

**Congregazione dei Rogazionisti**  
Curia Generalizia

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Rome. January 11, 2020

Prot. No. 11/20

Subject: Sunday of the Word of God

To: the Most Reverend Superiors  
of the Rogationist Circumscriptions  
and the Religious Communities

Dear Confreres,

With the Motu Proprio *Aperuit illis* of 30 September 2019, in the memorial of St. Jerome, Pope Francis has established that annually throughout the Church, "the III Sunday of Ordinary Time is to be devoted to the celebration, study and dissemination of the Word of God. This Sunday of Word of God will thus be a fitting part of the year when we are encouraged to strengthen our bonds with the Jewish people and to pray for Christian unity. This is more than a temporal coincidence: the celebration of the the Sunday of the Word of God has an ecumenical value, since the Scriptures point out, for those who listen, the path to authentic and firm unity" (no. 3).

In the following words, the Pope offers suggestions on how to live this Sunday dedicated to the Word, by making the religious and assiduous familiarity with the Holy Scriptures grow in the people of God:

"The various communities will find their own ways to mark this Sunday with a certain solemnity. It is important, however, that in the Eucharistic celebration the sacred text be enthroned, in order to focus the attention of the assembly on the normative value of God's Word. On this Sunday, it would be particularly appropriate to highlight the proclamation of the Word of the Lord and to highlight in the homily the honor that it is due. On this Sunday, Bishops could celebrate the Rite of Installation of Lectors or or a similar commissioning of readers, in order to bring out the importance of the proclamation of God's Word in the liturgy. In this regard, renewed efforts should be made to provide members of the faithful with the training needed to be genuine proclaimers of the Word, as is already the practice in the case of Acolytes or extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. Pastors can also find ways of giving a Bible, or one of its books, to the entire assembly as a way of showing the importance of learning how to read, appreciate and pray daily with sacred Scripture, especially through the practice of *lectio divina*" (no. 3).

The Vatican Council II reminds of the need for us to be more rooted day by day in the Word of God. The Pope invites us to meditate and live the pages of the dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum* and suggests that we also bear in mind the Apostolic Exhortation of Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini* (2008), "whose teachings remain fundamental for our communities" (no. 2).

We have in our Founder, St. Hannibal Mary Di Francia, a passionate lover of the Word of God. Since his youth and developed throughout the years, he has learned to be familiar to it day by day. In all his spiritual or instructional writings, in his prayers, homilies and speeches, in his own poetic compositions, the Word of God is almost always present, quoted either explicitly or implicitly.

He also particularly welcomed the Word of the Rogate as a light for his life and mission. From the Rogate, the Pious Work of the Interests of the Heart of Jesus began. And he handed down the Word of the Rogate to us Rogationists and to the Daughters of Divine Zeal, so that we can live it in our lives and spread it. He reminds us:

"The two Institutes, which are born of, in and from the Rogate, have received these ardent words, we would almost say, from the very adorable lips of the Divine Master himself; that they feel penetrated (by this Word) in the recesses of their spirit and the most hidden fibers of their heart; while they are all of the divine Rogate, while they absorbed it as a hope of their existence in Jesus, in his longings for the glory of the Father and the health of souls - the two Institutes of Rogationists and the Daughters of Divine Zeal are not satisfied by fulfilling the command, nor do they simply settle with the meaning of the prescriptive word of prayer that the Lord of the Harvest sends out workers, but they apply two other meanings to it, which they intend to understand in the broadest sense of the Word of God, understanding the Word of God with a limitless extension of meanings, (thus) the more one contemplates it, the more one will see how best to appreciate it for oneself and for others"(Rogationist Anthology, p. 670).

For us, we can apply to the Rogate the verse "Your Word is a lamp for my steps and a light to my path" (Ps 119, 105).

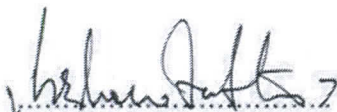
Dear Confreres, we welcome this invitation from the Holy Father with gratitude and enthusiasm. Let us personally live a renewed reference to the Word of God. The sacred Bible constitutes "the book" par excellence among our books. Let us live with greater care the nourishment of the Word of God that the Church offers us in the daily and Sunday liturgy, particularly, in the special seasons of the liturgical year.

Together with the Liturgy, the Word of God becomes the main source of nourishment for our spiritual life, at the very initial formation and on the path of ongoing formation. The fraternal life in our communities should be built and nourished around the Word of God, in the *Lectio Divina*.

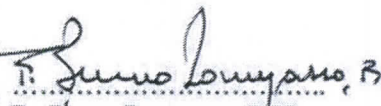
The Pope also reminds us that "along the path of welcoming the Word of God, the Mother of the Lord accompanies us. She was called blessed because she believed in the fulfillment of what the Lord had spoken to her (cf. Lk 1,45)" (no. 15).

Finally, I urge you to reflect on the *Motu Proprio Aperuit illis*, and to evaluate, at the level of Circumscription and Community, possible initiatives to be undertaken to grow in welcoming the Word of God, starting from the practical indications of the Holy Father and by joining initiatives that arise in the local Church.

With this wish, which I entrust to the Divine Superiors and to the intercession of Saint Hannibal, I greet everyone with affection in the Lord.

  
Fr. Fortunato Siciliano RCJ  
General Secretary



  
Fr. Bruno Rampazzo RCJ  
Superior General