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“I found St. Josemaría’s enthusiasm catching.”

Testimony of Petra Herold of Forchheim, Germany. She studied physics and mathematics, and is now married with four children.

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I was really quite distant from the Church. Then I read a biography of the founder of Opus Dei and I found his great enthusiasm catching. You

could see he was very much in love with the Church. It won me over. I found I could say, with all my heart, “Yes” to the Church, and “Yes” to the Pope.

I was also deeply impressed by the need to be a Catholic through and through: Let us not live by labels – I want you to be genuine, solid Christians. At the time I was divided inside. My religious life was on one side, my daily life on the other, and there was little connecting the two. But I came to see how to bring the two together, how I could sanctify my work, turn it into prayer, by realizing that what matters is not whether I am doing something special, but rather how I do it, with how much love, how much self-giving. Nor does it matter that my work is crowned with success, but that it is offered to God. I discovered that it isn't so important that the housework I have just finished, the

cleaning for instance, gets undone immediately by the children, because I know that my work has not been in vain. Nowadays I do the same things I did before, but in a unified and consistent way. And I find my reactions are far more serene.

There was another matter on my mind. My husband was a Protestant and I had a plan to help him towards conversion. At times I had the impression that things were going too slowly. What happened was in fact quite at variance with my plan. We really should have more confidence in God and place everything in his hands. One day I asked the priest of Opus Dei who gives me spiritual direction what I could do to help my husband's conversion. "Love him with all your heart" was his advice. Now I keep telling myself there could have been no better advice, since it is only

through love that we can bring people closer to Christ.

The joy which St Josemaría communicated always impressed me. His problems were many: health, financial and all those encountered in the course of founding Opus Dei. He was young and, undoubtedly, those problems must have affected him a lot. But he never lost his cheerfulness. This comes out clearly in the films of meetings he had with groups of people. His words transmit joy. Having got to know him, whenever I feel a bit down I think of him and begin to feel in better form again and ready to continue with my work.

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