

“Looking after my family is truly professional work.”

“The knowledge that I’m a much-loved daughter of God, my “divine filiation”, and that everything that happens to me is either willed or permitted by God, gives me a wonderful feeling of security, a great peace.” Testimony of Virginia McGough, homemaker in Cheshire, Great Britain, married with five children between 5 and 13.

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I think the aspect of St Josemaría's teaching that has the greatest effect on my life is the idea that we are daughters and sons of our Father God. The knowledge that I'm a much-loved daughter of God, my "divine filiation", and that everything that happens to me is either willed or permitted by God, gives me a wonderful feeling of security, a great peace. Of course, sometimes (well, quite often if I'm truthful) I lose this peace. I get into a flap and end up shouting at the children. But that's where St Josemaría's teaching on the need to make amends, to go back to our Father God with all the confidence of a child who knows her father is longing for her to say sorry so that he can put everything right, is so wonderful. And once I've said sorry to my Father God, it's so easy to

say sorry to the children or to my husband.

I think this aspect is of great relevance to the 21st century. We live in an age where we're supposed to plan everything. And of course, we can't. I find it helps people a lot when you tell them: "Look, you couldn't have foreseen this, but don't worry, your Father God has, and He loves you. Jesus has died for you, and he is not going to let you down now." This line of thought can save many people from the crushing burden of excessive worry.

Another teaching of his that I really love is that you should sanctify your work, and for me, looking after my family is truly professional work. This really goes against the trend of current thinking, in which the only real work is paid work, and where any woman who gives up her career to look after her family is wasting

her life. We had a census here recently, and one of the questions was: “Are you ready to take up work, if you were offered a job?” What do they think I am doing – painting my nails?

What a wonderful teaching is St Josemaría’s by contrast. It’s thanks to him that I know that looking after my husband and children is a noble vocation. I am helping to form saints, and for a saint, nothing is too much trouble. It’s in the little things that I find these teachings so especially helpful. After all, most of life consists of little things: tidying up as you go along, out of love; offering up the washing of smelly socks for the work of the Church in Kazakhstan; listening to a child when you’re exhausted and hoping for five minutes’ peace; being polite to the double-glazing salesman who calls just as you’re putting the meal on the table.

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