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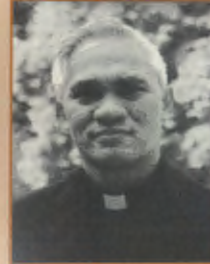
新聞摘要

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由聖若瑟瑪利亞施禮華創辦

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新聞摘要

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Compiled by Opus Dei Information Office in East Asia
由主業會東亞區資訊社編輯

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天主的擁抱

Joaquin Romero患有多發性硬化病，二十多年來一直要坐輪椅。但他並沒有為此傷心沮喪，反而視這殘缺為“上主的擁抱”。

2011



20年前當Joaquin Romero第一次被驗出患有此病時，他了解有關這個病的殘酷事實。多發性硬化是一種無藥可救和使患者機能逐漸退化的疾病。他要求醫生確實說出病患後要面對的種種情況。“你會四肢麻痺、盲、啞、長期臥床。但最壞的是，這是沒法醫治的疾病。而且在很多情況下，肉體上的疾病最後會引發精神上的抑鬱。”

Joaquin現年41歲，他左手的活動能力差不多已完全喪失，視力退化，呼吸常有困難。當他意識到需要自謀生計時，便決定和哥哥Borja開設一家專門幫助殘疾人士的公司，目的幫助與他同一遭遇的人。他是一位建築技術員，哥哥是工程師，

“這不是一場短跑而是一場馬拉松賽”

當我22、23歲時，我為自己的人生設定了一個完美計劃。服完兵役後，我攻讀了技術建築，希望有天能親自監督摩天大樓的建築項目。我喜歡足球，有天當我和朋友踢足球時，我追著球全速疾跑地踢，突然，我感覺到全身像被螞蟻咬著，接著便是看東西有重疊的現象。

當神經科醫生告訴我診斷的結果時，我想起我曾聽過這個疾病。那時我只希望醫生給我開些藥便算了。

有天當我和朋友踢足球時，我追著球全速疾跑地踢，突然，我感覺到全身像被螞蟻咬著，接著便是看東西有重疊的現象。

“Joaquin，不，”他說，“多發性硬化是一個不治之症。”

“好，那就是說我將要和它一起生活下去。”當我說出這番話時，我完全不知道將要面對的是什麼。

“這是一個使人逐漸老化的疾病，故這場決不是一場短跑而是一場馬拉松賽。你要作好準備，衡量自己的體力，不能邁大步走，只能一步一步來。”



那一刻，你怎麼做？你想著什麼？

那時，我都不知道該想什麼；我不清楚這代表什麼。我是那種喜歡所有事情都在自己掌握之中的人，但這次不可能了。感謝主，那時我已加入了主業會數年。我有一位可以交心和傾訴問題的朋友，我們會一起到海邊散步，喝點東西（我很喜歡海），亦正是這個原因，我對巴塞隆納海旁的酒吧瞭若指掌。

不是說說就能解決所有問題，但傾談過後，人會變得更加客觀。很多時候，患有此病的人常常會在一些可以解決的傻問題上自困。

你有沒有容許自己變得低落沮喪？

當然沒有。當我知道自己沒法自謀生計的時候，我和哥哥Borja把住所重新整理，自此之後，我無論是坐在椅子上、躺在床上或使用電腦時也可自己控制一切。我們公司就是從這三十平方米的地方發展起來。時至今日這是西班牙唯一一家協助殘疾人士適應生活的公司。

你一定見過不少疾苦吧…

有一次有位女士來電，請我們協助她患病的丈夫，我說我們會跟進，過了一段時間，當我致電給她時，沒人接聽了，原來她去了出席丈夫的喪禮。自此之後，我發誓不會浪費我生命中的一分一秒，並會盡一切努力去協助求助的人。有時客人入來向我們要求一些儀器後，離開時會問：“你是怎樣應付這一切的？”

你以為怎樣？我們可否戀上「痛苦」？

不；不是戀上痛苦本身；不，痛苦本身並沒有任何意義；你要找出它背後所蘊藏的意義。我現在坦白告訴你我所見，我所想的。現在，我是經歷人生中一個最美好的時刻，因為我開始意味到這疾病背後所蘊藏的意義。

至今我始意味到這疾病背後所蘊藏的重大意義。

痛苦是難以理解的奧秘，並沒有一本書解釋：一、如何應對痛苦；二、當它持續兩星期後應如何是好… 如果我們一早已知道該怎麼做，事情會變得多簡單呀！

我想天主給予我們自由，讓我們去找尋這些事的意義。“多麼不公平的天父呀！”你可能會這樣想。但這只是為自己找藉口。為什麼我們不怪責自己呢？我不認為我們的主是一個缺乏銳智或直觀能力的主；我們才是最後洞悉一切的人。我們應該反問自己為什麼不明白它的旨意，並應透過聖事更接近祂。



那你沒有投訴嗎？

在健康而言，我已失去一切。但有一樣東西我從未失去過的就是我的內在平安，以及現在我面對人生的那份肯定，我現在比以往任何時候都感覺良好。

對我而言，生命就像是一個奇蹟，是上主的一個恩寵。聽起來可能有點不可思議，沒有人能想像並虛構我現在經歷的一切；沒有，只有上主明白並能做到這一切。有沒有曾經在沮喪或遇到誘惑時，出現“受夠了！”這些念頭？

當然有，還出現過不少次。有時我會想上主已離棄了我，當我跌到谷底時，我記得曾經有位客人說他想自殺，我說我也曾想過，甚至想出一個很細緻的自殺計劃… 這並不難呀！但話說回來時，我問他：“難度你不覺得活著會更美嗎？”

有人說安樂死是解決方法

誰說的？是病人還是要忍受病人的那些人說的？如果你真的愛這些病人的話，你不可以用你的“方法”把他們關在外面。這顯然是不公平和自私的，要知道世上還有很多選擇。你不能把這般重要的問題簡單地以一句：“祝你安樂地死！”來解決，如果你真的愛這些病人，你會竭盡所能去幫助他們…

但如果是病人自己的意願呢？

那我會站在他的位置想。我們一定要面對面溝通。我會跟他說：“不要以為自己一無事處，什麼用也沒有… 不是的，情況剛剛相反。你有機會證明痛苦也可以有它無限大的價值。這是一項任務！”讓一般人明白殘疾人士並不是一無事處這一點很重要。

你是否一夜間便把一切想得透徹嗎？

不，不！15歲時我完全不懂得這樣想。這些念頭是隨著年月過去越來越清晰的，到現在，我把這一切都看透了… 用了20多年時間！

當我上天堂時，我將可以用雙膝下跪，並對祂說“妙極，這一切都太了不起了。”

當你上天堂時你會和天主說什麼？

我會親吻祂，會對祂說一萬個感謝，感謝祂為我安排的一切。我就是想過這般的生活，除此之外，其他方式的生活也不想要。我只想要祂所要的。我會跪下，(到時，我終於可以用雙腳跪下了)，然後對祂說，“妙極。這一切都太了不起了。”

主業社團在澳門的工作

上主的聖工

號角報 25-02-11

由於一般人對它在其所處地方的工作一無所知，因此它是現時最受討論的天主教團體。其實，主業會視工作為能讓人成聖的道路，而最重要的是，它確證天主的普世性。在澳門，它致力實現聖施禮華所提倡要成為《偉大的使徒工》的夢想，也隨時協助照料教區所提出的有關牧靈需要的要求。這就是主業會！



從1989來到澳門時起，聖十字架司鐸會與主業會一直致力提倡在世界中勉力工作、熱愛這個來自天主的世界的這些理念。為此，它輔助本地教區的工作，向不同年齡階層、不同種族和不同社會界別的信徒傳揚天主教教會的價值觀。

對主業會而言，工作和家庭是人類的兩大支柱，是應該好好維護的，因為這樣人類才可創建一個更美好、更滿溢美好價值的世界。

主業會現居澳門唯一的一位神父Father Peter Cabrerós (郭神父) 向本報解釋道：「如果我們聖化工作，工作亦會聖化我們，然後，我們便可協助聖化他人。」

事實上，自聖施禮華於1928年創立主業會起，其宗旨便是聖施禮華所說的：「工作是神聖的，它既聖化我們亦聖化他人。」

換言之，即是要《在工作中尋找耶穌》，郭神父續說，所有人在他所屬的社會中都有著他重要的角色，舉例說：「做醫生的應做一個好醫生；做律師的應做一個好律師；做記者的應做一個好記者；做家庭主婦的也應做一個好的家庭主婦。」

憑著其生活哲理，主業會希望透過每個人在其所屬家庭和社區內的工作，重新喚起早期基督徒守望相助的精神。

神父強調：「每一個人都是一個整體，我們同是天主的受造物，亦是家庭裡的一員以及社會的一份子。工作可豐富我們並幫助我們為大眾謀福。以耶穌為例，他是一名木匠，祂就如其他人一樣地工作，愛父母和周遭的

人。」

面對著歐洲越來越多的移民以及隨之而來其他宗教的廣傳事宜，主業會是第一個接納非基督教徒為協助人的天主教團體。為什麼呢？我們問。「這是因為天主是唯一和普世性的！祂是為所有人的！」郭神父答道。談到這方面，郭神父回想起當時還是樞機的若瑟·拉辛格（現任教宗本篤十六世），他在2002年10月6日，聖施禮華被封聖那天所發表的一番話：「一個活於天主臨在的人意識到天主時常都在工作，且到現今仍繼續工作。所以，我們要讓祂進來，並在我們內行事，這樣就會產生某些事物，是為開展未來和更生人類的事。」

《主業會希望透過每個人在其所屬家庭和社區內的工作，重新喚起早期基督徒守望相助的精神。》

《面對著歐洲越來越多的移民以及隨之而來其他宗教的廣傳事宜，主業會是第一個接納非基督教徒為協助人的天主教團體》

主業會在澳門



在梵二大公會議，特別就有關宗教團體和平信徒在教會福傳工作中所擔任的角色這一議題上，有指聖施禮華在這方面是其中一把最具影響力的聲音。主業會承諾協助澳門教區黎鴻昇主教在澳門教區的福傳工作也是從這理念而來。

主業會神父的服務範圍包括在玫瑰堂、主教座堂和兩個私人中心（分別專為男士和女士的）工作，同時亦為不同年級的學生講授要理，但由於在郭神父、鍾神父和黎神父三個服務澳門的主業會神父當中，只有郭神父是住在澳門的，另外兩位則穿梭於澳門、香港和新加坡，所以既要協助教區工作同時又要



履行主業會內的職務，這並非一件容易的事。

以這星期為例，郭神父便曾到澳門大學並與學生談論天主。聖若瑟大學、澳門理工學院和各所澳門中學的學生平日也會與神父會面。

《主業會神父的服務範圍包括在玫瑰堂、主教座堂和兩個私人中心工作，同時亦為不同年級的學生講授要理，所以既要協助教區工作同時又要履行主業會內的職務，這並非一件容易的事。》

除了上述的協助人，更仔細地看，主業會的首要關注乃是照顧它會中的成員，他們大多是平信徒，同時也有那些屬於聖十字架司鐸會的司鐸們。聖十字架司鐸會是一個本質上與主業社團不可分割的團體。

在澳門，主業會定期在路環的會議中心為不同界別的人(神父、其他成員或協助人)安排避靜和研習會。

郭神父 (Peter Cabrerós 神父) :

新血

郭神父於1970年7月4日出生於菲律賓，他在24歲生日後數天移居澳門，並在精道語言中心任教英語。其後，於澳門大學修讀英語研究碩士課程，於1999年取得學位，並兼任英語導師至2004年。同年，郭神父獲邀在澳門大學英語部門出任全職教授一職，但他毅然選擇前往意大利羅馬的聖十字架宗座大學修讀神學。

他於2008年完成神學博士學位以後，現任主業會監督蔡浩偉主教問他，他是否有意識到天主正在召叫他成為一位司鐸，也問他是否願意成為一位司鐸。郭神父接受了挑戰並於2009年5月獲授予司鐸聖職。6月起即被委派到西班牙馬德里一直至同年12月，其後被調派到香港。

郭神父只在香港逗留至2010年4月，因為天主為他安排的目的地 --- 是要他在離開澳門六年以後，再次回到這裡。

回家

Irena Kalpas, 波蘭
華沙，2011年2月6日



Irena Kalpas 在家

66年前戰爭期間，我和我的家人被逐離波蘭，自此之後我從沒再踏足過我小時候在波蘭居住的地方，我甚至不清楚我出世的那個家仍否存在。

直至聖施禮華死忌那天---2002年6月26日，對我來說只是尋常不過的一天，我回到我的舊居並在這裡發現一些改變我人生的東西以及在俗世中成聖的信息。

在這以前，我從沒聽過聖施禮華這個名字，對他可謂一無所知。但或許他早已認識我，所以我和他才會在華沙 Filtrowa 街頭“相遇”。2002年6月26日早上11時，我打開那道58年前我和家人在戰爭時被驅逐出家的大門。

戰爭結束後幾年，我從沒回過我的舊居 - 那是一個告了一段落的世界。我至親的離世對我而言是一個痛苦的回憶。在我獨來獨往的戰後新生活中，我從沒想過重回這條街，每次我只在祈禱中回到那裡。

但突然，在毫無刻意、全沒計劃或預料的情況下，我從這條街的街頭走到街尾，然後停駐在我家的門前。跟著，就如發夢一樣 - 但卻千真萬確 - 某人邀請我進入屋內。佈置完全不一樣了，我走過大堂、客廳、飯廳，猛然發現自己置身在一個小教堂，那時我確實感到驚訝不已。我很清楚知道這是一個奇蹟，是聖施禮華引領我到這裡來的，要不然我永遠都沒可能認識主業會。



戰爭期間的華沙

我無法形容我們從前的家現在改建成一間小教堂這個事實所帶給我的衝擊，那就是往日我媽媽和我慘死於集中營毒氣室裡的姨姨一起工作的地方 - 現在這個地方有一個祭台，而主耶穌就在聖體龕裡。旁邊的牆上掛著一幅聖施禮華微笑的畫像，一個多麼親切、睿智的笑容！就在那一天，我了解到現在這個家是為青少年而設的主業會中心。

在2002年6月26日之前我還是那個從沒聽過聖施禮華名字的人。但當我發現了他的存在後，我敢大膽地說我已愛上他，並領悟到他的精神。

向前邁進一步

我想聖施禮華不單賜給我恩寵去發現這一切，他甚至協助我的第一世界——亦即是我的內心世界中邁進了一大步。我很感激他，我發現自己十分渴望多了解他的一生及主業會的精神。我開始閱讀他的自傳。然後開始了解他的理念和他的寫作。他的著作——天主之友變成我每天的好幫手。



華沙全景

我發現聖施禮華的思想、每天的生活和他與天主交談時的直接，與我非常近似。這真是上主的美妙的傑作！

我活了這麼多年亦經歷過不少苦難，但我一直感覺到天主對我的保護與信仰的幫助，而最後更使我遇上主業會。

顯然那天是聖施禮華引領我回到從前的家，自此以後，我開始接受主業會的靈修培育。過了一年，天主給了我一個莫大恩寵的聖召。我更強烈地感到把天父所賜予我的一切傳遞給他人，告訴他人我的發現，告訴他們我如何一個陰暗的生活走到現在每天與上主緊密在一起的生活。

時至今日

直到今天，透過主業會的培育，祈禱生活的實踐（這不再是履行任務，它變成了我一種內在需要）我持續一點一滴地加深了解主業會的精神。同時，願意與其他人，特別是年青人分享這成聖道路的欲望也越來越強了。

因為整天體會到上主與我同在，我開始感受到來自心底的快樂。當別人問我主業會精神最吸引我的是什麼時，我總會毫不猶豫地回答：是每時每刻的生活都與上主同在的喜樂，我們簡單的做每一件事，不誇張也不虛偽，只是追求成聖。這就是我活出主業會的精神和嘗試將之傳遞給他人。

我想從我的心底大聲唱叫出：“人呀！難道還看不到上主給予我們的，是其多嗎？”

現在，我的晚年生活，沒有家人陪伴……但我感謝天主及聖施禮華，把我帶到這個美好的大家庭。

對，天主是我的父親！祂不可能現在就離棄我。

維珍妮亞現居香港，是一位律師和三個孩子的母親

維珍妮亞 是一名主業會協助人，她在香港寫下關於聖施禮華的轉禱及她兒子的疾病。

我的兒子Guillermo患有先天性胼胝體完全缺損。在我的懷孕期間已診斷出來，當中多月來出現的併發症使我飽受悲痛和不安的煎熬。



維珍妮亞與兒子Guillermo。他曾接受了兩次神經外科手術

當他們給我解釋時，醫生把情況描述得極其可怕。當有這樣的事情發生時，我突然想起學過的天主教要理和每月參加的短避靜的講座內容。我經常聽到聖施禮華怎樣體驗神聖父子之情而說：「上主是你的父親。」我的父親！醫生向我解釋胎兒的情況時，首先在我腦海中出現的就是：「天主是我的父親！祂不可能現在就離棄我。祂讓這事發生在我身上，大概是給我計劃了些什麼吧。」

一切併發症就在我雙胞胎懷孕的第十六週開始，胎兒每天遭受雙胎輸血綜合症的影響。

這情況發生在單絨毛膜雙胎的學生懷孕中是可能的，簡單地說一個胎兒吸去另一個胎兒所需要的羊水。當時我的情況很嚴重，為保存他們的生命我必須接受宮腔手術。

於脆弱的階段

在胎兒脆弱的階段中，我必須絕對休息，且不斷接受詳盡的醫療檢查，以確保兩個胎兒都能存活。醫生就在那時發現Guillermo的腦子發育異常，他腦中長有一個囊胞，到出生時估計有5公分 x 6公分大的，囊腫引起的壓力導致他的腦室擴張，同時發現他胼胝體完全缺損及皮質發育不良。他們給我說我的孩子將會是聾的、盲的、弱智、無法行走、樣貌怪異等。



維珍妮亞與她的三個孩子

我經常聽到人們談論十字架！像那樣的時刻來臨，你就會明白如何能夠愛它，接受它。

當我想到我孩子的模樣，他將怎樣受苦，我瞭解這是我的十字架，專為我而設的。我經常藉聖施禮華的轉禱求天主幫助。「讓我能背負它。」由於明白我可藉所發生的事實踐多年來接受的培育，我願意將那痛苦獻給上主。

已十八個月大



維珍妮亞和她的丈夫及三個孩子

我的兒子Guillermo，現在已18個月大，雖然患有以上提過的疾病並且早產，他是個完全正常的孩子，他有視力和聽覺，可以行走，懂得玩耍和笑，且看起來很可愛。雖然他接受了兩次神經外科手術，我們也有過倒運的事（誰有孩子的未曾嘗過！）且自他出生後我們用盡不同的方法應付他。他無疑是一個絕對愉快，極之被寵愛的孩子，他更讓我們一家感到自豪。

我沒有向主業會要求過什麼，但常獲得很多支持：猶如來自一個真正家庭的親切和關愛。

在我人生最困難的時刻，特別在兒子Guillermo出現嚴重情況時，想到我可以依賴整個主業會每天的代禱及彌撒中的意向，就感到安慰。我感謝他們的慷慨：即使我不是會員，也有來自全世界的祈禱所支持。

主業會協助人

我是一名協助人。在主業會中，協助人是他們的親友，作為好朋友我得到很多好處。在感激之同時，我嘗試予以報答。他們所要求的是我們能努力改善自己，能夠成聖從而幫助他們，在個人處境中，使世界基督化，沒有別的事比這更需要我們去做了。

我第一次與主業會接觸，是我到位於馬德里的一間主業會中心，為我那時將領受堅振聖事作準備。之後我經常到那裡接受靈修培育。對我來說，主業會是維持我靈魂健康的一種方法。如同到健身房鍛鍊健美一般，那些教會要理班及其它靈修活動例如每月退省，能幫助我的靈魂保持良好的狀態。

一個真正的家

世界各地不同地區的主業會會員，特別現時我與丈夫和孩子所居住的香港地區的會員，幫助我信仰的培育，使我每天嘗試成為一個更好的人。特別在我面對困難的時刻，當我難於明白生命中所出現的十字架的超性意義時，主業會使我在障礙中得以成長而不致崩潰。

接受了這些培育後，我可以將其價值傳給我的孩子，如同我父母所做的一樣，並以他們的生活給我們作了榜樣。

以中國這地方為例，看到領洗人數不斷增長、初領聖體及聖召等增多，的確令人感動。有這樣的成果，有賴許多人的使徒工作：神父們、平信徒、主業會及其他組織成員。他們一生盡心盡力致力，傳播天主教信仰。他們意識到每一位基督徒均有責任儘可能為教會貢獻一分力量。正如主業會創辦人在他的著作《道路》的第一點，也是我很喜歡的一點，所說：「希望你的生命不是一個荒蕪的生命。做個有用的人。開拓路徑。藉著你的信德和愛的亮光來照耀前方。」我們正需要如此！

「一定是天主所為」

嘉露蓮是主業會的協助人。她發覺若有天主界入，瑣碎“平凡生活的片斷”拼砌起來何其美妙。

2010/11/15

當我最初被邀參加縫紉小組時，“一定是天主所為”是我即時的想。她們怎知我會對縫紉和手工藝有興趣呢？無論如何，我接受了邀請，在2010年6月最後一個星期五第一次參加縫紉小組。



茱莉姨媽是縫紉小組的一股創作力量。她能把我們認為是廢物的東西化腐朽為神奇，創作出美麗的作品，使我極為鼓舞。她可以把一件平平無奇的短袖汗衫繡上美麗貼花，使它生色不少。她又以英格蘭超級足球聯賽各球隊為主題裝飾床單，令大家讚嘆不已。最近她教我們做手縫聖誕老人布偶。看到一雙手竟可以如此帶出美感、推動並啟發我嘗試把女兒“家裏穿著的汗衫”也繡上一兩個圖案予以美化。

當我第一次參加這縫紉小組時，同組的女士們已開始了一項計劃，就是製作一塊拼砌毯子。她們大約有五、六位女士，每一帶數片布塊回家，花好一番功夫縫合成一長長的布條。之後把它們帶回小組，縫合起來成為一大毯子。使我深為感動的是儘管她們每人的計法盡不相同，當布條縫合起來之後，那毯子看起來完整美麗。我肯定經我們的首席裁縫師最後潤飾後，那毯子簡直美奐絕倫，溫暖舒適更不在話下。我猜想我們也是把平凡生活的片斷拼砌起來，期望最終能成為天主旨意這大毯子的一部分，肯定這毯子將會無與倫比。



我們埋首於創作大約一個鐘後，通常便會用茶點，有一兩次還有影碟欣賞，使我們的靈修得以滋潤。最近一次觀看了製作出色，有關聖地追尋耶穌足跡的影碟。

執筆之時，我反問自己為什麼總是繼續參加這縫紉小組。我得停下來想一想，因為不是一時間能夠回答。在製作美麗手縫物品創作的氣氛中，與一羣肯定主業會精神的朋友在一起，並體驗怎樣以最大的專注力、愛心和盡善盡美地完成小如縫製一些普通物品使我有了一份舒適和平靜的感覺。大概就是這原因吧。

經聖施禮華代禱獲賜之恩惠

聖施禮華教會我聖化我的學習

我是一個在海外讀書的研究生。以前我對自己的學習成績非常緊張。在大學讀書時我的首要目標是拿到好分數。然而，當我在澳洲開始我的研究生學習後，那裡的環境、生活習慣、學習形式以及學校要求的改變令到我很緊張及感到壓力。

例如有一個學期，我付出了很大努力在一個科目上，可惜成績並不太理想。我感到非常失望，並且懷疑自己的努力是否白費了。我向聖施禮華祈禱，他回應了我。當我讀“道路”這本書時，聖施禮華在書中提到“一小時的學習就是一小時的祈禱”。然後我明白了只要我把我的學習奉獻給天主，所有的努力會變成我對天主的祈禱。最重要的是過程而非結果。現在每當我學習的時候，我會把它奉獻給天主。聖施禮華令我學會了如何聖化我的學習，令我明白到學習與工作的真正意義。

C.L.K.I.,澳門
2011年1月17日

我十二歲的兒子

兩星期前，我們正在為我們十二歲的兒子的問題煩惱，為他轉校？那正是學年的中間，以他的年紀，在那時候要在德國我們居住的地區找一間好的學校幾乎是無可能的事，就在我們不知如何是好的時候，一位主業會的朋友到來，我們同意為兒子做一個向聖施禮華祈求的九日敬禮，就在這九日之後，我們的兒子被一間柏林著名的好學校取錄了，還要是一間天主教學校！我們還可以再有其他苛求嗎？

今天，離我們做的九日敬禮還不到兩個星期，我們的兒子正在展開他人生中新的一頁！衷心感謝我們得到的幫忙！

Marcela A。
德國，柏林
2010年11月16日

我每天都向聖施禮華祈求

我想在此多謝聖施禮華和一位從台灣來的神父。在我跟一間在中國的公司洽談合同遇上困難時，這位神父送了我一張向聖施禮華祈求的祈禱咭。之後，我就每天都向聖施禮華祈求代禱，求主賜我力量去克服困難。我很高興就在上星期四，我跟那間公司的合同終於簽妥了。我希望能與更多人分享我的經驗，邀請他們也來一起祈禱。謝謝。

馬來西亞
2010年11月16日

醫生說他活不了

我真的很感激聖施禮華。四年零四個月前因聖施禮華的代禱，奇蹟出現了在我兒子身上。我的兒子現在是一個健康成長中的男孩，但是在他只有三個月大的時候，他患了重病，醫生說他活不了！今天他這個健康活潑，多謝天主和聖施禮華，-真是無盡的感激！現在藉著兒子生日，我們都會派發一盒盒內附有聖施禮華祈禱咭的糖果，好讓更多的墨西哥家庭認識聖施禮華，並向他祈求代禱。多謝你，聖施禮華。

Alejandra Sanchez,
墨西哥
2010年11月2日

我每天向天主和聖施禮華謝恩: 我仍存活

年僅四歲，我就失去母親，孤獨地跟著父親和姐姐過活。後來父親續弦，多生七個子女。十六歲時，朋友送我一本書‘道路’，這是我前所未有的最寶貴的禮物，它成為我生命的指引，皆因父親為養家而辛勤工作，實在沒有時間跟我們在一起。

‘道路’教導我認識作為天主女兒的價值，而克己苦行有助我們增強意志，陶鑄性格，防護我們流於冷淡。我對天主的信德日增，開始入讀 Chiclayo 學校時，老師是‘主業會’成員，介紹我認識其他女孩 如今我們成

為好朋友。我對聖施禮華愈加深入認識，常常求他為我轉禱。我將工作奉獻給天主，盡量不令他失望。當我犯錯時，會向他懺悔，並盡力改正。

三十三歲時，我突患重病，差點喪命。我請求聖施禮華的治愈，而我竟於三天內脫離危險，通過所有檢驗測試，醫生認為我真的已痊癒，可以出院回家。聖施禮華為我求得這個奇蹟。

我每天向天主和聖施禮華謝恩：我仍存活。

秘魯利馬 Virginia Monge
二零一零年十二月十四日

我們的生命有所改變

我寫這個見證是為感謝聖施禮華向天主轉求，致令我獲得殊恩。

幾日之內，我和妻子經歷了幾件大事，足以改變我們的人生。從頭說起，我們第一個孩子即將出生。他出生前一個月，我要接受膝部手術，而妻子則於一個半月前接受切片檢查，以檢測其胸部的‘懷疑’腫塊。

我恆常地滿懷信心向聖施禮華禱告，祈求一切安好。

終於，我們的兒子健康順利出生，我的手術非常成功，而妻子的檢測顯示屬於無關重要的良性腫塊。我對這一切結果實在感到非常慶幸，萬分感謝天主，亦感謝聖施禮華為我們轉求。

兩個月之間，我們的生命經歷幾許變化，吉凶難料，多謝天主，一切逢凶化吉，如今我們三口子在健康快樂的家庭裡共享天倫。

西班牙 Emilio
二零一零年十二月十二日

“A Caress from God”

Joaquin Romero has been wheelchair-bound with multiple sclerosis for almost 20 years. But he refuses to give in to pessimism and has no doubt that his disability is “a caress from God.”

November 15, 2010

“Mundo Cristiano” - Jaime Figa i Vaello



Joaquin Romero wanted to know the hard facts when he was first diagnosed 20 years ago. Multiple sclerosis is an incurable and progressive degenerative disease. He asked his doctor to explain exactly what to expect in the future. “You will become quadriplegic, blind, mute and bed-ridden. But the worse is that it is incurable, and often what began as a physical illness could lead to depression.”

Presently, Joaquin is 41 and has almost lost the use of his left arm, his sight has deteriorated and he is often short of breath. When he realized that he needed more help to fend for himself, he decided to start a company with his brother Borja to help disabled

people like himself. He is an architectural technician and his brother an engineer, and together they have started B & J Adaptations, presently the only Spanish company in this field. Through his company, Joaquin has made his voice heard and has helped many people to adapt their living space to the needs of their new illness.

“This is not going to be a sprint but a marathon”

I was then 22 or 23 years old. I had my life perfectly planned. After military service, I studied technical architecture, with the hope of one day overseeing high-rise construction projects. And I liked soccer. One day while playing soccer with my friends, I sprinted for the ball and kicked hard, and then I started to feel like there were ants all over my body; then came the double vision.

When the neurologist told me the diagnosis, I recognized

One day while playing soccer, I ran for the ball and kicked hard, and then I started to feel like there were ants all over my body; then came the double vision.

the name of the disease. I just wanted him to prescribe some pills and settle everything.

"No, no, Joaquin," he said, "multiple sclerosis is incurable."

"Okay, so I'll have to live with it," I told him without any idea of what I was going to face.

"It is a progressive, degenerative disease. This is not going to be a sprint but a marathon. You will have to be well prepared, and measure out your energy, not with great strides, but one step at a time."



What did you do? What did you think?

I didn't know what to think then; I couldn't grasp what it all implied. I'm the type that likes to have everything under control, but this time, it wasn't going to be possible. Thank God I was already a member of Opus Dei for some years. I always had someone to confide in and talk with about my problems. We would go for a drink by the sea (I love the sea), and with that excuse, I got to know all the bars along the coast of Barcelona.

I have only now begun to sense the great meaning that lies hidden behind my illness.

Not everything gets resolved talking, but you become more objective. Often people with this disease get trapped in silly problems that can be solved.

So you didn't allow it to get you down?

Of course not. And when I realized that I could no longer fend for myself, my brother Borja and I adapted the house so that I could control everything from either the chair or bed, or from the computer. That's how the company started in these 30 square meters. Today it is the only company in Spain that helps disabled people with similar problems adapt their living space to their disabilities.

You must have seen a lot of suffering...

Once a lady called asking for help for her ailing husband. I said I would look into it. After some time, I called but she was not around, since she had gone to her husband's funeral. Since then I vowed not to waste a second of my life and do all I could to help those who came to me. Sometimes a customer comes in for a machine and then before they go, they ask: "And how are you managing to hold up?"

What do you say? Can suffering be loved?

No; not for itself; no. Suffering makes no sense; you have to find the meaning behind it. I'm telling you the truth about what I feel and see. I reply that I'm going through some of the best moments of my life because I have only just begun to sense the great meaning that lies hidden behind this illness.



Suffering is a mystery, and there is no handbook that says: number one, how to cope with suffering; number two, what to do when it lasts more than two weeks... How easy it would be if we already knew what to do about it!

I think God has made us free so that we have a chance to discover its meaning for ourselves. 'What an unjust Father!', you might think. But that's the easy way out. Why not blame yourself? I don't think God lacks intelligence or intuition; we are the ones who are slow to understand. We should ask ourselves why we can't understand it, and strive to get closer to Him through the sacraments.

And you have no complaints?

In terms of health, I've lost everything. But one thing I have never lost is interior peace, and the sureness that the way I am facing all this really works. I don't remember ever having felt as good as I do now.

For me, it seems that my life is like a miracle, a caress from God. It may sound crazy, but no man would have enough imagination to invent what I'm going through; no, only God knows and is capable of it.

Have you ever had any moment of despair, a temptation to say "enough is enough"?

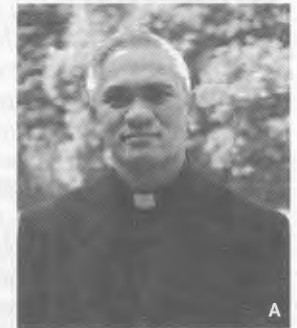
Sure, many times. There were moments when I thought God had abandoned me, and when I hit rock bottom. I remember one client who said he wanted to commit suicide. I told him that I too had thought about it myself and even had a suicide plan carefully drawn out.... it was easy! But then redirecting the conversation, I told him, "Don't you think it is much more beautiful to be alive?"

RETRATO DA PRELATURA DO OPUS DEI EM MACAU

Santo Trabalho de Deus

JOSÉ MIGUEL ENCARNAÇÃO
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É a instituição da Igreja Católica mais discutida na actualidade, fruto do desconhecimento quase generalizado da sua acção nas sociedades onde está inserida. Vê no trabalho o caminho para a santificação do homem e defende, acima de tudo, a universalidade de Deus. Em Macau procura ser a «grande catequese» idealizada por Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, contribuindo, sempre que necessário, na acção pastoral da Diocese. Assim é o Opus Dei!



PRESENTE em Macau desde 1989, a Prelatura da Santa Cruz e Opus Dei tem procurado incutir, também no território, as ideias que estão na base da sua fundação. Nesse sentido, ajuda na actividade da Diocese local e promove os valores da Igreja Católica junto dos leigos, independentemente da idade, raça ou grupo social.

Para o Opus Dei, o trabalho e a família são os dois grandes pilares do homem, que devem ser preservados, com vista à criação de um mundo melhor, rico em valores.

«Se santificarmos o trabalho, o trabalho santifica-nos. Depois, então, podemos ajudar o próximo», começou por explicar a O CLARIM o padre Peter Cabrerros (foto A), actual líder espiritual da instituição na RAEM.



Na realidade, desde que o Opus Dei foi constituído, em 1928, por São Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer (foto B), que tem por lema as palavras do seu fundador: «O trabalho é santo, santifica-nos e santifica os outros».

Por outras palavras, «é encontrar Jesus no trabalho», como referiu ainda o padre Peter Cabrerros, para quem todos os homens têm um importante

Some people say that euthanasia is a solution.

Who says so? The sick or those who have to put up with the sick? If you really love the sick, you cannot simply shut them out with your 'solution.' That is unjust and selfish. They need to see that there are many options. You can't settle such an important issue by simply saying: 'Have a good death.' If you really love those who are sick, you have to do everything you possibly can to help....

When I get to heaven, I will get down on my knees, because then I will be able to, and tell Him, "Incredible. It has been stupendous."

What if the patient himself wants it?

Then I'd put myself in his place. We must talk face to face. I would tell him. "Don't think you're a useless piece of junk, a leech.... No, exactly the opposite. You have the opportunity to show that suffering can have great value. That it's a mission." It is important that people understand that a person with a disability is not a useless person.

Did you discover all this overnight?

No, no! At 15, none of these answers had even entered my head. These are thoughts that have become clearer over the years, and now I see it all clearly... but it has been more than 20 years!

What will you say to God when you get to Heaven?

Thanks a million and a big kiss for the life He has given me. Besides I would not have wanted any other life. I want only what he has wanted. I will get down on my knees, because then I will be able to, and tell him, "Incredible. It has been stupendous."

papel a desempenhar na sociedade onde se inserem: «O médico deve ser um bom médico; o advogado, um bom advogado; o jornalista, um bom jornalista; a dona-de-casa, uma boa dona-de-casa», exemplificou.

Com esta filosofia de vida, o Opus Dei pretende reavivar o espírito de entreadjudada dos primeiros cristãos, que através do trabalho ajudavam as famílias e as comunidades a que pertenciam.

«Vemos cada pessoa como um todo. Somos, ao mesmo tempo, expressão da criação divina, elo de uma família e membros da comunidade onde vivemos. O trabalho enriquece-nos e ajuda-nos a contribuir para o bem comum. Jesus, por exemplo, foi carpinteiro. Trabalhou como qualquer outro homem, amou Seus pais e todos aqueles que O rodeavam», acentuou o sacerdote.

Perante o aumento do número de imigrantes, e a conseqüente proliferação de outras religiões, nos países europeus, o Opus Dei foi a primeira instituição da Igreja Católica a admitir cooperadores não-cristãos. – E porquê?, perguntámos. «– Porque Deus é uno e universal! É de todos!», respondeu o padre Peter Cabreros, que – a este propósito – recordou as palavras proferidas pelo então cardeal Joseph Ratzinger (hoje Papa Bento XVI), aquando da canonização de Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, em 6 de Outubro de 2002: «Um homem aberto à presença de Deus apercebe-se de que Deus faz maravilhas ainda hoje. Portanto, devemos deixá-lo entrar e agir. E é assim que surgem as coisas que oferecem um futuro e renovam a humanidade».

«O Opus Dei pretende reavivar o espírito de entreadjudada dos primeiros cristãos, que através do trabalho ajudavam as famílias e as comunidades a que pertenciam.»

«Perante o aumento do número de imigrantes, e a conseqüente proliferação de outras religiões, nos países europeus, o Opus Dei foi a primeira instituição da Igreja Católica a admitir cooperadores não-cristãos»

A OBRA NA RAEM

Há vários indícios de que São Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer foi uma das vozes com maior influência no decorrer do Concílio Vaticano II, principalmente no que respeita ao papel das instituições religiosas e dos leigos na actividade pastoral da Igreja. Daí o empenho do Opus Dei em ajudar o bispo D. José Lai nos diversos trabalhos da Diocese de Macau.



Embora a Obra no território conte com os padres Peter Cabreros, Paul Chung e José Pedro Líbano Monteiro, apenas o primeiro vive na RAEM a tempo inteiro, enquanto os outros dois dividem o tempo entre Macau, Hong Kong e Singapura. Por esta razão torna-se difícil conciliar as necessidades da Diocese com os deveres da Prelatura, cuja acção engloba as igrejas de São Domingos e da Sé, dois centros privados – um para homens, outro para mulheres – e o ensino da catequese a estudantes de vários níveis de escolaridade.

Esta semana, por exemplo, o padre Peter Cabreros deslocou-se à Universidade de Macau, tendo-se encontrado «com alguns alunos para falar sobre Deus». A Universidade de São José, o Instituto Politécnico de Macau e várias escolas secundárias também já receberam a visita do sacerdote.

«Torna-se difícil conciliar as necessidades da Diocese de Macau com os deveres da Prelatura, cuja acção engloba as igrejas de São Domingos e da Sé, dois centros privados e o ensino da catequese a estudantes de vários níveis de escolaridade.»

Numa esfera mais restrita, para além dos referidos cooperadores, o Opus Dei cuida dos seus membros, podendo estes ser leigos – é-lhes dada a possibilidade de viverem dentro ou fora dos centros – ou sacerdotes, desde que não pertençam à Sociedade Sacerdotal da Santa Cruz, uma entidade criada especialmente para acolher padres diocesanos que queiram estar, de alguma forma, ligados à Prelatura.

Com alguma frequência são organizados retiros e seminários, que variam consoante as pessoas a que se destinam (sacerdotes, membros ou cooperadores). Por cá têm lugar no centro de conferências da instituição, em Coloane.

PADRE PETER CABREROS

Sangue novo

O padre Peter Cabreros nasceu nas Filipinas, no dia 4 de Julho de 1970. Poucos dias após concluir 24 anos, veio para Macau ensinar Inglês no Centro de Línguas Jing Dou. Mais tarde inscrever-se-ia no mestrado de Estudos Ingleses, leccionado pela Universidade de Macau, o qual viria a terminar em 2004. Nesse ano, embora seja convidado a integrar, a tempo inteiro, o departamento de Inglês daquela universidade, na qualidade de professor, decide estudar Teologia. O local escolhido: a Pontifícia Universidade da Santa Cruz, em Roma (Itália).

Em 2008, já com o doutoramento em Teologia praticamente concluído, é abordado por D. Javier Echevarría (na foto C com o Papa), o actual prelado do Opus Dei, no sentido de abraçar a vida sacerdotal. Peter Cabreros aceita o repto, sendo ordenado padre em Maio de 2009. Logo de seguida é colocado em Madrid (Espanha), onde vive entre os meses de Junho e Dezembro, antes de ser transferido para Hong Kong.

Na região vizinha viria a estar apenas até Abril de 2010, uma vez que o destino – traçado por Deus – quis que regressasse a Macau, seis anos após ter deixado o território.

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(Translation)

About THE PRELATURE OF *OPUS DEI* IN MACAU

The Holy Work of God

O CLARIM - 25-02-11

JOSÉ MIGUEL ENCARNAÇÃO

It's the most talked about Catholic institution nowadays, which is a result of ignorance about it where it integrates. Actually, it (Opus Dei) sees work as a way to holiness and it upholds, above all, the universality of God. In Macau it aims to be a "great catechesis", an ideal work of Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, and aims to help attend, whenever it can, to the pastoral needs of a diocese that asks for such assistance. This is Opus Dei !

Present in Macau since 1989, the Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei has fostered its ideals of working well in the world, loving it, for it comes from God. In this sense, it assists in the activities of the local Diocese and promotes the values of Catholic Church among the lay people, regardless of their age, race or social group.

For Opus Dei, work and family are two great pillars of people that need to be well preserved, in order to create a better world, that is rich in values. *"If we sanctify work, then, work will also sanctify us. Afterwards, we can help the ones around us"*, this is how Father Peter Cabreros began to explain Opus Dei to *O CLARIM*. He is presently the lone priest of the Prelature living in Macau.

In fact, since the foundation of Opus Dei in 1928 by Saint Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, its motto comes from the words of their founder: *"Work is holy, it sanctifies us and it sanctifies others"*. In other words, referred also by Father Peter Cabreros, *"it's to find Jesus in work"*, for whom all people have an important role to play in the society where they integrate: *"A doctor should be a good doctor; a lawyer, a good lawyer; a journalist, a good journalist; a housewife, a good housewife"*, he explained.

With its philosophy in life, Opus Dei aims to revive the early Christians' idea of spirit of service, wherein through work, they help the families and the communities to which they belong. *"We see each person as a whole. We are, at the same time, an expression of the divine creation, a link to the family and the members of the community where we live. Work enriches us and helps us to contribute to the common good. Jesus, for example, was a carpenter. He worked like any other men, He loved His parents and all those around Him"*, the priest emphasized.

In the face of the increasing number of immigrants and the consequent proliferation of other religions in European countries, Opus Dei was the first institution of the Catholic Church that admits non-Christian cooperators. "And why?" we asked. *"It's because God is one and universal! He is for everyone!"*, responded Father Peter Cabrerros, who, at this point, recalled the words of the former Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (now, Pope Benedict XVI) at the canonization of Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, on October 6, 2002: *"A man open to the presence of God discovers that God is always working and still works today: We should, then, let him enter and let him work. And so things are born which open to the future and renew mankind."*

Opus Dei aims to revive the early Christians' idea of spirit of service, wherein through work, they help the families and the communities to which they belong.

In the face of the increasing number of immigrants and the consequent proliferation of other religions in European countries, Opus Dei was the first institution of the Catholic Church that admits non-Christian cooperators.

THE WORK (Opus Dei) IN MACAU SAR

There are various indicators which show that Saint Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer was one of the most influential voices in the Second Vatican Council, mainly with respect to the roles of the religious institutions and the lay people, in the pastoral activities of the Church. From here comes the commitment of Opus Dei to help Bishop José Lai in the diverse tasks in the Diocese of Macau.

Although Opus Dei in this territory had priests, such as, Father Peter Cabrerros, Father Paul Chung and Father José Pedro Líbano Monteiro, who perform their duties here, only the first one (Fr. Cabrerros) lives in Macau, while the other two have to divide their time between Macau, Hong Kong and Singapore. Due to this reason, it is difficult to reconcile the needs of the Diocese with the duties of the Prelature, as the scope of work comprises: the St. Dominic Church and the Cathedral, two private centers— one for men and the other for women – and the teaching of catechism to students of various levels and in different schools.

This week, for example, Father Peter Cabrerros was present in the University of Macau and had an encounter *"with some students to talk about God"*. Students from the University of St. Joseph, the Macau Polytechnic Institute and various secondary schools also see the priest. Aside from the cooperators we referred to, Opus Dei is, however, primarily concerned with attending to its own members, who are mostly lay people, and also those priests who belong to the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross, an association intrinsically and inseparably united with the Opus Dei Prelature.

With some frequency, the institution organizes retreats and seminars, which vary depending on the group (priests, members or cooperators). Here in Macau, these activities are held in its conference center, located in Coloane.

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FATHER PETER CABREROS

New Blood

Father Peter Cabreros was born in the Philippines on July 4, 1970. A few days after he turned 24 years old, he came to Macau and taught English in the Jingdou Language Centre. Much later, he enrolled in the Master's course in English Studies at the University of Macau, completed the degree in 1999 (sic) and worked part-time as English instructor until 2004. That same year, although he was invited by the same university's English Department to work there as a full-time professor, he decided to study Theology. The venue: the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, in Rome (Italy).

In 2008, with a doctorate in Theology practically finished, Bishop Javier Echevarría, the present Prelate of Opus Dei, asked him if he realizes God is calling him to be a priest and if he wants to be one. Peter Cabreros accepted the challenge and was ordained priest in May 2009. Soon after, he was assigned to Madrid (Spain) from June until December 2009 and later, he was transferred to Hong Kong.

He stayed in the nearby region until April 2010 only, since his destination – as willed by God – is to return to Macau, six years after he left the territory.

Coming home

Irena Kalpas, Poland

Warsaw, February 6, 2011



Irena Kalpas at home

During the War, 66 years ago, I was exiled from Poland with my family. Since then I had never been back to the part of Warsaw where I lived as a young girl, and I did not even know whether the house where I was born was still standing.

Until, on what for me was just an ordinary day, June 26, 2002 – the anniversary of St Josemaria's death – I went back. And there I found something that changed my life, and the message about being holy in the middle of the world.

I didn't know anything about St Josemaria; I had never even heard of him. But perhaps he knew me, and that was why he came to meet me in Filtrowa Street, Warsaw, at 11 in the morning on June 26, 2002. That was the moment I opened the gate into the front garden of the house from which, 58 years before (on August 11, 1944) I and my family were sent into exile in the middle of the war.



Warsaw during the war

During all the years that followed, I had never been back to my old home – it was a world that had ended. The memory of my beloved family who had been killed was too painful. In my new post-war life, alone, I never once felt any inclination to go down that street. I only went there in my prayers.

But suddenly, without intending, planning, or foreseeing it, I walked down that street from one end to the other, and stopped in front of the entrance to our house. Then, as though in a dream – but it was totally real – someone invited me to come into the house. I went into the hall, our sitting-room, into the dining-room – though the arrangement was different – and suddenly I found myself in a beautiful chapel. I was really astonished, and I can now see clearly that it was a miracle – St Josemaria had brought me there. Otherwise I would never have met Opus Dei!

I cannot describe the impact made on me by the fact that there was now a chapel in what had once been our house. Exactly where the dining-room table had been, where my mother used to work with my aunt, who died tragically in a gas-chamber in the concentration camp: now there is an altar, where Jesus lives in the Tabernacle. And from a picture on the wall beside it smiles St Josemaria – such a kindly, intelligent smile! That first day, I learned that the house was now an Opus Dei center for university students.

Until then, June 26, 2002, I still knew nothing about St Josemaria. Just a few months after my discovery, I can boldly say that I already loved him and had absorbed his spirit.



Panoramic view of Warsaw

A step forward

I think that St Josemaria not only brought me the grace of that wonderful discovery, but helped me to take a huge step forward in my number one world, meaning my inner life. I was so grateful to him that I felt a real need to learn about his life and the spirit of Opus Dei. I started reading a biography of him and getting to know his thinking and the things he wrote. His book *Friends of God* became my daily help.

I feel that St Josemaria is incredibly close to me in his way of thinking,

his daily life and the straightforward way he talked to God. This really is a Work of God!

I have lived many years and been through times of great hardship, but I have always felt God's protection, and the support of faith. And finally, my encounter with Opus Dei.

It was obviously St Josemaria who led me to my former home that day. From then on I began to receive Christian formation in the Work, and the next year God gave me the enormous grace of a vocation. I feel more strongly every day the need to pass on everything God has given me, to tell people what I have discovered, and the way I passed from a gray life to an intense relationship with God in my daily life.

From then till now

Little by little, steadily, until today, I have been getting to know the spirit of Opus Dei more and more deeply, plus the content of spiritual formation, the meaning of the practices of piety – which have become not an obligation but a real inner need. And my desire to talk about this divine path to other people, especially young people, grows stronger and stronger.

I began to experience deep joy because of my awareness of God's presence with me throughout the day. When people ask me what attracted me most about the spirit of the Work, I can say unhesitatingly that it was the happiness of living with God every moment of our daily lives, in all the things we do, aiming at holiness simply, without anything dramatic or artificial. That's how I live out the spirit of Opus Dei, and how I try to pass it on to the people I meet.

From the bottom of my soul I would like to sing and shout out: "People! Can't you see how much God is giving you?!"

Now, in my old age, with no family ... I thank God and St Josemaria for helping to bring me into this great family.

Yes, God is my father!

He can't leave me now

Virginia, lawyer and mother of three children, Hong Kong

October 11, 2010

Virginia is a Co-operator of Opus Dei and writes from Hong Kong about the intercession of St. Josemaria and her son's illness.



Virginia with his son Guillermo, who has had to have neuro-surgery twice

My son Guillermo has total agenesis of the corpus callosum. The diagnosis was made during my pregnancy and was accompanied by various complications that made me live through months of great anguish and uncertainty.

When they gave me the news, the doctors spoke of a truly dreadful situation. When things like that happen to you, you suddenly remember what you have heard in talks on Catholic doctrine, in spiritual

retreats that I go to each month. I had always heard how St Josemaria experienced his divine filiation: "God is your Father". My Father! Whilst the doctor was trying to explain the situation to me, the first thing that came into my head was precisely that: "God is my Father! He can't leave me now. He is sending me this because he has thought of something for me."

Everything started in week 16 of my complicated pregnancy with twins. The babies – from one day to the next – suffered from feto-fetal transfusion syndrome. This is something that can happen in pregnancies of monchorionic twins, which, in short, consists in one of the babies taking the amniotic fluid away from the other. My case was so serious that I had to have inter-uterine surgery so as not to lose both of them.

A delicate situation

Owing to that delicate situation I had to have absolute rest and exhaustive medical checks to ensure both of them survived. It was then that the doctors



Virginia with her three children

began to see that Guillermo's brain was not forming correctly. He had a cyst of huge dimensions – when he was born 5cm x 6cm-; ventriculomegaly because of the pressure caused by the cyst, total agenesis of the corpus callosum and, finally, cortical dysplasia. They told me I might have a child who was deaf, blind, retarded, unable to walk, with strange facial features – and I could continue

I had so often heard people talking about the Cross! When a moment like that arrives you understand that you can love it, embrace it. When I thought of what my child would be like, of how he would suffer, I understood this was my Cross, the one that had been given to me. I asked God for a lot of help through St. Josemaria's intercession. "May I be able to carry it". I wanted to offer this suffering to God, because I understood that it was the moment to put into practice what I had heard for so many years.

18 months on

My son Guillermo, in spite of having all those things, and moreover of having been born prematurely is now – at 18 months – a completely normal child He can see, he can hear, he can walk, he plays, he laughs and he is physically adorable. It's true that he has had to have neuro-surgery twice, and we have had bad patches (who doesn't have them with any child!) and ever since he was born we have worked a lot with him at every type of stimulation, but there isn't the slightest doubt that he is an absolutely happy child, immensely loved, and also one who fills the whole family with pride.



Virginia with her husband and three children

I have never asked Opus Dei for anything, and yet I have always received enormous support: the closeness and affection of a real family. At the most difficult moments that I lived through, especially the serious situation of my son Guillermo, it consoled me to know that I could count on the prayer, and

above all the Holy Mass, each day, of the whole Work. I will always be grateful for this generosity of Opus Dei: without belonging to the Work I've had the prayer of people all over the world to rely on.

A Co-operator of Opus Dei

I am a Co-operator of Opus Dei, which is like being a close friend of the Work. As a good friend I receive many positive things from it and in gratitude I try to give something in exchange. At heart, as good friends, the only things they ask in exchange is for you to struggle to improve personally, for your holiness, and then to help them, where you can, with the work of re-Christianising the world. What less could one do?

I first got to know Opus Dei when I went to a centre of the Work in Madrid to prepare for my Confirmation. From then on I used to attend the means of formation given by people of Opus Dei. For me, Opus Dei is a way of keeping spiritually in shape. Just as one goes to the gym to keep fit, the classes of Christian doctrine and other means of formation such as the monthly recollections, help me to keep my soul in shape.

A real family

The people of Opus Dei in different parts of the world, and now specifically in Hong Kong, where I live with my husband and children, help me to nurture my faith so that I can try and be a better person every day. Opus Dei has helped me especially at the difficult moments when it was hard to see the supernatural meaning of the crosses that have appeared in my life. It has helped me to grow before the obstacles instead of collapsing.

With this formation, I am able to pass on those values to our children, just as my parents did and do with us, as well as giving us the example of their own lives.

In places such as China, it is impressive to see the growth in the number of people being baptised, first communions, vocations, etc. This happens thanks to the apostolate of many people, priests and laity, people of the Work as well as people from other organisations, who dedicate their lives, body and soul, to spreading Catholicism. That is when one feels one's own responsibility as a Christian to contribute with one's grain of sand in whatever way possible. As the Founder of Opus Dei said in point No. 1 of *The Way*, which I have always liked: Don't let your life be barren. Be useful. Make yourself felt. This is what we're about!

"God must be behind this"

Caroline is a Cooperator of Opus Dei. She discovers how the little pieces of the "fabric of her ordinary life" come together beautifully when God enters the picture.

2010/11/15

"God must be behind this." That was my first thought when I was first invited to the Sewing Circle. How did they know I would be interested in sewing and craftwork? Anyhow, the invitation was accepted and I attended my first Sewing Circle on the last Friday of June 2010.



Aunty Julie is the creative force behind the Sewing Circle and I was thoroughly inspired by the beautiful things she created out of what might appear to be scraps to you and I.

She could make a plain, dull T-shirt come alive by a well-placed appliqué. Her bedspread featuring football clubs in the English Premier League drew oohs and aahs. She is also currently showing us how to make a hand-sewn Santa Clause doll. So motivated and inspired by the beauty one can create with one's hands that I actually attempted to transform my daughters' "home singlets" with a motif or two.

At my first sewing circle, the ladies had already started on a project to make a patchwork blanket. 5 or 6 of them had taken pieces of cloths home and each had to painstakingly sew it together to form a long strip. These strips were then brought back to the Circle to be arranged and put together to form a blanket.

What struck me was that it did not matter that the stitches done by each individual person was probably not the same as the other because when everything was pieced together, the blanket looked complete and

beautiful. And I'm sure after the chief seamstress adds the finishing touches, the blanket will simply be gorgeous, not to mention warm and cozy. And I suppose, each of us is also piecing together the fabric of our ordinary lives, and hoping to eventually be part of the larger blanket of God's Will which will no doubt be beautiful beyond comparison.



After about an hour of working on our projects, we usually have a snack and on a couple of occasions, a DVD was screened for some spiritual input. I remember the last DVD we watched was an excellently produced one tracing the footsteps of Jesus in the Holy Land.

In writing this article, I asked myself why I keep going back to the Sewing Circle. I had to stop and reflect because the answer did not come quickly. In the creative atmosphere of making beautiful hand-stitched items, I get a sense of comfort and tranquillity in the presence of others who believe in the spirit of the Work and how even sewing a little ordinary of a something can be done with so much dedication, love and perfection. That's probably why.

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

St. Josemaria has taught me how to sanctify my study

I am a postgraduate student studying overseas. I used to be very concerned about my academic results. Getting good marks was my first priority when I was an undergraduate. However after I started my postgraduate study in Australia the change of environment, living style, education style and the standards required by the university made me nervous and I felt under more pressure.

For example in one semester, I put a lot of effort into one subject but it turned out that the result was not satisfying. I was even depressed with the result and wondered if my effort was wasted. I prayed to St. Josemaria and he answered me. When I read *The Way*, St. Josemaria mentioned in the book that 'one hour of study is one hour of prayer'. Then I understood that once I offer my work and study to God all of the effort becomes my prayer to God. The most important part is the process rather than the result. Now every time I study and work I offer it to our Lord and I become more concentrated because I want to offer the best to our Lord. St. Josemaria has been a huge help in teaching me how to sanctify my study letting me to understand the true meaning of study and work.

C. L. K. I., Macau
January 17, 2011

My 12-year-old son

Two weeks ago we had a big problem with our oldest son (12 years old). I didn't know what to do or which way to turn. In Germany, where we live at present, it is practically impossible to change to a good school at that age, still less in the middle of term. In the middle of all the mess, a friend in Opus Dei came and we agreed to make a novena to Saint Josemaria. Nine days later my son got a place in one of the best schools in Berlin - a Catholic school, what's more! Today he begins the new stage in his life, and it's not yet two weeks since we started our novena. With grateful thanks for the help received!

Marcela A., Berlin, Germany
November 16, 2010

I prayed to St. Josemaria every day

I want to thank Saint Josemaria and a priest from Taiwan who gave me a prayer card of Josemaria Escriva during the time I was facing obstacles in getting my contract signed with a company in China. I prayed to St. Josemaria every day asking for his intercession to give me strengths to overcome the difficulties. I am so happy that my contract was finally signed last Thursday and I want to share with more people and ask them to pray as well. Thank you....

Malaysia
November 16, 2010

The doctors said he wouldn't survive

I am so grateful to St Josemaria. Four years and four months ago a great miracle was granted to me through his intercession: the health of my son Jose Alfredo. He is now a healthy growing boy, but when he was three months old the doctors said he wouldn't survive. Today he's full of life, thanks to God and St Josemaria. Endless thanks! Now on his birthday we've been giving away boxes of sweets with the St Josemaria prayer-card on them, so that more Mexican families will learn about him and pray through his intercession. Thank you, St Josemaria Escriva.

Alejandra Sanchez, Mexico D. F.
November 2, 2010

Every day I thank God and St Josemaria that I am alive

When I was four I lost my mother. I was left alone with my father and older sister. My father married again and had seven more children. When I was sixteen a friend gave me a copy of *The Way*. It was the most valuable present I ever had. It was my guide through life, because my father was so busy working to support the family that he didn't have much time to spend with us.

The Way taught me to see my worth as a daughter of God, and that mortification builds up your will-power and strength of character and stops you getting lukewarm. My faith in God grew quickly. I started attending classes at Chiclayo School. My teacher was a member of Opus Dei who introduced me to other girls that I made friends with. I got to know St Josemaria better and better, and I often ask for his intercession. I have learned to offer my work to God and I try not to let Him down. If I do go wrong, I say sorry to Him and put it right.

When I was thirty-three I became ill and nearly died. I asked St Josemaria to cure me and in three days I was out of danger, so that after doing all sorts of checks and tests, the doctors said that I could go home because there was nothing wrong with me. St Josemaria obtained this miracle for me.

Every day I thank God and St Josemaria that I am alive.

Virginia Monge, Lima, Peru
December 14, 2010

Our lives were going to be changed

I am writing to thank St Josemaria for his intercession before God for favors granted.

Within the space of a few days my wife and I faced some major events that could change the course of our lives. To begin with, the birth of our first child. Within a month of this, I was going to have a knee operation. And finally, just a month and a half before our baby was due, my wife had to have a biopsy for a "suspect" lump on her breast.

I said the prayer to St Josemaria quite often, with faith, for all these things to turn out well.

Our son was born healthy and beautiful. My operation went perfectly well, and my wife's breast biopsy showed a benign tumor of no significance whatsoever. I'm really happy about all of this, and very grateful to God, and also to St Josemaria for having interceded for us.

Within the space of two months, our lives were going to be changed, either for better or for worse. Thank God, it was for better. And now all three of us are rejoicing in a happy and healthy family.

Emilio, Spain
December 12, 2010