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Rome, 8th Sept 2012

On the 21th of April 2013, Fourth Sunday of Easter, will be the 50th World Day of Prayer for Vocations. This is an important event for the life of the Church, according to what was said by Pope John Paul II, *“the problem of priestly vocations as well as those of men and women religious is – and I say this openly – the fundamental problem of the Church”*. Thanks to the Second Vatican Council, the awareness about the urgency of a real and proper pastoral care of vocations has been always increasing in these last fifty years, as evidenced by several continental, international and national Congresses and the invaluable work of POVS (Pontifical Office for Priestly Vocations), the CNV (National Centers for Vocations), the Institutes of Consecrated Life and numerous organizations animated by vocations ministers who are sensitive and attentive to the signs of the times.

If the Second Vatican Council reminded us explicitly that *“the duty of fostering vocations falls on the entire Christian community”* (Optatam Totius, 2), we must never forget that *“Vocations to the priesthood and religious life - as underlined by Benedict XVI – are primarily the fruit of a constant contact with the living God and of an insistent prayer raised to the Lord of the harvest.”*

For this mission St. Hannibal Mary Di Francia spent all his energies and his life. *“The multitude of people as yet untouched by the Gospel and the insufficient number of evangelizers have been the torment of his heart as an apostle and a priest. To this end he founded two religious families, the Rogationists and the Daughters of Divine Zeal, and promoted several initiatives to spread awareness among the faithful of the need to pray intensely for vocations”* (John Paul II, 1990).

Undoubtedly his zeal in spreading the *Rogate*, especially among the holy prelates, has fostered this awareness in the Church, which found its most significant expression in the institution of the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, which reaches its 50th anniversary in 2013.


Blessed John Paul II has stressed many times and in different occasions about the role that St. Hannibal has had in this ecclesial journey to raise awareness for the cause of vocations, to the point of defining him as “*outstanding apostle of prayer for vocations*” (2004) and “*authentic precursor and zealous teacher of modern pastoral care for vocations*” (1990).

Encouraged by the words of Blessed John Paul II and by numerous attestations of recognition we would like to ask the Holy Father Benedict XVI for the grace to proclaim Saint Hannibal Mary Di Francia as “Patron of Vocations” so that he could be invoked as an intercessor by those who are discerning their vocation, by animators of pastoral care for vocations, and by all the faithful who are praying for vocations.

For this purpose, if you believe that our initiative would be useful for the good of the Church and of vocations, we request you to express your support to our petition by filling in the attached form or by sending us a letter with which you express your favorable opinion.

Assuring you of our prayers, we cordially thank you.


(Fr. Angelo A. Mezzari, R.C.J.)
Superior General



Mo. M. Teolinda Salemi, F.D.Z.)
Superior General
