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The Prayers (Preces) of Opus Dei

Every day the faithful of the Prelature raise their hearts to God through this set of prayers in which they praise, thank and petition God the Father, through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, for their own needs and those of others.

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On 10 December 1930, St Josemaría wrote in his *Intimate Notes*: “These days we are making copies of the *Prayers to Be Recited by Members of Opus Dei*. They have been approved by my confessor. It is obvious that God – because this is the way it has to be in the Work – has wanted us to begin with prayer.” [1]

These words of the founder of Opus Dei are a faithful reflection of his constant teaching: “prayer is the foundation of the spiritual edifice,” [2] of all supernatural work and any apostolic action; it is an indispensable means to advance in the struggle for holiness. [3] In Opus Dei, a practical way to fulfil this need – common to all Christians souls [4] – is provided by these *Preces* (plural of the Latin word *prex* : prayer,

supplication). Every day, the faithful of the prelature raise their hearts to God through this set of prayers in which they praise, thank and petition God the Father, through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, for their own needs and those of others. In this way, within this small part of the great family of God which is the Church, the scene from early Christianity which St Luke writes about is repeated: *all these, with one mind, gave themselves to prayer, and there was one heart and soul in all the company of believers.* [5]

St Josemaría composed these prayers during the first decades of the life of Opus Dei, using texts from Scripture and the Liturgy of the Hours.

Through their daily recitation of the prayers, the faithful of the prelature give thanks to God for the gift of their Christian vocation, and show their total availability to do God's Will. The *Preces* begin with the expression

Serviam! which summarises the resolution to serve God and promote the extension of His Kingdom throughout the world, without discrimination of any kind. Hence after addressing words of praise and thanksgiving to the Blessed Trinity, the faithful of the Work go *ad Iesum Christum Regem* , to Jesus Christ the King, who sends them out in order to open up for all men and women the divine paths of the earth.

Placing themselves under the protection of the most merciful God, with invocations from Psalm 27 [26] – *the Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear* – they also have recourse, with affection and filial confidence, to the intercession of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, mediatrix of all graces; St Joseph, patron of the universal Church; the Holy Guardian Angels, on whose feast Opus Dei was born; and St Josemaría. The invocation to

St Josemaría was added on 17 May 1992 after his beatification, and was slightly modified on 6 October 2002, when he was canonised by Pope John Paul II.

The *Preces* then include a number of petitions: firstly, as is natural, for the Holy Father, so that God *may keep him, give him life, and make him happy on earth* ; and then for the bishops of the different dioceses.

Next comes a prayer for unity in the apostolate – following the example of Christ at the Last Supper: *that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in me and I in you* – and for all those who, out of love for God, cooperate in the apostolic activities of the Prelature.

In continuity with these petitions for the pastors of the Church, the next prayer is for the Prelate of Opus Dei, familiarly called “Father”, whom God has placed at the head of this portion of the People of God. And since it is a

family prayer there is also a petition for the other faithful of the prelature: those still alive and those who have died.

In the concluding prayers, the faithful invoke God once again in the certainty of being heard, and trusting in his mercy they ask him that their hearts and their very being may be set alight with the fire of the Holy Spirit. They also ask him to bring to completion, through his inspiration and aid, all their actions: their work, their prayer, and the great variety of their occupations. They then ask for *joy and peace* , which are fruit of the interior struggle, as well as *a time for true penance, the grace and consolation of the Holy Spirit, and perseverance in Opus Dei*.

Lastly, they turn to the intercession of the Patrons of the apostolates of the Work – the archangels St Michael, St Gabriel and St Raphael, and the

apostles St Peter, St Paul and St John. When a priest is present, he gives a blessing, asking that *the Lord be in your hearts and on your lips* . The prayers end with a greeting that evokes the human and supernatural warmth of the early Christians: *Pax, in aeternum* – peace, for ever.

J. Yaniz

[1] *Intimate Notes* , no. 128, quoted in Vazquez de Prada, *The Founder of Opus Dei* , Vol 1, Princeton 2002, p. 277.

[2] *The Way* , no. 83.

[3] cf. 1 *Thess* 4:3.

[4] cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* , nos. 2744-2745.

[5] *Acts* 1:14 and 4:32

PRECES

Sérviam!

V /. Ad Trinitatem Beatíssimam.

R /. Grátias tibi, Deus, grátias tibi:
vera et una Trínitas, una et summa
Déitas, sancta et una Unitas.

V /. Ad Iesum Christum Regem.

R /. Dóminus Iudex noster; Dóminus
Légifer noster; Dóminus Rex noster.
Ipse salvabit nos.

V /. Christe, Fili Dei vivi, miserere
nobis.

R /. Christe, Fili Dei vivi, miserere
nobis.

V /. Exsurge, Christe, ádiuva nos.

R /. Et líbera nos propter nomen
tuum.

V /. Dóminus illuminátio mea et salus mea: quem timebo?

R /. Si consistant adversum me castra, non timebit cor meum; si exsurgat adversum me proélum, in hoc ego sperabo.

V /. Ad Beatam Vírginem Mariam Mediatricem.

R /. Recordare, Virgo Mater Dei, dum stéteris in conspectu Dómini, ut loquaris pro nobis bona.

V /. Ad Sanctum Ioseph Sponsum Beatae Mariae Víginis.

R /. Fecit te Deus quasi Patrem Regis, et dóminum universae domus eius: ora pro nobis.

V /. Ad Angelos Custodes.

R /. Sancti Angeli Custodes nostri, deféndite nos in proélio ut non pereamus in tremendo iudício.

V /. Ad Sanctum Iosephmariam
Conditozem nostrum.

R /. Intercede pro fíliis tuis ut, fideles
spirítui Operis Dei, laborem
sanctificemus et ánimas Christo
lucrifácere quaeramus.

V /. Oremus pro Beatíssimo Papa
nostro N.

R /. Dóminus conservet eum, et
vivíficet eum, et beatum fáciat eum
in terra, et non tradat eum in
ánimam inimicorum eius.

V /. Oremus et pro Antístite huius
dioecesis.

R /. Stet et pascat in fortitúdine tua,
Dómine, in sublimitate nóminis tui.

V /. Oremus pro unitate apostolatus.

R /. Ut omnes unum sint, sicut tu
Pater in me et ego in te: ut sint unum,
sicut et nos unum sumus.

V /. Omne regnum divisum contra se,
desolábitur.

R /. Et omnis cívitas vel domus divisa
contra se non stabit.

V /. Oremus pro benefactóribus
nostris.

R /. Retribúere dignare, Dómine,
óm nibus nobis bona faciéntibus
propter nomen tuum, vitam
aeternam. Amen.

V /. Oremus pro Patre.

R /. Misericórdia Dómini ab aeterno
et usque in aeternum super eum:
custodit enim Dóminus omnes
diligentes se.

V /. Oremus et pro frátribus nostris
Operis Dei, vivis atque defunctis.

R /. Salvos fac servos tuos, Deus
meus, sperantes in te.

V /. Mitte eis, Dómine, auxílium de
sancto.

R /. Et de Sion tuere eos.

V /. Réquiem aeternam dona eis,
Dómine.

R /. Et lux perpétua lúceat eis.

V /. Requiescant in pace.

R /. Amen.

V /. Dómine, exaudi orationem
meam.

R /. Et clamor meus ad te véniat.

Sacerdos, si Preces moderatur,
exurgit et addit Dóminus vobiscum,
stans etiam dum recitat orationem.

V /. Dóminus vobiscum.

R /. Et cum spíritu tuo.

Oremus.

Deus, cui pr oprium est misereri
semper et p arcere: s uscipe
deprecationem nostram. Ure igne
Sancti Sp iritus renes nostros et cor
nostrum, D omine: ut tibi casto
c orpore serviamus, et mundo corde
placeamus.

Actiones nostras, qua sumus
D omine, aspirando pra eveni et
adiuvando pros equere: ut cuncta
nostra or atio et oper atio a te semper
inc ipiat, et per te coepta finiatur. Per
Christum D ominum nostrum.

R/. Amen.

Omnes dicunt:

G audium cum pace, emendationem
vitae, sp atium verae poenit entiae,
gr atiam et consolationem Sancti
Sp iritus atque in Opere Dei
persever antiam, tr ibuat nobis
Omn ipotens et Mis ericors D ominus.

V /. Sancte M icha l.

R /. Ora pro nobis.

V /. Sancte Gábríel.

R /. Ora pro nobis.

V /. Sancte Ráphaël.

R /. Ora pro nobis.

V /. Sancte Petre.

R /. Ora pro nobis.

V /. Sancte Paule.

R /. Ora pro nobis.

V /. Sancte Ioannes.

R /. Ora pro nobis.

Cum adsit aliquis Sacerdos, dignior
ait:

Iube, Domne, benedícere.

Sacerdos benedicit:

Dóminus sit in córdibus vestris, et in
lábiis vestris, in nómine Patris + et
Fílii et Spíritus Sancti.

R /. Amen.

V /. Pax.

R /. In aeternum.

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