

## Every day with new enthusiasm

On 17th January 1906 Tomás Alvira was born in Villanueva de Gállego, the village of his father and grandfather, a few kilometres from Saragossa. His daughter, Pilar, recalls that it was her father's habit to celebrate his birthday not for himself, but for the enjoyment of the whole family, a simple party full of joy.

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In the Alvira house the feast days and birthdays of everyone were celebrated: parents, children and Aunt Visi, who lived with them all her life. They were parties like those of so many families, where lots of affection is shown for the person celebrating, with some presents, a card with lively comments and a cake with candles.

The party included a meal. Paquita was an excellent cook who always surprised with the variety, quality and good taste of the dishes she produced, especially on those special days. “She went on doing that,” the house help told Pilar, “even when none of you were there anymore, to celebrate your feast days.”

On Tomas’ birthday, he would collect the children from school and take them out for an appetizer before going home. In 1967 when all the

children were already grown up and dispersed, he wrote:

“Dearest children, I find it hard to express all the joy you gave me with your birthday letters. They arrived full of affection, spoiling me, and I am really moved.”

The children had grown up and naturally left the nest, but the one who remained physically beside Tomás for over fifty years was his wife. Years in which love and mutual admiration kept on growing, as can be seen from this letter Paquita wrote on a special occasion: the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of Tomás.

It sums up her gratitude for a whole life together, filled with fruitfulness; it is a proof of youthful spirit and a challenge to time, routine and fatigue. Six years later Tomás passed away and his wife followed him after another two years.

*“My dearest Tomas: Heartiest congratulations on this special occasion of your 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.*

*We have lived more than half those years together and I want to tell you that I will never be grateful enough to God for the gift he gave me in making you notice me and choose me for your wife. How time flies! How much joy we have shared together as we waited for the arrival of our nine children. God has greatly blessed us in them.*

*I admit that at your side I have made mistakes. It is impossible to be always up to your standard, because you are very good, the ideal husband, but they were always trifles that we promptly forgot and afterwards everything worked out for the best, loving each other even more.*

*I would tell you so many things today... but I finish repeating my desire that we continue together for many more years, starting each day*

*with new enthusiasm as you like to have as your motto and wishing that this happiness that we celebrate today may be always equally marvellous.”*

For more on the Alvira's, favours others have received through them or for a copy of their prayercard, visit their webpage [here](#).

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