

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

During my recent trip to several countries in Central America, I once again had the opportunity to experience the blessed unity of the Work. We should never grow accustomed to this mercy that God has shown us. Making reference to 14 February 1930 and 14 February 1943, our Father once said: “It is not by chance that God wanted these two manifestations of his goodness to fall on the same date ... Ask our Lord to teach you to love the unity of the Work as He wanted it from the first moment” (14 February 1958).

Our Lord at the Last Supper prayed for the unity of those who would be his disciples: *Ut omnes unum sint* (Jn 17:21)—that we all may be one. This is not simply the unity of an organization that is well structured humanly, but rather the unity of Love: “even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee” (*Ibid.*). Here, the first Christians are a clear example: “Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul” (*Acts* 4:32).

Precisely since it is the result of love, this unity is not uniformity, but rather communion. It is a unity in diversity that is shown in the joy of living alongside those who are quite different from us, where we learn to grow through what the others have to offer and we foster an atmosphere of affection around us. Jesus made clear that this unity is a requirement for being effective in passing on the Gospel: “so that the world may believe” (Jn 7:21). It is a unity, therefore, that does not enclose us in a group, but rather, as part of the Church, opens us to offer our friendship to every person in this marvelous mission of evangelizing.

Let us strive with new effort to live in unity with others, beginning with those closest to us. Then, with the grace of God, who is the source of this unity, we will be able to overcome the obstacles that we encounter along the way.

Your Father blesses you with all his affection,

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

Rome, 14 February 2019