



## The Burning Bush—Online article archive

### Education Secretary defends membership of secret Roman Catholic society



**Education Secretary, Ruth Kelly**

Education Secretary Ruth Kelly has defended her role in the Catholic conservative movement Opus Dei. She insisted in an interview that her faith was a private matter which had nothing to do with her job. Opus Dei, which means “Work of God” in Latin, adheres strictly to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Critics accuse the religious organisation of being secretive and elitist but members reject this. They prefer to regard it as discreet. The education secretary, who at 36, is the youngest woman to be appointed to the Cabinet, said of

her involvement in the organisation: “I don’t see why it should be an issue at all. I have a private spiritual life and I have a faith. It is a private spiritual life and I don’t think it is relevant to my job. I am here as a Catholic.

The Opus Dei organisation is founded on the principle that ordinary Catholics can achieve holiness in their everyday lives.

Some members of the movement practise “self mortification” including fasting and flagellation as a way of reminding themselves of how Christ suffered. In truth, Opus Dei is a medieval-style fanatical branch of the Roman Catholic institution. Here in Ulster, we have watched members of the police force and similar public bodies being pressurised to leave such organisations as the Orange and Royal Black institutions because they were linked to the loyalist community. Their membership was not considered a private matter. The whole affair highlights the two standards operated by the Roman Catholic-dominated Blair government.

*For details of this secret organisation, [click here](#).*