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Addicted to Instagram: “...here I am beginning and beginning again”!

Jacinta describes her struggle to overcome her addiction to Instagram, and the help she received from the writings of Saint Josemaria.

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Writing from Nigeria, Jacinta describes her struggle to overcome her addiction to Instagram, and the help she received from the writings

of Saint Josemaria. We all know the feeling you get when you walk into a class late, especially when that lateness could have been avoided. Well, here I was again, hurrying into my department because I was late, for the umpteenth time.

I'm a student of hospitality and as part of my studies, I work in the food production department. The director of my department was puzzled about my repeated lateness and she called me aside and tried to find out why I resumed so late, I replied vaguely, saying, "I was doing 'something' with my phone".

For the longest time, I have struggled with an addiction to Instagram and this has affected many areas of my life. I always felt the need to stay 'up to date' and to do that, I spend hours on end scrolling through the bottomless feed of Instagram. This was to the detriment of my work, my

studies, my sleep and even my relationships, especially my relationship with God. I couldn't really focus on the things that were important, I constantly felt I was missing out and I was ready to jump on my phone as soon as possible.

I saw the damage this was causing, but like all addictions it seemed almost impossible to pull away. I had deleted the Instagram application from my phone nine (9) times, but as you would guess, I could not have possibly deleted it nine times if I didn't keep re-installing it. For the times I re-installed it, I told myself I was going to be disciplined, but this discipline lasted less than 48 hours and I was back at it again.

During the conversation with the head of my department, I was so ashamed that I could not bring myself to tell her about the 'something' I was doing on my

phone, which resulted in my lateness, nevertheless she corrected me in such a friendly manner that I resolved to be better and delete the application for good. This resolution didn't last long. I even began talking to a priest about the struggle I was facing and I got an application lock which allowed me lock various applications on my phone, I received it eagerly with the intention of locking Instagram away and reducing the time I spent on it, but this didn't last very long either.

"All contrite you told me: How much wretchedness I see in myself! I am so stupid and I am carting around such a weight of concupiscence that it is as though I had never really done anything to get closer to God. O Lord, here I am beginning, beginning, always just beginning! I will try, however, to push forward each day with all my heart".

This is a quote from a book of Saint Josemaría titled *The Forge*, and it described how I felt on a particular day after spending long hours on Instagram. However, I began again and this time I tried something different, I gave my phone to a friend who helped me keep it till the next day, although I missed it, it allowed me some quality sleep and a recollected mind for the Mass of the next day. This helped a lot but after a while, I began making excuses and I stopped giving my phone to her.

In another of his books *The Way* St. Josemaría wrote about a friend who despondently told him about his inability to conquer himself, to which Fr. Escriva replied, “have you really tried to use the means?”. This struck me and I knew in all honesty that the *means* at this point in my life was to stay totally away from Instagram for as long as I needed to.

So for the 10th time, I deleted the Instagram application from my phone. For the first few days I felt something was missing but I kept up the struggle to keep it out and after some time I began to feel a lot of peace, I could now attend to many other things on my schedule and I was now able to pray better. This is not to say, I have not been tempted to re-install the application, but as St. Josemaria said, “...here I am beginning and beginning again”!

Jacinta Okeke

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