

Holiness for Everyone

A recent book by Eric Sammons looks at the inheritance St. Josemaría left to the Church. As Scott Hahn says in the foreword: "I could not have written a book as useful as Eric's, for he sees my family inheritance from a different perspective."

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The Practical Spirituality of St. Josemaría Escrivá

by Eric Sammons

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The following excerpt is from the author's introduction:

"When Catholics hear mention of St. Josemaría, too many think, 'Oh, he's the Opus Dei saint,' and then relegate his life and teachings as applicable only to Opus Dei members. What a shame. As you will see in these pages, St. Josemaría developed over many years of work and prayer among laypeople a spirituality whose goal is the sanctity of every man and woman. He insisted that every person could, with the grace of God, achieve holiness through ordinary life and work. In other words, he did not intend his spirituality only for an

elite group, or for those separate from the world, or for a select subset of laypeople. He intended it for all people, no matter their state in life.

"As any member of Opus Dei will tell you, joining its ranks is a vocation, a call from God. It is not for everyone. Furthermore, because of Opus Dei's relatively small size, its outreach is not available to everyone. But the spirituality of St. Josemaría is for everyone—laborer, executive, mother, teacher.

"Regardless of your state in life, the teachings of St. Josemaría can help you draw closer to God in ordinary life and grow in holiness. In this book I hope to make St. Josemaría's teachings accessible to non-Opus Dei members so that they can benefit from them just as so many members of the apostolate he founded have for decades. St. Josemaría is a canonized

saint of the entire Catholic Church, not just one segment of it.

"Our first step toward understanding St. Josemaría's message will be understanding the traditional Catholic teaching, forgotten at times, but renewed in recent years, of the call that each and every Christian has to holiness. St. Josemaría's spirituality did not develop in a vacuum, but instead stands on the shoulders of the entire tradition of Catholic spirituality.

"Yet he did bring something new to the Church, a way of approaching holiness that fits perfectly with the modern world. As the saint liked to say, his message was 'as old and as new as the Gospel.' "

From the *Foreword* by Scott Hahn:

"I could not have written a book like Eric's. Perhaps I could not have written a book as useful as Eric's, for

he sees my family inheritance from a different perspective. He is not a member of Opus Dei—though he has studied its spirit and learned from it—and so he sees it from the outside. Sometimes that means he sees it more clearly and more attentively and more appreciatively."

Eric Sammons is the Director of Evangelization for the Diocese of Venice in Florida. He began his study of the Catholic faith in 1991 as an Evangelical Protestant, converting to the Catholic Church in 1993.

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