

I remember him every June 26th

“St Josemaría loves priests and helps them a lot. 17 years have now passed since I prayed to St Josemaría, and from then on I remember him every June 26th with great love and gratitude.”
Fr Gonzalo tells his story.

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It was September 1990, when I was a curate in Illescas, a town in Toledo, Spain, and parish administrator for Yeles. I was living with another

priest, Fr Javier, who belonged to the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross.

He gave me a prayer-card of the Founder of Opus Dei, who had not yet been beatified, because at that point I had to set up catechism classes in Yeles and I had no idea how to do it.

On the second or third day of saying the prayer, I got a call from a relative of mine who is in Opus Dei. We'd last met at his sister's wedding some months before, and I'd told him about being appointed administrator for Yeles. I'd completely forgotten the conversation, and so I was really surprised when he called me to offer his services, together with a number of boys who were attending Christian formation activities in an Opus Dei center. I was dumbstruck, and realized right away that this was St Josemaría's response.

That was not all. Yeles was no easy task, and those school kids, with my relative and another guy in charge, came every Saturday with heroic regularity all the way from Madrid, 40 kilometers away, and spent the whole morning with the kids in the catechism groups.

I was quite content to know that they were going to give them Catholic instruction. They did much more – they played football with them, and some came with me on sick calls. Then off they went back to Madrid at mid-day, as happy as though it was I who'd done them a favor.

That whole year they never took a cent for what they did, not even to pay for the gas. There was only one Saturday in the year that they didn't come, and they warned me about it two months in advance. By the end of it I felt ashamed to remember that I had sometimes criticized Opus Dei

just because it was fashionable to. At the end of the year they accepted my invitation to a thank-you lunch.

The following October I went to Rome to study, and I know that my successor continued to benefit from their services for a time.

Seventeen years have now passed since that prayer to St Josemaría. In 1992 I was in Rome for his beatification, and from then on I remember him every June 26 with great love and gratitude. St Josemaría loves priests and helps them a lot. God bless the Work, may it continue doing good in the Church and the world.

Fr Gonzalo, Australia

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