



“Blessed be the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. He chose us in Christ before the creation of the world to be holy and spotless before Him in charity” (Ep 1,3-4)

“Courage for the present... And especially for the future” (Saint Daniel Comboni)

Dear Confreres, Happy feast of Saint Daniel Comboni!

The Word of God we have just read reminds us how good it is to thank the Lord for his presence and blessings in the lives of all men and women disciples. Contemplating the life of our Father and Founder, we are invited to speak well of God, to bless him and thank him for the person, the life of witness and missionary service of Saint Daniel Comboni. We are conscious of having before us a pastor of the People of God, holy and generous, who lived his call in sanctity of life and the exercise of apostolic charity in the mission in Africa.

Among the many inspirations the Holy Spirit may suggest to us whether individually or as a community, this year we want to celebrate the feast of Saint Daniel Comboni with three realities in mind.

The sanctity of Comboni speaks to us of the crucified love of the Heart of Jesus. Saint Daniel Comboni completed his journey of holiness loving and embracing the Cross, the place *par excellence* wherein to contemplate the love of God for suffering humanity. Gazing at the Cross, Comboni contemplated the Heart of Jesus which beats for humanity in its need to encounter the great love of God for every man and every woman. This year, after much reflection and various suggestions, we chose the cross which the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus will wear as a sign of their belonging to God, the mission and the Institute. This cross, by means of the figure of Christ presented with African features, reminds us of the missionary passion of Comboni for the peoples of Africa for whom he gave his life. The heart reminds us to contemplate the Heart of Jesus that continues to beat for all humanity. The MCCJ acronym on the back of the cross, placed above the image of the world, invites us to work as Comboni Missionaries to build up the Kingdom of God among various peoples and in difficult circumstances.

The holiness of Comboni is to be lived in communion with suffering humanity. Saint Daniel lived holiness of solidarity with the suffering and the ill-treated. Throughout our history, the sons and daughters of Saint Daniel Comboni have sought to walk in the path of holiness, sharing the daily life of their suffering brothers and sisters. We have some great figures who are examples of making common cause with the people: Fr. Giuseppe Ambrosoli, who is due to be canonised next year on the feast of Christ the King; Fr. Ezechiele Ramin and many others. Today, too, we are called to share, in holiness, the life of the many people faced with the crisis of the Coronavirus pandemic and all it entails. We remain in communion with the refugees and with the populations who find themselves living in zones of conflict and war. We carry in our hearts all the burden of the suffering of the Church and the sad situation of nature and creation.

The holiness of Comboni accompanies us on our journey towards the XIX General Chapter. We are confident that the encounter with Saint Daniel Comboni which we will intensify during our journey of preparation for the next General Chapter will make us rediscover the holiness of life of Saint Daniel and remind us of our call to be disciples. We are invited to allow ourselves to be converted by the Mercy of God, to continue our journey to become “holy and capable” as our Founder wished and to live our mission in the context of the world of today alongside our brothers and sisters who are in need of hearing the Good News of Jesus Christ.

May our Mother Mary, who accepted and kept everything in her heart, obtain for us the grace of listening, deepening and welcoming the promptings of the Holy Spirit as we journey towards the XIX General Chapter.

Travel well with Saint Daniel Comboni!