

My biggest change is my greatest gain

God arranged everything such that he could teach me and train me, while waiting for me to make a positive response...

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Margaret Yu is a member of Opus Dei. She works full-time and is the mother of two teenage sons. Her initial impression of Opus Dei has gone through a big change.

How did you meet Opus Dei?

My boyfriend then, who is now my husband, first got to know some members of Opus Dei. He brought me along to some family activities, one of which I clearly remember was a Christmas party where I made some friends. At their invitation, I attended two recollections, but I stopped going because I didn't feel comfortable. I didn't really know why or what it was that I was uncomfortable about; it just did not feel right. Besides I found it boring as I did not understand the talks.

Looking back, I was really very stupid! Anyway, I decided to call it quits. From then till I became a member of Opus Dei, some seven or eight years passed. The changes in me have been quite significant. Let me tell you what happened.

During this period, I got married and had two sons. I was receiving lots of lessons in life. One day, one of these friends called up unexpectedly. She

talked to me about attending a recollection, but this time my reaction was very different from the first time. In that dialogue, we talked about our lives and daily problems. Her invitation to the recollection was timely; I felt myself drawn to give it another try. “No harm attending,” I remember thinking to myself. So I appeared again at a recollection after a seven or eight year break. This time, I did not find it the least boring, though I did not yet understand all the talks and meditations.

I remain really grateful that this friend continued to invite me every month thereafter and I became quite regular. Gradually I began to understand the spirit of Opus Dei. I started to live it in my daily life and in my family. I found it very meaningful, and so the journey continued until I became a member of Opus Dei in the year 2000. It has taken me more than a decade, thanks

to all the training that God has arranged to help me change.

How do you bring the spirit of Opus Dei into your daily life?

The approach that the founder of Opus Dei, St. Josemaría, taught is the approach of “love”, that is, to put love into work, whether it is professional work or the chores of the home, and to try to do a good job. The key lies in the effort of trying to do one’s best and to offer that work to God, which does not mean that everything has to turn out perfect. This is what St. Josemaría means when he talks about the sanctification of work.

As for the family, I have to cope with the tough battle of having two sons going through their teenage years. I’m sure that every mother will agree that the time left for the family after work is very short, just a few hours to see to the children. I try to

communicate as much as possible with them during dinner. We talk about how the day went, happy things, unhappy things, all of us have something to share. This exchange strengthens the family and builds mutual understanding.

I also try to impart some virtues, such as table manners, moderation, order, cleanliness, etc. They do not always receive everything well. I have to find the right moment and apply a variety of skills so that it doesn't come across as repulsive or offensive. Then unconsciously they accept the lesson. You need to be aware of how easily young people would rebel against discipline, but if they like how and what is being told to them, they will happily comply.

After dinner, I try to make sure that the boys, myself included, make good use of every minute because time is given by God and we should not

waste this precious gift. And like all mothers, I am very concerned about their academic performance and I try to follow them up on this, though I personally think that the cultivation of their character is more important than academic performance.

How do you cope with the difficulties that crop up?

Every day I try to attend Mass after work and pray for a while before going home. In the Mass and prayer, I offer up to God all that makes me happy, and entrust all that I find difficult. The strength I draw from the Mass and prayer is a great help to me, because with this strength, I am able to face everything. This attitude of prayer and trust in God is what I learned from St Josemaría and it has really helped me a lot.

What changes have you noticed in yourself?

From the initial flat refusal to those invitations till today, I have come a long way. What I most deeply appreciate is God's patience towards me. He arranged everything such that he could teach me and train me, while waiting for me to make a positive response. Counting on God's help and the freedom he gives us, I feel very lucky to have been able to choose the right path for me and to become a member of Opus Dei.

I have had many opportunities to benefit from the spirit of St. Josemaría and the experience of other members of the Opus Dei, and to come to know the importance of prayer and communication with God. I have learned how to really live in God's presence. At times, I find the pace of life really hard, but with the power of prayer, I find the courage to face up to all kinds of problems and difficulties, without giving up. This is

my biggest change; better yet, it is my greatest gain!

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