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Regional Assemblies Conclude: Family, Work, and Formation for Mission

In 2024, the Regional Assemblies of Opus Dei were held, bringing together several thousand people in nearly 70 countries over the course of a year to reflect on the theme "On the Road to the Centenary of the Work." The contributions gathered will help prepare for the Ordinary General Congress of 2025, scheduled for April and May.

01/30/2025

In a message published on 15 November 2023, the Prelate of Opus Dei invited the faithful of the Work and their friends to take part in the Regional Assemblies — a participatory process outlined in the statutes — which would take place throughout 2024 in the various jurisdictions of the Prelature. Participants were encouraged to engage in a broad reflection on how to respond to the challenges of our time in light of the spirit of Opus Dei and how to celebrate the upcoming centenary of the Work, keeping both its origins and its future in view.

Over the course of twelve months, many people in each continent took part in the Assemblies, which were titled, “On The Road to the Centenary of the Work. Going More Deeply into

Our Charism and Renewing Our Desire to Serve God, the Church, and Society." Contributions came not only from members of Opus Dei but also from cooperators, friends who attend formational activities, and individuals who belonged to the institution at some point in the past. Many young people also participated, as they will play a key role in putting these ideas into practice in the coming decades.

The most prominent themes

In total, nearly 55,000 people from 70 countries submitted their suggestions. Additionally, around 3,000 working groups were organized to discuss various topics related to living out the message of Opus Dei, as well as the challenges and ways to strengthen apostolic work.

The three key themes that emerged most frequently in these discussions were family, work, and formation for the mission. In Chile, for example, participants reflected on the content used in means of formation to help people live the Christian ideal in today's reality. They also discussed support for families (especially young married couples), the importance of working alongside parents in the formation of their children, and encouraging parents to embrace their mission within the family as a service to other families and to society. Other topics included expanding the presence of the message of sanctification in new cultural and social settings, and improving both internal and external communication within Opus Dei to better contribute to the Church's mission.

Many other relevant topics were also considered, ranging from pressing

social needs in different countries and the Church's main evangelization challenges to aspects of Opus Dei's message that could be further explored. Among other conclusions, participants highlighted that the key contributions of Opus Dei's formation are: fostering an encounter with Christ in daily life, providing spiritual accompaniment, and offering theological and doctrinal formation on the Christian message, in order to transform the world from within.

This reflection was not merely institutional; it also led to a deeper personal commitment. Téophile, from the region of France and Belgium, explains: "I had a rather theoretical understanding of the challenges of our time, but I felt as if my eyes were being opened to concrete situations. I realized there were questions I had never asked myself and, above all, that it was

time to get more involved. In this way, I moved from theoretical reflections to discovering personal challenges.”

Modes of participation and analytical tools

Participation in the assemblies took various forms. Individuals could respond to a digital questionnaire with a guided set of questions for personal study. This was complemented in different locations with other formats, such as one-on-one listening sessions and group activities, including thematic forums and expert meetings. Additionally, in many countries, conversations were encouraged with representatives from civil society and the Church.

A significant innovation in this latest edition of the assemblies was the use of artificial intelligence tools to facilitate participation, collect

contributions, and analyze responses efficiently.

Elderly participants also had the opportunity to contribute by responding to surveys and taking part in working groups. The technical support provided by younger participants fostered a practical exchange of knowledge and mutual enrichment.

The concluding meeting organized by the region of East and South Asia — encompassing ten countries from Sri Lanka to Japan, including Singapore, Korea, and Vietnam — gathered people from diverse ages, backgrounds, and professions. Among those present were doctors, nurses, journalists, teachers, architects, lawyers, and researchers.

Fabiola, from Mexico City, shared her experience of participating in her country's final phase, which involved synthesizing all the collected

materials: “It has been a truly rewarding opportunity to immerse ourselves once again in the spirit of the Work, to deepen our understanding, and to become more aware of the role we all have as Catholics, as ordinary Christians. It was also enriching to compile and reflect on the ideas of others.” Likewise, Fr. José Luis Íñiguez, from the Diocese of Guadalajara, reflected, “It has been an intense exercise in listening and synodality. With God's help, we have come to understand the charism that He gave to our Father (St. Josemaría) a little more, so that we may embody it more fully and transmit it ever more clearly and naturally.”

From the synod to the centenary

All the materials compiled during the final meetings of these assemblies have been sent to Rome and will

serve as the foundation for preparing Opus Dei's Ordinary General Congress, scheduled for April and May 2025. At the same time, each region has already begun prioritizing and implementing its local conclusions.

"Let us ask God, through the intercession of St. Josemaría, for a renewed sense of identity and mission in each of us," Nigeria's summary of the process reads. "This will help us, following the example of our Founder and the first members of the Work, to live the spirit of Opus Dei more fully and, through our personal apostolate, bring many souls closer to God."

In agreement with the Secretariat of the Synod on Synodality, this process has been in harmony with the assembly convened by the Holy Father, achieving broad participation and fostering a conversation

enriched by diverse perspectives and experiences. All of this has taken place in a spirit of prayer, reflection, discernment, dialogue, and gratitude. That gratitude is directed, above all, to God, to St. Josemaría, and to those who have preceded us on this path. Thanks are also extended to everyone who took part in the final sessions of the Assemblies and to all who contributed to their organization.

Everything done and everything remains to be done

Maria, an architect from Reggio Calabria, Italy, describes her participation in the Assemblies as "an opportunity to rediscover what led me to my vocation, what made me fall in love with the new life that was opening up before me; to be amazed once again by the greatness of the spirit of the Work and by the

seriousness of the responsibility each of us feels toward the world.”

The Assemblies are a tool for listening and assisting in governance, established for Opus Dei by St. Josemaría. Held every ten years in a consultative capacity, their purpose is to gather the opinions and proposals of all members and friends of Opus Dei, considering how best to serve the Church and society in each country and historical moment. On this occasion, they have also served as a preliminary step in preparing for the centenary of the Work, which will take place between 2028 and 2030.

As St. Josemaría once said, and as the Prelate recently reminded us: “Everything is done, and everything remains to be done.”

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