

It's Not so Easy to Combine Family and Work

Vanesa Walter is a young French mother who finds ways to harmonize her family tasks and professional work.

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For me, Opus Dei has been a great support. It encourages me to keep looking for ways to care for my home and my outside work. It has taught me to pray, to carry out my daily duties with love for God and for

others--trying to love God's will, even if that's sometimes not so easy. This help is very good for me in struggling to fulfill the will of God, for that means striving to fulfill some important aspirations: making my husband and children happy while at the same time helping the people I work with.

I owe it all to St. Josemaria, whose magnificent way of writing and preaching contains lessons that are closely connected to the realities of life and show how to put them into daily practice. I consider him a father, a friend, and a counselor to whom I can go often to ask for help. I've learned from him almost everything that has to do with the spiritual side of life; before I met Opus Dei I knew very little about that. For example: I thought the Eucharist was no more than a symbol and that to pray meant reciting long formulas. One of his

sayings has especially impressed me: "Do what you ought, and give it all you've got."

I try to devote my best energies to my family, giving them the time each one needs. When I get home at 6:30 in the evening (4:30 on two days of the week), I make an effort to smile at my children and forget about the problems I've had to take care of at work in much less time than most managers devote to them.

From the start, I've had to develop my firm from the ground up; I wanted it to accomplish something useful under my own direction (being my own boss). It was an opportunity to put into practice what I learned while working on my degree in economics.

My original intention was to create a service association that would help people find ways to harmonize work inside and outside the home. I soon

realized that the first condition for my success would be to help others who already work in this field to improve their personal preparation.

That led me to refocus my project toward updating my professional formation. After doing some research, I think I can freely offer that formation to people who work in the home. The primary aim at present is the formation of baby sitters, domestic employees, and persons who care for the elderly.

This includes everything that has to do with running a home and taking care of children (accident prevention, safety, reinforcing parental authority, assessing their teaching competence, etc.). We are developing something I think will be noteworthy in this field.

This is why I have to make the best use of my time; it isn't so simple to see how family and profession come

together. Sometimes there is a good fit: By first attending to the children and caring for the home, I can work with no sense of guilt, trying to be serene both at home and at work.

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