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Statement by the Prelate of Opus Dei on the Election of Pope Francis

Bishop Javier Echevarría expresses his great joy at the news of Pope Francis' election.

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This is a moment of great joy for Catholics all over the world. Pope Francis is the 265th successor of Peter. From the moment the white smoke was first seen we have welcomed him with great thanks.

And now, following the example of Benedict XVI, we express to him our unconditional reverence and obedience. And also our affection and prayer, continuing the prayers that we shared with the Pope during his first appearance on the balcony of the Hall of Blessings in Saint Peter's Basilica.

In this moment filled with emotion, when the Church's universality is vividly sensed, I reaffirm to the new Roman Pontiff complete adherence to his person and ministry, with the certainty that I am expressing the sentiments of the faithful, both priests and laity, of the Prelature of Opus Dei. We all entrust ourselves to the prayers of His Holiness, in order to contribute effectively, with joyful availability, to the work of evangelization that the Pope has mentioned in his first greeting to the Church.

During these weeks of serene waiting, much has been said about the burden that weighs on the shoulders of the Holy Father. But let us not forget that the Pope relies on God's help, on the assistance of the Holy Spirit and the affection and prayers of all Catholics, and of millions of other men and women of good will.

As Saint Josemaría Escrivá always advised, I ask our Lord today very especially that all of us Catholics may share "one will, one heart, one spirit, so that *omnes cum Petro ad Iesum per Mariam*—so that we may all go to Jesus, closely united to the Pope, through Mary" (*The Forge*, 647).

+ Javier Echevarría

Prelate of Opus Dei

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