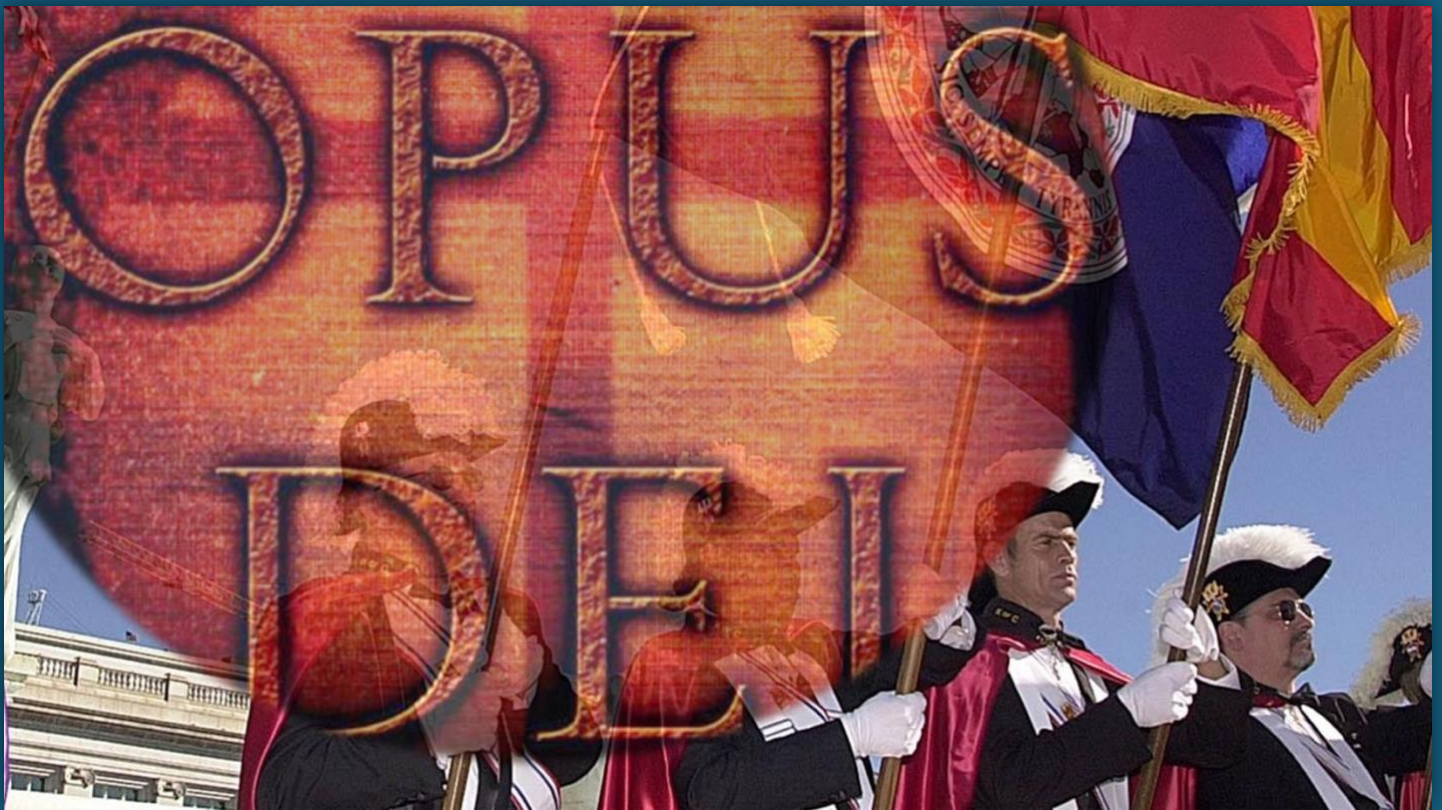


# Opus Dei

and the

# Knights of Columbus

*Anatomy of a Takeover*



Randy Engel

Opus Dei  
and the  
Knights of Columbus  
*Anatomy of a Takeover*

New Engel Publishing  
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Export, PA 15632  
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## FOREWORD

On January 11, 2016, I had the privilege of publishing (on my blog, at akaCatholic.com) an interview that I had conducted with celebrated journalist and writer Randy Engel.

By way of introduction, I began the interview by sharing with readers the following:

“In recent months, I’ve had the sincere pleasure of speaking with Randy Engel – one of the nation’s top investigative reporters and, as many readers of this space know, the author of *The Rite of Sodomy – Homosexuality and the Roman Catholic Church*.”

Over the years, visitors to the akaCatholic blog have been edified, educated, and entertained by Randy’s articles, masterworks of journalism each, numbering in the dozens.

Most recently, in March-April 2024, I had the great honor and privilege of publishing a nine-part series by Randy Engel on the Opus Dei takeover of the Knights of Columbus, the same presented here, in its entirety, in book form. The culmination of years of experience, tireless effort, and diligent research, this exposé shines the light of truth on some of the darkest and most powerful forces operating within the conciliar church today, surreptitiously providing fuel for its anti-Catholic, globalist agenda.

Please consider sharing this book with other faithful Catholics, in particular the well-meaning rank-and-file members of the Knights of Columbus, men who are uniquely positioned to help alter the course of this once faithful organization.

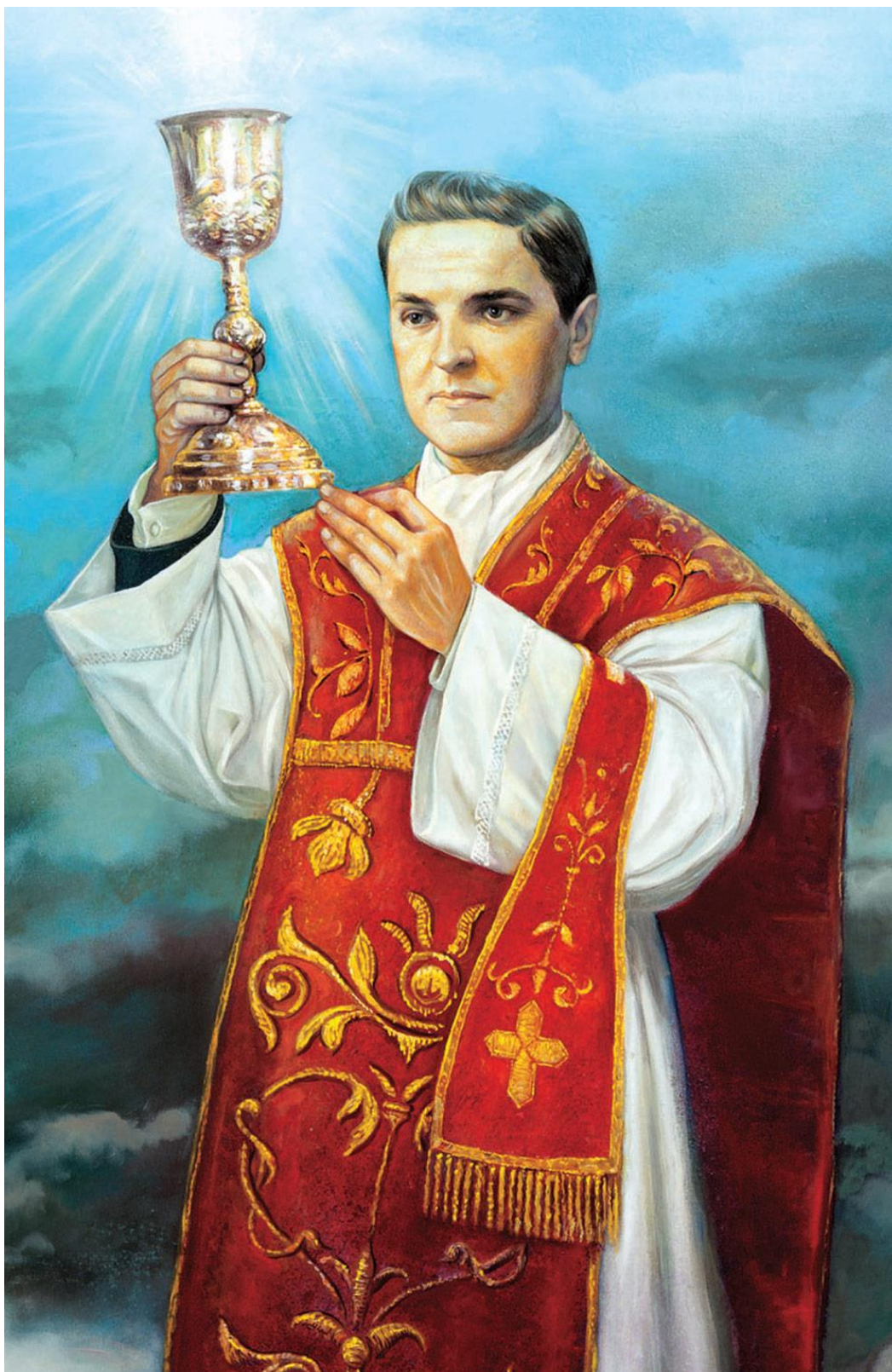
Although I no longer recall exactly what circumstances led to my initial contact with Randy Engel – most likely having something to do with an article that one of us had written for publication on the Renew America website at that time - I can tell you this:

What began in the latter part of 2015 was more than just a collaboration between likeminded Catholic writers (with Randy being a veritable giant in the field), but also a genuine loving friendship, one that has been a great blessing for me ever since.

Randy Engel is not only a tenacious researcher, a fearless reporter, and a bona fide pioneer in the prolife movement, she is first and foremost a deeply committed and faithful Catholic who loves the Lord and His Church without reserve. I will forever be grateful to Almighty God, that in His goodness, He arranged for our paths to cross.

- Louie Verrecchio





*On March 29, 1882, while an assistant pastor at Saint Mary's Church in New Haven, CT, Fr. Michael McGivney founded the Knights of Columbus as a mutual aid society to provide financial assistance to widows and orphans.*

# CHAPTER ONE

## Background on the Knights of Columbus

### Introduction

In the business world, a “takeover bid” is defined as an attempt by a competing person or entity to gain control of a company by buying up most of its stock. Militarily speaking, it is a hostile act of assuming power and control over a country, political party, movement, or corporation by deception, stealth, fraud, and if needed – force.

For the last thirty-plus years, the Knights of Columbus, one of the world’s most powerful, and wealthiest Catholic business and fraternal corporations has become a hapless target of infiltration, assimilation, and control by the international quasi-religious money/power entity known as Opus Dei.<sup>[1]</sup>

This study of the bloodless coup d’état by Opus Dei, hereafter referred to as Opus (since it is not of God), against the Knights of Columbus is based on public records and documents, news articles, and IRS 990 returns of the Knights and other key organizations involved in the organization.

The study is by no means a *definitive* work because much of the needed financial data and minutes of board meetings, etc., can only be obtained by legal proceedings, including the pre-trial litigation process of “discovery,” and the testimony of the Supreme Knights, past and present, taken under oath, as well as those of the Knights’ other national officers, board of directors, advisors, and consultants. Financial records would also have to be subpoenaed from banks and other financial institutions.

This study is further complicated by the fact that lay membership of Opus, specifically the names of its numeraries, supernumeraries, and cooperators (with the exceptions of select public Opus figures) is kept secret both in practice and by statute.<sup>[2]</sup>

However, while Opus’ capture of the Knights of Columbus and its assets is well advanced, it is not yet a done deal.

This exposé is written with two objectives in mind:

First, it is intended to provide the reader with a step-by-step description of how Opus goes about infiltrating and colonizing very wealthy and influential organizations and media outlets, relieving them of millions of dollars of their business and charitable

donations, which are then systematically funneled into the coffers of Opus “apostolates” to further the ambitions and programs of “The Work.”

Second, it is written with the hope that the long-suffering, hard-working rank and file members of the Knights, who represent the salt-of-the earth and who constitute the basic unit of the Knights, will discover within themselves the will and the means to resist both the internal and the external forces of Opus upon their fraternity, including the top leadership members of the corporation who have become, willingly or unwillingly, shills and water-boys for the powerful Prelature.

One of the Knights’ mottos is “We are men who get things done.” I hope that will be the case at this critical juncture of the history of the Knights of Columbus.

### **Key Background Notes on the Knights of Columbus**

Although most adult Catholics around the world know of the existence of the Knights, many have little working knowledge of its history and universal charitable and business operations. Far fewer Catholics have any knowledge of the entity known as Opus Dei or “The Work.”

For these reasons, before documenting the specifics of Opus’ capture of the Knights of Columbus, the early part of this exposé is dedicated to bringing up to speed both members and non-members of these two key organizations.

We begin with the Knights of Columbus, followed by important information on Opus.

The well-known Catholic fraternity and insurance corporation known as the Knights of Columbus, a tax-exempt 501(c)(8) “Fraternal Benefit Society,”<sup>[3]</sup> was founded in 1882 by Father Michael J. McGivney, the Irish American pastor of St. Mary’s parish in New Haven, Conn.<sup>[4]</sup> The Order is consecrated to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

As Catholics were (and are) forbidden by the Church from joining Freemasonry lodges and other secret societies and were often barred from labor unions and existing social services, Father McGivney (now Venerable Servant of God)<sup>[5]</sup> wanted to ensure the welfare of widows and orphans following the death or incapacity of the family’s breadwinner by establishing a fraternal mutual benefit society. He named his organization the Knights of Columbus in honor of the great Italian Catholic navigator and explorer, Christopher Columbus. The Order is dedicated to the four-fold principles of Charity, Unity, Fraternity, and Patriotism.



The Order swiftly spread throughout New England, then throughout the entire United States. Today are somewhere between 14,000 and 16,000 councils of the Knights of Columbus, depending on the source, and they can be found in the far-flung corners of the world including U.S. territories, Canada, the Philippines, Mexico, Poland, the Dominican Republic, Panama, the Bahamas, Cuba, Guatemala, South Korea, Ukraine, Lithuania, and on many U.S. military bases.

The governing structure of the world's largest Catholic family fraternal service corporation organization – a Fortune 1,000 company with nearly 2 million members – is relatively simple.

The ruling Supreme Council is made up of 21 members, seven of whom are elected every three years, and headed by a Supreme Knight, who acts as Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board.

Rank and file members fill the State and local Councils of the 50 States and Canadian provinces led by District Deputies, Grand Knights, and other elected officials. Assemblies, 3,109 in number, are distinct from Councils, and are led by a separate set of elected officers.

New members progress from the First Degree to the Second and Third Degree, with the Fourth Degree (Sir Knight) being the highest. The Fourth Degree Assembly's Color Corps is the most coveted and honorable arm of the Order.

While Charity is the foremost principle of the Knights of Columbus, the corporation currently has \$119 billion of life insurance in force as of 2022.<sup>[6]</sup> This income makes the Order's charities possible. In 2022 the Knights donated \$154 million to charity.<sup>[7]</sup>

## **Opus Targets the Knights of Columbus**

From this brief summary – taken from official but not necessarily accurate membership and financial data found in the Knights' own publications – it is easy to see why the Order would most certainly be a prime target for Opus infiltration and colonization.

It is not as easy, however, to determine when that effort began in earnest.

The history of the 13-year administration of Boston educator, John McDevitt, the Order's 11<sup>th</sup> Supreme Knight from 1964 to 1977, gives little or no clues that the corporation was a specific target of Opus at this time, although it may have been on the Prelature's drawing board for future acquisition.

McDevitt was a prominent and active advocate of social justice. He opposed racial discrimination, including any such discrimination in the ranks of the Knights, which leads me to believe that he would not have looked kindly on Opus' system of "numenary assistants/auxiliaries," aka, indentured servants.<sup>[8]</sup>

McDevitt had a good business sense. Under his administration, the Knights experienced a period of dramatic financial and membership growth. The Knights' income is derived mainly from dues, revenues from councils, assemblies, and chapters, life insurance policies, and interest gained from investments.



*Supreme Knight John W. McDevitt with President John F. Kennedy*

He was an advocate of improved social communications both in the Order and at the Vatican, one area of interest that he did share with the Prelature. Not unexpectedly, in keeping with the early euphoria surrounding the Second Vatican Council, at the Supreme Council meetings of 1965 and 1966, McDevitt instructed his fellow Knights to cooperate with the Conciliar Church's call for "renewal" and "reform." This ill-conceived advice, as we shall see, contributed heavily to the destruction of the faith within the

Knights' structure and would open the Knights' leadership and administration to an eventual takeover by malignant secular and liberal anti-Catholic forces.

In 1971, Supreme Knight McDevitt was honored by Pope Paul VI with the beautiful Grand Cross of the Order of Pope Pius IX (Pian Order), the highest degree of knighthood that can be bestowed on a Catholic layman who is not a head of state. In 1998, a scholarship fund was created in his name.

Time and money prevented this writer from tracking down the salary and commissions of McDevitt and other Knight officials received, but it is doubtful that they ran anywhere near the millions of dollars (not including cash bonuses, stock bonuses, profit sharing, retirement bonuses and other perks) as was the case under McDevitt's successor, Virgil C. Dechant, who was a horse of a completely different color – a color that would find great favor with Opus Dei.

## The Long Legacy of Virgil C. Dechant

For more than 23 years, the Kansas-born farmer and car businessman, Virgil C. Dechant, served as the 12<sup>th</sup> Supreme Knight (1977-2000) – the longest term ever for a Supreme Knight.

Dechant's long term of office was, coincidentally, comparable to the 27 years papacy of Pope John Paul II, the essential promoter and protector of Opus."<sup>[9]</sup>

Indeed, the intimate relationship of John Paul II to both Opus and to the Knights of Columbus is of such a symbiotic nature that it would be impossible to discuss one without critically referencing the other two.

Virgil Dechant joined the ranks of the local council Kansas Knights in 1948 at the age of 18. From there, he gradually worked his way up to numerous State and National offices including Assistant Supreme Secretary, Supreme Master 4<sup>th</sup> degree in 1963, and Supreme Secretary from 1967 to 1977, at which point he reached the pinnacle of his career as Supreme Knight and CEO of the Knights of Columbus. His long reign signaled a major paradigm shift in money, power, and prestige in the Knights.



*Supreme Knight Virgil C. Dechant with John Paul II*

Along with the title of Supreme Knight came more than a dozen honorary degrees, awards and honors including:

- Board of Director of the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, D.C.
- Trustee of Catholic University of American, Washington, D.C.
- Board of Director of the Pontifical College Josephinum, Columbus, Ohio
- Member of the Pontifical Council for the Family (1982 – )
- Member of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications ( 1990 – )
- Former Vice President of the Vatican Bank (IOR)
- A Gentiluomo di Sua Santità (a Gentleman of His Holiness)
- Councillor on the State Council for Vatican City



- Knight Grand Cross of the Order of Pius IX
- Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St. Gregory the Great
- Knight of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher

In Virgil Dechant's biography, *The Fraternalist*<sup>101</sup> (2017) written by his son, John Dechant, the Supreme Knight Emeritus recalls his private audiences, meetings, and personal ties to Pope Paul VI, Pope John Paul I, Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI, along with other world figures including U.S. Presidents Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, and a long list of U.S. Apostolic Delegates and top members of the Vatican Curia.

His was an era of major paradigm shifts of money, power, and influence at the Knights' monumental 23-story, four tower, international corporate headquarters at 1 Columbus Circle, New Haven, Conn., which serves as home to the Supreme Council.

In 1981, three years after Pope John Paul II took office, Dechant played a key role in the establishment of the Knights' Vicarius Christi Foundation which provides millions of dollars in discretionary funds for the pope's personal charities. Dechant assured the Knights that the money would solidify the bond between the papacy and the Knights "in perpetuity." Of that we can be certain.

The initial base allotment of \$10 million to the Vicarius Christi Foundation, the earnings on which are gifted to the pope, was increased to \$20 million in 1988. Every year since its founding, the fund has dispensed between \$1.5 million and \$2 million in unaccountable funds to the Holy Father.

In "Papal Memories," which appeared in the Knights' official magazine, *Columbia*, in March 2011, Dechant recollects:

At the 100<sup>th</sup> Supreme Convention [in Hartford, Conn., in 1982], I was able to arrange a private lunch between President Reagan, Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal [Agostino] Casaroli, Archbishop Pio Laghi, Apostolic Delegate to the United States, Mr. William Wilson, who was the president's representative to the Vatican, and one or two others. They met in my suite, but I was not present. At that meeting, they discussed the future ambassadorial relationship between the United States and the Vatican. Within the year, both countries accepted each other. Archbishop Laghi became a nuncio and Mr. Wilson became the first ambassador from the United States to the Holy See. ...

The last time I saw the Holy Father was during an audience following a concert. He saw me down the line and grinned. Bishop, now Cardinal, Donald Wuerl later joked, “After you, he forgot about all the rest of us...” We related, communicated. The point is it really got down to trust. The Holy Father trusted us. He was comfortable knowing we wouldn’t pull any surprises. It goes back to our presence in Rome and our *modus operandi*: We just let them know that we were there for service, and when they wanted us, they knew where to find us. ...

One of the warmest short audiences [one of more than 70 different visits] I had with Pope John Paul II was in September as he was recuperating at Castel Gandolfo. My wife, and Count Galeazzi and I went over to see the Holy Father. He still looked very much underweight, but he had a warm smile on his face, and you could see that he was on his way to recovery. ...

The funeral in 2005 was one of the few times I served in my capacity as a Gentleman of His Holiness. I decided I would join the Vatican staff and help usher in the visiting dignitaries and pay my respects in that way. Almost every head of state in the world was there. ... He (Pope John Paul II) captured the world.

Pretty heady stuff.

Although Dechant formally retired as Supreme Knight in 2000 with a “golden parachute” bonus of \$2,164,805 (this was in addition to his annual salary and insurance sales commissions estimated to have been well over the \$500,000 range), he remained a lifetime Supreme Director of the Knights with compensation of \$27,000 a year until his death in 2020.

### **Dechant’s Opus Dei Connections**

When and under what circumstances Dechant was introduced to Opus Dei in Rome we do not know. Msgr. Josemaría Escrivá, the founder of Opus Dei, established his headquarters, the Villa Tevere, in the plush Parioli district of Rome, in 1946.

Dechant became Supreme Knight in 1977. So, while Dechant may have known about Opus by the late 1970s, any real meaningful relationship with the organization would most likely have occurred in the early 1980s under Pope John Paul II, and most certainly by 1984 when Opus numerary and super intelligence collector for Opus, Dr. Joaquín Navarro-Valls, took over as Director of the Holy See’s Press Office.

It is also important for the reader to remember that it was Dechant who, in 1987, hired the two key personages of Opus’ takeover of the Knights, Russell Shaw and

Carl Anderson, to head the Knights Public Relations and lobbying office in Washington, D. C. We also know that when the Pontifical Academy for Life was founded in 1994 under the leadership of the well-known Opus-connected Professor Jerome Lejeune of Paris, Supreme Knight Dechant joined with Opus to fund and control the Academy.<sup>[11]</sup>

So, there had to be some degree of collaboration between the Knights and Opus by the early 1990s. What we don't know with absolute certainty, however, is the degree to which Dechant understood Opus' obsessive lust for money and power and its capacity to financially and otherwise exploit powerful organizations like the Knights for its own ends.

## The Dark Side of the Dechant Era

On February 22, 2020, Supreme Knight Carl Anderson delivered a eulogy for former Supreme Knight Virgil Dechant titled "A Man Who Was True,"<sup>[12]</sup> at the Church of the Nativity in Leawood, Kansas. His tribute recalled all of the accomplishments, both great and small, of his predecessor. And there were many.

However, there was also a dark side to the Dechant legacy, a dangerous detour in the future life of the Knights of Columbus, which Anderson obviously was not eager to discuss at the funeral, but which we will cover as part of our background material on the Knights in Chapter Two of this exposé.

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<sup>[11]</sup> For readers who are unacquainted with the various operations of Opus Dei, the following resources will provide valuable basic criticisms of its public and internal policies and programs; Opus Dei WATCH – contact author at [rvte61@comcast.net](mailto:rvte61@comcast.net); [ODAN Opus Dei Awareness Network](#) – “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” John 8:32; and [Opus Dei: a ROAD to nowhere? \(opuslibros.org\)](#). For a financial and corporate assessment of Opus Dei's business and political practices see Robert Hutchison's *Their Kingdom Come: Inside the Secret World of Opus Dei* (1999).

<sup>[12]</sup> See Articles 189 – 195 of Opus Dei's 1950 Constitutions at [ODAN – ODAN Opus Dei Awareness Network](#).

<sup>[13]</sup> As a 501 (c) (8) fraternal benefit society, the Knights are allowed to engage in limited direct political activities without jeopardizing their tax exempt status.

<sup>[14]</sup> For a generally favorable and uncritical history of the Order see Christopher J. Kauffman's *Faith and Fraternalism – The History of the Knights of Columbus* (1882-1982).

<sup>[15]</sup> The cause of sainthood for Father McGivney was opened in 1997, and he was declared a Venerable Servant of God by Pope Benedict XVI in March 2008 in recognition of his life of heroic virtue. One Vatican-approved miracle through his intercession is needed for beatification, and another miracle is needed for canonization.

<sup>[16]</sup> [2022 Annual Report of the Supreme Knight | KofC.org](#). Insurance in force is a calculation of the total amount of money owed to policy holders.

<sup>[17]</sup> Ibid.

<sup>[18]</sup> Numerary assistants are unmarried, female members of Opus Dei. The numerary assistants do not have conventional jobs outside of the centers, instead, their professional life is dedicated to looking after the domestic needs of the centers. Numerary assistants are required to be celibate, and they generally practice mortification. See [Opus Dei commission investigates alleged exploitation of women workers | Crux \(cruxnow.com\)](#). Even though the article is written by a *Crux* unidentified member of Opus, it will provide the reader with a good understanding of this form of indentured servitude.

<sup>[19]</sup> [Apostolic constitution “Ut sit” – Opus Dei](#).

<sup>[100]</sup> [The Fraternalist: The Remarkable Life of Virgil C. Dechant, The 12th Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus: John Dechant: 9780984295432: Amazon.com: Books](#).

<sup>[111]</sup> Robert Hutchison, *Their Kingdom Come-Inside the Secret World of Opus Dei*, Doubleday, London, 1997, p. 397.

<sup>[121]</sup> [Virgil Dechant Remembered | KofC.org](#).



## CHAPTER TWO

### The Dark Side of Virgil Dechant's Legacy

#### Introduction

Under Virgil Dechant's leadership, the Knights of Columbus – that is, its local members – continued to raise millions of dollars in charitable funds for worthwhile projects, including refugee relief programs, especially in the Middle East; assistance to victims of natural disasters in the U.S. and abroad; the restoration of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome and other Vatican antiquities; support for prolife emergency pregnancy services, and financial assistance to special needs groups.

These efforts, made possible thanks to funds raised by local rank-and-file Knights, are not in dispute. They are fully acknowledged by this writer with the attached caveat included in the end notes.<sup>11</sup>

What *is* in dispute are the financial and moral misadventures of Supreme Knight, Virgil C. Dechant, along with members of the Knights of Columbus ruling Supreme Council, which paved the way for further misadventures under Dechant's Opus Dei successor, Carl Anderson.

Following is just a sampling of the Knights' deadly ill-advised grants, programs and policies that took place under the Dechant administration, including the sexual abuse cases of minor boys by Knights that occurred during Dechant's rule, but which were later ruthlessly litigated under the Anderson administration.

Its purpose is to provide further background on the Knights of Columbus *prior* to the take-over of the corporation by Opus, and to document the growth of the ever-widening chasm that exists between the worldview of rank-and-file member Knights and that of the National Officers who make up the ruling and spending class of the Knights of Columbus corporate structure.

#### Dechant Refuses to Oust Pro-Abort Knights

One of the long-standing, and on-going, controversies surrounding the Knights of Columbus has been the refusal of the Supreme Council to dismiss from its ranks well-known, self-proclaimed "Catholic" politicians, whose public record includes a consistent anti-life and/or pro-sodomy legislative history.

On Wednesday, November 1, 1989, for example, leaders of the Pro-life Movement challenged Supreme Knight Dechant to end the scandal by ousting ten well-known pro-abortion “Catholic/Knights” including New York Governor Mario Cuomo, Massachusetts Senator Edward Kennedy, and a long list of Democrat Congressmen.<sup>[2]</sup>

A spokesman from the Knights’ national headquarters in New Haven, CT disputed the claim stating that membership in the Knights only requires that a candidate be “male, adult and a practicing Catholic,” and only the pope and bishops can decide who is, or is not, a “practicing Catholic.”

Presumably, then, a prominent self-proclaimed “Catholic” can be a radical racist, an anti-Semite, or even a convicted child-molester and still retain his membership in the Knights.

In 2005, the retired Virgil Dechant – who was still on the Knights’ payroll as Supreme Knight Emeritus – told Knight Kenneth Fisher, Founder of Concerned Roman Catholics of America, that the Knights would “NEVER” expel anti-life politicians.

Now, here we are in 2024, eighteen years later, under two successive Supreme Knight administrations, and despite grassroots protests by hundreds of pro-life Knights, Dechant’s prediction still holds for the Order.

### **The Hill & Knowlton Scandal**

In 1990, the Knights Supreme Council decided to commit between \$3 and \$5 million to a plan designed by the American bishops to “reshape the abortion debate.” The idea was the brainchild of Cardinal John O’Connor of New York who convinced the Administrative Board of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops/U.S. Catholic Conference (NCCB/USCC), the bilateral bureaucratic arm of the American bishops, to hire a prestigious public relations firm, and a sophisticated polling group, to counter “pro-choice” propaganda and to get the “pro-life message” out.

Never mind that, every Sunday, Catholic priests around the world have a relatively attentive captive audience of pew sitters to whom they can directly deliver a short and simple “pro-life message” – ABORTION KILLS AN UNBORN CHILD – STOP IT NOW!

Further, why pour millions of Knights’ dollars into an anti-life money pit, when the NCCB/USCCB was already throwing away millions on its own “pro-life bureaus,” including the National Committee for a Human Life Amendment (1974-2024) and the Bishops’ Committee of Pro-life Activities?

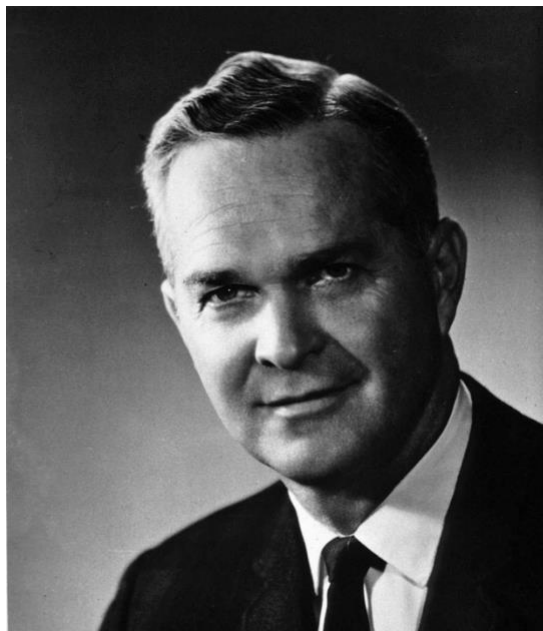
As it happens, the firms of Hill & Knowlton and the Wirthlin Group were chosen to share the Knights' millions – the former agency being hired to develop a campaign to challenge the rhetoric of Planned Parenthood (aka, Murder, Inc.), and the latter, which runs “focus groups,” to conduct polling on what Americans think of abortion, and to discover what “stirs or angers people.”

On August 12 and 13, 1980, more than 200 Roman Catholic bishops met in San Francisco at a secret conclave, closed to Catholic laity and members of the press, to view the final products created by Hill & Knowlton with funding provided by the Knights of Columbus.<sup>[3]</sup>

One can hardly appreciate the grotesque absurdity of giving Hill & Knowlton a bloody cent, much less millions of Catholic dollars, without acknowledging the long list of the firm's anti-life, anti-family clients including Upjohn Pharmaceuticals, Playboy Enterprises, and Time Warner.

### **Knights Invest in Upjohn's Abortifacient Development**

Upjohn Pharmaceutical's history in the development of abortifacient drugs goes back to 1969, when the company received a 4-year National Institute of Health contract for \$200,587, to develop an abortion prostaglandin-based drug that could effectively kill early and late term unborn children.



*Dr. Robert Q. Marston, National Institute of Health,  
September 1, 1968 - January 21, 1973*

First in a series of lethal applications created in Upjohn laboratories was the abortifacient drug, Prostin F2alpha, the clinical testing of which was conducted in the U.S. and around the world. Later, Upjohn developed Prostin E2 vaginal suppositories for early abortions, and Meteneprost suppositories, designed for early, self-administered abortions. Upjohn also developed the dangerous injectable long-term contraceptive/abortifacient Depo-Provera.

By the early 1980s, Upjohn was on the boycott list of every pro-life group including Pharmacists for Life International and the U.S. Coalition for Life (USCL). The USCL had a 6" stack of Upjohn abortion-related documents sitting on its desk, which were made available to prolife leaders throughout the U.S. and around the world.



You can image the shock among pro-lifers when they discovered in 1993, that the Knights had not only funded anti-life Hill & Knowlton “to produce a prolife message,” but that Knights of Columbus management had invested upwards of \$5 million of its policyholders’ insurance premiums in the “Merchants of Death,” aka, the Upjohn Pharmaceutical firm.<sup>[4]</sup>

How did Knights’ executives respond when news of their Upjohn investments surfaced? No apologies. They simply stonewalled. So much for the avowed “champions of ethical investing.”

Their public relations spokesman, Opus supernumerary, Russell Shaw, argued that the insurance investments misappropriated to anti-life groups represented only a small percentage of the National office’s total investment program. Dechant, also misspoke, revealing that the Pope John XXIII Medical-Moral Research and Education Center (later renamed the National Catholic Bioethics Center)<sup>[5]</sup> – an Opus consultant agency to the American bishops and the Knights Supreme Council – had not voiced any objections to the Upjohn investments. Nor had the salaried Medical Director of the Supreme Council objected.

We will be returning to the Opus entities of Russell Shaw and the National Catholic Bioethics Center later in this exposé.

### **Hill and Knowlton and the Pornography Industry**

Another of Hill & Knowlton’s infamous clients were Playboy and Time Warner, both notorious producers and promoters of pornography.

For decades, local and state councils have been leaders in the war against pornography. And to its credit, the Supreme Council since 2010 has backed them up with more than \$250,000 in grants to Morality in Media (renamed the National Center on Sexual Exploitation).

Morality in Media, created in 1962, has effectively drawn public attention to the connection of pornography to the destruction of married and family life, sex trafficking, prostitution, violence against women, child sexual abuse, and organized crime.

In late June 1986, under the Reagan Administration, the Meese Commission Pornography Report helped put teeth into anti-porn laws and litigation. Immediately, the multi-billion-dollar pornography industry hired none other than Hill & Knowlton to discredit the findings of Meese Commission. Christie Hefner, daughter of Playboy Enterprises founder Hugh Hefner, gave credit to Hill & Knowlton for countering the Commission Report. Playboy Enterprises was also a regular client of the ad agency.

## The Columbian Squires and the Sex Abuse of Minors

The Columbian Squires is the official junior organization of the Knights of Columbus and directly subordinated to it. The idea of organizing a new youth order of the Knights came up in August 1922 at the annual Supreme Council meeting in Atlantic City. At about the same time, Christian Brother Barnabas McDonald, F.S.C., was also contemplating a similar proposal for an international fraternity for boys ages 10 to 18.

The proposed venture was adopted by the Knights at a Supreme Council meeting in Montreal in August 1923. Two years later, Brother McDonald founded the first Squires circle, Duluth Circle 1 in Duluth, MN, which was officially recognized in ceremonies held at the Knights annual convention that year.

As envisioned by McDonald, “The supreme purpose of the Columbian Squires is character building.” Ideally, the program strives to provide “the spiritual, cultural, civic, social and physical improvement of its members, and the development of their leadership qualities.”



Br. Barnabas McDonald, F.S.C., circa 1920

Organized into local Circles, 1,000 of them at the organization’s peak, the Columbian Squires Circles are individually sponsored and supervised by a Knights of Columbus Council or Assembly. Each has an Advisory Board of local Knights officials, and Counselors drawn from the Knights, who act as guides for the young members.

Squires, we are told, “have fun.” Their motto is *Esto Dignus*, Latin for “Be Worthy.” Unfortunately, however, not all Squires “have fun,” and not all Squire leaders are “worthy.”

Like Catholic junior seminaries in the post-World War II era, and the Boy Scouts, the Columbian Squires has become a happy hunting ground for homosexual pederasts. Equally unfortunate is the fact that while the majority of Knights are family men, when push comes to shove, Knights leaders have behaved as wickedly as any member of the hierarchy intent upon covering-up the sexual abuse of children.

There are five cases in this study – the Jim Dennany and the John Doe 1 cases, each of which were filed at the same time (December 2010 in New Haven, CT); the Steve Fagan case; the Father William Barry McGrory case, and the Justin Georges Stephen

Coulombe case involving the Canadian branch of the Columbian Squires – all concerning the sexual abuse of young Squires by lay adult Knights.

Please note that the above-mentioned cases do not include two earlier Squire sex abuse lawsuits filed against the Knights of Columbus that were discovered by Knights' attorney Kevin O'Connor when his staff was going through the archives researching the John Doe 1 Case in 2010. We know nothing about these alleged abuse cases, which also occurred under the Dechant administration. According to O'Connor, he was unable to discuss the details of these secret sex abuse cases due to confidentiality concerns (aka, possible outside settlements by the Knights).<sup>[6]</sup>

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<sup>[1]</sup> Under the Anderson administration, volunteer support is billed at a whopping \$21 per hour. The ratio of overhead to funds earmarked for these charities is not disclosed. There is substantial reason to believe that the amount that actually reaches the intended charity is substantially less after the various overhead payments are made to the Knights. It is also probable that the membership numbers of the Knights (two million) is grossly inflated given the heavy aging of the U.S. population and the massive decline in Mass attendance at Novus Ordo parishes. Despite various legal maneuvers by Knights of Columbus former-members to obtain official updated Council membership lists, Knights officials have successfully resisted any public disclosure of current membership records. In 2017, a contract lawsuit was filed in 2017 by UKnight, a Colorado-based IT firm employed by the Knights who charged that the Order “engaged in an elaborate conspiracy to artificially inflate the Knights of Columbus’ insurable membership numbers and artificially improve its ratings by insurance rating companies, thereby making people more likely to buy its life insurance.” The complaints noted that large numbers of inactive members are on their local Council’s rolls, that senior members of the Knights of Columbus ignored their questions about it, and that they had to use donations meant for charity or pay out of pocket to cover dues owed by what they began calling “phantom” members. See [The Knights Of Columbus Is Facing Allegations Of Insurance Fraud \(buzzfeednews.com\)](https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/uknight/the-knights-of-columbus-is-facing-allegations-of-insurance-fraud). In June 2018, Knight Executive Thomas P. Smith, salaried at \$900,000 a year, suddenly retired from his post as the Knights’ Chief Insurance Officer. On January 31, 2020, Anderson warned of the crisis in Church membership and its implication for Knight membership. See [In major change, Knights of Columbus drop secret initiation ceremony | Catholic News Agency](https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/101114-in-major-change-knights-of-columbus-drop-secret-initiation-ceremony). The UKnight lawsuit was settled in the fall of 2019 in favor of the computer company, but for a very low sum of \$500,000 rather than the 100 million amount for which it petitioned the court.

<sup>[2]</sup> Ann Rodgers-Melnick, “Knights of Columbus refuses call to oust 10 for pro-abortion stand,” *The Pittsburgh Press*, Nov 4, 1989, p. A12.

<sup>[3]</sup> “Public Relations Firm to Present Anti-Abortion Effort to Bishops,” *NYTimes*, August 14, 1980.

<sup>[4]</sup> Credit for the exposé goes to Tom Strobhar, who founded Pro Vita Advisors, an organization promoting prolife investments. See “Knights’ investments support abortifacient drug makers, Pill producers, and pornographers,” HLI Newsletter, April 1995.

<sup>[5]</sup> The term “bioethics,” is an academic fraud. See Dr. Dianne Irving’s excellent papers on the subject at

[http://www.lifeissues.net/writers/irv/irv\\_257falsedefinition.html](http://www.lifeissues.net/writers/irv/irv_257falsedefinition.html)  
[http://www.lifeissues.net/writers/irv/irv\\_36whatishbioethics01.html](http://www.lifeissues.net/writers/irv/irv_36whatishbioethics01.html)

[http://www.lifeissues.net/writers/irv/irv\\_02ethics1.html](http://www.lifeissues.net/writers/irv/irv_02ethics1.html)

[http://www.lifeissues.net/writers/irv/irv\\_42whichethics1.html](http://www.lifeissues.net/writers/irv/irv_42whichethics1.html)

<sup>[6]</sup> “Knights of Columbus previously sued for sex abuse,” Associated Press, December 17, 2010.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Five Cases of Sex Abuse by Knights**

#### **Jim Dennany vs. Knights of Columbus**

The Jim Dennany Sex Abuse Case Federal lawsuit, Case No.: 10-CV-1961, and the John Doe No. 1 [Hector Stone] Case No. 3:10–CV–1960 (CSH)., Plaintiffs, vs Knights of Columbus, Defendant, was filed in U.S. District Court in New Haven, CT on December 14, 2010.<sup>[111](#)</sup>

Both the forty-nine-year-old Jim Dennany and 42-year-old John Doe No. 1, later identified as Hector Stone, were young Knights Squires at the time of their sexual abuse in the 1970s and 1980s. Each case is treated separately below.

The well-known attorney Jeffrey Herman of the Miami-based law firm, Herman, Mermelstein & Horowitz, represented both the 49-year-old plaintiff, Jim Dennany, and John Doe No.1, [Hector Stone]. James S. Needham, Kevin J. O'Connor, Bracewell & Giuliani, LLP, Hartford, Conn. represented the Knights of Columbus.

The Dennany lawsuit claimed that in 1973, when Jim Dennany was 12 years old, the youth was invited to join the Brownsville Texas Squires. The plaintiff stated that both his father and grandfather were members of the Knights of Columbus, and he was excited about becoming a Squire.

Dennany came under the tutorial supervision of Juan “Julian” Rivera, the adult Knight leader of the Columbian Squires’ Circle. On a Squires’ overnight trip to Houston, TX, Dennany and Rivera stayed at the same hotel and slept in the same bed. The latter provided the plaintiff with alcohol and marijuana. Rivera also showed Dennany pornography which graduated in explicitness to include homosexual acts. Rivera pressed the plaintiff into acts of mutual masturbation. The sexual abuse continued unabated from 1973 to 1977 when Dennany was about sixteen years old.

The sexual abuse took place on locations where Squires events were held, including the local Knights of Columbus Hall, and Rivera’s office and apartment, as well as other locations in Texas and Mexico.

According to the lawsuit, Rivera made no attempt to hide his close relationships with particular young boys like Dennany. Yet, not a single Knight made any effort to investigate the situation or warn and/or protect the boy from his abuser.

Lawyers for the plaintiff charged that “the Columbian Squires had at all relevant times, knowledge of Rivera’s history of sexual perversity and inappropriate contacts with children ... and that the Knights of Columbus actively concealed information that was pertinent and necessary for Dennany to bring civil claims in this matter ... in order to protect itself from civil liability and scandal.”

“As a direct and proximate result of the Knights of Columbus acts and omissions, Dennany suffered severe and permanent physical and psychological injuries including, but not limited to, guilt, shame, embarrassment, self-blame, depression, chemical dependency, and lack of trust.” The lawsuit also stated that in 1986, another boy [Hector Stone, aka John Doe 1, who was unnamed in suit] told Knights officials he was also abused by Rivera, but that the Knights concealed the report of abuse and intimidated the victim into not making the abuse public.

The lawsuit sought more than \$5 million in damages. The plaintiff demanded a jury trial in this action on all claims so triable.

### **Hector Stone vs. Knights of Columbus**

The Hector Stone Case No. 3:10–CV–1960 (CSH); JOHN DOE NO. 1, Plaintiff, vs. KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS, Defendant, was filed at the same time as the Dennany case on December 14, 2010. Two days after the lawsuit was filed by Attorney Jeffrey Herman, the 42-year-old “John Doe,” who was undergoing treatment in Kansas, broke his anonymity at a press conference in Brownsville, TX, and revealed his true name, Hector Stone. He stated that he was currently residing at a rehabilitation center in Kansas for treatment of chemical addictions, nightmares, depression, and suicidal tendencies.

Squire Stone endured the same grooming techniques and homosexual acts that Julian Rivera inflicted upon young Dennany. On one occasion, Rivera placed a handgun by Stone’s side to make him comply with a homosexual act and warned the Squire that he must never tell anyone what was happening to him. On several occasions, to keep the boy silent and in line, Rivera told the boy he would kill his family if he reported the abuse, or that he would cut off the boy’s penis and send it to his mother in a jar. The alleged perpetrator also supplied Stone with money for clothing and for dating girls in order to deflect any suspicion that the young boy might be involved in homosexual activities.

Stone was abused by Julian Rivera for six years from ages 12 to 18.

The lawsuit also claimed that Rivera “shared” Stone with another adult leader of the Squires in another city who also sexually abused him. If true, this would indicate that a criminal pederast ring existed between certain Knights who preyed on young boys.

According to Attorney Herman, “From what my clients have shared I’m very concerned that this was not isolated. The victims would tell me that they would go to the statewide conferences, and they would be paraded around like they were the boyfriends of the leaders.”<sup>[2]</sup>

The great difference between the Dennany and the Stone cases, however, is that while Jim Dennany had kept his sexual abuse a secret for decades, Stone’s lawsuit charged that in 1986, when he (Stone) learned that Rivera was still an active Knight and leader of the Squires’ group, he took action and filed a complaint against Rivera with the Brownsville Texas Knights of Columbus.

According to Stone’s attorney, “his client contacted some of the officers of the Knights of Columbus to try and get some help and stop the sexual abuse from happenings to other boys, but he (Stone) was ‘shut down.’” No action was taken by the Knights/Squires leaders or the Dechant administration.

From this statement we know this much: As early as 1986, if not before, the Brownsville Knights leadership (and most certainly the New Haven National headquarters of the Knights and its Supreme officer, Virgil Dechant) knew that there was a sexual abuse problem existed in the Brownsville Columbian Squires that needed to be addressed immediately.

That never happened.

In fact, the Knights leadership in New Haven under the Anderson administration even denied they ever knew anything about Stone’s 1986 complaint.

According to Patrick Korten, Senior Vice President of the Knights of Columbus National office, Stone’s sexual abuse by Julian Rivera’s only became known to the National office when Stone contacted the Knights for financial help in dealing with the aftereffects of his childhood sexual abuse in December 2009, before his lawsuit was filed in December 2010.

Korten stated, “We acted immediately, removing him [Rivera] from any responsibility involving youth programs, and referring the case to Brownsville law enforcement authorities.”

Note, however, that the Knights did not expel Julian Rivera, who left the Knights on his own accord in January 2010 and was never prosecuted for his crimes.<sup>[3]</sup> Brownsville Police spokesman Eddie Garcia stated that his office had no immediate information about the case.<sup>[4]</sup> The lawsuit sought more than \$5 million in damages. The plaintiff demanded a jury trial in this action on all claims so triable.

### **Knights Commit Fraud in Stone Case?**

As noted above, it was twenty-three-years later, in December 2009, that Hector Stone again reported his years of sexual abuse by Rivera to officers of the Knights of Columbus – this time to the Anderson administration. At this time, he was contacted by the Supreme Advocate and Chief Legal Counsel of the Knights’ headquarters in New Haven.

Stone told the Knights’ lawyer that he was chemically dependent as a result of drugs he used as a prelude to having sex with Rivera, and he wanted to enter a treatment program. He asked the Knights to help pay for the treatment. The Supreme Advocate agreed.

Stone’s lawsuit states that during his conversation with the Knights’ lawyer, there was never any discussion of any other payment other than financial aid for treatment. At no time were Stone’s legal claims against the Knights’ addressed or waived. Nor was there any talk of payment from the Knights to settle that claim.

On December 23, 2009, Knights of Columbus agent John A. Mahon and his wife met with Stone and gave him \$200 to pay for travel expenses to the rehabilitation facility. The agent gave Stone the money and had him sign a receipt for the cash. A second single sheet of paper was then given to Stone to sign to acknowledge that the Knights of Columbus would pay for the treatment. Stone agreed and signed the paper. Conveniently, the Knights’ agent’s wife was a notary, and she notarized the document.

One week later, Stone received a package in the mail containing the receipt note and the single sheet he signed to which was attached an eight-page document he had never seen.

The attachment was a Settlement Agreement and a Full Release absolving the Knights of Columbus of any claims against the corporation by Hector Stone. The Knights claimed Stone, with knowledge and forethought, had waived all his legal rights in exchange for the payment of his treatment. Stone denied that he had ever signed away his legal rights to bring action against the Knights.



The Knights contend that between December 2009 and December 2010, payments for the plaintiff's treatment and other benefits were, in fact, substantial, "in excess of \$120,000."

Stone's December 14, 2010 lawsuit included a refutation of the Knights' Settlement and Release document and charged the Knights with fraud and deception. The lawsuit sought more than \$5 million in damages. The plaintiff demanded a jury trial in this action on all claims so triable.

Defense attorneys representing the Knights charged that the lawsuit failed to identify the boy who reported Rivera's predatory behavior, the names of the Knight officials who received that information, and how the organization concealed the report.

### **Abuse Cases Against Knights Moves On**

On March 15, 2011, James S. Needham and Kevin J. O'Connor, attorneys for the Knights of Columbus under the Anderson Administration, moved to have both the Dennany and the Stone Cases dismissed based on the statutes of limitation laws which establish a time period after which sexual abuse victims are prevented by law from suing.

Dennany v. Knights of Columbus, No. 3:2010cv01961, was heard by District Judge Stefan R. Underhill in New Haven on August 10, 2011.

The Knights' attorneys argued that Dennany's negligence action is barred by both Texas and Connecticut statutes of limitations. And that it is uncontested that Texas, not Connecticut, has the most significant relationship to the case as the plaintiff is a Texas resident, the abuse allegedly occurred in Texas, and the Plaintiff and defendant's relationship has been based entirely in Texas.

Attorneys Horowitz, Mermelstein, and McNamara argued for the Plaintiff that the Knights of Columbus was aware that adult supervisors of the Squires were in a position where they could sexually abuse children; they knew Rivera was a sexual predator, and that they tried to conceal that knowledge.

Regarding the statutes of limitations, the lawyers argued that the limitations period should be "tolled" (a legal doctrine that allows for pausing the "countdown" toward the deadline for legal action set forth by a statute of limitations, thus effectively extending the limitation period) because Knights fraudulently concealed its negligence, and both Texas and Connecticut recognize fraudulent concealment as a basis for tolling statutes of limitations.

After the arguments were heard, Underhill ruled that Dennany was aware of his abuse and could have filed a nearly identical complaint at any point after 1979, the date his injury occurred. He ruled that Dennany's complaint lacks the particularity required by Rule 9(b) for a claim of fraudulent concealment. The judge also found that the attorneys for the plaintiff had offered no definitive arguments that would support the overriding of the statutes of limitation. Therefore, Dennany was not entitled to a tolling of the statute of limitations.

Judge Underhill declared that the Knight of Columbus was not negligent in their responsibilities toward the plaintiff and that the organization was not aware of the alleged sexual abuse in the Squires until John Doe contacted the Knights' National office in 2009.

Underhill GRANTED the Knights' Motion to Dismiss and ordered the clerk to close the file on Dennany vs. Knights of Columbus, No. 3:2010-CV-01961(SRU). He also ruled that the Court DECLINED to permit Dennany leave to re-plead his case.

### **Judge Haight Motion to Dismiss John Doe Case Denied**

The Motion to Dismiss by the Knights of Columbus on the John Doe [Hector Stone] Case was heard on March 12, 2013, by Senior District Judge Charles S. Haight, Jr. The case, as we shall see, took a different turn than the Dennany case because Hector was approximately seven years younger than Jim Dennany.

The Plaintiff, John Doe No. 1, set forth two counts. (1) The first for KofC's alleged failure to ensure Plaintiff's safety and well-being while he was in the custody and care of the Squires, particularly, *inter alia*, by failing in its duties of "placement, retention and supervision of Rivera as adult leader, and (2) declaratory relief – a request for declaratory judgment that Plaintiff relied on the intentional, fraudulent misrepresentation of a KofC agent to execute the signatory page later attached to the document entitled 'Settlement Agreement and Full Release,' rendering the Release void in that KofC procured it 'by fraud.'"

The Defendant (Knights of Columbus) set forth three basis for dismissal: (1) Plaintiff claim for negligence is barred by the Texas two-year statute of limitations; (2) Plaintiff failed to plead the required element of "foreseeability" to maintain a negligence action, and (3) Plaintiff failed to state a claim for fraud and misrepresentation with respect to Defendant's procurement of the Release (a) Plaintiff was not justified in relying on the alleged misrepresentations of KofC's agent when Plaintiff signed the Release, and (b) Plaintiff ratified the Release as a matter of law.

The Defendant also requests “a separate trial” (Bifurcate) on each of the two counts.

### **Judge Haight Rules on Statutes of Limitations**

On the matter of statutes of limitations, Judge Haight ruled in favor of John Doe [Stone] under the more liberal statutes of Connecticut stating that while the abuse occurred in Texas, the policies, programs, and control of the Squires programs were dictated by the National office of the Knights in New Haven, Conn. The Court, therefore, applied Connecticut’s 30-year statute of limitations rather than Texas’ more restrictive law. As the Plaintiff brought his action in 2010, 24-years later, Doe was within the 30-year period prescribed by the state. Judge Haight dismissed the Knights Motion to Dismiss with respect to the statute of limitations.

Next, Judge Haight ruled on the issue of Foreseeability in Negligence, that is, the claim by the Knights of Columbus that the injuries suffered by Doe at the hands of Rivera were not foreseeable.

Again, the judge ruled in favor of John Doe stating that the Knights had a duty to protect minors in its programs and the organization did not fulfill that duty.

I am going to quote a large section of Judge Haight’s opinion, not so much because of its legal relevance, but because of the revelation of mindset of the top leadership of the Knights of Columbus on the issue of the sexual abuse of minors that the opinion provides:

After careful consideration, I find that the risk, foreseeability, and likelihood of injury to Plaintiff by Rivera were all of notable magnitude. That Rivera’s conduct—plying Plaintiff with drugs and alcohol, subjecting him to pornography, sexually abusing him, and threatening him into silence with a handgun—had no “social utility” is self-evident.

Moreover, the magnitude of KofC’s burden to guard against Plaintiff’s injury was manageable in light of the location of much of the abuse, KofC’s hall and events, and KofC’s massive size and numerous resources. Unscheduled supervisory visits by KofC officials to meetings and events and/or interviews with Squires would have sufficiently monitored Rivera’s leadership. Under such circumstances, KofC should not be allowed to profess ignorance of Rivera’s activities in the Brownsville Squires to excuse KofC’s failure to prevent abuse, especially where much of the alleged abuse occurred at KofC meetings and events. Just as a multi-national corporation cannot disclaim any and all liability for conduct committed in its outlying offices and locations, neither should an

organization of KofC's sophistication, size, and organized structure be allowed to avoid liability by claiming an inability to supervise those running its programs at satellite locations.

Finally, considering public policy factors — [as] the Squires were minors, ranging in age, by Plaintiff's account, from 10 to 18 years old, KofC had a particular duty to ensure their welfare in the program. KofC recruited the boys to assist in "developing their leadership qualities" and "supporting the Roman Catholic Church..." Furthermore, "[a] Columbian Squires unit [was required to] operate within the structure and regulations of the [KofC]." Once minor boys became members of the Squires program in Brownsville, KofC should have supervised their activities and leadership to ensure the boys' welfare and determine whether the Squires were in fact operating according to KofC regulations.

Children, as vulnerable members of society, are owed greater care than their adult counterparts, who, in contrast, possess the maturity necessary to remove themselves from harmful situations. ... Moreover, "organizations whose primary function is the care and education of children owe a higher duty to their patrons to exercise care in the selection of their employees than would other employers. ...

Based on these preliminary findings, the Knights' motion to dismiss for failure to adequately plead foreseeability in its negligence action was denied.

### **Knights' Request to Bifurcate Approved**

In reviewing the Defendant's claim that Joe Doe [Hector Stone] signed away his right to sue the Knights for his injuries when he asked and received financial aid from the organization in 2009-2010 for treatment at a rehabilitation facility, Judge Haight opined that the majority of facts pertaining to the validity of the Release, especially the testimony regarding negotiations and signing of the Release, are separate and distinct from the facts relevant to Plaintiff's negligence claim stemming from his alleged sexual abuse by Rivera.

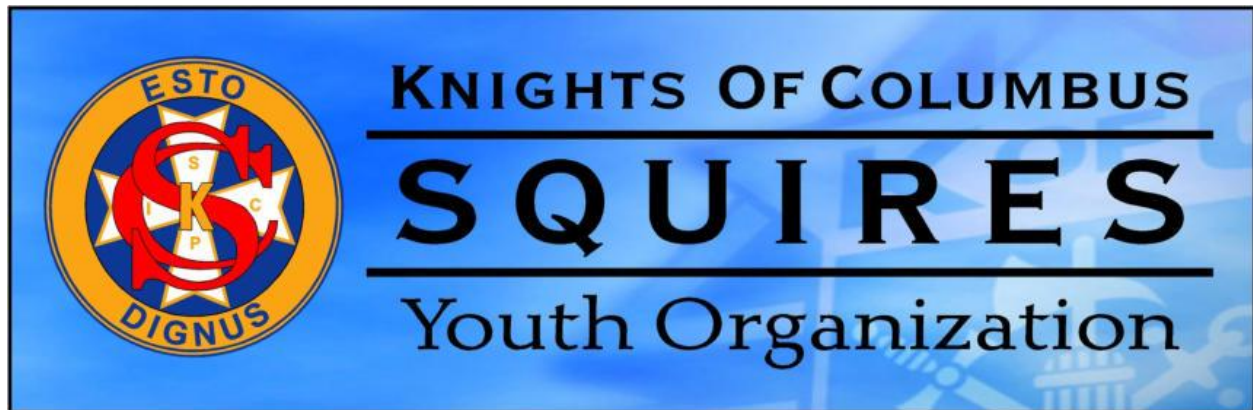
By separating the issue of the validity of the Release from the potentially emotional and graphic evidence of sexual abuse, the judge said he hoped to minimize the likelihood that the jury will be prejudiced or influenced in considering the separate issues to be adjudicated.



Thus, the Court ruled in favor of segregated trials: The validity of the Release will be addressed first, both in discovery and subsequently, if necessary, at trial. Should the Release be held invalid—that is, procured fraudulently via misrepresentations by KofC’s agent—the remaining discovery and trial on the negligence claim will follow. Should the Release be held valid, the case will be terminated.

A date of on or before March 22, 2013, was set by the Court for both parties to confer and submit their joint recommendations for updated case deadlines for discovery and trial of Count Two, regarding the validity of the Release.

Both parties were also reminded that they may wish to consider waiving a jury with respect to the bifurcated trial of Count Two, and consent to a bench trial on that issue.



### **Knight/Squire Fagan Sex Abuse Case**

In the summer of 1984, 25-year-old layman Steve Fagan, a member of the Knights of Columbus, member of Our Lady of Fatima (OLF) Squires in Ottawa, Ontario; State Chairman for the Ontario Columbian Squires; and a leader in the Provincial Board of Ontario Squires, sexually abused 14-year old Squire Todd Marinacci.<sup>[\[5\]](#)</sup>

Fagan had traveled with a group of OLF Squires from Ottawa to attend the ordination of Fr. Paul Hamilton in Kingston, Ontario. The young Squire Marinacci, who came from another corner of the province, was also in attendance at the ordination.



*Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson with Francis*

Fagan was arrested in the late fall of 2013 and confessed to his crime at that time, as he had on two prior occasions. He had already been expelled from the Knights in late 1992 or early 1993. Sentencing occurred in an Ontario courtroom on October 19, 2014.

The Crown's prosecutor sought a six-month jail term, a two-year probation, and his registration as a sex offender. Instead, Fagan received a suspended sentence and a 24-month probation. He was also ordered to register with the Offenders Information Registry. The presiding judge was told that Fagan was presently in a committed adult relationship, presumably with another male. Marinacci was present at the sentencing.

Despite efforts by SNAP (the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests) to get Supreme Knight Carl Anderson to conduct and finance an outreach program to contact other possible victims of Fagan, especially among young Squire members, Knights officials did nothing, a pattern seen in other Knight abuse cases as well.

Todd Marinacci, now in his 50s, did bring a lawsuit against the Knights of Columbus and won an out of court financial settlement, the amount of which remains secret.

It is unclear if the Fagan case was included in the two 1990s "secret" sex abuse cases found in the Knights of Columbus archives by Knights attorney Kevin O'Connor in 2010, when the Dennany and Joe Doe [Hector Stone] cases were being litigated.

### **Squire Turned Predator – The Barry McGrory Case<sup>[6]</sup>**

The extraordinary Father William Barry McGrory sex abuse saga, which took place over a forty-year period in Ottawa, Canada, is unusual in that the perpetrator of the sexual crimes was himself a former teen Columbian Squire and officer of the Unity Circle No. 55, overseen by the leaders of Ottawa Council 485, founded in 1900, as an extension of the American-based Knights of Columbus. Whether McGrory himself was a victim of early sexual abuse by an adult homosexual member of the Knight of Columbus or Squires Circle is not known, but should be considered a distinct possibility.

Please Note that almost all the references used in this segment were taken from Sylvia MacEachern's monumental work on the McGrory Case, unless noted otherwise. <sup>[7]</sup>

Father Barry McGrory was born in 1935 in Ottawa, Ontario, the capital city of Canada. He studied for the priesthood in Rome at the Thomas Aquinas University where he earned his PhD in Theology. He was ordained in 1960 for the Archdiocese of Ottawa. McGrory taught at Bishop's University, Lennoxville (Quebec), St. Paul University (Ottawa), and the Grand Seminary on Kilborn Ave. in Ottawa.

He served at various local parishes, including Holy Cross Church where he became a high-profile peace and social justice advocate, and later at St. Philip Parish in Richmond.

McGrory, a self-admitted "sex addict," suffered from an inordinate attraction to adolescent boys and girls especially the former. Retrospectively, we know that following his ordination during the late 1960s and well into the 1970s, he was sexually assaulting young vulnerable male and female victims, although his crimes were not adjudicated until the early 21 century.

While at Holy Cross Parish in the 1970s, McGrory molested two adolescent girls. In 2016, the Archdiocese of Ottawa settled out of court with the two women. One victim, Colleen Passard, who struggled relentlessly for years to expose the clerical predator, received a record-breaking \$300,000 payment from the archdiocese.

In the mid-1980s, McGrory allegedly informed his superior, Archbishop Joseph-Aurèle Plourde (January 1967 – 1989), of his criminal sexual propensities and requested treatment but, instead, the archbishop shuffled him off to a remote Toronto Catholic Mission site where, in 1991, he sexually assaulted a 17-year-old Indigenous youth. In August of 1993, McGrory was charged with the assault, for which he received a suspended sentence with a warning that if he violated the terms of his probation he would be jailed.

The petition to dismiss the priest from the clerical state was initiated later by Archbishop Terrence Thomas Prendergast, S.J. of Ottawa, and McGrory was laicized by Pope Francis in the fall of 2018.

### **Defrocked McGory Faces New Charges**

In April of 2019, Mr. Barry McGrory was brought to trial for sexually abusing two young male teens in the late 1960s [a third complainant died before the case came to trial]. McGrory pleaded not guilty.



*Admitted sexual abuser, Barry McGrory*

Complainant J.B., now age 66, testified at the trial that he was 15 years old when McGrory forced him into oral sex. The priest formed a trusting relationship with the young man's guardians who gave McGrory a key to their home, which he used to gain access to the boy's second-floor bedroom and continued to molest the boy for a year.

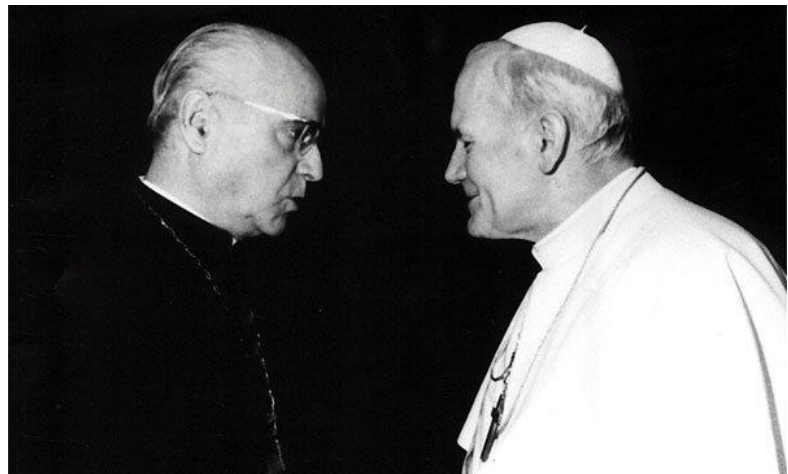
Another Complainant, R.G., was an altar boy at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, where McGrory ran a youth group (Squires?) and organized football

games. In 1969, the boy said, after his father died and his mother was diagnosed with cancer, McGrory briefly moved in to help look after the family.

On one occasion, after the priest moved to St. Philip Church, R.G and his friends visited the priest at the rectory where the boy was given a beer and became sick. He went to rest in an upstairs bedroom. McGrory gave him "aspirin" to help his migraine and later sexually molested him.

At the trial, R.G. testified that he went to inform Archbishop Plourde of his abuse. He eventually was promised that McGrory would be removed from the priesthood and was given a financial settlement which also contained a gag clause binding him to silence. He broke that silence in 2016 when abuse charges against McGrory became public.

The Crown prosecuting attorney asked the judge to impose a six-or seven-year prison sentence on McGrory, but McGrory's defense attorney argued that his client suffered with early stages of Alzheimer and was too old and frail to endure a jail term. Several former parishioners testified in favor of McGrory, stating that he was a good and holy priest.



*Archbishop Plourde with John Paul II*



Justice Michelle O'Bonsawin of the Ojibwa First Nation, the first Anishinaabe judge in Canada, didn't buy the "mercy" plea and delivered a guilty verdict on June 24, 2019. She was scheduled to deliver McGrory's sentence on November 18, 2019, but he skipped his court appearance. Judge O'Bonsawin issued an arrest warrant and Mr. McGrory was apprehended the next month in Toronto.

Mr. William Barry McGrory, former Knights of Columbus Squire, died on August 13, 2020, while being held in custody at the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre.

## **The Justin Coulombe Case**

The Justin G.S. Georges Stephen Coulombe pederasty case hit the Canadian scene in 2017, but it had been simmering for more than a decade.

Born in 1984, the young Coulombe came from a fairly well-to-do Canadian Catholic family. He was sent to the States, at age 13, to attend the elite, Episcopalian-based grades 7-12 boarding school of St. John's Northwestern Military Academy [Academies] in Delafield, WI.

At the time of his graduation, he had attained the rank of Cadet Colonel and was Commanding Officer of the Academy's Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps.

The Academy's stated mission is to foster and "strengthen character;" to promote "academic success;" to help form young men who are "physically and mentally fit," and to form leaders of the community – goals not unlike the Columbian Squires.<sup>[8]</sup>

In retrospect, however, given the fact that young Coulombe admits to engaging in homosexual acts with willing peers at the Academy soon after his enrollment, an all-male boarding school far from home, was probably not the best choice for him.

Thanks to the now defunct *Western Catholic Reporter*, which was the popular weekly diocesan newspaper for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton, the capital city of Alberta,<sup>[9]</sup> we do have some important knowledge of Coulombe's Catholicism and religious aspirations after he left Northwestern.

On September 27, 2004, *WCR* staff writer Ramon Gonzalez was sent to report on an annual vocations workshop held at Camp Oselia, a retreat center of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Edmonton, just 45 minutes west of Edmonton. It is not without a touch of irony, that Camp Oselia is most famous for its round-the-season youth programs and facilities. The workshop was co-sponsored by the Eparchy and the Archdiocese of Edmonton under the office of the Alberta Vocation Directors' Executive.

Gonzalez titled his article, “A young man’s dilemma ‘What kind of father am I called to be?’” The quote was taken from a 20-year-old attendee seeking information on the Catholic priesthood who was featured in the *WCR* interview. The young man’s name was Justin Georges Coulombe.

Coulombe told the Gonzalez that he had felt a call to the priesthood since he was seven years old but was torn between being a priest and being a family man with children of his own. He said he felt he was “meant to work with children,” but his attendance at the Camp Oselia had convinced him to become a priest. He added that he was in contact with various religious orders and might join the Spiritan Fathers because “they work with youth of all ages.”



*Justin Georges Coulombe*

Coulombe told Gonzalez he was a member of the historic St. Joachim Parish, the heart of the Francophone Catholic in the Oliver section of Edmonton, and a 4<sup>th</sup> degree member of the Knights of Columbus, which was quite an accomplishment for one so young.<sup>[10]</sup> He informed the *WCR* reporter that he was also a youth counselor for the Columbian Squires, and was busy setting up the first French Columbian Squire Circle west of Winnipeg, Manitoba. At the end of the interview, Coulombe indicated that he was still in college finishing his Bachelor’s degree, but didn’t name the institution.

Although we know that Coulombe never became a priest, one of the quirky features of his case is that, for many years, Coulombe disguised himself as a Catholic priest wearing full clerical garb, including black pants with a full-collared shirt, a red-trimmed black cassock, and black biretta with red tuft.

When he lived in Langley, B.C., Coulombe was reported to be involved with the U.S.-based Vatican in Exile, a small group located in Topeka, Kansas, headed by David Allen Bawden, aka “Pope Michael.” This writer contacted the organization and received a very polite and prompt response. According to Bawden, Coulombe approached him in 2014-2015 and claimed among other things to be a Monsignor, but Bawden discovered none of his claims were true and ended the connection. He had no information on any connections between Coulombe and the Old Catholic Church which is “inclusive” and accepts active homosexuals.

As for Coulombe's regular occupations while living in Langley, in the neighboring province of British Columbia, he worked for LandSea Camp and Catering Services, Ltd., a firm providing land-based and floating workforce accommodations for construction and mining crews.

### **Coulombe Arrested for Child Exploitation**

In 2017, six months after the 33-year-old Coulombe moved back to Edmonton, a police investigation was begun by the Internet Child Exploitation (ICE) unit of the Alberta Law Enforcement Response Team (ALERT).

The investigation was triggered by a complaint filed by the mother of one of the two teen male victims, both under 16, who notified the police when she discovered that her underage son was in a long-term sexually graphic internet relationship with Coulombe, which had led to an actual homosexual relationship with the alleged perpetrator.

The second youth also had an internet sexual relationship with Coulombe, but there was no physical contact as yet.

Coulombe was initially arrested by the ICE on Wednesday, July 27, 2017, in Edmonton. The police had a search warrant and seized multiple electrical devices all carrying underage pornography from his Edmonton home. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police also found another of Coulombe's laptops at his old house in Langley, with more child porn on it.

Coulombe was charged with eight counts including sexual interference with a child, sexual assault, the making and possession of child pornography and extortion. He was held until August 1<sup>st</sup> and then released on bail from police custody under restricted court conditions with a new bail hearing set for August 21, 2017.

But only two days later, on August 3, 2017, Coulombe was re-arrested when two more of his alleged victims filed sexual abuse complaints with the Alberta police. Five more counts were added to the original charges including sexual interference and sexual touching, bringing the total number of counts to thirteen.

When he appeared briefly in court on August 8<sup>th</sup> with no lawyer, the judge insisted on his obtaining legal counsel. The Crown then moved to revoke his previous bail ruling and to prevent any future bail attempts.

## **Campaigner for “Pederast” Rights**

Part of the Alberta police’s investigation included an inquiry into his social media accounts in which he advertised himself as a “virtuous pedophile,” and promoted “pedophile’s rights.” Despite the fact that his pro-child-molestation diatribes were reported and suspended multiple times, the Alberta police representative stated they took no action because no one filed a formal complaint with their office.<sup>[11]</sup>

In 2018, Coulombe was sentenced to a seven-year prison term. Since he had been held in custody since July 2017, he was given enhanced credit for time served and is expected to be released very soon. He will be placed on the sex offender registry for life and has a lifetime ban on using the internet and any association with youth under the age of 16.

## **Archdiocese and Knights Take No Action**

It is significant that the Edmonton Archdiocese claimed that although Coulombe posed as a priest, he was never ordained for the archdiocese or any diocese in Canada and the United States and that he had no connection whatsoever with the Catholic Church. This was not true since as a young man Coulombe played an active role in the Knights of Columbus and the Squires – a relationship which, once again, was exposed and documented by Canadian investigator Sylvia MacEachern, not by the Archdiocese of Edmonton or the Canadian Knights of Columbus or the U.S. Knights of Columbus leadership.

For the record, in none of the cases documented above did the Knights leadership do a follow-up investigation by issuing a letter of query to past Canadian Squire members urging anyone who might have been sexually assaulted by Coulombe in the early 2000s to come forward.

## **Knights Abandon Squires Program**

The reader will note that on January 1, 2016, the leadership of the Knights of Columbus officially announced that it was discouraging the formation of any new Squire Circles in the U.S. and Canada on the alleged grounds that youth activities should be moved from exclusive clubs into local parish youth groups. The Knights’ PDF file on the guide to Squires Circle Guide had already been removed on May 23, 2013.<sup>[12]</sup>

For the record, the Knights have consistently sided with Church lawyers and the USCCB in opposition to extending the statute of limitation in sex abuse cases involving minors. In a 2006 *Columbia* magazine article titled “Stand up for the Church,” efforts to extend the statute of limitations on sexual abuse cases are criticized and condemned. These measures are said “to prolong the sexual abuse crisis, allowing allegations with



very little or no supporting evidence.” The aim of such laws is to “cripple the Church financially,” the article said.

Although the Knights of Columbus have been the target of several state and federal class-action suits,<sup>[13]</sup> the cases of the sexual abuse of minors by adult Knights, including those documented in this study, represent a completely different scenario.

Over the last forty years, despite the endless rhetoric and hype about being first and foremost a Catholic prolife institution, where have the Knights’ councils, state offices and Supreme Council and the Supreme Knight been in terms of advocating for the thousands of victims of clerical and lay sexual abuse in the Catholic Church, and of providing victims with legal, financial and moral support as they seek justice and restitution from Church and/or Civil authorities for the crimes that have ravaged them in body, mind, and soul?

The answer is nowhere!

And that, dear reader, is a tragedy of the first degree for the Knights.

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<sup>[11]</sup> [Dennany v. Knights of Columbus, No. 3:10cv1961 \(SRU\) | Case text Search + Citor.](#)

<sup>[12]</sup> [Legal troubles for Knights – Yale Daily News.](#)

<sup>[13]</sup> [Brownsville Man at Center of Catholic Sex Abuse Scandal, by Mary Avila, Valley Central, December 15, 2010 \(bishop-accountability.org\).](#)

<sup>[14]</sup> [Men allege sexual abuse at Brownsville Knights of Columbus \(mysanantonio.com\).](#)

<sup>[15]</sup> [Fagan: Steven Fagan | Sylvia’s Site \(theinquiry.ca\); Squire molester | Sylvia’s Site \(theinquiry.ca\).](#)

<sup>[16]</sup> [McGrory: Barry McGrory | Sylvia’s Site \(theinquiry.ca\).](#)

<sup>[17]</sup> Ibid.

<sup>[18]</sup> [Home – St. John’s Northwestern Academies \(sjnacademies.org\).](#)

<sup>[19]</sup> The *WCR* ceased publication on September 26, 2016.

<sup>[100]</sup> The first Knights of Columbus council in Alberta, Father Bonner Council 7599, was formed in Alberta and the Northwest Territories on January 5, 1907 in Edmonton.

<sup>[111]</sup> “Campaigner for ‘Pedophile’s Rights Caught Raping Children Disguised as a Priest,” *Exposing government*, December 23, 2017.

<sup>[112]</sup> From the Desk of Supreme Knight Carl Anderson, “Our Service to Youth,” January 1, 2016.

<sup>[113]</sup> On January 6, 1993, a group of current and former insurance agents of the Knights filed a class-action lawsuit against the Order in Los Angeles, CA. The plaintiffs claimed that the Knights, a 501(c)(8) tax-exempt not-for-profit entity had: Misused proceeds from insurance funds for charitable purposes; denied agents the benefits promised to them before they signed contracts to work for the Knights and illegally restricted agents’ rights to sell other insurance. The complaint charged that the Knights insurance premiums are vastly subsidizing the fraternal (charitable) aspect of the organization to the detriment of the insured...policyholders. In 2002, *Kippes, et al. v. Knights of Columbus et al.*; Civil Action No. 96-C-4789, District Court, Sedgwick County, Kansas, and related cases, Knights entered into a \$23 million settlement on behalf of a class of policyholders sold “vanishing premium” policies, that is, the policy holders were incorrectly advised by Knight agents that after they paid policy **premium** for a number of years, the paid **premiums would** earn enough money so that the policy holder no longer has to pay **premiums** out of pocket. In these and similar financial/corporate litigations, the Supreme Council has successfully either obtained a dismissal of the claims brought against it or settled the remaining claims on favorable terms.



*Numeraries engage in corporal punishment including self-flagellation with the discipline (a whip with knotted cords) and self-mortification with the cilice (a wire chain with sharp prongs that dig into the skin and flesh, fashioned around the thigh or torso).*

## CHAPTER FOUR

### The Dangers Opus Dei Poses to the Knights and the Faith

#### Introduction

Thus far, the reader has been provided with key background information on the activities of the Knights of Columbus in modern times, information which will become all the more relevant as we begin to examine when, where, and how Opus Dei secured a foothold on the multi-billion-dollar business/charity known as the Knights of Columbus.

The Knights, however, are only half of the takeover equation; the Prelature of Opus Dei is the other half.

In this segment of the exposé, I will present some of the lesser known, but exceedingly vital, facts associated with the “Work” (as Opus is often referred), aspects related to the spiritual as well as the corporate foundation of Opus Dei. The intention is to provide the reader with background material that will put the Prelature’s successful capture of the Knights of Columbus in a more intelligible and lucid context. Hopefully, it will also demonstrate why the Knights need to divest themselves of Opus control and interests and carry out their own comprehensive program of external and internal reform.

#### What Opus Says About Itself

We begin with a look at how Opus Dei presents itself to the world, in its own words.

Opus Dei is part of the Catholic Church. The name is Latin for “Work of God.” Opus Dei’s mission is to spread the Christian message that every person is called to holiness and that every honest work can be sanctified.”<sup>[1]</sup>

The Institute named Sacerdotal Society of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei, abbreviated ‘Opus Dei,’ is an Institute for Christian Perfection of the secular world consecrated to the acquisition and exercise of apostolates.<sup>[2]</sup>

In everything we do, we must, all of us (priests and lay people), have a truly priestly soul and a fully lay outlook, if we are to understand and use in our personal lives that freedom which we enjoy in the sphere of the Church and in temporal things, considering ourselves at one and the same time citizens of the CITY OF GOD and citizens of the City of Man.<sup>[3]</sup> (Msgr. Escriva, Founder of Opus Dei)

The Work was thus the first association in the Church that fraternally opened its arms to all men, regardless of creed or [religious] confession. ...In the pastoral practice of the Church, never before had that unlocking and wide opening of doors been seen which incorporated the souls of its benefactors [of various religions], among whom were Protestants, schismatics, Jews, Muslims, and pagans. This doctrine, now widespread and consecrated by the Second Vatican Council, introduced in the year 1928 a revolution in theological, ascetical, and juridical concepts. <sup>[4]</sup> (Writer, Ana Sastre Gallego)



*Msgr. Escriva with John XXIII*

Since this is the spirit of our Work [i.e., secularism], it will be understood that for us it has been a great joy to see how the Council has solemnly declared that the Church does not reject the world in which it lives, neither its progress and development, but rather understands and loves it. Besides, this is a central tenet of our spirituality that members of the Work have strived – for almost forty years – to live...<sup>[5]</sup> (Escriva as quoted by Spanish historian and Opus numerary Andres Vazquez de Prada)

A supremely well-balanced association, formed by persons of undisputed morality and professionalism at all levels of a nation's political, economic, and social life, Opus Dei thus strives to promote a new spirituality<sup>[6]</sup> adapted to the needs of the world today.<sup>[7]</sup> Needless to say, the whole edifice of Opus Dei hangs on the exceptional, dynamic personality of Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer...<sup>[8]</sup> (French academic, Jean Jacques Thierry)

My Vocation is the same as yours [laypeople]. I never had any other one."<sup>[9]</sup> (Msgr. Escriva, founder of Opus Dei)

If members of the Work were to neglect their work in the world in order to carryout ecclesiastical activities, the divine gifts they have received would be wasted and, through a misguided desire for immediate pastoral effectiveness,

they would do real harm to the Church. For there would be fewer Christians dedicated to sanctifying themselves in the professions and trade of civil society, in the immense field of secular work. ... [Besides], there just isn't any spare time.<sup>[10]</sup> (Msgr. Escriva)

## What Critics and Ex-Members of Opus Say

*Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world. If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but is of the world. (1 John 2:15-16)*

What began as a small charismatic group slowly changed by force of circumstances and by the spirit of its founder, into what could be called in sociological terms, a cult. (Raimundo Panikkar, a founding father of Opus and ex-member)<sup>[11]</sup>

... The ethos of Opus Dei is entirely self-centered, sectarian, and totalitarian. ... Opus Dei is an Orwellian world employing much double-think and internal and external deception. (Ex-Member of Opus Dei and English Professor Dr. John J. Roche)<sup>[12]</sup>

The same money that is the source of perdition for the ones outside the sect is the source of sanctification for the Work, which transforms the accumulation of money into a sacramental activity: for this reason the member has to make money and give it to the sect.<sup>[13]</sup> (Jose Maria Escriva – pseudonym)

... affiliation in the Work requires absolute submission. The Father's rule embraces everything. The children of Escriva are like the treadmill donkeys: one turn, more turns, tied to the pole that moves the treadmill, they are tied to the Father; they have no power to act ... they cannot think anything that is against the Father's magnetic personality. We can say that they live as if they were drugged.<sup>[14]</sup> (Ex-member, Nicolas Cobo Martinez)

The reality is that Opus Dei, like Vatican II, advocates a liberal spirituality that calls for the full reconciliation between the Church with the principles of the Revolution or in the words of Pope Leo XIII, of attempting to reconcile "Christ and Belial."<sup>[15]</sup> Therefore, while they outwardly preach a strict adherence to doctrine, with their liberal principles and radically lay-secular mentality, they simultaneously undermine that which they claim to profess.<sup>[16]</sup> (Santiago – pseudonym)



Obviously, as these brief adulations and criticisms demonstrate, there are two irreconcilable spiritualities, aka, St. Augustine's City of God and City of Man,<sup>[17]</sup> and many conflicting heterodox practices associated with the "Work" which will be examined in the next two chapters of this exposé.

For Chapter Four, the critical ecclesiastical 2023 *Complaint* (described in the following section) will be used as the author's foundational document, to be followed in Chapter Five by additional evidence of Opus Dei's institutional corruption and ambitions of power, influence and control, both inside and outside the Roman Catholic Church, which made its takeover of the Knights of Columbus possible. Please note that italic print is used to identify statements taken from the *Complaint*.

### An Institutional Complaint Against Opus Dei

On June 26, 2023, a confidential Letter of Transmission titled an "INTERNATIONAL ECCLESIASTICAL INSTITUTIONAL COMPLAINT AGAINST OPUS DEI FOR REGULATORY FRAUD AGAINST THE HOLY SEE AND THE MEMBERS THEMSELVES"<sup>[18]</sup> was sent to the Apostolic Nunciature of the Holy See in Spain.<sup>[19]</sup>

The *Complaint* – complete with a massive dossier of supplementary documentation – was presented by the Spanish lawyer Antonio Moya Somolinos, himself a 42-year former member of Opus Dei, on behalf of the multitude of Opus Dei priests and lay members – including numeraries,<sup>[20]</sup> associate numeraries (oblates),<sup>[21]</sup> auxiliary associates,<sup>[22]</sup> supernumeraries,<sup>[23]</sup> and coordinators,<sup>[24]</sup> [and the super-secret *inscripti* <sup>[25]</sup> and their families – who have been spiritually, mentally, and materially deceived and abused by the leadership of the Prelature.

The key word in the *Complaint* title is "institutional," that is, the deception and harm caused by the government of Opus Dei has been **formal, systemic,** and **dangerous**. The drafters of the 20-page *Complaint*, all baptized Catholics, acknowledge that there are many good and faithful Catholics in Opus Dei, and that it is these members especially who need the protection of the Holy See from Opus Dei which has fallen into the "*Structure of Sin*."<sup>[26]</sup>



Antonio Moya Somolinos

Named in the Letter of Transmission as perpetrators of the abuses of power and regulatory fraud are the current President General and Prelate Fernando Ocariz Brana, Opus officers in Rome, and members of the Regional Commissions, including Regional Vicars, and Vicar-Priest Secretaries Delegates of the Prelature.<sup>[27]</sup>

## Opus Dei Accused of Regulatory Fraud

As explained in the *Complaint's* opening synopsis, the main reason for the action taken against the Prelature is that Opus has committed gross regulatory offenses against the Church, its hierarchy, and Opus members:

*This situation has allowed the [current and until recently held secret] 1982 Statutes<sup>[28]</sup> – the legal governing document of Opus Dei – to be de facto replaced by 46 (forty-six) “internal” documents/books [some set in several volumes] with a normative character. The daily government of Opus Dei is based on these documents [known as the Codex Iuris Particularis of St. Josemaria<sup>[29]</sup>] which laid the foundation for the systematic violation of respect for the dignity of the person through abuses of power, conscience, and spirit. In the process, God is replaced by the founder, the charism is confused with the institution, and an appropriation is made biased towards said charism – which belongs to the Holy Spirit for the service of the Church. .... As a consequence, Opus has acquired a sectarian drift resembling a destructive sect within the Catholic Church.<sup>[30]</sup>*

Throughout its 96-year history, Opus has experienced various modes of governance. In 1950, Pope Pius XII approved of Opus Dei as the first Secular Institute of the Church. It was ruled initially by Constitutions.<sup>[31]</sup> On September 14, 1970, Opus held a Special General Council at its headquarters in Rome with a Technical Commission led by Escriva and Msgr. (later Bishop) Alvaro de Portillo, Escriva's confessor of 40 years and his future successor.<sup>[32]</sup> An internal governance document consisting of 194 Articles and later known as the *Codex Iuris Particularis*, was drafted, approved, and signed into law by the founder on October 1, 1974.

In keeping with Escriva's passion for secrecy, the very existence of the 1974 *Codex*, which continues to dictate all imaginable life and rules and regulations of the Work, was kept a well-guarded secret.

By force of the founder's edict, the *Codex* was neither translated from the Latin into the vernacular, nor were its contents divulged to the “Work's” general membership, which is a violation of the members' right to know the true nature of their lifelong commitment to Opus Dei.

Perhaps even more importantly, the *Codex* was also kept secret from the Holy See [an act] *which constitutes a crime and a violation of the pontifical right to legislate.*<sup>[33]</sup> The *Complaint* correctly calls the purposeful institutional concealment of the *Codex* an act of “*legislative usurpation.*”<sup>[34]</sup>

It wasn’t until 2007 that the *Codex* made a brief public appearance on the Madrid website of *Opuslibros*,<sup>[35]</sup> founded by the intrepid ex-Opus Spanish numerary and journalist Agustina López de los Mozos Muñoz.

The 46 books (since translated) that comprise the secret *Codex* were given to Mozos by a group of Opus Dei members, including some directors, who believed that members and potential members of the Work have the general right to know the particular laws (*Iuris Particularis*) that regulate Opus Dei life down to the smallest, most intimate and arcane details, e.g., the days in a year when [female] numeraries are prohibited from wearing stockings or from wearing shoes that show the toes.<sup>[36]</sup>

Lawyers for the Prelature immediately sued Mozos for violation of copyright laws and intellectual property rights, demanding the removal of all 46 books from the *Opuslibros* site.

On March 19, 2008, the lawsuit was brought to the attention of the Holy See, which until then had no previous knowledge that this corpus of internal and external regulatory documents even existed. Much less was Rome aware that the *Codex* was actively being used in governing the Prelature in parallel with – and in many cases, in opposition to – the official Statutes that Opus had publicly accepted in 1982.

On January 24, 2013, the Courts ordered the Director of *Opuslibros* to remove the controversial documents from its website. The one salutary feature of the long-drawn out legal battle was that Opus lawyers were forced to admit that the documents in question were **authentic** and that the copyright was **inherited** from the founder.<sup>[37]</sup>

The burning question here is, “What was the leadership of Opus Dei so desperate to conceal?”

The answer is, “the *Codex Iuris Particularis of St. Josemaria* reveals spiritual texts that are mixed with crimes against conscience and a pattern of absolute control and *hyper-regulation* of its members leading to suicides and other forms of mental, emotional, and physical distress not excluding the loss of the Catholic faith.”<sup>[38]</sup>

The *Complaint* stresses that this fraud extends to all levels of Opus government and has metastasized throughout the Prelature’s entire body, thereby harming not only the Church but the State and Civil Society as well. The following excerpts from

the *Complaint* [with a minimum of grammatical changes] demonstrate the nature and extent of the charges brought against the Work – which in the colloquial – has turned out to be a dangerous piece of Work:

- **The Structure of Opus Dei**

*The group is united by a doctrine that is transmitted in a “messianic way” and is led by a charismatic figure who considers himself the possessor of the Absolute Truth.*<sup>[39]</sup>

*The structure of the group is theocratic, vertical and totalitarian.*<sup>[40]</sup>

*The main activities of the group are proselytizing and collecting money.*<sup>[41]</sup>

- **Divinization of the of Founder**

*The ideologization of the figure of the founder is a worrying issue within Opus Dei. There is an appropriation of the charism and a confusion between the charism and the institution, implying that the charism is identified with the ways that the founder established to institutionalize it. The excessive institutionalization and personalization lead to its prevalence over the figure of the Pope and the bishops, even giving their opinions a value of theological faith.*<sup>[42]</sup>

*The great obstacle for Opus Dei to deploy the service to the Church to which it is called is its own founder, who is ideologized to the point that, apart from official words and declarations, followers follow him instead of Jesus Christ.*

*In Opus Dei’s internal training facilities, it is always said, that for them, “our Father (Saint Josemaria) is Christ passing by.” They see Jesus Christ incarnated in the figure of the founder.*<sup>[43]</sup>... Overtime, the messianic character of the founder was extended to the institution itself.<sup>[44]</sup>

- **Using the Church to Gain Power**

*The founder always maintained that “Opus Dei serves the Church as the Church wants to be served.” It is not what is manifested in the facts. It is perceived that Opus Dei has always used and tries to use the Church... as a political entity to achieve its ambitions for power within it.*<sup>[45]</sup>

*Self-referentiality is a worrying characteristic in Opus Dei. This attitude is reflected in the way it shows a lack of openness toward the universal Church, and a tendency to look for its own interests and ambitions for power. This attitude is reflected in the way they relate to ecclesiastical authority, usurping the jurisdiction of bishops and systematically disobeying them.*<sup>[46]</sup>

*The truth is often misrepresented, especially in relation to apostolic activity, which is not such, but proselytizing-sectarian, aimed solely at achieving more members and greater power within the Church.*<sup>[47]</sup>

- **Protecting the Institution Over the Truth**

*This identification of the institution with God has consequences that disturb and destroy the moral order... Within Opus Dei, a single “moral norm” seems to prevail: the end (of Opus Dei) justifies the means. Any deviation from the moral order ends up being considered virtuous to the extent that it benefits the institution.*<sup>[48]</sup>

*Along these lines, there are lies about suicides (mentioning that the person died “by accident”), departure of members (preferably saying that he ran away with someone of the opposite sex), venereal diseases in [Opus] priests,<sup>[49]</sup> and the cover-up of crimes, especially pedophilia committed by Opus members, etc.*<sup>[50]</sup>

- **The Damage of Aggressive Proselytism**

*In Opus Dei an aggressive proselytism is practiced that only seeks to increase the number of members at all costs, regardless of the spiritual and conscience damage that is created with such action, creating all kinds of scruples and erroneous consciences about one’s life.*<sup>[51]</sup>

- **Replacing the Individual Conscience with the Escrivanian Conscience**

*It is important to note that in Opus Dei there is a supplanting of discernment and individual conscience, as well as a systematic violation of the personal sphere and privacy of the people who are involved in Opus Dei.*<sup>[52]</sup>

*This supplanting of individual discernment is done consciously through what the founder called an “inclined plane [a ramp].”<sup>[53]</sup> Through this process the will and intimacy of those who join the institution is gradually weakened, leaving them psychologically and spiritually vulnerable and deprived of their own discernment. They are progressively oriented to identify more with the institution than with Christ and are made to believe that “God’s will is manifested through the directors.”<sup>[54]</sup>*

- **Opus Dei Violations of the Seal of Confession**

*According to Canon 630 of the Code of Canon Law, a series of precepts are established related to respect for the freedom of conscience of members of religious institutes with regard to the right to choose a confessor and spiritual director. ... However, in Opus Dei this precept is systematically violated, there being a constant flow of conscience information, between the directors and those who carry out the spiritual direction of the members, who are designated by the directors. The secrecy of*



*confession has even been violated, which has led to the resignation of several priests of the Prelature.*<sup>[\[55\]](#)</sup>

*Opus Dei has always carried out the obligation to render an account of conscience and to do so with whomever the directors designate. This practice is carried out weekly for numeraries and associates and every two weeks for supernumeraries.*<sup>[\[56\]](#)</sup>

*Frequently, there is an intolerable invasion of the privacy and conjugal life of supernumeraries by the institution through denunciation from the spiritual director and sometimes violating the seal of confession.*<sup>[\[57\]](#)</sup>

*The testimony of the secularized numerary priest, Don Antonio Esquivias, in his book *Heaven in a Cage* is illuminating. In this book he narrates in first person his experience in the [Opus Dei] Regional Commission of Spain, where he managed the reports of conscience written by Spanish numerary members, including such details as the frequency with which they masturbated.*<sup>[\[58\]](#)</sup>

- **Psychiatric Pharmaceuticals at the Service of the Work**

*... The most painful consequences of the abuses in Opus Dei are, perhaps, the suicides and the people who have abandoned the faith after leaving the institution. However, it is also important to address the abuses in the field of psychiatric medicine, used to break the will of those who dare to express any discrepancy regarding the institutional inconsistencies they have observed.*<sup>[\[59\]](#)</sup>

*These abuses are abundant, and their effect translate into the generation of depressions in members who previously enjoyed good health and psychological balance. Although it could be argued that there always have been people with certain psychological vulnerability and that this is also manifested in the religious sphere, the high portion of people under psychopharmacological treatment in Opus Dei is surprising, especially among numeraries, compared to other Church institutions.*<sup>[\[60\]](#)</sup>

*In addition, these “methods” have been applied by physicians who are tenured members, some of whom are not specialists in psychiatry. Even more worrying is the fact that these doctors have left blank, signed prescriptions at the [Opus] centers, allowing in many cases the directors of the center, without being doctors, to prescribe drugs, thus violating the most basic principles of medical and (Christian) ethics. Its sole objective is to annul the will of the “dissenter” until turning him into a broken person, who in many cases has been returned to his parents after having ruined his life.*<sup>[\[61\]](#)</sup>

*These types of practices and their devastating consequences are unacceptable and require deep reflection and a forceful response. It is essential to protect the integrity and emotional well-being of the members of any religious institution, promoting an environment of respect, understanding and support instead of resorting to coercive and abusive methods.*<sup>[\[62\]](#)</sup>

- **Opus Dei is a False “Family”**

*[Opus Dei] forces the institution to be considered a family. However, their idea of family differs from the true families of organic cooperators and members of the prelature. It tries to convey the idea of a family... whose supposed “rights” are controlled exclusively by the directors [who believe] that “Opus Dei is a family with supernatural ties...” An opposition is established between the supposed “supernatural family” within Opus Dei, and the so-called “blood family,” generating a dynamic of exclusion instead of integration. The existence of internal terms such as “familosis” is even mentioned in training media, considering it an alleged “spiritual disease,” that represents an “attachment to the family as opposed to the vocation to Opus Dei.” <sup>[63]</sup>*



*Opus Dei distances its members from family relationships, affective ties, and previous activities. <sup>[64]</sup>*

*All adolescents were taught for decades to lie to their parents, denying their incorporation into Opus Dei, lying to attend the training media at the direction of the directors. <sup>[65]</sup>*

- **Opus’ Role in Human Trafficking**

*Among the many existing contradictions in the life of Opus Dei is the issue of auxiliary numeraries... victims of authentic slavery and human trafficking. <sup>[66]</sup>*

*These women [and young girls who take a vow of celibacy depriving them of marriage and a family] have not received an adequate salary, nor have they decent work hours, nor have they ... human, cultural, or professional promotion, nor have they been given a balanced working life, rest, vacation, or retirement. ... Although currently, due to various judicial sentences against Opus Dei, they have access to social security, the institution continues to violate and distort the truth in relation to the contributions of these women, who never charge for their work carried out in the institution. As one Opus male numerary judge told a journalist, “Opus Dei does not pay them, nor would he pay his sisters.” <sup>[67]</sup>*

- **Sexual Abuse by Opus Members**

*In recent years there have been several cases of sexual abuse by members of Opus Dei. <sup>[68]</sup> It should not be forgotten that sexual abuse always has its origin in a prior abuse of power, conscience, and spirituality, and that in the case of Opus Dei these abuses are institutionally induced due to relational asymmetry consciously promoted by the institution itself among those who direct and those who are not directors. <sup>[69]</sup>*

*In other Church institutions, as in the case of Marcial Maciel and the Legionaries of Christ, the founder's aberrations gave rise to direct intervention of the Holy See. Although Opus Dei has not experienced public scandals of this magnitude, that does not contradict the damage caused by an ideological founder. As we are seeing in this complaint, the damage to souls, the Church and to communion is equally serious, or even greater than in the aforementioned case.*<sup>[\[70\]](#)</sup>

- **Opus Dei and the Code of *Omertà***

*... A striking aspect of Opus Dei's interpretation of the way of living morality and Christian doctrine is the concept of silence about any crime that is committed that may affect the "honor" of Opus Dei.*<sup>[\[71\]](#)</sup>

*The criterion is experienced as a kind of Omertà. ... It implies "a categorical prohibition of cooperating with state authorities or using their services, even when one has been the victim of a crime." A person must avoid interfering if they see something that is not correct and cannot report a crime to the authorities under any circumstances.*<sup>[\[72\]](#)</sup>

*The reason that Opus Dei always gives to acting this way is that "dirty laundry is washed at home."*<sup>[\[73\]](#)</sup>

*We will only comment on cases that are publicly known. ... Along these lines, they have covered up: sexual abuse cases by Opus members in Chile, Spain, USA, Uruguay, Argentina; Provided safe harbor for fugitive Opus members guilty of embezzlement and fraudulent bankruptcies affecting thousands of victims in Uruguay, Paraguay, and Mexico; Crimes of illegal transfer of adults and minors through border crossings in Paraguay, Bolivia, Argentina; Falsification of documents; etc....*<sup>[\[74\]](#)</sup>

- **Opus Dei Falsifies and Hides Membership Data**

*Article 29 of the (1982) Statutes of Opus Dei states that for someone to voluntarily leave the Prelature, a dispensation is required that can only be granted by the Prelate, having heard his own Council and the Regional Commission. ... This requirement for a member to leave the Prelature is questionable since it is never provided in writing but through verbal communication without documentary evidence. This is done to manipulate the number of lay members to suit Opus Dei.*<sup>[\[75\]](#)</sup>

*Only Opus Dei directors have access to current membership data. Based on testimonies and articles in Opuslibros' "Correspondence," it is estimated that Opus Dei currently [as of June 2023] has no more than 40,000 members worldwide including lay people and priests. Very far from the 93,784 that appear in the aforementioned Anuario Pontificio 2023.*<sup>[\[76\]](#)</sup>

*Opus Dei has been known for always lying about the number of its members [no stats available on Opus' member attrition and priest laicization rates] as recognized in The History of Opus Dei [2022] by numeraries John Coverdale and José Gullón. In that book, page 447, it has been publicly recognized that the 60,000 members that Opus Dei has always maintained existed at the time of death of the founder were actually 32,800. <sup>[171]</sup>*

*In addition, there is a lack of credibility in the data provided by the Anuario Pontificio in relation to the priests incardinated into the Prelature. The Bulletin of the Roman Prelature is no longer published on paper and does not include the names of deceased members. For years there has been more casualties of priests than new ordinations. Likewise, in recent years, applications for admission have been very scarce, especially for numeraries, in all the countries where they are established. <sup>[178]</sup> In 1984, the Pontifical Yearbook reported that Opus had 354 major seminarians. In 2023 only 95 appeared. <sup>[179]</sup>*

*It is concluded that Opus Dei has used the importance of numbers to gain respectability and credibility, even at the cost of lying or living off income. This attitude of falsehood towards the Church, the State and Civil Society should be corrected... <sup>[180]</sup>*

## **Massive Documents Accompany *Complaint*.**

Accompanying the *Complaint* sent to the Madrid Papal Nuncio on June 26, 2023, there are several appendixes (Annexes) of great importance. Annex 3 contains the complete *Codex* listed by 46 separate titles; Annex 6 contains information from the 20-year-old *Opuslibros* web site, including the direct testimony of about 10,000 former Opus members; Annex 8 contains the record of 35 online Zoom meetings exposing Opus' malignant practices, and Annex 9 presents the testimony of former auxiliary [servant] numeraries from around the world.

Also of great value are the final pages of the *Complaint* (18-20) which spell out the case for the outright suppression of the Prelature on the grounds that it is so thoroughly corrupted by its own internal arrogance and lies that self-reform is impossible.

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<sup>[1]</sup> [Opus Dei – Questions about Opus Dei](#). See also [1. THE FOUNDING MOMENT OF OPUS DEI – Opus Dei](#).

<sup>[2]</sup> (N1-50) 195 Constitutions: Structure & Purpose. Reader can download the once secret Constitutions of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei, Rome, 1950. In fact, Opus warps the term, “apostolate” which generally means an organization that propagates the Faith. Opus propagates Opus and its founder, Msgr. Escriva from the ODAN website at [ODAN – ODAN Opus Dei Awareness Network](#).

<sup>[3]</sup> The quote is taken from Santiago at [OPUS DEI – TROJAN HORSE OF LIBERALISM IN THE CHURCH \(PART IV\) \(mysteriuminiquitatis-2thessalonians2.blogspot.com\)](#). His original source was a letter dated Fe. 2, 1945 by Escriva cited by Jose Luis Illanes, “The Church in the world: the secularity of the members of Opus Dei”, in *Opus Dei in the Church*, p. 165

<sup>[4]</sup> See [Opus Dei – Su Verdadera Faz – Comentarios y Citas en-GB.pdf – Google Drive](#). Source: Ana Sastre Gallego, *Tiempo de Camino*, Rialp [Opus Dei Publishers], Madrid, Spain, 1989, p. 610. According to Escriva, Opus had Jewish cooperators in the U.S. since 1948 who helped finance the Work. On Opus' revolutionary spirit see p. 594.

<sup>[5]</sup> See [Opus Dei – Su Verdadera Faz – Comentarios y Citas en-GB.pdf – Google Drive](#). Source: Andres Vazquez de Prada, *Fundador del Opus Dei*, Rialp [Opus Dei Publishers], Madrid, Spain, 2002, p. 31. De Prada wrote a three-volume biography of Escriva printed by Opus Dei's Scepter Press describing the founder's early years, the founding of Opus Dei, and its mission.



[16] According to Santiago, the so-called “new spirituality” of Opus Dei, does not conform to any traditional form of spirituality within Catholicism, for either the lay or religious state. He states that the thoroughly secular aspect of Opus lay members “represents liberalism – naked and unadorned.” See [OPUS DEI – TROJAN HORSE OF LIBERALISM IN THE CHURCH \(PART II\) \(mysteriuminiquitatis-thessalonians2.blogspot.com\)](#).

[17] Jean Jacques Thierry, *Opus Dei – A Close-up*, Cortland Press, NY, 1973, p. 95. Translated from the French by Gilda Roberts, 1975.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

[19] Quote found in Sandiago, Part VI, “Escriba: a Vocation” to the world, not to Christ’s priesthood.” The source of the statement by Escriva, shortly before his death, is found in Salvador Bernal’s *Josemaria Escriva de Balaguer – The Life of the Founder of Opus Dei*, Rialp, Madrid, 1980, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, p. 104.

[100] See Escriva, *Conversations with Msgr. Escriva de Balaguer*, Shann, Ecclesia press, 1972, p. 61.

[111] Alberto Moncada, *Historia oral del Op with us Dei*, Plaza & Janes, Barcelona, Spain, 1987, p. 131.

[122] John J. Roche, “The Inner World of Opus Dei,” September 7, 1982.

[133] Jose Maria Escriva is the pen name for the author of *Opus Judei – An exposition of Opus Dei*, Orion Publications, Bogota, Columbia, 1994, p.12. The founder’s name on his baptismal certificate was Jose Maria Escriva y Albas, which indicated a name of Jewish, possibly Marrano, ancestry. Escriva was then changed to Escriva and then to Escriva de Balaguer y Albas. Later, Escriva purchased the title of the Marquisate of Peralta, to which he had no claim whatsoever. The reader will note that from its very beginning, Opus was accused of being a Jewish branch of Masonry given its obsession with secrecy.

[144] Nicolas Cobo Martinez, *Faro inconfundundine*, No. 23, June 1988. Escriva encourage “his children,” to be like treadmill donkeys, always walking, going in circles, but going nowhere. It is common to see a statue of Escriva’s donkey with a saddle in Opus residencies, a dead giveaway that it is an Opus facility. According to the critical biographer of Escriva, Luis Carandell, “The most striking characteristic of *Opus Dei* is the lack of critical spirit of its members in everything that refers to the *Father* and the divine origin of the *Work*.” See [Luis Carandell, “Life and Limagros of the Founder of Opus Dei.” FOREWORD TO THE 1992 EDITION \(opuslibros.org\)](#).

[153] *Custodi Di Quella Fede*, 1892, Leo XIII’s encyclical on Freemasonry at [Custodi di quella Fede \(December 8, 1892\) | LEO XIII \(vatican.va\)](#). See also Leo XIII’s encyclical *Humanum Genus* at [Humanum Genus \(April 20, 1884\) | LEO XIII \(vatican.va\)](#).

[164] Santiago, p. 3. [OPUS DEI – TROJAN HORSE OF LIBERALISM IN THE CHURCH \(Part I\) \(mysteriuminiquitatis-2thessalonians2.blogspot.com\)](#).

[172] St. Augustine, *The City of God* [Complete edition] translated by Marcus Dods, Independently published, 2001 at [The City Of God Complete Edition: Book I-XXII: Of Hippo, Saint Augustine, Dods, Marcus: 9798517880611: Amazon.com: Books](#).

[188] [International ecclesiastical institutional complaint against Opus Dei for regulatory fraud against the Holy See and the members themselves.pdf \(opus-info.org\)](#)

[199] Archbishop Bernardito C. Auza is the Pope’s Apostolic delegate to Spain.

[200] Numeraries, male and female, make up the second largest type of membership in Opus. They comprise about 20% of the total membership. They must be “intellectuals,” (six years of study of philosophy and theology) and have no infirmity or physical disfigurement. They live celibate lives in Opus gender-segregated residences or centers and make themselves **totally** available to the Prelature. All their time, money, and energies are devoted to the Work. The needs of the Prelature come before any occupational or personal desires. Opus goes to extraordinary means to control their members, numeraries in particular. Numeraries are cash cows for Opus. They turn over their entire salaries to Opus Directors who in turn give them back a meager monthly salary. Once they make the Fidelity, the last stage of membership, all their possessions, property, and inheritances belong to the Prelature and are not returnable. Monies are spent at the discretion of the Prelate. After seven years membership, numeraries make out their wills to Opus. Author Robert Hutchison notes that wills are handwritten leaving blank the date, names of heirs, legatees, executors, and the fees to be paid to the executors. Nothing left to chance. Everything regimented. All mail, incoming and outgoing, is read and censored, as are their media contacts. Under the “virtue” of “non-giving,” they are forbidden to give gifts of any kind at any time to family members and friends, or to give alms to the poor. Although the term “culture” is an Opus Dei byword, Opus takes no part in enhancing the cultural life of its members. Numeraries engage weekly in corporal punishment including self-mortification and self-flagellation with the cilice and the discipline. As a result of their tightly regimented daily life, many numeraries become depersonalized stereotyped and shadows of their former self. Male numeraries form the clerical pool from which Opus draws its priests to serve Opus not Christ.

[211] Associate numeraries, (originally called oblates), by circumstance, live celibate lives outside Opus residences usually with their families, and are considered a lower class than regular numeraries. They attend philosophy and theological studies, but no advanced degrees are necessary. They can belong to any social class or profession, and may be ordered to the priesthood to serve Opus or directed to form a certain apostolate to promote Opus. Although they do not make themselves “fully” available to the Prelature, they do promote and recruit for Opus in their family and professional field.

[222] Auxiliary numeraries or associates are among the most controversial of Opus members and makeup a substantial number of ex-members. Although Escriva claimed that “We are all equal and we treat each other the same way,” this is obviously not true. These young teens and women are drawn from poor and uneducated families in foreign countries and trained to be servants at Opus residences and centers where they do menial and housekeeping tasks. They are forced to live celibate lives, thus giving up any hope of marriage and family. Escriva called them his “little daughters” who bring maternal love and peace to the Prelature. Unlike Opus’ well-dressed and professional female numeraries, these girls and women cook, clean, iron, etc. seven days a week for years on end. They get a “salary,” which they never see as Opus deducts for their room and board and basic needs. They have no money of their own and are never left alone, but must be accompanied by a female numerary when outside their residence. They wear uniforms on duty and thrift-priced quality clothing when at their houses. They rarely get to see their families as they have no vacation time or money for travel. In 2021, 43 auxiliary members filed a complaint with the Abuse section of the Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.



See [Opus Dei Ignores Complaint of 43 Women Held in Slavery | News | teleSUR English](#); and [https://www.reddit.com/r/PastorArrested/comments/14nek5a/more\\_than\\_40\\_years\\_of\\_exploiting\\_girls\\_in\\_the/?rdt=44776](https://www.reddit.com/r/PastorArrested/comments/14nek5a/more_than_40_years_of_exploiting_girls_in_the/?rdt=44776).

[23] Supernumeraries are the mainstay of the Opus institute making up approximately 70% of the membership. They are usually married and provide the Prelature with loads of money; form numerous Opus “Apostolates”; and provide Opus with large numbers of human fodder in the form of children to serve the Prelature’s generational needs. They take partial vows. Whereas, Opus requires an account of conscience every week from its numeraries, supernumeraries confess to Opus Dei priests and meet with their spiritual directors every two weeks to discuss their Plan of Life – wives and widows meet separately at Opus female centers and husbands and widowers meet at male Opus residents. They never meet together. For this reason, married couples are more likely to have their spiritual and conjugal privacy violated along with the seal of confession by directors and priests who wish to compare notes on a particular family. Engaged couples who join the Prelature are likely to dissolve their relationship after they are convinced that God is calling them to become celibate numeraries and, in the case of the young men, a priest of Opus Dei. See [EXPLOSIVE: Behind Opus Dei’s Veil of Secrecy – Part 1 – \(akacatholic.com\)](#) and [EXPLOSIVE: Behind Opus Dei’s Veil of Secrecy – Part 2 – \(akacatholic.com\)](#).

Opus instructs all its members to always observe a prudent silence as to the names of other members, and that they must never reveal to anyone that they themselves belong to the Opus Dei, not even for the sake of a perceived advancement of the institute. The exception are members who are selected by Opus to become the “public face” of the Work.

[24] Whether cooperators of Opus are actually counted as members of the Work is still debatable. They consist of general members of the public, not necessarily Catholic or even Christian, who wish to support the institute and fund its agenda. Some cooperators make useful idiots in criticizing blogs that are critical of Opus or in supporting articles written by [secret] Opus Dei members. The anonymity of cooperators makes large donations from questionable organizations and individuals possible. Note that a “cooperator” can be someone who might have been a numerary or supernumerary under normal circumstances, but whose public position as politician or an FBI agent, for example, might be compromised if he was known to be a formal member of Opus Dei. Such public figures can deny they are members of Opus Dei even though their children are registered in Opus private schools, they themselves have an Opus confessor and Opus spiritual director, and have taken a secret oath to advance and protect the Work.

[25] The real power in Opus Dei is held by its secret *inscribed* ruling class which numbers about 200 and consists of numeraries, select supernumeraries, and a small number of priests, all former numeraries. They form an intellectual or corporeal elite answerable only to the Prelate/President General. All electors in Opus governance are inscribed members, ages 30 or older, with at least nine years as incorporated members, and a record of outstanding devotion and loyalty to the Work. Opus Dei is also a “kingmaker,” in that it can encourage and finance relatively obscure people to take up positions of great power, aka, former Presidential Assistant Carl Anderson who rose to become one of the most influential Catholics in the world as Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus.

[26] See *Complaint*, p.7.

[27] In Opus Dei, absolute power is held by President-General chosen for life. He is followed by a Secretary-General and advised by a General Council of priests from different nation. In each country or region a Vicar-General is chosen by the Prelate as his representative.

[28] The 1982 Statutes (dated November 28) given to Opus Dei by Pope John Paul II created the Work as a Personal Prelature (not as a Prelature Nullis that Escriva wanted). By 1974, the pope had already moved to change the Code of Canon Law to permit Opus to become a new evangelizing tool typical of the new times marked by Vatican II. Until the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the 1982 Statutes were never translated into the vernacular and were kept under lock and key, accessible only to select Opus directors and administrators. One of the key features of the 1982 Statutes was the provision that lay members of Opus were under the authority of the local bishop not the Opus Prelate, and only the clergy of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross were under the Prelate’s authority. Although Opus has always touted its role as part of the hierarchical Church, this claim was refuted by Pope Francis in his Letter “*luvenescit Ecclesia*” of May 16, 2016, which clearly states, “The Prelatures are ecclesial realities of a charismatic not a hierarchical nature.”

[29] The *Codex Iuris Particularis* of St. Josemaria *activated* one year before Escriva’s death which occurred on June 26, 1975. These texts are revered by Opus leaders as being more sacred than the Gospel itself. Exact copies of the texts are included in the Annex documents presented to the Holy See on June 26, 2023 in conjunction with the formal *Complaint*.

[30] *Complaint*, p.1.

[31] The 1950 Constitutions are available at [https://odan.org/statutes\\_1950](https://odan.org/statutes_1950).

[32] See [Opus Dei – Blessed Alvaro del Portillo](#). Portillo, thus Opus, played a key role in the preparatory stages of the Council, especially with regard to the theme of “the laity in the Church.” As Secretary General of Opus Dei he served on the preparatory Commission on the Laity, and later as Secretary of the Commission for Discipline of the Clergy and Christian People, as well as assisting as *peritus* in other Commissions.

[33] *Complaint*, Ibid., p. 6.

[34] Ibid., p. 6. Note that on May 18, 1884, the Vatican’s Holy Office issued a formal statement that “the prohibition of the Church concerns all secret societies, regardless of whether or not they require an oath, because they are societies contrary to natural law.”

[35] The excellent *Opuslibros* website, Opus Dei – A Road to Nowhere with English translations is available at [Opus Dei: A ROAD to Nowhere? \(opuslibros.org\)](#). The organization has 10,000 direct testimonies of ex-Opus members.

[36] *Complaint*, p. 8.

[37] Ibid., p.4-5.

[38] Ibid., p.7.

[39] Ibid., p. 3.

[40] Ibid., p. 3.

[41] Ibid., p. 3.

[42] Ibid., p. 10.

[43] Ibid., p. 20.

[44] Ibid., p. 3.

[45] Ibid., p. 11.

[46] Ibid., p. 11.

[47] The Complaint on page 11 makes reference to Opus Dei's "apostolate," Centro Académico Romano Foundation/CARF [Roman Academic Center Foundation, whose theme is "We work to bring God's smile to every corner of the world through priests and their formation"]. The project was one of many Opus "apostolates" created and blessed by Pope John Paul II for Opus. For additional details on this multi-million dollar enterprise operated by Opus out of Rome through the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, and the University of Navarra in Spain, the latter is Opus' largest recruiting center in the world, see [Rosales: "CARF is moving forward because three saints are committed". \(omnesmag.com\)](#), and [About The CARF Foundation – CARF Foundation \(fundacioncarf.org\)](#).

[48] Ibid., p. 8.

[49] Ibid., p. 8.

[50] Ibid., p. 7.

[51] Ibid., p. 15.

[52] Ibid., p. 7. See also [Opus Dei Watch – December Issue – \(akacatholic.com\)](#), "According to the Father's Mind," by "Heraldo," *Opuslibros*, March 3, 2013. In this heart-rending story of a former numerary of Opus Dei, the author describes how, after leaving the Work for ten years, he managed to "reunite with himself." Heraldo entered Opus Dei at the age of 14. By the age of 24 he was subjected to psychiatric care and pharmacological treatment. For more than 30 years, he was the recipient of many generations of antidepressants and anxiolytics.

[53] The theory of the inclined plane in psychology means moving a mass [e.g., a person] in a certain direction with the least resistance.

[54] Ibid., p. 7. In "How We Made Numeraries in Mexico," by *Castalio*, which appeared on *Opuslibros* on July 10, 2009, the author, a numerary at an Opus Center in Mexico for 20 years, expresses his thoughts on the role of local directors who are always laymen in the Work. According to Castalio (a pseudonym) "We believe as directors in Opus that we entertain a special status in the world of mortals. We are told we have a grace of state; that it is a divine grace which entails occupying position in government which entails positions of hierarchy of an ecclesiastical institution, thus we, as directors, are able to interpret the will of God in the selection of members." Regional Commissioners meet with directors every two to three weeks to discuss the records of potential numeraries. Directors are taught to instrumentalize friendship and how to extract information in a veiled manner including sexual intimate details which are openly discussed at the meetings. Castalio stated that in "circles" and "confidences" young people confide in their directors, then we turn around and report on them with no sense of guilt or remorse. "In practice, a director's 'please,' becomes a command of obedience – to deny a director's request is to deny Christ and invite eternal disaster." See [Opuslibros – How we made numeraries in Mexico.- Castalio](#). In the United States, orders coming from their superiors in Rome are usually delivered by special couriers to directors who receive them on their knees.

[55] Ibid., p. 7.

[56] Ibid., p. 7.

[57] Ibid., p. 7.

[58] Ibid., p. 7-8.

[59] Ibid., p. 9.

[60] Ibid., p. 9.

[61] Ibid., p. 9.

[62] Ibid., p. 9.

[63] Ibid., p. 9.

[64] Ibid., p. 3.

[65] Ibid., p. 8.

[66] Ibid., p. 15.

[67] Ibid., p. 15.

[68] The *Complaint* specifically mentions the Gaztelueta Case which this writer covered for *AKA Catholic* and *Renew America* for a period of several years, the only U.S. reporter to do so, as Opus Controls most of the Catholic press in this country. The case involved Opus numerary Jose Maria Martinez Sanz who was eventually convicted of sexually abusing a young male student under his spiritual care at the Gaztelueta School, established by Escriva, in Spain. For details see [Opus Dei Watch – March Part 1 – \(akacatholic.com\)](#); [Opus Dei Watch – March Part 2 – \(akacatholic.com\)](#); [Opus Dei Sex Abuse Case: An exclusive interview – \(akacatholic.com\)](#); [Opus Dei Trial Ends with a Guilty Verdict – \(akacatholic.com\)](#). For another Opus sex abuse case see [Another Opus Dei Numerary Sex Abuse Case – \(akacatholic.com\)](#). If the reader has any doubts that Opus' purview of Opus sex abuse victims is "Let them eat cake," see the above articles.

[69] Ibid., p. 10.

[70] Ibid., p. 10.

[71] Ibid., p. 15.

[72] Ibid., p. 15.

[73] Ibid., p. 15.

[74] Ibid., p. 15.

[75] Ibid., p. 13.

[76] Ibid., p. 13.

[77] Ibid., p. 13.

[78] Ibid., p. 13.

[79] Ibid., p. 19.

[80] Ibid., p. 13.





*Our Lady of Peace Church, the Prelatic Church of Opus Dei in Rome. The tomb of Josemaría Escrivá is located beneath the altar.*

## CHAPTER FIVE

### More Abusive Institutional Practices by Opus Dei

#### Introduction

Although the June 26, 2023, *International Ecclesiastical Institutional Complaint Against Opus Dei for Regulatory Fraud Against the Holy See and the Members Themselves*, featured in Chapter Four of this exposé, laid out many of the dangerous institutional regulatory practices of Opus Dei, there were other key issues that were not addressed.

For example, near the end of the 20-page report, the authors state:

We are aware that we have not touched on the issue of priests incardinated into the Prelature with the breath and detail that it deserves, which together with the [abuses] against auxiliary numeraries in our opinion, constitute the most serious institutional abuses of Opus Dei.<sup>[1]</sup>

This segment highlights not only Opus' revolutionary desacralization of the Catholic priesthood, but also addresses other institutional practices that war against the Catholic faith and faithful. Special credit for this section goes to Juan Morales,<sup>[2]</sup> the Madrid author of "Opus Dei: Its True Face," a ground-breaking 1991 exposé that was first translated into English by "Santiago, and to Santiago, himself, for his excellent online investigation of the revolutionary "spirit" of the Work, "Opus Dei – Trojan Horse of Liberalization in the Church."<sup>[3]</sup>

#### Opus Dei as a Pseudo-Catholic Sect

One of the first indications of Opus' dominant secularity and pluralism<sup>[4]</sup> that this writer encountered more than four decades ago is its formal seal – a barren Gnostic cross<sup>[5]</sup> embracing the world, sometimes with a rose at the bottom similar to the *rose-croix* of Rosicrucianism – no corpus as on the traditional Catholic crucifix, much less the *INRI* inscription declaring Jesus of Nazareth, "King of the Jews."

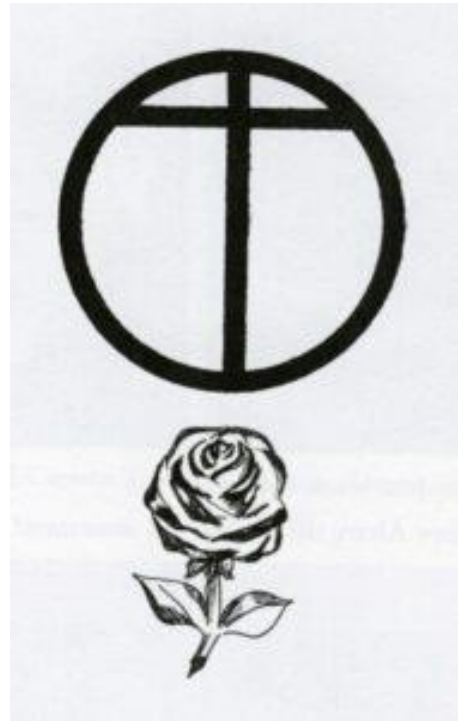
According to Robert Hutchison, author of *Their Kingdom Come – Inside the Secret World of Opus Dei*, when Opus novices take their Oath of Fidelity – an act that takes place five years into their membership, in the presence of the regional vicar and two witnesses, one of whom is the oblate's director and immediate superior – "the oath is administered before a plain wooden Cross without its Crucified in the darkened chapel of an Opus Dei center."<sup>[6]</sup>



Why a barren Cross? According to Escriva's, *The Way*, Maxim 178, members are invited to imagine putting themselves on the Cross in place of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ – an idea that reeks of blasphemy.

In Opus' 1950s Constitutions, numeraries are instructed that where three or more members live in an Opus Dei residence, there is to be erected a black cross, again, *without* the image of the Crucified. Members of Opus are encouraged to carry with them a plain black cross, *without* the corpus, in their pockets.

Another equally strange and disconcerting feature of the Work is the fact that Opus residences, study and conference centers, schools, and youth facilities typically are *not* openly identified as Catholic institutions. They employ secular names such as Arnold Hall, Shellbourne, Featherock, Longlea, Roseaire, the Willows Academy, etc. Ditto, Opus foundations such as the Castlewood Foundation, Mulholland Foundation, and the all-important Witherspoon Institute, Heights Foundation, and the Woodlawn Foundation, which fund hundreds of Opus entities in the United States. Murry Hill Place is the name of Opus' national headquarters in Manhattan.



*The Opus Dei seal*

In sum, the generic names under which so many Opus entities operate serve as yet another reflection that the charism, or spirit, of the Work is predominantly secular and not Catholic.

A popular criticism of Opus Dei “apostolates”<sup>[4]</sup> and the numeraries, associates, supernumeraries and cooperators who run them, is that these charitable and business associations, like Opus memberships themselves, are kept secret.<sup>[8]</sup> The exception to the rule is the names of the Prelate and his top officials, Opus priests, and designated members who display the “public face” of the Work. Secrecy at all levels of praxis and governance, however, is institutionalized in Opus and reinforced by the founder's edicts.

For the record, as mandated by Pope Saint Pius X and Pope Leo XIII, all Catholic “apostolates” should retain an open and “confessional” character.<sup>[9]</sup>



But all of these peculiarities that one initially comes to associate with the Work are but minor annoyances when compared to the more cryptic and dangerous praxes we are about to examine.

## Opus Dei Desacralizes the Priesthood

Most Catholics, especially cradle Catholics, have no difficulty in defining the nature of the Sacrament of Holy Orders and the practices and duties of Catholic priests. Nevertheless, it might be more instructive to refer to the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*<sup>101</sup> when comparing the traditional view of the Catholic priesthood to the “new priesthood” of Opus Dei.

*Dignity of this Sacrament* – In the first place, then, the faithful should be shown how great is the dignity and excellence of this Sacrament considered in its highest degree, the priesthood. Bishops and priests being, as they are, God’s interpreters and ambassadors, empowered in His name to teach mankind the divine law and the rules of conduct, and holding, as they do, His place on earth, it is evident that no nobler function than theirs can be imagined. ...

*The Divine Call* – Let no one take the honor to himself, but he that is called by God as Aaron was; and they are called by God who are called by the lawful ministers of His Church. They who are in Holy Orders have certain special duties and functions to discharge in the Church. Thus they offer Sacrifice for themselves and for all the people; they explain God’s law and exhort and form the faithful to observe it promptly and cheerfully; they administer the Sacraments of Christ our Lord by means of which all grace is conferred and increased; **and, in a word, they are separated from the rest of the people to fill by far the greatest and noblest of all ministries** (bold added).

*Right Intention* – In every action we undertake it is of the highest importance to have a good motive in view, for if the motive is good, the rest proceeds harmoniously. The candidate for Holy Orders, therefore, should first of all be admonished to entertain no purpose unworthy of so exalted an office. ... Though both the natural and divine law lay down, as the Apostle remarks, that he who serves the altar should live by the altar; yet to approach the altar for the sake of gain and money is one of the very gravest of sacrileges.

*Holy Orders Is a Sacrament* – That Sacred Ordination is to be numbered among the Sacraments of the Church the Council of Trent has established by the same line of reasoning as we have already used several times. Since a Sacrament is a sign of a sacred thing, and since the outward action in this consecration denotes the

grace and power bestowed on him who is consecrated, it becomes clearly evident that Order must be truly and properly regarded as a Sacrament. ...

*The Internal Priesthood* – Regarding the internal priesthood, all the faithful are said to be priests once they have been washed in the saving waters of Baptism. ...

*The External Priesthood* – The external priesthood, on the contrary, does not pertain to the faithful at large, but only to certain men who have been ordained and consecrated to God by the lawful imposition of hands and by the solemn ceremonies of holy Church, and who are thereby devoted to a particular sacred ministry.

*Functions of the Priesthood* – The office of a priest, then, is to offer Sacrifice to God and to administer the Sacraments of the Church.

*(Catechism of the Council of Trent, aka The Roman Catechism)*

Thus, the Church makes clear that while all Catholics are called to holiness, there is a difference between the baptismal and ministerial priesthood. The Sacrament of Holy Orders places the priest in a different ecclesial order in so far as it configures him, ontologically speaking, as another Christ.

## **Escriva and the New Priesthood<sup>[11]</sup>**

*I am anti-clerical because I love the priesthood.*<sup>[12]</sup> – Escriva

According to Doserra (pseudonym), a former Opus numerary, “From the beginning of his venture, Escriva held a different view of the nature of the Catholic priesthood and the priest, which is outside the tradition of the Church, that is, heterodox.”<sup>[13]</sup>

As Escriva proclaimed in his famous homily at the University of Navarre in Pamplona, Spain on October 8, 1967, “I am a secular priest: a priest of Jesus Christ, who loves passionately the world.”<sup>[14]</sup> He believed that, for Opus numeraries turned priests, “the priesthood is an accident of circumstance, because — within the Work — priests and laity have the same vocation. In Opus Dei we are all equal.”<sup>[15]</sup>

Doserra continued, “And, as can be seen, the various blurs that make up this erroneous concept of the priesthood have a common unhealthy root: the Founder’s obsession with having a group of priests totally subject to institutional interests.”<sup>[16]</sup> Doserra’s many contributions to *Opuslibros* over the years include the must-read “The Deformation of the Figure of the Priest in Opus Dei”<sup>[17]</sup> and “The Slavery Regime of Opus Dei Priests.”<sup>[18]</sup>

Unabashed apologist *for* the Work, Jean-Jacques Thierry, confirms Doserra’s argument that Opus Dei produces priests of “another sort:”

Each year certain numeraries receive sacred orders. Actually, according to the Association, it is not a matter of these members having “late vocations,” or a change in orientation. The divine call came to them well before they envisaged the priesthood as a possibility. ... by joining Opus Dei and choosing sanctity through work, they have committed themselves to practicing the virtues which constitute the heart of the priesthood. From the first day they were admitted they saw themselves in this sense, in remote preparation for the priesthood.<sup>[19]</sup> This despite the fact that the great majority of them are not actually ordained.<sup>[20]</sup>

[Numeraries] who are ordained after joining the Association, that is who have been prepared for the priesthood and brought to it at the invitation of their directors<sup>[21]</sup> so they might serve others in a different way. For them, ordination is not in any way the “crowning” of their vocation. In fact, when they receive the priesthood, they retain the secular mentality suited to their environment and to the profession they used to practice, so that they become doctor-priests, lawyer-priests, worker-priests, etc.”<sup>[22]</sup>



*May 2024, Basilica of St. Eugene, Rome: Twenty-nine men from 19 countries ordained priests of the Prelature of Opus Dei.*

Get it?

The Opus priest, then, is said to be *no different from the Opus layman*; he is ordained *at the direction of the director*; and serves primarily as a *functionary* of the Prelature.

Presto – the abomination of the Opus ecclesiastical chimera – the lay/priest or ordained layman or a numerary in clerical collar – who is ordained in *batches* of twenty to forty or more Opus numeraries.<sup>[23]</sup>

Clearly, the Holy See has to seriously question the validity and licitness of these ordinations on an individual basis, which it has never done.

As Doserra so shrewdly observes:

The call to the priesthood in the Work does not start from an interior movement of the person, which responds to a specific gift of God to that specific person, but from a decision of government ... It is an unprecedented abuse in the life of the Church, in that it relegates to a secondary plane those who are the principal protagonists of every divine vocation: first, God, then the individual person, who is moved interiorly by His grace ... [In Opus Dei] the priestly vocation becomes more of an external act like the Levitical priesthood of the Old Testament rather than the internal transformation that marks a true Catholic priest.<sup>[24]</sup>

And while it is true that Opus Dei has a reputation for dispensing sound doctrine, like the Sadducees and the Pharisees, the institution itself falls short in the promotion of the cardinal and theological virtue, especially that of charity, exchanging them for the absurd “virtues” of “holy shamelessness,” “holy intransigence,” “holy pilleria,” “holy cholera,” and “unity with the Father [Escriva],” etc.<sup>[25]</sup> Likewise, in private recruitment sessions we hear members using terms like “Wets,” for persons of no benefit to the Work; “goats,” for poor recruiters and “chicos,” who are monied or otherwise designated persons of interest.

Actually, this all makes sense if one rightly understands that the debate on who rules Opus Dei, laymen or clerics, is meaningless. Opus Dei is an institutional bureaucracy of the laity. Escriva’s “priests” are in essence programmed cloned laymen with collars who owe their allegiance to the founder and his successors, not to Christ. There is no room in the Sacerdotal Society of the Holy Cross for the traditional Catholic priest, who eventually comes to understand that his vocation, indeed his very salvation, depends upon him finding the nearest exit door of the Prelature.<sup>[26]</sup>

## The Abuse of Spiritual Direction

The abuse of spiritual direction in Opus Dei, accompanied by violations of the seal of confession, comes as no surprise, as both the former and the latter are matters of governance, that is to say, spiritual direction has become a tool of information gathering and control in order to achieve institutional objectives with greater effectiveness at the expense of the individual.

In the exquisite essay, “Freedom of Conscience in Opus Dei,”<sup>[27]</sup> Oraculo, a former member of Opus, calls Opus’ systematic violation of the freedom of conscience “a cancer” which has plagued the institute since its founding. And indeed it is.

According to Opus Dei, spiritual direction belongs, in the *first* place, to the local lay directors, with whom the priests also make their “fraternal chat,” or “confidence,” *then*, to the priests of The Work, through sacramental confession.<sup>[28]</sup> To hold *anything* back from one’s spiritual director is considered making a pact with the devil.<sup>[29]</sup>

Numeraries report once a week for their “fraternal chat” which is considered with their designated lay spiritual director and their designated Opus confessor; supernumeraries every two weeks; other members, monthly. The “circle,” considered by Opus to be in the “external forum,” completes a pattern of thought control in which members openly accuse themselves of their offenses and faults, accept correction and punishment if any, and discuss their Plan of Life, constructed under the supervision of their spiritual advisor.

But the greatest violation of conscience comes with the prescribed breaking of the sacred and natural duty of confidentiality by which Opus spiritual directors reveal to their Opus superiors intimate matters discussed in their fraternal chats with their trusting subjects. All manner of details,<sup>[30]</sup> especially those which might possibly touch upon the reputation or honor of the Work, make their way up the Opus chain of command from local directors to the Prelate in Rome, where the notations are dutifully read and filed by faceless Opus clone-bureaucrats.

As if these violations of conscience were not enough, there is another facet of Opus spiritual direction that defies description – that is the praxis that explicitly forbids the faithful to manifest their own intimacy to anybody other than their spiritual director or higher directors. According to the *Catechism of Opus Dei*:



It will never be appropriate for the faithful of Opus Dei to confide to each other matters of their interior life or personal concerns, because those who count on a special grace to assist and help the members of the Work are the male or female Director —or the person determined by the Directors— and the designated priest. [\[31\]](#)

This praxis of the Prelature includes even the prohibition of free and open communication among the members about any kind of “personal” issues or concerns, not just those pertaining to the government of the Work but also matters related to the intimacy of one’s soul. In Opus Dei, one’s thoughts about the institution can only be discussed with the directors. Anyone expressing his/her personal opinion, publicly or in private, to a fellow member or friend outside the Work, will be immediately censured and corrected for “murmuring.”

Hence members who have given their life to the Work are gradually despoiled of the autonomy of their conscience as spiritual direction is gradually transformed into a means of exerting iron-fisted control over them.

### Opus Dei Violates the Seal of Confession



*“The sacramental seal is inviolable...” (1983 CIC, 983 §1)*

The Catholic position on the inviolability of the seal of sacramental confession is universally known. The confessor cannot by word or sign or by any manner whatever in any way betray the sinner, even under the threat of death. There are no exceptions. The penalty for this grave reserved sin is automatic excommunication. Period.

But in Opus Dei, the matter is much more complicated as the crime of violating the seal of confession is both institutionalized and systemic. It involves virtually every Opus official, from the Prelate and his vicars and

secretaries, down through the local chain of command, to Opus residences and retreat centers, where confessions are heard on a regular basis. The justification for the abuse of ecclesiastical power, once again, is that the Sacrament of Penance is held to be a function of government.

As Msgr. Escriva explains, “Confession is used to confirm the directives of the Directors, beyond the ‘sacramental wall.’”<sup>[32]</sup> How this praxis plays itself out in practical terms is described in a set of internal manuals called the *Vademecum de Sacerdotal*.<sup>[33]</sup>

Priests know that, in order to collaborate effectively in the personal spiritual direction of the faithful of the Prelature, they must ordinarily confirm in everything the directives that others receive in fraternal conversation: only a complete harmony between the two councils ensures the adequate spiritual direction of the people of the Work.<sup>[34]</sup>

If ever deems it desirable, in order to achieve greater unity criteria in the work of training and management, the local Director may speak briefly with the priest – always in the confessional on such points as it deems necessary.<sup>[35]</sup>

Thus, in Opus Dei, the priest is routinely subjugated to lay directors unless he holds a position of special importance for institutional, business, corporate, or public relations purposes like the late Washington D.C. personality, Father C. John McCloskey.

On the occasion when Opus spiritual directors or the priests themselves deem it necessary that information received from penitents in a sacramental confession be shared or released to their superiors, Opus priests may do so.

If this is not absolutely clear to the reader, the following internal directive by the Prelate to his priests published in *The Experiences of Pastoral Practice* should end all doubt:

If at any time, due to lack of formation, a member of the Work does not make known to his Directors circumstances or facts of his life that are contrary to our vocation or that are an obstacle to our work; and instead when these facts are communicated in the Confession, the priest – ‘making it clear that he does not command it’ – must advise that soul, for his own good and that of the Work, to speak sincerely and confidently with his Directors, and if necessary, to ask that they change his Centre or his city. Exceptionally, because of the importance of the facts, because there is a clear incompatibility with the duties towards the Work, because of their impact on the harm of third parties, etc., this indication could go from being a simple advice of spiritual direction, to constituting a strict and serious obligation, according to the general norms of Moral Theology; an obligation that the priest must impose with the necessary fortitude, and in the way that persons and circumstances demand, even “imperatively” advising him to ask for his departure from the Work.<sup>[36]</sup>

To illustrate how this grave abuse is executed and the seal of confession compromised, one need go no further than the testimony of former Opus priest Father Vladimir Felzmann, who related the following story to Michael Walsh, author of *The Secret World of Opus Dei*:

One day, he [Felzmann] was visited by senior Opus Dei officials. It had come to their attention, they told him, that someone had confessed to him the sin... of homosexuality, yet Felzmann had not informed Rome. That, pointed out Felzmann, would have breached the seal of the confessional. The officials grudgingly conceded the point but told him he should have made the person involved, on the pain of not receiving absolution from his real or supposed sin, to come back to him or to someone else outside the confessional in the form of a confidence, so that the information may be used. Felzmann protested to the point of tears that this could still technically be construed as breaking the seal. The senior members would not accept this and rebuked him sharply for his want of loyalty to the organization.<sup>[37]</sup>

When the Opus officers faulted Father Felzmann for *not* having informed Rome that a penitent, presumably a male numerary or supernumerary, had confessed to the sin of homosexuality, what exactly did they mean? Since when are priests supposed to relate *anything* they hear in a sacramental confession to an outside source?

Both the question and the answer bring us to another level of the abuse of power endemic in the Prelature involving violation of the seal of confession, as well as the grave violation of conscience and right to privacy of Opus penitents.

### **Opus Dei Acts as a Super Intelligence Agency**

Based on the old adage “Knowledge is power,”<sup>[38]</sup> Opus Dei has emerged as one of the most important Catholic information gathering agencies in the world, second perhaps only to the Vatican itself. All kinds of information are gathered by Opus Dei like water in a reservoir, which in turn produces knowledge that the sect can use to advance its own institutional and corporate interests.

It was during the long reign of Pope John Paul II, especially during the twenty-two years (1984-2006) that Opus numerary Dr. Joaquín Navarro-Valls managed the Vatican Press Office, that the Prelature became a first-class power at the Vatican. Navarro-Valls was able to closely monitor the daily life of John Paul II. He accompanied the pope on all his trips and vacations, and quickly became second-in-command after the Polish priest Stanislaw Jan Dzieisz, the pope’s personal secretary.



*Joaquin Navarro-Valls*

This writer believes that Navarro-Valls – who resided in an apartment at Opus Dei’s Rome headquarters, a vast complex of concrete and brick known as the Villa Tevere<sup>[39]</sup> until his death in 2017<sup>[40]</sup> – became a treasure trove of valuable intelligence for the Prelature during these years, including all matter of secret information affecting the universal Church and its hierarchy.

Ex-Opus numeraries writing for *Opuslibros* report that the Prelature office in Rome maintains comprehensive secret dossiers on every bishop in the world, even [especially] when the bishop or cardinal in question is anti-Opus.

Of course, the Rome headquarters routinely maintains secret monthly written reports on all its members, past, present, and future, that include detailed personal and intimate data obtained from both the external and internal [confessional] forum (whether or not the report is true or false is irrelevant).

For example, under the office section labeled the “Apostolate of Friendship,” information derived from local directors and sent to the Regional Commission and then Rome, includes the aptitude of a potential member to occupy a key position in the Prelature or to develop certain “apostolates.” The section referred to as “Saints,” contains data on potential candidates that a member is attempting to recruit, including the individual’s familial and financial status, special talents and skills, level of piety and purity, and docility to obedience, etc.

The violation of privacy of married supernumerary members is particularly disgusting in that details of matters as intimate as their conjugal relation and spacing of children are grist for the Opus spiritual direction mill.

This gross invasion of personal privacy, along with violations involving sacramental confession as reported in the 2023 *Complaint*, is justified by Opus leaders, including the founder and his successors, on the grounds that Opus directors and other informants are helping in the formation and sanctification of Opus candidates and members and, like “a good doctor,” benefiting them.



## Corporate Fraud Involving the State and Civil Society<sup>[41]</sup>

As Opus classifies itself as a religious organization, officially Catholic, and as such commonly pays no taxes to government [with the exception of regulated business income], the financial oversight and filing of its annual report falls exclusively to the Vatican's Dicastery for Clergy, which has competence for all matters that pertain to the Holy See with regard to Personal Prelatures.

To date, no official [public] comprehensive account of the Work's finances – whether by the Vatican or any other source – exists, other than that which may be found in the vault of Opus Dei's Minister of Finance at the Villa Vecchia.

In the 2023 *Complaint Against Opus Dei*, the drafters of the document note that under the Opus praxis of “the end justifies the means,” the good of the Work is “the end” to be achieved, even when the “means” involve a moral evil.



*Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, Opus Dei Seminary in Rome.*

Among the charges of financial corruption made against the Prelature, is the praxis, crystalized over the years, of systematically using “black money,” that is, money on which tax is *not* paid to the government, thus violating:

- Limits on the cross-border transportation of money, avoiding bank transfers that leave traces.
- Tax obligations for not registering in some cases up to 100% of the contributions received.
- Tax or social security obligations in the case of employees, and continuously lying or falsifying working conditions.<sup>[42]</sup>

Other financial violations include the use of funds, collected and designated for social work among poor populations, for pet projects including the embellishment of Opus residences and centers.<sup>[43]</sup>



Wherever and whenever money is involved, the *Complaint* states, Opus exhibits “no moral considerations.”<sup>[44]</sup>

In economic matters, Opus Dei acts through opaque commercial companies, interposed, secretly controlled by the prelature. The prelature decides who works in each one, who the directors will be, which directors of the delegation or region will monitor them, attend their meetings, etc. By means of a blank signature on the resignation forms of its directors, the management and control of the directors is ensured. Through interposed companies, tax and social security regulations are fraudulently violated. These companies also enable the prelature to evade responsibilities for activities organized in Opus Dei centers [including schools, boys’ clubs, youth associations, apostolates, etc.]<sup>[45]</sup>

Through these structures, not only a certain legal impunity develops, but also an excessive desire for money, patrimonies, inheritances, legacies, and material wealth. In fact, around the year 2010, an Opus government note to directors advised the latter to “treat” [entertain] notaries, lawyers, etc., who had contact with older people with money and questionable offspring, as they would be in a position to suggest Opus Dei or one of its societies or apostolates as a beneficiary of their wills. ...<sup>[46]</sup>

The particular *Complaint* accusation that, “the patrimonial assets of the lay numeraries and associates are being emptied little by little,”<sup>[47]</sup> may be of special interests to grassroots Knights concerned about the possible exploitation of the Knights of Columbus insurance assets by an organization notorious, especially in Europe, for its highly secretive, irregular, and sometimes criminal financial scandals<sup>[48]</sup>

### **Opus Dei Evades Responsibility for Its Apostolates**

As already disclosed throughout this exposé, in Opusian finances, “the fiduciary holder is not independent but is dominated by the real holder, in this case, Opus Dei. This feature holds true for individual acts, contracts for leases of premises, Opusian residences, commercial companies, educational centers, or commercial banking companies or the titles of property of all kinds of goods. Thus members ‘holdings,’ are in fact, mere holders apparent on behalf of the real owners who hold effective power internally to [offset] any temptation for a member to take adverse action and sign away property or goods that Opus owns. That is why, in lists of members holding shares of assets, one sees the same names over and over again. Thus, “The fiduciary is a simple instrument of the real holders.”<sup>[49]</sup>

Opus Dei uses “front organizations” or “shell companies” to avoid responsibility and shield it from liability. Numeraries, who are assigned various roles in Opus corporate activities “are not given any information at any policy level without being implicated as being responsible for it, which makes it difficult to later denounce Opus’ actions – ‘Why didn’t you object at the time?’”<sup>[50]</sup>

For all these reasons and more, Opus Dei is frequently referred to by its ex-members as “a nursery for vulnerable adults.”

As we continue in this exposé on Opus Dei’s takeover of the Knights of Columbus, it is hoped that this information on the Work contributes to a better understanding of how that takeover was made possible and what it means for the future of the Knights of Columbus.

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<sup>[4]</sup> *Complaint*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>[2]</sup> See Juan Morales’ “Opus Dei: Its True Face,” as translated by “Santiago” (pseudonym) at [MYSTERIUM INIQUITATIS \(mysteriuminiquitatis-2thessalonians2.blogspot.com\)](http://MYSTERIUM_INIQUITATIS(mysteriuminiquitatis-2thessalonians2.blogspot.com)). Quotes from the original Morales article that appeared in Spanish in Madrid in December 1991 were subsequently found in a number of traditionalist publications including the Italian *Sodalitium* from (October-November 1996) and *Le Sel De la Terre* (No.11) and [Opus Dei: a strange pastoral phenomenon – District of the USA \(sspx.org\)](http://Opus_Dei:_a_strange_pastoral_phenomenon_-_District_of_the_USA(sspx.org)). However, it was not until February 7, 2024, that a complete translation of the Morales exposé was made available in English by Santiago on his website, [MYSTERIUM INIQUITATIS](http://MYSTERIUM_INIQUITATIS).

<sup>[3]</sup> Santiago, [OPUS DEI – TROJAN HORSE OF LIBERALISM IN THE CHURCH \(Part I\) \(mysteriuminiquitatis-2thessalonians2.blogspot.com\); OPUS DEI – TROJAN HORSE OF LIBERALISM IN THE CHURCH \(PART II\) \(mysteriuminiquitatis-2thessalonians2.blogspot.com\); OPUS DEI – TROJAN HORSE OF LIBERALISM IN THE CHURCH \(PART III\) \(mysteriuminiquitatis-2thessalonians2.blogspot.com\); OPUS DEI – TROJAN HORSE OF LIBERALISM IN THE CHURCH \(PART IV\) \(mysteriuminiquitatis-2thessalonians2.blogspot.com\); OPUS DEI – TROJAN HORSE OF LIBERALISM IN THE CHURCH \(PART V\) \(mysteriuminiquitatis-2thessalonians2.blogspot.com\); OPUS DEI – TROJAN HORSE OF LIBERALISM IN THE CHURCH \(PART VI\) \(mysteriuminiquitatis-2thessalonians2.blogspot.com\)](http://OPUS_DEI_-_TROJAN_HORSE_OF_LIBERALISM_IN_THE_CHURCH(Part_I)(mysteriuminiquitatis-2thessalonians2.blogspot.com);OPUS_DEI_-_TROJAN_HORSE_OF_LIBERALISM_IN_THE_CHURCH(PART_II)(mysteriuminiquitatis-2thessalonians2.blogspot.com);OPUS_DEI_-_TROJAN_HORSE_OF_LIBERALISM_IN_THE_CHURCH(PART_III)(mysteriuminiquitatis-2thessalonians2.blogspot.com);OPUS_DEI_-_TROJAN_HORSE_OF_LIBERALISM_IN_THE_CHURCH(PART_IV)(mysteriuminiquitatis-2thessalonians2.blogspot.com);OPUS_DEI_-_TROJAN_HORSE_OF_LIBERALISM_IN_THE_CHURCH(PART_V)(mysteriuminiquitatis-2thessalonians2.blogspot.com);OPUS_DEI_-_TROJAN_HORSE_OF_LIBERALISM_IN_THE_CHURCH(PART_VI)(mysteriuminiquitatis-2thessalonians2.blogspot.com)).

<sup>[4]</sup> Thierry quoting Escriva: “There will never be a school of thought or opinion proper to Opus Dei. Opus Dei believes in “political pluralism.” Thierry identifies Opus members as “full-fledged citizens of the secular city, a basic tenet of Opus Dei.”

<sup>[5]</sup> For an explanation of the love of the barren cross as an instrument of torture, not as a remembrance of Jesus crucified, see Randy Engel, *Marrano – A Novel of Faith, Mystery, Murder and Mayhem at the Vatican*, available from NEP, Export, PA, (2015). See also Santiago, Part I at [OPUS DEI – TROJAN HORSE OF LIBERALISM IN THE CHURCH \(Part I\) \(mysteriuminiquitatis-2thessalonians2.blogspot.com\)](http://OPUS_DEI_-_TROJAN_HORSE_OF_LIBERALISM_IN_THE_CHURCH(Part_I)(mysteriuminiquitatis-2thessalonians2.blogspot.com)).

<sup>[6]</sup> Robert Hutchison, *Their Kingdom Come*, Doubleday, NY, 1997, p.183.

<sup>[7]</sup> By their own admission, apostolic works organized by the Opus Dei, that are planned and governed from a lay mentality, are not confessional, that is, not specifically Catholic. According to Opus supernumerary Russell Shaw, the Work’s “apostolates are not ‘officially Catholic,’ since members of Opus Dei conduct them on their own and in collaboration with others who are not only NOT members of Opus Dei but, in many cases, not even Catholics.”

<sup>[8]</sup> See Articles 189 – 195 of Opus Dei’s 1950 Constitutions at the ODAN site at [ODAN – ODAN Opus Dei Awareness Network](http://ODAN_-_ODAN_Opus_Dei_Awareness_Network).

<sup>[9]</sup> See [Notre Charge Apostolique – Papal Encyclicals](http://Notre_Charge_Apostolique_-_Papal_Encyclicals); and [Fidentem piumque animum \(September 20, 1896\) | LEO XIII \(vatican.va\)](http://Fidentem_piumque_animum(September_20,_1896)_|_LEO_XIII(vatican.va)) and <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/leo13/113ro1.htm>.

<sup>[10]</sup> [Catechism of the Council of Trent.pdf \(catholicsociety.com\)](http://Catechism_of_the_Council_of_Trent.pdf(catholicsociety.com)), pp. 194-207.

<sup>[11]</sup> This writer’s eye-opening introduction to the “new priesthood” of Opus clergy was an interview with supernumerary Marc Brammer in the *South Bend Tribune* in 2006 in which Brammer commented on the large number of Opus priests being ordained and said, “These are the guys who will recast and shape the role of the priest.”

<sup>[12]</sup> Msgr. Escriva quoted by Santiago. Source: Salvador Bernal, *Monseñor Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer. Apuntes sobre la vida del Fundador del Opus Dei*; Rialp, Madrid, 1980, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, p. 87

<sup>[13]</sup> Doserra at [Opuslibros – The Deformation of the Figure of the Priest in Opus Dei \(I\).- Doserra](http://Opuslibros_-_The_Deformation_of_the_Figure_of_the_Priest_in_Opus_Dei(I).-Doserra).

<sup>[14]</sup> Jean Jacques Thierry, *Opus Dei – A Close-up*, Cortland Press, NY, 1973, p. 95. Translated from the French by Gilda Roberts in 1975, pp. 155-156. With regard to Escriva’s obsession with loving the world, the following commentary by Argentinian priest Father Julio Meinvielle found in Santiago’s Part IV “Opus Dei: ‘Reconciling’ the City and God and the City of Man,” may prove helpful to the reader:

“Be not conformed to this world; but be reformed in the *newness* of your mind, that you may prove what is the good, and the acceptable, and the perfect will of God.” Romans 12.2. According to Father Meinvielle, ... “This rejection of the world does not allude to an *ontological* but to a *mystical* contempt.” That is, the world itself as God’s creation (the ontological aspect, which is good) is not to be despised. The “mystical contempt for the world refers to the Earthly City with its unholy trinity of allurements traditionally referred to as ‘the world, the devil, and the flesh.’”

[15] See [OPUS DEI – TROJAN HORSE OF LIBERALISM IN THE CHURCH \(PART II\) \(mysteriuminiquitatis-2thessalonians2.blogspot.com\)](#). Original quote of Escrivá is found in Salvador Bernal’s *Monseñor Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer. Apuntes sobre la vida del Fundador del Opus Dei*; Rialp, Madrid 1980, 6<sup>a</sup> ed., p152.

[16] Dossera.

[17] Dossera at [Opuslibros – The Deformation of the Figure of the Priest in Opus Dei \(I\).- Dossera](#).

[18] Dossera [Opuslibros – Slavery Regime of Opus Dei Priests \(II\).- Dossera](#).

[19] This assertion runs counter to Opus Dei’s policies that reject for membership any candidate that demonstrates an inclination toward the priesthood or religious life. Anyone coming to Opus and asking to be admitted as an Opus Dei seminarian is turned away. Also rejected are any former members of religious orders or Third Order societies including monks, nuns, novices, and postulants. Opus only ordains its own numeraries who have served the Work for approximately ten years and are known to be thoroughly obedient and imbued with the “lay mentality.”

[20] Jean Jacques Thierry, p. 57.

[21] The Directors of Opus “seminarians” also assigns them to their seminary either in Rome or Spain; tells them what they should study (canon law, theology, etc.); and makes the final decision as to whether or not they will be ordained. It should be noted that these candidates to the priesthood are never out of the control of the Prelature. These men live in a “limbo” from two to five years, that is, from the time they are told by Opus officials they have been selected by Opus to train for the priesthood until they are either ordained or returned to their previous residence as numeraries.

[22] Thierry, pp. 59-60. Escrivá stated that after ordination, priests may continue to exercise their former occupation as their “professional work,” continues to be part of the divine vocation. (Letter *Multum usum* 29.IX, 1957, 9).

[23] Bishop Javier Echevarría ordained 42 new priests for the Prelature of Opus Dei in the Basilica of St. Eugene in Rome on May 21, 2005. Priests came from Nigeria, U.S., Philippines, and various European and Latin American countries. In May 2021, Opus member Archbishop Georg Gänswein, former prefect of the Papal Household and private secretary of Benedict XVI, ordained 27 priests of the Opus Dei prelature in the Basilica of Saint Eugene in Rome. The Prelate of Opus Dei, Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz, participated in the ceremony from the presbytery, and laid hands on the new priests after the consecrating bishop. See video at [Archbishop Gänswein Ordains 27 Priests from 14 Countries – Opus Dei](#). Earlier records show that Opus ordained 22 numeraries in 1964; 29 in 1971; and 51 in 1973 including members from Spain, France, USA, and Italy.

[24] Dossera, “The Deformation...”

[25] It is only gradually that Opus members are introduced to the double-coded language of the sect. According to one ex-member, by this time their conscience is “frozen.”

[26] The only priests that hold office in Opus Dei are the Prelate and his vicars. In the General Council there are usually only four priests; all the others – in number without comparison greater – are lay people. In the Regional Commissions, the only Priest Directors are the Counsellor and the Priest Secretary; all the others are also lay people. Local governments are always made up of lay people. It can be assured, therefore, that the laity have a very large majority in the positions of government of the Work” (Letter *Ad servendum*, 8.VIII.1956, n. 7). See also, Oráculo, “Freedom of Conscience in Opus Dei,” *Opuslibros* at [Freedom.pdf \(opuslibros.org\)](#)

[27] Oráculo, “Freedom of Conscience in Opus Dei,” *Opuslibros*, [Freedom.pdf \(opuslibros.org\)](#).

[28] See [Opuslibros – Vademecum of Priests](#). This is one of many Opus internal documents posted on *Opuslibros* to validate the claims made against the Work.

[29] “Herald,” “According to the Father’s Mind,” *Opuslibros*, March 3, 2013.

[30] One of the irregular and dangerous aspects of Opus spiritual direction is that members are required to perform the “manifestation of conscience,” which has been outlawed by the Church for more than a hundred years. Religious superiors, much more secularized lay directors, are rigorously forbidden to directly or indirectly induce their subjects by precept, advice, fear, threats, or praise, to render to them a manifestation of conscience of this kind. (The “Quemadmodum” Decree of December 17, 1890).

[31] *Catechism of Opus Dei*, p. 221.

[32] [Opuslibros – Slavery Regime of Opus Dei Priests \(II\).- Dossera](#).

[33] As described by Robert Hutchison in *Their Kingdom Come*, the *Vademecum* is a seven-volume set of books, written in Spanish, that covers all matter of internal details on Opus life, practices and regulations. He may be referring to the secret Opus documents referred to in the 2023 *Complaint* which consists of 46 volumes.

[34] *Ibid.* p. 41.

[35] *Ibid.*, p.53.

[36] Reference to *The Experiences of Pastoral Practice*, pages 263-264, is found in Dossera, “Slavery Regime.”

[37] Michael Walsh, *The Secret World of Opus Dei*, Grafton Books, London, 1989, p.119. Feltzman left the organization in 1982, 23 years after joining Opus Dei, and became a priest of the Westminster Diocese, London, England.

[38] Although knowledge and information are related, they are not synonymous; the former is the awareness, understanding, or skill that is derived from experience or education, and the latter are the facts, data or details that are gathered on a subject.

[39] The name of the Villa Tevere (Villa Tiber) has been changed to the Villa Vecchia (Old Villa). It is a massive cement complex with a decorative front veneer that covers 77 different buildings and contains multiple chapels, elaborate apartment dwellings for the Prelate and his officers, and underground tunnels. The Casa del Uffici houses the General Council, the men’s central government, and the Villa Sacchetti, the segregated women’s division, Central Advisory, aka no vote. As Robert Hutchison describes it in *Their Kingdom Come*, it is a barred and “walled city state” deep in the heart of Rome.

<sup>[40]</sup> Navarro-Valls continued to serve as the Vatican press secretary under Pope Benedict XVI until 2006. Afterwards, important Vatican news continued to flow into Opus headquarters from Benedict's personal secretary, Archbishop Georg Gänswein, a priest of Opus Dei, who served as a Professor of Canon Law at Opus' Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome for at least five years. After Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi left the Vatican press office in 2016, he was replaced by Opus numerary Greg Burke. Pope Francis selected Matteo Bruni as head of the Vatican press office in 2019. Bruni is a member of the Sant'Egidio Community.

<sup>[41]</sup> See Hutchison, "Moneybags Theology," *Their Kingdom Come*. Pp. 339-352.

<sup>[42]</sup> 2023 *Complaint*, p. 13.

<sup>[43]</sup> Ibid.

<sup>[44]</sup> Ibid.

<sup>[45]</sup> Ibid., p.14.

<sup>[46]</sup> Ibid.

<sup>[47]</sup> 2023 *Complaint*, p. 14.

<sup>[48]</sup> For detailed studies of Opus' major financial scandals some including murder, or the threat of murder, see Robert Hutchison's *Their Kingdom Come* which highlights the Rumsa/Ruiz-Mateos Affair; the Matesa Case; and the Gregorio Ortega Pardo money and jewelry heist.

<sup>[49]</sup> *Opuslibros*, "Without Fear of Opus Dei," November 11, 2017, p.4.

<sup>[50]</sup> This important insight was made by the late Opus numerary, Dennis Dubro. A physicist by training, he was, nevertheless, sent as an accountant to an Opus Catholic men's dormitory known as Warrane College in Sydney, Australia. Dubro found out that Opus members were financially "cooking the books," and brought the matter to the attention of Opus officials who ignored him. When he publicly complained of the financial corruption, Dubro ended up being blamed for the financial discrepancies, was removed from office, and later dismissed from the Work without due process. Dubro sued Opus Dei in a New York court, but the case was dismissed due to a technicality. See [ODAN – ODAN Opus Dei Awareness Network](#).



*Paul VI (left) with Cardinal Albino Luciani of Venice, the future John Paul I, who called Opus Dei founder Josemaría Escrivá "a revolutionary priest... vaulting over traditional barriers to become another St. Francis de Sales."*



## CHAPTER SIX

### Biographies on Russell Shaw and Carl Anderson

#### Introduction

As noted in Chapter One of this exposé, because so much of Opus Dei's intrigues are shrouded in the deepest of secrecy, it's impossible for outsiders to know exactly when the ruling Council of the Prelature in Rome approved the move to take over the Knights of Columbus.

However, a closer look at two key players in the stealth acquisition, namely Russell Shaw and Carl Anderson – each being well-known members of both Opus Dei and Knights of Columbus – provides a probable estimation of the mid-1980s, or more specifically, 1987. It was in this year that both men left their respective jobs to take up key positions in the Knights' national public relation headquarters in Washington D.C.

The fact that Supreme Knight Virgil Dechant hired both Opus members for key positions in the Knights of Columbus at about the same time indicates that Dechant may have been caught up in the Prelature's powerful orbit, whether or not he was ever formally a member himself.

#### Biographical Summary on Russell Shaw

The following information on Russell Shaw was gleaned from several hundred pages in my office files with articles dating back to the late 1960s and 1970s when “Company Man” Shaw worked for the newly incorporated National Conference of Catholic Bishops/United States Catholic Conference (NCCB/USCC). This was approximately 18 years before he became the “Company Man” for Opus Dei and for the Knights of Columbus.<sup>[11](#)</sup>

Born on May 19, 1935, in Washington, D.C., the second child of Charles Burnham Shaw, a non-Catholic New Englander and career army officer, who retired with the rank of colonel. His mother, Mary Russell Shaw, was a mid-Westerner and devout Catholic.

The young Shaw attended both public and parochial schools, among them, Gonzaga High School and Georgetown University where he graduated *summa cum laude* with a B.A. in 1956, earning his Master's Degree in English literature in 1960.



In 1958, Shaw married Carmen Carbon. They are the parents and grandparents of 5 children and 10 grandchildren respectively, and they are parishioners of Our Lady of Victory Parish (OLV) in Washington, D.C.

In a history of the parish that Shaw wrote for the church's website, it appears that OLV was a casualty of the Second Vatican Council and never recovered [my opinion, not Shaw's].

After the Council, liturgical Latin gave way to English in the Mass at OLV, and the main altar was resituated so that the celebrant could face the congregation. Lay lectors made their appearance there in 1968 and, in time, they were followed by lay ministers of Holy Communion. By the early 1970s, a number of ministries were open to women. A parish council was instituted at OLV in 1967. There is no indication that Shaw was distressed by these "developments."

In 1960, Shaw got his first job with *The Catholic Standard*, the diocesan newspaper for Archdiocese of Washington, D.C.

The following year, 1961, he joined the staff of the National Catholic Welfare Conference's News Service, which later became the better-known Catholic News Service (CNS) where he worked for 9 years, rising in the ranks to the national news desk

In 1969, two years after the old DC-based National Catholic Welfare Conference was transformed into the monstrous bicameral bureaucracy called the National Conference of Catholic Bishops/U.S. Catholic Conference (NCCB/USCC), Shaw joined the liberal, left, and homosexual-dominated bureau<sup>[2]</sup> as Director of the National Catholic Office for Information, later serving as Secretary for Public Affairs, positions he held for 18 years.



*Russell Shaw*

## Russell Shaw joins Opus Dei in 1980

Although Shaw states that he knew about Opus Dei around 1965 and was attracted by the concept of “a lay vocation,” [and possibly attended some Opus’ evenings of recollection and/or went to confession to an Opus priest – RE], he did not formally join the “Work” until 1980, after which his writing career really took off and he became a devoted champion of everything Opus. Shaw was particularly impressed by Escriva’s first successor, Father Alvaro del Portillo,<sup>[3]</sup> and by Opus’ ostensibly revolutionary promise of sanctifying the ordinary things of life, most especially work.

In October 1982, when the John Paul II Institute for the Family (a key entity in this exposé) was founded in Rome with backing from Opus Dei, Shaw became an Institute member. This connection is important because, in 1987, both Shaw and Anderson would leave their jobs for the Public Policy Office of the Knights of Columbus in Washington, D.C., and begin the long task of taking over the Knights for Opus.

## Shaw Promotes Opus as “God’s Work”

On January 1, 1985, Shaw published one of his early promotional booklets for Opus titled “Working for God the World Over – On the Nature and Spirit of Opus Dei,” printed by Opus’ Scepter Press.<sup>[4]</sup> Although Shaw assures his readers that “members don’t advertise their membership, neither do they conceal it” and Opus’ “purpose and programs are an open book,” he does not identify himself as a supernumerary of Opus anywhere in the text.<sup>[5]</sup>

Shaw repeats many of the myths concerning Opus, including the touted premise, “that they (members) can love and serve God without giving up their ordinary work, their family life, and their normal social relations.”<sup>[6]</sup>

He states that Opus “reaches out to people of all creeds [religion], races, tribes and social conditions,”<sup>[7]</sup> which clearly registers the Work as an instrument of “liberalism,” a heresy condemned by a long succession of popes including Pope Gregory XVI in his 1882 encyclical *Mirari Vos – On Liberalism and Religious Indifferentism*<sup>[8]</sup>; Pope Pius IX in his famed 1864 *Syllabus of Errors*,<sup>[9]</sup> Pope Leo XIII in the 1888 encyclical *Libertas* On the Nature of Human Liberty,<sup>[10]</sup> and Pope St. Pius X’s 1910 Apostolic Mandate, *Notre Charge Apostolique*,<sup>[11]</sup> in which the pope condemns the errors of the French Sillon Movement that shared some of the dangerous practices of Opus Dei.

Shaw notes that Cardinal Albino Luciani of Venice, the future Pope John Paul I, called Opus founder Josemaría Escriva “a revolutionary priest... vaulting over traditional barriers to become another St Francis de Sales,”<sup>[12]</sup> and a master of the spiritual life.<sup>[13]</sup> According to Shaw, however, Escriva comes in first for whereas “St. Francis taught only a ‘spirituality’ [religious] for lay people, Escriva wants a ‘lay spirituality.’”<sup>[14]</sup>

Shaw reports that Opus apostolates are conducted by members on their own initiatives which embody the lay-mentality spirit and purposes of Opus Dei but makes the unusual statement that these institutions are not really Catholic, that is to say, they are not “apostolates” in the traditional sense of the word. They are by their own admission “non-confessional,” which according to Opus critic Santiago means that “they are *not* born from Catholic principles and oriented towards exclusively Catholic ends and objectives.”<sup>[15]</sup>

Although these institutions – universities, schools, study centers, student residences, conference centers, and professional or vocational training institutes of various kinds – have an apostolic purpose, **they are not officially “Catholic,”** since members of Opus Dei conduct them on their own and in collaboration with others who are not only NOT members of Opus Dei but, in many cases, not even Catholics (bold added). Opus Dei itself takes responsibility only for the spiritual and doctrinal aspects of the program of these institutions, not for their practical and professional management. Opus Dei’s specific mission is the formation and motivation of its members as they strive for sanctity and carry on apostolates wherever they live and work. <sup>[16]</sup>

Shaw’s comments on Opus’ recruitment techniques and the role of parents are especially enlightening:

Why do people join? The answer is that they receive a vocation of God. ... The criteria for membership aren’t income, education, social status, race, or similar considerations. [But the very poor, handicapped, very ugly and deformed, and former members of other religious institutions, need not apply. – RE].

Opus Dei observes canonical and common-sense requirements regarding commitment and vocation. The earliest age at which an individual can formally apply for membership is sixteen-and-a-half. But someone applying at that age may not make even a temporarily binding commitment until he or she is 18. ... Moreover, no lifetime commitment can be made earlier than age 23.

**When and how parents are consulted depends on individual circumstances**(bold added). But parents are, naturally, always aware of their

children's growing interest in Opus Dei, and Opus Dei itself encourages parental involvement before as well as after a vocational commitment is made. ...

Opus has recruited minors as young as 12 to 15 years of age, especially poor young girls in developing nations to serve as celibate numerary assistants/servants and maids. Opus scraps the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment, "Honor thy father and mother."<sup>[17]</sup>

## The Divinization of Work

Shaw's mistaken commentary on work is equally revealing:

"Make no mistake about it," Monsignor Escriva once said, "Man's duty to work is not a consequence of original sin, nor is it just a discovery of modern times."

Unfortunately, the quote does not distinguish between before and after sin as is made clear in *Genesis 3:17-18*.<sup>[18]</sup> And if I recall my childhood *Catechism*, man was not created "to work" but to "Know, love and serve God in this world, so that we may be happy with Him in the next."

Did not Saint Paul make it clear that no matter the depth or breath of our activity, including all forms of good works, "if we have not charity... we become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal... we are nothing... it profits us nothing" (1 Corinthians 13.1-3)?



Rabbi Angel Kreiman with John Paul II

As an interesting sidenote on the subject of the divinizing of work, according to Rabbi Angel Kreiman, the former international Vice President of the World Council of Synagogues and an Opus cooperator, "Many of Josemaria Escriva's concepts call to mind the Talmudic tradition and reveal his profound knowledge of the Jewish world." Kreiman claimed that the Talmudic interpretation of work was a central teaching of Escriva.<sup>[19]</sup>

On the other hand, in *Saints and Schemers*, Professor Joan Estruch makes an excellent argument for the similarities between "the sanctification of work" in Opus and the Protestantism- Calvinism work ethic minus the baggage of predestination.<sup>[20]</sup>



Either way, Opus' doctrine of the sanctification of work is not Catholic. God put man in the Garden of Eden to save his soul by carrying out His commandments.<sup>[21]</sup> The World was made for man and man was made for God.

Regarding the spirituality of Opus Dei, Shaw states that it is a combination "of traditional elements of Catholic piety and the doctrine according to the letter and spirit of Vatican Council II."<sup>[22]</sup>

"Ideas like lay initiative and sanctity in the world were avant-garde novelties when Opus Dei began, but especially since Vatican Council II, they've come to be widely appreciated," Shaw claims approvingly.<sup>[23]</sup>

Interestingly enough, however, Shaw fails to acknowledge that Escriva's "novel" ideas on holiness as regards the laity were not exclusive nor original to him when proposed in 1928.

Christ called everyone to holiness, did He not? "Be you perfect as also your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48) is an invocation to mirror God, to be a reflection of His goodness. And the Apostles, and their successors, along with the Fathers of the Church and the saints down through the ages have continued to proclaim this truth. And so it was from the beginning.

But getting closer to Escriva's time, I should point out that there were two similar religious movements in Spain about the same period that the founder of Opus Dei was promoting his new vision for the Catholic Church.

On the positive side, there was the founding of a new religious institute in Barcelona called the Parochial Cooperators of Christ the King founded by Father Francisco de Paula Vallet, a Jesuit-trained and well-known preacher and retreat master. Vallet devoted himself and the institute to popularizing a shortened version of the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius. Between 1923 to 1927, an astounding 12,500 laymen and young adults took his retreats. The primary themes of the five-day retreats were centered upon eternal salvation, the importance of Confession, and "living in the state of grace."<sup>[24]</sup>

Ironically, Vallet's work was later suppressed by certain members of the Spanish hierarchy and the priest expelled from Spain, just about the time that Escriva's new theology and vision for the Catholic Church was on the rise in Spain.

On the negative side, a second religious movement percolating in Spain's liberal intellectual circles and Masonic halls in the mid-to-late 1920s traced its roots to none other than the French Jesuit paleontologist, theologian, and philosopher, and heretic Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.

The following quotations are taken from Chardin's book, *The Divine Milieu*<sup>[25]</sup> written between November 1926 and March 27, 1927, at least two years before Escriva announced his vision for Opus Dei. Credit for this extraordinary find, which demonstrates the close similarities between Escriva's and Chardin's concept of the "divinization" of work (activity), belongs to Santiago as part of his "Opus Dei – Trojan Horse of Liberation" series.<sup>[26]</sup>

In *The Divine Milieu*, a reflection of Chardin's early religious views, the dedication reads, "To those who love the world." It continues:

Because we believe intensely and with a pure heart in the world, the world will open the arms of God to us. It is for us to throw ourselves into these arms that the divine *milieu* should close around our lives in a circle.<sup>[27]</sup>

Each one of our works, by its more or less remote or direct effect upon the spiritual world, helps to make perfect Christ in his mystical totality. Our work [our opus<sup>[28]</sup>] appears to us, in the main, as a way of earning our daily bread. But its essential virtue is on a higher level; through it we complete in ourselves the subject of the divine union...<sup>[29]</sup>



*Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*

To repeat: by virtue of the Creation and, still more of the Incarnation, *nothing* here below is *profane* for those who know how to see. On the contrary, everything is sacred to the men who can distinguish that portion of chosen being which is subject to Christ's drawing power in the process of consummation.<sup>[30]</sup> This is not simply a commonplace precept for salvation: it is the very path to sanctity for each man according to his state and calling.<sup>[31]</sup> Why should there not be men vowed to the task of exemplifying, by their lives, the general sanctification of human endeavor?<sup>[32]</sup>... Right from the hands that knead the dough, to those that consecrate it, the great and universal Host should be prepared and handled in a spirit of *adoration*.<sup>[33]</sup>

Without denying that some Christians, by their words more than their deeds, do give grounds for the reproach of being, if not the “enemies,” at least the “stragglers” of the human race, we can safely assert, after what we said above concerning the supernatural value of our work on earth, their attitude is due to an incomplete understanding and not at all to some ineradicable flaw in our religion.<sup>[34]</sup>

The Christian knows that his function is to divinize the world in Jesus Christ.<sup>[35]</sup>

The text of Shaw’s 1985 booklet, “Working for God,” ends with a tribute to the alleged “freedom” which Opus members share and the “universal call to holiness” as proclaimed by Vatican II.<sup>[36]</sup>

The reader may want to reread Shaw’s analysis, for although it was written more than 38 years ago, it still summarizes Opus Dei’s current propaganda schtick almost to the letter.

### **Shaw’s Multiple Catholic Writing Outlets**

In addition to writing more than 20 books, Shaw’s columns and articles on Catholicism were and continue to be widely distributed in the United States, especially in Opus-controlled Catholic newspapers, magazines, the diocesan media, and the Knights of Columbus magazine *Columbia*. Below is a short selection of his opinions on topics which I believe will be of special interest to the reader, and which generally reflect the mindset of Opus literary clones like Shaw *without* revealing their membership in the Prelature.

### **Shaw “On the Politics of Hate”**

In the February 1989 issue of *Crisis Magazine*, Shaw wrote “The Politics of Hate – What’s Wrong With Right-wing Catholics,” the title of which speaks for itself. According to Shaw, his wife put her finger on something about conservative Catholics today.

“Whether or not they intend it, they frequently come across as good haters,” Shaw pontificates. Their actions, including publicly criticizing bishops, are “self-destructive.”

So, what’s the solution to reigning in heretical, gnostic prelates? According to Shaw, who spent a good part of his life at the NCCB/USCC defending homosexual clerics like the conjoined faggotry team of Bishop Joseph Bernardin<sup>[37]</sup> and Father James S.

Rausch,<sup>[38]</sup> we should follow the advice of John Henry Newman and “Let us pray for them, not abandon them.”

## **Shaw Attacks Sex Ed Opponents**

As public information officer for the NCCB/USCC, Russel Shaw has been hawking so-called “sex education” in parochial schools since the early 1980s.

In February of 1995, diocesan papers across the country featured an article by Shaw titled “The unwinnable war over chastity ed,” in which he knocked opponents of classroom sex initiation programs, claiming such groups [like Mothers’ Watch] misinterpret papal texts which condemn public sex instruction for children across the board.<sup>[39]</sup>

Shaw disclosed that he has a “vested interest in the whole matter,” as he was serving on the Board of Directors that sponsors the (un)-chastity program Teen STAR. He did not note, or perhaps he didn’t know at the time, that Knights of Columbus financed the diocesan program,<sup>[40]</sup> and that Opus Dei member Veronica Pierson was Teen STAR’s coordinator in England.<sup>[41]</sup> Shaw argues for a “wholesome, authentically Catholic” sex initiation program. That obviously includes Teen STAR created by feminist sister and doctor, Hanna Klaus.

The formal title, Teen STAR: SEXUALITY TEACHING IN THE CONTEXT OF ADULT RESPONSIBILITY, may well indicate to the reader that, although it obviously escaped the attention of Shaw, a sex/fertility awareness program designed for high school and junior high school students which directs young teen girls to plot their fertility cycles by examining their vaginal mucus, and young boys to chart their emotional mood swings, wet dreams, testosterone levels and other personal sexual data, hardly meets Shaw’s, let alone any traditional Catholic’s definition of “wholesome” and “authentically Catholic.”

Add the fact that the Teen STAR program includes disguised sexual behavior modification techniques; enough reproductive anatomy and physiological data to insure a degree in obstetrics and gynecology; detailed information on masturbation; sexual response; sexual orientation; all forms of birth control, including abortifacient IUDs and the Pill, and sexually transmitted diseases.

It also includes witty suggestions like, “There are many ways to give and receive sexual pleasure and not have intercourse,” with all this cast in a secular, feminist, Sangerite framework.<sup>[42]</sup>

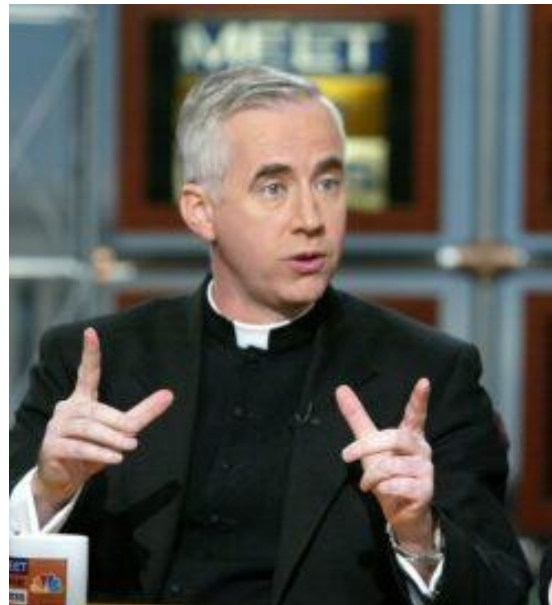


## Shaw and the Ill-fated McCloskey Saga

In 2007, Ignatius Press published *Good News, Bad News: Evangelization, Conversion, and the Crisis of Faith* by Russell Shaw and the popular celebrity Opus priest and former numerary Rev. C. John McCloskey III.<sup>[43]</sup>

The event and date may not be immediately significant to the reader, but it is related to the explosive sex abuse case involving Father McCloskey, the Director of Opus' Catholic Information Center (CIC) in Washington, D.C., and a middle age Opus female devotee,<sup>[44]</sup> which didn't become public knowledge until early January 2019, that is more than a decade after *Good News, Bad News* was released.

For readers whose minds are a bit fuzzy about McCloskey's sexual misadventures, let me lay out the basic details which will help put the Shaw and McCloskey collaboration into a meaningful context.



Father C. John McCloskey

## Opus Dei Shields Sex Abuser

In November 2002, the Prelature received a complaint of sexual misconduct against the popular EWTN figure and conservative activist, Father John McCloskey, from a 40-year-old woman receiving spiritual direction from the Opus priest.<sup>[45]</sup>

The victim said she was groped several times by McCloskey during their pastoral counseling sessions that involved her marital troubles and serious depression. Ironically, it was she who suffered guilt and shame, not McCloskey. At one point, she went to confession to her abuser, whom, she claimed, absolved her of "her sins."

If true, this was an excommunicable and reserved offense by McCloskey.<sup>[46]</sup> But, as far as we know, this did not overly distress Opus officials who have difficulty in distinguishing between God's work and Opus – they are one and the same for the Prelature.

It took Opus management a year after the first of three sexual abuse complaints was filed to remove McCloskey from the Catholic Information Center in 2003, at which time it was decided to get McCloskey out of the country until the fires of scandal faded

away. He was sent to an Opus residence in London where he was actively engaged in conservative Catholic and Opus circles.

While McCloskey was cooling his heels in England, after extended legal negotiations beginning in 2004, the victim received a whopping settlement of \$977,000, which was donated, according to Opus, by an undisclosed Prelature patron. The 2005 settlement included a mutual non-disclosure agreement meaning that for all practical purposes, the McCloskey scandal would be kept secret from the public including Opus Dei's general membership.

In January 2005, confident that the almost one-million-dollar payout would ensure indefinite confidentiality, Opus officials in Rome brought McCloskey back to the States and resettled him in the Archdiocese of Chicago under Cardinal Francis George, OMI. Opus informed Cardinal George of the details of the sexual abuse incident and promised him that the priest would be kept on a tight leash. That promise was not kept.<sup>[47]</sup> McCloskey kept his faculties and continued to hear confessions and say Mass at St. Mary of the Angels and other churches in the Chicago area.<sup>[48]</sup>

### Shaw Teams Up with McCloskey

According to McCloskey, the idea for collaborating on a book about “respect for the dignity of the human person and his interior freedom,” came from the retired Shaw during an earlier visit by the journalist to see McCloskey at the CIC in Washington, D.C.<sup>[49]</sup> Shaw believed that McCloskey was the personification of the ideal Catholic evangelizer and proselytizer.

Opus officials (I'd like to think), failed to inform Shaw that such was not the case.: McCloskey had engaged in criminal actions, even though he hadn't spent a day in jail.

Not only did Opus fail to take immediate action to quell the co-writing of the book between Opus members Shaw and McCloskey, when *Good News, Bad News: Evangelization, Conversion, and the Crisis of Faith* was released by Ignatius Press in 2007, McCloskey was endlessly praised in the Opus-controlled Catholic press for his abilities as “a friend and teacher” to make Catholic converts, especially rich and influential converts.<sup>[50]</sup>



Here is a sampling of the adulation poured out on McCloskey by an almost exclusively loyal but largely clueless Opus cliental when *Good News, Bad News* made its way into print:

Father C. John McCloskey is one of the most dynamic apostles of Jesus I have ever known. He has the ability to present the good news of our redemption through the saving life, death, and resurrection of Our Lord persuasively, enthusiastically, invitingly. ... 'This is a must read.' ~*William E. May*<sup>[51]</sup>

From personal experience, I can testify that Father C. John McCloskey is one of America's great Catholic evangelizers. This book is a unique, fascinating guide of how and why to convert and it should be must reading for all Catholics. ~*Robert D. Novak*<sup>[52]</sup>

Through their friendship and their family life, Catholics converted the Roman Empire, one person at a time. This book shows you how it was done, and how it's still done today. It's a book that can change the world all over again. ~*Dr. Scott Hahn*<sup>[53]</sup>

This book ranks with Karl Stern's *Pillar of Fire* and Thomas Merton's *Seven Storey Mountain* as an indispensable spiritual road map for the perplexed, the sorely bent and the broken. ... ~*Dr. Bernard Nathanson*<sup>[54]</sup>

No matter where you are in your spiritual journey, pick this book up and be transformed both inside and out. ~*Raymond Arroyo*<sup>[55]</sup>

When it comes to leading people into full communion with the Catholic Church, Fulton J. Sheen was the John McCloskey of his day. ~*Robert P. George*<sup>[56]</sup>

I've often wished that the call to Christian witness could come with a user's manual. Now it does, and the book is written by two true heroes of the apostolate. Do the world a favor and read this book today! ~*Mike Aquilina*<sup>[57]</sup>

... McCloskey and Shaw have provided us with an indispensable guide for bringing others to where we are all called – home to Christ and his Catholic Church, the home of Truth and Divine Love. ~*Samuel Gregg*<sup>[58]</sup>

In McCloskey and Shaw we have examples of men who contradict the vacuous dictum that those who cannot do, teach. They teach what they have done, and have done well. What they say is both faithful and reasonable and the combination has already affected many lives. ~*Fr. George William Rutler*<sup>[59]</sup>

Fr. C. John McCloskey has written a book from an uncommon vantage point: the perspective of a clear-eyed, optimistic Christian who focuses, not on the obstacles to religious belief in our society, but on the incredible opportunities for evangelization. ~*Christopher Wolfe*<sup>[60]</sup>

McCloskey and Shaw have put forth a clarion call to the laity to proclaim the Gospel and defend the Faith. *Good News, Bad News* is filled with inspiring stories, concrete advice, and a clear theological vision of what it means to be a disciple and witness of Jesus Christ in a culture in desperate need of the Truth. ~*Carl Olson*<sup>[61]</sup>

*Good News* gives Christians of today a clear guide on how to reach out to people and disseminate the truth about life. The many personal stories about how human beings opened their souls to the Lord's calling have one implicit element in common: McCloskey's extending himself to meet and understand human beings as they are. God does the conversion, but McCloskey has helped open minds and hearts by an apostleship based on prayer, knowledge about his faith, example, and courage. ~*Alejandro Antonio Chafuen*<sup>[62]</sup>

Without conversion there will be no evangelization, that is the good news and the bad news. The call to change is the very heart of the gospel and the new evangelization demands it. ~*Bishop Nicholas Di Marzio*<sup>[63]</sup>

"Evangelizing" sometimes has a bad name. But Father McCloskey and Russell Shaw show why this needn't be the case. In fact, they explain why evangelization is every Christian's responsibility and how to evangelize with both zeal and genuine respect for others. ~*Sen. Rick Santorum*<sup>[64]</sup>

Readers are guaranteed to find this book highly intelligent, unabashedly orthodox, and splendidly readable. The team of "Fr. C. John" and Russell Shaw would be very difficult to beat. ~*Thomas Howard*<sup>[65]</sup>

One can only wonder at how these and thousands of other faithful Opus supporters, most especially Russell Shaw, reacted when the McCloskey scandal made front page news in January of 2019, and Opus officials were forced to admit that they were aware of the priest's sexual attacks on a vulnerable Opus-sympathetic women as early as 2002, but skillfully hid the facts of the case for over 16 years.

Fr. Charles John McCloskey III died on February 23, 2023.

Russell Shaw, who played a major role in the Opus takeover of the Knights remains an influential Catholic writer and advocate for the Prelature till this day.



## Biographical Notes on Carl Anderson



*Supreme Knight Carl Anderson receives 2016 “The Human Life Review Great Defender of Life Award.”*

My notations on Carl Anderson, the second key figure in this exposé on the takeover of the Knights by Opus Dei are not as copious as those for Russell Shaw as there are long periods of time when there is an almost total blackout of his occupational activities. This is particularly so it as relates to his systematic rise up the Knights’ corporate ladder beginning in 1987 and consummating in his election as the thirteenth Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus on October 2000, a post he kept for twenty-one years, much to the advantage of Opus.

For this writer, the main difference between Shaw and Anderson is that I have never met the former, whereas I was well acquainted with Anderson when he was beginning his political career in Washington, D.C. and continuing through the Reagan Administration years.

### **Anderson Joins Senator Helms Staff**

Born on February 27, 1951, in Torrington, CT., lawyer Carl Andrew Anderson received a Bachelor’s degree in Philosophy in 1972 from Seattle University, a private Jesuit

Catholic institution, and his law degree from the University of Denver in 1975. He is a member of the Bar Association of the District of Columbia.

In the early 1970s, this writer, as founder and Director of the U.S. Coalition for Life (USCL) – a prolife research agency specializing in anti-life federal government, domestic and foreign legislation – was in regular contact with prolife Congressional and Senatorial aides, including the implacable prolifer, James Lucier, Chief Legislative Aide for Foreign Affairs in the office of Republican Senator Jesse Helms (N.C.).

One of Senator Helms' first prolife acts following the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision of January 22, 1973, was to attach an anti-abortion rider to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (FAA).<sup>[66]</sup> In 1974, Helms also introduced a (no exception) Human Life Constitutional Amendment.

The reader will note that contrary to some “prolife” revisionist misinformation, there was a time when baby-killing in the womb was held to be abhorrent to many U.S. Republican *and* Democratic congressmen and senators who believed that abortion needed to be outlawed, not “regulated.”

That same year, 1974, the USCL sent a twelve-member prolife team to the United Nations World Population Conference in Bucharest, Romania, thanks to the backing of prolife groups and the Catholic press around the nation.<sup>[67]</sup> The USCL team made an international impact and put the International Population Control Establishment on notice that their anti-life monopoly of U.S. tax dollars to promote contraception, abortifacients, surgical abortion, and mass sterilization around the world was at an end.<sup>[68]</sup>

As a result of the successful Bucharest prolife venture, this writer subsequently testified on USAID antilife legislation before the House and Senate Foreign Relations Committees, after which the USCL became a regular resource for prolife Congressional and Senatorial aides seeking detailed information on USAID's violation of the Helms Amendment.

This brings us to one of the main figures of this exposé, Carl A. Anderson.

It was in 1976 that the USCL received a surprise call from a young man who introduced himself as Carl Anderson, a new Legislative Assistant from Senator Helms' office, who basically wanted to be briefed on how USAID was promoting and funding abortion, thereby circumventing and/or violating the Helms anti-abortion amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act.

For the record, between 1965 and 1975, USAID's Office of Population provided \$732 million taxpayer dollars to carry out population control programs around the world – programs based almost entirely on early abortifacients (aka the Pill and the IUD), surgical abortions, and mass sterilization.<sup>[69]</sup>

In the mid-1970s, the USCL was able to document that the USAID Office of Population Affairs was pouring millions of taxpayer dollars into the antilife International Fertility Research Program (IFRP) at Chapel Hill, North Carolina (Senator Helm's home state), and the IFRP's three directors, Elton Kessel, George Stathes, and J. Harvey Lucas had used USAID funds to incorporate a new non-profit, tax-exempt, agency called the International Pregnancy Advisory Services (IPAS).



In addition to administering an abortion loan program, IPAS provides abortion equipment, (including early menstrual extraction kits), while promoting and coordinating mass abortion programs around the world.

Over a period of months in which this writer provided Carl Anderson with detailed information on USAID's abortion and forced mass sterilization programs, we became good friends and remained so even after 1983 when Anderson left Helm's Senate office for an important position in the new Republican Administration.

In all our personal conversations over the years, that included familiar banter about his family and mine (he married Dorian Jean Lounsbury in 1972 and together they have five children and eleven grandchildren) the subject of Opus Dei never came up until he went to the White House.

### **Anderson, Reagan, John Paul II, and Opus Dei**

Between 1983 and 1987, Carl Anderson became a very important figure in the White House under President Ronald Reagan. As Special Assistant to the President and Acting Director of the Office of Public Liaison for special interest groups, including Opus Dei, with its unique and dominant relationship over the Polish-born Pope John Paul II, that

relationship obviously grew. Anderson met Pope John Paul II in 1981 and every year since until the pope's death on April 2, 2005.<sup>[70]</sup>

According to Canadian/Swiss writer, Robert Hutchison, author of *Their Kingdom Come – Inside the Secret World of Ops Dei*:

Anderson was an Opus Dei member and as such his apostolate was to attract others in milieu into the Work. But he was unlikely to have been the only one working inside the Reagan Administration.<sup>[71]</sup>

Hutchinson's statement is independently backed up by Central Intelligence Agency specialist and journalist David Wise, author of *Spy: The Inside Story of How the FBI's Robert Hanssen Betrayed America* (2002), in which a Wise source observed:

Tenley Center<sup>[72]</sup> [an Opus Dei Study Center in Washington, D.C.] had strong ties to the Reagan Administration. "Half of the Reagan White House would come to meetings at Tenley House," the source told Wise. "Opus Dei is very strong on recruiting people, and once they have you, they don't let go. They're all over you."... [Robert] Hanssen was also a regular at the Opus Dei Catholic Information Center (CIC) in downtown Washington.<sup>[73]</sup>

There is good reason to believe that there was already a strong but secret connection between Anderson and the Prelature prior to his White House appointment because, in 1983, Anderson was also given the position of Visiting Professor of Family Law at the Opus-funded and controlled Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family at the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome.

Following President Reagan's first historical private interview with Pope John Paul II on June 7, 1982, Opus Dei loomed as a major player in the new administration. The Work also had significant influence in the Vatican and the anti-Communist Polish politics of Pope John Paul II, whose alter ego, the Spanish Opus numerary, journalist, psychiatrist, fellow actor, and image-maker, Joaquín Navarro-Valls, served the papal office and its appointments as the Director of the Holy See Press Office beginning in 1984.

In the mid-1980s, in my last conversation with Carl Anderson, while he was still working for the Reagan Administration, he offered this writer a top position in the USAID Population Office which was immediately declined for familial reasons. I never spoke to him again after 1987 when he joined Russell Shaw as the Knights' Vice-President for Public Policy headquartered in Washington, D.C.

It was at this time that Anderson began his systematic climb up the Knights' corporate order, a topic we will cover in the next chapter.

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<sup>[11]</sup> Much of Shaw's intimate biography [partially edited] is taken from [The Way of the Lord Jesus by Germain Grisez twotlj.org](http://www.twotlj.org/). See also Germain G. Grisez's book, *Beyond the New Morality: The Responsibilities of Freedom*, Notre Dame Press, Ind. 1974. Shaw was a contributor to this 3-volume series.

<sup>[12]</sup> See Randy Engel, *The Rite of Sodomy*, "The Homosexual Network in AmChurch," New Engel Publishing, 2006, at <https://www.newengelpublishing.com/>.

<sup>[13]</sup> Blessed Alvaro del Portillo, a Spanish engineer and Escrivá's closest companion, was beatified on September 27, 2014. After his ordination, Escrivá instructed him to go to Rome where Alvaro built Opus Dei's headquarters, worked on Opus Dei's legal status, supervised its expansion throughout Italy, received a doctorate in canon law *summa cum laude*, and served as the first rector of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross. Alvaro served as Escrivá's confessor and right hand. Note that following his death, Portillo was laid out in Jewish fashion on the floor. A picture of Pope John Paul II at Portillo's funeral preparation, praying over Portillo's mortal remains, is captured by Santiago at [OPUS DEI – TROJAN HORSE OF LIBERALISM IN THE CHURCH \(PART III\) \(mysteriuminiquitatis-2thessalonians2.blogspot.com\)](http://mysteriuminiquitatis-2thessalonians2.blogspot.com).

<sup>[14]</sup> [Working for God the world over: What is Opus Dei?: Shaw, Russell: Amazon.com: Books](http://Working for God the world over: What is Opus Dei?: Shaw, Russell: Amazon.com: Books).

<sup>[15]</sup> Ibid., p.9.

<sup>[16]</sup> Ibid., p.3.

<sup>[17]</sup> See the appendix to Pope Pius IX's encyclical *Quanta Cura* called the Syllabus of Errors at [The Syllabus Of Errors – Papal Encyclicals](http://The Syllabus Of Errors – Papal Encyclicals).

<sup>[18]</sup> [Mirari Vos – Papal Encyclicals](http://Mirari Vos – Papal Encyclicals). Pope Gregory XVI condemns "absolute liberty"; the "liberty of perdition"; the "liberty of conscience and worship as each man's personal right," and the "ecumenical mind-set," all of which Escrivá promoted as the foundations of Opus Dei. The Work includes "cooperators, men and women of any belief or no belief at all, under the guise of "pluralism."

<sup>[19]</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>[100]</sup> See [Libertas \(June 20, 1888\) | LEO XIII \(vatican.va\)](http://Libertas (June 20, 1888) | LEO XIII (vatican.va)). See [Libertas \(June 20, 1888\) | LEO XIII \(vatican.va\)](http://Libertas (June 20, 1888) | LEO XIII (vatican.va)).

<sup>[111]</sup> See [Notre Charge Apostolique – Papal Encyclicals](http://Notre Charge Apostolique – Papal Encyclicals). Pius X stated: "they [Sillon leaders] have a particular conception of human dignity, freedom, justice and brotherhood; and, in an attempt to justify their social dreams, they put forward the Gospel, but interpreted in their own way; and what is even more serious, they call to witness Christ, but a diminished and distorted Christ."

<sup>[112]</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>[113]</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>[114]</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>[115]</sup> Santiago. See

<sup>[116]</sup> Ibid., p. 11. See also, Jean Jacques Thierry, *Opus Dei – A Close-up*, Cortland Press, NY, NY, 1975, p.98.

<sup>[117]</sup> See J.J.M. Garvey, *A Parents Guide to Opus Dei*, NYC, 1989. Although Opus systematically violates parents rights, it promotes itself as a defender of parental rights. See [Opus Dei – Family and Raising Children](http://Opus Dei – Family and Raising Children).

<sup>[118]</sup> My thanks to Father J.M. who provided the following insights: "And to Adam he said: Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat, cursed is the earth in thy work; with labour and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life. 18 Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herbs of the earth. 19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken: for dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return." That is, working BEFORE SIN was a blessing, AFTER SIN it became a curse in the natural form of things. ... In addition, note the subtle part of the Opus idea that focuses on self, sanctifying *oneself* through work etc. However, in the traditional way we are to forget self, give one's whole self, by His grace, to do His will. Adam did his own will and failed. It's not what 'I' do, it's what the Lord wants me to do in the present moment by His grace. The height of sanctity is the complete abandonment of oneself, the consecration of one's whole self to Him.

<sup>[119]</sup> [Rabbi Angel Kreiman links Opus Dei Escrivá's teaching on work to Talmudic Tradition – Forum | Fitzpatrick Informer \(fitzinfo.net\)](http://Rabbi Angel Kreiman links Opus Dei Escrivá's teaching on work to Talmudic Tradition – Forum | Fitzpatrick Informer (fitzinfo.net)).

<sup>[120]</sup> Joan Estruch, *Saints and Schemers-Opus Dei and Its Paradoxes*, translated from the Spanish by E.L. Glick, Oxford University Press, NY, 1995, pp. 245-256.

<sup>[121]</sup> See Santiago, Part III at [OPUS DEI – TROJAN HORSE OF LIBERALISM IN THE CHURCH \(PART III\) \(mysteriuminiquitatis-2thessalonians2.blogspot.com\)](http://OPUS DEI – TROJAN HORSE OF LIBERALISM IN THE CHURCH (PART III) (mysteriuminiquitatis-2thessalonians2.blogspot.com)).

<sup>[122]</sup> Shaw, "Working for God," p. 23.

<sup>[123]</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>[124]</sup> For additional background on Rev. Father Vallet see Nicolas Dehan's "Opus Dei: a strange pastoral phenomenon." It was Dehan who first introduced this writer to Father Vallet. The English translation from the French of the Dehan article made by Suzanne Rini is available at [Opus Dei: a strange pastoral phenomenon – District of the USA \(sspx.org\)](http://Opus Dei: a strange pastoral phenomenon – District of the USA (sspx.org)).

<sup>[125]</sup> Pierre de Chardin, *The Divine Milieu*, Harper Perennial, N.Y., 1965. As Santiago notes in Part III of his series, Baron Yves Marsaudon, a former official of the Roman Catholic Knights of Malta and a 33degree Scottish Freemason, and author of *Ecumenicalism Viewed by a Freemason of Tradition*, claims that Chardin's works were among the most popular books found in masonic lodges.

<sup>[126]</sup> See [OPUS DEI – TROJAN HORSE OF LIBERALISM IN THE CHURCH \(PART IV\) \(mysteriuminiquitatis-2thessalonians2.blogspot.com\)](http://OPUS DEI – TROJAN HORSE OF LIBERALISM IN THE CHURCH (PART IV) (mysteriuminiquitatis-2thessalonians2.blogspot.com)). Note *The Divine Milieu* was not published until 1957, two years after Chardin died.

<sup>[127]</sup> Ibid., p. 113.



[28] Ibid., p.24.

[29] Ibid., p.27

[30] Ibid., p.30.

[31] Ibid., p. 31.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid. p. 33.

[35] Ibid., p. 37.

[36] Shaw, .p.28.

[37] See Engel, “The Special Case of Joseph Cardinal Bernardin,” *The Rite of Sodomy* (2006), pp. 889-917.

[38] Ibid.

[39] *The Pittsburgh Catholic*, February 10, 1995. Shaw does not mention a particular document, but he is referring to Pope Pius XI’s encyclical, *On Christ Education (Divini illius magistri)* issued on December. 31, 1929, in which the Roman pontiff condemns the “ugly” term and practice of so-called “sex education,” that “falsely imagining they can forearm youths against the dangers of sensuality by means purely natural, such as a foolhardy initiation and precautionary instruction for all indiscriminately, even in public; and, worse still, by exposing them at an early age to the occasions, in order to accustom them, so it is argued, and as it were to harden them against such dangers.” See Shaw’s condemnation of Mothers’ Watch in *The Washington Times*, “Sex Education and the Catholic Church,” July 20, 1994. [Divini Illius Magistri \(December 31, 1929\) | PIUS XI \(vatican.va\)](#).

[40] Attorney James M. Bendell, Virginia Right to Life Newsletter, “Lawyer Challenges HLI’s President.” (Undated).

[41] Mothers’ Watch, “HLI – *Teen STAR* – Hanna Klaus and Population Control,” 2000.

[42] “Sex education in parochial Schools,” *The Washington Times*, May 11, 1994).

[43] Father McCloskey attended Columbia University and was A Wall Street magnet and Opus numerary prior to being ordained in 1981 at Torreciudad, Spain, the location of the Opus Dei Marian shrine built in Aragon by Escrivá in 1975. He served as chaplain at Princeton before becoming head of Opus’ Catholic Information Center, a powerhouse for conservative Congressmen and Senators and Washington, D.C. elite.

[44] [C. John McCloskey: Opus Dei paid \\$977,000 to settle sexual misconduct claim against prominent Catholic priest – The Washington Post](#).

[45] [Statements Regarding Fr. C. John McCloskey – Opus Dei](#).

[46] Canon 1378<sup>[46]</sup> imposes a *latae sententiae* (automatic) excommunication for any priest who hears a confession, and grants absolution, to a person with whom he commits a sexual sin. Although more common among homosexual priests, the practice also applies to heterosexual clerics. Canon 1378 imposes a *latae sententiae* (automatic) excommunication for any priest who hears a confession, and grants absolution, to a person with whom he commits a sexual sin. Although more common among homosexual priests, the practice also applies to heterosexual clerics.

[47] [Fr. C. John McCloskey, Opus Dei, and me | Sean Dailey \(patheos.com\)](#).

[48] Christopher White, “Case of Opus Dei Priest raises fresh questions about clerical abuse crisis,” *Crux*, January 15, 2019.

[49] Zenit, [Don’t Just Keep the Faith, Spread It \(catholiceducation.org\)](#).

[50] McCloskey is given credit for the conversion of prominent public figures including Senator Sam Brownback, economist Larry Kudlow, Judge Robert Bork, Dr. Bernard Nathanson, journalist Robert Novak and publisher Alfred Regnery.

[51] [Good News, Bad News: Evangelization, Conversion and the Crisis of Faith \(catholicity.com\)](#)

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Section 114 reads: “Limiting use of funds for abortion — None of the funds made available to carry out this part (Part I of the Act) shall be used to pay for the performance of abortions as a method of family planning or to motivate or coerce anyone to practice abortions.”

[67] The USCL members of the Bucharest International Team included Chairs Dr. Albert Kapusinski (USA) and Rev. Paul Marx (USA), and Professor Charles Rice (USA), John Harrington (Canada), George Barmann (USA), Rev. Pedro Richards (Uruguay), Dr. Herbert Ratner (USA), Dr. John Linklater (England), Dr. Patrick Dunn (New Zealand), Rev. Michel Welters (Haiti), Rev. Anthony Zimmerman (Japan) and the only prolife woman on the team, Frances French (USA).

[68] See [doc.php \(uscl.info\)](#).

[69] Forty-six million dollars went into the development of new means of fertility control including the Ravenholt-backed once-a-month pill that would insure the non-pregnant state at the end of a woman’s menstrual cycle. One hundred-forty million dollars went directly to the International Planned Parenthood Federation, and a sundry of other population control groups including the Pathfinder Fund,

the Rockefeller Population Council, and Population Services International. One hundred-five million went to university, private, and quasi-governmental agencies to institute population control research and propaganda programs. Copies of the *Pro-Life Reporter* on USAID population control funding are available at [www.uscl.info](http://www.uscl.info).

<sup>[70]</sup> See *National Catholic Register Interview*, March 24, 2021 at [Former Knights of Columbus Chief Sees Two Decades as Living Call of Discipleship](https://www.ncregister.com/Former-Knights-of-Columbus-Chief-Sees-Two-Decades-as-Living-Call-of-Discipleship) | *National Catholic Register* ([ncregister.com](https://www.ncregister.com)).

<sup>[71]</sup> Robert Hutchison, *Their Kingdom Come-Inside the Secret World of Opus Dei*, Doubleday, London, 1997, p. 360.

<sup>[72]</sup> Tenley Center, a spacious Opus residence complex located on Garrison Street, NW, in Washington, D.C. is an exclusive “study center” for young upward-bound male students at middle school through college levels. Its stated mission is to provide academic and character formation to young men whose spiritual care is entrusted to Opus Dei. It is staffed by Opus numeraries who collect no salaries. Annual budget is within the three-quarters of a million dollar range (IRS 990 Forms). Note that the reference to superspy Robert Hanssen will be followed up in Chapter Nine of this exposé.

<sup>[73]</sup> [Breaking the Opus Dei code: the secretive Catholic group’s name means ‘Work Of God,’ but in Washington, D.C., that divine task has a decidedly political bent. – Free Online Library](https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Breaking+the+Opus+Dei+code%3A+the+secretive+Catholic+group%27s+name+means+%27Work+Of+God%27+but+in+Washington%2C+D.C.%2C+that+divine+task+has+a+decidedly+political+bent.-Free+Online+Library) ([thefreelibrary.com](https://www.thefreelibrary.com)).



*Royal Castle in Warsaw, Poland, Oct. 9, 2021. Carl Anderson receives Totus Tuus Award (Photo: Rycerze Kolumba / via CNA)*

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### Supreme Knight Becomes One of the World's Most Influential Catholics

As previously noted, much of this exposé is about relationships – the relationship between organizations, that is, between Opus Dei, the Knights of Columbus and the Catholic Church, specifically during the Pontificate of Pope John Paul II.

It is also about the relationships between key players in the Opus takeover of the Knights, that is, between Supreme Knight Virgil Dechant, Opus supernumerary Russell Shaw and the Opus secret *inscript*<sup>[1]</sup>, Carl Anderson, who, for the record, denies any relationship with the Prelature.<sup>[2]</sup> This denial is in keeping with Opus Dei as a secret society, even though secret societies have been condemned by the Catholic Church for almost four hundred years.<sup>[3]</sup>

### Opus Dei as a Secret Society

That the reader should appreciate the role of secret membership in Opus Dei, we present the following Articles from Opus Dei's 1950 Constitutions, documents written under Escriva's early administration, on the key role secrecy plays in hiding membership identification:<sup>[4]</sup>

–189 In order for the Institute to reach its proper end more effectively, it wishes to live as hidden, therefore it abstains from collective acts and does not have a name or common denomination by which its members are called. Given the character of the Institute, which externally does not desire to appear publicly as a society, it is not appropriate that its members should engage collectively in certain manifestations of cult like processions.

–190 By virtue of this collective humility, which is proper of our Institute, whatever is done by the members is not attributable to itself; but rather, whatever good is attained by them is attributable to God alone. Consequently, even membership in the Institute admits no external manifestations. The number of members is kept hidden from outsiders; and indeed our people do not discuss these things with outsiders.

–191 This collective humility leads our people to live the life which they consecrate to God with the same discretion which is most suited to the desired fruitfulness of the apostolate. The lack of this discretion can constitute a grave obstacle to exercising apostolic work or create some difficulty in the environment of one's natural family or in the exercise of their office or profession. Thus the

Numerary and Supernumerary members should know they are to live a prudent silence regarding the names of other members; and that they are never to reveal to anyone that they themselves belong to Opus Dei, not even to spread the Institute, without express permission from their local director. This discretion especially binds those who are newly accepted in the Institute and also to those who, for whatever reason, have left the Institute. The Institute and some of its members, however, need to be known, because all our apostolic works develop and are carried out within the bounds of civil law and likewise, with the same strength of soul, each one of us, altogether shuns secrecy and clandestine activity, for the only thing which moves us to maintain this discretion is humility and a deeper and more fruitful apostolic efficacy.

–193 These Constitutions, published instructions and those which in the future may be published, and the other things pertaining to the government of the Institute are never to be made public. Indeed, without the permission of the Father, those documents which are written in the Latin language may not be translated into vernacular languages.

–194 In those points in which the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross, or Opus Dei falls under the civil law of their own region, they should faithfully submit to it. Other points which regard the internal government of the Institute, the organization, customs, spirit, ceremonies, and methods of apostolate, are permitted to be known only to the Church legitimate authority.

–195 Each and every one of the members are obliged with all their strength to facilitate and lend their cooperation to the perfection and development of the apostolic ministries of the other members. Hence the obligation incumbent upon all to advise the internal Superiors of the Institute of all things, whether in the method or mode of action of members, which might bring any diminution to some activity or efficacy of the Institute. Similarly, members, remembering the norms of charity and prudence, are also bound to exercise fraternal correction, so that, in the event, they may separate the members from customs which are repugnant to the spirit of the Institute.

### **Anderson Advances up the Knights Corporate Ladder**

By his own admission, Carl Anderson didn't join the Knights of Columbus District of Columbia State Council until he was in his 30s, that is, while he was still employed at the White House, but before he joined Russell Shaw at the Knights Office of Public Policy in Washington in 1987.<sup>[5]</sup> This makes obvious sense since you cannot take over an organization to which you don't belong.

It should be noted that the Washington D.C. Knights Council, historically speaking, was one of the most important of the Knights' operations and a key stepping-stone to the upward bound Anderson.<sup>[6]</sup>

Anderson held his position at the Knights Office of Public Policy in D.C. until he advanced to become the Supreme Secretary of the Knights at the National office in New Haven, CT, and heir apparent to Supreme Knight Virgil Dechant, who retired on September 30, 2000 (but stayed on the Knights' bankroll). Anderson assumed his new office as Supreme Knight in October 2000.

Grooming for such an extraordinarily high and lucrative position takes many years, in Anderson's case, ten years to be exact. It also takes uncanny good fortune. Lucky for Anderson, his ascent up the Knights of Columbus corporate order was achieved without a hitch thanks to the direction and support of his primary benefactor in the take-over bid of the Knights – Opus Dei.

For all practical purposes, most, if not all of Anderson's lobbying activities for the Knights during the period of 1987-1997, have been scrubbed from the internet, or were never inserted into his biographical data in the first place.

All that is known for certain is that Anderson advanced systematically from Knight to Grand Knight, to District Deputy, to State Advocate, to State Secretary, to State Deputy in D.C., before obtaining the National Office/New Haven position of Assistant Supreme Secretary, Supreme Secretary, and finally, Supreme Knight, Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board of the Knights of Columbus.

Also, we know, that simultaneously during this decade-long period, Anderson held the position of Visiting Professor of the Opus-funded and controlled Pope John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and the Family based at the Lateran University in Rome, headed by the future Cardinal Carlo Caffarra of Bologna, Italy, an avid Opus sponsor.

In 1988, Anderson became the founding Vice President of the John Paul II Institute Graduate School of Theology, housed at the Catholic University of America.

Carl Anderson's formal installation as Supreme Knight took place in Mexico City where Anderson publicly dedicated the Knights, and his administration, to the Blessed Mother under her title, Our Lady of Guadalupe. Thus, he began his rise from legislative aide and presidential assistant to become one of the most important and influential Catholic figures in the world.<sup>[7]</sup>



## Office Draws National and Vatican Honors

During his 21-year tenure as Supreme Knight, Carl Anderson, by way of his office, received countless national and international honors and awards. A short sampling is provided below:



*The Andersons awarded at the Catholic Information Center, an Opus Dei apostolate located in Washington, D.C.*

- Mr. Anderson was made Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St. Sylvester, a Knight of the Order of St. Gregory the Great, and a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem (with his wife Dorian).
- He was the only Catholic layman from North America to serve as an auditor at the World Synod of Bishops in 2001, 2005, and 2008. In addition, he participated as an auditor in the Synod of Bishops (2012).
- He held membership in the Pontifical Council for the Laity (2002); the Pontifical Council for the Family (with his wife Dorian) and the Pontifical Council for Peace and Justice (2003); the Pontifical Council for Social Communication (2007), and the Pontifical Council for the Family (2008).<sup>[8]</sup>
- He serves as a member of the International Scientific Council of the Studium Generale Marcianum of Venice.
- He became a Consultor to the Pro-Life Committee of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in 2002.
- He serves on the Board of Trustees of the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center/Museum.
- Anderson serves on the Board of Trustees of The Catholic University of America and the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.
- He has received honorary doctorates from The Catholic University of America, The Pontifical Theology Academy of Krakow and St. Vincent's Seminary, Latrobe, Penna.
- Mr. Anderson is the recipient of many honors including the Imago Dei Award, Archdiocese of Denver (2005); the Canterbury Medal, Becket Fund for Religious Liberty (2007); Servant of Peace Award, Path to Peace Foundation (2007); Rector's Award, Pontifical North American College, Rome (2008); The John Carroll Society Award (2009); the Lupa Capitolina Award, City of Rome (2009); the John Cardinal O'Connor Award (2009), and the Evangelium Vitae Medal (2015).

- On October 29, 2014, Anderson and his wife, Dorian, received the Opus Dei St. John Paul II New Evangelization Award at the Catholic Information Center in Washington, D.C.

## Anderson Joins the Vatican Bank

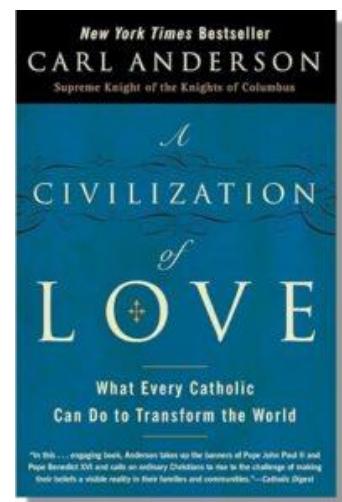
With the mandated retirement of Supreme Knight Virgil Dechant, who had served as the Vice-President of the *Istituto per le Opere di Religione* (IOR), aka the Vatican Bank, as a perk of his office, Carl Anderson was appointed a member and secretary of the IOR Board of Supervisors in 2009 – a major goal of the Opus Dei take-over of the Knights. The main function of the IOR is to manage bank accounts for all Vatican dicasteries, religious orders and Catholic associations, including Opus Dei, which also has multiple Swiss bank accounts and offshore financial entities. Currently, the IOR has exclusive control of *all* of the Holy See’s movable and liquid assets.

The IOR and its clerical and lay leadership have been drowning in money laundering lawsuits, indictments, and convictions for decades. “Money laundering” is defined as “when funds from criminal acts, political backroom deals, tax evasion and other reasons why people want their money hidden are deposited in a financial institution and, after taking a cut off the top as a fee, the company releases the ‘washed’ money into an account with a seemingly legitimate purpose.”<sup>[9]</sup> Despite its shady resumé, the IOR is an amateur when compared to Opus Dei and its international banking and money laundering empire as documented in Robert Hutchison’s classic *Their Kingdom Come*, one of the few critical books on the Prelature which deals almost exclusively with Opus as a corporate business entity.<sup>[10]</sup>

## Anderson as “Best-Selling Author”

In addition to all of the above activities and obligations that come with the office of Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus, publicists for Anderson also portray the corporate giant as a “best-selling *New York Times* author.” Among the 20 or so books credited to him as author while he was serving as Supreme Knight are:

- *Called to Love: Approaching John Paul II’s Theology of the Body* (written with Jose Granados<sup>[11]</sup> and preface by Msgr. Livio Melina.<sup>[12]</sup>
- *A Civilization of Love: What Every Catholic Can Do to Transform the World.*



- *Our Lady of Guadalupe: Mother of the Civilization of Love* (with Knight and Mexican Canon Eduardo Chavez and former Opus numerary Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles.)
- The [Beyond a House Divided: The Moral Consensus Ignored by Washington, Wall Street and the Media.](#)

As a side note, frankly, I find that it beggars belief that Anderson, the Chief Executive Officer of a multi-billion dollar international insurance firm and charity is the principle author of the aforementioned texts for which he claims primary credit, with the possible exception of the paperback *Beyond a House Divided*.

I mention this matter because in 2008 the Knights picked up the tab for a full-page ad in the *New York Times* costing thousands of dollars that promoted *A Civilization of Love* as well as an American and European tour to promote the book. The book's back cover features endorsements by the usual Opus Dei sycophants – John Allen, Jr., George Weigel, Mary Ann Glendon and Robert E. George.

Really! I ask you – is this a genuine expense that the run-of-the-mill Knight should have been burdened with? I think not, especially when Anderson was collecting a \$1,000,000 plus salary<sup>[13]</sup> as Supreme Knight.

As a Director/Past Supreme Knight, Anderson continues to siphon off hundreds of thousands of dollars in compensation from the Knights of Columbus.

According to the Knights' 990 IRS returns, as Supreme Knight in 2014, Anderson took in \$2.3 million. In 2021, he received over \$1.9 million in reportable compensation, while Patrick E. Kelly, who took over as Supreme Knight on March 1<sup>st</sup> of that year, took in only \$1,159,239.00.

### **Anderson & Son Face Charges of Nepotism**

In 2017, under Supreme Knight Anderson, the Knights of Columbus was named a Defendant in a lawsuit filed by Denver IT company, UKnight Interactive. The lawsuit specifically accused the Knights Chief Insurance Officer, Thomas P. Smith (who immediately “retired”), and fellow Senior Executive, Matthew St. John, of insurance fraud and racketeering. According to the Plaintiff's allegations, the Knights inflated their membership numbers by deliberately including “phantom” members. The lawsuit claimed that the Knights did not want to streamline their record-keeping system as the results would demonstrate that membership in the Knights has been in decline, not rising.<sup>[14]</sup>

The case, which received some publicity in secular financial papers but little if any in the Catholic media, was eventually settled in court, on September 19, 2019, in favor of UKnight Interactive for a negligible amount of \$500,000.<sup>[15]</sup> It is unclear if the Knights national office ever submitted its membership records, which the court had ordered, at any stage in the case.

One year later, the Anderson Administration faced a different kind of lawsuit, this one filed by lobbying firm, QGA Public Affairs, involving allegations of “self-dealing” among the Andersons (Carl, Sr. and Carl, Jr.). Similar to the legal proceedings involving UKnight Interactive, this 2020 lawsuit likewise received no publicity in the Catholic press and little in the secular media.

As reported by the *Daily Caller*, a Washington, D.C. based news and opinion service, on August 28, 2019, the Knights of Columbus entered into a contract with a lobbying firm ensuring that Carl Anderson, Jr., – the Supreme Knight’s son – became the organization’s chief lobbyist. That contract resulted in more money spent by the Knights for less work than under previous deals made by the organization with other Washington D.C. lobbyist groups, including QGA Public Affairs.

According to columnist Amber Athey, the Knights entered into a lobbying contract with QGA Public Affairs in 2015 that paid \$80,000 for a full year’s worth of lobbying on appropriations bills and religious freedom issues.

In 2017, the Knights entered into a similar contract with Van Scoyoc Associates – a government affairs firm that employed Supreme Knight Anderson’s son – to provide lobbying services on such issues as judicial nominations, religion, tax-exemption, healthcare, US Agency for Development programs, Iraq and Syria Genocide Emergency Relief and Syrian War Crimes.

Under this contract, the Knights paid the firm \$100,000 *for just six months* of lobbying by Carl, Jr. To make matters worse, the official job record for young Carl shows that he did *no lobbying* for three of the six months for which he received payment.<sup>[16]</sup>

Dr. Craig Holman, a government affairs lobbyist with Public Citizen, was asked to comment on the QGA lawsuit by the *Daily Caller*.

Holman first made it clear that the Knights of Columbus lobbying arrangements did not violate public laws as the Knights are a private religious institution, not a government agency. However, he stated that the very large imbalance of payments between the two reputable lobbying firms “raises ethical issues of self-dealing and nepotism,” thus, it is an issue the Knights need to be concerned about.

Holman concluded that “paying one firm more than double the other for services rendered strongly suggests that the [Anderson] family connection was the deciding factor.”<sup>[171](#)</sup>

## **Anderson as the Quintessential Opus Dei Spokesman**

Whatever former Supreme Knight Carl Anderson has been “selling” the grassroots members of the Knights of Columbus for the last twenty or so years, it’s certainly not traditional Catholicism based on the Social Kingship of Christ and Sovereign Rights of Christ the King in society.

Rather, Anderson’s public record clearly demonstrates that, as the Knights’ chief officer, he has consistently promoted the errors of Opus Dei as mirrored in the Second Vatican Council, specifically “Liberalism” and its progeny – secularism, religious liberty (liberty of conscience), modernism, ecumenicalism, pluralism, and intellectual anarchy.

I use the word “Liberalism,” as defined by Spanish priest Dr. Don Félix Sardà y Salvany in his 1886 classic *Liberalism is a Sin* <sup>[1181](#)</sup> – as a cancer in the body of Christ.

Calling liberalism “a monster of our times,” Salvany declares:

Liberalism is a world complete in itself; it has its maxims, its fashions, its art, its literature, its diplomacy, its laws, its conspiracies, its ambushes. It is the world of Lucifer, disguised in our times under the name of Liberalism, in radical opposition and in perpetual warfare against that society composed of the Children of God, the Church of Jesus Christ.

Liberalism, whether in the doctrinal or practical order, is a sin. In the doctrinal order, it is heresy, and consequently a mortal sin against faith. In the practical order it is a sin against the commandments of God and of the Church, for it virtually transgresses all commandments. To be more precise: in the doctrinal order Liberalism strikes at the very foundations of faith; it is heresy radical and universal, because within it are comprehended all heresies. In the practical order it is a radical and universal infraction of the divine law since it sanctions and authorizes all infractions of that law.

We may then say of Liberalism: in the order of ideas it is absolute error; in the order of facts it is absolute disorder. It is therefore, in both cases a very grievous and deadly sin, for sin is rebellion against God in thought or in deed, the enthronement of the creature in the place of the Creator.



Heresy has never been so insidious as under its present form of Liberalism. Its range is so wide that it touches upon every note in the scale, and finds an easy disguise in its protean facilities. But its most fatal shaft is in its plea for “liberty of mind.” This in its own eyes is its cardinal virtue. “Intellectual freedom from dogmatism” is its boast, a boast in reality the mask of ignorance and pride. To meet such an enemy requires no ordinary courage guarded by a sleepless vigilance. When encountered it is obligatory upon the Catholic conscience to resist it with all the powers of the soul. Heresy and all its works are sins; Liberalism is the root of heresy, the tree of evil in whose branches all the harpies of infidelity find ample shelter; it is today the evil of all evils.

Father S. Salvany describes perfectly the entity of Opus Dei and one of its most illustrious patrons, Carl Anderson, who continues as Supreme Officer on the Knights of Columbus as Past Supreme Knight with a six-figure compensation of \$269,000.



*Rev. Dr. Don Félix Sardà y Salvany*

<sup>[1]</sup> Jean Jacques Thierry, *Opus Dei – A Close-up*, Cortland Press, Ny, p. 54. The *inscripti* are numeraries who have been selected for positions of great importance. Some are electors chosen by the President General, they in turn are responsible for choosing his successor by cooptation. The real power in Opus Dei is held by its secret *inscribed* ruling class which numbers about 200 and consists of numeraries, Opus priests, and select supernumeraries. They form an intellectual or corporeal elite answerable only to the Prelate/President General. All electors in Opus governance are inscribed members, ages 30 or older, with at least nine years as incorporated members, and a record of outstanding devotion and loyalty to the Work. Opus Dei is also a “kingmaker,” in that it can encourage and finance relatively obscure people to take up positions of great power, aka, former Presidential Assistant Carl Anderson, who rose to become one of the most influential Catholics in the world as Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus.

<sup>[2]</sup> Membership in Opus Dei is kept secret by internal fiat, especially the names of directors of banks, insurance companies, international corporations, and men who work in civil service or political life which would include men like Carl Anderson.

<sup>[3]</sup> See CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA: Secret Societies (newadvent.org). Also, for the record, up until 1983 with the promulgation and approval of the Church’s new Code of Canon Law, the 1917 Code of Canon Law explicitly declared that joining Freemasonry [and any other secret society] entailed automatic excommunication. Opus papal functionary Pope John Paul II, however, approved of the removed of this punishment from the new Code replacing it with an ambiguous “just penalty,” or interdict.

<sup>[4]</sup> See ODAN – ODAN Opus Dei Awareness Network. Download the English translation of the 1950 Statutes of Opus Dei (RTF file – 643 KB).

<sup>[5]</sup> See NC *Register* interview above. Also, Robert Mickens, “Meet one of the most influential Catholics in the World,” *The Tablet*, June 16, 2012. According to Mickens, Anderson joined the Knights in the 1980s.

<sup>[6]</sup> The Knights of Columbus have been in the District of Columbia since 1897, when Washington Council #224 was instituted, just a couple of months after Baltimore Council #205 first established the Order below the Mason-Dixon line. Both were at the time in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, then headed by James Cardinal Gibbons, a supporter of the Knights. By 1899 DC was a state jurisdiction, with five councils in the city.

<sup>[7]</sup> Ibid.

<sup>[8]</sup> Anderson was appointed to the Pontifical Academy of Life by Pope John Paul II in 1998. Pope Francis reappointed him to the Academy in 2017.

<sup>[9]</sup> See The Vatican Bank and Money Laundering (dailykos.com).

<sup>[10]</sup> Robert Hutchison, *Their Kingdom Come*, pp. 320, 344, 350. According to Hutchison, Opus Dei was involved in the Carlo Calvi-Banco Ambrosiano Banking Scandal. As he notes, the Calvi case “in its *ensemble*” was a good example of “the intermingling of power, priests, and organized crime.”

<sup>[11]</sup> Father Jose Granados is an employee of the John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family.

<sup>[12]</sup> Msgr. Livio Melina is also connected with the John Paul Institute.

<sup>[13]</sup> SK Anderson took in a salary of \$1.2 million in 2008 and \$1.5 million in FY 2011.

<sup>[14]</sup> Expert: Knights of Columbus inflates membership numbers | AP News.

<sup>[15]</sup> For details of the UKnight Interactive Case see Part I Endnote 12. See also, Business Misconduct by the Knights of Columbus Raised In Letter To Carl Anderson, Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus (prnewswire.com); Insurance Fraud/Racketeering: Knights of Columbus Style – Really Right.

<sup>[16]</sup> See EXCLUSIVE: Knights Of Columbus Faces Accusations Of Self-Dealing Amid Insurance Fraud Lawsuit | The Daily Caller. Also Lobbying for Knights of Columbus by Van Scoyoc Associates | Represent | ProPublica.

<sup>[17]</sup> EXCLUSIVE: Knights Of Columbus Faces Accusations Of Self-Dealing Amid Insurance Fraud Lawsuit | The Daily Caller. For other Knights of Columbus lawsuit cases see \$2.6 Million Wrongful Termination Case Settles with Knights of Columbus After Finding of “Bad Faith” Actions by Legal Team – The McCabe Law Firm (mccabe-lawfirm.com); Class Action Lawsuit against the Knights of Columbus case no 96C4789 What was the Class Action lawsuit settlement against the Knights of Columbus .? – Answers;

<sup>[18]</sup> Félix Sardà y Salvany, *Liberalism Is A Sin*, Spain, 1886. A beautifully translated edition of this timeless work by Conde B. Pallen, Ph.D., LL.D. is available online at ~Liberalism is a Sin~.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### How Knights' Money Gets into Opus Coffers

#### Knights Funding of Opus Dei “Apostolates”

An in-depth study examining whether, and to what extent, the billion-dollar insurance business known as the Knights of Columbus may have contributed to Opus Dei's international *financial* coffers is outside the purview of this report. An investigation of how, under the Anderson administration, millions of Knights *charity* dollars have gone to support a wide assortment of Opus “apostolates” is not. This thanks to the Knights required annual tax filing of 990 forms which are a matter of public record.

In keeping with its long-standing policy of the virtue of “non-giving,”<sup>[1]</sup> once Opus effectively gains control over a wealthy outside organization – be it a non-profit, a media or corporate/business entity – monies from that organization will inevitably be siphoned off in support of Opus “apostolates.”

What follows is just a sampling of the more egregious incidents of Opus sacking the Knights' treasury under the Anderson administration, an operation that continues under current Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly.

#### The Catholic Information Center

Opus Dei's Catholic Information Center (CIC) in the District of Columbia is a 501 (c)(3) multi-million-dollar Opus corporation attached to the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. The Director of the CIC is always a priest of Opus Dei nominated by the Prelature and appointed by the Archdiocese of Washington.

In 1993, Cardinal James A. Hickey, who was a great devotee of Josemaría Escrivá,<sup>[2]</sup> gave the CIC over to the Prelature. Opus Dei has been operating the agency ever since that time, but from a new location just two blocks from the White House on K Street. The logo for the Center publicizes the CIC as “the nearest Tabernacle to the White House” but makes no reference to Opus. In 2001, the retired Cardinal Hickey consecrated the first public chapel in the United States at the CIC, honoring Opus Dei's founder Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer.

The stated mission of the CIC is to bring the sacraments and spiritual resources to those working in the Nation's capital, more specifically, to a wealthy professional cliental working in the international, political, educational, banking, and business fields. The Center offers weekday Masses and Eucharist Adoration, confessions, and spiritual

direction, along with a host of theological, philosophical, and public policy lectures, podcasts, book signings, and entertainments, many of which are centered on Pope John Paul II and his “New Evangelization.”

The CIC has not been without controversy over the years. For example, in February 2010, the CIC opened its doors to a book-signing event featuring the notorious anti-life, pro-sodomy Catholic journalist, “Cokie” Roberts. Adverse publicity resulted in the disinvitation of Mrs. Robert, which drew anger from some Opus Dei members who resented the cancellation.<sup>[3]</sup>

Because of its strategic importance in terms of recruitment and contact with top White House officials and offices, Congressional and Senatorial members, and Supreme Court justices, the CIC has always been directed by high level Opus Dei priests.

Past CIC Directors include Rev. Charles John McCloskey III<sup>[4]</sup> (1998-2004), Msgr. William H. Stetson<sup>[5]</sup> (2004-2007), Msgr. Arne Panula<sup>[6]</sup> (2007-2017), and Rev. Charles Trullols<sup>[7]</sup> (2017-present).

The John Paul II “New Evangelization Award Dinner” is an annual highlight of the Catholic Information Center. Among the CIC’s list of ingrown past gala Awardees are Leonard Leo of the Federalist Society (2022); March for Life head Jeanne Mancini (2021), Carl and Dorian Anderson (2014), and CIC Director Rev. Arne Panula (2017). [Note: In 2021, Jeanne Mancini awarded Carl Anderson the March for Life Pro-Life Legacy Award.]

Sponsorship levels for the CIC gala include: (1) \$25,000 New Evangelization Circle; (2) \$10,000 Patron; (3) \$5000 Guardian, and (4) \$1000 Friends.<sup>[8]</sup> One can wonder how many, if any, rank and file members of the Knights of Columbus can afford to attend the event that they underwrite with their charity dollars.

Over the last 20 or more years, the Knights of Columbus, under Supreme Knight Carl Anderson, has poured hundreds of thousands of dollars into Opus Dei/CIC coffers. In 2022 alone – the last year for which data is available as of this writing – the Knights donated a whopping \$205,000 to the CIC. So, it appears that the Knights’ annual contribution is growing at a rapid rate, with no limit in sight.

## **The National Catholic Bioethics Center**

During the Anderson Administration, Opus Dei’s National Catholic Bioethics Center (NCBC) continued to receive millions of dollars from the Knights – usually at a quarter of a million dollars per year – ostensibly to promote medical-moral ethics and the

dignity of the human person. Unfortunately, the NCBC's response to certain medical and moral issues has not always been Catholic.

The NCBC – originally known as the Pope John XXIII Medical-Moral Research and Education Center of St. Louis, Missouri – was created in 1972 and headed by Dominican theologian and scientist Father Albert Moraczewski, O.P. Its primary purpose was to evaluate medical-moral trends in society and conduct related workshops for the American and Canadian bishops, as well as Catholic health professionals. The main funding source for the Pope John XXIII Center was the Knights of Columbus under the Dechant Administration. Sadly, as with most Knights-funded activities over the decades, the monitoring of these workshops was lax or non-existent.<sup>[9]</sup>

In 1996, Opus Dei took over the renamed Pope John XXIII Center (now the National Catholic Bioethics Center) when former Episcopal priest, convert, and Opus supernumerary, John M. Haas, Ph.D.<sup>[10]</sup> became its fifth president. Eventually, the NCBC was relocated to the Philadelphia area near Haas' home turf of Broomall, PA.



*Tom Monaghan*

This writer's first run-in with Haas and the NCBC took place in late March of 2010, when the U.S. Coalition for Life (USCL) learned that Barron Collier Companies, which partnered with Catholic philanthropist Tom Monaghan to create Ave Maria Town, home of Ave Marie University (AMU), had *given* land, co-owned with Monaghan, to the anti-life, eugenics-based Jackson Laboratory of Bar Harbor, Maine, to build a new medical and genetic research facility. The planned \$710 million Jackson Lab project, called the Institute of Personalized Medicine, was to be located just three miles from the Ave Maria campus.<sup>[11]</sup>

The major issue was whether or not Monaghan & Co. and the residents of the 'City of God' were willing to have a little Auschwitz in their backyard. The answer turned out to be, "yes."

The battlelines in the Jackson Lab anti-life fiasco, a conflict that raged on non-stop for thirteen months, were quickly drawn. On the pro-life side, along with USCL, was my colleague Marielena Stuart, an Ave Maria resident, and AveWatch, a prolife monitoring blog.



On the opposing side was Tom Monaghan; Blake Gable of Barron Collier, a project manager for Ave Maria Development; Nicholas Healy, Jr, Ave Maria University President and Monaghan's legal mouthpiece; Opus-connected Professor of Philosophy at AMU, Dr. Michael Waldstein, who described the Jackson Lab project as a "gift from God"; Opus supernumerary and writer Phil Lawler, who argued that the Jackson Labs were not in the human embryo business<sup>[\[12\]](#)</sup>; Michael Hyde, a Vice President of the Jackson Lab, and the National Catholic Bioethics Center (NCBC).

To his credit, in the early stage of the project's consideration, Monaghan, as part of his "due diligence," hired the NCBC in Philadelphia to investigate the Jackson Lab and to advise him on the merits, or dissuasions, of his selling his 50% interest in this land to his partner for the new Jackson Lab site.

The NCBC eventually produced two papers dealing with the Monaghan and Barron Collier Company land transaction for the Jackson Lab. The NCBC reports stated that there would be "no moral obstacle" to the sale. No mention was made of the eugenic history of Jackson Lab founder, Clarence C. Little<sup>[\[13\]](#)</sup>, or the Jackson Lab's long-standing promotion and/or funding of eugenic abortion, human embryo research, or research on male contraceptives – charges fully documented by the USCL.

As it happens, Opus member and President of NCBC, John M. Haas, had already established a relationship with Monaghan via Legatus, the latter's exclusive club for wealthy Catholic CEOs with business assets over \$5 million. On February 5, 2009, six months before the Jackson Lab pow-wow was initiated, Legatus hosted Haas in Bermuda at their annual 3-day members-only summit where he received the Cardinal O'Connor Pro-Life Award from Monaghan.

Up until the USCL's relentless three-month media campaign against the antilife Jackson Lab that took place between March and May 2010, the latter had enjoyed excellent public relations, as well as unprecedented and uncritical press coverage. However, once the USCL released its anti-life reports on the Jackson Lab and the citizens of Collier County, FL became aware that their tax dollars would be used to lure and subsidize the Jackson Lab enterprise, the tide slowly began to turn.

On January 17, 2011, exasperated officials of the Jackson Lab withdrew their application to Enterprise Florida for state funding due to "political challenges and interventions" and a hostile taxpayer environment. Barron Collier also withdrew its free land offer.

The Jackson Lab project was dead – no thanks to the National Catholic Bioethics Center.

Following the Jackson Lab debacle, the USCL continued to clash with the NCBC over another life and death issue, namely, the organization's support of "brain death" as a valid criterion for vital human organ donation and transplantation. The problem is basically two-fold (1) viable vital organs cannot be harvested from a corpse and (2) "brain death" is not true death.

As documented by the prominent Catholic physician Dr. Paul Byrne, a neonatologist and Clinical Professor of Pediatrics, past President of the Catholic Medical Association, and co-founder of the Life Guardian Foundation:<sup>[14]</sup>

The statements of Pope Benedict XVI, Pope Pius XII, Pope John Paul II, the Council of Vienne, the Council of the Fifth Lateran, and the Catechism of the Catholic Church, make it clear that excision of individual vital organs, i.e., organs that are single in the body, e.g., the heart and whole liver cannot be initiated when the soul-body unity is present. At the very least, if the separation of life from the body cannot be verified, or if there is doubt about the separation of life from the body, organ excision is morally prohibited and should not be allowed.



*Dr. Paul Byrne*

A corpse, a cadaver is a dead body that is the remains of someone who was on earth. "By death [*L., post mortem*] the soul is separated from the body" (CCC 1016). Separation of the soul from the body changes a living body to a dead body, a cadaver, a corpse.

It would seem that people ought to compare the corpse viewed at a funeral home to a patient in an intensive care unit who has a declaration of "brain death imposed upon him when his heart is beating<sup>[15]</sup> and he responds when cut open to take his organs. And prior to this his ventilator needed for life support is cruelly taken away. Never is this beneficial to the comatose defenseless patient. After the beating heart is cut out, isn't he then a corpse? And before that wasn't he a sick patient receiving treatment in an intensive care unit?<sup>[16]</sup>

Dr. Byrne makes clear that the true Catholic position on single vital organ donation is: "No one shall be declared dead unless respiratory, circulatory, and nervous systems have been destroyed. Such destruction shall be in accord with universally accepted medical standards."

As spokesperson for the NCCB, and an advisor to the American bishops on medical ethics, John M. Haas, Ph.D. has clashed many times over the years with Dr. Byrne on questions concerning the moral legitimacy of vital organ transplantation.

The position of Haas, who holds a doctorate in moral theology, *but no medical degrees*, and the NCBC, was clearly stated in the Summer 2011 issue of the *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* in a lengthy article titled “Catholic Teaching Regarding the Legitimacy of Neurological Criteria for the Determination of Death.”<sup>[17]</sup>

My first impression of the lengthy article was that while Haas was critical of Dr. Byrne, especially the latter’s contention that excising the heart or other single vital organs of a not-yet-dead human being is tantamount to homicide, he was *not* critical of the cash cow organ transplantation industry where a fresh heart sells for \$290,000 to \$1.4 million, putting the not-so-dead patient/donor at a critical disadvantage in the battle to save *his own* life.

On subsequent readings over the years, the (mistaken and dangerous) bottom line position of the NCBC and its officers remains unchanged – VITAL SINGLE HUMAN ORGAN DONATION IS A MERITORIOUS ACT. Either the name “Catholic Bioethics,” or its position on organ donation *must* change.

That the Opus Dei “apostolate” of the National Catholic Bioethics Center has continued to exist at all has been due mainly to annual grants received from the Knights of Columbus. IRS records show that the Knights gave the NCBC \$489,000 in 2006; \$250,000 in 2014; \$300,617 in 2015; \$100,000 in 2018; \$183,355 in 2020, and \$250,000 in 2021.

As with the Catholic Information Center, isn’t it about time for rank-and- file Knights to cut the financial cord to the not-so-Catholic NCBC?

## **Knights Expand the OD Media Empire**

One of the major changes that occurred after Opus Dei’s Carl Anderson took over as Supreme Knight in 2000 was the purchase of various Catholic newspaper and media outlets, which in turn come under the ultimate control of the Work without financially burdening the Prelature. Some media acquisitions, like the Knights’ purchase of Crux from *The Boston Globe* in 2016, have made news headlines. Others, like EWTN<sup>[18]</sup> and Catholic News Agency, are listed by name in the Knights’ 990 tax reports. Other forms of media financial support are hidden in the Knights’ official accounts under generic entries like “communication activities,” as in the case of Robert Moynihan’s *Inside the*

*Vatican*, or in the ledgers of the Knights of Columbus Charities, Inc., or in media entities outside the United States.

By far, the Knights' 2016 unthinkable bailout and "corporate resurrection"<sup>[19]</sup> of Crux from the historically anti-Catholic, anti-life *Boston Globe* received the most publicity and criticism of all the Knights' media escapades.<sup>[20]</sup>

On March 11, 2016, *The Globe* announced it was dropping its Catholic news site CruxNow.com, operated by American journalist in Rome, John L. Allen, Jr., with Crux Vatican correspondent, Ines San Martin, an Opus numerary.<sup>[21]</sup> Four days later, on March 15, Supreme Knight Carl Anderson stated that it was entering a "partnership" with Crux editor John Allen to preserve the "independent" Catholic news service.

Shortly after coming to Rome in 2000, John Allen, who then worked for the liberal *National Catholic Reporter*, realized that his success as a Vatican journalist depended on obtaining the benediction of Joaquin Navarro-Valls, an Opus Dei supernumerary who lived at the Prelature's headquarters in Rome. As Director of the Holy See Press Office, Navarro-Valls was arguably the most important man at the Vatican, second only to Pope John Paul II.

As luck would have it, Allen became a Navarro-Valls' favorite and, not surprisingly, an avid media waterboy for Opus Dei. In fact, Allen's best-known work is his whitewash of the Prelature, *Opus Dei – An Objective Look Behind the Myths and Reality of the Most Controversial Force in the Catholic Church* (2005).<sup>[22]</sup>

The Knights media romance with Crux ended just three and a half years later in the fall of 2019, with two million dollars of hard-earned donations wasted.<sup>[23]</sup> On October 23, 2019, my colleague George Neumayr issued an interesting tweet:

More Francis-friendly blather from John Allen. Many have been fooled into thinking he is an "objective " Vatican reporter. In truth, he is mainly a stenographer for the bad guys. He is openly heterodox – a divorcee who is shackled up with Crux's Elise Harris [Rome senior correspondent for Crux].<sup>[24]</sup>

When the Knights dropped Crux, the latter's major financial apparatus shifted to the Archdiocese of Los Angeles under former Opus Numerary and priest, Archbishop José H. **Gomez**, with supplementary funding from the DeSales Media Group in the Diocese of Brooklyn under associate Opus priest, Reverend Nicholas DiMarzio, and *Angeles News*, the official media organ of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.<sup>[25]</sup> Crux is home at last with the Opus Dei Prelature.



## Knights Capture the March for Life

The Knights of Columbus' subsequent takeover and corruption of the Washington, D.C. March for Life Education and Defense Fund (MFL) began with the death of the March founder and president Nellie Gray on August 13, 2012. One of the organization's staffers, Gene Ruane, arrived for a morning meeting and found Nellie Gray dead in her Washington Capitol Hill apartment.

Although Knights leadership claims their organization played a major role in the very early days of the MFL, this is simply media hype.<sup>[26]</sup> According to one of the founding members of the MFL all volunteer, non-salaried Board, there were only seven people gathered around Nellie's dining room table, none of whom claimed they were acting on behalf of the Knights of Columbus, although some present were grassroots members.<sup>[27]</sup> The only mention of the Knights came when the small group discussed having "marshals" for the March.

After the MFL was organized and functioning, it attracted thousands of grassroots Knights who supported the MFL and the "no compromise" philosophy of its founder. IRS records show that while Nellie Gray was alive, the Knights annual contribution to the MFL was in the \$10,000 range. Thus, it was not until *after* Nellie's death that the



*Jeanne Mancini flanked by Patrick Kelly (left) and Carl Anderson (right)*

Knights, under Carl Anderson's leadership, engineered a paradigm shift in the March's philosophy, finances, policies, and programs.

The transfer of power and control started with the appointment of new MFL Board member, feminist Jeanne Monahan (Mancini),<sup>[28]</sup> first as interim President. Later, she was formally named President of the MFL following a unanimous vote in her favor at an "emergency" Board meeting in 2012. At the time of Monahan's appointment, Patrick E. Kelly was doing dual service as Chairman of the MFL and Vice President of Public Policy for the Knights of Columbus National Office.<sup>[29]</sup>



In a much later 2018 interview with *Crux*/Opus Dei reporter, Christopher White, Mancini admitted that she felt “conflicted and ambivalent” about joining the Board as she thought the organization was “old school in its thinking and operations,” and her views on abortion were more inclusive and “big tent.”<sup>[30]</sup> In an October 2018 panel discussion on abortion held at Georgetown University, sponsored in part by the Knights, Mancini said that religious anti-abortion language damaged the Prolife Movement and that she preferred a secular approach that promotes abortion as a “social justice” issue.<sup>[31]</sup>

At the MFL Board meetings following Nellie Gray’s death, for the first time since the organization’s founding, the matter of salaries and staff came to the fore.

In 2011, the annual budget for the MFL was only \$314,155. In 2012, the budget was \$462,071.

One year later, 2013, under Mancini/Kelly leadership, the MFL budget exploded to an astounding \$1,439,109 to support the March’s bloated and growing bureaucracy, including new office space with staff, and their salaries, to operate the organization year round.<sup>[32]</sup>

In 2014, the MFL budget dipped to \$532,150, but exceeded the one-million dollar level thereafter: 2015 – \$1,083,266; 2016 – \$1,083,929; 2017– \$1,554,482; 2018 – \$1,444,990; 2019 – 1,814,504; 2020 – \$1,678,987.

In 2021, the MFL budget surpassed \$3 million with assets of \$2,938,096, thanks to the \$500,000 to \$850,000 annual contribution of the Knights of Columbus.

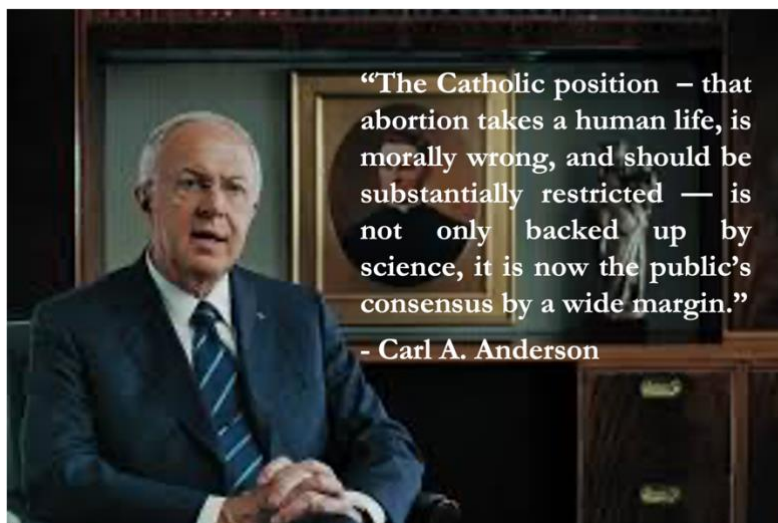
A large portion of MFL funding in the fall of 2016 went into the Board of Directors’ creation of a sister-lobbying organization called March for Life ACTION, a 501(c)(4) entity headed by Tom McCloskey, a colleague of Mancini from her Family Research Council days. As Vice-President of Government Affairs, his starting salary was set at six figures, \$102,000.

Unfortunately, the financial generosity of the Knights of Columbus came at a high price for the original March for Life, including the loss of independence and control. Within one year of Nellie Gray’s death, the Knights had captured all four major offices of the MFL:

- Chair – Deputy Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly
- Vice Chair – Knight Thomas J. Harrington, Senior Policy Director
- Secretary – Knight Timothy Saccoccia, Metro Area Senior Policy Director
- Treasurer – Knight Donald R. Kehoe, Assistant Supreme Secretary

With its newly acquired control, the Knights leadership was ready to engineer a paradigm shift from the MFL's foundational epitaph of "NO EXCEPTIONS NO COMPROMISE" to the deadly endorsement of "CONSENSUS," on the life and death issue of abortion. President Mancini fully cooperated in the media endeavor.

The idea of "consensus" as a foundation for a new national legislative and political strategy for the Pro-Life Movement originated with the Media Compass Project carried out by the Knights' Media Research and Development team in cooperation with the Marist Institute for Public Opinion of New York, an idea incubated in the Knights' New Haven office between 2008 and 2010. The consensus strategy was concretely defined and promoted for popular grassroots consumption by Supreme Knight Anderson in his 2010 book, *Beyond A House Divided – The Moral Consensus Ignored by Washington, Wall Street, and the Media*.<sup>[33]</sup>



According to Anderson, the Knight's funded Marist poll shows that the American public is moving towards a consensus "prolife position," that is to say, a majority "favor restrictions that would limit abortion to the first three months of pregnancy at most."<sup>[34]</sup>

what almost everyone sees as the most hopelessly divided issue in America today,"<sup>[35]</sup> Anderson said.

Obviously, to make "consensus" fit an acceptable definition of "prolife," Anderson had to *redefine* what the term prolife even means, so that, when challenged, his defenders can claim that his position is being "taken out of context."

For example, in an August 17, 2016, editorial for the Washington, D.C. newspaper, *The Hill*, titled "Catholic politicians should follow conscience, consensus on abortion," Anderson falsely claims, "The Catholic position – that abortion takes a human life, is morally wrong, and should be substantially restricted — is not only backed up by science, it is now the public's consensus by a wide margin."<sup>[36]</sup>

AkaCatholic editor, Louie Verrecchio, rakes Anderson over the coals and back in his excellent podcast<sup>[37]</sup> on the Knights of Columbus/March for Life creation and promotion of “consensus,” so I won’t belabor the significance of the death-knoll strategy for the Prolife Movement for the reader other than to cite these brief points:

- Prolifers who stand by the founding abolitionist position of the Prolife Movement, that is zero, zilch, nada, killing of innocent human beings in the womb or test tube, are now relegated to the “extremist” category held by pro-aborts who favor abortion ‘til birth (and a little beyond).
- Politicians who favor the popular “exceptions” for abortion including rape, incest, eugenics, and life of the mother are promoted to “prolife” status.
- According to the U.S. Center for Disease Control, **91% of all abortions** are performed in the first trimester, and 9% in the second and third trimester. Early abortifacient chemical abortions are gradually replacing surgical abortion. Figures do not include abortifacient “contraceptives” and devices including the intrauterine device and the Pill.

On September 22, 2016, March for Life ACTION launched its version of a national “CONSENSUS” media campaign, funded by Knights’ “charity.” The ad/commercial played on prime cable and network television.<sup>[38]</sup>

So, what’s the Knights of Columbus/March for Life endgame?

For the last seven years, the March for Life and March for Life Action have been organizing State prolife marches across America with the objective of establishing an alternative to the National Right to Life in Washington, D.C. However, an extensive phone questionnaire conducted by the USCL of the State and diocesan prolife offices in the U.S. in 2017 indicated that that not a single spokesman was aware that the Knights of Columbus and the March for Life were promoting a “consensus” strategy on abortion, nor what the implications were for the adoption of such a strategy.

As this is a exposé on Opus Dei’s capture of the Knights of Columbus, and the Knights’ subsequent absorption of the largest and most recognizable prolife organization in the nation, the question arises as to the Prelature’s position on “consensus” as defined by its inscribed member, Carl Anderson.

Do they correspond?

Since Opus Dei falsely insists that its role embraces only spiritual matters, and not politics, to get an answer to the above question, one must review the actions of its “apostolates,” and there is none better to select than the multi-million dollar

“conservative/libertarian” Federalist Society for Law and Public Policy,<sup>[39]</sup> founded by Leonard Leo, a member of the Prelature’s Catholic Information Center (CIC) in Washington, D.C.

Leo draws an annual salary of \$500,000 plus per year as Director and Co-chair of the Society. Opus priest, Fr. Charles Trullols, has served as a Director of the Federalist Society, and is the current Director of the Prelature’s CIC.

On October 7, 2016, following the MFL “consensus” campaign, the Federalist featured an article by MFL President Mancini titled “80 Percent of Americans Support Limiting Abortion to the First Trimester.”<sup>[40]</sup> Mancini concludes:

Last month, March for Life ACTION released a commercial making the case to the American people that we should not be afraid to tackle this winning issue, to move on the offensive and embrace what have now become mainstream pro-life policies. We are indeed winning the hearts and minds of Americans. To anyone out there who has been afraid to speak the truth on these winning issues, I invite you to join the consensus.<sup>[41]</sup>

For the record, under the Anderson administration, the Knights plowed hundreds of thousands of “charity” dollars into Leonard’s Federalist Society, at an annual rate of \$50,000. Leo Leonard also sits on the Board of Directors of the think-tank agency called the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C. that receives from \$85,000 to \$300,000 a year from the Knights.<sup>[42]</sup> Leo Leonard is also the President of the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast (with Patrick Kelly Director/Secretary). The Breakfast is held annually in Washington, D.C. for about \$100,000 a year, with the majority of funding, some \$75,000, supplied mainly by – you guessed it – the Knights of Columbus. I think the reader gets the idea.

### **The Pope John Paul II Shrine Money Pit**

Originally dubbed the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center and later renamed the Saint Pope John Paul II National Shrine, this bottomless million-dollar money pit has been sucking the Knights’ coffers dry for decades.

The center’s origins are linked to the special friendship that Bishop (later Cardinal) Adam Maida established with John Paul II in 1988 when Maida was bishop of the Green Bay Diocese in Wisconsin. Maida tickled the pope’s ears with the idea of building an international showcase for the Wojtyla papacy.

After Maida was installed as the Archbishop of Detroit, one of the poorest dioceses in the nation, he received permission from the pope to raise funds for the papal edifice that Pope John Paul II wanted built in Washington, D.C.

The Pope John Paul II Cultural Center, modeled on the American idea of a presidential library, came under the auspices of the now defunct John Paul II Foundation. Maida was appointed President of the Foundation and head of the Cultural Center project in the United States.

The JP II Cultural Center, a 130,000-square foot, 12-acre facility was built on Harewood Avenue on the edge of the Catholic University of America campus, just a short distance from the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. It featured lectures on the life of Pope John Paul II as well as galleries to exhibit Vatican artifacts, a church and a chapel, with a large support staff and host of academics. The final cost of the ugly structure, including design, construction, and maintenance, ran well over \$54 million U.S. dollars, with the Knights initially contributing \$5 million. The Vatican contributed zero.



*JP II Cultural Center, Washington, D.C.*

In 2001, the Cultural Center had its grand opening.

By its 5<sup>th</sup> year, the failing Cultural Center was \$36 million in debt to the Detroit Archdiocese due to loans from the Allied Irish Bank that Maida either made, or guaranteed, to cover the center's operating costs. As a business model, the center was unsustainable because it had few visitors. As a prayer center, it could not compete with the Basilica just a short walk away.

In 2009 when Cardinal Maida retired, the new Archbishop, Allen H. Vigneron, ordered a 9-member commission to investigate the status of the sinking ship. Eventually, the facility was shuttered and padlocked until Vigneron finally put the building and property up for sale in 2010. It took 18 months before the archbishop was able to unload the money pit onto the Knights of Columbus.

On August 2, 2011, Supreme Knight Anderson announced at a business session of the Knight's 129<sup>th</sup> annual convention in Denver, that the Supreme Board had voted to acquire the ill-fated structure and transform the Cultural Center into a shrine for Pope



John Paul II. Anderson said the Knights would bail out the Archdiocese of Detroit for \$22,700,000 in cash. He noted that the purchase was good for all concerned, and that the Knights would now have a permanent Washington Office of Public Policy and the facility would also house the Knights State Council office. Anderson appointed Patrick Kelly as the new Executive Director.

Cardinal Donald Wuerl of Washington, D.C. issued a decree turning the center into a shrine, and in 2014 the renamed Shrine of Saint John Paul II was given the status of a National Shrine by the United States Conference of Catholic bishops.

A quick look at the IRS 990 forms filed by the primary officer of the Pope John Paul II Shrine reveals that between 2013 and 2021 Knights' Supreme Council allocated the following millions for the Shrine's maintenance and staff: 2013-\$9,816,162; 2014 - \$13,101,873; 2015 - \$14,500,000; 2018 - \$10,763,801; 2020 - \$10,274,273; 2021-\$8,395,000. The latest return showed that expenses exceeded revenue by \$307,120.

### **Who Benefits from Maida's white elephant?**

The reader will note that this segment on the Pope John Paul Shrine, unlike the other Opus Dei "apostolates" cited above, does not mention the Prelature at all, because, as far as I know, Opus, in keeping with its virtue of "non-giving," has not contributed to the Shrine's existence in any meaningful way. However, I have included this story on the shrine because it is Opus Dei, and not the Knights of Columbus or the Catholic Church, that has been the primary beneficiary of the Knights' millions that continues to publicize the legacy of the Pope John Paul II to which the Prelature's entire future is inextricably linked.

### **The Pope John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family**

Although Opus Dei is no friend of the natural family and parental rights, and not a particular supporter of marriage, with the exception of married supernumeraries with large families who supply the bulk of the Prelature's financial base, never-the-less it has a large number of popular apostolates devoted to marriage and the family including the well-known Pope John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family.

The Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family was founded in 1981 by Pope John Paul II in the Apostolic Constitution *Magnum Matrimonii Sacramentum*,<sup>[\[43\]](#)</sup> but its formation was delayed until October 1982, due to the attempted assassination of the pope.

The Institute was closely related to the ill-fated Pontifical Council for the Family that was created in the Roman Curia that same year under the Motu Proprio *Familia a Deo Instituta* for the purpose of fostering the pastoral care of families and protecting the rights and dignity of families in the Church and civil society.<sup>[44]</sup>

The Institute was annexed to the Lateran University in Rome with later affiliates in the U.S. and around the world including Mexico, Spain, and Australia – all with the right to confer, *de iure*, doctorates and licentiates in the sciences on marriage and family. The first presiding president was Bishop, later Cardinal, Carlo Caffarra (1981-1995), a close associate of Opus Dei.

In 1987, Supreme Knight Virgil Dechant, joined by Cardinal James Hickey of the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C., asked the Congregation for Catholic Education for permission to establish an independent John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family, initially at the Dominican House of Studies adjacent to the Catholic University of America, and later on the campus of Catholic University of America, an entity heavily endowed by the Knights since its early years.

The corporation [EIN 52-1547103], which is the legal organizational body of the Institute, was established in the District of Columbia under the name “John Paul II Shrine and Institute, Inc.” **The Institute is governed by a Board of Governors composed of the Supreme Officers of the Knights of Columbus.**

Thus, on September 8, 1988, the rank-and-file members of the Knights of Columbus were burdened with another decades-long questionable financial enterprise dedicated to perpetuating John Paul II’s legacy on love and sex, aka, *Theology of the Body*, starting off with a \$50,000 grant by Virgil Dechant.

How many millions of dollars the Dechant, Anderson, and Kelly Administrations have squandered on propping up the John Paul II legacy via the Institute, as well as the Pope John Paul II Shrine, is any one’s guess. My low-end estimate would be in the \$160 million range,<sup>[45]</sup> not including special projects like the 2006 outlay of \$8 million used to turn CUA Keane Hall into the new McGivney Hall, as the permanent seat of the Institute.

Thus far, the Knights’ John Paul II Institute on Marriage and Family has only graduated 600 students. Using the above low calculations that would put the cost of educating a single layman, priest, or deacon at the Institute for the period from 1990 to 2022 at about \$266,000 per graduate.

Fortunately for the Knights, Pope Francis put the Pope John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family out of its financial misery on September 2017, when he introduced the Motu Proprio *Summa Familiae Cura*, renaming the original body the Pontifical John Paul II Theological Institute for Matrimonial and Family Science.<sup>[46]</sup>

In driving out the bad, with the more bad, Francis replaced John Paul II's *Theology of the Body* with his own post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*.

Francis named Archbishop Vincenzo “How I love my homoerotic mural” Paglia,<sup>[47]</sup> head of the Pontifical Academy for Life, as the Grand Chancellor for the newly renovated Institute. So, one can only hope that the days of the Knights funding any more John Paul II academic love fests is finally over.



Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia

### **Knights Fund Only Opus Dei Cult**

There are many other ways, of course, that the Knights' Supreme Office or its members, including the Supreme Knight, can secretly funnel funds to Opus Dei, including giving a rebate on their salaries to the Prelature.

But I think from the IRS 990 information provided, it should be clear that during the twenty plus years of the Anderson Administration, Opus Dei and *only* Opus Dei has been the sole “Catholic” sect at the receiving end of the Knights' financial generosity.

No other prominent “Catholic” sect/cult, including Focolare, the Neocatechumenal Way, the Legionaries of Christ and Regnum Christi Movement, Communication and Liberation, and the Community of Sant'Egidio, all of whom attended the canonization of Escriva (along with Supreme Knight Carl Anderson)<sup>[48]</sup> have been so blessed.

The question that grassroots Knights of Columbus must ask themselves is: *What benefits has the Knights organization accrued from funding the Work?*

If the answer turns out to be minus zero, then it's time to turn off the financial spigot that continues to feed Opus Dei and its “apostolates,” and replace all Opus-dominated Supreme Knight Board of Directors with independent officers who will reclaim their leadership role, putting the Catholic faith and the welfare of their fellow grass roots Knights first.<sup>[49]</sup>

<sup>[11]</sup> “We [Opus Dei members] were instructed to practice the art of ‘non-giving,’ but only after we joined. We were not permitted to give alms. We didn’t give gifts to anyone, even family members. Any gifts we may have received were handed over to our Directress, who often gave them to other members.” – Ex-Opus Dei Numerary, Eileen Johnson, See [Interview w Randy Engel](#)

<sup>[12]</sup> [James Hickey, Washington Cardinal and Devotee of St. Josemaria, Dies – Opus Dei.](#)

<sup>[13]</sup> Thomas A. Droleskey, “Not the Work of God,” Christ or Chaos, February 22, 2010, at <http://www.christorchaos.com/NotTheWorkofGod.html>.

<sup>[14]</sup> A graduate in Economics from Columbia University, Rev. McCloskey was originally recruited as an Opus Dei numerary, but later became a priest of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross (1981). He attended Opus’ University of Navarre in Spain where he obtained his Doctorate in Sacred Theology. The Washington D.C. celebrity priest was credited with the conversion to Catholicism (and Opus Dei) of many prominent Washingtonians including Newt Gingrich, Sam Brownback, Lawrence Kudlow, Robert Novak, and former abortionist Bernard Nathanson. The late Opus supernumerary Robert Hanssen, the infamous spy/traitor arrested in 2001, was known to have befriended McCloskey. His fall from grace was attributed to a female sex scandal which came to the Prelature’s attention in 2002 but was covered-up until the case made public headlines in 2019. Father McCloskey died on February 23, 2023.

<sup>[15]</sup> Msgr. William Stetson was an Opus numerary ordained to the Prelature in 1962. He was a graduate of Harvard Law School and earned his doctorate in Canon Law at the Angelicum in Rome. For 17 years, Stetson was the Vicar of Opus Dei in Chicago. In 2004, he replaced Father McCloskey at the CIC. He was appointed to his CIC post by homosexual predator Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, and served, very successfully until September 2007. He died on January 3, 2019.

<sup>[16]</sup> Rev. Arne Panula was recruited to Opus Dei while studying at Harvard and ordained to the Prelature in 1973. He earned his theology degree from Opus’ University of Navarre in Spain, after which he returned to the United States and served at Opus’ Heights School in Washington, D.C. From 1998 to 2002 he was Vicar of the Prelature for the United States. In 2007 he replaced Msgr. Stetson as Director of the CIC. Panula created the Leonine Forum in Washington, D.C. as an Opus “apostolate,” to cultivate “Catholic professionals for lives of virtuous leadership.” Its annual budget hovers around a half-million dollars a year. He died on July 19, 2017, following a long battle with cancer.

<sup>[17]</sup> Father Charles Trullols, a Spaniard, took over the CIC in March 2017. Educated as an architect, he studied at Opus’ Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome and worked for four years at Opus’ Rome headquarters. He was ordained a priest for the Prelature in 2006. In addition to his directorship of the CIC, Trullols serves as the Chaplain at Opus’ Oakcrest School for Girls and is the Spiritual Director of the Leonine Forum. He speaks four languages.

<sup>[18]</sup> Additional funding for the CIC comes from the multi-million dollar Washington, D.C. Catholic Association Foundation (CAF) which shelled out \$375,000 to the CIC in 2021. The CAF operation is directed by one office/president (\$66,400) and a secretary/treasurer (\$85,000) who, according to IRS 990 form work five hours a week each for the CAF.

<sup>[19]</sup> For example, at the February 1981 meeting of the NCBC in Dallas, Texas, homosexual Father Michael Peterson, the future founder of the notorious St. Luke Institute in Washington, D.C., a popular hide-out for clerical pederasts, delivered a lecture titled, “Psychological Aspects of Human Sexual Behavior.” An ardent devotee of Alfred Kinsey, sexologist Peterson instructed the bishops on how Catholic dogmas and morals on sex including the Church’s opposition to birth control and homosexuality, creates much human suffering. Peterson helped frame the sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults in terms “disease,” rather than a “prosecutable crime.”<sup>[9]</sup> His anti-life commentaries were dutifully received by the attendees of the workshop and unopposed by the Knights. Father Michael Peterson died of AIDS on April 9, 1987.

<sup>[10]</sup> Opus Dei supernumerary Dr. John M. Haas retired from the NCBC in 2019. He has served as a consultant to the USCCB’s Committees on Pro-life, and Health Care issues. He is a member of the Pontifical Academy for Life, and a consultant for the Pontifical Council for Health Care Workers. He is also President of the Opus apostolate called the International Institute for Culture located in Philadelphia.

<sup>[11]</sup> The complete series on the Jackson Lab Scandal is available at [Jackson Lab project defeated in Florida — a major victory over the U.S. eugenic establishment \(renewamerica.com\); Jackson Lab project defeated in Florida, Part II \(renewamerica.com\); Jackson Lab project defeated in Florida, Part III \(renewamerica.com\);](#)

<sup>[12]</sup> Apparently, Phil Lawler of Catholic Culture, as well as Tom Monaghan and Co. were oblivious to the fact that the Jackson Lab had a branch lab in West Sacramento, Calif. called JAX-West originally built to expedite the shipment of JAX Mice and Services to area biomedical and university medical centers. In November 2004, following the passage of Proposition 71, which authorized the creation the multi-billion-dollar California Institute for Regeneration Medicine (CIRM), Jax-West was relocated and expanded to conduct experiments on developing new mice models of human diseases to be used in human stem cell treatments. On June 22, 2009, the Jackson Lab announced that Jax-West had received a \$3.4 million grant from CIRM to conduct human stem cell research that would involve the use and destruction of human embryos [referred to as “fertilized embryos” in a Jackson Lab video] to produce immune-deficient mouse models of human diseases that can be used for testing human stem cell therapies. In a public statement made by Jackson Lab Michael Hyde on May 20, 2010, , the executive officer stated that nobody from Ave Maria or elsewhere had ever asked Jackson Laboratory to give its assurance that it would refrain from human embryonic stem cell research on its property. Nor, he insinuated, would Jackson officials and researchers likely agree to any infringement of their right to pursue whatever scientific course they desired to pursue.

<sup>[13]</sup> C.C. Little (1888-1971) was a member of the American Eugenics Society, a founding director of Margaret Sanger’s Birth Control League, and a trustee of the American Euthanasia Society which promoted voluntary and involuntary euthanasia of “defective children.” He founded the Roscoe B. Jackson Memorial Laboratory in Bar Harbor, Maine in 1929 (later renamed the Jackson Laboratory). By the time of Little’s death in 1971, the Jackson Lab had morphed into an international center for mammalian genetic research and a major promoter of “medical genetics,” eugenic abortion, human embryo and stem cell research and destruction, and the “Health by Death” ethic. In 2007, the Jackson Lab hired Dr. Robert Braun to develop new forms of male contraception.

<sup>[14]</sup> For a complete evaluation of the true Catholic position on vital, single organ transplantation see [lifeguardianfoundation.org](http://lifeguardianfoundation.org). See also [“Brain Death” Test Causes Brain Necrosis and Kills Patients: Neurologist to Rome Conference – LifeSite](#)



(lifesitenews.com); [Catholic Teaching on Death and Organ Transplantation brochure.pdf](#)

([truthaboutorgandonation.com](#)); [Bioethics experts challenge the 'Revised Uniform Anatomical Gift Act \(2006\)' \(renewamerica.com\)](#).

[15] In addition to a beating heart, the “brain dead” patient has circulation, respiration, digestion of food, urine production, salt and water balance (in at least 50% of patients), internal control of temperature and many more biological activities.

[16] Series of articles sent by Dr. Paul Byrne to the author. Includes, “Haas is Confused,” and “NCBC Brain Death,” and “Catholic Teaching on Brain Death and Vital Organ Transplantation.”

[17] [John M. Haas, Ph.D. – Liberty Institute for Faith & Ethics \(liberty4life.org\)](#).

[18] EWTN received \$1.25 million from the Knights in 2014; \$250,000 in 2018; \$857,000 in 2021. 990 tax forms.

[19] Laura Hazard Owen, “Crux’s corporate resurrection”: How the Catholic News site will live on beyond The Boston Globe,” March 24, 2016.

[20] See Randy Engel, “Knights of Columbus dump Crux – Who picked up the slack?” four-part series at AKA Catholic: [Knights of Columbus Dump Crux: Who Picked up the Slack? – \(akacatholic.com\)](#); [Knights of Columbus Dump Crux: Who Picked up the Slack? Part II – \(akacatholic.com\)](#); [Knights of Columbus Dump Crux: Who Picked up the Slack? Part III – \(akacatholic.com\)](#); <https://akacatholic.com/knights-of-columbus-dump-crux-part-iv/>.

[21] For a full dossier on Opus member San Martin and other Opus members of Crux see [Knights of Columbus Dump Crux: Who Picked up the Slack? Part III – \(akacatholic.com\)](#);

[22] According to an Amazon book promotion of Allen’s book, “The first serious journalistic investigation of the highly secretive, controversial organization Opus Dei provides unique insight about the wild rumors surrounding it and discloses its significant influence in the Vatican and on the politics of the Catholic Church.” In his introduction of December 8, 2004, to *An Objective Look*, Allen writes: When Doubleday first spoke with me about this project, I approached the people at the Rome headquarters of Opus Dei with some trepidation, given their legendary reputation for secrecy. I told them I was thinking of writing a book on Opus Dei and wanted to know if they would cooperate. Their immediate response was “yes” and so I signed the contract and began to work.” He added that Opus never faltered in their commitment to full disclosure.

However, Kirsten Biondich, who wrote a fascinating, online, must-read masters’ thesis titled “Operation Lemonade: Opus Dei’s Public Relations Campaign Against The Da Vinci Code,” in 2007, gives a different version of the circumstances surrounding Allen’s authorship of his study of the Prelature. Following a detailed background report on Opus’ three-year, multi-million-dollar public relations campaign against Dan Brown’s anti-Christian *The Da Vinci Code* book (2003) and movie (2006) that features an Opus Dei murderous albino numerary “monk,” named Silas, Biondich quotes Kathleen Fearn-Banks, an “organizational crisis communications” expert hired by Opus to defuse the movie and book’s harmful portrayal of the Prelature. Among Fearn-Banks’s strategies to combating false rumors is “to get an outside expert on the subject to discredit the rumor in order to be more believable,” says Biondich. Then Biondich adds: Established Vatican correspondent for the *National Catholic Reporter* and a Vatican analyst for CNN and NPR, John L. Allen, Jr. was just the expert Opus Dei needed. **During *The Da Vinci Code* crisis, Allen approached Opus Dei with a proposal for a book to show the real side of Opus Dei, to which they readily agreed and supported** (emphasis added).

... Allen’s book received plenty of media coverage during Opus Dei’s crisis. He participated in several interviews in which he countered rumors about Opus Dei with research from his book [provided by Opus Dei]. **This outside expert certainly gave more credibility to Opus Dei when they needed it the most** (emphasis added).

Kirsten Biondich, “Operation Lemonade: Opus Dei’s Public Relations Campaign Against the Da Vinci Code,” University of Florida, May 2007 is available at [biondich\\_k.pdf \(ufl.edu\)](#).

[23] Under the financial arrangement made between the Knights and Crux/John Allen, the former would contribute \$350,000 annually towards a total Crux budget of \$850,000. The Archdioceses of Washington, D.C., New York and Los Angeles and the Diocese of Brooklyn, with an Opus Dei bishop, provided the remaining funding.

[24] Engel “Dump Crux” AKA Catholic, series, Part I. Allen was divorced from his first wife, Shannon Levitt, a Jewess. The couple came to Rome in 2000, and she later became the business manager and copy editor for Crux for a decade before returning to the U.S. where she continues to work for Crux. Allen took Elise as his second wife in a civil ceremony.

[25] For details on the transfer of Crux from the Knights of Columbus to the Los Angeles Archdiocese see <https://akacatholic.com/knights-of-columbus-dump-crux-part-iv/>.

[26] J. Mancini, “Together Strong,” *Columbia*, 1/1/2021.

[27] The six co-founding members of the MFL with Nellie Gray were Eileen Vogel, Bill Devlin, Lou Gardner, Margaret Jacocks, John Mawn, and Mary Ann Pierce.

[28] After graduation from James Madison University with a BS in psychology, Monahan worked for the US Department of Health and Human Services. After graduation from the Opus-controlled Pope John II Institute, Mancini secured a job as former Associate Director of the Cardinal Maida Institute located in the St. John Center for Youth and Family, a prominent promoter of Pope John Paul II’s *Theology of the Body*, for the Archdiocese of Detroit in Plymouth, Mich. (2002- 2006). From there, she accepted a position as Abstinence Advisor to the U.S. Agency for International Development (2006-2008) and later, to the USDHHS (2008-2009). In 2009, Mancini was hired by the Protestant Evangelical Family Research Council (a division of James Dobson’s Focus on the Family), in Washington, D.C., where she became Director for the Center for Human Dignity. For a closer look at Mancini’s feminist and anti-abortion views see [The Case Against “ABORTION CONSENSUS” – The Prolife Movement at the Crossroads – \(akacatholic.com\)](#) Whatever the amount of her initial salary as President of MFL, by 2014, Mancini’s reached \$95, 927. By 2019 that figure jumped to \$106, 384.00. Today it stands around \$ 140,000.

[29] Patrick E. Kelly joined the Knights of Columbus while a college law student in 1983. Like Anderson, he served as a Past State Deputy of the District of Columbia; then moved up to the Order’s National Office as Vice President of Public Policy in 2006, and as Deputy Supreme of the Knights of Columbus from January 1, 2017 until February 28, 2021 when he succeeded Anderson as Supreme Knight. Prior to his ultimate rise as CEO of the Knights of Columbus, Kelly had a distinguished military record in the U.S. Navy as well as a long career of public service that included the office of Senior Ambassador to the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious



Freedom at the State Department which brought Kelly in contact with the Holy See. Kelly serves as a “consultant” on several committees of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops alongside Carl Anderson including the Committee on Pro-life Activities, the Committee on Religious Liberty, and the Committee on Laity, Family Life and Youth. He is also a Board member of the Opus Dei National Catholics Bioethics Center since 2013. In 2011, when the Knights’ Supreme Council decided to bail out the financially sinking ship of the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center in Washington, D.C., Supreme Knight Anderson appointed Kelly as the first Executive Director of the new shrine dedicated to the Opus Dei pope. Both Monahan and Kelly had an Opus Dei connection, not necessarily an Opus membership, as they both received their Master’s Degrees from the Opus-controlled Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Mariage and Family at Catholic University in Washington, D.C.

<sup>[30]</sup> Christopher White, “‘March for Life president seeks big tent approach to pro-life cause,” *Cruce*, January 12, 2018.

In a separate earlier interview with White in 2017, Mancini said she was determined to “transform the March to a more inclusive event – open to people of all faiths and no faith, and to folks of all political persuasions.”

<sup>[31]</sup> See Natalie Ise, “MFL President promotes Use of Secular language in Pro-Life Movement,” Oct.10, 2018, at <https://thehoya.com/march-life-president-promotes-use-secular-language-anti-abortion-movement/>.

<sup>[32]</sup> An example of the excessive spending misadventure of the post-Nellie Gray era involved one of the MFL Board’s new appointments, Diana Banister, who, on the 990 IRS 2014 form is listed as serving at zero compensation. Further investigation, however, shows that the firm the MFL Board hired as part of its new “New Media” campaign in 2016 is the well-known Alexandria, Virginia firm of Shirley & Banister Public Relations headed by President and CEO Craig Shirley and Diana Banister as VP. That same year, the IRS record shows that Banister received \$48,015 for her “public relations services” which brings up the obvious question – Why does the MFL need a public relations agency at all?

<sup>[33]</sup> Carl Anderson, *Beyond A House Divided – The Moral Consensus Ignored by Washington, Wall Street, and the Media*, Doubleday, NY, 2010, p.7-8. Anderson defined the singular term “consensus” as endorsed by the Founding Fathers, as a 2/3rds majority, the number needed to override a veto to ratify a treaty.

<sup>[34]</sup> Carl Anderson, in the May 2, 2019, issue of the *Des Moines Register*, in an article titled “The Silent Democratic Majority On Abortion,” puts the limit at 20 weeks, that is 5 months. By about 3-to-1, Americans oppose abortion **after 20 weeks** – or don’t want it at all (emphasis added). This includes about 8 in 10 Republicans and independents and nearly 6 in 10 Democrats.

<sup>[35]</sup> Anderson, *Beyond a House Divided*, pp. 84-85.

<sup>[36]</sup> [Catholic politicians should follow conscience, consensus on abortion | The Hill.](#)

<sup>[37]</sup> See [The akaCatholic Podcast: Episode 11 –](#).

<sup>[38]</sup> See [MARCH FOR LIFE ACTION LAUNCHES 2016 AD CAMPAIGN REVEALING PRO-LIFE POSITION IS NATIONAL CONSENSUS.](#)

<sup>[39]</sup> The tentacles of the Federalist Society reach out to a dozen or more Opus Dei “apostolates” including the Catholic Association and its associated Catholic Association Foundation; Catholic Voices; and the Ethics and Policy Center.

<sup>[40]</sup> [80 Percent Of Americans Support Limiting Abortion To The First Trimester \(thefederalist.com\).](#)

<sup>[41]</sup> Ibid.

<sup>[42]</sup> Opus Dei member George Weigel is, the leading biographer of Karol Wojtyla also belongs to the society.

<sup>[43]</sup> [Library : Magnum Matrimonii Sacramentum | Catholic Culture.](#)

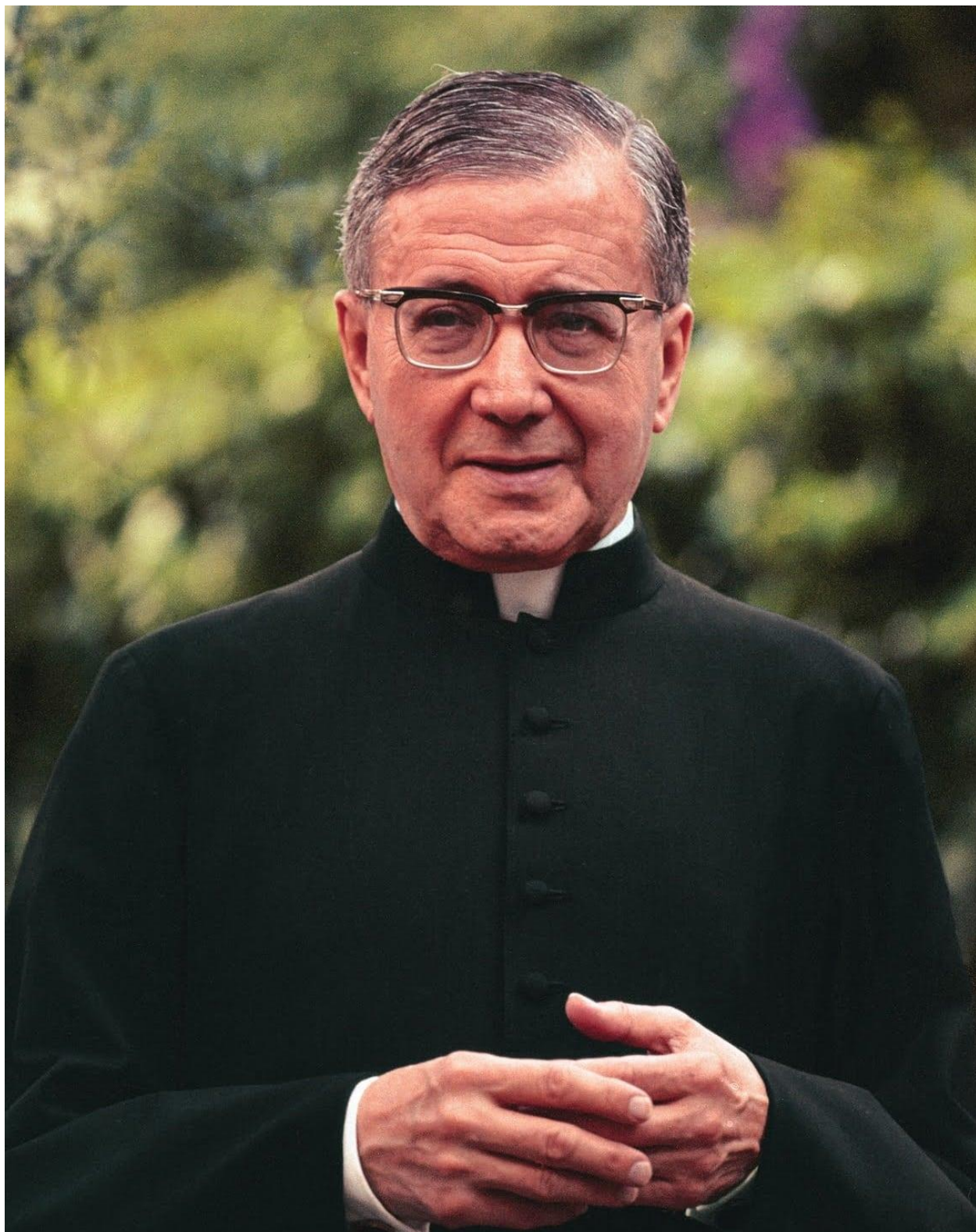
<sup>[44]</sup> See <https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=8724#3>.

<sup>[45]</sup> A sample annual cost of the Institute per year is **2013** \$9,816,162; **2014** \$13,101,873 + \$440,916 + 478, 904 = \$14,021,693; **2015** \$15,781,312; **2018** \$8,540,000; **2020** \$7,484,120; **2021** \$11,042,721 + \$501,661 + 1,150,000 = \$12,594,382. Given the fact that the above figures comingled the Institute and the Shrine’s expenses on the IRS forms, I estimated the Knights annual donation at Dechant’s original level of \$50,000 per year exclusively designated to the Institute for 32 years which comes to about \$160,000,000.

<sup>[46]</sup> See [Apostolic Letter issued Motu Proprio Summa familiae cura, instituting the Pontifical John Paul II Theological Institute for Matrimonial and Family Science \(8 September 2017\) | Francis \(vatican.va\).](#)

<sup>[47]</sup> See [Vatican Archbishop Commissions Blasphemous Homoerotic Mural \(traditioninaction.org\).](#)

<sup>[48]</sup> [Canonization of Josemaría Escrivá – Opus Dei.](#)



*"In the pastoral practice of the Church, never before had that unlocking and wide opening of doors been seen which incorporated the souls of its benefactors, among whom were Protestants, schismatics, Jews, Muslims, and pagans."*

- Ana Sastre Gallego writing with admiration of Opus Dei in her biography of Josemaria Escriva

## CHAPTER NINE

### Reopening the Hanssen Spy Case

#### Introduction

The espionage case against FBI agent Robert Philip Hanssen, a supernumerary of Opus Dei, was *officially* closed on May 10, 2002, when Judge Claude Hilton in the Federal Court of Alexandria, VA, sentenced the superspy to fifteen consecutive life sentences plus one day, with no possibility of parole.<sup>[1]</sup>

Hanssen was convicted of selling supersecret U.S. national security documents valued at an estimated \$10 billion<sup>[2]</sup> to the Soviet KGB<sup>[3]</sup> and GRU<sup>[4]</sup> and their post-cold war successors. Even more tragic was the betrayal and resulting loss of what the intelligence community coldly refers to as “human assets,” the dozens upon dozens of agents and informers working for the Central Intelligence Agency<sup>[5]</sup> (CIA) and Federal Bureau of Investigation<sup>[6]</sup> (FBI) in the United States and abroad.

Fortunately, espionage cases, especially those of the Hanssen magnitude, are never really closed *forever*.

Writing in her 2022 book, *A Spy in Plain Sight – The Inside Story of the FBI and Robert Hanssen, America’s Most Damaging Russian Spy*, popular news commentator Lis Wiehl – the daughter of an FBI agent herself – reveals that “there were secrets yet to be uncovered” in the Hanssen case, and “those new details would further a richer understanding of the facts behind the story.”<sup>[7]</sup>

“Hanssen’s story will continue to wind through American history for years to come,”<sup>[8]</sup> Wiehl went on to predict, despite writing more than two decades after the fact.

And she was right.

Revealed in this, the final chapter of the exposé, is Opus Dei’s role in the Hanssen espionage affair, and how the Work contributed to extending his spying spree for an additional decade and a half. Raised along the way will be new questions as to how the Prelature, like Hanssen, was able to hide the evidence of its crimes in plain sight for so long.



## A Summary of Hanssen's Spying Career



In August 2003, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) produced three reports on the Hanssen case, including a comprehensive 674-page Top Secret / Codeword classified version; a less detailed 383-page report classified as Secret, and a 31-page online unclassified Executive Summary titled, *A Review of the FBI's Performance in Deterring, Detecting, and Investigating the Espionage Activities of Robert Philip Hanssen*.<sup>[9]</sup>

While the latter document is designed for public consumption and is written in shoddy, insipid, kindergarten level language, it nevertheless provides an accurate timeline for Hanssen's espionage activities along with occasional insight into the personality and mind of America's most dangerous spy:

- Hanssen was an only child whose father, a lieutenant in the Chicago Police Department, emotionally abused him throughout his life. Starting from a young age, Hanssen enjoyed spy-related entertainment. We believe that the personality flaws and background that Hanssen brought with him into the FBI likely played a more significant role in his decision to commit espionage than anything that happened to him after he became an agent.
- Hanssen became an FBI agent in 1976.<sup>[10]</sup> During his 25-year FBI career, he principally served in Soviet counterintelligence assignments in New York City

and Washington, D.C. in the 1980s and 1990s. Hanssen held positions at FBI Headquarters and the State Department that gave him access to a broad range of highly sensitive counterintelligence and military information.

- Hanssen's espionage began in November 1979... and continued intermittently until his arrest in February 2001. His espionage spanned three separate time periods: 1979-81,<sup>[\[11\]](#)</sup> 1985-91,<sup>[\[12\]](#)</sup> and 1999-2001.<sup>[\[13\]](#)</sup>
- Hanssen had no alcohol, drug, or gambling problems, and did not engage in ostentatious spending. [Hanssen was addicted to pornography, sexual fetishes, and distributed sexually explicit videos of his own wife on the Internet.<sup>[\[14\]](#)</sup>].
- Hanssen was a mediocre agent who exhibited strong technical abilities but had weak managerial and interpersonal skills.
- Hanssen received minimal supervision in most of his positions, was not required to produce significant work product, and had ample time to plan and commit espionage while on duty. Hanssen also encountered few security checks at the FBI. He was never asked to submit to a polygraph examination or to complete a financial disclosure form, and he received only one background reinvestigation during his 25-year FBI career. He deposited much of the KGB's cash directly into a passbook savings account in his name in the late 1980s. [Hanssen had two Swiss bank accounts]
- While Hanssen has not accounted for much of the money [\$4.5 million] he received from the KGB [and GRU] it is clear that he spent some of it on an addition to his home, cars, tuition payments for his children's private schools, gifts, a loan to his brother-in-law, and at strip clubs.
- Hanssen suggested to the KGB that it attempt to recruit Jack Hoschouer, Hanssen's closest friend, who was then serving as a military attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Bonn.<sup>[\[15\]](#)</sup>
- In late 1989, Hanssen began a year-long relationship with a stripper, Priscilla Sue Galey. Hanssen paid for Galey to accompany him on an FBI Inspection Division trip to Hong Kong, bought her a Mercedes Benz, provided her with an American Express card, and gave her jewels, cash, and other gifts.<sup>[\[16\]](#)</sup>
- His removal of hundreds of classified documents from the FBI – including original and numbered Top Secret documents – and improper searches of the Bureau's computer system for references to himself and to the Bureau's most sensitive espionage investigations went unnoticed.



- The reasons why Hanssen initially began committing espionage, and repeatedly returned to it, are complex and, as we explain below, changed over time. Many of the factors that have motivated or influenced traitors in the past – such as greed, ideology, career disappointments and resentment, and drug and alcohol abuse – do not apply to Hanssen or do not fully explain his conduct.
- In late 2000, after the FBI received information identifying Hanssen as a Russian mole, the FBI offered him a Senior Executive Service position at FBI Headquarters, where he could be closely monitored.
- The defects in the FBI's security program were the product of decades of neglect. ... Before Hanssen's arrest, the FBI's security program was based on trust. Rather than taking the sort of proactive steps adopted by other Intelligence Community components – such as requiring regular counterintelligence polygraph examinations, financial disclosures, and meaningful background reinvestigations, and utilizing audit functions regarding computer usage – the FBI trusted that its employees would remain loyal throughout their careers. The Hanssen case shows the danger of that approach.

By the time of his arrest on February 18, 2001, Hanssen had handed over 6,000 pages of classified and supersecret intelligence reports and computer disks that revealed U.S. government nuclear survival, defense, and retaliation plans; entire National Intelligence Programs and budgets for specific years; the location, methods and technology of the FBI in their Soviet spy surveillance programs; the existence of the FBI's hundred-million-dollar ultra-secret project, code named "MONOPOLY," involving the building of a secret tunnel under the Soviet embassy for electronic eavesdropping; details of the U.S. intelligence community's classified intranet system called COINS-II; information on KGB double agent recruitment techniques, and intelligence reviews of Soviet military capabilities.

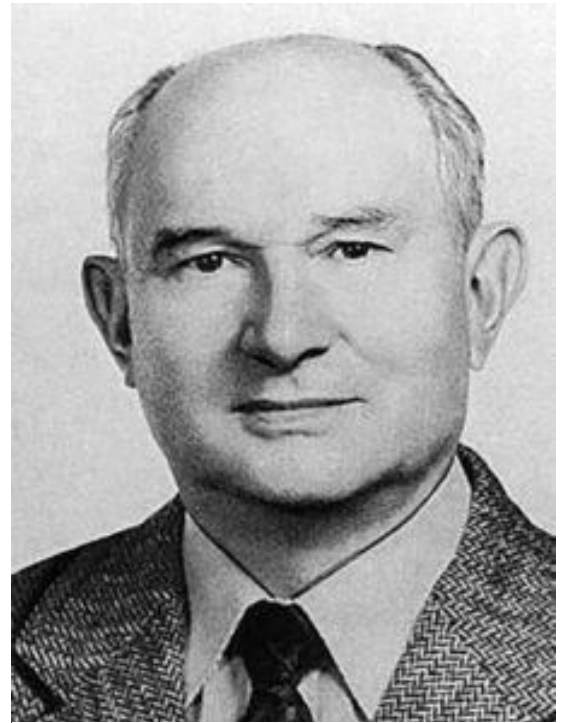
Most tragically, however, Hanssen knowingly signed the prison, torture, and/or death warrants of countless Soviet agents, military officers, embassy officials, and defectors spying for the U.S., as well as fellow U.S. intelligence agents operating in the Soviet Union.<sup>[17](#)</sup>

Of these, the name of General Dmitri Polyakov continues to claw at this writer's mind because this particular betrayal had a personal, as well as a professional, motivation on the part of Hanssen.

## More Than Blood on his Hands

In 1980, only a year into his first attempt as Soviet spy, Robert Hanssen committed one of most significant and damaging treasonable acts of his espionage career by revealing to the GRU, aka, Soviet Military Intelligence, the name of Major General Dmitri Polyakov, code name TOPHAT. Hanssen chose his target very carefully with full thought and malice because he feared that Polyakov might at some point discover *his* identity and report *him* to the CIA or the FBI as a Russian spy.

Dmitri Polyakov was born on July 6, 1921, in the Russian Ukraine. After his education and training at the Frunze Military Academy, one of the most prestigious military educational institutions in the Soviet Union, he served in the Red Army from 1941 to 1946 and was decorated for bravery. He went on to serve in the GRU from 1951-1980.



*Dmitri Polyakov, aka TOPHAT*

In 1962, Polyakov was posted to the United Nations headquarters in New York City where he served as a KGB disinformation officer. That same year, he contacted counterintelligence agents at the FBI and offered himself as an unpaid double agent. As for motive, he said he loved his country, but not its Communist Party elite.

Former CIA operative Sandy Grimes, who participated in the debriefing of Polyakov, called him, “the crown jewel” of the CIA and FBI.<sup>[\[18\]](#)</sup>

In an extensive online interview on January 30, 1998, Grimes stated that Polyakov – being a Soviet military as well as intelligence officer, and a member of the Communist Party – provided priceless information on GRU and KGB agents and moles, and their modus operandi around the world. According to Grimes, because of his rank and the length of his service, he was the best source of enemy intelligence from the top down that the CIA “had or ever will have.”<sup>[\[19\]](#)</sup>

In 1980, after Hanssen had exposed Polyakov to Soviet intelligence as a defector, he was recalled to Moscow and disappeared from the CIA radar. Polyakov, however, was not arrested by Soviet authorities until 1986, six years after his retirement from the GRU, by which time he thought himself free and clear of suspicion.<sup>[\[20\]](#)</sup>

At the time of his secret imprisonment, a video was made of his capture. According to Lis Wiehl, it showed an elderly man being manhandled by KGB agents, one stripping him of his shirt and another twisting the old man's neck to face the camera. Polyakov, Wiehl observed, showed "resignation, for sure" but also a "silent dignity," "no fear," and "no apparent regrets."<sup>[21]</sup>

On March 15, 1988, after 20 months of interrogation and torture, the 66-year-old Major General was put on trial for treason and subsequently executed, but not in the usual manner of a bullet through the back of the head.

As Wiehl reports, the GRU made a second video starring Dmitri Polyakov, one that the KGB shows as a "cautionary tale to new recruits":

In this one, he is lying naked on a metal tabletop, still alive, after his torturers have extracted every last secret they can from him. As the video rolls, the tabletop is slowly elevated at one end until 'TOPHAT' slides off the lower end into a roaring fire.<sup>[22]</sup>

I trust the reader will remember the fate of Dmitri Polyakov, as we now return to Robert Philip Hanssen and his connection to the Work.

### **Hanssen and the Opus Dei Connection**

It is unlikely that lower-middle class Robert Hanssen would have ever had seen the inside of an Opus Dei center, much less become a supernumerary of the Prelature, except that he happened to marry into a large, wealthy, Chicago Opus Dei family that was totally devoted to the Work.

Hanssen's future wife, Bernadette "Bonnie" Wauck, was the second of eight children of Leroy and Fran Wauck of the upscale suburb of Park Ridge, IL. Her father was a psychologist associated with Loyola University, and her mother, Fran, lived her life for her children and Opus Dei.

One of Bonnie's brothers, John Paul Wauck, became an Opus numerary and was later ordained a priest of the Prelature in Rome, with Hanssen and the Wauck family in attendance.

As for Bonnie Wauck, she was by all descriptions, a lovely, intelligent, young Catholic woman blindly attached to Opus Dei when she met and married the dark, tall, and handsome "Bob" Hanssen.

In a lavish wedding ceremony on August 10, 1968, the couple was married at Seat of Wisdom Parish by Bonnie's uncle, the Rev. Robert Hagarty of the Chicago Archdiocese. Unfortunately, Bonnie's honeymoon bliss was cut short when she learned of her husband's extramarital affairs directly from one of his distraught castoffs. All was quickly forgiven (but not forgotten), however, when Bob minimized his earlier sexual exploits, promising to be a loving and faithful husband.

## **Hanssen Absorbed into the Opus Dei Sphere**

Bob Hanssen came from a Lutheran background but had little interest in religion as a young man, that is, until he met Bonnie. Unfortunately, his first experience of Catholicism after his conversion and baptism to the faith was stamped with the Opus Dei brand.

At 24, the young husband was quietly groomed into joining the Work by the Wauck family. He was taken to Opus family retreats, Opus nights of recollection, and other Opus functions. Bonnie's father, Leroy, even took Hanssen to a special, male-segregated weekend at the Shelburne Conference Center in Indiana founded by Msgr. Escriva in 1928. The event was a costly venture at several hundred dollars a night per guest.

In 1978, two years after Hanssen joined the FBI, he joined Opus Dei as a supernumerary. As part of his initiation, Hanssen made a promise [a vow] of obedience to the Prelature. From that time on, he publicly wore his Opus Dei affiliation on his sleeve for all to see, even though, officially speaking, almost all members of the Work, including married supernumeraries, keep their identity secret. He was heavily into recruitment, especially of his fellow FBI agents, although his openly aggressive techniques lacked the finer touch and deceptive discipline characteristic of Opus' more sophisticated and trained numeraries.

As an Opus supernumerary, Hanssen would have been assigned a spiritual director, most often a male with whom he conferred once a week, and an Opus confessor to whom he was obliged to confess his sins at least once every two weeks. In addition, we know that the Opus Director of the Center to which Hanssen belonged filed monthly reports to the Villa Vecchia in Rome on their new supernumerary.

According to some of his closer associates, "Opus Dei was never far from his mind."<sup>[23]</sup>

What and how much of *anything* Robert Hanssen ever revealed to his assigned Opus spiritual director and his Opus confessor over the 20 plus years he served as a supernumerary will never be known. Certainly, as part of the "Plan of Life" that every

Opus member is required to write out in conjunction with their spiritual director after being initiated into the Work, Hanssen never stated “I want to be a Soviet spy.”



*Robert and Bonnie Hanssen*

However, according to Dr. Alen J. Salerian, a psychiatrist hired by defense attorneys in April of 2001 to evaluate Hanssen’s long history sexual exploitation and betrayal of his wife, Robert Hanssen told him that he discussed his erotic fantasies and deviant sexual behaviors with his [unnamed] spiritual director during their regular sessions. If this was the case, then one can be certain that his spiritual director relayed that information to his superiors at the Villa Vecchia in Rome. One can also be certain that Hanssen’s personnel folder would

then be tagged with a red flag signifying possible serious moral trouble ahead.

Just how serious that trouble, Opus officials would in time find out.

As a supernumerary, Bonnie Hanssen enjoyed the same setup with a spiritual director, (female in her case), an Opus Dei priest confessor, and a director’s monthly report to Rome. The main difference was that she attended a segregated female Opus Center and rarely accompanied her husband to Opus events unless the whole family was invited.

After her husband’s arrest and subsequent imprisonment in February of 2001 for spying, she continued her close ties with Opus Dei, including as a theology teacher at Oakcrest, the Work’s all-girls private school in McLean, VA, a position she held until her retirement in 2020.

## **Hansen and Opus Dei Made for Each Other**

Although Opus Dei was to play a critical role in the Hanssen Case, at the time of the traitor’s arrest in the midwinter of 2001, the Work received little attention in the secular and Catholic press for reasons that will be discussed in detail later. The short quip by the Office of the Inspector General characterizing Opus Dei as “a conservative Catholic lay organization” pretty well characterizes the absence of any serious intent to investigate in depth the relationship between the Prelature and Bob Hanssen.

There were some exceptions to the rule, however, one being a stinging commentary by the laicized priest and religious commentator Eugene Kennedy titled, “Opus Dei’s Secret Revealed: It Takes Spies in From the Cold.”<sup>[24]</sup> Kennedy made some important



observations on the Hanssen-Opus connection, asking a lot of the right questions without necessarily getting truthful answers.

As Kennedy noted with his opening zinger: “The secret spy and the hidden organization were made for each other. The trouble with this Work of God is that nobody can tell you exactly what its work is or how it does it.”

He continued in the same sardonic mode:

The arrest of accused master F.B.I. spy Robert Hanssen opened the door a crack on this international organization... How could a man be a member of a Catholic group that emphasizes unquestioning loyalty to the Holy Father and, at the same time, be unscrupulously disloyal to his fatherland? This intersection of secret group and secret agent, however, demands that Opus Dei either reveal itself and its operations more fully or find that questions and doubts about it will multiply in the future....Here, then, the spy who separates himself from and looks down on his fellow Americans pledges himself to an organization in which he separates himself from and looks down on his fellow Catholics.

### **Hanssen Caught Spying Early On<sup>[25]</sup>**

And so it was that in 1979, only one year after joining Opus Dei, Hanssen launched his espionage career. And just a year or so later, his wife Bonnie, pregnant with their third child, became aware that he was spying for the Soviet Union and had sold them \$30,000 worth of classified documents.

The circumstances surrounding that discovery were pretty straightforward.

In the fall of 1980, Bonnie found her husband, currently employed in the FBI's Counter-Soviet Department, in their basement reading a communication from his Soviet controllers that he tried to hide from her. Her immediate thought was that her husband was involved in another affair.

Bonnie was also aware that her husband had stopped going to holy communion about the same time and demanded answers. Under pressure, Bob claimed he was selling “unimportant” security secrets to the Russians without bothering to mention that, in fact, he had signed off on Dmitri Polyakov's horrific execution and had provided top secret military and security information to the GRU.

Once the degree of punishment involved in acts of treason had sunk into her consciousness, Bonnie turned to her one hope in times of disaster – Opus Dei, and a meeting was arranged with an Opus priest named Msgr. Robert Bucciarelli at Crawford Hall [later renamed the Overlook Study Center] in New Rochelle, Westchester County, N.Y., this writer’s old home hunting ground.

Now, there are three critical factors operating at this meeting – the location – the person of Msgr. Bucciarelli – and the timing of the incident:

- First, New Rochelle, which is only about a 20-minute drive from Yorktown [Scarsdale] where the Hanssens lived, was for decades home to Opus’ National Office and a center for Opus’ operations on the East Coast. The city also houses the Woodlawn Foundation, one of the Prelature’s largest multi-million-dollar fund-raising arms, and the National Center Foundation which paid out \$55 million for Opus Dei’s palatial 17-floor U.S. headquarters in Manhattan at 34<sup>th</sup> Street and Lexington Avenue completed in 2000. So New Rochelle has always been a major operational center for Opus Dei.



*Bishop Álvaro del Portillo*

- Second, Rev. Robert Bucciarelli wasn’t just a “nobody.” He was a high-ranking member of the Opus clergy, possibly an Opus Dei secret *inscripti*, that is, a part of Opus Dei’s top inner circle of secular and clerical leaders. Born on September 7, 1935, in New Canaan, CT, he graduated from Harvard<sup>[26]</sup> in 1956 and went on to earn a doctorate in Sacred Theology at the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome, after which he was informed that he had a “vocation,” and was ordained to the Prelature of the Holy Cross in August 1960. He went on to exercise his Opus ministry in Chicago, where he made the acquaintance of Fran Wauck and her family, as well as in Washington, D.C., New York, Milwaukee, Boston, Ireland, and Italy. From 1966 to 1976 he became the Vicar of Opus Dei for the entire United States.<sup>[27]</sup>

And finally, we come to the third important factor in the Hanssen spy case involving Opus as a corporate entity with its Prelate, officers, and clerics – the matter of timing

- The founder of Opus Dei had died on June 25, 1975, and his successor, Father (later Bishop) Álvaro del Portillo, took on the role of President-General with the explicit goal of getting Pope John Paul II to create Opus Dei as a Personal Prelature. He was aware that Escriva's preference was always for a "prelature *nullius*," that is, a self-ruling territorial prelature headed by an Opus bishop, but understood that this was unlikely to materialize under the current pontificate.<sup>[28]</sup> Since there was a small but significant and well-organized opposition in the Roman Curia and among the Spanish hierarchy to giving Opus Dei this special status, the early 1980s was an especially stressful time for Portillo. There also was, of course, the matter of Escriva's beatification, the first step toward Opus' founder's elevation to sainthood which had just gotten traction in 1980.<sup>[29]</sup>
- From his headquarters in Rome, Portillo also was forced to deal with the fallout of the multi-million dollar financial scandal known as the Rumasa/Ruiz-Mateos Affair in Spain, which had plagued Opus during the late 1970s. Author and financial analyst Robert Hutchison provides details on the international scandal for interested readers in *Their Kingdom Come*, that serves as a guide to Opus Dei and its multinational network of banks, and industrial, shipping, pharmaceutical, tourism, and agribusiness enterprises.<sup>[30]</sup>

So, from the perspective of timing alone, it is easy to see why the leadership of Opus Dei would consider the emergence of a major scandal of *any* kind unthinkable at this critical juncture in the organization's evolution, treating the mere prospect as something to be avoided at all costs.

### **Bucciarelli Saves Hanssen from Prison**

At the time of the Hanssen incident, Bucciarelli had just recently been transferred to Opus' New Rochelle hub and was working at Crawford Hall, an Opus residence and study center on 99 Overlook Circle.

Now, there are a number of varying accounts describing the first meeting of Bob and Bonnie Hanssen with Bucciarelli at the Opus New Rochelle office in the late fall of 1980 (none with the exact date), as well as the priest's initial response to Hanssen's "confession" to being a spy for the Soviet Union, and his subsequent change of "fatherly" advice after his second visit the following day. There are, however, a few facts which seem to hold solid across the board.

At the so-called “consultation,” Hanssen gave Bucciarelli the same minimalist spiel he gave Bonnie – the classified military documents he had sold to the GRU were of little consequence.

“No one was hurt,” he told both Bonnie and Bucciarelli.

No doubt still in a state of shock, the priest reacted spontaneously by telling Hanssen what he needed, but did not want, to hear, namely, that he must turn himself over to the proper authorities, prepared to suffer the consequences of his actions. In later testimony to FBI investigators following his arrest, Hanssen reported that he underwent a “sacramental” confession and was absolved of his sins by Bucciarelli before he and Bonnie left the Opus Center that day.

No evidence exists, however, indicating that Bucciarelli asked Hanssen to release him from his vow of silence as his confessor so as to bring the betrayal out from the internal forum (the seal of the confessional) into the external forum (which the priest had the right to do), or that the priest volunteered to accompany the couple to FBI headquarters as a demonstration of support for the Hanssen family.

The next day, however, Bucciarelli allegedly contacted the Hanssens to arrange a follow-up meeting at Crawford Hall, at which time he gave the couple a cock and bull story that, after reflection, he had a change of heart.

Instead of surrendering himself to FBI officials, Bucciarelli told Hanssen that he could expiate his sin of treason by giving the dirty money he received from his Soviet controllers to a worthwhile charity, along with a promise to cease spying and sever all clandestine contacts with the GRU. In this case, the recipient of Hanssen’s “donation” was supposed to be Mother Teresa’s Missionaries of Charity.<sup>[\[31\]](#)</sup>

Of course, Hanssen’s ill-begotten thousands had already flown the coop by then, and there was no possibility that he could make, much less keep, such a large financial promise on his FBI salary alone. Just as obvious is the fact that the Harvard-educated Bucciarelli would have realized as much, even as he made his revised “charity donation” proposal to the Hanssens.

It’s likewise almost certain that Bucciarelli would have contemplated the possibility that Hanssen might continue spying for the Soviets, or perhaps merely pause his espionage activities only to resume them at a later date, which, as history records, he did intermittently for the next sixteen years.

And, of course, not to further belie the obvious, by pushing this untenable scheme on Bonnie and Bob Hanssen, which still left the FBI out in the cold, the priest was doing double duty by protecting the Prelature from any adverse publicity connected to one of the greatest crimes of the century.

So, one can only imagine FBI officials being caught off-guard during their later interrogation of Bonnie Hanssen in mid-June of 2001 when she informed them that her husband's spying career began in 1979, not in 1985, and that another party was involved in the cover-up of her his espionage activities during this early period, namely, an Opus Dei priest named Msgr. Robert Bucciarelli.

That Opus supernumerary Bonnie Hanssen had waited for several months to divulge this fact to the FBI was most certainly due to the fact, that, according to David Wise, author of *Spy – The Inside Story of How The FBI's Robert Hanssen Betrayed America*, Opus Dei officials at the Villa Vecchia had written to Bonnie after her husband's arrest, urging her to make no public statements about his acts of treason,<sup>[32]</sup> lest any details she may reveal be construed as an obstruction of justice by the FBI.<sup>[33]</sup>

### **Msgr. Bucciarelli Makes *The New York Times***

One can also understand Msgr. Bucciarelli's state of shock when, on June 16, 2001, he discovered that he and the Prelature were front page news on the *N.Y. Times*, making his own grave and long held "secret" concerning Hanssen's spying for the Soviets public knowledge.

With Escriva's canonization and elevation to sainthood just around the corner, this unexpected public revelation that traitor Robert Hanssen was a formal member of Opus Dei – and worse, that a high-level member of its clergy induced the spy to launder Soviet money through a Catholic charity in lieu of turning himself into FBI authorities – spelled disaster for the Opus Dei General President and his officers.

Opus Dei's first attempt at "damage control" was to prep Bucciarelli for a brief press statement in which the former Vicar professed that, as a Catholic priest, he was bound by the sacramental seal of confession, and should he violate his sacred oath of absolute silence on all matters confessed to him, he would incur the penalty of automatic excommunication. Period. Case closed. Any attempt to pursue the matter further, Bucciarelli insinuated, would be considered an "uncalled-for" intrusion.

In a brief conversation with *New York Times* reporters, the priest stated that he initially came to know of Mr. Hanssen in 1980, presumably as a new Opus Dei supernumerary. He withheld, however, the fact that he knew the Wauck family back in Chicago.



Shortly after the *Times* encounter, Bucciarelli was secretly “relocated” to Opus’ Elmbrook Study Center in Cambridge, MA, near Harvard University, one of the priest’s old haunts. Eventually, the priest was sent abroad to Dublin where he was awarded a plum appointment as Vicar of Ireland.

Msgr. Bucciarelli only returned to live in the U.S. in 2012, four years before his death after a long battle with Parkinson’s disease.

### **FBI Director Louis Freeh Protects Opus Dei**

According to FBI sources, Msgr. Bucciarelli was never interrogated by FBI officers on orders from Director Louie Freeh, whose tenure began in September 1993 and ended in June 2001 when the Bucciarelli story made headlines. Freeh stated that the reported “confession” or “consultation” between Hansen and the Opus priest was confidential under both canon and criminal law, and the agency did not want to involve itself in any potential



*Louis Freeh*

controversy on the subject. Further, Freeh held that Hanssen had agreed to give the FBI full details on his activities as part of a plea bargain, thus there was no need for the FBI to get further involved with Bucciarelli or the Opus Dei organization.

Although Louis Freeh is known to have close relations with Opus Dei – e.g., he attended an unofficial Opus Dei parish with the Hanssen family, Saint Catherine of Sienna in Great Falls, Virginia;<sup>[34]</sup> he sent his young boys to The Heights, an Opus school in Potomac, MD that charges \$11,000 a year per student,<sup>[35]</sup> and his brother, John Freeh,<sup>[36]</sup> served as a numerary and director of the Prelature in Philadelphia until 2001 when the Hanssen affair exploded – Freeh never offered to recuse himself from the Hanssen case.

Rather, as the record shows, he did just the opposite.

In the previously cited 2003 Department of Justice report, *A Review of the FBI's Performance in Deterring, Detecting, and Investigating the Espionage Activities of Robert Philip Hanssen*, we find *only* a seven-word reference to Opus Dei:

To his FBI co-workers, Hanssen's personal life appeared completely inconsistent with that of a spy. He was married with six children, and appeared to be a devout Catholic who attended mass every day and who was actively involved in **Opus Dei, a conservative Catholic lay organization.**<sup>[37]</sup> [Emphasis added]

Had the FBI and other U.S. intelligence agencies not fallen into the trap of accepting the Prelature's Catholic external manifestations for the real thing, and actively pursued Opus Dei as a secret cult or sect, they would have discovered that the driving engine of the Work is not "conservatism," it's "liberalism." They likewise would have recognized that the Work is not truly Catholic, but rather a mishmash of Kabbalistic Gnosticism.<sup>[38]</sup>

Other than acknowledging the simple fact that Robert Hanssen was a member of Opus Dei, it appears that Director Freeh did everything in his power to protect the Prelature and its officials from any in-depth FBI investigation of its connection to Hanssen's early espionage activities, ostensibly insisting that he wanted to avoid any breach of Catholic Church doctrine regarding the absolute inviolability of the sacramental seal of confession.

The problem, however, was that Louis Freeh, as the Chief Officer investigating the Hanssen case, not only prevented FBI agents from pursuing any further legitimate inquiries into the Bucciarelli confessional matter, he also effectively thwarted any serious investigation by the FBI or other non-governmental entities from extending their investigations to include the role that Opus Dei played in Bucciarelli giving Hanssen a "Get Out of Jail Free Card."

### **When did Opus Dei Learn of Hanssen's Treason?**

In Lis Wiehl's version of the Bucciarelli incident, she concludes that:

Hanssen's silence, Bonnie's tacit assent to it, and Bucciarelli's ecclesiastical endorsement close that window of opportunity and impose a cone of secrecy that will last more than 20 years. No one in or out of the US intelligence community will have any idea of Bob Hanssen's first spying career until Bonnie tells this story while being interviewed after Hanssen's arrest – **the first breach** of Bucciarelli's expansive understanding of the sanctity of a confession.<sup>[39]</sup> [Emphasis added]

But is Wiehl correct in stating that Bonnie Hanssen's admission of the 1980 Bucciarelli affair made to the FBI in 2001 was "the *first* breach" of the vow of silence concerning her husband's sacramental confession to Bucciarelli?

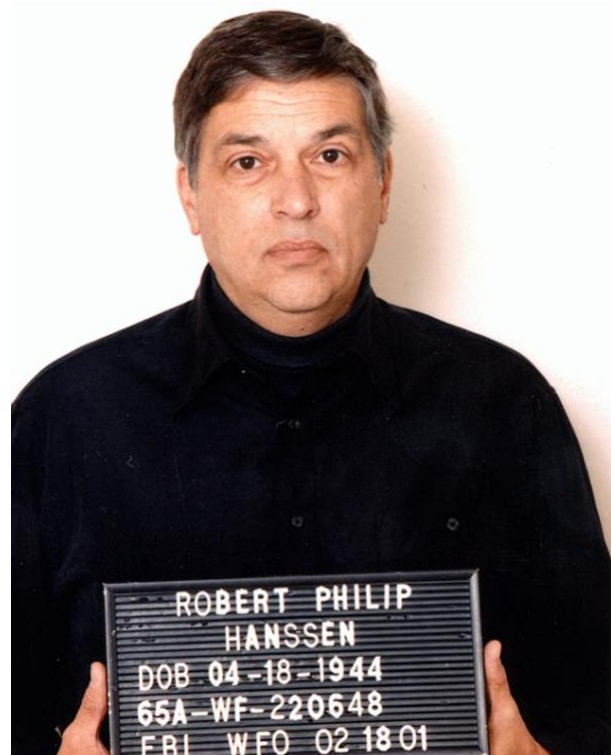
I think not.

I believe that it was the *second* breach of the sanctity of confession – the *first* being Msgr. Bucciarelli's own report to his Opus superiors in New Rochelle, and to the President General and his officials in Rome, shortly after the Hanssens left Opus headquarters in 1980, that Opus was harboring a dangerous American spy in its own ranks.

To put it bluntly, with Opus Dei officials having been made aware of Hanssen's treason by Bucciarelli, it was likely *they*, not Bucciarelli, who masterminded the "charity donation" scheme and subsequent cover-up. Not only did their covert plan serve to keep Hanssen out of jail, it also, and perhaps even more deliberately, saved Opus Dei from a terrible scandal at a critical stage in the Work's relationship with the Vatican, even as Escriva's canonization loomed on the near horizon.

Subsequently, when Hanssen was finally arrested by the FBI in February of 2001, Opus officials found themselves in a serious quandary. If they were to reveal that they had known about Hanssen's spying for the Soviets for two decades but kept it secret to avoid scandal, they would also have to admit that Bucciarelli broke the seal of confession with their approbation and collusion, and that they never had any intention of reporting Hanssen to the FBI or any other U.S. intelligence service, thus, permitting Hanssen's spying career to continue as it did.

The only other alternative for Opus officials in both Rome and the U.S. was to continue with the original Bucciarelli cover-up, and to carry on a national public relations campaign of disbelief and feigned ignorance regarding Hanssen's betrayal of his nation, his faith, and his family. And this is exactly what the Prelature did.



According to the Westchester, N.Y., *Journal News*, reporting on Opus Dei's reaction to the Hanssen scandal in the aftermath of his arrest:

For the past two decades, the most controversial Roman Catholic group in the world ran its American operations on a New Rochelle side street, waiting for the right time to deliver its message.

Now Opus Dei is ready to take its stand.

This mysterious worldwide movement for lay Catholics, long a visible religious force in Europe and Latin America, has just opened a new 17-story, \$55 million headquarters in midtown Manhattan and is aiming to increase its American membership.

The news that Robert Hanssen, the FBI agent accused of spying for Russia, was an Opus Dei member brought an unexpected round of media attention in February. Suddenly, the longstanding international debate about Opus Dei was cracked open, with Catholic liberals and progressives framing the more conservative organization as a Catholic mafia – cunning, cult-like and secretive.

But Opus Dei dealt squarely with February's media assault, seeing a chance to confront its critics and polish its public image. **Its ultimate weapon: Opus Dei is beloved by the pope and its teachings are in lock step with the Vatican.** [Emphasis added]

As one Opus Dei priest put it, the group's 'coming out party' in America is underway.

Still, there will be no ceremonial ribbon cutting. Opus Dei operates below the cultural radar, finding new members and raising millions of dollars through a network of supporters. How it will reach out to 8 million New Yorkers remains to be seen.

... Opus Dei members even say, with no apparent irony, that the Hanssen arrest may ultimately bring positive exposure.

"The joke is that we should put 'Opus Dei Inc.' at the top of the building," said the Rev. Arne Panula, Opus Dei's vicar, or top official, for the United States. "Then we thought that maybe we won't."<sup>[401](#)</sup>

Well reader, the cover-up charge against Opus Dei is no joke. It's real and the evidence in its favor is substantial and in keeping with the Prelature's own long history of deceit and intrigue.

### **Bucciarelli Never a Free Agent**

Although the FBI always treated Msgr. Bucciarelli as an independent priest, apart from association with Opus Dei, the priest was *never* a totally free agent in the Hanssen affair. His own instincts were correct when he advised Hanssen to give himself up to FBI officials and confess his crimes, but at the deeper level, he must have known that any final decision on the matter was out of his hands and belonged to Opus officials at the Villa Vecchia in Rome, specifically the President General of Opus Dei, Álvaro del Portillo and his officers.

As with all numeraries who sign-on to Opus Dei, Bucciarelli had made a life-long promise [vow] of chastity, obedience, and poverty, as well as taken an oath of loyalty to subject himself, without exception, to the institutional interests of the Work. When he was informed by Msgr. Escriva that God had called him to the priesthood, he obeyed. He was ordained on August 14, 1960, and served the Work faithfully including the high office of Vicar for 20 years before Bonnie and Robert Hanssen entered his life.

Moreover, Bucciarelli not only practiced obedience, but rather “*blind obedience*” in keeping with Maxim 941 of Camino (The Way) – “Obedience, the sure way. Blind obedience to your superior, the way of sanctity. Obedience in your apostolate, the only way; for in a work of God, the spirit must be to obey or to leave.”<sup>[41]</sup>

Obviously, Bucciarelli did not leave, and continued on to advance up the clerical ladder, which is the only reward Opus offers its loyal sons.

### ***Omertà* and Other Restraints on Opus Members**

In the *Complaint* detailed in Chapter Four, Opus is accused of practicing *Omertà*, that is the concept of imposing silence regarding any crime that is committed that may affect the “honor” of Opus Dei.<sup>[42]</sup>

The *Complaint* continues:

It implies a categorical prohibition of cooperating with state authorities or using their services, even when one has been the victim of a crime. A person must avoid interfering if they see something that is not correct and cannot report a crime to the authorities under any circumstances.<sup>[43]</sup>



Bucciarelli, and for that matter, Bonnie Hanssen, an Opus supernumerary;<sup>[44]</sup> her brother, Rev. Father John Wauck, a former numerary and Opus priest ordained in 1999 living in the Villa Vecchia in Rome,<sup>[45]</sup> and numerary John Freeh, Louis Freeh's brother, *all* would have been subject to this formal, institutionalized, restraint had they wanted to report Hanssen as a spy to the FBI on their own.

Then we have the matter of the Sacrament of Penance as a function of governance in Opus Dei. As spelled out by Msgr. Escriva in detail in Chapter Five of this exposé, “Confession is used to confirm the directives of the Directors, beyond the ‘sacramental wall.’”<sup>[46]</sup>

As a priest of Opus Dei for 20 years, Bucciarelli would have been fully aware that he was permitted, indeed mandated, to report important information gleaned from penitents in a sacramental confession to his superiors, especially if it affected the “honor” of the Work.

Hanssen's treason would certainly qualify.

### **The Knights of Columbus & Patriotism**

Maxim 525 in *Camino (The Way)* by Escriva states “To be ‘Catholic’ means to love our country, and to let nobody surpass us in that love.”

In the Hanssen case, however, Opus Dei's obsession with saving its own “honor” took precedence over love of God, faith, country, and family, thus permitting supernumerary Robert Hanssen to continue the acts of treason that turned out to be the worst intelligence breach in U.S. history.

The Knights of Columbus also state that they have a special relationship with love of country:

Patriotism was added to the Knights of Columbus Order's principles in 1900, based on the principle that Knights are loyal to both God and country. Members who wish to live out patriotism together can join “the Fourth Degree.” For most men who follow Jesus, there comes a time when duty extends beyond our own lives, beyond how we lead our families, and into how we serve our fellow man. That's what the Knights of Columbus is all about. The Patriotic Degree allows K of C members to take this one step further. “Sir Knight” is more than a title — it's an honor. ... They take pride in their devotion to God and country, standing up for both publicly and privately. As Knights, they remind the world that Catholics are among the greatest citizens who support their nations. <sup>[47]</sup>

Thus, the Knights of Columbus, especially the hundreds of thousands of veterans that make up its rank and file, obviously should have a keen interest in the treason of Robert Hanssen and the Opus Dei Prelature's cover-up of his treachery, which reaches far beyond the ordinary civic organization, and is the reason why I chose to close this exposé with the Hanssen case.

The grassroots of the Knights of Columbus need a big wake-up call! A spiritual wake-up call!

If this exposé, especially the background of the Hanssen case, does not shock the Knights of Columbus out of their current lethargy and inspire in them a spiritual awakening and a commitment to raise the banner of Christ the King in opposition to the Opus banner of Liberalism and Secularism, probably nothing else will. But at least when the financial walls of the Knights of Columbus come tumbling down some time in the not-too-distant future, they cannot say they were never warned.

The End

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<sup>[1]</sup> The following texts provided the major details of the Hanssen spy case used in this exposé: David A. Vise, *The Bureau and the Mol – The Unmasking of Robert Philip Hanssen, the Most Dangerous Double Agent in FBI History*, Atlantic Monthly Press, N.Y., 2002; Lis Wiehl, *A Spy in Plain Sight*, Pegasus Books, Ltd., N.Y., 2022; Elaine Shannon and Ann Blackman, *The Spy Next Door*, Little, Brown and Company, N.Y., 2002; David Wise, *SPY – The Inside Story of How the FBI's Robert Hanssen Betrayed America*, Random House, 2002, N.Y. Robert Hanssen was sentenced to solitary confinement for 23 out of 24 hours a day at ADX Florence, a federal supermax prison in Florence, Colorado. He was visited in prison on occasion by his wife and children until his death on June 5, 2023, ostensibly from “natural causes,” although the FBI never revealed the actual cause of death. He followed his wife in death by only seven days.

<sup>[2]</sup> Wiehl, p. 19. This is the amount that Hanssen's Soviet controller, Victor Cherkashin gave in his own book on Hanssen. If one includes the annual budgets of the CIA and the FBI over the 20-year period that Hanssen spied for the Soviets, the fiscal damage to our nation would be in the hundreds of billions of tax dollars.

<sup>[3]</sup> The KGB, The Committee for State Security, was the Soviet Union's primary spy agency from March 1954 until December 1991.

<sup>[4]</sup> The GRU was the Soviet's military intelligence service. It was created in November 1918 and dissolved in 1992. It was often in competition with the KGB.

<sup>[5]</sup> The Central Intelligence Agency, aka, the Agency or the Company, was formed in 1947 as the civilian foreign intelligence service of the federal government officially tasked with gathering and analyzing national security information around the world. The CIA with an annual budget of \$15 billion is one of over a dozen federal agencies that make up the \$52 billion National Intelligence Program.

<sup>[6]</sup> The Federal Bureau of Investigation is the domestic intelligence and security service of the U.S. government and its principal federal law enforcement agency. Its annual budget is in the \$11 million range.

<sup>[7]</sup> Wiehl, p. ix.

<sup>[8]</sup> Ibid., p. xii.

<sup>[9]</sup> [Special Report: A Review of the FBI's Performance in Deterring, Detecting, and Investigating the Espionage Activities of Robert Philip Hanssen \(justice.gov\)](https://www.justice.gov/special-report-a-review-of-the-fbi-s-performance-in-deterring-detecting-and-investigating-the-espionage-activities-of-robert-philip-hanssen)

<sup>[10]</sup> Prior to joining the FBI, Hanssen attended Knox College in Illinois, a Presbyterian and Congregationalist school where he continued to learn the Russian language. He went on to dental school but left before graduation to attend business school in accounting. His proficiency in the Russian language, his photographic memory and his skill with numbers and computers were positive factors in his FBI resume as was his love for technology and techniques. He was sworn into the FBI in January 1976 in Gary, Indiana.

<sup>[11]</sup> 1979-1981 In his first act as traitor Hanssen informed the GRU of the identity of U.S. intelligence most valuable Soviet spy, General Dmitri Polyakov for which he received between \$21,000 and \$30,000. This was the period that Hanssen directly involved Opus Dei.

<sup>[12]</sup> 1985-1991 – During this period, Hanssen entered the major leagues of espionage with the KGB to whom he sold some of the nation's most valuable Cold War counterintelligence and military secret for hundreds of thousands of dollars, much of it spent on a stripper named Priscilla Galey. In addition, he betrayed two of the FBI's most valuable assets – KGB officers Sergey Motorin and Valeriy Martynov – who worked in the Russian embassy in Washington, D.C. Both agents were recalled to Moscow, interrogated, tortured, and executed.

- [13] 1999-2001 During this short period of time leading up to his capture, Hanssen continued to provide the Soviet government with some of highest levels of classified materials on U.S. national security and military preparedness.
- [14] See David Vise, *The Bureau and the Mole*, Atlantic Monthly Press, NY, 2002, pp. 258-266. Hanssen's sexual fantasies of his wife, from the earliest days of their marriage, are too disgusting to reprint. Vise makes a point of stating they were Hanssen's fantasies not Bonnie's. She never commented on them, but they must have been forever etched on her memory, perhaps more than her husband's espionage crime because they were so intimate and vulgar.
- [15] Jack Delroy Hoschouer was Hanssen's most intimate friend from high school days. He was a retired career soldier who had done some intelligence work, best man at Hanssen's wedding, a close family friend to Bonnie Hanssen, and godfather to all of Hanssen's six children. Hoschouer and Hanssen shared pornography including videos showing Bonnie naked and Bonnie having sex with her husband, and both visited prostitutes when Hanssen visited Jack who was stationed in Germany for several years.
- [16] According to Hanssen, he was only interested in the salvation of Galey's soul, but he was never able to get her to go to Mass with him. He also said he never had committed adultery with her, but in later press interviews Galey admitted they had in fact engaged in sexual activity. Jack Hoschouer also stated that Hanssen had told him he had "bad sex" with the stripper. In later interviews Galey also said that she had come to believe that Hanssen was grooming her to help spy for the Russians and assist him with drops and pick-ups. Hanssen met Galey in the summer of 1990 and for the next 18 months flooded her with diamonds and cash. He said he had received a large inheritance from his mother. See [Ex stripper reveals how Robert Hanssen tried to recruit her as a spy | Daily Mail Online](#).
- [17] See Vise, pp.240-245 for a summary of the major intelligence documents Hanssen sold to the KGB and GRU.
- [18] Statement of tribute to Polyakov by Sandy Grimes, a CIA agent specializing in the GRU. See [SANDY GRIMES – 30.1.98 \(gwu.edu\)](#).
- [19] Ibid.
- [20] American Aldrich "Rick" Ames, a former CIA counterintelligence agent, who spied for the Soviet Union from 1986 to 1994 also revealed the identity of Dmitri Polyakov to the GRU, thus confirming Hanssen's earlier identification.
- [21] Wiehl, p. 1.
- [22] Ibid., p.6.
- [23] Wiehl, p. 74.
- [24] [Opus Dei's Secret Revealed: It Takes Spies in From the Cold – Beliefnet](#).
- [25] In 2001 Mark Wauck, Bonnie Hanssen's brother employed as an FBI special agent in Chicago, publicly claimed that he suspected his brother-in-law of being a spy and reported his suspicions to FBI authorities in 1990, eleven years before Hanssen's arrest. According to Mark Wauck, he had learned through family connections that in August 1990, Bonnie found \$5000 worth of unexplained cash in her husband's dresser draw and expressed dismay to his wife, Mary Ellen, who was visiting the Hanssen household at the time. Obviously, Bonnie realized that her husband had continued his espionage career after promising to quit spying in 1980, but she had kept that information secret from her family. Mark Wauch, known as a straight arrow through and through, stated he reported his suspicions to his supervisor, Jim Lyle in the FBI's Chicago Field Office, but his warning was ignored and/or lost in procedural red tape. However, during her interrogations by the FBI after her husband's arrest, Bonnie claimed the incident never happened. A lie detector test supported her denial her lawyer said. From testimony of other Wauch family members, the topic of Hanssen's *plethora* of ready cash to spend on his children's private tuition expenses, and for household improvements, and expensive jewelry for Bonnie was the subject of much speculation over the years. Hanssen is known to have bled his widowed mother financially dry of at least \$100,000 and there were rumors of inheritance from rich relatives which proved false.
- [26] For more than a century, Harvard provided Opus Dei with top-ranking numeraries, directors and offices. See [The Harvard Crimson \(thecrimson.com\)](#).
- [27] [ROBERT BUCCIARELLI Obituary \(1935 – 2016\) – Chestnut Hill, MA – Boston Globe \(legacy.com\)](#).
- [28] The difference between the personal prelature and the territorial "nullius" prelature is that the latter belongs to no diocese, but has its own superior, clergy and people. Escriva imagined himself as bishop and overlord of this religious conglomerate. This was Escriva's known choice, and not the personal prelature as constructed by the Second Vatican Council.
- [29] The cause for Escriva's beatification and canonization opened in 1980 only five years after the founder's death. In 1981, the year of Bucciarelli's involvement with Hanssen, the Congregation for the Causes of Saints formally opened the process. Escriva was canonized in a record 27 years on October 6, 2002, just a year after Hanssen was arrested.
- [30] See Hutchison, *Their Kingdom Come*, pp. 229-237.
- [31] Sister Mary Dominga, the leader of the Eastern United States region of Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity, when asked by reporters what if any money Hanssen sent to the charity insisted that this was not a matter the charity could or would discuss. However, there appears to be no solid evidence that Hanssen ever gave Mother Teresa's charity a cent. It is not known if the FBI followed up on this matter in its own investigation.
- [32] Wise, p. p.289. Wise was one of the few writers who made the observation that the Hanssen scandal could affect the canonization process of Escriva negatively.
- [33] Although some writers have suggested that Bonnie believed that her husband had been blackmailed into spying by the Soviets, thus making him less culpable in his crimes, the evidence is overwhelming that he embarked on his treason of his own volition.
- [34] Although St. Catherine's parish was not officially under Opus Dei control, the Work was a major force at the parish especially under Rev. Franklyn McAfee, an Opus Dei cooperator who permitted Opus priests to hear confessions at the church. Families like the Freehs, Santorums and the Hanssens, who lived outside the parish jurisdiction, paid a small monthly assessment to attend the parish and its school. However, given Opus' mandate of "non-giving" most members like Robert Hanssen gave their major donations to Opus Dei and limited funds to outside facilities like St. Catherine's to a minimum. Although the parish is well known for its Sunday Mass said in Latin, it is not the Traditional Mass, but the Novus Ordo mass said in Latin. Thus, Robert Hanssen, as a convert, probably was never exposed to the Mass of All ages.
- [35] The Heights School where the Hanssens sent two of their boys is located in the Washington, D.C. area.

<sup>[36]</sup> It is my understanding that Louie Freeh's brother, John Freeh, left Opus Dei in disgust after the Work's involvement in the Hanssen crimes became known.

<sup>[37]</sup> *U.S. Inspector General Special Report*, p. 5.

<sup>[38]</sup> Santiago, [OPUS DEI – TROJAN HORSE OF LIBERALISM IN THE CHURCH \(Part I\) \(mysteriuminiquitatis-2thessalonians2.blogspot.com\)](https://mysteriuminiquitatis-2thessalonians2.blogspot.com).

<sup>[39]</sup> Wiehl, p. 16.

<sup>[40]</sup> Shawn Cohen and Gary Stern, "[Opus Dei: A Journal News Special Report — Inside the World of Opus Dei](#)", *Journal News*, April 22, 2001.

<sup>[41]</sup> Escrivá, *Camino (The Way)*, Scepter [Ops Dei] Press, Chicago, Ill., p. 218. See also Robert Hutchison's *Their Kingdom Come* in which the author quotes the famed-Opus millionaire numerary Jose Maria Ruiz-Mateos as describing the "terrifying obedience" that dominated Opus membership (p. 234)

<sup>[42]</sup> *Complaint*, p. 15.

<sup>[43]</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>[44]</sup> After her husband's arrest, Bonnie Hanssen cemented her ties to Opus Dei even tighter. She visited him occasionally in jail at Florence, Colorado, and forgave him his crimes. She died at her Virginia home on May 28, 2023, leaving behind her six children and 14 grandchildren. Robert followed her closely in death on June 5, 2023, only 9 days later.

<sup>[45]</sup> Rev. John Paul Wauck, Bonnie Hanssen's brother and Robert Hanssen's brother-in law is a Harvard graduate. He is a popular Opus figure at the Vatican, especially with American journalists like John Allen. He teaches at Opus' University of the Holy Cross in Rome. He was a former speech writer for William Barr and Senator Bob Casey in Washington, D.C. and editor of the *Human Life Review*. He is pictured in the following YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAN7Wlox7tU> promoting the beatification of Opus Bishop Portillio. His interview with "Catholic Vote," is available at [Mission – CatholicVote.org](https://www.mission-catholicvote.org).

<sup>[46]</sup> [Opuslibros – Slavery Regime of Opus Dei Priests \(II\).- Doserra](#).

<sup>[47]</sup> Andrew Butler, *Who Are the Fourth Degree Knights? The Patriotic Degree reminds us of our duty to God and country*, November 11, 2019.



*Logroño, Spain. Josemaría Escrivá with his little brother, circa 1917-1918 (Credit: OpusDei.org)*



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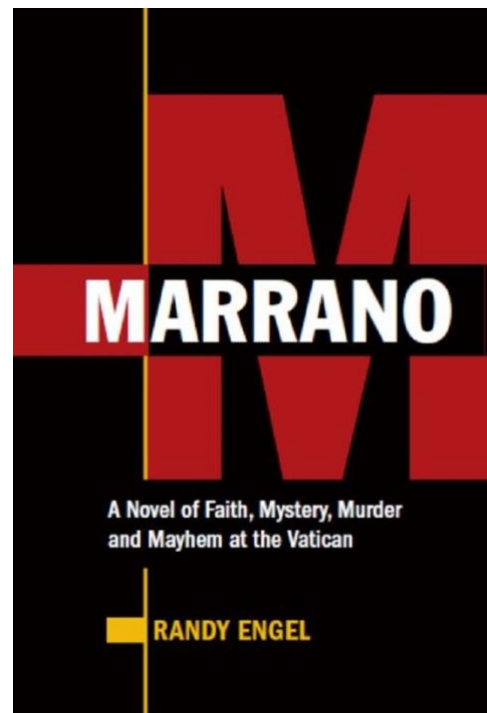
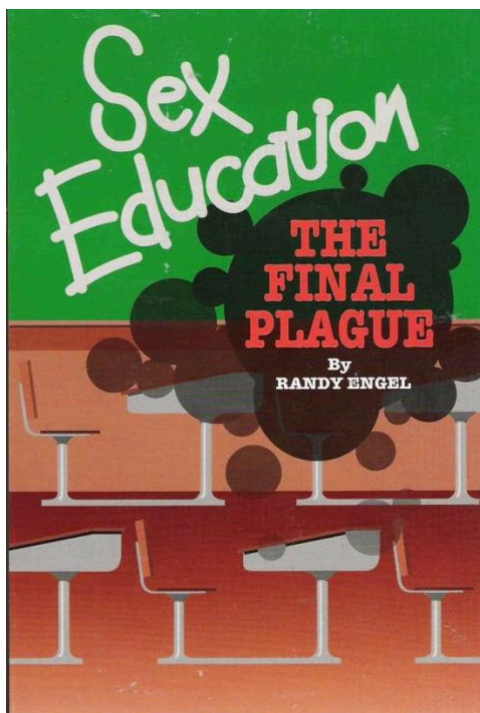
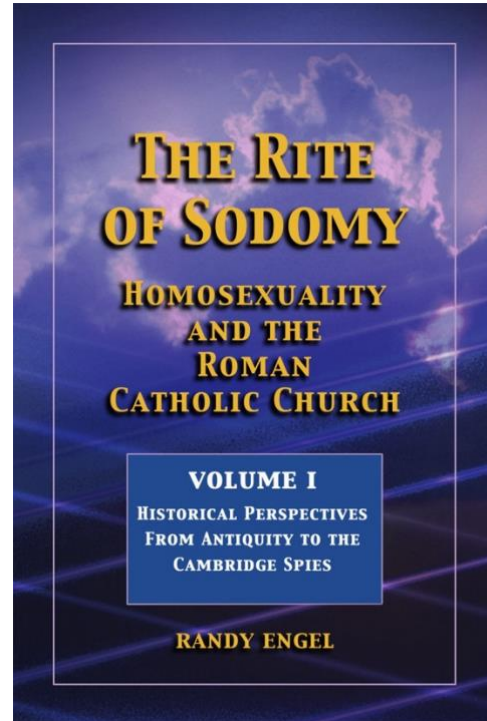
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# Opus Dei and the Knights of Columbus

## *Anatomy of a Takeover*

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Randy Engel, one of the nation's top investigative reporters, began her journalistic career shortly after her graduation from the University of New York at Cortland , in 1961. A specialist in Vietnamese history and folklore, in 1963, she became the editor of *The Vietnam Journal*, the official publication of the Vietnam Refugee and Information Services, a national relief program in South Vietnam for war refugees and orphans based in Dayton, Ohio . She recorded for the Voice of America and Radio Saigon. In 1970, she received the Distinguished Service Medal for “exceptional and meritorious service to Vietnam .”



In the mid-1960s, Randy developed an intense interest in pro-life issues including population control, abortion, and eugenics, putting her on the ground floor of the emerging Pro-Life Movement. In 1972, she founded the U.S. Coalition for Life in Pittsburgh, Pa. , an international pro-life research and investigative agency, and began editing the USCL's official publication, the *Pro-Life Reporter*. Her four-year study on the eugenic policies and programs of the March of Dimes titled “*Who Will Defend Michael?*” quickly putting USCL on the map as the finest pro-life research agency in the U.S.