

The Day I Decided to Truly Live My Faith

José is a graduate in Medicine in Puerto Rico who loves to surf. He recounted, in 2019, at the age of 26, an unexpected encounter at WYD in 2011 that changed his life and that of his future wife Michelle.

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I went to Mass. I received the sacraments. I took part in Opus Dei's apostolic activities my whole life. It was always something I took for granted. Like when you have

something your whole life, you take it for granted, you fail to appreciate it. Until the summer of 2011...

I went to the World Youth Day. And I think it was a few days after it began, when by chance we ended up in the middle of a protest that was taking place. I think the group called themselves “The Outraged.” I witnessed something I had never seen in my life: hatred for the Church, with insults, and horrible gestures. I was petrified, paralyzed.

And suddenly, I saw a group of young people, young girls about 14 or 15 years old, a bit younger than me. I was 18 then. There were 4 or 5 of them. And they confronted one of the persons attacking a group of nuns. They told that person: “What’s wrong? Leave these people in peace. What’s your problem?” It was an older person who was shouting at the nuns, and when he saw these

young girls he suddenly became completely quiet. He stopped insulting them and making gestures.

And I said to myself: Wow! My whole life I've had the help of religion to be the person that I am. The ideals that I have and the few good things I have are all thanks to religion, and the values and virtues that I've been taught. What have I done for the Church, when the Church has done so much for me? And I began... When I returned to Puerto Rico I began to pray more, I began to draw closer to God.

“Hanging out” with your friends, alcohol, women, whatever... money, it seems like a lot of fun but in the end, after leaving a party with your friends, after getting home at 4 in the morning, you wake up the next day with an emptiness in your heart that no one can fill. After I made this decision in my life I began to realize

that what can fill this emptiness, this desire to have and to love, which is insatiable in the end, that the only thing that can fill it is what is infinite, right? I met Michelle a year later.

Michelle says: “I was attending the Evangelical church with my mom, and my dad also came with us. Dad is a Catholic but doesn’t practice much.”

José continues saying: “The two of us weren’t very compatible in our faith, as regards our behaviour... I told her: “Look Michi, unless something changes, I don’t think we can continue in our relationship. Because there are some things that are important for me, which I don’t think will be possible to achieve with you”. So... I left her. We ended the relationship.

But two days later I called her and said, ‘I think it would be good to try again, we can change whatever

needs to be changed. I think that together we can achieve it'. And two weeks later we became engaged. It was the first time I'd been engaged."

Michelle says: "That was the day I fell in love with José, the day he spoke to me about Opus Dei. I saw that he was so passionate about it, that it was something that filled his life. And I said, fine, this must be the key to why he is so different from other boys. I had never known anyone like him. And that was when I began to get to know more about Opus Dei."

José tells then: "Michi, after 6 years, converted. She made her First Communion, and was confirmed. We were married in the Catholic Church, and now she too is attending activities of Opus Dei, and in fact she too is a member of Opus Dei."

Michelle says: "I remember that it was right on this beach some time ago now, that José told me he wanted

to be a saint. I was surprised and thought he wanted to become a priest, and that he was going to leave me again. But now I think like he does and this is my dream too, since I want to reach heaven, and I want to live my life to the full, also here on earth.”

José ends saying: “I see Opus Dei as a marvelous instrument, both human and spiritual, whose goal in the end is only to help people be more joyful, to fill this emptiness that is in our heart, as it has filled mine.”

And Michelle: “I need to know the “magic recipe” for this smile, and in the end that’s what Opus Dei is. I’m very happy that it’s been in Puerto Rico for 50 years now. And for 50 years more...”

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