

opusdei.org

# A Faithful Son of Saint Josemaria

Father Cormac Burke, who helped begin Opus Dei's apostolic work in several countries, died on 22 November in Nairobi, after many years of faithful work in Kenya. He was also a well-known author and worked as a judge on the Roma Rota.

11/29/2021

Fr Cormac had been sick for the last few months. He had contracted Covid a few months ago but managed to

recover somewhat. But at 94 years of age he was not able to regain his strength sufficiently and passed away quietly on 22 November 2021 around 9.05 pm. He lived and died in a centre of Opus Dei located in the residential area of Strathmore School in Nairobi, Kenya.

Fr Cormac was born on 21 March 1927 in Sligo, Ireland. His father, Patrick, was a doctor and his mother, Nora, was a teacher. He had two brothers and two sisters. He studied Arts in University College Dublin, where he met Jose Ramon Madurga, a young Spanish engineer working in Dublin. On 9 January 1948 he joined Opus Dei as a numerary. He was the first vocation from that country. Through him his sisters also joined the Work, so in some way we can say that he was also responsible for starting the apostolate of Opus Dei with women in that country.

He was ordained in 1955 and thereafter he helped spur forward the apostolate of Opus Dei in various countries. In a letter from the Prelate of Opus Dei sent when receiving the news about his death, the Prelate summarized Fr Cormac's life as follows: *Cormac has been faithful to the end. He has done much good with his dedication and apostolic zeal: first in Ireland, where he planted the seed of the Work; then in various countries of Europe and North America with his pastoral and teaching work, and during his years in Rome working with great prestige. Finally in the last years in your region, where he exercised his priestly ministry joyfully, with deep piety and serving countless people, trying to bring them closer to Christ.*

Fr Cormac was also a renowned author. Some of his books, still available on the internet, include *Covenanted Happiness, Man and*

*Values, The Theology of Marriage, The Mass Explained, Authority and Freedom in the Church.* He also worked in Rome for a number of years as a judge in the Roman Rota. For a personal assessment of his work as a canon lawyer, see: [In the Light of the Law: Msgr. Cormac Burke's canon law website.](#)

An [article by Chris Noonan in \*Studia et Documenta\* Vol. 13](#) provides extensive information about Cormac's efforts as a young student in helping to begin the apostolic work of Opus Dei in Ireland, and the key role he played in the first translation of *The Way* into English.

Despite all his academic interests, he chose to spend the last few years of his life working happily as an assistant chaplain in Strathmore School ( [www.strathmore.ac.ke](http://www.strathmore.ac.ke)). He was very happy to spend time talking

with young people and help guide  
the future generation of leaders.

May he rest in eternal peace!

---

pdf | document generated  
automatically from [https://opusdei.org/  
en-nz/article/a-faithful-son-of-st-  
josemaria-2/](https://opusdei.org/en-nz/article/a-faithful-son-of-st-josemaria-2/) (08/18/2025)