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A Road to Freedom Across the Pyrenees

A documentary directed by Arturo Méndiz, winner of 3 Goya Awards, a Golden Palm in Cannes, and a film nominated for an Oscar.

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In 1937, during the Spanish Civil War, St Josemaria was forced to look for ways of escaping from the Republican side to the Nationalist side in which Spain was divided, so that he could continue with the work that God had entrusted to him.

For more than one year since the beginning of the war, he had been in hiding in Madrid, with his life in constant danger. After exhausting alternative ways of escape, he decided on a daring attempt to cross the Pyrenees into Andorra as a fugitive. From there he could safely go into France and cross back into the other side of the Spanish conflict.

“We would like the adventure of St Josemaria’s escape to Andorra in the autumn 1937 to be widely known” says Jordi Piferrer of the *Association of Friends of the Way from Pallerols of Rialb to Andorra*. Hence the reason for this new documentary on the “Crossing of the Pyrenees”.

The documentary is directed by Arturo Méndiz, winner of 3 Goya Awards, a Golden Palm in Cannes and who had his film *Timecode* nominated for an Oscar.

The documentary traces the stages of St Josemaria's external and internal struggles during his escape. His finding of the "Rose" in the ruined church of Pallerols of Rialb is a pivotal event in his journey, confirming him in his quest and reassuring him, amid his anguish, that he is indeed fulfilling the will of God.

The second part of the documentary includes a bird's eyes view, filmed in a helicopter, of the path followed by the fugitives over five days until they finally reach Andorra on 2 December 1937. It is a journey of 100km across mountains and rivers.

Piferrer explains: "we are aware that many people across the world would like to follow in St Josemaria's footsteps and re-live his experiences during his escape. This is the reason for the documentary. We also have a team of guides who will be happy to

accompany any group who wishes to follow this path. Already we have had thousands of people who have been through Pallerols.”

“During the last few years many volunteers have helped with our Association: marking out the routes, restoring buildings along the way, spreading news about our work, creating a centre of historical research and helping us rebuild the church and adjacent priest house in Pallerols.”

Producer Arturo Mendiz adds: “when I received the commission for the documentary, I wanted to deepen in my knowledge of the facts, so as to be able to convey, on those watching, the true hardships undertaken by all who took part in these expeditions.”

When the aerial shots were insufficient to convey the message, the director and producer made use of a young illustrator, Regina

Insenser. The music was produced by Luis Meseguer and the director of photography was Joan Girbau. Members of the Raier club in Lleida contributed to the live action.

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