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Bishop Echevarría: “A happy coincidence”

Statement of Bishop Javier Echevarría concerning the approval of miracles attributed to the intercession of John Paul II and Alvaro del Portillo, and the Pope's decision to canonize John XXIII.

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The announcement of the forthcoming canonizations of Blessed John Paul II and Blessed John XXIII,

and the future beatification of the venerable Alvaro del Portillo is a happy coincidence and a cause of deep joy. We should be profoundly grateful to God for Pope Francis' decision.

Blessed John Paul II spent himself with untiring generosity in the service of mankind. He brought us closer to God with his rich teaching, through his words and writings, with images and so many gestures charged with meaning. His whole life was based on intimate union with Jesus Christ. You needed only to see him pray to understand the fruitfulness of his ministry.

John Paul II and John XXIII were truly fathers close to all the faithful, to the Church, and particularly, I can say, to this part of the Church which is the Prelature of Opus Dei. I think they helped millions of people to feel

that they were the Pope's "much-loved sons and daughters."

Bishop Alvaro del Portillo was Saint Josemaría's best support, and a most faithful collaborator of John Paul II. Many churchmen and lay people from all over the world have told me how much good this faithful priest did to them. And they all agree in this: that it was easy for them to love him, to trust his advice, because they sensed his sincere and priestly interest for their souls.

Earlier the Church referred to Bishop Alvaro del Portillo as a "profoundly good and amiable man, able to transmit peace and serenity to souls." At this time of joy, I turn to the intercession of this good and faithful servant, and I ask him to "infect" us with his loyalty to God, the Church, the Pope, Saint Josemaría, and to his friends. I ask him to win for us a share in his social

concern, which was shown in the many initiatives around the world for people in need which he encouraged. I ask that he may transmit to us his special love for the family and his passionate love for the priesthood, as well as his tender and simple piety, which had such a Marian flavour.

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