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Letter of Benedict XVI to the Prelate of Opus Dei

Letter of the Holy Father Benedict XVI to Bishop Javier Echevarría on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his priestly ordination.

10/06/2005

Esteemed Brother

Javier Echevarría Rodríguez

Titular Bishop of Cilibia

Prelate of the Personal Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei

As the joyous commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the start of your priestly life and activity draws near, we have received word, Esteemed Brother, that you plan to celebrate it solemnly, in union with the members of the personal Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei, raising heartfelt thanksgiving to the Blessed Trinity for the ineffable gift of the priesthood and for all its blessings. With great joy, we take advantage of this singular occasion to add our congratulations on this happy jubilee and express our esteem and affection.

While still young, on hearing God's gentle voice calling you, you promptly followed it, coming to form part of Opus Dei. After the necessary formation, you received priestly ordination on August 7, 1955. You

have obtained a doctorate in civil law and in canon law. You have carried out various pastoral and academic ministries. For twenty years you were the Secretary of St. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, Founder of Opus Dei, and now you faithfully govern his providential Work with the same spirit.

Casting a glance back on the long priestly path you have followed, you will undoubtedly recall so many labors and difficulties overcome with divine grace; but, above all, so many joyful occasions granted by God to you and to your personal Prelature. As Secretary General, in 1982, you were present at the raising of Opus Dei to the status of a personal Prelature, of which you were immediately named Vicar General. Twelve years later, after the holy death of our Esteemed Brother Alvaro del Portillo, you were elected Prelate of the personal Prelature;

and, in the same year, you were named titular bishop of Cilibia. In 1995, here in Rome, on the solemnity of our Lord's Epiphany, our beloved Predecessor John Paul II conferred on you episcopal ordination, as a clear sign of his benevolence and trust.

Governing your Prelature and contemplating in it the action of God's grace, you never cease exhorting its members—with your example, with your writings, with your words and your pastoral trips—to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose (Acts 11:23). When you foster the eagerness for personal sanctity and the apostolic zeal of your priests and lay people, not only do you see the flock that has been entrusted to you grow, but you provide an effective help to the Church in her urgent evangelization of present-day society. In the terrain of culture and the sciences, you

strive to spread the Christian message in all environments, as is clearly seen in the recently established Pontifical University of the Holy Cross. You bear in your heart the defense of life, the family and marriage, and the formation and pastoral care of young people.

Therefore, Esteemed Brother, receive this proof of our love and benevolence, along with the Apostolic Benediction that, imploring divine grace, through the intercession of the Mother of God, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of St. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, we impart to you with all our heart, and also to the bishops, priests, and men and women who form part of the beloved personal Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei, and to all who, filled with joy, celebrate such an important jubilee.

From the Vatican, the 9th day of July
of the year 2005, the first of Our
Pontificate.

Benedict PP XVI

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