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**"I want each article to enhance the dignity of women."**

In Uruguay, Sofia Carluccio found her profession as a small girl while she watched her mother refashion clothing for her children. Today, she is a fashion designer whose work strives to put St. Josemaria's teachings into practice.

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"I'm a graduate of the Commercial Design School, specializing in

fashion. Probably it was childhood experience that guided me to this profession. My mother took such delight in refashioning clothing, partly because it was a way of economizing, since she had eleven children to dress. I must have inherited her artistic flair.

"At present, I work in a textile mill supervising the production of men's and women's clothing for tailors in Mexico, the United States, Brazil, Chile, and Argentina.

"On the side, a friend and I started our own line of fashions which we first displayed at Uruguay's Fashion Week in 2001. Afterwards we were invited to a fashion review in the Rally Museum, Punta del Este. There we introduced a line of designs commemorating the opening of that spa in 1925. We called it 'Evening.' It was well received by the other specialists.

"Today's world of fashion usually takes its cue from Europe. We try to bring to it certain values we consider fundamental: elegance, harmony, and the intention that each article enhance the dignity of women.

"The world of fashion is interesting but difficult. Some designers try to create styles intended to be striking, that simply appeal to a desire for boldness. It seems very clear to me that fashion is meant to dress people up, not undress them; that's my 'leit motiv.'

"Since I first entered the world of fashion, I've brought to it a sound criterion, a healthy superiority complex, because it tends to be degrading, even enslaving. Some words of St. Josemaria Escriva have spurred me on: 'Nowadays, it's especially necessary to intensify apostolic work in the field of fashion so as to bring 'the fragrance of Christ'

to this great means of social influence. We want to be able to see God in this area of life and human customs, often so paganized, and to convert it into an occasion for apostolate, into something that speaks of God and leads to God.'

"When it comes to designing, it's not enough to make sure that people are up to date; it has to combine modesty with elegance in the small details and accessories. Every article is thought through, even to the smallest detail.

"I'm also working with a group of highly professional dressmakers who live in various parts of Montevideo. Usually their shops are right in their homes, and this enables me to meet each of their families. I try to give them an incentive, a stimulus, to carry out their work as well as they can in the presence of God. This brings to mind a well ingrained idea

of St. Josemaria that houses of fashion should be instruments for doing an effective apostolate. It's clear to me that one can work in God's presence and at the same time be successful because many women appreciate this and feel at home with the styles we try to fashion."

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