

My Good Friend Isidoro

July 15 marked a new anniversary of the death in 1943 of the Venerable Servant of God Isidoro Zorzano. María José Salazar, from Peru, recounts the important role he has in her life.

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I first met Isidoro Zorzano eight years ago. He was in Heaven and I was here on earth. Can you make friends with a person from the “other world”? From my experience, I know

this is possible – thanks to the communion of saints.

I was speaking with a priest friend of mine, Father Antonio Ducay, who I first got to know as a professor at the University of Piura. I told him that I was worried about some financial and work-related problems. He said: “Ask Isidoro Zorzano for help.”

I knew who he was: one of the first members of Opus Dei, a strong support for Saint Josemaría Escrivá during the Spanish civil war. But I didn't know much more. I couldn't find his printed prayer card anywhere, but it was available online. I began praying it and the results were incredible. The difficulties I was going through not only disappeared, but turned into very positive situations for my family. I knew I had found a great intercessor.

After reading his biography, I even began to see him as a friend in Heaven: someone who was patient, understanding, humble and always willing to help.

Some time later, I wrote a letter to the then Prelate of Opus Dei, Bishop Javier Echevarría. I told him a lot of things, including my experience with Isidoro. I timidly asked him to send me some printed prayer cards since I couldn't find any in Peru. Don Javier asked someone to send me the prayer cards, and even included one with a relic, with a small piece of Isidoro's shirt!

In the neonatal ICU

When I was pregnant with my second child, I don't know why, but I became very afraid of losing him and sensed that something bad would happen. Faced with this fear, I turned right away to Isidoro: "I'm not going to worry about it any more.

You will take care of my baby, with the help of our Lady.”

Rafael Isidoro (he couldn't have any other name), was born very prematurely. For some reason, my placenta had stopped feeding him and there was no way for the doctor to notice this, since the problem occurred between one prenatal checkup and another, without any explanation. The hours of waiting in the neonatal ICU were eternal. We didn't know what would happen to my son Rafa; they wouldn't even let me see him. I just prayed, entrusting his life to Isidoro and our Lady.

Finally, my son managed to breathe on his own. When we were allowed to see him in the incubator, I didn't hesitate to tape Isidoro's prayer card to it so he would look after my baby. A nurse asked me who this man was (the pictures they see are usually of

priests or nuns, not lay people), and I told her a bit about his life.

Today, Rafael is 6 years old and is a wonderful child. After what happened at his birth, I decided that I would only “bother” Isidoro about problems related to my son. Since he was six months old, Rafael Isidoro has suffered from bronchial problems (now more under control, happily), and more than once we have ended up in the emergency room. Yet each crisis has been defused in ways I could never have imagined, thanks, I’m convinced, to the help of my good friend Isidoro from Heaven.

In Vallecás, a dream come true

My husband is Spanish. Therefore, when we manage to save enough, we travel to Huesca, Raul’s hometown. In December 2021, after several years, we spent Christmas there. To return to Peru we had to catch a

flight in Madrid to Lima. I told my husband I couldn't leave Spain without visiting the tomb of Isidoro, located in the parish of Saint Albert the Great, in Vallecas, a neighborhood in Madrid.

COVID-19 was still ravaging Spain and we didn't want to enter a subway car. But an uncle of mine offered to take us in his car, and I was finally able to visit my friend "in person."

Isidoro's remains are kept in a marble box that was smaller than I expected. Nearby are some pictures of him and information about his life. We spent as much time as we could there, praying with Cristina and Rafael Isidoro. Before leaving I took several of his prayer cards and rubbed them on the tomb.

I hope to return again, when the pandemic is over and I can spend as much time as I want praying there.

Since I first met Isidoro eight years ago, he has not left me alone for a moment, and I'm sure he never will.

Thanks to the communion of saints we can be friends with those who are in Heaven. Now I am asking God to give me the grace to be present at Isidoro's beatification.

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