

Opus Dei forms new institute, issues video on members

Noticia publicada por el Catholic News Service sobre el vídeo editado por la Oficina de Información del Opus Dei en EE.UU.

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NEW YORK (CNS) -- Opus Dei will take a hard rap when "The Da Vinci Code" premieres May 19, if the movie at all resembles the best-selling book of the same name by novelist Dan

Brown, which portrays Opus Dei as a secretive cult within the church plotting to

take over the church.

But U.S. leaders of Opus Dei -- a Catholic organization with more than 87,000 members worldwide who seek to make their faith infuse all aspects of life, including their jobs -- are using the occasion as a teachable moment to spread the word of what they are really about.

A month in advance of the movie's release, Opus Dei's U.S. branch announced the formation of the St. Josemaria Institute and the release of a free DVD with interviews of several U.S. members who tell how belonging to Opus Dei has affected their lives. The institute, named after Opus Dei's founder, St. Josemaria Escriva de Balaguer, is at the organization's U.S. headquarters in New York.

Charles Thornton, the institute's director of development, told Catholic News Service that the best way to order the DVD is on the institute's new Web site, www.stjosemaria.org. He said most of the content of the DVD is also available in a series of separate video clips on the web site.

The institute's commentary on the new DVD, titled "Passionately Loving the World," describes Opus Dei members as "real people with real lives."

"They work hard, love their families, celebrate successes and endure failures. Through joys and sorrows, they try to grow closer to God without ever leaving the ordinary circumstances of their daily lives," the Web site says. There are about 3,000 Opus Dei members in the United States.

Opus Dei is Latin for "God's work." Most members are laypeople who continue their secular jobs or careers but seek to bring a strong Christian spirituality into all aspects of their lives. Some Opus Dei members commit themselves to lifelong celibacy and some are ordained priests.

In "The Da Vinci Code" one of the chief characters is an Opus Dei monk -- although Opus Dei has no monks -- who goes around murdering people in an effort to uncover the secret of the

Holy Grail. The book portrays all of Christianity as a vast, historic conspiracy to suppress people's knowledge of the "sacred feminine."

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