



Saint Josemaría Escrivá

Founder of Opus Dei

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There are all sorts of ways of showing gratitude with deeds. Esteban Casado's family chose to build a shrine with a statue of Saint Josemaría. Like that many more people can come and pray as intensely as they did when they appealed to his intercession for 10-year-old Angel, who spent 21 days in a coma following a road accident. His sister Judith tells the story.

I am 17 and wasn't a very practising Catholic, but as of 6 April 2003 my life turned around completely.

That afternoon my dad and I were discussing which course I should choose at university, when we began to feel surprised that my mum and brother had not got home yet. Shortly afterwards a car came and we were told that they'd been in an accident. At first that was all we knew – we didn't know how they were or what had happened. I remember that both my dad and I couldn't really believe it. I felt "sure" that it couldn't be anything very serious – lots of people have accidents. I could never have imagined the ordeal ahead.

We got to the hospital and after a 30-minute wait we were allowed to see my mum. She was under observation, and my brother was in intensive care, fighting for his life. When we went in to see him he was linked up to dozens of tubes and machines. My dad went close to the bed and called his name but Angel didn't answer, because he was in a coma. We went out and passed on the first news to the rest of the family. My dad broke down and cried, and I realised how serious it was. My mum had an operation on her shoulder, and was out of danger. But my brother was in a coma for three weeks.

We went to Mass every day and I said the Rosary at least twice every day. From the moment we learnt how serious Angel's situation was we prayed hard to Our Lady of La Cabeza and Saint Josemaría Escrivá for him to recover.

The whole time we were in hospital we got lots of support from everyone, more than we could possibly imagine, including our schools, Altaduna and Saladares. They even set up a web-page so that people could visit it to see how Angel was doing and pray for him and write get-well messages to him. The children from his class wrote to him telling him all the news to keep him up to date, and saying how much they were praying for him to come back to school soon.

At last he came out of the coma and he was moved to Badalona, to the Guttmann Neural Rehabilitation Institute. We were told that rehabilitation would be slow, like 8 or 10 months, but when he'd been there a month the doctors told us that we could go home to Almeria, because Angel was better. His physical strength and will to survive had beaten the prognosis.

We know that my brother's recovery is due to our unceasing prayer to our Lady and Saint Josemaría. Angel came home on 18 July, and he leads a totally normal life like any other 10-year-old, goes to school and plays football with his friends. On 18 October he made his First Holy Communion.