

## Lawyer, Wife and Mother

Begoña couldn't understand why God had allowed her brother to fall into a coma. After undergoing a conversion in her own life, she brought her new-found faith and happiness to many other people.

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A few years ago my 28-year-old brother suddenly fell sick with a grave illness. He was in a coma for more than a month. During those long days the thought kept coming to

me that God had no right to afflict him that way. I rebelled against it.

Until then my life had revolved around friends, work and family. But I still felt unfulfilled. Something was lacking. I considered myself a practicing Catholic, but after my own fashion.

In the hospital I began praying to our Lady. I couldn't remember how to say the Rosary. So I just said "the first mystery" and prayed an Our Father, ten Hail Marys, and the Glory Be. Then "the second mystery," and so on. On one of those days, I found myself unexpectedly inside a church in front of a confessional. I started talking to the priest. When I came out, I had been transformed. From that moment, my life has taken a 180-degree turn.

God was looking for me. He found me, and here I am. Some time later I asked for admission to Opus Dei as a

supernumerary. Although I was afraid to take that step, it was the best decision I've ever made.

I am a lawyer in Salamanca, a city I like a lot. I'm married and have one child. That's my world. And I know I'm here for a reason: to love my husband and son, to help others and bring them to God.

I've often asked myself how I could help others where I am. And I found the answer in the people I meet in my work. For example, Estrella and her husband are penniless and he suffers from AIDS; they're homeless. Several friends and I found them a suitable place to stay and enough financial assistance to live decently. I remember how Estrella prayed every day to "my Jesus my life" and her joy on receiving Holy Communion after many years and a difficult life away from the faith.

"Many great things depend on whether you and I live as God wants," St. Josemaria says in *The Way*. How true! We have to do what we should and put ourselves into what we do. That's the lamp that began to guide my steps—at work, at home, everywhere. Since I started struggling to put God at the center of my life, I'm much calmer and happier, and accomplish a lot more. And "crazy" ideas come to me about telling others about it. I do so during coffee breaks with friends, at the bus stop with other mothers, and with people at work.

I try to ensure that everyone who comes to my law office leaves feeling encouraged. St. Josemaría said that we Christians should be "an intravenous injection in the bloodstream of society." As a lawyer, I try not only to defend my clients and resolve their disputes, but to listen and advise—and speak about

God. All this helps to sanctify me, and besides I have a good time.

On top of my desk I keep a small image of our Lady. Once, as a new client was leaving, she told me as I accompanied her to the door: "I'm at ease because you have a good guide"—referring to that picture—"to help you solve my problem." That gave me a chance to talk with her about some other things.

Another day, a couple came in seeking a divorce. They told me there were "insurmountable" problems and a lot of anger. We started to work on a contract to arrive at the terms, such as care and custody of the children, alimony, etc. After talking at length with me about these matters for several days, they came to the decision that it would be better to try to start over together. The husband asked me, "But you aren't interested in taking our money?"

Some time has now gone by, and they are still together.

I speak to clients about Confession, Holy Mass, marriage, etc. without apology or human respect, with the same naturalness as commenting on the weather, politics, or any other current topic. This has led to many new friendships. Some months ago a couple came to me for help regarding an inheritance. As we spoke about it and about life in general, they told me about their twenty years together and their two children, now grown, and mentioned that they had never married. Yesterday they invited me to their wedding. All of this gives me many reasons to thank God every day for letting me be his instrument in the lives of these people.

Another of my activities is moderating a radio program on legal matters. Its purpose is to give listeners accurate information, to

offer solutions for those who call in with problems, and to make it clear that lawyers see their clients as human beings who need assistance, and not simply as a source of income. Every possible topic comes up: euthanasia, marriage, neighborhood covenants, leases... A few days ago the topic was abortion. One listener located my office and brought me a sack of tomatoes from his garden in appreciation for the way I had handled the topic. How good they tasted!

My new outlook on life has also affected my family. We're learning that work, study, any effort is a means God has given us to grow in the human virtues that are essential if we are to gain a place in heaven after we die. And we're coming to understand that when God does anything it's for a reason.

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