

Consecrating Opus Dei to the Holy Spirit

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He himself composed the prayer of consecration, which is renewed in all Opus Dei centers every year, on the feast of Pentecost.

Previously, when faced with situations that led him to make particularly urgent appeal to God, he had consecrated Opus Dei to the Sweet Heart of Mary , the Sacred Heart of Jesus , and the Holy Family.

Andrés Vázquez de Prada describes the event in his biography of Saint Josemaria as follows:

After the locutions of 1970, which helped him so much in his persevering prayer for the Church, there soon followed a “discovery”: the action, the effusion, of the Holy Spirit in the Mass. This broadened his apostolic vision, enabling him to contemplate how, by divine

goodness, there had come about “*the flowering of Opus Dei in souls of every race, language, and nation.*”

Monsignor Escrivá was not much given to inventing new private devotions, but he felt the need for another consecration of the family of Opus Dei. He would offer the Work to the Holy Spirit, so that it might always be a faithful instrument in the service of the Church.

On May 30 (Pentecost Sunday), 1971, in the General Council’s oratory, he consecrated the Work to the Holy Spirit. Behind the altar was a large illuminated stained-glass window depicting the scene of Pentecost. The text of the consecration was read by Don Alvaro. It implored the Holy Spirit to pour out on his faithful his gifts, one by one: the gift of understanding; the gift of wisdom; the gift of knowledge; and that of counsel; and that of fear; and that of

fortitude, “*that it may make us firm in our faith, constant in our struggle, and faithfully perseverant in the Work of God.*” And, finally, the gift of piety, “*that it may give us the feeling of our divine filiation, the joyful and supernatural consciousness of being children of God and, in Jesus Christ, everyone’s brothers and sisters.*”

There was also a prayer for the People of God and its pastors, whose situation was the cause of so many tears:

“*We pray that you may always assist your Church, and in particular the Roman Pontiff, so that he may guide us with his word and with his example, and so that he may attain eternal life together with the flock that has been entrusted to him. We pray that good shepherds never be lacking. And we pray that, with all of the faithful, we may serve you with*

holiness of life and integrity of faith and thus reach the glory of heaven.”

For the consecration ceremony, which would be renewed every year in Opus Dei centers, St Josemaria composed a text that he passed to Don Alvaro for comment. To his text, there was then added a reference to the Founder, underlining the faithfulness his children should always show to him. St Josemaria would have preferred to go unmentioned. It was this same sense of humility that led him to ask Don Alvaro to read the prayer, which says, “*Preserve always in your Work the spiritual gifts you have bestowed on it, so that, in keeping with your most lovable will, and inseparably united to our Father, to the Father, and to all our brothers and sisters, cor unum et anima una, we may be holy, and, at the same time, an effective leaven of holiness among all people. Keep us ever-faithful to the*

spirit you have entrusted to our Founder, and help us to preserve it and transmit it in all its divine integrity” (PR vol. XVII, Documenta Vol. II, Opus Dei (*Consecrations*), p. 17).

Those painful tears born of love brought on a shower of graces. The locution “*clama, ne cesses!* – Cry aloud, spare not!” stirred up in the soul of the Father a new spirit of vigilance which kept him on high alert, always closely attentive to God. Each divine locution was a step up, a rung on the ladder, a silent game between God and his soul. Stamped by fire, indelibly, on his spirit, the words opened up new channels of love.

At the prompting of the Holy Spirit, he sought refuge in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the tabernacle of the divine mercy. When, at the beginning of September 1971, he returned from

Caglio, he counseled his children to recite often the aspiration “*Cor Iesu Sacratissimum et Misericors, dona nobis pacem!*” (“Most sacred and merciful Heart of Jesus, grant us peace!”). Thus, little by little, in a piecemeal way, the Father was showing his children something of the action of the Holy Spirit in his soul. In October 1971, for example, he spoke to them of the act of abandonment that he had composed: “O Lord, my God, into your hands I abandon the past and the present and the future, what is small and what is great, what amounts to a little and what amounts to a lot, things temporal and things eternal.” And then, looking very pensive, he said to them, “*To arrive at this act of abandonment, you have to lose your skin.*”

The divine locutions led the Father to a complete detachment. Shortly after hearing the locution “*Clama, ne*

cesses,” he told his children: “I am always on the alert for God; I am more off the earth than on it.” These locutions redirected his interior life, sending it along new channels of love, towards the merciful sentiments of the Heart of Jesus. “In any profession,” he said disconsolately, “after so many years, I would now be a master. In the love of God I am always an apprentice.”

The brief locutions were touches of grace that strengthened his soul and sustained him in the constant struggle against discouragement.

They were simple brushstrokes painted by the divine artist to provoke heroic responses in the founder – which they did. By this time the Father had more than enough experience to be able to recognize that unmistakable “something” that marks the words of God. In his particular case, he

described the distinctive notes of the locutions: they were “*brief, concrete, unheard by the ear – and came without being sought.*”

Extracts from the book *The Founder of Opus Dei, vol. III: The Divine Paths of the Earth*, Andrés Vázquez de Prada

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