



The Holy See

***LETTER OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS
TO THE FATHER GENERAL OF THE CONGREGATION OF SAINT JOSEPH
ON THE 150th ANNIVERSARY OF ITS FOUNDING***

To the Reverend Fr. Tullio Locatelli
Father General of the Congregation of Saint Joseph

On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the foundation of your Institute, I wish to extend my affectionate greetings to you and to the Brothers. I rejoice with you for this significant achievement, which marks the beginning of a Jubilee Year, in the memory of the journey taken by your religious Family, founded in Turin by Saint Leonard Murialdo on 19 March 1873. It is like going back to the sources to draw from them new energies for the future; but it is also an occasion to gratefully remember the Lord and to confidently ask Him to continue blessing the Congregation, sustaining its charisma, aimed at the education of youth, and conforming it to today according to the will of the Spirit.

"New times need new works," said Saint Leonard Murialdo. He knew how to interpret the era in which he lived, to grasp the problems present in Turin in the second half of the nineteenth century, and to offer effective remedies, in step with the times. He took the poor and abandoned youth to heart, helping many young people not only to cope with their immediate needs, but to prepare a dignified future for themselves through education and the learning of a trade. Farsightedness also typified his commitment to another social emergency, linked to the world of work. His activity in this area too was intense, yet he always remained simple and trusting, sustained by the gentle strength of God's love: "We are in God's hands," he used to say, "and we are in good hands.

Unexpected scenarios opened up, to which he was able to respond with zeal and renewed action. He did so by allowing himself to be guided by an ancient and ever timely wisdom, that of Saint Joseph. Inspired by Saint Joseph, he worked in humility and charity, urging every member of the Congregation to be a friend, brother and father to young people in need, drawing strength from the conviction that God loves each person with tender, provident and merciful predilection.

In these one hundred and fifty years of life your Congregation has been generous in its mission. Today your Congregation is present in Europe, America, Asia and Africa, and operates in various fields, ranging from parish care to the welcoming of children, to the management of foster homes and oratories. A broad and demanding field of work in which many new challenges have been added to old ones.

In this Jubilee Year, I hope that you will further, in the school of the Founder, the art of grasping the needs of the times and providing for them with the creativity of the Holy Spirit. I commend to you in particular the youngest, who today, more than ever, need credible witnesses. In your ministry, let yourselves be guided by the gentle and concrete example of Saint Joseph; like him, never cease to dream of the surprising wonders of God; like him who, working for Jesus and Mary, made of his own life the "sign" of a higher fatherhood, that of the heavenly Father (cf. Apostolic Letter *Patris Corde*, 7), welcome the great call to be dedicated fathers for the youth of today.

With these sentiments, I impart my Blessing to you all, asking you to pray for me.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 2 March 2022.

FRANCIS

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