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## A Creativity with Soul

Fran and Maria ended up working in the fashion industry by chance, since he was an historian and she had a law degree. For the last 25 years they have directed a prestigious school of fashion in Seville.

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"The model is a person with dignity, and not an object to show off a garment. Above all, she is a person. And one realizes, more and more each day, how greatly the world is in

need of professionals who live their life with integrity.” The one speaking is Fran, who together with his wife María started the Seville Fashion School.

The school began over 25 years ago. María remembers it well: “I received a phone call from my husband. His aunt was leaving a dress-making academy and he asked me if I wanted to continue the business. I replied that I knew nothing about it since I had studied law.”

The world of fashion didn't appeal to her. But María continues: “At that time I was doing a spiritual retreat for a few days and had read a letter from the then Prelate of Opus Dei, Bishop Javier Echevarría. In his letter he spoke about the need for Christians, and specifically the faithful of Opus Dei, to promote *new legislation, a new culture, a new fashion consistent with the dignity of*

*the human being, as children of God.*

A light lit up in me and I felt encouraged to 'jump into the ring,' since it was an opportunity to add my little grain of sand to creating this new fashion."

So along with Fran the two of them began studying possible ways to help bring about this new culture in the world of fashion. "We managed to get a foothold in the fashion sector and today we have positioned ourselves as a large company of national and even international recognition in organizing fashion events. We also collaborate with other institutions and business organizations through our modeling agency."

They try to train people to be creative, but with a creativity that has a soul. For as Fran stresses, "not everything is of value in the fashion sector, in the design sector. You have

to know how to say no, to mark out red lines beyond which one should never go. And what at that time seemed to require swimming against the current, today has become a favorable wind for us.”

Over time María’s perception of fashion changed: “There is a lot of superficiality, a lot of ‘posturing.’ That is true, but at the same time there is also a professional world of fashion. Therefore, like any other worthy profession, it can be sanctified. This endeavor to which we dedicate ourselves, which is our professional work, can lead us to God. We have learned that it is possible to seek sanctity in our profession from Saint Josemaría Escrivá.”

Human excellence, beauty, elegance, creativity and good taste need to be joined to the reality of the world of business. That is why, Fran says, “one

needs to harmonize a youthful designer spirit with a spirit of modernity, of avant-garde. And even, why not, with visual aggressiveness. The commercial aspect is also important: the beautiful, what is truly attractive, sells.” And he continues: “The ugly is not attractive. We are looking for people with a joyful ‘flair.’ I’m tired of gray people, dark people. The world is looking forward to generations of creative people who think in bright colors, who bring light and joy to the world, because the world is greatly in need of that joy and hope.”

Fran got to know Opus Dei thanks to Saint John Paul II. “He recommended it to me. He told me: what you are looking for already exists; look for Opus Dei.” Saint John Paul II was a very important figure in his life, who helped mark out his personal, professional and vocational future. “He guided me in my desire to start a

family and also to choose this professional path of the fashion business. I was a historian and I could have kept studying like a classmate of mine, who was working in the Vatican archives – the most beautiful work that exists. Although really the most beautiful work in the world is the fashion industry.”

*In the video below (in Spanish), Fran and Maria speak about their professional work:*

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