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# **"Queen of Husbands... pray for us": Stories from a Marian Family**

"It was the presence of the Blessed Virgin that truly made our meeting meaningful." Twelve years after that first meeting, Luca and Maria share how devotion to Mary has helped them face the challenges of daily life.

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"Maria and I met on November 1, 2008. Her expression and her elegant red overcoat caught my attention, but it was the presence of the Blessed Virgin that truly made our meeting meaningful."

Luca and Maria married twelve years ago. They are supernumeraries of Opus Dei and have four children. They shared their story in an interview with Radio Mater (Italy), recounting how they felt our Lady's presence from their very first meeting.

"During my final years of university in Spain," Maria recalls, "I had the opportunity to visit the Marian Shrine of Our Lady of Torreciudad. I asked the Blessed Virgin to guide me towards my future husband, promising her that he would accompany me when I returned to give thanks. He would be the

realization of my lifelong dream of getting married and raising a family.”

“One night,” Luca adds, “I learned that Maria had gone to Torreciudad, a shrine I had heard a lot about and wanted to visit. Spontaneously, as we were walking, I asked her, ‘Do you want to go there with me?’ Little did I know that my words echoed her prayer to the Blessed Virgin.”

They got married on May 8, 2010.

“After more than twelve years of marriage, we can unequivocally say that reality has surpassed our dreams. Of course we have had our difficulties, but we feel the presence of our Mother in Heaven every time these situations come up,” Maria says.

## **Gifts from the Blessed Virgin Mary**

Two years into their marriage, they faced a daunting professional setback. “In 2016, just before the

birth of our daughter Elisabetta, the company I was employed with went through a crisis, necessitating a reduction in my working hours and salary,” Luca explains. They decided to pray a novena to the Virgin of Pompeii. On May 8, her feast and their wedding anniversary, they were told that he could come back to work full-time.

They received their house as a gift from Our Lady of Loreto. “When we visited the house for the first time, the first thing we saw was an image of Our Lady of Loreto,” Maria says. “We were immediately certain that, after four long years of searching, we had found our new home. We signed the contract on the feast of Our Lady of Loreto. Our children had been praying and offering sacrifices for years, and each of them wanted a house with very specific characteristics. It seemed impossible,

but the house we found had all the features they had asked for.”

## **Praying to the “Queen of husbands” and “Consoler of rents”**

The toughest moments of the pandemic brought forth more Marian fruits. Luca tells the story: “Every day, we gathered online with several families, including grandparents and children, to pray the Rosary. We agreed that we would take turns leading the prayer. As well as getting to pray together, we were able to help each other grow in hope. We left some time at the end to chat; everyone could ask the others to pray for their intentions, and the children were the most vocal. It was a solid support and it kept us going under difficult circumstances.”

There were really hilarious moments, like the children’s mispronunciations during the litany. For instance, they prayed to the

“Queen of husbands” instead of the “Queen of martyrs” [*in Italian: “Regina dei mariti” and “Regina dei martiri”*], and the “Comfort of rents” instead of the “Comfort of the afflicted” [*in Italian: “Consolatrice degli affitti” and “Consolatrice degli afflitti”*].

## **Carrying the Cross with joy**

Recently, Maria fell gravely ill. She took it as an opportunity to ask for more help from our Lord and his Mother: “It is not easy to understand the love of God through suffering and difficulties; it is a steep and mysterious path. Giving our best day in and day out is a struggle, but we find God in our frailties. He accompanies us through the people he puts beside us. And the experience of finding him in our lives is very precious. It gives us hope and makes us his friends. You can only understand the depth and

beauty of it when you experience it yourself.”

They are both grateful for the spiritual accompaniment they receive as part of their formation in Opus Dei. It is a personal conversation that helps each person to understand the will of God and find meaning in their struggles, joys, and sorrows. Maria compares spiritual directors to guardian angels: “They are attentive to whatever happens to us, and we need their help if we want to be holy. They encourage us to rise every time we fall, and they help us let the Lord mold us the way he wants.”

Maria finishes by sharing a crucial element in the struggle to accept and carry the Cross each day: having fun. “Our children help us take our mind off my illness, and now we spend a few minutes every night playing and doing impressions. Our children are

very creative and they are experts at making us laugh, teasing us without being disrespectful. The Holy Spirit often speaks to us through their words, which sometimes catch us by surprise because of their frankness, simplicity, and depth.”

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