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Four Meetings in the Congo

From April 6 to 27, during four consecutive Saturday sessions attended by 150 students and young professionals, Tangwa University Center in Kinshasa hosted meetings about Blessed Josemaria Escriva and his message, especially with regard to social initiatives for the advancement of women.

08/29/2002

A multicolored poster announced the gatherings as marking the

celebration of the centennial of the birth of the founder of Opus Dei.

The chairperson of the meetings, Doctor Amisi, cited a quotation from Blessed Josemaria that provided the basis for the projects being considered: “A man or a society that does not react to suffering and injustice and makes no effort to alleviate them is still distant from the love of Christ’s heart.” Reflections on the need to find solutions that really contribute to development, and work that is done well and with a spirit of service, as a way of attaining this, were present throughout the addresses.

Few people in Kinshasa could say that they personally had met Blessed Josemaria. Doctor Maria Dolores Mazuecos, who lived close to him in the 70s, told of her memories of the founder of Opus Dei. She described the immense panorama that Blessed

Josemaria described as early as the 40s, sure that someday the most varied projects for the advancement of women would be underway all over the world.

The presentation of Annick Rascar, the Director of the Higher Institute for Medical Services (Institut Supérieur en Sciences Infirmières), founded in 1997, showed how this dream was little by little becoming a reality in Kinshasa as well. The Institute was seeing to it that its students acquired a serious professional formation imbued with human and Christian values. Three classes of nurses have already graduated and are working in different hospitals and other medical facilities in the capital and the interior of the Congo.

Nelly Tshela, the Technical Director of the Kimbondo Professional School, entitled her address "Tradition and

Development are not Contradictory." She explained the gestation and birth of the school from its first classes, given in the open air under a tree, up till today in which a broad educational and social work is being carried out in a large rural area on the outskirts of Kinshasa.

A documentary on development projects in various countries of the world, among them the Monkole Medical Center in Kinshasa, followed by a discussion, completed the series of meetings. To an open question of whether it was worthwhile to complicate one's life by this kind of project, the response of one of the participants summed up the feeling of the assembly: promoting these kind of projects is not a matter of complicating one's life, but of making it meaningful.

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