opusdei.org

Christians in the middle of the world

Opus Dei has around 90,000 members, both men and women. 98% are laypeople, most of whom are married. The remaining 2% are priests.

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Laity and priests

Opus Dei is made up of a prelate, a presbyterate or clergy of its own, and laity, both women and men. There are not different categories of member in Opus Dei. There are

simply different ways of living the same Christian vocation, according to the different circumstances of each one: married or single, healthy or sick, etc.

The majority of the faithful of the Prelature (about 70% of the total membership) are **supernumeraries**. Generally they are married men or women, for whom the sanctification of their family duties is the most important part of their Christian life.

The rest of the faithful of the Prelature are men and women who commit themselves to celibacy, for apostolic reasons. **Associates** live with their families, or wherever is convenient for professional reasons. **Numeraries** usually live in centers of Opus Dei, and are completely available to attend to the apostolic undertakings and the formation of the other faithful of the Prelature.

Some of the women numeraries, called **numerary assistants,** dedicate themselves principally to the domestic responsibilities in the centers of the Prelature, which is their ordinary professional work. They strive to faciliate the apostolic work, their own and that of the other members, by creating the atmosphere of a Christian home.

The decision to ask for admission in Opus Dei as a numerary assistant requires a liking for working in the home and the desire to acquire an adequate professional preparation. Just like the numerary women who also sometimes take on this same work in the centers of Opus Dei, they carry out this work not as "employees" in someone else's home, but as mothers or sisters working in their own home.

The priests of the Prelature come from the laymen of Opus Dei:

numeraries and associates who are freely disposed to be priests and, after years of belonging to the Prelature and having done the studies required for priesthood, are invited by the Prelate to receive holy orders. Their main pastoral ministry is to serve the faithful of the Prelature and the apostolic activities promoted by them.

Family atmosphere

A characteristic feature of Opus Dei is its Christian family atmosphere. This is present in all the activities the Prelature organizes. It is evident in the family warmth found in its centers, in the simplicity and confidence with which the members deal with one another, and in the readiness to help, the understanding, and the kindness they always try to display in daily life.

Membership distribution

The Prelature is made up of more than 87,000 people, of whom about 1,900 are priests. The numbers of men and women are roughly equal. The geographical distribution is approximately as follows:

Africa 2,000

Asia and the Pacific 5,000

The Americas 30,000

Europe 50,000

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