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Pioneer of Argentinean Rock

Juan Carlos “Chango” Pueblas was a guitarist of “Wild Cats”, founding group of rock music in Argentina. St Josemaria showed him that God and music can follow the same path.

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When did you meet Opus Dei?

It was around 1980. I was feeling down and saw an Informative Bulletin on the night table. My wife told me to read it, that it would be

good for me. What caught my attention were the miracles that the then Servant of God Msgr. Josemaría was doing and that he was a saint of our times. I used to think that saints belonged to the Middle Ages. In 2002 I celebrated his canonization with much joy.

Did his message of sanctification in one's professional work catch your attention?

Oh yes... it is a mysterious thing. By doing such trivial things, ordinary things, we can gain Heaven! I thought that one had to do great, extraordinary things in order to merit it. But what one has to do is to do things well. Jesus sees everything. If what I do in my activity is correct, then it is meritorious; it is as good as a deed of charity to help the sick or the elderly.

And do you live it playing music?

I do too. When I play and receive applause or acknowledgment, I offer them to God because they are not mine. If I play, it is because God wants it. I never thought I would become famous. God sees everything; he is everywhere and has foreseen all these things.

Does it surprise you?

I am surprised that something I had done in my youth could influence other well known musicians today. Now I see them and they tell me that they used to sneak into the shows; they would go up to the first row and they still remember how I was dressed. I was not aware that I was doing something that was extraordinary. And this happens in other activities, even though they may seem of little importance. The good example you give or you do not give can leave a mark on people. For those kids, we were something

important. I am not saying we were role models, but in some way, yes. That was how we were able to influence with “Wild Cats” (Los Gatos Salvajes).

And now everything is good.

God is giving me too much. Sometimes I ask Him: why do you give me so much? Because I do not deserve it; I do not behave as well as I should. Sometimes I am scared that he gives me so much in my personal life, in my work, my family, my music... I have had some very bad times. I feel like Job who, after some really tough times, have everything going well again.

Do you look at music in a different way today?

Before, like any other youth, I sought success, popularity, fame, easy money. Now, I just enjoy the music. And whatever comes with it is a

bonus, not something that I was seeking. The revival of “Wild Cats” after 40 years took a lot of effort. Three of us were in Buenos Aires and two, in Rosario. We had to meet up again. Ciro Fogliatta and I would travel to Rosario. We would rehearse on Fridays and Saturdays and then return on Sundays... We were doing this for three to four months.

How is your relationship with God and the guitar?

I try to be in the presence of God when I play, to offer it up. I also ask my Guardian Angel for his help so that everything will go right, that the instruments do not fail, that there will be no noises; not for me but for the others. Without his help everything would be more difficult; I feel that he helps me. Sometimes I think that I play better than I actually know. He makes me put the fingers

where they have to go... ((Chango laughs)).

The group had a lot of pressure from the record companies to make other types of music and you rebelled against the system.

We had very strong convictions. If we had given in, we could have had more commercial success but (Argentinean rock) would not be what it is today. To have remained firm—in the long run—was what made it possible to sing rock in our own language. It is very hard to go against the current. At that time we were branded as “fat” and “tacky”. All the other groups of rock also sang in English; but we wanted to express ourselves in Spanish, our own language.

How do you live your faith in the world of music?

There are people with other beliefs, like Buddhism, re-incarnation... Some said they were altar boys before and later left the Faith... In my case, it was the opposite. I had strayed, I met the Work and I got closer. It was the grace of God. I ask Him to make them see what I saw. St Josemaría used to tell us that we ought to love everyone even if we did not think alike. I think that is what it means to be Christians.

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