

## Assembly of the confreres in charge of Ongoing Formation

– *Message to the Confreres* –



Dear confreres,

at the end of two weeks (from 17<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> June), filled with intense work and joyful fraternity, we wish first of all to thank the Lord, for having given us this providential opportunity in our journey through the life of the Institute, but also the team of the General Secretariat of Formation who prepared and coordinated the Assembly.

With this short message, we want to share with all of you a little of what we experienced during the two weeks, certain that what we learnt will bear good fruit in all the Comboni circumscriptions, and beyond.

The presence of more than thirty Combonian missionaries from all continents filled our hearts with joy and now allows us to return to our commitments full of hope. Alongside a large group of authentic "wise men", rich in years of missionary life and with a great knowledge-experience of the history of our Institute, there was also a good group of younger and very active confreres, and this gave rise to a true "communion of cultures", a visible and concrete sign of a continuous formative experience, destined to last a lifetime.

The reflection of the first few days, aided and animated by some experts, allowed us to enter more deeply into today's vision of Formation in the Church and in Consecrated Life. We reread the path taken by our Institute through the various General Chapters and the related guiding documents they have drawn up.

We all feel that we share the same passion that spurs us to make our missionary life a true journey of personal and community formation, which is rooted in the paths lived during initial formation and continues to grow over the years in a permanent process of discernment made up of missionary work, prayer, study, fraternal life, and personal interiority.

We are all aware of the fatigue and fragility that, at times, accompany the “ordinariness” of our journeys. Hence the need for Ongoing Formation to truly become a dynamic process capable of animating our every day.

We have realised that, along with the "extraordinary" Ongoing Formation initiatives (courses at the central level, assemblies, spiritual exercises, meetings at various levels... in the various circumscriptions), what most sustains our missionary journey is, in truth, the “daily journey” of ongoing formation, both at the personal and community levels.

We are invited to assume an attitude of “docibilitas”, that is, that willingness that commits us to learn from the experiences we live, enriched by discerning history and events, deepened in the vital encounter with the Word of God in a personal and community *lectio divina*. This willingness to continue “always growing” is the path that puts us in tune with the "dream" Comboni had for his missionaries: that they would all be "holy and capable".

Inspired by the *Chapter Acts* that the 19<sup>th</sup> General Chapter gave us, and in deepening the priorities suggested by it, we have drawn up “*concrete proposals*” as to implement “paths of ongoing formation” – proposals that, once back home, we wish to share in our circumscriptions, so that the six-year plans, now being drawn up, will not fail to indicate also the basic choices and concrete programmes necessary for the path of personal and community growth in a formation that continues throughout life and concerns us all, young and old.

We have had the opportunity to learn more about the journey of the Institute. Thanks to the interesting and enriching contributions (“in-puts”) offered to us by the Superior General and his Council, as well as by the General Secretaries, we realised that we form an Institute that is called to always try to be as faithful as possible to the charism of the Founder, in the most diverse situations, often difficult and challenging, still present in the continents where we are and operate.

In particular, we felt in deep communion with our confreres in Sudan, especially in prayer, asking for the intercession of St Daniel Comboni, so that the land he loved so much and for which he gave his life may return to live in true peace.

Fraternally,

The confreres participating in the General Assembly of Ongoing Formation

Rome, 29<sup>th</sup> June 2023

Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul