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Sanctifying Ordinary Work: An Art Library

Elisabetta, married with two children, is in charge of a large art library in Milan connected with the Institute of Art.

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“When I was in high school I didn’t put much effort into my studies,” Elisabetta confides. “But I had a good relationship with my teachers, and they helped me to open up a path in the world.” Married now and with

two young children, she is in charge of the library of a well-known institute of art in Milan.

Sensing God's call

Her first job was teaching art courses and later she went on to direct and coordinate the other teachers. After spending time in Barcelona, Elisabetta returned to Milan to supervise the masters program. In 2007 she met the man who would later be her husband and they were married in 2013.

About her vocation to Opus Dei, Elisabetta says: “After the wedding I sensed that our Lord was calling me. It was a strong, clear call, but also gentle and leaving me free. I responded ‘yes,’ because I wanted to show my thanks for all the gifts I had received and to make of my daily life a service to God.”

Arrival of children

Filippo Maria, her first child, soon arrived on the scene. “Professional work was part of my life,” Elisabetta says, “and I didn’t want to give it up completely. So I decided to continue working at the art institute, while reducing the number of hours.”

Several months ago, Elisabetta gave birth to another child, Edoardo Maria, who brought new challenges to her day: “Something I learned at the university and that helps me a lot is to dedicate some time to planning my day: the menu, the shopping list, the cleaning plan, exercise, seeing a friend... It requires keeping clear in your head what you have to do, so as not to waste time and put order in your day.”

Like many families with small children, the end of the day is one of most challenging times, especially if both parents are working: “The evening brings with it organizing the

children's baths, supper, singing for my youngest child until he falls asleep... The short video *The Heart of Work: Saint Josemaria's Vision*, has helped me to face all these challenges with in an optimistic spirit.”

Smiling when it's difficult

Directing a large library requires interacting with many colleagues and borrowers every day. “When tensions arise, I try not to get upset at people and to be as understanding as possible, imitating the example of our Lord. If I find it hard to do so, I try to avoid confronting the person right away and seek out a solution to the problem before addressing the one responsible for it. I also always try to keep smiling—to smile even when it's difficult to do so.”

With the need to care for both her family and her work at the library, like many other mothers who work outside the home Elisabetta realizes

how important it is to keep in contact with our Lord: “My interior life is like a rubber glove that adapts to all my daily commitments. I also program my smartphone to remind me throughout the day to say brief prayers and aspirations. And if at times I can’t get to what I had planned for the day, I try never to lose my peace. When I confront in my day difficulties I don’t understand, I always remember the words of Blessed Alvaro del Portillo: *God knows more.*”

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