

Large families: lots of work and lots of fun

"Having a large family is certainly hard work, but it is immeasurably rewarding and can be lots of fun." John Perrotet, 46, works in the tourism sector in Sydney, Australia, where he lives with his wife Anne and their family.

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A simple fact, often overlooked by many, is that a key to a successful

marriage lies in selecting the right partner. The teachings of Josemaría Escrivá led me to take this responsibility very seriously. Living as a student in Warrane College, I was able to mix with a good group of people and I am happy to report that, with the help of St Joseph, I found a wonderful wife - Anne. We now have twelve children ranging in age from twenty one to three. This is my greatest treasure here on earth and one that I would never have thought possible were it not for St Josemaría. It is a direct result of his teachings on ***marriage as a vocation*** and on being generous with Our Lord regarding the transmission of life.

With such a large family, there are always challenges, especially when the children are all so close in age. In this day and age, people need to realise that having a large family is certainly hard work, but it is

immeasurably rewarding and can be lots of fun.

Teaching children to be generous is not easy, but in a large family it becomes a practical necessity. One gift we have received in this regard is that one of our sons is now in Opus Dei also. I hope his example will lead some of our other children to give their lives to God. It would make us extremely happy if they received the gift of celibacy ***which encourages a person to give both body and soul to God, to offer Him an undivided heart, without passing first through human love.***

St Josemaría's example in always maintaining a supernatural perspective has been very important to us in times of trial. Financially, there were always challenges but Our Lord knows just how far to push us such that we do not lose our trust in Him.

Perhaps our most difficult challenge was the loss of one our children. Not long after we knew Anne was expecting, we discovered that Joseph had a congenital abnormality which meant he could not survive. With a great deal of God's grace we were able to offer our baby back to Jesus on the day of his birth. Our Lord gave us great serenity during this time and the gift of having one of our children in Heaven.

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