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## **Role of the Prelate**

The Prelate guides Opus Dei's mission of spreading the universal call to sanctity and spurs forward the apostolic efforts of the Prelature's faithful.

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Within Opus Dei, which from its start has had the distinctive atmosphere of a family, the Prelate is simply called Father. The Prelate has the responsibility of governing Opus Dei, as the Ordinary and Pastor of the Prelature. He strives to ensure that

the teachings and guidelines of the Holy See are faithfully followed and that the laws and customs of the Prelature are observed.

The Prelate exercises his pastoral concern through advice and encouragement, and also through norms and precepts. His authority is restricted to the Prelature's specific apostolic mission. The lay faithful of Opus Dei depend on the Prelate in whatever refers to the Prelature's mission, that is, in the spiritual, formational and apostolic commitments they freely take on. Just like the other lay people in their diocese, they come under the jurisdiction of the local Ordinary (bishop) in everything that concerns him. The priests of the Prelature depend exclusively on the Prelate.

To elect the Prelate of Opus Dei an elective general congress is convoked. The Pope ratifies the

appointment. The position is held for life. The current Prelate, Bishop Echevarría, was born in Madrid in 1932. He succeeded Bishop Alvaro del Portillo in 1994, who took over the government of Opus Dei after St. Josemaría Escrivá's death in 1975.

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