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“I confessed a sin I found it hard to confess, and walked away relieved”

Tiago is a health-care worker specializing in medical emergencies in Lisbon. He was at the forefront in the fight against the pandemic. One day he returned to God in the Sacrament of Confession and this helped him to be a better husband, father and worker.

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Tiago, who is married and has a son, lives in Lisbon and has been working for 15 years in medical emergencies. In an ambulance, helicopter, hospital, or at the scene of an accident, the race against time is a daily demand. But his working life has also involved some special missions.

Recently he had to look after someone in prison. Before that, he had been in Guinea-Bissau on a humanitarian mission fighting against Ebola. And more recently he joined teams set up to combat Covid-19. He admits that during lockdowns at work, what cost him most was being separated from his family for extended periods. “It isn’t easy for me to be separated from my wife and family.”

A confession that changed everything

Tiago grew up in a Christian family, but he admits that he had very little formation. As he says, “I hadn’t been to confession for some years when I eventually decided to go to confession. The priest belonged to the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross, although I didn’t know this at the time. I wanted to confess a sin that I had on the tip of my tongue yet it weighed heavily on me. I felt incapable of saying it. When I eventually succeeded, the priest didn’t utter a single word of judgment.”

“I came out of the confessional with a feeling of extraordinary relief, and I was full of gratitude to God who had granted me the grace to come across that priest at such a difficult time in my life, when I had something on my conscience that I found it so difficult to confess.”

Intense work and a family to take care of

Some time later, as he prepared for his wedding, he became interested in receiving deeper Christian formation. And it was then that he became acquainted with Opus Dei and the message of Saint Josemaría.

Tiago says he came to realize the importance of formation for family life, in his relationship with his wife, and in raising their children.

“Eventually I asked for admission to the Work and today I am a Supernumerary. One is always being formed. Just like in my professional work, the training never stops in the Work, and my Christian formation will last until the end of my days.”

He is well aware of the demands involved in reconciling family life, work, and his relationship with God. And so he takes advantage of travelling and free time to nurture

his relationship with God while striving to work as well as possible and offering it to God so that it becomes prayer. “During my work, particularly when faced with difficulties, I try to pray, and then I put myself into my work. When sending an email, or preparing a phone call, I make use of that moment to pray.”

Finally, he says that in Opus Dei he has met people who look after him and support him in his relationship with God. “Now, I never feel alone.”

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