

# ST JOSEMARÍA, *Today*



## DISCOVERING GOD IN THE FAMILY

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# Biography

St Josemaría Escrivá was born in Barbastro, Spain, on 9 January 1902. He was ordained to the priesthood in Saragossa on 28 March 1925. On 2 October 1928 he was inspired by God to found Opus Dei. On 26 June 1975 he died suddenly in Rome, after a last, very loving glance at the picture of Our Lady in his office.

At that point Opus Dei had spread to five continents, serving the Church with the same spirit of complete union with the Pope and the Bishops which always characterised Saint Josemaría. Saint John Paul II canonised him in Rome on 6 October 2002. His feast is celebrated on 26 June. The mortal remains of Saint Josemaría rest in the Prelatic Church of Our Lady of Peace, Viale Bruno Buozzi 75, Rome.



## 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.

## 02 | St Josemaría's family

St Josemaría Escrivá often expressed his affection and gratitude to the family in which he was born on 9 January 1902, in the Aragonese city of Barbastro, Spain. José and Dolores Escrivá, his parents, gave him his first formation. Through their teachings and especially by their example, little Josemaría learnt to practise the human and Christian virtues: sincerity, industriousness, order, service to others, strong faith, simple piety, concern for the most needy... He had an early experience of sorrow: his sisters Rosario, Lolita and Chon died at the age of nine months, five years and eight years respectively.

In this Christian home environment he received his father's generous support in following the call to the priesthood. Years later – his father had died in 1924 – when on 2 October 1928 the young priest Josemaría founded Opus Dei

in Madrid, he also received great help from his mother and his sister Carmen (his brother Santiago was very young at the time) in taking forward the Work that God had entrusted to him.

“Born of a deeply Christian family, already in adolescence Josemaría Escrivá perceived God's call to a life of greater commitment” (St John Paul II, homily at the beatification of Josemaría Escrivá, 17 May 1992).

“God our Lord disposed things in such a way that my early life was quite normal and ordinary and in no way exceptional. He caused me to be born into a Catholic family, like most people in my country, with exemplary parents who practised their faith in daily life” (St Josemaría Escrivá, Meditation, 14 February 1964, *In Dialogue with the Lord*, 53, Scepter, London, 2018).



St Josemaría Escrivá with his brother Santiago, May 1921



## 03 | Man and woman, equal and different

For this year, which Pope Francis has proclaimed as the “*Amoris Laetitia* Family Year”, some essential points on the family from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* are given below.

“Each of the two sexes is an image of the power and tenderness of God, with equal dignity though in a different way. The *union of man and woman* in marriage is a way of imitating in the flesh the Creator’s generosity and fecundity: ‘Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh’ (*Gen* 2:24). All human generations proceed from this union (Cf. *Gen* 4:1 2, 25 26; 5:1)” (*Catechism*, 2335).

“The unity of marriage, distinctly recognized by our Lord, is made clear in the equal personal dignity which must be accorded to man and wife in mutual and unreserved affection (*Gaudium et Spes*, 49, §2)” (*Catechism*, 1645).

“In creating man and woman, God instituted the human family and endowed it with its fundamental constitution. Its members are persons equal in dignity. For the common good of its members and of society, the family necessarily has manifold responsibilities, rights, and duties” (*Catechism*, 2203).



**“The unity of marriage is made clear in the equal personal dignity which must be accorded to man and woman.”**

“Married people are called to sanctify their marriage and to sanctify themselves in that union. They would therefore be making a serious mistake if they went about building their spiritual life while ignoring their home or apart from it. Family life, marital relations, the care and education of children, the effort to meet the financial needs of the family and to safeguard and improve the family, dealings with the other people who make up their social community: all these are ordinary human situations that Christian couples are called to supernaturalise” (St Josemaría Escrivá, *Christ is Passing By*, 23, Scepter, New York, 1974).



**“The family necessarily has manifold responsibilities, rights, and duties.”**

“It is important for married people to acquire a clear sense of the dignity of their vocation. They must know that they have been called by God not only to human love but also to divine love, through their human love. It is important for them to realise that they have been chosen from all eternity to cooperate with the creative power of God by having and then bringing up children. Our Lord asks them to make their home and their entire family life a testimony of all the Christian virtues” (*Conversations with Monsignor Escrivá*, 93).

“The purpose of marriage is to help married people sanctify themselves and others. For this reason they receive a special grace in the sacrament which Jesus Christ instituted. Those who are called to the married state will, with the grace of God, find within their state everything they need to be holy, to identify themselves each day more with Jesus Christ, and to lead those with whom they live to God. That is why I always look upon Christian homes with hope and affection, upon all the families which are the fruit of the Sacrament of Matrimony. They are a shining witness of this great divine mystery” (*Conversations with Monsignor Escrivá*, 91).

“The pure and noble love of spouses is something holy which I, as a priest, bless with both hands. [...] Our Lord sanctifies and blesses the husband’s love for his wife and the wife’s for her husband. [...] No Christian, whether or not he is called to married life, has a right to undervalue it” (St Josemaría Escrivá, *Christ is Passing By*, 24).

“But they [Christian couples] mustn’t forget that the secret of married happiness lies in everyday things, not in daydreams. It lies in finding the hidden joy of coming home in the evening, in affectionate relations with their children, in the everyday work in which the whole family cooperates; in good humour in the face of difficulties that should be met with a sporting spirit” (*Conversations with Monsignor Escrivá*, 91).



## 04 | *Family, communion of persons*

“In creating man and woman, God instituted the human family and endowed it with its fundamental constitution. Its members are persons equal in dignity. For the common good of its members and of society, the family necessarily has manifold responsibilities, rights, and duties” (*Catechism*, 2203).

“In the procreation and education of children, [the Christian family] reflects the Father’s work of creation. It is called to partake of the prayer and sacrifice of Christ. Daily prayer and the reading of the Word of God strengthen it in charity. The Christian family has an evangelizing and missionary task” (*Catechism*, 2205).

“The relationships within the family bring an affinity of feelings, affections and interests, arising above all from the members’ respect for one another. The family is a privileged community called to achieve a ‘sharing of thought and common deliberation by the spouses as well as their eager cooperation as parents in the children’s upbringing’ (*Gaudium et Spes*, 52, §1)” (*Catechism*, 2206).

**Parents can, and should, be a great help to their children. They can open new horizons for them, share their experiences and make them reflect.**







“Parents can, and should, be a great help to their children. They can open new horizons for them, share their experiences and make them reflect, so they do not allow themselves to be carried away by passing emotional experiences. They can offer them a realistic scale of values. Sometimes they can help with personal advice; on other occasions they should encourage their children to seek other suitable people such as a loyal and sincere friend, a learned and holy priest or an expert in career guidance. [...] Parents have to be on guard against the temptation of wanting to project themselves unduly onto their children or of moulding them according to their own preferences. They should respect the children’s individual God-given inclinations and aptitudes” (*Conversations with Monsignor Escrivá*, 104).

“Couples have the grace of the married state – the grace they receive in the Sacrament of Marriage – which enables them to live all the human and Christian virtues in their married life: understanding, good humour, patience, forgiveness, refinement and consideration in their mutual relations. The important thing is not to give up the effort, not to give in to nerves, pride or personal fads or obsessions. In order to achieve this, husbands and wives must grow in interior life and learn from the Holy Family to live with refinement – for supernatural and, at the same time, human reasons – the virtues of a Christian home. I repeat again that the grace of God will not be lacking” (*Conversations with Monsignor Escrivá*, 108).

# 05 | FAVOURS OF ST JOSEMARÍA

Dear Saint Josemaría,

Thank you for helping us to bring our daughter Marina into this world. After hoping for a child for a long time, we went to pray to you at your tomb in Rome, and a month later I was pregnant.

Coincidence or cause, I don't know, but I do know that you and the other saints I prayed to had something to do with it.

This is the third thing I have asked of you and has come about.

M. - Germany



My husband and I needed to find a house in 2 weeks because we couldn't stay in the one we were in any longer.... How difficult it is to find something in line with our possibilities, and in England...!! We started to pray the novena to St Josemaría, and over the weekend we started looking for accommodation. Two days later we looked at two places, and the second one was within our financial reach, and right next to our place of work. Today we finally went to talk to the estate agent and handed in the paperwork, and next week we will start moving in.

We are delighted. God never disappoints.

A.B. - United Kingdom



In the midst of a pandemic and in a country in acute social and financial crisis, I received a call last night from a friend of mine, a young professional, making her way in life and in dire financial straits. She tells me that she went to pick up her salary at the cash machine, and by mistake she pressed a key that made the money come out in the local currency – which is highly devalued – instead of dollars in which she is paid. This meant losing half of her salary. The banks are closed. She managed to call but was told it was her fault and there was nothing they could do. She persisted and they told her: “We’ll see... but it’s very difficult. We’ll let you know tomorrow.” She was very distressed. I encouraged her to ask St Josemaría for a solution. I prayed the prayer card several times before going to bed and, with faith, asked him to take care of her, because she needs it. Today, at mid-day, I received a WhatsApp. They called her from the bank, solving her problem. I am sure that behind it is the hand of St Josemaría.



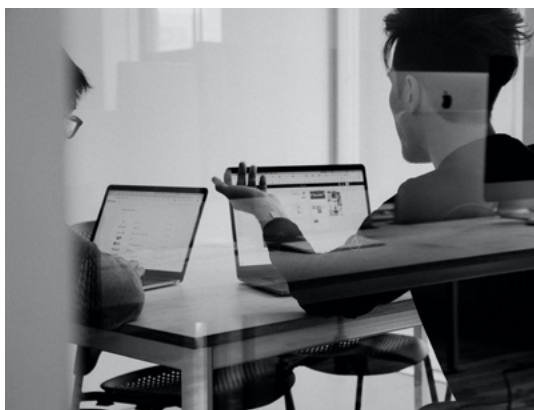
I want to thank him in this difficult time we are going through and I ask him to continue to protect us, for we need him very much.

F.B. Lebanon

Thank you St Josemaría! In the summer of 2019, I started praying the Novena for work, because I was 19 years old and I wanted to get a job so I could have some money for myself. A friend recommended this novena to me. She told me I should pray and make a novena, because it was “very miraculous”. And so I did. On the fourth day of the novena I was called with a job offer, and a year later I am still working.

I thank him for his great intercession.

A.K. Spain



# 06 | POPE FRANCIS CONVOKES THE YEAR OF THE FAMILY



On 19 March 2021 Pope Francis inaugurated the “*Amoris Laetitia* Family” Year, which runs until 26 June 2022.

“In imitation of the Holy Family,” the Holy Father said, “we are called to rediscover the educational value of the family unit, which must be based on the love that always regenerates relationships and opens up horizons of hope. Sincere communion can be experienced in the family when it is a house of prayer, when affections are serious, deep, pure, when forgiveness prevails over discord, when the daily harshness of life is softened by mutual tenderness and by serene adherence to God’s will.”

“In this way,” he continued, “the family opens itself to the joy that God gives to all those who know how to give joyfully. At the same time, it finds the spiritual energy to open itself to the outside world, to others, to the service of its brothers and sisters, to collaboration for the building up of an ever new and better world; capable, therefore, of being the bearer of positive stimuli; the family evangelises by the example of life.”

### **Objectives of the “*Amoris Laetitia* Family” Year**

1. Disseminate the contents of the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*. “It is important that people experience the Gospel of the family as a joy that fills hearts and lives” (AL 200).
2. Proclaim that the sacrament of marriage is a gift and that it holds a “transforming power” (cf. AL 228) for human love.
3. Make families themselves the active agents of the pastoral care of the family. This requires

“an effort at evangelization and catechesis inside the family” (AL 200).

4. Raise awareness among young people of the importance of formation in true love and self-giving, by creating initiatives specifically for them.
5. Broaden the outlook and action of the pastoral care of the family so that it includes spouses, children, young people, the elderly, and people in fragile family situations.

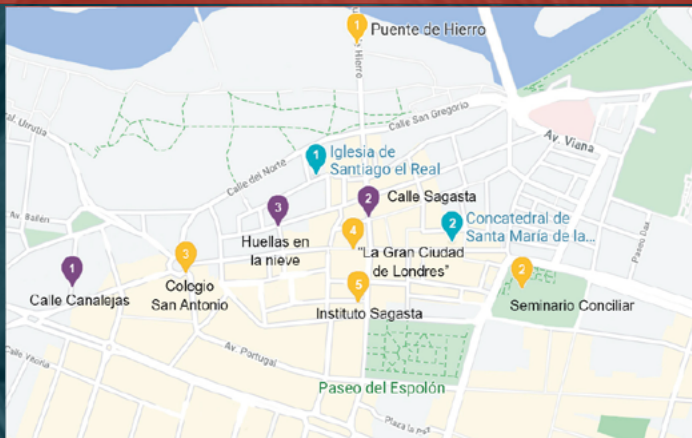


**Amoris Laetitia Family**  
**Year 2021 - 2022**



# SAINT JOSEMARÍA HISTORICAL TOUR OF LOGROÑO, SPAIN

## Places in the city related to his childhood



### Streets in Logroño

- 1 Canalejas Street
- 2 Sagasta Street
- 3 Footprints in the snow

### Churches

- 1 Church of St James
- 2 Santa Maria de la Redonda

### Places

- 1 The Iron Bridge
- 2 Major Seminary of Logroño
- 3 St Anthony's School
- 4 "The Great City of London" shop
- 5 Sagasta Institute



### St Josemaría returns to Triana, Seville

Fifty-three years have gone by since the morning of 1 October 1968 (the eve of the fortieth anniversary of the foundation of Opus Dei), when St Josemaría Escrivá went to the Chapel of Seafarers in Triana to prostrate himself in prayer before Our Lady of Hope. St Josemaría's visit is commemorated by a plaque, a relic and a postcard. A relic, because on 31 October 2020, the Brotherhood of Triana placed a reliquary containing a relic of the saint at the feet of Our Lady of Hope: "so that this relic of him will remind us," said Sergio Sopena, the head of the Brotherhood, "of what

St Josemaría told us: that 'happiness in heaven is for those who know how to be happy on earth.'" And a postcard, because the saint wrote a postcard with a picture of Our Lady of Hope to his children in Opus Dei in Rome, and it has been kept as a family souvenir of that filial visit of prayer.

### A new book by St Josemaría: "Letters (I)"

The sanctification of ordinary life, humility, service and the proclamation of Christ are the themes of four of the Letters that St Josemaría addressed to the faithful of Opus Dei. They have now been published in English for the first time. These Letters are addressed to the people of Opus Dei throughout the ages, not to specific recipients. They deal with topics related to the spirit and history of Opus Dei, but most of the things they say are helpful for all Christians: they speak, above all, of following Jesus Christ, the subject that really interested St Josemaría.



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Account Number: 81044834 | Sort-Code: 40-05-33