

## **"Dora Showed that the Family is Built Day by Day"**

We interviewed Bishop Jose Luis Gutierrez, Postulator of the Cause of Canonization for Dora del Hoyo. He knew Dora personally as well. "Dora's work was to create the warmth of a home for those around her, whom she considered her family."

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We interviewed **Bishop Jose Luis Gutierrez, Postulator of the Cause of Canonization for Dora**, who has worked for many years in the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, and who is also a full professor emeritus at the Faculty of Canon Law at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross.

### **Did you ever meet Dora del Hoyo?**

Yes, on several occasions, especially between 1970 and 1975 during the yearly courses of formation she attended. I was responsible for the theology classes and for other tasks of pastoral care. I noticed that with her great delicacy and naturalness she passed as just one more among those attending the course, but without seeking to do so, she earned the affection of all.

### **What is the significance of a cause of canonization?**

The reason for opening a cause of canonization is God's glory and the good of the Church and of souls. It brings to light someone who has tried to respond to grace and to love and serve the Lord throughout her life, struggling to overcome the defects which we all have. The saints are models and intercessors for us here on earth, supporting us and accompanying us on the path to the holiness to which we are all called, each in his own situation and circumstances. Those who are already in heaven do not need to have incense burned in their honor; we are the ones who benefit from their canonizations.

**What is the importance of a cause of canonization of someone like Dora for the Church, for souls, and for society?**

Dora devoted her whole life, with real passion and legitimate pride, to

the work of the home, to domestic work. Her work was to create the warmth of a home for those around her, whom she considered her family. The World Meeting of Families VII just concluded in Milan, and there Pope Benedict XVI stressed once again the fundamental importance of the family as the principal heritage of humanity. A family is not built on abstract principles alone: it is created every day with the contributions of each of the members. We all need a home which is clean, orderly, and pleasing to the eyes, in which we share with the others our most intimate moments and we know that we are loved and understood. The one who, with her gaze fixed on God, dedicates herself with love to the care of this environment--whether she is the homemaker or domestic help--is the foundation of the building and contributes efficaciously to the peace, unity, and happiness which

should reign in every home. Dora knew how to love people, and she loved her work, which she never considered to be—because it isn't—in an inferior category. She aspired to being up to date in technical advances for the sake of increasing efficiency. Presenting this kind of work as a path of holiness recognized by the Church will encourage the many faithful Christians who are enmeshed in the thousand circumstances of ordinary life, and it is also a valuable contribution to the good of society.

## **What are the steps of the process of canonization?**

A person dies with a widespread reputation of holiness and many people begin to seek her intercession for God's graces and favors. Once five years have passed since her death, the Postulator, who represents all who wish to promote the cause,

submits a request that the cause be opened to the competent Bishop, which in our case is Bishop Javier Echevarría, Prelate of Opus Dei. In order to investigate, the Bishop appoints a judge, a promoter of justice, and a notary. From the moment that he begins the formal process, the person for whom canonization is being requested is given the title of Servant of God. The court questions witnesses and collects documents, favorable or not favorable, having to do with the life, the living of the virtues, and the reputation of holiness of the Servant of God. Once this investigational phase is concluded, the proceedings of the investigation are sent to Rome to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. The Congregation has the job of conducting two successive examinations of the evidence, once by the Consultants and once by the Cardinals and Bishops. The Congregation will then present its

opinion of the sanctity of the Servant of God to the Pope, who has the authority to pronounce the final judgment. If the Roman Pontiff approves this, he will issue a decree which declares that the person in question has lived the Christian virtues in a heroic way, that is to say, to the highest degree.

**Once the decree has been issued concerning the person's heroic virtue, can the Servant of God be beatified?**

No. The Postulator then needs to present proof of a miracle worked by God and attributed with certainty to the intercession of the Servant of God. In order to collect proof of a miracle, there is a process where the events took place. When the necessary evidence has been collected, it is sent to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, which in turn submits the

study to a commission of seven experts in the field (usually physicians, since the scientifically inexplicable cures are usually medical). Then it is submitted to the Consultants and to the Cardinals and Bishops. Again the Congregation will present the results of its study to the Pope, who makes a decision about promulgating a decree in which the miracle is recognized.

**When the two decrees have been made, concerning the life of heroic virtue and concerning the miracle, the beatification can take place. How long will it be before Dora is beatified? Who can say?**

Both for the virtues and for the miracle the diocesan process still has to take place. Later, in Rome, all the material that is collected will have to be organized and submitted in printed form, to be studied by the Consultants and the Cardinals and

Bishops and, in the case of the miracle, by the experts in the field—and remember that for this examination there is a long waiting list.

## **What can be done now to speed the process up?**

We can follow the example of Dora by seeking holiness in the ordinary circumstances of our professional and family lives: this has to be the fundamental outcome of the Cause, even now. Then, we must continue to ask her intercession to obtain for us many graces and favors, and report these favors to the Postulator as evidence of her reputation for holiness and her ability to intercede before God. Finally, we should ask that among these graces and favors there be at least one with the characteristics of a verifiable miracle, that is to say, one which cannot be explained by science and

which can be submitted to the judgment of the Holy Father.

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