

## **"You party so much yet you don't neglect your religion"**

Ekene Ogbechie is a pharmacist by profession, and a former singer in a band. Currently a student on the MBA Programme at Manchester Business School (United Kingdom), she is a Supernumerary member of Opus Dei.

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In 2001 a friend of mine invited me to a retreat in Wickenden Manor, I

went, and I thought “Oh my God, I’ve wasted my life!” Not everybody has that reaction at a retreat, but I did. After that I attended days of recollection regularly, at Ashwell House University students hall of residence in London and I took all my friends because it was so good.

At the time, I was a member of a band, I sang in the band and I had a very active social life, everything anyone could want, but there was unrest in my soul. It’s difficult to express, but head and heart told me God wanted more of me, and I had to give more. Friends said how do you do it? You party so much yet you don’t neglect your religion, you have good judgement, you’re always so cheerful... Opus Dei helped me to get the balance right. I got myself a spiritual director – a lay person in Opus Dei – who helped me get it all together.

There was so much I didn't know about the Church, about the Faith. I think that's where Opus Dei members can really help; we need people like that in the world who can interact with other people wherever they may be – university, work, - who are not superheroes or anything, but who live for Christ in the middle of world, just do regular things, nothing extraordinary. Who are not judgemental, who take you as you are, but can give you really good Catholic teaching.

Being a Christian is the most ambitious thing a person can do, as young people we have dreams, aspirations, we want to do great things. But being a saint is surely the most ambitious of all. When I examine my conscience I see how far I am from the aim. Despite all my effort! It's only by God's Grace I achieve anything.

My advice for people in relationships is that it's not easy to have a chaste relationship, and it's so important to avoid occasions of sin. A chaste relationship really helps the love between the two of you. Talk a lot, my boyfriend and I know so much about each other, have done so much together. Should we end up getting married it will be wonderful, we are such good, close friends already, a chaste relationship helps us to grow as people, as well as in our spiritual life.

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