

# Familia Comboniana

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES OF THE HEART OF JESUS

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790

November 2020

## GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

### General notes of the 47th Consulta: September-October 2020

#### 1. Appointments

##### 1.1. *Appointment by the Vatican*

On 29 September 2020, the Holy See appointed **Fr. González Núñez Juan Antonio** *Apostolic Administrator of the Apostolic Vicariate of Hawassa (ET)*.

##### 1.2. *Appointments made by the GC*

**-Fr. Angelo Giorgetti** *General Treasurer of the Institute, as from 20 October 2020.*

**-Fr. Nordjoe Yao Djodjo Eugene** *superior* of the scholasticate of Kinshasa, **as from 1 November 2020.**

**-Fr. Hategek'Imana Sylvester** *formator* at the scholasticate of Nairobi, **as from 1 November 2020.**

#### 2. General Secretary of the Mission

##### 2.1. *Approval of the statute of the General Secretariat of the Mission*

The CG has approved the revision of the Statute of the general Secretariat of the Mission (GSM) dated 10 October 2020. This new version incorporates some changes to the functions and the methodology of work. We hope it will be an instrument to facilitate the work of the Secretariat in this sector so fundamental to our life.

##### 2.2. *Website of the General Secretariat of the Mission*

The GSM has set up a new website incorporating the previous blog of the Secretariat. The new URL: <https://combonimission.net>. Its content is organised according to the three main functions of the GSM: observation, accompaniment and synodality. It functions in three languages: Italian, English and Spanish. We invite all to visit the website and to send in reflections or other material regarding the mission and so enrich its content.

### **2.3. The App “Comboni Connected”**

The communications office has created an app for Android devices called “**Comboni Connected**” which may be downloaded on Google Play. This app is an extension of the official website of the Comboni Institute [comboni.org](http://comboni.org) which gathers the most relevant items of news. The increase in the use of mobile phone devices compels us to communicate by means of more versatile channels. The main function it provides is that it facilitates sharing material by means of social networks and the possibility of receiving notifications.

### **2.4. The Journey of the Church during the coming decade**

At the request of Pope Francis, the Dicastery for the service of integral human development has worked out a plan for the realisation of *Laudato si'* which has as its objective to render all the Catholic communities of the world sustainable, in the spirit of integral ecology, by 2030. Our secretariat is collaborating with the Union of Superiors and Superiors General to develop the proposal for Religious and provide practical tools to facilitate their involvement. We wish to promote this campaign of the universal Church among the Comboni communities and we believe that such involvement is a basic requirement for missionary communities.

### **2.5. Comboni Social Forum**

Once again, we have been forced to postpone this meeting due to the pandemic in which we are immersed. The new plan is to hold it in Rome from 3 to 7 July 2021. As a preparation for this event, the commission has suggested having two webinars open to all who wish to participate. The first is planned for 4 and 5 December 2020 (15:00-17:00, Rome time), and the second for 5 and 6 March 2021 (15:00-17:00). It is our hope that these meetings may contribute to achieving the aims of the Forum.

## **3. Towards the XIX General Chapter**

### **3.1. Meeting**

On 19 October last, the General Administration met with Bro. Enzo Biemmi, facilitator of the next Chapter, to see how an Institute ought to prepare for an event of such importance. Various themes were discussed such as the secularisation of Europe and the experience of the pandemic, dialogue on discernment, the involvement of all the members and how to maintain hopes and confidence in the unforeseeable action of the Holy Spirit.

### **3.2. Budget**

The General Council has prepared and approved the budget for the next Chapter and already wishes to thank the Lord who, by His

Providence and the kindness of our benefactors, will help us find the means necessary for this fundamental moment in the life of our Institute.

### **3.3. Open Forum**

The General Chapter is an event that demands the participation of all the members of the Institute. It is only by doing so that it may be lived in synodality based upon lived missionary experience. The GC has decided to create an open forum to which we are all invited to send our reflections freely. For this purpose, the following e-mail address has been created: [capitolo2021@comboni.org](mailto:capitolo2021@comboni.org)

This material will be passed on to the pre-capitular commission.

### **4. New Crucifix for All Combonis**

On 14 September 2020, the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, decreed the official crucifix of the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus. The crucifix is a sign that unites all Comboni Missionaries who offer their lives for the mission all over the world. In Roma, on 10 October, the feast of St Daniel Comboni, there was an official gesture during the Eucharistic celebration: the blessing and distribution of the Comboni crucifix to all the confreres present. The GC invites all the circumscriptions to distribute the Comboni crucifix in each community. The General Secretary will forward the crucifixes to all circumscriptions as soon as possible.

### **5. New General Administration Directory**

On 23 October, the General Council, during an ordinary Consulta, reviewed the Directory of the General Administration (DGA). This new directory takes account of the restructuring of the General Secretariats, approved by the General Chapter of 2015. Two new sections have been added: the communications office and the accompaniment of confreres. Furthermore, it was considered appropriate to publish separately the text of the second part of the previous GAD which concerns "*particular situations of personnel*". This matter has been covered in the "*Vademecum for the management of some situations regarding the members of the Institute*", translated into various languages, so as to assist the circumscription superiors in dealing with the various canonical situations of confreres. This new GAD and the Vademecum will guide us in the coming years to carry out well our missionary service.

## 6. Journeys

Fr. Tesfaye Tadesse and Fr. Pietro Ciuciulla will visit Egypt from 28 October to 10 November to participate in the episcopal ordination of Mons. Claudio Lurati and to make brief visits to the communities.

### Perpetual Professions

Sc. Amuzu Kofi (Abraham) (T)	Bangui (RCA)	27/06/2020
Sc. Ouandora Seigneur Malthus (RCA)	Bangui (RCA)	27/06/2020
Sc. Azameti Komi Benoît (T)	Kraków (PL)	09/10/2020

### Ordinations to the priesthood

Fr. Ruiz Eche Javier Martín (PE)	Tarma (PE)	10/10/2020
Fr. Kambale Kasika Emmanuel (CN)	Butembo (RDC)	22/10/2020

### Publications

**Guido Oliana**, *The Intriguing Story of Gondokoro and Rejâf and the Spread of the Faith in Bahr el-Gebel. Historical and Theological Annotations.*

This book contains historical and theological research into the first two missions of the Comboni Missionaries in Bahr el-Gebel (Gondokoro and Rejâf, Equatoria, South Sudan) and the spread of the Catholic faith in the region. The first part deals with the history of Gondokoro and the second with that of Rejâf. The third part evaluates the concept of mission, the Church and missionary methodology of the past and suggests a new way of understanding it in light of recent Magisterium teachings. The aim of the book is to sensitise bishops, priests, religious, seminarians and laypeople working in South Sudan concerning missionary commitment in this land, to boost enthusiasm and the courage to evangelise in present times and in the future.

### Holy Redeemer Guild

November	01 – 15 SS	16 – 30 T
December	01 – 15 PE	16 – 31 U

### Prayer Intentions

**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.*

**December** – That the celebration of the birth of the Son of God, who fully assumed the human condition, may increase in society understanding, respect and the inclusion of diversity. *Lord hear us.*

## ASIA

### **Official admission of a postulant to the novitiate**

All the Comboni missionaries of the two Filipino communities, gathered together with the postulants on the evening of 10 October, the feast of St Daniel Comboni, at the residence of the novitiate in Quezon City, Manila, to attend the official admission of the postulant Francis Xavier Dao Quang Vinh to the following formation phase of the novitiate. Francis is from Vietnam and joined our formation programme after some work experience.

The simple ceremony included the presentation to the new novice of the books of the Rule of Life and the Writings of the Founder which are to guide him in his spiritual journey of the next two years. The ceremony was led by Fr David Domingues, in the presence of the Novice Master Fr Victor Dias.

The day began with a solemn Mass in honour of St Daniel Comboni, followed by breakfast shared with the few friends who could attend, given the restrictions in place due to the Covid 19. In the afternoon, the confreres from Sucat community arrived and we all attended a conference by Fr Noel Tchawe; we then went to the novitiate for the admission of Francis Xavier.

The day was crowned with a joyful supper followed by presentations. Unfortunately, the second-year novices could not attend as they were taking part in a period of insertion among the indigenous Aetas people, in a place that is quite far away and it would have been difficult to travel due to quarantine rules.

The three Vietnamese aspirants were also unable to attend as they have not yet been able to come to the Philippines, as we had hoped. They hope to do so as soon as the restrictions are lifted.

## COLOMBIA

### **Progress in Afro pastoral**

Afro Pastoral, a priority for the American continent ever since the 1985 Chapter, has recently made considerable progress both in coordination and modernisation. For some time, the representatives of the Pastoral in the circumscriptions of Brazil, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia (Fr. Anoumou Mossi Kuami Bernardin, Brasil; Fr. Laye Ayikoue Mawutodji Elysée, Peru; Fr. Raffaello Savoia, Colombia, Bro. Alberto Degan, Colombia, and Bro. Abel Dimanche, Ecuador) hold

virtual meetings each month to share information, dialogue about common problems and encourage each other in this journey so much in line with the charism we have inherited from St. Daniel Comboni.

One of the areas in which progress is more evident is that of the organisation, digitalisation and diffusion of the huge amount of educational material we have, as Comboni missionaries, in the various Afro Centres of the above-mentioned provinces. Thanks to the help provided by Fr. Francisco Carrera, Director of “Iglesia sinfronteras” and the constant impetus given by Fr. Raffaello Savoia, a database has been created that is accessible on the website ([afro.redbiblio.net](http://afro.redbiblio.net)), and it is possible to consult the available material in the different centres (books, videos, audio and documents of all sorts). Anyone, anywhere in the world, can view the lists of books and documents. One of these centres, the CAEDI in Bogota, already has its web page – [centroafrobogota.com](http://centroafrobogota.com) – with a relevant amount of documents which may be consulted and downloaded.

The other centres, too, have their web pages which may be consulted to receive information about the country: [pastoralafroperuanaelcarmen.com](http://pastoralafroperuanaelcarmen.com) (Peru); [pastoralafrobrasileira-cenaph.com](http://pastoralafrobrasileira-cenaph.com) (Brazil); [combonianosecuador.org/index.php/centro-afro-guayaquil](http://combonianosecuador.org/index.php/centro-afro-guayaquil) (Ecuador).

In October, the Afro-American Pastoral took the opportunity to honour the memory of Comboni with a new initiative that augurs well for the future. Thanks to the help of the General administration and some other European provinces, a server was installed with the name of Nas Sinfronteras, which is at the disposal of the four circumscriptions to bring the web all the documented resources kept in our centres.

## CURIA

### **Missionaries with the youth in Europa today**

This was the theme of the European Assembly for Formation held at the General Curia in Rome from 29 September to 3 October. It was attended by the vocations promoters who work in Youth Vocations Ministry in some European countries where we are present (Portugal, Spain, Italy, England, Ireland and Poland) and the present General Secretary for Formation, Fr. Elias Sindjalim and the Ongoing Formation Commission.

The method used was that of the three phases of “seeing, judging and acting”, also in light of the Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit*.

In the first phase, an effort was made to see the reality of our youth pastoral and the youth of today, using the conclusions of the questionnaire proposed to the young people after the Sunningdale assembly (2018), and analysing the progress made by the provinces and the Institute since then. The second part consisted in deciding upon the journey we intend to make, in the sense of defining the *common vision* and the direction we wish to take as European Comboni provinces for Youth Vocational Pastoral. The meeting noted the need to place at the kerygma at the centre of our initiatives using language suitable for young people and the encounter with Jesus Christ in a missionary way, from the perspective of Comboni. Accompanying – it was emphasised – means first of all forming ourselves as companions so as to sustain the process of the young person in understanding his vocation and proposing to him the choice of Comboni missionary life. It is important to become a “dwelling”, which means creating a sacred space from which no one feels excluded and in which the young people, in an environment of brotherhood, welcome and listening, may be protagonists of their own journey.

In the final phase, the meeting began to define the goals, strategies and a plan for activities at European and provincial levels: one of the initiatives is to hold a series of virtual meetings between the secretaries for formation in the European provinces for a more efficient and effective organic implementation of the common vision and the activities proposed during the Assembly.

The next European Formation Assembly is planned for 12-17 September 2022, at Krakow, in Poland. (*Filipe Resende, mccj*)

## ETHIOPIA

### **Our parish of Gublak is attacked**

Traditionally, around 20 October each year, we celebrate the parish feast in honour of our patrons Blessed Daudi and Blessed Jildo. This year, the feast was due to be held on Sunday 18 and was to be led by our Eparch, Bishop Lesanu Christos Mathewos. It was to be a great event firstly, because of the planned baptisms of 120 catechumens who had not been baptised at Easter due to the Coronavirus and also because the feast coincided this year with World Mission Sunday.

We were aware that, during the months of August, September and October there had been attacks in various localities by bandits known

as “Shiftas”. Nevertheless, we went ahead and prudently continued our pastoral work.

Unfortunately, on the evening of 5 October, our parish of Gublak was attacked while the apostolic community (MCCJ and SJA) was assembled for the celebration of the community Mass. The function had just begun when loud sounds of shooting were heard from all directions. In a matter of minutes, people ran from all quarters to take refuge in the courtyard of the parish. Decisions had to be made immediately, especially regarding the sharing of the food reserves. The Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition were forced to confine themselves to the parish for more than ten days.

Many innocent civilians, both Gumuz and others, lost their lives. Many people moved out of the city of Gublak. The Gumuz themselves feel very insecure; some survivors returned to the city just to collect their belongings and go to hide in the forest.

We felt the warmth of prayers for us being said by many of those who went to heaven. We are grateful for this spiritual solidarity. We thank the Lord for his protection and for the prompt action by the forces of law and order. (*Fr. Isaiah Sangwera Nyakundi*)

### **Appointment of Fr. Juan González Núñez**

On 29 September 2020, Fr. Juan González Núñez was appointed Apostolic Administrator of the Apostolic Vicariate of Hawassa. The appointment was a surprise for many Catholics in Ethiopia.

Fr. Juan was happily working at the mission of Gilgel Beles, 900 km from Hawassa when he was called – out of the blue, we may say – to a post that is usually conferred on people much younger than he. However, as we all know, the Lord does not look at the appearance of the one he wishes to choose. For this reason, bearing in mind that the appointment is temporary and that the Lord does great things through his humble servants, let us pray for Abba Juan.

## PERU

### **Ordination to the priesthood during the pandemic**

Even while the pandemic was raging, the ordination to the priesthood of Fr. Javier Martín Ruiz Eche was held behind closed doors in the cathedral of Tarma (Peru), in the presence of a limited number of people: it was the wish of the newly-ordained priest to receive the gift of the priesthood on 10 October, the feast of St. Daniel



Comboni, administered by Comboni bishop Mons. Luis Alberto Barrera Pacheco.

Fr. Javier's parents and three brothers had to overcome many obstacles during their long journey from the village of Organos, in the province of Piura, close to the border with Ecuador: the curfew in Lima, mechanical problems with their vehicle, having to ascend to an altitude of 4,818 metres and the sickness this caused.

Besides the family, some confreres also attended together with the Vice-Provincial. The bishop also invited seven future permanent deacons – among the first in Peru – to the ceremony as part of their preparation for the diaconate in the diocese.

This was the third ordination in the province in little more than a year. The other ordinations were: Fr. Jonathan Luna Sánchez in March and Fr. Eduardo Revolledo Villanueva in December. These events, at this time when vocations are scarce both in Peru and many other countries, are providential for the Comboni mission in the world. It is worth noting that the three Peruvians have already been appointed "*ad gentes*": Jonathan to Uganda, Eduardo to Taiwan and Javier Martín to South Africa. (*Fr. Luis Weiss, mccj*)

## POLONIA

### **To love gratuitously**

The Comboni community of Krakow has recently lived a very important event: the perpetual vows (9 October) and the diaconate (10 October) of Benoît Azameti, one of its members.

Benoît was born in Togo and owes his vocation to his family. His parents educated their children in the spirit of the love of God. Every day, at five in the morning, they were together for prayers, ending with the reading and sharing of the Word of God for the day. From his youth, Benoît attended the meetings of the vocations group of his parish. One day, he was given a book on the life of Comboni by the Comboni Sister in charge of the group. Reading the book, he was fascinated by what Comboni did for Africa and the Africans, against all odds. This encounter with Comboni who consecrated himself entirely to the mission, with unconditional trust in God, motivated Benoît to get to know better the men and women missionaries working in his parish.

After some time, he decided to join the Comboni postulancy. He spent the first two years in formation in his home country, followed that with two years in Benin and went to Italy to study theology. Now,

after ten years in formation, Benoît is part of the community of Krakow where he is studying the Polish language and culture.

On 9 October, Benoît professed his perpetual vows. The ceremony was attended by his friends and the Combonis present in Poland, as well as by the general Secretary for formation Fr. Elias Sindjalim. In his homily, Fr. Elias stressed that “having a concrete and personal experience of Jesus is the basic element of the Christian life of each one of us and becoming a friend of Jesus is to experience his mercy and love”. “You may be very intelligent, young and handsome but this is not why God called you. If he has called you, it is because he saw your misery and calls you to save you and make of you an instrument of salvation for others. By taking the vows, you must remember that the vow of chastity means giving yourself totally to others. We become priests, religious and missionaries because we want to love differently, freely. There is no greater love than to give one’s life for others. (...) Remember that the meaning of the vow of obedience is the daily search for the will of God. The superiors are just his instruments. Then there is the vow of poverty: always strive to reject attachment to things, to people or to ideas. Always seek to have a heart that is free to love Jesus Christ. There will be some difficulties but when they come, always remember that God is faithful. This is the source of your happiness”.

On the following day, the feast of St. Daniel Comboni, Benoît was ordained deacon by Bishop Jan Zając.

During the Mass, celebrated in Krakow at the parish church dedicated to Our Lady Queen of Poland, among the gifts brought to the altar there was a drum, a symbol of happiness which is one of the characteristics of Benoît. We wish the newly-ordained deacon constant and deep happiness since – as Pope Francis says – joy is the characteristic sign of a true evangeliser. (*Tomek Basinski*)

## IN PACE CHRISTI

### **Fr. Karl Wetzel (16.04.1921 – 08.10.2020)**

The day of his ordination, 30 July 1950, at the Marian sanctuary of Schönenberg, near Ellwangen, conferred by the bishop of Witbank (South Africa) Johannes Riegler MFSC, was one of the meaningful moments after the Second World War for the then German-speaking Congregation and also for the Catholics of Ellwangen. A year earlier, the Austrian Johannes Riegler had been ordained bishop of the diocese of Witbank. The minor seminary Josefinum in Ellwangen,

destroyed during the final days of the war, was already being rebuilt. More than a hundred young seminarians were expected at Josefstal to move into the new seminary. The ordination of Fr. Wetzel was celebrated with great solemnity and enthusiasm by the confreres and the people of the city. There was in the air a feeling that a new beginning was underway.

Fr. Wetzel was born on 16 April 1921, at Sigmaringen/Baden Württemberg and grew up in Mengen. His father was a railway worker. Reverend Georg Vogel, brother of the deceased Fr. Paul and Bro. Franz Xaver, both Comboni missionaries, was a curate at the parish in the thirties. On his recommendation, fourteen-year-old Karl entered the Josefinum seminary in Ellwangen, where he completed his studies in 1939 and passed the final exams. He then started the novitiate but in 1940 was conscripted for *Arbeitsdienst* (paramilitary service) and, a year later, received the call to arms. He was fortunate in that his work was that of a radio operator for almost the whole of the war. After a brief period as a prisoner of the Americans, he returned to the community of Bamberg in the summer of 1945. He resumed the novitiate and took first vows on 20 October 1946, and commenced his theological studies also in Bamberg. He consecrated himself to God and the missions with perpetual vows on 19 March 1950. He was ordained priest, as noted above, on 30 July 1950.

After his ordination, the Superior General, Fr. Johann Deisenbeck, who had just returned from a visit to the confreres in Peru, assigned him to that mission. After about four years of pastoral work in the parishes of Huánuco and Panao, he was transferred to Lima in 1954.

The small group of missionaries needed a *piede a terre* in Lima, the capital, and a confrere who would see to the necessary contacts with the ecclesiastical and civil authorities. They were entrusted with the new parish of Pius X, not far from the airport. Fr. Wetzel was appointed its first parish priest. He began with energy to give new form to the parish. In a short time, he founded Catholic Action, the Legion of Mary and Parish Caritas. He was also involved in the social field, setting up a national cooperative for savings and credit which was a modern form of social pastoral, in those days.

In 1968, he was called to Tarma to take charge of the parish of Santa Anna. There, too, he worked to meet both the pastoral and social needs of the people, reorganising the existing cooperative called "Perla de los Andes". In 1972, after 21 years of work, he had to return to Germany for health reasons.

After about a year at Unterpremstätten, close to Graz, he was assigned to the seminary of Neumarkt in Bavaria as formator and superior of the community while helping with pastoral work in the local parishes at weekends. In 1989, at the age of 68, he was assigned to the community of Mellatz, as pastoral assistant to the parishes. During this period, he also attended the Comboni renewal course in Rome. In 2009, now 88 years old, he went to live at the Ellwangen house for the sick and elderly.

Fr. Wetzel was a confrere with a pleasant character, one who sought harmony and appreciated the good things in life such as good food and a glass of fine wine. Though always faithful to the Institute and his vocation, he was always an independent person. He was open and honest. He probably never doubted his priestly and missionary vocation. He loved music, singing playing the piano and the organ. He felt at home among his confreres with whom he joyfully celebrated his various anniversaries and jubilees that occurred during his long life. As the Bible says, "He then breathed his last in plentiful old age and full of days", on 8 October 2020, in Ellwangen, six months before his hundredth birthday. (*Fr. Reinhold Baumann mccj*)

## **LET US PRAY FOR OUR BELOVED DEAD**

**THE FATHERS:** Manuel, of Fr. José Luis Román Medina (E); Wolde Tekle, of the Sc. Melaku Wolde Tekle (ET).

**THE BROTHERS:** Josef, of Fr. Otto Fuchs (DSP); Anton, of Bro. Eduard Nagler (DSP); Gino, of Fr. Luciano Verdoscia (FCM); Antonio, of Fr. Celestino Prevedello (C).

**THE COMBONI MISSIONARY SISTER:** Sr Teresa Assunta Dal Lago.

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**MISSIONARI COMBONIANI - VIA LUIGI LILIO 80 - ROMA**

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