

# Isidoro Zorzano Declared Venerable

Yesterday afternoon the Holy Father Pope Francis authorized the Congregation for the Causes of Saints to promulgate decrees concerning 8 causes of canonization. Among these was a decree declaring the heroic virtues of Isidoro Zorzano (1902 – 1943), an engineer who joined Opus Dei in 1930.

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Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz, who is the auxiliary vicar and vicar general

of Opus Dei, and who became the acting head of the prelature upon the death of Bishop Javier Echevarría, made the following statement upon learning of the news from the Holy See: “This is a moment of special joy and gratitude towards Pope Francis, coming at the same time that we mourn the loss of our beloved Prelate.”

He also stated, “Isidoro Zorzano was an example of industriousness and spirit of service in professional work, commitment to social justice (shown in attentiveness and respect towards his colleagues), love for the Eucharist, great faith in God and sensitivity towards people in need. United to all the faithful and friends of the Prelature, and to the many people with devotion to Isidoro, I ask our Lord that Isidoro’s example will help us to grow in these features so important in the life of a Christian,

and to be good sons and daughters of the Church.”

In an interview, the postulator of the cause, Monsignor José Luis Gutiérrez, stressed Isidoro’s loyalty and proposed him as a model for workers. Monsignor Gutiérrez noted that Isidoro’s reputation for sanctity is widespread (over 5,000 accounts of favors attributed to his intercession have been received), and suggested taking advantage of this new step towards his beatification to ask for favors and miracles through Isidoro’s intercession.

**Brief biography** (a longer biography can be found [here](#))

Isidoro Zorzano was born in Buenos Aires (Argentina) on September 13, 1902. Three years later his family emigrated to Spain and settled in Logroño. During his high school years he became friends with a classmate, Josemaría Escrivá. As an

adolescent, Isidoro began to live his faith more seriously, and he looked for a priest who could advise him on living a Christian life. Isidoro carried out works of mercy, and always sought to help those around him.

After obtaining a degree in industrial engineering, in 1927, he worked in a shipyard in Cadiz. Later he moved to Malaga and began working in the Andalusian Railway Company. There he also gave classes in the local Industrial School. During this period he began to feel a growing spiritual restlessness.

In 1930, Josemaría Escrivá (who had been ordained a priest five years earlier) explained to him the message of Opus Dei: to seek holiness and do apostolate in the midst of one's daily work and duties. Isidoro recognized that this ideal corresponded to his own aspirations in life and decided to join Opus Dei. He deepened his life of prayer, woke

early to attend daily Mass and receive Communion, and collaborated in works of assistance to the needy. He was known for his sense of justice, his spirit of service, and his closeness to those who worked under his direction.

During the Spanish Civil War he assisted many people, providing them with provisions, food, and spiritual support. He helped to foster unity with St. Josemaría and the members of Opus Dei. He had a great love for the Eucharist. Despite all the restrictions, he brought St. Josemaría and some other priests the bread and wine they needed to celebrate Mass secretly. He also kept the sacred hosts in his room so that those in hiding could receive Communion, and informed those he knew of the possibility of attending the Eucharistic celebration in certain apartments. To help all these people, he relied upon his status as a

foreigner, using his birth certificate from Buenos Aires. But this provided little protection against being arrested and executed at any time.

After the war, Isidoro worked at the Western National Railway Company. In addition, St. Josemaría appointed him administrator of the apostolic instruments of Opus Dei, a task he carried out generously and humbly, never losing his peace in confronting the constant financial difficulties in the apostolic initiatives. Isidoro knew and loved Christ's life in its every detail, and had recourse to our Lady with filial affection. His great love for God was shown in his service to others and his care for little things.

Early in 1943 he was diagnosed with malignant lymphoma. He accepted this painful illness with fortitude and abandonment to God's will. He died with a reputation for sanctity on July 15 of that same year, at the age of 40,

and was buried in the cemetery of La Almudena. In 2009 his mortal remains were transferred to the St. Albert the Great parish in Madrid, where they repose today.

## **Itinerary of the cause of canonization** (a more detailed chronology is available here)

The informative process on Isidoro Zorzano took place in Madrid between 1948 and 1961. In total 71 witnesses testified, including St. Josemaría Escrivá. Later Blessed Paul VI and St. John Paul II modified the norms for causes of canonization. As a result, an additional process for Isidoro's cause was conducted between 1993 and 1994. The Congregation for the Causes of Saints decreed the validity of both the informative and the additional processes in 1994.

On March 25, 2006, the “positio” on the life and virtues of the servant of

God was presented in the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. On November 17, 2015, a special meeting of the theological consultors gave a positive response to the question of the heroic exercise of the virtues by Isidoro Zorzano. On December 13, 2016, the ordinary session of the cardinals and bishops confirmed this judgement.

On Wednesday, December 21, 2016, Pope Francis received from Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, a detailed report of the phases of the cause. The Holy Father ratified the vote of the Congregation and authorized that a decree be published declaring the servant of God Isidoro Zorzano venerable.

## **Links**

- [Biography of Isidoro Zorzano](#)
- [Chronology of Cause](#)

- Interview with the Postulator of Isidoro's cause
- Books and articles about Isidoro
- Press kit about Isidoro Zorzano Ledesma (for journalists)

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