

opusdei.org

"Closer to God, more capable of acting as a priest should"

Fr. Steven John Szakaczki is a priest in Saint Lawrence Martyr Church, Scarborough, Ontario, Canada.

05/18/2018

I first heard about Opus Dei when I was still a seminarian. I heard that the members of Opus Dei are very faithful to the Magisterium and that they are doing a lot of good in society. I was also made aware of

some of the media attacks on Opus Dei. At that time I did not have any personal experiences with Opus Dei, and so I wondered if there was any truth to what the media was saying, or whether the media was just attacking Opus Dei because Opus Dei is such a strong, effective, and growing Catholic organization.

In 2001, four years after my priestly ordination, I needed to find a new confessor/spiritual director. A priest friend of mine gave me a long list of priests that were considered loyal to the Church's teachings as potential confessors. This list included the priests of Opus Dei, the priests of the Society of the Holy Cross. I tried some of the other priests first but eventually went to confession to the priests of Opus Dei.

At the time I did not know that the priests of Opus Dei take upon themselves a portion of the penance

assigned to the penitent and that they regularly pray for their penitents. I did notice, however, that when I went to confession to these priests I felt so much more spiritually energized. I felt closer to God, more capable of acting as a priest should, and even my homilies were better and delivered with greater conviction. For me, this was not just some slight improvement. It was something that I definitely noticed. This would last for a few days after each of my confessions.

What motivated me to become a cooperator of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross

My overall experience of the priests of the Holy Cross was extremely positive. I found all of them to be men of prayer, very friendly and very welcoming. I try regularly to attend the monthly recollections organized for priests. I find this to be

extremely beneficial in helping me live out my priestly life. At these recollections I am always reminded of some important aspect of our priestly life that we can easily lose sight of because of neglect or because of the demands of priestly ministry.

How I cooperate and what it means to me

I do not cooperate with any concrete apostolic activities of the Priestly Society. My time is too occupied with my own priestly ministry in my parish. But I support the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross by having committed myself to praying regularly for their apostolic works and by providing regular financial contributions for their needs.

The Priestly Society of the Holy Cross does tremendous work to help others spiritually and otherwise. By being a cooperator, I am contributing to make these beneficial works happen.

I know that God will reward me generously for my support. I also know that because I am a cooperator of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross, I receive the benefit of the prayers and Masses they offer specifically for cooperators.

Because I had benefited so much from my association with the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross and from the recollections, I encourage other priests to attend the recollections and to get to know the priests of the Holy Cross. And because I had benefited so much from the work that they do, I want to help them, or support them, in their work for priests and for the laity. This is why I decided to become a cooperator.

Which aspect of the spirit of Opus Dei appeals to me the most

What appeals to me the most of the spirit of Opus Dei is the tremendous emphasis that is placed on personal

sanctification. We are all called to personal holiness, to grow in our relationship with God. We are all called to be saints. I believe it is extremely important for us to be frequently reminded of this and to be motivated to strive for it. The Priestly Society does this in an extremely effective way.

The formation I receive

I try very hard to attend the monthly Recollections for priests, as well as the monthly Circle which is offered for a group of us priests, and I also try to attend a yearly retreat put on by the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross. I try to be consistent in going to the priests of the Society of the Holy Cross for weekly confession and some spiritual direction.

pdf | document generated
automatically from [https://opusdei.org/
en-tt/article/closer-to-god-more-capable-
of-acting-as-a-priest-should/](https://opusdei.org/en-tt/article/closer-to-god-more-capable-of-acting-as-a-priest-should/)
(03/15/2026)