

Congregazione dei Rogazionisti

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First Sunday of Advent

Prot. no. 284/22

Obj: Rogationist Mission Day 2023

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

Dearly Beloved,

With the beginning of the new Liturgical Year comes to you the announcement of Rogationist Mission Day 2023. We embark on the journey towards the Christmas of the Lord, who wants to shower us with peace and great joy, but we still live with the threat of the pandemic and suffer with brothers and sisters who in so many parts of the world endure the atrocities of absurd wars.

We proclaim the "glory to God in the highest" and call for "peace on earth to people of goodwill." Jesus was sent by the Father and came to dwell among us to reveal to us that we are born of God's love and are called to respond to this love and manifest it, following his example, by becoming a gift to our brothers and sisters, particularly if they are in affliction.

He said this to his disciples, and he says it to each of us, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I also send you" (Jn. 20:21).

All of us, each in our own small social context, are sent; we are on a mission. By a design of the Father and by the baptismal consecration, we are united with "Jesus of Nazareth, who went about doing good and healing all" (Acts 10:38). The more the Lord's love pervades our lives the more it leads us to spread it around us and to broaden the horizon of our view to those who are in pain or do not know that they are loved by God.

We are sent to the world to bear witness to the love that God the Father has for each of us; He who has manifested himself, in the Spirit, through Christ Jesus. This truth, this mission of ours, was called to mind for us by Pope Francis in his message for World Mission Day 2022, which had the theme "*You shall be my witnesses*" – *The call of every Christian to bear witness to Christ*. This is the central point, the heart of Jesus' teaching to the disciples, in view of their being sent forth into the world. The disciples are to be witnesses of Jesus, thanks to the grace of the Holy Spirit that they will receive. Wherever they go and in whatever place they find themselves. Christ was the first to be sent, as a "missionary" of the Father (cf. Jn 20:21), and as such, he is the Father's "faithful witness" (cf. Rev 1:5). In a similar way, every Christian is called to be a missionary and witness to Christ (no. 1).

As we try to live out this vocation and mission of ours in the best way possible in our daily environment, we have our eyes set on those priests, brothers, sisters, and lay people, who carry out this mission of evangelization and assistance on the front lines in mission places, sometimes going to considerable sacrifice, even to the point of risking their lives.

Then we cannot help but support the mission of the Church in our daily prayer, in our various ways of nearness to the missionaries, in our financial contribution to the running of the

mission, and to meet the needs of so many of our brothers and sisters who live at times in extreme conditions of poverty.

Father Hannibal, who personally longed for the grace to go on a mission, envisaged this holy ideal for his children by speaking explicitly of *missio ad gentes*. He, moreover, felt the urgency of proclaiming the Rogate to all peoples. Following the Founder's example and in response to the missionary commitment that the Church asks of religious in particular, we look at all the peoples of the earth as harvest ripe for gathering and privilege those places where poverty and abandonment especially afflict the little ones.

The Rogationist Mission Day (RMD) recurs every year to remind us that we are all "missionaries" and that, as Rogationists, we are called to be bearers of the gift of the Rogate, the secret of salvation for the whole world. This appointment, moreover, calls us to make an experience of fraternity, among all the Circumscriptions and Communities of the Congregation, in a gesture of sharing and solidarity towards a Community that, in one of its Works, is in a situation of need.

Therefore, accepting the proposal of the Central Mission Office, it was decided to promote the RMD 2023 Project in favor of a "Community Development Center for School Dropouts" in Jalandhar, Punjab, India. We Rogationists have been engaging in India since 1987, in Aluva, Kerala, a Southern State that has a significant presence of Catholics. With the gift of vocations, our presence has grown, and the Confreres have felt the need to open new branches in other States of India. For several years now, some of them have been inserted in the State of Punjab, in the far north, where the Catholic presence is minimal, barely more than 1 percent.

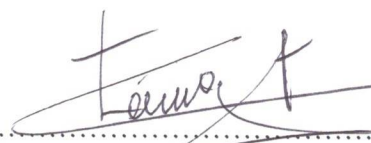
Father Hannibal, when he began his work of redemption in the Avignone Quarter, the most degraded place in Messina, immediately began to bring the children and the poor to the Lord through prayer and catechesis, and at the same time to the little ones, he imparted the rudiments of school disciplines, putting his teaching diploma to good use.

On August 20, 1906, a committee of ladies of the Messina aristocracy organized a visit to the Anthonian Orphanage for Girls, and for the occasion Father Hannibal gave a speech in which he emphasized the importance of the education and social promotion of the children in his care, saying among other things, "I highly understood my obligations, my responsibility. Gathering girls in order to feed them and let them grow is not an implanting of a house of education; this does not change the fortunes of abandoned orphans and prepare the future for the derelict daughters of the people. It is necessary for education to regenerate and form in morals the young girl plucked from vagrancy; it is necessary for education to make her fit one day to earn honestly the bread of life. This very weighty task of the education and instruction of so many orphan girls put me in another pressing need: the need either to provide myself with good educators or to train them."¹

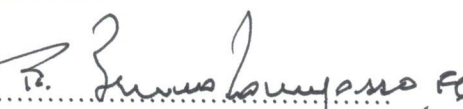
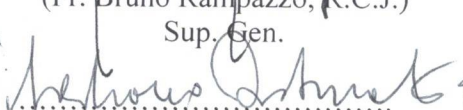
Dearly beloved, I invite you to take a look at the project prepared by the Central Mission Office, to propagate and support it. I kindly request that your contribution be sent to the Central Mission Office by June 2023.

We entrust the successful outcome of RMD 2023 to the Divine Superiors, through the intercession of our Founder, St. Hannibal Mary.

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


(Fr. Eugène Ntawigenera, R.C.J.)
Councilor General for the Missions




(Fr. Bruno Rampazzo, R.C.J.)
Sup. Gen.

(Fr. Fortunato Siciliano, R.C.J.)
Sec. Gen.

¹ DI FRANCIA A., *Scritti*, vol. 45, 2.