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# Opus Dei and cult allegations

"The Da Vinci Code" falsely describes Opus Dei as a "Catholic sect," which makes no sense because Opus Dei has always been fully a part of the Catholic Church.

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Opus Dei received its first official approval from the Bishop of Madrid in 1941, and received final approval from the Holy See in 1950. Then in 1982, the Holy See made it a personal prelature, which is one of the

Church's organizational structures. (Dioceses and ordinariates are other examples of organizational structures of the Church). Moreover, one of Opus Dei's hallmarks is fidelity to the Pope and to the Church's teachings. All of Opus Dei's beliefs, practices, and customs are those of the Church. Opus Dei also has excellent relations with all the other institutions of the Catholic Church, and considers the great variety of expressions of the Catholic faith to be a wonderful thing. To call Opus Dei a sect is simply inaccurate.

**Cardinal Christoph Schönborn,**  
**O.P.:** “Nobody needs to have studied theology to recognize the basic contradiction in the slogan ‘sects within the Church.’ Their presumed existence in the Church is an indirect reproach of the Pope and Bishops who are responsible for investigating whether ecclesiastical groups are in agreement with the faith of the

Church in teaching and practice. From a theological and ecclesiastical point of view, a group is considered a sect when it is not recognized by the relevant Church authority.... It is therefore wrong if communities which are approved by the Church are called sects (by institutions, individuals, or in media reports).... Communities and movements approved by the Church should not be called sects, since their ecclesiastical approbation confirms their belonging to and grounding in the Church.” *L'Osservatore Romano*, 13/20 August 1997. Cardinal Schönborn is Archbishop of Vienna and Editor of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

**Pope John Paul II:** “With very great hope, the Church directs its attention and maternal care to Opus Dei, which -- by divine inspiration --the Servant of God Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer founded in Madrid on

October 2, 1928, so that it may always be an apt and effective instrument of the salvific mission which the Church carries out for the life of the world. From its beginnings, this Institution has in fact striven, not only to illuminate with new lights the mission of the laity in the Church and in society, but also to put it into practice.” *Ut Sit*, November 1982.

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