

FAMILIA COMBONIANA

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES OF THE HEART OF JESUS

836

January 2025

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

GENERAL NOTES – 32nd general consulta (2-11 December 2024)

Dates of the Intercapitular Assembly

The General Council has set the dates of the inter-capitular assembly, which will take place in Rome, EUR House, from Sunday 7th September, to Saturday 27th September 2025. All circumscription superiors are asked to plan their activities for 2025 keeping this commitment in mind. Further information will follow after the next consulta.

Updates on the progress of the election of the new Superior General

During the 32nd Consulta, on 9.12.2024, the Vicar General, with the consent of his Council, announced the voting procedure for the extra-capitular election of the Superior General. The deadline for sending the ballots to Rome has been set at 24:00 on 15.1.2025. The General Council asks all the confreres to pray that the Holy Spirit may guide the electors in their discernment and making their choice.

Disclosure of the contents of the general assembly of formation

In recent weeks, the Secretary of Formation has sent the Acts of the General Assembly of Formation (i.e., the daily minutes of the sessions) to all the superiors of the circumscriptions and to all the formators of the houses of formation of the Institute. He has also prepared a summary document for dissemination, which takes up the conclusions and priorities indicated by the assembly. The first draft has already been completed, which the Council of Formation will review and finalise in the coming days, during a telematic meeting. After this step, the document will be presented to the General Council in the extraordinary consulta of mid-January 2025 for final approval. Once approved, it will be sent to all the confreres of the Institute.

Course for the elderly

The Ongoing Formation Centre will organise the next course for the elderly from 7th October to 7th December 2025. In the coming months, the leaders of the permanent formation centre will send more detailed information to all the superiors of the circumscriptions and include them in *Familia Comboniana*.

Next consulta (extraordinary): 16, 17 and 18 January 2025.

Perpetual professions

Sc. Dangninou Codjo Constantin	TGB	Fidjrosse – Cotonou	22/12/2024
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Ordinations

Fr. Agnimaka Kodjovi Abraham	TGB	Hedranawoe–Lomé	21/12/2024
Fr. Atsou Kokuvi Elom Joseph	TGB	Hedranawoe–Lomé	21/12/2024
Fr. Dodor Yawovi Ametepe (Jacques)	TGB	Hedranawoe–Lomé	21/12/2024
Fr. Ocloo Komla Elisée	TGB	Hedranawoe–Lomé	21/12/2024
Fr. Awudi Atsu Augustine	TGB	Akatsi	28/12/2024

Holy Redeemer Guild

January 01 – 15 A 16 – 31 BR
February 01 – 15 C 16 – 28 EGSD

Prayer intentions

January – Let us pray that, through our missionary service, we may help build up the kingdom that Jesus came to bring into the world: a kingdom of justice, love and peace. *Lord hear us.*

February – We pray you, Lord, that in the face of the looming and frightening threat of human trafficking, we may increasingly be, together with you, defenders of life, promoters of dignity and facilitators of freedom. *Lord hear us.*

Comboni liturgical calendar

FEBRUARY

8	Saint Josephine Bakhita, virgin	Memoria
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Meaningful anniversaries

FEBRUARY

4	Saint John de Brito, martyr	Portugal
6	The Holy Martyrs of Japan	Asia
23	Kidane Mehret, Co-Redemptrix	Eritrea

Publications

Jorge Naranjo Alcaide, mccj, *Um sueño para Daniel. El Comboni College de Jartum*, Mundo Negro, Madrid 2024. As it says in the introduction, “Comboni College is and has been an educational institution with unique characteristics in the history of Comboni Missionaries and in that of a country with an Islamic majority such as the Sudan”. In these pages, Father Naranjo follows the process of preparation, foundation and development of this “laboratory of interreligious coexistence and driving force of sustainable development”, to present the Comboni educational and evangelising work in the Sudanese Republic.

ETHIOPIA

Comboni Day 2024

From the afternoon of 17th December to the evening of 19th December, at the provincial headquarters in Addis Ababa, the Province celebrated ‘Comboni Day’, the annual event of ongoing formation. Twenty confreres from our eight communities participated.

The invited speakers were Mgr. Lisane-Christos Matheos, Bishop of Bahir Dar-Dessie Eparchy, Mekdem Geremew (PhD), of the Ethiopian Catholic Secretariat, and Father Angelo Giorgetti, General Treasurer.

Father José da Silva Vieira opened the meeting with a reflection on the missionary Heart of Jesus, centred on paragraphs 205-216 of Pope Francis’ latest encyclical, *Dilexit nos*. Each participant received a copy of the encyclical “On the human and divine love of the Heart of Jesus Christ” and had two hours of personal prayer, drawing inspiration from the text. The day’s activities concluded with the celebration of Holy Mass.

The following morning, Mgr. Lisane-Christos reported on the situation in Bahir Dar-Dessie, sharing his experience as the first bishop of the new eparchy. The territory is suffering greatly from insecurity and conflict for over the past twenty months. He expressed his desire that the Ethiopian rite be used in all parishes of the eparchy and that the time of the catechumenate be reduced to six months.

The Comboni missionaries have two communities in the eparchy, among the Gumuz people: Gilgel Beles and Gublak.

In the afternoon, Mekdem presented the Ten-Year Plan of the Ethiopian Catholic Church for the period 2023-2032. The document intends to guide and coordinate the efforts of the General Secretariat, dioceses and religious congregations to strive “towards its vision and mission” and achieve sustainability through responsibility, adaptation and resilience. The implementation of the Plan is divided into three periods of three years each. The last year will be dedicated to evaluation. The Episcopal Conference is working with the government to obtain recognition as a ‘legal person’. The Eucharist concluded the day.

The third day was animated by Father Giorgetti. He first presented a very interesting reflection on finances starting from the 2022 Chapter Acts. Then he informed the assembly about the financial status of the Institute and the Province. He also witnessed the change of the provincial treasurer, after having verified the accounts.

In the afternoon, after a session with all the participants, Father Giorgetti met with the treasurers of the communities for practical questions.

The Provincial Superior, Father Weldeghiorghis Asfaha Yohannes, presided over the closing Eucharist, followed by a dinner and a social. (*Father José Vieira, mccj*)

ITALIA

Relic of Comboni at S. Maria in Organo – Verona

On 3rd December 2024, the liturgical memorial of Saint Francis Xavier, the patron saint of missions, Msgr. Domenico Pompili, bishop of Verona, placed a relic of Saint Daniel Comboni in the parish church of Santa Maria in Organo, in Piazza Isolo, in front of the monument to Comboni. The initiative for this ceremony was born within the parish community, which asked to have in its church a tangible sign of the holy missionary, who had special relations with it. He, in fact, attended the nearby diocesan seminary; in Via Seminario, on the corner of Porta Organa, he purchased, in 1871, the house for his male Institute and in 1872, for the female Institute, the current building of the Mother House of the Pie Madri della Nigri- zia, today the Comboni Missionary Sisters. The building, which has the shape of a large cloister, is attached to the church and was inhabited for five centuries, until the early 1800s, by the Olivetan Benedictine monks. From this proximity of Comboni to the church of Santa Maria in Organo, it is easily deduced that he celebrated Mass and preached there several times.

Now, the relic of the holy Founder of the Comboni family extends the bonds of missionary brotherhood to other nearby parishes, in Veronetta, as the parish priest of the area emphasised. Present at the celebration were diocesan priests, numerous Combonians (priests, brothers, sisters, seculars and lay people) and a good number of parishioners.

In his homily, Bishop Domenico highlighted the two great missionary saints celebrated that day, Francis Xavier and Daniel Comboni, pioneers and promoters of evangelisation in Asia and Africa. At the end of the joyful ceremony, Father Eliseo Tacchella, superior of the Mother House, thanked the bishop and all those present (*Father Romeo Ballan, mcccj*).

MOÇAMBIQUE

Young Combonians of Mozambique meet at Nampula

Ten young missionaries from the Province met from 19th to 22nd November, at the novitiate community of St. Francis Xavier in Nampula. The first three days were dedicated to the themes of ongoing formation, planned by Fr. António Manganhe, the current master of novices. Sister Raquel Mariano de Souza, of the Sisters of Jesus the Good Shepherd (Pastorelles) led the reflection on the first day on the theme 'Echoes of Synodality'. With the help of some biblical and cultural references, Sister Raquel began by recalling the experiences of synodality that each one has had in the course of their life – walking together and listening to each other – and then presented a summary of the five parts that make up the Final Document of the XVI General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on Synodality. To delve deeper into the theme, two groups were formed which afterwards shared in a plenary session the various reflections and personal, community and pastoral experiences. The theme of the second day was 'Lifestyle, transparency and sustainability'. The participants tried to reflect starting from their personal lives and the current reality of the communities of the Province and the Institute.

The theme of the third day was 'Prayer, the source and support of our apostolate and our missionary vocation', starting from the testimony of St. Daniel Comboni and his Writings. In particular, it was emphasised that there must always be a healthy balance between personal and community prayer life and pastoral life.

On the morning of the last day, 22nd November, a Eucharist of thanksgiving was celebrated, presided over by Father Manganhe, the provincial head of ongoing formation. Other confreres in formation, some sisters, neighbours and friends of the novitiate community participated in the celebration.

The missionaries then visited the Comboni community and the Industrial Technical Institute of Carapira, with a visit to the famous beach of Chocas-Mar, in Mossuril, where the first Comboni missionaries who arrived in Mozambique settled at the end of 1946 (*Fr. António Natal Manganhe, mccj and deacon Sérgio Vilanculo, mccj*).

PCA

Costa Rica: Continental Assembly of Missionary Animation

The Continental Assembly of Missionary Animation took place in San José, Costa Rica, from 3rd to 6th December. The fourteen participants gathered at the pastoral house of the diocese of Alajuela, in the province of the same name.

First of all, we had the opportunity to delve deeper into the theme of missiology with the help of Father Jafet Peytrequín Ugalde, national director of the PMS of Costa Rica, who, after participating in CAM6, came to share with us his vision of missionary congresses in America, especially this last one, which urges us to energetically resume missionary animation in the local Churches so as to live the mission *ad gentes* with greater commitment.

Father Fernando González Galarza, general secretary of the mission, recalled the conclusions of the General Assembly of Missionary Animation that took place in Rome last April, inviting us to a greater 'incurSION' into digital media and to seek more qualified collaboration, involving the laity in our missionary service.

Monsignor Vittorino Girardi reviewed the capitular documents that remind us of the commitment to missionary animation and cited, in this regard, other documents of the Church, reminding us of the famous phrase from the Puebla documents in which the Church of America is invited to give missionaries to the world from its poverty.

Finally, Monsignor Bartolomé Buigues Oller, bishop of the diocese that hosted us, presented an overview of the missionary dimension in the Churches of Costa Rica that are increasingly engaged in this important task of the universal Church.

After the reflections, we began to concretise the continental plan of missionary animation, which is an update of the previous one and which pushes us to renew our commitment to spread the passion for the mission towards the people of God, seeing ourselves as missionary animators in synodality, in the style of St. Daniel Comboni, and to work in communion, participation and collaboration. The assembly concluded on December 6

at the feet of Our Lady of the Angels, at her national sanctuary, in Car-tago. (*Father Héctor Peña, mccj*)

PERU

Brother Kuno Stösser completes seventy years of religious life

On Sunday, 8th December, the second Sunday of Advent and the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, with great joy and deep gratitude to God our Father, we celebrated the gift of the missionary vocation of Brother Kuno Stösser. The chapel of the provincial house in Monterrico, Lima, was filled with friends of the community, neighbours, friends of Brother Kuno and religious sisters who worked with him over the years. At the end of the Mass, he addressed the following words to us:

«I only want to offer you a brief summary of my life in Peru. 70 years have passed since my first vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Religious life is a calling from God, a grace and a privilege to which we must respond. This anniversary is a day of thanksgiving to God, but also of asking for forgiveness for everything that was not perfect in my fulfilment of the vows. Even after becoming religious, we remain people exposed to temptations and especially to selfishness.

«I made my first vows on 8th December 1954, exactly 100 years after the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception by Pope Pius IX, on the same day in 1854. Four years later, on 11th February 1858, Our Lady appeared in Lourdes, saying, “I am the Immaculate Conception”.

«In 1955, my superiors sent me to Peru. A few months earlier, they had asked me to learn to cook because, in addition to becoming a community companion of the parish priest of the new parish of San Pio X in Mirones, Lima, I would also be his cook.

«When in 1958 Pius XII erected the new prefecture nullius of Tarma, entrusting it to the congregation of the Missionary Sons of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (MFSC), Father Anton Kühner was chosen to govern it (It would later become the diocese of Tarma-Cerro de Pasco) and he asked me to accompany him on his trips to get to know the new prelature, then completely unknown to us.

«In 1964, Father Kühner was ordained bishop and entrusted me with building the seminary of Tarma. I liked the idea very much and, from that moment, I also began to design and build chapels, churches and parish houses in the Tarma area, then, following the official parameters for architectural projects, I also built the large churches of Huánuco and Tarma.

«In 1979 I went to Rome to participate in the general chapter that sanctioned the ‘reunification’ of the two branches of the Institute (FSCJ and

MFSC). After the chapter, I was assigned to the province of Germany, appointed to the community of Bamberg.

«At the end of 1980, Msgr. Kühner who was appointed bishop of Huánuco in July of that year, asked me to return to Huánuco to finish the construction of his residence. In 1984, I was again sent to Lima, to the provincial headquarters in Monterrico, to finish the construction of the new postulancy. Since then, I have not moved from Lima.

«The most necessary thing for a religious is to fulfil his daily duties, to be faithful to the prayers of each day, such as the Eucharist, lauds, visits to the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel, vespers, the rosary and evening prayers, and to attend the annual spiritual retreat.

«Every day we receive numerous graces from God, even if we do not realise it; like the sun that rises every morning, even if we do not see it. Today I want to renew my vows, and I intend to do so until the end of my life. Thank you to all of you who wanted to be close to me on this feast with your prayers. I ask you to continue praying for me.

«To conclude, I can only say: O God, may my life be a song of gratitude to you, for your love, your goodness and your mercy».

Joy and gratitude were redoubled on December 23, when Brother Kuno turned 94. (*Father Nelson Mitchell, mcccj*)

PORTUGAL

VII LCM General Assembly

From 9th to 15th December 2024, the VII General Assembly of the Lay Comboni Missionaries (LCM) was held at the house of the Comboni community in Maia. The motto of the assembly was '*All together for the mission*'.

The 29 participants – 20 LCM and 9 Comboni missionaries – came from 16 countries on three continents: Africa (9), America (9) and Europe (11). Of the five members of the current Central Committee, the lay people Alberto de la Portilla (Spain) and Marco Piccione (Italy) were present, as well as Father Arlindo Pinto (Rome), the contact person of the General Council for the LCM.

The morning of the first day was dedicated to prayer. The opening Mass was presided over by Father Fernando Domingues, Provincial Superior of Portugal.

On Wednesday the 11th, an online meeting was held with the representatives of the General Councils of the Comboni Family. On Thursday afternoon, the participants went on a pilgrimage to the Marian Shrine of Fatima. On Tuesday and Friday, some testimonies of the LCM working in

international communities in Mozambique, Kenya, the Central African Republic, Peru and Brazil were heard online.

The main topics discussed during the Assembly were the following: the presentation of the path taken by each LCM group from the different countries, during the last six years, at all levels (formation, mission, economy, and organisation) and the reflection and approval of the LCM statutes, to be presented to the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life.

On Saturday the 14th, the members of the new Central Committee that will coordinate the LCM for the next six years were elected: Flavio Schmidt, from Brazil, Mukami Anne Muthee, from Kenya, Anna Obyrtacz, from Poland, and Alberto de la Portilla, from Spain, re-elected, who will also continue to be the general coordinator. Father Arlindo Pinto will continue in his role as representative of the General Council.

Alberto, in the statement he addressed to the LCM and to the entire Comboni Family, underlined the hopes born from this new assembly: «An assembly that we hope will help us to mature and deepen our vocation in every corner of the world, and to acquire responsibility in our journey of autonomy at all levels». Regarding his re-election, he added: «I hope it is not only a service of continuity, but of consolidation of the important aspects and progress that we need as an international movement. The true protagonists are each and every one of the CLM, each of our communities and our groups, listening and available to the Holy Spirit».

The work concluded on Saturday evening, 14th December, with the Mass presided over by Father David Domingues, Vicar General. Also, the following day, the Third Sunday of Advent and International Day of the LCM, Father David presided over the Mass in the presence of those participating in the assembly, together with the people of God, in the chapel of the house in Maia.

IN PACE CHRISTI

Father Giuseppe Moschetta (02.09.1935 – 24.08.2024)

Father Giuseppe was born in Farra di Soligo, in the province of Treviso, on 2nd September 1935; he was baptised three days later. He was the first child of Antonio and Orsolina, two convinced and fervent Christians. The atmosphere at home was one of deep faith. Even as a child, Giuseppe loved ‘serving’ mass, and his mother Orsolina, gazed at him and, with the eyes of her mind, already ‘saw’ him as a priest. Everyone in the parish thought that he could really become a priest. So much so that, at the age of eleven, after finishing elementary school, the parish priest

spontaneously 'invited' him to enter the episcopal seminary of Vittorio Veneto. Giuseppe told him that he had been waiting for nothing else.

In the seminary, Giuseppe excelled in his studies. In the 1956-57 school year, he attended the third year of theology and his results were very good: twelve *decem* (10), 2 *novem* (9), only one *octo* (8) in *musico instrumento*, most likely the organ or the harmonium.

But Giuseppe had a secret in his heart. It was revealed in a letter he wrote to the Superior General of the Combonians on 21st September 1956: "For five years I have felt attracted to the missions. At first, I thought it was one of those flashes in the pan, born of sentiment that burn out after a brief flash. But as the years passed the attraction grew stronger, it was supported by theological reasons, and it gradually expressed itself in an urgent obligation to decide."

On 1st October 1957, Giuseppe entered the Combonian novitiate in Gozzano where he attended the fourth and final year of theology. On 1st May 1959, he took his first temporary religious vows. On 28th June 1959, he was ordained a priest by Msgr. Albino Luciani. On 1st January 1960, Father Giuseppe was sent to Mexico, assigned to the Novitiate of Tepèpam, Xochimilco, as a teacher and bursar; from 1963 he was also vice superior. He remained there until the end of June 1966 when he was sent to La Paz, in Baja California, as assistant priest of the parish of St. Anthony. There he spent years that he defined as 'unforgettable', of intense apostolic work and missionary animation. In July 1971, instead, he was assigned to the parish of the cathedral of La Paz, as the person in charge of the apostolate of the laity. In 1975, he went to the postulancy of Xochimilco, Mexico City, to be a formator of the postulants and superior of the Comboni community. He remained there until June 1981.

In the meantime – in 1979 – the Province of Mexico decided to have Comboni points of presence in Central America, particularly in Costa Rica. Father Giuseppe was among the first to accept the commitment to this task. The first community was opened in San José, the capital, in March 1979, as a missionary animation centre. In May, the second community was opened, in Puerto Limón, in the then Apostolic Vicariate of Limón, accepting the management of the parish of Sagrado Corazón de Jesús, where a pastoral animation centre was immediately created.

Father Giuseppe could not leave the postulate of Xochimilco before 1981. Once he found someone who could take his place as formator and superior, he went to Puerto Limón. He was fascinated by it: "The city is very beautiful. Its inhabitants are surprisingly friendly and enjoy a rather high cultural level. But there is a great need for evangelisation or new evangelisation. The area where I began my missionary work starts from the

centre of Limón, includes several peripheral neighbourhoods and goes down along the coastal strip of the Pacific Ocean to the border with Panama. Here the people have only been baptised. Very few have made their first communion, let alone confirmation; almost no one is married in church." A true missionary experience began for Father Giuseppe, which lasted nine years, until December 1990, when he was called to be the formator of postulants in the postulancy that has recently been opened in San José, in the Barrio Sagrada Familia.

While dedicating himself to the work of formation, Father Giuseppe continued to provide his services wherever he was called. He was known as an unsurpassed preacher of spiritual retreats and animator of 'missionary days' for parish groups and for the local clergy. People were starting to really like him. They appreciated him as a preacher and confessor. He was known to everyone for the hours he dedicated to confession after celebrating the Eucharist.

At the end of 1996, his commitment as formator of postulants in the Barrio Sagrada Familia ended. While continuing to hold the position of secretary of the delegation for formation, he agreed to go to the new Centre for Missionary Animation and Vocational Promotion, recently opened in the locality of Paseo Colón, again in San José.

In April 2001, Father Giuseppe was sent to Casares, in Nicaragua, in the diocese of Managua, where the Institute opened the first community in that country. He remained there until January 2005, as head of the missionary animation centre, when he was called back to the postulancy in San José as spiritual director. A year later, he was at the Missionary and Vocation Animation Centre of Paseo Colón, as local superior.

In 2014, when the delegation became the province of Central America, Father Giuseppe was elected provincial councillor, a position he held until the end of December 2019. In September 2015, he was in Rome for the General Chapter, as a delegate of the Province of Central America.

In January 2020, while participating in the annual provincial assembly in Guatemala, he had a cerebral haemorrhage. He was taken to the hospital, where he was stabilised and then spent the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic at Casa Comboni, in Ciudad de Guatemala, where the Institute ran an animation centre, until December, when he was able to return to San José in Costa Rica where he was admired as a man of prayer, even though weakened by the disease and forced into silence.

On 24th August, ten days before his 89th birthday, he died surrounded by the affection and prayers of his brothers.

The funeral was celebrated in the cathedral of the archdiocese of San José, presided over by Archbishop José Rafael Quirós. Concelebrating

with him were also the local auxiliary bishop, Msgr. Daniel Francisco Blanco Méndez, the Comboni bishop emeritus of Tilarán-Liberia, Msgr. Vittorino Girardi, and Msgr. Javier Román, bishop of the diocese of Limón, and a large number of priests and religious. The cathedral was packed with people who came to pay homage to a great missionary. (*Father Franco Moretti, mccc, and confreres of the Provinces of Mexico and Central America*)

Father Paolo Paoli (04.06.1946 – 26.09.2024)

Paolo was born in Urbania, in the province of Pesaro, on 4th June 1946. His father Gino and his mother Nazarena (“Zena”) Faggi had five sons (Paolo was the second) and a daughter. The family was poor. His father was a war invalid and worked as the caretaker of a building. His mother took on the burden of raising the family.

After finishing elementary school, Paolo entered the “Barberini” Episcopal Seminary in Urbania, where he completed the first two years of middle school, showing surprising intelligence. He kept repeating to everyone – classmates and teachers – that he actually wanted to be a missionary. It was the parish priest who put him in contact with the Combonians in Pesaro.

In 1959, he entered the Apostolic School that the Combonians ran in Sulmona. Here he attended the third year of middle school and the two-year period of high school. In September 1962 he went to Carraia (Lucca) for the three-year period of high school. His superior, Father Danilo Castagnedi, gave him a more than positive assessment: “Excellent intellectual qualities, which he has put to good use to mature spiritually as well. He has a strong apostolic sense.” In July 1965 he passed his classical high school exams, taken in Verona, as a private student, at the ‘Alle Stimate’ High School. The doors of the novitiate in Florence opened to Paolo, where he arrived on 10th October of the same year.

For the scholasticate, he was sent to Rome, where on 15th October 1967, he enrolled at the Urbaniana University. In June 1969, he obtained a Bachelor’s Degree in Sacred Theology *summa cum laude*. On 9th September 1970, he made his perpetual religious profession. On 12th April 1971, he was ordained a priest in the cathedral of Urbania, by the hands of Archbishop Anacleto Cazzaniga. He returned to Rome to complete his theological studies, and on 22nd June 1971, he obtained a Licentiate in Sacred Theology *magna cum laude*.

The Comboni seminaries needed professors and educators, and Father Paolo was assigned to the province of Italy and appointed to the Apostolic School of Pesaro. He remained there until June 1976, when he received

the letter of assignment to Ethiopia. In September, he was already in London, at Comboni House in Dawson Place, to study English.

In June 1977, he was ready to leave. He was waiting for the green light from Rome, where they were working to get him a permit to enter and work in Ethiopia (not an easy task). Finally, in September 1978, he was able to take a plane to Addis Ababa. The provincial, Father Lorenzo Ceresoli, accompanied him to Asmara, where Comboni College was located, run by the Comboni Fathers: a large structure that included primary and secondary schools and also the Comboni High School, which every year is consistently at the top of the national rankings for its university entrance exam results. The postulancy was also located there. For a few months Father Paolo threw himself into learning the local language, Tigrinya, but immediately took on the role of formator of the postulants, teacher and professor in the College. In June 1981, he went home to Italy for holidays, returning to Asmara at the beginning of October. In 1982, with the dramatic changes caused by the Derg (the military junta that tyrannised Ethiopia and Eritrea from 1974 to 1991), all the Catholic schools were nationalised, with the irreparable loss of the University of Asmara, founded and managed by the Comboni Sisters. At the beginning of 1985, the postulancy was moved to Addis Ababa.

In July 1985, Father Paolo was assigned to Arramo, in southern Ethiopia, among the Gedeo ethnic group, in the diocese of Hawassa. Before reaching Arramo, he stopped for a few months in Addis Ababa for a course in the Amharic language. In Arramo, he was first assistant priest and director of the mission school and then he was also placed in charge of the small schools present in the parish territory.

Given the good work done in Arramo, in July 1987 the superiors assigned him to the mission-parish of Tullo, as superior of the Comboni community and director-in-charge of the schools. He had a truly extraordinary approach to the schools: thousands of schoolchildren and pupils adored him; their teachers respected him and waited for his visit to talk to him, explain the problems they had encountered, and he patiently listened and helped everyone. In 1994 he was appointed superior of the local Comboni community.

In February 1997, he was assigned to the province of Italy. Always obediently available, he hoped (and continued to ask) to return to Ethiopia. After a short family vacation, he went to Messina, where the Combonians had a large community (of six confreres) dedicated to missionary animation, vocation promotion and ministry among the youth. He remained there until November 1999, when the provincial, Father Francesco Antolini, proposed that he be transferred to the community of Trento, again

for the ministry of missionary animation and for pastoral service in the nearby rectory.

Finally, in September 2003 he was able to return to Ethiopia. Father Corrado Masini, provincial superior of Ethiopia, assigned him to Fullasa, in the diocese of Hawassa, as superior of the community.

In March 2007, he was assigned to Teticcia. A few months later, he was appointed superior of the local community. His main attention, however, continued to centre on the schools: he visited them regularly, asked the teachers if there were urgent needs, listened, took notes and promised that he would do everything to please them. And he always kept his promises. He had many friends in Urbania, who were just waiting to help him. In October 2008, he moved to the parish of Dongora, where the Diocesan Pastoral Centre was located, as superior. In August 2015, he was assigned to the mission-parish of Daye, as director of the school. He came to love this school more than any other, developing it and raising the standard of teaching. The school eventually hosted 1,300 pupils and students, of whom Father Paolo was very fond. Here he decided to stay until the end of his days. He also thought of being buried here. On 1 March 2016, he was appointed superior of the local community.

On 12th April 2021, the confreres of Daye and the neighbouring communities organised a big celebration for the 50th anniversary of Father Paolo's priesthood.

During the first months of 2024, Father Paolo began to feel unwell. In August, he was admitted to hospital in Pesaro, where he underwent surgery. Further tests revealed that a tumour in the metastatic stage, which had already reached the brain. Father Paolo agreed to be transferred to Castel d'Azzano, to the 'Fratel Alfredo Fiorini' Centre. On September 26, 2024, he died. On September 28, a funeral mass was celebrated in the chapel of the Centre, presided over by Father Giovanni Munari, superior of the Centre.

On September 29, Father Paolo's body remained for the entire day in the church of the Santissimo Crocifisso in Urbania. On the 30th, the funeral was celebrated in the cathedral presided over by the bishop. (*Father Franco Moretti, mccj*)

Father Giuseppe Ceriani (03.08.1935 – 17.11.2024)

Giuseppe was born on August 3, 1935, in Verona. He attended primary school at the local school and became a very faithful altar boy at morning mass. Even during the three years of middle school, he did not stop serving at the altar. He then enrolled at the 'Anton Maria Lorgna' State Commercial Technical Institute in Verona, where on July 16, 1954, he

obtained a diploma in accounting and commerce and immediately found work in a bank not far from home.

In 1951, a new parish, Santa Maria Assunta, was founded, led by Don Bruno Trezza, who invited Giuseppe to become an animator of youth groups. The boy was enthusiastic and proved to be a great leader of young people, especially through the organisation of sports competitions (especially soccer).

He met various Comboni missionaries; one day, for the monthly meeting of the missionary group, Father Egidio Ramponi, the founder of the Secular Institute of the Comboni Missionaries, showed up. Giuseppe was fascinated and asked him to become his spiritual father.

On 15th May 1960, Giuseppe entered the novitiate in Gozzano (Novara). On 9th September 1962, he took temporary vows. On 9th September 1965, he made his perpetual religious profession and on 28th June 1966, he was ordained a priest. He asked to leave immediately for the mission but his superiors other plans: they assigned him to the Comboni Region of Milan, as a “vocations promoter” for the apostolic houses of Brescia, Barolo, Crema, and Rebbio.

In 1971, he was assigned to Uganda. In 1977, upon his return to Italy, he was sent to Pesaro, where the apostolic school had been closed, but a vocations animation centre had been created. Officially, he was a vocations animator, but he continued to call himself a “recruiter.”

In 1981, he was assigned to the province of Kenya. In September 1986, Father Giuseppe returned to Italy for a sabbatical year. He first went to the Verona Centre for the Sick at the Mother House, for medical examinations and tests.

At the beginning of July 1987, Father Giuseppe went to Katilu, the only mission that the Combonians have in Turkana, in the semi-desert north-west of Kenya. The new assignment involved a change of language: English and Kiswahili were no longer enough; it was necessary to learn the local language, Turkana, which is extremely difficult. Father Giuseppe was not upset: “To announce Jesus and speak of God’s love, you don’t need to be an expert in a language: simple sentences, a few words... and many deeds of love and charity are enough.”

In Katilu he suffered from numerous attacks of malaria. In mid-1988, it was particularly serious. He was taken to a hospital in Nairobi where he arrived in poor condition but, little by little, he recovered and returned to Katilu. He remained there until the end of June 1989 when he was sent to the new Catholic Youth Centre in Nairobi.

In 1990, he was assigned to the province of Italy. Father Giuseppe obeyed. After the conclusion of his sabbatical year in Rome, he went to the Comboni Missionary Animation Centre in Trento.

But his wish was to return to Africa and it was granted. Before leaving, however, his superiors to have a check-up since his health had already been put to the test during his previous services in Africa. Although his health was not perfect, in mid-July 1997 he went to Nairobi. Two days later he was assigned to the community of Rongai, in the diocese of Nakuru.

In 2016, he went to Italy on holiday after which he was “waiting for an appointment”, champing at the bit. For a while, he accepted a ministry service at the rectory of San Tomio in Verona.

For Father Giuseppe, there would be no more departures for Africa. In 2017 he retired to the Mother House, assigned to ministry in the parishes. In July 2018 he is at the Sick Assistance Centre in Brescia, undergoing treatment. On 1st March 2020 he was taken to the ‘Fratel Alfredo Fiorini’ Centre in Castel d’Azzano.

In November 2024, his health took a turn for the worse. He was taken to Borgo Roma Hospital, but the doctors could do nothing more than give him palliative care until the end which came on the 17th.

The funeral was held on Thursday, the 21st, at the parish church of Santa Maria Assunta, Golosine. Then, his remains were accompanied to the central cemetery of the city. (*Father Franco Moretti, mcccj*)

LET US PRAY FOR OUR BELOVED DEAD

THE FATHER: Bernardo Joaquim, of Monsignor António Manuel Bogaio Constantino (MO).

THE MOTHERS: Angelica, of Father Gerardo Oviedo Casillas (PE); Teresina, of Brother Claudio Parotti (I).

THE BROTHERS: Ponciano, of Father Moises Albarina (A); Mario, of Brother Silvano Bergamini (I).

THE COMBONI MISSIONARY SISTERS: Sr. Maria Adela González Rodríguez (E); Sr. Benvenuta Frattini (I); Sr. Faiza Teresina Foad Guergues (EG).