

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

The approach of Holy Week invites us to intensify our contemplation of Christ on the Cross. Lent, which like all dimensions of Christian life leads us to identify ourselves more closely with Jesus, is helping us to do so liturgically. I am reminded of some words that Saint Josemaría addressed to a group of his children: “Manifest clearly the Christ that you are: by your life, by your Love, by your spirit of service, by your eagerness to work, by your understanding, by your zeal for souls” (13 June 1974). With the help of grace, we can always grow in a love that does not remain superficial, but is shown in concern for others. The spirit of service, the effective desire to love with deeds each person as they are – with their virtues and defects – reflects, despite our own littleness, our Lord’s face.

Another way to make Christ manifest is obedience. In Holy Week, we will contemplate how Jesus “humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross” (*Phil 2:8*). I suggest that you continue meditating on the letter on obedience that I sent you last month. As I said there, we need to live an intelligent obedience, integrated into our freedom. Thus we will not let ourselves be carried away by events, but we will have a heart attentive to what God wants to tell us through people and circumstances.

In a few days, we will celebrate the solemnity of Saint Joseph. In meditating on his life, we see that, along with the moments of joy, there was also no shortage of suffering and doubt. By trusting in the plans God had prepared for him, he found a happiness that did not depend so much on what happened externally, as on his union with Jesus and Mary. We can ask him to teach us to treat Jesus and Mary better and thus have the strength and joy to serve others.

I am relying on your prayers for my intentions. Among them, the work that we are carrying out with the Holy See to adapt the statutes. A few weeks ago we had a meeting at the Dicastery for the Clergy, in a welcoming and friendly atmosphere. Continue to entrust the next steps of this work with peace and serenity.

Your Father blesses you with all his affection,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Leonardo".

Rome, March 15, 2024