

that accompany our journey on earth, you try to make them "bright and cheerful homes." You have all of God's grace to raise your families with the joy of knowing we are children of God and with the light of the faith and the vocation. In turn, you will bring this family spirit to your group and your center, and live the blessed fraternity that leads you to give yourselves continually to others, while being very close to those who most need your care and company.

Saint Josemaría passed on to his children a conviction about the transforming power of the family in society, that is, the family's capacity for building a more human society, more in keeping with the dignity of the children of God. He liked the example of the families of the first Christians, which were focal points of evangelization.

Let us ask the Holy Family for the strength to renew our family life with hope and to accompany other families, especially those who, in various ways, are experiencing greater difficulties and suffering. All of them should be present in our prayer, especially on today's feast. Nothing is of little concern or foreign to us Christians since, as Saint Paul tells us, "all are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (*1 Cor 3:22-23*).

May God bless you.

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Messages

Message of January 18

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

We are beginning eight days when we will be praying especially for Christian unity. The Church's prayer in this Octave has its source in Jesus' dialogue with his Father at the Last Supper. Surrounded by his apostles, he said, "I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (*Jn 17:20-21*). The Lord also prayed for us, for those who, in the course of time, would become members of his Church. And he added that unity will always be necessary, "so that the world may believe."

During this time let us try to intensify our prayer, so that God's will may be fulfilled and there be "one flock and one shepherd" (*Jn 10:16*).

These days can also help us to consider the value of unity in its many other diverse aspects, because we know that "unity is a sign of life" (Saint Josemaría, *The Way*, 940). How good it is to help strengthen this unity with small daily actions! Sometimes we will need to give in on our preferences or ideas, which in themselves may be legitimate. Here it

can help us to recall that "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts" (Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 235). Unity is a more important value than so many other things, precisely because it is a condition for life.

Rome, January 18

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Message of February 14

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

During the past year, I have asked you on several occasions to pray for the plan to reorganize the territory of some regions, so that better coordination may give rise to a renewed apostolic impulse. In fact, in the monthly intention that began last October 2 and that will last the whole year, I suggested that you contribute to this project by transforming every moment of your life into prayer. Now, as we approach the midpoint of this year, it may be a good opportunity to rekindle this intention.

As you know, the Pope was happy to learn about this initiative, as it will enable more people to dispense with organizational work and "get out on the street" more, making the spirit of the Work directly present with their personal apostolate in their family and professional settings. This plan is not without its difficulties; let us feel that, in this effort too, the Work is in our hands. Thanks to the communion of saints, we are all working in the same task to serve God and our fellow men and women.

Today marks a new anniversary of the founding of the Women's Section and of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross. Let us live this feast – and every day – with a spirit of thanksgiving that leads us to remember continually that everything good comes to us from God, often through others, and especially in the Work, through the fidelity of Saint Josemaría.

Rome, 14 February 2022

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Message of February 26, on the Occasion of the Pope's Call to Prayer and Fasting for Peace

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

Faced with the new war in Europe, let us unite ourselves wholeheartedly to the Pope's invitation to respond to violence with prayer and fasting. In addition to the day of fasting for peace that we will observe on 2 March, let us, with the confidence that comes from being his children, continue imploring God frequently every day for the gift of peace.