

# Familia Comboniana

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES OF THE HEART OF JESUS

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757

November 2017

## GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

### GENERAL NOTES - OCTOBER 2017 CONSULTA

#### 1. Appointments

The GC has appointed:

- **Fr. Fabio Baldan**, as from 1 November 2017, Technical Counsellor (GDE 55) of the General Economate.

- **Fr. Daniele Moschetti**, as from 1 January 2018, Comboni Representative at the VIVAT International office in New York and that of the AFJN in Washington.

#### 2. "Die Schriften": German translation of Comboni's Writings

The DSP has published in two volumes the Writings of Comboni in German. The GC and all the confreres wish to thank those who worked to complete this undertaking, especially Fr. Alois Eder and Fr. Georg Klose. The Writings of our Founder are now accessible in six languages: Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, English, French and German. This is an added opportunity to facilitate knowledge and research on the person of Comboni and a valuable instrument of information at all levels.

#### 3. Note concerning confidentiality of circumscription minutes

The GC invites those responsible in the circumscriptions to make a clear distinction in the minutes of their council meetings between confidential matters and those for public use, both as regards Persons and the Economy. Confidential matters are usually placed at the end of the minutes.

#### 4. Solidarity and Projects

The GC is happy to be able to express solidarity with the most needy by financing development projects. However, before presenting a project, from whatever source, to the GC for financing, the circumscrip-

tion superiors are asked to ensure that such project is first examined by their secretariat for finance and then to make a sound discernment as to its validity and suitability and avoid leaving such discernment entirely to the GC.

### **5. Process of Revisiting and Revising the Rule of Life**

The guide to the implementation of the Chapter stipulates that the year 2018 be dedicated to “Revisiting and Revising the Rule of Life”. In the March, 2017 Consulta, the GC appointed the central commission and the commission of consultants to lead this process. The commission met from 30 June to 3 July and prepared a methodology of work and established the process of animating the circumscriptions in this process, in line with what the 2015 General Chapter decided. The work done hitherto by the commission has been shared with all the circumscriptions and we trust it may be known by all the confreres. The various circumscriptions have already appointed their representatives to lead this process and the central commission, in dialogue with the provincials, has arranged continental meetings to prepare the confreres to be real animators in their respective communities and provinces. This is the calendar for the continental meetings:

- Europe/Asia: Verona, 23 – 27 October 2017
- Francophone Africa: Lomé, 25 – 30 November 2017
- America: Ciudad de Guatemala, 4 – 8 December 2017
- Anglophone Africa: Nairobi, 7 – 9 November 2017

The GC invites all the confreres to accompany this process of approaching the Rule of Life so as to know it better and to live by it in daily life.

### **6. General Assembly for Formation – Maia 2017**

The GC warmly thanks the General Secretariat for Formation, the Province of Portugal and all the formator confreres who took an active part in the General Assembly for Formation in Maia, Portugal, from 10 to 30 July, 2017. In November, the GC will dedicate a session to the analysis of the Final Document which will then be presented to all the confreres of the Institute.

### **7. World Social Forum 2018**

Evangelisation is the heart of the work of the Institute (RL 13) and this cannot be understood without a commitment in the field of JPIC. The 2015 Chapter confirmed the relevance of this commitment (No. 11) and asked the circumscriptions to promote networking in this sector (No. 45.6). Participation in the World Social Forum as Comboni Family

is already a tradition and is usually preceded by the Comboni Forum. The GC encourages participation in this activity of mission promotion as a qualified place of evangelisation that permits dialogue between the social doctrine of the Church and the aspirations of civil society. We realise that this comes at a price but nevertheless we believe it is an opportunity to improve collaboration at the level of the Institute, the Comboni Family and other Institutes that share the same desire for a more just and dignified life for all. The GC invites the circumscriptions to send some confreres who already work in this field to the World Social Forum in March, 2018, in Salvador de Bahia (Brazil), so that they may contribute their experience to the work of the Forum.

### **8. CLM Assembly in Africa**

The third Assembly of the Comboni Lay Missionaries (CLM) working in Africa was held at Anchilo (Mozambique) from 24 to 30 July. The GC wishes to thank all the Combonis and the CLM who collaborate with us and repeats, as it was said in the last Chapter, that we will continue “to accompany whatever processes of formation, structuring and self-sufficiency that may assist to consolidate their identity as a Lay Family, both Comboni and missionary, at the service of the mission” (CA '15, No. 35). In this spirit, the GC hopes that the next CLM General Assembly, planned for December 2018, may be a step forward in their consolidation and improve even more their service to the Kingdom of God.

### **9. Celebrations of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Institute in Rome**

After the symposium held in May, organised mostly for Comboni Missionaries, the GC has planned two events for November: a press conference and a symposium open to all. The press conference, in preparation for the symposium and entitled '*Africa is no fake news*', is also an opportunity to dispel myths and prejudices about Africa; with the speakers Fr. Domenico Guarino, Sr. Gabriella Bottani, Fr. Elias Sindjalim, the expert on Africa Luciano Ardesi and Fr. Giulio Albanese as moderator, the press conference will take place in the Vatican Radio Marconi Hall on 14 November at 11am. The symposium will be centred on Africa in Comboni's time but also on the socio-political and ecclesial situation of Africa today, with the participation of Fr. Fidel González, the historian Gianpaolo Romanato, the journalist Jean L. Touadi and the priest and journalist don Filippo di Giacomo as moderator; it will take place in the Aula Magna of the Urbaniana University on 17 November at 3.30pm.

## **10. Logo for the Institute**

The GC wishes to thank all who took part in the choice of the logo. The replies sent in showed that there is a real desire to have a logo that is common to the whole Institute. Most opted for the first version, but many confreres said they preferred other logos used in some provinces. For this reason, the GC has asked the communication office to launch another questionnaire including other proposals.

## **11. Six-year Plans**

The GC wishes to thank the circumscriptions that have completed the drafting of the Six-year Plan. Just three circumscriptions have yet to do this. We appeal to those circumscriptions to send in the Plans in time for the December 2017 Consulta.

## **12. Journeys and commitments of the GC**

### ***Fr. Tesfaye Tadesse Gebresilasie***

24 October – 14 November: visit to the delegation of Central Africa with Fr. Ciuciulla

18 – 19 November: Bari (Italy)

27 November – 2 December: Pesaro (Preaching spiritual exercises for the Italian Province)

28 December – 21 January: visit to the Province of Togo with Fr. Ciuciulla

### ***Fr. Jeremias dos Santos Martins***

4 – 17 November: Chad

17 December – 4 January: visit to Sudan (North)

20 January – 27 February: visits to the Provinces of Uganda & Kenya

### ***Fr. Pietro Ciuciulla***

24 October – 15 November: visit to the delegation of Central Africa with Fr. Tesfaye

28 December – 21 January: visit to the Province of Togo with Fr. Tesfaye

### ***F. Rogelio Bustos Juárez***

20 December – 11 January: Mexico

12 – 30 January: visit to the Province of Central America

### ***Bro. Alberto Lamana Cónsola***

10 – 19 November: visit to the London Province

2 – 20 January: visit to the Province of South Sudan

20 January – 16 February: visit to the Province of Uganda

## Specializations

On June 30, 2017, Fr. Ruffino Ezama has defended his Ph.D. dissertation entitled: “*A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Investigation of Christianity and Lugbara Culture Challenging Each Other*” at Makerere University, (Kampala, Uganda), in the Department of Philosophy, College of Humanities and Social sciences.

## Perpetual professions

Sc. Anyaja Pious (U)	Zamalek-Cairo (EG)	08/10/2017
Sc. Owino James Marcellus (U)	Castelvoturno (I)	10/10/2017
Bro. Mora Mora José Alberto (CO)	San Ramón (CR)	22/10/2017

## Ordinations to the priesthood

Fr. Caspis Salarde Jemboy (A)	General Santos (RP)	27/10/2017
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## Holy Redeemer Guild

November	01 – 15 SS	16 – 30 T
December	01 – 15 PE	16 – 31 U

## Prayer Intentions

**November** – For our Comboni Missionary martyrs and all deceased confreres who sacrificed themselves that life might triumph over death, that they may help us to recognize and accompany the situations of martyrdom in today’s world. *Lord hear us.*

**December** – For all consecrated people in the Church that, through the intercession of Mary Immaculate, they may have open hearts, always ready to welcome others and that they may be transparent and in harmony with the will of God. *Lord hear us.*

## ASIA

### “World Mission” awarded for the fourth time

“World Mission” magazine was awarded for the fourth time the Best-Family oriented magazine trophy at the Catholic Mass Media Awards (CMMA) on October 25, in Manila.

The theme of this year was “Fear not, for I am with you (Isaiah 43:5): Communicating hope and trust in our time”, was based on the Social Communication Day message of Pope Francis.

In his special message, Manila Archbishop Luis Antonio G. Cardinal

Tagle, CMMA honorary chairman, said that “communication is an impulse of the human person; to be a person is to communicate.” For communication of hope and trust to be meaningful, he explained, a communicator must have “a heart that knows how to hope, a heart that is trusting. Without a conversion of the heart, communication is reduced to techniques for manipulation”.

### **Ordination in the Philippines**

Rev. Jemboy Salarde Caspis was ordained to the Priesthood on the morning of October 27, in St. Peter and Paul Church, Lagao (General Santos City), by Mgr. Dinualdo D. Gutierrez, bishop of Marbel. About thirty priests, including Combonis and members of other religious families and some diocesan priests also concelebrated.

For the Delegation of Asia, Fr. Jemboy’s ordination was a most welcome gift in this year when we celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Institute, and it refreshed our missionary enthusiasm. Fr. Jemboy has been assigned to the Province of Kenya, a place not unfamiliar to him since he completed his Theological studies in Nairobi and a year of missionary service in Kacheliba, where he was ordained Deacon on April 8, 2017. In the afternoon, a large crowd gathered at the Chapel dedicated to San Roque, much nearer to his own family house, to join Fr. Jemboy in his thanksgiving Eucharist.

## COLOMBIA

### **Continental Assembly of American Provincial Bursars**

From 24 to 30 September, the bursars of provinces and delegations of America gathered in Bogota for their Assembly at which seven circumscriptions were represented.

The Continental Assembly is held every three years and constitutes an important moment of updating and sharing.

The main themes of the Assembly were the study of the 2015 Chapter Acts, especially the part dealing with finance from which the orientations of the economic policy of the Institute take their inspiration. A separate session was devoted to the study of the new international norms governing the banking system.

The morning spent with Deacon Dr. Alirio Caceres, a CELAM consultant, was dedicated to the study of the encyclical *Laudato Si’* and this gave rise to points for reflection and a series of concrete pro-

posals to the Comboni circumscriptions for a growing commitment to respect for Creation.

The final part of the work concentrated on examining possible initiatives to increase the level of economic sustainability of the provinces. The participants crowned their meeting with a pilgrimage to the Shrine of the Fallen Christ of Monserrate and a visit to the International Brothers' Centre.

## CURIA

### **Feast of St. Daniel Comboni**

On 10 October, the communities of the General Curia in Rome celebrated the feast of St. Daniel Comboni. The highlight of the celebration was the concelebrated Mass led by Mons. Mengheteab Tesfamariam, Archeparc of Asmara, with the Comboni Sisters and numerous friends and benefactors attending.

In his homily, Mgr. Mengheteab emphasised what seemed to him to be the three most important aspects of the figure of St. Daniel Comboni. "First of all – he said – he was a man courageous in faith, in opting for Africa, in believing in the Africans, fighting against slavery and never giving up even in the most difficult times. Secondly, he was unconquerable in hope, even in the most critical moment: 'I die but my work will not die'. Thirdly, he was generous in Christian charity: he gave himself totally, all his time, all his strength and all his life for the cause of the mission".

Celebrating this feast at a particularly important time for the Institute, the 150 years of its existence, "we are faced with a great challenge – he added – and a perfect opportunity: a crisis that leaves us paralysed or a renewed launching that gives new life.

I wish to remind you that, as Comboni Missionaries, we ought to be experts in the new evangelisation. Pope Benedict XVI very wisely challenged the Church to be at the service of the new evangelisation. The Gospel, in fact, is always the same but the ways and means, the people and the environments have changed and are continually changing. We must be creative and eager to find the right means for each place, situation or time.

Comboni men and women are called to be in the forefront as Comboni was 150 years ago: he was indeed a man before his time, original in his initiatives and in his plans".

## **Launching Fr. Daniele Moschetti's book**

*"Sud Sudan. Il lungo e sofferto cammino verso pace, giustizia e dignità"* (South Sudan. The long and painful journey towards peace, justice and dignity) is the title of the book written by Fr. Daniele Moschetti and recently published (September 2017) by Dissensi Edizioni. Given the importance and the relevance of the theme, as well as the growing interest in this young African nation, the book will continue to be launched on a long tour throughout Italy, in about forty cities. In Rome it was launched during a press conference organised together with the Generalate in Marconi Hall, Vatican radio, on 13 October, 2017.

One is immediately struck by the introduction to the book written by Pope Francis who speaks of how this testimony "gives a broad and passionate account of the work of so many men and women missionaries by the side of the needy and, above all, of those who suffer due to enduring conflicts that cause death and destruction". Fr. Moschetti also had the joy of presenting his book personally to the Pope during the Wednesday general audience.

Originating from his experience as provincial superior of South Sudan for six years, the book also presents the contributions of other missionaries, including that of Fr. Tesfaye Tadesse, superior general.

DSP

## **German edition of the Writings (*Schriften*) of St. Daniel Comboni**

It was a "rather difficult delivery" but it was worth it. The last child of a family often becomes the favourite of all.

On the occasion of the feast of St. Daniel Comboni, on 10 October 2017, his writings and letters were published also in German. They were presented to the confreres and friends during the Missionary Symposium of 7- 8 October 2017 at Ellwangen. Provincial superiors or individual confreres who wish to have a copy may refer to Fr. Anton Schneider, the vice-provincial, [anton.schneider@comboni.de](mailto:anton.schneider@comboni.de)

We thank all who contributed and worked tirelessly to produce this edition: especially Fr. Georg Klose and Fr. Alois Eder for the translation and those in charge of the final editing, Mrs. Andrea Fuchs and Fr. Anton Schneider.

It is our hope that this effort by the DSP may bear abundant fruits, so that, by reading and meditating on the writings of Comboni, his figure may become more alive and present in each one of us and amongst us, thus strengthening our Comboni identity.

## **Celebrations at Ellwangen and Josefstal**

On the occasion of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Institute, the Provincial Council organised one celebration at Ellwangen and one at Josefstal held 7 - 8 October.

The celebration began on 7 October at Ellwangen with a symposium. A hundred and twenty people comprising friends and invited guests attended. Dr. Roman Siebenrock (a former student of our Ellwangen seminary and professor of theology at the Jesuit faculty of Innsbruck) developed the theme: "*The Mission as a process of understanding in the school of the permanent novelty of the Gospel. An approach from the perspective of 'a theology of the signs of the times'*". The conference was very well received and those present showed their appreciation with prolonged applause.

During the open discussion that followed, there were interventions by people with the most varied experiences. Mrs. Uta Knauss, parish priest of the Evangelical parish of Ellwangen, spoke of their collaboration with a parish in Ghana. Fr. Roberto Turyamureeba mcccj, a Ugandan, expressed his profound agreement with the DSP and his satisfaction with the openness of the people to the newness of the mission. Mr. Berthold Weiss, director of the refugee reception centre in Ellwangen, spoke at length of his experience with them and of the need to treat them with respect and esteem. Bro. Hans Eigner mcccj, who works in South Sudan, where civil war is raging, said that, in his opinion, the Church can and must overcome the barriers that divide the various tribes of the country.

On Sunday, 8 October, a great crowd filled the church of our Josefstal house to celebrate a solemn Eucharist, presided over by the Provincial Superior Fr. Karl Peinhopf. The *Comboni Singers* contributed with their songs to render the celebration both joyful and festive.

## ERITREA

### **150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Comboni Institute**

The celebration of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Institute in the delegation of Eritrea started on 1st January 2017, with an opening letter of the GC.

It has then been celebrated throughout the year at three levels:

1. Community level: On the very day of the foundation of the Institute, that is, 1st June 2017;

2. Delegation level: All the confreres gathered at the delegation house from 20-23 June 2017. There were reflections on the following topics: a) On the origin of the Comboni Institute; b) on the charism and spirituality of the Institute; c) on the Sacred Heart. The Comboni Sisters joined in the reflections and prayer. On the 23rd of June there was the conclusion with a solemn Eucharistic celebration presided by His Grace Mgr. Menghesteab Tesfamariam, the Metropolitan of the Arch Eparchy of Asmara.

3. Local Church level: The three communities were able to organize mission promotion in their surrounding parishes to commemorate the occasion. The community of Asmara, together with the Comboni Sisters, had the possibilities of doing mission promotion in the three largest parishes of Asmara on the 8th of October, accompanied by the Eucharistic celebration. On the 9th of October there was the vigil prayer chanted according to the Geez liturgy, while on the 10th of October it started with the chants at 3.00 am and concluded with the Eucharistic Celebration. Many local priests, religious and lay people were present for the prayers and the refreshment that followed. After the Mass, a good breakfast was served for all, and at midday the Comboni Family, Fathers, Sisters and students had a delicious lunch accompanied by spiritual songs (chants) and the liturgical dances. The day was very much marked by a spirit of brotherhood among the Comboni Family.

## ESPAÑA

### **Sesquicentennial of the Institute**

On 10 October last, the feast of St. Daniel Comboni, the first one hundred and fifty years of Comboni Institute history were celebrated at the provincial house in Madrid, with the participation of a large group of Comboni Sisters, Lay Comboni Missionaries and friends.

The event opened in “Fr. Farè’s Hall” where, after some words of welcome by the provincial Fr. Pedro Andrés, D. Gerardo González Calvo, former editor-in-chief of Mundo Negro magazine, chaired a conference entitled: “A hundred and fifty years of fidelity to Daniel Comboni and the mission”. The Combonis – D. Gerardo stated – keep the memory “to remember the past and to give new vigour to the present and the future, following faithfully the charism and footsteps of the Founder, as is also noted in the booklet recently published by Mundo Negro ‘Memoria agradecida y esperanzada’ (Grateful and

Hopeful Memory)”).

Following the conference, the Cardinal Archbishop of Madrid, Mgr. Carlos Osoro presided at the Eucharist concelebrated by a number of Comboni and priests of the area with a profound feeling of gratitude. The other Comboni communities in Spain also celebrated the anniversary in their respective contexts.

### **Comboni family project among Immigrants**

The Comboni Family Commission comprised of Comboni Missionaries, Sisters and Lay Missionaries, met on 14 and 15 October at Granada (Spain) to continue to shape the elaboration of the project to open a Comboni Family mission in an area of immigrant camps, at San Isidro de Níjar, Almería.

The situation of the immigrants, Africans for the most part, challenges men and women missionaries to respond to it on the basis of the Comboni charism of “saving Africa with Africa”. We support and encourage this model of collaboration so that this experience may go ahead.

## ITALIA

### **1. Meeting in Bressanone**

On 26 October, about forty members of the communities of the Mother House, CCM, S. Tomio, Castel d’Azzano, Brescia, Padova, Limone, Lucca and Trento met together with the confreres of the community of Bressanone and other DSP communities to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Foundation of the Institute. It was a truly fraternal and successful meeting. Present were the provincials of Italy and the DSP and representatives of the diocese. Fr. Eder and Fr. Maneschg explained the history of the house. At the end of the Eucharistic celebration, the DSP provincial presented the *Writings* of Comboni in German. In the afternoon, there was a visit to the famous abbey of Novacella where the great friend and benefactor of Comboni, Bishop Mitterutzner, is buried.

### **2. Projects approved for financing**

During its meeting at the end of September, the Commission of the Italian Province for the analysis and approval of projects approved 21 projects of the 25 submitted, for a total of € 281,203.00.

As we have often been reminded, applications for projects of the Italian Province are sent to the Projects Commission: Vicolo Pozzo 1 - 37129 Verona (milaniven@gmail.com). They must have been approved by the presenting community and signed by the provincial or delegate. The Guide for the presentation of projects has been sent to them at least twice. Copies are available on request.

### **3. Increase in Nigrizia subscription**

Beginning in January 2018, the subscription to Nigrizia will go up from €32 to €35. However, those who subscribe to the hard copy will automatically receive a free subscription to the online version. It will still be possible to subscribe to the online version only. The subscription to PM remains unchanged. As for Nigrizia, those subscribing to the hard copy may freely use the online version. It is still possible to subscribe to the online version only. The parish of the Ugandan Martyrs, Rome, deserves praise and appreciation for the 30 subscriptions to Nigrizia it made in October.

## **KENYA**

### **Celebrating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Institute**

In the province of Kenya this event has been organised and celebrated colourfully in various zones. The first was in the Pokot zone, followed by the Turkana zone and finally in the Nairobi zone. The climax of this celebration, in the Nairobi zone, was on World Mission Sunday, at St. Daniel Comboni Catholic Church, Mission Promotion Community, in Embakasi. Other celebrations were held previously at the Holy Family Basilica in Nairobi.

The celebration was divided into two moments: A talk on St. Daniel Comboni and the Eucharistic celebration. There were various topics tackled by our confreres in order to enlighten the Christians on the relevance of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Comboni Missionaries: Bro. Jonas Dzinekou Yawoi presented the person of Comboni, Fr. Andrew Bwalya on the Comboni Missionaries, emphasising who we are, where we are and what we do, and finally Fr. Claudio Longhi on the Comboni Missionaries in Kenya and, above all, by giving his living testimony as one of the earliest confreres who arrived in the Kenya Province.

The Eucharistic celebration was presided over by Fr. Onesmas Otieno, a Kenyan confrere who works in Egypt-Khartoum province.

The message to the congregation by the provincial Superior of Kenya, Fr Austine Radol, was: The first mission to be established in Kenya was Kariobangi parish, which has given birth to other fourteen parishes; he then emphasised the role of education as a means of evangelisation.

## LONDON PROVINCE

### **Fifteen years at the service of the mission in Europe**

From 25 to 28 September, there was the meeting of the European group for Theological Reflection (GERT), established in 2002 to assist and contextualise missionary commitment in the European continent.

At this meeting, the Group was represented by Fr. Martin Devenish (European provincial in charge), Fr. Benito De Marchi and Fr. Alberto Pelucchi, LP; Fr. Dario Balula, Portugal; Fr. Stephane Kamanga, Spain; Fr. Hans Maneschg and Fr. Franz Weber, DSP; Fr. Alex Zanotelli, Bro. Alberto Parise, Fr. Giorgio Padovan and Fr. Fernando Zolli, Italy. Other participants were Professor Carmelo Dotolo and two Comboni Sisters, Sr. Carmina Ballesteros and Sr. Paola Moggi.

Starting from an analysis of the situation in recent months, the group underlined the importance of continuing to provide hope and support to those movements, including lay movements that work for a welcoming and sharing Europe.

Several studies were also presented such as “Meeting the other in the Bible”, by Fr. Hans Maneschg and a research paper by Fr. Fernando Zolli on the presence of *Fidei donum* priests and students from other continents (45% of whom from Africa), a phenomenon that affects all the Churches of the Continents of Europe and North America.

In its final evaluation, it was reiterated that the reflections of the GERT are based on the praxis of our communities and re-launches dimensions and proposals so that missionary drive may not weaken, assisting the missionaries themselves to move forward as the “Out-going Church”.

## PERU

### **St. Daniel Comboni and his “grandchildren”**

On 14 October, Cardinal Juan Luis Cipriani conferred priestly ordination on five deacons of the Institute “Missionaries of Reconciliation of the Lord of Miracles (MRSM)”.

After the Mass, the Superior General of the MRSM thanked God for this “miracle”: to have five new priests in the month dedicated to the patron of the Institute.

The MRSM see themselves as the “grandchildren” of St. Daniel Comboni and of the Comboni Missionaries since their Founder, Fr. Felipe Fierro, was a Comboni until, almost thirty years ago, he started this foundation to “fill a void”, as he himself said at the time.

In fact, he had been for some years a missionary in Africa and, having seen that, after a century of evangelisation, there were already Institutes of Africans, he asked himself why, 500 years since the coming of the Gospel to the continent, there was not yet a single male Institute in Peru.

Fr. Felipe was, however, notably absent on this solemn occasion, as he was in the United States doing mission promotion and collecting funds for his missions.

Three Combonis participated in the ceremony: Italian Fr. Gianni Gaiga, back in Peru after serving for several years in Poland as superior of the delegation, Peruvian Fr. Abel Torres, formator at the postulancy in Lima, and German Fr. Luis Weiss who took part representing the diocese of Tarma.

## SOUTH AFRICA

### **Visit of the Vicar General**

The visit of the Vicar General, Fr. Jeremias dos Santos Martins, to South Africa offered our missionaries new heart and enthusiasm for the mission.

The visit was from the 13<sup>th</sup> of September to the 1<sup>st</sup> of October. During this period all nine communities were visited and all the Missionaries had a chance of a personal encounter with the Vicar General who shared about the life of the Institute, its challenges and blessings, and the programme of the Institute leading to the next General Chapter.

During this visit, we had an opportunity to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Institute with the Comboni Friends and the Gauteng communities in Johannesburg.

This was a splendid event that offered new hope and vision to us all. Our gratitude goes to him for his encouragement and assistance.

## **An unpleasant visit to Mahube Valley**

We stand united with our Comboni Community in Mahube Valley who, on Thursday night (19 October), suffered an armed attack by several robbers.

The robbers gained entry to the house by climbing over the fence and surprising the community who were still in the process of locking up. They beat up a parishioner, demanding the keys and access to money from him. This young man is in the Intensive Care Unit in Steve Biko hospital. His condition is serious but stable.

Fr. Kotoku Lawson Kwaku Evans and Fr. Sebopela Ronnie Kgomotso managed to lock themselves in a bathroom. They heard the robbers breaking into all the rooms and ransacking the place. The Police were slow in coming. As it happened, Fr. Tehou Prosper and Fr. Kintamo Kirba Kifle, who were visiting Mahube Valley, had taken some parishioners home just before the robbers struck. Having been contacted by Fr. Prosper, they went to the Police Station to summon help. After some time they returned with the Police. The robbers had taken off by that time, stealing two cars. The cars were recovered on Friday but are still in Police possession.

Friday, throughout the day, the parishioners and the Comboni Missionary Sisters came to show support to the Missionaries, for which we are truly grateful.

This coming Sunday, Fr. Harold Felix Gomanjira, who had been assisting at Silverton, will return to Mahube Valley.

We continue supporting our Missionaries in Mahube Valley with our prayers and encouragement.

TGB

## **Commemoration of the 150 years**

The commemoration of the 150 years of the Comboni Missionaries culminated on Sunday, 8 October, 2017, with a Eucharistic celebration presided over by Mgr. Roger Hougbedji, OP. The faithful of the parish of St. Francis of Assisi thanked God not only for the 150 years of Comboni presence in the world but also for the 28 years of Comboni presence in Benin, at the parish of Fidjrosse. Mons. Roger Hougbedji unveiled the marble plaque erected by the parishioners for the occasion, as a sign of appreciation for the work of the Comboni Missionaries.

## **New entrants to the Cotonou novitiate**

The provincial of Togo-Ghana-Benin, Fr. Victor Kouande Adekoun, presided on 2 October at the ceremony of the official entrance of the new novices to the St. Daniel Comboni International Novitiate at Cotonou, in Benin. These young men numbered seventeen and were from Congo, Central Africa, Togo, Ghana and Benin.

This official entry took place three weeks after an introduction to the life-style of the Comboni novitiate and after the retreat on 27 September preached by Fr. John Baptist Opargiw, Secretary General for Formation, who was on a visit to the novitiate from 24 to 29 of the same month. The ceremony was simple and sober but deeply felt. The provincial, in his homily, invited the novices to be as transparent as the holy angels. Only by maintaining this openness to Our Lord and the mediations he gave them, could they experience the personal encounter with Christ, with Comboni, the Comboni charism and with themselves. In conclusion, the provincial presented each novice with the book of the Word of God, the Rule of Life and the Educative Charter of the novitiate. Two of these novices are Brother candidates and fifteen are candidates for the priesthood.

“We thank God for the vocations he continues to send us at this moment in the history of Francophone Africa. We entrust their journey to the Lord that he may transform them and make them holy and capable for the mission, as Comboni, our Father and Founder, desired”, said Fr. Léonard Ndjadi Ndjate, the novice master.

## **UGANDA**

### **Various pieces of news**

The 8<sup>th</sup> October saw the inauguration of St. Daniel Comboni Church at Lacor. It is a marvellous piece of architecture and art realised by a team led by Bro. Elio Croce. His Grace John Baptist Odama, the Archbishop of Gulu, officiated at the ceremony which started with the blessing of the Church. This was followed by the Eucharist. Priests, Religious and the faithful were many and all in celebrative mood.

The 150 years of the foundation of our Institute have been celebrated at zone level. Our confreres in the Karamoja zone got together on the 10<sup>th</sup> October at Kangole Parish. Together with the Comboni Sisters, they had a wonderful moment of prayer and sharing. They were joined by some diocesan clergy. The southern zone assembled on the same day at the Spirituality Centre run by the Comboni Sisters at Na-

mugongo. Brothers, Fathers, Sisters, male and female novices plus the postulants from Jinja MCCJ Postulancy celebrated together the feast of our Founder. In the Northern zone, the 10<sup>th</sup> October was celebrated at Lira-Ngeta. Confreres came together and shared in prayer and fraternal encounter.

On 20<sup>th</sup> October 2017, all roads were leading to Paimol for the celebration of our Blessed martyrs Jildo Irwa and David Okello. The celebration was a faith-renewing moment for all Christians. We continue to pray for the canonisation of our two martyrs as we seek their intercession for Uganda which is going through a moment of political uncertainty and economic upheavals.

## IN PACE CHRISTI

### **Bro. Girolamo Fortuna (06.08.1928 – 05.07.2017)**

Born at Castelvigo (Vicenza) on 6 August 1928, Girolamo entered the Venegono novitiate, having decided to become a Brother. He took first vows on 19 March, 1950, at Gozzano and, in 1952, after two years' service at Troia; he left for Khartoum where he worked at the technical school, especially in the carpentry. Assigned to El Obeid in 1955, he worked also in construction. After a short period of holidays in Italy, he returned to El Obeid (1958) where he worked at Comboni School and, from 1966 to 1986, at the bishop's house. In 1986 he moved to Kadugli, then to Nyala and then to Khartoum North. In 2009 he returned to Verona for treatment. In 2010, he was transferred to Arco and later to Verona. Lastly, he moved to Castel d'Azzano where he died on 5 July, 2017.

Bro. Agostino Cerri recalls: "I met Bro. Girolamo Fortuna, or "Momi", as he was called, for the first time in September of 1982, at the mission of Dilling, a few months after I arrived in El Obeid. My memory of this friend and confrere is tied up with the construction work he carried out in the diocese of El Obeid. The missions of Dilling, Kadugli, El Fasher and Nyala witnessed his precise, simple and economic work. He had a group of workers who were very fond of him as had great respect and esteem for him. Bro. Momi loved his work and community life. Nothing pleased him more than a game of cards after supper while he discussed his concerns, the work done during the day and that of the next day with his confreres. He was a capable administrator of money and always knew exactly what was needed for any given project such as a church or a house. His constructions are still a credit

to him in Kordofan. The church of Dilling, that of Kosti and many other buildings are still standing, even though the ground may have subsided causing cracks to appear. In those well-ventilated and light-filled churches, the people gather every Sunday dressed in their best clothes to pray and praise God. He must be very happy with that.

Very often, during the hot Sudanese afternoons, I saw Bro. Momi wetting down the cement work of a building with his usual straw hat on his head and his Rosary beads in his hand, as if to show me how prayer is not to be separated from the work of every day. Later, we went our separate ways: old age with its ailments forced him to stay at the house in Bahri, on the bank of the Blue Nile. The land there was the plot which good Fr. Pigarella, with great patience and unending effort, had succeeded in having returned to the mission by the illegitimate dwellers. That land was transformed by Bro. Momi into a verdant garden. In his expert and industrious hands everything grew, to the joy of many confreres and religious Sisters who visited Bro. Momi's garden every Friday morning. Besides distributing vegetables, he would enquire about the work and health of the confreres and the activities of the schools in Khartoum, to share the joys and sorrows of the Mission.

Here in El Obeid where I am now living, his workers are still around, though already grandfathers, both Christians and Moslems. It was Bro. Momi who taught them the skills to earn their living, rear a family and live a dignified life".

Another confrere who knew him in El Obeid was Fr. Carmine Calvisi. "He came to Sudan as a carpenter and learned how to build from Bro. Pietro Laffranchi. When the latter fell ill and died, the confreres who were building the cathedral met to see who could take charge of the work and complete it. They chose Bro. Momi who accepted on condition that everyone would collaborate if difficulties arose. I do not remember how many Brothers worked on the cathedral but I do remember that every Sunday at supper we were quite a few. That was how the cathedral of El Obeid, a beautiful building, big, strong and with excellent acoustics, was completed.

Bro. Momi with his team of workers was also given the task of building the mission of Kosti. Fr. Pietro Coronella had bought 5,400m<sup>2</sup> of land with planning permission to build a house for the fathers, one for the Sisters and a church. The foundation stone was laid by Mgr. Calabresi, the Nuncio, on 22 April 1973. It was completed in a year and, on 28 April, 1974, Mons. Baroni consecrated the church. I had the part of

the deacon during that ceremony. Bro. Momi was both swift and precise in his work, and was demanding with himself and with others”.

### **Fr. Michele Bonfitto (15.05.1922 – 06.10.2017)**

I knew Fr. Michele Bonfitto when I was in the Liceo at Carraia. Being choirmaster and interested in music, I met him a number of times and worked with him.

After completing theology in Italy, he was appointed to England where, for a period of time he was vice-rector of the minor seminary. The then Fr. General, Fr. Todesco, allowed him to do further musical studies. He took a diploma in the pianoforte, the organ, choral singing, Gregorian Chant, composition and choral and orchestral conducting. He did some course in London and others, such as musical composition, at Durham. He received second prize for composing a hymn in honour of the Queen in a choral competition at the Royal Albert Hall in London. The Queen presented him with a choir conductor's baton which he greatly prized. Unfortunately, during choir practice, Fr. Bonfitto broke the baton much to his displeasure and causing him to shed a tear or two.

He composed various Masses and motets in Latin with modern harmonies that were quite popular and an oratorio on Comboni entitled *Alba di Gloria* for choir, soloists and orchestra. Outstanding among his Masses is the popular *Missa Martyrum* that he composed in England and which we performed as boys on the occasion of the ordination to the priesthood of a large group of Combonis at the Votive Temple of Verona at which Cardinal Agagianian presided. If I remember correctly, that was in 1964.

Fr. Bonfitto composed a Mass in Latin for voices and organ on the occasion of the Second Vatican Council. His two famous post-conciliar Masses sung in many parishes throughout Italy were the *Messa dei Fedeli* and the Mass *Sei Grande nell'Amore*, with interesting rhythmic hymns, some of which were arranged by Bonfitto while others were originals, composed by him. He composed harmonies *con gusto* and creatively, avoiding the banal and what was too obvious. He had a deep sense of liturgical music. In conducting a choir he was nothing short of magical.

Fr. Michele was not an easy character and he would become annoyed if he thought people had little regard of him. He was depressed at times. Some of us Liceo students had at times to encourage him to bring him back to normal. He would sometimes “mythologise” himself

as a musician as, for example, he told us how, during a very cold winter in England, while he warmed himself at a stove, he fell asleep only to awake to see the last pages of the manuscript of a the new composition of his for choir and orchestra he had just completed go up in smoke. I had read of another composer who had had the same experience. He once told me he kept some of his compositions at the studio of a brother of his, a lawyer living in Florence. That music would be released when the time was right.

In conclusion, Fr. Bonfitto was a man of great musical gifts that he was able to place at the service of the liturgy and of the Church. I admire in him his ability to adapt to modern times so as to be musically relevant also to the youth. Even though his musical training was classical, he was ready to assume a style that was more rhythmic and with the modern accompaniment of guitars, base and percussion instruments. Much of what I have learned of music and choral composition I owe to him. (*Fr. Guido Oliana*)

### **Let us pray for our beloved dead**

**THE MOTHER:** Carmen, of Fr. García Oviedo José Manuel (NAP).

**THE BROTHERS:** Armando, of Fr. Gino Melato (I); Maurizio, of Fr. Baccanelli Giovanni (ET); Marcello, of Fr. Primo Silvestri (I).

**THE SISTER:** Santina, of Fr. Natale Basso (EC).

**THE COMBONI MISSIONARY SISTERS:** Sr. Alma Teresa Scagliarini; Sr. Carla M. Abraha; Sr. Eufrasia Fucina; Sr. Giannausilia Foscati; Sr. Giuseppina Tresoldi.

**Don Ferdinando Colombo** (1930-2017): as a Comboni Missionary, he undertook his first service in South Sudan and later in the north of the Congo where he was incardinated in 1980, pursuing his ministry with great dedication. He has always been a great friend of the Combonis and was always happy to see them. He passed away at Seregno (Italy) where he had lived in retirement for the past two years RIP.