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Why did the Church make Opus Dei a personal prelate?

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Personal prelatures are ecclesiastical jurisdictions provided for by the Second Vatican Council and the Code of Canon Law that are created to meet specific pastoral needs with greater flexibility. Opus Dei combines in a single worldwide institution priests and laity, women and men, sharing the same vocation of spreading the ideal of holiness in the world and the sanctification of work.

With these characteristics, it does not fit properly into canonical categories for religious orders and lay associations. Being a personal prelature, however, "provides Opus Dei with an ecclesial configuration fully in keeping with its foundational charism and sociological structure" (the Holy See's 1982 "Declaration on Opus Dei").

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