

## Now you belong to Me

"Jesus came to my soul as love comes - *sicut fur*, like a thief," said St Josemaría once, "when I was least expecting him, bringing sweetness to my life and telling me 'Now you belong to Me.'"

It was soon after Christmas, 1917. Josemaría was fifteen. Like every year, the lights from the Crib shone in the family sitting-room. One night, while he was asleep, snow came silently falling on the city of Logroño. It snowed so heavily that there were articles about it in the local press. The Little Watch-Mender knew that God had a reason for covering the city with this white blanket of snow... Josemaría's soul was ready for a decisive call from Heaven.

"It's worth while, it's worth while," sang the Little Watch-Mender as dawn broke.

He had been praying ceaselessly all night long. He knew that that day, God in his goodness was going to reveal something very important to Josemaría, and that he had to be on the watch against the devil, whom he had seen menacing the boy for some time past. The light on Josemaría's forehead had not gone unnoticed, and it was plain that Josemaría was more committed to God every day.

Like every day, Josemaría got up as soon as he was called, and said his morning prayers.

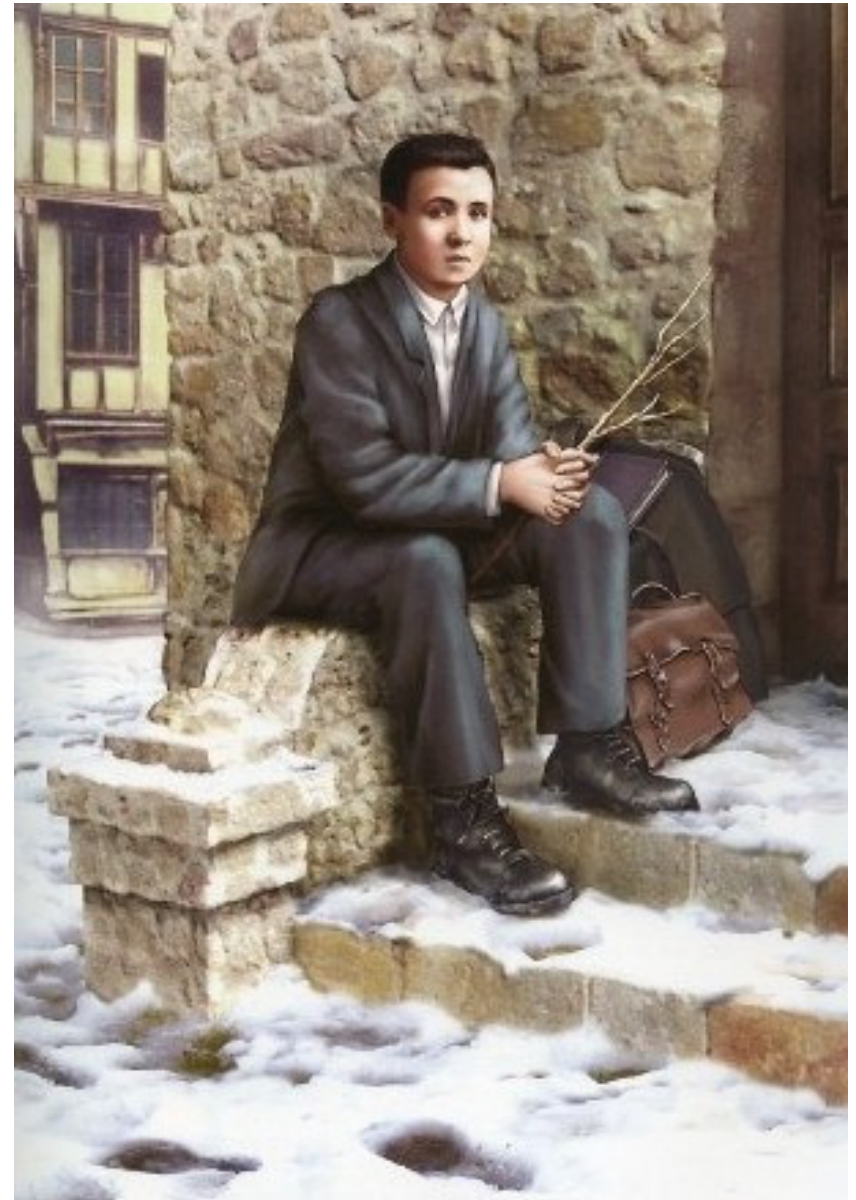
"I offer to you all my thoughts, words and actions of this day, Lord, and my whole life too, for love."

"... and my whole life too, for love!" the Little Watch-Mender repeated meaningfully in his ear.

Josemaría got ready to go out. That morning the bitter cold threatened to chill him to the bone, and he wrapped himself up warmly and put on a thick pair of boots. He picked his way carefully along the street, not wanting to skid and fall in the cold, wet snow. Suddenly he saw something that halted him in his tracks. Footprints... left by a friar who was walking barefooted in the snow! A Carmelite friar had passed that way shortly before, on his way to say Mass at a convent nearby.

The sight of those bare footprints shook Josemaría profoundly. He stared at them, thinking: "What about me? What do I do for God? If other people offer such great sacrifices for love of God, aren't I capable of offering Him anything?"

His Guardian Angel was praying without stopping. From that moment on, Josemaría began to ask himself, "God wants *something* from me... but what is it?"



Extract from the book *Vida y aventuras de un borrico de noria... y de su Relajerico* ("Life and Adventures of a Water-Wheel Donkey... and His Little Watch-mender") by Paulina Mönckeberg, published in Spanish by Palabra