

Familia Comboniana

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES OF THE HEART OF JESUS

804

February 2022

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

GENERAL NOTES - 65th General Consulta December 2021-January 2022

Appointments of the Institute

After the necessary consultations and having obtained the views of the nominated confreres and their superiors, the General Council has appointed:

- Fr. Opargiw John Baptist Keraryo Vice-Provincial of the Province of South Africa as from 21.12.21.
- Fr. Martin James Devenish as a Member of the Council for Finance as the representative of the circumscriptions of Europe as from 1.1.2022.
- Fr. Pierpaolo Monella as Father Master of the Manila Novitiate as from 1.1.2022.

Promulgations

General Directory of Finance

The new Financial Directory updated according to the most recent modifications introduced (cf. 37.7.7. and attached document 1), has been approved in the Italian version and is promulgated and dated 15.3.2022. It is being translated into the various languages (English, and Spanish with the added version in French).

Vademecum for Circumscription Superiors and their Councils

There has long been a need to produce a flexible and easily consulted instrument to help circumscription superiors and their respective councils to carry out their duties. After much work of revision and updating by the Vicar General over a long period, the updated text of the Vademecum has been approved by the General Council which has decided the date of its promulgation as 15.3.2022 and its translation which will follow.

Jubilee Year of the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the Institute of the Comboni Missionary Sisters

The Comboni Missionary Sisters are celebrating throughout this year, 2022, the Jubilee of the 150th anniversary of their foundation which took place on 1 January 1872. The celebration of the opening of the Jubilee Year took place at the Verona Mother House attended, unfortunately, by a limited number of people due to the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions. Members of the General Council who participated in the event were Fr. Tesfaye Tadesse and Bro. Alberto Lamana. For the occasion, the Council sent a letter of good wishes to all our Sisters: we remember them with special affection during this period of celebration and we thank God for all they have done for the mission over the past 150 years. Our history cannot be understood without the precious collaboration and testimony of the Comboni Missionary Sisters. We ask the Lord to continue to bless their work as a generous and courageous response to the new challenges to the mission today.

Note on the Venerability of Fr. Sartori and the date of the Beatification of Fr. Ambrosoli

On 10 January 2022, the Postulation informed the General Council concerning two topics: the declaration of the venerability of the Servant of God Bernardo Sartori and the matter of the ceremony of the beatification of Venerable Giuseppe Ambrosoli. In the case of Fr. Sartori, besides being informed of the fact and the significance of his approved venerability, there was no lack of rejoicing in the parishes and missions where he worked. In his home town, preparations are under way and the Postulation is in the process of producing a new enlarged edition of the "Thoughts" of Fr. Sartori and a religious bookmark is already printed. As regards Fr. Ambrosoli, a meeting was held to decide the definitive date of the celebration of the beatification. At the time of the meeting, the situation was still under discussion: it was a question of choosing Kalongo or Ronago. The General Council and the Postulation were in favour of the first option in line with the figure and work of Fr. Ambrosoli and also according to the mind of the local Church of Gulu. However, there has recently been a communication indicating the definite date fixed by Archbishop John Baptist Odama: 20 November 2022. Nevertheless, the date can only be officially published after a final formal but not preventive step. Also in this case, at the right time and as soon as possible, the collaboration required for a worthy and expressive celebration of the event will be communicated.

Election of the Chapter Substitutes

Election of the priest-delegate substitutes

The elections for the substitute delegates to the Chapter took place last year. In seven circumscriptions (DSP, MZ, RCA, RSA, PE, KE) the priest-delegate substitutes with the largest number of votes did not receive 1/3 of the valid votes (cf. RV 150.10). The GC has asked the respective circumscriptions to repeat the elections before 31 March 2022.

Brother-delegate substitutes

As regards the Brother-delegate substitutes, the whole exercise has turned out to be extremely laborious and slow due to the great dispersion of votes that were cast; this happened because the established electoral colleges (except for Italy) include several circumscriptions and, in effect, the majority of electors vote for the support of the confreres they now, of the members of their own circumscriptions. Of the nine established electoral colleges, only the 4th (C, E, P) and the 5th (DSP and LP) chose a substitute with a sufficient number of votes. In the other seven colleges (Nos. 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9), those elected received less than a third of the valid votes. Furthermore, as regards Italy, the supposed substitute was transferred to another circumscription and reference must be made to the following confrere in terms of votes.

Considering the great difficulties involved in repeating the electoral process in a time marked by difficulties in communication due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the GC has decided to accept the substitutes already chosen by colleges 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9). In the case of the electoral college of Italy, the one who came second in terms of votes is elected. The Brother-delegate substitutes for the XIX General Chapter are the following confreres:

- Electoral College 1 (A, PCA, M, NAP): Bro. Patt Fabio;
- Electoral College 2 (BR, EC, PE, CO): Bro. Dimanche Godfroy-Abel;
- Electoral College 3 (RCA, TCH, T, CN): Bro. Mwamba Kabaya Jean-Marie;
- Electoral College 6 (EGSD, ER, ET, SS): Bro. Desu Yirashe Banksra;
- Electoral College 7 (I): Bro. Bianchi Giancarlo;
- Electoral College 8 (KE, U): Bro. Adossi Koffissan Adéklóví Matthias-Elie;
- Electoral College 9 (MZ, MO, RSA): Bro. José Francisco Duarte Neto.

The use of images protected by copyright

In recent years, the GC has received complaints about the publication in our media of images protected by copyright downloaded directly from the Internet. Aware that this is an illegal act punishable by law, we shall present a protocol that may be of help in the process of selecting and publishing graphic material. An article on this topic that is particularly relevant for our magazines and official websites will be published in the January issue of the MCCJ Bulletin. Circumscription Superiors are asked to indicate the above-mentioned protocol to those in charge of the media in the various provinces.

Activities of the Centre for Ongoing Formation

Comboni year of Ongoing Formation

The XX edition of the Comboni Year of Ongoing Formation began on 3 January 2022. This edition has 13 confreres: they are originally from 10 different countries and work in 9 different countries as missionaries. Many of them have stayed in Rome for some months preparing for the Course by studying Italian. The leadership team is composed of Fathers Fermo Bernasconi and Alberto de Oliveira Silva who rely upon the cooperation of many other people including the Comboni Missionaries and the Comboni Sisters and members of other Institutes both for personal accompaniment and the presentation of the various themes for reflection.

The schedule this year is completely new: it starts a bit later than previous editions in consideration of the Covid emergency (we hope it will not disturb the process too much!), and it will end with an extended stay of about a month and a half in Limone Sul Garda to facilitate the General Chapter.

The themes take into consideration the human, spiritual, charismatic and missionary dimensions of our consecration: they are not a theoretical study but some starting points to help each person to re-read in depth his own life experience so as to make a new start with renewed passion for the mission.

Courses in preparation

The Ongoing Formation Centre team is preparing two more courses:

- **The Comboni Course for the Elderly (C.C.A.)** is intended for the confreres of all circumscriptions who are seventy years old or more. It is scheduled for the months of September and October 2022.

➤ **The Comboni Renewal Course (C.C.R.)** is intended for confreres from 50 to 70 years of age – especially, but not exclusively – for those celebrating a meaningful anniversary of their consecration. Neither of these courses is for “aggiornamento” but “renewal” and form part of the mission that the Institute lives out to take care of the person of the missionaries so that they may, by re-reading their experience, enter with renewed confidence and passion into the new phase of their life and live it as witnesses of the Gospel. The circumscription superiors are invited to animate the confreres to participate consciously in these activities. The confreres who so desire are also invited to begin a dialogue with their superiors and plan with them whatever is required for their preparation. Further explanations and discussions may be had by contacting the team by using either of these email addresses fermoberna@gmail.com / ccfpmccj@comboni.org

Thanks for extraordinary contributions

The General Council would like to thank all the circumscriptions that responded to the usual appeal for extraordinary contributions to be devoted to the replenishment of the general funds. The effects of the economic recession due to the Covid-19 pandemic are being felt but the circumscriptions have not failed to make an effort to contribute even while they themselves were in need. Special thanks go to the NAP Province which has given a substantial extraordinary contribution that has allowed the General Council, within the limits of the present situation, to meet the expressions of need emerging in various situations.

Date of the next Consulta

The General Council is endeavouring to organise visits that were not made due to the pandemic; for this reason, the first stage of the March Consulta will be brought forward and commence on 21 February and end on 5 March. The dates of the second stage will be decided upon afterwards. The General Council asks the circumscription superiors to forward their dossiers before the middle of February.

First profession

Bro. Mantegazza Giuseppe Luca (I) Limone sul Garda (I) 06.01.22

Perpetual professions

Sc. Evans Musyoka Nzuka (KE)	Lima (PE)	20.01.2022
Sc. Mopembu Mambuse Crispin (CN)	Isiro St Anne (CN)	22.01.2022

Sc. Mbusa Tulirwagho Jean Baptiste (CN) Yanonge (CN) 23.01.2022

Priestly ordinations

Fr. Régis-Eric Ngalite (RCA) Bangui (RCA) 23.01.2022
Fr. Sirak Medhanie Ghebrenegus (ER) Asmara (ER) 30.01.2022

Holy Redeemer Guild

February 01 – 15 C 16 – 28 EGSD
March 01 – 07 CO 08 – 15 E 16 – 31 DSP

Prayer intentions

February – We pray that our Church may be ever more fraternal so that all of us can participate in it and be co-responsible for announcing the Kingdom of God. *Lord hear us.*

March – We pray, during the month in which we remember especially Saint Joseph in whose face Jesus saw the tenderness of God the Father, that all Christians may encounter in the sacrament of reconciliation the tender face of the Father who welcomes, embraces, sustains and pardons us. *Lord hear us.*

Comboni liturgical calendar

February

8 Saint Josephine Bakhita, Virgin Memorial

Meaningful anniversaries

February

4 Saint John de Britto, Martyr Portugal
6 The Martyrs of Japan Asia
23 Kidane Mehret, Co-Redemptrix Eritrea

Meaningful celebrations

March

17 Saint Patrick, Bishop LP (London Province)
19 Saint Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary Central Africa

Those who left in 2021

Fr. Oscar Aníbal Najarro Morales 05/12/2020 (6) PCA
Sc. Simião Ernesto Noventa 22/03/2021 (2) MO
Fr. Zerbin Adriano 25/03/2021 (6) I
Fr. Hernández Rogel Juan José 28/04/2021 (1) PCA

Sc. Matuta Harry	30/04/2021 (3)	MZ
Sc. Oolio Ismael	30/04/2021 (3)	U
Sc. Petrol Matthews	01/05/2021 (3)	MZ
Fr. Matua Asumi Alexis	04/05/2021 (6)	U
Fr. Foncillas Bernaldez José Luis	05/05/2021 (6)	E
Sc. José Torres Bonjesse	01/06/2021 (2)	MO
Bro. Messori Gabriele	02/06/2021 (3)	I
Bro. José Domingos Chuva	10/07/2021 (2)	MO
Fr. Ricardo Alberto Leite Gomes	30/07/2021 (6)	P
Bro. Mascalconi Damiano	01/09/2021 (5)	I
Fr. García Ulloa Victor Hugo	14/12/2021 (6)	M

Tot. 15

Notes: (1) Incardinated; (2) Dispensed from temporary vows; (3) Left on the expiry of temporary vows; (4) Left before the expiry of temporary vows; (5) Dispense from perpetual vows; (6) Laicized; (7) Dismissed

Publications

Pierpaolo Monella mccj, *“Am I Cursed?” The long struggle for inner liberation*, Paulines, Nairobi 2021. This is the true story of Patrick (not his real name), a middle-aged man from Lusaka and his journey of personal counselling with Fr. Pierpaolo lasting two and a half years and with more than thirty sessions, to escape from his dramatic condition. After a year of journeying together, Patrick clearly understood that he had undertaken a “new process that would enable him to give the best of himself in life and to face adversity with renewed strength”. The book is the result of his desire that this very positive experience of his should help other people, especially Africans, to grow both humanly and spiritually.

Bernard Ward, *“A Heart for Africa. A life of Saint Daniel Comboni”*, Comboni Missionary Publications, 2021. This is a brief summary of the life of Daniel Comboni from his vocation up to his canonisation ending with some pages dedicated to the work of the Comboni Missionaries today.

G. Caramazza mccj, M. Moerschbacher, L. Sileo (editor). *Mission in Africa: Evangelizing the Future*, Urbaniana University Press 2021. In order to identify the different ways in which the various continents and contexts contribute to the formation of a theology of the mission

and the challenges it must face today, there are many broad topics that must be taken into consideration. The organisers of the international conference "Mission in Africa: Evangelizing the Future" identified three fundamental areas to be explored from an African perspective: 1) evangelisation and inculturation, 2) the feminine face of mission and 3) mission and development. This volume presents the results of well-sourced and productive institutional cooperation in the hope that it may help to cultivate new ways to develop our common task of mission.

CURIA

General Secretariat of the Mission

The General Secretariat of the Mission (GSM) is promoting a missionary reflection and sharing on the encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, on fraternity and social friendship. This encyclical questions us as Comboni missionaries and stimulates us to reflect on our missionary ministry as we prepare for the XIX General Chapter. The GSM website (combonimission.net) has opened a section "Fratelli Tutti" dedicated to contributions by confreres who wish to share their reflections and experiences from the point of view of a chapter of the encyclical or the entire document. This is an open forum but contributions must not be more than one page (500 words). The Secretariat thanks in advance those confreres who, with their reflections, give life and room for listening and dialogue based upon different experiences, contexts and perspectives.

MOÇAMBIQUE

Provincial Assembly

The Combonis working in Mozambique gathered for their provincial assembly from 10 to 14 January at the Anchilo Catechetical Centre in Nampula. Despite the effects of the Omicron variant of the Covid 19 virus pandemic, 28 confreres attended.

The chosen theme was "The Comboni Missionaries in the wake of the IV National Pastoral Assembly", an assembly which the Church in Mozambique is preparing to hold next year.

On the evening of the 10th, Fr. Massimo Robol, Superior of the Anchilo community and member of the assembly preparatory commission, welcomed the participants.

On the following day, Fr. António Manuel Bogaio Constantino, Provincial Superior, officially opened the Assembly, inviting the participants to make the meeting a moment of reflection, fraternal agape, evaluation and planning. He emphasised the importance of prayer and the exercise of the virtue of patience in missionary life. Paraphrasing Pope Francis, he noted that “where there is no prayer, hope fades away due to disappointments and lets in the worm of sadness that corrodes ... today, more than ever before, in Mozambique, we must not lose the sense of fraternity nor patience nor hope”.

Then messages of greetings were read from Sr. Laura Malnati, Provincial Superior of the Comboni Sisters and Francisco Martinho, Co-ordinator of the Lay Comboni in Mozambique who could not attend the meeting for reasons of health.

The theme proposed for reflection on the first day, “Reliving the testimony and proclamation of the Word of God today”, was presented by Mons. Ernesto Maguengue, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Nampula, who underlined the importance of placing Christ and his Word at the centre of all pastoral and missionary motivations.

NAP

Moving Christmas Crib

In December, the Comboni Missionaries in Cincinnati, Ohio, presented their seventy-fourth edition of their Moving Christmas Crib. More than 1,400 visitors passed through the missionary centre to admire the crib – mounted on a small platform – with its figures representing the city of Bethlehem and the Holy Family with the animals, the shepherds and the Magi, together with various scenes from daily life. The crib is one of the most popular Christmas events and has been produced annually for 74 years. The visitors also had an opportunity to visit the mission museum and see a display of cribs from all over the world and purchase items for the benefit of the missions.

POLAND

Little Lay Comboni Missionaries

On 16 January 2022, a group of children officially began their training in preparation for a missionary journey with their families.

The idea of forming this group emerged naturally when the children began to come with their parents to the CLM formation meetings. The couples who wished to discern their missionary vocation never imagined that the children would not take part in the meetings since the decision to leave for the mission changes the lives of all the members of the families.

In September 2021, the group responsible for the management of the CLM meetings began to reflect on how to help the children to take part in missionary formation, bearing in mind their needs and their cognitive abilities, completely different from those of the adults. It was necessary to create a formative plan adapted to the age of the participants, to choose the most appropriate values and themes, find specific people to take charge and schedule times for play since this is an integral part of child development.

After a long preparation, for the first time in the history of the Combonis in Poland, a group was formed that gathered the of pre-school and school-going age, focussed upon awakening in them a love for Jesus, a desire to know Saint Daniel Comboni, to read and meditate upon the words of the Gospel and take part more actively in the Eucharist, to understand various aspects of the mission (such as the different culture and language of the country they are going to), as well as to promote social values such as tolerance and respect for differences.

It was an extremely important moment at the beginning of the New Year was the entry of the children into the missionary formation group which took place during the first meeting for adults this year. On 16 January 2022, seven children received missionary crosses made by Bro. Tomek Basiński. They sang their profession of faith together with the adults and, for the first time, recited a prayer composed especially for them. (*Bro. Tomek Basiński, mccj*)

IN PACE CHRISTI

Fr. Ambrogio Reggiori (05.06.1935-06.01.2022)

Fr. Ambrogio was a peaceful, happy person. His main characteristic was his humility. He never liked being praised or being in the limelight. He worked hard in the vineyard of the Lord with great simplicity and ability to serve.

He was born in Varese on 5 June 1935. He did the novitiate in Florence and took first vows on 9 September 1953. For scholasticate

studies, he went first to Verona and later to Venegono. He took perpetual vows on 9 September 1959 and on 2 April 1960, was ordained to the priesthood.

He was immediately sent to Portugal to study the language and, in 1962, was assigned to Mozambique, the mission that was to be the passion of his life. He worked there for 54 years, from 1962 to 2016; he witnessed all the political and social seasons of the people. The beginning of the colonial war in 1964, the imperative of conscience of the Comboni missionaries in 1974, independence in 1975; the times of the civil war, which lasted for 16 years, until the peace agreement of October 4, 1992.

Fr. Ambrogio shared with the people the joys and sadness, abundance and hunger, mourning and dancing, life and death and the daily struggle for a life worthy of the children of God. He was a sort of factotum: parish priest, curate, superior and bursar of the community, he ran development projects, made a thorough study of the Macua language and taught it. Finally, when his health was failing, he returned to his home country leaving his heart among the people he loved, even if, at times, like all of us, he lost patience when people did not do as he expected or when the confreres did not agree with his plans for an inserted pastoral.

For a number of years he worked at the Pau; VI Catechetical Centre in Anchilo, an inter-diocesan centre, at Nampula and at the Pastoral Centre at Carapira in Nacala diocese, preparing the laity and the missionaries for the work of evangelisation. Even though he did great work translating texts and catechetical books into the local language, Fr. Ambrogio was not a missionary pen-pusher. He lived a life immersed in that of the people, sharing their situation of poverty and abandonment but especially their dreams and plans for improvement. Even during the war years, he never stopped but forever sought to be present among the people with his motorbike, a car or on foot. He wanted to be present where the people lived, sharing their "eshima" (a sort of porridge made from maize or cassava flour), listening to the stories of life and death of the people, and very often, being a silent witness to their suffering, the best way of evangelising and making present the Kingdom of God.

Pastorally, his characteristic was catechesis based upon the Word. He collaborated in translating the Bible into the Macua language. One of his last works was a catechism for the many adult catechumens in the dioceses of Nampula and Nacala, in four volumes, one for each stage of the catechumenate for adults and another volume for children. He

was not alone in this work but his dedication and commitment were extraordinary.

Once he returned to Italy and took up residence at the father Ambrosoli Centre in Milan, he continued to write – in Macua – his reflections on the Word of God. These he would send to his confreres and catechists: this was his way of continuing to be useful to the mission in Mozambique where he had left his heart.

His passing has left behind a great vacuum. Fr. Ambrogio was one of the “*old soldiers*”. This was how people described the missionaries of the early days of Mozambique, during the many wars that destroyed so many innocent lives. At the time of his death, there are still campfires of war, especially in the north, due to the greed of men and the interests of foreign and national powers who exploit the riches of this great country, leaving an entire people in poverty. May Fr. Ambrogio rest in peace, contemplating the face of the God of his life and intercede from Heaven for peace and justice in this country and its people whom he so dearly loved. (*Fr. Jeremias dos Santos Martins*)

LET US PRAY FOR OUR BELOVED DEAD

THE FATHER: José, of Fr. Gabriel Estrada Santoyo (M).

THE MOTHER: Teamu Weldeghiorghis, of Fr. Ghebregziabihier Woldehawariat (EC).

THE BROTHERS: Esteban, of Fr. Rafael Huerta Carbajal (M); Peter, of Fr. Paul Pezzei (DSP) and cousin of Fr. Fidelis Pezzei (DSP) and of Bro. Jakob Pezzei (DSP).

THE COMBONI MISSIONARY SISTERS: Sr. Rosaenrica Canzi, Sr. M. Carmela Franzese, Sr. María Inés Avecilla Rodríguez, Sr. M. Giuseppina Peroni.

THE SECULAR COMBONI MISSIONARY: Petronella Chiara.