

# Saint José María Escrivá of Balaguer

∞ 1902-1975 ∞

*Saint José María Escrivá* of Balaguer, founder of Opus Dei, had a great trust in his Guardian Angel. It is interesting to note that Opus Dei was founded exactly on October 2, 1928, the feast day of the Guardian Angel.

Concerning the protection of his Guardian Angel, it is said that one time, while walking down the street, the Saint was attacked by a stranger in plain daylight. He was grabbed around the neck and risked being killed, if it were not for the interference of a young stranger who caused the attacker to immediately release him. Saint José María attributes the violence to the devil and his rescue to the protection of his Guardian Angel.

to the priesthood. In 1918 he entered the Seminary of Logroño, and in 1920 he transferred to the Seminary of Saint Francis of Paul in Zaragoza. In 1923 he started studying Law at the University of Zaragoza and on March 28, 1925 he was ordained a priest.

In the spring of 1927 he moved to Madrid, where he dedicated himself to the poor and sick, especially the incurable and dying patients in the hospital. He became chaplain of the “Patron of the Sick”, a charitable



His familiarity with his Guardian Angel was so great that whenever he made an entrance, he let his Guardian Angel go first. Similarly, when he greeted someone, he first greeted the person's Guardian Angel. He recalls that one time, he broke his watch and asked his Guardian Angel to wake him up at a specified time. The Angel faithfully woke him up at the requested time. For this reason, sometimes the Saint called his Angel in confidence “my little alarm clock”. Saint José María had the habit of dedicating every Tuesday to his Guardian Angel and all Guardian Angels. He writes in his book *The Way*: “Have faith in your Guardian Angel. Treat him like an intimate friend and he will repay you in thousands of services in your ordinary daily doings.”

Saint José María Escrivá was born in Barbastro, Spain on January 9, 1902. Around 15-16 years old he began to feel the calling

initiative of the *Apostolic Dames of the Sacred Heart*, and docent of an academic university. On October 2, 1928 the Lord showed him Opus Dei. On February 14, 1930 he started the apostolate of Opus Dei with the women. In 1934 he was named Rector of the Patron of Saint Elizabeth.

On February 14, 1943 he founded the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross, inseparably united to Opus Dei, which allows the ordination of lay people as members of Opus Dei and their incardination to the service of the work. Subsequently, also the priests incardinated in the diocese could share the spirituality of Opus Dei, still resting on the dependence of their respective diocesan order.

In 1946 he moved to Rome, where he remained for the rest of his life. He died on June 26, 1975. Pope John Paul II beatified him on May 17, 1992 and on October 6, 2002 canonized him a Saint.