

# Familia Comboniana

NEWSLETTER OF THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES OF THE HEART OF JESUS

809

July/August 2022



## **XIX GENERAL CHAPTER**

**Rome, 1 June – 1 July 2022**

*I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him bears much fruit, for without me you can do nothing. (Jn 15,5)*

## **XIX General Chapter: 1 June – 1 July 2022**

### **Summary of the work done on the various days**

The XIX General Chapter, inspired by the biblical icon "I am the vine, you are the branches" (Jn 15.5), was held in Rome, at the Generalate of the Institute, from 1 June to 1 July. The capitulars were sixty-nine, plus four observers. Of the 69 capitulars with the right to vote, 27 had already participated in one or more chapters, while 42 were participating for the first time.

In addition to the 5 members of the General Council - 7% of the participants - the other capitulars came from Anglophone Africa plus Mozambique: 21 (30% of the total); from America-Asia: 18 (27%); from Europe: 16 (23% of the total); French-speaking Africa: 9 (13%). There were 24 different nationalities: 30 Africans, 28 Europeans, 11 Americans. The countries of origin with the most capitulars were Italy (13), Uganda (7), the DR Congo (6), Mexico, Spain and Portugal, with 5 each. The four observers were the General Secretaries of the Institute (the Mission, Formation, Finance and the Secretary General).

The first four days were preparatory. The Chapter officially began with the solemn Eucharist on Pentecost Sunday, 5 June.

In actual fact, it had started a long time ago, since it was convened with the Letter of convocation of 19 June 2020, which provided for it to take place in September 2021. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was postponed to the month of June 2022. During all this time, a synodal process of reflection had been initiated at the personal, community, circumscription and continent levels. The Precapitular Commission collected all these reflections and proposals in a document which was presented to the capitulars as an instrument for discernment.

The Chapter had three fundamental phases. A first preparatory phase, to get to know each other, with the election of the various service officers who helped to carry out the work, a retreat in prayer and a brief period of formation on the missionary, synodal and fraternal Church, in line with the magisterium of Pope Francis. A phase of listening to the various reports followed: from the General Administration, the continents-circumscriptions, the Pre-Chapter Commission, the Comboni Bishops, the Comboni Sisters (CMS), the Seculars (SCM) and the Comboni Lay Missionaries (CLM). The last phase was one of discernment on the fundamental elements on which to work during the Chapter, with the choice of priorities and paths to be followed in the coming years.

On the first day, after Lauds, the capitulars met in the garden of the house for a brief dynamic of acquaintance, followed by meetings in nine language groups, in which each had the opportunity to introduce himself to the others. In the afternoon, they gathered again in groups to share the

expectations each one had of this Chapter. The concluding Mass of the day was celebrated by Fr. Jeremias dos Santos Martins, Vicar General. There were two particularly important moments on 2 June. In the morning, the address - on synodality and mission - by Msgr. Erio Castellucci, Metropolitan Archbishop-Abbot of Modena-Nonantola (since 2015) and Vice-President for Northern Italy of the Italian Episcopal Conference (since 2021).

In the afternoon, Fr. Gonzalo Fernández, who accompanied all the work of the Chapter as a facilitator, spoke on the theme "Appreciative discernment: a spiritual journey", proposing a new methodology, in which "the starting point is to avoid that verbiage that does not change concrete life", and presented three necessary approaches - synodal, narrative and appreciative - explaining them in detail.

The day ended with the Eucharist, presided over by Fr. Pietro Ciuciulla, assistant general.

On Saturday 4 June the capitulars had a day of retreat on the theme of the Chapter, led by Comboni Cardinal Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.

On June 5, Pentecost Sunday, there was the official opening of the Chapter. The first act was the Eucharistic celebration, presided over by Fr. Tesfaye Tadesse G., Superior General, who in his homily prayed to the Holy Spirit for three graces in particular: the grace of growing in the love of God, the grace of walking in humility trusting in the Holy Spirit and the grace to understand each other and to understand together the things of God.

During the celebration, the capitulars took the solemn oath and, immediately afterwards, gathered in the hall, where Fr. Tesfaye began the work with a prayer and thanks to all who contributed to the preparation of the Chapter. Furthermore, he made it known that several good wishes messages had been received, including those of some cardinals and bishops, of the Comboni Sisters, of the Comboni Seculars and of the Comboni Lay Missionaries.

Later, Fr. Pietro Ciuciulla read the letter of indiction of the Chapter and Bro. Alberto Lamana, assistant general, made the roll call of the sixty-nine participants. Everyone was present. The assembly then confirmed, by show of hands, that there were no particular disputes relating to the roll call made, including the four observers chosen by the General Council.

Having completed the above formalities, Fr. Tesfaye officially declared the Chapter open.

On Monday 6 June, the Eucharistic celebration was presided over by Fr. Elias Sindjalim Essognimam, General Secretary of Formation.

The day was fundamentally dedicated to the study and reflection of the proposed Statute - which is the document that regulates the entire Chapter process - up to its approval.

The day of 7 and the morning of 8 June were dedicated to the election of the persons in charge of the offices and members of the chapter commissions and to the reading of their duties. The liturgy of 7 June was entrusted to the General Secretaries of Finance and the Mission, Fr. Angelo Giorgetti and Fr. Fernando González Galarza.

The Statute of the Chapter clarifies that "the President of the Chapter is the Superior General for the entire duration of the Chapter (RV 152.3)" and therefore Fr. Tesfaye presided over the entire XIX General Chapter. The capitulars, however, elect a Secretary of the Chapter who is a member and coordinator of the Central Commission. Thus, Fr. Andres Miguel Pedro, Secretary of the Chapter, and four Moderators (Fr. Achilles Kiwanuka, Fr. David Costa Domingues, Fr. Antonio Soffientini and Fr. Dario Bossi) were elected to make up the Central Commission.

As part of the capitular process, there is also the appointment of a Special Commission (Fr. Kyankaaga S. John Richard, coordinator, Fr. Ndjadi Ndjate Léonard, Fr. Katsan Fodagni Kokouvi-Fidèle) and a Presidency Council. This Council is made up of the President, Fr. Tesfaye, and two other capitulars elected by the assembly, Fr. Enrique Sánchez G. and Fr. Antonio Villarino.

In addition, the tellers, the commissions (Liturgical, Recreational and Cultural), the press officers, and the secretaries (Fr. Vincenzo Percassi and Fr. Tomasz Basiński) were elected.

Once the start-up phase of the Chapter was concluded and before entering the listening phase, Fr. Gonzalo, the facilitator, made a brief intervention of a methodological nature, to help the capitulars to participate well in carrying out the work.

On the afternoon of 8 June, the listening phase of the reports began, starting with those of the General Administration. The members of the General Council were the first to present their report, which gave an overview of the life of the Institute from 2015 to today.

The ninth-day liturgy was led by the capitulars from the circumscriptions of Egypt-Sudan (Fr. Kyankaaga S. John Richard and Fr. Mbutia Simon Mwaura) and South Sudan (Fr. Okot Ochermoi Louis Tony, Fr. Maku Joseph and Fr. Pomykacz Jacek Andrzej).

In the morning, the reports of the general secretariats of the Mission (Fr. Fernando González Galarza, Bro. Alberto Parise and Fr. Arlindo Pinto) and of Formation (Fr. Elias Sindjalim Essognimam) were presented.

In the afternoon, the Secretary General (Bro. Daniele Giusti), the Confreres Accompaniment Service (Fr. Fermo Bernasconi), and the

persons in charge of the following Offices presented their reports: Procure (Fr. Cosimo De Iaco), Library (Fr. Mario Camporese), Historical Archive (Fr. Umberto Pescantini), Postulation (Fr. Arnaldo Baritussio), Studium Combonianum (Fr. Manuel Augusto Lopes Ferreira), and Communications (Fr. Arlindo Pinto).

The liturgy of Friday 10 June was entrusted to the capitulars of Ecuador and Colombia.

In the morning, Fr Angelo Giorgetti, general treasurer, presented the report of the Secretariat of Finance.

In the afternoon, the hearing of the continental reports began, starting with that of the provinces of French-speaking Africa (ASCAF), presented by Fr. Fidèle Katsan and Fr. Léonard Ndjadi, followed by Anglophone Africa plus Mozambique (APDESAM), presented by the capitulars Fr. Simon Mwara Mbuthia, Fr. Gédeon Ngunza Mboma, Fr. Anthony Kibira and Fr. José Joaquim Luis Pedro. The reports tried to give a vision of the reality of the Comboni circumscriptions and of the African continent in general; there are many signs of life but also many particularly worrying realities: armed conflicts and insecurity, migrants and displaced persons, the unequal distribution of wealth and social inequality, poverty, corruption and abuses of human rights.

The morning of Saturday 11 June began with the celebration of Mass, presided over by Fr Daniele Moschetti and animated by the capitulars of Italy. Fr. Fabio Baldan, provincial superior, gave the homily.

The work began with listening to the report of the provinces of America / Asia. The capitulars Fr. Enrique Sánchez, Fr. Juan Diego, Fr. Francisco José Martín Vargas and Fr. David Domingues (delegate from Asia) presented the reality at the level of the continent, and of each of the countries where the Comboni Missionaries are present: Philippines, Taiwan, Macao, Vietnam and China, in Asia; the United States of America, Canada, Mexico, Guatemala, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Brazil, in America.

After the break of Sunday 12 June, day 13 began, as always, with the prayer of Lauds and Mass, led by the confreres who work in Eritrea, Fr Habtu Teklay Tiluq, and in Ethiopia, Fr Sisto Agostini and Fr Asfaha Yohannes Weldeghiorghis.

Work then resumed in the chapter hall with the report of the circumscriptions of Europe.

In the afternoon, Mgr. Menghsteab Tesfamariam, Archeparch of Asmara, intervened telematically, speaking from Eritrea on behalf of the 21 Comboni bishops around the world and underlining how "The current situation in which we live and work is complicated ... the situations are as many as the nations and local Churches are. Sociopolitical, religious and

economic situations also have a great influence on the situation of our Churches”.

Subsequently, the Superior General of the Comboni Missionary Sisters, Mother Luigia Coccia, present in person, reminded the assembly of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of their Institute and intervened with a "Reinterpretation of the charism and a reorganization of presences".

The liturgy of 14 June was entrusted to the capitulars of the Comboni provinces of Mexico and Central America. The Eucharist was presided over by Fr. Juan Diego Calderón Vargas and Fr. Enrique Sánchez G. gave the homily.

The first report of the morning was presented electronically by Alberto de la Portilla, coordinator of the Comboni Lay Missionaries (CLM), who gave a general picture of how many CLM there are, where they are and how many lay people live in international communities, showed the size of the movement, which includes about 400 members. He also spoke briefly about the history of the movement, the international meetings held, and the concerns and challenges regarding the future.

It was then the turn of Maria Pia Dal Zovo, the head of the Comboni Secular Missionaries, who spoke briefly of the history of their Institute and how the members of this small reality live by sharing the common life of all the laity, inserted in the different environments and ordinary contexts of society. Finally, she expressed their desire to "grow in the awareness of being part of the same charismatic family".

In the afternoon, the Precapitular Commission presented its report which is a summary of all the responses to the questionnaires sent by individual Comboni Missionaries, provinces and continents. At the speakers' table sat Fr. Pedro Andrés, Fr. David Domingues, Fr. Léonard Njadi, Fr. Raimundo Nonato and Fr. Antonio Soffientini.

On Wednesday 15 June, the capitulars celebrated Mass divided according to their continents and then engaged in group work.

The liturgy of 16 June was animated by the capitulars working in the London Province (LP) and the German-speaking Province (DSP). The capitulars who studied theology in London and Innsbruck were also invited to approach the altar.

Before entering the second phase, that of discernment, the missionaries were invited to identify the priorities emerging from the reports presented during the preceding days, under three headings: sicknesses (what obscures the calls that come to us from God), seeds of life (what gives us strength and hope) and calls (what we have heard as clear calls from God).

After discernment in groups, the assembly approved as a priority the three paths indicated by the Precapitular Commission, the result of

listening to many members of the Institute: ministeriality in view of requalification; verification and revision of Formation; communion of goods, sharing and sustainability.

In addition to these, the assembly considered it appropriate to add two other priorities concerning community life and Comboni missionary spirituality.

On Friday morning, 17 June, the capitulars entered the third phase, the definition of dreams and the beginning of planning: they were invited "to dream and to imagine" (Follow your dreams) as they would like the year 2028 to be for them, before concentrating their focus on guidelines and establishing concrete commitments.

On Saturday morning 18 June, the capitulars were received by Pope Francis in the Vatican. In his speech, he underlined among other things that "if we are like branches well attached to the vine, the sap of the Spirit passes from Christ into us and whatever we do bears fruit, because it is not our work, but it is the love of Christ. acting through us. This is the secret of the Christian life, and in particular of mission, everywhere, in Europe as in Africa and in the other continents. The missionary is the disciple who is so united to his Master and Lord that his hands, his mind, his heart are "channels" of the love of Christ".

The days of Monday 20, Tuesday 21 and Wednesday 22 June were dedicated - between the group work and in the hall - to the formulation, presentation, discussion and voting of the guidelines and commitments proposed by the members of each of the groups, relating to the five priorities.

Mass on Tuesday 21 June was presided over by Fr. Pedro Andrés Miguel, provincial of Spain, while Fr. Fernando Domingues, provincial of Portugal, gave the homily.

The planning and definition phase of the commitments for the next six years was completed on the morning of Wednesday 22 June.

In the first session of the afternoon, Fr. Gonzalo, the facilitator, summarized the work of the third phase of planning: a total of 5 dreams, 25 guidelines and 120 commitments were defined. "The work done - he said - is a clear expression of the synodal approach and the narrative and appreciative approach that has guided the whole process of Chapter discernment ... The Chapter, after listening to the Institute and the Church, traced a path for the next six years. It is the responsibility of the General Administration and the Provinces to implement these guidelines and to concretize the commitments at the various levels".

Immediately afterwards, the capitulars entered the specific topics, starting with the presentation of the working methodology for the approval and

voting - number by number - of the 202 proposed changes to the Rule of Life (RV).

On the same day, the capitulars sent a message of solidarity to the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Fr. Arturo Sosa, after the murder of two of his confreres: "To all our Jesuit brothers, we offer our deepest solidarity and closeness, with esteem and prayer, following the barbaric assassination, in northern Mexico, of fathers Javier Campos Morales and Joaquin César Mora together with the person whom, with great dedication, they tried to protect from the aggression of an armed man".

A second message was sent by the capitulars to Fr Stanley Lubungo, Superior General of the Missionaries of Africa "Following the barbaric assassination of Fr Michael Mawelera Samson which took place a few days ago in Tanzania, in the diocese of Mbeya and the death of Fr Francis Kangwa, again in Tanzania, in circumstances that are still unclear".

The whole day of 23 June was completely dedicated to reading and voting on the amendments to the Rule of Life.

Since some Comboni members of the community of the Curia tested positive for the covid virus, including two capitulars, Cardinal João Braz de Aviz, Prefect of the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, who was to preside over the celebration of the solemnity of the Sacred Heart, Friday, June 24, could not attend. Instead of his address, Fr. Gonzalo gave a meditation in the morning to introduce the capitulars into the electoral process and guide the assembly in reflection and prayer, concluding as follows: "Governing a religious institute requires competence and excellence, but since it means accompanying people, it is preferable to opt for the baccalaureate and not just for the curriculum. The election of a government in a community of consecrated persons is a choice of God ... We are only mediators to discover the people who are in the heart of God ... It is very important to take seriously one's responsibility to be a mediator and discover what God wants, not what I prefer". At 12.00 he presided at the Mass, during which the Comboni Missionaries present also renewed their vows out of devotion.

On Friday afternoon the capitulars began discernment in view of the election of the Superior General. On Saturday morning, 25 June, they re-elected, by a large majority, Fr. Tesfaye Tadesse G. After his acceptance, Fr. Pedro Andrés Miguel, as Secretary of the Chapter, according to the elections procedure provided for by the Statute, declared: " Whereas the Rev. Father Tesfaye Tadesse Gebresilasie received the sufficient number of votes, on behalf of the XIX General Chapter, I, Father Pedro Andrés Miguel, Secretary of the Chapter, declare elected for a second



term the Rev. Father Tesfaye Tadesse Gebresilasie Superior General of the Congregation of Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus, in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ". Then, the Decree of Election was signed by the Secretary of the Chapter, Fr. Pedro Andrés Miguel, and by the General Secretary of the Institute, Bro. Daniele Giovanni Giusti.

On the morning of Sunday 26 June, Cardinal Luis Antonio Gokim Tagle, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, did not attend, as expected, but gave his conference electronically (also to prevent possible Covid infection).

The liturgy of June 27 was entrusted to the capitulars of Mozambique. Fr. António Manuel Bogaio Constantino, provincial superior, and from South Africa, Fr Burgers Jude Eugene, provincial superior. The Eucharist was presided over by Fr Bogaio Constantino and Fr Mkhari Antony Abednego, Chapter delegate from South Africa, gave the homily. The capitulars who worked in the two circumscriptions were also invited to approach the altar. The capitulars then resumed reading and voting on the amendments to the Rule of Life (RV).

On Tuesday 28 June, the day began with the liturgy led by the capitulars from Brazil: the Mass was presided over by Fr. Raimundo Nonato Rocha dos Santos, vice provincial, while the provincial, Fr Dario Bossi, gave the homily.

The work in the classroom began with the reading of the minutes of the previous day and the presentation of the agenda, proposed by the Central Commission, for the last days of the Chapter.

Once the agenda was approved, the capitulars resumed reading and voting on the amendments to the Rule of Life, a process that ended in the afternoon. After a debate in the hall on the proposal to appoint an ad hoc commission to review the final version after the Chapter, it was decided to entrust the elected General Council with the decision on how and when to arrive at the final text of the Rule of Life.

On 29 June, the four general assistants, members of the General Council (GC) were elected: Fr. Luigi Fernando Codianni, Fr. Alberto Lamana Cónsola (re-elected), Fr. David Costa Domingues and Fr. Elias Sindjalim Essognimam.

The penultimate day, 30 June, was dedicated to the reading and approval of the document on the five priorities defined by the Chapter, with their respective dreams, guidelines and commitments for the next six years: 1) Spirituality. 2) Identity and Community Life. 3) Review of Formation. 4) Ministeriality and Requalification. 5) Communion of goods, sharing and sustainability.

The specific scheduled issues were then addressed, including: missionary service, the duration of the service of treasurers, spending limits at the level of circumscriptions and the appointment of the post-capitular commission (Fr. Fernando Domingues, Fr. Ivardi Filippo and Fr. Dario Bossi). Furthermore, it was decided that the process of electing the circumscription superiors will begin on 15 July.

On 1 August, the new General Council will take office and on 1 September, the decisions taken by the Chapter will come into force, with the publication of the Chapter Acts.

On the morning of 1 July, the Chapter members gathered in the hall to approve the Letter to be sent to all the confreres, to hear to the latest guidelines and to evaluate the Chapter.

The Superior General, Fr. Tesfaye Tadesse, then declared the Chapter closed and presided over the concluding Eucharistic celebration.

### **Perpetual professions**

Sc. Biro Jexis Berlin (RCA)	Grimari (CA)	28.05.2022
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### **Ordinations**

Fr. Telmo Efraín Castillo Merino (EC)	Quito (EC)	14.05.2022
Fr. Nzuka Evans Musyoka (KE)	Kitui (KE)	11.06.2022
Fr. Clement Mutie Mbithi (KE)	Kitui (KE)	11.06.2022

### **Holy Redeemer Guild**

July	01 – 15 KE	16 – 31 M
August	01 – 15 MO	16 – 31 MZ
September	01 – 15 NAP	16 – 30 PCA

### **Prayer intentions**

**July** – We pray for the young volunteers who visit the missions of the Comboni Family in various parts of the world that their encounter with other peoples and cultures may strengthen their faith and Christian witness. *Lord hear us.*

**August** – We pray that in our missionary life we may be real makers of peace, instruments of compassion and builders of dialogue and universal fraternity. *Lord hear us.*

**September** – We pray for all the families in the most remote corners of the world who lack the most basic needs that they may feel the Lord's company and receive a helping hand on their journey. *Lord hear us.*

## Meaningful recurrences

### AUGUST

2	Saint Frumentius, bishop	Ethiopia
15	Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary	RSA (South Africa)
23	Saint Rose of Lima, virgin	Perù, Chile
28	Saint Augustine, bishop and Doctor of the Church	Kenya

## Comboni liturgical calendar

### SEPTEMBER

9	Saint Peter Claver, priest <i>Patron of the Institute</i>	Solemnity
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## Meaningful recurrences

### SEPTEMBER

9	Saint Peter Claver, priest <i>Patron of the Institute</i> , Solemnity	Chad, Colombia
14	Exaltation of the Holy Cross	

## Publications

**Egidio Metelli e Anna Salvioni** (editors), *Viaggiatore della solidarietà, Bro. Mario Metelli*, ed. Anna Salvioni, March 2022. Using a number of photos, letters and testimonies, the booklet traces the story of this Comboni brother from Cologne, who spent most of his life in Mozambique, where he rests in peace "in the Church that he evangelized, loved and served with authentic missionary spirit".

**Enzo Santângelo, mccj** (editor), *Servidores & Testemunhas do Reino. Missionários Combonianos no Brasil*, Ed. Alô Mundo, São Paulo, Abril 2022. On the occasion of the 70 years of Comboni presence in Brazil, the author remembers the legacy of the many missionaries who have marked the Comboni journey in this land, "bringing the Gospel of Mercy and living it, for the most part, in the suffering peripheries, among the poorest and the discarded".

**Tonino Falaguasta Nyabenda, mccj**, *Suor Bianca*, ed. art&print, June 2022. This is a biography of Sr. Bianca Benatelli, a midwife, that Fr. Tonino enables us to meet in the various stages of her missionary consecration. Regardless of ethnicity or religion, anyone who needed her found welcome and help. In 1997, at St. Mary's maternity hospital in Khartoum, she assisted Lubna, a Muslim Sudanese mother close to

giving birth, who arrived at the birth in desperate conditions. Sister Bianca appealed to Msgr. Comboni and the miracle took place that allowed the Founder to be proclaimed a saint.

## CURIA

### **25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of priestly ordination**

On Sunday, 19 June, the solemnity of Corpus Christi, the Comboni Missionaries of the General Curia in Rome celebrated the 25th anniversary of the priestly ordination of three student confreres: Fr. Désiré Badola, Congolese, Fr. Patrick Benywanira, a Ugandan, and Fr. Corrado Tosi, Italian. Fr. Désiré and Fr. Corrado have just finished the university course for formators and will be assigned, respectively, to the Postulancy of Balaka (Malawi-Zambia), and the scholasticate of Kinshasa (Congo), while Fr. Patrick is now starting his studies, again as a formator, in view of his appointment to the postulancy of Jinja, in Uganda. Fr Désiré was ordained on 17 August 1997 and was immediately assigned to Ethiopia where he worked until 2007; he then spent a few years in the Congo and has been in Malawi-Zambia since 2015. Fr. Patrick was ordained on 9 August 1997 and immediately assigned to Central Africa, where he remained until 2008 when he was sent to Uganda. Fr Corrado was ordained on 29 June 1997, and, except for a few years in Italy, has always worked in the Congo. Although the day did not coincide with the precise date of their ordination, the intention was to mark the meaning of Corpus Christi for priests and also to take advantage of the beautiful occasion of the presence in the Curia of all the capitulars.

Fr. Désiré presided at the Mass and, in his homily, underlined how the feast of Corpus Christi and that of the Jubilee express a profound mystical sense because the Body of the Lord, time and missionary service refer to deeper realities that give meaning to what happens in everyday life.

## DSP

### **“Katholikentag” – Catholics’ Day**

From 25 May, the Feast of the Ascension, until Sunday 29 May 2022, the "Katholikentag" was held in Stuttgart, on the theme "Sharing life". There were many possibilities for meetings and sharing on current religious, social and political issues and for receiving information of all kinds. We were present as a Comboni family with a stand, in collaboration with the Comboni Lay Missionaries (CLM), focusing on world peace. For this, we used the CLM exhibition on the subject, presenting the Peace Centre (Friedenszentrum) in Kit, near Juba, in southern Sudan, and the

testimony of Bishop Christian Carlassare in Rumbek and the Comboni family.

Through the presentation of a painting of the fifth station of the Via Crucis, by the priest painter Sieger Köder, we wanted to emphasize the importance of sharing pain and joy.

The numerous meetings and the opportunity to share our concerns with other Christians were very enriching experiences.

### **60th anniversary of priesthood**

On Sunday 19 June, Fr Albin Grunser celebrated his 60th priestly Jubilee in his hometown of Terenten, South Tyrol. Fr Eduard Falk, a native of the same village, also celebrated the same jubilee one year late due to the pandemic. Fr Hans Maneschg, superior of the community of Milland / Bressanone, was the main celebrant. It was a beautiful celebration that also offered many opportunities for meeting together. Fr Grunser worked 57 for years in Peru as a religion teacher, in pastoral care and in the provincial administration. If his health permits, he will return to his beloved Peru. Father Falk gave 49 years of his long life to parish ministry. He now belongs to the Ellwangen Elderly Confreres Centre. We give our warmest wishes to the two confreres and a sincere thank you for their work and their example!

### **Aid to refugees from Ukraine**

An ecumenical group of volunteers was formed in Nuremberg to help refugees from Ukraine. Volunteers prepare a weekly meeting in our provincial house for a welcoming coffee and distribute clothes and articles for daily use. The initiative is highly appreciated. About fifty volunteers organize games, offer coffee and entertain the participants. Sometimes there are as many as a hundred people. It is particularly interesting that among the volunteers there are many Russian immigrants of German origin, towards whom Ukrainians have a lot of prejudices for historical reasons. This too is our contribution to promoting peace, giving them the opportunity to meet and dialogue.

## **ECUADOR**

### **Diaconal and priestly ordination**

This year, 2022, the province has been blessed by the Lord to the great joy of the mission, of our Comboni family and of the whole Church.

On January 21, the scholastic Telmo Efraín Castillo Merino was ordained a deacon in the parish of María Estrella de la Evangelización, run by the Comboni Missionaries, in Quito.

After a few months of diaconal service in the same parish, on May 14, Telmo Efraín was ordained a priest in the parish of Santo Ángel de Guamaní, where Efraín's father comes from.

The auxiliary bishop of Quito, Mgr David de la Torre, presided over both celebrations.

In an atmosphere of encounter between parish communities full of joy and missionary animation, the people were enthusiastically involved in the preparations for the feast and, for the parishes, it was a moment of great motivation because they felt they were missionaries together with our missionary ordained a priest for the church. The two ordinations, diaconal and priestly, have profoundly marked the lives of many people who, for the first time, witnessed a missionary experience like this.

May the Lord continue to give us vocations for the local Church and for the missions.

## EGSD

### **CCST: Inauguration of the degree course in nursing**

The first semester of the new degree course in Nursing began on Saturday 4 June 2022 at the Comboni College of Science and Technology (CCST). The inauguration of this new program began with words of welcome from the Dean of the College, Prof. Abdel Rahman Al-Khangi.

The Dean, Fr. Dr. Jorge Naranjo, presented Comboni's vision for Africa and how the College seeks to develop this vision through its various academic programs.

The program coordinator, Halima Ali, PhD, and the director of the new department, CNS Geraldine Damanhuri, introduced the program and teaching staff to the students.

Sister Tsega Haile, a Comboni missionary sister who works at St. Mary's hospital in Khartoum, shared her experience as a nurse and the meaning of being a nurse. This hospital will host students for their clinical practice. Nurses from England and New Zealand also shared their experiences through video messages. They encouraged the students and expressed their willingness to support our program.

Elisabetta Marzo, PhD., a nurse from Milan (Italy), explained the role of her NGO, AISPO, in supporting the training of the College's mentors who will follow the clinical experiences of our students and their tutors in hospitals. Applying this mentoring system will also help host hospitals develop their staff, which is also an expression of the program's work-based methodology.

The College also has the support of the British NGO Books2Africa which has already sent four shipments of 1,000 books each to create an updated library for new students.

Another partner of this network is the Spanish company Proeduca, which owns the UNIR university in Spain and the MIU Miami City University. The company is providing several professional development courses for college staff, particularly for nursing staff, with the aim of creating an online programs department.

In a year's time, the degree course in Nursing should move to the new location, currently under construction within the Comboni sports field.

## ITALIA

### **Request from CANAM**

The Commission for the Elderly and the Sick of the Italian Province (CANAM) kindly asks all Provincial Superiors to inform their Italian Confreres who intend to follow a path of diagnosis and treatment at the AAC of Brescia, to postpone possible returns to Italy **to the end of September 2022**, where possible. Starting from September-October 2022, it would be desirable that the Provincial Superiors send a prospectus of the Confreres who intend to return to Italy for treatment (also with a view to a final destination in Italy) and that these returns are staggered as far as possible so as not to overburden the only centre we have available for this service (Brescia CAA). Bro. Paolo Rizzetto, Supervisor of CANAM, is at the disposal of both the Provincials and the confreres who wish to ask for clarification and thanks them for their collaboration. Bro. Rizzetto can be contacted at [supervisore-canam@gcomboniani.org](mailto:supervisore-canam@gcomboniani.org)

### **A plaque for St. Daniel Comboni**

On 22 May 2022, in the Parish of S. Maria Assunta in Riva del Garda, a solemn and well-attended concelebration took place, presided over by the Bishop Emeritus of Trento, Mons. Luigi Bressan, at the conclusion of the restoration of the church which lasted several years. On the occasion, a plaque was blessed which commemorates the day on which St. Daniel Comboni, in that church, received the sacrament of confirmation from Blessed John Nepomuceno Tschiderer, then Bishop-Prince of Trent. The Comboni Fathers and Comboni Sisters communities of Limone took part in the celebrations, meeting many old friends of the Comboni Family.

## KENYA

### **Ordinations**

11 June 2022 was a day of great joy for the province which witnessed the ordination of two new priests, Fr Clement Mbithi Mutie and Fr Evans Musyoka Nzuka, ordained by Mgr Joseph Mwangela, bishop of the diocese of Kitui, about 180 km east of the capital Nairobi. Among those present, there was a good number of Comboni Missionaries, many lay faithful, diocesan and religious priests.

The Mass took place outdoors, in the grounds of the St. John Paul II Institute of Technology, which is part of the parish of the Cathedral, Our Lady of Africa. The beautiful Eucharistic celebration, with many songs and dances, lasted six hours and was broadcast live by social media, by Thome, the local diocesan radio, and by Capuchin TV, the country's Catholic television station.

Andrew Bwalya, vice provincial, presented the two candidates. Bishop Mwangela, in his homily, reminded them that the priesthood is the grace of God and urged them not to be afraid to testify to Christ because the Church, even if it needs academically qualified priests, above all needs their availability. He also urged the people to vote wisely in the upcoming general elections and prayed for a peaceful and credible election.

The following day, the solemnity of the Holy Trinity, the two newly ordained celebrated their First Mass in their native parishes, Fr. Evans in Kiiio and Fr. Clement in the Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart of Mbitini. Fr Clement is assigned to Kenya while Fr Evans is on his way to Peru.

## NAP

### **Fr. Vermiglio and Fr. Colleoni celebrate important anniversaries**

Fr Thomas Michael Vermiglio, after 13 years of preparation and formation, was finally ready for his first missionary assignment. It was 1972 and for the next 50 years, his work would take him to Canada, the United States, Kenya and other East African countries. Now, he lives at the Cincinnati Mission Centre and helps with the parish ministry in various areas of the city.

Friday 3 June – Feast of the Ugandan martyrs - Fr. Tom celebrated his 50th anniversary of priestly ordination with a special mass and lunch at the Cincinnati Mission Centre.

During his homily he recalled his first mission; he had to learn Swahili, and it was not easy for a young man from Wisconsin: "I prayed to the Holy Spirit for the gift of tongues and the Holy Spirit told me to 'Go to school for three months, practice the language for three years and then, perhaps,



you will begin to learn it' said Fr. Tom jokingly. Then, he talked about one of his earliest memories, the religion lessons he gave to a group of fourth-grade students, who enjoyed hearing his pronunciation.

"Not all missionaries are called to the mission ad gentes, he added; for some, missionary work is at home. It is truly the Holy Spirit who inspires us missionaries".

Fr Tom was ordained a priest on May 27, 1972; he spent the first five years in East Africa, teaching in a secondary school and in parish ministry. For the next 13 years, he worked in the United States and Canada in missionary animation. In 1990 he returned to Kenya for another three years of parish ministry, serving in the slums of Nairobi.

From 1993 to 2006 he engaged in missionary and parish animation activities again in the United States and Canada. In 2006 he was assigned to the community of Kitchener, Ontario, where he remained until last year, working in the parishes of St. Joseph and St. Ann.

Fr Zaverio Maria Carlo Colleoni was born in Bergamo in 1927. he has been a Comboni missionary for 70 years. He currently works at Holy Cross parish in Los Angeles, carrying out pastoral ministry among the Latin community. He first arrived in the United States in 1948 as a seminarian. After his ordination in 1952, he taught Latin at the Sacred Heart Seminary in Cincinnati. He has served in parishes throughout the United States, primarily in California. He served in Holy Cross Parish in Los Angeles for more than 25 years. During those years, the parish has grown significantly, and now has ten masses a day, 9 of which are in Spanish.

Fr Zaverio now lives a mostly quiet and withdrawn life, but he helps when he can. At the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, he celebrated mass online several times a week. Happy anniversary P. Zaverio!

## IN PACE CHRISTI

### **Fr. Giovanni Capaccioni (01.04.1940 – 13.04.2022)**

Giovanni was born on 1 April 1940 in Città di Castello, in the province of Perugia (Italy). He entered as a novice in Gozzano and on 9 September 1962, he made his first profession. After the scholasticate in Venegono, he made his perpetual vows on 9 September 1965 and on 28 June 1966, he was ordained a priest. He was immediately sent as a formator to the minor seminary of Troy and then to the Missionary Animation Centre of Bari.

Apart from a few years in Burundi and Central Africa, Fr. Giovanni spent almost all of his missionary life in Italy, working in various communities, mainly engaged in vocations promotion and missionary animation.

Since 2005 he was local superior of the community of Cavallino (Lecce) The archbishop of Lecce, Msgr. Michele Seccia appointed him as head of the diocesan commission "Migrantes", and Fr. Giovanni was very attached to this activity of his which he carried out with great love and zeal.

In recent months he suffered from a tumour; he died on April 13, 2022. The funeral, at the request of Mons. Seccia was held on Tuesday, April 19, at the community of Cavallino.

Giovanni was much loved by the many people who gravitated around the Lecce community. We briefly report some of the testimonies collected by social networks.

- "I was very attached to Fr Gianni. A great man. A priest and a missionary of great human depth. Immense in the sweetness, simplicity and availability of him. In serving others, especially the least of all. His smile was very sweet and soothing. The radical nature of his actions was immense and "calm". Of faithful and loyal witness to the Gospel message. An unspoken radicalism. Witnessed in his daily actions. Lived with simplicity and naturalness. In Italy as in Africa. Especially among the least and the humble, whom he loved most of all".

- "His masses, animated by African children, were a fantastic, colourful moment of enthusiasm, unity and smiles. Everyone will miss him but especially his young people who adored him. It was nice to meet him while he was walking in the park and dispensing greetings with a smile".

- "A wonderful person! The celebrations at which he presided were always full of missionary experiences, the most passionate, participated and heartfelt that I have witnessed, showed him to be a wonderful speaker: he was able to vibrate the strings of the heart!".

- "The missionary who brought Africa to Salento: first came his smile, then his open and welcoming arms and 'make yourself comfortable, help yourself' ... and finally, 'I am Father Gianni Capaccioni, a Comboni Missionary'. Thus, many of us have known and loved the face of the Merciful Father constantly reflected in the eyes and in the daily gestures of Father Gianni, the missionary with a smile as broad as his heart. His missionary spirit, formed in pastoral activities between Burundi and Italy, and then again Benin and again Italy (Lecce, Bari, Troia, Bologna Verona), lived more as a witness than as a teacher, made him an authentic missionary of the third millennium, capable of reminding us that today, our Lecce land is a land of mission, it is a land of re-evangelization that needs good and humble priests and laity, able to serve the weak in silence and at the same time joyfully occupy the lowest places.

### **Fr. Ezio Rossi (04.01.1926 – 31.05.2022)**

Fr Ezio was here with us in Castel d'Azzano just for a few months and many of us know very little about his missionary life. We remember the most important dates.

Father Ezio was born in Boltiere, in the province of Bergamo (Italy) on January 4, 1926. At the age of 11, he entered the diocesan seminary and remained there until maturity. In 1945 he entered the Novitiate of Venegono, where he made his first vows on 9 September 1947. For theological studies, he went first to Verona and then to Venegono. He made his perpetual vows on 23 September 1949 and was ordained a priest on 3 June 1950. He was immediately sent to Zahle in Lebanon, where he stayed for a year to study Arabic. Then he was assigned to Egypt where he spent ten years teaching French and English. Later, he spent nine years in Togo, as pastor of the parish of Tabligbo, one year in Sudan and thirty-eight again in Egypt.

Fr. Ezio had returned to Italy for good when he was over eighty in 2007 and had spent the last few years in Milan. He died on May 31, 2022, in Castel d'Azzano, where he had arrived a few months previously. Three days later he would have celebrated 72 years of priesthood: "You will celebrate them in a big way, with Jesus, in heaven", Fr. Renzo Piazza, superior of the house, said in his homily at the funeral.

"You came to end your life in Castel d'Azzano, in this community that welcomed you with joy. Welcoming you among us, we perceived the presence of an elderly man, fragile, with a faint voice, but at peace with himself, with God and with others. Observing yourself in the chapel it was evident from your gestures and attitudes that you had a mature, profound and habitual relationship with the Lord. One understood that prayer was important to you and that being with the Lord was a priority for you. In recent days, during a Eucharist, you tried to express a personal prayer, but the confreres were unable to hear your voice. That prayer, fruit of the presence of the Holy Spirit, expressed love for your vocation and for the mission. Even if the celebrant did not notice, your prayer did not fall to the ground. It was collected and brought to God".

At the end of the Eucharist, Br. Roberto Strabla, in a very spontaneous and heartfelt way, shared his life experience with Fr. Ezio in the community of Milan, underlining his dynamism, serenity and good humour. (*Fr. Renzo Piazza, mccc*)

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

**THE BROTHERS:** Lorenzo, of Fr. Giampietro Pellegrini (DSP); Franco, of Fr. Alberto Anichini (U); Vincenzo, of Fr. Raffaele di Bari (†).

**THE SISTERS:** Mariaromana, of Fr. Giuseppe Farina (I), Marina, of Fr. Palmiro Mileto (I).

**THE COMBONI MISSIONARY SISTERS:** Sr. Giannantonia Barbieri, Sr. Santina M. Tesfajohannes Mosazghi.

**THE SECULAR COMBONI MISSIONARY:** Dina Polisenò.

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

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