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This world crisis is a crisis of saints

Saints are men and women of flesh and bones!

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The world crisis today, of confusion and self destruction, is a crisis of saints, of holy men and women, who ought to give "Life" to a rather decadent society, and inspire joy, hope and meaning to lives of so many others. It would seem the vessel of humanity has lost its bearing in high seas. People are sad when they ought to be happier, with

the advances man has made. Atrocious crimes, unfettered indecency, greed without measure, corruption at all levels, depression and suicides, so many broken marriages, loss of value for life, society's conditioning by terrorism... We need saints who are great luminaries to breathe newness to a world turned old.

This year I was privileged to attend the canonization ceremony which proclaimed two great popes, John XXIII and John Paul II, as saints, exemplary persons in their holiness, and true mirrors of Christ's message. Many adult Kenyans recall the visits of Pope St John Paul the Great to our country, where his words and gestures rekindled the hope and faith of many.

St. John Paul II has been a true role model to many, and a darling to the youth. He started the world youth day

and even in his old age loved to spend time with young people. He is a true inspiration to many of us, even across the religious divide. He challenged the youth to be truly Christian and to stand up against the lures of evil, of rebellion and of mere pleasure. He invited them often to seek ways to serve others and witness their faith...

I count this year a special blessing, as I received the wonderful news of the beatification of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo, a man to whom I owe so much to, who mentored many, and who ordained me to the priesthood. This means recognition of his holiness of life, and just one step from Sainthood. I knew bishop Alvaro as a soft spoken man, an Engineer like myself before becoming a priest, and yet a man with an immense spiritual drive. Through his encouragement even here in our country, Strathmore

University and other institutions were initiated.

He transmitted amazing optimism in the face of the sanctioning of immoral actions in legal systems, in styles of life. His legacy is the determination he instilled to us, his spiritual children, those he met and who read his writings, to keep this mission alive, to become holy men and women who can turn the world around. Don Alvaro's beatification is yet another sign for this world, that the real giants, the real earth shakers are the saints.

A great man, who when he visited Kenya urged the people he met, to be more committed to the love of God irrespective of difficulties that may be on our paths. He echoed Christ's words, that we must become "the leaven of society" and "the light of the world".

With a proverb, "the road to the beloved has no hills", he echoed the message the world needs to hear today. We need to make efforts, but Love urges us onwards. Sanctity is possible, and the renewal and transformation of today's society calls for persons committed to what is right, committed to defend Christian values. It calls for holiness of life, solid faithfulness, and authentic witness to love of God.

Bishop Alvaro, the successor of St Josemaria Escriva, as head of Opus Dei was merely rephrasing the message St Josemaria echoed for over half a century. "This world crisis is a crisis of saints..." All people need to wake up to the fact that the ones to transform society are not over there, but are "us"! Legislators must cease to fear "consequences" of standing for uprightness, and true values like, family, marriage, prayer, equality of persons, dignity of life... Ordinary

people must seek to do things right,
give God space to change

our society through our hands...
Businessmen must live up to ethical
trade, without seeking profit alone...
Teachers and nurses must be moved
by service and compassion... In other
words, if we were to embrace the
invitation of the witness of these
great saints, not only would justice
prevail but also peace and
prosperity.

The process of beatification of our
dear Cardinal Maurice Otunga is also
underway. The cause of a holy nun
who worked in Kenya, Sr Irene
Ngaatha, is nearing conclusion, and
hopefully the beatification will be
here in Kenya. The witness of saints
ought to spur on all baptized to a
"loud wake up call". That is why I am
going to Madrid to witness the
beatification of Bishop Alvaro del
Portillo, a man I knew in flesh and

blood. A simple, cheerful, humble and exceptionally gifted priest and bishop. I want to be awakened!

If only some sparks could fly from these saints, and start a fire in the hearts of all christians, to transform this society to make it truly and authentically human.

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