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# **An inspirational doctor**

A special award to encourage young doctors has been launched in honour of a member of Opus Dei who passed away last May

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Raheal Gabrasadig was a member of Opus Dei who died suddenly last May from a massive stroke, aged only thirty.

Her professionalism and compassion were celebrated at the annual

paediatric award ceremony for the East of England in early February, during which her colleagues established an award in her name, a sign of the respect she enjoyed among them. During the event, held at Addenbrook's Hospital in Cambridge, Dr Wilf Kelsall, head of the paediatric school for the East of England, posthumously gave Raheal a reward as an unsung hero of paediatrics. He also spoke of her legacy as a doctor, bringing "dedication, hard work and compassion" to support her patients and colleagues every day as well as her passion for education.

Additionally, the first *Raheal Gabrasadig Award for Educational Achievement* was awarded to Dr Nikhil Ganjoo, who was chosen by his colleagues. The award has been instituted to preserve her memory and pay tribute to all the things she achieved in her short life. Over the five years this award will run, her

colleagues hope that she will continue “to inspire them to be the best that you can be, both academically and on a personal level”.

Born in the Sudan of deeply Catholic Eritrean-Egyptian parents, Raheal moved with them to East London at the age of four. She passed away on her way back from a silent retreat in Wickenden Manor, Sussex. As she was driving home to Dagenham she stopped in Croydon to visit her five-year-old nephew. When she picked him up to hug him she collapsed and never regained consciousness.

Rahael was a deeply committed Catholic and faithful member of Opus Dei who frequently went to Mass and Confession and received Jesus in Holy Communion. Having received a marvellous grounding in the faith from her family and the Neo-catechumenal Way, she

discovered her vocation within Opus Dei to find God and love others in ordinary life, especially through daily work.

She had a huge effect on those around her and there have been many letters sent by friends and colleagues illustrating this. One of her friends said how she had learnt from Rahael to put her first canula and later on to say a short prayer as she washed her hands after seeing each patient. Rahael filled the hospital corridors with prayers and hard work. As a result she brought many of her colleagues closer to God, many of her patients received the sacraments and many babies were baptized. Her deep faith also enabled her to make good decisions in stressful moments, to lighten a room with her sense of humour, and to be a top clinician.

Her life was very ordinary but full of the love of God, lived out through her daily prayer schedule and the passion, determination and good humour she put into every minute of her life: at home with her family, with her friends and in the way she did her work so well and with so much care.

Dr Kelsall's speech about Raheal, which received a standing ovation, remembered her as "a truly special person who somehow managed to bring out the best of us. We miss her deeply. It has been said, that some people are in our lives only briefly, but leave footprints in our hearts forever. Raheal was one such individual and our lives are richer for having known her... Despite all her educational achievements, one of Raheal's greatest qualities was her kindness, compassion, friendship, and the way she looked out for everyone, whether they were a close

friend or just a passing acquaintance. She was never shy in checking up on people, regardless of whether you were a trainee or the most senior of consultants.”

Ever since her death on 18th May 2017, her family, friends and colleagues have been coming together in her house to celebrate a Mass for her soul. Hundreds of people have come to those masses, which show the love and affection that Raheal gave to those around her, regardless of their faith, race or background, a tribute to her open heart which she shared with anyone who came close to her.

Given the number of people in the world, one life can seem very small but as Monsignor Nicholas Morrish, Regional Vicar of Opus Dei in the United Kingdom, preached at Raheal’s funeral, each human life has a fantastic richness and all the good

achieved does continue. He illustrated this by the well-known example – often used by St Josemaría – of the stone thrown into a lake, the ripples of which spread out far from the initial impact. We pray that Raheal's good deeds will continue to touch many lives in ever-expanding ripples.

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