

CONGREGATION OF THE ROGATIONISTS OF THE HEART OF JESUS

**ROGATIONIST RELIGIOUS LIFE TODAY:  
UNITY, SHARING, AND COORDINATION**

DOCUMENT OF THE 13<sup>th</sup> GENERAL CHAPTER

Rome 2022

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Rogationists of the Heart of Jesus

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Authorized for publication and printing:

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Superior General

Rogationists of the Heart of Jesus

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Congregation of the Rogationists of the Heart of Jesus  
General Curia  
Via Tuscolana 167 - 00182 Rome

Rome, November 27, 1022

Prot. no. 277/22

Subject: Promulgation of the Document of the 13<sup>th</sup> General Chapter.

To: Most Rev. Superiors of the Rogationist  
Circumscriptions  
and the Rogationist Communities  
**THEIR LOCATIONS**

Considering what the Constitutions prescribe: “The General Chapter determines which of the Capitular Acts are to be brought to the knowledge of the whole Institute. It also indicates which of the norms are to come into force immediately upon promulgation made by the Superior General” (art. 147);

Considering what the Norms provide: “The binding operative norms approved by the Chapter come into force on the day of their promulgation made by the Superior General. They remain in force until the new Chapter, which may abrogate, modify, or confirm them” (Appendix I, 63b).

After the final editorial revision of the Chapter Document has been completed in the General Council, as wished by the 13<sup>th</sup> General Chapter,

with the consent of the General Council,

on this day, November 27, 2022,

the first Sunday of Advent,

I hereby

### **PROMULGATE**

the Acts of the Chapter and the Chapter Document *Rogationist Religious Life Today: Unity, Sharing and Coordination* of the 13<sup>th</sup> General Chapter Generate of the Congregation, held in Morlupo on July 5-25, 2022.

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

.....  
(Fr. Fortunato Siciliano. R.C.J.)  
Secretary General

## PRESENTATION

At the beginning of the preparation for the 13<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, as required by the Norms, the General Government, as a first step, inquired about the particular theme that should characterize the Chapter.

By its very nature, every Chapter Assembly is called to reflect on a general theme: the religious life and the apostolate of the Institute, in fidelity to the charism and the Rule of life, in view of its renewal and updating, beginning with the formation of its members.

In our Congregation, it has also been customary to give the General Chapter a specific theme. The Chapter is, therefore, called to develop these two themes. Or if one wishes, to carry out from the perspective of the theme, to read the situation in the light of the general theme of charism, spirituality, and mission.<sup>1</sup>

The 12<sup>th</sup> General Chapter focused on the theme *Our Charismatic Identity in Today's Challenges*, with particular attention to the challenges of today's world.

Even in choosing the specific theme for the 13<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, the General Government, after consulting the religious communities, asked the Congregation to reflect on the journey of our time.

In this way, we became more aware of the development that has taken place since the 1970s in terms of personnel and apostolic works. This growth has been behind the missionary thrust that has taken us to the United States of America, Argentina, the Philippines, Rwanda, India, Cameroon, Vietnam, Indonesia, and more recently to other nations.

In the new Circumscriptions, characterized above all by the growth of religious and apostolic works, other difficulties have arisen that are no less challenging, such as the organization of formation curricula, the construction of structures, the launching of apostolic works, and the lack of economic autonomy.

The decentralization of the Congregation has been appropriately pursued to promote the growth of the Congregation and the necessary inculturation. The Constitutions emphasized the need to harmonize decentralization with the unity of the Congregation:

“The common mission which we share calls us to participate responsibly at the various levels in the decisions of the whole Congregation. For this reason, those who exercise the service of authority encourage this participation in the ways provided by law. The decentralization of the Congregation unites the unity of the Institute with the proper autonomy of its parts, according to the principle of subsidiarity, through an appropriate distribution of responsibilities and powers” (art. 133).

In order to deal with the difficulties that arose, various initiatives of collaboration among the Circumscriptions were undertaken in agreement with the General

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Constitutions*, art. 139 and *Norms*, art. 160.

Government. It was felt, however, that each Circumscription, in addition to giving due attention to its own development and growth, should pay more attention to the common journey of unity, sharing, and coordination.

The contribution to the reflection that came from the consultation of the Communities and Confreres, led the Pre-Chapter Commissions that prepared the *Lineamenta* and the *Instrumentum laboris*, to focus attention on the specific theme proposed: “Rogationist Religious Life Today: Unity, Sharing and Coordination.”

The *Instrumentum laboris*, in its first part, develops the profound reason for the unity of the Congregation, namely charismatic belonging, by examining it in its various theological and juridical components. In the second part of the Document, which focused on the different areas of religious life, charism, spirituality, and mission of the Congregation, appropriate indications and orientations were formulated for the path of unity, sharing, and coordination.

The Chapter Assembly accepted the Document prepared and decided to have it studied by separate Commissions, entrusting to one the study of the first three parts, which are mainly doctrinal in nature, and to others the study of the Document with particular attention to the various sectors of the life of the Congregation and the formulation of practical orientations.

The work of the Commissions was enriched by the many interventions proposed and voted on in the Chapter Assembly. The General Government, in accordance with the mandate of the Chapter, provided for a mere editorial revision.

Now, with the final Document, which is hereby published, we have in our hands a wealth of indications that can validly accompany us in our efforts of renewal. In reading the Document, some observations or suggestions will happen to be repeated. This is because some areas of the life and apostolate of the Congregation are, by their very nature, interrelated.

Dear Confreres, at the last session of the Chapter Assembly, as planned, I officially declared the 13<sup>th</sup> General Chapter closed. Now, with the promulgation and printing of the Chapter Document, one would be inclined to think that the Chapter could be archived and consigned to history. If so, this would be a grave deception.

I mentioned above that the Chapter Assembly, by its very nature, is convoked to reflect on a general theme: religious life and the apostolate of the Institute, in fidelity to the charism and the Rule of Life, with a view to its renewal and updating, beginning with the formation of its members.

All of this began with the journey of discernment in the Congregation, Communities, and individual religious, in prayer and reflection, in preparation for the Chapter. This wealth of contributions was submitted to the discernment of the members of the Chapter, whether they were members by right or representatives of the entire Congregation. Now, this journey reaches its finality in the concreteness of the implementation of the contributions that this Chapter Document is called to give to all of us, each in his own field. To be consistent, we should say that although the 13<sup>th</sup> Chapter has been declared closed, from the next day it begins to be put into practice, to

be effective with its thrust of renewal and updating, inasmuch as it has succeeded in projecting a prophetic vision, in filling us with new hope and enthusiasm.

Fraternally, I urge you to welcome this document as a gift from the Confreres who worked on it and, more generally, as a gift from the Congregation. Even with its limitations, it awaits consideration in our planning and life, both personal and communitarian.

With the Lord's blessing, the Congregation continues to develop and reach new horizons, even in the midst of many difficulties. We must *walk together*, as was suggested to us at the opening of the Chapter. We will be able to do this better and faster if we try to live our *Rogationist Religious Life today in 'Unity, Sharing, and Coordination'*.

With this wish, which I entrust to the blessing of the Divine Superiors and to the intercession of St. Hannibal Mary Di Francia, our Founder, I hereby present the Document of the 13<sup>th</sup> General Chapter.

Rome, November 27, 2022  
First Sunday of Advent

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

## PART ONE

### THE ROGATIONIST RELIGIOUS LIFE TODAY

#### **The pilgrimage of the little caravan**

1. St. Hannibal Mary Di Francia, referring to the biblical image of the faith journey of the People of God, describes the beginning of the Pious Work as that of a *small caravan* that in its first components set out on a *pilgrimage*, that, although *rough*, was always been accompanied and *comforted* by the Bread of Heaven.<sup>2</sup> The charism of the Rogate, entrusted by the Holy Spirit to the Founder for the edification of the whole Church, sown in the fertile soil of poverty in the Avignone district, has grown and branched out from Sicily to Apulia, throughout Italy and the five Continents.

#### **The proclamation of the Rogate in ever-changing contexts**

2. This year we celebrate the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our foundation and witness the living history of the Congregation. It continues to fulfill its mission of proclaiming the Gospel of the Rogate in the new *existential peripheries*,<sup>3</sup> collaborating with the local Churches both in the first proclamation (*kerygma*) in the *missio ad gentes* and in the mission of the new evangelization.

3. The gift of the Rogate has led the Congregation to go beyond the borders of the *Avignone district*. The gradual and steady increase in the number of *Rogationist Religious*, despite the stagnation or decline in some Circumscriptions, has consolidated the Congregation and grown in its multicultural character. The missionary spirit, inspired by the evangelical logic of giving freely what one has freely received, has urged the Rogationists to continue with zeal and readiness to spread the charism.

4. Today, we are present both in places where Christians are a majority as well as in places where they are a minority. We are embedded in different multicultural and socioeconomic settings, with all their different needs and problems.

5. The reception of Rogationists in these geographical areas and cultural contexts is a clear manifestation of the relevance of the charism. Embedded in the local Church and society, our charism, spirituality, and mission have acquired a contextualized cultural dimension with new understandings, expressions, and visibility. At the same time, the charism of the Rogate has enriched the life of the local Church and society.<sup>4</sup> In several Circumscriptions, there have been notable contributions to vocation ministry, rooted in prayer and socio-educational apostolate, with a presence in various organizations such as the Bishops' Conference, the Conference of Religious, and diocesan offices. In

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. DI FRANCIA, A., *Scritti*, Vol. VI, Ed. Rogate, Rome 2010, p. 398.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. FRANCIS, *Message to the Meeting for Friendship Among Peoples*, Rimini, August 24-30, 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Seeing the Crowds, He Felt Compassion for Them and Said, 'Rogate'. Our Charismatic Identity in Today's Challenges*, Document of the 12<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, Rome 2016, no. 57. From now on, this document will be cited thus: *Seeing the Crowds*.

addition, our communities are creatively engaged especially in the service of the marginalized and in human promotion in general.

6. Today's social, political, and economic situation is obviously very different from that which St. Hannibal experienced at the beginning of the Work. However, the compassion of the Heart of Jesus in the face of the weary and exhausted crowds and the abundant harvest that is being lost, the remedy that was given by the Lord to pray for evangelical laborers, and the commitment to serve the little ones and the poor are ever-present Gospel values that continue to flow from the *Divine Command of the Rogate*.

### **The decentralization of the Congregation**

7. The growth and development of the Institute through new foundations favored the path of decentralization that the 7<sup>th</sup> General Chapter of 1986 decided to implement. We moved from centralization to decentralization, thus making a significant change in the life of our Institute.

8. More than structural, decentralization is relational. More than organizational efficiency, it is openness to the creative movement of the Holy Spirit that inspires the incarnation of the same charism in different historical and cultural contexts.

9. The organizational aspect of the Institute, divided into Provinces, Quasi-Provinces, and Delegations has promoted inculturation, streamlined the bureaucratic aspect, facilitated meetings between Circumscription Superiors and the Confreres, helped and encouraged insertion into the local Churches, stimulated apostolic responsibility and creativity, awakened vocational and economic autonomy, promoted the spread of the charism, and fostered a deeper knowledge of the writings of the Founder and Rogationist literature through their translation into different languages. On the other hand, decentralization, if not properly managed, can lead to divisions and the exaltation of partisan interests to the detriment of the good of the whole Institute; it can weaken unity, hinder communication and the sense of belonging to the Congregation, forgetting that the *whole is greater than the part*.<sup>5</sup>

### **The fruitfulness and challenges of inculturation**

10. The 12<sup>th</sup> General Chapter has strengthened the dynamics of the journey of inculturation of the charism in the logic of the Incarnation.<sup>6</sup> Every cultural and social context can be a fertile ground for the Rogationist Charism to find new and typical ways of expressing itself ever more fully. But it seems necessary to overcome nostalgia and open ourselves to the breath of the Spirit; to free ourselves from ways of thinking and doing things that have been overtaken by history, even to abandon structures that have become an unbearable burden, in order to look to the future with hope and creativity. We should seriously ask ourselves: Are we open or resistant to the movements and impulses of the Holy Spirit? Are we open to encounters, dialogue, and collaboration

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<sup>5</sup> FRANCIS, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Vatican City, 2013, no. 237.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Seeing the Crowds*, nos. 55-57.



with cultures, society, and the Church? Are we bold and creative in shifting our paradigms to be relevant here and now?

**11.** The journey of inculturation has involved all the Circumscriptions. Some communities are well advanced in this endeavor; others are still in the early stages. There is an urgent need to understand better the need for inculturation in order to maintain the dynamic path by which the Charism reveals its evangelical richness, its ecclesial significance, and its authentic social value. At the same time, we must recognize that we encounter not a few difficulties in expressing it adequately in the language and with the sensitivity of today's social and cultural contexts.

**12.** Care must be taken so that cultural expressions and ways of life adopted in one culture and historical context are not uncritically transported and simply reproduced in another cultural and social context. The path of inculturation is broader and more complex than mere repetition and duplication. It is therefore necessary to accompany the Confreres on the path of understanding and inculturating the charism not only during initial formation but especially in ongoing formation.

### **The Rogationist prophetic mission**

**13.** Contemplating the compassion of the Christ of the Rogate, obedient to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, and following in the footsteps of St. Hannibal, we can live the Rogationist prophetic mission everywhere in its fullness, as men of prayer and charity. We live this vocational identity above all by the witness of our religious consecration; by working in the incarnate presence of God, with the values of His Kingdom and at the service of the vocation of every person; by sharing the discipleship of Christ with a spirit of communion in the concreteness of fraternal life, welcomed not by compulsion, but in the joys and labors of community life. Thus, let us make our community a *house and school of prayer*, where we read the signs of the times and respond to them as good laborers in all the fields that the Lord gives us, committed to making our home also a place and source of charity for all, especially for those who live on the margins of life.

**14.** The great historical advances in technology, medicine, and science are accompanied by a deterioration in ethics, which leads to a weakening of spiritual values and a sense of responsibility. All this contributes to a general feeling of frustration, loneliness, and despair. Pope Francis underlines this phenomenon in *Fratelli tutti*: “Technology is constantly advancing, but ‘how wonderful it would be if the growth of scientific and technological innovation were accompanied by greater equality and social inclusion. How wonderful it would be, even as we discover distant planets, to rediscover the needs of our brothers and sisters who orbit around us!’”<sup>7</sup>

**15.** Some of our communities often face seemingly insurmountable challenges: a growing imbalance between the needs of the apostolate and the dwindling number of members due to the lack of new vocations; an increase in the average age of religious; a great need for charitable services; often restrictive government regulations. All of this can lead to discouragement and to settling for the bare minimum to survive, symptoms

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<sup>7</sup> FRANCIS, Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti*, Vatican City, October 3, 2020, no. 31.

of *spiritual worldliness and functionalist mindset*.<sup>8</sup> Now is the time to open the eyes of the heart, as the pericope of the Rogate teaches us, and to find the courage to offer the prophetic signs of hope that humanity is waiting for, beginning with the concrete witness of Rogationist religious consecration, fraternal life, and service to the little ones and the poor, and paving the way for those changes in structures and priorities that are becoming indispensable.

### **Apostles of the Rogate**

**16.** The Rule of Life tells us that our identity is rooted in the intelligence and zeal of the Rogate, a charism that the Holy Spirit gave to St. Hannibal for the building up of the Church and entrusted to us to continue to incarnate it in history.<sup>9</sup> The General Chapters reaffirmed the close relationship between the charism and our way of living the evangelical counsels, fraternity, and mission. The Rogate is the source of fraternal communion in community because it brings us together as one body to implore in the Name of the Lord Jesus for good laborers in the harvest, as He Himself commanded. *Entering into the pierced side of Jesus* leads to the intelligence and zeal of the Rogate and moves us to spread this prayer in various inculturated and creative ways. Our *rogation*, to be authentic, cannot remain indifferent to the Lord's interests but urges us to be ready to say, *Here am I, send me* (Isaiah 6:8).

**17.** The Church, which recognizes us as *worshippers and implorers of the highest and most beautiful mission*<sup>10</sup> expects us to radiate this aspect of her life and mission in the contemporary world. We must continue and consolidate our specific apostolate of praying for good laborers in collaboration with the local Church, ecclesial organizations, and Conferences of Religious. In this service, Rogate Vocations Centers continue to be of great value in spreading Rogationist culture of vocations, producing prayer aids, stimulating discussion and reflection, also through the means of social communication, organizing conferences and forums, collaborating in the preparation and celebration of the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, in promoting parish, diocesan or national vocation month or week, and other similar initiatives. In some of our Circumscriptions, the Rogate Vocation Center works side by side with the Institute of Vocation Ministry to deepen the theme of the Rogate Apostolate and the centrality of prayer in the world of culture, formation, and education, including the academic world, of those who work in the field of vocation ministry and formation. This area of pastoral care in the Church is felt more than ever and the service rendered in this field is appreciated. It is a contribution that we, as Rogationists, are called to offer at the forefront.

**18.** Centers of spirituality, places of perpetual adoration, and communities dedicated to contemplative prayer are other environments closely related to the apostolate of the Rogate because they offer a place where initiatives for prayer, vocation discernment, and the deepening of a prayer-based vocation ministry, as well as for the ongoing

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. FRANCIS, *Homily at the Holy Mass of Chrism*, Holy Thursday, Vatican City, April 14, 2022.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Constitutions*, art. 2.

<sup>10</sup> PAUL VI, *Speech at the Audience to Chapter Fathers*, Castel Gandolfo, September 14, 1968, in IV GENERAL CHAPTER (1968), *Declarations and Decrees*, p. 313.

formation of the *Family of the Rogate*, can be proposed. This particular form of apostolate should be promoted and supported in the Circumscriptions where it exists, and, where it does not yet exist, it is appropriate to discern the possibilities for its introduction.

**19.** The charismatic inspiration and apostolic passion of St. Hannibal involved first and foremost the poor, the clergy, and the laity in a crusade of prayer in obedience to the command of the Rogate as well as its diffusion, thus indicating another aspect of the Rogate apostolate. The revival of the *Priestly Union of Prayer for Vocations* (PUPV) and the *Union of Prayer for Vocations* (UPV)<sup>11</sup> should be accompanied by an awareness among Rogationists about the historical and contemporary relevance of these associations. Some Circumscriptions are introducing them into their contexts, while others are reviving them. As the Congregation continues on its journey, other Rogate-inspired associations have sprung up among the laity and clergy. As we continue to be incorporated into new geographical and cultural areas, new forms of adherence to the charism can be envisioned.

**20.** Many Confreres, while recognizing the importance of the Apostolate of the Rogate for our apostolic works and commitments, note a shortage of personnel assigned to this sector compared to other areas of apostolate. The problem of sufficient and qualified personnel is exacerbated in this area because it requires special formation and preparation. Efforts are being made to integrate the Apostolate of the Rogate into the formation program, especially in the Philosophical and Theological Center of Studies, both in teachings and apostolic commitment. It must be recognized that much more needs to be done so that the Confreres will naturally recognize this as the *specific apostolate* of the Rogationists and learn to give it the importance it deserves, making themselves available to engage zealously in this ministry, uniting their prayer with the cry of the poor.

Obedience to the Gospel command of the Rogate and its spread are inseparable from being laborers in the harvest.

### **Laborers in the harvest**

**21.** Works of charity and mercy are the “*legitimate and immediate consequence*” of our fourth vow.<sup>12</sup> The experience of our history testifies to our constant commitment both as men of prayer and as men of charity, according to the Lord's two imperatives, *Rogate* (Lk 10:2) and *Ite* (Lk 10:3). We have committed ourselves *as laborers in the great harvest of the Lord and as shepherds of the weary and exhausted flock* in many ways, according to the signs of the times and the concrete needs of the territory.

**22.** We maintain our apostolic commitment to the integral promotion of each person, with a preferential love for the poor and the little ones whom our Founder considered the *tender harvest*, expressed in the traditional historical forms of orphanages, vocational training schools, education, instruction, and evangelization.

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. MEZZARI A. and SALEMI T., *Joint Circular Letter on Criteria for the New By-Laws of the UPV and USPV*, in *Bollettino* 93, no. 4 (2014) pp. 292-300.

<sup>12</sup> Cfr. DI FRANCIA, A. *Preziose Adesioni* [1901], p. 6; *Scritti*, vol. 61 [02176].

**23.** In addition, new forms of apostolate have emerged in response to changing social contexts, such as family homes (*case famiglia*) and social welfare centers; shelters for refugees, migrants, street children, the homeless, and the deaf-mute; soup kitchens, health clinics, provision of clothing, hygiene and housing; long-distance adoption, scholarships, livelihood programs, and housing projects; communities inserted in poor neighborhoods for the development of the people living there; and care and advocacy for indigenous peoples.

**24.** The pastoral responsibility of parishes and sanctuaries entrusted to Rogationists<sup>13</sup> has offered us environments in which the two icons of the Charism can flourish: the inspiration of the *Rogate* and the encounter with *Zancone*. These are centers of charismatic radiance, for the fervor of prayer for vocations, the sensitivity to care for the most vulnerable, for the commitment to pastoral care attentive to the promotion of the laity, and for the development of associations linked to the Rogationist family.

**25.** We have also witnessed many mission send-offs of Confreres, priests and lay Brothers, who have left their homelands and go on mission both in the poor and remote rural areas and in large urban centers, in Christian and non-Christian communities.

#### **New wine in new wineskins<sup>14</sup>**

**26.** The conditions of society and the Church will continue to change, and new demands will arise. On our part, this requires constant discernment and openness to the impulses of the Holy Spirit, for it is He who determines our path and not the situation in which we find ourselves.

**27.** The compassion of the Christ of the Rogate for the *great harvest* and the *helpless flock* is always alive and relevant. It is our prism for seeing new approaches and ways of carrying out our apostolate and mission. There is a real danger of getting stuck in nostalgia for a glorious past, of settling for doing the minimum required, of nesting in comfort zones, of relationships based on management standards than on fraternal communion, and even of getting stuck in visions of personal beliefs and practices. However, there is also a sincere desire to rekindle the zeal to be laborers in the harvest, rooted in the compassion of the Lord, moved by the Spirit wherever he blows, and to respond to the demands of the present milieu with the *creativity and 'fantasy' of charity*, just as St. Hannibal did in his context.

**28.** Adaptation to change and renewal in Rogationist religious life are not only in the realm of apostolate and mission, but also in relational patterns, community life, service of authority, and formative choices.

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<sup>13</sup> CONGREGATION OF THE ROGATIONISTS, *The Rogationist Mission in Parishes and Shrines*. Guidelines, Rome 2022.

<sup>14</sup> Adaptation and renewal of consecrated life to changing realities are the main themes of the CICLSAL document, *New Wine in New Wineskins*, Rome 2017.

## **Intercultural communities**

**29.** The internationalization of the Congregation has led to a multicultural composition of communities that reflects today's globalized society. At present this is most evident in our houses of formation, but in the near future, relationships will become an emerging trend in our communities as more and more exchanges of Confreres between Circumscriptions are expected in view of common projects. Intercultural community life is a privileged place for the inculturation of the charism and the concrete witness of fraternity, apostolic collaboration, and governance of the Institute. The dynamics of relationships in an intercultural community are complex and require openness, time, and commitment. Cultural integration must be an integral part of initial and ongoing formation.

## **Intergenerationality and integration<sup>15</sup>**

**30.** The composition of the Congregation varies. Some Circumscriptions are growing steadily in vocations and keeping the average age of members young, while others, which have sent many missionaries in the past, are declining in numbers and consequently the average age is rising constantly.

The sense of belonging to the same religious family motivates the exchange of Confreres between Circumscriptions, thus accelerating the growth not only of intercultural communities but also of intergenerational communities. Intercultural and intergenerational communities present challenges and opportunities. Initial and ongoing formation plays an important role here. Elder religious can witness to younger religious the security, wisdom, joy, and sense of belonging in Rogationist religious life, and at the same time, younger religious can communicate enthusiasm, dynamism, and creativity.

**31.** The advancement of age is more pronounced in the Italian Circumscriptions. Some communities are well equipped to welcome sick and elderly members with care and attention; others, however, do not have the conditions to do so. It must be the concern of each Circumscription to ensure a serene environment and a good quality of religious life for the sick and elderly Confreres. For this purpose, it is necessary to find means and facilities for the needed health care.

## **The gift of fidelity and the joy of perseverance<sup>16</sup>**

**32.** In our Congregation, too, we experience the problem of vocational fragility and abandonment, both in the stages of initial formation and in later years. This phenomenon challenges our formation programs, beginning with initial discernment, and the fraternal life in the community itself. This situation urges us to take preventive measures and, above all, to provide the necessary accompaniment in both initial and ongoing formation, in order to safeguard *the gift of fidelity and the joy of perseverance*. With

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. FRANCIS, *Fratelli Tutti*, Vatican City 2020, no. 199.

<sup>16</sup> CICLSAL, *The Gift of Fidelity the Joy of Perseverance*. Guidelines, Rome 2020.

those who have shared part of their life's journey with us, let the bond of prayer and fraternal relationships remain.

### **The vow of poverty at the service of charism and mission<sup>17</sup>**

**33.** The global economic crisis affects everyone, especially the poor. The faithful observance of the evangelical counsel of poverty will be a prophetic and hopeful sign for our times. Some Confreres and many communities are experiencing the economic crisis in an existential way, especially through their daily contact with the poor and the most vulnerable in society. This situation offers an opportunity to return to the basics of religious life and community, with a simpler lifestyle in solidarity with the people, stimulating creative ways of joyful sharing, working together with care and responsible commitment.

**34.** It cannot be denied, however, that there is also resistance to the necessary changes demanded by today's society and by the Church itself, such as the mentality of accumulating possessions and the pursuit of a comfortable lifestyle. There is sometimes a danger of becoming trapped in the concerns of one's own community or Circumscription, remaining indifferent to the needs of the whole Congregation.

### **A Synodal Church**

**35.** The Church's current journey toward Synodality has deepened its awareness of the fundamental vocation of the Church as a people of God walking together. Pope Francis, in his message for the 59<sup>th</sup> World Day of Prayer for Vocations,<sup>18</sup> affirmed that we are called not only as individuals but as peoples. Like all the followers of Christ, every Christian is a missionary disciple, and every baptized person is sent.<sup>19</sup> Each one has a key role to play, willing to listen attentively to God and to others in a spirit of discernment. The first step in this journey is the conversion of heart and mind.

**36.** Synodality concretely means sharing and is expressed in participation, involvement, and co-responsibility. No one is excluded, and no one can withdraw and remain on the sidelines. The Apostle Paul reminds us that *each person is given a particular manifestation of the Spirit for the common good* (1 Cor. 12:7). Therefore, each one must responsibly seek to make good use of “the variety of spiritual gifts which the Spirit shares out among the People of God for the upbuilding of the one Body of Christ.”<sup>20</sup>

**37.** Synodality is the Church's prophetic response to today's globalized society full of contradictions because it helps to recover the vision of *walking together* as the Church's *constitutive way* and “a sign and instrument of all that humanity is called to be”.<sup>21</sup> The synodal journey allows us to interpret reality with the eyes and heart of God; it offers

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<sup>17</sup> CICLSAL, *Economy at the Service of Charism and Mission*. Guidelines, Rome 2018.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. FRANCIS, *Message for the 59<sup>th</sup> World Day of Prayer for Vocations*, May 8, 2022.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. The theme for the extraordinary missionary month of October 2019.

<sup>20</sup> INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*. Preliminary Note, Rome 2018, no. 18.

<sup>21</sup> FRANCIS, *Message for the 59<sup>th</sup> World Day of Prayer for Vocations*, May 8, 2022.

the *condition* to follow the Lord Jesus and to be servants of life in this wounded time. Only in this light can we face the complexity of this time.<sup>22</sup>

**38.** The synodal journey of the Church is also the journey of the Congregation, in the constant search for our identity as Rogationist religious to respond creatively to the needs and demands of today's society.

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. FRANCIS, *Address to the Italian Episcopal Conference*, Rome May 22, 2017.

## PART TWO

### THE PATH OF UNITY

#### *Sequela Christi*

**39.** By virtue of Baptism, all Christians have a common vocation to follow Christ, the *cornerstone* that unites all believers. By religious consecration, in virtue of the evangelical counsels, this following of Christ is expressed in the faithful observance of the vows, lived in fraternal communion, and dedicated to the mission. Our Christian identity is marked by our religious state, which “manifests to all believers the presence of heavenly goods already possessed here below [...], foretells the future resurrection and the glory of the heavenly kingdom [...] and manifests that the Kingdom of God and its needs, in a very special way, are raised above all earthly considerations.”<sup>23</sup>

**40.** Our *sequela Christi* is an *imitatio Christi*, because the consecrated life, through the prompting of the Holy Spirit, constitutes *the way of life which Jesus, the supreme Consecrated One and missionary of the Father for the sake of his Kingdom, embraced and proposed to his disciples.*<sup>24</sup> We are united as consecrated men through the evangelical counsels, which in turn unites us with the Church as her eschatological witnesses.<sup>25</sup> The evangelical counsels contribute greatly to the development of the human person and are spiritual “therapy” for humanity.<sup>26</sup>

**41.** Our sequela, as Rogationists, is characterized by *following the Christ of the Rogate*. His actions, feelings, and concerns are expressed in the pericope of the Gospel of Matthew (Mt. 9:35-38). Jesus was on his way, teaching, preaching, and healing all kinds of diseases. The tired and weary crowds who were eagerly awaiting the fulfillment of the Kingdom moved him to compassion because they were like sheep without a shepherd. Faced with this reality, Jesus commanded: *Rogate ergo*. This Word generates our charism.<sup>27</sup>

**42.** The various expressions of the Congregation's apostolic commitment in different socio-cultural and geographical contexts, as well as generational differences, revealed the immeasurable riches of the Rogate. The different expressions of the Rogationist apostolate, however, cannot obscure the value of the unity that comes from belonging to the same charismatic family. In fact, it is the charism that identifies our specific spirituality, fraternal communion, consecration, and mission in the Church. Finally, fraternal life in community becomes a workshop of unity and of the radiance of the charism.

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<sup>23</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 44.

<sup>24</sup> JOHN PAUL II, *Vita consecrata*, no. 22.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 44.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Vita consecrata*, no. 87.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *Constitutions*, art. 2.



## **Founder and Father**

**43.** St. Hannibal Mary is the point of reference for the unity and identity of Rogationists. We are bound together as his children, heirs of his spiritual heritage. His example is our constant inspiration. We walk in his footsteps, conforming ourselves to the Christ of the Rogate and imbibing his sentiments. The understanding of the Rogate can never be separated from our Father Founder: he is the one who received the original inspiration from the Holy Spirit. For this reason, it is essential to constantly revisit and study his life, his spiritual and apostolic experience, and his teachings.

**44.** The knowledge of the life of Father Founder is intended to increase in us his sensitivity and obedience to the impulses of the Holy Spirit. In doing so, we will not simply repeat in our own time the efforts and the language of the Founder's response to the needs of his time, but we will enter, just as he did, into the dynamic of discernment and contemplation in order to understand how our charism can respond to current challenges.

## **The Rogationist spirituality<sup>28</sup>**

**45.** The Charism of the Rogate, is a particular experience of the Gospel lived in the Holy Spirit and is expressed in a specific spirituality, which is Eucharistic and rooted in the Bible. It is the living heritage shared by the *Family of the Rogate* and is deeply rooted in the spirituality of the Church and is nourished by the unique and pure light of the Holy Spirit.<sup>29</sup> Just as Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit throughout his earthly life to fulfill the Father's mission, so too will the Rogationists be led by the same Spirit in their endeavors.

**46.** The liturgical year of the Church, which unfolds the various mysteries of our faith in ordinary time and liturgical seasons, marks the rhythm of our spiritual life. Thus, when we pray with the Church, we do so as members of the one Body of Christ, united to Him, Head and Shepherd, we pray as authentic Rogationists.<sup>30</sup> The daily Liturgy of the Hours, the Celebrations of the Liturgical Proper of the Family of the Rogate, and the Rogationist prayer handed in tradition<sup>31</sup> create a true union among us, even if the prayer is expressed in different languages, rites, times, and places.

## **Prayer, the soul of unity**

**47.** Prayer is the privileged expression of our unity and communion with the Holy Trinity and with one other. We are gathered together in the Name of Jesus. He is in our midst; He prays in us, with us, and for us. Our prayer, therefore, is pleasing to the Father. This communion with Him, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, shows how our vocation as baptized and as Rogationist religious forms us as a charismatic family,

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. *Constitutions*, art. 9-23.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2684.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. *Constitutions*, art. 19.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. The Congregation's Manual of Prayer: *Rogate...*, Rome 2022.

called and sent by the Christ of the Rogate. In prayer, we strengthen our identity and mission.

**48.** The name *Rogationist* both qualifies us and shows how prayer for good laborers is at the center of our identity. The rhythm of our daily life is marked by personal and community prayer with which we unite ourselves to Jesus, to his prayer and mission, in order to merit and form holy laborers of the Lord's harvest.

**49.** Our Father Founder taught us that “just as a burning coal dies if it left alone,”<sup>32</sup> so every flame, including that of the charism, if it is not protected and nourished in an atmosphere of unity, risks dying; or, more precisely, we risk dying out and the Rogate is entrusted to others.<sup>33</sup> In this way, we understand that unity, sharing, and coordination are essential aspects of achieving any common goal. Its point of departure is none other than prayer, characterized as prayer in a united community, because the prayer of a divided community, of a torn body, does not penetrate the clouds, does not reach the Father, even if it does not move him to indignation.<sup>34</sup>

### **The Word of God, the source of unity**

**50.** The Sacred Scripture is at the center of the Church's life. It reveals God's plan of salvation, which reaches its culmination in the incarnation of the Word within the limits of human history, reaches its climax: *Et Verbum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis* (Jn. 1:14). It is the light that illuminates the path of the Church on its pilgrimage to the homeland.

**51.** The divine Word of the Rogate reveals the interests of the Heart of Jesus for the salvation of humanity. St. Hannibal penetrated into the secret of this divine command and dedicated his life to the salvation of souls. The Rogationists, as his children, have in the Rogate the source, the foundation, and the goal of their unity. The Rogate is the Word by which God calls us to be with Him, to live in communion, and sends us to evangelize (cf. Mk. 3:13-15).<sup>35</sup>

**52.** Fidelity to the Word of the Rogate challenges us in our fraternal relationships in the community and in our commitment to build unity. It would be a counter-witness and a betrayal of our vocation if, as laborers who gather the flock into one, we lived by fomenting divisions and quarrels.

### **The Eucharist, the bond of unity**

**53.** The daily celebration of the Eucharist is a way to welcome, preserve and nourish unity. St. John Paul II reminds us of this: “[St.] Hannibal Mary Di Francia, docile to the teachings of the divine Master and inwardly guided by the impulse of the Spirit, highlighted the conditions and characteristics of this prayer [= rogate] which make it an

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<sup>32</sup> DI FRANCA, A., *Scritti*, Vol. 57, p. 96.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. DI FRANCA, A., *Scritti*, Vol. 57, p. 90.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. DI FRANCA, A., *Scritti*, Vol. VI, Rogate Ed, Rome 2010, p. 325.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. *Called to Stay with Him. The Primacy of the Spiritual Life*. Document of the 9<sup>th</sup> General Chapter of 1998.

*ecclesial work par excellence*, bearing abundant fruit for the Church and the world. The first condition is to place the *Blessed Eucharist at the center* of personal and community life, in order to learn from it how to pray and love according to the Heart of Christ, indeed, to unite the offering of one's own life to the offering of Christ, who continues to intercede for us before the Father (cf. Heb 7:25; 9:24). Following the example of the Founder, may each member of the Rogationist Family be a profoundly Eucharistic soul!"<sup>36</sup>

**54.** The Eucharist, the source and summit of Christian life, is the model of Christian prayer and is, at the same time, an experience of unity built up and strengthened by words, gestures, and bodily postures. In the Eucharistic celebration, God takes the initiative, calls us, and brings us together to form us into one Body.<sup>37</sup>

Unity, before being a goal to be achieved, is a gift to be welcomed and cherished: "Gathered together, we form one body: away with divisions among us; away with evil strife, away with quarrels, and let Christ God reign among us."<sup>38</sup> The sacrament of the Eucharist is for us "a sign of unity and a bond of charity."<sup>39</sup> Through Eucharistic communion, we are made partakers of the one bread and the one cup; united with Christ in one body, we joyfully bear the fruit of eternal life for the salvation of the world.<sup>40</sup>

**55.** Precisely because it is a school of love, the Eucharist is the sacrament that builds up, expresses, strengthens, and increases unity. The *fractio panis* is a sign of sharing and fraternal communion. United with one another and with the assembly of Angels and Saints, we profess with *one voice* the same faith and speak the same words of praise, supplication, forgiveness, and thanksgiving. "Now there is no one who does not know that Love tends to Union. This is the main purpose for which Jesus became food: to unite Himself with humanity. (...) Here you observe the most joyful mystery (...) Jesus Christ is infused into us. What union could be more intimate? This Union was the purpose of the Institution of the Holy Eucharist; and since all the works of Jesus Christ were directed to this union, thus, all the Works were directed to the Eucharistic table, as the ultimate goal!"<sup>41</sup> Eucharistic union, then, "is what gives life and existence, increase, fruitfulness, and stability to a religious Institution."<sup>42</sup>

**56.** Without the union in the name of Christ, it is not possible to celebrate the Eucharist.<sup>43</sup> Among the obstacles to unity, our Holy Founder points out the party spirit: "Woe when two or three agree secretly or openly to oppose Authority, to discredit the other brothers, to murmur, to disapprove, to conspire, and to proselytize. Then it happens that different parties are formed, and the word of the Gospel is fulfilled: *Every kingdom divided in itself falls into ruin* (Mt 12:25)."<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> JOHN PAUL II, *Address to the Rogationists*, May 16, 1997, no. 4.

<sup>37</sup> Cfr. *Messale Romano*, Nuova Edizione (Italiana), 2020, p. 137.

<sup>38</sup> *Messale Romano*, Antifona alla Lavanda dei Piedi, p. 139.

<sup>39</sup> *Messale Romano*, p. 625.

<sup>40</sup> Cfr. *Messale Romano*, p. 267.

<sup>41</sup> DI FRANCIA, A., *Scritti*, Vol. 12, pp. 24-25.

<sup>42</sup> DI FRANCIA, A., *Scritti*, Vol. 1, p. 11.

<sup>43</sup> *Messale Romano*, p. 326: "Pray, brothers and sisters, that this family of ours, gathered by the Holy Spirit in the name of Christ, may offer the sacrifice pleasing to God the Father Almighty."

<sup>44</sup> DI FRANCIA, A., *Scritti*, Vol. VI, Ed. Rogate, Roma 2010, p. 76.

## **The Rogationist Mission**

**57.** The Lord Jesus called the disciples, first of all, *to stay with him* (cf. Mk 3:13), commanded them *to pray* to the Lord of the Harvest (cf. Mt 9:38, Lk 10:2), and then *sent* them on a mission to proclaim by deeds and words that the Kingdom of God is at hand (cf. Mt 10:5. 11, Lk10:3. 7).

**58.** The contemplative-existential reading of the Rogate pericope in the Gospel of Matthew (9:35-38) places us in the heart of Christ, whose compassionate gaze is directed toward the weary and exhausted crowd. Our participation in the same gaze of the Lord leads us to see the three components of the Rogationist mission as intrinsically united and not as separate compartments. Thus, our specific mission in the Church is the solid foundation of our unity. The threefold dimension of the one Rogationist mission, summarized in the verbs *pray*, *spread*, and *be*, opens us wide to unlimited possibilities for apostolic services according to the signs of the times.

**59.** Praying daily for vocations, in response to Christ's command of the Rogate, is a fundamental element of our mission. Understanding this command to pray is the natural source of the zeal that impels us to be its proclaimers and propagators. Authentic prayer for the laborers of the Gospel and commitment to its spread necessarily impel us to be zealous laborers in the Lord's harvest, especially in the service of the little ones and the poor.

## **The Rule of Life, the service of authority and obedience**

**60.** The fundamental Rule of Life is the Gospel of Christ, "*lamp and light*" (Ps 119:105), which guides the pilgrimage of all who follow Him to holiness, regardless of culture, place, or time. Our *Rule of Life*, the *Constitutions and Norms*, as well as the Directory of Circumscriptions are rooted in and inspired by the values of the Gospel, which are lived out with creative fidelity in daily reality. *The Rogationist Rule of Life* is "an expression of consecration, a guarantee of charismatic identity, a support of fraternal communion, a project of mission."<sup>45</sup>

**61.** It has been noted that the *Rule of Life* is still little known and therefore little practiced. This is where the service of authority comes in, whose particular task is to guide communities in building fraternal life in community, in which each member shares his gifts and responsibilities in order to live religious consecration meaningfully and fruitfully way, as a common project in the richness of diversity.

Those called to the service of authority have the task of ensuring a *renewed reference to the Rule*, in its spiritual and practical dimensions, especially in these times of rapid and convulsive change. The *Rule* is necessary and indispensable if one is to remain anchored in the original charismatic inspiration. In fact, it "provides a map for the entire journey of discipleship, according to a specific charism confirmed by the Church."<sup>46</sup> Given the importance of the *Rule of Life*, it must be studied, meditated on,

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<sup>45</sup> Cf. *The Rogationist Rule of Life*. Document of the 11<sup>th</sup> General Chapter of 2010.

<sup>46</sup> JOHN PAUL II, *Vita consecrata*, no. 37.

appreciated, and put into practice in all its dimensions.

## Formation

**62.** The ultimate goal of the initial and ongoing formation of Rogationists is the gradual and constant growth in the Christ of the Rogate, in order to conform oneself to His sentiments and attitudes (cf. Phil 2:5), and to live with joyful fidelity as Religious, vowed, and consecrated to their specific mission. This formative journey is a lifelong process and commitment. It is essential, therefore, to be formed in the art and practice of discernment, which makes us not only docile and willing but *docibilis*, always humbly striving for conversion, eagerly open to learning and to the impulses of the Holy Spirit.<sup>47</sup>

**63.** The care of formation is a primary responsibility of each Confrere. It is the task of the competent authority to accompany, animate, and responsibly guide the steps of the formative journey both in initial and ongoing formation. Indeed, the formation of members must be constantly safeguarded and nurtured, since the present and future of the Congregation, as well as its proper renewal, depend on it.<sup>48</sup>

**64.** Lay Brothers have played a fundamental role in the history of the Congregation. More attention should be given to their promotion and formation. It is hoped that a formation community will be established, which will guarantee a specific accompaniment for them.

**65.** The historical journey of the Congregation and its spread in different geographical and cultural contexts have increased the need for adaptation and renewal of Rogationist religious life, especially formation. There is a diversity in the paths of formation in the various Circumscriptions. However, it is essential to harmonize and balance this diversity with the unity of the common charismatic, spiritual, and apostolic content within the whole Congregation, as outlined in the *Ratio Institutionis*. It provides the fundamental principles, objectives, means, and framework for the content of the various stages of Rogationist formation, which is common to all. While the *Directory or Formation Manual of the Circumscriptions*, which almost all of the Circumscriptions have prepared, takes care of the inculturation of the common principles of formation of the *Ratio* in their respective concrete contexts.

**66.** The renewal, adaptation, and inculturation of formation in constantly changing contexts are dynamic processes, which require a “constant return to the sources of all Christian life and to the original spirit of the Institutes.”<sup>49</sup> Those entrusted with the service of authority, at the general and Circumscriptional levels, as well as formation teams, have a key role to play in ensuring and promoting unity in the diversity of formation paths. Formators are called to be *companions, guides, and interpreters of the sources and original spirit of the Institute* to be transmitted to new generations. For this reason, the selection, accompaniment, and mentoring of formators are of the utmost importance.

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<sup>47</sup> CICLSAL, *New Wine in New Wineskins*, no. 35d.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. CICLSAL, *Potissimum institutioni*, Vatican City, 1990, no. 1.

<sup>49</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Perfectae caritatis*, no. 2.

**67.** Ongoing formation is a personal commitment to deepen one's Rogationist identity, rooted in the charism. It is first of all a daily search for the integration of one's own self-understanding and self-realization in the Rogationist consecration, in fraternal life in community, in apostolic service, and in the various stages and transitions of life. Extraordinary formation experiences such as refresher courses, advanced studies, or special experiences complement ordinary means. Ongoing formation is the antidote to identity crisis, loss of meaning, regression, and fragmentation.

## PART THREE

### THE PATH OF SHARING

#### **The Rogationist synodal path**

**68.** The Congregation, in keeping with the synodal path of the Church, grows in unity, sharing, and coordination, seeking to incarnate the Charism in the various socio-cultural contexts to which the Lord sends it. In fact, the Church recognizes in synodality “the specific *modus vivendi et operandi* of the People of God in the responsible and ordered participation of all its members in discerning and putting into practice ways of fulfilling its mission.”<sup>50</sup>

The Rogationist synodal path is expressed in the commitment to attentive listening to the Holy Spirit, to fidelity to the Church’s teachings, and, at the same time, to creativity in discovering and setting in motion the most appropriate instruments for the ordered participation of all, for the mutual exchange of gifts, for an incisive reading of the signs of the times, and for effective planning in mission.<sup>51</sup>

**69.** The Rogationist synodal journey, like that of the whole Church, requires conversion. In some situations, conversion concerns both the personal and the community levels. Some communities have settled into a comfort zone, with a lifestyle aimed at comfortable tranquility, indifferent to others, closed to creativity, freedom of the Spirit, and collaboration with others. “A leveled community life that does not leave room for originality, responsibility, and cordial fraternal relationships, results in little sharing of real life.”<sup>52</sup>

#### **Fragmentation and loss of identity**

**70.** Fragmentation and loss of identity are experienced in some communities due to the following causes: lack of attention to spiritual life, individualism, lack of a project for community life, over-activity, lack of a sense of belonging, communication difficulties, and lack of interest in community meetings and events of Circumscription. Situations such as these do not create harmony or fraternity, nor do they grasp the real needs of the Circumscriptions, communities, and religious, but they generate weariness, exhaustion, and indifference.

**71.** We suffer the temptation of selfishness and the centralization of power. Authority as service and shared responsibility in the community are the way to overcome them. History teaches that the centralization of decisions in the hands of a few, without adequate sharing of responsibility and planning, has often been the cause of choices that

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<sup>50</sup> INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*, no. 43.

<sup>51</sup> INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*, no. 76.

<sup>52</sup> CICLSAL, *New Wine in New Wineskins*, no. 26.

have jeopardized not only the mission and assets of Institutes<sup>53</sup> but their very survival. Thus, synodal life becomes a prophetic and effective sign for today's world.

### **Rogationist communion and community**

**72.** The theme of *unity, sharing, and coordination* concerns communion in the life of the Congregation as a whole and as communities. It is of fundamental importance that a family spirit is cultivated in our Congregation where everyone listens and is heard, in order to manifest our charismatic unity, fraternal sharing, and a common mission.

**73.** Communities have meetings and councils, which are the ordinary expression of their synodal life. These moments of listening, dialogue, planning, and sharing among Confreres build our *fraternal life*. Councils (House, Family, and Formation Councils, etc.), along with the service of authority, are grounded in the Gospel and in the tradition of our religious family. They are moments of ongoing formation, in which, with the help of the Spirit, we seek to discern together God's will for the good of all, faithful to our vocation. In addition, they aim to achieve a lifestyle marked by fraternity, harmony, and mutual collaboration for the common mission, and not simply as instruments of organizational efficiency.

### **Fraternity and the service of authority**

**74.** Authority today is understood more as *service*. There is a shift from the centrality of the role of authority to the dynamism of fraternal life.<sup>54</sup> This requires overcoming the mentality of one against the other and building authentic co-responsibility.<sup>55</sup> Authority, lived as service, shows its synodal face when it seeks to involve and empower the Confreres, and not to exclude them, but to involve them in common goals and responsibilities.<sup>56</sup>

**75.** By following this synodal style of fraternal life in community, new models of relationships, more human and less bureaucratic, more evangelical, and less functional, can be creatively realized. “The challenge of the relationship between superiors and subjects is the responsible sharing of a common project. This sharing must go beyond the mere performance of obedience that does not serve the Gospel.”<sup>57</sup> For the smooth development of the daily activities of communities, it is essential to be inspired by the new models of relationships,<sup>58</sup> recovering the ideals of the Gospel as the primary source of inspiration (cf. Jn. 15:15).<sup>59</sup>

**76.** The Superior has an important role in community leadership and in awakening co-responsibility in the consciences of the Confreres. “Those who exercise power should

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<sup>53</sup> Cf. CICLSAL, *Economy at the Service of Charism and Mission*, nos. 3, 18, 33, 58.

<sup>54</sup> CICLSAL, *New Wine in New Wineskins*, no. 41.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. CICLSAL, *The Service of Authority and Obedience*. Instruction, Vatican City, 2008, no. 17.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. *Constitutions*, art. 131.

<sup>57</sup> CICLSAL, *New Wine in New Wineskins*, no. 42.

<sup>58</sup> CICLSAL, *New Wine in New Wineskins*, no. 22.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. RAMPAZZO B., *Our fraternal communion of life with Christ and the Poor*, Rome 2021. Father General develops the theme of fraternity as a fundamental element of Rogationist religious consecration and mission.



not encourage infantile attitudes that can lead to non-responsible behavior.”<sup>60</sup> Indeed, authority is not a centralized power in the hands of one person but is lived in a collegial way, seeking dialogue and listening.

**77.** It is healthy for the life of the community, and of each religious in particular, to avoid leaving responsibility in the hands of the same person and with the same office for a long time. Alternatives in community leadership and coordination, as provided for in our Rule of Life,<sup>61</sup> should be promoted, overcoming insecurities, distrust, and fear.

**78.** In some situations there are objective difficulties in finding new superiors, either because of the limited number of Confreres or because of the lack of the necessary qualities and experience. In other Circumscriptions, especially young and emerging ones, there is still a need for experience, guidance, and ongoing formation. In some Circumscriptions, the challenges of aging and health, as well as the lack of academic qualifications required by law, make it difficult to have the turnover of leadership in our apostolic work.

### **Decentralization and Circumscriptions**

**79.** To promote the growth and development of the Congregation in the world, it was necessary to begin the process of decentralization.

**80.** The success of this journey happens when a constant balance is maintained between the central authority, the guarantor of the unity and communion of the entire body, and the peripheral realities that promote and incarnate the charism in a specific geographical and cultural context. These realities, in order to accomplish their goals, must have appropriate autonomy, but they must also walk together in a spirit of dialogue and sharing.

**81.** “Circumscriptions are living parts of the Congregation that express its presence in a particular cultural and geographical area. They remain united among themselves and depend on the General Government. The life of the Circumscriptions and the local diversities must be united with the interests and unity of the entire Congregation.”<sup>62</sup> With *decentralization*, the Congregation concretely experiences subsidiarity through the sharing of tasks, functions, responsibilities, and decision-making powers in a path of growth where specific needs and interests are realized in communion with the whole life of the Rogationist religious Family.

**82.** In fact, the continuous study, planning, and organization of our Rogationist life in the different Circumscriptions have contributed to the growth of a sense of belonging and the development of a vision of things that goes beyond the circumscribed sphere of one's own Community and Circumscription. This journey has created in the Confreres a greater interest in the situation of other Circumscriptions, an openness to collaboration and support, and fostered the sharing of human and material resources to achieve the common goals of the Congregation.

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<sup>60</sup> CICLSAL, *New Wine in New Wineskins*, no. 21.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. *Norms*, art. 256.

<sup>62</sup> *Norms*, art. 126.

## **Decentralization and inculturation**

**83.** *Inculturation is the existential dialogue between a living people and the living Gospel.*<sup>63</sup> There can be no evangelization without inculturation because faith always meets and enriches the culture, customs, and life of a people present in a territory and bearers of a tradition and historical memory.

**84.** Decentralization facilitates the inculturated presence in a given territory; it brings us in contact with a people that has a culture and a history that shape it and makes it unique. The study of issues, discernment, and decisions are based on a concrete understanding of situations, contextual factors, language, and culture of the place. This facilitates the identification and adoption of appropriate solutions. Sharing contextual and situational knowledge with the Superior General and his Council greatly facilitates the journey of discernment and decision-making.

**85.** The closeness and presence of the Superiors of Circumscription in a given territory encourage more frequent meetings, consultations, and dialogues with the Confreres, promoting co-responsibility and a better sharing of the service of authority.

## **Decentralization, an ongoing journey**

**86.** Decentralization must be guided, supported, reviewed, and reformed to achieve the right balance between autonomy and subsidiarity. This responsibility belongs to the Superior General who “has ordinary power over the whole Congregation”, assisted by his Council.<sup>64</sup>

**87.** Decentralization, as a living dynamic journey, passes through gray areas and critical points that challenge us to reconsider and adapt our choices. This process began with difficulties and in recent years has encountered other difficulties, especially in the sharing of human and economic resources to achieve the apostolic goals that were set.

**88.** There have been difficulties between the General Government and some Circumscriptions due to a lack of communication and a lack of knowledge of the regulations.<sup>65</sup> There is a need for better preparation of those responsible for leadership, at various levels.

## **Interdependence of Circumscriptions and the presiding role of the Superior General**

**89.** Unity, built on the communion of the Circumscriptions with the Superior General, is an inestimable richness, a precious gift of the Holy Spirit, to be guarded and nurtured with gratitude. The Superior General is the *sign of unity*,<sup>66</sup> the guide of the Congregation, and the guarantor of communion. This role is considered very positive

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<sup>63</sup> Cf. KOLVENBACH H., *Living People, Living Gospel*. Address to the International Workshop on Native Ministry, Canada, October 12, 1993.

<sup>64</sup> *Constitutions*, art. 152.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. *Instrumentum laboris* for the 13<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, no. 100.

<sup>66</sup> *Norms*, art. 159.

and is valued and appreciated by the Confreres, who are convinced that unity, communion, participation, and coordination are the foundations of good governance in the Congregation. Likewise, the Superiors of Circumscription, in communion with the Superior General, are a sign of unity within their Circumscription.

**90.** An objective and disenchanted look at the present situation of our Circumscriptions, which truly intend to pursue a sustainable future from a vocational, organizational, and economic point of view makes us increasingly aware of the need for interdependence, mutual support, and subsidiarity.

### **Promoting a culture of encounter and dialogue**

**91.** The Rogationist synodal journey is characterized by a culture of encounter and dialogue and is based on a sense of belonging, respect, and trust at all levels: between the General Government and the Circumscriptions, between the different Circumscriptions, and between the Circumscriptions and their respective Communities. This is strengthened by constant communication and through meetings, animated by a sincere desire to get to know each other and to be aware of each other's real situations. Only in this way will it be possible to carry out common discernment, initiate coordination, and arrive at the sharing of human and material resources. On this path will grow that genuine fraternal communion which is a central element of our life as consecrated persons.

**92.** The need to improve and perfect communication in the Congregation is very much felt by the Confreres because it strengthens unity, sharing, and coordination. In fact, the purpose of communication is not only to be a channel of information, but it is above all a means of formation and transformation. Communication is a fundamental component of our synodal journey.

### **Chapter and Assembly**

**93.** Chapters and Assemblies of Circumscriptions are useful because they encourage the interest, participation, and co-responsibility of all. Their success, however, depends largely on the preparation and involvement of all the Confreres through prayer, study, discussion, and deepening.

**94.** The opportuneness of holding a Chapter Assembly with the participation of all perpetually professed is based on the need to promote the co-responsibility of all the Confreres. The choice of this formula must consider the cultural context and situation of the Circumscription.

### **Spiritual and cultural heritage**

**95.** The spiritual heritage received as a gift from the Founder and from our tradition is the common charismatic heritage that manifests our identity and is the basis of the fraternity. Sharing this heritage increases the sense of belonging to the same religious

family and makes the fulfillment of its mission more effective. This is an area that we must privilege and promote.

**96.** We all recognize the need to improve our love for the Charism and the figure of the Founder. Some communities, however, find it difficult to promote initiatives to this end because of their many commitments and tasks; others testify enthusiastically to a personal and community desire to grow in Rogationist life and apostolate; still, others have lost interest and their present situation is stagnant and lacking in any meaningful motivation.

**97.** The spread of the knowledge about Father Founder and the Congregation in the Church and society is currently experiencing a period of great commitment. There has been an increase in the production, translation, and publication of Rogationist literature through the media, including the creative use of social media and online platforms. In addition, many texts of Rogationist literature have been translated into the various languages spoken in the Congregation. It is recommended that this service of translations be consolidated by strengthening and expanding the team of translators.

**98.** In some Circumscriptions, Rogate Vocation Centers, and Institutes of Vocation Ministry<sup>67</sup> have been active in developing materials and programs at the service of vocation ministry in the local Church and in collaboration with other Congregations, including those recognized by Institutes of Higher Education or Universities. Communities, parishes, and the personal initiatives of Confreres, through magazines and other means of social communication, contribute greatly to spreading the Charism and knowledge of the Founder to audiences outside the Congregation.

**99.** There is knowledge and diffusion of the figure of the Founder at the popular level. There is a need to promote academic studies on the Founder, the Charism, and spirituality. For this reason, there is an urgent need to reorganize the Rogationist Research Center and make it more functional and effective.

**100.** Aware of the role of social media and technology in today's world, we need to maximize the use of these channels to spread our spiritual heritage. No less important is the integration of aspects of the Founder's charism and teachings into the lessons, homilies, talks, conferences, etc. that members of the Family of the Rogate give in the various fields of apostolate.

**101.** The spiritual and cultural heritage of the Institute is contained in the history of the Congregation and should be carefully written down and studied. It contains the witness of holiness, apostolic, and missionary zeal of many Confreres who have embodied in their own lives the charism of the Rogate, giving witness of holiness in the prayer for vocations lived and spread in the Church, and in the care and evangelization of the poor, especially of orphans and needy children.

### **Sharing of human resources**

**102.** The primary resources of the Congregation are the Confreres whom God has called to live the Rogationist consecration and mission. Their quality and quantity are decisive

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<sup>67</sup> For example: IPV (Brazil), PIVM (Philippines), FISH (Indonesia), and the Course at LUMSA (Italy).

factors for living our fraternal communion and apostolate in a meaningful and fruitful way.

**103.** In some Circumscriptions, the number of religious is constantly increasing, while in others there is an alarming decrease. The sharing of human resources is therefore the response both to the need for personnel in Circumscriptions that lack them and to the inspirations of the Spirit to venture together into new apostolic horizons. In particular, the commitment to vocation promotion, formation, and mission are privileged areas of collaboration on which the common efforts of the Circumscriptions in communion with the General Government should converge.

**104.** The future of the Congregation depends in part on the quality of formation. To this end, it must be supported and strengthened with adequate human, economic and structural resources. At this time of the Congregation, we are experiencing difficulties in finding vocation animators and trained formators, and in some Circumscriptions, there is a shortage of formands. Therefore, we feel the need to study places, ways, and times to share, among the different Circumscriptions, formators, and formands. This is dictated not only by practical reasons but also in order to offer an inculturated and unified formation can be offered. This is also valid and urgent for ongoing formation. This seems to be a way of responding better and better to the apostolic commitments that lead us to new frontiers of evangelization and charity.<sup>68</sup>

**105.** The redistribution and sharing of personnel will be increasingly necessary for the coming years, especially for the benefit of the Circumscriptions which suffer from a lack of personnel. This journey of communion will have a positive outcome only if it is not improvised, but well thought out, prepared, and planned, according to concrete projects in accordance with the apostolic activities of the Circumscriptions and identifying the path necessary to manage this integration over time. A community made up of Religious of different origins and cultures, living in *sympathetic hospitality*, offers to the globalized but too often divided world a *highly prophetic* sign of the evangelical value of universal brotherhood<sup>69</sup> and the joy of working together for the mission of spreading the Kingdom of Christ.

### **Sharing of economic resources**

**106.** The global economic crisis, exacerbated by the pandemic crises and wars, calls us to live with a new paradigm and vision of stewardship that is more open, collegial, decentralized, and at the same time connected to the broader reality of the whole Congregation. It is no longer possible to think in isolation as if economic problems were solely the concern of the community or the Circumscription experiencing them. Only by addressing them by *working together* can we come to an awareness of the situation, and work toward coordination and sharing, with planning that considers ways of thinking, culture, and procedures.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> CICLSAL, *New Wine in New Wineskins*, no. 16.

<sup>69</sup> CICLSAL, *New Wine in New Wineskins*, no. 40.

<sup>70</sup> CICLSAL, *Economy at the service of charism and mission*, nos.32-33.

The synodal way of life also concerns the administration of goods and the sharing of the gifts of Divine Providence and the efforts of all, regardless of the place and the apostolate that is being carried out.

**107.** We have been won to compassion and zeal for the abandoned and exhausted crowds of the little ones and the poor, who are like a flock without a shepherd, and, like Jesus and our Founder, we are naturally called to sharing. For this reason, it is necessary to initiate a change of mentality that will allow us to live in a more human way, with a Rogationist lifestyle that is permeated by the Gospel logic of accepting everyone and everything as a gift to become a gift for our brothers and sisters: *Freely you have received, freely give* (Mt 10:8). Our evangelical vow of poverty is to be lived both personally and communally and is characterized by the following of Christ expressed in generous solidarity, sharing, responsibility, diligence, and trust in Divine Providence.

**108.** The management of economic resources requires good organization at various levels. In addition to competence and professionalism, however, it is necessary to cultivate the spiritual and human values of fraternal relationships, such as openness to others, the spirit of humility, a willingness to learn, an inner disposition to detach oneself from one's possessions, and fidelity to work. This will promote better management and distribution of economic resources.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> CICLSAL, *Economy at the service of charism and mission*, nos. 14-16.

## **PART FOUR**

### **OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES**

#### **I. THE PATH OF COORDINATION**

**109.** *Walking together* in our religious life must be manifested in our relationship as brothers in Christ and expressed in structures and functions that generate co-responsibility and understanding, readiness to serve, listening, and dialogue through dynamics and processes that seek increasing interaction, capable of translating them concretely into personal and community life projects.

Our Congregation, in the course of its experience, has adopted a path of synodality and has expressed it, especially in the Rule of Life, equipping itself with appropriate instruments such as Chapters, Assemblies, House Councils, Family Councils, Spiritual Reading, and Spiritual Exercises.

#### **Chapter and Assembly**

g. Chapters and Assemblies are unique moments in the synodal journey of the Congregation. They are occasions for reviewing, in concrete contexts, the journey made in Rogationist religious life and for pointing out new paths to be taken according to the signs of the times. They go beyond their celebration and their contributions and find their continuation in the concrete steps of the Circumscriptions and Communities. We can continue to improve the quality of the celebration of Chapters and Assemblies to better meet our needs through the following:

a. Promote the unified journey of the Institute, the Chapter, and the Assembly of the Circumscription by inculturating the Document of the General Chapter and the Six-Year Program of the General Government in their contexts, thus fostering work in synergy and avoiding parallel paths.

b. The Government of the Circumscription, at the beginning of its term, will prepare its four-year plan to be presented to the General Government.

c. The General Government, in consultation with the Circumscriptions, formulates normative guidelines for the celebration of the General Assemblies of the Circumscriptions.

#### **General Government and Circumscriptions**

**111.** All the Circumscriptions, under the guidance of the Superior General, should engage in a continuous synodal journey to grow in harmony with one another. In the spirit of subsidiarity, each component participates in the process of discussion and

discernment within its sphere of competence, to be able to decide and carry out common projects. This synodal spirit, without neglecting the legitimate interests of each Circumscription, seeks to bring together the energies and resources of all. The coordination of the General Government with the Circumscriptions and among the Circumscriptions can be improved by the following means:

a. Organizing the Annual Conference of the General Council with the Superiors of the Circumscriptions.

b. Reviving the function of the General Secretariats, composed of the General Councilor and the Circumscription Councilors of the sector.

c. Promoting a training workshop (seminar, group work) for the Circumscription's Superior, Councilors, Treasurer, and Secretary at the beginning of their term of office to introduce them to their respective roles and scope of authority.

d. Circumscriptions in which the attributions of the Councilors and the Provincial Treasurer are different from those of the General Government should commit themselves in their Chapters to make them the same in order to facilitate the work of coordination, sharing, and collaboration.

## **Circumscription**

**112.** The service of the authority of the Superior and the Council of the Circumscription is responsible for fostering the sense of belonging and for guiding the synodal journey, in unity and sharing, of each member and each community of the Circumscription (see *Norms*, art. 230):

a. The Superior of the Circumscription with the support of the Councilors should be more committed to animating and coordinating the communities entrusted to him. He should be faithful to the commitment of community visitation so that it may be an instrument of listening, animation, support, and evaluation of local situations.

b. Plan strategies and roadmaps for leadership succession, especially regarding the selection and preparation of leaders.

c. Introduce first-time Superiors and Councilors to their responsibilities through specific training, including group workshops.

d. Promote meetings and regular updates of all Superiors and their respective Councils.

e. Prepare a manual or practical guide, where one is not available, for the local Superior and his Council to guide them in carrying out their responsibilities.

f. The Superior of the Circumscription should promote meetings, in person or by other means, with communities or Confreres who are in particular situations or who live in places far from the Circumscription.



## Local Community

**113.** The service of authority plays a key role in the life of our communities, first of all in animating the religious life of each confrere and also in efficiently organizing apostolic services that make each member of the community a protagonist in the common journey of consecration and mission. To make this service more effective, it is recommended to:

a. Make together an annual personal and community life project (cf. *Norms*, art. 260), which outlines goals, means, and times to promote the growth of religious life, as suggested in the document *Stir into Flame the Gift of God that Is in You (2 Tim 1:6). Project of Rogationist Permanent Formation* (2002). Let this common project, read in the light of the orientations of the Chapters and Assemblies, be a guide and a means of evaluation.

b. Ensure that meetings, especially the House Council and the Family Council, are held regularly and that the minutes are written.

## Networking

**114.** Networking is an effective sign of synodality and synergy, especially in interacting with people in the same field of service, sharing information and experiences for a common vision-mission, planning, sharing of resources, formation, and carrying out common projects. This way of working is already common in some Circumscriptions, especially in the socio-educational apostolate and in vocation ministry, including working in partnership with other organizations that share the same service.<sup>72</sup> Networking should be promoted at the level of the entire Congregation,<sup>73</sup> with special attention to the protection of sensitive data according to rules of privacy. Let this work be promoted already in the first three years of the term of government.

## Organisms

**115.** Various organisms have been created to render better services to the entire Congregation. It is necessary to study and propose a plan of action to improve their organization and promote their effective functioning. These observations and requests have been repeated in previous General Chapters. In particular, the following organisms are mentioned:

a. The *Sector Secretariat or Commission*, chaired by the appropriate authority, is an effective body for idea generation, planning, coordination, and evaluation. Some sectors may also be linked between Secretariats, so it would be appropriate to promote joint initiatives between them. At the general level, the Secretariat is headed by the General Councilor of a sector and its members are the Circumscription Councilors for

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<sup>72</sup> For example: a unified branding and management system of Rogationist Schools; inter-congregational collaboration in Institutes of Vocation Ministry; membership in ecclesial bodies.

<sup>73</sup> For example: Network of Rogate Vocation Centers, Institutes of Vocation Ministry, the Social-Educational Institutes, Formators and Formation Houses of the different Circumscriptions.

that sector. At the Circumscription level, it is composed of the incumbent Councilor, as the president, and other confreres working in the same sector.

b. The *Rogationist Research Center (Centro Studi Rogazionisti)* has a key role to play in promoting inculturation by stimulating and encouraging in-depth studies on the charism and other Rogationist themes; by organizing forums, workshops, or Study Conferences; by publishing research articles, especially by improving the journal *Studi Rogazionisti*. It is necessary to revive this Center, with the collaboration of all the Circumscriptions, to spread better and more widely the life, teachings, charism, and spirituality of St. Hannibal.

c. The *Commission on Translations* has helped to make Rogationist literature available in other languages for the benefit of Confreres and formands. Let its service be further improved by the creation of sub-groups of translators and editors in coordination with the Circumscriptions. This will speed up the work and ensure the quality of the translations.

d. It is proposed that a *virtual library* be created to provide easy access to Rogationist literature and related materials in various languages, so essential for initial and ongoing formation and research. Finally, initiatives should be organized to encourage Confreres to read and study our literature, through cultural meetings.

e. A centralized *Rogationist Communications Center* should be established to serve as a space for sharing news, information, and other materials from the different Circumscriptions and their various organisms. In addition, an action plan should be prepared on how to improve our current websites and social media platforms, to help create new ones, link them effectively with each other, and properly prepare personnel for this service.

**116.** The commitment to accompany the Associations of the Family of the Rogate, to revitalize in a special way the Union of Prayer for Vocations (UPV) and the Priestly Union of Prayer for Vocations (USPV), should be strengthened by seeking and promoting ways of meeting, dialogue, and collaboration. They should help each other, in accordance with their respective statutes, in the program of formation of members, growth in the knowledge of the charism, participation in the mission of the Congregation, and in their relationships with the other members of the same charismatic family.

**117.** The Councilors of the Sectors of the Rogate and Laity and their respective Secretariats have an important role to play in animating and coordinating with the ecclesiastical assistants, leaders, and respective governing bodies of these associations. At the Circumscription level, where it does not yet exist, it is worth exploring the possibility of creating an umbrella organization similar to the Union of Rogationist Associations (U.A.R.), to promote mutual support and edification among lay Rogationists.

**118.** The International Symposium of the Laity, which could not be held because of the *Covid-19* pandemic, should be realized during this six-year term, preparing it with local Symposia and Congresses, which in the past have been effective in improving the organization of the various groups.

## Formation

**119.** The Rogationist formation, both initial and ongoing, is a fruitful area of unity, sharing, and coordination. Formation in different cultural and geographical contexts has made the richness of inculturation evident. We welcome and value this diversity while striving to maintain unity in formation, as the *Ratio Institutionis* prescribes.

**120.** As already indicated by the 12<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, it is necessary to continue the revision of the *Ratio Institutionis* (1996). In addition to being updated with the most recent orientations of the Church and the Congregation, the *Ratio* should provide the common framework for the principles, objectives, and contents of the various stages of formation, which are inculturated in the Directory/Manual of Formation of the Circumscriptions. Therefore, both initial and ongoing formation should be included in a single *Ratio*, thus showing that formation is a lifelong journey.

**121.** It is proposed to study the structural and institutional dimensions of ongoing formation and the sabbatical period<sup>74</sup> and develop a program, even at the inter-circumscription level. Ongoing formation is already present in the present *Ratio* and is the main theme of the *Rogationist Project of Ongoing Formation* (2002). However, the need is widely felt in the Congregation to develop a concrete itinerary, with contents, personnel, and structures, in collaboration and coordination among the Circumscriptions to better respond to the formation needs of the Confreres.

**122.** It is proposed to study and plan the organization of initial and ongoing formation, with the preparation of a team of experts among the Confreres who can conduct spiritual exercises or courses for the Family of the Rogate both in the various Circumscriptions and online. That team would be coordinated at the level of the Circumscriptions and the General Government.

**123.** Similarly, it is proposed that a *Rogationist Distance Learning School* be created to organize systematic online formation programs for the Confreres and our collaborators in the various areas, including courses on Rogationist religious life for those in ongoing formation as well as for those in the various stages of initial formation.<sup>75</sup> The online inter-circumscription formation programs will promote mutual acquaintance among our Confreres, cultural exchange, and shared inculturation of charism, spirituality, and mission.

**124.** To further strengthen the formation in the charism, in addition to the program offered in initial formation, it is suggested that an intensive period of charismatic formation be organized for candidates for the priesthood before their ordination or in the first years of their ministry, or, in the case of lay Brother, before their perpetual profession. Similar to the formation of formators, this program can be organized by the

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<sup>74</sup> Cf. CICLSAL, *New Wine in New Wineskins*, no. 35e.

<sup>75</sup> Initially provoked by the Covid-19 pandemic, the various online activities undertaken by Circumscriptions, such as courses, workshops, webinars, meetings, and prayer meetings, can continue to be an efficient avenue for initial and ongoing Formation. Examples: council meetings, meetings for specific areas of service and tasks, courses for formands (postulants, novices, and young religious), etc.

General Government and welcome participants from different Circumscriptions. In a mixed format of online and face-to-face meetings, the program could conclude with a pilgrimage to Messina, enriched by moments of study and a spiritual retreat.

**125.** Given the crucial importance of both initial and ongoing formation, the investment already made in the formation of formators should be continued.

### **Human resources**

**126.** A system of coordination for the sharing of personnel is necessary and should be carried out by the General Government, considering the Congregation's formative and apostolic project. The experience of the exchange of personnel and the collaboration among Circumscriptions for common apostolic projects is growing. The *Guidelines for the Exchange of Religious Personnel between Circumscriptions*<sup>76</sup> affirm that these exchanges must be the fruit of common discernment, reflection, study, discussion, and planning. This includes the identification and proper preparation of suitable personnel and the economic aspects involved. The path involves coordination between the Superior General and the Circumscriptions, especially in cases that arise in the Conference of Superiors of Circumscriptions.

**127.** The establishment in Rome of the *Rogationist International Student Residence (Studentato Internazionale Rogazionista [SIR])*, conceived as a center for the formation of Rogationist religious students from different Circumscriptions in view of their insertion into the communities and apostolates of the Italian Provinces and other Circumscriptions, is an initiative to be valued in order to better prepare for the sharing of human resources. The creation of an intercultural formation community of formators and formands of different nationalities at an early stage of formation develops both intercultural competence and insertion into European socio-cultural and ecclesial contexts in which they will be engaged in the future. If the experiment is considered successful, it will be worthwhile to study the possibility of replicating this experience in other Circumscriptions.

### **Material resources**

**128.** The ordinary way of sharing economic resources in the Congregation is by means of *percentage*, based on the economic condition of a House or Circumscription. Each Circumscription should monitor and support Communities that fail to fulfill this duty.

**129.** Other means of raising economic resources necessary for the development of our apostolate come from the Office of Anthonian Benefactors, the animation carried out by the Central or Circumscription Mission Office, participation in the biddings of NGOs and various Bodies, the celebration of Rogationist Mission Day and Mission Appeals, the Distance Sponsorship of our seminarians, and the Perpetual Masses.

**130.** The Project Office operating under the Mission Office at the General Curia, which is aimed at seeking public and private funding, should be supported.<sup>77</sup> It provides

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<sup>76</sup> RAMPAZZO B., Circular Letter, Prot. No. 220/2022, October 24, 2020.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. *Seeing the Crowds*, no. 109.

Circumscriptions with information and assistance in the preparation, presentation, and reporting of development projects for the benefit of the entire Congregation. This Project Office coordinates with the various Circumscriptions.

**131.** The creation of civilly recognized bodies by Circumscriptions or Houses must be authorized by the Major Superior, with the approval of the Superior General (*Norms*, art. 234, 2e). Recognized associations are accountable to the appropriate Institutional authorities, and relations with the Congregation of the Houses in which they operate are codified in the Congregation's regulations (*Norms*, art. 283-285) and their own Internal Regulations.

**132.** For some years now the Church has been urging Institutes of Consecrated Life to define their “stable patrimony (assets)”<sup>78</sup> according to the criteria outlined in the document of the CICLSAL, *Economy at the Service of Charism and Mission*, nos. 38-40. The 12th General Chapter in its Chapter Document *Seeing the Crowds*, with the Operational Proposal no. 112, had already asked the Congregation to define its “Stable Patrimony” [Assets]. The General Government with the Circumscriptions, while awaiting the Implementing Regulations, will study, with the help of experts, how to respond to this request of the Church.

### **Toward a common project**

**133.** Working together for a *common project* is a concrete expression of our synodality because it is an opportunity to deepen fraternal dialogue and open and fruitful interaction among the Circumscriptions.

**134.** Our regulations entrust to the General Government with the task of opening or closing houses or Works, in coordination and dialogue with the Circumscriptions to which they belong. This decision is the result of reflection, careful study, planning, and discussion based on objective pastoral, charismatic, missionary, socioeconomic, etc. criteria. It is appropriate to consider these choices within the broader vision of the Common Project, which involves other Circumscriptions as well. Therefore, the following is proposed:

a. When specific situations arise in which a Circumscription is unable to keep a House open due to a lack of personnel, before deciding to close, sell, rent, or give the property to other Entities for free use, consideration should be given to entrusting the administration of that House to another Rogationist Circumscription. The Superior General will coordinate this entrustment with the Superiors of the Circumscription, both in the process of discernment as well as in its implementation.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> “The stable patrimony consists of all the immovable and movable property that by means of a specific assignment are destined to guarantee the economic security of the institute. For the goods of the entire institute, the General Chapter, or the Superior General with the consent of his/her Council makes this assignment. For the assets of a province, as well as for the assets of a legitimately established house, the Provincial Chapter, or other similar assemblies (cf. can. 632) or the Provincial Superior with the consent of his/her Council and confirmed by the Superior General makes this assignment.” CICLSAL, *Economy at the service of charism and mission*, no. 38.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. RAMPAZZO B., *Guidelines for the Exchange of Religious Personnel between Circumscriptions*, nos. 17-18.

b. Regarding the opening of new missionary presences and stations in new territories, whether on the initiative of the General Government or on the proposal of a Circumscription, their establishment and direction must be placed directly under the authority of the Superior General. The Circumscriptions are always involved in the study and planning of the project through the identification of religious personnel and the provision of economic resources, but it is up to the Superior General to make the decision and determine the timing of the opening of this new reality and to which Circumscription it will be assigned. This will avoid misunderstandings and disagreements regarding territory and jurisdiction.

c. For the purpose of spreading the charism or for pastoral care, the Superior General may authorize a Circumscription to open a presence (missionary station or community) in the geographical area where another Circumscription is present, after having consulted the Superiors of the Circumscriptions concerned to get their opinion on its opportuneness.<sup>80</sup>

d. As for the Confreres to be assigned to the new foundations, they must have the suitability and receive adequate preparation, both remote and immediate. To ensure community life, the number of religious personnel for a new opening should be guaranteed (at least three), so that the Confreres are not left alone for too long.

## **II. RELIGIOUS LIFE, FORMATION, AND VOCATION ANIMATION**

### **1. ROGATIONIST RELIGIOUS LIFE**

#### **A. Unity**

**135.** The Chapter feels the need to urge each Community, each Circumscription, and the General Government to make a careful assessment of the quality of spiritual and apostolic life in terms of unity, sharing, and coordination before making any plans. This is done to take into consideration not only its positive aspects but also its more problematic ones, which are not fully expressed, and which could, in a certain sense, compromise the belonging to our Institute, thus risking to hinder its journey of charismatic, community, and apostolic unity. The prior review will make it easier for each community, the Circumscription, and the Congregation itself to take and adopt directions that are more responsible and responsive to the concrete situations at the geographical levels of Rogationist presence.

**136.** The unity of the Rogationist religious family is realized in fidelity to its charismatic identity as a radical following of Christ of the Rogate, as emphatically expressed by our

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<sup>80</sup> Cf. RAMPAZZO B., *Guidelines for the Exchange of Religious Personnel between Circumscriptions*, no. 20.

Constitutions. For this reason, the interior and apostolic unity of the individual religious, the Communities, the Circumscriptions, and the entire Congregation must be constantly formed, anchoring life and all activities in the charismatic gift that qualifies us in the Church and the civil society. It is believed that this way will help improve the collaboration and sharing between Communities, Circumscriptions, and the General Government, which will be able to face more effectively and constructively facing the challenges of our time.

**137.** The quality of the sense of belonging to our Congregation, both of individual Confreres and local communities, is an issue that deeply affects the whole Congregation, its formation processes, life, and apostolate. The gift of fidelity and the joy of perseverance are values that need to be adequately cultivated and sustained throughout life's journey. Unfortunately, it seems that sharing the apostolic ideals and the charism of the Institute is sometimes not perceived as an essential value for Rogationist life. A weak sense of belonging to the Congregation, therefore, favors vocational fragility, loss of the sense of consecrated life, and painful abandonment.

**138.** It is necessary to place Art. 4 of our Constitutions at the center of each Rogationist's interest: "We acknowledge and love the Congregation of the Rogationists as our spiritual family. We live in it as Religious, Priests and Brothers, with equal rights and duties; we accept its spirit, embrace its ideals, accomplish its works according to the tasks entrusted to us and propagate its spirit, most of all with the holiness of our life." This is not an external belonging, but a strong inner, identity-based belonging. In fact, one belongs to oneself by birth, to the Church by Baptism, and to the Congregation by the special gift of the charism, received from the Spirit, which makes us living members of our Rogationist Family.

**139.** There is an urgent need to recover the sense of fraternal life in common and, with it, communion and sharing within our communities. Unity, sharing, and coordination show their true face experientially only in fraternal life in common; after all, we are well aware that, within the various families of consecrated life, religious are characterized by their common life, which precedes and flows from it every apostolic action and every prior ministerial exercise. Community life is not a flat uniformity, but a conviviality of diversities. As in any human family, there may be divergences and conflicts in a community, but its original tension remains directed to finding ways to overcome them in charity, going beyond the thoughts and actions of the Confreres, the good and the bad, the faults and the shortcomings, and thus finding new ways of rebirth, capable of transforming people in their thoughts and actions, through the action of the Spirit.

**140.** Since fraternal life is a fundamental value, the neglect of fraternity leads to the death of the ideals of freedom and equality within the community, transforming freedom into individualism and equality into the denial of differences. It is well known that individualism, on the one hand, is disastrous and destroys all coexistence, on the other hand, equality becomes egalitarianism, which eliminates any possibility of differentiation. Fraternity can restore these two ideals in spirit, soul, and body, curbing their drift and soothing the wounds that have always marked the life of our communities and Confreres. In the community, then, no one loses or wins, but it is the whole body that benefits or suffers. At the same time, it is in the community that one learns to

exercise fraternal correction, in the name of the inner freedom of each one, in the prophetic mode of denunciation and free proclamation, transforming diversity into opportunities for a multifaceted unity in which each of its members finds his space of vibrant and choral vitality. The role of the Superior, as father and formator, is decisive in re-founding of new communities, rich in gifts and fervent in communion.

**141.** In the deepening of the Chapter, several aspects of the quality of consecrated life to be promoted in our Congregation emerged, avoiding structural deficiencies and superficial attitudes that cause serious problems in the continuation of the vocation journey. For example:

- a. the compromises in the selection process in vocation promotion and the tendency to fill the seminary with inadequately guided candidates;
- b. the lack of adequately trained vocation formators and animators;
- c. the lack of organizational and operational guidelines and coordination within the formation team;
- d. the lack of a family climate in our educational and formation communities;
- e. the emphasis given to the apostolate over community and, more properly, religious life;
- f. the lack of motivated deep relationships and fruitful dialogue in the community;
- g. the tendency to be absent from the community, preferring more intimate, personalized, and self-directed forms of communication, through social media, as a search for the self, avoiding the daily confrontation with the community, even though these do not create a world parallel to that of the community to which one belongs.

## **B. Sharing**

**142.** In our time, the Church urges us to place the theme of synodality at the center of our reflections in preparation for the Jubilee of 2025. Our Chapter Assembly has also asked how this can be done, following the ecclesial path in the understanding of sharing, emphasizing the need to do it in synodal ways. First of all, it is necessary that our community meetings, as a rule, become places and moments of real sharing of thoughts, projects, and hopes of all the members of the community, thus promoting communion and a more correct relationship between the Superior and his Council, and also among all the Confreres in the community. This will happen when all the Confreres grow in the ability to listen attentively and respectfully to one another, to develop a serene and open dialogue, and to arrive at a community discernment, rich in *sensus fidei* and docility to the Holy Spirit.

In fact, the meetings of the community are not only guided by the laws and customs of democracy but are a free, open, and attentive listening to the voice of the Spirit by all the members of the community. In this essential difference, we must be formed by a concrete practice and attitude that is both humble and prophetic.



**143.** Sharing takes place in two directions. First, internal sharing concerns the sharing of individual members with the Community, of Communities with the Circumscription, and of Circumscriptions with the Congregation at large. Second, external sharing considers:

a) first, sharing with the local Church in which we live and work. This is the good ground where Rogationists are locally rooted and where, primarily, they manifest the charism of the Rogate and share the apostolic fruits. Each religious community is called to share and propagate the talents it has received, that is, the Charism of the Rogate and the apostolic works;

b) second, sharing with civil society, to put ourselves at the service of spreading the Kingdom of God in the world, collaborating with all, and sharing the specific service entrusted to us by the Lord of the harvest.

### **C. Coordination**

**144.** The realization of coordination requires the *networking* of our various apostolic works and services in our communities (social-charitable, educational, cultural, spiritual, etc.). Proper coordination among persons and activities makes the work easier, more efficient, and more professional. Although experiences may vary according to place and situation, the planning and organization of our activities will help to give them unity, sharing, and coordination. Reflection on this theme has been enriched by Pope Francis' teaching in his Encyclical *Fratelli tutti*. In particular, when the papal Document illustrates: the need for fraternal dialogue (206), the care and kindness to be afforded to the other (223), interaction (224), and the common search for truth (206).

### **D. Community life**

**145.** Each Community, each Government of Circumscription, and even the General Government should assess the quality of their Rogationist life in order to draw up a concrete and coordinated plan that takes into consideration the weaknesses that do not manifest themselves and, perhaps, hinder a stronger membership, and may destroy unity. Remembering that the interior and apostolic unity of individual Religious, Communities, Circumscriptions, and the whole Congregation must be constantly formed by anchoring life and all activities in the charismatic gift that qualifies them in the Church and civil society.

**146.** “We acknowledge and love the Congregation of the Rogationists as our spiritual family” (*Constitutions*, art. 4). For this reason, the appreciation of fraternity can restore spirit, soul, and body to evangelical ideals, restrain individualistic drifts and heal the wounds that unfortunately have marked and continue to mark the lives of not a few Confreres. Each community, in drawing up the project of community life, will evaluate the quality of its own fraternal life, remembering that, as in any family, there may be divergences and conflicts, but that our ideal tension is directed and aimed at finding a solution by going forward in charity, avoiding at all costs, the search for faults and deficiencies in others.

**147.** As provided in the norms, a synodal style should be promoted in *Family and House Councils*, fostering formation in attentive listening and respect for others and developing a serene and frank dialogue among the Confreres in order to arrive at a community discernment, rich in *sensus fidei* and docility to the Holy Spirit.

**148.** The Major Superior, through his Councilors, should promote the development of networks among the various apostolic services present in the Circumscription and periodic meetings of those responsible for such activities for coordination, collaboration, and sharing of methods and initiatives in order to present a unified image of our Congregation.

**149.** The Superior General should encourage and facilitate the sharing among the various Circumscriptions of the Congregation for an understanding of the life, apostolate, and problems that each of them goes through, both by means of scheduled official moments and by specifically tailored initiatives designed to nurture communion and to carry out their service of formation to unity.

**150.** Each religious community should feel that it is an active part of the life of the Church and of the Civil Society in which it carries out its works. It should be attentive to sharing the various moments of its life and that of the local Church; it should welcome the initiatives of civil society, especially in the promotion of minors and the poor, bringing the contribution of its specific mission of solidarity and compassion.

## **2. FORMATION**

**151.** The plan of action of the outgoing General Government included the revision of the *Ratio Institutionis*, which was not completed. It is therefore suggested that the work of revising the *Ratio* be continued, with the collaboration of the Councilors of the sector of Formation of the various Circumscriptions or of a Commission on Formation that could be created to carry out this project. In its drafting, special attention should be paid to the current problems of inculturation. The ongoing formation should also be included and integrated, so as make it clear that the formation journey of the Rogationist religious is lifelong.

**152.** Recognizing the great importance of basic formation, especially at the stage of first acceptance and initial accompaniment, it is proposed that the Sector of Formation, with the help of a Commission, draw up a Directory containing guidelines and basic norms for the formation of aspirants in all Circumscriptions, especially with regard to specific themes concerning knowledge of the Founder, the history of the Congregation, the charism and the mission of the Rogationists.

**153.** In initial formation, special attention should be given to the growth of the sense of belonging to our religious family (*Constitutions*, art. 4), educating us to pass from an external and formal belonging to an internal and identity-based belonging, remembering that just as one belongs to oneself by birth and belongs to the Church, which is the Body of Christ, by Baptism, so one belongs to the Congregation by the special gift of the charism received from the Spirit, which has made him an integral part of our religious family.

**154.** The formation of formators is a very effective means of enriching the formators and the formation of the various Circumscriptions. Therefore, it is proposed that this program be continued and continuously improved, considering the feedback of the participants, the coordinator, and the experience of the last five years, in order to promote a deeper understanding of the Father Founder and our Charism.

**155.** Ongoing formation and the sabbatical period are two very important moments of formation to help the Confreres and accompany them on their Rogationist vocational journey. Therefore, they should never be neglected. We should set up an Ongoing Formation Program, both at the general and the circumscriptional levels, with common contents that address aspects of the Rogationist vocation, renewal of the appreciation of the charism, religious/priestly identity, learning the language and literature of the Founder, charity, mission, and other concerns that invest the life of a Rogationist today. A reference point in this regard is our document, *Stir into flame the Gift of God that Is in You (2 Tim 1:6). Project of Rogationist Permanent Formation (2002).*

**156.** The General Government appoints a special Commission for Ongoing Formation to be responsible for the sabbatical period. It will prepare a program that will help the Confreres regain enthusiasm for a serene and happy appreciation of their Rogationist vocation.

**157.** The Superiors of the Circumscriptions offer the Confreres the possibility of living a sabbatical period according to the indications of the *Project of Ongoing Formation*.

**158.** The General Government is invited to prepare *periodic formation resources* based on our *Rule of Life* and the documents of the 13<sup>th</sup> General Chapter. This will serve as a common source of formation content for initial and ongoing formation in the Circumscriptions.

**159.** The Rogationist International Student Residence (*Studentato Internazionale Rogazionista*) in Rome is an initiative of the General Government and the two Italian Provinces to respond to the decrease in the number of religious in Italy. It gives the two Italian Provinces greater security for the future in terms of religious personnel to animate the Communities and carry out the apostolate in Italy and Europe. For this reason, the Italian Provinces must commit themselves to offer every possible kind of support for the formation of young religious coming from the other Circumscriptions for their integration and preparation.

The International Student Residence, after its first year of experience, highlights some needs:

a. To have a stable “Team” of Formators (i.e., Superior/Prefect, Spiritual Director, and Treasurer);

b. To define, as soon as possible, in agreement with the General Government, the Major Superiors of the two Italian Circumscriptions, and the Team of Formators, a Statute/Directive containing some essential indications concerning:

1) the modalities of dependence on the authority of the Superior General and the Major Superiors both from Italy and from the respective Circumscriptions of origin;

2) the role of the Superior/Prefect of the formation community;

3) the formation curriculum.

c. To examine the possibility of finding a suitable logistical arrangement regarding the place for the appropriate formation;

d. To examine the possibility of offering the service of the Rogationist International Student Residence to other Circumscriptions for candidates who are willing to commit themselves to the mission and to live in an international and intercultural religious community.

### **3. VOCATION MINISTRY**

**160.** In several Circumscriptions, there has been a significant decrease in the number of candidates for the Rogationist consecrated life. The causes are many. Most recently, the *Covid-19* pandemic has undoubtedly had a negative impact, making it impossible to carry out normal vocation promotion activities.

**161.** Acknowledging the decline in the number of candidates should not discourage us, but rather should lead us to revive our commitment to vocation animation, putting the best spiritual, human, and material resources at its disposal. In the near future, it is essential that we focus on these goals:

1) Intensify personal and community prayer;

2) Review and study the cultural and socioeconomic situation of the countries where we work;

3) Explore new approaches and strategies;

4) Commit human and economic resources;

5) Create synergy within the Circumscription, sharing spiritual and material support from all communities, not just the houses of formation;

6) Accompany young people in their vocation discernment, offering them more personalized and qualified guidance.

**162.** For a qualified and effective revitalization of our vocation ministry, it is necessary that each Circumscription prepares a document with concrete guidelines for the animation and promotion of vocations. In the drafting of this document, we should treasure the *Guidelines* proposed in the document *Rogationist Youth Ministry* and try to translate them appropriately into the geographical and cultural context, combining youth ministry and vocation promotion in a wise and charismatically prophetic way in the countries and different socio-cultural contexts in which we are called to work.

**163.** The General Government should encourage and intensify the exchange of experiences and, if possible, formation and study meetings among those who work in this field, especially making use of videoconferencing and online communication.

## **A. Youth ministry and vocation promotion**

**164.** The Congregation has recently come out with a document for the Rogationist Youth Vocation Animation Service, which bears the title *Rogationist Youth Ministry. Guidelines*. The Rogationist youth ministry is always necessarily qualified as a *vocation ministry*. One cannot exist without the other.

**165.** “Youth ministry and vocation ministry must go hand in hand. Vocation ministry is supported, emerges, and develops in youth ministry. For its part, youth ministry, in order to be dynamic, complete, effective, and truly formative, must be open to the vocational dimension. This means that the vocational dimension of youth ministry is not something that should be raised only at the end of the whole process or to a group that is particularly sensitive to a specific vocational call but must be constantly raised throughout the process of evangelization and education in the faith of adolescents and young people.”<sup>81</sup>

**166.** In preparing their own “Guidelines on the animation and promotion of vocations”, the Circumscriptions will treasure the “Guidelines” proposed in the document *Rogationist Youth Ministry* and will seek to apply them to their own geographical and cultural contexts, combining youth ministry and vocation promotion in a wise and charismatically prophetic way.

## **B. The Role of the Vocation Director**

**167.** *The Rogationist, by identity and charism, is a vocation animator*<sup>82</sup> and recognizes in vocation ministry the *primacy of insistent and trusting prayer to the Lord of the harvest so that he may send out laborers into his harvest.*<sup>83</sup> We are also aware of the importance in vocation ministry of the personal and communal *testimony of our life joyfully given to God and to others, the climate of fraternal love and community, the sharing and communication are the best attraction for all those whom God calls.*<sup>84</sup> And if it is true that every Community and every religious is called to take charge of the transmission of the charism to the new generations, it is also true that *the Superiors and those who are appointed to assume this office are the immediate responsible for vocational animation.*<sup>85</sup>

**168.** We believe that the role of the vocation director today should be more highly valued and given the importance and attention it deserves. In some Circumscriptions, the office of vocation director has been assigned to Confreres who hold other offices of responsibility that absorb time and energy, with the risk that they can do little for vocation promotion.

**169.** In today's situation, we call the attention of the Superiors of Circumscriptions to devote more care and resources to vocation promotion, both in the identification,

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<sup>81</sup> FRANCIS, *Message to participants at the International Conference "Vocations Ministry and Consecrated Life: Prospects and Hopes"*, Rome, December 1, 2017.

<sup>82</sup> *Constitutions*, art. 90.

<sup>83</sup> *Constitutions*, art. 91.

<sup>84</sup> *Constitutions*, art. 93.

<sup>85</sup> *Constitutions*, art. 94.

selection, and preparation of vocation directors, in the planning of their apostolic activities and commitments, and in the availability of the economic resources that are necessary to carry out the activities. As a rule, the vocation director should be included in the formation team of the community of first acceptance in which he works, so that the transition between the accompaniment given to candidates when they were still outside the community and the experience of the community of the first acceptance may be lived by the candidates with continuity and gradualness, avoiding misunderstandings and contrasts, but fostering among the Confreres a spirit of collaboration, sharing, and synodality in the formative action.

### **C. Vocation accompaniment and discernment**

**170.** Vocation is always a call to go out of oneself in order to encounter the mystery of God. It is not a solitary undertaking but one to be made together throughout life, *oriented toward the maturity of faith, toward the adult state (cf. 1 Cor. 13:11-12) of being a believer.*<sup>86</sup>

**171.** One of the most important commitments that the Congregation must assume in order to respond to the decrease in the number of candidates and to the ever-painful problem of the abandonment of consecrated persons, religious and priests, is to offer personalized and qualified accompaniment to candidates in the various stages of their vocational journey.

**172.** “The first thing we must discern and discover is this: Jesus wants to be a friend to every young person. This discernment is the basis of all else.”<sup>87</sup>

**173.** Accompaniment must help the person to grow in the freedom to say his decisive and definitive yes to the Lord. Pope Francis invites us to place at the center of this accompaniment in vocation discernment, the art of listening, *of knowing how to listen to the other person*, which requires an attitude of profound attention to the person we are accompanying on the vocational journey, seeing God's plan being fulfilled in them.

**174.** *The first kind of sensitivity in vocation discernment is attention to the person before us. It is a matter of listening to someone who is sharing his very self in what he says. A sign of this willingness to listen is the time we are ready to spare for others. More than the amount of time we spend, it is about making others feel that my time is their time, that they have all the time they need to say everything they want. The other person must sense that I am listening unconditionally, without being offended or shocked, tired, or bored.*<sup>88</sup>

**175.** *The second kind of sensitivity is to distinguish grace from temptation in order to discern the salutary promptings of the good Spirit, who proposes to us the Lord's truth, but also the traps laid by the evil spirit. Here I need to ask myself what exactly is that the other person trying to tell me, what he/she wishes me to understand about what is happening in his/her life.*<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> CICLSAL, *The Gift of Fidelity the Joy of Perseverance*, no. 48.

<sup>87</sup> FRANCIS, Post-synodal exhortation *Christus vivit*, no. 250.

<sup>88</sup> FRANCIS, *Christus vivit*, no. 292.

<sup>89</sup> FRANCIS, *Christus vivit*, no.293.

**176.** *The third kind of sensitivity is the ability to perceive what is driving the other person. This calls for a deeper kind of listening, one able to discern the direction in which that person truly wants to move. Apart from what they are feeling or thinking right now, and whatever has happened up to this point in their lives, the real issue is what they would like to be.*<sup>90</sup>

**177.** It must be the concern of every Circumscription to prepare and train vocation directors to be experienced and enlightened companions of young people who ask for help on the path of vocation search and discernment. In fact, the first essential task required of the vocation director is to make himself the *companion of the young person* in his journey of vocational obedience (listening) to the Lord who calls.

#### **D. Means, tools, and strategies of vocation promotion**

**178.** Some Circumscriptions favor meeting young people and carrying out vocation animation in schools and parishes.

**179.** In some countries, Rogationist vocation animators participate in youth meetings and events organized at the parish or diocesan level, where the presence of young people is relevant and the opportunities for mutual acquaintance are many and positive.

**180.** In some Circumscriptions, the vocation proposal is conveyed through the world of social communication (press, radio, and television), mostly by offering our presence and participation in religious programs. However, it is observed that in today's world of youth, the use of social media in interpersonal communication is gaining consistency and importance. The Internet and social networks have created a new way of communicating and making connections, and "*they are a public square where the young spend much of their time and meet one another easily, even though not all have equal access to it, particularly in some regions of the world. They provide an extraordinary opportunity for dialogue, encounter, and exchange between persons, as well as access to information and knowledge. [...] In many countries, the internet and social networks already represent a firmly established forum for reaching and involving young people, not least in pastoral initiatives and activities.*"<sup>91</sup>

**181.** For this reason, the use of social media is also becoming an indispensable tool for Rogationist vocation animation, as well as a conducive space to meet young people and foster fruitful relationships for the deepening of the faith and the proclamation of the *Gospel of vocation*.

**182.** Rogationist Vocation Ministry is at the service of the local Church with the specific charism of the Rogate, that is, the primacy of prayer and service to the least. Therefore, Rogationists, especially our vocation directors, should make themselves available to collaborate with, support, and animate the Centers of Vocation Ministry in the local Churches with initiatives and apostolic activities shared with the diocesan clergy and other religious institutes.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> FRANCIS, *Christus vivit*, no. 294.

<sup>91</sup> FRANCIS, *Christus vivit*, no. 87.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. *Seeing the Crowds*, no. 83c.

**183.** The recent document “The Rogationist Mission in Parishes and Shrines. Guidelines” recommends to those who work in the pastoral service of our Parishes and Shrines the duty to dedicate themselves to the *Rogationist Vocation Animation*. The commitment to animate and cultivate vocations to the consecrated life of Rogationists, Daughters of Divine Zeal, and Missionaries of the Rogate (*Missionarie Rogazioniste*) must be considered by all as primary and fundamental.<sup>93</sup>

**184.** For this reason, each Rogationist parish will draw up the *Parish Vocation Pastoral Plan* at the service of Rogationist vocation animation, *integrating it with the program of parish activities and the diocesan plan* (no. 47).

**185.** For some time now, the vocation of Religious Brothers has long been experiencing a serious crisis in the Church and especially in the so-called *clerical* Congregations, in which Religious Brothers share the same religious consecration with ordained members. The document *Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church*<sup>94</sup> describes the proper dimensions of this ecclesial vocation and invites us to recover its proper value and charismatic and apostolic importance in our Religious Family.

The initiatives to be taken for the revitalization of the vocation ministry for the Religious Brother in our Congregation should be specified in the Guidelines of the Circumscription for the animation and promotion of vocations.

### III. ROGATE

**186.** The animation and diffusion (both internally and externally) of the Rogate and the Communication in the Congregation and the Church is a priority commitment. On a personal level, each Rogationist is committed by the vow of the Rogate to participate fully in the apostolate of praying for vocations and propagating the Rogate. At the community level, we are called to make our community *a house and school of prayer* for good laborers.<sup>95</sup>

**187.** The charism of the Rogate should help us to walk together in unity, sharing, and coordination. Cultivating the synergy of coordination, growing together, and making others grow in the field of the Rogate means promoting the exchange of resources among the Rogate Centers in the Circumscriptions. Thus, rather than having separate excellent works in the field of Rogate in each Circumscription, it is better to grow together and be effective and credible witnesses together as a Family of the Rogate, each in its own place.

**188.** The task of the General Councilor of the Rogate is concretized as follows:

(a) the first and fundamental commitment is to ensure coordination in view of a common and shared planning together with the Circumscription Rogate Centers;

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<sup>93</sup> *Norms*, art. 33; cf. also *Norms*, art. 116.

<sup>94</sup> CICLESAL, October 4, 2015, Year of Consecrated Life.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. *Norms*, art. 83.



b) the second commitment is to promote the study of the charism and spirituality, the spread of the knowledge of the Founder, and the study of the history of the Congregation;

c) the third commitment is to disseminate the work of the Research Center by making it known, through round tables, debates, and dialogues at various levels, in different social and ecclesial bodies. For this purpose, it is useful to plan and establish a dedicated central office for communication.

**189.** The Secretariat, composed of all the Councilors of the Sector of the Rogate of the Circumscriptions and presided over by the General Councilor, will have the following tasks:

a. draw up a 6-year plan of activities, dividing all annual tasks, jointly planning and scheduling all the interventions and events for each year;

b. meet (online) for a quarterly review and evaluation for possible improvement or enhancement of the common action plan;

c. designate a person at the general level to be in charge of the Priestly Union of Prayers for Vocations;

d. establish an online Library of Rogationist Literature for all Rogationists to access for reference and study.

**190.** At the general level for the entire Congregation, the Rogate Secretariat is responsible for animating and coordinating the local Rogate Centers in the Circumscriptions.

**191.** At the general level, a Center for the Pastoral Service of Social Communication should be set up to coordinate the various areas of animation in the Congregation.<sup>96</sup>

**192.** A Liturgical Office should be organized in the General Curia to promote liturgical life in the Congregation.

**193.** It is proposed that a center of charismatic formation be established at the general level, with a group of experts in the Rogate, to be responsible for the preparation of manuals and aids on the Charism, the Founder, and the history of the Congregation.

**194.** Regarding the Statutes of the Rogate Centers of our Congregation, the General Government should give indications and guidelines to be adapted to the different contexts of the Circumscriptions.

#### **IV. CHARITY AND MISSION**

**195.** Religious who work in the area of charity and mission should be qualified to respond to the signs of the times in different contexts. Creativity and zeal are required in the exercise of charity. It is important, therefore, to provide adequate preparation

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<sup>96</sup> Cf. *Norms*, art. 124.

from the time of initial formation. The appropriateness of establishing a Rogate School for formation in Charity and Missions should be considered.

**196.** It is necessary to strengthen and support existing missionary stations.

**197.** In the preferential option for the poor, it is appropriate to work in close collaboration with the laity as partners who are organically inserted in our works of charity.

**198.** To be effective in our works charity and mission, collaboration among the Confreres of the different Circumscriptions, as well as with the local Church and the various sectors of society, should be strengthened by way of networking, with the coordination of the relevant authorities of the General Government and local governments.

**199.** It is proposed that the missionary stations be gradually strengthened to become religious communities.

**200.** Study the possibility of establishing a Rogate School for Charity and Missions to develop zeal and competence in this field, and as a means of sharing the charism of the Rogate with the laity and other Congregations, offering a diploma or certificate according to existing laws.

## **V. PARISHES, LAITY, AND YOUTH MINISTRY**

**201.** The parish apostolate is a recent development in our history. We were born with Orphanages, but today many of our communities have re-qualified themselves in the parish setting. This is due to the reduction of the commitments in the works for the benefit of disadvantaged minors, tasks that today have been taken over and managed directly by social services and state welfare. In this sense, it is hoped that the specificity of our charism can be expressed more effectively in the parish ministry.

**202.** Our parishes are the privileged place to welcome, animate, and nourish all the expressions of the Rogationist laity. In view of what has been said and discussed in the Chapter, and as already done in the General Government Action Plan 2016-2022, *From Compassion to Mission*, we feel the duty to reaffirm that further efforts should be made to express the Congregation's charismatic identity, especially in the parish setting, through the implementation of concrete initiatives. Among the priorities of the above-mentioned Action Plan was that of working hand in hand with and in the charismatic family of the Rogate and therefore also with the Laity. In it (p. 24) we read: *The Laity can reveal to the Church the original and unseen potentialities of the charism.* Therefore, in every area of our apostolate, we must consider the lay faithful in order to awaken, animate, and motivate our collaborators on a daily basis, considering them not only as *implementors* but above all as *companions in the journey* whom the Lord sends us to serve together the People of God entrusted to us.

Youth ministry, which fully belongs to the sphere of our charism, should be at the center of the attention of our Religious, aware that the new vocations to consecrated life that we need come from young people.

In the formation, courses should be offered to help the young religious learn the dynamics of vocation animation and promotion.

203. It has been observed that the preparation of those Rogationists who are called to be parish priests is often inadequate. The General Government is asked to work for the implementation of an *adequate* preparation, centered on the *Rogationist* way of leading the People of God entrusted to us.

204. Wherever possible, the Circumscriptions should strive that each of our parishes opens a *Help Center for families with minors in difficulty*. This would be a place of meeting, interaction, and listening that could be run by lay people belonging to our Associations.

205. Rogationist lay associations should be present in all our Parishes and Shrines. The General Government should, through the Governments of the Circumscriptions, should insist that there is a worrying lack of coordination among our parishes and shrines. The possibility of building common pathways and initiatives should be studied. For example, it would be desirable to create and network all the groups of our volunteers, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, animators in the oratories, choirs, sports, and altar servers. Such groups could meet to exchange best practices in the implementation of our charism and could also become seedbeds of vocations.

206. It would be desirable for each Circumscription to have at least one Church with Perpetual Adoration for Vocations. In all our parishes and places of worship, new opportunities should also be created that go beyond the traditional evangelization and catechetical programs. This includes the possibility of developing cultural projects to encourage the return of those who are far from the faith community and to welcome those who are coming for the first time and those who are returning.

207. We believe that the UPV and PUPV can develop and spread through our parishes and sanctuaries. It is proposed that the animation of these associations be removed from the sector of the Rogate and included instead in the Sector of the Laity, Parishes, and Youth Ministry.

208. The General Government undertakes to organize Courses of Vocation Ministry for the Laity, with the aim of forming people who can also assimilate the theological and cultural profile of our charism. To strengthen the sense of unity among our Circumscriptions, the General Government should indicate an annual theme for reflection to be offered to all the Rogationist Lay Associations.

209. In all the Circumscriptions, a youth ministry program should be developed in which the theme of vocation is given the greatest importance and priority.

210. The Rogationist Associations should be promoted in the Circumscriptions through the involvement in and coordination with the Union of Rogationist Associations (U.A.R.).

**211.** In order to involve all our lay Rogationist Associations, the Symposium for the Laity, which could not be held during the previous six-year term because of the pandemic, should be held during this six-year term.

**212.** Study the possibility of promoting a UPV-Youth, where one does not yet exist, to raise the awareness of the younger generation of the necessity of praying for vocations and thus spread the charism of the Rogate. The General Government in agreement with the Union of Rogationist Associations (U.A.R.), will organize the *International Meeting of Rogationist Youth* every four years, avoiding the coincidence with World Youth Day,

## **VI. GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF GOODS**

**213.** The General Councilors may be assigned other duties outside the Council and may reside outside the General Curia when necessary.

**214.** Given the urgent need on the part of the General Curia to support the works of formation in the missions, a *one-time (una tantum) contribution* is requested from all the Houses, to be used exclusively for this purpose.

**215.** The new General Government, in agreement with the Circumscriptions, will study how to overcome the present economic crisis.

**216.** Concerning the Rogationist socio-educational sector, by involving all Circumscriptions, the experience of networking should be deepened, in order to achieve International Pedagogical Coordination, promoting common formation courses for collaborators, encouraging exchanges, and sharing of ideas and initiatives, creating an ad hoc website and applications so that Rogationist socio-educational works can be presented internationally.

**217.** There should be the completion of the inventory of all the real estate properties in the Congregation, in all Circumscriptions, with a thorough compilation of the deeds of ownership of the properties acquired or received in succession to the Congregation. Each Circumscription should send annually to the General Curia a list of all the properties it owns, specifying in a standard form common to all, indicating elements should not be missing from this inventory.

**218.** The system for the financial and administrative management of the apostolic works and religious personnel should be improved so that the information is updated and monitored daily and online, through an ad hoc application.

**219.** The reporting of the accounts of the offices of the General Curia and the Circumscriptions should be updated, if possible, two months before the celebration of the Chapter.

**Message**  
**of the Holy Father Pope Francis**  
**to the 13<sup>th</sup> General Chapter**

Reverend Father **Bruno RAMPAZZO**  
Superior General  
of the Rogationists of the Heart of Jesus

On the occasion of your 13<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, I wish to encourage you in your spiritual preparation for this event of grace: it is an important reminder to return more and more to the roots of your Congregation, to deepen its charism in order to be able to incarnate it in the most appropriate way in the present socio-cultural context and in new existential frontiers.

You propose to reflect on the theme “Rogationist religious life today: unity, coordination, and sharing.” In this way, you intend to enter into the synodal journey of the Church to identify a common itinerary aimed at harmonizing unity, plurality, communion, and diversity. It is a matter of laying the foundations to build the present and future of your Institute on the pillars of participation and mission. To realize this project, you are called to journey along apostolic paths, including new ones, to bear witness to the Gospel of charity, committing yourselves to be eloquent signs of God's love and instruments of peace in every environment.

For this to happen, you must preserve the spiritual heritage handed down to you by your founder, St. Hannibal, who loved Christ intensely and was always inspired by Him to carry out a courageous apostolate in favor of his neighbor in need. Follow his example and continue his mission which is still valid today, even though the social conditions in which we live have changed.

The great challenge of inculturation asks you to proclaim the Good News in languages and ways that are understandable to the men and women of our time. Vast, therefore, is the field of apostolate that opens before you! Through the contemplation of the compassion of the Christ of the Rogate, the docility to the desires of the Holy Spirit, live the Rogationist prophetic charism with joy and generosity as men of prayer and charity. Give your existence to the poor, cultivate a true passion for education, especially for the young, and dedicate yourselves to an intense pastoral activity among the people, especially for the last and the discarded.

So many people in the world are still waiting to know Jesus and his Gospel: it is necessary to create fraternity and collaboration in order to proclaim with joy that Jesus is the Savior of all. Therefore, involve the lay faithful as well, and share with them the

spiritual and cultural heritage received as a gift from the Founder: seek together with them new ways of closeness, promoting simplicity as a form of sharing. Each one of you, however, knows well that to be fruitful in the proclamation of the Gospel as Apostles of the Rogate, it is necessary first of all to cultivate constant contact with Christ in intense and fervent prayer.

May the Virgin Mary protect you and may St. Hannibal confirm your intentions. For my part, I assure you of my prayerful remembrance and, while asking you to pray for me, I cordially impart to you my Blessing.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, June 24, 2022

*Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.*

Franciscus

## **Message of the 13<sup>th</sup> General Chapter to the Congregation**

Rome, July 24, 2022

Greetings from the 13<sup>th</sup> General Chapter

To: the Rogationist Confreres  
the Sisters Daughters of Divine Zeal  
the Family of the Rogate

Dearly beloved,

As we conclude the 13<sup>th</sup> General Chapter of the Congregation and are about to leave this Rogate Center of Spirituality in Morlupo, our thoughts go out to you to share our feelings in fraternal communion.

During these twenty days, we have met together in moments of prayer or while working in the assembly hall or in commissions or conversing in the park, echoing the theme of the Chapter that we in the Congregation have given “Rogationist Religious Life Today: unity, sharing, and coordination”.

We perceived the development of our Religious Family, even visibly, considering that we came together from the Philippines, Congo, Italy, Brazil, Cameroon, Argentina, Slovakia, India, and Rwanda. When we were together, we did not feel at all the distance of our countries of origin. We can say that it was a time of work, with the discomfort of the heat, but spent in a serene and joyful fraternity.

The shared glance at the Congregation, while it allowed us to bless the Lord for the good things we can do in our apostolate, also made us aware of our limitations and the many difficulties, and all the more of the need to rekindle in ourselves the flame of the Rogate that Father Hannibal passed on to us, in order to grow in this apostolic zeal and to *walk together*”

Pope Francis reminded us of this in his message to our Chapter:

“So many people in the world are still waiting to know Jesus and his Gospel: it is necessary to create fraternity and collaboration in order to proclaim with joy that Jesus is the Savior of all. Therefore, involve the lay faithful as well, and share with them the spiritual and cultural heritage received as a gift from the Founder: seek together with them new ways of closeness, promoting simplicity as a form of sharing.

“Each one of you, however, knows well that to be fruitful in the proclamation of the Gospel as Apostles of the Rogate, it is necessary first of all to cultivate constant contact with Christ in intense and fervent prayer.”

Moved by a lively sense of belonging, in our Communities, in our Circumscriptions, *we walk together* with those who have been called to the service of the fraternity and with the whole Family of the Rogate.

We hope that this work of ours, which we have tried to communicate in the Chapter Document, will be welcomed first of all by each one of us and make it his own.

Let us remain united, under the kind gaze of the Divine Superiors, and may the intercession of our Founder, St. Hannibal Mary Di Francia, grant us this gift.

With fraternal affection,

The 13<sup>th</sup> General Chapter



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