

St. Josemaría Escrivá’s “The Way” tops Amazon charts thanks to Hallow’s Lent challenge

This Lent, sales of “The Way” by St. Josemaría Escrivá have skyrocketed thanks to Hallow’s Lent Pray40 Challenge, with listeners diving deeper into the writings of the Spanish-born saint in his most well-known book.

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The Way reached the No. 1 spot on Amazon’s “Christian Inspirational” and “Christian Devotionals” lists as well as the “Inspirational Spirituality” list. It was also No. 5 on Amazon’s “Religion and Spirituality” list and No. 33 on the general books list.

Hallow is using Escrivá’s *The Way* as a companion to its Lenten prayer challenge this year. The book consists of 999 points that aim to help

the faithful pray and encourage them to love God, live for him, and converse with him.

Escrivá founded the personal prelature Opus Dei in 1928. John Coverdale, author of several books on the history of Opus Dei, spoke to CNA about Escrivá's book and why he believes it resonates with so many readers.

"[Escrivá] kept a sort of journal or diary in the early years of the work and wrote down both encounters he had with people and striking things people said to him and also things from his own prayer," Coverdale explained. "So the book, I think, very much reflects his own spiritual life."

He also pointed out the "immediacy" of the book in that it invites readers to grow their life of prayer in a personal way throughout their daily lives — not through complex

theology — so that, in turn, they can grow their relationship with God.

Coverdale quoted his favorite point from “The Way”: “To pray is to talk with God. But about what? About him, about yourself: joys, sorrows, successes and failures, noble ambitions, daily worries, weaknesses! And acts of thanksgiving and petitions: and love and reparation. In a word: to get to know him and to get to know yourself: to get acquainted!”

“Certainly at least to me, it is a very appealing message and I think to many people when they read that sort of thing say, ‘Well, prayer doesn’t have to be some complicated exercise, and all these steps and so on, it’s to talk with God,’” Coverdale said.

Opus Dei continues to spread this message, “that we are all called to holiness, to sanctity, to actually

loving God with our whole heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, and our neighbors as ourselves, and that is something that we're called to do in our daily life, an ordinary life,” Coverdale explained.

Coverdale lived in Rome for eight years where he worked very closely with Escrivá, who died in 1975.

Describing the now-saint, he said: “When he talked about God or Mary or the angels, he wasn’t talking about somebody he read about in a book, he was talking about somebody he knew. And I think that comes across even in the book.”

“These aren’t just pious reflections, they’re something more than that,” he added.

Reflecting on his time spent with Escrivá, Coverdale called the saint a “quite remarkable human being” who was “a lot of fun to be with.”

“He was also somebody who was exceptionally close to God and that came across,” he shared.

In get-togethers with Escrivá, Coverdale recalled his ability to “seamlessly” go from discussing news events to discussing Jesus or the Blessed Mother.

“I think this was because they were equally real to him. It wasn’t two different worlds. It was the world he lived in — both the everyday, the funny, Our Lady, St. Joseph, Jesus, God the Father,” he said.

Coverdale said he hopes new readers of *The Way* take away the message that “God is a father who’s looking for them to respond to his love in their ordinary, everyday life.”

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