

## **Opus Dei's focus on secular life**

"The Da Vinci Code" presents Opus Dei as hostile to the modern, secular world. In fact, the reverse is true. One of Opus Dei's central ideas is that lay Christians are called to be fully a part of the modern, secular world, improving it by their Christian witness rather than rejecting and withdrawing from it.

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**Pope John Paul II:** “[Opus Dei] has as its aim the sanctification of one’s life, while remaining within the world at one’s place of work and profession: to live the Gospel in the world, while living immersed in the world, but in order to transform it, and to redeem it with one’s personal love for Christ. This is truly a great ideal, which right from the beginning has anticipated the theology of the lay state, which is a characteristic mark of the Church of the Council and after the Council.”

*L’Osservatore Romano*, August 27, 1979.

**Prof. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese:** “Opus Dei is dedicated to the peculiarly modern mission of sanctifying life – and especially work – in the world. The very title, which means the work of God, captures the essence of this mission. Ordinary people, living ordinary lives, can sanctify their work, whatever it may be, to God and thereby consecrate

themselves to promoting the holiness of everyday life.... Members of 'the Work' may be full-time mothers, politicians, university professors, teachers, school administrators, scientists, social workers, interior decorators, communications specialists, businessmen or women, or members of virtually any other occupation." From a statement given on January 3, 2004. Fox-Genovese is a Professor of History at Emory University, founding director of the Institute for Women's Studies, and Editor of *The Journal of the Historical Society*.

**Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger:** "From all this I have better understood the inner character of Opus Dei, this surprising union of absolute fidelity to the Church's great tradition, to its faith, and unconditional openness to all the challenges of this world, whether in the academic world, in the field of work, or in matters of the

economy.” *L’Osservatore Romano*, October 6, 2002. Cardinal Ratzinger was elected Pope Benedict XVI on April 19, 2005.

**Cardinal Basil Hume, OSB:** “[St. Josemaría’s] words, seventy years ago, anticipated the Vatican Council’s decree on the place and the role of the laity in the world.... It is my conviction that it’s only slowly that we’re coming to understand what the Spirit was trying to say to us through the Council. But the Spirit goes on calling.... And surely the Holy Spirit is calling us in our day to a greater degree of holiness, to deepen our spiritual lives. And it has been the role of the movements [and] of Opus Dei to provide support and guidance on that road to holiness.” From a homily on October 2, 1998, at a Mass of thanksgiving in London to mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of Opus Dei.

**St. Josemaría Escrivá, Opus Dei's founder:** "Indeed, one of my greatest joys was to see the Second Vatican Council so clearly proclaim the divine vocation of the laity." From an interview published in the French newspaper, *Le Figaro*, May 16, 1966, republished in *Conversations with Josemaría Escrivá*, Scepter Publishers, 2002.

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