

A firefighter and spiritual direction

Testimony of Paul Ybarra, a Los Angeles firefighter for nearly twenty years. He has three children, two of them adopted.

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One of the things I'm most grateful to St Josemaría for is spiritual direction. By this I mean that I can go to a priest, or a layman like yourself, who can help. It's great to have someone to confide in, who can give you advice from the outside and help you reflect on issues. It's been very

helpful for me in my life as a husband and father.

I can't tell you how many times I've been reminded not to forget to show my love for my wife through specific actions, even though they may seem small: a box of chocolates, a bunch of flowers, a caress, a word of thanks for the meal she's made. I've also learned to adjust the priorities in my life. For example, if one day one of my children is ill, I know that is where I have got to be. And instead of going to church to pray, I stay at home and perhaps say the Rosary at his side. That's how I've learned to combine my life of piety with my life as a father, firefighter and husband. At times I've had to reduce my work or social commitments because I know that my family comes first. If it hadn't been for spiritual direction, I wouldn't have known many of these things.

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