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The Seminary Years

Why am I becoming a priest?
Our Lord wants something:
what is it? And in Latin — not
very elegant Latin — ... I kept
repeating Domine, ut videam!
Ut sit! Ut sit! The thing that you
want, and that I don't know —
make it happen!”

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“Time passed, and many hard and
distressing things happened, which I
will not tell you about. Although they
do not make me suffer, you would be
saddened by them. They were axe

blows struck at the tree by our Lord. From that tree, he was shaping a beam that would be used, in spite of its weakness, to do his Work. Almost without realizing it, I kept repeating *Domine, ut videam! Domine, ut sit!* [Lord, let me see! Lord, let it be!] I did not know what it was he wanted, but I went forward . . . without doing anything unusual, working with just average intensity... Those were the years in Saragossa.”

He arrived at the Seminary of San Carlos in Saragossa in 1920, after having completed the first year at the diocesan seminary in Logroño as a day student. At San Carlos, because of his comportsment and human qualities, he was named a prefect by Cardinal Soldevila, who shortly afterwards was assassinated by anti-religious fanatics.

He went every day to the nearby basilica where Our Lady of the Pillar

is venerated in accord with an ancient tradition. He entrusted himself to her while waiting for a definitive answer regarding the will of God. “And I, half-blind, was always waiting for the answer. Why am I becoming a priest? Our Lord wants something: what is it? And in Latin — not very elegant Latin — ... I kept repeating *Domine, ut videam! Ut sit! Ut sit!* What is it that you want and that I don’t know?”

Here his piety welled up in tender child-like gestures. He recounted, for example, “I was able to stay in the Church one day after the doors were locked. With the complicity of one of the good priests, I climbed the few steps so well known to those who escort the little children, and getting up close, I kissed the image of our Mother. I knew that this was not customary; that kissing her cloak was reserved exclusively for children and authorities. However, I was and am

sure that my Mother of the Pillar was pleased that I disregarded the protocol on that one occasion.”

His prayer to Mary was accompanied by prolonged adoration of the Eucharist. He spent much time in the chapel of the seminary, at times praying for an entire night from an upper balcony that had a view of the Tabernacle.

March 28, 1925: Josemaria ordained a priest

In November, 1924, an urgent call came from Logroño: his father had died unexpectedly. “My father died exhausted, but still with a smile on his lips...” In addition to their sorrow, the Escrivá’s were now in an even tighter spot economically than before. Still in mourning, he was ordained a priest in the chapel of the seminary on March 28, 1925. He celebrated his first Mass in the Basilica of Our Lady of the Pillar, at

the feet of the beloved Madonna he had prayed to so often. His mother, his sister, and a few close friends were present, and the Mass was said for the repose of the soul of his father.

From that moment on, Holy Mass became even more central in his life. Within the Mass he received some of the most important inspirations from God. Upon the altar he deposited his requests, from there he always drew his strength. Conveying his own experience, he counseled: “Keep struggling, so that the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar really becomes the center and the root of your interior life, and so your whole day will turn into an act of worship — an extension of the Mass you have attended and a preparation for the next. Your whole day will then be an act of worship that overflows in aspirations, visits to the Blessed Sacrament and the

offering up of your professional work and your family life.”

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