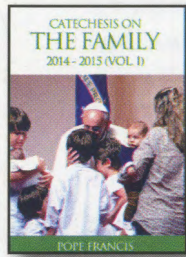


NEW RESOURCES

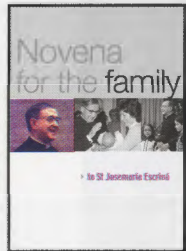
E-BOOK: CATECHESIS ON THE FAMILY BY POPE FRANCIS

The Information Office of Opus Dei has put together an e-book containing the catechetical addresses on the family delivered by Pope Francis during “this intermediate time between the two Synod Assemblies dedicated to this very important reality.” The book is available in PDF and ePub formats for free on www.opusdei.org.



NOVENA FOR THE FAMILY

This Novena, intended for married couples, seeks to ask God through Saint Josemaría's intercession for the grace to form a true Christian family and to strengthen it continually by building on the firm foundation of any Christian family: love for Christ and the example of the Holy Family.



The electronic version is available at opusdei.org and josemariaescriva.info.

This bulletin is distributed free of charge. We appreciate contributions, which are tax-deductible, to help defray the printing and distribution costs. These can be sent to:

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PRAYER

Oh God, through the mediation of Mary our Mother, you granted your priest Saint Josemaría countless graces, choosing him as a most faithful instrument to found Opus Dei, a way of sanctification in daily work and in the fulfillment of the Christian's ordinary duties. Grant that I too may learn to turn all the circumstances and events of my life into occasions of loving you and serving the Church, the Pope and all souls with joy and simplicity, lighting up the pathways of this earth with faith and love.

Deign to grant me, through the intercession of Saint Josemaría, the favor of...
(make your request). Amen

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

Cover photo: St. Josemaría blesses a baby in La Chacra, Buenos Aires (Argentina), June 25, 1974.

Learn more about St. Josemaría Escrivá at:
escrivaworks.org / josemariaescriva.info / opusdei.org



SAINT JOSEMARÍA TODAY

VOCATION TO MARRIAGE, A PATH FOR TRANSFORMING 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 times . . . 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.”

SAINT JOSEMARÍA, *Christ Is Passing By*. “Marriage a Christian Vocation,” no. 30.

MEMORIES

A selection of texts from Saint Josemaría's oral and written preaching that transmit his experience regarding the family, and some memories of those who knew him. p. 2

POPE FRANCIS

Preaching about the family during his pontificate. p. 6

FAVORS

Stories from people who had recourse to Saint Josemaría's intercession. p. 8

Bulletin of the Office for the Causes of the Saints Prelature of Opus Dei, New York

2015



WHAT ADVICE WOULD HE GIVE TO MARRIED COUPLES?

"I would advise them to love one another and to realize that although disagreements and difficulties will crop up throughout their lives, if they are solved with naturalness they can even contribute to the deepening of their love . . . It is possible to live happily together when everyone tries to correct his own defects and makes an effort to overlook the faults of others. 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 by

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 until he calms down, and vice versa. If there is true love and a real desire to deepen it, it will very rarely happen that the two give in to bad temper at the same time.

"Another very 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 so debatable, the surer we are of being completely right, the more doubtful it is that we really 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. Josemaría Escrivá, Scepter, New York, 2008, no. 108.

1-2/FAMILIES ON THEIR WAY TO THE BEATIFICATION OF ALVARO DEL PORTILLO, SEPTEMBER 27, 2014.



EDUCATION BASED ON TRUST

"The parents are the first persons responsible for the education of their children, in human as well as in 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 for giving good example. Imposing things by force, 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 way.

"Parents should find time to spend with their children, to talk with them. They are the most important thing—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 the fact 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 direct their efforts and to carry out their projects properly, teaching them to consider things and to reason them 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."

Saint Josemaría, *Christ Is Passing By*, "Marriage, a Christian Vocation," no. 27.

"We would have a poor idea of marriage and of human affection if we 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."

Saint Josemaría, *Christ Is Passing By*, "Marriage, a Christian Vocation," no. 24.

3/THIS COUPLE CAME FROM GUATEMALA AND HAVE TWO PRIEST SONS (SEPTEMBER 27, 2014).
4/MASS OF THANKSGIVING FOR BLESSED ALVARO DEL PORTILLO (SEPTEMBER 28, 2014).



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“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.”

Saint Josemaría, *Friends of God*, “Open to God and Men,” no. 173.

EDUCATING CHILDREN IN A MATERIALISTIC WORLD

The father of a family once asked him how he could raise his children to be responsible and to love hard work in a materialistic environment with easy access to money.

“I would take them for a walk through some districts around this great city of Caracas. I would cover their eyes with my hand, and then take it away so they could see the shanties, all on top of each other. They should learn that money has to be used well. They have to learn how to manage it, so that everyone can share in some way in the goods of this earth. Because it’s very easy to say ‘I’m a good person,’ if one has never been in a situation of real need.

“A friend of mine, a wealthy man, once told me: ‘I don’t know if I’m a good man, since my wife has never been sick while I was out of work and did not have a penny to my name. I’ve never had my children weakened by hunger while I did not have any work and not even a cent. I’ve never found myself in the street, with no roof over my head. I don’t know if I’m an honest man. What would I have done, if all those things had happened to me?’”

Ana Sastre, *Tiempo de Caminar*, Rialp, Madrid 1989, p. 588.

5/BEATIFICATION MASS OF ALVARO DEL PORTILLO (SEPTEMBER 27, 2014).

6/MASS OF THANKSGIVING FOR BLESSED ALVARO DEL PORTILLO (SEPTEMBER 28, 2014).



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LAGUNA: HOSPICE FOR THE TERMINALLY ILL AND ASSISTANCE TO RELATIVES

Saint Josemaría understood the place of suffering in the plan of redemption. But he would also say: “When physical suffering can be remedied, we try to do so. There is enough suffering already in life! And when it cannot be remedied, we offer it up.” With this outlook the Laguna Hospice Center in Madrid was born as a health care center for patients with terminal illnesses, and for elderly people who need special assistance.

Begun under the auspices of the Vianorte Foundation, it was inspired by Josemaría Escrivá’s efforts in the 1930’s to care for the sick and abandoned, especially in the General Hospital of Madrid and in the King’s Hospital, which specialized in contagious diseases that at the time were incurable. As he himself said, it was from his contact with people who were suffering in the hospitals that he drew the strength needed to begin Opus Dei.

“I wanted to tell you that the human strength of the Work has been the sick in the hospitals of Madrid: the most wretched ones; those who lived in their houses while having lost the last vestige of human hope; the most ignorant in the outlying slums: the incurably sick, the abandoned poor, children without family or education, homes without heat and without love.”

Sin miedo a la vida y sin miedo a la muerte. Words of Saint Josemaría to doctors and patients, Eunsa, Pamplona 1976, p. 141.

7-8/THE LAGUNA HOSPICE CENTER, IN MADRID



THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING CHILDREN REVEALS THE GRATUITOUS DIMENSION OF LOVE

“If a family with many children is looked upon as a burden, something is wrong! The child’s generation must be responsible, as the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* of Blessed Pope Paul VI also teaches, but having many children cannot automatically be an irresponsible choice. Not to have children is a selfish choice. Life is rejuvenated and acquires energy by multiplying: it is enriched, not impoverished! Children learn to assume responsibility for their family. They mature in sharing its hardships. They grow in the appreciation of its gifts. The happy experience of brotherhood inspires respect and care for parents, to whom our recognition is due.”

Pope Francis, *Audience*, February 11, 2015

THE FAMILY: MAN AND WOMAN

“Experience teaches us: in order to know oneself well and develop harmoniously, a human being needs the reciprocity of man and woman. When that is lacking, one can see the consequences. We are made to listen to one another and help one another. We can say that without the mutual enrichment of this relationship—in thought and in action, in affection and in work, as well as in faith—the two cannot even understand the depth of what it means to be man or woman.

“Modern contemporary culture has opened new spaces, new forms of freedom and new depths in order to enrich the understanding of this difference. But it has also introduced many doubts and much skepticism. For example, I ask myself, if the so-called gender theory is not, at the same time, an expression of frustration and resignation, which seeks to cancel out sexual difference because it no longer knows how to confront it.”

Pope Francis, *Audience*, April 15, 2015.



PRESERVING THE FAITH AND TRANSMITTING IT IN ALL ENVIRONMENTS

“The 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, October 11, 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 Exhort. *Evangelii Gaudium*, November 24, 2013.

Pope Francis has dedicated his Wednesday audiences this year to reflections on the importance of the family, with practical examples of how to strengthen the bonds of family love. Reading these addresses will help us to grasp more deeply Christ’s command to love our neighbor, especially the neighbor closest to us: our family members.

9/THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WHO HAD COME TO ROME TO SHOW THEIR GRATITUDE FOR THE BEATIFICATION OF ALVARO DEL PORTILLO ATTENDED POPE FRANCIS’ GENERAL AUDIENCE ON OCTOBER 1, 2014. IN THE PHOTO, THE FAMILY OF JOSÉ IGNACIO URETA (THE BLOND BOY NEXT TO THE POPE) HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO GREET POPE FRANCIS, WHO WAS ACCOMPANIED BY BISHOP JAVIER ECHEVARRÍA. THE HOLY SEE RECOGNIZED AS MIRACULOUS THE CURE OF JOSÉ IGNACIO, WHOSE HEART HAD STOPPED BEATING FOR MORE THAN HALF AN HOUR ON AUGUST 2, 2003.

FAVORS

TENACITY AND JOY

On April 8, 2014, I was in my office at the university. A student who had graduated a few years earlier knocked at my door to return a book I had loaned him.

While studying at the university and earning outstanding grades he had had a serious accident on a northern highway. Driving in a snowstorm he decided to stop his car on the shoulder and put chains on the tires. There he was hit by another car and for a time was in a coma. After several operations he was still in a very bad state, with frequent trembling, stuttering, difficulty in speaking and other problems.

After talking (with some difficulty) about the book and other topics and how he had noticed some improvement, I told him: "The truth is that you look better to me; God is clearly protecting you." The young man was visibly moved and replied that, yes, he sensed that God was protecting him, but he was also being

protected by a saint who had lived in the same building where he lived on Concepción Street in Burgos: "I don't know if you know him; his name is Saint Josemaría Escrivá. He lived for a time in apartment 3-D and I live in No. 4. He is helping me to keep improving."

I told him that with his tenacity and the help of that saint he would make great progress, and might even be cured completely, and that he should continue giving such a good example of tenacity and joy. I remembered that I had a prayer card in my briefcase and I offered it to him. "Have you seen one of these," I asked him, and he told me that he hadn't. He looked at it



closely with a smile on his face and then said, "But it's in English." I found another in Spanish. I told him that that saint had done many small favors for me in problems at work, in my family life, etc. The young man was moved once again and told me that small things were really very important and that he would not only ask him for big things, but also for small ones.

He put the prayer card in the inner pocket of his jacket and said: "Now it will be close to my heart." And then he left.

A. C. M (Spain)

TWINS IN DANGER

Six months ago I found myself in the worst of nightmares. I was 20 weeks pregnant with twins and an echograph showed that one of the babies was not developing well. With each echograph it was worse. All we had left was faith and prayer.

I don't know how, but a prayer card of Saint Josemaría fell into my mother's hands and we were told that he works many miracles. We began to pray it.



When the time came for giving birth, the doctors told me that my baby could not live and would surely die. But my child was born strong and healthy.

Today he is a beautiful bright-eyed baby two months old. The doctors say he is very healthy and can't explain

how it could have happened that he is so well.

But I know that a miracle has occurred. My two babies are charming and are growing up wonderfully.

J. R. Ch. (email)

TEN YEARS

Ten years have gone by since our son, recently operated on for a brain tumor, arrived home and said he wanted to ride his bicycle. When we told him to be careful he complained: "they operated on my head, not my feet." Everyday for these past ten years we have given thanks to God and to Saint Josemaría, since it was through his intercession that the operation was a marvelous miracle.

Ten years ago we came across a picture of Saint Josemaría in a magazine and from that moment on we began to pray to him for the recovery of Felipe, since the prognosis was very bad. A few days later, on March 18, 2005, he had the surgery. As he came out of the operating room the surgeon said "it's a miracle." Felipe woke up

from the anesthesia and asked for a soda as if nothing had happened.

A few days later he returned to school and resumed his normal life. And today, thank God, he is a strong and healthy teenager who gets very good grades. He is going through some of the little problems adolescence brings with it, but he is healthy and is leading a completely normal life. Ten years have gone by, and thanks be to God a few months ago my wife and I were able to fulfill our dream and travel to Rome to Our Lady of Peace where Saint Josemaría is interred and thank him for Felipe's health and pray for our whole family. Greetings from Argentina.

L. G. M. (Argentina)

HE HELPED BOTH OF US TO FIND JOBS

My husband and I are devoted to St. Josemaría. We have been blessed to have him answer our prayers on three separate occasions.

When we first met, my future husband (a nurse) was living three hours away from Chicago. I left my job as a public school teacher one month after we met, in part due to serious illness. The 3-hour distance between



us made things a bit difficult, but we continued to see each other. When I felt ready to look for a job, I began a novena to St. Josemaría to find work. Before I finished my novena, I received an offer from a private school as a Spanish teacher. After we were engaged in June, we both knew that we needed my future husband to be closer to Chicago, to me, and to his family. So we began another novena to St. Josemaría, and again, our prayers were answered – he quickly got an offer at a hospital with a great reputation in the Chicago area and started there in September. We could

see Josemaría's intercession and God's providence at work, as our prayers were being answered.

In November, after three months at my job and much distress over a work environment where my Catholic beliefs were clearly not welcome, I left the job. I had also been struggling with some persistent health problems. We left everything in God's hands and told him that we accepted his will. With our wedding approaching, I was given a great opportunity to rest and improve in health while being off work. I began applying for another position, mostly in Catholic youth ministry. I also began a novena to St. Josemaría again – only this time, I turned the novena into my daily 2:00 p.m. prayer (for about 3–4 weeks). Yesterday, I went to a local Catholic pregnancy crisis center for a volunteer interview and left with a job offer to serve as its Director of Communications. Needless to say, I thanked God, the Blessed Mother, and St. Josemaría (in that order) immediately after.

St. Josemaría is a wonderful intercessor and friend in helping my family obtain employment and in getting through our daily work lives. We hold a special place for him in our home and in our marriage. May God elevate him to greater and greater glory in heaven!

A.V. (Chicago)

A JOB OFFER ON THE LAST DAY OF THE NOVENA

I am from India. I was first told about St. Josemaría Escrivá by a friend from the Philippines. His life and teachings are wonderful, and deeply rooted in faith.

In May 2014, my son had completed his graduate studies in Management and was sadly unsuccessful in getting a good placement despite several attempts. I began to pray the Novena to St. Josemaría (I asked him to do the same). On the next day he got interview calls from two Bangalore based companies. But they did not hire him after the interviews. We continued praying the Novena and on the last day of the Novena, he got an offer from a startup company close to his residence, and he joined. Immense thanks to St. Josemaría for his intercession and favors. A friend of mine

who was unhappy with his work in a private company prayed the same Novena and landed a senior level job in a Government company about 5 years back. Praise the Lord.

T.D. (India)

A ROOMMATE

I wanted to share a favor I believe to have been granted, thanks to St. Josemaría's intercession. I remember I went to pray before the Blessed Sacrament in an oratory of an Opus Dei center. I had been searching for a potential roommate to help with living expenses in college. It was very stressful. I remember praying for help in finding one. Just after I made the petition, an Opus Dei priest came into the oratory

and asked to speak with me. He asked if I knew of anyone looking for a roommate. My prayer was answered! It was more than a coincidence. I am grateful that God answered my prayer and thankful for St. Josemaría's intercession.

D.C. (email)



A DAUGHTER AFTER EIGHT YEARS

I am writing to tell you about a miracle I obtained through the intercession of Saint Josemaría. My wife and I went for eight years without being able to have children. For a number of months, I prayed the prayer to

Saint Josemaría asking for his help and now we have a marvelous baby girl, who is the joy of our lives. This would not have happened without the intercession of Saint Josemaría.

S. G. (United Kingdom)