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"Less screen, more family"

Interview with Joanna Raczyńską, who lives in Poland. The mother of two children, she is a graphic designer and writes several blogs.

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You write blogs on various topics and have several Facebook pages. The computer is also the main instrument for your professional work. Could we say that computers are your passion?

(laughing) My passion is my family and art, but my husband Marcin is a programmer, and we both enjoy spending time in front of the computer and discovering bit by bit the possibilities the Internet offers. I find inspiration there for my work and also many opportunities to help bring other people closer to God. Thanks to the Internet I can share with others my ideas and my vision of the world.

In recent years much has been said about the dangers of the Internet. Not only because of some harmful content, but also because it can so easily create a dependency. How can children be protected from these dangers?

On the one hand, children need to be protected by installing filters, selecting suitable programs and limiting the time spent on the web. Parents also need to teach children to

choose wisely, and not to give in to whims. Children quickly become attached to the computer or tablet. And the more exciting a computer game is, the more easily a child gets drawn in and becomes addicted. That's why we try to choose games that teach logic, where no one shoots anyone or flees from anyone. We also pay attention to the graphic content, making sure that it's done with good taste and is suited to the child's age.

The parents' good example is also very important and demands a lot from them. What does this involve in your case?

This is one of the areas where I see most clearly the benefits of the Christian and human formation I receive in Opus Dei. Thanks to this help I am very aware that time is a treasure God has given me, and that I need to make good use of it to serve

others, and not waste it by thinking only about myself.

In Opus Dei I have found the inspiration needed to fight to have a strong will, in order to persevere in battling my defects—doing so with a sporting spirit, being defeated and then starting again, setting small goals, always keeping my sense of humor and not getting discouraged at my falls.

You have organized a social campaign entitled “Less screen, more family.” Could you list some of its goals?

I'm a great defender of the advantages the Internet offers. As I already said, I am very active on the web. But one's family requires special attention. Therefore some suggestions I offer others are:

--Less time in front of the screen—
more time for others

--Fewer social networks—more authentic human relationships

--Less television—more board games

--Less “snacking” in front of the screen—more family meals

--Fewer computer games—more sporting activities

--Less Internet—more books

--Less time spent online—more time for sleep

--Less Wikipedia—more time for serious study

--Fewer gadgets—more friends

What alternatives to the screen have you found? What other activities do children like besides computer games?

At a young age, children love to spend time with their parents doing

something active. And parents enjoy very much sharing their interests with their children. For some this may be excursions, music, reading.... When our children were still quite young we spent a lot of time playing creative games, making toys, baking cookies, painting..... At that age children enjoy doing things with mom. Now that they are getting older they have more fun playing board games, with dad taking the lead. And when the weather is good, they love outdoor games. We also try to make sure they spend time with other children their own age and learn the value of real friendship, something a computer can never replace.
