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Everyday help from St Joseph

As we celebrate the feast of St Joseph on 19 March, we remember his important role in caring for the Holy Family, as patron of the Universal Church and of workers, and his intercession that is felt by many people in everyday life.

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When I was in Year 2, I remember the school chaplain suggesting that we say an Our Father to St Joseph

each day. For some reason unknown to me, I began to do this.

Fast forward to my last year of school, when it was getting close to my final exams. Worried that I wasn't studying hard enough, after mass I would stand in front of the statue of St Joseph at my parish and beg him to help me. He was a good worker after all, right? In silent St Joseph fashion, I didn't get much of a reply, but I hoped for the best.

The final exams arrived, and I still wasn't convinced that I was going to get into my desired course - Journalism. One of the supervisors was handing out random prayer cards after our last exam, and much to my surprise, I found that she had given me St Joseph. In the moment of seeing his image, I knew he must be looking out for me (in hindsight, I even realise that the supervisor's name was Lily – the flower that St

Joseph is often depicted with!) Sure enough, my marks were much better than I expected, and I got into the course of my choice.

This incident gave me a keen awareness of St Joseph's intercession in my life, and I started to go to him more often. I loved the things that I felt we had in common – he is often called 'St Joseph the Silent,' and while I can't profess to have his level of calm, I do prefer to fly under the radar than be in the spotlight. I loved that he was surrounded by people doing amazing things, but that his day to day path to holiness was simple and ordinary.

In 2011, I joined Opus Dei as a supernumerary. Often, for the day that they officially join, a person might choose a feast day that is special to them. Once I recognised that God was calling me to this vocation, I was frustrated to find that

there were no feast days of St Joseph coming up for months! So I joined on 1 November, the feast of All Saints (while being a little annoyed at St Joseph, because this just wasn't like him). But really, he had done it again – because six months later, the day that I would be admitted to Opus Dei, was 1 May – the feast of St Joseph the Worker.

A couple of years later, I was trying to find the right job after returning from six months overseas. Once again, I went to St Joseph, and when the interview was scheduled for his feast day, I knew I was being looked after. No surprise – I was told I got the job that very same day. I'd also prayed to St Joseph over the years for a good husband, and he went above and beyond in sending me a man that is better than I ever expected.

Perhaps his biggest help yet was just last year – the Year of St Joseph as

declared by Pope Francis. We were looking for a new home, something closer to the school that our eldest daughter had started attending. We sold the home where we were living quite quickly, but that left us with the stress of only having a limited few months to find and buy a new place. And this was all happening at a time when the market was absolutely crazy - auctions were getting record prices, and prices in the area we wanted were rapidly climbing away from what we could afford.

We were trying not to lose hope and in the midst of this, I started a 33-day consecration to St Joseph, to finish on his feast day, 19 March. In the consecration book, I read about a tradition where you write your intention on a piece of paper and place it under a statue of the sleeping St Joseph. Coincidentally, it was about this time that one of my best friends told me she had bought one

of these statues. She put my intention under the statue and, stressed as can be, the house search continued.

We were so drained at this point that I wasn't even attending house inspections anymore – my husband would go by himself. We were outbid time and again in auctions, so our only real hope was buying something off-market, without having to compete with many others. But even these were getting way too much interest!

One Saturday, my husband got a call about one such off-market property. Before seeing it he had sat in a church and told God, and St Joseph, that he wasn't very impressed with how this was all going. But they delivered just a few hours later – amazingly, this house came down to us against one other potential buyer and we got it! The location is amazing, literally five minutes from

our daughter's school. And of course, the date when we were asked to go to the bank and sign the loan was none other than 19 March, the feast of St Joseph.

Many a saint, from St Teresa of Avila to St Josemaria, have urged us to go to St Joseph. I certainly can witness to the fact that they knew what they were talking about.

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