

In Namibia, with Saint Josemaría's Help

Vesna Ostoic lives in Namibia, Africa. She moved there from London because of her husband's work. In her situation, it is more difficult to receive Christian formation and do apostolate...but not impossible.

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My name is Vesna Ostoic. I am Chilean, married and have three

children, Camila (9), Barbara (7) and Trinidad (4). My husband Milton works for a mining company.

In January 2007, for work reasons, we moved from London to a mining town in southern Namibia called Rosh Pinah. The closest cities are Windhoek, the capital of the country, and Cape Town, in South Africa, both more than 900 km away.

Life here is not easy. From the spiritual point of view one misses the possibility of going to the sacraments frequently. There is a Catholic church, very charming by the way, and not as poor as the rest of the houses in the town.

Mass is celebrated only once a month, on a Sunday. The faithful are very cheerful. The Church is filled with hymns praising God and the people dance. We are the only white people in the parish.

In this environment, far from my friends and from the people who used to help me to live a Christian life, I notice the help of God in a special way, and I lean on what I have learned from meditating on the life and teachings of Saint Josemaría.

During the day I try to keep aware of God's presence through some small practices of piety. For example, each morning I say "Lord, I will serve you," I will be faithful to you, as the founder of Opus Dei used to do. I try to make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, but since the Church is locked I stand outside with my daughters, and we go to the tabernacle inside with our hearts.

I thought a lot about my personal apostolate in my prayer and I saw that I could plant a seed in Namibia: to make the Christian faith known to many people, and the spirit that I have learned in Opus Dei.

I started giving catechism classes to people in the parish on Mondays. Now I am finishing with the Creed and will soon start on the sacraments. On Wednesdays, we pray the Holy Rosary, and on the first Friday of each month we spend some time in adoration in front of the Blessed Sacrament. On Thursdays, we do the Visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and we pray the hymn *Adoro Te Devote*, singing it in Latin. This is wonderful because the people didn't know these practices of piety and they are very happy.

To be able to give catechism classes I know that I need to pray and to continue growing in my spiritual life. Some time back, I attended a retreat in South Africa, where there are centers of Opus Dei. I had to travel 900 km by car to an international airport and from there go on to Johannesburg, a total of 1,300 km. But it is worth it. I brought back a

small portrait of Saint Josemaría that now hangs on one of the walls of our parish church.

From England, friends are sending money to buy Bibles for the people in the parish. My next project is to build a house for the priest, so he can live here and celebrate Mass daily or at least more than once a month. Pray very much for this project.

For June 26, we organized a "St. Josemaría Week" for those in my catechism classes. We watched a video with segments from one of his get-togethers, had a talk on "Sanctifying Ordinary Life," and we ended with a reading of the texts from the Mass of St. Josemaría. It was quite beautiful. Twelve people attended, and it made me happy to think that the Church started with only twelve.

The majority of the white people living in this district belong to the

Dutch Reformed Church that has roots in Calvinism. Most of my friends belong to this Church, but that doesn't prevent us from sharing our concerns for our family and children, and so many other things.

I am relying on your prayers for all of us here.

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