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Opus Dei Founder To Become A Saint

For Blessed Josemaria, the founder of Opus Dei, a sure seat awaits him among the saints in heaven as authorities of the Catholic Church have approved a miracle in his name, which cured a Spanish medical doctor who had been afflicted by a terminal disease.

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This is the last evidence required by the Church for the canonization the

late Spanish priest who was beatified in 1992 by Pope John Paul II.

A release from the *Opus Dei* office in Lagos last week signed by Mr. Eugene Agboifo Ohu, its information officer, disclosed that Pope John Paul II on December 20 approved a decree issued by the Vatican's department in charge of the Causes of Saints, confirming the healing, in 1992, of the Spanish doctor from chronic cancerous radiodermatitis. The miracle was obtained through the intercession of Blessed Josemaria.

The medical committee of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in a report said the complete cure was confirmed by the examinations carried out on the patient in 1992, 1994 and 1997. It said the cure was "very rapid, complete, lasting and scientifically inexplicable." In January 1998, the Committee of Theologians also gave its unanimous

approval for attributing the miracle to Blessed Josemaria. The Ordinary Congregation of Cardinals and Bishops confirmed these conclusions last September.

This approval means that all the formal requirements for the canonization of the founder of Opus Dei have been completed while the remaining steps are for the Vatican to set a date for the ceremony and for the Pope to solemnly proclaim that Blessed Josemaria is to be included among the Saints.

Dr. Manuel Nevado Rey was born in 1932 and a specialist in orthopaedic surgery. Since 1956, he has carried out many operations on fractures and other injuries, exposing his hands to x-rays. The first symptoms of radiodermatitis appeared on him in 1962 and continued to worsen. By 1984, he had to limit his activities to minor operations because his hands

were gravely affected. He stopped work completely in 1992. The only known treatments are surgical (skin grafts, and the amputation of the affected parts of the hand). In November 1992, he met with an Agricultural engineer working with the Spanish government who offered him a prayer card of the *Opus Dei* founder who was just elected Blessed by the Pope. The engineer also invited him to pray for a cure for his illness. From then, his hands began to get better and in a fortnight, the disease disappeared and he was completely cured. In 1993, the doctor was back to work without any problem.

Josemaria Escriva was born in Spain on January 9, 1902 and was ordained priest in 1925. In 1928, he founded *Opus Dei*, meaning *Work of God*. After his death in Rome in 1975 nearly 1,300 bishops –more than a third of the Catholic bishops in the

world – requested the Pope to begin the process to declare him a saint.

His pet organization is now entrusted with the mission of fostering a deep awareness of the universal call to holiness among men and women of all walks of life. There are 84,000 faithful of *Opus Dei* worldwide. Its work in Nigeria began in 1965.

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