

BISHOP ALVARO DEL PORTILLO

PRESS DOSSIER

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1. Brief biography of the Venerable Bishop Alvaro del Portillo (1914-1994)

Alvaro del Portillo was born in Madrid on 11 March 1914, the third of eight children of a Mexican mother, Clementina Diez de Sollano, and a Spanish father, Ramón del Portillo y Pardo.

After receiving his secondary education at El Pilar school (Madrid), he entered the School of Civil Engineering, where he completed his studies in 1941. Subsequently he worked in a number of state authorities. At the same time he studied Philosophy and Literature, specializing in history, and in 1944 he completed his doctorate on the early exploration of the California coast.

In 1935 he joined Opus Dei, an institution of the Catholic Church that had been founded seven years earlier by St. Josemaría Escrivá. He received formation directly from the founder, with the spirit corresponding to this new path in the Church. He carried out a wide-ranging work of evangelization among his fellow students and colleagues, and from 1939 he undertook numerous apostolic journeys to various cities in Spain.

On 25 June 1944 he was ordained a priest by the Bishop of Madrid, Leopoldo Eijo y Garay, together with José María Hernández Garnica and José Luis Múzquiz. These were the first three priests of Opus Dei, after the founder.

In 1946 he moved to Rome, a few months prior to St. Josemaría moving there, and lived alongside the founder in the years that followed. Around that time Opus Dei received its first juridical approvals from the Holy See. For Alvaro del Portillo it was also a decisive period during which he carried out a deep reflection on the role and responsibility of the lay faithful in the Church's mission, through their ordinary work and their social and family relations. "In a hospital," he wrote years later by way of illustration, "the Church is not only present through the chaplain: it also acts through the faithful who, as doctors or nurses, strive to provide good professional service and to show respect and care towards the patients. In a particular locality, the church building will always be an indispensable point of reference, but the only way of reaching those who don't attend it will be through other families."

Between 1947 and 1950 he spurred forward the apostolic expansion of Opus Dei in Rome, Milan, Naples, Palermo and other Italian cities. He promoted Christian formational activities and provided priestly service to many people. The impact his work had in Italy is reflected today in the numerous streets and squares that have been dedicated to him in various cities.

On 29 June 1948, the founder of Opus Dei erected the Roman College of the Holy Cross in Rome, an international center for formation, of which Alvaro del Portillo was the first rector and in which he taught moral theology (1948-1953). In that same year, 1948, he obtained a doctorate in Canon Law from the Pontifical University of St. Thomas.

During his years in Rome, the various Popes from Pius XII to John Paul II called upon him to carry out numerous tasks as a member of or consultor to 13 bodies within the Holy See.

He played an active role in the Second Vatican Council. John XXIII appointed him as consultor to the Sacred Congregation of the Council (1959-1966). In the stages prior to Vatican II, he was president of the Commission for the Laity. In the course of the Council (1962-65), he was secretary of the Commission on the Discipline of the Clergy and of the Christian People. After the Council, Paul VI appointed him as consultor to the post-conciliar Commission for Bishops and the regulation of dioceses (1966). He was also for many years consultor for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, of the Congregation for the Clergy, of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints and the

Pontifical Council for Social Communications.

The life of Alvaro del Portillo was closely united with that of the founder. He remained always by his side until the very moment of his death, on June 26, 1975, helping St. Josemaría in his work of evangelisation and pastoral care. He accompanied him on numerous trips to countries in Europe and America to help set up and give advice on the apostolic works of Opus Dei. At the time of Bishop del Portillo's death, an Irish Augustinian, Father John O'Connor, wrote: "on seeing his friendly and unobtrusive presence beside the dynamic figure of Msgr. Escriva, there came to my mind the thought of the humility of St. Joseph."

On September 15, 1975, in the General Congress convened after the death of the founder, Alvaro del Portillo was elected to succeed him as head of Opus Dei. On November 28, 1982, when St. John Paul II erected Opus Dei as a personal prelature, he appointed Alvaro del Portillo Prelate of the new prelature. Eight years later, on December 7, 1990, the Pope named him bishop, and on January 6, 1991, he received Episcopal ordination in St. Peter's Basilica.

Over the years he spent as head of Opus Dei, Bishop Alvaro del Portillo promoted the start of activities of the prelature in 20 new countries. In his pastoral visits, which took him to every continent, he preached to thousands of people about love for God, for our Lady, the Church and the Pope, and transmitted persuasively the Christian message of St. Josemaría about seeking holiness in ordinary life.

As the Prelate of Opus Dei, Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo inspired the start of many social and educational initiatives. The *Monkole Hospital* in Kinshasa (Congo), the *Niger Foundation Hospital* in Enugu (Nigeria), the *Center for Industrial Technology and Enterprise (CITE)*, en Cebú, Filipinas) are example of social development projects carried out by members of Opus Dei, with others, under the direct impetus of Bishop del Portillo.

In addition, the *Pontifical University of the Holy Cross* (since 1985) and the *Sedes Sapientiae International Seminary* (from 1990), both in Rome, and the *Bidasoa International Ecclesiastical College* (Pamplona, Spain), have formed for the dioceses thousands of candidates for the priesthood sent by bishops from around the world. They show the concern of Bishop del Portillo for the role of the priest in today's world, a theme to which he devoted much of his energies, as evidenced during the years of Vatican II. "The priesthood is not a career," he wrote in 1986, "but a generous, complete self-giving, without calculation or limits, to be sowers of peace and joy in the world, and to open the gates of Heaven to those who benefit from this service and ministry."

Alvaro del Portillo was an author of publications on theological, canonical and pastoral subjects: *Faithful and Laity in the Church* (1969), *On Priesthood* (1970) and numerous articles, many of them collected posthumously in the volume *Rendere amabile the Verità. Raccolta di scritti di Mons. Álvaro del Portillo*, which was published in 1995 by *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*. In 1992 the book *Intervista sul Fondatore dell'Opus Dei* was published, a collection of interviews with Italian journalist Cesare Cavalleri about St. Josemaría Escrivá. It has been translated into several languages. The English translation is titled *Immersed in God*.

Bishop del Portillo died in Rome in the early hours of March 23, 1994, just hours after returning from a pilgrimage to Holy Land. On Tuesday, March 22, he had celebrated his last Mass at the Church of the Cenacle in Jerusalem. Since his death, thousands of people have testified to his kindness, the warmth of his smile, his humility, his supernatural courage, and the peace of mind his words inspired in them.

2. Chronology of the Cause of Canonization of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo

23 March 1994: he died in Rome, with a reputation for holiness. That same day, 23 March, St. John Paul II went to pray beside his mortal remains.

19 February 1997: Bishop Javier Echevarría, Prelate of Opus Dei, appointed Monsignor Flavio Capucci as Postulator of the cause of canonization of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo.

6 December 2002: decree is published in “Romana” (<http://en.romana.org/>), the official bulletin of the Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei, and displayed at the entrance to the offices of the curia of the Prelature. The aim of this decree, addressed to the faithful of the Prelature, was to collect the writings of the Servant of God and any documents about him, favourable or otherwise.

4 July 2003: Cardinal Camilo Ruini, Vicar for Rome, directed that a similar decree, for the faithful of the diocese of Rome, be displayed at the entrance to the diocesan offices and published in the Rome diocesan magazine.

21 November 2003: the Congregation for the Causes of Saints agreed that Bishop Alvaro del Portillo’s cause could be run “aequaliter” (in parallel) by the Tribunal of the Diocese of Rome and by the Tribunal of the Prelature of Opus Dei.

21 January 2004: at the request of the Prelate (Bishop Javier Echevarria) and of the Vicar of Rome (Cardinal Ruini), the Congregation decreed to grant the “nihil obstat” for the cause to be opened.

5 March 2004: Cardinal Ruini officially opened the process of the Tribunal of the Diocese of Rome “super vita et virtutibus” (on the life and virtues) of the Servant of God Bishop Alvaro del Portillo, in the Sala della Conciliazione of the Lateran Palace.

20 March 2004: Bishop Javier Echevarria presided over the first session of the process of the Tribunal of the Prelature, in the John Paul II Auditorium of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross.

26 June 2008: the process of the Tribunal of the Diocese of Rome was brought to a close in the Lateran Palace; over 85 sessions, 25 witnesses were interviewed, including 11 cardinals, 6 bishops, 4 priests and one monk.

5 August 2008: the first session of the diocesan process takes place in Santiago de Chile about the cure of the child Jose Ignacio Ureta Wilson, attributed to the intercession of the Servant of God Alvaro del Portillo.

7 August 2008: the first phase of the process of the Tribunal of the Prelature was brought to a close in the Auditorium of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross; 133 witnesses were interviewed: 62 were faithful of the Prelature, 71 were not; among the witnesses were 19 cardinals, and 12 archbishops and bishops: all but two were “de visu,” which means they knew him personally.

6 August 2009: last session of the diocesan process in Santiago de Chile on the cue of the child Jose Ignacio Ureta Wilson, attributed to the intercession of the Servant of God Alvaro del Portillo.

15 January 2010: the Congregation for the Causes of Saints declares the validity of the diocesan process of the cure of the child Jose Ignacio Ureta Wilson, attributed to the Servant of God Alvaro del Portillo.

19 February 2010: Fr. Cristoforo Bove, OFM Conv., Relator of the “Positio” of the cause of canonization of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo, presented the “Positio super vita et virtutibus” (documentation on the life and virtues) of the Servant of God Bishop Alvaro del Portillo. It comprised 2,530 pages in 3 volumes: “Informatio” (Information), “Summarium” (Summary) and “Biographia documentata” (Biographical details). The length of the “Positio” was due to the number of investigations carried out and the sources researched (searches were made in 63 archives – ecclesiastical and civil, public and private).

24 February 2011: the *Positio* of the possible miracle attributed to the intercession of the Servant of God is presented to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

10 February 2012: the General Promoter of the Faith, Fr. Luigi Borriello, OCD, put the question to the theological consultants of the Congregation of the Causes of Saints as to whether the Servant of God Bishop Alvaro del Portillo had practised the virtues heroically. They unanimously gave an affirmative answer.

5 June 2012: Cardinal Antonio Cañizares put the same question to the regular meeting of the cardinals and bishops who are members of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. They announced that they had reached the same decision.

28 June 2012: the Holy Father Benedict XVI orders the promulgation by the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints of the decree of heroic virtue of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo.

18 October 2012: the Medical Consultants of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints declares that the cure of Jose Ignacio Ureta Wilson has no scientific explanation.

15 December 2012: the Congress of Theologians of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints declares that the said cure is miraculous and can be attributed to the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God Alvaro del Portillo.

4 June 2013: the Ordinary Session of Cardinals and Bishops members of the Congregation approves unanimously the decision of the Theological Consultants.

5 July 2013: Pope Francis orders the publication of the Decree of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints declaring that the cure of Jose Ignacio Ureta Wilson is a miracle obtained through the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God Alvaro del Portillo. Afterwards, the Holy See fixes the date of the beatification to be in 27 September 2014 in Madrid.

3. Some testimonies about Bishop Alvaro del Portillo

Brief comments about Bishop Alvaro del Portillo taken from communications sent by some well-known people in the Church and society.

St. John Paul II: *He was an example of fortitude, trust in divine providence and fidelity to the See of Peter* (Telegram to the Vicar General of Opus Dei, Vatican City, March 23, 1994).

Pope Francis: *He was a zealous priest who was able to combine an intense spiritual life founded on a faithful adhesion to the rock which is Christ, with a generous apostolic effort which turned him into a pilgrim throughout the five continents, following in the footsteps of St. Josemaría, and worthy of the Biblical phrase found in the book of Proverbs: “Vir fidelis multum laudabitur”* (Telegram to the Prelate of Opus Dei, Rome, Vatican City, March 12, 2014).

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith: *I remember the humility and availability in any circumstance that characterized the work of Msgr. del Portillo as Consultor of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith. With his competence and experience, he offered an exceptional contribution, as I was personally able to verify* (Letter to the Vicar General of Opus Dei, Vatican City March 25, 1994).

Sister Teresa Margarita, Discalced Carmelite: *I met him on a retreat he gave for young people at the School of the Carmelites of Charity in Vigo in 1945. He impressed me right away with his distinguished demeanor, his recollected spirit and deep humility, and also his simplicity. He was both kind and welcoming, and took care of us with evident goodness* (Letter to the Prelate of Opus Dei, Sabaris, June 20, 1998).

Bishop Ramon Búa, Bishop of Calahorra y La Cañada-Logroño: *In him I found a brother and bishop of exceptional human and ecclesial standing* (Testimonial document, Logroño, January 13, 1996).

Cardinal Jozef Glemp, Archbishop of Warsaw (1981-2006) and Primate of Poland (1981-2009): *He was a man with clear principles, full of interior serenity and affection. He was kind and direct, while keeping the gravity of a man of the Church* (Testimonial statement, Warsaw, September 7, 1994).

Joaquín Navarro Vals, Spokesman for the Holy See from 1984 to 2006: *He leaves behind that indelible footprint evident in men of God who have carried out in silence an important task for the good of others* (ABC, Madrid, March 25, 1994).

Ombretta Fumagalli Carulli, Deputy in the Italian Parliament: *I have always admired the dignity and moderation with which he reacted in the face of the polemics against Opus Dei artificially promoted in secular environments and also, at times, unfortunately in Catholic circles as well* (Romana, X, 1994, p. 55).

Cardinal Vicente Enrique y Tarancón, Archbishop Emeritus of Madrid: *We worked together both in the Council and in the revision of Canon Law. He was very intelligent and able, and also very good* (ABC, Madrid, March 24, 1994).

Cardinal Camillo Ruini, Pope's Vicar for the Diocese of Rome: *I will never forget Don Alvaro's kindness when he came to see me at the Vicariate. He always left behind a memory and testimony of his dedication to Christ* (Discourse at the closing of the diocesan process on the virtues of Alvaro

del Portillo, Rome, June 26, 2008).

Cardinal Joachim Meisner, Archbishop of Cologne: *A great Christian, a great priest and a model bishop, characterized by a most lively faith in the providence of God* (Romana, X, 1994, p. 53).

Bishop Luigi Conti, Nuncio in Honduras: *Bishop Alvaro del Portillo was a man in love with serving others. His life was always governed by a demanding spiritual discipline, a high sense of duty, an intense and untiring industriousness, with a complete dedication and self-giving to the cause of Christ, the Church and the Work* (Fides, Teguzigalpa, April 1, 1995).

Bishop Stanislalus Lo-Kuang, Archbishop Emeritus of Taiwan: *When he came to Taiwan, I invited him to lunch in Fujen University. Bishop Alvaro del Portillo was very sincere, very humble, extremely transparent and simple. There wasn't a trace of arrogance or affectation in him. He had great apostolic zeal. He understood our difficulties and showed an immense charity. I truly esteem his friendship deeply* (Testimonial statement, Taipei, March, 1999).

Alejandro Llano, writer and journalist: *He was the living synthesis of two cultures: the humanistic and the technical. He was a great intellectual and university figure* (La Vanguardia, Barcelona, March 24, 1994).

Cardinal Angel Saquía, Archbishop of Madrid from 1983 to 1994: *He was a deeply good man, affectionate in his conversation, very prudent and very cheerful. I don't remember ever having left him without more joy than when going to speak with him* (ABC, Madrid, March 24, 1994).

Vittorio Messori, writer and journalist: *You felt more like going to confession with him than interviewing him. You could see that he had been an engineer, specializing in roads and bridges. Behind the clothing of a bishop, a man who knew the world very well showed through* (Corriere della Sera, Milan, March 24, 1994).

Cardinal Antonio María Rouco, Archbishop of Santiago de Compostela (now Cardinal Archbishop of Madrid): *He played a key role in making lay people aware that all are called to be children of God: a beautiful lesson, an urgent task, which our brother lived and tried to foster in the Church through Opus Dei* (El Correo Gallego, Santiago de Compostela, March 27, 1994).

Mother Maria de Jesus Velarde, foundress of the Daughters of Holy Mary of the Sacred Heart of Jesus: *Alvaro del Portillo is in my opinion the holiest person I have ever met in the 88 years of my long life. This is both a declaration and a song of thanksgiving to God, for the immense gift of having been able to know him, to be advised, as well as loved and much helped by him* (Personal testimony, Madrid, November 24, 2014).

Cardinal Carlo Caffarra, Archbishop of Bologna: *My meeting with Msgr. del Portillo was edifying for my priesthood from two points of view: firstly his fidelity and loyalty to the Holy Father, to the Pope; and secondly his deep humility* (Interview with Manuel de Tefé, Bologna, May 13, 2013).

Maria Concepcion Barros Carou, nurse: *Bishop Alvaro was an example of unity of life. He gave a supernatural meaning to sickness. He lived habitually in the presence of God. He encouraged other sick people to offer all their sufferings to God* (Personal testimony, March 14, 2014).

4. Some Social and Educational Projects started with the encouragement of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo

During his years as head of Opus Dei, Bishop Alvaro del Portillo fostered the setting up of many social and educational projects all over the world, many of them for the benefit of the very needy. He followed these projects closely, and made specific suggestions to help their work be more effective. Below is a brief description of some of these projects.

Monkole Medical Center (Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo)

Monkole Medical Center was set up in Kinshasa following a trip by Bishop Alvaro del Portillo to Congo in 1989. During his stay, he suggested that it would be a good idea if some members of Opus Dei started working on a medical center in response to a request made by Cardinal Laurent Monsengwo, then President of the Bishops' Conference of Congo. Monkole currently offers both medical assistance (in the areas of gynecology and obstetrics, surgery, internal medicine and pediatrics) and hospitalization services, as well as providing classes in basic hygiene and health, particularly concerning prevention of diseases such as HIV/AIDS, sickle cell anemia, malaria and tuberculosis. Three medical clinics connected to the hospital – Eliba, Moluka and Kimbondo – offer medical care in poor neighborhoods. Also affiliated with Monkole are a nursing school (ISSI), which graduates 50 new nurses every year, and a training center for doctors (CEFA). Monkole and its affiliated institutions now have over 50,000 medical consultations each year. (www.monkole.cd)

Pontifical University of the Holy Cross (Rome, Italy)

The Pontifical University of the Holy Cross is a university-level center for ecclesiastical studies serving the whole Church. This project had been desired by the founder of Opus Dei and was launched by Bishop Alvaro del Portillo. It currently has four faculties (Philosophy, Theology, Canon Law and Institutional Communications) and a Higher Institute of Religious Sciences. Some 6,000 graduates have now benefitted from its programs. Academic activities started in 1984 under the title of the Roman Academic Center of the Holy Cross, the forerunner of the present university, which was established as a pontifical institution by John Paul II on July 15, 1998. Many bishops from all over the world send priests and seminarians from their dioceses to receive academic instruction and spiritual formation at this university. Following the express wishes of Bishop del Portillo, the academic activities at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross are open to scholars and students from all fields working on questions concerning scientific, philosophical, economic and social issues, with a view to encouraging an open dialogue between the faith and the world. (www.pusc.it)

Utz Samaj Agricultural School (Tecpán Chimaltenango, Guatemala)

A few months after the terrible earthquake that devastated Guatemala in February 1976, the Foundation for Integral Development (FUDI) was set up with the encouragement of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo to take on the job of rebuilding Sajcavillá, a village inhabited mainly by indigenous people in the district of Sacatepéquez. In the early nineties, FUDI promoted the creation of Utz Samaj, a community development project in Tecpan in the district of Chimaltenango, another predominantly indigenous area in the western highlands of Guatemala. The goal of Utz Samaj is to give farm workers technical, business and human training. Its Agricultural Training School turns out graduates with an entrepreneurial mindset who have gone on to set up small farms and businesses based on their expertise in agriculture, greenhouse management, and marketing, inspired by a vigorous work ethic. Over 50,000 families in the area now benefit from the training programs offered by Utz Samaj. Their main source of revenue is farm work. (www.serviciosuniversitarios.org)

Bidasoa International Ecclesiastical College (Pamplona, Spain)

Bidasoa International Ecclesiastical College is an international seminary run by the Prelature of Opus Dei. It was established by the Holy See in 1988 at the request of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo and is located in Pamplona (Spain). The students who attend this seminary are sent by their bishops to be trained for the priesthood to serve in their respective dioceses. In Bidasoa's first 23 years of operations, it has seen 512 of its seminarians ordained priests, coming from 160 different dioceses in 29 countries. Currently Bidasoa has 93 seminarians, from 46 different dioceses and 16 countries. Their philosophy and theology courses are given by the Faculty of Theology at the University of Navarra. (www.ceibidasoa.org)

Lamatepec School (San Salvador, El Salvador)

Lamatepec opened its doors in 1981. Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo followed its launching and the first years of its life very closely because of the civil war raging in El Salvador at the time. Some words of encouragement from Alvaro del Portillo during a meeting in Rome with one of the couples sitting on Lamatepec's board of directors helped to keep the promoters of this project going through the tough years when they were trying to get it off the ground: "If you help look after the children of others, God will look after your own children." Lamatepec currently has 700 students. Twenty-four graduating classes have gone through the school, many of whom now work in social service projects in San Salvador. In addition, the school also runs 15 social programs for people in need. (www.lamatepec.edu.sv)

Pedreira Educational and Professional Center (São Paulo, Brazil)

Pedreira Educational and Professional Center (CEAP) began in 1985 as a result of an ideal shared by a group of professionals and students who wanted to set up a social project in São Paulo that would contribute to social development in a needy area in the city. They decided to start a school in the Pedreira district (located 30 km from the downtown), which had some of the worst social conditions in the city, with high rates of delinquency, violence and drug use among young people. Currently, CEAP serves 580 students each year. In addition, it offers basic courses in vocational education in electricity and computing for students aged 10 to 14, as well as professional training courses in computer networks, business administration and telecommunications for students aged between 15 and 17. The center also offers members of the local community preparatory courses to bring future students up to admission-level requirements for its programs, along with medical care, which benefits approximately 7,000 people per year. Over 6,000 students have graduated from the Center. (www.pedreira.org)

Kinal Technical Training Center (Guatemala City, Guatemala)

Kinal Technical Training Center was founded in 1961, but it was only in 1985, due to the special encouragement of Alvaro del Portillo, that it began construction of its new facilities. Kinal gives economically-disadvantaged youth the opportunity to obtain a high school diploma along with high-level technical training, opening up the prospect of a better professional future. It also offers refresher courses and training for adults, mainly in the technical field. 1,200 young people between the ages of 12 and 19 are currently studying in Kinal, plus another 800 adults. Over the past 15 years, the school has on average graduated more than 200 students per year. (www.kinal.org.gt)

Monterrey Children's City (Guadalupe, Nuevo Leon, Mexico)

The Children's City was founded in 1951 by Father Carlos Alvarez Ortiz, who ran it until 1984. Initially it was an orphanage that gave shelter to 50 children, but in 1986 it became a Family Education Development Center. In 1987, Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo encouraged a group of faithful of the Prelature to take responsibility for the moral and spiritual formation offered at the institution. Today, the operations of the Children's City, which has now graduated over 2,600 students, include a boys' school, a girls' school, a family education center, a church and the Centennial Medical Clinic. The school presently caters to a total of 905 families through family education courses and has 1,330 students from kindergarten through grade 12. It provides 22,000 monthly breakfasts, devotes 16,500 hours annually to one-on-one tutoring, conducts 7,000 medical consultations every year in the clinic, and promotes four annual cancer-prevention campaigns.
(www.ciudadelosninos.edu.mx)

Seat of Wisdom International Ecclesiastical College (Rome, Italy)

The Seat of Wisdom International Ecclesiastical College is a seminary erected by the Holy See on January 9, 1991 which welcomes candidates for the priesthood from all across the globe. The project was initiated by Bishop del Portillo in response to a request from St. John Paul II. Since its inception, more than 400 of its seminarians have been ordained priests. Students are sent by their bishops from all over the world, and once they have completed their ecclesiastical studies they return to their dioceses. Currently the College has 90 seminarians from 31 different countries. Bishop del Portillo encouraged the governing board to foster an environment of trust and freedom, order and fraternity, along with an atmosphere of serious study and strong piety.
(www.sedessapientiae.it)

A. C. Educate (Ixtapaluca Valle de Chalco, Mexico state, Mexico)

In 1983 in Jaltepec, Mexico, Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo told a group of professionals and businessmen that there was a need for a major social service project in Mexico City. Six people took on responsibility for this project, and in 1991 started a school for boys and another one for girls in one of the poorest areas in the outskirts of Mexico City. The project attempts to address one of the country's most pressing social needs: high-quality education in low-income areas. Both schools offer programs at the pre-school, elementary, middle and high-school levels. Technical assistance and training is also provided to a large number of people. The schools currently serve 690 parents and 1600 students. (www.educar.org.mx)

Uruguayan Association of Agricultural Family Schools

At the end of the 70's, a group of people working in the agricultural sector saw a need for training programs aimed at helping farm workers and their families. This led in 1970 to the foundation of the Uruguayan Association of Agricultural Family Schools (AUEFA), which opened its first center in the town of Juanico in 1980. In 1987, one of the directors of the AUEFA met with Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo in Rome, who reminded him of the importance for Uruguayan society of the work being done by their association, whose aim is to help farm workers improve their living conditions and those of their family. Currently, the first center to be opened has moved into a permanent facility and in addition to its professional development courses is providing basic education to 70 high school students. In March 1999, a second academic institution was set up, which today is providing training to over 50 students. In its 32 years of operation, AUEFA has helped 485 farm workers to improve their career prospects.

Center for Industrial Technology and Enterprise (San Jose, Cebu, Philippines)

When Alvaro del Portillo visited the island of Cebu in 1987 he suggested the setting up of a project to help people who had few or no financial resources. Once he got back to Rome, to his place of residence, he asked two specialists in Italian organizations of international cooperation to study the possibility of helping to start a school in Cebu. Three years later, in 1990, the Centre for Industrial Technology and Enterprise (CITE) started. Its mission was to offer technical and administrative

training, as well as formation in values and basic services, to young people and families with financial and social difficulties, so as to have a positive influence in the local community of Visayas and Mindanao. Currently CITE offers courses in mechanics, electricity and electronics. About 3,000 people have graduated to date, it has obtained international quality certificates and is recognized by the Philippine government as one of the best technical schools in the country (<http://cite.edu.ph>).

Developmental Advocacy for Women Volunteerism (Metro Manila, Philippines)

The *Developmental Advocacy for Women Volunteerism* (DAWV) is an educational programme which started in 1989 in order to develop the social conscience of those with financial resources and encourage them to help those in need not just with material means but also with education and advice. It works with volunteers (homemakers, doctors, business women, social leaders, students) who receive formation on topics such as the roots of poverty, the principles of social justice and the Social Teaching of the Church, and organize courses, such as the promotion of volunteer work and the programme for rehabilitation. Through a network of 1,500 young volunteers, the foundation helps about 50,000 people in different areas of Metro Manila.

5. Projects in Africa promoted by Harambee with the occasion of the beatification of Alvaro del Portillo

Harambee (www.harambee-africa.org) is a solidarity project that promotes initiatives for development in Africa and awareness-raising activities about that continent in the rest of the world. One of its goals is to bring about a deeper knowledge of the noble qualities of African culture and the future possibilities of that great continent. In connection with the beatification of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo, Harambee in 2014 is seeking funds for projects in four institutions that came into being through the impetus of the new blessed.

A mother and child care wing at the *Niger Hospital and Diagnostic Centre*. (Nigeria)

The Niger Foundation Hospital and Diagnostic Centre (NFH) opened in 1990, and offers quality health care to the people in Enugu, Nigeria. At present the hospital provides the following services: medical consultation, diagnostic and therapeutic services, radiology, and laboratory analysis. (www.nfh.org.ng)

Medical care in Nigeria, marked by a high birth rate, is very unreliable. Among the greatest problems are the lack of infrastructure and well-trained medical teams. Surgical interventions are especially risky. Each year more than seven million patients suffer major complications after being operated on.

The project will directly benefit the 200,000 inhabitants of Ezeagu, a rural area where the hospital is located. It is also accessible to the people living in Enugu, a large city with more than a million people. 3,922 prenatal visits took place in the Niger Hospital in 2013. With the creation of the new mother and child care facility, it will be possible to triple the number of people helped. This project will require 500,000 euros (about \$675,000).

To help eradicate malnutrition in the Bingerville area (Ivory Coast)

In 1984, the Association for Social and Cultural Development (*Association pour le Développement Social et Culturel -ADESC*) was set up in Abidjan, to help improve living conditions for the inhabitants of the Bingerville region. Since then, thanks to the opening in 1998 of the Ilomba Rural Center, campaigns against infant malnutrition have been organized, along with hygiene and nutrition courses for mothers. Literacy courses and other educational activities have also been organized to discourage children from dropping out of school. (www.Ilombacotedivoireblogspot.it)

In recent years, Ivory Coast has experienced varying degrees of instability with an accompanying deterioration in living conditions, particularly in rural areas such as Bingerville. But the 2002 civil war created a still more serious crisis since it caused the loss of coffee and cocoa export capability, the pillar of Ivory Coast's economy. With a tropical, humid climate and a lack of infrastructure, the Bingerville region's living conditions have gotten progressively worse. The project seeks to begin a widespread campaign against malnutrition by giving hygiene and nutrition training courses for women; and, upon purchasing a vehicle for this purpose, by performing home health visits for medical care to approximately 5,000 people. It also seeks to help end the poverty cycle and improve the living conditions of women in extreme poverty through vocational training that prepares them to be self-supporting and contribute to the local economy. Finally it will provide secondary school courses to 25 young people.

The direct beneficiaries will be 5,500 Bingerville residents, especially young women. It will also benefit the families of 14,000 people in the area. The projects will require an expenditure of

100,000 euros (about \$135,000).

Strengthening three health clinics in the outskirts of Kinshasa: Eliba, Kimbondo and Moluka (Democratic Republic of Congo)

In 1991, the *Centre Congolais de Culture de Formation et Développement* began the Monkole Hospital in Kinshasa, in the region of Mont-Ngafula. Currently the hospital, in conjunction with ISSI (*Institut Supérieur en Sciences Infirmières*), provides care to over 80,000 patients each year, of whom 48,000 are women, 70% living in conditions of extreme poverty.

www.monkole.cd / www.issisfax.rns.tn

The city of Kinshasa has 10 million inhabitants, most of whom are poorly nourished and depend on subsistence farming for their livelihoods, in a country where 74% of the population is malnourished and 80% live in extreme poverty. This precarious state of general health has given rise to the need for medical services that the public health system is not able to meet due to a lack of resources, infrastructures and adequately trained personnel. The Monkole Hospital and the ISSI nursing school have tried to respond to this emergency by offering at the central hospital four general medical services: maternity, pediatrics, internal medicine and general surgery. Three clinics have also been opened in outlying areas not easy to reach (in Eliba, Kimbondo and Moluka), along with training programs for medical and paramedical personnel.

These projects will require an expenditure of 500,000 euros (\$675,000). The beneficiaries include 10,000 children a year to be seen in the three clinics, 2,000 pre and post-natal consultations each year, and 35,000 patients receive medical assistance each year. There will also be 200 new nurses, specialized courses for 75 nurses, and 150 scholarships for student nurses.

Scholarships for African priests to study in Rome

The Pontifical University of the Holy Cross was born in Rome from the desire of St. Josemaría to begin a center of higher education for ecclesiastical studies at the service of the whole Church. In 1984, his successor Alvaro del Portillo, with the blessing of St. John Paul II, made St. Josemaría's dream a reality by inaugurating the Roman Academic Center, which in 1998 became a Pontifical University. The Pontifical University of the Holy Cross is currently made up of the Schools of Theology, Canon Law, Philosophy and Institutional Social Communications, along with the Apollinaris Institute of Religious Sciences. Many bishops from all over the world send priests and seminarians from their dioceses to study in Rome, so that they might receive there a deep theological and spiritual formation.

With a scholarship of 13,500 euros per year, a student can cover tuition, books, room and board, and health insurance. Harambee wishes to give 100,000 Euros (\$135,000) to this project. Those who will benefit are priests and seminarians from African dioceses who would not be able to pursue ecclesiastical studies due to lack of funds. The Pontifical University of the Holy Cross enables students coming from these and other geographical areas to live close to the Holy Father and grow in their understanding of the history of Christianity, in the service of the universal Church.

5. Questions to the postulator of the cause of beatification and canonization of Alvaro del Portillo

From 1997 the postulator of the cause of canonization of Alvaro del Portillo was Msgr. Flavio Capucci, who died on 7 August 2013, a few days after the approval of a miracle attributed to the intercession of the venerable Alvaro del Portillo. He was succeeded as postulator by Fr Javier Medina Bayo, author of the biography *Alvaro del Portillo, a faithful man*, who has made his own several answers given by Msgr. Capucci and answered some more himself afterwards.

1. The Holy Father approved a miracle attributed to the intercession of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo. Can you tell us what this miracle is?

The miracle is the recovery of a Chilean baby, with brain damage and other pathologies who, after suffering a cardiac arrest for over half an hour and a massive haemorrhage, not only continued living, but experienced an improvement in his general state, eventually reaching the point of being able to lead a normal life like any other child. The events took place on 2 August 2003. His parents prayed with great faith through the intercession of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo and, when the doctors thought the baby had died, in a totally unexpected way, the heart of the baby started beating again, until it reached 130 beats per minute. Perhaps the most surprising thing about this case is that, despite the gravity of clinical diagnosis, the child today, ten years later, leads an absolutely normal life.

2. Why is Bishop Alvaro de Portillo a candidate for beatification? What has he done?

His life was a constant “yes” to God’s demands. Bishop del Portillo gave himself heroically to the service of the Church and of souls, faithfully following the example of St. Josemaria Escriva. He brought many people closer to God.

To open a cause of canonization, the decisive factor is a well-established reputation for holiness, which is both spontaneous and widespread among a significant portion of the People of God. Bishop del Portillo’s cause was initiated because, right from the day of his death, there were very clear signs of this reputation. Many people all over the world were convinced that he was a saintly man and invoked his intercession with a view to obtaining favors from Heaven. The role of the “cause” is to verify that this reputation has a real basis. The decree regarding heroic virtues promulgated by the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints on 28 June 2012 tells us that the Church has indeed reached a positive judgment about his holiness of life.

In addition to his personal struggle for holiness, one should also consider the decisive push he gave to the creation of institutions for the good of others, such as for example the Monkole Hospital in Kinshasa (Congo), the Niger Foundation hospital in Enugu (Nigeria), the Campus Bio-Medico University in Rome, the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross and International Ecclesiastical College *Sedes Sapientiae*, also in Rome, where thousands of seminarians and priests receive careful doctrinal and spiritual formation.

3. What is his principal message?

Alvaro del Portillo’s teachings include doctrinal matters such as the role of lay people in the Church, the foundations of the ministerial priesthood, and unity with the Pope and the hierarchy. However, I would underline as a general characteristic of his personality, the virtue of faithfulness. He was an example of faithfulness to the Church (first as an engineer, then as a priest and finally as a bishop), of faithfulness to the Popes he knew, of faithfulness to his vocation and finally to the

founder of Opus Dei. Fidelity should be seen as a creative virtue which demands a continuous renewal both interiorly as well as exteriorly. It is not a question of simply “preserving” something, but of always drawing out new potentialities from the treasure one has received.

On his death, John Paul II wished to recall “his zealous priestly and episcopal life, the example he always gave of fortitude and of trust in divine providence and his fidelity to the See of Peter.” The then Cardinal Ratzinger recalled “his modesty and availability in every circumstance,” a characteristic of the service Alvaro del Portillo rendered for so many years in the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which, Cardinal Ratzinger went on to say, “he enriched in a singular way with his competence and experience.”

4. Of all his virtues which one would you emphasize?

Obviously, the three theological virtues: faith, hope, and love for God and others. Those who knew him, in addition to his faithfulness, emphasize other virtues which might be considered as being lesser but which nevertheless are essential for a Christian. Among these we could mention affability and gentleness, because one could not say merely that he smiled a lot: he smiled all the time. Also good-heartedness, the capacity to spread around him an atmosphere of serenity, especially in difficult moments. And one should not forget his work ethic: he had an enormous capacity to work hard, never sparing himself, and even then his smile never left him. He was very demanding with himself and also with others: he gave the maximum and asked it of others, but always in a peaceful way, sowing joy.

Nevertheless, in addition to all this, I would like to stress above all his charity. He loved God and others with his whole heart. He possessed the gift of a deep spiritual fatherhood. All those who approached him remember him as a good father who understands, who forgives, who has an unconditional confidence in others, in each person’s loyalty.

Finally, I would like to speak of his humility: he never tried to impose himself or his opinions on anyone. When he was called to succeed St. Josemaria at the head of Opus Dei, his governmental program had as its only goal continuity with the founder’s example.

5. Is devotion to Alvaro del Portillo confined to Opus Dei?

No, his reputation for holiness can truly be called a Church-wide phenomenon. Up to 2012 we had received 12,000 signed accounts of favors obtained, attributed to his intercession, very often from countries in which Opus Dei is not as yet established. Right now the number exceeds 13,300. It is an enormous number, especially considering that among those who receive favours, only a few decide to put them in writing and send them to the postulator of the cause.

The newsletter about his cause for canonization has reached five million copies in print; ten million prayer cards for private devotion have been distributed world-wide. One can truly say that Bishop del Portillo is a gift of the Church and for the Church.

6. What was Alvaro del Portillo’s role in the Second Vatican Council and in general in the Holy See?

During the Council he was secretary of the Commission *De disciplina cleri et populi christiani*, from which came the decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, and he was a “peritus” in the Commissions *De Episcopis et diocesum regimine* and *De religiosis*. Afterwards he was consultor for the Congregation of the Council, qualifier for the Supreme Congregation of the Holy Office and consultor for the Pontifical Commission for the revision of the Code of Canon Law. He was also a

judge of the Tribunal for the causes of competence for the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith and consultor for the same congregation, as well as secretary of the Commission for Secular Institutes of the Congregation for Religious and consultor for the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

Those who worked with him underline his determination to promote the rights of the laity in the Church's mission (his book *Faithful and Laity in the Church* is a classic text of theological and canonical thought on the topic) and the beauty and importance of priestly holiness.

7. Does Bishop Alvaro del Portillo have anything to say to non-Catholics?

The nucleus of Opus Dei's message, preached insistently by St. Josemaría, is the sanctification of work and one's ordinary duties. Bishop Alvaro incarnated this teaching of St. Josemaría in an exemplary manner. He worked unceasingly throughout his whole life: first as an engineer, then as a priest and in his latter years as a bishop, always giving a deep meaning to his work, through which he sought the glory of God and the good of his neighbor. I think that precisely by seeing and living his work as the "hinge" for attaining holiness, he offers us a teaching of universal scope, valid not only for Catholics but for all men and women who want to give a transcendent and spiritual meaning to earthly realities.

8. Could you give us some data on the process which ended with the declaration of his heroic virtues? Who have been the witnesses?

In accordance with the relevant Church norms, I can make known data that is of a public nature.

There were two parallel processes. One of these was carried out before the tribunal of the Opus Dei Prelature, since the Prelate was recognized as being the competent bishop in this cause. Nevertheless, as his own name figured in the list of witnesses, he considered it preferable that he not to be interviewed by his own tribunal, but rather by an external one, so as to more scrupulously guarantee neutrality in the whole process. Consequently, he asked the Cardinal Vicar of Rome to entrust to the tribunal of the Vicariate of Rome the whole task of interrogating the principal co-workers of Bishop del Portillo in the government of Opus Dei. These included himself, as well as several ecclesiastics residing in Rome. In addition, given the great number of witnesses who live far from Rome, eight other processes were held in Madrid, Pamplona, Fatima-Leiria, Montreal, Washington D.C., Warsaw, Quito and Sydney.

In total 133 witnesses were interviewed (all *in visu*, except for two who gave accounts of two miracles attributed to the Servant of God). Among these were 19 cardinals and 12 bishops or archbishops. 62 of the witnesses belong to the Prelature; 71 do not belong to it.

9. You told us earlier that more than 13,300 accounts of favours obtained through the intercession of Bishop del Portillo have reached your desk. Can you tell us if there is a "speciality," some type of favour or grace that many people ask Alvaro del Portillo for? Are there any favours which have especially struck you?

Those who have received favours through the intercession of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo tell us in their letters of graces of all kinds, both material and spiritual. Clearly the most striking are the extraordinary cures, of which there are several: from the disappearance of melanomas with metastasis after praying to Alvaro del Portillo, to the full recovery of a child who had drowned in a swimming pool.

But thinking of what you ask – his "speciality" – I would highlight the many graces that the

venerable Servant of God has obtained in favour of the family: married couples who are reconciled and live together again in harmony; the ability to have children, sometimes after waiting for many years before going to his intercession; reconciliations between estranged relatives; giving birth to healthy children after being told that the baby would be born sick or malformed. Bishop Alvaro was a family person, who carried out a wide and deep catechesis on the family. It is perhaps because of this that the desire to go to his intercession for these kinds of matters arises spontaneously. Personally I am moved in a particular way by the favours granted to children – there are many of those.

10. What do you think of the coincidence of the announcement of the canonization of John Paul II and the approval of the miracle that paves the way for the beatification of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo?

For me it was a great joy. St. John Paul II and the venerable Alvaro del Portillo met during the Second Vatican Council and, since then, were united by a deep closeness and a great filial trust on the part of the Prelate of Opus Dei for the Pope.

They were two shepherds in love with the Church. Bishop Alvaro del Portillo had great admiration for the generosity and self-giving of the Pope, and did all he could to follow faithfully all the evangelisation initiatives put forward by St. John Paul II. It was perhaps for that reason that the then Pope encouraged several other pastors to seek the spiritual help of the Prelate of Opus Dei.

This affection of the Pope was shown in a special way when Bishop del Portillo died. Pope John Paul II wanted to go to the residence of the Prelate of Opus Dei to pray before the mortal remains of Bishop Alvaro. In my opinion, what shone in both of them was their humility, their love for the Church and all souls, their devotion to Our Lady, and their sense of paternity, among other things. There was a great spiritual harmony between them.

7. Miraculous cure of Jose Ignacio Ureta Wilson

The Holy See has approved as miraculous the recovery of the child Jose Ignacio Ureta Wilson after a cardiac arrest lasting more than 30 minutes which took place on August 2, 2003.

Jose Ignacio was born on July 10, 2003, in Santiago de Chile severely unwell. His condition included a “tetralogy of Fallot” (a combination of four cardiac defects which brings about the mixture of deoxygenated blood with oxygenated blood) and an omphalocele (a protrusion of the abdominal contents through the abdominal wall).

Two days after his birth he underwent surgery for the omphalocele. During the operation he suffered his first cardiac arrest. Between July 19 and July 25 he had three episodes of severe hypoxia (low levels of oxygen in the blood): one, on July 19, due to atelectasis (collapse of a segment of lung) in the whole left lung; and two on July 25, due to atelectasis in the right lung. These events had grave consequences in the region of his brain: a diagnostic sonography of July 28 shows hypoxic-ischaemic lesions in the brain (that is, damage to brain tissue due to insufficient supply of oxygen). Shortly after, the position worsened, and during the night of July 29 to 30, Jose Ignacio had a seizure.

Due to the likely poor prognosis, the medical team decided to carry out a palliative heart operation termed a “Blalock-Taussig shunt,” which took place on July 30.

On August 2, at around 1p.m., his condition deteriorated and he developed acute cardiac failure. At 2p.m. a similar episode occurred and Jose Ignacio was diagnosed with a massive cardiac tamponade. So much blood had accumulated around the heart that it was unable to pump blood around the body and he suffered a further cardiac arrest at 3.30 p.m.

Jose Ignacio received 30-45 minutes of intensive resuscitation (during which time his heart was not beating) including cardiac massage, pericardiocentesis (insertion of a needle into the lining around the heart to evacuate the blood in the pericardium), and multiple blood transfusions. The situation continued to worsen and over 140 ml of blood was evacuated from the pericardium (greater than the estimated total blood volume for a baby of his size).

After 30-45 minutes of futile efforts, the medical team – as is usually done in these cases – slowed down the manual ventilation and cardiac massage, as they thought the baby had died. At that moment, without any additional treatment and in a totally unexpected way, the baby’s heart started beating again, soon reaching a rate of 130 beats per minute.

After such a prolonged cardiac arrest, the patient’s brain, already affected by severe hypoxic damage in the first days of his life, would have experienced even more cerebral damage, much more serious than suggested by the ultrasound scan of July 28. However, this did not happen.

The condition of José Ignacio kept improving in the days following these events, and on September 3, 2003 he was discharged. Today, ten years later, he leads a totally normal life.

José Ignacio’s parents had prayed for their son through the intercession of the Servant of God Bishop Alvaro del Portillo already from before his birth, as it had been a difficult pregnancy. For some time, his mother had a prayer card of Bishop Alvaro on her womb. Afterwards she also put a prayer card on the cot of the child, and asked her friends to entrust the health of Jose Ignacio to the intercession of Bishop del Portillo.

On August 2, during the prolonged cardiac arrest, the parents asked with great faith for the healing of their child, reciting the prayer of Bishop Alvaro incessantly. Referring to that time, the mother of José Ignacio has said: “I guess that while they revived him and I prayed, that was exactly the moment he improved. I would say that there was a link. ... I never stopped thinking that it could be a miracle.”

In 2007, husband and wife travelled on pilgrimage to the tomb of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo in Rome, to give thanks for the favour received.

As the healing appeared to be an extraordinary event, the Cardinal Archbishop of Santiago de Chile, according to the indications foreseen for these cases, opened an Inquiry *Super Miraculo* on July 22, 2008, and appointed a diocesan tribunal for the investigation. On January 15, 2010 the Congregation for the Causes of Saints approved the validity of the acts of the diocesan inquiry.

On October 18, 2012, the medical Council of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints examined the case. The doctors described two different aspects of the healing under study: the absence of neurological damage in relation to the cardiac arrest, taking into account the repeated hypoxic brain damage in the first days of life of the child; and the very fact of the survival of the baby. The experts of the Congregation declared both facts to be inexplicable from the scientific point of view.

Subsequently, the case was submitted for examination to a committee of theological consultants who, at a meeting on December 15, 2012, declared that the link between the miraculous healing of José Ignacio and the prayers through the intercession of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo was proven beyond reasonable doubt.

Finally, the Cardinals and Bishops who are members of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, at the regular meeting of June 4, 2013, in conformity with the conclusions reached by the Council of medical doctors and the special Congress of theological consultants of the Congregation, resolved that it was solidly proven that the case should be considered a miracle.

The Holy Father Pope Francis, after having received from Cardinal Angelo Amato, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, a report of everything described above, declared on July 5, 2013, that there is sufficient proof that a miracle has been worked by God through the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God Alvaro del Portillo.

8. Programme for the beatification

The ceremony of the beatification of the Venerable Alvaro del Portillo will take place on September 27, 2014, at Valdebevas (Madrid). The next day Bishop Javier Echevarria, Prelate of Opus Dei, will celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving.

Saturday September 27

8 a.m.: Access to the Valdebevas site opens.

10 a.m.: Beginning of programme of welcome on screens.

12 noon: Holy Mass of the Beatification; principal celebrant: Cardinal Angelo Amato, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

Sunday September 28

8 a.m.: Access to the Valdebevas site opens.

10 a.m.: Beginning of programme of welcome on screens.

12 noon: Holy Mass of thanksgiving; principal celebrant: Bishop Javier Echevarría, Bishop Prelate of Opus Dei.

Then in Rome, the city where the body of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo is buried and where he lived from 1946 until his death in 1994, the following ceremonies will take place:

Monday September 29

6 p.m.: Blessed Álvaro del Portillo's body is transferred to St. Eugene's Basilica.

Tuesday September 30

11 a.m.: Holy Mass of thanksgiving in the Basilica of St. John Lateran; principal celebrant: Cardinal Agostino Vallini, Vicar General of his Holiness for the diocese of Rome.

4:30 p.m.: Holy Mass of thanksgiving in the Basilica of St. Mary Major; principal celebrant: Cardinal Santos Abril y Castelló, Archbishop of the Basilica.

Wednesday October 1

10:30 a.m.: General audience with Pope Francis in St. Peter's Square.

Thursday October 2

6 p.m.: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction in St. Eugene's Basilica. Blessing with the relic of Blessed Álvaro and transferring of his body back to the prelatial church of Our Lady of Peace.

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