

## **The Way: "It was love at first sight"**

"I was baptized an evangelical Lutheran and even received Confirmation, but I can't claim that I was a good Christian." Another story about how Saint Josemaria's book "The Way" has changed people's lives.

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My name is Sirje. I work as an anaesthesiologist. I was baptized an evangelical Lutheran and even received Confirmation, but I can't claim that I was a good Christian.

I didn't know anything about Opus Dei or its founder. The first time I heard about it was in the context of some calumnies being spread around. The critics didn't convince me and, being a curious person, I decided to try to find out the truth about Saint Josemaria, and learned about his book *The Way*.

It was love at first sight. It seemed like just what I had been looking for: wise advice, direct and specific. Although I had always seen myself as a strong woman, I realized that I too needed good advice and support.

At times in my life I have wanted to cry, and Saint Josemaria told me that crying can sometimes be very good:

*You are crying? Don't be ashamed of it. Yes, cry: men also cry like you, when they are alone and before God. Each night, says King David, I bathe my bed with tears.*

*With those tears, those burning, manly tears, you can purify your past and supernaturalize your present life (The Way, no. 216).*

I sought out the center of Opus Dei in Estonia, and became a cooperator. Little by little I drew closer to God. I began attending catechism classes to get to know the Catholic faith better. I learned to pray guided by Saint Josemaria. I soon realized how hard it is to make progress in the spiritual life without the guidance of a teacher. Spiritual direction has been a great help to me.

As a doctor I often need to find solutions for critical situations and rapidly carry out complex interventions, which can sometimes lead to serious complications. But now I have a helper at my side. I go to Saint Josemaria, pray a Hail Mary and tell him in Spanish: “Vamos!” It

works every time. I feel more sure and above all much more tranquil.

I had an opportunity to visit the University of Navarra Hospital. Medical care in Estonia is quite good technically speaking, but it has ethical deficiencies, especially in regard to end of life care. I am very grateful for what I learned from the doctors there. With their help I have begun to better appreciate the value of human life from conception up to the moment of death.

In May 2013 I went to Rome on a pilgrimage with others Catholics from Estonia. On Pentecost, I attended Mass in the prelatic church of Our Lady of Peace, where the mortal remains of Saint Josemaria now lie. I felt quite clearly that I “was part” of Opus Dei, and had the strong sensation of being at home. At the end of the Mass I spoke with my confessor and told him of my

decision to become part of Opus Dei. I had already considered doing so back in Estonia, but I am happy to have made the final decision in the presence of Saint Josemaria's mortal remains.

The next day, May 20, Mass was celebrated in Saint Peter's Basilica. Many Estonians, myself included, received the sacrament of Confirmation. And afterwards, I attended a get-together with the Prelate of Opus Dei.