

Familia Comboniana

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES OF THE HEART OF JESUS

807

May 2022



GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Perpetual professions

Sc. Kasoso Rab-Saba Raoul (CN) Kisangani (RDC) 24.04.2022
Sc. Mina Anwar Habib Atia (EGSD) Cairo (EG) 25.04.2022

Ordinations

Fr. Angella Gabriel (U) Namalu (UG) 23.04.2022
Fr. Elias Samuel E. Manhica (MO) Beira (MO) 23.04.2022
Fr. Mina Albeer Tawfik K. A. (EGSD) Imbaba (EG) 29.04.2022

Holy Redeemer Guild

May 01 – 15 ET 16 – 31 I
June 01 – 07 ER 08 – 15 LP 16 – 30 P

Prayer Intentions

May – We pray that the unequal access to resources of the planet may be corrected and that we may know how to take care of the common home given to us in trust for future generations. *Lord hear us.*

June – We pray that the celebration of the XIX General Chapter of the Comboni Missionaries may bring such abundant fruits of missionary joy and enthusiasm in rediscovering the charismatic experience of Saint Daniel Comboni as to ender present today the mystery of the grace granted to him in the mission to the peripheries of human experience. *Let us pray.*

Comboni liturgical calendar

MAY

Last Saturday of the month

The Blessed Virgin Mary, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Memorial

Meaningful anniversaries

MAY

2 Saint Athanasius, bishop and doctor of the Church Egypt

Comboni liturgical calendar

JUNE

Friday after Pentecost Sunday

The Sacred Heart of Jesus, *Titular of the Institute* Solemnity

Meaningful anniversaries

JUNE

1 Anniversary of the foundation of the Institute

Saturday before Pentecost Sunday

Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Apostles

3 Saint Charles Lwanga and companions, martyrs Uganda

5 Saint Boniface, bishop and martyr Memorial DSP
(Sud Tyrol, Austria, Germany)

Friday after Pentecost Sunday

Sacred Heart of Jesus *Titular of the Institute* Solemnity
Togo-Ghana-Benin

Saturday after the solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

The Immaculate Heart of Mary

MEETING OF THE COUNCILS OF THE COMBONI FAMILY

From 22 to 24 April, the community of Limone hosted the General Councils and the leaders of the four expressions of the Comboni Family (MCCJ, CMS, SC and LCM) for their traditional annual meeting. For the record, this meeting was not possible in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic. It was therefore with great joy that this year the Comboni Family was able to express its unity and desire for collaboration by gathering together at the geographical source of the charism that generated it. The participants brought before St. Daniel Comboni their experience of walking together in recent years and their desire for an ever-faster step towards greater unity of purpose and operation.

The two full days spent together enabled them to look gratefully at the growth of their collaboration and also to identify some challenges that lie ahead of us all. One of the objectives of the meeting was in fact the evaluation of the experience made. It was then a question of ensuring that their collaboration would enjoy a harmonious transition towards a new composition of the group: in a few months the General Councils of the MCCJ and CMS are likely to change; It will therefore be up to the Seculars and the CLM to ensure the "narrative" linked to the development of this "forum" of exchange, mutual knowledge and discernment, which has proved so precious in the eyes of all. To tangibly "mark" the awareness that has arisen and consolidated over

the years, it was decided to plant an olive tree in the courtyard of the CMS house.

Inspiration was drawn from the Writings of St Daniel Comboni n. 2182: *"Let us all toil with no other aim than to gain souls for Christ: Let us join hands together. Let the vow, the objective and the commitment of all who love Jesus Christ be one: to win unhappy Africa for him"*. A commemorative plaque affixed to the map will remain in memory of the event, as a stimulus, inspiration and testimony of that growth that is known to be ensured by the gift of a fruitful charism.

General Secretariat for Formation

Newly professed 2022

The General Council, in the Consulta of 21 April 2022, assigned the novices who are preparing for their first profession in our Institute to the Scholasticates and IBC. This year we have forty-four (44) newly professed compared with 36 last year. Of these forty-four, thirty-nine are scholastics and five Brothers. Their provenance by continent is as follows: Anglophone Africa / Mozambique, seventeen (17); French-speaking Africa, twenty-six (26), America and Asia, one (1). Regarding the number from America / Asia, it must be said that last year, due to the pandemic and travel difficulties, no one entered the novitiate in Mexico and therefore there are no novices in the second year. The only newly professed on this continent comes from the Manila novitiate. The good news is that now, in the Mexico novitiate, there are ten first-year novices who, God willing, will make their first vows in a year. We welcome these new confreres with joy and gratitude and we commit ourselves to accompany them with our prayer and our witness on their path of formation. (Fr Sindjalim Essognimam Elias, mccj)

CURIA

Comboni Course for the Elderly

We wish to confirm that the course aimed at confreres over 70 will also be held this year. The course will start on 1st September 2022 and end at the end of October. The goal of the CCE is to offer help to the confreres who take part in it to live the stage of old age as Comboni missionaries with serenity and fruitfulness, through a deep, trusting and intimate relationship with the Lord; greater inner freedom; a path of reconciliation with one's own experiences; a more personal and close relationship with St. Daniel Comboni, our founder, and a greater sense

of belonging to the Institute, also through the experience of fraternal life in community.

We invite the confreres who wish to participate to dialogue with their circumscription superiors and to send us their enrolment, by writing to Fr. Fermo Bernasconi (fermberna@gmail.com or ccfpmccj@comboni.org)

Comboni Renewal Course

We also confirm that the Comboni Renewal Course will also be held. It is aimed in particular at confreres who are between 50 and 70 years of age, especially if they are celebrating a particular anniversary of consecration and / or ordination. The course aims to offer the missionary help for a global renewal of his person: physical, psychological, spiritual, community and apostolic for growth in personal integration and for greater awareness of the existential moment he is living, in a deeper relationship with God, with himself, with St. Daniel Comboni and with the community. He examines the challenges of today's mission for a more aware, free and responsible response to his own Comboni vocation.

The course will start in early January 2023 and will end with a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the month of May. We ask the confreres who need to study Italian to communicate it to us, in order to agree on dates and procedures. The confreres who need a visa for Israel will have to arrive at the end of November, to begin their residence procedures in Italy, in order to apply for a visa at the Israeli embassy.

We invite the confreres who wish to participate to dialogue with their circumscription superiors and to send us their enrolment, by writing to Fr. Fermo Bernasconi (fermberna@gmail.com or ccfpmccj@comboni.org)

ETHIOPIA

Provincial Assembly

The province celebrated its XXXIV Provincial Assembly in Hawassa from 29 to 31 March. The meeting began with a theme of ongoing formation on synodality presented by Fr. Juan Antonio González Núñez, apostolic administrator of Hawassa, and a report by Fr. Sisto Agostini, provincial superior.

Fr Tesfaye Tadesse - who came to Ethiopia to visit the war-torn area of Gumuz and its Comboni community - spoke about the life of the Institute, the journey towards the 19th General Chapter and the

upcoming provincial electoral process. Three missionaries shared their experience among the Sidamo, Guji and Gumuz peoples. The first day ended with an informal session on the Institute led by the Superior General.

The second day was dedicated to discussing reports by the provincial treasurer and the secretaries of formation, ongoing formation, vocation promotion and missionary animation. The 16 participants took note of the draft of the statute of the Comboni Youth Cultural Centre, which they discussed in detail during the last morning of the work.

Fr Juan Núñez presented the situation of the Vicariate of Hawassa and Sister Veronica Mburu, Provincial Superior of the Comboni Missionary Sisters, spoke about her province and projects. The day ended with an evening devoted to celebrating the jubilees of three missionaries.

The annual assembly concluded with the Eucharist presided over by Fr. Sixtus.

ITALIA

The relatives of Comboni Missionaries gather again in Padua

On Sunday 3 April 2022, the Comboni house in Padua welcomed the families of the Comboni missionaries of central Veneto, from Padua to Vicenza and Rovigo: about seventy people, relatives, parents, brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews, responded to the invitation to meet again after the long pause caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

After some hot coffee, everyone gathered together to listen to Fr. Alcides Costa, assistant general, who came from Rome, who presented the situation of the Comboni Family in the world today: "Our family continues to grow. During the past six-year period, we have received, for the first time, the gift of the religious profession of a confrere from Congo Brazzaville and of three confreres from Vietnam.

Some formation houses have been reopened. In recent years the Pope has chosen a Comboni Missionary, Cardinal Miguel Angel Ayuso Guixot as President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and has appointed four Comboni Bishops: Msgr. Claudio Lurati in Alexandria in Egypt, Msgr. Matthew Remijo A. Gbitiku in Wau, South Sudan, Msgr. Wokorach Raphael P'Mony in Nebbi, Uganda, Msgr. Christian Carlassare in Rumbek, South Sudan, and appointed Fr. Juan Antonio González Núñez, apostolic administrator of Hawassa, Ethiopia. The causes of beatification of several Comboni Missionaries are underway: on November 22nd there will be the beatification ceremony of Fr. Giuseppe Ambrosoli; on 13 December we received the news that

Pope Francis approved the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Fr. Bernardo Sartori, who is therefore now Venerable; the cause concerning the martyrdom of Fr. Ezekiel Ramin; in addition, all the documentation for the causes of Msgr. Antonio Roveggio and Br. Joshua de 'Cas.

Alcides then mentioned the themes that will be dealt with in the next General Chapter. The day continued with the celebration of Mass, during which the deceased confreres of our area and all the family members, benefactors and friends who have left us in this last period were remembered. Among the participants, there were also a number of family members who had been 'apostolic' seminarians as they used to call them, in the house in Padua, and who remembered with sympathy and gratitude the period they lived at the African Missions in Padua. A shared lunch concluded the beautiful day of friendship, the exchange of information and memories of many good times past.

Street named after Fr Raffaele Cefalo

The 10th of April last, was the second anniversary of the death of Fr. Raffaele Cefalo, a Combonian, who died in Milan of respiratory complications due to Covid-19 on 10 April 2020. In addition to the religious ceremony in his memory, the inhabitants and the municipality of Fontanarosa, an Italian town in the province of Avellino, in Campania, and the birthplace of Fr Cefalo, wanted to honour him by naming a street in his memory. "We are grateful to the people and to the authorities of the municipality of Fontanarosa and with them, we join his family in thanking this community for this memorial in honour of Fr Cefalo", writes his confrere and fellow countryman Fr Antonio Guarino.

KENYA

A new community of laypeople is born

For some years, the Comboni Lay Missionaries (CLM) had been thinking of opening an international community in Kenya. To meet this desire, the Comboni Missionaries are completing the construction of a house in Kitelakapel (parish of Kacheliba), among the Pokot, which will welcome these lay missionaries.

With the arrival, in early April, of Linda Micheletti, an Italian laywoman, and Josephine Loree, from Kenya, this dream is becoming a reality. Now they expect other candidates to live in community with them. 'Subira huvuta heri' is a Swahili expression which means good things come to those who wait.

The Comboni Lay Missionaries in Kenya are a small group of four members who completed their formation in December. Others are still in training. The group meets monthly in Nairobi. We are happy that our family is growing and look forward to welcoming more members in the future!

MOZAMBICO

Ordinations to the diaconate and priesthood

On Saturday 23 April, in the parish of San Giovanni Battista, in Beira, the Archbishop of the city, Msgr. Claudio Dalla Zuanna, presided over the celebration of the diaconal and priestly ordinations of two Mozambican Comboni Missionaries, Moisés Zacarias and Elias Samuel respectively.

To the young newly ordained Msgr. Dalla Zuanna recalled that the Gospel they proclaim to others was first of all announced to them and that, for this reason, they must be the first to give witness to a life according to the Gospel. Furthermore, he said, "the exercise of the ministries of the diaconate and the priesthood is one of the greatest signs of gratitude to God".

Towards the end of the Eucharistic celebration, with a joint message, the newly ordained thanked especially those involved in the long process of their formation.

Immediately afterwards, Fr. António Manuel Bogaio Constantino, provincial superior, thanked all the faithful present and asked them to pray for the two young people and to continue asking the Lord of the harvest to send us more workers. In fact, during this year, 2022, another five Mozambican Comboni missionaries from different regions of the country will be ordained. In the Church of Beira, this was the first time that a Comboni deacon and priest were ordained together.

Also present at the celebration was Br. Silvério Maria dos Santos, one of the missionaries who made up the first group of Combonis who arrived in the Archdiocese of Beira, in 1967. He underlined how these ordinations are truly the realization of St. Daniel Comboni's dream of "Saving Africa with Africa".

PCA

Golden Jubilee of priesthood

On Sunday 27 March, in the parish of San Luis, Petén (Guatemala), where the Comboni Missionaries have been present for more than

fifteen years, the Golden Jubilee of priesthood of Fr Enrico Cordioli was celebrated. The faithful of the parish prepared the event which was really very beautiful because, in addition to the Eucharistic celebration, it was enriched by other moments of celebration such as the Mañanitas (traditional greeting songs) on the same Sunday and other "surprise" meetings on the part of groups and families.

The communities of our rural and indigenous areas feel close to their priests. As Fr Enrico said, "the faithful of San Luis believe in the need for priests; whatever his age, the priest is the bearer of spiritual realities, he guides men and women towards the Kingdom of God, facilitates the understanding of the Word and how to put it into practice".

With the presence of the Comboni community, the CLM of Guatemala and San Luis (a recently founded group) and the religious communities of the parish felt the joy of being part of the family, also because it is not every day we have a Golden Jubilee to celebrate. It was an inspiring vocational moment because we witnessed the fidelity of one of our elders and also that of our young people since, in the same celebration, the scholastic Byron Valverde, in missionary service, renewed his temporary vows. It was an occasion to celebrate the call that God makes to us in the mission, enlightened by the "yes" of Fr. Henry and Byron. It was also a call to our young people and our faithful to promote the mission as well as religious and lay missionary vocations.

PORTOGALLO

Feast of the relatives of Comboni missionaries

After a two-year break due to the pandemic, on 24 April, the second Sunday of Easter, we were able to celebrate the traditional feast of the Comboni family in Portugal again. A group of about 85 people, almost all from the north and west of the country, met in the Famalicão community; It was particularly nice to meet the families of some confreres who were absent because they are on mission abroad.

After a brief moment of prayer led by Fr Manuel Machado, of the community of Viseu, the provincial, Fr Fernando Domingues, presented the main events of the Comboni journey during these 75 years of presence in Portugal, from the beginning, with the seminary of Viseu, back in 1947, up to the present day. Some senior confreres present recalled some anecdotes from the "old days". The presentation of this "story of blessing" culminated in the brief testimony of Bro Joseph Peanane, a new member of the province, from the DR Congo and now on a mission to the OCPU of Camarate, which shows us a future in

which the presence of the various cultures of the Comboni Family will again be a strong testimony of missionary Church for our communities in Portugal.

The Mass, presided over by the superior of the community of Maia, was animated by a group of young people from the parish of Antas-Famalicão, entrusted to the pastoral care of the Comboni Missionaries. Lunch, offered by the Famalicão community, was also a moment of joyful encounter in a family atmosphere.

To appreciate the presence of a good group of confreres, together with some members of their families. After years of restrictions due to the pandemic, it has been a real joy to see that we can finally relaunch the various modalities of our missionary presence.

Upcoming events include the meeting of the Comboni alumni association on 7 May in Viseu, and the national pilgrimage of the Comboni Family to Fatima on the last Saturday of July, with the presence of Cardinal Miguel Ángel Ayuso.

UGANDA

First Comboni priest from the diocese of Moroto

After more than 50 years of evangelization and presence in the diocese of Moroto, Karamoja, on 23 April the Comboni Family was blessed with the priestly ordination of Fr Gabriel Angella in his home parish of Namalu, founded and still run by the Comboni Missionaries.

The ordination Mass was presided over by Monsignor Damiano Guzzetti, a Combonian and Bishop of the diocese of Moroto. The Christian community of Namalu experienced this event with enormous joy also because Gabriel is not only the first Comboni priest, but he is also the first native priest of Namalu.

In his homily, Bishop Damiano reminded Fr Gabriel of his role as a shepherd, a typical figure of his tribe, the Karimojong shepherds: taking care of his sheep, ready to give his life for them and never abandoning them.

The ordination of Fr. Gabriel is a source of inspiration for many young people in the diocese. It is also a sign of the growth of the local Church of Moroto, which now sends missionaries to the world.

Fr Gabriel also received many symbolic gifts, such as the traditional stool, with sandals and cloak, typical of the Karimojong pastor.

IN PACE CHRISTI

Fr Giuseppe Zoppetti (09.10.1930 – 03.04.2022)

Fr Giuseppe Zoppetti was born in Endine (Italy) on 9 October 1930. After his novitiate in Florence (1949-51) he made his temporary vows on 9 September 1951 and, six years later, his perpetual vows (9 September 1957). After his studies in Verona (1951-54) and in Venegono (1954-58), he was ordained a priest on May 31, 1958 and immediately left for the Sudan mission to teach mathematics at the Comboni School of Atbara and then at that of Port Sudan. Fr Luciano Perina met him in 1975: "We spent three years together at the Comboni School in El Obeid. He taught maths and I taught English. His desire was to promote all of his students. And for that he was always ready to work extra hours in the afternoon, for those who were struggling. All the students respected him and loved him as a good elder brother, who loved them and encouraged them all to do their best".

In 1978 Fr. Joseph was appointed parish priest of El Nahoud. From 1982 to 1983 he was parish priest of the Cathedral of El Obeid, before being elected Provincial Superior. During his two terms (1984-1989), he moved the provincial house from Khartoum to Bahri.

Bro Agostino Cerri, who lived for several years in the same diocese - El Obeid - as Fr. Giuseppe remembers him for his cheerfulness and frugality, for his availability, simplicity, and for his mathematical mind. "As a provincial he was interested in the harmony that should reign in every community and he wanted our missions to be welcoming and well maintained. He was among the first to take an interest in solar panels which he bought for those isolated missions where there was no electricity, precisely to give them the opportunity to do their jobs in the best possible way".

From 1990 to 1996 he was parish priest of Masalma and favoured the growth of a number of vocations to the priesthood.

After Masalma, Fr Giuseppe worked for ten years at Medani as local superior and curate of the parish.

"On Sundays - Fr. Perina recalled in his homily delivered at the funeral - we would go to celebrate the Eucharist in some small Christian community on the outskirts of El Obeid. For the Mass he read transliterated Arabic. Then, he did his very best in preaching the homily; he necessarily kept it short. But there was a word he repeated over and over again, kwaies, in dialectal Arabic, which means good / good. And people understood you, Fr Zoppetti! Those people, migrants from South Sudan, often knew less Arabic than you. And those expressions

conveyed the essentials of the Christian life, simplified for simple hearts, even if they seemed to be said in a somewhat repetitive way, were easily understood. Because even before hearing them in the sermon they had seen them in your life”.

In 2008, Fr Giuseppe stayed a few months in Italy for treatment but managed to return to Sudan to spend a few more years in Kosti, where he helped in the pastoral life of the parish until 2014, when, at the age of 84, he returned to Italy for good.

As it transpired, he was one of the confreres present in Castel d'Azzano since the opening of the Centre in 2015. "Despite his strong physical constitution, the second wave of the Covid sorely weakened his physical and mental health. His condition had worsened in recent weeks and Fr Joseph passed away peacefully on April 3. On the 6th, we celebrated his funeral, presided over by the provincial superior, Fr. Fabio Baldan. Some confreres from the Mother House of Verona, family members and two representatives of our volunteer association were present". (*Fr. Luciano Perina, mccj*)

LET US PRAY FOR OUR BELOVED DEAD

THE MOTHERS: Marie-Ange, of Fr Jonas Tita-Olema-Mbeka Beka (RCA); Estrella, of Mons. Juan José Aguirre Muñoz (RCA), Irma, of Fr Giuseppe Cavallini (I); Mary, of Fr Enzo Bellucco (CN); Donata, of Fr Paolo Latorre (I).

THE SISTER: Anália Maria, of Fr Raimundo Nonato Rocha dos Santos (BR).