



COMMEMORATION OF THE  
BLESSED TRANSITUS OF ST. HANNIBAL MARY

The Transitus Prayer is the commemoration of the death, the passage to Heaven of our Father, St. Hannibal Mary. If possible, the prayer should take place on the morning of June 1, around 6:30 a.m., the time of St. Hannibal Mary's death.

Solemn form: To be celebrated early in the morning, the commemoration begins with a hymn to St. Hannibal Mary or another appropriate song, during the entrance procession. The presider brings, if possible, the relic of the Saint. The relic is placed next to the altar, and both are incensed. Then the celebrant or guide, from the presider's chair, begins the prayer as indicated below.

Simple form: If possible, the relic of the Saint is placed near the altar. The celebration begins with a Hymn to St. Hannibal Mary. Then it continues as indicated below. If the presider is neither a priest nor a deacon, the greeting "The Lord be with you" is omitted both at the beginning and at the end.

## FIRST FORMAT

### GREETINGS

L. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

A. *Amen.*

L. The Lord be with you.

A. *And with your spirit.*

L. Dear Brothers, we are gathered together to commemorate the *transitus* of our Fr. Hannibal Mary, that is, his passage from earthly life to eternal life, which took place at the dawn of Wednesday, June 1, 1927, in the locality of Guardia, on the outskirts of Messina. It is a grace for all of us to once more listen to his last words, to remember his last gestures, and to relive his death.

### A brief pause for silence

L. Praise to you, O Father, for you have enriched the Church with the holiness of your servant Hannibal Mary.

A. *Blessed be the Lord forever.*

L. Praise to you, O Lord Jesus Christ, for you have made St. Hannibal Mary an outspoken and ardent prophet of your words: “Rogate Dominum messis ...”

A. *Blessed be the Lord forever.*

L. Praise to you, O Holy Spirit, for you have endowed St. Hannibal Mary with the charisms of charity and wisdom of the Rogate.

A. *Blessed be the Lord forever.*

L. *Let us pray.*

Holy Father, you deigned to accept your humble servant Hannibal Mary to the glory of the Blessed. Grant that we, who devoutly remember his transitus from this earth to you, may follow his example and burn with the same love for you and for our brothers and sisters and one day be ad-

mitted with him into eternal joy. Through Christ our Lord.

A. Amen.

FROM THE BOOK OF WISDOM

(4:7-15)

But the righteous one, though he dies early, shall be at rest. For the age that is honorable comes not with the passing of time, nor can it be measured in terms of years. Rather, understanding passes for gray hair, and an unsullied life is the attainment of old age. The one who pleased God was loved; he who lived among sinners was transported, snatched away, lest wickedness pervert his mind or deceit beguile his soul; For the witchery of paltry things obscures what is right and the whirl of desire transforms the innocent mind. Having become perfect in a short while, he reached the fullness of a long career; for his soul was pleasing to the LORD, therefore he sped him out of the midst of wickedness. But the people saw and did not understand, nor did they take this into account.

The Word of the Lord.

Psalm 112

*The Blessings of the Righteous Man*

**Ref. He gives generously to the poor,  
his justice endures forever.**

Blessed the man who fears the Lord,  
who greatly delights in his commands.  
His posterity shall be mighty upon the earth;  
the upright generation shall be blessed. **R.**

He dawns through the darkness,  
his generosity shall endure forever.  
Well for the man who is gracious and lends,  
who conducts his affairs with justice. **R.**

He shall never be moved;

the just man shall be in everlasting remembrance.  
An evil report he shall not fear;  
his heart is firm, trusting in the Lord. **R.**

Pause for silent reflection.

### ACCOUNT OF THE DEATH OF ST. HANNIBAL MARY

**L.** Dear Brothers, having listened to the Word of God which enlightened us about the death of the Righteous Man, let us now prepare ourselves with devout recollection to relive the moment of St. Hannibal's death. From the words of his first biography, we will once again hear the account of his last days on earth up to the moment when he entered the joys of eternal life to receive the reward promised to the good laborers of the Gospel. It was at 6:30 at dawn on Wednesday, 1 June 1927, in the locality of Guardia, in Messina. May this moment of listening and prayer *illumine the eyes of our minds and make us understand* the holiness to which God is calling us, following in the footsteps of our Father.

One or more readers take turns in reading.

From the biography *Father Mary Hannibal Di Francia. His Life and Works* by Fr. Francis Vitale (English edition, pp. 361 ff)

Easter was approaching and we wondered if the Risen Jesus would take the Father into heavenly life. The Father was eagerly awaiting Easter, hoping to celebrate the Holy Mass and say: *I have wanted so much to eat this Passover meal with you.*

As his illness worsened, the Father went to confession very often and, like a candid child, asked some of his priests for advice. One evening he said to Fr. Vitale: "After I die, I want you to continue to help these people (he named them one by one) and in this particular manner..." Charity reigned until his last breath.

Great were his sufferings during the last days of his illness, but equally ad-

mirable were his examples of self-surrender and union with God. He lacked sleep and rest, and sometimes he could not even breathe; it seemed that he was dying. When he had periods of rest, he used to say: "I am a ball in God's hands. He is a good marksman who knows how to aim well, and one day he heals me, another day he hits me." On the night of his last Easter, when he understood that he would no longer be able to say Mass again, he exclaimed: "My Easter is to do God's will. He could heal me by his mere word as he did with the paralytic, or even through the intercession of the saints, but we must always say: 'Your will be done...'" Seeing that the illness was getting worse, the doctors tried the last remedy: they ordered that he be taken to the countryside, to the locality of Guardia, with all the necessary care. On May 9, accompanied by some of our priests and lay Brothers, and with the doctor always at his side, the Father followed God's will and left Messina.

\* \* \*

This is how the Father had written in one of his youthful poems, almost prophesying the place of his death:

"In the lonely woods,  
at the foot of the mountains,  
unknown to the world, to men,  
my room will be ... and here I will die ...  
the story of my rumbling afflictions  
will remain unknown to men:  
God alone will know! "

\* \* \*

He seemed to have somehow recovered from his usual exhaustion; therefore, we hoped with greater expectation...

In the evening of Monday, May 30, the Father told Fr. Vitale: "I feel some improvement; perhaps I will soon be able to resume my work." On Tuesday morning, feeling a little more relieved, he got up at around 8:00 a.m., after receiving the Holy Communion and praying the usual thanksgiving, and then, sat down in his chair. Brother Lapelosa recounts: "Suddenly his face was happy and radiant; his eyes were sparkling and full of energy he

exclaimed: ‘Oh! the Most Holy Child Mary (*Santissima Bambinella*)! How beautiful she is! How beautiful she is! Look at the twelve stars; look at her little face, oh her little feet! Look, Brother, by the window!’ With my heart pounding, I ran here and there, touching the wall, and turned back to the Father to ask for new indications, to which he replied, ‘On this side, more... over there, to the right! Further up! You almost touched her!’ Alas! I did not have as much faith as the Father’s! I was unworthy of such grace! That is why I saw nothing...!”

At this point of the narration, this prayer of Fr. Hannibal to the Blessed Mother is recited in alternating choirs or with the soloist. A Marian hymn may be sung in its place.

L. And now brothers, let us relive this moment of encounter between Fr. Hannibal and the Most Blessed Virgin Mary by praying one of the most beautiful prayers he composed for the Blessed Virgin.

A. O Immaculate Mother of God, we implore you:  
Never cease to show us your motherly protection.  
In you we place all our hope;  
to you we entrust all our interests;  
in particular, we entrust to you this sacred banner of the Rogate  
which forms all our glory,  
the banner of our religious aspirations,  
around which we are closely united,  
by which we are strong despite our weaknesses,  
rich in our poverty,  
courageous in the midst of life’s struggles:  
we entrust it to you.  
You who treasured in your maternal heart  
all the words of your divine Son,  
You certainly did not fail to keep  
this sublime saying which came from the zeal of the Most Sacred Heart of  
Jesus:  
*Rogate ergo Dominum messis, ut mittat operarios in messem suam;*  
O admirable mystery of your motherly goodness!  
This sacred Word,  
this divine command, hidden in your Heart,

you deigned to reveal it to us, your little ones,  
 in the midst of these shanties,  
 and through us  
 you deigned to spread it elsewhere,  
 and to draw to it  
 the attention of the Church.

O Mother, your thousand titles  
 proclaim you Our Lady,  
 they adorn your sweet name  
 with grace and splendor,  
 Perchance be not the last Jewel  
 that adorns your crown,  
 Mistress of the mystical harvest  
 to call you again! Amen.

*After the prayer or Marian song, the reading resumes.*

On the evening of May 31, he seemed more haggard; however, he went to bed serenely; he blessed those around him as usual, and stayed with Brother Michael Lapelosa, who watched over him. He spent the night sleepless and in pain but then seemed to fall asleep. After midnight, the Brother felt the bed shake a little and asked the Father if he needed anything. When he received no reply, he became frightened and hurriedly called Brother Mary Anthony, and they both woke the priest who was sleeping in the next room. That night, Fr. Vincent Gandolfo from Aragona, our priest friend and admirer of the Father had wanted to spend the night there, and our priests agreed to it. When Fr. Gandolfo realized that the Father was in agony, he began saying the Prayer of Commendation. Meanwhile, Fr. Vitale, who had been contacted by telephone, rushed in along with the doctor who diagnosed the cerebral congestion and prescribed the necessary remedies, but he saw the immediate end.

Interpreting the Father's wishes in that last hour, Fr. Vitale asked Fr. Gandolfo to say the Mass for the dying, while he continued the prayers of commendation with the Rogationists and Sisters who arrived. Meanwhile, he asked that a telegram be sent to the Holy Father requesting the Apostolic Blessing for the dying. Shortly after the Holy Mass, amid the invocations of



the priest who was assisting him and the prayers of his children, the Father breathed his last. It was at 6:30 a.m., on Wednesday, June 1 [1927].

*A long pause for silence*

### COMMUNITY PRAYER

**L.** Dear Brothers, with joy and gratitude for the holiness of our Founder, Hannibal Mary, let us invoke God, Lord of the harvest and source of all holiness, to grant us the grace to follow in his footsteps. Let us pray together and say:

**R. Through the intercession of St. Hannibal Mary, hear us, O Father.**

- For the “Church of Jesus Christ, the great field covered with harvest”, that, through the intercession of St. Hannibal Mary, the Apostle of the Rogate, she may obtain many and holy laborers of the Gospel in every moment of history. Let us pray. **R.**

- For the Holy Father N., our Bishop N. and for all the pastors of the Church, that following the example of our Founder, they may dedicate their lives more and more to the service of the Gospel and devote all their energies to the cause of the kingdom of God. Let us pray. **R.**

- For the Congregations of the Rogationists and the Daughters of Divine Zeal, that, following in the footsteps of Fr. Hannibal, they may become the sign of God’s Compassion and the prophecy of the Rogate for today’s world. Let us pray. **R.**

- For all the lay associations of the Family of the Rogate, that, with the help of the Spirit and with the example of St. Hannibal Mary, they may bring the authentic spirit of the Gospel of the Rogate into temporal realities, like yeast that ferments the dough. Let us pray. **R.**

- For all those who suffer, the little ones and the poor of the world, that they may be supported and helped through the intercession of our Father, Hannibal Mary, who continues to love and defend them from heaven. Let

us pray. **R.**

- For all the Rogationists and the Daughters of Divine Zeal who are in heaven, so that together with the Father Founder they may intercede to obtain many and holy vocations among the People of God. Let us pray. **R.**

**L.** *Let us pray.*

O God, hope of the humble, refuge of the poor and father of orphans, You have chosen St. Hannibal Mary, priest, as an outstanding apostle of prayer for vocations. Through his intercession, send into your harvest worthy laborers of the Gospel, and moved by his same spirit of charity, we may grow in the love of you and of neighbor. Through Christ our Lord.

**A.** Amen.

#### **BLESSING WITH THE RELIC OF THE SAINT**

If the community has a relic of St. Hannibal Mary, the blessing may be given with it.

**L.** The Lord be with you.

**A.** *And with your spirit.*

**L.** Through the intercession of St. Hannibal Mary, may Almighty God bless you, Father, Son + and Holy Spirit.

**A.** *Amen.*

**L.** Follow in the footsteps of Fr. Hannibal.

Go in peace.

**A.** *Thanks be to God.*

The celebration ends with the hymn to St. Hannibal Mary or with another appropriate song, during which the relic of the Saint may be kissed.



## SECOND FORMAT

### INVITATION TO PRAYER

L. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

A. *Amen.*

L. The Lord be with you.

A. *And with your spirit.*

L. Dearly beloved, today we are gathered here in prayer to commemorate the *transitus*, that is, the “passage” from earthly life to eternal life, of St. Hannibal Mary, which took the place at dawn on Wednesday, June 1, 1927, in the humble country house in the locality of Guardia, a short distance from the city. Let us observe a few moments of silence and praise God in our hearts for enriching the Church with the gift of the holiness of Fr. Hannibal Mary Di Francia, an outstanding Apostle of Prayer for the laborers of the Gospel and true Father of the orphans and the poor.

*A brief pause for silence.*

L. *Let us pray.*

Holy Father, you deigned to admit your humble servant Hannibal Mary, priest, to the glory of the Blessed. Grant that we, who devoutly remember his *transitus* from this world to you, may follow his example and imitate his love for you and for our neighbor. Grant that we too may one day join him in eternal joy. Through Christ our Lord.

A. *Amen.*

### READING

#### **The Holy Death of Fr. Hannibal**

From the biography *Father Mary Hannibal Di Francia. His Life and Works* by Fr. Francis Vitale (English edition, pp. 364-365)

On the evening of May 31, he seemed more haggard; however, he went to

bed serenely; he blessed those around him as usual, and stayed with Brother Michael Lapelosa, who watched over him. He spent the night sleepless and in pain, but then seemed to fall asleep. After midnight, the Brother felt the bed shake a little and asked the Father if he needed anything. When he received no reply, he became frightened and hurriedly called Brother Mary Anthony, and they both woke the priest who was sleeping in the next room. That night, Fr. Vincent Gandolfo from Aragona, our priest friend and admirer of the Father had wanted to spend the night there, and our priests agreed to it. When Fr. Gandolfo realized that the Father was in agony, he began saying the Prayer of Commendation. Meanwhile, Fr. Vitale, who had been contacted by telephone, rushed in along with the doctor who diagnosed the cerebral congestion and prescribed the necessary remedies, but he saw the immediate end.

Interpreting the Father's wishes in that last hour, Fr. Vitale asked Fr. Gandolfo to say the Mass for the dying, while he continued the prayers of commendation with the Rogationists and Sisters who arrived. Meanwhile, he asked that a telegram be sent to the Holy Father requesting the Apostolic Blessing for the dying. Shortly after the Holy Mass, amid the invocations of the priest who was assisting him and the prayers of his children, the Father breathed his last. It was at 6:30 a.m., on Wednesday, June 1 [1927].

*A brief pause for silence*

### COMMUNITY PRAYER

**O St. Hannibal Mary**, true servant of the Most High, even in this life you had the privilege of contemplating the face of the Lord in the faces of the poor and defenseless little ones. O holy soul, you were always pierced by the martyrdom of your love for the little ones and the poor, for whom you “begged men and God.” O Blessed Heart, image of the Heart of Christ, you too were pierced by the fire of compassion for the poor, the orphans and the afflicted. Prophet of God, you offered your whole life in obedience to the “Rogate”, the Word-Command of Christ the Savior. Our Venerable Father, before you died, you exhorted your tearful children to love God and neighbor. Receive us kindly under your fatherly gaze and help us in our earthly pilgrimage until we, too, together with you and with all the Saints, will con-

template the face of God forever in the heavenly homeland. Amen.

**L.** Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

**A.** *As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen*

The prayer may continue with the celebration of Lauds, beginning immediately with the Psalmody of the day and ending with the greeting and blessing using the formula below. Otherwise, the celebration ends with the blessing and kissing of the relic.

#### BLESSING WITH RELIC OF THE SAINT

If the community has a relic of the Saint, a blessing can be imparted with it.

**P.** The Lord be with you.

**A.** *And with your spirit.*

**P.** Through the intercession of St. Hannibal Mary,  
may Almighty God bless you:  
the Father and the Son + and the Holy Spirit.

**A.** *Amen.*

**P.** Follow in the footsteps of St. Hannibal Mary. Go in peace.

**A.** *Thanks be to God.*

The celebration ends with the hymn to St. Hannibal Mary or with another appropriate song, during which the relic of the Saint may be kissed.





Congregation of the  
**Rogationists**  
of the Heart of Jesus  
St. Matthew Province