

My "Way"

Chezhiyan, a software development manager from Bengaluru, India, had to undergo a kidney transplant. He tells about the support he received from his wife and a book by Saint Josemaría Escrivá

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Before telling my story, I would like to introduce myself to the reader. My name is Chezhiyan (my friends call me Chez), a software development manager by profession. I live and work in Bengaluru, where I was born

forty-five years ago. This city in southern India is the center of the country's fast-growing high-tech industry. I am happily married, with three wonderful children and a lovely wife who saved my life. But that is part of the story I want to tell.

In 2006, browsing the books at a big bookstore I found and bought a copy of *The Way*, by St. Josemaría Escrivá. Even if I had already vaguely heard about Opus Dei, I consider that book to be my first real contact with its message. So I started reading it at home and I have to confess that I didn't understand much of what I was reading. I felt that I was not able to relate to the book, which very quickly became just one more unfinished book among others that were kept in my room.

Six years later, though, when I was 37, I was diagnosed with kidney failure. Following the directions of

the doctors, I was immediately put on dialysis. I had to go to the hospital three times a week for a three-hour session each time. That situation forced me to change my routine and take a break from work.

The doctors strongly advised me to go for a kidney transplant, provided a suitable donor was found. After hearing that, my wife herself immediately came forward as a donor. I will always be extremely grateful to her for her courage and generous love.

At that time we already had two small kids, and some people close to us even discouraged her from donating one of her kidneys, but she remained firm in her decision in order to save my life. After some medical adjustments and preparation, the doctors told us that the transplant surgery could be carried out, but they could not

guarantee it would be a success. I had seen some failures during my visits to the hospital. But we decided to go ahead with it, placing our trust in God, and eventually the transplant was successful!

During my three-month-long convalescence at home, I had plenty of time to read. I took it as a good opportunity for me to grow deeper in my faith and prayer life, something that I wanted to do but had never taken it seriously enough. I wondered how to start. I first took a book by St. Teresa of Avila, but that reading lasted very little for the usual reason: I found it very difficult for me, got discouraged and gave up reading it. But this time one thing struck me and remained in my mind: the importance St. Teresa gave to spiritual direction, to being helped by somebody else to grow in spiritual matters.

That was when I found by chance my old copy of *The Way* that had been lying forgotten on the shelves for several years, and I started reading it again. On the very first page of the book he writes: ***Read these counsels slowly. Pause to meditate their meaning. They are things that I whisper in your ear, as a friend, as a brother, as a father. We shall speak intimately; and God will be listening to us. I am going to tell you nothing new. I shall only stir your memory so that some thought may arise and strike you: and so your life will improve and you will set out along the way of prayer and of Love. And in the end you will become a soul of worth.*** That was what I was looking for. *The Way* was helping me find and rediscover my way forward.

As I began reading those short spiritual considerations many things started making sense to me,

something that hadn't happened years before when I first opened the same copy of the book. What had changed? The health problems I had gone through, in the meantime, along with the personal experience of the immense support and love I received from my wife made me see my life from a different perspective. In addition, being guided by the doctors must have helped me value the importance of being helped and guided by somebody else in spiritual matters as well.

That is why when reading the words of St. Josemaría I felt like a son being guided by his father with clear indications about real situations, challenges and questions that were also mine: charity, forgiveness, joy, family, friendship, optimism, trust in God, difficulties, etc. Those daily minutes of reading became like moments of spiritual guidance, something that I was looking for. His

fatherly way of teaching gave me a lot of the strength and confidence which I needed so much in order to restart my life. And this is what I did!

A couple of months after my convalescence period I returned to work in the same company, but with a new job. And two years later our third child was born very healthy bringing more joy into our lives!

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