

# **Opus Dei members mark 100th anniversary of founder's birth**

Archbishop Francis J. Spence presided at a Solemn Mass, January 10, 2002 in Kingston (Ontario)

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A Mass in commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Blessed Josemaria Escriva, the Spanish priest who founded Opus Dei (Work of God) was celebrated at

Holy Name Parish on Thursday Jan. 10. Approximately 300 people were in attendance.

Archbishop Francis J. Spence presided. Nine priests concelebrated, including Msgr. Frederick Dolan, the regional vicar for Opus Dei in Canada, Msgr. Thomas Raby, the vicar general of the diocese, Fr. Richard Whalen of St. Michael's in Belleville, Fr. John Grainger of Blessed Sacrament Parish, Fr. Edward Keyes of St. Edwards in Wesport, Fr. Paul McAvoy of Our Lady of Lourdes, Fr. Peter Murphy of Annunciation in Enterprise, and Fr. Gerald Scanlan of St. Carthagh in Tweed.

In his homily, Archbishop Spence said that Blessed Josemaria saw Opus Dei "as a way to develop the sanctification of people from all walks of life in their daily work. The message he received was to inspire

and nurture a lay spirituality in which people would commit themselves to God without changing their state of life. Lawyers would remain lawyers; business people would remain business people; journalists would remain journalists – but their work would be dedicated to God – hence the Opus Dei name, which means “work of God”.

Archbishop Spence concluded his homily by saying he was "most pleased to join here with the members of Opus Dei who have so generously come to our diocese to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the birth of Blessed Josemaria Escriva and who look forward to his canonization in the near future."

Blessed Josemaria dedicated his life to teaching that men and women of every walk of life can find holiness in and through their ordinary work in the world. He had the idea for Opus

Dei in Madrid in October 1928 while on a spiritual retreat. He saw the movement as a way to develop the sanctification of people from all walks of life in their daily work. Opus Dei has since spread around the world, funding universities and vocational centres.

Blessed Josemaria died in Rome on June 26, 1975, and was beatified 17 years later by Pope John Paul II in 1992. On Dec. 20, 2001, the Vatican announced the approval of the miracle required for his canonization.

In Canada, numerous bishops have presided over a series of Masses marking the centennial, including Cardinal Turcotte in Montreal, Archbishop Couture in Quebec City, Archbishop Gervais in Ottawa, Archbishop Spence in Kingston, the Papal Nuncio Archbishop Ventura in Toronto, Archbishop Collins in

Edmonton, and Archbishop Exner in Vancouver.

In Kingston Fr. Paul Cormier, a priest of the Prelature, gives monthly evenings of recollection for men and for women in the St. James Chapel next to St. Marys Cathedral.

Some families have organized lively catechism sessions for their children where they prepare them to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and a number of priests of the diocese attend days of recollection preached by Fr. Cormier at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish.

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