

events

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新聞摘要

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Opus Dei Information Office in Southeast Asia 主業會東南亞區資訊社

7 Shiu Fai Terrace,
2B United Mansion, Hong Kong
香港肇輝台七號騰黃閣2B
Tel/電話 (852) 257 273 31
Fax/傳真(852) 257 324 70

website: www.opusdei.org



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Escrivá de Balaguer

不要荒廢你的生命」

這標題是聖施禮華所著的一本靈修思考隨身書《道路》的開場白，此書翻譯了超過四十五種語言，銷售超過五百萬本。2009年的九月二十九日將是《道路》發行的七十週年紀念日

2009/10/01

不要荒廢你的生命，
要成為有用的人，
燃燒出一道熊熊火焰，
以你信德和愛德的光亮照耀前方。（《道路》，1）

這一點，是在由聖施禮華所撰寫的其他靈修思考中的第一個寶藏，當時他大約三十歲左右。「那些是在你耳邊說的悄悄話、如朋友、兄弟、父親般對你坦承相告的…好使一些想法能伴你左右，去打動你；如此一來，你將能改善你的生活，開始展開祈禱和愛的道路。」（《道路》，序言）

是對天主的愛，和對所有人靈的愛，促使他寫了這本《道路》。此書已在現代基督徒文學中，留下了不可磨滅的印記：以四十五種語言，銷售了五百萬本。



《道路》首度發行是在1943年，當時的書名為“Consideraciones Espirituales”（靈修思考）。到了1939年的第二版加長版，此書被賦予決定性的書名“Camino”（西班牙文，道路）。在幾個月內，第一版已銷售一空，第二版也遭逢類似的「命運」。英譯本的第一版是在出版的幾年後，也就是1954年，在都柏林初露曙光。而中譯本則是在1970年的一月，在台灣正式發行，而且自那時起不斷校訂，現在已發行第三版了。

革新教導

這本書匯集的簡要忠告和建議，是從聖經上摘要的段句、從1925年聖施禮華作為一位年輕神父起，對話交談間的片段、信件中的文



句和個人的經驗。在這本書撰寫的那幾年，他大量周旋於馬德里大學的學生們，和工人們之間。是這些學生們激發此書的誕生，因為他了解到他們對靈修指導的需要和渴望。

《道路》是深度基督徒靈修經驗的結晶，旨在鼓勵眾人去愛天主，並依靠天主而生活，在他們所有世俗性的興趣和活動中，都注入基督徒的格調。「你有成聖的義務。對，你也有！誰說這不過是神父和修會會士的專有工作。我主曾對所有人——任何人都不能例外。說過：「你們該是成全的，如同我天父是成全的一樣。」（《道路》，291）

當《道路》首度問世時，像這類的講道不只是未能預期意料到的——這根本是革新的教導。對許多人而言，《道路》中的字句是個啟示，使他們更留意到身為基督徒的尊嚴，還有他們在這世上所負有的神聖使命。

這本書其中最引人入勝的是它直率、對話形式和個人化、充滿人性的特色。就如同羅馬觀察報 L'Osservatore Romano 一位評論家曾寫道：「施禮華蒙席寫出了一本超越曠世鉅作的著作，他是直接由心去寫這本書。那些由短要字句所組而成的《道路》——就如同一串珍珠——字字直搗人心。」

選定書名：《道路》

聖施禮華所選的書名，對那些了解他精神理念的人而言並不意外。1970年12月31日在羅馬，在一次默想中他親口說出了「道路」這一詞對他而言所附有的深遠含意：

「我很喜歡「道路」這一詞，因為在天主眼中，我們都是步行旅者。我們是旅客、旅行者，打從出世的那天便開始朝向我們的創造者前行。一個準備動身旅行的人有著清晰的終點、目標：他想要從一地到另一地。也因此，他會盡其所能安全地抵達終點：他不會蹉跎光陰、他會避免岔路和可能會導向兇猛野獸或懸崖峭壁未經勘查的道路。我的孩子們，毅然決然地邁步向前吧！我們必須盡可能地留心關於天主和人類靈的事，一如其他人留心於世上瑣事般——我們需要渴望成聖…」

很清楚地《道路》中的所有要點，旨在幫助讀者們去堅定不移地步武著師傅的芳蹤。

「我的朋友，願恆常地閱讀此書能幫助你去導正、鞏固你的道路。」（聖施禮華，1945年西班牙文版第三刷引言）



我的祿母和「道路」

桑雀絲 (Azucena Olivar Sanchez) 來自西班牙阿斯杜瑞亞思 (Asturias) 的漁村拉司翠絲 (Lastres)，對我們這群小鬼而言她永遠是我們的「祿母」。

2009/11/01

她曾經是我們的祿母，也是媽媽的得力助手。媽媽一手攬起照顧九個小孩，和馬德里的家，而每當父親到墨西哥出差時，她還得兼顧父親生意的重責大任。

我的祿母，是個充滿了無比喜樂的人，我對她最初的記憶是她30歲剛到我家的時候，她身材美好、擁有一頭美麗的黑髮及和藹可親的笑臉。在家裡她總是特別照顧最年幼的孩子，而且說話很幽默風趣，她有說不完的故事、寓言及童話，她一點一滴訴說的這些故事，在我的成長過程帶給我很大的影響。

幾年後，有一次我哥哥納秋 (Nacho) 邀請我參加主業會中心辦的郊遊活動，我回拒了，因為我不對爬瓜達拉瑪山脈時飢寒交迫的感覺抱有任何嚮往。不過其實真正的原因是我害怕有人跟我談加入主業會的聖召，這是不想討論的話題。祿母她總是站在我這一邊，叫哥哥不要煩我，哥哥總會聽她的話，因為我們都很尊敬及愛她，而我很感激她一直保護著我。

對於她的體貼；仁慈終於有機會讓我回報她：就在那時候她決定要學習認字，並請我當她的老師。她從來沒學過讀書寫字，她並不覺得有這個需要，因為她一直能把事情處理得很好，而我也從未聽說她被誰欺騙過。但她卻突然決定自己必須要學會閱讀，我開她玩笑地告訴她，就算她這麼聰明，但一輩子仍然是無知的。

她曾笑著告訴我，小時候她很少到學校去，因為那時候她家裡非常的窮困，她得去工作賺取些微薄的錢貼補家用。她去過學校幾次，老師覺得她很聰明機靈，都會找她當跑腿，而她也喜歡做那些差事，勝過被關在教室裡。

但這一次她竟完全沒提起她從前對任何書的不感興趣的事，當她抓到第一個機會拿出一本書要我教她如何閱讀時，這本書正是由聖施禮華所寫的《道路》。我並不感到訝異，因為她本來就是一位很虔誠的人。此外，《道路》這本書總是在我家的每個角落出現，有些人會拿來默想，不過我個人不是很了解這本書。她還記得一些字母及音節，這讓我們能夠馬上透過這基礎開始讀第一句：「希望你的生命不是一個荒蕪的生命…」她之前從未讀過這些，



然而當我們開始讀這句子時，她竟轉向我，開始向我解說其中的含意。

她自然而然地告訴我，我們該如何成為一個有用的人，去幫助別人過有意義、充實的生命，她還解釋給我聽什麼是使徒工作，比我過去聽到的更加清楚，我真的驚訝極了！不過那只是個開始，過沒多久，她已經能夠非常流暢地把《道路》裡其他的九百九十八句，一字不漏地讀完，並能一條條加以解釋給我聽。

我們幾乎每天都會撥出一些時間上課，她對我一點也不感歉意，而我也不感到驚訝，那段時間成為靈修和默想的課程，祿母就像是教會的一位教父，透過她的生活經驗很自然生動地訴說著耶穌的生平，而不像其他人只是轉述他們所學過的。偶爾我會取笑她的智慧，或以開玩笑的口吻跟她爭辯她所說的某事。儘管我們的這些課，是在馬德里家中祿母的小房間裡面所上的，但事實上她所說給我聽的，就好像是些超凡入聖的事，讓我留下了深刻的印象，而這些似乎都無法以人性眼光來解釋。那些大師級的課徹底改變了我。感謝祿母，我開始有一個真正的內修生活，我開始很認真的祈禱，雖然我發現那不是件容易的事。不過耶穌為我降生成為了一位活生生的人，一個我可以跟他談話並會聆聽我訴說每天生活點滴的人。

我不再拒絕去我哥哥請我去的主業會中心，當她們跟我講有關聖召的事時，我馬上便接受了。我肯定自己已經找到了那避風港，也就是我最終的目的地。會是誰第一個會聽到我所做出的決定，我心中絕無第二人選。

那一年的一月十二日，當時祿母在廚房忙著，自從我們長大後，她不再需要照顧我們，反倒成為一個超強的廚師。當我告訴她有關聖召的決定後，她並沒有如我預期般地感到意外，她微笑著，就像是位漁村的村民般對我說：「你衝刺得像隻塘鵝哩！」塘鵝是一種像海鷗的鳥類，常盤旋在海面上，當看到魚的時候，會馬上俯衝下來抓住牠。

那一刻，我們兩個人都互相攤牌了。她學習閱讀的理由，是有人建議她能夠每天做些靈修上的閱讀。透過我哥哥姐姐們她認識了主業會，並且已經在我加入之前不久已成為會員了。

幾年後，祿母在天主的恩寵內離開了我們，在她有生之年她深厚的靈修生活及幽默感對我們家的每一個人都是極大的助益。她帶領了許多人去認識了天主，每個人對她的信仰智慧的深度都感到不可思議。而對我而言，當我們第一次一起讀《道路》她的智慧就已經顯露給我了。



Alejandro Llano

「我，成為聖人嗎？」

伊莎貝拉(Isabella Lau)是一位寡婦也是三個小孩的母親告訴我們，當基督進入她的生命時，她是如何改變的。

2009/10/17

「我，成為聖人嗎？」這問題在我經常去主業會的中心上道理課、辦告解和神修指導不久後，開始在我腦海中浮現。這幾乎是我想像不到的，因為絕大多數我所知道的聖人都是神父、修女或殉道者，而且大都活在也死去於幾世紀前。



我的生活在那時是無止盡地追求崇高的人性和世俗性的目標。然而追尋那些短暫的事物並不能填滿我破碎的空杯。我是個主日天主教友，在我方便時履行我的信仰，幾乎沒有做出任何犧牲，只奉獻給天主嘴皮子的服務。

轉捩點

史帝芬是我的丈夫，他在2005年我們十三週年結婚紀念剛過不久，就因為心臟病毒感染而突然過世了。深受震驚和嚴重受創，我得要面對孤寂和令人生畏的扶養工作--三個分別是三歲、六歲和八歲的孩子。我們還有那麼多未完成的計畫，在聖經箴言19：21說「人在心中儘可策劃多端，實現的卻是上主的計畫」，為我留下深刻印象。那是我人生最低潮的時刻，經歷了悲傷的黑夜、恐懼、怨恨、罪惡感和混亂不清。

感謝朋友們和我不認識的那些人的祈禱，包括許多主業會的女士們，有很多人在那時我都還不認識。天主讓我看到在我人生中，與祂一起的悲傷和痛苦是如此地不同。漸漸地我找到了重新力量再次開始，而且幫助同處在類似情況下的人。

我突破了我的安全地帶並開始更認真地活出我的信仰。訂下固定的每天默禱時間，盡我所能去過度敬規範的生活，這幫助我更接近天主。特別是聖體聖事和默禱，帶给了我力量，更能面對每天在工作和家庭的挑戰。

超越成功

我在健康食品公司做行銷工作，需要經常在亞洲出差。想要均衡兼顧家庭和工作、試著當個好母親、女兒、員工、同事和朋友，若不是有主業會的教

導，我會瘋掉的。愛天主和讓天主愛你。沒有了愛，沒有任何事是可能的。

我享受我的工作也努力去做好它。但是當我的動機是出於人性觀點，像是想要得到讚賞時，當我的投資沒有得到可見的成功，我便會感到沮喪悲慘。現在，我試著以愛去做這一切、給天主光榮，因而那焦點不再是我。

去年，我帶領的一項計畫，儘管所有事都精心計畫也全力以赴了，但並沒有達到被高度預期的結果。不過取代那被擊敗和憤怒的感覺，我祈禱說：「主啊，祢知道我已經盡力了，但是如果祢不想要那份光榮，我也不需要。」然後，我繼續努力下去，因為最終，重要的是天主對我的工作、我的努力的想法，並非我希望得到的結果。

最有力的武器

當我遇到困難和在職場遇到不太容易相處的人時，我一整天曾因遇到這些不愉快的事而被破壞殆盡。現在，我已經學會去到我的護守天使那裡請求幫助，去和那個人的護守天使談談。事實上，我應該感謝這些人，因為如果沒有了他們，我可能不會這麼熱切地祈禱，也不會如此經常求助於護守天使。

我的孩子們也學到向護守天使求助。每當我在一個擁擠的地方能找到停車位時，傑若米亞會高興地宣稱他早就向護守天使祈求了。這雖然是件小事但是當他在未來面臨到更嚴重的事情時，也會自然而然地如此做。另一個晚上，娜塔莉雅(現在已經六歲了)說：「媽咪，我剛唸了三次聖母經--一次是跟我的護守天使一起唸，一次是為了妳要祈求的，還有一次是為了卡門、傑若米亞、妳還有我的皮膚狀況。」祈禱對我們這個家的所有人來說是最有力的「武器」。

通常我的孩子們會為了小事情爭吵，不過也幾乎在同時就言歸於好了；他們會保證要乖乖的，可是就在幾分鐘內，他們又惹麻煩了。當我結束一天的工作回家時，最容易發生的事就是失去我的耐心。我習慣拿出我的「武器」--棍子，好能得到立即的效過，不過現在我已經不這麼做了。

在一次避靜過後，我回到家中告訴他們我不會再打他們，可是我們得同意一些家裡的共同家規，好能維持家中井然有序。他們高興的不得了，不過很快發現到，這新的懲罰事實上對他們而言更加「疼痛」，因為這幾天，他們的處罰是得要放棄一項他們最喜歡的活動，像是電視或是電腦遊戲。這個好處是他們能自己決定如果他們要守規矩或是要調皮搗蛋，然後他們要為自己的行為負責。

我深信成聖是每個人都能力所及的，包括我在內。這不是很美妙嗎？

星期六早上的教理班

我開始在一個被稱為「14公里」的貧民窟協助教理班，深知這區內大多數人都存有負面態度… 幸好過了兩三次之後，他們一見到我們也就不再擲石了…

2009/11/08

馬徹羅·薩拔

大專學生

烏拉圭，蒙特維達奧

當我們還在就讀中學四年級時，主業會Flama男生中心的人問我們有沒有興趣去幫助一個堂區的慕道班。這座教堂座落於蒙特維達奧，是個貧窮的鄉下小地方。我們第一個反應就是覺得太難了吧，因為我們當中很多人都習慣在星期六早上睡個懶覺。對我們來說，去幫忙便要「犧牲」掉整個星期六上午與周公的相會了。



為了準備教理課，我們開始在上課前一天相約見面，討論課程內容。我們從沒有教過書，他們是我們的第一批學生。也因為深知學生們專注力不夠，我們的課得要準備得盡善盡美。

Flama中心的人仔細地向我們解釋教理班的重要性，也告訴我們聖施禮華尤其熱愛講授天主教要理。主業會成立初期，我們的創辦人常帶領一批年青人，一塊兒到馬德里外的城鎮，向當地人講解基督徒教理。

我首先協助在班塔維理(Punta Rieles)的教理班，然後到了烏士加拉維亞(Euskalerria)，最後是一個被稱為「14公里」(14Km)的地方。在班塔維里，修女們讓我們在修院旁的空房子上課。又因為班塔維里隣近「14公里」，於是我們也邀請那地方的男孩子們一起來上課。哪知就在第二個星期，那些從「14公里」來的男孩，躲進修院的儲物間，偷吃了修女們做的水果果凍。為了處理這問題，我們只好分組授課，將較有秩序的一羣留在修院的空房間上課，而「14公里」的那羣小搗蛋們便安排為一組，我們的教理班便開始分成兩組上課。

「14公里」是個貧民窟。居民棲身的地方是用枝條和破布搭建而成的，馬路

對街又是一個垃圾棄置區，不用說那裡的衛生條件非常不良。深知這區內大多數人都存有負面態度，我們不得不費一番唇舌去解釋清楚我們的意向，然後他們才讓我們在那裏講課。當地很多人，甚至是已領洗的，會去非天主教團體或一些教派所辦的主日學，我們很難說服他們去按著天主教信仰過日常生活。



猶記我們五個人在該區上課的第一天，我們先將孩子以年齡分組。在沒有選擇的情況下，我們只可在垃圾棄置區附近的空地上課。一開始我們和他們一起踢足球，因為裁判沒有看到其中一方犯規，在上半場賽後，約裘(Juancho)和安東尼(Anthony)為此打起架來。然後他們開始要趕我們走，並向我們扔石頭，大聲叫喊：「不要再回來了！」。這事件令我們記憶起很多年前，聖施禮華在前往馬德里國王醫院路上也曾被石頭襲擊，只因他當時穿了司鐸的長袍！

幸好再過兩三次之後，他們一見到我們也就不再擲石了。賴天主豐厚的恩寵，和我們付出更多的努力，孩子們為初領聖體作準備，他們中有些終能在感恩祭中第一次領受聖體聖事。

事隔多年，我們深深體會到透過教理班，孩子們能獲益良多：這些課加深了他們在信德和道德的觀念上，也讓他們終生不忘。在他這年齡，我們可以為他們做的應是教導他們有關基督的真理，而不只是單單解決他們的就業或居住問題。

我想強調的是，在深加反省後，我想我們這群授課的才是真正被堅強起來的一羣。從孩子身上，我們學到很多，也深深感受到那份想要向未知者宣講基督教導的迫切性，特別是我們實際體驗到真正的貧窮，並和他們一起經歷那痛苦。凡此種種經歷，都觸動了我們奮發帶領自己的國家向前邁進。

此文節錄自2002年由Maria Magdalena Pareja Silveira主編，蒙特維達奧出版的《聖施禮華與烏拉圭人民》“St Josemaría & the Uruguayans”

「天主把孩子交托給我們，祂期待我們準備他們成為一個獨立、自由、有能力應付生活的人。故此，教育並不光只是要去打擊缺陷，而是要增加各自的素質。」

一切視乎優次

佛羅倫斯和丹尼斯·庫爾圖瓦是一對居住在巴黎的已婚夫婦，有六個孩子。為家庭而言，最好是能活出良好的基督徒精神，然而，每年暑假後，準備回校的情況往往是家中的一場小革命。

2009年 9月21日



開學有時會為家長們構成點壓力。你是怎麼應付的呢？

佛羅倫斯：雖然我們不能避免在最後一分鐘仍是匆匆忙忙的，但我們試圖去做點預備，讓改變不致太激烈。在假期結束前，我們會嘗試恢復上學的節奏，特別是調整睡覺和起床的時間。還有，我們通常會在假期結束前數天來個特別的慶祝活動，因為學年的開始往往是一個大轉變。

你們有否想過課外活動的問題？

有的，我們會一同挑選，同時依據孩子們的喜好和我們的能力。我和丈夫很多時會談到有關每個孩子的事情，例如：我們會鼓勵比較害羞的那個去參加一些藝術性的活動；鼓勵有點自私的那個去參加一項團隊運動。這不只是為使孩子們更「忙碌」，而是要培育他們。如果某種活動沒有教育意義或它會破壞家庭中其餘正常的運作，我們便會中止它。

通常，我們較喜歡只把孩子們的這些活動安排在週末，因為那樣我們可以見到對方、互相傾談和聆聽... 但如果這些活動變成了家庭的負擔，比如說那場足球比賽會佔用了整個星期日，那是不值得的。作為一項規則，也容許某情度的靈活性，每個孩子會有兩項課外活動：一項運動性質的和另一項則是較知性的活動。

作為一位父母你們有甚麼目標？

作為一位母親，每個孩子出生時，我都對自己說：我要幫助他們成長，讓他們能正面地回應天主對他們所期許的一切。天主把孩子交托給我們，祂期待我們

準備他們成為一個獨立、自由、有能力應付生活的人。故此，教育並不光只是要去打擊缺陷，而是要增加各自的素質，澆灌好的植物好讓它們的數量比雜草要繁多。這一切都有助我們在新一年裏更集中我們的精力。

你是怎樣輔導他們的功課的呢？

我們嘗試從一開始就在這方面有所要求，對比較聰明的那些孩子也是如此。加強他們的意志力是重要的一環，這樣能讓每個孩子都盡其所能，做到最好。每當他們步上正軌時，便可讓他們自處，否則就會變得很困難，或許我會說，是不可能。家長在開始時要很細心注意，當漸見成果時，可做的便不多了。

對於主業會為青年人提供的活動，你認為怎樣？

作為父母，我們知道，有三個環節影響着一個孩子的教育：家長、學校和朋友。因此，尤其在青春期間，必須至少有其中一個環節能與我們的教育計劃一致地互相配合。如果學校有良好的環境，也許那便很足夠。可是，現今的環境似乎並不理想。

因此，我們鼓勵我們的孩子去參加主業會統籌的青少年小組，並讓他們去認識它的精神，而小組的氛圍也非常好。我們邀請他們去嘗試參與，之後，便隨他們自己去決定。

丹尼斯，作為父親，你在新學年之始扮演甚麼角色？

丹尼斯：夫妻間在有關孩子的問題上互相溝通是非常重要的。我會把日程擠壓一下，讓自己能早點回家與妻子在一起，並解決孩子們的問題。為他們這些青少年或兒童的困難提出一些合情理的解決方法是必須的。家長可以互相交換意見，這樣也很有幫助。不要讓任何事妨礙他們的教育。

如果你有很多的工作，那你會怎麼辦？

這是真的。有時人會被誘惑，會留在辦公室工作到很晚，讓老闆看到你，或是清理一下隔天的工夫，以消滅下一天的壓力... 而沒選擇早點回家，去說說當天發生的事，輔導孩子們的功課，或為較年幼的孩子們洗澡。有時候，你其實並不需要留在辦公室。但你應時常撫心自問：現在，哪裏更需要我，這裏還是在家裏？然後誠懇地作答。

聖施禮華曾說：兒童是我們最大的資產，你必須做好一切準備，去照顧這珍寶——要放棄一個晉升的機會或是在工作上受到某些批評。這一切視乎你的優次。

成為哈薩克人

克勞蒂亞·瓦布納從來沒想到她會生活在一個遠離她的祖國智利的地方。她在十年前抵達阿拉木提 (Almaty) 開始主業會的工作。「成為哈薩克人」是一個漫長的過程，不過現在她已經覺得是半個哈薩克人了…

克勞蒂亞回憶著：「有些人具有冒險精神，不過那可不是我。當我被邀請去哈薩克斯坦時，我正幸福快樂地在義大利生活。那時我覺得這是不可能的事！不過，我想，『好吧，我們就一起去吧！』」

「入鄉隨俗成為哈薩克人」是一個包括文化、身體和心理的改變進程，是需要開闊的心胸和靈活的調適性。哈薩克斯坦是一個游牧國家，130多個民族和睦相處，融合東方和蘇聯文化（他們先是受沙皇，然後受共產黨統治）。

「對我來說，一切都不一樣：食物、氣候、人們的溝通方式、人們非常保護他們的隱私，但仍然開放和熱情。」

這裡大部分人口是回教徒，但也有俄羅斯東正教徒。天主教徒算是少數，所以自然而然，傳播福音的過程開始於與他人的交談。克勞蒂亞說：「人們幾乎沒有宗教文化，雖然他們認為在他們的生活中需要天主，但卻害怕談論這些話題。不過聖施禮華的精神教導漸漸使人理解。而其關鍵就在於，人們感到無比自由，他們接近信仰，因為他們自願地希望如此。」

若望保祿二世的請求

克勞蒂亞說：「主業會來到哈薩克斯坦，是2001年來到現在的首都阿斯塔納 (Astana) 的教宗若望保祿二世的請願。」

確是如此，透過教宗若望保祿二世的建議，在1994年哈薩克斯坦主教找主業會監督相談，因為在該國他需要一個著重於教育和青年工作的機構。這請求在1997年成真了：第一個主業會成員抵達了哈薩克斯坦的第二大



「人們漸漸了解到，他們的所做所為，都能具有超凡的意義。」



與大學生們在雪中漫步

首都阿拉木提。

當克勞蒂亞和她的同伴們在1998年抵達哈薩克斯坦時，去找個棲身之所和找份工作是首要之事。當她找到了一份教英語的工作後，克勞蒂亞開始學習該國的兩種官方語言：俄文和源於土耳其語的哈薩克語。

克勞蒂亞說：「我開始在KIMEP教授英語，那是所位在阿拉木提的商學院，是為預備社會新鮮人在新興經濟市場打拼的其中一所商學院先驅。現在，我們都有不同的工作，三名年輕的成員將開始他們的大學生涯。」

計畫與夢想

目前進行中的主要使徒工作計畫是成立餐飲服務的訓練中心。她解釋到：「我們想要幫助他們去了解家中的服務和工作對社會而言是很重要的，因為在多年的共產主義統治之下，這工作不被賦予任何價值，除非是為了某些特殊場合境況。」現在，他們正籌措資金，並等待建築許可準備開始動工。

在過去10年中，這些主業會成員們一直從人性和社會的角度關心著婦女們的培訓，歡迎開放給社會各階層的人士，目的是傳播良好的家庭價值觀念和社會倡議。



因教宗若望保祿二世明確地請求，主業會來到了哈薩克斯坦。

至於使徒工作方面，克勞蒂亞解釋說，「是通過友誼；當他們看到我們如何生活，他們開始對天主和我們所做工作的產生興趣。我們並未強壓，但我們的朋友們開始感受到她們的生活似乎缺少些什麼，還有也了解到她們所做的一切，都能有超凡的意義。」

在秘魯安地斯高崗上

Enrique Pelach主教是首位聖十字架司鐸會的司鐸。他騎在馬背上，沿著秘魯曲折崎嶇的山路前行，把成千上萬的男女帶到天主跟前。

2009/07/27

Pelach神父於1957年抵達秘魯卡亞俄港口（Callao）。他和另外四位教區司鐸一起前往秘魯照顧姚又司（Yauyos）的新教區，那是教宗庇護十二世新近成立並委託給主業會照料的教區。從那時起直至2007年7月19日他逝世之日，Pelach神父都一直留守在秘魯。



當時，他還是一位年輕的司鐸，在羅馬完成了他的學業，他遇到了聖施禮華並與他成為朋友。不久以後，他便成了首位要求加入聖十字架司鐸會的司鐸，那是聖施禮華專為神職人員而創立，在本質上與主業會合一的組織。



教宗保祿六世委任Pelach神父為阿班凱（Abancay）主教，他於1968年7月21日起執掌該教區的主教座堂。2007年7月21日，他於同一主教座堂舉殯。現任主教依斯多·薩拿（Isidro Sala）在他的講道詞中指出：「Pelach主教的心雖然已在世上停止跳動，但它並沒有停止去愛，因為這份大「愛」——即他對天主和人類的愛——將永不止息。」

現任阿班凱主教回憶起Pelach主教時指出他曾花很長時間騎在馬背上，穿梭於姚又司和萬諾徹利（Huarochiri）之間的山嶺。這些都是他開展使徒工作和福傳之旅：提供教理講授，聽告解，主持彌撒聖祭，探訪貧窮家庭及病人。

薩拿主教說：「身為聖十字架司鐸會的首位司鐸，他忠誠地幫助主業會擴展，並開拓出一條新路徑。他決心以其身為司鐸和主教的職務追求成聖。正如他所說：『在主業會中，我們找到最好的生活和安息之所。』」

他又補充：「在艱難的時刻」，他曾接受聖施禮華的「建議和鼓勵去成立一所專為培育本地司鐸而設的教區神學院，並因而結出了豐碩的果實。」

薩拿主教說他的前任「對群眾極其憐憫」，以致他「成立許多社會服務機構，如老人院，並得到赤足加爾默羅修會的莎蓮娜院母（Mother Celina）的幫助。他用自己的汽車集合街上露宿的乞丐。為照顧麻瘋病人和最窮苦的病人，他建立了聖女德蘭醫療中心，並創辦了醫療診所，又為學生們建宿舍。」阿班凱主教接著說：「他做了這一切，然而他卻追隨聖施禮華的座右銘：『隱藏和消失，好使耶穌的光芒四射。』」



秘魯大主教璜·路易士·西彼阿尼樞機（Cardinal Juan Luis Cipriani）於2007年8月2日在El Comercio報章中發表了一篇文章。文中指出：「他對貧苦大眾的愛充滿了福音的摯誠：你必需到訪阿班凱便能知道Enrique靈魂的偉大之處。」



西彼阿尼樞機在文章中也強調他那份「能移山倒海的進取才能和直率的個性」。「他把成千上萬，不同年齡及來自社會各階層的男女帶到天主跟前。無論他是騎在馬背上或是騎在騾背上，在一萬二千尺以上的安地斯山區作福傳之旅，或是在對一名小孩微笑，在照顧一名垂死的人，還是在低聲歌頌他所跋涉的山峰的美景，他仍然是同一個人。他有一顆純潔的靈魂，清澈而又崇高，熱熾地燃燒着對天主和人類的愛情。」

對樞機而言，「他視教理講授為一項非常迫切的任務，從其不朽著作《Pelach-Kunher教理手冊》中可反映出他這一理念，此書已售出超過十萬本。另外，他也提供了另一工具書《祈禱與歌詠手冊》（Devocionario Rezar y Cantar），為我們在安地斯山區數以千計的「農戶」兄弟姐妹而言，這本書十分有用。」

活著就是生命的價值

1991年，主業會神父路易士莫亞在一宗交通意外中脊椎破裂，喪失了自頸椎以下的知覺和活動能力。自此，他生活的一切起居，幾乎要完全需要依賴別人。

2009/11/15

莫神父現任納瓦拉大學建築學院的牧靈司鐸。他住在邦不隆那省，從他的屋內你可以感受得到那些照顧他的人對他付出的愛。當你進到他房間時，通常會發現他在用那特製的電腦回覆電郵，或更新他的網頁www.fluvium.org。

我們都需要感受被愛

自從意外發生以後，18年來生活起居都要依靠別人照顧的他強烈地斷言：「每個人都需要有一個溫馨的環境，讓他能感受到被愛，無論是患病或健康者、孩童或成年人，是否需要依賴輪椅。我們都需要感受到來自他人的體諒和幫助，我們都有感覺、都有顆心，會因別人的好消息而感到高興，也會因他們的哭泣而感到哀慟；動物是不會哭泣或歡笑的，只有人才享有這種能力。」



路易士莫亞神父在其當本堂神父之建築學校內

「一個時常感受到愛和被愛的人是不可能自自殺傾向的。感受到自己為至親和週邊人所愛護和需要是很重要的，這種愛的感覺是能夠幫助和支持他，使他能夠繼續向前邁進的。雖然這並不代表身體所承受的不適、煩惱、痛楚不會帶來負面情緒，但人是需要努力振作去贏得喜樂，去多想別人，好能將自己的苦痛奉獻給天主。」

只是失掉了九牛一毛

莫神父便是這個自強不息和努力振作的例子，很多人看見他活出的尊嚴都敬佩不已。他甚至在某個場合中說他感到自己所失去的，只是像「九牛一毛」。

「我不可以讓自己將不幸遇上交通意外而受苦的負面情緒，不斷反覆地縈迴於腦海。我知道我必需繼續工作和履行我的司鐸職務。」

也因此他沒有浪費任何時間，手術後便隨即恢復工作。「手術後，我繼續教授教理班和擔任納瓦拉大學建築學院的牧靈司鐸，以及和其他司鐸們合作，一起為學生做牧民工作。」

他樂觀的秘訣

正如圖中所見，莫神父是需要靠特製的輪椅活動的。「我遇上了一宗嚴重影響

我活動能力的意外，但這並不算是甚麼大不了的事情。」

「雖然每天要面對這事實並不容易，但是最重要的是我知道我是天主的兒子，祂愛我還有永遠都不可能會給我任何壞的事情。」

「如果是天主的旨意容許這發生在我身上的意外是壞的，那麼天主便是殘忍的，就天主而言，這是不可能的；天主是美好的，祂給我的一切都是為我和其他人的益處。所以我當作只是失去祂給我的萬千寵愛中的其中極少的一點；況且祂源源不絕地繼續賜給我一切。或者我們很少仔細想想我們到底是誰，和我們為人的價值，天主使我們享有人的位格，這便是身為人類的尊貴之處。而人之尊貴，並不在於他們的活動能力。很多動物的身手比較起我們更是敏捷和快速，但它們並沒有理解和愛的力量，也無法在天堂享有永恆。」

要避免自怨自艾

以他多年“駕駛”輪椅的經驗，他曾被邀請向那些與他遭遇相若的朋友們演講。

「我勸勉他們不要墮入負面和消極的情緒中，不要一直去想都是這場蠢意外，帶來一連串不幸…不要自暴自棄，整天自怨自艾地沉溺在痛苦和哀傷，心想我有多不幸、我再也不能做這或那…他們要遠離這些惡性循環思想。」

「相反地，我鼓勵他們去工作，要積極些，要為自己訂下一個生活計劃表，不要以為這些活動只是用來“消磨時間”或分散注意力。我勸他們要利用他們仍然擁有的去謀福祉；還有很多事情是可以做的，他們怎可能無所事事？要是想不出來，叫他們聯絡我，我一定有適合的工作給他們。」

要珍惜你所擁有的

他同時亦鼓勵那些在意外中受害人的家人和那些照顧他們的人。

「能夠讓他們了解自己在家中的價值，能帶給他們很大的幫助。那的確是一件瑰寶。它不但促使他們去為別人服務，去珍惜生命、去付出愛與被愛，更令他們在處事時，更為人性化和更懂得體諒別人；我亦常勸告他們要肩負責任，並以行動去愛那些需要自己幫助的人。他們應該清楚地知道這一點是比任何事情來得重要。」

這些就是莫神父藉自己的奉獻和堅毅的精神做來教導我們。



經聖施禮華代禱獲得之恩惠

我不再抽煙

我今年五十四歲。一直以來我都嘗試戒煙，但不成功。直到兩年前，我向聖施禮華祈求，藉他的代禱，我終於打了一場勝仗！多謝你，聖施禮華！

班諾·拿波沙爾，法國

2009年9月4日

聖施禮華給予我們一家人莫大的幫助

他對我的丈夫、子女以及我本人——為人妻和人母的——都給予幫助，我想在此做個見證。我的丈夫已失業了一段時間，聖施禮華幫助他覓得一份工作。在子女的學業上，他也施援手。而我既為人母又為人妻，他則助我實現全家旅行的願望。這是我家多年以來未有過的喜事。接觸到有關聖施禮華的事蹟是2009年5月才開始的，在這麼短的時間里，他為我們求獲無數恩典。為此我想表達衷心的感謝。



卡斯達蘭奴，委內瑞拉

2009年7月

重新走在一起！

我們有一對已婚的朋友，最近鬧分居并正在辦理離婚手續。我們向聖施禮華祈求，希望他們打消離婚的念頭，他俯聽了我們的祈禱；如今他們又重新走在一起了。

路易斯，意大利

2009年7月

在沒有作弊情況下我考獲優等成績！

藉著聖施禮華的代禱，我的祈求得到俯允。我本應將此事早告訴主業會。2005年9月，我參加一個高級商業課程考試。在赴考途中，我無意中接觸到聖施禮華的祈禱單張。我便向他尋求轉禱。

我自己誠心祈求，卻同時發現很多考生在考場中作弊，而我只是將一串念珠放在桌上便進行考試。不由得你不信，我考到全班最好成績——全科“A”！我相信，我會繼續尋求聖施禮華的代禱，並將他介紹給我的家人。聖施禮華，請為我祈求！

D.M., 肯雅

2009年7月4日

他關懷我並指引人生的每一步

一天我剛探訪完我的女兒，在回家的路上我孤單、困惑、害怕、自責和身無分文。這時候我在地上發現一張聖施禮華的祈禱卡。我拾起來並依它祈求。我有無數需要向他懇求，包括我自己，我的生命，我的工作，都求他護佑。真奇怪，從那時開始，我便不用再挨餓。這段日子雖不斷有事發生，但我總不忘為一切發生的好事向他道謝。我深感聖施禮華對我關懷並指引我每一行動。我本有嚴重的抑鬱病，但現在已不用服藥。我的母親曾一度病重，我向他祈求，三天后母親又完全康復過來！對我來說，這一切都是奇跡。無論我走到哪裡，我都與他一起，他已成了我的知己呢！



嘉露蓮娜，智利

2009年6月14日

“Don’t let your life be sterile.”

This is the opening line from a pocketbook of Spiritual Considerations written by St. Josemaría called “The Way”, which has sold more than 5 million copies in more than 45 languages. Oct. 2, 2009, marks the 70th year of its publication.

2009/10/01

Don’t let your life be sterile. Be useful. Blaze a trail. Shine forth with the light of your faith and of your love. (“The Way”, no.1)

This point is the first of a treasury of other spiritual considerations written by St Josemaría when he was about 30 years of age. **“They are things I whisper in your ear, confiding in you as a friend, as a brother, as a father... so that some thought may come to you that will strike you; and that way you will improve your life and enter upon ways of prayer and of Love.”** (“The Way”, Prologue)



The love for God and the love for souls was his motivation in writing “The Way”. It has left its mark on the features of contemporary Christian literature, with at least 5 million copies sold in 45 different languages.



“The Way” was first published in 1934 under the Spanish title “*Consideraciones Espirituales*” (*Spiritual Considerations*). It was only when the second and longer version appeared in 1939 that it was given its definitive title “Camino” in Spanish. In a few months, the first edition ran out of copies, and the second edition suffered a similar fate. The first English translation saw the light of day years later in Dublin in 1954. The Chinese version was published in Taiwan in January 1970; it has since been revised and is in its third edition.

A revolutionary teaching

The compilation of brief counsels and advices are made up of passages from Sacred Scriptures, snatches of conversation, passages of letters and the personal experiences of St Josemaría working as a young priest from 1925. During the years when the book was being written, he circulated widely among students at the Madrid University and with workers. It was these students that motivated the writing of the book when he realized their need and desire for spiritual guidance.

Born out of a deep Christian experience, “The Way” aims to encourage men and women to love God and to live by God, imbuing a Christian tone to all their earthly interests and activities. “You have an obligation to sanctify yourself. Yes, you too! Who thinks that this task is only for priests and religious? To everyone without exception, our Lord said, “Be ye perfect, as my heavenly Father is perfect.” (“The Way”, 291)

At the time when “The Way” first appeared, preaching like this was not merely unexpected – it was revolutionary. For many, the words of “The Way” were a revelation which made them more aware of their dignity as Christians and of the divine mission which they had in the world.

One of the main attractions of the book is its direct, conversational style and its personal and deeply human character. As a reviewer in *L’Osservatore Romano* once put it, “Msgr. Escrivá has written something more than a masterpiece; he has written straight from the heart. And these short paragraphs which make up “The Way” –like pearls on a string– go straight to the hearts.”

The choice of the title: “The Way”

The title chosen by St Josemaría is no surprise for those who have come to know his spirit. In his own words, he once talked about the significance the word ‘way’ has for him in a meditation given on Dec 31, 1970, in Rome:

“I like the word ‘way’ very much, because in God’s sight we are all wayfarers. We are *viatores*, travelers, heading towards our Creator from the day we entered the world. A person who sets out on a journey has a clear goal, an objective: he wants to get from one place to another. Consequently, he does all he should to reach his goal safely: he doesn’t dawdle, he avoids side-roads and unexplored tracks that might lead to wild beasts or precipices. Keep walking resolutely, my children! We must take as much care of the affairs of God and of souls as others take of earthly affairs – we need to desire holiness...”

It is clear that the points that make up “The Way” were intended to help its readers follow unwaveringly in the footsteps of the Master.

“May the constant reading of this book, my friend, help you to straighten out and consolidate your way.” (St Josemaría, preface to the 3rd Spanish edition, 1945)



Nanny and “The Way”

She came from Lastres, a fishing-village in Asturias, Spain. Her name was Azucena Olivar Sanchez, but for us kids she was always “Nanny”.

2009/11/01

She'd been our nanny and was an enormous help to our Mom, who had her hands full with nine children, running the house in Madrid and looking after my Dad's business when he was away in Mexico for business.

Nanny was an extraordinarily joyful person. My earliest memories of her are of a woman in her 30s, well-built, with very black hair and a pleasant, smiling face. She was always concerned for the smallest children in the house, and had a very witty way of speaking. She knew countless stories, proverbs and fairy-tales, which she told us little by little, and which I consider part of the core of the tradition in which I grew up.

Years later, when my brother Nacho invited me to join some outings organized by a Center of Opus Dei, I resisted because I didn't fancy getting cold and hungry scrambling up the Guadarrama mountain range. The real reason was that I was scared someone would start talking to me about a possible vocation to Opus Dei, something I had no intention of discussing. Nanny always took my part and told my brother to leave me in peace. Nacho yielded before her, since we all respected and loved her to the point of veneration. And I was deeply grateful to her for throwing her cloak of protection over me.

I soon had a chance to repay her kindness, because around that time she decided to learn to read. And she chose me as her teacher. She had never learned to read or write; she had never needed to. She managed perfectly without it, and I never heard anyone succeed in tricking or cheating her. But all of a sudden she decided she just had to be able to read. I really teased her about it, telling her that although she was so clever she would remain ignorant all her life.

She herself had told me, laughing, that when she was a child she hardly ever got to go to school because her family was very poor and she had to work to bring in a bit of money. The few times she did go to school, the teacher, seeing how bright she was, would send her on errands, which she enjoyed much more than being shut up in a classroom.

But this time she didn't mention her previous indifference to every kind of book-learning. The first chance she had, she brought out the book she wanted me to use to teach her to read. It was “The Way” by Josemaría Escrivá. I wasn't surprised because Nanny was a naturally devout person. Besides, “The Way” had always been around our house and some used it for meditation, although personally I didn't know much about it.



She could remember a bit about the alphabet and syllables. We went rapidly through the basics and started reading the first point: “May your life not be sterile...” She had never read anything before. But once we'd worked our way through that first text, she turned to me and explained what it meant.

She spoke very naturally about how we have to be useful to others in order to lead a fruitful life, and explained what apostolate was, more clearly than I'd ever heard it before. I was absolutely astounded, but that was just the start. It wasn't long before she could read fairly fluently, and she gave me a running commentary on each of the remaining 998 points of “The Way” without missing a single one.

Nearly every day we would set aside some time for her reading class. Without any apology on her part or surprise on mine, those minutes became a class on asceticism and mysticism given by Nanny as though she were a Doctor of the Church. She spoke about life in God, not like someone handing on a lesson they've learned, but in a way a person talks about something they know from experience and that comes naturally to them. I occasionally teased her about her wisdom, or argued, jokingly, against something that she said. The fact was that it made a very deep impression on me, as though I was present at something extraordinary; there was no human explanation, even though it was all taking place in Nanny's little room in our flat on Castello Street, Madrid. Those master classes changed me completely. Thanks to Nanny, I began to have a real interior life. I began to pray seriously, though I found it hard work. And Jesus became a living person for me, someone I could talk to and listen to throughout my everyday activities.

I no longer refused to go to the Center of the Work where my brother went. When they talked to me about a vocation, I accepted straight away. I felt certain I had arrived at a safe harbour that was somehow my final destination. Nor was I in any doubt as to who would be the first to hear of my decision.

That January 12, Nanny was in the kitchen. There weren't any more little kids for her to look after and she'd turned into a terrific cook instead. When I told her the news, instead of being surprised like I'd expected, she smiled and, like the Asturian fisher folk she came from, she said, “You fell like a gannet!” The gannet is a bird like a seagull, which hovers over the sea from high up and when it sees a fish, dives straight down to catch it.

And that was the moment when we both put our cards on the table. The reason she wanted to learn to read was that she'd been recommended to do some spiritual reading every day. She had come to know Opus Dei through my brothers and sisters, and had asked to be admitted to it shortly before I had.

Nanny died years later, in a very holy way, being a help to everyone in our family with her deep spiritual life and keen sense of humour. She brought many people to God, and they were astonished at the depth of Christian wisdom that she possessed, which was revealed to me for the first time when we read “The Way” together.



Alejandro Llano

“I, a saint?”

Isabella Tan, a widow and mother of three young children, tells how she changed when Christ entered her life

2009/10/16

“I, a saint?” that question kept popping up in my head shortly after I started going to a centre of Opus Dei regularly for doctrine classes, confession and spiritual direction. It was almost unthinkable because most of the saints I knew were either priests, nuns or martyrs and most lived and died centuries ago.



My life at that time was an endless pursuit of lofty human and worldly goals. Going after those temporal things did not fill my broken cup at all. I was a Sunday Catholic, practicing my faith at my convenience with hardly any sacrifices and paying lip service to God mostly.

A turning point

Stephen, my husband, passed away suddenly of a viral heart infection in 2005, shortly after our 13th wedding anniversary. Left in shock and badly traumatised, I had to face the lonesome and daunting task of raising our three children (then aged 3, 6 and 8). We had many unfulfilled plans and scripture verse Proverbs 19:21 - “Many are the plans in a man’s heart but it is the decision of the Lord that endures” made a deep impression. That was the lowest point in my life as I went through dark days of grief, fear, anger, guilt and confusion.

Thanks to the prayers of friends and strangers, including that of many women in the Work, many of whom I did not know then, God let me see how sorrow and pain tasted different with Him in my life. Gradually I found renewed strength to begin again and to help others in similar situations.

I broke out of my comfort zone and started to live my faith a lot more seriously. Settings fixed periods for mental prayer daily and doing my best to live the norms of piety have helped me to grow closer to Our Lord. The Eucharist and periods of mental prayer, in particular, gave me strength to better face the daily challenges both at work and at home.

Beyond visible successes

My marketing job in a health food company requires me to travel frequently within Asia. Maintaining the right balance between family and work priorities, trying to be a good mum, daughter, employee, colleague and friend would have

driven me mad if not for what Opus Dei taught me. Love God and let God love me. Without Love, nothing would have been possible.

I enjoy my professional work and strive to do it well. But when it was motivated by human motives like getting compliments, I was discouraged and bitter whenever my ventures did not result in visible success. Now, I try to do it out of love, to give glory to God and the focus is no longer on me.

Last year, a project I led did not achieve the highly anticipated results, despite all the careful planning and hard work. Instead of feeling beaten and angry, I prayed, “Lord, You know I’ve done my best. But if You don’t want the glory, then I don’t want it too.” And I moved on, for what ultimately counts is what God thought of my work, my struggles, not my results.

Prayer: the best ‘weapon’

When I met difficult and not so loveable personalities at work, my entire day used to be ruined by such unpleasant encounters. Now I have learned to turn to my Guardian Angel, asking him for help to speak to the Guardian Angel of the other person. Actually, I should thank these people because without them, I may not have prayed that intensely and may not have turned to my Guardian Angel so often.

My children too have learned to relate to their Guardian Angels. Whenever I get a parking space in crowded places, Jeremias would happily declare that he had asked help from his Guardian Angel. It’s a small thing but it will come naturally when he faces weightier matters in future. The other night, Natalie, now 6, said “Mummy, I just said three Hail Mary’s – one with my Guardian Angel, one for the favour you are asking and one for the skin condition that Carmen, Jeremias, and you and I have.” Prayer is the best ‘weapon’ for all of us in the family.

Most of the time, my kids fight over little things then make up almost instantly; they will promise to be good and within minutes, they get into trouble. When I return home from a day’s work, losing my patience was the easiest thing to do. I used to take out my ‘weapon’ – the cane – to get instant results. But not anymore.

After one retreat, I went home and told them that I will not cane them but we agreed on some house rules to ensure order. They were elated but soon realised that the new punishment is actually more “painful” for them because these days, their punishment comes in the form of giving up one of their favourite activities like television or computer games. What is good that they can decide for themselves if they want to be good or naughty and then face the consequences of their actions.

I am convinced attaining sainthood is within the reach of everyone, myself included. Isn’t that wonderful?

The Sweetest Precept of the Decalogue

Gabriel Robledillo Amezcua is an Associate of Opus Dei. Following the advice of St. Josemaría, he is doing the most important thing he can do at present: "to take care of my parents."

21/9/2008

At times, two things come to my mind: the first has to do with St. Josemaría and his words about the fourth commandment "Honor your father and your mother", which he called the sweetest precept.

The second was a radio phone-in programme in which I participated in the 1980's. Those invited to the discussion did not perhaps have very clear ideas about Opus Dei. I phoned in and asked a series of questions that seemed interesting to me. One of the participants in that radio discussion told me at one point of the conversation: "All the members of Opus Dei have a university degree..."

"Well, I worked in a slaughterhouse. My job was to remove the flesh from the left wing of the chicken", I answered him.

The conversation continued until someone remarked that the members of the Work separate themselves from their parents. At that moment, my mother, who was listening to the radio and who is pleasantly decisive, grabbed the phone from me and said: "I am the mother of this person in Opus Dei. Is there a problem?"

So the years have passed since that radio programme ... some 25 years. Life has changed and my parents, thanks to God, continue living with me. I say 'with me', because until four years ago, I lived 'with them'.



In 2002, I went to Pamplona to do a doctorate. Because of this, I stopped living with my parents after 42 years with them. I have a degree in Spanish Philology and I was working then in a high school in Jaén.

My mother was a little delicate in health but the family doctor told me that her symptoms were those typical of elderly persons. After discussing with my parents, it was decided that I should go to Navarre to complete my

studies. My parents then were 78 and 79 years old.

When I had lived in Pamplona for two and a half years, my father suffered a stroke, which left the right half of his body paralysed. My mother, after being examined by a specialist, was diagnosed with an advanced stage of Alzheimer.

In view of those events, I left off my studies in Pamplona and returned to my native city to take care of my parents. I returned to my work as a teacher in the school Altocastillo, but worked only in the mornings. I have asked for fewer hours at work to take care of my parents. When I am at school in the mornings, a hired-lady is with them and I take over when I return from school.

My father, thanks to St. Josemaría, has recovered in a miraculous way. He can move and is independent. The doctors still don't believe it because they told me that he would be bed-ridden. Now, he doesn't need help in anything, though he can't help much around the house.

My mother is losing her faculties little by little. She needs to be watched 24 hours a day and everything needs to be done for her: to sit up, to get dressed, to be fed, etc. She does not recognize anyone and at times, she doesn't know where she is and gets very nervous. I try to calm her and bring her out for a stroll in the wheelchair. There was a time when we could not sleep at all at night because she would go out into the streets, regardless if it were raining or cold or hot.

In the afternoons, those who suffer from Alzheimer's are more restless; the specialists do not know why. I have to be very, very patient and to try to accompany her and to distract her because there is no medicine that can calm her down. The doctors told me that the best way to distract her is to do what one would do with a 3-year old child. That is how I cope.

Following the advice of St. Josemaría, the most important thing that I can do now is to take care of my parents, in the same way that they took care of me when I was little. By doing this, I am doing Opus Dei, because I see Jesus Christ in my parents. When I am tired or feel burdened, I look at the Cross of the Lord and remember that passage from St. Mathew: "He who wants to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me" (Mt. 16, 24).

As time passes and I get older, and from what I see at school and from what my friends and acquaintances who themselves are advanced in age tell me, I see that I am not a martyr, because there are people in worse situations than me. I try to encourage these people, helping them to see the Cross of the Lord in their situations.

In the town where I live, there are 13,000 inhabitants and nearly everybody knows everybody. We have put up an association of Alzheimer's. The municipal government is giving us all kinds of aid to push the association forward. We have been in contact with the priests of the town so that they can attend spiritually to our sick people.

When I go out in the streets, the other people in town stop me and ask me about my parents. At the same time, they encourage me and congratulate me on the work that I am doing with them. I can help recalling the sweetest precept of the Decalogue that St. Josemaría used to talk about and that time when I took part in a radio phone-in programme...

Saturday morning catechism

I helped with Saturday morning catechism classes in “14 km”, a shanty-town where people’s attitudes were not exactly positive. After two or three more attempts, they stopped stoning us on sight...

2009/11/08

Marcelo Sheppard
College student
Montevideo, Uruguay

When we were in our fourth year of secondary education, the people in Flama, an Opus Dei club for schoolboys, asked some friends of mine and I if we would like to help in the catechism classes being given in a parish in one of the poorer suburbs of Montevideo. At first we found it quite hard as it meant “sacrificing” our Saturday mornings which many of us use to have a lie-in.



We started meeting up the day before to prepare the topic we were going to teach for that week. They were the first classes we’d ever taught in our lives, and our pupils were not naturally attentive, so we had to prepare them really well.

The people at Flama Club explained to us in detail how important those catechism classes were and how much St Josemaría loved catechism-teaching. When Opus Dei was beginning, the Founder used to go out with groups of young people to teach Christian doctrine in the outlying districts of Madrid.

I began by helping with the catechism classes in Punta Rieles, then in Euskalerría, and finally in the district known as “14 Km”. In Punta Rieles some nuns let us use some rooms next to their convent for the classes. Punta Rieles is close to “14 Km” so we went there to invite more boys to come to the classes. The next week the “14 Km” boys got into the convent store-room and ate the fruit jelly the sisters had prepared for tea. We had to find a solution, so we decided to teach in “14 Km” itself, and teach only the more manageable ones in the convent rooms. So we ended up with two catechism groups.

“14 Km” is a shanty-town. The people live in shacks they make out of sticks and sheeting. The sanitation is unreliable and the other side of the road is a trash dump. We very well knew that the town’s attitudes were not exactly positive, and we had to explain our intentions very clearly before they would let us give classes there. Most of the people in “14 Km”, if they are even baptized, go to the Sunday schools run by certain sects or non-Catholic groups, and it can be hard to persuade them to live in accordance with their faith.



Five of us went together for the first class there. We divided the kids into groups by age, and delivered the classes in an open space close to the trash dump, as there was nowhere else. Then we started a game of football. At the end of the first half, Juancho started a fight with Anthony over a fault the referee hadn’t seen, and soon after that they drove us away by throwing stones at us, shouting, “Don’t come back!” In a way, it reminded us of the time when St Josemaría had stones thrown at him just because he was wearing a cassock, especially when he went to the King’s Hospital in Madrid.

After two or three more attempts, they stopped stoning us on sight. With a little bit more effort, and a lot of grace from God, the kids prepared for Communion and some of them received our Lord in the Eucharist for the first time.

Years later, you realize how much good those catechism classes did to the kids: it gives them real support in their faith and morals, which they will never forget. What we could do for them at that age was not getting them jobs or solving their housing problems, but teaching them the truth of Christ.

What I’d most like to stress is that in the final analysis, the ones who really were strengthened were us, the teachers. We learnt so much from those kids. We realized how urgent it was to overcome the ignorance about Christ’s teachings, we came face to face with real poverty and we suffered together with them. All of that inspired us to fight to take our country forward.

Extract from an article published in “St Josemaría & the Uruguayans”, ed. Maria Magdalena Pareja Silveira, Montevideo, 2002.

"God has entrusted our children to us. He expects us to prepare them to be independent, free, capable of coping with life. That's why education is much less about combating defects than to increase the qualities of each one."

A Matter of Priorities

Florence y Denis Courtois are married and live in Paris with their 6 children. Returning to school after summer is always a small revolution for the family, which is best lived with a Christian spirit...

September 21, 2009



The start of classes is sometimes a bit stressful for parents. How do you cope?

Florence: Although we can never avoid the last minute rush, we try to anticipate a little so that the change is not so drastic. Towards the end of the holidays, we try to restore the rhythm of school, especially with regard to bedtime and rising. Moreover, we usually have special celebrations for the last days of vacation, so the start of the academic year is usually a big change.

Have you thought about extracurricular activities?

Yes, we select them together, keeping in mind the preferences of the children and our possibilities. My husband and I talked a lot about each child, so that, for example, we encourage the one who is more timid to take up artistic activities; and the one that is a bit selfish, a team sport. It is not about keeping the children 'busy', but to form them. If an extracurricular activity does not educate or if it breaks the normal function of the rest of the family, we stop it.

And in general, we prefer to limit these activities of the children to the weekend because that is when we can see one another, talk and listen... If these activities become a family burden, like a football match which takes up the whole Sunday, it's not worth it. As a rule, with flexibility, each child gets two extracurricular activities: one sports and the other, something intellectual.

What is your goal as a parent?

As a mother, with the birth of each child, I tell myself: I have to help them grow, to be able to say yes to what God expects of him or her. God has entrusted our children to us; he expects us to prepare them to be independent, free, capable

of coping with life. That's why education is much less about combating defects than increasing the qualities of each one; watering the good plants so that they outgrow the weeds within us all. All this helps us to focus on the year that just begun.

Do you help them with their homework?

We try to be demanding on this point from the first day, also with the ones who are smarter. It is very important to strengthen their will, so that each child can be the best that he can be. Once they are on track, they can be left alone, otherwise it is very difficult; I would say, impossible. Parents have to be attentive at the beginning: when the results come out, little can be done then.

What about the activities offered by Opus Dei for young people?

As parents, we know that there are 3 components that influence the education of a child: the parents, the school and friends. It is essential that at least one of these components coincides with our educational plans, especially during adolescence. If the school environment is good, that may be sufficient. But perhaps these days, it is not sufficient. That is why we encourage our children to attend a youth club of Opus Dei which organizes activities and get to know its spirit; the atmosphere of the club is magnificent. We invite them to try it out, and after that, they decide.

Denis, what is the role of fathers at the beginning the school year?

The dialogue between husband and wife about the children is paramount. I squeeze my schedule a little to reach home early to be with my wife and to resolve the questions the children have. It is essential to propose sensible solutions to their problems as teenagers or children. Parents can help each other by exchanging views so that nothing stands in the way of their education.

What do you do if you have a lot of work?

It's true that sometimes it is very tempting to stay in the office working late, so that the boss sees you, so that the pressure is less for the following day... instead of coming home early: to talk about the day, to assist the children with their homework, or to bathe the smaller ones. Sometimes, you do need to stay in the office. But you should always ask yourself that question: Now, where am I needed more, here or at home? And answer honestly.

Saint Josemaría Escrivá said that children are our greatest asset, and you have to be ready for anything in order to take care of this treasure - to give up a promotion or to receive some criticism at work. It is a matter of priorities.

Becoming Kazakh

Claudia Valbuena never dreamt she would live in a place so far from her native Chile. She arrived in Almaty more than 10 years ago to begin Opus Dei. "Becoming Kazakh" has been a long process, but she already feels half Kazakh...



"Gradually people are understanding that there can be a transcendent meaning in what they do."

"There are people who have an adventurous spirit. Not me. I was very happy living then in Italy when I was asked to go to Kazakhstan. I saw that it was not impossible and I thought, 'Great, let's go.'" recalled Claudia.

"Become Kazakh" is a real process of cultural, physical and psychological change that demands openness and flexibility. Kazakhstan is a country with nomadic roots where more than 130 ethnic groups live together, with a culture that is both Oriental and Soviet (they were subject to the czars and then to communist rule).

"For me, everything is different: the food, the climate, the way people communicate, very protective of their privacy and yet open and welcoming."

The majority of the population is Muslim, although there are also Russian Orthodox. Catholics are a minority and the process of evangelization begins, naturally, through conversion. "People have little religious culture; there is a fear to talk about these issues, although they see the need for God in their lives," said Claudia. "Slowly, the spirituality of St. Josemaria is making itself understood. The key lies in that people feel very free and they come close to the Faith because they freely want to."

At the request of John Paul II

"The arrival of the Work to the country was an explicit wish of Pope John Paul II, who had traveled to Astana, the current capital, in 2001," says Claudia.

Indeed, on the advice of Pope John Paul II, a bishop of Kazakhstan went to talk to the Prelate of Opus Dei in 1994 because he needed an institution that could focus on education and the work with youth in the country. The request



A walk in the snow with university students

materialized in 1997 when the first members of Opus Dei arrived in Almaty, the second largest city in the country.

To find a place to live and a job was the first thing that Claudia and her companions did when they arrived in Kazakhstan in 1998. Once she got a job as an English teacher, Claudia began to study the country's two official languages, Russian and Kazakh, which had Turkish origin.

"I started teaching English in KIMEP, a business school in Almaty which was one of the first to prepare young professionals to work in an emerging market economy. Today we all have different jobs and three of the young members will begin their college career here," says Claudia.

Projects and dreams

The main apostolic project in progress is a training center for hospitality services. "We want to help them understand that service and the work in the home are something important to society, because during the years of communism they were not given any value, unless they were for special occasions," she explains. Now they are fund raising and waiting for building permits to begin construction.



The work came to Kazakhstan through the explicit request of Pope John Paul II.

In the last 10 years, these faithful of the Prelature have been concerned with the training of women from a human and social standpoint, with openness to all sectors of society, and aiming to transmit good ideas on family values and social initiatives.

As for the apostolate, Claudia explains that "it is through friendship; when they see how we live, they become interested in God and in the work we do. We do not impose, but our friends come to realise that something is missing in their lives and that there can be a transcendent meaning in everything they do."

High in the Peruvian Andes

Bishop Enrique Pelach, the first priest of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross, brought thousands of men and women to God traveling by horseback along mountain trails in Peru.

2009/07/27

Father Pelach landed in the Peruvian port of Callao in 1957. He was one of five diocesan priests who went to take care of the new Prelature of Yauyos, recently created and entrusted to Opus Dei by Pope Pius XII. From then until his death on July 19, 2007, Father Pelach remained in Peru.



As a young priest, when finishing his studies in Rome, he met and became a friend of St. Josemaría Escrivá. Shortly thereafter he was the first priest to ask for admission to the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross, which St. Josemaría had founded as an association of the clergy intrinsically united to Opus Dei.

Father Pelach was appointed Bishop of Abancay by Pope Paul VI and took possession of the diocesan Cathedral on July 21, 1968. It was in that same Cathedral that his funeral took place on July 21, 2007. In his homily, the current Bishop Isidro Sala said that the heart of Bishop Pelach "has ceased to beat on earth, but it has not ceased to love, because Love with a capital letter—that love with which he loved God and humanity—will never end."



The current bishop of Abancay recalled "the many hours that Bishop Pelach had ridden on horseback through the mountains of Yauyos and Huarochiri. These were apostolic and missionary travels: giving catechism classes, hearing confessions, celebrating Holy Mass, visiting the sick and the poor."

Bishop Sala said that "as the first priest of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross, he also helped the Work grow and opened up a pathway with his fidelity. He sought sanctity with determination in his ministry as a priest and as a bishop. In Opus Dei, as he himself said, one finds the best place both to live and to die."

He added that, "in a difficult moment," he had received from St. Josemaría "the advice and encouragement to create the diocesan seminary for the formation of priests in this land, which has borne such great fruit."

Bishop Sala said that his predecessor had "great compassion for the multitude," which led him "to found many social works such as the Home for the Aged, helped by Mother Celina, a discaled Carmelite. He gathered up in his own car the beggars sleeping in the street. For the care of lepers and the poorest of the sick he created the Santa Teresa Medical Center. He founded residences for students and medical clinics." And he did all this, the Bishop of Abancay added, following St. Josemaría's motto: "to hide and disappear, so that only Jesus shines forth."



"His love for the poor was of a great evangelical depth: one has to visit Abancay to know the greatness of Enrique's soul," wrote Cardinal Juan Luis Cipriani, Primate of Peru, in an article published in the newspaper *El Comercio* on August 2, 2007.



1957 photo of first 5 priests who arrived in Yauyos

Cardinal Cipriani in that article also highlighted his "enterprising talent and his simplicity, which could move mountains." "He brought thousands of men and women of all ages and social conditions to God. He was the same when on a horse or mule in the Andes on a mission at more than 12,000 feet as when smiling at a child, or taking care of someone who was dying, or singing in a low voice of the beauty of the mountains where he was riding. He had a clean soul, transparent and noble, ablaze with love for God and all mankind."

According to the Cardinal, "he saw the teaching of the faith as a very urgent task, reflected in the monumental work of the Pelach-Kunher Catechism, of which more than 100,000 copies have been sold. Another instrument he provided was the *Devocionario Rezar y Cantar* [Prayer and Song Book], which thousands of our 'campesino' brothers and sisters in the Andean mountains have found useful."

Life is Worth Living

In 1991, Fr. Luis de Moya, an Opus Dei priest, suffered an automobile accident. His life was miraculously saved, but his spine was fractured and he lost all mobility and sensation below the neck. He had to learn to live with an almost unusable body, dependent on others for almost everything.

2009/11/15

Feeling that you are loved

Fr. Luis lives in Pamplona, and in his house you can feel the great affection of those who care for him. On entering his room one often finds him answering e-mail on his specially adapted computer or updating his web page: www.fluvium.org.

Sixteen years after the accident which left him in the care of others, he strongly affirms that "every human being needs an environment where he can feel that he is loved, whether sick or well, whether a child or an adult, whether needing or not needing a wheel chair. To feel understood and helped by others is a need for every person. We have feelings and a heart, we rejoice at the good news of others, and weep with those who weep. Animals cannot cry, nor laugh; but men and women can."

It is impossible for a person who receives and gives affection to think of committing suicide. That affection helps to sustain the person, to keep him working. To feel that one is loved and needed by the people who are closest to us is very important, although this does not mean that discomfort, annoyance, or pain will not at times leave a person in bad humor. But one has to make an effort to appear cheerful, thinking of others in order to offer one's sufferings to God. The life of Fr. Luis is a continual example of this cheerfulness, and many people are surprised to see the dignity with which he lives. In fact, on one occasion Fr. Luis even said that he feels "like a millionaire who has lost a ten dollar bill." He explains this with great simplicity: "I can't allow myself to fall into a negative dynamic, thinking continually of how unfortunate I am to have suffered a traffic accident. I know that I have to continue working and carrying out my priestly ministry."

And so he got down to work right away without letting any time pass. Immediately "after the operation, I continued giving classes and working as chaplain in the School of Architecture of the University of Navarre, as well as collaborating with other priests in the pastoral work with students."

It's not so important

Far from what one might imagine, Fr. Luis is not from outer space nor does he



Fr. Luis, at the School of Architecture at which he serves as chaplain.

have a screw loose. He is very conscious that "I had an accident which impedes my mobility," but, he adds, "it is something that is not so important." And he reveals the secret to moving forward: "Although it is difficult to confront it every day, the important thing is to know that I am a son of God and that God loves me and would never give me anything that was bad in itself. If God had had a bad intention in permitting the accident that caused my injury, he would have been cruel, and that is not possible with God. God is always good, and everything that I receive from him is for my good and that of others. And so I look at it as if I had lost a small bill compared with the millions that I have received and continue to receive from him. Perhaps it is that we don't think much of what we are and are worth in being human: because God has wanted us to be persons. And this greatness of being human, the greatness of being persons, is not a matter of movement. Many animals are many times faster and more agile than we are! But they can neither reason nor love, nor do they have an eternal destiny in heaven."

With his years of experience in "driving" a wheel chair, he has been asked to speak for those who might suffer or have suffered an injury like his. "I encourage them not to fall into the negative dynamism of considering, again and again, the innumerable misfortunes that they suffer as the result of a stupid accident . . . that they not let themselves be conquered by laziness or neglect, that they stay out of that vicious circle: how much I have lost, how unfortunate I am, I can never again do this or that... Everything becomes suffering and sorrow for how much I have lost, and this goes on forever. On the contrary, I encourage them to work, to seek activities, to subject themselves to a schedule, and not to consider those activities as a way of 'passing the time,' as a mere distraction. I tell them to think of what they still have and how to make that profitable. There are so many things to do; how can they not do anything? And if they can't think of anything, let them contact me, and I'll give them work to do."

He also has words of encouragement for the families of accident victims and for those who take care of them. "I encourage them to realize the value of what they have at home. It is really a treasure. It helps them to work for others, to value life, to give and receive love. It makes them more human, more understanding. I tell them that they should feel the responsibility of loving with deeds those who need them so much and who seem to have been put with them to make it easier for them to love. They should feel certain that the greatness of each of them lies in this more than in anything else." This is something that the goodness of Fr. Luis teaches us every day with his example, his dedication and his tenacity.



Favors granted through the intercession of St. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer

I quit smoking

I'm 54 and often tried to quit smoking. Two years ago I asked St Josemaría to intercede for me in this fight, and now I have won the battle. Thank you, St Josemaría!

Bruno Combe Laboissière, France
September 4, 2009

Saint Josemaría has greatly helped my whole family

Saint Josemaría helped my husband, my children, and me as wife and mother; I want to bear witness to all that he has granted me. He helped my husband get a job when he'd been looking for work for a long time. He helped my children in their studies. And he helped me as wife and mother, and in my efforts to obtain a family vacation after not having one for many years. I first heard about Saint Josemaría in May 2009 and in such a short time he already obtained so many favors. A thousand thanks for all the favors granted.



M. Castellanos, Venezuela
July 2009

Together again

A married couple who were friends of ours had separated and were arranging for a divorce. We prayed to St Josemaría that they would not go ahead with the divorce. He heard our prayer: they have got back together again.

Luis M., Italy
July 10, 2009

I didn't cheat but passed with a distinction

I obtained my favor through the intercession of Saint JOSEMARIA ESCRIVA. I have been meaning to notify the Prelature. In September 2005, I picked the brochure of the prayer to Saint Josemaría just before sitting for my Advanced Certificate in Business Studies, and went on to seek his intercession. Through these prayers, even when other candidates were cheating, all I did was place a rosary on my desk during the exams, believe me, I was the best in our class with straight Distinction. I do believe that in the future I will still seek his intercession and more so will introduce him to my family. Saint Josemaría, pray for me.

D.M., Kenya
July 4, 2009



He cares for me and guides every step

One day I was coming home from a visit to my daughter. I was lonely, confused, fearful, remorseful, and broke. I saw on the ground a prayer-card of St Josemaría. I picked it up and read it on the way home, and asked him for thousands of things, commending myself, my life and my actions to his protection. From that day on I have always had enough to eat. Something always comes up, and I am grateful to him for all that is good. St Josemaría cares for me and guides every step I take. I used to suffer from deep depression; now I don't even need the tablets. My mother was very sick and I prayed for her; three days went by and she was absolutely fine! For me these are miracles, and I take him with me everywhere I go, he's become my best friend.

Carolina, Chile
June 14, 2009

