

Oscar Romero and St. Josemaria

Pope Francis has recently expressed interest in expediting Archbishop Oscar Romero's canonization. We offer some facts about Romero's dealings with St. Josemaria and Opus Dei.

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Recently a number of news stories have spoken of Pope Francis' interest in moving forward the cause of canonization of Oscar Romero, who

was assassinated on March 24, 1980 while saying Mass.

Oscar Romero was Archbishop of San Salvador from 1977-1980. He met the founder of Opus Dei in 1974 in Rome. In 1975, after the death of St. Josemaría, he wrote a letter to Pope Paul VI asking for the beatification and canonization of Msgr. Escrivá.

In this letter he said that he was grateful for having known Msgr. Escrivá personally “and for having received from him encouragement and strength to be faithful to the unchangeable doctrine of Christ and to serve the Holy Roman Church with apostolic zeal.

"Msgr. Escrivá's life was marked by a continuous dialogue with God and a deep humility. One could see that he was a man of God and that he dealt with people with great refinement, affection and good humor. For many years I have been acquainted with

the activity of the Work here in El Salvador and can give witness to the supernatural spirit that animates it and the faithfulness to the Magisterium that characterizes it.

"Personally, I owe deep gratitude to the priests involved with the Work, to whom I have entrusted with much satisfaction the spiritual direction of my own life and that of other priests.

"People from all social classes find in Opus Dei a secure orientation for living as children of God in the midst of their daily family and social obligations. And this is doubtless due to the life and teaching of its founder."

Archbishop Romero's cordial relations with Opus Dei continued right up to the day of his death. Fernando Sáenz, who eventually succeeded him as Archbishop of San Salvador, says that after writing this letter, Archbishop Romero took

advantage of being in Rome to pray before the founder's tomb, and became visibly moved. "His spirituality, in some sense, was nourished by the spirituality of Josemaría Escrivá. He read *The Way* frequently."

In his September 6, 1979 *Diary* entry, Archbishop Romero says that Opus Dei "carries out a silent work of deep spirituality among professional people, university students and laborers...I think this is a mine of wealth for our Church—the holiness of the laity in their own profession."

The day he was assassinated, Archbishop Romero spent the morning with Fernando Sáenz at a recollection for priests organized by Opus Dei. Afterwards the Spanish priest accompanied Romero to the church where he was to celebrate Mass. Sáenz recalls: "They killed him during the offering of the bread and

wine. It was, as it were, a marvelous external sign of his having offered his life for his people, for the poor, for justice, for peace."

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