

Message

Work, family life, and the ordinary events of each day are opportunities for drawing close to Christ, and making Him known to others.

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As the Second Vatican Council taught, every baptized person is called to follow Christ closely, by living according to the Gospel and making its teachings known to others. The aim of Opus Dei is to contribute to that evangelizing mission of the Church, by fostering among

Christians of all social classes a life fully consistent with their faith, in the middle of the ordinary circumstances of their lives and especially through the sanctification of their work.

The following are some of the main features of the spirit of Opus Dei:

Divine filiation. “Divine filiation is the foundation of the spirit of Opus Dei,” said its founder, Saint Josemaría Escrivá. A Christian is a child of God by virtue of baptism. Thus the formation provided by the Prelature seeks to foster among the Christian faithful a deep awareness of their being children of God, and helps them act accordingly. It fosters confidence in divine providence, simplicity in their dialogue with God, a deep awareness of the dignity of each human being and of the need for fraternity among all people, a truly Christian love for the world and

for all human realities created by God, and a sense of calm and optimism.

Ordinary life. “It is in the midst of the most material things of the earth that we must sanctify ourselves, serving God and all mankind,” said Saint Josemaría. The family, marriage, work – all of our activities – are opportunities for drawing close to and imitating Jesus, trying to practice charity, patience, humility, diligence, integrity, cheerfulness, and all the other human and Christian virtues.

Sanctifying work. Sanctifying work means to work with the spirit of Christ, to work competently and ethically, with the aim of loving God and serving others, and thus to sanctify the world from within, making the Gospel present in all activities whether they be outstanding or humble and hidden.

In the eyes of God what matters is the love that is put into work, not its human success.

Prayer and sacrifice. The formation given by Opus Dei encourages prayer and sacrifice in order to sustain the effort to sanctify one's ordinary occupations. Thus members strive to incorporate into their lives certain practices of Christian piety, such as prayer, daily Mass, sacramental confession, and reading and meditating on the Gospel. Devotion to our Lady occupies an important place in their hearts. Also, in striving to imitate Christ, they try to acquire a spirit of penance by offering up small sacrifices, particularly those that help them fulfill their duties faithfully and make life more pleasant for others, such as renouncing small pleasures, fasting, almsgiving, etc.

Unity of life. Saint Josemaría explained that Christians working in the world should not live “a kind of double life. On the one hand, an interior life, a life of union with God; and on the other, a separate and distinct professional, social and family life.” On the contrary: “There is just one life, made of flesh and spirit. And it is this life which has to become, in both soul and body, holy and filled with God.”

Freedom. The members of Opus Dei are ordinary citizens who enjoy the same rights and are subject to the same obligations as any other citizen. In their professional, family, political, financial or cultural activities, they act with freedom and personal responsibility, not involving the Church or Opus Dei in their decisions, nor presenting those decisions as the only Catholic solutions. This implies respecting the freedom and the opinions of others.

Charity. To meet Christ is to find a treasure that one cannot stop sharing. Christians are witnesses to Jesus and spread his message of hope among their companions, with their example and their words. “Side by side with our colleagues, friends and relatives and sharing their interests, we can help them come closer to Christ,” wrote Saint Josemaría. The wish to make others know Christ, which is a direct consequence of charity (that is, love of God above all things and of one’s neighbour as oneself), cannot be separated from the desire to contribute to finding solutions to the material needs and social problems of one’s surroundings.
