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Quotes on Opus Dei from Catholic leaders

Statements on Opus Dei made
by American Catholic figures.

01/20/2005

George Weigel, author of *Witness to Hope*: “Opus Dei's intention is to take very seriously Vatican II's call to lay people to be sanctifiers of the world.” From “Fast-track sainthood,” Frances D'Emilio, *Associated Press*, March 16, 2002.

Richard John Neuhaus, editor of *First Things*: “[I]n forming one's approach to Opus Dei, the strong and consistent affirmation of John Paul II cannot help but carry very considerable weight.” “[O]ne cannot help but be impressed by the people who believe that they have found in Opus Dei a way to make an unqualified gift of their lives to Christ and his Church.” From “The Work of God,” *First Things*, November 1995.

James Nicholson, U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See: “I found it very moving and inspiring to see a humble priest proclaimed a saint in the presence of hundreds of thousands of people. I think the message is clear: when people are living their lives in a manner where they are fulfilling their responsibilities, being good husbands, sons or daughters, they are doing something very important

in God's eyes. You don't have to be a rock star or an athlete to live your life right." Statement made at the canonization of St. Josemaría Escrivá, founder of Opus Dei, on October 6, 2002.

Virginia McCaskey, Chicago Bears owner: "As a cooperator of Opus Dei, I have learned that everything I do in my life is to be sanctified and dedicated to God. To support that endeavor I have the invaluable assistance of monthly circle meetings and mornings of recollection, bi-weekly chats with a friend for spiritual advice and confession to a priest who knows me by my first name, daily norms of piety, an expanded wealth of spiritual literature and friends who enrich my life with their prayers and loving concern. All these are my favorite things." Statement, January 9, 2004.

Rev. Tom Mullelly, Princeton University chaplain:

“[C]ollaboration with the members of Opus Dei has been an enriching experience for me and many other members of this community. It is my hope that the cooperation in the Lord’s ministry, which exists in the Princeton University Community, will continue to flourish and that the collaboration between those who seek to deepen their knowledge of and commitment to the Lord, Jesus Christ, will serve as a model for others who seek to enhance the experience of campus ministry.”
Statement, February 11, 2004.

Rev. John Raphael, SSJ, Howard University Chaplain:

“My association with Opus Dei extends back to my undergraduate days. I have greatly benefited from their spirituality and their love for and fidelity to the Church. I count some of my dearest friends among their

membership. In recent years my own students have collaborated with them in volunteer outreach projects. I have great esteem and respect for the contribution Opus Dei makes to the great task of evangelization that belongs to the entire Church.”
Statement, March 23, 2004.

Prof. Evelyn Birge Vitz, New York University: “Opus Dei plays an extremely important role in the Church today. Its mission of helping people find holiness in their work is a very important one. It also provides spiritual direction and inspiration to many people of all ages, both Catholics and non-Catholics. I have the highest regard for the work and members of Opus Dei.” Statement, February 16, 2004.

Dr. Robert Royal, president of the Faith & Reason Institute: “In my experience, the activities of Opus Dei are better organized, more

unobtrusively hospitable, and more clearly thought through than are those of any other organization, religious or secular, known to me. In a church that lately has often mistaken incoherence for simplicity and disorder for spontaneity, Opus Dei breathes a refreshingly competent spirit. The Work, quite clearly, works.” “Opus Dei members seem to me as healthy, non-fanatical, and ordinary as any average group of Catholics who take their spiritual lives seriously. The young people in particular seem both happy and happy to have found a solidly Catholic group that encourages them to live good lives in the world of today.” From “God’s Work,” *First Things*, May 1998.

Matthew Bunson, co-author of *The Encyclopedia of Catholic History*:
“[Opus Dei] is one of the Church’s most active and effective instruments of evangelization and

renewal.” From EWTN Catholic Q&A, May 1, 2003.

Comments on criticism of Opus Dei

Richard John Neuhaus: “Opus Dei is frequently vilified as a sinister power within the Catholic Church and beyond. But I think that from the Holy Father's viewpoint, it is more accurately seen as a very impressive movement of lay renewal that is committed to vibrant orthodoxy of teaching and practice” (as reported in Alan Cooperman, “Founder of Opus Dei will be canonized,” *Washington Post*, February 27, 2002.) Neuhaus is editor of *First Things*, a journal of religion and public life.

Prof. Mary Ann Glendon: “It was only through serving on the Pontifical Council for the Laity that I came to know groups like Communion and Liberation, the Community of St. Egidio, Focolare, the Neo-Catechumenate Way, Opus

Dei, and Regnum Christi, and became acquainted with many of their leaders and members. What a contrast between these groups that work in harmony with the Church and organizations that define their aims in terms of power! It is no surprise that the more faithful and vibrant the great lay organizations are, the more they are vilified by dissenters and anti-Catholics. But attacks do not seem to trouble them, for they know who they are and where they are going.” “The Hour of the Laity,” *First Things*, November 1, 2002. Prof. Glendon is Learned Hand Professor of Law at Harvard Law School.

Dr. Robert Royal: “Nothing attracts criticism like success. In the seventy years since its founding, the Work [Opus Dei] has grown to almost eighty thousand members, over half in Europe, another third in the Americas, and the rest scattered

throughout the world.” “God’s Work,” *First Things*, May 1, 1998. Dr. Royal is president of the Faith & Reason Institute in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Warren Carroll: “The beatification of Josemaría Escrivá, one of the best attended events in Rome for many years, put to rest the accusations against Opus Dei, which particularly with the Pope’s strong support of it, can no longer be upheld by any serious Catholic. I had questioned it myself once, but no longer do so, for these reasons” (from EWTN Catholic Q&A, May 31, 2002). Dr. Carroll is the author of *A History of Christendom*.

Prof. Helen M. Alvaré: “I wished to offer a word of support that Opus Dei might use in its responses to *The Da Vinci Code* ‘phenomenon.’ I am not a member of Opus Dei, but I thought the book took cheap, sensationalistic shots at Opus Dei and am happy to

offer support. It is simply too easy for those uncomfortable with the strong, often counter-cultural stands taken by Opus Dei, to attempt to undercut these stands with *ad hominem* attacks. I know many members of Opus Dei, many wonderful families raising children of whom communities can be proud. *The Da Vinci Code* portrays Opus Dei as interested above all things in its own survival; but Opus Dei would not be so publicly brave when taking culturally unpopular stands, and would not demand so much virtue of its members if it were operating out of self interest.” Letter, January 15, 2004. Prof. Alvaré is Associate Professor of Law at the Catholic University of America.

Lupe Garcia, Esq.: “I was very saddened by the inaccuracies of news reports flowing from reviews of *The Da Vinci Code* regarding Opus Dei. Although I am not a member of

Opus Dei, it has become an important part of my family and spiritual life.... Contrary to the widely reported news stories, Opus Dei provides a critical service to the Church by helping to foster holiness among the laity, and serves as a special witness to the Cross of Christ in today's secularized society." Letter, January 9, 2004. Atty. Garcia is General Counsel of the Chicago Park District.

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