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Opus Dei in the Heart of Russia

During the Mass celebrated in Rome on the feastday of St. Josemaría (June 26), the Prelate mentioned that on that very day the stable work of Opus Dei in Russia had begun. These paragraphs from Bishop Echevarría's homily speak about these new beginnings.

07/09/2007

Today I feel a special joy in my soul that I would like to share with you. Precisely today, as we celebrate St.

Josemaría's feastday, the apostolic work of Opus Dei will begin in a stable form in Russia, that immense land that extends from the Baltic Sea to the Pacific Ocean and from the Black Sea to the frozen Arctic Ocean. This fulfills a dream of St. Josemaría, who always wanted the spirit of Opus Dei to spread throughout the whole world, including the nations of Eastern Europe. You can't imagine how much he looked forward to this moment!

Thanks be to God, the faithful of the Prelature are now working in the countries of Eastern Europe as well as in so many others. For many years the realization of this dream was stalled by a lack of freedom. In 1955, during a trip to Vienna, St. Josemaría entrusted this intention to the Mother of God, invoking her with the aspiration: *Sancta Maria, Stella Orientis, filios tuos adiuva!* (Holy Mary, Star of the East, help your

children!) He never tired of praying for this intention, although as the years passed he was never allowed to see to see even the beginning of an answer.

Later, when the walls built by violence unexpectedly began to fall, our beloved Don Alvaro del Portillo began the apostolic expansion of Opus Dei into those countries. First of all, Poland; then the Czech Republic and Slovakia, Hungary and the Baltic countries. And in the last few years, Slovenia and Croatia. Today, finally, the moment has arrived to carry this apostolic activity to Russia as well. Let us give thanks to God and let us ask, through the intercession of our Lady and St. Josemaría, for divine help in these beginnings. . . .

To carry forward any apostolic activity we must go, first of all, to God. We must also place the

necessary material means at the service of the apostolate, for the apostolic activities of Opus Dei need the collaboration of many people, their prayers and their material help. In this way, through the grace of God and the generous contribution of so many men and women from different walks of life, an ever-growing work of evangelization is being carried out throughout the world in service of the Church.

The complete homily is available (in Spanish) at

www.josemariaescriva.info .

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