

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

June 26th will end the Year of the Family convoked by Pope Francis, who has invited us to reflect on the importance of the family in the Church and in all of society.

The family is the first setting where a person becomes aware of being loved for who he or she is and learns to love others. All families have their strengths and weaknesses, their good times and their difficulties. But our Lord is always calling us to look at each person with gratitude and love. Loving others as they are – with their virtues and defects – will lead us to have a heart in harmony with that of Jesus. As Saint Josemaría said: “The human heart is endowed with an enormous coefficient of expansion. When it loves, it opens out in a ‘crescendo’ of affection that overcomes all barriers. If you love our Lord, there will not be a single creature that does not find a place in your heart” (*The Way of the Cross*, Eighth Station, no. 5).

Couples who try to build a Christian family today face many challenges. Among these are reconciling family duties with their work, social relationships, rest and so on. Therefore it is very good to accompany them from the very beginning of their marriage path. I encourage you to promote activities and initiatives along these lines, knowing that they have a “multiplying effect.” “How important it is that young people see with their own eyes Christ’s love alive and present in the love of married couples, who give testimony with their own life that a love that lasts forever is possible!” (Francis, Video message, 9 June 2021).

We entrust to Jesus, Mary and Joseph the fruits of the Year of the Family that is now ending. We ask them that all Christian homes may be a reflection of the home in Nazareth.

Your Father blesses you with all his affection,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Leonardo". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rome, 14 June, 2022