

Beatification Cause Opened for Arturo Alvarez

The beatification cause for a Mexican professor of engineering and Associate member of Opus Dei was recently opened in Guadalajara by Cardinal Robles Ortega.

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Arturo Alvarez was born on May 5, 1935 in Ciudad Guzmán, a small city located in the south of the state of Jalisco, Mexico. His family moved to

Guadalajara, capital of the state, where he went to high school and studied chemical engineering at the University of Guadalajara. Upon graduating, he dedicated himself to teaching at his *alma mater* for more than thirty years, until a heart condition forced him to retire.

He met Opus Dei in 1963 and joined definitively as an Associate in 1974. He lived the celibacy that was part of his vocation as a gift from God that enabled him to care more diligently for everyone around him. Arturo passed on to his friends the joy of a person who struggles every day to achieve sanctity in ordinary things.

Arturo was aware of the broad apostolic possibilities of his university position. “He knew he could do a lot of good there,” said Fr. Jesús Becerra, postulator of his cause. As a teacher, he was concerned not only about the academic training of

his students, but also took a genuine interest in each one personally. Arturo is the first Associate of the Prelature of Opus Dei and the first Mexican member of the Work whose process of beatification has been opened.

Arturo worked with order and diligence. His colleagues say he was a good worker and a good listener: he was always available to give advice to those who asked for it. His office was jokingly called a “confessional,” since besides resolving academic questions, students and colleagues found there a welcome that led them to share their problems and concerns. Arturo often advised them to unburden themselves in prayer with Jesus before the tabernacle and to receive the forgiveness obtained in the sacrament of penance.

The University of Guadalajara, after his death, unveiled a statue and

named a hall in his honor as a sign of gratitude and recognition for his work. His students also wrote him a letter to express their gratitude: *A true teacher is someone who, besides carrying out his teaching tasks, gives his students part of his own being, his philosophy of life and beliefs. In attending your classes each morning we have seen how in every activity you are a person who strives to improve, to seek sanctity ... You are a Professor who will leave a firm mark on our own lives. For all that you have done, thank you Professor.*

The son of Madaleno Alvarez Rodriguez, bricklayer, and Maria de Jesus Ramirez Rosales, homemaker, he received from them the seed of his deep Christian faith and the example of hard daily work. Arturo was the youngest of eight siblings (including a niece who was brought up as another daughter). One of his brothers received a call to the

priesthood and a sister to religious life. As a young boy he enjoyed hiking in the countryside, helping out at home and in his family's corrals, making others laugh through his skill with puppets, studying and singing, in a home that stood out for its joy, charity towards others, and generosity towards those in need.

His life, like everyone's, contained both joys and hardships. His brother left for the seminary and later died in an automobile accident; his mother died suddenly due to a cardiac condition, and his father contracted a second marriage. He himself suffered from a heart condition, which to his great sorrow forced him to stop teaching in his beloved University, which he accepted with a supernatural spirit and offered up for the good of souls.

Getting to know Opus Dei in 1963 opened for him a new horizon with

the possibility of encountering Christ through his ordinary work. He had the opportunity to meet Saint Josemaria, in Rome, and later Blessed Alvaro del Portillo, who told him how lucky he was to be able to bring those around him to God through his work as a university professor. Arturo organized outings with his students and visited their families in order to get to know their backgrounds better and help out, even financially, when someone ran the risk of having to abandon his studies.

The 57 years of Arturo's life contained nothing extraordinary as regards external events.

Nevertheless, his deep interior life, his humility, and his ardor in striving to bring others closer to God, even when confronting an atmosphere of intolerance and indifference to the faith, made his life very fruitful. His sincere interest in his students and colleagues, and his own dedication to

God's will, strengthened by his life of prayer, reception of the Sacraments, devotion to Our Lady, and fidelity to his calling to Opus Dei, made him someone who left a deep imprint on others.

In a small notebook he used for a daily examination of conscience, we can read, among other questions, “Did I devote the best time and choose the best place to do my prayer today? How many people did I speak to about God today?”

In a message sent to his students he shared the following reflection: “The poets say that ‘time flies by.’ The philosophers define time as the ‘measure of movement’ of whatever changes ... To mature is to discover the true meaning of our existence: who we are and where we are going. To be fruitful is to help others share in one’s own good, without bargaining and without excuses; it is

to give oneself generously. To bear fruit is to transmit to those about us the pure joy we have in our hearts.”

Jose Guadalupe Ramirez, a businessman who knew Arturo, said: “He died like the just, in peace with himself. To enter the gate of Heaven is the overriding goal of every Christian and Arturo Alvarez’s heart was always focused on a complete self-giving to God.”

When he died, his students composed for him a “calaverita” (humorous Mexican verses for the Day of the Dead dedicated to a beloved person’s encounter with death). It made reference to his well-known punctuality in beginning his classes, one of the many virtues that accompanied him when he departed for a new life on November 28, 1992:

Death came for Arturo

but couldn't take him away:

He arrived late for class,

and had to come back another day!

Opening of his cause of beatification

At the opening of his process, Cardinal José Francisco Robles Ortega, Archbishop of Guadalajara, stated: "By this edict I exhort all the faithful to inform the tribunal about any facts for or against this Cause, and that these be carefully examined."

In that act, the main features of his life were highlighted. Constant example of a coherent Christian life. Punctuality. Order. Joy. Welcoming others with an unfailing smile. And above all, the great loves in Arturo's life: Jesus, God the Father, the Holy Spirit and Our Lady.

The brief video below (in Spanish) contains scenes from the opening of his process:

Chemical Engineer

Arturo Alvarez Ramirez

Prayer for private devotion

Almighty God, who granted your servant Arturo, engineer and university professor, the grace of being a generous instrument in serving his neighbors and helping colleagues and students to discover the greatness of Christian life; I ask that I too, like him, may be a faithful child of yours through the exercise of my professional work, and encourage many souls, with my example and words, to lovingly fulfill your Holy Will. Deign to glorify your servant Arturo and grant me, through his intercession, the favor that I ask... (make your petition

here). Amen. Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be.

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