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Two Muslims and a Turkish Orthodox: Life in Nideck Residence

Alik and Timur, who are Muslims, and Kami, a Turkish Orthodox, talk about their interaction with Catholics in Nideck, a student residence in Strasbourg run by people of Opus Dei.

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Alik, Timur, and Kami live in Strasbourg, France, in a student

residence directed by members of Opus Dei. It is common to find students of different races, cultures, religions and outlooks in Opus Dei residences. Alik and Timur, Muslims, came to France from Kabardino-Balkaria, Caucasus Republic, in the Russian Federation. Kami is Turkish Orthodox.

What led you to choose a Catholic residence?

Alik: While it might seem like an unusual place for a young Muslim to live, it really isn't. On the contrary, it shows that people of different cultures and religions are able to understand each other and get along together. But why Nideck? I suppose it was to show people that it's possible for someone like me to live here.

I'm pleased and grateful that I decided on a residence run by people of Opus Dei.

Timur: It strikes me as a great place for a student because it's well run and organized. It gives you a friendly working environment—almost like a family, I'd say—among people who are always ready to help you.

Kami: Well in my case, when I got to Strasbourg classes had already started, and many residences were full. I found a place in Nideck and didn't pay much attention to whether it had any connection with Opus Dei or not.

Now that you've spent some time around Catholics, what have you noticed?

Alik: That we have many things in common, when you are trying to get along with others and take a real interest in them.

Timur: My experience has been nothing but good. I haven't seen all

that many differences between the outlooks of Catholics and Muslims.

Kami: From what I've noticed, Catholics observe rather strict but quite logical rules. It's that logic, I think, that leads them to practice their faith.

Have you felt any kind of pressure to become Catholics yourselves, or any criticism or disrespect towards your own faith?

Timur: Not at all!

Alik: I haven't noticed any such pressure, criticism or disrespect. It's even seems laughable to ask about that.

Kami: Even if Nideck is a Catholic residence, I've never seen the slightest sign of disrespect for my religion. Everybody can practice his own faith with full freedom.

What do you think of the Catholic Church?

Alik (taken by surprise): I like the fact that the Church actually helps millions of people, and is not content with mere declarations. I especially appreciate the way it reacts to injustice.

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