

Familia Comboniana

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES OF THE HEART OF JESUS

789

October 2020

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Perpetual Professions

Sc. Obwaya Justus Oseko (KE) Amakuriat (KE) 25/12/2019

Priestly ordinations

Fr. Obwaya Justus Oseko (KE) Nyamagwa-Kisii (KE) 06/08/2020

Fr. Apedovi Awoumessi (Hippolyte) (ET) Lomé (TG) 12/09/2020

Fr. Babley Komla Djigbodi (Daniel) (T) Lomé (TG) 12/09/2020

Fr. Hounlessodji M. Sikpa Vincent (T) Lomé (TG) 12/09/2020

Holy Redeemer Guild

October 01 – 07 RCA 08 – 15 TCH 16 – 31 RSA

November 01 – 15 SS 16 – 30 T

Prayer Intentions

October – That all Christians may feel they are “sent” ad gentes and take to heart the mission of building up an atmosphere of welcome and encounter for the poor and for migrants, and commence initiatives of mutual knowledge and respect. *Lord hear us.*

November – That deceased missionary women and men may enjoy the peace of the encounter with the Lord whom they proclaimed to the world during their earthly lives. *Lord hear us.*

CURIA

Commissioning Mass for Mons. Claudio Lurati

Mons. Claudio Lurati is ready to leave for Egypt where he will be ordained bishop on 30 October at 18.00, in the church of St Joseph in Cairo. Before leaving the General Curia, Mons. Claudio presided at two commissioning Masses. The first was with his community on 25 September, the anniversary of his arrival at the Curia, twelve years

ago, to assume the post of Treasurer General of the Institute. The second Mass was celebrated on 27 September, together with the faithful of the quarter who usually attend Mass on Sunday mornings in the chapel of the Generalate.

As we all know, on 6 August, Mons. Claudio Lurati was appointed Vicar Apostolic of Alexandria in Egypt where there are sixty thousand Latin Catholic Christians, distributed in sixteen parish communities, five of which are staffed by Comboni Missionaries. About 90% of the population of Egypt are Moslem. The rest are mostly Christian and most of them belong to the Coptic Orthodox Church.

“On 24 July, when I went to see H. E. Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, in the Vatican, to give my reply as to whether I accepted or not the proposal to accept the pastoral care of the Latin Catholics in Egypt – Fr. Claudio said with some emotion – I had many reasons to refuse but I said yes because I saw it as the voice of the Lord Jesus, the Christ, who was calling me to go to a new mission, albeit with a different role, in a country with which I was already familiar. Today I ask you to accompany me with your prayers”.

Before the final blessing, Fr. Jeremias dos Santos Martins, Vicar General, on behalf of the entire Institute, of the General Council and the Curia community, congratulated Fr. Claudio and assured him of their best wishes for his new missionary service and thanked him wholeheartedly for his twelve years of work as Treasurer General, carried out with great competence and clarity, at the service of the Institute.

Laudato Si' Park at the General Curia

This is the name given to the educational tour that some Comboni Fathers and Brothers have been setting up within the grounds of the General Curia. Its purpose includes raising awareness among the young and not so young of the beauty of nature of which we not always aware.

In particular, the tour is an invitation to discover the message and spirituality of the encyclical of Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, from which some extracts have been taken for the brief reflections that will accompany the stages of the tour.

In the context of the campaign “The Time of Creation”, that is celebrated annually from 1 September to 4 October and in anticipation of this tour, on Sunday 20 September, a group of children,

accompanied by their families, inaugurated a recreational-educational proposal for the care of the common home.

Bro. Marco Binaghi, the curator of the proposal, led the young participants in the discovery of the ecosystems existing in the grounds, the trees and the plants, enjoying direct contact with nature. Playing various games, the children were brought into close contact with such values as the safeguarding of creation, for example, by the differentiated collection of rubbish, and creativity in the uses of natural materials and relations with the environment.

Meanwhile, their parents were kept occupied with a spiritual tour accompanied by the Comboni Sisters.

Meeting of the National Coordinating Group of the GIM in Italy

From 25 to 27 September, there was a meeting at the General Curia of the National Coordinating Group of the GIM (Youth Missionary Involvement), the common youth vocations ministry course of the Comboni Family in Italy. The participants consisted of the teams of the groups that meet in Venegono Superiore (VA), Verona, Padua, Rome, Casavatore (NA) and Bari.

In verifying the progress made and planning for the new year 2020/21, an analysis was made of the challenges to be faced in this historical moment and a definition of the steps to be taken towards a Comboni presence alongside young people that can help them to (re)discover the God of life and motivate them to work together with those regarded as the least important.

In particular, during the year 2020/21, the youth will be sensitised to the support of the missions in Mozambique and the campaign of pressure against the “armed banks” in Italy.

DSP

99th birthday anniversary of Fr. Karl Wetzel

On 16 April, our confrere Fr. Karl Wetzel celebrated his ninetieth birthday in Ellwangen. He is still quite well, though his memory is deteriorating. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, only the elderly confreres of the Centre celebrated this joyful event. Other confreres sent him their best wishes by phone or by post.

60th ordination anniversary of Fr. Fidelis Pezzei

On 29 June, eighty eight-year-old Fr. Fidelis Pezzei celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of his ordination at the community of Neumarkt/Baviera. Fr. Andreas Thorwarth, who worked for years with Fr. Fidelis in Peru, told in his homily of interesting experiences in the missionary life of Fr. Pezzei, of his ministry in Tarma and later in Huánuco.

Among other things, he recalled the difficult times of the *Sendero Luminoso*, when Fr. Fidelis was targeted for having spoken on TV and on the radio of the attack of the terrorists on a village he visited to celebrate Mass. He was threatened with being killed and so had to leave Peru.

Fr. Fidelis has been part of the community of Neumarkt since 2008 and lends his assistance in parishes of the diocese of Eichstätt.

60th ordination anniversary of Fr. Josef Pfanner

On 29 June 2020, at the age of 92, Fr. Josef Pfanner celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. Having gained a doctorate in Canon Law, in 1963 he left for the missions of Peru where he was entrusted with the parish of Huasahuasi, in the diocese of Tarma. Apart from his pastoral work, he was especially involved in development and the formation of the people. When he returned to Germany, he was appointed novice master and held posts of responsibility in the governance of the MFSC and the DSP. For twenty years, he was a member of the community of Graz/Austria, with various pastoral services in the city. He has been in the community of Ellwangen for the past two years and is still very active in the house and garden. His favourite pastime is swimming.

70th ordination anniversary of Fr. Karl Wetzel

On 30 July, Fr. Karl Wetzel joyfully celebrated a great feast: seventy years ago, he was ordained priest. Fr. Karl was the last to enter the novitiate before the Second World War, in 1939. He, too, was called to arms. At the end of the war, he was captured but was released the same year, 1945. He immediately resumed the novitiate. Towards the end of his theological studies, in 1949, he took first vows and was ordained priest in 1950 by the Bishop of Lydenburg (South Africa) Johann Riegler, at the sanctuary of Schönenberg, a short distance from Ellwangen. On 30 July, on the seventieth anniversary of his ordination, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, only the community of

Ellwangen, some confreres from other communities and a niece of his gathered for the happy celebration. The provincial superior, Fr. Hubert Grabmann, recalled in his homily the places and the services Fr Karl carried out during his missionary life: leaving for Peru immediately after his ordination, the founding of the parish of Mirones/Lima and two agricultural cooperatives, the post of parish priest of the cathedral of Tarma, his formation work at Neumarkt/Baviera seminary and pastoral ministry at Mellatz. Or some years, Fr. Karl has been a member of the centre for elderly and sick confreres. Ad multos annos!

Bro. Manfred Bellinger returns to Mozambique

On 23 September, after six years in Ellwangen, Bro. Manfred Bellinger left for Mozambique where he is expected at the technical school of Carapira. For six years, he served the community of Ellwangen as the person in charge of the sick and elderly confreres. His most important duties were night duty at the centre and accompanying the confreres for their check-ups and while in hospital.

He also worked as a volunteer among the refugees at the reception centre in the city. He was a member of the Freundeskreis Asylum and on Tuesdays and Fridays he took part in sports with the refugees, including the children and adolescents, organising football tournaments. It was when the time came to say goodbye that the refugees and camp personnel showed how much they thought of Bro. Manfred.

The community wishes to thank Bro. Manfred for his other services such as caring for the grounds and serving in the kitchen. Sincere thanks from all the confreres and best wishes for his new missionary commitment!

MALAWI/ZAMBIA

Inauguration of the Centre for Missionary and Vocations Animation

On 23 August last, at Kalikiliki, one of the poorest quarters around Lusaka, the capital of the country, the Centre for missionary and vocational animation (CMA), was opened. Fr. Carlos Alberto Nunes, one of the main promoters of the project, recounts the origins of this project and how it was completed.

The inauguration of the Centre, dedicated to St Daniel Comboni, was simple but very meaningful both for the Comboni Missionaries and for the Local Church. There were some representatives of the

Archdiocese of Lusaka and the nearby parishes and religious communities, especially the parish of St Augustine, where the centre is located: one hundred persons in total, the number allowed during this Covid-19 pandemic that affects also Zambia.

After visiting the actual buildings, there was a brief moment of prayer and reflection followed by the blessing of the Centre, there was a fraternal gathering with songs and dancing. The celebration concluded with the Centre anthem.

The celebration was recorded by “Lumen TV”, owned by the Episcopal Conference of Zambia and was later broadcast as a documentary entitled “Mission today in Lusaka and Zambia”.

Today, all agree that the Local Church is the main protagonist of mission promotion and that we missionaries are collaborators at the service of the Local Church. On my arrival for the third time in Zambia in July 2019, Archbishop Alick Banda, whom I visited to pay my respects, jokingly asked me: “I know you were Director of the Pontifical Missionary Works in this diocese, but now what are you going to do?”. I answered: “Whatever God and you ask of me. My superiors want me to organise a Centre for Missionary Animation”. “You are very welcome – he said – just keep me informed”.

The flyer we distributed states that our mission is open to all; our team is made up of two Combonis, a Sister and a laywoman and we are willing to work with all those who wish to deepen their faith and the missionary vocation. It will be a Centre radiating mission and vocation, inspired by the charism of St Daniel Comboni which our Institute wants to keep alive in the Churches where we are present.

TOGO

Fr. Sandro Cadei. Fifty years of perpetual vows

On 9 September, the feast of St Peter Claver, patron of the missions and the slaves, a thanksgiving Mass was celebrated for the fifty years of perpetual vows of Fr. Sandro Cadei, former provincial superior of Togo. In the course of his homily, Fr. Sandro, joyfully recalled his missionary life from his arrival in the Province in 1972, going over his parish ministry (Kodjoviakope, Togoville, Fidjrosse), his service as provincial superior, as a formator at the Paris scholasticate, the Cotonou novitiate and in the postulancy, where he is at present working: “The Lord continues his work – he said – watching over us and asking us to trust Him”.

In particular, Fr. Sandro thanked God for the growing number of autochthonous Combonis, a palpable sign of the fact that the efforts of the missionaries have not been in vain but gave effective witness. He concluded by inviting those who serve in the province to continue with self-denial the missionary work entrusted to them.

The feast was held in the Saint Pierre Claver Postulancy in Adidogome. By happy coincidence, on the same date that Fr. Sandro took his perpetual vows, 9 September, he celebrated fifty years of vows in a community entrusted to the protection of the saint whose feast occurs on that day!

Ordination to the priesthood

On 12 September, in the Comboni parish of “Mary, Mother of the Redeemer” of Adidogome, the ordination took place of three Combonis: Fr. Daniel Babley, Fr. Hippolyte Apedovi and Fr. Vincent Hounlessodji, together with a further twelve of whom nine were religious (SMA, Eudists and SVD) and three were diocesan. It was the first ordination for the new metropolitan archbishop of Lomé who took his see in January 2020.

Mons. Nicodème Barrigah-Benissan, with appropriate example typical of his style, invited the ordinands to consider the priesthood as a gift that the Lord grants out of his goodness and that calls for “self-giving”. He then emphasised how, as priests, they belong to God and are not the owners of the Church. The Church belongs to God. This is why the priest must do everything he can to be a dealer in sacred things.

Fr. Daniel, Fr. Hippolyte and Fr. Vincent will all go to the mission ad extra, to Kenya, Etiopia and Uganda respectively.

Ordination to the diaconate

“The mission of the deacon is a noble one”, said Mons. Isaac-Jogues Gaglo in his homily on the ordination to the diaconate of three Combonis: Augustin Makasyaturwa, Macaire Mbo Nkumileke (both from the DRC) and René Kouami Agbonou (Togo), who were ordained deacons together with nine others of the diocese of Aného, on 19 September, in the cathedral of the city.

Mons. Gaglo highlighted the nature of the diaconate which is, to be understood at two levels, the service of the table and the service of the Word, emphasising that, even if the primary duty of the deacon is service at table, this does not dispense him from meditation and preaching. He then invited all to holiness. He urged the deacons to

touch the sacred vessels with a holy attitude and encouraged everyone to receive Holy Communion, Jesus himself, with a pure heart.

The three new deacons will continue their service in the respective communities of the Province. Our hearts are full of joy and gratitude to God who, despite facing the dangers of the Covid-19 pandemic, makes these celebrations possible for the greater development of the mission and the salvation of the human race.

UGANDA

Perpetual profession and diaconate of three scholastics

For the first time in the history of the Province, three scholastics, Izakare Amoko Isaac, Nicholas Onyait and Vicent Turinawe, celebrated together their perpetual profession. The simple and impressive ceremony took place on Thursday, 15 July, in Layibi, at the spirituality centre, in the presence of the provincial superior. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, many were unable to attend but there was still a good number from the communities around Layibi, of the Brothers postulancy and the Fathers' community. The provincial superior, while congratulating the newly-professed, appealed to them to have the same zeal as Comboni in the religious life they had embraced. The celebration was preceded by an eight-day retreat conducted by Fr. Peter Alenyo.

The following day, Saturday, the three scholastics and the provincial went to the parish Church of the Nativity in Matany where, on Sunday, 18 July, they were ordained to the diaconate by Mons. Damiano Guzzetti, Bishop of the diocese of Moroto.

The liturgical celebration was very impressive, enlivened by the parish youth choir and accompanied by traditional Karimojong dances. Despite the restrictive measures, many confreres and members of the families of the candidates were present, together with religious and priests of Moroto diocese. In his homily, Bishop Guzzetti warned the deacons against clericalism tendencies which are contrary to the call proper to deacons – to be a servant – and exhorted them to be available for service in their ministry. After the Mass, there was a meal with some time dedicated to expressions of good wishes addressed to the newly-ordained deacons. (*Deacon Nicholas Onyait*)

Karamoja: a worsening situation

The state of insecurity in the Karamoja region has worsened in recent months: the parish of Kangole, in the district of Napak, is the

worst affected. What began in December del 2019 with the theft of some animals by robbers identified as Matheniko, from Moroto, has now become nothing less than an attack on homes which are plundered and burned down. Those who resist are killed or injured. This has caused immense suffering and innocent victims, especially women and children.

The worst-hit villages are Kautakou, Narengemoru, Lomerimong, Lomosingo, Lolet, Lopeeny, Lomerimong, Lokachere and Nachuka in the parish of Kangole, where a number of women and children went seeking a place of refuge.

The situation is alarming. Many people have lost everything including their homes and their savings. There is an urgent need for food, clean water, sleeping mats, blankets, medical supplies and the usual things for daily living. Besides the danger of the Coronavirus, there is also the danger of contracting cholera.

IN PACE CHRISTI

Fr. Jorge Oscar García Castillo (14.09.1953 – 07.09.2020)

I met Fr. Jorge García Castillo a little more than thirty-five years ago in the editorial office of Esquila Misional and Aguiluchos. At that time, he was working and that was the start of the work he would have been involved in right up to the last hours of his life and which made him a great missionary through publications. In all those years, to be a missionary and to work on publications became inseparable in the person of Fr. Jorge. His mission, with his background of pastoral experience in areas of first evangelisation, was always marked by his ministry as a communicator of the Gospel by means of books and magazines, the main instrument of his preaching.

Fr. Jorge was born on 14 September 1953 at Los Camichines, in the parish of los Guajes, close to Juchitlán, Jalisco. From infancy, he experienced poverty and great sacrifices and it was from this that he first felt the desire for the priestly life at the service of others. He entered the seminary of Autlán where the broader horizons of the world opened up to him, going beyond the confines of his diocese. He felt that God was calling him to set out on the path of the mission.

In 1975, he entered the Comboni postulancy in Xochimilco where he continued his philosophical studies before entering the Novitiate in Cuernavaca, Morelos, for his first experience of religious life which ended with his consecration to the missions.

He then went to Rome where he studied theology. Having returned to Mexico, he was ordained priest on 23 July 1983 and appointed to the missionary animation centre. That same year he started to study journalism at the Carlos Septién School where he was awarded a diploma. In 1990, he was appointed to Peru and editor of *Misión sin Fronteras* magazine. In those years he lived his life not just imparting information but also allowing himself to be challenged by situations of poverty and injustice, taking up his prophetic mission by indicating and denouncing. This led to him having to accept the cross of being misunderstood and being punished by being obliged to leave the mission he loved so much. From 2001 to 2007, he had an opportunity to devote himself to pastoral work, in direct contact with the people in various and very different contexts. He spent some years on the mountains of Guerrero among the Mixtecos, in the diocese of Tlapa.

He served in urban pastoral in the community of the Uganda Martyrs in Colonia Moctezuma, Mexico City. In 2008, the superiors called him to Rome as Secretary General of Missionary Animation in the Institute. Returning to the world of communications, he accompanied all the missionaries dedicated to transmitting the Gospel by means of the media. He could often be seen with his camera and journalist ID, on his way to cover events where the Church was present through its commitment to the poor. He happily wore his jacket bearing the title "Comboni Press".

In 2017, he returned to Mexico showing the first symptoms of suffering and illness caused by the surgical operations he had to have, but this did not prevent him from going wherever he needed to seek out news or testimonies of the presence of the Gospel among the marginalised. He happily accepted the task of editing the magazines *Esquila Misional* and *Aguiluchos* to which he dedicated his time and his heart: a few days before he died, he wanted to see the latest issue of the magazine that was ready for the printers, as if to show how the missionary is meant to die on the field of combat.

Fr. Jorge was short in stature but had an immense heart. He was one of those people who are not noticed in a group but who are missed when they are absent. Those of us who knew him will always remember him as one who was simple, humble, caring little for himself, a man of great goodness who, by his gestures of friendliness and consideration for others created empathy that became lasting friendship. Fr. Jorge was a man in who loved his priestly vocation. He lived his priesthood as a great gift that God gave him that he might be

of service to others. He loved to celebrate the sacraments and was always available when anyone asked him for help.

We shall miss his words of counsel and his presence. But we are certain he will continue to be present among us since love knows no boundaries either past or present and Jorge was great in the experience of loving. (*Fr. Enrique Sánchez G., mccc*)

Bro. Luigi Coronini (15.05.1940 – 09.09.2020)

He was over eighty but he seemed to have ignored the passing of the years. He still had his young face, his good disposition and his ability to laugh at himself and carried on with his responsibilities always very calmly and serenely.

If we had to describe this Brother in just a few words, I would say: peace and wisdom. His presence, his way of relating to people and his character spoke of serenity, tranquillity and peace. At the same time, one learned much by being with him due to his experience of life.

Luigi was born in Gazzaniga (Bergamo) on 15 May 1940. Having finished school, he took up tailoring but when his father Vittorio died, he decided to follow the path of the missionary. At the age of 18, he entered the novitiate in Gozzano where he stayed from 1958 to 1960 and then went to Verona and the Coadjutor Brothers. Besides his religious formation, he learned all the secrets of mechanics and electronics. He made his first profession on 1 May 1960. In 1964, he sailed from Genoa bound for Coimbra, in Portugal where he stayed until 1967; he learned Portuguese perfectly and then went to Peru to help in the mission of Cerro de Pasco. He had made his final profession on 1 May 1966.

He spent his life serving the Institute in various posts in Spain, Peru, Mozambique and in Italy. He worked in Mozambique for two periods: from 1971 to 1991 and from 1998 to 2007, with an interval in Rome at the General Curia as community bursar. He was 31 when he first arrived in Mozambique. He worked for some years at the Technical School in Carapira which was founded by the Combonis in 1964, and at the Catechetical Centre in Anchilo, not far from Nampula, the capital of the homonymous province. I met him in that Centre when I arrived in Mozambique, in 1984. At that time, he was in charge of printing the magazine *Vida Nova* – 18,000 copies – edited by the Combonis to this day.

In mid-1989, I returned to the Catechetical centre where I lived with Bro. Luigi for two years: a short period, admittedly, but enough to

leave me with grateful remembrance of his presence in that large Centre where courses were continually held for missionaries and laypeople, even during the difficult years of the civil war. Apart from his job of printing the magazine and other catechetical material that the Centre produced for Christian formation, he was in charge of the maintenance of the Centre and the vehicles and of receiving people coming for meetings.

The Centre was always busy with people continually coming for courses or just stopping by to say hello. Br. Luigi listened patiently to everyone, giving his advice and suggestions. Whenever he could, he would provide the help they needed. He was very patient and took his time to explain things, to teach and encourage. He often said it was a waste of time getting angry with people but that we should pass on what we know to others so that our work may continue when we have moved on. He was always in a good mood and he liked to tell jokes appropriate to the moment to help reduce tension or simply to make a difficult situation a happier one.

In 1974, Bro. Luigi was working at Carapira School and, together with other missionaries, he was taken and expelled from Mozambique, due to the *Obligation of Conscience* document which all the Comboni Fathers, Brothers and Sisters had signed. It was at Carapira that the document had been discussed by the missionaries and the Bishop of Nampula. In it, the Combonis asked the Bishops to be more prophetic and to ask the government to put an end to the colonial war being waged by Portugal against the liberation movement (FRELIMO).

Bro. Luigi also served as bursar in the mission and, for six years, at the General Curia. He was no spendthrift; quite the opposite. If anyone pointed out that some food was a little old or expired, he always replied calmly: "Has anyone died because of this food?"

I am certain that Bro. Luigi will continue to inspire us with his patience ... while he is teaching some angel the little tricks of his trade or imposing a diet on the obese ones to improve their profiles! (*Fr. Jeremias dos Santos Martins, mccj*)

Fr. Giovanni Battista Bressani (14.09.1931 – 21.09.2020)

Fr. Giovanni Battista Bressani ended his earthly existence on Monday, 21 September 2020. He died from Alzheimer's, a devious disease that silently enters the life of a person only to take it over completely. We do not know what goes through the mind of those who find that life, the environment and relationships are no longer what they have always been used to, when their relationship with the world,

places and people become a cause of disturbance and life becomes so complicated that they can do nothing for themselves. But we do know what happens to those who, with an open and docile heart listen to the same words Jesus addressed to Matthew: follow me! The joy of having discovered the treasure of life moves them to leave everything and follow the Lord. The joy of the Gospel truly fills the hearts and entire lives of those who meet Jesus and are not afraid to offer him their very existence to collaborate with him in the work of evangelisation. This indeed was the experience of Fr. Giovanni Battista.

He was just 23 years of age when he became a priest in 1954, four months after taking first vows. He began his ministry as bursar in Carraia and then in Florence. In 1960, he began to work as curate for five years in Mexico. He did specialisation studies in Rome and, in 1966 was sent to Spain as novice master where he stayed until 1975.

Concerning this period, Fr. Manuel João Pereira Correia states: "I met Fr. Bressani more than fifty years ago during our novitiate in Moncada (Spain) from 1968 to 1970. He was our novice master. We were young Portuguese and Spanish youths and he was a young man in his thirties. He was naturally jovial, enthusiastic and playful sort of person but his role forced him to be somewhat strict; he was a man who reflected the values he sought to pass on to us. He often spoke of his missionary experience in Lower California (Mexico)".

From 1975 to 1981, he was a parish priest in Mexico and was then sent to the Mother House in Verona as superior. He would stay there for six years. In 1987, the bishop of Esmeraldas invited him to go to Ecuador as Vicar general of the diocese: a period lasting eight years. He spent a short period in Columbia, first in Bogota, in Missionary Animation and then in Medellin, in the Postulancy. In 1999, he was appointed to Arco for nine years, serving in ministry, accompanying elderly confreres and as probus vir. In February 2009, he returned to Ecuador and San Lorenzo, an arduous mission in difficult times marked by violence. He was superior at the Provincial House up to 2015 when, now already ill, he returned for good to Italy, staying first at Rebbio and then, from 1 February 2017, at Castel d'Azzano.

Humility, sweetness and magnanimity were the virtues he acquired in the final period of his missionary life when the trials, humiliations and difficulties of the mission and the violence of the environment put him to the test and transformed him interiorly.

"Some God called to be apostles ... others to be pastors and teachers to prepare confreres to carry out their ministry". Fr. Giovanni

Battista received the gift of being a master of novices to prepare the confreres for ministry. For many years he was a leader in the communities with the role of a pastor, gathering together, leading and accompanying.

We return to Fr. Manuel João's testimony: "I again met Fr. Giovanni Battista at the end of the nineties, when he was in charge of the community of Arco for elderly confreres. I visited that community a number of times and was impressed by its serene atmosphere. It was a beautiful community. Fr. Bressani was a capable animator, dedicated and enthusiastic". "Later on", Fr. Manuel João continues, "I found Fr. Bressani here in Castel d'Azzano, when the Alzheimer's disease was worsening. Despite this, he maintained his playful disposition, telling innocent jokes. In the evening, after supper, he would ask where the recreation room was. If we suggested he go to the TV room, he would refuse but if we offered to take him where the other confreres were, he would allow himself to be taken there. He was a man who enjoyed company". (*Fr. Renzo Piazza, mcccj*)

Fr. Carlos Bascarán Collantes (11.06.1941 – 22.09.2020)

Fr. Carlos was born in Oviedo (Spain) on 11 June 1941. In 1963, he entered the novitiate at Moncada where he made his first profession on 12 October 1965. He did the scholasticate at Maia and took perpetual vows on 15 August 1969. After a couple of years in Palencia in missionary animation, he was appointed to Brazil where, with the exception of a few years in Granada (1979-1983), he spent his whole missionary life.

Fr. Carlos was a "radical" missionary with a charming sort of essential outlook. He was humble. With not a trace of exhibitionism, he wore sandals that, for him, represented the footwear of a simple and poor person but most of all of a disciple, of an itinerant and humble follower of the Master! For him, the missionary had to be radical even in outward appearance: wearing sandals meant being always close to the poor and humiliated, to reject the consumer mentality and being always alert, ready to leave for new places and take up unheard-of challenges without the shoes of pride or the haversack of material goods or the clothing of vanity, but possessing only one's availability for service and to welcome everyone.

Fr. Carlos was happy and enthusiastic, one who easily made friends, especially with the youth and children; he had charisma. He played football very well and was famous for his technique, his pace and his ability as a leader.

He had an extraordinary musical talent and was especially in harmony with those who shared his passion, encouraging them to cultivate this gift so as to enliven their lives and those of others.

He loved the mission and always sought to have the youth follow him to Brazil.

Fr. Silvério Simões Malta, who was with him as vice-provincial during his two mandates as provincial, recounts: "At the end of the twentieth century, Fr. Fausto was coming to the end of his mission as provincial of Brazil North East and the straw ballots indicated Fr. Carlos as his successor. Those were difficult times for him who had always been one who was free as regards structures, no matter what they were. His way of celebrating and animating celebrations, considered by some as slightly unorthodox, his critical attitude towards civil and religious authorities and even his personal appearance – with long hair, a long beard and wearing sandals – demonstrated his great freedom. Taking all this into account, his first reaction was to withdraw his name from the list (which he requested during the provincial assembly) but, seeing the insistence and support of his confreres, he decided to go ahead and was elected provincial.

A man of great ideals, during his mandate he sought to give a new impulse to the Province, both in initial formation by promoting a more inserted alternative, and in the field of the mission, promoting the opening of Itupiranga-PA, who was meant to represent the new face of the Comboni mission. Some things succeeded while others did not, but Fr. Carlos was not one to lose heart when things did not go as planned. In him one certainty was deeply rooted: Christ is the Lord of the mission and he also used our limits and our defeats to make it grow.

As well as that, even though he had great ideals, he was very realistic, aware of his own limits and those of the confreres. He often said: 'The mission is like a symphony concert. The music is written perfectly but the musicians are very limited and out of tune'.

He was not the sort of person who shirked the challenges of the mission. Once he ended his mandate as provincial, he chose to integrate the community of Itupiranga-PA which, it was planned, would be different from the others: tenacious, in the best sense of the word, he refused to give up trying once again and moved there. However, the emerging needs of the Church and our limited resources could not provide for this novelty".

To give an idea of who Fr. Carlos really was, we may end by quoting a saying that the people often used in speaking of him: 'A priest who

is good at football and good at saying Mass'. He was a man with a special charisma, dedicated to God and the people.

LET US PRAY FOR OUR BELOVED DEAD

THE FATHER: Albino, of Fr. José Domingos Fernandes de Oliveira (P).

THE MOTHER: Amparo, of Fr. Miguel Angel Martín Lambás (E).

THE BROTHER: Teketel Ababo, of Fr. Endrias Shamena Keriba (RSA); Aldo, of Fr. Mario Benedetti (I).

THE SISTERS: Miryan, of Bro. Gustavo Montoya (CO); Maria de Lurdes of Fr. Ramiro Loureiro da Cruz (P); Maria, of Fr. Antonio Furioli (I).

THE COMBONI MISSIONARY SISTERS: Sr. Annaflora Belotti, Sr. Luigia Emilia Dell'oca, Sr. Anna Pia De Marchi, Sr. Zena Olivato, Sr. Mary Silvia Pisetta, Sr. Amine Abrahão.