



Rome. January 15, 2019

Prot. No. 28/19

Subject: Celebrations for the 150th anniversary of the Inspiration of the Rogate

To the Most Reverend Superiors

of the Circumscriptions of the Rogationists and the Daughters of Divine Zeal
and of the Communities of the Rogationists and the Daughters of Divine Zeal
and for the information of the Family of the Rogate

Dear brothers and sisters,

In coincidence with the 15th anniversary of the Canonization of St. Hannibal Mary Di Francia, our Founder, and in the year of the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Inspiration of the Rogate, we want to share with you an initiative proposed by the *Annibale Culturale Maria di Francia* in Francavilla Fontana (BR), which aims to involve the educational communities of the Rogationists and Daughters of Divine Zeal present in the world, in a useful experience of growing in the knowledge of our roots and of spreading the Rogate even more in the reality we find ourselves in.

The program includes two days to be spent in Rome, starting from May 15, the anniversary of the canonization of our Founder. This will involve the communities in Italy, particularly the socio-educational communities, who will represent their peers from the various parts of the world, by means of some particular signs.

Specifically, we intend to participate at the general audience of His Holiness Pope Francis at St. Peter's Square on May 15, during which we want to present to the Holy Father a mosaic depicting the Our Lady of Vocations, which will be made from soil and colored pebbles that will be sent to Italy from the socio-educational communities present in the five continents.

On the following morning of May 16, we will meet at the Pantheon - Basilica of Santa Maria ad Martyres, for a moment of sharing and prayer. There will be an exhibition of drawings and a presentation poems and prose on the theme of the *gift and gratitude*, produced by the children and youth of the entire Rogationist and the Daughters of Divine Zeal world, which will be exposed and recited at the time of prayer, possibly accompanied by local images and music.

The reference, for the coordination and the sending of the above materials, can be done through: Dr. Cosima Proto (facebook page: Associazione Culturale Annibale Maria Di Francia - Email: cosima.proto@gmail.com Telephone: +39 329 7620782), P. Matteo Sanavio and Sr. Rosa Graziano.

We hope that this beautiful initiative, as part of the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the Inspiration of the Rogate in St. Hannibal Mary and the 15th anniversary of his canonization,

may involve our realities, with activities to be carried out in our educational centers, but also in parish catechetical groups, oratories and places of encounters where our children and/or youth are.

The theme of the *gift and gratitude*, so necessary in our society, have a great educational value and constitute the most genuine approach to our charismatic spirituality, which arises from the Eucharist and finds its fulfillment in it.

Let us implore the blessing of our Divine Superiors and the intercession of our Holy Founder, St. Hannibal Mary Di Francia, and the Celestial Rogationists and Daughters of Divine Zeal, for the success of these celebrations.

With these sentiments, we cordially greet you in the Lord.

Madre M. Teolinda Salemi

(Madre M. Teolinda Salemi, FDZ)
Superiora Generale



P. Bruno Rampazzo, R.C.J.

(P. Bruno Rampazzo, R.C.J.)
Superiore Generale



Project
"PantheonRog: all the Love in one sphere"

1. The heart of the idea

"PantheonRog: all the Love in one sphere" is the cultural project celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Intuition of the Rogate, the charism that inspired St. Hannibal Mary Di Francia in the foundation of his religious congregations and his socio-educational works that started in Messina, passed through Francavilla Fontana and Oria in the Province of Brindisi, reached Rome, and extended throughout the world.

The project is aimed at the new generations, pupils and the young of the Rogationist Educational Communities, so that they can reflect on the dimension of *gift* and *gratitude*, with a look at poverty that has always afflicted humanity and at the generous response that everyone can give so that the civilization of respect and love can triumph.

2. The project idea

Starting from the historical and biographical data of St. Hannibal Mary Di Francia, we intend to undertake an ideal human, spiritual, historical, artistic, literary, anthropological, pedagogical, ecclesial and social path.

To involve *"his children"* who are lovingly welcomed in schools and social-educational communities present throughout the world, the following stages will be enhanced:

- Messina, where everything originated;
- Francavilla Fontana (Br), where St. Hannibal, scrutinizing the will of God, tried to start again after the devastating earthquake of 1908 that struck the city of Messina;
- Oria (Br), where he opened the first relief works after the earthquake;
- Rome, where he would be recognized as a Saint, and father of the orphans and the poor;
- The missionary communities present in the five continents, where the sons and daughters of St. Hannibal actualize and witness to the Rogate.

The aim of the project is to read the inspiration of the Rogate as something that involves us, challenges us and encourages us to get to know each other better in communion, to arouse in each one a renewed response of love.

3. Objectives and plan of activities

- Knowledge of St. Hannibal Mary and of his charism: the project foresees that the Rogate, the founding charism that gave rise to the two religious congregations of the Rogationists and Daughters of the Divine Zeal will be repeated in the socio-educational works of the male and female Anthonian Institutes, in schools, in social centers and in all the initiatives in which the two Congregations dedicate themselves to the least and poorest of the society.
- Knowledge of Father Hannibal Mary as a poet and educator: the students will be guided in reflection and will produce drawings, poems and prose on the theme of *gift* and *gratitude* starting from the poems of St. Hannibal Mary: *"I love my children"*, *"Flower of gratitude"* and an extract from the *"Letter to friends"*. They are also invited to identify a flower, an image and a music that represents their local reality.

Gratitude can be expressed for the beauty of creation, but also for the gift of teachers, schools, pens and books; for the gift of medical care, doctors and hospitals; for the gift of sports facilities; for the gift of the family, etc. Gratitude will bring out the recognition and implementation of the Universal Rights of the Child presented in the UN Convention and adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on November 20, 1989, whose 30th anniversary we commemorate this year.

All that will be produced will then be acknowledged and presented in the three significant celebratory moments shown below:

1st : Audience with the Holy Father His Holiness Pope Francis at St. Peter's Square in Rome, on Wednesday, May 15, 2019.

For this event, we will try to produce, in collaboration with the Taranto District House, a mosaic representing the Madonna of Vocations. This image can be blessed by the Holy Father Pope Francis and can later be raffled off, the proceeds of which will be for the support a charity work of the Family of the Rogate.

Therefore, it is necessary that **the communities present in the five continents to send a bit of soil and some colored pebbles**, that will be used, with the help of everyone, to produce an art work that will express the devotion of St. Hannibal towards Mary and the global nature of the Charism, which after 150 years, assumes global dimensions and characteristics, both for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations and for the charitable aspect in favor of the little ones and the poor.

The material that will arrive will be mixed with water from two springs: San Placido Spring, near the Church of San Giovanni di Malta in Messina, where St. Hannibal received the gift of Rogate; and the Madonna della Fontana Spring in Francavilla Fontana (Br) where St. Hannibal arrived with the refugee orphans, who escaped the earthquake of 1908.

2nd : Celebration of the Liturgy of the Word and ecumenical prayer "*PantheonRog: all the Love in one sphere*" at the Pantheon - Basilica Santa Maria ad Martyres in Piazza della Rotonda - Rome, Thursday, 16 May, from 10:00 to 12:00.

The Pantheon of Rome, now the Basilica of "*Santa Maria ad Martyres*", was founded between 27 and 25 BC by Marco Lucio Agrippa and rebuilt by Emperor Hadrian after a fire between 118 and 125 AD. Originally, it was a pagan temple dedicated to all deities. In 608, Pope Boniface IV placed in the Pantheon the bones of many martyrs taken from the Christian catacombs and the temple was officially passed on to Christianity with the name of Santa Maria ad Martyres.

The Pantheon boasted the largest dome in the world until 1436, when that of the Cathedral of Florence was built by Brunelleschi. At its peak, it presents an opening to the sky of 9 meters in diameter, called *óculus*, or eye, which remains the only source of light of the immense hemispherical dome with a diameter of 150 Roman feet, or 43.2 meters. The temple inside can contain a sphere of the same dimensions, a symbol of perfection and eternity, which celebrates the encounter between the human and the divine.

The drawings, poems and prose on the theme of *gift and gratitude* produced by the children and youths of the entire Rogationist and of the Daughters of Divine Zeal

world will be exhibited and recited in the moment of prayer, accompanied, possibly, by local images and music. There is a need to identify a flower, representing local realities, and which will be formed into chaplet to be dedicated to St. Hannibal.

At the moment of prayer, representatives from the main monotheistic religions and the Embassies of the States where the Rogationist and the Daughters of Divine Zeal communities are present will be invited.

At the end of the prayer, a relic of St. Hannibal will be given to the Basilica "*Santa Maria ad Martyres*" and will be exposed to the veneration of the faithful each year during Easter time together with those of the martyrs.

The compositions, poems and drawings (accompanied by music and images of local flowers) will be shared on the Facebook page "Associazione Culturale Annibale Maria Di Francia", created for the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the Inspiration of the Rogate.

3rd : Concluding Convention of presentation of and reflection on the pedagogical principles of St. Hannibal and the relevance of the theological anthropology of the "Gift" and of the "Gratitude" in the Writings of St. Hannibal and of Mother Nazarena Majone.

The conference will be held on November 20, 2019, on the UN Universal Day of Children.

4. The Steering Committee

The initiative is promoted by the "Annibale Maria Di Francia" Cultural Association founded in Messina by Prof. Salvatore Schirò, great-grandson of the Saint. Today, it is represented by Dr. Rosalia Schirò in Messina and by Dr. Cosima Proto in Francavilla Fontana (Br). It expresses itself in communion with the Congregation of the Rogationists of the Heart of Jesus and the Daughters of the Divine Zeal.

5. Timeline

The project will involve schools and educational communities from January to November 2019.

The literary materials produced must be submitted by April 30, 2019 at the e-mail address cosima.proto@gmail.com, in order to publish it and present it at the celebratory events in Rome.

The material for the mosaic (soil and small stones) must be sent by post mail by April 15, 2019 to the following address: Cosima Proto, Piazza Ippocrate, n. 7 – CAP 72024 Oria (Br) - Italy.

6. Useful contacts

Facebook page: Associazione Culturale Annibale Maria Di Francia

Email: cosima.proto@gmail.com

Telephone of dott.ssa Cosima Proto: +39 329 7620782.

ATTACHMENT 2

PASSAGES FOR POETRY AND REFLECTIONS

I love my children

(St. Hannibal M. Di Francia, Messina September 25, 1902)

"To the eminent Dr. Angelo Toscano, so kindly encouraging me with his affectionate poems in my humble efforts for the salvation of abandoned orphans."

Like a tune of wandering songs
Comes to me the gentle sound of your zither,
O unknown friend, and it brings me back
To the wonderful love for my children.

I love my children; they are for me
The most cherished ideal of my life.
From oblivion and abandonment I rescued them
Deeply prompted by daring hope.

Gentle flowers of this land, though newly born
Depths were ready to swallow them;
There was no gaze of loving people
To bring them joy at least for a while.

Scattered dear children, on their own way
With no love, liveliness, or smiles in store for them;
Alas, what a future, what a fate
Would have hurt and crushed them!

O purest pearls, my little girls,
One by one I picked them up from dirt,
Like precious shells thrown along the streets
Now on their way to a better future.

They call me Father: On their head
As God's Minister I lay my hand,
They cry "Mother!" to such a sweet name
A Sister answers: the Lord's chaste spouse.

So that food might never lack on their table,
Many times I went frozen, I sweated...
Here, my children, is the food today,
God who loves you will provide tomorrow.

I often knocked in vain to unfriendly doors:
Terrible was what I was sentenced back:
- Don't bother us, crazy guy, get out of here!
This you deserve for your foolishness!

Dear children, time will come that you
Will know my daily martyrdom and love;
No father loves more his little ones,
For you I begged from God and men!

O unknown friend! Might your poem
Warm up chilled hearts and turn them to fire
So that love may bestow his gifts on us
The Love I plead from heaven and earth.

Translator: Fr. Cesare Bettoni RCJ

A Flower of Gratitude

*The Little orphans to one of their benefactors
(by St. Hannibal M. Di Francia)*

As a flower that a passer-by tramples upon
Lies damaged on the ground,
But, if the brook's friendly water reaches it,
Beautifully it stands up in its original vigor,

Thus, we raised up again our unhappy face,
Still beautiful in our youthful enthusiasm,
The day that at the foot of our humble request
You signed with your name, O gentle Sir.

May the heavenly grace, softly
Upon you descend, and joined to true hope
May joy shine in you forever.

And the Lord who invites us to do good,
May write your name indelibly
In the eternal book of unending Life.

Translator: Fr. Cesare Bettoni RCJ

Note: This poem in the original Italian is a classical "sonnet" with rhyme and format much used by Italian poets. With 19th century redundant language, it thanks the benefactor for having answered (signed with your name) to the request of a donation, most probably a letter from the Anthonian Propaganda Office. Then, it wishes the Lord's joy, grace and eternal life to be his recompense.

From "Letter to friends" (cf. TUSINO, *The Father's Soul*, P. 438-439.

"I have designed this letter for those who, according to my personal knowledge, reference, or fame, have admirable gifts of mind and heart, and seem like they would be favorably disposed to receive my pure expressions of friendship with the pure impartiality of reason.

"Since I have devoted my life to the sacred ministry, as a priest of Jesus Christ I feel a loving affection and a longing for the welfare and happiness of others, just as I do for myself.

"I think of myself as being joined by the bond of friendship with all people on earth, rich or poor, lords or workers, humble or aristocratic. I have seen a brother and a lord in everyone and what I have longed for me in this and in the after life, I have longed for others in the same way."