

# Familia Comboniana

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES OF THE HEART OF JESUS

830

June 2024



**THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS**

## First professions

Title	Name	Place	Date	Prov.
Sc.	Hoang Van Viet Phap Joseph	Manila	04/05/2024	A
Sc.	Tran Dinh Phuc Joseph	Manila	04/05/2024	A
Sc.	Alumakiyo Maximiano Magang	Namugongo	11/05/2024	MZ
Sc.	Amukun Ivan	Namugongo	11/05/2024	U
Sc.	Argaw Yohannes Haile	Namugongo	11/05/2024	ET
Sc.	Bakalu Frank	Namugongo	11/05/2024	U
Sc.	Banda Innocent Gibson	Namugongo	11/05/2024	MZ
Bro.	Beyene Kasahun Chemir	Namugongo	11/05/2024	ET
Sc.	Chidetsa Lawrence Tamandani	Namugongo	11/05/2024	MZ
Sc.	Denkeka Abate Abebe	Namugongo	11/05/2024	ET
Sc.	Getan Chrisphino Gabriel Gilo	Namugongo	11/05/2024	SS
Sc.	Gimaino Nyamohanga Joseph	Namugongo	11/05/2024	KE
Bro.	Mackmot Pachotto Ambrose	Namugongo	11/05/2024	U
Sc.	Munywoki Ngangi Benjamin	Namugongo	11/05/2024	KE
Sc.	Mwachande Jacob Msanjama	Namugongo	11/05/2024	MZ
Sc.	Mwenendeka Anthony	Namugongo	11/05/2024	MZ
Sc.	Ohure Peter Marko Tulio	Namugongo	11/05/2024	SS
Sc.	Oliha Emmanuel Felix	Namugongo	11/05/2024	SS
Bro.	Onyango Brian Oyugi	Namugongo	11/05/2024	KE
Sc.	Otsieno Dennis Ochola	Namugongo	11/05/2024	KE
Sc.	Phillip Mborinako Apollo Alex	Namugongo	11/05/2024	SS
Sc.	Phiri Steven	Namugongo	11/05/2024	MZ
Sc.	Trilli Elgadi Kuku	Namugongo	11/05/2024	EGSD
Sc.	Turiasyngura Ronald	Namugongo	11/05/2024	U
Sc.	Turibamwe Comboni	Namugongo	11/05/2024	U
Sc.	Calderón Granados Marco Antonio	Xochimilco	11/05/2024	M
Bro.	Cervantes Rendón Raúl Alfredo	Xochimilco	11/05/2024	M
Sc.	Navarrete García Jairo Manuel	Xochimilco	11/05/2024	M
Sc.	Patiño Cruz Carlos Yonatan	Xochimilco	11/05/2024	M
Sc.	Pérez De León César Daniel	Xochimilco	11/05/2024	M
Sc.	Prieto Gómez Raúl Alexander	Xochimilco	11/05/2024	CO
Sc.	Tasson Rodríguez Luis Omar	Xochimilco	11/05/2024	PE
Sc.	Agassounon Lucas Godfry Segnon	Isiro	12/05/2024	TGB
Sc.	Agbo Ekoué Israël Florent	Isiro	12/05/2024	TGB
Sc.	Akator Komla-Mensah Jean-Baptiste	Isiro	12/05/2024	TGB

Title	Name	Place	Date	Prov.
Sc.	Atindehou Amitha Maxime	Isiro	12/05/2024	TGB
Sc.	Eshun Solomon	Isiro	12/05/2024	TGB
Sc.	Gawa Badébako David	Isiro	12/05/2024	TGB
Sc.	Kakule Kaputhu Emmanuel Milan	Isiro	12/05/2024	CN
Sc.	Kakule Kasomo Patrick	Isiro	12/05/2024	CN
Bro.	Kambale Thahungula Achille	Isiro	12/05/2024	CN
Sc.	Kasereka Kamaliro Héritier Kamale	Isiro	12/05/2024	CN
Sc.	Kouevijin Amavi Agoménon Raphael	Isiro	12/05/2024	TGB
Sc.	Muhindo Kimathe Delphin	Isiro	12/05/2024	CN
Sc.	Tchoumado Éric	Isiro	12/05/2024	TGB
Sc.	Tokolet Bienhereux De Jourdin	Isiro	12/05/2024	RCA
Sc.	Alberto Ramos	Nampula	25/05/2024	MO
Sc.	Alves Martinho Sabonete	Nampula	25/05/2024	MO
Sc.	Dioqueltino Jaime Rodrigues	Nampula	25/05/2024	MO
Sc.	Manuel Elías Vermelho Pahar	Nampula	25/05/2024	MO
Sc.	Télio Ernesto Maculane	Nampula	25/05/2024	MO

### Perpetual professions

Sc.	Mynor Rolando Chavez Ixchacchal (PCA)	San José	28/04/2024	CR
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### Ordinations

Fr.	Carlos Fernando (MO)	Alua	27.04.2024	MO
Fr.	Bimbo Ngoabide Esdras Ulrick (RCA)	Bangui	12/05/2024	RCA
Fr.	Tabasse Taramboui Ebed Malek Ruben Dario (RCA)	Bangui	25/05/2024	RCA

### Holy Redeemer Guild

June	01 – 07 ER	08 – 15 LP	16 – 30 P
July	01 – 15 KE	16 – 31 M	

### Prayer intentions

**June** – That, following the example of St Daniel Comboni, we may keep our eyes fixed on Jesus crucified to assimilate the sentiments of his Heart and bear witness to this through communion between us, with the local Churches and with the poorest. *Lord, hear us.*

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### Comboni liturgical calendar

June

7	Friday after the second Sunday after Pentecost	Sacred Heart of Jesus <i>Titular of the Institute</i>	Solemnity Togo-Ghana-Benin
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### Meaningful anniversaries

June

1	Anniversary of the foundation of the Institute	
3	Saint Chales Lwanga and companions, martyrs	Uganda
5	Saint Boniface, bishop and martyr	Memorial (DSP, South Tyrol, Austria, Germany)
8	Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary	memorial

### Publications

► **Edited by Arnaldo Baritussio, mccj**, *Annuncio oltre le parole. Dott. Padre Giuseppe Ambrosoli Comboniano*, Missionari Comboniani, Roma November 2023. An attractive book ending with a photo album showing extracts from the beatification of Father Ambrosoli which took place on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2022. The book brings together nine contributions that retrace both some periods of the life of the doctor from Kalongo, and some aspects of his figure in action, with the difficult task of recalling the life of a great doctor and missionary in historical fidelity, but also going further to explore the deeper meaning.

► **Gerardo De Tomasi, mccj**, *Il Dono del Regno della divina volontà. Compendio alla conoscenza dei Libri di Cielo*, Verona 2024. Almost 500 pages from writings on the Divine Will that Jesus revealed to the mystic and Servant of God Luisa Piccarreta. Father Gerardo specifies: this creature, which Jesus chose “to begin in her the fulfilment of his plan... so that he may be known in the Church and in the whole world”, has always been under the authority of her various confessors and in obedience to Ecclesial authority.

► ***Walking with God’s People. 100 Years of Comboni Presence in South Africa (1924-2024)***, Comboni Media Centre, Pretoria 2024. With a presentation by the provincial superior Father John Baptist K. Opargiw, the book is based on the volume *The Comboni Missionaries in South Africa 1924-1994*, by Father Konrad Nefzger (who also wrote the preface of this book we are now presenting), with a number of “historical” photos in addition to the contributions of some confreres.

► **Justino Martínez Pérez, mccj**, *Historias para vivir. Leer la Biblia desde la vida*, ed. Claret, second edition, considerably increased, in Castigliano and

Catalan. The first edition was, in its time, translated into Italian for the EMI, with the title *La Parola che è in te*.

Written in a simple style, the book presents a formative proposal that is methodological, experiential and spiritual since “The first step towards the renewal of theology, pastoral and spirituality is to renew the manner of reading the Bible” (Frederic Raurell). These naive stories contain a threefold level of meaning in their plot. The reader is asked to navigate the ocean of the Bible and get involved personally to tell how the journey is unfolding. Good luck!

## CURIA – STUDIUM COMBONIANUM

### **Manuscripts on the beginnings of the mission in Sudan discovered**

Last summer, during the research on the friendship between Comboni and Canon John Chrysostom Mitterrutzner, published in the *Comboni Archive* (Year LIV – 2024, pp. 185-239), an important part of the correspondence of Friedrich Emanuel von Hurter (1787-1865), ex-Protestant pastor converted to Catholicism, president and true soul of the Marienverein of Vienna from 1851 to 1865. We immediately understood that it was an important discovery for the historiography of the Sudanese mission, also because there had been sent copies of two letters from Comboni and two from Don Mazza.

The documents found are around one hundred and fifty. After the letters of Comboni and Mazza, the most important for us are perhaps those of the first three apostolic pro-vicars – Ignazio Knoblecher, Matteo Kirchner and Giovanni Reinthaler – and of the superiors of the mother station of Khartoum: Giovanni Kocijancic and Giuseppe Gostner. The remaining letters also allow us a glimpse into the activities and important figures of the Marienverein.

Many of their names are known to us from Comboni’s *Writings*. In the diversity of their roles, they reveal to us the breadth of the group of people who in many ways actively helped the Sudanese Church to be born, and subsequently supported its growth. Perhaps we have not always been able to grasp the importance of the contribution of some of these people, often passed over in silence in the historiography of the mission. Hearing them speak in first person today, despite writing a lot about the mission and little about themselves, allows us to remember them and rediscover their discreet but fundamental role.

Organised by *Studium Combonianum*, the research – at the State Archives of Obwalden – was conducted by Joaquim Valente, with the participation of Father Reinhold Baumann and Father Markus L. Korber, between 7 and 11 April 2024. (*Father Manuel Augusto L. Ferreira, mccj*)

COLOMBIA

## **Visit of Father David Domingues**

From May 13<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> we had the pleasant visit of general assistant Father David Costa Domingues. His presence was greatly appreciated in all communities for his sensitive attention to the reality in which each confrere and each community lives, to the social, political and economic reality of the country, and to the context in which we are inserted.

During his visit to the communities of Tumaco, Cali, Medellín and Bogotá, he was able to see our work and our options, such as Afro-pastoral care, peripheral pastoral care, missionary and vocational animation, and formation. He also appreciated the simplicity, industriousness and joy that characterise the Colombian people, and the closeness that exists between us and our people.

Father David encouraged us to live and intensify our fraternal life, to review our presence according to our abilities, to have the necessary care with the people we deal with daily and to continue working with lay people. He said: "May our communities continue to be missionary following the example of Saint Daniel Comboni and accepting Pope Francis' invitation to be a Church that opens its doors so that its members can both enter actively and go out to meet the poorest and most fragile."

He also shared with us the personnel situation at the Institute level, highlighting the favourable vocation panorama in Africa, where Comboni's dream is certainly coming true.

We thank Father David for his visit and for the joy he communicated to us in the moments of fraternal sharing with all of us.

## **ESPAÑA**

### **Brother Dario Laurencig awarded for his "committed optimism"**

The editors of *Anoche Tuve un Sueño* ['Last Night I Had a Dream'], a Spanish magazine with a strong social commitment, organise an event once a year to recognise people or organisations that promote a more humane global society. Among the various prizes, there is also the one awarded to the *Optimistas Comprometidos* ['committed optimists'] which, this year, was awarded to Brother Dario Laurencig, an Italian Comboni missionary, originally from Cividale del Friuli (Udine), who has been working in Kenya for 44 years.

Brother Laurencig, 73 years old, with a specialisation in car mechanics, is 'special' in a thousand other things, among which his dowsing ability stands out, which allows him to identify natural elements underground, in particular water.

This ability has made him known not only in northern Kenya, largely desert, semi-arid and without watercourses, but also in other parts of the country, and even beyond the Kenyan borders. He is often called to 'search for water' in South Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania. And if there is any, he is sure to find it, and in the simplest way possible: with a wooden stick, usually in the shape of a 'Y', which acts as an amplifier of his body's movements due to the radiation emitted by whatever he is looking for. If there is water under his feet, the stick begins to rotate between his two hands, and he can tell how many meters deep the precious liquid is found and also the quantity present. He can sense the presence of water even at a depth of 120-150 metres.

But Brother Dario does not limit himself only to seeking and finding water, as an unsurpassed diviner: he also makes it 'gush' on the surface. In fact, among the many services he provides to the populations he lives with, there is also the drilling of wells. He has excavated many of them, in particular in the schools and missions of northern Kenya, among the nomadic or semi-nomadic populations: Pokot, Turkana, Borana, Rendille... Bishops, missionaries, non-governmental organisations, local governors, and even European embassies have used him to provide water to the nomadic populations of East Africa. Brother Dario has formed a team of excellent workers, who are always on the move with him. Everyone wants Brother Dario, also because – coincidentally! – a well dug by him, topped with a nice hand pump, costs much less than an equivalent one dug by other companies or organisations.

The *Anoche Tuve un Sueño* jury recognised in Brother Dario not only his great sense of solidarity towards those in need but also his surprising ability to face things with cheerful and combative optimism.

## ETHIOPIA

### **New website <https://combonimissionariesethiopia.org/>**

The Comboni Missionaries in Ethiopia have launched a new website. Conceived and created by the team of the Comboni Youth Centre (YCC) of Hawassa, the new online page was presented to the Provincial Assembly last March and the Provincial Council approved it, thus expressing the 'yes' of the entire province to this new type of missionary presence on the Internet, a true 'sixth continent', which should be considered not a threat but an enormous opportunity.

"The initiative of a website of the Ethiopian Province is not new," explained Father Pedro Pablo Hernández, one of the missionaries involved in its creation. "A few years ago, there was one, but it disappeared for

different reasons”. He added: “The aim of the initiative is that future visitors to this new website can both know the rich testimony of life offered by the Comboni Missionaries in terms of pastoral service and receive inspiration from their specific vision of mission, in view of an active participation in the work of evangelisation of the Church.”

The website has two main sections: a) news, regularly updated, and b) information that remains available for longer.

The ‘news page’ provides missionary news, both global and Ethiopian news, life testimonies, prayer intentions, and Ethiopian literature (proverbs, fables and stories). Visitors to this page can leave comments and prayer requests.

The ‘information page’ contains articles on San Daniele Comboni, on the history of the Comboni Missionaries in the world and in Ethiopia, on the work of the Provincial Secretariats (Mission and Formation) and on Vocations.

The ‘Comboni Missionaries in Ethiopia’ section offers a rich photo gallery and the presentation of the works published by the missionaries, in over six decades of presence in Ethiopia, in various local languages (Amharic, Sidama, Guji, Gedeo and Gumuz). (*Father Joe Vieira, mcccj*)

## ITALIA

### **Golden Jubilee of Father Vittorio Barin**

On Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2024, the community of Pozzetto di Cittadella celebrated together with Father Vittorio Barin, a Comboni missionary. He himself said: “With immense joy and gratitude to the Lord, I celebrate with you the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my priestly ordination, which took place in the Cathedral of Cittadella on 27<sup>th</sup> April 1974, when the then bishop of Padua, Monsignor Girolamo Bortignon, laid his hands on my head and invoked the Holy Spirit upon me.”

He talked about his family: “I was born on 29<sup>th</sup> March 1948 – it was Easter Sunday – to Antonio Barin and Agnese Bertollo. The fifth of seven brothers and sisters, including two Sisters of Providence, I had a happy and carefree childhood. I immediately absorbed the profound faith of the family and the Christian community, quickly becoming a faithful altar boy.”

In 1959, at the age of 11, with the fixed idea of becoming a missionary in Africa, he began his journey of Comboni formation, passing through various houses of the Institute: first in Trento, then in Padua, Lucca, Florence and, finally, in Rome, for philosophy and theology courses. Ordained a priest in Cittadella, the following day he was in Pozzetto for his first mass. He remembers: «It was a solemn mass, which I celebrated surrounded



by numerous priests, missionaries, family and relatives, many friends and acquaintances, and by the joyful and festive parish community».

For Father Vittorio, the path to the mission in Africa immediately opened up. He went to London to study English, then to Beirut to study Arabic. “When I arrived in Beirut, I discovered that it was a city in the midst of war: bombs even fell in the backyard.” In September 1976 he arrived in Sudan, destined for the province of Darfur, where he remained for 14 years. He was then assigned to the Kordofan missions, where he worked for 6 years. “They were 20 wonderful years. Wherever I went, I was welcomed with great joy.”

Places like Darfur and Kordofan belonged to the mission of Saint Daniel Comboni. “I carried out intense apostolic work there, also characterised by social, educational and health works (dispensaries), but above all by initiatives aimed at the training of catechists, catechumens, parish leaders and young people.” With some emotion, he adds: “Between 1992 and 1996, I had the joy of working as parish priest of the Cathedral of El-Obeid, alongside Mons. Antonio Menegazzo, Apostolic Administrator of the diocese of El-Obeid, also originally from the parish of Pozzetto.”

In 1997, Father Vittorio was sent to Cairo (Egypt), to the parish of Zamalek, on an island in the middle of the Nile River. In 2000, he was assigned to the parish of Aswan, where he remained for 9 years. In 2009 he returned to Cairo, to the parish of the Sacred Heart, in the Sakakini district, where he dedicated his time to welcoming refugees from Sudan, who were numerous at the time. In 2012, he returned to Italy, assigned to various Comboni communities in northern Italy, dedicating himself to pastoral service, missionary animation and vocational promotion.

The ending words of Father Vittorio are a prayer: “Thank you, O Lord, for having granted me the same ministry as your son Jesus Christ, and for having associated me with his mission, in the service of the Word of God, of the Eucharist, of Charity, which is the human promotion of many poor and abandoned individuals and peoples.” The Eucharistic celebration was followed by refreshments for all the parishioners present. Then, Father Vittorio’s family met together for the family lunch. (*Father Gaetano Montresor, mccj*)

### **Meeting of the Italian Comboni Brothers in Verona**

‘The art of listening as the heart of the Brother’s ministeriality’ was the theme of the conference of the Comboni Brothers of the Italian Province, which took place from 29<sup>th</sup> April to 1<sup>st</sup> May at the Mother House in Verona. The Brothers present were invited to engage in a moment of reflection and prayer under the guidance of Bro. Giandomenico Placentino, a monk of Bose.

On the morning of the 30<sup>th</sup>, Bro. Giandomenico proposed the biblical image of Jesus in the desert (*Mt* 4.1-11). Faced with the temptations of the evil one, Jesus listens to the Word and remains faithful to it. Temptations are an opportunity for Jesus to practice listening to God. The second biblical passage proposed was that of the meeting between Jesus and the Canaanite woman (*Mt* 15.21-28). Jesus listens to the other person, but also to the present reality. Placing the other at the centre of our lives is fundamental to the Brother's vocation. Being a Brother means being a man who listens to God and his Word, listens to himself, and also listens to others. In a world where many want to talk, there is a need for Brothers who know how to listen.

In the afternoon of the same day, Bro. Alberto Lamana shared an overview of the situation of the Brothers in our Institute. There are currently 193 brothers, including the five who made their first vows this year. There are some things that worry us, such as the ever-decreasing number of Comboni Brothers and the advanced ages of many of them. But there are also signs of hope: among these, there are the communities that are living the gift of fraternity in a very beautiful way and the new vocations that come above all from African countries. The central moment of the second day of the conference was the sharing with our elderly and sick brothers of Castel d'Azzano and the Eucharist celebrated together.

### **Verona – New parish church with a relic of Comboni**

On Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May, Monsignor Domenico Pompili, Bishop of Verona, presided over the rite of dedication of the parish church of the Holy Family, placing a relic of Saint Daniel Comboni under the altar, together with those of Saint Zeno and Saint John Calabria.

The new church, which externally has the shape of a sail, was built in the second half of the last century, on the southern outskirts of the city of Verona, where a new working-class neighbourhood arose.

The parish priest, Don Flavio Bertoldi, asked the Comboni Missionaries for the relic for his church and a painting of their holy Founder, as has already happened for other churches in this diocese. (*Father Romeo Ballan, mccj*)

### **ACSE – Assembly and Celebration**

► The annual meeting of the members of the Comboni Emigrant Service Association (ACSE) took place on 5<sup>th</sup> May. The president, Father Venanzio Milani, presented the problems that migrants are facing at the moment and highlighted the various activities carried out by ACSE in 2023 in dental services, Italian and IT courses, legal assistance, tailoring courses,

procurement and food distribution to individuals and families, etc. The activities are possible thanks to over 50 volunteers.

The assembly renewed the board of directors. The only variation compared to before is the inclusion of Father Luigi Codianni in place of Father Lino Spezia, appointed to another community.

The assembly thanked Father Lino for the great service he has rendered to ACSE for many years, wishing him all the best.

► On 26<sup>th</sup> May, the ACSE Festival was held at the General Curia in Rome. Around 90 people participated, including members and volunteers from the various services that the Association provides to university students who benefit from our scholarships. *'Io Capitano'*, a 2023 film directed by the well-known director Matteo Garrone, was then screened. The film tells the adventurous journey of two young people, Seydou and Moussa, who leave Senegal to reach Europe. A true contemporary 'Odyssey' through the dangers of the desert, the horrors of the detention centres in Libya and the dangers of the Mediterranean Sea. An interesting debate followed the screening of the film. The new graduates were introduced to the participants and detailed information on the association's activities was given. After a well-attended Eucharistic celebration, a 'fraternal *agape*' closed the celebration. (*Father Venanzio Milani, mcccj*)

## KENYA

### **Economics and accounting course for Scholastics and Brothers**

From 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> May 2024, the International Scholasticate and the International Brothers Centre of Nairobi had a short training course on economics, led by Father Angelo Giorgetti, general bursar of the Institute, and by Father Maciej Zielinski Mikolaj, bursar and procurator of the Province of Kenya.

The course, which had as its theme 'Taking care of creation—Management and Accountability', had the aim of creating awareness of the various dreams and guidelines of the XIX General Chapter which aim at the sustainability of our communities.

The mornings were dedicated to in-depth study of topics such as the Chapter Acts, the drafting of projects, the Code of Conduct on financial abuse, the Total Common Fund, and some accounting principles. In the afternoons, however, we practised using the various Microsoft Excel functions to manage our accounts.

In his presentations, Father Angelo highlighted the role that each confrere has in promoting the sustainability of our communities and the Institute. He then challenged each of us to consider the community's assets as

'ours' and to be ready to assume responsibility for them. He also helped us understand that the Total Common Fund is not just about money, but also about the little things that can be done for the well-being of the community. Father Maciej then presented the Province of Kenya as a good example of how the Total Common Fund is contributing to the sustainability of communities in Kenya.

Thanks to the help of Father Angelo, the participants were able to have a good knowledge of the use of Microsoft Excel to create simple accounts, maintain double-entry accounting, draw up an economic report and prepare a budget.

At the end of the 5 days of training, the Scholastics and the Brothers said they appreciated the input offered and suggested that the course should not be reduced to a sporadic thing, but become an annual program and that it be extended to the entire Institute, so that we can work together for the sustainability of our Communities and Provinces. (*Sc. Winfred Etse Dzikunu*)

## MOÇAMBIQUE

### **Priestly ordination of Father Carlos Fernando at Alua**

On Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> April, the parish community of Alua, Nampula, in the north of Mozambique, experienced a great celebration: two sons of this parish which is just over 50 years old and which, from the beginning, has been evangelised by Comboni Missionaries. How can we fail to remember some of the pillars of the parish, such as Fathers Vincenzo Capra, Cornelio Prandina, Graziano Castellari, Ambrogio Reggiori, Firmino Cusini, Brother Alfredo Fiorini, and many others who passed through here?

In truth, the parish has generated not only many Christians but also several generations of lay evangelisers, according to the style of Saint Daniel Comboni, as well as vocations of consecrated men and women. There are already four nuns originally from this parish, together with 12 priests, 9 of whom are diocesan. The Comboni Missionaries are only now receiving the fruit of long years of evangelisation in the parish of S. João de Deus in Alua, where they have built a sanctuary dedicated to Mary, Mother of Africa.

In the presence of the 3 bishops, coming from the Diocese of Nacala, Msgr. Atanásio Canira, Bishop of Lichinga, and Msgr. Inácio Lucas, Bishop of Gurué, and 30 priests, both religious and diocesan, Comboni missionaries and friends, the Bishop of Nacala, Msgr. Alberto Vera, ordained the two new priests originally from Alua: Don Belém Casimiro and Father Carlos Fernando, the first Comboni priest of this parish, who will soon leave for the province of Togo to which he has been appointed.

All of us Comboni Missionaries present at the celebration felt immense joy when Msgr. Vera mentioned some confreres among the deceased who worked here: it was a nice gesture of gratitude. We are convinced that in the tender and eternal womb of the Father, all of them, in the embrace of Saint Daniele Comboni, rejoiced at seeing that the dream of our founder – ‘Saving Africa with Africa’ – has become reality in this first Comboni missionary of Alua. (*Father Alberto Vieira, mccj*)

## PROVINCIA DE CENTRO AMÉRICA

### **Perpetual Vows in Costa Rica**

The Comboni scholastic Chávez Ixchacchal Mynor Rolando, originally from Guatemala, took his perpetual vows on the morning of Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April, in the presence of Father Marín Artavia Ignacio Enrique, vice-provincial of the Province of Central America and parish priest of Nuestra Señora de la Medalla Milagrosa, in San José de Costa Rica, of Mons. Vittorino Girardi, Comboni priests and religious, seminarians, religious sisters of the parish and a good number of faithful. During the homily, Mons. Victorinus rhetorically asked Mynor if anyone had forced him to choose the priesthood. “Of course not! Nobody forced him,” the bishop reiterated: “He responded freely to his desire to love and to undertake a path of missionary consecration”. Mynor confirmed: “At the end of the homily, I said yes! And God answered me through these words of the bishop emeritus. After an applause and an embrace of closeness and welcome, I felt that I belonged, forever, to the Institute of the Comboni Missionaries.”

Mynor studied philosophy in Costa Rica, did his novitiate in Mexico and theological studies in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, the last stage of his basic training. We congratulate him and pray to the Lord of the harvest that many young people are willing to question themselves about the meaning of life and can respond boldly to the missionary vocation. (*Father Juan Diego Calderón Vargas, mccj*)

## SOUTH AFRICA

### **Feast of the Comboni Centenary in Pietermaritzburg**

‘The missionary legacy of Comboni in our vocational promotion and formation today’ was the theme of the celebration of the Comboni Centenary in South Africa, which was held in the parish church of Saint Joan of Arc in Pietermaritzburg, on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

At the opening, Father John Baptist Opargiw Keraryo, provincial superior, outlined the life of Saint Daniel Comboni, highlighting his passion for the

regeneration of Africa and his constant commitment to recruiting people – “holy and capable” – for the mission. In a PowerPoint presentation, Father Efrem Tresoldi illustrated the figures of the confreres – as many as 14! – who have followed one another at the helm of the parish and the scholasticate from the beginning in 2002 to today.

The Eucharist, presided over by the archbishop of Durban, Msgr. Mandla Siegfried Jwara, missionary of the Mariannahill congregation, and enthusiastically participated by around 200 of the faithful, was animated by songs in Zulu and other South African and African languages, supported by the parish choir and accompanied by our scholastics with traditional musical instruments. In his homily, the bishop expressed words of gratitude for the service rendered by our confreres to the Christian community of Saint Joan of Arc, transmitting the richness of Comboni’s charism.

After the mass, a member of the parish organisational committee wanted to highlight how, thanks to the intervention of our confreres, a relationship of trust and respect had been established with the inhabitants of the slums surrounding the parish, putting an end to serious episodes of thefts. The archbishop, in turn, congratulated the Christian community for the joy with which they took part in the ceremony and invited them to remain steadfast in their faith and persevere: “So that it may not happen to you what is happening in Holland which I visited recently, where the churches have been emptied and only a small number of elderly people participate in ecclesial sacramental life.”

The Christian community then gathered in the garden, near the cave, where the bishop blessed the new statue of the Our Lady. The party continued with a Zulu dance show with boys and girls in traditional costumes. Finally, everyone was invited to the parish hall for a hearty lunch, prepared by the social committee of Saint Joan of Arc. (*Father Efrem Tresoldi, mccj*)

## TOGO-GHANA-BENIN

### **Golden Jubilee of Comboni presence in Ghana**

Having arrived on the coast of West Africa, precisely in Togo, in January 1964, the Comboni Missionaries spread, ten years later, to the two neighbouring countries, Ghana and Benin, to constitute the current province of Togo-Ghana-Benin.

On 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> April 2024, two events were organised to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Comboni presence in Ghana: a conference and a thanksgiving Mass.

In the 'Good Shepherd' parish of Mafi-Kumase, after the opening prayer of the bishop of the diocese of Keta-Akatsi, Msgr. Gabriel Edo Kumordji, SVD, the words of welcome from Father Achille Dansou, administrator of the parish, and a brief historical account of the Comboni presence in Ghana by Father Giuseppe Rabbiosi, one of the pioneers of the Comboni mission in Ghana, the superior general, Father Tesfaye Tadesse, presented the theme 'Saving Africa with Africa', assisted by Father Sindjalim Essognimam Elias, general assistant.

The culminating moment of the jubilee celebration took place in Accra, in 'Our Lady of the Assumption' parish, with a Mass presided over by the archbishop, Msgr. John Bonaventure Kwofie, concelebrated by Father Tesfaye and Father Elias, numerous confreres and some diocesan priests. In his homily, Msgr. Bonaventure thanked the Lord for the gift of Daniel Comboni to the Church and of the Comboni Missionaries to the people of Ghana.

## IN PACE CHRISTI

### **Father Paolo ('Paolino') Tomaino (4.11.1937 – 3.3.2024)**

Paolo Antonio (better known as 'Paolino') was born on 4 November 1937 in San Pietro Apostolo, a small town in the province of Catanzaro, in Calabria, in the diocese of Lamezia Terme. He was the first child of Santo and Rosa Tomaino. For more children followed. At the age of six, Paolino started primary school in the village. His parents thought his education should have ended here. However, the religion teacher, Don Corrado Mazza, was convinced that Paolino should continue with his schooling. He told his father who at first did not entirely agree but did so in the end. In 1951, Paolino passed the eighth-grade exam and was enrolled in High School. During the holidays after the second year of studies, he was offered the opportunity to go attend a summer camp organised by the parish. There he met Don Corrado to whom Paolino confided his desire to help those in need. Don Corrado suggested he become a priest and so he entered Catanzaro seminary where, in mid-1956, Father Enrico Farè came to visit the seminarians: he spoke of Daniel Comboni, of Africa, of his missionary vocation, of his experience in the missions of South Sudan. «It's the path I'm looking for», Paolino said to himself and there and then informed the missionary.

On 1<sup>st</sup> September 1956, Paolino went to Gozzano to begin his novitiate. In July 1960 he was assigned to the scholasticate of Venegono for a year, and then moved to the scholasticate of Verona, at the mother house, for theology courses.

During the four years of Theology, Paolino built a network of acquaintances and friends who could help him once he left for the mission. Every Sunday he went with the confreres in charge of missionary animation and 'mission Sundays' in parishes near and far, distributing missionary publications, the magazines *Nigrizia* and *Il Piccolo Missionario*, but above all, he 'started up conversations' with everyone, and recorded in a notebook their addresses and telephone numbers. And it would be precisely thanks to these addresses – behind which there were very specific faces, often reproduced in photos that he always carried with him – that he would accomplish all he did: miracles!

On 9<sup>th</sup> September 1963, he made his perpetual religious profession. On 28<sup>th</sup> June 1964, together with 53 other Comboni deacons, he was ordained a priest in Verona. He was immediately sent to England for further preparation in English because he was appointed to Uganda where he arrived at the beginning of 1965. He was sent to the mission of Nyakishenyi and then to the parish of Rushoroza (Kabale). In October 1966, Father Paolino went with Father Erminio Tanel to open the new mission of Nyamwegabira, detaching half the territory of the parish of Makiro, which was also assigned to the Comboni Missionaries.

After holidays in Italy, in January 1971 he was assigned to the Buhara mission as parish priest. He began to lay the foundations of schools and chapels. Two years later, Bishop Barnabas Rugwizangonga Halem'imana called him to entrust him with the task of the lay apostolate of the entire diocese of Kabale.

In 1976, Father Paolino returned to Nyamwegabira, to everyone's joy, but he remained there for a few months because he was due to have some holidays at home. More visits to friends, missionary days and more projects to propose for possible sponsorship... When he returned, on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1977, he was appointed to Makiro as parish priest. He remained there until 1980 when he returned to Italy for holidays and medical check-ups. In July 1981 he was back in Uganda, at Kambuga Mission, where he built a wonderful church, a parish centre with numerous rooms and halls, and laid the foundation stone of what he already called 'Kambuga Comboni College'. At the end of 1989, the parish was officially handed over to the local clergy.

The bishop of Mbarara suggested he go to Kyamuhunga, a very difficult parish, without priests for over four years. On 1<sup>st</sup> July 1990, he went there and remained until 2000. He regained his past enthusiasm. The 'friendly' parishes of Lamezia offered to support him financially. A large hospital, a secondary school, numerous chapels and dispensaries were built in



distant communities; numerous agricultural cooperatives were also started, which had immediate success among the population.

After a sabbatical in Italy, in September 2000 he returned to Rushere mission in Uganda, assigned to ministry among the shepherds of the Bahima ethnic group. He was to remain there until 2011, even if, in 2004, he had to return to Italy due to heart problems.

In February 2015, he returned to Kyamuhunga where he remained for good. The pace of work slowed down a bit, but he continued to follow everything: projects, correspondence (even with former pupils, pupils and students sent to Italy to graduate), courses for catechists, schools, cooperatives... He also sponsored projects that were 'not his' in other missions that turned to him for help.

In May 2023, Father Paolino's heart again began to disturb him. He was taken to hospital in Kampala, where he recovered. In December, a new crisis. On the 28<sup>th</sup> he was admitted to the hospital and stayed there for two weeks. He was then taken to Limone Medical Centre, the house that the Comboni Missionaries run in the parish of Mbuya for convalescing and sick confreres but the situation worsened.

On 14<sup>th</sup> February, the president of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, who considered and defined Father Paolino as "The greatest Kigezi development agent of the last 50 years", made the presidential plane available to take him to Italy, to the Niguarda Hospital of Milan, in the hope of saving his life. Father Paolino remained in the hospital for two weeks. Then, at his express wish and at the request of his sister, he was taken by ambulance to his hometown, where he died immediately after he arrived. It was 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2024.

The funeral was celebrated on the 6<sup>th</sup> by the Bishop of Lamezia Terme, Mons. Serafino Parisi, in the mother church of San Pietro Apostolo. On the 8<sup>th</sup>, President Museveni sent his presidential plane back to take back the remains – "too precious for Ugandans" – of Father Paolino, so that he could pay homage to him throughout Uganda, before being buried in Kyamuhunga "Like a holy national hero with a state funeral planned in his honour." (*Father Franco Moretti, mcccj*)

### **Father Giuseppe Ambrosi (9.11.1936 – 25.3.2024)**

Giuseppe was born on 9<sup>th</sup> November 1936 in Verona, the eighth of the ten sons and daughters of Gerardo and Assunta Zamperini. In 1948 he entered the Junior Seminary that the Comboni Missionaries had in Trento for the three middle classes. Three years later, he was sent to the Apostolic School of Brescia for the two-year high school course. On 1<sup>st</sup> October 1953, he began his novitiate in Florence, where he took the habit on 11<sup>th</sup> December. In June 1954, he was sent to Sunningdale to continue his

novitiate and finish his high school courses. On 9<sup>th</sup> September 1955, he took his first vows. In the summer of 1956, he obtained a certificate in English from the University of Oxford.

In 1958 he repatriated and went to Venegono, where, in September, he began his first theology course. At the end of the third year, after a discussion with his major superiors, he spent a period outside the Institute, with a view to reflecting on his vocational path.

On 1<sup>st</sup> October 1961, Giuseppe entered the novitiate of Gozzano again. On 10<sup>th</sup> September 1963, he went to the Mother House of Verona for his scholastic studies and to complete his theology courses. On 28<sup>th</sup> June 1964, he was ordained a priest in Verona, at the hands of Card. Gregorio Pietro Agajanian, Prefect of Propaganda Fide. On 1<sup>st</sup> July, three days after his priestly ordination, he returned to Sunningdale to begin a one-year course in Pastoral Theology.

In January 1965 he arrived in Uganda, assigned to the diocese of Mbarara. After the local language course (Runyankole-Rukiga), he was assigned to the mission of Makiro in Kabale diocese as assistant parish priest. He would then go to the Rwanyena mission, and then back to Makiro, as a curate.

In February 1970, he returned to Italy for the holidays. When he returned, he was assigned to Buhara for two months, and then moved back to Rwanyena, first as curate, then as superior of the community.

In 1973 he was assigned to Bukinda, in Kabale diocese, at the seminary of the Apostles of Jesus, as vice-rector. He remained there for two years. In 1975 he became bursar of the community of Pesaro. In 1976 he returned to Makiro, with the task of following the nearby parish of Buhara as parish priest. Shortly afterwards he was alone in the sub-parish of Kayonza. In September 1977 he went to Warr-Zeu, Arua diocese, for a language course. In February of the following year, he moved to Orussi, then to Kambuga, Pakwach and Kigumba.

Father Giuseppe liked to move, to change places, and wherever he went, he seemed to see important things to do or structures to build.

At the end of 1987, he went to Rome, to the Curia community, for a year of updating and ongoing training. Soon after, he was assigned to the Province of Kenya. He immediately flies to Nairobi for a Kiswahili improvement course, learned from books in Uganda. Then he was assigned to the mission of Amakuriat, in Eldoret diocese. In October 1992, he went to Mogotio, in the diocese of Nakuru. In July of the following year, he was appointed to Lokori and then to Kariobangi. In July 1998, Father Giuseppe was once again assigned to the province of Uganda

On 1<sup>st</sup> January 2000, he went to Rome for a renewal course. In June he returned to Kyamuhunga for three months, before moving to Rushere. In November 2004, a letter from the superior general, Father Teresino Serra, assigned him to the Italian Province starting from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005, at the Arco (TN) community for elderly confreres. In 2007 he moved to Cordenons where he remained until 2011, when he was sent to Verona, to the Rectory of San Tomio.

In 2016, Father Giuseppe was assigned to the Rebbio community for Elderly Confreres. In the last period of his life, however, health problems followed one another which ended up physically exhausting him.

On Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2024, his health situation worsened to the point of having to transfer him to Castel d'Azzano, where the medical staff could help him better. At first, he seemed to respond positively to the new environment. On March 23<sup>rd</sup>, his health took a turn for the worse. On March 25<sup>th</sup>, Monday of Holy Week, he passed away in the Lord, lovingly assisted by the members of the community and the medical staff on duty. The funeral was celebrated on the morning of 27<sup>th</sup> March, in the chapel of the 'Brother Alfredo Fiorini' Centre. In the afternoon, a second funeral celebration took place in the parish of Domegliara, with the body of the deceased present, with the burial in the local cemetery. (Father Franco Moretti mccj)

### **Father Piergiorgio Prandina (03.09.1940 – 31.03.2024)**

Piergiorgio was born on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1940 in Torrebelticino, province and diocese of Vicenza, the third of ten children (six boys and four girls) of a deeply Christian family.

The Comboni adventure of the Prandina family began in the summer of 1954 when a zealous missionary from the town organised a spiritual retreat held by Father Giovanni Vedovato, mccj. Piergiorgio, who had finished seventh grade, told his parents that he would like to go. Their 'yes' was immediate. His little brother Cornelio (the seventh of ten children) did not want to be outdone. At the end of the two weeks, the missionary presents the children with a piece of paper on which there is a simple question: "Would you like to become a missionary?". Both Piergiorgio and Cornelio wrote: "Yes!"

During the summer of that year, the two did the 'trial month'. Two months later, they both entered the Apostolic School that the Comboni Missionaries had in Padua.

On 1<sup>st</sup> October 1960, Piergiorgio was in Gozzano for the two years of novitiate, which he crowned with temporary vows on 9<sup>th</sup> September 1962. For his theology studies, he moved to Verona, to the Mother House, where he made his final profession on 9<sup>th</sup> September 1965. On 26<sup>th</sup> June

1966, he was ordained a priest in the chapel of the Mother House by Msgr. Diego Parodi, m.c.c.j., then auxiliary bishop of Perugia.

The major superiors called Father Piergiorgio to Rome for a specialisation at the Pontifical Salesian University. Three years later, he obtained a licentiate in philosophy and pedagogy, '*magna cum laude*'.

Destined for the Ugandan missions, in July 1969 he went to London to learn English. Within a year, he received the Certificate of Proficiency in English and flew to Kampala. Two weeks later, he was already in Gulu mission studying Acholi, the local language, Acholi. A few months later – in July 1970 – he was in Patongo as assistant parish priest. In June 1973 he returned to Gulu, as director of the Training Center for Catechists. Here Father Piergiorgio gave his very best.

While in Italy on holiday in the spring of 1975, the president of Uganda, Idi Amin Dada – who, since taking power in a coup in 1971, had done nothing but make life difficult for the Christian missionaries present in the country – decreed the expulsion of sixteen Comboni Missionaries. Among the names on the list was that of Piergiorgio. It was a terrible blow for him: the unfortunate conclusion of his first missionary experience was experienced by him as “a terrible failure”. But he has something he’s proud of. He would write it many years later, in June 2016, on the occasion of his 50<sup>th</sup> year of ordination: “The only consolation I brought with me was my catechism, *Wun aye lwakka* (‘You are my people’) which I had written in Acholi for the diocese of Gulu. Today, after 40 years, they tell me it is still in use.”

Meanwhile, the superior general, Father Tarcisio Agostoni, assigned him to the International Scholasticate of Rome and, in September 1975, Father Piergiorgio began his new service as a formator of scholastics. Father Manuel João Pereira Correia remembers him: “I have held Father Prandina in great esteem since he was my formator in Rome in the years 1975-1977. His liveliness and concreteness, his frankness and spontaneity, his perspicacity and critical spirit, his sociability and humour, with a joke for every occasion, encouraged us students.” On 1<sup>st</sup> July 1977, Father Piergiorgio was appointed General Secretary of Vocational Promotion and Training. He would hold this position for eight years.

In March 1988, he was assigned to the CIF in Nairobi (Kenya) as a formator. He arrived there in a difficult moment, with morale at an all-time low; he himself recognised that “My headaches, my heartburn, my insomnia... all come from the soul”. In October he left Nairobi and returned to Italy. He was assigned to Uganda but did not feel ready to take this step, and asked to be able to go to London, where there is a Missionary of Africa who is an excellent psychologist, considered very competent by various religious institutes. A few weeks later, he wrote to Father Francesco: “I put myself in his hands,

with the clear intention of letting myself be vivisected. No spiritual or priestly crisis, according to him. The evil to be cured is deeper, at the roots of the personality.” Father Piergiorgio also undergoes clinical tests and is diagnosed with ‘chronic fatigue’. At the end of December 1991, he felt much better and returned to Rome, assigned to the Curia where, for a year, he was general archivist ad interim. In September 1992, the premature death of his brother Cornelio affected him deeply.

On 1<sup>st</sup> January 1993, he was assigned to the province of Italy. His organisational ability and meticulousness, on the one hand, and his somewhat poor health on the other, convinced the provincial of Italy to appoint him provincial secretary. Among other things, in 1994 he edited the publication of his brother Cornelio’s letters – *Carissimi* – published by EMI.

He had, however, to wait until June 2005 before receiving a new assignment: the General Council asked him to serve in the Curia. On 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2006, Father Piergiorgio went to Rome as an assistant in the general secretariat. A year later, he was given the position of general archivist, a post he held until May 2021.

Father Manuel João recalls: “Whatever work was asked of him, you could be sure that he would carry it out quickly and perfectly. Piergiorgio, however, did not limit himself to office work but gave his time and energy unsparingly to pastoral service in our Curia chapel. He presided over the Sunday Eucharist at 11.00, which was always well attended. He carefully prepared the homily, which was always much appreciated, also because, in addition to being brilliantly presented and always embellished with some short story, it never lasted more than 9/10 minutes. After the celebration, he would stay to have coffee and chat a bit with the faithful closest to us. In addition, he took turns celebrating the weekly Eucharist scheduled for the people of the neighbourhood, at 6.30 pm, and he always did it with creativity.”

On the night between 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2022, Father Piergiorgio had an acute myocardial infarction. He was immediately taken to hospital. “It’s impossible to operate on him: he’s too weak,” the cardiologist said. We can only wait and hope. After a few days, he returned to the community, but, after a day and a half, he was returned to the intensive care unit, where he contracted Covid-19. In the second half of January, he returns to the community. He was very weak. He seemed to recover a little, but it was only an illusion. He tried hard to move around the big house again. In February, on Sunday mornings, he was brought in a wheelchair to the reception hall, ready to welcome the faithful coming to Mass and wanting confession. He had been doing this for years, and he wanted to continue doing it. Many people would come and embrace him.

In April 2023, it was necessary to transfer him to the 'Fratel Alfredo Fiorini' Centre in Castel d'Azzano, where he could receive the care he needed. His family visited him every week. But Father Piergiorgio saw his departure from Rome and the loss of the role he had held until shortly before as a sign the end was approaching. Everyone hoped that he could resume an almost normal rhythm of life, but the pain and discomfort of his illness, physical tiredness and the sense of uselessness deprived him of any possible reaction.

On 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, a sudden cardiac arrest ends his earthly existence. It was the dawn of Easter Sunday. The funeral was celebrated on 3<sup>rd</sup> April in the Centre's chapel. Then the remains were taken to Torrebelticino, for a funeral ceremony in the parish church, followed by burial in the local cemetery. (*Father Franco Moretti, mccj*)

### **Father José Luis Valle Castellanos (01.12.1940 – 09.05.2024)**

José Luis was born on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1940 in Tepatitlán de Morelos, in the Mexican state of Jalisco. Having entered the Apostolic School of Sahuayo, in the state of Michoacán, he attended secondary and high schools. In 1967, he moved to the Scholasticate-Novitiate of Xochimilco for his first philosophy courses. On November 13, 1968 he took the habit, and on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1970, he began his two-year novitiate, again in Xochimilco, where he made his first religious profession on 9<sup>th</sup> June 1972. He remained in Xochimilco for another year to complete his philosophy courses. The following year he went to France to learn French and then, in October 1973, began theology courses in Issy-Les-Moulineaux (Paris). On 19<sup>th</sup> January 1976, as the end of the theological studies for José Luis approached, the two fathers responsible for formation in the scholasticate of Paris, Father Vittorio Moretto and Father Fabio Gilli, sent a report on him to the superior general, Father Tarcisio Agostoni, with a more than positive opinion: "José Luis is very involved in community life. He acts spontaneously, trying to be himself in everything. He faithfully dedicates himself to personal prayer and is active in community prayer. He was very committed to the study of theology, with satisfactory results. His personal 'history' and what we know about him lead us to believe that his call to the Comboni life comes from God."

The 'yes' from the General Council does not take long to arrive, but in the letter from the superior general there is news that is destined to sadden Luis quite a bit: "You are not leaving for the mission immediately, as would be your wish... From 1<sup>st</sup> July 1976, after your perpetual religious profession, you will be at the disposal of your provincial superior, Father Giampiero Pini, and

his council.” Luis put the best face on bad luck and replied: “I accept the ‘little’ of today, while waiting for the ‘great’ of tomorrow.”

On 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1976, Luis made his perpetual profession and on 4<sup>th</sup> October he was ordained a priest in Tepatitlán de Morelos, at the hands of Msgr. Francisco Javier Nuño y Guerrero, Archbishop of San Juan de los Lagos (Jalisco). Immediately afterwards, he was sent to the Apostolic School of Sahuayo, as a formator of young seminarians. He remained there until the end of 1980.

After a first letter of assignment to Kenya, Father Alois Eder, just one month later, wrote him a second: “We have received confirmation from your provincial superior, Father Jaime, that you prefer to go to a French-speaking mission... We have quickly changed your destination and assign you to the Central African Province from 1<sup>st</sup> November 1980.”

Father Luis then took a plane for Bangui where the provincial superior, Father Luciano Benetazzo, was waiting to meet him. He threw himself into learning the local language and, on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1981, he was already assistant parish priest at the Dékoa mission. In 1984, he moved for a year to the mission of Doba, in Chad, where the superior of the community was Father Michele Russo, who would become the first bishop of the diocese of Doba from 1989 to October 2013, when he was expelled for his critical position towards government management of petroleum resources.

In 1985, Father Luis was assigned to the mission of Grimari, in the Central African Republic, first as bursar of the local community, then as assistant parish priest. He also spends a few months in Mongoumba.

In July 1989, he was recalled to his homeland, assigned to the San Francisco del Rincón seminary, as a trainer. Father Luis willingly returned to Mexico: he is rich in missionary experience in Africa and believes that he can give something precise and valid to the future Comboni Missionaries of his province. He remained there until June 1997. Every year, however, when he sends greetings to his major superiors, he reminds them: “Do not forget that I always dream of Africa.”

In February 1997, the superior general, Father David Glenday, informed him that he had been assigned to the province of Central Africa, starting from 1<sup>st</sup> July 1997. The following words were of gratitude for the work done in the Mexican seminary.

Father Luis left immediately. In August 1987, he was in Boda, as superior of the community and engaged in ministry. In 1999 he moved again to Grimari, in the diocese of Bambari where a catechetical centre was created. It was the place that Father Luis always dreamed of, and he remained there until 2006, when the provincial superior called him to Bangui, to the provincial residence, as bursar of the community. The capital

gave him many opportunities to throw himself into the missionary animation ministry of the local Church, in which he excels.

The last letter of destination came to him from Father Teresino Serra, superior general, in March 2009. Father Luis was, once again, appointed to his province of origin from 1<sup>st</sup> July. He knew that he might never have the chance to return to Africa. And what did he do? For four months he remained in Central Africa and visited all the missions where he lived in the two periods he spent there. In November, he went home and enjoyed three months of well-deserved vacation. In mid-January 2010, he settled in to Guadalajara, at the Centre for Elderly Missionaries, called the Oasis, with the role of local bursar. He remained there until July 2011, when he was assigned to the Postulancy, located in Mexico City, again as bursar. On 1 July 2011, the Postulancy was transferred to San Francisco del Rincón, together with the 'preparatory' school. Two years later, Father Luis was called there with the role of formator of postulants. In 2016 he was chosen as the *probus vir* of the province: a sign that his confreres respected him and considered him a wise person.

He would never move from the San Francisco del Rincón Postulancy. And it was there that the Lord calls him to himself on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2024, surrounded by the affection and care of his confreres, who will long remember him as an exemplary Comboni missionary for his dedication and for the hard work that he has always carried forward with a happy spirit. (*Father Ramón A. Orendáin Camacho, mccj, and Father Franco Moretti, mccj*)

## LET US PRAY FOR OUR BELOVED DEAD

**THE FATHER:** Vincenzo, of Father Alessio Geraci (I)

**THE BROTHERS:** Roberto, of Father Enrique Ibarra Hernández (M); Laurence, of Father Patrick Wilkinson.

**THE SISTER:** Lourdes, of Father Jeremias dos Santos Martins (MO)

**THE COMBONI SISTERS:** Sr. Peralta Cantos Bertha Ernestina; Sr. Le-basi Fedele M.; Sr. Amparo Flores Torres