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# **Pope OKs beatification of bishop who backed Phl projects**

Bishop Alvaro del Portillo inspired Filipino Catholics to continue running educational and training institutions that prepare the youth who are unable to afford college education for the workforce.

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MANILA, Philippines - A Spanish bishop who initiated several social

projects for the poor in the Philippines edges closer to sainthood after Pope Francis approved his beatification.

The late Bishop Alvaro del Portillo, who served prelate of Opus Dei, will be called "blessed" after a beatification ceremony on September 27 in Madrid, his hometown.

Del Portillo was known for his cheerful disposition, infectious smile and desire to help others. He is also remembered for his untiring service to the Church and for living the spirit passed on to him by Saint Josemaria Escriva, the founder of Opus Dei and his predecessor, faithfully. His message was simple: That ordinary activities and work can be offered up to God.

The bishop, who died on March 23, 1994, visited the Philippines--dropping by Manila and Cebu--only

once in 1987, but left a lasting legacy reaching out to the less fortunate.

In one of his general audiences in Manila, he made an observation about Philippine society: "My daughters and my sons, I have seen enormous wealth and enormous poverty," he said.

Del Portillo inspired Filipino Catholics to continue running personal undertakings such as training schools that prepare the youth who are unable to afford college education for the workforce.

Upon his return to Rome, he sent an Italian delegation to Cebu to help set up a technical school in Talamban, which came to be known as Center for Industrial Technology and Enterprise or CITE.

CITE has graduated 3,000 industrial technicians from the Visayas and Mindanao since it opened in 1991. It

is recognized by the national government and industry as one of the leading technical schools in the Philippines.

Former President Corazon Aquino also inaugurated the Dagatan Family Farm School in Batangas in August 1988, opened the year after Del Portillo's pastoral visit. The year earlier, the bishop also paid the president a courtesy visit.

Dagatan, a unique learning institution providing high school education to farmers' children, is the first of its kind in Asia.

Other projects inspired by Bishop del Portillo in the Philippines include the Banilad Center for Professional Development for girls in Cebu and the Development Advocacy for Women Volunteerism or DAWV.

**Nearing sainthood**

Last July 5, Pope Francis signed the decree of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints approving a miracle obtained through the intercession of Del Portillo. This paved the way for his beatification.

The miracle was the instantaneous healing of Chilean newborn baby, Jose Ignacio Ureta Wilson in 2003. The boy suffered a cardiac arrest lasting more than 30 minutes and a massive hemorrhage. The medical team considered the baby dead, when unexpectedly, his heart started to beat again.

His parents had been praying for his revival through the intercession of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo. Ten years later Jose Ignacio is living a normal life.

The late Msgr. Flavio Capucci, postulator of Del Portillo's cause, said his office has received from all over the world 12,000 signed accounts of

favours granted through Del Portillo's intercession.

Del Portillo died in Rome upon returning from a pilgrimage of the Holy Land. Pope John Paul II went to pray during his wake and later spoke of "the example he always gave of fortitude and of trust in divine providence and his fidelity to the See of Peter."

This year's beatification ceremony will be presided over by Cardinal Angelo Amato, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints.

## The Philippine Star

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