

to consider that the Church is not only the group of men and women who have joined her, but above all, as St. Josemaría said, it is “Christ present in our midst; God who comes down to us to save us, calling us with his revelation, sanctifying us with his grace, sustaining us with his constant help” (*Christ is Passing By*, no. 131). Even if we, the men and women who are part of the People of God, make mistakes and err, God is with us, in his Church.

In the face of these difficulties, which are evident to everyone, Pope Francis invited all Catholics, in the month of October, to recite the Rosary daily, ending it with the invocation *Sub Tuum Praesidium*, and with the prayer to St. Michael the Archangel. This is another key aspect: offering prayer and penance is a wonderful way to love the Church and the Pope ever more effectively.

You are urging us to ask for light to see and strength to want to do God's will. How can we help channel the enthusiasm of young people and lead them to dream high?

Indeed, World Youth Days are a sign of the joy that marks young people who have ideals, a joy they should spread throughout the whole Church. The Pope encouraged them to transmit this enthusiasm with his famous remark, “Make a mess!” So it is something positive.

At the same time, each young person will also need help so that these days in Panama don’t remain an isolated event in their lives, but

rather help enkindle in each person the desire to deepen the true origin of that joy, which is being close to Christ. Ordinary life—with its good and less good moments—can sometimes seem arid, a desert for those whose faith is enkindled only in moments of enthusiasm. But as St. Josemaría reminds us: “There where your fellow men and women are, where your aspirations are, your work, your loves, there is the place of your daily encounter with Christ.”

Young people live their lives with great intensity, so sometimes they may find it difficult to “see” Christ who is accompanying them. Some simple and practical advice might be to read the Gospel every day for a few minutes. If they don’t have that habit, they can start with the Gospel of St. Mark, which is short and direct. Those few minutes can have a great impact on their life.

Letting Yourself Be Surprised by a Good Father, an Article in Avvenire, Italy, and La Razón, Spain (January 26, 2019)

“When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him?” (*Ps* 8:3-4). These words of the psalmist reflect

the amazement awakened in the person who contemplates the immensity of the universe, and at the same time discovers that, despite their own smallness, they are unconditionally loved by God just as they are, for themselves.

Sometimes we may view this as a beautiful but unattainable ideal. We may have the impression, as St. Josemaría warned us, that God is far away, where the stars shine, and not truly close to us, that we are immersed in the turmoil of daily life, with so many jobs and things to do. And the doubt may arise: what is the point of all this, what do I want to achieve, what am I really looking for? These are longings that are awakened in a soul who is seeking something more in his or her life, and with the assistance of the Holy Spirit they can open up for us great horizons.

Youth is an especially opportune time to ask these questions, since it is a time filled with possibilities, with great challenges and decisions that will mark one's entire life. One wants to make the most of one's time and set one's life on the right track. Hence one needs time for reflection, for maturing, for considering one's life up to this moment, for rediscovering the present—what each one truly is—and for planning the future.

None of us is here by accident. God has put us on this earth to take part in something great, to collaborate with him in human

history. He is concerned about each of us and has a plan for each of us.

But this can give rise to fear, since it means setting aside what we are used to and that makes us feel safe. In his message in preparation for World Youth Day, which is taking place in Panama, Pope Francis told young people: "I invite all of you to look within yourselves and to 'name' your fears. Ask yourselves: what upsets me, what do I fear most in this specific moment of my life today? What blocks me and prevents me from moving forward? Why do I lack the courage to make the important choices I need to make?" And he encouraged them: "Fear must never have the last word but rather should be an occasion to make an act of faith in God... and in life! This means believing in the fundamental goodness of the existence that God has given us and trusting that he will lead us to a good end, even through circumstances and vicissitudes which often bewilder us."

God wants to open up for us a great and beautiful panorama, which perhaps is hidden from our eyes. We need to trust him and take a decisive step towards him, overcoming the fear that, if we do so, we will lose many good things in life. His capacity to surprise us is much greater than any of our own expectations.

God's plans for us, like those he announced to Mary, are not

meant to extinguish our dreams, but to enkindle our desires, to make our lives fruitful and bring joy to many hearts. As the Pope also said in his video message for World Youth Day, where he pointed to the example of our Lady, with her generous “yes” to God Mary changed forever the course of human history.

*Guadalupe: a Path
To Heaven in
Daily Life,
an Article in
ABC, Spain
(March 15, 2019)*

The servant of God Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri will be beatified on May 18th in Madrid. This news fills us with joy and hope because it confirms for us once more that God calls everyone to a fulfilled life close to him, to holiness, which is within our reach amid the ups and downs of ordinary life.

The future Blessed loved the life that God had chosen for her; she made it her own and found happiness there. As a young woman, she confronted her father's execution with serenity and strength. Despite the difficulties, she chose to continue pursuing studies in chemistry, a profession seldom taken up by women at that time. Later on, she would dedicate

herself to teaching, putting to use all her capacities. When she met Saint Josemaría Escrivá and discovered that God was calling her to live her Christian life according to the spirit of Opus Dei, she did not hesitate to respond generously to the invitation to seek holiness in ordinary life. Guadalupe was open to whatever God was asking of her at each moment. She set aside her professional career for some time and took it up again later; she moved to Mexico to help start Opus Dei's apostolic work there, and upon returning to Spain worked as a teacher again, starting and completing a doctoral thesis in her later years.

Guadalupe's example can give us light as well as encouragement to undertake our ordinary life as a path to holiness – our daily efforts, dreams, challenges and plans, where we also encounter unexpected difficulties and problems. Guadalupe stands out for her attitude of loving whatever God wanted of her, accepting his will, trusting and hoping in him, and living completely in the present, exactly as it is, leaving the future in God's hands.

Guadalupe was a joyful, courageous, decisive, enterprising and affectionate person. Her certainty of God's closeness and love led her to a simplicity and peace that allowed her not to be afraid of her mistakes and defects, but to keep going forward no matter what, seeking to love God and others in