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## **Friends of God**

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01/01/2006

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Josemaría. Issued in 1977, its 18 homilies preached between 1941 and 1968 touch on the great subjects of Christian spirituality according to the foundational inspiration of Saint Josemaría: the greatness of ordinary life, the gift of freedom, the importance of natural virtues, humility, detachment, chastity, prayer, faith, hope, charity, apostolate...

His clear, concise, gracious language speaks to ordinary Christians. And precisely to them he offers the high goal of contemplation, with the conviction that everyone can and should strive for holiness without qualifications: “In recommending this unbroken union with God am I not presenting an ideal so sublime that it is unattainable by the majority of Christians? Certainly the goal is high but it is not unattainable.”

“The path that leads to holiness is the path of prayer: and prayer takes root and grows in the soul little by little, like the tiny seed which later develops into a tree with many branches.

“First one brief aspiration, then another, and another... till our fervor seems insufficient, because words are too poor...: then this gives way to intimacy with God, looking at God without needing rest or feeling tired. We begin to live as captives, as prisoners. And while we carry out as perfectly as we can (with all our mistakes and limitations) the tasks allotted to us by our situation and duties, our soul longs to escape. It is drawn towards God like iron drawn by a magnet. One begins to love Jesus, in a more effective way, with the sweet and gentle surprise of his encounter.”

What basis, what grounds do Christians have, for nurturing such amazing aspirations in their lives? Álvaro del Portillo notes in the foreword, “The answer comes as a sort of refrain, again and again, right through these homilies: it is the humble sense of daring ‘of the person who, knowing himself to be poor and weak, knows also that he is a son of God.’”

Over 400,000 copies in 13 languages have been sold.

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(03/28/2025)