

Ecumenism and apostolate »ad fidem« in the teaching of saint Josefmaria Escrivá

Ernst Burkhart

Abstract

Recent studies of the teaching of St. Josemaria Escrivá scarcely touch upon ecumenical concerns. This apparent »ecumenical aloofness« can be attributed to the mission of Opus Dei which is broader than that of rebuilding Christian unity: its aim is to proclaim sanctification of ordinary life, thus aspiring to put Christ at the top of all human activities.

Besides the prayer of the members of Opus Dei and the participation of some of its specialized theologians in the various fields of interfaith dialogue, there is no corporate contribution of Opus Dei to the Church's official ecumenical efforts. There is, instead, the personal apostolate of the faithful of Opus Dei in their family and professional environments. Given religious ignorance and indifference, this apostolate often consists in leading people to the Faith (ad fidem) in the case of the non-baptized, and to the fullness of the Faith (ad plenitudinem fidei) in the case of those distant from the Catholic Church.

The apostolate ad fidem, which was very dear to the Founder of Opus Dei, is based on God's universal salvific will as well as the evangelizing mission of the Church which respects freedom of conscience. It relies on the conviction that moral righteousness is the way God's grace leads people to the Redeemer. Personal conversions resulting from this apostolate thus fall in line with the ecumenical efforts of the Church.