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Commemorating the Centennial by Serving

Around the world, people are commemorating the centennial of Blessed Josemaria Escriva's birth with concrete expressions of solidarity with the poor. Here are eight examples of social initiatives in the fields of education, immigration, work, and healthcare that have been or will be put into operation in honor of the centennial

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D.R. Congo: Moluka Medical-Social Clinic

Inauguration: November 2002

The Moluka Medical-Social Clinic will be opening southwest of Kinshasa in the Selembao district. (The name Moluka means “creek” in English.) During the last decade the area has experienced a sharp growth in population due to displacements caused by recent wars and rural exodus. The sponsors of this new center estimate they will be able to provide services for about 30,000 people.

The clinic, which is attached to Monkole Hospital, will provide a team of doctors and nurses offering medical care to impoverished people with little education. It will also offer programs for the advancement of women and for improvement in family living conditions. The programs will include physical and

nutritional hygiene, improvement of sanitary standards in the home and surroundings, family health care, child care, literacy, home finances and domestic science, methods of developing local resources, and creation of productive enterprises.

For several years the Monkole Hospital has been carrying out vaccination programs and school health programs for teachers and students in the area where Moluka will be set up. Some 3,000 school children have been benefiting from the medical examinations each year.

A Protestant community has donated the land for the new clinic to Monkole Hospital. Inauguration of the new facility is scheduled for November of 2002.

**VENEZUELA: Anauco Medical
Dispensary**

Inaugurated October 2001

In honor of the centennial of the birth of Blessed Josemaria Escriva, the sponsors of the Health and Family Association of Caracas have established a medical dispensary in the center of the city and will open two clinics in poor, densely-populated outlying areas of the city.

The Anauco Medical Dispensary, opened in October, 2001, is located on a central square in Caracas and offers primary and secondary medical care to low-income families. The first estimates indicate that Anauco will be able to take care of 800 patients each month. During the last two years, the Health and Family Association has also begun two clinics in the low income districts of Baruta and Catia La Mar. In 2002, the Association plans to open two additional clinics in the districts of Petare and Catia-Propatria. Through this initiative, the sponsors of the Health and Family Association seek

to provide quality medical care which would not otherwise be within reach of low-income families.

MEXICO: Ciudad de los Niños Medical Dispensary

Inaugurated January 8, 2002

With 400 years of history and almost four million inhabitants, Monterrey has a relatively high level of industrial development.

Nevertheless, as often happens in fast-growing urban areas, the city is surrounded by belts of poverty. One of these is the municipality of Guadalupe, with about one million inhabitants. Around 20,000 of its children lack primary education, and 320,000 young people are without secondary or preparatory studies. In 1951, the Monterrey Ciudad de los Niños was founded to provide shelter, food, and education to homeless children. In 1986 its board of directors decided to broaden its

operations and turned it into a Center for Social Development with the objective of providing a more comprehensive training for economically-deprived children and young men.

On January 8, 2002, a medical dispensary was inaugurated at the Ciudad de los Niños in honor of the centennial of Blessed Josemaria Escriva's birth.

Colombia: Guatanfur Family Farm School

Inaugurated January 16, 2002

The Guatanfur School is an educational center established to train farmers in the Temza Valley, a region in the center of Colombia which includes seven municipalities whose economies are chiefly based on small family farms. The project is made up of three programs:

—A rural high school offering courses on agricultural techniques for young men. The students will alternate a week of academic work at the School with two weeks of work on the family farm.

—A school for adults aimed at educating fathers of families and other working adults of the region through programs of agricultural training, personal development, small business instruction, and cooperative activities.

—An Institute for Technological Instruction will promote alternatives for improving the productivity of the farm workers of the region and increasing their earning capacity.

The students will pay about twenty per cent of the cost of their stay at the school. The remainder will be financed donations from private individuals and organizations. The official inauguration of this school

took place on January 16, 2002, with a mass celebrated at Guatanfur by the President of the Latin American Bishop's Conference (CELAM), Bishop Jorge Enrique Jimenez.

URUGUAY: Los Pinos Educational Center

Inauguration: June 26, 2002

Los Pinos Center will be located in the Casavalle district of Montevideo, an area of great poverty. This district's development is impeded by a significant disintegration of families, affecting some forty per cent of the families living in the region. Thirty-two per cent of the children do not have a father living at home. Many homes do not have electricity, water, or sanitary facilities. In the last ten years, of 10,000 children beginning school in the district, only 800 went on to secondary studies. The new Center will provide training in a number of

trades, including electricity, telecommunications, carpentry, and construction.

The Center, initiated in honor of the centennial of the birth of Blessed Josemaria, will begin activities on June 26, 2002, the anniversary of the death of Opus Dei's founder. Initially, 240 young men will be able to take part in the activities of Los Pinos. The Center will operate under the auspices of the Technical and Cultural Association, a non-profit association which since 1998 has been operating the Center of Assistance for Integral Development (CADI), which provides professional formation to women of the Casavalle district.

SPAIN: Braval Occupational Program

Inauguration: October 2002

Of Barcelona's neighborhoods, El Raval has perhaps the greatest need

of social programs. El Raval's residents are primarily immigrants, many of whom have not assimilated easily into Spanish society. As a result, the neighborhood has increasingly divided into ghettos, with unusually high rates of unemployment. Braval, a private not-for-profit organization, has undertaken various activities designed to foster the integration of immigrants into society. These programs have been carried out with the help of more than sixty volunteers.

In October, 2002, the new Occupational Program will begin, aimed at young immigrants who have not obtained a secondary education certificate. The new program will provide basic professional development aimed at incorporating young men into the working world or enabling them to continue their studies.

During 2001, three other programs were started:

—The Trinitat Vella Program is a soccer tournament carried out with inmates, many of whom are immigrants, of a youth correctional facility in Barcelona;

—Program One-on-One is an undertaking aimed at motivating boys of school age to improve in their studies;

—The Summer Program has activities that help young immigrants (from 14 countries, last year) to get to know and fit into their new surroundings.

NIGERIA: Institute for Industrial Technology (IIT)

Inaugurated October 2001

In commemoration of the centennial of the birth of Blessed Josemaria

Escriba, the activities of the Institute for Industrial Technology have commenced in Lagos. The IIT, which is dedicated to teaching technical skills and ethical values, is open to students from all religions, races and tribes.

The majority of Nigeria's estimated 120 million inhabitants live below the poverty level, and the unemployment rate in some areas of the country approaches 60%. In this daunting environment, the IIT seeks to give its students an excellent training that will enable to make their way in the world of work.

In the opening ceremony, Otunba Peter Adegbesan, the President of the Board of Directors, noted that the school wanted to be “an agent for the alleviation of poverty, since it was directed specifically at young people in the neediest economic sectors.” A representative of Nigeria’s Ministry

of Education, Abimbola Davies, said that the establishment of the IIT showed that “private citizens can exercise initiatives for the benefit of the community of which they form a part.”

In its first class, IIT has 75 students, a number which will increase year by year. The school uses the “dual” educational system, by which the students undertake a synchronized apprenticeship in two different places: school and factory. The school gives general and basic education, while the factory provides more specific technical training and practice in working as part of a team.

POLAND: Dworek Center for the Advancement of Rural Women

Inauguration: September 2002

The Dworek educational center will offer training to rural women to help improve their families' standard of

living. The Association of Education and Culture (Stowarzyszenie Edukacji I Kultury) is promoting this project in Siennica, a rural area in the northwestern region of Poland.

One of the basic problems of the region is the low income of many families. Women often lack adequate professional qualifications and as a consequence unemployment is high. A lack of education prevents them from finding ways out of their precarious situation. This has resulted in a lack of motivation and passivity in the face of a difficult future, which, among other things has resulted in a high rate of alcoholism among rural women (19%).

Dworek hopes to contribute to training women who can start small businesses in the field of agro-tourism. Courses will be provided in nutrition, artistic handicrafts, family

finances, etc. The project will be carried out in three phases: first, an information campaign aimed at the women of the area; second, training courses; and finally, the creation of a school with a specialty in agrotourism. The first phase will be initiated in September of 2002.

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