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“I rediscovered that I could have a personal relationship with God”

“The joy of the Children of God” is a new brochure published by the Opus Dei Information Office. In it people from different continents tell how they embarked upon or set about improving their Christian life thanks to the teachings of St Josemaría Escrivá. James Burfitt is one of these witnesses.

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James Burfitt comes from Sydney, Australia. A school teacher for nearly 20 years, he also writes film reviews in a magazine for families.

I was born into a Catholic family and though I got to know about Opus Dei when I was young, it never really interested me. I was already working when, thanks to one of my brothers, I attended a retreat. I began to attend Christian doctrine classes and rediscovered that I could have a personal relationship with God. Particularly strong at the time was the thought that God had given me so much and I just had to respond. My guide through all of this was St Josemaría. When I read his books it was as if they were addressed to me. I began to discover that I could not stay as I was, and to want to love God

passionately. And so I discovered my vocation to Opus Dei.

Today I'm a husband and father first and foremost, and an educator after that. My wife and I work hard at keeping our marriage young, and at becoming true friends with our seven children. The only way to achieve this is by spending time, talking and, most importantly, listening to them. I coach their rugby teams and am busy teaching other sports to the older ones. I don't want them to see their parents as the ones who were born to watch them grow and experience life; I want to experience it with them!

In our family life there have been many tough times: a marriage between two strong-headed people like my wife and I brings its difficulties from time to time; the loss of parents and relatives on both sides; serious illnesses, and a

multitude of other challenges. Awareness of our divine filiation, that we are children of God, ensured that we saw these events as the hand of God caressing our family and so managed to view them in a very positive light.

We see the fact that we are not well off as one of the best gifts to our children. Though they are surrounded by the heavy hand of materialism and consumerism, we live to a very tight budget. We feel this will help them discover that our Lord is their real friend and that true happiness is gained by doing his will.