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Romancing Work

Advertising man Minyong Ordonez writes that "There are two big ideas in Opus Dei that are extremely attractive to followers of the Christian faith—Sanctification of Work and Divine Filiation."

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I have known Opus Dei (work of God) since 1970. Some of my best friends are Opus Dei members. I enjoy their company. They are always warm and friendly, polite and caring single

individuals, or loving family men with a happy disposition.

I've attended their retreats, seminars, get-togethers and study groups which are highly formative, intellectually and spiritually.

There are two big ideas in Opus Dei that are extremely attractive to followers of the Christian faith—Sanctification of Work and Divine Filiation. These two ideas are not new in the scriptural sense.

However, the founder of Opus Dei, St. Josemaria Escriva, has interpreted them with a deeper and inspired insight. He injected the visionary zeal, making it a more innovative and winsome path to personal holiness.

Personal holiness

For 2,000 years, Christianity had always been very consistent in

advocating personal holiness in the private and public life of Christians. “Be ye perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect,” echoes the universal call for holiness by the Church.

A hierarchy with priestly authority and roles took the lead in promoting holiness. They are the anointed evangelizers and ministers of the sacraments that bestow sanctifying grace, the signature of holiness. The laity has traditionally been the recipients and participants in their spiritual care and holiness goals.

Holiness is commonly associated with the laity’s participative acts in Church rituals and devotions such as novenas, rosaries, and the use of sacramentals.

Holiness primarily resides in members of the religious orders — priests and nuns who received the sacrament of the Holy Orders to

administer and enhance the holiness of the laity inside or outside the Church through proselytizing.

This traditional setup was the practice within the Catholic Church when, in 1928, a young Spanish priest, Josemaria Escriva (now St. Josemaria), experienced a vision for a “mobilization of Christians disposed to sacrifice themselves with joy for others, to render divine all the ways of man on earth, sanctifying every upright work, every honest labor, every earthly occupation.”

There blossomed from St. Josemaria Escriva’s vision a behavior and attitude that not only energized but also re-evangelized the conventional praxis of the Catholic laity.

The thrust is to pursue holiness on a self-generating mode through the sanctification of work and the enjoyment of Divine Filiation patronage.

Symmetrical

The divine metaphors and scriptural truths are beautifully symmetrical in the two themes of Sanctification of Work and Divine Filiation. When fulfilled, it elevates Christian life to the highest tribute of man's love for God and God's love for man. Our closeness to God becomes more palpable due to the physicality of work and the love and protection from God's fatherhood.

Reflect on the miracle of incarnation of the second Person of the Holy Trinity. God the Father willed the Son incarnated as man. Jesus Christ, "the Galilean carpenter," was a worker who spent his days perfecting his craft in carpentry, always striving for work excellence and the highest-quality output. The second Person of the Blessed Trinity incarnated work in the carpenter Son of the Blessed Virgin Mary. That's how functional

and idealized work is as a fecundity of man. Work is a form of prayer, a means of holiness, a habit that makes a person close to God.

Conversely, us humans, “made unto the image and likeness of God” in perfect imitation of Jesus the carpenter Son of God, must likewise regard work as incarnated in our physical and spiritual life.

Metaphorically, our fecundity is the same fecundity that Jesus put in His craftsmanship to conform with His humanity and brotherhood with man.

Divine Filiation is the amazing Father and Son concept of God and man. This is for real! “Our Father who art in Heaven...” is the prayer taught to us by Christ, a clear declaration of a relationship that God loves his children. The “Our Father” is the most awesome signal that God loves us. The thought alone is enough

to elate us every day of our lives as we fulfill our work and duties our families.

There's nothing more exhilarating than the permanent awareness that we exist every day as sons of God. It suffuses us with confidence, hope and love, even in our most difficult times.

Divine Filiation makes it easier for us to follow Christ's call that we must love one another.

Rewarding

Romancing our work is the attitudinal way that makes sanctification of work engrossing, enjoyable and rewarding. It can range from the most awesome, as Michelangelo's magnum opus on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, or the fantastic kare-kare cooked by our kasambahay, Racquel, with her uncompromising choice of the

freshest ingredients and the right fire temperature in the stove.

The reward for those who romance their work to excellence is the joy of giving good service and pride of authorship. On a spiritual level, there's a transcendent feeling of rendering honor and gratitude to God who gave us the fecundity to be the best that we can be.

An Opus Dei friend told me years ago that writing was my apostolate. True enough, I always ask God's help to communicate His truths in my own romantic way.

To those of you who are interested in a fresh approach in your striving for perfection (or holiness), try romancing your work. Treat your work as a form of prayer and you'll feel closer to God.

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