

# Challenges of our Courtship

Setting out on a life-long journey requires careful preparation. Dulce and José María speak about the challenges of their own engagement, which ended with their wedding in May 2021.

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José María, 28 years old, lives in Lisbon and has a degree in Human Resource Management; currently he is working in a university in Lisbon. Dulce, who is 24 and studied

Communication Sciences, works for a multinational company.

They met in 2016 at the wedding of some friends and began dating shortly afterwards. José was already working while Dulce was still at the university. At the beginning of the relationship, some difficulties arose. José María says that at that time he was going through a stage of very intense work. “focused on my own concerns, without quality time for Dulce,” and was often in the “nothing box” when he was with her.

“He was always rushing around and upset, and communication was very poor,” Dulce recalls. She says she had to speak clearly to him and tell him that as his future wife she deserved more attention.

Dulce also realized that her Communication Sciences classes at the university didn’t always have the Christian focus that she had learned

in her family and in the formation activities of Opus Dei. They both talked a lot about these issues. He helped her to strengthen her Christian criteria and see things from a Christian perspective. While Dulce helped José María to be a more flexible person and to find the positive side of work issues.

Later, José María, unintentionally introduced a topic that greatly strained their relationship: he began to talk to Dulce about their marriage as a future possibility and said it might be too soon to make a final decision. Dulce says she had to stop him and clear up the misunderstanding.

“One key factor was that we needed to talk with one another more.” José María adds that “the starting point to resolve these difficulties was to pray more, to be more generous with God

in prayer and with our Lady, praying the rosary more often together.”

Little by little they got to know each other better, and in 2020, during the pandemic, they began making final preparations for the wedding.

Besides all the external details, they knew they needed to take more seriously the Marriage Preparation Course at the parish, which helped them understand that marriage is not a “*magic wand*” that will make all their problems disappear. Rather, great sincerity, trust and communication are needed for a successful marriage.

They also took advantage of the formation they received in the centers of Opus Dei. José María acknowledges that “the founder of Opus Dei has helped me a lot during my courtship, especially to resolve those more critical moments.” And the founder’s words have inspired

him “to want to be a good husband and father.”

The wedding took place in May 2021, among friends and family. That day a new adventure began for both of them.

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