

A Close Encounter with my Saint

A newly-married engineer narrates his first visit to the Prelatic Church of Opus Dei in Rome, the day before his wedding.

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What if you were about to meet your hero or someone you admire most up close and personal? Would it not evoke an ecstatic feeling with a tinge of nervousness? That was precisely the feeling I had when I visited the Prelatic Church of Opus Dei in Rome

because I knew that the mortal remains of San Josemaria Escriva lay in one of the chapels there.

My visit to the Prelatic Church took place the day before my wedding. I told my bride that I was going to visit the Prelatic Church only for a short while. We needed to transfer that morning to the hotel where our wedding reception was to be held the following day. I walked, exploring the area, thinking that the Prelatic Church was just a short distance from our hotel. I ended up lost in an area near the Vatican City and because of the language barrier it was difficult for me to ask people for directions. The easiest way was to ask for directions to Vatican City. One of the persons I asked gave me a hint, and I made it to St. Peter's Square. I grabbed a quick breakfast there and changed currencies because I did not have enough Euros in my wallet.

Despite the hurdles encountered that morning, my heart was resolute in its desire to get close to San Josemaria, even for a brief period. I looked for a taxi stand, took a taxi, and went to the Prelatic Church, which is 5.3 kilometers or 14 minutes by taxi from the Vatican City.

Arriving at the main door leading to the Prelatic Church, my heart was beating fast with excitement. I took a selfie with the Prelatic Church signage as background. On entering the building, a very kind man approached me and asked me how he could be of help. I introduced myself as a devotee of San Josemaria and that I am helping to propagate the devotion to our beloved saint in my home province of Albay. I told him that I wanted to visit the tomb of San Josemaria to pray.

He very kindly toured me around the church starting from the main chapel

were the mortal remains of St. Josemaria Escriva lie. Then we proceeded to the crypt below where the tombs of Blessed Alvaro del Portillo and Bishop Javier Echevarria are located. The tomb of Blessed Alvaro used to be the one of San Josemaria. I prayed to all of them for guidance as I embark on the new road of married life. I prayed for sanctity as a loving husband and a responsible father.

To me, embarking on a new chapter of life should start by praying to God through the intercession of his saints such as San Josemaria and Blessed Alvaro. In my experience, invoking San Josemaria has always led me to better paths, judicious decisions, and optimal actions. Perhaps my devotion to him is a “driving force” as we know it in Chemical Engineering or the “invisible hand” in Economics that bring me closer to God in the everyday circumstances of

my life. I hope to tread the same direction in my married life with my wife.

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