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## **The Alviras: Newsletter No. 2**

Tomás and Paquita are a good example of the impact the spirit of the Work can have not only on family life but also on the running of educational institutions. Unity of life and fostering a family spirit are decisive factors for obtaining good results in the education of children.

09/08/2019

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## **Extension of the Home**

In one of his pastoral letters, the then Prelate of Opus Dei, Bishop Javier Echevarría, said: “I never tire of reminding you to invite fathers and mothers to the club activities and to collaborate in the running of the schools, generously contributing their time, their material help and their initiatives to the splendid work of preparing exemplary citizens and good Christians, in this extension of the home which the schools and youth clubs are.”[1]

In these words the Prelate of Opus Dei summed up very well an initiative of Saint Josemaría to which Paquita and Tomás dedicated a great part of their lives. The point was to encourage parents to bring the wealth of their family spirit to other

particularly important educational fields by creating and setting up schools and youth clubs. In this way, and through these extensions of the home, the overall, human and Christian formation of young people is made easier and more effective and prepares them to commit themselves better to the progress of society.

When Saint Josemaría suggested setting up schools with these ideals, Tomás took the task upon himself and was part of the small group that founded “Fomento de Centros de Enseñanza.” Someone who witnessed his work in these schools writes: “Tomás was a great teacher, a true reference point and loved by all the teachers. His younger colleagues warmed to his cordiality, and with the consistency of his personal life he convinced them that to educate one has to love the students, value their positive aspects and win their trust.

He was convinced that parents are the first educators. They have the right and the duty to educate their children, and he paid the greatest attention to them so that the family could identify with the educational plan of the Centre. Paquita accompanied him to the functions which required her presence, though always with great discretion, yet this didn't hide her personal qualities. She showed her affection and refinement so naturally that she made us feel like one more family member. She always radiated peace and joy, even under circumstances that were not very encouraging.”[2]

Tomás and Paquita also helped to develop the first youth club started in Madrid. “The married couple Tomás and Paquita was key to setting up the first youth club. With the experience of their own home and their educational backgrounds, they helped make a reality of a concept

that has now been transplanted to the five continents; more than youth associations, a second home was created where many families have found an adequate complement for the formation of their children. Tomás, always united to Paquita, was the lessee of the property, the first president of the Promoter Group... A fantastic example of a pioneer family, who were always easy to approach and ready to assist.”[3]

*More information about Tomás and Paquita Alvira*

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[1] Bishop Javier Echevarria, Pastoral Letter, 1 April 2015.

[2] Testimony of Jeronimo Gay.

[3] Jara Club Magazine.

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