

SOME NEWS

e-BOOK OF POPE FRANCIS' CATECHESIS ON THE FAMILY

eBook: Catechesis on the Family (Vol. I)

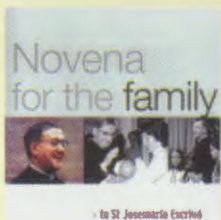
The Book of St. Pope Francis' catechesis on the family is available in the usual electronic formats: Pdf, iTunes, ePub and Mobi, Google Play Books.



The Information Office of Opus Dei has compiled in an e-book the first catechesis that Pope Francis dedicated to the family, during "this intermediate time between two Assemblies of the

Synod devoted to this matter of great importance." The book is available, for free, in the usual electronic formats: Pdf, iTunes, ePub and Mobi, Google Play Books.

NOVENA FOR THE FAMILY



This Novena —designed for married couples— aims at asking God, through the intercession of St. Josemaría, for the grace to form an authentic Christian family, to maintain and continually improve it

on the firm foundation of love for Christ and the example of the Holy Family, which is the foundation upon which —with the help of the Holy Spirit— all Christian families should be built.

It can be accessed electronically on the web pages: www.opusdei.ph and www.sanjosemaria.info



PRAYER

O God, through the Blessed Virgin Mary, you granted countless graces to your priest Saint Josemaría, choosing him as a most faithful instrument to found Opus Dei, a way of sanctification in daily work and in the fulfillment of the ordinary duties of a Christian. Grant that I may learn to turn all the circumstances and events of my life into opportunities to love you and to serve the Church, the Pope and all souls, with joy and simplicity, lighting up the paths of the earth with faith and love. Through the intercession of St. Josemaría grant me the favor I request... (here make your request). Amen

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be to the Father.

This Informative Bulletin is distributed without charge.

Subscriptions may be requested from the Prelature of Opus Dei, Office for the Causes of Saints by email (ocs.ph@opusdei.org) or by sending the form inserted in this issue.

Those who wish to help defray the printing and distribution costs of this Informative Bulletin may send their donations to **The Philippine Foundation for C.E.D., Inc.**, Rm 202 Alexander House, Amorsolo St. Legaspi Village, Makati City. Checks and money orders may be made payable to **The Philippine Foundation for C.E.D., Inc.** You may also deposit them to The Philippine Foundation for C.E.D., Inc. BPI account # 0321-0202-08 at the BPI Legaspi Columns Branch, Makati City through the branch nearest your place. Donations are tax-deductible.

Imprimatur

Bishop Javier Echevarría, Prelate of Opus Dei

Cover Photo: Saint Josemaría Escrivá blessing a baby in La Chacra, Buenos Aires (Argentina) on June 25, 1974

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www.josemariaescriva.info is the address of the official website of Saint Josemaría. It contains abundant information on his life and teachings; testimonies and interviews; social initiatives throughout the world which he promoted; official documents; an ample multi-media section and a news section.

Saint Josemaría Today #4



THE VOCATION TO MARRIAGE: A WAY TO TRANSFORM THE WORLD

"Families who lived in union with Christ and who made him known to others. Small Christian communities, which were centers for the spreading of the Gospel and its message. Families no different from other families of those time... This is what the first Christians were, and this is what we have to be: sowers of peace and joy, the peace and joy that Jesus has brought to us."

ST. JOSEMARÍA, *Christ is Passing By. Marriage: A Christian Vocation, Point # 30.*

MEMORIES

A selection of texts on the family from the preaching and writings of St Josemaría including some reminiscences of those who knew him

POPE FRANCIS

His preaching about the family during his pontificate

FAVORS

Accounts of people who received favors through the intercession of St Josemaría



WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO MARRIED COUPLES?

"I would advise them to love one another and to realize that although disagreements and difficulties would crop up throughout their lives, if they are resolved with naturalness they may even contribute to the deepening of their love... It is possible to live happily together when each one tries to correct his or her own defects and makes an effort to overlook the faults of the other. That is to say, when there is love, which cancels out and overcomes everything that might seem to be a motive for coldness or disagreement..."

The important thing is not to give up the effort, not to give in to nerves, pride or personal fads or obsessions... Anyone who says he cannot put up with this or that, or finds it impossible to hold his peace, is exaggerating in order to justify himself. We should ask God for the strength to overcome our whims and to practice self-control. When we lose our temper we lose control of the situation. Words can become harsh and bitter and we end up offending,

wounding and hurting, even though we didn't mean to.

We should all learn to keep quiet, to wait and say things in a positive, optimistic way. When her husband loses his temper, the moment has arrived for the wife to be especially patient and wait until he calms down, and vice versa. If there is true love and a real desire to deepen in it, rarely will it happen that the two give in to bad temper at the same time...

Another important thing is to get used to the fact that we are never a hundred per cent right. In fact one can say that in matters like these, which are usually debatable, the surer we are of being absolutely right, the more doubtful it is that we are... Finally, I would advise parents never to quarrel in front of their children. They can remind each other of this with a certain word, a look or a gesture. If they cannot avoid the argument altogether they can, at least, put it off till later when they are more calm."

Conversations with Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer, Rialp Edition, Madrid 2002, no. 108

1 & 2: Families on their way to the Mass of the Beatification of Alvaro del Portillo, 27 September 2014, Madrid



EDUCATION IS BASED ON TRUST

"The parents are the persons primarily responsible for the education of their children, in both human and spiritual matters. They should be conscious of the extent of their responsibility. To fulfill it, they need prudence, understanding, a capacity to love and a concern to give good example. Imposing things, in an authoritarian manner, is not the right way to teach. The ideal attitude of parents lies more in becoming their children's friends: friends who will be willing to share their anxieties, who will listen to their problems, who will help them in an effective and agreeable manner.

Parents should find time to be with their children, to talk to them. They are top priority—more important than business or work or rest. In their conversations, parents should make an effort to listen, to pay attention, to understand, to recognize that their children are sometimes partly right—or even completely right—in some of their rebellious attitudes. At the same time, they should help their children to orient their energies and their dreams in the right direction, teaching them what things to consider and how to reason things out. It is not a matter of imposing a line of conduct, but rather of showing the human and supernatural motives for it. In a word, parents have to respect their children's freedom, because there is no real education without personal responsibility, and there is no responsibility without freedom."

St. Josemaría, Christ is Passing By. Marriage: A Christian Vocation, no. 27

- 3. A Guatemalan couple, with 2 priest sons, who attended the Beatification of Blessed Alvaro, 27 September 2014, Madrid
- 4. Part of the crowd after the Thanksgiving Mass for Blessed Alvaro, 28 September 2014, Madrid

"One would have a poor idea of marriage and of human affection if he were to think that love and joy come to an end when faced with such difficulties. It is precisely then that our true sentiments come to the surface. Then the tenderness of a person's gift of himself takes root and shows itself in a true and profound affection that is stronger than death."

St. Josemaría, Christ is Passing By. Marriage: A Christian Vocation, no. 24



“For me there is no clearer example of this practical union of justice and charity than the behavior of mothers. They love all their children with the same degree of affection, and it is precisely this same love that impels them to treat each one differently, with an unequal justice, since each child is different from the others.”

St. Josemaría, *Friends of God. Living Facing God and Men*, no. 173.

EDUCATING CHILDREN IN A MATERIALISTIC WORLD

“A perplexed father asked him how he could educate his children for work and responsibility in a materialistic environment.

I would take them for a brief stroll...in the slums surrounding the great city of Caracas. I would cover their eyes with my hands and then remove them so that they could see the shanties, some above the others... May they learn that they should make good use of money; may they know how to manage it so that everyone participates in some way in the goods of the earth. Because it is very easy to say: “I’m a good person,” if one has not gone through any privation.

A friend of mine, who has a lot of money, once told me: “I do not know if I’m good because my wife has never gotten sick; I was never jobless nor penniless; I have not had my children weakened by hunger, jobless nor penniless; I have not found myself hanging out and living in the middle of the street without a shelter... I do not know if I am an honest man. I would not know what I would have done if all these had happened to me.”

Ana Sastre, *Tiempo de Caminar (Time to Walk)*, Rialp Edition, Madrid 1989, p. 588.

- 5. Pilgrims from Africa after the Beatification Mass of Alvaro del Portillo, 27 September 2014, Madrid
- 6. Some Asians in the Thanksgiving Mass for Blessed Alvaro, 28 September 2014, Madrid



LAGUNA: CARING FOR THE TERMINALLY-ILL AND THEIR FAMILIES

St. Josemaría understood that suffering had a place in the plan of Redemption. At the same time, he used to repeat, “physical pain, when it can be removed, should be removed.” There are already enough sufferings in life! And when it cannot be removed, it should be offered up.” From this perspective, the Laguna Palliative Care Hospital, a health care institution in Madrid dedicated to the care of terminally-ill patients and elderly people who need assistance, was founded. The project was established by the Vianorte Foundation.

The Vianorte Foundation finds inspiration in the work that Josemaría Escrivá carried out in the 1930s among the sick and terminally-ill of Madrid, above all in the General Hospital and in the King’s Hospital, an institution specializing in contagious diseases which had no cure at that time. As he himself declared, working in the hospitals and living with those who were suffering were the sources of the strength he needed in the early years of Opus Dei.

7 & 8: Laguna Palliative Care Hospital in Madrid.

“I have wanted to tell you that the human strength of the Work had been the sick in the hospitals of Madrid: the most wretched ones; those who lived in their homes and have lost their last human hope; the most uneducated in the poorest slums... the incurably sick, the abandoned poor, children bereft of family and learning, homes without light, warmth and love.”

Without Fear of Life and Without Fear of Death. Words of St. Josemaría to doctors and to the sick. *Eunsa, Pamplona 1976, p. 141.*



Pope Francis, *Audience*, 11 February 2015.

Pope Francis, *Audience*, 15 April 2015.

Province/Country

Those who wish to help with their donations may send them to The Philippine Foundation for C.E.D., Inc., Rm 202 Alexander House, Amorsolo St., Legaspi Village, Makati City. Checks and money orders may be made payable to **The Philippine Foundation for C.E.D., Inc.** You may also deposit them to The Philippine Foundation for C.E.D., Inc. BPI account #0321-0202-08 at the BPI Legaspi Columns Branch, Makati City through the branch nearest your place. Donations are tax-deductible.

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KEEP THE FAITH AND TRANSMIT IT IN ALL ENVIRONMENTS

“But family and the workplace can also be a parched place where faith nonetheless has to be preserved and communicated. Yet “it is starting from the experience of this desert, from this void, that we can again discover the joy of believing, its vital importance for us men and women. In the desert we rediscover the value of what is essential for living; thus in today’s world there are innumerable signs, often expressed implicitly or negatively, of the thirst for God, for the ultimate meaning of life. And in the desert people of faith are needed who, by the example of their own lives, point out the way to the Promised Land and keep hope alive.” (Benedict XVI, Homily 11 October 2012). In these situations, we are called to be living sources of water from which others can drink. At times, this becomes a heavy cross, but it was from the cross, from his pierced side, that our Lord gave himself to us as a source of living water. Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of hope!”

Pope Francis, *Apostolic Exhortation, Evangelii Gaudium*,
24 November 2013, no. 86

Pope Francis dedicated the catechesis of the Wednesday Audiences of 2015 to explain the importance of the family, using practical examples on how to improve the bonds of family love. Reading these texts will help us understand more deeply the commandment of love for our first neighbor, the members of our family.

9. The General Audience of Pope Francis on October 1, 2014 was attended by thousands of devotees of Blessed Alvaro del Portillo who came to Rome to express their appreciation for the beatification. In the photo, the family of Jose Ignacio Ureta (the blonde boy with the Pope) greets Pope Francis who was accompanied by Bishop Javier Echevarría. The Holy See recognized as miraculous the cure of Jose Ignacio after a cardiac arrest of more than half an hour which occurred on August 2, 2003.

FAVORS

TENACITY AND JOY

On the morning of April 8, 2014, I was in my office at the Faculty when a former student, who graduated some years ago, came back to return a book that I had lent him.

Years ago, this fellow—a brilliant student at the University—had a serious accident in a highway up north. There was a heavy snowfall and he decided to park the car on the shoulder pavement in order to put the tire chains. Right then and there another vehicle slammed against his car which left him in a coma. He was saved after several surgical operations but the accident left him in a bad state: he had continuous convulsions all over, he stuttered and had difficulty expressing himself, etc. That was his condition when he came to my office that day.

After talking with great difficulty about the book and other topics of interest, I noticed some improvement in him and I told him: “The truth is that I find you much better now. How much God must have protected you...” Deeply moved he replied,

“Yes”, he felt that God had protected him; also a saint who had lived in the same building where he lived at Concepcion Street in Burgos protected him. “I do not know if you know him. His name is St. Josemaría Escrivá. He lived on the third floor and I live on the fourth. Well that saint who also stayed in Hotel Sabadell and in Santa Clara Street helps me to keep moving ahead.”

I commented that with his tenacity and the help of the saint he could go very far and be completely cured and that he could continue being a good example of tenacity and joy. I remembered that I had a prayer card in my wallet and offered it to

him. “Have you had one?” I asked him and he said no. He looked at it carefully and was very happy. “But this is in English”, he said. Immediately I brought out another one in Spanish. I told him that this saint obtained for me many small favors related to problems at work, family, etc. The fellow was again moved and told me that it is true that little things matter a lot and that he would ask him not only for big things, but also for small ones.

Since he kept holding on to it and looking at it I asked him to keep it. He placed it in the inside pocket of his jacket and told me. “Here it will be closer to my heart”. And he left.

A.C.M. (Burgos)



MY DIFFICULT PREGNANCY WITH TWINS

Six months ago, I experienced my worst nightmare. I was twenty weeks pregnant with twins. In an ultrasound one of them was seen not to be developing well. Each ultrasound after that showed the baby getting worse. We only had faith and prayer to rely on.

We do not know exactly how, but my mother found herself with a prayer card of St Josemaría. We were told that it was miraculous. We began to pray. Then came the time for me to deliver.



The doctors told me that one of the babies would not be fit for life and would die at birth. Well, my little child was born, and survived healthy and strong.

Now he is a healthy and lively 2 month-old baby. The doctors say that he

is very well but could not explain how it happened.

Right now, I am full of faith and I know that there had been a miracle. My two babies are precious and they are growing tremendously well.

J.R.Ch. (e-mail)

TEN YEARS

It has been ten years now when our son, who had just been operated for a tumor in his head, upon arriving home started biking. When he was reprimanded, he complained saying that he, “had surgery on the head and not on the feet.” For each day of these ten years we give thanks to the Lord and to St Josemaría because, through his intercession, the operation was a wonderful miracle.

Ten years ago, we got hold of a magazine with the image of St Josemaría. From that moment on, we began to ask for the health of Felipe whose prognosis was bad. A few days later, on March 18, 2005, he underwent surgery. The surgeon, upon leaving the operating room, only managed to say that it was a miracle. Felipe awoke

from the anesthesia asking for a soft drink as if nothing had happened.

A few days later, he resumed schooling with absolute normality... Thank God, now he is a lively, strong and healthy young lad with a remarkable intelligence and splendid growth... with some quirks that come with adolescence...but a handsome and healthy boy who, since that time, lives an absolutely normal life.

Ten years had already passed and thanks be to God, a few months ago, my wife and I fulfilled our dream of going to Our Lady of Peace [The Church of the Prelature of Opus Dei in Rome] to thank St Josemaría for Felipe's health and petition him for our entire family. Greetings from Argentina.

L.G.M. (Argentina)

I DID THE NOVENA FOR WORK AND I WAS HEARD

I did the novena for work and I was heard. I started to pray, not really knowing what I wanted. After finishing my studies in Social Work, I could not find a job in that area. I am a catechist and always liked Christian volunteer projects and work.

I asked God many times to help me find a job on projects of this type. I did the novena for work and, after a year, I no longer recited it because I didn't know what to ask for. Earlier this year, I decided to dedicate myself more to professional life and to study. My first decision was to pray the novena. I visited the website of Opus Dei and there I read about a young

I only had to shoulder the travel expenses and I didn't have to worry about the rest. God gifted me with a project related to my career and the life of a Christian missionary. One day after receiving the offer, I met a lady friend. She was the first person of Opus Dei that I had known, and we had not seen each other for some time. She encouraged me to earn a master's degree and offered to help me in the preparation. This was my great desire but I did not know where to start. I accepted her help. I was experiencing that the novena was bearing much fruit. My experience as a missionary abroad will be very useful for my master's aside from being a blessing from God.

Now I recommend this novena to all my friends because I know that many of them feel lost in their professional life as I myself felt.

R.N.S. (Brazil)

HE WAS ASKED TO BEGIN WORK IMMEDIATELY

In the month of March, we were thrilled with the arrival of our second child. In July, my husband was told that his job had become redundant and that he would be retrenched. He was notified a month before the date of his termination. We were distraught. I was on maternity leave and, if my husband did not succeed in finding a new job, we would be having financial problems.

Immediately we started the Novena for work to St Josemaría with the promise that, if he gets a job, we would talk about the grace and infinite mercy of God through the intercession of St Josemaría. We prayed the novena several times. My husband had interviews, but without positive results. His term ended and he was unemployed by the end of August. I was only receiving financial assistance for my maternity leave so I asked my office if I could report back for work earlier than usual so as to earn extra income.

At the end of September, on the fifth day of our novena, my husband had an interview. The job was in a good place and the salary was excellent. The interview went very well and he was told that he would be contacted after a couple more interviews.

On the eighth day of the novena, he was offered the job and was asked to accept it and to begin work almost immediately. Fortunately, I had not yet submitted the documents for my early return to work and could still cancel it. My husband started his new job on October 6, and now enjoys the new challenges and opportunities he faces. We are grateful to God for the intercession of this great saint, and ask him for new favors and for world peace.

E.U. (United Kingdom)

TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE

Thoughtlessness. I hate to admit that I have to often accuse myself of this. And worse... (I also hate to admit this) instead of recognizing the lack of virtue, I put the blame on other issues, e.g., too much work, lack of time, etc.

I was just thinking of the one-way relationship between my sister and me. I say "one-way" because I am always on the receiving end. My sister is always there when I need her. I can borrow anything from her... and anytime, as the need arises. Yet... I was hardly available for her. Why? I was busy. I had too many things to attend to. I... I... I...

One conscience-stricken moment, I felt sorry about how much my sister always puts up

with me. As I prayed, I turned to St Josemaría and asked him to teach me how to make up for my thoughtlessness. He made me see that my sister understands... but, then, he also made me see that thoughtfulness could well be shown in a small token or gesture for her.

That "thoughtful moment" came in the form of a box of brownies, which I bought when I attended an activity in Makiling Conference Center. Ever-appreciative as my sister was, she liked them. So, I thanked St Josemaría seeing how pleased my sister was... and seeing how I had settled my debt in an instant... St Josemaría never grants a favor without providing the possible fringe benefits as well.

As it turned out, the box of brownies had served as a

sample for her to taste-test the product. She decided that it would make a perfect give-away for Christmas for her and her husband's friends. A few days later, I learned that she ordered a van-full more of brownies. I was very happy because she was affording good business for Anihan Technical School which, in turn, meant helping underprivileged students in their schooling. Eventually, my sister also started to order other goodies, aside from the brownies, whether at Christmas or off-season. No doubt she has become a regular customer of the livelihood project.

I thank St Josemaría for his wonderful way of suggesting solutions to problems and doing so with unexpected surprises to go with them.

D.L. (Quezon City)

A DAUGHTER AFTER EIGHT YEARS

I write to inform you about a miracle obtained through the intercession of St Josemaría. My wife and I have been childless for eight years. For several months, I prayed every day the prayer to St Josemaría to ask for his help. Now we have a wonderful little girl who is the joy of our life. This would not have been possible without the intercession of St Josemaría.

S.G. (United Kingdom)

