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Tracing the Beginnings: A Look into the Early History of Opus Dei

At a talk in Singapore, entitled "Opus Dei: A History" on 21 July 2025, historian Fr José Luis González Gullón traced how Opus Dei grew from Madrid to the world with rare photos and fresh insights.

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About 100 people attended a talk entitled "*Opus Dei: A History*" by

visiting priest and historian Fr José Luis González Gullón at St Joseph's Church (Victoria Street).

With warmth and humour, Fr José brought the audience into the early years of Opus Dei, from its founding in Madrid in 1928 to its global reach today.

Fr José teaches Church History at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome and is a member of the Istituto Storico San Josemaría Escrivá. He has spent years immersed in the archives of Opus Dei and co-authored the two-volume book, *Opus Dei: A History*.

What made the evening special wasn't just the timeline, but the way the story was told, with rare anecdotes and photographs not often seen. These revealed the human side of the Work's beginnings and made Saint Josemaría and the early members feel real and relatable.

“I had a brief idea of the history of the Work prior to the talk,” said Keefe Ng, 24, a young professional. “But it was quite cool to hear Father talk about Opus Dei at the grassroots stage. I quite enjoyed the small bits about the recreational activities at the student residences, because it is still very similar to what it’s like now.”

Fr José also shared how the Work expanded after the war, first across Europe, then the Americas, then Asia, including Singapore, always with the same spirit, finding God in ordinary life. The presentation ended with images of the founder’s final years and the successors who carried the mission forward.

During the question and answer segment, Fr José reminded the audience that the story of Opus Dei is still unfolding. “We’re only just beginning to grasp what the founder

saw”, he said. “Others will explain it even better than we can today.”

The evening wrapped up with book signings, conversation, and refreshments, a fitting end to a talk that made history feel not just informative, but alive.

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