



Saint Josemaria Escriva

Founder of Opus Dei

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Sowers of peace and joy

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The contemporary world is a place full of hope, and yet it presents urgent challenges and difficulties which require a decisive response from Christians. For we cannot forget that Christ is our peace. While we have our eyes fixed on our heavenly homeland, Christians are not unconcerned about what happens in this world. True concern is what is proper to those of us who prepare ourselves, with living and incarnate faith in the search for peace and justice, to enjoy eternal peace and divine justice, which is identified with God's mercy and love.

The active presence of Christians in society should transform the hopes of the today's world into deeds of love and of service. It should also offer true and authentic answers to contemporary problems and challenges. If every Christian should be a "creator of peace and justice", the founder of Opus Dei wanted each one to be a "sower of peace and joy". Throughout his life, and through his example and teachings, Josemaria Escriva successfully sowed justice, peace and love. This fruitful sowing still continues today, alive in the apostolic spirit of his spiritual children and in the many social initiatives promoted by him directly or inspired by him.

The heart of his message centers on the sanctification of ordinary life through daily work. And where could this world of justice and peace be brought about if not in ordinary everyday life? In the family home, in the school, in public offices, in businesses, or in the farm, wherever it may be, a Christian should give testimony of his faith and become - as the founder of Opus Dei liked to describe it - an authentic sower of peace and joy. It is precisely there where one must transform the world with Christian conviction: in daily life, in social relations, with the freedom of the children of God. "The world awaits us - he wrote in *Furrow* - Yes, we love the world passionately because God has taught us to: *Sic Deus dilexit mundum...* - God so loved the world. And we love it because it is there that we fight our battles in a most beautiful war of charity, so that everyone may find the peace that Christ has come to establish" (*Furrow*, n. 290).

I know that Josemaria Escriva wanted the catechism of Christian doctrine to refer to the social and political obligations of Christians in civil society. In this way, Catholics from childhood could be educated for unity of life: a good Christian must also be a good citizen. His wish has come true. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, in the third part, dedicates an entire section to this topic. It says, "'Participation' is the voluntary and generous engagement of a person in social interchange. It is necessary that all participate, each according to his position and role, in promoting the common good. This obligation is inherent in the dignity of the human person" (n. 1913). "Participation is achieved first of all by taking charge of the areas for which one assumes personal responsibility: by the care taken for the education of his family, by conscientious work, and so forth, man participates in the good of others and of society" (n. 1914).

The apostolic mission of a Christian, according to the teachings of Josemaria Escriva, involves social participation and personal responsibility. Our Lord wants, through the intercession of the Most Blessed Virgin and Josemaria Escriva, that Christians truly become workers for justice and peace, founded on forgiveness, which can also be described with words from the founder of Opus Dei, as "sowers of peace and joy".

And I wish that these sowers of peace and joy, with the help of Holy Spirit, would also come to the Far East, to Vietnam.

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