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Pray with Blessed Alvaro: “Where Peter is, there the Church is”

“Whoever he is; tall or short, fat or thin, from this country or that one, he is Peter.” Let’s accompany our new pope, Leo XIV, guided by the words of Blessed Alvaro del Portillo a few days before his liturgical memorial.

05/08/2025

On 12 May 1921, Alvaro del Portillo received his First Communion in the Church of Our Lady of the Conception in Madrid. This date was later chosen to mark his liturgical memorial on the day of his beatification. In view of his upcoming feast day and the ongoing conclave, we offer some reflections from Blessed Alvaro del Portillo on the Pope, successor of Peter and shepherd of the universal Church:

1. I know that, persevering unanimously in prayer, you will be praying for the Pope who is to come, faithful to the teaching and example of our Father in similar circumstances. “We already love him!” our Father would say during a period of *sede vacante*, referring to the future Sovereign Pontiff. Well, we too, let us love him, praying, praying a great deal. (Letter, 29-IX-1978)

2. Love the Pope a lot, with deeds of faithful service to the Church; consolidate this spirit which from the beginning has always been a characteristic trait of the Work. (Letter, 9-I-1980)

3. From our place of work – in the office and in the field, in the home, in the factory and in the university, everywhere – if we fulfill our duties with joy and are faithful to our vocation, if we are sincerely devout each day, we are helping the Pope in his mission of governing the Church, strengthening so many Christians who are unjustly persecuted on account of the faith, fostering peace and harmony among nations, giving impulse to the apostolate: carrying out in the most varied environments a sowing of peace and joy. Is this not something to thank God for every day?
(Letter, 1-XI-1984)

4. In Opus Dei, we love the Pope, whoever he may be, and we like to show him both human and supernatural affection.

Remaining united to the Pope is the only way to be faithful to the words of Our Lord, who said: *super hanc petram ædificabo Ecclesiam meam*. It is Christ who builds the Church – and we with Him – through the Holy Spirit, but on the foundation He Himself has laid. There is no other way than always to act *cum Petro et sub Petro*, in union with the Pope and under his authority.

(Homily, 2-V-1988)

5. “Whoever he is; tall or short, fat or thin, from this country or that one, he is Peter. And God our Lord Jesus Christ gave the keys to govern the Church to Peter.” (Gathering in Paris, 1988)

6. Love the Holy Father a lot. He is, in God's name, the sign and cause of unity in the Church. Be most docile to his teachings and to everything he lays down. And, in each diocese, love the Bishop and pray for him a lot, so that the Lord may help him greatly with his grace to carry so heavy a burden; and so that the union of all with Peter, the High Priest, may be ever strengthened. *Ubi Petrus, ibi Ecclesia*: where Peter, there the Church is. (Letter, 28-VII-1988)
7. We should be very Roman, out of love for the Successor of Peter, with a love that is shown through prayer and sacrifice for his person and intentions, through fidelity to his teachings, and through wholehearted obedience to his guidance. And we should be very Roman as well in our apostolic zeal to bring all souls *cum Petro* to

Jesus through Mary. (Letter, 1-VIII-1991)

8. Prayer for the common Father of all Christians cannot be confined to more or less exceptional moments, such as the ones we have just been through. It has to be part of our ordinary approach, practised *every day and many times a day*. We learned that lesson from our holy Founder, Blessed Josemaría, who summed up the mission of Opus Dei in a few words we should have ever in mind: *omnes cum Petro ad Iesum per Mariam!* Our apostolic work consists in leading all the people we find along our path, in close unity with Peter, the Pope, all the way to Jesus through Mary. And that *cum Petro*, which our Father stressed so much, can show itself, first of all, in prayer and mortification for the August

Person of the Holy Father and his intentions. We help him in this way to carry the burden, a burden both heavy and gentle, which the Lord has placed upon his shoulders. Don't ever forget it, my daughters and sons, and make sure your relatives, friends and acquaintances do not forget it either! (Letter, 1-VIII-1992)

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