



Congregazione dei Rogazionisti
Curia Generalizia

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World Mission Day

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Re.: Rogationist Mission Day 2017

To the Most Rev. Superiors
of the Rogationist Circumscriptions
and To the Rogationist Communities
c.c. To the Family of the Rogate

Dearests,

As we approach the conclusion of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, which falls on November 20, 2016, Solemnity of Christ the King, in the next few days of October we celebrate the World Mission Sunday. This year's theme is "Missionary Church, witness of mercy". In his message for World Mission Sunday, the Holy Father points out that "By virtue of the missionary mandate, the Church cares for those who do not know the Gospel, because she wants everyone to be saved and to experience the Lord's love. She 'is commissioned to announce the mercy of God, the beating heart of the Gospel' (*Misericordiae Vultus*, 12) and to proclaim mercy in every corner of the world, reaching every person, young or old".

It is a powerful reminder for us to reflect on the missionary dimension of our life as Christians and consecrated people, who are called for this additional reason to live and spread the charism that has been given us, to be shared to the whole People of God.

The document of our XII General Chapter, "*Our charismatic identity in the challenges of today*", which will be promulgated soon, also calls our attention to this fundamental commitment to evangelization: "Evangelization is the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize." (...) Therefore we assume the task of "proclaiming the Gospel to all, in all places, on all occasions, without delay, without repulsion and without fear" (n. 18).

In the message sent to us for the Chapter, Pope Francis reminds us that "our time more than ever asks good workers for the construction of the Kingdom of God on earth and therefore the *Rogate* is always alive and actual 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 building up of the Church" and therefore he invited us "to be the voice that renders present and effective the prayer of Jesus to the Father so that no one would be deprived of the light and joy of the Gospel".

Since 1950, our congregation which had achieved a strong presence in Italy and had a good availability of congregants, opened the mission in Brazil; later on, in the seventies, with the blessing of the Divine Superiors, it has expanded its horizons to other continents. Thanking the Lord, today we attest that the face of our Congregation has become international.

The Rule of Life, which has fully recognized the missionary aspect, has given us, as its particular expression the Rogationist Mission Day, which aims to be a valuable opportunity to rediscover the “holy ideal” of the missions, as a dimension of our lives as Christians and consecrated, and as an expression of our specific charism.¹

The Rogationist Mission Day revives our missionary sensitivity and, at the same time, calls us annually to a concrete gesture of solidarity and generosity to some realities of the Congregation with particular needs. For the next year we are invited to turn our gaze to the recent Rogationist presence in the Parish of Butamwa (Diocese of Kigali) in Rwanda.

We accomplish this choice in line with the Chapter document that, in reminding us of our commitment to the new evangelization, stresses the importance of pastoral service in parishes and shrines:² “One of the challenges for the Church in the urgency of the transmission of faith is to recover the centrality of the parish in the Church's mission. Our charismatic identity addresses this challenge and makes us believe that the shrines and parishes are providential places and means for the spread of the charism among God's people and in the local Church” (n. 101).

Such choice is also in response to the call of the Holy Father in his message for World Mission Sunday: “Every nation and culture has the right to receive the message of salvation which is the gift of God for all. This is all the more necessary when we consider how many injustices, wars, humanitarian crises now await a solution. The missionaries know from experience that the Gospel of forgiveness and mercy can bring joy and reconciliation, justice and peace”.

The Rwandan people, who remained greatly affected and traumatized by the tragedy of the 1994 genocide, has a particular need today to listen and welcome the Gospel of forgiveness and mercy so as to continue on the path of reconciliation and reconstruction of the country in unity and peace. The genocide and the war have left deep wounds to the people and to the social fabric. Resistance, mistrust and closure are felt even within the same ecclesial community. Many difficulties are encountered along the path of forgiveness and reconciliation. For the society and the Church of Rwanda itself to be able to overcome divisions and antagonisms, they need our help, which we express in prayer and solidarity.

In this perspective, I invite you to look forward to the next Rogationist Mission Day 2017.

The Archbishop of Kigali Mons. Thaddée Ntihinyurwa has entrusted to our Congregation the Parish of Butamwa on June 17, 2015. Despite belonging to the capital district of Kigali, Butamwa is a rural area that, besides the farmers, welcomes poor people who were living in the slums of the cities and, due to the gradually increasing urbanization, were forced to migrate in the surrounding peripheries.

The biggest problem that the Confreres encounter is the lack of parish structures, since the church has been rendered unfit for use a few years ago by a strong hurricane, which ripped through the roofs, while the perimeter wall has deteriorated over time. For four years, the Holy Mass is celebrated in the catechism classrooms, which can accommodate only a limited number of faithful, forcing most of them to stay outside under the sun or the rain.

During the Canonical visit to the Saint Joseph Quasi Province (Africa) in the month of May, my predecessor Fr. Angelo Ademir Mezzari had the opportunity to see

¹ Cfr. Costituzioni, art. 72; Norme, art. 107.

² Cfr. Norme, art. 110-118.

personally the problematic situation of Butamwa Parish and to accept the request for assistance from the faithful and the Confreres.

Already in the past, the Congregation had contributed to the Church of Rwanda by realizing in 1993 the construction of the church, dedicated to our Founder St. Hannibal Mary Di Francia, in the parish of Magi (Diocese of Butare). In addition, after the genocide of 1994, we financed the reconstruction of the parish church of Mugombwa (Diocese of Butare), our first mission in Africa.

In continuity with the work of the Superiors General who preceded me, and responding positively to the request of Fr. Jozef Humenansky, Superior of the St. Joseph Quasi-Province (Africa), with the opinion of the General Council, I decided to dedicate the next **Rogationist Mission Day 2017** to the promotion and support of **Project Butamwa**, in order to realize the **“Reconstruction of the Parish Church of Butamwa (Rwanda)”**.

The project intends to collaborate with the ecclesial community of Butamwa in the construction of the church, as well as the setting up of other parish structures such as classrooms for catechesis, for the promotion of evangelization, the deepening of faith and the holiness of the people of Rwanda, who needs to pass through the delicate phases of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Dearests, I invite you to have a view of the project and to disseminate it so that this Mission Day may contribute in restoring confidence, courage and hope in the hearts of many Rwandans.

We entrust the success of the Rogationist Mission Day 2017 to the Divine Superiors, through the intercession of our Founder, St. Hannibal Mary.

With this wish, I greet you with affection in the Lord.


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(Fr. Matteo Sanavio, R.C.J.)
General Councilor for the Missions




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(Fr. Bruno Rampazzo, R.C.J.)
Superior General


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(Fr. Fortunato Siciliano, R.C.J.)
General Secretary