

My dear children: may Jesus watch over my daughters and sons for me!

The feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, which we will celebrate tomorrow, reminds us that “in the Passion, the Cross ceased to be a symbol of punishment and became instead a sign of victory. The Cross is the emblem of the Redeemer: *in quo est salus, vita et resurrectio nostra*. There is our health, our life and our resurrection” (Saint Josemaría, *The Way of the Cross*, Second Station, no. 5). On the occasion of this feast, I suggest that you reflect once again with special care on the mystery of the Cross. There we discover that “Christian freedom is quite the opposite of arbitrariness; it consists in following Christ in the gift of self even to the sacrifice of the Cross. It may seem a paradox, but the Lord lived the crowning point of his freedom on the Cross as a summit of love. When they shouted at him on Calvary: ‘If you are the Son of God, come down from the Cross!’ he showed his freedom as the Son precisely by remaining on that scaffold, to do the Father’s merciful will to the very end” (Benedict XVI, Angelus, July 1, 2007).

In the upcoming weeks we will renew our gratitude to God for a new anniversary of the day on which he let Saint Josemaría “see” Opus Dei. And on October 6th we will joyfully recall his canonization. Our founder was always aware of being simply an instrument for bringing about what God wanted. How can we fail to recall that, when Opus Dei was taking its first steps, he wrote to us: “The Work of God comes to fulfill the Will of God. *Therefore have the deep conviction that heaven is determined on it becoming a reality*” (Instruction, March 19, 1934).

On my recent trip to Asia and Oceania, and also through the news that reaches me from many other places, I have seen once again the desire of so many souls to be faithful to the spirit that began its earthly journey in 1928. Let us be filled with supernatural enthusiasm for the mission God has entrusted to us. Let us not allow our horizons to be narrowed. Wherever we are, together with so many brothers and sisters of our in the faith, we can be sowers of peace and joy – of the peace and joy of our Lord – in this world of ours.

I am happy to inform you that – after the summer break in the northern hemisphere – we are working with the Dicastery for the Clergy to draw up the proposal for modifications to the Statutes that will be presented to the Holy Father. Continue to accompany this process with your prayer and with an attitude of hopeful filial abandonment. There has been no shortage of interpretations on this matter in the media and on social networks, and many of you have sent your questions and concerns. I thank you and understand your concern for the Work, which belongs to everyone; let us take advantage of this news to joyfully spread the spirit that we have received from our Lord. As in the previous messages of June 3rd and August 10th (which I suggest you reread), to the extent that the Dicastery deems it appropriate, we will inform you about the progress of this work.

In the first days of October the Synod of Bishops will begin. I ask you to pray for this meeting, as Pope Francis has asked us to do. Between the 4th and 9th of that month I will be in Portugal. I count on you to accompany me spiritually on that trip, where I will meet with many people. I entrust myself to Our Lady of Fátima so that, also with your help, my work there will be fruitful. And I place all of you under her motherly protection.

Your Father blesses you with all his affection.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Leonardo". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rome, 13 September 2023