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Election of New Prelate

The elective Congress to elect the new Prelate of Opus Dei will be held in Rome, starting on January 23. This website will offer updated information about the various phases of the Congress.

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Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz, auxiliary vicar of the Prelature of Opus Dei, has convoked an elective Congress that will start on January 23rd to elect the next Prelate. Bishop

Javier Echevarría, the previous Prelate, died on December 12th in the “Campus Bio-Medico” hospital in Rome from respiratory insufficiency.

The elective process involves both women and men and concludes with the confirmation of the election by the Pope. The Opus Dei website will offer updated information about the various phases of the Congress.

Only a priest can be elected as the Prelate. He must be at least forty years old and a member of the Congress of electors, and incorporated in the Prelature for at least ten years and a priest for five years.

The statutes of the Prelature describe the various human, spiritual and juridical qualities the Prelate must possess to ensure that this responsibility is carried out suitably. In summary, he has to stand out for the way he lives the virtues of charity

and prudence, for his life of piety, love for the Church and her Magisterium, and fidelity to the spirit of Opus Dei. He also needs to possess a deep culture, both in ecclesiastical and civil studies, and the requisite gifts for pastoral government. These qualities are similar to those required by canon law for candidates to be bishops.

The faithful of Opus Dei who take part in the elective Congress (currently about 150) are priests and lay people at least thirty-two years old, who have been in the Prelature for at least nine years. They have been appointed from among the faithful of the Prelature in the various countries where Opus Dei is carrying out its pastoral work.

The elective process begins with a plenary meeting of the women's Council of the Prelature, called the Central Advisory, which will take

place starting January 21. At present, this Council is made up of women from twenty different countries. Each of them submits a list with the name or names of the priests seen as best suited for the position of Prelate. The members of the Congress, keeping these suggestions in mind, then proceed to the voting process. Once the election has been concluded and the person chosen has accepted, he, in person or through someone else, asks the Holy Father for confirmation, as the Pope is the one who appoints the Prelate of Opus Dei.
