

# Messages

## On the Occasion Of Holy Week (April 5, 2017)

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

Holy Week is drawing near. Let us try to live the coming days intensely, so that we can always once again say with Saint Paul: “*Mihi vivere Christus est!*” For to me to live is Christ! (see *Phil* 1:21). For us our Lord is not just an example. I recall here some words of the Pope: “I am always struck by something Pope Benedict said, that ‘the faith is not a theory, a philosophy, an idea; it is an encounter. An encounter with Jesus.’”<sup>1</sup> For us, to live is Christ. And if at times, because of weakness, exhaustion, or so many other circumstances in life, we lose sight of this reality, Jesus is always waiting for us, and even *goes* out to meet those who do not seek Him.<sup>2</sup>

Reading the Gospel with love helps us to grow in Jesus’ friendship, “on which everything depends;”<sup>3</sup> seeking him, finding him, getting to know him, loving

him.<sup>4</sup> When contemplating the life of our Lord, God always surprises us with new lights. Although sometimes it might seem that our reading doesn’t leave a trace, afterwards there come to our lips or our thoughts Jesus’ words, his reactions and gestures, which shed light on the ordinary or not so ordinary situations in our life. We need (and it is a gift that I ask God to grant everyone) to “breathe” with the Gospel, with the Word of God. To attain this, we have the help of so many good commentaries on Sacred Scripture, the writings of Saint Josemaría, and also many other works: lives of Christ, writings of the Fathers, etc.

The recent General Congress insisted on the “centrality” of Jesus Christ. We are eager, in this great catechesis that is the Work, to see everything focus more clearly on his Person.<sup>5</sup> With this desire to put yourselves more deeply into the Gospel, when giving talks, classes, meditations, or when speaking about the Christian life with your friends, you will transmit more brightly the marvelous news of God’s love for each person. Saint Ambrose said: “Draw out the water of Christ . . . Fill your soul with this water so that your land is well watered; . . . and once filled, you

<sup>1</sup>. Pope Francis, Homily, November 28, 2016.

<sup>2</sup>. Saint Josemaría, Homily “A Priest Forever” (April 13, 1973), in *In Love with the Church*, no. 39.

<sup>3</sup>. Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Doubleday: 2007, Foreword, p. xii.

<sup>4</sup>. Saint Josemaría, *Friends of God*, no. 300.

<sup>5</sup>. See Letter, February 14, 2017, no. 8.

will provide water to others.”<sup>6</sup> I ask our Lady to teach us to keep and ponder in our heart, as she did, all that refers to Jesus (see *Lk* 2:19), so that we tread and help others to tread—each person where God is calling them—along *paths of contemplation*.

Although the letter I wrote you with the conclusions of the General Congress is still recent, perhaps you missed having a letter from the Father last month. After considering it calmly and consulting the Central Advisory and General Council, it has seemed opportune to me to communicate with you by alternating letters with briefer messages, which will reach you through the Work’s website, now that the Internet is another means for staying united.

During Easter week I will make a brief pastoral visit to Ireland: accompany me with your prayer. And don’t forget to pray for the 31 faithful of the Prelature who will receive priestly ordination on the 29<sup>th</sup> of this month. Finally, I want to thank you for the closeness you have shown me with your letters and prayers. My prayers for all of you accompany you always.

Wishing you a happy Easter, your Father blesses you with all his affection,

Rome, April 5, 2017

Fernando

<sup>6</sup>. Saint Ambrose, *Epistola* 2, 4 (PL 16, 880).

## On the occasion of The Holy Father’s Trip to Fatima (May 10, 2017)

The upcoming centennial of our Lady’s apparitions in *Cova da Iria* and the Pope’s pilgrimage to Fatima awaken once again in our hearts, in a special way, Saint Josemaría’s ardent desire: *Omnes cum Petro ad Iesum per Mariam!* Let us accompany Pope Francis with the closeness that is made possible by prayer. And let us leave in our Mother’s hands the big intentions of peace and conversion that she made known in her apparitions. Let us also entrust to her the unity of the Church and of Christians, so that—all with Peter!—we may sow peace and joy in the world. To the intercession of the soon to be saints Francisco and Jacinta we entrust all those suffering from the physical and spiritual consequences of violence, war, lack of freedom, discrimination, loneliness, poverty. Our Lady recommended the Rosary at Fatima. Let us pray it with the affection and trust of children who have recourse to their Mother’s heart.

Our prayer will be fruitful if the peace and fraternity that imbue our Lady’s messages become more present in an attentive, open and refined love for those God places at our side. Charity isn’t cold good manners. Let us meditate on it slowly: in our home, at work, in