Devotion to Isidoro in the Polish Railways

Antoni Idkowiak, a cooperator of Opus Dei who works for the Polish Railway Company, talks about his efforts to spread devotion to Isidoro Zorzano, recently declared Venerable by Pope Francis.

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During a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa organized by the Polish Railway Company,

Antoni Idkowiak, who works for the company, handed out more than 5,000 prayer cards with the prayer for the intercession of the Servant of God Isidoro Zorzano. He wanted to make known to his co-workers the exemplary life of a colleague of theirs.

Isidoro Zorzano (1902-1943) was one of the first members of Opus Dei. An industrial engineer, he specialized in railways. He worked in Cadiz, Malaga and Madrid, and everywhere he went he left a mark of well-done professional work and cheerful assistance to his colleagues.

When Isidoro met Saint Josemaria Escriva in 1931, his work took on a new dimension: it became his pathway for finding God,

Antoni Idkowiak, a cooperator of Opus Dei, is trying to follow the same pathway, but along the tracks of the Polish railways.

Why did you become interested in the life of Isidoro Zorzano?

We're both railway engineers, and he has taught me a wonderful truth: that it is possible to serve the Church without wearing a habit or cassock. Isidoro didn't do anything "special"; people say he had the charism of "normality." But in his work (the same work I've dedicated myself to for over 30 years) he served those around him and joyfully made Christ known to them.

This is one of the things that I really find attractive about his life: that he shared his knowledge with his colleagues, seeing it as a service. And I assure you, this isn't very common among people working in this area.

Besides handing out thousands of prayer cards to spread devotion to Isidoro, you have helped publish a biography of him in Polish.

I'm a member of the Catholic Association of Polish Railway Workers. Many people have asked me about Isidoro, his holy life and his process of canonization, but I can't explain things very well. I think that he, with his exemplary life, explains everything much better. So we have translated his biography into Polish.

Who is the book meant for?

Above all, for those working in the railways, but not only them. The book will be of interest to all those who want to draw closer to Christ in their daily work. Isidoro's biography also contains stories about the life of Saint Josemaria and the beginnings of Opus Dei that many people don't know about.

Isidoro could one day be the first saint who worked in railways. Could he be your patron?

We railway workers already have Saint Catherine of Alexandria as our patron. But Isidoro would be for us someone who is closer to us, since he lived in the 20th century. He has taught us that these trains of ours can lead us to heaven!

You are a cooperator of Opus Dei. How does the formation you receive help you to speak about your faith to your colleagues at work?

In Opus Dei I've heard for the first time the message of the universal call to holiness and apostolate.

Before I, like many others, thought that apostolate wasn't compatible with respect for others' freedom and that I shouldn't try to influence how they thought. But I learned from Saint Josemaria that "out of a hundred persons we are interested in a hundred." Lay people are called

to bring the message of the Gospel to wherever they are.

For me, of course, this means my work on the railways, and it is there that I try to give personal and spontaneous witness of my faith. And Isidoro helps me, I'm sure of it.

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