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Statement of the Prelate of Opus Dei on the Election of the New Pope

"Today is a moment of great joy" declared Bishop Javier Echevarría, Prelate of Opus Dei, when learning of the election of Pope Benedict XVI.

05/18/2005

Today is a moment of great joy for the entire Church. Catholics all over the world are giving thanks to God for the gift of a new Pope, Benedict

XVI. Once again his children turn their eyes to Peter's successor, finding in him light and serenity.

In my name, and with the certainty that I am expressing the sentiments of the men and women who make up the Prelature of Opus Dei, I assure Benedict XVI of our fullest union both with him and with his teachings: a deep communion. The new Pope is well acquainted with the Prelature's mission and knows he can count on the cheerful efforts of the priests and lay people who form part of it in order to serve the Church, which was St. Josemaría Escrivá's only ambition. Along with our union with him, I also want to transmit to him my deep filial affection, joined to the prayer and affection of all the faithful of Opus Dei.

During these days of trust-filled waiting, there has been a lot of talk

about the Roman Pontiff's immense responsibility, about the Church's need for his ministry, and the weight of the mission that rests on his shoulders. All of this is true. But we are also seeing now how the Pope, besides God's help, can rely on the support of the prayer and affection of all Catholics and of so many other persons of good will.

The circumstances surrounding the death of John Paul II and the election of Benedict XVI have been a marvelous manifestation of faith on the part of millions of persons and a moving expression of unity: in a shared sorrow first of all, at the loss of our beloved John Paul II, and also in their joy at the gift of a new Pope. May John Paul II protect his successor in this moment of a new springtime!

I am also struck, as is only natural, by the Church's marvelous

continuity, so clearly reflected in the joy of the People of God at the election of Peter's new successor.

+ Javier Echevarria

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