

Rome, October 1, 2019
Saint Therese of the Child Jesus

Prot. N. 266/19

Subject: Rogationist Mission Day 2020

To: Most Rev. Superiors of Rogationist Circumscriptions
The Rogationist Communities
Cc: The Family of the Rogate

Dearly beloved,

I am writing you on the day of the memorial of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus, the "special patroness of men and women missionaries in the world"¹ in order to announce to you the next Rogationist Mission Day 2020.

We know that St. Therese set her whole existence towards the mission: *"I would like to travel over the whole earth to preach your Name and to plant your glorious cross on infidel soil. But...one mission alone would not be sufficient for me. I would want to preach the Gospel on all the five continents simultaneously and even to the most remote isles. I would be a missionary, not for a few years only, but from the beginning of creation until the consummation of the ages. But above all, my beloved Savior, I would shed my blood for You, even to the very last drop."*² On her deathbed, she confided to her sister, *"Yes, I want to spend my heaven doing good on earth. (...) I cannot rest as long as there are souls to be saved."*³

The conduct of Father Hannibal toward Saint Therese of the Child Jesus was astonishing. In fact, on July 30, 1915, he wrote in Giardini (Messina) a "novena for a grace - with supplication"⁴ to Sister Teresa of the Child Jesus, while her apostolic process of canonization in Rome was just in the opening phase. Father Hannibal, ardent with zeal for the salvation of souls, was perfectly in tune with Sister Teresa of the Child Jesus.

The Rogationist Mission Day returns each year with its reference to the month of October, which is characterized by World Mission Sunday, and reminds us first of all that the missionary activity is an essential dimension of our Christian identity.

Pope Francis is driven by this vocation of the Church to go to different continents to announce the Gospel of the Lord. He reminds the "brothers and sisters of Mauritius" about it as he was about to visit them: *"It will be a joy for me to proclaim the Gospel among your people, who have distinguished themselves for having been formed by the coming together of different ethnicities, and therefore, benefit from the richness of various cultural and religious traditions. The Catholic Church, from its beginnings, is sent to all peoples, and speaks all of the world's languages. But the language of the Gospel — as you know — is love."*⁵ The Pope, then, who declared October 2019 as an "extraordinary missionary month", reminds us that we will not be able to live the missionary spirit without an authentic, constant

¹ From the Decree of the Congregation of Rites on December 14, 1927, by a decision of Pope Pius XI.

² St. Therese of Lisieux, *The Story of a Soul*, Chapter XI.

³ St. Therese of Lisieux, *Her last conversations*, July 17, 1897.

⁴ St. Hannibal Mary Di Francia. Archive, Vol. 50, miscellany, n. 439. *Father Hannibal on September 5, 1915, will proclaim Sister Teresa of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face special "protector and sister" of the least Community of the Daughters of the Divine Zeal of the Heart of Jesus.* See Chronology.

⁵ Pope Francis, video message on September 3, 2019 for his upcoming visit to Mauritius on September 9, 2019.

commitment to love: *"A Church that presses forward to the farthest frontiers requires a constant and ongoing missionary conversion."*⁶

The Constitutions reminds us of our mission: *"We commit ourselves to live constantly united with the Father through prayer, to draw from the source of salvation and to respond to the command of the Rogate, always ready for the mission to bring to the poor the proclamation of the Kingdom"* (Art. 25). The Rogate is the response to Jesus' compassion for the loss of tired and exhausted crowds like a flock without a shepherd. It is the precious secret for the salvation of souls. As Rogationists, we have a double calling to be missionaries: to announce the Gospel of salvation and to bring the charism of the Rogate that the Spirit, through us also, wants to give to the whole Church.

The Rogationist Mission Day comes back every year to remind us of our dual vocation, to praise and bless the Lord for the gift of the Rogate and to look, with a special remembrance and gratitude, to the confreres who work with zeal far from their homeland and sometimes with so many difficulties. We assure them of our closeness, both in prayer and in fraternal solidarity.

For the next year, 2020, with the solidarity project in favor of the missions, we are invited to meet the boys, girls and the young people of our mission in Davao, Philippines of the Saint Matthew Province.

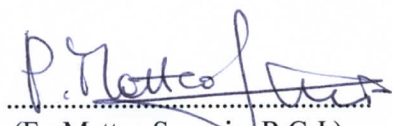
We have been present in Davao - Toril for over twenty years. It is a beautiful, spacious place surrounded by greenery. We began with the acceptance of 50 children at risk. Subsequently, the Rogationist Academy of Davao was started. Currently, about 250 students study there. The area that was scarcely inhabited upon our arrival, became more populated. Since 2017, we have the pastoral care of the nearby parish of Sta. Cruz. The condition of the area, from an economic point of view, is precarious but in the phase of development. In particular, we are asked to promote the human and Christian growth of young people, who constitute hope and the beginning of a better future for society.

For this reason, with the solidarity project of the Rogationist Missionary Day 2020, we want to realize the *Rogate Youth Mission Center in Davao - Toril*, which is a Center that welcomes young people for experiences of spirituality, discernment and formative accompaniment. The charitable and socio-educational mission is integrated with the ministry of vocational accompaniment, thus associating in a more evident way the two icons of the Rogationist identity in the apostolate of the community. The estimated cost for the construction of the rooms and furnishings is around Php 4,500,000.00 (about € 75,000.00).

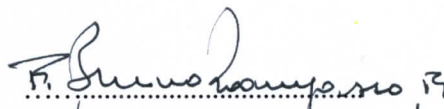
Dear friends, I invite you to take a look at the project prepared by the Central Missionary Office, to make it known to others and support it to help sustain the hopeful journey of our missionary action in Davao - Toril. I kindly request that your contribution be sent to the Missionary Office by November 2020.

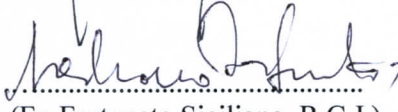
We entrust the success of the Rogationist Mission Day 2020 to the Divine Superiors, through the intercession of our Founder, Saint Hannibal Mary.

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


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




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


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

⁶ Pope Francis, Message for World Mission Sunday 2019.