

Saint Josemaría, **today**



THE FAMILY: INSPIRATION AND SOURCE OF LOVE

“Young people are always capable of getting enthusiastic about great undertakings, high ideals, and anything that is genuine. They must be helped to understand the simple, natural and often unappreciated beauty of their parents’ lives. Children should come to realise, little by little, the sacrifice their parents have made for them, the often heroic self denial that has gone into raising the family” (Conversations with Monsignor Escrivá, 101).

1 | Quotations

2 | Memories

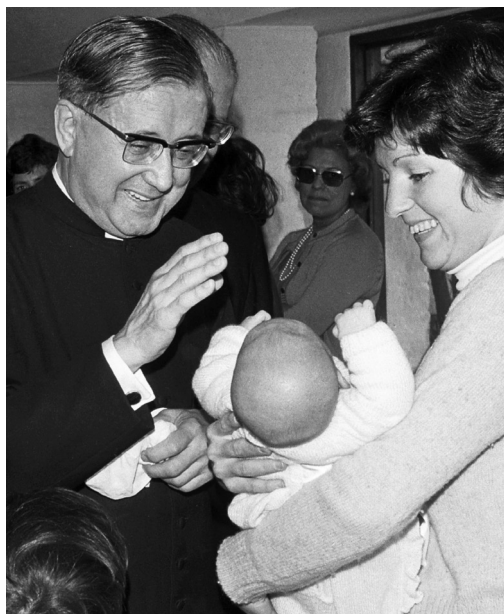
3 | Favours received

4 | Pope Francis

Newsletter

Prelature of Opus Dei in Britain | No. 24 | 2020

“Fatherhood and motherhood do not end with birth: that participation in God’s power, which is the capacity to generate children, is meant to be prolonged in cooperation with the Holy Spirit so as to culminate in the formation of authentic Christian men and authentic Christian women” (Christ is Passing By, 27).



TIME AND UNDERSTANDING FOR ONE’S CHILDREN

“Parents need to find time to be with their children and talk with them. Children are what’s most important: more important than business, or work, or rest. In their conversations, they should listen to them with attention, make an effort to understand them, be willing to recognize they may be partly right – or entirely right – in some of their rebellious attitudes. And, at the same time, they should help them to channel their yearnings and dreams in good directions, teaching them to consider things and to reason them out; not imposing a line of conduct, but showing them the reasons, both supernatural and human, that advise it” (*Christ is Passing By*, 27).

“Parents are the principal educators of their children, in human as well as in supernatural matters, and they should feel the responsibility of that mission, which requires them to be understanding and prudent, to know how to teach them and, above all, how to love; and to help them with their own good example” (*Christ is Passing By*, 27).

CONFIDENCE, A KEY FOR BRINGING UP CHILDREN

“Your confidence, your friendly openness towards your children, will be rewarded by their sincerity towards you; and, even though there may be some arguments and minor misunderstandings, that means peace in the family, and Christian life” (*Christ is Passing By*, 9).

THE VALUE OF REFLECTION

“Parents can, and should, be a great help to their children. They can open new horizons for them, share their experiences and make the children reflect, so they do not allow themselves to be carried away by passing emotional experiences. Parents can offer them a realistic scale of values” (*Conversations*, 104).

“Parents have to be on guard against the temptation of wanting to project themselves unduly on their children or of moulding them according to their own preferences. They should respect their individual God-given inclinations and aptitudes. If their love is true, this is easy enough” (Conversations, 104).

MAKING DECISIONS FREELY

“When a young person makes a decision that the parents have good reason to consider mistaken and that they think will lead to future unhappiness, the answer lies not in force, but in understanding. Very often it consists of standing by their child so as to help him or her overcome the difficulties and, if necessary, draw all the benefit possible from an unfortunate situation.

“After giving their advice and suggestions, parents who sincerely love and seek the good of their children should step tactfully into the background so that nothing can stand in the way of the great gift of freedom that makes people capable of loving and serving God. They should remember that God himself has wanted to be loved and served with freedom and He always respects our personal decisions. Scripture tells us: *When God created man, He made him subject to his own free choice* (Sir 15:14)” (Conversations, 104).

“Respect their freedom, because there is no true upbringing without personal responsibility, nor responsibility without freedom” (Christ is Passing By, 27).

OPUS DEI IS A FAMILY

“I often tell the members of the Work that they owe ninety per cent of their vocation to their parents because they brought their children up well and taught them to be generous. I can assure you that in the vast majority of cases, practically all of them, the parents respect and love their children’s decision. They immediately see the Work as an extension of their own family. It is one of my greatest joys and yet another proof that in order to be very divine you have to be very human as well” (Conversations, 104).





HUMAN FORMATION BEGINS IN THE HOME

“The people of Barbastro saw them take walks together. That intimate relationship of confidence and friendship between father and son was due to the solicitude of Don José, which bred in Josemaría generosity and sincerity...

“His father invited him to open his heart, and to share with him all his concerns, in order to help the child learn to control the impulsive outbursts of his budding personality and sacrifice personal preferences and whims. Don José listened to him unhurriedly and answered to the boy’s satisfaction the questions that arose from a child’s curiosity about life. Josemaría was happy to see that his father made himself available to be consulted, and that whenever he asked a question, *he always took him seriously.*”

(Andrés Vázquez de Prada, *The Founder of Opus Dei*, Scepter, Princeton 2000, Volume 1 p. 21)

A son likes his father to be available and to take him seriously when he asks a question

PARENTS AND ROLE MODELS TOO

“Doña Lola devoted herself completely to her household. Together with her husband, she centred her efforts on bringing up Carmen and Josemaría, creating a family environment to which those children whom the Lord later would send would be added...

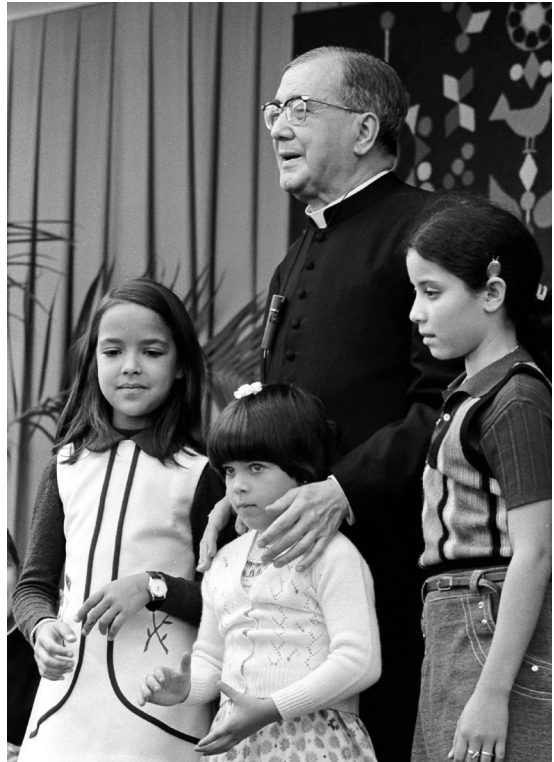
“The parents were early risers, even though they went to bed after the rest of the household. In the morning, Don José left for work with such strict punctuality that one always knew where he was and when he would come home. The boy would wait with great impatience and excitement for his return. Sometimes he was too excited to wait, and would go out to meet him. At times, Josemaría would go to the store and entertain himself by counting the coins in the cash register, and his father would take advantage of the occasion to explain the basics of addition and subtraction. And on the way home, in the fall, Don José would buy roasted chestnuts and put them in the pocket of his overcoat. Then Josemaría, standing on tiptoe, would put in his little hand in search of the chestnuts, and would get a tender squeeze from his father’s hand.”

(Andrés Vázquez de Prada, *The Founder of Opus Dei*, Scepter, Princeton 2000, Volume 1 p. 19)

PRAYER IN THE FAMILY

“He had not yet attained full use of reason when he started to enjoy taking part in the family Rosary, going to Mass with his parents, and attending Saturday services at Saint Bartholomew’s (an oratory, close to their house, where the Escrivás went each Saturday to pray the Hail Holy Queen). And he had very fond memories connected with the family’s Christmas celebrations. Together with Carmen, he would help his father put up the Nativity scene. And the whole family sang Christmas carols together. He remembered in particular the one which begins, ‘Mother, there’s a little boy at the door.’ This carol has a verse in which the Child Jesus repeats, ‘I have come down to earth to suffer.’ The song stayed with him from the cradle to the grave. *When I was three years old*, he would tell us, *my mother would take me in her arms and sing me that song, and I would very happily go to sleep*. In his last years he would be visibly moved, and would become totally absorbed in prayer, whenever he heard this song at Christmastime.”

(Andrés Vázquez de Prada, *The Founder of Opus Dei*, Scepter, Princeton 2000, Volume 1 p. 18)



SAINT JOSEMARÍA, A SOWER OF PEACE AND JOY

Monsignor Fernando Ocariz, who has been the Prelate of Opus Dei since 23 January 2017 when Pope Francis confirmed his election, lived with St Josemaría during his student days in Rome.

He stresses St Josemaría’s capacity to see the positive side when facing any situation and thus manage conflicts better. For Monsignor Ocariz, it is of vital importance, “following the constant teaching of the Church, the experience of St Josemaría and the example and words of Pope Francis, to emphasize the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. Personal activities and initiatives in the area of solidarity, service to those in need, and social responsibility are not something passing or marginal, but rather are at the very heart of the Gospel” (Monsignor Fernando Ocariz, Pastoral Letter, 14 February 2017, 27).

For Monsignor Ocariz, it is most important to learn the art “of being *sowers of peace and joy*, as our Father taught us, and of rectifying in a sportsmanlike manner when, instead of peace, we have sown a bit of discord.” For the Prelate, “the virtues of humility, as well as joy and generosity, are necessary for our fraternity and the apostolate of friendship and confidence” (Monsignor Fernando Ocariz, Pastoral Letter, 14 February 2017, 11).



GOODBYE TO SEVERE NERVE PAINS

“After having suffered a serious neuralgic attack, about four years ago, the pains prevented me from leaving my bed, and medical treatment did not have the desired effect.

I had heard about favours which St Josemaría had granted people with conditions similar to my own. And so, I decided to

**I prayed to St Josemaría,
I asked him to cure me, and the
following night the pains I had had
for four years disappeared**

follow their example and seek his intercession.

I prayed to St Josemaría, I entrusted myself to him, I asked him to cure me. And the following night the pains disappeared and I have never felt them again. I could not be more grateful to St Josemaría for his intercession.” J.G.L.I.

I MANAGED TO GET A STABLE JOB

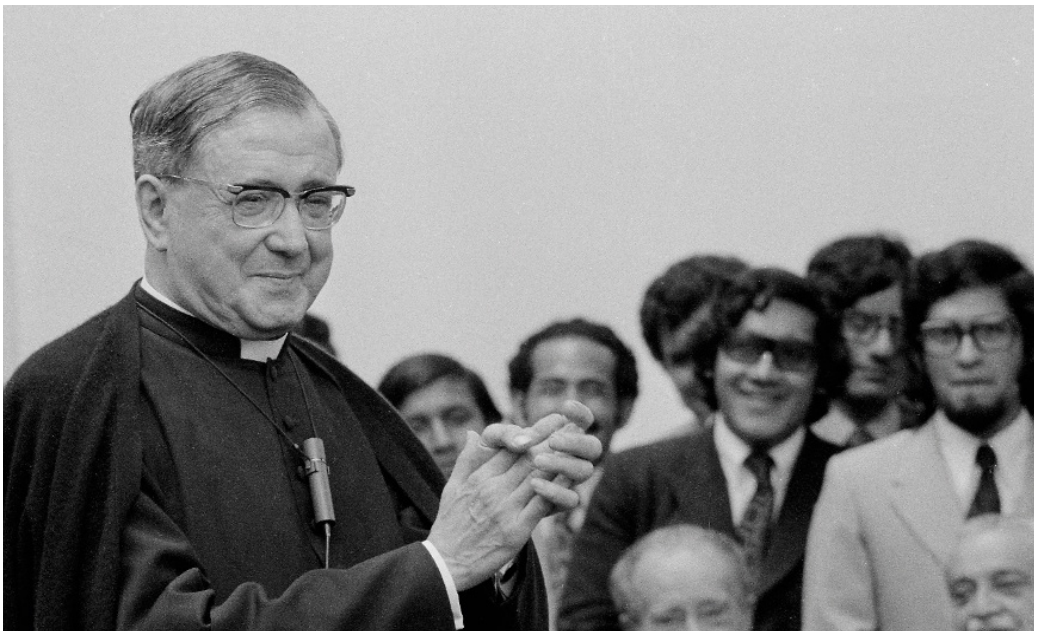
“I spent many years looking for a stable job, which would enable me to balance my personal and professional life. One day, my grandmother advised me to turn to St Josemaría, to ask his intercession for employment which would suit my needs. I decided to follow her advice and that day I looked for his prayer and made my petition.

A week later, I had an interview for a new job whose requirements matched my needs perfectly, except that it was temporary.

In spite of this, I chose to accept the position which was offered to me, and it was fortunate that I did so, as a little after I started working for the company, on the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady, I signed a long term contract.

My gratitude to St Josemaría is absolute, since thanks to his favour I was able to obtain the longed-for stable employment.” I.V.R.

Personal and professional compatibility, which I had so long yearned for, became a reality





SAVED FROM DEATH

“Some years ago, as I was returning home from work on public transport, the driver asked me if he could alter the route to shorten the journey. When we got to a main street, a young woman on my right punched me hard in my stomach, while the man on my left pointed a gun at me and said: ‘This is a hold-up. Keep still or I’ll kill you.’ The young woman put a bandage over my eyes. They went through my briefcase, took my watch, my mobile phone and my wallet, and asked me if I used credit cards. When I said ‘No’, they got angry. The woman again began punching me. And looking through my shirt pocket – in which I had a prayer card of St Josemaría and my identity card as a lawyer – they said: ‘This fellow is a lawyer. He’ll report us.’ And, while the bus continued along its route, another two added: ‘Kill him!’

They made the bus stop in a quiet area, and told me to curl up in a foetal position. One of the robbers put the gun to my head and prepared to fire. Resigning

myself to losing my life, I asked God for pardon for my sins and I asked St Josemaría to bring things to an end and that I should not feel the shot. In that instant the gun jammed. For the second time the robber got ready to fire. But it jammed again, leading one of the assailants to say: ‘He can’t be killed. Something’s stopping me from killing him. It isn’t the gun – someone’s protecting him.’

He can’t be killed. Something’s stopping me from killing him, someone’s protecting him.

They made me get out of the bus, and ordered me to count to 1,500 before taking off the bandage. When I took it off, I found I was under a lonely bridge in a dangerous area, and the few people around did not help me. After some time a taxi driver stopped. I told him what had happened and he took me home.

I attribute this miracle to St Josemaría, since when they went through my shirt pocket they did not take the prayer card away and it remained with me throughout.” M.P.O.

I REGULARIZED MY SITUATION ABROAD

My student visa meant that I could not practise normally as a doctor. I was able to do small jobs with private ambulances, but this did not solve my financial problems, nor did it enable me to obtain social security.

And, although interviewers liked my CV, having to apply for permission to employ someone from abroad always meant I was turned down at the end of the selection process.

In the second interview they confirmed the job offer and the contract

I began to pray St Josemaría's Novena for Work every day, and on the day I finished it, I was called for a job interview by a primary care hospital. Just five days later my life had turned around, and I was able to make important long term plans, like that of starting a family.

This favour of St Josemaría led me to re-affirm my Faith and my affection for the Work." J.F.J.

Against all expectation, the judge exonerated her

"A colleague at work was concerned about an allegation made against her by the person she had contracted to look after her mother. She had always treated that person really well, offering her better working conditions than those she was legally obliged to offer.

However, on terminating the contract, she made a technical mistake as she was not aware of all the relevant employment legislation. When she found out about the possible consequences, her lawyer advised her that although she could prove she had acted in good faith, she would very probably be obliged to pay a substantial amount in damages.

On the day of the court case, I advised her to pray to St Josemaría, and to ask for his intercession. She told me she had done so. And against all expectation, the judge exonerated her." P.G.

I found a job after four years being unemployed

"I had been unemployed for four years, and my situation began to worry me seriously, because it had begun to affect my spiritual life.

On going to confession one day, I explained my situation to a priest, and he suggested I could make a novena to St Josemaría Escrivá.

Leaving the confessional, I went to a side chapel and began the novena. As I was leaving it I received a call from a firm which was interested in employing me. Four days later, the contract was signed.

The Lord granted me my greatest wish through St Josemaría's intercession, and in gratitude for this, I completed the novena that I had begun that day." J.F.G.

“For us Christians in particular, fear must never have the last word but rather should be an occasion to make an act of faith in God... and in life! This means believing in the fundamental goodness of the existence that God has given us and trusting that he will lead us to a good end, even though circumstances and vicissitudes often bewilder us.”

(Pope Francis, Message for World Youth Day, 25 March 2018)

In the Message which Pope Francis wrote for the 33rd World Youth Day, he wished to remind all those gathered there that “God also reads our inmost heart. He knows well the challenges we must confront in life, especially when we are faced with the fundamental choices on which depend who we will be and what we will do in this world. It is the ‘shudder’ that we feel when faced with decisions about our future, our state of life, our vocation.”

Addressing young people directly, Pope Francis asked them: “And you young people, what are your fears? What worries you most deeply? An ‘underlying’ fear that many of you have is that of not being loved, well-liked or accepted for who you are. Today, there are many young people who feel the need to be different from who they really are, in an attempt to adapt to an often artificial and unattainable standard.

“In moments when doubts and fears flood our hearts, discernment becomes necessary. It allows us to bring order to the confusion of our thoughts and feelings, to act in a just and prudent way. In this process, the first step in overcoming fears is to identify them clearly, so as not to find yourself wasting time and energy by being gripped by empty and faceless ghosts.

And so, I invite all of you to look within yourselves and to ‘name’ your fears. Ask yourselves: What upsets me, what do I fear most at this specific moment of my life today? What blocks me and prevents me from moving forward? Why do I lack the courage to make the important choices I need to make?

Do not be afraid to face your fears honestly, to recognize them for what they are and to come to terms with them.”



“From the certainty that God’s grace is with us comes the strength to take courage in the present moment: the courage to carry forward what God asks of us here and now, in every area of our lives; courage to embrace the vocation which God reveals to us; courage to live out our faith without hiding or diminishing it.”



CONSCIENCE: DECIDING ALONE WITH GOD

“Discernment is indispensable when searching for one’s vocation in life. More often than not our vocation is not obvious or evident at first but rather something we come to understand gradually. Discernment, in this case, should not be seen as an individual effort at introspection, with the aim of better understanding our interior make-up so as to strengthen us and acquire some balance. In such instances the person can become stronger, but is still confined to the limited horizon of his or her possibilities and perspectives. Vocation, however, is a call from above, and discernment in this context principally means opening ourselves to the Other who calls. Prayerful silence is therefore required in order to hear the voice of God that resounds within our conscience.

“The Lord, the Church, the world are waiting for your answer to the unique call that each one receives in this life!”

God knocks at the door of our hearts, as he did with Mary; he longs to establish friendship with us through prayer, to speak with us through the Sacred Scriptures, to offer us mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and to be one with us in the Eucharist.”

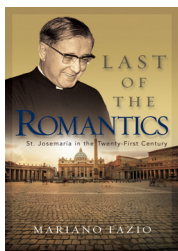


PRAYER

O God, through the most 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 to holiness through daily work and the ordinary duties of a Christian. Grant that I also may learn to turn all the circumstances and events of my life into opportunities to love you and 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 Saint Josemaría please grant the favour I request (*here make your petition*). Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.

New books



Last of the Romantics: St Josemaría in the Twenty-first Century

MARIANO FAZIO

With this eloquent title, taken from St Josemaría's own lips, Mgr Mariano Fazio, Auxiliary Vicar of the Opus Dei Prelature, recalls for us what a passionate defender of freedom the Opus Dei founder was. In his teachings, "respect for the freedom of others is never indifference, but rather the consequence of love, of charity, which knows how to value each man in his concrete reality." St Josemaría wanted above all to challenge his listeners, to

awaken in them the same love of freedom that he bore in his heart "Don't let me be 'the last of the romantics.' This is Christian romanticism: to love the freedom of others, with affection."

Taking this as his starting-point, Fazio explores several aspects of the Gospel as St Josemaría saw them under God's inspiration: the joy of being children of God, work as a locus of holiness, the positive character of secularity, the importance of family life and of love, the values of pluralism, and the social repercussions of every Christian life. In this thought-provoking and readable book, he offers an enlightening and accessible summary of St Josemaría's key teachings.

This newsletter is issued free of charge and is for private circulation only. Donations towards printing and distribution costs, and the development of the apostolic activities stemming from the spiritual influence of the founder of Opus Dei, may be sent to:
Prelature of Opus Dei, 6 Orme Court, London W2 4RL
or, for donations by bank transfer:
Account Number: 81044834 Sort-Code: 40-05-33

Further information

On Saint Josemaría: www.josemariaescriva.info
On the writings of Saint Josemaría: www.escrivaworks.org
On Opus Dei: www.opusdei.org.uk
On the bulletin of the prelature: www.romana.org

For more information about Opus Dei or its founder, Saint Josemaría, please contact:
Information Office
Prelature of Opus Dei in Britain
6 Orme Court, London W2 4RL
Tel: 020 7221 9176
E-mail: info.uk@opusdei.org

Imprímatu: Monsignor Fernando Ocariz, Prelate of Opus Dei