

Rome, April 18, 2024

Prot. n. 97/2024-en

Subject: 20th anniversary of the Canonization of St. Hannibal Mary Di Francia
(2004 May 16, 2024)

To: the Most Rev. Superiors
of the Rogationist Circumscriptions
the Most Rev. Superiors
of the FDZ Circumscriptions and Zones
the Missionaries of the Rogate
to the RCJ FDZ lay associaties
THEIR ADDRESSES

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On the journey we are making together towards the centenary of the birth to heaven of St. Hannibal Mary Di Francia, this year we wish to give the value it deserves to the 20th anniversary of his canonization, which will take place next May 16, 2024.

Canonization is the recognition by the Pope that a Servant of God has spent his existence in the exercise of the theological and moral virtues to a heroic degree, giving himself to God and to his brothers and sisters. This recognition is proclaimed by the Holy Father after the Lord has proclaimed it from heaven through a miraculous event clearly attributed to the intercession of the Servant of God.

In this way, canonization is the moment of arrival of an existence spent on the path of holiness. In this case, more than in any other, we would be inclined to say that they "arrived". It is true that they have entered eternal happiness, but their mission does not end there. The liturgy reminds us that in the lives of the saints God the Father offers us an example, in their intercession a help, and in their communion of grace a bond of fraternal love.

The Church, therefore, does not raise them to the honors of the altars merely to invite us to contemplate and praise their virtues, blessing the Lord for the miracle of holiness He has wrought in them. The Church invites us to look to the saints, to the testimony they have left us, and to implore their help. After all, they desire nothing less, as St. Therese of the Child Jesus expressed herself: "If the good Lord grants my wishes, I will spend my heaven on earth until the end of the world. Yes, I want to spend my heaven doing good on earth".

Our Founder, St. Hannibal Mary, who spent his entire life for God and for neighbors. With the help of the Lord, he was "ready to make any sacrifice, even to give his blood and his life, for the sake of the pious work, so that this Rogation may become universal" (DP 21). We are sure that he continues to accompany us from Heaven.

It is only right that we, for our part, constantly refer to him, express our affection for him, thank him for what he has done, implore his intercession and, above all, make him known and give him to the People of God. If the Church gives us the saints as examples to imitate, in our case, as sons and daughters of St. Hannibal, it is our duty to spread his knowledge in every way.

We have an ulterior motive that should lead us to spread the knowledge and veneration of St. Hannibal with the means at our disposal. In fact, we have set out to follow in his footsteps and in the Church, in different ways, as consecrated or simple lay people, we have made a formal commitment to follow his virtues and to spread the charism given to him by the Holy Spirit, the Rogate. The charism of the Rogate was embraced and lived by St. Hannibal throughout his life, as we have just mentioned. Therefore, the most direct and immediate way for us to spread the charism of the Rogate, which expresses our identity, through our various apostolates, is to give St. Hannibal to the People of God, to make him known and loved.

It has sometimes been said that today, when the Church has long established the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, the Rogate is rightly included in the universal prayer of the Church, and therefore our mission to spread prayer for vocations can be considered accomplished. Nothing could be more wrong, because the word of the Gospel remains relevant with all its force, because this commandment of Jesus is far from having reached the Church in its universality, and because we, the sons and daughters of Saint Hannibal, have inherited a charismatic understanding specific to this Gospel pericope.

How do we make the person and message of St. Hannibal visible in our presence and apostolate? The ways can be varied, very varied. If we have in our hearts and minds the desire to make the Holy Founder known, we will know how to seize the opportunities, today even through the digital media. We can see to it that streets, churches, our centers or works, schools, magazines, or essays and biographies are named after Saint Hannibal. Let us present his life or his message in our periodicals and, if possible, in those that receive us, perhaps on topics of current interest. Let us also do this in prayer groups.

We will feel this need as a matter of course if we have had the good fortune to be introduced by formators or pastoral workers to the knowledge and devotion of our Holy Founder, if we feel this deep sense of belonging.

In particular, the Motherhouse in Messina, which houses the sacred remains of St. Hannibal in the crypt of the Basilica-Shrine, should become more and more a center of radiation of devotion to him, as well as the Parish of Sts. Anthony and Hannibal Mary in Rome, which keeps the precious relic of his heart. In addition, we should present the historical places and museums of St. Hannibal in our historical houses of the two Congregations in the best possible way.

We should cherish his memory and keep alive his blessed presence, devotion to him, especially on his feast day and on the monthly day dedicated to him.

A special occasion is offered to us today with the upcoming 20th anniversary of his canonization on May 16, 2024.

We invite the Superiors of the Circumscriptions and the Superiors of the Zones to animate the communities and the laity close to our charism to commemorate this important anniversary with initiatives, possibly to be lived together as the Family of the Rogate, aimed at thanking the Lord for this great gift of the canonization of St. Hannibal, given to the Church and especially to us, his sons and daughters.

We recall that, by providence, Saint Hannibal Mary and Saint Luigi Orione were canonized on the same day, as if to seal with a heavenly sign the holy friendship and mutual imitation that united them in their life of self-giving to God and to others.

Therefore, wherever it is possible, given the closeness of the Orione Religious Family, it would be most meaningful to organize a moment to commemorate this together.

We attach the outline of a moment of prayer that can be adapted to the places and circumstances.

The central moment of the 20th anniversary of the canonization will be the solemn Eucharistic Celebration on May 16, 2024, which will bring us together in praise and thanksgiving to the Lord and to manifest our closeness to our beloved holy Founder.

We will do well, if the conditions are right, to organize a study seminar or conference illustrating the figure and work of St. Hannibal, or some external event, such as a floral tribute to one of his monuments.

This anniversary of ours will be celebrated in Messina with a Triduum of preparation, with the following events May 14: concert by the boys of the Annibale Di Francia Paritarian School Institute of the FDZ Sisters of the Holy Spirit; May 15: testimony concert with Fr. Cosimo Schena, the "influencer" priest, poet of God's love; May 16: under the arcades of Piazza del Popolo distribution of "Father Francia" bread; May 17: Laudamo Theater: Seminar of experts on the sanctity of Hannibal: Di Francia, Luigi Orione, Francis M. Di Francia and a path of sanctity lived in the Congregations of the Daughters of Divine Zeal and the Rogationists. May 16: Holy Mass presided by the Archbishop, Archbishop Giovanni Intini, the hymn of St. Hannibal sung by the boys of the Holy Spirit School Institute, the blessing of the gardenias and the procession with the reliquary bust of St. Hannibal.

In the Parish of St. Anthony and St. Hannibal Mary in Rome, on the 15th of May, since the next day is the feast of St. Louis Orione, there will be a Holy Mass presided over by Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, during which St. Hannibal Mary Di Francia and St. Louis Orione will be remembered together. The next day, from the morning until 6:15 p.m., the Daughters of Divine Zeal will be in constant presence before the relic of the Heart of the Father and Founder. At 6:15 p.m., the two Congregations and the parish community will render thanks, followed by Holy Mass presided by the Vicar General, Fr. Jose Maria Ezpeleta.

The anniversary that we are commemorating deserves to be remembered in a special way in the Province of St. Luke, and especially in Passos, where the miracle of the healing of the little Gleida Danese took place. There, at the Shrine of St. Hannibal, various initiatives will be organized, especially the Romaria, a pilgrimage that will bring together groups from our communities, associations and devotees of the Saint. Special initiatives will also be organized in the Province of St. Matthew in the Philippines, where the miracle of the healing of little Charisse Nicole Diaz took place, especially in the Shrine of St. Hannibal in Mina, Iloilo.

Also with this 20th anniversary, in preparation for the centenary of the birth of the Holy Founder (2027), a special compilation of essays on his person begins there is already a first essay that is attached.

We are confident that the awareness of the great gift of St. Hannibal's canonization and the great affection we have for this "Father" of ours, as he has always been called since the beginning of the Pious Work, will move us in our Circumscriptions and

communities to commemorate this anniversary in the best possible way. It will be an important step towards the centenary of his blessed Transitus, which we will commemorate in 2027. We are invited to share in our communication media, as a sign of belonging, what we will implement in the Circumscriptions and Communities.

With the hope that the Divine Superiors will bless and accompany our journey and that the charism of the Rogate will resound in the Church in the person of St. Hannibal, we greet you with affection in the Lord.

Madre Maria Eli Milanez
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(Mo. Maria Eli Milanez, FDZ)
Sup. Gen.



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



Attachments :

- Community Prayer
- Vocation of Saint Hannibal