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# Papal statements on Opus Dei

A selection of statements on Opus Dei by various Popes.

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**Benedict XVI (when he was Cardinal Ratzinger):** “From all this I have better understood the inner character of Opus Dei, this surprising union of absolute fidelity to the Church’s great tradition, to its faith, and unconditional openness to all the challenges of this world, whether in the academic world, in the field of work, or in matters of the economy.”

L'Osservatore Romano, October 6,  
2002.

**John Paul II:** “[Opus Dei] has as its aim the sanctification of one’s life, while remaining within the world at one’s place of work and profession: to live the Gospel in the world, while living immersed in the world, but in order to transform it, and to redeem it with one’s personal love for Christ. This is truly a great ideal, which right from the beginning has anticipated the theology of the lay state, which is a characteristic mark of the Church of the Council and after the Council.”  
L'Osservatore Romano, August 27, 1979.

**John Paul II:** “With very great hope, the Church directs its attention and maternal care to Opus Dei, which -- by divine inspiration -- the Servant of God Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer founded in Madrid on October 2, 1928, so that it may always be an apt

and effective instrument of the salvific mission which the Church carries out for the life of the world. From its beginnings, this Institution has in fact striven, not only to illuminate with new lights the mission of the laity in the Church and in society, but also to put it into practice.” Ut Sit, November 1982 (the apostolic constitution by which Opus Dei was made a personal prelature of the Catholic Church in accord with Code of Canon Law sections 294-97).

**John Paul II:** "In the 65 years since its foundation, the Prelature of Opus Dei, an indissoluble unity of priests and lay people, has contributed to making Christ's saving message resound in many walks of life. As Pastor of the universal Church, echoes of this apostolate reach me. I encourage all the members of the Prelature of Opus Dei to persevere in this work, in faithful continuity with the spirit of service to the Church

which always inspired the life of your founder." Address to Theological Study Convention on the Teaching of Blessed Josemaria Escriva, October 14, 1993.

**John Paul I** (one month before his election as pope): "Newspapers give [Opus Dei] a lot of coverage, but their reports are frequently quite inaccurate. The extension, number and quality of the members of Opus Dei may have led some people to imagine that a quest for power or some iron discipline binds the member together. Actually the opposite is the case: all there is is the desire for holiness and encouragement for others to become holy, but cheerfully, with a spirit of service and a great sense of freedom." *Il Gazzettino* (Italy), July 25, 1978.

**Paul VI**: "Your words resonate with the burning and generous spirit of

the whole Institution, born in this time of ours as a vigorous expression of the perennial youth of the Church, fully open to the demands of a modern apostolate, ever more active, flowing and organized. We look with paternal satisfaction on all that Opus Dei has achieved and is achieving for the kingdom of God, the desire of doing good that guides it, the burning love for the Church and its visible head that distinguishes it, and the ardent zeal for souls that impels it along the arduous and difficult paths of the apostolate of presence and witness in every sector of contemporary life."

(From a handwritten letter to Msgr. Escrivá, October 1, 1964)

**Blessed John XXIII:** Opus Dei opens up "unsuspected horizons of apostolate." March 5, 1960.

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