



Saint Josemaria Escriva

Founder of Opus Dei

[Home](#) - [For young people](#) - Josemaria's Christening

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On January 13, 1902, everyone in St Josemaria's house got up early and put on their best clothes. The little family was going to gather at the baptismal font in Barbastro Cathedral that morning.

His godparents arrived very early to take the baby, who was looking enchanting in a beautiful shawl. His mother, Mrs Escriva, had wrapped him up warmly, and she handed him to his godmother to take him to the cathedral. Mrs Escriva stayed at home, as she still needed to rest.

Everyone was looking very elegant. Mr Escriva was carrying his two-year-old daughter, Carmen, in his arms. She was wearing a very pretty frock, and clapped her hands with pleasure nearly all the way to the cathedral.

The priest poured the baptismal water onto Josemaria's forehead, and the baby squeaked with surprise. His Guardian Angel, the "Little Watch-Mender", could see how the water of baptism washed away the stain of original sin from Josemaria's soul, and made the star of his vocation shine a thousand times brighter. The Blessed Trinity had come to dwell in the baby's soul, and would stay with him forever.

Deep in prayer, the Guardian Angel repeated joyfully again and again, "Jesus, Josemaria loves you a mill-i-on times over!"

Celebration in Heaven and on earth

Everyone went back to the Escriva's house, feeling very happy. There they made a little celebration. Mrs Escriva gently hugged her baby and kissed him – her baby who was now a Christian and would belong to Jesus forever.

The angels in Heaven walked with them on their way home, and then went back adoring God.

The horrid black devil hadn't appeared anywhere. Perhaps it was because he thought that this baby was just like any other baby. Or perhaps it was because of the reinforcements that the Little Watch-Mender had asked for from Heaven, because the devil doesn't dare stand up to angels.

Extract translated from *Vida y venturas de un borrico de noria... y su Relojerico* ("*The Life and Adventures of a Water-Wheel Donkey and His Little Watch-Mender*"), by Paulina Mönkeberg, published by Palabra, Madrid, 2004.

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