

Rome. December 8, 2018



*“Rejoice in Jerusalem and be
glad because of her.
Rejoice with her in her joy,
all who mourn over her,
that you may be nursed and
satisfied by her consolation.”
(Is 66.10)*

Greetings of a Holy Christmas and a Happy New Year

To the Rogationists
To the Rogate Family

Dear brothers and sisters,

I would like to formulate the wishes of a Holy Christmas this year with the words of the liturgy of the Fourth Sunday of Advent, which invite us to joy because the consolation of the Lord is near.

The evangelists who told us about the birth of Jesus have repeatedly emphasized exultation and joy. The angel who appears to Zechariah, announcing the birth of John, tells him: "You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth" (Lk 1:14). Elizabeth, who welcomes Mary into her home, informs her of the exultation of the child she bears: "Behold, as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy" (Lk 1, 44). This joy that John the Baptist bears appears in its fullness with the birth of Jesus, as the angels announce to the shepherds: "Do not be afraid, behold, I announce to you a great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ, the Lord" (Lk 2: 10-11). Even the Magi, who came from the East, "Upon seeing the star, they were overwhelmed with joy" (Mt 2:10).

Today, while we at times in a multitude of difficulties, the announcement of joy and the invitation to joy may seem inappropriate, but this is not what Pope Francis thinks. On March 19 this year, there he addressed to us the Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate*, rejoice and exult, with two synonyms that intend to reinforce the invitation to joy, the invitation to exultation.

With his letter, Pope Francis wanted to remind that each one of us, in the condition in which he finds himself, is called by the Lord to become a saint, in the daily journey of life, in the tribulations of every day. Even this invitation may seem utopian to us, if we look at the inconsistencies and contradictions in which we often find ourselves. But in front of these realities, which would end up discouraging us, here is the appeal and invitation of the Pope: "Do not be afraid of holiness. It will take away none of your energy, vitality or joy. On the contrary, you will become what the Father had in mind when he created you, and you will be faithful to your deepest self. To depend on God sets us from every form of enslavement and leads us to recognize our great dignity" (GE 32).

With these words, we understand why Pope Francis, when speak to us about the call to holiness, begins with the invitation to joy, to *rejoice and exult*. It is because sadness engulfs us when we lead a life without light, without direction, without meaning, in search of satisfactions that, in the end, leave us with emptiness and bitterness.

However, true joy comes to us from the Lord. "If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete" (Jn 15: 10-12).

We can say that holiness becomes synonymous with joy, even when its way is marked by the cross. Father Hannibal was aware that on the path to holiness, the tribulations are accompanied by "inner consolations", as expressed in a prayer to the Heart of Jesus: "O please, for your intimate and secret pain, deign to visit with inner consolations those souls you choose to place in the crucible of tribulation in order to sanctify them."¹

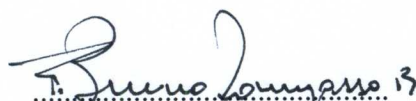
Dear friends, in this year, in the 150th anniversary of the Inspiration of the Rogate, we have had the renewal of Governments in the Provinces of St. Luke and St. Matthew. There is also my visit to the Congregation; and we are approaching the celebration of the Chapter of the Province of St. Hannibal and the renewal of the Government of the Delegation of Our Lady of Guadalupe. These accomplishments give us the opportunity to look more closely at the path that we are taking, as a Congregation, Circumscriptions, Communities and individuals.

It is not an easy path and, at times, it is not even coherent and committed. The charism and spirituality of the Rogate were for Father Hannibal the light of his path to holiness; the strength and joy in his mission.

I desire that my best wish, of holiness, may reach all of you, especially those who are tried by sickness or suffering. The closeness to the Lord, to the Virgin Mary, and the communion with the brothers, obtain for us the comfort, the peace and the joy of Christmas.

May Mary, Joseph and the Child Jesus grant us this grace, through the intercession of our Celestial Patrons and of the Holy Founder.

In union of prayer, I greet you with affection in the Lord. Merry Christmas!


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

¹ DI FRANCIA AM, *Scritti – Preghiere al Signore* – Vol I, Ed. Rogate (2007), pag. 108.