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"It has strengthened my relationship with Christ"

Jocelyn Owens, is a housewife with 8 children. She lives in Lancashire, and is a Supernumerary member of Opus Dei.

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A friend at work invited me to a documentary film about Opus Dei. I thought it was a tremendous organisation, particularly with students. I had just finished

University and found there was nothing on offer for students to keep them going in the faith, to provide more in depth knowledge of the faith. I found college life a very isolating experience. I found it a desert. Beyond the first year, there was nobody living the faith at university. I found the culture very degrading. So when I saw the work Opus Dei was doing with students, I felt it was an oasis. The values I had grown up with, and wanted to live by were all there! I thought this is what is needed, and just wished I had had it before!

I was immediately interested in the Work and loved the formation given, but I never thought I had a vocation. It was something I grew into and have now been in Opus Dei for 12 years! Opus Dei hasn't changed my mission in life – it has helped me to carry out that mission better – on a practical level, sharing others'

experiences, their solutions to family problems from housekeeping to raising children in the faith. On a personal level because I've deepened in my knowledge and relationship with God, I can cope much better with the problems of life. If I have a problem, I will pray about it instead of getting depressed about it – that's one of the greatest things Opus Dei has given me, it has strengthened my relationship with Christ. Another thing is to do with the feeling of isolation; you have companionship within Opus Dei, there are other people who are struggling to live their Christian Faith and I think that is very important, as one at times can feel very isolated trying to live the faith in our society.

I think that Opus Dei has an important role in re-Christianising society and a major role is that of education and formation. We are nominally a Christian society, but

how to put that into effect is a tall order. For me, hope is key; nothing stays the same for very long, so if you're in a bad patch, you must realise that this is a short-lived experience, in a few years time all the variables will have changed, so the thing to do in times of difficulty is to rely on God, seek the solutions to those problems and you'll get through the bad times and you'll come through them into better times. Don't throw in the towel in those moments of stress. And in the end you'll see that you've achieved something instead of having given up half way through.

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