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The simplest things in the best possible ways

In the Philippines: A seventeen-year-old shares her discoveries about St. Josemaria, Bishop Alvaro, and living the fulness of the Christian life in everyday little things.

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I first heard about St. Josemaría and Opus Dei at a very young age (around 4-6 yrs old) when my aunt Lucille told me about him. I did not

know initially what Opus Dei was all about. I just knew that it was an organization in the Catholic Church and that my aunt was part of it.

As I grew older, I found out more about the organization as she invited me to attend seminars, activities, to go to Opus Dei centers, and as she lived by the values fostered by Opus Dei. She even introduced me to private devotion to Bishop Alvaro, St. Josemaria's successor. When I learned about him, his good works, and those countless times when he answered my aunt's prayers to him, I did not think twice but prayed to him too. And from then until now, he has been helping me with a lot of things like in my studies, in my relationships, in my goals in life, and in my aim to become a better person, closer to God.

However, with all of these, the objectives and the whole essence of

Opus Dei still was not clear to me. It was when I started to read the book my aunt gave me, “Friends of God” authored by St. Josemaría, that I’ve really understood about it. I read chapters about various topics such as work peace, human virtues, and the richness of ordinary life. Every chapter, every paragraph, and every word inspired me because it made me feel that it is actually not that hard to be a saint, living in my own ways.

I used to think that in order to go to heaven, I would have to do extraordinary things like dying for someone or for many people, giving away most of the things that I have, giving up my profession or aspirations in order to serve God, and several other things. But when I learned about Opus Dei and what it was all about through the book, I realized that I did not have to change much to be good. I just have to do the

simplest and littlest things in the best possible and holiest ways. It made me feel better that I do not have to give up everything; I just have to devote everything to him. For instance, whenever I am studying, I must do my best and offer it all up to Him and that will already make God happy. I can reach my goals, and I'm not deprived of it. I just have to direct it towards a path with God alongside and at the end of it.

In the most ordinary things in life, I can be holy. I just have to do them in a holy way. There are many more things that I learned from "Friends of God" and about the whole organization of Opus Dei itself, but the emphasis is on what I have learned about being extraordinary in the most ordinary means. It makes me feel fulfilled whenever I am able to maximize all the things I am blessed with, and it is easier to do something when I put my heart into

it. And at this early age of 17, I know now that the only path I shall take is the path with God; and Opus Dei must help me in this journey.

Madelaine Johanna Abraham

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