A life dedicated to Christ: testimony of communion, mission and fatherhood on the outskirts of Santiago, Chile

We are Camilo and Margarita, and we want to share our experience of life and mission. We met at a university retreat organised by the Communion and Liberation movement. Since then, we have discovered that we can be truly happy there, and that our life only has meaning if it is completely dedicated to Christ. This has led us to give our lives for children and young people from vulnerable areas.

In 2018, we began going every Tuesday to El Duraznal, a very vulnerable neighbourhood in Santiago. Together with Father Lorenzo, we spend time with children exposed to violence, drugs and abandonment: we play, eat bread with Nutella and invite them to Mass. From a conversation with a young man, a weekly space emerged to talk about his questions, happiness, love and loneliness.

For years, we did not explicitly mention Christ. Then, in 2022, we organised a trip to southern Chile where we shared our daily life, cooking and walking. In front of a waterfall, we announced our faith to the young people by reading them the story of John and Andrew's encounter with Jesus. They remember it as one of the first moments when they sensed that they could be happy.

The following year, on another trip, the young people shared with complete frankness the deepest pains of their families, especially hunger. One of them, a month after the trip where he had told us his story full of suffering, told us that he had given up marijuana because he had found someone who loved him.

Before last year's holidays, we took a risk and told them that we had found true happiness in the Christian experience. We asked them if they were interested, and they all answered without hesitation that they were, because they had already experienced it.

During those days, Camilo told his story, marked by an alcoholic father, and how, through that, he discovered the fatherhood of God in the priests of the Fraternity of St. Charles Borromeo. At that assembly, a young man said that in Camilo he had found the fatherhood he had always sought. Another said that in the moments of silence he had sensed that there was a Father for him: Jesus. The most surprising thing is not that they call us fathers, but that one of our children has found faith on this path. We do not believe there is a greater happiness.

Today we are accompanied by three judgements. First, that the greatest miracle is our communion and how it changes our lives. Second, that this communion allows us to share a life, the Church, where we are truly a family to which we belong forever. Third, we discover that being instruments of the Lord allows us to live true fatherhood, and that He gives us back our lives, a hundred times more joyful.

Finally, we discover a method: respond to reality, be available, and remain. In this way, God shows us His preference and that reality is positive, giving us a place with these children, just as they are.