

From Engineering to the Priesthood

Jose Ramon Alba received the priestly ordination on September 6th in Torreciudad at the hands of the Prelate of Opus Dei.

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Jose Ramon Alba is an Associate of Opus Dei. He was an engineer with a passion for cars. Last September, he was ordained a priest. This interview was given shortly after his ordination.

* * * * * **They say you are a die-hand fan of Formula 1 and that you like driving. When was this passion for cars born?**

As a child, I once helped my father, who was a mechanic, to change the radiator of our “*tin can*”, as we familiarly called the family car. I devoted considerable time to it and started taking an interest in the world of motoring. I also remember the time when my father took me to a Formula 1 Grand Prix at Montjuic: it was an unforgettable experience. **As an engineer who has worked first for Siemens, and then later for SEAT in its German office and then in the directives of projects like the SEAT Leon and the Altea... would all this professional experience help in your priestly duties?**

Naturally, yes. My training in engineering helps me to reason

logically and in so many other ways, perhaps even unconsciously. But more importantly, the priest is another Christ: God acts using the priest as an instrument, and counts on his personality, talents and personal experiences.

Can you mention any particular experience?

In our German office, there was a motto that made an impression on me: “love up to the last detail”. I had learned this in Xaloc High School where I studied; it came from the teachings of St. Josemaria: “We must find God in the little things of each day”. I was glad to find this harmony between the German precision and the education I had received at school in Hospitalet de Llobregat. **You were a director of SEAT, and now, at 45 years, you are ordained priest. It would not be easy to**

understand such a decision in these times...

It was precisely while I was immersed in an intense professional life that I saw God calling me to priesthood. To fully understand this decision, it is necessary to have faith. God calls each one personally, just responding to this call can make one very happy. There is continuity in the course of my life: when I was young, I saw that God was calling me to a vocation in Opus Dei and decided to respond affirmatively . The priesthood for me now is a realization of that same call, a new path within the same way. Now, however, I can serve the Church and bring people closer to God in a new and essential manner: the administration of the Sacraments and preaching of the Gospel. Every day I give thanks to God for my vocation.

How did colleagues at work react when they knew you were preparing for the priesthood?

It has certainly sparked off personal reflection and been a cause to come closer to God and the Christian life. Some have thought, “And I, what should I do?”

Initially, everyone’s reaction was one of surprise, since professionally I already had a very clear path. Throughout, they have offered their help and collaboration. In fact, about 30 of my colleagues were at the Ordination ceremony. I must also thank them for their support received during these years of study and preparation for the priesthood.

[en-sg/article/from-engineering-to-the-priesthood/](#) (01/25/2026)