



Message from the Prelate

19-III-2026



PATH TO THE
CENTENARY
2028/30

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Pro manuscripto

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

Everything is done and everything remains to be done. This phrase, so often meditated on by Saint Josemaría, has also guided us on the [path of preparing for the centenary](#) of the Work. Everything is done, because God inspired our Father to found the Work; everything remains to be done, because He always opens new horizons for us in fidelity to its origin.

Today we celebrate the feast of Saint Joseph, patron of the universal Church and of the Work. Our founder called him “my father and lord” and saw him as “the man with the permanent smile and shrugged shoulders.” How much we can learn from him! As a model and intercessor, he helps us to travel through life, with its lights and shadows, sorrows and joys, and to keep our heart filled with an eagerness for love and fidelity.

Guided by Saint Joseph, I want to speak to you once again about the centenary of the Work. On [June 10, 2021](#), I informed you that the celebration would encompass the five hundred days from October 2, 2028, to February 14, 2030, as an expression of unity: women and men, laity and priests. I also told you that a committee had been formed to plan the preparations and organize a process for gathering suggestions, which has allowed us to experience, once again, what Don Javier so often emphasized: Opus Dei is in our hands. I want to thank the committee and everyone for their interest and participation in these tasks.

As you know, the recent regional assemblies focused on the theme “Path to the Centenary.” In considering this veritable chorus of voices from nearly seventy countries, I give thanks to God for the spirit of unity and fidelity, the foundation of the permanent apostolic and spiritual renewal that we wish to bring about in order to respond to the challenges of each era. Young and old, members of the Work, cooperators, friends, and many persons who were part of Opus Dei at some point in their lives, you have paused to consider how to embody today, with dynamic fidelity, the spirit that Saint Josemaría received from God to serve the Church. *A grateful reflection on the past, accompanied by a humble examination of conscience, and a hopeful look towards the future* is what I would like to convey to you in this message so that, together, we may go forward towards the centenary.

In your contributions, three areas of our life in the world have had special resonance: [the family, work, and formation](#). Reading your considerations on the family, one notices a renewed desire for each home to be a true “domestic church,” a reflection of the Holy Family of Nazareth. Likewise, you have emphasized that work is not only a human task, but also a place for a personal encounter with Christ. The constant changes in professional and social life beckon us to show how the Gospel enriches the meaning of work and contributes to humanizing – and therefore Christianizing –

work relationships and all forms of work, transforming daily work into a generous service, filled with meaning. The formation we receive is an impetus to identify ourselves more closely with Christ and enliven the world from within.

In the coming years, we will continue to make use of this valuable material, which encapsulates everyone's hopes and needs. The situation in the Church and in society is both exciting and delicate, and we see how God's grace continues acting. The Work, as part of the Church, is never detached from the ups and downs of this world. Besides the [process of adapting the Statutes](#) (which began almost four years ago and is still under review by the Holy See), we have abundant challenges and opportunities to serve the Church as she wants to be served today.

Specifically, we will travel this path with gratitude to God as we witness the growing number of people seeking Him and taking part in means of formation, the conversions our Lord is bringing about thanks to our interaction with our friends, and the new apostolic initiatives underway. All this vitality is an opportunity to give thanks for God's action, from whom these fruits come, and for the self-giving of my many sons and daughters – your brothers and sisters – who have given their lives for others.

At the same time, this stage of continuity is not without its challenges, in keeping with those faced by all Christians. For example, in most regions, the difficulties for young people to perceive the beauty of the call to apostolic celibacy are evident. Furthermore, as time goes by, we will have to address the challenge of replacing older members, both lay people and priests. This will require seeking new ways in each region to continue fulfilling our mission. This situation will also require (as noted in all the regional assemblies) giving priority to the apostolic work with young people and asking the supernumeraries to play a greater role in the apostolate; and hence it will require continuing to improve their formation so that we may all be on the front line in this capillary apostolate, spread out like a fan.

Almost five years have gone by since the first message I addressed to you about the centenary, and we are drawing closer to this celebration. In accord with the Central Advisory and the General Council, I suggest that we prepare ourselves spiritually for this celebration by meditating on the example of the first Christians: men and women of every condition and background who bore witness to their faith in Christ, in such a way that they transformed society. Our Father reminded us that "if you want a point of comparison, the easiest way to understand Opus Dei is to consider the life of the early Christians. They lived their Christian vocation seriously, seeking earnestly the holiness to which they had been called by their Baptism. Externally they did nothing to distinguish themselves from their fellow citizens" ([Conversations, no. 24](#)).

Against this backdrop, I would like us to consider more deeply in the coming years some central aspects of the spirit of Opus Dei, which Saint Josemaría summarized in phrases and expressions that we know well and that are for us both a gift and a task. Last February 19th, in a meeting with priests, Leo XIV highlighted Jesus' words to the Samaritan woman: "If you knew the gift of God" (Jn 4:10). And the Pope continued: "The gift, as we know, is also an invitation to have a creative responsibility . . . With our creativity and our charisms, we are called to help carry out God's work. In this sense, the words that the Apostle Paul addresses to Timothy are illuminating: 'I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you' (2 Tim 1:6)."

Rekindling God's gift is what we especially wish to do in these coming years. Specifically, between October 2, 2026, and October 2, 2027, I suggest delving deeper into the idea of *being contemplatives in the middle of the world*, by which our Father encapsulated many elements of the spirit of Opus Dei: divine filiation, the Mass as the center and root of our existence, the value of ordinary life, and the beauty of discovering that "divine something" hidden in the most common realities of work, family, and civic life.

The following year, until the start of the centenary on October 2, 2028, I would like us to keep more present Saint Josemaría's teachings on *friendship and confidence*, each of us being for others "Christ passing by," and discovering Him also in others. In our vocation, friendship is the privileged place for evangelization, since in the ties of friendship we share the Gospel heart to heart.

Finally, from October 2, 2028, to February 14, 2030, I invite you to reflect on *work* from the viewpoint of *secularity*, starting with Saint Josemaría's expression "sanctifying work, sanctifying ourselves through work, sanctifying others through work," thus inspiring the transformation of the world in accord with the heart of Jesus. Saint Josemaría's message on work takes on particular relevance when the very idea of work as a place for sanctification is being questioned, especially in light of technological and cultural changes that are decisively influencing people. Then, with God's grace and our own example, despite our personal limitations and failings, many people will find Christ in their lives, which will be filled with new meaning.

Over the next few years, we will prepare ourselves spiritually by reflecting on these three central teachings of Saint Josemaría, with the desire to better serve those around us, the Church, and society as a whole. Our Father saw his sons and daughters as "sowers of peace and joy." We wish to make that dream a reality.

Let us continue to pray for these intentions, in harmony with the perennial exhortation of our Father: "From the beginning of our Work, I have not tired of teaching the same thing: the only weapon we possess is prayer, praying day and

night. And now I repeat the same thing to you again: pray!, pray!, for it is very necessary" (*Letter 28-III-1973*, no. 5).

The life of Saint Joseph centered on contemplating, loving, and caring for Jesus and Mary, from his position as a father and worker in Galilee. We ask him to accompany us on this path towards the centenary.

Naturally, also in this context, let us sincerely join the Holy Father in his prayer for peace in the world, so ravaged by war and destruction in many countries and peoples, and let us strive to be instruments of peace in our own setting. May Christ, Prince of Peace, have mercy on our world; may his grace console those who are suffering, and transform the hatred in many hearts into sentiments of love and forgiveness.

Your Father blesses you with all his affection.

Fernando

Rome, March 19, 2026