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Cardinal Desmond Connell commemorates the new saint

The Cardinal's opening words at a Mass of Thanksgiving for the Canonisation of Saint Josemaría Escrivá, at the parish church of St Thérèse, Mount Merrion, Co. Dublin.

11/13/2002

My dear brother priests, my dear brothers and sisters, I would like to welcome you all to the Mass this

evening in thanksgiving for the canonisation of Saint Josemaría Escrivá. It was nearly three weeks ago in Rome. I would most willingly have been there but that I had already committed myself to the celebration of a centenary here in the diocese. I would very much have liked to be with those of you who were in Rome for that wonderful celebration. This year we are celebrating also the centenary of the birth of the new saint.

Many of you have received the spiritual influence of Saint Josemaría, through his founding, in 1928, of Opus Dei. It opened for lay people and for secular priests a way to seek God through everyday life and work. At the centre of the charism of the new saint is the profound importance of holiness in the Church, the holiness to which all of us are called in our different ways. Holiness it is that expresses our

highest dignity, the holiness that God has given us through Jesus Christ his Son in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

The universal call to holiness, which was proclaimed in a very special way by the Second Vatican Council, is the expression too of that same charism and it is something of very great importance to you as members of Opus Dei, the seeking of holiness in your everyday lives. Holiness is not something divorced from life, it is not something rarely attainable. Holiness is to be found in the humblest life within the Church, and the humblest life within the Church is transformed by that holiness.

My predecessor, Archbishop McQuaid, was impressed by the warmth and charisma of the new saint when he visited him in the Archbishop's House in August 1959.

Saint Josemaría's insight from 1928 formed part of the Second Vatican Council's proclamation of that universal call to holiness. All of us in the Church have received that call through our baptism. Saint Josemaría used to add that God's calling to holiness occurred not in spite of, but somehow because of our weakness. He marvelled at a God who created and redeemed us, but to think that God is always ready to forgive us, that was even more astonishing. It's expressed in the wonderful prayer of the Church, "Deus, qui omnipotentiam tuam parcendo maxime et miserando manifestas": the almighty power of God is shown above all, says the Church, not in the extraordinary work of creation, which has produced such wonders, but in God's willingness to show mercy and to stand back in order to allow us to flourish, to stand back from our weakness, to stand back even from

our sins, and to show us his goodness and his mercy. And so we also turn to God for mercy and forgiveness as we call to mind our own sins.

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