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# Joining Opus Dei

Membership involves a commitment to receive spiritual formation from Opus Dei and to participate in its mission.

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## A "secular" vocation

Joining Opus Dei requires a supernatural vocation. It is a personal call from God to place one's whole life at his service, spreading the message of the universal call to holiness in ordinary work and social life.

An Opus Dei member continues being an ordinary citizen and an ordinary Catholic. The faithful of the Prelature join by a mutual declaration rather than by vows. They remain ordinary faithful of their dioceses and are free to engage in the same social and political activities as other Catholics.

After joining Opus Dei, people have the same jobs and live in the same social settings as before. The Prelature's faithful do not live apart from the world. Instead, they view their work and social relationships as ways to grow closer to God and to help others do likewise.

Opus Dei stresses people's responsibility to seek holiness and to lead others to holiness in all the normal circumstances of life, rather than creating special ways of living the faith. As ordinary citizens and Catholics, the faithful of Opus Dei

live out their vocation in a natural way, neither making a show of it, nor hiding the fact that they belong to the Prelature. Their daily life and apostolic efforts should reflect their commitment to God's service.

## **Commitments**

Members of Opus Dei participate in a program of spiritual, doctrinal and apostolic formation adapted to their circumstances and needs.

Philosophical and theological instruction follows guidelines set down by the Catholic Church.

Commitments include a plan of spiritual life, centered on daily Mass, Holy Communion and frequent use of the sacrament of Penance, as well as reading Sacred Scripture and other spiritual texts, reciting the Rosary, and spending time in personal prayer. Through a life of joyful and generous self-giving to God and neighbour, they embrace

the Cross of Christ hidden in the challenges of daily life. The Prelature's faithful also strive to carry out the duty that all Christians have of spreading the Gospel message effectively to those around them. This apostolic responsibility is an essential part of the Christian vocation, and thus of the vocation to Opus Dei.

Opus Dei encourages its members to fulfill these commitments with a spirit of complete freedom.

## **Incorporation in the Prelature**

In order to join Opus Dei a person must freely ask to do so, in the personal conviction of having received this divine vocation. Such a calling is a specification or determination of the Christian vocation received at baptism, and it leads them to seek sanctity and participate in the mission of the

Church according to the spirit with which God inspired St. Josemaría.

The request is made in writing and needs to have been accepted by the authorities of the Prelature, and admission is granted after a minimum of six months. After an additional period of at least one year, the person can be temporarily incorporated into the Prelature through a mutual declaration, which is renewable annually. In accordance with canon law, no one may be juridically incorporated into the Prelature who has not reached 18 years of age. After a minimum of five more years, the incorporation can become definitive (that is, at a minimum age of 23).

Incorporation into Opus Dei means, on the part of the Prelature, the commitment to provide the person with ongoing formation in the Catholic faith and in the spirit of

Opus Dei, as well as the necessary pastoral care from the priests of the Prelature. On the part of the person to be incorporated, it means the commitment to remain under the jurisdiction of the Prelate in all that concerns the aim of the Prelature and to respect the norms by which it is governed. The bond with the Prelature ceases at the end of the term of the agreement with the Prelature, or earlier, if the person so requests, by agreement with the authorities of the Prelature. Departure from the Prelature brings about the cessation of mutual rights and duties.