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In Sickness and in Health

Twenty years ago Javier suffered a serious car accident that left him confined to a wheelchair. But despite everything, he and Begoña decided to get married, and their life together has been very fruitful.

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Back in 2001 Javier was 26 years old and worked in a graphic arts business. He was on the road all day, traveling up and down the highways.

On one especially rainy day in Valencia, his car skidded into the opposite lane just as a truck was approaching. After weeks of intense suffering, he was left a quadriplegic.

At that time he had been dating Begoña, who worked as a travel agent. A Cooperator of Opus Dei, she began praying to Saint Josemaría and Eduardo Ortiz de Landázuri (a doctor in the process of beatification) for Javier's recovery. "He was so badly injured that for me it's a miracle he even survived," she says.

Two years later, against everyone's advice, they decided to get married. "But I'm going to be your wife. Not your caregiver or nurse," Begoña told him. And that's how it has turned out. Over the years she has often had to take special care of Javier, but always with the love of a spouse.

“At our wedding, when we came to the question about whether you are willing to love one another in sickness and in health, we replied: we’ve already answered that one!” Begoña also remembers that on their wedding day “I stepped onto Javier’s wheel chair and we danced together there. It was something unforgettable. Many friends tell us they have never seen such beautiful dancing at a wedding.”

Today, eighteen years later, Begoña and Javier are parents of an adolescent daughter. “When she was little I used to put her on my lap and bring her back and forth to school in the wheelchair,” Javier recalls. Now his daughter skates at his side while they race one another and share stories. “She has more confidence in her father than in me,” Begoña admits.

Begoña is a strong woman, but Javier also has a lot of fortitude. Every day he exercises with his wheel chair along the streets of Valencia to build up strength in his arms. That is why he prefers using a manual wheelchair rather than an electric one. He also likes to take long rides on excursions with other quadriplegics.

Javier is a volunteer for the Red Cross and a board member of the Valencian Association for Spinal Injuries. He gives talks to people with injuries similar to his, and also helps organize Family Development courses along with Begoña. He says that “married couples need formation because many people confuse love with something much poorer. They need to be told that difficulties can be confronted and overcome. You have to begin by talking and sharing experiences, listening to one another...”

In the video below (in Spanish) they talk about their life together and the secret for keeping their love alive despite all the difficulties. “Life will always have pain, but suffering depends on how you accept it,” Javier says.

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