



The Servant of God

José María Hernández Garnica

Newsletter of the Office for the Causes of Saints, Prelature of Opus Dei.

A priest for all souls



Fr José María was a model of that common sense, supernatural outlook and sense of humour of those who are guided by the grace of God in the sanctification of their ordinary tasks.

In an interview, St Josemaría had said: “The Work is not based on enthusiasm, but on Faith. The early years were long years and they were very hard. All we could see before us were difficulties. Opus Dei went ahead by the grace of God and by the prayer and sacrifice of the first few, despite the lack of material resources. All we had was youth, good humour and a desire to do God’s will. From the beginning, Opus Dei’s weapons have always been prayer, self giving and silent renunciation of all forms of selfishness for the sake of serving souls.”¹

Fr José María Hernández Garnica was one of those first members. He followed the Founder to serve all types of people, in different countries, when he was an engineer as well as in the years he was a priest. When he became a priest, “St Josemaría put him in charge of giving a push to the apostolic work with women, a task which he did with a great spirit of sacrifice and generous dedication.”²

“He developed that job trusting the people he had to help and form. He knew how to love with deeds. He had learned from the Founder about the virtues which accompany charity, perhaps because of his love for the Virgin Mary and for his own mother, whom he sometimes referred to. He depended on the virtues which are proper to women and insisted that we should exercise them, encouraging us to practise them ... There is unanimous testimony of his understanding of the feminine soul.”³

This is also what is said by Carmen Eyre, who knew him in Belgium: “The role of Fr José María was crucial on two fronts: to be united to the Founder, whom he loved dearly with an effective and affective fidelity, and to capture and develop in his priestly ministry, what has come to be known as the ‘feminine genius’, incorporating it into the general patrimony common to the Work, leaving out certain accessories. I have never heard of anyone who has felt hurt by Fr José María or thought that ‘he was not aware of our preferences’: the specific way we women have of being and understanding ... From that perspective, the humble and discreet figure of Fr José María grows in an unsuspected way, and becomes a reference point for those who have to perform similar tasks ‘as time goes on’.”⁴

In 1956, Fr José María’s assignment changed: “His mission would be, not so much governance as to help in the task of offering spiritual attention and doctrinal guidance to the faithful of Opus Dei, with special reference to giving a push to the means of formation that the Work offers to diocesan priests. He began to visit them, talking to and being with them (...) and trying to have conversations with them with a supernatural tone, without being stilted in language. His cordiality, apparently distant, was compensated for with jokes which made get-togethers very enjoyable.”⁵

Fr José María was a model of the common sense, supernatural outlook and sense of humour of those who are guided by the grace of God in the sanctification of ordinary tasks.

¹ St Josemaría Escrivá, *Conversations*, Scepter, London 1993, no. 68

² J. C. Martín de la Hoz, *Roturando los caminos*, ed. Palabra, Madrid 2012, p. 105

³ *Ibid.*, testimony of Mariangela Vila Burch, p. 106

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 108

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 131



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Prayer for private devotion

Lord God, you wished to count on your servant and priest José María to spread the call to holiness in everyday life in many parts of the world. Help me to get to know and follow Jesus Christ closely in my ordinary work, so that I can convey to many souls the joy of responding to our Christian vocation. Deign to glorify your servant José María and grant me, through his intercession, the favour I ask of you ... (*here make your request*). Amen.

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

In conformity with the decrees of Pope Urban VIII, we declare that there is no intention of anticipating in any way the judgment of the Church, and that this prayer is not intended for public use.

Those who have obtained favours through the intercession of the Servant of God Fr José María Hernández Garnica are asked to let us know by writing to us at the address shown on this page.

Publications

- **José Carlos Martín de la Hoz:** *Abriendo horizontes*. Ed. Església de Santa Maria de Montalegre, Barcelona 2010.
- **José Carlos Martín de la Hoz:** *Roturando los caminos*. Ed. Palabra, Madrid 2012.
- **Documentary video José María Hernández Garnica.** *Por los caminos de Europa* (27 min), Goya Producciones, Madrid 2008.
- **Hernández Garnica, José María:** in the *Diccionario de San Josemaría Escrivá*, ed. Monte Carmelo, Burgos 2013

News of the Cause

The *Positio* on the life and virtues of Fr José María is currently being worked on.

This Newsletter is issued free of charge. Those who wish to give alms to help its publication may send donations by cheque to the address below or by bank transfer. We would be grateful if our readers would send us names and addresses of others who might be interested in receiving this Newsletter or the prayer card of Fr José María. Direct transfer for donations to:

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Favours from a colleague

I learnt about José María (and that they called him *Chiqui*, as I also call him), while studying Mining Engineering in Madrid. When I found out that he too was a Mining Engineer, I began to use his prayercard regularly, asking for his intercession when I had exams, and things like that.

From the very beginning, when I began to pray to him, I felt I was being helped by him in each examination, to such a point that I finished my university studies having done one course per year, even though I had been six months behind.

When I finished my academic studies, I also asked him to find me a good job. And the very day I presented my project at the end of my course, I was made an offer to work in Seville, and I began the following week.

These favours could be considered as pure chance, or that I had worked harder at my studies, but I always felt the hand of Chiqui helping me. The greatest favours are the two I describe in what follows:

Now in Seville, I went around on a motorbike to get to work, for the office was on the other side of the city. Until one day the bike broke down without the possibility of having it repaired. I needed a vehicle, but I had no money to buy one. So I asked Fr Chiqui to intercede for me and find a solution to my problem, for I was wasting two hours in going to and returning from work, and was not managing to do everything I had to do there. A week after having asked him, I received news that I had won a prize in my final year which had been a year earlier; and that because of an administrative mistake I had not been told. Thanks to this prize I was able to buy a car.

The other favour I want to relate is the one I am most grateful for and is the clearest one. It has happened this same month: my girlfriend has been looking for a job for months, and did not even receive calls for interviews. I had spent all those months praying the card of Fr Chiqui, but to no avail. Two days ago, in the morning, I prayed the card again and promised that if she obtained a job before the end of the month, I would write down all the favours I have received in recent years. It is clear that I need to write them, because, four hours after having promised this, they called my girlfriend for a job interview. She went to the interview that same morning, and before lunch she was signed up for the job.

So, I have written up all these favours fulfilling the promise I had made, and I am very grateful for his intercession.

C.B.O.