

# **Bishop Echevarría: “Thank you, Cardinal König, for your help and your friendship.”**

Bishop Javier Echevarría attended the funeral of Cardinal Franz König on March 27 in Vienna at St. Stephen's Cathedral.

04/03/2004

*“The witness he gave to the good news of Christ and his commitment to peace*

*and reconciliation reached far beyond the borders of his country,” Pope John Paul II stated upon receiving news of the Cardinal’s death on March 12, 2004 at the age of 98. Franz König was an important figure in the Second Vatican Council and President Emeritus of the Pontifical Council for Dialogue with Unbelievers. In 1956 Pope Pius XII named him Archbishop of Vienna, a post he filled until his 80th birthday in 1986. The Prelate of Opus Dei made the following statement at the Cardinal’s funeral:*

“Cardinal König was a most important figure in the Catholic Church of our times. He stood out both pastorally and intellectually and left a deep imprint that future historians will highly regard.

“As Prelate of Opus Dei, I owe him a debt of gratitude, and wish today to renew my thanks to him for his help

and his friendship for almost forty years.

“During the 1960s I personally witnessed his meetings with St. Josemaría Escrivá, Opus Dei’s Founder. As the Cardinal himself made clear in his writings, the foundational idea of Opus Dei impressed him as an anticipation of some of the most timely teachings of Vatican II, especially lay participation in the mission of the Church.

“Afterwards, in the ‘70s and ‘80s, that cordial friendship continued with St. Josemaría’s successor, Bishop Álvaro del Portillo. I also witnessed their frequent meetings in Rome, Vienna, and elsewhere. Cardinal König made encouraging suggestions to Don Alvaro, as one of the ecclesiastics who quickly and enthusiastically understood the definitive juridical form of Opus Dei as a Personal Prelature-a jurisdictional

configuration proposed by the Second Vatican Council which integrates priests and lay people, men and women, in a fullness of unity and organic collaboration. The Cardinal understood Opus Dei's fundamental secularity and used his moral authority to explain it to others. There are many reasons to thank him.”

While he was in Vienna, Bishop Echevarria met several times with the faithful of the Prelature.

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