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Priestly Ordinations in Rome

On 24 May, twenty faithful of Opus Dei will receive priestly ordination from Cardinal Arthur Roche, Prefect of the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. The ceremony will take place at 10:00 a.m. (Rome time) in the Basilica of St Eugene.

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- Watch the livestream of the ceremony on the Basilica of Saint Eugene's YouTube channel
- Download the booklet for the Mass

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Cardinal Arthur Roche will confer priestly ordination on 20 deacons of the Prelature of Opus Dei. The candidates come from 11 countries:

- Vincenzo Affinita (Italy)
- Stefano Baravelli (Italy)
- John Robert Bickford (United States)
- Daniel Callejo Goena (Spain)
- Ramón Díaz Perfecto (Hungary)
- Arturo Escamilla Contreras (Australia)

- Santiago Fabregat Trueba (Mexico)
- Ramón Fernández Aparicio (Spain)
- Luis García-Menacho Ariz (Spain)
- José María López-Barajas (Austria)
- Jose Miguel Marasigan (Philippines)
- Robert Alvin Marsland (United States)
- Ezequiel Mercau (Ireland)
- Álvaro Orejana Martín (Spain)
- Pedro Perkins (Argentina)
- Santiago Populín Such (Argentina)
- Enrique Sañoso Vela (Spain)
- Antonio Santos García (Spain)
- Gonzalo Silió Pardo (Spain)
- Cristóbal Vargas Balcells (Chile)

Some stories of the future priests

After finishing high school in Mexico, Arturo Escamilla crossed the ocean

to live in Australia. For over a decade, he directed Warrane College, a university residence in Sydney, where he accompanied hundreds of young people. “With God’s grace, in a few days I’ll be able to make Christ present in the Mass and in the sacrament of penance for future generations of young people,” he says joyfully.

Vincenzo Affinita was born in Rome in 1996. While completing a doctoral thesis on Dante Alighieri and the *Divine Comedy*, he is preparing intensely for the priesthood. “As the ordination approaches, my gratitude grows, and I try to place everything in God’s hands.” In addition to philosophy, his interests range from martial arts and chess to Irish music.

Also from Italy, Stefano Baravelli has lived in several cities (Milan, Verona, Rome and Bari) and worked for years in a business association. Looking

back, he reflects: “I’ve been fortunate to meet many exemplary priests who have dedicated their lives to serving God and others. Now that God is asking me to be an instrument for drawing many people closer to the faith, I’d like to follow in their footsteps.”

From Rosario, Argentina) to Dublin, Ireland), Ezequiel Mercau has followed a unique path: university professor, specialist in the Falklands conflict, and now a researcher on the history of Catholicism in 20th-century Ireland. In his life, he has observed that “many people feel far from God, but many also suffer and carry wounds that only God can truly heal with his mercy, forgiveness, and fatherly love.”

An engineer and double bassist, Enrique Sañoso has lived in cities as diverse as Barcelona, Rome, Madrid, and his hometown, Campo de

Criptana. “Over the course of my life, the Lord has given me the gift of breathing in a wide variety of environments and sensibilities. Perhaps that’s why I see how important it is for today’s priests to embody the heart and sentiments of Christ in every corner of contemporary reality.” With a smile, he adds, “It’s a real challenge — and I ask for your prayers.”

A physicist by training, Robert Marsland discovered Opus Dei while studying at Princeton University (New Jersey), and later earned his PhD at MIT. Looking back on those years, he recalls: “I used to help my colleagues discover God through rigorous study of creation. Now I’ll strive to continue that mission, but in a different setting, through the Word of God.”

A journalist by profession, José María López-Barajas has lived in Austria for

over three decades. From there, he helped develop the work of Opus Dei in several Eastern European countries, including Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Croatia, and Slovenia. At age 58, he is joyfully preparing for the priesthood: “Many of my friends are thinking about retirement, and the Lord gives me the opportunity to begin a new adventure: serving as a priest. It’s an honour and a responsibility!”

John Robert Bickford, a Guatemalan doctor, specialised in paediatric emergency medicine in Houston, where he worked for twenty years. He also launched a youth leadership programme for teens in New York. In 2021, Providence opened up an unexpected path: the priesthood. “Through the example of the children I cared for, St Josemaría has taught me to live like one of them; as one of God’s little children,” he

explains. “As a paediatrician, I had the privilege of helping heal many children. Now, as a priest, I’m excited to be an instrument to help heal many others, young and old alike.”

Originally from Mendoza, Santiago Populín Such is grateful to God “for the family I was born into, where I learned to love Him and to make an effort to help others.” Santiago studied a degree in oenology and began his professional life among vineyards and wineries before deciding to dedicate himself to education. He is currently completing a doctorate in theology at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, focusing on Christian courtship as a path toward personal maturity. “As a future priest, I’m especially excited to help young people prepare for marriage and family life,” he says. “This is vital work for the good of society, grounded in the organic

development of the person and the family itself.”

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