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"St. Josemaria taught me how to care for others and to be patient"

Aníbal was educated at Valle Grande, an Opus Dei initiative aimed at providing young people in Peru with the skills needed for social and professional integration. In this video, he shares his story and explains how this educational center has helped him succeed.

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From a young age, Aníbal Aburto was connected to agricultural work. He studied at Valle Grande in Cañete, where he began his practical training on a local businessman's farm thanks to the Institute's practical methodology.

Over time, Aníbal advanced within the company, applying his learning from Valle Grande, where he now also teaches new generations of students. Aníbal's life has been marked by many challenges, but the education he received at Valle Grande helped him overcome these obstacles and share his knowledge with family and friends. This initiative by Opus Dei is a corporate project aimed at having a social impact on the education of young people in Peru.

Aníbal's story is part of the multimedia series "El viaje del viaje," ("The Journey of a Journey")

produced to mark the 50th anniversary of St. Josemaría's catechesis in Latin America. Here is his testimony:

My mother separated from my father when I was seven months old. We relied solely on my mother and grandmother for support. Both of them have always worked in the fields, as laborers, as workers, but always in agriculture. We would go to the fields to harvest potatoes, sweet potatoes, to strip corn, to apply treatments to cotton... Always working in the fields, helping my mother, and in addition, earning my own wages.

Admission to Valle Grande and professional steps

I went to Valle Grande. After the first year, I interned for two years at a

company where I learned various tasks: pruning, applying treatments, evaluating crops... In my last semester, I started working at Amigos S.A, where I evaluated and supervised fields.

The company paid for my studies for six months, which was a great relief for my mother and grandmother. I worked in this role for three years, fully taking on the company's crops with the engineer and the owner. During this time, my family's economic situation began to improve as I was able to provide more support. My mother stopped working in the fields, and since then, I have been continuously employed.

Family farm entrepreneurship

We have a farm—a plot of several hectares—that my mother received during the agrarian reform. The farm was leased out for 21 years, gradually becoming self-sustaining.

Now it is creating jobs, and we've built a friendly relationship with the workers, fostering a sense of camaraderie and a pleasant, comfortable work environment.

Teaching and managing agricultural businesses

In 2018, Valle Grande opened its doors for me to work as a teacher, and I now manage six agricultural business ventures under the SAT brand, which we present to all producers.

My role here involves not neglecting production, always staying attentive to farming tasks, splitting my time from 6 AM to 6 PM between these duties and my teaching responsibilities, along with afternoon tutoring sessions.

St. Josemaría taught me perseverance, how to care for others, and to be patient. You strive to do the

best job you can. It's a way of serving, collaborating, teaching, and forming others.

Sadly, my mother passed away four years ago, and less than a year ago, my grandmother also passed away. Now, I have my own family: my wife and my two daughters, who are studying. I teach them those values, showing them the importance of hard work and effort to achieve something.

Most students at the institute come from agricultural areas. We learn at the institute, and everything we learn is applied in our own fields.

St. Josemaría visited Valle Grande in 1974 during his catechesis in Peru. He witnessed the work being done and met with students and professionals, addressing them in a family gathering. You can watch the full get together in the following video.

“I've come here to congratulate you all on the marvellous job you're doing here to help people develop as human beings. I've said ‘human’ development; by which I mean that it's not only professional or material development that's being done: there's spiritual development as well.

“We must be on our feet, erect! Courageous, serving the Lord in the middle of the street, in the midst of our work, being a good friend to your colleagues and also an example to your colleagues. Speaking to them about the truth, sincerely, without offending them, but helping them, not ill-treating them. You are learning this and are practising it; otherwise you would not be the kind of Christian whom God wants receiving formation in Valle Grande.”

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