

Familia Comboniana

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES OF THE HEART OF JESUS

772

March 2019

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

General Secretariat

We plan to reprint our Anuario Comboniano in 2020, after the new provincial superiors and their councils have been appointed. We ask the confreres on this list to kindly update their home addresses, now out of date due to deaths that have taken place:

Fr. Amaxsandro Feitosa da
Silva
Mgr. Arellano Fernández Eu-
genio
Fr. Alvarado Ayala Javier
Bro. António Carvalho Leal
Fr. Benedetti Donato
Fr. Benywanira Patrick
Fr. Borghi Orlando
Bro. Bozza Claudio
Fr. Bressani Giovanni Battista
Fr. Castrejana Fernández Felipe
Fr. Cortés Barbosa Fernando
Fr. De Robertis Corrado
Fr. Delgado Serrano José
Antonio
Fr. Dolzan Antonio
Fr. Esquivel Hernández David
Arturo
Fr. García Castillo Jorge Oscar
Fr. Girardi Luigi
Fr. Goffredo Donato

Fr. Guglielmi Antonio
Bro. Gusmeroli Ciriaco
Fr. Hernández Jaime Pedro
Pablo Leobardo
Fr. Huruwella Moses Samuel
Fr. Kifle Kintamo Kirba
Fr. Kiwanuka Achilles Kasozi
Fr. Lix Costop Agustín
Sc. Lizcano González Jalver
Fr. Lokpo Koudjo Kunegbodzi
Jean Philippe
Fr. Martínez Vargas Jorge
Fr. Máximo Aquino Armando
Fr. Mazzata Flavio
Fr. Mejía González José Luis
Fr. Melato Gino
Fr. Mileto Palmiro
Fr. Mödi Abel Nyörkö
Bro. Moretto Ruggero
Fr. Moser Luigi jr.
Fr. Mumba Michael Nyowani
Fr. Mwambi Karloli

Fr. Navarrete Arceo Miguel
Sc. Ojok Jasper
Bro. Ongaro Alessandro
Fr. Onoba John Kennedy
Fr. Pampaloni Elia
Fr. Peinhopf Karl
Fr. Pérez Cordova Roberto
Fr. Puttinato Giuseppe

Fr. Ramírez Falcón Nicolás
Martín
Fr. Ramundo Massimo
Fr. Sandoval Luiz Dutra da Luz
Fr. Sierra Moreno José Aldo
Bro. Tiziani Luigi
Fr. Tonolli Bruno
Fr. Zanardi Silvestro

Perpetual professions

Sc. Musonda Cosmas (MZ)	Lunzu (MW)	24/01/2019
Sc. Sebutinde Michael (U)	Namalu (UG)	25/01/2019

Holy Redeemer Guild

March	01 – 07 CO	08 – 15 E	16 – 31 DSP
April	01 – 15 CN	16 – 30 EC	

Prayer intentions

March – That the canonisation of Bishop Romero may bring all the Christian communities of Latin America strength, perseverance and confidence in the power of the Gospel. *Lord hear us.*

April – That the celebration of the passion and resurrection of Jesus may heal and reunite the peoples of all cultures and give them the strength to overcome the barriers that prevent their peaceful co-existence. *Lord hear us.*

Publications

Fr. Guido Oliana, *'The Lover of People'*. Fr. Joseph Ukelo Yala. *Comboni Missionary*, Nairobi, Paulines Publications Africa 2019.

A biography of Fr. Joseph Ukelo, a Comboni missionary of South Sudan; a sort of memorial of the action of grace in his life and how Fr. Joseph was courageously faithful to his religious and missionary vocation by means of all the events and situations he experienced in Sudan, South Sudan and South Africa; reasons why he may become a role model for many young people and not only those of Sudan.

Fr. Romeo Ballan, *Passi di Testimoni*, Universal Missionary Calendar, € 5. This calendar is "a memorial of men and women evangelisers, martyrs, saints, blessed, founders, patrons and other Christian

and non-Christian personalities, men and women of good will who left their mark on history; meaningful dates, days and events pertaining to the life and history of the Missions the world over”, as the introduction to the booklet says.

Reading this calendar day after day is like making a journey through the five continents, meeting men and women, seeing the faces and hearing the stories of both well-known and newly encountered people who left humanity better than they found it. The result is that “it improves our missionary culture and opens up new horizons”.

BRASIL

Comboni Missionaries support the process of the Amazon Synod

The Amazon Synod is already involving hundreds of Christian communities, various indigenous peoples, fishermen, people of African descent, quilombolas and traditional communities, organisations, companies and study and research groups.

To date, in Pan Amazonia, there have been 45 large assemblies for hearing the people of God, as well as parish round tables and thematic forums.

The Combonis are actively participating in this process of listening to the Spirit who speaks through the people, due to their “faith instinct” as Pope Francis frequently emphasises.

In February, they participated in the important work of synthesising all that had been heard in the territory, together with the Pan Amazon Ecclesial Network (REPAM). This synthesis will be one of the most important contributions for the drafting of the *Instrumentum laboris*, which will guide the discernment of Synod Fathers in October 2019.

CONGO

Provincial Assembly

On 8 February the Provincial Assembly was opened at Simisimi, Kisangani, with the participation of Fr. Tesfaye Tadesse, Superior General, and Bro. Alberto Lamana, Assistant General, who were visiting the province.

After the opening prayer by Bishop. Marcel Utembi, Archbishop of Kisangani, Fr. Joseph Mumbere, the provincial superior, presented the missionaries and the various dioceses: Bondo, Butembo-Beni,

Kinsantu, Isiro, Kinshasa, Kisangani and Wamba. He then thanked Bishop Utembi for his presence and officially opened the Assembly, welcoming Fr. Tesfaye and Bro. Lamana.

Bishop Utembi, in turn, remarked that the Comboni work in three of the five ecclesiastical provinces of the Congo, Kinshasa, Kisangani and Bukavu, praised their efforts in the pastoral field and encouraged them to continue while emphasising the need for such work. He also asked that they continue to increase the awareness of the faithful while introducing them to the culture of looking after their own priests, knowing that they are a gift for the good of the Church.

Lastly, having invited the Comboni to continue to work in the pastoral of the sick and the family, he presided at the Eucharistic celebration.

CURIA

Comboni Renewal Course 2019

The Comboni Renewal Course (CRC) is a Sabbatical period which the Comboni Institute offers to confreres aged between 45 and 65; it is held from January to May at the Generalate in Rome. It is coordinated by Fr. Siro Stocchetti, Bro. Guillermo Casas Rosell and Fr. Elias Sindjalim Essognimam, a team with many years of experience in the sector of ongoing formation and the accompaniment of confreres in this phase of life.

This year there are 17 participants aged from 48 to 68 and from 13 different countries and ministries.

During the Course, great importance is given to community life, to reflection and to prayer in small groups, so that each one may freely and easily share his personal and missionary experiences. An entire week is devoted to this sharing which helps the participants to get to know one another.

The CRC also includes some visits for the purpose of study and life-sharing. The group have already been to Assisi and also took part in various celebrations in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican and in the area of "Tre Fontane", where the Generalate is located. Two longer and very special trips are planned to which all are eagerly looking forward: first to Limone sul Garda and, for the final three weeks, to the Holy Land to see the places mentioned in the Bible and the very roads Jesus walked as he accomplished his mission.

“People in Movement” series of conferences in Rome

This year, 2019, is, for the Institute, a year dedicated to reflection on interculturality. For this reason the Lenten Conferences, held regularly since 2015, have as their specific theme the co-existence and integration of peoples of different religions and culture. The title of the series is “Peoples in Movement” and its purpose is to reflect on the challenge of living together as well as presenting experiences of success in the educational and parish environments.

The first conference will be held on 14 March and is entitled *Emigration and the challenges of living together*. It will be presented by the President of the Astalli Centre in Rom, Fr. Camillo Ripamonti S.J.

The challenge of living with people of different cultures and religions in the educational environment is the theme of the second meeting on 28 March; the relator will be Professor Pierluigi Bartolomeo, Director of the Elis professional school in Rome. On 14 April, Rev. Claudio Santoro, curate of the church of St. Barnabas, Rome, will speak on the theme of *the challenge of living together in the parish environment*.

It seems important to us, living in Italy, a country permeated with feelings of racism and rejection “towards those who are different from us”, that we present positive experiences of real coexistence and integration. Faced with people in movement, the challenge for the future will, in fact, be that of welcoming, promoting and integrating the migrant – as Pope Francis stresses – without forgetting the fears of those who receive them. It is the task of politics and many organisations in civil society to mediate between these two realities.

ESPAÑA

XXXI Encounter Africa

We belong to the Earth. Ecology in Africa and in the world

From 1 to 3 February 2019, organised by Mundo Negro magazine, the XXXI edition of *Encounter Africa*, was held in Madrid entitled “We belong to the Earth. Ecology in Africa and in the world”, during which the Mundo Negro Prize for Fraternity 2018 was awarded to the Liberian activist Silas Kpanan Ayoung Siakor, for his defence of the environment and reporting of the abusive exploitation of timber and diamonds by the government of Liberia.

Encounter Africa was seen not only as denouncing situations like this, which afflict and impoverish local populations stricken by reckless plundering, but also as an opportunity to bring into the open what is being done to check these abuses and name the person who is dedicating his life to this with such great courage. It resolved to recognise the work of Silas Siakor which he has continued since 2002, through the Institute for Sustainable Development which he founded and which, among other things, is fighting to have the community receive a just share of the benefits of such exploitation.

Following the *Encounter* in Madrid, Silas Siakor held conferences and meetings with the media in Granada and Barcelona. On 24 April 2006, in San Francisco, he received the Goldman Award for the Environment, a prize also known as the Nobel Prize for Ecology which is conferred every year to highlight those who are fighting for the defence of the natural world.

During the meetings, a film was screened describing the life and activities of the Liberian leader who, together with the Mundo Negro Award, also received 10,000 Euro for the work of his NGO.

Mundo Negro had already presented this theme in former editions because of the many people throughout the world who gaze at the African continent with questionable intentions. During the Encounter, the words of the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, which Pope Francis gave us four years ago, were borne in mind: "There cannot be a new relationship with nature without a new human being. There can be no ecology without an adequate anthropology".

ITALIA

Missionari Comboniani Mondo Aperto Onlus

New email addresses

We wish to make it known that, following the new European Privacy Regulations, new email addresses have been created for communication with Missionari Comboniani Mondo Aperto Onlus:

amministrazione@mondoaperto.it and info@mondoaperto.it

These two addresses are already active and take the place of onlusmccj@comboniani.org which will be discontinued.

Assembly on Mission

The Assembly on Mission of the Italian province was held in Pesaro from 29 to 31 January on the theme “Listening to the young and the mission”.

The first day was given over to sharing experiences in the youth ministry sector, so as to understand the expectations and desires of the youth of today and possible areas of commitment, while bearing in mind the final Document of the Synod on Young People.

The contribution of Rev. Armando Matteo, on the first day, was found to be very interesting. In it he underlined how reference adults no longer manage to express the connection between ‘adulthood’ and faith. Today, Rev. Matteo added, “most young people are learning how to live without God, without an experience of Church and without reference to Jesus Christ and the reason for all this is the generational break in the transmission of the faith caused by the adult universe giving up its own testimony of faith, having decided that their own happiness no longer depends on the foundational structure of being an adult but on one’s ability to remain young. It is time to redefine youth pastoral and catechesis, making them, for the Christian community, a place of generation and education for the youth”. The final part of the day was dedicated to Comboni youth pastoral with the presentation of GIM activities.

On the second day, after the reports by the various commissions of the Italian Province (Mission Secretariat, Migrants Commission, JPIC, Communications and Media, the Laity), Fr. Giovanni Munari, the Provincial, recalled the five important challenges for the Comboni communities: globalisation and the understanding of the mechanisms that govern the world of today so as to face them in an effective and prophetic way; the credibility of the Comboni presence in our society; multiculturality; the reform of the Church and, consequently, the reform of our life-style; and lastly, the importance of communication/proclamation in the world of today.

The third day was employed in proposing lines of action and concrete indications for work to be done in 2019.

KENYA

Visit to the province

Fr. Jeremias dos Santos Martins, Vicar General, is making an official visit to the Province of Kenya starting on 15 January. On 1 February, he was joined by Fr. Alcides Costa, Assistant General and they continued the visit in the area around Nairobi, the capital of the country.

Fr. Jeremias spent the first two weeks in the north of Kenya where the Combonis are present in six communities: two each among the Turkana and the Pokot and two in Marsabit where various pastoralist people live such as the Borana, the Gabra, the Rendile and so forth.

On the first weekend in February, Fr. Jeremias and Fr. Alcides visited the community of Kariobangi, a large parish in the outskirts of Nairobi where Comboni missionaries have been present since 1974. In fact, it was the first Comboni presence after the provincial house.

At 6am the parish church opens its doors to the faithful who are starting to come from all parts of Kariobangi, a crowded quarter populated mostly by young people from the various regions and tribes of Kenya. Young people often move to Nairobi in search of work or to continue their studies begun in their places of origin. This is why two thirds of the population is young with a great desire to work and to pursue their life's dream. Besides the parish centre, dedicated to the Blessed Trinity, the Combonis also provide pastoral care to two other prayer centres called after St. Daniel Comboni and St. John, which may, in the future, themselves become parishes, given the rapid increase in the number of people wishing to frequent the Catholic Christian community.

From 4 to 9 February the Provincial Assembly was held with times for prayer, revision, evaluation and the planning of activities.

Provincial Superiors of Africa gather in Nairobi

The superiors of the Comboni circumscriptions of English-speaking Africa and Mozambique (APDESAM) and of Francophone Africa (ASCAF) gathered in Nairobi from 18 to 25 February for their annual meeting for the evaluation and planning of activities at continental level. Present were all the circumscription superiors and two representatives of the Brothers at continental level, one from APDESAM and the other from ASCAF.

The agenda of the meeting included various important themes. A political, social and ecclesial analysis of each country was made and there were discussions on some common proposals, taking care to give concrete answers and to approach the real situations in the life of the populations with whom we Comboni work. Besides the themes proper to each sub-continent (Francophone Africa and Anglophone Africa and Mozambique), other common and urgent themes were dealt with such as JPIC in Africa, social and economic opportunities for the youth, interreligious dialogue, especially with Islam, the formation and academic preparation of candidates for the Institute and of young confreres, the economic self-sufficiency of the various circumscriptions, interculturality and the social media, including the Comboni magazines published in Africa.

Among the original items of the meeting, there was a proposal to create a "Centre" to coordinate activities of social entrepreneurship in the various circumscriptions of Africa. The proposal was backed by the participants, convinced that the project could have good results and make an impact on African society, especially among the very young who are the majority of the population. The name proposed for this Centre is Comboni Alliance for Social Entrepreneurship (CASE).

The meeting ended on 25 February with a meeting between the APDESAM superiors and the coordinating team of the Communications Centre in Nairobi (New People Media Centre). Among other things, the promotion of New People magazine and the enhancement of the Communications Centre in Nairobi and in Africa were discussed.

IN PACE CHRISTI

Fr. Josef Valentin Knapp (14.02.1941 - 12.01.2019)

Josef was born at Falzes in Val Pusteria/Alto Adige on 14 February 1941, the eighth of twelve children. The brotherhood he lived and experienced as a child became his life-long characteristic.

At the age of eleven, Josef entered the missionary seminary of the Comboni Missionaries at Milland, close to Bressanone, for junior school and went to the diocesan minor seminary for high school. After his final exams in 1961, he began the novitiate in Mellatz (Germany).

On 14 October 1962 he took temporary vows and moved to Bressanone for philosophical and theological studies in the diocesan major seminary. On 6 January 1966, he took final vows and, on 29 June 1966, he was ordained priest by Bishop Josef Gargitter of Bolzano-Bressanone. While waiting for a visa for South Africa, he filled the post of local bursar in the Milland community.

At long last, in 1968, he was able to leave for the mission. All through the thirty two years he spent as a missionary, Fr. Josef kept in close contact with his family and his native country. For him, to be a missionary meant a continual learning process; he loved to communicate and was convinced of the need to keep up to date. For this reason, after fourteen years working in the missions of Luckau, Burgersfort and Glen Cowie, he frequented various courses at the *Amecea Pastoral Institute*, also known as the *Gaba Pastoral Institute*, from January to October 1982. In general, the post-conciliar period which includes the first phase of Fr. Josef's missionary work, was a time of "going out". Like many other local missionaries and Christians, Fr. Josef collaborated with *Lumko Pastoral Institute*. The fruits of that post-conciliar 'going out' were the Small Christian Communities, Biblical Apostolate, printed material for the various ecclesial services and the Pastoral Plan of the Catholic Church in South Africa: "*Community Serving Humanity*" (1989), which underlined the social dimension of the mission.

In 1986, the new bishop of the diocese of Witbank, Mgr. Paul Mogale Nkhumishe, appointed Fr. Josef as Director of the Pastoral Centre of "Maria Trost", Lydenburg. As Director of the Centre, he accompanied the formation courses for deacons, catechists and other ecclesial services. At the same time, he ministered to the two parishes in Lydenburg, one for Africans and the other for whites. It was still the time of apartheid. He restored the old church of the mission, the first 'cathedral' of the Apostolic Vicariate. Bishop Nkhumishe appointed him Secretary and Administrator of the Diocese of Whitbank, thus showing how much confidence he had in him.

For the years 1993-1994 Fr. Josef was a member of the DSP. Before returning to South Africa in 1995, he completed a renewal course at the "Recollectio-Haus" in the Benedictine monastery of Münster-schwarzach (Germany).

With his return to South Africa, he began a new phase in his missionary life. He started working in the Archdiocese of Pretoria taking

on the mission of St. Joseph in Dornbirn, a rural area of ten communities with various schools, helped by six pastoral collaborators and eighteen part-time catechists.

On 1 July 2003, Fr. Josef was assigned definitively to his original province (DSP) but he continued to build bridges between the people of South Africa and those of his own country and to maintain contacts between Africa and Europe, which he believed should be a reciprocal commitment. The visits of South African parish choirs to Europe were unforgettable. For example, the choir called *Ubuntu*, a word meaning "humanity, friendship and cordiality" in the Zulu language, arrived in September 2011 and presented the story of South Africa in four acts: its origins, the period of oppression, the struggle for liberation (with Nelson Mandela) and the first democratic elections in 1994.

The organisation of those tours, which always had the purpose of promoting social projects (helping schools for nurses, old-peoples' homes, the training of pastoral agents), required much time, energy, collaboration and economic resources. With the help of the local government of the autonomous province of Bolzano, of many friends, benefactors, relatives and confreres, the journeys, meetings and public shows by the choirs produced remarkable results for all involved.

From 2004 until his death, Fr. Josef was administrator of the two small parishes of Ponte Gardena and Kollmann, situated a few kilometres from Bressanone. As parish priest he lived in a simple apartment at the primary school in Waidbruck. He never put himself forward but neither did he hesitate to challenge people as he did when it was a matter of resolving conflict in the community through reconciliation. He proclaimed the Word of God in simple language, celebrating the liturgy creatively and leaving ample space for the people to participate. Unfortunately, his last trip to South Africa had undermined his health. After a week in intensive care at Bolzano hospital, he died on 12 January 2019.

The liturgical farewell celebrations at Kollmann and Ponte Gardena, the funeral at his home town of Falzes, presided by the diocesan Bishop Mgr. Ivo Muser and the large attendance were a clear sign of the esteem and affection the people had for their pastor and friend. He was buried in the cemetery of his home parish of Falzes. (*Fr. Hans Maneschg mccc*)

Fr. Balbino Rodríguez Lorenzana (17.11.1944 – 20.01.2019)

Spanish by birth, a travelling missionary, mystical and dynamic, parish priest and teacher, critic and humourist, he was devoted to Saint Teresa of Avila on whose works he based his spirituality.

Balbino was born at Carbajal de la Legua, in the diocese of León (Spain) on 17 November 1944. He did his novitiate at Moncada and studied theology at Venegono. He was ordained priest on 22 March 1970 and assigned to the Province of South Brazil where he assumed, among other functions, the coordination of the parish of Ecoporanga, in the diocese of São Mateus (ES), from 1972 to 1976.

“Fr. Balbino” – writes bishop emeritus Mgr. Aldo Gerna – “was a man of broad and open vision with respect to the process of the Church today. He loved the poor and often said he wanted to be buried at Pitengo, a community that seemed out of this world due to its distance from the church of Ecoporanga, for its poverty and for the simplicity of its people. That is why he admired and liked that place”. For some years, with some *fidei donum* missionaries and the Comboni Sister Maria Vidale, he coordinated the diocesan pastoral care of São Mateus”.

In the period of post-conciliar change, conflict arose between the missionaries who assumed Vatican II, favouring and giving priority to the *preferential option for the poor*, following the social method of Liberation theology and of the CNBB, and other priests who preferred not to become involved in the social struggle. However, most of the priests of the diocese of São Mateus accepted the principle that “there is no pastoral if we do not participate in the struggles of the people and if we do not share in their sufferings and victories” (G. Munari, *Caminhos Combonianos no Brasil*, p. 228). In this context, Mgr. Gerna admits that Fr. Balbino, the general coordinator of the diocese, surprised him with his ability to carry out this task and tells how, in the eighties, “Fr. Balbino and I were in perfect agreement regarding pastoral policy of the diocese. In difficult moments, Fr. Balbino would advise me on the right pastoral decisions to take. A real friend, Fr. Balbino lived a profound and contagious spirituality together with me, as no one else did”.

“Profoundly identified with the Comboni charism” – writes Fr. Karl Peinhopf – “Fr. Balbino led a very simple lifestyle. He kept the house clean, liked to cook and bought the simplest and cheapest foodstuffs.

In the pastoral work, he sought a new form of evangelisation such as visiting families in their homes. On weekdays, either in the morning or the evening, he would visit each and every family. On days of rest he would read the documents of the Institute, the diocese and the Pope”.

“Fr. Balbino had one virtue most uncommon among mortals”, wrote Fr. Massimo Ramundo, “his extreme sincerity; he was immovable regarding anything he believed to be right because he practised what he preached. He was radical. He would often worry about Catholics abandoning their faith and joining other churches or sects. In order to comprehend why, he visited the non-Catholic Christian churches, also to better understand the language and the needs of the people”.

Fr. Balbino never stayed long in the same community. After the mission in South Brazil, he moved to various circumscriptions: Mexico (1980-1989), Spain (1989-1996), Central America (1996-2001), South Brazil (2001-2011) and lastly he returned to Central America where he stayed from 2011 until his death in 2019.

In May 1977 Fr. Balbino introduced me to the parish of Pinheiro (ES). He taught me the new way of carrying out the ‘liberation’ mission, and I willingly agreed to adopt the priorities of the diocesan pastoral work which, in those days, fostered the Ecclesial Basic Communities, lay ministries and the political training of our leaders in a diocesan pastoral journey that was neither easy nor unified. It was due to its ‘journey of liberation’ that the Church in São Mateus was considered ‘one of the most progressive and radical dioceses in the whole of Brazil’. (*Fr. Enzo Santangelo, mccj*)

Fr. Robert Mary Kleiner (22.02.1944 – 02.02.2019)

For 47 years, Fr. Robert (Bob) Kleiner enjoyed the most beautiful adventure of sharing the Gospel and serving the people of the world as a Comboni missionary. He was kind, generous and friendly to all. After a full life he returned to the Father in the final hours of Saturday, 2 February 2019, in Los Angeles, California.

Fr. Robert was born in Cincinnati on 22 February 1944, into a large, loving and fervent family. He attended the parish of Saint Pius X and entered the Seminary of the Sacred Heart in Anderson Township (Forestville) for high school. Novitiate and theology required him to go to San Diego, California, and to Cincinnati, Ohio (1966-1971). He was ordained priest on 29 May 1971 in the Cincinnati Cathedral of Saint Peter in Chains.

Two months later, he was on his way to Peru for his first missionary post in the small city of Yanahuanca, in the high Andean mountains, eight hours by a climbing road from Lima. His mountain parish had 36 communities. As for his Spanish, he had learned a bit of it in the seminary but now he really “learned it well while working and celebrating Mass in various towns on the mountains”, as he himself wrote in an article in 2011.

He stayed in Peru for three years but his various health problems, which did not certainly improve in the cold mountain climate, forced him to leave the province. About a year later he was assigned to the seminary of the Comboni School at San Francisco del Rincón, Mexico. He remained there for six years, 1976–1982, working well and with good results.

In 1982 he was assigned to the parish of Holy Cross in Los Angeles, where he ministered for eight years. In 1991, he left sunny California for the Archdiocese of Chicago, the ‘windy city’. Together with Fr. Domingo Campdepadrós he began working in the parish of San Donato, Blue Island, Illinois, and in the nearby parish of the Seven Holy Founders. San Donato had started as an Italian parish but at that time there were immigrants coming from various Latin American countries. The challenges were many, most of them caused by overlapping and, at times, conflicting cultures, but the two Comboni confreres and their successors managed to establish a sound Catholic community.

Fr. Robert remained in Chicago up to the year 2002. After a Sabbatical year, he was reassigned to the Comboni parishes of Holy Cross and Saint Cecilia, in the South Side of Los Angeles, where he lived until his death, with the exception of a year spent serving the community of Covina, engaged in mission promotion.

Those years were also marked by increasingly bad health: in 2005, Fr. Robert seemed so close to death’s door that his funeral arrangements were being considered. Surprisingly, he recovered. After a period of convalescence, he asked to continue his missionary work, even though he was not really his old self yet.

Fr. Robert was no great orator, but he was especially gifted in making contact with people, whatever their social level. Charmed by his constant smile and his infinite patience, many people sought his advice.

Immediately after his death, many came to pay him homage and to express their admiration for him. His remains were taken to his native

parish in Cincinnati for a requiem Mass. He was buried in the family tomb.

“It was really worth it: I would not change my missionary vocation for all the world. I feel motivation and love living and working with people. They are my inspiration in following Christ and my vocation to the priesthood”. May these words of Fr. Robert inspire us all. (*Lindsay Braud/Joseph Bragotti, mcccj*)

LET US PRAY FOR OUR BELOVED DEAD

THE BROTHERS: Carlos Alberto, of Fr. António Marques Martins (P); Joaquim, of Bro. Matias Martins dos Santos (P).

THE SISTERS: Rosemarie, of Fr. Anton Schneider (DSP); Johanna, of Bro. Bernhard Hengl.

THE COMBONI MISSIONARY SISTERS: Sr. Alma Pia Targa, Sr. Maria Santina Pelizzari, Sr. Imeldina Muraro, Sr. Maria Carmen Martínez Morales.



Let your hearts be torn and not your clothes
(Pope Francis)

MISSIONARI COMBONIANI VIA LUIGI LILIO 80 - ROMA
