

Rome, March 19, 2021
Solemnity of St. Joseph



“After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, approached, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was like lightning and his clothing was white as snow. The guards were shaken with fear of him and became like dead men. Then the angel said to the women in reply, “Do not be afraid! I know that you are seeking Jesus the crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.”.

(Mt 28, 1-6)

A Serene and Holy Easter!

To: the Rogationists
the Rogate Family

Dearly Beloved,

In this Special Year of Saint Joseph, on the solemn day of his feast, I send you my Wishes for Holy Easter. He, the patron of the universal Church, is also the special patron of our Congregation. We ask him to protect the whole world, to free it from the pandemic that reaps so many victims and leaves deep wounds and desolation in many people, and to guard over us all.

In the empty tomb which women came to see, we can read the metaphor of these days: although humanly the closeness of the Risen One does not seem to be visible, faith tells us that this calamity constitutes a call of the Lord to purification, solidarity, awareness of the value of life, the protection and safeguard of creation.

At the same time, we experience the fear of facing increasingly difficult days, while we struggle to listen to the voice of the Angel of the Lord who assures us: "Do not be afraid!"

As Jesus was about to leave his disciples to return to the Father, he sent them to be those who would continue his mission and instilled courage in them: "Go therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. Behold, I am with you always, until the end of the world" (Mt 28:19-20).

It would not be an easy mission for the disciples, but Jesus told them that they would not remain alone, because he would remain close to them, every day, until the end of the world.

The mission carried out by Father Hannibal in the Avignone Quarter was not easy. But the great faith that our holy Founder enabled him to overcome all difficulties, especially because he brought the stable presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament amid his orphans and poor. He states this clearly, indicating the profound reason for the Eucharist's link to the Pious Work:

“He came as a very loving Father in the midst of his children to form a small family that lived on his flesh and blood, and was made capable of his Real Presence in Sacrament to be able to receive from his divine lips the Command of the Divine Zeal of his Heart: Rogate ergo Dominum messis ut mittat operarios in messem suam, which is in the most intimate connection with the Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, which cannot exist (having thus decreed by Him) without the Priesthood, which [in turn] is in the most intimate connection with that Divine Command.”

Immediately afterward, Father Hannibal confirms that from that moment the "most arduous pilgrimage" could be faced without fear: "With the coming of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, the Pious Work, in the person of its first members, emerged as a child, or rather a small caravan, to begin a most arduous pilgrimage, but always comforted by the true ark of the covenant which contains not the symbolic manna, but the true living Bread come down from Heaven, Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.”¹

In the present situation, we are often limited in our movements, we find it difficult to conduct our formative works and the apostolate in the way we wanted it to be, we everyone experiences the economic crisis caused by the pandemic, the timeframe of the term of office of Governments of Circumscriptions are also conditioned. We hope that next year, the conditions will allow us to celebrate the XIII General Chapter of the Congregation as scheduled.

We must recognize that until now we have been largely protected by our Divine Superiors. Despite the difficulties and limitations imposed by the pandemic, we have done our utmost to cultivate our life of piety, to serve the People of God in our parishes and shrines, and to meet the pinch of poverty for so many of our brothers and sisters.

In some of our churches, perpetual adoration was promoted, which saw the prompt participation of so many of the faithful.

We can say that we are experiencing the closeness of the Lord and the protection of the Immaculate Virgin and our holy Protectors.

In this Easter, which we will live once again with the restrictions of the pandemic, let us approach the Holy Mysteries with the desire to rise to new life, together with the Risen Jesus. Let us welcome his greetings and good wishes for peace, in our hearts, in our fraternal communities, and let us become peacemakers, everywhere, in our relationships, and in our apostolate.

May the Risen Lord grant us to live the Holy Easter in the spiritual joy of faith, in the peace of heart, and in the serenity of fraternal communion.

My best wishes go to all of you, dear confreres, especially to the sick and to all those who, for different reasons, find themselves in situations of difficulty. In addition, I address a special greeting and good wishes to the Daughters of Divine Zeal sisters, to the Missionaries of the Rogate, to the members of the Rogationist Associations, and to all the laity who share with us the charism of Rogate. May the Risen Jesus give his peace to us all.

I entrust these wishes to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, and St Joseph, her husband, St. Hannibal, and our Holy Protectors, as I greet you all with affection in the Lord.

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

¹ DI FRANCIA A., *Scritti*, Regolamenti, vol. VI, Roma (2010), pag. 397.