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## Teia: “We all need to connect with nature”

Teia is an associate of Opus Dei who finds God in the middle of her work, surrounded by fields, crops, and heavy machinery.

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Teia is the eldest of seven siblings, and working in the countryside is her passion. The spirit of Opus Dei, which she discovered at the Rocabruna Club, helps her to be “aware that everything I do every day—dozens of things of all kinds, very small, seemingly insignificant in

themselves—can have infinite value.” An associate of Opus Dei, her daily life unfolds in the fields of Catalonia (Spain), specifically in the province of Girona.

Ten years ago, Pope Francis invited Christians and non-Christians alike to care for our common home with the publication of his encyclical *Laudato si'*. More recently, Leo XIV became the first pope to celebrate a Mass for the care of creation during his holidays in Castel Gandolfo, with a new liturgical formula he had recently approved. On that occasion, he recalled “the urgency of caring for our common home.”

## **“I really love my work!”**

Teia remembers how pleased she was when the encyclical was published: “The Church has a great deal to say about many aspects related to the Earth, which is God’s

creation and a common good. It felt like a wake-up call, an invitation to go deeper into the full meaning of those words: ‘have dominion over the earth’ and ‘care for it.’”

“Nature,” she adds, “is a source of serenity and peace, well-being, and constant wonder and gratitude. It teaches us to be patient, to wait, to be resilient, to start again and again when things go wrong. In nature we discover beauty and order, which lead us to contemplation... A real luxury nowadays. It prompts us to ask questions, to keep looking beyond, to open our minds.

“My experience is that if you calmly contemplate any element of nature, from the greatest to the smallest, you discover God behind that extraordinary wonder. We may have grown so used to it that we no longer even notice it. It seems to me that ever since, we started moving away

from nature in the name of ‘progress,’ instead of moving forward we have actually taken steps backwards.”

Teia studied agricultural engineering, one of the options available to her without leaving Girona, which meant she could also help at home. Her family was going through financial difficulties at the time, and with seven children those difficulties were greater. “I will always be grateful to my parents for sparing no sacrifice so that all of us could have the chance to receive a good all-round education.” Today, she says she is very happy she chose this path.

She currently works in a company she set up two years ago with a business partner. They mainly offer advice to farmers, as well as to managers of green spaces, sports grounds and similar areas, on

everything related to plant health, fertilisation and so on. As she explains it, “I’m basically a plant doctor; that’s how my friends outside the sector understand it.” They also offer services to help manage some of the endless bureaucracy that weighs so heavily on the sector, which is often the most burdensome part of the job.

When asked whether work in the countryside is undervalued, she says that “the countryside is misunderstood and largely unknown. Many people see the idyllic side of working on the land, and that does exist: you see incredible landscapes with mountains, fields of crops, light, flowers, birds... But the day-to-day reality is very demanding, both physically and mentally.

“And you are at the mercy of the weather: you could have spent

months working on a crop and, just before harvesting, a spell of bad weather can wipe everything out.”

Talking about the link between her work in the countryside and her relationship with God, Teia explains: “Work is the place where I can offer the talents God has given me — few as they may be — to the society I happen to live in. It’s where I have the privilege of ‘serving’ others, in both senses of the word [in Spanish]: being useful and offering my dedication. Because ‘the countryside’ is, above all, the people who work in it.

“It’s the place where I can find God and talk to him — perhaps more easily than if I were doing other kinds of work — every day, in the midst of silence, as I walk alone through a wheat field, take samples in a vineyard or prepare a report for a client.”

“Even though there may be few people who have faith, or at least who openly express it, they are always very respectful. Once, a farmer told me: ‘I don’t need faith, Teia, because who could it be but God turning the tap on and off to water the fields?’”

## **Sharing through social media**

“I use social media to share everything I see in my professional work that seems interesting to me or that might help other farmers. I always like to put into practice something I learned in the Work: when someone is starting out in a job you’ve been doing for a while, pass on all your experience so that they can start where you finished, and knowledge can move forward.

“It makes no sense for us to have to start from scratch every single time. I try to share the reality of what I live

and see from a positive, respectful and attractive perspective. Even when things go wrong, we can always learn something. There are so many surprising and wonderful things in nature, in traditions, and above all in people!”

As for the challenges Christians face when working in the countryside, Teia says that the challenge is the same for everyone immersed in the hustle and bustle of today’s society: to live out the first point of *The Way*: “Don’t let your life be barren. Be useful. Make yourself felt. Shine forth with the torch of your faith and of your love.”

## **The spirit of Opus Dei**

“The spirit of the Work helps me understand that everything I do every day — dozens of all kinds of tasks, each of them very small and insignificant in themselves — can



have infinite value if I do them to make this God I am trying to get closer and closer to smile (and sometimes even laugh!) because he is my Father, my best Friend, and I know he is always by my side.”

“It also helps me see that life, amid all its joys and sorrows, difficulties and obstacles, few certainties and many doubts, including the challenges of working in the countryside, is much more meaningful when I see it as an opportunity to do my bit to make the world a little better, through service, care for others, and sharing what I’ve learned along the way.”