

Rome, October 1, 2018

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

Tomorrow is the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1928. Shortly after that date, Saint Josemaria wrote, “On that day our Lord founded his Work; He brought to birth Opus Dei” (*Personal Notes*, no. 306). Our joy in celebrating this anniversary is also thanksgiving to God, who constantly enriches his Church with gifts and charisms: “Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. For his mercy endures forever” (*Ps* 118:1). Before our Father’s eyes there opened up the immense panorama of cooperating in reconciling the whole world with God, through professional work and the other circumstances of ordinary life.

Let us reflect on the primacy of God’s role. It is He who *founded his Work*, and who continues to bring it forward. As in the whole Church, the words of the Gospel become a reality: “The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed upon the ground, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he knows not how. The earth produces of itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear” (*Mk* 4:26-28). Saint Josemaria did his part: intense prayer, a determined interior struggle and untiring apostolic initiative. Nevertheless, he always had the conviction that all the drive that moved him to serve souls came from God. “Lord, I thank you for having made me understand without the shadow of a doubt that everything is yours: the blossoms, the fruit, the tree, the leaves, and the clear water which springs up to eternal life. *Gratias tibi, Deus! Gratias tibi, Deus!*” (*En diálogo con el Señor*, p. 308<sup>\*</sup>). The primacy of God’s grace is equally real in the life of every Christian, in the life of each and every one of us.

Besides reflecting on God’s gift let us renew our thanksgiving because, despite our own littleness, He has wanted to rely on us in order to make us his co-workers (cf. *2 Cor* 6:1). At times it might seem that, in reality, our role in carrying out God’s plans is irrelevant. Nevertheless, He takes our freedom seriously and truly relies on us. Let us recall that young boy who placed the little that he had—five loaves of bread and two fish—in Jesus’ hands. Thanks to this small act of generosity, Christ fed a multitude of people (cf. *Jn* 6:1-13). God also counts on our daily response, made up of small things that become great through the strength of his grace.

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\* Translation of text from *En diálogo con el Señor. Textos de la predicación oral*, Critical-historical edition, Rialp, 2017.

In this way we dedicate our best efforts to seeking Him in our work and serving the people around us, and we strive to look at them and love them as He would. Thus, in a thousand different ways, we make present in the world the light and warmth that He has put in our hearts. All of this is our small contribution as children, which our Father God makes use of to work wonders in souls.

The Synod on young people, the faith, and vocational discernment will begin soon. Let us continue praying and ask for the light and impulse needed so that Jesus' message may continue to reach many young men and women, and they may decide to follow Him generously on the different paths that exist in the Church. The proximity of this event in the Church to the anniversary of the Work can help us to see our own personal vocation with renewed eagerness, with a young and enamored heart. Our Founder never lost his youthful heart. He underwent many setback and sufferings, but his love for our Lord kept him always young. And he revealed to us the secret of his youthfulness: "When I pray at the foot of the altar *to God who gives joy to my youth (Ps 43:4)*, I feel young and I know that I will never consider myself old. If I keep true to my God, Love will constantly vivify me. My youth will be renewed like that of the eagle (cf. *Ps 103:5*)" (*Friends of God*, no. 31). If we remain united to our Lord, we will always be young, and He will continue to carry out his Work, ever ancient and ever new, in all the various places, times and cultures.

For a human life, ninety years is a lot; but for the Work it is certainly very few. We are still at the beginning. May this serve as a reminder for us of the gift we have received and of the beautiful mission Christ has placed in our hands.

Don't stop accompanying me with your prayer. Above all, let us accompany the Holy Father at this time, so that we may all go together to Jesus through Mary.

Your Father blesses you with all his affection,

*Lemaudo*