

CONGREGATION OF THE ROGATIONISTS OF THE HEART OF JESUS
XII GENERAL CHAPTER

*Seeing the crowds,
he felt compassion for them
and said, “Rogate”
Our Charismatic Identity in Today’s Challenges*

CHAPTER DOCUMENT
ROME, JULY 2016

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Prot. No. 263/16

Subject: **Promulgation of the Chapter Document of the XII General Chapter of the Congregation**

To the Most Rev. Superiors of Circumscriptions
and to the Rogationist Communities

Having seen what the Constitutions prescribes, “The General Chapter determines which of the Capitular Acts is to be brought to the knowledge of the whole Institute. It also points out which rules shall immediately come into force with the promulgation made by the Superior General” (Art. 147);

Having seen what the Norms requires, “The binding and operative norms, decided by the Chapter, come into force on the day of their promulgation made by the Superior General. They remain in force until the new Chapter which may abrogate, modify or confirm them” (Appendix I, 63b);

After having completed the final redaction of the Chapter Document during the meeting of General Council, as indicated by the XII General Chapter;

With the present act, with the consent of the General Council, I,
today, 20 November 2016,
Solemnity of Christ the King and the
Closing of the Jubilee of Mercy

PROMULGATE

the Capitular Acts and the Capitular Document “*Seeing the Crowds, he felt Compassion for them and said, ‘Rogate’*”- *Our Charismatic Identity in Today’s Challenges* of the XII General Chapter of the Congregation, held in Morlupo on 5-23, July 2016.

Fr. Bruno Rampazzo
Superior General

Fr. Fortunato Siciliano, RCJ
Secretary General

We are accustomed to receive the Chapter Document after each General Chapter and we are tempted to accept it just as another document to be added to those already existing. We heard critical voices of this practice, almost an invitation of not providing any document in the Chapter or, otherwise, to limit ourselves in giving to the Congregation just a series of concrete indications.

We ask ourselves: what for and what is a Chapter Document?

The Chapter Document is not, as one might think, the document produced by the Chapter and handed over to the Congregation, but it is the document “of the Congregation”. It is the final synthesis of a three-year reflection done by the Congregation. This reflection is continued during the General Chapter through further analysis, study, discussion and discernment shared by the Chapter members. Therefore, it is an expression of the Congregation and, by its nature, it must become its instrument of life and apostolate.

We could compare the Chapter Document, by analogy and in miniature, to what happens in the annual planning of a religious Community. We sit around a table, we confront and reflect together on the lights and shadows, and then we trace a path to accomplish together for the coming year.

The Document of the XII General Chapter is our reference point, our guide for the next six years.

Why should it be considered a doctrinal, pastoral and charismatic “document”, and not just a list of guidelines and resolutions?

It was the choice of the Chapter; and even before that, during the process of preparation, it was the choice of the Congregation. If we feel the need to have new inputs for updating and renewal of our life and our apostolate, we do not simply accept ready-made

indications and orientations. We have to own and implement them, after having espoused their doctrinal and pastoral motivations.

The Chapter Document calls us to reflect on “our charismatic identity in today’s challenges”. It is not intended to illustrate to us our “charismatic identity”, for it has already been clearly defined in the preceding Chapters and codified in our Rule of Life, which is approved by the Holy See.

The document invites us to live our “identity” in today’s reality. It wants to tell us that, if in the past decades, the life and apostolate of the Community responded to the challenges of that time in faithfulness to our charismatic identity, today we live and work in a totally new existential reality that we cannot simply ignore.

We are called to verify if our choices at all levels, big and small, personal and communitarian, allow us to live our charismatic identity in today’s reality, where we are immersed with its problems and challenges, as we are trying to recognize the signs of the times.

In the message that we have received from the Holy Father, we have been reminded that our time more than ever needs good workers to build up the Kingdom of God on earth and therefore, the “ROGATE” is always alive and relevant, and every Rogationist religious becomes an effective sign of the Holy Spirit who, through the evangelical command, continues to call and to send holy apostles for the edification of the Church.

This theme is indicated to us by title of the Chapter Document, which is introduced by a synthesis of the particularly important charismatic *pericope*: “Seeing the Crowds, he felt Compassion for them and said, ‘Rogate.’”

With these words we are given the key solution to face the difficult task of immersing our charismatic identity in today’s challenges. We are shown the way and the means to use in order to revive our identity and to renew and update our life and our charismatic apostolate. Let us closely consider this verse.

Seeing the Crowds. It is an invitation to be inserted Communities,

as we are often reminded by Pope Francis. We can not respond “from a distance” to the challenges of today, to the cry of the poor. If the orphans and the poor are the beloved of the Lord, as our Holy Founder taught and witnessed to us, we need to grow in our awareness that the closer we get to them, the more we are united to the Lord.

He felt Compassion for them. This closeness leads us to real compassion. The concreteness of appropriate choices in our apostolate will depend from situation to situation, according to the different social contexts in which we work, but at the base of our real commitment must be our knowledge, nearness, affection and compassion towards the orphans and the poor, men and women, young and old.

And he said, “Rogate.” Our mission is “to say the Rogate”, to say it with our life and words. We need to rediscover the greatness and beauty of the treasure that has been entrusted to us with the charism of the “intelligence and zeal of Rogate”. It is the prayer of the poor, the prayer with the poor, and the prayer for the poor. We will become men of “charity of the Rogate” when we have learned to be men of “prayer of the Rogate”. We will know the compassion of the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus, then our gaze and hands will turn towards the little ones and the poor.

This is the message that the XII General Chapter has entrusted to us. At the same time, we are given some **Orientations** or guidelines on which path to take, to help us translate this message into concrete daily choices.

It indicates to us where to direct particularly our attention so that we could be helped in our journey of rediscovering our charismatic identity and thus becoming an effective response to the needs and challenges of our time.

We are invited to rediscover the brotherhood in our Communities, that we want to be simple, warmhearted and compassionate. We need to take care of the cultural dimension, especially in its charismatic aspect, in order to become heralds and

witnesses of the Rogate. We are exhorted to have our Rule of Life as the point of reference, and to become more and more men of prayer in order to form the laity who are adhering to the charism, and to make our Communities as houses of prayer.

The Chapter Document, besides these and other precious Orientations, gives us also a series of **Operative Proposals**, i.e., concrete suggestions, to translate these Orientations in our lives. Here, we find a wealth of indications, which are entrusted to our discernment and our good will to renew our identity and respond to the challenges of today.

The Chapter Document then closes with some **Deliberations**, concerning the Structure and the Government of the Congregation. These are some new articles or modifications of articles of the Norms, based on the needs which emerged in the previous six years.

Dearest confreres, in my first letter of greeting I reminded that the General Chapter has elaborated a precious document that would help us do a successful personal and community revision. I wish to underline the importance of “communal” reception of the Chapter Document. For us religious, fraternal life is a fundamental value in order to walk along the way that the Lord has shown us. To take hold of this document periodically as a means of community revision will surely be of great benefit for our personal life and for our apostolate.

Our future depends on how we rediscover and live with joy our being “brothers” who belong to the same “family” with a historical, charismatic and apostolic identity. In fact, the Chapter Document thus says,

“Through fraternal life in community we express the joy and celebration of living together, which refers primarily to the interior and profound happiness of belonging to a common history, marked by the charism of the Rogate. We are therefore called to build communities that are schools of prayer, places of encounter and dialogue; where we live with trust, respect, mutual support and

attention. Rediscovering ourselves every day as ‘brothers’ in Christ is a decisive factor for the establishment of our identity and sense of belonging to a Congregation that we consider as our ‘family’.” (n. 28)

This is my most fervent hope, which I entrust to the blessing of our Divine Superior through the intercession of St. Hannibal Mary, while I present to you the Document of the XII General Chapter.

Fr. Bruno Rampazzo, RCJ
Superior General

XII General Chapter CHAPTER DOCUMENT

*Seeing the crowds,
he felt compassion for them
and said, "Rogate"*
Our Charismatic Identity in Today's Challenges

INTRODUCTION

1 The theme of the XII General Chapter of the Congregation, "*Seeing the Crowds, he felt Compassion for them and said, 'Rogate'*" – *The Charismatic Identity in Today's Challenges*", wants to be in continuity with that of the preceding General Chapter, "*The Rogationist Rule of Life – Expression of Consecration, Guarantee of Charismatic Identity, Support of Fraternal Communion, Project of Mission.*"

2 The charismatic identity which springs from the "intelligence and zeal of the Rogate", requires a consideration of the socio-cultural environment in which the Congregation is inserted, with the arising challenges and expectations, in order to interpret, accompany and give answers that faithfully embody our charism in line with our relevance and prophecy.

3 Departing from the Gospel passages of *Matthew* (9:36-38) and *Luke* (10:2), the text is organized according to the scheme of

- *seeing* the challenges of today;
- *interpreting* the charism of the Rogate as a way of life;
- *acting* in the charismatic identity as response to the challenges of today.

4. In focusing on the Gospel passages of the Rogate, the document wants to emphasize the primacy of the Word of God in the interpretation of the Rogationist charismatic identity and in the reading of the challenges that emerge from the different social and ecclesiastical contexts today. Jesus met the tired and abandoned crowds, he had Compassion for them and pointed out the Rogate. We are called to take care of the people we meet with the same compassion of Jesus following the example of Saint Hannibal.

PART ONE

TODAY'S CHALLENGES

"When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."

(Mt 9:36, RSV)¹

5. The Word of God is at the center of our life and of our journey. It illumines our mind and heart, as it happened in the life of Saint Hannibal, so that even today we are able to discern the "signs of the times" and to respond to the will of the Lord. In welcoming the "primacy" of the Word, we fix our gaze on the face of Jesus, the Word made flesh, who entrusts to the Church the prayer of the Rogate. The Word implies silence and listening, acceptance and internalization, dialogue and confrontation, obedience and service in charity, shared responsibility and mission. The biblical and evangelical roots of the charism of the Rogate demands from us today the wisdom and courage to revisit our history and to know how to interpret it in the light of the Word of salvation and mercy, which the Father has given us in the Son through the Holy Spirit.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL CHALLENGES

6. In the light of the charism of the Rogate, which is our reason of being in the Church, we are committed to reflect on the great challenges of the contemporary world, which interrogate the meaning of life and, more generally, the deeper questions of humanity. Among many, the following seem to challenge more directly our charismatic identity, either in its anthropological and cultural contexts, as well as in its ecclesial and congregational aspects.

The Anthropological Question

7. In different geographical contexts, the phenomena of secularization and the eclipse of the sacred are prevalent in today's society, where God becomes a marginal "issue".

In our day-to-day life experience, we are confronted with a vision of the human being that is far from that vocational anthropology which characterizes the charism of the Rogate. In a culture where the segmentation and fragmentation of every aspect of the human life prevails, an anthropology that is founded on man's vocation stands out as a true counter-culture, a feasible way for the construction of the integral person.

8. Today's anthropological and social crisis affects especially the family, making it vulnerable in its constitutive values of unity, fidelity, indissolubility and fecundity. The globalized world is increasingly pervaded by a "weak thought" (*=pensiero debole*) that results in a wrong concept of freedom, an exaggerated individualism and a strong privatization of existence. Laws that threaten human life from its beginning to its natural end are being introduced. Besides, there is the diffusion of a "culture of the temporary", the fear of making definitive commitments, the trivialization of sexuality, the "Gender Ideology" - phenomena that undermine the whole society and especially the identity of the family, affected also by insufficient, or even the lack of, social and political support.

9. In a general climate of decline of Christian values and of experience of faith, the family as a "domestic church" seems to be weakened even in its mission of Christian education of children and of being the place where vocation is born and develops. We share the common challenge of the whole Church, which is to support the identity, vocation and mission of the Christian family in the contemporary world, ensuring an adequate and appropriate pastoral care.

¹ The Revised Standard Version (RSV) is used in the biblical citations in the English translation of the XII General Chapter Document.

10. In various parts of the world we are living side by side with men and women of today, who are “lost wayfarers” in the modern labyrinths of life. A question of humanization, at times shouted out and sometimes subdued, arises in a world that is constantly threatened by the loss of meaning and value of things, persons and relationships. It is almost an appeal for care and custody of what is human, which is continuously exposed to “dis-humanity”. Following Pope Francis who said that “we have been entrusted with a treasure which makes us more human”², we are called to be attentive in perceiving and accepting the uniqueness and inalienable dignity of each person, particularly of those who are overlooked by the society. In this regard, we need to re-think in a new and effective way the area of education which is the qualifying component of our apostolic mission.

The Economic Question

11. In today’s worldwide economic crisis we see multitudes of tired and exhausted crowds, who are hungry for bread and thirsty for God. We are invited to reflect on the structures of global inequity that concerns peoples and nations.³ The economic crisis affects also the Congregation and leads us to reconsider ourselves in examining our overall lifestyle and in prudently reconsidering our Works and the resources in order to move ahead with these or to undertake new ones.

In our difficulty to continue our work for the benefit of so many poor people, let us put our trust in the Providence of God. We are aware that the Rogate itself is “a charism for crisis”, and so, following the example of our Holy Founder, we remain steadfast in our generosity to share what we have, even in the midst of a critical situation.

² FRANCIS, Ap. Exhort. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 264.

³ Cf. FRANCIS, Enc. Letter *Laudato Si’*, 48-52.

New Forms of Poverty

12. Besides the traditional forms, we see today new expressions of poverty that demands new answers, different from those traditionally offered by religious Institutes, which often possess a great history of charitable “works” and “assistance.” It is a sort of “relational poverty”, of moral, spiritual and cultural in nature. They demand an inculturated formation that is capable of relationship based on sharing and love, mutual closeness and of diligent human and spiritual accompaniment and support.

The Geographical and Existential Peripheries

13. Saint Hannibal Mary Di Francia said to Zancone, “I’ll come to see you,” and he moved out from his home to go to a degrading and dangerous periphery. Whenever we propose to “start again from Avignone”, we intend to imitate the gesture of our Holy Founder, who in this way becomes the exemplar paradigm of a Congregation that is willing to go out to the modern peripheries – the “Avignone” of today, from where arises the cry of the poor.

ECCLESIAL CHALLENGES

The New Humanism in Jesus Christ

14. The discovery of life as a gift from a loving and provident Father gives birth to surprise and wonder, to commitment in realizing the plan of God, to gratitude for the communion of so many brothers and sisters in humanity, as well as to the willingness to share to others the gift received. The challenge consists in announcing and giving witness to this “gospel” of liberty and gratuity, by accompanying and supporting people in the consciousness of being important and precious in the eyes of God, called to live a life worthy of the children of God in Jesus Christ.

15. In a journey that involves the whole Church, we Rogationists find ourselves reflecting on how the word of the Gospel can be today a real offer of meaning to the world, echoing the announcement of the Second Vatican Council, “Whoever follows after Christ, the perfect man, becomes himself more of a man.”⁴ In the changed cultural contexts, we commit ourselves to recall the evangelical icon of Christ who meets and saves the abandoned crowds, and who commands the prayer of the Rogate.

Called to Evangelize

16. We live in a historical period of deep and radical changes, which certainly do not spare the world of faith and religion. The societies of ancient Christian tradition are besieged by the process of secularization. The “rejection of the transcendent” is accompanied by a growing deterioration of ethics and a steady increase in relativism, which lead to a general sense of disorientation.⁵ In many baptized, there is a widespread indifference to religious practice and sacramental life, and the Christian communities experience a marked decrease in the number of vocations of “special” consecration, both numerically and qualitatively, also due to lack of evangelical witnessing.

Almost everywhere “the Catholic faith of many peoples is nowadays being challenged by the proliferation of new religious movements, some of which tend to fundamentalism while others seem to propose a spirituality without God.”⁶

In several countries the attacks on religious freedom and forms of new persecution against Christians are seriously increasing and alarming.⁷

17. The expanding phenomenon of migration puts together people of different cultures and religions, giving rise to a context of religious pluralism, which in many traditionally Catholic

countries imposes itself as a “new era”.

The way to be taken in order to meet the challenge of religious and cultural pluralism is that of ecumenical and interreligious dialogue. “An attitude of openness in truth and in love must characterize the dialogue with the followers of non-Christian religions, in spite of the various obstacles and difficulties, especially fundamentalism on both sides. Interreligious dialogue is a necessary condition for peace in the world, and so it is a duty for Christians as well as for other religious communities.”⁸

18. “Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize.”⁹ In line with his predecessors, Pope Francis asks all believers to engage in the “new evangelization” which “is realized mainly in three areas”: the field of the “ordinary pastoral ministry”, the area of the baptized who “do not live the demands of Baptism”, and finally that of the “proclamation of the Gospel to those who do not know Jesus Christ or have always refused him.”¹⁰ Therefore we assume the task of “proclaiming the Gospel to all, in all places, on all occasions, without hesitation, reluctance or fear.”¹¹

19. We commit ourselves in re-reading the charism of the Rogate in today’s history, affirming the truth that accompanying a person towards the discovery of his/her vocation actually signifies promoting him/her towards his/her human integrity. In fact, vocation is a significant dimension of the theological revelation of Jesus Christ, who is the first to be “called” by the Father. In various aspects of our lives we are confronted and we relate with this acquired theological and ecclesial sensitivity, which has led to the discovery and valuing of vocation and of all vocations in the Church.

⁴ ECUM. COUNCIL VAT. II, Past. Const. *Gaudium et Spes*, 41.

⁵ Cf. FRANCIS, Ap. Exhort. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 64.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 61.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 250. The dynamics of interreligious dialogue are specified in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 251.

⁹ PAUL VI, Ap. Exhort. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 14.

¹⁰ Cf. FRANCIS, Ap. Exhort. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 14.

¹¹ Cf. FRANCIS, Ap. Exhort. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 23.

The “Gospel of Vocation” for the Young

20. In our apostolic mission we experience in many ways how the living Word of God is able to speak even today in a strong and persuasive manner to the heart of the young generation. To announce to the young the “Gospel of Vocation”¹² signifies that they can see more clearly within themselves, orient themselves in the choice of life, and walk with generous steps along the roads of the Lord. The proclamation of the “Gospel of Vocation” is done above all through a witness of a credible and enthusiastic life.

Valuing the Laity

21. In all aspects of the life of the Church, the figure of the lay as member of the people of God is gaining more importance. Their vocation and mission enjoy a growing recognition and value, which should be explored in all their spiritual and apostolic potentialities. With the accompaniment and support of our pastoral care, they themselves will be the ones to deepen and realize their specific vocation in the Church.

CHALLENGES OF ROGATIONIST LIFE

22. As a religious Institute we face many problems, such as how to balance the different dimensions of the consecrated life; the exercise of authority and obedience; the formation of the new generations; the vocational crisis, particularly that of the religious Brother; aging; the insertion in new geographical contexts; the reception and integration of ethnic and cultural diversity; the expansion of parish apostolate; the dynamics of decentralization; the re-thinking of structures and apostolic works; and the economic crisis.

These issues are summarized briefly in a triple challenge: how to render our presence to truly be a witness to the Gospel, how to find reasons for the joy and the celebration in the fraternal life in

¹² Cf. PONTIFICAL WORKS FOR ECCLESIASTICAL VOCATIONS, *New Vocations for a New Europe*, Final Document of the Congress on Vocations to the Priesthood and Consecrated life in Europe, Rome, May 5-10, 1997, 3.

community, and how to live our commitment of discipleship and mission as proclamation of mercy and prophecy.

Evangelical Witness

23. The charism of the Rogate inspires and molds our life and gives particular meaning to what we are and what we do. Only in the light of an authentic witnessing of life that others can recognize and appreciate the importance of praying for vocations and, at the same time, would commit themselves to be good workers in the harvest of the Lord.

24. We feel the urgency of deepening our knowledge of the Founder and his spirituality through careful and constant study of his Writings and of the Rogationist literature, knowing that the entire life and apostolic activities of Saint Hannibal, inspired by the Rogate, are for us a unique “way of holiness”.

25. We are called to acquire a deeper awareness of being bearers of God’s compassion, as the true source of our unceasing call to express the same concern for others, especially towards the least of the society. In this way, we constantly recall our origin in Jesus’ compassion for the weary and abandoned crowds; we make our own the same sentiments of that divine Heart (cf. Phil 2:5); we open our hearts to the miserable crowds of our times, staying in their midst as “wounded healers”, while being aware that we ourselves are the first ones who need the compassion of the Heart of Jesus.

26. In living radically the evangelical counsels according to the demands of our consecration, we bear witness to the most authentic values of human and Christian life, in a constant search of the Kingdom of God and his righteousness (cf. Mt 6:33). Indeed, “the consecrated life continually fosters in the People of God an awareness of the need to respond with holiness of life to the love of God poured into their hearts by the Holy Spirit (cf. Rm 5:5).”¹³

¹³ JOHN PAUL II, Ap. Exhort. *Vita Consecrata*, 33.

27. The ongoing formation is important for us to remain anchored to the fundamental values of consecrated life and of the charism. Reflections and studies, professional formation, meetings and conferences, formative experiences and others, are appropriate dynamisms that contribute to deepen the understanding of our charismatic identity and help us revitalize our apostolic mission.

The Joy of Fraternal Life in Community

28. Through fraternal life in community we express the joy and celebration of living together, which refers primarily to the interior and profound happiness of belonging to a common history, marked by the charism of the Rogate. We are therefore called to build communities that are schools of prayer, places of encounter and dialogue; where we live with trust, respect, mutual support and attention. Rediscovering ourselves every day as “brothers” in Christ is a decisive factor for the establishment of our identity and sense of belonging to a Congregation that we consider as our “family”.

29. Valuing this joyful aspect of community life can be a factor for a credible witnessing and for attracting the young people who are striving to make out of their life “something beautiful for God”.

30. Some communities are experiencing even more the mismatch between the apostolic demands and the inadequate number of religious. Besides, at times we run the risk of living our apostolic activity in an individualistic manner and without reference to the community. In this context, the service of authority is called upon to intervene either to reduce the apostolic activities, if necessary, or to harmonize the initiatives of individual religious with the apostolic project of the community and of the Circumscription.

31. In carrying out the numerous apostolic activities, we often run the risk of neglecting the spiritual dimension and the community

life itself. Our presence among the people of God, especially in the midst of young people, must help us to seek and live a more intense life of union with God, to give witness to the beauty of life in Christ and to the same joy of fraternal life in community.

Compassion and Prophecy

32. The Rogationist consecration and mission become a prophecy, at the School of Saint Hannibal Mary Di Francia, the “prophet” of the Rogate. Therefore, we are committed in the various areas of our charismatic mission, in collaboration with the Family of the Rogate in the local Churches: prayer for vocations and its diffusion; vocation animation and promotion; education and assistance to the children and the poor.

33. In different parts of the world where we are present, we are called to read and interpret the reality, starting from our preferential option for the poor, in living and working in the peripheries with the least ones, by being poor with the poor. “Opening the doors” of our Houses to the poor does not only mean going out to meet them, but for us it also means allowing them to become part of our life.

34. The contemplation and continuous prayer are meaningful expressions of the richness of the charism and they should be lived in harmonious balance with the other essential elements of the Rogate. The Rogationist communities that intend to propose a stable experience of contemplation represent an opportunity to be welcomed and promoted as a new expression of the charism.

35. In front of the increasing number and different types of apostolic needs of the Church and of the society, it becomes more urgent to identify appropriate ways for the inculturation of the charism. Today, we are particularly challenged by our work with young people, family, migrants, and ethnic minorities.

PART TWO

THE CHARISM OF THE ROGATE AS A WAY OF LIFE

“Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest!’” (Mt 9:37-38, RSV)

36. The peculiarity of the “command of the Rogate”, entrusted by Jesus to his disciples, is characterized by three aspects: 1. the compassionate (visceral) mercy of God who knows and comes to help the “harassed and helpless crowds, like sheep without a shepherd” (Mt 9:36); 2. the obedience to the will of the Father in taking care of the suffering humanity, combining prayer and charity; 3. the transition from the “vocation” to the “mission” of the Twelve, called by name and sent as apostles of the Kingdom to “cast out the evil spirits, and to heal every disease and every infirmity” (Mt 10:1-4). To be “Rogationists”, in continuity with the charismatic experience of Saint Hannibal, means to embody and actualize these three dimensions that show the intimate relationship of the Rogate with the Mercy of God: compassion, prayer, mission.

BIBLICAL ELEMENTS AS BASIS OF THE CHARISMATIC IDENTITY

The Overall Biblical Context

37. The overall context of the Gospel narratives on the Rogate (Mt 9:35-38; Lk 10:2-3), offers some key elements as basis of our charismatic identity. From these texts we can identify a reference to two complementary dynamics in which those who wish to put into practice this portion of the Gospel can recognize themselves.

On the one hand, we have the dynamics of “absence” and “scarcity”. The common element is given by the broad reading of the two contexts in which the “Gospel of the Rogate” is developed in *Matthew* and in *Luke*: the lack of shepherd and the wounded flock (Mt 9:36), “like lambs in the midst wolves” (Lk 10:3). On the other hand, we have the dynamics of “presence” and “providence”. The common element is given by the two commands with which Jesus recalls God’s concern for his children: “Pray the Lord of the harvest” (Mt 9:38, Lk 10:2); “Go! Behold, I am sending you out” (Lk 10:3).

Absence and Scarcity: the Promise of a Shepherd

38. The Old Testament background underlying the broad context of Mt 9:36 and Lk 10:2 consists of the prophetic oracles about the conduct of the shepherds towards the flock and the care of the Lord in shepherding his flock by himself and in providing pastors. Various texts are related to this theme (Nm 27:17; 2 Chr 18:16 and Jdt 11:19) and some specific oracles as in Jer 23:1-6 (parallel with Ez 34) and the “Booklet of Shepherd” in Zec 11:4 -17 and 13:7-9. But one particularly evocative text remains that of Ez 34 in which the prophet speaks an oracle against evil shepherds who have no care for the flock, and the promise of a Shepherd who feeds the flock.

39. The fulfillment of the prophecy about the shepherd of Israel who is moved to compassion for his people is alluded in the words of *Matthew*, “Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. [...] For my yoke is easy, and my burden light” (Mt 11:28-30). In curing “every disease and illness” and feeling compassion for the crowds, Jesus fulfils the task announced in the prophecy of Ez 34:11, “For thus says the Lord God, ‘Behold I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out.’” The overall context of the Gospel wants to show the fulfillment of the promises of restoration through a new metaphor: that of the harvest of the Lord who manifests his power and his providence as the Lord of the harvest.

Presence and Providence: Healed Flock and Guardian Shepherd

40. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who reminds his disciples that the harvest has a Lord and caretaker who provides the workers. The guarantee of this providence of God lies in the compassionate gaze with which Jesus looked at the condition of weariness and of helplessness of his people and in finally providing them concretely: “When he saw the crowds, he felt compassion for them.”

41. From this compassion springs the extraordinary emphasis of the Rogate, that is, on the priority of the “prayer” that precedes the apostolic mandate (Mt 10:1-4) and the subsequent mission of the proclamation of the Kingdom (Mt 10:5-10). It is most evident in the Gospel of Luke where the *logion* of Rogate (Lk 10: 1-2) is closely connected with the instructions given to the following of Christ by the disciples (Lk 10:3-12). In the perspective of *Luke*, the emphasis is on the urgency of universal evangelization entrusted to the seventy-two disciples, whom the Lord appointed and also charged with the transmission of the Rogate.

42. Some prophetic texts (Hos 6:11, but also Jl 4:18 and Am 9:13-15) describe the harvest as a time of unimaginable blessing, of restoration and salvation: “For you also, O Judah, a harvest is appointed. When I would restore the fortunes of my people.” (Hos 6:11) In this passage, the evangelist Matthew is not only announcing a harvest ready to be reaped, but also an abundant harvest that God has prepared primarily as providence. Jesus is announcing a harvest of blessing prepared by the Father, from whom we must ask for the gift of the workers who would bring the fruits of this Messianic time to the tired and abandoned crowds. The dual command “Pray!” and “Go!” represents the mission entrusted to the good workers, to gather the scattered and wounded flock towards the abundant and peaceful pastures that the provident and compassionate Lord has prepared.

Mercy, Source of the Rogate

43. The promise of a good shepherd in the Old Testament, especially in the prophetic literature, has its proper context in the experience of failure on the part of those who have been entrusted with the care for the people of God. There was a scarcity of pastors who were capable of bringing the people to an encounter with God. This scarcity, however, has become a providential moment for the revelation of God’s mercy and faithfulness. God himself will provide for his flock; he will raise up good shepherds who would take care of them (Jer 23: 3-4). So, what had been prefigured has found its fulfillment in the compassionate gaze of Jesus to the crowds who were like sheep without a shepherd (Mt 9: 36). From this heart full of mercy springs forth the command of the Rogate.

THE GIFT OF THE ROGATE

The Evangelical Passages in Saint Hannibal Mary Di Francia

44. The biblical elements on which the charismatic inspiration is founded are recalled almost naturally and find their concrete application in the testimony of the life and in the Writings of Saint Hannibal Mary Di Francia. Some exemplary passages help us grasp the harmony and continuity between the scriptural roots and the charismatic sprouts.

In a prayer “To Obtain Priests According to the Heart of Jesus” (Messina 1906), the Founder pleads the “Lord of the mystical harvest” to look upon his children with “the eyes of mercy” and applies the theme of blessing to his words, “Oh, have mercy on us, you who make the barren dwell in your home, *matrem filiorum laetantem* (Ps 112:9); please, give us children of blessing, chosen priests according to your Heart.”¹⁴

The theme of the harvest as “mystical” is illustrative of a positive reading filled with hope, which abounds especially in

¹⁴ Cf. DI FRANCIA A. M., *Scritti*, Vol. I, *Pregbiere al Signore*, Editrice Rogate, Roma 2007, p. 406.

some passages of the “Hymns of the July First”. In this text of remarkable spiritual inspiration, Saint Hannibal commemorates and celebrates the wonders of the presence of the Sacramental Jesus in the “place of the Poor”: the Avignone Quarter.

Inspiration of the Rogate and Meeting with Zancone, Icons of the Charism

45. In the life of Saint Hannibal there are several encounters and experiences that manifest his personality. However, two of these mark his life; they immediately delineate his figure, spirituality, mission and charism in the Church. These are “the inspiration of the Rogate” at his young age and “the meeting with Zancone” when Hannibal was still a deacon. These are two decisive moments in order to understand his life and, above all, his charism in the Church. We could say that they are two “icons” of the charism of Saint Hannibal Di Francia. Recalling and narrating them serves to keep alive the gift of the Rogate which we have also received through the Founder. They are the paradigm of the existence of all the different components of the Family of the Rogate and points of reference for the comprehension and reinterpretation of Rogationist charism in the present and in the future.

46. The young Hannibal intuitively feels the necessity of “good workers” for the benefit of the Church and of the society and the unceasing prayer to the Lord of the harvest in order to obtain them, long before he read the Gospel passages that contain the teaching of Jesus on this regard (Mt 9:38; Lk 10:2). It is a real and unique experience of the Spirit that marks him interiorly and influences his spiritual and apostolic journey. Later on, expressing himself in third person, he would speak about it in these words, “A young man, at the beginning of his spiritual life and when he still knew nothing of the divine words of Our Lord Jesus Christ recorded in the Gospel, ‘Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into his harvest’, had in mind this predominant thought, that in order to do greater good in the Church, in order to save many souls, to extend the kingdom of God on earth, there is no surer means than the increase of chosen ministers of God, of holy and apostolic men, according to the Heart of Jesus and therefore

the most excellent and fruitful prayer to be preferred would be to ask continually the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus to send out on earth holy men and chosen priests, as in the time of St. Dominic and of St. Francis, as in the days of St. Ignatius and the like. This idea seemed for him very clear and indisputable. Later on, he said the young man was filled with surprise to read in the Gospel those divine words: ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few: pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.’”¹⁵

47. This experience is only the first stage, the first step of a long spiritual journey that will gradually bring the young Hannibal to a growing comprehension of the prayer of the Rogate. The icon of the inspiration of the Rogate expresses in germ the first characteristic elements of the charism of Saint Hannibal Mary Di Francia and his project of evangelization: the importance of priestly ministry, of witness of holiness, of apostolic zeal, of conformation to Christ, and of the primacy of prayer in the pastoral care of vocations.

48. The second crucial experience in order to understand the life and the charism of Saint Hannibal Mary Di Francia is undoubtedly his meeting with Francis Zancone.¹⁶ In his dialogue with him, Father Hannibal perceives the Lord’s call. The path of evangelization is shown to him by a poor and blind man. Avignone, the most infamous area of Messina, thus becomes the place where Saint Hannibal lives his priesthood together with and for the poor, and where he proclaims the Gospel of the Rogate. The poor made him remember in a visible way the necessity of prayer for good workers commanded by Jesus. The words of Jesus ignite in him ever more strongly the desire for social and spiritual redemption of the poor. This is the journey lived by Saint Hannibal, and it is the same path he traced out for his disciples.

¹⁵ Cf. DI FRANCIA A. M., *Scritti*, Vol. II, p. 143. Cf. T. TUSINO, *Memorie Biografiche*, Parte I, Roma 1955, p. 118.

¹⁶ Cf. VITALE F., *Il Canonico Annibale Maria Di Francia nella Vita e nelle Opere*, Messina 1939, p. 738.

Prayer for Vocations and Charity: the Two Faces of the Rogationist Charism

49. The two icons, “the inspiration of Rogate” and “the meeting with Zancone”, when read carefully and in a unified way, are like two sides of the same coin, two faces of the Rogationist charism: prayer for vocations and charity. They are not juxtaposed and separated but in a reciprocal relationship, as Saint Hannibal lived them. A sort of osmosis between Rogate, praying for good workers, and love for the poor, has been forming in his pastoral ministry and in his thought.¹⁷ The intuition of the Rogate leads him to the road of the poor, and the encounter with the poor helps him understand ever more clearly the value of that intuition. This is what emerges from his life and his thought. “What are these few orphans who are saved and these few poor who are evangelized,” he writes, “in front of millions who are lost and are lying like sheep without a shepherd! I was looking for an answer and I found a broad and immense one, in those adorable words of Jesus Christ, ‘Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.’ Then it seemed that I have found the secret of all good works and of the salvation of souls.”¹⁸

50. The experience of Saint Hannibal tells us that there is a vital circle between the prayer for vocations and service to the “little ones” and the “poor”. There can be no authentic prayer for vocations without a true love for the poor, neither can there be a fruitful pastoral care for vocations without the care of the poor. Such is so for us Rogationists, that there can be no true love for the poor without prayer for vocations. This is the originality and the secret of the Rogationist charism, commonly expressed with only one word: Rogate.

51. Fasting is pleasing to God and prayer is answered when we know how “to share bread with the hungry, bring the homeless

¹⁷ Cf. CONGREGATIO PRO CAUSIS SANCTORUM, *Positio super Virtutibus*, Vol. I, *Relazione di P. Valentino G. Macca*, Roma 1988, pp. 10-11.

¹⁸ Cf. DI FRANCIA A. M., *Preziose Adesioni. Prefazione*, Tipografia del Sacro Cuore, Messina 1901, pp. 4-5, in *Scritti*, Vol. LXI, p. 20.

poor in the house, and clothe one who is naked” (Is 58:7). The text of the prophet Isaiah, which is reported and commented on in the writings of Saint Hannibal¹⁹, concludes, “Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, ‘Here I am!’” (Is 58:9). The commitment of love for the little ones and the poor is also the basis of the “miraculous secret” of the devotion of the bread of St. Anthony: if you want to obtain grace, give to the orphans and the poor.²⁰ Thus, in order to obtain workers from the Lord of the harvest, to have real confidence that “the Lord will answer our prayer, we must share our bread with the poor.”²¹

From the Charism of the Rogate, the Identity Comes Forth

52. Consecrated life is an ecclesial expression of the mystery of Christ. However, each religious family embodies this mystery departing from a particular moment in the life of Christ and his ministry. In the case of the religious families of Father Hannibal, the Daughters of Divine Zeal and the Rogationists, it consists in living and proclaiming the whole mystery of Christ, starting from that moment when Christ feels compassion for the weary and abandoned crowds, proclaims the Gospel, cures their infirmities and commands the prayer for laborers of the harvest (cf. Mt 9:35-38; Lk 10:2). Our holy Founder, with all his entire existence, has encapsulated this particular mystery of Christ’s life in a single word: Rogate.

The Rogate is our identity in the Church, the synthesis and the measure of our spiritual life and apostolate. It has been entrusted to us with a “special vow”, the vow of the Rogate, so that this word would be known, accepted and lived by all.

¹⁹ Cf. DI FRANCIA A.M., *Del Soccorso ed Evangelizzazione dei Poveri*, in *Scritti*, Vol. VI, *Regolamenti (1914-1927)*, Editrice Rogate, Roma 2010, pp. 760 ff.

²⁰ Cf. DI FRANCIA A.M., *Il Segreto Miracoloso ovvero il Pane di S. Antonio di Padova a Vantaggio degli Orfanotrofi Antoniani*, in *Scritti*, Vol. LI, pp. 125 ss.

²¹ Cf. ZAMPERINI A., *Preghiera e Poveri nell’Esperienza di Annibale Maria Di Francia*, in AA. VV., *Preghiera e Poveri nella Pastorale Vocazionale Rogazionista*, Ed. Rogate, Roma 1994, pp. 99-100.

Following the Christ of the Rogate

53. With the vows, we are called to “conform” our lives to the life of the “Christ of the Rogate”, to Jesus who commands the prayer for the workers of the harvest and he himself, as a true laborer of the harvest, feels compassion for the people and cares for their needs, announces the Gospel of the Kingdom and cures their infirmities (cf. Mt 9:35-38). In fact, the content of our Fourth Vow, as explicitly wanted by the Founder and faithfully described and handed down through our Constitutions, is expressed in three points: praying daily to obtain “good laborers”, propagating in the Church this prayer, and being “good laborers” among the “little ones” and the “poor.”²²

54. Saint Hannibal writes, “I will often consider the opportunity of this holy mission and the importance of the vow of obedience to this Divine Command to which the members of this Pious Institute are called. [...] I will dedicate all my days and all my actions to this unceasing prayer, [...] and I will have a great solicitude and zeal, according to the norms of our Constitutions, so that this divine mandate of Our Lord Jesus Christ, so little appreciated until now, would be known and fulfilled everywhere [...]. I will be ready, with the Lord’s help, to make any sacrifice, even by giving my blood and my life, so that this “Rogation” would become universal.”²³

The Charism of the Rogate in the History of the Congregation and the Process of Inculturation

55. The flourishing of the Congregation in geographical and cultural areas different from where it was born represents a providential event that sees the charism of the Rogate increasingly becoming universal at the service of the whole Church and for the

benefit of the whole world.²⁴ This expansion of the Rogate is the fulfillment of the great dream of Saint Hannibal Mary Di Francia.

56. The Rogate must find its original expression in every culture. However, it is important to be aware that every authentic inculturation of the charism represents a real enrichment of the charism itself, an unfolding of the gift of the Spirit that reveals its inexhaustible richness. In this process we must be guided by a wise audacity and evangelical courage²⁵ in the logic of the Incarnation.

57. The Rogationist is animated by the awareness that any genuine process of inculturation of the charism has the happy outcome of acquiring a “contextualized cultural dimension of the Rogate”, that while it enriches the Church, at the same time, it also enriches the charism with a new understanding, a new expression, and a new incarnated visibility.

THE RULE OF LIFE: LIVING TRADITION OF THE CHARISMATIC IDENTITY

58. With the expression “Rule of Life”²⁶ the XI General Chapter has intended to design a set of legislation, that is, the “Constitutions”

²⁴ The Congregation of the Rogationists was born in Messina (Italy) in 1897 and has had international expansion after World War II: the first foundations in Brazil (1950); in the USA (1967); the presence in Spain (1970); in the Philippines (1976); in Rwanda (1978); in Argentina (1979); in India (1987); the presence began in Poland (1991) and in Albania (1992). The Congregation is present in Cameroon (2000), in Korea (2003), the same year when it opened in Papua New Guinea and Vietnam; in Mexico and Indonesia (2004); in Paraguay (2005). More recent presences are in Iraq, Sri Lanka, Colombia, Australia, France, England, Germany, Portugal and Angola.

²⁵ Cf. FRANCIS, Ap. Exhort. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 33.

²⁶ The XI General Chapter has completed a long process of revision of our legislation, which was started just before the conclusion of and willed by the Second Vatican Council. It has moved from the stage of updating-adaptation (1968) to the re-reading-interpretation of the charism (1980). Later, there was the need for a general revision of the Constitutions and Norms that should have two characteristics: a greater spiritual and charismatic enrichment and a re-elaboration with the participation of all Rogationist religious who could better express the inculturation of the charism (2004). This work was carried out over an entire six-year period (2004-2010) and concluded by the assembly of the XI General Chapter (2010), which sealed the happy intuition of the new general title of the Constitutions and Norms as “Rule of Life”. The same Assembly welcomed the proposal to include at the Appendix of the Constitutions the “Declarations and Promises”, the classical text written by the Founder, as the true and proper Rule of Life with the constitutive elements of the Rogationist charismatic identity.

²² Cf. *Constitutions*, art. 3.

²³ Cf. DI FRANCIA A. M., *Dichiarazioni e Promesse, XXI Dichiarazione*, in: *Scritti*, Vol. V, *Regolamenti (1883-1913)*, Editrice Rogate, Roma 2009, pp. 604-606.

and “Norms”, which “inspires” and “regulates” our Rogationist life. The Rule of Life is the legislative instrument that represents the translation of the Gospel in the spirit of a specific charism and traces a particular path of *Sequela Christi*, i.e., a way of holiness in the Church. The revision of our regulations, at the general and assembly level, has been motivated by a threefold necessity: to reaffirm its value as a Rule of Life; to better focus on charismatic spiritual elements; and to call the attention, responsibility and collaboration of all congregants in valuing the legislation as a basic text in order to understand, live and transmit the charismatic identity.

59. The Rule of Life remains the principal written source where the charismatic identity is expressed, continuously interpreted and adapted to the times and different cultures. Thus, it becomes the living instrument of the expression, interpretation and transmission of the charismatic identity. It expresses with fidelity and creativity the gift of the charism, reads it in the light of the times and cultures, and transmits it to the future generations of Rogationists.

PART THREE

THE CHARISMATIC IDENTITY AS RESPONSE TO TODAY’S CHALLENGES

“And he said to them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go out on your way, behold, I am sending you out.’”
(Lk 10:2-3, RSV)

60. The spiritual dynamism of the prayer of the Rogate takes a programmatic and missionary meaning, which is more accentuated in *Luke’s* version (Lk 10:1-3). The evangelist Luke includes the giving of the Rogate in the context of the “great journey” of Jesus and presents the mission of the disciples as a first “harvest”, which anticipates the fulfillment of the Messianic Kingdom. From the compassion for the crowds (Mt 9:35-38), to the mission to the crowds (pray/go), the given task is accomplished in the prayer for good workers united with the dynamism of the proclamation of the Gospel, that is, to “go forth toward others”, to reach all, especially the poor and suffering.

A Gift for the Life of the World

61. Inspired by the words of the Founder, “The Rogate contains the secret of all good works and of the salvation of all souls”, our Constitutions forcefully reminds us that “we are called to proclaim the importance of the divine command for the life of the Church.”²⁷

The Rogate is an effective means indicated by the Lord Jesus for the salvation of men and women of today, a gift in order to respond to the existential and ecclesial challenges of our time.

²⁷ *Constitutions*, art. 65.

For a “Rogationist Style”

62. We are called to reflect and respond to the present challenges, on the bases of our charismatic identity and spiritual physiognomy. In this way, we outline a “Rogationist style” of being in the Church and in the world.

63. We are committed, individually, in communities and Circumscriptions, and as a Religious Institute in the Church, to the building up a “world view” that is able to put together all the elements that define our life: consecrated persons, community life, spirituality, and apostolic ministry. On the basis of this holistic view of being Rogationists, we outline the following traits, which define a personal and community identity of the Rogationists today, in order to face and respond to the challenges of the Church, culture and contemporary society.

THE PERSON AS VOCATION

Adorers and Missionary Disciples

64. We live with the awareness of being persons qualified “in the image of adorers and implorers for the highest and most beautiful mission, to obtain and prepare vocations for the Kingdom of Christ.”²⁸ We see ourselves as persons who are called to be missionary disciples of Jesus who walked the roads of Palestine, met the weary and exhausted crowds, and cured them with infinite compassion. While in prayer we ask the Lord of the harvest for good workers of the harvest, we declare our readiness to be the first to serve in the harvest of the Lord.

Cultivators of Every Life as Vocation

65. By virtue of the charism, we are called to work in order to promote in today’s culture and society a vocational anthropology that would

²⁸ PAUL VI, *Message to the Rogationists*, Castelgandolfo, September 14, 1968.

enable every person to realize himself/herself according to the project of God. As apostles of prayer for vocations, we are discreet interpreters of God’s plan for the people loved and called by Him, collaborators of the divine grace in helping them discover their highest calling in Jesus Christ.²⁹ Hence, in obeying to the command of the Rogate, we live in the Church “a vocation for other vocations.”

INTEGRAL PROMOTION OF THE HUMAN PERSON

Supportive Companions in the Journey

66. The different forms of old and new poverty represent today unprecedented charismatic and apostolic opportunities. We recognize the cornerstone of our mission in the integral promotion of the person according to a project of life as vocation. Therefore, we work side by side with those people who in the journey of life has lost all sense and direction. We share with them a portion of the way and let them feel that they are not alone in the adventure of life.

Evangelizers, Evangelized by the Poor

67. In fidelity to our charism and following the admirable example of the Holy Founder, we are called to stay at the side of the poor and with the poor, to live as poor, in order to understand fully and concretely the Rogate, which was first entrusted to the poor. The Lord of the harvest listens to us when we join ourselves with the cry and prayer of the poor. This requires docility and attention to the voice and the cry of the poor, without forgetting that when the poor are evangelized by us, we are also evangelized by them. “We are called to find Christ in them, to lend our voice to their causes, but also to be their friends, to listen to them, to speak for them and to embrace the mysterious wisdom which God wishes to share with us through them.”³⁰

²⁹ Cf. ECUM. COUNCIL VAT. II, Past. Const. *Gaudium et Spes*, 22.

³⁰ FRANCIS, Ap. Exhort. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 198.

Merciful Shepherds

68. Jesus reveals the Father's mercy and in him "everything speaks of mercy. Nothing in him is devoid of compassion. Jesus, seeing the crowds of people who followed him, realized that they were tired and exhausted, lost and without a guide, and he felt deep compassion for them (cf. Mt 9:36). On the basis of this compassionate love he healed the sick who were presented to him (cf. Mt 14:14), and with just a few loaves of bread and fish, he satisfied the enormous crowd (cf. Mt 15:37). What moved Jesus in all of these situations was nothing other than mercy, with which he read the hearts of those he encountered and responded to their deepest need."³¹

69. With the spiritual strength of our charism, we are called to be "merciful", i.e., called "to take to heart the poor" and their various material and spiritual miseries, as we are reminded also by our Rule of Life.³² In making as our own the mercy and tenderness of Jesus Christ, as well as the shining example of our holy Founder, we are committed to take care of fragility in its various forms.

Prophets of Charity

70. The evangelical word of the Rogate allows us to be "prophets", i.e., to be able to read the reality of the world with a "divine gaze". We need to constantly ask this word of the Gospel in order to see, in every different time and life situation, what it has to say prophetically to us and the world today.

71. Hence, we are called to a continuous exercise of prayer and reflection on our charismatic identity so that our life could truly be conformed to the Gospel and respond in a prophetic way to

³¹ FRANCIS, Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy *Misericordiae Vultus*, Rome, 11 April 2015, 8.

³² Cf. XI GENERAL CHAPTER (2010), *The Rogationist Rule of Life – Expression of Consecration, Guarantee of Charismatic Identity, Support of Fraternal Communion, Project of the Mission*, Rome 2010, n. 33.

the urgent needs which arise from today's harvests. In this tension of creative fidelity to our charismatic identity, each Rogationist becomes a sign of the presence of God's kingdom on earth.³³

72. We recognize that the economic crisis, which also affects our Congregation, is an opportunity for change and evangelical conversion of our lives. For such renewal to become a prophecy it requires changing the way we consider and manage the goods which Providence entrusts to us.

A new economy starts from a poor lifestyle, in the sharing of goods, in the common commitment to work, and in putting to good use all our personal and community energies to maintain and consolidate the common patrimony.

Called to live a truly fraternal poverty, we manage the goods entrusted to us responsibly, with transparency and attention, avoiding situations of dependency and inequality among communities and between Circumscriptions.

JOURNEY WITH THE CHURCH

A New Way of Sanctity

73. In the footsteps of Saint Hannibal Mary Di Francia, with our consecrated life and apostolic ministry, we give witness to a new and original way of holiness for all the faithful. It consists in a deep spiritual experience which harmoniously unites the prayer for laborers of the harvest and the human and integral promotion of the person.

74. Confronted with the challenge of the New Evangelization, the charism of the Rogate lends a unique perspective of reading, for a renewed insertion of the Gospel in today's world. Pope Benedict exhorts, "Follow his (Father Hannibal's) example and joyfully carry on his mission that is still valid today, in spite of the

³³ MEZZARI A.A., *Missionary Disciples of Christ in the Rogate, According to the Rule of Life. Lines of Action of the General Government 2010-2016*, 1.

different social conditions in which we live. In particular, spread increasingly his spirit of prayer and of concern for all vocations in the Church; may you be painstaking laborers for the coming of the Kingdom of God, expending all your energy to evangelization and on human advancement.”³⁴

With the Young, Ministers of Their Vocation

75. In our ministry to the young people, either in the field of education or animation, we are called to serve the plan that God has for the young generations; to be ministers of the timeless vocational dialogue: “Master where do you live?” – “Come and see” (Jn 1:38-39). While we accompany the young in their vocational quest, we are also committed in making them responsible in announcing the “Gospel of Vocation” to their peers. In fact, through the witness of their young lives, they show that the demanding word of the Gospel can truly speak to young people, deeply motivate them and be for them a fulfilling experience of happiness, within a project of commitment and service.

Promoters of the Rogationist Laity

76. The charismatic family “includes a number of Institutes which identify with the same charism, and especially lay faithful who feel called, precisely as lay persons, to share in the same charismatic reality.”³⁵

Rogationists, Daughters of Divine Zeal, Missionaries of the Rogate and lay people who share the spirituality and mission, we are called to be ever more aware of this reality and to promote it through common formative journeys and apostolic initiatives.

77. We promote with enthusiasm the Laity of the Family of the Rogate, aware that the Holy Spirit calls them today in order to

reveal to the Church the original and innovative potentiality of the charism. This means giving value to the charismatic richness of the Rogate, which is entrusted to the Laity, a richness that still remains to be discovered and to be fruitful. We need to identify and define appropriate formative programs, recognizing the importance and validity of their collaboration and responsibilities that they can assume within our apostolic activities. It is our duty to promote the Laity of the Rogate in front of the challenges that we face as a Congregation: the new frontiers of evangelization, the prayer and service for vocations, the field of education, the role and mission of the family, the poor and the new forms of social exclusion.

³⁴ Benedict XVI, *Message to the Delegates for the XI General Chapter of the Rogationists of the Heart of Jesus*, July 5, 2010.

³⁵ FRANCIS, *Letter to the Consecrated on the Occasion of the Year of Consecrated Life*, Rome, 21 November 2014, III, 1.

PART FOUR

ORIENTATIONS

Religious Life and Formation

78. The Rogationist communities and each religious in particular, taking into account the cultural sensibilities and the social and ecclesial context where we operate, are called today to live and bear witness to our charismatic identity through our commitment:

- a) to live the joy of the Gospel, giving testimony of fraternal life in community, harmonizing apostolic commitments, moments of common life and personal needs;
- b) to promote a renewed “culture of vocation”, starting from the primacy of prayer, in order to interpret reality according to the perspective of a vocational anthropology that is centered on the absolute value of every person and of his/her vocation;
- c) to make the community a place of vocational discernment for young people through fraternal welcome, sharing the prayer for “good worker” and the apostolate among the poor;
- d) to insert ourselves in the vocation ministry of the local Church with the specific charism of the Rogate, that is, through the primacy of prayer and service to the least;
- e) to verify our personal and communal fidelity to the vow of poverty, seeking a sober lifestyle, in order to be closer to the life and needs of the poor, through new forms of sharing our material and spiritual goods with them.

79. The charism should be always lived, deepened, reinterpreted and expressed according to the needs of the different places and geographic areas where our communities are present. Therefore, it is necessary:

- a) to program, at the level of Circumscriptions and of communities, moments of study, reflection and sharing about the charism, spirituality and mission;
- b) to organize in the Circumscriptions specific moments of experience and study on the charism, such as deepening of

the Word of God and the spiritual-theological aspects of the Rogationist literature (Writings of the Founder, the Rule of Life, Chapter Documents, Circular Letters, specific studies of the confreres, etc.);

- c) to produce the critical edition of the Founder’s Writings.

80. The XI General Chapter has completed a long process of revision of our legislation, the Constitutions and Norms, giving it a new general title: Rule of Life. The text, rich in biblical and charismatic references, is a sapiential synthesis of our spiritual tradition and contains the essential elements of our charismatic identity. Therefore, it should be carefully read, studied, gradually assimilated and translated into attitudes of life and apostolic commitments through:

- a) periodic community reading and revision of life on particular occasions such as the monthly recollection and special spiritual retreats during intense periods of the liturgical year;
- b) conferences or seminars throughout the year as favorable moments of ongoing formation.

81. The diffusion of the prayer for vocations is the duty and commitment of every Rogationist religious, of every community and of every Circumscription of the Congregation. Therefore:

- a) every community should be a place where we pray, learn and teach how to pray for vocations, inviting the lay people who are involved in various areas and levels of our charismatic apostolate to share significant moments of prayer and specific celebrations;
- b) care should be given to the ongoing formation of the religious through organization or participation in conferences and seminars aimed at acquiring specific professional skills in carrying out the charismatic apostolate;
- c) raise the awareness among religious students so that they choose their specialization studies in academic disciplines that best favor the understanding and expression of our charismatic mission.

82. The inculturation of the charism is a process that accompanies our presence in different geographical areas. Such process should be stimulated and promoted through:

- a) special attention to the formation of formators, even by taking up related academic courses;
- b) the formation and preparation of confreres who are called to live in cultural contexts other than those of their country of origin;
- c) the inclusion, in the program of each formative stage, of the knowledge about the geographical and social realities that make up the Circumscription; encouraging the exchange of religious in the stage of studies as well as the interchange of confreres between different Circumscriptions;
- d) research and deepening of local cultural categories so as to enable to translate and convey adequately the Rogationist charism.

Announcers and Witnesses of the Rogate

83. The knowledge about the charism is a task that is accomplished through constant study and application. To promote this, it is necessary to cultivate the various fields of studies: philosophy, theology, literature, art, technology, journalism, cinematography, and all that is deemed scientifically necessary for communication in the world today. Hence, we need:

- a) to promote the commitment to a careful and systematic study of the charism;
- b) to identify, in each Circumscription, those religious who are willing and able to undertake appropriate university studies for a deeper reflection and transmission of the charism and to favor their insertion in Institutes of Study and theological Faculties, as professors of academic courses on the charism and spirituality of the Rogate and related subjects;
- c) to support and animate the Centers for Vocation Ministry in the local Churches, promoting schools of prayer and courses on vocational catechesis and discernment;
- d) to encourage and sustain the publications of essays and articles

on Rogationist charism, the production of artistic works of the symbols of our tradition and spirituality, to work through both traditional and new means of social communications for the promotion of specific programs on the various dimensions of the charism of the Rogate: prayer, pastoral care of vocations, the promotion of the little ones and the poor.

84. In the context of the Circumscriptions, the Rogate Centers have an important role to spread in the Church the spirituality of the charism, the knowledge of the holy Founder, and the cultural animation of the apostolate of the Congregation. Therefore, every Circumscription should:

- a) organize, also through the Rogate Centers, conferences for the knowledge and diffusion of the prayer for “good workers”, vocational celebrations and favorable moments of prayer for vocations;
- b) enhance the use of adequate modern instruments (interactive exhibits, short films, websites, films, etc.) for the presentation of the life of the Founder and of his charism, and in order to support and qualify the specific apostolate of the Congregation;
- c) invest, by assigning qualified personnel and by giving economic support, for the publication of vocational magazines for the spread of the charism in the Church.

Service of Charity

85. The way of expressing solidarity with the poor and needy varies according to the different geographical and cultural areas. It is essential to maintain everywhere our presence with the poor to give them our moral support and to break their existential exclusion. Attention should be given to foster new expressions of promotion and evangelization of the poor, resulting from the creativity of evangelical charity and from listening to the real needs of the territory. Forms of solidarity, which have been proven successful and are still considered valid should be enhanced in various Circumscriptions. For this, it is important:

- a) to verify at the levels of the Congregation, Circumscription

and local community if our life and our apostolic activities express well enough today the compassion of the Heart of Jesus for the weary and helpless crowds, with the same intensity and passion that characterized the life and activity of our Holy Founder;

- b) to undertake the option of living with the poor, in defense and support of the poor and of new forms of poverty, making our Houses places of welcome and evangelization, taking courageous apostolic choices in favor of the “peripheries” of human life;
- c) to pay constant attention in monitoring social needs where we can better express our mission.

86. The “Avignone” is the paradigm of the Rogationist charism and mission. To go forth to the existential and geographical peripheries is an evangelical indication, which belongs to the mission of the Church and characterizes the apostolate of consecrated persons. It is a part of our charismatic origins and our tradition. Prompted by the words of Pope Francis, today we are particularly encouraged:

- a) to open the doors of our communities to welcome the poor and at the same time to become their companions in the journey, sharing in their particular situations of material and spiritual poverty;
- b) to educate young religious in formation to compassion and care for the poor, offering them specific experiences both within our structures as well as in other specialized centers;
- c) to allow ourselves to be guided by the poor in the selection of places for new foundations, and to go where they most abound;
- d) to create places with adequate facilities for the reception, assistance and evangelization of the poor.

Service of Animation and Formation of the Laity

87. Today we are called to take care of all realities of the Rogationists Laity, those who are organized associations or those that are not, especially the Union of Prayer for Vocations and the Priestly Union

of Prayer for Vocations, which are privileged instruments for the diffusion of the prayer for vocations in the Church. To promote the Rogationist Laity:

- a) each Circumscription should draw up a Project for the Laity that specifies their lay Rogationist identity and mission in the Church and in the world, to enable them to face the challenges with which they are involved together with the Congregation of the Rogationists;
- b) care should be given to the accompaniment of families who live the spirituality of couples in the light of the charism of the Rogate;
- c) support should be given to the family in its double mission to live within itself the “Gospel of vocation” and to proclaim it to other families, thus creating a cultural environment which favors the acceptance of life as a vocation, and promoting, above all among their children, the development of the “sacred vocation which they may discern in them.”³⁶

³⁶ Cfr. ECUM. CONC. VAT. II, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 11.

Part Five

OPERATIVE PROPOSALS

Religious Life and Formation

88. The renewal of religious life implies both the constant return to the sources of all forms of Christian life and to the original spirit of the Institutes (PC 2).

The General Government:

- 1) will continue the publication and translation of the Writings of the Founder and of the Rogationist literature;
- 2) will encourage in the Circumscriptions the preparation of aids to foster a better understanding of the charism.

89. Considering the cases of abandonment of religious and priestly consecration, it is deemed important that:

- 1) the Superior General supports the Superiors of Circumscription in accompanying the confreres who are experiencing moments of crisis and loss of religious identity;³⁷
- 2) the General Government, in agreement with the Superiors of Circumscription, identifies a Rogationist community that would welcome and accompany the confreres who came out from “Centers of assistance for religious/priests in difficulty”.

90. For an updating of the formation of Rogationist religious and a deepening of the spiritual life and charismatic identity, in the face of current challenges,³⁸ the General Government:

- 1) will promote, in agreement with the Circumscriptions, the knowledge of the origins of the Congregation and the work of the Founder through a period of charismatic formation;
- 2) will take care the preparation of aids, related to the Rogationist identity, to be proposed in the courses of ongoing formation.

³⁷ Cf. XII CAPITULO GENERALE DEI ROGAZIONISTI, *Relazione del Governo Generale*, Roma 2016, 101-102 and 122.

³⁸ Cf. *Norms*, art. 19-20.

91. The needed updating of the *Ratio Institutionis* must be resumed and completed.³⁹ The Rule of Life indicates that it is the task of the Superior General and his Council to promulgate and periodically update the *Ratio*.⁴⁰

The General Government will analyze and update and/or integrate the *Ratio Institutionis*.

92. The General Government will verify the charismatic contents present in the various stages of formation in the different Circumscriptions. If it deems necessary, a common platform for the initial training could be elaborated.

93. Generic courses offered in recent years for the formation of formators have been profitable. There is a need to continue along these paths and above all, to begin a charismatic formation, which includes basic courses such as: Introduction to the Writings of the Father Founder, History of the Congregation, Rogationist Spirituality, Proper Liturgy, Pedagogy of Prayer, etc.

- 1) The General Government will constitute the “School of Rogationist Formation for Rogationist Formators”;
- 2) The venue will be in Italy, considering the importance of knowing the places of the Founder and studying/deepening of the Italian language in order to have immediate access to his Writings and the documents of the Congregation.

94. The Church teaches that different vocations can be specified when confronted with the others: “The presence of lay people, families and especially the presence of women in priestly formation, promotes the appreciation of the diversity and complementarity of different vocations in the Church.”⁴¹ The Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* offers further motivation for the need of this cooperation, by noting a particular problem of our society, when

³⁹ Cf. *Relazione del Governo Generale*, 110.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Norms*, art. 4.

⁴¹ XIV GENERAL ORDINARY ASSEMBLY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS, *Relatio Finalis*, 24 October 2015, 61.

it says about the seminary formation that, “Their training does not always allow them to explore their own psychological and affective background and experiences. Some come from troubled families, with absent parents and a lack of emotional stability. There is a need to ensure that the formation process can enable them to attain the maturity and psychological balance needed for their future ministry.”⁴²

The General Government will draw up “guidelines” for formators that would define the collaboration of the laity in the formation of candidates in various stages of formation.

Announcers and Witnesses of the Rogate⁴³

95. The opportunity of starting in Rome a postgraduate Institute for Vocations, by affiliating with a Pontifical University, that would give students the opportunity to pursue degrees in theology and Pastoral Ministry of Vocations will be studied. The motivation behind this proposal are: the growing number of religious students from different backgrounds and cultures, the opportunities for collaboration with other religious Institutes that share the same ideals, the sharing of the charism with the laity, a greater development of a culture vocation within the Institute through formation, research, production of vocational materials as well as the qualification of the Congregation *ad extra*.

96. The religious students, considering the challenges and apostolic needs of the Congregation and in dialogue with the competent superiors, will orient their specialization studies to academic disciplines that would enable them to better understand and express the Rogationist charismatic mission and prepare them to carry out our specific apostolate with professionalism.

⁴² FRANCIS, Ap. Exhort. *Amoris Laetitia*, 203.

⁴³ Cf. *Norms*, art. 82-89.

97. The Rogate Vocational Centers of the Circumscriptions are also tasked:

- 1) to spread the Union of Prayer for Vocations (UPV) and the Priestly Union of Prayer for Vocations (PUPV), which are the current resources for the propagation of the charism of the Rogate;
- 2) to take care and accompany the Associations and lay groups (young people, families and volunteers) who are inspired by the Rogationist spirituality.

98. The diffusion of the UPV and PUPV is a task not only of those in charge but involves all Rogationists who would strive to make them take roots in the apostolic activities of the communities⁴⁴ and find their expression especially in places of our pastoral service (ex. parishes, shrines).

99. Considering what is indicated in art. 82-89 of the Norms and departing from the Statutes of respective Associations (UPV and PUPV), each Circumscription, will elaborate its own Operational Regulations, identifying and assigning religious who would dedicated themselves to this sector. The sharing and collaboration with the Family of the Rogate is necessary.

Service of Charity⁴⁵

100. A more updated cultural and educational practice, following the example of Saint Hannibal, encourages us to carry out activities and projects that have as their aim the preferential but not exclusive, educational service for children and young people who come from situations of difficulty in the family and society. Therefore:

- 1) we take care of the collaboration with those responsible of Social Services in the territory, while respecting the existing regulations in the sector and responding to the needs of the place and of the local Church;

⁴⁴ Cf. *Norms*, art. 87.

⁴⁵ Cf. *Norms*, art. 90-102.

- 2) we favor and promote the emergence of lay associations that may collaborate with our communities which provide services of attention to children in need and their families, so as to counteract the new evils in our society like addictions, youth unemployment, loneliness due to family abandonment, vulnerability of the weakest, and exclusions deriving from cultural differences.

Pastoral Service in Parishes and Shrines⁴⁶

101. One of the challenges for the Church in the urgency of the transmission of faith is the return to the centrality of the parish in the Church's mission. Our charismatic identity addresses this challenge and makes us consider the shrines and parishes as places and providential means for the spread of the charism among God's people and in the particular Church. Therefore:

- 1) they should manifest a clear Rogationist physiognomy, in line with the Parish Pastoral Project of the Circumscription;
- 2) the Circumscriptions that have not yet done so, will draw up their Pastoral Project of Rogationist Parishes and Shrines.

Service of Formation and Animation of the Laity⁴⁷

102. The Rogationist Laity is God's gift and resource for the Congregation. The Rogationists Laity, in fact, by virtue of baptism are called to live and share the same charismatic ideals, even with the bond of the Promise. Aside from the prayer and formative dimensions, they must be accompanied in the many fields of social action, beginning with charity. Hence:

- 1) according to the Rule of Life and to their explicit request, it is the duty of the Rogationists to ensure the Laity with an adequate Christian and Rogationist formation, spiritual and sacramental accompaniment and involvement in the various activities of the Congregation. It is therefore essential to

ensure the availability, as well as the operational and formative presence of religious who are dedicated to this service;

- 2) the Cultural Project of the Rogationist Laity⁴⁸, an appropriate instrument for interaction, formation, reflection and accompaniment of the laity, should be reviewed, shared, improved and inculturated in the different geographical areas;
- 3) the Rogationist religious should be prepared and oriented to work with and for the laity in the many sectors of service, beginning from their initial formation, through specific courses and practical experiences.

Service of the Poor and of the Missions⁴⁹

103. In the choice of new foundations and new projects to be launched, it is important to consider the possibility of offering a specific service to the poor in the locality. This can be realized first of all by assigning religious therein, even in the style of inserted communities. Thus:

- 1) they shall be ensured with adequate places for the reception, assistance and evangelization of the poor, counseling centers or facilities for families and children in difficult situations;
- 2) they will provide temporary lodging facilities for poor or migrant families, wherever this service is needed, and with the deliberation of the respective Superiors of Circumscription.

104. Where it is deemed necessary, pursuant to art. 109 of the Norms, a Missionary Office shall be established in the Circumscription, in support and cooperation with the Central Missionary Office, with competent personnel, having also the task of the presenting, implementing and reporting of missionary projects financed by national or international organizations.

⁴⁶ Cf. *Norms*, art. 110-118.

⁴⁷ Cf. *Norms*, art. 119-123.

⁴⁸ UAR, *Il Progetto Culturale del Laicato Rogazionista*, Morlupo, 2012.

⁴⁹ Cf. *Norms*, art. 103-109.

Pastoral Service of Social Communication⁵⁰

105. Bearing in mind the importance of the means of social communication, as described in art. 124 of the Norms and in order to level up from a simple information towards formation, as well as for a better communication of the Rogationist identity and spirituality of the Rogate:

- 1) the website of the Congregation, updated and enriched with new formative and informative contents, will have a reserved area that would serve as a venue for the confreres to share ideas and confront opinions;
- 2) the periodical *Studi Rogazionisti* should be better qualified in its identity as an instrument of culture, with new features and an extended non-residential editorial staff, and with the possibility of online edition;
- 3) Circumscriptions that publish vocational magazines, periodicals for Anthonian Benefactors Office (ABO) and publications inspired by the charism and apostolate of the Rogate, shall be ensured with qualified personnel and necessary financial sustenance.

ADMINISTRATION OF GOODS

106. One of the current challenges that particularly affects also our Congregation is the economic problem caused by the global crisis, but also sometimes by a careless management of goods we received, and by a lifestyle that is no longer sustainable.

Our full and effective response is the trust in the Providence, through: investment in works of charity, review of our way of management, downsizing of expenditure, retrieval of new sources of income, and confidence in the intercession of St. Anthony, the Gospel worker who is full of love for the little ones and the poor; all in support of our apostolic activities.⁵¹

The following proposals want to offer concrete suggestions for improvement of our administration of goods, confident in the intervention of Providence and in the witnessing of the religious.

⁵⁰ Cf. *Norms*, art. 124.

⁵¹ Cf. *Constitutions*, art. 22.

The Confreres and the Mission

107. In the administration of the goods of the Congregation, we must remember that our greatest wealth are not the goods, but the confreres who make up the community and are living a sober and joyful lifestyle at the service of humanity. At the same time, however, these are persons who are consecrated to a bigger mission, that of the Rogate, which transcends and complete him who gives himself completely.

The Percentage

108. A better and effective means for the sharing of goods is that of solidarity through the percentage system with its own dynamics, according to the situation of each Circumscription.⁵² Aside from paying a share of the percentages received from the Houses, in agreement with the General Curia, each Circumscription will also give a percentage applied to its external incomes.

New Sources of Income

109. The percentages received from the Circumscriptions have been until now the main source of income for the General Government. New sources of sustenance should be found, such as, establishing and/or improving primarily the Anthonian Benefactors Offices (ABO), the initiatives of the Central Missionary Office, investments, leases and other forms of fundraising to be organized also in the Circumscriptions.

Extra Contribution for the General Government

110. In the current economic situation which particularly touches the General Government, in order to support its initiatives for the common interest of the Congregation, it was agreed upon to offer, right at the beginning of the mandate of the new government,

⁵² Cf. *Norms*, art 287, 301.

an extra contribution *una tantum* from all communities and Seats of Circumscriptions, according to their economic possibilities. Even the Houses of formation will have to share with a small contribution from their external income. The Houses will agree with their respective Circumscription concerning the amount and mode of their contribution. This concrete gesture will strengthen each community's sense of belonging.

Online Archive

111. The modern means of communication allow us to manage and access information and resources at a global level. To facilitate those who are authorized to have access and consultation to essential technical and administrative documents of the Houses of the different Circumscriptions, an online archive with remote access will be organized in the General and Circumscription levels.

Stable Patrimony

112. The “Stable Patrimony” of the Congregation will be defined, as the Document *Guidelines for the Administration of Assets in Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life* indicates in these lines, “Every Institute of Consecrated Life and Society of Apostolic Life, after careful evaluation of its overall structure and its works, develops a list of all the assets belonging to the stable patrimony in such a way that reflects the current situation, as with respect to civil law.”⁵³

Therefore:

- 1) the Major Superior with his Council, through a special resolution, will establish in due time the legitimate designation of such Stable Patrimony;
- 2) in coordination with the experts employed by the Circumscription, the assistance of the Technico-Legal-

⁵³ CONGREGATION FOR INSTITUTES OF CONSECRATED LIFE AND OF SOCIETIES OF APOSTOLIC LIFE, *Guidelines for Administration of the Assets in Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life* (GA), Circular Letter, Libreria Ed. Vaticana, Vatican City 2014, 1.4.

Administrative Office of the General Curia (if constituted), or of an external consultancy firm, can be availed of for the gathering of the necessary documentation.

Easy Census

113. Today's administrative needs of our Houses require a valid and comprehensive instrument of management. The current centralized accounting program *Easy Census* seems unable to meet all of our actual needs.

There is the idea of having a single program that would manage not only the accounting, but would also help in the administration of Houses, possibly contemplating functions that would enable us to manage the following: the Special Funds, the annual economic planning, real estate and securities, cars, loans given and received, scholarships, Holy Masses, legacies, etc.,⁵⁴ the option of automatic submission of backup, the cost centers, and so on.

Budget for the Poor

114. Seeing the global situation of new forms of poverty, we are all the more invited to follow the example of our Holy Founder who wrote, “Keeping in mind the command and the exhortations of Our Lord Jesus Christ, ‘Give to anyone who asks’ (Mt 5:42) [...] Make sure that soup kitchen for the poor (*caldaia per i poveri*) should never be lacking in all the Houses of the Institution. Without any preoccupation, after having provided everything for the interns, the poor, miserable and needy who come shall be given a meal and some money according to their age and the ailments caused by their extreme poverty. All this is to be done with utmost joyfulness, keeping in mind the saying of the Apostle, ‘God loves a cheerful giver’ (2 Cor 9:7) [...] Such almsgiving is to be done with the spirit of faith, trusting in the infallible promise of Our Lord Jesus Christ, ‘If you give one you will receive a hundredfold,’ (Mt 19:28[29]) and ‘Give, and it will be given to you; good measure,

⁵⁴ Cf. *Norms*, art. 307.

pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap' (Lk 6:38). [...] This faith in the word of Our Lord Jesus Christ calls to our mind what he himself declared, 'as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me' (Mt 25:40)."⁵⁵

115. In determining the budget of our Houses, the House Council will clearly establish in the Annual Budget how much should be allotted annually for the service of the poor. In particular, not less than 3% of the external income should be destined for "Aids and subsidies", favoring more specific charitable projects.

New Structures

116. With regard to the new works of apostolate, compared to those that imply high operating costs, we should prefer new structures that "are adaptable and easy to manage, less time consuming and, in times of vocational difficulty, easily transferable or downsized without significant management costs."⁵⁶

Monitoring and Solving Management Problems

117. The Government at the General and Circumscription levels will "initiate an appropriate system of monitoring works with operational deficit, introduce plans for reducing the deficit and overcoming a welfare mentality: covering the operational losses of a work without having resolved management problems results in continued dissipation of resources that could be used for other works."⁵⁷

New Legal Entities

118. For the better accomplishment of our charismatic mission that involve the management of assets of the Congregation, the

creation within the Circumscriptions of new juridical entities⁵⁸ should not result in a diversion from the unified path dictated by the General Government. Therefore:

- a) the Superior General and of the Circumscription will see to it that the activities of these entities are effectively in line with the demands dictated by our regulations and by the directives of the General Government and/or the Circumscription, by monitoring their annual budgets and authorizing extraordinary transactions;
- b) the manner of contribution of these entities in favor of the Circumscription and of the General Curia should be defined.

⁵⁵ *Constitutions*, Appendix I, p. 71.

⁵⁶ GA 1.1.

⁵⁷ GA, 1.1.

⁵⁸ Onlus (*Organizzazioni non lucrative di utilità sociale*), Cooperatives, Foundations, NGO (Non-Governmental Organizations), SRL (*Società a Rischio Limitato* = Limited Corporation), ASD (*Associazioni Sportive Dilettantistiche*), etc.

Part Six

DELIBERATIONS

Structure and Government

119. Concerning the Norms for the composition of the General Chapter,⁵⁹ the Chapter establishes that the quorum of participants in the next General Chapter will be equal to 11%.

120. With regard to the election of Councilors or the appointment of Councilors of Circumscription,⁶⁰ the Chapter deliberated to change from ten to five the required number of years of perpetual profession.

121. In order to give a more complete presentation of the status of patrimony of the Congregation, the Economic-Administrative report for the General Chapters and of Circumscriptions should include not only the commercial and institutional income statement, but also the patrimonial assets.

While for the Circumscriptions the accounting should be updated up to December 31, or six months before the celebration of the Chapter,⁶¹ as regards the accounting of the General Curia the report should include the data until the last month preceding the celebration of the Chapter.

122. For a more shared and prudent management of our communities, it has been resolved to modify the art. 280 of the Norms as follows, “In so far as possible, in each House, the Treasurer designated is distinct from the Superior, under whose direction he takes care the administration of goods and manages the economy.”⁶²

⁵⁹ Cf. *Norms*, Appendix I, art. 1-3.

⁶⁰ Cf. *Norms*, art. 217, 242.

⁶¹ Cf. *Norms*, art. 150.

⁶² Cf. CJC, c. 636 § 1.

123. Considering that in the Constitutions the promotion of vocations is the first stage of the formative journey, and for consistency with the Rule of Life⁶³ and the *Ratio Institutionis*,⁶⁴ it has been decided to modify the art. 156 of the Norms concerning the competences of the General Councilors as follows:

1. Religious Life, Formation and Vocation Ministry;
2. Rogate;
3. Service of Charity and Missions;
4. Laity, Parishes and Youth Ministry.

124. The Circumscriptions may provide in their Directory that the Treasurer, either elected⁶⁵ or appointed,⁶⁶ shall not be included among the four Councilors. His participation in the Council of the Circumscription will be analogous to the functions of the General Treasurer, as provided in art. 188 of the Norms.

125. To guarantee the right of passive voice to a Superior of Circumscription who is about to end the mandate, it has been decided that, when the end of his term is foreseen between the act of convocation of the General Chapter and the moment of its celebration, his name should be inserted in the list of religious with passive voice.

⁶³ Cf. *Constitutions*, art. 90-94.

⁶⁴ Cf. *Ratio*, Part IV, art. 1ff.

⁶⁵ Cf. *Norms*, art. 217.

⁶⁶ Cf. *Norms*, art. 242.

LETTER OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Reverend Father Angelo Ademir Mezzari, RCJ
Superior General of the Rogationists
Via Tuscolana 167
00182 Rome

APPENDICES

On the occasion of the XII General Chapter of your Congregation with the theme: “Seeing the crowds, he felt compassion for them and said, ‘Rogate’. Our charismatic identity in today’s challenges”, in the context of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy that invites all to perform corporal and spiritual works of mercy, the Holy Father Pope Francis sends his cordial and best wishes, reminding that our time more than ever needs good workers for the building up of the kingdom of god on earth and therefore the “Rogate” is always alive and relevant, and each Rogationist religious becomes an effective sign of the holy spirit who, through the evangelical command, continues to call and send holy apostles for the edification of the church. The pope calls you to be the voice that renders present and efficacious the prayer of Jesus to the father so that no one remains deprived of the light and joy of the gospel and, while asking your prayer in support of his Petrine Ministry, through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Good Shepherd and of Saint Hannibal Mary Di Francia, cordially imparts to you and to the chapter confreres the implored apostolic blessing, gladly extending it to the entire religious family.

Cardinal Pietro Parolin
Secretary of State of his Holiness

Vatican, July 3, 2016

INDULGENCE



PAENITENTIARIA APOSTOLICA

Prot. N. 542/16/1

BEATISSIME PATER,

Angelus Ademir Mezzari, Superior Generalis Congregationis Rogationistarum a Corde Iesu, occasione Capituli Generalis Congregationis, a die V proximi mensis Iulii in Morlupensi domo pro feriis celebrandi, reverenter petit plenariae Indulgentiae donum, sub suetis condicionibus (sacramentali Confessione, eucharistica Communionem et orationem ad mentem Sanctitatis Tuae) ab omnibus Congregationis sodalibus aliisque personis, quae Capitulo Generali intererunt, semel acquirendum peculiari die ante initium illius, orationibus et liturgicis celebrationibus ad divinum auxilium implorandum dicata, si, unito corde cum spiritalibus finibus Anni de Misericordia Sancti, iisdem orationibus et liturgicis celebrationibus pia mente interfuerint. Et Deus, etc.

Die XXX Iunii MMXVI

PAENITENTIARIA APOSTOLICA, de mandato Ss.mi Patris Francisci Div. Prov. Papae, libenter annuit pro gratia iuxta preces. Non obstantibus in contrarium facientibus quibuscumque.

Maurus Card. Piacenza
MAURUS Card. PIACENZA
Paenitentiarius Maior

Christophorus Nykiet
CHRISTOPHORUS NYKIET
Regens

Message of the XII General Chapter

Rome, 22 July 2016

To the Rogationists
To the Daughters of Divine Zeal
To the Family of the Rogate

Dearest,

With the Lord's help we have concluded the 12th General Chapter and from the Rogate Spirituality Center, here in Morlupo, we want to share with you the pervading sentiments of spiritual joy.

We felt your fraternal closeness, through your prayer for the success of this Chapter Assembly, which is important for all of us and for the Church.

During these three weeks we have combined the rhythms of activities that are proper of the General Chapter with those usual moments of fraternity when we stay together.

We reflected on the particular theme: "Seeing the crowds, he felt compassion for them and said, 'Rogate'. Our charismatic identity in today's challenges", through listening, queries and dialogue, which were generally done in a serene manner, at times allowing ourselves to be rightly provoked by issues that require us to look forward with certainty. By looking back to our origins we rediscover the greatness of our vocation in following the footsteps of our Founder.

We are, in fact, confronted with challenges as we work out with the first and fundamental challenge of our identity.

Finally, we become aware of having to be truly what we are in the DNA of our charismatic identity. It is only through this awareness that

we may be able to share the compassion of the Lord of the harvest for the tired and exhausted crowds, to listen to their voices, to see their poverty that awaits and asks for our help.

Our reflection is extended to the different dimensions of our life and apostolate. Whatever we were able to draw out fraternally are presented in the Chapter document that, with its proposals and deliberations, will constitute a precious gift for our life.

In particular, two lights have illuminated us during these days, and recurred several times in our sharing, drawing inspiration from two new realities that have emerged in our Congregation in recent decades. One is the experience of a form of contemplative life which articulated into the full implementation of the various dimensions of the charism. And the other is the experience of an inserted community, living side by side with the poor. They might seem to be distant experiences, but not at all, as they had not been for Saint Hannibal and for the Confreres and Sisters who sustained him at the beginning of the Pious Work.

Dear brothers and sisters, this is the wish that we want to address to you from this Chapter: may we be able to live our daily lives meeting one another in the compassionate Heart of Christ that we have encountered in the Eucharist and in the persons of the little ones and the poor.

May our Divine Superiors, through the intercession of Saint Hannibal and of our Patron Saints, obtain for us this gift.

The Chapter Members

PHOTO CHRONICLE OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER



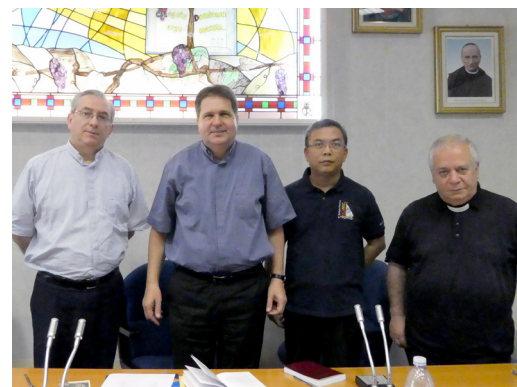
Fr. Mario Aldegani, Superior General of the Josephites of Murialdo, who gave the introductory conference, here with Fr. Mezzari.



Fr. Angelo A. Mezzari during the Mass at the start of the Chapter.



"The Rogationists and the Daughters of the Divine Zeal at the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, with Cardinal Joao Braz De Aviz."



The Presidential Board.



Fr. Jean Pierre Ntabwoba and Fr. Eugene Ntawigenera, the scrutineers.



The Chapter Assembly.



1st Commission – Chapter Document.



2nd Commission – Religious Life and Formation



3rd Commission – Mission and Apostolate.



4th Commission – Structure and Government.



5th Commission – Administration of Goods.



Fr. Bruno Rampazzo during the closing Eucharistic Celebration of the Chapter



Fr. Angelo Mezzari expresses his wishes to Fr. Bruno Rampazzo and to the new government.



The new set of General Government.



The Members of the XII General Chapter.



*The Delegates of the St. Matthew Province to the XII General Chapter
(here with Fr. Wilfredo Cruz)*

