

## THE REAL OPUS DEI

Peggy Kelleher

I read with interest the coverage Opus Dei receives in the media. It always surprises me why media and other people find it difficult to understand Opus Dei.

### First contact

I'm a Cork housewife, living in a semidetached in Bishopstown. I became interested in Opus Dei through a cousin of mine some 17 years ago. I started attending meetings on up-to-date Church teaching, organized by women of Opus Dei. I soon began to realize that I could be a good Catholic and love God by trying to be a good wife, a good mother and housekeeper, a good neighbour, etc.

I have deepened in my faith and in the meaning of life itself through prayer and the study of Scripture; my friends and I are now working our way through the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. For many years I have attended weekend retreats directed by Opus Dei, in Gougane Barra, West Cork. I find them informative, challenging and encouraging.

### Backed up by friends

This ongoing discovery of how God loves us and how we can and ought to respond to that love, has given my life a whole new meaning.

I've made some really good friends too. They have been a real support to me in the ups and downs of life. My husband died suddenly, 16 years ago. That was a very sad period for me and my two sons; and then, the years of loneliness, and the difficulties of making ends meet. Along with my relatives, the friends I made through Opus Dei, and the spiritual life they had helped me build up, were my mainstay during those years. I am deeply grateful to them, and to Opus Dei, and all it stands for.

That's the Opus Dei my friends and I live here in Cork. It's the only Opus Dei. The other so-called 'secretive, mysterious organization' is a creation of some people's imagination. Certainly, like all other loyal Catholics, I stand up for truth and integrity, for high moral standards and for Church teaching, to the best of my ability. Apart from that, the only agenda Opus Dei has is hard work, prayer, the grace of God and good humour. If media and other people would accept these simple truths, I think they'd find Opus Dei a simple straightforward organization and a very attractive one at that.

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*This article first appeared as a letter in the Cork Examiner, 23 January 1995.*