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"Saint Joseph, you do it because I don't know how to"

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José Ignacio and Pilar, who live in Chile, always wanted a large family.

But they never thought they would have to face the pain of a number of pregnancies that failed to reach their term. They were married 10 years ago and had great expectations that a good number of children would arrive. The first two died before birth. Then Pilar found out that she would have twins. But only one of them, Lucia, was born alive.

Their first child brought great joy to the family. When Lucia was a year old, Pilar was expecting again. But at 22 weeks of the pregnancy she had to be hospitalized, since there were going to be problems with the birth. They prayed to Blessed Alvaro del Portillo and, as José Ignacio says, they received a miracle: Isabel was born healthy at 37 weeks.

During the almost 4 months that Pilar was hospitalized waiting for Isabel, José Ignacio had to look after Lucia full time. He brought her to

work with him (he's a public auctioneer), took care of her at home, and above all went with her to the hospital every day so she could spend time with her mother. It's true he also had the help of his mother-in-law and mother, he says, which made him appreciate the importance of having a woman in the home and taught him to admire the tireless capacity mothers have for tenderness and joy. But his mother, because of circumstances she was going through, also required special care on his part. "Things did not always turn out as I wished, but Providence watched out for me and gave me strength. Every day I prayed to Saint Joseph because he had to deal with much more complicated problems and was a strong support for the Holy Family."

After the birth of Isabel, his wife had two other pregnancies that ended in miscarriages. But a year and a half

ago their son Guillermito, as they affectionately call him, was born. “I have learned to love all my children dearly. We know that our family is a gift from God and we are happy and very grateful.”

Pilar works as a nurse in a school, and when the pandemic struck they could no longer get home help.

“Although the children are still quite young,” José Ignacio says, “we have done all we could to make this trying time we are going through a happy memory for them. We have gone ‘camping’ on the terrace of our apartment, eaten meals from other countries, had costume parties, etc. We all try to contribute to making family life richer with optimism and joy.”

Our family Patron

“Growing up in my own family, we were five brothers and we all had José as part of our name, because my

father named him our ‘Patron.’ I have tried to pass on this love for Saint Joseph to my children, and we even have a special aspiration that we say whenever we need help: ‘Saint Joseph, you have to do it because I don’t know how to.’”

For José Ignacio, Saint Joseph is a model to imitate in his daily care for his family. As Pope Francis said in his Apostolic Letter *Patris corde*, Saint Joseph stood out for his tenderness as a Father in caring for the Holy Family. “I would like the tenderness of Saint Joseph to be my model in how I treat Pilar and the children.”

“My upbringing has helped me here too. Besides, I prayed so much to have children that I could not but be tender and affectionate when seeing these tremendous gifts!” He also says that “when my wife and I share in the household chores, I always think of Saint Joseph, who must have been

a good ‘partner’ for our Lady. This helps me to put my heart into these tasks and to do them happily, and not reluctantly.”

Word of encouragement at work

In his work as a public auctioneer, José Ignacio often meets people in very painful situations, since he has to liquidate the goods of bankrupt individuals and businesses. When it is possible to do so, he talks with those who seem sad or worried and offers them some words of encouragement and affection.

Most days he can work from home, so Guillermito spends the whole day at his side. When the two girls get home from school, he makes lunch and plays with them for a while. In the afternoon, when Pilar returns from work, they take turns caring for the children. “During the day I look for times to be especially with God, to keep Him present. Thus, both my

work and my children remind me of God's generosity with us in giving us this family. And that fills my life with joy.”

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