

# Wake up the World: Q&A with Sr. Maria Silva, OP

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*"I stand on the shoulders of giants, the sisters who came to the U.S. and started Catholic schools and hospitals. I live my religious life because of them," Sr. Maria told The Catholic Sun. (Joyce Coronel/CATHOLIC SUN)*

Sr. Maria Silva began working for a car dealership in the Bronx right out of high school. She was working her way through Fordham and studying to be a psychologist, hoping for a lucrative career. Instead, she became the youngest chief financial officer for the dealership at 23. In spite of great financial success, she felt drawn to the religious life.

**The Catholic Sun:** When did you first realize God was calling you to the consecrated life?

**Sr. Maria:** I was 18 years old and I was on a religious retreat called Emmaus. I was helping lead it with my old high school. We were in Adoration and it was the night time. It was sort of the Franciscan style of having Jesus raised up and candles everywhere. It was very beautiful and it was like someone flipped a light switch and I thought, "I think I'm being called to religious life." And it was for two minutes and I was like, "That's awesome!" and then after that I was like, "No, it's not. I want to have a husband and a beautiful house and children and the cars and the clothes and all the things that the world says you need to have to be successful." So for the next

**S** 12 years it was this tug of war. Do I do it or do I not do it? In my heart, I always knew that was ultimately what God was calling me to.

**Sun:** Why did you choose the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist?

**Sr. Maria:** I was sitting in the walk-in closet and I said, “OK Lord, if we’re going to get married we need to go house shopping.” ... I visited [the Mother House in] Ann Arbor. In the chapel, I knelt down and I said, “Lord, I just want to become a saint. Tell me where you want to do this for me.” He said, “I can do this here.” I thought I was projecting, so I said, “Tell me where you want me.” And again in my heart, He said, “It’s here with my grace you can become a saint.” The world tells you your self-worth is equal to your net worth. Money can be very good provided it’s ordered right – provided God comes first. There was always this longing of “I want more.” I

thought it was something I could buy or wear or drive in. One day I had just finished decorating my bedroom – I had just installed my home theater – I sat down on my couch and I thought, “I could give this all up tomorrow and it wouldn’t make a hill of beans.” It was a little jarring. All the things I had, the beautiful view – it meant very little in the scheme of things. I wanted a community that would show the world I am decidedly Marian; I wanted a community that was eucharistic ... and that had a deep love of study ... and that was traditional with the full habit.

**Sun:** What story about your vocation stands out?

**Sr. Maria:** Being on Oprah. It was beautiful and I think St. Dominic would have been proud. We walked into the living rooms of people that would have never opened the door to us. It’s been five years and I still have people coming up to me saying, ‘Don’t I know you?’ It’s going to be on again Oct. 17.

**Religious community:** Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist

**Community charisms:** Teaching, evangelization

**Community founding:** 1997

**Current role:** Sixth and seventh grade teacher at St. Thomas the Apostle School

**When she first heard God’s call:** Age 18

**Final vows:** July 29, 2015



## Joyce Coronel

Joyce Coronel is a regular contributor to The Catholic Sun and author of “A Martyr’s Crown.”

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