

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

At the beginning of a new year, you will surely have recalled Saint Josemaria's words: "New year, new struggle!" It is a struggle that requires, yes, our own effort, but above all divine grace. Let us consider the parable of the sower, with the desire to be "good soil" (*Mt* 13:8) for receiving God's gift, the seed that yields abundant fruit. Jesus offers us this gift each day in the Eucharist.

In the synagogue at Capernaum, our Lord said: "unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you" (*Jn* 6:53). A good way to begin this year can be to renew, with greater depth and gratitude, our faith in God's love for us (cf. *1 Jn* 4:16), made sacramentally visible in the Eucharist. Thus our struggle to be the "good soil" that receives the seed will be made effective.

Let us turn our eyes to Christ who, despite our own little worth, wants to fill us with renewed effectiveness and joy.

Your Father blesses you with all his affection,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Leonardo". The script is cursive and fluid.

Rome, 5 January 2020