



Saint Josemaría Escriva

Founder of Opus Dei

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Those Masses made me love the liturgy

Jose María Casciaro

José María Casciaro met Saint Josemaría in 1939. The next year he moved to Madrid to study, and lived in Jenner hall of residence, where Saint Josemaría was also living. He spent more than five years close to the Founder of Opus Dei.

When I arrived in Jenner I was impressed by the way saint Josemaría celebrated Mass. I found it deeply moving, and so did everyone, judging by the comments I heard. In the first place, it was the way he celebrated it. He followed the liturgical norms of the Church with great care. Within these rubrics he ensured that the congregation participated in the Holy Sacrifice as actively as possible. His daily Mass was “dialogued”, meaning that the responses were given not only by the server, as was usual in churches in those times, but by all of us together, slowly and calmly. This enabled us to be really penetrated by the Eucharistic mystery.

Another factor was that the vestments were both simple and elegant. For example, I had not seen a priest celebrating Mass in a Gothic chasuble before, only the kind which was usual at that time, the guitar-shaped “Roman” chasubles. In Jenner, with the permission of the Bishop of Madrid, the larger Gothic chasubles were worn, which lent added dignity to the sacred act. The frontal on the altar was changed according to the liturgical colour of the day.

When saint Josemaría was celebrating Mass, with his clear intonation, well-marked pauses, and unconcealed recollection and devotion, being at Mass in Jenner generated deep, sincere piety. I cannot do less than state, after all these years, that those Masses of the Father led me to love the Church’s liturgy and to participate in the Holy Sacrifice with a new attitude. The transcendence of the action being celebrated was something we could see, hear, and touch.

José María Casciaro, *It is Worth While*, Scepter, 2000, pp. 134-6.