



Saint Josemaria Escriva

Founder of Opus Dei

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Best friends with Dad

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In autumn the chestnut-sellers appeared. Mr Escriva used to buy a handful of hot roasted chestnuts and put them in his pocket. The minute his footsteps and the sound of the front door were heard, Josemaria rushed to greet him, shouting, “Daddy’s home! Daddy’s home!”

And even before saying hello to him, he put his hands in his pocket to see if there were any sweets there. Mr Escriva caught hold of his hand, and the little boy laughed as he discovered the hot chestnuts in his father’s pocket. Then, lifting him up in his arms, Mr Escriva asked him his usual question, “Tell me how much you love me?”

“A mill-i-on mill-i-on times over!” replied Josemaria.

Sometimes, teasing him, Mr Escriva asked him for the sweet back. “Will you give it to me?”

Josemaria looked at him, and slowly held it out. Mr Escriva laughed to see the immense love his little boy had for him!

Then Josemaria put his hand in his own pocket and surrendered his “treasures”: an empty cotton-reel, a headless toy soldier, a bottle-top... and although he found it hard to take such a step, he ended up holding out his hand with a smile of satisfaction.

Whenever they could, he and his father would go out for a walk through Barbastro. One morning, they set off to see an airplane. It was one of the very first to be produced, and was on show in Barbastro. Josemaria was beaming with joy at the great adventure in store for him with his father.

Josemaria held tightly onto his father's hand. The crowd was unbelievable. Still holding Mr Escriva's hand, the little boy reached out and touched the side of the airplane, and then said in surprise, "It's made of cloth!"

"Yes," his father replied, "and the astonishing thing is that people can travel very far, and very quickly, inside that!"

Josemaria saw his father laugh out loud, as one of a group of religious sisters nearby asked anxiously, "If that flew over our garden, would it break our enclosure?"

Extract from Paulina Mönkeberg, *Vida y venturas de un borrico de noria*, "[The Life and Adventures of a Water-Wheel Donkey and His Little Watch-Mender](#)" © Ediciones Palabra S.A., 2004.