

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

With the solemnity of Saint Joseph fast approaching, I suggest that you each focus more diligently on the example of the holy Patriarch, as “God’s faithful servant in continual contact with Jesus” (*Christ is Passing By*, no. 56).

From the moment God chose to make Himself more clearly present in Saint Joseph’s life, we see his readiness to be God’s faithful servant: in the mystery of the Incarnation, during the flight into Egypt, on the return to Nazareth and when Jesus is lost and remains in the Temple. On these occasions, Saint Joseph strives to welcome promptly what God is asking of him, even when it means changing his own plans and leaving his own future in doubt.

Saint Josemaria also helps us realize that “in the different circumstances of his life, Saint Joseph never refuses to think, and never neglects his own responsibilities” (*Ibid.*, no. 42). Let us try to always obey God with a faithfulness that is prompt, intelligent and responsible, although at times we may not fully understand his plans. We may not understand them, but we can always love them, with the certitude that God wants our good, which will lead us to act with freedom of spirit.

Saint Joseph dedicated his entire life to caring for Jesus with a father’s love, and he taught Him, in the human realm, many things, especially about work. At the same time, how much Saint Joseph would have learned simply by looking at the Child who was God! We have to learn everything from Jesus. He himself tells us: “learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart” (*Mt* 11:29). May Saint Joseph help us to contemplate Jesus—in the Gospel and in the Tabernacle—so that, with the motherly intercession of our Lady, we may become more gentle and humble, more filled with charity. Then, with the grace of the Holy Spirit, our hearts will be filled with greater love for God and others.

In recent months, many people have been affected by the epidemic that has spread in various parts of the world. As the Pope recently asked us, I invite you “to confront this difficult moment with the strength of faith, the certitude of hope and the fervor of charity” (Francis, 8 March

2020). Let us go to Saint Joseph's intercession and beseech him to extend his fatherly protection to the whole world.

Your Father blesses you with all his affection,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Leonardo". The script is cursive and fluid, with a prominent initial 'L'.

Rome, 11 March 2020