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Abeokuta Bishop Prays for the Canonization of Opus Dei Founder

Bishop Alfred Adewale Martins, Bishop of the Diocese of Abeokuta has encouraged Opus Dei to be bolder at a seminar for priests organized at Iroto Conference Centre in preparation for the year 2002, centenary celebrations of Blessed Josemaría's birth.

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Addressing a group of the clergy from the dioceses of Lagos, Ijebu-Ode, Ibadan and Abeokuta, Bishop Martins enjoined Opus Dei to present the kernel of its message to the local population. "Everyone certainly needs the truth of the Gospel that is so admirably presented in the writings of Blessed Josemaría," he emphasized.

Perhaps sensing this need, Criterion Publishers of Lagos is about to publish in Nigeria a short biography of Blessed Josemaría. It has appeared in U.K. only this year in the form of a booklet published by the Catholic Truth Society. Permission has been obtained from the CTS thanks to the offices of Archbishop Okogie and it is expected to be made available in the year 2002 the centennial of the birth of the founder.

Reviewing the universal call to sanctity in the writings of Blessed

Josemaría, Bishop Martins exhorted priests to take serious their own call to sanctity in the daily ministry of the priestly work. "As priests, we are called upon to sanctify our world through a diligent exercise of our priestly duties so that the work can be the instrument by which we also attain our own sanctification," he said. And he added, "By living up to the demands of our priesthood i.e. fidelity to the promises made at ordination, our work would have become our tool for attaining holiness."

Examining the spirit of Opus Dei in the teaching of its founder he concluded saying that these teachings" are in perfect synchrony with the mind of the universal Church and therefore applicable to all the faithful." And he appealed to Opus Dei priests thus: "Priests that belong to the Opus Dei are expected to make the spirit of Opus Dei come

alive both in their exemplary apostolate and also in their relationship with their brothers priests within the diocesan presbyterate. This would help in ensuring that the mode of seeking holiness promoted by the Opus Dei would find acceptance among them and thereby get wider dissemination within the ranks of God's children in the Church."

He finally augured the canonisation of Blessed Josemaría who is a great son of the Church who lived and died in the service of the Gospel. "On the occasion of his 100th birthday it would be significant if he were raised to the status of sainthood, the due process having gone through." This, he added, "would be a source of inspiration to all the faithful of the Church".

Jide Martins // The Independent

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