



# The Holy See

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**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS  
POPE JOHN PAUL II  
TO THE ROGATIONIST FATHERS**

*Saturday, 26 July 1997*

Today's Eucharistic celebration, on the liturgical commemoration of St Joachim and St Anne, parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary, has a particular meaning, especially for you, dear Rogationist Fathers of the Heart of Jesus, whom I cordially greet. I am pleased to join you in giving thanks to the Lord for the centenary of the birth of your congregation, which sprang from the generous heart of Bl. Annibale Maria Di Francia, the 70th anniversary of whose death occurs this year.

The Eucharist is the culmination of ecclesial prayer: in this the prayer of Christ and of the Church for vocations is fulfilled according to the Lord's explicit mandate: "*Rogate ergo Dominum messis ut mittat operarios in messem suam*" (Mt 9:38). In these Gospel words Annibale Maria Di Francia found the "way" to respond fully to God's will. Making it his own, he made his own the sentiments of the Heart of the Good Shepherd, full of compassion for the Father's flock.

Through the intercession of Mary, Mother of every Christian vocation, and her holy parents whom we venerate to day, let us implore the gift of the Holy Spirit, that he may form in the Church men and women enthusiastic for Christ and the Gospel, ready to give themselves for God's kingdom, with all their heart and all their strength. And may your blessed founder obtain for you and for your whole spiritual family the gift of renewed apostolic and missionary flowering.

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