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General Archive of the Prelature of Opus Dei

The Archive of Opus Dei was first set up between 1953 and 1956. In 2010 the documentation was catalogued. In December 2017 it was officially erected. It is currently in an advanced stage of organisation and classification, and is scheduled to open to the public between 2028 and 2030.

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The Archive of Opus Dei was first set up between 1953 and 1956, when the Central Advisory and the General Council of Opus Dei moved to Rome. These bodies took the documentation of previous years, which had been held in Madrid, with them. Together with new documents generated in subsequent years, the material was stored without being organised in Rome. After the death of the Founder, and on the occasion of the work of his cause of canonization, an effort was made to locate all his writings and documents.

After several years of study, a classification chart was drawn up in 2010 and the documentation was catalogued. At the same time, work began on the premises located in Viale Bruno Buozzi 48, destined to become the location of the Archives.

A few years later, as the construction progressed, Msgr. Fernando Ocariz

officially erected the General Archive of the Prelature of Opus Dei (AGP) with a decree dated December 6, 2017.^[1] At the same time, he appointed the director of the archive, who is currently the priest and historian Francesc Castells.

As the decree of erection points out, from the moment of its opening "the consultation of documents of historical interest will be open to researchers, with the requirements and conditions that are laid out." As is standard practice in this type of institution, the requirements and conditions will consist of holding a university degree or doctorate (or an equivalent degree) and carrying out research of a scientific character.

At present, the historical archive is in an advanced stage of organisation and classification, in order to allow adequate conservation and consultation of the documents.

According to the planning and pace of the aforementioned work, the plan is to open the archive on the occasion of the centenary of Opus Dei, in the period from 2028 to 2030. Until that time, the archive remains closed.

Access will be granted to researchers from the archive itself and from the St. Josemaría Historical Institute, according to the interests that may arise regarding historical questions that affect Opus Dei and need to be clarified with documentary support.

The archives, which date back to 1928 and even earlier, since they include personal documents of the Founder from his childhood, are made up above all of the documentation resulting from the work of the governing bodies of Opus Dei: the Prelate and his two central councils, the General Council and the Central Advisory. There is also other documentation from the regional circumscriptions of Opus Dei.

In addition to advancing in the cataloguing process, the Archive staff are working to determine the documentation that will be made available to researchers. Like all ecclesiastical archives, this one is governed by the norms of canon law. It also takes into account Italian legislation in this area and is subject to the European Union's data protection regulations, which determine a period of confidentiality for the documentation, which varies according to its content. For example, documents containing sensitive personal data, such as private correspondence, must wait a particularly long period of time: 70 years. The rule for the Vatican Apostolic Archives, which allows access to documents by pontificate after 70 years from the death of the pontiff, is also particularly relevant for documents relating to pontiffs (currently up to the death of Pius XII, 1939-1958).

The aim is for the opening of the General Archives of the Prelature to allow many researchers to access and shed light on the history and context of this institution of the Church.

[1] Published in *Romana* no. 65, July-December 2017

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