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50th Anniversary Mass on 15th August 2008

A Solemn Mass on the feast of the Assumption is being celebrated in the church of Our Lady of Willesden in London, to commemorate the consecration of Opus Dei to Our Lady carried out by St Josemaría in that church on 15th August 1958.

17/07/2008

A beautiful signboard at the entrance to the church which houses the

statue of Our Lady of Willesden, long venerated as the Protector of London, shows two saints at prayer before Mary, the Mother of God. They are St Thomas More, the sixteenth-century Lord Chancellor of England and Saint Josemaría Escrivá, the twentieth-century Spanish priest and founder of Opus Dei.

Thomas More often made the pilgrimage to Willesden, both to the shrine of Our Lady and to see his step-daughter, Alice, who lived nearby. His last visit to the shrine was in April 1534, just before his arrest, trial and his decision to die rather than deny that the Pope was the head of the universal Church. St Josemaría made many pilgrimages to shrines of Our Lady throughout the world. Twice while staying in England he made pilgrimages to Our Lady of Willesden.

The first was fifty years ago, on Friday 15th August 1958. He then renewed the consecration of Opus Dei to the Most Sweet Heart of Mary. He prayed: “We consecrate to you our being and our life, everything that is ours: all that we love and all that we are. Our bodies, our hearts and our souls are for you; we are yours. And to make this consecration truly effective and lasting, today at your feet, O Mary, we renew the dedication that we made to God in Opus Dei. Inspire us with a deep love for the Church and the Pope, and make us live in full submission to all their teachings.” This consecration is renewed in the same words on every 15th August in all centres of Opus Dei.

St Josemaría’s second visit was on 17th August 1962, accompanied by his future successor, now the Servant of God Alvaro del Portillo. They recited the Holy Rosary and bought

pictures of the statue of Our Lady of Willesden for members of Opus Dei in London.

On 15th August 2008, a solemn Mass of the Assumption will be celebrated at 7.30pm in the church of Our Lady of Willesden, Nicoll Road, London. Confessions will be heard from 6.30pm.

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