

LECTIO DIVINA

of the Family of the Rogate



“Christ, the Light who chooses, anoints,
and sends laborers into the harvest”

*“I am the light
of the world.”
John 9:5*

Invocation: Hymn to the Holy Spirit

Reading: John 9:1–41

1. Welcome the Word in silence
2. Reread it personally
3. Share a word or phrase that strikes you
4. Connect this passage with other texts of Scripture
5. Prayerful refrain (chosen as desired)

Understanding the meaning of the text

- **LECTIO – WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?**

Listening to the Word in its literal and salvific-historical meaning

LEADER: Dearest brothers and sisters, at the heart of our Lenten journey the Church invites us to pause for a “luminous” moment on this Sunday called *Laetare*, the Sunday of Joy. It is the deep joy that arises when the light of God begins to pierce through our darkness and to restore within us what sin has obscured. In the midst of the penitential itinerary, the liturgy opens before us a window of hope: salvation is already at work, grace is already acting, the light is already dawning. For this reason, the Word proclaimed today presents itself as a true path of spiritual illumination, in which we contemplate the action of God who, with merciful gaze, chooses according to the heart, anoints with his Spirit, enlightens through the presence of his Son, and sends forth on mission. Thus Lenten joy becomes the certainty that the light of Christ is stronger than every darkness and continues to raise up, within the Church, men and women called to live and radiate that same light.

L1: In the First Reading (1 Sam 16:1b, 6–7, 10–13a) we are led into the mystery of divine election in the anointing of David. The prophet Samuel, still guided by human criteria, allows himself to be influenced by the appearance of Jesse’s sons; but God interrupts his gaze and reveals a different logic: “*Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance but the Lord looks into the heart.*” Thus the one who was not even invited—the young shepherd tending the flock—is called, chosen, and anointed. The oil poured upon his head is not merely a sign of honor but of consecration and mission: the Spirit of the Lord rushes upon him and prepares him to shepherd the people. Election is born from the gratuitous gaze of God who discerns the heart and enables it for service. In this silent gesture, hidden in the fields of Bethlehem, the divine pedagogy that runs through the whole history of salvation is already revealed: God chooses the lowly, anoints those whom the world does not notice, and sends them to accomplish his designs of life for his people.

L2: This same logic of the divine gaze that discerns the heart and chooses the lowly finds its full manifestation in the Gospel proclaimed this Sunday. If in the anointing of David God shows that he does not stop at appearances but sees the inner truth of the person, in Jesus this pedagogy reaches its definitive expression. Encountering the man born blind, Christ turns toward the one whom no one saw—marginalized and reduced to his condition of infirmity. While the Pharisees remain imprisoned in external criteria and human judgments, the Lord performs a new act of election: he enlightens the one who dwelt in darkness and leads him along a progressive journey

of faith. Just as David is anointed for a mission on behalf of the people, so the blind man is enlightened to become a witness to the Light. In both texts God reveals that his choice springs from a merciful gaze that calls, consecrates, and sends those whom the world does not recognize, but whom he forms to share in his saving work.

L3: In the liturgical sequence we hear Psalm 23, which reveals the Lord as the Shepherd who guides, sustains, and anoints. He leads even through the valley of darkness, prepares the table, and anoints the head with oil. It is a profoundly messianic and Eucharistic psalm: God not only guides but nourishes and consecrates.

L4: In the Second Reading (Eph 5:8–14) Saint Paul proclaims with force: “*For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.*” This affirmation is ontological: it speaks of a true passage of condition, of identity, brought about by grace. In the light of the First Reading and the Gospel, we understand this dynamism more deeply. Just as David, chosen and anointed by the Spirit, passes from the obscurity of the fields to the luminous mission of guiding the people, and just as the man born blind is led from physical darkness to the light of faith in Christ, so every Christian is called to undergo this interior exodus: from blindness to sight, from night to dawn, from sin to grace. Election, anointing, and illumination do not remain isolated events but become a permanent path of transformation. Enlightened by Christ, we are made children of the light, called not only to receive the clarity of salvation but to live it and radiate it in the world as witnesses of God’s action.

L5: In the Gospel (Jn 9:1–41) Jesus reveals himself as the Light of the world, the incarnate Word who acts, who is sign and revelation. The healing of the man born blind goes beyond the level of a physical miracle and assumes a deeply symbolic and salvific dimension. The man who had never seen becomes an icon of humanity not yet illumined by grace. The gesture of Jesus—mixing clay, anointing the eyes, and sending the man to wash—carries a profound creational and sacramental density: it recalls the formation of the human being from the dust of the earth and manifests that the light he offers is a new birth. In the light of the First Reading we understand that this is a new act of election: just as David is anointed and clothed with the Spirit for a mission, so the blind man is enlightened to become a witness. His journey of faith is progressive: from “a man called Jesus” to “prophet,” until he recognizes and worships the Son of Man. True sight does not lie in the eyes but in the heart that opens itself to revelation.

L6: In contrast, the Pharisees—who possess physical sight and knowledge of the Law—remain in interior blindness. Here the liturgy finds its synthesis: those who believe they see are unable to recognize God’s action, while the poor, the excluded, the disregarded are led into full light. This is precisely the logic that Saint Hannibal Mary Di Francia contemplated deeply in his spiritual experience: God manifests his work in the little ones, the forgotten, those whom the world overlooks. His writings continually reflect this conviction: the light that flows from Christ, especially in the Eucharist, illumines simple hearts and makes them instruments of salvation. For this reason, for him, the *Rogate* is born from contemplating the light of Christ who continues to pass through the “blindness” of humanity—healing, calling, and sending laborers into his harvest. Thus the man healed and enlightened becomes the image of the disciple who, having encountered the Light, can no longer remain silent but is sent to radiate the Light that has enabled him to see.

The liturgy therefore reveals a movement: God chooses, anoints, enlightens, and sends. It is the very dynamism of every vocation.

MEDITATIO – WHAT DOES THE WORD SAY TO US?

Exegetical, pastoral, and Rogationist foundation

LEADER: The Word of this Sunday reveals that every mission is born from an interior illumination. David is chosen not for his appearance but for his heart. God sees what human beings do not see. Here we find a first profound link with the *Rogate*: the Lord continues to look upon the harvest and to choose laborers according to his Heart.

Saint Hannibal Mary Di Francia contemplated this divine election with deep wonder. He saw every vocation as the fruit of God’s merciful gaze upon wounded humanity. He shows us that the *Rogate* springs from the compassion of Christ who sees the multitude “like sheep without a shepherd” and throws himself with burning zeal into helping all.

L1: The Gospel presents us with the man born blind, an image of humanity that has not yet seen the light of grace. Jesus does not simply heal him; he leads him along a journey of faith. First he recognizes him as a man, then as a prophet, and finally as the Son of Man. Illumination is progressive.

Vocation is born in the same way: no one sees everything at once. The call matures as the person allows himself to be led by the light of Christ. Saint Hannibal accompanied this process with fatherly patience, helping souls to recognize the voice of God that gradually revealed itself.

L2: There is a central gesture in the Gospel: Jesus anoints the blind man’s eyes with clay. It is a sacramental, creative gesture that recalls God’s action in Genesis when he formed man from the dust of the earth. The healing is re-creation. The light of Christ not only enlightens; it re-creates. Here the parallel with the Father Founder is profound: Saint Hannibal saw in the Eucharist the center of this spiritual re-creation. Before Jesus in the Eucharist he discerned vocations and implored laborers. The light that heals the blind man is the same Eucharistic light that illumines the Church and gives birth to apostles.

L3: Saint Paul affirms: “Live as children of light.” It is not enough to be enlightened; one must become light. Here is the passage from contemplation to mission. The healed blind man becomes a witness, even in the face of persecution. The *Rogate* too is born from this witnessed light. Saint Hannibal understood that the harvest needs laborers who have seen the light—men and women who proclaim a living experience of Christ.

LEADER: Thus the liturgy reveals that light generates election, election generates mission, and mission requires laborers. Contemplating Christ the Light inevitably leads to the Rogationist supplication: “**Send, O Lord, holy apostles!**”

In the silence of prayer, let us allow ourselves to be questioned by the Word and welcome these reflections with sincerity, so that the light of Christ may illumine and guide our journey.

“The Lord looks into the heart”

- Have I tried to discern my life with God’s gaze, or only with human criteria?
- How does the charism of the Rogate help me recognize and value vocations in the Church?

“I am the light of the world”

- What spiritual blindness must I still surrender to the Lord?
- Have I sought the light of Christ in prayer and in the Eucharist?

“Once you were darkness...”

- What concrete changes reveal that I am walking in the light?
- Does my life illumine—or obscure—the calling of others?

Vocational witness

- Does my witness awaken vocations?
- How can I accompany someone who is discerning?

SHARING THE WORD

LEADER:

In the light of what we have meditated upon, let us freely share what the Lord has stirred within us. *A moment of free sharing follows.*

- **ORATIO – WHAT DO WE SAY TO GOD?**

Responding to the Word that has visited us

LEADER: Lord Jesus, Light of the world, we place ourselves before You like the blind man in the Gospel. We too carry shadows, resistances, and blindness.

1st CHOIR: Enlighten us, Lord. Wash our eyes in the waters of your grace. Grant that we may see life with your gaze, discern your will, and recognize your presence in history.

2nd CHOIR: Sustain your Church with the light of your Spirit. Awaken holy vocations. May your harvest never lack laborers—shepherds after your own Heart.

ALL: Lord, make us light in the world. May our lives, united to yours, awaken faith, hope, and new callings for the Kingdom. Amen.

- **CONTEMPLATIO – WHAT DOES THE WORD DO WITHIN US?**

Silent Adoration; Welcoming the mystery

LEADER:

After listening to the Word, meditating on it, and responding in prayer, we are now invited to remain in silence before the mystery that has been revealed to us. *Contemplatio* is the moment in which the light of Christ descends from the words into the heart, illuminating our deepest shadows. Like the blind man who allowed himself to be led until he could see, we too place ourselves before the Lord so that He may heal our inner sight and make us capable of discerning his will. In this silence filled with God’s presence, we welcome the grace of being enlightened so that we may become light and intercessors for vocations in the Church.

- Let us place ourselves before Jesus, the Light that does not fade.
- His gaze rests upon our blindness without accusing—only to heal.

- Let us remain in the silence of this light that penetrates the heart.
- Let Him reveal our shadows and transform them into clarity.
- To contemplate Christ is to allow his light to shape us according to the Gospel.
- Enlightened, let us welcome the calling that arises in the depths of the soul.

- **ACTIO – HOW DOES THE WORD SEND US INTO LIFE?**

The Word becomes action; the Gospel becomes choice

LEADER: After listening to the Word, meditating on its appeals, and resting in silence before Christ the Light, as we leave this *Lectio* we are called to translate into life what the Lord has kindled in our hearts. Lent enlightens us interiorly and leads us to concrete conversion. The light that heals the blind man also desires to guide our steps, purify our choices, and make us willing laborers in the Lord’s harvest. Enlightened by Christ and inspired by the zeal of Saint Hannibal Mary, let us embrace commitments that make our lives a luminous and fruitful witness for the Kingdom.

Each person personally acknowledges the fruits of the Lectio.

CONCLUSION OF THE LECTIO DIVINA

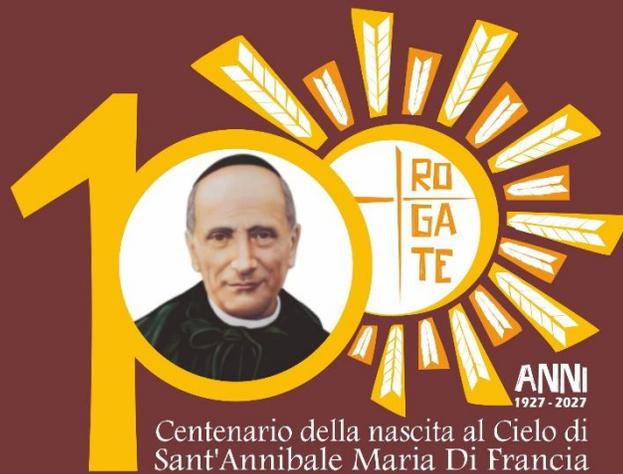
LEADER: Brothers and sisters, at the end of this journey of the Word, let us remain before Christ, the Light who has visited us, healed us, and called us. The liturgy has led us from election to illumination, from illumination to mission. God continues to look into the heart, to anoint his chosen ones, and to send laborers into his harvest. Enlightened by this grace and strengthened by the witness of Saint Hannibal Mary Di Francia, let us renew our desire to live as children of the light and to implore, with filial trust, that holy apostles may never be lacking in the Church. With Mary, Mother of Vocations, we pray:

FINAL PRAYER

O Father of mercy,
 we bless you because, in your Son Jesus, the Light of the world,
 you have willed to illumine our darkness
 and lead us onto the path of life.
 We thank you for Mary, Woman of listening and of faith,
 who welcomed the Light in the silence of her heart
 and offered it to the world as salvation.
 In her shines forth the creature fully illumined by grace,
 the fertile soil in which the Word found a dwelling place.
 O Virgin of the Rogate,
 you who treasured in your heart the designs of the Father
 and accompanied the birth of the first called,
 teach us to recognize the voice of the Lord,
 to respond with generosity,
 and to sustain, through prayer,
 the vocations that are sprouting within the Church.
 Mother of Light and Mother of Vocations,
 intercede for us,

so that, enlightened by Christ
and enkindled by the Holy Spirit,
we may live as children of the light
and lovingly cooperate in the work of salvation.
With Saint Hannibal Mary,
we raise to the Father the supplication
that flows from the Heart of Jesus:
“Send, O Lord, holy apostles to your Church!”
Through Christ your Son,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

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