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The Prelate in Valencia

Invited by Cardinal Antonio Cañizares, Archbishop of Valencia, Bishop Javier Echevarría gave an address on Blessed Alvaro del Portillo's contribution to Vatican II, and prayed before an image of “Our Lady of the Forsaken.”

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The Prelate of Opus Dei, Bishop Javier Echevarría, opened the conference on April 17 for the “Almudi Theological Dialogues” with

an address on Blessed Alvaro del Portillo's work as secretary of the Vatican II commission responsible for the decree *Presbyterorum ordinis*. Highlighting his predecessor's desire "to serve in first place the Church," he spoke about Blessed Alvaro's diligent work in "carrying out a task of such great importance for the Church: the spiritual and human formation of priests." Blessed Alvaro's selfless dedication to the Church led him "to often work late into the night, while not allowing these efforts to lessen his dedication to the help he provided the Founder as Secretary General of Opus Dei."

Following Bishop Echevarría's address, Cardinal Cañizares spoke briefly about the need "to go more deeply into the teachings of the Second Vatican Council" and of "the great challenge involved in coming to know these teachings better and

interpreting them in the proper way."

According to the Cardinal, *Presbyterorum ordinis* is a document that is still not well known, but it is a "key document" since "we priests are absolutely necessary for the Church and the world, and we have a great responsibility."

Citing words of his predecessor as Archbishop of Valencia, Jose Maria Garcia Lahiguera, whose process of canonization has been opened, Cardinal Cañizares said that "priests need to have Christ's holiness," and that not only is this the essence of *Presbyterorum ordinis* but also "the living substance of the person of Alvaro del Portillo."

In the evening, at 7 pm, Bishop Echevarría presided at a Mass held in the Cathedral of Valencia, concelebrated with Cardinal Cañizares, for an overflowing crowd

of faithful of Opus Dei and Cooperators and friends. In his homily the Prelate of Opus Dei urged those present to “set aside human respects in speaking to others about the sacraments, any fear to talk about Confession, a sacrament that is so needed today. Thus many people will be able to start over in their life and come close to God, since he always helps us and loves us.” He also spoke about the great gift that is the sacrament of the Eucharist.

The Prelate also urged the families present “to give smiling encouragement to one another, because you are the communicators of God's love to others.”

During his brief stay in Valencia, the Prelate of Opus Dei, accompanied by the Cardinal, also had a chance to pray before “Our Lady of the Forsaken” in the basilica next to the Valencia Cathedral, and to view an

image of Saint Josemaria praying before the city's patroness (see video below). He asked our Lady to “look after the Church, the Pope and this particular Church” and “to assist each of us in our specific needs.”

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