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Book Review: "Uniting Heaven and Earth": a Japanese biography of Blessed Josemaria

Seido Publishers has just published Ten to chi wo Tsunagu ("Uniting Heaven and Earth"), a biographical sketch of the founder of Opus Dei by Toshimi Nakai.

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The author, who became a Catholic after reading *The Way*, begins his book with a description of the beatification ceremony in Saint Peter's Square on May 17, 1992.

The first pages describe episodes in the life of Blessed Josemaria Escriva from his infancy to the founding of Opus Dei in 1928. To gather that information, Toshimi Nakai made a trip to Spain and Italy to visit the cities in which Blessed Josemaria lived and to interview people connected with him and his work.

In a chapter entitled "The Dream of Japan," the author tells of the beginning of the apostolic work of Opus Dei in the land of the rising sun. The book includes, as an appendix, a chronological table of the life of Blessed Josemaria and an informative description of a number of social initiatives promoted by the faithful of Opus Dei, together with

cooperators and friends, in various countries.

The apostolic work of Opus Dei began in Japan in the autumn of 1958. The pages of "Uniting Heaven and Earth" cover with simplicity and good humor the joys and problems through which the first faithful of Opus Dei went when they arrived there, their difficulties in learning Japanese, etc. According to the author, reading the book shows how Blessed Josemaria continues to show from heaven the affection for Japan and the Japanese people that he always manifested during his life on earth.

Throughout his life, the founder of Opus Dei frequently prayed and asked for prayers for the expansion of the Christian faith in that country. In 1974, during a catechetical trip to Latin America, he said, "Pray a lot for Japan. . . . I love very much that

marvelous country of hard working, orderly, serious people, of great intelligence. I have great praise for Japan, but I am very sorry that they do not know the true faith. . . . It is an immense country, if not in area, in the number of its inhabitants. You should pray that our Lord send many vocations, and thus you will bring to God so many, who with the Catholic faith will do even more good."

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