

Thanksgiving Mass for the beatification of Alvaro del Portillo

Pope Francis during the Angelus unites himself to the ceremonies in Madrid, and Bishop Javier Echevarria, prelate of Opus Dei said to families “Dear families, God loves you and makes himself present in your marriage”.

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**Prayer for all families of the world
from Valdebebas**

Madrid 28 September: A Mass of thanksgiving took place this morning for the beatification of Alvaro del Portillo. The venue was the very same streets of Valdebebas that was yesterday filled with the more than 200,000 people that attended the beatification. A good number of these people returned same day to their homes in order to save travel costs. Nevertheless, tens of thousands of others joyfully attended today's ceremony.

At the beginning of the ceremony during the Angelus, Pope Francis from Rome remembered the beatification that took place yesterday in Madrid and prayed that "the exemplary Christian and priestly witness of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo give rise in many the desire of uniting themselves ever more to Christ and to the Gospel".

Prayer for all the world's families in union with Pope Francis

Considering that the event was attended mainly by families from the five continents, the prelate of Opus Dei dedicated a good part of his homily to them. This he did, by uniting himself to the wishes of Pope Francis who dedicated this Sunday to prayer, against the background of the celebration of the III Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops dedicated to the family: "On this day which the Holy Father Pope Francis has dedicated to praying for the family, we unite ourselves to the petitions of the entire Church through this communion of love, this school of the Gospel which is the family".

Monsignor Echevarria addressed families saying: "Our Lord loves you, Our Lord is present in your marriage which is the image of the love Christ

has for the Church.I know that many of you dedicate yourselves generously to supporting other married couples along their path of faithfulness.I know that many of you help other homes to go forward in this social context that is sometimes difficult and even hostile.Take courage!Your work as Gospel witnesses is necessary for the whole world”.

He wanted also to thank them: “Now we thank also those parents who are here gathered and to all those who take care of children, of the aged and of the sick”.

The massive crowd of these days is testament to the fruitfulness of the life of Alvaro del Portillo

At the start of his homily the Prelate make specific reference to the beatification ceremony that took place the day before: “The crowd during these days, the thousands of

people from all over the world and so many others who are already waiting for us in Heaven, give special testimony to the fruitfulness of Don Alvaro's life". Speaking further he said, "we cannot really call this a crowd, but rather a family gathering, united by love of God and love for one another. This same love is also made strong today in the Eucharist, during this Mass of thanksgiving for the beatification of our beloved Don Alvaro, bishop, prelate of Opus Dei".

Alvaro del Portillo revealed the divine mercy through his solidarity with the poor and abandoned

During the Thanksgiving Mass Monsignor Echevarria explained that "looking at the holy life of Don Alvaro we discover God's hand, the grace of the Holy Spirit and the gift of a love which transforms us. The prelate urged all to aim that "others

may discover God's goodness in my way of life, as was the case in the daily activities of Don Alvaro, who already in this beloved Madrid also revealed the divine mercy through his solidarity with the poor and abandoned".

Continuing with this spirit of Blessed Alvaro del Portillo the collections from the Masses of yesterday and today will be used to support four social projects he helped to start when he was alive:

- The construction of a mother-and-child Centre in the Niger Foundation and Diagnostic Centre in Enugu, Nigeria, a project that will benefit 12,000 people annually.
- A program to eradicate infant malnutrition in Bingerville (Cote d'Ivoire) and that will directly benefit 5,000 people.

- Four outpatient clinics on the outskirts of the Democratic Republic of Congo, a project that will offer health care to 10,000 children a year.
- Scholarships for the training of African priests in Rome.

At the end of the ceremony the 3,500 young volunteers, in spite of the natural tiredness of these days of intense work helped to collect the materials used for the ceremony.

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