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My vocation to Opus Dei and Don Alvaro

It all started in the 80's when my wife and I began to feel the urge to be a bit more serious in our faith. By then we had four children. We attended Sunday Mass but we did not partake of the sacraments.

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One of our concerns was the poor example we were giving our children. Examining ourselves, we could not see any big obstacles in our lives or some good reasons as to why

we were not receiving the sacraments. Our journey to renewal in faith had begun. It ended up in our vocations to Opus Dei. This followed the visit of Don Alvaro to Kenya in March 1989.

I do not exactly remember when my wife came into contact with the Work. A friend and a schoolmate had invited her for recollections in Kianda School. She loved what she heard there and in the course of time she told me there was something similar for men at Strathmore School.

I did not then know even where Strathmore was and what the nature of the activities was. I asked her whether it was a club but she did not have an answer. Eventually I was introduced (with a friend of mine) to somebody who took us for the recollections in the school.

Before our contact with the Work, we had become aware of some doctrinal difficulties in the Church. We had already gone through some doctrine with a priest. In certain matters, we felt his theology went outside the traditional teaching of the Church in which case we agreed to disagree. And so my friend, and I went to the recollections ready to exit in the event we sniffed any errors against the teachings of the Church.

However, that was not to be. To our great admiration, we observed there was devotion to the Virgin Mary and St Joseph etc. We loved this. Soon enough we were invited for monthly talks. I was home at last.

I continued to attend the talks and became a cooperator in October 1988. I learned from Opus Dei to seek sanctity in my work and do apostolate. That made a lot of sense. But then, I was happy to remain a cooperator and mind my own

business. However, in time I began to feel a certain fear that I might be asked for more. Not that I had any objection but I felt that I was not up to the demands God would make. And sure enough, I was asked and began a one-to-one formation.

In March 1989, Don Alvaro made his visit to Kenya. I remember inviting my sister and a friend from the office. In the public get-together with him at KICC, I was slated as one of those who would ask 'the Father', as he was called, a question. I somehow trembled in anticipation. The simplicity of this man struck me. He looked as docile and as harmless as a lamb. He was not in a hurry to answer the questions from his sons and daughters. He took his time and answered with love as if he was only talking to that particular person. Here was a whole bishop even being mobbed by his sons and daughters. I could not believe it.

The visit of Don Alvaro did leave me with a lasting impression of the man and Opus Dei. My wife remembers his quoting a Kikuyu proverb "kwa mwendwa gutiri irima" which means that to the loved one there are no obstacles be they be mountains. That was really touching. He loved us and no obstacles would hold him back from visiting his beloved children in Kenya. Unknowingly my journey to the Work accelerated. Many of the things I had come to admire were confirmed somehow with his coming. After his visit, it was like a journey downhill. On May 31, 1989 I did not see any reason for holding back anymore and so I wrote asking for admission. What is significant is that it was the feast of our Lady, the woman who has a lot to do with my coming into the Catholic faith.

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