

## REFLECTION

### I'm Sure Of It!

by Guillermo de Carndonagh

Have you ever been really sure of something and then found it not to be so? If not, you are a lot different than myself. Many of the factoids that we end up storing in a disorderly pile in our memories turn out upon inspection to be false. As a practical matter we cannot do a through study of all the ideas or allegations we encounter and so we accept on faith the interpretation of others.

I recently heard a young convert quite vehemently alleging that the Knights of Columbus organization was a Masonic organization. Now of course this is nonsense; the Knights are many things but Masonic they are not. Sadly, in the city where I was raised one could, based upon empirical evidence, draw the erroneous conclusion they are a bunch of drunks. But to draw conclusions about an entire organization based upon the sins of a few of its members is grossly unfair. The Knights organization is a fraternal organization of men who do much good charitable work for the Church and the world. In addition they run those numerous social events; dances, dinners, etc. that provide wholesome entertainment for their families. Rather than being Masonic and therefore anti-Catholic the Knights organization is militantly pro-Catholic and as such a real asset to those communities where they exist. Where did the young convert come by his certainty that the Knights were Masonic? It turned out that his father and uncles were masons and as a youth they had told him that the Knights were Catholic masons.

Another sound Catholic organization that is regularly maligned is Opus Dei. I have seen every thing from scurrilous pamphlets to seemingly objective magazine articles attacking this Personal Prelature of the Church. Some of these materials particularly the pamphlets remind me of the vehemently anti-Catholic comic books and fliers I encountered regularly when living in the Southern states. They are full of them same sort of untrue, irresponsible vocabulary and concepts that popular anti-Catholic literature uses. The use of the word cult and the claims of abuses of authority and exotic and purulent activities are often identical to the point that I wonder if the sources might be the same.

The CATHOLIC DICTIONARY defines Opus Dei as:

"Opus Dei (O-puhs DAY-ee): (Latin: work of God) 1. An association primarily of Catholic laity who seek to promote the universal call to holiness and the exercise of a personal apostolate in the ordinary circumstances of everyday life, particularly through one's ordinary work. Founded in Madrid by BL.. Josemaria Escriva de Balaguer (beatified on May 17, 1992) on Oct. 2, 1928, Opus Dei was accorded full pontifical approval on June 16, 1950, and was erected as a personal prelature by Pope John Paul II in 1982. Opus Dei is international in scope, serving the universal Church by its participation in the local Church. The prelate has ordinary hierarchical jurisdiction, while the lay members remain subject to the local Ordinary of the diocese in which they live; they likewise retain full personal freedom and their own responsibility in all that pertains to their secular lives and work. Priests of the prelature are drawn solely from the lay membership and serve the membership and cooperators in the work, which may include non-Catholics. Diocesan priests who wish to share in the spirituality of the work may be associated with Opus Dei in the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross, while remaining fully under the jurisdiction of their own bishop. A specific ministry entrusted to the priests of Opus Dei by the Holy See is the spiritual direction of diocesan priests. Opus Dei embraces over seventy-five thousand lay members, thirteen hundred priests, and three hundred fifty seminarians."

Hardly the description of an anti-Catholic cult! Defend the Faith but be sure of your facts before you attack or malign some other apostolate.