



Saint Josemaria Escrivà

(1902-1975)

Feast: June 26

Virtue of the Month: Gratitude, seeing everything as a gift from God and being thankful:

It can be easy to race through a day without giving thought to how grateful we should be, even for the splendor of a sunset or the fidelity of a close friend. Yet we are called not only to be grateful for these things, but even for the difficulties in life, which God allows for the greater good of our salvation. Everything God has made, everything that happens, is a gift. So in all things, “Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His love endures... FOREVER!

“I did not know what it was (the Lord) wanted, but I went forward... without doing anything unusual...” These words uttered by the young seminarian Josemaria Escrivà would be a premonition of the “Work” literally, “Opus Dei,” the Work of God—through ordinary life that would become his apostolate as a priest and his gift to the Church.

Born in 1902 in the small town of Barbastro in northern Spain to Jose Escriva, a prosperous textile merchant, and his wife Mara Dolores, Jose Maria was the second oldest of six children, only three of whom were to survive to adulthood—a loss that was to have a profound effect on the family. Josemaria himself almost died of a serious illness at the age of two; but his devout mother commended him to the care of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and he made a full recovery, which he always attributed to the intercession of the Blessed Mother.

As a teenager, glimpsing the footsteps in the snow made by the bare feet of a monk ignited in Josemaria a desire to give to God whatever He wanted, to make his life a pleasing gift to the Lord. With this end in mind, he entered the seminary, was ordained a priest, and served in various ways—as pastor, confessor, and teacher, ministering to the poor, sick, and abandoned. It was not until the Feast of the Guardian Angels, October 2, 1926, that Saint Josemaria received the inspiration to found Opus Dei. Opus Dei has more than 80,000 members worldwide.

All his life, Saint Josemaria felt a deep gratitude to God for the gift of his family, especially the formation in living a Christian life provided by the example of his parents. Throughout his priestly life promoting Opus Dei, he would always regard the family as the first school of holiness, the place where both parents and children would learn to “sanctify themselves and sanctify others.”