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# Courage to Practise my Faith

Ever since someone brought me face to face with God, I have had a clear way to follow and clear aims in life. I've been happy, and what's more, I hope to gain eternal life.

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I was studying to become a lawyer at the University of Guadalajara, Mexico, and from 1994 onwards I worked for a legal practice with my father and some friends of his who were also lawyers.

## Discovering the answers

Around that time, the aunt of a university friend invited me to go and give catechism classes in a poor neighbourhood of the city. To prepare for them, we arranged to meet in an Opus Dei Centre.

At first I was sorry I'd gone because I didn't know anyone there, but when I saw the atmosphere of friendship and serious study, I began to go there every Saturday for catechism, a meditation, and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

To prepare our catechism classes, Luzma, whom I became friends with, lent me a copy of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and told me to read the part about human life, and to ask her about the things I wasn't sure of. I was ready to argue; at first I wrote down lots of questions. But to my surprise, by the time I got to the end I found that I'd crossed out all

my questions because in the Catechism I found what I had been looking for in many different systems, none of which had been totally convincing.

However, I still had many doubts about the Church because of my family – my parents don't have faith in the Church – and education background. I talked to the priest who went to the Centre to hear confessions. With great clarity, patience and supernatural sense he clarified many things I needed to know.

But what was most convincing was to see that the university students who went to that Centre had a real relationship with God. They were fighting to get to heaven, paid attention to little details and lived as I imagined the first Christians had.

Could effects like these be a product of the hypocrisy which, so I had been

taught, was what Catholics lived by? Definitely not! What's more, nowhere did I see any sign of people being kept in ignorance and subjection. So, although the vast majority of people in Guadalajara are Catholics, it came as something new to me to discover what the Catholic faith means.

I plucked up my courage to start practising the faith from then on, though I knew that we human beings, both inside and outside the Church, have our failings. Real love for the Holy Father came later, little by little, with prayer and reading books about him, helped also by things people said just in passing.

## **Discovering the transcendence of work**

In 1997, two days before my graduation ceremony, my father, who was 45, died of a heart attack. My mother worked alone at home,

my two brothers were still at school and my grandmother was also depended on my father for financial support. The only property we possessed was sold off cheaply, and we were left with no house, no job and no money. We sold both our cars to pay for food and rent. We urgently needed a steady income, so as I was the only person in the family who could earn something, I worked for more than six months as an office assistant, mostly answering the telephone, sorting out mail and making coffee. I found it very hard, because I felt degraded.

But then I remembered the Cross, of no value without its Crucified, that Saint Josemaría talked about in *The Way*, and I remembered Don Alvaro del Portillo (the first successor of the Founder of Opus Dei), smiling. And that changed my outlook on everything because work has a supernatural, transcendental value.

Service is the most important part of it, and any effort seems little when it is offered to God.

## **Finding happiness**

In 1998 I was transferred to the legal department, for which I was very grateful to God. I have been working ever since as a lawyer in family law for disadvantaged people in the Guadalajara City Council. In addition, since 2003 I've been teaching the Civil Course of Marriage Preparation which is obligatory in the State of Jalisco. I'm now 30 years old. I like my work despite the tiredness and the heavy responsibilities, and I have the same post and salary as I did when I started, plus only the annual increments.

On 8th December 1998 I asked to be admitted to Opus Dei as a Supernumerary. On 1st December 2000, I married Eduardo, a psychologist I met at work, and in

February 2002 my daughter Mariana Paola was born.

I am grateful to God for all this and happy to give permission for my testimony to be published on the Saint Josemaría website.

E. A. A. (Mexico)

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