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Commemorative Book in Germany

A new book on Josemaria Escriva, Profiles of the Founder, was unveiled in the convention hall of the diocese of Cologne recently. The same day more than 3,000 people attended a Mass celebrated by Cardinal Meisner in the Cologne cathedral in commemoration of the centennial of the birth of the Founder of Opus Dei.

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The book, *Josemaría Escrivá. Profile einer Gründergestalt*, is a joint work of various ecclesiastical and civil personalities of Germany. The essays are preceded by a prologue by Msgr. Javier Echevarría, prelate of Opus Dei, and by a simple biography of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá. The book, which comprises some 450 pages and was published by Adamas, also includes some testimonies of persons who knew the founder of Opus Dei personally.

“Ecumenism in Blessed Josemaría” (Archbishop Karl Braun), “The Charism of Opus Dei in the Church” (Cardinal Joachim Meisner), “Catholics and Politics in Josemaría Escrivá” (Kurt Malangré, ex-mayor of Aachen), “The Pedagogy of Blessed Josemaría” (Monika Born), and “Grace in the Spirituality of Josemaría Escrivá” (Cardinal Leo Scheffczyk) are some of the works that figure in the book.

In commemoration of the centennial of the birth of Blessed Josemaría, a Mass attended by 3,000 was celebrated in the cathedral of Cologne on the same day as the book was presented. The Mass was concelebrated by Cardinal Meisner, archbishop of Cologne, and Cardinal Scheffczyk, and several priests. In his homily, Cardinal Meisner pointed out that “the Church is not formed by persons belonging to two different categories: those called to holiness and normal Christians.... Rather, in God’s eyes, the saints are normal Christians, ...since in the last analysis, holiness means perfection in love; it’s the greatest thing that can be given to man because it brings him to God and makes him a little like God.”

The centennial of Blessed Josemaría coincided with the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the apostolic work of Opus Dei in Germany, as the

Apostolic Nuncio Giovanni Lajolo pointed out in a letter to the regional vicar of Opus Dei, Christoph Bockamp: "Through the petition of Cardinal Frings, then archbishop of Cologne, the first members of Opus Dei arrived in Cologne in 1952," and even though those first years of Opus Dei in post-war Germany were not easy, "Opus Dei grew steadily: from Bonn it spread to Cologne, Essen, Aachen, Münster, Frankfurt, Trier, and most recently to Bavaria and Berlin, besides the many other places where members of Opus Dei live. Opus Dei's presence can be seen in its student residences, youth clubs, schools of formation for domestic workers and other centers of formation," centers in which "one prays, that is, one speaks with God and about God." Msgr. Lajolo stressed the important work of evangelization which the faithful of Opus Dei carry out with their friends, companions and acquaintances, in

their families and at work, an apostolate which “benefits the local Church, the same as the various projects Opus Dei has undertaken in the social, academic, cultural fields.”

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