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We Are Beloved

Last year, a group of young women professionals in Ireland got together to thrash out ideas on how to spread a positive message about the Catholic Church and help young women re-discover the joy of their faith and be energised by it.

10/20/2020

Inspired by the message of St Josemaría Escrivá, we launched *Beloved* in July 2019. St Josemaría highlighted the great joy, hope and strength Christians can find in the

reality that we are more than mere creatures – we are children of God. Hence we chose a name that would reflect this reality. The name *Beloved* comes from St John's Gospel referring to our divine filiation: "Beloved, we are God's children" (1 Jn 3:2).

What does *Beloved* offer?

From the start we knew we needed to be on-line as that is how most people now access their information, and yet we knew we wanted *Beloved* to be much more than just a website. We wanted it to be a means of encounter for people in real life. Certainly we do offer quite a lot of online input: daily posts and inspirations on our Instagram and Facebook account, and weekly blog posts on our website. But *Beloved* is more than its on-line material: it is a vehicle for real life encounters as well.

Apart from a retreat, which will be an annual event in Lismullin Conference Centre, we also facilitate monthly meet-ups, have invited speaker events, and also fun trips away where college students and young professionals can just relax, enjoy themselves and hopefully form long-lasting friendships.

What was the first year of “Beloved” like?

It has been a great experience and we can honestly say it has lived up to our hopes of being a way to reach out to other young women who are interested in finding meaning in their life and relationships. The first beneficiaries have been ourselves, the women who form part of the organising team for *Beloved*. We have learned so much in the process: listening to and understanding what people really want, looking for and pooling together interesting

resources, appreciating the Catholic faith we have and the joy of sharing it with others and exploring the many ways in which it can impact on and improve our everyday lives, getting better at dialoguing with those who do not fully share that faith.

It has been particularly interesting to share the message of St Josemaría on the sanctification of ordinary life and the difference it can make when we integrate our faith into every aspect of life and realise the potential for meaning in the most ordinary aspects of life. This is something that perhaps many of us take for granted but in fact there is a lot to unpack there.

We started from a base of just a few of our friends that knew what we were doing but now a year later there are so many more people who have benefitted from *Beloved*. The

retreat was definitely a highlight, especially as it was the last event we did before COVID-19 restrictions were put in place in the country.

What has it been like with COVID-19 restrictions?

Covid-19 restrictions certainly made us all realise the importance of *Beloved* and the providential hand of God guiding us to launch it before the pandemic started. It all came together seamlessly in that regard.

The restrictions obviously curtailed opportunities we had on offer for this year: a trip at Easter to do part of the Camino de Santiago and another trip to France scheduled in October. All monthly meet-ups had to cease also.

At the same time, we have tried to ensure that *Beloved* would be a real source of faith-filled inspiration and optimism for our followers. We

receive a number of messages about how the material we share – inspiring quotes, book and film recommendations, insightful blog posts – are really helping people. That has been a great boost for us who share this material.

Going forward?

Our vision is to unpack the message of St Josemaría for young women today, and that is the task of a lifetime. We know there is a lot we can offer to people and we hope this platform will continue to grow and benefit many more. In 2028, we celebrate the centennial of the founding of Opus Dei. Eight years is a short time but during this time, we hope that *Beloved* will contribute to enrich the lives of many young women with the message of St Josemaría. And when we reach 2028, we'll see where the next 100 years will providentially lead us.

To find out more:
www.wearebeloved.ie

Instagram: www.instagram.com/wearebeloved

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