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Learning to love more each day

Dr Chan Yeow, who works at a public hospital in Singapore, offers us a glimpse of his life and his motivations.

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I became a Catholic at the age of nineteen, after searching for God in atheism (yes, I started off as a materialistic atheist seeking truth), Buddhism and evangelical Christianity. In the final stage of my search, I was helped by a priest of

Opus Dei, who was my catechist and spiritual advisor.

Soon after my baptism and confirmation, I was admitted to Opus Dei as a Supernumerary. Eighteen years have passed, and I have graduated from medical school, gotten married, and become a father. Eighteen years have passed, but my walk with God still consists of a continuous process of falling, reaching for His hand and beginning again. Each day, I learn anew how to love, how to see God's presence in the challenges, the sufferings and monotony of everyday life, and how not to forget him when we are blessed with material and emotional comforts.

I try to feel for my patients

My work as an anaesthesiologist in a large public hospital in Singapore puts me in touch with many patients undergoing surgery. I also take care

of those who are in intensive care because of life-threatening conditions.

The human and psychological reaction to such a surfeit of suffering is usually a process of distancing and desensitization. I try to fight this tendency and to feel for my patients, to see them as individuals loved by God, which helps me remember that everything I do for them is in some way done for Christ.

My vocation to Opus Dei helps me a lot. It helps me especially to remember them at the Holy Mass: I offer up their sufferings and the effort of all the staff in union with the sacrifice of Christ.

When I'm on the job, I have many "unglamorous duties": preparing medications, checking equipment, setting intravenous lines for patients, etc. I also have to disinfect my hands meticulously between each patient.

Instead of chaffing at these tedious procedures, Opus Dei has taught me to do these little things for the love of God, which converts them into something precious. The spiritual training I get also helps me keep a clear mind and a Christian outlook on various difficult moral issues of human life that I have to face.

Keeping our love young

My wife, Genevieve and I just celebrated our tenth wedding anniversary last year. She is also an anaesthesiologist. Over the years, we have learned – and are still learning – how to balance professional dedication with family life, how to overcome tiredness and our moods so as to keep our love young.

After eight long years, our son Dominic was born. As I watch him grow, I can only marvel at the tremendous gift that each child is, and the tremendous responsibility

that comes with being a parent. When I see how Genevieve stretches herself for the sake of Dominic, I grow in admiration and love for her.

In the company of friends

Two years ago, Genevieve and I joined a parenting course, the “*Family Education Programme*”, together with nine other couples. Over a year, we met monthly and shared experiences on how to instill virtues in our kids. It was very reassuring to hear other families encountering similar challenges, and more helpful yet to learn from their unique ways of coping. We developed firm friendships and have continued to stay in touch.

We have been fortunate to have many friends who have enriched our lives. Hopefully, we also contributed to theirs. Among them are Gabriel and Teresa, who honoured us by asking us to be godparents to their

six children. The 2 families often spend time together. Once I saw how their oldest child, who must have been five then, got his younger brother to make peace with a boy whom he was fighting in the playground! I was edified; such is the maturity that comes from growing up in a large family!

Looking forward

Each day I look forward to the challenges that come my way, and, with God's grace, I hope to continue serving and loving Him. I know my weaknesses, but through the Sacraments, the help I receive in Opus Dei and the friendship and prayers of my family and friends, I try to be a better person day by day – a better husband, a better father, a better friend, a better son and a better doctor.

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