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Does one have to stand out in order to be a saint?

Are the members of Opus Dei supposed to do outstanding work and seek to be the best? Does one have to stand out in order to be a saint?

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It's just the reverse: Becoming a saint is itself the outstanding thing about eternal life. Since this is the same thing as identifying oneself with Christ more each day—in spite of

each one's weaknesses, so long as we strive to overcome them—it is a great responsibility we have before the world. We take most seriously what is happening all around us because we want to help improve it, as far as possible. Human perfection is an important component of Christian work. But that doesn't imply perfectionism or seeking success for its own sake. It means working hard, being generous, truly being at the service of others. Mere success is not the summit of personal aspirations. What gives value to someone's life is very different from that.

One of Opus Dei's characteristics in the sanctification of professional work. How is this to be understood? Isn't there a danger of carrying this dedication too far?

Diário do Minho, Braga, Portugal

October 2, 2000

Yes, there is a danger. Unfortunately, in the contemporary world there are people who can't find work and many others who probably work too much. They do it in order to survive or out of an unmeasured zeal for personal success. It's sad to see people who don't see a problem, for example, in neglecting their family obligations in order to put in a twelve or fourteen hour work day.

Work is a means, not an end. Our end is God. So, to sanctify work does not mean being successful, but coming closer to God through one's work, whether it be lowly or brilliant.

God put us in the world to work, as we read in the book of Genesis. To sanctify work is, in the first place, to work with love; that is, to work so as to give glory to God and serve others. Self-centered work, no matter how technically perfect it might be or how

much time is devoted to it, is not
work one can sanctify.

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