarters in New York or Chicago or Los Angeles or Houston, or perhaps at some other center. He read the document through from beginning to end—it is not very long—and then added that he was sure that we had understood that Latin version. But in case we missed something, he read it again, translating it, and then explained the people who were involved: the Cardinal Secretary of State, Casaroli, the head of the Congregation for the Bishops, Sebastiano Baggio, the secretary of the Congregation, Marcello Costalunga; and then the names of the scribes. He explained to us that the delay in receiving the document was in part due to several bishops having been named Cardinals at roughly the same time as the erection of the Prelature, and their documents taking precedence. Soon after, the document was officially given to Don Alvaro by the Nuncio from Italy before the Holy See, Romulo Carboni. Then, in the name of Saint Josemaria and in representation of him, Venerable Alvaro travelled to Mexico to give thanks at the Basilica.

What impressed me about this was that Don Alvaro wanted all of us to share in the joy of that moment, even though some, like myself, might have just arrived in Rome and have known relatively little about the history of this step and the canonical theory involved. He insisted that we had all been united with him (and

with St Josemaria, before him) in prayer in seeking to obtain from God this confirmation of the spirit God had shown to Saint Josemaria. This was a great moment for the Church and for Opus Dei, and we should all share in this joy. This was characteristic of his humility and simplicity. He worked with great concentration and personal capacity, with a great detachment. He was sensitive about avoiding anything that would mean seeking one's own glory, rather than seeking God's will above all.

In 1984, having spoken with the Secretary of State and realizing the Blessed John Paul II was concerned about the Church in China, he spoke with the Pope in an audience about a project that was in the works in Guangzhou, or Canton. At some point, the Pope made a dramatic gesture and said, "What I am most concerned about is right here!" By this he was referring to the apparently dwindling faith and religious practice of people in the developed countries. They then spoke about the possibility of the Prelature taking on the project of an institution of high learning in Rome, aimed especially at the education of priests. Venerable Alvaro took this up with a real sense of urgency, and the opening of the Roman Atheneum, what is now the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, took place in the fall of 1985. Don Alvaro mobilized people from around the world to bring forward this project, and he followed it, even down to small details. Someone once wrote graffiti about Opus Dei on a neighboring building, and he saw it, and he asked the people in charge of the university to point this out to the neighbors and to insist that the signs be removed.

In those years, Venerable Alvaro spent considerable time explaining to bishops and to canon lawyers and to journalists what the erection of Opus Dei as a personal Prelature meant for the Church and why it was beneficial. That is an ongoing task, but at a certain point, he realized it would be good to travel to some parts of the world where the founder had never been, so that people around the world would feel closeness with the person at the head of the Prelature, to feel more the warmth of a Christian family. In 1987, he made a six-week long trip to Asia and Oceania, traveling to Singapore, to Australia, to the Philippines, to Taiwan, Hong Kong, mainland China (just a day trip), to Korea and to Japan. When he arrived in Singapore, he was exhausted, but it was time to celebrate Mass, and he did the best he could. He was excited and moved, because it was the first time the head of Opus Dei had celebrated Mass in Asia. In 1988, he traveled to North America, spending most of the time visiting almost all the centers of Opus Dei in the United States and in Canada. Among other aspects, he encouraged everyone to seek the maturity of an apostolic work that would foster many conversions and decisions of personal dedication.

St Josemaria had a faith that he said was so thick it could be cut; he thanked God for this grace. Venerable Alvaro tried to live with this same spirit. As he was preparing to travel to the United States, someone asked him, now that the institute of higher education had grown up in Rome, whether there were any dreams of the founder of Opus Dei which remained to be realized. Venerable Alvaro responded immediately that St Josemaria had written a note in 1960: *Un santuario de la Virgen*

Mater Pulchrae dilectionis en Norteamerica: a shrine, dedicated to our Lady, Mother of Fair Love, in North America. The founder thought that such a shrine would be fitting, since liberalized divorce laws had begun in the United States. Don Alvaro said he was sure this would come about as a consequence of the natural development of the apostolate in the United States. When Fr Michael Barrett and I were preparing to return to this country, Don Alvaro repeated to us a number of times that St Josemaria dreamed of being able to draw from this country the needed resources for the growth of the apostolate in countries lacking in the material wealth of the United States.

This has been a sketch of some details I remember about the exemplary priestly life of Venerable Alvaro. I hope this will move many of you to learn more about him. A biography in English, prepared by John Coverdale and based on a long biography in Spanish written by Javier Medina, should soon be available. Just after he died, Salvador Bernal, a Spanish journalist, sketched a short treatment of his life. Hugo Azevedo from Portugal has also written a short biography. Since his death, I have often sought his intercession, as have many people, among them the current Prelate; and I must recognize that he has helped many times; and so I encourage you also to ask for his prayer before God for intentions that seem particularly difficult to achieve. I am sure that he will intercede for us, so that we can bring about the renewal of priestly life which is the key to a flourishing work of evangelization.

Important dates in the life of Venerable Alvaro

March 11, 1914 Born in Madrid

May 12, 1921 First communion, while attending our Lady of the Pillar School

1932 Beginning of studies in engineering

March, 1935 Meets the founder of Opus Dei

July 7, 1935 Requests admission in Opus Dei

July, 1936 Outbreak of the Spanish Civil War

December, 1936 until January 29, 1937 Imprisoned in Madrid

October 12, 1938 Crosses from the Republican to the Nationalist side

1941 Graduation from the program in engineering; work with the Department of Public Works

1941-1944 Realizes studies in preparation for priestly ordination

May, 1943 Trip to Rome to obtain the *nihil obstat* for the diocesan approval of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross

June 25, 1944 Priestly ordination, along with Jose Luis Muzquiz and Jose Maria Hernandez de Garnica

February, 1946 Trip to Rome to prepare for pontifical approval of Opus Dei

1947 to 1949 Work with the commission within the Congregation for Religious dealing with Secular Institutes (He wrote his doctoral thesis in canon law on the topic of secular institutes)

1956 Second General Congress of Opus Dei, named Secretary General of Opus Dei

May 2, 1959 Named consultor of the Sacred Congregation for the Council, which later became the Congregation for the Clergy

1960 Begins to work for the Holy Office, now the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

During the Second Vatican Council, he participated in various commissions, was named an expert for the Council, and was Secretary of the Commission which prepared *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, approved in 1965

1964 Named Consultor for the commission preparing the reform of the Code of Canon Law

1966 Named Consultor for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

1969-1970 Special General Congress of Opus Dei, presided by Saint Josemaria, preparing for the erection of Opus Dei as a personal Prelature, a juridical figure mentioned in no. 10 of *Presbyterorum Ordinis*

June 26, 1975 Death of Saint Josemaria

September 15, 1975 Elected President General of Opus Dei

March, 1976 Audience with the Servant of God Paul VI, in which the Pope encourages the study of the juridical status of Opus Dei

February, 1979 Presentation to the Holy See of the needed documentation concerning this juridical study

1981 Introduction of the process of canonization of St Josemaria

March 19, 1983 Execution of the pontifical decision to erect Opus Dei as a personal Prelature

He took part in various Synods of Bishops: 1983, 1987, 1990

January 6, 1991 Ordination as bishop

March 23, 1994 Death in Rome

2004 Introduction of his cause of canonization

2012 Declared Venerable

September 27, 2014 Beatification in Madrid

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