

Familia Comboniana

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES OF THE HEART OF JESUS

781

January 2020

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

GENERAL NOTES – CONSULTA OF DECEMBER 2019

1. APPOINTMENTS as from 1 January 2020

Fr. González Galarza Fernando is appointed General Secretary of the Mission.

Bro. Parise Alberto is appointed Assistant General Secretary of the Mission and Head of the JPIC Sector and GMS Coordinator of the Year of Ministeriality.

Fr. Giorgetti Angelo is appointed Assistant General Treasurer.

Fr. Manuel Augusto Lopes Ferreira is appointed Coordinator of the Library Council (Archives, Library and Studium Combonianum).

Fr. Arlindo Ferreira Pinto remains head of the Communications Office, member of the Mission Secretariat and GC reference person on the CLM Central Commission.

Fr. Ciuciulla Pietro is appointed reference person of the GC in CANAM (service towards sick confreres in Italy).

2. The General Council wishes to remind all confreres of what is said in No. 79 of the Rule of Life: “Before publishing books or producing means of social communication, the missionary seeks permission from his Major Superior”. And also No. 79.1: “According to the norms of ecclesiastical legislation, the missionary submits to the judgement of the diocesan Bishop, before publication, writings which concern faith and morals”.

3. The GC recommends that there be a certain degree of continuity in the composition of circumscription councils. It is not appropriate that anyone who has agreed to being elected to this service in a circum-

scription should ask to be transferred to another circumscription; where possible, he should render this service for the entire triennium.

4. Regarding the Assembly of Circumscription Superiors to be held at the Generalate from 15 February to 1 March 2020, the GC has set up a reference logistics committee composed of Fr. Alcides Costa (coordinator), Bro. Alberto Lamana and Fr. Claudio Lurati.

5. The process of beatification of Fr. Giuseppe Ambrosoli: the process begun in 1999 is coming to a conclusion. We are now waiting for the *Pontifical Decree*, which will indicate the place and date of the solemn celebration. All of us Comboni Missionaries are called upon to live these days of expectancy and preparation with a great spirit of faith.

6. As indicated in the Guide for the Implementation of the XVIII General Chapter, the year 2020 will be dedicated to reflection on the theme of Ministeriality. Some supplements will be included in *Familia Comboniana*. Other indications will be given in due course by the General Administration.

7. The GC wishes to thank most sincerely all the confreres who have given their service to the Institute as Circumscription Superiors over the past three years. In the case of those who have ended their service, it wishes them, after a due period of rest, a peaceful transition to whatever missionary commitment and service the Institute shall entrust to them. It offers its best wishes to the confreres who have been called for the first time to render this service in the Institute: on them and on those who have been re-elected, the GC invokes the abundant gifts of the Holy Spirit so that their leadership may bear fruit in their circumscriptions.

8. Journeys and commitments of the GC

From 6-8 March 2020 the GC will be in Ariccia or Nemi for a weekend of prayer and reflection.

Fr. Tesfaye Tadesse

15 December 2019 – 8 February 2020 Visit to the Congo and Uganda

Fr. Jeremias dos Santos Martins

10 – 16 December 2019

Visit to Paris

16 December 2019 – 3 January 2020

In Portugal

Fr. Ciuciulla Pietro

8 – 17 December 2019 Meeting of ASCAF Provincials in RCA
23 December 2019 – 2 January 2020 In Sicily
5 January – 8 February 2020 In Uganda

Bro. Lamana Cónsola Alberto

8 – 15 December 2019 In Colombia (CIF)
16 – 19 December 2019 In DSP (Provincial Assembly)
29 January – 3 February 2020 Holidays in Spain

Message from the General Secretariat

In view of the reprinting of the *Annuario Comboniano* in 2020, the General Secretariat would like the superiors and all the confreres to check that the *Annuario* details of next of kin and their home address are correct. There are about fifty cases of confreres whose parents died years ago without their names being replaced.

Generale Postulation

Towards the beatification of Fr. Giuseppe Ambrosoli

The long process to bring about the beatification of Fr. Giuseppe Ambrosoli is practically complete.

Begun in August 1999 at Kalongo and then at Como in November of the same year, it was granted *Validity* by Rome on 7 May 2004 as to the completeness and the quality of the inquiry carried out in the areas of testimonies and documentation. The *Positio*, prepared by the Postulation, was approved by the Theologians on 4 December 2014. This resulted in the *Decretum Super Virtutibus* of December 2015, in which was recognised a sound complex of missionary virtues in our confrere and Servant of God Fr. Ambrosoli, who was deemed worthy of the new title of *Venerable*.

Meanwhile, a diocesan inquiry was opened at Moroto (Uganda) concerning a presumed miracle in favour of a Karimojong mother, Mrs. Lucia Lomokol. On 6 February 2019, the *Medical Commission* recognised her sudden, complete, lasting and scientifically inexplicable cure. For their part, the Theologians of the *Special Congress* of 13 June of this year, 2019, unanimously recognised the connection between invocation and cure and, therefore, the miraculous character of the event. All the documentation was then presented to the Cardinals and Bishops assembled on 15 November 2019. The outcome was the

approval by Pope Francis of the promulgation of the *Decree* on the miracle.

We are now waiting to receive that *Decree* which will include details of the place and date of the Beatification, depending upon the engagements of the Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints, Cardinal Giovanni Angelo Becciu.

We believe that the entire Institute is called to assume responsibility for the recognition of the missionary sanctity of our confrere Fr. Giuseppe Ambrosoli. It is, in fact, a special grace that he was able to express his missionary service in working for the good of the local people, with simplicity and goodness equal to the depth of his inner life. Our Lord is raising him up before our eyes so that *Evangelii Gaudium* may increasingly shine through in our Comboni Family. Later we will be informed about the organising commissions and the series of activities of promotion and celebrations to take place in the more important places where Fr. Giuseppe lived and where he is remembered as a true son of Saint Daniel Comboni.

Ordinations

Fr. Revollo Villanueva Eduardo Antonio (PE) Lima (PE) 21/12/2019

Publications

Giacomo Ghedini, *Da schiavo a missionario. Tra Africa ed Europa, vita e scritti di Daniele Sorur Pharim Den (1860-1900)*, Studium editions, Rome 2020. This book is the result of a degree thesis – writes Gianpaolo Romanato in the Presentation – broadly based on unedited documents. It is the story of a young Dinka of what is now South Sudan, a runaway slave taken in by Comboni, baptised by him with his own name and sent to school. Daniel Sorur became a priest, learned to speak and write in a number of languages and visited all of Europe. His considerations concerning the condition of the African man, his defence of the equality of human beings, the anticipatory value of his reflections on many questions, and much more, “together make of him an *unicum* whose discovery was overdue”. The text contains an introductory note by the General Council thanking the author on behalf of the Comboni Missionaries.

Fr. Antonio Berti, *Nzoni Mbaye Ti Nzapa Na Azo, L’Histoire Sainte*, Grimari (RCA) 2018. The book is a supplement for catechists and those heading Movements and Fraternities – Fr. Berti writes in the acknowledgements. Fr. Berti, is a Comboni Missionary who works in

the parish of Notre Dame de Liesse, in Grimari – so that they may know and teach others the sacred history of God who, by means of men and women, has made known his Name and his Face.

Fr. Lorenzo Mboriguié Frattini, *Doctrine Générale du Droit. Réflexions à partir de la coutume/réconciliation et dans la perspective de l'interculturalité*, Éditions “La Perle Noire”, Bangui 2019. The reflections contained in the text, as we read in the introduction, derive from the need to teach. As a matter of fact, the author is Director of a course in Law at a Higher Institute of Philosophy, and this required him to carry out accurate and complex research, in an effort to discover the challenges that the juridical African culture brings.

Holy Redeemer Guild

January	01 – 15 A	16 – 31 BR
February	01 – 15 C	16 – 28 EGSD

Prayer Intentions

January –

That all the inhabitants of the world may work to guard this common home which God entrusted to us so that future generations may also enjoy it. *Lord hear us.*

February – That the MCCJ circumscription Superiors meeting in Rome may be enlightened by the Spirit and so discover the best ways to impart new vigour to our missionary service in the various continents. *Let us pray.*

BRASIL

Handover of the parish of Menino Jesus

On 28 December 2019, in the city of Timon (Maranhão), Holy Mass was celebrated in thanksgiving for the Comboni presence in the parish of Menino Jesus of Prague.

Comboni Missionaries had worked in Timon city for 35 years. The Plan of the Province included the closure of this community before the end of 2020, in harmony with the indications of the General Chapter and with the aim of reinforcing our presence in other places.

It was a beautiful and intense moment in which the People of God showed – as they always have – their great affection for all the Combonis who served in this city.

In the persons of Fr. Silvério Malta, Fr. Francisco Coqueiro and Fr. Armindo Dinis, who made up the Comboni community of Timon, we summarised the memory of the many Combonis who worked so hard in this city bordering the state of Piauí.

The Bishop of the diocese, Mons. Sebastião Duarte, who presided at the celebration, emphasised how the Combonis gave witness by organising a lively parish, involved in the life of the people and in social progress. He then spoke of the historical importance of the Education Project “Mãos Dadas (Hand in Hand)”, founded by Fr. Dinis for the families of Parque Alvorada, a city quarter known for its challenging level of violence. It was also at Timon that the activity of mission and vocations promotion called “Cejudaz” was started; for a number of years it has animated the youth of North-East Brazil.

The parish is well established and capable of looking after itself, all the more so after the intense process of the Holy Peoples’ Missions. It is to be entrusted to the care of a diocesan priest who is to be installed on 8 February 2020. The Combonis have been “sent out” and blessed by the people.

Speaking on behalf of the Province, the Provincial thanked the People of God for everything the missionaries learned and built up during this journey, placing the future in the hands of God.

CURIA

Comboni Course for the Elderly 2020

The team coordinating the Comboni Courses that are held in the Ongoing Formation Centre at the General House has made available the details concerning the fourth edition of the Course for the Elderly, to be held in 2020.

- 1) **Addressees:** confreres aged seventy or more who, for their physical and psychological condition, could benefit from this Course.
- 2) **Aim:** to help the participants live out their old age peacefully and fruitfully.
- 3) **Duration:** eight weeks. Start: on Friday 4 September; conclusion: Thursday 29 October 2020.
- 4) **Venue:** OGF Centre, the General House, Rome.
- 5) **Enrolment:** those wishing to participate, having received the

approval of their respective circumscription superiors, must contact the Course coordinator, **Fr. Elias Sindjalim**, using this e-mail: **esindjalimess@hotmail.com**.

ETHIOPIA

A Close Call

On the evening of 1 December 2019, at 8 pm, Fr. Elvis survived an attempt on his life while he was returning from evening ministry and on his way to collect Fr. Isaiah at Dabokokokel chapel on the main road towards Gublak. Two kms before he reached Dabokokokel, his vehicle was struck by a hail of arrows that seemed to be aimed at the driver. There were also two catechists inside the pick-up and a third on the open back. Several arrows came close to him but none of them found their mark, thanks be to God. Fr. Elvis also escaped injury, even though he had the window of the vehicle open. The pick-up, instead, was struck by a number of arrows, mostly on the driver's side: there were several arrows still stuck in the vehicle when they reached home. After the attack, Fr. Elvis continued his journey and only after some time did he realise what had happened. He arrived at Dabokokokel and, together with Fr. Isaiah, went to the local police. Together they went to the place where the attack occurred but found nothing. They then remembered that, on the previous day, on that very spot, one of the people of the Gumuz village had been abducted. He was later found dead, his body hacked. From this they deduced that the attack was most likely not aimed at themselves but was some sort of vendetta they happened to encounter.

Our confreres believe it best not to attach much importance to the incident since they feel really safe and well protected among the people they serve and feel encouraged by them to continue their apostolate. In all probability, they will try to bring forward the schedule of their visits to the community even if the people find it easier to assemble in the evening when they have returned from their work in the fields or from the hunt.

We join our confreres of the area in thanking God for their escape from danger and in praying for the person who was killed, for social harmony and for the great heavenly gifts of forgiveness and reconciliation. (*Fr. Sisto Agostini*)

ITALIA

Don Luigi Ciotti in Verona

On 3 December, more than a thousand people attended a conference by Don Luigi Ciotti in Verona, at the large and magnificent church of Saint Anastasia. He was presented by Fr. Venanzio Milani, coordinator of the initiative “The Tuesdays of the World” and introduced by Don Carlo Vinco, a diocesan priest, with an interesting analysis of the situation in Verona: a city of solidarity and hospitality, but also open to drugs and the mafia.

The founder of the “Gruppo Abele e Libera” commented on the message of Pope Francis on poverty: *“The hope of the poor shall not be disappointed”*. He emphasised, among other things, that it is necessary to fight against poverty, and especially against all that aggravates it. Woe to solitary travellers: what we need is a collective commitment.

Initiatives for the Golden Jubilee of Acse

The encounters in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of Acse continue.

On 14 November at the Major Pontifical Seminary in Rome, a conference was held on the theme: *“Migrants are a Resource”*. There were interventions by Mons. Pierpaolo Felicolo, Director of the Migrants of the Vicariate of Rome, Prefect Mario Morcone, Director of CIR (Italian refugee Council) and Dr. Ornella Martella, coordinator of the Acse school. The Moderator was Dr. Paolo Masini.

On 13 December, in the Chapter Hall of the Comboni Missionaries Curia in Via Lilio, Rome, a conference was held on the theme: *“Africa is a Gift”*. The speakers were Fr. Elias Sindjalim, a Comboni from Togo, Welly Marguerite Lottin, a native of Cameroon and President of the GRIOT Intercultural Association, and Constant Nzimbala Mfuka, a Congolese geologist. The Moderator of the discussions was Sr. Maria Rosa Venturelli, Vice President of Acse.

SUDAN

From the Diary of Fr. Giuseppe Puttinato

Khartoum, 25 November 2019. When I joined the Comboni College Khartoum community in 1959, there were 26 of us: 22 Fathers and 4 Brothers. Today, at the end of November 2019, it sometimes happens that I am the only person attending Vespers and supper (and I am 85

years and eight months old). The community now consists of five Fathers. Not one Brother. A disaster? A failure?

Have we come to the end of a work that many considered most worthy in the past? In 1959, 30 years after it was opened, there were 915 students and 15 lay teachers. Today, in late November 2019, 90 years after the Primary and Secondary Schools were opened and 18 years since the University College was founded, there are 3000 students following long courses and 700 enrolled in short courses. There are 147 lay employees between teachers and administrators. The work, it would seem, is neither dead nor dying.

IN PACE CHRISTI

Fr. Paul Eugene Chintu (02.02.1983 – 09.12.2019)

Fr. Paul was born in Mansa (Zambia) on 2 February 1983. He completed the novitiate in Lusaka and took first vows on 3 May 2009, after which he completed the scholasticate in Cape Coast. He took final vows as a scholastic on missionary service in Lirangwe, Malawi, on 1 May 2015 and was appointed to South Africa on 1 July of the same year.

He only spent a relatively short period in this province due mostly to illness and various difficulties.

Fr. Paul was sent to the parish of Acornhoek where he studied the Tsonga language (February-August 2016), a language he soon picked up since it was similar to the languages he already knew. In dealing with people he was friendly but firm. In working together with the other missionaries he felt that his point of view should also be taken into consideration.

In the autumn of 2016 he was assigned to the parish of Waterval as Curate with Fr. Clement Kazaku. He took an active part in pastoral and youth work.

On 1 December he was appointed superior of the local community. He spent some months studying the Sepedi language in the parish of Steelpoort since he saw it as essential to his pastoral work.

On 20 June 2018 he was appointed Parish priest of the Holy Family in Waterval. Unfortunately, however, Fr. Paul had contracted various illnesses including tuberculosis and other lung infections. In August 2018 he left Waterval to go to Pretoria where he could more easily access medical treatment centres. He never returned to Waterval. Complications set in and, in November 2018, he was accompanied by the

provincial Superior to Zambia since his recovery was proving very slow. He died in Lusaka on 9 December 2019. May he rest in peace.

Bro. Giuseppe Zamboni (25.09.1936 – 14.12.2019)

We may summarise the life of Bro. Giuseppe Zamboni in his very own words: “I was born at Scardevara (Verona) on 25 September 1936. I lived most of my life in that town until I entered the novitiate of the Comboni Missionaries in Florence intending to become a missionary Brother. That was on 5 September 1955. I was then 19 years old. Before becoming a religious, I had worked for four years with the Vittorio Meneghini company. When I was a boy I wanted to become a missionary priest and I spent a period of time in the seminary. There I was advised to leave for want of a vocation ... Later on, when I was eighteen, a missionary unexpectedly asked me: “Why don’t you become a missionary Brother?” “And why not?”, I answered.

There followed many interior struggles and (it was God’s will) who should I find in the novitiate but that same priest who had advised me to leave the seminary as there were doubts about my vocation? However, the Good Lord also placed on my path a holy priest, still alive and over a hundred years of age, who reassured me in the name of God that I certainly did have a vocation. As a result, I have always forged ahead with happiness and confidence despite the many difficulties, in the joy of Jesus who, out of his goodness, gave me the strength to continue. That is how it was and I hope things will continue this way until my dying breath. I have much to thank the Good Lord for in giving me the vocation I so dearly love.

After the novitiate and a further six years spent in Italy, only and always out of obedience, I travelled all over the world, as it were, serving God and our brothers and sisters. I spent a year in England, 11 years in Brazil in charge of the building works in the state of Espírito Santo, six years in Spain as a formator (or perhaps a “deformator”), almost seven years in La Paz, Mexico, Lower California (as a printer at Boys Town), and the rest of my years here in Malawi and in Zambia. I have now been in the Lusaka novitiate for more than three years, knowing and loving God and my brothers and preparing for a Happy Death ... forever thanking God for this vocation of mine ... for my good family, especially my grandmother Augusta, my parish priests and all the good people of Scardevara”.

One thing is certain – Fr. Renzo Piazza said in his funeral homily – Bro. Giuseppe left this world surrounded by people who loved him

deeply and who witnessed how his life was a life of love. A confrere wrote: “I am still here thinking and praying for Good Old Bepi. It was he who taught me the basics of the missionary life, work and prayer, in all humility. He never managed to learn Chichewa or even English but he always spoke with his life that language that the rest of us have still to learn properly, the language of love. He loved greatly. Perhaps it was due to his great love that his heart gave out. I still keep a place for him in my heart. From above he is continually praying for us. Of this I am certain”.

We may express the human and spiritual experience of that disciple of the Lord in just two words: love and service. Love and service also summarise the life of Bro. Giuseppe Zamboni, who died aged 83, 62 of which he spent as a missionary Brother. He returned to Italy for medical treatment in 2015 and went to Castel d’Azzano where he passed away on 14 December 2019.

Fr. Rodolfo Fabián Caicedo Minda (10.12.1970 – 22.12.2019)

Rodolfo Fabián was born on 10 December 1970 at Ibarra (Ecuador) into a poor family with deep Christian values. Rodolfo was always very proud of his family and his Afro culture. He met the Comboni Missionaries while he was a member of a youth group called “Un camino llamado Amistad”. He was admitted to the postulancy shortly before his eighteenth birthday. He completed his preparatory schooling and studied Philosophy at the Pontifical University of Ecuador, not without some difficulty in the more abstract fields. While his formators judged him to be good, generous, helpful and gifted with apostolic zeal, they still advised him to spend some time outside the seminary, before the novitiate, to put to the test his rather idealistic approach to the missionary vocation and to improve some aspects of his communitarian relationships. This period had a positive result and Rodolfo entered the novitiate at Huánuco (Peru).

Having made his first profession on 1 May 1995, he went to Rome to study theology and, even before his final profession, he was appointed to Mozambique where he had the opportunity to express his beginner’s missionary enthusiasm especially in accompanying the youth and in the training of catechists.

Let us now turn to the testimony of Fr. Claudio Zandrón who was his provincial superior and who accompanied him as a friend for a number of years: “After his first missionary experience – a period of three years – in Mozambique, Fr. Enea Mauri appointed him to El Carmen

(Manabí, Ecuador) to provide pastoral assistance to the many rural Christian communities. Even though he was at times rather intransigent, he was very willing and faithful in his devotion to the people. He loved manual work and wanted the chapels and evangelization centres to be in proper order. For this he urged the local authorities and even the mayor to collaborate with the communities. The people were very fond of him and, despite occasional disagreements, they were deeply moved by his death. Fr. Rodolfo fought on behalf of the poor and also sided with them when they took over some unused land to build houses for the needy. Communities like Puerta de Oro, Unidad de Palma Sola and Paraíso Pita are grateful to this day for what he did for them. Fr. Rodolfo was transferred from El Carmen to the mission of San Lorenzo (Esmeraldas), where he devoted himself especially to the outlying chapels located among tumbledown shacks, using some of his time to help boys and young men who had no schooling to learn at least the rudiments of a trade, especially carpentry. To this end he himself began to study auto-mechanics so as to be of help to others in this field ... When he would return from Brazil to Ecuador on holiday, he would visit the families of his old mission and spend a few weeks preparing the children to receive the Sacraments. He once confided in me that when he received his diploma, he won a scholarship to study medicine in Cuba. Nevertheless, his missionary desire and the proposal of Fr. Raffaello Savoia to become involved in the pastoral of his Afro people led him to choose the Comboni vocation”.

He died at Quito, rather suddenly, due to a pulmonary embolism, at the age of 49, on 22 December 2019.

LET US PRAY FOR OUR BELOVED DEAD

THE MOTHERS: Marie Therese, of Fr. Eugene Nordjoe (E); Batakobana, of Bro. Abule Kabungi Philippe (CN).

THE BROTHERS: Francesco, of Fr. Alberto Vittadello (†); Tarcisio, of Fr. Aldo Pusterla (EC); Nicanor, of Mons. Jaime Rodriguez (M).

THE COMBONI MISSIONARY SISTERS: Sr. M. Luciana Marcazzan, Sr. Virginiana Pelacchi, Sr. M. Cristina Pirra.

MISSIONARI COMBONIANI - VIA LUIGI LILIO 80 - ROMA
