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"Don Alvaro, a Man of Faith, a Faithful Man"

Bishop Javier Echevarría spoke these words in Rome on August 7 as the tribunal of the Prelature of Opus Dei closed the introductory phase of the Cause of Canonization for Bishop Álvaro del Portillo, first successor of St. Josemaría.

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Over the last four year the Prelature's tribunal has been

studying the life and virtues of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo, while a similar study was being carried out in the Vicariate of Rome. Both tribunals interviewed many witnesses who knew and worked with him. The Prelature's tribunal closed this phase on August 7 in the John Paul II hall of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, with the current Prelate presiding.

"Above all he was a faithful man," Bishop Echevarría said, speaking of his predecessor as Prelate. A "faithful man" means "a man of faith," he went on to say. "Don Alvaro's faith embraced faith in God, faith in the Church, faith in the supernatural origin of Opus Dei, and therefore in the divine character of the undertaking God had asked him to take part in." This faith is what underlay his deep fidelity to the founder, "whom he worked alongside closely for forty years, and

later was his first successor as head of Opus Dei."

Bishop Echevarría concluded: "May Don Alvaro, with his unforgettable smile, unshakable interior peace, firmness in doing the good, and deep humility, help us to make Christ's light shine forth in the world through an unwavering apostolate that brings souls the joy of finding Christ. Always keep his teaching and example in mind: 'Make the truth lovable,' he urged us."

The Vicariate's process closed on June 26 in the Lateran Palace, presided over by Cardinal Camillo Ruini in his final public act as the Pope's Vicar for the Diocese of Rome.

Bishop Alvaro del Portillo's Cause is the first to be brought before the Prelature's tribunal. Its Postulator, Msgr. Flavio Capucci, explained that according to the Church's practice in regard to a bishop whose sanctity is

to be investigated, the process begins in his own ecclesiastical circumscription. And so the Congregation for the Causes of Saints recognized the Prelate of Opus Dei as the competent Ordinary to begin investigating the Cause.

With the diocesan process completed, the next step will be preparation of the "positio," a biography that shows how the candidate lived the Christian virtues to an heroic degree. Upon its completion, the Postulator will present this document to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in the Holy See.