

Familia Comboniana

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

778

October 2019

EXTRAORDINARY MISSIONARY MONTH

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION



General Secretariat of the Mission Languages, Mission, Memory

The year 2019 has been proclaimed by the UN as International Indigenous Languages Year. Furthermore, Pope Francis has made October 2019 an Extraordinary Missionary Month, to mark the centenary of the Apostolic Letter of Pope Benedict XV, *Maximum Illud* (30 November 1919).

To celebrate these two events, an exposition entitled *Languages, Mission, Memory: the contribution of the Comboni Missionaries to the study and conservation of local languages in their work of proclaiming the Gospel*. The title and sub-title reflect the aim: to keep the memory of the Comboni commitment to the study and translation of texts in some African languages. The language is indeed the instrument which expresses the richness of the culture of a people

and the indispensable means to transmit the evangelical message.

The exposition will be opened on 10 October, the feast of Saint Daniel Comboni, at 17.00. On 14 October, at 18.00, a conference will be held to present the exposition with the participation of Fr. Claudio Lurati, Treasurer General, Laura Fasciolo and Massimiliano Troiani, artistic directors of the display, Fr. Venanzio Milani, Director of the African Museum of Verona and Professor Pierluigi Valsecchi from the Department of Political and Social Sciences at Pavia University.

The exposition is in six sections: grammars and dictionaries, catechisms, sacred history texts, liturgical texts, educational texts and music. The aim is to provide a range of texts translated into local languages while seeking to describe the ethnic group, its geographical location and the author in the case of grammars and dictionaries. On display there are also images, stories of the period and historical maps of the country where the missionaries were working.

The exposition also includes some documents representing the majority of the ethnic groups in Africa among whom the Combonis have worked. A complete panorama of all the work of translating, study, cataloguing and arrangement of the languages, would have required many more documents to be put on show, such as the grammars and dictionaries of other Combonis who worked in Ethiopia, Mozambique, Sudan, Uganda, Kenya and elsewhere ... catechisms and books of Sacred History etc.. Besides these, it was not possible to show all the countless articles and books on ethnology alongside anthologies of stories, fables, proverbs etc. that they collected and catalogued. That would have been an enormous task, sufficient to open a museum.

Despite its limits, we are certain that the material displayed provides sufficient elements to evaluate the enormous work of the study and conservation of the local languages done by Comboni Missionaries, a contribution that forms part of the epic missionary effort to announce the Gospel from Pentecost to the present day.

Code of Conduct (CD)

On 10 October 2019, the feast of Saint Daniel Comboni, the new Code of Conduct (CD) will be published and come into force. It has kept the same title under which it was published in 2007: "Missionaries Both Holy and Capable: guidelines for the ministry and fraternal care of persons in some particular situations".

As we read in the preface, the revised text has taken account of different factors, especially of the recently published documents of the Church concerning the matter of the Code.

The rules and norms contained in the Code are a help to prevent inadequate behaviours. Nevertheless, the law by itself is not sufficient to keep us faithful to our vocation. For this reason, the CD is meant to be, first, of all, an urgent call to conversion, to fidelity to Christ and the Gospel, joyfully accepting the journey that the Lord proposes with freedom and responsibility.

All confreres are therefore bound to know and follow the guidelines of the Code and to sign the “form of acceptance of the Code of Conduct of the MCCJ”, included in the CD.

Comboni liturgical texts in Spanish

By decree of 9 September 2019, the Congregation for Divine Worship has granted approval of the texts in Spanish of the Comboni Missal and the relative readings.

Since the approved texts do not include the parts present and already approved in other languages, it will not be possible to print them for the present.

By another decree of the same date, the Congregation allows the Comboni Missionaries to transfer the optional memorial of St. Jerome Emiliani from 8 to 9 February, so as to be able to celebrate the memorial of St. Josephine Bakhita on that day.

Fr. Angel Lafita had introduced these requests to the Holy see in March 2016. The Institute, and especially the Spanish-speaking provinces are most grateful to Fr. Angel for his contribution.

General Secretariat for Formation (SGF)

Meeting in Rome

Over the two days, 13 and 14 September 2019, the confrere members of the General Council for Formation gathered at the Generalate in Rome. This was the second meeting of the new group at general level after the unification of the Secretariats for Initial and Ongoing Formation into one single Secretariat for Formation.

The two days of meetings were full and spent in an atmosphere of fraternity and sharing of the joys and challenges of formation in the different cultural contexts in which the Combonis work. The agenda of the meeting included especially these three points: the attention to be paid to vocations promoters and formators regarding their selec-

tion, preparation and accompaniment; a general verification of Comboni formation and thirdly, the organisation and the organic consolidation of the new united secretariat at all levels, in an effort to give more space and relevance to ongoing formation. The next meeting is planned for February 2020, again in Rome.

The participants were: the members of the SGF – Fr. John Baptist Opargiw (Secretary General for Formation), Fr. Elias Sindjalim (Director of the Ongoing Formation Centre), Fr. Siro Stocchetti (Member of the Ongoing Formation centre) and Fr. Fermo Bernasconi (Member of the Ongoing Formation Centre) – and the continental representatives: Fr. Fidèle Katsan (Francophone Africa), Fr. Jude Eugene Burgers (Anglophone Africa and Mozambique), Fr. Jesús Villaseñor (America and Asia), and Fr. Karl Peinhopf (Europe).

“Saint Daniel Comboni, The man and his message”

In publishing this book, the Secretary general for formation wished to act on one of the suggestions of the General Assembly of Formation (Maia, 9-30 July 2017) – that of making available material useful for formation in different languages and on various themes such as Comboni history, charism and tradition. Its purpose is to make it possible for everyone, in their own language, to avail of the historical memory of the Institute.

The first outcome of this is this booklet, issued in this month of October 2019, thanks to the availability of Fr. David Kinnear Glenday who saw to the translation of this small anthology of text of Comboni, first published in 2003 under the title: “Daniele Comboni. A servizio della Missione”.

At the heart of the matter is a precious instrument – hitherto lacking in English – to transmit the essential aspects of the person, the history, the mission and the charism of the Founder. The booklet will therefore be distributed to all the houses of formation so that the confreres – especially the youthful ones – may come to know better St. Daniel Comboni and deepen their knowledge of the Comboni charism. (*Fr. John Baptist K. Opargiw*)

Ordination

Fr. Geraci Alessio (I)

Palermo (I)

14/09/2019

Holy Redeemer Guild

October 01 – 07 RCA 08 – 15 TCH 16 – 31 RSA
November 01 – 15 SS 16 – 30 T

Prayer intentions

October – That the extraordinary month of mission desired by Pope Francis may reawaken in all Christians enthusiasm for the *missio ad gentes*. *We pray to the Lord.*

November – For all men and women missionaries who come to the end of their earthly journey: Lord, welcome them with your Fatherly embrace and may they always be for us an example of self-giving and the seed of new missionary vocations: *We pray to the Lord.*

Publications

Enzo Santangelo, *Fala-nos Pedro. Revelações misteriosas e confidenciais do primeiro Papa*. Ed. O Recado, 2019. This booklet is a brief biography of the apostle Peter which gives us – as the author says in the preface – a better awareness of the liberating mission of Christ.

DSP

Meeting of confreres under fifty

From 9 to 13 September a meeting was held in Nuremberg of Combonis less than fifty years of age and who work in Europe. Most of them were Africans.

Combonis come from 46 different nationalities. New vocations are coming mostly from Africa with some also from America and Asia and extremely few from Europe which, up to a few years ago, was in first place. Precisely for this reason, the General Council proposed that this year's reflection should centre on internationality and interculturality.

At the suggestion of the DSP, therefore, twelve Combonis under fifty years of age who work in Portugal, Germany, Italy, Spain and Poland, met at the provincial House of Nuremberg to get to know each other and to share the joys and challenges that they experience in their communities which are particularly international, intercultural and intergenerational.

Interculturality was stressed as the fundamental dimension of the Comboni Institute which Comboni wanted to be catholic and not just Italian, Spanish or German.

During one of the gatherings, a beautiful testimony was presented by Fr. Körber Markus Lorenz, a German aged 47 who studied theology in Rome and spent eleven years at Tali in South Sudan. Fr. Markus maintained that it is very good to live together with people of different cultures and that it is constructive for the missionary to assume the cultures of various peoples. His testimony – he has been struggling with cancer for five years which radically changed his life – won great admiration from the participants.

The group took the opportunity to visit Bamberg, the old provincial House of the Combonis of the DSP, and the community of Ellwangen, the first Comboni community in Germany (opened in 1920), and which is now a home for the sick and elderly.

ESPAÑA

Meeting of Comboni Bishops

From 14 to 19 September, the Comboni bishops (UVC) held a their biennial meeting in Madrid. They are nineteen in all and from various countries. Eleven of them work in African dioceses, six in America and one in Europe. Seven are Emeritus bishops who, even though they have no great responsibilities, are still active, aware that the missionary never retires and will, until their last breath, always be a witness to the Risen Christ. The main purpose of the meeting is an exchange of pastoral experiences and, since the nineteen bishops work in such varied pastoral situations, the exchange is indeed an enrichment for all of them. The Superior General, Fr. Tesfaye Tadesse Gebresilasie and the Superior general of the Comboni Missionary Sisters, Sr. Luigia Coccia, were also present.

Three bishops were unable to attend. One of these was Mons. Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, who was made a cardinal at the October 5 Consistory and became the first cardinal in the history of the Comboni Missionaries.

Apart from the formal meetings, the programme also included other events. On Sunday 15 they celebrated the Eucharist in groups in two Madrid parishes – St. John the Baptist and Holy Trinity – and also at the 'Africa' chapel of the Combonis. On Monday 16, the bishops met with the Spanish national director of the Pontifical Missionary Works,

Fr. José María Calderón. On Tuesday he held a press conference and on Wednesday they visited the historical city of Toledo, where they celebrated the Eucharist with Archbishop Braulio Rodríguez. On Thursday 19, a conference was conducted by the missiology lecturers of Burgos University Eloy Bueno and Roberto Calvo, entitled "The mission ad gentes, paradigm of the work of the Church". On the same day, the bishops were visited by Cardinal Carlos Osoro of Madrid, who came to greet and share a meal with his fellow bishops.

Given the happy coincidence of the National Missionary Congress being held in Madrid (in view of the Extraordinary Mission Month), four of the Comboni bishops – Mons. Juan José Aguirre, Bishop of Bangassou (Central Africa), Mons. Jaime Rodríguez Salazar, Bishop Emeritus of Huánuco (Peru), Mons. Luis Alberto Barrera Pacheco, Bishop of Tarma, Junin (Peru) and Mons. Miguel Ángel Sebastián Martínez, Bishop of Sarh (Chad) – on the afternoon of 19 September, took part in a round table discussion at the Congress.

ITALIA

Civil economy and mission: "We can transform the system"

The acquisition of greater instruments of understanding and critique of the socio-economic reality and evaluate whether missionary action is sufficiently equipped to face this epoch of transition dominated by the financial economy were the directives followed by the workshop organised in Florence (4-7 September) by the European Group for Theological Reflection (GERT), which brought together around a score of Comboni Missionaries from Italy, the UK, Spain, Portugal, Germany and the democratic Republic of Congo.

Among the relators were the economist Stefano Zamagni, theorist of civil economy (appointed last March by Pope Francis as President of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences); Michele Dorigatti, one of the founders of the school of civil economy and director of the Don Lorenzo Guetti Foundation; Gaetano Sabetta, lecturer at the Faculty of Missiology at the Pontifical Urbanian University; Lorenzo Semplici, who teaches ethics and finance at the Pontifical Salesian University. There was also a testimony by Marco Bartoletti, an entrepreneur who implements civil economy.

Fr. Fernando Zolli, Superior of the Florence Comboni community and GERT coordinator, explained: "This workshop is a starting point that opens the way to further occasions for study and evaluation. The

Comboni Missionaries are called, first and foremost, to enrich their own formation along these lines, to evaluate what their own role is in the territories where they operate and also to recalibrate styles of life both personal and communitarian. Our missionary presence must continue to keep alive the hope of a change of paradigm; a change that will bring life in abundance to all the poor of the world”.

“Centenary of Comboni presence in San Tomio” (Verona)

The community of San Tomio and the faithful who attend this church are celebrating this year the centenary of the Comboni presence there, in communion with the diocese and the Institute. In November 1919 Cardinal Bartolomeo Bacilieri, Bishop of Verona, entrusted to the “Sons of the Sacred Heart of Jesus” the pastoral service of San Tomio (*St. Thomas the Apostle*), in the very centre of the city of Verona, on the corner where Piazza Erbe, Via Mazzini and Via Cappello meet (the location of the Shakespearean “*House of Juliet*”).

The church of San Tomio, one of the most ancient in the city (the late IV century), has seen times of religious splendour as an oratorio, a college and a parish, while during the Napoleonic period it was close and reduced to a theatre. Reclaimed in 1836 and again blessed as a *rectory* nel 1842, it was dedicated to the Immaculate and Saint Thomas, entrusted to the diocesan clergy and, in 1919, to the Comboni Missionaries. In the name of the Institute, the commitment was accepted by Fr. Antonio Vignato, the then Vicar and Assistant General.

He was succeeded in 1923 by Fr. Ercolano Zanta, who was rector for almost thirty years. Starting in 1945 the pastoral service was enriched with the institution of daytime adoration of the Blessed sacrament and, in the fifties, by the opening of a resident and a larger number of confreres always available for the Masses and confessions. In 1954 Bishop Girolamo Cardinale, “Having seen the praiseworthy manner with which the Combonis run the church”, granted them its pastoral service “*in perpetuo*”.

During the hundred years of presence, around seventy Combonis were assigned there, both Fathers and Brothers. Besides these, some tens of other confreres helped – as they are still doing! – to cover for those who are absent for short and occasional periods.

The four confreres present today at San Tomio believe it is their duty to keep the memory – with a deep sense of gratitude! – of the gifts received from the Lord and shared with the people during the past

100 years, thanks to the constant and generous presence of so many confreres, both young and old, who spent years of their missionary passion there. This centenary journey is punctuated by some dates and events for the months of October and November. The Comboni service to San Tomìo bears out three values:

1. *The Eucharist*: three Holy Masses are celebrated each day and there is Adoration during the daytime;
2. *The Sacrament of Reconciliation*: priests are always available for confessions;
3. *The Mission*: which is shared through preaching and personal colloquies.

For these reasons the Veronese consider San Tomìo to be an important “*Source of spiritual breath for the city*”.

The first celebration took place at the Mother House on 24 September with the launching of three missionary events: *The extraordinary Mission month of October*, the *Synod for Amazzonia* and the centenary of San Tomìo, with interventions by Fr. Giulio Albanese and Fr. Romeo Ballan. There will be further celebrations in October-November.

Initiatives of Verona CCM

The activities of the CCM community of Verona have recommenced.

The *African Museum* has already prepared about thirty workshops for schools ranging from pre-school to university. As in previous years, more than six thousand students are expected to take part. Sixty per cent of these are museum visitors. From 5 October to 8 December, a display will be held of the work of the well-known Kenyan artist, painter and sculptor, Cyrus Kabiru, who transforms rubbish into futuristic spectacles that help to see in a different way. The displays “*Migrant Bodies*” and “*Clandestine Minerals*” have already received a good number of bookings.

The Asia, Africa and Latin American Halls are also in demand with twenty evening bookings already for the month of October. The Africa Hall is especially in demand. It is used in the morning for Museum workshops, and for other initiatives in the afternoons and evenings. The conferences entitled “*Tuesdays of the World*” are held there. Up to December the film “*Rwanda*” will be shown there for the opening of the African Film festival, as also the docufilm “*Esilio, la passione secondo Lucano*”, the conferences of Cardinal Pedro Barreto on the

Amazonian Synod and those of Cardinal Lorenzo Monsegwo on the *Congo* in November as well as a meeting with Rev. Luigi Ciotti in December. The hall is also used for presenting a number of books and journeys, for showing films from the Travellers and Migrants section of African films, conferences on such varied themes as the laws affecting migrants and nutrition problems in Africa and elsewhere, courses for leaders of various events such as the African Film festival and the initiatives of the Diocesan Missionary centre, courses for the training of teachers at the school of Italian for immigrants, theatre workshops, photography courses, meetings about spirituality, problems of student mobility, university student unions and so forth.

There was an interesting two-day conference held by the Ghanaian Ambassador to Italy for the Ghanaians living in Verona and the surrounding provinces (more than 500) to regularise their documents.

Besides all these things there is the normal work preparing the issues of the *Nigrizia*, *PM* and *Missionari Comboniani* magazines, the calendar and the *Strenna*, managing subscriptions, Holy Redeemer Guild campaigns, First Holy Communions and Confirmations, printing and despatching the provincial bulletins, *Famiglia Comboniana* etc.

We are also busy preparing a round table on Africa during the Festival of the Church's Social teaching to be held in Verona from 21 to 24 November.

KENYA

Fr. Daniel Villaverde becomes a "Turkana Elder"

Living with peoples and cultures different from one's own is part and parcel of the missionary vocation. It is not always easy but it is something marvellous and enriching, especially when the people who receive the missionary recognise in him someone who has worked for their good. This was recently experienced by the Spanish Comboni Fr. Daniel Villaverde who worked in the parishes of Katilu and Lokori for six years, from 1989 to 1995. The people never forgot him. Therefore, when in July he visited the area while accompanying some young Spaniards belonging to the *Combojoven* group, he was pleasantly surprised when, at the end of the Mass he was celebrating at the Comboni parish of Lodwar, on 21 July, during a brief and simple ceremony, he was unexpectedly presented with the attributes and instruments of a "Turkana Elder".

The Turkana elder has no political power but is a point of reference and is a counsellor whose word is always heard before taking important decisions concerning the community. Attributing anyone the honorary title of “Turkana Elder” is very rare since there has to be a very broad agreement that the person has shown they have contributed to the good of the community. Fr. Daniel showed he fulfilled these conditions by his love for the Turkana, a love which he showed by his deeds, especially by financing the studies of many young people – Catholics, Moslems and Protestants – during the years when he was Parish priest. The fact that the help given by the Catholic mission is not just for personal benefit is shown by the way these young people, now grown up and with important posts in society and doing useful work, have, for the most part, remained in the Turkana area to help their own people.

PORTUGAL

Meeting for reflection on interculturality

Seven Combonis from the Spanish Province and ten from the Province of Portugal met from 24 to 26 September at Leiria (Portugal) to reflect together, led by Fr. Jeremias dos Santos Martins, Vicar General and Bro. Alberto Lamana, Assistant General, who directed the reflection starting from the demography of the Institute and the challenges posed by the new vocational geography.

The encounter – of ongoing formation – began with a day devoted to study and reflection on interculturality, the theme of the Institute for 2019. Interculturality is a long and difficult process that brings new life to the Institute and new ways of communication among its members.

The participants shared their concrete experiences of interculturality which is, above all else, a meeting between people and groups with different cultures. They underlined that the African intuition of Ubuntu (I am because we are) is essential for living according to it and the y affirmed – to promote it – the urgency of greater internationalisation of the provinces of Spain and Portugal.

Wednesday 25 September began with the celebration of Mass at the sanctuary of Our Lady of Nazareth and with a visit to the city. After lunch, the participants visited the Moeda Caves and ended the day at the Sanctuary of Fatima where they joined in praying the Rosary.

The final day, – 26 September – was spent sharing information on the life of the Provinces and the Institute the two provincials and members of the General Council.

In conclusion, the participants thanked Fr. Jeremias and Bro. Alberto for attending and for their contribution. They judged the meeting as a beautiful and useful time together which offered all of them a better interprovincial understanding and they decided to share with their respective communities the reflections made during the three days at Leiria.

This Iberian meeting is held every two years and is part of the process of greater communion between the two Comboni provinces, so similar to each other.

SOUTH AFRICA

Meeting of the Sub-Continental Council for the Mission

Some members of the nine APDESAM provinces met in Johannesburg from 10 to 13 September 2019. Seven of the nine provinces sent their secretaries and two sent their delegates. Those present were: Fr. Arlindo Ferreira Pinto (a representative from Rome), Fr. Mboka Ngere Faustin (Egypt-Sudan), Fr. Gaim Hailesslassie (Eritrea), Fr. Masini Corrado (Ethiopia), Fr. Schmidt Gregor Bog-Dong (South Sudan), Fr. Ochola Robert Lukwiya (Uganda), Fr. Bitia Mbowaka Jean Paul (Kenya), Fr. Kasitomu James Milward (Malawi/Zambia), Fr. Crespim Cabral de Benfica Baraja (Mozambique), Fr. Rojas Zevallos Ibercio (South Africa) and Fr. Burgers Jude Eugene (Provincial of South Africa).

The assembly took place in three stages: in the first stage Fr. Anthony Egan SJ spoke of the political-economic situation of the African continent and the Catholic Church and of the importance of the Ad Gentes document (Vat. II) for today and for the development of the Church after the African Synod and the document Africa Munus.

In the second stage, each participant presented the activities of the mission secretariat of his own province and the restructuring carried out after the changes to the Secretariats in Rome.

In the third stage, the Sub-Continental Council for the Mission was instituted with the duty of making suggestions to the group of APDESAM provincials. A draft of the statutes was written and three members were elected who will always be elected from among the provincial secretaries and who will collaborate with the APDESAM

provincial in charge of the mission who is presently Fr. Richard Kyankaaga.

For the first three years the following were chosen: Fr. Nyakundi Isaiah Sangwera, from Ethiopia (representing the region of Egypt-Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia), Fr. Jean Paul Bitia, from Kenya (for the region of Uganda, South Sudan and Kenya) and Fr. James Kasitomu, from Malawi/Zambia (for the region of Malawi/Zambia, Mozambique and South Africa). Fr. James Kasitomu was proposed as coordinator of the Council.

UGANDA

Daniel Comboni Vocational Institute

In August 2019 the il “Daniel Comboni Vocational Centre” became a technical school empowered to grant state diplomas. This is a very important step for the development of the Institute. The 1991 general Chapter suggested the creation of Significant Works for Brothers and managed by them. The Province of Uganda subsequently presented this project for Layibi, Gulu, with many possibilities in mind: university, medical centres, teacher training colleges etc. The centre started in September 1995 with a dozen postulants under the direction of Bro. Pasqualino Artuso, but the official opening took place three years later in January 1998, when almost all the essential structures were in place, competent instructors had been found and the required number of students had been reached. In the following years many young people benefitted from this technical school which promoted local industry and created job opportunities, and became one of the best vocational institutes in the entire region, offering courses for the national diploma in civil, mechanical and electric engineering.

Despite being faced with many challenges, our brothers are convinced they have gone in the right direction to support and instruct, also from the social point of view, the future technicians of Uganda. (*Bro. Konrad Tremmel, mccj*)

The Cry of Creation

On 20 and 27 September, at the parish of Matany in the diocese of Moroto (Uganda) prayer meetings were organised in solidarity with the entire Church, especially with the young who are urging the governments of the whole world to take urgent action to stop climate change. The initiative came from Bro. Günther Nährich who led the

prayers in the hospital chapel. The staff of the hospital, some patients and other people took part.

Mother earth is becoming ever more hostile towards her children for the damage they have caused her. Even though she has continued to sound the alarm, nobody listens. The Church, through Pope Francis, has repeatedly called for action especially from the youth who, as the "*Laudato Si* generation" are organising strikes and prayers for the environment.

The seriousness of climate change demands concrete and urgent interventions apart from damage limitation measures. This is why the church must encourage and support initiatives aimed at reversing the present trend. Initiatives may be simple such as planting trees, recycling plastic and rubbish management, as well as more complicated initiatives such as reducing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

The initiative of the Combonis in Uganda of planting trees in Kakooge is indeed praiseworthy. Bro. Günther also deserves our thanks for the prayers organised at Matany that were not only a gesture of solidarity but also a way of drawing attention to the problems of the environment.

IN PACE CHRISTI

Bro. Paulo Luís Correia Aragão (25.01.1957 – 09.09.2019)

Bro. Paulo Aragão was born in Arrifes (Ponta Delgada, Azzorre) on 25 January 1957. In a family that was simple, numerous and deeply Christian, he lived through infancy, adolescence and youth in the family and parish context typical of the Azores island of San Miguel. He must certainly have known the Comboni Missionaries through the frequent visits of Fr. Albino Meneguzzo who, coming from the community of Lisbon, stirred up missionary awareness in those islands.

The germ of the missionary vocation developed and culminated in the decision to enter, in 1977, the Comboni Postulancy then based in Aradas (Aveiro).

The postulancy over, Bro. Paulo entered the novitiate on 1 October 1979 and took first vows at Santarém on 6 June 1981.

Due to continue his training at Gilgil, in Kenya, he spent the 1981/1982 scholastic year in Elstree, England, studying English. In July that same year he left for Kenya and completed his spiritual and professional formation at Gilgil.

He was then appointed to the province of Khartoum (Sudan), and in July 1984 he went to Cairo (Egypt), where he stayed for two years studying Arabic. Finally, in mid - 1986, he was able to leave for Khartoum and so fulfil his missionary dream. He was made provincial bursar and carried out his work with dedication and competence up to 1992.

In that year, his original province of Portugal asked for him to return and he was appointed provincial procurator, a function he exercised until 1996, in Lisbon, devoting himself generously to the financial, medical and logistic support of departing missionaries, those on holiday and those returning to the mission.

Bro. Paulo made no secret of his desire to return as soon as possible to his beloved Sudan and his superiors granted what he desired: in mid-1996 he was again in Sudan as local bursar in the community of Port Sudan; in 1998 he again became provincial bursar up to 2001.

Having taken part in the Comboni year of Ongoing Formation at Germiston (South Africa), in 2002 (up to 2007) he was administrator of the Archdiocese of Khartoum. He was provincial counsellor from 1 January 2005 to 30 June 2007.

After a short stay in Portugal in 2008, as bursar of the community of Santarém, he returned to Sudan and resumed his work as provincial bursar, first in the province of Khartoum and then in the province of Egypt/Sudan, up to 2019.

Meanwhile, on 8 January 2017 he began his long “Calvary”, contracting a severe bout of malaria accompanied by typhus and a gastric ulcer; after some improvement, breathing complications developed. He spent some days in intensive care in hospital in Khartoum but had to be moved to the hospital of Santa Maria in Lisbon already in a coma. He recovered somewhat and, as soon as he could travel, he was taken to the community of Viseu where his treatment continued. When the doctors allowed him to travel he wasted no time in returning to Sudan but he still showed signs of all he had been through: he was no longer strong, was not able to work as he could previously and his enthusiasm was more contained.

In March 2019 he returned to Portugal where a tumour was diagnosed, together with renal insufficiency and a further tumour in his lungs. He went into hospital several times. Coincidentally, from 3 to 7 September, the provincial Assembly was taking place in Viseu, many confreres were able to visit and encourage him. On Thursday 5 Sep-

tember, the Bishop of Viseu, Mons. António Luciano, went to visit him.

On 9 September, the Comboni solemnity of St. Peter Claver, at around 19.00, Bro. Paulo returned to the home of the Father. His funeral took place on 11 September at the seminary chapel in Vila Nova de Famalicão where Bro. Paulo was interred in the part of the cemetery reserved for the Comboni Missionaries.

As news of his death spread, many messages of sympathy were received, sent by such people as Father General and his Council, the Provincial of Sudan, confreres, formators, mission companions, family members and friends. All of them expressed how, behind the simplicity and goodness of Bro. Paulo, so many virtues lay hidden: humility and serenity, an exceptional spirit of service and availability, a degree of shyness, his simple and infective smile, his sense of responsibility and extreme diligence, his great love for Sudan and especially the impressive serenity and peacefulness that characterised the long months of suffering, confined to a hospital bed, of this faithful servant as he awaited his Master's arrival. (*Fr. Manuel Ferreira Horta*)

LET US PRAY FOR OUR BELOVED DEAD

THE MOTHER: Mary, of Fr. Szpara Adam Witold (A).

THE BROTHERS: Rudolf, of Fr. Georg Klose (DSP); Mark, of Fr. Marcello Monyo Romano (I).

THE SISTERS: Lidia, of Fr. Pietro Ciaponi (U), Pilar, of Fr. José Rubio (E).

THE COMBONI MISSIONARY SISTERS: Sr. M. Prassede Colombo, Sr. Teresa Salvina Rizzari, Sr. Ruth Veran Valencia Corozo, Sr. Laura Giuseppina Oleotti.

MISSIONARI COMBONIANI - VIA LUIGI LILIO 80 - ROMA
