

To the Young People of UNIV

The Vatican, 16 March 2018

Dear young people:

On the fiftieth anniversary of this university encounter organized by the Prelature of Opus Dei, you once again are coming to the Eternal City moved by love for God, the Church and the Pope. Thus you have a beautiful opportunity to draw closer to Christ during Holy Week and to strengthen your faith and your commitment, along with other young people from diverse cultures and backgrounds, spurred on by the same desire for happiness, fulfilment and generous self-giving.

Your gathering is taking place during the year when the Synod on "Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment" will be held. I encourage you to prepare to take part in this ecclesial event. You will be helped to do so by turning your eyes to John, the young disciple whom Jesus loved and to whom he entrusted Mary as our Mother. He will teach you to recognize Jesus who is passing by in your life and to follow Him with the impetus and joy that "fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus" (*Evangelii gaudium*, 1).

Yes, our Lord is inviting all of us to follow Him with joy and to love God and neighbor with an unconditional love. This advice from Saint Josemaria will be of great help to you: "May you seek Christ. May you find Christ. May you love Christ" (*The Way*, 382). Strive to strengthen each day your friendship with Christ, asking yourselves frequently: "What would Jesus do in my place? What can I do to become more and more like Him and bring Him to others?" Seek Him in prayer, in the sacraments, in all the circumstances of your life and also in the people around you: in your friends, family members, fellow students, and in the most needy and forgotten of the world, in whom Christ's face is reflected in an especially clear way. I invite you to get out of yourselves, overcoming comfort-seeking and the selfishness of thinking only about your own concerns, in order to set out on the path of encountering those in need, and serving them with your talents. This is the best way of following Christ and keeping your heart always enkindled with love for Him.

I am praying for you, and for your hopes and endeavors, so that you may always sense the love of our Lord, who called us to a life of self-giving and service.

I also ask that you don't forget to pray for me. May Jesus bless you and our Lady watch over you.

Cordially,

Francis