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## IL ROGATE OGGI... E DOMANI. ATTUALITÀ E PROFEZIA DI UN CARISMA



29 GIOVEDÌ | Dott.ssa Doriana Rita Nuzzi

**Il Rogate dei Laici oggi. Un necessario esercizio di fantasia carismatica.**

**THE ROGATE OF THE LAITY TODAY.**

**A NECESSARY EXERCISE IN CHARISMATIC IMAGINATION.**

** This text was translated using AI*

**Report by Doriana Rita NUZZI**

*Rome, General Curia, October 29, 2026*

## 1. Introduction: Memory That Becomes Prophecy

Good afternoon, everyone.

First of all, I would like to thank the superiors and the organizers, especially Fr. Luciano Cabbia, for this invitation, which I feel is not only a great honor but also a profound responsibility. Speaking about the Rogate today, while looking toward tomorrow, means for me touching the beating heart of a charism that does not belong to the past but provocatively challenges our present.

The general theme of these days challenges us to navigate between two polarities: *relevance and prophecy*. And when this pairing encounters the reality of the laity, it immediately translates into a vital, almost urgent dynamic: **a necessary exercise in charismatic imagination**.

An exercise that certainly begins with a word that often risks being misunderstood: *memory, the act of remembering*. I spent my youth and much of my life within the Rogationist Laity. I experienced the first steps, the growth, the structural changes, the congresses, the struggles, and the milestones of our journey. I'd be tempted to retrace the steps we've taken, the dynamics we've experienced, the fellow travelers, the setbacks, the milestones, and so much more. But I won't do that: the remembrance we're called to today cannot be the nostalgic contemplation of a museum. Charismatic remembrance, to be authentic, must serve as a springboard, never a armchair. Fidelity to Saint Hannibal Maria Di Francia is not measured by how faithfully we repeat the actions of the past or retrace its paths, but by how much courage we have in translating his original vision into the cultural and social context of our time. Here and now.

Certainly, if we look at our history, the laity has made giant strides. We have gone from being mere "external collaborators" or "benefactors" of Rogationist works to rediscovering ourselves as fully co-responsible for the Rogate charism. We have come to understand that St. Hannibal's vision—prayer for good, Gospel-inspired laborers in the harvest and charity toward the little ones and the poor—is not the exclusive domain of consecrated life, but a gift of the Spirit to the entire Church.

Yet today we stand at a turning point. The context in which we live—marked by a profound ecclesial vocational crisis, but also by a crisis of meaning affecting the younger generations, society, and families—demands a qualitative leap from us. It is no longer enough to simply manage the present. We must *discern*. And this is where "charismatic imagination" comes into play.

What is charismatic imagination? It is not spontaneous improvisation, nor is it the pursuit of novelty at all costs. Charismatic imagination is the Holy Spirit working through our intelligence, our creativity, and our boldness to find original answers to original questions. It is the gaze of those who do not resign themselves to "that's how it's always been done," but who scrutinize the harvest of the contemporary world through the eyes of hope.

In the reflection we will undertake together, there will be no ready-made formulas, but rather an attempt at a lay interpretation of this shared charism. I would like to try to sketch out with you some paths, some guiding principles for new journeys. Journeys that—I say this with deep conviction—perhaps only the lay vocation can discern and bring to life, for the good of the Church, the Rogate family, and society today and tomorrow.

**2. The Distinctiveness of the Lay Perspective: Identity and Sharing of the Charism**

To venture into the new paths that await us, we must first engage in an honest assessment of who we are and where we stand today. As Pina Varlaro, President of the Union of Rogationist Associations, noted during the recent First International Symposium of Rogationist Laity held in Morlupo from April 30 to May 3, 2026, the Rogationist Laity today is a deeply multifaceted and diverse reality. We are alumni, Friends of Father Annibale, members of ERA, the Rog Families, and LAVR; volunteers, missionaries, benefactors, prayer groups for vocations, laypeople in parishes, and supporters in various capacities. This historical fragmentation is a source of richness, but it has been—and continues to be—a challenge in building a shared path.

In 2012, with the drafting of the *Cultural Project of the Rogationist Laity* (PCLR), we sought to chart a road map for our identity. But we must admit frankly, as laypeople who love this charism: that project has remained largely unfinished. Relational struggles, the impact of the pandemic (which should not be underestimated), and the shockwave of an increasingly aggressive secularization have, in many ways, weakened our bonds as a community and, at times, our very synergy with the Religious Family.

Yet it is precisely from this potential wound—for those who have clearly experienced it—that the distinctiveness, beauty, and future of our lay perspective emerge. The Rogationist layperson is not a "quasi-religious" person—as we have always told ourselves—nor a mere performer of parish tasks or an assistant in times of need for the institutes. The layperson has a vocation of their own and one that is original. Sharing in the anxieties, struggles, and joys of proclaiming the Rogate cannot remain a mere slogan confined to the Congregation's official documents or to our own good intentions as laypeople. The layperson is, in every sense, a "good worker in the harvest," called to embody the Divine Command in the living fabric of daily life.

What, then, is the distinctiveness of this perspective?

While the men and women religious—the custodians of the charism—live out the prophecy of the Rogate in community life and institutional works, the layperson lives it out "in the world." Our harvest is the world of work, the complex dynamics of the family, and the places of social and economic suffering. We encounter "existential forms of poverty" before they knock on a church door.

We are called to live out the compassion of Saint Hannibal in the hallways of a hospital, behind office desks, in the educational challenges with our children, among the poor in our communities around the world, and among street children. For us, Rogate is not a secondary commitment during our free time, but an existential stance: it means looking at reality through the eyes of Christ, who sees the weary and exhausted crowds as sheep without a shepherd.

However, to express this distinctiveness, the laity cannot be left on their own. From the grassroots of our associations and the Rogationist laity—who gathered in various capacities at the First Symposium—a strong request emerges: we need genuine spiritual and charismatic support from the Religious Family. We are not seeking a functional delegation of authority, but authentic communion. It is the great dynamism of synodality to which Pope Francis calls us: a process of mutual listening

in which the laity offer their understanding of the world and the Religious Family offers nourishment from its charismatic roots.

If we want our formation to be more than mere theoretical knowledge—but rather a life capable of making us "one heart and one soul"—we must overcome the barriers between our own associations. Only united—laypeople and religious, in the reciprocity of gifts—can we avoid the risk of being salt that has lost its flavor, and instead become authentic leaven in the dough of today's society.

### 3. The Exercise of Charismatic Imagination at the School of Saint Annibale

To understand what "charismatic imagination" truly is, we must learn from our Holy Founder. Saint Hannibal Maria Di Francia was not a theorist: he was a giant of the Spirit's creativity. When he first entered the Avignone neighborhood, he did not find a ready-made structure there, but an abandoned, wounded harvest crying out to Heaven. There, in that existential periphery, he did not apply pre-existing pastoral formulas; on the contrary, he allowed the Gospel's command (*Rogate*) to become the key to understanding a dramatic reality. His was an authentic *imagination of charity and prayer*.

Today, for us laypeople engaged in an international context—as the journey of our Family powerfully testifies—exercising charismatic imagination means taking that same bold leap. It means interpreting *Rogate* not as a private devotion, but as a universal principle for transforming the world, capable of speaking different languages and inhabiting different cultures.

Let us then trace this prophecy through three universal areas of focus.

### A. New Paths in the Church: The Rogate as the Soul of International Co-Responsibility

The first exercise in imagination requires us to reinterpret the command of the *Rogate* within the synodal journey of the universal Church. Saint Hannibal had understood, a century before the Second Vatican Council, that the problem of vocations is a structural problem of the Church: without workers, the Gospel does not move forward.

Charismatic imagination calls us to move beyond a purely local or clerical vision of the charism. Lay Rogationists, across the globe—from Europe to the Philippines, from Brazil to Africa—are not called to standardize their activities, but to let the *Rogate* resonate within the specific challenges of their local Churches.

· **The prophetic vision:** We must promote a **global culture of vocations**. Lay creativity must translate into the ability to weave the spirit of the *Rogate* into the formation programs for children, young people, and engaged couples, into family movements, and into the pastoral care of workers across the five continents. It is not merely a matter of asking young people to become religious, but of helping every baptized person discover their own specific vocation. The international Rogationist laity must become a global network of discernment, where listening to God's voice is learned in the daily reality of lay life, in the places around the world where we live. Rogate thus becomes the very soul of international lay co-responsibility.

### B. New Paths in Society: The Compassion of Saint Hannibal in the Peripheries of the World

St. Hannibal taught us that prayer for good laborers for the harvest arises only if one first experiences *compassion* for the weary and exhausted masses. The Gospel term used by Jesus indicates a visceral movement. The lay Rogationist experiences this movement in the places where they live: in the world, in social structures, in the economy, and in politics.

Our charismatic imagination must become **social compassion on a global scale**. Today's neglected harvest is not limited to the boundaries of the Avignone neighborhood of 1880; it bears the faces of new forms of poverty that vary from continent to continent.

· **The prophetic vision:** In Europe, the neglected harvest is the loneliness of the elderly and the crisis of meaning among the younger generations; in many other parts of the world, it is often the tragedy of denied social justice, hunger, and the lack of education for children. The creativity of the international laity lies in knowing how to devise modern and contextually relevant "works of charity." I am thinking of transnational support projects, of networks of lay professionals who put their expertise at the service of the development of the most disadvantaged communities. This means embodying the Rogate by becoming, as laypeople, the working hands of the Lord of the harvest in society.

**C. New Paths in Language: Translating the Charismatic Insight for Contemporary People**

St. Hannibal's insight is universal, but the words used to express it are shaped by their time. The crisis we often sense in our associations—the challenges of formation, the weakening of bonds due to secularization—is first and foremost a crisis of translation. If the laity is to have a future, we must have the imagination to translate the key concepts of the charism into language accessible to postmodern people.

· **The prophetic vision:** We must undertake a process of high charismatic fidelity: keeping the heart of the message intact while changing the channels and the words.

o The *Messe* of which the Founder spoke must today be described as humanity's profound and universal need for dignity, justice, and hope.

o The evangelical *Workers* must be presented to new generations as credible witnesses, ethical leaders, caring fathers and mothers—figures of whom the globalized world is in desperate need.

o The *Prayer for Vocations* must be rediscovered as a great act of responsibility and love for humanity: praying that the world not be left alone, that enlightened guides may never be lacking. This linguistic translation requires international cooperation that unites the sensibilities of different countries to courageously inhabit the new digital and cultural spaces.

**4. Conclusion: A Synergistic Journey Toward Tomorrow**

We have reached the end of this reflection, but I prefer to think that we have reached the beginning of a renewed commitment. The theme that has guided us during these Study Days, *"Rogate Today… and Tomorrow"*, is not an academic exercise in futurology. It is a call to action knocking at the door of our conscience here and now.

If we examine the state of our laity—with its structural challenges and projects left partially unfinished—the risk of discouragement might creep in. We might give in to the temptation to think that the laity is merely a decorative element or logistical support for the Congregation's works. But today we must say this to ourselves forcefully, with the frankness that the Spirit grants us: the world and the contemporary Church cannot do without the Rogationist charism—and therefore also without a Rogationist laity that acts as leaven in the dough through prayer and action—so that everyone may discover their own vocation and place themselves at the service of God and their neighbor in every form, in every way, in every part of the world.

Understanding the importance of the laity today means recognizing that the Holy Spirit has placed within the hearts of the fathers, the sisters, and also of us laypeople, the very same charismatic fire. A fire that expresses itself in different notes, yet within the same melody. St. Annibale Maria Di Francia did not envision an isolated religious family, but rather ignited a movement of compassion and prayer destined to inspire the People of God.

For this reason, the appeal I would like to leave you as a mandate for tomorrow can be summarized in three clear guidelines:

· **Let us not lose heart.** The challenges facing our associations, membership numbers that sometimes seem to decline, or the complexity of a secularized society must not frighten us. Saint Annibale began his work amid the mud and misery of the Avignone neighborhood. The fruitfulness of the *Rogate* does not lie in our human strategies, but in fidelity to the Divine Command. We are fertile ground if we remain united to the Vine.

· **Walk together.** Synodality is not a passing fad, but the very form of the Church. We must overcome every form of isolation between our various associations and the different expressions of the laity to rediscover ourselves as a single, great reality. But above all, we must walk together with the entire Rogate Family, both lay and consecrated. There are not "guardians of the charism" on one side and "users of the charism" on the other. There is a single Family in which everyone needs one another.

· **Looking at one another synergistically.** This is the definitive leap forward. Synergy means that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Religious men and women need the layperson's perspective to understand where the harvest is suffering and crying out in the world of everyday life. And we laypeople vitally need the spiritual, theological, and charismatic lifeblood of consecrated life so as not to lose our identity.

Dearest fellow travelers, the harvest is still plentiful, and it is often weary, exhausted, and abandoned. But we have received an immense gift: the secret of prayer that gives birth to workers of hope.

Let us lift our gaze. With the focus and zeal of the Rogate that sustains us—even through the writings of Father Annibale and the Rogationist studies (many and varied, I must say) produced by his sons and daughters—with the historical experience that serves as our foundation, but above all with the boldness of that *charismatic imagination* that sets the heart ablaze, let us strengthen the bonds of our communion. Let us walk together, laypersons and consecrated persons, for only together will we be able to discover the new paths of the Rogate, for the life of the Church and for the salvation of the world.

May the journey be a good one for all of us! Thank you.

**APPENDIX: Implementation Tool for the Report**

**NEEDS ANALYSIS IN ROGAZIONIST CONTEXTS AROUND THE WORLD**

The exercise of "charismatic imagination" required of the Rogationist laity today cannot be separated from a careful, sociological, and theological analysis of global reality. To chart a course toward the "future" of the charism, it is essential to map out the concrete needs of the various regions of the world where the Rogate Family is rooted. Each geographical context presents a specific form of the "harvest that is weary and exhausted" (Matthew 9:36) that awaits the synergistic and co-responsible action of laypeople and consecrated persons.

For this reason, I am providing you with a practical working tool based on the report, to be explored further together within your own contexts.

**NEEDS ANALYSIS**

**IN CONTEXTS OF LAY ROGAZIONIST ACTION**

***Report: The Rogate of the Laity Today. A Necessary Exercise in Charismatic Imagination, D.R. Nuzzi***

**WORK TOOL**

This document serves as the analytical and programmatic appendix to the report by Dr. Doriana Rita Nuzzi. The goal is to map the challenges of the *"abandoned harvest"* across the various continents and to identify the real needs of the laity in order to foster genuine **charismatic synergy** with the Religious Family, overcoming discouragement and walking together as one family.

**Geographic Context The 'Abandoned Harvest' (Today's Challenges) Needs of the Laity (Lines of Action: Prophecy)**

**Europe**
(Highly secularized context) A profound crisis of meaning among young people; existential loneliness among the elderly; fragmentation and individualism within lay organizations themselves (post-pandemic struggles). Overcoming organizational boundaries to unite forces; translating the concepts of "Harvest" and "Workers" into language accessible to contemporary people; implementing the "Social Rogation" in apartment buildings, workplaces, educational settings, and digital spaces.

**Latin America** (A context of vibrant religiosity and stark disparities) Fragmentation of family structures; the scourge of material and educational poverty affecting children; the risk of a youth ministry lacking concrete vocational opportunities. Develop self-sustaining lay charity projects modeled on the Avignone Neighborhood; train lay leaders capable of addressing educational poverty; create safety nets for the Rogate family and its charismatic identity.

**Philippines and Asia** (Context of dynamic Catholicism) Latent risk of pastoral clericalism that confines the laity to purely executive roles; family breakdown caused by massive labor migration. Move from simple collaboration to genuine shared responsibility; activate lay networks providing remote pastoral and spiritual support for migrants; promote a culture of vocations in every profession.

**Africa**
(Context of rapid population growth) A population explosion of young people seeking a future; chronic unemployment; a lack of adequate educational facilities; systemic poverty that threatens human dignity. Establish vocational and ethical training programs led by laypeople; set up lay-run job placement centers and microcredit projects; bear witness to Rogate as a source of social opportunities.

**Guidelines for Operational Synergy**

Based on a needs assessment (which can be further developed and tailored), each geographic context—in charismatic synergy between consecrated persons and the laity—should develop concrete responses through projects: one might consider an ***"Annual Charismatic Action Plan"***. The analysis shows that, although the challenges vary depending on geographical location, the underlying need is the same everywhere: the laity must develop and bring to the fore their own concrete and prophetic action. No context can face these challenges alone.

An analysis of global needs demonstrates that the "future" of Rogate requires a profound and structural synergy to activate that charismatic imagination capable of generating new paths for the future. Only by walking together, facing the present challenges, can the entire Rogate Family become a credible response to the cries of the contemporary harvest in every part of the world.




*Manda, o Signore,*
*apostoli santi*
*nella tua Chiesa!*

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