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## **Serving the Church however you can**

Álvaro Anguísola is a volunteer at the Diocese of Bilbao. When it was time for him to retire, a friend invited him to help out in his diocese with the economic and transparency areas. He agreed right away, and now he dedicates his days to collaborating with his local church in this way.

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After spending his childhood and teenage years in Bilbao, where he

was born, Álvaro Anguísola worked for over 30 years in an automobile factory in Vitoria. When a friend offered him the chance to contribute to strategic projects at the Diocese of Bilbao after his retirement, he seized the opportunity.

Álvaro, who had always loved working and still felt capable of contributing, joined the team of volunteers without hesitation.

There are many ways to support the Church: as a catechist, through Caritas, helping in the parish, or as Álvaro did, by bringing his professional experience to various areas, working behind the scenes in an equally important role.

The Diocese of Bilbao's volunteers are retired (or active) professionals with time to spare, like Álvaro, who undertake tasks and projects that do not interfere with the diocese's regular staff. Specifically, he is part

of the strategic planning group in the economic area.

## **A seamless transition: from business to the diocese**

This role suited Álvaro perfectly, because he had served as the financial director at his automobile company, focusing on strategic planning and action plans. He had also worked on international projects to improve the efficiency of financial departments, collaborating with people from various countries, which honed his adaptability and learning skills—skills he now finds invaluable in his new role.

At the diocese, for instance, he has analyzed financial reports from entities not directly managed by the diocese, such as cloistered convents, which are required to present their accounts annually. This task reminded him of a project at his former company where he

developed industrial indicators for all the factories in the corporate group. Essentially, the underlying idea was similar: he had to create a procedure, get it approved, test it over time, and, if successful, extend it to other organizations also required to report to the diocese.

He is also involved in the Church's transparency project, promoted by the Spanish Episcopal Conference. During his professional career, Álvaro worked in regulatory compliance, giving him relevant experience. "Transparency," he explains, "is the first rule in communication, especially in the Church. You cannot convey the *Truth* if you are not transparent yourself. This transparency applies to behavior, finances, material assets, and more. That's why we have external audits, just as we did at my company, to help identify areas for improvement." The demand for

transparency is growing, as society increasingly expects it.

## **“It’s a way of giving back”**

Through his work at the diocese, Álvaro has met wonderful people within the Church, forming friendships. Like him, most come from the business world: engineers, economists, and architects, working in strategic planning, real estate, and supporting other entities. He finds the work environment very pleasant, free from the pressures of profit and deadlines. He is one of only a few single volunteers; most are married with grandchildren, balancing their family responsibilities with their volunteer work at the diocese.

Álvaro is very happy, noting that it’s easy to get hooked on this project due to the variety of tasks and the positive atmosphere. He says, “It’s a way of giving back for all I’ve received in life.” He usually goes to

the diocese once or twice a week, balancing it with household chores and leisure activities.

He has discovered the Church's internal organization, rich and varied, and its need for everyone's help: laypeople, consecrated persons, bishops, and more.

## **The role of laypeople in the Church**

Reading the letter from the founder of Opus Dei about the spirit of Opus Dei and the vocation of supernumeraries like himself has helped Álvaro understand better how laypeople should collaborate with bishops and priests: “Because of the fact that we love the Church, we have a great love for the Bishops, whom *the Holy Spirit has made ... overseers to care for the church of God* (Acts 20:28). We work in their dioceses, following in the same direction as the Reverend Ordinaries, and the fruit of our apostolate

remains in the dioceses” (Letter no. 8).

As Saint Josemaría once reflected, The layman's specific role in the mission of the Church is precisely that of sanctifying secular reality, the temporal order, the world, ab intra, in an immediate and direct way” (*Conversations, “Freedom and Pluralism in the People of God”*).

Despite being written over half a century ago, Álvaro finds these ideas insightful and relevant to the present day, reflecting true vision: the freedom of Opus Dei members, the separation between ecclesiastical work and the work of the faithful serving society or family. That’s why he strives to do his work well, respect others, and humbly accept feedback in his tasks at the diocese.

Since volunteering in the diocese, Álvaro has become more aware of the Church’s need for everyone’s

help, particularly the talents and professional experience of laypeople, to advance transparency. The Church, as a bearer of the truth, must demonstrate this truth through transparency, making all necessary information available to those who seek it: financial, catechetical, educational, and more, with nothing to hide.

Thus, Álvaro encourages other retired colleagues and friends to join the project, showcasing the Church's contributions to the earthly and eternal happiness of all people.

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