

Fr. Francesco Chemello mccj

The
COMBONI MISSIONARIES
IN
SOUTH SUDAN

An Outline History

Comboni Missionaries
South Sudan Province
- Juba -



FONDAZIONE NIGRIZIA ONLUS
2017

Front cover picture

Artist: Bro. Francesco Ragnoli; view of the front of the church at the Comboni House in Juba.

The image symbolizes Mgr. Daniel Comboni, first Bishop of Khartoum, in the act of handing over the Apostolic Ring to his first Sudanese successor of that very seat, Archbishop Gabriel Zubeir Wako. It is the fulfilment of his plan, ***The Regeneration of Africa by Africans Themselves***, which has now become true.




The consecration of Bishop Ireneo Dud in Wau Cathedral on 20 November, 1955, the erection of the Sudanese Hierarchy on 12 December, 1974 and the taking possession of the seat of Khartoum by Archbishop Gabriel Zubeir Wako on 10 October, 1981, are indelible milestones in the process.

Back cover pictures

1. The first junior seminary in Okaru 1928; a witness to the Comboni Missionaries' first priority: the formation of local clergy.
2. Moroyok, Juba: the Comboni Pre-Postulancy: the Local Church of South Sudan was now open to the proclamation of the Gospel to the world.
3. In the footsteps of Fr. Barnaba Deng, the first Sudanese Comboni Martyr. ***Fr. Barnaba Deng Formation House***, Moroyok.
4. 150th Anniversary of the Comboni Institute.

Printed by Don Bosco Printing Press, P.O. Box 158, 01020 Makuyu (Kenya)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title and Publisher	i
Front-back page description	ii
Table of Contents	iii
PART ONE: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	iv
Section one: the first missionary endeavour (1846-1899)	iv
Section two: the second missionary endeavour for the South (1900-1964)	iv
Section three: keeping the mission alive (1964-1981)	vi
PART TWO: THE HISTORY OF THE CIRCUMSCRIPTION	viii
Introduction and brief history of Circumscription (1981-2017) ...	viii
Section one: - headquarters in Juba (1981-1994)	viii
Chapter One: Fr. Raffaele Cefalo (1981-1984)	viii
Chapter Two: Fr. Cesare Mazzolari (1984-1989)	ix
Chapter Three: Fr. Abel Mödi Nyörkö & New Sudan Group (1990-1994)	x
Section two: Headquarters in Nairobi (1995-2004)	xi
Chapter one: Fr. Francesco Chemello (1995-1998)	xi
Chapter two: Fr. Ezio Bettini (1999-2004)	xii
Section three: Return to Juba. Headquarters in Juba	xiv
Chapter One: Fr. Luciano Perina (2005-2010)	xiv
Chapter Two: Fr. Daniele Moschetti (2011-2016)	xv
Chapter three: Fr. Louis Okot Tony Ochermoi (2017-2019) ..	xvii
APPENDIX	xviii
	
Abbreviations - Indications	xix
Main Bibliography	xxii
	
Presentation by the Provincial Superior, 2011-2016	
Fr. Daniele Moschetti	xxvii
Foreword	xxxii
Introductory Notes	xxxv
	

PART ONE

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

to the Circumscription of South Sudan (1846-1891)	1
---	---

SECTION ONE

The first missionary endeavour in the Sudan (1846-1899)	1
The Institution of the Vicariate of Central Africa	2
The “Stella Matutina” Vessel	5
After Mgr. Knoblecher	7
Daniel Comboni: first trip to the South	9
The Shilluk	10
The Dinka	12
The Nuer	13
Holy Cross	14
The Bari tribe of Gondokoro	15
Evaluation of the Holy Cross Mission	15
COMBONI’S VISION: TO EVANGELIZE AFRICA	17
Comboni Institutions: in Italy and Cairo	20
In Cairo, Egypt, Fr. Comboni founded three Institutes	21
The “ <i>Postulatum pro Nigris Africae Centralis</i> ”	23
Comboni Pragmatism and Vision for the Future	24
Changes within the Institute for the African Missions	29
The FSCJ Congregation	30
Britain’s Southern Policy	30

SECTION TWO

The second missionary endeavour for the South	
up to the expulsion (1900-1964)	33
A new Start (1900-1913)	33
Mgr. Antonio Maria Roveggio (1858-1902)	35
Franz Xaver Geyer (1860-1943)	35
To Civilize or to Evangelize? Gayer vs. Vignato	36
Silvestri Paolo Tranquillo (1867-1949)	37
Apostolic Vicariate of Central Africa (1846-1913)	37
Ordinaries of the Vicariate of Central Africa	37
Divisions of the Vicariate of Central Africa	38
The Apostolic Vicariates (1913-1964).....	38

From Khartoum to the South	38
The Apostolic Vicariate of Khartoum	39
Ordinaries	39
The Apostolic Prefecture of Bahr el Ghazal (from 1913)	39
Ordinaries	39
The Apostolic Prefecture of Bahr el Jebel (from 1927)	41
Ordinaries	41
The Mission Sui Juris of Kodok	42
Ordinaries	43
The Apostolic Prefecture of Mupoi	43
Ordinaries	44
The Apostolic Vicariate of Rumbek	44
Ordinaries	44
Comboni Institute and Superior Generals	45
Comboni Superiors of Mission/Regionals (1913-1964)	45
Bahr el Ghazal (from 1913)	45
Bahr el Jebel (from 1927)	46
Mupoi (from 1949)	47
Kodok	48
Comboni Regional Superiors at the expulsion 1964	48
Reflection of the period 1900-1964	48
Missionary Methodology	49
Formation of the Catechists	50
Formation of Priests	51
Foundation of Religious Institutes of Men and Women	52
Inculturation	54
Fr. Pasquale Crazzolaro	54
Fr. Filiberto Giorgetti	55
Fr. Stefano Santandrea	57
Fr. Arturo Nebel	58
The Comboni Brothers	59
The Comboni Sisters: "The Devout Mothers of Africa"	61
Missionary Spirituality	63
The Progress of the Catholic Mission in the Sudan	63
Religious and Ecclesiastic Authority	65
The expulsion of the Comboni Missionaries	66
6 March, 1964: the good bye	67
A pastoral letter from the expelled Bishops 1965	68
Missions operating by the time of the expulsion	70
Southern Sudan: Statistics	74

SECTION THREE

Keeping the mission alive to prepare a better future (1964-1981)	75
The Historical Context 1964-1981: an overall view	75
The Catholic Ordinaries in 1964, after the expulsion	75
THE CHURCH IN SOUTHERN SUDAN	76
1964-1981 International Political Scene	77
Celebration of the Second Vatican Council in Rome	79
The Mission of the Church: <i>Ad Gentes Divinitus</i>	81
Visit of Pope Paul VI to Uganda	81
RCIA the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adult: 1972	82
Evangelii Nuntiandi: 8 December, 1975	83
Mutuae Relationes Bishops-Religious: 14 May, 1978	84
Catechesi Tradendae: 16 October, 1979	86
The Moratorium on Mission	87
Moratorium: Protestants and Catholics understanding	90
The Comboni Missionaries	92
Inculturation	93
THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES IN S. SUDAN 1964-1981	95
The Sudanese Comboni Students in Formation	96
The Scholastics	96
The Brothers	97
All the Sudanese Radical Members	97
The last days of Fr. Barnaba Deng	99
Diocesan Priests Martyrs	100
Fr. Arkangelo Konogo Ali	100
Saturnino Ohure	101
Fr. Leopoldo Anywar	102
Time of displacement and exile: care of Refugees	102
Kilomines Seminary	103
Agbosi Parish	103
Mboki Parish	103
Pakele Parish	104
Statistics 1969	104
The Sudanese Radical Members' new assignments	105
The Region of Khartoum and Southern Sudan	106
The Combonis and a Community in Nzara	110
Comboni approaches to be adopted and implemented	113
THE TIME FROM 1972 TO 1981	114
The Addis Ababa Agreement: the reaction of confreres	114

The Return of the Expatriate Comboni Missionaries	116
The work of the Sudanese Comboni Radical Members	119
Nzara	119
Kapoeta	119
Shared experience of Fr. Abel Mödi Nyörkö	121
The Extraordinary Sudan Episcopal Conference and Priorities	122
Seminaries	122
Education	123
Reconstruction of the South	124
Ecumenism	124
Pastoral issues	125
Moving ahead	126
Fr. Louis Lotimoi Nyabanga	129
The Issue of the Permits and the Jonglei Canal	130
The situation of the Comboni Missionaries in the South	131
The Erection of the Catholic Hierarchy 1974	133
The Catholic Hierarchy of Sudan.....	134
Homily of the Superior General Fr. Tarcisio Agostoni	135
Comboni personnel 1974-1975 and other initiatives	136
Ecclesiastic Situation in the South 1975	137
Growing Comboni Commitment in the South	139
Comboni Missionaries' primary focus	141
The Schools in Juba	142
January 1978: the communities in the South	143
Comboni Missionaries: commitment to renewal	144
Relationship between Ordinaries and Religious	145
The Comboni House in Juba	146
The Extraordinary General Chapter 1979	147
June 1980: the communities in the South	149
Commitments in the Dioceses	151
Archdiocese of Juba	151
Diocese of Wau	152
Diocese of Tombura	153
Diocese of Rumbek	154
Diocese of Malakal	154
The issue of the separation of the South from Kh. Region	155
The end of the seventies: an overall view	157
The Centenary of Comboni's Death	159

PART TWO

THE HISTORY OF THE COMBONI MISSIONARY

CIRCUMSCRIPTION OF SOUTH SUDAN 161

Introduction and brief history of the Circumscription (1981-2017) 161

PART TWO: Outline 164

The Circumscription from 1981 to 1994 165

SECTION ONE:

Headquarters in Juba (Sudan) 167

CHAPTER ONE

THE CIRCUMSCRIPTION From 1981 to 1984. *Representative /*

Delegate Superior: FR. RAFFAELE CEFALO 167

Preparing for the First Delegation of South Sudan: 1981 168

The Centenary Year of Comboni's Death: 1981 168

New juridical status and the "Opera Significativa" 168

Fr. Raffaele Cefalo: "Superior General's Special Representative" .. 169

Fr. Raffaele Cefalo (1981-1984) 171

Fr. Cefalo in Juba: June 1981 172

Temporary residence at "Hai Jallaba" 172

Church Ordinaries in May, 1981 173

Comboni personnel on 15 June, 1981 173

The First steps "ad experimentum" 174

Looking for a plot for Comboni House 175

Fr. Cefalo's wider activity 176

The Plan of Action 177

Adjusting the terminology and the plan of action 177

A new kind of relationship 181

Other meaningful events 181

The Celebrations of the Centenary of Comboni's Death 182

Juba: the Centenary and the CSSJ Foundation stone 183

Comboni personnel and communities on 1 January, 1982 184

Getting into the situation 188

"Safari" to Rumbek, Wau and Bussere 188

"Safari" to Malakal and Tonga 188

Relevant events 189

SCBC Retreat and Renewal Course 189

Meeting of Priests in Juba and Presbyteral Council	189
The regrettable incident of Maridi	190
Great need of missionary presence in Malakal Diocese	190
Comboni House and Comboni Secondary School, Juba	191
Fr. Pierli's comments to the minutes of the IV Council	192
First Visit of Fr. Salvatore Calvia, Sup. Gen. and the General Assembly	192
The Logistics and further events	194
The Comboni Postulancy and National Seminary	195
Fr. Cefalo on safari: the SCBC meets in Mupoi	196
Khartoum: Meeting of Men Religious Superiors	196
Agenda and Minutes of Men Religious Superiors	197
Comboni Plan of Action 1982-1985, Khartoum Province	198
Distribution of Personnel in the Sudan	199
AMECEA STATISTICS	200
Talk of Archbishop Gabriel Zubeir Wako	201
Comboni communities reorganized: September, 1982	204
The "Representation of South Sudan becomes a "DELEGATION .	205
Fr. Salvatore Calvia, Sup. Gen., at the SCBC in Wau	205
Letter of the Superior General to Archbishop Ireneo Dud	206
The Superior General's letter: main points	206
Letter of the Fr. General to the confreres of S. Sudan	209
Comboni personnel in Southern Sudan, January 1983	210
Appointment of the Superior of the Delegation	211
Commitments in Juba, Tombura, Rumbek, Wau, Malakal	213
1983 - Changes in the Political-Military Arena	216
The Delegation within the Archdiocese of Juba	219
Newly appointed Ordinaries	221
Archdiocese of Juba	
H.G. Paolino Lukudu Loro: Homily on his Enthronement.....	222
H.G. Paolino Lukudu Loro: "The Policy Speech"	223
H.G. Paolino Lukudu Loro and the Comboni Missionaries	226

CHAPTER TWO

THE CIRCUMSCRIPTION From 1984 to 1989. <i>Delegate / Provincial Superior: FR. CESARE MAZZOLARI</i>	229
South Sudan Delegation: New Elections	229
Comboni personnel and Communities on 1 October, 1984	232
Commitment with the Apostles of Jesus	235

Worsening insecurity	236
The National Eucharistic Congress	237
The Province of South Sudan is born:1985	239
Joint meeting of the SCBC and RSAS at Juba, 22 April, 1985	240
Opening talk of Archbishop Gabriel Zubeir	241
Bilateral Agreements Dioceses – Religious Institutes	245
Guidelines <i>inspiring a bilateral agreement</i>	246
Some reflections on the meeting SCBC-RSAS 1985	246
The Comboni in this <i>process of growth</i>	248
Position the Church and new Government of the Sudan	249
Events of the year 1985 and the General Chapter of the MCCJ	251
10 October, 1985: Daniel Comboni Day	254
Mgr. Pellerino and Fr. Cefalo hostages of SPLA	254
Year 1986: other events	257
Opening of the Comboni Pre-Postulancy in Munuki	258
Fr. Peter Magalasi shares his experience	260
Other sharing from elder Sudanese Combonis	262
Comboni personnel in 1987	262
Year 1987 unfolding	265
The Teaching Brothers of St. Martin De Porres	269
Year 1988	271
Year 1989	272
Situation in Malakal, Rumbek, Wau, Tombura, Yei and Torit	274
Letter to the expelled confreres in 1960-64	276
Some hints on the SPLA guerrilla situation-1988-1989	278
Election of the New Provincial	279

CHAPTER THREE

THE CIRCUMSCRIPTION From 1990 to 1994. *Provincial Superior:*

FR. ABEL MÖDI NYÖRKÖ	281
South Sudan Province: New Elections 1990	281
Handing over of office of the Provincial	281
Comboni personnel and Communities on 1 January, 1990	282
Visit of Bro. Giuseppe Menegotto	285
Proposed Procure in Khartoum	288
Difficult task of Fr. Abel Mödi Nyörkö	290
The South Sudan Province and its situation in 1990	291
SPLA captures Western Equatoria	293
The “New Sudan Group”: the institution	295

Preparing for the General Chapter 1991	298
Report of the Province to the General Chapter	298
The Archdiocese of Juba: report to the General Chapter 1991	307
The “New Sudan Group”: juridical status	309
Strengthening the “New Sudan Group”	309
Relationship with SPLA/M	311
New Personnel for the “New Sudan Group”	311
Khartoum’s dry season military offensive against the SPLA	313
“We will be with the South Sudanese people”	316
Events in Juba,	318
Diocesan Priests targeted	322
Effect of Juba peaceful demonstration and SPLA operation	323
Wau and Raja	325
The “New Sudan Group” to remain one	327
Out through one door - in through another one	328
New Sudan group: personnel by 10 March 1993	331
The years 1993 and 1994	332
Plenary Assembly: 12-19 December 1994	334
Fr. Abel Mödi Nyörkö experience (1990-1994)	335
 SECTION TWO: Headquarters in Nairobi (Kenya)	337
Introduction: the Circumscription from 1995 to 2004	337
 CHAPTER ONE	
 THE CIRCUMSCRIPTION From 1995 to 1998. <i>Delegate Superior:</i>	
FR. FRANCESCO CHEMELLO	339
The second South Sudan Delegation, 1995	339
The New Sudan Group becomes a Delegation	339
The “New Sudan Group” and the “New Delegation”	340
Searching for a New Strategy	341
Commitments of the new Delegation	343
Three intense personal experiences of Fr. Chemello	345
Marial Lou experience	346
Leer experience	347
Finding the Delegation House in Jacaranda Avenue	349
Consolidating the existing and starting new missions	350
Priesthood in Sudan: the golden jubilee	352
Year 1996 unfolding	352
Bilateral agreements between the MCCJ and the Ordinaries	356

Assemblies and topics of Evangelization and Formation	356
Plenary Assembly of January, 1996	357
The priorities of the Delegation	359
Important events in 1997	362
At level of Institute	362
At level of Delegation	364
The Postulancy	366
Personnel on 1 January, 1998	367
Commitments 1998	367
Torit Diocese	368
Rumbek Diocese	368
Tombura/Yambio Diocese	368
Malakal Diocese	369
The mission of Leer	369
Nyal	371
Juaibor	371
Yei Diocese	372
Kajo-Kaji Parish	372
Collaboration with other institutes and entities	372
Mccj communities, 1 October, 1998	374

CHAPTER TWO

THE CIRCUMSCRIPTION From 1990 to 1994. Delegate / Provincial Superior: FR. EZIO BETTINI	377
The second Administration in exile	377
Situation of the Communities and Offices in 1999	378
<i>Lomin Parish, Jacaranda, Nzara, Narus, Kocoa, Nyal, Old Fangak,, Rumbek, Mapuordit, Marial Lou, Agang Rial communities</i>	379
Secretariat of Evangelization	383
Vocation Ministry	384
Secretariat of Finance	384
Handing over the office of Delegation Superior	385
The 1999 Assembly, a real opportunity	385
Moving forward: Fr. Bettini's activity in 1999	387
Inherited issues and new perspectives in 1999	388
Fr. Bettini and the concrete reality	389
Pastoral commitments	390
Relationship with other pastoral agents and Com.ty policies ..	391

Situation of the Delegation on 1 January, 2000	392
New opportunities for on-going formation, 1999-2004	395
The Plenary Assembly of year 2000	396
Cross-Culture in the Comboni community	397
War, Justice and Peace and the Initiative of the Institute.....	399
The Six-Year Plan 1999-2004	400
Challenges community by community	401
On a journey until December, 2004	402
Secretariats, Communities and commitments.....	403
Secretariat of Evangelization, Animation and Ongoing-Formation	404
G. Assembly, January, 2001, Justice and Peace workshop	405
Justice and Peace Committee: the Declaration	406
The South Sudan Delegation elevated to a Province	408
G. Assembly 2002: <i>“Attention to the person”</i>	408
G. Assembly 2003, <i>“The challenge of different Ministries”</i> ...	409
G. Assembly 2004 <i>“Report of the XVI General Chapter”</i>	411
Meeting of Young and Experienced Confreres	414
Secretariat of Animation, Vocation Promotion, Formation	415
The Pre-Postulancy and Postulancy 1986-2004	415
Secretariat of Finance	419
The Total Common Fund system	419
Education Fund	419
The Communities	420
Lomin, a great opportunity	420
Lomin (Kajo-Kaji)	421
The Parish	421
The Comboni Comprehensive College	423
St. Martin Workshop	424
The Pre-Postulancy	424
Kapoeta/Lolim Community	424
The Pre-Postulancy in Narus	425
Mabia Community in the displaced people’s camp	426
Moyo community (Uganda)	428
Mapuordit community	430
The schools	431
“Mary Immaculate Hospital”	431
Marial Lou community	433
Agang Rial community	434
Nyamlel	435
Nyal community	436

The Catechetical Centre <i>James Duol Kai</i>	438
The public library <i>Joseph Pal Mut</i>	438
Old Fangak	439
The Comboni House Community in Nairobi	440
Confreres with special commitments	441
A New Commitment	441
A Catholic FM Radio for Southern Sudan	441
The most important events of this Administration	443

SECTION THREE: Return to Juba

Headquarters in Juba	445
Introduction: the Circumscription from 2005 to 2010	445

CHAPTER ONE

THE CIRCUMSCRIPTION From 2005 to 2010. *Provincial Superior:*

FR. LUCIANO PERINA	447
The Provincial and his Council	447
South Sudan Province, Personnel in 2005	448
The Comprehensive Peace Agreement, 2005	451
Year 2005: “Going Home”	453
Starting moving ahead and the General Assembly 2005	453
Finalization of the Six-Year Plan	454
Four topics from the Assembly 2005	457
The work on “Ratio Missionis”	458
The “Code of Conduct”	458
Commitment to peace, reconciliation & civic education ..	459
Peace and reconciliation, input	459
Collaboration with Khartoum Province	460
The General Assemblies (2005-2010)	461
The “Going Home” process	464
The Radio Project	468
A Catholic FM Radio for Southern Sudan	468
Communities given special attention	476
Old Fangak Community	476
Nyal/Leer Community	478
Leer Community	481
Juba Community	483
Yirol Community	485
Tali Community	487

Communities already settled	490
Moyo Vocation Centre	490
Lomin Community	491
Mapuordit Community	492
Agang-Rial Community	494
Commitments with special arrangement	496
Nyamlel pastoral commitment	496
Barghel project	498
Ayod pastoral commitment	498
Communities inherited after the CPA	501
Malakal Community	501
Wau and Raja Communities	502
Provincial Institutions	502
Mary Immaculate Hospital, Mapuordit	502
St. Martin Workshop, Lomin	503
St. Daniel Comboni VTC, Leer	504
Secretariats	505
Secretariat Evangelization and Animation	506
Office of On-going Formation	507
Secretariat of Vocation Promotion and Basic Formation	507
Pre-Postulancy and Postulancy	508
Lay Comboni Missionaries	509
Secretariat of Finance	509
Bridging time	510
Final consideration	513

CHAPTER TWO

THE CIRCUMSCRIPTION From 2011 to 2016. *Provincial Superior:*

FR. DANIELE MOSCHETTI	515
The Provincial and his Council	515
The Referendum for Self-Determination	517
9 July, 2011, Independence Day	519
Situation of the Province: Personnel (Easter 2011)	523
The prov. Assembly of 2011: <i>Sudan will never be the same again</i>	527
Sudan will never be the same again, J. Ashworth	528
Sudan will never be the same again, Fr. A. La Braca	530
The Six-Year Plan, 2011-2016	530
Opening of the Provincial Website	535
Annual Provincial Assemblies 2012-2016	535

The Provincial Assembly of 2012	536
The Provincial Assembly of 2013	537
The Provincial Assembly of 2014	539
The Provincial Assembly of 2015	541
The Provincial Assembly of 2016	542
Clustering/merging of Provinces	545
The Symposium: One Church from every Tribe, Tongue and People, <i>on the role of the Church in the independence of South Sudan</i>	546
The Speeches	547
About the past	547
About the present	548
About the future	550
Re-organising the Province,	556
The Communities	556
Old Fangak Community	557
Leer Community	558
Juba Community	562
Yirol Community	564
Tali Community	565
Lomin Community	567
Mapuordit Community	568
Commitments with special arrangement	570
Nyamlel pastoral commitment	570
Barghel project	571
Ayod Community	571
Communities assumed with the independence	572
Wau Community	572
Raja Community	575
Provincial Institutions “Opere” of the South Sudan Province	578
Mary Immaculate Hospital, Mapuordit	578
St. Martin Workshop, Lomin	579
St. Daniel Comboni VTC, Leer	579
The <i>Opera Significativa</i> , the CR Network	581
Personnel at 1 January, 2014	585
Provincial Secretariats	587
Secretariat of Evangelization	587
<i>Charter of Evangelization, a Symposium, a Workshop on Pastoralists, a Workshop on Reconciliation, Language and culture of South Sudan network and</i>	

<i>dictionary Nuer-English and English-Nuer, the Workshop on Pastoralists of APDESAM, a Workshop on Family life and human growth in South Sudan, Education and Evangelization</i>	
Office of On-Going Formation	589
Further studies and specializations	590
Comboni Missionaries' publications (2011-2017) ...	590
Secretariat of Vocation Promotion and Basic Formation (2011-2016)	592
Fr. Barnaba Deng Formation House, Moroyok	593
Statistics of Basic Formation, 1999-2011	594
Statistics of the restarted Basic Formation	595
The joint Postulancy (2013-2017)	595
Secretariat of Finance	596
RSASS-The Religious Superiors' Association in South Sudan	597
The Catholic University	601
Important events, 2011-2017	602
A brief word on missionary methodology	604
South Sudan Province, Personnel on 1 November, 2016	606

CHAPTER THREE

THE CIRCUMSCRIPTION From 2017 to 2019. *Provincial Superior:*

FR. LOUIS OKOT TONY OCHERMOI	609
2017, the Provincial and his Council	609
The Provincial Assembly of 2017	611
The reports of the Secretariats	611
The Secretariat of Evangelization	612
The reports of the Communities	612
Visit of His Grace Paolino Lukudu Loro, Archb. of Juba	613
The Six-Year Plan, 2017-2022	615
The Mission	616
The Person	617
Reorganization	619
Finance	620
Looking ahead with confidence	621
Conclusion	623

APPENDIX

PART ONE (1846-1981)	625
SECTION ONE - <i>(1846-1899)</i>	625
SECTION TWO - <i>(1900-1964)</i>	626
SECTION THREE - <i>(1964-1981)</i>	631
PART TWO (1981-2016)	642
SECTION ONE - <i>(1981-1994)</i>	642
<i>CHAPTER ONE</i> - <i>(1981-1984)</i>	642
<i>CHAPTER TWO</i> - <i>(1984-1989)</i>	653
<i>CHAPTER THREE</i> - <i>(1990-1994)</i>	+++
SECTION TWO - <i>(1995-2004)</i>	660
<i>CHAPTER ONE</i> - <i>(1995-1998)</i>	660
<i>CHAPTER TWO</i> - <i>(1999-2004)</i>	662
SECTION THREE - <i>(2005-2017)</i>	673
<i>CHAPTER ONE</i> - <i>(2005-2010)</i>	673
<i>CHAPTER TWO</i> - <i>(2011-2016)</i>	674
<i>CHAPTER THREE</i> - <i>(2017-.....)</i>	677
 The Author	 683

ABBREVIATIONS - INDICATIONS

Comboni Missionary Abbreviations

ACR	Archivio Comboniano Roma/ <i>Comboni Archives, Rome</i>
Ad Personam:	Personal assignment, no substitution planned.
APDESAM	Assembly of Provinces and Delegations of the English Speaking Africa and Mozambique.
CATALOGO/ANNUARIO COMBONIANO:	<i>Comboni Members Catalogue.</i>
CMS	Comboni Missionary Sisters.
CSSJ	Comboni Secondary School Juba.
FSCJ	Filii Sacri Cordis Jesu (<i>Sons of the Sacred Heart of Jesus</i>)-Italian branch.
FSSPJ	Files of the South Sudan Province, Juba.
MCCJ	Missionarii Comboniani Cordis Jesu (<i>Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus</i>) - Union between the FSCJ (<i>Sons of the Sacred Heart of Jesus</i> , “Italian branch”) and the MFSC (<i>Missionary Sons of the Sacred Heart</i> “German Branch”).
MFSC	Missionarii Filii Sacri Cordis (<i>Missionary Sons of the Sacred Heart</i>)-German Branch.
OGF	On-Going Formation.
Opera significativa:	“A Commemorative Project”.
TCF	Total Common Fund.

General Abbreviations

ACROSS	African Committee for the Rehabilitation of Southern Sudan.
AJ	Apostles of Jesus.
AMECEA	The Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa.
CART	Combined Agencies Relief Team (based in Juba).
CCI	Compagnie de Construction Internationale.
CORDAID	Catholic Organisation for Relief and Development Aid.
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement (between SPLA/M and Khartoum Gov.).
CRE	Christian Religious Education.
CRN	Catholic Radio Network (After the independence with the RoSS).
CRS	Catholic Relief Service.
CUAMM	Doctors with Africa (Collegio Universitario Aspiranti Medici Missionari).

DOR	Diocese of Rumbek.
DOT	Diocese of Torit.
FAJSS	Files of the Archdiocese of Juba (Rep. of South Sudan).
GLRA	German Leprosy Relief Association.
GoNU	The Government of National Unity (2005).
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross.
IDP	Internally Displaced People (within Sudan).
ILACO	International Land Consultant (Financial & Technology Corporation).
IRC	International Rescue Committee.
JPIC	Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation.
LWF	Lutheran World Federation.
MSBVM	Missionary Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary, (known as Mupoi Sisters of T/Yambio).
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières.
MSMMC	Missionary Sisters of Mary Mother of the Church (from Uganda).
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid.
NCP	National Congress Party (of President El Bashir).
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation.
NPA	Norwegian People Aid.
OLS	Operation Lifeline Sudan.
OLSH	Daughters of Our Lady of Sacred Heart (from Australia).
PALICA	Pastoral-Liturgical-Catechetical Centre.
PROPAGANDA FIDE	- Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of Faith (then SCEP).
RoSS	The Republic of South Sudan.
RSAS	Religious Superiors' Association of Sudan.
RSASS	Religious Superiors' Association of South Sudan.
SCBC	Sudan Catholic Bishop's Conference.
SCC	Small Christian Community.
SCEP	Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.
SCIAF	The Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund.
SCRN	Sudan Catholic Radio Network (Before independence of SS).
SEC	Sudan Episcopal Conference.
SECAM	Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar.
SHS	Sacred Heart Sisters (South Sudan).
SPLA/M	Sudan People Liberation Army/Movement.
SS	South Sudan.
SSIM/A	South Sudan Independence Movement/Army.
SSS	Solidarity with South Sudan (a collaborative project).
UN	United Nation.

UNHCR	United Nation High Commission for Refugees.
USRATUNA	“La Nostra Familia” (in Arabic).
WFP	World Food Programme.
WVI	World Vision International.
YCS	Young Christian Students.

Vatican Documents:

AG	Ad Gentes Divinitus, <i>on the mission of the Church.</i>
AM	Africae Munus, <i>the Post-Synod Apostolic Exhortations of Pope Benedict XVI. (2nd Synod of Africa).</i>
AT	Africae Terrarum, <i>Litterae Apostolicae Motu Proprio Datae</i> , Paulus PP.VI, 29 October, 1967.
CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church.
CD	Christus Dominus, <i>Decree concerning the pastoral office of Bishops.</i>
CSDC	Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church.
CT	Catechesi Tradendae.
DV	Dei Verbum.
EA	Ecclesia in Africa, <i>the Post-Synod Apostolic Exhortations of Pope John Paul II. (1st Synod of Africa).</i>
EG	Evangelii Gaudium.
EN	Evangelii Nuntiandi.
GS	Gaudium et Spes, <i>the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World.</i>
MR	Mutuae Relationes.
PC	Perfectae Caritatis, <i>on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life.</i>
RCIA	Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.
RM	Redemptoris Missio.
SC	Sacrosanctum Concilium, <i>Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy.</i>

MAIN BIBLIOGRAPHY

Quoted bibliography

1. **The Writings of St. Daniel Comboni**, *correspondence and reports (1850-1881) of the Founder of the Comboni Missionaries*. Editorial Coordinator: Fr. Luciano Franceschini mccj, English Edition: Fr. John M. Troy mccj, Translation: Catherine P. Marcellin-Rice, Louis Marcellin-Rice. (Original title: *Daniele Comboni, Gli Scritti*, Bologna, 1991). Published by Comboni Missionaries, London Road, Sunningdale, Berks, SL5 0JY, United Kingdom, 2005.
2. Michelangelo Grancelli, *Mgr. Daniele Comboni e la Mission dell'Africa Centrale*, Verona, 1923, XIV – 478 pages.
3. Aldo Gilli, *La missione Cattolica nel Sudan dall'inizio alla ripresa dopo la Rivoluzione mahdista*, Verona, 1972.
4. Erich Schmid, *Alle origini della Missione dell'Africa Centrale (1846-862)*, Verona, Novastampa, 1987.
5. Elisa Pezzi, *La Missione Cattolica nel Sudan, Pie Madri della Nigrizia*, Verona, 1972
6. Elisa Pezzi, *L'Istituto Pie Madri della Nigrizia*, Studi Comboniani/6, EMI Bologna, 1980.
7. Juan Manuel Lozano: *Vostro per Sempre*, Daniele Comboni, Editrice Missionaria Italiana (EMI), Bologna, 1996.
8. Giampaolo Romanato, *L'Africa Nera fra Cristianesimo e Islam, L'esperienza di Daniele Comboni (1831-1881)*, Corbaccio, Milano, 2003.
9. Salvatore Pacifico, *Centenary of the Mission in Bahr el Ghazal, main historical events, 1904-2004*.
10. Vittorino Dellagiacoma, *Catholic Missionaries in Southern Sudan, 1900-1964*, (revised reprint), Khartoum, 1998.
11. Vittorino Dellagiacoma, *History of the Catholic Church in Southern Sudan 1900 – 1995*, Khartoum, 1996.
12. *The Comboni Missionaries, An Outline History 1867-1997*, Fr. Tarcisio Agostoni, Biblioteca Comboniana, 14FS, Rome, 2003.
13. Giovanni Vantini, *La Missione del Cuore. I Comboniani in Sudan nel ventesimo secolo*, EMI della Coop. Sermis, 2005.
14. Abel Alier, *Southern Sudan: Too Many Agreements Dishonoured*, Paul & Co. Pub. Consortium, 1992; & Abel Alier, (Sudan Studies), Hardcover, 1 January, 1999.
15. Arop Madut-Arop, *Sudan's Painful Road to Peace*, 2006, Book Surge, LLC, Introduction.

16. Anders Breidlid, Adelino Androga Said, Astrid Kristine Breidlid, Anne Farren, Yosa Wawa, "A Concise History of South Sudan", new revised edition, Fountain Publishers, Kampala, Uganda, 2014.
17. Franzelli Giuseppe: Mondo Comboniano, Collana di Strumanti di Animazione Missionaria, EMI, 2004.
18. Mariano Tibaldo , Cambi di paradigma missionario nell'Istituto Comboniano dal 1969 ad oggi, Segretariato Generale dell'Evangelizzazione MCCJ, Studi ed Esperienze, 21 Marzo, 2013.
19. Elias Toniolo & Richard Hill, The Opening of the Nile Basin, C. Hurst & Company Ltd, London, 1974.
20. Alle origini della Missione dell'Africa Centrale, (1846-1862, Erich Schmidt, Studi Comboniani/7, Novastampa di Verona, 1987.
21. Servants of the Gospel. Witnesses in the footsteps of St. Daniel Comboni in Sudan and South Sudan, Paulines Publications Africa, 2014.
22. Elia Toniolo, The First Centenary of the Roman Catholic Mission to Central Africa, 1846-1946, *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. 27 (1946), p. 99, Published by: University of Khartoum.
23. Lozano Juan Emanuel, Vostro per sempre, Daniele Comboni, Editrice Missionaria Italiana (EMI), Bologna, 1996,
24. A. Gilli, DIP, vol. III, 1976, coll. 1515-1520. (Dictionary of the Institutes of Perfection (DIP), 10 voll., Pauline Publications, Milan, 1974-2003.
25. Francesco Chemello, Il Catecumenato Missionario nel Rinnovamento Post-Conciliare in Africa Orientale, Pontificia Università Urbaniana, Facoltà di Missiologia, Tesi di Licenza, Roma 1981.
26. Fr. Francesco Chemello Odiongo Gatwic, mccj., "A missionary experience in a context of war", History of the Comboni Missionaries in the "Liberated Areas" of Sudan (1 July, 1990, to 31 December, 1998), Fondazione Nigrizia Onlus, 2016.
27. Seumois A., Théologie Missionnaire IV, Eglise Missioinaire et Faceur Socio-Culturel, Roma, Università Urbaniana (Biblioteca), 1978.
28. Richard Owen, Sudan Days, 1926-1954, University Library Durham, ed. Duff Hart-Davis, 2015.
29. Lilian Passmore Sanderson, Neville Sanderson, Education, religion & politics in Southern Sudan, 1899-1964, Ithaca Press London, Khartoum Univ. Press, 1981.
30. Franz-Xaver Geyer, Handbuch für die missionäre des Apostolischen Vikariats Khartoum, 1915.
31. Catalogo of the Sons of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, or later, Annuario Comboniano, Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus.
32. Mario Cisternino, Passione per l'Africa, Urbaniana University Press, 2001.

33. Fratel Giosuè Dei Cas, *Lettere*, Remo Bracchi, Vita e Missione, EMI Bologna, 2010.
34. Jean Beyer, Religious in the New Code and their Place in the Local Church, in: *Studia Canonica* 17 (1983).
35. Claudio Bortolossi: Catechesi e Missione, I quaderni della Missione a cura di “Missione Oggi” Parma. EMI, Bologna, 1981.
36. Valentino Savoldi, Renato Kizito Sesana, *AFRICA il Vangelo ci Appartiene*, EMI, Bologna, 1986.
37. Butturini G. (a cura di), *Le nuove Vie del Vangelo*, Bologna, EMI, 1975. R.Werner-W. Anderson-A.Wheeler, *Day of Devastation Day of Contentment*, Paulines Publication Africa, 2nd ed., 2010.
38. Robert O. Collins, *A History of Modern Sudan*, Cambridge University Press, 2008.
39. Centenario di Tonga, Fr. Elvio Cellana, *ACR* 475/22; *MCCJ Bulletin* no. 221, January, 2004.
40. Fr. Salvatore Pacifico mccc Centenary of the Mission in Bahr el Ghazal, main historical events, 1904-2004.
41. John Ashworth (ed), *Sudan Catholic Bishops conference (SCBC), One Church from every Tribe, Tongue, and People, Symposium on the Role of the Church in the Independence of South Sudan*, Paulines Publications Africa, 2012.
42. G. Caramazza and A. Parise, eds, *Paths of ministry among the pastoralists*, Paulines Publications Africa, Nairobi, 2015.
43. Comboni Magazines/Bulletins/Websites: *Nigrizia Magazine*, *MCCJ bulletin*, *Familia Comboniana*, *Comboni.org*, *Combonisouthsudan-org* and other Comboni websites.
44. Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, was frequently referred to on line.

Background Literature

45. Agostino Capovilla, *Il Servo di Dio Mgr. Daniele Comboni*, Verona 1928, VIII – 330 pages.
46. A. Capovilla, *Il servo di Dio Daniele Comboni; vicario apostolico dell'Africa Centrale*, Verona 1949 (IV ediz.).
47. Clemente Fusero, *Daniele Comboni*, Bologna, 1953, 318 pages. C. Tappi, *Cenno Storico della Missione dell'Africa centrale, dal suo principio ad oggi*; Torino, 1894.
48. L. Bano, *Mezzo Secolo di Storia Sudanese*, Verona 1976. Aldo Gilli – Pietro Chiocchetta, *Il Messaggio di Daniele Comboni*, Bologna 1977, 472 pages. (available in English, French, German, Portuguese and Spanish).

49. Pietro Chiocchetta, *Carte per l'evangelizzazione dell'Africa*, Bologna 1978, 335 pages.
50. Aldo Gilli, *L'Istituto missionario comboniano dalla fondazione alla morte di Daniele Comboni*, Bologna, 1979, 431 pages.
51. Jean Mauzaize, *Un Apôtre de l'Afrique au XIXe siècle*, Bologna, 1980, 235 pages.
52. Domenico Agasso, *Daniele Comboni profeta dell'Africa*, Bologna, 1981, 131 pages.
53. V. Dellagiacoma, *Missionari Cattolici nel Sudan, prima del 1900*, manoscritto, Venegono Superiore (VA).I
54. Elisa Pezzi, *L'Istituto Pie Madri della Nigritia. Storia dalle origini fino alla morte del Fondatore*, Bologna, 1981.
55. Various Authors, *L'Africa ai tempi di Daniele Comboni*, Rome, 1981, 470 pages.
56. Arnaldo Baritussio, *Daniele Comboni: Regole del 1871*, Rome, 1983, 176 pages.
57. Fidel Gonzales, *Daniel Comboni profeta y apostolo de l'Africa*, Madrid, 1985, 518 pages.
58. Juan Manuel Lozano, *Cristo è anche nero*, Bologna 1989, 302 pages. (available in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish).
59. General Postulation, *Le opere di Dio sono così*, Rome, 1991, 256 pages. (English translation has been published: *God Works Like This...*)
60. David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, Maryknoll, N.Y., Orbis Books, 1991.
61. G. Romanato, Daniele Comboni (1831-1881), *L'Africa degli Esploratori e dei Missionari*, Milano 1998.
62. Pietro Galletto, *Veneti illustri dell'Ottocento*, Don Nicola Mazza 1790-865, F.lli Corradini Editori, Urbana (PD) 2013.
63. Gaiga Lorenzo: Daniele Comboni, *La Missione Continua*, collana Vita e Missione, EMI 1995.
64. Hastings, Adrian: *The Church in Africa 1450–1550*, Oxford 1994.



Presentation by the Provincial Superior, 2011-2016

Fr. Daniele Moschetti.

It is with great joy and satisfaction that I make this presentation of the history of the Province of South Sudan prepared with great passion, care and determination by Fr. Francesco Chemello, whom I thank in a special way of having accepted the challenge of “becoming an **“historian”** in spite of the commitments he had in his mission for almost two years. To write about the history of our Province is naturally to go back to the origin of the love and passion for Africa and Sudan of our founder, St. Daniel Comboni. For this reason the history starts there and develops during the years and centuries. It gave already an imprint and focus for a very challenging mission which still remains today after more than 150 years since the first coming to Holy Cross mission of our founder in 1858.

After the death of St. Daniel Comboni in 1881 in Khartoum, the missionaries were imprisoned for several years and later on went back to Italy thinking that everything was finished. Instead, the first mission station in South Sudan was opened by the Comboni Missionaries at Lul among the Shilluk in 1901. Kayango and Mbili, near Wau, among the Jur, were opened in 1904. To these were added many more foundations all over South Sudan and many missionaries, men and women, worked and established Christian communities. This period of rapid expansion of the Church in the Sudan received a severe setback in 1964 when all expatriate missionaries working in the southern regions were expelled. While in exile, the Comboni Missionaries continued to hope firmly for a return to South Sudan.

Sacred history: we would like to make memory through this book of this *sacred history* and celebrate the wonders God has worked even in the most painful situations. God was able to make something great for the salvation of his people through the thousands of Comboni missionaries, men and women, who worked tirelessly and with great love. We make memory of this event in the context of the celebration of the 150th anniversary of foundation of the Institute for the Missions of Africa in Verona, (now known as Comboni Missionaries) on 1 June, 1867. The expulsion itself occurred in 1964, exactly 100 years from the time Comboni received the inspiration for the Plan for the Regeneration of Africa. The 1964 expulsion: was it a sign or an inevitable misfortune? We would like to read it today as a *sign of the times* for the mission in Africa, the Africa of the *wind of change* characterised by the achievement of independence.

The 1964 expulsion was certainly a moment of great suffering for the missionaries and even more for the people of South Sudan. And yet, when we look at it in retrospect, we may discover in it an event of salvation. The Lord has been able to draw from these events, in themselves difficult and painful, new fruits. Making memory of those events helps us to re-read and understand them afresh, and the effect is that it becomes a moment of thanksgiving and appreciation for what has emerged. The Local Sudanese Church that was born out of these events is surely a gift for the Sudan, both North and South, and for Africa as such in continuity with the dream of Comboni to *Save Africa with Africa*.

The expulsion from South Sudan was also the occasion for the Comboni Institutes to open communities in other African Countries. The Comboni Missionaries went to Congo, Central Africa and Chad in order to accompany the Sudanese refugees. They opened new missions in Uganda (Moroto), Ethiopia (Awassa), Togo, and elsewhere. The Comboni Sisters opened a community in Kenya that would become a new Province. The missionaries, male and female, scattered everywhere in Europe, Latin America and Middle East making present the Comboni Charism.

The expulsion was also the occasion for the two Institutes to give emphasis to the formation of local pastoral agents (Priests, religious, lay people) and the promotion of Comboni Vocations. New African Congregations with a missionary spirit were started, like the Apostles of Jesus and the Evangelizing Sisters of Mary; history was teaching that the motto of Comboni *Save Africa with Africa* was essential for evangelization in South Sudan and in the world. If further expulsions occurred, the Christian communities would continue to have their pastoral agents and their missionaries.

The situation of the South Sudan today: by re-reading events of the past and finding in them clear signs that they became history of salvation, helps us to look with hope and love also to the present history of South Sudan.

On 9 July, 2011 South Sudan became the 54th country of Africa. Independence was celebrated with rejoicing while dreaming of a bright future of harmony and peace. Instead, after only three years of work for building up of the nation, suddenly things returned to ground zero, on 15 December, 2013. The troubles started in Juba but rapidly spread over the whole nation bringing suffering, death, destruction and division, continuing up to now. Within so much evil, there were acts of genuine love inspired by the Gospel: “*Love your enemy, pray for those who persecute you*”. In this context the Bishops of Sudan, and South Sudan, in their Assembly held in Juba in January 2014 wrote the exhortation: “*Let us re-found our Nation on a New Covenant*”. They re-designed the work of evangelization in the short and long terms, placing *Reconciliation* at the top: “*Reconciliation -they write - must become the first*

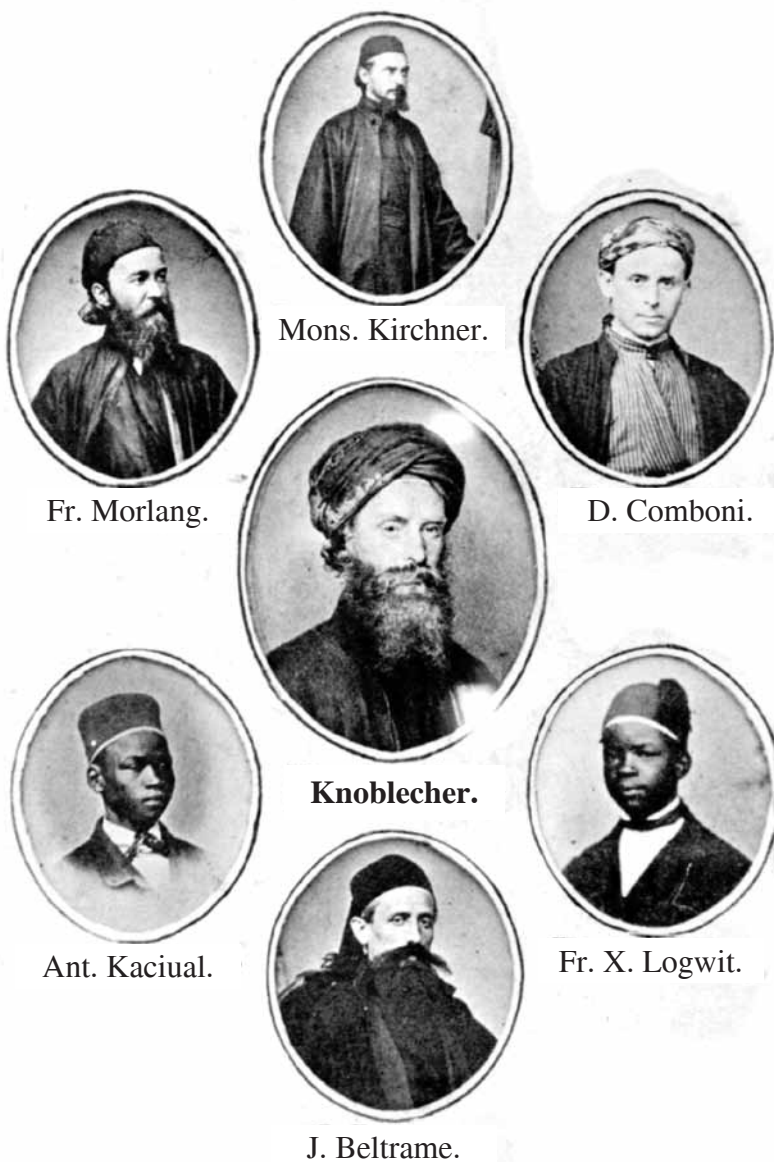
priority at all levels, in the society and in the Church. We are convinced - they write - that we are at a turning point in the history of South Sudan. South Sudan cannot be the same. It is time for our Nation to rise from the ashes. Now is the time for a new Nation. We commit ourselves to a reconstruction that is very much necessary for our new Nation. The task is hard and uncertain, but we remain in solidarity with our Brothers and sisters who are in need of our support. Let Our New Nation rise!"

Looking ahead with faith and hope: when the expulsion took place in 1964, the disciples of Comboni, men and women assumed the vision and faith of Comboni and made them their own and ours. A heavy Cross had to be carried but we continued our journey. *"The Catholic, who is used to judging thing in a supernatural light, looked upon Africa not through the pitiable lens of human interest, but in the pure light of faith. There he saw an infinite multitude of Brothers who belonged to the same family as himself with one common Father in heaven" (W 2742).*

In the same way, I believe and pray that the South Sudanese people will come out of this crisis stronger than ever, ready to face the challenges that history and life imply. My confreres and I believe that the people of South Sudan will rediscover their national identity to build up their nation together with the help of God, overcoming the evil of tribalism and division. It will take time. People look at the Church and at the missionaries with great hope and a strong desire to see us walk in the direction that the Church is offering in an attitude of purification together and within the society of which we are part. God has not abandoned his people! God has never abandoned South Sudan during the long 40 years of war. Ours too will be history of salvation for the people of South Sudan. We are called to be part of it, and write this section of history with His people, as our ancestors in faith did. Without fear and with great courage! And we continue to have before us the great history of our ancestors in faith who preceded us, very well presented in the book you are beginning to read. And the last words of our founder St. Daniel Comboni, in point of death, will continue to accompany us:

"Courage! Have courage in this tough hour and especially for the future! Never give up!"

Fr. Daniele Moschetti, Mccj
Provincial Superior (2011-2016)
Comboni Missionaries South Sudan
Juba, 31 December, 2016.



Picture from: The Opening of the Nile Basin, Elias Toniolo & Richard Hill, C. Hurst & Company Ltd, London, 1974.

FOREWORD

Before I started this work I was asked to write the history of the Province of South Sudan. However, this Province is not just a Province like any other on the world map of our Comboni Missionary Institute but, together with the history of Khartoum Province and that of Egypt, it constitutes the actual *Field of work* of our founder Daniel Comboni¹ and his companions, who struggled and died in this land as well as that of the other generous missionaries who had previously opened the way for the *Central African Mission* and had already given their lives for it.

The hard work of evangelization, the dedication and the sufferings and deaths of the confreres of the *Institute for the Missions of Africa* of Verona, newly founded on 1 June, 1867,² with the related Institute of the *Pie Madri della Nigrizia* founded in *Montorio Veronese* on 1 January, 1872,³ were the foundation stones and, at the same time, the bridge linking the experience in the Sudan, mainly in the *North*, with the new experience in the South. In the year 1900, the new Religious Institute of the *Filii Sacri Cordis Jesu - FSCJ*, born from the former Institute founded by Daniel Comboni, took up the new task in the South.

Hundreds of confreres longed to work and give their lives in this land for the *Regeneration of Africa*. Their true character and spirit was formed here and then affected many other parts of the world where they were sent after their expulsion from South Sudan in 1964. In their struggle for the proclamation of the Gospel, great virtues and successes were mingled together with failures and deficiencies. The land of the Sudan has proved itself to be a real testing place above the ordinary, at the beginning and even at the present time.

¹ Michelangelo Grancelli, *Mons. Daniele Comboni e la Missione dell'Africa Centrale*, Verona 1923, XIV-478 pp.

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Comboni

- http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniele_Comboni

² A. Gilli, DIP, vol. III, 1976, coll. 1515-1520. (Dictionary of the Institutes of Perfection (DIP), 10 voll., Pauline Publications, Milan, 1974-2003; Writings: 2646, 3303, 4079.

http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missionari_comboniani_del_Cuore_di_Gesu%C3%B9#cite_note-dip-4

³ A. Gilli, DIP, vol. VI, 1980, col. 1678 (Dictionary of the Institutes of Perfection (DIP), 10 voll., Pauline Publications, Milan, 1974-2003.

https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suore_missionarie_pie_madri_della_Nigrizia

Sudan and South Sudan have always been considered a fearful mission by many Religious and Missionary Institutes, even by those who evangelized other parts of Africa and of the World. The name alone was synonymous with a very demanding and almost impossible mission. In the seventies, several other Religious Missionary Institutes came to Sudan bringing new contributions to the Local Church. It is only very recently that many other Missionary Societies, of both men and women, have come to share in the present Church reality. Nevertheless, certain areas within the Sudan and South Sudan are still viewed with the same fear.



Mgr. Comboni & Fr. D. Sorur

A great variety of challenges have arisen along the path of the *historical development* of the *South* in relationship to the *North*. Though the Sudan Mission started in 1846, with the erection of the Vicariate of Central Africa, it never developed harmoniously. Great efforts were reduced to ashes on several occasions. Building up and tearing down seemed to be the pattern in the *Southern Sudan Mission*. One could never sit back peacefully and *admire with joy* the work done and the progress made without experiencing the *bitterness* of seeing the annihilation of previous efforts. Only the work done in people would remain, but without any real continuity.

Southern Sudan, with 170 years of different types of struggles, could not develop evangelization as other countries did, even though



Fr. Antonio Dubale

The difficult climate, its harsh history and tough people all seem to have combined together into a unit making up its geographical, human and spiritual environment. South Sudan is not a place a missionary will go just for *idealistic reasons*. Either one goes there with *really deep motivations* or one should not go there at all.

The words of St. Daniel Comboni are still very true and valid: “*The life of the missionary... must be a life consisting wholly of spirituality and fidelity to God.*” “*...The missionary who lacks a strong awareness of God and a lively interest in his glory and the good of souls is without the right*

attitude for his/her ministry, and will end by finding himself/herself in a kind of emptiness and intolerable isolation."⁴

The various political, military and religious events which brought the country to the point of breakdown and compelled it to start anew over and over again, at the cost of great efforts, were and are factors which would discourage anyone who is not rooted in a deep faith and love for God and for people. This is a point of honour for all the missionaries who have accepted and made themselves available to work in this context. The positive aspect of all these *interruptions* is that they became opportunities to *start again* with new attitudes, methodologies and approaches to evangelization. Indeed, they were opportunities for renewal.

The most relevant crisis, not only for Sudan but for all Africa of, occurred at the time of the independence of African countries from colonial powers. This could not leave the Church unaffected. The end of the ***Jus Commissionis*** and the setting up of the Bishops' Conferences was a major shift in the understanding of Mission and therefore a big challenge but was, at the same time, a great opportunity for renewal for the missionaries and their Institutes and also a big challenge for the Bishops and each Particular Church (Local Church) called to understand in depth the meaning of its vocation to *Evangelize*.

The *Jus Commissionis*, which was the policy to entrust a mission territory to a particular Missionary Institution to be evangelized, had the positive effect of helping the various Religious Societies to work peacefully and without interference in each other's territory, but it had also the negative effect of making the missionaries think that *they were the masters and owners of the mission within that territory* and all other people their subordinates. This enhanced a position of *superiority* towards the people and the Local Indigenous Clergy, which was very similar to the attitude of colonizers in the political sphere.

The shift from the *Jus Commissionis* to the Local Conferences of Bishops was sometimes wrongly interpreted, simply as a handing over of *Management*, with the new *bosses* showing off their power over the former ones. Just as the exercise of *authority* was not a simple matter for the political leaders of the newly independent countries; it was a considerable challenge for the new Church Leaders. Only one approach would avoid the danger of falling into a *self-referential* attitude: the focusing of all energies,

⁴ The Writings of St. Daniel Comboni, Published by Comboni Missionaries, United Kingdom, 2005. n. 2489, 2698. (*Original title: Daniele Comboni, gli Scritti*, Bologna, 1991).

authorities and ministries in Jesus Christ, concentrating on the proclamation of God's Kingdom. Only in this way would a Local Church fulfil its deep Evangelizing Mission and the Missionaries become promoters of this dynamic within it.

Finally, a word on the title: **COMBONI MISSIONARIES IN SOUTH SUDAN, An Outline History**. The title: *History of the South Sudan Province*, as requested, would have limited the whole historical account of our presence to a short period of time. **Comboni Missionaries in South Sudan** instead, seems more appropriate. Then, with the words: *An Outline History*, I want to point out that I am not a scholar of history, though I did do as much research as I could on the topic. Personally, I am a Comboni Missionary who was, and still is, involved in a concrete missionary pastoral experience, having spent ten years in Malawi and Zambia and, since 1991, in South Sudan. My experience developed in situations of war, displacement and the restart of missionary activity in the so-called *New Sudan* liberated areas.⁵ Since 2005 I have carried on this missionary experience in Leer, the Nuer land of Unity State until the beginning of June, 2016, when I was assigned to TALI Parish, Terakeka.

So, even though a good amount of research was done in the archives of the Comboni Missionaries in Rome and in Juba (South Sudan), and even though I received the valuable contributions of outstanding elderly confreres who were, or still are, working as missionaries in Sudan and South Sudan, together with the South Sudanese Confreres (Radical Members) who agreed to be interviewed, there were limited possibilities of accessing other significant resources and literature, while writing this historical account here in Juba.

Nonetheless, this *Outline History* has been produced and I do hope it will be, for all the readers, a means towards a deeper awareness and reflection on the steadfast love and dedication of all the Comboni Missionaries for the people of South Sudan. I wish that it may also be a help for us Combonis to walk in their footsteps, with a renewed heart within the Local Churches, and with the same passion and love for people as missionaries of Jesus.

Fr. Francesco Chemello, mccj.

⁵ Fr. Francesco Chemello Odiongo Gatwic, mccj., “**A missionary experience in a context of war**”, *History of the Comboni Missionaries in the “Liberated Areas” of Sudan* (1 July, 1990, to 31 December, 1998), Fondazione Nigrizia Onlus, 2016. (The Italian version, “Una esperienza missionaria in zona di guerra” was published in 2015 by the same Fondazione Nigrizia Onlus.

Introductory Notes

The official start of what later on became the SOUTH SUDAN PROVINCE happened to be the decision of the Superior General, **Fr. Salvatore Calvia and his Council**, on 7 April, 1981, when Fr. Raffaele Cefalo was asked to be the *Special Representative of the Superior General*.

However, because of the deep historical roots going back to the date in which the *Vicariate of Central Africa* started and because our Founder Daniel Comboni first came to Sudan and reached the South with the team sent by the Institute of Don Nicola Mazza, as I said in the *Foreword*, I cannot fail to mention this initial historical period of time. Mention must also be made of these heroic missionaries who went and gave their lives in this precise area of Southern Sudan since the time the *Vicariate of Central Africa* was erected.

I will, therefore, cast a brief, global glance at key points of the past background, without expanding it, because it has already been the subject of deep study by our well-known historians and researchers like Michelangelo Grancelli, Fr. Agostino Capovilla, Fr. Aldo Gilli, Fr. Pietro Chiocchetta, Fr. E. Schmid and Fr. Luciano Franceschini, just to mention a few. On the XX century history of the Comboni Missionaries and of the Church of Sudan there are the extensive works by Fr. Giovanni Vantini, Fr. Vittorino Dellagiacoma and, lastly, by Fr. Tarcisio Agostoni on the Comboni Missionaries since the time of their foundation in 1867 up to 1997.

Here and there, I will avail of quotations from their historical works for the needs of this present book, or refer directly to their works, without repeating what has already been investigated. This background, in fact, is intended to recall the main events and people who made possible, later on, the start of the Province of South Sudan.

Since many people mentioned in this *outline history* are still alive and fully committed in their different responsibilities, I would also like to include an introductory note to the effect that, certain necessary statements which will appear throughout the account, should not be interpreted as a judgment upon them, but as a duty to present the facts and the historical reality in all their aspects, sometimes sensitive, sometimes contradictory, difficult and puzzling but, nevertheless, a true part of a journey of faith and salvation. Many other people who contributed by their lives and commitment to the living history I am dealing with, have already received

the reward of their commitment to Christ and his Gospel in heaven: they truly deserve our deep esteem and admiration.

If my account takes into consideration some people or events rather than others, my intention



is not to bring some to the fore and ignore the rest, or to *manipulate people or events* for any biased agenda whatever, but to give, as far as possible, a fair account that may help to understand the positive and continuous growth of what our *predecessors*, together with those who

are still living, have handed on to us with their hard work, endurance and missionary commitment within the Local Church of South Sudan.

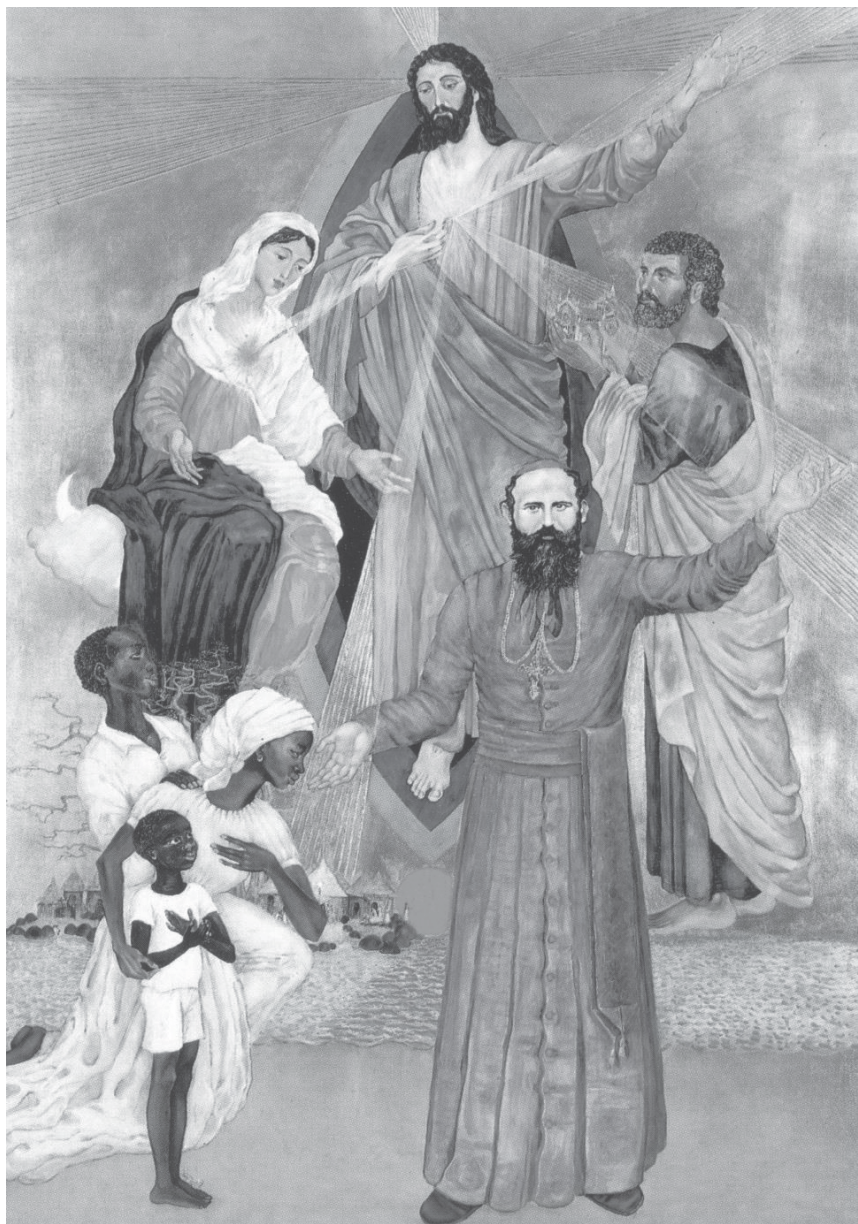
I have taken great care to see to it that this account may not hurt anybody but may inspire a more objective reflection, without prejudice or the intention of reopening old wounds. Furthermore, it is my hope that this work may help to look at people and events with a serene heart, ready to make a better synthesis that may lead to better relationships and communion in the future. If my research were to prove inaccurate, it would be a joy for me that others may contribute to a better and clearer version of the facts involved.

Finally, my deepest wish is that this historical account may help to truly appreciate what the Comboni Missionaries, the Local Church and all the people involved did for the Kingdom of God, and that every reader, at the end, may thank God who has always guided the history of the South Sudanese Catholic Church with his Holy Spirit, the real protagonist of mission:

The Principal agent of the whole of the Church's mission of Evangelization.⁶

Fr. Francesco Chemello mccj.

⁶ Redemptoris Missio, Chapter III, no. 21.



“All my trust is in the Cross and in the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary...
and in St Joseph the king of gentlemen.” (The Writings nn. 3202 + 3434)
Artwork of Luigi Scapini, Comboni Chapel, Limone sul Garda, Italy

PART ONE

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND to the Circumscription of South Sudan (1846 - 1981)

PART ONE, *The Historical Background*, is divided into three sections. In SECTION ONE, I will deal with the start of this missionary adventure and its demise. In SECTION TWO, I will deal with its restart in the year 1900, until the expulsion of the Missionaries by the Khartoum Government in 1964. In SECTION THREE, I will carry on with the period after the expulsion of the missionaries, until the time when the new *Circumscription of South Sudan* had its beginning, in 1981.

SECTION ONE

The first missionary endeavour in the Sudan (1846-1899)

In 1846, when the *Apostolic Vicariate of Central Africa* was erected, the interior of Africa was still an unknown reality. The source of the river Nile, the upper part of the Zambezi and the upper Congo rivers had not yet been discovered by the European countries. The slave trade,⁷ at the time, was banned by Denmark in 1792, the United States in 1794 and Britain in 1807, but the Arab countries were still practising it as usual. Catholic Missions, however, were already present around the coastlands of Africa, even before the time of its circumnavigation, such as in the kingdom of Congo.⁸

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlantic_slave_trade
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_slave_trade

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Kongo

The Institution of the Vicariate of Central Africa.⁹

In 1842 the Vincentian Priest, Fr. Luigi Montuori, who had fled from Ethiopia to escape persecution, came to Khartoum and wrote letters to his Superiors in Europe. Together with one of his confreres, Fr. Girolamo Serao, he opened in Khartoum a tiny chapel for the few foreign Christians living there. Montuori then returned to Ethiopia in 1844 and his confrere to Malta.

A Maltese Canon, Annetto Casolani, in 1846 presented to Propaganda Fide a mission project of his for Africa. A decree of Pope Gregory XVI on 3 April, 1846, established the *Apostolic Vicariate of Central Africa*. The objectives of the Mission, formally approved, were the conversion of the Black Africans to Christianity, to bring assistance to the Christians who were in the Sudan as traders and the suppression of the slave trade. The boundaries were: Egypt, Tripolitania and Algeria to the north and northwest; the Red Sea and Abyssinia to the east; the Mountains of the Moon to the South and the Guineas and the Sahara to the west.¹⁰

Canon Casolani was consecrated Bishop for the mission in Central Africa and obtained as companions two Jesuits, Fr. Maximilian Ryllo, a Pole who had already been a missionary in Lebanon-Syria, Fr. Emanuele Pedemonte, who was an ex-officer of Napoleon, two Lay Brothers, and the two volunteer Priests: Fr. Angelo Vinco, from Verona, of the Institute of Fr. Nicola Mazza, and Fr. Ignaz Knoblecher, a Slovenian-Austrian.¹¹

This group left for Egypt in 1847. However, Bishop Casolani resigned from the post of Vicar Apostolic, though he followed the expedition as a member, and Fr. Ryllo was appointed by Propaganda Fide as Pro-Vicar on 23 April, 1847. They sailed from Cairo in September, 1847 and arrived in Khartoum in February, 1848. Fr. Ryllo was ill with dysentery throughout

⁹ La Missione del Cuore. I Comboniani in Sudan nel ventesimo secolo, Giovanni Vantini, EMI della Coop. Sermis, 2005, p. 10 and ff.

- The Opening of the Nile Basin, Elias Toniolo & Richard Hill, C. Hurst & Company Ltd, London, 1974, pp. 1-2.

- Alle origini della Missione dell'Africa Centrale, (1846-1862, Erich Schmid, Studi Comboniani/7, Novastampa di Verona, 1987, pp. 47-66.

- Servants of the Gospel. Witnesses in the footsteps of St. Daniel Comboni in Sudan and South Sudan, Paulines Publications Africa, 2014, p. 15.

¹⁰ The First Centenary of the Roman Catholic Mission to Central Africa, 1846-1946, Elia Toniolo, *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. 27 (1946), p. 99, Published by: University of Khartoum, p. 99. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41716739?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

¹¹ - The Opening of the Nile Basin, op. cit., pp. 1-2.

Ibid.

the long journey of 2,400 kilometres. In Khartoum he founded the first missionary station with an orphanage, a school and a church. He died in Khartoum on 17 June, 1848, within four months of his arrival.¹² Before dying he made Fr. Knoblecher his *Vicar General* who then took his place. Later on, the Congregation of Propaganda Fide nominated him Pro-Vicar on 13 August, 1851.¹³

After the death of Fr. Ryllo, Bishop Casolani also fell sick and, in that same year, returned to Europe. Fr. Vinco accompanied him in order to look for financial help. He did not succeed because at that time all of Europe was shaken by revolutionary movements (1848-1849). In Verona, Fr. Vinco spoke to the young students of the Mazza Institute and aroused enthusiasm: among the listeners was 18-year-old Daniel Comboni.¹⁴ In 1850 Fr. Vinco returned to Africa. Fr. Knoblecher, instead, went to Europe to recruit staff in his homeland (Carinthia, Slovenia) and to organize material aid from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He succeeded well in his intent and, at the end of August, after his nomination as Pro-Vicar Apostolic, Mgr. Knoblecher left for Africa with a group of Slovenian missionaries, Fathers B. Mozgan, M. Dovjak, O. Trabant, J. Kocijancic, M. Milharcic and some Laymen who were skilled craftsmen.

Meanwhile, Fr. Vinco made a journey of exploration to the South and visited some tribes along the Nile such as the Nuer, the Cic, the Liab and the Shir. Once in the land of the Bari he visited some tribes on the eastern bank of the Nile, among them the Beri.¹⁵ Mgr. Knoblecher, instead, on 13 December, 1852, sailed up the White Nile with Frs. Dovjak, Trabant and Mozgan as far as Illibari where they arrived on 3 January, 1853. Four days later, Mgr. Knoblecher, called by people *Abuna Soliman/Suleiman* (our Father prince of peace), went to Gondokoro and bought a piece of land from Chief Lutweri. Several other Chiefs were present on that occasion and they spoke in this way: *"The Stranger must buy a field for himself and for his friends; he may grow trees on it and instruct our children; and because the Strangers have nothing in common with the robbers and murderers from foreign lands, the chiefs bind themselves to ensure that no one damages their possessions."* Mgr. Knoblecher arrived in Gondokoro just in time to assist Fr. Vinco, who died of fever on 22 January, 1853.¹⁶

¹² Alle origini della Missione dell'Africa Centrale, op. cit., pp. 117-123.

¹³ Ibid. p.129.

¹⁴ Lozano Juan Emanuel, Vostro per sempre, Daniele Comboni, Editrice Missionaria Italiana (EMI), Bologna, 1996, pp. 78-80.

¹⁵ The Opening of the Nile Basin, op. cit., pp 75-77, 85, ff.

¹⁶ The Opening of the Nile Basin, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

At this point it is worth mentioning the great popularity Fr. Vinco enjoyed among the Bari people, so much so that, for many years after his death, they continued singing in his honour. The first stanza of the song went like this:

Angelo Angelo, Go to Belenia¹⁷
Here you find too many diseases
“No, no, I’m all right here.”

*Anjelo, Anjelo, ti ni Belenia*¹⁸
Ni do ariye gilajin jore
“Bayin. bayin, nan a lo’but ni.”

Angelo Angelo, Go to Belenia
No mosquitoes are there
“No, no, I’m all right here.”

Anjelo, Anjelo, ti ni Belenia
Kimur bayin yu
“Bayin. bayin, nan a lo’but ni.”

Viva, Viva Angelo.¹⁹

Runeru, runeru, Anjelo.

The missionaries gradually built a mission station in Gondokoro. The traders, however, saw in the presence of the missionaries a great obstacle to their varied trafficking, especially the slave trade, and the cause of their misfortunes. They tried to undermine their reputation and presence in every possible way, also by inciting the people against the missionaries in order to get rid of them.²⁰ The local Bari population saw the missionaries as people who were on their side, helping them in their troubles. The work of the apostolate started and had to be carried out among untold difficulties. Meanwhile, Fr. Bartolomäus Mozgan had gone to establish another mission station among the Dinka Kic, between Shambe and Bor, which he called *Holy Cross*, a place then known in its Arabic form as *Kanisa* (Church) even on maps.

When Mgr. Knoblecher reached Gondokoro with another Priest, Fr. Ignaz Kohl, on 4 April, 1854, they learned of the death of Fr. Dovjak on 22 January and of Fr. Otto Trabant on 15 March. On 12 June, Fr. Kohl also died a victim of his apostolic zeal, after assisting a sick person. Mgr. Knoblecher, at this point, was compelled to return to Khartoum and to entrust Gondokoro mission to the old chief Lutweri, since he had no more missionaries left. By the end of October, 1854, Mgr. Knoblecher received a new contingent of missionaries in Khartoum: three Priests and five Lay

¹⁷ *Belenia*: a more healthy place where Fr. Vinco resided as a guest of a chief. Cf. Vostro per sempre, J.M.Lozano, op. cit., p. 79-80.

¹⁸ Bari – present-day language of Juba.

¹⁹ The Comboni Missionaries, An Outline History 1867-1997, Fr. Tarcisio Agostoni, Biblioteca Comboniana 14FS, Rome 2003, p.31.

²⁰ Alle origini della Missione dell’Africa Centrale, op. cit., pp. 295-297

Brothers. The Pro-Vicar left immediately for Gondokoro with Fr. Ueberbacher and a Lay Brother and arrived on 15 April cheered by the Bari people.

Mgr. Knoblecher dedicated himself to the translation of prayers and hymns into Bari. A Bari boy whose name was Logwit assisted him. Logwit would later go to Europe and help Prof. J. C. Mitterutzner of Brixen in the transcription of the Bari language. Mitterutzner, in fact, prepared grammars and dictionaries in Dinka and Bari and translated the catechisms into those languages. Fr. Ueberbacher remained alone in Gondokoro, studying the language and translating extracts of the Gospels, of the Epistles of St. Paul, a brief Bible history and various hymns into Bari.

In September 1853, Fr. Nicola Mazza (*Mazza Institute*) sent two of his Priests, Fr. Giovanni Beltrame and Fr. Antonio Castagnaro to the Mission of Central Africa. At Korosko, on the Nile River, they meet Mgr. Knoblecher and, according to Fr. Mazza's plan, they asked him for a mission for their Institute, which was granted. They went together to Khartoum and, at their arrival on 29 December, 1853, found Fr. Kocijancic dying. On 6 February, 1854, Fr. Castagnaro also died of dysentery in Khartoum. Thus, Fr. Beltrame continued the exploration alone along the Blue Nile up to the territory of the Shiangallah, returned to Khartoum on 5 April, 1854, and left for Verona by the middle of November, 1855.

In September, 1857, a second expedition of Priests from the Mazza Institute departed for the Mission of Central Africa and was led by Fr. Beltrame. The group was made up of Frs. Francesco Oliboni, Angelo Melotto, Alessandro dal Bosco, Daniel Comboni and the layman Isidoro Zilli. At Aswan, Mgr. Knoblecher met the Mazza Group from Verona and said to Fr. Beltrame: *"I recommend to you the Verona Mission, of which you are taking charge. Orders have already been given that you and your companions will be welcome at Holy Cross. You will stay there for some time to explore the country, record the customs of the inhabitants, and study their language. You will then choose a suitable site to found your mission... I do not know if we shall ever meet again. I am worn out. I feel that I shall soon die."* Indeed, this soon came true: he died in Naples on 13 April, 1858. He was only thirty-eight.

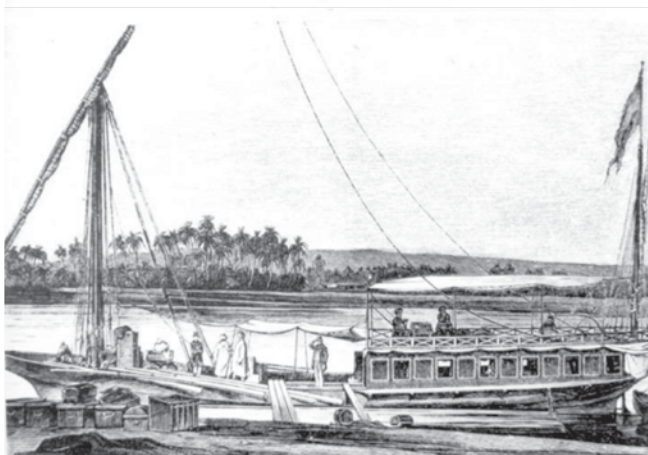
The *Stella Matutina*, (Morning Star) Vessel

At this point, before carrying on with the events which took place after the death of Mgr. Knoblecher, I think it is necessary to digress and dwell for a while on the importance this iron vessel, *Dhahabiya*, which was bought by

the Pro-Vicar Apostolic in Cairo²¹ in order to have autonomy in the missionary expeditions.

Briefly, it is important to remember that the exploration of the valley of the Nile, south of *Lake No*, was more complex than one can imagine. I am just making the point here so that the reader who may be interested in research may do so. In fact, the first missionaries were accused of being the spearhead of the river Nile trade and those who opened the way to all the abuses this trade caused.

Mgr. Knoblecher and Fr. Vinco, at the start, having no means of transport and little help from Propaganda Fide, had to fend for themselves with the help of the Khartoum traders and their boats and pay for their services with ivory which they themselves had to buy. Moreover, once the traders made their way to Gondokoro, they made their expeditions trading not only



in ivory but also in slaves and exploiting the local populations in every possible way, as already mentioned above. This was certainly not the purpose of the Missionaries, who developed good relationships with the local tribes and chiefs who were able to distinguish between them and the ruthless traders.

The *Stella Matutina* was therefore a great achievement in keeping this independence, though it could not avoid being confused with traders' boats, especially in Gondokoro, and accused of all the bad luck caused by the traders' abusive profits.²²

²¹ The Opening of the Nile Basin, op. cit, p. 6.

²² - Opening of the Nile Basin, op. cit.

- Giampaolo Romanato, *L'Africa Nera fra Cristianesimo e Islam*, L'esperienza di Daniele Comboni (1831-1881), Corbaccio, Milano, 2003. Prima Parte, I – 1.8. pp. 95-107 (Knoblecher); II – 2.3. pp. 140-160 (Il giudizio dei missionari); 2.4. pp. 161-179 (Alle origini della tragedia africana); 2.5. pp.179-189 (Missionari ed esploratori).

After Mgr. Knoblecher

After the death of Mgr. Knoblecher, Fr. Matheus Kirchner, of Bamberg, brought the Mazza expedition to Holy Cross and reached there on 14 February, 1858. They were welcomed by Fr. J. Lanz, who was mourning the death of Fr. Mozgan on 24 February. (In fact, in 1856 Fr. Morlang and Fr. L. Pircher had reached Holy Cross, as well, but the latter died a short time after, while Fr. Morlang went to Gondokoro. A year later, Fr. A. Kaufmann arrived at Gondokoro and Fr. J. Lanz at Holy Cross).

Fr. Kirchner then proceeded to Gondokoro and returned to Holy Cross with the news that Fr. Ueberbacher had died. At Holy Cross he found that Fr. Oliboni had died as well on 26 March, 1858. On his death-bed Fr. Oliboni had spoken words of encouragement saying: *“Even though only one of you should remain, let not his confidence fail, nor let him withdraw.”* On his return from the White Nile journey in August of the same year, Fr. Matheus Kirchner received orders from the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide to take up the reins of the Vicariate.²³

Since the number of missionaries was decreasing without any hope of others coming in the future, he went to Rome and asked the Most Reverend Fr. General of the Franciscans for some candidates, the latter having begun to deal with the Vicariate on behalf of the Institutes for Africans in Naples and the Missions in Upper Egypt. After being granted three people, one of whom was Fr. Johannes Reinthaler-Ducla from Graz, he returned to Africa. Kirchner, fearing the unhealthy climate, founded a missionary station at Shellal, on the southern border of Egypt, in order to gather the missionaries there for acclimatisation and send them periodically to the interior of the Sudan.

For the Mazza team, the experience of Holy Cross mission ended on 15 January, 1859, when Frs. Beltrame, Melotto and Comboni left the place for Khartoum, though, before reaching there on 4 April, they did sail a considerable distance up the Sobat river to look for a possible new site, but

²³ Ibid. pp.8-13.

- https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicola_Mazza

- https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giovanni_Beltrame

- https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francesco_Oliboni

- https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angelo_Melotto

- https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniele_Comboni

- https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alessandro_Dal_Bosco

- The Writings, op. cit., nn. 2123, 2142, 2148.

- Alle origini della Missione dell’Africa Centrale, op. cit., pp. 295-297

without success. Fr. Melotto died on 28 May, 1859, on his return to Khartoum. Mgr. Kirchner ordered Fr. Beltrame to sail up the White Nile again to *recall the missionaries, to take pupils with them (with their consent), as prudence suggested, as well as some furniture which could be used in the new acclimatisation house of Shellal*. When he reached Holy Cross he ordered that everything be made ready for the evacuation. With Fr. Lanz he went to Gondokoro to get Fr. Morlang who was alone and they arrived back in Khartoum on 29 March, 1860. Fr. Lanz died few days later.²⁴

On 4 September, 1861, Propaganda Fide entrusted the Mission of Central Africa to the Order of Friars Minor headed by Fr. Johannes Reinthaler -Ducla (of the Styrian Province). He led a Franciscan expedition of 33 members, five Fathers and twenty-eight Lay Brothers and reached the station of Shellal in January, 1862. He then proceeded to Khartoum, leaving some of them there, while he sailed up the White Nile. In the Shilluk area he fell sick and had to return to Khartoum, while the others proceeded to Holy Cross. At this time, a mission station at Kaka, among the Shilluk, was opened.

In March, 1862, another convoy of 25 Franciscans reached Shellal; it was made up of eight Priests, two Seminarists and fifteen Lay Brothers. Several of them fell sick and Fr. Reinthaler died of fever in Berber on 10 April, 1862. Since January of that year twenty-two Franciscan missionaries had died, including those of Kaka. The survivors were shocked by all these deaths and, being persecuted by the slave traders, they decided to withdraw. Propaganda Fide decided to entrust temporarily the Sudan mission to the Vicar Apostolic of Egypt. The mission stations of White Nile and Shellal were closed and only two Franciscans remained in Khartoum, Fr. Pfeifer and a Lay Brother.²⁵

Fr. Morlang, however, on 27 December, 1860, was in Nyan/Liab (Adok al Bahr) on his way to Holy Cross where he arrived on the 6 January, 1861, and found much of the mission in ruins. When people saw the boat coming they ran away, but when they recognized it as the boat of the mission, they hurried back overjoyed. On 25 January he left for Gondokoro where he arrived on 6 February and departed again for Holy cross on 4 March, 1861.

²⁴ - The Opening of the Nile Basin, op. cit, pp. 15-17.

- The Writings, op. cit., nn. 2857, 2858, 4348.

²⁵ - The Opening of the Nile Basin, op. cit, pp. 14-17.

- The Writings, op. cit 942, 2863, 2864

Note: the number of the missionaries of the two expeditions of Fr. Reinthaler differs (34 & 23) with the account of Comboni in his Writings.

He remained in Holy Cross all the time until he went to Khartoum on 31 March, 1863. On 23 June he arrived in Berber and, on 26 July, in Shellal.

The diary ends on the 11 of August, 1863, with a sleepless night because of the mosquitos and a bath in the river. Once back in his homeland, he remained there for ten years and then in 1873 went to Peru' as chaplain to the German emigrants.²⁶

At this point, I want to let Fr. Daniel Comboni speak so that we may hear directly from him, through his writings, of his experience of his first trip along the White Nile. Though he was not in charge of the expedition - Fr. Beltrame headed it - he made his own personal considerations which were very important for shaping his convictions, his priorities, and what in future would emerge as his Plan for the Regeneration of Africa through Africa.

Daniel Comboni: first trip to the South.

The first trip of Fr. Daniel Comboni,²⁷ from Khartoum to the South, was led by Fr. Giovanni Beltrame on the *Stella Matutina* (Morning Star) vessel.

"With this objective, we left Khartoum at dawn on 21 January, (1858) after exchanging embraces with our beloved companion, Fr. Alessandro Dal Bosco, who stayed behind in this city as Procurator. There were four of us: Fr. Giovanni Beltrame, who heads the Mission, Fr. Franco Oliboni, Fr. Angelo Melotto and I. We were to carry out a thorough exploration down the White Nile, in order to establish a Mission among the black tribes in accordance with the great plan of our Superior, Fr. Nicola Mazza of Verona. ...The vessel that bore us on this arduous and perilous voyage was the Stella Matutina, owned by the Khartoum Mission. It was crewed by 14 able sailors, under a courageous and experienced Rais (captain), who had made the voyage before..."

The team of Fr. Giovanni Beltrame started the journey southward from Khartoum on 21 January, 1858, and reached Holy Cross, at Latitude 6°40' North, on 14 February, 1858. Fr. Comboni describes the whole journey in a very vivid way, including both the scenery and the people encountered. In a letter to his Father he takes time to describe in wonderment the geography,

²⁶ Missione in Africa centrale, Diario 1855-1863, Francesco Morlang, Museum Combonianum N. 28, Editrice Nigrizia, 1973, (see the dates concerned).

²⁷ Michelangelo Grancelli, *Mgr. Daniele Comboni e la Mission dell'Africa Centrale*, Verona, 1923, XIV – 478 pages.

- The Writings, nn. 236-237, N. 32 (30) – To his Father.

the environment, the animals, the people and the events he witnessed while moving south on the river Nile.²⁸ Fr. Comboni describes with particular care the customs and appearances of the tribes and peoples they encounter. When they reached the area of the Hassanieh and Baqqarah's tribes, he cut the account short by saying that their goal was not there and that, because their Superior in Verona had requested it, they were determined to find other more suitable tribes on the White River.

*"The distant banks are picturesquely covered with a variety of greenery whose luxuriant growth at all times in every season of the year is caused by the hot sun and a perpetual springtime. Our Stella Matutina seemed to smile on those quivering waves as she skimmed majestically through the great river at the speed with which our boats cut through our own Lake Garda although she was running against the current. The first tribe one encounters beyond Khartoum (which is located on the 16th parallel North while Verona is between 45° and 46°) is the Hassanieh, spread over the left and right banks of the Baharel-Abiad and consisting of two black and Nubian races... As to the Baqqarah's government and region, I can tell you nothing. Only that this tribe, like that of the Hassanieh, for many justifiable reasons, are not at the moment suited to our purpose"*²⁹

Fr. Comboni mentions that, previously, Fr. Beltrame had gone to explore other possible locations along the Blue Nile, but that the final decision was to go southward along the White Nile, which was better known, because many of the former missionaries, among whom Fr. Vinco,³⁰ had already travelled there in the past. Fr. Comboni takes considerable care to describe the tribes of the Shilluk and their fierce appearance, as well as the Dinka and the Nuer, showing his positive preference for a work of evangelization among these tribes of the South.

(For ref. Comboni see Appendix to Part One, Section One point no. 1)

The Shilluk

After having talked about the Hassanieh tribe, Fr. Comboni tells how the *Stella Matutina* ran aground in the middle of the river Nile because of the shallow waters, just between the Shilluk and Dinka tribes who were living on both sides of the river. Having heard in Khartoum of the fearsome reputation of these tribes, this experience was quite dreadful but, with

²⁸ Ibid. nn. 216, 228, 229, 230.

²⁹ Ibid. nn. 238, 239, 250.

³⁰ Ibid. nn. 230, 232.

God's assistance they managed to communicate and it was this that saved them, since the people and the crew of the vessel did not seem to be a threat to the warriors in the canoes, who were equally afraid of them:

*"We are between the Shilluk and the Dinka. Some of the Shilluk crews stay close to their bank of the river staring with fear at our Stella Matutina. Others, belonging to the Dinka's, pass our boat terrified and move off. We hail their captain. He hails us and flees. That night the attempts to remove our ship from the mud and sand are vain."*³¹ *The left and right banks are swarming with men armed with spears, shields, bows and arrows. The Shilluk are on the left, and, on the right, the Dinka who hide among the bushes when they realise that the Shilluks are very numerous, and only appear when the left bank is less populated with Shilluk.*³²

It took them a lot of work and a good deal with the Shilluk warriors as well as personal skill in order to solve the problem and get the vessel moving again but, after 42 hours, the vessel got under way again to the immense relief of all.

*"...As we proceed they grow less, and they hide increasingly in the bushes until we can see no more. Thus the banks until the 7th parallel appear to be covered only with reeds, papyrus, and mimosa bushes. Only every now and then there grows a gigantic Baobab, the broadest and tallest tree in the world. Before reaching the capital of the Shilluk where we moored with the Stella Matutina, I would like to give you a brief description of the two great tribes of the Shilluk and the Dinka. The tribe of the Shilluk, one of the largest and most powerful in Central Africa, extends from the 12th degree to the 9th, Latitude North."*³³

Comboni thinks that this Shilluk tribe would be a good field for evangelization; however, for the moment it is to be left for future undertakings.

*"...The whimsy of the Shilluk is particularly noticeable in the way they dress their hair. They cut it in thousands of different ways..."*³⁴ *This would seem a suitable tribe for our Missionary plan; but for reasons which I will tell you, we left it, and here we are at its capital, Denab, and Kaco. This town is situated on the White Nile and is several miles*

³¹ Ibid. n. 252.

³² Ibid. n. 265

³³ Ibid. n. 266

³⁴ Ibid. n. 272

long...³⁵...In Kaco, a town of the Shilluk located on the 10th parallel, I attempted to find similarities with my friend Bahkit Miniscalchi's language; but I found it different. Moreover, I am of the opinion that through Kaco it will be very easily possible to penetrate the tribes of the Karco and Fanda, that is, Gebel Nuba, without crossing the desert of the Baqqarah, and the Kordofan and Dongola, the route taken by the Moor Miniscalchi...The whole of the left bank of the Shilluk as far as 9.5° Latitude North swarmed with armed Shilluk as I told you...³⁶

The Dinka

As for the Dinka tribe, Fr. Daniel Comboni clearly states that that is their real target and therefore all the others, for the moment, will have to wait until the time is ripe. This is the reason they carried on with the trip until they reached Holy Cross, trying, in the meantime, to make an overall exploration of other locations.

"...We were constantly observing our Shilluk friends and to tell you the truth, seeing those canoes going backwards and forwards, others appearing, and the Dinka's on the other side of the river departing (and we knew that the Dinka's are very afraid of the Shilluk, so that when there is a crowd of Shilluk on one side, the Dinka's flee on the other), made us wonder whether they would attempt to take possession of our boat and make a good mess of us."³⁷

"But let us come to the Dinka. This is Central Africa's largest tribe as far as we can see; and this is the reason why for a long time we have turned our eyes towards it, selecting it to be the focal point of our efforts and the field of our labour."³⁸ ...The light of the Gospel will shine before their eyes, penetrating their minds and hearts, and with divine grace they will change their thoughts, their counsel and their customs. Their language is widespread among other African tribes... later, if God pleases, when we succeed in penetrating this vast tribe, I shall be able to give you more abundant information."³⁹

"Nonetheless, before going on I would like to describe to you how we stopped at Hano to provide ourselves with a bull. Here we received the old chief (Sheikh) of this town on board the Stella Matutina."⁴⁰ ...A

³⁵ Ibid. n. 273

³⁶ Ibid. n. 276; see also nn. 358-370

³⁷ Ibid. n. 260

³⁸ Ibid. n. 277

³⁹ Ibid. n. 279

⁴⁰ Ibid. n. 280

few miles beyond Hano there is the majestic mouth of the River Sobat, which leads inland to the heart of the Dinka tribe... Right from Europe we were determined to penetrate the Dinka's through the mouth of the Sobat; and perhaps we will carry out this project. But now since Aswan we have thought that we should investigate several places, the better to ascertain where it would please God for us to found our mission."⁴¹

The Nuer

If the reputation of the aforementioned tribes was quite frightening in Khartoum, the stories about the Nuer tribe were even more so. Travellers and merchants depicted them in such a frightful way that only mad people would dare to stop among them. However, in the opinion of the Mazza team, and especially of Fr. Daniel Comboni, a fearless approach would be the best one. It turned out to be so and they could peacefully visit *Fandah-El-Eliab*, the actual *Liab/Liap* of Adok al Bahr on the western bank of the river Nile, where Fr. Vinco and Fr. Morlang had also stopped and had a very positive experience.⁴²

Here, the heart of Comboni seems full of regret because, while recognizing that this tribe would be a *most splendid area* of evangelization, he is aware that the logistic environment would not be suitable for their survival. A comment which one could make at this point is to see how much their previous evaluation brought them to such conclusion about the geography of the place. In fact, Holy Cross was not in a better situation, but it was already founded. What weighed more in the Mazza group evaluation and conclusion was that, since the Dinka people were such a huge tribe, the knowledge of their language, in their opinion, would facilitate the entrance into other bordering tribes. Comboni, however, seems to leave Fandah-El-Eliab with sense of regret.

"Here I would like to make a brief digression for you. Right from Europe, from books, etc. and especially after the tragic tales we heard in Khartoum, we formed a frightening impression of the Nuer that they killed and ate people, etc., etc. and we were convinced of this in Khartoum in particular, where we were advised to arm ourselves...,

⁴¹ Ibid. n. 281; see also nn. 371-372

⁴² The Opening of the Nile Basin, op. cit, pp 75-76.

- Missione in Africa centrale, Diario, op. cit., pp. 45-46, 23 April, 1856.

- Fandah-El-Eliab, the Plan of Regeneration of Africa by Africa, from failure to fulfilment, Fr. Francesco Chemello Odiongo Gatwich, in SSCOMBONI@NEWS.COM, Newsletter of South Sudan Province, no. 15, February, 2015, pp. 61-66. FSSPJ.

*instead..., we walk unafraid and without showing any fear, so that seeing us so firm, they flee if we do not invite them to stay with us.*⁴³ ... *Having reached Fandah, I wandered in among the spears at a large market of the Nuer, who as we passed made way for us as though an emperor were passing.*⁴⁴

*"The tribe of the Nuer is the most hard-working of all we have seen and therefore in my opinion the richest. I came to learn something about this people, since we stopped in Fandah-el-Eliab which is like their capital and the tribe's main market.*⁴⁵ ... *This vast tribe of Nuer would be a most splendid area for our efforts; but their swampy land is deadly for the European. And I will tell you a little later what further reinforces our reasons. In Fandah we received on board this tribe's chief who expressed the same wonder as the chief in Hauo: but this one was prouder and more determined.*"⁴⁶

*"The immense tribe of the Nuer, which extends from the mouths of the Bahr el Ghazal to the 7th degree, in addition to the islands mentioned above, which were on our left, includes yet another great stretch of country to the west of the river. It was precisely on this bank, at Fandah-Eliab, that we enjoyed an even stranger sight than that of Kaco. The Nuers cultivate enough durra and other vegetables to sell to their neighbours. Thus although they are less powerful than the Dinka and the Shilluk, they are nevertheless better nourished and have a thicker-set physique..."*⁴⁷

Holy Cross

Once he arrived at Holy Cross, Fr. Comboni felt free to express all his satisfaction because his team had reached their destination and because they could now get immediately into the work according to their plan. He had no knowledge of the hardships that awaited him and the whole team. The joy of the arrival was overwhelming. The people, their language and culture were the first priorities together with new explorations.

"...finally on 14th February we reached the Station of Holy Cross where we are now, in the country of Pà-Nòm, 25 days after our departure from Khartoum, a little more than 1,000 miles from that city,

⁴³ Ibid. n. 289

⁴⁴ Ibid. n. 290

⁴⁵ Ibid. n. 288

⁴⁶ Ibid. n. 291

⁴⁷ Ibid. n. 380, N. 35 (33) To Dr Benedetto Patuzzi, ACR, A, c. 15/88; see also nn. 373-382

by precise and close calculations. Pà-Nòm is located at 7° Latitude North, and it is a magnificent central point, safer than the others, from which to undertake explorations... ”⁴⁸

“From our observations we have discovered that the language most extensively known is that of the Dinka, which is spoken not only by the Dinka but by many other tribes of Central Africa such as the Nuer, Kich, Tuit, Eliab, Arol, Jok, etc. This is why we are stopping here at Holy Cross where there is a Missionary from Khartoum and, here with him, we shall try to learn from the natives’ lips the language of the Dinka, while at the same time we will do a bit of exploring. Then we will go to the tribe that seems to us to be the most suitable, to plant the Cross of Christ.”⁴⁹

“I can stammer 522 words of the Dinka tongue; indeed, 523 because at this very moment I have discovered that a-gnáo means “cat.” It is an indescribable effort to learn a language by dragging each word from the natives’ lips.”⁵⁰

The Bari tribe of Gondokoro

As for the Bari tribe, Fr. Comboni could never visit them personally, and all he knew came from what other missionaries said and wrote. Only the deep desire to reach there, where the person who put in his heart the burning fire for the Mission of Africa, Fr. Angelo Vinco, had died, remained in his heart, as a longing he could never fulfil.

Evaluation of the Holy Cross Mission

In 1867 all the stations, except Khartoum, were abandoned. In that city there remained only one Priest and two lay people.⁵¹ In this way, the first mission attempt in Central Africa, in the nineteenth century, ended. The harsh reality of the situation and the hardships the missionaries endured were appalling, but what positive results were achieved? Fr. Daniel Comboni himself pointed them out in his Historical Report on the Vicariate Apostolic of Central Africa to the sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide on 25 February, 1872.⁵²

⁴⁸ Ibid. n. 293, N. 32 (30) – To his Father, AFC

⁴⁹ Ibid. n. 382, N. 35 (33) To Dr Benedetto Patuzzi, ACR, A, c. 15/88

⁵⁰ Ibid. n. 337, N. 34 (32) To Fr Pietro Grana, ACR, A, c. 15/39; see also nn. 348, 550,

⁵¹ Erich Schmid, *Alle origini della Missione dell' Africa Centrale*, op. cit., p. 292

⁵² The Writings nn. 1314-1316; 2850-2854; *The Opening of the Nile Basin*, op. cit., pp. 18.

The achievements Fr. Comboni noted under the rule of the three Pro-Vicars Ryllo, Knoblecher and Kirchner were that Khartoum, Gondokoro, Holy Cross and Shellal stations had been founded. A knowledge of all the tribes spreading left and right of the White Nile was acquired, especially the Shilluk, the Dinka, the Janghé, the Nuer, the Kish, the Tuic, the Gogh, the Eliab and the Bari. A study was made of the customs, the character and the social conditions of these Africans. Medicine and charity were practised and people could distinguish the spirit of the missionary, who sought their welfare, from that of the white adventurers who mistreated them and stole their children and goods.

Some of the languages of those lands were learned, including two of the main ones: *Dinka*, and *Bari*. The latter was spoken by Africans living between the 5th parallel and the Equator. In these two languages, Professor Mitterutzner of Brixen, helped by the manuscripts of the missionaries, compiled and published dictionaries, catechisms, several dialogues, translations of the Psalms and St. Luke's Gospel. The publications in those two languages, of which scientists in Europe knew not even the names, would become immensely useful to future missionaries in Central Africa.

To conclude, Fr. Comboni spoke of about one hundred Africans who became Catholics and were baptised. He continued by saying that, during that period, Europe saw the appearance of two new Institutions which were preparing to consecrate their efforts to the formation of candidates for Africa: the Mazza Institute and the Institution of Fr. Lodovico of Casoria, a Franciscan, who in 1854 established two colleges in Naples, one for boys and one for girls.

For the Mazza Institute the *Vicariate of the Central Africa*, as it was, appeared to be an impossible adventure. The Order of the Franciscans Minor took over the Vicariate but with no success and too many deaths. Thus, the two missions in the south, Gondokoro and Holy Cross, which had to be abandoned, could not be reopened. Fr. Reinthaller had no successor in his arduous duties. After his death the Sacred Congregation entrusted the governance of the Mission indefinitely to the Vicar Apostolic of Egypt. The Seraphic Order sent nearly 60 men to Central Africa, including Priests and Brothers. Twenty-two died and the others returned either to Egypt, the Holy Land or Europe.⁵³ According to Fr. Comboni the whole issue needed a completely new approach in order to become viable.

⁵³ The Writings, op. cit., 2864.

COMBONI'S VISION: TO EVANGELIZE AFRICA

After the unfortunate failure of the various missionary expeditions along the river Nile to evangelize the African tribes living in the *interior of Africa*, in the vast region of the so-called *Vicariate of Central Africa*, Comboni continued to reflect on the deep reasons for these failures and search for a way to overcome them. He came up with a *Plan* which, as he himself says, was an inspiration from God, while he was praying in Rome for the Canonization of Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque, a French nun who spread the devotion of the *Sacred Heart to Jesus*. Initially, on 18 September 1864, he called his plan the *Plan for the Conversion of Africa*,⁵⁴ but later on, with a deeper insight and with a more extensive meaning, he would call it *The Plan of the Regeneration of Africa with Africa*.⁵⁵



The *Vicariate of Central Africa* was the most extensive Vicariate within Africa, but the dream of Comboni was to unite all the Catholic institutions working around the coastlands of Africa into a common missionary venture, so that the benefit of evangelization could better reach the African people living in the interior of Africa. That was the reason why he proposed

⁵⁴ Daniel Comboni, "THE PLAN of the Association of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary for the Conversion of Africa", 18 September, 1864, The Writings nn. 800-848.

⁵⁵ Ibid. nn. 968, 911, 1010, 1015, 1139, 1150, 1209, 1221, 1425, 1828, Report to Card. Alessandro Barnabò, Rome, April 1870, n. 2214; to Propagation of Faith Lyon, Verona, July, 1871, n. 2579; Plan of the Regeneration of Africa by Africa, 4th edition, Verona, 1971, nn. 2741, 2753. (2741-2791); See also 2943, 3302.

- Servants of the Gospel, op. cit., p. 21.

to the Congregation of Propaganda Fide that *the project should not restrict itself to the old-established borders of the Mission of Central Africa*, but would include the whole African race and extend and develop its activity over almost all the countries of black Africa.

The project would take into account that in the *north* there were the two Apostolic Vicariates of *Egypt* and *Tunisia* and the three Apostolic Prefectures of *Upper Egypt*, *Tripoli* and *Morocco*. In the *west* there were the five Apostolic Vicariates of *Senegambia*, *Sierra Leone*, *Dahomey*, *Guinea* and *Natal* and the three Apostolic Prefectures of *Senegal*, the *Congo* and the islands of *Annabon-Corisco* and *Ferdinando-Pò*. In the *south* there were the two Apostolic Vicariates of the *Western* and *Eastern Districts* of the Cape of Good Hope. In the *south-east* there was the Apostolic Vicariate of *Madagascar* and the three Apostolic Prefectures of *Zanzibar*, the *Seychelles* and the *Nossibè*, *Ste Marie* and *Mayotte* islands, while in the *north-east* there were the two Vicariates Apostolic of *Abyssinia* and the *Gallas*.

Considering the fact that the most successful among the ten existing Dioceses were those of *Algiers* in the *north* and of *St Denis* on Réunion Island in the Indian Ocean in the *south-east*, Comboni thought it natural that, in order to put the *Project* into effect, they had to be asked to help and co-operate. In fact, they would be able to give a valid contribution with their authority, advice and work in assisting and facilitating the great undertaking of the regeneration of the vast and numerous tribes of these Vicariates, Prefectures and Dioceses, already established around Africa. The *Project*, would propose the *creation of innumerable Institutes of both sexes to surround the whole of Africa*, situated at the least possible distance from the interior of the continent, in stable and fairly civilized areas, in which both Europeans and Africans could live and work.⁵⁶

Education was to be given to all individuals of either sex so that the spirit of Jesus Christ, integrity of behaviour, firmness of Faith, the principles of Christian morals, and the knowledge of the Catholic catechism and the basic elements of necessary human knowledge might take root in them. Men had to be instructed in the practice of agriculture and in one or more skills of first importance and women similarly educated in the most necessary of women's skills. In this way, the former would become honest, virtuous, useful and active men, and the latter virtuous and capable mothers and wives. Comboni believed that all of this would have a powerful influence for the moral and spiritual good of the individual

⁵⁶ The Writings, The Plan, 1964, op. cit., nn. 813-821

African people. Once an individual student has completed his religious and secular education in the Institute and leaves, the Institute will do everything in its power to help him to keep the healthy religious and moral principles received in his education.

From the men and women formed in the Institutes around Africa, some would be chosen to move gradually to the interior of Africa to start and consolidate the work of Evangelization and Human Promotion (*for them, it was understood as work of religion and of civilisation*). Men would go as *capable Catechists, teachers, craftsmen (farmers, carpenters, tailors, builders, shoemakers, doctors, nurses, pharmacists, etc.)*. Women would go as *capable school mistresses* with full religious and human, education, women teachers and housewives, capable of promoting the education of other women in reading and writing, keeping accounts, spinning, sewing, caring for the sick and practising all the domestic skills needed.⁵⁷

Comboni's idea embracing the whole of the African continent was a great vision, but premature for the Religious /Missionary Institutes of the time, or, perhaps, just considered an impossible dream. Comboni himself, however, had to come to practical terms with the situation of his time. Moreover, since December, 1866, the Mazza Institute had given up its commitment to the Mission of Central Africa and Comboni had to find his own way to implement his *Plan for the Regeneration of Africa with Africa*. After having consulted Propaganda Fide and the Bishop of Verona, Mgr. Luigi di Canossa, he founded in Verona (Italy) what would be called the *Institute of the Good Shepherd for the Regeneration of Africa*⁵⁸

After the foundation of his institutes in Verona, Fr. Comboni organized his first expedition to Cairo, consisting of 23 people, departing from Marseilles (France), on 29 November. There were 3 Camillian Fathers, 3 Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition (from France) and 16 African Girls who had studied in Italian institutions. Once in Cairo, Egypt, he carried on with his plan and, in the same year 1867, founded immediately two new institutes, one for boys and one for girls, according to his plan. Moreover, in Cairo another 2 boys were accepted to join the group, thus making a total of 25 people.⁵⁹ On 20 February, 1869, Fr. Comboni led another expedition

⁵⁷ Ibid. nn. 826-829

⁵⁸ The Writings, XVI, Biographical Notes; n. 1416-1417, To Cardinal Alessandro Barnabò – 11 June, 1867; n. 1420, N. 207 (195) – Minute of the Diocesan Decree “Magno Sane Perfundimur Gaudio” By Canossa, Acr, A, C. 25/14 N. 5; nn. 1425-1426, to Mr De Lamenie De Brienne – 22 August, 1867;

⁵⁹ The Writings, 1492-1493, To Mgr Luigi di Canossa – 29 November, 1867; 1522, To Mgr. Luigi di Canossa – 20 December, 1867.

of 6 members to Africa from Marseilles with one Priest (the first) from the Verona Institute, 2 good African school mistresses, 1 Catechist and 1 teacher of crafts.⁶⁰ Thus, the members dedicated to the African Mission were gradually increasing.

Comboni Institutions: in Italy and Cairo

In Verona (Italy), in June 1867, Comboni founded, for this purpose, the male *Institute for the African Mission*, by diocesan decree. The same decree foresaw also the foundation of a missionary institute for women, as Comboni called it, *The Virgins of Charity*. However, after an initial trial in 1867, its foundation had to be postponed to 1872 and it was given the name of the *Pious Mothers of Africa*. In both Institutes, their members were to be taught in the same spirit. In order to provide financial support for the two Institutes, he also founded the *Association of the Good Shepherd*, with the same aim of *the Regeneration of Africa*. These Institutes were operating under the governance and the supervision of Bishop Canossa of Verona, who was assisted by a Council of respectable ecclesiastical and secular personalities.⁶¹

At Propaganda Fide there was consensus on the foundation of Verona that would assure the stable future of the Mission of Central Africa and there was a certain amount of pressure on Fr. Comboni to consolidate the institutions created to prepare suitable personnel for the African environment at human, physical and spiritual levels, properly trained to be able to face the difficult challenges they would be encountering. Cardinal Barnabò, of the Sacred Congregation, told him clearly:

“My dear Comboni, one or the other: either you put it in writing that you will live another 35 years, or you firmly establish this College of Verona for me, so that it provides good missionaries for Africa. In either case you have hopes of initiating great missionary activity in Central Africa. But if you fail to put the College in Verona on firm foundations, or

⁶⁰ The writings, n. 1856, To Cardinal Alessandro Barnabò – 20 February, 1869; n. 1857, To Bishop Luigi di Canossa – 20 February, 1869;

- L'istituto Pie Madri della Nigrizia, op. cit., 38-42.

⁶¹ La Missione Cattolica nel Sudan, Elisa Pezzi, Pie Madri della Nigrizia, Verona 1972, pp. 45-47.

- L'istituto Pie Madri della Nigrizia, Elisa Pezzi, Studi Comboniani/6, EMI Bologna, 1980. pp.13-21

- The Writings, nn. 2884, 2893, Report to Card. A. Barnabò, 2 March 1872;

- Ibid. nn. 2567, 2571, 2575, 2576, Report to the Society of Cologne – 6 June, 1871.

- The Writings, 4086, 4087, to Cardinal Alessandro Franchi – 15 April, 1876

if some accident should befall you that carries you off to the next world, your beautiful work might perhaps go up in smoke!" And Comboni concluded: *"Since up to the present I have not found anyone who can assure me that I shall live another 35 years or even another day, it is necessary that I busy myself with the Verona College."*⁶²

In Cairo, Egypt, Fr. Comboni founded three Institutes

- A. The house of the Sacred Heart, an Institute for male Africans. (Founded in 1867)
- B. The house of the Sacred Heart of Mary, an Institute for female Africans. (Founded in 1867)
- C. The house of the Holy Family, a school for African girls in Old Cairo. (Founded in 1869)⁶³

A) The Institute of the Sacred Heart of Jesus for the conversion of Africa. Its primary goal was the moral and religious education of young Africans and their instruction in all the branches of knowledge and craft skills that seemed useful for Central Africa, then the acclimatization of European missionaries and craftsmen; for the European missionaries to learn Arabic, the languages and dialects of the African tribes, to be a time of apprenticeship in this Institute, equivalent to a period of instruction and trial. The secondary aim of this Institute was the conversion to Christianity of the black people resident in Egypt.

The Institute of the Sacred Heart of Jesus included:

- 1. The Missionaries.
- 2. The Catechists and assistants.
- 3. The Catechumenate and the educational centre for Africans.
- 4. A small hospital for African males.

B) The Institute of the Sacred Heart of Mary for the Regeneration of Africa. This was the Institute for African girls which was entrusted to the direction of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition. It was located close to the Nile. This Institute's primary and secondary aims were similar to that of the one for African boys, except for a few differences which had to be made for purposes of the education which aimed above all to train young

⁶² The Writings, n. 2568, Report to the Society of Cologne – 6 June, 1871.

⁶³ Ibid, nn. 2480-2488; 2511-2513; 2524-2527; 2572-2574.

- The Writings, nn. 2884, 2893, 2895, 2897, 2898, 2899, 2902, 2903, Report to Cardinal Alessandro Barnabò, "The Institutes of Verona and Egypt for the regeneration of Africa and Plan of Apostolic Action to be followed in reassuming the Vicariate of Central Africa", Rome, 2 March, 1872.

Catholic girls to help with the apostolate among African women, both in Egypt and in Central Africa.

This Institute consisted of:

1. The Sisters.
2. The African girl missionaries.
3. The Aspirants and the assistants.
4. The Catechumenate.
5. A small hospital for African women.

In Cairo, Fr. Comboni was the ordinary Superior for the Sisters of St. Joseph.

C) *The Institute of the Holy Family.* Its goal was to demonstrate and promote the talents, the dignity and the esteem of the Africans in Egypt and to administer the public school in Old Cairo, run by African women Missionaries (see B, above), for young girls of every race and religion. The teaching extended principally to Catholic faith and morals, to elements of the various branches of knowledge and to feminine skills, and was done in various languages. These three Institutes were under the jurisdiction of Mgr. Luigi Ciurcia, Vicar and Delegate Apostolic of Egypt, with a decree dated 23 May, 1869.

On 21 December 1871, the *perpetual members* of the Verona College,⁶⁴ apart from many laymen and craftsmen of proven good conduct (without counting the two Camillians) were the following Secular Priests, who were living as religious:

In Old Cairo:

1. Fr. Daniel Comboni, Superior
2. Canon Pasquale Fiore, (*Dep. Superior of the Institutes in Egypt*)
3. Fr. Bartolomeo Roller
4. Fr. Giuseppe Ravignani
5. Fr. Elia Calis, cleric in theology
6. Fr. Vincenzo Jeramolinski

Due to arrive with Comboni to Cairo within a month.

7. Fr. Pietro Perinelli, *Comboni's secretary*
8. Fr. Giovanni Losi from Piacenza
9. Fr. Pietro Rossi (*then studying at the Verona College*)
10. Fr. Ilario Zanon (*then studying at the Verona College*)
11. Fr. Antonio Squaranti, *the Rector of the College*

A total of eight missionaries operating in Africa.

⁶⁴ The Writings, 2631, To Cardinal Alessandro Barnabò – 21 December, 1871

On 2 March, 1872, the Missionary Priests in Cairo, including the Camillians, were:⁶⁵

1. Fr. Daniel Comboni, Superior, aged 40
2. Fr. Pasquale Fiore, Canon, Vice-Superior, aged 34
3. Fr. Bartolomeo Rolleri, aged 30
4. Fr. Giuseppe Ravignani, aged 37
5. Fr. Stanislao Carcereri, (*Minister of the Sick*), aged 29
6. Fr. Giuseppe Franceschini, (*Minister of the Sick*), aged 25
7. Fr. Vincenzo Jeramolinski, aged 32
8. Fr. Giovanni Losi, aged 30
9. Fr. Pietro Perinelli, aged 29
10. Fr. Elia Calis Gerosolimitano, Cleric in Theology, aged 21

From the above date, the following personnel were available to resume responsibility for the Vicariate of Central Africa:

8 Missionary Priests.

9 Lay Assistants.

4 Sisters, one of whom is from Bethlehem.

20 African women teachers.

Of the four Stations founded in the past, only 3 remained, Shellal, Khartoum and Gondokoro, which was meant to be the operational base for extending the activities as far as the source of the Nile. Holy Cross had been destroyed.

The Postulatum pro Nigris Africae Centralis

(The Postulatum (proposal/petition) in favour of the black peoples of Central Africa).

It is important to devote some space to this issue, due to the importance of this proposal of Fr. Daniel Comboni presented to the Assembly of the First Ecumenical Vatican Council in Rome, where the Bishops from all over the world were gathering together to discuss the most relevant issues concerning the Catholic Church in the XIX century.

The Postulatum was signed by hundreds of Prelates and submitted to Pope Pius IX by the Secretary of the Commission for Postulata, Mgr. Alessandro Franchi. Pope Pius IX signed it and established that it should be addressed at the Council in the category of *de Missionibus Apostolicis*. (Apostolic Missions). Unfortunately, it could not be discussed because the

⁶⁵ The Writings, 2898, 2906, 2907, 2914, Report to Cardinal Alessandro Barnabò – 2 March, 1872.

Council was suspended. However, the fact that Pope accepted the Postulatum, and agreed that it should be included in the section dealing with the Apostolic Missions, was an unprecedented achievement.⁶⁶ In that circumstance, Fr. Daniel Comboni could be present in the Council only because Bishop Luigi of Canossa took him as his personal expert in theology.

Comboni Pragmatism and Vision for the Future

Fr. Comboni was elected Pro-Vicar Apostolic of Central Africa on 26 May, 1872. On 2 July, 1877 he was elected Vicar Apostolic and Bishop and his consecration took place on 12 August, 1877.⁶⁷

Once he consolidated his institutes in Cairo, the springboard towards Central Africa, he started implementing his plan by moving into present-day Sudan. His undertakings developed in Khartoum and in the area of El Obeid, Kordofan,⁶⁸ with works of exploration, geography, language study, evangelization and care for slaves. The mission of Malbes,⁶⁹ a few hours travel from El Obeid, was a model of integration between evangelization and human promotion for freed slaves.

In Malbes, the Priest in charge of the mission was Fr. Antony Dobale, born in Marago (Galla) probably in 1851, the first African Priest of Daniel Comboni, educated at the Mazza Institute in Verona,⁷⁰ who, unfortunately, died at the end of September, 1881, struck down by typhoid fever.

⁶⁶ The Writings n. 2412, To the Emperor Franz Josef – 2 March, 1871; nn. 2479, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, Report to the Society of Cologne – 6 June, 1871; n. 2795, to Mgr. Luigi di Canossa – 1872; n. 2881, to Canon G.C. Mitterrutzner – 28 February, 1872; n. 3884, to Cardinal Alessandro Franchi – 21 August, 1875; nn. 2294-2309, Circular to the Council Fathers – 24 June, 1870; n. 2336, To Mgr Luigi Ciurcia – 18 November, 1870.

⁶⁷ http://www.comboniani.org/?page_id=8544

⁶⁸ <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04152b.htm>

⁶⁹ The Writings nn. 4499, 4500, 4527, 4528, 4529,
<http://www.comboni.org/en/contenuti/100901-10-malbes-mission>
- G. Vantini, *La Missione del Cuore*, op. cit., p. 13-14;

⁷⁰ The Writings, n. 743, to the President of the Society of Cologne – 4 October, 1863; n. 4722; nn. 5086, 5212, 7146, to Cardinal Giovanni Simeoni – 24 April, 1878 – 21 June, 1878; 24 September, 1881; 6674, to his Father – 24, April, 1881.
<http://www.comboniane.org/who-we-are/women-in-our-history/sr-maria-rosa-colpo>
<http://www.comboni.org/fr/contenuti/100229-egsd-egypt-sudan;>



Malbes: Christian farming village of freed slaves

Of the group of African girls educated in Europe, two young ladies were selected by Comboni to open the new mission station in El Obeid in 1873; they were Bakhita Kuashe (*Fortunata Quascè*), a Nuba by tribe, and Domitilla Bakhita, a Dinka. (Domitilla stayed with the Combonis until her death in Cairo in 1921). Bakhita Kuashe asked to become one of the Pious Mothers of Africa. In 1879 she began the two years of Novitiate of prayer, contemplation, and preparation that was required to become a Sister. On Easter Sunday, 1881, she took her vows. *Fortunata (Bakhita) Kuashe*⁷¹ was the first African woman to join the Female Institute. Mgr. Comboni was finally able to realize his dream of regenerating *Africa through Africans*.

It is also worth mentioning Fr. Daniel Sorur, (Farim Deng) a Dinka, whom Comboni had ransomed from slavery. He was born in 1859 or 1860 in Bahr el Ghazal. He was captured by Baqqara in 1871, when he was eleven or twelve and was given a new name, *Surur* (Sorur), which means happiness. He escaped from his owner and ran off to the mission of El Obeid where Fr. Comboni welcomed him. He converted to Christianity and was baptized by Fr. Comboni in 1874. In 1876 he was chosen to be sent to

⁷¹ The Writings, nn. 754, 1542, 2013, 6714, 6717; when in 1896 a new Comboni school was opened in Aswan, she was appointed a member of the teaching staff. The new school being located in Aswan and not Shellal, most of the students in the new school were children of Egyptians. In 1897 some of them protested to the school authorities about the suitability of an African woman teaching their children, and they began taking them out. Bakhita was reassigned back to Cairo in 1898, and though she protested to the Vicar about what happened, she remained at the Colonia Antischivistica of Zamalek. She died a year later in 1899. http://www.dacb.org/stories/sudan/bakhita_kwashe.html
- Servant of the Gospel, op. cit., pp. 28-34.

Verona (Italy) and in 1877 he was admitted to the *Collegium Urbanum* in Rome. He became the first Dinka to be ordained a Catholic Priest. He spent only eighteen months in Sudan, living mainly in Europe where he shared his experience as an African, talking especially about the evil of slave trade, and advocating for Africa. Ill-health was probably the reason for his return to Cairo in 1891, where he remained during the final period of his life, teaching at the mission schools in Cairo, Suakin and Helwan. Sorur died in Cairo at the Abbasiyya Hospital on 11 January, 1900.⁷²

Mgr. Comboni's vision, however, was not limited to Kordofan. Only financial reasons and personnel did not allow him to go beyond it. His gaze was turned towards the southern part of his huge Vicariate, especially the River Nile and the *Nyanza Lakes*. For this he asked the help of the Governor, General Gordon Pasha, during one of his visits to Mgr. Comboni. General Gordon told him that in that moment he was not able to help him, but two days later he sent him Captain Gessi with this message: *"Tell Monsignor Comboni that I want to help him and that his expedition will be made at my expense, (that is, at the expense of the government). I will see to the transport of the missionaries, the baggage, etc.; he (Comboni) will only have to see to the specific food supplies."*⁷³ Mgr. Comboni answered thanking the Governor and accepted the generous offer.

In a recent letter, Cardinal Simeoni had already informed Mgr. Comboni that the Missionaries of Algiers⁷⁴ were on their way to the Nyanza Lakes and Comboni understood the wisdom of having new vicariates in those far-away regions of his Vicariate. However, since the move of Propaganda Fide was affecting his Vicariate, he wrote to Cardinal Simeoni saying he would send a report on the reason for which he thinks, first of all, that the Nyanza Lakes should be under the jurisdiction of the Vicariate of Central Africa; secondly he proposed to constitute two new great Vicariates to be entrusted to the Missionaries of Algiers, in the South of the Nyanza Lakes; and lastly, the definition of new borders for the Vicariate of Central Africa.

However, according to Mgr. Comboni, the new boundaries should only reach the southern borders of the sources of the Nile, which were the Nyanza Lakes, that is the 4th or 5th degree of Latitude South.⁷⁵ Just to

⁷² The Writings, 4683-4685, to Cardinal Alessandro Franchi – 15 July, 1877; 4695-4697, To Daniele Sorur and Arturo Morsal – 23.7.1877; 6018, 6729; http://www.dacb.org/stories/sudan/sorur2_daniel.html

⁷³ To Cardinal Giovanni Simeoni Khartoum, 21 June, 1878, The Writings, nn. 5203-5212

⁷⁴ The "Missionaries of Africa" or "White Fathers", founded by Mgr. Lavigerie, Bishop of Algiers.

⁷⁵ Ibid. n. 5210

stress that he was attentive and actively following the issues of his Vicariate even in far distant regions, and especially the region of the Nyanza Lakes, in another letter he let Cardinal Simeoni know that, through people he knew, he had already sent a letter of recommendation to the Governor General of the White Nile and Equatoria to welcome the Missionaries of Algiers, (of Bishop Lavigerie), as if he were receiving him personally and his missionaries,⁷⁶ to whom those areas were entrusted and still belonged.

Both Mgr. Comboni and especially his Vicar, Fr. Antonio Squaranti, were already studying with great care everything pertinent to the exploration of those areas. Comboni started preparing what was necessary for the expedition, but *Propaganda Fide* had other plans and told Mgr. Comboni to abandon the intended expedition. In full obedience, though painfully, he answered:

*"By the last post I received your esteemed letter of 14th August in which you command me to defer my expedition to the Nyanza Lakes for the time being. You were good enough to present just and prudent reasons, and I comply with God's will, of which I have clear knowledge through my Superior. I have discontinued preparation for the expedition in the assurance that God will provide for these poor souls in the best way possible... Fr. Squaranti and I are content in the knowledge that we are doing God's will, which is so clear, and we continue with our work."*⁷⁷

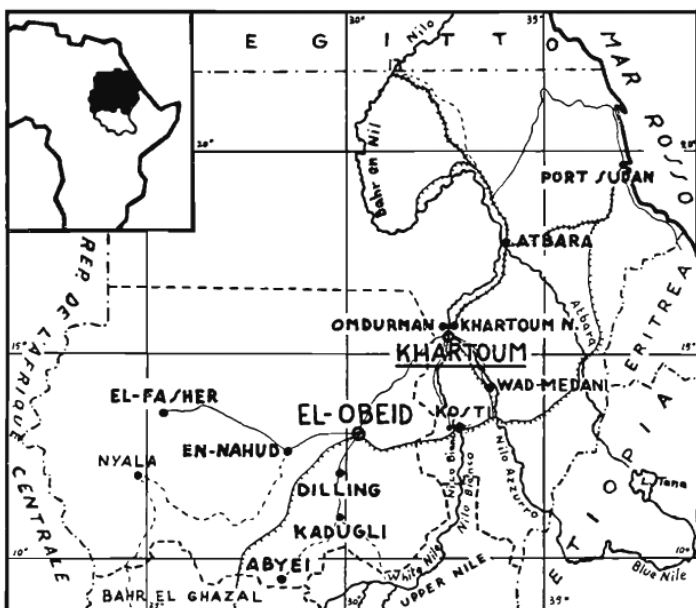
Finally, while in Rome, Mgr. Comboni came to know about the new vicariate of the Missionaries of Algiers and its boundaries reaching the Bahr el Arab River, bordering with South Kordofan. It was a great shock for him and so he wrote to Cardinal Simeoni:

*"I read in **Missions Catholiques** that the northern confines of Mgr. Lavigerie's missions are Bahar el Arab, (as that prelate wrote). Bahar el Arab has been **a great heartache** for me (the original word is **a big toothache**), and I shall not be rid of it until I die or until the Sacred Congregation takes other more appropriate and necessary decisions. But I trust in the sweetest Heart of Jesus, and in the wisdom, love and justice of the Holy See to put all this right."*⁷⁸

⁷⁶ To Cardinal Giovanni Simeoni, Khartoum, Khartoum, 23 August, 1878, The Writings, op. cit., nn. 5374-5381.

⁷⁷ To Cardinal Giovanni Simeoni, Khartoum, 30 September, 1878, Writings, op. cit nn. 5392, 5393 (5392-5399)

⁷⁸ To Cardinal Giovanni Simeoni, Khartoum, 29 August, 1881 Nuba map 6971-6976



New Boundaries of the Vicariate proposed by Propaganda Fide

Mgr. Comboni was writing these reports to the Congregation of Propaganda Fide between 1878 and 1881 when the powerful countries of the time were already planning to pursue their interests in the African Continent. King Leopold II of Belgium had already founded the *International African Society* and in 1878 invited the explorer Henry Morton Stanley, who had already mapped the Congo River, to go back to Congo as his envoy, in view of economic goals. So did France on the western Congo basin. All this led to the Conference of Berlin (Germany), 1884-1885.

King Leopold II of Belgium convinced France and Germany that an overall agreement on common trade in Africa was in the best interests of all three countries. With support from the British and the initiative of Portugal, Otto von Bismarck, the German Chancellor, called on representatives of Austro-Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden-Norway, the Ottoman Empire and the United States to take part in the Berlin Conference, which started on 15 November 1884, and worked out a joint policy on the African continent. The Conference resolved to end the *Slave trade*, but the **General Act of the**

Berlin Conference, in reality, was seen as the formalization of the *Scramble for Africa*.⁷⁹

Mgr. Comboni died in Khartoum on 10 October, 1881 and the above developments at the political level were to give new shape to the African reality and spheres of political influence. He left a vast empty space in the missionary arena, but his legacy and vision did not die with him. In the following years the Mahdi⁸⁰ revolution would destroy everything he and his missionaries had achieved and many of his missionaries, Fathers, Brothers and Sisters, had to undergo the long and excruciating period of the Mahdiyya captivity until the British General, Sir Herbert Kitchener, leading the British-Sudanese-Egyptian army, defeated the Mahdi army led by Abdullah al-Taashi (Khalifa) in the battle of Kerreri, Omdurman (2 September, 1898),⁸¹ and finally in 1899 with the battle of Umm Diwaykarat. After this event, new opportunities for evangelization in the Sudan opened up.

Changes within the Institute for the African Missions

The time between the death of Bishop Daniel Comboni and the end of the Mahdiyya, was a time of change within the Institute he had founded. His successor, Mgr. Francesco Sogaro, thought it was better to give the Institute a clear religious status. With this intention, he asked and obtained from the Holy See that the Institute be transformed into a Religious Congregation with the name of *Filii Sacri Cordis Jesu (FSCJ), Sons of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*.

The direction of the Institute was given to the Priests of the Company of Jesus (*Jesuits*). They helped the Comboni Institute to strengthen their consecrated life with the three religious vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience. The first religious profession took place in 1887.⁸² Not all the former Missionaries of Comboni agreed to profess vows in the new congregation; nevertheless, they carried on working together.

⁷⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berlin_Conference

⁸⁰ El-Mahdi: Muhammad Ahmad bin Abd Allah (Arabic: الله ع بد ابن أحمد محمد ; August 12, 1844 – June 22, 1885) was a religious leader of the Samaniyya order in Sudan who, on June 29, 1881, proclaimed himself the Mahdi (or Madhi), the messianic redeemer of the Islamic faith.

⁸¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Ahmad

⁸² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Omdurman

⁸² Mondo Comboniano, Giuseppe Franzelli, EMI 2004, pp. 19-20.

The FSCJ Congregation (Sons of Sacred Heart of Jesus)

The Institute for the African Missions was founded in Verona on 1 June, 1867, by Fr. Daniele Comboni under the authority of the Bishop of Verona, Mgr. Luigi di Canossa, who issued the Decree of diocesan erection on 8 December, 1871.

Rectors of the Institute

Fr. Alessandro Dal Bosco	1867-1868
Fr. Antonio Squaranti	1871-1877
Fr. Paolo Rossi	1877-1879
Fr. Giuseppe Sembianti (Stigmatine)	1880-1885

On 28 October, 1885 the Jesuit Fathers started the novitiate of the ***Sons of the Sacred Heart of Jesus***, to transform the Institute into a Religious Congregation.

Jesuit Superiors

Fr. Pietro Frigerio	1885-1887
Fr. Antonio Voltolina	1887-1892
Fr. Samuele Asperti	1892-1893
Fr. Giacomo Mogni	1893-1897
Fr. Antonio Voltolina	1897-1899

Meanwhile, the Rules and Constitutions were approved by the Holy See with the Pontifical Decree of Praise of 7 June, 1895. The General Chapter opened in Verona on 19 June, 1899, and the Jesuits withdrew from the direction of the Institute, which from that time had its own Superiors General.

The first Superior General of the new-born Institute was Fr. Angelo Colombaroli FSCJ, elected on 21 June, 1899.

Bishop Antonio Maria Roveggio FSCJ, direct successor of Mgr. Sogaro and second successor of Mgr. Comboni, a member of the newly constituted Institute of the *Sons of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*, was the one who took on the responsibility of leading the Sons of the Sacred Heart of Jesus into the new missionary adventure, by the end of year 1900.

Britain's Southern Policy

From the beginning of the Anglo-Egyptian condominium, the British sought to modernize Sudan by applying European technology to its underdeveloped economy and by replacing its authoritarian institutions with others that adhered to liberal English traditions. However, Southern Sudan's remote and undeveloped Provinces—Equatoria, Bahr el Ghazal,

and Upper Nile—received little official attention until after World War I, except for efforts to suppress tribal warfare and the slave trade. The British justified this policy by claiming that the South was not ready for exposure to the modern world. To allow the South to develop along indigenous lines, the British, therefore, closed the region to outsiders. As a result, the South remained isolated. A few Arab merchants controlled the region's limited commercial activities while Arab bureaucrats administered whatever laws existed. Christian Missionaries, who operated schools and medical clinics, provided limited social services in Southern Sudan.

The earliest Christian missionaries were the Verona Fathers, founded by Daniel Comboni.⁸³ Other missionary groups active in the South included Presbyterians⁸⁴ from the United States and the Anglican Church Missionary Society.⁸⁵ There was no competition among these missions, largely because

⁸³ Comboni, Verona Fathers, Nelson's Dictionary of Christianity. edited by George Kurian.

⁸⁴ - Presbyterianism: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presbyterianism>
 - Is a part of the Reformed tradition within Protestantism which traces its origins to the British Isles. Presbyterian churches derive their name from the Presbyterian form of church government, which is governed by representative assemblies of elders. Many Reformed churches are organized this way, but the word "Presbyterian," when capitalized, is often applied uniquely to the churches that trace their roots to the Scottish and English churches that bore that name and English political groups that formed during the English Civil war. Presbyterian theology typically emphasizes the sovereignty of God, the authority of the Scriptures, and the necessity of grace through faith in Christ. The Presbyterian denominations in Scotland hold to the theology of John Calvin and his immediate successors, although there are a range of theological views within contemporary Presbyterianism.

- Presbyterian polity: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presbyterian_polity

Presbyterian (or Presbyteral) polity is a method of church governance typified by the rule of assemblies of presbyters, or elders. Each Local Church is governed by a body of elected elders usually called the *session* or *consistory*, though other terms, such as *church board*, may apply. Groups of Local Churches are governed by a higher Assembly of elders known as the presbytery or classis; presbyteries can be grouped into a synod, and Presbyteries, along with synods nationwide often join together in a general Assembly. Responsibility for conduct of church services is reserved to an ordained minister or pastor known as a *teaching elder*, or a *minister of the word and sacrament*.

⁸⁵ **Church Mission Society:** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_Mission_Society

The **Church Mission Society (CMS)**, formerly in Britain and currently in Australia and New Zealand known as the **Church Missionary Society**, is a mission society working with the Anglican Communion Anglican Communion and Protestant Christians around the world. Founded in 1799, CMS has attracted over nine thousand men and women to serve as mission partners during its 200-year history. The society has also given its name "CMS" to a number of daughter organizations around the world. Foundation: The original proposal for the mission came from Charles Grant and George Uday of the East India Company and the Rev. David Brown, of Calcutta, who sent a proposal in 1787 to

they maintained separate areas of influence. The government eventually subsidized the mission schools that educated Southerners. Because mission graduates usually succeeded in gaining posts in the Provincial Civil Service, many northerners regarded them as tools of British imperialism. The few southerners who received higher training attended schools in British East Africa (present-day Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania) rather than in Khartoum, thereby exacerbating the north-south division.

British authorities treated the three Southern Provinces as a separate region. The colonial administration, as it consolidated its southern position in the 1920s, detached the South from the rest of Sudan for all practical purposes. The period's *closed door* ordinances, which barred Northern Sudanese from entering or working in the South, reinforced this separate development policy. Moreover, the British gradually replaced Arab Administrators and expelled Arab merchants, thereby severing the South's last economic contacts with the North. The colonial administration also discouraged the spread of Islam, the practice of Arab customs, and the wearing of Arab dress. At the same time, the British made efforts to revitalize African customs and tribal life that the slave trade had disrupted. Finally, a 1930 directive stated that black people in the Southern Provinces were to be considered distinct from Northern Muslims and that the region should be prepared for eventual integration with British East Africa.⁸⁶

William Wilberforce, then a young member of parliament, and Charles Simeon, a young clergyman at Cambridge University. The Baptist Missionary Society was formed in 1792 and the London Missionary Society was formed in 1795 to represent various denominations that were part of the Evangelical Revival in the English Protestant churches. The first missionaries went out in 1804. They came from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg and had trained at the Berlin Seminary. The name Church Missionary Society began to be used and in 1812. The society was renamed **The Church Missionary Society**. The Principal missions in Africa:

- **West Africa** (1804), Sierra Leone (1816), Niger expedition of 1841, Yorubaland (1844) and Niger (1857).

- **Egypt** (1825) and **Ethiopia** (1827). The missionaries were expelled from Abyssinia in 1844 following the Siege of Khartoum and the death of General Gordon. The Egyptian Mission was revived in 1882.

- **East Africa** (1844): when the missionaries were forced out of Abyssinia they moved to Mombasa. CMS missionaries, explored East and Central Africa, reached Mount Kilimanjaro (1848) and Mount Kenya (1849). The East Africa Mission was revived in 1874 and extended to inland Kenya (Nyanza Province at Lake Victoria) and Uganda (1876). The Uganda mission centred in Kampala and was pioneered by the missionary Brothers Albert Ruskin Cook and John Howard Cook.

⁸⁶ History of Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, Britain's Southern Policy, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Anglo-Egyptian_Sudan

SECTION TWO

The second missionary endeavour for the South up to the expulsion (1900-1964)

The firm desire of the successors of Mgr. Comboni, Mgr. Roveggio and Mgr. Geyer⁸⁷, was to return to those places that had witnessed the great missionary zeal of their predecessors, as Mgr. Comboni himself always desired. The memories of the tribes along the White Nile and the great hospitality shown by the Bari tribe were very much alive in their hearts. The historical and political events of their time delayed that return, but the desire for a presence in the South was so great that it developed in a wonderful way. It was finally fulfilled when the Apostolic Prefecture of Bahr el Jebel was erected and could fully develop.

Regarding this period, there is a very extensive study by Fr. Giovanni Vantini in *La Missione del Cuore, I Comboniani in Sudan nel ventesimo secolo*, (in Italian), Fr. Vittorino Dellagiacoma in *History of the Catholic Church in Southern Sudan, 1900-1995*, (in English) and Fr. Tarcisio Agostoni, *The Comboni Missionaries, an outline history 1867-1997* (in English and Italian). For this reason, I will not repeat what they have already written but I will just link people, places and events in a chronology-like line from 1900 to 1964. The readers who are particularly interested in this rich historical time of development of the Mission and of the Church, can find a very valuable and well-presented material in the above-mentioned historical works.

A new Start (1900-1913)

What happened with the new start for the South at the time of the Apostolic Vicar Mgr. Antonio Roveggio, was precisely what the young Fr. Daniel Comboni envisaged during his first trip to the South of Sudan. The first mission was precisely among the Shilluk tribe. Then, for historical reasons which we will see later on, it developed in different geographical areas on the western side of the South: it went on to the Ndogo, Jur and Dinka of Bahr el Ghazal and other tribes of the area; to the Zande of Mupoi, Tombura/Yambio and other related tribes; finally, to the Bari of

⁸⁷ G. Vantini, *La Missione del Cuore*, op. cit., p. 505.

Juba and other tribes of Equatoria and to the tribe of the Nuer of Yoynyang (present-day Rubkona).⁸⁸

Things took this path because of the British *Mission Spheres*⁸⁹ regulations issued in 1905. The purpose of these spheres, according to the British Rulers, was to prevent competition and keep order and peace among missionaries belonging to different Church Denominations, but also to prevent that the whole territory being occupied by non-British Missionary Societies. The regulations also included other legal issues related to land property and trading. North of the 10th parallel was considered Moslem territory and the area south of it was given to the Christians, either to the Catholics or other Protestant Denominations with specific boundaries.

The Catholics were given the western side of the Upper Nile River and most of the Bahr el Ghazal region, whereas the Eastern bank was given to the Protestant Churches. The *Mission Spheres* policy was never fully accepted and, at a later stage, became quite controversial and for the Roman Catholic Church it was *anathema*.⁹⁰ As for the Catholic Mission, it

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 91, 93, 278-280, 69-70, 381-385, 352, 366-369.

⁸⁹ - G. Vantini, *La Missione del Cuore*, Op. Cit., pp. 74-75. "On 7 January, 1903, in front of the Governor General Wingate - present Lord Cromer - there were the representatives of the three missionary societies: Fr. Banholzer (accompanied by Fr. Ohrwalder) of the Catholic Church; the Reverend Llewellynn Gwynne of the Anglican Church; the Rev. John Kelly Giffen for the Presbyterian Church of America. The discussion was extremely animated. Wingate then divided the Sudan in areas ... The official document, known as "Mission Spheres System", was published in 1905."

- M.W. Daly, *Empire on the Nile, The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, 1898-1934*, Cambridge University Press 1986, Education and health, 1898-1919, "the Mission Spheres", p. 253.

- "In 1905 the government issued regulations governing missionary work in the Sudan. No station was allowed in any area north of the 10th parallel that was recognized by the government as Moslem. South of that line, "spheres" were allotted...

In the 1905 division, most of the Bahr-al-Ghazal was allotted to the Catholics, the Americans were assigned the Upper Nile Province east of the Bahr-al-Zaraf and north of the 7°30' parallel, while the reminder of the south was assigned to 'British Missionary Societies'. Missionaries were 'not permitted to act as intermediaries between natives and government'.

- "Trading in any form was forbidden. Missions could not own land. It has been postulated that Wingate published the regulations at this time 'simply because it was convenient to incorporate them in the same document as that which partitioned the whole of Southern Sudan into exclusive denominational spheres'. Certainly the spheres were drawn up not only to prevent competition among missionaries but also to ensure that the dilatoriness of the CMS would not result in the occupation of the whole region by non-British missionaries. The 'sphere system' later gave rise to serious problems."

⁹⁰ Richard Owen, *Sudan Days, 1926-1954*, University Library Durham, ed. Duff Hart-Davis, 2015, p. 149.

immediately started developing the Shilluk and the Bahr el Ghazal area with new mission foundations.

Mgr. Antonio Maria Roveggio (1858-1902).

Mgr. Antonio Maria Roveggio was the second successor of Comboni and the one who started the new venture to the South of Sudan. He left Khartoum on 13 December, 1900, with a vessel called *Redemptor*, together with some missionaries and, leaving aside the Nuba Mountains where the populations were still in rebellion against the foreign government, he sailed straight up the river Nile. He founded LUL station (12 April, 1901), among the Shilluk tribe. In December, 1901, he made his second trip to the South, with the intention of reopening the old station of Gondokoro (abandoned in 1862). The British Government of the Protectorate of Uganda, which was then administering the area, did not allow him to found any new stations there. He returned to Omdurman (April, 1902) seriously weakened by malaria fever.

Despite the fever he departed by train for Egypt to prepare other foundations in the South. Death overtook him at the train station of Berber (2 May, 1902). **Wilhelm Banholzer** temporarily took his place as Apostolic Administrator until the election of the new Apostolic Vicar, while residing in Lul.

(For ref. see Appendix to Part One, Section Two, point nos. 1 & 2)

Franz-Xaver Geyer (1860-1943)

The appointment of Fr. Franz-Xaver Geyer was approved by the Holy Father on 28 August, 1903: *Francis-Xaver Geyer, Titular Bishop of Trocmad i.p.i., Vicar Apostolic of Central Africa*. He intended to open missions in Bahr el Ghazal, and at least one station in Uganda. But the area of Uganda was under the government of Entebbe, and so it was not possible. Instead, Boulnois Bey, Governor of Bahr el Ghazal, was actually looking for a mission in his Province.⁹¹ Mgr. Geyer accepted immediately and in less than fifteen days he prepared the first Comboni expedition to Bahr el Ghazal.

(For ref. see Appendix to Part One, Section Two point no. 3)

⁹¹ Lilian Passmore Sanderson, Neville Sanderson, Education, religion & politics in Southern Sudan, 1899-1964, Ithaca Press London, Khartoum Univ. Press, 1981, p. 56.

To Civilize or to Evangelize? Gayer vs. Vignato

At the beginning of the XX Century, just when the new missionary adventure had restarted in Southern Sudan, the question of missionary methodology became rather acute because of two different approaches to evangelization.⁹² The issue, already a matter of discussion among the confreres of Khartoum, reached its hottest point between the newly elected Apostolic Vicars, Mgr. **Franz-Xaver Geyer** and Fr. **Antonio Vignato**. Mgr. Geyer maintained that, before *Evangelizing people* it was necessary to *civilize them*. Only at later stage, would evangelization find the proper ground to germinate and develop. This stand was partly due to the fact that in the mission where there were Shilluk (Lul) and Jur (Mbili) it was thought that quick evangelization would be seen by the chiefs and the people as a threat to uproot the tribal traditions and that this would ruin the good relationship Mgr. Geyer had created with the chiefs.

Fr. Vignato, (in Kayango), who had already started the regular Catechumenate, instead, was of the opposite approach and thought it was good to start immediately with evangelization, and that people, by becoming Christian, would also become more civilized. His stand was also due to the fact that Kayango mission was among the Ndogo, Golo and other tribes who were not as inflexible as the Shilluk and Jur tribes. The dispute between the two missionaries went on with Fr. Vignato telling Mgr. Gayer that he had come to Africa *to evangelize*, if not, he would have just stayed home. Mgr. Geyer contacted Propaganda Fide on the matter and the answer was: “*translate into vernacular the texts of prayers and the Catechism of the Catholics in England (Christian Doctrine) and intensify the religious instruction to those who dwell on the ground of the mission, the casual workers and those who come to sell goods.*” This was the end of the controversy, at least for Kayango.

Fr. Vignato was prominent for missionary methodology out of his own experience and that of other missionaries of his own and of other institutes working in Africa. He prepared the liturgical books in the vernacular and a handbook where he gave methodological lines to get in touch with people in order to create sympathy and interest in the faith. He insisted on the importance of the study of the language of different peoples, understanding the local cultures and giving attention to people. He gave clear instructions to Christians on how to live their faith and morality in a pagan world. He

⁹² Centenary of the Mission in Bahr El Ghazal, main historical events, 1904-2004, Fr. Salvatore Pacifico mcej, p.16.

taught how to follow the Christian communities with only a few pastoral agents and how to organize the visits to the villages. He promoted the African Ministerial Priesthood, the Religious Life for men and women and gave great importance to the formation of Catechists. In his old age, he retired to Verona and wrote a documented history of the Comboni missions, which is still a fundamental text.

In 1915, Mgr. Geyer dealt with the mission methodology in his book in German, *Handbook for the Missionary of the Apostolic Vicariate of Khartoum*, while Fr. Vignato, in 1935, circulated his own booklet in Italian *Collection of Advice and Doctrine for the practical use of the young missionary*⁹³

Mgr. Paolo Tranquillo Silvestri (1867-1949)

He was appointed Vicar Apostolic of Khartoum to succeed Bishop. Geyer, who had resigned (1924). In 1930 he also resigned and retired. His authority included also the area which would later become the MISSION SUI JURIS OF KODOK.

(For ref. see Appendix to Part One, Section Two point no. 4)

Apostolic Vicariate of Central Africa (1846-1913)

The Vicariate of Central Africa, *the largest Vicariate in the world*, as Mgr. Comboni called it, underwent many changes throughout its history, in regards to its boundaries, starting from the time of Mgr. Comboni. In the XX century, it underwent many other changes and internal subdivisions into smaller Apostolic Vicariates and Apostolic Prefectures, entrusted to the Comboni Institute,⁹⁴ except for Malakal (Mission Sui Juris of Kodok) which was entrusted to the Mill Hill Institute.

Ordinaries of the *Vicariate of Central Africa*

Mgr. Annetto Casolani, Apostolic Vicar	1846-1847
Fr. Massimilian Ryllo S.J., Apostolic Pro-vicar	1847-1848

⁹³ Handbuch für die missionäre des Apostolischen Vikariats Khartoum, Franz-Xaver Geyer, 1915.

- Raccolta di suggerimenti e dottrine per utilità pratica del giovane missionario, P. Antonio Vignato FSCJ, Missioni Africane Verona, 1935.

- <http://www.comboni.org/fr/contenuti/100923-padre-antonio-vignato>

- <http://www.comboni.org/en/contenuti/101224-how-we-work>

⁹⁴ Congregation of the Sons of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Catalogo, January, 1977, pp. 5-6. (Fr. Aldo Gilli, FSCJ)

Mgr. Ignatius Knoblecher, Apostolic Pro-vicar	1848-1858
Mgr. Matthew Kirchner, Apostolic Pro-vicar	1858-1861
Fr. John Reinthaler, Apostolic Pro-vicar	1861-1862
Mgr. Pasquale Vuicic, Apostolic Administrator	1862-1866
Mgr. Luigi Ciurcia, Apostolic Administrator	1866-1872
Mgr. DANIELE COMBONI, Apostolic Pro-vicar	1872-1877
Mgr. DANIELE COMBONI, Apostolic Vicar	1877-1881
Mgr. Francesco Sogaro, Apostolic Vicar	1882-1894
Mgr. Antonio Roveggio, Apostolic Vicar	1895-1902
Mgr. Franz Xaver Geyer, Apostolic Vicar	1903-1913

Divisions of the *Vicariate of Central Africa*

From 1886 onwards, the Vicariate of Central Africa was increasingly called The Apostolic Vicariate of Sudan. The various *Missionary Circumscriptions* into which it was divided all became Dioceses with the erection of the Church hierarchy in Sudan in 1974. The data are documented according to their historical development.

The Apostolic Vicariates. (1913-1964).

At this point, I want to mention the various Circumscriptions, Prefectures and Vicariates which were established during the history of the evangelization of the South, as a link with the Province of South Sudan itself. Political developments during the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium were also the reason why the Circumscriptions happened to be defined within the South. The borders North-South at the time of the independence of Sudan in 1956 and the erection of new Dioceses within the South resulted in the arrangement of diocesan boundaries we have at present.

From Khartoum to the South

Throughout its history, Khartoum was always a key place in relationship to the South and always played an important role in the setup of the Church and of the Comboni presence in Southern Sudan, even when other Circumscriptions were created according to the historical development of the Mission in the different parts of the South.

For the Comboni Missionaries, separation from Khartoum would start with the erection of the *Representation* of Southern Sudan, in 1981 which became the South Sudan Delegation and finally the Province of South Sudan, in the eighties.

The Apostolic Vicariate of Khartoum ⁹⁵

The Apostolic Vicariate of Khartoum (now an Archdiocese), was erected on the 30 May, 1913. After two later subdivisions, it was made an Archdiocese on 18 November, 1974.

Ordinaries

Mgr. Franz Xaver Geyer, Apostolic Vicar	1913-1922
Mgr. Antonio Stoppani, Apostolic Administrator	1922-1924
Mgr. Paolo Tranquillo Silvestri, Apostolic Vicar	1924-1930
Mgr. Francesco Saverio Bini, Apostolic Vicar	1930-1953
Mgr. Agostino Baroni, Apostolic Vicar	1953-1981

The Apostolic Prefecture of Bahr el Ghazal ⁹⁶

(now the Diocese of Wau)

It was erected on the 30 May, 1913. Later it became an Apostolic Vicariate which included also the North of Uganda. After several subdivisions, it became a Diocese on 8 November, 1974.

Ordinaries

Mgr. Antonio Stoppani, Apostolic Administrator	1913-1917
Apostolic Vicar	1917-1933
Mgr. Rudolf Orler, Apostolic Vicar	1933-1946
Mgr. Edoardo Mason, Apostolic Vicar	1947-1960
Mgr. Ireneo Wien Dud, Apostolic Vicar	1960-1974

Mgr. Antonio Stoppani (1873-1940), born at Lecco, Como, (Italy) was first a mission Procurator in Khartoum from 1902 to 1910, when he went to Wau, again as Procurator. In 1913, when the southern part of the *Vicariate of Central Africa* was separated from Khartoum, Fr. Stoppani was appointed Apostolic Prefect and became a Bishop in 1917, when the Prefecture became a Vicariate. For the first ten years his responsibility extended to the whole of Equatoria and Northern Uganda; the Ugandan part was detached in 1923 and included Eastern Equatoria (Bahr el Jebel). Bishop Stoppani developed Bahr el Ghazal and Mupoi area in his twenty-year term of office. In 1933 he resigned and retired to Italy.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Catalogo, op. cit., January, 1977, p. 6.

⁹⁶ Catalogo, op. cit., January, 1977, p. 7.

- Centenary of the Mission of Bahr El Ghazal, op. cit., p. 18 & ff.

⁹⁷ Vittorino Dellagiacoma, Catholic Missionaries in Southern Sudan 1900-1964, (revised reprint), Khartoum 1998, p. 49.

Mgr. Stoppani was held in high consideration as *a gentleman and a man of culture at the service of the Missions*. From his appointment, the mission of Bahr el Ghazal developed immensely. Elementary, intermediate and secondary schools were opened. What attracted the sympathy of the local population and the approval the government was the institution of workshops with modern machinery. The result was the formation of capable artisans in a time when all this was at low level and, at the same time, it would orientate many youth and their families to conversion. All this added to the esteem for the mission on the part of government authorities. Appreciation and esteem were also shown by Major E. W. Witley, Governor of Bahr el Ghazal during his visit.

Major Witley came from a Protestant family, with all the prejudices inherited from other Protestants who were openly opposed to the Catholic Mission, but when he saw the reality with his own eyes, he changed his opinion and started admiring the work done by the missionaries and the goodness of Bishop Stoppani, who was a good and cultured man. He proposed to support the Catholic mission, thus raising the jealousy of the Protestants in Southern Sudan who objected, insinuating that the Catholic Mission was progressing well thanks to the personal protection of Major Witley. The Governor, however, attributed the success of the Catholic Church to the holiness of her cause and the example and sacrifices of these worthy pioneers and their Bishop. Once back in his own country, these examples contributed to his becoming a Catholic.⁹⁸

Mgr. Rudolf Orler (1892-1946), born at Vulcan, Michigan, U.S.A. of Italian parents and raised in Trento (Italy) was a missionary in Bahr el Ghazal - at Kayango, Wau and Mbili - from 1921 to 1929; back in Italy, he was elected Assistant General of the Society in 1931 and appointed Apostolic Vicar of Bahr el Ghazal in December 1933. He died in Wau not yet 54.⁹⁹

Mgr. Edoardo Mason (1903-1989), born at Limena, Padua, went to England soon after his ordination (1926) and mastered the English language; in 1927 he arrived in Bahr el Ghazal and was involved in teaching and organizing schools at primary and intermediate level: one of them was Bussere Intermediate (1933); another one was the *Normal School* at Mupoi. In 1935 he was transferred for one year to the Shilluk missions.

- G. Vantini, *La Missione del Cuore*, op. cit., pp. 249-251.

- Catalogo, op. cit., January, 1977, p. 6.

⁹⁸ The Comboni Missionaries, *An Outline History*, op. cit., pp. 175-176.

⁹⁹ V. Dellagiocoma, *Catholic Missionaries in Southern Sudan 1900-1964*, op. cit., p.37

In 1936 he returned to Wau as director of Wau and Bussere schools. In 1938 he was sent to U.S.A. to open some centres for the Verona Fathers in that country. He was back in Wau before the beginning of World War II in 1940 and was Education Secretary for Bahr el Ghazal. On the death of Bishop Orler, he was appointed Bishop of Wau (1947). In this capacity he developed education and opened new stations, especially among the Dinka. In 1949 the southern part of the Vicariate became the Apostolic Prefecture of Mupoi under Mgr. Domenico Ferrara. In 1960 Bishop Mason became the first Bishop of El Obeid. In 1964 he had to leave the Sudan and retired. In his early seventies, he spent five years in Kenya (1972-77). He died in Verona.¹⁰⁰

Apostolic Prefecture of Bahr el Gebel¹⁰¹

(now the Archdiocese of Juba)

Bahr el Gebel, detached from the Circumscription of Northern Uganda, became the Apostolic Prefecture on 14 July, 1927, becoming an Apostolic Vicariate on 12 April, 1961. With the establishment of the Catholic hierarchy on 12 December, 1974 Juba became an Archdiocese with the suffragan Dioceses of Wau, Tombura, Rumbek and Malakal.

Ordinaries

Mgr. Giuseppe Zambonardi, Apostolic Prefect	1927-1938
Mgr. Stefano Mlakic, Apostolic Prefect	1938-1950
Mgr. Sisto Mazzoldi, Apostolic Prefect	1950-1951
Apostolic Vicar	1951-1964

Mgr. Antonio Vignato (1878-1954), born at Gambellara, Vicenza, (Italy) was a pioneer missionary Priest in Bahr el Ghazal, founding and directing the station of Kayango from 1904 to 1911. He was then called to direct the newly founded missions in Northern Uganda (1911-1919), where he supervised the opening of Gulu, Ama, Ngal, Kitgum and Moyo. Elected Assistant and Vicar General of the Society in 1919, he was appointed, in 1923, head of the new Prefecture of Equatorial Nile, which included Northern Uganda and Eastern Equatoria (Bahr el Jebel). The latter Province was erected an autonomous Prefecture in 1927 while Mgr. Vignato continued to develop the Northern Ugandan section.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 32.

¹⁰¹ Catalogo, op. cit., January, 1977, p. 7.

Mgr. Giuseppe Zambonardi (1884-1970), born at Gardone, Brescia, (Italy) was first a Missionary Priest in Uganda and a founder of Ama mission station (1911-1920). After three years (1920-1923) of activity in the newly-founded Rejaf,¹⁰² he was called again to Uganda to be the religious Superior of the Verona Fathers there. In 1927 Eastern Equatoria was made an autonomous Apostolic Prefecture and Fr. Zambonardi was appointed *Prefect*. As such he developed the existing stations of Rejaf, Torit and Isoke and opened Palotaka, Okaru and Kapoeta; he extended the pastoral care to Lafon and, by agreement with the Protestants (1935), to Yei with residence in Juba, having obtained an exception to the *spheres policy*, the western bank of the Nile being a CMS zone. As a result of the Italian war in Ethiopia, the British Government demanded his replacement by a non-Italian Apostolic Prefect; consequently, in July 1938, Mgr. Zambonardi left the Sudan.¹⁰³

Mgr. Stefan Mlakic ((1884-1951), born in Fojnica, Bosnia, worked in Khartoum (1920-1927) as director of the school and Administrator in Port Sudan (1931-1933), Yoynyang (1927-1931, 1933-1937) and Malakal (1937-1938). In 1938 he was appointed Apostolic Prefect of Bahr el Jebel and resided in Juba. In 1950 he retired and died in Cairo a few months later.¹⁰⁴

Mgr. Sisto Mazzoldi (1898-1987), born at Nago, Trent, (Italy) was a Diocesan Priest in his home Diocese for six years (1922-28); soon after becoming a Comboni Missionary he went to Southern Sudan. He re-opened and developed Kapoeta (1931-46); he was a Rector of Okaru Minor Seminary (1946-7) and Superior of the Comboni Missionaries in Bahr el Jebel Vicariate (1947-50) and then Apostolic Vicar of the same territory up to the expulsion (1964).¹⁰⁵

The Mission Sui Juris of Kodok (*now the Diocese of Malakal*)

It was erected on 10 January, 1933 and was given to the Mill Hill Fathers as an Apostolic Prefecture on 4 August, 1938. It was made a Diocese on 18 November, 1974.

¹⁰² *Passione per l'Africa*, Mario Cisternino, Urbaniana University Press, 2001, pp. 391-394.

¹⁰³ V. Dellagiacoma, *Catholic Missionaries in Southern Sudan 1900-1964*, op. cit., p. 54.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* p. 34.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* p. 32

Ordinaries¹⁰⁶

Fr. Matteo Michelin, Superior <i>Sui Juris</i>	1933-1934
Mgr. Francesco Saverio Bini, Apost. Admin.	1934-1938
Mgr. John Ambrose Wall, Apostolic Prefect	1938-1947
Mgr. John Henry Hart, Apostolic Prefect	1947-1962
Mgr. Herman Gerard Te Riele, Apostolic Prefect	1962-1964

Fr. Matteo Michelin (1885-1964), born at Bassano (Vicenza) was first a missionary in Egypt (1922-32) (Helouan, Cairo), in the years 1908-1912; arriving in Bahr el Ghazal in 1912 he worked first at Mbili, and then founded the mission of Rafili (1914); he spent the rest of his life in Italy, except for a period in Egypt (1922-32) and in the Sudan: appointed Superior of Kodok (later Malakal) Prefecture in July 1933 he accepted reluctantly and resigned, for health reasons, in 1935. He was then 50 and actually lived to be 79. He clearly shied away from the responsibility of the new job. The Shilluk area was again administered by the Bishop of Khartoum until it was entrusted to the Mill Hill Missionaries in 1938.¹⁰⁷

Mgr. Francesco Saverio Bini (1886-1953) was born in 1886 in Medicina (Bologna) in 1886, entered the Diocesan Seminary and from there joined the Comboni Institute in 1904, after he read a report of Mgr. Roveggio on the Mission of Central Africa. After his religious profession (1906), he obtained a degree in philosophy and theology at the Gregorian University. He was ordained Priest in 1908. In 1930 the Apostolic Delegate, Mgr. A. Hinsley, proposed him to the Holy See as Vicar Apostolic of Khartoum, in succession to Archbishop Silvestri. Appointed titular Bishop of Vallis and Apostolic Vicar on 29 November of that same year, he was consecrated Bishop on 7 December and, in January, 1931, took up his post. In 1933, following the resignation of Fr. Michelin at the *Sui Juris Mission* of Kodok, he accepted that responsibility as Apostolic Administrator.¹⁰⁸

The Apostolic Prefecture of Mupoi (now the Diocese of Tombura)

It was erected into an Apostolic Prefecture on 3 March, 1949, with the territory taken from Bahr el Ghazal and Bahr el Gebel and, later on became a Diocese based in Tombura on 18 November, 1974.

¹⁰⁶ Catalogo, op. cit., January, 1977, p. 6.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 34

¹⁰⁸ G. Vantini, La Missione del Cuore, op. cit., pp. 491

Ordinaries¹⁰⁹

Mgr. Domenico Ferrara, Apostolic Prefect

1949-1974

Mgr. Domenico Ferrara (1905-1998) was born at Zeme, Pavia, was a missionary among the Zande people (Yubu, Mupoi) and for a short period also in Wau and Rafili, between 1930 and 1939. Transferred to Cincinnati, U.S.A., he was Parish Priest there and adopted American citizenship. In 1949 he was appointed Prefect Apostolic of the newly erected Prefecture of Mupoi, embracing all Parishes and activities among the Zande. He was entrained in the general expulsion of 1964, and in 1966 was consecrated Bishop. He continued to assist Zande Priests and Christians and visited Zande refugees in Zaire and The Central African Republic.¹¹⁰

In the Prefecture, he appointed Fr. Martin Penisi, a Zande Priest, as his Vicar. (His failure to resign from his position as Apostolic Prefect would cause resentment among the Zande clergy, who felt the desire to exercise leadership in the Church). In 1966 he was appointed and consecrated Bishop, and continued to provide assistance to the refugees. He put the Zande Priest Jerome Bidai in charge of the translation of the liturgical texts into the Zande language and financed and took care of their printing in Vigevano. In 1972 the Diocesan Priest Joseph Gasi Abangite was appointed as his Vicar General. In 1975, with a special permit from the Sudanese President Nimeiry, he was present at the consecration of the Sudanese Bishops, among whom there was also Mgr. Joseph Gasi, his successor. In 1986 the Diocese of Mupoi changed its name to the *Diocese of Tombura-Yambio*, the two main centres of the region)¹¹¹

Apostolic Vicariate of Rumbek.

(now *Diocese of Rumbek*)

The district of Rumbek, with territories taken from the Circumscriptions of Mupoi and of the Apostolic Vicariate of Bahr el Gebel, was made an Apostolic Vicariate on 8 July, 1955, and a Diocese on 8 November, 1974.

Ordinaries¹¹²

Mgr. Ireneo Dud, Apostolic Vicar

1955-1960

Mgr. Lino Tiboi, Apostolic Administrator

1960-1972

¹⁰⁹ Catalogo, op. cit., January, 1977, p. 7.

¹¹⁰ V. Dellagiacoma, Catholic Missionaries, op. cit., p. 20.

¹¹¹ G. Vantini, La Missione del Cuore, op. cit., pp. 718-720

¹¹² Catalogo, op. cit., January, 1977, pp. 7-8. (P. Aldo Gilli, Fscj)

Comboni Institute and Superior Generals

The *Sons of the Sacred Heart of Jesus FSCJ* (*Filii Sacri Cordis Jesu*)

(For ref. see Appendix to Part One, Section Two point no. 5)

General Superiors

Fr. Angelo Colombaroli	21.6.1899
Fr. Federico Vianello	4.10.1909
Fr. Paolo Meroni	25.9.1919

In 1923 the FSCJ Institute split into two: the new German speaking one took the name of MFSC (Missionari Filii Sacri Cordis), the one with Verona as its centre carried on with the same name FSCJ.

Fr. Paolo Meroni	17.9.1925
Fr. Pietro Simoncelli	5.9.1931
Fr. Antonio Vignato	2.9.1937
Fr. Antonio Todesco	3.5.1947
Fr. Antonio Todesco	2.7.1953
Fr. Gaetano Briani	22.7.1959

Comboni Superiors of Mission / Regionals (1913-1964)

The term *Superior of Mission* was used during the time when the *Central African Vicariate* was the only mission of the *Verona Institute* and during the division of this same Vicariate into other Ecclesiastical Circumscriptions. The sequence was: General Superior, Superior of Mission and Local Superior.¹¹³ The *Superior of Circumscriptions* came into use in 1951 with the creation of other Comboni Circumscriptions in the world.¹¹⁴ The term *Regional Superior* came into use in 1958, when the above-mentioned Comboni Circumscriptions were called *Regions*.¹¹⁵ The same happened within the Sudan.

Bahr el Ghazal (from 1913)

Fr. Giuseppe Bernabe' (1876-1922), born at Ischia, Trent, (Italy) was a mission Procurator in Cairo (1905-1909) when he was elected Assistant

¹¹³ Fr. Paolo Meroni, 8 December 1923, *La voce della Congregazione*, Scuola Tipografia Nigrizia, Verona, 1957, "Regarding the government of the Institute", p. 58-64.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. 20 June 1924, "Major Superior", p. 71.

¹¹⁴ Catalogo, op. cit., 1 March, 1951, "Circoscrizioni" = "Circumscriptions"

¹¹⁵ Catalogo, op. cit., 15 November, 1958, "Regions"

General and Novice Master (1909-1919). Sent to Wau (1920) as Regional Superior, he died after a short illness in 1922.

Fr. Angelo Arpe (1889-1946), New Regional in 1923¹¹⁶. Born at Monte Rosso, Genova, was the founder and the *patriarch* of Mboro. He worked also at Kayango, before and after the Ndogo were removed from that area. He was murdered in Mboro on All Saints' evening, November, 1, 1946, the day Fr. Arkanjelo Ali celebrated his first Mass there.

Fr. Ercole De Marchi (1884-1958), born at Resana, Treviso, (Italy) was a missionary in Uganda for most of his priestly life (1924-1934, 1949-1958). In October, 1934, he was sent to Wau as Regional Superior of the Comboni Missionaries. In 1935 he established his residence at Bussere. At the expiry of his term (1937) he was transferred to Italy and later again to Uganda, where he died.

Fr. Domenico Seri (1910-1991), born at Comurano, Macerata, (Italy) was a missionary in Bahr el Ghazal, Mupoi and Brazil; he was in Raja and Mboro (1936-1949) and was Regional Superior; in 1950 he was transferred to Mupoi and in 1953 to Brazil.

Fr. Francesco Colombini (1914-1979), born at Civezzano, Trent, (Italy) was a missionary Priest in Bahr el Ghazal from December, 1945 to mid-1953; he was assigned to Kwajok first and then to Wau as Procurator and later was appointed Regional Superior of the Comboni Missionaries.

Fr. Gaetano Briani (1900-1984), born near Verona, went to Bahr el Ghazal in 1934; after a short period in Dem Zubeir he was appointed Regional Superior of the Comboni Missionaries in Bahr el Ghazal (1937-1947), residing in Mbili and Wau. After a term as Vicar General of the Society in Verona (1947-1953) he returned to Wau as Regional Superior (1953-1959).

Fr. Valentino Saoncella (1920-), born at Casalia, Padua, (Italy) was a missionary at Mboro (1947-1959) and, as Comboni Regional Superior and Parish Priest of the Cathedral, at Wau (1960-1964) up to the expulsion.

Bahr el Jebel (from 1927)

Fr. Giuseppe Zambonardi was first a missionary Priest in Uganda, then for three years (1920-1923) in the newly-founded Rejaf, and from there he went back to Uganda as religious Superior of the Circumscription of

¹¹⁶ G. Vantini, *La Missione del Cuore*, op. cit., p. 312

Northern Uganda, until he was elected Apostolic Prefect of Bahr el Jebel in 1927.

Fr. Luigi Molinaro (1888-1985), born at Volpino, Verona, (Italy) was a missionary Priest mostly in Northern Uganda from 1913 onwards. Then for some periods in Eastern Equatoria, between 1920 and 1931, at Torit, Loa, Nagishot and Lerwa. In the last two years (1929-1931) he was also Regional Superior.

Fr. Fausto Federici (1900-1955), born at Sanguinetto, Verona, (Italy). As a missionary Priest he was in Loa (1925-1929) and Okaru (1929-1934), serving from 1931 to 1934 as Regional Superior of the Comboni Missionaries in Bahr el Jebel.

Fr. Aleardo De Berti (1898-1969), born at Roverchiara, Verona, (Italy) was a missionary Priest in Uganda and Sudan. From Gulu he moved to Torit in 1927 as director of the Artisan School; the following year he was transferred to Isoke, which was at its beginnings as a mission station; from 1934 to 1947 he was Regional Superior of the Comboni Missionaries in Bahr el Jebel, residing successively in Torit, Okaru, Palotaka and again Torit.

Fr. Stefano Patroni (1901-1966), born at Sernio, Sondrio, (Italy) was in the Sudan as a missionary Priest in 1930-1939, 1948-1953 and 1957-1960. He was mostly in Rejaf and, for short terms, in Juba and Kadule. On 1 February, 1960, he was suddenly deported after a summary trial for allegedly causing a students' strike in protest against the change of Sunday to Friday as a weekly holiday. He had high responsibilities in the Society (Rector of Minor Seminary, Master of Novices, Provincial Superior in Bahr el Jebel and in Mexico).

Fr. Alberto Guidi (1915-1994), born at Montecalvo, Pesaro, (Italy) graduated in Theology (S.T.L) in 1940; after the war he worked in Torit and Okaru from 1946 to 1964, being Regional Superior of Comboni Missionaries from 1953 to 1964.

Mupoi (from 1949)

Fr. Riccardo Simoncelli (1894-1979), born at Borgo Poncile, Brescia, (Italy) arrived in Bahr el Ghazal in Dec. 1923; he spent most of his missionary life in Yubu, except for a few years in Rimenze and Mupoi; he was also for a term Regional Superior of Comboni Missionaries in the Prefecture of Mupoi. He was forced to retire in 1958 and spent the rest of his life in Italy.

Fr. Pietro De Angelis (1914-1992), born at Massignano, Ascoli Piceno, (Italy) was a missionary in the Prefecture of Mupoi from 1953 to 1964, at (Maridi), Yubu, and at Mupoi, where he was also Regional Superior.

Kodok

Fr. Giovanni Battista Pedrana (1881-1967), born at Livigno, Sondrio, (Italy) was a pioneer missionary Priest in Bahr el Jebel, being posted at Gondokoro in 1913.¹¹⁷ The following year he went to Gulu in Northern Uganda. He was back in Sudan from 1921 to 1935 working among the Shilluk at Lul, being also Regional Superior. All the others were Mill Hill Missionaries.

Comboni Regional Superiors

*At the time of the expulsion from South Sudan in 1964*¹¹⁸

Region of Bahr el Ghazal

Regional Superior: **M. R. Fr. VALENTINO SAONCELLA**
From 1960 up to the expulsion in 1964.

Region of Bahr el Gebel

Regional Superior: **M. R. Fr. ALBERTO GUIDI**
Regional Superior of the Comboni Missionaries
for the last 11 years.

Region of Mupoi

Regional Superior: **M. R. Fr. PIETRO DE ANGELIS**
He was Regional Superior up to 1964.

Reflection on the Period 1900-1964

When I came to the *Second missionary endeavour for the South (1900-1964)*, I recalled the extensive work by Fr. Giovanni Vantini *La Missione del Cuore, I Comboniani in Sudan nel Ventesimo Secolo*, Fr. Vittorino Dellagiacoma in *History of the Catholic Church in Southern Sudan* and Fr. Tarcisio Agostoni, *The Comboni Missionaries, an outline history 1867-1997* and it is not necessary to repeat what they have already written, so I will just link people, places and events in a chronology-like fashion.

However, it is a fact that this period of time, which also witnessed the destruction, the disorder and the hostility caused by the First and Second

¹¹⁷ *Passione per l'Africa*, op. cit., pp. 392-393.

¹¹⁸ *Catalogo*, op. cit., January, 1963, pp. 143, 155, 169.

World Wars, was the most fecund time at the level of evangelization in the Sudan. The apostolic zeal of the Comboni Missionaries held strongly, and through the crosses they had to bear, their witness of total confidence and dedication to God and to the Sudanese people was bearing fruit in conversions. In a wonderful way, evangelization carried on spreading and new Circumscriptions and missions multiplied.

Therefore, I will now deal with some relevant topics which are at the basis of our work of evangelization, not only in this precise time but also for the future. They are constitutive to any missionary undertaking, and especially in line with the original plan of our founder St. Daniel Comboni of *Saving Africa with Africa*. These are the topics:

missionary methodology, the formation of Catechists, the formation of Priests, the foundation of Religious Institutes for Men and Women, inculturation, the Comboni Brothers, the Comboni Sisters, Missionary Spirituality, the progress of the Catholic Mission in Sudan, and the Relationship between Religious and Ecclesiastic Authority.

Missionary Methodology

Missionary methodology is a key issue in evangelization and it has developed according to the needs of the places, people and situations in which evangelization was in operation. Direct experience contributed immensely to its development. Mgr. Comboni, after the painful experience of the Catholic Missionary Expeditions, came up with the plan of *Saving Africa through Africans themselves* with everything this approach would imply, as regards the persons of the missionaries and of the people they were going to. At the time of the slave trade in Sudan, he planned to have several farming Christian villages where freed slaves could live protected lives of full human dignity and respect. Malbes was the first one.

The word used by the European countries in relation to the African tribes was *Civilisation* and we have witnessed the dispute between the two missionary approaches of Mgr. Gayer and Fr. Vignato. Both of them were convinced of the need of Civilisation (human promotion, education, development, etc.) and evangelization. The point was which to start with. This brought a big divergence between the two missionaries regarding method. In Sudan, the method of Fr. Vignato prevailed, especially after the directives of Propaganda Fide that invited Mgr. Geyer to give priority to the translation of the prayers and the catechism into the vernacular and to intensify religious instruction at least to those living in the mission compound.

Another very important aspect of the missionary methodology was the so called *safaris*,¹¹⁹ that is, the regular visits to the various Christian Centres, Churches, Chapels and villages, near and far, with the purpose of encountering people, both Christian and non-Christian. These served to bring the missionary into direct contact with the grassroots level of the population in their everyday living situations. This was appreciated so much by people that, at later stage, when the local Clergy took up responsibility, they were frequently reminding them, especially those Priests who were not doing so, that the former missionaries were the ones going to visit them in their villages, and not just waiting at the Parish for people. Thus, the people themselves confirmed its importance.

Formation of Catechists

The experience of the *Missionaries of Africa* (White Fathers) in Uganda, with the Catechists and the rediscovered Catechumenate,¹²⁰ greatly helped the Comboni Missionaries in Sudan to overcome the former dilemma and take up the same methodology which revealed itself very fruitful. The Catechists, in fact, being people of the same culture, and living the normal village life, could find



ways, images and words to convey the Christian message, something missionaries found very difficult.

When Bishop Geyer visited Uganda he was very appreciative of the work of Catechists. Bishop Stoppani, Apostolic Vicar of Bahr el Ghazal, in his report to Propaganda Fide in

1919, was very happy to say that, at last, the Institution of Catechists had now been understood and promoted in nearly all the missions. In the

¹¹⁹ *Safaries*: From Arabic سفار (safir) word meaning *travel*. In our case travelling to visit the Christians the Chapels and the people.

¹²⁰ The beginning of the White Fathers' mission in Southern Uganda and the organization of the Catechumenate 1879-1914, Marinus Rooijackers, translated by Ivan Page, Rome, Society of Missionaries of Africa, 2008.

twenties, schools for Catechists were started by the Comboni Missionaries in Sudan.¹²¹ The formation of Catechists and collaboration with them revealed itself to be of the utmost importance. Actually, it was the implementation of the same plan of Comboni, *Save Africa with Africa*.

Formation of Priests¹²²

Already Mgr. Daniel Comboni took care of the formation of African youth for the Priesthood. Fr. Daniel Sorur and Fr. Anthony Dobale were the first fruits.

As for the Comboni Missionaries in Southern Sudan, the great care taken to prepare future Diocesan Priests, who would then take charge of the new-born Christian communities and of evangelization, was a clear part of their missionary methodology. In 1920 Fr. Bernabè started training two

young men in Wau but they did not succeed.

Bishop Mason, in 1929, took care of five young men, one of whom was the future Bishop Ireneo Wien Dud, ordained Priest in 1955 and the first Bishop to emerge from the Comboni missions.



Okaru

- In 1928, the Junior Seminary of Okaru in the Prefecture of Bahr el Jebel was founded by Mgr. Zambonardi and the first Rector was Fr. Antonio Todesco.
- In 1933, a Junior Seminary was opened in Bussere, Bahr el Ghazal Vicariate, with the plan of opening, a Major Seminary in 1939
- 1937/39 in Lachor, Uganda, a Major Seminary for Sudan and Uganda.
- In 1956 the Inter-Vicariate Major Seminary for Sudan was opened at Tore on the way from Yei to Maridi. After the expulsion of the missionaries it was transferred to Rejaf, but the attacks of government soldiers made the Seminarians flee to Lachor, Uganda. From there, in 1968, they joined all the Major Seminarians of Uganda in Katigondo

¹²¹ The Comboni Missionaries, an outline history, op. cit., pp. 188-189.

¹²² Ibid. pp. 189-190.

(Southern Uganda) for Philosophy and Ggaba (Near Kampala) for Theology.

Foundation of Religious Institutes of Men and Women¹²³

I now wish to note that, since the time of Comboni, together with the two Priests already mentioned, three young women had already entered religious life.¹²⁴

Sr. Bakhita Kuashe, (1841-1899), a Nuba, who became the first Comboni Sister. In November, 1867, Comboni took sixteen of the educated African



young women to Cairo (Egypt) to open the first school called *Institute of the Blacks* (Istituto di Neri) and Bakhita, with eleven years of training behind her, was one of the teachers. The Institute's purpose was to train African students so that they could help with the evangelization of the Sudan. When Comboni decided to open the new mission station of El Obeid, in 1873, Bakhita Kuashe was one of the chosen ones. Thus, Bakhita and the other young women were fulfilling the dream of Mgr. Comboni who was firmly upholding the dignity, the competence and the creativity of African women, especially in education.

Sr. Zeinab Alif (Mary Josephine Benvenuti) - 1845/6-1926, OSC (Poor Clare Sisters) from Kordofan. She became also the Vicaress of the monastery of Serra de' Conti (Ancona-Italy) and in 1909, when the Abbess died, she was appointed by the Bishop as its caretaker and, the following year, elected as Abbess and re-elected in the following term (1910-16). She died in 1926.



¹²³ Ibid. pp. 191-194.

¹²⁴ - Sr. Zeinab Alif (Mary Josephine Benvenuti):

http://www.ofimconv.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=135&Itemid=251&lang=en

- Sr. Bakhita Kuashe (Sr. Fortunata Quasce):

http://www.dacb.org/stories/sudan/bakhita_kwashe.html

- Sr. Josephine Bakhita: [http://www.cfl-](http://www.cfl-sacramento.org/html/SaintJosephineMargaretFortunataBakhita.html)

[sacramento.org/html/SaintJosephineMargaretFortunataBakhita.html](http://www.cfl-sacramento.org/html/SaintJosephineMargaretFortunataBakhita.html)

- Josephine Bakhita the lucky one, Jean Maynard, Catholic Truth Society, Publisher to the Holy See.

Sr. Josephine Bakhita, (1869?-1947) from Darfur, a Canossian Sister. Once freed from slavery she asked to be baptized and then became a Sister. She lived mainly in the convent of Schio, (Vicenza-Italy). Her kindness and love, her welcoming attitude, simplicity, trust and wisdom conquered the heart of all the people of Schio who knew her. She died in 1947 and became the first Sudanese Saint. She was canonized on 1 October, 2000, and became *Saint Josephine Bakhita*. Her feast day is on 8 February.¹²⁵



In the XX century, the following Institutes were founded:

The Sisters of the Sacred Heart: founded in 1952 in Juba by Mgr. Sisto Mazzoldi, Vicar Apostolic of Bahr el Jebel, who entrusted the novices to Sr. Domitilla, (a Comboni Sister). With the civil war in Southern Sudan they had to flee to Moyo, Arua Diocese. There, they were trained by Sr. Elizabeth Coggi, also a Comboni Sister.

The Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Sudan. Mgr. Edoardo Mason founded an institute of Sisters, *The Sisters of Nazareth* in 1956 and Mgr. Domenico Ferrara of Mupoi-Tombura founded that of *Our Lady of Victories* in 1957. Due to the difficulties encountered in Sudan and because they were languishing as refugees, the Holy See amalgamated them in 1977 into one with the above title.

St. Martin de Porres Brothers. In 1953, Mgr. Mazzoldi started this Institute with the assistance of Fr. Giuseppe Gusmini (+1980) and Bro. Alessandro Pelucchi. The main purpose was to prepare qualified teachers for the direction of Catholic schools. Their development did not run smoothly and in 1965 they had to take shelter in Uganda and went back to Sudan only in the eighties.

The Brothers of St. Joseph. These were founded in 1955 by Mgr. Mason in Wau with the multiple aim of the vocation to Brotherhood, according to the Comboni style. When the Comboni Missionaries were expelled they found themselves in difficult circumstances and very few in number.

The Apostles of Jesus. The first Religious Institute in Africa to be exclusively missionary. It was founded in 1968 by Fr. Giovanni

¹²⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josephine_Bakhita

Marengoni under the patronage of Mgr. Sisto Mazzoldi, then Bishop of Moroto. The Institute became international with candidates from more than six African countries and has its Generalate in Langata, Nairobi (Kenya). They came to Sudan in 1981. The first Superior General was a Sudanese, Fr. Thomas Oliha, from Torit Diocese.

Inculturation

To know and speak the language: how to enter into the culture of people was the first challenge all the Missionaries since the time of Comboni. The first element for genuine inculturation was to tackle the matter of the language, that is, to know and speak the language. It is an illusion to think that one can penetrate into the culture of people without a substantial knowledge of the language, the vernacular as it is spoken in the homes and in the villages.

Our missionaries always took as their first task the study of local languages and produced a wide range of material in the vernacular, according to the needs. However, in this regard, there were some confreres who were really *outstanding* and, among these were Fr. Pasquale Crazzolaro, Fr. Filiberto Giorgetti and Fr. Stefano Santandrea, whom I want to present here.

Fr. Pasquale Crazzolaro¹²⁶ (1884-1976)
Linguist and Ethnologist.

He was one of the first missionaries to arrive in Uganda at Omach in 1910. He started immediately to learn Acholi and when he was transferred to Southern Sudan he learned the Nuer language and published a Nuer grammar, a translation of the catechism, the most important prayers, various hymns and the books of mathematics, geography and history for the first year class.

He attended courses of phonetics and anthropology at the Universities of Vienna and London. He published an Acholi grammar and dictionary and a Lugbara (Madi) dictionary, with scientific phonetic signs and accents; they

¹²⁶ The Comboni Missionaries, an outline history, op. cit., pp. 200-201.

- Diary of Yoynyang Station (in Italian), in date 14 November, 1930, ACR 145/16. "Today is the fifth year (14 Nov. 1925) since the start of our mission station. During this time Fr. Crazzolaro has translated into Nuer the Catechism, the most important prayers, various hymns, the books of Maths, Geography and History for the first year class. These days he completed the Nuer Grammar in English."

are genuine classical works. He also wrote two volumes on Lwo migrations, the first of their kind. He was awarded the Medal of the Royal Society of London, the M.B.E (Member of British Empire) and the nomination of *Commendatore* of the Italian Republic.

When Fr. Crazzolaro was sixty he started the study of a small tribe in Arua Diocese, the Okebo. In his eighties he started writing a Karimojong grammar, but unfortunately he did not have the time to complete it. Fr. Bruno Novelli and Fr. Mario Mantovani took up the task and completed the work.

The basis of Fr. Crazzolaro's life and studies was the missionary ideal: to make God known to the Africans. This is the synthesis of his life up to the end. A man of notable intelligence, he was very keen to teach and explain the catechism to the illiterate catechumens and to the small children in primary school because he loved them and understood their difficulties and their limitations. He shared their problems and knew how to indicate possible solutions. Bishop Cesana, who lived with him, testifies in the obituary: *we really loved him and looked upon him with a certain veneration.*

Fr. Filiberto Giorgetti¹²⁷ (1902-1978)

Ethnologist and Musician with an African soul.

He learned the language of the Azande drum, the *gugu*. Fr. Jero, his nickname, was a musical genius and, in this field, the best of our missionaries so far. He had the intelligence and the interest to study the Azande Drum, as the originality of African music lies neither in the melody, nor the harmony but the rhythm given by the drum. The intervals and major/minor tone-messages are also transmitted by the drum; moreover different kinds of drums are used for different occasions and performances. It was after the study of the drum that Fr. 'Jero' became supreme in Azande music. If we keep in mind the role of the drum and of the songs in modern African music, we can understand how Fr. Jero was a pioneer. His life-long friend and colleague Fr. Santandrea said of him:

"For some time, Fr. Giorgetti had become aware that our Latin language, as used in our worship and transplanted into Africa in its original form, did not appeal too much to the local population. What was lacking was their music, and, further, their dances, naturally with some restraint. And so ingenious songs were composed, which were

¹²⁷ Ibid. pp. 201-202

learned immediately and sung at the top of their voices by the whole Assembly. Then came the para-liturgical dances like nativity scenes and the *Via Crucis*. Finally, also entertainment, which aroused irresistible appeal and drew large crowds; little Zande dances, always well performed, which excited enthusiasm among blacks and whites alike. The whites wanted more compositions even as far away as Juba, the capital of the Province.

We must not forget that music became, thanks to Jero, a very important factor in religious formation. His songs, with refrains in perfect Azande, expressing praise of God, of Christ, of the Virgin, or fundamental truths of our faith, accompanied Zande melodies, passed from mouth to mouth, to the instruction and edification of the people. Not only Catholics sang them, but also Protestants and pagans. It was not infrequent to hear them sung in profane dances, often substituting indecent texts. They became a patrimony of the Azande, who found in them their language and their true music. Not a few of those songs took the inspiration from Zande singers, a motif caught here and there by the always attentive Jero"¹²⁸

"As an ethnologist, Fr. Giorgetti is known internationally for his deep knowledge of the Azande. Three of his books can testify to this. '**La Superstizione Zande**' (Zande Superstition); the title is not very proper in as much as the book contains an amount of material which exceeds the title.

Death among the Azande of the Sudan a book in English which fared better than the first. "**Non siamo cannibali**" (We are not cannibals), his last work full of anthropological and historical interest, which he was preparing in English in the last days of his life.

The three books together constitute a significant monument to the culture of the Azande people.

Besides various articles published in *Nigrizia*, three articles appeared in magazines of international repute, such as *Africa* and *The Annali Lateranensi*. "¹²⁹

¹²⁸ See Bulletin n. 123, p. 78.

¹²⁹ See Bulletin, *Ibis*.

Fr. Stefano Santandrea¹³⁰ (1904-1990)

A living encyclopaedia.

On the eighty-sixth birthday of Fr. Stefano Santandrea (February 16 1990), the librarian of the Generalate, Fr. Alessandro Trabucchi, prepared an exhibition of all his publications and a bibliography of all his writings. The display was visited by all the major Superiors, confreres and scholastics and was certainly a long overdue tribute.

Visitors were amazed at what humble, quiet and simple Fr. Santandrea had achieved: 150 books and booklets, all on very taxing ethnographic topics, without counting the innumerable articles in specialised magazines, most of them in English, with many translations. It is not easy to evaluate all that he produced.

He was seen as an authority on everything African and his opinion was sought and appreciated by international scholars. This knowledge increased during the years when he was in charge of the library at the Generalate in Rome. To the admirers of his works he always gave the following answer: *"The whole thing isn't worth much. I hope that Jesus Christ will take pity on me and out of my thirty years of work will give priority to my predilection for the old and abandoned people, for the lepers, particularly the years of Khor-Malang with Bro. Giosuè, and when I was alone."*

His work in the field of ethnology and linguistics is appreciated by the Africans themselves. Luis Omodo, an old pupil of his, recently wrote in a booklet, 35 years after the Father left from Sudan:

- *"He taught us Christianity, as a way of life and encouraged us along the way of goodness, inspiring in us development and progress.*
- *He saved our African culture with his research.*
- *He wrote many useful things for our welfare and growth.*
- *He was our pioneer and animator in every field.*
- *He will always be remembered in Bahr el Ghazal; he consumed himself for us, therefore he is ours, he is one of us.*
- *He was always faithful and exact in all his duties; may God reward him with eternal life.*
- *He waited on us with care, affection and serenity; may he continue to be our guardian and protector also from heaven.*
- *We are not weeping for him; we are invoking him as a Father and protector of Bahr el Ghazal.*
- *And may the Lord Jesus be blessed for having sent him to us. Amen."*¹³¹

¹³⁰ The Comboni Missionaries, an outline history, op. cit., pp. 201-203.

Fr. Arturo Nebel¹³² (1888-1981)

A true friend of the Dinka.

Because of the horrible crimes the slave traders inflicted on the Dinka people in the past, said Fr. Nebel, the missionary is looked upon with mistrust and suspicion. Kwajok was the first mission opened at the end of 1923 in Dinka land and it did not have an easy start, because of the above mentioned mistrust. Fr. Nebel, however, was deeply aware that these were the people God assigned to him, he loved them and he did not care about the difficulties he would have to face but immediately started moving around getting to know people. Rumours were spread that the missionaries would get the boys and send them to Khartoum: everybody disappeared. Only ten months after the arrival in Kwajok, the Governor of Wau entrusted Fr. Nebel with two Dinka boys, orphans, so that he might teach them. These two boys were the first Dinka catechumens, they were the ones opening the way for others and helping people to overcome the mistrust towards the missionaries.

Fr. Nebel applied himself deeply to the study of the language and the customs of the Dinkas taking care also of the few catechumens and Christians. He was able to publish a Dinka dictionary, Dinka/English and English/Dinka, a Dinka grammar, then Dinka folklore, primary school books I, II, III, IV and other textbooks for school, together with all the other religious books the mission was using. A confrere wrote: *"In spite of his small size, Fr. Nebel will be remembered as a great man in a tribe of giants, for his love of the Dinka people, and for his studies of the language and ethnography of that tribe."*

¹³¹ See Bulletin n. 170, pp. 34-53

¹³² - Servant of the Gospel, op. cit., pp. 116-119.

- Diary of Yoynyang Station, op. cit. in date 2 Dec. - 29 Dec. 1933, ACR 145/16.

"Fr. Nebel arrived today and will remain for a month to study the Dinka Dialects."

"The presence of Fr. Nebel was very helpful for our Dinka people of Lake NO. He corrected the common prayers translated by Michael, son of Bilkwey, and translated a small Catechism."

The Comboni Brothers

When going through documents and reports of missionary expeditions or of the opening of mission stations, the names of the Brothers may emerge once or twice and then disappear, leaving only names of the Fathers in charge of that mission. Then one finds that the mission consists of so many other realities that one starts wondering who it was who worked so hard to make the mission available for all those services for the community of missionaries, for people, youth, leaders, catechists, men and women? The answer would be: *It was Brother so and so...*, but now where is he? *He has been asked to start something new in such and such mission station...*

If we remember that almost all the facilities we could see in Sudan, from 1900 to the present time in every mission, have one or more Comboni Brothers to thank for their existence, we can really admire and be surprised by their great work such as residences for the mission personnel, schools, catechetical centres, agricultural schools and workshops for carpentry, mechanics, and other trades for the training of capable and skilful workers



Bussere

in every field of activity like building, preparing furnaces for burning bricks and tiles and so on.

Mr. Richard Owen, Assistant District Commissioner in Wau at the end of the twenties and Deputy Governor and then Governor of Bahr el Ghazal from 1945 to 1953, about Brothers and the Catholic Church, wrote:

“There was Bro. Botticelli (I must change the names – so why not resort to the Old Masters?), chief mechanic of the mission, and a most competent one too. Yet when an occasion required higher cuisine, it was he who was called in as a chef, and the hand that could be firm with the spanner was light and persuasive with the rolling-pin. I recollect a particular luncheon given by the Bishop for the visit of the Governor General. There were six courses, and Bro. Botticelli had cooked them all superbly. Not content with that, he even helped hand round the ‘pommes de terre à la maitre d’hôtel’.”¹³³

As for the technical training given by the Church of Rome, whose protagonists were the Brothers, he continues:

“The training given in its technical schools in carpentry, iron-work, printing and mechanics held the field to the last against anything the Government could show, and has been of the utmost value to the community.”¹³⁴

We can say that with their practical skills they were the real people who made development possible in the various part of the country. Theirs was a work done in silence but whose outcome could be clearly seen everywhere. But what was even much more wonderful was the impact their relationships had on the people, like the workers and other collaborators who were directly involved in all those development initiatives. Their style of life, their model of relationships, their religious life as Missionary Brothers and the way people looked up to them could not leave their hearts untouched.

So it was not only a matter of the many different beautiful works they were doing, never before seen by the eyes of the Sudanese people of the time, but it was a witness of how they followed Christ and gave their life totally to him for the human and social development of the Mission and of the Sudanese people, in whatever ethnic group they found themselves serving. They were really the *very first evangelizers*, those who, through their practical work and skill, were putting the seed of new values and the desire of conversion into the heart of all the people around them. People were learning every day through their example, more than their words, and learning what, for a normal lay person, it meant to follow Jesus, to work, to pray and to live a life of faith and hope with persevering determination.

They were real masters of humanity. People could relate to them without fear as *real Brothers*, and find in them support, courage,

¹³³ Richard Owen, *Sudan Days*, op. cit., p. 151.

¹³⁴ Ibid. p. 154.

confidence and friendship. They learned how to appreciate the life of work and commitment, leaving aside a frequently lazy sort of life. They helped people to take their first steps in finding that hidden God the Brothers came to witness to and about whom, later on, Priests would teach them in a more systematic way. At that point, the foundations of a Christian life were already laid and the Brothers were the very witnesses of life transmitted with their simple life style. They were the ministers of the *Pre-evangelization phase through their life-experience with Adult People, and model of insertion* like Bro. Giosuè Dei Cas¹³⁵ (1880-1952).

The Comboni Sisters: *The Devout Mothers of Africa*¹³⁶

The presence of consecrated women, whom Daniel Comboni specifically prepared for Africa, was a real blessing for the work of evangelization in Sudan. The fact that women were not felt as a threat in the African society and environment, allowed the Comboni Sisters to enter everywhere and be welcome any time they were visiting villages and families, thus, they could relate to everybody without any restriction.

They were involved in education, in various types of schools for small children, primary and secondary schools and, through this school activity, they could meet with parents and relatives of the children and students. They were dealing with



The Comboni Sisters and Comboni...

sick people in the dispensaries and other health facilities and, therefore, in direct contact with the sufferings of people and with the most vulnerable because of many other diseases such as leprosy and malaria. Through their

¹³⁵ Fratel Giosuè Dei Cas, *Lettere*, Remo Bracchi, Vita e Missione, EMI Bologna, 2010.

- Servo di Dio Giosuè Dei Cas Missionario Comboniano,

<http://www.santiebeati.it/dettaglio/96716>

¹³⁶ The Writings, nn. 5106, 5117, 5442, 5443, 6356.

work and service everybody knew them, trusted them and felt confident in their motherly care.

They were an example to the girls and all the women and a source of inspiration with their style of life and generous dedication. With their word they could give courage, hope and strength to all who came to them. Their life of prayer, their consecration to God, their following of Christ Jesus in their lives, made them concrete signs of God's presence, love, mercy and care for all without distinction. It was a great witness and affected not only women but also men, especially in the families.

So, as it was said for the Brothers, they were the real ministers of the first encounter with the God of Jesus revealed in their faces and in their service, and so they planted the seed of Jesus in the hearts of people: children, boys, girls, women and men, enabling them, too, to experience the Good News and, at a later stage, to receive more formal teaching. After their first encounter with the *living Master*, catechism and other teaching would help the seed to sprout and grow to maturity.

Again Mr. Richard Owen, the Bahr el Ghazal Governor would say of them:

*"In some ways the Sisters seemed to me the most remarkable of all. By the standard of the world their life lacked all the essentials for content – company, exchange of views, creature comforts, variety. Yet you only had to look to their eyes to see the quality the world lacks – serenity..."*¹³⁷

It is also remarkable what Mr. Owen thought about education and evangelization:

"No missionary society can supply the academic needs of a modern educational system; and if they attempt it, they would be neglecting their primary duty of evangelization. But in the pride of our up-to-date methods, apparatus and curricula, it is as well to remember two things.

First, the missionaries were the pioneers of African Education. They faced bitter difficulties with inadequate resources, and achieved results long before the state had even made a serious effort – so much so that for long the state regarded them as the main agency of education; and almost to this day the candidates for higher instruction are often from the past institutions of missions.

Second, I believe with all my heart that any purely secular education, divorced from the authoritative teaching that goes with the Faith, is a false education, and will not breed a civilisation which can stand the

¹³⁷ Richard Owen, Sudan Days, op. cit., pp. 152-153.

test of time. The work of the missionaries has come through the trial of fifteen years of persecution, and it is they who have laid the foundation on which African civilisation of future centuries will rest."¹³⁸

Missionary Spirituality

The spirituality based on the *Sacred Heart of Jesus*, to whom Fr. Daniel Comboni entrusted his Vicariate, was the basis of the Comboni Missionaries experience, of both Institutes of Father-Brothers and Sisters. The *Cenacle of Apostles* was the missionary way of living, *sending its rays* into the darkness of the heart of every person and enlightening it with the light of Jesus. The communities living faithfully their consecrated life, praying and offering themselves to God every day as a pure oblation so that the message of the Gospel could penetrate the heart of the Sudanese People - all this was the great message and witness of the Comboni Missionaries.

The task of caring for the Comboni Missionaries' spirituality of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, fount of love (charity),¹³⁹ and that the spiritual life of the confreres might grow, rested on the Superior General, on the Superior of Mission and on the Local Superior. Their main task was also to be vigilant lest the pressing needs of missionary work should conflict with balanced personal spiritual growth, and to help the confreres in their human and spiritual development, so as to grow in strength and bear abundant fruit.

The Progress of the Catholic Mission in the Sudan

Letter of the Superior General, Fr. Antonio Todesco, March 1955:¹⁴⁰

"...God in his mercy wanted me to have the joy and the grace to follow in fairly regular stages the progress of Catholicism in our African missions. I was able to observe the first difficult efforts of this advance in 1928, the year of my entry into mission, its situation ten years after, when I left the missionary field, then in 1949 on the occasion of my first official visit, and lately in 1954: well, my spirit is moved and there is no other expression more genuine than that

¹³⁸ Ibid. pp. 154-155.

¹³⁹ Fr. Federico Vianello, 21 May, 1914, *La voce della Congregazione*, Scuola Tipografia Nigrizia, Verona, 1957, "*The Fraternal Charity: preoccupation and habit of the Sons of the Sacred Heart*", pp.37-41.

¹⁴⁰ Fr. Antonio Todesco, *La voce della Congregazione*, op. cit., 19 March, 1955, pp. 337-338.

expressed by the most holy Virgin in her Magnificat: 'Fecit nobis magna qui potens est!''"

Religious and cultural missionary literature; rudimentary schools, primary, secondary; courses for teachers; lower and upper vocational schools, for the various technical branches; agricultural schools, at family level lower and upper; pharmacies and dispensaries; maternity homes, leper hospitals, orphanages and kindergartens for children and old people; minor and major seminaries, religious institutions for both sexes. Increased indigenous clergy, parishes entrusted entirely to their care. Unnumbered buildings, built with so much artistic taste: churches, chapels, schools, hospitals, homes for the missionaries, housing for natives, etc. Increasing number of catechumens, baptized people, Christian families, schoolchildren, Catholic professionals. Mission stations increased in number and sufficiently equipped and organized ... here, in short, the wonderful scenery of the successes achieved in these recent years.

I was able to admire with emotion and holy satisfaction the apostolic dedication and heroic sacrifice of all missionaries, Priests and Brothers: their efforts of spontaneous missionary generosity in the apostolate and in the work in order to make up what was lacking in their number.

But here let me now express particular praise of the tirelessness of our Brothers that, not thinking about their needs, and only motivated by a strong spirit of conquest, pass with ease and willing sacrifice, from the altar to their work, from the foundations of one house to the roof of another, from the design of a building to its execution, from the workplace of the bricks to the furnace for lime, from the forest to choose the timber to the workshops and vocational schools. Soldiers always attentive to the voice of God and of their Superiors: always spiritually, if not humanly, pleased to have contributed to the expansion of the boundaries of the Church and of the coming of God's Kingdom.

Also to the Fathers go my frank praise and my paternal admiration. First of all, to those, that with so much patience and in a pure supernatural way, teach in our schools and colleges or seminaries; to those who, heedless of fever or fatigue, undertake long and difficult safaris, through swamps and mountains, accepting heroically the poor assistance on the part of people and enduring stinging spiritual disappointments because of an unsuccessful apostolate.

To all my sincere appreciation for the greatness of heart and for the prudent missionary concern, in wanting to master the difficult

psychological situation and environment in which their missionary work develops today.”

Religious and Ecclesiastic Authority

At the beginning, Fr. Daniel Comboni founded an institute of Priests and Lay Brothers who were not bound together by religious vows, but as Diocesan Priests and Lay people kept together by promises that they would totally dedicate their live to proclaiming the Gospel to the African People until death. The Bishop, (Comboni) with his ecclesiastical authority, was their only authority. With the conversion of the Institute into a *Religious Missionary Institute*, the Ecclesiastic Authority (e.g. the Vicar Apostolic) was exercising his authority in whatever regarded the administration of his Vicariate, but the *Religious Authority* (the Superior) had direct authority on the Religious Confreres. Thus, the two authorities had to be aware of the boundary between each other's responsibilities.

This, at times, was not an easy relationship and could give way to interference in each other's field of responsibility, especially in cases of strong personalities. Though both Religious and Ecclesiastical Authorities were belonging to the same FSCJ institute, thus facilitating mutual understanding, for some other reasons, it could lead to strained relations. The Superior General had to intervene in certain critical cases, in order to restore harmony between the two parties.

Sometimes, due to the pressing needs of evangelization and mission work, the ecclesiastical authority (the Pro-vicar or Vicar Apostolic) may have exercised a certain amount of pressure to carry out his plans, regardless of the human and spiritual welfare of a confrere. In this case the Superior of Mission had the responsibility to take up the issue with the Ecclesiastical Authority.

In one of his letters, Fr. Paolo Meroni, then Superior General, (1919-1931) had to clarify the existing relationship (Ecclesiastical and Religious Authority) to confreres, who were still not acquainted with the issue, especially in the matter of obedience:

“The fact that the religious, in his missionary duties, depends on the authority of the Ecclesiastical Superior, takes nothing from the special religious merit of his acts, because of the fact that he is on Mission in that mission where he was sent and will remain, out of obedience received from the religious authority. This mandate of obedience remains virtually the whole time that the religious remains in Mission

and covers all the actions the same religious does in the performance of his duties as a missionary.

And on the other hand in Mission the Religious remains always subject to the local religious authority, not only with regard to fulfilling his religious duties, but also concerning the right performance of his duties and Apostolic Ministries. It is the task of the afore-mentioned authority to ensure that the religious may fulfil seriously and adequately also these duties and to regulate his activities when required, so that it may not damage his spirit nor his health, to establish timetables and regulate the various tasks and offices so that common life be possible, that is, to keep up the requirements of the apostolate and maintain in force the norm of can. 594 and of our constitutions.

All this in order to say that even the religious merit of all our acts and our entire life of sacrifice remains safe in Mission."¹⁴¹



The expulsion of the Missionaries 1964

The expulsion of the Comboni Missionaries February-March 1964

As a follow-up to the *Missionary Societies Act of 1962*,¹⁴² on 27 February, 1964, the Government of Khartoum ordered the expulsion of all

¹⁴¹ Fr. Paolo Meroni, 18 January, 1931, *La voce della Congregazione*, Scuola Tipografia Nigrizia, Verona, 1957, p. 110.

the missionaries. The news was a great shock for everybody. Among the Comboni Missionaries there were 4 Ordinaries, 64 missionary Priests, 42 Brothers and 92 Sisters. It left one Bishop, Mgr. Ireneo Dud and 28 Priests in Southern Sudan. They had to fend for themselves and were the first fruits of a Sudanese Church with a local leadership.

The impact of this event was kept alive by the vivid memory left in the diary of Fr. Ivo Ciccacci which he wrote down on the last days before the expulsion. He described in a very emotional way the moment of the farewell to all missionaries on the 6 March, 1964, and the blessing of Mgr. Ireneo Dud, Bishop of Wau, he wrote:

6 March, 1964: the good-bye.

“We are about to leave Wau for Khartoum by plane. We are surrounded by officers and policemen. Around the airfield government soldiers are on the watch. No civilian can approach us. Christians and pagans, defying police and spies, expressed their affection. But the government press will say that the population has received with joy the news of our expulsion. Among the participants there is also, almost agonizing, Sr. Ines. She leaves Sudan after 33 years of missionary life. She does not complain. She smiles. Tomorrow she will die in Khartoum: the most precious drop of the chalice.

The plane awaits us. The officers are satisfied. They are crushing the black minority and we are bad witnesses. They don't understand anything of the soul of our black people. The officer ordered us to get closer. He has a sheet in hand with our names. He says to hurry up. He stamps his feet and raises his voice. Let him go ahead. We kneel in the dust: Mgr. Ireneo Dud, our Bishop, raises his hand and blesses us. He cries. He is a black person, but he is our leader and our Father. We have solved the racial problem long ago. They did not. They look at us now without understanding. The officer holding the list of names is now calmed down.

The Bishop embraces us. We turn away. And he remains there, alone. He has to take care of half a million baptized people, hundreds of seminarians, the sick, the old, children and lepers.

¹⁴² Anders Breidlid, Adelino Androga Said, Astrid Kristine Breidlid, Anne Farren, Yosa Wawa, “A concise History of South Sudan”, new revised edition, Fountain Publishers, Kampala, Uganda, 2014, pp. 211-212.

- http://www.dacb.org/stories/sudan/ngalamu_elinana.html

We will keep in our heart his last look, along with the tears of the young Christian Community, lost, helpless, at the mercy of the enemy. ¹⁴³

This painful experience of the expulsion of the Comboni Missionaries working in Southern Sudan closes one cycle and opens another. The period of time which follows will be a time full of very important events at both political and church levels in Africa and in the world but, in a particular way within the Catholic Church which was celebrating the Second Vatican Council. It will be the starting point of a renewal for the whole life of the Catholic Church itself, inside itself and outside by its opening up to the world with a new endeavour and spirit for its *Mission ad Gentes*. As Comboni Missionaries, this was a time for a true renewal and new attitude in order to comprehend the motto of the Founder, Daniel Comboni, ***Save Africa with Africa*** under a new light which the new political and religious context brought about.

The pastoral letter written by the expelled Bishops to their persecuted Priests and faithful (1965).

On the 31 October, feast of Christ the King, the four Ordinaries expelled from Sudan, Mgr. E. Mason, Apostolic Vicar of El Obeid. Mgr. Sisto Mazzoldi, Vicar Apostolic of Juba, Mgr. D. Ferrara, Apostolic Prefect of Mupoi, Mgr. H. Te Riele, Apostolic Prefect of Malakal, sent a letter to Mgr. Ireneo Dud, to the Priests and faithful of Southern Sudan to comfort them in this tragic hour. We quote here a passage of the letter:

"The persecution which fell on our beloved Church in Southern Sudan, and that separated our persons from you, on the day of the expulsion of the missionaries, cannot extinguish our love for you, nor destroy the bonds of pastoral concern and paternal anxiety that link us to you in the name and in the virtue of our Lord Jesus Christ. We can now say that, even though the sacrifice and the pain were almost unbearable, however, they helped to increase our love for you even more and to strengthen our determination not to fail in the service of the Church in southern Sudan.

We thank God, our common Father, who gave you the grace and strength to remain firm; we also congratulate you for having responded to so great grace with courage, determination and wonderful patience.

¹⁴³ The diary of Fr. Ivo Ciccacci on the 6 March, 1964.

All Christians of the world, especially the Sovereign Pontiff, are with you in your struggle and your hardships.

The results obtained in the apostolate and in continuing the work of the Church, in spite of the persisting obstacles and difficulties, the many temptations, the perverse opposition and the unspeakable sufferings known only to God, fill us with joy and exultation. They once again prove your loyalty to Christ and his Church. Our thoughts go especially to the unforgettable Fr. Arcangelo and Fr. Barnaba and to all the Brothers who have lost their lives in this tragic period. They will protect you from heaven.

Dear brothers, we pray to God for help, so that, after starting so well, you can bring everything to fulfilment, until the day when peace and justice will reign in our beloved country. Don't be put off if the storm moves again. The Lord is with you.

Try to enhance your interior life of faith, prayer and trust in the Lord. Keep your devotion to the Sacred Heart growing: He is the source of every grace and of our salvation. Especially when you cannot receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist, it is necessary that your heart will join spiritually and continuously to the heart of Jesus. Pray daily the great mother of God and our good mother Mary, especially by praying the Rosary. Please, repeat often the Act of perfect contrition: 'I'm sorry for having offended thee, O Jesus in your infinite goodness, have mercy on me'...

Continue to be united with your pastors, receiving the Sacraments as often as possible. May the pure offering of the Immaculate and Divine Redemption continue on all the altars where the few remaining Priests can still work and live. Let Seminarians and aspirants continue their efforts to become worthy of their calling. Let the Sisters and Brothers be faithful to their vows. In the words of Scripture, we say: 'there is no comparison between what we can suffer in this world which passes away with the marvellous glory that we will be given in the life that is eternal!'

We send you from the bottom of our hearts our full and Fatherly blessing."¹⁴⁴

Regarding this critical moment and the excruciating experience of the expulsion¹⁴⁵ a lot has been written and reflected upon, especially in the

¹⁴⁴ Nigrizia no. 12, December, 1965, pp. 44-45

Italian context, since the great majority of the expelled missionaries, both men and women, belonged to the Comboni Institutes of Italian origin. Moreover, further considerations and reflections concerned the whole continent of Africa, since it was happening when freedom, independence and self-empowerment were aspired to; the question of how to tackle the relationship with Africa in a new way and with new approaches was certainly a big issue.

Missions operating at the time of the expulsion.

*Southern Sudan situation*¹⁴⁶

It is appropriate at this point to present the status of the Church in Southern Sudan and the mission centres and other important undertakings realized up to the time of expulsion. They testify to the hard and very committed work carried out with true missionary zeal and worthy of praise, a witness of true dedication and love for the people of Southern Sudan, beyond any criticism and prejudice.

Bahr el Ghazal – (Apostolic Vicariate)

Mgr. Edoardo Mason until 3 Dec 1960.

Mgr. Ireneo Wien Dud from 3 Dec. 1960.

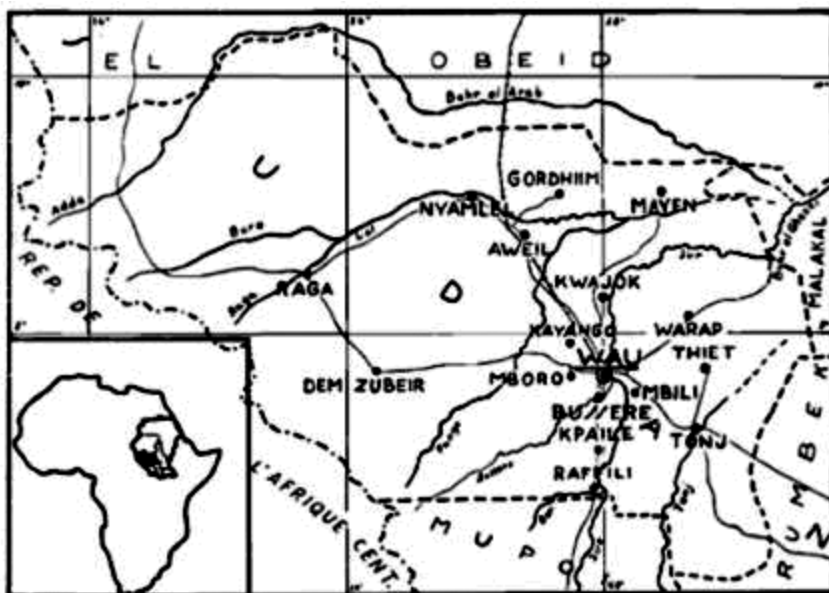
	<i>Foundation</i>	<i>Dedicated to</i>
Residence of Wau.	1905	Maria Auxiliatrix

¹⁴⁵ - **MCCJ BULLETIN:** (All in Italian) SS. Propaganda Fide (1963) 65/693-94; Mccj Bulletin, Pope Paul VI, 69/833-36; Bulletin, Letter of the prelates, 69/843-47; Bulletin, Chronology of the expulsion (1964) 69/853; Letter of Sup. General, (1964) 70/894; Archbishop of Westminster (1964) 70/906-7; From the Calvary of Southern Sudan (1965), 75/181-203; Message of the expelled Ordinaries to the Clergy and Faithful 76/37, 76/41-21 3 63, (1966) 77/159-177, 78/215-234, 79/343-50, 80/27-31, (1967) 82/163-69, 83/210; (1968) 85/65-70, Dal Calvario... (From the Calvary...)

- **NIGRIZIA MAGAZINE:** (All in Italian) **No. 4/1964**, p.1, A. Doneda, South Sudan, a death sentence; p. 8, KH. Declaration of the Foreign Minister; p. 13, G. Xillo, eight years of patience, Fr. G. Dwatuka shows his wounds; p. 18, SS/KH unwanted witnesses; p. 26 Chronology of the expulsion; p. 32, the missionaries tell...; p. 37, Fr. Ivo Cicacci, the longest day in Thiet, 1-3 March 1964; p. 40, the expelled missionaries arrive at Fiumicino; p. 43, Paul VI to the expelled missionaries; p. 46, letters and telegrams of solidarity to the expelled. **No. 5/1964**, p.1, re-examine with serene objectivity; p.12, letter of Mgr. Mason to the interior Minister of Sudan.... and letter to benefactor, all lost?; p. 14, Fr. A. Matordes, the kindness of the Sudanese police at Dem Zubeir; **No. 3/1965**, p. 30, hopes and delusions in Sudan; **No. 9/1965**, p.6, Sudan: a new Mahdia?; Moschetti-Sguazza, Espulsione evento di salvezza, 50 anni dopo, Aprile 2014, pp 70-71.

¹⁴⁶ Catalogo, op. cit., January, 1965, pp. 163-178.

Station of Kayango.	7 March 1904	St. Francis Xavier
Station of Mbili.	17 March 1904	Mary Immaculate
Station of Mboro.	1912	St. Joseph
Station of Kwajok.	Dec. 1923	St. Joseph
Station of Dem Zubeir.	1926	Our Lady of Mercy
Station of Bussere.	17 Aug. 1933	St. Anthony
Station of Nyamlel.	1934	St. Therese of the Child Jesus
Station of Raga.	Jan. 1935	S. Heart of Jesus
Station of Mayen.	1946	Immaculate Heart of Mary
Station of Thiet.	1949	The Child Jesus
Station of Aweil.	1950	St. George
Station of Gordhiim.	1953	Our Lady of Fatima
Station of Tonj.	1953	Our Lady of the Divine Love
Station of Warap.	1953	Ss. Peter and Paul
Station of Kpaile.	1954	St. Peter Claver
Institution of the <i>Brothers of St. Joseph</i> of Raffili founded in 1955		



Apostolic Vicariate of Bahr El Ghazal

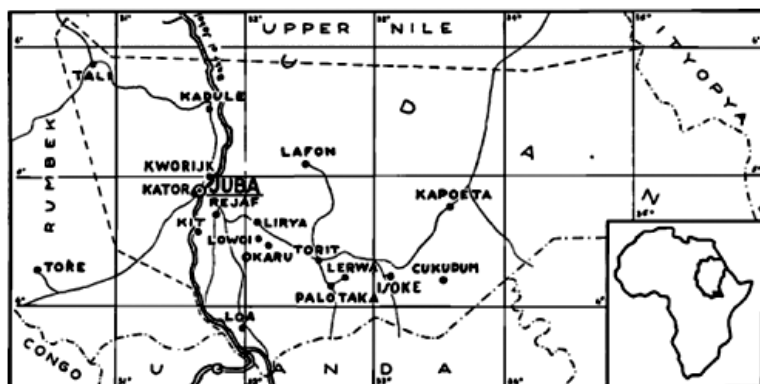
Bahr el Gebel – (Apostolic Vicariate)

Mgr. Sisto Mazzoldi, Apostolic Vicar¹⁴⁷

Episcopal Residence of Juba.	1931	St. Joseph
Station of Rejaf.	1919	Our Lady of the People
Station of Torit.	1920	Ss. Peter and Paul
Station of Loa.	1921	Our Lady of St. Luke
Station of Lerwa.	1925	Regina Pacis
Station of Isoke.	1926	St. Therese of the Child Jesus
Seminary of Okaru.	1928	Immaculate
Station of Palotaka.	1933	Holy Family
Station of Kapoeta.	1935	Our Lady of Sorrows
Station of Lirya.	1946	St. Joseph
Station of Chukudum	1946	Sacred Heart of Jesus
Station of Lowoi.	July 1947	Sacred Heart of Jesus
Station of Lafon.	1948	Most Holy Mary Consolatrix
Station of Kworijik (<i>Juba</i>).	1951	Sacred Heart of Jesus
Station of Kator (<i>Juba</i>).	1952	St. Therese of the Child Jesus
Station of Kadulè.	1952	Immaculate

*Institution of the
Brothers of St. Martin
de Porres of Kit.*

Seminary of Tore. ¹⁴⁸	May 1952	
Technical School of Torit.	1953	St. Paul
Station of Tali.	1953	St. Joseph
	1954	Our Lady of Fatima
House of Torit (city).	Sept. 1958	Assumption



Apostolic Vicariate of Bahr El Jebel

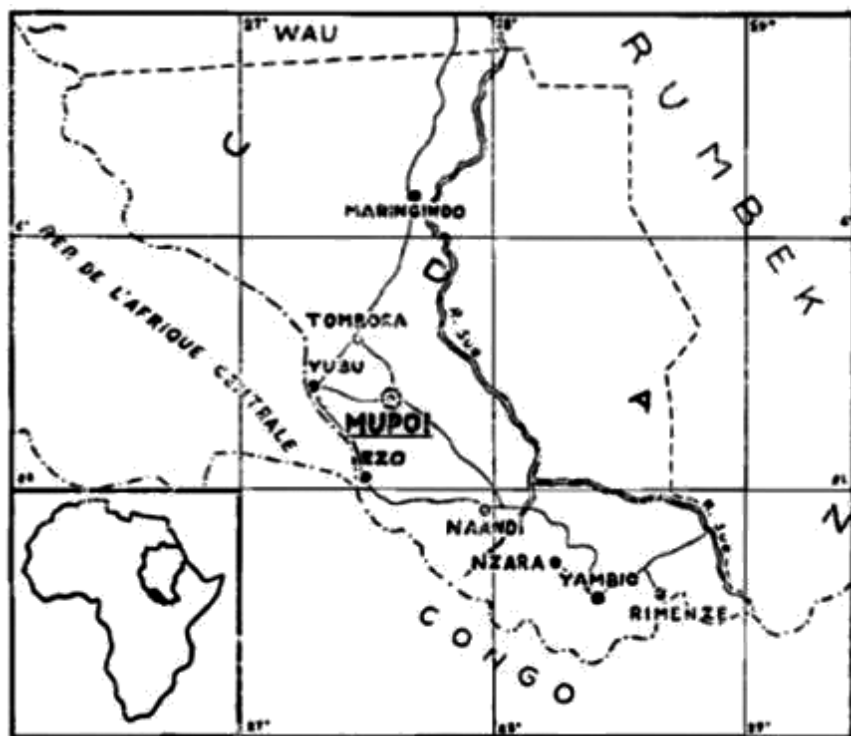
¹⁴⁷ Address: see Kangole, p. 190. (Catholic Church Kangole, Moroto, Uganda).

¹⁴⁸ Apostolic Vicariate of Rumbek.

Mupoi - (Apostolic Prefecture)

Mgr. Domenico Ferrara, Apostolic Prefect¹⁴⁹

Residence of Mupoi.	24 Dec. 1912	Our Lady of Sorrows
Station of Yubu.	Feb. 1923	Our Lady of the Rosary
Station of Naandi.	Dec. 1947	Ss. Peter and Paul
Station of Rimenze.	May 1947	Assumption
Station of Maringindo.	1950	Immaculate Heart of Mary
Station of Tombura.	1950	Maria Auxiliatrix
Station of Nzara.	Oct. 1951	Our Lady of Nzara
Station of Yambio.	Jan. 1951	Our Lady of Victories
Station of Ezo.	Nov. 1954	Regina Mundi



Apostolic Prefecture of Mupoi

¹⁴⁹ Present Address: Missioni Africane - Verona

Southern Sudan: Statistics

- Area: sq.km. 610,000. population: 4 million. = Catholics 500,000;
= Protestants 100,000.
- Ecclesiastic Circumscriptions
 - 1. Apostolic Vicariate of Wau (Comboni)
 - 2. Apostolic Vicariate of Juba (Comboni)
 - 4. Apostolic Prefecture of Mupoi. (Comboni)
 - 3. *Apostolic Vicariate of Rumbek* (Diocesan Clergy)
 - 5. *Apostolic Prefecture of Malakal* (Mill Hill Institute)
- Sudanese clergy: the Apostolic Vicar of Wau.
- Minor Seminarians, Administrator of Rumbek, 24 diocesan Priests, 4 Sudanese Comboni Missionaries.
- Mission Residences: 61 (in 1962).
- Major Seminarians 94, at Tore.

(approximate number):

Bussere	93 + 14	in pre-seminary,
Lul	20 + 15	in pre-seminary,
Okaru	170 + 70	in pre-seminary
Porkele	95 + 25	in pre-seminary,
Totals:	378 + 124	in pre-seminary = 502

- Religious (Sudanese): Brothers 19. Sisters 41.

- Expelled Missionaries:	Prelates	Priests	Brothers	Sisters	Totals
From 1955 to 1963	1	73	21	53	147
27 February 1964	3	70	43	98	214

	4	143	64	151	361

The final words of the *Catalogue* conclude by saying, "*Though we are sad for our expulsion from Southern Sudan (1964), we look forward to returning as soon as possible to the sacred territories of our firstborn missions. Faxit Deus!*"¹⁵⁰ Words of great meaning which express a deep sorrow and show a firm hope of a return. In the meantime, however, the Sudanese Comboni Missionaries¹⁵¹ who remained in South Sudan continued to bear witness and work alongside the people and Local Church. For security reasons, some of them were later appointed to the northern part of Sudan and others to Uganda.

¹⁵⁰ Catalogo, op. cit., January, 1965, p. 178.

¹⁵¹ Catalogo, op. cit., January, 1965, p. 158.

SECTION THREE

Keeping the Mission alive to prepare a better future (1964-1981)

The Historical Context 1964-1981: an overall view

Before going into the early history of the South Sudan Circumscription, *Representation/Delegation/Province*, it may help to give an overall view of this historical period of time, from the expulsion of the missionaries until the juridical beginning of the new Circumscription of South Sudan, which is like *a second re-starting* for the Comboni Missionaries. This period of time was marked by many great events that affected the World, the whole Church, Africa and Sudan. They would also directly affect *evangelization work* and the *renewed presence* of the Comboni Missionaries in South Sudan

The Catholic Ordinaries in 1964: after the expulsion

With the expulsion of all the *Expatriate Missionaries* from Southern Sudan, in March 1964, all the Ecclesiastical Circumscriptions found themselves deprived of their Ordinaries, except for the Apostolic Vicariate of Rumbek where Mgr. Ireneo Wien Dud was its Bishop. All the others were headed by an Apostolic Administrator until the erection of the **Sudanese Catholic Hierarchy** on 12 December, 1974. Another exception, though, was the Apostolic Prefecture of Mupoi, with the Apostolic Prefect Mgr. Domenico Ferrara, who was consecrated Bishop after the expulsion, but could never exercise his authority within the territory of the Sudan, except through Mgr. Martin Penisi.

1. **Bahr el Ghazal:** Apostolic Vicariate of Wau
- Apostolic Vicar Bishop **IRENEO DUD**
2. **Bahr el Jebel:** Apostolic Vicariate of Juba
- Ap. Admin. Mgr. **SILVESTRO LAHARANYA**
3. **Rumbek:** Apostolic Vicariate of Rumbek
- Ap. Admin. Mgr. **LINO TIBOI**
4. **Malakal:** Apostolic Prefecture of Malakal

- Ap. Admin. Mgr. **PIO YUKWAN DENG**
- 5. **Mupoi:** Apostolic Prefecture of Mupoi
 - Ap. Prefect Bishop **DOMENICO FERRARA**
 - In Mupoi itself Mgr. **MARTIN PENISI**

THE CHURCH IN SOUTHERN SUDAN.

The *second era* for the Church in the South of Sudan, according to Fr. V. Dellagiacoma, began with the opening of mission stations in Lul (March 1901), in Kayango (7 March, 1904) and in Mbili (March 17, 1904). Its growth was counted by the dozen in the first years and by hundreds and thousands in the climax year of 1964. The following years saw the Local Clergy and Laity assuming total responsibility for the administration and expansion of the Church, though there are no accurate statistics because communications were impossible between 1964 and 1972.¹⁵²

On 12 December, 1974, old Vicariates and Prefectures became Dioceses and Khartoum and Juba became metropolitan sees with Archbishop Baroni for the North and Archbishop Dud in Juba for the South. At the same time three new Bishops were appointed: Bishop. Gabriel Zubeir to Wau, Bishop Pius Yukwan to Malakal and Bishop Joseph Gasi to Tombura/Yambio. On April 6, 1975, Archbishop Dud was installed in Juba and the three new Bishops were consecrated there by Cardinal Angelo Rossi.

Rumbek, which had been under a local Sudanese Apostolic Administrator since the transfer of Bishop Dud to Wau, was temporarily administered from Wau. In 1976 Bishop Gabriel Dwatuka was appointed Bishop of Rumbek and consecrated on 17 June. Being a Zande, he felt uneasy in Rumbek and settled in Yei, but his experience there was no better. In 1982, he was invited to resign and Archbishop Baroni, who had recently left Khartoum on reaching the age of 75, administered the Diocese from 17 July, 1982, until a Comboni Missionary, Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino, was elected Apostolic Administrator of Rumbek on 9 July, 1983.¹⁵³

As for the *expatriate* Comboni Missionaries in South Sudan, all of them had been expelled by 1964 and only Sudanese Radical Members of the Comboni Missionaries remained in the South. The situation was not easy, even for them and the Superiors in Rome had to take action regarding their safety as they faced a very unstable future.

¹⁵² V. Dellagiacoma, *History of the Catholic Church in Southern Sudan 1900 – 1995*, Khartoum, 1996, pp. 77, 7, 13, 95-96.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.* p. 87

1964-1981 International Political Scene

Taking a brief glance at the world situation from the sixties until the beginning of the eighties, we find quite a few instances affecting the western world in relation to the third world and Africa. The *cold war*¹⁵⁴ between the Western Countries and those of the East, was causing a lot of unrest everywhere the two sides were extending their influence. Africa was directly affected as well. The struggle between the communist ideology headed by Russia and China and their satellite countries on one side, and the capitalist ideology led by the USA and its western European allies on the other, made of several African countries a place of struggle and a fight for the communist or capitalistic hegemony. Many armed movements for independence in Africa were linked to the Communist ideology and supported by Russia or other Communist countries in their struggle for liberation against the dominant European colonizers belonging to the *opposite block* of capitalism.

The period from the sixties until the beginning of the eighties witnessed the independence of many countries in the world from the British Empire and other European colonizers such as France, Belgium and Portugal. In Africa, the Dutch and Italian colonies had already reached their independence before the end of World War II, while the great majority reached it precisely in the year 1960. By the year 1977 the process of independence in Africa was practically completed, except for the existing struggle against *Apartheid* in South Africa. The South Sudanese situation had many similarities with that of South Africa, as the Arabs were not giving equal rights and opportunities to the black population of the South. This was the real reason for the struggle.

During the period July-August, 1955, a few months before independence, the political temperature in Southern Sudan was raised by several events: two Southern ministers left the Council of Ministers; participants in the Liberal Party's Conference of July, meeting to discuss the formation of the Southern Block were arrested; the Northerners refused to discuss federalism with the Southerners; on 8 July, 1955, striking workers of the Zande Scheme were shot.

On 18 August, 1955, the Equatoria Corps of Sudan Defence Force (which became the Sudanese Army with independence) in Torit was

¹⁵⁴ The Cold War was a state of political and military tension after World War II between powers in the Western Block (the United States, its NATO allies and others). https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold_War

scheduled to be transferred to Khartoum (widespread rumour had it that the Southern troops would be massacred upon arrival in Khartoum). The Southern corps was instructed to disobey the order of transfer to the North. The rejection resulted in mutiny. Several hundred Northerners were killed and, with the arrival of Northern troops, many mutineers were also killed. Some of them fled to remote areas and started organizing resistance which affected mainly Equatoria.

On 1 January, 1956, the Sudan gained independence from the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium as one country, sidestepping completely the deep differences existing between its two parts, the Arab and Islamic North, and the South, made up of Black African tribes which were mainly Christian and Animists. The Southerners felt betrayed by the British who were the main rulers in the Condominium (1899-1956) and felt tricked by the Northern rulers in the first years of Independence. In the North the language was Arabic, while in the South it was English. North and South also had two sets of public holidays, Moslem in the North and Christian in the South. Both in the colonial and postcolonial period, Sudan had never been brought to feel it was one nation.

*“To guide such a country into unity of purpose may have needed much more insight and good imagination from the founding Fathers. But unfortunately, those who took over power immediately from the colonial administration failed miserably to live up to the country’s expectations”*¹⁵⁵

The follow-up of the Torit Mutiny and of the Northern policy towards the South triggered off a civil war called the “ANYA NYA” (*cobra’s venom*) war, which went on from 1956 to 1972. On 17 November, 1958, the first *coup d’état* brought to power General Ibrahim Abboud’s regime that carried out a firm policy of Islamization and Arabization in the South, mainly through the education system. Instead of trying to solve the problem and creating consensus, Khartoum opted for the military solution, with repressive activities, thus making the situation even worse. In 1962, the Abboud military regime intensified its repression by producing the ***Missionary Societies Act of 1962***, aimed at regulating the activity of the Christian Missionaries in Sudan with many implications both for expatriate missionaries and indigenous Pastors.

The October Revolution of 1964 overthrew by popular uprising the first military regime of Ibrahim Abboud. The new leaders, however, continued

¹⁵⁵ Arop Madut-Arop, SUDAN’S Painful Road to Peace, 2006, Book Surge, LLC, Introduction.

the same policy, but they, too, were overthrown on 25 May, 1969, by the military headed by Colonel Jaafar Mohamed Nimeiri. In 1969, an effective organized political and military movement emerged, the South Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM) and its military wing, the ANYA NYA guerrilla force led by a young officer, Joseph Lagu. The new military Junta, under the command of Colonel Jaafar Mohamed Nimeiri started a period of time where both North and South tried to get on together peacefully.

Indeed, the Addis Ababa Agreement brought a complete new situation in the whole of Sudan and especially in the relationship between North and South. President Nimeiri immediately declared a plan to grant regional autonomy to the South, though its implementation had to be postponed until the Communists were excluded from the Government after the abortive *coup d'état* in July, 1971. A constitutional referendum gave more power and legitimacy to President Nimeiri. The Addis Ababa Agreement was signed in February 1972 and its implementation started the following month, giving substantial regional autonomy to the South, which opened a period of *golden opportunity* for the Church.¹⁵⁶ That was from 1972, the date of the Addis Ababa peace agreement, until 1982. After this date, a new revolt broke out with the start of the SPLA/M army and movement.¹⁵⁷

The Celebration of the Second Vatican Council in Rome (11 October, 1962 - 08 December, 1965)

In the Catholic Church, the great event of the **Second Vatican Council** took place in Rome. This event was a true *revolution* within the Catholic Church itself and brought about very deep reflection on the Mission in the modern world. This reflection deeply affected the way of understanding *Mission* within the Church. In this context, the most affected institutions were the Missionary Institutes. They were called to *re-think Mission* according to the new Vatican II spirit and guidelines. Indeed, it was for the Missionary Institutes and their members a time of deep crisis, a painful journey, but one that led to a great renewal in the way of *understanding* and *doing* Mission in the world. The *Post Vatican II Documents*, little by little, implemented Vatican II renewal by tackling the most important and delicate areas and themes dealing with the *Mission of the Church*.

¹⁵⁶ V. Dellagiacoma, History, op. cit., pp. 82, 85-86

¹⁵⁷ - Arop Madut-Arop, op. cit., pp.1-13 and following ones.

- Anders Breidlid, Adelino Androga Said, Astrid Kristine Breidlid, Anne Farren, Yosa Wawa, "A concise History of South Sudan", new revised edition, Fountain Publishers, Kampala, Uganda, 2014, pp. 191-193, 211-216, 234-241

Starting specifically with the *Missionary Activity of the Church*, the Decree **AD GENTES** was the basis of a new understanding of Mission. Then the decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, **CHRISTUS DOMINUS**, proclaimed by Pope Paul VI on 28 October, 1965, constituted one more great change from the old legacy, in the way of understanding Mission, in relationship to the **Local Churches and the Conferences of Bishops**. Even the visit of Pope Paul VI to Uganda was a great contribution to a new missionary awareness in the Church of Africa. The **RCIA - the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults** of 1972; **Evangelii Nuntiandi** on 8 December, 1975; **Mutuae-Relationes**, from the Sacred Congregation for Bishops and the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, concerning the relationship between Bishops and Religious, on 14 May, 1978; **Catechesi Tradendae** on 16 October, 1979, all were new steps forward on this path of renewal.

An old *Mission legacy*, that of the **Jus Commissionis**,¹⁵⁸ had ended and the **Local Churches** and the **Conferences of Bishops** were started. A *new era of Mission* had dawned. The period of time between 1964 and 1981 was the span of this *Missionary revolution* affecting the **Missionary Institutes**, the **People called to Missionary Life**, but also the **New Local Churches** in this process of all-embracing renewal. Missionaries could not excuse themselves by *saying I know it from the past*, but neither could the **Local Churches** simply accept the new legacy without seriously deepening its meaning and its implications for both sides: **Local Churches** and **Missionaries**. Clearly now, the Religious/Missionary Institutions are no longer the main protagonist of Mission, but they become entities at the service of the Local Church from within it.

No wonder then if Missionaries who, in their zeal, thought they were **Protagonists** would be reminded, sometimes politely and sometimes pungently, that the times had changed and that **Leadership had changed its side too**. After a country's political independence this, within the Church, was equal to **Church independence** from the former legacy. Indeed, it was positive, though the emotional effects required a long period of healing to cure the old historical wounds on the part of Local Bishops and Diocesan Clergy and the new wounds which certain utterances on their side were inflicting on the expatriate missionaries, regardless of whether they had either an old or new mentality. As a matter of fact, the new legacy required a deep conversion of heart from the side of the Missionaries, so as to allow

¹⁵⁸ "Jus Commissionis", that is the commission of certain territories to a missionary institute for their evangelization.

the Local Churches to develop all their potential which was pertinent to the relationship and communion meant to exist between the Local Churches and the Universal Church.

The Mission of the Church: *Ad Gentes Divinitus*

The Decree ***AD GENTES*** on the Missionary activity of the Church is described as the ***magna charta*** of mission and certainly it is a very remarkable document.¹⁵⁹ This is because, according to the text, the ultimate foundation for the Church's missionary activity is based on ***its participation in the mission of the Son and of the Holy Spirit***. This participation, through Baptism, in the very life of the Trinity makes the Church ***Missionary by its own nature*** and the Holy Spirit makes people share in the same mission of Christ.

“The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature, since it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father.” (A.G. 2)

“The Holy Spirit makes the entire Church ‘one in communion and in ministering; He equips her with various gifts of a hierarchical and charismatic nature,’ giving life, soul - like, to ecclesiastical institutions and instilling into the hearts of the faithful the same mission spirit which impelled Christ Himself.” (A.G. 4)

Mission is not just one thing the Church does. It is rather constitutive of its very being. Mission is not just something that specialists – missionaries –do. Mission is something that all Christians are called to. It is the responsibility of every Local Bishop (something the Decree emphasized constantly) and of every single baptized person. Mission has now been defined not as a territorial concept, but as a call which is part of the same very identity and nature of the Church.

Visit of Pope Paul VI to Uganda

The visit of Pope Paul VI to Uganda was surely a great contribution to a new African understanding of *Mission*.

The Pope clearly stated that:

“We (I) wish our (my) presence among you to have the significance of a recognition of your maturity.” “The help of collaborators coming here from other Churches is still necessary to you today; cherish that help, honour it, and unite it wisely with your own pastoral labours.”

¹⁵⁹ SVD Superior General, Fr. Johannes Schütte, Stephen Bevans SVD, <http://www.maryknollvocations.com/mission.pdf> “Ad Gentes”

*“Missionaries to yourselves: in other words, you Africans must now continue, upon this Continent, the building up of the Church.”*¹⁶⁰

The words of Pope Paul the VI seemed the fulfilment of that dream Mgr. Daniel Comboni expressed in his Plan of *Saving Africa with Africa*. They were powerful words creating a new missionary awareness in the Church of Africa. He did not dismiss the still needed work of the missionaries, but he clearly stated that a new era had started. There was to be no looking back with *nostalgia*, but everybody should look *forward*, to find new horizons, new meaning and new attitudes for both Missionaries and African Church.

RCIA the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults: 1972

The Bishops assembled at the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council recognized the importance of restoring the Catechumenate in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy **SACROSANCTUM CONCILIUM** in the numbers 64, 65, 66, with the following words:

“The Catechumenate for adults, comprising several distinct steps, is to be restored and to be taken into use at the discretion of the local ordinary... (64).

- In mission lands it is found that some of the peoples already make use of initiation rites. (65).

*- Both the rites for the baptism of adults are to be revised: not only the simpler rite, but also the more solemn one, which must take into account the restored Catechumenate... (66).”*¹⁶¹

Treasuring the initiation rites and experiences already in use in *mission lands*, the Bishops decreed to fully restore the Catechumenate in steps for the whole Church. In 1972, the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship fulfilled the mandate of that decree with the promulgation of the **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults**. No longer would new members come into the Church merely through individual instruction or private convert classes. Rather, they would undertake the journey of conversion and faith in the midst of the community of the faithful.

¹⁶⁰ HOMILY OF PAUL VI, Kampala (Uganda), 31 July, 1969. Eucharistic celebration at the conclusion of the symposium organized by the Bishops of Africa.

https://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/homilies/1969/documents/hf_p-vi_hom_19690731.pdf

¹⁶¹ Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy “**Sacrosanctum Concilium**”, nn. 64, 65, 66.

Evangelii Nuntiandi: 8 December, 1975

Evangelii Nuntiandi was written at a time when the very idea of mission was undergoing a deep crisis. Vatican II and AG had opened up fresh perspectives and a new understanding of Mission, but some reflections on the issue reached conclusions which were certainly not in line with it. Moreover, the growing secularized mentality in the missionary-sending countries was giving more and more attention to the social reality of the so-called third-world¹⁶² countries than the issue of *Mission* and proclamation of the Gospel. The term Mission was not well accepted even by the *Mission Countries*, since probably it reminded them of the struggle in the time of colonization linked with the missionary expansion and they may have felt uneasy with the term.

*“It was in this context that Paul VI convoked the 1974 Synod of Bishops with the theme ‘Evangelization in the Modern World.’ It was from the deliberations of the Synod and Paul VI’s careful listening to the Bishops of the Two Thirds World¹⁶³ that Paul VI developed his ideas for his apostolic exhortation. Interestingly, perhaps as a reflection of the rather strong aversion for the word **mission** that had emerged in the churches and in theology and (ironically!) missiology, the pope uses the word **evangelization**. However, the meaning of the terms is the same, and I believe that they can be used interchangeably.”¹⁶⁴*

The Church’s Mission Continues the Mission of Jesus. This is the first significant teaching of EN in the very first chapter and, like *Ad Gentes*, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* emphasizes the essential missionary nature of the Church. However, it does not start with the Trinity, but with Jesus’ mission of preaching and witnessing to the Kingdom of God.

¹⁶² The term Third World was originally coined during the Cold War to distinguish those nations that were neither aligned with the West (NATO) nor with the East, the Communist bloc. Today the term is often used to describe the developing countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania.

¹⁶³ “Two-Thirds World”, “Three-Fourths World”, “majority world.” All of these terms were coined in order to get away from the old-time practice of referring to the non-Western parts of the world as the “Third World” or as the “developing nations”; the terms *Two-Thirds World* and *Three-Fourths World* both attempt to refer to approximately how much of the world’s population lives in the non-Western parts of the world. When the term *Two-Thirds World* was coined in the 1960s, about two-thirds of the world’s population resided outside North America and Europe. <http://www.dictionarofchristianese.com/two-thirds-world-majority-world-three-fourths-world/>

¹⁶⁴ Stephen Bevans SVD, op. cit., *Evangelii Nuntiandi*

*“As an evangelizer, Christ first of all proclaims a kingdom, the kingdom of God; and this is so important that, by comparison, everything else becomes ‘the rest,’ which is ‘given in addition’. Only the kingdom therefore is absolute and it makes everything else relative” (EN 8). “Those who sincerely accept the Good News... gather together in Jesus’ name...and make up a community which is in its turn evangelizing.” (EN 13) “...**Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize...**” (EN 14)¹⁶⁵*

Evangelization must first start from the Church herself, and Christ, Church and evangelization are closely linked together.

“The Church is an evangelizer, but she begins by being evangelized herself... this means that she has a constant need of being evangelized, ... is evangelized by constant conversion and renewal, in order to evangelize the world with credibility... EN 15); There is thus a profound link between Christ, the Church and evangelization.” EN 16)

In a time when the saying was often **Yes to Jesus but no to the Church** Pope Paul the VI insists on the fact that evangelization is an Ecclesial commitment through and through.

Evangelization is **“not accomplished without her, and still less against her”** (EN 16) *“It is the whole Church that receives the mission to evangelize, and the work of each individual member is important for the whole.”* (EN 15)

Finally, EN 17 tells us that evangelization is a complex reality and that one must take into consideration all its aspects, without tackling it in a fragmentary way.

Mutuae Relationes, Relations between Bishops and Religious¹⁶⁶

14 May, 1978

The Sacred Congregation for Bishops and the Sacred Congregation for Religious and for Secular Institutes held a mixed Plenary Assembly (October 16-18, 1975) on the tenth anniversary of the promulgation of the Decrees *Christus Dominus* and *Perfectae Caritatis* (October 28, 1965). Their text was submitted for examination by the Holy Father, who, on April

¹⁶⁵ (EN 14) *“**She (the Church) exists in order to evangelize**, that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God, and to perpetuate Christ’s sacrifice in the Mass, which is the memorial of His death and glorious resurrection.”*

¹⁶⁶ www.claretianformation.com/en/church-documents/30-1978-mutual-relations-between-Bishops-and-religious.

23, 1978, approved it and ordered its publication. The document bears the signature of **Card. SEBASTIAN BAGGIO**, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Bishops and **Card. EDUARDO PIRONIO**, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Religious and for Secular Institutes, and was issued on the 14 May, 1978.

Needless to say, this document was important, especially for the new situations in the *Mission Countries*, and for us here in Africa and Sudan. The ***Jus Commissionis*** was already a past memory and the Bishops and the Conferences of Bishops were fully aware of their new responsibilities and power in the administration of their Local Churches.¹⁶⁷ The Missionary Institutes and the missionary personnel were also fully aware that the situation in which they were called to give their missionary service was a completely new situation.

However, we may ask where the new *boundaries* for fruitful collaboration located? In the matter of authority and agreements, to what extent could Bishops and Religious Superiors exercise their authority without interfering with each other? How was the service of the missionaries to be understood and carried out within the Local Church and how was the Bishop (Local Church) exercising his authority upon religious personnel and contributing to the spiritual and financial support of the same personnel at his service? For us Combonis, these issues were already there even when the *Ecclesiastical Authorities* were all Combonis, and indeed, since the time the Verona Institute of Comboni was transformed into a Religious Society, as we have already seen in part one. Nonetheless, the new changes brought about by Vatican II made this issue necessary for good collaboration between *Ecclesiastical and Religious Authorities*.

Mutuae Relationes was meant to help build up sound relations within the Local Church¹⁶⁸ *called to make up together a visible Sacrament* (MR 3)¹⁶⁹ while witnessing the Gospel all in their own manner (MR 4) and respecting the distinctive character of every Institute. (MR 11).¹⁷⁰ It was a

¹⁶⁷ - Ad Gentes, Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church, no. 22

- **Christus Dominus**, Decree concerning the pastoral office of Bishops (CD 3, 11, 15, 35, 36, 37, 38)

¹⁶⁸ - Take note of the use of "Particular Church" for "Local Church" (MR 18, etc.)

- Jean Beyer, Religious in the New Code and their Place in the Local Church, in: *Studia canonica* 17 (1983), 171-183.

- Jean Beyer, Religious and the Local Church,
<http://www.theway.org.uk/Back/s050Beyer.pdf>

¹⁶⁹ Lumen Gentium, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, no. 13

¹⁷⁰ Perfectae Caritatis, Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life, no. 20

great help in order to clarify issues of relations which, otherwise, would give way to unease and even quarrelling instead of carrying out the ecclesial mission with love (MR15) through different forms of apostolic commitments. (MR 17). It was also a help towards the building up of *self-reliance* and awareness of either side's commitment towards the future through bilateral agreements in carrying out the Mission, fostering respect and good collaboration.

“Every particular Church becomes enriched by sound human elements, characteristic of the genius and nature of each nation. Such elements, nevertheless, are not to be regarded as indications of division, of particularism or of nationalism, but as expressions of variety within the same unity and of the fullness of that incarnation which enriches the entire Mystical Body (cf. UR 14-17). The Church universal, in fact, is not the sum total of particular Churches, nor is it a federation of them (cf. EN 62), but it is the total and enlarged presence of the unique universal sacrament of salvation (cf. EN 54). This multiform unity, however, carries with it various concrete exigencies for Bishops and religious in the fulfilment of their duties.” (MR 18).

“Efforts should be made to renew the bonds of fraternity and cooperation between the diocesan clergy and communities of religious (cf. CD 35, 5). Great importance should therefore be placed on all those means, even though simple and informal, which serve to increase mutual trust, apostolic solidarity and fraternal harmony (cf. Ecclesiam Suam I, 28).” (MR 37).

Catechesi Tradendae: 16 October, 1979

The apostolic exhortation **Catechesi Tradendae**,¹⁷¹ dated 16 October, 1979, of Pope John Paul II, comes after the long series of documents dealing with the *Mission of the Church* since *Ad Gentes*. After Evangelii Nuntiandi, Pope Paul VI wanted the Synod to carry on with the issue of Catechesis for the present time, with particular reference to children and youth. After having dealt with evangelization, now he wants to deal with Catechesis as a moment of reflection on the activity of formation to the faith of the contemporary Christians.

“As the 20th century draws to a close, the Church is bidden by God and by events - each of them a call from Him - to renew her trust in catechetical activity as a prime aspect of her mission. She is bidden to

¹⁷¹ Catechesi Tradendae (October 16, 1979). http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_16101979_catechesi-tradendae.html

offer catechesis her best resources in people and energy, without sparing effort, toil or material means, in order to organize it better and to train qualified personnel. This is no mere human calculation; it is an attitude of faith. And an attitude of faith always has reference to the faithfulness of God, who never fails to respond."¹⁷²

Chapter 18 affirms clearly that catechesis is one phase of evangelization and that between Catechesis and Evangelization there is neither division nor opposition but reciprocal complementarity. Catechesis is one of these important moments in the process of evangelization.¹⁷³

*"All in all, it can be taken here that catechesis is an education of children, young people and adults in the faith, which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life. Accordingly, while not being formally identified with them, catechesis is built on a certain number of elements of the Church's pastoral mission that have a catechetical aspect, that prepare for catechesis, or that spring from it. These elements are: the initial proclamation of the Gospel or missionary preaching through the kerygma to arouse faith, apologetics or examination of the reasons for belief, experience of Christian living, celebration of the sacraments, integration into the ecclesial community, and apostolic and missionary witness."*¹⁷⁴

Though it is clear that the document is valid for the entire Church, it certainly was of primary importance for a new catechetical approach and preparation of those people felt called by the Holy Spirit to start their journey following Jesus and in explaining to them what all this was about. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, R.C.I.A. and *Catechesi Tradendae* go hand in hand and so, for missionaries, this Apostolic Exhortation was another step forward in order to help in the missionary effort.

The Moratorium on Mission

Missionaries Go Home! In 1971, this bold exclamation found its first expression in the Presbyterian Pastor JOHN GATU, General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa who proposed a Moratorium on

¹⁷² Ibid. n. 15

¹⁷³ Claudio Bortolossi: *Catechesi e Missione*, I quaderni della Missione a cura di "Missione Oggi" Parma. EMI, Bologna, 1981, pp. 31-38.

¹⁷⁴ *Catechesi Tradendae*, op. cit., no. 18.

Mission.¹⁷⁵ Thus, the called-for *Moratorium on Mission* came from a Protestant environment and from Africa in a time of *post-colonial mission* when the great majority of the countries in Africa had already reached their independence. On the African side, it was certainly a *cry for freedom* also at the religious level, though not always very consistent, if not in contradiction with its content. The call for a moratorium took place at a mission festival in 1971 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin (US) with these words:

*“The time has come for the withdrawal of the expatriate missionaries from many parts of the Third World, that the Churches of the Third World must be allowed to find their own identity and that the continuation of the present missionary movement is a hindrance to this selfhood of the Church.”*¹⁷⁶

The immediate reaction was strong and provoked a debate about Mission. Gatu’s motivation for such an abrupt and controversial action needed to be properly investigated. The issue of the moratorium was, however, a milestone in mission history, marking the symbolic end of the colonial mission paradigm and the start of the postcolonial mission era. The keywords of John Gatu were: *moratorium, imperialism, dependency, interdependence, postcolonial missions and spiritual renewal.*

*“John Gatu, repeated this call for a moratorium on expatriate missionaries and foreign funds (Wagner, 1975: 166) also at Lusaka, Zambia at the All-Africa Conference of Churches in 1974 (Hastings, 1976: 22). Reaction to the moratorium was intense in the 1970s.”*¹⁷⁷

The issue implied a call for a moratorium on both expatriate missionaries and foreign funds. However, those big meetings of the All Africa Council of Churches (in the Protestant environment) were run with funds from abroad, from the very people who should have gone home. Some critics to the Moratorium pointed out that it may not have been the refusal of funds as such, but that such funds should have been administered directly by *Locals* without foreign interference: in a word: *Give us the funds and you stay home, let us decide how to use them freely.*¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ Moratorium on Mission, John Gatu, <http://mis.sagepub.com/content/early/2013/09/03/0091829613502143.full.pdf>

¹⁷⁶ Gatu, in Sundkler & Steed 2000:1027. http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/2972/dissertation_makofane_%20k.pdf?sequence=1

¹⁷⁷ Moratorium on Mission, John Gatu, op. cit.

¹⁷⁸ Robert Reese, Roland Allen and the Moratorium on Missionaries, p. 5. http://www.edsmither.com/uploads/5/6/4/6/564614/reese_ems_2012.pdf

Though it started in a Protestant environment, this issue was picked up also in Catholic environments with the same desire of **freedom** and recognition of being now a **grown up Church** and not accepting any longer dependence upon expatriate missionaries. On the side of the latter there was also growing resentment: "If the Africans are tired of us, let the '**Moratorium**' be there. Let us **stop, suspend** the foreign help and missionary endeavour for the so-called **mission ad gentes**. Leave the local leadership to **fend for itself**; if they are mature, let them become fully **self-reliant**, and pay for it. Let them **stand on their own two feet** regarding Ministry, Finances and Evangelization; is not this what they want...?"

It was clear that, on both sides, it was not only a matter of finding a space or allowing a period of time to grow in freedom, but that there were attitudes to be changed and wounds which needed to be healed and a new relationship and dialogue which needed to be established and fostered on new ground so that the whole situation would develop with a new maturity. The **Local Side** felt hurt by long years of **political** but also **religious** dependence, and the **Foreign Side** felt also hurt by this attitude of **rejection**, perceived as mere arrogance and lack of acknowledgement of all the efforts and work done. **On both sides a creeping desire for retaliation could hardly be disguised.**

Regarding the whole situation and historical circumstances, what was true for both sides was that **an era had just ended** and **a new one was starting** and that Moratorium and Suspension were a way of stating clearly that **a break with the past was needed**. It was the time of **Empowerment of the Local Clergy** and this implied finding **a new way of relating, a new relationship**, a new communion and dialogue out of the tough experiences of the past, **a deep renewal** and a new understanding of the inner life of the Church, fully present in the **Local Church**.

"Peter Wagner emphasized that the AACC's stand against foreign input was "the proverbial bulldog with rubber teeth," because the AACC received 80 percent of its budget from overseas (1975:167). Wagner noted that AACC General Secretary Burgess Carr actually modified the proposal for a break in funding, saying rather that the moratorium was "a demand to transfer the massive expenditure on expatriate personnel in the church in Africa to programme activities manned by Africans themselves" (1975:167). In other words, Carr saw the moratorium as a way to divert foreign funds from obsolete missionaries to African churches. Wagner also accused mainline denominations of using the moratorium as "a smoke screen to hide some much more fundamental problems in their missionary programmes" (1975:170). By this he meant that the mission boards of these denominations were already shifting their policies "to decrease involvement in evangelization and church planting and increase involvement in worldwide social and political action" (1975:170)."

Moratorium: Protestant and Catholic understanding.

The difference of Ecclesiology between Protestants and Catholics had surely a great impact also in relationship to the understanding and implementation of the Moratorium. For the Protestant Churches the bond existing among each other was more loose and their independence stronger. An issue like this would certainly have a strong bearing, but their greater independence in making decisions would not have the same impact on their relationship as would happen in the Catholic Church. Even their communion expressed in the Council of Churches would not be of such a kind as not to accommodate the new difficult situation.

In the Catholic Church, however, the relationship existing among Churches is of a different type: The **Local Church** is, in fact, a smaller unit of the whole **Catholic Church**, but its internal life reproduces in full all the components of the former one and the bond of communion is so tight that, on key issues, a certain way of dealing and deciding, would in reality break their communion. The moratorium, in this case, would touch the very centre of the Church's nature, that is, its *evangelizing mission*. To tell the missionaries *go home* would have broken the same command of Jesus: *go and make disciples of all nations* (Mt. 28:19) and all that the Second Vatican Council said about the Mission of the Church and its responsibility in this issue.

In brief, it was not only a matter of telling the missionaries to *go home*, because of how much they may have been linked with the colonizing factor or of being guilty of having used the same style, but it was a matter of *rejecting the missionary dimension of the Local Church itself*. Without this dimension the Local Church would not be *Catholic* any more, but just a *breakaway Church*. Of course, this did not imply a refusal to take action regarding possible misbehaviours and wrongdoings by the missionaries. It was the way of addressing the whole issue which was much different, because the understanding of the Church's Nature was different. So, rather than a *Moratorium*, what was needed was new style of *Cooperation*.

For this reason, the Moratorium, as such, within the Catholic Church, was not as acute as in the protestant Churches. What was instead very acute was the new awareness arising within the new Local Churches, the reflection and proposals on necessary changes and their strong identity which needed to be addressed in a way that would bring the newly acquired insight to its fulfilment. Important figures within the African Catholic Church (and in other continents) brought forward a very deep reflection and prompted the African reality to a radical positive transformation.

Africa had to find “*its own way*” in the Catholic Renewal of the Vatican II and its own way of “*re-appropriating the Gospel*”¹⁷⁹

Mgr. Zoa,¹⁸⁰ Bishop of Yaoundé (Cameroon), though he was of the opinion that cooperation between young and old churches should continue, nonetheless clearly believed it should take on *new forms* and *new structures* of Christian life. A change was therefore necessary. Mgr. Kalilombe, Bishop of Lilongwe (Malawi), was of the idea that the Churches in the mission land had to get rid of the links of dependence from overseas and adopt ways and means in order to be *self-reliant Christian communities*,¹⁸¹ a point in line with the Moratorium and which shared also in the Catholic approach. The Local Church needed to become *self-reliant*,¹⁸² that is, a Local Church standing on her own feet, but not cut off from the wider Catholic Communion.

In the Catholic Church the renewal going on after the Second Vatican Council was just the precise help needed on both sides. The new *tools*, constituted by the Church documents mentioned above, needed to be implemented in order to help this *Copernican Change* to take place in a positive way. This change was very hard for missionaries, some of whom never entered deeply into this change, but the new legislation also had its difficulties for the locals (*Bishops and Priests*) who may have assumed for themselves the same former model, as if it was just a matter of a swap of responsibilities. The new change was a real challenge for everyone within the Local Church. Everyone had to rediscover their own place and ministry in a true attitude of service.

¹⁷⁹ Valentino Savoldi, Renato Kizito Sesana, *AFRICA il Vangelo ci Appartiene*, EMI, Bologna, 1986, p. 156

¹⁸⁰ <http://users.telenet.be/arseen.de.kesel/kameroen.htm>
Younde (Fides) – *The first Congress on the figure and work of Archbishop Jean Zoa of Yaounde who died on 20 March, 1998...Various papers and testimonies described the late Archbishop Zoa as a tireless promoter of ecclesial initiatives, highlighting also the theological and pastoral aspects of his work. The Congress revealed all the interior riches of Archbishop Zoa: a man of deep faith, great humanity and dignity, a shepherd who loved his people and traced an African path for Christianity, and predicted for this tormented continent a future of hope. (18 December, 1998).*

¹⁸¹ Savoldi/Sesana, *AFRICA il Vangelo ci Appartiene*, op. cit., pp. 153, 155. See also from p. 153 to 171.

¹⁸² <http://www.smallchristunities.org/africa/africa-continent/231-historical-development-of-the-small-christian-communitiesbasic-ecclesial-commuiancommnities-in-africa.html>
Joseph G. Healey, MM, *Historical Development of the Small Christian Communities/Basic Ecclesial Communities in Africa*, “Two of the founders of SCCs in Eastern Africa were Bishop Patrick Kalilombe, MAfr, of Lilongwe Diocese, Malawi and Bishop Christopher Mwoleka of Rulenge Diocese, Tanzania.”

The Comboni Missionaries

If there were missionaries who went along hand in hand with the colonizers, once the colonizers left, they usually left too. The Comboni Missionaries, however, were not linked to a colonizing government. On the contrary, sometimes they were very critical of it, especially in matters of education,¹⁸³ and that of the *Missionary Spheres*¹⁸⁴ in regard to evangelization. When the colonizers left, the Comboni Missionaries remained. However, Vatican II called all the Missionary Institutes to a deep renewal, and that was a requirement Comboni Missionaries needed as well.

Misleading interpretations of the Second Vatican Council on the Mission of the Church brought many missionaries into deep crisis and to wrong conclusions. The Italian Missionary Institutes were strongly affected too. Instead of coming to rediscover the true identity of the *Mission in and of the Church*, during the post Vatican II time, some just concluded that it was time to give it up all together. The declarations of Vatican II, which should have helped to re-discover the Mission of the Church under new perspectives, instead of challenging the Institutes and certain layers of the Church to find new paradigms, some concluded that the time of the missionary institutes was over: *if the Local Churches are missionary of themselves, they would say, then why send expatriate missionaries?*

We must note that, even the terminology in English speaking countries was changed. When reporting, the term *missionaries* was frequently exchanged with *expatriate personnel*.¹⁸⁵ The stress was not on the identity of the person as a *missionary*, but on the fact that he/she was coming from abroad (not a real part of the local reality). This revealed once again the uncomfortable relationship to a reality which was not clear anymore and in need of re-definition, an indication of a much deeper ***crisis of identity***, an identity in need to be painfully rediscovered, especially by the older missionaries.

¹⁸³ Ibid. Mgr. Zambonardi-Gov. MW Parr- Gov. Nalder-DC Lilley-DC Kook-CMS Kitching, pp. 462-463, 467, 469. "Mgr. Zambonardi, remembering that interview, notes: "Although the Government appreciates the education that we are giving in our schools, it always misses that character and stamp English Protestant impart in their schools, though they are below in the standard of teaching. And this character, the Government wants it absolutely (is the refrain of Cox)."

¹⁸⁴ Vantini, *La Missione del Cuore* op. cit., Mgr. Zambonardi, pp. 439-440, 447-448;

¹⁸⁵ At the beginning of the eighties I was in Malawi and I have to say that this terminology "expatriate personnel" annoyed me very much because I was sure I was there for no other reason but to be "a Missionary", not an "Expatriate"

Thanks be to God, some outstanding confreres among the Comboni Missionaries brought about this reflection in a positive way. Sometimes among a general disheartening environment caused also by *very well-known* religious clergy who were acting as big drums in an orchestra whose members were playing the same discouraging music, as if it were a true follow up of Vatican II. Being myself a student of philosophy, at that time, I can say that I am proud of how we Comboni Missionaries, through those outstanding confreres, were able to envisage a new way of being missionaries in a pivotal time, in need of rediscovering the mission of the Church in all its dimension and pointing with confidence towards a brighter future.

Inculturation

In the seventies, the word ***inculturation***, although it expressed an old concept, was just emerging.¹⁸⁶ This word intended to express the implantation of the seed of the Gospel into a culture, so that the germ of Faith could develop in it and express itself according to the resources and the genius proper to the culture itself.¹⁸⁷

The Second Vatican Council in its documents used the term ***adaptation*** (AG. 22; SC. 37-40)¹⁸⁸ to indicate the attitude that the Evangelizers had to adopt in regard to socio-cultural and religious realities that they encountered in their work. This term, however, in the 1970s, was accepted with difficulty by the Young Churches that, instead, preferred to use terms such as ***incarnation, indigenisation, Africanization***. So, if we approach the problem of inculturation as a process in its development, we can possibly describe it in stages: first stage ***adaptation***, second stage ***incarnation*** and third stage ***indigenization or Africanization***.

In the phase of ***adaptation*** the Gospel is announced faithfully and, in full respect of the people. In the phase of ***incarnation*** the message is accepted and appropriated. In the third phase of ***indigenization*** /

¹⁸⁶ Francesco Chemello, *Il Catecumenato Missionario nel Rinnovamento Post-Conciliare in Africa Orientale*, Pontificia Università Urbaniana, Facoltà di Missiologia, Tesi di Licenza, Roma 1981, p. 206-211.

¹⁸⁷ - Seumois A., *Théologie Missionnaire IV, Eglise Missioinaire et Faceur Socio-Culturel*, Roma, Università Urbaniana (Biblioteca) 1978, pp. 14-15.

- Editoriale, *Il Problema dell'Inculturazione Oggi*, in *Civ. Catt.*, Vol. 4 (1976) p. 315

¹⁸⁸ *Nigrizia Magazine*: R. Pazzi, *adattamento e evangelizzazione*, 12/1970, p. 20; *Evangelizzare*, 10/1971, p. 30.

Africanization¹⁸⁹ the message received is assimilated and becomes an integral part of an ethnic group which now begins to express it according to the genius of its own culture.¹⁹⁰ Instead, in the papal documents the term **inculturation** is used in the apostolic exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae*

“(CT. 52). ... *Catechesis goes beyond every form of formalistic moralism... It seeks to arrive at man's innermost being.* (CT. 53) Now a second question. As I said recently to the members of the Biblical Commission: The term 'acculturation' or 'inculturation' may be a neologism, but it expresses very well one factor of the great mystery of the Incarnation. We can say of catechesis, as well as of evangelization in general, that it is called to bring the power of the Gospel into the very heart of culture and cultures. For this purpose, catechesis will seek to know these cultures and their essential components; it will learn their most significant expressions; it will respect their particular values and riches. In this manner it will be able to offer these cultures the knowledge of the hidden mystery and help them to bring forth from their own living tradition original expressions of Christian life, celebration and thought.”¹⁹¹

While saying this, the Pope asks to keep in mind that the message cannot be simply isolated from the culture in which it was first inserted (biblical) and from the cultures it has been expressed down the centuries, but in dialogue with them. Finally, a question: *who are the protagonists of inculturation?* Certainly not the *expatriate* missionaries, but the *local people and their leaders*. In the whole of Africa, and therefore also in Sudan, this renewal was bound to take place within the context of the *Local Church* which had all the ingredients to inculturate the Gospel message and to open itself up, with the gift of its *missionary spirit*, to Evangelization *Ad Gentes*.

The missionaries belonging to missionary institutes would contribute, with their missionary vocation, to serve the Local Church in this precise aspect by taking up their task, with a spirit of service and not of *managers*, with a renewed attitude ***within the Local Church*** but also ***fully part of the***

¹⁸⁹ - Mgr. Zoa J., Non più “Adattare” ma “Africanizzare”, in Butturini G. (a cura di), *Le nuove Vie del Vangelo*, Bologna, EMI, 1975. I Vescovi Africani parlano a tutta la Chiesa, pp. 246-247.

- Mgr. Maanicus A., Bishop of Bangassou (RCA), Il termine “Adattamento” dispiace a vescovi Africani, in *Le nuove vie del vangelo*, op. cit., pp.267-268.

¹⁹⁰ - Mgr. Sangu, J. D., *Evangelizzazione in Africa*, pp. 47-48.

¹⁹¹ *Catechesi Tradendae* op. cit., nn. 52-53.

Local Church. This was precisely the *new attitude* required from us Comboni Missionaries in this new post-colonial situation towards the civil authority and, in particular in the Local Church.

THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES IN SOUTHERN SUDAN 1964-1981

For the Church in Southern Sudan, the period 1964 to 1981 can be considered the continuation of the time starting from 1900 onwards, which Fr. V. Dellagiacomma calls *the second era*.¹⁹² For the Comboni Missionaries, instead, this time was another new stage, a transitional period of time of their presence in Southern Sudan. Furthermore, because of the different situations involved, it is also good to divide this period of time into two periods: from 1964 to 1972 and from 1972 to 1981.

The characteristic of the period of time between 1964 and 1972 was the special relevance of the work of the Sudanese Comboni Missionaries who were Radical Members, since the expatriate Combonis were all expelled. The one from 1972 to 1981 is characterized both by the growth in number of the Sudanese Radical Members and the gradual return of the expatriate Combonis to Southern Sudan. The period of time between 1964 and 1972 was the most difficult and unsettled one for the Church in Southern Sudan, but especially for the Comboni Missionaries. Immediately after the expulsion, the following Sudanese confreres were attached to the Region of Khartoum, with Fr. Ottorino Sina as the Regional Superior. All of them carried on with the following responsibilities:

Fr. Barnaba Deng in charge of the Parish of Aweil (Wau)

Fr. Peter Magalasi bursar of Kit Seminary (Juba)

Fr. Angelo Umedo in charge of the Parish of Wau

Fr. David Uras, Rector of Kit Seminary (Juba)

Bro. Benjamin Majok in charge of the carpentry shop with temporary vows on 6.1.1965.

(Fr. Macram Max Gassis belonged to the Region of Khartoum)

Though working in other vicariates, all of them were attached to the Apostolic Vicariate of EL OBEID,¹⁹³ with Mgr. Edoardo Mason as Apostolic Vicar.¹⁹⁴ As for Fr. Barnaba Deng, he was killed on 23 August, 1965.

¹⁹² V. Dellagiacomma, History. op. cit., p. 95

¹⁹³ Catalogo, op. cit., January 1965, p. 158

¹⁹⁴ Present address: Missioni Africane - Verona

The Sudanese Comboni Students in Formation (*Radical Members*)

The number of Sudanese Scholastics in the year 1964, after the expulsion, preparing for Priesthood and those in temporary vows for Brotherhood was really encouraging and promising. The only dark cloud lying ahead was that of their future assignment, since the situation in the South was in such disarray with no immediate hope that it would soon improve.

The Scholastics

- **Hilary Boma** was in Florence (Italy) 1962-1963 and took first vows on 9 September, 1963. He then he went for the Scholasticate to Venegono (Italy) where he obtained a Licentiate in Liturgy. He was ordained on 28 June, 1966. He was appointed to Uganda, 1966-1970: He was first at Kangole Parish as coadjutor, and then went to Lacor Seminary as Vice Rector and teacher. Later on, he went to Pakele and was in charge of the Sudanese Pre-Seminary students. He then went to Italy (1971-1974) for a course in liturgy at the Pontifical University of St. Anselm. From 1974 he was appointed Vicar General of El Obeid Diocese.
- **Paolino Lukudu Loro** was in Florence, Italy 1965-67, took first vows on 9 September, 1967, and then went to Verona for the Scholasticate, 67-70. He was ordained on 4 April, 1970, and appointed to Khartoum, 1971-1972.
- **Hector Ayon Oyamute** was for a few months in TORE (South Sudan) after the expulsion, in 1964, and then went to KIT (Juba). In April, 1965, he left for Lacor Seminary, Uganda, and then went to Florence, Italy, 1965-1967 and Venegono for the Scholasticate 1967-1970. Once ordained Priest on 17 May, 1970, he was appointed to Uganda from 1971 to 1972, and then went back to Southern Sudan.
- **Elia Lodu** was in Florence, Italy 1965-1967, took first vows on 9 September, 1967, and then went to Venegono for the Scholasticate but could not follow regularly because of medical treatment up to 1971 in Rome when he left.
- **Angelo Ibele** was in Florence, Italy 1966-1968, took first vows on 7 October, 1968, and was ordained on 27 June, 1970. He was appointed to Khartoum, in 1971.
- **Michail Suliman** Novitiate and Scholasticate in Sunningdale (UK), took first vows on 9 September, 1967, but left the community by 1971.

- **Abel Mödi Nyörkö** was in Florence 1968-1970 and took first vows on 9 September, 1970. He went to the scholasticate in Rome, 1970-1971, and was ordained on 3 March, 1971. He was then appointed to South Sudan from 1972.
- **George Longokwo** took the cassock in 1967 and the first vows on 9 September, 1969. He then continued the scholasticate in Rome. He was ordained on 18 March, 1971, and then appointed to Uganda.
- **Joseph Ukelo** was in Florence 1967-1969 and took the first vows on 9 September, 1969. Then he carried on with the scholasticate, first in Verona 1969-1970 and then in Rome 1970-1972. He was ordained on 23 April, 1972, and then appointed to South Sudan from 1972.
- **Patrick Mura Ondok** took the cassock in 1968, while in Florence 1968-1970, and first vows on October 10, 1970. Then he went to Rome for the scholasticate year 1970-1971 and then left.
- **Louis Lotimoi** was ordained on 9 June, 1972, took first vows on May 31, 1973 and was then appointed to Kapoeta. He died in a car accident on 29 July, 1974, in Juba.

The Brothers

- **Bro. Philip Arik Kwol** took first vows on 9 September, 1970 and went to Khartoum for the course of formation as a mechanic.
- **Bro. Munir Fahmi** took first vows on 29 June, 1970, and was appointed to the service of Assuan Parish.
- **Bro. Benjamin Majok** took first vows on 6 January, 1965. He was given charge of the carpentry in El Obeid Diocese 1969-1971.
- **Bro. Angelo Makur** (*Dinka-Rumbek*), left.

All the Sudanese Radical Members

	Name	Born.	Vows.	Perpetual V.	Ordination
1.	Fr. Peter Magalasi (<i>Belanda</i>)	1.12.1929	9. 9.1956	9. 9.1959	7.7.1957
2.	Fr. Angelo Umedo (<i>Jur</i>)	6. 7.1931	9. 9.1956	9. 9.1962	29.3.1964
3.	Fr. Barnaba Deng (<i>Dinka</i>)	30.11.1935	9. 9.1959	9. 9.1961	7.4.1962
4.	Fr. David Urasi (<i>Belanda</i>)	1. 1.1935	9. 9.1959	9. 9.1961	7.4.1962
5.	Fr. Hilary Boma (<i>Pari</i>)	26 .12.1941	9. 9.1963	9. 9.1965	28.6.1966
6.	Bro. Benjamin Majok (<i>Dinka</i>)	1.4.1941	6. 1.1965		

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|------------|-------------------|-----------|
| 7. Fr. Paolino Lukudu
(Bari) | 23. 8.1940 | 9. 9.1967 | 9. 9.1969 | 12.4.1970 |
| 8. Elia Lodu | | 13. 8.1942 | 9. 9.1967 | |
| 9. Fr. Hector Ayon
(Didinga) | 1.1.1940 | 9. 9.1967 | 9. 9.1969 | 17.5.1970 |
| 10. Fr. Angelo Ibele
(Didinga) | 17. 2.1943 | 7.10.1968 | - | 27.6.1970 |
| 11. Joseph Ukelo
(Pari) | 1. 1.1946 | 9. 9.1969 | 6.3.1974 | 23.4.1972 |
| 12. George Longokwo
(Toposa) | 1. 1.1941 | 9. 9.1969 | 7.6.1974 | 18.3.1971 |
| 13. Bro. Philip Arik Kwol
(Dinka) | 15. 6.1964 | 9. 9.1970 | | |
| 14. Abel Mödi Nyörkö
(Mundari) | 31. 7.1943 | 9. 9.1970 | 27.9.1976 | 3.4.1971 |
| 15. Patrick Mura Ondok | | 15. 9.1948 | 10.10.1970 | |
| 16. Louis Lotimoi
(Didinga) | | 31.5.1973 | (Died car accid.) | 9.6.1972 |
| 17. Clementino Logwe
(Didinga) | a Novice, he died in Italy in car accident, Florence, 12. 9.1955. | | | |
| 18. Bro. Angelo Makur (Dinka) | he left. | | | |

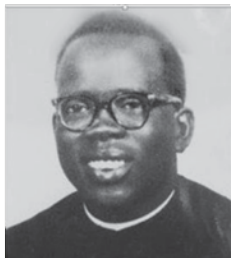
Sudan North

- | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 19. Fr. Max Macram
(Sudanese) | 20. 9.1938 | 9. 9.1957 | 9. 9.1963 | 28.6.1964 |
| 20. Bro. Munir Fahmi
(Sudanese) | 11. 9.1 938 | 29.6.1970 | | |
| 21. Mikhail Suliman
(Sudanese) | | 8.12.1945 | 9. 9.1967 | |

Some of these confreres were assigned to other Provinces, especially Uganda, but the confreres working within the Sudan, for the time being, were appointed to the Region of Khartoum under the authority of its Regional Superior, until the date of the election of the SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE of the Superior General for Southern Sudan in 1981.

The last days of Fr. Barnaba Deng¹⁹⁵

Wau, 23 August, 1965.



Fr. Barnaba Deng, a Dinka Malwal, son of Akec Kwac and Alwel Agol, was born at Atokwel about 1935 and baptized at Kwajok in 1947. As a seminarian he was trained in Bussere, Gulu, and Tore River before going to Florence, Italy, where he joined the Comboni Missionaries in 1959. At the end of his theological course he was ordained at Milan by Cardinal Montini (who later became Pope Paul VI) on 7 April, 1962. He returned to the Sudan the following year and worked in the missions of Gordhiim and Aweil.

In late July, 1965, he went from Aweil to Wau for the monthly retreat for Priests. In his luggage he had a transistor radio and a tape recorder. On the train, a policeman noticed those items and, suspecting that their owner was a rebel, wanted to shoot him. A brave Nuba soldier stopped him, but Barnabas was now under investigation.

In Wau, the Bishop advised him to remain until better days. Barnaba wanted to visit his mother, who was sick in Gogrial, sixty kilometres from Wau. He did so and returned (1-2 August). He then returned to Aweil to attend to other matters. On Sunday, 9 August, after celebrating two masses, he asked the police for permission to go to Wau. Their reply: *it's better if you wait a few more days*.

Someone suggested Barnaba should leave immediately, through the forest, not by train. That evening, at 18.30, another person came running to tell him: *leave immediately, flee!* Barnaba ran off into the forest, spent the night in the hut of an acquaintance and then continued on foot, in stages, keeping away from the road, until a few kilometres from Wau. From there he sent a note to the Bishop.

Mgr. Ireneo Dud received it and, just after he ended the Holy Mass, he left by truck together with Fr. Egidio Ukelo to get him. He found Fr. Barnaba very tired and scared, dressed in black shorts and a coloured shirt,

¹⁹⁵ - Dictionary of African Christian Biography,

http://www.dacb.org/stories/sudan/deng_barnaba.html

- Deng P. Barnaba - ultimi giorni, (The last days of Fr. Barnaba Deng), Mccj Bulletin, n. 76, pp. 41-44.

- Vantini, La Missione del Cuore op. cit., pp. 851-853

- Fr. Louis Okot Tony Ochermoi, mccj, <http://www.comboni.org/en/contenuti/106122-anniversary-of-the-martyrdom-of-fr-barnaba-deng>

as he had dressed at his departure from Aweil. Around 10.30 he brought him back to the mission and, to let him feel more secure and quiet, he put him in the room that had once been occupied by the Procurator. He allowed him to celebrate in the Cathedral, at 4 pm. at a side altar. Mgr. Dud, who had to go to Rome for the Second Vatican Council, advised Fr. Barnaba to go to Khartoum and from there to go together with him to Rome. He accepted the proposal.

On 23 August, at 3 pm. Fr. Barnaba asked Fr. Angelo Umedo for his van to go to greet the family who had hosted him before reaching Wau. On the way he met a military convoy coming from Aweil. They told him to stop. Somebody alighted from a truck and asked Fr. Barnaba: “who are you?” “I am Barnaba Deng”, he replied. “How is it that you are here, while we have been looking for you in Aweil?” Fr. Barnaba did not answer. There are two gunshots and Fr. Barnaba fell next to the roadside. In the evening, at home, they were waiting for him anxiously. The soldiers in the convoy hid the corpse in the grass.

The next morning, Fr. Egidio and Fr. Angelo went looking for Fr. Barnaba. A man who was living near the site of the assassination told them: “Go away from here! There are soldiers hiding in the grass!” The two Fathers returned to Wau and reported to the Bishop. The Bishop phoned to the police to enquire about Fr. Barnaba. They said they would carry out a search. In the evening (August 24), the Chief of Police called to the Bishop saying: “We are sorry, Fr. Barnaba was killed by soldiers who found him after curfew and did not know who he was!”

During that night, the corpse was buried somehow by some inmates of the prison. On the evening of 25 August, the police brought the van back to the mission.

Diocesan Priest Martyrs

From 1965 to 1968, three Diocesan Priests were killed. The first one, one month before Fr. Deng was killed, was Fr. Arkangelo Ali (Rumbek, 21 July, 1965), then Fr. Saturnino Ohure (Padibe, 22 January, 1967) and Fr. Leopoldo Anywar (Palabek, 9 November, 1968).

Fr. Arkangelo Konogo Ali

Rumbek, 21 July, 1965.

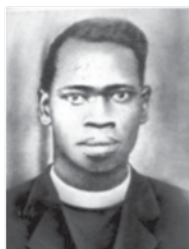
Fr. Arkanjelo Konogo Ali was an Ndogo of Fei, one of the villages evangelized from Kayango. He was born in 1918 and baptized in 1928. He completed the Minor Seminary in Bussere and attended the philosophical and theological courses at Gulu (1939-1946). He was ordained Priest at

Mboro on 1 November, 1946 by Bishop F. X. Bini Vicar Apostolic of Khartoum. The big Church of Mboro was packed with people. The celebration was a time of sheer joy until sunset. Fr. Arkangelo was actually the first Ndogo Priest. The ordination took place in the morning with great joy, but at evening there was mourning and anxiety due to the killing of Fr. Arpe, at the hands of an Ndogo.

Fr. Arkanjelo was taking care of the pastoral work at Dem Zubeir, Raja, Kwajok, and Warrap. When the Rumbek Vicariate was erected in 1955 he was stationed in Rumbek and later in Maridi. In 1961 he went to Brussels, Belgium, for a one-year catechetical course at Lumen Vitae. A most active and zealous Priest, he spoke Arabic, English, Italian, French, Ndogo, and several other languages of the Sudan.

On 21 July, 1965, military trucks burst into Rumbek mission compound at about nine am. Fr. Jerome Bidai and Fr. Arkanjelo who were stationed there were ordered to walk ahead of the soldiers. Suddenly there was a volley of gunfire and Fr. Jerome Bidai fell, wounded, while Fr. Arkanjelo was taken under the veranda and killed. His body was hidden by the soldiers. Fr. Arkangelo, murdered by Arab soldiers in Rumbek, stands as an example of courage and principle for all Sudanese: he was 47 years old.¹⁹⁶

Saturnino Ohure (*Padibe*, 22 January, 1967)¹⁹⁷



The first Lotuho Priest, Saturnino Ohure was born to Xillange and Ixonon about 1921 and was baptized at Torit in 1931. Soon he asked to enter Okaru Seminary and he went to Gulu in 1938. On 21 December, 1946, he was ordained Priest with Fr. Avellino Wani at Gulu. Some years later he was given responsibilities with the same Father at Lirya mission until 1955, when the

¹⁹⁶ Vantini, *La Missione del Cuore* op. cit., p. 564; Dictionary of African Christian Biography, V. Dellagiacoma, http://www.dacb.org/stories/sudan/arkangelo_konogo.html; Fr. Arkangelo Ali, Arch. Gabriel Card. Zubeir Wako, <http://catholicradionetwork.org/?q=node/2371>

¹⁹⁷ Dictionary of African Christian Biography, V. Dellagiacoma, http://www.dacb.org/stories/sudan/ohure_saturnino.html - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saturnino_Ohure
- Regarding Fr. Saturnino's involvement in politics, the attitude of the Comboni Missionaries at the time (who were still in charge of the Sudan mission) was supportive of his choice, though without making a fuss of it. He was on good terms with them and they had a great appreciation for him personally and thought he could really do something good. (a witness report).

existing Sudanese Priests were transferred to the new vicariate of Rumbek under Bishop Irenaeus Dud.

At the first general elections he stood for Torit and was elected. He soon became a leader of Southern MPs in the Constituent Assembly. When the Assembly was dissolved by the military government in November 1958, Fr. Saturnino retired to Yei and Porkele. In 1961, informed of his imminent arrest he fled to Uganda together with other ex-parliamentarians where he helped and counselled Sudanese refugees. In one of his travels in this connection he was killed by a Ugandan soldier near Kitgum on 22 January, 1967. He was a distinguished Priest, and an unselfish, prudent, and courageous leader. In January, 2009, his body was exhumed from its grave in Kitgum and transported to Torit for reburial.

Fr. Leopoldo Anywar¹⁹⁸ (Palabek, 9 November, 1968)

Fr. Leopoldo Anywar, a Torit Priest from Magwi, was killed in 1968 in a combined military operation by forces from Uganda and Sudan in Kitgum, along the Uganda border. Fr. Anywar met his death while bringing support to South Sudanese displaced by the war. On 2 July, 2011, his body was exhumed and brought to Torit to Our Lady of the Assumption Church for a memorial and thanksgiving Mass. The solemn reburial of Fr. Leopold Anywar's remains took place the following day at a mausoleum built in Magwi, Eastern Equatoria.

Time of displacement and exile: care for the Refugees

The oppressive regime of Khartoum did not take long to create an unbearable situation in the South and many people, including diocesan clergy, religious men and women and seminarians, for safety reasons, had to go into exile outside Southern Sudan, in the neighbouring countries such as Congo Kinshasa, The Central African Republic (RCA) and Uganda. Thus, also our Comboni Confreres, Radical Members who had already been ordained Priests, were appointed to Uganda, and were available for various works such as pastoral activity in Parishes, teaching in seminaries or the care of refugees. Italian confreres were also appointed for the care of the refugees in Congo Kinshasa and the Central Africa Republic.

Kilomines in Congo, **Agbosi** and **Mboki** in RCA and **Pakele** in Uganda, were also hosting Brothers, Sisters, Aspirants, Postulants and

¹⁹⁸ Fr. Leopoldo Anywar, <http://catholicradionetwork.org/?q=node/4285>

Novices of the Sudanese Local Congregations. **Lacor** (Gulu, Uganda) was hosting the Major Seminarians under the direction of Comboni personnel. Fr. Hilary Boma was there as a teacher and Vice Rector.

Kilomines Seminary¹⁹⁹ (*Congo Kinshasa*)

For the refugee Seminarians of the Apostolic Vicariate of Rumbek.

Opened in December, 1965.

Priests: Fr. Andrea Trucchi, *Superior and Teacher*.

Fr. Pasquale Palermo, *Spiritual Director*.

Fr. Ferdinando Sembiente, *Teacher*.

Brothers: Bro. Annico Meloni, *service to the Seminary*.

The **Seminary of Kilomines** (Congo) for the **Vicariate Apostolic of Rumbek** was under the direction of Diocesan Clergy. In 1967 there were 82 Minor Seminarians of whom 69 were of the Apostolic Vicariate of Rumbek, 11 of that of Wau and 2 of the Apostolic Prefecture of Mupoi. In 1969 there was a total number of 70, including 10 from Wau, 1 from Mupoi and 3 from Juba.

Agbosi Parish²⁰⁰ *Diocese of Bangassou. Republic of Central Africa (RCA)*

Among the Sudanese refugees, founded on 12 September, 1966.

Priests: Fr. Busnelli Paolo, *Superior and Parish Priest*

Brothers: Bro. Schiavone Nicola, *service to the Parish*

At Agbosi there were Zande refugees. In 1967 there were 3 Priests, 1 Brother with 3 Novices and 15 Sisters with 4 Novices and 5 Aspirants and a Dispensary.

Mboki Parish²⁰¹ *Diocese of Bangassou (RCA)*

Among the Sudanese refugees. Founded on 12 September, 1967

Priests: Fr. Luigi Gusmeroli, *Superior and Parish Priest*

Fr. Giuseppe Morlacchi, *Coadjutor*,

Fr. Alfonso Polacchini, *Rector of the Pre-Seminary*

Brothers:

Bro. Leone Artioli, *service to the Parish*

Bro. Vittorio Montolli, *service to the Parish*

Absent: Fr. Giorgio Montemanni `

¹⁹⁹ Catalogo, op. cit., 1 January 1967, pp. 25, 31; 1 January, 1969, p. 28

²⁰⁰ Ibid. 1 January, 1967, pp. 25, 31; 1 January, 1969, p. 29, 38

²⁰¹ Ibid. 1 January, 1969, pp. 30, 38

In 1969 in Mboki there were 2 Zande Priests of Mupoi (since 15 August, 1968, they had been in Riruyo, 14 km from Mboki), 3 Dominican Sisters, the Pre-Seminary of Mupoi with 24 students, a maternity, a dispensary, and a leper colony with 200 patients.

In 1969, in Obo there were 2 Priests and a Brother of Mupoi, with a catechetical school for Sudanese; 4 Comboni Sisters and 13 Sisters of Mupoi, with 3 novices and some Postulants.

Pakele Parish.²⁰²

Priests: Fr. Antonio Santinoli, *Superior and Parish Priest.*

Fr. Luigi Moser, *Coadjutor.*

In the Comboni Parish of **Pakele** the Apostolic Vicariate of Juba had 110 Pre-Seminarians.

Statistics 1969²⁰³

Southern Sudan

Area: 640.595 Km²; population: 3,271,645; Catholics: 403,648²⁰⁴

Ap. Vicariate of Wau – 171.840 Km², pop: 700.000; Cath: 63,000.

Personnel present: Ap. Vicar, Priests 11 (included one of Malakal Dioc.); Major Seminarians 7 (in Khartoum), minor 21, Pre-Semin. 94; Brothers 12, Novices 3; Sisters 14, Novices 0.

Personnel absent: Priests 1; Maj. Sem. 21 (14 in Lacor and 7 in Rome), min. 10 (at Kilomines).

Ap. Vicariate of Juba - 106.000 Km², pop: 500.000; Cath: 215,850.

Personnel present: Ap. Administrators, Priests 4; Min. Sem. 26, Pre-Sem. 24; Brothers 5; Sisters 8, Aspirants 7.

Personnel absent: Priests 7; Maj. Sem. 50 (43 in Lacor and 7 in Rome), Min. 39, of whom 1 in Kilomines, Pre-Sem. 110 in Pakele and 2 in Kilomines; Brothers 4, Novices 12, Postul. and Aspir. 48; Sisters 25, Novices 5, Postul. 4, Aspir. 21.

Ap. Vicariate of Rumbek– 83.257 Km², pop: 769,045; Cath. 25,846.

Personnel present: none.

Personnel absent: Ap. Admin., Priests 10; Maj. Sem. 14 (11 in Lacor and 3 in Rome), Min. 43 and Pre-Sem. 13 (in Kilomines).

²⁰² Catalogo, op. cit., 1 January, 1967, p. 224.; 1 January, 1969, p. 169, 174

²⁰³ Catalogo, op. cit., January, 1969, pp. 123-124.

²⁰⁴ Annuario Pontificio

Ap. Pref. of Malakal - 236.180 Km², pop: 1,152,600: Cath: 10,728.

Personnel present: Ap. Admin., Priests 5 (included 2 of Tanzania, not the one who was in Wau); Maj. Sem. 1 (in Khartoum), Min. 23, Pre-Sem. 150.

Personnel absent: none.

Ap. Pref. of Mupoi – 43,318 Km², pop: 150,000; Cath: 88.224.

Personnel present: Priests 1; Maj. Sem. 7 (at Khartoum), Min. 5 (in Wau).

Personnel absent: Mgr. Domenico Ferrara, Priests 7; Maj. Sem. 13 (8 in Lacor and 5 in Rome), Min. 1 (in Kilomines), Pre-Sem. 24 (in Mboki; Brothers 1; Sisters 13, Novices 3).

Totals:

Personnel present: Priests 24 (included the most rev. prelates), Brothers 17, Sisters 22. Their ministry is restricted to Wau, Tonj, Aweil, Juba and Malakal.

Personnel absent: Priests 27 (included the most rev. Prelates), Brothers 5, Sisters 38.

Refugees:

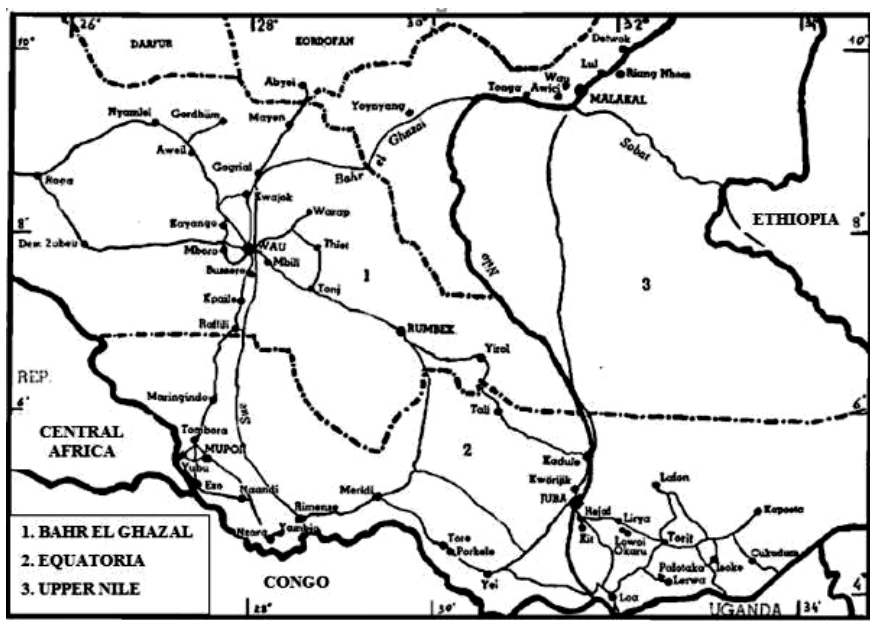
Central African Republic (RCA) 20,000, Congo 69,000, Uganda 163,000, Ethiopia 50,000.

Priests killed:

Fr. Arcangelo Ali (*Rumbek, 21 July, 1965*), Fr. Barnaba Deng FSCJ (*Wau, 23 August, 1965*), Fr. Saturnino Ohure (*Padibe, 22 January, 1967*) and Fr. Leopoldo Anywar (*Palabek 9 November, 1968*).

The Sudanese Radical Members' new assignments

Fr. Peter Magalasi was in Lacor (Uganda) and **Fr. David Urasi**, Director of the *Aspirant Brothers* of the Vicariate of Juba, was in Patongo Parish, Diocese of Gulu. **Fr. Angelo Umedo**, Novice Master of the *St. Joseph's Brothers* of Wau was attached to El Obeid Vicariate. **Bro. Benjamin Majok** was in charge of the carpentry in El Obeid. **Fr. Hilary Boma** was assigned to Uganda, 1966-1970: Kangole Parish as a Parish coadjutor, then to Lacor Seminary as Vice Rector and Teacher.



The Region of Khartoum and Southern Sudan

As already said, after the expulsion, the Region of Khartoum was the reference point and the one taking care of all the confreres working in the Sudan, including those belonging to the South. However, it was towards the end of the sixties that the Region of Khartoum acquired a stronger relevance, since there were the Sudanese students ending their theological studies and these were available for their first assignment. After the expulsion, Fr. Ottorino Sina was the regional Superior of Khartoum and the question of the assignment of the Sudanese Confreres became an issue, together with the type of commitment which could be still viable in the South. The matter had to be taken up with urgency by the new Regional Superior Fr. Ferruccio Rovelli, who was elected on 9 December, 1969, and his council, with the mandate to start on 15 December, 1969.²⁰⁵

The election of the Councillors was done on 15 January, 1970. The confreres of the South, with right to active and passive vote (to vote and to be voted for), were Fr. Angelo Umedo and Fr. Hilary Boma, the first

²⁰⁵ Fr. Calvia Salvatore, Sec. Gen.: Appointment of Fr. Rovelli Ferruccio as Regional Superior (of Khartoum), Rome, 10 December, 1969. ACR 341/1.

received 12 votes and the latter 1.²⁰⁶ Indeed, they did not receive many votes, but considering the situation of the time, it was very positive that also their names were taken up seriously by the confreres of the North. During this period, life was not easy, especially for the Comboni Radical Members, and it needed real dedication. It is helpful to hear the direct experience of a couple of them, Fr. Hilary Boma and Fr. Peter Magalasi from Uganda.

Fr. Hilary Boma. He felt it was important to send a report from Uganda to the General Superior, Fr. Tarcisio Agostoni, for possible follow up, about the difficult situation of eight Sudanese Diocesan refugee Priests in Uganda, who felt that they were not welcome guests there, and were experiencing a lot of frustration. All of them were working among the refugees, but there was a lack of means of transport for their visits and also lack of financial support to carry out the work. Their only income was their Mass stipends. As Diocesan Priests and refugees in Uganda, they felt they were not belonging to any Ordinary, since they were outside of Sudan. They were finding some care only in Bishop Mazzoldi, now in Moroto, so he was chosen as a reference Bishop for the Sudanese Diocesan Clergy in Uganda.

Regarding the Diocesan Seminary of Pakele, Northern Uganda, (for the Vicariate of Juba), Fr. Boma pointed out that it was going through a very difficult situation and that it kept going only due to the help of Bishop Mazzoldi. The greatest difficulty was the lack of personnel which was causing continual setbacks. In 1967, Fr. Boma was there alone. At the time of his letter, probably in 1969 or 1970, there were two Priests, but the work was far too much for them they had no normal budget, just some help coming from Rome and from Bishop Mazzoldi. The following year, their intention was to open the Senior Seminary, but there was a shortage of staff, no Spiritual Director and no teaching material. Fr. Boma was asking that the Seminary of Pakele be recognized by the Church and financially assisted. The Bishop of Lira, Mgr. Asili, accepted to have the seminary transferred to his own Diocese, but he also foresaw difficulties on the part of the local authorities.

As for Lachor Seminary, Fr. Boma told of the need of a full time Spiritual Director as a top priority and to have the Seminarians ending primary 7 in Pakele accepted in Lachor. Regarding the refugees in general he expressed the gratitude of all Sudanese Priests, Brothers and Sisters, for the care given to the refugees in the various places within Uganda and

²⁰⁶ Region of Khartoum, 16 January, 1970. ACR 341/1.

asked for support from Italian benefactors to enable the work to proceed in their difficult situation.

The issue of the Sudanese refugees and especially of the Sudanese Diocesan Priests outside of their own Vicariates was not an easy matter. Since the Comboni Missionaries were in a position where they could facilitate the difficult situation, they thought it wise to have all the above issues discussed in a meeting held in Kampala in the presence of the Superior General, Fr. Agostoni, Mgr. Mazzoldi, Fr. Marchetti, Fr. Xillo, Fr. Magalasi, Fr. Boma and Fr. Spagnolo. Since Mgr. Mazzoldi was the former Apostolic Vicar of Bahr el Jebel, and therefore the most suitable Bishop, he was confirmed as the Ordinary in charge of all the Sudanese Clergy ordained by him and those who opted for him. The Clergy were to be incardinated temporarily in the Diocese of Moroto and he would deal with the respective Bishops, in cases where the Priests were working in other Dioceses. If there were other Priests who had not chosen a Bishop yet, they had to be temporarily incardinated in a Diocese of their own choice.

As for Pakele seminary, after the report of Fr. Boma, it was decided that Fr. Boma himself should leave Pakele in order to help within Sudan, but that the Comboni Fathers of Pakele Mission, in particular Fr. Santinoli and Fr. Zuani, could help Fr. Andrea Adyang in the seminary. There was a strong invitation to keep up the academic performance so that the Seminarians coming out from Pakele could then join the Diocesan Seminary of Moroto.²⁰⁷

Fr. Peter Magalasi was instead directly involved in pastoral missionary work and, on 16 December, 1970, had planned to visit from Uganda some centres in the area of Palotaka, inside Southern Sudan. During that time, a Khartoum offensive was threatening to overpower the Freedom Fighters movement in that area.

“Accompanied by a young man, I went into the Sudanese forest in order to celebrate the Holy Mass of Christmas. The people live in small groups in the jungle and one must go on foot here and there. Between 18 December and 6 January, I celebrated the Holy Mass in Ayu, Adodi, Langaya, Patoko, Limur, Owinykibil, Nyongwa, Atunda and Dungo.

²⁰⁷ “Memorandum” (for the Sudan institutions in exile) Fr. H. Boma to Fr. T. Agostoni, Sup. Gen. (1970?); Meeting of 19 February, (1971?), Kampala, Mbuya; Newsletter about Sudanese Priests and Seminarians (by Fr. Dellagiacomia), Gulu, Uganda, No. 1 June, 1971; No. 2, August, 1971; No. 3, October, 1971; No. 4, February, 1972. ACR 341/5/1.

In all places the Priest was welcomed, as a Priest, with great enthusiasm and joy. Participation in the sacred functions was satisfactory with hundreds of people receiving Communion. There were 50 baptisms of children and medicines were given to hundreds of sick people. In these places there are only a few Catechists. In many of the places mentioned above the people have been staying for just a few months and then moving on. To find and appoint Catechists here is a problem and it is difficult, both for Catechists and Priests, to follow them up. Anyway, I met nine Catechists and helped those getting married. The people live in terror and fear of the big Arab offensive. We were attacked by a helicopter, one Mig and two jets that came to bomb. One jet was shot down and crashed on the side of Katire-Ayon. The Freedom Fighters allowed the Government soldiers to take their compound and then they surrounded them. Several people died and others were wounded. Joseph, the leader of the fighters was still alive.²⁰⁸

Three new confreres were just ordained Priests: Fr. Paolino Lukudu, Fr. Angelo Ibele and Fr. Hector Ayon. The first concern of the General Administration and of the Regional Superior of Khartoum, Fr. Ferruccio Rovelli, was that they should have a positive experience within a Comboni community and in the pastoral-missionary field. The matter of having it in the environment of Khartoum or outside was not a real problem, as long as they could positively share the life of the Comboni community and be understood and valued in their identity as Sudanese confreres.²⁰⁹

As a conclusion of the above reflection and priorities, Fr. Paolino Lokudu and Fr. Angelo Ibele, on their arrival, were appointed to the Comboni community of Khartoum as Coadjutors to Ss. Peter and Paul Parish,²¹⁰ so that they should get into their commitment as soon as possible. Fr. Hector Ayon, instead, was appointed to Uganda, as he needed medical treatment.

During this period of time the Comboni Radical Members were few and scattered in various locations outside Southern Sudan: **Fr. Peter Magalasi** (Morulem - Uganda) Coadjutor, **Fr. Angelo Umedo** (Port Sudan) teacher, **Fr. David Urasi** (Gulu - Uganda), **Fr. Hilary Boma** (Pakele - Uganda) in charge of the Sudanese Pre Seminary, **Fr. Paolino Lukudu** (Khartoum)

²⁰⁸ Breve Resoconto (short report) of the apostolate within Sudan, Fr. Peter Magalasi, 18 December, 1970-6 January, 1971. Kampala, 13 February, 1971. ACR 341/8

²⁰⁹ Fr. Sina O. to Fr. Rovelli, Roma 18 August, 1970; Rome 31 August, 1970. ACR 341/2/1

²¹⁰ Catalogo, op.cit., 11 April, 1971, p. 133.

Coadjutor at Ss. Peter and Paul, **Fr. Angelo Ibele** (Khartoum) Coadjutor, at St. Peter and Paul, **Fr. Hector Ayon** for (medical treatment) Uganda. They were asked to go back to Southern of Sudan by the end of 1971.

However, Fr. Angelo Umedo, while in Port Sudan, suffered a crisis and wrote a letter to Fr. Rovelli in order to leave the Priesthood. He also published news of his laicisation in a newspaper, even before it was done by the General Superior; by 1972 he appeared as out of community.²¹¹ In 1971, Fr. Angelo Ibele, after a positive experience in Kadugli, went to Lebanon.²¹² There he again underwent a crisis and was given some time to reflect on what to do.²¹³ He then also left the Congregation and by 1974 he did not appear any more in the Catalogue of the Comboni Missionaries.

The Combonis and a Community in Nzara

Formerly, to the proposal of the Regional Council of Khartoum to have a community of Sudanese confreres in the South, Fr. Sina from Rome replied to the Provincial, Fr. Rovelli, saying that the time did not appear to be right and that it would be better if they had a positive experience in the North first and then, after an appropriate time, they might be ready for it.²¹⁴ However, this became possible by late 1971. Fr. Paolino Lukudu was given the task of contacting Mgr. Silvestro Laharanya for a possible opening of a commitment in the Vicariate of Bahr el Jebel, to be entrusted to some of our Comboni Confreres, in a spirit of collaboration between the Congregation and the Local Church. The Regional Council was waiting for the results of the enquiry.²¹⁵

This preliminary dialogue with Mgr. Silvestro Laharanya of Juba, however, did not lead to any concrete result, so Fr. Rovelli and Fr. Sina, who was on visit from Rome, decided to go to the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Ubaldo Calabresi, in order to finalize the matter with him. The final agreement was to open the mission of Nzara. This was a great opportunity for the Combonis for two reasons: first to have a presence in the South; second, because the Sudanese Comboni confreres would be the

²¹¹ - Fr. Rovelli to Fr. General, Kh, 8 May, 1971, Kh. 16 May, 1971, Kh. 23 May.1971. ACR 341/2/2.

- Fr. Agostoni to Fr. Rovelli, 1 November, 1971, 400/71. ACR 341/2/2

- Catalogo, supplement, op. cit., 1972, p. 27

²¹² Fr. Rovelli to Fr. Sina, 24 February, 1971. ACR 341/2/2.

²¹³ Fr. Rovelli to Fr. Sina, 6 May, 1972, ACR 341/2/2.

²¹⁴ Minutes of the Council (Khartoum) 4-5 September, 1970, paragraph 8. ACR 341/4; Fr. Sina to Fr. Rovelli, Roma 2 December, 1970. ACR 341/2/1.

²¹⁵ Minutes of the Council (Khartoum) 18-20 September, 1971, paragr. 3. ACR 341/4.

very first ones to start it, possibly with Fr. Peter Urasi (coming from Uganda), Fr. Paolino Lukudu, Fr. Angelo Ibele and Bro. Benjamin Majok. Fr. Abel Mödi Nyörkö, ordained on 3 April, 1971, was expected back in Sudan from Rome during the same year.

Of these five confreres, Fr. Lukudu and Bro. Majok were ready to start their journey towards Juba and Nzara on 1 November, 1971. They had just to prepare what was needed, with the idea of opening Nzara by Christmas.²¹⁶ As for Fr. David Urasi, things were uncertain since he was not yet in Sudan, while the arrangement with Fr. Mödi was that he would travel to Nzara on 21 December. For the reasons already noted, this opening was perceived as a *golden opportunity* not to be missed. The opening of Nzara was welcomed by Fr. Agostoni, the General Superior who, not only approved of opening one community, but also encouraged opening a second one, as long as there were three members in each community.²¹⁷

The re-opening of Nzara Mission took place on 6 December, 1971, by Fr. Lukudu together with Bro. Benjamin Majok. Fr. Lukudu was accompanied by Bro. Matthew Yangadakpio, a Brother of St. Martin de Porres from Juba. Fr. Mödi and Fr. Urasi (the future Superior) joined him later on. They settled in the former house of the Comboni Sisters, which was in fairly good shape. The Fathers' house was, at that time, occupied by the personnel of a local factory but they soon left it. The other buildings were not occupied by the soldiers, but had been damaged by the *Simba* of Congo and by termites.

Thus, by the end of 1971, Nzara became the first mission to be reassumed by the Comboni Missionaries in the South.²¹⁸ The big difficulty was to get enough funds to be able to run it. This was done, first of all, with a lot of trust in Divine Providence and partly, with donations received by the confreres, possibly with some help from Propaganda Fide through the Apostolic Delegate, from the Mission Procure and some *locally*.

Since the expulsion of 1964, no Father had resided in Nzara. When Fr. Lukudu and the other new Combonis arrived, they found that the Christian community had kept going under the care of the Head Catechist, Mario Motawari, a very committed ex-Seminarian, who set up a Parish committee

²¹⁶ Fr. F. Rovelli to Fr. T. Agostoni, 5, October, 1971, and of 24 October, 1971; Fr. F. Rovelli to Fr. O. Sina 12 December, 1971. ACR 341/2/2.

²¹⁷ Fr. T. Agostoni to Fr. F. Rovelli, 1 November, 1971 (400/71). ACR 341/2/2.

²¹⁸ Kh. 12 December, 1971. Fr. F. Rovelli to Fr. Sina (Rome): "Fr. A. Mödi is leaving for Juba and then Nzara on the 21 December, 1971." 341/2/2; Lettera di Collegamento (Link Letter) Interview of Fr. Paolino Lukudu – Nzara – 1 April, 1973. ACR 341/5/1.

of four persons whom he personally instructed. This committee was in charge of collecting the offerings on Sunday, dealing with the various issues of the Christian community and especially with marriage problems.

The committee of four enjoyed great trust by the people and did a lot of good. There were also 8 Seminarians, 27 women of the Legion of Mary and 15 members of Catholic Action. The money collected was used to help the Catechists and to organize some small feasts for the groups. Two of the women of the Legion of Mary were appointed Deaconesses and given the habit of Sisters. Their group met once a week and they visited the families, helped with difficult cases, gathered the children for catechism and cleaned the church on Saturdays, while the mission compound was kept clean by the members of Catholic Action.

Every day there were morning prayers at 7 am. and the Rosary at 5 pm. On Sundays there was the Liturgy of the Word in Zande by the Head-Catechist and in Arabic by the headmaster of the primary school, who had done a course at *Welfare Centre*. Of the 8 Catechists, only the Head Catechist was working full time; the others were working only in the mornings. Every Catechist had an assistant Catechist and was taking care of around 10-20 Catechumens.

As for the refugees in the neighbouring countries the Fathers were waiting for them to return home. According to information received, there should have been around 378 Catechists abroad with their assistants; they would be distributed also in other Parishes. The expectation was that the returnees would group together and see to the building of their churches. Meanwhile, in Nzara, an evening school with 200 youth was opened; some of them were coming also from the government school in order to learn English. The Head Catechist was also teaching religion. In the area of Nzara, the majority of people were Protestant, but in school they were fifty per cent, due especially to the returnees who were mainly Catholic. Relations with the Protestants were a bit tense, but there was hope for improvement. From Nzara, the Fathers were taking care also of the Parishes of Ringosi and Yambio.

The main difficulties the Combonis experienced on their arrival in Nzara were: the matter of the Zande language, since none of them was a Zande; there was only one car for transport; the shortage of fuel which could only be found in Juba; the lack of financial resources. People were living in a very poor situation; sometimes the Fathers would pass on their donations, preferring to give them to needier people. Regarding a possible Sisters' presence in Nzara, since they were ten Sisters in Tombura, the Fathers thought they might have problems with their upkeep in Nzara. If

they did decide to return there, the Fathers were ready and willing to leave the house to them.²¹⁹

Regarding the proposed second Comboni Community in the South, the Regional Council of Khartoum left the question pending; Kapoeta would have been the preferred location. As for the political situation, since the middle of 1971, it was becoming more unstable and it was very dangerous to travel towards the South and in the South because of guerrilla attacks.²²⁰

Comboni approaches to be adopted and implemented

The Regional Council of Khartoum asked the General Administration to clarify the issue of the territorial extension of the Region of Khartoum to the South, a new and unforeseen development for the Region, and its commitments in the North. The renewal brought by the Second Vatican Council and the new situation within Sudan made the Regional Superior and his council aware of the pressing need for the confreres to reflect on the *signs of the times* calling for a renewal of the style of life and attitudes. This renewal needed to penetrate all the situations and all aspects of missionary life. In the field of finance, a more communitarian approach needed to be developed, decisions needed to be made in a spirit of communion, collaboration and fraternal sharing according to requirements. Better care was to be taken that finances be clearly used for the specific purpose of evangelization and for the implantation of the Church.²²¹

As for possible new undertakings in the South, once the juridical aspects involved had been taken into consideration and clarified, the Regional Council was recommending a real spirit of collaboration between the Comboni Missionaries and the Local Church. In relation to the newly appointed Sudanese Confreres, the concern of the Regional Superior and his Council was also to ensure that personal freedom and equality was to be afforded likewise to all the members of the Congregation.²²²

On 14 February, 1972, Fr. Ferruccio Rovelli was again confirmed as the Regional Superior of Khartoum.²²³ In the Regional election, among the

²¹⁹ Lettera di Collegamento (Link Letter) Interview to Fr. Paolino Lukudu – Nzara – 1 April, 1973; Newsletter (by Fr. V. Dellagiacoma, Gulu, Uganda, No. 4, February, 1972. ACR 341/5/1.

²²⁰ Fr. Rovelli to Fr. Sina, Kh. 6 June, 1971. ACR 341/2/2.

²²¹ Minutes of the Council (Khartoum) 4-5 September, 1970, op. cit., paragraph 8.

²²² Minutes of the Council (Khartoum) 18-20 September, 1971, op. cit., paragraph 3. ACR 341/4.

²²³ Secr. Gen., Appointment of Fr. Rovelli Ferruccio as Regional Superior (of Khartoum), Rome, 10 July, 1972. ACR 341/1.

eligible South Sudanese Confreres were **Fr. Hilary Boma** (1 vote), **Fr. Paolino Lukudu** (7 votes), **Fr. Peter Magalasi** (9 votes), and **Fr. David Urasi** (6 votes). The councillor with most votes received 26 out of 66 votes.²²⁴ Again, none of the Southerners were elected to the Council, but the increasing number of votes they received was a witness to their direct involvement and of the growing positive confidence of the other confreres in the Radical Members of the South in the Region of Khartoum.

THE TIME FROM 1972 TO 1981

This period of time is deeply marked by the extraordinary event of the signing of the Addis Ababa agreement²²⁵ between President Nimeiri and the Anya-Nya movement, which brought about peace between North and South and a real change in relations within the whole of Sudan. How this was received is worthy of note.

The Addis Ababa Agreement: the reaction of confreres

The reaction was one of mixed feelings in the country and also among our confreres. Some were optimistic while others were sceptical regarding this agreement. Those against it looked with scepticism on all the former Arab policies and thought that one could hardly believe that this one would be truthful. Southerners had always been cheated since the independence of Sudan: who would believe that this was not another lie?

The more sceptical, for the sake of truth, showed all the former tricks of the Government of Khartoum in order to have the consent of the Southerners and then dishonour it. Foremost among these was Fr. Adriano Bonfanti who did not believe at all in the whole matter. Those more inclined to give this agreement a chance, instead, would say that the top people involved in the talks, on the side of the Southerners, were capable of evaluating both risks and benefits. Finally, it was said that we, as Combonis, should never forget that our primary task is evangelization and

²²⁴ Region of Khartoum, 26. October, 1972. ACR 341/1.

²²⁵ *"The contacts with the rebels produced the first ever face-to-face meeting between the Sudanese government and the Anya-Nya in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, early 1972. The Emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie was the patron of the meeting which was chaired by Canon Burges Carr from All Africa Conference of Churches. The Sudanese government delegation was led by Abel Alier, a Southerner, while the Anya-Nya delegation was led by Ezbon Mundiri."* - A Concise History of South Sudan, op. cit., p. 238.

that this opportunity, after all, would be positive for all. The concerns, however, were how to interpret and evaluate the event and the positive signs which were evident and to see how the whole thing would develop, the feelings of people and their expectations, the scepticism of the clergy, the care for the future returnees, especially the students, financial help, the possibility of the Comboni Missionaries going back to Southern Sudan and how to deal with press information, making the event a chance for an open dialogue.²²⁶

In reality, though the northerners were not in favour, there was the perception, also among our confreres, that President Nimeiri was keeping his word in implementing the Addis Ababa agreement in a way that was surprising everyone in the South and giving the real feeling that he was serious.²²⁷ The government in the South had its governors appointed and the administration was in the hands of the Southerners and all political prisoners were freed (except the communists). Funds had been made available by the Commissioner for Refugees.

From the military point of view, the solution seemed acceptable for the South. In Khartoum, especially, the changes made by President Nimeiri could be seen clearly by everybody and would give a real sense that the policy towards the South was trustworthy. *Southerners were convinced that the government was serious* and our confreres were also convinced.²²⁸ However, by the fall of 1972 the news coming from the South gave the idea that the situation at political, military and social level was still unsettled.²²⁹

In the Anya-Nya military environment, there was in fact a variety of reactions to the agreement, some responded immediately in a positive way, others were more sceptical and some manifested clear opposition and tried to sabotage the agreement.²³⁰ Even Joseph Lagu did not get what he was expecting from President Nimeiri:

²²⁶ Fr. Bonfanti to Fr. Agostoni, Verona 30 April, 1972; Fr. Marchetti to Fr. Bonfanti, 7 May, 1972; Fr. Agostoni to Fr. Bonfanti, 10 May, 1972. ACR 341/3; Meeting for the Sudan, (Views on Addis Ababa Agreement), Rome 26 April, 1972. ACR 341/7; Fr. Marchetti to Fr. Agostoni (peace agreement / J. Lagu) Kampala, 8 night. April, 1972. ACR 341/9.

²²⁷ - Arop Madut-Arop, op. cit., Nimeiri pp. 8-13; Churches' role pp.1-15; the making pp. 15-a17; public reaction, pp.17-23.

- Anders Breidlid, Adelino Androga Said..., "A concise History of South Sudan", op. cit., pp. 242-246; the agreement, pp. 246-250; reactions to, pp. 250-252.

²²⁸ April 1972, Report of Fr. Rovelli on the changes with President Nimeiri: "looking at the facts, the Southerners are convinced that Nimeiri is serious." ACR 341/2/3.

²²⁹ Report on the situation inside the South, Tongdit, 26 October, 1972. ACR 341/8.

²³⁰ Arop Madut-Arop, op. cit., p. 19.

*“Speaking to the author (Arop Madut-Arop) in London (2002) Lagu disclosed that before he left Addis Ababa for Khartoum, he was promised that he would be appointed to the post of Vice-President of the Republic. In that position he would recommend the President of the Republic a candidate of his choice to be appointed President of the Interim High Executive Council with the consultation of Southern Sudanese leaders inside and outside the country.”*²³¹

President Nimeiri, however, re-instated Joseph Lagu to the Sudanese Army with the rank of Major General, two ranks above his batch in the military college, and told him that Vice-President Abel Alier was also appointed President of the ***Interim High Executive Council*** for the Southern Region. This was devastating for Joseph Lagu and created bitterness between and him and Abel Alier.

*“This bitterness remained unabated to the extent that it contributed negatively, dragging the South in the process into two hostile opposing camps which, unfortunately, were instrumental in policies of dismantling the Addis Ababa Agreement.”*²³²

President Nimeiri was afraid that the South would become too strong, especially after the discovery of oil in the South and therefore gradually worked to dismantle the Addis Ababa agreement. Sceptical though he was, Fr. Bonfanti was right in believing that Khartoum would not honour the agreement. A few decades later also Abel Alier would write about *too many agreements dishonoured* by Khartoum.²³³

At this time, however, public opinion in the South favoured peace and the plan to resist and continue with war was discarded. Therefore, this was a golden opportunity for the Comboni Missionaries to re-start commitments in the South.

The Return of the Expatriate Comboni Missionaries to the South.

Regarding possible entry permits for the return of the Comboni Missionaries to the South, at first there was absolutely no real hope. The Apostolic Delegate in Khartoum put two questions to the Authorities of Khartoum: the first was if there was hope about the abolition of the *Missionary Act* and the second was if the *Missionaries can return to the*

²³¹ Ibid. p. 22.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Abel Alier, *Southern Sudan: Too Many Agreements Dishonoured*, Paul & Co. Pub. Consortium, 1992.

South. The answer was that the Ministry of Interior would have no difficulty regarding both points, but due to the controversial situation both of them were to be excluded for a good period of time. Since the Addis Ababa agreement was received with hostility in the North, such steps might have created very negative reactions. The government did not want to lose the consensus of its voters.

On the above issue, even the Apostolic Delegate was of the opinion that the time was not yet ripe. There were only very short permits given to some Brothers in order to visit the South for urgent repairs to the workshops in Wau and machinery in Juba and in Malakal. However, the General Superior was not in favour of sending Brothers without Priests.²³⁴

By this time the Jesuits had been welcomed to the South and were entrusted with formation in the Major Seminary in Juba. As they were new in the Sudan, the Major Seminarians had to get acquainted with their different style and background. Moreover, the Jesuit Expatriate Missionaries, themselves, had to do likewise in order to gain trust and meet expectations. Some perplexities were manifested by the Local Clergy on the outcome of the formation of the Major Seminarians, saying that they might come out half Jesuit and half Indian.²³⁵ However, good relations and dialogue would later bring about positive reciprocal understanding and appreciation.

As for the Refugees in Uganda (Acholi, Lotuko and Toposa) there was a huge number of returnees. From Congo and Central Africa, the process was very slow and the Priests were still remaining abroad.

With the Addis Ababa Agreement, by June 1972, the attempt to go back to Sudan became a matter of discussion among all the Sudanese Clergy who were refugees in the bordering countries. The concern was to get enough assurance that the situation would be safe enough. On the Uganda side, some of them had already moved back, others were still in doubt, but all of them were in favour of going back to their country. Mgr. Paolino Doggale was nominated Apostolic Administrator of Juba; some of the Clergy had their reservations, others would have preferred the return of Bishop Sisto Mazzoldi for a few years by way of transition; all of them were probably expecting a wider consultation. Some among the

²³⁴ Fr. Rovelli to Fr. General, 21 April, 1972, "News of the Church in Sudan"; Fr. Rovelli to Fr. Sina, 27 May, 1972. ACR 341/2/3.

²³⁵ Fr. Rovelli to Fr. General, 21 April, 1972, "News of the Church in Sudan"; Fr. Rovelli to Fr. Sina, Atbara 14 February, 1973. ACR 341/2/3; Newsletter (by Fr. V. Dellagiacomma, Gulu, Uganda, No. 4, February, 1972. ACR 341/5/1.

missionaries were rather sceptical as to the possibility of the Comboni Missionaries returning. Rumour had it that the Sudanese Clergy did not want them.

Fr. Vittorino Dellagiacomina tried to give a more realistic interpretation to the thinking of the Sudanese Clergy along these lines:

"There are some who desire and hope in the mass return of ALL the Comboni Missionaries who were in Sudan and are available. Somebody would say that this is a duty and even a right because their expulsion was not because of the will of people but of a government which did not represent the country. Others had their reservation towards some Fathers who showed a 'colonialist mentality' or were not sympathetic and open towards Africans, but all of them want the Combonis to return, especially some of the old missionaries."

*"In the 'St. Irenaeus Newsletter' N. 5 (1972) of May, the summary of the discussion of the Church Committee which took place in Nyamlel, Wau, on 30 May, is this: 'The subject of the return of the white missionaries was brought forward for discussion. After a long discussion it was discovered that the majority of the members voted for the return of some few white missionaries for special work like teaching in the Seminaries etc. One needs to take into account the difference between Bahr el Ghazal and Equatoria: in Wau there are now 18 Priests with 8 opened missions; in Juba actually only two stations opened...' "*²³⁶

About this hot issue, it was discovered that even Bishop Ireneo Wien Dud, who was the one giving the expelled missionaries the last blessing in 1964 and who was now very open to the return of the Comboni Missionaries to Southern Sudan, had in the past written a letter to the Governor Ali Baldo supporting the expulsion of the missionaries. This is what Fr. Giovanni Vantini reported in his book *La Missione del Cuore*:

*"It is enough to recall that Bishop Ireneo Dud, after the general expulsion, wrote a letter, most likely at the suggestion of the Priests, to Governor Ali Baldo in these terms: 'You were right to expel the Italian missionaries, because they were keeping us in an under-age condition'. (His letter came into my hands!)." "*²³⁷

This is to show how difficult the whole issue of the return of the Expatriate Comboni Missionaries to Southern Sudan was, both on the part of the Government and that of the Sudanese Clergy. Wounds from the past

²³⁶ Fr. V. Dellagiacomina to Gen. Sup., Gulu, 22 June, 1972. ACR 341/8

²³⁷ Vantini, *La Missione del Cuore*, op. cit., Erezione della gerarchia locale, p. 868.

were surely there, but the positive position of the Clergy in favour of their return surely played an important role in limiting animosity and looking forward with confidence.

The work of the Sudanese Comboni Radical Members.

By this time, the Sudanese Comboni radical members were already at work in Nzara, which was re-opened on 6 December, 1971.

1. **Nzara:** The community was made up of **Fr. David Urasi** (Superior of the community), **Fr. Paolino Lukudu**, **Fr. Abel Mödi Nyörkö**, and **Bro. Benjamin Majok**. By the end of 1972, Bro. Benjamin Majok was not admitted to the renewal of his vows and was given time to reflect²³⁸. For this reason, he left the community of Nzara and went to Rumbek. Later, he left the Institute for good, unfortunately,
2. **Kapoeta:** this new community in the making was supposed to be composed by **Fr. Longokwo**, **Fr. Ayon** and **Fr. Ukelo**. Luckily, by this time, Fr. Louis Lotimoi Nyabanga was completing his theological studies and was available to join the others.²³⁹ The Community of Kapoeta was opened in 1972 and the confreres appointed were: **Fr. Longokwo**, who resided there with Fr. Nereo Lopé, a diocesan Priest, **Fr. Ayon** and then **Fr. Lotimoi**. Fr. Ayon, however, never resided physically at Kapoeta, but lived all the time in Chukudum. Fr. Ukelo, who was supposed to be part of it, was instead sent to Terakeka to help a Diocesan Priest who was in charge there. He would go to Kapoeta a couple of years later.

Regarding Religious Life, what the Regional Council was earnestly asking was that the Superiors of the existing communities keep the Regional Council informed about the life of their communities and about relationships with the Local Ordinaries; send financial reports, continue reflecting about which type of Mission and missionary approach was needed at that particular time, and deal with this matter especially at the level of the Council of Priests.²⁴⁰

²³⁸ Fr. Rovelli to Fr. General, 29 April, 1973. ACR 341/2/3.

²³⁹ Minutes of the Council (Khartoum) 9-12 November, 1972, paragraph 4. ACR 341/4.

²⁴⁰ Ibid. paragraph 4, 6. ACR 341/4.

An important event of one year later was the visit of the Regional Superior, Fr. Rovelli, accompanied by Fr. Max Macram, to the South and in particular to the community of Nzara in January 1973. He found the situation good and with no serious problems. He continued with the visit on the side of Kapoeta and, on his return to Juba, found that all the Priests were having a retreat. With them there were also the Comboni Confreres Fr. Lukudu and Fr. Mödi, from Nzara, and Fr. Longokwo, Fr. Ukelo and Fr. Ayon from Kapoeta. Mgr. Paolino Doggale, the Apostolic Administrator of Juba, was also there and was supposed to appoint the Priests to their different posts.

The five Comboni Confreres held a meeting with Fr. Rovelli. Several issues emerged that needed to be tackled urgently: one concerned leadership among the confreres in the South; another was the problem of the great distance between the two communities of Nzara and Kapoeta - it had been suggested by the confreres of Nzara that it was better to have the communities around Juba - and, finally, the financial issue of the community budget. Immediate answers could not be provided for all these matters. After a meeting with Mgr. Paolino Doggale, the most important and urgent question about Nzara and Kapoeta was dealt with and accepted by our confreres. During the meeting, the Regional Superior reminded the confreres that, before taking up Nzara, an enquiry was carried out by Fr. Lukudu himself with Mgr. Silvestro Laharanya, but there was no follow-up, as a result, Nzara was chosen. Kapoeta, instead, was already proposed as the favourite site for a second opening.

As for the issue of leadership, the matter was left to the care of the Regional Council. The financial problem was taken up with Mgr. Joseph Gasi who, asserted that he had no financial resources, and gave Fr. Rovelli to understand that he would be very thankful if the Combonis could find a solution to it. Fr. Rovelli reiterated the point of the direct responsibility of the Local Church on this issue and Mgr. Gasi agreed in principle. Considering the needy situation of the Prefecture of Mupoï, with only Nzara Parish functioning outside Tombura, place of residence of Bishop Gasi and Fr. Zinkorano, Fr. Rovelli thought it best to postpone the matter.

Regarding the confreres of the community of Kapoeta, they were very eager to get into their missionary work there, without any extraordinary claim for their maintenance and accepting to live as the people were living. In fact, they handled the situation in a simple way, sharing the common life of the Toposa people. Then, Mgr. Paolino Doggale put forward the request of a possible Comboni commitment with the Brothers of St. Martin de

Porres in KIT (Juba). Fr. Joseph Ukelo, who was coming from Uganda, was sent to help a Diocesan Priest in the Parish of Terakeka.²⁴¹

As for the matter of the Expatriate Comboni Missionaries, Bro. Francesco Ragnoli was already in Malakal in 1971 and also Bro. Panfilio Marino. The General Superior requested the latter be transferred to Pordenone (Italy). The Regional Council, backing Bro. Panfilio's desire to remain in Sudan, because he had already planned a working trip in the South to the workshops of Malakal, Wau and Juba, thought it was providential to leave him complete this programme, since it was also for the good of the presence in Southern Sudan. After an extraordinary meeting, the request was presented to the Superior General.²⁴²

Shared experience of Fr. Abel Mödi Nyörkö

“About our experience in the community of Nzara in 1971, we were the first Comboni Missionaries to restart the presence of the Combonis in South Sudan. It was a good experience; we were very keen to start our mission in South Sudan. However, we knew that our Expatriate Confreres would return to South Sudan someday, when the troubles were over. At that time, we belonged to Khartoum Province and some confreres from Khartoum, like Fr. Sina and Fr. De Bertolis, came a couple of times to visit us. We were looking forward to the peace agreement.

Fr. Paolino and I took care of Nzara Parish, but we were also visiting Tombura, Maringido, Source Yubu, Mupoi, Yambio, Maridi and Mundri. We then felt responsible for the missions in Tombura/Yambio Vicariate. We planned our pastoral work very well. We had 41 chapels, each with a Catechist, assisted by committee members. Bishop Joseph Gasi wanted all the Priests in the Parishes to visit the chapels three times per year. This was not always possible, especially when Fr. Paolino and Fr. Urasi were transferred, Fr. Paolino to El Obeid, and Fr. Urasi to Rimenze. I was left alone for three years. I did my best to care for the Parish, the chapels and the primary school we had opened.

Education was important. We decided to open a Comboni Primary School. I was appointed to take charge of the school. Comboni Primary

²⁴¹ Letter of Fr. F. Rovelli to Fr. Sina, Kh. 14 February, 1973. ACR 341/2/3; Meeting of the Council (Khartoum) 11-14 April, 1973. ACR 341/4; Lettera di Collegamento (Link Letter), 1 August, 1973. ACR 341/5/1.

²⁴² Minutes of the Council (Khartoum) 18-20 September, 1971, paragraph 10. ACR 341/4.

*was working very well. Twice it was the first in the whole of Western Equatoria. Our dream was to have Primary, Junior and Senior Secondary. I got enough land for all these levels. Thank God today we have the Primary and the Junior running in Nzara.*²⁴³

The Extraordinary Sudan Episcopal Conference and Priorities

From 28 to 30 March, 1973, there was an extraordinary meeting of the Sudan Episcopal Conference²⁴⁴ with H. E. the Pro-Nuncio, Archbishop Ubaldo Calabresi. All the Ordinaries were present, except that of Rumbek, due to unforeseen circumstances. There was also a representative of *Cor Unum* from Rome and the secretary of Sudanaid. This extraordinary meeting was very important because it dealt with the reconstruction of the South and with the most important priorities and issues of the time. These priorities were the starting point of a plan of action in which all the components of the *Local Church* were affected. Since the Comboni Missionaries and the other Religious Institutes were an integral part of the Sudanese Local Church, the outcome of this Episcopal Conference was, therefore, a challenge to all and to their active involvement in it.

The meeting was opened by H. G. Archbishop Calabresi with a prayer. He had words of thanks for the success of the celebration of his 25th anniversary of Priestly ordination and for the fact that this extraordinary meeting of the Sudanese Episcopal Conference was taking place. He introduced the Rev. Fr. H. De Riedmatten from *Cor Unum* in Rome who came to explain how best to set up the reconstruction program and Rev. Fr. Arthur Dejemeppe who was to stay with Sudanaid Secretariat to coordinate and implement the projects. The agenda of the meeting outlined the most important issues to be tackled and reflected upon for future actions. Here I wish to deal with them briefly, according to the various fields of activity within the Local Church of Sudan.

Seminaries

The first and most important priority of the Ordinaries was clearly the preparation of the Local Clergy. This was the issue into which they were putting their hearts and it was their first concern. It was evident that this was supposed to be the first priority also for the Religious and Missionary

²⁴³ 21 July, 2016, Shared experience of Fr. Abel Mödi Nyörkö.

²⁴⁴ Extraordinary meeting of the Sudan Episcopal Conference, Khartoum, 28-30 March, 1973. ACR C/342/2/9.

Institutes which were ready to offer their service to the Local Sudanese Church.

Points one, two and three of the agenda were about the situation of the various Seminaries. First, the **Major Seminary** in need of a new rector: the person proposed was Rev. Fr. Paolino Lukudu, a Comboni Missionary, subject to the approval of his religious Superiors; Rev. Fr. Joseph Nyekindi was proposed as the Vice Rector, and Fr. Jocondo as the Spiritual Director. As for the location it was agreed that the provisional location, until a permanent one could be found, was to be **Busserie** (Wau). However, since the place was still occupied by the Anya-Nya Armed Forces, it was agreed that it should be moved to the premises of Juba Senior Seminary, on a temporary basis.

The second point concerned the **Senior Secondary Seminary** which was experiencing administrative difficulties and had several problems. It was decided that it should be moved to Rimenze, since there was a large area for agriculture and the houses of the Fathers and Sisters could be used as dormitories, classrooms and for other needs. Fr. Gaetano Gottardi, a Jesuit Brother and Bro. Angelo of Wau were proposed to go there to carry out immediate repairs, subject to the approval of their Superiors.

The third point was again about the personnel in the Seminaries, in this case, those abroad in Uganda, the Sudanese Major Seminarians in **Katigondo** and **Gaba**. Their major problem was pocket money that for some reason was decreasing whereas *the cost of living was increasing*.

Education

The fourth priority was **EDUCATION** in schools, and precisely the appointment of **Religion Teaching Inspectors in the Southern Region**. This was a very important issue and opportunity, considering the fact that, since independence, the government of Khartoum had tried in many ways to dismantle the Christian schools, both Catholic and Protestant. It was decided that the contract be permanent in nature, that the Priest be appointed by the Sudan Episcopal Conference, and that the Ordinary of Juba be the one contacting the Regional Government. Fr. Jacob Rondiang was appointed by the SEC as *Inspector in the Southern Region*. Meanwhile, the Religion Teaching Training Course of Khartoum was transferred to Malakal and Mgr. Pio Yukwan was asked to supply a Priest to run the centre.

Reconstruction of the South

On the matter of the *Reconstruction of the South* and other issues dealing with all the practical affairs and projects of development, SUDANAID was to hold a crucial position in the service of the Local Church of Sudan and Southern Sudan; hence a **STATUTE FOR SUDANAID** (*Sudanese Caritas*) was necessary. In this meeting, a draft of the statutes was submitted to the SEC, discussed, corrected and approved unanimously. It was decided that Sudanaid should locate its office in Khartoum and provide all the necessary equipment, and that Fr. Mark Lothong be sent to Swansea University to take a one-year course in Social Policy and administration to prepare himself and, in due course, to replace the General Secretary. It was also suggested that a lay person be prepared to take up the job, in due course.

On this topic, there was the presentation of the report of Bishop Baroni on fund-raising for reconstruction in the South. This fund-raising entailed the reconstruction of churches, the purchase of vehicles for the Parishes, leper rehabilitation centres and Mass intentions. A priority list was made totalling 29 locations (Parishes and Seminary) in the South and two in El Obeid Diocese. Another issue needing to be tackled was the winding-up of the Procure. The Rev. Fr. Picotti, from the General Curia of the Comboni Missionaries, was sent to audit the General Procure in Khartoum and to control the accounts. He found them in good order. There was the proposal to set aside some money to have a Procure also in the South, but there was no full agreement and the matter was dropped.

Another issue affecting the Ordinaries more directly was the letter of S.C. Propaganda Fide on subsidies to the Ordinaries. Comments and views were expressed.

Ecumenism

Due to the newly acquired autonomy of the South, the **Sudan Council of Churches** (SCC) was in need of some amendments to the constitution in order to allow the participation of Southern Churches in it. Other needs were the creation of a permanent Secretariat and the decentralization of the work with a branch of the Council in each region, (North and South) and to choose replacements for the Director and Assistant Director. A full session of the Sudan Episcopal Conference was dedicated to it and it was unanimously agreed to have one SCC. A committee of 6 persons was formed to study the proposed amendments to the constitution.

Pastoral issues

The importance of pastoral issues such as the training of the Catechists, the personnel for vacant Parishes and the courses of on-going formation and renewal for Priests, needed specific attention for the well-being of the Local Church's pastoral agents. The urgent problem of the **Catechist Training Centres** was discussed at length. It was agreed that, in each Administration, there would be courses for untrained Catechists, that there would be an inter-diocesan Centre near the Teaching Brothers (St. Martin de Porres Brothers) of Kit, so as to give them the chance to take part in the course. This particular point was to be studied by the Superior General (of the Comboni Missionaries) and the Ordinary of Juba. Each ordinary should provide a refresher course for 20 Catechists: the financial cost was presented and also the budgets for year 1973 and 1974.

Considering the fact that the expulsion of the Expatriate Missionaries left many Parishes uncovered, it was seen as urgent to draw up a **collective plan to staff vacant Parishes**. A list was made and a fixed number of expatriate church personnel for each jurisdiction was to be presented to the Central Government, possibly with copies to Catholic Ministers. If the number asked were granted, then the names would be supplied. There was the acknowledgement that the Mill Hill Fathers were willing to go and work in Malakal and a group of 10 young Capuchins from Malta were eager to work in Southern Sudan. The list of vacant Parishes was:

- **Wau:** Mayen, Nyamlel, Gordhim, Kayango, Mbili, Thiet, Warap, Bussere
- **Rumbek:** Yirol, Mundri, Porkele, Tore, Kajo-Kaji.
- **Juba:** Tali, Kworijik, Kit, Lirya, Rejaf, Lowoi, Okaru, Isoke, Lerwa.
- **Malakal:** Tonga, Lul, Malakal, Tumierwau, Yoynyang, Riangnom, Detwok.
- **Mupoi:** Maringindo, Ezo, Naandi, Yubu, Rimenze.

Finally, regarding the planned **Pastoral work-study week for the clergy at Juba and Wau**, which was supposed to be held in Khartoum in March, there were difficulties in sending the Priests there. It was decided to postpone it to November 1973, from 1 to 30, in order to give time to the Priests still outside the country to return. There was also a collective letter from the Priests of Rumbek Vicariate objecting to the proposal of the change of boundaries of the Vicariate. The letter was given attentive consideration, but the ordinaries decided to examine it later on.

(full agenda ref. Appendix to Part One, Section Three, point no. 1)

Moving Ahead

By the middle of 1973, requests were made to have entry permits for personnel to work in two leprosy commitments and the feedback was not clear. Bishop Pio Yukwan Deng, from Malakal, asked officially for Comboni personnel for Yoynyang, Tonga, Lul and Detwork but, before any decision was made on this point, it was important to see the outcome of the requests for permits for the leprosy commitments. However, the positive attitude of Bishop Pio Yukwan on the question of seeing to the permits was viewed as very encouraging and to be supported.²⁴⁵ As for the language, Arabic was considered necessary for the new undertakings. Another issue was the imminent erection of the Bishops' Hierarchy in Sudan. This would mean that *agreements* with the Bishops were needed.

The bilateral agreements were not meant to diminish the Bishops' authority on the Religious Personnel but to be an expression of *co-responsibility* between Bishops and Religious Institutes. The agreement was to help the smooth running of commitments and personnel involved, stating the responsibilities involved in the process, taking into account the care of the confreres and settling also the matter of finance. Some confreres were asked to carry out commitments individually; the Regional Council was clearly against the permanent appointment of confreres outside a Comboni Community.²⁴⁶

The applications for three Fathers and three Brothers for the leprosy programme were rejected by the government on 15 August, 1973, while the entry visas for Bro. Confalonieri, Bro. Gelmini and Bro. Bonzi, requested for the reconstruction of Sudanaid were granted on 16 August, 1973. The entry visa for Fr. V. Dellagiacoma was also rejected. The result of the application for the entry visas was a matter of reflection for everybody, but the General Administration needed to interpret it and give proper directives on the issue. Sometimes the Superiors, with regret, could see that certain difficulties were coming not so much from the Government, but from certain Ordinaries themselves and certain Diocesan Clergy in their constituencies. What was encouraging, though, was the general appreciation of other members of the Clergy with a welcoming attitude.

²⁴⁵ Letter of Fr. Rovelli to Fr. General, Kh., 29 April, 1973. ACR 341/2/3.

²⁴⁶ Fr. Agostoni to Fr. Rovelli, Rome, 21 May, 1973. ACR. 341/2/3, ACR. 341/2/3; Minutes of the Council (Khartoum), 28 June, 1973. ACR 341/4; Lettera di Collegamento (Link Letter), 1 August, 1973. ACR 341/5/1.

The Regional Superior and his Council was eager to appoint confreres to the South, but with the firm policy that they would do so only as long as the Ordinaries would take care of the applications for permits. The reaction of the Local Church authorities appeared to them also very clear along the following lines:

- 1) The applications for visas should be made only by the Ordinaries of the South.
- 2) The Ordinaries of the South alone will have to take care of the permits.
- 3) All the confreres concerned should keep in mind this procedure and understand how harmful their *private initiatives* would be.

Since what the Ordinaries of the South were asking for was to have Comboni Brothers for reconstruction, with the above principles in mind, the Regional Council was then trying to find a way of taking care of their religious assistance so that they would not be abandoned to their material work. There were various possibilities: one was to apply for a new Priest (Father), the other was to get a confrere who was a radical member from the South and the third possibility was to make available a confrere from the North. The regional Superior was counting on Fr. Magalasi and Fr. Ibele but, at that time, they were not available yet.²⁴⁷

The matter of the application for permits was very delicate because it involved the sensitive policy of the Government and of the Ordinaries on one side and that of the Comboni Missionaries on the other. It was not just a matter of applications, but more of screening former personnel who may or may not have been approved, either by the Government or the Local Ordinaries. As for the General Administration, the matter was also rather difficult and delicate since they could not make available only *a certain type of confreres*. Due to reasons we took into account with the issue of the *Moratorium*, though in Sudan the moratorium was imposed by the government with the expulsion, dispensing the Local Church from the issue, it was clear that the whole matter was not cool under the surface and resentment may have been still there. Everything needed to be interpreted and faced in an open and balanced way, or better, in a true Christian way.

Surely the Government was not as interested in giving permits to Expatriate Priests as to people who could help in the social field. The same trend was there for the Local Ordinaries: they were asking for Brothers²⁴⁸

²⁴⁷ Minutes of the Council (Khartoum), 20-27 September, 1973. ACR 341/4; Lettera di Collegamento (Link Letter), 1 October, 1973. ACR 341/5/1.

²⁴⁸ Fr. Agostoni to Fr. Rovelli, Rome 6 September, 1973. ACR. 341/2/3.

so that they might renovate the buildings of former institutions which needed urgent repairs. They were less inclined to ask for Fathers/Priests who may have interfered in their newly acquired freedom from the former missionaries. This, as we have seen from the assessment of the Superiors, was giving way to a certain exploitation of the Brothers, without taking into account their religious and spiritual needs while they were busy with practical work. The reluctance to have proper bilateral agreements opened the way to several misunderstandings that would sour mutual relations. All this needed to be properly tackled in order to prepare a process of true collaboration and common trust. All sides had certainly to work hard to achieve that, since neither side was totally faultless in that time of change.

Taking care of the application for permits was considered a sign of real interest in having Comboni personnel in the South and this depended directly on the real interest of the Ordinaries. Any *Comboni push* in this regard would have been seen as overstepping the mark.²⁴⁹ The particular situation of the time required the strengthening of trust on both sides. This was not only a matter between Local Ordinaries and Comboni Missionaries, but also within the Local Clergy, and within the Dioceses themselves. Renewed trust was also needed between the Clergy who remained in Sudan and returnee Clergy with experience abroad as refugees in the neighbouring countries. The difficulties regarding leadership, tasks and assignments were realities to be faced by the Ordinaries with due care and attention.

Hidden fears, prejudice and gossiping were of no help in creating a positive environment, which needed the contribution of Indigenous Clergy and Religious People, as well as the contribution of the *Expatriate Missionary Personnel*, called to assist especially in the Seminaries and other Institutions in need of specialized skills. Other Institutes were invited to work in Southern Sudan by the Ordinaries with the Jesuits among the first, followed by others. Their presence was considered positive and enriching for the Church of Southern Sudan.

As Comboni Missionaries, it was necessary to get into the new environment with an open spirit. The presence of the Comboni Radical Members was a new *spearhead* within the Local Church. They themselves, however, were possible targets of prejudice, being both Combonis and Sudanese. They were closely watched in their behaviour and attitudes like people still learning to fit in.

²⁴⁹ Fr. Rovelli to Sup General, Kh. 29 April, 1973; Atbar, a 31 May, 1973; Fr. Agostoni to Fr. Rovelli, Rome 21 May, 1973; Rome, 6 September, 1973. ACR 341/2/3.

This may have been the case in Nzara where there was a certain degree of reluctance on the part of the Local Clergy to accept the presence of the Sudanese Comboni Confreres, reinforced also by the fear that they would be another means for the Comboni Institute to keep hold of key responsibilities at the expense of the Local Clergy. Even the fact that Bishop Domenico Ferrara held the post in spite of the expulsion was giving credit to such an interpretation.

As to the Sudanese Comboni Radical Members, some of them had already years of missionary experience and some were just new. They themselves had to find their place within the Local Church, without giving up what was specific to their missionary vocation, and without behaving as if they were Diocesan Priests. At this particular time, the understanding of the difference between the two types of vocation did not seem so evident.

At the same time, the Comboni confreres had also to face the great challenge of working out their Comboni Vocation in a different way than the Expatriate Confreres. Their way of *inculturating* their Comboni Vocation and Ministry was surely a big challenge too. No one else could do this for them. They themselves were called to find their own way to express their specific Comboni Missionary identity without isolating themselves and in communion with the whole Institute. So, *personal freedom and equality*, which the Regional Council was advocating for them, were needed in order for them to find the way to re-express their being Religious and Missionaries in the context of Southern Sudan.²⁵⁰

Fr. Louis Lotimoi Nyabanga

Fr. Lotimoi Nyabanga Louis was a Didinga from Chukudum and was ordained on 9 June, 1972. He took his first vows in Lachor (Uganda) on 31 May, 1973, and was then appointed to Kapoeta. He was elected by the Socialist Union Party for the Didinga district as a Member of the Regional Parliament in the South. He died in a car accident on 29 July, 1974, in Juba.

He was one of the three Priests (Fr. Vincent and Fr. Zakary) who agreed to be elected as Members of the Regional Parliament. The Episcopal Conference had very severe words to say regarding these three cases because of the obvious matters involved, but especially because they saw the great risk of making people and government think that the Church was involved in politics at the expenses of its spiritual responsibility. They

²⁵⁰ Minutes of the Council (Khartoum) 11-14 April, 1973, paragraph. ACR 341/4.

ordered that they should carry out their political duties outside the premises of the Church in order to give a clear message to everybody.²⁵¹

Fr. Louis, was a very precise and punctual person in his activities, as a Member of the Regional Parliament, and was held in very high esteem by everybody, especially by his own Didinga people. He had his residence in room no. 4 of the Procure of Juba. As a Priest, he was exercising his pastoral ministry without any regard for himself and, especially on Sundays, he used to go to the most difficult places. On Sunday the 28 July, Fr. Rovelli, the Regional Superior, went to greet him but he was told he had gone to celebrate Holy Mass on an island 10 Km south of Juba, a very dangerous trip by local canoe in the middle of the river Nile during the rainy season.

On Monday afternoon of 29 July, he was in a Land Rover, beside the driver, going down from the hospital near to the Procure towards Kator. A big lorry was coming from the opposite direction and both were travelling at a fair speed. In order to avoid a cyclist, the driver swerved abruptly towards the middle of the road and crashed into the lorry. The impact was terrible and Fr. Louis died instantly. On 30 July, 1974, his funeral was held in the church of the Juba Procure (St. Joseph Parish) with all the Priests of Juba and in the afternoon he was taken to be buried in Chukudum, according to the wishes of his people.²⁵²

The Issue of the Permits and the Jonglei Canal

Towards the end of 1974 the issue of the entry permits seemed to get some positive results, particularly after a request by Mgr. Ireneo Dud, on behalf of Fr. Pasquale Boffelli and Fr. Dino Rebellato, with the intention of opening a catechetical centre in Nyamlel. Before leaving for Rome for the Synod on Evangelization, Mgr. Ireneo Dud showed Fr. Rovelli the permits, but when Bishop Dud left, a letter was sent from the Bishop's office to Fr. Rovelli stating that the government would grant permits only in cases where there were no local personnel qualified for the post. This left Fr. Rovelli rather puzzled and gave rise to perplexities and different interpretations regarding the whole matter. Surely this did not help to

²⁵¹ Fr. F. Rovelli to Fr. General, Kh. 6.3.74, ACR 341/2/3; Circular letter of the Sudan Episcopal Conference to the Sudanese Clergy, in Lettera di Collegamento (Link Letter), Jan. 1974, ACR 341/5/2.

²⁵² Fr. F. Rovelli to Fr. General, Kh. 20.8.74, ACR 341/2/3. Bollettino FSCJ, 107, 1st Jan. 1975, pp. 66-67.

promote a feeling of being welcome. The whole process related to the matter of entry permits revealed also an underground division of attitudes within Church Leadership in Wau, as well.

Fr. Rovelli and Fr. Agostoni understood that the issue needed more time to find the right approach and to resolve hidden fears of the past, both in regard to the Government and to the Ordinaries.²⁵³ More success, instead, appeared to have been achieved by Malakal Diocese with Bishop Pio Yukwan, who confirmed the possibility of obtaining permits in Malakal.²⁵⁴ This instance showed that the way forward was a slow process requiring patience, understanding, perseverance and great humility in the whole approach.

Towards the end of 1974, on the political side, the situation in Juba became very critical due to the construction of the Jonglei canal. When the first contingents of Egyptians arrived for the project, the people of Juba held a mass demonstration with three days of strikes with cars being burnt and some fatalities, dozens of wounded and shops being looted; people paralyzed the town and a curfew was announced. The Egyptians were taken back to Egypt by plane.²⁵⁵ The Jonglei canal remained a hot issue until it had to be suspended altogether in the eighties. Among these uncertainties, one big event in the Catholic Church was imminent and would make a real change to the future of the Catholic Church in Sudan and of evangelization: the erection of the Catholic Hierarchy in the Sudan.

The situation of the Comboni Missionaries in the South

In 1973 Bro. Rodolfo Cogliati and Bro. Tarcisio Soardi were asked by Caritas, through the Pro-Nuncio, to go to Yubu to restore the buildings annexed to the Hospital. Since their permits were expiring, the perception was that it was better not to ask for a renewal and that they should go back to Khartoum.²⁵⁶

By September 1973, the Sudanese Radical confreres of Southern Sudan (*Zone Circumscription South*) had the joy of becoming ten in number: Fr. Hector Ayon, Fr. Louis Lotimoi Nyabanga, Fr. George Longokwo, Fr.

²⁵³ Fr. Rovelli to Fr. General, Kh. 7 October, 1974; Ireneo Wien Dud, Vic. Apost. of Wau, to V. Rev. Fr. Gabriel Zubeir, Vicar Delegate, Wau, copy to Fr. Rovelli 22 September, 1974; Fr. Zubeir to Fr. Rovelli, Wau, 1 October, 1974. ACR 341/2/3.

²⁵⁴ Fr. General to Fr. Rovelli, Rome 12 December, 1974. ACR 341/2/3.

²⁵⁵ Fr. Rovelli to Fr. General, Kh. 28 October, 1974. ACR 341/2/3.

²⁵⁶ Lettera di Collegamento (Link Letter), Bros. Cagliati and Soardi, 1 May, 1973. ACR 341/5/1.

*Paolino Lukudu, Fr. Peter Magalasi, Fr. Abel Mödi Nyörkö, Fr. Joseph Ukelo, Fr. David Urası, Fr. Hilary Boma, and Fr. Angelo Ibele.*²⁵⁷

At the same time Bro. Ambrogio Confalonieri and Bro. Ottorino Gelmini arrived for the work of reconstruction in the South, requested by the Ordinaries, but were then diverted to Juba to work for the projects of Sudanaid. The Ordinary of Juba agreed that the Comboni Community could have a separate residence and that they should remain together in the various works needed in different locations. As for a fixed financial support to the Brothers, there was no commitment. The works were sponsored by Sudanaid while the machinery remained the property of the Comboni Community.

Bro. Ragnoli was given a commitment to set up some social centres sponsored by Sudanaid in Malakal, but he was advised not to take commitments on his own without a decision from the Regional Superior. He was left free to reside in a Comboni Community or elsewhere according to the works. Instead, regarding the proposal of Bro. Ragnoli to have a “*key centre*” in Malakal for the works in the South, the Council thought it was still premature. As for Kapoeta and Nzara the Ordinaries were giving some financial contribution to the confreres.²⁵⁸

Bro. Confalonieri and Bro. Gelmini, who were in Juba by December, 1973, started their work in KIT by April, 1974, and began to put in order various premises for the Sudanese *St. Martin de Porres Brothers* and Aspirants (4 Brothers and 18 Aspirants of the 1st Junior Secondary). Fr. Magalasi, who joined them in June 1974, was helping with spiritual direction. The house of the Comboni Community required maintenance as well. Before the works were started, the Region of Khartoum had to provide the financial support for their maintenance, but then it was included in the budget of the projects sponsored by Sudanaid. Fr. Adelmo Spagnolo became the Superior General of the Sudanese Brothers of Kit.

As for Nzara, the work was very well organized with 40 chapels and a school with three Sudanese Sisters helping them. Since Fr. Urası was busy with the works in Rimenze, Fr. Lukudu was appointed Superior of the community and Fr. Urası was attached to it. In Kapoeta Fr. Longokwo and Fr. Ukelo had also a lot of work to be carried out, while in Chukudum the death of Fr. Louis Lotimoi left Fr. Ayon alone. Fr. Boma would join him

²⁵⁷ Instructions for the election of the zonal delegates to the Assembly of the Regional Directory, from the minutes of the Reg. Council September, 1973, Zone Circumscription South. ACR 341/4.

²⁵⁸ Minutes of the Reg. Council, January, 1974. ACR 341/4.

after Christmas 1974, according to the agreement with Mgr. Paolino Doggale. For Nyamlel, instead, Fr. Pasquale Boffelli and Fr. Dino Rebellato, who were supposed to be there since October, because of the unforeseen misunderstanding on the permits mentioned before, had to postpone their departure until the return of Bishop Ireneo Dud from the Synod of Rome.²⁵⁹ With the erection of the Catholic Hierarchy, Mgr. Ireneo Dud was moved to Juba and the issue had to be dealt with by the new Bishop Mgr. Gabriel Zubeir Wako, himself.

The Erection of the Catholic Hierarchy 1974

On 12 December, 1974 the local Catholic Hierarchy²⁶⁰ and the Sudan Episcopal Conference (SEC) were established. In 1976 it became known as the ***Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference (SCBC)*** with headquarters in Khartoum. This was a historical event in the history of the Catholic Church in the Sudan and, from this time onwards, the Local Church was to be considered fully established in the country. The dream of St Daniel Comboni and the evangelization work of the Comboni Missionaries found its fulfilment with the erection of the ***Catholic Hierarchy in the Sudan***.

This event was a real ***turning point*** also in the experience of the Comboni Missionaries. They had to look forward towards a new way of being missionaries in South Sudan. They were no longer the only protagonists of the Mission, but they would live their missionary vocation hand in hand with ***the Local Church***.

This great event, was not only a matter of ***Leadership Change*** but of leading the whole Church into a new experience towards a ***fully mature Local Church*** whose key dimension was to be ***missionary, to evangelize***²⁶¹ with the Bishops who had the responsibility of seeing that their own Local Churches/Dioceses should become fully grown and mature.

²⁵⁹ - Minutes of the Reg. Council, 16-19 October, 1974. ACR 341/4.

- Bishop Ireneo Dud to V.R. Fr. Phillip Sina, Wau, 19 October 1972, Short term plan for reactivation and evangelization in the Vicariate Apostolic of Wau.

²⁶⁰ <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/events/day1212.html> ; V. Dellagiacomia, History, op. cit., p. 87.

²⁶¹ Evangelii Nuntiandi, 14 . "Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize"

The Catholic Hierarchy of Sudan

On 12 December, 1974²⁶² the Vicariates and Apostolic Prefectures were elevated to Dioceses and the Catholic Hierarchy was as follows:

- The Apostolic Vicariate of El Obeid
was elevated to the **Diocese of El Obeid**, with
Mgr. **Paolino Lukudu Loro** (FSCJ)
as Apostolic Administrator.
- The Apostolic Vicariate of Juba
was elevated to the **Archdiocese of Juba**, with
His Grace **Ireneo Wien Dud** as Archbishop.
- The Apostolic Vicariate of Khartoum
was elevated to the **Archdiocese of Khartoum**, with
His Grace **Agostino Baroni** (FSCJ) as Archbishop.
- The Apostolic Prefecture of Malakal
was elevated to the **Diocese of Malakal**, with
Mgr. **Pio Yukwan Deng** as Bishop.
- The Apostolic Vicariate of Rumbek
was elevated to the **Diocese of Rumbek**, with
Mgr. **Gabriel Dwatuka Wagi** as Bishop.
(appointed 24 Jan. 1976)
- The Apostolic Prefecture of Mupoi
was elevated to the **Diocese of Tombura**, with
Mgr. **Joseph Gasi Abangite** as Bishop.
- The Apostolic Vicariate of Wau
was elevated to the **Diocese of Wau**, with
Mgr. **Gabriel Zubeir Wako** as Bishop.

In 1979, Mgr. Paolino Lukudu was elected Bishop of El Obeid and Mgr. Vincent Mojwok Bishop of Malakal. Their consecration took place in Rome, in the Basilica of St. Peter, by Pope John Paul II on 27 May, 1979.²⁶³ This was a great event, not only for the Local Church of Sudan, but also for the Comboni Missionaries. The Bishops were joyfully welcomed the following day to the Comboni Generalate in Rome for a solemn Eucharistic Celebration. The two Sudanese Bishops, together with a third, Mgr. Armido Gasparini for Ethiopia, were the main celebrants. On that occasion, precisely five years after the erection of the Hierarchy, after

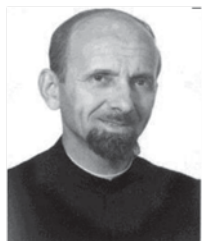
²⁶² <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/events/day1212.html>

²⁶³ MCCJ Bulletin, no. 125, July, 1979, p. 31

the meal in the refectory of the Comboni scholasticate, Bishop Gabriel Zubeir Wako gave a very important, straight-forward and powerful talk about the new situation of the Church in Sudan and the need of a Comboni Missionary presence, but with a new attitude.²⁶⁴

Homily of the Superior General, Fr. Tarcisio Agostoni:

on the occasion of the erection of the Sudanese Catholic Hierarchy



Looking at the history of the journey of Church in the Sudan of the recent past years, with its political and religious happenings, the relationship of the Comboni Missionaries with the new situation was not easy and its progress was a bit like a swing which needed to find a proper sense of balance and a proper place. It was the responsibility of the General Superiors and their Councils and of the Regional Superiors to acquire first this proper sense of balance and then help the confreres to develop their own, as well, in the practical field of their missionary ministry.

In this regard, there was a very important homily given in Khartoum by the Superior General, the Rev. Fr. Tarcisio Agostoni, on the occasion of the erection of the Catholic Hierarchy in the Sudan. He took up the issue in front of the confreres stating clearly the meaning and the bearing of this great event and turning point constituted by the erection. He tried to help all the Confreres (and Sisters) to enter into the new legacy with the right spirit and attitude. Due to the importance of this homily, I want to recall its main points here and give the full text in the appendix.

After some few historical notes, Fr. Tarcisio Agostoni pointed out that, with the erection and the establishment of the Sudanese Hierarchy, the ***Jus Commissionis***, that is the mandate of the Comboni Missionaries for the evangelization of Sudan, reached its conclusion. However, ***if requested by the Ordinaries of the Local Church, the Combonis would accept to remain***. In any case, ***they will remain in a different way*** at the service of the Local Church, ***who alone will have the authority and the responsibility***

²⁶⁴ The writer of this historical account was present in that circumstance, since he was in Rome for the Scholasticate and for the Licentiate in Missiology at the Urbaniana University. He was quite impressed by the very bold talk, the content of which he personally considered a “normal thing” in the context of missiology, but very tough in relation to the concrete “human” situation on the ground. He got a real feeling that there was a lot of work to be done, on both sides, to get the situation on the right track.

of decision-making regarding the matter of evangelization. This service, in order to be properly carried out, would necessarily need a juridical instrument, like a convention, to be drawn up between the Ordinary and the Comboni Institute.

He stated that the service to be given will be on a *qualified temporary basis*, on the lines of the *ad gentes mission*, in a context of *first evangelization* and among the *most poor and abandoned*.

As for the priorities of this mission, he put first the *formation of Priests and Religious Men and Women*, and the *formation of Catechists and Lay Leaders*. He confirmed that the service would be given in a spirit of *co-responsibility* and *subsidiarity*. Then, aware of the existing great needs, constituted by all the above realities, he called for other Religious Institutes of Priests, Brothers and Sisters, to get involved in this undertaking. Finally, he manifested a deep sense of joy and satisfaction to see fulfilled the plan of Comboni of *saving Africa with Africa*.²⁶⁵

(full text ref. Appendix to Part One, Section Three, point no. 2)

Comboni personnel 1974-1975 and other initiatives

The work in the South was proceeding under the religious jurisdiction of the Region of Khartoum with Fr. Ferruccio Rovelli as Regional Superior. Things were moving slowly, but his commitment to the South brought about the presence of the first Comboni Communities and other social commitments, especially with the Comboni Brothers in the South. The General Administration in Rome, of course, was encouraging this process without forcing the situation, but with constancy and their full support. The commitments in the South in the year 1974 were as follows:²⁶⁶

NZARA: Fr. David Urasì (*from 1972*), Fr. Abel Mödi (*from 1971*),
Fr. Paolino Lukudu (*from 1971 to 1974*).

KAPOETA: Fr. George Longokwo (*from Moroto-Uganda 1972*),
Fr. Hector Ayon (*from Nabilatuk, Mototo-Uganda 1972*), Fr.
Louis Lotimoi (*from 1973-1974*). *He died in a car accident in Juba on 29 July.*

TERAKEKA: Fr. Joseph Ukelo (*temporary assistance; this mission was run by Diocesan Clergy*).

²⁶⁵ Homily of Fr. Tarcisio Agostoni on the occasion of the erection of the Catholic hierarchy in the Sudan. Khartoum 14 April, 1975. "Omelia ai missionari in Sudan" MCCJ Bulletin 109/4-7.

²⁶⁶ Catalogo, op. cit., 1 January, 1974.

In February, 1975, there were ten Comboni Missionaries working in Southern Sudan: three Fathers in Kapoeta-Chukudum with 30 Catechists; three in Nzara-Rimenze with 40 Catechists; one Father (Fr. Magalasi) and two Brothers (Bro. Gelmini and Bro. Confalonieri) in KIT (Juba), working with Sudanaid; one Brother in Malakal (Bro. F. Ragnoli) also working with Sudanaid and living in community with two Diocesan Priests in charge of the Minor Seminary.²⁶⁷ Fr. Boma was the new Superior and Parish Priest of Nzara and newly elected Councillor in the Regional Council of Khartoum.

In April, 1975, the Superior General, Fr. Agostoni, paid a visit to the South. The topics discussed on that occasion during the meeting in Kit (About 15 km. outside of Juba), were about a house in Juba and Comboni Vocations. Vocation promotion done in a spirit of faith and prayer was seen not only as a way of increasing the number of Local Comboni Missionaries but also an opportunity to offer better support and cooperation to the diocesan Local Priests.²⁶⁸ It was agreed that, for the time being, the reference point of residence should be *KIT* and that a couple of Brothers should be assigned for the needed works.²⁶⁹

Regarding the issue of Comboni House, the Schools in Juba and the already mentioned Comboni Aspirants, steps were quickly taken up by Fr. Magalasi in the name of the Comboni Missionaries and applications were made. He applied for the schools (one for boys and one for girls) to the Ministry of Education on 19 May. The approval of the Minister arrived on 28 of May.

The Superior General confirmed through Fr. Hilary Boma that the above proposals had been approved. He gave instructions on how to proceed for the purchase or lease of the land. He asked first for the approval of Khartoum Province and that a proper plan and cost estimate be made by expert people.²⁷⁰

Ecclesiastical Situation in the South 1975

It is quite interesting to see the report of Khartoum on the overall ecclesiastical situation in the South in January 1975. As Comboni

²⁶⁷ Minutes of the Reg. Council, 24-28 February, 1975. ACR 341/4.

²⁶⁸ Fr. Hilary Boma to Nzara community, 28 April, 1975. (on the meeting of Kit of 7 April, 1975). ACR 583/3/1.

²⁶⁹ Minutes of the First meeting of the Combonian Fathers of Southern Sudan (Superior Gen. present), Juba (Kit) 7 April, 1975, Fr. Hilary Boma secretary. ACR 583/3/1.

²⁷⁰ Fr. Agostoni to Fr. Hilary Boma, Rome, 22 June 1975, 395/75. ACR 583/3/1.

Missionaries we were giving our contribution through the work of our Sudanese Radical Members, but it was clear that the main burden of the pastoral activity was on the shoulders of the Sudanese Diocesan Clergy. We should note, as well, how many Parishes still had no Priests. The majority of those with Priests had only one. This meant that the Clergy were fully stretched in order to meet basic needs. This would play a very negative role in the matter of finding time for ongoing formation and personal spirituality. This was happening at a time when, in the Church at large, such personal ongoing formation and spirituality was a top priority. The situation was indeed critical from this point of view.²⁷¹

The following statistics help us to understand how much the various Christian Communities (Churches) in Southern Sudan needed assistance and the pressing need to overcoming the controversies of the past for the good of the people who had the right to be nourished with the Good News of Christ.

Diocese of Juba: Archbishop: H.G. Ireneo Wien Dud

Procure: Fr. James Ladu

Secretary: Fr. Aquilino Wani, Fr. Marco Latong

- KATOR: Fr. Agostino Oboma
- LIRIA: Fr. Anania
- REJAF: Fr. Costantino Pitia
- KADULE': Fr. Quirico
- LOA: Fr. Julio Ida, Fr. Ercolano
- PALOTAKA: Fr. John Baptist Lohitu
- TORIT TOWN: Mgr. Silvestro Laharanya
- TORIT MISSION (Seminary): Fr. Cesario Lukudu, Fr. Aleardo
- LAFON: Fr. Valente
- ISOKE: Fr. Nereo
- **Kapoeta**: Fr. G. Longokwo, Fr. J. Ukelo, Fr. H. Ayon (Chukudum) (*Comboni Missionaries*)
- **Kit** (Juba): Fr. P. Magalasi, Bro. O. Gelmini, Bro. A. Confalonieri (*Comboni Missionaries*)
- *Without Priests*: Tali, Lowoi-Okaru, and Kworijik

Diocese of Malakal:

- Bro. Francesco Ragnoli (*Comboni Missionary/Sudanaid*)

²⁷¹ Situazione Ecclesiastica al Sud, (Ecclesiastic Situation in the South, January, 1975, From Khartoum. ACR 583/2/1.

Diocese of Rumbek: Mgr. Dominic Matong

Fr. Raphael Riel

Bro. Angelo Makur

- THIET TOWN: Fr. Daniel Deng
- TONJ: Fr. John Dinki
- YEI: Fr. Peter, Fr. Tarcisio, Fr. Simon Khamis
- MARIDI: Fr. Gabriel Dwatuka, Fr. Mario Toronigano
- MUNDRI: Fr. Justin
- TORE: Fr. Felix Lokosa

Diocese of Tombura - Mupoi: Bishop Joseph Gasi Abangite

Fr. David Saatini

- YUBU MISSION: Fr. Martin Penisi
 - YUBU TOWN: Fr. Matthew Samusa
 - MUPOI: Fr. Anthony Gaka
 - NAANDI: Fr. Jerome Bidai
 - YAMBIO: Fr. John Mikanipare
 - **NZARA**: Fr. Abel Mödi, Fr. Hilary Boma, Fr. David Uresi
- (Comboni Missionaries)**
- **Without Priests**: Maringindu, Ezo.

Diocese of Wau: Bishop Gabriel Zubeir Wako

Fr. Charles Ufeo, Cathedral

Fr. David Deniki, Secretary

Fr. Marco Matong, (new)

Fr. Raphael Thabit, (new)

- NPAILE: Fr. Charles Ukola
- DEM ZUBEIR: Fr. Lino Rani
- RAGA: Fr. Peter Dabura
- MBORO: Fr. Peter Nambuku
- AWEEL: Fr. Paolo Mongu
- KWAJOK: Fr. Alipio
- **Without Priests**: Raffili, Kayango, Nyamlel, Warap, Mbili, Bussere, Mayen, Gordhiim.

Growing Comboni Commitment in the South

During these years, little by little, some more Expatriate Confreres were granted entry permits for the South. It is quite interesting, after the experience of the journey from the time of the expulsion of the missionaries until the year 1976, to see the reactions of the Ordinaries and of the Local Church of the South where the Comboni Missionaries, both *Radical*

Members and *Expatriates* were working. According to the reports coming from the various visits of the Regional Superior and others who were holding places of responsibility, there was the satisfaction of hearing that the ordinaries were happy with the presence of the Combonis and their activities and that they were asking for more to come in order to increase the number and to take up further commitments.

It was observed that, where the confreres were working in community, the work was better organized and much more fruitful. This was a point to be taken into consideration. A programme, good planning, and the implementation of the pastoral programme were seen as a way of achieving good results in a time where the various commitments were quite demanding. Particularly relevant was the reflection going on regarding the relationship between Comboni *Radical Members* and *Expatriate Members* with the Local Church, Ordinaries, Priests and Laity. It was seen as very important that the missionaries be *incarnated* into the reality of the Local Church and the whole environment in a spirit of mutual esteem, love, reciprocal understanding and prayer, involving all concerned in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the whole enterprise.

The reflection about *incarnation* into the social reality of people and their style of life also included the manner of dress and the type of food to prepare at table. However, this point had no unanimous answers and was not considered very important for a good insertion, though the matter was considered on two levels: within the Comboni community itself and when confreres were visiting people in their environment. What instead was considered very important was the matter of accountability in giving reports to the community and to the authorities concerned about the way funds were used, and to adopt more and more the attitude of having a *community common fund* for the needs of all the members, where all confreres would feel the responsibility of contributing and of sharing what was available from their personal sources such as their benefactors. This sharing was considered meaningful also as a specific African value.²⁷²

The need for pastoral guidelines was of great importance. Due to the lack of pastoral directives, institutions like the Catechumenate were still being carried out using traditional methods, when the new *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* had been promulgated in 1972. The need was felt to form diocesan Presbyteral Councils, to go forward in true dialogue, to have

²⁷² Minutes of the Reg. Council 19-27 July, 1976; Minutes of the Reg. Council 20-26 September, 1976; Minutes of the Reg. Council, Nairobi 14-17 December, 1976. ACR 583/4/2; Minutes of the Reg. Council, 2-8 March, 1977. ACR 583/4/3.

pastoral directives which could answer the situation of the Church in the South of Sudan with good planning of pastoral activity. Some confreres felt these issues very deeply but they were, perhaps, asking too much from the situation of that time but certainly, something had to move in order to open up a better future.

The amount of work to be faced by the Local Church and by our confreres was so great that, without real coordination, they would run the risk of exhaustion. Appointments, changes, too many activities and isolation, were all working against sound development. Kapoeta, Nzara, Juba/Kit, Malakal were all suffering because of this situation. Even though everyone was doing their best to carry on with the commitments received, in fact, it was all too much and was carried out in a dispersed fashion.

The matter of our presence, projects, commitments and lack of personnel in certain locations, needed to be properly considered. The school in Nzara, for example, could possibly have been run by a well-prepared lay person, thus leaving the Father free for pastoral commitments. The presence in the area of Kapoeta, instead, was possibly better served by Comboni personnel than Diocesan Priests because of the strong tribalism there. The internal life of the communities was sometimes hindered because of lack of time to meet and too many commitments, especially on the side of the Brothers. All these realities had to find a balance in order to create a proper smoothly-running community environment. Moreover, the issue of the schools and the house in Juba, proposed during the visit of the Superior General in 1975, already under the consideration of the General Council and to be taken up and considered by the Regional Council of Khartoum, were seen also as priorities during this time.

The Comboni Missionaries' primary focus

The Comboni presence in the South, especially in Juba, lacked a logistic reference point for the confreres, that is, a residence which would allow confreres to gather together and meet when necessary. Moreover, the Conference of Bishops was considering the need for a Secondary School which could give the youth the chance of a better education for the future. Fr. Rovelli and his Council had already started looking into the matter, but it was in the time of the following Regional Council, with Fr. Sina as the Regional Superior, that some specific steps were taken, in line with the Chapter Planning of 1975.

The Schools in Juba

A Secondary School in Juba had already been proposed and was already discussed at Regional Level but, at the end of 1976, the matter became urgent and in need of clear guidelines to implement it. A letter of Fr. Pietro Tiboni, a General Councillor, made the Regional Council aware of the position of the General Council on the matter, giving the conditions and the margins within which they were ready to support the project.

The Junior Secondary School: a letter from a group of Sudanese Clergy of Juba, with the support of Archbishop Ireneo Dud, was written to the Regional Council. They were asking the Combonis to help the Archdiocese to open a Junior Secondary School near the existing St. Joseph's Primary School. The Combonis were invited to help with personnel and finances. This school would then remain the property of the Archdiocese, as was the Primary School, and would remain under its responsibility. Its direction would be in the hands of the Local Clergy in continuity with the Primary School, where the teachers' salaries were paid by the Government and the same was foreseen for the Junior School.

The Senior Secondary School: three years after the opening of the Junior School, a Senior Secondary School should be started, also under the responsibility of the Archdiocese and as its property. This would be the natural continuation of the Junior School and it should be built some kilometres away. The Archdiocese asked the Combonis to help with what was needed for its construction and with their personnel to run it until local personnel were ready to take it over. The two schools would have two streams per class. So they would need six classrooms for the Junior and six for the Senior.²⁷³

At that Regional Council meeting, Fr. Boma also explained the policy of the Regional Government of Juba regarding the application for entry permits. The Government was taking into consideration and giving priority to personnel helping in projects of development, especially if the Expatriate Personnel were preparing local people to take up the administration once they were ready. The Regional Council gave its support to the proposal and asked the Archbishop to re-elaborate it and present it to the Regional Government of Juba.

²⁷³ **Junior School:** also called Intermediate, the three years after the P.6 leaving certificate, (J1, J2, J3); **Senior School:** the three years after the Junior School (S1, S2, S3) preceding University entrance.

The Regional Council, in reply to the encouragement of the General Council, presented the outlines of the following projects for the South proposing also names of confreres that would fit the purpose:

1. A group of Fathers to teach religion in English in a government school centre: the proposed names were Fr. Luigi Cocchi and Fr. Michael Barton. At the moment of opening the Junior and Senior School they could move there.
2. In 1977, a team made up by Fr. Zarate and Fr. G. Pellerino for the Diocese of Wau. Perhaps with a specialized person like Fr. Tessitore in order to produce printed material for school in the Dinka language, if the Bishop was able to get the permits.
3. A team of a Father capable of technical work plus two Brothers with knowledge of English and with experience of mission (under the responsibility of the Regional Superior) and the Bishops' Conference or of a Diocese for any required work.
4. The Regional Council was open to moving personnel from the North, if their place was covered by somebody else.²⁷⁴

In any case, this was the time to look confidently ahead. With patience and constancy, the doors were opening little by little.

January 1978: the communities in the South

With the appointment of Fr. Ottorino Sina on 19 February, 1976, as the new Regional Superior in Khartoum, (*and Fr. Hilary Boma as his Vice-Regional from 21 May*), the General Superior expressed the will that, as Regional Superior, he should spend a good amount of time in the South in order to improve the situation.²⁷⁵ The appointments of confreres and commitments grew in number; by January, 1978, they were as follows:²⁷⁶

Archdiocese of Juba (6 confreres)

Juba: Bro. Augusto Bazzanella, Bro. Ambrogio Confalonieri, Fr. Michael Barton, Bro. Renato Bastianelli, Fr. Luigi Cocchi, Fr. Alfonso Rossi.

²⁷⁴ Minutes of the Regional Council, 14-17 December, 1976, Secondary School in Juba. ACR 583/4/2.

²⁷⁵ Fr. Agostoni to Fr. Rovelli, Rome, 13 December, 1975. ACR 583/2/1; Letter of appointment of Fr. Ottorino Filippo Sina as Regional Superior of Khartoum, Rome, 19 February, 1976. ACR 583/1; Fr. Hilary Boma, Vice Regional, Kh. 21 May, 1976. ACR 583/2/2.

²⁷⁶ Catalogo, op. cit., 1978.

Diocese of Wau

Bussere, Wau-Kwajok: (4 confreres) Fr. Hilary Boma, Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino, Fr. Raffaele Tessitore, Fr. Baltazar Quiroz Zarate.

Diocese of Tombura

Nzara: (3 confreres) Fr. David Urasi, Fr. Abel Mödi, Fr. Joseph Ukelo²⁷⁷ (Mupoi/Tombura)

Diocese of Rumbek

Yei: (2 confreres) Bro. Ottorino Gelmini, Bro. Giuseppe Manara, (in community with Juba/Kit)

Diocese of Malakal

Tonga Parish: given in 1977; Diocese of Malakal. (3 confreres) Fr. Elvio Cellana, Bro. Fahmi Munir, Bro. Francesco Ragnoli.

Absent: (2 confreres) Fr. Hector Ayon (Course, Rome), Fr. Peter Magalasi (due to come for Kit)

Total: 5 communities with 20 Confreres, 11 Fathers, 7 Brothers and 2 absent.

(full list ref. Appendix to Part One, Section Three, point no. 3).

Comboni Missionaries: commitment to renewal

The commitment to a journey of renewal was always a priority and also a difficulty in the situation of Sudan, especially in that of the South, with so many problems in organizing things properly and finding people prepared to give up-to-date inputs. The Regional Assembly of Khartoum, from 14 to 16 June, 1978,²⁷⁸ organized a workshop. The topic was the Christian Community in its social and evangelizing dimension, which finds its communion in the Eucharist through Reconciliation. This was the programme:

1st Day: the social community.

2nd Day: the Christian community (L.G./Ev. N.).

1. How to know, prepare and announce the Word of God
2. The Eucharist and Reconciliation in the community

²⁷⁷ -Mgr. Paolino Lukudu to Fr. Sina, (Fr. Ukelo, proposed spiritual director of the novitiate of the Sudanese Sisters of Mupoi), Bussere-El Obeid 1 May, 1977. ACR 583/3/2.

- Fr. Sina to Mgr. Paolino Lukudu (about Fr. Ukelo) Juba, 21 May, 1977; approval 7 June, 1977. ACR 583/3/2.

- Agreement between SCBC and Comboni Missionaries regarding Fr. Ukelo, Mupoi, Rome, 10 March, 1979. ACR 583/3/2; Fr. Peano to Fr. Sina (on the contract) Rome, 10 March, 1979. ACR 583/3/2.

²⁷⁸ Regional Assembly, Khartoum 14-16 June, 1978. ACR 583/20.

3. How to live unity in the diversity of charisms.

3rd day: the evangelizing religious community.

Ref.: AG.23; AG.5; AG.11, 12, 13, 14, 15; AG.25, 26; LG.44; PC.5, 8.

The Post-Vatican II renewal was of utmost importance and the new situation of the Church in Sudan and Southern Sudan needed a real commitment to live with a new spirit the reality of the Local Church from within, especially in connection with missionary life, lest the many pressing needs, activities and projects should lead confreres into empty activism.

Relationship between Ordinaries and Religious

After the erection of the Catholic Hierarchy, it became clear to the General Administration that agreements between Bishops and the Comboni Institute were very important in order for the relationship among Ordinaries and confreres working in their Dioceses to continue smoothly in the various undertakings. The Superior General, Fr. Agostoni wanted to give some directives on this issue, but felt that the time was not opportune yet, since the Sacred Congregation for Religious, together with the S.C. of Propaganda Fide and other Congregations, was in the process of issuing an *Instruction* on this issue which was already translated into different languages but not yet finalized. He suggested that the President of the *Union of the Superior Generals*, Rev. Fr. Arrupe, involve also the Superior Generals of the Missionary Institutes in editing the *Instruction*.²⁷⁹

The document which bears the signature of **Card. SEBASTIAN BAGGIO**, *Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Bishops* and **Card. EDUARDO PIRONIO**, *Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Religious and for Secular Institutes*, was issued on 14 May, 1978 with the title *Mutuae Relationes*.

Regarding the *Comboni Insertion* into the Local Church, there were confreres who felt uneasy with the Comboni approach of the time. Their perception was that it was time to change, and this was a true issue, but it was not clear how to change and along which paths. It was both an internal issue of the Comboni Missionaries' formation and a desire to have a true perception of what *Local Church* meant and entailed. It was a time in need of renewal and, therefore, not an easy time, but in need of a wider and deeper reflection in order to find a solid basis for the changes.

²⁷⁹ Fr. Agostoni to Fr. Sina, Rome, Relationship Religious-Ordinaries, 24 May, 1978. ACR 583/2/4.

Real difficulties were emerging possibly with confreres of great missionary charisma but without sufficient patience to wait for a diocesan discernment and wider consensus, which needed more time. What I can envisage is that the capacity to involve other confreres in a fruitful sharing, was what was most needed at that precise time in order not to remain stuck in the past but to move forward together in the new situation. Moreover, a full participation in the Diocesan Councils of Priests and in the diocesan planning may have provided the basis for a wider consensus on how to carry on together and clear up possible misunderstandings.

All in all, the tools for reflection and renewal were the same documents of the Church which came out with, and after, the Second Vatican Council, and especially those of the seventies, which were of great help, especially for our missionary life. In fact, this decade was more and more calling for *evangelization* and for the promotion of a better understanding of the vocation of the *Missionaries / Evangelizers Ad Gentes*, within the Local Church, whose deepest vocation was *to be Missionary, and to Evangelize*.

The Comboni House in Juba

It was in May 1979 that the Regional Council proposed officially to the General Administration to have a Comboni House in Juba, as a very urgent matter. The house of Kworejik, that was serving as a Comboni residence for the confreres working in schools in Juba, was only a temporary solution and it was not fit for the future. The possibility of having a plot to build a house was a very difficult matter and to build it was as expensive as buying an existing house. Fr. Ottorino Sina informed the General Administration that, during his visit to Juba, a suitable house was found. It was near the schools and big enough to host the confreres of Juba and, with some adaptations, also those coming from outside. Moreover, since it was near a populated area without a church, it might be possible to have one there in the near future.

Building a new house, in case of real need, could be done later somewhere else, while the present house could then be sold. The owner was ready to sell, but the house was expensive and the Region did not have funds available to buy it. For this reason, the General Administration had to help through other Provinces.²⁸⁰ However, the matter could not reach a positive conclusion and it was left pending. Meanwhile, the consistent

²⁸⁰ Minutes of the Reg. Council 10-13 May, 1979. ACR 583/4/4; Fr. Sina to Fr. General, Kh. 23 May, 1979. ACR 583/2/5.

number of confreres had to endure the lack of proper logistics, which they did in a real spirit of dedication.

The Extraordinary General Chapter, June, 1979 ²⁸¹

The Extraordinary General Chapter of June, 1979 witnessed the re-union between the FSCJ (*Sons of the Sacred Heart of Jesus* – ‘the Italian related branch’) and the MFSC (*Missionaries Sons of the Sacred Heart* – the ‘German-speaking branch’). It was a decision of the joint chapter on 2 September, 1975, and later ratified with a referendum.

On 22 June, 1979, the Holy See issued the Decree of Union of the two congregations and the Extraordinary General Chapter was opened. On 28 July, 1979, the Holy See approved the official title of the reunited congregation: **MCCJ (*Missionarii Comboniani Cordis Jesu*), Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus.**²⁸² This gave considerable impetus to the renewal of the Comboni Missionary spirit in its international dimension.

During this Extraordinary General Chapter, the Region of Khartoum presented its report which took into consideration the historical background of Sudan starting from 1955, the year before independence, the expulsion of the Comboni Missionaries, in 1964, and its aftermath and the positive developments enjoyed with the Addis Ababa Agreement. It acknowledged the favourable attitude of the Juba Regional Government, anxious to promote the development of the Southern Region and its policy approving the entry into the Southern Region of qualified people (missionaries) with the aim of training Sudanese personnel able to run the very institutions for which the permits were asked and given.

The report showed the priorities of the Regional Government in approving social projects for the building or rebuilding of structures in the areas of Juba, Yei, Mupoi, Rumbek, and in the field of education like teaching in Juba Secondary School. It confirmed the approval of all the projects requested at pastoral level such as those of formation of Catechists in Kwajok and Mupoi and the formation of Local Clergy in the National Major Seminary of Bussere. It stated that the situation needed patience and perseverance, but also that the horizon ahead appeared to be much brighter and encouraging. It gave a report on the status of personnel and

²⁸¹ Regione di Khartoum, Relazione per il Capitolo Generale Speciale della Congregazione Riunita, Giugno, 1979. ACR/D/594/12.

²⁸² Annuario Comboniano op. cit., 1 gennaio 1982, p.7.

commitments which differed in several areas from that presented in this historical account up to that time.

The report underlined the concern, in those difficult times, for the number of confreres living in isolation, outside of a Comboni community, because of their work and activity, an issue in need of a proper solution. Another concern was about two Priest confreres who had left the congregation.

Service in the Local Church: the report confirmed that the Region of Khartoum had assumed an attitude of service to the Local Church, both in the North, where the hierarchical frameworks were still almost exclusively Combonian, and in the South, where the hierarchical structure was Sudanese. The stress on the Comboni side was on the recognition of the full responsibility of the Local Hierarchy in the field of pastoral care and collaboration, but as members of the Local Presbyterium, they were willing to give a positive contribution to the planning and execution of pastoral care, as an essential part of the Comboni service.

On the one hand, there was the request that the Local Church should take up full financial responsibility, as far as possible, for the Combonis and speed up growth and self-reliance in this area. On the other hand, the Combonis were willing to serve the Church by seeking the financial means necessary for pastoral work, always in dialogue with the Local Ordinaries. The contracts signed with the Ordinaries would express this attitude of service and the readiness to render any service the Local Church would ask, within the limits of the contract.

However, the report acknowledges also that, in reality, only a few Dioceses had signed the contract and that the issue needed to be followed up properly in order to improve relations. By contrast, the coming to Sudan of other Religious and Missionary Institutes and the existing collaboration with them was presented as very positive and enriching.

Vocations Promotion: the report stated that the first priority was the promotion of vocations to the Diocesan Priesthood and Local Sudanese Religious Societies. It took into account also the evaluation of our Comboni confreres, Sudanese Radical Members, who confirmed that the possibility of young people showing signs of a Comboni Vocation as Aspirants was real, but added that direct Comboni vocations promotion had never been done. The youths who approached our Sudanese confreres as Aspirants were mainly Seminarians but their acceptance should have been preceded by a deeper discernment of their personal and family backgrounds. At that time there was no real vocation director or place of formation, though in

Wau something was proposed. Eventually, Uganda was ready to accept possible Postulants, if they were found eligible.

Economy: The orientations in this field were the Chapter Documents of 1969, which were to give the Region enough economic means to carry out its functions and to form a deeper communal conscience regarding the possession and use of financial means. Progress had been made by the creation of a *Regional Common Fund* made up of a percentage deducted from individual offerings, to be used for various planned initiatives, and a *Community Fund* made up of the offerings of every confrere. The Regional Fund had intervened positively and had helped communities and confreres in the South.

Planning: the priorities were to present to the communities the new Constitutions (of the reunited Comboni Congregation), to solve the problem of the isolated confreres, to increase our presence in the South in dialogue with the Local Church and, according to its needs, to solve the problems connected with school commitments and, **in No. 12.5, the creation of a new independent Circumscription in the South.**

June 1980: the communities in the South

Under the religious jurisdiction of Fr. Sina, as Regional Superior in Khartoum, the confreres and the communities in the South kept gradually increasing and on 1 June, 1980 the Comboni commitments in the South had developed as follows:²⁸³

Archdiocese of Juba

Juba, (4 confreres)

Fr. Luigi Cocchi, *Sup., Teacher*, Bro. Renato Bastianelli, *dioc. work.*, Bro. Augusto Bazzanella, *printing press*, Fr. Alfonso Rossi, *Teacher*.

Kworejik, (2 confreres)

Fr. Michael Barton, *Sup., P. Priest, Teacher*,
Fr. Hector Ayon (though appointed he never came).

Rejaf, (4 confreres)

Parish, reconstruction of the mission, Fr. Tito Giuntoli, *Sup.*, Fr. Mario Busellato, *Parish*, Fr. Giuseppe Farina, *Coadjutor* and Bro. Ambrogio Confalonieri, *projects*.

Diocese of Wau

Bussere, Wau, (1 confrere)

²⁸³ Annuario, op. cit., 1980 supplemento all'annuario 1979, aggiornato al 1° Giugno, 1980.

St. Paul's Major Seminary, Fr. Luigi Penzo, *Spiritual Director*,

Kwajok, WAU, (2 confreres)

Parish and Catech. Centre, Fr. Raffaele Tessitore, *Sup.*, Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino, *Catech. Centre*.

(El Obeid: Cathedral, in the North)

Mgr. Paolino Lukudu, Bishop, Fr. Hilary Boma, Vic. Gen.

Diocese of Tombura

Mupoi, (3 confreres)

Dioc. Catechetical Centre, spirit. Assist. Sisters of the B.V.M., reconstruction of the mission, Fr. Joseph Ukelo, *Sup.*, *spiritual director Sisters*, Bro. Ottorino Gelmini, *projects*, Fr. Pietro Ravasio, *dir. Catech. Centre*.

Nzara, (2 confreres)

Fr. David Urasi, *Sup.*, *Parish Priest*, Fr. Abel Mödi, *Director of Schools*

Diocese of Rumbek,

Rumbek, (3 confreres)

Fr. Peter Magalasi, Bro. Mario Rossignoli (*did not arrive*), Bro. Valentino Fabris, *projects*.

Diocese of Malakal

Tonga, (3 confreres)

Fr. Elvio Cellana, *Sup.*, *Parish*, Fr. Justin Ogen (*arriving*), Bro. Francesco Ragnoli. (for artisan school and development projects).

Total: 9 Communities in the South with 24 confreres, 17 Fathers, 7 Brothers, *plus (2 in El Obeid)*.

(full list ref. Appendix to Part One, Section Three, point no. 4).

These positive results were due to the fact that the issuing of the entry permits was proceeding well and so the personnel kept increasing. This was a very positive development which gave the Comboni presence a foretaste of a brighter future to come about and a wider breadth for further undertakings. Fr. Sina continued to give more and more attention to the development of evangelization and human promotion in the South and, according to the directives of the General Council, helped to mature a more solid presence with personnel coming from abroad, especially in the second half of the seventies.

Commitments in the Dioceses

Archdiocese of Juba

Juba: *Fr. Luigi Cocchi, Bro. Renato Bastianelli, Bro. Augusto Bazzanella, Fr. Alfonso Rossi.*

Archbishop's house and Printing press: Bro. Bastianelli Renato was lodging at the Archbishop's house and was in charge of the projects of the Archdiocese together with Bro. Confalonieri (Rejaf). He was also taking care of the economy of the Juba Comboni Community. As for the works, he was following up the construction of the Archbishop's house and other premises. Bro. Bazzanella, instead, was running the procure of the Archdiocese of Juba and was in charge of building the printing press in St. Joseph's Parish, while lodging there.

The Comboni Secondary Schools of Juba: This was a top priority in the field of education. Fr. Luigi Cocchi, together with two confreres from USA, Fr. Alphonse Rossi and Fr. Michael Barton, after spending 18 months in Cairo waiting for the final entry permit for Sudan, were fortunate enough to get visas. They arrived in Juba in the summer of 1977 to be teachers for the Comboni Secondary School of Juba. They were lodging in an old mission house at Kworijik, some 12 km from the town, a mud building with doors and windows that had become the favourite food of the termites.

They started teaching in the *Junior Secondary School* (intermediate) and were preparing the students to get ready for the *Senior Secondary School*, later on to be called ***Comboni Secondary School Juba (CSSJ)***.

They were travelling to and from the school in an old Land Rover. The school was a real challenge: mixed classes of some sixty teenagers, with no books and no light at night, sometimes even teaching under a tree... But the students were proud of their white teachers!²⁸⁴ Fr. Cocchi was teaching Maths and Fr. Rossi English. They were waiting for the two schools to be built in the hope of finding proper quarters there. However, the project was proceeding slowly and they had to make do with the Kworijik location.

Kwörjik Parish: *Fr. Michael Barton.* Though Fr. Barton was sent to Juba to help teaching in the school he felt that he had to give more time to Arabic and get fully into pastoral work, so he left the school commitment for a language course and then carried on with the pastoral work, leaving to Fr. Cocchi and Fr. Rossi the teaching commitment in the schools. The latter, however, continued to lodge in Kworijik. By late 1978, the house

²⁸⁴ http://www.cocchiluigi.org/sudan_juba.html

had been put in good order by Bro. Ambrogio Confalonieri and living conditions improved. Fr. Ayon was assigned to help in the Parish but never moved from Chukudum.

Project Rejaf/Kit: construction of Rejaf Mission, restarting its activities and caring for the St. Martin Brothers.

Rejaf (Juba): The community of Rejaf was made up of Fr. Tito Giuntoli (Superior), Fr. Mario Busellato, Fr. Giuseppe Farina and Bro. Ambrogio Confalonieri. Fr. Busellato was the Parish Priest, helped by Fr. Giuseppe Farina. Bro. Ambrogio Confalonieri was taking care of the reconstruction of the big mission.

Kit (Juba): Fr. Giuntoli was responsible for the care of the Brothers of St. Martin de Porres, called also the Brothers of KIT. Since 1975, Fr. Hilary Boma was assigned to them and Fr. P. Magalasi was giving them spiritual assistance. Fr. Magalasi was also doing the pastoral work in the area and assisting sick people. By then, Bro. Confalonieri, who was one of the Brothers in charge of the projects in the Archdiocese of Juba, was also taking care of those in Kit.

Diocese of Wau

Bussere (National Major Seminary): *Fr. Luigi Penzo and Fr. Vittorino Dellagiacoma*. Bussere was hosting St. Paul's Major Seminary and the Jesuits were put in charge of it by the SCBC. In 1977 Fr. Hilary Boma was assigned there as part of the teaching staff, professor of liturgy and music. He was also given the responsibility of accompanying the Comboni Aspirants in Bussere and Nazareth in their formation²⁸⁵. Unfortunately, at the time, he was alone. The only hope for a real community was the opening of Kwajok mission, not far away. By 1980, however, he was transferred from Bussere to El Obeid, as Parish Priest of the cathedral and Vicar General of the Diocese. Fr. Luigi Penzo was then assigned as spiritual director of the seminary and Fr. Dellagiacoma followed later.

Kwajok: *Fr. Raffaele Tessitore and Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino and Fr. Baltazar Quiroz Zarate*. The project: reconstruction and reactivation of the mission, the formation of leaders, adult education and other requirements.

The way to Kwajok was not easy: Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino had already arrived in Khartoum on 19 March, 1979, and for two months waited for the arrival of Fr. Raffaele Tessitore and Fr. Baltazar Quiroz Zarate, but in vain. After many failed trials to find a plane for Wau he decided to go by train, together with some material needed for the new mission.

²⁸⁵ Khartoum: Minutes of the Council 5/6 September, 1978. ACR 583/4/4.

After five days' travel, he arrived in Wau towards the end of May. There he found Fr. Arturo Nebel who had arrived in Sudan the previous year with a special entry visa through Hon. Bona Malual. Towards the middle of June, Fr. Tessitore and Fr. Zarate also arrived in Wau by plane. Once they had prepared the most necessary goods for the mission, they departed for Kwajok where they arrived at the end of June.

Fr. Tessitore was the Superior of the community and Parish Priest. He had already been in Kwajok for many years before the expulsion and knew the language well. He was in charge, first of all, of the translation of the liturgical texts into Dinka, but he was also doing a good job at pastoral, catechetical and nursing levels.

At first, Fr. Zarate and Fr. Pellerino were very busy with the study of Dinka, helped also by Fr. Arturo Nebel. Fr. Zarate, however, after three months left Kwajok and the Sudan for health reasons. Fr. Pellerino, after he had learned the language, committed himself to the translation of *Africa: Our Way to New Life*, helped by A Major Seminarian, Jervase Manyuat, and, with Fr. Tessitore, saw to the formation of the Catechists.

Fr. Pellerino, travelling even by bicycle, on Sundays was going to visit centres and schools near and far like Gogrial, Akon, Mayen Abun, Wunrok, Thuralei, Aweng, Luonyaker, Ameth, and Akoc: very intense work. The presence in Kwajok was felt as a real enhancement of the Comboni presence in Wau Diocese.

Diocese of Tombura

Nzara: *Fr. David Urasi and Fr. Abel Mödi.* It was the first commitment, opened on 6 December 1971 by Fr. Paolino Lukudu, Bro. Benjamin Majok and Fr. Abel Mödi, followed by Fr. David Urasi. By 1980 Fr. D. Urasi was the Superior of the community and Parish Priest and Fr. Abel Mödi the Director of the school. The centre was very important both for missionary activity and the education work involved, very much needed and appreciated. Even the protestant students were taking advantage of the school, especially for English courses.

Mupoi: *Fr. Joseph Ukelo, Bro. Ottorino Gelmini and Fr. Pietro Ravasio.* This was the place of residence of the Bishop, but the reason for the Comboni presence, through Fr. Ukelo, was specifically to care for the congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary (MSBVM). He was the Formator of the Novices and the Spiritual Director, a post which the SCBC asked to be filled as a priority. The Diocesan Catechetical Centre was another important reality and Fr. Ravasio was put in charge of it. Bro. Gelmini was to take care of the projects which were so

much needed in Mupoi, especially the construction of the house of the Sisters. Bro. Fabris was supposed to join Bro. Gelmini as well but then he was appointed to Rumbek in connection with the *German Leprosy Project*.²⁸⁶

Diocese of Rumbek

Rumbek: *Fr. Peter Magalasi, Bro. Valentino Fabris, Bro. Mario Rossignoli.* This was a new commitment with Fr. Magalasi as Superior and Parish Priest, Bro. Fabris in charge of the projects, and Bro. Mario Rossignoli (who was appointed, but never went). Together with the pastoral work there was the project of the *German Leprosy Centre* to be carried out with the involvement of Bro. Fabris (and Bro. Rossignoli).

Yei: in 1977. Bro. Gelmini and Bro. Manara, who were part of the Juba/Kit community, were sent to Yei to carry out works for the Diocese of Rumbek, especially the building of the Cathedral. Once the works were completed, Bro. Manara was sent to Khartoum to the Procure of the SCBC and Bro. Gelmini to Mupoi.

Diocese of Malakal

Malakal: *Bro. Francesco Ragnoli* had already been working for several years in Malakal Diocese repairing the workshops, the boat/vessel Martino, and on many other tasks where needed. Without putting a stop to all the works, the Regional Council required that Bro. Ragnoli should take care of the works required within an agreed commitment. The reopening of Tonga mission provided this opportunity. In the case of Brothers, however, as a specific policy, neither the Regional Council nor the General Council approved of all this running around to get all these jobs done at the expense of the physical and spiritual health of the Brothers.

Tonga: *Fr. Elvio Cellana, Fr. Justin Ogen, Bro. Francesco Ragnoli.* This was the mission given by Mgr. Pio Yokwan to the Comboni Missionaries to be reopened. The presence in Tonga started in 1976 with Fr. Cellana, (Superior of the community and Parish Priest) and Bro. Ragnoli in charge of the projects. Bro. Munir Fahmi joined them later on. Fr. Isturiz was also supposed to join them but the application for the entry permit needed to be made, possibly as the person in charge of the school. Bro. Ragnoli, due to his abilities, was still requested for too many other works outside Tonga. During the following years, they worked hard to reactivate the Parish at the pastoral and human promotion levels with the artisan school and other projects.

²⁸⁶ German Leprosy = GLRA German Leprosy Relief Association.

It is also worth mentioning a project financed by the association *Mani Tese* (Outstretched Hands) of Milan (Italy), to provide clean water and carried out by Bro. Ragnoli and his group of workers. The water of the river Nile was pumped through two decontamination tanks into a huge circular tank located in front of the Church. Thus, from 1980 onwards, people could have plenty of clean water without the added danger of women becoming food for crocodiles during the dry season, when they had to enter deep into the Nile to draw clean water. This project was also very helpful in preventing bilharzia and amoeba, when women were forced to draw water from the marshes, during the rainy season when it was impossible to take it from the Nile.²⁸⁷

The issue of the separation of the South from Khartoum Region.²⁸⁸

The issue of the separation of the South could not be postponed any longer and needed to be tackled appropriately, especially after the mandate of the General Chapter of 1979 to the General Council.

At the 1979 General Chapter the Province of Khartoum strongly recommended that Southern Sudan be given the status of a Province or Delegation. However, the Chapter didn't feel like deciding on the matter but left it to the General Council to study the proposal and to erect eventually the Province or Delegation of Southern Sudan.²⁸⁹ In fact, the Khartoum Provincial Council had always supported and was still supporting the evolution of the communities of Southern Sudan into a separate juridical entity. Now the matter was to make the Comboni presence in Southern Sudan more meaningful and effective, especially from a missionary point of view and with regard to community life.

The Representative of the Superior General: following the mandate of the General Chapter, the General Council started taking steps to implement it and a letter signed by the Secretary General, Fr. Felice Centis and Fr. Alois Eder, Vicar General, was sent to *all confreres* working in, and assigned to, the territory of the five Dioceses of Southern Sudan (Juba,

²⁸⁷ Centenario di Tonga, Fr. Elvio Cellana, p. 5. ACR 475/22; MCCJ Bulletin no. 221, January, 2004, p. 98.

²⁸⁸ Khartoum: Council 28 September, 1980. ACR 606/1/1.

²⁸⁹ XII General Chapter, the Chapter Acts n. 21: "*The XII General Chapter delegates to the General Council the study of the problem of establishing a Province of Southern Sudan in dialogue with the Provincial Council of Khartoum, and leaves it free to take the decision it will deem opportune.*"

Malakal, Tombora, Rumbek, Wau) to form an autonomous group.²⁹⁰ The confreres were asked to start preparing for it by proposing names through a straw ballot of people who could be nominated Representative of the Superior General in South Sudan. The ballot papers had to be returned to the Secretary General not later than 10 January, 1981.

The responsibilities of the Representative of the Superior General were as follows:

1. To act according to what is said about the duties and rights of a Provincial or Delegate in the Rule of Life. In particular:
2. To build up the community spirit among the Confreres and to consolidate the communities.
3. To improve their living conditions.
4. To define a clear policy regarding the finances and the Procure, according to the Rule of Life.
5. To provide a permanent centre for Confreres to meet and rest.
6. To draw up and to accomplish the contracts with the Bishops.
7. To intensify and improve relationships with the local civil and religious authorities and various organisations.

The great hope of the General Council was that these steps would lead to a more qualified presence of the Institute and to a better service offered to the Local Church and the people of Southern Sudan. It was planned to establish the new Circumscription in the year 1981, on the occasion of the celebrations of the centenary of Daniel Comboni's death.

Consultation for the appointment of the Representative: in November, 1980, an official list from the General Administration was sent to the Provincial of Khartoum, Fr. Sina, to be sent to all the Comboni Confreres of Southern Sudan in view of the consultation for the appointment of the Representative of the Superior General. The list of voters (*active vote*) was made up of confreres belonging to Southern Sudan, while those eligible for election (*passive vote*) were all the confreres of the South plus those of Khartoum Province and also any member outside

²⁹⁰ - Fr. Centis, Fr. Eder, "To all Confreres of Southern Sudan", Rome, 5 November, 1980. ACR 610/8.

- Fr. Sina to confreres, no. 6 "Towards an Independent Circumscription in the South", Khartoum 24 November, 1980. ACR 583/3/1.

- Famiglia Comboniana no. 354, December, 1980 pp. 1-2.

- Ibid. No. 361 July/August 1981 pp. 10-11.

Sudan, from any other Province. The paper had to be sent to Rome, to the Secretary General, before 10 January, 1981.

(full list ref. Appendix to Part One, Section Three, point no. 5)

Personnel present in Southern Sudan 1981: *The personnel present in Southern Sudan before the juridical start of the proposed new Comboni Circumscription can be found in appendix.*

(full list ref. Appendix to Part One, Section Three, point no. 6)

The end of the seventies: an overall view

I want to give now a summary of the work carried out in the South by the end of the eighties, according to the main priorities set by the Sudan Episcopal Conference and the individual Ordinaries and accepted by the Comboni Missionaries.

First of all, we have to consider the great work done by the Comboni Sudanese Radical Members during the period of time from 1964 to 1971, in diaspora and from 1971 up to this time within South Sudan. Their presence and work was a witness of what it meant to be Sudanese Comboni Missionaries working side by side with their Sudanese Brothers and Sisters, whether Diocesan Priests, Religious or ordinary Lay People. They were not many, but their commitment and dedication traced the outline of what the Comboni Missionary Vocation and Life meant.

Second, not in value but in time, was the work requested from and carried out by the Comboni Brothers in the various Dioceses of the South. First of all, they were the ones who made possible the re-entry of the Expatriate Missionaries into the Southern Sudan, because they were working in the social field. They took seriously the priority of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Sudan Conference of Bishops of 1973 on the reconstruction of the South, through professionally repairing former structures and making them functional, such as diocesan workshops, churches, catechetical buildings, schools and seminaries.

The Brothers also undertook initiatives to build the new structures which were urgently needed in various locations throughout the different Dioceses, on either a short or long-term basis, according to the duration of their entry permits. They collaborated with other organizations like *Sudanaid* and *German Leprosy* in order to carry out projects related to their contract in the field of health and education. They showed by their lives and commitment what it meant to be a Comboni Missionary Brother.

Third, the process of having also Comboni Priests return to Southern Sudan was certainly most difficult, for reasons already explained above. However, those who were able and fortunate enough to have their entry permits, could immediately set about following the priorities of the Episcopal Conference in the fields that remained uncovered by the expulsion. In this way, they gradually prepared a better planned presence, prioritizing the formation of Local Clergy (Seminaries), Local Religious (St. Martin de Porres Brothers), care of the Youth (commitment to education), and of course, specific pastoral-missionary work in the Parishes.

A great debt of gratitude was owed to the Region of Khartoum which worked with generous dedication to make evangelization in Southern Sudan viable after the expulsion of the Comboni Missionaries. It carried on with the same love and zeal of their great predecessors so that the motto of Comboni *Save Africa with Africa*, already fulfilled with the erection of the Sudanese Hierarchy, might give the opportunity to the Comboni Missionaries to carry on serving the people of Southern Sudan in a new way, not as the *protagonists of evangelization* but as Evangelizers ready to serve, with their Missionary Charism, within the reality of the Local Church.

The Centenary of Comboni's Death: preparation of the celebrations

The Conference of Bishops asked the Comboni Missionaries and the Comboni Missionary Sisters to take the lead in the preparation for the Comboni centenary.²⁹¹ A committee for the centenary was set up and Fr. Pasquale Boffelli prepared a calendar of events.²⁹² In Khartoum, for the whole of Sudan, it was to take place on 10 of October itself, while in the other Dioceses and in the South it would take place on other different dates to be fixed.



Save Africa With Africa
Daniel Comboni
1831-1881

²⁹¹ Khartoum: Minutes of the Council 28-31 December, 1979.

²⁹² Khartoum: Minutes of the Council, 28 September, 2 October, 1980.

Mgr. Daniel Comboni, on 10 October 1881, only 50 years old, marked by the Cross which, like a faithful and loving bride, has never let him, dies in Khartoum, among his people. But he is aware that his missionary work will not end with him: **“I am dying”,** he says, **“but my work will not die”.**
²⁹³

²⁹³ Daniel Comboni (1831-1881).
[http://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/ns_lit_doc_20031005_comboni_en.h](http://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/ns_lit_doc_20031005_comboni_en.html)
[tml](http://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/ns_lit_doc_20031005_comboni_en.html)

PART TWO

THE HISTORY OF THE COMBONI MISSIONARY CIRCUMSCRIPTION OF SOUTH SUDAN

Introduction and brief history of the Circumscription (1981-2017)

In PART TWO of the historical account I will directly deal with the canonical time of the Province of South Sudan itself. It all began when the Superior General, Rev. Fr. Salvatore Calvia, and his Council, decided, *ad experimentum*, to detach South Sudan from the Province of Khartoum and invited Fr. Raffaele Cefalo, with a letter written on 7 April, 1981, to start the new Circumscription. Fr. Cefalo was then appointed Representative of the Superior General as from 1 July, 1981, until the erection of the Delegation of South Sudan on 10 March, 1983, with Fr. Cefalo as the Delegation Superior.

On 2 April, 1984, with effect on 1 July, 1984, Fr. Cesare Mazzolari was elected the new Delegation Superior. He actually started his term of office on 1 June, 1984, because Fr. Cefalo did a quick handover of responsibilities. It was on 1 March, 1985, that the Delegation was made a Province: **THE SOUTH SUDAN PROVINCE**. From that point onward, the Province of South Sudan continued with Fr. Cesare Mazzolari as Provincial Superior until 31 December, 1990, when Fr. Abel Mödi Nyörkö took over the leadership. He was the first Sudanese Comboni Missionary to serve the Institute as a Provincial Superior, and the first in Africa.

Due to the war situation, the South Sudan Province endured very difficult events. On 1 July, 1990, the Superior General and his Council decided to start a group called the **New Sudan Group** to work in the so-called **Liberated Areas**, under the control of the SPLA/M, with Fr. Eugenio Caligari as the Coordinator (1990-1992), followed by Fr. Francesco Chemello (1992-1994). This group of Comboni Missionaries formally belonged to the South Sudan Province, with Fr. Mödi Nyörkö as the

Provincial Superior but, due to the fact that they were working in the *rebel areas*, they were told to refer directly to the General Council, through the Councillor dealing with English-speaking Africa. This was done to avoid exposing the confreres working in the Government areas to possible retaliation.

Though belonging to the Province of South Sudan, *New Sudan Group* in fact led an almost completely autonomous life, except for strictly juridical issues such as the election of representatives to the General Chapter or of the Provincial Superior. Meanwhile, the security situation, the commitments and the movements of the Provincial Superior in the Government-controlled areas were becoming more and more difficult. On the contrary, the commitments in the SPLA/M-controlled areas were experiencing much more freedom of movement and growth, though they were all in rural areas. Because of this situation, on 31 December, 1994, the former South Sudan Province with its headquarters in Juba was suppressed and a new Delegation of South Sudan was created on 1 January, 1995, out of the so-called *New Sudan Group* working in the *Liberated Areas of the Sudan*, with Fr. Chemello as Delegation Superior (1995-1998).

Again, this new South Sudan Delegation went through the same long process the first South Sudan Province had gone through to become a Province. In fact, Fr. Ezio Bettini took over as the Delegation Superior in January 1999, until the Circumscription became a Province in January 2003, again with the same name of *South Sudan Province*, but this time with headquarters in Jacaranda Avenue, Nairobi, because only from there was it possible to visit the *Liberated Areas* under SPLA/M and SSIM/A control. Fr. Bettini ended his term of office at the end of 2004 and Fr. Luciano Perina took over on 1 January, 2005. A few days later, on 9 January 2005, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed between the government of Sudan and the SPLA/M and offered South Sudan a favourable time of peace and growth.

The Comboni Missionaries, with Fr. Perina and his Council, had the exciting and, at the same time, the very hard task of moving the headquarters of the Province from Nairobi to where it really belonged, in Juba, South Sudan. Time and events had brought with them many issues to be dealt with, both within the Comboni Missionaries and the Local Church of the Archdiocese of Juba. Thanks be to God who always chooses the right people at the right time, Fr. Perina, who had had a prolonged experience of pastoral service, both in Parishes and in the Diocesan and National Seminaries within the Sudan, was able to create a healthy atmosphere of dialogue and understanding with H. G. Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro

and the Clergy, after our long absence from Juba. This made it possible for the Comboni Missionaries to return to the original residence, the Comboni House of Juba.

The broken link was now mended and Fr. Perina and his Council could give the go-ahead for the whole difficult process of planning the restructuring of the house and the move from Jacaranda House in Nairobi to Comboni House in Juba. Bro. Hans Dieter Ritterbecks took on the work of renovation of Comboni House and the confreres of the Province were able to hold their first Provincial Assembly in Juba from 13 to 20 January 2008, with the presence of the Superior General, Fr. Teresino Serra and his Vicar, Fr. Fabio Baldan.

All the confreres felt they had returned to the place where they belonged: South Sudan. To Fr. Perina goes the merit of rebuilding confidence in a work no longer broken up by the division of war, until his term of office ended in December, 2010.

The new Provincial Superior, Fr. Daniele Moschetti and his council, taking over in January, 2011, were the chosen people destined to cross the *Red Sea* of history, the difficult and troubled history of Sudan, both North and South, with the referendum of 9 January, 2011, and the Independence Day celebrations on 9 July, 2011. A new country was born: ***The Republic of South Sudan***. The path to all its hopes and dreams lay open ahead; all the promises were now within reach: ***South Sudan will never be the same again***, was the slogan proclaimed by a *chorus of voices*. However, no matter how many voices were raised, if there was no real change of heart, these things would not last long.

In fact, what happened was that on 15 December, 2013, the new country was plunged into another civil war even more bitter than the former. Fr. Moschetti and his Council had to adopt a new attitude: gone was the explosive enthusiasm of the achievement of independence, now replaced by the task of binding up the broken hearts of people wounded by this senseless war of unprecedented cruelty. The process of implementing the peace agreement by the IGAD Assembly of Heads of States and (IGAD-PLUS)²⁹⁴ was difficult and slow. We still pray that, aware of having worked and struggled together with all the Comboni Confreres and all the

²⁹⁴ IGAD, The Intergovernmental Authority on Development. [http://igad.int/
http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article56153](http://igad.int/http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article56153)
[http://igad.int/attachments/1395_FINAL%20COMMUNIQUE%20-
%20IGAD%20Plus%20on%20South%20Sudan.pdf](http://igad.int/attachments/1395_FINAL%20COMMUNIQUE%20-%20IGAD%20Plus%20on%20South%20Sudan.pdf)

Religious within the Local Church of South Sudan, the dream uttered in the slogan: ***South Sudan will never be the same again***” may really come true.

Meanwhile, in the second half of 2016, new elections were duly held and Fr. Louis Okot Tony Ochermoi was elected the new Provincial Superior, his term of office starting on 1 January 2017, the year of the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the Comboni Institute, *the Institute for the African Missions*, by St. Daniel Comboni in 1867.

Fr. Louis Okot is the second South Sudanese Provincial Superior after Fr. Abel Mödi Nyörkö. He, too, is taking up this task in a difficult situation of the country and, surely, it will not be easy but one must look forward to a better future with renewed hope, while carrying on the daily commitment of evangelization with dedication and perseverance in the Lord. The 150th anniversary celebrations will certainly be of inspiration along the furrow already traced.

Thus, in PART TWO, the Circumscription will be dealt with in different SECTIONS, according to the corresponding *Administrations*, and their locations, each in a separate CHAPTER, starting with Juba headquarters.

PART TWO: Outline

Section One: Headquarters in Juba (1981-1994)

Chapter One: Fr. Raffaele Cefalo (1981-1984)

Chapter Two: Fr. Cesare Mazzolari (1984-1989)

Chapter Three: Fr. Abel Mödi Nyörkö & New Sudan Group (1990-94)

Section Two: Headquarters in Nairobi (1995-2004)

Chapter One: Fr. Francesco Chemello (1995-1998)

Chapter Two: Fr. Ezio Bettini (1999-2004)

Section Three: Return to Juba. Headquarters in Juba (2005-2016)

Chapter One: Fr. Luciano Perina (2005-2010)

Chapter Two: Fr. Daniele Moschetti (2011-2016)

Chapter Three: Fr. Louis Okot Tony Ochermoi (2017-2019)

The Circumscription from 1981 to 1994

I wish now to present the phases of the Circumscription with its different *Administrations*, starting with Fr. Raffaele Cefalo, Fr. Cesare Mazzolari and Fr. Abel Mödi Nyörkö, with their place of residence in Juba, and the creation of the *New Sudan Group*, (with reference to Nairobi), within the span of time from 1981 to 1994.

Juba, in fact, was the right place of start after the long period of displacement due to the events which followed the expulsion of the Comboni Missionaries from Southern Sudan in 1964. The work of the Comboni Sudanese Radical Members and the return of the Expatriate Comboni Missionaries rekindled the hope that a better future lay in store for Southern Sudan. The celebration of the centenary of Mgr. Daniel Comboni's death in 1981 was a sign of hope.

Though this hope became true for a decade, 1972-1983, the following decade again brought the situation within the South to an excruciatingly painful state, rendering it impossible to carry out normal evangelizing activity and pastoral care among the majority of the population living in the so-called *Liberated Areas*.

The main towns, controlled by the government, were all besieged by the SPLA/M and pastoral work was confined within the boundaries of the town centres. This was the reason which, later on, made it necessary to move the reference point from Juba to Nairobi, because the different rural locations were receiving every kind of assistance from Kenya.

PART ONE has dealt with the history before the erection of the Circumscription of South Sudan, PART TWO, SECTION ONE, will deal directly with the new Circumscription.

SECTION ONE

Headquarters in Juba

CHAPTER ONE

THE CIRCUMSCRIPTION

From 1981 to 1984

Representative/Delegate Superior:
Fr. RAFFAELE CEFALO

"PART ONE, Sections One, Two and Three dealt with the Historical Background. Section Three dealt specifically with the period of time about which little was known because of the tragic event of the expulsion and communications difficulties that delayed or prevented news about what was happening being sent abroad. The section shows the heroism shown by the Sudanese Clergy and Church Personnel who carried out their pastoral duties in such difficult and dangerous conditions and, in particular, the dedication shown by the Sudanese Members who kept the Comboni presence alive in Southern Sudan."

With Fr. Raffaele Cefalo, the Institute started a new chapter in the history of the Comboni Missionaries in Southern Sudan. PART TWO presents the history of our SOUTH SUDAN PROVINCE and deals with all the Administrations which followed until the one that started its journey on 1 January, 2017.

Preparing for the First Delegation of South Sudan: 1981

The General Councils always tried to give as much consideration as possible to the development of evangelization in the South and, as the situation allowed, they appointed more personnel there. The directives of the General Chapter of 1979 regarding the possibility of a better juridical set-up for the confreres already working in Southern Sudan, and the occasion of the celebration of the centenary of Comboni's death, were golden opportunities to enhance the juridical status of the Comboni Group already present and actively working in the area.

Things had to be done gradually and the already good relationships with the Sudan Conference of Bishops who were more and more taking care of the entry permits of missionaries, was paving the way for a possible new status of the Comboni Group. Khartoum Province was accompanying and facilitating this process which would have been beneficial also for the Province itself in dealing specifically with the situation in the North, without being always torn in two by having to administer faraway places and the complicated and different situations in the South.

The Centenary Year of Comboni's Death: 1981

The Centenary year of Comboni's death was a propitious and meaningful context for this new initiative. The celebration would provide a golden opportunity both for the Comboni Group and the Local Church. This occasion was also a real chance to continue with other meaningful initiatives, already taken into consideration, like the Comboni House and the Comboni Secondary School in Juba.

New Juridical Status and the "Opera Significativa"²⁹⁵

By setting up a Southern Sudan Group with a more defined juridical status and a Superior directly responsible for it, was something which would give the Comboni Group greater stability and strength to face the future and its challenges. Thus, a house for the Combonis in Juba and a secondary school to improve education in the South would have been a very meaningful and appropriate start to this new juridical set-up.

²⁹⁵ "Opera significativa" = "A meaningful initiative", an expression better rendered in English as "A Commemorative Project", but I leave the original term in the narrative because it is commonly used among the Comboni Missionaries.

The Superior General and his Council decided to have a **Representative** in the South who could link up with them at any time and be directly answerable to them. An enquiry among the confreres was started in late 1980 and by January, 1981, the person suggested was Fr. Raffaele Cefalo, a confrere with many years' experience in Uganda and who had formerly been entrusted with the responsibility of opening the Kenyan Province.²⁹⁶

Fr. Raffaele Cefalo: "Superior General's Special Representative in Southern Sudan"

The Superior General, Fr. Salvatore Calvia, on 7 April, 1981, wrote his official letter to the Provincial Superior of Khartoum, to Fr. Raffaele Cefalo (at that time in Naples) and to all confreres in Southern Sudan, letting them know his decision about the appointment of Fr. Cefalo as his *Representative* in Southern Sudan, with all it entailed.

"I) Having considered the situation of the Comboni Missionaries in Southern Sudan and consulted the Provincial Council of Khartoum and the confreres concerned, the Superior General has decided to appoint a special Representative in Southern Sudan and has named the Rev. Fr. Raffaele Cefalo to this office. The area concerned covers the five Dioceses of Juba, Malakal, Rumbek, Tombora and Wau.

The special Representative depends directly on the Superior General for anything concerning his powers and work. He has authority over all Comboni Missionaries who are working in the area and those who are, or will be, assigned to it during his mandate.

To assist him, the Superior General and his Council, after consulting the confreres concerned, have named Fr. Joseph Ukelo and Fr. Pietro Ravasio as Councillors.

Both the special Representative and the two Councillors are appointed for a period of time 'ad nutum' by the Superior General.

It is foreseen that in about one year's time, just before the Intercapitular Assembly, the confreres of the area will meet to review the situation and prepare a report for the Superior General. The General Council will then decide whether the mandate of the special

²⁹⁶ Raffaele Cefalo: Born on 28 May, 1935, at Fontanarosa, Avellino, Italy, with experience in Uganda from 1960 to 1972 and Kenya from 1972 to 1978. He was assigned to Italy from 1978 to 1981 and then appointed "Special Representative of the Superior General."

Representative is to be discontinued or to be extended for a longer period.

2) The duties and powers of the Special Representative in Southern Sudan are as follows:

- to ensure that the living and working conditions of the Comboni Missionaries are adequate to carry on their religious and apostolic duties;*
- to help our missionaries to overcome the danger of isolation and individualism, and to unite them into a compact group through well-formed communities, as required by our Rule of Life;*
- to keep contact with the Bishops, the civil authorities and the international aiding bodies, through friendly relations and clear conventions covering single projects and commitments. No missionary can accept employment except through him.*

3) Among the things to be done, the special Representative will give absolute priority to the building of an appropriate central residence of the Comboni Missionaries at Juba. In agreement with the diocesan authorities, he will also start a secondary school (Comboni School) at Juba, which will be run by the Comboni Missionaries for a period of time agreed upon. The school will be distinct from the Missionaries' residence.

Without prejudice to the missionaries' duty to foster vocations for the Local Church, the Representative will provide personnel and the necessary structures for promoting and training vocations also for our Society.

4) Economic provisions: All accounts and deposits under the names of our confreres and communities of Southern Sudan now existing at Khartoum, Nairobi, Rome or elsewhere, will come under the responsibility of the Superior General's Representative and will be administered, on behalf of the Congregation, by a Treasurer to be appointed by him.

The Khartoum Provincial Treasurer will reckon the amount contributed to the Provincial Fund by the confreres of Southern Sudan, deduct the expenses made by them, and pass the rest to the Southern Sudan Fund.

The Province of Khartoum will keep the agreement already made to share substantially in the expense for the building of the missionaries' residence at Juba. This contribution will be requested by the Treasurer General in due time.

The separation of accounts between Khartoum and Southern Sudan will be backdated to 1 January, 1981.

5) Any other point or problem that may arise will be treated by the special Representative with those concerned, if necessary through the General Administration”²⁹⁷

Fr. Raffaele Cefalo (1981-1984)

The decision was made and Fr. Raffaele Cefalo was appointed ***Special Representative of the Superior General*** by Fr. Salvatore Calvia. He was then still in Naples, but ready to move swiftly into the new task. With his enthusiasm and his missionary experience in Uganda and Kenya, he had to tackle this new and by no means easy task of the erection of the new Circumscription in Southern Sudan, with all it entailed regarding the work of evangelization.

Fr. Cefalo was born in Italy, at Fontanarosa, in the Diocese of Avellino, on 28 May, 1935. He took his first vows in the Comboni Missionary Institute (then known as *Sons of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*) on 9 September, 1953, the feast of St. Peter Claver, and perpetual vows in 1959, on the same feast-day. He was ordained Priest on 2 April, 1960, and appointed immediately to the mission of Uganda. In 1972, he was asked to start the new Province of Kenya and, in 1981, as already stated, he was appointed *Special Representative of the Superior General* in order to open the way also to the Province of South Sudan.

His appointment took into account his previous experience, though South Sudan proved to be a real testing place beyond his expectations and full of new challenges. On 1 May, 1981, Fr. Cefalo was in Nairobi ready to travel to Juba. Here is his account of how things started moving and developed from that initial stage:

“A Toyota Land Cruiser has been purchased in Nairobi. An entry permit has to be provided. It seems that the Juba Local Government is not authorized by the Khartoum Government to issue these permits. It seems also that the list of the Comboni Missionaries expelled in the past is still consulted and therefore we must be very careful to present only the names of new people, e.g. those who have never worked in Sudan

²⁹⁷ - Fr. Salvatore Calvia, mccj, Superior General: “*Superior General's Special Representative in Southern Sudan*”, Rome, 7 April, 1981. ACR 610/8.

- Division “ad experimentum” from Khartoum with Fr. Cefalo (Italian) MCCJ Bulletin (1 July, 1982) 134, p. 2.

before. It seems that this is also the policy of the Bishops of South Sudan: they want Comboni personnel, especially Brothers, but not those who worked in Sudan in the past. The Apostolic Nuncio of Khartoum, Archbishop Moretti, has applied for these entry visas, but we have had no news so far.

In the meantime, Fr. Cesare Mazzolari, from U.S.A., assigned to South Sudan, is also in Nairobi, hoping to get an entry visa. We applied to the Sudan Embassy in Nairobi specifying that the purpose of our application was the project of a Comboni College in Juba. We realized that the mere mention of a 'Comboni College' would make us most welcome and so, miraculously, we got the visas in Nairobi, both for Fr. Cefalo and Fr. Mazzolari. We were encouraged by this procedure and applied also for Bro. Mario Rossignoli, assigned to South Sudan and he also received a visa."²⁹⁸

Fr. Cefalo in Juba: June 1981

Again, let us see the testimony of Fr. Raffaele Cefalo at his arrival in Juba on 1 June, 1981:

"After three days' journey driving the new Toyota Land Cruiser via Lokichokio, Kapoeta, and Torit, Fr. C. Mazzolari, Bro. Mario Rossignoli, and I finally reached Juba."²⁹⁹ We were very warmly welcomed by Archbishop Ireneo Dud, who was now almost ready to hand in his resignation to the Holy See, and by some ex-students of the Comboni College of Khartoum like Mr. Bona Malual, Mr. Joseph Oduho and others. In Juba we found Bro. Renato Bastianelli and Bro. Augusto Bazzanella."

At their arrival, Fr. Cefalo and confreres were put up in an already rented house at 'Hai Jallaba', commenting that, *with all the buildings the Combonis had built in Juba in the past, they now had to lodge in a rented private house.*

Temporary residence at "Hai Jallaba"

The new temporary residence rented at Hai Jallaba provided a place for the new institution to make a start on the journey, while taking time to arrange for the top priority initiatives. The first meaningful event, on 4 June, 1981, was the inauguration of the chapel in the house which brought

²⁹⁸ Fr. Raffaele Cefalo's personal account.

²⁹⁹ Famiglia Comboniana no. 360, June, 1981, pp. 14-15.

together for the Eucharistic celebration Archbishop Ireneo Dud, Bishop Paride Taban, Fr. Wuni and Fr. Costantino. The new presence started taking shape and also the new projects of the Comboni House and Comboni Secondary School started to receive direct attention.

Church Ordinaries in May, 1981

Before proceeding with other issues, it may be useful to provide information about Church Leadership in Southern Sudan in 1981.

Archdiocese of Juba:

Archbishop:	His Grace Ireneo Wien Dud
Auxiliary Bishop:	Mgr. Paride Taban
Vicar General:	Fr. Julius Idda (Torit)

Diocese of Malakal:

Bishop:	Mgr. Vincent Mojwok Nyiker
---------	----------------------------

Diocese of Rumbek:

Bishop:	Mgr. Gabriel Dwatuka
Autonomous Vicar for Rumbek pastoral area:	Mgr. Raphael Ryel
Vicar General of Yei-Maridi pastoral area	Mgr. Jocondo Anyugo

Diocese of Tombura:

Bishop:	Mgr. Joseph Gasi Abangite
Vicar General:	Mgr. Jerome Bidai

Diocese of Wau:

Bishop:	Mgr. Joseph Nyekindi
Vicar General:	Mgr. Louis Agwek

Comboni personnel on 15 June, 1981

Confreres present on Fr. Cefalo's arrival in 1981 were:³⁰⁰

- | | | |
|----------------------------|------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Fr. Raffaele Cefalo | Juba | <i>(just arrived)</i> |
| 2. Fr. Luigi Cocchi | Juba | |
| 3. Bro. Renato Bastianelli | Juba | |
| 4. Bro. Mario Rossignoli | Juba | <i>(came with Fr. Cefalo)</i> |
| 5. Bro Augusto Bazzanella. | Juba | |

³⁰⁰ Report by Fr. Raffaele Cefalo. Diario, Missionari Comboniani Sud Sudan - from 1 May, 1981 to 1 January, 1990 - (Diary of the Comboni Missionaries of South Sudan) 15 June, 1981. ACR 475/1.

6. Fr. Tito Giuntoli	Rejaf
7. Fr. Mario Busellato	Rejaf
8. Fr. Giuseppe Farina	Rejaf
9. Fr. Mattia Bizzarro	Rejaf (<i>with Apostles of Jesus</i>)
10. Bro. Ambrogio Confalonieri	Rejaf
11. Fr. Michael Barton	Kworijik
12. Fr. Hector Ayon	Kworijik (<i>Chukudum</i>)
13. Fr. Cesare Mazzolari	Juba/Nzara (<i>came with Fr. Cefalo</i>)
14. Fr. Luigi Penzo	Wau (<i>Bussere</i>)
15. Fr. Vittorino Dellagiacoma	Wau (<i>Bussere</i>)
16. Fr. Raffaele Tessitore	Kwajok
17. Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino	Kwajok
18. Fr. Joseph Ukelo	Mupoi
19. Bro. Ottorino Gelmini	Mupoi
20. Fr. Pietro Ravasio	Nzara
21. Fr. Peter Magalasi	Rumbek
22. Fr. Ezio Bettini	Rumbek
23. Fr. Elvio Cellana	Tonga
24. Fr. Miguel Isturiz	Tonga
25. Bro. Francesco Ragnoli	Tonga
26. Fr. Guido Bertuzzi	Loa (<i>Ugandan refugees</i>)

The First steps “ad experimentum”

With the *Special Representative of the Superior General*, the South was detached from Khartoum *ad experimentum*. The first meeting of the **Representation Council** took place few days later, on 8 June, with the presence of Fr. Raffaele Cefalo and his Councillors, Fr. Pietro Ravasio and Fr. Joseph Ukelo (*Vice-Representative*).³⁰¹ Bro. Mario Rossignoli was chosen as Procurator and, since the plot already given by the Government for Comboni House did not appear to be suitable, it was necessary to look for another one. During this first meeting Fr. Luigi Cocchi was chosen as Vice-Superior of Juba Comboni House, Fr. Cefalo being the Superior. Among the decisions taken was that of having English as the official language, to have a quarterly newsletter, to start with a draft of the *Regional Directory*, to maintain as first priorities the building of Comboni

³⁰¹ Diario, Missionari Comboniani Sud Sudan, (from 1 May, 1981 to 1 January, 1990).
- Ibid. Op. Cit., day 8 June, 1981. ACR 475/1.

Secondary School and of Comboni House, to renew the request for personnel and the proposal to abolish firearms for hunting.³⁰²

What Fr. Cefalo felt it important to stress in his first letter to the confreres, after some few words regarding his appointment as the Representative of the Superior General, was that the group of the Comboni Missionaries in South Sudan should really be a family, *a Cenacle of Apostles* as Daniel Comboni wanted them to be. Every confrere had to feel the responsibility of giving witness of unity and communion. First of all communion with the Lord, *without me you can do nothing* (Jn. 15:5) and communion among themselves, *by this they will know that you are my disciples* (Jn. 13:35), in the spirit of the previous General Chapter and the Rule of Life.³⁰³

Looking for a plot for Comboni House

Fr. Cefalo started immediately asking for a new plot for the Comboni Missionaries Residence.³⁰⁴ As for the Comboni College, there was the possibility of building it in 'Kator', where the Archdiocese had enough land. Meanwhile, the Government granted him a good plot in town, free of charge, where Comboni House could be built. The two priorities (Comboni House and the Comboni Senior Secondary School) needed to be tackled with urgency so that the new Circumscription could be up and running as soon as possible.

The main priority was still evangelization. It was clear that a preliminary round of pastoral visits was needed in order to get the confreres to appreciate the benefits of the new situation and, at the same time, for Fr. Raffaele Cefalo (Representative of the General Superior), to gain direct, personal knowledge of how the real situation was on the ground. All of these questions were seen to and events seemed to move at a good rate indeed; however, there were problems ahead.

³⁰² Minutes of the Representation: Juba 20 June, 1981, (first meeting). ACR 610/11/1

³⁰³ Juba 9 June, 1981, Fr. R. Cefalo to all Comboni Missionaries of Southern Sudan. ACR 610/10

³⁰⁴ - Juba, 14 August, 1981. Fr. Cefalo to His Exc. the Commissioner, Eastern Equatoria, Juba: application for an alternative plot for "Comboni House." FSSPJ.

- Juba, 20 November, 1981. Fr. Cefalo to the Director, Ministry of Housing, Juba: "Decision to abandon the Plot on the Airport Road for the new one proposed." FSSPJ.

- Juba 14 March, 1982, Fr. Cefalo to the Director Ministry of Housing and Public Utilities, Southern Region, Juba: request for the "Certificate of the Lease." FSSPJ.

The reality of Juba was a bit more complicated than was foreseen, so the pace of progress could not be kept up as one would have liked. Moreover, it was taking some time for the promised funds from Europe to be collected and there was a misunderstanding between the General Administration and Fr. Cefalo. New personnel were slow to come, especially younger confreres. The logistical situation had its difficulties and Fr. Cefalo had the impression of having to fight the battle on many different fronts, including the Comboni front: the harsh reality of Sudan with its many facets was little by little emerging, much different than what he had experienced in Uganda and Kenya. The dream of a Province similar to that of Uganda with a lot of confreres to meet the many needs of Southern Sudan immediately, possibly recovering the *lost time* since the expulsion of the missionaries, was to remain just a dream. The target had to be re-adjusted and the difficulties had to be faced one by one, with patience and constancy.

Fr. Cefalo's wider activity

Fr. Cefalo tried to face the various matters earnestly, getting in touch with the different authorities concerned and arranging an *official visit* to the Commissioner of Juba, Mr. Venzio Loro. Radio Juba spoke about it and there was appreciation for the return of the Comboni Missionaries. Particular mention and appreciation was given to the project of the Comboni College of Juba. This, however, caused an unexpected negative reaction by the Minister of Education, probably for the way the matter was handled and made public.

Fr. Cefalo then started moving out of Juba, visiting other places and confreres. He went to Chukudum with Fr. Pietro Ravasio to meet Fr. Hector Ayon, then to Loa to visit Fr. Eugenio Calligari, Fr. Giovanni Ferrazin and Fr. Guido Bertuzzi who had fled there from Moyo (Uganda) with his Madi refugees. On 16 June, the sad event of the death of Mgr. Lino Tiboi, former Apostolic Administrator of Rumbek Diocese, took place in Yei. After the celebration of the feast of the Sacred Heart in Rejaf, together with Bro. Bastianelli, Fr. Cefalo went to Maridi to meet Bishop Gabriel Dwatuka. In Juba, a meeting with the Minister of Education was arranged and from Pibor, Jonglei Province, the Acting Commissioner strongly begged for personnel for the Kachipo, Termak and Murlè tribes, giving the *Representative*, once more, the burden of the urgent need for more personnel. His visit to Khartoum concluded his first three months of direct activity.

The Plan of Action

After the letter of appointment, Fr. Salvatore Calvia wrote another letter³⁰⁵ to Fr. Cefalo pointing out what the General Council felt as very important in order to start the new Circumscription in a proper way. Among other things, he made Fr. Cefalo aware of his specific authority in relation to the General Council and the Local Hierarchy. Fr. Calvia also promised a facilitator, provided by the General Administration, to give assistance regarding the Procure and in the matter of fundraising for Comboni House, the school and other projects. As for situations of confusion which Fr. Cefalo would inevitably find, he invited him to accept them for the love of the Comboni Institute, and the Church and out of zeal for souls.

In June, the Superior General wrote another letter asking Fr. Raffaele to attend especially to

1. *Community life* for an efficacious witness and to draw up a global plan of the communities and make it known to him.
2. A plan for the permits to be applied for through the SCBC (Sudan Catholic Bishops Conference).
3. Following up the cases of Fr. Urasi and Fr. Longokwo according to the local traditions required by the praxis of the Church.³⁰⁶

Adjusting the terminology and the plan of action

After the first meeting of the *Representation Council* the minutes were sent to the Superior General under this heading: **“1st Meeting of the Provincial Council of South Sudan”**, and then at no. 1/81 **“Meeting of the New Comboni Delegation of South Sudan.”** The Superior General felt it important to point out the true name of the new Circumscription in order not to give rise to misleading interpretations and replied with a new letter stating that it was neither a Province nor an Independent Delegation but only a ***Representation***³⁰⁷ of the Superior General for the time being (*ad nutum*).

However, what touched the most sensitive side of Fr. Cefalo's pride were a couple of letters, especially the second one, from Fr. Francesco Pierli,³⁰⁸ who did not want to hurt him, but only to make him understand

³⁰⁵ Fr. S. Calvia to Fr. R. Cefalo, Rome, 20 April, 1981. ACR 610/9/1.

³⁰⁶ Fr. S. Calvia to Fr. R. Cefalo, Rome, 17 June, 1981. ACR 610/9/1.

³⁰⁷ Fr. S. Calvia to Fr. R. Cefalo, Rome, 27 June, 1981. ACR 610/9/1.

³⁰⁸ Fr. F. Pierli to Fr. R. Cefalo, Rome, 2 July, 1981. ACR 610/9/1.

that the approach sought by the General Council was to use simple means and proceed at a pace which would not create difficulties in relationships with the Local Church and the various pastoral agents, especially with regard to the Local Clergy.

In his first letter of 2 July, Fr. Pierli pointed out that Comboni House should not be a large structure, but a simple one; that the words used like stores, procure and workshop to be built, the speed and the financial support needed, gave them the idea that it was all a way of showing off power, resources and personnel, as if it was a way of *recovering the lost time*, thus giving an impression that was both false and misleading regarding concrete Comboni possibilities. The approach of the General Council, instead, was to foster a spirit of *self-sufficiency* and *self-support* proceeding at the same pace as the people, not in order to quench zeal, but to avoid repeating mistakes made in other Provinces.

The issue was that of giving more priority to the *formation of leaders, to the seminaries and catechetical centres* rather than taking commitments in new Parishes. This indication was motivated by the fact that the Institute did not have enough personnel to cover all the pastoral needs present at the time. Therefore, the Comboni Missionaries had to be very careful not to raise false hopes in the minds of the Bishops by making promises that they would not be able to fulfil. Regarding the communities, he underlined the importance that they may be *made up of three confreres* each.

What annoyed Fr. Cefalo even more was Fr. Pierli's second letter of 11 July on the issue of the land for the Comboni House noting: *it was best not to hurry up unnecessarily; that the piece of land was too big; that the Church was not necessary*. This seemed to him a real about-turn of the whole issue and made him come to a standstill, prompting him ask for clarification on what he was supposed to do: whether he had to look only for the land or also to carry on with the buildings; if the Comboni House, the Secondary School and Comboni Vocations Promotion were still priorities or not. He concluded by saying that he had already told them he was not the right person, and concluded, *Now, I myself must get into gear in Southern Sudan: a rhythm of super slow motion*.³⁰⁹ However, the last thing the General administration wanted was to cast doubt on their trust in Fr. Cefalo.

In fact, Fr. Calvia himself one day would share with Fr. Cefalo his deep appreciation and admiration for his dedication and enthusiasm with these

- Fr. F. Pierli to Fr. R. Cefalo, Rome, 11 July, 1981. ACR 610/9/1.

³⁰⁹ Fr. R. Cefalo to General Administration, Juba, 29 June, 1981. ACR 610/9/1.

words: "Dear Fr. Cefalo, I really thank you for all the good you do with such zeal, with much dedication and with much enthusiasm; I often really wonder at your courage and your constancy! Praise the Lord."³¹⁰

What Fr. Pierli intended with his two letters was to help in such a way that the energetic and enthusiastic character of Fr. Cefalo, faced with so many needs of evangelization, human promotion and personnel, would not take a line which would force the General Administration into promising what they could not fulfil, thus creating unease and mistrust in relations with the Local Ordinaries and the Civil Authorities.

In answer to the stinging letter of Fr. Cefalo to the Superior General and his Council, Fr. Salvatore Calvia tried to smooth over the situation and clarify possible misunderstandings between the two sides regarding the projects of Juba, but he also stated clearly that the final decision belonged to him (Superior General) and his Council and that he himself, would communicate the final decision to the *Representative* of South Sudan through the Secretary General. He was stressing the importance of going ahead *in a true spirit of communion*, even despite possible difficulties of communication, and making it clear that it was not at all their intention to criticise the service of the *Representative*.

He pointed out that it was important for them to have better information about the meeting he had with the Regional Minister on 10 July, 1981, and its follow-up. They needed to know about the matter of the staff working in the school, which Congregation of Sisters could possibly take up the work in the school and about their residence; to clarify the matter of the *running fund*, about which he was not aware; to have precise figures of the costs involved in carrying out the project in order to apply for assistance, and to decide if the school should have one or two streams and when.³¹¹

As a conclusion to his letter, the Superior General also tackled the matter of the possible future of the new Circumscription with these words: *The conclusion is also my personal observation between me and you and I propose it to you for reflection. The future remains in the hands of God. We all want the greater good of our communities and especially of the Local Church of Sudan; but nothing has yet been decided in a definitive way. Separation of the South or the status quo of a single Province? Only one Province with a zone Council in the South with strong autonomy? Supplies - and therefore a Procure - from Nairobi or from Khartoum? The situation*

³¹⁰ Fr. S. Calvia to Fr. R. Cefalo, Rome, 16 June, 1983. ACR 610/9/3.

³¹¹ Fr. Salvatore Calvia to Fr. R. Cefalo, Rome 29 September, 1981. ACR 610/9/1.

in Juba, in this regard, does not seem to me the same as that of Wau or Malakal³¹²

In spite of the difficulties involved, in Rome, the General Council was really happy to hear that the project was going ahead, but they were also truly concerned that the process should do so with a clear procedure, especially regarding the responsibilities to be taken by both sides, that of the Comboni Missionaries and that of the Local Church in the Secondary School, in order to have a clear, smooth and stable development. Through the Secretary General, Fr. Felice Centis, they were asking:

- A letter from the Bishops, or at least from the two Bishops of Juba, declaring the importance of having a Comboni school (a secondary school) built in Juba.³¹³
- The request to the Comboni Missionaries, with a letter addressed to the Superior General, asking them to start the school and get it going as a project of the Local Church and not of the Comboni Missionaries, sending the quotation of the cost, the final building plan and to make clear that the project was to be handed over within five years.³¹⁴

While the process was going on, the General Council noted with contentment the positive developments, especially the permit received from the Government Authorities of Juba to start the secondary school.³¹⁵

However, the issue of the Comboni Secondary School of Juba was meeting several other problems along the way and Fr. Cefalo was getting impatient because the time was passing swiftly. The person promised by the General Administration to help, especially regarding fund raising, was delaying the process and there was no news.³¹⁶ Fr. Cefalo called his journey a daily pilgrimage, like the one of the Hebrew people in the desert, so much so that in one of his letters he wrote: *“As the Hebrew people were expecting the ‘manna’, I am waiting, day after day, for the mail to arrive.”*³¹⁷ Doubtless, the slow pace of implementation of the projects, which were considered a priority, was a real test for Fr. Cefalo.

³¹² Ibid. point 4.

³¹³ There had been talk about a Senior Secondary School since 1976, with the understanding that: *“three years after the starting of the Junior School, a Senior Secondary School should be started, always under the responsibility of the Archdiocese and as its property.”* Now it was the time for putting it in written form.

³¹⁴ Fr. F. Centis to Fr. R. Cefalo, Rome, 21 November, 1981. ACR 610/9/1.

³¹⁵ Fr. F. Centis to Fr. R. Cefalo, Rome, 3 December, 1981. ACR 610/9/1.

³¹⁶ Fr. R. Cefalo to Fr. S. Calvia, Juba 24 January, 1982. ACR 610/9/2.

³¹⁷ Fr. R. Cefalo to Fr. S. Calvia, Juba 16 March, 1982. ACR 610/9/2.

A new kind of relationship

Both Government and Church Authorities were asking for personnel who had never been in South Sudan, something Fr. Cefalo agreed with but, a request that the General Administration could not specifically promise to meet; neither would it have been sound to do so, since the confreres were those the Institute had available at the time. Moreover, the experience of those who had already been in Sudan was also very precious. What was really important, instead, was the effort to acquire a *new mentality and relationship* which would allow for a *fresh start*, but also for accepting confreres in their specific reality.

A more balanced interaction – it was precisely this *challenge* that faced the new Comboni group who came after the Addis Ababa agreement and this was also the new challenge for Fr. Cefalo in his new beginning. To have a group of confreres who would take up the challenge of a new relationship, aware that now there was a *Local Church* and no longer the *Jus Commissionis*, and that the missionaries themselves were to think of themselves as being *fully part* of that *Local Church* where the Bishop is the real authority uniting all the Church's components and planning within his Local Church. This was also precisely what the General Council was fostering through their letters.

This, simple as it seems, is not something which can be lived and experienced in an easy way or done overnight. The *centrifugal force* which drives people apart is always at work in many ways and unity is not built up *automatically*; it always needs good will both from the Locals and from Expatriates. However, with the institution of the *Local Hierarchy*, already in its seventh year, a new era had begun and, although the journey of growth is always long, the direction was clearly signposted.

The new set-up brought into Sudan several other Religious Institutions. These were now called to share and cooperate ***within the Local Church*** - in all the Dioceses united in the SCBC. The presence of other different Religious Institutes was positive in breaking up the past monolithic presence of the Comboni Missionaries, in opening up to other approaches in forming a broader understanding and reflection within the Sudanese reality.

Other meaningful events

On 30 July, 1981, there was the meeting of the *Executive* of the Episcopal Conference in Juba. Fr. Cefalo was invited to participate. The

members of the *Executive* were then invited to Comboni House for a reception which was very much appreciated. Then Fr. Cefalo accompanied Fr. Luigi Parisi to Nzara. Seventeen years had passed since the expulsion: it was a joyful and great event. Bishop Joseph Gasi Abangite was present to welcome them. Fr. Luigi Parisi would take up the post of Parish Priest, while Fr. Pietro Ravasio was the Superior of the community.

In Nairobi, in the month of August, 1981, there was the meeting of *The Assembly of Missionary Animation and Comboni Formation in Africa* with the participation of Fr. Vittorino Dellagiacoma: South Sudan was starting to plan for the opening of the Postulancy. Another positive event was the arrival in Juba of Fr. Ottorino Sina from Khartoum.³¹⁸ He was the former Provincial Superior of Khartoum and now he had been appointed to the South. Fr. Cefalo had the opportunity to visit, together with Fr. Sina, various authorities whom the latter knew very well. Another very meaningful event was the visit of Sr. Bianca Garascia, the new Provincial of the Comboni Sisters of Khartoum, on her first visit to the South with a view to accepting commitments there as well. The conclusion was a supper organized by Mr. Joseph Oduho in honour of Fr. Sina on 15 August, the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady, in his own house.³¹⁹

The Celebrations of the Centenary of Comboni's Death, 10 October, 1981

The difficult task of organizing the programme and the celebrations was carried out by the Provinces of the Comboni Missionaries and the Comboni Missionary Sisters of Khartoum in collaboration with the SCBC, as requested. On that occasion, Fr. Raffaele Cefalo was present in Khartoum as the new Representative of the Superior General. After the celebration he continued his journey to Rome to meet the General Council concerning the various issues of the South. In Khartoum, during that same celebration, Archbishop Agostino Baroni handed over the Archdiocese of Khartoum to the new Archbishop, His Grace Gabriel Zubeir Wako. It was a clear and very meaningful sign that the dream of Daniel Comboni had definitely come true: *A Sudanese Bishop was now taking Comboni's place, his dream was fulfilled.*

³¹⁸ - Khartoum: Provincial Council 31 August-7 September. Fr. Sina appointed to the South. ACR 606/1/1.

- Diary of South Sudan, 4 August, 1981. ACR 475/1.

³¹⁹ Ibid. April-July, 1981. ACR 475/1.

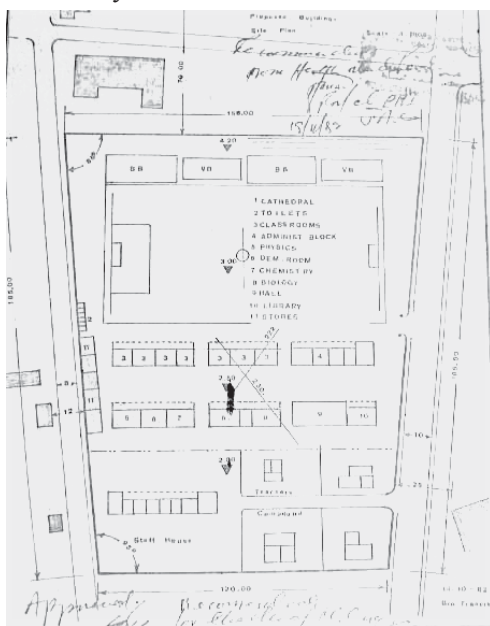
Juba: the Centenary and the laying of the CSSJ Foundation Stone

As agreed by the committee for the celebration of the Centenary, the celebration in Juba Archdiocese took place on 29 November, 1981, with a solemn liturgy at St. Theresa's Cathedral in Kator, presided by Archbishop Ireneo Dud. The picture of Daniel Comboni was the same as that used in Khartoum. It was a real discovery of Daniel Comboni as the true founder of the Catholic Church in the Sudan. During this celebration, the foundation stone of the Comboni Secondary School of Juba, to be built in the Cathedral compound in Kator, was laid in the presence of the Minister of Education,³²⁰ to the great joy of all the people, although the final approval for the building was not given until a year later.

Approved

on

19 November, 1982.



³²⁰ - Diary of South Sudan, 29 November, 1981. ACR 475/1.

- Celebrations of the Comboni Year -1981- (Italian) MCCJ Bulletin no. 135, pp. 54-56.

- Fr. Cefalo to His Exc. Mr. Philip Obang, Minister of Education and Guidance, Southern Region, Juba: *Invitation to the commemoration of the death of Bishop Daniel Comboni at 8 a.m., outside Kator Cathedral on 29 November, 1981, and laying of the foundation stone of the proposed Comboni Secondary School, Juba.* FSSPJ.

Comboni personnel and communities on 1 January, 1982

The personnel listed in the *Annuario Comboniano*, which was updated to 1 January, 1982, in practice was the personnel Fr. Raffaele Cefalo could count on for the foreseeable future.³²¹ The personnel of the *Representation of Southern Sudan*³²² carried on being still considered under Khartoum Province, though it had been a different entity since May, 1981.

To convey an overall idea of the situation, it may help to see the names and addresses of communities and confreres. This will show their logistical situation, not always well settled, and the need for other entities to help.

The Representative of the Superior General:

Fr. Cefalo Raffaele, appointed on 1 May, 1981. Address:

- Comboni Missionaries, P.O. Box 32 JUBA (Sudan).

Temporarily, all correspondence (except registered letters, parcels, etc.) for the confreres of Juba, Kworejik e Rejaf, were to be addressed to:

Comboni Missionaries, Juba
P.O. Box 18256
NAIROBI (Kenya)

For the confreres of Wau and Kwajok, this address was used:

- (name of the confrere)
Project Development Unit Wau
P.O. Box 60837
NAIROBI (Kenya)

- Private planes fly between Nairobi and Juba and Wau.

Tasks and places of presence:

Councillors:

Fr. Joseph Ukelo
Fr. Pietro Ravasio

Procurator:

Fr. Luigi Cocchi

In charge of the Economy:

Bro. Mario Rossignoli

In charge of Formation:

Fr. Luigi Penzo

Comboni personnel:

Bishop 1 - Priests 24 - Brothers 6.

³²¹ Minutes of the IV (1/82) meeting of the "Representative of South Sudan", Juba 5-7 January, 1982. ACR 610/11/1.

³²² *Annuario Comboniano*, 1982, p. 77-79 (Updated on 1 January, 1982).

Abbreviations:

al = Pupils; **d** = Diocese; **dedic.** = dedicated to; **ch** = Churches/Chapels; **cp** = prayer centres; **cr** Christians; **ct** Catholics; **cat** = Catechists; **ma** = teachers; **ms** = Muslims; **pg** = pagans; **pp** = population; **rf** = Religious Women/Sisters; **sc** = School; **sen. sec.** = Senior Secondary School.

Bussere

- St. Paul's Major Seminary

Bussere

P.O. Box 2

WAU (Sudan)

Inter-Diocesan Seminary of Sudan; d. Wau. Our confreres were called in 1979 for teaching and training.

Comboni Postulancy, started in 1980; 3 Postulants.

Fr. Luigi Penzo

Fr. Vittorino Dellagiacoma

Juba

- Catholic Church

P.O. Box 32

JUBA (Sudan)

Residence for our confreres of Juba and hospitality; opened in 1978

Fr. Raffaele Cefalo (C) Representative of the Superior General.

Mgr. Agostino Baroni

Fr. Luigi Cocchi, new Procurator, teacher.

Bro. Augusto Bazzanella, in charge of the printing press

Bro. Mario Rossignoli, works at Comboni House

Fr. Guido Bertuzzi (U), assistance to the Ugandan Refugees in Loa.

Kwajok

- Catholic Church Kwajok

P.O. Box 29, WAU (Sudan)

Parish and zone Catechetical Centre founded in May, 1979, d. Wau.

Fr. Raffaele Tessitore

Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino, Director of the Catechetical Centre

Kwörejik

- Catholic Church

P.O. Box 32

JUBA (Sudan)

Parish; d. Juba. The mission of Kwörejik was founded in 1962; re-opened in 1978.

Fr. Michael Barton, Parish Priest

Fr. Justin Ogen

Fr. Hector Ayon (in Chukudum)

Mupoi

- Catholic Church

Mupoi

TOMBORA, W.E.P. (Sudan)

Spiritual Assistance to the Sisters of the B.V.M. founded in 1977; d. Tombora.

Fr. Joseph Ukelo, Spiritual Director of the convent

Bro. Ottorino Gelmini, in charge of projects

Nzara

- Catholic Church

NZARA - W.E.P. (Sudan)

Catholic - Nzara

Parish founded on 31.10.1951, re-opened in 1973, dedic.to Mary Queen of Nzara; d. Tombora, area 250 Km²; pp ... ch. 49; cp I; rf 3; cat 50; sc; Comboni primary Nzara (Diocesan); (540 al). Dioc. Catechetical Centre.

Fr. Pietro Ravasio, in charge of the Catechetical Centre

Fr. Luigi Parisi, Parish Priest

Fr. Cesare Mazzolari

Rejaf

- Catholic Church Rejaf

P.O. Box 32

JUBA (Sudan)

Parish, re-opened in 1979; dedic; to Mary SS.; d. Juba. ; pp 55.000; ct 45.000; cr 3.000; ms 100; pg 7.000; ch 1; cp 40; cat 42; ma 70.

Fr. Tito Giuntoli, Sup., of Rejaf and Novice Master of the Brothers of Kit. Fr. Mario Busellato, Parish Priest

Fr. Giuseppe Farina

Seminary of the Apostles of Jesus, founded in 1981. (Rector: Fr. Thomas Oliha with 6 professors of philosophy AJ. helping him.

Fr. Mattia Bizzarro, in charge of the (Administration of the) Seminary of the Apostles of Jesus. (arrived on 21.2.81).

Bro. Ambrogio Confalonieri

Brothers of St. Martin de Porres (Kit).

Rumbek

- Catholic Church

RUMBEK

Lakes Province (Sudan)

Parish founded in 1953, re-opened in 1978, dedic. to the Holy Family, d. Rumbek. area 29.000 Km²; pp 333.000; ct 17.474; cr 30.000; ms 700; pg 285.000; ch 4; rf 4, sen. sec. (1,200 pupils)

Fr. Peter Magalasi, Parish Priest and Superior

Fr. Ezio Bettini

Bro. Valentino Fabris, in charge of projects

Tonga

- Catholic Church Tonga

P.O. Box 27

MALAKAL, U.P. (Sudan)

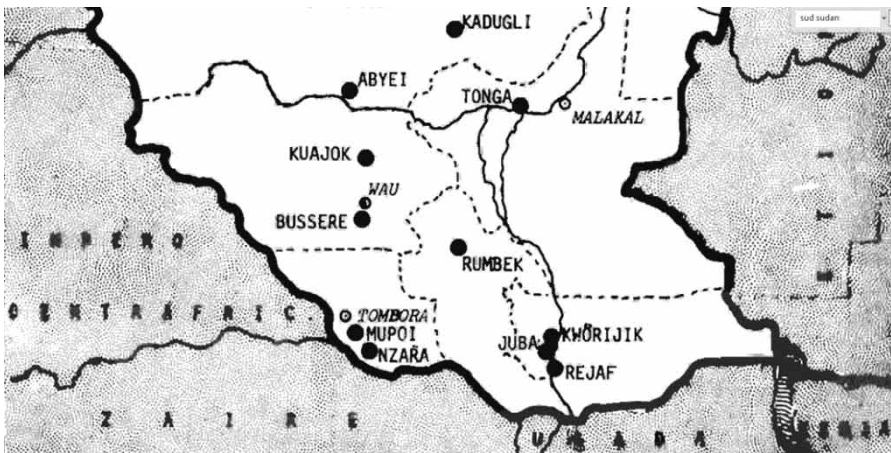
Parish founded in 1901, given to the Mill Hill Fathers in 1936; returned in 1977; dedic. to Our Lady of Sorrows; d. Malakal. km² ...; pp 25.000; ct 8.000; pg 17.000; ch 5; sem I; cat 9.

Fr. Elvio Cellana

Fr. Miguel Angel Isturiz Agudo

Bro. Francesco Ragnoli

*(full list ref. Appendix to Part Two, Section One,
Chapter One, point no. 1)*



Getting into the situation

Once the urgent preliminary duties in Juba were carried out, the *Representative* started planning his visits to the various communities in the other Dioceses of Malakal, Rumbek, Tombura and Wau. The Provincial s of Khartoum had already visited them in the previous years but, with the start of the new Circumscription, it was necessary for Fr. Raffaele to have personal knowledge and awareness of what life and evangelization precisely entailed in Southern Sudan.

Safari to Rumbek, Wau and Bussere.

In December 1981, Fr. Raffaele Cefalo undertook his first *safari*³²³ to Rumbek, Wau and Bussere. It was very important and meaningful in order to get a precise idea of the situation in those areas, to meet the confreres working there and to make reliable plans for the future. The sixth of December was the date set for the celebration of the centenary of Comboni in Rumbek. On that occasion there was also the Priestly Ordination of a Diocesan Priest, Fr. Benjamin Madol. The Bishop of Rumbek, Mgr. Gabriel Dwatuka, was living in Maridi and usually went to visit Rumbek from there, but this time he could not make it so Archbishop Gabriel Zubeir Wako from the Archdiocese of Khartoum presided at the celebration and the ordination.

In Rumbek there were Fr. Ezio Bettini and Fr. Peter Magalasi who were trying their best in their commitment. St. Paul's Major Seminary, instead, was in Bussere and two of our confreres, Fr. Luigi Penzo and Fr. Vittorino Dellagiacoma were assigned there. The work was very much appreciated by the whole Episcopal Conference. Fr. Raffaele Tessitore and Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino, for their part, were working in Kwajok.

Safari to Malakal and Tonga.

In January 1982: Fr. Cefalo organized a safari to Malakal and Tonga. The journey to Malakal from Juba was made either by steamer or by plane. Neither was available and so he took the risk of going there by car. The work on the big project of the Jonglei canal was in progress and together with it there was the watershed road ready to be used by cars. However, that important work was never concluded because of the start, one year

³²³ Safari = (Arabic): in our context = Pastoral Visit

later, of the rebel movement of the SPLA/M.³²⁴ During that time, the enormous and unique excavation machine from France was destroyed; Bro. Francesco Ragnoli was working in Malakal and Fr. Elvio Cellana and Fr. Miguel Angel Isturiz were working in Tonga.

Relevant events

There are some events along the journey of the people of God that are very relevant in order to grow with one heart and one mind and these need to be fostered; others make people reflect and there are others still which can be like a springboard, helping to give new strength to go forward. The following events can enter into these categories and help to acquire positive attitudes.

SCBC Retreat and Renewal Course

At the beginning of February 1982, one of the events which was really of great help was the retreat and the renewal course organized by the SCBC for Diocesan Priests and Religious held in Mupoi. Fr. Jerry Henthorst, a Mill Hill Father, was invited to lead it together with other courses in Wau and Malakal. It was a great occasion to experience the strength of the renewal coming from the Second Vatican Council that was very much needed in South Sudan. Fr. Cefalo and Fr. Parisi were present.

Meeting of Priests in Juba and the Presbyteral Council

Another important event in the middle of February was the four-day meeting of the Priests in Juba and the establishment of the Diocesan Presbyteral Council that met a month later for the first time and started sharing on the most important issues concerning the Diocese with its pastoral life and activities in a way which helped communion among the Priests working in the Archdiocese. In March there was also a short three-day visit of the Apostolic Nuncio, Mgr. Giovanni Moretti from Khartoum.

Other positive events that took place in the first half of April were: the meeting in Torit to plan for the Catechetical Centre; the community retreat for the Combonis preached by Mgr. Agostino Baroni, with the plan of having it every first Thursday of the month; the deanery meeting at Palica

³²⁴ SPLA/M = Sudan People Liberation Army/Movement.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sudan_People%27s_Liberation_Army

Centre and the Baptisms and First Communions at Comboni House for the group of Madi people instructed by Bro. Mario Rossignoli. Life was moving forward...

A regrettable incident at Maridi

In March, 1982, there was a very regrettable incident in Maridi which astonished many people. It concerned what happened with Bishop Gabriel Dwatuka and his very questionable way of dealing with the Salesian Fathers there. The Bishop practically expelled the Salesians in such a way that he created a great scandal for everybody. The Conference of Bishops and the Apostolic Nuncio had to intervene directly in the case.

This matter could have easily been resolved in the spirit of the Vatican Directives of *Mutuae Relationes*, but this was not done, and so the issue became very serious. The matter was relevant for all the Religious and Missionary Institutes, including the Combonis. This was the reason for Fr. Cefalo's strong letter of complaint to the Chairman of the SCBC, H. G. Gabriel Zubeir Wako,³²⁵ pointing out that such attitudes can truly harm relations with the Institutes which are in Sudan at the service of the Local Church.

Pressure was brought to bear on Bishop Dwatuka to resign, which he did. On 17 July, 1982, there was the official news of the acceptance of the resignation of Mgr. Gabriel Dwatuka, Bishop of Rumbek Diocese, and the nomination of Mgr. Agostino Baroni, Archbishop Emeritus of Khartoum, as the Apostolic Administrator of Rumbek, Yei and Maridi.³²⁶ However critical an event like this may have been, it also became an occasion for discovering wiser ways of acting, with a more broadminded attitude, within the Church.

Great need for a missionary presence in Malakal Diocese

Malakal Diocese is the biggest Diocese in the whole of Southern Sudan. According to the British Mission Spheres it was a Presbyterian and Episcopal territory. Nonetheless, Catholics returning to their homelands from Khartoum, after the Addis Ababa Agreement, started spreading Catholicism, arranging places for prayers and building up their chapels. It was a phenomenon which matured in the nineties and was already present in the major towns.

³²⁵ Fr. Raphael Cefalo to H. Grace Arch. Gabriel Zubeir, Chairman of SCBC. ACR 610/9/2.

³²⁶ Diary of South Sudan, June-July, 1982. ACR 475/1.

Fr. Cefalo, who had already travelled to Malakal by car in January to visit the confreres, could see for himself the great need for a missionary presence in Malakal Diocese. Bro. Ragnoli had already helped in Malakal itself and, at that time, was helping the Combonis present in Tonga: but what could be done for other towns like Bor? It was this consideration that moved Fr. Cefalo to plan a safari for Holy Week and Easter Sunday in Bor, where he was practically the only Priest in the whole Jonglei Province. He was there again a couple of years later, in January, 1984, waiting for the White Fathers (Missionaries of Africa) who should have arrived to possibly take up a commitment there. The more he came to know the situation, the more he could feel how pressing the need for evangelization was in the whole of Southern Sudan. A person with a character like his could hardly remain indifferent when faced with such a reality.

Comboni House and Comboni Secondary School, Juba

Together with the general concern of Fr. Raffaele Cefalo and his Council for the whole situation of the *Representation of South Sudan*, regarding the two priority projects in Juba, Comboni House and the School, there was some movement and this was noted in the minutes of the Council report:

“We had hoped to be able to transfer to the new home in January, but it was not possible due to lack of funds. We are building two units of 4 rooms each, a refectory, a small chapel, a kitchen and a storage room. The House we rent now costs us 800 Sudanese pounds per month. We expected greater help from the General Direction... we had to ask for a loan...”

Our plan is to move to Comboni House for Easter, where the Assembly (27 April) will take place, again using the rented house (only as sleeping accommodation) for the confreres during the Assembly. On May 15, we will cancel the rent.

Then, if we want to start the Comboni School this year (and we have to start it), at least 2 units must be built for the Staff... The Council agrees that Fr. Gaetano Gottardi is to be the Headmaster of the school, so let him be officially assigned in order to start planning for the opening.”³²⁷

³²⁷ Minutes of the IV (1/82) Meeting of the “Representative of South Sudan”, Juba 5-7 January 1982. ACR 610.11/1.

Fr. Pierli's comments on the minutes of the IV Council

Taking up the minutes of the IV Council of the *Representation of South Sudan*, Fr. Pierli made some positive and encouraging comments. He saw in the minutes a reason for optimism as they showed that things were starting to move and that some good results were becoming apparent. He confirmed that the Superior General would be present at the Assembly but that he personally would be absent due to unforeseen circumstances.

He expressed his happiness for the variety of Missionary Societies,³²⁸ with their different charisms, which had accepted the invitation of the Bishops to work in Sudan and saw it as an enrichment for Local Church. He appreciated the good planning relating to the Comboni community life and urged that it be followed up with determination, trying to bring in also the confreres who found this issue more difficult. With regard to personnel and planning, he admitted that the time was not one of abundance, but added that, nevertheless, the General Council had not neglected Southern Sudan, and that it hoped to have as many as forty confreres there. He also encouraged Local Bishops to apply for Lay Volunteers.

As for the Comboni House, he confirmed that the General Council was not withdrawing from its commitments, even in the matter of fundraising. However, his desire was to have simple structures, enough to answer the existing needs. The reason for proceeding slowly, then, was due to the difficulty of acquiring a clear understanding of the situation. Regarding the school, he pointed out that, since the meeting in Rome with Fr. Cefalo, the cost of the premises had doubled; moreover, the Local Church had taken no commitment yet for the *running funds*, leaving the issue with a big question mark. So, in order to face the situation better, the Superior General decided to entrust it to Fr. Gaetano Gottardi, working on it full time.³²⁹

First Visit by Fr. Calvia, Superior General and the General Assembly

The General Assembly, preceded by the Spiritual Retreat, was to be held in Juba from 27 April until 6 May, 1982.³³⁰ On this occasion the Superior General, Fr. Salvatore Calvia, had planned his official visit to the

³²⁸ In the previous years the following Societies accepted the SCBC's invitation: the Society of Jesus (SJ), the Maryknoll Missionaries (MM), the White Fathers (WF), the Salesians, the Capuchins (OFM Cap) plus other Female Institutes not mentioned here.

³²⁹ Fr. F. Pierli to Fr. R. Cefalo, Rome, 21 March, 1982. ACR 610/9/2.

³³⁰ Minutes of the IV (1/82) Meeting of the "Representative of South Sudan", Juba 5-7 January, 1982. ACR 610.11/1.

group of the Representation of Southern Sudan. His desire was to go by car from Nairobi to Juba, but it was not possible and he had to travel with an NCA³³¹ private flight, arriving in Juba on 23 April. He wanted to visit all the communities, if possible, before the Assembly, in order to animate all the confreres and also to encourage all of them to be present at the Assembly, but due to the lack of time, he only managed to visit Nzara. Fr. Pierli was also expected to be present and to preach the Spiritual Retreat, but he could not make it and Archbishop Baroni had to take his place.

Fr. Calvia emphasised the great significance he was attaching to this General Assembly and explained the reasons why he insisted that great importance be given to its preparation, especially regarding those points of planning that had been decided by the General Council when it created the new Representation. He resolutely insisted that *all* confreres, Priests and Brothers, and even newly-assigned Frs. Sina and Gottardi, had to be present in order to have a full sharing of views on the future of the new institution and reach a definitive decision.

He also stated that nobody should think that a decision had already been made but that it would be reached through open discussions within the Assembly. He added that, although it was only consultative, the General Council was giving the Assembly their close attention. It was also probable that a future Delegation would have to give this sharing careful consideration. Finally, another very important issue, about which he felt deeply concerned, was that no confrere, Priest or Brother, should stay alone, not only physically, but above all in his work. No one should depend upon other entities, such as Sudanaid or even the Episcopal Conference; everything had to be done in a collaborative way with all these entities and also with the Bishops and Comboni Institute.³³²

The presence at the Assembly, for the first time, of the Superior General, and also of the Provincial of Khartoum, Fr. Francesco De Bertolis, was of utmost importance for the new-born Circumscription, due to the sharing involved, and the revision of commitments and planning for the future. On 6 May, the Assembly was closed with a concelebration and supper at the new Comboni House, with the participation of Bishops, Diocesan Clergy, Religious and Sisters.

After the Assembly, the Council of the *Representation* met in the presence of the Superior General and Fr. De Bertolis, to discuss and finalize the whole range of issues and concerns which emerged from the

³³¹ NCA = Norwegian Church Aid.

³³² Fr. Salvatore Calvia to Fr. R. Cefalo, Rome, 15 March, 1982, ACR 610/9/2.

Assembly. As to the matter of personnel, the Superior General made it clear that the General Council was indeed ready to provide more personnel for the group, but that one also had to be moderate. This meant that the group had to plan wisely, without over-stretching the confreres and to recognise the issue of the limited number of personnel available.

In conclusion, some confreres were transferred. Fr. Luigi Cocchi and Fr. Giuseppe Farina were appointed to the North. It was also decided to close the community of Mupoi. Bro. Ambrogio Confalonieri was appointed to Nzara, Bro. Mario Rossignoli to Rumbek and Bro. Francesco Ragnoli and Valentino Fabris to Juba.

Regarding the matter of Juba CSS, the Superior General was proposing Fr. Gaetano Gottardi as the most qualified person to become its director and to be in charge of the projects still pending. At the same time, Fr. Calvia confirmed that a good sum of money was already available for the project. However, he also played down this issue saying that what was most important was not the material buildings and the money needed to carry them out, but that the priority of the Assembly and of any activity was to give a clear and precise meaning to the Comboni presence and, therefore, to guarantee community life to all.

Logistics and further events

The logistics of the Assembly, starting from 26 April, was a real test for the Comboni group, but the spirit of adaptation, the interest of the members and their massive presence made it all a very positive experience. The retreat was preached by Archbishop Baroni, just retired from the Archdiocese of Khartoum,³³³ at the Palica centre, with 22 participants. The General Assembly which followed was at the new, as yet incomplete Comboni House. Meals had still to be taken in the former Hai Jallaba house. Accommodation had to be found anywhere it was available, mostly at the *German Leprosy* Guest House.³³⁴

On the first of May, at the St. Martin Brothers of Kit, there was the religious profession of three of their novices. The event was very meaningful, both for the Congregation, which was looking ahead with

³³³ Fr. Cefalo commented: *"Immediately after handing over Khartoum, Mgr. Baroni asked to come to Juba. I was hesitant, since he was my former novice master and now he would be my subject. He set to work at once to start the USRATUNA (La Nostra famiglia) in Juba. His presence was a true blessing for us. He was appreciated and respected by all the authorities."*

³³⁴ *German Leprosy* (GLRA): the Combonis had a commitment with them.

hope, and for our confreres accompanying them along their formation. Fr. Calvia was present, as well.

Fr. Polacchini from Kwajok, Fr. Cellana and Fr. Isturiz from Tonga found it difficult to travel; Fr. Gottardi also had to find a way of being present on his way to Italy for holidays, but planning to be back for the opening of Comboni Secondary School on 16 August. A delicate and relevant point was also the agreement of having English as the official language in the Assembly, even though some confreres were not very much acquainted with it and needed somebody who would help with translation.

During the Assembly, the joyful event of the 25th anniversary of Priesthood of Fr. Peter Magalasi was celebrated with a solemn Mass at St. Therese's Cathedral in Kator, followed by a picnic and lunch at Rejaf.

The month of May ended with two items of good news. One concerned Kworijik where the Maryknoll Sisters had agreed to open a community: the intention was to start a Catechetical Centre for that Deanery in January 1983. The other item was that the Comboni Postulant Albino Adot Oryem, after a long delay, was finally given permission to leave Sudan. He went to Nairobi on 14 June, 1982; he then started the Novitiate at Tartar.³³⁵

The Comboni Postulancy and the National Seminary

The issue of the Comboni Postulancy was not new, but it was certainly a rather delicate matter to deal with for several reasons: the location, the philosophical studies and the necessary link with the National Major Seminary. The issue had formerly reached the SCBC through the Bishop in charge of the Seminaries and the SCBC gave its guidelines on the matter. Regarding the Postulancy, Fr. Raffaele Cefalo assured Bishop Paolino Lukudu Loro, then in charge of the Seminaries, that the Combonis would not take any decisions about it without the consent of the SCBC and before a suitable place was found for the National Seminary. After letting Mgr. Paolino Lukudu know of the imminent arrival of Fr. Felice Sciannameo for the Major Seminary, he apologized for the fact that he could not find personnel to help in Nazareth Minor Seminary in Wau, even though he tried hard. He also presented a draft of a possible agreement for the Major National Seminary for consideration and comments.³³⁶

³³⁵ Diary of South Sudan, April-May, 1982. ACR 475/1.

³³⁶ Fr. R. Cefalo to H. L. Bishop Paolino Lukudu, Chairman of the Seminary Episcopal Commission, Juba, 5 June, 1982. ACR610/9/2.

Fr. Cefalo on safari; the Episcopal Conference meets in Mupoi

On 24 June, 1982, Fr. Cefalo went on safari to Tombura, Wau and Rumbek. On the 26th there was a meeting of the Episcopal Conference in Mupoi. All the Bishops were present and Fr. Cefalo was also invited in order to present the plan of the Combonis and to hear the various proposals and requests from the different Dioceses. When the Bishops heard of the decision to close the community of Mupoi, they all showed their deep disagreement as it meant removing Fr. Joseph Ukelo, the Spiritual Director of the Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and Bro. Gelmini, in charge of the projects.

As a result of this divergence the Bishops did not agree to sign the agreements they were supposed to with the Comboni Institute. One month later, on 17 July, Fr. Ukelo and Bro. Gelmini arrived in Juba from Mupoi and the community was definitively closed, as planned. Fr. Ukelo was assigned for rotation to Italy and Bro. Gelmini to Juba. After the visit of the Provincial of the Salesians to Juba, at the end of June, they agreed to take up, later on, the printing press of Juba.

Khartoum: Meeting of Men Religious Superiors

For the first time, on 22 July, 1982, a meeting of the newly established Association of Men Religious Superiors was held in Khartoum.³³⁷ The importance of this does not need elaboration. The Local Church of South Sudan welcomed several other Missionary Societies and, together with the Local Religious Societies, the need for a new Association of Religious Superiors was clearly seen in order to tackle in a positive way the relevant issues of their service within the Local Church and the reciprocal relations involved. The Conference of Bishops, in fact, encouraged the founding of such an association for the benefit of both parties.

Fr. Raffaele Cefalo was one of the participants together with Fr. Thomas Oliha of the Apostles of Jesus (AJ), Fr. Ilario Tesfasghi of the Capuchins (OFM Cap), Fr. Francis De Bertolis of the Comboni Missionaries (MCCJ) North Sudan, Fr. William Knipe of the Maryknoll Missionaries (MM), Bro. Karlo Farajallah of the St. Joseph Brothers (SJB), Bro. Samuel Lokibe of

³³⁷ First meeting of the representatives of the Male Missionary Societies working in the Sudan, Khartoum 22-24 July, 1982.ACR 606/3.

- Ibid. Front Page. By this time, the Women's Religious Institutes were not yet organised.

the St. Martin Brothers (SMB), Fr. Armand Garon of the White Fathers (WF), and representatives from the Mill Hill Missionaries (MHM) and the Society of Jesus (SJ).

For the Comboni Missionaries it was a challenging experience requiring openness towards the new ecclesial situation in Sudan and a new broadminded attitude in tackling such issues together with the other Religious Institutes. For the Religious Superiors, as such, it was a chance to lay down the principles for coping with the needs of evangelization and reconstruction, together with the Local Church of Sudan, according to each Institute's Charism. The introductory talk by Archbishop Gabriel Zubeir would give them food for thought right from the beginning.

Agenda and Minutes of Meeting of Men Religious Superiors

Opening Session

1. Welcoming of the participants by Fr. Francis De Bertolis
2. Each Delegate introduced himself giving a short description of his experience in his society and in the Sudan.
3. Fr. Thomas Oliha was chosen as Moderator; Fr. Bill Knipe became the Recording Secretary.
4. The Participants brainstormed various points for the opening agenda
5. Archbishop Gabriel Zubeir Wako delivered to the Delegates a powerful and important speech, entitled: **“Talk given to the Superiors of Religious Congregations working in the Sudan (Men).”** The main theme of the talk was **“What is your role in this Local Church?”** The Archbishop's talk was followed by questions and discussion.

Points of the Agenda:

Point 1.

Temporary representative of the Superiors of men's religious congregations.

Point 2.

Creation of the Sudan Association of Major Religious Superiors. The delegates decided to begin work in forming an Association of Major Religious Superiors, to evolve slowly over the next few months.

Point 3.

Co-opted members of the Sudan Association of Major Religious Superiors.

To promote fraternal bonds with the Diocesan Clergy and various other Missionaries in the Sudan, the Delegates decided to extend Membership of the Association to the Following:

- A representative of the Association of Diocesan Clergy.
- A representative of the Fidei Donum Clergy (Malakal).
- A representative of the Lay Volunteers and Lay Missionaries.

Point 4.

Agreements between the Ordinaries and

- a. Expatriate Missionary Congregations.
- b. Brothers' Congregations.

Point 5.

The Brothers' Congregations.

Point 6.

Comboni plan of action 1982-1985, Khartoum Province.

Point 7.

Communications.

Point 8.

Spiritual renewal and spiritual maturity.

Point 9.

Distribution of personnel in the Sudan.

Point 10.

Hospitality in Khartoum and Juba.

Point 11.

Choice of a temporary representative to the Bishops' Plenary and a research person for developing the constitutions of the Association.

Point 12.

Date and venue of the next meeting.

Comboni Plan of Action 1982-1985, Khartoum Province

At the 6th point of the agenda, Fr. De Bertolis solicited the interest of the Delegates in two activities planned for the near future: The Provincial Assembly, in 1983, on the topic: *Pastoral Aspects of Education in the Sudan*, and a yearly Pastoral Course on relations with non-Christians. The Provincial Assembly would help to refresh personnel working in teaching assignments, stress the importance of the education apostolate and find ways to obtain additional personnel.

The yearly Summer Pastoral Course, bringing in experts in Islamic studies, would give personnel an opportunity to study and discuss relations with Muslims, deepen the knowledge of Sudanese culture, and evaluate the

experience. It was pointed out that the Sudan is a unique place for carrying out the dual task of dialogue with Islam and evangelization, because of the presence of a minority Christian Community in a majority Muslim population, living together in freedom and peace.

In relationship with the SCBC, the Delegates felt that it would be good to have their Representative at the Plenary Meeting of the Episcopal Conference raise the point with the Bishops about the need to have a good Liaison Officer capable of obtaining entry permits from the Government for Visiting Experts, Retreat Masters, Religious Superiors, etc.

The Delegates approved the two activities from the Comboni Plan of Action and agreed to co-operate with Fr. De Bertolis.

Distribution of Personnel in the Sudan.

At the 9th point of the agenda the Delegates discussed at great length the great need of the Church in the Sudan for more Priests and Brothers both in the South and in the North. Fr. Raphael Cefalo provided the Delegates with up-to-date statistics on the current situation of the Sudan Diocesan Clergy and drew comparisons between the Sudan and the other AMECEA Countries. Fr. De Bertolis explained the current situation of the Comboni Missionaries working in the Sudan. It was noted that the Bishops were then asking additional Religious Congregations to come to the Sudan.

Some specific points mentioned were:

1. Some Dioceses have very few Priests of any kind: 2 - 3 Priests
2. Some Missionary Societies are willing to come and work in Southern Sudan, but few seem willing to work in the North.
3. Initiatives for inviting new personnel must come from the Bishops, but the Association can assist them.
4. The needs of the Dioceses in the South are very great, with Parishes of more than 30,000 faithful standing vacant.
5. So far, not much had been done to animate lay leaders capable of providing a pastoral service in vacant Parishes.
6. New personnel are free to take over any work from other Congregations because these works belong to the Local Church.

The Delegates agreed that the members of the Association should assist the Bishops by:

- a. Sharing information about the needs of the Church in the Sudan with the members of their societies

- b. Putting pressure on their General Councils to take up work in the Sudan and increase the number of those whom they send.

It was felt that the Association Representative at the Plenary Meeting might help by stimulating initiatives among the Bishops.

AMECEA STATISTICS³³⁸

Based mainly on the 1982 *Annuario Pontificio*³³⁹ (*statistics supplied by Diocesan Curias 1/1/81 and updated where information was available*). (From Appendix No. 2 of the minutes of the meeting of the representatives of the Male Missionary Societies).

Country	Priests			Catholics per Priest	Population per Priest	Major Seminarians	Brothers	Sisters
	Diocesan	Missionary	Total					
Ethiopia	170	369	539	394	68,645	92	92	849
Kenya	214	651	865	3709	19,596	490	200	1927
Malawi	114	210	324	4230	19,451	146	85	598
Sudan	44	110	154	6720	124,617	39	36	210
Tanzania	803	705	1508	2387	12,934	468	353	3759
Uganda	700	344	1044	4998	12,569	525	288	2032
Zambia	71	389	460	3577	13,624	112	149	659
Totals	2,116	2,778	4,894	Average	Average	1,872	1,200	10,070
				3,328	24,180			

Sudan

Diocese	Area Km ²	Population	Catholics	Priests: Diocesan Missionary		Major Seminarians	Brothers	Sisters
El Obeid	888,939	5,294,000	21,237	0	19	2	4	22
Juba	100,000	859,000	400,000	12	7	16	12	35
Khartoum	977,296	8,267,000	75,500	2	57	2	9	115
Malakal	238,800	2,216,000	32,292	3	8	3	1	10
Rumbek	93,393	891,000	106,509	8	2	6	-	4
Tombura	45,318	225,000	146,738	8	4	5	3	15
Wau	205,760	1,439,000	252,513	11	13	5	7	9
Totals	2,505,827	19,191,000	1,034,889	44 *	110	39	36	210

* In addition to 44 diocesan Priests, nine Sudanese Priests are members of Missionary Institutes.

³³⁸ Amecea Statistics, ACR 606/3.

³³⁹ Annuario Pontificio, 1982, Città del Vaticano.

Talk given by Archbishop Gabriel Zubeir Wako



The talk to the Superiors of the Male Religious Congregations working in the Sudan³⁴⁰ in 1982, by Archbishop Gabriel Zubeir Wako, was of very great importance. It came eight years after the setting up of the Sudanese Hierarchy (1974). New religious societies had come into the Sudan, thus widening the missionary commitment and views which in the past were solely the prerogative of the Comboni Missionaries. This talk gave a taste of how the whole issue was seen, evaluated and presented by the Archbishop of Khartoum expressing the view of the SCBC, and therefore of the *Sudanese Hierarchy*, just at the beginning of the journey together of the various Religious Institutes present in the Sudan.

With the experience of the former relationship with the Combonis and the awareness of the present situation of the Sudanese Church, and especially of the feeling of the Diocesan Clergy in their concrete situation and ways of thinking, working and behaving, the Archbishop addressed the Religious Superiors pointing out, without beating about the bush, the points which needed to be tackled to promote a fruitful relationship and the growth of the Local Sudanese Church as a whole. Hidden fears and open challenges were facing them, calling for their role to be made clear and carried out as an experience which could enrich the Local Church, if shared in a way that would not discriminate against the Locals, who surely did not have the opportunities and the means that members of Religious Institutes and Societies had.

The main fear was that of a possible creation of **power blocks**, instead of normal collaboration in full respect of Ecclesiastic Authorities and of the Church as a community on a journey together in a spirit of fraternity and collaboration. The expectation, instead, was that the prophetic role of the Religious might positively contribute to a growth in communication and spirituality, very much needed by the Sudanese Church. Aware that areas of tension existed, the invitation was to face up to the issue with the aim of working together in order to create new opportunities of good collaboration, with a positive experience of being fully part of the same

³⁴⁰ H.G. Archib. Gabriel Zubeir Wako: Talk to the Superior of the Male Religious Congregations working in the Sudan, Khartoum, 22 July, 1982, Minutes/Appendix, p. 8-11. ACR 606/3.

Local Church and responsible persons within the Christian Community, and not mere attachments.

In addressing the Superiors of the different Institutes his main challenge was: **“What is your role in this Local Church?”**

The Archbishop expressed his happiness for the meeting of the **“Representatives of the Male Missionary Societies”**, a meeting which had the approval of the Bishops, who also approved that a representative of the Religious be present at every Plenary Meeting of the Bishops, with the hope that, in the future, the Superiors of the Congregations of Women would also be present.

Commenting on the possible **“fear of power blocks developing in the Church”**, as the religious Superiors would meet by themselves without Bishops, he put himself this question: **“how can the Religious send their representative if they do not meet beforehand by themselves?”** Thus, he encouraged the Congregations to feel the pulse of the Local Church and evaluate the impact of their presence in it by clarifying *their role* within the Local Church itself.

He deepened the reflection on the term *Local Church* and its concrete meaning as something specific to a determined place, people, time and circumstances, concluding that the various Religious Institutes are of mutual enrichment, and are beneficial to the Local Church, and insisted on **“the prophetic role of Religious in the Church.”**

He pointed out that there is too much of the **“We...You”, “We...They”** attitude in the Church of Sudan, and that the Sudanese Bishops of the Sudanese Church are the very ones who *guarantee fidelity to the religious vocation*, as Religious Congregations carry out their service. **Fraternity and cooperation** should be the real attitude, and the Local Church, the Local Ecclesial Community, the place where each one finds he belongs.

He challenged the *We are here only to help* approach, by pointing out that a helper can be dispensed with, but Religious in the Sudan are indispensable, all the time, *as co-workers*, with as much responsibility for the work as the Local Priests and Bishops, and he warned of the danger of reducing every Congregation to a common denominator, which would really harm the Church.

Regarding the point of *collaboration with the Bishops*, he emphasised that, the fact of having a representative of the Superiors of the Religious Congregations at every SCBC plenary meeting, would contribute much to this collaboration and would be a help to the deliberations of the Bishops.

As for the priorities, he presented the most urgent needs as follows:

- **Well-programmed spiritual renewal at all levels**
- **The on-going formation of Church personnel**
- **The renewal of the Liturgy and Catechesis**
- **The Pastoral Care of Families ... etc ...**
- **The Episcopal Commissions or Departments.**

In all these areas, the Religious Congregations could offer very valuable help.

He acknowledged that, **within the Local Church in Sudan, there were many areas of tension between the religious, both Local and Expatriate, and the Diocesan Priests:** there were suspicions, assumptions, distrust, and mutual condemnation. All of these needed to be tackled bravely and in a Christian way. As a final point, he invited people, and Local and Expatriate Religious Congregations, to think and clarify certain limits of behaviour like:

- Where does collaboration end and interference start?
- Where does community life and exclusion start
- Where does defence of property rights end and greed and selfishness start?
- Where does fraternal correction end and contempt of the culprit start?
- Where does national pride end and chauvinism (*narrow mindedness / prejudice / dogmatism*) start?

He concluded that all that was said required new attitudes from everybody: getting rid of outdated assumptions and prejudices, opening eyes and hearts to the present reality of persons and times and going ahead with determination and hope.

These invitations were also a programme that certainly would not leave Religious and Local Clergy idle, but engage them in a journey of growth, beneficial to both sides and to the whole reality of the Local Church, as such. In reality, the point was not ***Religious and the Local Church*** but ***Religious as fully part of this Local Church***, therefore, on a journey together.

As for the Comboni Missionaries, where did they stand and where would they start, while the journey of the new Circumscription had just begun? This was certainly food for thought for Fr. Raffaele Cefalo, for the community meetings and for ongoing formation, since it would help to set the priorities in planning for the present situation and the immediate future.

Comboni communities reorganized: September, 1982

Starting from the reorganization of September 1982, Fr. Raffaele Cefalo could proceed by giving prominence to the places where the needs were most urgent.

Archdiocese of Juba: Tot. Priests 27; Brothers 6.

Juba:

Fr. Cefalo, Fr. Sina, Fr. Pasetto, Bro. Ragnoli, Bro. Fabris, Fr. Gottardi

Rejaf:

Fr. Giuntoli, Fr. Busellato, Fr. Farina, Fr. Bizzarro with the Apostles of Jesus.

Kwörejik:

Fr. Barton, Fr. Ogen.

Loa:

(Fr. Bertuzzi - Uganda)

Diocese of Tombora:

Nzara

Fr. Ravasio, Fr. Parisi, Fr. Mazzolari, Bro. Confalonieri

Diocese of Rumbek:

Rumbek

Fr. Magalasi, Fr. Bettini

Diocese of Wau:

Kwajok

Fr. Tessitore, Fr. Pellerino, Fr. Polacchini

Bussere

Fr. Penzo, Fr. Dellagiacoma, Fr. Sciannameo

Diocese of Malakal:

Tonga

Fr. Cellana, Fr. Isturiz

Waiting for appointment:

Bro. Bazzanella, Bro. Gelmini, Bro. Rossignoli.

Frs. Ukelo, Ayon, Mattevi, Zambruni.

*(Personnel in September, 1982 ref. Appendix to Part Two, Section One
Chapter One, point no. 2)*

The “Representation of Southern Sudan” becomes a DELEGATION

In the months of August and September, 1982, Fr. Cefalo was present, as representative of the Superior General for South Sudan, at the Intercapitular Assembly in Rome. The new presence in South Sudan made all the participants very eager for news. On 15 October, 1982, the *Representation of Southern Sudan* was elevated to the **DELEGATION of SOUTH SUDAN**³⁴¹ by the Superior General and his Council. This decision was a real milestone for the whole group and a challenge to look towards the future with renewed strength and vision.

A new consultation among the confreres had to be carried out to give the General Council the opportunity of choosing the future Superior Delegate. Fr. Raffaele Cefalo let them know he did not want any responsibility for the future and proposed they appoint him to Rumbek, in great need of personnel, to stay with Bishop Agostino Baroni, whose example of missionary dedication and humility impressed him deeply. The Superior General, however, while bearing his wishes in mind, asked him to leave the issue to the choice of the confreres.

Fr. Salvatore Calvia, Superior General, at the SCBC in Wau

The SCBC started one of its annual conferences in Wau on the 22 November, 1982. The Superior General, Fr. Salvatore Calvia, was invited to participate and he accepted to do so. There were no flights from Nairobi and he had to take a small private plane of the ILACO Corporation going to Aweil. Fr. Cefalo had then to go from Juba to Aweil to receive him and take him to Wau. During the meeting the complaint about the withdrawal of the Combonis from Mupoi came up again, and again there was a renewed insistence on the side of the Superior General to draw up the conventions between SCBC and the Comboni Institute in order to promote good relationships in the various commitments. The Superior General was indeed very happy and grateful for the chance offered to him to participate in the meeting, since it gave him a real perception of the concrete reality of South Sudan, of the progress of the Church and its challenges.

³⁴¹ 15 October, 1982, (It.) Erection of the Delegation of South Sudan. ACR 610/8.

Letter of the Superior General to Archbishop Ireneo Dud



Together with the Letter of the former Superior General, Fr. Tarcisio Agostoni, to the Comboni Missionary confreres in 1974, on the occasion of the erection and the establishment of the Sudanese Hierarchy, this letter of the then Superior General, Fr. Salvatore Calvia, to Archbishop Ireneo Dud, on 24 December, 1982, was one of great value in order to understand progressively the *signs of the time* within the newly created *Delegation of South Sudan* and the *Local Church* so that missionary service might be carried out with renewed understanding and fervour and promote always better relationships and, as he concluded, in order to fulfil the common aim: ***the growth to full maturity of the Church of God in the Sudan.*** Due to its importance, while pointing out the most relevant points, I will put the entire letter in the section of the appendix.

The Superior General's letter: main points

The letter of Fr. Salvatore Calvia was addressed to the Archbishop of Juba, his Grace Ireneo Wien Dud,³⁴² whom he thanked for his invitation to a session of the Episcopal Conference and for the fraternal reception he received. He pointed out that his presence underlined the ***moral obligation*** of the Comboni Missionaries towards the Sudan, convinced that mutual contact may help to fulfil it, in agreement with the Local Hierarchy.

He apologised for any misunderstandings of the past due to various reasons, but never to ill will. These difficulties, in his own view, were due to accepting any invitation whatever, in order to satisfy the desires and the needs of the Local Church, but without clear reference to the ***Rule of Life***. Since the Holy See approved it definitively in 1980, it will be of real help in making mutual relations easier and better.

Regarding the present ***Representation of Southern Sudan***, he informed the Archbishop that the General Council decided to give the Comboni Missionaries in South Sudan *a more precise and autonomous religious structure* and that, in this sometimes painful process, there is the desire to understand better the plans and wishes of the SCBC, and also the desire to

³⁴² Fr. Salvatore Calvia, MCCJ, Superior General, to Most Rev. Mgr. Ireneo Wien Dud, Rome, 24 December, 1982. ACR 606/1/2.

hold a proper place among the various pastoral agents working for this Church, which is governed by the Local Hierarchy, and in which both the Combonis and other Religious Institutes have to be active coadjutors.

Looking at the future, he believed that the most important issue was to establish mutual relations of understanding and help by all sides for the success of the activities involved and, in relation to the priorities of the SCBC expressed in the meeting of Wau, he maintained what follows:

- First of all, he confirmed that the Comboni Missionaries are in full agreement with them, especially for what regards the formation of local personnel, the on-going formation of Priests and Religious, the activity of PALICA, particularly with regard to the formation of the laity, projects of human promotion and reconstruction in the various missions.
- Secondly, he also confirmed that, while trying to comply with the call for personnel, the initiative of inviting the Comboni Missionaries to Sudan is left to the Bishops, though the Institute may not be able to accept every invitation because it has to consider both the needs of the confreres, the numerical requirements and community life.

Fr. Calvia added a further three remarks:

- One in connection with the request for *young personnel*: in principle there was agreement but, at least for the time being, some Fathers and Brothers who have already worked in Sudan will also be proposed, while awaiting the reply (of the Bishops concerned) as to whether it was possible to send them or not. As for the training of young personnel for Sudan, he assured that the Institute was committed to it.
- The second remark concerned the General Council's insistence on the variety of pastoral agents. The presence of other Institutes was not only accepted but also encouraged by all means. Moreover, a Presbyteral Council made up of Local Priests, of Religious and of Missionaries belonging to various Religious Institutes, would be much richer and more fruitful for the Local Church.
- The third remark regarded community life: according to the new Rule of Life it was not merely an internal affair for the Combonis. Community life was affecting relationships with the Local Church, with other Institutes and with the International Agencies for development.

As a consequence, all commitments should be taken up by the Superior Delegate and never by an individual confrere. In his view, the Conventions with the Bishops could and should resolve all the issues mentioned above and he was surprised to notice some resistance to these Conventions on the part of the Archbishop and of the other Bishops. He agreed that it was evident that the Local Church *had its own needs*, but that also the Institutes, *including the Comboni Missionaries, had theirs*. The Conventions would then be the official means to balance the needs of both parties and lead to fruitful collaboration for the Kingdom of God.

He also informed Archbishop Dud that the Conventions were used everywhere and in all territories where the Combonis were working and that they were also strongly recommended by the Holy See. Fr. Calvia maintained that what was emphasised in *Mutuae Relationes* Nos. 58 and 65, that is, better contacts between the SCBC and the Conference of Religious Superiors, could greatly facilitate mutual understanding and closer cooperation and that, while Nos. 18, 29 and 36 of *Mutuae Relationes* were referring to the needs of the Dioceses, Nos. 8, 11, 46 referred to the needs of the Institutes.

He confirmed that the General Council's desire was to reach an equal distribution of confreres in the Dioceses of Juba, Wau, Tombora, Malakal and Rumbek, and possibly any newly-erected Diocese. In this regard, the Conventions, too, should be agreed upon by all Dioceses, according to the specific situation, to better meet their local needs. As for the presence in Juba, he affirmed that the present situation was only temporary, due to the urgency of building Comboni House and the Comboni Secondary School. The Comboni Missionaries would fulfil their promise to build the school and run it for five years but, meanwhile, a Local Priest should be prepared to take over its running and administration.

As for the Comboni House compound, the plan was to have different units: a Chapel, a Comboni Missionaries' residence, a Sisters' residence,³⁴³ rooms for visiting confreres and units for Lay Volunteers, a multipurpose centre, a workshop and a kind of Procure able to render the essential services. He confirmed his support for what the Diocese was already doing, and also that there was no intention of substituting what was already done. He concluded by saying that the meaning of the letter was to have a new start in friendly dialogue, for which he had had such great encouragement

³⁴³ - For the Sisters teaching in the Comboni Secondary School.

- Circular 4/82, Newsletter 1 January, 1982, point no. 9: House for the Comboni Sisters teaching in the CSSJ. ACR 610/11/1.

at the recent meeting in Wau. He expressed his conviction that this heartfelt communion would help to reach the common aim, that is, ***the growth to full maturity of the Church of God in the Sudan.***

(For full text, ref. Appendix to Part Two, Section One
Chapter One, point no. 3)

Letter of Father General to the confreres of South Sudan.

The letter of the Father General, Fr. Salvatore Calvia, to the confreres of South Sudan³⁴⁴ was written at the same time as the one sent to Archbishop Ireneo Dud Wien on 24 December, 1982. It was a very important letter for the group of the Comboni Missionaries belonging to the new Delegation because it dealt directly with the attitude they must make their own among themselves and in relation to the Local Church. One could say that it was the other side of the same coin, tackling directly the ***living reality, the perspectives, the Local Church and the Comboni service*** from an internal Comboni point of view towards the Local Church, while the one to Archbishop Dud dealt directly with the relationship between *Local Church and the Combonis* and issues the Local Church should take into consideration.

Reality, prospects, Local Church and Comboni service are the key issues of the letter of Fr. Salvatore Calvia to the confreres whom he invites not to take up inaccessible ideals but to view everything with realism. He affirmed having seen a big change in the six months from the time of the Assembly to his SCBC meeting. Progress was made because of the good will and the work of the confreres, especially in what regarded relationships within the communities and with the Local Church. He highlighted the importance of proceeding with optimism and realism, with confidence in the population and to opt for achievable goals with patience, adaptability, tolerance and mutual understanding, including also the *element of the cross*.

About relationships with the Local Church, he noted that it must not be forgotten that past history had to be overcome and managed, and that it was necessary to prove this was being done by our way of living, working and cooperating with the Local Church (Bishops, Priests and Lay People).

With regard to personnel, he said that new and different people were being asked for, but that it was necessary to be content to work with the personnel that the Institute then had available. These were people who were

³⁴⁴ (In Italian) Rome 24 December, 1982, Letter of the Father General, Fr. Salvatore Calvia, to the confreres of South Sudan. ACR 610/10.

already quite mature, who had already worked in the Sudan, who found it difficult to change, but were, nevertheless the people that the Lord offered at the time. Full cooperation, formation of the Laity, Seminaries and Parishes were all goals to be achieved, but only after some years and by different people. In any case, he thought that the most important thing to do was *to take the first steps...*

Fr. Calvia claimed to have gone back to Rome with optimism after his visit and the meeting with the Bishops and that he saw in them a lot of good will, true pastoral spirit and a welcome for the Comboni presence that should be appreciated. He asserted the right to feel fully part of the Local Church, but he also invited the confreres not to forget that they were foreigners in the country and that, even if the Combonis had been in the Sudan for years, there was no immediate perception of the mentality. It was necessary, therefore, to have a collaborative spirit and humility. It was important to give suggestions, but it was also necessary to accept the Local Leadership, the work assigned, and to collaborate, leaving aside any protagonistic attitude.

Looking to the future, he expressed a desire for an improvement in relations with the Local Church so as to make the acceptance of missionaries more trusting, open and safe, and that both suspicion and doubt had to be eliminated. Life and work should demonstrate a new spirit among the Comboni Missionaries and a new style of presence in South Sudan. Christian communion ought to become the foundation of the whole Christian life and of work

Comboni personnel in Southern Sudan, January, 1983

Confreres	Date of Entry	Place of work
1. Fr. Raffaele Cefalo	30.5.81	Juba - Deleg. Sup.
2. Fr. Gaetano Gottardi	1947	Juba, CSS
3. Fr. Ettore Pasetto	10.5.82	Juba, CSS
4. Fr. Alfredo Mattevi	28.1.83	Juba, CSS
5. Fr. Filippo Sina	1947	Juba, CSS
6. Bro Bazzanella	June 1977	Juba
7. Bro. Francesco Ragnoli	16.7.52	Juba
8. Bro. Domenico Cariolato	28.1.83	Juba
9. Bro. Valentino Fabris	14.12.49	Juba
10. Bro. Ottorino Gelmini	3.4.74	Juba
11. Fr. Tito Giuntoli	18.1.80	Rejaf

12. Fr. Mario Busellato	Feb. 80	Rejaf
13. Fr. Mattia Bizzarro	21.2.81	Rejaf, A.o.J.
14. Fr. Michael Barton	26.6.78	Kwörejik, Juba
15. Fr. Justin Ogen	16.11.81	Kwörjijik, Juba
16. Fr. Hector Ayon	Sudanese	Chukudum
17. Fr. Elvio Cellana	1965	Tonga, Malakal
18. Fr. Miguel A. Isturiz	12.1.81	Tonga, Malakal
19. Fr. Luigi Parisi	16.11.81	Nzara
20. Fr. Pietro Ravasio	9.3.79	Nzara
21. Fr. Cesare Mazzolari	1.6.81	Nzara
22. Bro. Ambrogio Confalonieri	1973	Nzara
23. Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino	19.3.79	Kwajok, Wau
24. Fr. Raffaele Tessitore	May 79	Kwajok, Wau
25. Fr. Alfonso Polacchini	20.10.81	Kwajok, Wau
26. Mgr. Agostino Baroni	1932	Rumbek
27. Fr. Ezio Bettini	Jan. 81	Rumbek
28. Fr. Peter Magalasi	Sudanese	Rumbek
29. Fr. Pietro Zambruni	-	Rumbek
30. Fr. Luigi Penzo	30.4.79	Bussere, Wau
31. Fr. Vittorino Dellagiacoma	1.1.80	Bussere, Wau
32. Fr. Felice Sciannameo	30.8.82	Bussere, Wau
33. Bro. Libero Ribelli	22.3.83	Bussere, Wau
34. Bro. Mario Rossignoli	30.5.81	-
35. Fr. Joseph Ukelo	Sudanese	-
36. Fr. Guido Bertuzzi	17.6.81	Loa

Appointment of the Superior of the Delegation

The consultation was carried out and the Superior General and his Council decided to appoint Fr. Raffaele Cefalo as *Superior of the Delegation of South Sudan*.³⁴⁵ His answer was that he would accept it only in a spirit of obedience, since he had already expressed his opinion that he should not be given any responsibility.³⁴⁶ The General Council, however, taking into account the votes of the confreres and his valuable missionary

³⁴⁵ -Rome, 10 March, 1983, Appointment of the Superior of the Delegation of South Sudan (Fr. Raffaele Cefalo). ACR 610/8.

- Rome 22 July, 1983, confirming election of Fr. Ottorino Sina as Vice Superior of the Delegation of South Sudan. ACR 610/8.

³⁴⁶ Fr. R. Cefalo to Fr. S. Calvia, Juba, 19 January, 1983. ACR 610/9/3.

experience, for the sake of continuity, confirmed him in the leadership of the new erected Delegation.

“Dear Confreres, as you can see, the General Council has nominated Delegate for South Sudan Fr. Raffaele Cefalo. Up to now he did not belong to South Sudan because he was only the Representative of the Superior General, now he belongs to South Sudan officially because he is assigned to South Sudan as he himself had already chosen even before his election as Delegate. In order to give more trust and more courage to Fr. Cefalo, who has accepted his appointment only for obedience, I want to publish with this letter, even though there was no need for it, the results of the ballots and also the reasons why the General Council has decided to go ahead with the appointment of Fr. Cefalo...Next year we will have in all Circumscriptions the elections of the new Superiors with the possibility of South Sudan becoming a Province... This will help the continuity of the work in this delicate moment of South Sudan, and at the same time it will give our confreres the possibility to reflect on the future ahead: whether to confirm the same person as Provincial Superior or propose somebody else...”³⁴⁷

The trust they placed in him was a clear sign of the need of his services at this particular stage of the Comboni group, now a Delegation, and there were reasons for unease in relations with the Bishops that needed to be addressed in due course.

With the appointment of the Delegation Superior, the Delegation of Southern Sudan was looking ahead with new purpose. The two top priorities of Comboni House and Comboni S. S. Juba, together with the other commitments in the Diocese of Juba, could develop with a clearer approach, and the undertakings in the other different Dioceses of the South, within the limits imposed by the shortage of personnel, could be more realistically planned according to their needs.

(December 1983: Electoral list for Election of Provincial Superior, ref. Appendix to Part Two, Section One, Chapter One, point no. 4)

³⁴⁷ Rome, 15 March, 1983, Fr. Salvatore Calvia to all the confreres of South Sudan.

- (In Italian) “Delegation of South Sudan”, Interview of Fr. Salvatore Calvia, by Fr. Ezio Sorio, MCCJ Bulletin, no. 138, July, 1983, pp. 356-38.

Commitments in Juba, Tombura, Rumbek, Wau, Malakal.

The period of time from the visit of the Superior General in May, 1982, until the appointment of Fr. Raffaele Cefalo as Delegation Superior, was a time of hard work in order to implement the *Representation priorities*. Despite the difficulties of working out plans and the slow speed imposed by the situation and other hindrances, as Fr. Calvia pointed out in his letter, the Comboni group and the situation did change.

The Comboni S. S. Juba: Fr. Cocchi, already working as a professor since 1977, ended his service in the South and was transferred to the North while Fr. Gottardi was already in Juba planning to open the school by 16 August. Bro. Ragnoli was also in Juba for the building of the secondary school and in June started the work in Kator, while waiting for Bro. Valentino Fabris to leave the work with *German Leprosy* in Rumbek and join him.

The plans for the building were approved by the City Council on 19 November, 1982, thus giving the green light for building to start. Unfortunately, a technical divergence of opinion on the way the building should have been carried out, and the strong character of Bro. Ragnoli who wanted his way throughout, led him to decide to resign from the work. Bro. Fabris then took over and implemented the project, as agreed, with the help of Bro. Domenico Cariolato who arrived in Juba at the end of January, 1983. By 4 July, 1983, the students could already start their second term in the new classrooms.

On 2 December, 1983, they had the honour of the first official visit from the Minister of Education. This was a great achievement for the whole Comboni Group and especially for Bros. Fabris and Cariolato and the confreres teaching in the school, Frs. Gottardi, Sina, Pasetto and Mattevi, together with the Comboni Sisters Elena Binetti and Giovanna Sguazza who had already started their commitment with the school and moved into the new Sisters' House on 25 July.

Comboni House: though not yet completed, it had already hosted the Assembly during the visit of the Superior General in May, 1982. If the Comboni School was giving reasons for rejoicing, Comboni House was also progressing well, according to the plan approved by the General Council and confirmed again by Fr. Calvia during his visit. The SCC (Sudan Council of Churches) accepted to finance a four-roomed guesthouse in the Comboni House, as well.

Fr. Sina was chosen as Superior of the Comboni community of Juba in July, 1983, with the understanding that the workshop and the extraordinary

program of construction would be the responsibility of the Delegation Superior and the Procurator.³⁴⁸ As for the Financial Council it was composed of Bro. Gelmini, Fr. Gottardi and Bro. Fabris, with Bro. Gelmini as Procurator and Bursar.³⁴⁹ Bro. Bazzanella continued to look after the printing press in St. Joseph's area.

The final joyful act of the whole Comboni House project was the handing over to the Delegation Superior, by the SCC, of the keys of the four-roomed guesthouse on 15 November, 1983.³⁵⁰ The successful completion of the works within the Comboni Missionary compound was another outstanding achievement of the Brothers and of Fr. Cefalo whose tireless commitment to the project kept it going.

In Juba Archdiocese.

Rejaf area: the Parish of Rejaf continued under the care of Fr. Busellato as Parish Priest and Fr. Farina his curate; It was the same with Fr. Giuntoli and the Brothers of Kit (St. Martin the Porres Brothers) and Fr. Bizzarro with the Apostles of Jesus of Rejaf, as well. The Brothers Rossignoli (logistics/pastoral), Gelmini, Confalonieri, joined later by Bro. Ragnoli, continued with their specific projects, especially in the construction field. In order to encourage better community life among the confreres working in the area of Rejaf, it was proposed that they should form one community, possibly with Fr. Busellato as their Superior.³⁵¹

Kwörejik Parish: Frs. Barton and Ogen were very busy with their pastoral work and it was felt that more personnel were needed in order to respond to the real needs. Besides, there was the need of better means of transportation, better food, lodging and travelling conditions and the fostering of good relations with people.

In Tombura Diocese

Nzara: with the closing of the community of Mupoi and the commitment with the Local Sisters in 1982, Fr. Ukelo was asked to go on rotation to Italy and Bro. Gelmini to Juba, while the community of Nzara remained with the Frs. Mazzolari, Ravasio, Parisi, and Bro. Confalonieri

³⁴⁸ Voice of the Southern Sudan Delegation, Minutes of the Delegation Council Meeting, Juba 28/6-2/7, 1983, p. 7. ACR 610/11/2.

³⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 3.

³⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 6.

- Diario, Missionari Comboniani Sud Sudan, (from 1.May, 1981 to 1 January, 1990). op. cit., day 15 November, 1983.ACR 475/1.

³⁵¹ Delegation Council Meeting, Juba 28/6-2/7, 1983. op. cit., p. 7.

who would later be asked to go to Juba and work with the Apostles of Jesus of Rejaf.

In Rumbek Diocese

Rumbek was in some disorder due to the repercussions of the Yei incident involving Bishop Gabriel Dwatuka and the Salesian Fathers. Archbishop Agostino Baroni was already in Juba since handing over the Archdiocese of Khartoum on 10 October, 1981, and was trying to help start the *Centre for Disabled Children* directed by *Nostra Famiglia* (USRATUNA). He was appointed Apostolic Administrator of Rumbek Diocese, including Yei and Maridi, on 17 July, 1982, the date of the official news of the resignation of Bishop Dwatuka.

Previously, the Comboni presence in Rumbek started with Bro. Valentino Fabris, (who in 1978 was in Khartoum), in connection with the *German Leprosy project*. He was appointed to South Sudan and to Rumbek in 1979 for this specific project. Together with him Fr. Ezio Bettini was appointed teacher of Religious Education in the huge government-run *Rumbek Secondary School*. Besides teaching, Fr. Bettini was available also for many other most needy practical things and was entrusted with the financial administration of the Pastoral Region. He was residing in the premises of the school and Bishop Dwatuka, at the time, was really happy with his commitment, though the financial administration during that period was far from easy.

Fr. Peter Magalasi was also appointed to Rumbek as Superior of the community in July 1983. The appointment of Bro. Fabris to Juba at the end of 1982 left Rumbek with Archbishop Baroni, Fr. Magalasi and Fr. Bettini (Fr. Pietro Zambruni, though in the list, never arrived in Rumbek). Life consisted in very essential things and was not easy. Confreres managed to carry on their service with dedication. Of particular example and inspiration was Mgr. Baroni, who accepted to serve only until a new person could be chosen and put in charge of the Diocese.³⁵²

Wau Diocese had two ongoing Comboni commitments: Bussere and Kwajok.

Bussere with its Major Seminary was the top priority of both SCBC and Comboni Missionaries because of the formation of future Priests. The

³⁵² Comment of Fr. Cefalo: “When the Apostolic Nuncio, Mgr. Moretti, asked him on behalf of the Pope to go to Rumbek, it came as a shock to him, but his answer was: ‘I can’t say no to the Pope’.”

Major Seminary was run by the Jesuits. Fr. Luigi Penzo had been Spiritual Director since 1979; Fr. Vittorino Dellagiacoma, at the beginning of 1980 and Fr. Felice Sciannameo, in the middle of 1982, joined him as teachers of theology; Bro. Libero Ribelli, at the beginning of 1983, joined them as the person in charge of provisions and for other services required by the Seminary. On the part of the Combonis, Fr. Penzo was also the person in charge of following up a couple of Major Seminarians who had shown the desire of becoming Comboni Missionaries. One of these was Albino Adot Oryem.

Kwajok Parish: the Comboni presence had been restarted with Fr. Pellerino and Fr. Tessitore in 1979, and, by the end of 1981, was also granted the temporary presence of Fr. Alfonso Polacchini (appointed to Raja) and was continuing to function normally with the commitments of producing liturgical books in Dinka, the work in the catechetical centre and that of the Parish. Kwajok and Bussere were not too far from each other so the confreres could easily support each other in their community life.

Malakal Diocese

Tonga Parish was the only Comboni commitment. At the time, only two confreres, Fr. Cellana and Fr. Isturiz, were working there since Bro. Ragnoli had been assigned to Juba for the various projects. The two confreres were working hard but were probably the most isolated community, being the only one in that Diocese and difficult to reach. At any rate, Fr. Cefalo visited them and also facilitated the visits of the White Fathers who intended to open a presence in the town of Bor, a place he considered a top priority in terms of evangelization.

1983 - Changes in the Political-Military Arena

Five members of **ACROSS** (African Committee of Rehabilitation of Southern Sudan) were abducted on 23 June, 1983, by the rebels³⁵³ and kept hostage in Boma National Park, Eastern Equatoria. The rebels threatened to kill them if their requests were not met. The mass media reported the fact, but *“what they never mentioned was that, during those days, ACROSS members and other Christians were really joined in prayer: daily prayer and nightly vigils for their safety, for their release. The raised hands of*

³⁵³ ACROSS hostages: <http://www.upi.com/Archives/1983/06/30/A-Sudanese-official-today-ruled-out-a-military-rescue/7792425793600/>;
<http://www.upi.com/Archives/1983/07/06/Guerrillas-threatening-to-kill-five-Western-hostages-in-Sudan/7177426312000/>

Moses did more than fighters on the field. Our Bishops, in their recent meeting at Mupoi, have appealed for peace in the Sudan as a whole, and the most powerful means we have at our disposal is prayer”³⁵⁴

The abduction of the members of ACROSS on 23 June, 1983, brought Church personnel and Comboni Missionaries, as well, to the abrupt awareness that the situation had indeed changed in the political and military scenario of Southern Sudan.

There were people who were unhappy with the Addis Ababa agreement, especially those people in favour of the separation of the South. Some others were dissatisfied with the changing policy of President Nimeiri towards the South since 1980, especially for matters linked to religion and to the discovery of oil. Many others were unhappy with the decree issued by Nimeiri on 5 June, 1983, abolishing the Addis Ababa Agreement, the Regional Self-Government Act and all the institutions in the South, dividing it into three regions. The imposition of the Shari’a law (8 September, 1983) was the straw that broke the camel’s back. Lastly, the military personnel who were against the transfer of the Southern military units to the North saw this as a reason to start a new armed struggle.³⁵⁵

It was against this background that the SPLA military campaign started. The spark was the Bor mutiny of Battalion 105, which first erupted in March 1983, due to the failure to pay salaries, with the new date set for August 1983 (though it had to be postponed), just as the first Torit mutineers chose August 1955. The other battalions (of Khartoum Government) in the South had to be put on full alert such as Juba, Torit, Kapoeta, Aweil, Rumbek, Bor, Pibor, Pochalla, and Ayod. Waat, Akobo in early August. On 13 May, 1983, Colonel Garang went to Bor and Major Kerubino Kwanyin Bol handed over the command to him, but Garang preferred to proceed to Langbar (where there were many expatriate engineers) to tie down that military battalion and prevent a disastrous attack on Bor from the rear.

On 16 May, an assault was launched from Juba to attack rebel battalion 105 in Bor. Fierce fighting followed. The news reached Major William Nyuon Bany, commander of a part of battalion 104, who also joined the

³⁵⁴ Minutes of the Delegation Council Meeting, Juba 28/6-2/7, 1983, op. cit., p. 4.

³⁵⁵ - R. Werner-W. Anderson-A. Wheeler, Day of Devastation Day of Contentment, Paulines Publication Africa, 2nd ed. 2010, pp. 382-394.

- A Concise History of South Sudan, Andres Breidlid ed, Fountain Publisher, Rev. Ed. 2014, pp. 261-263.

- Sudan’s Painful Road to Peace, Arop Madut-Arop, op. cit., pp. 41-50

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaafar_Nimeiry

rebellion, destroyed a military convoy, emptied Ayod garrison's stores and fled towards Ethiopia. On 18 May, the rebel forces in Bor were already outnumbered so they pulled out and went into the bush; Pibor, Pochalla and Waat forces also rebelled. When all the mutineers were on their way towards the Ethiopian border, Colonel John Garang, who was still in Langbar, made his way out with his family towards Adura village (Ethiopia), which became his command post.³⁵⁶

In order to have the full military and logistic support of President (Chairman) Mengistu Haile Mariam, a document stating the objectives of the revolutionary movement needed to be presented to him. However, it was made clear that he would not support any separatist movement. Implored by the elderly and respected Joseph Oduho, Colonel John Garang accepted to write it under three conditions which became the basic principles inspiring the *Manifesto of the SPLA Movement*:

- To fight for the creation of a New United Sudan that would give the marginalised areas of the Sudan equality and justice.
- To adopt a Socialist system of rule.
- To ensure that the fighting forces scattered all over the South, including Anya-Nya II, be regrouped, and trained and then start the war.

These three points were unanimously accepted and Colonel Dr. Garang selected members of his team to write the document. The document was issued in July, 1983, with some slight modifications, and it was proclaimed as the manifesto of the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M).³⁵⁷ It was accepted by Chairman Mengistu Haile Mariam, as well.³⁵⁸ The struggle for leadership, especially against the Anya-Nya II groups (fighting for the separation of the South), continued as before, but Colonel Dr. John Garang got his leadership confirmed and accepted by the Ethiopian President.

In *Day of Devastation Day of Contentment* by Werner, Anderson and Wheeler, we find the following statement: "*The outbreak of war in 1983 caught the Church in the South largely unprepared and left it in confusion*

³⁵⁶ Sudan's Painful Road to Peace, Arop Madut-Arop, op. cit., pp. 44, 45, 52-54, (35-96).

³⁵⁷ Ibid. p.70.

³⁵⁸ Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

- Arop Madut-Arop- [DOC]SPLM/SPLA - CMIwww.cmi.no/sudan/doc/?id=992;

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sudan_People%27s_Liberation_Army

throughout the 1980s. Between 1989 and 1991, several developments at last provided the Church with a clearer sense of its role and direction.”³⁵⁹

This evaluation was very accurate and the years which followed witnessed a Church trapped by events and trying to go through the loopholes left, either by the Khartoum Government or by the SPLA movement, in the safest way as possible, without knowing whom she should trust or how to bridge the difficult situation.

As for the 5 hostages of ACROSS in Boma, after two weeks of negotiations and many prayers, they were released. However, the result of this incident was that the lack of security brought about the withdrawal of Expatriate Volunteers from Yirol, Tonj, Rumbek and other places, and the Rumbek road was no longer safe. This constituted a very big setback to the work of reconstruction of Southern Sudan and for every initiative in the social and spiritual area, especially in the life of people. From now on the security situation in all parts of Southern Sudan became more and more precarious, unpredictable and downright dangerous.

The Delegation within the Archdiocese of Juba

With the new juridical set-up of the group as a Delegation, Fr. Cefalo could look ahead with more confidence that, at level of personnel and commitment from the General Council, the Comboni Group would be able to consolidate the commitments requested and undertaken and face in a better way the big challenges that lay ahead for South Sudan. His great efforts to be near the confreres in the different communities, through frequent visits, was a great help to keeping up their spirits and giving them the feeling of togetherness, even though they were quite far away from each other, with difficult roads and, in certain areas, with precarious security. This difficult situation was felt particularly at the time of Assemblies when confreres wanted to gather together in Juba. To facilitate matters, a proposal was presented to have two points of reference for the Assemblies: Juba and Wau.

Another reflection the Delegation Council made was in connection with the misunderstandings that arose between June 1982 and June 1983 in the Archdiocese of Juba and that needed to be addressed. The Council felt that there was no true dialogue with the local clergy and a definite culture gap between the Local Church and Expatriates. Due to the fact that very few meetings were organized, there was no real possibility of bridging the gap

³⁵⁹ Day of Devastation Day of contentment, op. cit., pp. 393-394.

and engaging in healthy dialogue. This was made worse by the fact that, at that time, there was a real lack of Church leadership and that the Priests in charge were rather inaccessible.

The accusation on the side of the Local Clergy was that the Combonis were taking initiatives about things that were the competence of the Local Church officials, that they were liaising with the Pro-Nuncio and influencing his decisions, that they were obtaining Visa and Permits without consultation with the Local Church, and that they were giving assistance and hospitality to people who should have been assisted and directed by the Local Church officials.

The Council admitted that sometimes the competence of the Church officials was invaded for the sake of efficiency and that, with the coming of the new Bishop of Juba a report needed to be presented of what the Combonis did with the best of intentions, with the openness to follow his directives and to remain within the limits prescribed for those cases where the Combonis overstepped their authority. This reflection and acknowledgement on the side of the Delegation Council, revealed how deep was the need of reciprocal encounter in order to build up a healthy relationship during the process.³⁶⁰

Regarding the AMECEA giving priority to Small Christian Communities, the Comboni Provincial Superiors met in Nairobi from 21 to 25 June, 1983, and dealt with this topic. There was an interesting comment of the Delegation Council worth quoting which said: *"If the top priority of AMECEA Bishops is the building up of Small Christian Communities, before being just a new method, a new technique, it is supposed to be a new spirituality: how can we preach about S.C.C. (Small Christian Communities) if we do not live it among ourselves, with the Pastoral Agents, with Seminarians...?"*³⁶¹

This last reflection would really be the basis of a new relationship within the whole configuration of the Church, from the Bishops to the ordinary people and from the Local Clergy to the Expatriate Missionaries. Everyone would have a share in the common responsibility of building up a healthy body of the Church in its three proposed dimensions: *self-supporting, self-ministering and self-propagating*. Indeed, the question was: *are we really going for it* in our context of South Sudan...?

³⁶⁰ Voice of the Southern Sudan Delegation, Minutes of the Delegation Council Meeting, Juba 28/6-2/7, 1983, pp. 6-7. ACR 610/11/2.

³⁶¹ Ibid. Voice of the Southern Sudan Delegation.

Newly appointed Ordinaries

On 9 July, 1983, there was the official news of the appointments of new Ordinaries:

- Mgr. Paolino Lukudu Loro (New Archbishop of Juba)
- Mgr. Paride Taban (First Bishop of Torit)
- Mgr. Giuseppe Pellerino (Apost. Administrator of Rumbek)

This was a very positive event for the Catholic Church in South Sudan because it would fill the gap of authority lamented beforehand in the Archdiocese of Juba. It would give new leadership to the Diocese of Torit allowing better care for the population within its boundaries and, for the Diocese of Rumbek, it would end the provisional arrangement made with Archbishop Baroni and open up to a more well-defined future.

As for Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino, the news was brought to him by Fr. Cefalo who was visiting Bussere and who was very much honoured to be the first one to do it. *“Fr. Pellerino was really shocked. He could not possibly believe it. Never, never in his life could he suspect such an appointment. It took the whole evening to calm him down and make him accept the heavy cross, in obedience, because the letter read: ‘The Holy Father has appointed you Administrator Apostolic...’ Who can dare refusing anything to the Pope himself?”*³⁶² Finally, he did accept and, before taking possession of the Diocese, he had to go for a medical check-up to Nairobi.

In Juba, His Grace Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro took possession of the Archdiocese on 31 July, 1983, in the presence of all the Bishops and a wonderful reception and feast was prepared for him; Bishop Paride Taban took possession of Torit Diocese on 7 August; Mgr. Giuseppe Pellerino took possession of Rumbek Diocese on 9 October; Fr. Erkolano Ladu was nominated Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Juba on 12 November.³⁶³

As for the Religious Superiors’ Association of Sudan, in their meeting of December, 1983,³⁶⁴ they decided that their next meeting was to be held at the PALICA National Centre in Juba, from 5 to 10 June, 1984. They agreed that the first point of their Agenda should take up the issue of

³⁶² Ibid. p. 4; see also Fr. Cefalo to Fr. General, Juba 11 July, 1983. ACR 610/9

³⁶³ Diario, Missionari Comboniani Sud Sudan. op. cit., on the dates.

³⁶⁴ Khartoum 15 December, 1983, newsletter no. 4, Religious Superiors’ Association of Sudan, op. cit., point 5.

Mutuae Relationes. In fact, at the SCBC Plenary Meeting which took place at the end of November, 1983, in Khartoum, H. L. Bishop Joseph Gasi Abangite, Chairman of the Commission for Religious, had already presented a short report on the RSAS: one of the points of the SCBC's agenda was an evaluation of the sample of *written agreements* proposed by RSAS. Thus, the Religious Superiors were now expecting to have a written evaluation at the time of their next meeting in Juba. The finalization of the bilateral conventions between Bishop and Religious would have surely been a remarkable achievement.

Fr. Cefalo, on 1 January, 1984, paid a visit to Bor, Malakal Diocese, where the White Fathers were supposed to open a new mission and on 3 January he participated in the first diocesan meeting of the Diocese of Torit. On that occasion, our confrere Fr. Hector Ayon, who had been given 3 years' leave of absence from the Comboni community at the service of Torit Diocese, was appointed Parish Priest of Chukudum Parish.

Archdiocese of Juba

His Grace Paolino Lukudu Loro: Homily on his Enthronement

On Sunday 31 July, 1983, the day of his enthronement as Archbishop of Juba, at St. Theresa's Cathedral in Kator, His Grace Paolino Lukudu Loro gave a homily³⁶⁵ reminding the congregation of how God took care of his people, how he guided them along the centuries through the prophets and leaders and how Jesus sent his Apostles to go and make all the nations his disciples with the power of the Holy Spirit.

He mentioned his predecessor, His Grace Archbishop Ireneo Wien Dud, one of the first Priests and first native Bishop and how he was honoured and proud to succeed him in the Apostolic Ministry in Juba. He declared that his mission in the Archdiocese could not be carried out in isolation and called for the collaboration of everyone, Priests and Religious, Missionaries and Lay People.

He stressed the point that, since Christianity was brought in by Foreign Missionaries, people should not now feel foreigners in their own land, but that Christianity belonged to them. He then went on to reveal his pastoral motto: *Et Verbum Caro Factum Est*, that is to say, *And the Word was made Man (flesh)*.

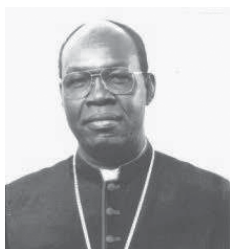
³⁶⁵ Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro, Enthronement Day, 31 July, 1983, Homily.
- In "Booklet of the Silver Jubilee July 31 1983 – July 31 2008", pp. 30-40. FAJSS.

He then addressed the Civil Authorities, the Heads of the Religious Denominations and the Laity of the Archdiocese of Juba, concluding with expressions of heartfelt gratitude for the wonderful welcome he received into the Archdiocese.

This first speech already broadly indicated the path along which he intended to lead the Archdiocese, but the most important speech was his **“Policy Speech”**, where Archbishop Paolino developed specifically, in all the aspects, the meaning of his motto: **“Et Verbum Caro Factum Est”** - *And the Word was made Man (flesh)*.

Due to the importance of this Policy Speech for the Metropolitan Archdiocese of Juba, for Priests, Religious, Missionaries and Lay People, and for the bearing it would have on all the other Dioceses in Southern Sudan, I will both give a summary presentation of the speech and quote it in full in the appendix, so that it may be taken into consideration in its full extent.

His Grace Paolino Lukudu Loro: “The Policy Speech”



On 1 September, 1983, Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro issued this speech³⁶⁶ which was meant for all the Diocesan Priests the members of the Religious Congregations and all the Faithful in the Archdiocese of Juba.

After some words of introduction referring to his election as Archbishop of Juba, His Grace Paolino Lukudu Loro went on by thanking the Priests, the Religious and the Missionaries because they were there keeping on in their mission. He encouraged them to feel fulfilled by such a grace and by everything they had done for the Church in Juba until that date. He carried on saying that he would be confirming, with his faith and love, their Priesthood, Religious Life and Missionary Life. He assured them that he would try to combine the qualities of a Brother, Father and Pastor for each and all of them.

Before presenting his policy he puts some questions to each one for personal reflection as follows:

- What is your identity in this Archdiocese?

³⁶⁶ “*Et Verbum Caro Factum Est*”, Silver Jubilee, July 1983-July 2008, H.G. Paolino Lukudu Loro, Archbishop of Juba. FAJSS.

- Are you a Priest, a Brother, a Sister, Sudanese or Expatriate Missionary?
- How do you practically view your identity? In other words, what are you doing here to show to yourself and others that you are a Priest, a Brother, a Sister or a Missionary?
- Are you personally happy, committed and fulfilled in the role you play?

He presented his coming to Juba as a new Pastor as a real historical and providential occasion for each one's personal renewal and the renewal of each one's personal commitment. He went on to say that the mission of the Bishop and of every baptized person is to go out into the world and Christianise, and that the priority in the entire Archdiocese was to be the **PASTORAL** or **EVANGELIZATION** of the people entrusted to it. Thus, he invited the listeners to reflect and see how many were in Juba for Pastoral and evangelization purposes and in which commitments they are engaged.

He asserted that the **SACRAMENTS** were the main instruments of sanctification for the Christians, through the Paschal Mystery of Christ and the Sacrifice offered to the Father during the summit of the liturgical celebration. He warned that when pastoral evangelization is weak, poor and inactive in a Diocese, it may be a sign of a loss of faith and perseverance in the reception of the Sacraments and their salvific power.

He made it clear to all that, if there is faith in the Sacraments, there is no need for a lot of people from abroad to come here and teach how to prepare and administer the Sacraments. Moreover, Priests are not the only ones who can lead the Church and the Small Christian Communities, the Brothers, the Sisters and the Catechists can do it as well, with due preparation.

The motto he chose: *Et Verbum Caro Factum est*, that is, *The Word became Man (flesh)* was expressing the principle of **Incarnation** and showing how God “**inculturated**” among people. In fact, Christ came to live as the **Emmanuel- God-with-us**. This, he said, is a message for all, but especially for us Africans, who find it difficult, due to our own fault, to incarnate Christ into our people.

Regarding the Missionaries he maintained that they should not think that Christ is theirs. He continued saying that *here Jesus is an African*, and that here the Missionaries, themselves, are to try to live as Africans. Incarnation asks all of us to be Missionaries, that is, people who come, preach Christ, and go ahead.

Then, Archbishop Paolino called for the *pastoral evangelization* to be implemented under the following conditions or in this way:

- *It must be directly and immediately given to the people.*
- *The local personnel should be valued, trusted and be given responsibility to the maximum possible.*
- *Greater importance should be given to the training and development of local personnel to efficiently run the structures of the Diocese.*
- *Find ways, means and assistance, so that the Local Church may be sufficiently self-supporting.*
- *The missionaries should know that they are here to help establish the Local Church and its structures and not themselves and/or their structures.*
- *The spirit of unity, Brotherhood, equality, trust and cooperation should be observed instead of favouring superiority or inferiority complexes.*
- *Our structures should serve people and not vice-versa.*
- *Our God-given natural differences should be accepted, respected and moderated for the common good.*
- *In this way our pastoral evangelization priority will be carried out through the “Et Verbum Caro Factum est” motto in order to render the Local Church, by the grace of God: self-ministering, self-supporting, and self-propagating.*

The Archbishop continued by stressing some important pastoral activities:

- Formation of the Catechists and preparation for the Sacraments.
- Preaching the Word of God.
- Formation of the Christian life.
- Formation and care of Deaneries, Small Christian Communities, Chapels and Parishes etc.
 - Engagements in diocesan responsibilities, institutions, departments etc.
 - The spiritual, moral and pastoral renewal and up-dating of Church personnel in various fields by means of prayers, retreats, recollections, courses, spiritual reading, specializations, seminars, literature, spiritual direction, reception of sacraments, etc.

The Policy Speech was of paramount importance especially regarding the past, the present and the future presence of Missionaries and Expatriate Personnel, in particular, in regard to the Comboni Missionaries and the new effort to acquire a relationship which could really express that renewal

which the Second Vatican Council, and its practical application, had brought about in the understanding of the Particular Churches / Local Churches and the renewed missionary attitudes within the Local Church itself.

(Full speech, ref. Appendix to Part Two, Section One,
Chapter One, point no. 5)

His Grace Paolino Lukudu Loro and the Comboni Missionaries

At this time the Delegation of South Sudan had to face new challenges coming up with the new Ordinaries, with the opening of Torit Diocese and with new requests for commitments in their Dioceses. The real challenge was the scarcity of personnel, though there was no lack of willingness or availability. The challenge had a particular weight in the Archdiocese of Juba for all the many initiatives and projects the Archdiocese itself had formerly requested the Comboni Missionaries to undertake, before Archbishop Paolino Lukudu's appointment.

All these existing commitments were putting the confreres under pressure. The reflection within the Delegation Council, presented in previous chapters, needed to be addressed in order to create healthy relationships within our communities and between the Local Clergy and the Comboni Missionaries. The occasion arrived with the Delegation Assembly of January 1984, almost six months after His Grace's enthronement as Archbishop of Juba, where the new Archbishop had the opportunity of giving his input on the new policy within the Archdiocese, especially in reference to the Comboni Missionaries as such, since Archbishop Paolino was himself a Comboni Missionary.

Of course, the Archbishop had to point out that, though a Comboni himself, his responsibility could not be restricted to the *Comboni Institute*, but had to be open to the wider reality of the Church. As expected, he tackled immediately and repeated the main points of *the pastoral evangelization* of the *Policy speech*³⁶⁷ to be implemented, thus fulfilling the motto *Et Verbum Caro factum est*.

³⁶⁷ South Sudan Delegation, Minutes of the Assembly 16-21 January 1984: From the "Policy speech" of Arch. Paolino Lukudu Loro to the Priests, Brothers, Sisters and Missionaries of Juba Archdiocese, ACR 610/11/2.

- H. G. Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro: "Policy speech" delivered to the Assembly of the South Sudan Delegation, Juba 16-21 January 1984, (*Typewritten from manual*), ACR D/475/6/2

Naturally, all these were not just points of a pastoral plan, but had all the bearing of the historical background of positive values and failures in relationships to be taken up with realism, on both sides, and to outline a new journey, also on both sides, with the humility of recognizing what was positive, without regret, and what was still in need of reconciliation and healing, and needed its own time and process in order to face the future with a real spirit of communion, service and sharing.

These points, taken face to face, gave the Comboni Assembly and each confrere much food for thought. In this historical situation, personal availability and openness were the most important attitudes for building up reciprocal trust and appreciation. Regular encounters within the Archdiocese itself were to be new opportunities in order to build up this common trust and reciprocal appreciation. Prejudices and fears could only be overcome, in due time, by dialogue, not in an abstract way but with realism.

As for the matter of a *self-reliant, self-supporting and self-propagating Church*, this was a very important indication of the AMECEA Conferences of Bishops that needed a lot of creativity and expertise in order to implement it in different concrete situations and countries.

Finally, there was the need for *reciprocity* in the relationship which was put in evidence by the Superior General in his letter to Archbishop Ireneo Dud in 1982, especially concerning the conventions between the Bishops and Comboni Missionaries. This issue needed to be addressed clearly. The letter pointed out that: ***the Local Church has its needs and that the Comboni Missionaries (as an Institute) also have theirs to be taken into consideration.***³⁶⁸ Actually, this point was felt very much by the whole General Administration as a point to be tackled boldly.

Finally, with so many activities going on in the Archdiocese and the other urgent requests requiring a response, the South Sudan Delegation needed sufficient time to take them into consideration and deal with them adequately. Another issue which was still pending was the proposal of the handing over of the Parish of Rejaf to the care of the Archdiocese of Juba. On 7 January, 1984, the decision of H.G. Archbishop Lukudu Loro was that Rejaf should be handed over to the Apostles of Jesus. This was a sudden decision, though the proposal was already there, and the handing over was postponed because the Apostles of Jesus could not come until 23

³⁶⁸ Fr. Salvatore Calvia, MCCJ, Superior General to Most Rev. Mgr. IRENEO WIEN DUD, Rome, December 24th, 1982. ACR 606/1/2.

February.³⁶⁹ Thus, the Rejaf issue came to its conclusion and Fr. Mario Busellato became available for another *Bari-speaking* commitment.

Archbishop Lukudu had already scheduled the first Archdiocesan Pastoral Council meeting on 5 March, 1984, in order to discuss and share the emerging issues and take possible decisions afterwards. All pending Comboni issues would, therefore, be dealt with after that Council. Moreover, for the Comboni Missionaries of the South Sudan Delegation, the time for new elections had come, as in all the other Comboni Circumscriptions, and Fr. Cefalo was already busy organising them.

The results of the new elections went for a change of leadership from Fr. Cefalo to Fr. Cesare Mazzolari. The former carried on with his work of finalizing the remaining ongoing commitments and on 31 May, 1984, all the communities of Juba, the Rejaf area and Kwörejik met together for a *thanksgiving meal* in honour of Fr. Cefalo, at the conclusion of his mandate which he decided to conclude a month earlier than the juridical date. Fr. Mazzolari took up his new responsibility on 1 June, 1984.

³⁶⁹ Diario op. cit., in date 7 January, 1984.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CIRCUMSCRIPTION From 1984 to 1989

Delegate/Provincial Superior:
Fr. CESARE MAZZOLARI

South Sudan Delegation: New Elections

The new elections in the Delegation of South Sudan were over. Events were evolving fast and, while the previous elections had been held so as to upgrade the group to the status of Delegation, the present elections brought the Delegation into the *normal running* common to all Comboni Circumscriptions. The outcome was a change of leadership in the person of Fr. Cesare Mazzolari who became the new Delegation Superior, and his new Council composed of Fr. Ottorino Sina (Vice-Delegate), Fr. Salvatore Pacifico, Fr. Ezio Bettini and Bro. Valentino Fabris. The new Delegation Superior and his Council were to come into effect on 1 July, 1984.³⁷⁰

On the occasion of the change of leadership in the Delegation, the Superior General, Fr. Salvatore Calvia, expressed his deep gratitude for what Fr. Cefalo did in the first three years since the starting of the new Circumscription of South Sudan and his appreciation for his presence, his work and enthusiasm which contributed greatly to the development of the

³⁷⁰ - Fr. A. Dalfovo to Fr. R. Cefalo, Rome 3 April, 1984. Appointment Fr. C. Mazzolari as Superior of Delegation, proceed with the election of Delegation Council. With effect from 1 July, 1984. ACR 610/8.

- Fr. A. Dalfovo, Rome, 3 April, 1984. Letter of "Appointment of the Superior of the Delegation of Southern Sudan", Fr. CESARE MAZZOLARI, 2 April, 1984, with effect from 1 July, 1984. ACR 610/8.

- Fr. Alois Eder to Fr. C. Mazzolari, 6 August, 1984, Appointment of Fr. Ottorino Sina as Vice-Delegate, 1 August, 1984. ACR 610/8.

Delegation of South Sudan. He also admitted that there had been some difficulties of attitude, different approaches and style, but what was achieved was due to the enthusiasm and courage with which Fr. Cefalo faced the complex situation of the time. If the General Council could elect another Delegation Superior, who, possibly, could also become the Provincial, this was due to Fr. Cefalo's endeavours.³⁷¹

On this same line, some few months earlier, Fr. Calvia had already expressed his thanks for all the good Fr. Cefalo did with his zeal, dedication and enthusiasm.³⁷² Words of deep appreciation and thanks came also from the newly-elected Delegation Superior, Fr. Cesare Mazzolari who acknowledged the great work done and suffered for the good of the confreres and of the Church of the Sudan, going on to say that the possible birth of the future Province of South Sudan was to be considered as the fruit of Fr. Cefalo's efforts.³⁷³

Fr. Mazzolari asked Fr. Cefalo to carry on until 1 July, the day on which the new Provincial and his Council were supposed to take effect, but Fr. Cefalo considered it useless dragging things out and agreed to carry on only until 1 June, to allow Fr. Mazzolari to attend the meeting of RSAS (5-10 June, 1984).³⁷⁴ In a certain way, he told him, *take up your bed and walk..., it is now your time! No need to wait any longer!*

What Fr. Cefalo needed was to take his overdue holidays and then join the community of Rumbek, as proposed the year before. This would have given Fr. Bettini the chance to see to other commitments.³⁷⁵ The new Delegation Superior accepted and on his return Fr. Cefalo was appointed to Rumbek to help in the administration of the schools under Comboni care and help Fr. Bettini in the administration.³⁷⁶

So, Fr. Mazzolari took up his task and started immediately getting into what would be a very difficult post, in a very troubled time that had already started with the incident of the kidnapping of the ACROSS people in 1983 and had deteriorated even further. 1984 was a year of great tension with a low level of security, especially on the roads. On the one side there were Church personnel and other vulnerable people, who had to rely for protection on the government which, in many cases, was unable to provide

³⁷¹ Fr. S. Calvia to Fr. R. Cefalo, Rome, 4 April, 1984. ACR 610/9/4

³⁷² Fr. S. Calvia to Fr. R. Cefalo, Rome, 16 June, 1983. op. cit., ACR 610/9/3.

³⁷³ Fr. C. Mazzolari to Fr. R. Cefalo, Juba Easter, 1984. ACR 610/9/4.

³⁷⁴ Fr. R. Cefalo to Fr. C. Mazzolari, Juba 13 April, 1984. ACR 610/10.

³⁷⁵ Fr. R. Cefalo to Fr. S. Calvia, Juba, 19 January, 1983, op. cit., ACR 610/9/3

³⁷⁶ First meeting of the new South Sudan Delegation Council, Juba, 2 June, 1984. ACR 610/11/2.

it. On the other side, there was a movement of freedom fighters, the SPLA with their Marxist ideology, who were acting as if they were the enemies of the same people they pretended to liberate, and the military struggle continued to intensify.

It is enough to give a list of incidents that occurred during the year 1984 to convey an idea of the risks Missionaries and Church Personnel were running. People were under enormous psychological pressure and whenever any of the Missionaries had to travel by road for pastoral work or other sorts of duties and commitments, such as visiting communities in distant places, their hearts were in their mouths. This situation had become part and parcel of daily life.

Malakal town was attacked by the Anya-Nya II/SPLA on 22 February, 1984. The diocesan personnel were holding a meeting when everything was disrupted and a plane had to be sent from Juba to get Fr. Cellana and Fr. Isturiz out. However, only Fr. Cellana was evacuated; Fr. Isturiz would move out later on, since the situation was uncertain. As a result, the Comboni presence in Malakal Diocese and the Tonga Parish commitment reached the final conclusion that very day, 22 February, 1984.

On 3 March, employees of the CCI³⁷⁷ (Compagnie de Construction Internationale) of the Jonglei Canal Company Project were taken hostage in Malakal. The oilfields in Bentiu under Chevron, a US oil company, had to close down as did work on the Jonglei canal. Juba Airport was closed, as well. Along the river Nile, all the boats had to stop moving and the same was true for the railway to Wau. No supplies could reach the big towns any more.³⁷⁸ Another accident which could have ended in a tragedy was the ambush and robbery by rebels, on 5 March, of Fr. Magalasi four kilometres from Tonj. They shot at the tyres and the engine of the car. Luckily, Fr. Magalasi was not injured.

Fr. Cesare Mazzolari took up his task without delay, one month before his juridical mandate, and his first planned commitment was the meeting of the Religious Superiors' Association of Sudan, due to be held at the Palica Centre in Juba from 5 to 10 June, 1984. He then started planning for his visits to the Comboni communities in the various Dioceses and, with God's

³⁷⁷ - France's "Compagnie de Construction Internationale" (CCI) for the Jonglei projects.
- <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer135/khartoums-greatest-challenge>
- Robert O. Collins, *A History of Modern Sudan*, Cambridge University Press, 2008, pp. 143-144.

³⁷⁸ Diario, Missionari Comboniani Sud Sudan. op. cit., on the dates. ACR 475/1.
- see also: Sudan's Painful Road to Peace, Arop Madut-Arop, op. cit., Ch. 4, Garang de Mabior stated. p. 96, quot. 13.

protection, he was able to keep contact and bring encouragement to confreres sorely tried by this difficult situation. At the beginning of July 1984, he flew to Rumbek, to visit to Mgr. Pellerino, Fr. Bettini, Fr. Magalasi and the Sisters, staying only for a few hours as he had to go back on the same flight. At that particular time all seemed quiet and well in Rumbek.

In 1984 there were several joyful events which somewhat moderated the stormy situation, such as the joyful anniversary in Kator of the enthronement of H.G. Paolino Lukudu Loro on 29 July (he was installed on 31 July, 1983) and the dedication of St. Paul Major Seminary in Munuki, built by Bro. Ottorino Gelmini, with the presence of H.G. Gabriel Zubeir Wako, Mgr. Baroni and Bishop Paride Taban on 31 July. Other reasons for rejoicing were the arrival of Fr. Ukelo from Rome on the same day and, on 6 August, that of Bro. Giuseppe Redaelli who was then expected to take up the office of the Comboni Procure.

The month of September, which had a very busy programme for the Eucharistic Congress, was instead a very troubled month as were the months which followed. On 4 September, Rumbek was bombed and hostages were taken in Bentiu. Mgr. Pellerino had problems between Yirol and Rumbek. However, this unstable situation did not prevent but rather urged Fr. Mazzolari to go from Juba to Nzara, Tombura, Kwajok and Raja to visit the confreres and assess personally the situation on the ground.

After a meeting in Wau, on 25 September, having considered the deterioration of security, Mgr. Pellerino decided to withdraw the Salesian Sisters from Tonj and the Comboni Sisters from Rumbek. Then, Fr. Mazzolari carried on with the visit to Kwajok and Raja. Nevertheless, in those same days, Bro. Confalonieri arrived in Rumbek, while the Provincial was on his way back to Juba for the celebration of Comboni Day on 10 October. Archbishop Lukudu Loro presided the afternoon Mass with all the confreres in Juba, together with the other Clergy and Religious People. Of course, the feast ended with a proper reception.

Comboni personnel and Communities on 1 October, 1984³⁷⁹

In the middle of this unpredictable situation it is good to stop for a while to see how the situation of personnel and commitments was within the Delegation of South Sudan, especially because later events would very badly affect certain areas.

³⁷⁹ Annuario Comboniano updated 1 October, 1984, pp. 145-148.

- **Archdiocese of Juba:** Juba, Kwörejik, Rejaf 1 e 2
- **Diocese of Malakal:** Tonga
- **Diocese of Rumbek:** Rumbek, Kajo-Kaji
- **Diocese of Tombura:** Nzara
- **Diocese of Torit:** Loa.
- **Diocese of Wau:** Bussere, Kwajok, Raja

JUBA ARCHDIOCESE

Juba - Comboni House

- Fr. Cesare Mazzolari, *Provincial Superior*
- Mgr. Agostino Baroni
- Fr. Gaetano Gottardi, *Director of Comboni College*
- Fr. Alfredo Mattevi, *Teacher*
- Fr. Ottorino Sina, *Teacher*
- Bro. Domenico Cariolato, *Workshop Technician*
- Bro. Valentino Fabris, *Construction*
- Bro. Giuseppe Redaelli, *Provincial Bursar*

Kwörejik: Parish founded in 1950, re-opened in 1978

- Fr. Michael Barton, *Parish Priest.*
- Fr. Justin Ogen
- Fr. Elvio Cellana

Rejaf/Kit:

- Fr. Tito Giuntoli
- Bro. Francesco Ragnoli
- Bro. Mariano Zonta

Rejaf: Apostles of Jesus,

Seminary of the Apostles of Jesus, founded on 14.5.1981, Minor Seminary, 120 Seminarists, 2 Apostles of Jesus' Priests, 1 Maryknoll Father.

- Fr. Mattia Bizzarro, *Administrator of the Seminary*
- Bro. Augusto Bazzanella
- Fr. Dorino Elisire

WAU Diocese

Bussere: Parish founded in 1933, National Major Seminary.

- Fr. Luigi Penzo
- Fr. Vittorino Dellagiacoma
- Fr. Felice Sciannameo

Kwajok: Parish and Catechetical Centre, founded in March 1979.

- Fr. Raffaele Tessitore
- Fr. Salvatore Pacifico

Bro. Erminio Tanel
Bro. Aldo Marangio

Raja: Fr. Alfonso Polacchini, *Sup. Parish Priest*
Fr. Gino Tosello
Fr. Luigi De Giorgi

TORIT DIOCESE

Loa: Parish re-opened 1984, (Assists 80.000 Uganda Refugees)
Fr. Eugenio Caligari, *Sup.*
Fr. Guido Bertuzzi
Fr. Giovanni Ferrazin (I), *(still to come)*

MALAKAL

Tonga: (Parish closed for security reasons)
Fr. Miguel A. Isturiz Agudo

TOMBURA

Nzara: Parish founded on 31 October, 1951; re-opened in 1971.
Fr. Pietro Ravasio, *Catechetical Centre*
Fr. Luigi Parisi, *Parish Priest*
Fr. Feliz Da Costa Martins
Bro. Ambrogio Confalonieri *(moved to Rumbek)*

RUMBEEK: Parish founded in 1953, re-opened 1978.
Mgr. Giuseppe Pellerino
Fr. Peter Magalasi, *Parish Priest and Superior*
Fr. Ezio Bettini, *Chaplain Rumbek Sen. Sec. School*
Fr. Raffaele Cefalo

Kajo-Kaji:

Fr. Mario Busellato
*(For the full list of confreres ref. Appendix to Part Two, Section One
Chapter Two, point no. 1)*

One can notice that the Parish of Rejaf no longer appears. In fact, it was left definitely on 27 May, 1984 and Kajo-Kaji, in Rumbek Diocese, was taken up as a new commitment. Loa Parish, as well, was taken up as a full commitment in the newly created Diocese of Torit with the addition of new personnel. Tonga Parish was still there, but in reality the Parish was closed for security reasons and Fr. Cellana was transferred to Kwörejik.

On 12 July, 1984, it was decided to remain in Kwajok with Fr. Tessitore, Fr. Pacifico, Bro. Tanel and Bro. Marango and to accept also Raja, in the same Diocese (Wau), as a new commitment, with Fr. Alfonso

Polacchini, Fr. Gino Tosello and Fr. Luigi De Giorgi assigned to it. Fr. Polacchini was appointed Parish Priest.³⁸⁰

Commitment with the Apostles of Jesus

Though Rejaf Parish was handed over to the Apostles of Jesus in May 1984, the Comboni Missionaries carried on the commitment with them and their Minor Seminary, founded on 14 May, 1981, with 120 seminarians, 2 Priests from the Apostles of Jesus, 1 Maryknoll Father and Fr. Mattia Bizzarro, in charge of the Seminary. The Institute of the Apostles of Jesus had its beginning in Uganda in 1968. The founders were Mgr. Sisto Mazzoldi and Fr. Giovanni Marengoni.³⁸¹ It was the first African Missionary Institute *Ad Gentes* that was opened for the evangelization of other countries. The time was ripe also for this mission.

One year later, in 1969, Pope Paul VI while visiting Uganda would affirm: *“By now, you Africans are missionaries to yourselves... ‘Missionaries to yourselves’: in other words, you Africans must now continue, upon this continent, the building up of the Church.”*³⁸² Other further developments on this line came about with Pope John Paul II who invited Africans not only to be missionaries to themselves but also to other countries, especially to other African Countries (Nairobi, Kenya 1981). The Apostles of Jesus had already prophetically undertaken this path.

In 1981 they decided to fulfil their mission in the Sudan, which was left behind by their co-founders with the expulsion of 1964. They started the *Apostles of Jesus Rejaf Missionary Minor Seminary* in Rejaf-Kit Parish. Fr. Mattia Bizzarro was assigned to this commitment and started in February 1981 as Administrator while Fr. Thomas Oliha was the Rector of the Seminary. The Comboni Brothers, like Bro. Bazzanella, took care of building the Seminary premises but previously there also had been Bros. Rossignoli, Gelmini, Confalonieri and Ragnoli. The Comboni commitment with the Apostles of Jesus ended in 1986. By August of the same year the security in Rejaf-Kit places became very precarious and they had to move to Juba.

As was said before, the Apostles of Jesus were the first African Missionary Institute *Ad Gentes*, that is, open to the evangelization of other

³⁸⁰ Diario, Missionari Comboniani Sud Sudan, op. cit., 12 July, 1984.

³⁸¹ Rejoicing in Sheep with Shepherds: a 40 years history of the African Pioneers, A history of the Apostles of Jesus, 1968-2008, Rev. Fr. Frederick L. Nkwasiwe A.J., MBA, pp. 36-37; 241-242

³⁸² Homily of Paul VI, Kampala (Uganda), 31 July 1969, op. cit.

countries. One of the difficulties found at the beginning was that their Missionary Vocation was frequently downplayed and considered similar to that of the Diocesan Priests. This was also the same challenge found by the Sudanese Comboni Missionary Radical Members. The Sudanese Local Church, in fact, needed still to take its own time to clearly understand this essential aspect of its Mission. The presence of both Expatriate and Indigenous Institutes, together with the Women Missionary Institutes, contributed a lot to gradually raise this awareness.

Worsening Insecurity

The security situation in the last months of the year 1984 remained very bad, both for the population and for the service of our confreres. In such a situation, it was not enough to have *personal human courage based only on human strength* in order to carry on with the commitments; it really required *the Spirit of God who comes to our help*,³⁸³ as St. Paul said in his letter to the Romans, to carry on with the mission in so difficult a situation, or one would not have sufficient motivation to endure all of this.

On 26 October, Mgr. Pellerino and Fr. Bettini were stopped by a group of SPLA fighters and risked being taken prisoner, as had happened to the ACROSS people.³⁸⁴ In Rumbek the situation was steadily worsening. On Christmas day there was also a very violent ambush of a government convoy with more than 120 military people killed. The worsening situation brought certain places and initiatives to a standstill. Pastoral work in certain areas, especially around Rumbek, was very dangerous.

Due to insecurity, many Volunteers and other Societies preferred to withdraw completely, others stayed in Wau or Juba. The Comboni confreres preferred to remain with the people. This was not imposed from above by the Superiors, but was a personal choice. In fact, the General Council invited everybody to reflect and not to feel ashamed to pull out if they thought it was more than they could bear.

At the Church level it is worth mentioning the fact that, though the situation was very dangerous, the Eucharistic Congress programme for the Sudan was carried out with great care during the year and concluded with great success. At the Comboni level it was a factor of renewal within the Comboni family itself, while helping others along the same journey, especially with the example of keeping faithful witness amongst the

³⁸³ Letter to the Romans, 8:26.

³⁸⁴ Ibid. Diario, op. cit., on the dates.

Christian Communities undergoing the hardships of the chaotic situation created by political and military unrest. This was really a time of witnessing to the faith and true dedication to the troubled people of South Sudan.

The National Eucharistic Congress

1984 was the year of the EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS. The matter was discussed in the SCBC to get it done at national level. The initiative was then shared with all the Dioceses, Parishes and Religious Institutions. The Religious Superiors' Association of Sudan took it up in their meeting of 15 December, 1983, and started reflecting and planning for this great event as an opportunity to enhance co-operation and creativity by having celebrations of the Eucharistic Year at local level, and at zone level in Khartoum, in September 1984, and in Juba on the feast of Christ the King, 25 November, 1984.³⁸⁵

Considering the precarious and worsening security situation in 1984, all the Dioceses and Parishes made a great effort to ensure that people might receive great benefits from it. On 9 September, there was the closing celebration in Khartoum, with the presence also of the Superior General. On 25 November, the feast of Christ the King, there was the closing celebration in Juba, at national level. The closing celebration in Juba was preceded by the rite of Reconciliation on Friday 23, by a procession through Juba and Adoration on Saturday 24 and the Solemn Mass with ordinations on Sunday 25, followed by a thanksgiving Mass after the closing of the Eucharistic Congress on Monday 26.

The Eucharistic Congress was a real success and, after its conclusion, the Bishops wrote a pastoral letter to the Clergy and the Religious with the title: *Keep the Light of the Eucharistic Congress Burning*.³⁸⁶ They developed it into several important points most relevant to the experience of the Congress and asked them to keep them alive as a living experience to be deepened more and more. The invitation encouraged them to focus on the following points:

1. *A reconciled family sharing the one bread:* so meaningful in the context of the current situation in the country.

³⁸⁵ Khartoum 15 Dec, 1983, newsletter no. 4, Religious Superiors' Association of Sudan (RSAS). ACR 606/3.

³⁸⁶ Letter of the Catholic Bishops of Sudan to the Clergy and the Religious "Keep the Light of the Eucharistic Congress Burning." ACR 606/6.

2. ***Love and devotion to the Holy Eucharist:*** true centre of the whole Christian life
3. ***The Sacrament of Reconciliation:*** Priests were encouraged to make use of the *New Rite of Penance*, to give special attention to the formation of consciences, to help the faithful to prepare for the Sacrament of Penance on important moments, to have a fixed time set aside for confession, to have a confessional or a suitable place in Churches and Chapels.
4. ***Liturgical Celebrations:*** special attention was to be given to liturgical preparation and celebration.
5. ***Youth:***

The extraordinary participation of Youth during the Congress was seen an expression of their hunger for God and an appeal for help. The Bishops' call was to help the youth; to insist on the need of sacramental absolution before communion for those conscious of mortal sin; to stress the importance of the Sacrament of Penance even independently of Communion; to impart the Catechesis on the Sacrament of Penance; to help form consciences and train them in the spirit of prayer.

In spite of our current situation, the Bishops said: "God has set our hearts and minds on one thing: ***'The Eucharistic Congress must be celebrated'*** and we added ***'even at the risk of our lives'***. The love of Christ has triumphed. The Good Shepherd has come to gather his scattered sheep back into the fold."

The effort made in progress, growth and communion by all the components of the Local Church, by the Bishops, Religious and the Clergy, together with the whole community of Christian people, was undoubtedly great. Working and journeying together with openness and good will was the real way to build up confidence, trust and a healthy relationship. The Eucharistic Congress, therefore, proved to be of great help.



Meeting of the Comboni Missionary Provincials of Africa
and the Americas with the General Council.
August, 1984, Kinshasa, Congo

The Province of South Sudan is born: 1985

The year 1985 was the crowning of the new group of South Sudan. It was the year when the *Province of South Sudan was born*³⁸⁷: a moment of extreme joy in such a difficult time. The whole group felt that the journey they started in 1981, and even the one before that, had reached its fulfilment. New hopes of becoming more organized and settled motivated the new Province to present a proper plan to the General Council having in mind a deeper level of commitment to be implemented with its rediscovered zeal.

³⁸⁷ Fr. Antonino Orlando, Rome 12 March, 1985, Erection into Province of the Delegation of South Sudan, 11 March, 1985. ACR 610/8.

Fr. Antonino Orlando, Rome 12 March, 1985, Appointment of the Provincial Superior and his Council, 11 March, 1985. ACR 610/8.

Joint meeting of the SCBC and RSAS in Juba, 22 April, 1985

The joint meeting of the “**Religious Superiors’ Association of Sudan**” (RSAS) with the “**Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Sudan**”³⁸⁸ (SCBC) which took place in Juba from 22 to 26 April, 1985, was very important for the topics it dealt with. I will highlight the most important elements in the agenda:

“The first two days (22-23) were spent on the position the Church should take with the new Government of Sudan: the contribution of the Church to the country, the role of our Christian leaders in their civil and political life, what motivations and attitudes should be inculcated in all our Christians, what expectations there were in the light of the declaration of ‘freedom’ and ‘rights’ about religious and civil rights?”

Archbishop Paolino Lukudu welcomed the participants and Fr. Caesar Mazzolari thanked the Bishops for the trouble they went through to postpone the date of their annual meeting from June to the end of April and the heavier working programme, all the more demanding because of what had happened in the country in the previous weeks. He noted that what brought everyone together was the great concern, as Church, to discern and value the signs of the time in the present changing moment in the history of Sudan and the Church Response, especially in regard to the poor, the oppressed, the suffering and the weak whom we are serving as a Church.

He also informed everyone that there were then 28 Religious and Missionary Groups active in the Sudan.

- *11 African Congregations: 7 of Religious Women, 4 of Religious Men. (Founded on the African Continent).*
- *17 Religious Congregations, Missionary Societies and Lay Institutes: 9 Female Congregations and Societies and 8 Male Congregations (Founded outside the African Continent).*

*Realizing all this within the Church of Sudan with its Local Bishops was a reason for **rejoicing**, of increasingly **serious responsibility** for the Church of Sudan, a **God-sent gift at the service** of God’s people and a **call to join hand and work in unity** with the Church personnel.*

The agenda brought up these points:

³⁸⁸ Minutes of the joint meeting of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Sudan (SCBC) and the RELIGIOUS SUPERIORS’ ASSOCIATION OF SUDAN, Juba, April 22-26, 1985.ACR 606/3.

- *Involvement of the Religious and Missionary Congregations in the life of the Local Church.*
- *Interrelation of and apostolic interaction between Religious and Missionary Congregations and Local Church Personnel.*
- *Vocations Promotion.*
- *Agreements or contracts.*
- *Goal and composition of the 'Commission for Religious'.*"

Opening talk of Archbishop Gabriel Zubeir



Within the context of this joint meeting and in that particular historical context of the Local Church in Sudan, in relation to the Religious and Missionary Institutes operating within it, I present here below the main points which Archbishop Gabriel Zubeir Wako expressed in his opening talk SCBC-RSAS on 21 April, 1985 in Juba. The talk was very important because it dealt with different relevant topics of the time, and for the insight it could give in dealing with certain issues concerning relationships within the Local Church, both on the side of the Religious and Missionary Congregations and with the diocesan Priests and people

Archbishop Zubeir started by pointing out immediately his conviction that the 1985 meeting of SCBC and Religious had come at the appropriate time.

He continued by mentioning the number of congregations of men and women in Sudan by the end of 1985³⁸⁹ and of the need for coordination with the Bishops (Dioceses) and the congregations themselves. He stated that no meeting as such had been held since the creation of the Hierarchy, (12 December, 1974), and that it was time that certain norms and directives regarding relationships, collaboration and mutual understanding be formalized.

He confirmed that the Religious and Missionary Personnel constituted the majority of consecrated persons in this Church and that, for the most

³⁸⁹ Minutes, Ibid. p. 4. Archbishop G. Zubeir Wako gives the following numbers of Religious Congregations: "By the end of this year (1985) we shall have 11 congregations of men (two of them local) and 17 of women (four of them local) working in the Church of the Sudan." However, there is a discrepancy with the numbers given by Fr. Cesare Mazzolari of the RSAS. p. 3.

part, they were Expatriates working under two authorities: their Religious Superiors and the Bishops.

He pointed out that this Local Church (of Sudan) was *the common denominator* for everybody, because *it is the service of this Local Church* that has put us into each other's hands.

He then recalled the historical background to the whole issue, as food for thought, in the following 16 points:

- 1) The Sudan, in spite of its Local Hierarchy, is still essentially a Missionary Church.
- 2) The transition from the Missionaries to Local Bishops (the creation of the Hierarchy) was an abrupt one; it took place in the absence of the Missionary Founders and functioned on its own before Missionaries came in again to help.
- 3) For the first years after its creation, the Hierarchy functioned practically as a Protectorate. One had the impression that “we” were being tested. The real growth of the Hierarchy started around 1980, but with the scars of wounds inflicted between the years 1975-80.
- 4) The Church in Sudan shares the vicissitudes of the Sudanese nation. 17 years of paralysis, followed now by 12 difficult years of reconstruction and rehabilitation.
- 5) Soon after the creation of the Hierarchy, the Sudanese Church began to appeal for Missionaries. Unfortunately, the Missionary Congregations were slow to respond.
- 6) The Local Hierarchy took over at a time of strong nationalism, and strong criticism of past missionary methods and attitudes, particularly its attitude towards the Local Clergy and Religious.
- 7) Most of the Religious and Missionaries working in the Sudan are not the result of the internal growth and strength of the Sudanese Church. Many have come in at the invitation of the Bishops for specific needs and tasks.
- 8) A Missionary in Sudan works with many uncertainties such as the possibility of being expelled. Doubts as to whether their work is appreciated by the Local Ordinary and Clergy are signs of some sort of communication gap.
- 9) The Local Ordinaries also have their own uncertainties on the presence of Missionary Personnel who may be expelled or withdrawn. The way of dealing with the Religious may give rise to the criticism of the Local Clergy who, on grounds of equality, resent such care.
- 10) The Church in Sudan has many urgent and serious needs.

- 11) The desire for quick results often makes the Church personnel look inward and be little concerned for building up relationships. The Missionary's first question is *what am I supposed to do?* rather than *what kind of person are you?*
- 12) Materialism is taking a strong hold on the Church in Sudan. Too much importance is given to the material means to do one's work; Faith in Divine Providence is weakened. The difficulty of those who have and those who have not.
- 13) There is the debilitating assumption that the non-Religious Clergy are an inferior class regarding the holiness and competence of Religious, therefore they are reckoned unable to direct or guide the Religious. When applied to Bishops, the assumption has devastating consequences: complexes of superiority or inferiority, contempt and arrogance.
- 14) The Local (Diocesan) Religious Congregations were off-shoots of founding Missionary Congregations. In the transition to the Local Hierarchy, they showed signs of unease, distrust and suspicion, probably inherited from the past.
- 15) Sometimes there is a sense of independence: tell me what I have to do and leave me alone, especially when *I have raised the funds myself or provided the materials with my own efforts.*
- 16) Often there is a lack of dialogue within the Diocese. The final word for the Religious or Missionary is not the Local Ordinary but the Religious Superior.

Archbishop Gabriel Zubeir Wako pointed out that the Sudan is a Local Church still in the process of growth and implantation. All the personnel in the Sudan, Bishops, Priests, Religious, Laity, should have this common goal in mind.

Principles or norms are known to everybody, but there is rather an inability or a reluctance to apply them to concrete life situations. Such an application is possible only if there is a real conversion of heart, that is, a real conversion to Christ in whose name we claim to work, a real conversion to Christ's Body in whose service we are, but not a vague Body, the concrete Body of Christ incarnated in this Community. This is why the ***Local Church is our common denominator*** and the Sudan is a Local Church still in the process of growth and implantation.

There is the need of organizing the Local Church so that it may be able to provide for its own needs such as a sufficient number of Priests, Religious and Catechists from among its own people, a genuine Laity; the necessary structures for organization and coordination, material resources to ensure

that it grows into a *Holy Catholic, Apostolic and Missionary Church*, and a communion of love.

All efforts at collaborating, coordinating and understanding should lead to the realization of one goal using different charisms as the Holy Spirit directs us, for *the building up of the Body of Christ* and also of building the beneficiaries *into the Body of Christ*. The charisms of the various Religious and Missionary Institutes build up the Local Church, in response to a need of the Church, at a specific period in history, as felt and interpreted in a particular place. It is important to study how the particular charism of the institutes can operate effectively in the concrete situation of the Church to which they are sent.

The two-way traffic can create confusion or perplexity. What can one receive from a Church that lacks structures and cannot provide for its own needs? This is at the base of the present difficulties of interaction we experience. We perceive the ideal but do we know where we stand concretely?

About the Diocesan Religious Congregations, Archbishop Zubeir observed that, in practice, they had not grown up within the Local Church, and did not seem to be for it; their founders practically turned some of them into Personal Institutions.

These background reflections, surely, raised many questions - questions that should be resolved, while trying to run the race taking an honest look at the hurdles on our way.³⁹⁰

The importance of this talk was that it was stating clearly the most relevant issues to be tackled in the relationship between the Local Church and the Religious Missionary Institutes. It gave the chance to everybody to take up one's own concern in order to work on it. Surely, the direct consequence was that, on both sides, the various issues had to be tackled adequately, but also jointly at Diocesan and Parish level through pastoral meetings where all the active members would be contributing with their views and commitments.

The responsibility of the Ordinaries in organizing such meetings and encounters would determine the effectiveness of dialogue and implementation of the various issues. The lack of regular meetings, instead, would leave room for harmful prejudices and gossiping and destroy the unity of purpose within the Church. As for the Comboni Missionaries, it

³⁹⁰ ArchiBishop Zubeir, from the Minutes of the joint meeting of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Sudan (SCBC) and RSAS, Juba, April 22-26, 1985. op. cit., ACR 606/3.

was a clear message to be taken into consideration for their ongoing formation, planning and missionary approach.

(For full text, ref. Appendix to Part Two, Section One
Chapter Two, point no. 2)

Bilateral Agreements between Dioceses and Religious Institutes

Against the background of the above talk of Archbishop Zubeir Wako, the importance of stipulating Bilateral Agreements, inspired by *Mutuae Relationes*, was evident in order to help enhance a genuine and healthy relationship between the Ordinaries and the Religious Missionary Institutes at the service of the Local Church of South Sudan. By taking up specifically the issues linked with the type of service required by the Local Ordinaries, fully respecting the charism of the different Institutes, they would have enabled both parties to rely on a relationship which could be verified and continued in dialogue and reciprocal understanding with mutual efforts to improve in the areas where possible difficulties would arise, with the freedom to suspend the agreement when it proved impossible to fulfil what was agreed by both parties. The termination of a contract would be done in full respect of each other's authority and of the dignity of people involved, whether the case in question was a normal or serious matter or even a matter of irreversible difficulties.

It has to be said that the stipulation of such conventions or agreements was always a difficult issue in the Local Church of Sudan and South Sudan, especially with regard to the Comboni Missionaries. Many attempts were made but, at the end, they remained unsigned, and when difficulties were arising, the two parties were lacking the tools to solve such situations in a proper way, frequently leaving behind the bitter taste of open or hidden resentment, thus undermining the reciprocal trust, giving rise to unhealthy gossiping and leaving one side or the other with the feeling of having been dealt with unfairly. The agreements would become a way to enhance reciprocal awareness of rights and duties and provide the motivation to live up to the standards required in order to contribute to the growth of the Local Church, while sharing different religious gifts and ministries.

I quote here below the introductory part of how the Religious Superiors dealt with the whole matter and its spirit.

Guidelines Inspiring a Bilateral Agreement Between A Diocese And Religious - Missionary Institutes In The Sudan.

1. *“The drafting of this agreement has been guided by three main considerations: the importance of safeguarding the living reality of the Local Church, the recognition of the Bishop’s prominent responsibility as the common pastor of all members of the Local Church, and the need to ensure that all religious Institutes fulfil their special vocation in the building up of the Local Church.*
2. *The Universal Church finds her concrete embodiment in the living reality of the Local Church, that is to say, in a particular Christian community at a certain moment of its history, a community made up of different members and endowed by the Holy Spirit with the gifts and charisms needed for its growth in sanctity.*
3. *The Bishop is the common pastor of the Local Church, guarding and strengthening the unity of the People of God for the sake of the Kingdom to come, leading and guiding all its members, Priests, Religious, Missionary and Lay People, towards the fulfilment of their respective vocations for the greater perfection of the Bride of Christ.*
4. *Religious life, under its many forms approved by the Church, is a gift from the Holy Spirit and a permanent feature of the Universal Church, whether these forms arise within the Local Church itself as Diocesan Institutes, or whether they have originated in Sister Churches, as did, for instance, the Missionary Institutes.*
5. *These considerations provide the background for the agreement, the aim of which is to promote unity and cooperation between the Diocese and the Religious Institutes, both Diocesan and Missionary, to clarify their respective rights and duties.”*³⁹¹

Some reflections on the meeting SCBC-RSAS 1985

This joint meeting SCBC-RSAS 1985 took place precisely 21 years after the 1964 expulsion of the Comboni Missionaries and 11 years after

³⁹¹ Minutes of the joint meeting of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Sudan (SCBC) and the RELIGIOUS SUPERIORS’ ASSOCIATION OF SUDAN, Juba, April 22-26, 1985. Topic “Model for a General Agreement...” ACR 606/3.

the erection of the Sudanese Hierarchy. As Archbishop Zubeir affirmed, ***a number of factors make this meeting timely***, and surely it was so. It was needed because the presence of many Religious and Missionary Institutes, now at the service of the Local Church of Sudan, required it for a better collaboration, and it was needed particularly for the Comboni Missionaries, as such, in order to find how their missionary charism would find its place among the other Religious and Missionary Institutes and a new style of relationship with that same Local Church which was the fruit of their endeavour since its start.

If for the other Institutes this SCBC-RSAS encounter could just be a clarification of points needed to adjust their new commitments along the journey, (the Expatriate Institutes had no more than 12 years of presence), for the Comboni Missionaries, instead, this encounter had a much deeper bearing. It was the moment of facing the situation with full awareness, recognizing the merits of the past with thankfulness to God and the faults due to human weakness with a sincere ***mea culpa*** and looking forward with the good will to establish a new relationship capable of enhancing the points Archbishop Zubeir was putting across, to facilitate the proper healing of former wounds and scars of the former journey and look to the future with new vision, all realities already emphasized by the Superior Generals, Fr. Tarcisio Agostoni and Fr. Salvatore Calvia, but in need of refreshing.

On the other hand, the clear-cut message of Archbishop Zubeir on behalf of the SCBC could not be just ***a one-way message*** only for the Religious or for the Comboni Missionaries. If he and the Conference of Bishops had to be frank with them, it was their responsibility to mediate among all the components constituting the Local Church: Diocesan Priests, Local Religious Societies and Expatriate Religious-Missionary Institutes. The whole matter needed to be tackled no longer from the angle of ***who is in charge, who is the boss***, with ***opposing power blocks***, but involving all the parts with an attitude of service to the same Local Church whose authority lay with the Ordinaries.

A frequent complaint was that there were no proper diocesan meetings organized in order that all the elements making up the Diocese could share together, or at different level, so as to get the sense that the various pastoral agents, Diocesan Clergy, Religious, Catechists and Leaders, by sharing their views and participation would feel they were personally responsible for its running. The eighties was a time when great emphasis was put on the building up of *Small Christian Communities* and its methodology. AMECEA and SECAM were already a great help in order to open up the

boundaries of dialogue and inspiration from other experiences and other Conferences of Bishops, in a sharing, listening and learning attitude. Sudan, therefore, was no longer isolated from the rest of Africa and from the wider Catholic Church experience of renewal brought about by the Second Vatican Council and its post Vatican II reflection.

The Comboni Missionaries in this *process of growth*

The stress placed by Archbishop Zubeir on a *real conversion of heart* was certainly the central point for dialogue and a good relationship. This, of course, was to be applied to everybody, that is, to the Religious, to the Comboni Missionaries, to Local Clergy and other pastoral agents and people. For the precise fact that the ***Local Church is the common denominator***, a real conversion to Christ implied also a conversion to Christ's Body which all were serving. Truly, all vocations and services were found and lived in the Local Church, including the *Missionary Vocation and Service*. The Comboni Superior Generals and their Councils were totally in agreement with this and the quoted letter of Rev. Fr. Tarcisio Agostoni on the occasion of the erection of the Sudanese Hierarchy in 1974 was precisely on this line in relation to the Church in the Sudan. However, Fr. Salvatore Calvia, writing to Archbishop Ireneo Dud, on 24 December, 1982, had to point out some aspects to be upheld by Comboni Missionaries too.

The Comboni Missionaries had always been aware that the Sudan was still essentially a Church in need of missionaries and, later on, that the Local Church was still in a process of growth and implantation, even though it now had its own Local Hierarchy. In many different ways they never abandoned the Sudanese Church, though many other doors were already opened to them in the world. They always did the best they could, inside and outside Sudan, with the Sudanese Refugees, People, Clergy and Religious. Moreover, in the North, Khartoum Province was never displaced and was also in charge, as we have already seen, of the situation in the South, in as much as it was possible.

Since 1971 the Comboni Radical Members had been present in Nzara (Tombura) and Kapoeta (Juba). From 1972 onwards, it depended on the interest of the Ordinaries to ask for *Expatriate Comboni Missionaries* and to apply for entry permits. The difficulty in getting entry permits was surely due to the political situation, but also to the resistance of some Local Clergy which contributed to slowing down the process. Though aware of this, the Comboni Missionaries never got tired of waiting for the right

moment to return. This desire became a reality as new doors gradually opened up for the Comboni Missionaries to go back to South Sudan.

The reluctance of the Ordinaries to stipulate bilateral conventions was another issue which did not help create good relations and sometimes led to unpleasant misunderstandings. The positive fact was that, at the 1985 joint meeting the issue of the conventions was finalised, so one may conclude that, from this time, the basis for real, positive and healthy cooperation was laid, at least on paper, though its implementation would take much longer still, with continuous delays and hesitations, frequently due to the well-known attitude of very prominent confreres totally dedicated to the Sudanese/South Sudanese cause.

Confreres like Fr. Ottorino Sina and Archbishop Agostino Baroni were holding that, *we Comboni Missionaries, whatever we may have to suffer, we will carry on all the same.*³⁹² Other confreres would say instead that this stand, though a true and genuine Comboni one, was giving way also to abuses and to the above-mentioned continuous delays, which generally did not occur in other countries where the Comboni Missionaries were not the *Founding Fathers*.

Position of the Church with the new Government of the Sudan

Security was deteriorating more and more and the risk of travelling, as we have seen before, confirmed this. The Nimeiri government was facing increasing challenges on the political and military fronts. The SPLA had already inflicted great losses on the Government Army, but the full scale campaign which had to be re-launched, did not take place due to internal reasons. The military command still needed proper organization at the level of leadership and the power struggle for military positions continued. From 1984 to 1986, many South Sudanese politicians who claimed they were inclined to join the SPLA, after the mysterious death of the respected politician Benjamin Bol Akok in an Addis Ababa jail, in August 1984, started dragging their feet,³⁹³ and the full scale SPLA campaign remained at a standstill.

However, the SPLA, with the help of Chairman Mengistu Haile Mariam and especially of the Libyan President, Colonel Muammar al-Ghaddafi,³⁹⁴

³⁹² Juba, 15 July, 1982, Notes in preparation for the Intercapitular Assembly. ACR 610/11/1.

³⁹³ Sudan's Painful Road to Peace, Arop Madut-Arop, op. cit., pp. 81-83.

³⁹⁴ Ibid. pp. 90, 91

in a few years (1983-1985) managed to assemble a huge and formidable force capable of conventional confrontation with the Sudanese army and the recruits were undergoing political-military training at a college opened in Bonga, in Gambela district. President Nimeiri tried to win over the northern public by declaring Jihad against the SPLA, enforcing Shari'a Law through amputations (by August 1984, 58 amputations and 12 cross-limb amputations) carried out especially on non-Moslems. By targeting the SPLA and the Dinka population in particular, in a campaign of hate, he only produced the opposite effect, to have more Dinka recruits join the movement, particularly from Bahr el Ghazal and Lake States. Finally, having a radio station in Ethiopia with regular programmes enabled the SPLA to counteract the Nimeiri propaganda rhetoric in the North.³⁹⁵

Throughout 1984, the SPLA struggled to move away from the chaotic situation it was in and move towards a more positive environment wherein to consolidate itself by adopting structural policies on political and military grounds. The SPLA engaged the government army in various successful attacks and by the middle of March, 1985, it captured Pochalla, Pibor, the Bentiu oil fields, Gemeiza, south of Bor and Lokiliri near Torit. Some battalions were sent to the Southern Upper Nile areas bordering with Equatoria, others to fight in Owiny-Kibul, in Acholi areas and others fought in Terakeka, 50 miles north of Juba.

The Central Command attacked Jekou garrison on 3 March, 1985, while other troops were sent to Southern Blue Nile region and captured Dago, Padigli and Maban. The government forces in Boma plateau and east of Bor were also overrun. The Bahr el Ghazal Province and the whole transport system were paralyzed; the towns of Yirol, Aluakluak, and Tonj were overrun, while the towns of Wau and Rumbek were isolated. With these operations, the SPLA was waging full-scale conventional warfare. In his famous speech of 22 March, 1985, Colonel John Garang stated that *Nimeiri and his regime were like a patient at a terminal stage of illness*³⁹⁶. This came true on 6 April with the coup d'état in Khartoum.

While all these political and military activities were going on, at Church level, the joint meeting of the SCBC/RSAS took place in Juba. The immediate concern of the participants was about the position the Church should take with the new government of the Sudan, as shown here below.

³⁹⁵ Ibid. pp. 97-104.

³⁹⁶ Ibid. pp. 111-113.

*THE FIRST TWO DAYS (April 22 and 23) WERE SPENT ON THE POSITION THE CHURCH SHOULD TAKE WITH THE NEW GOVERNMENT OF THE SUDAN.*³⁹⁷

The following points were specifically discussed:

- 1. What can we contribute as Church to the country in this moment of hope by way of suggestions and by way of action?*
- 2. What role should our Christians leaders undertake in their civil and political life?*
- 3. What motivations and attitudes should be inculcated in all our Christians at this particular moment in the history of our country?*
- 4. In the light of the declaration of 'freedom' and 'rights' about religion and civil rights, what expectations can we bring forth to the government to ensure the rights of the Church and the betterment of the country as a whole?*

It was clear that from now onwards all the Church personnel, the pastoral Agents and the people were getting more and more into a very troubled situation with no clear vision ahead. As for the Comboni Missionaries and other Religious in Bahr el Ghazal and Lake District areas the situation was no longer safe. Fr. Pacifico and Fr. Tessitore had to leave Kwajok for Wau on 22 June, 1985, because of disturbances (Fr. Tessitore would die of heart failure in Wau on 22 August).

Events of the year 1985 and the General Chapter of the MCCJ

If the new Provincial Superior, Fr. Cesare Mazzolari, was thinking that the new status of the Comboni group elevated into a Province would really enhance and expand the missionary commitments for the benefit of the Church in South Sudan, especially in the neediest areas, he really needed a lot of faith and hope. Indeed, the positive journey of the new start in 1981 with the Representation of Southern Sudan, followed up by its upgrade to the Delegation of South Sudan and, in 1985, into the Province of South Sudan, was a demanding but also an exciting journey, but what laid ahead

³⁹⁷ Minutes of the joint meeting of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Sudan (SCBC) and the RELIGIOUS SUPERIORS' ASSOCIATION OF SUDAN, Juba, April 22-26, 1985. Topic "Position of the Church..." p.2. ACR 606/3.

was becoming much more worrisome and the dark clouds on the horizon were certainly not encouraging.

The main historical events in the Province of South Sudan were presented to the General Chapter of 1985. Regarding the Province, the group had gradually acquired its own features, having received the status of Delegation separate from Khartoum in 1982, and that of a Province in March, 1985. In line with the planning of 1982, there had been a gradual increase of personnel and of commitments. By 1983 the group had to prepare a pastoral Directory by defining the style of Comboni presence in South Sudan.

The important events which occurred in the Church of Sudan and Southern Sudan³⁹⁸ and in the political life were affecting the Combonis and calling for reflection and a response. The main events were the following:

At Church level

- Postings of Bishops: Arch. Gabriel Zubeir Wako to Khartoum (1981), Mgr. Joseph Nyekindi to Wau (1981), Mgr. Agostino Baroni to Rumbek (1982) and then Mgr. Giuseppe Pellerino (1983), Archb. Paolino Lukudu Loro to Juba (1983), Mgr. Paride Taban to Torit (1983), Mgr. Max Macram to El Obeid (1984)
- The Catechetical Centre in Nzara (1980)
- The National Pastoral Plan (1981-1986)
- The Seminary of the Apostles of Jesus to Rejaf (Feb. 1981)
- The Opening of the Minor Seminary in Rumbek (1982)
- The Opening of the Minor Seminary in Tore-Yei-(1983)
- The Comboni Sec. School in Juba (1981) and the Loyola Sec. School in Wau (1984)
- The transfer of the National Major Seminary from Wau to Juba (1984)
- The ordination of Sudanese Priests (13) over three years (81-84)
- Important letters of the Sudanese Bishops on the family, reconciliation, peace and the present situation.
- Mass Ecumenical prayer in response to the political situation.
- The Diocesan and National Eucharistic Congress
- The entry of new congregations into Sudan: The White Fathers, the Salesian Fathers and Brothers, the Kiltegans, the Ustratuna (Nostra Famiglia), the Lay Volunteer Missionaries, the Sisters of Mary Mother

³⁹⁸ Answers to questionnaire "A": Replies to the questionnaire in preparation for the XIII General Chapter of the Congregation, 1985, Juba South Sudan. p. 171.ACR 616/3.

of the Church, the Fathers of Foreign Missions, the Theresian Sisters (Wau), the Salesian Sisters.

- Comboni assistance in the revision of the Constitutions and to the General Chapters: Sisters of the Sacred Heart (1983), Mupoi (1984), Brothers of Saint Martin de Porres (1985).

In the social and political arena:

- The Presidents of the High Council (South Sudan): Their Excel. Joseph Lagu, Peter Gatkwath, Abel Alier, Gismalla Abdalla Rassas, Joseph James Tombura.
- Division of the South into three regions (24 September, 1983)
- Introduction of Islamic law (Shari'a) 17 October, 1983)
- Henceforth: guerrilla war, increasing political instability, difficulty in obtaining permits, uncertainty about the future; famine in some areas (worsened by the lack of vision and political action) difficulty in travelling and communication.
- Destruction of schools, health and social services;
- Withdrawal of many foreign agencies, in particular the closure of the search for oil in Bentiu (Chevron) and of the Jonglei Canal (February, 1984).
- Three Priests taken hostage in Bentiu (later released).

Regarding the analysis of the situation and of the Comboni commitment,³⁹⁹ the emphasis was: *our (Comboni) commitment is to stay until death; our desire is to do everything the SCBC asks us to do; it is our desire to update the analysis of the situation by means of an annual appraisal of the situation by each community.*

The objectives were the ones expressed in the Directory of the Province Nos. 34-38 and appendix II p. 47:

- Formation of leaders, Priests, Religious, Catechists (n. 34)
- Small Christian Communities (n. 35)
- Work in schools (n. 36) CSSJ (Appendix p. 47)
- Projects of social and economic development (n. 37)
- People fleeing to the towns: it is an urgent pastoral problem (n. 38)
- Promotion of Comboni Missionary Vocations (App. p. 47)
- Pass the procure to the Local Church (ibid.)
- Have communities according to the rule of life with at least three members (App. p. 47 , Dir. n. 19)

³⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 185

As for resources, there was the awareness of the need for younger personnel, some of whom should come already trained. Instead some commitments were handed over: the presence with the Mupoi Sisters in July, 1982; the Printing Press was handed over to the Salesians also in 1982 and the Parish of Rejaf to the Apostles of Jesus on 27 May, 1984. Kajo-Kaji Parish was, instead, taken up as a new commitment and Fr. Mario Busellato, who was in Rejaf, was appointed Parish Priest in the same year.⁴⁰⁰

10 October, 1985: Daniel Comboni Day

On Daniel Comboni Day, 10 October, 1985, the Comboni Secondary School of Juba, a great achievement of the Comboni Missionaries, had the honour of celebrating its official opening attended by H.G. Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro, the Governor Peter Cirillo and several civil and religious authorities, all the Clergy of the Archdiocese, many of the Religious Personnel and many parents of the CSSJ students. The long journey to achieve this extraordinary objective came to its completion to the great joy of the Comboni Missionaries.

The second priority was Comboni House which also had to be celebrated. On 1 July, 1985, the building of the chapel at Comboni House had been started and Bro. Ragnoli was in charge of the construction. All of these were great achievements as well. The dinner with Archbishop Lukudu and all the Comboni personnel present and the afternoon liturgical and social celebration with all the Clergy and Religious at Comboni House crowned the whole event of 10 October, 1985.

However, the final touch related to the above CSSJ was the visit of the Pro-Nuncio on 22 November when the students honoured him with the gift of an ivory Madonna, after which he had supper at Comboni House. The joyful celebration ended with a sense of fulfilment though the living reality of South Sudan brought them immediately into the tough, concrete situation.

Mgr. Pellerino and Fr. Cefalo hostages of SPLA at Gebel Boma

On 30 November the Jesuits from Wau had to flee to Juba and then to other destinations, some of them back to USA. Dark clouds were building up more and more around the whole area of Wau and Lake States. On 17

⁴⁰⁰ Annuario Comboniano updated on 1 October, 1984.

January, 1986, the Provincial Council decided to withdraw Fr. Cefalo from Rumbek while, at the same time, the Pro-Nuncio could not come from Khartoum for the ordinations in Yei. The security situation around Rumbek continued to worsen. Mgr. Pellerino and Fr. Cefalo were there together, and the only way of getting them out was by air. On 8 April, 1986, an attempt to evacuate them failed. In spite of the insistence of ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross), neither the government of Khartoum nor the SPLA allowed the flight. The last communication Fr. Mazzolari had with Fr. Cefalo was on 21 April via radio. The account went as follows:

“On 24 December, 1985 the last plane of UNICEF landed in Rumbek. Among the passengers there was also Mgr. Pellerino, Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Rumbek, who had just visited Yei. Then the situation collapsed and no more aircraft arrived. The roads going out of Rumbek were all mined and SPLA guerrillas were laying siege to the town all around. From Juba Fr. Mazzolari had told the two missionaries it was better to leave the area, but Mgr. Pellerino refused saying he would not move without an order of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and Fr. Cefalo did not want to leave the confrere alone.

On that occasion, Libyan planes supporting the regular government troops conducted two bombing raids to break the guerrilla front, but the SPLA guerrillas responded with anti-aircraft rockets. On 4 March, in the middle of the night, the soldiers stationed in Rumbek, the police, the Arabs, the authorities and their families decided to abandon the city. They were in their hundreds and they set off on foot towards Maridi. The journey was disastrous. They walked for 12 days, with constant ambushes and the danger of mines. Several died, some even of thirst. Mgr. Pellerino and Fr. Cefalo refused to join them; to flee did not seem less risky than the possibility of falling into the hands of the SPLA forces, which then Rumbek entered meeting no resistance.

On the morning of March 5 the SPLA looted a bit everywhere. The Colonel of the SPLA tried to put Mgr. Pellerino and Fr. Cefalo at their ease saying that, if they wanted to leave, they were free to do so, but it was now practically impossible. Fr. Cefalo was suffering from kidney problems and by radio the Red Cross confirmed it was ready to go with a plane from Juba, but neither the Government nor the SPLA allowed it. In late April, they received the news that two battalions of the regular army of Khartoum were marching to recapture Rumbek: they had new weapons and, they also had tanks. On Sunday 27, the guerrillas told them they had to leave with the Land Rover of the mission.

So they set out, but once they reached Yirol, their car was taken and the SPLA took them to the river Nile with a truck full of guerrillas. They brought them to Kenisa, where they waited two days to find a canoe willing to take them across the Nile, in the area of Bor. They travelled a short way on foot and then a truckload of SPLA took them up to Kongor and then to Gebel Boma, a base camp of theirs. There they remained for 113 days, cut off from all contact with outsiders. They were treated as hostages and continuously watched.

They had travelled about 800 Km. and now they wanted to talk to the Chairman (Colonel John Garang), but the guerrillas answered saying he had no time to meet them. They could not understand the real reason for their being held hostage: perhaps it was for propaganda purposes, or because they were dangerous witnesses, having seen in Rumbek airplanes with weapons and supplies coming from Ethiopia (that Col. Garang had always denied), or that they were expecting a ransom. On 15 August, the feast of the Assumption, there was the announcement that they would take them to the Ethiopian border. They collected whatever few things they had and climbed aboard the vehicle that brought them to the border. They were delivered to the Red Cross and to the Ethiopian soldiers. They were finally free.

Having brought with them from Rumbek a bottle of wine, they were able to celebrate Holy Mass for several weeks, but then the hosts ran out. In the place where they were kept, they found some wheat: they ground it between two stones and made something like biscuits with which they continued to celebrate Holy Mass for a few weeks until they ran out of wine. They kept the Blessed Sacrament in the miserable hut they had built, right up to the last day of their captivity.”⁴⁰¹

Wherever they went, Fr. Pellerino and Fr. Cefalo could see that the guerrilla movement was well organised. It had tens of thousands of well-equipped soldiers who were supplied with weapons by Ethiopian aircraft (Russian Antonovs). They were fighting hard and were showing great determination in the struggle to liberate the South at all costs, without sparing anybody, not even when entire populations were reduced to starvation because of the widespread insecurity. When questioned they were answering: "This is the price we have to pay for our freedom." If foreigners were falling into their hands, they were delivered to the

⁴⁰¹ 22 August 1986, Interview for the Comboni Press: "Mgr. Pellerino and Fr. Cefalo freed"

Chairman, Dr. John Garang, who would decide their fate. It was clear the SPLA did not want outsiders and, especially, did not want witnesses.

The arrival of Fr. Pellerino and Fr. Cefalo in Rome from Addis Ababa, on the afternoon of the 22 August, 1986, ended their ordeal but revealed clearly that the presence in those areas of South Sudan was no longer viable.

Year 1986: other events

Apart from what happened to Mgr. Pellerino and Fr. Cefalo, year 1986 was a mixture of happy and sad events. On 19 April, Fr. Luigi De Giorgi from the Raja community died of malaria and virus complications. However, there was also the joyful news that, on 20 April, Vocations Sunday, the Vatican announced the appointment of Fr. Erkolano Lado Tombe as Bishop of Yei.

On 18 July, Juba was invaded by a huge number of cows (figures say about 60,000), and more than 10,000 people who fled from Terakeka, Gebel Ladu and Luori and remained displaced in Juba. Many of them were armed. They invaded the Seminary of Munuki and also the Comboni Chapel.

On 25 August, due to the deteriorating situation, and at the command of the respective General Councils, there was a meeting of Comboni Missionaries and Comboni Sisters in the Juba area for discernment on *the value of our presence in South Sudan*. The result was in favour of maintaining the presence even though, a few days later, the situation got even worse.

Again, another happy event occurred on 28 November with the episcopal consecration of Bishop Erkolano Lado Tombe in Khartoum by Cardinal Michael Maurice Otunga of Nairobi. On 29 November, Fr. Ezio Bettini and Sr. Carmela also reached Kajo-Kaji safely. Bro. Valentino Fabris, having worked so hard in South Sudan, was asked to go to Nairobi to build the Scholasticate there. He was given a warm send-off on 3 December.

On 4 December, Fr. Antonio La Braca arrived in Khartoum, appointed to South Sudan and the following day, newly consecrated Bishop Erkolano, together with Bishop Dwatuka and Fr. Joseph Ukelo also arrived in Juba from Khartoum.

A very much desired visit was that of Fr. Venanzio Milani, from the General Council, on 6 December. He came to Juba just at the right time to see for himself what the situation of South Sudan was at that precise

moment. He was able to visit Juba and the surrounding areas, even though the time available for the visit was very short.

Opening of the Comboni Pre-Postulancy in Munuki

On 2 February, 1987, feast of the Presentation of the Lord, there was the official opening of the Comboni Pre-Postulancy at Munuki. The formation team consisted of Fr. Jesús Aranda Nava, Fr. Ottorino Sina and Fr. Todd Riebe. The Provincial, Fr. Mazzolari, was the main celebrant. Also present were Fr. Joseph Ukelo and Fr. Abel Mödi.

This was a really big event if we consider how much and for how long the Comboni Missionaries wanted to do vocation promotion in South Sudan. Now this dream had come true and all the former difficulties had, at last, been overcome. In fact, since the ordination of Fr. Ukelo and Fr. Longokwo, only Albino Adot Oryem, from the Major Seminary of Bussere, was in Comboni formation. In June, 1982, he started the Novitiate at Tartar and, in 1987, he was preparing for perpetual vows in the Scholasticate of Kampala (Uganda). Now, with the opening of the Pre-Postulancy, there was new hope for the future.

If we consider the former time as the *first phase* of Comboni formation, which had gathered quite a good number of aspirants who had reached the novitiate, the scholasticate and Brotherhood or Priesthood, we can say that the *second phase*, with scholastic Adot Oryem included, had now begun.

The 21 confreres of the first phase who made their first profession and those who were ordained Priests, as we have seen in Part II, were aware that Fr. Barnaba Deng and Fr. Louis Lotimoi had died in the exercise of their Priesthood, and, by this time, only 6 of these confreres remained in their Missionary Priesthood. These consisted in two Bishops, Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro (Juba), Bishop Max Macram (El Obeid), and the Priests Fr. Peter Magalasi, Fr. Hector Ayon, Fr. Abel Mödi and Fr. Joseph Ukelo.

The fact of the opening of the Pre-Postulancy was surely a great event, but it also led to reflect on the reasons why so many confreres left, and what the new formation guidelines had to take into serious consideration for the good of the Radical Sudanese Members.

Asking a couple of our older Sudanese confreres this specific question, the answer I was given was that:

1. Identification with the *Comboni Vocation* needed to be much stronger.

2. The issue of *community life* was fundamental in order to help one another in the Comboni Missionary vocation and that confreres should not have been appointed to this or that place just to fill a pastoral gap. In the long run, this was not helping.
3. Sometimes the difference between Diocesan Priesthood and the Comboni Priesthood was not clear.
4. The life of prayer and spirituality was fundamental as it comprised elements without which one would not find enough reasons to cope with the challenges of missionary life, since the common understanding coming from each one's culture would not help consecrated life as intended in the vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience for missionary life, especially to other countries and peoples.

Of course, the difficulties that the new formation team in the Pre-Postulancy were to face was not easy either, considering the challenges deriving from the situation of disarray in Sudan and Southern Sudan at this precise historical moment of the eighties. To discern the real motivation leading a young man to apply to join the Combonis was certainly not easy in a context of war, insecurity, famine and displacement. Nonetheless, the way was now open and the challenges had to be faced just as in any other historical time, with faith and trust in the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It goes without any doubt that the new team were in almost desperate need of that guidance.

Regarding the Pre-Postulants who completed the preparatory course in the Pre-Postulancy, the plan was that they should go to Nairobi for the Postulancy and for the Philosophical studies, since the previous decision of the SCBC did not allow Religious Students who had not taken temporary vows to study Philosophy at St. Paul's Major Seminary. It was not until 15 December, 1988, that the Provincial, Fr. Mazzolari, received confirmation from the SCBC that the Comboni students would be accepted for philosophy classes at St. Paul's Major Seminary starting from March 1989.

With this decision, the Postulancy formation programme in South Sudan could become a reality. As for the work of fixing the premises of the Postulancy, Bro. Redaelli and Bro. Cariolato did a first-class job, to the satisfaction of all concerned, especially the Provincial.

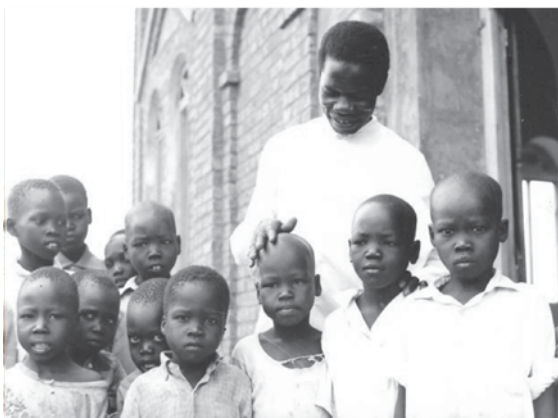
The experience of older confreres, who had lived totally dedicated to the Comboni style of life, was a great help toward understanding the spirit with which new aspirants and candidates ought to embrace the Comboni Missionary. Fr. Peter Magalasi, one of the elder confreres, did much to transmit this early spirit for a successful process of formation of our

candidates. This is the reason why I am including his shared experience at this point.

Fr. Peter Magalasi shares his experience

His advanced years – he is 87 - do not seem to have affected his spirit, but enhanced it, as he recalled his past life and the difficulties he, together with the other South Sudanese confreres, went through in the mission, after the expulsion of the Expatriate Comboni Missionaries. They wholeheartedly accepted the new, and difficult, situation.

He and the whole group were very well aware that the Government of Khartoum expelled the Expatriate Missionaries in order to kill the natives, especially the Local Priests and Missionaries. All of them decided with one heart to carry on with their missionary life planning the work or the visits according to their place of assignment. At first, he was in Wau community with Fr. Barnaba Deng and Fr. Angelo Umedo.



They planned the visit to the Christian communities as the situation allowed, sometimes staying out for a week and then going back to the mission. Being too far away, they could not reach some places and placed good Catechists there to take care of the Christian Communities. He remembered very well how the Arab commanders and soldiers abused them.

“They thought we were foolish because we were black, and that we did not know anything, but we had studied in universities”, Fr. Peter said. “They were trying to get our cars deceiving us with false promises, telling us that then they would give us new cars, but they found us strong and we were answering that we were doing the work of God and that they could keep their cars.”

Remembering that time, Fr. Peter said: *“The trials we encountered did not discourage us but strengthened our faith and our courage since we were referred to by people as ‘elders’ in that situation.”* Then, speaking of Fr. Barnaba Deng, he said: *“Fr. Barnaba was a strong Dinka man*

and used to face directly the challenges and the people who were showing no respect: you could not joke with him; he was a kind of 'hot Dinka' one would not joke with. He would go to the police with all their guns without fear, 'let them shoot', he would say.

While in Kit, Fr. Peter Magalasi carried on saying:

"The Arabs hated us. I myself one day, having seen that a government army officer was following me everywhere with the soldiers, with courage and ready for martyrdom, I stopped the car and told him: 'you captain, what do you want from me since you are following me everywhere?' He answered: 'Ah, Abuna, why are you talking like that...?' I said: 'I am in my country and not in yours...' Another time I was invited to a feast together with another Priest. We were the only two black people among all those other important Arab people, two Priests. They tried to put pressure on us thinking that we were stupid. We ate together as Brothers..."

Again, talking about the time he was in Rejaf with the Brothers of St. Martin de Porres he said:

"People were really protecting us. Once I was openly attacked by the Arabs. What was spoiling the Arabs' mind was that they thought we were stupid. They collected Priests and Brothers, but the people gathered together with spears and arrows and came to our rescue. The commanding officer, then, afraid of the people, changed his attitude and started saying: 'Kef, how are you? Give us the old cars; we will give you new ones..."

*They were putting pressure on the Catholic Church, trying to deceive us, but we were educated people; we did not want to fight but to reason..."*⁴⁰²

This interview, short though it was, is a witness of how the first Comboni South Sudanese confreres had a strong awareness of their Comboni vocation and lived it deeply in the difficult situation they had to go through. They are witnesses to the new generation of young people who want to become Comboni Missionaries that, frequently, life is not easy but, where there is a true vocation, as Fr. Peter said, *the difficulties were not discouraging us, but were making us stronger in faith* and, of course, in their vocation to missionary life.

⁴⁰² Recorded interview with Fr. Peter Magalasi by Bro. Andrés Gaspar Abarca, June, 2016.

Other sharing from elder Sudanese Combonis

During the years 1964-1981, the Sudanese Comboni Radical Members were in a situation that did not allow them an easy experience of Comboni community life and, belonging to the Region of Khartoum, the main difficulty was how to arrange the first viable communities in the South. It was by no means easy. Regarding Formation, the older Sudanese confreres confided that it was of the utmost importance to form the new candidates to the essential values: a strong **Comboni Spirit**, a deep sense of **community life** and a deep sense of **prayer**

The inspiration of our Founder would be the real basis for growth in human and spiritual life as a Comboni Missionary. A concrete and strong community life would be a great help in sharing and facing difficulties together, and a deep life of prayer would be the element without which one would not be able to face the human and spiritual challenges of life. Reflection on the experiences of the past would certainly be the foundation for future success in the Formation of candidates...

Comboni personnel in 1987⁴⁰³

Provincial Superior: Fr. Cesare Mazzolari

Provincial Councillors: Fr. Abel Mödi Nyörkö, Vice-Provincial;
Fr. E. Bettini, Bro. F. Ragnoli, Fr. Todd Riebe

Provincial Bursar: Bro. Giuseppe Redaelli

Juba (1) Archbishop's House, H.G. Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro

Juba (2) Comboni House, Provincial residence and hospitality house, opened on 10 October, 1981: Fr. Cesare Mazzolari, Prov. Sup., and Fr. Ottorino Sina, Sup.

Fr. Hector Ayon, ministry

Fr. Gaetano Gottardi, teacher

Fr. Alfredo Mattevi, teacher

Fr. Todd Riebe, Director of Comboni College

Bro. Valentino Fabris, constructions

Bro. Ottorino Gelmini, constructions

Bro. Francesco Ragnoli, vocational school

Bro. Giuseppe Redaelli, Prov. Bursar

Bro. Libero F. Ribelli

⁴⁰³ Annuario Comboniano, op. cit., 1987, updated on 1 July 1987.

Juba (3) Pre-Postulancy (opened in 1986)

Fr. Jesus Aranda Nava, formator

Juba (4) St. Paul's Major Seminary, Munuki

Fr. Salvatore Coppo, teacher

Fr. Vittorino Dellagiacoma, teacher

Fr. Abel Mödi Nyörkö, Vice-Director

Kit

Brothers of St. Martin de Porres.

Fr. Tito Giuntoli, Novice Master

Terakeka

Fr. Mattia Bizzarro, Sup., Parish Priest

Fr. Justin Ogen, Coadjutor

Bro. Augusto Bazzanella, bursar

Wau Diocese

Wau

Fr. Luigi Penzo, Sup.

Fr. Enzo Tomasoni, Chaplain

Kwajok

Parish and zone catechetical centre; founded in March, 1979.

Fr. Salvatore Pacifico, Parish Priest

Raja

Fr. Alfonso Polacchini, Sup., Parish Priest

Fr. Gino Tosello

Bro. Ambrogio Confalonieri

Tombura/Yambio Diocese

Nzara

Parish founded on 31 October, 1951; re-opened in 1971

Fr. Pietro Ravasio, Sup.

Fr. Elvio Cellana, Bursar

Fr. Luigi Parisi, Parish Priest

Fr. Raymond Pax

Fr. Mario Riva

Rumbek Diocese

Rumbek opened in 1953, re-opened in 1978.

Mgr. Giuseppe Pellerino

Fr. Antonio La Braca, coadjutor (then transferred to Wau)

Torit Diocese

Loa mission re-opened in 1984.

Fr. Eugenio Caligari, Sup., Parish Priest
Fr. Giovanni Ferrazin, Coadjutor

Yei Diocese

Kajo-Kaji

Fr. Ezio Bettini
Fr. Mario Busellato, SUP., Parish Priest
Fr. Ignacio López Toro, Coadjutor
Bro. Domenico Cariolato, constructions

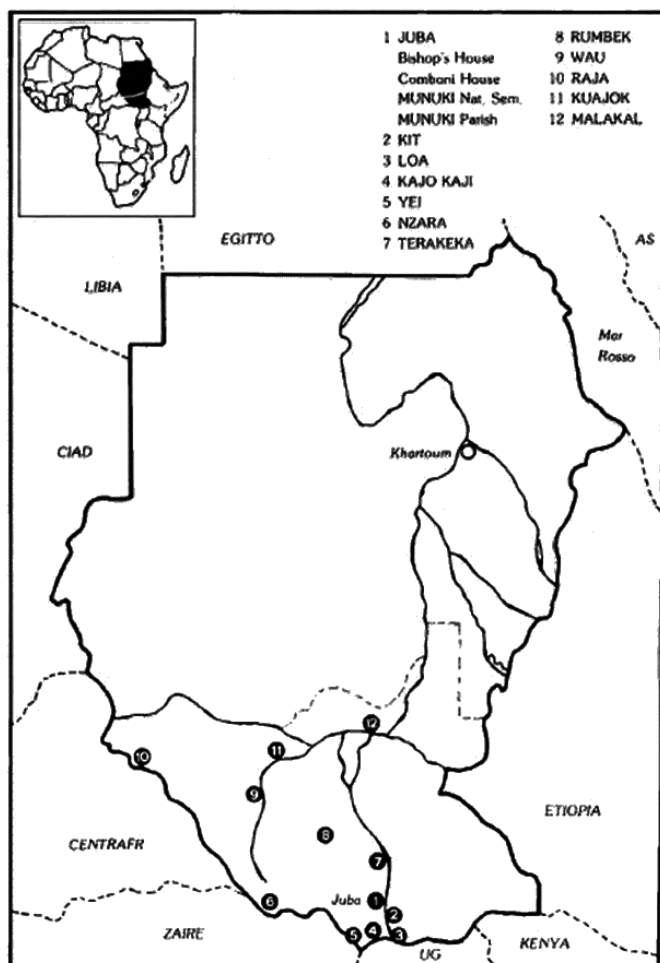
Malakal Diocese

Fr. Miguel A Isturiz Agudo, Minor Seminary

Waiting for assignment

Fr. Albino Adot Oryem
Fr. Guido Bertuzzi
Fr. Peter Magalasi
Fr. Felice Sciannameo
Fr. Erminio Tanel
Fr. Joseph Ukelo

Total: 47 confreres, 2 Bishops, 37 Fathers; 8 Brothers



Year 1987 unfolding

At the beginning of 1987, Fr. Mazzolari started his second period as Provincial Superior and the new Provincial Council was made up of Fr. Abel Mödi, Fr. Todd Riebe, Fr. Ezio Bettini and Bro. Francesco Ragnoli. Their first meeting took place from 3 to 7 March, 1987. On 17 March there was the celebration of the silver jubilee of Fr. Mazzolari with the presence of Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro, the Pro-Nuncio from Khartoum, Mgr. Erkolano Ladu Tombe and many of the Church Personnel of Juba.

On 5 May, 1987, a **Sasco Air Lines**, Cessna 404 Titan II ST-AIJ, was shot down in Malakal.⁴⁰⁴ This again heightened awareness of how fragile the situation was and Malakal remained isolated for security reasons. This bad news was, in a certain sense, balanced by such good news as the opening of the classrooms in Munuki Major Seminary, the perpetual profession of Fr. Albino Adot Oryem on 27 May in Kampala and the perpetual profession of Bro. Giuseppe Redaelli (Peppo) on 28 May.

The visit of the Superior General, Fr. Francesco Pierli, was certainly a very important event for the Province of South Sudan. He started by preaching the retreat from 29 May to 2 June and proceeded with the Provincial Assembly from 3 to 5 June with the presence of 22 confreres. Those of Raja and Malakal could not attend for security reasons. From 6 to 8 June there was the Provincial Council meeting together with Fr. Pierli. Fr. Adot also arrived in order to prepare for his ordination to the Diaconate.

After this, from 10 to 21 June, Fr. Pierli carried out his visit to Yei, and then went on to Maridi, Nzara, Mupoi, Tombura and back to Yei where he visited Kajo-Kaji and then returned to Juba by convoy. Unfortunately, he then contracted severe malaria and all the rest of the programme had to be cancelled. He could not even attend Holy Mass on the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which was celebrated at St. Joseph Parish. However, he was able to celebrate at the Pre-Postulancy and have a short Provincial Council meeting.

On 28 June, in Kator, there was the happy event of the ordination to the Priesthood of Fr. Darius Akim and to the diaconate of Fr. Albino Adot. Bro. Redaelli went to Tombura to collect the driver who went to Wau and Fr. Pierli left for Kajo-Kaji. The following day he left for Moyo and Arua, ending his visit. On 10 and 11 July, in Western Equatoria there were attacks on missions and villages, but there too, thanks be to God, Bro. Redaelli and the driver reached Juba safely just in time; all the area then became too dangerous to access.

During the second attack on Tore (Yei area) on 12 July, Fr. Salvatore Ferrao and Fr. Pullicino (Jesuits), were abducted from the mission and taken to Boma SPLA/M headquarters (Eastern Equatoria), while Fr. Pio Ciampa, the third member of their community, was mercifully allowed to cross to Zaire (now Congo) for health reasons. An attack was also carried out on Kajo-Kaji with the abduction of 5 people from the Sunday service. Nonetheless, Bro. Domenico Cariolato, assigned to Kajo-Kaji, left on 23

⁴⁰⁴ Malakal, Sudan **Sasco Air Lines** Cessna 404 Titan II ST-AIJ,
<http://www.planecrashinfo.com/1987/1987.htm>

July for that mission with a lorry load of supplies for the house of the Comboni Sisters there under construction.

In a radio message from Juba to Raja, Fr. Mazzolari received confirmation from Fr. Salvatore Pacifico that, for the moment, everything in Raja was going well, but not in Tombura where Fr. Riva had decided not to go to Juba because of the closing of the Yei-Maridi road. Once again in Kajo-Kaji the confreres were able to occupy the newly built house but, due to the worsening of the situation, they had to prepare a plan of evacuation which was followed just a few days later on 8 August.

On that day, all the personnel of Kajo-Kaji had to evacuate the mission and flee to Moyo (Northern Uganda), just before the road was closed to traffic. This was done in agreement with Bishop Erkolano Ladu and the Major Superiors of the Comboni Missionaries and Comboni Missionary Sisters. A plan was worked out whereby Fr. Busellato, Fr. Ignacio López Toro and Bro. Cariolato would remain in the Comboni Community of Moyo to keep in contact with Kajo-Kaji mission, while Fr. Bettini and the Sisters went back to Juba by another way.

In August, the Diocesan and Comboni programmes in Juba were going ahead, apparently as usual. There was the closing of the youth week with a solemn Holy Mass in Kator. Fr. Mödi returned to Juba from the meeting of Lomé (Togo) on Comboni vocation promotion and formation, and Fr. Aranda went to Nairobi for the matter of the Postulancy. Fr. Mazzolari and Bishop Erkolano Ladu were present at the closing of the five-day course for Youth Ministers sponsored by the Major Religious Superiors.

On 15 August, the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, there was the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of Rejaf Parish Church, with Bishop Erkolano Ladu and the Governor present. On the same day there was also the celebration of the birthday of Fr. Mödi. On 21 August there was the official dedication of St. Kizito School in Munuki with the presence of Archbishop Lukudu Loro. There was, instead, bad news from Kajo-Kaji/Lomin which was looted and destroyed during the same period.

On 30 August, the Brothers of St. Martin de Porres had to abandon Kit due to insecurity and the Apostles of Jesus had to transfer much of their belongings from Rejaf to Juba for the same reason. At the beginning of September Kajo-Kaji/Lomin was evacuated and all the people fled. By the end of September, Fr. López Toro left for Mexico while Fr. Busellato got a three-month permit for Uganda and continued organizing things from Moyo, especially for the Kuku refugees of Kajo-Kaji in Northern Uganda. A positive note at the closing of the month was the departure for the

Postulancy of Nairobi, after a long waited permit, of the first two Pre-Postulants, Joseph Sunday and Philip Sebit.

The Months from October to December were also filled with mixed events: Fr. Ezio installed in the Cathedral of Kator the sound system donated by Fr. Gaetano Gottardi and appreciated by everybody, especially Fr. James Ladu.⁴⁰⁵

On 4 October there was the opening of the Jubilee year in St. Theresa Cathedral in Kator. On the 10th, a well prepared Comboni Day was celebrated in the Comboni Secondary School. On the 14th, the convoy from Juba to Torit ran into trouble just a few miles outside Juba. Exploding landmines in the road inflicted casualties among the military personnel. On the 16th, Archbishop Lokudu Loro called for a meeting to prepare for the 25th anniversary of St. Theresa Cathedral in Kator and the opening of the Marian Year on 1 January, 1988.⁴⁰⁶

Another item of good news, after all the struggle of clarifying the issue of the ownership of the land of the Postulancy, was that, by 22 October, the keys of the residence were in the hands of the Provincial and the works of maintenance and building could finally start under the direction of Bro. Fabris and Fr. Bettini. On 28 October, at Comboni House, there was the joyful celebration of the centenary of the first religious professions in the reborn Comboni Congregation which took place in 1887. Fr. Vittorino Dellagiacoma gave the homily and both the MCCJ and CMS who were around Juba were present. It was an occasion for personal and community renewal and for the renewal of religious vows. On such an occasion, an outdoor supper was essential.

Archbishop Lokudu Loro, on 1 November, feast of all Saints, closed the 50th anniversary celebrations of Rejaf Mother Church that began on 15 August. In the second half of the month there was the welcome return of Fr. Ananias Ladu, Diocesan Priest and Parish Priest of Lyria, who had been abducted and kept in captivity for three months. A thanksgiving Holy Mass was celebrated at Comboni House for his endurance and for the help such an example would give to people. Another joyful circumstance at the beginning of December was the blessing of the foundation stone of the primary school of USRATUNA, with Fr. Nicholas Kiri as celebrant.

⁴⁰⁵ Fr. James Ladu to Fr. Caesar Mazzolari, 1 October, 1987, Ref. ADJ/VGO/Oct. 1987. FSSPJ.

⁴⁰⁶ In 1987 Pope John Paul II also proclaimed a Marian year.
http://www.vatican.va/jubilee_2000/docs/documents/ju_documents_1997_history_en.html

The ordination to the Priesthood of Fr. Albino Adot Oryem was a most extraordinary event. It was almost 15 years since the last ordinations of Fr. Longokwo and Ukelo and the joy of the Comboni family was indeed great. The ordination took place on 13 December, 1987, by H.G. Paolino Lukudu Loro, assisted by Bishop Paride Taban who gave a very *stirring and joy-filled homily on the Priesthood*.⁴⁰⁷ Fr. Albino said his first Holy Mass with the Comboni community on 18 December and, on the 20th celebrated Mass in Lulugu displaced people's camp.

The Teaching Brothers of St. Martin De Porres⁴⁰⁸

I take the opportunity of inserting here this paragraph on the St. Martin de Porres' Brothers. They were founded in 1953 by the Comboni Missionary Bishop Mgr. Mazzoldi, assisted by Fr. Giuseppe Gusmini and Bro. Alessandro Pelucchi. The Comboni Missionaries carefully accompanied them for several years, both in Uganda and in Southern Sudan; the main purpose of their foundation was to prepare qualified teachers for the direction of Catholic schools. It is therefore only right to give a brief account of their early years.

The first five members of this Congregation of *Teaching Brothers* took their first religious vows on 19 March, 1957, but only Bro. Augusto Lopeta had the joy of celebrating the silver Jubilee in 1982, since the other four had left the Congregation. In the beginning, some of the aspirants were studying at Okaru Seminary, but their co-founder, Fr. Gusmini, thought it best to have a completely separate place for the formation of the Brothers. Thus, on the 15 March, 1953, he brought the aspirants to KIT and built what was necessary for them. Together with Fr. Gusmini were Fr. Giuseppe Simonelli, Bro. Enrico Vanzo and, later on, Fr. Adelmo Spagnolo.

With the expulsion of the Comboni Missionaries in 1964, the members of the Congregation and the Aspirants were all dispersed. The Novitiate was closed and the premises of the Institute were occupied by the Major Seminarians from Tore. One year later the Aspirants were taken to Torit, Bro. Matthew Yangadapio was elected Acting Superior General; Bro. Gabriel Ngor was appointed Rector of the Aspirants. After the Kuku incident in Torit, in 1965, they had to flee, as refugees, to Uganda and settled in Agago. Fr. Mattia Bizzarro took care of them, since the place was in his Parish, and erected some shelters for them.

⁴⁰⁷ Diario, Missionari Comboniani Sud Sudan. op. cit., 13 December, 1987.

⁴⁰⁸ St. Martin Brothers' Silver Jubilee, 19 March, 1982, FSSPJ.

In 1966, Fr. David Urasi became the Chief-Rector of the Institute. In 1967 the Novitiate was opened and by the end of 1968, one novice made his first religious profession, followed by others, later on. The situation was very difficult due to the lack of facilities, financial resources and countless others things. The arrival of Fr. Adelmo Spagnolo in 1971 gave the Congregation new hope. He worked hard so that the Congregation could really take root.

In 1971, he called for a Synod in which the Constitutions of the Congregation were revised. It was at this Synod that the name of the Congregation was changed from *Sudanese Teaching Brothers* to *St. Martin's de Porres Brothers*. This was to give a wider scope of activities to the Brothers. The following resolutions were adopted:

The specific aim of the Congregation was Apostolic, through active participation with the Local Church in the field of Apostolate. Therefore, the Brothers would be engaged in:

- a. Religion and Catechetical teaching in Schools and Parishes
- b. Coordinating and animating Catechists in Parishes
- c. Teaching academic subjects and technical trades
- d. Animating Youth Organisation in Parishes and Schools
- e. Social activities, such as caring for the sick, orphans, the handicapped and the aged.
- f. Any manual work: such as building, carpentry and farming.

In 1973 the Novitiate was moved from Patongo to Lukome, eight miles from Gulu town. This was because Patongo, due to its remoteness, could not easily provide the facilities required for formation. They were very thankful to His Lordship Dr. Cyprian Kihangire for having granted them such a favour.

After the signing of the Addis Ababa agreement, they decided it was better to reconstruct their old place in Kit. Bro. Yangadapio and Bro. Ngor were sent to Kit in 1974 to start the work. Sudanaid took on the financing of the project and Bro. Ambrogio Confalonieri and Bro. Ottorino Gelmini did the reconstruction. The then students moved from Patongo to Kit. Since 1975, Fr. Hilary Boma had been assigned to assist them and Fr. Peter Magalasi was giving them spiritual assistance, while Fr. Tito Giuntoli became the Novice Master in Kit.

In 1978 Fr. Spagnolo resigned as their Superior General and an Extraordinary Chapter was held where Rev. Fr. Eugene Otway was elected to serve for three years. Formation continued in Kit also for the Ugandan Novices who had to flee from Uganda in 1979.

The Comboni Commitment with the St. Martin's de Porres Brothers ended in 1987.

Year 1988

The year 1988 started with the opening of the Marian year in Juba and with the consecration of the Sudan to Our Lady. On 24 April 1988, at 9:45 p.m., in Wau, Archbishop Ireneo Dud died after a long illness. The first Sudanese Bishop was buried behind the main altar of the Cathedral of Wau.⁴⁰⁹ A requiem mass was celebrated in Juba, Kator Cathedral, on 29 with the presence of 3 Bishops.

(Brief biography of Archbishop Ireneo Wien Dud ref. Appendix to Part Two, Section One, Chapter Two, point no. 3).

On 17 September 1988, the SPLA attacked Kwörejik. Fr. Bizzarro and Fr. López Toro (who was appointed to this new Parish after the evacuation of Kajo-Kaji) fled just a few metres ahead of the SPLA, who did not shoot at them. However, there was shooting for the whole day and the people fled to Juba. Mines were placed along the road and one bridge was blown up. In Juba, on the following day, a day curfew was imposed on the whole town but, later on, there came an order to lift it for fear that the news of the crisis may be broadcast outside Sudan.

In the middle of October, Fr. Bizzarro and Fr. López Toro left Comboni House in order to take up residence with Fr. Tosello, at the printing press of St. Joseph, which was closer to their displaced people. The situation in Juba was serious, people started going away and there was confusion, panic and fear for lack of food. The UNHCR, on 19 October, issued a letter of evacuation, but the Government forbade it. In any event, some Volunteers of USRATUNA did manage to leave. The Comboni confreres had already made up their mind to stay with the people.

In the second half of October, a UN convoy failed to reach Juba. In the town there was no leadership, people were suffering from hunger and the Church started to help with feeding centres around Juba: a scramble for food began. In the middle of the month, a peaceful demonstration was organized in Juba. The Acting Governor promised food; people were hungry and became violent. The relief operation was complicated by bureaucracy, inefficiency and corruption. A lot of patience was needed everywhere. A beautiful example of sharing was set by the university

⁴⁰⁹ Diario, Missionari Comboniani Sud Sudan. op. cit., at 24 April, 29 April, 1988.

students. For some days they brought their food to the hospital, prison and orphanage.⁴¹⁰

Towards the end of the month, food relief planes from Entebbe, (Uganda) began flying into Juba under the sponsorship of the WFP. Flights would continue until December, 1988. There were also from 4 to 6 flights per day from Khartoum bringing food for merchants and the Government, but food continued to be a very critical issue. Prayers for peace were also organized at ecumenical level in St. Theresa Cathedral, Kator. On 5 November the Association of Women staged a peaceful demonstration against hunger and both communities of Comboni Missionaries and Comboni Sisters decided to hold weekly prayers for peace on Thursday evenings.

Among all these troubles, to end year 1988 with a note of joy for the Church in South Sudan, I want to recall the happy event of the ordination of nine new Priests on Sunday, 18 December: One for Juba, four for Torit and four for Tombura/Yambio, by Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro, assisted by Bishop Erkolano Ladu Tombe.

Year 1989

For the Comboni Missionaries, the year 1989 started with the zone retreat directed by Fr. Joseph Ukelo (2-7 January) and the Juba Zone Assembly (8-11 January) with the attendance of 23 confreres. It came at a very crucial time for the situation of South Sudan and especially of Juba. Soon afterwards, Fr. Giuntoli, Bro. Rossignoli and Bro. Ragnoli, formed a new community and officially took up residence in Lulugu to start a Vocational Training Centre.

On 20 February there was the first shelling of Juba at 11 am, when one bomb fell in the Comboni SS Juba, shattering windows and damaging a lot of iron sheets and the walls of the staff building. Providentially no one was in the building and Fr. Gottardi had already left the chemistry building twenty minutes before the shelling. However, 27 people died and 52 were wounded as a consequence of this shelling and that of the following days.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid. 21 October, 1988.



**9-11 January 1989: Juba zonal Assembly
attendance 23 Confreres**

On 13 March, the school year opened at Muniki Major Seminary. Fr. Caesar Lukudu was the Rector; Fr. James Rondyan the Spiritual Director, and among the newly admitted students from the religious congregations there were:

- 7 candidates of the Apostles of Jesus
- 4 Comboni Postulants, admitted to the philosophy classes as day students.

On 8 April there was the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Fr. Sina's ordination at Comboni House; on the following day there was an archdiocesan celebration with a Holy Mass at 10 a.m. in Kator. Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro, Bishop Erkolano Ladu Tombe, most of the Clergy and many other people from all parts were present at this remarkable event which showed how well known, loved and appreciated Fr. Philip (as people used to call him) was by all the people of Juba Archdiocese. A reception took place at Comboni Secondary School.

On 1 May, there was the declaration of a cease fire as an act of good will by Dr. John Garang, leader of the SPLA/M, calling on the Khartoum Government to fulfil the conditions for eventual peace.

On the same day there was also the arrival of the first cargo plane from the Italian Ambassador, with seven tons of material for both the Archdiocese and the Combonis. The durra was entrusted to CART ⁴¹¹ as agreed. The following day another cargo of durra arrived and on 3 May, 164 drums of fuel from the same Italian Ambassador, were brought and had to be collected by the respective assignees. Given the situation of Juba, this was a real blessing.

Situation in Malakal, Rumbek, Wau, Tombura, Yei and Torit

Malakal: the situation of the town and of the Diocese was very much affected by the SPLA attacks by land and by air. Moreover, considering the huge extent of the Diocese, practically all the places outside the town were under the control of, or besieged by, SPLA forces who were spread everywhere in the rural areas without any chance of being controlled by the Khartoum Government Army. The SPLA had spread to places like Boma, where it had its headquarters, Pochalla, Akobo, Gambela, Nassir and northwards; westwards to Kodok, Tonga, Bentiu and southwards to Leer, Adok and Bor and Pibor. The Comboni Missionaries had already withdrawn from Tonga for security reasons and the Diocese was practically limited to the boundaries of the town.

Rumbek: was no longer viable and the Diocese had to withdraw all the personnel and be served, when possible, from the town of Wau. For the Comboni Missionaries and for the Comboni Apostolic Administrator, Mgr. Giuseppe Pellerino, this was a most excruciating experience. Though he never gave up in looking for ways to carry on with the service to the people of his Diocese, it was clear that the situation had gone beyond the limits of safety. Mgr. Pellerino was trying to cope with the pastoral situation of the Diocese, as much as he could, from Tonj, where he resided almost all the time, but also with a link to Wau. The Wau-Tonj link was not at all safe, even by convoy. In fact, a convoy once came under SPLA attack at the beginning of May 1988 and Mgr. Pellerino was travelling with it: provisionally he came through unhurt.

Wau: this was one of the only four towns, together with Malakal, Juba and Yei where the Khartoum government could still claim to be in complete control. Together with Juba it provided a location for its air force

⁴¹¹ CART (Combined Agencies Relief Team) was established by international and national NGOs based in Juba and as of 1986 shouldered the main responsibility for receiving and allocating a shared pool of relief supplies for Juba.

bases from where military strikes could be organized regularly in all the vast surrounding areas of the western part of the South.

In June, 1987, none of the confreres of Wau, even Fr. Antonio La Braca, who was supposed to be the chairman of the Assembly, could go to Juba for the visit of the Superior General, Fr. Pierli, the Retreat or the Assembly. The same was true for the confreres of Raja, Fr. Polacchini, Fr. Tosello and Fr. De Giorgi. On 24 July, Fr. Mazzolari spoke by radio with Fr. Pacifico who was in Raja: Fr. Pacifico confirmed that, at that time, everything was fine there.

Tombura: this area was generally under control and had no major problems at military level. However, the area was cut off because the road out had to pass through Yei which was totally out of control. On 24 July, in fact, Fr. Mazzolari talked by radio with Fr. Riva who was in Tombura and was supposed to go to Juba. However, Fr. Riva chose not to go to Juba because the Yei-Maridi road was closed due to insecurity.

Yei (Kajo-Kaji): as reported in news flashes, the whole area of Juba was quite unsafe and outside of Government control. Only the town was holding. The rural areas were practically under the control of the SPLA and had to be evacuated. Though all the confreres initially went to Moyo (Northern Uganda), it transpired that, in the end, only Fr. Busellato would remain in Moyo Comboni Community, for the time being, to take care of the refugees had who fled to the area of Pakele/Adjumani. He would not be able to return to Kajo-Kaji until the SPLA captured Yei town in 1998, thus bringing the whole area under SPLA control.

Torit: like Juba it was undergoing more and more frequent attacks in all the surrounding areas and communication by road between Juba and Torit was becoming increasingly difficult. Convoys were regularly the target of the SPLA guerrillas and casualties were often very high, both among the military and civilians. Bishop Taban underwent this shocking experience at the beginning of June 1988; he reached Torit alive, but many other people were killed on the way there.

On 4 October, Bishop Paride sent messages to the OAU and to the UN and Sudanaid in Juba for immediate food relief, medicines and clothes for the displaced people who had escaped to Torit.

On 26 February, 1989, the SPLA captured Torit.⁴¹² Bishop Paride, Fr. John Baptist Lohitu, Fr. Leo Traynor and Fr. John Levachier were there. For weeks their fate was unknown but they were being kept in captivity by

⁴¹² A Concise Chronology of 1989-1999: Ten years of the National Islamic Front, Richard Lobban, Arab Studies Quarterly, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Spring 2001), pp. 115-130

the SPLA. Fr. Renato Kizito Sesana, who was already in contact with Dr. Lam Akol of the SPLA, tried to help resolve the issue. This came about on 7 June with the release of the prisoners. Fr. Sesana went to meet Bishop Paride himself, while Fr. Traynor and Fr. Levachier, after their release from Torit, arrived in Nairobi the following day.

Letter to the expelled confreres in 1960-64

The Provincial Superior, Fr. Cesare Mazzolari, made known to the confreres who had been expelled between 1960-64 that the SCBC (Sudan Catholic Bishops Conference) had decided to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the expulsion of the Expatriate Missionaries and to place the celebration between the feast of Mgr. Daniel Comboni (10 October) and the World Mission Sunday (20 October 1989). The letter was written on the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 15 August, 1989.⁴¹³

Along with remembrance and thanksgiving, this letter was basically a historical summary of the work done by the confreres and subsequent developments. Their great sacrifices were not in vain but, like the grain that dies, they produced abundant fruit and multiplied. Here below I am inserting the main passages:

“At the expulsion of those confreres there was only one Sudanese Bishop (Mgr. Ireneo Dud Wien), while in 1989 there are 7 Dioceses (Juba, Malakal, Wau, Torit and Rumbek, Yambio, Yei and Tombura) with as many Sudanese Bishops, except Rumbek which has got an Italian Comboni Apostolic Administrator.

In 1964, there were 34 Sudanese Priests (some of them abroad); now there are 68 ‘still active’, without including those who, more or less officially, left the Priesthood or those who passed away. This number includes also the Bishops. To them must be added also the 7 Sudanese Priests of the Archdiocese of Khartoum, who are all from the South.

Until 1964 all the Missionaries were Combonis; now, in addition to the Comboni Missionaries, there are several Missionary Institutes, Jesuits, Salesians, Apostles of Jesus, Mill Hill, White Fathers, Maryknoll, Canadian Foreign Missions; Maryknoll Sisters, Carmelite Nuns, Theresian Sisters, Medical Missionaries of Mary, Nostra Famiglia, Lay Missionary Volunteers and Maryknoll Sisters). Some other Missionary Institutes have members only in North Sudan.

⁴¹³ From the "Letter to the expelled confreres in 1960-64", by Fr. Cesare Mazzolari, Comboni Provincial of Southern Sudan, Juba, August 15, 1989.

The Religious Congregations founded before 1964 continue with varying degrees of success and there is no shortage of vocations to the Religious Life. Some of the Sudanese Comboni left while more have come to us. The Vice-Provincial of the Province of South Sudan, Fr. Abel Mödi, is a Sudanese.

As for Parish structures and apostolic activity, there are restrictions due to the civil war. After the forced confinement of about one hundred days of Mgr. Pellerino and Fr. Cefalo of Rumbek, the centre was abandoned and Mgr. Pellerino serves it, as best he can, from Tonj, where he mostly resides. Also abandoned are Kajo-Kaji, Kwörejik, Terakeka (Tali) and Rokon. The same thing has happened to almost all the Parishes outside of the centres, served by Sudanese Priests (all the Parishes of Torit, Yei, Rumbek, Wau and Malakal).

The one exception is the Diocese of Tombora-Yambio, where Sudanese Priests are present in all the older Parishes, while Nzara and Tombura are entrusted to the Comboni Missionaries. The Zande area did not suffer from activities of the SPLA, but had to endure isolation from both Juba and Zaire.

There are also positive aspects to be highlighted. One can say that the majority of Southern Sudanese people consider themselves as Christians or sympathizer of Christianity. The old Christians show a solid and mature faith. Young people, for their part, show great interest in the knowledge and active participation in the life of the Church. At the moment this is especially evident in the towns, where the Church can carry out its activities more liberally.

The Sudanese Bishops are giving a shining example of zeal and of sacrifice (like the Bishops of Torit, Wau, Malakal, and our Mgr. Pellerino) and also of wise spiritual guidance. Outstanding among these is Archbishop Gabriel Zubeir Wako of Khartoum with his courageous and timely interventions, as well as the Archbishop, Paolino Lukudu Loro for his leadership in the 'Peace Committee' and the Bishops Paride Taban and Mgr. Nyekindi with their testimony of life."

We can say that now we have gone through the whole situation and are aware of its status in August 1989. Thus, almost at the end of Fr. Mazzolari's Administration, we have a pretty clear idea of how difficult it was to carry out pastoral and missionary work in South Sudan. Only the dedication coming from the spirit of Daniel Comboni and the example of so many confreres who worked, were expelled or even gave their lives in the

exercise of their mission, provided the inspiration to continue with such generous dedication.

Some hints on the SPLA guerrilla situation-1988-1989

With all this uncertainty in the pastoral and evangelization programmes because of war and insecurity, it may be useful to explain briefly how the real situation within the SPLA/M guerrilla movement was and its real ability to take and hold positions it captured from the Khartoum Government just before year 1990. During that time, the SPLA launched its **Bright Star Campaign** which really shook the Khartoum government.

*“In July 1988, the rejuvenated SPLA assembled a huge force code-named ‘Bright Star Campaign’, and launched it against the Sudan government army. ‘Bright Star Campaign’ was to take the war to Equatoria, an area which had not seriously felt the SPLA presence, except for guerrilla groups sent there earlier. The aim this time was to take Kapoeta and Torit and the countryside. If these towns were successfully overrun, the war would then proceed to lay siege around Juba city.”*⁴¹⁴

The SPLA made a plan to confuse the Khartoum army and divert its attention from the main targets on the east bank of the Nile. The SPLA **Infijaar Battalion** occupied Jebel Ladu, 15 miles north of Juba and started shelling continually Juba airport and other installations in the town.

“Expecting more attacks upon the city, the army started to dig in. The SPLA’s objective to tie down the troops inside Juba city was accomplished when the government ordered one brigade of troops that was supposed to relieve Torit back to defend Juba. Continuous shelling of Juba city was maintained for three months. Work on Kapoeta and Torit was vividly maintained. When these two towns were captured, the ‘Infijaar’ forces were divided up into Malek, Kon Anok, Shambe, Bahr al-Naam and Deng Nhial task Forces. The Deng Nhial Task Force was ordered to bypass Rumbek and headed for Tonj, putting the enemy into panic, as it thought this was an attempt to link up Tonj with Bahr al Ghazal.

*The Deng Nhial task force was particularly for politicisation and recruitment mission on Tonj, the hometown of one of the earlier leaders of the liberation struggle, the late William Deng Nhial.”*⁴¹⁵

⁴¹⁴ Arop Madut-Arop, Sudan’s painful road to peace, op. cit., pp. 213 & ff.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid. pp. 213-214

The remaining forces went to other places like Yirol and Bahr al Naam in the Rumbek area to await a possible attack and to Shambe to cut off the Shambe river port from any steamers coming from Malakal. The Malek task force overran Mangala and Gemeisa, and linked up with the Infijaar Brigade waiting for orders to move to Bor.

Kapoeta fell on 26 February, 1989 and a number of places from Kiyala to Magwi were overrun leaving Torit isolated and in March it was captured. Nimule was also captured a short time later with a disguised attack. Within three months the whole Eastern Equatoria was seized by SPLA to the great humiliation of Khartoum.

“This humiliation was also responsible for the military ultimatum signed by 300 senior military officers addressed to Sadig al-Mahdi’s government to either equip the army to enable it to face the rebel offensive, or accept the peace overture under the ‘Koka Dam Declaration’ and the DUP-SPLA peace accord of 1988.

...Bor town was captured in May 1989 (six years after battalion 105 was dislodged in 1983 by government forces). It was expected that the SPLA, having taken Bor, should have continued the momentum it had gained since the beginning of the year. This move, many believed, would have at best enabled SPLA forces to take over the entire War Zone One (South Sudan). SPLA would have then turned around to face War Zone Two (Northern Sudan). But the SPLA decided to declare a unilateral cease-fire, thereby losing that momentum. Essentially many people had expected that keeping up the momentum, the SPLA Bright Star Campaign would have moved swiftly to liberate Western Equatoria which was a possible easy target.”⁴¹⁶

With a situation like this, one can imagine how difficult it was to make pastoral or missionary plans. Despite the zealous desire of the Provincial, his Council and the confreres to expand the work, all their hopes were becoming more and more unattainable.

Election of the New Provincial

In the middle of all the different troubles, the time for new elections had come and Fr. Cesare Mazzolari, as required by the Comboni Rule of Life, had the duty to see they were carried out. Notwithstanding the generally difficult situation, everything went ahead and Fr. Abel Mödi Nyörkö, a Sudanese Radical Member, was elected the new Provincial Superior of the

⁴¹⁶ Ibid. pp. 214-215

Province of South Sudan. Actually, he was the first African Provincial Superior of the whole African Continent where the Comboni Missionaries were present.

All in all, one has to say that the double term of office of Fr. Mazzolari witnessed the gradual growth of the Delegation into a Province that was gradually growing despite innumerable difficulties and concerns for the work of evangelization, in many ways endangered by war, insecurity and political problems, while the confreres, selflessly dedicated to evangelization, were themselves under threat.

He experienced the protection of God in so many different situations that one should conclude with a *Te Deum* (We praise you O God...) to God for his guidance of the Province, through the Holy Spirit, during his time, in a way that could only be seen termed *miraculous*, since all confreres safely reached the close of December, 1989.

Fr. Mazzolari ended his second term of office on the 31 December, 1989, and Fr. Abel Mödi Nyörkö took over on 1 January, 1990. After a short time, Fr. Mazzolari was appointed Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Rumbek and took up this new office replacing Mgr. Pellerino who had resigned.



Comboni House Chapel: Fr. C. Mazzolari handing over to Fr. Abel Mödi

CHAPTER THREE

THE CIRCUMSCRIPTION

From 1990 to 1994

Provincial Superior:

Fr. ABEL MÖDI NYÖRKÖ

South Sudan Province: New Elections 1990

On the occasion of the change of leadership in the Province, the Superior General, Fr. Francesco Pierli, had words of deep gratitude for what Fr. Cesare Mazzolari accomplished during his years as Provincial Superior of the Province of South Sudan. Fr. Abel Mödi Nyörkö was elected Provincial Superior, Fr. Todd Michael Riebe became his Vice-Superior and Fr. Eugenio Caligari, Bro. Giuseppe Redaelli and Fr. Vittorino Dellagiacoma became his Councillors.⁴¹⁷

Handing over the office of the Provincial

On 1 January, 1990, during the prayer service celebrating the handing over of the South Sudan Province by Fr. Cesare Mazzolari to Fr. Abel Mödi Nyörkö, the Diary on the date says, *Congratulations and God's blessings*

⁴¹⁷ Comboni House, Juba, 1 July, 1989, to Fr. Alois Eder, (Rome), Results of the Opinion Poll for the election of the Provincial Superior, ACR 635/2.

- Rome, 11 October, 1989, appointment of Fr. Francis Abel Mödi as Provincial of South Sudan, ACR 635/2.

- Comboni House, Juba, 6 December, 1989, Provincial Councillors' votes, ACR 635/2.

- Rome, 10 March, 1990, confirm election of Fr. Todd Michael Riebe as Vice Provincial Superior of South Sudan, ACR 635/2.

on you, Fr. Abel Mödi, for your ministry as 'THE FIRST AFRICAN' COMBONI PROVINCIAL in the history of the MCCJ's! God speed!⁴¹⁸

Surely congratulations were indeed very appropriate since the Sudan, and especially the South, with this choice was once more showing that the dream of the Founder, Mgr. Daniel Comboni, had come true, not only in regard to the Local Church Hierarchy, but also in the leadership of the Comboni Missionary Province. One could say that the Founder's dream was now complete. As for the asking the blessings of God on him, given the situation of complete disarray of the country in the South, he really needed *all the possible blessings of God*, so challenging was the task he faced.

If the situation had gone from bad to worse during Fr. Mazzolari's time, during that of Fr. Mödi it would reach its peak of disarray and he surely had to rely only on faith in God and his guidance amongst the difficulties prevalent in all corners of the Province. In the environment of Juba, the escalation of the war and insecurity and their consequences in the work of evangelization, of pastoral commitment and of formation of candidates, was particularly felt. Many thousands of displaced people looked to the Catholic Church and the Comboni Missionaries for some relief from their sufferings as they lacked all human and spiritual support.

The term of office of Fr. Abel Mödi Nyörkö will be certainly remembered as the most difficult period for the Circumscription from the time of Fr. Raffaele Cefalo to that of Fr. Daniele Moschetti in 2016.

Comboni personnel and Communities on 1 January, 1990⁴¹⁹

- Provincial Superior: **Fr. Francis Abel Mödi Nyörkö** (1 January, 1990)
- Provincial Councillors:
 - Fr. Todd Riebe, Vice-Prov.**
 - Fr. Eugenio Caligari**
 - Bro. Giuseppe Redaelli**
 - Fr. Vittorino Dellagiacomma**
- Provincial Bursar/Procurator: **Bro. Hans Dieter Ritterbecks**
- Secretary of Formation/ Missionary Animation: **Fr. Todd Riebe**
- Secretary of Evangelization: **Fr. Vittorino Dellagiacomma**
- On-going Formation: **Fr. Salvatore Coppo**
- Comboni personnel: Bishops **3**, Priests **35**, Brothers **10**, Postulants **5**

⁴¹⁸ Diario, Missionari Comboniani Sud Sudan, op. cit., day 1 January, 1990.

⁴¹⁹ Annuario Comboniano, op. cit., updated 1 January 1990.

- Provincial Bulletin: **Comboni Southern Sudan**
- Languages Spoken in the Province: **Arabic, Bari, Dinka, English, Jur, Kresh, Madi, Nuer, Shilluk, and Zande.**
- Dioceses where present:
 1. Juba: Juba 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, Terakeka,
 2. Rumbek: Rumbek
 3. Tombura: Nzara, Tombura
 4. Torit: Torit
 5. Wau: Raja, Wau

Juba

Juba (1) Bishop's House

H. G. Paolino Lukudu Loro

Juba (2) Provincial House, opened on 10 October, 1981.

Mgr. Agostino Baroni

Fr. Francis Abel Mödi Nyörkö

Fr. Tito Giuntoli

Fr. Gaetano Gottardi

Fr. Alfredo Mattevi

Fr. Todd M. Riebe

Bro. Augusto Bazzanella

Bro. Domenico Cariolato

Bro. Francesco Ragnoli

Bro. Libero Francesco Ribelli

Bro. Hans Dieter Ritterbecks

Bro. Mario Rossignoli

Juba (3) Postulancy, opened in 1986.

Fr. Jesus Aranda Nava José

Fr. Giovanni Ferrazin

Juba (4) St. Paul National Seminary,

Fr. Mario Cisternino

Fr. Salvatore Coppo

Fr. Vittorino Dellagiacoma

Bro. Ottorino Gelmini

Juba (5) St. Kizito Parish, opened in 1988.

Fr. Felice Sciannameo

Fr. Ottorino Filippo Sina

Terakeka Parish, (Kadulè), founded in 1952.

Fr. Mattia Bizzarro

Fr. Ignacio López Toro

Wau

Wau Parish founded in 1905.

Fr. Agostino Bertolotti

Fr. Antonio La Braca

Fr. Luigi Penzo

Fr. Lorenzo Tomasoni

Bro. Giuseppe Redaelli

Raja Parish founded in January 1935.

Fr. Nicola Lo Polito

Fr. Salvatore Pacifico

Fr. Alfonso Polacchini

Bro. Ambrogio Confalonieri

Tombura /Yambio

Nzara Parish founded on 31 October, 1951; re-opened in 1971.

Fr. Igino Benini

Fr. Eugenio Caligari

Fr. Luigi Parisi

Bro. Valentino Fabris

Tombura Parish founded in July 1950.

Maringindo Parish: founded in 1950, assisted from Tombura.

Fr. Raymond Pax

Fr. Pietro Ravasio

Fr. Mario Riva

Rumbek - Bishop's House, founded in 1953, re-opened in 1978.

Mgr. Cesare Mazzolari

Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino

Torit

Torit Parish founded in September 1958.

Fr. José Oscar López Flores

Fr. Joseph Ukelo, Episcopal Vicar

Awaiting assignment

Fr. Albino Adot Oryem

Fr. Ettore Ayon

Fr. Elvio Cellana

Fr. Erminio Tanel

Fr. Gino Tosello

Members of the Province

Bishops

1. Agostino Baroni,
2. Paolino Lukudu Loro
3. Cesare Mazzolari
(Apostolic Administrator)

Fathers

4. Albino Adot Oryem
5. Jesus Aranda Nava José
6. Hector Ayon
7. Iginio Benini
8. Agostino Bertolotti
9. Mattia Bizzarro
10. Eugenio Caligari
11. Elvio Cellana
12. Mario Cisternino
13. Salvatore Coppo
14. Vittorino Dellagiacoma
15. Giovanni Ferrazin
16. José Flores López Oscar
17. Tito Giuntoli
18. Gaetano Gottardi
19. Antonio La Braca
20. Ignacio López Toro
21. Nicola Lo Polito
22. Alfredo Mattevi
23. Abel Mödi Nyörkö

24. Salvatore Pacifico
25. Luigi Parisi
26. Raymond Pax
27. Giuseppe Pellerino
28. Luigi Penzo
29. Alfonso Polacchini
30. Pietro Ravasio
31. Todd Michael Riebe
32. Mario Riva
33. Felice Sciannameo
34. Ottorino Filippo Sina
35. Erminio Tanel
36. Lorenzo Tomasoni
37. Gino Tosello
38. Joseph Ukelo

Brothers

39. Augusto Bazzanella
40. Domenico Cariolato
41. Ambrogio Confalonieri
42. Valentino Fabris
43. Ottorino Gelmini
44. Francesco Ragnoli
45. Giuseppe Redaelli
46. Libero Francesco Ribelli
47. Hans Dieter Ritterbecks
48. Mario Rossignoli

Visit of Bro. Giuseppe Menegotto

At the end of 1989, there was the visit to Sudan and to the South by Bro. Giuseppe Menegotto, a General Councillor, from 31 December, 1989 to 27 January, 1990.⁴²⁰ The report of this visit, specifically for the South, which lasted from 10 to 22 January, is quite meaningful because it took place at a crucial moment in the situation of South Sudan and especially of Juba town.

⁴²⁰ Rome, 8 March, 1990, Bro. G. Menegotto, Report on the visit to South Sudan from 31 December, 1989 to 27 January, 1990, ACR 635/4.

The purpose of the visit was primarily a gesture of solidarity towards a Province tested very much by years of guerrilla warfare and where the communities were often isolated. The intention was to have three Assemblies, one in Juba, one in Wau and one in Nzara. The topic was to be that of the community, according to the reflection contained in the letter of the General Council on the *Values of the Kingdom and integral liberation of man*. Only in Juba was it possible to have such a meeting. Unfortunately, the time of the meeting coincided with the end of the cease-fire and the beginning of hostilities.

It was not possible to visit Nzara because the flights from Juba were cancelled after the attack on Yei by the SPLA. The visit to Wau had also to be cancelled because of the overwhelming difficulties in obtaining residence permits and flights.

Just to convey some idea of the difficulties: Bro. Menegotto, coming from Khartoum, had to wait for 10 days to get permission to go to Juba and then had to wait for the one weekly flight authorized to carry passengers. The overall situation was one of great uncertainty and always changing, making it impossible to make any real programme. Nevertheless, from 10 to 22 January he was able to pay a short visit to the communities in Juba, to spend a couple of days at an Assembly with all the confreres present in Juba, hold a brief encounter with the Brothers, attend a meeting with the Comboni Sisters, visit the Postulancy and the Technical School (Vocational School) of Lulugu and, finally, to meet with Archbishop Paolino Lukudu on 20 January.

Some days after the cease-fire ended, the Government army, at certain times of the day, started carrying out artillery attacks from Juba on the surrounding area. In reply, the SPLA shelled Juba with Katiusha rockets for about an hour, causing 6 deaths (15 according to the BBC), many wounded and great panic. Some days previously, the SPLA had intensified its appeals on the radio for civilians to leave Juba since, they said, their final attack on the city was imminent.

The situation in January 1990: Bro. Menegotto found that the confreres were engaged in their work with serenity: pastoral commitments, refugees, school etc., despite knowing they were being isolated and unable to leave Juba, except by air and only after a long wait. The situation was rapidly deteriorating. On one side there was a euphoric climate due to the continuing successes of the SPLA (conquest of Kajo Kaji, Frage, Kaya, Morobo, Yei encirclement) but at the same time there was great concern as the SPLA approached closer and closer to Juba in increasing strength, broadcasting incessant appeals to leave the city.

The words were followed by facts with the shelling of the city on 21, 25 and 27 January. Foreigners were able to flee from Juba. For the 300,000 people who could not leave, it was a tragedy since the Government prevented them from doing so. They had to survive with very little food and under the threat of a full-scale attack by the SPLA.

Deciding whether to stay or leave Juba was rather difficult. The letter from the Superior General, Fr. Pierli, to Fr. Mazzolari on 23 September, 1989, was read in order to help the confreres in case the situation should further deteriorate and compel the Provincial Council to come to final decision because of the intensification of the bombing. It was hard to predict what would happen and whether Juba itself was the immediate goal of the SPLA. However, one could not see, at that moment, how the situation could improve. Many prayers were offered to God, through the intercession of Bishop Comboni, even pleading for a miracle.

Regarding the point of reflection on *the values of the Kingdom*, groups were formed to reply to the questionnaire on the Kingdom of God and the Comboni community. The point that got everyone involved, the hottest topic for debate, was that of the Kingdom of God, charity, justice and peace, a subject quite obvious for Juba. It was said to be interesting to have it in written form, given the intensity with which all this was experienced as a sign of the absence of the Kingdom. In particular, it related to Islamic fundamentalism that so caused and continued to cause so many evils to the country of Sudan.

At the end of the meeting Bro. Menegotto expressed the appreciation and solidarity of the General Council for the attachment to the mission, the spirit of sacrifice, the apostolic zeal, the patience and the participation of the confreres in the painful situation of the people whose life and security were at stake. He also expressed the concern of the General Council at the continuation of this situation of uncertainty which was already expressed in the letter of the Superior General to Fr. Mazzolari on 23 September, 1989, with clear indications in the case of the outbreak of war. A particular recommendation was made to acknowledge and reflect on the Pan-African Assembly of Evangelization.

Lulugu project: Among the various commitments in the Archdiocese of Juba there was the issue of Lulugu Vocational School. The question was not so much the project in itself, which everybody was in favour of, but the matter of personnel and the way of running it. The Archbishop made it very clear that without the presence of the Combonis the project would be closed. Moreover, concerning the Brothers, the General Council was suggesting that, given the extreme poverty of the country, projects of

human development with the engagement of the Brothers, should be promoted, such as agricultural projects. The Lulugu programmes would, therefore, also be included. The situation of insecurity made the lack of personnel even more difficult to resolve.

Comboni Pre-Postulancy and Postulancy: this formative stage was divided into two stages: Pre-Postulancy and Postulancy. At the time, the formators were Fr. Jesús Aranda (full time) and Fr. Giovanni Ferrazin who was helping considerably, although he had also other duties. There were six candidates for the Priesthood, one of whom was in Ongata Rongai, (Kenya) and five in Juba. There were two candidates to the Brotherhood, one of whom was in Ongata Rongai and one in Juba. A candidate for the Priesthood was preparing to enter the Novitiate that same year, 1990. The outlook was good for both commitments for Postulants and for Vocation Promotion in general.

There was an increase of young people seeking to enter the Comboni Postulancy, so Bro. Mario Rossignoli was asked to accompany and prepare these young people. As for the preparation of the candidates to the Brotherhood, in Juba there were no opportunities for technical subjects, so they would be sent to Kenya for the Postulancy.

As a result of the shelling, the siege was ever more pressing and the probability of an attack by the SPLA higher. This was the situation of staff on 30 January, 1990, after several confreres departed from Juba:

In Nairobi: Bro. Gelmini, Fr. Gottardi, Fr. Dellagiacoma, Bro. Libero Ribelli, Bro. Bazzanella, Fr. Giuntoli, Fr. López Toro (for medical treatment).

In Cairo: Fr. Coppo.

In Italy: Fr. Caligari, Bro. Cariolato, Fr. Ferrazin, Fr. Sciannameo, Fr. Mattevi and Fr. Sina.

In Juba: Fr. Mödi, Fr. Riebe, Fr. Bizzarro, Fr. Aranda, Bro. Ragnoli, Bro. Mario Rossignoli, Bro. Ritterbecks.

Even though the situation was extremely difficult in Juba, the confreres involved in the various commitments, together also with the Comboni Sisters in the Comboni Secondary School, continued their work with great dedication in the pastoral and educational fields, in human promotion, Comboni formation, in the Diocesan Seminary and in relief work.

Proposed Procure in Khartoum

The Provincial Superior, Fr. Mödi, his Council and the confreres strongly felt the need, even the necessity of a community in Khartoum

which would function as a Procure for the Province of South Sudan. On this topic, the former Provincial, Fr. Mazzolari, had already presented a proposal to the General Council. However, the price seemed rather high and the legal aspect needed to be studied well, given the circumstances of the time. The decision was left pending. What was becoming clear was the lack of communication between the two Provinces of Khartoum and South Sudan and that a better reciprocal communion would have benefited both of them.

Going back to the issue of the house in Khartoum for the South Sudan Province, together with the matter of the procure, a strong reason for having it, in fact, was that it would have helped in following up the confreres in the area of Wau Diocese (Wau and Raja) and those of Tombura Diocese (Nzara, Tombura and Maringindu) when permits and flights were available from the capital city. Without it, it was felt that the Province would not be able to carry out its task. However, the Superior General and his Council were of a different opinion and the final decision was that the South would use the Khartoum Province facilities for this purpose.

This was a big blow to the whole South Sudan Province, but in particular to the newly elected Provincial Superior, Fr. Mödi, who did not welcome the decision, feeling he was being personally ignored since the issue had been there with the previous Administration. In any case, Khartoum Province offered its logistics to enable the *besieged* South Sudan Province to carry out its mandate out of Juba.

The fact was that the only meeting of Bro. Menegotto was the one in Juba; all the other areas of South Sudan remained without any possibility of sharing their issues and concerns, except by mail. Only Fr. Caligari was present in Juba, being one of the Provincial Councillors, but then he could not go back to Nzara anymore.

The Juba meeting heightened the impression that all the rest of South Sudan was on its own, totally isolated from the centre of the Province. Moreover, cases of single confreres in the missions could not be followed from Juba. For instance, there was the issue of Fr. Mario Riva who, according to Fr. Mödi, should have remained in Tombura, while Fr. Ravasio thought he should either have left Sudan through Yambio and Zaire, or continued his work in Maringindu. At that time, the news reached Juba about Father Mario Riva being seriously ill. He was brought from Maringindu to Tombura after a heart attack and suffering from malaria. It was planned to take him to Nairobi, but that was not impossible. Later on it was learned that he recovered and returned to Maringindu.

Difficult task of Fr. Abel Mödi Nyörkö

As already noted, Fr. Abel Mödi had both the honour and the arduous task of taking up his term of office when everything in South Sudan seemed to be crumbling under the weight of events. At the same time, he could not be sure when the final stage would come. He was besieged in Juba. He had to travel to Khartoum whenever he planned to visit the communities of Raja and Wau, with no certainty of being able to get a permit or find a flight to reach them. As a matter of fact, as would be revealed in the report to the General Chapter of 1991, the last visit to these two communities was in 1989. Many visits had to be postponed, or suspended even at the last moment, or when Fr. Modi had already set out. It was a very stressful situation.

While the former Delegation and Provincial Superiors were actively looking forward to the implementation of evangelization programmes and to improving the service of the Province towards the people and confreres, at the time of Fr. Mödi there were long periods of stagnation which did no good for morale and produced little by way of results. Moreover, in the so called *Government Controlled Areas* there were no real plans for future development, except that of keeping control of places. Instead, in the so-called *Liberated Areas* controlled by the SPLA/M, new horizons started opening for an evangelizing commitment which were not visible before.

While some Comboni personnel had to move, as we have already seen, due to the high degree of risk and insecurity, Mgr. Paride Taban, Bishop of Torit, in 1989 started asking the General Council for personnel for a specific commitment in his own Diocese.⁴²¹ This was a very good proposal to take care of the people in the rural SPLA/M areas, but, for Fr. Mödi, it would be a new source of concern because it would have meant losing even more personnel in the Government Areas, which were already below the required number.

Moreover, Fr. José Oscar Flores López, coming from Mexico and with experience in Karamoja, Northern Uganda,⁴²² had already been appointed to Torit in 1989 together with Fr. Ignacio López Toro who had been in Terakeka with Fr. Mattia Bizzarro until 1989, when the SPLA captured it, and carried on taking care of the Mundari people in Juba. These two were the first to be appointed to the so-called *Liberated Areas*. Their juridical status, however, was not yet defined: we will return to this issue later on.

⁴²¹ Ref. Fr. E. Caligari, "Cronistoria", Mccj Bulletin no. 172, October, 1991, p. 11-14.

⁴²² Fr. José Oscar Flores Lopez, born 27 May, 1934, ordained in 1959, Mexico.

It is also good to recall how things developed after Bishop Paride was freed from captivity by the SPLA. A sort of relationship with the guerrilla movement began to take shape. In those circumstances, Fr. Mödi, in a certain sense, had to endure events beyond his control even as Provincial Superior of the South Sudan Province, since he had to deal not only with the confreres who were in the Government Controlled Areas, but also with the others, though it implied adopting new approaches, with the ever-present fear that the Khartoum Government might take retaliatory action against the Comboni Missionaries working in its territories.

The South Sudan Province and its situation in 1990

We may well ask about the concrete reality in 1990 and what kind of freedom there was to work there, starting from the beginning of the year. The following made up the personnel in Juba on 30 January, 1990: Fr. Mödi, Fr. Riebe, Fr. Bizzarro, Fr. Aranda, Bro. Ragnoli, Bro. Mario Rossignoli and Bro. Ritterbecks. Other the confreres were either in Nairobi, Cairo or Italy. Fr. Sina, Fr. Gottardi, Fr. Mattevi, Fr. Dellagiacomma and Bro. Bazzanella would go back to Juba, but the rest did not. This was a great handicap for the commitments in Juba. The Postulancy had to be moved to Khartoum, since St. Paul Major Seminary was transferred there as well.

The confreres in Wau were carrying on with their life and pastoral activities, restricted to the town environment. Fr. Lorenzo Tomasoni, a medical doctor, was carrying out his medical activity in the clinics of the Diocese; Fr. Penzo was taking care of the PALICA and Fr. Agostino Bertolotti was made Parish Priest of the Cathedral. Fr. La Braca, after leaving the commitment with Mgr. Pellerino, was following up a particular experience of evangelization in Loko-Loko, near Wau, and Bro. Redaelli was fully committed as *Development Coordinator*, while also helping in the administration of the Diocese.

As for Raja, since 1987, the mission had suffered the pressure of Arabic elements bound together with political, military, police and trading links, trying to disturb Catholic activity as much as possible and reduce the ground given to such a small area that would make any development at pastoral and educational level impossible. Even Fr. Parladé was expelled for documentation reasons. However, because of the Catholic environment, the authorities could not pressurize the situation further. Nobody thought the SPLA would arrive there, and that the Government would never have

allowed the only way of communication with the South to be captured, instead, the SPLA did reach Raja, though they could not hold it.

Nzara, instead, though very much isolated from the rest of the country, could carry on its evangelizing and educational programme, since Western Equatoria was not so badly affected by the war and life continued with a degree of regularity. In fact, it was to be the last part of Southern Sudan to be captured by the SPLA/M. Regarding Malakal Diocese, all the commitments were dropped and the Church Personnel were also confined within the boundaries of the town.

There is also a comment to be made on the personnel noted in the *Annuario Comboniano* of 1 January, 1990, which certainly is very much connected with the deterioration of security, especially in Juba. For the Postulancy (Juba 3) and the personnel teaching in St. Paul's Major Seminary (Juba 4), there were changes since the SCBC intended to shift the Major Seminary to Khartoum and with it, also the Comboni Postulancy for study reasons. St. Kizito Parish, opened in 1988, would continue its pastoral activity normally.

Terakeka was closed and the Fathers were taking care of the displaced Mundari people in Juba from St. Joseph's Parish. Rumbek Diocese was only nominal and was served from Wau, with the hard job of finding a way to take care of it. In the case of Torit, instead, two new names appeared: Fr. José Oscar López Flores and Fr. Joseph Ukelo as Episcopal Vicar; Fr. Ignacio López Toro would also join them.

Meanwhile, the Superior General and his Council were still studying how to reach a positive solution to the issue of the Comboni Missionary commitments in both Government and SPLA/M areas, seeking advice also from other Bishops and from the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (SCEP) in Rome. All of them recommended taking up the commitments in the SPLA-controlled areas in order to take care of the Sudanese people who could not be reached from areas controlled by the Government.

Consequently, a *modus operandi* had to be found, a practical way of relating within the Province of South Sudan which could be viable and simple and conducive to a good set-up, one that would allow enough freedom of work in the juridical context of the Province. Moreover, it had to work in such a way as not to give the Khartoum Government any pretext to punish the confreres working in its areas. This was the fear of the Bishops within Sudan, of the Provincial, Fr. Mödi, of the confreres and even of Mgr. Mazzolari, in regard to Rumbek Diocese.

SPLA captures Western Equatoria

The unilateral SPLA cease-fire of May 1989, gave the Khartoum Army time to reorganize itself and put together a huge force for a dry season offensive code-named *Al-Jundi al-Wattan al-Wahed* or *The soldier of one nation* which became operative in February 1990 and was able to neutralise the SPLA victories of the previous eight months and frustrate other possible SPLA achievements.

“However, although these reverses had apparently weakened the SPLA in a military sense, it did not in the main halt the SPLA from completing the mission of the ‘Bright Star Campaign.’ Instead it made the Government army forget about controlling the whole South and concentrate its efforts in defending strategic towns like Yei, Kurmuk and Geissan, Juba, Wau, Malakal, Bentiu, Kodok, Renk and Aweil on the railway line between Wau and Northern Sudan.

However, despite the threat posed by the invigorated Sudan army and the new government decision to declare a unilateral cease-fire and the invitation to discuss ways and means of ending the war, the SPLA had continued preparing for the next dry season offensive, to liberate Western Equatoria. This was the ‘Bright Star Campaign phase II.’ Throughout the rainy months of June, July, August and September (1989), the SPLA, having held on to Eastern Equatoria, assembled a huge force for the final push to Western Equatoria. The Bright Star final phase was very crucial for the SPLA to occupy the whole of Equatoria in its liberation process because Equatoria borders with the five African countries of Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Congo and Central African Republic.

*Controlling Equatoria would therefore frustrate Khartoum’s plan of ferrying troops to the neighbouring countries to attack the SPLA from the rear. Equatoria also had warrior tribes whose enlistment would provide the forces it needed for the SPLA. ... The Bright Star Campaign final phase went into action in the beginning of 1990. Moving from its rear base in Nimule area, the main SPLA ‘Intisar’ Brigade under the direct command of Colonel John Garang and deputised by commanders Oyai Deng Ajak, James Oath, Bior Ajaang and Obote Mamur Mete, crossed the Nile and stormed Kajo-Kaji. It swiftly moved and took the strategic border of Kaya, where the Sudan, Congo and Uganda join.”*⁴²³

⁴²³ Arop Madut-Arop, op. cit. p. 219-220

From this point onwards it was a series of swift successes. Towns like Morobo, Lasu, Tore, Ras Aulu and Laiyna fell into the hands of the SPLA who avoided Yei which had just been reinforced by the Government and went on to capture Mundri and Amadi. Shelling commenced on Rokon post (40 miles north-west of Juba), alarming Juba and raising fears of a new attack by the SPLA on the city.

By April 1990 the *Bright Star Campaign* had captured Yambio, the Provincial headquarters of Western Equatoria, without any serious resistance. The government attempt to rescue Yambio from Nzara, 12 miles away failed and Nzara was also captured. The SPLA proceeded on its way up to Ezo and Tombura, as far as the Central African Republic border. The SPLA then went back to Mundri and captured it after a fierce fight.

In this way, in just four months, the *Bright Star Campaign* took almost the whole of Equatoria and, throughout the middle of 1990, the SPLA strengthened its siege around Juba city, giving the Government a strong signal that Juba was the next target. However, in Ethiopia, Mengistu Haile Mariam's government was getting deeper and deeper into trouble and in danger of falling. This would have badly affected badly the SPLA situation and support.

These latest military events in Western Equatoria were a real set-back for the South Sudan Province. Church personnel and many civilians fled to Congo or to the Central African Republic. The Comboni communities of Nzara and Tombura also fled to the Central African Republic, suddenly and with no preparation, having tried to remain as long as possible in their posts, and having lost all their vehicles and property. From there, confreres and Sisters had to find their way to their respective countries, mainly to Italy. Some tried to remain there for some time at the service of the refugees who had fled from Western Equatoria.

The confreres concerned were: Fr. Igino Benini, Fr. Eugenio Caligari, Fr. Luigi Parisi, Bro. Valentino Fabris, Fr. Raymond Pax, Fr. Pietro Ravasio and Fr. Mario Riva. All of them had to wait patiently for new orders from the Major Superiors in Rome, without knowing how the situation would develop or when and how it would be possible to return. Bishop Joseph Gasi Abangite, at that precise time, was in Khartoum and followed the situation from there without any means of intervening effectively in the situation.

Fr. Mödi, Provincial of the South Sudan Province, found himself abruptly with two communities less in the geography of the Comboni Province. Those remaining were the communities in Wau and Raja with Mgr. Cesare Mazzolari (Apostolic Administrator of Rumbek) and Fr.

Pellerino for Rumbek itself. Altogether, this was another big blow to the situation of the Province in the Government Controlled Areas.

The “New Sudan Group”⁴²⁴

in relation to the Province of South Sudan

The Institution: 1 July, 1990

The *New Sudan Group*⁴²⁵ was set up to start on 1 July, 1990,⁴²⁶ by the Superior General, Fr. Francesco Pierli and his Council,⁴²⁷ in the General Consulta which took place in Rome from 14 June to 7 July, 1990⁴²⁸. Since, at the time, the Provincial Superior of the *Province of South Sudan*, Fr. Abel Mödi, was also in Rome,⁴²⁹ it was a good opportunity for serious discernment on the issue.

The Group, though belonging juridically to the South Sudan Province in everything, from the assignment of personnel to the Provincial election, with Fr. Mödi as the Provincial Superior, had to have a juridical set-up to allow work to be done in the non-government areas under the SPLA/M (army/movement) control, without being hindered by the impossibility of contacts or communications with the Provincial, cut off in the government environment and situations.

⁴²⁴ A missionary experience in a context of war, Fr. Francesco Chemello Odiongo Gatwic, mcej, Comboni Missionaries South Sudan Province, Juba, Fondazione Nigrizia Onlus 2016, pp. 11-12.

⁴²⁵ “**NEW SUDAN GROUP**” is the title of the group belonging to the “Province of South Sudan.”

⁴²⁶ The letter of Fr. Milani dated 20 July, 1990 gives the official news of the creation of the “**NEW SUDAN GROUP**.”

⁴²⁷ (*In Italian*) - Rome 20 July, 1990 = Fr. Venanzio Milani, Object: Group of Torit Diocese – To the Confreres Fr. Caligari,....

"I. With this addressed to each one of you, in the name of the General Council, further to what has already been briefly published in Familia Comboniana, July/August, 1990 (p. 5), I inform you that you have been assigned to the Diocese of Torit for the service of the missions of 8 and Loa." "As a group you depend on the General Council."

⁴²⁸ The group of the “**NEW SUDAN**” was approved in the Consulta which took place in Rome from 14 June to 7 July, 1990. Fr. Venanzio Milani was charged with taking the steps necessary for its implementation.

⁴²⁹ (*In Italian*) Rome, 13/07/1990 = Letter of Fr. Francesco Pierli, Sup. Gen., to Fr. Ignacio Lopez Toro:

"In June, taking advantage of the presence of Fr. Abel Mödi, we reflected on the commitment in the Diocese of Torit... We decided to give this presence a degree of stability, appointing as leader of the group Fr. Eugenio Caligari."

As a follow-up to this discernment, the Superior General, Fr. Francesco Pierli and his Council, with the encouragement of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, the Nuncio, other Bishops and people,⁴³⁰ considering the presence of the Comboni Missionary personnel in the SPLA/M areas to be of the utmost importance, decided to give the presence of the Comboni group working in Torit Diocese⁴³¹ *a degree of stability*.

They appointed Fr. Eugenio Caligari as **Coordinator** and Superior in charge of the **NEW SUDAN GROUP**. The *Coordinator* had to report directly to the General Councillor for Africa, Fr. Venanzio Milani. All this was clarified by Fr. Milani himself in a letter to Fr. Ignacio López Toro,⁴³² and Fr. Flores, himself, who had not yet understood the nature and the juridical set-up of the group. They were the first two confreres to undertake this experience, together with Fr. Ukelo.

Thus, Fr. Mödi had to endure this situation, so to speak, willingly or unwillingly, knowing that the New Sudan Group, though belonging to the South Sudan Province, was already another entity and he could already foresee that, little by little, it would slip away from his authority. The freedom of movement which the group would perhaps enjoy in the *Liberated Areas* would certainly attract more personnel to the detriment of the Comboni group in the Government Areas. Of course, in principle, the priority was the care of the Sudanese people in the SPLA rural areas but, nonetheless, since this trend was clearly foreseeable, at personal level, this may have surely caused him a lot of pain.

Meanwhile, Juba was showing the symptoms of a besieged town. It was the biggest town in the South, but it was a besieged town and all the Church personnel and pastoral agents and also the Comboni commitments were there. It was a town under pressure due to its great number of activities and conflicting commitments. A situation like this, with Church Personnel

⁴³⁰ Ref. Fr. Venanzio Milani, (Presenza nel New Sudan) "Letter to the confreres appointed to the diocesi of Torit", Rome, 20/07/1990, MCCJ Bulletin no. 172, October, 1991, pp. 10-11.

⁴³¹ Rome 21 July, 1990, Fr. Venanzio Milani to Rt. Rev. Mons. Paride Taban, Bishop of Torit. "I am writing this letter on behalf of the General Council. We have appointed Fr. E. Caligari as the leader of the group and he will act as Delegate of the Assistant General for Africa (the undersigned) Since there is now an official group leader, Fr. Kizito is no longer in charge of the 'official' contacts with your Diocese...."

⁴³² (In Italian) Rome, 13 July, 1990 = Letter of Fr. Francesco Pierli, Sup. Gen. to Fr. Ignacio Lopez Toro: "We decided to give this presence a degree of stability, appointing as leader of the group Fr. Eugenio Caligari." "You carry on in the Diocese of Torit, assigned to the Group of the 'Liberated Sudan.' You and Fr. Flores are the initiators of this new presence"

working next to each other, can create better collaboration but, if gossiping and a spirit of competition creep into the fabric of the Church, negative attitudes of jealousy may develop with competition, envy, suspicion and trespasses of authority.

As Comboni Missionaries, the confreres were actively involved in the pastoral care of the displaced people who fled to Juba town, especially the Mundari, Madi and Acholi, in a mainly Bari environment. Even an excess of zeal can, at times, become a source of friction because of by-passing Diocesan rules and setting up things without proper discussion or authorization, like prayer groups on tribal lines, or relief activities carried out in ways considered mistaken, sometime directed to specific recipients according to tribe, or considered not to be fair to other people. Emergency situations are always difficult to organize and to administer well.

Efficiency can also become a cause of divisions, if it is seen as humiliating to those who may feel less efficient, creating in them a negative attitude instead of stimulating their creativity. In a situation like that in Juba town in those days, with a lot of needs, frustration and negative feelings due to the endless war and the isolation it brought, issues that were not dealt with carefully, inevitably, led to deep divisions, even among the most zealous Church Personnel, whether Diocesan, Religious or Missionary.

At the time of the visit of Bro. Menegotto, Archbishop Lokudu Loro asked for something to be done for the besieged people in Juba and was reported to have appealed using these very words: "*They will make all of us die of famine, please, do your best to inform the Pope.*"⁴³³ The appeals from within the Catholic Church in South Sudan and abroad, and by the Comboni Missionaries themselves, got a positive response. However, the difficulty was in deciding on whom the responsibility for this relief work fell at the time of distribution and how to evaluate and select the possible recipients.

Nothing was more urgently needed than relief goods, but it must also be said that nothing can create more division in society and also within the Church itself than the question of relief. Surely, something of what has been mentioned was to be found in relationships between the Local Church organization and the Comboni Missionaries, with a degree of good and bad, service, power, generosity, paternalism, praise, competition, interests, envy and jealousy. All these ingredients would sooner or later show their fruits,

⁴³³ Bro. G. Menegotto, Report on the visit to South Sudan from 31 December, 1989 to 27 January, 1990, op. cit., "*ci faranno morire di fame tutti - fa il possibile per informare il Papa.*"

and in this case they produced not communion but division, as we would see later.

Meanwhile, on the side of the SPLA/M *Liberated Areas*, the following were appointed to Torit Diocese by the Superior General and his Council on 20 July, 1990: Fr. Eugenio Caligari, Fr. Joseph Yala Ukelo, Fr. José Flores, Fr. Ignacio López Toro, Fr. Giovanni Ferrazin, Fr. Mario Riva and Bro. Domenico Cariolato; Fr. Flores and Fr. López Toro had been in **Isoke Parish** since 1 May, 1990. Fr. Ukelo would reach **Torit** a while later. Fr. Caligari and Bro. Cariolato would go in August to serve **Loa Parish**; Frs. Riva and Ferrazin would join the *New Sudan Group* in October.⁴³⁴

Thus, Torit Diocese in Eastern Equatoria, led by Bishop Paride Taban, was the first Diocese in the South to open the way for the presence of the Comboni Missionaries and other Religious Missionaries and Church Personnel in the SPLA/M-controlled areas. The Comboni Missionary confreres numbered seven.

Preparing for the General Chapter 1991

The 1991 General Chapter came at a time when the towns of Juba, Wau, Raja and Rumbek were firmly besieged and locked in by SPLA. Eastern Equatoria had already been under SPLA control since the beginning of 1989 and, by the beginning of 1990, three confreres had already been assigned to Torit Diocese, under SPLA rule. Western Equatoria, by the end of April 1990, was also under SPLA control and there was no longer a Comboni Presence there.

In this context, the time for starting to prepare for the General Chapter had come and reflection and sharing on the situation of the South Sudan Province's achievements and perspectives was supposed to be presented. It is interesting to see how the Provincial Superior, Fr. Mödi, his Council and confreres were evaluating the concrete situation from various perspectives.

Report of the Province to the General Chapter

Taking up the report to the General Chapter and reading through it, one can see immediately the difficult situation the South Sudan Province was going through. Neither does one fail to notice both the sense of discouragement, due to a situation that did not allow much movement and, at the same time, the desire to drive onwards as if there were real room for

⁴³⁴ Fr. G. Ferrazin had to return to Italy for health reasons.

improvement and development. On the one hand, there was the need to present proposals as if the situation were normal and open to progress and further expansion; on the other hand there was the awareness that the country was totally paralyzed and would bring missionary initiative to a standstill.

This was completely understandable: who would look at the future without hope? Who would not think that something, with time, would not change? If for no other reason than survival itself! In fact, as we have seen, the reality was that the pastoral commitments of the Province were confined within the towns where they were living, towns in the hands of the government. It was a very valuable and hope-giving presence for those people, but with no other possibility of further expansion.

It was no easy task to maintain steadfast positions with real faith and hope and with a real self-sacrificing love, so as to be close to the abused, suffering and humiliated people, harassed in so many different ways and frequently with no means of defending themselves. They were *on the cross* with Jesus and the real frustration was that nobody knew when the time would come for the Resurrection. That was the reason why Bro Menegotto, in his report about the visit of January, 1990 wrote:

*"On one side there was a euphoric climate for the continuous success of the SPLA, but at the same time there was great concern for the SPLA coming nearer and nearer to Juba with more strength and the continuous and incessant appeals to leave the city. The words were followed by facts with the shelling..."*⁴³⁵

This was the true reality for Juba city. For Wau and Raja, though totally besieged, the situation was less severe because the aim of the SPLA was to capture Juba city first, which would mean capturing the whole of Equatoria and practically **war zone I**, Southern Sudan. It would take though long years of frustrating attacks and withdrawals before reaching a conclusion.

The report to the General Chapter,⁴³⁶ started by presenting the situation of the Province at that particular time, the environment at educational level, the policy of the government, the work of the opposition, the financial crisis in connection with the difficult living conditions of the people and the famine. They were aware that most of the territory of South Sudan was under SPLA control and that, because of the determination of

⁴³⁵ Bro. G. Menegotto, Report, January 1990, op. cit.

⁴³⁶ Short report of the Provincial of Southern Sudan to the General Chapter 1991. (Supplement to the SS Report on questionnaire). ACR 483/15/4/5a.

the government to recapture the lost areas, the war, the atrocities and the loss of lives would continue.

The introductory part of the short report of the Provincial began by presenting an overall view of the political situation:

"After the Peace Talks broke down at the end of year 1989 in Nairobi, Kenya, through the mediation of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, no other serious peace talks had been attempted. There seems to be a dead silence on the issue.

The journey into the unknown future gets more complicated, deteriorating almost stage by stage as time goes on. On 31 December, 1990, the Fundamentalists declared their so called Federal System, something patterned after the Libyan Political System. According to the system, States have been created in the whole country. Though the system is called Federal, it is a heavily military regime, nowhere similar to Western Federal Systems. Each State is headed by a military Governor, helped by five State Ministers, three of whom depend directly on the Central Government and the Governor has no control over them.

Under the Ministers there is a 'Parliament' (consultative 'shura') that makes the state laws, which must be approved by the Central Federal Government. The Parliament is made up of 100 parliamentarians, more than half of these must be supporters (Muslim) of the regime in Khartoum. They are the state legislators. Since they are more than half of the Parliament, they will pass state laws in favour of Islam.

Previously, Southern Sudan had supported a Federal System: but the Federal System we have now is totally different in orientation, content and philosophy. Its content is Islamic fundamentalist and is implemented through the use of the military.

Southern Sudan has been opposing the system through official documents, but the regime has simply ignored these documents and goes ahead with its own objectives. The Islamic laws (Shari'a) which were introduced by President Nimeiri and confirmed by the fundamentalists on 31 December, 1990, are now being implemented fully for all the country (it was stated on 21 April 1991).

New educational policies have been introduced. They stress Arabic as the only medium for learning. Christian teaching will be prohibited in schools, except in the Primary years. The new emphasis is on the Koran and Arabic language.

There is a strong dissatisfaction on the part of Southern Sudanese with the so called Federal System, Shari'a laws and the new educational policies. Opposition is likely to mount as time goes on.

Another serious setback has been the change of the Sudanese Pound, which has added further stress on the famine situation."⁴³⁷

From the social point of view, the most serious situation was the famine and related health problems. The Government did practically nothing to counteract the famine and the health problems. No food or medicine was coming from the Government which was doing nothing more than allowing some of the charitable organizations to do what it should have been doing itself.

Food situation: the population in Juba, at the time, was near to 500,000 inhabitants. The food that came for these people was donated by foreign donors and partly also due to the efforts of our Comboni Institute. Yet confreres were aware that the food airlifted from either Nairobi or Kampala was keeping the huge population only surviving and there were still people dying from malnutrition, most of them children and elderly people.

Nonetheless, they were also aware that, in South Sudan, Juba town seemed to have been luckier than Wau and Malakal where no relief was going. This had been the case since the beginning of year 1991 for those two towns. It is believed that Malakal was the worst off of the three towns.

The health situation was one which proved difficult for many Southern Sudanese. Drugs were generally not available in civil hospitals unless they were provided by UNICEF, other organizations and the Church. The hospitals were generally identifying the diseases, giving prescriptions and asking the patient to purchase the drugs: the majority of people simply could not afford them. Health services were either very poor or non-existent, particularly in the rural areas.

Many doctors were opening their own private clinics. The trouble with them was that prices were above what most people could afford. There were Church clinics which were offering medicine either free of charge or at very nominal prices. However, the latter were not sufficient to respond to the needs of the population. 'La Nostra Famiglia' (Usratuna – Our Family) was a real blessing to Juba, both for foodstuffs and medicine. It was doing a timely service and had also opened a primary school within its premises, services that would certainly be remembered in Juba.

⁴³⁷ Ibid. Short report, pp. 1-2.

Regarding the pastoral work, the report mentioned especially the Dioceses of Juba, Tombura-Yambio and Wau. In Juba and Wau the pastoral work was mainly carried out in the towns, since the rural areas were inaccessible. In these towns, pastoral attention was given to people by the Diocesan Priests and the Comboni Missionaries and was offered especially to the displaced populations and to the civilians in the town.

The Church, in its services to her faithful, was fully immersed in the political, social and war situations. Although it was generally rendering good services to the population in general and the faithful in particular, its work was affected and limited in many ways by socio-political events and the famine. This was specially the case with the Government at that time, which seemed determined to curb its pastoral activities and was challenging her duty to do so.

The Arabization policies, the Shari'a law and the educational policies seemed to go directly against the Church and perhaps eliminate it. The perception was that one could not talk of outright persecution of Churches at that time, but that the above mentioned policies would have soon triggered it. It was also felt that, in that situation, the Lay Leadership often appeared to be non-existent. The Church, however, was still believed to be the voice of the South Sudanese people, even though it looked subdued and lacking a tough and determined stand in situations where it should, perhaps, have spoken more openly.

As regards the Comboni Missionaries, there was a total of 26 confreres restricted to working in the centres of Juba, (16 confreres), Wau (6 confreres), and Raja (4 confreres). In the Six-Year Plan they were trying to take other zones into consideration. The Provincial pointed out that he had very little to say about Torit Diocese, which was cared for by Fr. Caligari as Coordinator.

Comboni relationships with the Bishops were generally considered serene and positive, although some difficulties were noticed. Some Bishops had not been able to sign the Conventions, mainly for financial reasons.

The Sudanese Clergy formed the majority in all the Dioceses the Combonis were working in, but the number of clergy was still insufficient and most of them were young. It was noticed that, apart from the Diocese of Torit, all other Dioceses were lacking adequate numbers of ordinations each year. In 1991 there were no ordinations for Juba, Wau, Rumbek, Yei or Malakal. As for the other Congregations, their numbers decreased due to the war (Jesuits, Salesians, White Fathers and Kiltegans).

The Comboni Missionaries commitments were in the pastoral and formation fields:

- **Parishes:** St Kizito (Juba), Terakeka-Tali, Raja, Wau;
- **Formation:** Palica Centre and Small Christian Communities, Wau, National Major Seminary in Juba and Khartoum, Comboni Senior Secondary School in Juba as well as Lulugu Centre and the Comboni Postulancy.
- **The intention** was to carry on the Comboni commitments already agreed in the past with the Bishops and take up the newly proposed commitments after the General Chapter.

As for security in South Sudan, at the moment the report was written, it seemed fairly good, though the war could always take another turn. The Comboni Missionaries felt very much in union with the other pastoral agents and the Bishops, and were determined to remain, as long as it was reasonably possible, sharing with the population in discomfort and danger. Likewise, they did not exclude the possibility that the situation could also change for the better and in a peaceful way.

Regarding the health of our confreres, it was considered generally good; in the most urgent cases, confreres were sent home on holiday or scheduled holidays were brought forward. This policy was also to be followed later on. It appeared obvious that those circumstances were a great strain on the mental and physical health of all. In Raja, instead, the health situation was much better.

The matter of personnel was considered very serious because, for various reasons, the Province had lost some confreres, while others had been cut off from its control and communion. A reason of particular anxiety was the assignment of personnel to the areas controlled by the SPLA, without consultation with the Province, whether they were previously in the Province or not. It was particularly painful to see that the General Administration did not provide personnel for formation (especially the Postulancy) in spite of its promises. The confreres were also uncertain about the personnel who were working in Tombura/Yambio Diocese and had to flee to the Central African Republic.

Peace in South Sudan: it was the Province's first priority (though it did not depend on them) because, without peace, the Comboni missionary activity would not be able to proceed, and it was impossible to programme any meaningful work in that situation of war, though it was true that they were still doing pastoral work in the towns where they were and often under very difficult situations. This was the reason why people were yearning for peace above all else.

The process of Islamization in Southern Sudan was carried out systematically. South Sudan had been constantly rejecting the dictatorial regimes of Khartoum that had simply turned a deaf year to the political proposal of the South for a federal system of government, and made a mockery of the process of peace with the SPLA/Movement. The Khartoum talk about peace was just lip service for the Fundamentalist to buy time for the Islamization of the country and the setting up of an Islamic Republic.

Within the reflection of the Province, there was clear awareness that the Islamic laws were fully implemented. Though the regime on 31 December, 1990, declared that the South was to be exempted from the Islamic Law, in reality it was just a lie, for both North and South were under Islamic Law. What the report tried to clarify was that Southerners were not against Islam as such, but they were against Islam becoming a tool for achieving political ambitions, interests and aspirations, which would mean *an Islamic state*. In fact, the aim of the regime was to impose Islam by means of its armed forces. What the fundamentalist regime planned to achieve was:

1. To achieve political power in the whole country through the setting up of an Islamic Republic.
2. To take over the land of South Sudan and its wealth without helping its peoples. The refusal to allow food to be brought in for relief proves this point. Food was a very effective weapon to achieve their objectives.
3. To reduce all peoples of African stock to second class citizens, if not to slavery.
4. To end Christianity as happened with the Nubian Kingdoms centuries ago.

What was clear for the Province was that, with these being the major objectives of the Moslem Fundamentalists in Khartoum, they had embarked on Islamizing the three major towns of South Sudan through the application of Shari'a Law. New education policies were set in place in the three towns of Juba, Wau and Malakal geared to Islamization. The Government had embarked on buying Southern Sudanese Politicians, civil servants of some influence and different ethnic groups. Millions of Sudanese pounds were spent on corruption rather than on food for the starving population. In this way, unfortunately, people had no chance of leaving the towns.

Islam in South Sudan: while in other countries Islam was regarded as a Religion, in South Sudan the evaluation of the Province was that its true colour was political, camouflaged with a religious appearance. In Sudan, Islam was distorting its own image. In South Sudan Islam was not

tolerating other religions and other peoples with their cultural values. Islam in the Sudan was out to end the freedom of non-Muslims and to destroy the African element in the country. In Sudan Islam appeared to be free to disregard human dignity, human rights and human freedom.

Due to this situation, the Province was asking itself if, in that given situation, Christianity (Comboni's dream of the regeneration of Africa) and African cultures would survive in South Sudan. According to their evaluation, the people of Southern Sudan were pretty convinced that the Moslem Fundamentalists wanted the land of the South and its wealth and wanted them to become Moslems. This would give the regime room for political manoeuvres in the country. If such a regime were to remain in power in Khartoum, South Sudan would find itself trapped.

The Province realized that the Moslem regime, with the help of some other Arab nations, had precise objectives. This solidarity was providing them with millions of dollars and weapons for the Fundamentalists in Khartoum. In this case, Khartoum would opt for a military solution instead of a peaceful diplomatic way of resolving the situation by establishing a federal system within a united Sudan. However, due to all these abuses, the idea of a *federal system within a united Sudan* was abandoned.

People in Juba and elsewhere no longer wanted a united Sudan. The Juba elite, the report stated, wrote to John Garang requesting him to fight for the separation of the country. They had also written to the UN, OAU and the American Congress stating that their option was now the division of the Sudan into two nations. The time of the General Chapter also gave the Province of the South a reason to present this appeal to the Chapter Delegates, and through them to the whole Comboni Institute, to maintain solidarity with the people of South Sudan. ***“Why should the South Sudanese people be sold out to the Moslem fundamentalists because of lack of solidarity of the West with Africans?”*** was the question.

At the end of the General Chapter there was an appeal to the whole of Africa, to European and American Nations, to all peoples of good will stating that the people of South Sudan are African and for the majority are also Christians. What they all wanted was to keep their ancestral values and culture and, for those who were Christian, to be free to live their Christian faith. Moreover, South Sudan had considerable mineral and natural resources which could contribute to its development without being harassed by the Arab Moslem Fundamentalists of the North.

Isolation of the confreres. With this situation of war, the Provincial report stated that communication by land had become impossible in South Sudan. The only way to travel was by air, but even by air it was not always

easy and one might have to wait for long periods of time before finding a seat on a flight. Moreover, the few available flights were not free of danger: some aircraft had been shot down or blown up by land mines.

The cost of living in South Sudan was very high and flights were few and very expensive. Due to these circumstances our communities were suffering a lot from isolation. In the Government-held territories the Province of South Sudan could keep only the communities in the three towns of Juba, Wau and Raja. The rest were in the *Liberated Areas* controlled by the SPLA. The Provincial could visit the communities of Wau and Raja only with great difficulty. For more than two and a half years the Provincial had no possibility of visiting both of them. Only in May 1991 was he able to do so. The postal service was also erratic this resulted in a bad experience of isolation with serious consequences like feelings of frustration, lack of enthusiasm and uncertainty about what the future had in store. The proposal was to increase the personnel in Wau and Raja or to pass Raja to Wau Diocese.

Preparation of Leaders for the Political Sector: the point here is that education was not neglected. The Church had Primary and Junior schools. In some cases there were also Senior Secondary Schools. However, preparation for political life did not go far enough. The need to prepare leaders for politics who had had a Christian formation was felt very much. The Province suggestion was that:

1. Every Diocese in South Sudan should set up schools starting from Primary, Junior and Senior Secondary levels. Since the Dioceses in South Sudan were seven, this meant that there would be 7 Primary Schools, 7 junior schools and 7 senior schools. The Dioceses were the ones supposed to take up this responsibility but we, as Combonis, would provide support.
2. After the Senior Secondary level, a Catholic University would become also a necessity.
3. According to the report, South Sudan badly needed some scholarships, especially in a situation like that. The regime of Khartoum was shutting the doors to university candidates from South Sudan. The proposal was that a *Catholic University* would be a joint project carried out by RSAS (Religious Societies Association in Sudan). Thus, a real Christian formation would take place.

Thus, the report of the Chapter Delegates of the South Sudan Province gave a clear picture of the situation in South Sudan in mid-1991, just when the General Council was considering the strengthening of the *New Sudan Group* by adding further personnel, having seen that the possibility of

expansion of the pastoral and missionary activity was giving way to new possibilities of presence, both in the area of Torit Diocese and, at a later stage, also in Western Equatoria (Nzara) and Rumbek Diocese (Yirol).

However, there were some sad developments within the Church situation in Juba, later on happily solved and reconciled. So, painful though the instance may have been, it cannot be left unmentioned since it is helpful for our reflection. In fact, as the famous saying goes, *those who do not know history are condemned to repeat it.*⁴³⁸

The Archdiocese of Juba: report to the General Chapter 1991

As already noted, Juba was the biggest town in the South, but it was under siege. All the Church Personnel and Pastoral Agents and much of the Comboni commitments were based there too. The town had a great number of activities and overlapping undertakings with limited space. All Church Personnel, Local and Expatriate, were busy working according to their own duties and responsibilities and in God's name.

Nevertheless, with all the overlapping activities, it came as no surprise that people sometimes trod on each other's toes or bypassed the channels of authority, arousing feelings of misunderstanding and even of resentment. Perhaps they did so by showing excessive zeal in charitable activities or in the way those charitable activities were carried out, or even how, with whom and where prayer meetings were held. On countless occasions, the perceived infringements may have taken place without any admission on the part of those responsible.

Besides, the Comboni Missionaries, with longer experience and preparation, could show a higher degree of efficiency in their works, surely done for the good of the Church and the country. In practical terms, this may have produced a negative effect and feelings of inadequacy on the part of the members of the Local Church who may not have had access to the same resources and preparation. This could also have been another reason for the deterioration of relations within the Church of Juba.

If one adds the facts expressed in the report of the Province concerning the sense of frustration due to the situation of war, not only among the Combonis, but also among Church Personnel and people, we have an ideal recipe for a breakdown in healthy communications, not infrequently bordering on the irrational.

⁴³⁸ "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.", George Santayana (16 December, 1863, in Madrid, Spain - 26 September, 1952, in Rome, Italy) was a philosopher, essayist, poet and novelist.

Though not all the reasons were crystal clear or even well known, the fact was that a sharp report was sent to the General Chapter by the Archdiocese of Juba in the name of the Diocesan Clergy, who seemed unaware that the report written was for the General Chapter. However, the report was sent and it was read at the General Chapter Assembly of the Comboni Missionaries in Rome, together with the reports coming from all the other Dioceses where the Comboni Missionaries were present.

The report was literally breath-taking for all the Chapter Delegates since, after a positive introduction, it carried on pointing to the Combonis in Juba in a very negative way, as forming a *ghetto* and *not well inserted in the Local Church*. Verse 10 of chapter 10 of the Gospel of John⁴³⁹ was also quoted where, in the context of Jesus' talk on the Good Shepherd, speaking instead about the *thief*, Jesus said that this one had come *only to steal, and slaughter and destroy*. Of course, such a report froze everybody in the Chapter hall, especially the South Sudanese representatives. In Juba itself, it froze all the Combonis who, at risk of their lives, remained faithful with their presence among the suffering people of Juba, and suffered themselves because of the bombing, isolation and all the related risks.

It was really felt as an unfair blow to their presence and it did not take long for the Vice-Superior, Fr. Todd Riebe (replacing Fr. Abel Mödi who was in Rome for the Chapter) to answer with another sharp letter attributing to the same people who wrote that report what was attributed to the Combonis. Moreover, he was also asking why, if there was any discontent with the behaviour of the Combonis (which seems to have been the case), a meeting of reciprocal understanding had not been called for in order to deal with any faulty behaviour involved. His letter asked also for *a forum* for discussion at the return to Juba of the Provincial.⁴⁴⁰

With the help of God and through the wise and capable mediation by Fr. Ottorino Sina (Fr. Philip for the people), the issue was really dealt charitably. Two meetings were held at the Provincial House in Juba between the Diocesan Clergy and the Comboni Missionaries. In a spirit of dialogue, the issues were dealt with and a renewed understanding of each other side's faults and positive intentions was reached. Forgiveness was

⁴³⁹ Gospel of John, 10:10, "*The thief comes only to steal, kill and destroy*. I have come that they may have life, life in all its fullness."

- Juba, 4 April, 1991, *By the Diocesan Priests*, The evaluation of the Pastoral Work carried out by the Comboni Missionaries in the Archdiocese of Juba. (*Sent to the General Chapter 1991 in Rome*). ACR 535/15/3/2; FSSPJ.

⁴⁴⁰ Juba, 20/10/91, Fr. Todd Riebe mcccj, Vice-Provincial, to Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro. FSSPJ; ACR 535/15/3/3.

begged by both sides in the persons of Fr. Sina and Fr. Mödi on behalf of the Comboni Missionaries and H. G. Archbishop Paolino Lokudu Loro on behalf of the Diocesan Clergy. The final reconciliation was sealed with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, with Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro presiding, assisted by Fr. Sina and the Provincial Superior Fr. Abel Mödi, with the participation of the Combonis, the Diocesan Clergy and all the people present.

It is inevitable that there be difficult moments in the life of the Church and of the Institutes but, as the Second Vatican Council and the Doctrine of the Church teach, reconciliation is at the heart of Christian human and spiritual experience. This event which could have brought very bad consequences to relationships between Local Church and Comboni Missionary personnel in Juba became a new occasion for a growth in reciprocal understanding. By the grace of God, what was a sinful circumstance became an occasion of renewed salvation.

The “New Sudan Group”: juridical status

As already mentioned in several instances, the *New Sudan Group* canonically belonged to the Province of South Sudan but, at the same time, it had a degree of autonomy that was hardly compatible with the authority of the Provincial Superior. In practice it was like a *parallel group* to the Province and it became more and more so. Considering then the fact that the Province in the Government-controlled areas were confined to Juba, Wau and Raja, while the *New Sudan Group* had practically all the vast rural areas and the towns in the hands of SPLA to develop, it was clear that the General Council was inclined to keep going the presence in the Government-held towns and develop a stronger presence in the so-called *Liberated Areas of South Sudan*.

Thus, together with the first group of confreres appointed in July 1990, a second group was appointed during the year 1991.

Strengthening the “New Sudan Group”

During the year 1990 and the first half of 1991, the Comboni commitments in the *Liberated Areas* were limited to Torit Diocese (Loa, Isoke), with Fr. Joseph Ukelo residing in Chukudum. In May 1991, Fr. Venanzio Milani, who was the General Councillor for Africa, was sent to visit the confreres of the *New Sudan Group* in order to become personally aware of the situation and explore other ways of action in the *Liberated Areas* under SPLA/M control. Their discussions and dialogue with Bishop

Paride Taban, his Vicars and other pastoral agents, and with the leaders of the SPLA/M, were a great help for discernment at General Council level.

It was after this visit that the Superior General Fr. Francesco Pierli and his Council came to the resolution to bolster the presence in the *Liberated Areas* by assigning new personnel to the group. The decision, at this point, regarded not only personnel for the Diocese of Torit, but also for the Dioceses of Rumbek and Tombura/Yambio.

Fr. Milani, recalling the content of his letter dated 20 July, 1990, wrote to the confreres of the *New Sudan Group* pointing out what was to be followed also in the two new locations of YIROL, (Rumbek Diocese) and NZARA (Tombura/Yambio Diocese).⁴⁴¹ He stressed very much the *new spirit* which should inform the members of the Comboni group in the relationship among themselves, with the Dioceses and Church Personnel and with the people in their difficult situations.⁴⁴²

Fr. Milani underlined clearly that the most important reason for the presence of the Comboni group in the *New Sudan / Liberated Areas* was to be **witnesses of solidarity** and **signs of hope and trust in a better future** for our Sudanese Brothers and Sisters sorely tried by the sufferings of war.⁴⁴³ For this reason he gave some practical guidelines regarding community and apostolic life.

The main policy for the life of the community was to **evangelize as a community** and to be witnesses of **brotherly communion in the Spirit** which the Comboni Missionaries are called to proclaim and make present among the people they evangelize. The community was seen as the place where **the apostle is made and made new**.

Regarding **apostolic life**, without losing sight of our specific charism, emphasis is placed on **communion and collaboration** with the *Local Church* as **a real necessity: not working for, but working with**. *We are an intrinsic part of, and in full communion with the Local Church*. Due to the difficult situation, the formation of leaders was a real priority. *Activism and large-scale resources* would not be advisable and working with *limited means* would be the best way to produce good fruits, though it might require more patience.⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴¹ Ref. Fr. Eugenio Caligari, "Cronistoria", MCCJ Bulletin no. 172, October, 1991, p. 14.

⁴⁴² Ref. Fr. Venanzio Milani, "Letter of Fr. V. Milani after visiting the New Sudan (summary)" Rome, May, 1991" MCCJ Bulletin no. 172, October, 1991, pp. 15-18.

⁴⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

Relationship with SPLA/M

The visit of Fr. Milani had also the specific purpose of meeting the officials of the SPLA/M in order to clarify various matters related to our presence in the areas controlled by them and to ensure respect and protection, when necessary. The mediation of Fr. Renato Kizito Sesana (Director of *New People Magazine* in Nairobi) was very important at the time, as was the meeting with Dr. Lam Akol Ajawin, a high-ranking official in the SPLA/M, who assured respect, security and freedom of work for the Comboni presence in the SPLA/M controlled areas.

New Personnel for the “New Sudan Group”

In the year 1991, the following eight confreres were assigned by the General Council to the *New Sudan Group*, as from 1 July, 1991:

- Fr. José Luis Martinez Açevedo,
- Fr. Francesco Chemello,⁴⁴⁵
- Fr. Elvio Cellana, (*retroactive appointment*),
- Bro. David Enriquez Sanchez
- Fr. Giuseppe Caramazza.
- Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino
- Fr. Igino Benini,
- Bro. Valentino Fabris

The *New Sudan Group*, with the confreres already appointed in 1990, now comprised a total of 15 people for **Torit Diocese, Rumbek Diocese and Tombura/Yambio Diocese.**

Regarding Fr. Ukelo, he was assigned *ad personam* to Torit Diocese and Bishop Taban appointed him to the post of Vicar General and Episcopal Vicar of Kapoeta, Chukudum and Buoya. He resided at Chukudum with the Diocesan Priests.⁴⁴⁶

A very shocking piece of news was the split of the SPLA on 28 August, 1991.⁴⁴⁷ This event could certainly not be good news for the *Liberated Areas* and one could immediately foresee that there would be a very

⁴⁴⁵ 27 March, 1991, letter of Fr. Pierli to Fr. Chemello: appointment to New Sudan starting from 01 July, 1991. (*Fr. Francesco Chemello, who had just completed the renewal course in Rome and was coming from the Province of Malawi/Zambia, was appointed to Isoke Parish from 1 July. He reached Isoke via Nairobi in August.*)

⁴⁴⁶ Ref. Fr. Eugenio Caligari, “Cronistoria”, MCCJ Bulletin no. 172, October, 1991, p. 13

⁴⁴⁷ Arop Mdut-Arop, op. cit., Chapter 10, pp. 259 ff.

unpleasant follow-up with reciprocal military confrontation by the two SPLA groups, *the Torit Group* under the leadership of Dr. John Garang de Mabior and *the Nassir Group* under the leadership of Dr. Riek Machar Teny Durgon, which it did happen.

The communities in the summer 1991 were so composed:

Loa Parish:

Fr. Eugenio Caligari
Fr. Mario Riva
Fr. Giovanni Ferrazin
Bro. Domenico Cariolato

Isoke Parish:

Fr. José Flores
Fr. Ignacio López Toro
Fr. Francesco Chemello

Ad Personam (for Torit in Chukudum)

Fr. Joseph Yala Ukelo

Nzara Parish:

Fr. Elvio Cellana, (*retroactive appointment*),
Fr. Igino Benini,
Bro. Valentino Fabris

Yirol:

Mgr. Cesare Mazzolari (apostolic Administrator)
Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino
Fr. José Luis Martínez Azevedo,
(Fr. Mario Riva) by the end of the year

Waiting for appointment:

Bro. David Enriquez Sanchez
Fr. Giuseppe Caramazza.

With the return of Fr. Caligari from the General Chapter in November, 1991, Loa Parish was handed over to Torit Diocese, Fr. Mario Riva was appointed to Yirol, Fr. Ferrazin had to go back to Italy for health reasons and a new Parish, Kimatong, among the Buoya people, was taken up on 30 December, 1991.

Kimatong:

Fr. Eugenio Caligari
Fr. Giuseppe Caramazza.
Bro. Domenico Cariolato
Bro. David Enriquez Sanchez

Yirol Parish:

Mgr. Cesare Mazzolari, after the appointment of Fr. Riva, Fr. Pellerino, and Fr. José Luis Martínez,⁴⁴⁸ started preparing the required material in order to commence the presence in Yirol, a location not far from *Holy Cross*, where Daniel Comboni had worked. Fr. Pellerino and Fr. Riva, together with Mgr. Mazzolari, would reach Yirol in November 1991; Fr. Martínez, instead, would arrive there in January 1992.

Nzara Parish:

Fr. Benini, with three Comboni Sisters, returned to Nzara on 17 November, 1991, while Fr. Cellana, Bro. Fabris and Bishop Joseph Gasi Abangite reached the mission on 23 December, 1991.⁴⁴⁹ The community of Nzara was now complete, and Tombura/Yambio Diocese, heartened by the presence of their Bishop, could now look to the future with a new hope. This was then the set-up of the New Sudan Group at the beginning of 1992.

Khartoum's dry season military offensive against the SPLA

At the beginning of 1992, all the Comboni communities in the *Liberated Areas* were busy planning how to carry on with their pastoral and missionary work and the eventual restructuring of former damaged buildings or to build in local material some other premises needed for the confreres and for pastoral activities. Everything seemed to be going well, when the Government of Khartoum launched its hitherto most powerful offensive aimed at completely eradicating the SPLA in the South.

In January 1992, the Military High Command in Khartoum launched its biggest ever military offensive against the SPLA code-named *Hemlat Seif*

⁴⁴⁸ 29 September, 1991, Letter of Fr. Caligari to Fr. J. L. Martínez "Fr. Caligari is leaving Rome"

⁴⁴⁹ (In Italian) NZARA 03 January, 1992, Fr. Cellana to Fr. Caligari: "About Fr. Benini, Srs. Natalia, Milagro and Aurora you already know. After 22 days of waiting, Bro. Valentino (Fabris) and I came from Nairobi to Nzara ... Mgr. Gasi asked to come. So much awaited by the people, he arrived here in Nzara and then he proceeded with Fr. Matthew Samoza to Yambio." "We found everything open: they took away everything... even the nails on which we hung the sacred images and the calendar, and broke whatever they couldn't remove, such as the marvellous drill ... we will try to go ahead, working more closely with the people ...It is feared that there may be air strikes with bombings in retaliation, for this we are preparing shelters."

al-Obuur (the dry season campaign). The first phase consisted in a concerted attack to Bor, Pibor, and Pochalla districts. On the 9 March, 1992, taking advantage of the collaboration of the *Nassir Faction* the Government took Pochalla on the Ethiopian border. On 13 March, Kapoeta,⁴⁵⁰ the seat of local administration for the SPLA/Torit, was indiscriminately bombed by the government army (it would fall on 28 May). By April of the same year, Bor was captured together with Yirol, after a week of bombing.



The government plan was very well-defined:

- attack Kapoeta, the SPLA logistics hub, from the east, thus preventing SPLA connections with Ethiopia and Kenya;
- ensure the Bahr el Ghazal connection from Wau to Yirol, clearing the Nile route allowing river supplies from Malakal to Juba;
- Finally, attack TORIT, (it was captured on 13 July, 1992)⁴⁵¹,

thus clearing the way up to Kapoeta and the Kenyan border.

In this situation, the three Comboni missions of Yirol, Kimatong, and Isoke were in a most critical situation. Yirol because of a possible attack from the side of Wau, Kimatong because it was near to Kapoeta and on the northern side of Torit-Kapoeta road with the risk of getting trapped by the attackers, and Isoke because of its geographical position not far away from Torit.

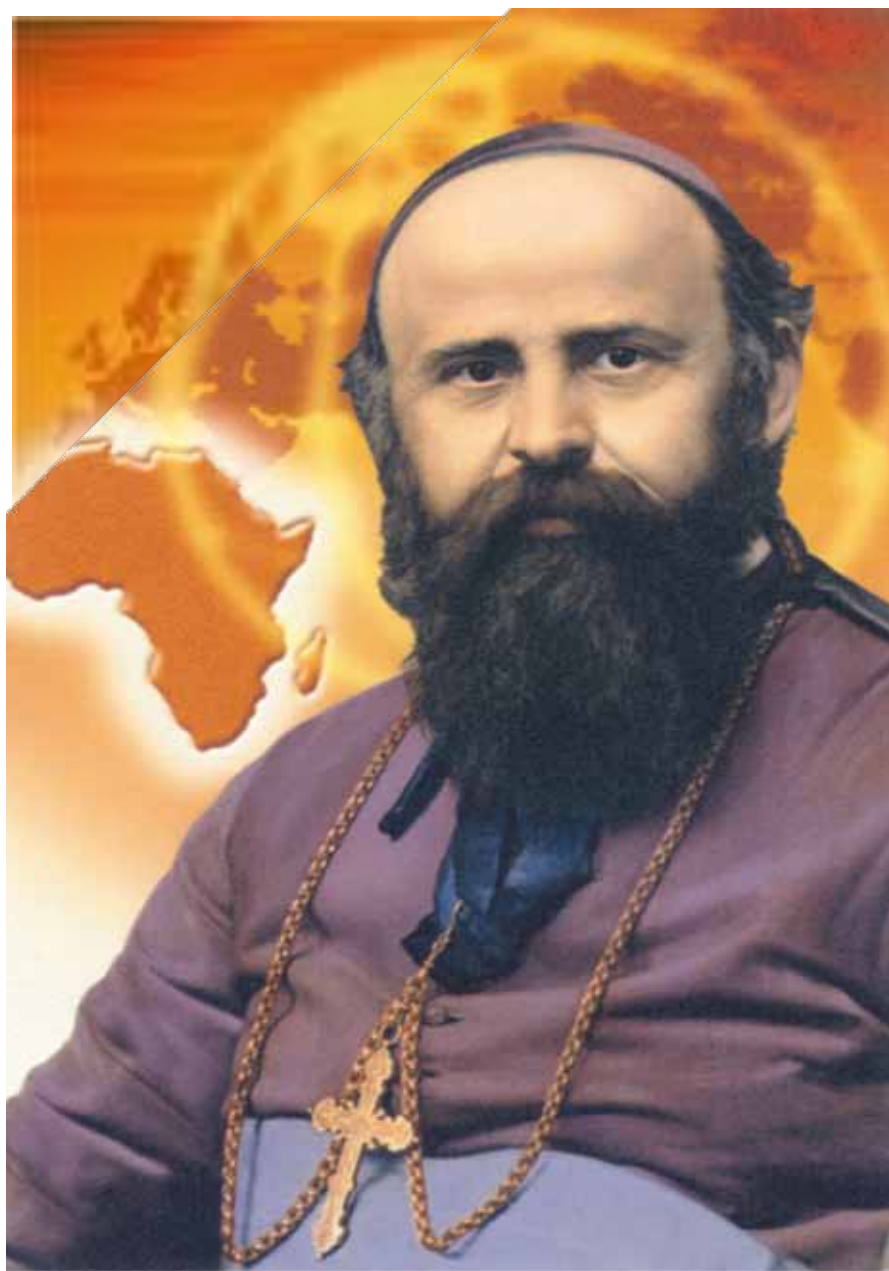
The General Council was therefore deeply concerned and closely followed developments, especially in regards to Yirol. The greatest concern was for the community of Yirol. Fr. David Glenday sent a fax to Fr. Pellerino asking him and the community to leave Yirol immediately.⁴⁵² They were very surprised, thinking there was no immediate threat, and

⁴⁵⁰ <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/03/18/world/sudanese-troops-push-into-south.html>

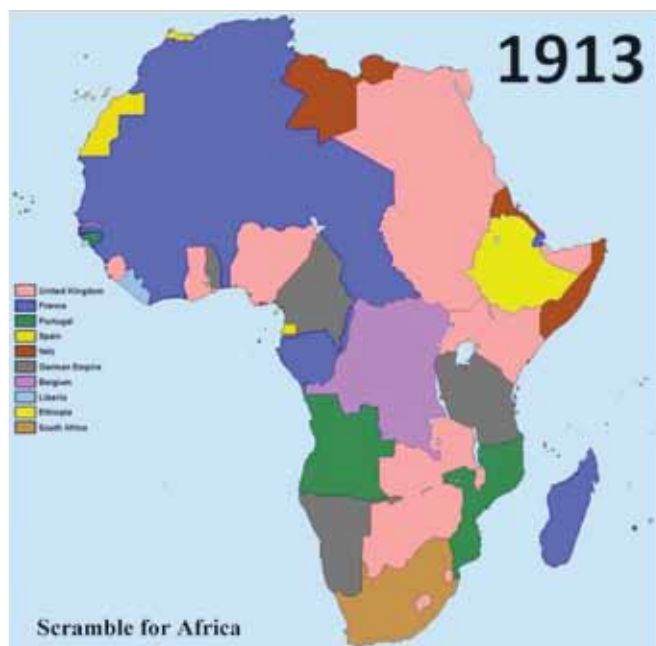
⁴⁵¹ Human Rights Watch: CIVILIAN DEVASTATION.

<http://www.hrw.org/reports/1993/sudan/>

⁴⁵² (In Italian) 18 March, 1992 (Fax) Fr. D. Glenday, Sup. Gen. to Fr. Pellerino, Superior of Yirol Community: "I am writing to you ... to inform you of a decision made by me today ... we ask that you leave Yirol immediately. ... Please, let Mgr. Mazzolari know that we strongly recommend that he may leave together with you."



St. Daniel Comboni 1831-1881





St. Josephine Bakhita 1869 (?) - 1947



Mboro 1932: Fr. Crazzolaro



Isoke 1952: Fr. Fare



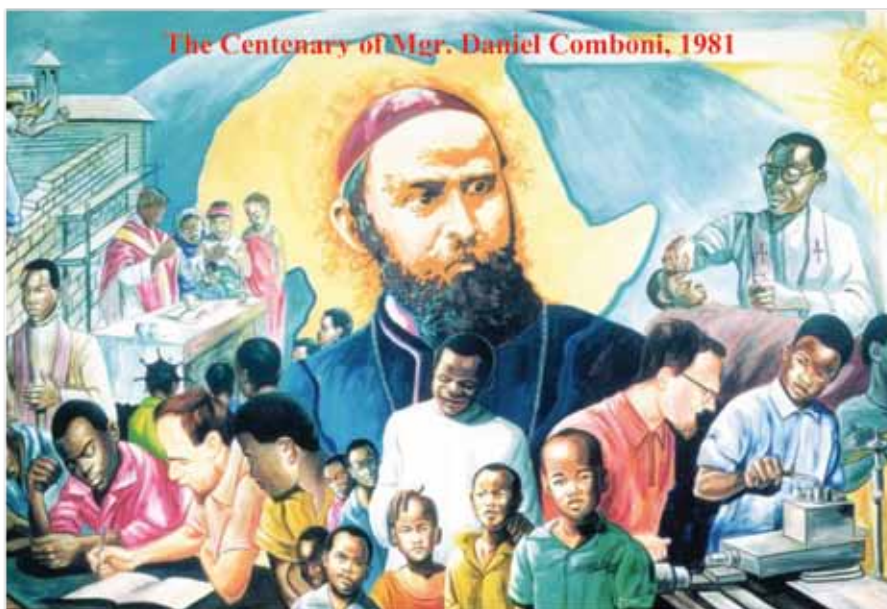
Mupoi Parish 1938



Juba 1981, Archbishop Ireneo Dud: Centenary of Mgr. D. Comboni



The Centenary of Mgr. Daniel Comboni, 1981





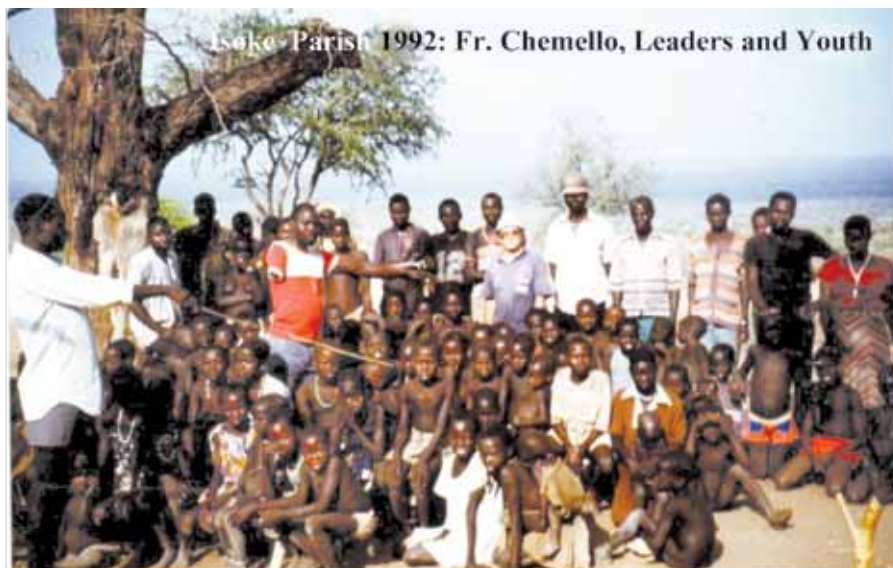


Loa Parish Church 1992

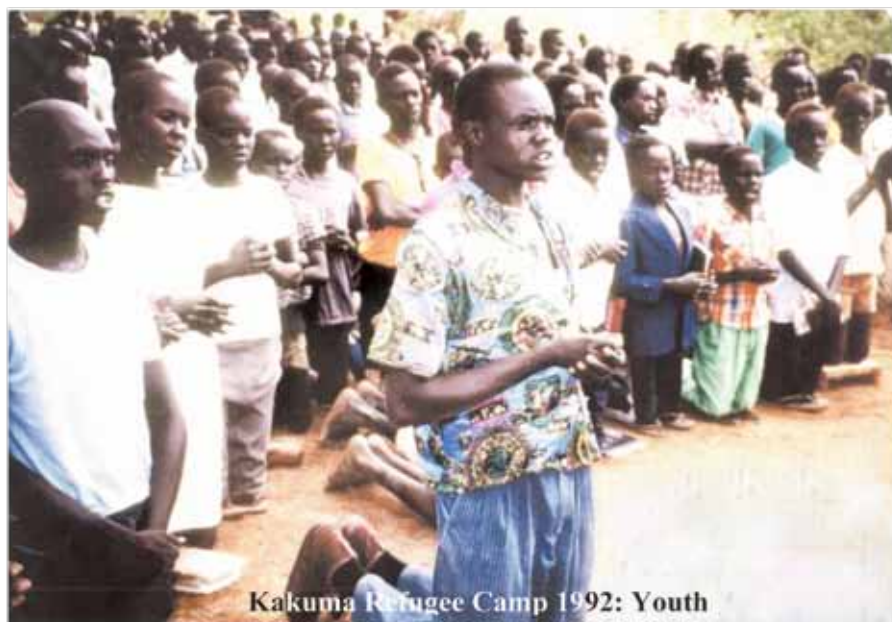
Chukudum Parish Church 1992

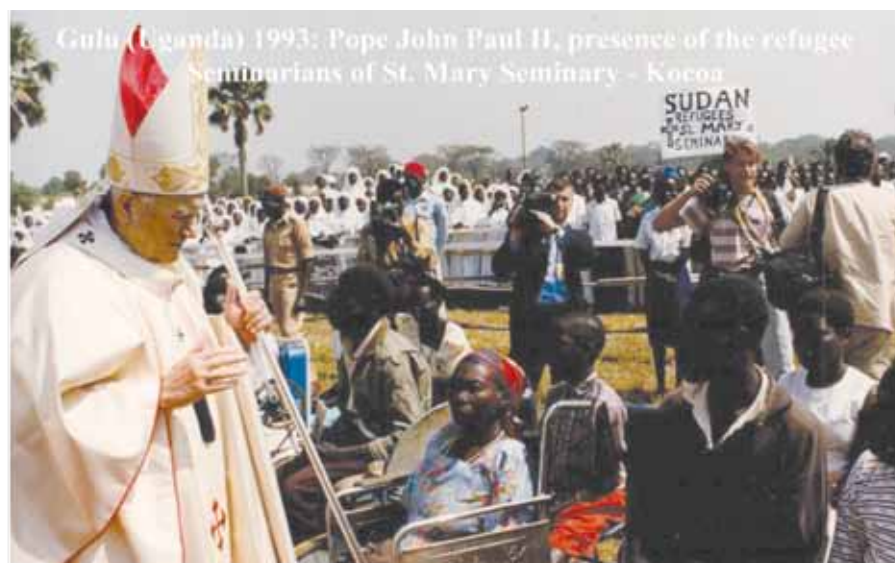


Koko Parish 1992: Fr. Chemello, Leaders and Youth



Kakuma Refugee Camp 1992: Youth







Diocese of Rumbek: the Cathedral

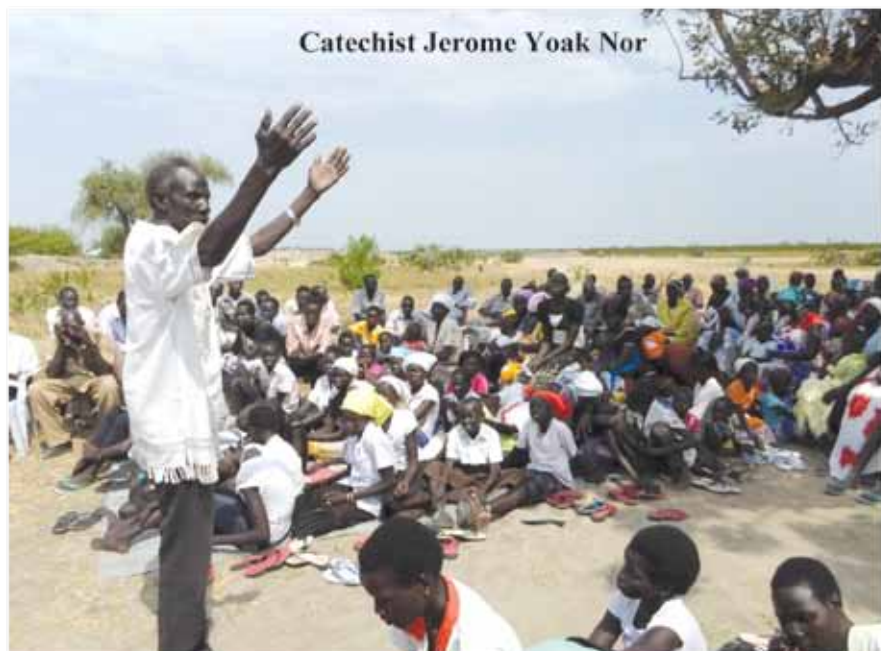
Leer 1996: Fr. Chemello, Sr. Zucca, Sr. Cerlini, Women group



Nyal Meej Community Compound



Catechist Jerome Yoak Nor





Map until 8 July, 2011

Map of the States on 9 July, 2011



09/01/2011: Referendum for Self-Determination



09/07/2011: Independence Day - looking towards the Future



Leer 2012, James Duol Kai Catechetical Centre: Graduation

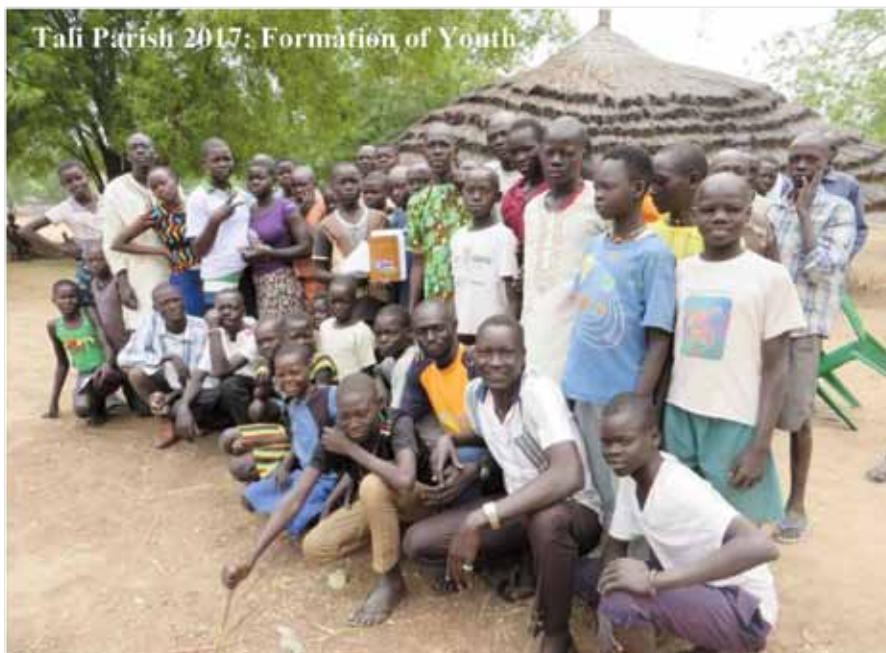


Tali Parish: Fr. Markus Körber, Catechists and Leaders

Tali Parish: Visit of Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro



Tali Parish 2017: Formation of Youth





Leer: Meej Community House



Leer: Nursery School



Leer Parish Assembly: Church under construction



Leer: St. Daniel Comboni Vocational Centre



Nuer reality





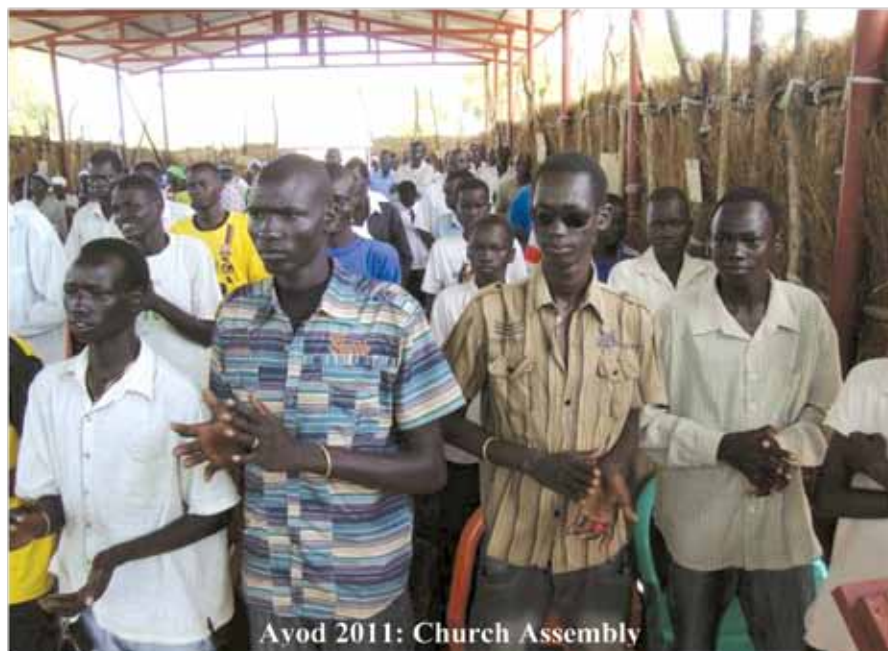
Old Fangak Parish



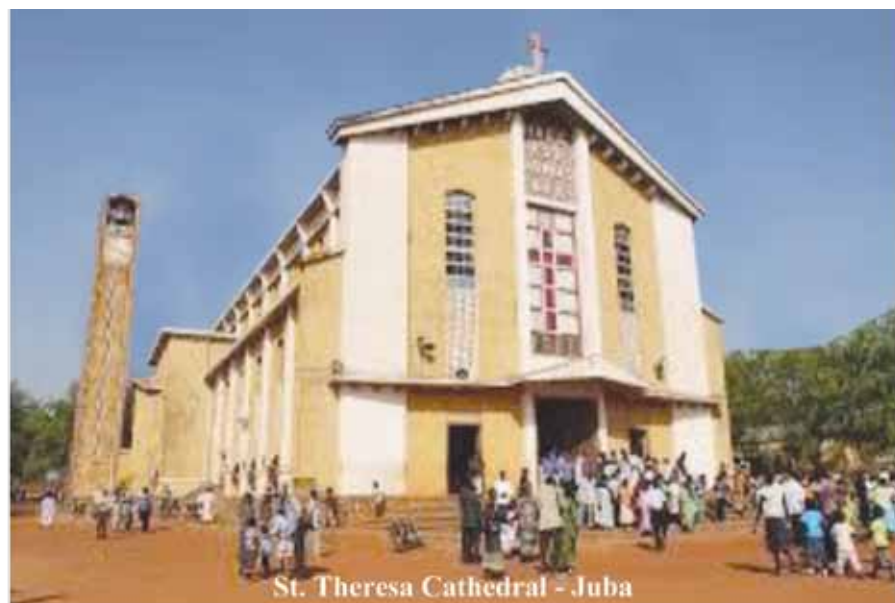
Old Fangak 2014: P.8 Class



Ayod: Fr. La Braca, an experience of hermitage



Ayod 2011: Church Assembly



St. Theresa Cathedral - Juba



St. Pauls' Major Seminary - Celebration



Juba: Comboni House 2017



Composition of Wau MCCJ community



G
H
I
S
L
A
I
N

2017



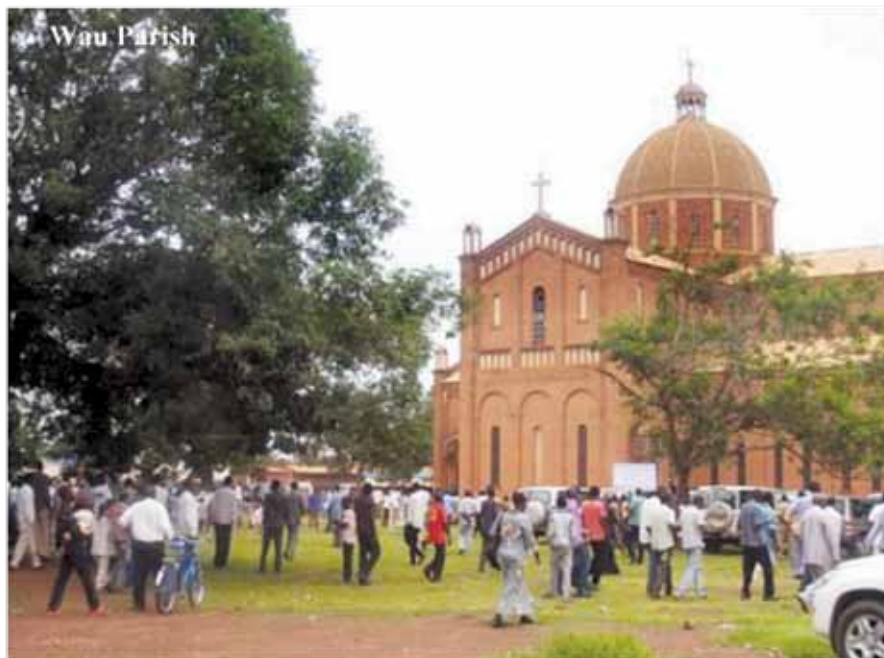
P
A
T
R
I
C
K



S
A
L
O
M
O
N

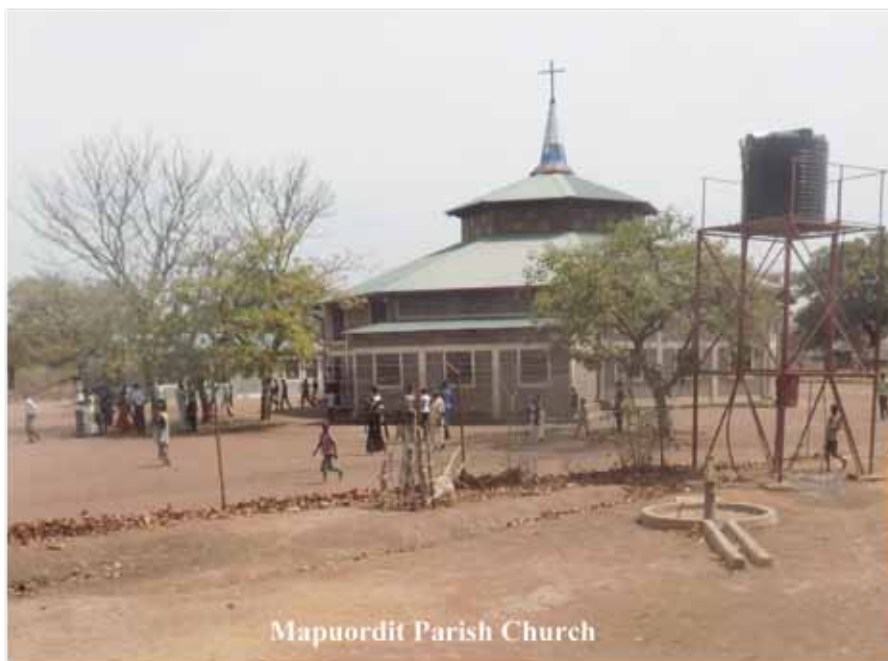


R
O
S
A
R
I
O





Mapuordit: Meej Community House



Mapuordit Parish Church



Mary Immaculate Hospital - Mapuordit



Yirol: Meej Community Compound



Yirol Parish Church



Lomin Parish Church – Kajo-Kaji

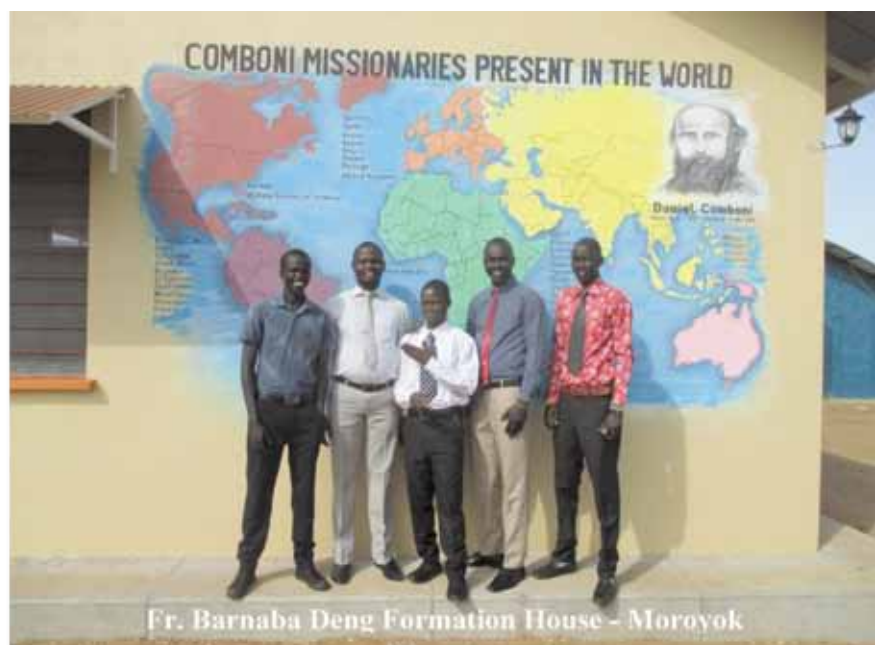


**St. Martin
Workshop**

Lady Lomin

**Comboni
Comprehensive
College**







Good Shepherd Peace Centre - Kit



SCBC: inauguration of the Good Shepherd Peace Centre - Kit with the Apostolic Nuncio to South Sudan, Archbishop Charles D. Balvo,



Juba: Assembly 2015

Juba, December, 2016, hand-over of Administration: joint Provincial Councils





**Juba 2017, New Provincial Council: Fr. Louis T. Okot Ochermoi (centre)
Fr. Paolino Tipo Deng; Fr. Christian Carlassare (at his right)
Bro. Jacek Andrzej Pomykacz; Fr. Fernando González Galarza (at his left)**



Juba January, 2017, Provincial Assembly with Archb. Paolino Lukudu Loro

asked that, at least one or two should remain there. However, having again considered the matter, the Superior General reconfirmed the request to leave the place immediately, hoping this would be only temporary.⁴⁵³ Later on, Mgr. Mazzolari admitted that the order to evacuate Yirol was the right decision and avoided the capture of the missionaries.

As for Kimatong and Isoke, this happened after the visit to the two communities of Fr. Giuseppe Filippi, General Councillor for Africa at the end of May 1992. Fr. Caligari was in Nairobi to organise the visit of Fr. Filippi, Fr. López Toro was also in Nairobi for health reason and Fr. Flores, after the meeting with Fr. Filippi, had just gone back to Ikotos where the children were supposed to receive the Sacraments. The confreres of Kimatong had just left the new mission and come to Isoke with the idea to proceed to Uganda and Fr. Chemello (who was given the task by Fr. Filippi to coordinate the situation in absence of Fr. Caligari), thought to go to Torit in order to talk to Bishop Paride on the situation.

While this was being planned, that same evening, 29 May, all this planning was cut short. One of the Episcopal Vicars, Fr. John Lohitu, arrived at Isoke with a written radio message from the General Council⁴⁵⁴ ordering immediate withdrawal. He had come to Isoke on purpose from Torit. Bishop Taban also sent his thanks and appreciation to the Comboni personnel.⁴⁵⁵

There was no real possibility to evaluate independently the gravity of the situation, so everyone just obeyed and followed the order. Fr. Lohitu gave one of the Catechists the responsibility of looking after the Parish and, very early the following morning, all left greeting only the Catechists and a few people present there.

On the way, the group met Fr. Flores who wanted to remain and only reluctantly accepted the injunction to withdraw altogether. The SPLA commander said that there was no permission to go to Uganda through Madi Opei but only through Torit. The same information arrived, just at the

⁴⁵³ 23 March, 1992 (Fax) Fr. D. Glenday, Sup. Gen. to Fr. Pellerino: "... Fr. Filippi did report the telephone conversations he had with you and Mgr. Cesare. Having considered the matter very carefully, with the consent of the Assistants, I confirm the decision already taken, namely the exit (hopefully temporary) of the Comboni group of Yirol."

⁴⁵⁴ The radio message arrived to Bishop Paride through SPLA radio. The message contained the order to leave. Bishop Paride sent Fr. J. Lohitu to despatch it on 29 May.

⁴⁵⁵ 29 May, 1992, Bishop Paride to Comboni Father and Brothers of DOT. "I wish to express on behalf of all our personnel our sincere thanks and deep appreciation...We wish you God's blessing and a safe journey. We assure you of our prayers."

same time, from Bishop Taban⁴⁵⁶ confirming everything. Thus, the group with their three Toyota Land Cruisers set out for Torit.

Once in Torit, the commander in charge of its defence, Cmdr. Kuol Manyang Juk, after a tough dispute with Bishop Paride and the whole group, ordered the SPLA soldiers to seize the three Land Cruisers. The group passed the night at the Bishop's house and the following morning they met with him to evaluate the situation. Meanwhile, another radio message from the General Council reached the Bishop saying that, regarding Isoke, *the confreres are free to assess the situation*.⁴⁵⁷ But now it was too late; the situation could not be reversed.

In order not to lose the confreres assigned to Torit Diocese, together with Bishop Taban, it was decided to write a letter to the General Council proposing to relocate the personnel in North Uganda to take care of the Sudanese Refugees and the Seminarians who had escaped from Juba. Fr. Leo Traynor, the chancellor of Torit Diocese, took all five Combonis to Loa Mission, where they were kept for one week (under house arrest? The SPLA commander said: *no, it is just a formality*). Sr. Giovannina Zucca and Sr. Agata Cantone were already there as were two Maryknoll Lay Associates, Dr. Susan Nagele and Elizabeth (Liz) Mac. A week later they were all allowed to go to Uganda (Gulu) and then they proceeded to Nairobi.⁴⁵⁸

In Nairobi all the confreres who were compelled to leave the liberated areas, except the community of Nzara, assembled with Fr. Caligari and the Provincial, Fr. Mödi, to exchange views about the latest events and in order to make proposals to the Superior General and his Council for the future.

“We will be with the South Sudanese people”

The most probable scene was that the confreres belonging to the group of Torit and Rumbek would be assigned to Kenya and Uganda to take care

⁴⁵⁶ 30 May, 1992, Letter of Bishop Paride to Comboni Isoke: “*the official road we chose was Nimule Uganda road...through Torit*” (received in Ikotos 30, May, 1992/CF).

⁴⁵⁷ In fact, the radio message received on 29 May gave the order to leave with no specification. Bishop Paride thought it was for all Combonis (Kimatong and Isoke). On 31 May, Bishop Paride showed Fr. Chemello the last radio message he received specifying that the former one was for Kimatong only. Isoke was free to decide. But this was now too late. The three Land Cruiser pick-ups had already been commandeered. There was now no way of going back on the decision taken.

⁴⁵⁸ A missionary experience in a context of war, op. cit., pp. 21-29

of their own refugees and the confreres of Nzara be attached to the Province of Congo.

The group worked hard to discuss the pro and cons, seeking inspiration from God and the Founder, Daniel Comboni. It came up with the following unanimous conclusion: *“Where our South Sudanese people are, there we will be. Where they move, there we will move with them. If we have to go out through one door, we will try to enter through another one. This can only be possible if we remain united and autonomous. Therefore, we must propose to the General Council to continue with our identity as **New Sudan Group.**”*

Along this line and in this spirit, it was decided to send the proposal to the General Council. This Fr. Caligari did and, having assigned each confrere according to the previous Diocesan Assignments, he proceeded to Italy. However, some confreres were assigned elsewhere: Fr. Caramazza asked to be assigned to the Kenyan Province for pastoral reasons; Fr. López Toro asked to go to Kenya for health reasons; Fr. Flores and Bro. Sanchez were assigned to Mexico.

Fr. Caligari told the remaining confreres to wait for the final answer from Rome and that, meanwhile, Fr. Chemello was to act as Coordinator.⁴⁵⁹ In any case, everyone was to carry on working according to the decisions taken, either joined to the Provinces or within an autonomous *New Sudan Group*.

These were the required commitments:

- The Rumbek Diocese Group in KAKUMA Refugee Camp: *Fr. Pellerino, Fr. Riva* (Fr. Raphael Riel and Fr. Benjamin Madol - Diocesan Priests - would be with them). *Mgr. Mazzolari* would continue seeking ways to serve Rumbek.
- The Torit Diocese Group in Pakele/Adjumani refugee camps and St. Mary's seminary: *Fr. Chemello and Bro. Cariolato*. In Chukudum *Fr. Ukelo and Fr. Ayon.*⁴⁶⁰
- The T/Yambio Diocese Group in Nzara: *Fr. Benini, Fr. Cellana, Bro. Fabris and Fr. Martinez.*

⁴⁵⁹ 07 July, 1992 Letter of Fr. Caligari to confreres: *“I write to you to communicate the decisions of the General Council about us, and to tell you that I have finished my service as (incaricato) in charge of our group...During the August Consulta they will choose the new Superior of the group officially. **For the moment Fr. Francesco Chemello will act.**”* (as Coordinator).

⁴⁶⁰ 15 July, 1992 Fr. Caligari to Bishop Paride: *“The Superior General and his Council in the coming August Consulta will appoint officially the new Superior of the group. In the meantime, Fr. Francesco Chemello will be acting”* (as Coordinator)

After the meeting in Nairobi, all the confreres got ready to go to their respective destinations: Bro. Cariolato went for holidays to Italy. Fr. Chemello left for Pakele/Kocoa (Uganda). This was the new location where the Seminarians of Torit Diocese, and others who fled from Juba, were supposed to continue their Minor Seminary formation. Fr. Chemello found his place in the team of the Seminary and the pastoral team which was supposed to work with all the refugees of South Sudan in the area. From the community of Moyo (Uganda), Fr. Mario Busellato was already taking care of the Kuku refugees in Pakele/Adjumani area since Kajo-Kaji was abandoned in 1988.

Events in Juba,

The Situation in Juba: Throughout the year 1990, people were not allowed to leave the town and were kept as human shields by the Khartoum government army. Due to the grave situation of famine, several appeals were made to international agencies and governments by various Church organizations. H.G. Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro appealed on behalf of the Catholic Church, and also the Comboni Missionaries did their part, as far as they could.

At the beginning of 1991, the Procure of the Comboni Missionaries in Juba learned that international organizations were ready to give considerable support. It was thought that the best way was to engage the LWF (Lutheran World Federation) whose person in charge, Mr. Bob Koepp, knew the Combonis well and had visited them at the Comboni House several times: he was ready to organize the airlift of all the food items donated.

The first round of this operation took place in October 1991 with seven flights of Boeing cargo planes full of relief items, and the second round, in March 1992, with a further ten flights. The items consisted of bags of beans; it was arranged for some of the beans to be swapped for WFP maize.

The distribution was organized in such a way as to include the Parishes, the Minor and Major Seminary, the Religious Congregations, the displaced people's camps and some others places. The lorry of the Comboni procure was used to distribute the food items to the beneficiaries.⁴⁶¹ This was a great help for the people of Juba stricken by hunger, though the needs were much wider still, since the Government was not helping the people and the military isolation of Juba continued relentlessly.

⁴⁶¹ Witness of Bro. Hans Ritterbecks, at the time, Provincial Bursar and Procurator.

Human rights abuses by the government of Khartoum in Juba were almost routine, but they reached a critical point during the 1991-92 school strike and civic struggle: many young people tried to escape from Juba and flee towards Uganda, at the risk of their lives.

"In the course of suppressing civic resistance to its policies of forced Arabization and Islamization, the government arrested and brutally treated student demonstrators and leaders.

The struggle began in May 1991, when the government announced proposed new laws to change the language of instruction in the South from English to Arabic and to make compulsory the study of Islam (Since 1972 Southerners had been exempted from this requirement). The students in Juba organized themselves and held workshops and seminars in protest. The Young Christian Student Movement passed resolutions against the change in the language of instruction, which, they protested, would have an adverse effect on their academic careers.

In August 1991, the laws were passed, and on 9 September, 1991, a school boycott of primary, intermediate, and secondary schools took effect in Juba. A peaceful student march to the office of the minister of education in Juba was stopped by the police, who ordered the students to disperse. The students tried to negotiate with the police, who after an hour started to use tear gas and electric prods to disperse the crowd. Some students were arrested. The next day the students attacked the office of Dawa Islamia, the Islamic missionary organization supporting the curriculum changes. Arrests of students continued.

On 22 September, 1991, while the school boycott continued, the secondary school students assembled at Juba Commercial Secondary School and elected representatives, who drew up a list of demands and made an appointment to meet the governor and the Council of Ministers the next morning. At the meeting, the students presented their demands and the governor responded that he would make the changes that fall within his jurisdiction but that other matters would have to be referred to the central government, including stationing armed Popular Defence Forces in schools and on Juba University grounds.

The main student demands related to a regional curriculum, the language of instruction, and the teaching of religion. The students objected that textbooks contained information about the North that was not 'practical or useful to the South.' They thought it highly unfair that mid-year exams would be held in Arabic, not in English as before.

Finally, the students called off the boycott, with the ultimatum that it would be resumed on 10 October if matters were not resolved.

At the end of October 1991, as the boycott held fast, the minister of education announced the dissolution of the governing student body. At midnight, three student leaders were arrested; they were interrogated by security authorities and released three days later. Other arrests followed. From time to time during November 1991, security authorities would force some students to announce on the radio that they had dropped their complaints and were ordering the other students to go back to classes. During the same month, the government announced that the schools in southern Sudan were to use Arabic rather than English as the language of instruction. By the end of the month, seeing the intransigence of both sides, some students started to leave the country on foot. Those who were intercepted by the army were taken to military intelligence headquarters and tortured.

A BBC broadcast on 25 December, 1991, of interviews with students who had fled Juba and reached Uganda on foot, inspired more to try to escape, including a group of about twenty-eight students who left for Uganda on 8 January, 1992. They found a guide to assist them in travelling through the military posts and the land mines outside Juba.

Because some in the group had already attempted three or four unsuccessful escapes, they proceeded without a guide. After moving five more kilometres, they were surrounded by the army and ordered to stop. Although they were unarmed and complied with the order, the army shot at them, and they fell down, most escaping injuries.

A boy and a girl in the group, however, disappeared at that point and have not been seen since. The other twelve were captured; three were young women. All were taken to the military intelligence headquarters in Juba. The nine boys were packed into one room with twenty-one male students arrested earlier, four of whom, unbeknownst to the others, were informers."

The arrested students were tortured in many different ways without mercy. Military intelligence was trying to get from them false statements threatening them and using all kinds of methods, especially on those who refused to collaborate.

*"The church put pressure on the army because of the reports of torture that were leaking out of the base. Military intelligence then ordered the beatings to stop, about fourteen days after the arrest and the torture of the student."*⁴⁶²

⁴⁶² Human Rights Watch: Civilian Devastation, Government abuses before and during the battle for Juba, 1992. (short summary). <https://www.hrw.org/reports/1993/sudan/>

At that time, in the *Liberated Areas*, several youths (young men and young women) arrived also in Isoke Parish where Fr. Chemello was the assistant Parish Priest, and were held in the compound of the SPLA, waiting for further orders from the side of Dr. John Garang. Bishop Paride interceded for them and, except those who agreed to join SPLA, all the others were allowed to go to Uganda. These youths were telling about all the hardships they and the people of Juba were encountering.

Since the Catholic Church in Juba had a strong hold on the students of school, the Government started thinking that all these upheavals and unrest were caused with the support and instigation of the Church Leaders. This was the reason why the Church Personnel, Priests, Religious, Sisters and other leaders decided to come together in the courtyard of St Joseph Parish and agree on some action to be taken so that they would not be always targeted because of the wrongdoing of the Government.

The proposal was to have a peaceful demonstration from St. Joseph's Parish compound to the Ministries; there they would hand over to the Governor a letter clarifying their position. Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro was not aware of what was going on, but he was called by the group who explained the reasons why they were there. Aware of the delicate situation, once he heard the reasons, he asked if they really wanted a public demonstration or if it were not better to leave the matter private and to hand over the letter, in any case, to the Governor without a public demonstration.

The group, however, was determined to make their voice heard publically through a peaceful demonstration. At this point, the Archbishop allowed them to go on with it. Peacefully and prayerfully, having let the Governor know that the demonstration was heading to him, they started the journey from there, reached the Governor's place and handed over to him the letter concerned. Along the way, a film was taken by one of the participants as a record of the event.

The security people who followed the peaceful demonstration reported about the taking of the film and, after everything was concluded, they went to the Vicar General of the Archdiocese, Fr. Constantino Pitya, to ask for that film to be handed over to them, since it was considered a very sensitive item. Fr. Pitya did not know about it and where to find it. The pressure the security put on him compelled him to go to the Secretary General of the Archdiocese, Fr. Nicholas Kiri, and talk with him about the matter and about what was to be done. Both of them realised they had no choice, but to hand over the film.⁴⁶³

⁴⁶³ Interview to Fr. Nicholas Kiri, Juba, 12 October, 2016.

Of course, the Security personnel used it as they wanted to identify people they targeted as suspicious. Among these, they found some Expatriate Missionaries, Priests and Sisters, who could be instrumental, as witnesses, to spread information abroad. So they thought that action had to be taken towards them to prevent this to happen again. This did not happen immediately, but later, after the SPLA tried to capture Juba, in June and July.

Diocesan Priests targeted:

The Arrest of Fr. Constantino Pitya and Fr. Nicholas Kiri⁴⁶⁴

Priests and leaders during that time did not find life easy. After what was said above and connected with the student strike and unrest, the Ministry of Education started getting very worried and nervous because the students had ignored the letter of the Ministry that school had to start in February. It was already March and no school, either government or Church, had started the lessons.

The Vicar General, Fr. Constantino Pitya, had issued a letter making the students of the Catholic Schools know that they had to start registering in March and that Lessons would start in April, as usual for private Catholic Church Schools. This had nothing to do with the Government Schools, but the Minister in charge thought that the letter was intended for the students of all the other Government Schools and Fr. Pitya was called and questioned about the purpose of the letter.

Of course, he explained that his letter had nothing to do with Government run schools and that it was addressed only to the Catholic School. However, his explanation was not accepted and he was ordered to go to the Government Radio and tell all the students to go to school. Moreover, the Security officer wanted him to go around the whole town with a car and loudspeakers for the same reason. Fr. Pitya could not accept the injunction, since he had no authority over the students of the Government Schools and so he refused to go to the radio and, as for the car, he said he had no petrol.

He was threatened with arrest and he was sent to Khartoum. He answered that, whatever the case, that was something he could not do. The Security

⁴⁶⁴ Fr. Nicholas Kiri was, at the time, called “Adalla” but Arab people were normally writing and calling him “Abdallah”, thus, creating confusion of identity among Arabs and others who thought he was not a Catholic Priest. Tired of this, he asked the Authorities to change his name in the official documents to “Nicholas Kiri.”

officer was furious at his refusal and ordered him to be arrested. Together with him there was also Fr. Nicholas Kiri, the Secretary General: looking at him, the officer order that he should be arrested on the spot as well, and both of them were sent to Khartoum to the top security prison.

People around came to know about their arrest and a Sister, by chance, saw them in the car while being taken to the airport. She confirmed that the two Fathers head been arrested and a huge number of people started gathering in protest.

Taken to Khartoum they were put in high security cells, beaten and interrogated many times. Archbishop Paolino Lokudu Loro went to see them in Khartoum and told the Security people that the longer the imprisonment was, the harder would be the reaction of people in Juba, but they did not listen. Dr. Abel Alier acted as their solicitor.

While they were in prison, in Juba the demonstrations of people and protests were mounting more and more, also with a lot of violence. The imprisonment went on for almost one month. At last, they were just literally chased out of the prison by the Officer who got rid of them. They had no money whatever and did not know Khartoum, but they got a taxi and asked the driver to take them to the Catholic Cathedral.

“Juba civilians demonstrated on March 15, 16, and 17, to protest the arrests of the Priests. On 17 March tear gas was used to disperse the crowds. A fourteen-year-old boy, Francis, who was at the head of the crowd, died when the soldiers shot into the crowd. His body was carried to the church by the demonstrators.

Marchers were ordered to disperse in ones and twos; they were warned that larger groups would be shot at. The Priests who were present agreed to obey the order and the crowd dispersed. The two detained Priests (Fr. Pitya and Fr. Kiri) were released in April 1992 after twenty-six days in custody. They returned from Khartoum to Juba in early May and were met by a large group of supporters at the Juba airport.”⁴⁶⁵

Effect of Juba peaceful demonstration and SPLA operation

Meanwhile, the Sudanese Security, using the film of the peaceful march mentioned before, identified the expatriate people spotted among the participants. Several of them were also Comboni Missionaries Confreres and Sisters. It took very little time for an injunction to be issued requiring

⁴⁶⁵ Human Rights Watch: Civilian Devastation, op. cit.

all Expatriate Missionaries to leave Juba. That was what happened: they received the order of leaving Juba for *security reasons*. Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro, who was not made aware of the injunction, wrote a strong letter to the Military Governor, but with no result.⁴⁶⁶

As a consequence, by 22 July, several Expatriate Missionaries had arrived in Nairobi.⁴⁶⁷ Fr. Mödi was still in Khartoum. Except Fr. for Albino Adot Oryem, all the other Comboni Expatriates still remaining in Juba were forced to leave Juba within the same year 1992.

During this time, the *Seif al-Obuur* military campaign of Khartoum strengthened the striking power of Khartoum's army in Juba and in Central-Eastern Equatoria with the result, as previously seen, of being a real threat to the town of Torit. The SPLA, in fact, finding itself overpowered, did not try to defend it but withdrew southwards, at the same time strengthening its grip on Juba with the operation *Jungle Storm*.

While the SPLA was moving out of Torit and the Khartoum Army retaking possession of the city, in June 1992, the SPLA operation *Jungle Storm*, that was supposed to counter the *Seif al-Obuur*, invaded Juba. The SPLA task force moved swiftly into Juba city without alerting the government defences at Lulugu camp (unit) who were disarmed without any resistance and, unaware of the attack, most were killed in their beds.⁴⁶⁸

However, the capture of Juba failed because of several incidents that prevented the SPLA attackers from gaining full control. An SPLA commando set ablaze the main military petrol station and there was such a loud explosion that it alerted not only the army generals in their sleep, but also the whole city; moreover, the full support from the mechanized unit

⁴⁶⁶ Archdiocese of Juba, 18 August, 1992, Letter of Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro to His Exc. Military Governor of Equatoria State – Juba, Subject Matter: Order for Christian Missionaries to leave Juba, Our Ref. ADJ/ABO/86/AUG/1992. FSSPJ.
- 10 July, 1992 Sudan Council of Churches: attacks of SPLA 6/7 June and 6/7 July. Situation deteriorated. Civilian forced to leave their home, FSSPJ.

⁴⁶⁷ (*In Italian*) 23 August, 1992, Nairobi Fr. F. Chemello to Fr. Filippi: "News from Juba: Bro. Gelmini came out with 4 members of 'Nostra Famiglia'. They are here in Nairobi. Sr. Eugenia, a Comboni Sister, is still in Kampala. Fr. Bizzarro, Fr. Riebe, Fr. Sina, Fr. Aranda, Fr. Giuntoli, Bro. Rossignoli, Bro. Ragnoli and Fr. Albino Adot Oryem remained in Juba. The first seven were given the order by the security to leave by August 23. For Fr. Oryem no order came. They decided to leave only if forced. In this case Fr. Oryem would remain as the person in charge for everything since Fr. Mödi is in Khartoum. Also 5 Comboni Sisters were ordered to leave by August 23. (Sr. Giulia, Sr. Massima, Sr. Azezet, Sr. Miriam and Sr. Faisa)."

⁴⁶⁸ Arop Madut-Arop, op cit., pp. 305, 307, & ff.

failed to turn up because they went into swampy areas and were held up there; at the end the operation had to be called off.

The SPLA withdrew towards Nimule and the Government forces, backed up by the Mujahideen, tried to deliver the final blow to the SPLA. Their efforts were in vain as the SPLA blew up the bridge on the river Aswa and cut off the attack. Nimule remained in the hands of SPLA forces which withdrew along the border of South Sudan. In the second half of 1992 and in 1993, the government army put great efforts to eradicate completely the SPLA from the South but, in the final stage, the whole operation failed. The Government held the towns, but the SPLA held the countryside. *Seif al-Obuur* was supposed to put an end to the question of who was in control, but it left the situation as ambiguous as ever. The campaign practically ended in complete failure.

The Juba attack prompted the Government to carry out cruel reprisals against the population in Juba, suspected to have cooperated in the SPLA attack. During these operations, tens of thousands of innocent civilians were reported killed by the Security Forces. Prominent politicians like Major General Peter Cyril, former governor of Equatoria (1986-1988) and public figures like Fr. David Tombe, a Catholic Priest of the Archdiocese of Juba were arrested and detained. According to Amnesty International, very few arrested civilians, soldiers and politicians that were arrested escaped death at the hands of the Sudanese Army and Security forces during these operations.⁴⁶⁹

Wau and Raja

Wau town, likewise the others, was also in lockdown and the confreres of our community were carrying on their activity as best they could in the circumstances. At the beginning of 1989, Bro. Redaelli was appointed to the community of Wau as Development Coordinator and he also gave some assistance to the Diocesan Financial Administrator. Fr. Agostino Bertolotti arrived too in Wau together with Bro. Redaelli. He became Parish Priest of the Cathedral of Wau.

After Bro. Redaelli went on rotation to Italy in 1992, Bro. Hans Ritterbeck was appointed in his place. At that time, the link with Khartoum was almost impossible. Obtaining a travel permit to Wau, a piece of paper that would expire just after 14 days, took seven months. Eventually, a confrere took him from Khartoum to El Obeid by car and then he got a seat

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 310

on a cargo plane from El Obeid to Wau. His main task was logistical work and providing food for the poor because, at that time, there were many people in Wau with nothing to eat.

Once in Wau, Bro. Ritterbecks stayed a few months at the Palica centre together with Fr. Luigi Penzo. However, his missionary presence in Wau did not last very long because in August he got sick and, although he was treated for malaria he did not get better and had to go to Khartoum for a proper check-up and treatment.

There he was informed by the Apostolic Pro-Nuncio about the Government order that all the expatriate people who had participated in the march in Juba had to leave the country. He was one of them, so he left for Rome to see the Superior General about what to do next. Fr. Penzo, instead, carried on with his routine but very important commitment in the field of formation of Catechists and Leaders at the Palica Centre. Fr. Lorenzo Tomasoni, a medical doctor, was carrying on with his very much needed work in the clinics of Wau Diocese.

Fr. Antonio La Braca was living and working in Loko-Loko, a place where he had started an experience of insertion with the people. Fr. La Braca had had a previous missionary experience in Karamoja, Uganda, and was very well known for his missionary commitment in this specific area, with long pastoral visits to people, promoting small Christian communities according to the AMECEA understanding, communities which would grow little by little in the three dimensions of *self-reliance, self-administration and self-propagation*. He himself had adopted a very simple life style and lived with people.

As for Raja, the pastoral and educational work seemed to be proceeding normally, even though the confreres were very much affected by being isolated. The presence in Raja, at this moment in the history of South Sudan was very important and was of great encouragement to the people there. Moreover, the Catholic schools greatly assisted the young people in their intellectual and religious formation. The dedication of the Fathers in Raja was worth the effort for the Comboni presence.

By the end of year 1992, Expatriate Comboni Missionaries were present only in Wau and Raja. All those in Juba had to move, either abroad or to Khartoum. The Postulancy, as well, was moved to Khartoum because St. Paul's Major Seminary had been placed there. Fr. Todd Riebe carried on as formator of the Postulancy, but after few months he went back to USA and Fr. Francesco Debertolis continued with it. The South Sudan Province carried on with the formation of its candidates for another couple of years in Khartoum.

The only confreres remaining in Juba were Fr. Albino Adot Oryem and the Provincial, Fr. Abel Mödi. Fr. Adot was going ahead with the pastoral care of St. Kizito Parish, started by Fr. Sina in 1987, with both primary and junior schools, and also as the person in charge of Comboni House. Fr. Mödi continued as the Provincial Superior until the end of December 1992. The Superior General, Fr. David Glenday and his Council, then, gave him new directives which we will discuss in more detail in connection with the *New Sudan Group*.

The “New Sudan Group” to remain one

The Superior General Fr. David Glenday and his Council accepted the proposal sent by the *New Sudan Group* from Nairobi in July 1992. Although scattered in different places, the *New Sudan Group had to remain one* and Fr. Francesco Chemello was appointed the *New Coordinator* of the Group.⁴⁷⁰

At the same time, Fr. Abel Mödi whose term of office was expiring on 31 December, 1992, was asked to continue as Superior of the confreres belonging to South Sudan Province for the time being. (Juridically speaking, the New Sudan Group was still part of the Province, though it was led by the newly-appointed Coordinator, Fr. Francesco Chemello. However, Fr. Mödi would not continue any more as a Provincial but as a Delegate of the Superior General. The members of the same Provincial Council were also asked to continue as his Councillors and Fr. Todd Riebe as the Vice-Superior of the group.

As for the *New Sudan Group*, although it had only 10 members left, it felt strengthened by the decision of the General Council and, though

⁴⁷⁰ Rome 21/10/1992 Fr. David Glenday Gen. Superior to the Provincial of South Sudan, Fr. Abel Mödi: “*I. We ask Fr. Abel Mödi to continue as Superior of the confreres belonging to South Sudan Province for the time being. When his present term of office expires (on December 31st 1992), he will continue as my Delegate. We also ask the members of the present Provincial Council to continue as his Councillors and Fr. Todd Riebe as the Vice-Superior of the group.*”

“*Regarding the confreres belonging to those communities at the service of the Sudanese Church in the so-called “New Sudan” (Nzara) or in the refugee camps (at present, Pakele and Kakuma), we are asking Fr. Francesco Chemello to serve as Coordinator. In this capacity, we invite him: a) to keep in touch with and, when possible or necessary, visit these communities; b) to keep us in the General Council informed of the situation; c) to facilitate, as far as possible, relations between these communities and the Provinces of Uganda and Kenya and the respective Procures, d) to keep in touch with the Bishops in whose Dioceses or with whose people our confreres work.*”

scattered and challenged by the whole situation of disarray in South Sudan, there were clear signs of a new vitality and purpose: ***Where the people are, there we will be a presence of hope.***

The most important achievement was that the *New Sudan Group* had the freedom to make decisions in whatever was thought suitable for the work among the South Sudanese people, inside South Sudan in the zones under the control of the SPLA/M, and also abroad in the refugee camps in Kenya and Uganda. All this was aimed at giving the best possible service to the people in both areas.

It was clear, at any rate, that without the collaboration and the support of the Kenya and Uganda Provinces, the work of the *New Sudan Group* would have been practically impossible because of lack of personnel and logistics. With their support, instead, it continued for all those long years of war. This is why the New Sudan Group always felt very grateful to them since they enabled them to be close to the suffering people of South Sudan.

However, we must, first of all, thank God and St. Daniel Comboni for the light and courage the little group found during that June-July 1992 discernment to propose to remain a group that was autonomous of the above mentioned Provinces, as regards decision-making and choices of work and policies. The autonomy of the *New Sudan Group* proved to be the right decision for the very demanding work in a very delicate security situation requiring close attention and the monitoring of its development in the various geographical locations and of the social and spiritual needs of people.

At the end of 1992, the *New Sudan Group* consisted of 11 confreres (including Mgr. Mazzolari, Apostolic Administrator of Rumbek), 9 Priests and 2 Brothers.

Out through one door - in through another one

Strategic withdrawal; that was the term the SPLA used when they had to abandon a place or lose it, as part of the *guerrilla tactics*; the New Sudan Group had to apply a similar method to maintain its presence. If people had to move to safer places, the confreres also had to move and adapt to the changing situation. The need to abandon a certain place for a period of time could arise but, at the same time, ways were to be sought to go back to the people. The strategy was: ***Out through one door - in through another one.*** With this strategy, some helpful procedures in the work were: ***communion, adaptation, simplicity of service, safety, mobility.***

This was particularly the case in Torit Diocese where Bishop Taban had to move his seat from Torit to Nimule, then from Nimule to Narus. Yei Diocese experienced the same situation. Rumbek Diocese moved from Rumbek to Yirol, then to Nairobi or Arua (in Uganda), while trying to explore possible safe locations both within and outside the diocesan boundaries. Immediately after the exit from Yirol, the personnel were employed in the service of the young refugees coming from Ethiopia who walked to Narus, then to Lokichokio (Kenya) and finally to Kakuma Refugee Camp.

The first two commitments taken up as Comboni Missionaries, after the meeting of June 1992 in Nairobi, were the work in the refugee camps of Kakuma, Kenya, (under the responsibility of Rumbek Diocese) and St. Mary's Seminary in Kocoa (Pakele/Adjumani) Northern Uganda, (under the responsibility of Torit Diocese). As for Nzara in Western Equatoria, in the Diocese of Tombura /Yambio, the situation held throughout all the events and the confreres were carrying on normally with their pastoral, educational and catechetical commitments, though sometimes disturbed by the occasional *Antonov*⁴⁷¹ of the Khartoum Air Force making raids on the area and indiscriminately bombing the population. The New Sudan Group was then present in three Dioceses: Torit, Rumbek and Tombura/Yambio.

Rumbek Diocese, at the time, was the most unsettled of the Dioceses because of its geographical position, with no borders with neighbouring countries. The only way to reach its territories was by plane from Nairobi, Wilson Airport, or by land, war situations permitting, from Uganda. This meant that a lot of investigation regarding viability and security were needed before deciding to place a specific commitment (e.g. a Parish) in a given location.

The first investigation inside the geographical boundaries of Rumbek Diocese, after the re-capture of Yirol by the Khartoum army, was carried out by Mgr. Mazzolari and Fr. Pellerino from 19 May to 2 June, 1992,⁴⁷² but the situation still looked too uncertain to make a decision along these lines. In November, 1992, another attempt was made: Fr. Chemello (coming from Kocoa-Northern Uganda) joined Mgr. Mazzolari who

⁴⁷¹ The "Antonov" is a Russian cargo plane used by Khartoum Air Force as a bomber. It was extremely inaccurate and its use was to create panic among the civilian population because it would just kill people indiscriminately. It was carrying and dropping conventional bombs, but frequently also barrels full of explosive and nails to be dropped indiscriminately.

⁴⁷² 15 June, 1992, Mgr. C. Mazzolari: reports of his journey to Aluaklual (Aguran) with Fr. Pellerino.

decided to visit *Aguran place* with Fr. Riva.⁴⁷³ Fr. Dominic Matong and Fr. Raphael Riel (Diocesans) had temporarily placed themselves in Aguran.

The visit took place from 27 November, to 3 December, 1992, and the outcome was that the centre of the Mission would be located in Mapuordit, around 5 km south of Aguran. Fr. Pellerino and Fr. Riel were assigned to it. Unfortunately, Fr. Dominic Matong died around that time. It was by now clear that more confreres were needed to start consolidating properly the evangelizing presence in this part of the Diocese, while continuing with further explorations of other safe locations.⁴⁷⁴

Fr. Pellerino terminated the work with the refugees in Kakuma at the end of December 1992 and went to join Fr. Riel (Diocesan), who was already in Mapuordit, on 10 February, 1993. Fr. Michael Barton was also appointed to the New Sudan Group and assigned to Mapuordit and reached Mapuordit on 17 March, 1993.⁴⁷⁵ The main work was pastoral and educational. Fr. Barton was asked to start immediately with a primary school and he really took it to heart and with good results.⁴⁷⁶ Yondu IDP (*Internally Displaced People*) Camp was also taken as a new commitment and served by the Personnel of Rumbek Diocese with Fr. Riva and Bro. Ottorino Gelmini. Arua (West Nile, Uganda) was their centre of reference.

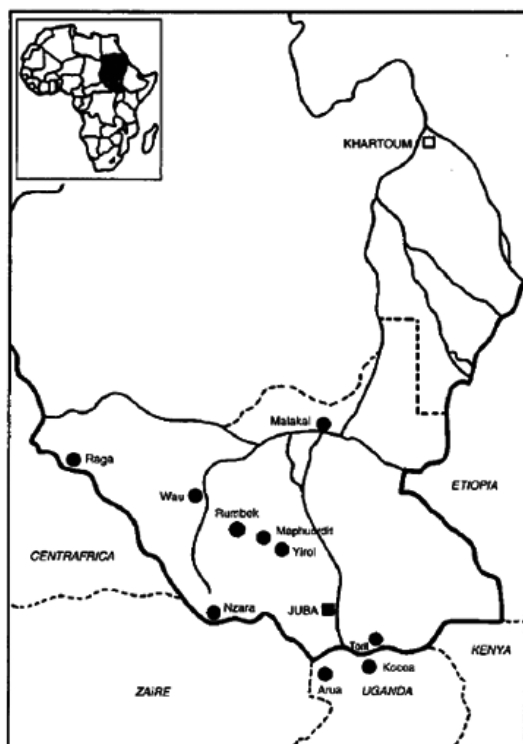
⁴⁷³ 06 December, 1992, Report by Mgr. Caesar Mazzolari on the journey into Southern Sudan with Fr. Francesco Chemello and Fr. Mario Riva from 27 November to 03 December, 1992.

⁴⁷⁴ (*In Italian*) 06 December, 1992, Fr. Chemello to Fr. Pellerino: *"I returned yesterday from the trip to Aguran with Mgr. Mazzolari and Fr. Riva. Mgr. Mazzolari has already sent to Rome the report of the trip ... Briefly, he thinks of two stations: one in YONDU CAMP (49,000 people with 2,000 children of school age) (15 km from Kaya) mostly from Bor, Kongor and Yirol, - it is in Yei Diocese, (Bishop Ercolano Lado) Fr. Peter Dada is in favour, and one in Aguran-Mapuordit (5 km south of Aguran)."*

⁴⁷⁵ Rome 21 October, 1992, Fr. Filippi: Barton Michael assigned 01 January, 1993 - Group of Mgr. Mazzolari.

(He arrived in Nairobi on 5 March and in Mapuordit on 17 March, 1993).

⁴⁷⁶ In 1993 Fr. M. Barton started with the first year of primary and by 1998 he would have students ready to start the first year of secondary school. He really made the students work hard, with purpose and good results. In this way the most intelligent ones were able to advance sooner to the upper stages. In Rumbek Diocese it was the most prominent school of the time.



Situation of the missions
in South Sudan in 1993

New Sudan group: personnel on 10 March, 1993⁴⁷⁷

The Comboni communities of the *New Sudan Group* in March, 1993, Consisted of 12 confreres (including *Mgr. Cesare Mazzolari, Apostolic Administrator of Rumbek*), of whom 9 were Priests and 3 Brothers. The communities were composed as follows:

T/Yambio Diocese

Nzara Community:

Fr. Elvio Cellana (Superior)

Fr. Igino Benini⁴⁷⁸

Fr. José Luis Martínez Acevedo

Bro. Valentino Fabris

⁴⁷⁷ Date 10 March, 1993, Status of Personnel: Report of Fr. Chemello to Fr. Filippi Gen. Council, Roma.

⁴⁷⁸ 23 November, 1992, Fr. Benini was very sick and urgently went back to Italy.

Torit Diocese

Pakele/Kocoa Community

Fr. Francesco Chemello (*Coordinator of the New Sudan Group*)

Bro. Domenico Cariolato⁴⁷⁹

Vicar General Torit Diocese

Rev. Fr. Joseph Ukelo Yala

Fr. Hector Ayon Oyiamute (was engaged in an experience outside the community attached to the Diocese of Torit from 1992 to 1996)⁴⁸⁰

Rumbek Diocese (Mgr. Cesare Mazzolari)

Aguran Community (Mapuordit):

Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino

Fr. Michael Barton

Yondu Community:

Fr. Mario Riva

Bro. Ottorino Gelmini⁴⁸¹

The years 1993 and 1994

The years 1993 and 1994 were spent looking for possible new locations with the intention of consolidating the other locations where commitments had already been undertaken and where security had improved.

During this period of time, what the *New Sudan Group* needed most was an increase in personnel. To get personnel from the General Council, the Coordinator had to make them understand that, although the situation was difficult, nevertheless, it was possible to work with relative safety in the places where our commitments were located. It was also very important to show concretely that the set-up of our commitments allowed *enough normality* in community life and that intercommunity meetings were also possible. So, the choice of locations and the physical possibility of moving between them were of utmost importance in reassuring the General Council and receiving new personnel.

⁴⁷⁹ Arrived on 17 September, 1992 in Pakele, stayed until December, 1993, then went for a Sabbatical.

⁴⁸⁰ Fr. Hector Ayon: 1992 returned to New Sudan, before the capture of Torit he went to Chukudum for Easter, after Easter, Chukudum Nagichot Ngatuba Lokichokkio on foot and then to Nairobi. In 1993 he was in Loa with Fr Julio Ida, Yohannes Le Vachier and Fr. Leo Traynor. Then in Parajok, Lobonne (care of the IDP) up to 1996.

⁴⁸¹ (Rome G. Filippi) After March, 1993, Bro. Gelmini Ottorino will go with the group of Mgr. C. Mazzolari

This was done with frequent reports about the situation on the ground, about the trips of the Coordinator visiting confreres and communities within the *Liberated Areas*, either by plane or by car, and especially during the visit of the Superior General in January 1994. The very fact that he could travel within Sudan gave him first-hand knowledge showing that the situation was difficult but that, with due care, it was also *manageable*. This was the most important achievement relating to the possible appointment of more personnel.

During that time, Western Equatoria was a clear target of the Khartoum *Seif al-Obuur* military offensive. Though the Khartoum Army recaptured many key places, and also Kaya border area, Khartoum military power seemed, by then, to have lost its bite, since it failed to get the South solidly under its control and it never reached Yambio or Tombura. The rural areas were still under SPLA control. Thus, the real purpose of the big Khartoum offensive to *eradicate completely* the SPLA from the South had failed. Yondu IDP camp had to be abandoned, because of the threat of Khartoum's army, but the community of Nzara, though it felt threatened at one time, was never in real danger of having to evacuate.

The plan was to arrange the communities in the Dioceses in such a way that intercommunity meetings would be possible by choosing locations with the physical possibility of travelling from one to the other. This became a difficult issue, especially with the Diocese of Rumbek. However, it was of the utmost importance in reassuring the General Council and receiving new personnel; the Coordinator had to make the point very clear especially to Mgr. Mazzolari.

The year 1994 was also spent searching intently for new locations, especially in the areas of Rumbek Diocese. Several explorations were made in different places, within and outside the boundaries of the Diocese, in particular where the important centres of the past missionary era were located. The idea of Mgr. Mazzolari was to reactivate them. This was a noble cause, but those places were also very well known to Khartoum and were highly unsafe because they were regularly targeted and bombed by Khartoum military planes. The harsh reality was that, with deep regret, a different approach had to be followed in this regard.

In the summer of 1994, a Comboni Intercapitular Assembly was held in Rome, a very important occasion to present and discuss the situation of South Sudan. Fr. Mödi, the Provincial Superior of South Sudan and Fr. Chemello, Coordinator of the New Sudan Group were present and presented their respective reports with the opportunity to give straightforward answers to the questions arising from the other Provincials and

Delegates. As a follow-up, later on, the Superior General and his Council made known their own final decision on the *South Sudan Circumscription* and the *New Sudan Group*.

Meanwhile, between 5 and 10 February, 1993, there was the happy event of the visit of Pope John Paul II to Uganda and on 6 February to Gulu, enabling the Seminarians of St. Mary Seminary of Kocoo and other Sudanese refugees to be present at the important event. In late 1994 there were some happy events which took place in the Liberated Areas.

One was the visit of Mgr. Mazzolari and Fr. Chemello to Marial Low, (Rumbek Diocese) during the first half of October, and the decision to make it the location of a new Parish. Fr. Benjamin Madol (Diocesan) had already been there since September and Comboni personnel would have then joined him. The second important and happy event was the Eucharistic Congress for the *Liberated Areas*, which took place in Nzara (Tombura/Yambio Diocese) at the end of the same month of October and which brought together the various Dioceses of the so called *New Sudan* through their chosen representatives.

Except for the people of Tombura/Yambio, all the other representatives were flown to Nzara by plane and were, therefore, very few, but it was a very important and meaningful historical and spiritual event because it brought together all the Dioceses of the *Liberated Areas* of South Sudan, showing that *communion* was possible even in such precarious situations.

The presence of the Eucharist is always a sign of the perpetual loving presence of Jesus among his chosen people, but in this particular time of the history of the *New Sudan*, it was also a powerful sign of the encouraging presence of Jesus among his *suffering people*, journeying together with them. It was a vivid sign of hope and of communion with the passion of Jesus, while waiting in faith for his resurrection.⁴⁸²

Plenary Assembly: 12-19 December 1994

The year 1994 closed with the Plenary Assembly of the *New Sudan Group*, which took place in Nairobi from 12 to 19 December, at the Carmelite House, Langata. It was there that the unexpected news arrived that the *New Sudan Group* had been promoted to a Delegation starting from

⁴⁸² A missionary experience in a context of war, op. cit., pp. 37-50.

1 January, 1995. This changed all the former juridical set-up of the Combonis in South Sudan and of the South Sudan Circumscription, as well.

From this moment onwards, a new phase in the history of the Comboni Missionaries in South Sudan was starting. The process, which began with the *Representative of the Superior General in South Sudan*, Fr. Raffaele Cefalo, then the Delegation Superior and Provincial, Fr. Cesare Mazzolari and the first Sudanese Provincial, Fr. Abel Mödi, all with Juba as the centre of the Province, underwent a mutation, not in spirit or in undertaking but in geographical location. The Juba reference point of South Sudan was discontinued. As from 1 January, 1995, the reference point for the missionary work in South Sudan was temporarily moved to Nairobi and it will remain there until the internal situation in South Sudan would allow the return to the original location in Juba.

Fr. Abel Mödi Nyörkö's experience (1990-1994)

"The time between 1990 and 1994 was the time of the second civil war and the SPLA was regularly shelling Juba for some time. One night in June in 1992 the SPLA entered Juba, but then they were pushed back and had to withdraw. Despite the civil war, the confreres were able to do their ministry inside Juba effectively until 1992.

During that time I could visit the confreres in Wau and Raja by plane from Khartoum. Only once did I fly from Juba to Wau. Flying to Raja from Khartoum was a risky business in those days. Once I chartered a plane from Khartoum to Raja. On the return flight we got lost; we had crossed into Chad and we were late arriving to Nyala.

It was not difficult to charter a plane and I always chartered a 'Sudan Safari' plane. The problem was that it was dangerous to fly with those planes. Once I took a plane to Raja and the following day it flew to Aweil; it was shot down as it was taking off for Khartoum. Twelve people died in the plane crash, including the two pilots who had taken me to Raja the day before."

***"As for our presence in the places where we were working,** we did not see ourselves as being different from the Local South Sudan communities and the Local Clergy. Our fate was the same as theirs. That time was also a moment of persecution by the Muslim Government against the Church. The faith of our people was made stronger, not weaker, by the persecution carried out by the Arabs. Just a few of our Christians became Muslims, but for personal gain. At any rate they were few. Even among the Church personnel, it happened that some*

betrayed their own people, as happened with Jesus. This was sad, but it was the truth.

As for myself, frankly speaking, I was always happy with the confreres. They respected me and cooperated with me as their Provincial. I did not complain against any one of them. During the shelling of Juba those who were not able to bear the situation of insecurity and danger were allowed to leave Juba. The years I was Provincial were difficult years indeed, but the confreres accepted the situation willingly without complaining, even cheerfully. They knew it was a challenge to their ministry and mission.

*Regarding the issue of insecurity, in the government-held areas, there was often the danger of shelling by the SPLA, but the confreres shouldered it. Their presence was an encouragement for both the Local Clergy and the Christians in general. I was a gift of the Lord to every one of the Combonis. I was in Bussere (Wau) when the war began in that area. Other Expatriate Missionaries decided to leave due to the dangerous situation, but the Combonis decided not to move at all.*⁴⁸³

⁴⁸³ 21 July, 2016, shared experience of Fr. Abel Mödi Nyörkö, Provincial Superior from 1990 to 1994.

SECTION TWO

Headquarters in Nairobi (Kenya)

Introduction: the Circumscription from 1995 to 2004

Section Two deals with the Circumscription led by Fr. Francesco Chemello and Fr. Ezio Bettini. It is the continuation of the *New Sudan Group* which was raised to the status of a Delegation starting from 1 January, 1995. The previous South Sudan Province with its Provincial House in Juba, in the *Government-held Areas*, was suppressed in favour of the *New Sudan Group* working in the SPLA/M *Liberated Areas*, with the existing logistic base in Nairobi, that had been used since 1990.

As a consequence of this option on the part of the General Superior and his Council, all the territories of the South under the control of the Government of Khartoum were entrusted to the care of the Comboni Missionaries of *Khartoum Province*. The territories under SPLA/M control, even in the North of Sudan, would fall under the jurisdiction of the new *Delegation of South Sudan*, based in Nairobi, such as the Nuba Mountains and the refugee camps abroad.

The two *Administrations* of the Circumscription of South Sudan of Fr. Francesco Chemello and Fr. Ezio Bettini, which operated before the CPA (Comprehensive Peace Agreement) between the SPLA/M and Khartoum Government, had to carry on using the Nairobi logistics base, *in exile*, so to speak, in order to be able to reach, by air or by land, the various locations in the *Liberated Areas*. The CPA made possible the return to the original base of the former Province, the town of Juba. This, however, will be dealt in **Section Three**.



Map of South Sudan

CHAPTER ONE

THE CIRCUMSCRIPTION

From 1995 to 1998

Delegate Superior:

Fr. FRANCESCO CHEMELLO

The second South Sudan Delegation, 1995

The first Delegation of South Sudan, in Juba, was erected on 10 March, 1983, and Fr. Raffaele Cefalo was its first Delegate. On 1 January, 1995, the second Delegation of South Sudan was erected in Nairobi, with Fr. Francesco Chemello as Delegation Superior. The purpose was the same: the care of the people of South Sudan, the majority of whom were living in the rural areas of the South and in the refugee camps abroad.

The New Sudan Group becomes a Delegation

On 1 January, 1995, the New Sudan Group becomes the *Delegation of South Sudan*⁴⁸⁴. This new juridical set-up also implied a new understanding of the fields of work within Sudan itself.

From now on the *Delegation of South Sudan* would take care of the Sudanese people in the *Liberated SPLA/M and SSIM/A Areas*⁴⁸⁵, and even

⁴⁸⁴ - 15 October, 1994, General Council: Decree of Erection of the Delegation of South Sudan.

- 15 October, 1994, Document Concerning the creation of the Delegation of S. Sudan.

- 14 December, 1994 Fr. Alois Weiss to Fr. Francesco Chemello. The Superior General: Appoints Fr. Francesco Chemello, as the Delegate for South Sudan.

- 1 January, 1995. Juridical start of the Delegation.

- From the "Bollettino" no. 186, 1995.

in places in the North such as the Nuba Mountains and the refugee camps outside Sudan, (e.g. Uganda), while the *Province of Khartoum* ⁴⁸⁶ would take care of all the areas in the North and in the South under the control of the Khartoum Government such as Juba, Wau, Raja and Malakal.

This new juridical set-up created the possibility of working in the respective areas, *Government-controlled* or otherwise, without the risk of interference and enabled the two Circumscriptions to consolidate the various initiatives taken and follow them up with regular visits without fearing the refusal of permits. As for the *South Sudan Delegation*, everything had to be followed up from Nairobi as the best logistic base and already established since the foundation of the *New Sudan Group*. Fr. Francesco Chemello was appointed Delegation Superior and Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino and Bro. Hans Dieter Ritterbecks were chosen as his Councillors. Fr. Pellerino was then appointed as Vice-Delegate ⁴⁸⁷.

This juridical set-up and the one related to the *fields of work* remained in force until the independence of South Sudan in 2011, when the geographical boundaries of the countries, the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan came into force.

The “New Sudan Group” and the “New Delegation”

With the erection of the new *South Sudan Delegation* it was clear that the journey of the *New Sudan Group* was entering into a more mature stage. Many situations on the ground had changed, the instability of the past years was no longer at the same critical level, the hope of having more confreres assigned to the Delegation was a real possibility and the fact of having a proper juridical status was surely a positive element for the planning and decision making in the different fields of undertaking.

However, it was not just a ready-made packet to be opened and disposed of. It was still a difficult journey to be carefully looked into with eyes looking intently to the future, but yet with the heavy load difficult experience of the past. There was now a breathing space with opportunities offered by the new situation but, at the same time, one had to remember

⁴⁸⁵ SPLA/M (Sudan People Liberation Army/Movement (Mainstream Torit Group). SSIM/A South Sudan Independence Movement /Army (Nassir Group).

⁴⁸⁶ Example: the Nuba of South Kordofan under SPLA/M though in the NORTH, would be served by the South Sudan Delegation.” Instead, Juba, Wau, Malakal and Raja, though in the SOUTH, would be served by the “Khartoum Province.”

⁴⁸⁷ 17 June, 1995 Curia, Roma: “Confirmation of the election of Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino as the “Vice-Delegate Superior”

that there were still many ideas and attachments to the past to be loosened up to make the journey really free, capable of the mission the Delegation was called to.

It was not only a matter of planning a new work of presence and locations, or of the number of confreres or the amount of missionary work to be undertaken among the innumerable needs to be faced in the years to come, but *the quality of missionary life* the new Delegation was to assume. This required deeper reflection and discernment on new ways of evangelizing and being present; this, in turn, meant devoting more time to these realities, among the many activities and commitments already there.

All these realities, on the side of the Delegation, needed better sharing of responsibilities within the Secretariats of Evangelization, On-going formation, Animation and Finances, as well, so as to become animators and foster a deeper sensitivity that would enable the confreres to grow in their personal lives and transmit the new values to the people in the places where they were exercising their ministry. The expected assignment of new confreres would certainly bring new positive opportunities in this regard. New strategies had to be found in all the aspects of life of the Delegation, spiritual, human, practical and, especially in the evangelizing ministry.

Searching for a New Strategy

As mentioned in chapter III, when speaking of the *New Sudan Group*, due to the different situations, it was necessary to find a new strategy for pastoral/missionary work. The first thing was to make a plan where the communities would be able to find concrete ways of living up to the requirements of the Comboni Missionary life according to the invitation of the General Council. Moreover, the General Council had to be shown that, although the situation was hard and precarious, nonetheless, it would not prevent the communities and the group from relating, sharing and growing in community life and values in all aspects and requirements.

Then, though the situation was still risky, it had not to be so dangerous as to make safe emergency evacuation impossible when necessary. This implied choosing missions where confreres could safely evacuate via land or by air and in places at low risk of bombing from Khartoum military aircraft. It meant abandoning the traditional well-established centres and starting new ones in the rural areas far away enough from the main roads.

This policy became a particular issue of friction especially with the group of Rumbek Diocese. Since Mgr. Mazzolari was a man with a *big-heart*, he tended to establish places in the most dangerous areas as they

were certainly the *poorest and most abandoned*. However, this approach was certainly not practicable for the development of a manageable strategy for the *South Sudan Delegation*. It would have hindered the establishment of a viable plan that would encourage the appointment of younger personnel to South Sudan, and of personnel to the Diocese of Rumbek.

In a couple of instances our confreres in remote places such as Nyamlel,⁴⁸⁸ and Pariang⁴⁸⁹ really ran the risk of being cut off by the government militia or government troops with no hope of being rescued. Moreover, all these places were outside the territory of Rumbek Diocese. It was clear that this planning, however generous, would have led nowhere. The only way of assisting those places was by *safari* and then returning to safer locations.

As a conclusion to the reflections and debates, the Delegate and his Council had to make clear some points of procedure for all the Dioceses:

1. The Comboni communities had to be situated in locations where they could communicate by land and be safely rescued if necessary.
2. In Rumbek Diocese the communities had to be located *within the diocesan boundaries* (except for refugee camps).
3. The absence of these conditions would have precluded the appointment of any new personnel to such Dioceses.

Remote places could always be served by *safari* with visits of one or two weeks, weather and safety permitting.

⁴⁸⁸ At the end of 1994, Fr. J. Pellerino and Bro. D. Cariolato came out alive from Nyamlel only because of the firmness with which the local SPLA commander ordered them to follow another road than the usual one. "German Agro-Action", instead, had one person killed because of an ambush by the militia along that road. In case of evacuation, the planes would have had to carry a drum of kerosene and refuel on the ground putting at risk the whole operation.

⁴⁸⁹ Pariang was alternatively held by different factions and far too insecure for the permanent presence of a community. This is what happened also with CCM Doctors from Turin, see:

"THE ARAKIS PERIOD: 1992-98"

<http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/sudan1103/11.htm>

(Quotation 227) "Since 1983, Ruweng (Panaru) County had been left without any assistance whatsoever from the outside world ... Security continued to be the main problem for those wishing to bring help to the seriously ill population. In 1994 and 1995 the Italian medical NGO Comitato Collaborazione Medica (CCM) visited the area three times, bringing medicine and medical equipment, intending to build a hospital in the Padit area. In 1995 two CCM doctors were captured by government militia and taken to Khartoum, bringing to an end the work of CCM in the area.

Commitments of the new Delegation

In the span of time between 1990 and 1994, the New Sudan Group went through many changes. The commitments with the Dioceses at the beginning of 1995 were:

Torit Diocese:

Narus Parish, among the Toposa people; started in November, 1994.

Pakele/Kocoa, among the refugees in Northern Uganda; started in July, 1992.

Rumbek Diocese:

Mapuordit, among the Dinka people; started in February, 1993.

Marial Lou, among the Dinka people; started in September, 1994.

Tombura/Yambio Diocese:

Nzara Parish, among the Zande people; restarted in December, 1971, and again in November, 1991.

After the hard experience in Nyamlel of Fr. Pellerino and Bro. Cariolato who narrowly escaped an ambush by the government militia on their way to the airstrip, since the area was highly insecure and with no means of receiving security information, the Delegate decided that Nyamlel could not be a permanent place for a Comboni community and invited Mgr. Mazzolari to explore other more suitable places within the diocesan boundaries. Both Mgr. Mazzolari and Fr. Chemello went together to make a survey. The choice was for Agang Rial, (not far from Rumbek town which was still under government control, but far away enough to keep a safe distance). The Delegation Council agreed and, in May 1995, Fr. Pellerino and Bro. Cariolato were themselves appointed to start it.

Thus, Rumbek Diocese had three Parishes with the presence of a Comboni community: Mapuordit, Marial Lou and Agang Rial. These three mission stations were accessible by car and could communicate with each other and have meetings among themselves without much difficulty. This accessibility was confirmed during the visit of Fr. Filippi and Fr. Casillas (General Councillors) from the end of December 1995 to 13 January, 1996, who travelled between these missions by car together with the Delegate and Fr. Bizzarro.

The visit of the General Superior, Fr. David Glenday, in January 1994, to Arua, Pakele/Kocoa, Marial Lou and Nzara, with the Assembly in Nzara, and the afore-mentioned visit of Fr. Filippi and Fr. Casillas, made the General Council confident that the assignment of young personnel would

now be possible. The care taken by the Delegate and his Council to make the situation viable bore fruit: a fair number of young confreres were assigned to the South Sudan Delegation afterwards.

This created more confidence also within the Delegation, which could now realistically consider wider fields of commitments. The most urgent issue was that of the *Nuer*. In fact, in 1993, a couple of Catechists, Joseph Pal Mut and John Kuok Baluang, went from Leer to Nairobi to ask for Priests. They met the staff of New People Media Centre, Fr. Renato Kizito Sesana and Fr. Paul Donohue, who organized a meeting with Bishops and other Priests of other Religious Congregations so that their request could be heard.

Nobody really believed the two envoys when they said that in the Nuer land, an area with a strong presence of the Presbyterian Church, there were many Catholic converts. Therefore, Fr. Kizito and Fr. Donohue organized a trip to Leer to investigate their report and found that it was indeed true. What they saw and experienced was beyond what they were told to expect, so much so that they were moved to tears.

What they saw not only confirmed the Catechists' report but was a genuine witness to a strong and self-reliant Lay Catholic community already capable of standing on its own feet through the work of Catechists and Leaders. Therefore it was only right that they should have Priests to accompany them. Their report and their request were published in the press and made a big impact. The Comboni Missionaries could not ignore it. Lack of personnel was an issue. Nevertheless, the Delegation Council took it as one important point to be developed and presented to the General Council for further discernment.

The General Council gave a positive answer on the topic, thus, Bro. Hans Ritterbecks was made available for the *Nuer Project* in connection with Torit Diocese. Bishop Paride Taban, in fact, was already taking care of this mission and Bro. Ritterbecks started working there, waiting for a Comboni Father to come available.

Another commitment that the new South Sudan Delegation inherited from the former South Sudan Province was the work of Basic Formation. In fact, until the end of 1994, all the students in formation were under the jurisdiction of the Province (in Juba), but from 1 January, 1995, the responsibility passed to the Delegation. This concerned the candidates already in formation in the Novitiate of Namugongo. As for the formation in the Pre-Postulancy and Postulancy everything had to be re-arranged.

The Delegation had no structures or personnel to get engaged immediately in this area and the whole matter had to be looked into during

the following years. What was clear, instead, was the commitment to Vocation Promotion. This, however, was possible only in the refugee camps of Pakele/Kocoa and in Nzara. In the other missions, the issue was still premature.

Another commitment was the new Delegation house of Nairobi (Jacaranda Avenue, Lavington) which the General Council accepted to be purchased as a logistic centre for the Delegation work in South Sudan.

So, to the former five commitments, the South Sudan Delegation had now to add the following, thus bringing the total to nine commitments:

- Rumbek Diocese:

Agang Rial (May, 1995)

- Malakal Diocese, care/of Torit Diocese (October, 1995)

The Nuer Project,

- Basic Formation

- The Delegation House of Nairobi (in Jacaranda Ave., Lavington).

When Fr. Antonio La Braca, after the experience of Loko-Loko (Wau), arrived in Nairobi in January, 1996, for a preliminary talk with the Delegate, having accepted to work among the Nuer people, he was assigned to the Delegation. This made it possible to continue with the Nuer Project, already started with Bro. Hans Ritterbecks, and marked the first step towards the erection of the community of Leer.

The official opening of the mission of LEER was fixed for 12 March, 1996, after Fr. La Braca, Bro. Ritterbecks and Sr. Giovannina Zucca, on the side of the Comboni Sisters, met with the leaders, the Catechists and the people, and agreed on some guidelines regarding their presence among the Nuer people.

*(For full list, ref. Appendix to Part Two, Section Two
Chapter One, point no. 1)*

Three intense personal experiences of Fr. Chemello

When going around visiting people, normal experiences are not remembered among many activities which are part and parcel of daily life, but there some experiences that remain very much alive and impressed in the heart and memory because of their unusual nature. Among the most memorable are the visit to Marial Lou, among the Dinka, the visit to Leer among the Nuer and the discovery of the Delegation house.

Marial Lou experience

The most meaningful experience Fr. Chemello had during the visiting of Dinka places was at the beginning of October, 1984.⁴⁹⁰

“Mgr. Mazzolari, Apostolic Administrator of Rumbek, Bro. Ritterbecks and I were visiting Marial Lou to assess whether, as Comboni Missionaries, we would agree to take it up as one of our commitment. The place already been opened in the month of September by Fr. Benjamin Madol, a Diocesan Priest. We received a real warm welcome on the part of the chief and of the people, we jumped over the bull to be slaughtered, and then, after personally greeting the chief and the other civil and military authorities and people, we were accommodated under a huge tamarind tree, which to me seemed bigger than a church.

The Dinka chief welcomed us with his speech, which I followed with attention and interest through an interpreter, and told of all the joys and anxieties of his and of his people. He mentioned what they expected from the Diocese and from ourselves, making all of us share in their vicissitudes of life and giving us reasons to plan for our commitment among them. However, towards the end of his speech, his words became more grave and dense in meaning. He was no more talking about needs, but about a very existential reality for them, as Dinka people. I would say, the most important one for him and his people.

*He went on and concluded with these words: **We really thought that God had abandoned us..., now we see you here, this is the sign that God has not abandoned us!** This final few words were like a sword piercing my heart to the point of tears (which I did not show), but that revealed to me the real way we, and our presence among them, were seen. We were not just people ‘bringing some help’ to them, we were people revealing and confirming to him and to them that **God was still present among them, that God had not forgotten them.***

*Without possibly realizing, he himself revealed to us the true nature of our mission, for which the South Sudan Group in July 1992 opted: **to be a sign of God’s presence and hope among the suffering and abandoned South Sudanese people.**”⁴⁹¹*

⁴⁹⁰ Letter 03/11/94 Visit Marial Lou and Eucharistic Congress of NZARA

⁴⁹¹ October, 1994, visit to Marial Lou (Rumbek Diocese), witness of Fr. Francesco Chemello, Delegate.

LEER experience

Another very meaningful experience of Fr. Chemello happened among the Nuer people in LEER, in the second half of January, 1995. Mgr. Paride Taban, Bishop of Torit, had scheduled a visit to Leer, after the Torit diocesan meeting held in Chukudum. He was in fact in charge of the *Liberated Areas* under the SSIM/A movement (the Nassir Faction), with an agreement with the Bishop of Malakal, Mgr. Vincent Mojwok Nyiker, who was forbidden to visit the Rebel Areas and was confined to offering pastoral care only to the town of Malakal.

Bishop Paride invited Fr. Chemello and Sr. Giovannina Zucca (of the Comboni Sisters) to pay a visit, on the following Sunday, to see the situation of the Nuer people in Leer. At the beginning, Fr. Chemello refused saying that, a visit to Leer was not at all useful, since the Delegation had no personnel and it would appear as to go there with empty promises. However, Bishop Taban insisted and, after discussing it with Sr. Zucca, sceptical though he was, Fr. Chemello accepted.

The people supposed to go to Leer with Bishop Taban were: Fr. Matthew Hauman, of the Mill Hill Fathers, Fr. Chemello, Sr. Zucca and Sr. Maria Mazzocco (Comboni Sisters), and Sr. Rita Scovia of the Missionary Sisters of Mary Mother of the Church (MSMMC). A *Trackmark Ltd. Flight* was scheduled for Saturday, but was delayed until Sunday morning for mechanical reasons. That night the travellers had to be put up in the *Operation Lifeline Sudan* OLS camp in Lokichokio. This is what Fr. Chemello says about his experience:

"I drove from Chukudum to Lokichokio. Along the way Sr. Zucca felt sick and started vomiting, probably due to malaria or just the bad road..., or bad driving. At Loki she was alright. I, instead, during the night suffered a terrible attack of gastric malaria, so strong that I could not reach even the toilet a few metres away... In such a condition I started thinking that a trip on a small Cessna Caravan Plane, the following day, was not advisable at all! If something like what happened during the night occurred during the flight, I would probably asphyxiate everybody in that small plane with no toilet. What was I to do? This was the only chance for Leer..."

While thinking of possible alternatives, I put my hands into my satchel and I found a big Uchumi Supermarket plastic bag. An immediate inspiration came to my mind: I went immediately to one of the OLS toilets, took three toilet rolls, unrolled them into the plastic bag, made two holes for my legs and put them through, binding the

*plastic bag around my waist. A perfect baby nappy! Like a baby, in case of emergency, I was now safe, and so would have been the other passengers in the plane... Was it an inspiration from God for the Nuer cause? I do not know, but the trip was possible... and the issue went ahead...*⁴⁹²

*During the various visits I did around South Sudan, with other missionaries, we were always remarkably well received by the people, but the welcome of the people of Leer surpassed all others. That Sunday morning, a huge crowd of Nuer people was waiting there at the airstrip for hours (the flight was late) to receive Bishop Taban and the people accompanying him.*⁴⁹³ *The reception was both exceptional and emotional. The joy of the people was beyond words, as was that of the guests. The leaders confirmed that the people had walked for days and some for weeks, from all corners of Nuer land, in order to reach Leer in time for the great event.*

When our aircraft landed, we saw the great crowd of Nuer people waiting at the airstrip, and when we disembarked they surrounded us, greeting us with vigorous handshakes, songs and dances while the women added their traditional ululations with the children running around everywhere. They accompanied us holding papyrus sleeping mats over our heads and, singing and dancing, they brought us to a grass hut where we could sit down and then we were properly greeted and served...

The big crowd of people was waiting with great commotion in the open air place prepared for the celebration of the Holy Mass where Baptisms of children and adults were to take place, together with Confirmations and First Holy Communions. People had travelled from very distant places, like Waat and Akobo, on the border with Ethiopia, and for many days, to be present at this rare event with Bishop Paride Taban. The mass of people was so big that Bishop Taban asked Fr. Hauman and me to help him to administer Confirmation.

'A great Pentecost', exclaimed Bishop Paride talking to me, 'and a great mess as well', I added! But one thing that could not be denied was the great joy and faith of the Nuer Catholics who, from all over the Nuer land, came to Leer bearing witness to their faith, their joy and their

⁴⁹² Personal incident of Fr. Chemello: A missionary experience, op. cit., p. 58-59, footnote.

⁴⁹³ A witness account by Fr. Chemello: A missionary experience, op. cit., pp. 61-62, footnote.

choice to follow Christ and to testify that the Catholic Church was already solid among Nuer People.”

Finding the Delegation House in Jacaranda Avenue

By the end of the year 1994, the New Sudan Group had already grown consistently and it was clear that the Province of Kenya could not provide space for all the confreres. With the erection of the Delegation it became even more evident that a separate house was necessary. The proposal went to the General Council which approved it. The house had possibly to be located near to the Kenya Provincial House and Bethany House of Rumbek Diocese.

Finding a suitable house was not easy with all the NGOs and agencies looking for residences. Prices were high and all the existing houses for rent or for sale were too small or needed to be demolished and rebuilt from scratch, requiring too much work or too much time to get them ready. Finally, a suitable house was found in Lavington, in Jacaranda Avenue. Fr. Chemello struggled a lot to find it and the process became also a particular personal experience of faith and searching:

“I started a novena to our founder Daniel Comboni and began going around, literally house by house, for many days. There were some good plots but they very far away in the countryside and in not very safe areas. Moreover, they needed to be built or rebuilt from scratch, something already excluded. That Saturday morning, I went to view the area of Lavington, Jacaranda Avenue. I was very tired and discouraged. I looked at my watch and saw it was already past 12. That was enough! I would go home, have lunch and a rest! I hit the accelerator and sped away....

As I looked at the jacaranda trees, I saw a sign on the gate of a house: ‘For Sale’. I did not bother to stop but went on at speed. However, in my mind I still had the image of the house and automatically evaluated it as looking good. In a doubtful mood I stopped, reversed, and went for a closer look. The external appearance was good and it seemed to have been built recently. I parked the car and asked to enter. I talked with the owner who led me inside the house itself. The family was still there. I greeted them and went around checking. I immediately thought that the house, with some few adaptations, would be the right one for us and we could occupy it immediately. I told the owner I would come back the same afternoon with somebody else.

*'Never do things in a rush!' I told myself, but we had to hurry up. I went to the Kenya Provincial House, had a quick, late lunch, called Fr. Fernando Colombo, the Provincial of Kenya, and asked him to come immediately with me to see it. He, too, thought we should buy it. I thought: 'That's it!' When we went back home I realized it was the last day of my novena... Of course, we needed some time to evaluate it better and finalize all the details, but 'That was it', Jacaranda House.'*⁴⁹⁴

The price, according to the time, was a bit high but, thank God, the funds were found and, by the first of September 1995, after all legal matters were concluded, the confreres who were guests of the Kenya Province at Ngong Road were able to move in and begin the required work of renovation and adaptation.

Consolidating the old and starting new missions

In the 1990s the main attention was given to consolidating the existing missions and starting new ones. During this period of time the South Sudan Delegation had the following commitments:

Torit Diocese: two commitments

1. **Kocoa**, *St. Mary's Seminary* (Northern Uganda) with the commitment in the refugee camps of Pakele-Adjumani since July 1992. With Bro. Mario Rossignoli (October, 1993) and Fr. Alfredo Mattevi (Since April, 1994).
2. **Narus**, in the eastern part of Eastern Equatoria, the new temporary seat of Torit Diocese and pastoral work among the Toposa People, since the arrival of Fr. Elia Ciapetti (November, 1994).

Tombura/Yambio Diocese: one commitment

1. **Nzara**, since November, 1991, with Pastoral work, Palica Centre, Primary and Intermediate schools. With Fr. Cellana, Bro. Fabris, Fr. Martinez and Fr. Horácio Ribeiro Rossas.⁴⁹⁵

Rumbek Diocese: three commitments

1. **Mapuordit**, with Fr. Pellerino, Fr. Barton, (Fr. Raphael Riel – Diocesan Priest) and, on a temporary basis, Fr. Claudio Lurati from 14 April until August, 1995.⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁹⁴ A house for the Delegation, Fr. Chemello: A missionary experience, op. cit., p. 57-58, footnote.

⁴⁹⁵ Appointed starting from 01 July 1995. In NZARA until 01 July 1998.

2. **Marial Lou**, with (Fr. Benjamin Madol – Diocesan Priest as from September, 1994), Fr. Riva (as from October, 1994), Fr. Bizzarro (as from December, 1994). He was previously appointed to Mapuordit as from 29 October, 1994.
3. **Agang Rial**, with Fr. Pellerino (July, 1995), Bro. Cariolato (July 1995), Fr. Stragapede (August, 1995)⁴⁹⁷.
 - Fr. Kizito Sesana occasionally and for a limited period of time collaborated with Rumbek Diocese⁴⁹⁸.

Malakal Diocese under the care of Torit Diocese for the *Liberated Areas*: one commitment.

1. **The Nuer Project** - Bro. Ritterbecks (14 October, 1995)

Nairobi (Kenya)

1. **The Delegation House** in Jacaranda Avenue.
The Delegate Fr. Chemello, Fr. Polacchini, (Local Superior), Fr. Zanardi and Bro. Confalonieri (July, 1995).

In Basic Formation (end 1995)

- **Scholastics with temporary vows:**
 - Louis Okot Tony Ochermoi (Nairobi)
 - Aventore Jimmy Milla (Rome)
 - Bosco Anthony Mawa (Lima)
 - Martin Lako Mödi (Elstree).
- **Novitiate of Namugongo:**
 - Francis Okeny
 - Joseph Taban
 - Paul Idra

The South Sudanese confreres serving the mission in other Provinces at the start of the South Sudan Delegation, in January 1995, were:

- Fr. Abel Mödi Nyörkö (in Khartoum), Fr. Joseph Ukelo Yala (in South Africa), Fr. Albino Adot Oryem (in South Africa), Fr. Peter Magalasi (in D.R. Congo).

⁴⁹⁶ Fr. C. Lurati, from Mapuordit went to visit by car Agang Rial and Marial Lou. This was very important and it showed that, with good will, the three communities could plan regular meetings among themselves without any great problem.

⁴⁹⁷ Fr. M. Stragapede: 25 August, 1995, appointment to Agang Rial.

⁴⁹⁸ Fr. Renato Kizito Sesana: SS. 1995-1996

- 22 April, 1995, Fr. Kizito asks Fr. Fernando Colombo (Kenya Province) to work with Mgr. C. Mazzolari for one year.

- 01 July, 1995 Fr. D. Glenday, Sup. Gen. appoints him to SS. Delegation for Rumbek Diocese. SS. Delegation confirms the request on 20 July, 1995.

- Fr. Hector Ayon Oyiamute was *absent from community*, for an experience attached to the Diocese of Torit from 1992 to 1996.

The total number of confreres in the South Sudan Delegation working in/for the *Liberated Areas* of Sudan at the end of year 1995 was 19, including Mgr. Mazzolari, 14 Priests and 5 Brothers.

(For full list, ref. Appendix to Part Two, Section Two
Chapter One, point no. 2)

Priesthood in Sudan: the Golden Jubilee

The year 1995 saw another great event for the Catholic Church in the Sudan: it was the *Golden Jubilee of Priesthood*. The SCBC Mini Conference⁴⁹⁹ decided that it would be held together by the three Dioceses of the *Liberated Areas* in Chukudum on 25 November, 1995, the feast of Christ the King. Fr. Jerome Bidai Siri, from T/Yambio Diocese, was present, celebrating his *Golden Jubilee* and Fr. Hector Ayon who was celebrating his *Silver Jubilee*. The Delegate was present together with Bro. Ritterbecks.

Year 1996 unfolding

The year 1996 was a very special year for many reasons: *first*, at the level of the Comboni Institutes, with the Beatification of the founder Mgr. Daniel Comboni on 17 March; *second*, for the Delegation of South Sudan which could enter, little by little, into a better programme of reflection and formation at the level of evangelization and attention to the values of the Institute, which before was difficult to take up due to the unsettled situation we were in; *third*, it was a year in which a fairly good number of confreres were assigned to the Delegation, in particular young confreres coming directly from Basic Formation (Scholasticates and Brothers' Centres). All this brought to the Delegation a new draught of fresh air and renewal which was very much needed for the health of the whole group.

⁴⁹⁹ SCBC Mini Conference: During the SCBC Plenary Assembly (The Sudanese Bishops were there for the AMECEA Conference) in Limbe, Malawi, 23 August-4 September, 1995, (*The SCBC Mini-Conference encompasses the three Dioceses of Torit, Tombura/Yambio, Rumbek, partially Yei and El Obeid Diocese in regard to the "Nuba Mountains"*), decided that: "*The Golden Jubilee of Priesthood will be celebrated together by the 3 Dioceses in Chukudum on the 25th of November 1995, feast of Christ the King.*"

Regarding the first point, the Beatification of our founder Mgr. Daniel Comboni on 17 March, all the Dioceses of the South organized themselves in such a way as to assure that a delegation of people should be present in Rome during the feast. Of course, it was a tough time for the organizers, since they had to face all the problems of documents and immigration permits. However, the difficulties were overcome and South Sudanese people were present at the Beatification of their *first Bishop and Founder*, as well.

As a follow-up to the celebrations in Rome, there were other celebrations all over the world where Comboni Missionaries were present. In South Sudan the chosen place was Nzara in the Diocese of Tombura/Yambio. Their Bishop and founder of the Church in Sudan (and South Sudan) was coming home, not only, but now precisely to the *Liberated Areas*.

The celebration of Nzara was scheduled for 20 October, 1996, with the participation of Fr. David Glenday, the Superior General, Bro. Guillermo Casas (General Councillor), Sr. Libanos Ayele CMS (General Councillor), the Delegate of the South Sudan Delegation and the Provincial of the Comboni Sisters in South Sudan. The celebration was really exceptional, with the contribution of all the Dioceses, but in particular Tombura/Yambio Diocese and the two Comboni communities of Nzara (MCCJ and CMS) who worked hard on the logistics.

The Local Church was represented by Mgr. Joseph Gasi, (Bishop of T/Yambio), Mgr. Max Macram (El Obeid Diocese/ Nuba) and Mgr. Cesare Mazzolari of Rumbek Diocese, together with other Priests and people. Although Mgr. Comboni is the direct founder of the two missionary Institutes, the *Comboni Missionaries* and the *Comboni Missionary Sisters*, the true *Sons and Daughters* of Comboni are actually the people of the Local Church of the Sudan.

Nonetheless, the two Institutes of the Comboni Missionaries (MCCJ) and of the Comboni Missionary Sisters (CMS), were the instruments through which the Gospel of Jesus was transmitted in the Sudan. They worked hard that the Gospel might take root and grow among the Sudanese people. For this reason, there was a very meaningful ritual celebrating the *Handing over of the Gospel* from the hands of our Superior General, Fr. David Glenday, representing all the dreams of Comboni for Africa, into the hands of Bishop Joseph Gasi Abangite, representing the *beloved Sudanese Children of Comboni*, for whom he gave his life, and who constitute the Sudanese Local Church.

In response, Bishop Joseph Gasi, presented the Superior General with a traditional gift of a pair of *short Zande trousers* made from the bark of a special tree, together with other traditional objects symbolizing the culture of the people who received the Gospel, people who welcomed Jesus and started following him, taking up the challenge of inculturating his message in their lives.⁵⁰⁰ It was a beautiful sign of the interaction of gifts between evangelizers and evangelized people. The gift of Mgr. Gasi, in particular, was a reminder that every culture has something useful, meaningful and important to offer.⁵⁰¹

Regarding the second point, the Delegation of South Sudan had the chance to enter, little by little, into a better programme of reflection and formation at the level of evangelization and attention to the values of the Institute. The war situation in the rural areas was subsiding, the SPLA had a stronger hold everywhere and this was creating new opportunities of consolidation and growth of the places where we were present and was giving more peace of mind to tackle basic issues of Evangelization, Community Life and Pastoral Planning. I will deal, later on, with the specific themes of our assemblies, much richer in topics and personnel ready to share.

The third point regarded the appointment of a fairly good number of confreres, in particular young confreres coming directly from the basic formation (Scholasticates and Brothers' Centre). This was the greatest gift of God and richness for the Delegation, because it was bringing fresh approaches, new ideas and a richer opportunity of sharing on evangelization topics and values, which the new generation of confreres were bringing into the Delegation.

At the beginning of the year 1996, the Delegation Council decided to take the Toposa area as a priority for evangelization. Bishop Paride renewed the proposal of taking care of Isoke Parish or Kimatong Parish, which were abandoned at the end of May 1992, but the Delegation Council thought it was better to strengthen the commitment in the Toposa area

⁵⁰⁰ Regarding those "short Zande trousers", some people present really wished that the Superior General would wear them to experience personally the "*struggle for inculturation*." In fact, those traditional trousers made out of the bark of a special tree were rather stiff and had to be worn for some time, causing itching and chafing where they touched the skin, before they became soft and comfortable. The writer adds: "*Maybe Bishop Joseph Gasi really meant to make him taste what 'this challenge between evangelizers and evangelized people meant' along the years...*" something which, actually, can be true for both sides (Local Church and Missionaries).

⁵⁰¹ A missionary experience, op. cit., pp. 69-71.

because of the strong need of evangelization and because it was offering the possibility of having a couple of Comboni communities in the whole area, thus, giving the opportunity of communication, sharing and possible exchange of personnel with the same language. Fr. Elia Ciapetti, already Parish Priest, was chosen as the Superior of the community.

The other decision was the opening of Leer Mission, in Unity State, among the Western Nuer people, as a follow up to the *Nuer Project*. Fr. Antonio La Braca was chosen as the Superior of the community.⁵⁰² He was joined immediately by Bro. Hans Ritterbecks, already assigned to it, and later on by Bro. Raniero Iacomella who would be assigned to the SS. Delegation as from 1 July, 1996, and appointed to Leer as from 1 September, 1996. Finally, Fr. Fernando González Galarza was assigned to the SS. Delegation as from 1 July, 1996, and appointed to Leer on 24 October of the same year. As for the Comboni Sisters, they had not yet enough personnel ready and Sr. Giovannina Zucca joined the group in an intermittent way.

The year 1996 also faced both positive and challenging situations. One challenging one happened in Mapuordit in August (17-29) where there was a serious misunderstanding between the local SPLA commander and the Comboni community of Mapuordit. It could have led to the closure of the mission. Fortunately, after 13 days of debate the matter ended positively. A positive one, instead, happened in November with the visit of the Pro-Nuncio, his Grace Archbishop Joseph E. Ender, to the Sudanese *Liberated Areas*. It was really very significant. Bishop Taban accompanied him and Fr. Chemello was also present. The people received him with great joy and enthusiasm, as if Pope John Paul II himself had come.

In November, 1996, the Delegate, together with Bishop Max Macram, went to visit the people of the Nuba Mountain and explore the possibility of having a commitment there, possibly in Kauda. However, this desire of the Delegation Council never did materialize. By the end of the year also the situation in Congo became very bad and, on 30 December, the confreres

⁵⁰² **Daniel Kai Liah** H/Catechist of the Catholic Christian community of LEER to the Delegate. "We have already received your letter on 20/02/1996, the Christian community of Leer and Upper Nile as whole (have) very well appreciated what you have done for them, we really give you our thanks (and) to almighty God who answered our great desire. And also to Fr. Francesco, because you represented our needs to your people (the) Comboni Missionaries. ...We really appreciate and welcome the visit you promised before the month of May. May God lead you in peace."

from Duru and the Sisters of Duru/Dungu had to flee. They were welcomed in Nzara.

Bilateral agreements between the MCCJ and the Ordinaries

It is also worth mentioning the start of having formal *bilateral agreements* with the Bishops of the *Liberated Areas*. This topic was always very difficult also during the time of the former South Sudan Province, since the Bishops were not used to the idea that they had also a responsibility of *supporting* the missionaries working in their Dioceses. The only exception to this was Torit Diocese who made a real effort to be welcoming.

Actually, in all the other Provinces where the Comboni Missionaries were working in Africa or elsewhere, the contract was fundamental to their presence in a Diocese. In Sudan, especially in the South, this was always a difficult issue. However, in the Dioceses of the *Liberated Areas* it took time but, little by little, it was accepted, though its practical implementation took place with the new South Sudan Delegation only in 1999.

Thanks be to God, security in South Sudan in 1996 was fairly good and the various commitments were consolidated. Even though Khartoum was bombing some centres here and there, our locations were not disturbed. The future of the mission in South Sudan started looking much brighter. The General Council was increasingly confident regarding the Comboni presence in the *Liberated Areas*.

At the end of 1996, the total number of confreres in the South Sudan Delegation working in/for the *Liberated Areas* of Sudan was 28, including Mgr. Mazzolari: 21 Priests and 7 Brothers.

Assemblies and topics of Evangelization and Formation

From 1995 onwards, the situation in the *Liberated Areas* grew more and more stable and, as stated above, there was a significant increase of new and younger personnel. This was a blessing for the Delegation since it could organise Delegation assemblies with meaningful topics of Evangelization and Formation, which could not be organized in former years because of the many emergencies with forced movement and displacements. Confreres had also a better chance to have a more meaningful community life enabling them to tackle important issues. Moreover, the house in Nairobi helped considerably with logistics.

Thus, starting from January 1996, together with the Annual Retreat, there was the opportunity of inviting to the Assemblies experienced confreres of other Provinces or people specialised in specific topics.

Plenary Assembly of January, 1996

The Delegation Superior together with Fr. Martinez, in charge of the Secretariat of Evangelization,⁵⁰³ sent around a questionnaire in order to help the reflection in the communities and bring reports to the Delegation's General Assembly from 7-10 January, 1996. The points dealt were all issues mainly concerning evangelization. This was the first great opportunity to open up the horizon in the journey of the Delegation.

The questions to be reflected upon were meant to give an evaluation of the existing situation in each mission station at socio-politico-economic, cultural, and religious level. Confreres were supposed to identify the most relevant needs requiring attention in the different areas and places of presence. Confreres were asked also to identify the pastoral priorities of the Diocese of presence and of their communities.

Among the many needs and priorities, they were requested to find out and name three priorities they were already working upon and to describe briefly how they were implementing them.

Particular attention was given to the Formation of Leaders, to the type of leaders they were forming, how many they were and how they were doing it. Another point was how often they were gathering them for seminars, workshops, etc. as well as the content of what they were studying, conveying, and teaching them and what difficulties and challenges they were finding along the way.

In this context of evangelization, special relevance was given to the issue of the Catechumenate, the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults), how the pastoral programme was carried out, what type of Catechumens there were, their age and gender, its duration, the frequency of meetings, the content and the methods.

Another important aspect was co-operation with communities of Sisters, of other Religious and Local Clergy: what kind of collaboration there was and in which areas, what were the difficulties and challenges found; the same with the Lay Missionary Personnel and the NGOs.

Of particular relevance for everybody was the recent *African Synod* which took place in 1994. It was an opportunity to discuss the kind of

⁵⁰³ Questionnaire prepared by Fr. Chemello and Fr. Maartinez, 8 November, 1995. FSSPJ.

material received about it, how it was taken up and discussed in the communities, with the pastoral agents and with the people, and if any translation of the most meaningful parts and important issues had been made into the local languages.

Since the years leading up to the Beatification of Comboni were so filled with reflections, it was clear that a question on the relevance of this great event for South Sudan, for the Delegation and for each of the communities could not go unanswered, both regarding community initiatives and programmes, already taken up or to be foreseen at Parish and Diocesan level. It was even more important to see what kind of impact this special occasion had on evangelization in the places of presence.

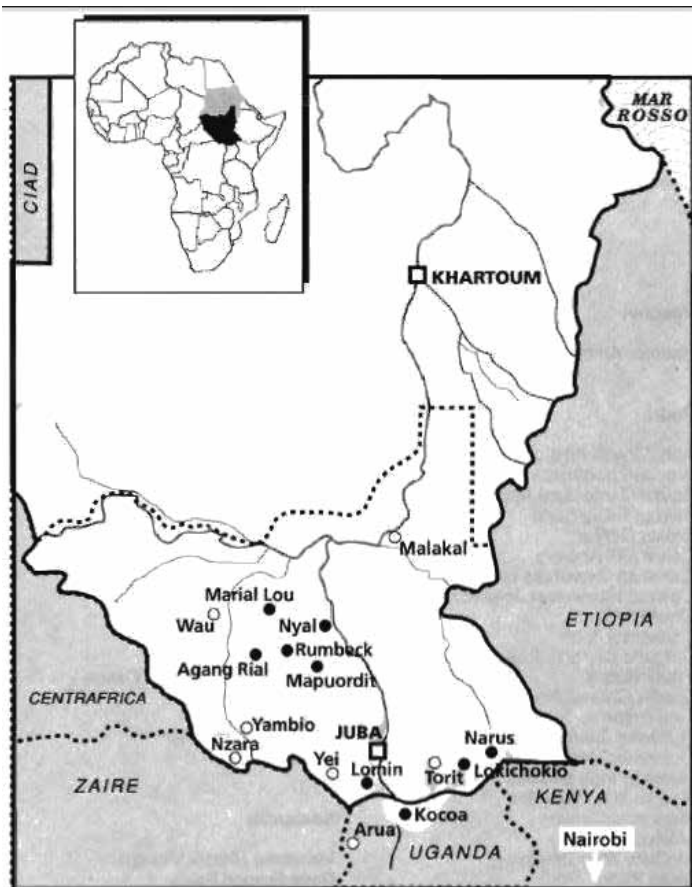
The Delegate, Fr. Chemello, in his introduction to the theme of this Assembly on Evangelization, put in evidence what had been said by the Chapter of 1991 and by the Inter-capitular Assembly, Rome 1994, on Evangelization. He showed the great emphasis that was placed on *how to evangelize as a community*, and emphasised the importance of keeping the Founder, Daniel Comboni, well present along the Journey, particularly during 1996, the year of his Beatification.

Taking into account the difficult but fruitful progress made by the *New Sudan Group* previous to the erection of the South Sudan Delegation, Fr. Chemello reminded the confreres that the main purpose of the Assembly on Evangelization was to reflect especially about the first year of life of the Delegation and on how the evangelizing ministry was worked out in the different places and situations of Comboni presence in order to draw up some guidelines on evangelization for the year 1996 until the next Assembly of 1997.

He stressed the importance of the presence of the Comboni Sisters in the mission stations of the *Liberated Areas*, above all, for the great service of evangelization which their ministry can provide, especially among the women who were surely the most neglected. Very encouraging was the fact that almost all the confreres were present at the Assembly, as was the presence of two representatives of the Comboni Sisters of South Sudan: Sr. Giovannina Zucca and Sr. Aurora Salgado.

Fr. Manuel Casillas, one of the General Councillors, was also present after visiting the missions inside Sudan. Fr. Giuseppe Filippi would have been present as well, if his mother had not died. The methodology just followed the presentation of the reports point by point, according to the

questionnaire sent to the various communities, so as to have an overall view of the reality.⁵⁰⁴



Situation of the missions of South Sudan in 1997

The priorities of the Delegation

The Plenary Assembly of January, 1996, was a good occasion to give an overall evaluation of the previous years of journey of the New Sudan Group and of the first year of the Delegation of South Sudan. It was important to put in evidence the priorities of the Delegation in the field of evangelization for the years to come. The stress was placed on areas and

⁵⁰⁴ Minutes of the General Assembly, Nairobi, 7-10 January, 1996. FSSPJ.

people most in need of first evangelization and those who were much more abandoned with regard to human and religious care because of historical, political and social reasons which played a negative role in their history.

In the evaluation of the previous years the Assembly of confreres noticed a great thirst for, and openness to, the Word of God and to the presence of the Church among several ethnic groups which, in the past, had been rather reluctant to accept the Gospel message, like *the Toposa, the Nuer and the Dinka*. In such a situation, the struggle was how to establish suitable pastoral guidelines and fields of work in order to respond to these new challenges and provocations.

In this context Dinka, Nuer, Toposa and possibly the Nuba people, were becoming top priorities for the Delegate and his Council. As a follow up, in the year 1996 the work of evangelization among the Toposa people in the Diocese of Torit was strengthened, the Delegate went with Bishop Paride to survey other locations for the possible opening of a second community, the evangelization among the Nuer people started in Leer, and the Nuba people were visited by the Delegate with Bishop Macram but with no outcome.

The Plenary Assembly of the Delegation in January 1997, in Nairobi, started with the annual retreat conducted Fr. Francesco Pierli and continued with Fr. Renzo Salvano of the Uganda Province, as facilitator, on the topic *The Lumko Programme in the light of the African Synod*. As we can see, little by little, the most important topics related to evangelization were finally appearing in the planning of the Delegation and acquiring a new shape, especially with the authoritative impact the African Synod had regarding African issues and life.

The Plenary Assembly of 1998, soon after the General Chapter that took place in September, 1997, dealt with the main theme which was a *Fresh Start From Mission*. A theme like this was just what the new Delegation needed for the situation in South Sudan, since it was the most important challenge the Delegation was facing, a future with a renewed missionary methodology, a proclamation and witness of the Gospel with more stress on the *insertion factor* and the full sharing with people and their situation of life.

There was a retreat from 5 to 12 January 1998 guided by Fr. Thomas Leyden (SVD) at the Dimesse Sisters (Karen/Nairobi) and then the Plenary Assembly in the Delegation House of Jacaranda, Fr. Guido Olina being the facilitator. Even though there was not much room or proper accommodation, all were happy because it was done in solidarity with the *suffering people of Sudan*. Fr. Juan Nunez Gonzalez and Bro. Umberto Martinuzzo, General Councillors, were present.

Various aspects of Comboni Missionary concern were tackled, such as community life and spirituality, community style, finances and projects, mission methodology, human promotion in emergency situations, the type of relationship with the Local Church, places of presence, issues of human rights, of justice, of using poor means, etc. were tackled. The presence in the Nuer land and its mission style was also having a big impact in the younger confreres.⁵⁰⁵

As for the Comboni methodology of evangelization, it was acknowledged that it was not yet sufficiently organised and in need of development regarding the programmes and their content. Possibly, new and qualified personnel, able to take up tasks in the above-mentioned fields were needed, especially in the formation of leaders where the Delegation was still at an initial stage. There was also the proposal about some new pastoral programmes including Bible sharing, Small Christian Communities and in particular the Catechumenate for adults, according to the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults).

Regarding human promotion there was a good effort in promoting primary education, in as much as it was possible, both in the main schools of the Parish Centres and other bush schools. Secondary education was fostered among the young refugees of Northern Uganda with sponsorships. Relief and material assistance was kept at the minimum level and for the most vulnerable people (lepers, the blind, the disabled, the elderly and the poorest), and there was a big effort to promote self-reliance. Human promotion was also implemented in the fields of health, women's promotion and the reconstruction of the Country.

The presence of the Brothers was an essential ministry in planning and caring for the building and running of simple structures. This allowed the group to settle down and start the presence and the work in totally new, remote bush areas and to renovate some old residences which were abandoned completely or looted. Brothers were also involved in pastoral work. As for the young Brothers, they were still in the process of finding new, meaningful ways of being present in the social and religious context of South Sudan.

Regarding Islamic pressures, the Delegation was facing it by strengthening Christianity with a presence aimed at forming leaders and mature Christian communities. The Delegation carried on with this approach also because, in the *Liberated Areas*, the Muslim presence was a

⁵⁰⁵ - Plenary assemblies 1996, 1997, 1998, South Sudan Delegation.

- South Sudan Delegation, Report to the Assembly of the XV General Chapter-1997.

small minority and the above approach would not only give the Christian community a better and more solid Christian identity, but a more positive stance to face the Muslim challenge.

Comboni Basic Formation: it is also very important to mention the effort the Delegation put in order to keep up Basic Formation. Novices in Namugongo Novitiate were frequently visited by the Delegate as were the Scholastics. Bro. Mario Rossignoli in Pakele/Kocoa was given the task of following up the youth in the refugee camps, due to the high numbers of young refugees there, and also because, at that time, the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) had built and was running a secondary school for Sudanese refugees with a very good standard. Thus, it was the best place for a spiritual activity among the youth aimed to promote vocations.

In the financial field, new approaches were needed in order to cultivate a deeper community spirit and to develop new ways of sharing in all aspects of community life for better growth within the Delegation. The question was which type of financial system would help more to foster a better community approach. The reflection was following the line of the *Total Common Fund* system.

Reasons for the commitment in the Liberated Areas of South Sudan: the first priority was to carry on with the evangelizing presence and share the difficult situation of the people: being signs of hope in situations without hope and a voice for the voiceless and abandoned people of Sudan. This reality led the New Sudan Group and the Delegation to assume a missionary style of life closer to that of the people.

All the confreres were convinced that, in order to be faithful to the Comboni charism, they had to continue their presence in that given situation, in spite all the limitations. This made it necessary to find out new ways of being present, to put up with and accept instability, isolation, irregular supplies, serious problems of communication, heavy financial burdens in keeping up with flights, and the need to finding logistical support.

Important events in 1997

At Institute Level

The most important event at Institute level in 1997 was, without any doubt, the XV General Chapter (Rome, 1 September - 13 October). The reports followed the order of the Chapter Acts of 1991 which focused on *Mission-Charism-Charism-Mission* and the five paths for the fulfilment of the purpose:

1. Comboni Missionary spirituality
2. Comboni Missionary community
3. Basic and on-going formation
4. Fields of action in the missions
5. Comboni Missionary methodology

The report of the General Council regarding the first path was that, in spite of the progress made, the integration of our specific spirituality still remained a challenge (CA 25-26 and Report 24, 8). About the second path, it was acknowledged that there was a certain resistance to understanding our incapacity for sharing and making the community a place of reciprocal human support (no.130), genuine friendship and fraternity, fostering openness to shared apostolic discernment, on-going formation and administration of goods. (Report 27, 3).

As for the third path, after thanking God who continues to inspire many young men to serve him as Comboni Missionaries, there was great concern about the huge discrepancy between the formative proposals and practical life (nos. 159, 165). In this case, the need was felt to pay more attention to persons rather than what they do.

The fourth path was still pointing to Africa and the peoples not yet evangelized as a priority (nos. 6-7), but in such a context, other areas were considered, as already mentioned in the previous Chapter, such as *the outskirts of metropolises, youth, refugees, emergencies, the world of communication, training of leaders and Islam* (one of the great challenges to missionary activity). Then, other *Nigritia* situations in other continents, such as the *African-Americans, indigenous peoples, the inhabitants of the big city suburbs in America; peoples not yet evangelized in Asia and immigrants in Europe and North America* (no. 8, 58).

Regarding the fifth path, Comboni missionary methodology, there was the awareness that the constantly changing and, at times, dramatic situations in which we were living was a constant source of challenge and stimulation for our missionary methodology. Missionary Animation was holding a special place in the Comboni way of evangelizing. Its aim was to open up the Local Church, even in its infancy (no. 99), to *ad gentes*, communion and cooperation with other Churches (no. 100-101). In this way the Comboni Lay Missionaries were seen as the result of Missionary Animation and Methodology.⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰⁶ The Comboni Missionaries, an outline history, op. cit., pp. 539-544.

- Fr. Mariano Tibaldo, L'evoluzione dei contenuti, delle modalità e del termine 'evangelizzazione ad gentes' nei Capitoli Generali dal 1969 al 2009, the XV General

What instead was surprising in the relevant points covered by former Superior General Fr. Agostoni, were his words about the report of the *New Sudan Group* to the XV General Chapter stating:

*“Here is the report to the Chapter of the development of the New Sudan. I have chosen to report it as the most interesting development in our missions during these years and the one that recalls Blessed Daniel Comboni in a special way. Moreover, many places now are not much more developed than they were at the time of Blessed Comboni.”*⁵⁰⁷

These words of Fr. Agostoni, are very important because they are an evaluation and a witness that, in that particular time, 140 years after Daniel Comboni started his mission in 1857, the experience and the situations encountered by the *New Sudan Group* were to be considered *most interesting* and *not much different than what Comboni had to face in his own times*. War, emergencies, insecurity, risks, uncertainties, no clear and secure path and other unforeseen realities which had to be faced were putting everybody to the test in such a way that the path had to be sought and rediscovered almost from scratch. This was what was making the experience of the *New Sudan Group* so relevant and so inspiring, in the nineties, at Institute level.

At Delegation Level

The year 1997 was marked by many joyful events in the Delegation such as:

- The preparation of the Great Jubilee of the year 2000 through the years of Jesus Christ (1997) and of the Holy Spirit (1998).
- The appointment of Bro. Armando González Ramos to the South Sudan Delegation, 01 July, 1997 (to Narus).
- The first professions of Bro. Francis Okeny, Bro. Joseph Taban and Sc. Paul Idra: Namugongo, 10 May, 1997.
- The perpetual profession of Fr. Michele Stragapede at Namugongo, 10 May, 1997, with the other Novices/Scholastics. The perpetual profession and the Diaconate of Scholastic Bosco Mawa Anthony and his ordination to the Priesthood. He was then assigned to Uganda.
- The Priestly ordination of Fr. Louis Okot at Iboni (Lopit) Sudan on 25 May, 1997; of Fr. Aventore Jimmy Milla in Robidire Refugee Centre

chapter, pp. 59-70; ambiti e orizzonti, p. 65. <http://segretariato-evangelizzazione-mccj.over-blog.com/2013/11/evangelizzazione-ad-gentes-e-i-capitoli-general-mccj-Evangelization-ad-gentes-and-the-general-chapters-mccj.html>

⁵⁰⁷ The Comboni Missionaries, an outline history, op. cit., pp. 552-554.

(Adjumani) Northern Uganda; of Fr. Samuel Juma (Khartoum Prov.) at Yambio. Fr. Louis Okot was then assigned to Peru from 1 July, 1997, Fr. Aventore Jimmy Milla was assigned to Malawi /Zambia and Fr. Samuel Juma was assigned to Mexico.

- The choice of the location of the Postulancy of the South Sudan Delegation.
- The permission received from the Government of Kenya to set up a radio base station in Nairobi, Jacaranda House, its name was CN (Charlie-November = Comboni Nairobi) and a mobile radio to be installed in the car of the Delegate: frequency 7512.5 L.S.B.⁵⁰⁸ This assured a radio link with our communities in Sudan and Kocoo.
- July, 1997, Leer - 3 Comboni Sisters started their presence in Leer: Sr. Giovannina Zucca, Sr. Maddalena Virgis and Sr. Lorena Morales.
- Fr. Joseph Ukelo, working in the Province of South Africa since 1995, celebrated his *Silver Jubilee* of ordination in Narus in 1997 (Ordained on 23 April, 1972).
- The setting up of a radio transmitter in Jacaranda House for communication with the communities inside South Sudan.

Year 1997 was particularly good because of these joyful and meaningful events which took place among the Radical Members of the Delegation, Novices, Brothers and Scholastics. All these were the fruits of the former South Sudan Province in Juba. The new Delegation inherited the benefits of the hard work done previously in basic formation. There was the great joy of having first and final religious professions, new ordinations to the Diaconate and to the Priesthood in the refugee camps of Pakele/Adjumani and within South Sudan (Iboni).

Unfortunately the Delegation had also the very sad event of the death of the Scholastic Victor Duku in Nairobi. He was on his last year of Scholasticate, He had spent some time in Nairobi Hospital, but during his final months he was looked after in the Delegation House. It must be mentioned that Bro. Raniero Iacomella and a nurse from Nairobi took care of Victor Duku with real love in the last weeks of his life. All the Jacaranda community were united in accompanying him. He died in Jacaranda House, Nairobi, on 24 July, 1997.

⁵⁰⁸ New Sudan, 25 June, 1997, Fr. Chemello to Confreres, permission of Ke.Go. of setting up radio base in Nairobi. FSSPJ.

The Postulancy

Vocations Promotion, as already mentioned, was carried out particularly by Bro. Mario Rossignoli, who was helping with logistics at St. Mary's Seminary in Kocoo. He was taking care of the youth in the refugee camps of Pakele/Adjumani and holding regular meetings with them. Other youths were followed up by the community of Nzara. The question was where to send them for the Postulancy. The South Sudan Delegation was unable to start its own Postulancy and it was clear that it had to be organized in collaboration with the Province of Uganda or that of Kenya, at least for some years to come.

Since the students came mainly from the refugee camps in Uganda, the Delegate tried to contact the Vocations Director, Fr. Luciano Fulvi, the formators of the Postulancy and the Provincial of Uganda. While enquiries were being made, it became evident that there were several difficulties for the Sudanese students to be accepted in Uganda: the Postulancy of Uganda had very few places free, studies were of *"A" level standard* and with a high success rate; the different style of accompaniment in Vocations Promotion was another difficulty and there were also other reasons. The matter was followed up by the Delegate and put on the agenda to be discussed in the Plenary Assembly of January 1998.

The suggestion was to contact the Province of Kenya as well, given the fact that, in their curriculum, they were taking in students with *"O" Level* exams. Both possibilities were kept opened to discussion, but the indications were leading more towards the Kenya Province.

Personnel on 1 January, 1998⁵⁰⁹

The members of the Delegation at the beginning of year 1998 were as follows:

Apostolic Administrator

1. Cesare Mazzolari

Fathers

2. Hector Ayon
3. Michael Barton
4. Mattia Bizzarro
5. Elvio Cellana
6. Francesco Chemello
7. Elia Ciapetti
8. Alberto Jesus Eisman Torres
9. José Oscar Flores López
10. Fernando González Galarza
11. Horacio Ribeiro Rossas
12. Antonio La Braca
13. Eugenio Magni
14. José Luis Martinez Acevedo
15. Alfredo Mattevi
16. Raymond Pax
17. Giuseppe Pellerino
18. Jerónimo Pérez Caporal

19. Alfonso Polacchini

20. Mario Riva

21. Michele Stragapede

Brothers

22. Domenico Cariolato

23. Ambrogio Confalonieri

24. Valentino Fabris

25. Raniero Iacomella

26. Francis Okeny

27. Armando Ramos Gonzalez

28. Hans Dieter Ritterbecks

29. Mario Rossignoli

30. Joseph Taban

31. Mariano Zonta

Scholastics

32. Paul Idra

33. Martin Lako

34. Bosco Anthony Sule-Mawa

Other confreres were assigned during the same year confirming the special attention the General Council was giving to South Sudan.

Commitments in 1998

In the first part of 1998, the Delegate contacted the various Ordinaries in order to find out what could be finalised before the end of his term of office. Unfortunately, in May, he developed some health problems and had to go to Italy for surgery. He was discharged from hospital on 7 July, 1998. On his return, he again visited the Ordinaries to see what stage the topics discussed before his departure had reached and to present those matters to the Delegation Council for final consideration and approval at the final meeting of the Delegation Council.

⁵⁰⁹ Annuario Comboniano, op. cit., 1 January, 1998

Torit Diocese

Toposa area: Bishop Taban suggested a commitment in a place somewhere near *Fort Loweli* but still had to decide how to implement it, so the decision on a second commitment in the Toposa area had to be postponed and passed on to the new Administration. However, a young confrere, Fr. Mitiku Habte Cheksa, was appointed on 31 October, 1998. Work with the Kocoo refugees, instead, would continue as usual.

Rumbek Diocese

The three existing commitments of Mapuordit (pastoral and educational),⁵¹⁰ Agang Rial (pastoral and educational), and Marial Lou (Pastoral), would continue and would be consolidated with the assignment of new personnel: Fr. Martinez, Bro. Mariano Zonta and Fr. Ayon.

In 1998, however, Marial Lou Mission experienced a serious famine aggravated by many displaced Dinka people who had fled from Wau after Cmdr. Kerubino Kwanyin Bol⁵¹¹ tried to capture the town and the Khartoum Government Army started retaliating against all the Dinka population in Wau.

The two communities of Comboni Missionaries MCCJ and Comboni Missionary Sisters CMS were deeply concerned and worked very hard to cope with the situation, distributing food delivered mostly by *World Vision*, and providing health care. Many people died. Even Fr. Bizzarro suffered a serious infection after he drank infected water from a river in which there were decomposing human bodies.

Tombura/Yambio Diocese

Nzara: the PALICA centre was already handed over to the Diocese with the departure of Fr. Martinez, and the handing over of the Parish was

⁵¹⁰ Nigrizia, 10/1997, Vita comboniana – Piccole scuole crescono a Mapuordit [SS] di p. Rafael Riel, *G. Bersella*, p. 64.

⁵¹¹ Kerubino Kwanyin Bol, after the Bor mutiny of Battalion 105, which erupted in March 1983, went through various vicissitudes and disciplinary sanctions in the SPLA. He was held in a series of SPLA detention centres, in prolonged arbitrary incommunicado detention for alleged coup plotting. He escaped and joined Riek Machar's faction and later created his own force in Gogrial, a garrison town in Bahr El Ghazal. Since 1994 he also allied with the government of Sudan. See Human Rights Watch, *Famine in Sudan*, pp. 14-15. Kerubino's Background Leading up to Wau

also under discussion. The proposal was to take up another Parish more in need of a missionary presence. The issue was under discernment with Bishop Joseph Gasi, who had to finalize the matter and give the Delegate his final proposal.

The Delegate, on his return from Italy, met him and found that he was still undecided and no final proposal could be reached. At this point Nzara Parish was to be handed over without any decision about a new Parish to be taken up. The whole matter had to be entrusted to the new Administration for future decisions.

Moreover, divergences between the OLS leadership in Lokichokio and the Governor of Western Equatoria, Mr. Abujon, made the issue even worse regarding evacuation plans. Yambio Diocese did not have any alternative evacuation plan for that emergency, so two confreres had to leave Nzara with the last OLS flight. A couple of weeks later, due to serious health problems, Fr. Cellana too had to be evacuated with another plane of the OLS Officials who came to talk to the Governor. Only Fr. Jeronimo Perez Caporal and Bro. Valentino Fabris remained behind.

Malakal Diocese

The mission of Leer

Still under the care of the Bishop of Torit, it was proceeding quite well and the members of the community were busy with improving their Nuer language skills. Fr. La Braca and Fr. González Galarza were expanding pastoral care through visits on foot. Bro. Ritterbecks was fully committed to pastoral work while Bro. Iacomella was committed in agriculture and in the running of the mission. The three Comboni Sisters, Sr. Giovannina Zucca, Sr. Maddalena Vergis and Sr. Lorena Morales, were also working hard in the pastoral, medical and women's promotion areas.

The pastoral activities were in full swing and courses for Catechists were organised, while the local communities provided food and housing. The community worked out an articulated pastoral plan aiming at the formation of SCC (Small Christian Communities), so the confreres and Sisters were busy with the formation of these SCC, prayer groups, committees of elders, teaching in the schools of Leer, caring of the sick, home visiting and long safaris. Fr. Antonio took his time to visit also the Christians and Catechumens in both Western and Eastern Upper Nile.

Regarding human promotion, several small agricultural and human promotion projects were undertaken.

The challenges to be faced in the Nuer land were the huge geographical extension of West and East Upper Nile, the large Nuer population of approximately 1,500,000 and strong tribalism among the Nuer themselves, which was provoking violence, destruction and death. What was of great encouragement was the great openness and desire of the Nuer people to come to know Jesus.

As for Fr. La Braca, he was given broad responsibility by Bishop Taban as his *Vicar* in the Nuer land: he was *Diocesan Administrator for all the Nuer* and had an extensive plan of visits all over the areas of the *Western Nuer*.

Regarding the *Central and Eastern Nuer*, no commitment was taken by the South Sudan Delegation but, since Fr. La Braca received requests on 8 April, 1998, he made a journey of *exploration* in the *Eastern Upper Nile* area to Juaibor, Fangak, Dhoreak, Ayod, Waat, Langkien and Akobo in order to assess the situation.⁵¹² At the end, he came up with the proposal to the South Sudan Delegation to take up a new commitment in the area of the *Central Nuer*, suggesting *Juaibor* for the first start, and to fix the real place later on.

Meanwhile, Leer was in a real critical situation because of the fighting between the army of Gen. Paulino Matiep⁵¹³ and that of Riek Machar,⁵¹⁴ in Unity State, in the middle of 1998. With Leer under threat, the two

⁵¹² Account of Fr. Antonio La Braca - Old Fangak mcej Community. "At Easter time 1998, Fr. Antonio went to Juaibor and from Juaibor to Fangak, to Dhoreak and, with some Catechists of Fangak, he proceeded to Ayod, Waat, Lamkien and Akobo. He planned to reach Maiwut, but the authorities stopped him for security reasons. So, he walked back to Lamkien and was taken to Leer by plane."

⁵¹³ 23/07/1998 Letter of Fr. A. La Braca to Mr. Paolino Matiep (former governor of W.U.N-Mankien) and Mr. Martin Machot (RASS Secretary Mankien). Fr. Antonio pleads and invites them to bring peace and not destruction to their areas.

⁵¹⁴ In April 1997 the Sudanese government entered into the Khartoum Peace Agreement with Riek Machar's forces and several other smaller rebel factions. **Riek Machar** was appointed President of the Southern States Coordinating Council (SSCC), to govern the South, and also headed a new army (SSDF) created from the former rebel armies that signed the Khartoum Peace Agreement. **Paulino Matiep** was promoted to major general in the Sudanese army in 1998 and his militia, directly supplied by the government, was given a name: South Sudan Unity Movement/Army (SSUM/A).

The alliance dating from 1991 between Paulino Matiep and Riek Machar broke down in armed clashes in September 1997, over the campaign for governorship of Unity State. When his candidate lost the December 1997 gubernatorial election, according to one observer, "Paulino declared war" on Riek Machar's SSDF.

See: "THE ARAKIS PERIOD: 1992-98"

<http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/sudan1103/11.htm>

communities of Comboni Missionaries and Comboni Sisters had to evacuate to Nairobi. Leer was then destroyed and new arrangements had to be made on what to do and where.

In Nairobi there was a meeting of the Delegate, Fr. La Braca and Leer community with the two Bishops, Mgr. Taban and Mgr. Mojwok Nyiker, who were there for the Episcopal Conference (SCBC) meeting. At that time, the proposal of another Comboni community was finalized and presented to the Delegation Council.

The result of the meeting led to the decision to have two communities, one among the Nuer on the western side of the river Nile, at Nyal (since Leer was destroyed), and one on the eastern side, at Juaibor. The confreres of both locations were appointed in September 1998. This was the last commitment taken by the out-going Delegation Superior and his Council. The composition of the two communities was as follows:

- **Nyal**, was chosen as a new residence, instead of Leer. The new community was constituted by Fr. Gonzalez as Superior and Parish Priest, Fr. Zuñiga (a newcomer) as his assistant and Bro. Iacomella as community bursar.

The Christian community of Nyal gave a joyful welcome to the missionaries. When they arrived in Nyal the area was flooded and the crop lost. The World Food Program planned to bring food every 40 days and UNICEF was to provide seeds at the proper time.

- **Juaibor** with Fr. La Braca and Bro. Ritterbecks.⁵¹⁵ It was agreed that the final location would be confirmed after spending some time in loco.⁵¹⁶

⁵¹⁵ 21/09/1998 Fr. Chemello to Fr. A. La Braca and Hans Ritterbecks: *"New evangelizing care in the East Upper Nile."* *"Following the decision of the Delegation Council expressed in the letter to the Bishops Paride Taban and Vincent Mojwok (22 September, 1998) I confirm the opening of a new commitment in the East Upper Nile / Nuer area."*

⁵¹⁶ (Account of Fr. A. La Braca – Old Fangak MCCJ. Community) *"Fr. Antonio and Bro. Hans went to Juaibor (Central Upper Nile) in the area of Fangak. They delivered a one-month course to all the Catechists of Fangak area (Ghezira) and, in the meantime, they had to look for a suitable place to open another 'Comboni Community'. Bro. Hans remained in Juaibor and celebrated Christmas there. Fr Antonio went to Kew, Fangak, Paguir and celebrated Christmas in Paguir. It was during this safari that Fr. Antonio liked Fangak and told the population to get ready, because the Combonis would have arrived in January 1999. When he went back to Nairobi, he proposed it to the new Delegation Superior as a new 'suitable place for a Comboni Community in the East-Upper-Nile'. However, Bro. Hans was appointed elsewhere and Fr. Antonio went back*

Pastoral Activities: a one-month in-service course for 85 Catechists. Fr. La Braca carried on with the visit of Juaibor and Old Fangak Christian communities, while Bro. Ritterbecks remained in the centre. Their priorities were to organise well the training of Church Leaders and continuous pastoral visits in the whole area.

Yei Diocese

Kajo-Kaji Parish: the issue of Kajo-Kaji Parish was brought up several times by Fr. Mario Busellato who was taking care of the Kuku refugees in Pakele/Adjumani area. He affirmed that the Comboni Missionaries never officially ended the commitment with Yei Diocese and this Parish. His point was true, but the Delegate and his Council never took up the issue since the Bishop was not residing in Yei, but in Juba, and it would have been awkward to do it in absence of the Bishop.

However, when the SPLA captured Yei town, and the Bishop could go back, then the former obstacle was removed. The Delegate informed Bishop Erkolano of Fr. Busellato's proposal and he gladly agreed with it. The Delegate then went to visit the area of Kajo-Kaji, to the joy of the Catechists and people, and prepared a report to be discussed at the Plenary Assembly of January 1999.

Collaboration with other institutes and entities

During the time of the New Sudan Group and then with the starting of the new Delegation of South Sudan, collaboration with other Institutes, NGOs and other entities was remarkable, since the various situations, movements, displacements, emergencies and planning, brought the confreres and the Comboni group, as such, into contact with them resulting in collaboration as need arose.

The most important were the direct collaborators in the field of evangelization such as the Comboni Missionary Sisters in Nzara, in Marial Lou and in Leer, directly involved in the medical, educational and pastoral fields. With the Lay Comboni Missionaries the process was still at an initial stage and only Rumbek Diocese had the opportunity of starting something in connection with the North American Comboni Province.

alone." In 1999, Fr. A. La Braca was appointed 'permanent Parish Priest' of all the Ghezira and 'Moderator' of all the Nuer in West-Centre and East Upper Nile with residence in Fangak.

In Mapuordit, there were other congregations like the DOLSH Sisters (the Daughters of Our Lady of Sacred Heart) who had come from Australia in 1995, working in health care, school⁵¹⁷ and pastoral. In Pakele/Adjumani, Kocoo, the MSMMC (the Missionary Sisters of Mary Mother of the Church from Lira - Uganda) had been serving St. Mary's Seminary and doing refugee work since 1992 and were also engaged in Narus with the primary school for girls and pastoral work.

There was also close collaboration with the SHS (Sacred Heart Sisters) from Adjumani Parish, especially with the small, but very effective and appreciated, mobile clinic health project in the refugee camps.

Collaboration with other entities and non-government organizations (NGOs) was also regular and necessary for different reasons, mostly humanitarian: this involved assistance, education, health, food distribution, water programmes, communication, flight coordination etc. like OLS, MSF, WV, NPA, NCA, CRS, JRS and, at level of Churches, the NSCC; air transport companies such as Trackmark Ltd.⁵¹⁸

The relationship with the local civil and military authorities was routinely normal. Of course, with the local authorities the relationship was much easier than with the military who were frequently very coercive, as part of the military policy. However, the attitude was always respectful and relations were good; whenever issues arose, they were dealt through the appropriate Church Authorities, like the Bishop, the Episcopal Vicars or the Superiors of the communities.

The SRRA (Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Agency) and the corresponding agency of the Nassir Group, RASS (Relief Agency of South Sudan) were the official agencies in charge of permits on the part of the movements. In general there were no problems with permits.

Ecumenical activities with Muslims, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and other Churches depended very much upon the commitment of the Parish Priests and Church Personnel of the various areas and their counterparts from the different Churches.

However, most important of all was the institution and the work of the NSCC (New Sudan Council of Churches), a very important Inter-

⁵¹⁷ Nigrizia, 7-8/1998, Vita comboniana – Progetto solidarietà Mapuordit [SS]: a scuola contro la guerra, *G. Bersella*, p. 65.

⁵¹⁸ OLS = Operation Lifeline Sudan; MSF = Medicine Sans Frontiers; WV = World Vision; NPA Norwegian People Aid; NCA = Norwegian Church Aid; CRS = Catholic Relief Service; JRS = Jesuit Refugee service; NSCC = New Sudan Council of Churches; Flying Companies e.g. TRACKMARK LTD.

Denominational Institution which greatly helped in uniting the various Churches and giving them a common voice. It took up the very controversial issue of religious and human rights and promoted advocacy for South Sudan matters in the world in order to gain international support on key issues for its people. It helped to make the Churches become *the voice of the voiceless* concerning the difficult problems of the South, the futile war of destruction, the abuse of human rights, humanitarian tragedies, and the lack of religious freedom; it created, little by little, a wider acceptance of each other Churches' values and a more open mind.

Looking back at the risks and the difficulties the Delegation and the confreres went through in their work of service, this *Administration in exile*, could only conclude with thanksgiving to God and his Providence for his protection along the dangerous journey at his service and the service of the people.

MCCJ communities, 1 October, 1998

The *New Sudan Group* which began in July, 1990 with seven confreres, increased to fifteen confreres by July, 1991. By the end of 1992, it had ten confreres plus Mgr. Cesare Mazzolari. It opened the new Delegation in January 1995 with sixteen confreres and ended the year 1998 with thirty-three confreres. These numbers show the vicissitudes the Comboni group went through, but also the gradual confidence and perseverance along the journey that allowed it to be at the total service of the mission and of the South Sudanese people without reserve in the following communities:

Rumbek Diocese

Agang-Rial

1. Fr. Michele Stragapede (Sup.)
2. Fr. Hector Ayon
3. Fr. Mario Riva
4. Bro. Mariano Zonta

Mapuordit

5. Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino (V. Deleg. Sup.)
6. Fr. Michael Barton
7. Fr. Ignacio López Toro
8. Fr. Alfredo Mattevi

Marial-Lou

9. Fr. Mattia Bizzarro (Sup.)
10. Fr. Raymond Pax
11. Fr. José Luis Martínez Acevedo
12. Fr. Jaime Simon Chua Caceres

Malakal Diocese**Leer (Nyal)**

13. Fr. Fernando Gonzalez Galarza (Sup.)
14. Fr. Roy Carlos Zuñiga Paredes
15. Bro. Raniero Iacomella

Juaibor

16. Fr. Antonio La Braca
17. Bro. Hans Dieter Ritterbecks (Deleg. Councillor)

Torit Diocese**Kocoa**

18. Fr. Eugenio Magni (Sup.)
19. Bro. Mario Rossignoli

Narus

20. Fr. Elia Ciapetti (Act. Sup.)
21. Bro. Ambrogio Confalonieri
22. Bro. Armando Ramos Gonzalez
23. Fr. Mitiku Habte Cheksa
24. Fr. José Oscar Flores Lopez (Lokichokio)

T/Yambio Diocese**Nzara**

25. Fr. Elvio Cellana (Sup.)
26. Fr. Alberto Jesús Eisman Torres
27. Fr. Jeronimo Pérez Caporal
28. Bro. Valentino Fabris

Nairobi Archdiocese**Jacaranda House**

29. Fr. Alfonso Polacchini (Sup.)
30. Fr. Gaetano Gottardi
31. Bro. Domenico Cariolato
32. Fr. Francesco Chemello (Deleg. Sup.)
33. Fr. Silvano Gottardi

Newly assigned:

Fr. Alberto Jesus Eisman Torres, Fr. Silvano Gottardi, Fr. Mitiku Habte Cheksa, Fr. Roy Carlo Zuñiga.

Fr. Ezio Bettini, 30 October, 1998 was assigned to the South Sudan Delegation as from 1 January, 1999 (New Delegation Superior).

These are the communities and the confreres who brought to conclusion this Administration and continued the missionary service into the following one: a total of 34 confreres, including Mgr. Mazzolari: 26 Priests and 8 Brothers.

(For change of personnel, ref. Appendix to Part Two Section Two, Chapter One, point no. 3)

CHAPTER TWO

THE CIRCUMSCRIPTION From 1999 to 2004

Delegate/Provincial Superior:
Fr. EZIO BETTINI

The second Administration in exile

The leadership of the South Sudan Delegation was now taken up by Fr. Ezio Bettini, who was appointed Delegation Superior and started his official duties on 1 January, 1999, residing in Nairobi. Fr. Eugenio Magni was his Vice Delegate and Councillor together with Bro. Hans Dieter Ritterbecks.⁵¹⁹

The Plenary Assembly of Nairobi (Kenya) from 10 to 17 January, 1999, gave Fr. Bettini and his Council, their first opportunity to discern how to proceed with the Delegation of South Sudan. Fr. Bettini, having been appointed from outside the Delegation by the Superior General (he was working in Kosti, Khartoum Province), had the opportunity to introduce himself to the confreres and put forward some points he deemed to be very relevant for the whole Delegation such as *evangelization, communion, sharing* and *combining theory with praxis*.

The handover took place at the Assembly and there was a very fruitful interaction between the previous Administration and the new one.

⁵¹⁹ Rome, 25 October, 1998, Fr. Manuel Augusto Lopes Ferreira, Superior General, Appointment of Rev. Father Ezio Bettini, Superior of the South Sudan Delegation, to assume office as from 1 January, 1999. ACR 727/1/2.

- South Sudan Delegation, Nairobi 30 November, 1998, Straw Ballot for Councillors. Result: Bro. Hans Dieter Ritterbecks, votes 11..... etc. ACR 727/1/3.

- Rome, 28 January, 1999, The General Superior and his Council confirm the election of Fr. Eugenio Magni as Vice-Delegate of the Delegation of Southern Sudan ACR 727/1/5.

Though the Delegation had still to be led from Nairobi, it became clear that the situation, meanwhile, had undergone quite a number of changes with new challenges and opportunities coming up. In fact, the former Administration had to deal with issues related to the precarious situation caused by the war: *instability, uncertainties, displacement of people, the lack of basic facilities, very precarious structures and poor attention to issues like the health of confreres*. All of these conditions were generously endured but now new perspectives were needed.

The new Delegation Superior and his Council had to face the problem of responding more adequately to the new challenges and opportunities. In this they were facilitated by a new and more stable situation in all the *Liberated Areas*, as Fr. Bettini himself would say:

*“When I was appointed to the Delegation, I realized that there was a need for a ‘stabilisation’ of living and missionary service. Everything was set in an emergency way, not caring for the details and welfare of the confreres. Therefore, I took as my main goal the stabilization of the situation, to move from emergency to stability, at the level of the Delegation, the communities and the confreres.”*⁵²⁰

Indeed, the changed situation in the field and in the Delegation called for a new way of facing the new challenges arising. In order to perceive what these challenges were, a presentation of the reality of every community and offices was to give a better idea of the achievements attained beforehand and possible ways forward.

Situation of the communities and offices in January 1999⁵²¹

This part deals with what already took place during the year 1998 and marks the specific situation of the Delegation at the time of the handing over to the new Delegation Superior, Fr. Ezio Bettini. It is a term of reference for the future undertakings which will be dealt with in a second stage, not year by year as it was mainly done for the previous Administrations, but, to avoid useless repetition, seeing what was done globally during the six-year term of office of the Delegate/Provincial, Fr. Bettini. The following description of the Communities and Secretariats may help to give an overall view at the time of the handover.

⁵²⁰ Sharing of Fr. Ezio Bettini, December, 2015.

⁵²¹ Comboni Missionaries, South Sudan Delegation, Nairobi, Assembly, 10-17 January 1999. FSSPJ.

Lomin Parish (Kajo-Kaji) in Yei Diocese had only Fr. Mario Busellato who took part in the Assembly as an observer, as he was a member of the Uganda Province, but was working in West Nile for the South Sudanese refugees coming from Kajo-Kaji. He presented the situation of Lomin Parish (Kajo-Kaji) and asked the Assembly to consider the possibility of re-opening that mission, with the help of a Brother from the Delegation. He wanted to have an answer by the end of the Assembly. He gave an overall report in order that the confreres, the Provincial and his Council could take into consideration the issue of Kajo-Kaji / Lomin during the year 1999 and reach a decision on what to do about it.

Jacaranda community in Nairobi Archdiocese, the residence of the Delegation Superior and the Delegation Bursar was the residence of the confreres **Fr. Alfonso Polacchini, Fr. Ezio Bettini, Fr. Gaetano Gottardi and Bro. Domenico Cariolato**. Fr. Polacchini, as the Superior of the Jacaranda community, welcomed all the confreres to use Jacaranda house facilities whenever needed, especially for medical treatment, rest, etc. Jacaranda community was also helping all our communities in terms of logistic and communication needs.

Nzara community in Tombura/Yambio Diocese carried on with Fr. Elvio Cellana, Fr. Jerónimo Pérez Caporal, Fr. Horacio Rossas, Fr. Alberto Eisman and Bro. Valentino Fabris. On 7 October, 1998, Bro. Valentino celebrated the Golden Jubilee of his perpetual profession. Pastoral activities were continuing with visits to the 76 chapels, preparing the Catechumens for Baptism, running a course for 28 Catechists and a pastoral council meeting. Sometimes they experienced insecurity due to soldiers out of control roaming around looting and harassing people, causing anxiety and widespread fear.

Sickness and confreres changing Province also caused instability in the community. Confreres had the feeling that the Comboni presence in the Diocese was no longer necessary. As for the Comboni School, the previous Delegate had asked the Bishop to appoint a Sudanese Director and the school was handed over to the Diocese.

On 30 May, 1999, also the mission of Nzara was handed over to Tombura/Yambio Diocese and placed in the hands of the new Parish Priest, Mgr. Anthony Gaka.⁵²² In fact, the previous Administration could not reach

⁵²² Delegation Council, 2/1999, 8-14 June; The New Sudan Newsletter no. 12, Handing over of Nzara, FSSPJ.

any agreement in time because of the continuous delay and hesitancy of Bishop Joseph Gasi Abangite and the new Administration did not take up any other commitment with the Diocese. Thus, after a prolonged period of missionary service in the T/Yambio Diocese, (since December, 1971) the Comboni Missionaries' presence ended.⁵²³

Narus community in Torit Diocese was made up of two Brothers and two Fathers, Fr. Elia Ciapetti. Fr. Mitiku Habte, Bro. Ambrogio Confalonieri and Bro. Armando Ramos González, with approximately 300,000 Toposa people, of whom only 15% were estimated Catholics. The pastoral activities were aimed towards first evangelization among people obviously eager to listen to the Word of God. For this reason, the community asked the Delegate to open a second mission in that area. The catechetical centre was organizing courses for Catechists four times a year in two streams: beginners (55 people) and advanced (50).

In 1998, about 800 Catechumens were baptised. 36 couples received the sacrament of matrimony and over 3,000 people were confirmed. The confreres were carrying on visiting the Christian communities and attending to their spiritual needs.

Education: there was the *Bakhita Girls Primary Boarding School* run by the Missionary Sisters of Mary Mother of the Church (MSMMC). The Comboni Missionaries were running a *Comboni Primary Boarding School* with approximate 400 pupils: two St. Martin Brothers were in charge of it. The number of Toposa pupils was increasing every year. There were 4 small boarding and 4 day-schools outside Narus, as well.

Difficulties: famine caused by irregular rainfall in 1997. Narus was bombed several times. This caused the temporary closure of the Bakhita and Comboni Schools, a fall in Sunday Mass attendance and the Catechists' courses had to be cancelled.

Kocoa community was formed by Fr. Eugenio Magni and Bro. Mario Rossignoli. The main work was to help in the formation of the Seminarians of the Diocese of Torit and Vocation Promotion for our Delegation and the Ugandan Province. Fr. Magni was teaching Christian Religious Education, and Bro. Rossignoli was looking after the maintenance of the Seminary, the new buildings and was tirelessly dedicated to Comboni Vocation Ministry.

⁵²³ On your own...Nzara, Fr. E. Cellana, The New Sudan, South Sudan Delegation Newsletter, no. 13, June 1999, pp.7-9. FSSPJ.

They had pastoral activities on weekends among the community of refugees and were giving spiritual support to some Religious Communities.

Nyal community, Malakal Diocese, was composed of Fr. Fernando González Galarza, Fr. Roy Carlos Zuniga and Bro. Raniero Iacomella and had *Nyal* as the Parish centre. The pastoral activities consisted in a three-week course for 86 Catechists. On December, 1998, various communities (about 645 Christians) came to Nyal to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation in preparation for Christmas. Christmas celebrations were attended by approximately 1,200 people. There was also the visit to some chapels and centres of the area.

Bro. Iacomella started an agricultural project in two villages. He successfully treated about 100 people stung by scorpions with '*the black stone*', while Fr. Roy Carlo Zuñiga spent his time studying the language and translating liturgical prayers.

Their programme of pastoral work for 1999 included the formation of Catechists, the promotion of Bible sharing groups and follow up of the choir, the pastoral care of the sick and the attention to the situation of women. They were promoting other ministries like the readers, the ministers of the sick and others, the translation of liturgical material and visiting the Christian communities. All this was being done in collaboration with the committees of the elders and of the Christian community.

Old Fangak was chosen as the new mission centre after the first months of presence. However, with the new appointment of Bro. Ritterbecks elsewhere at the beginning of 1999, Fr. Antonio La Braca remained alone. It was clear that this huge area of first evangelization was in need of more personnel. Fr. Antonio requested at least two confreres to form the new community, pointing out that missionaries assigned to Old Fangak should be ready to live very simply, eating local food and to move on foot over long and swampy distances.

The two main activities of Fr. La Braca were visiting the Christian communities of the area and training the Local Church Leaders.

Rumbek Diocese had the joy of having its own new Bishop. Mgr. Cesare Mazzolari, after ten years of service as Apostolic Administrator. He was consecrated Bishop of Rumbek Diocese in St. Peter's Basilica, Rome, by Pope John Paul II on 6 January, 1999, the feast of the Epiphany. This important event gave Rumbek Diocese better stability and direction for the future.

Mapuordit community was made up by Fr. Alfredo Mattevi, Fr. Michael Barton, Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino and Fr. Ignacio Lopez Toro. Two Australian Sisters, Daughters of our Lady of the Sacred Heart (DOLSH) were with them, living in the same compound of the Comboni Missionaries, and were very active in the Parish, the school and the clinic.

The work of education was going on well, both in the primary and secondary schools. The primary school started with 200 pupils in 1993 and reached 1500 in 1998, with 60 students proceeding to the secondary school, under the direction of Fr. Barton and the teaching dedication of Fr. Mattevi: a really great achievement.

The pastoral programme was carried out in the schools, visiting the chapels of the area, having regular monthly meetings with the Parish Council. The *LUMKO programme* was used in the formation meetings with youth groups and women's associations. Humanitarian assistance was given to lepers, malnourished children and to the poorest. These activities were carried out by Catholic Relief Service personnel. Vocational meetings and courses on Church ministries for readers and ministers of the Eucharist were given, as well.

Five Catechists were trained at Bakhita Centre (Kitale, Kenya) and were working in the mission. 15 Seminarians and 5 teachers were training in Kitale.

As for planning, for the future, a monthly recollection and community council meeting were to be held together with the Sisters. A full day was to be dedicated for planning the pastoral, educational, medical, medical assistance and relief activities. A four-week in-service course for 75 Catechists from 4 Parishes was to be organized. The areas of Yiról and Adior, with their great need of pastoral care, were to be taken into consideration.

Marial-Lou community, in this very huge mission was made up of Fr. Mattia Bizzarro, Fr. Raymond Pax and Fr. José Luis Martinez Acevedo. A community of 5 Comboni Missionary Sisters was there, as well.

The previous year the population suffered all the consequences of war: violence, displacement, hunger and death. There were clashes between Dinka and Nuer and among the various Dinka factions. WFP, WVI, MSF-Switzerland as well as the Diocese of Rumbek (DOR), brought in hundreds of tons of relief to meet the needs of the numerous population. Nonetheless, many people died because the relief arrived too late and there were cases of relief mismanagement. The community was trying to cope with the follow-up of this difficult situation.

The pastoral activities involved a seven-day in-service course for 70 Catechists, a seven-day workshop for Youth Group leaders, adult Catechumenate for the first wives of polygamous and non-polygamous men and several safaris in order to visit the Catechumens and Christian communities. Many of them were baptised.

Agang-Rial community, its members were Fr. Mario Riva, Fr. Hector Ayon, Fr. Michele Stragapede and Bro. Mariano Zonta. Unease within the community regarding the SPLA-SRRA did not favour good relations.

The pastoral activities had not been continuous and consistent because of the famine which entangled the mission in relief activities all the yearlong. As for the school, in spite of all the difficulties, the teachers were able to carry on with their work with good results. It was felt that a deeper commitment was needed by all confreres in the community. There was also a suggestion to the Bishop to consider whether it was better to move Agang-Rial mission to another place towards Rumbek and Cueibet, since people were more and more moving that way and deserting Agang-Rial after Rumbek was freed by SPLA. Moreover, due to the lack of personnel, the question arose as to whether it was still necessary to keep the mission open.

The Secretariat of Evangelization

During 1998 the Secretariat of Evangelization included also Animation and On-going Formation. It was made up by Fr. Magni (Secretary), Fr. La Braca, Fr. Ayon, and Bro. Rossignoli (members). Its main task was to prepare a working paper which should have led to the Evangelization Directory. After the Assembly, a new committee was made up of Fr. González Galarza, Fr. Stragapede, Fr. Magni and Fr. Flores in order to prepare a paper, taking into account what was written before, to be sent to the communities. However, since it was mainly based on the Evangelization Charter of the Province of Malawi-Zambia and the confreres considered it too general and not pertinent to the situation of South Sudan, the Secretariat had to rethink its content.

At any rate, the issue of the Evangelization Directory was a very important one, since clear guidelines were required for the pastoral work. The two main and leading ideas within the Secretariat were to have, first of all, a more incarnated and inculturated way of doing mission and, second, to put evangelization at the centre of missionary work rather than the

projects. To pass from a project-oriented way of doing mission to one more centred in pastoral ministry and, especially, in the Word of God.

That was why the Secretariat of Evangelization was also working together with the Secretariat of Finance in order to create awareness of the *Total Common Fund*, so that confreres would be appointed as Superiors of communities and Parish Priests based on their gifts and skills rather than on their economic power.

Vocations Ministry

In spite of some difficulties, Vocations Ministry during the year 1998 was positive, with monthly meetings with two groups of students, those of Senior One, Two and Three and those of Senior Four and Five. However, there was no possibility to follow up the students of Senior Six, “A” level, according to the Ugandan system. There was only an exchange of correspondence with them. Six candidates were to be presented in 1999 for the Seminary. Besides, Bro. Rossignoli did not feel able to continue any more with the Vocation Ministry because he had to follow up the building of a new dormitory for the Seminary and other projects, and so he would be very busy, but also because of criticisms regarding his methodology.

Secretariat of Finance

The Delegation Treasurer, Fr. Gaetano Gottardi, presented the running of the procure as fairly smooth during the previous year, though he complained that some confreres were not transparent in their procedure, were not informing the Bursar/Procurator or were hiding the reasons for certain bills, purchasing things without having them discussed and approved in the Community Council and having obtained, if that was the case, the approval of the Delegation Council.

Other important points were about the improper use of money as some who may still have the idea that *this is my money and I can use it as I like*, even though this was not said openly, or large sums of money kept unused by some missions instead of sharing with others. Another point of concern was how to deal with real emergencies, suggesting a possible Delegation emergency fund, (with an agreed maximum) that would have a special short-cut procedure. All these issues needed proper reflection and a new attitude which would be fostered by an eventual acceptance of the *Total Common Fund* system.

Handing over the office of Delegation Superior

Fr. Chemello was invited to give some inputs and reflections about the previous Administration and he started with words of gratitude to God for his protection during the journey of the *New Sudan Group* and of the Delegation, considering all the risks and danger the confreres went through.

He clearly pointed out the importance of community life as the most meaningful sign of light and renewed humanity and relationship in the middle of all the ravages of war. This would bring confreres to a new vision of life and mission and a better attention to the person, as expressed by the XV General Chapter. He mentioned the Sudanese Confreres, Radical Members of the Delegation, already carrying out the missionary ministry in other Provinces, the Scholastics, the Brothers in formation and the candidates in Vocation Promotion.

Finance and sobriety was an aspect to be attended to, lest we fall into the trap of *money and power, my money, my freedom*, to use as I want; the need of fostering *moderation* as a true requisite. Fr. Chemello also reminded the Assembly that in 1998, in order to deal with the above issues, the *Total Common Fund* was discussed and proposed to be implemented. Since *evangelization* is the first priority, everything said above is considered a help to reach this goal.

The issue of confreres from different countries and continents assigned to the Delegation was calling for new openness of mind, while the Comboni Brothers Centre (CBC) of Nairobi was another call to foster the human, ecclesial, intellectual and mystical dimensions in human promotion.

The 1999 Assembly, a real opportunity

This General Assembly from 10 to 17 January, 1999, took stock of the many new challenges the Delegation Superior, Fr. Bettini and his Council were to face at the start of their mandate, but also of the new opportunities which the improved general situation, at security level and also at grassroots level, was offering.

It was a real opportunity for growth, as well as for expansion, of commitments in all the *Liberated Areas* but, above all, a time and an opportunity of growing in depth in the various areas of evangelization, education and human promotion, especially with the consistent number of confreres. Some were coming from a long experience of work in the Sudan and others were new confreres coming from the basic formation ready to

put their enthusiasm and new approaches available for the work of evangelization in the Delegation.



Map: 1 January, 1999.

Moving forward: Fr. Bettini's activities in 1999

At the beginning of his mandate Fr. Bettini had to take care of the handing over of some commitments in Kosti. In the meanwhile he asked Fr. Chemello to put in order the files of the Delegation. The work was done and, before Easter, Fr. Chemello could leave for Italy.

For various reasons, the first year of Fr. Bettini's mandate had to take into its planning several matters within and outside the specific work of the Delegation. First of all the insertion into the new responsibilities in the Delegation required him to devote time to learning and understanding the status of the new reality. He had to spend almost two months in Kosti to finalize the handover which he could not do before the appointment to South Sudan. Almost two months were also to be taken up by his scheduled holidays in Italy and another three weeks for a meeting in South Africa.

On his return to Nairobi, Fr. Bettini had to go around visiting personally the various communities and locations to be aware of what the real work of the coming months and future years would entail. As he hinted in his presentation to the Plenary Assembly, the most important issue was to reflect on how to pass from a general emergency situation, a characteristic of the *New Sudan Group* and of the *previous Administration*, to a more solid and better planned institution which would take the new Administration into a new phase, more appropriate to that period of time.

While some communities and missions were showing signs of solidity, others instead needed special care in order to get them run properly. This was the challenge that Fr. Bettini and his Council met at the start of their mandate. The situation of the communities in the Nuer land was particularly difficult because of the insecurity due to the war and fighting among different commanders and clans. Then there was the issue of the community of Narus which needed new clarifications within itself and a revised agreement with Torit Diocese.

The community of Agang Rial also had its doubts about its reason to exist due to the movement of people towards the major towns of Rumbek and Cueibet after SPLA/M took control of the whole area. This, in reality, was a general situation, since the various centres of these missions were formerly taken up on those precise locations because of security reasons, not to endanger the presence of the confreres and of people. With the change of situation which got all these areas under the SPLA/M control, some of these places needed to be discussed again to see if the presence in those areas was still valid and to be kept. Finally Fr. Bettini had also to give his attention to the commitment in Lomin Parish (Kajo-Kaji).

Regarding the Postulancy, in the former Administration the Delegate tried to enquire, in an informal way, about the feasibility of collaborating with the Postulancy of Uganda or Kenya, but with no agreement or commitment taken, since the students were not ready yet. At this point, instead, a speedy solution to the issue was required since the students followed up in the Vocation Ministry were in their final year of secondary school and ready for the Postulancy and the philosophical course. On this issue, the new Delegation Superior and his Council decided to collaborate with the Kenya Province offering one formator for the formation team.

In 1999 the Delegation was also concerned to prepare for the Jubilee year 2000, in order to propose activities to the Christian communities that would foster conversion, renewal and a new enthusiasm for evangelization. All these issues needed to be tackled adequately so that they could be presented to the next Assembly in the year 2000 for final evaluation and implementation.

In 1999, Fr. Bettini visited, at least once, all the communities with the only exception of Agang Rial. He was quite happy with the visits because they allowed him to have a fairly clear picture of the situation and of the real needs on the ground. Even at Delegation level, the Delegation Council had the opportunity of meeting three times throughout the course of the year in Jacaranda Avenue. The Delegation Newsletter continued to be issued but with a different name: *The New Sudan*, South Sudan Delegation Newsletter. Later on it would change again into *SSCOMBONI@NEWS*, Newsletter of South Sudan Province.

Inherited issues and new perspectives in 1999

It will be useful to see the status of the personnel in the Delegation at the end of 1998, whom the new Delegate inherited, because it was the starting point for Fr. Bettini. The confreres assigned at the beginning or during 1999 were five: Fr. Ezio Bettini (since 1998), Fr. Jesus Aranda, Fr. Giovanni Ferrazin, Fr. Jessie Dimafilis and Bro. Mario Busellato. Four were assigned to other Provinces: Fr. Francesco Chemello, Bro. Mariano Zonta, Fr. Alberto Eisman and Bro. Ambrogio Confalonieri.

The number of the confreres during 1999 was 36 (1 Bishop, 27 Priests, 6 Brothers, 1 scholastic and 1 Brother in formation). The average age was 55.6 years: 7 from 30 to 40, 7 from 41 to 50; 5 from 51 to 60; 9 from 61 to 70; 8 above 70. Of these, 20 were from Italy, 7 from Mexico, 1 from Peru, 2 from USA, 1 from the Philippines, 1 from Ethiopia, 3 from Sudan and 1 from Germany.

As for the of commitments, the confreres were engaged in the following fields: pastoral work (17), maintenance of missions (2), veterinary (1), education (3), translations (1), administration (5), logistics (1), basic formation (1), development projects (2). Of course, these figures were simply indicative, since many confreres were committed also in many other different works.⁵²⁴

In 1999, the issue of re-opening Lomin (Kajo-Kaji) mission, that was closed on 8 August, 1987, for security reasons, was under consideration. With the return of Bishop Erkolano Lodu Tombe to Yei, freed by the SPLA, the date of reopening the Comboni community was put on 1 January, 2000, with the main purposes of Evangelization and Education.

Fr. Bettini and the concrete reality

While visiting the communities, Fr. Bettini found that, in his own opinion, the conditions in which some communities lived were not suitable, lacking even the minimum living conditions required. Given the prolonged war situation, he thought it advisable for all the communities to plan and work towards making their houses more suitable for the well-being of the confreres themselves: better housing, a well with running water, a solar power system, proper toilets and other facilities.

Fr. Bettini found that community prayer was well organised, while community councils were playing a very minimal role in the discernment of pastoral and missionary matters. This was a point to be taken into serious consideration because it would improve communication among the members of the community and help to overcome conflicts.

He also noticed that communities had much independence in taking decisions about many pastoral, financial, personal matters, instead of doing so within the framework of the Rule of Life, Diocesan Directives, the Delegation Directory and programs. Another point for reflection was about different experiences of missionary activities in apostolic communities that brought together different religious and pastoral agents. Though they were positive experiences, there was still the need to stress the importance of the communitarian moments just for the Comboni confreres. At the same time, other Clergy and Religious Institutes had to have their own community life.

Regarding the Vocation Ministry, Bro. Rossignoli and Fr. Aranda were in charge of accompanying the candidates to the Postulancy. It was felt important that a third person, from the Council, should be added to the

⁵²⁴ Report of the Delegate, Fr. Bettini, Assembly of Nairobi, 9-16 January, 2000. FSSPJ.

team. Then, since the South Sudan Delegation had not yet developed its specific guidelines in Vocation Ministry, the confreres were invited to follow the ones already set up by the Uganda and Kenya Provinces for the time being.

Another relevant point was that care was to be taken of youth living in places where the Comboni Missionaries are present and that the Aspirants should be accompanied by one of the confreres for at least one year. Moreover, the age limit for acceptance was set on 23 years.

Regarding the issue of the Postulancy, after long consultation with the Provinces of Uganda and Kenya, which had already begun with the previous Delegation council, a final agreement was made with the Kenya Province. They would accept the South Sudanese Postulants and the Delegation would provide a formator to be part of the formation team in Nairobi. Two Postulants were already frequenting the first year and two or three new Postulants were expected for the coming year. A written agreement on the matter had to be drawn up since, until then, there was only a verbal agreement between Kenya Province and the Delegation.

As for the Scholasticate and the Comboni Brothers Centre, the Scholastic Paul Idra was still continuing his training, and so was Bro. Francis Okeny. Bro. Joseph Taban, instead, at the request of his formators, was not allowed to renew his vows and was dismissed from the Brother Centre. The Delegation helped him financially to establish a small mechanical workshop in Uganda.

Pastoral commitments

The reflection on pastoral work was also an issue which needed new attention, especially at level of *Adult Catechumenate* to see how it was done and which pastoral lines were to be followed, especially in connection with the directives given by SCBC. There seemed to be confusion between *School Catechumenate* to the detriment of a proper Adult Catechumenate.

Moreover, the trend of confreres was to visit the furthest ends of the Parish, while abandoning the places nearby. This pastoral trend was hindering the deepening of faith and the improvement of Christian life of the people living in the mission that could become a leading example for the whole mission. The Delegation Superior noticed, as well, that missionaries were not learning adequately the local languages and that Arabic was wrongly underestimated, while English was overused.

Another very important point, as Comboni Missionaries, was that of our *charism*. The fact of working in a Local Church should not make confreres

forget that the Comboni Missionaries have a charism, a style of life and a methodology. Because of emergency situations and the hard life, there was the tendency to dismiss the Comboni quality of life and presence as secondary to what was to be done. This in turn was causing identity problems, discouragement, disregard for community life and strained relations with proper authorities.

At that time the Delegation counted very much on the support of the General Administration in order to face all the challenges and give the Circumscription greater stability.

Relationship with other pastoral agents and community policies

In Agang Rial and Marial Lou, both communities of MCCJ and Comboni Missionary Sisters were working together in different ministries. Due to unclear job descriptions, uncertain responsibilities and lack of communication, and the inexperience of the two parties, there was some tension and it needed to be tackled for a smooth running of both sides' commitments. Another source of concern that had to be dealt with was the logistic office of the Diocese of Rumbek in Nairobi. In spite of its efforts to serve everyone, it made many confreres suffer. This was mainly due to the sudden increase in the number of out-stations without the proper development of the logistics office.

More positive was, instead the matter of the agreements with the Dioceses. The Ordinaries of Rumbek and Yei had already signed them, while the issue needed further following up with the Bishop of Torit Diocese. As for the situation of Nyal (Malakal Diocese) the matter was still in limbo.

Regarding the introduction of newly assigned confreres to the life of the Delegation, nothing was done. However, the newly assigned confreres were already experienced missionaries like Fr. Aranda, Fr. Ferrazin and Fr. Busellato who had worked in other Administrations. Nonetheless Fr. Dimafilis was in need of some introduction as he was coming directly from the Scholasticate. One possibility was to refer to the Kenya Province, but it was not possible, so the Delegation Council planned to have a meeting for them since there were nine new eligible confreres for such a group.

Another point of reflection related to community life was the issue of holidays. The previous policy, since the *New Sudan Group*, and due to the heavy stress the confreres were in, was that confreres would take their holidays every two years. With the new situation, except for particular situations (sickness, tiredness, and special occasions) the suggestion was to

take home leave every three years. A two-yearly leave, in fact, would cause serious instability in the communities (half of the community would be absent every year for some months). Besides, the three-month period of holidays was to be understood as all-inclusive. Only in case of particular needs, more time of dialogue should be required at community and Delegation levels.

A note of clarification was also needed about the Delegation House of Jacaranda and its community. It was meant to be a house of hospitality but confreres had to remember that the community has a life of its own with a prayer schedule, a Superior, a bursar and a timetable. All are asked to adapt to its life when staying in the house. As for means of transport, when needed, confreres were asked to refer to the persons in charge of them, the Procurator and the bursar of the community.

With the increase of the number of confreres in the Delegation, unfortunately there was a shortage of guest rooms in the house. The Delegation Council proposed to add six more self-contained rooms. Funds were available but the matter needed to be discussed and approved during the Assembly in the year 2000. The radio transmitter in Jacaranda house was of great help, and facilitated communication between the Delegation House and the missions. It was a real means of keeping in touch; however, the increased transmission traffic within the Diocese of Rumbek compelled the Comboni Missionaries to take another frequency for their use.

Situation of the Delegation in January 2000

On 1 January 2000 the Delegation consisted of eight communities: Lomin (3 confreres), Kocoa (2), Agang Rial (3), Marial Lou (3), Mapuordit (5), Narus (3), Nyal (3) and Jacaranda (7). There were also 3 confreres working in Lokichokio, Nyamlel and Old Fangak respectively. Two confreres were borrowed from the Italian Province.

List of confreres, offices and communities on 1 January, 2000⁵²⁵

Fr. Ezio Bettini, Delegation Superior, (since 1 January, 1999)

Councillors:

Fr. Eugenio Magni, Vice-Del., Fr. Ritterbecks Hans Dieter

Provincial Bursar and Procurator:

Fr. Gaetano Gottardi

Secretary of Formation:

⁵²⁵ Annuario Comboniano, op. cit., 1 January, 2000.

Fr. Jesus J. Aranda Nava
Secretary of Evangelization, Animation, Ongoing Formation
Fr. Fernando González Galarza

Vocation Promotion:

Bro. Mario Rossignoli

Lay Comboni Missionaries:

Fr. Jerónimo Pérez Caporal

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation:

Fr. Michele Stragapede

Comboni personnel:

Bishops 1, Fathers 27, Brothers 6, Scholastics 1, Brothers in Basic Formation 1, Postulants 2.

Newsletter: *The New Sudan*

Spoken Languages:

Arabic, Bari, Dinka, English, Ma'di, Nuer, Toposa,

Dioceses where present:

Nairobi: Residence of the Delegation

Rumbek: Mapuordit, Marial Lou, Agang Rial.

Torit: Pakele/Kocoa, Narus.

Yei: Lomin

Malakal: Nyal, Old Fangak

NAIROBI - Jacaranda Avenue (Residence of the Delegation) opened on 1 September, 1995, dedicated to Blessed Daniel Comboni

Logistics and hospitality house.

Fr. Ezio Bettini, Del. Sup.

Fr. Jesus José Aranda Nava

Fr. Hector Ayon

Bro. Domenico Cariolato

Fr. Giovanni Ferrazin

Fr. Gaetano Gottardi

Fr. Alfonso Polacchini

Fr. Giovanni Battista Zanardi (It. Prov.)

Rumbek Diocese

Bethany house, opened in 1994. Logistics and hospitality house for the Diocese of Rumbek. The confreres assist also the Parish of Yirol.

Mgr. Cesare Mazzolari

Fr. Giuseppe Farina (It. Prov.)

Fr. Mario Riva

Mapourdit, opened in February 1993.

First evangelization and education among the Dinka

Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino, sup.

Fr. Michael Barton

Fr. Silvano Gottardi

Fr. Ignacio López Toro

Fr. Alfredo Mattevi

Marial Lou, opened in November 1994.

First evangelization among the Dinka

Fr. José Luis Martinez Acevedo

Fr. Raymond Pax

Fr. Jerónimo Pérez Caporal

Agang-Rial, opened in May 1995.

First evangelization among the Dinka

Fr. Michele Stragapede, Sup.

Fr. Elvio Cellana

Bro. Hans Dieter Ritterbecks

Torit Diocese

Pakele/Kocoa, opened in July 1992.

- Pastoral work among the refugees (Seminarians of St. Mary's Seminary, Torit Diocese and refugee camps of Pakele/Adjumani) and Vocation Ministry.

Fr. Bizzarro Mattia

Bro. Rossignoli Mario

Lokichokio, Media Centre

Mass Media Centre of the Diocese of Torit.

The confrere's community is that of Narus.

Fr. José Oscar Flores López

Narus, opened in November, 1994.

First evangelization among the Toposa.

Fr. Elia Ciapetti

Fr. Mitiku Habte Cheksa

Bro. Armando Ramos Gonzalez

Yei Diocese,

Lomin (Kajo-Kaji) Parish, community closed on 8 August, 1987, for security reasons and reopened on 1 January, 2000.

Evangelization among the Kuku and Education.

Fr. Mario Busellato

Bro. Valentino Fabris

Fr. Eugenio Magni

Malakal Diocese

Nyal Parish, opened on 10 October, 1998. (It replaced Leer, founded on 12 March, 1996, and was closed for security reasons in October, 1998). The confreres also assist the region of Eastern Upper Nile (Old Fangak). Evangelization among the Nuer.

Fr. Fernando González Galarza (Sup.)

Bro. Iacomella Raniero

Fr. Roy Carlos Zuñiga Paredes

Fr. Antonio La Braca (Old Fangak)

Awaiting assignment

Fr. Jessie Dimafilis Ventura

(Personnel year 2000- full list ref. Appendix to Part Two, Section Two, Chapter Two, point no. 1)

New opportunities for on-going formation, 1999-2004

In the previous chapters dealing with the Communities, Secretariats and other commitments, I presented the opportunities offered by the new and more stable situation during the period of time 1999-2004. Fr. Bettini and his Council took advantage of this to give a positive boost to the structures and facilities of every community. However, what builds up a good community is not simply the structures, however important they may be, but the way of relating, sharing, working together and living the specific values of the Gospel.

In this field, new and good opportunities were also occasioned by the improved stability and peace enjoyed in the *Liberated Areas*, with more time available to consider long-term planning and to think about taking up issues which could help the journey of on-going formation much better than in the previous Administration marked by a lot of emergencies and short time planning. This can be witnessed by the type of topics chosen for the Plenary Assemblies, topics with a broad, long-term scope, more appropriate for building up communities through better *attention to the persons*.⁵²⁶

⁵²⁶ “*Attention to the Person*”, Italianism, an expression better translated in English as “*Putting people first*” or “*Consideration for others*”, but I leave the original term along the narrative because it is a common use in the official documents of the Comboni Missionaries.

The Plenary Assembly of January, 2000, took up the theme of the letter of the General Council *on Cross-culture in the Comboni Community* and about *War, Justice and Peace and the Initiative of the Institute*. The theme of January, 2001 was developed through a Justice and Peace workshop.

The Assembly of 2002 took up the theme of *Attention to the person*. Year 2003: *The challenge of different ministries in the MCCJ communities and apostolate*. The theme of the last Assembly of Fr. Bettini's Administration of 2004 was: *the report from the XVI General Chapter* with the theme *The Mission of the Comboni Missionaries at the beginning of the third millennium*. Fr. Teresino Serra, (Superior General) and Fr. Fabio Baldan (Vicar General) were present at the Assembly.

At last, even South Sudan, with all its troubles, wars, destruction and displacements, could have enough serenity to deal with themes which would build up something new for the betterment of people's lives and for the human and spiritual wellbeing of the missionaries.

I will now take into consideration the General Assembly of the year 2000, as still linked more tightly with the one of 1999 for its transitional character, while the others from 2001 to 2004 will be dealt with within the Secretariat of Evangelization, having reached a more specific identity within the journey of the Delegation.

The Plenary Assembly of the year 2000

The plenary Assembly of Nairobi, from 9 to 16 January, 2000, took up the theme of the letter of the General Council *On the cross-culture in the Comboni Community*.⁵²⁷ The presence of the Superior General, Fr. Manuel Augusto Lopes Ferreira and of the Assistant General, Fr. Juan Antonio González Núñez, was intended to show all the confreres the importance of the Delegation and give them new courage.

Indeed, the theme was appropriate because the fabric of the Delegation had now really become much more international and intercultural than ever before, especially with the new assignments directly from the Scholasticates and CBC (Comboni Brothers Centre).

Many difficulties in relating within the communities were caused by prejudices due to diversity of culture, minority or majority complex and lack of acceptance of diversity. For these reasons and also others, to have a proper time to reflect and be aware of certain mechanisms which can

⁵²⁷ Delegation of South Sudan, General Assembly 2000, 9-16 January, Nairobi, Kenya

trigger a lack of intercultural acceptance was of great benefit for a good community life.

However the matter was not merely restricted to the Comboni community, as such, but it was a theme affecting the whole of Sudan and South Sudan. The fact of striving to live this important dimension of our Comboni life was certainly of great benefit for the practical evangelization among the different ethnic groups (tribes) of South Sudan, as well, in their struggle to relate among themselves in a good and peaceful way.

Cross-culture in the Comboni Community

The theme was presented by the Assistant General, Fr. Juan Antonio González Núñez, with a set of questions to be followed up by group discussion and feedback reports. The reflection focussed, first of all, on Biblical sources in order to find the light which may help to understand, appreciate and live multi-culturality. Then the focus was the context of the past and present experience of the Comboni Institute and the speed of the process of internationalisation together with the personal contributing to this process. This was followed by clarifications and suggestions.

Another set of questions involved reflection on how the missionary vocation could reconcile personal commitment to one's cultural rights, especially when conflicts in the community occur due to cultural differences and other factors as age differences, character, formation, etc., and on the impact of attitudes based on cultural complexes of inferiority or superiority.

Other points of reflection concerned missionary service and structures, the use of money, governance structures, the use of languages, cross-culture and basic formation.

The feedback was, first of all, an acknowledgement that the topic was very relevant in the context of the Comboni Missionary Community and the wider experience of the Institute and that such a theme should never be left aside as unimportant as already discussed and closed. The topic should remain always open and alive. This implied that the experience of the communities in the Delegation needed to take this reality into account in its daily life and not to take it for granted.

Regarding the first set of questions the Assembly felt that, in the Bible, the incarnation of Jesus was the example *par excellence* of inculturation. In the Gospel, the icon of the Magi coming from different countries, and especially the many instances dealing with the matter of culture in the Acts of the Apostles and elsewhere were very important.

The cultural issue inside the Comboni Institute had come a long way with many positive developments, from an Italian Verona/Veneto culture to opening up to wider horizons until the present world-wide situation. The opening of the International Scholasticates in 1969 was certainly a great help in this perspective towards wider cultural inclusion.

The re-union of the two Comboni Institutes in 1979 was a great thrust forward, as well. Surely, internationality presents many challenges which should be taken into consideration during Basic Formation especially as regards how to appreciate one's own and other people's cultures, in a spirit of Brotherhood and dialogue.

The Assembly had words of appreciation for the Letter, since it spoke of concrete issues affecting community life. However, there was also the feeling that the word *tolerance* was missing and that, frequently, tolerance is the only way through. Another distinction related to the issue of globalisation was that people should not just *adapt* to world trends, but promote positive new ways of relating based on faith and Christian love.

As for the second set of questions the confreres felt that the *missionary vocation* is a call to go out of one's own culture and to be open to other cultures and values. This openness becomes enrichment for each one's culture and the basis of Catholicity. No culture should be *imposed* on other cultures but there must always be a respectful effort to discover the richness and the values present in all cultures.

However, it was observed that not all the difficulties in the community are due to cultural matters, sometimes it is just a mechanism of *self-defence*. Inferiority and superiority, majority and minority complexes can always play a negative role within the community. The community councils can give to each one the opportunity of sharing one's own experience and situations freely and become an occasion of growing in harmony as a missionary apostolic community. Not everything can be solved at the human level; the spirit of faith needs to play its important role.

The feedback to the third set of questions unequivocally pointed out that the Italian majority should not impose its standard of life in the communities and the same should apply for the implementation of projects. The real need was that the community should discern, evaluate and implement projects considered valid by the whole community; everyone should be kept accountable for them.

Regarding the language, it was pointed out that the official language of Sudan is Arabic and that in the South English is spoken only by the missionaries and the students of our schools. When there is no common dialect people resort to Arabic. It was felt that a lot of tolerance was still

needed towards confreres who, for different reasons, were not speaking English. In regard to the Basic Formation, it was thought that the Delegation would need its own Postulancy but that, for the time being, the collaboration with the Kenya Province would do.

War, Justice and Peace and the Initiative of the Institute

The Superior General, Fr. Manuel Augusto Lopes Ferreira, shared about the general situation of the Comboni Institute and tackled also the issue of *Justice and Peace and Integrity of Creation* as a theme felt more and more as very important in the context of evangelization at the level of the Comboni Institutes. This was certainly a very important issue everywhere, but in the context of Africa and of Sudan and South Sudan, it was extremely relevant because of the experience of so many years of war, destruction and the abuse of human rights.

At the level of the Comboni Institutes the concern was much wider than the context of Sudan and South Sudan and the commitment for justice, peace and reconciliation was aiming at three different situations: Congo and the Great Lakes; the Eritrea-Ethiopia conflict and the war situation in Sudan. For this reason the General Councils of the three Comboni Institutes (MCCJ, CMS and Secular Combonis) through the committee of Justice and Peace and Integrity of Creation, led by Fr. Anton Maier, Fr. Milani, Bro. Martinuzzo and Sr. Margit Forster, had published a letter entitled: *Justice as a Life Giving Relationship*.⁵²⁸

The aim was to promote reflection, prayers, conversion and action in all the Confreres and Sisters during the Jubilee Year 2000 and encourage everyone to cooperate fully with the various activities proposed, especially those in favour of the above-mentioned situations, through workshops on peace, reconciliation and the missionary challenges in contexts of war and social injustice in the African environment.

In that circumstance, while the Bishops Conferences of Congo, Rwanda and Burundi had already made public their common vision regarding the situation in the Great Lakes Region, the SCBC seemed to have lacked a clear position and found itself more divided than united. The Comboni effort, therefore, was to try to promote social justice and peace among the

⁵²⁸ “*Justice as a Life Giving Relationship*”, Letter to the members of the three Comboni Institutes on Justice/Peace and the Integrity of Creation, Rome, 1 January, 2000, World Day of Peace.

<http://www.comboni.org/en/contenuti/100875-justice-as-a-life-giving-relationship>

people the missionaries were working with, so that they themselves and the Local Church might come up with a common vision for the future.

The Six-Year Plan 1999-2004

A Six-Year Plan of action was drawn up, taking into account the acts of the Assemblies 1998/1999, the *Plan of action*⁵²⁹ of 1998 and the reflection of the Delegation Council, and was approved by the General Council with some comments,⁵³⁰ to be reported at the end of the main body of the text.

Evangelization

The Delegation will implement the Evangelization Directory drawn up by the Assembly 1999 and approved by the Delegation Council.

Commitments

The Delegation Assembly 1999 has indicated as a target to have at least two communities among the same ethnic groups in the Dioceses of Torit, Rumbek, Tombura/Yambio, Yei and Malakal (Nuer area).

Community life

Each community is to be made up of at least four members because of the current situation of uncertainty and insecurity. The style of community life and presence in a given place is to come gradually into line with what is stated in the Evangelization Directory.

Finance

We shall implement the Total Common Fund as chosen by the 1999 Assembly and approved by the Delegation Council.

On-going formation

- The Delegation will set up a comprehensive library.
- The new comers will be introduced into the life of the Delegation by visiting some communities soon after their arrival.
- The newcomers will participate in courses of African studies available in Kenya.
- They will be given at least 6 months to study the local language.
- Every year there will be a one-month course in colloquial Arabic for any confrere willing to participate.

⁵²⁹ Plan of Action, South Sudan Delegation, Plenary Assembly, January, 1998. FSSPJ.

⁵³⁰ - Delegation Council 1/2000, Nairobi 17-22 January, 2000, no. 5, Six year plan, approved by the General Council with some comments. FSSPJ.

- Six Year Plan, The New Sudan, South Sudan Delegation Newsletter, no. 15, January, 2000, p.8. FSSPJ.

Basic Formation

The Delegation shall open its Postulancy. Meanwhile, candidates will join the Postulancy of the Kenya Province. The Delegation will contribute to the Kenya Postulancy by appointing a co-formator.

Vocation Promotion

We will set up a Vocation Ministry Team of two confreres possibly inserted in pastoral work.

Human promotion

We shall promote the self-reliance of the Christian communities by supporting those projects which show that the local community is seriously committed to their implementation.

Education

We give priority to education so as to enable South Sudanese students to attend higher education institutes. We set apart a fund for sponsorship, teacher training and the establishing of senior secondary schools.

The comments of the General Council were the following:

- 5.1 We (SS Delegation) are requested to prepare the Delegation Directory.*
- 5.2 To have two communities in each Diocese of South Sudan is considered as a target, but first we have to make sure that there are communities formed of 4 people.*
- 5.3 Do not be in a hurry to have an independent Postulancy, but give priority to vocation promotion.*
- 5.4 Self-reliance is to be promoted but do not forget the needs of the poor.*

Challenges community by community

Nzara had already been handed over to T/Yambio Diocese by the year 1999, with the subsequent opening of Lomin/Kajo-Kaji, Yei Diocese. Then there was the issue of the community of Narus which had to be tackled and the one of Pakele/Kocoa community and the related Vocation Centre. There was also the issue of the Pre-Postulancy and Postulancy to be solved. The issue of Raja, considered by the Khartoum government a place SPLA would never dare to attack, was instead attacked, and captured and then abandoned after a short while.

However, the insecurity and retaliation of the government which followed the capture of Raja created a lot of displacement of people who fled to the side of Tombura/Yambio Diocese. The Provincial Council

thought it was a duty, if asked, to assign confreres with a knowledge of Arabic to that location. In the year 2000 the security situation of Nyal, caused by the inter-clan war, was a big concern and provoked the evacuation of the confreres. Finally, there was the matter of having two communities, instead of three, in the Diocese of Rumbek with the situation of Nyamlel taken up by Rumbek Diocese with Fr. Barton.

All these were issues to be followed up properly and to be dealt later on when taking up each community specifically in the span of time of Fr. Bettini's Administration ending on December, 2004.

Another issue to be foreseen in case of an imminent signing of a peace agreement were the communities of Raja, Wau and Malakal which were belonging to the South but were taken care of by Khartoum Province. They would be handed over to the South Sudan Province, so the question was about the personnel and the language. Would the confreres pass to the South as well? Would it be good to unify the two Provinces into a *Sudan Province*? All these matters had to be reflected upon in their pros and cons.

On a journey until December, 2004

At the start of Fr. Bettini's Administration there was the presentation of the Communities and Secretariats as they came from the previous one of Fr. Chemello's, giving the perception of the concrete situation at the time of the handing over. Now I want to present the journey the Secretariats and the communities went through under the leadership of Fr. Bettini and his Council, until the end of the Administration, in December, 2004.

At the beginning of his introductory speech at the Plenary Assembly of 1999, Fr. Bettini envisaged a new approach to the situation of the Delegation: that was the transition from a status of emergency to one where he would give priority to ameliorate the living conditions of confreres and communities, thus making the presence *more stable* and with a solid foundation, especially regarding the most essential facilities such as houses, running water, electricity etc.

We will see this gradually fulfilled while dealing with Secretariats and individual communities along the journey until December, 2004. While entering into the details of every community we have to keep in mind that the Delegation (and then the Province) had accepted and approved the system of the ***Total Common Fund*** to be implemented starting from 1

January, 2000.⁵³¹ This was not just a *financial system dealing with money*, but it implied a deeper and more community-centred approach and mentality in the life of each confrere, with discussion and sharing, at local community level, of the plans, projects and commitments.

At the start, in order to establish which projects were to be undertaken and who would be in charge of carrying them out in the name of the community, the discernment had to be done at local community level, then the proposal had to be passed on to the Delegation/Province Financial Committee and finally to the Delegation/Provincial Council for final approval.

In the whole matter, the involvement of the Provincial Superior and his Councillors, during the visits to each community, was something that could help the planning. The attitude of Fr. Bettini, mentioned at the beginning, was therefore very significant for all the on-going improvements and developments on the ground.

There will also be an overall view into the various General Assemblies of the Circumscription, their content and the follow-up in the different sectors and in the communities. The fact of having well planned Assemblies showed that the ameliorated situation on the ground allowed for good planning, a great help for the growth of the Delegation/Province, as a whole, and of all its members.

The Secretariats, Communities, and commitments⁵³²

In this part, each Secretariat and Community will be taken into consideration at individual level from its background until the end of the Administration so that a reader may have an idea of the gradual work of development every institution and community went through in the span of the six years. This would also give a perception of the amount of work and commitments which were carried out in the various specific fields and the struggles encountered in order to achieve what was achieved.

At the start, I will deal with the Secretariat of Evangelization, which included also Animation, Ongoing Formation and Justice and Peace. While

⁵³¹ Six Year Plan, Finance, The New Sudan, op. cit., no. 15, January, 2000, p.8. FSSPJ.

- Report of the Delegate, General Assembly, 2000 (9-16 January) no. 6.5, Finances. FSSPJ.

⁵³² - Comboni Missionaries, Province of South Sudan, (Italian) "Report on the state of personnel and communities, September, 2003," Fr. Ezio Bettini. FSSPJ.

- Annual Plenary Assemblies, South Sudan Delegation/Province, Nairobi, 1999-2004. FSSPJ.

doing so, I will take into consideration the General Assemblies of the Delegation/Province which were organized through this Secretariat. The fact of dealing first with the content of the General Assemblies will help to understand what enlightened the various Secretariats and communities in their daily journey.

The Secretariat of Evangelization, Animation and Ongoing-Formation

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation and *Lay Comboni Missionaries* were linked to this Secretariat, although they had a specific person taking care of each of them

The Secretariat of Evangelization and Ongoing Formation, during the period 1999 and 2004, was working, in a particular way, to prepare the Annual Assemblies and the topics related to evangelization, especially the formation of Small Christian Communities, the Christian Initiation of Adult People (RCIA), Lumko courses for formation of Leaders and Catechists, and further reflection on evangelization themes according to the new documents and sensitivity of the Church, especially after the Synod of Africa of 1994.

The new sensitivity towards themes of JPIC produced a good amount of work and reflection on the new approaches and initiatives to be taken and how to go about sensitizing the Comboni Communities, the Christian communities and the Parishes where we were present. The new evangelization proposed for the third millennium was a challenge to be faced at the level of Evangelization, Animation, JPIC, Ongoing Formation and Lay Comboni Missionaries. The meetings of young and elderly confreres were also new opportunities contributing to the reflection about the new challenges along the journey of the Circumscription.

At this point, I want to tackle the work done in the yearly General Assemblies 2001- 2004, with the various aspects and topics of Comboni Missionary life and evangelization dealt with, which were a real journey of on-going formation. It was an extremely valid work of reflection and discernment for growth at personal, community and Delegation/Province level. This valuable work offered to all the opportunity of living community life in a deeper way and of being better equipped for the work of Evangelization and Human Promotion.

General Assembly of Nairobi, 12-18 January, 2001

Justice and Peace workshop.

The theme of the Assembly was presented and facilitated by Fr. Anton Mayer and it was based on the booklets: *International Workshop on non-violence and Conflict Resolution* and on the letter of the General Council *Justice as a life Giving Relationship*.

He started with the standpoint that justice was a life giving relationship because our life is related to other human beings, to creation and to God. Thus, peace would come about only when all these relationships are at work. If these relationship are faulty, or simply not there, there will be no peace. However, in order to heal the others, it is important to look first after one's personal wounds (*healing the healer*). Besides, there cannot be forgiveness without reconciliation and no real peace without it.

Since Bro. Raniero Iacomella and Fr. Roy Carlos Zuñiga Paredes participated at the International Workshop on *Non-Violence and Conflict Resolution* which was held in South Africa in November, 2000, they had the opportunity of sharing the most relevant points of the workshop on this important issue. The fact of hearing about experiences in countries like Eritrea-Ethiopia, Congo, Chad, Central African Republic and Mozambique, helped them to put the Sudanese reality into a wider perspective since the experience of Sudan and South Sudan was one where violence had become part of daily life,

All this showed that, in this context, people like the missionaries and the other pastoral agents, are the first to bear the consequences of this critical reality and are the first people in need of being healed, in order to care for others. An issue like this was challenging the Province directly, since all the confreres had to go through these tough situations of life, without any real specialized help to tackle difficulties and traumas they went through.

The issue of organisation of campaigns on human rights violations was also tackled showing how many realities are to be kept in mind in order not to act in a naive way. Governments, security-police and anti-demonstration squads are fully at work and people can be threatened, arrested and undergo all sorts of torture and trials. Preparation, the ability to record events and abuses, knowledge of the content of the constitution and of resolutions, treaties and other agreements ratified by the government at international level are needed, to avoid being shown up as ignorant.

The workshop helped us to be more aware of the challenging reality of getting involved in upholding human rights and in the fight against their violation. In reality, for the communities it was not easy matter. The first

important result of the workshop was the awareness of the importance of being in relationship with people, in solidarity with them. To sympathize with them would bring them consolation. The basic approach would be to learn how to be people who help reduce tensions and deal with wounded people with an attitude of humility and understanding.

Another great help was the awareness that, while doing that, we are not alone, God is with us and with people, as well. Instead, what was thought to be very important was to avoid being led by emotions and, in violent situations, to face them with inner strength without panicking. In this regard, it is essential to grow in the ability to denounce violence and defend the powerless, upholding the truth in order to become better instruments of peace. It is essential to maintain a positive attitude in situations of uncertainty.

Finally, the attitude of faith and abandonment into God's hands, through prayer and promotion of prayer for peace together, was considered a real help to grow deeper in one's own faith and spirituality.

At the end of the workshop of the General Assembly of Nairobi, 12-18 January, 2001, on Justice and Peace, the *Justice and Peace Committee*, considered it was important to do something tangible. With the agreement of the great majority of the participants, 30 confreres, the committee decided to break the silence with an open letter entitled: ***A Declaration of the Comboni Missionaries working in Southern Sudan***, inviting all the belligerent parties to stop the war and bring peace to the country.

Justice and Peace Committee: the Declaration

A Declaration of the Comboni Missionaries working in Southern Sudan:

"We, the Comboni Missionaries working in the 'Liberated Areas' of Southern Sudan, gathered for our Annual Assembly, have painfully analysed and evaluated the present tragic situation of war and violence. We have come to the unanimous conviction that the situation of war in Sudan at the present stage has become immoral and a tragic farce. It is not any longer a struggle for freedom of the Sudanese people and for the defence of human rights. The war has become a struggle for power, business and greed. Many heartless people are taking advantage of it and enrich themselves at the expense of the poor. Global interests have the Sudanese resources at heart, not the wellbeing of the Sudanese people. Religion is distorted and misused as a means for other interests. The number of victims is escalating, especially among women and children. Spiritual, human and cultural values are getting lost.

*Corruption, tribalism and fratricidal hatred are fostered. Degradation, underdevelopment and anarchy increase. Humanity in Sudan is getting lost. The word 'liberation' is abused. What improvement do we see? Oppressors and oppressed are running for their life. Northerners against Southerners, Northerners against Northerners, Southerners against Southerners, Nuer and Dinka are fighting against Arabs. Nuer and Arabs are fighting against Dinka; Dinka against Dinka; Nuer against Nuer, Didinga against Dinka. There are no winners. All are losing. NGOs and Churches prolong the fighting through the relief aid that unknowingly supports also the warring factions. The country has so much wealth and natural resources that would guarantee a good livelihood for all Sudanese. We Comboni Missionaries, working in the Liberated Area of Southern Sudan, have decided to **'break the silence'** and intensify our commitment against the injustice that fuels the war in Sudan. We appeal to you leaders of the warring sides: **'In the name of God, lay down the guns! Stop fighting!'** We appeal to all people of goodwill: 'break the silence' and intensify your mediation for peace in Sudan! We appeal to you, political and economic powers of the world: 'Give up your greed and your selfish interests! Help Sudan to regain its lost humanity and identity.'"*

Agreed upon by 30 Comboni Missionaries working in Southern Sudan.

Justice and Peace Committee Coordinator,
Fr. Michele Stragapede, MCCJ.⁵³³

The declaration gave rise to controversial opinions, both in the SPLA/M and in the Church environment as well, who, for different reasons, felt challenged and bypassed in their authority, without previous consultation.

Was it *prophetic*; was it defiant, impudent or just bold? History will have to give the final assessment about it, but what happened was that it was written and given openly to the public, with the strong invitation to **lay down the guns and stop fighting, in the name of God!** It was a call to all people of good will to look for the real good of the suffering people who had nowhere to run for protection and care.

⁵³³ Declaration of the Comboni Missionaries working in Southern Sudan, Nairobi, 19 January 2001. pp. 6, 217, 230, **393** (*Text of the declaration*). In: http://www.sudanoslo.no/edc_media/Structure/Item-293/TinyFiles/Searchforpeace.pdf

The South Sudan Delegation elevated to a Province

A real very big event was the elevation of the Delegation into the status of a Province starting from 1 January, 2002. What had been lost in 1995 because of painful events which obliged the General Council to take the acute decision to suppress the Province in Sudanese territory was recovered. After the positive journey of dedication, commitment, growth and fruits shown by the Comboni Group in the *Liberated Areas*, this juridical act of the General Council, renewing the erection of the Province of South Sudan, indicated that a real journey of development had been completed.

Fr. Bettini and his Council made up of Fr. Fernando González Galarza, Vice-Provincial, Fr. José Jesus Aranda Nava, Fr. Raniero Iacomella and Fr. Giampaolo Mortaro,⁵³⁴ could now look forward with more confidence towards a challenging but also promising future. This formal action was the recognition and confirmation of the acquired solidity of the whole group.

General Assembly of 10-11 January 2002: *Attention to the person*.⁵³⁵

This was very important theme for the whole Comboni Institute. It emerged from the XV General Chapter, but was never reflected upon enough. For the situation in South Sudan, with long years of war and abuses of people, the abusive mentality would appear almost a normal way of life. A theme like this was therefore very relevant in order not to get accustomed to the prevalent low perception of the dignity of the human person. This low grade of perception could also affect relations between confreres and within the communities. Therefore, the theme of *Attention to the person* was a topic which engaged the whole Assembly in a reflection fostering better relationships, care and appreciation, first for every confrere, and then for every person we are called to deal with.

⁵³⁴ Roma, 15 Aprile, 2001, Curia Generalizia, Decreto di erezione della Provincia del Sud Sudan. (Decree of erection of the Province of South Sudan). ACR 727/1/7.

- Rome, 3 October, 2001, Curia Generalizia, Appointment of Fr. Ezio Bettini Provincial Superior for three years, starting his office on 1 January 2002. ACR 727/1/11.

- Rome 2 February, 2002, Curia Generalizia, Appointment of Fr. Fernando González Galarza as Vice-Provincial till 31 December 2004. ACR 727/1/13.

⁵³⁵ Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus, XV General Chapter, Chapter Acts 1997, A fresh start from Mission with the courage of Blessed Daniel Comboni, *Mission is Attention to the Person*, Part II, Chapter 5, nn. 119-165.

Looking at Daniel Comboni's attitude towards the Brothers and Sisters in the mission one can see he always valued their qualities, he recognised the good they did and he always encouraged them and was himself encouraged by them. He was affectionate, sincere and concerned towards all.

The Comboni Institute, as well, always tried to use expressions radiating trust, goodness and sincere attention to others and respectful dialogue. The centrality of the person is essential because *the missionaries are the gifts to the Institute and, for this reason, its greatest care is for each confrere* (RL. 162.1). Moreover, it was made clear that each Comboni Missionary is called to witness Christ not just as an individual, but in a life of fellowship with his Brothers (RL. 23).

The real challenge felt by confreres was how to take clear steps towards creating a more life-giving environment within one's personal life and between community members so that the community may become a source of energy and companionship for the mission and the ministry, and not of energy consumption and isolation. Hence the question: how to create an environment fostering healthy, holistic missionaries and mission.

This Assembly which took place at the beginning of the second term of office of Fr. Bettini and at the very start of South Sudan as a Province, was an occasion to give a better evaluation of the journey of each community and, in particular, to prepare together the Provincial Directory, which would enable the confreres of the Province to have a proper tool during the journey itself. The work was done successfully and it was approved by the Assembly, leaving to the Provincial the task of overseeing the final edition.

(Personnel in 2002-full list ref. Appendix to Part Two, Section Two, Chapter Two, point no.2-3)

General Assembly 2003, *The challenge of different Ministries in the MCCJ communities and apostolate.*⁵³⁶

Two days of the Assembly of Nairobi from 8 to 14 January, 2003, were dedicated to issues concerning On-Going Formation and preparation for the XVI General Chapter, guided by Fr. Francesco Pierli. There were several topics related to the different ministries, worth reflecting upon in any case, whatever theme the XVI General Chapter may decide to take up.

⁵³⁶ Fr. Francesco Pierli, "The challenge of different ministries in the MCCJ communities and apostolate", Nairobi 9-10 January, 2003.

The most important one was the title itself: ***The challenge of different ministries in the MCCJ communities and apostolate***. Truly, the reality within the MCCJ Institute itself and also in relationship to the other Comboni Institutes (CMS, Secular and Lay) had really undergone deep changes. Within the Church at large, as well, the reflection on *Ministry* had already gone a long way forward. This topic, therefore, fell at a very appropriate time.

Fr. Pierli expressed his strong conviction that the topic of *Ministry* would be ***the core challenge of the XVI General Chapter***. In case this did not happen, in his opinion, the overall theme: ***The mission of the Comboni Missionaries in the third millennium*** would remain vague and obscure.

He presented the Ministry as the meeting point between the vision of and the action for the Kingdom to come. In the ***Lineamenta*** Chapter V on *Ministry*, *Ministry* is envisaged in two ways: one is ***people oriented*** (180-184) with a description of what MCCJ Priests and MCCJ Brothers should be doing to serve the people, and the other is ***Congregation centred*** (185-191), that is the ministry of authority.

The MCCJ community unites Brothers and Priests as ***Cenacle of Apostles*** both in daily life and in the apostolate, with the ***religious consecration*** strengthening the bond of fraternity and commitment to a ***collaborative ministry***. In this context, what is different is ***the specificity of the two Ministries***: the Comboni Priests have their ministry marked by Ordination; the Brothers' ministry, instead, is marked by a particular orientation to social apostolate. The RL in 11.1 and 11.2 tries to give further details providing a great contribution to a definition of the roles that Priests and Brothers should unfold in the missionary apostolate. In his view, however, the XVI General Chapter had to clarify better the ***ministerial identity and role of the MCCJ Priests and MCCJ Brothers***.

In any case, the two ministries, the ordained ministry of the Comboni Priests and the ministry of Comboni Brothers have a full meaning in themselves. One is not at the service of the other, but both are in co-operation, at the service of the people.⁵³⁷

In the context of the *New Sudan* in its phase of development, the topic of the different ministries was of great enlightenment, especially regarding the ministry of the Brother, for future different undertakings. Collaborative Ministry within the Comboni community and with other institutions and pastoral-social agents entailed new types of approach and relationships

⁵³⁷ Ibid. Fr. Francesco Pierli.

which, in the past missionary experience, may not have been present, or at least, not worked out with the current sensitivity and approach.

General Assembly 2004, the report of the XVI General Chapter: *The Mission of the Comboni Missionaries at the beginning of the third millennium.*

While the Assembly of 2003 was a reflection in preparation for the XVI General Chapter, the Nairobi Assembly of 2004, from 18 to 24 January, took up the report of the XVI General Chapter with its main theme: *The Mission of the Comboni Missionaries at the beginning of the third millennium.*

In his input, at the beginning of the Assembly, the new Superior General, Fr. Teresino Serra, pointed out that ***the quality of Mission depends on the quality of the missionary.*** Hence, he went on affirming the need of being deeply rooted in spiritual life and prayer which are the essential elements of our mission today. He stated that prayer is mission and that prayer makes us missionaries (Cf. Chapter Acts '03 n. 52.1), and that the starting point of our missionary activity is the conversion of the missionary to Christ (Cf. RL. 46. 1), thus, allowing Christ to evangelize our hearts, first.

He went on to emphasize that, as evangelizers, it is the quality of our consecrated life that will ensure the authenticity of our evangelization.⁵³⁸ He then took three examples that could help to re-qualify our being missionaries: ***Jesus' prayer***, (he is a prayerful person), ***the Apostles' prayer*** and ***Comboni's prayer***. (Writings, 7062, 7063). Next, he went into the theme of the General Chapter, chosen during the previous Intercapitular Assembly: ***The Mission of the Comboni Missionaries at the beginning of the third millennium.***

He pointed out the difficulty found in defining ***Mission***, due to the different geographical and social situations in which we work and the diverse personal experiences of the chapter members. However, the Chapter Delegates devoted great efforts to understanding, with all their mind and heart, ***what kind of mission Comboni would like us to do today.***

Missionary methodology, how we perform our missionary tasks and how much we work with people, was the second issue the Chapter tackled.

⁵³⁸ *Daniel Comboni, witness of holiness and master of mission.* Letter of the three General Councils of the Comboni Institutes on the occasion of the canonization of the Founder Daniel Comboni, n. 39.

The third one dealt with **our life in the mission** and the acknowledgement that *the quality of the mission depends on the quality of the missionary*, and that it is through our way of life that we make true evangelization.

Moreover, the Chapter Delegates realized that the commitments, instead of decreasing, had increased. Provinces had taken up other missionary services like formation, missionary animation, justice and peace and others, while the personnel had diminished because of lack of vocations, increase in age and weakness of the confreres. The challenge is *how to improve the quality of the missionaries through on-going formation*.

Signs of weakness, fatigue, lack of sense of belonging, discouragement and confreres leaving before perpetual vows are increasing. Age and culture differences in our community life are not easy to deal with. Often, community life is very poor and without sharing, hence, we need to reflect on and improve our living together in our communities. Finally, the novelty of the Chapter was that of *remembering the richness of our spirituality and to present it to our confreres for a renewal of their lives*.

Fr. Jesús Aranda and Fr. Ezio Bettini, as Chapter Delegates of South Sudan, also shared their experience attesting that the plurality of people present in the General Chapter was clearly evident and a positive contribution to widening the understanding of our charism. Besides, the canonisation of the Founder, St. Daniel Comboni was something enhancing the sense of community and of belonging within the Comboni Missionaries. However, one could not fail to realize that mission had gone beyond Comboni and the African reality, towards wider horizons and new perspectives for our charism and missionary commitment.

Finally, the Vicar General, Fr. Fabio Baldan gave an introduction and an outline of the Chapter Acts 2003, defining the Chapter as a moment of sharing different feelings and excitements and the Chapter Acts as revealing the diversity of what we are. He presented the outline in six parts: *world, mission, formation* (especially on-going formation), *community, methodology* and *various*. As for the most used words in the Acts, which were reflecting the spirit of the Chapter, they were *life, community, mission* and *formation*.

The main issues tackled were the global situation, the Church context and the Comboni reality, the rich countries becoming richer and the poor poorer; the economy which affects daily life, and the development of communications which allows us to live physically in the *mission* but with the heart still in one's own country and friends, holding back a full commitment to the people we serve.

There was a clear awareness that the Churches were growing in the Southern part of the world and that Daniel Comboni and our dead confreres were the hidden foundation stones of an Institute whose geography of vocations was visibly changing, with an ever increasing gap between young and old confreres.

It was revealed that Chapter two of the Acts was the most difficult chapter to deal with. As for the Chapter Delegates, all tried to rediscover the Comboni Spirituality refusing to give a simply geographical interpretation to the charism, which is not only Evangelization, but also Missionary Animation, Vocation Promotion and Formation. The assessment and review of commitments and methodologies were left pending to be taken into account in the Provinces.

On-going Formation was considered very important, especially in the dangerous places where we were working. Regarding the community, it was seen as the subject and object of mission, a place of on-going formation and a place of witnessing in community what we proclaim, with the Superior as an animator within it. About the reflection on *action and contemplation* the stress was put more on *being than on doing*.

As for the relationship between *mission and economics*, it was acknowledged that there was something new to look at and in need of a change of heart: sharing was seen as a means of proclamation of the Gospel. Finally, about re-qualification, the issue was still to be taken into consideration.

The group work which followed gave the participants of the South Sudan Provincial Assembly the time to personalize and give the various points presented and coming from the General Chapter a more local perspective, the South Sudanese reality. Two questions were given for the confreres' reflection, one on the effects of Globalisation and one concerning the most important and urgent challenge.

To the first question on the *effects of Globalisation in the context where one was living*, confreres recognised that in Southern Sudan there are means of communication such as *radios, television mobile phones and satellite phones* and that people feel the urge to go abroad. There is a tendency to imitate foreign life styles in regards to clothing, cosmetics, music and so on, and all this was bringing about a cultural crisis.

People are becoming only consumers and receivers and do not give anything to Globalisation. The fast changes give room to non-commitments. Globalisation may affect us missionaries in a positive way, as well as in a negative one, with confreres with half-hearted commitments

to mission, poor motivations and self-centred affirmation; as a consequence, the ideal of living a simple lifestyle is lost.

Quite evident was the large gap existing between those who have and those who do not have access to the benefits of Globalisation; moreover, the issue of Family Planning was pushed through by all means. As for armaments, the weapons are much more sophisticated now than in the Anya-Nya war of Sudan.

On the other side, there is more awareness for *Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation*. Through UN, NGO, and the Church, people are informed about what is going on in the World. HIV/AIDS was spreading considerably. Finally, the pressure of the international community, the war against terrorism and the particular interests of USA were having a strong effect in the peace process.

Regarding the most urgent challenges in reference to Chapter Acts 26-28, those considered most important were the sobriety and simplicity of life, the proclamation of Christ as the goal of Mission, the intensification of dialogue with other religions, the renewal of Mission and methodology, education, commitment to work for the disadvantaged human groups and consecrated life.

(Personnel in 2004-full list ref. Appendix to Part Two, Section Two, Chapter Two, point no. 4)

Meeting of Young and of Experienced Confreres

The matter of the introduction of the new confreres arriving in the *Liberated Areas* was something difficult to organise but necessary, in order to understand the situation from various points of view, geographical, ethnical, religious and at Comboni level. During the first years of the Delegation it was not possible to work it out: the matter was tackled in a better way at the time of Fr. Bettini. However, the issue developed in another way, by organizing meetings of *young confreres* and of *experienced confreres*.

Yet, in this case the emphasis was put more on the age group than on the introduction to a new reality for everybody. From the start of this methodology, every year there was a meeting for young Confreres, (e.g. below 45 years old) with their agenda and another for experienced confreres (e.g. above 45 years old). The General Assemblies would become the meeting point for both age groups.

Secretariat of Animation, Vocation Promotion, Formation.

The work of animation and vocation promotion was carried out by Fr. Paul Idra together with the vocation promotion team of Moyo. He was regularly visiting the Refugee camps in Pakele/Adjumani, together with the Comboni Sister, Sr. Silvia Flores, at a time when the LRA (the Lord's Resistance Army) was very active and dangerous. He was visiting also Kiryandongo and Rhino refugee camps, as well, and was planning to visit other places in the Province, within South Sudan. He had to take care also of the orientation courses and the Pre-Postulancy, either in Moyo or in Lomin, helped by the Comboni Sisters and Deacon Alfredo Estrada. Sometimes the vocation meetings were organized together also with the Sacred Heart and the Mary Mother of the Church Sisters, according to the place visited. Diocesan Priests in Uganda were asking Fr. Idra to hold vocation meetings in their Parishes. Fr. Aranda was also helping in the orientation courses. However, there was the complaint about having given Fr. Idra the responsibility of temporarily running the Parish of Lomin, thus putting too much stress on him and hindering the work of vocation promotion.

The Pre-Postulancy and Postulancy 1986-2004

The Background (1986-1994)

The formation of Sudanese Priests started even before the Seminary of Okaru was set up. The first fruit of this priority was the Priestly ordination of Fr. Ireneo Wien Dud on 21 December, 1944. The second priority was the formation of Comboni Missionary Priests and Brothers and the first fruit was Fr. Peter Magalasi on 7 July, 1957. However, during that time there were no real formative plans and structures for Comboni Formation.

With the return of the Expatriate Comboni Missionaries in the seventies, this issue came up again, but it took time before it was settled. Applicants to the Comboni Missionaries were coming from the Diocesan Seminaries and were followed up personally by confreres teaching there. The Bishop of Tombura, at the time, agreed that possible candidates could refer to Nzara Parish until a better solution could be found, but this did not work out. Instead the Seminary of Bussere, where there were also philosophy and theology courses, became more viable.

The discussion about the issue of the Pre-Postulancy and Postulancy went on for quite a long period of time also even up to the time of Fr. Cefalo and Fr. Mazzolari, in connection with the SCBC. The obstacle was

that the SCBC was not in favour of taking students without vows in the Major Seminary for the philosophical course, which was the case of our Postulants. The temporary solution was therefore to have the Pre-Postulancy in Juba and then send the Postulants to Nairobi for the Postulancy which included the philosophical course.

Having accepted this alternative, the Province could start planning for the purchase of the required property and make it fit for the purpose. This was carried out and the opening of the Pre-Postulancy in Juba, Munuki area, took place on **15 March, 1987**. Fr. Jesús Aranda Nava was asked to be the temporary formator for six months: in practice he was to become, at various intervals, almost a permanent formator until 2016. Fr. Todd Riebe and Fr. Ottorino Sina were helping, though they had other commitments.

In 1989, the SCBC agreed that the Comboni Postulants could go to study philosophy at St. Pauls' Major Seminary, around eight kilometres from the Postulancy, which the students covered by bicycle. This was very much appreciated and allowed the first stage of formation to be done within the Sudan. Pre-Postulancy and Postulancy were going on in the same building.

In the middle of 1989, and later on, the war situation in Juba was so terrible that it was impossible to study or go to St. Paul's Seminary for the philosophical course because of the continuous shelling of the city. As a result, due to the insecurity in Juba, the SCBC and the Superiors of the Seminarists studying in St. Paul's Seminary, decided to transfer it to Khartoum. Thus, the Comboni Postulancy had to follow the same way too.

The Province of Khartoum received the Postulants from the South very well and greatly assisted to establish the community of the Postulancy very close to Kobar, where the Seminary was. The Province of Khartoum asked Province of South Sudan to accept and follow the formation of their Postulants, as well. The formation team was made up of Fr. Luciano Perina from Khartoum Province and Fr. Aranda from South Sudan. The Moslem environment did not welcome them and created some problems, but they succeeded in managing the situation.

For Fr. Aranda the experience of Khartoum was not easy because he had to follow also the Pre-Postulants who remained in Juba and to move from Khartoum to Juba and back was a great inconvenience. In fact, there were often no room available on the airplanes or the flights were postponed for weeks or cancelled without notice. Sometimes one had to travel to Juba among sacks of food or weapons. Planes from Juba to Khartoum had no seats and no security. People would sit on the floor and secure themselves with ropes.

In mid of 1990, it was decided that the Postulants would go back to Juba. Only some of the Postulants of the Province of Khartoum moved there. Some of them, fearing the situation of war, decided to leave the Postulancy. In Juba, for the first nine months of 1991 the situation was quite peaceful. For the rest of the year and all through 1992, the situation in Juba was very dangerous. There were daily SPLA attacks on the city of Juba and the government would retaliate with the killing and torture of civilians in the prisons. It was a time of great suffering and frustration!

In that reality the Postulants were really heroic. After the shelling, the community used to go and collect the wounded people to be taken to the already overcrowded hospital, already jam-packed with them. They took the bodies of the dead to the morgue. Sometimes they had to collect various parts of dismembered bodies. After this pitiful service, they all had to go to the river to wash the blood off themselves.

When it was possible they used to go to for pastoral work outside Juba, but when it became impossible they did a lot of pastoral work in the displaced people's camps with catechism, choirs and visiting the people, especially the sick and old.

When the situation became too difficult to continue with the courses of philosophy in Juba, it was again decided to transfer the Postulants to Khartoum. At that time, Fr. Abel Mödi, the Provincial, was in Khartoum unable to go Juba, so the Postulants were sent there under his care and Fr. Aranda remained in Juba with the Pre-Postulants. On 15th August, 1992, the government notified all the Comboni Expatriates to be ready to go to Khartoum because Juba was not safe for them. So, on 5 September all the Comboni Missionaries Fathers, Brothers and Sisters, 15 in all, were taken to the airport and sent to Khartoum.

The challenges of that period of time were many. Among them were:

1. How to help the Pre-Postulants and Postulants to discern their vocation in a reality of war and make their choice with serenity.
2. How to help some confreres that were opposing formation and were using every occasion criticize it.
3. How to help the Seminarians to concentrate in their prayers, studies and others activities of formation when the entire environment was spoiled with so many signs of war.
4. The terrible situation of lack of food and essential commodities and no opportunity to move freely for pastoral service.
5. The difficult situation some of them experienced before they entered, due to mentality and culture, making it difficult for them to enter in the process of formation. Some of them felt they were

ready to be ordained, so the programme of formation was losing effectiveness. Because of this, some left the formation angry while others even threatened to beat the formator; others ones went through and continued their Basic Formation.

In Khartoum, Fr. Todd Riebe carried on as formator of the Postulancy for a few months, but then went back to USA and Fr. Francesco Debertolis continued with the work. The South Sudan Province carried on with the Postulancy until the end of 1994, when the new Delegation of South Sudan with its base in Nairobi took over responsibility for the Basic Formation.

A New start (1995-2004)

However, the new Delegation was not equipped for it and, though it was going on with the Vocation Promotion in Pakele/Kocoa with Bro. Rossignoli, for the Postulancy issue the Delegate, Fr. Chemello, had to start enquiring with the Ugandan and Kenyan Province. Only in the time of Fr. Bettini could a new arrangement be concluded with the Kenyan Province and the Postulants could again carry on with their philosophical and Comboni formation.

During the year 2000 the Delegation decided reopen the Pre-Postulancy in Narus (Kapoeta County) for six months, with Fr. Aranda as the formator and four students, one of which was Phillip Kenyi Andruga. The Comboni community of Narus was made up of Fr. Elia Ciapetti (Superior), Fr. Mitiku Habte Cheksa, and Bro. Armando Ramos González.

With the shift of the Vocation Ministry from Pakele/Kocoa to Moyo on 1 January, 2002, with Fr. Giovanni Ferrazin (Superior), Fr. Paul Idra and Bro. Rossignoli, it received a new impulse from Fr. Paul Idra as Vocation Director, and after his assignment to Ecuador, Fr. Jimmy Aventore Milla who became part of the team at Moyo Vocation Centre.

Again the Pre-Postulancy was moved to Lomin (Kajo-Kaji) in 2003, where the new Comboni Comprehensive College was producing good fruits. Meanwhile, in June of the same year 2003, Fr. Bosco Anthony Sule Mawa was sent to Rome for a course for formators, due to start in October, and expected to be ready for August 2004 to take up the work of co-formator in the joint Comboni Postulancy of Nairobi, for the South Sudan Province, together with Fr. Aranda.

Secretariat of Finance

The Total Common Fund system

After a long time of reflection in the previous Administration and throughout 1999, it was decided that the system of the **Total Common Fund** would come into effect on 1 January, 2000, and so it came.⁵³⁹ This was certainly a big change in the financial tradition of Sudan and South Sudan and the confreres found it all very new. It was not only matter of putting all the financial resources together in a common pool, but of acquiring and developing a *community-minded* way of life.

The most important attitude was that of planning the economic activities together according to the needs of each community and mission by sharing out the resources available or to be applied for, in a way that decisions would not just follow *personal plans*, but communitarian discernment with the final approval of the Delegation Council. This way of dealing with the financial matters needed a real change of mind and approach and would affect directly the way of evangelizing, as well. Of course, at the beginning it took a lot of patience to get into the new system, especially with reference to the issue of budgeting.

What was clear was that the real problem for the Delegation was not so much the lack of funds or how to apply for them, but how to use them, in line with the Evangelization Charter and the intentions of the donors. Besides, if needs were arising on the part of the Dioceses, it was viewed as important to consider ways of financially supporting the Dioceses of South Sudan that were most in need and people living in emergency situations.

Education Fund

As a follow-up of the fundraising program done in Italy with the film *"E poi ho incontrato Madit"* (Then I met Madit), a good amount of money was given to the Delegation. It was decided to use it to prepare people able to take over the administration of South Sudan after the war. With half of the money, a fund was opened to help young people in their studies, including university; it was decided to use the other half to build a College in Lomin for Senior Secondary, open to students from our primary schools and others.

⁵³⁹ Common fund: Delegation Council 1/1999, 19-21 January, no. 10. FSSPJ.
- Minutes of the General Assembly, 2000, 9-16 January, no. 6.5. FSSPJ.

The Communities

Having concluded with the Secretariats, we enter now into the setup of the communities with their concrete situation and in their development.

Lomin, a great opportunity

Among the different undertakings, Lomin was the one who got the greatest opportunity and attention of the Delegation/Province at Parish level and especially regarding the educational level with schools. Already during the time of Fr. Mazzolari's Administration, there was the proposal of another secondary school in the South of Sudan, beside the Comboni Secondary School of Juba. The matter, however, could not go further because of the general situation of insecurity in the country.

At this time, though, the situation in the *Liberated Areas* was good enough for such an undertaking. Fr. Bettini, aware of the proposal of the past, since he was a Provincial Councillor with Fr. Mazzolari, deemed it a unique opportunity to make a renewed proposal on the topic for Lomin. Moreover, there was a happy coincidence of an unpredicted and successful fund-raising carried out in the Italian Province, as follow up of a documentary film whose title was *Then I met Madit* by Silvestro Montanaro and diffused by the RAI (The Italian Radio-Television) in 1998.⁵⁴⁰

The documentary was filmed in the area of Rumbek at a time of a severe famine, in 1998, when people from the town of Wau were fleeing after the attack of Cmdr. Kerubino Kwanying Bol, who captured the town but was not able to hold it. Famine and the displacement of people became the cause of many deaths. In this context, the documentary developed the story of *Madit* a baby who got lost while the mother was running for safety and the struggle of the mother to find him.

The documentary proved very popular and resulted in significant funds being donated. Beside some emergency interventions to curb the famine, the Delegation Council decided to use a considerable part of this fund to help the youth in their education through sponsorships and through the construction of a secondary boarding school for boys and girls.

⁵⁴⁰ “...e poi ho incontrato Madid” a documentary of Silvestro Montanaro - Rai – 1998.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rd29cnCHVu8>

Lomin (Kajo-Kaji) was, at that time, the most suitable place because it was not far from Uganda, near to the town of Moyo, with easy access for materials and equipment to build it and to run the whole education programme. Its proximity to Uganda allowed the possibility of employing well trained Ugandan teachers and, above all, the opportunity of following the Ugandan school syllabus.

The hard work of Fr. Eugenio Magni, who strongly believed in education, made it possible to have a full comprehensive college, with students coming from all over South Sudan. At the time, the *Lomin Comprehensive College* was the most prominent secondary school in the whole of South Sudan. Lomin College was attracting students from different backgrounds and ethnic groups, thus becoming a hope for a better future in South Sudan, especially for young people desirous of education.

Lomin (Kajo-Kaji)

The Parish: Lomin (Kajo-Kaji), 29 km from Moyo (West Nile, Uganda), was closed on 8 August, 1987, for security reasons and reopened on 1 January, 2000, with the presence of Fr. Mario Busellato, Bro. Valentino Fabris and Fr. Eugenio Magni. Its purpose was to evangelize the Kuku and to start an education programme at secondary school level. As for the mission premises in Lomin, since the beginning, the buildings of the mission were developed in bricks and mortar, care was taken to ensure running water and electricity were provided.

Regarding the secondary school (the college), the place was chosen because it was close to the border of Uganda and was offering several good opportunities. One of these was that the students could escape there on foot, if necessary; another was that the community could be contacted by radio and also by using the mobile telephone system of Moyo. Lomin could be reached by car from Moyo without major problems, though the road was bad. Finally, the materials for the College, the community and education would come to Lomin via Uganda, often directly from Kampala, and well prepared Ugandan teaching personnel could also be found there.

Lomin, *Sacred Heart Parish* was a Bari speaking (Kuku dialect) community belonging to the Diocese of Yei. It consisted of 20 chapels and 3 IDP camps: **Limi** (1,450 families), **Bamurye** (22,000 people: Bari of Juba, Lotuho, Kresh, Dinka, Nuer, Kuku), **Mangalore** (Dinka). The Parish had 24 Catechists and was divided into six zones of three chapels each, with a monthly meeting of all the chapels, with prayer and Holy

Mass. There was also a Catechist meeting every month with 3-4 days of formation, liturgy and planning.

The Comboni Sisters were present, as well, and were helping in different areas. Sr. Dorinda Lopes de Cunha was helping as adult coordinator, Sr. Maria Silvia Flores as youth coordinator and Sr. Maria Adela González in the pastoral field. There was an adult pastoral programme for women's formation with a meeting once a month. The Parish also took on the work of translating *Our Journey Together* to help build up the Christian community.

The pastoral activity was rather intense: every month there was a meeting for youth formation and also a seminar in each zone on HIV and education on sexuality, various social activities and days of retreat and mission awareness in some chapels, with a monthly meeting of Lomin Parish committee as well. By 2003, the achievements were the building of the office of the Parish, the renewal of catechetical building, the handing over of the 12 chapels of Uganda to Arua Diocese and the compulsory six months formation before receiving the sacraments at Easter time.

A pastoral council was busy with the training of Catechists, formation for different groups, adult education, a couple of income generating projects, one for women's dressmaking, and one with a workshop for the manufacture of liturgical objects, using recycled material.

In January, 2002, Lomin community was made up by Fr. Tarcisio Loro, already in the Delegation since November 2000, Fr. Eugenio Magni, Fr. Mario Busellato and Bro. Ottorino Gelmini. However, after three months, Fr. Busellato and Bro. Gelmini had to leave the community for health reasons and go to Italy. Only Fr. Loro and Fr. Magni remained in Lomin. Fr. Loro was in charge of the Parish and Fr. Magni of education. In January 2003, Fr. Giampaolo Mortaro was assigned to the community, as well, coming from *Kapoeta/Lolim*.

The community was doing fairly well with the daily timetable, while it was more difficult for the confreres to keep the monthly one with the retreat and community council. Unfortunately, matters regarding life together were seldom dealt during proper fixed times, but just during the meals. The relationship with the Comboni Sisters was good and a monthly meeting with the celebration of the Eucharist, a shared meal and social were of great help. The Comboni Sisters' collaboration in education and in the Parish work was of great importance.

An event to be mentioned and which was much felt in the community of Lomin was the celebration of the funeral rites of the late, well-known and appreciated Fr. Mattia Bizzarro who died in Moyo (Uganda) on 3 August,

2001. Bishop Erkolano, Fr. Bettini and members of the Local Authorities were present. A gravestone was placed on his tomb and a project in his memory was launched: the construction of the science laboratory block of the college. Giving a glance to all the running commitments, one would think that the community of Lomin had bitten off more than it could chew.

At the end of 2003, the community experienced very severe difficulties. Fr. Mortaro had to go to Italy for emergency health treatment, from which, thanks be to God, he slowly recovered, but could not go back. Fr. Loro left for holidays and did not go back to Lomin any more either.⁵⁴¹ Fr. Paul Idra had to take temporary charge of the pastoral work, while caring also for the Pre-Postulants.

The Comboni Comprehensive College

This was a project of the Province of South Sudan aimed at providing education for students preparing to take the exams in Uganda, so as to have a recognised qualification from the *University of East Africa*. The school provided boarding for both boys and girls. In 2002, two classroom blocks were completed, able to accommodate 320 students or more if necessary. The students were 166 accommodated in four classrooms. One more classroom was used as a dispensary, another one as a library, one as science laboratory and one as staff room. In 2003 at least 50 new students were expected and the classroom had to be left free. By the end of January 2003 a new dispensary was ready and a classroom was made available for the newcomers. A new multipurpose hall was completed, as well. A very positive thing was that the students were involved in agriculture, thus contributing in their own maintenance.

The upgrade of the staff of the school was a priority and the head teacher was sent for further studies while Fr. Magni took full charge of the school, having as deputy Sr. Caterina Cirimelli of the CMS. In the college, the Comboni Sisters were involved in teaching and fully committed in its administration. They saw to the health of the students, providing food and books through the help of *Sign of Hope*, a German NGO. The Board of Governors was working hard to make the school gradually self-reliant financially through the school fees, though this was quite difficult.

⁵⁴¹ sscomboni@news.com, Newsletter, no. 25, Novembr, 2003. FSSPJ.

St. Martin Workshop, Lomin

Bro. Erich Fischnaller arrived in the South Sudan Province, in April 2004. He belonged to the South African Province and was supposed to remain only for one year to look after the building of Comboni College. In fact, the Provincial Superior, Fr. Ezio Bettini, assigned him to Lomin community for this purpose, to continue the construction of the Comboni Comprehensive College, a schools complex already under way. Due to the needs of the college construction, he started developing a simple *carpentry workshop*, adding a welding section to it, for the required works in metal and brick-making for the same purpose.

The Pre-Postulancy: with the Vocation Centre located in Moyo, since 1 January 2002, after visiting Lomin, Fr. Aranda thought it was a suitable place for the Pre-Postulancy because of the pastoral opportunities in the Parish and the college. Fr. Paul Idra was placed in charge of it.

Kapoeta/Lolim Community

The presence of the Comboni community in Narus, made up of Fr. Elia Ciapetti. Fr. Mitiku Habte and Bro. Armando Ramos González went on with the pastoral programmes and the presence until March 2001 when, following the proposal of the Delegation Superior, Bishop Paride agreed that the Diocese would take it over and allocate another Parish among the Toposa people.⁵⁴² However, Fr. Ciapetti was allowed to remain in Narus under the care of the Bishop.

Fr. Giampaolo Mortaro, with a long experience among the Pokot people of Kenya, was assigned to this new commitment together with Fr. Mitiku Habte and Bro. Valentino Fabris, who was in charge of the constructions. The village was called Lolim, but since the community was ministering to Kapoeta, it was called the Kapoeta community.

The presence started in June, 2001, in a simple permanent building and seemed to develop well. The confreres thought it important to start first with a census of the population.⁵⁴³ The aim of this new mission was also to have a community in a place where confreres could start a specific Comboni project with a new approach directed to a more self-reliant attitude among the people, something that was not possible in Narus because of the opposite approach of Fr. Ciapetti

⁵⁴² sscomboni@news.com, Newsletter, no. 18, March, 2001. FSSPJ.

⁵⁴³ sscomboni@news.com, Newsletter, no. 19, September, 2001. FSSPJ.

Unfortunately, the population was already accustomed to receive a lot of hand-outs and did not appreciate the new style of the Comboni community. People began to be uncooperative to the extent that a group of people who named themselves *Toposa Educated Class*, from Narus/Kapoeta, in November 2002, appealed in writing to the Provincial Superior, Fr. Bettini, to remove Fr. Mortaro from Lolim.

Fr. Ciapetti took his stand in support of Fr. Mortaro denouncing what was written against him as a pack of lies. In December, 2002, also Bishop Paride tried to intervene making the *Toposa Educated Class* understand their wrong move in addressing themselves to the Provincial Superior, instead to their own Bishop, who was the one in charge of the matter, but unfortunately it was too late and the matter could not be reversed.

Thus, Lolim was abandoned and the community returned to Narus to carry on the work of Fr. Ciapetti while he was in Italy for health reasons. Then, the Provincial Council decided to assign the personnel elsewhere, Fr. Mortaro to Lomin and Fr. Habte to Marial Lou. Bro. Fabris remained there until the completion of the classroom and then, in March 2003, went to Nairobi. Fr. Ciapetti was allowed to remain in Narus indefinitely, at the Bishop's disposal, but no other Comboni personnel were made available for the Toposa area.⁵⁴⁴

Unfortunately, in March 2003, while driving to Lokichokio, Fr. Ciapetti's car was attacked by robbers and he was shot in the upper right arm. He had to go back to Italy for treatment and rehabilitation.⁵⁴⁵ He continued to improve but, by the end of the year, he expressed the desire to leave South Sudan and go somewhere else. The Provincial Council agreed he should do so. It was an unfortunate way to end the presence of the Comboni Missionaries, not only among the Toposa people, but also in Torit Diocese, the very Diocese which made it possible, in 1990, the missionary experience of the *New Sudan Group*.

Pre-Postulancy in Narus: during the year 2000, the Delegation decided to reopen the Pre-Postulancy in Narus (Kapoeta County) for six months, with Fr. Aranda as the formator and four students, one of which was Phillip Kenyi Andrugá. The Parish Priest Fr. Mitiku Habte Cheksa and Bro. Armando Ramos González were helping, as well. However, by 2002, the Pre-Postulancy was moved to Lomin.

⁵⁴⁴ Nairobi, 24 January, 2003, Fr. Bettini to Bishop Paride Taban, Lolim/Narus. FSSPJ.

⁵⁴⁵ sscomboni@news.com, Newsletter, no. 24, June, 2003. FSSPJ.

Mabia Community in the displaced people's camp

Mabia was an IDP (Internally Displaced People's) camp 8 km from Mupoi on the Mupoi-Tombora road in Western Equatoria, in the area of Tombura/Yambio Diocese. The displaced people (approximately 19,000) were coming from the areas of Raja and Deim Zubeir and had to flee from their home place in October, 2001, after the attack and the retreat of the SPLA forces. They belonged, at least, to eleven different tribes of the Fertit group (Beland, Kresh, Ndogo, Aya, Banda, Yulu, Shatt, etc.), so the only means of communication was Arabic, either colloquial or liturgical.

These tribal groups are renowned for their spirit of diligence, simplicity, their meek character and non-violent way of life. The camp of Mabia was a mirror of the ideal of a *New Sudan* where different ethnical groups and religious creeds were able to live, interact and collaborate in mutual respect and harmony.

Situation of the people: people had arrived in very poor health and with no belongings whatsoever. WFP, other UN and non UN agencies helped them to build their housing gave them some emergency food on a regular basis. People in the camp had been widely praised for being hard-working people, not inclined to live constantly on relief help.

Primary health care had always been a very serious issue in the camp; some NGOs had been supplying drugs, but from the very beginning there had been massive drug mismanagement, people therefore were unable to get the necessary treatment for the most basic ailments.

On the other hand, there have been blatant examples of corruption and use of violent means by the local authorities, which had made people mistrust the SPLA. The feeling of disappointment and discontent had become so strong that many of these displaced people had risked their lives trying to go back to the government-controlled areas.

Presence of the MCCJ: Raja was a Parish that had always been served by the Comboni Missionaries and the Province felt it had a responsibility towards them. The community was opened in May 2002 with the presence of 2 confreres, Fr. Zúñiga and Fr. Eisman, and was immensely appreciated by the Christians. Fr. Cosmo Spadavecchia also went to help them. Grass huts for the community and some other premises were built by the people themselves.

The Comboni Sisters joined in July and enriched the missionary work with their presence. At that time the MCCJ and the CMS were sharing certain premises such as the dining room, kitchen and store. Each community was supposed to have its own premises within the year.

The MCCJ were involved in direct pastoral work and helped out part-time in the school. The CMS were focusing on women groups and evening school for women.

Pastoral work: from the very beginning the group of Catechists from Raja Parish continued their work; pastoral structures had benefited from this work and the positive attitude of people (even Muslims) towards the Church and its activities was a further positive component. People felt very much attached to the Church, since they had for a long time suffered persecution and oppression while in Raja. Another reason for that was the fact that they did not feel let down by the Church, or more particularly, by the Combonis, after their experience of displacement.

The Comboni community decided not to get directly involved in the running of the school, so that lay people might have the opportunity to take direct responsibility for it, but they were involved in teaching and, since the teachers were not paid, the Combonis also offered a help in kind every now and then.

Strictly speaking, Mabilia mission was not a place of first evangelization but was indeed a place where a deepening of the proclamation and the understanding of the Church after the 2nd Vatican Council was much needed. There was a certain tradition of Small Christian Communities, but they still needed support and strengthening in these essential aspects of Christian life.

Mabilia was also a place where there was a good relationship and dialogue between Muslims and Christians. Since the most radical elements were out of sight (like the Feroze Moslems and fundamentalist elements coming from the North) local Muslims were open and even supportive to the Catholic Church and her activities. The Christians of Mabilia were, for the first time, confronted with different Protestant and Independent Churches present in Western Equatoria. When they faced them and were challenged by them, Mabilia Christians answered in a positive way and with a strong identification with the Catholic Church.

At the beginning of 2003, there was the opportunity of sending two of the pastoral agents to the one year course for Catechists at Maracha (Arua Diocese, Uganda). Then, since the possibilities for students to continue the Secondary School in the region were practically non-existent, the confreres together with the chairman of the Church Council decided to send 4 young people who had been attending the last year of secondary school in Raja to Lomin so that they might finish their studies. Due to the English pattern, they possibly had to repeat some academic years. The support given by the Province to all these initiatives was of great help.

Future perspectives and Challenges: the future of Mabilia mission was linked to the destiny of the displaced people of Raja. All of them strongly hoped to return to their place back in Raja. The missionaries were also longing to go back to Raja and continue the work there.

A possible return was deeply linked to a positive outcome of the peace talks of Machakos and any eventual agreement on peace, safety and comprehensive resettlement of all the displaced people created by the war. Therefore, mission structures, premises and projects were to keep adapting to the precarious emergency situation.

One of the major challenges was to start a process of awareness on the *Values of the Kingdom of God* in the form of Human Rights, education, gender awareness, education for tolerance, processes of reconciliation and problem resolution. The presence and activities of the Small Christian Communities was crucial to achieving this goal.

Concerning personnel, it was thought that a certain level of continuity needed to be achieved and that the availability of Arabic-speaking personnel should be assured. However, many displaced people were already leaving the place and going home. By the end of November 2004, it was foreseen that the majority of people would have already left the camp and Fr. Zuñiga was meant to hand over everything. As for the issue of South Sudan Province taking over Raja, it was out of the question.⁵⁴⁶

Moyo Community (Uganda)

Before dealing directly with Moyo it may be useful to refer briefly to the community of Pakele/Kocoa, since Moyo community was just its follow up. Kocoa community started in order to be at the service of St. Mary's Seminary of Torit Diocese for the restructuring of the buildings and the spiritual and educational care of the Seminarians and, at the same time, to help with the pastoral care of the Sudanese refugees in the camps of Pakele/Adjumani.

Gradually, the community started taking care of students aspiring to know more about Comboni Missionary life and helping them in the vocation journey. In 1999, the confreres in Kocoa were Fr. Magni and Bro. Rossignoli. Then Fr. Magni was assigned to Lomin and Fr. Bizzarro joined Bro. Rossignoli. Finally, Fr. Paul Idra was ordained Priest on 14 July, 2001, in the Pastoral Centre of Robidire refugee camp by Rt. Rev. Akio Johnson

⁵⁴⁶ sscomboni@news.com, Newsletter, no. 27, June, 2004. FSSPJ.

Mutek, Auxiliary Bishop of Torit Diocese. He was assigned to the community of Pakele/Kocoa for Vocation Ministry with Bro. Rossignoli. Unfortunately, after falling sick, Fr. Bizzarro died in Moyo on 3 August, 2001, at the age of 74.

Meanwhile, the Delegation Council decided to develop a proper *Vocation Centre*. The first idea was to have it in Kocoa, since the two confreres in charge of Vocation Ministry were residing there, but the position of the Bishop, for obvious reasons, was that it was not appropriate to have a Comboni Vocation Centre in the premises of the Diocesan Minor Seminary.

At this point, the Delegation Council decided to move the community elsewhere and asked Fr. Magni and the members of the vocation team to look for a suitable place for the *Vocation Centre*.⁵⁴⁷ After the search, the final decision was to have it in Moyo, a place considered more central to the area of work and near to Lomin.

By the end of December 2001 the compound of Kocoa was handed over to the Diocese of Torit, with everything in it, and moved to Moyo, starting the presence on 1 January, 2002. The purpose of the community was missionary animation and vocation promotion among young Sudanese attending secondary schools in northern Uganda. The community consisted of Fr. Ferrazin, Fr. Idra and Bro. Rossignoli. However, Fr. Idra had to go temporarily to stay in Lomin, which later on was deemed suitable also for the Pre-Postulancy.⁵⁴⁸ Fr. Ferrazin, instead, after a short time had to go to Italy for health reasons.

Moyo was a town of West Nile (Uganda) bordering with Sudan and the most important centre of the *Ma'di People's* area. It was the place of one of the first missions founded by the Comboni Missionaries who came from Juba. The Parish was run by Diocesan Clergy, the confreres helping them.

The community residence was a rented house adapted to the new needs. The house had running water and electricity from the town and an alternative system of solar panels for electricity. There was no radio-transmitter because the confreres could use the Ugandan phone system; for provisions and the needs of daily life, everything could be found in town. Everybody could move freely, though some problems still existed between Adjumani and Gulu. Kampala could be reached by bus in one day.

⁵⁴⁷ sscomboni@news.com, Newsletter, no. 19, September, 2001. FSSPJ.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid. no. 20, February 2002. FSSPJ.

The *Vocation Centre* of Moyo carried on with Vocation Ministry throughout the Administration of Fr. Bettini, in collaboration with the Province of Uganda.

Mapuordit Community

The Comboni community was made up of Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino, Parish Priest, Fr. Silvano Gottardi, his assistant and Fr. Raymond Pax, the religious education teacher in the school; Bro. Alberto Lamana Cónsola was in charge of the maintenance of both hospital and mission and Bro. Rosario Iannetti was surgeon at the mission hospital.

Mapuordit, 24 km south of Akot, on the road Rumbek-Yirol, was a Parish with many chapels and had the largest school in South Sudan with approximately 1500 students. When Bro. Lamana joined the community soon after the Assembly of 2002, Fr. Barton left it just at the beginning of February, after a very successful experience in Education. Then, the school was run by the DOLSH (Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart) from Australia with the help of Volunteers. As for the hospital, though very small, it had a tent equipped with an operating theatre where Bro. Dr. Iannetti was performing surgical operations.

The house and the premises of the Comboni Missionaries consisted of some straw huts, but between December, 2001, and February, 2002, three prefabricated buildings in wood were set up in the Comboni compound. One was used as a refectory and the other had four rooms for the confreres. A well with a solar pump provided water for the Fathers and Sisters.

The Sisters and the Volunteers each had their own accommodation, separate from that of the Comboni community. Two prefabricated buildings in the Volunteers' compound were set up by the DOR (Diocese of Rumbek). Bro. Lamana was really committed in the hospital premises and elsewhere: the surgery theatre was roofed and other facilities were set up as well. The school was built with local material, but the classrooms were gradually replaced by others in semi-permanent material. The hospital was a mixed set of buildings, some in mud, others in aluminium and others in cement blocks.

Security was not a cause for concern in Mapuordit, since the war zones were very far away. There was also a radio transmitter, but it was not working properly and it was difficult to communicate. The community had two cars for different services and for pastoral work. The airstrip was in Akot, at 24 km from Mapuordit and, especially during rainy season, it was

a problem to reach it. Materials and medicines were transported overland from Nairobi through Uganda.

Activities: every 30 to 40 days there were regular visits to all the 25/30 outstations (and small village schools) but also to four larger *government schools*. The Parish had about 50 Catechists.

The schools

In Mapuordit, in 2004, the OLSH Sisters, with Sr. Mary Bachelor as the Principal, were running two big primary schools (Mapuordit and Makur Agar) with almost 1900 students, and a secondary school. The schools were in a process of continuous growth, although some of the structures were still in local and others in semi-permanent material.

Mary Immaculate Hospital

Mapuordit *Mary Immaculate Hospital* was linked very much with the personal story of Bro. Rosario Iannetti. A brief background account will help to appreciate the valuable work of this young Brother, a medical doctor, born in Naples, Italy, in 1961. He started his first missionary experience in the medical field in Wau, while it was under the Province of Khartoum, because of the arrangement drawn up during the time of the *New Sudan Delegation*.

Bro. Dr. Rosario Iannetti arrived in Wau in February, 1995. At that time Fr. Lorenzo Tomasoni, also a medical doctor, was helping in the three Catholic dispensaries of Wau town and was the director of the *National Leprosy Training Centre* of Agok, 10 Km. from Wau, built by the *German Leprosy Relief Association* (GLRA) and opened in 1979. In 1983, due to deteriorating security, some of the staff members left Wau. In 1985 the Administrator of the leprosy centre was killed and all the other staff members from abroad were evacuated.

In 1987 Fr. Tomasoni agreed a contract with the GLRA and worked as its Director. Since in Agok there was a good operating theatre, Fr. Tomasoni took advantage of it to perform surgical operations and people in need were going there. Bro. Iannetti joined him in 1995 and then took his place as Director when Fr. Tomasoni left in 1996.

The attack on Wau town by Cmdr. Kerubino Kwanyin Bol on 29 January, 1998, brought insecurity to a critical point. Bro. Iannetti carried on with surgical operations until the middle of 1998, but then stopped because patients could not reach Agok any more, since the government army was shooting at them while crossing the river. At that time the famine became severe and Bro. Iannetti had to work full time in Wau town. He gave up

surgical operations and started helping with relief activities, while continuing his work in the three dispensaries of Wau. Leprosy and tuberculosis patients were taken care of in the government hospital in Wau, with the help of the GLRA. Bro. Iannetti took care of the malnourished, TB, and leprosy patients from July 1998 to June 1999.

Since he could no longer carry out surgical operations, and because Mgr. Mazzolari of Rumbek Diocese asked for him, after the visit of the Superior General, Fr. Manuel Augusto Ferreira, Bro. Iannetti, in dialogue with Fr. Salvatore Pacifico, Provincial Superior of Khartoum, decided to leave Wau and accept Mgr. Mazzolari's request to work in the *Liberated Areas* of the New Sudan. However, in 1997, the Diocese of Wau had instituted the *Diocesan Health Commission* with medicines sent to Wau by the Dutch *MEMISA*. Thus, the five Catholic dispensaries, the three of Wau, Raja and Aweil could be taken care of.

Mgr. Mazzolari was planning to start a health structure in Rumbek Diocese and was seeking a doctor to run it. Bro. Iannetti, however, was preparing for his perpetual vows and availed of the Comboni year of ongoing formation in South Africa, from October 1999 to May 2000. In March 2000, he was already assigned to the South Sudan Delegation for medical work with Rumbek Diocese.

The aim of Mgr. Mazzolari was to open a surgical unit in Mapuordit provided with a surgical ward. For this reason he purchased a big prefabricated metallic structure with 24 beds. In the meanwhile, Bro. Iannetti stayed in Kalongo Hospital (Uganda) in order to refresh and improve his surgical skills from July 2000 to December 2001. At the same time CRS (Catholic Relief Service) sponsored one Ugandan registered nurse to train twelve students of Mapuordit Secondary School to become *Hospital Auxiliary Nurses*.

When Bro. Iannetti arrived in Mapuordit on 15 December, 2001, he found the twelve *Hospital Auxiliary Nurses* ready and the prefabricated *surgical ward* almost complete. Moreover, there was an *operation tent*, fully equipped for surgical operations, donated by *Trnava University* of Slovakia, with which there was an agreement for medical co-operation with the Diocese of Rumbek. The hospital was officially opened on 1 February, 2002, and surgical operations started in March. Bro. Iannetti was the Medical Director of the Diocesan Hospital and the Slovakian doctors, three each time, followed a rotation period of three months.

In 2004 the O.T. (Operating Theatre) was built as a permanent structure, while the O.P.D. (Outpatient Department) and the Septic Surgical Ward (infective surgery) were semi-permanent buildings.⁵⁴⁹ By the end of Fr. Bettini's Administration, what Mapuordit Hospital achieved under the direction of Bro. Iannetti was really remarkable.

Marial Lou Community

The Mission of Marial Lou started in 1994 to replace the important mission of Thiet that was regularly bombed by the military aircraft of Khartoum. It was assisting also the displaced who came from Aweil and Gogrial and was located about 50 km north of Thiet, on the way to Akop. The language spoken was Dinka, but Arabic was widely used in the market. The area was poor and water, during the dry season, was a real problem. All the organizations present in the area, and the mission itself, were providing water for the people.

In 2003, in Marial Lou there were two Comboni Missionaries, Fr. Jeronimo Caporal and Fr. Mitiku Habte. Fr. Jimmy Aventore was also helping there temporarily. There was also a community of Comboni Sisters who were taking care of the school, of the boarding for girls, of the hospital and helping in pastoral work.

The territory of the Parish was very extensive and during the rainy season it was becoming a big swamp. Though the Parish was started nine years before, it was still at an initial stage in many aspects and the Catechists were very few. The Mission had a primary school with 750 students and a boarding school for girls. There was also a hospital for TB and leprosy patients, the only one in the vast territory. In Marial Lou there was a multitude of NGOs, including Medicines Sans Frontiers.

The former mud houses of the mission were replaced by a brick-and-concrete House with four rooms and a refectory. Running water and an electrical system with solar panels were supplied. The school was still in mud and grass, whereas the hospital was improved with a prefabricated iron building: the same was true for the boarding of girls and part of the house of the Sisters.

In 2002, several wells, about 100 meters deep, were dug to provide clean and safe water for all the needs of the mission and the people. Marial

⁵⁴⁹ New People, Nov/Dec, 2004, G. Caramazza.

- Nigrizia, 2005, Fratel Rosario Iannetti / *Due mani per salvare*, (two hands to save) a cura di Fr. Mo., febbraio, p. 56.

Lou was a village near the war zones and sometimes there were problems of safety, however, it was never bombed, though some nearby villages were.

The community had two Land Cruisers for pastoral work, but they were in poor condition. They also had a radio which was not working well and communication was poor. All types of material were coming from Nairobi by land and it was taking at least 15 days journey for a truck to arrive to Marial Lou. Near the mission there was an airstrip which was operating the whole year through.

Regarding Rumbek Diocese, the Province had three commitments there one of which had to be handed over to the Diocese. When the time came to decide which Mission was to be handed over to the Diocese, between Agang-Rial and Marial-Lou, the Diocese chose Marial Lou. So, it was handed over on 31 July, 2004, to the Bishop's representative, Fr. John Waweru, the new Parish Priest of Marial Lou.

Agang Rial Community

The mission of Agang Rial was founded in 1995 in a place around 12 km south of Rumbek, on the Tonj-Cueibet road. The people are Dinka, but there are also some Bongo and Jur. Fr. Luciano Perina (Superior and Parish Priest) and Fr. Ignacio Toro were working there. There was also a community of Comboni Sisters, who was taking care of the primary school and of the hospital for TB patients and they also help in pastoral work.

In 2003, the buildings were in straw and mud, but there was an ongoing renewal of the mission with a project of four rooms, a dining hall and a kitchen to be built in bricks and iron sheets which were completed by June 2004, together with solar panels, running water and electricity with the help of Bro. Lamana.⁵⁵⁰ As for the matter of security there was no problem since people respected the property of the mission. Unfortunately there was no market place for shopping and one had to go to Rumbek (80 km) or Cueibet.

The mission was equipped with a radio-transmitter that was working well and reaching all the communities. There was also a seasonal airstrip, but during the rainy season the community had to fly from Rumbek: the journey was rather complicated and dangerous because of the large swamps

⁵⁵⁰ sscomboni@news.com, Newsletter, no. 27, June 2004. FSSPJ.

surrounding Agang Rial. As a means of transport, the community had a Toyota Land Cruiser, though in a rather bad shape and often broke down.

The community of Agang Rial carried on with the planned renovation of the premises, with the primary school commitment, the hospital and care for TB patients throughout the time of the Administration.

Agang Rial had about 27 chapels and 40 Catechists, almost all of them untrained except two who were trained in Kitale. The visits to the Chapels were lasting two or three days and a projector with a small generator was taken along in order to show some biblical films translated into Dinka. There was also CRE (Christian Religious Education) teaching in the Parish school by the Comboni Sisters.

The Youth group was made up of students and few youth teachers who had finished the secondary school in Uganda. Seminars and workshops were organised by Sr. Lorena Morales who was also taking care of the Small Christian Communities and the women's group. The Fathers were involved with specific topics delivered during meetings or on the recollection days. As for the Parish Council, it was made up of Catechists and representatives of different groups.

Challenges were not lacking, such as the language, the Christian faith still at an initial stage, and a hostile and aggressive environment. However, gradual changes in the hearts of people gave rise to new hope. Another challenge was the lack of communication during the rainy season due to the bad condition of the roads.

Nyamlel

St. Theresa's Parish was taken care by one Comboni confrere, Fr. Michael Barton, who was assigned to it in February, 2002, after he left Mapuordit. Though it was in the territory of Wau Diocese, in agreement with the Bishop of Wau, it was served by the Diocese of Rumbek. St. Theresa had one Parish centre and eight other centres, each one having ten village chapels under it. A trained Catechist was leading each one of the centres and each chapel had either a prayer leader or a part-time Catechist. The head Catechist coordinating all the head Catechists was trained for two years and was residing in the Parish centre. All the other head Catechists had been trained for one year. The prayer leaders and part time Catechists were locally trained.

The Parish was serving two counties, Aweil West and Aweil North, with a total population of about 450,000 inhabitants. About two per cent of the elderly people and about forty per cent of the youth were Christian; the

younger generation was very open to the Gospel and to the Church. The population was mostly Dinka Malual.

Saint Theresa's Parish was founded in the thirties, but evangelization had to be started again through Word and Sacrament and the education of the youth and adults. It was therefore a new effort to make the Catholic Church an integral part of Dinka Malual's life in these two counties. There was also a very ineffective attempt by the Church to work in famine relief, but it was given up on 28 March, 2002. There was a health care centre run by ICRC and IRC in the area: MSF had recently arrived, as well. The Diocese had no health work in the Parish.

The Parish had two Catholic schools both in Aweil West and none in Aweil North. In 2004 both schools went up to class seven. All the teachers were locally trained, while the two trained in Kitale left the church service. One of the schools was in Marial Baai and the other in Nyamlel and they were reorganized in October 2002 and, from 2003 onwards, they had better results in the examinations.

There were nine trained and twenty part-time Catechists: the rest were prayer leaders. There were about forty locally built chapels: the Parish church was a permanent structure while all the rest were prayer centres under trees. There was a yearly training workshop for Catechists and prayer leaders and another workshop for teachers in the schools. A nine-month Catechumenate of Dinka Catechism teaching was organized in Nyamlel and in the centres. The Parish Council and Catechists Council were planned for 2004. SCCs were not yet properly organized. Often some men and Catechists would leave the area to go to Khartoum for work and earn money.

The Priest-in-charge was teaching and visiting the chapels on weekends and during dry season school holidays. All chapels were visited twice a year. The Parish had no car, so all pastoral visits were done by bicycle or on foot. Building work or repairs, with local workers, on the rectory, Parish and school had continued since 2003.

The youth were now better reorganized and motivated with the theme *You are the Church of today, don't wait for tomorrow*. Two centres had been made into Eucharistic Centres and the head Catechists trained as Eucharistic ministers.

Nyal Community

Nyal community was opened in October, 1998, after the destruction of Leer on 29 June of that year, and was located in the Western Upper Nile

(W.U.N.), among the Nuer people neighbouring with the Dinka. Nyal was a small village in the middle of the Sudd (huge marshes along the Nile) but of great strategic importance because it was at the centre of the activities of the UN/OLS in the whole Nuer area. At first there were two confreres in the community, Fr. Fernando González Galarza and Bro. Raniero Iacomella. Fr. Roy Carlos Zúñiga Paredes joined them in November of the same year. He stayed only two years and in 2000 he was transferred. Fr. Guillermo Aguiñaga Pantoja joined them in February, 2001. All were engaged in pastoral work.

Living: the territory of the mission was very extensive and it was the only mission in the whole W.U.N. The confreres were particularly involved in the training of Catechists, in visits to the chapels and the translation of pastoral materials from English to the Nuer language. Bro. Raniero was also participating in the pastoral activities but more dedicated to small development projects. The houses of the missionaries were in mud and grass, built by the Christians to accommodate their missionaries, towards whom they had much devotion and respect. The confreres lived according to the local style and even their food followed local custom. For lighting they had simple solar lamps and water was brought with buckets.

Security was a real issue as the oil wells were not far away, and because of the struggles between the various Nuer clans and the different military commanders, the war also reached Nyal. On 19 February, 2001, Fr. González Galarza, Fr. Aguiñaga Pantoja and Bro. Iacomella were evacuated and two days later, on 21, Nyal was attacked and burned down completely.⁵⁵¹ The community was obliged to find lodgings in Ganyliel until March 2002, after which they returned to Nyal.

In February 2004, Fr. Wellington Alves de Souza arrived in South Sudan. Before his assignment to the community of Nyal, he was invited by the Provincial Superior to visit various communities around, as an introductory experience, and after the meeting of the young Confreres in Nairobi (22-28 August) he arrived in Nyal and started with the study of Nuer. Scholastic Jaime Nistal was also assigned to Nyal, where he arrived in October 2004, for his two years of pastoral experience.

Evangelization: the UN/OLS aircraft were often forbidden to fly to some locations and this was making it impossible for the confreres to come

⁵⁵¹ sscomboni@news.com, Newsletter, no. 18, March, 2001, p.18. FSSPJ.

- Ibid. no. 21, Fire in Western Upper Nile, F. Gonzáles G., May, 2002, pp. 21-22. FSSPJ.

- Leer Community Charter, 2015. FSSPJ.

and go between places, sometimes for several weeks. Nyal Mission had no radio, but occasionally used those of the other NGOs. Confreres had no means of transport because of the life-style they chose to live since the beginning of the Comboni presence among the Nuer. They were going to visit the Christian communities on foot, even more than 150 km away, accompanied by the Catechists and the youth. They were going into the mission and coming out to Kenya always using UN/OLS aircraft which were rather expensive, since it was impossible to reach Nyal by land, even during the dry season.

During the time the confreres were in Nyal, Fr. González Galarza worked hard on the translation of catechetical and liturgical books and material, helped by the Catechists and people with a knowledge of English. This was a real benefit for the work of evangelization and pastoral care of the people at large and the Christian communities, in particular. Fr. Zúñiga Paredes, first, Fr. Aguiñaga Pantoja and others who came later were more concentrated on visiting the communities.

Development projects: of particular importance in human promotion was the work of Bro. Iacomella who was involved in development projects. Significantly, he set up a demonstration garden through which he tried to introduce new agriculture skills among the Nuer. He was dedicated to motivating the people, especially Catechists, youth and leaders on the benefit of tree plantation, particularly fruit trees like mangoes, guavas, gishta, sugar cane and whatever could improve the diet of the Nuer people, where fruit trees were almost non-existent. Ox-ploughing was also introduced.

Another good initiative carried out by the missionaries was the involvement of the Christians in the building of their churches in local material but covered with Iron sheets. Bro. Raniero made sure that trusses and iron sheets would be properly set on the roof, and in a straight line.

The Catechetical Centre *James Duol Kai*. The institution which was by far most appreciated by the community and respected by the Christians, especially Catechists and leaders, was the catechetical centre, named after the founder of the Catechists' League, James Duol Kai, which was built and became functional in April, 2004. Since then, this was the most prominent initiative and institution which helped the intellectual, biblical, catechetical and spiritual preparation of hundreds of Catechists throughout the vast territory of St. Joseph the Worker Parish during the years to come.

The public library *Joseph Pal Mut* was also opened with 435 books, 60 magazines and 90 members. Many people who were not members also used using it. The library was built with semi-permanent material with the cooperation of the youth. Teachers and youth welcomed it and the scholastic Jaime Nistal supervised it and prepared some prominent youth to run it, keep a record of the books and keep the books in proper order on the library-shelves.

Old Fangak

The work of Fr. Antonio La Braca among the Eastern Nuer people with reference point to Old Fangak, as its centre, was very important for the development of evangelization in that vast Nuer area.

In March 1999, Fr. Antonio settled in Old Fangak marking the creation the new Parish which eventually was named *Holy Trinity*. Fr. La Braca found fervent and faithful collaboration among the people of the Parish, especially the Catechists, the men of the church committee and the women of the *Legion of Mary*. He gave a great impulse to the Parish, although he remained alone for several difficult years.

Bishop Vincent Mojwok appointed him Parish Priest of Fangak area and moderator of all the Nuer Land, with residence in Old Fangak. Since 1999, Fr. La Braca and his Catechists had been working at building up Christian communities *mature in faith and charity*⁵⁵². In this regard, all the people of Fangak believed that the Catechists James Riek, Michael Thilyang Gatkek, and Moses Gatjang Gatkuoth were to be rightly considered the Fathers of their faith and all the other Catechists the pillars of Catholic Christian evangelization in Fangak. The Catechists had always been volunteers: they had been working hard, not for money or any other material incentive, but for God's sake and for the spiritual growth of all the Nuer.⁵⁵³

The methodology of evangelization of Fr. La Braca, as we have already seen in the case of the Loko-Loko experience in Wau, was marked by a strong awareness of the importance of *self-reliance* in the life of the Christian communities, united with the other two aspects of *self-ministry* and *self-propagation*. Nuer people had already being following these principles since the start of the Catholic Church among them, carried out by the convert Nuers, in particular, those coming from Khartoum, who became their Catechists and leaders.

⁵⁵² Encyclical Letter "Redemptoris Missio", no 23.

⁵⁵³ A line of history about the Catholic Church in Old Fangak, Fr. Antonio La Braca, mccj, January, 2006. (files of Old Fangak Parish, mccj community).

The presence of an *itinerant Father* like Fr. La Braca, walking hundreds of kilometres on foot with Catechists and youth and visiting practically all the most important areas of both Western and Eastern Nuer, up to the border with Ethiopia, was a strong message for all the Nuer people, adults and children, men and women. This itinerant way of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus had a very deep impact in the Nuer population and also among the Church leaders of other denominations, especially Presbyterians.

People could not fail to ask themselves what was the reason for which this *white kawaja* was walking around the whole swampy Nuer area on foot, with many people accompanying him from place to place, and living in the same conditions they were living, with no exception. There was no need of long talks, the style of life was speaking by itself, that was the reason why people were drawn to know more about the whole matter and frequently ending up by joining the Catholic Christian community.

This was what went on until the end of 2004. However, only with the next Administration could Old Fangak receive new personnel and move forward in a more consistent way, thus consolidating the previous hard work and efforts.

The Comboni House Community in Nairobi

The Comboni House of Nairobi was meant to support the activities of the confreres working in South Sudan and was the residence of the Provincial Superior and of the Provincial Bursar. In this house, the confreres found a welcome when passing through or staying in Nairobi. The house went through a lot of renovation and addition of rooms at the beginning of Fr. Bettini's Administration and it was large enough to accommodate the missionaries going to and from Sudan, providing a good logistic service to everyone, with a person in charge full-time.

In Nairobi the Comboni Missionaries of South Sudan were living as *refugees* since the time of the *New Sudan Group*: the real Provincial House and the Postulancy were in Juba, in South Sudan, where everybody was yearning to return, as soon as peace would allow.

In September, 2003, the community was composed of eight confreres: Fr. Bettini, the Provincial Superior, Fr. Girardi, the Provincial Bursar, Fr. Giarolo, in charge of logistics, Fr. Polacchini and Fr. Ayon. Fr. Aranda Nava, formator of the Postulancy, was a member of the community, but he was living in the Postulancy of Ongata Rongai. Fr. Boffelli and Fr. Rossi were working respectively for Bishop Macram (El-Obeid/Nuba Mountains) and Bishop Mazzolari (Rumbek) and were staying with them.

Unfortunately, Fr. Polacchini, while in Italy for medical treatment, died in Negrar, on 25 December, 2003, at the age of 76.

Confreres with special commitments

Confreres with special commitments: Fr. Aranda Nava was the second formator in the inter-Provincial Postulancy of Ongata Rongai (Nairobi) where the Postulants of South Sudan were also present. Fr. Aranda was normally living at the Postulancy and, once a week, he would join the community of the Comboni House for the community day.

Fr. Boffelli was living in Bakhita House, which was the residence in Nairobi of Bishop Max Macram, in charge of the Christians of the Nuba Mountains, part of the Diocese of El Obeid.

Fr. Antonio La Braca was working in the Parish of Old Fangak, in Eastern Upper Nile and was taking care of the Nuer communities on the Eastern bank of the White Nile.

Fr. Rossi was the Personal Secretary of Mgr. Mazzolari, Bishop of Rumbek. He was living in Bethany House, the house of Rumbek Diocese, and was referring to the Comboni House for community life.

Father Michael Barton was also committed to the Diocese of Rumbek and working in Nyamlel, among the Dinka people.

A New Commitment

On the occasion of the Canonisation of Bishop Daniel Comboni, founder of the Comboni Missionaries and of the Comboni Missionary Sisters, the two Institutes agreed to support an *Opera Significativa* for Southern Sudan to remember its first Bishop. They asked the missionaries working in the area to make a proposal on what would be most important and necessary for Southern Sudan in the aftermath of war. They unanimously chose a *Catholic Radio* as essential for the implementation of peace and the development of the country

A Catholic FM Radio for Southern Sudan

The whole matter started on 20 June, 2003, just before the canonisation of Blessed Daniel Comboni. The General Superiors and the Councillors of the two Comboni Missionary Institutes, that of the Comboni Missionary Sisters (CMS) and the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus (MCCJ), wrote a letter to the respective Provincial Superiors and all the

Sisters, Priests and Brothers of the two Provinces of South Sudan proposing them an *opera significativa* (a meaningful initiative) in the following terms, which I have summarised:

“Dear Sisters, Priests and Brothers..., we thought especially of you, who carry on your missionary ministry in situations of great hardships, very difficult environment, isolation... With the approach of our the canonisation of our Founder, Blessed Daniel Comboni, we feel more intensely and with greater urgency the desire to put forward a ‘meaningful initiative’ for the suffering lands of Southern Sudan.

We are thinking of a specific project, something that can become a constant reminder of the canonisation. Among the various possibilities we have thought of (we are just suggesting) could be a centre of formation for local leaders (Catechists?) or an initiative about Justice and Peace and the Integrity of Creation. The project would be started and implemented by the CMS and the MCCJ together. The place itself should preferably be inside the territory of Southern Sudan... We do see, indeed, the difficulty of implementing such an initiative...

It would have to be, rather, an initiative that responds to your expectations and the needs of the people among whom you work... What is important is to begin to look at it, to reflect about it, encouraged by the forthcoming canonisation, even though the project may be implemented at a later stage. We invite you, therefore, to send us your comments about this proposal of ours.

The main reason for this initiative is not just to start another project, but rather to implement it together... not only in an area where Comboni worked or dreamed of working, but also among the poorest and most abandoned, the latter being a characteristic that, in the will of the Founder, distinguishes our favoured fields of work.”⁵⁵⁴

The proposal was good, but as the letter already said, the issue was not a simple one and personnel were not available. Reflection among all the members of the two Provinces, in dialogue with the Local Churches, took some time but, at the end, it settled on the creation of a *radio network within Sudan*, encouraged also by the prospect of an imminent signing of a peace agreement and the great importance of having means of communication with people in order to foster the building up of the country in the various sectors of life, religious and social.

⁵⁵⁴ The General Councils of the Comboni Missionary Sisters and of the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus, to the Provincial s and the CMS and MCCJ in Southern Sudan, Rome, 20 June, 2003. FSSPJJ.

In fact, Bishop Cesare Mazzolari, of Rumbek Diocese, had already explored the matter and taken action in order to obtain a permit to set up a radio station in Kenya broadcasting into Sudan. In 2004, he had already forwarded a request to the proper authorities of South Sudan (SPLA/M) and of Kenya in order to have it, but with no follow up.

This *Opera Significativa* promoted by the two General Councils of the MCCJ and CMS, therefore, would suit the purpose. No other projects, as proposed by the letter, were proposed but that of *a radio network within South Sudan*. The two Comboni Institutes, MCCJ and CMS, would carry out the project in collaboration with the Dioceses of South Sudan. It was then clear that the acceptance and the go-ahead for the project depended on and had to be given by the SCBC. In fact, at a later stage, when the Radio Project would be fully running and the personnel prepared adequately, it would be handed over to the Dioceses to be run by local personnel.

Fr. Bettini, as MCCJ Provincial and an expert in the field, was asked to formulate a plan to be then discussed at General and Provincial level and at the level of SCBC. He indeed did so, with the help of experts of *Signis* in Rome, and presented a possibly feasible plan to the two General Councils (CMS-MCCJ). However, since the project came at the end of his mandate, after having done this first and most important job, and presented the second draft,⁵⁵⁵ he left the whole issue to the in-coming Provincial of South Sudan and his Council.

(Fr. Bettini's proposal, ref. Appendix to Part Two, Section Two Chapter Two, point no. 5)

The plan went through quite a number of changes, but the project was gradually implemented in all the Dioceses of the South, including the Nuba Mountains, during the next Administrations, to the great benefit of the listeners who could, in this way, follow the news, other topics and formation programmes with a Christian outlook which no other radio station would be able to offer.

The most important events of this Administration

- The most important event in the Catholic Church was the Jubilee of Year 2000. It was a time of renewal for the whole Church but also of the Comboni Missionaries looking for a new thrust in evangelization.

⁵⁵⁵ Nairobi, 28 August, 2004, Fr. Ezio Bettini, Catholic FM Radio for South Sudan, 2nd Draft. FSSPJ.

- For Africa, Sudan (North and South) and all the Comboni Institutes, the most important event was the canonisation of the Founder, St. Daniel Comboni, on 5 October, 2003, by Pope John Paul II in St. Peter's Basilica.
- As for the Delegation of South Sudan, the most important event was surely that of 15 April, 2001, when the Delegation was again raised to the status of a Province, as from 1 January, 2002. After a gap of seven years, the *second* Province of South Sudan was born again and Fr. Bettini was elected Provincial Superior.
- During this time there was the ordination of Fr. Martin Loku Mödi on 3 October, 1999, at St. Theresa's Cathedral in Kator, by H.G. Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro, and that Fr. of Paul Idra on 14 July, 2001, in Robidire Pastoral Centre, by Rt. Rev. Akio Johnson Mutek, Auxiliary Bishop of Torit Diocese, and the thanksgiving Mass (First Mass) on 15 July, 2001 at Alere Chapel, thus, adding two new Fathers to the Radical Comboni South Sudanese members of the Province.
- At community level there was the handing over of the Mission of Nzara on 30 May, 1999; the opening of Lomin (Kajo-Kaji community on 1 January, 2000; the starting of the Pre-Postulancy in Narus and then the closing of Narus and the opening of Kapoeta (Lolim) community on 1 June, 2001; the definitive closing of the Community of Lolim in December, 2002; the taking up of the commitment of Mabilia, in the area of T/Yambio Diocese for the care of the displaced people from Raja; the closing of Kocoa and the transfer of the community to Moyo as *Vocation Centre* on 1 January, 2002; the transfer of the Pre-Postulancy to Lomin. The community of Nyal, for security reasons, had to stay in Ganyliel until it was possible to go back again Nyal and Marial Lou which was handed over to Rumbek Diocese on 31 July, 2004.
- A very important proposal towards the end of Fr. Bettini's Administration was the joint *Opera Significativa* promoted by the two General Councils of the MCCJ and CMS, to start a radio transmission project covering the whole South Sudan, with a station in every Diocese. In agreement with the Dioceses the Comboni Missionaries would start it and then, after an appropriate time of running and formation of personnel, it would be taken over by the respective Dioceses themselves. Fr. Bettini was asked to look into the technical issues and prepare an outline of the project in all its aspects.

SECTION THREE

Return to Juba Headquarters in Juba

Introduction: the Circumscription from 2005 to 2010

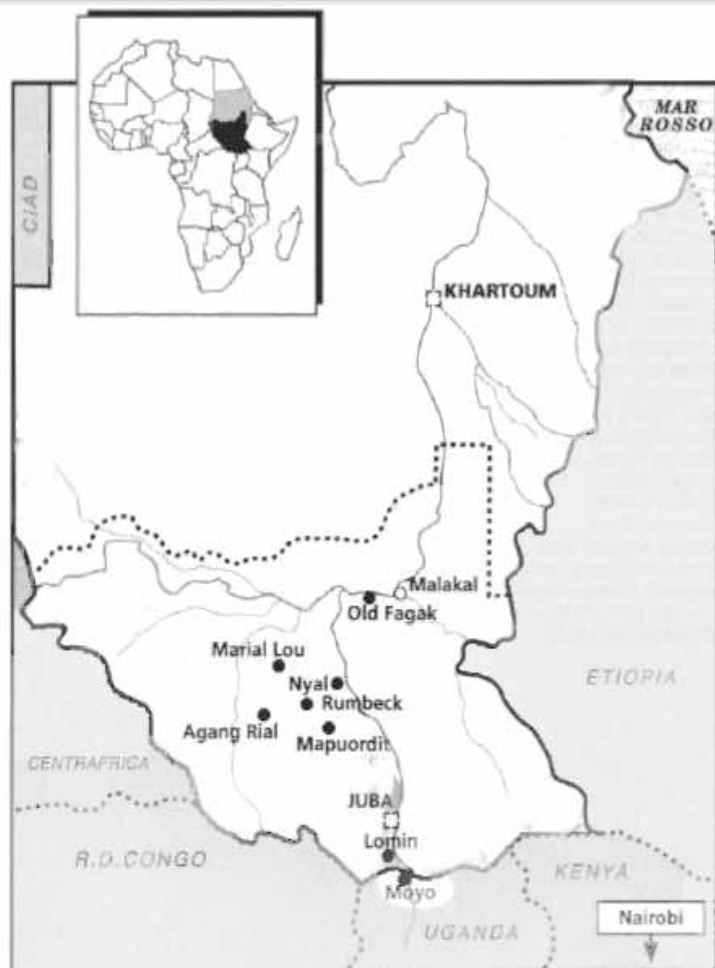
Section Three deals with the Circumscription led by Fr. Luciano Perina, (Chapter One), by Fr. Daniele Moschetti (Chapter Two) and by Fr. Louis Okot Tony Ochermoi (Chapter Three).

In Chapter One, the South Sudan Province with Fr. Luciano Perina as the Provincial Superior was the continuation of the Province which had the *New Sudan Group* as its origin. It was raised to the status of Province on 1 January, 2002, and, after the years of work in the *Liberated Areas*, came to the time when the CPA (Comprehensive Peace Agreement) was about to be signed. In fact, at the time of the signing of the CPA on 9 January, 2005, the new Administration of the South Sudan Province had already seen a few days of the New Year.

Surely, nobody would have thought that the new Provincial, Fr. Luciano Perina and his Council, would be the ones to lead the Province back to the original place where it belonged. The CPA was a turning point, not only for the Sudan, but also for our Comboni Province. All the effort made by the General Council to form the *New Sudan Group*, and accompany the Administrations that followed, had now reached its complete fulfilment by returning the Provincial Headquarters from Nairobi to Juba: ***Going Home.***

If the previous time was one of suffering and exile, it now turned into a time of joy and new hope because the horizon was opening up in front of everyone: new opportunities lay ahead, though not without a certain amount of apprehension and disbelief as to what the future might have in store. Nevertheless, hope prevailed and the focus was on the new opportunities ahead.

Fr. Perina and the whole Circumscription were aware that a new day had dawned and a new challenge was there to be taken up without looking to the past. A page of history had been turned; a new one had to be written.



Map 2005

CHAPTER ONE

THE CIRCUMSCRIPTION

From 2005 to 2010

Provincial Superior:
Fr. LUCIANO PERINA

The Provincial and his Council

Fr. Luciano Perina was elected Provincial Superior of the South Sudan Province,⁵⁵⁶ with his residence still in Nairobi.

The four councillors were: Fr. Bosco Anthony Sule Mawa (Vice-Provincial)⁵⁵⁷, Bro. Rosario Iannetti, Fr. Joseph Ukelo and Bro. Iacomella Raniero. The new Provincial Council shared responsibilities were: Bro. Iacomella would take up the task of Secretary of the Provincial Council, Bro. Iannetti and Bro. Iacomella the financial matters and the link with the Finance Committee, Fr. Joseph Ukelo would follow up evangelization and Fr. Sule Mawa Formation and Vocation Promotion.

Fr. Luciano Perina was elected for a second term as Provincial Superior of the South Sudan Province⁵⁵⁸ and his councillors were Fr. Alfredo

⁵⁵⁶ Fr. Teresino Serra, Superior General, Rome, 20 October, 2004, Province of South Sudan, Appointment of Fr. Luciano Perina as Provincial Superior, from 1 January, 2005. FSSPJ.

⁵⁵⁷ From the Superior General, Rome, 4 February, 2005, Appointment of Fr. Bosco Anthony Mawa as Vice Provincial Superior of South Sudan till 31 December, 2007. FSSPJ.

⁵⁵⁸ Fr. Teresino Serra, Superior General, Rome, 29 January, 2008, Province of South Sudan, Appointment of Fr. Luciano Perina as Provincial Superior, from 29 January, 2008, till 31 December, 2010. FSSPJ.

Estrada⁵⁵⁹ Meza Luis, Vice Provincial, Fr. Albino Adot Oryem, Bro. Bortoli Nicola and Bro. Alberto Lamana Cónsola. After Fr. Alfredo Estrada resigned, Fr. Louis Okot Tony Ochermoi was elected to the Council as his replacement and also took up the office of Vice Provincial Superior⁵⁶⁰.

The status of the personnel at the beginning of 2005 was as follows:

South Sudan Province, Personnel in April, 2005⁵⁶¹

Jacaranda Avenue, NAIROBI (Kenya)

Provincial Superior

Fr. Luciano Perina (1 January, 2005)

Provincial Councillors

Fr. Bosco Anthony Mawa, Vice Provincial

Fr. Joseph Ukelo Yala

Bro. Iacomella Raniero

Bro. Rosario Ianetti

Provincial Bursar

Bro. Jorge Arturo Rodriguez Fayad

Provincial Procurator

Fr. Luciano Giarolo

Secretary of Formation and Missionary Animation

Fr. Jesus José Aranda Nava

Secretary of Evangelization, Coordinator of JPIC

Fr. Fernando González Galarza

Secretary of Vocation Promotion

Bro. Mario Rossignoli

Comboni personnel

Bishops 1, Fathers 25, Brothers 9, Scholastics 1, Postulants 8

Bollettino of the Province

SSCOMBONI@NEWS

Languages spoken in the Province

Arabic, Bari, Dinka, English, Ma'di, Nuer, Toposa

Dioceses where present

⁵⁵⁹ From the Superior General, Rome, 19 February, 2008, Appointment of Fr. Estrada Meza Luis Alfredo as Vice Provincial Superior from 11 February, 2008, till 31 December, 2010. FSSPJ.

⁵⁶⁰ During the Consulta session on 31.3.2010 the GC appoints the Vice-Provincial s of other Circumscriptions: **Fr. Okot Luis** for South Sudan. (Curia mccc Rome).

⁵⁶¹ Annuario Comboniano 2005 (Updated on 1 April, 2005)

KENYA Nairobi:

Comboni House, Bakhita House, Bethany House

UGANDA Arua: Moyo

SUDAN

Rumbek: Agang-Rial, Mapuordit.

Yei: Lomin.

Malakal: Nyal, Old Fangak

Nairobi - Comboni House

Fr. Luciano Perina, Provincial Superior.

Fr. Joseph Ukelo Yala, Superior

Fr. Aranda Nava José Jesus*

Fr. Michael Barton **

Bro. Valentino Fabris

Fr. Luciano Giarolo

Fr. Bosco Anthony Mawa *

Bro. Jorge Arturo Rodriguez Fayad

***Ongata Rongai (1) - Postulancy**

****St. Teresa Parish**, Nyamlel, Aweil, West Sudan

Nairobi - Bakhita House, Diocese of El Obeid, entrusted to the Comboni Missionaries on 1 October, 2001.

Mgr. Max Gassis Macram (KH)

Fr. Pasquale Boffelli

Nairobi - Bethany House, Diocese of Rumbek

Mgr. Cesare Mazzolari

Fr. Fernando Colombo (KE)

Rumbek Diocese

Agang-Rial

Fr. Mitiku Habte Cheksa, Superior

Fr. Luis Alfredo Estrada Meza

Mapuordit - Parish

First evangelization and Hospital among the Dinka.

Fr. Giovanni Girardi, Superior

Bro. Rosario Iannetti

Bro. Alberto Lamana Cónsola

Bro. Damiano Mascalzoni

Fr. Raymond Pax

Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino

Yei Diocese

Lomin (Kajo Kaji) – Parish.

Evangelization, **Pre-Postulancy** and Education

Fr. Eugenio Magni, Superior

Fr. Hector Ayon Oyiamute

Bro. Erich Fischnaller (RSA)

Fr. José Manuel Garcia Oviedo

Moyo - Vocation Centre (Arua Diocese)

Community opened on 1.1.2002,

Vocation Ministry, care of Refugees.

Fr. Giovanni Ferrazin, Superior

Fr. Aventore Jimmy Milla

Bro. Mario Rossignoli

Malakal Diocese

Nyal Parish.

First evangelization, assistance to the region of Eastern Upper Nile.

Fr. Fernando González Galarza, Sup.

Fr. Guillermo Aguiñaga Pantoja

Sch. Jaime Alvarez Nistal (E)

Bro. Raniero Iacomella

Fr. Antonio La Braca *

Fr. Wellington Alves de Sousa

*** Old Fangak Parish**

Catholic Church, Eastern Upper Nile, Southern Sudan

Waiting for appointment

Bro. Nicola Bortoli

Fr. Alberto Jesus Eisman Torres

Bro. Hans Dieter Ritterbecks

Fr. Pawel Skiba

In other Circumscriptions

Fr. Christian Carlassare (LP)

Fr. Silvano Gottardi (I)

*(Full list ref. Appendix to Part Two, Section Three,
Chapter One, point no. 1)*

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement, 2005

The *Comprehensive Peace Agreement* (CPA), also known as the Naivasha Agreement, was an accord signed on January 9, 2005, by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the Government of Sudan. The CPA was meant to end the Second Sudanese Civil War, develop democratic governance countrywide and share oil revenues. It also set a timetable for Southern Sudanese independence. The peace process was encouraged by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), as well as IGAD-Partners, a consortium of donor countries.⁵⁶²

During the meeting of 8 February, 2005, on the situation in Sudan, the President of the Security Council, Joel Adechi (Benin), stated that:

*"The signing of this Comprehensive Peace Agreement was a historic moment of great opportunity for the country and one which all its people should strive to seize in order to steer development in the path leading to a solid and long-lasting peace. At the same time, he said that the Council was appalled by the serious crimes under international law that had been committed in Darfur, as described in the report of the International Commission of Inquiry, and was determined to tackle impunity and to bring the perpetrators of those crimes to justice."*⁵⁶³

At any rate, the signing of the CPA was received with mixed reactions by the public, both in the South and in the North. Most observers welcomed the prospect of a significant decline in the violence that had occasioned the loss of over two million lives and the displacement of over four million Southern Sudanese people since 1983. However, given its history of prevarication, obstruction and obfuscation, many remained wary of the depth of the commitment of the ruling National Islamic Front (NIF) to peace. Nevertheless, extreme war-weariness and the seemingly steadfast involvement of the international community generated mild optimism that peace with justice could eventually arise from the CPA.⁵⁶⁴

The most serious and dark event at the start of the *interim period of time* of the CPA was the death of the newly sworn-in *First Vice-President of Sudan* and Chairman of the SPLA/M movement, Dr. John Garang de

⁵⁶² The Comprehensive Peace Agreement, Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comprehensive_Peace_Agreement

⁵⁶³ Sudan Peace Agreement Signed 9 January, Historic Opportunity, Security Council Told, 8 February, 2005. <http://www.un.org/press/en/2005/sc8306.doc.htm>

⁵⁶⁴ Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Briefing Sudan, for public use, December 2005, <http://www.cswusa.org/filerequest/2852.pdf>

Mabior, in a helicopter crash on 30 July, 2005.⁵⁶⁵ Then, the Government of National Unity (GoNU) came into being on 20 September, 2005, but, since the death of Dr. John Garang there had been worrying indications that the NIF (or National Congress Party (NCP) may already have begun to take advantage of any structural weaknesses within the CPA in order to ensure its domination of the GoNU and to hinder, and ultimately undermine, the CPA itself.

To confirm the seriousness of the situation in regard to the CPA implementation, on 11 October, 2007, the SPLM withdrew from the government of national unity (GoNU), accusing the central government of violating the terms of the CPA. Later on, the SPLM announced that it was re-joining the government on 13 December, 2007, following an agreement. Finally, the Northern Sudanese troops left Southern Sudan on 8 January, 2008.

In the book by Arop Madut-Arop, in the Chapter dealing with the *public reactions to the peace agreement*, among the various reported views of some Sudanese politicians and academics, there is that of Dr. Francis Mading Deng, which I personally think gives a real insight into how the CPA was perceived, and shows apprehension about its implementation. Certainly, it depended on the Northerners to prove to the Southerners that they would be safe in a United Sudan. If not, *secession* would probably remain the only option.

The quotation says: *“The bitter history of broken promises and dishonoured agreements, the elusiveness of peace suggest that no option can be ruled out”* But, he continues, the best guarantee for unity is for the leadership, especially at the national level, to rise above factionalism and to offer a vision that would inspire a cross-sectional majority of Sudanese people irrespective of race, ethnicity, region or religion, to identify with the nation and to stand together in collective pursuit of their common destiny. *“Only through mutual recognition, respect and harmonious interaction among African and Arab populations throughout the country, can the Sudan achieve and ensure a just and lasting peace and live up to its role as a true microcosm of Africa and a dynamic link between the Continent and the Middle East”*⁵⁶⁶

⁵⁶⁵ Arop Madut-Arop, Sudan's painful road to peace, op. cit., pp. 417-422.

⁵⁶⁶ Arop Madut-Arop, ibid. ref. Dr. Francis Mading Deng, p 408.-

- Southern Sudan: Too Many Agreements Dishonoured (Sudan Studies), Hardcover, Abel Alier, 1 January, 1999.

The above vision was what led the Comboni Missionaries to follow through the different commitments at church, school, public health, civic and religious levels. They were committed to help build up a country from the ruins and the traumas of a long drawn-out war and to work so that a positive attitude of interaction and integration among different ethnic groups might emerge and grow wherever there was a Comboni presence.

Year 2005: “Going Home”

As Comboni Missionaries, the reason for choosing to work in the “Liberated Areas” was precisely to carry on being “at home” with the suffering people of South Sudan and to walk with them the whole way through. However, now “Going Home” really meant to be “fully at home” in the very country from which people and missionaries were displaced.

It was to Fr. Perina that this wonderful, but also delicate and difficult task was assigned. In reality, Fr. Perina was a Missionary of the “North” who had been assigned to the “South” only a short time previously, but he had, nonetheless, a great advantage over the people who had always been in the South, in that, in the North, in Khartoum, he was the person entrusted with the Orientation Course for all the Sudanese Diocesan Clergy. Thus, he accompanied and helped many students aspiring to the Priesthood and prepared them to enter the Major Seminary in Khartoum. Since all the Seminarians of the South had to go to Khartoum in order to proceed with Philosophy and Theology, he came to know many of them whom he met afterwards again in the South, especially in Juba. This was no small matter, if we consider the difficult relations between some Comboni Missionaries and some Diocesan Priests in Juba at the beginning of the nineties.

A positive experience of relations with the Diocesan Church was of the utmost importance to restart with a positive outlook and a spirit of true collaboration, free of experiences which may have created unease, diffidence or prejudice. It was with this attitude of confidence, respect and trust that he and his Council made their first approaches with a view to *Going back Home*.

Starting to move ahead and the General Assembly 2005

The former Provincial Council met the members of the new Council on 10 January, 2005, for the handover. For the new Council it was an opportunity to get to know better the reality of the Province and to be introduced to their new task. After thanking the outgoing members for their

service to the Province, the new Council started moving ahead with the upcoming General Provincial Assembly, in the immediate aftermath of the signing of the CPA (Comprehensive Peace Agreement) between the Government of Khartoum and the SPLA/M.

The CPA, signed on 9 January, 2005, opened up a completely new future and a new perspective. It affected everybody at political, social and also religious levels, since the new reality was calling for new, concrete planning in each organisation. For the Comboni Missionaries, this had an immediate effect and the issue was discussed in the General Assembly of Nairobi which took place from 16 to 21 January, 2005.

Due to its importance, the first day of the Assembly was completely dedicated to the issue of the CPA. Three SPLM/A representatives were invited to talk on the Comprehensive Peace Agreement: Mr. Samson Kwaje, *Commissioner of Information and Official Spokesman of SPLM/A*, Secretary and Spokesman for SPLA/M delegation to the IGAD peace talks since 1994, from Lany place, some kilometres outside Juba; Dr. David Mayo, a *PhD in Political Economy, was part of the Wealth Sharing Committee of the SPLM delegation*, from Chukudum; Professor Cirino Iteng, *an expert in International Public Relations and member of the SPLM*. Their inputs were followed by many questions from the floor to reach a better understanding of the new situation in different fields of life.

The other topics dealt with by the Assembly were: the work on the *Ratio Missionis*, presented by Fr. Fernando González Galarza; spiritual formation on *Peace and Reconciliation*, facilitated by Fr. Mariano Tibaldo, the newly elected Provincial Superior of Kenya; reports from the Communities and Secretariats; reflection on the *Code of Conduct* by Fr. Fernando Domingues; the *revision and approval of the Six-Year Plan*, particularly needed with the new situation after the signing of the CPA.

Finalization of the Six-Year Plan

Since the situation in South Sudan had changed so much due to the CPA, new issues had to be taken into consideration in making a Six-Year Plan. Moreover, all the former relationship and agreement with the Province of Khartoum made at the time of the erection of the *New Sudan Group* into a Delegation had to be revised. The commitments in the Southern areas under the Government of Khartoum like Wau, Raja and Malakal, were to be given back to the South Sudan Circumscription. With Juba under the care of the Province of Khartoum, some works of renovation had been

undertaken; all these issues needed to be discussed and considered within the Six-Year Plan and in relation to the Province of Khartoum, as well.

Because of the above-mentioned topics, the matter of collaboration with the Khartoum Province became a vital issue to be taken up by the present Administration. Together with what was mentioned above, it also included the issues of Formation, Mission Promotion, Logistics, the return of the Provincial seat to Juba and, especially, the whole matter of the implementation of the *Sudan Catholic Radio Project*.

The Six-Year Plan of 2004 was given to the confreres to be read and reflected upon to see what was still valid and what needed to be added due to the new situation. It was approved at the first meeting of the Provincial Council. Here below is the outcome. The changes are reported in Italics.

Evangelization

- ***Our top priority in this field, due to the signing of the peace agreement in Sudan, will be to join our efforts with those of the Local Church and other institutions to promote peace, reconciliation and civic education***
- We will gradually pursue the implementation of the Evangelization Charter of the Provincial Directory.
- When appointing confreres to commitments in the field of evangelization, special attention will be given to qualifications, personal charisms ***and continuity***.
- We will promote sharing and planning together at community and Provincial level, ***as well as with Sisters and co-operators***, on the methodology of evangelization.

Finance

- We confirm our choice of the Total Common Fund (TCF) and we will improve our ways of implementing it ***according to the Directory of Finance***.
- A more stable and experienced financial committee will be set up.
- In each community there will be a confrere officially appointed to act as bursar, keeping accounts in order and animating the community as to the proper use of money.
- We will organise at Provincial level courses in accounting and book-keeping for Local Bursars.
- Each community will foster only those projects that do not create dependency from abroad, but self-reliance and self-sufficiency.

Communities and Commitments

- At first we will put in order and strengthen the present communities *paying special attention to those that are most in need of personnel (e.g. Old Fangak)*
- We will have communities ***with no less than*** three members, four ***will be the optimum.***
- We aim at establishing two communities each among the Nuer, the Bari-speaking people and the Dinka. ***When personnel increase we will open another community among the most needy of the people mentioned above.***
- We will accept a commitment in the Diocese of Torit *(with the agreement of the Bishop)* for training leaders and Catechists, or for helping diocesan and religious people in their on-going formation.
- ***Now that peace has officially being agreed,*** we will move the Provincial House from Nairobi to Southern Sudan. For logistical support we will ask the Province of Kenya or Uganda to help.
- As we take over from Khartoum Province the communities of Raga, Wau and Malakal, we will have ***to provide confreres who know Arabic.*** Some confreres will be sent either to Khartoum, Cairo, Juba or any other suitable place to learn spoken Arabic.

On-Going Formation

- ***During these six years we will focus our on-going formation on reflection upon and the elaboration of the Ratio Missionis.***
- We will establish in our Province a permanent office for on-going formation *and appoint* a confrere in charge *of it.*
- The library of Nairobi will be merged with the Provincial library of Juba and a part time librarian will be appointed.
- The existing on-going-formation groups of the young and the experienced missionaries will be taken care of in a special way by the person in charge of on-going formation and ***a programme for both groups will be drawn up.***
- We will prepare confreres for qualified commitments in the Province and in the evangelization service.
- We will make ourselves available to help Diocesan Priests and Religious in on-going formation programmes, at the request of the SS Bishops.

Vocation Ministry

- The Vocation Ministry community, at present in Moyo, is confirmed and its activities will be enhanced by appointing more personnel to the community.
- *Now that peace has come*, the community will be moved inside Southern Sudan to a suitable place, decided by the Provincial Council.
- Two confreres of the Vocation Ministry community will be full-time in charge of vocation discernment and guidance. They will follow the candidates and be responsible for them up to the time they enter our Postulancy.
- The community will provide vocational material like books, videos, pamphlets, etc. for their use and for the use of the vocation service at community level.

Basic Formation

- As soon as possible, the Postulancy will be taken back to Juba. In the meantime we will continue to collaborate with the Kenya Province.
- We will prepare formators for the Postulancy as needed. We will consider ways of collaborating with Khartoum Province Postulancy.

Meaningful Initiative for SS (CA 136)

- We have chosen as a meaningful initiative to set up *a radio station* covering the whole of Southern Sudan, in memory of Comboni and to help South Sudan to form a strong leadership.
- As soon as the General Council agrees, we will start a feasibility study and then begin setting up the radio stations.
- The SCBC will be contacted and their approval of the Radio Project sought.
- The project will include formation of lay people *with the intention of handing over* the running of the radio to them.

Four Topics from the Assembly 2005

I want to deal now with the following four topics emerging from the Assembly of 2005 because, later on, they were to affect the progress of the Circumscription on the very same issues: the *ratio missionis*, the *code of*

conduct, the issue of peace, reconciliation and civic education and collaboration with Khartoum Province.

The work on the “Ratio Missionis”

The topic was presented for reflection by the Assembly by Fr. Fernando González Galarza. He helped the participants to go through the *Message of the General Council* on the elaboration of a *Ratio Missionis* for the Comboni Institute. The reasons for this initiative, as well as the proposed outline of its implementation, were presented and taken up by the Assembly.

It was emphasised that the *Ratio Missionis* was not to be just a document coming from Rome to the Province but, on the contrary, a reflection on evangelization from the grassroots of the Institute. Thus, each confrere was called upon to reflect and contribute to the work on the *Ratio Missionis*. For this reason, each confrere was given a copy of the documents *Towards a Ratio Missionis* and the *Message of the General Council* upon which to work.

An interesting comment in the newsletter of the Province from the Provincial Superior, Fr. Perina, on the matter of the identity of a Comboni Missionary and *evangelization* in South Sudan reads:

“In South Sudan we cannot but feel that the missionary is ‘ad Gentes’, among the poorest of the world, and indeed, after 38 years of civil war, in an ‘areopagus’ which is absolutely unique and very much the same as when Comboni reached the place in 1858”.

Then he carries on with another example from a Dinka proverb saying:

*“In a composition of primary seven, a student wrote: ‘thanks to Comboni, our great ancestor, the light of Christ has come to our country’, and concludes: ‘when a cow gives birth, the children of the house are the first to drink the milk’. That young Dinka was right, we are still writing it anew. A ‘Ratio Missionis’ should be genuine and original as Comboni’s love was for the people of his land”.*⁵⁶⁷

The “Code of Conduct”

Fr. Fernando Domingues introduced this topic by explaining how it came about and the positive attitude to be used in its approach pointing out

⁵⁶⁷ Fr. Luciano Perina, sscomboni@news.com, Newsletter of South Sudan Province, no. 29, February 2005, p.3. FSSPJ.

that *we are not called to avoid sin, but to live in holiness*. The code of conduct would help confreres by giving norms and guidelines for the pastoral care of persons in special situations. He pointed out that the call to religious and missionary life *is a call to holiness* of the person called, first of all, and of the people to whom the missionary is sent. Henceforth, if there are grave abuses, they need to be dealt with properly. This was the area the *code of conduct* was trying to deal with, at different levels, according to the religious responsibilities and authority involved.

Commitment to Peace, Reconciliation and Civic Education

The Six-Year Plan stated that *our top priority will be to join efforts with the Local Church and other institutions to promote peace, reconciliation and civic education*.

This was a very bold statement implying that, throughout those six years, the primary effort in all the evangelizing activities would be to foster peace, reconciliation and civic education, in order to help the people and the country to make progress in the integration of the different ethnic groups, in the places where we were present.

Peace and Reconciliation input

The topic of peace and reconciliation was covered by Fr. Mariano Tibaldo. He started off by underlining the biblical roots of *Peace and Reconciliation* and led the whole Assembly towards a couple of questions to be reflected upon in relationship to the concrete reality of South Sudan. The answers were quite interesting because they revealed both limitations and encouraging points to be taken into consideration and to be tackled at different levels, in the community, in the Province and in the Dioceses in South Sudan.

The basic stand-point of Fr. Tibaldo was that *we cannot be ministers of reconciliation unless we are reconciled among ourselves*. He then went on to ask us to identify *the evils which prevent us from being fully reconciled in our communities, in the Province and in the Diocese where we are working, and to name some of those evils*. What the Assembly found was:

Community Level: jealousy, individualism and lack of communication, prejudices, fear of others, of those different from us, of what is new, the unknown, refusal to accept others' advice or correction.

Provincial Level: gossip, fear of change, fear of new ways of being missionary, prejudices against groups (e.g. the elderly, the young, nationalities...), using influence for individualistic purposes.

Diocesan Level: a sense of superiority, lack of the feeling of belonging to the Local Church, having too much money.

He also asked us *to name some situations/structures of sin in our people which need to be addressed as ministers of reconciliation*, and the answer was:

In Cultural Structures, we find revenge, tribalism, pride, the refusal to accept correction, forced marriages, the oppressed condition of women and children, corruption of the traditional judicial system, greed and nepotism.

In Social and Ecclesial Structures, we find a lack of cultural identification, the fragile condition of the youth, injustices due to the war and the counter-witness of Church personnel.

The Assembly tried to identify, as well, moments and events which brought reconciliation among people and ethnic groups; other traditional ways of reconciliation already existing among different ethnic groups, and moments of reconciliation among Churches and Religious Groups which could be promoted and improved through this ministry. This exercise was a great help towards strengthening each confrere in tackling such issues in their pastoral and educational environment.

Collaboration with Khartoum Province

The CPA made everybody aware that collaboration with Khartoum Province was a very urgent issue, because the communities of Juba, Wau, Raja and Malakal, under the care of Khartoum Province since 1995, would naturally return to South Sudan Province. Therefore it was necessary to find a good solution in collaboration with the Khartoum Province.

It was clear that it was not just a matter of shifting communities and responsibilities, but of looking into the concrete situations of confreres and commitments and the fulfilling of former agreements with Dioceses and Institutions. This needed its own time. Fr. Perina and the Provincial of Khartoum, Fr. Luigi Cignolini and the respective Councils, had quite a bit of work to do in order to settle the matter.

Furthermore, there were suggestions coming from the General Administration to improve collaboration, not only with the Province of

Khartoum, but even with other Provinces like Egypt and Chad,⁵⁶⁸ for the issue of personnel with knowledge of Arabic, where confreres could be moved or shared among these Provinces. Regarding collaboration with Khartoum in the field of formation, the Provincial Council, in agreement with Fr. Cignolini, decided to send their three new Postulant, candidates to the Postulancy of Khartoum, with the understanding that, if the structure there needed repairs or extensions, the South Sudan Province would contribute financially.

In doing so, the General Administration and the two Provinces of Khartoum and South Sudan were just following their *common sense and understanding* that the South, in the future, would develop in collaboration with the North of Sudan in a possibly *United Sudan*, as the SPLA/M of Dr. John Garang was upholding. This was not to happen in the country, as such, or even in the South Sudan Province. After independence, the South Sudan Province would consider more feasible the link with Kenya and East Africa than with Khartoum. Therefore, all these praiseworthy undertakings were just leading nowhere.

The General Assemblies (2005-2010)

It is worth seeing briefly the topics chosen for discussion in the Annual General Assemblies in order to have an overall view of what was seen as important for the growth of the South Sudan Province within the Six-Year Plan. Then, all the other topics will not be tackled year by year but in their entirety over the span of six years so not to break them up too much into smaller issues.

General Assembly 2005

The first concern of the 2005 General Assembly, from 16 to 21 January, was to understand well the implications of *the Comprehensive Peace Agreement* for Sudan in practical terms. Linked to the CPA and to the Six-Year Plan were the issues of *returning the Provincial House to Juba*, the *Sudan Catholic Radio Network* and the *new communities* to be given priority. At the level of *On-Going Formation* were the issues of the *Ratio Missionis*, of *Peace and Reconciliation*, of the *Code of Conduct*, and of the *revision and approval of the Six-Year Plan*.

⁵⁶⁸ Provincial Council 2/2005, 25-31 May, 2005. FSSPJ.

General Assembly 2006

The 2006 General Assembly, from 8 to 14 January, carried on with the issue of the *Ratio Missionis* and *reinforcing the consolidation of communities*, of former and new undertakings like hospitals, schools, VTC and Secretariats.

General Assembly 2007

The General Assembly of 2007, from 14 to 20 January, took up the topics of *Prophesy and Prophets in the Mission Field* and of the *revision of the Provincial Directory* where Evangelization, Vocation Ministry, Community, Province and Economy were dealt with in depth in relation to the situation of South Sudan. Moreover there was also the update of the journey done on the *Ratio Missionis*.

General Assembly 2008

The year 2008 marked the joyful event of the long-awaited physical return of the Comboni Missionaries and of the Provincial House to Juba and its first Assembly. In the programme of the Assembly, from 13 to 17 January, *H. G. Paolino Lokudu Loro, Archbishop of Juba*, was invited to address the confreres during a half-day of on-going formation. Fr. Teresino Serra, Superior General, and Fr. Fabio Baldan, Vicar General, were also present. The topics chosen were again the *Ratio Missionis*, prepared and guided by the Secretariat of Evangelization; *the Total Common Fund*, a reflection animated by Fr. Giuseppe Giannini, with experience of Malawi/Zambia, the first Province which started with the TCF since its beginning and, finally again, *The Directory of the Province*. The presence of a confrere from Khartoum Province and of the CMS of South Sudan Province underlined the importance of collaboration.

General Assembly 2009

The Assembly of 2009, from 15 to 21 January was the second one done in Juba. Its main topic was the issue of *The Total Common Fund*. In this case, however, the matter was a re-evaluation of it after nine years of experience and the unease of many confreres with its running. The rest of the time of the Assembly was taken up by community and Secretariat reports. The organised outing to Gondokoro was to underline the link with our historical background.

General Assembly 2010

In 2010, the third Assembly to take place in Juba, from 14 to 20 January, took up the topic of *“The Evaluation of the Six-Year Plan”* which started in 2004 and the new and very important topic of the second *“Synod of Africa”* which had just been concluded in Rome on 25 October, 2009 with the topic *“The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace”*. The rest of the time was devoted to the community and Secretariats reports.

Summarizing the topics of the six Assemblies:

- 2005** *The comprehensive peace agreement, Ratio Missionis, Peace and Reconciliation, Code of Conduct, revision and approval of the Six-Year Plan, (return of the Provincial House to Juba, Sudan Radio Project, new communities)*
- 2006** *Ratio missionis, reinforcing, promoting the development and consolidation of communities,*
- 2007** *Prophecy and prophets in the mission field, revision of the Provincial Directory, Ratio Missionis.*
- 2008** *In Juba, the presence of Archbishop Paolino, the Superior General Fr. Teresino Serra and Fr. Fabio Baldan, the Ratio Missionis, the Total Common Fund, the Directory of the Province.*
- 2009** *The Total Common Fund,*
- 2010** *The evaluation of the Six-Year Plan, the Synod of Africa: the Church in Africa in service to reconciliation, justice and peace.*

One realizes that the main concern of these years was the *Ratio Missionis* (statutes/guidelines/paradigms of mission) emerging from direct experience of life and reflection and aimed at finding new paradigms for the future. This reflection and evaluation on *Mission* was a help to all confreres to evaluate how *Mission* was carried out in each community and in the Province and the way it could develop.

In the concrete situation of South Sudan, after the CPA, it was also a help in order to find appropriate ways of carrying out this *Mission* in every Comboni undertaking whether pastoral, educational, social or spiritual. The peace agreement was a challenge, not only for the army commanders, the politicians, and civil society, but above all for missionaries whose task it was to give a positive contribution towards building up and strengthening this peace in all its meaning and aspects.

This was the reason why the need was felt to explore in a deeper way the *prophetic role* the *Church* and the *missionary* were called to in such a reality and context. This was also affecting the type of choices the Comboni Missionaries were making and the priority to be given to the ethnic groups most in need according to the *Six-Year Plan*. Another more pressing issue was that of *Justice and Peace and Integrity of Creation*, then confirmed as a real priority by the *Second Synod of Africa* of 2009, and the way to tackle it.

The matter of the *Total Common Fund* was also another important issue in the line of evangelization. It was not just a matter of how to put the money together into the same pot, but it was a call for a *new spirit in evangelization*: a better spirit of *communion* and of *planning together* as a way of fostering *joint responsibility* and *solidarity* in the community and at Provincial level; a call to pass from an *individualistic* mentality to a more *collaborative* one. The financial system was to be just the fulfilment of this new *mission trend*. The reflection on this topic, therefore, was in line with the content of the *Ratio Missionis* and the type of *Mission* the confreres of the South Sudan Province wanted for the future.

The fact that the house of the Province was back in Juba in 2008, gave the South Sudan Province the real quality of being fully integrated into the context of the South Sudanese Local Church. The presence of H. G. Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro at the Assembly was a positive reminder of it. The presence of the Superior General and his Vicar was another reminder of other two delicate issues the Province had to tackle: *Leadership and Basic Formation*, which meant having the right people in the right office and the commitment to re-opening Vocation Promotion.

The “Going Home” process

As a follow up and at the suggestion of the General Assembly of Nairobi in 2005, the first Provincial Council of the new Administration decided that *Bro. Jorge Rodriguez Fayat, Fr. Joseph Ukelo and Fr. Perina*, the Provincial Superior, would look into the feasibility of reopening the Provincial House of Juba.⁵⁶⁹ However, its implementation was not a simple matter and would take a couple of years because of the different issues involved in the Nairobi and Juba situations.

The matter of moving the Provincial House to Juba had two big issues to be taken into consideration: the first was the relationship with and the

⁵⁶⁹ Provincial Council 1/2005, Nairobi, 30 January-4 February, 2005, no. 18. FSSPJ.

acceptance of the Archdiocese through a dialogue with H. G. Paolino Lukudu Loro, Archbishop of Juba; the second was the dialogue with the Brothers of St. Martin de Porres and the Sacred Hearts Sisters who, during the Comboni absence from Juba, had been taking care of the residences within the compound and who had not had yet the possibility of resuming their presence in their own residences damaged or destroyed by the war.

About the first issue, the first thing Fr. Perina did in the first months of year 2005 was to visit H. G. Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro and present the issue of the Comboni desire to go back to Juba. The Archbishop manifested his eagerness to welcome back the Comboni Missionaries. While welcoming them back, he also put forward a proposal for a possible future pastoral commitment to be taken up at a later stage. The way was then open and the Provincial Council could start planning. As for the possible pastoral commitment, Archbishop Lokudu Loro officially confirmed his request in 2006, proposing a commitment in Tali or Wonduruba, in the area of Terakeka County. After proper assessment, the Province opted for Tali.⁵⁷⁰

The second issue was the dialogue with the Brothers of St. Martin de Porres and the Sacred Heart Sisters who were living in and taking care of the Comboni House and of the Comboni Sisters house. It was certainly due to the care taken by the Brothers and the Sisters who were living in them that had kept the houses in good condition and prevented them being pillaged or damaged during the war. The whole matter was positively settled and, by the beginning of 2008, the South Sudan Province could hold its first Assembly.

After the committee of Fr. Perina, Bro. Rodriguez Fayat and Fr. Ukelo was set up in January, 2005, it took quite some time to see how to go about with the matter of the return to Juba. Only late in the year could Fr. Perina, now together with Bro. Hans Dieter Ritterbecks and Bro. Valentino Fabris, make another visit to Juba, to see to it. The fact of knowing that the Archbishop was eagerly waiting for the return of the Comboni Missionaries gave them more motivation and joy.

The house was in good shape, yet its refurbishing, renovation, restructuring, redecoration and to increase the number of rooms and add more bathrooms, was requiring more time than initially foreseen. Bro. Ritterbecks did go back to Juba to start organising the work in January 2006. The Comboni Sisters had already visited Juba the previous December

⁵⁷⁰ Minutes of the Provincial Council, 2/2005, 25-31 May, 2005; Minutes of the Provincial Council, 3/2006, 27-30 August, 2006. FSSPJ.

for an assessment on the issue of the Radio Project and the house. The two realities were practically unfolding together.

It was not until May that the confreres, at the invitation of the General Administration and coming from different Provinces and projects, were physically able to reach Juba, while Bro Ritterbeck was going ahead with his task of supervising the works. The Brothers assigned to the Radio Project were Bro. Roberto Misas, an expert in informatics equipment and Bro. Roberto Bertolo, for the construction of its premises, but both only for a couple of months, in collaboration with the Comboni Sisters. Bro. Misas and Bro. Bertolo travelled to Juba on 4 May 2006, together with Sr. Aloisia Cerlini, who was also going there to get the Sisters' own house put in order.

Then, Bro. Fernando Acedo arrived, on loan from the Ethiopian Province and in charge of the works of rehabilitating Comboni House. He remained in Juba until 4 October, 2006, and then went back to his Province. The unqualified workers he had to work with were something of a challenge to him, but he and all of them did well. Bro. Alberto Lamana arrived on 7 July and started putting in order the electrical system of the compound. He also began his commitment with the Radio Project. Fr. Perina had the possibility of visiting Juba before the Provincial Council of August and he was very happy to see the work going on well. Their belief was that the work could be finished by the end of the year or the beginning of 2007, which in reality did not happen.

However, by the end of January 2007, the Provincial and his Council appointed Fr. José da Silva Vieira as acting Superior of Juba till the community could be merged with that of Jacaranda. Bro. Ritterbecks was appointed Local Bursar, while continuing as the person responsible for the renovation of the house and Bro. Lamana was appointed to Juba community for the work on the Radio Project. Instead, Fr. José Luis Martínez Acevedo and Fr. Mitiku Habte were invited to study the Bari language in view of the opening of Tali mission, among the Mundari people.⁵⁷¹

We should not forget the happy event of Radio Bakhita, in Juba which had already been launched and was being tested. It was on the air on Christmas Eve, 24 December, 2006, with the live broadcast of the Midnight Christmas Mass celebrated by H. G. Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro, in St. Theresa's Cathedral, in Kator, followed by Carols and Christmas

⁵⁷¹ Minutes of the Provincial Council, 1/2006, 17-21 January; P.C. 2/2006, 2-4 May; P.C. 3/2006, 27-30 August; P.C. 1/2007, 23-27 January, 13 d. FSSPJ.

messages from Catholic and Anglican Church leaders. Indeed, the project was beginning to take shape in Juba.

Year 2007 was very intense in all aspects of Provincial life for different reasons. The first one was the follow-up of the Six-Year Plan with the decision to have two communities in each ethnic group in which the Combonis were present which involved: two communities among the Nuer of Malakal Diocese, Nyal/Leer and Old Fangak; two among the Dinka of Rumbek Diocese, Mapuordit and Agang-Rial, with the proposal of handing over Agang-Rial in 2008 and taking up Yirol; two among the Bari of Yei/Juba Dioceses, Lomin in Yei and Tali in Juba. It was planned to close the Jacaranda community by September 2007, but this actually took place in December of that year.

Within this wider framework, there was the specific commitment of Juba community itself towards the Radio Project and the completion of the on-going works to make the Comboni compound and all the premises ready to move the Provincial House from Jacaranda/Nairobi, to Juba. The Radio Project committee was asking the Province for permission to use the old Postulancy building temporarily as a training centre for their work, thus adding to the already heavy workload, since the premises had to be cleared of unauthorised people who had settled there.

The third Provincial Council meeting of 2007 took place in Juba at Comboni House itself. It gave the final instructions on the whole matter of the transfer according to the requirements of the General Council. In fact, the requirements for the transfer of the Provincial House from Nairobi to Juba were that communications (telephone/internet, flights and WFP connection, etc.) and administrative facilities (for banking, etc.) should be finalized and be manageable from Juba before moving there.

The Comboni compound, therefore, not only had to be ready as regards refurbishment, but also had to have the necessary facilities to allow the immediate smooth running of the Province within South Sudan. Besides, the final permission of the General Council was needed before moving.

Thanks be to God and to the hard work of Bro. Ritterbecks and the Juba community, everything was ready for the month of December. **On 1 December, 2007**, while Fr. Luciano Giarolo left for Italy, the confreres in Jacaranda community, Fr. Perina, Fr. Hector Ayon, Fr. Ukelo, Bro. Rodriguez Fayad and Bro. Fabris moved to Juba. In Nairobi, Fr. Guillermo Aguiñaga Pantoja was asked to remain in Jacaranda House temporarily to take care of it until final arrangements with the procure of the Kenyan Province were reached. Thus, the first important joyful event was fulfilled.

The long **“journey home”** was ended. Actually, it took up the whole first term of office of Fr. Perina and his Council, (2005-2007), similar to the Israelites’ journey into the *Promised Land*. The positive aspect of this journey, however, was that the faith and great desire of the confreres to go back to Juba and South Sudan made the journey much shorter than that of the Israelites. The second joyful event of **“being at home”**, was that the first Assembly of Juba was also the **“first General Assembly of the third millennium”** which took place from 13 to 17 January.

The Radio Project

Considerable time elapsed from when the *Opera Significativa* was proposed to its implementation, but the two Provincial Councils, MCCJ and CMS, had clearly set their minds on it.

A Catholic FM Radio for Southern Sudan

In 2005, the Province of the Comboni Sisters and the new Provincial Superior of the Comboni Missionaries (MCCJ), Fr. Luciano Perina and his Council, took up the issue of the radio with clear awareness that to have a Catholic Radio Network operating in Sudan was really of great importance and value, especially at the time when Sudan had finally found peace with the CPA (Comprehensive Peace Agreement) of 9 January, 2005. The problem was the burden such a huge project would be for a Province still in the making and without sufficient personnel.

The previous Administration had seen to the preparation of a technical outline and assessment of the project; now new updates to the project were needed, but it was felt that, in order to implement the project concretely, the General Administration had first to give its feedback and tangible support, especially in the matter of personnel to be sought and assigned to this project. A list of personnel fit to run it had previously been sent to the General Administration and the Province also considered adding another name to it.

During the meeting with the Provincial Council of the Comboni Sisters on 3 February, 2005, the two Provincial Councils reconfirmed that the issue of the Radio station for Sudan was a very important part of their agenda. However, they realized that, until then, there had been a poor response from the two General Administrations on this issue. The two Provincial Councils agreed to write a joint letter to be sent to the two General

Administrations asking for a clear commitment on their part and a definitive approval of the project.⁵⁷²

In April 2005, the General Administrations of the CMS and MCCJ met together and launched a proposal for a joint meeting to clarify responsibilities and plan the project. The meeting was fixed for the end May in Nairobi. At that time also the second Provincial Council of 2005⁵⁷³ was to take place with the presence of Fr. Fabio Baldan, the Vicar General. His expertise was of paramount importance for taking further steps in setting up the radio station for Sudan.

From 30 May to 1 June, the meeting proposed by the General Administrations took place in Nairobi as well. The people present at the joint meeting on the side of the Comboni Missionaries were Fr. Baldan, Fr. Perina, Fr. Luigi Cignolini, (Provincial Superior of Khartoum Province) and for the Comboni Sisters, Sr. Adele Brambilla, Mother General and her Vicar General, Sr. Gianfranca Silvestri, Sr. Fulgida Gasparini, the newly elected Provincial Superior of the South Sudan Province and Sr. Annalisa Pansini, Provincial Superior of Khartoum Province.⁵⁷⁴ The meeting was of paramount importance to get the project moving and further research was carried out in Rome with “*Signis*” by Fr. Baldan.

On 18 June, 2005, the SCBC, with a letter to the two Superior Generals of the Comboni Missionaries, MCCJ/CMS, through Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro, thanked them for the great opportunity offered with the Radio Communication Network for both Northern and Southern Sudan. Archbishop Lukudu informed them that Mgr. Macram Max Gassis, and Mgr. Cesare Mazzolari were appointed to the management board and that Mgr. Macram Max Gassis, was appointed to the executive board:

“In keeping with your suggestions we have allotted tasks as follows:

*- **On the Management Board** there will be two Bishops to cooperate with the MCCJ Provincials, namely H. L. Bp. Macram Max Gassis and H. L. Bp. Caesar Mazzolari.*

*- **On the Executive Board**, the Director will be H. L. Bp. Macram Max Gassis who will take charge of obtaining the licenses for the operation of the Radio from the two governments (Sudan and Kenya) and will inform you of the outcome as soon as possible.*

⁵⁷² Provincial Council 1/2005, 30 January-4 February, 2005. FSSPJ.

⁵⁷³ Provincial Council 2/2005, 25-31 May, 2005. FSSPJ.

⁵⁷⁴ Meeting MCCJ-CMS, Nairobi, 30 May-1 June, 2005. FSSPJ.

Your generosity is cause for much joy among the Bishops, their Secretariats and our people everywhere. We will work hard to make this golden opportunity fruitful for our people.”⁵⁷⁵

A word should be said about “obtaining the licenses for the operation of the Radio from the two governments (Sudan and Kenya).” The reason was that, at the initial stage, the idea was to have the main station in Kenya and the daughter stations in Sudan, but then the choice went for a direct broadcast from within Sudan. This was the way it was implemented.

The, soon afterwards, on 28 June 2005, Mgr. Macram applied for government permission within Southern Sudan. The answer was positive on the side of SPLM Commission of External Relations, Information and Humanitarian Affairs, Secretariat for Information and Culture and a permit was granted for Radio and TV.

“As I informed your Predecessor Bishop Mazzolari of Rumbek Diocese this temporary licence is to help you in planning and purchasing the necessary equipment. This is also because we are still discussing with the Central Government in Khartoum to allot specific frequencies to the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS). Once these frequencies are received (which may be within the next 8 weeks) then you will be given the permit and allotted the exact frequency. But in all purposes you will have the full permission since the Movement believes in the free press particularly in the case of SCBRC which will assist in Civic Education and other useful programmes

I wish you success and may God Bless You.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr. Samson L. Kwaje

*Commissioner for Information and
Official Spokesman SPLM/SPLA”⁵⁷⁶*

In fact, the FM frequencies for the Dioceses of Juba, Rumbek, T/Yambio, Torit, were given by the Ministry of Telecommunications and Postal Services on 10 July, 2006, while Malakal, Yei and Wau had to wait until later.

⁵⁷⁵ Kampala, 18 June, 2005, Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro to Comboni Fathers and Sisters in Rome and Provinces of Sudan. FSSPJ.

⁵⁷⁶ Dr. Samson L. Kwaje, Commissioner for Information and Official Spokesman SPLM/SPLA, to Bishop Macram Max Gassis, Nairobi, 4 July 2005, Ref. SPLM/SCBRC/1-05, Subj. Permit for Radio and TV. FSSPJ.

The project/endeavour of the radio network was turning out to be far from easy, since it involved the starting itself and the setting up of the substations in the various Dioceses concerned. The other issue was the personnel taking care of the network. Qualified confreres to be in charge of the project were not easily found and had to be borrowed from other Provinces. In September 2005, the Provincial Superiors of South Sudan received a letter from the MCCJ/CMS General Superiors, Fr. Serra and Sr. Brambilla, that they had finalised the composition of the team for the implementation of the Radio Project. The people chosen for the team were:

- Maria de Graça Gomes de Almeida
- Sr. Paola Moggi
- Sr. Carla Rova
- Bro. Hans Dieter Ritterbecks
- Fr. Alberto Jesus Eisman Torres⁵⁷⁷

All were chosen because of their expertise in the fields required by the project and their ability to work in a team and collaborate with other Religious Bodies and Societies. However, Fr. Eisman and Bro. Ritterbecks did not accept.

At that stage, the Comboni Sisters were very much better off regarding personnel and between 16 and 28 December, 2005, three of them, Sr. Elena Balatti (Italian), Sr. Graça Almeida (Portuguese) and Sr. Paola Moggi (Italian) visited Juba to assess the situation in view of implementing the Radio Project. Sr. Balatti had worked for many years in Sudan (Khartoum) and in South Sudan among the Dinka, Shilluk and Nuer, and spoke Arabic and some local languages. Sr. Almeida, instead, worked in Ethiopia at the Bishops' Conference and Sr. Moggi in Kenya at Tangaza College. This was the first visit to South Sudan of Sr. Moggi and Sr. Almeida.

The Sisters made a feasibility study in Juba⁵⁷⁸ and thought that the only viable solution was to establish the radio temporarily in the former Diocesan Communication Office of Juba where the tower of the cathedral would serve to erect the antennas. They also believed that the testing period would possibly take place between April 2006 and June 2007 and that the new building of the Radio Station Block could be completed by June 2007. This was what they tried to envisage, however the reality was to show that

⁵⁷⁷ Rome, 21 August, 2005, Fr. Teresino Serra and Sr. Adele Brambilla to Sr. Fulgida Gasparini and Fr. Luciano Perina, Letter of appointment for the Comboni Team of Radio Sudan. FSSPJ.

⁵⁷⁸ Brief report on the visit to Juba Presented by the Executive Committee for the Catholic Radio Station.

the timescale was much longer. Meanwhile, Sr. Almeida, who arrived in October, 2005, had to leave for health reasons on 30 April, 2006.

By April 2006 a letter from Rome informed Sr. Gasparini and Fr. Perina how difficult it was to find appropriate personnel and that only some could be found part-time from other Provinces and commitments, like Bro. Roberto Misas, an expert in informatics equipment, Bro. Roberto Bertolo for the construction of the premises, Fr. José Carlos Rodrigues Soto, Fr. Kizito Sesana, Fr. Francesco Carrera, Fr. Giuseppe Cavallini and Fr. Franco Moretti as journalists, for courses and workshops.⁵⁷⁹ By May, 2006, two Comboni Brothers, Misas and Bertolo, were in Juba working hard in their own field.

Sr. Cecilia Sierra Salcido (from Mexico) arrived in Nairobi on 19 April, 2006, and on the 24th she started her radio training, first at Don Bosco Media Centre in Nairobi, then at Radio Waumini, also in Nairobi. At Waumini she met two Italian engineers, Mr. Marco Camozzi and Mr. Bruno Ghisellini, who would eventually assist in setting up and offering technical support to Bakhita Radio.

Already in January 2006, the Provincial Council of the MCCJ sent a note to the confreres announcing the cheering news that probably, by April, the Catholic Radio in Sudan would have started transmitting, but this did not happen until December. Moreover, due to unforeseen difficulties, the project which should have covered the whole of Sudan was to start simply in Juba and its surroundings, with the hope that, as soon as favourable conditions allowed, transmissions would be extended to the whole of South Sudan.

On the part of the Province, Bro. Alberto Lamana was asked to join the team in charge of the project,⁵⁸⁰ at least for a certain period of time: he had worked for Spanish Television and was an expert in electronic technology and computers. However, he was still in Khartoum for a course of Arabic and was supposed to be in Juba in a couple of months. Bro. Misas was asked to remain at least until the basic informatics equipment was installed.

As for the radio station of Malakal Diocese and the proposal to have it in Leer, the issue was still pending and the matter went on quite a long time. In the end, the final arrangement and decision was to set it up in Malakal. Thus, the whole programme of establishing a radio for each Diocese in South Sudan and one in the Nuba Mountains was on the right

⁵⁷⁹ Fr. Fabio Baldan MCCJ, Rome, 14 April, 2006, to Sister Fulgida Gasparini and Fr. Luciano Perina. FSSPJ.

⁵⁸⁰ Provincial Council 2/2006, Nairobi 2-4 May 2006. FSSPJ.

track. Besides, in December, 2006, Sr. Moggi contributed to the preparation of the personnel of Radio Bakhita and to the production of the first programmes.

Finally, it was on 24 December, 2006, that the happy event took place and **“91 FM Bakhita Radio”, “The Voice of the Church”**, went on air. This was the name of the radio station of the Catholic Church of Juba. At midnight it began its live broadcast of the Christmas Mass celebrated by H. G. Paulino Lukudu Loro, Archbishop of Juba, from St. Theresa's Cathedral, in Kator. Carols and Christmas messages from Catholic and Anglican Church leaders followed. The Archbishop welcomed with enthusiasm the beginning of Bakhita Radio and thanked the Comboni Institutes for *“the Christmas present to the Catholic Church in South Sudan.”*⁵⁸¹

The event brought joy in Rome, as well, so much so that the two General Superiors of the Comboni Missionaries (MCCJ), Fr. Teresino Serra, and of the Comboni Sisters (CMS), Mother Adele Brambilla, issued a joint message full of happiness on the occasion of the launching of Bakhita Radio in Juba with these words:

“I BRING YOU NEWS OF GREAT JOY, A JOY TO BE SHARED BY THE WHOLE PEOPLE. TODAY A SAVIOUR HAS BEEN BORN TO YOU; HE IS CHRIST THE LORD” (Lk 2:10-11).

“This is the announcement that for two thousand years breaks the silence of the night to bring the Good News: the Emmanuel, God-with-us, comes to visit us. Glory to God in the highest and Peace on earth.

This Holy night, the message of peace for all the people of Sudan is broadcast for the first time by radio.

An event that not only marks the beginning of a new era, but fulfils the dream cultivated for years by the Comboni Family who wished to collaborate in the establishment of this Radio, at the hour of the canonisation of the Father of Sudan, Daniel Comboni, with a meaningful sign in favour of his country of adoption.

While we thank those who have worked passionately to achieve this dream that has now become a reality, we wish that this means of communication may accompany the long process of peace, reconciliation and dialogue, to build together a new country.

⁵⁸¹ Sr. Cecilia Sierra Salcido, History of the Bakhita Radio, 2005-2007. FSSPJ.
- 22 January, 2007, Bishop Caesar Mazzolari to Fr. Teresino Serra and Mother Adele Brambilla: Thanks in the name of the SCBC. FSSPJ.

*Merry Christmas, and best wishes for a Year full of blessings from the Emmanuel, God who will never leave us alone.*⁵⁸²

On 27 December, 2006 there was a meeting in Juba of the Executive Committee, the Provincial Superiors of South Sudan and Fr. Fabio Baldan, the MCCJ Vicar General.⁵⁸³ The people present were: Sr. Fulgida Gasparini, Sr. Cecilia Sierra, Sr. Elena Balatti, Sr. Paola Moggi, Fr. Fabio Baldan, Fr. Luciano Perina, Bro. Alberto Lamana and Fr. José Vieira. During the meeting, Bro. Lamana was proposed/appointed as Administrator of the Network and, for the time being, also of the station of Juba. However, since he was in charge of the technical set-up of the main station, Sr. Elena would continue handling the project.

Fr. José Vieira, who had joined the EXCOM (Executive Committee) in December 2006, was welcomed to in the station of Juba. For his specific competence, Fr. Vieira was appointed to the News Desk of the Network which required reliable and objective information, especially in the transitional period of time. In this capacity he would assist also the news desk of the main station. It was proposed that Fr. Vieira be the Coordinator of the Editorial Board.

Fr. Baldan, on behalf of the two General Administrations, expressed their gratitude for the great work so far accomplished: Radio Bakhita was on air.

The radio was to be on air in the evening hours during the testing period, while the official launching and inauguration of the station were to take place in the first months of the Year 2007. In fact, Bakhita Radio was officially opened in Juba on 8 February, 2007, the day the Church celebrates the memory St. Josephine Bakhita.⁵⁸⁴ In those days, in-training was conducted in the mornings. In the evenings, the radio would go on air for two hours. The eleven trainees, most of whom began their training completely from zero in computer skills and radio techniques, were Sudanese from the Bari, Acholi, Madi, Kakwa and Zande tribes.

⁵⁸² Rome, Fr. Teresino Serra, Superior General mcej, Sr. Adele Brambilla, Superior General CMS, on the occasion of the first broadcast of Radio Bakhita, Juba. FSSPJ.

⁵⁸³ Juba, 27 December, 2006, Sudan Catholic Radio Network. Minutes of the meeting of the EXCOM and the Provincial Superiors of CMS and mcej in South Sudan and the mcej Vicar General, Fr. Fabio Baldan. FSSPJ.

⁵⁸⁴ - Bakhita Radio: official inauguration, 8 February, 2007, <http://www.comboni.org/en/contenuti/101490-bakhita-radio-official-opening>
- Radio Bakhita, the Voice of the Church, <http://www.comboniane.org/africa-sudan-91-fm-bakhita-radio-the-voice-of-the-church.html>

Bakhita Radio quickly earned a good name and became part of the social, economic, religious and cultural life of the capital city. This was an important indicator to be taken into consideration for all the radios of the Network. Bakhita Radio, at the technical level, was also a help in testing the equipment in order to find the most suitable apparatus for the weather of South Sudan, as well as the use of technology and the how to acquire and improve the command of the language and the radio technology of communication.

By 2009, Radio Bakhita was joined by *Voice of Peace* in the Nuba Mountains, *Saut al Mahaba* (Voice of Love) in Malakal and *Emmanuel Radio* in Torit. Another three stations were soon opened in 2010, *Easter Radio* in Yei, *Good News* in Rumbek, and *Don Bosco Radio* in Tonj. Don Bosco Radio was not in the preliminary plan, but it became part of the Network. *Anisa Radio* in the Diocese of T/Yambio and *Voice of Hope* in Wau became operational in 2011. On 12 April, 2016, a sister radio to “Anisa”, *Centenary FM 100, the Voice of Bishop Gasi*, was also opened in Tombura county of Gbudwe State in the same Diocese of T/Yambio.

The Training centre in Juba was opened in 2008, and two training sessions were conducted. At the same time fundraising and the construction of the different radio stations was taking place. The construction of the radios was far more complex and costly than what was foreseen in the first assessment.

In the original idea, Bakhita Radio was to be the main station of the SCRNs, containing the production department and the News Desk. For various reasons, the SCRNs production department and the News Desk were moved to a different location and were no longer within the premises allocated for Bakhita Radio. By mid-2010, the new premises of Radio Bakhita were finalized.

The sustainability of the radios was considered as a key issue for their future good running. For this reason, SCRNs had a challenging task in drawing up a possible plan and find strategies for the sustainability of the network. Based on the first three and a half years of broadcasting experience of Radio Bakhita, the other radio stations could also get some useful insights.

The question, at the time, was how the stations could become gradually *self-sufficient*. All radios, except Tonj and Gidel, were operating in fast-growing economies. A good number of NGOs who were in partnership with Radio Bakhita were also operating in locations where the radios of the SCRNs were operating, thus becoming a positive asset also for them. This issue of *sustainability* and *self-reliance* was then a key issue for their

future, considering the fact that the commitment of the Comboni Institutes was getting near the hand-over deadline of the whole Radio Project to the respective Dioceses.

The Training Centre of the SCRN, at the end of the decade, was operating in the premises of the former Postulancy of the MCCJ in Juba. After renovation, two training sessions were immediately conducted in 2008, other two in 2009 and these continued in the following years. A sponsored Production Department consisting in the production of Civic Education programs was also going on, though the broadcast by the SCRN radios was not financed. All these realities had to be taken into consideration carefully in order to prepare a positive hand-over.

It has to be said that, at the end of Fr. Perina's mandate, the great effort of setting up the Radio network had almost reached its completion. The Comboni Sisters gave a paramount contribution from the beginning, and Fr. Perina and the Provincial Council also showed a very clear commitment, together with the General Administration.

Communities Given Special Attention

These communities were given special attention because they were considered to be, according to the Six-Year Plan, *those that were most in need of personnel* or were working in ethnic groups *where our presence was particularly needed*, like *the Nuer, the Bari speaking* people and *the Dinka*. Among these were Old Fangak, Nyal/Leer, Yirol and Tali. Juba was also included because it was the Provincial House and needed refurbishing and reconstruction in order to provide proper service to the Province.

Old Fangak Community

We have already followed up the journey of Fr. Antonio La Braca, working alone since 1999 in the Parish of Old Fangak, in Jonglei State, and taking care of, but also being taken care of by the Nuer communities living along the Zeraf river. He was travelling on foot, eating what the local communities gave him, without privileges, except those the people were giving him out of their deep "respect" and, I would say also, their "veneration" for him and his dedication.

Not having a fixed residence, living as an *itinerant Father*, he was welcomed and hosted by the people of the communities he was visiting. Communication with the Provincial Superior was rare and only when

NGOs offered him communication facilities like a satellite phone or a radio-transmitter.

This was a situation to be taken care of with special attention. Fr. Perina and his council tried immediately to take action in order to meet the needs involved: the need of personnel and also of a simple, but better residence. The timescale, however, was according to the local style, long and requiring patience. A visit of assessment by Fr. Perina to Old Fangak, made him aware of the most urgent needs, if a Comboni community was to be placed there permanently. In November of the year 2005, Bro. Raniero Iacomella moved to Old Fangak from Nyal, to set up the structures of the mission and form the community with Fr. Antonio La Braca.

Together with Fr. La Braca and Bro. Iacomella, the Provincial Superior planned to have some prefabricated iron structures brought there by plane and set up as a residence for the Community. Fr. La Braca certainly felt it as something piercing his heart, since the original style of life could not be followed any more in a “radical way” but, for the sake of a better and more solid presence among the Nuer people, he accepted it sincerely.

Fr. Alberto Modonesi and Fr. Christian Carlassare followed in April 2006. The Parish was organised into four pastoral regions with twelve centres and about forty chapels. There were four Lay Parish Animators (LPA) in the four regions who worked as *Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist*. Each centre had a head Catechist who coordinated the work with his co-Catechists, a committee administering its goods and planning the manual work, a women’s group and a youth group. A Centre Council had four representatives of these four groups: Catechists, Committee, Women, and Youth with regular meetings. There was a Parish Council which was composed of a core committee of close collaborators of Fr. La Braca and some representatives from the four regions.

The Sunday celebrations and festivities were organised in such a way that each Catechist led the prayers at his own chapel with one priest staying in Old Fangak and the others visiting chapels.

Fr. La Braca promoted the presence of several prayer centres in various homes. He personally followed four prayer centres in Old Fangak and weekly Rosary. Fr. La Braca also introduced perpetual adoration on Saturdays from morning to evening and made himself available at the Church.

Pastoral Visits were regularly carried out to the chapels, to celebrate the Sacraments, teach the faith, support the Catechists, and meet the groups of the centres and the Centre Councils. Visits to families were made on special occasions for blessings, thanksgiving, a relative returning home,

births, deaths or sickness in the families, and there were visits to the hospital and to the prison.

Collaboration with the Diocese, NGOs and other stakeholders in Old Fangak was fostered. Human Promotion was carried out through income-generating projects.⁵⁸⁵

Fr. La Braca left Old Fangak on 1 October, 2007, for a Sabbatical Year. Fr. Wellington Alves joined the community on 3 March, 2008, whereas Fr. Modonesi was moved to the community of Juba by the end of the same year. In June 2009, Fr. La Braca re-joined the community, though based no more in Old Fangak but in Ayod, and living a contemplative missionary life.⁵⁸⁶

Nyal/Leer Community

In 2005, the community of Nyal was composed of Fr. Fernando González Galarza, Bro. Raniero Iacomella, Fr. Guillermo Aguiñaga Pantoja, Fr. Wellington Alves de Souza, the Scholastic Jaime Nistal, on two years pastoral experience and Fr. José Manuel García Oviedo (two months stay in Nov-Dec 2005). The newcomers were carrying on with the study of the Nuer language, but were also engaged in pastoral activities and visits to the Christian Communities and in the running of the *Joseph Pal Mut* public library.

The other confreres were fully committed in the planned pastoral work, visits to villages and Christian Communities, the preparation of people for the reception of the Sacraments, the translation of Nuer liturgical and Catechetical material, teaching in the *James Duol Kai* Catechetical Centre and Bro. Iacomella was occupied with his work of human promotion.

In February 2005, a community of Comboni Sisters arrived in Nyal. Both communities, the MCCJ and CMS, according to their specialisations, were giving their service with the teaching in the catechetical centre, in the pastoral activities and in the local primary school.

In October 2005, there was the arrival of Bro. Nicola Bortoli, assigned to Nyal, but also the departure of Fr. Gonzales Galarza who left for Mexico for the Comboni Year. Bro. Iacomella was assigned to the Old Fangak community and left Nyal in November. However, at the end of the same month, Fr. Christian Carlassare and Fr. Francesco Chemello arrived in Nyal

⁵⁸⁵ Comboni Missionaries, Old Fangak, Community charter, 2013. FSSPJ.

⁵⁸⁶ Missionary presence in Fangak, edited by Fr. Christian Carlassare, (files of Old Fangak Parish mcej community).

in view of their appointment to one of the two communities among the Nuer people.

They started immediately with the study of Nuer, helped by the Scholastic Jaime Nistal, a real linguist and very much appreciated by the Nuer people for his quick and proper learning of their language. Other young Nuer people were also contributing to this language study.

The January, 2006, the General Assembly in Nairobi brought all the confreres together. However, the scholastic Nistal, at the end of his experience, decided to leave for home. The rest of the confreres returned to Nyal until Easter time, after which Fr. Chemello was assigned to Nyal, Fr. Carlassare to Old Fangak and Fr. García Oviedo decided to withdraw. Henceforth, the community of Nyal now consisted of Fr. Pantoja, Fr. Alves, Bro. Bortoli, and Fr. Chemello.

After the signing of the CPA, in 2005, the community of Nyal started its reflection on the advisability of going back to Leer, which was the main town where the presence of the Comboni Missionaries had begun, on 12 March, 1996. The community was not united in the discernment with some in favour and others against, considering the fact of having to “abandon” the Christian community of Nyal which did so much good and was very committed during the difficult years of displacement. The reflection went on for the whole of 2006. Meanwhile, the community of the Comboni Sisters left Nyal and, by the month of May, were already in Leer.

The final decision, after having considered pros and cons, was to return to Leer. Nyal would be visited on a regular basis, though certainly the Christians would experience the difficulty of the lack of a Comboni presence. Luckily enough, in 2006, Fr. Celestino Seabra Invaha Namaneque was assigned and arrived in Nyal. Then, the proposal was that two confreres, namely Fr. Chemello and Bro. Bortoli would go to Leer while the other three confreres would go on with the usual missionary work and the catechetical centre in Nyal for the whole of 2007.

The decision of the Provincial Council, according to the discernment and the proposal presented by the community of Nyal, was that in Leer there should be a church compound for all the personnel and church activities, and a compound for a school, a Vocational Training Centre for young people. The Confreres assigned by the Provincial for this task in Leer were Fr. Chemello and Bro. Bortoli. Fr. Chemello went to Leer at the beginning of February, 2007, following up the above-mentioned matters, and also the pastoral care of people. Bro. Bortoli arrived in May.

With the help of the Catechists and Church Leaders of Leer, the application to the Commissioner of Leer for the two plots of land was

made, but the matter was not an easy one. While waiting for permission, four huts were built in local material beside the existing church, also in local material. Only with the coming of Fr. Jeremiah Manyang Kon, a Priest sent by Mgr. Vincent Mojwok Nyikier, Bishop of Malakal, to deal with the matter, was the plot officially approved and given on 30 June, 2007.⁵⁸⁷

The whole issue consisted of a piece of land assigned to the Catholic Church of the Diocese of Malakal, to build the house of the Comboni Missionaries, that of the Comboni Sisters, the church, the catechetical centre of the Parish, the compound for the Catechists of Leer county, a nursery-school for children and other buildings for women's and youth activities. The second piece of land was assigned to the Comboni Missionaries, for a Vocational Training Centre, to train youth (boys and girls) in agriculture, metalwork, carpentry and other skills according to new evaluations and needs.

Once all the documentation was ready, Fr. Chemello and Bro. Bortoli started planning for the permanent buildings, sharing in each other's given task. In fact, Fr. Chemello was given the task by the Provincial Superior, Fr. Perina, of overseeing the building of the Comboni Missionaries' house and church compound, and Bro. Bortoli was chosen as *Principal of the VTC* with the task of planning and building the necessary premises for the VTC, according to the approved plan.

The fencing and the internal plan of the two compounds was the first thing Fr. Chemello and Bro. Bortoli took care of, within the area of the land given, and presented it to the community in Nyal and the Provincial Council for evaluation and approval. Everything was done via email, since there were no roads, or during meetings in Nairobi.

In Leer there were no buildings in permanent material, except a couple of old government houses built in brick by the British in colonial times. The ground was of cotton soil, creating problems for buildings with no strong reinforcement. It was decided to build with a new technology called M2.

This method of building used Italian technology available in Egypt. It consisted of prefabricated panels with an *expanded polystyrene* core and prefabricated zinc-coated steel wire mesh reinforcement. Once erected on site, it was encased in sprayed concrete. This method was considered the most appropriate for cotton soil places like Leer. The contractor arranged to

⁵⁸⁷ 30 June, 2007, approved Church plot, Franco Duoth Diew, Commissioner of Leer County, Unity State, South Sudan. FSSPJ.

get the material from Egypt and the house was built with this M2 materials. The same method was also used to build the Sisters' house, the Pre-school building and the VTC classrooms. For the VTC, this material was later found to be available also in Khartoum.

Leer Community

In January 2008, after the first Assembly of Juba, Nyal was closed and all the confreres went to Leer. However, Fr. Alves was assigned to Old Fangak and so the community of Leer remained with Fr. Francesco Chemello as Superior and in charge of overseeing the building of all the structures in the church compound, except for the Comboni Sisters' house which they saw to themselves. He also helped in pastoral work; Fr. Celestino Seabra was the Vice-Superior, in charge of the Catechetical centre and helped in pastoral work; Fr. Guillermo Agüñaga Pantoja was the Parish Priest and was involved full-time in pastoral activities; Bro. Nicola Bortoli was the Bursar, Principal of the VTC and in charge of developing the structures in the VTC school compound.

The Community of the Comboni Sisters was involved in different activities: Sr. Lorena Morales was collaborating with Fr. Seabra in the catechetical centre; Sr. Lily Grace Akumu and Sr. Adriana Tovar were teaching in the government schools but also collaborating in pastoral work. When Sr. Agata Cantone arrived in Leer, she started taking care of women, but later on the responsibility was given to Sr. Miriam Parra, who was teaching in school as well. Finally, Sr. Laura Perin was put in charge of the women's desk, while Sr. Agata Cantone took care of the pre-school (or nursery school).

The work of the community house and that of the nursery school, due to some complications along the way, took much longer than was foreseen. Meanwhile, the members of the community were living in the four huts in local material. By the middle of 2010 the house was completed and the community could start moving in. The VTC started with the course of agriculture in an iron sheet classroom in April 2009.

In 2010 the first classroom block in M2 of the VTC was completed, as it was the nursery school that could start under the direction of Sr. Agata Cantone and her team of staff members. The Catechetical Centre, however, was built by the Catechist and church leaders in local material and was still going on in this way, both for the teaching hall and the residence houses of the Catechists doing the course.

The Parish church was built in local material and was in a very poor condition, waiting for a permanent replacement. Fr. Aguiñaga Pantoja received a substantial offering for the building of a new church, but certainly not enough to complete a church big enough for the future Catholic Population.

Fr. Chemello took up the issue and, in agreement with the community, started preparing a plan for a prefabricated, iron-framed church⁵⁸⁸ including a sacristy and an office to be completed with M2 technology to fill in the walls. However, as a matter of principle, Fr. Chemello did not want the iron structures of the church to be set up by non-Nuer companies, but by Nuer labourers themselves, as a sign of their own abilities.

He managed to find a Nuer welder, and together with him and another young Nuer helper, he assembled the iron framework and set it up with the help of a Ugandan builder, who was already working for the house of the community. The church was built with the help and collaboration of the church personnel and of the County Commissioner who provided an excavator, a couple of lorries, a compressor and a grading machine from the road construction company to excavate deep foundations to create a base in the cotton soil, filling it in with good stabilizing earth. This work went on throughout the whole of 2010 until 2011.

One unfortunate happening was the sudden illness of Fr. Celestino Seabra in the summer 2009. He had to go for medical treatment to Italy and Sr. Lorena Morales took over the running of the Catechetical Centre and the whole programme until the closing of the course in the month of December. By the end of the same month of December, Fr. Aguiñaga Pantoja was assigned to Mexico and left in January, 2010.

Thereafter, the community of Leer consisted only of Fr. Francesco Chemello and Bro. Nicola Bortoli. It was a time of great isolation for both of them. Sr. Anna Gastaldello, who came to replace Sr. Morales, due to go for a course in Biblical studies, took up the direction of the catechetical centre for the next two years, in collaboration with Fr. Chemello.

It was not until April 2010 that Bro. Hans Dieter Ritterbecks was assigned to Leer community to work in the VTC programme. The burden of the pastoral work was totally on the shoulders of Fr. Chemello, who by then was free from overseeing the building of the house. The pastoral need was great, considering the extension of St. Joseph the Worker Parish, spread over 4 counties (Koch, Leer, Mayendit and Payinjiar), around 250

⁵⁸⁸ Fr. Chemello, before joining the Comboni Missionaries, was a mechanic designer, and took the initiative of planning for the church iron structure.

Km North-South and 80 East-West, with a lot of marshland for much of the year.

Though a few new roads were built by the government and the community could avail of a Toyota Land Cruiser vehicle, the amount of pastoral work was clearly too much for one person.⁵⁸⁹ Thanks be to God, in 2010 Fr. Alberto Modonesi was assigned to Leer, but unfortunately he had to leave on 27 July, 2010, for health reasons. On the same flight, Fr. Raimundo Nonato Rocha dos Santos arrived in Leer and started to study the Nuer language. This was a great blessing and a real relief to Fr. Chemello who could already dream of Fr. Nonato Rocha taking over as Parish Priest in the near future.

Juba Community

Juba community was given special attention because of the key role it was playing in the South Sudan Province, starting with the whole process of transferring the Provincial House from Nairobi back to Juba and the responsibility placed on the confreres making up this community. Together with the Comboni Missionary Sisters, it was associated from its initial stages, with the issue of the Sudan Catholic Radio Network in its planning, its implementation, fund-raising, technical requirements and premises, the setting up of departments for its running such as the Board of Governors, the Executive Committee and the MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the Conference of Bishops (SCBC).

Juba community had to look after the logistics (e.g. air tickets, relations with the WFP, provisions, etc.) and the work of the Procure. It was supposed to welcome and organise whatever was necessary for confreres or other visitors coming to the Provincial House and to look for ways to deliver an adequate service to all. Much of this, at the initial stage, was mentioned when talking about the return of the Provincial House from Nairobi to Juba, in the Chapter dealing with the *going home process*, therefore, here below, I will just list and mention the most relevant points and confreres who were directly involved in the different services.

Fr. Luciano Perina, Provincial Superior at that time, was the first confrere to go to Juba at the beginning of the year 2005 to inform His

⁵⁸⁹ - Narrative of Fr.Fr Francesco Chemello, who went through the Leer Events from 2007 to 2016.

- Comboni Missionaries, MCCJ-LEER, Community charter, January 2015. FSSPJ.

Grace Paolino Lukudu Loro, Archbishop of Juba, that the Comboni Missionaries meant to go back to the old Provincial House, after 20 years of civil war. Having being welcomed by the Archbishop, the whole issue of the St. Martin de Porres Brothers, who had been living in the Fathers' compound, and the Sacred Heart Sisters who had been living in the Sisters' compound was tackled. Once all this points were concluded the Juba community could indeed settle down and look specifically to the required service entrusted to it.

Members of the Community of Juba from 2005 onwards:

- Fr. Luciano Perina, Provincial Superior at the beginning of year 2005
- Bro. Hans Dieter Ritterbecks and Bro. Valentino Fabris came to assess the situation in October 2005, as well.
- Bro. Ritterbecks, then, continued in 2006 as the person responsible for supervising the work of restructuring the premises of the whole Comboni House compound, including the fencing and as Local Bursar. Then he was appointed Provincial Bursar; he left Juba community in February 2009 for the VTC of Leer, and was substituted by Fr. Alberto Modonesi.
- *In May 2006, for a few months, Bro Roberto Misas and Bro Roberto Bertolo were to help in the Radio Project while Bro. Fernando Acedo would help with the restructuring of the house.*
- Bro. Alberto Lamana arrived on 7 July, 2006, assigned to the Radio Project as Administrator and technical advisor. He was assigned to Spain in January, 2011, but left Juba in July of that same year.
- Fr. José da Silva Vieira, January 2007, in charge of the News Desk of the Radio Project and acting Superior of community of Juba.
- *At the beginning of 2007, on a temporary basis, Fr. Martinez Acevedo and Fr. Mitiku Habte, to study the Bari language in view of the opening of Tali mission. However, this did not happen.*
- On 1 December, 2007, the confreres in Jacaranda community, Fr. Perina, Fr. Hector Ayon, Fr. Ukelo, Bro. Rodriguez Fayad and Bro. Fabris, all moved to Juba and were now *physically* members of it. Bro. Jorge Rodríguez Fayad was appointed Superior from 2008 to 2014, and in charge of shopping and of dealing with the workers.
- Bro. Fabris from December 2007 until December 2013, when he left for Italy. Fr. Ukelo belonged to this community but resided in Torit. Fr. Hector was often in Juba for health reasons.

- Fr. Alberto Modonesi arrived at the end of 2008 to be the Provincial Bursar until Bro. Nunes took over in January, 2010.
- Bro. António Manuel Nunes Ferreira came to Juba to take up his task as Provincial Bursar and Procurator in January, 2010. He also covered the tasks of Community Bursar, the service of hospitality, the kitchen and the animal farm.

Yirol Community

With the handing over of Agang-Rial on the second half of 2008, the Province took up a commitment in Yirol as the second commitment in Rumbek Diocese. Formerly, the Comboni Missionaries were in Yirol for a short time between 1991 and 1992, as part of the *New Sudan Group*, but then the Parish had to be abandoned because of the military campaign of Khartoum in March of the same year. The Diocese of Rumbek and Comboni confreres were assisting it from Bethany House, Nairobi. Fr. Silvano Gottardi, assigned to the South Sudan Delegation on 1 July, 1998, was appointed Parish Priest of *Holy Cross Parish* of Yirol, but belonging to Mapuordit community: then, the pastoral care restarted.

Fr. Benjamin Madol, a Diocesan Priest, was assigned as Parish Priest after Fr. Gottardi left for health reasons, and Fr. José Javier Parladé Escobar, in 2002, started working together with him there but belonging to the community of Mapuordit. In 2004, after the departure of Fr. Madol, Fr. Parladé became the Parish Priest.

At the same time there was no school in the area apart from Holy Cross Primary School situated in the town. In order to offer more hope for a better future to the youth, the Fathers had a meeting with the elders and, in agreement with them, they opened 27 primary schools under the trees with about 260 unpaid volunteer teachers. These schools functioned in this way up to the CPA in 2005 when they were all handed over to the government. But the Parish continued to support and encourage them. Since the beginning, these schools became something like pastoral centres with one or two Catechists each.

In January, 2005, Fr. Parladé began a few education and evangelization projects and asked permission to purchase a car from the Red Cross with the purpose of visiting the vast Parish. In 2007, he started preparing some rooms for confreres in view of possibly taking up Yirol as a Comboni commitment, and so it happened on 1 January, 2008. Then, the confreres

assigned to Yirol had the chance of consolidating what had been already started by Fr. Parladé.

When Bro. Mario Rossignoli was assigned to Yirol, he started completing and adjusting different things in the house. He took over the whole responsibility of the maintenance, freeing the other confreres from that heavy burden. Moreover, he also began to take up also a liturgical commitment, with short talks to the youth and preparing the Sunday Eucharist. He was preparing a small booklet of Dinka songs as well as a short History of Salvation for the Catechists.

Then, Fr. Colombo was also assigned to the community and, as soon as he arrived, he started with two workshops of ten days for all the Catechists of the Parish. With the arrival of Fr. Titus Henry Makokha, they decided to dedicate most of the time to the formation and renewal of the Catechists, not at the Parish but zone level. The formation of the Catechists was a priority so that they may become active and consistent pastoral agents.

The members of the community in 2008 were Fr. José Javier Parladé Escobar, Bro. Mario Rossignoli, Fr. Fernando Colombo and Fr. Titus Henry Makokha.⁵⁹⁰ In the Parish there were ten pastoral zones, each one led by a head Catechist with eight or nine helpers. Workshops of some days had been given in the various zones and were continued. Pastoral youth groups were already functioning.

The Parish had 58 chapels with 110 Catechists. The ten pastoral zones were defined according to language (Jiang and Atuot) and clan. The most populated of the zones was that of the town of Yirol, which also had the highest number of Catechists. The Parish covered two Counties, Yirol west and Yirol East. Yirol West was already sufficiently organized with basic structures - a primary school with almost 2000 school children, and a hospital under government management, assisted by the CUAMM doctors. The new Parish church, whose construction had already been going on previously, was completed in 2009.

Yirol was an area of first evangelization and there were also many Protestants, with whom there was a good relationship. The long war did not allow for systematic planning of all the activities. A gradual systematic pastoral plan, to reach out to all the population, started after the CPA. Continual tribal confrontations were making people suffer: at Yirol West between Atuot and the Jang, and at Yirol East with the Nuer settled in the forests and not allowing people to move safely.

⁵⁹⁰ Provincial Assembly 2009, Juba 14-19 January. FSSPJ.

Yirol in the past had the problem of isolation from Rumbek, which was basically solved by the construction of a solid bridge on the Peyi River, though, during the raining season, it was hard to move around because of the water covering the murram road joining Yirol to Rumbek.

The evangelizing priorities of the Parish were the formation of Catechists and of youth, education on HIV/AIDS, collaboration with the NGOs and Government, women's empowerment and promotion, education for girls, the rescue of street children, and spiritual and human formation in the mission schools and determination in the proclamation of the Word of God.

By 2010, Yirol community was composed of Fr. Colombo, Superior, Fr. David Octavio Aguilar Guzman, Fr. Makokha, and Fr. Parladé. There was also a community of the MSMMC (Missionary Sisters of Mary Mother of the Church), who had been there since 2001, sharing in the education and pastoral activities. In the field of health, there was the presence of the CUAMM doctors for the hospital.

Tali Community⁵⁹¹

After the CPA, in 2005, during the visit of the Provincial Superior, Fr. Luciano Perina to Juba, Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro asked to take up the pastoral care of one of the neediest areas in Juba Archdiocese. The choice went for Tali. It was not possible to implement the proposal immediately, but action was taken gradually.

Tali Mission is located among the Mundari tribe, a Bari speaking ethnic group. The Mundari are considered agro-pastoralists because they not only herd livestock like cows, goats and sheep but they also cultivate their fields around the homestead during the rainy season. Their main crops are sorghum, maize, groundnuts, sesame, beans and cassava.

The mission was first opened by the Comboni Missionaries in 1954, but, a few years later, they were forced to leave by the government of Khartoum. From 8 to 12 March, 2007, Fr. Mitiku Habte, Mr. Hassan (builder) and Bro. Hans Ritterbecks visited Tali for an assessment arranged by Fr. Santo Loku Pio, the Parish Priest of Terakeka, and were warmly welcomed by the Christian community, the Catechists and the Local Chief.

⁵⁹¹ Tali Mission, Community Charter 2014. FSSPJ

- Provincial Council, 1/2008, Markus to celebrate Easter in Tali and prepare soon temporary huts/provisional residence. FSSPJ.

At Easter time, from Holy Thursday, 5 April, 2007, until Easter Sunday, Fr. Perina, Fr. Mitiku Habte and Bro. Lamana Consóla visited Tali for the Easter celebrations accompanied by Fr. Clement, assistant Parish Priest and Deacon Joseph; they also visited the old mission place.⁵⁹² Fr. Markus Körber visited Tali on the following Christmas and then on 23 March, 2008, celebrated Easter there. The Parish Priest of Terakeka (Tali was then an outstation of Terakeka Parish), Fr. Santo Loku Pio handed over Tali Parish with its 30 chapels to the Comboni Missionaries.⁵⁹³

From then on, the community resided in Tali centre where access to clean water and health care was guaranteed, not in the area of the Old Mission. For the first weeks Fr. Markus was alone. One month later Fr. Joseph Pellerino joined him.⁵⁹⁴ Finally, the week before Christmas, 2008, the community was blessed with the arrival of Bro. Damiano Mascalzoni.

In 2008, close to the church in Tali Centre built of local material, three huts for the Fathers were already prepared when Fr. Körber arrived. Before the end of the year three more were added. In May, two boreholes were drilled, one inside the community compound and one outside for the people. In June the fencing was completed as part of a “Food for Work” project, supported by the organization “Sign of Hope”.

The local material like grass, bamboos, and poles were procured through the contribution of some of the chapels. Mostly their youth were also involved in fencing the compound. Next to the church a playground was prepared for children and young people. They were invited not only to play football but also to join catechism and prayers.

Fr. Pellerino was very committed in teaching catechism and in giving lessons in the lower classes of the local Primary School run by the government. In collaboration with local NGOs, Bari lessons were offered in some of the chapels, in order to enable more parishioners to read and understand the liturgical books.

The lack of a qualified preparation of the majority of the Catechists, to guide their communities for prayer and teaching, was clearly perceived during the visits to the outstations. Although they were provided with almost all the liturgical books, they needed empowerment to fulfil their responsibilities properly.

⁵⁹² sscomboni@new.com, newsletter of South Sudan Province, pp. 26-27. FSSPJ.

⁵⁹³ Tali Mission, Community Charter 2014. FSSPJ

- Provincial Council, 1/2008, Markus to celebrate Easter in Tali and prepare soon temporary huts/provisional residence. FSSPJ.

⁵⁹⁴ Provincial Council, 2/2009-May, Fr. Pellerino presented to Archbishop, Fr. Markus Körber, Superior, Bro. Damiano Bursar; Building in progress... FSSPJ.

Some of them, around 30, were sent for a two-month course to Ku'dule (Terakeka Parish). This project was carried out in collaboration with Terakeka Parish, a way to strengthen the communion with the Local Church. The first pastoral visit of the Archbishop of Juba to Tali Parish, at the end of January, helped also in the same way.

However, in order to start building a residence in permanent material, the issue to be solved was the definition and the demarcation of the boundaries of the land for the Catholic Church in Tali Centre. Without this, no possible development would take place. This was done during the pastoral visit of H. G. Paulino Lukudu Loro at the end of January/beginning of February 2009, in the presence of a government representative from Juba. Then the construction plan could start.

In the Old Mission, instead, one borehole was drilled. The question of how to restructure the old building needed more time to examine it; meanwhile, the construction of a chapel helped the Christian community to gather for prayer.

When the Parish of Tali was opened in 1954, it was dedicated to *Our Lady of Fatima*. Nowadays, this name is used for the “Old Mission” which is an outstation of the Parish. After a process of discernment together with Archbishop Paulino Lukudu Loro and the Local Christian Community, in 2014, the name chosen as the new patron for Tali Parish was “*Christ the King*”

The members of the community until the end of 2010 were Fr. Markus Körber, since November, 2007, Fr. Joseph Pellerino, since 2008, Bro. Damiano Mascalzoni since 2008 and Fr. Gregor Schmidt, since 2009.

Challenges: the geographical challenges encountered were that Tali Parish, as such, included Tali and Tindilu Payam, bordering with Yei and Rumbek Diocese. Its north-south extension was around 60 km, and its east-west extension around 100 km. Due to the rough roads, flooded areas and the distances between the chapels, transport and communication was very difficult. During the rainy season, even the Old Mission, seven kilometres away from Tali, was not reachable because of swamps and rivers.

The social challenges were related to a very low general standard of living: primarily, poor education, even in the few existing schools, few opportunities and little encouragement for progress and development. Consequently, many of the youth dreamt of a better future abroad. For this reason, the need to contributing towards integral development and human formation was pretty clear. The presence of the Comboni Missionaries in such a situation was surely a positive sign, after so many years of absence

of missionaries, and the people did not hide their joy about the return to Tali Parish.

The pastoral challenges were met through the visits to the outstations done on a regular basis by car, motorbike and bicycle or on foot, according to the conditions of the roads and the paths in the forest. Visits were also an opportunity to witness and to follow Jesus Christ in a concrete way and an occasion to offer all these challenges to His infinite mercy. They were also opportunities of walking in the footsteps of Saint Daniel Comboni, on a journey of faith, together with people who were surely among the poorest and most neglected within the Archdiocese of Juba. Comboni's intercession along this journey would surely help.

Communities Already Settled

Moyo Vocation Centre

Moyo *Vocation Centre*, since January, 2002, had carried out Vocation Ministry in the Province. In 2005, Fr. Jimmy Aventore, who substituted Fr. Paul Idra, and Bro. Rossignoli, Secretary of Vocation Promotion, continued with the Vocation Ministry. Fr. Ferrazin was in Italy for health reasons and, on his return, he moved to Lomin where he died on 1 June, 2006.

In 2006 the community was following a new experiment: the *Pre-Postulancy for Brotherhood* in Entebbe, started two years before, with three students who were followed up from Moyo once a month by Bro. Rossignoli and Fr. Aventore and Fr. Bosco Sule Mawa. Some perplexity was expressed about this experiment because the offer for further studies was linked with vocation promotion. Moreover, the Vocation Ministry was to be moved to Lomin and done in connection with Comboni College. Finally, the community of Moyo was closed down on 28 December, 2006.

In January 2007, Bro. Rossignoli was moved to another mission and Fr. Aventore took over the office of vocation promotion, but there was also the decision of the Provincial Council to discontinue vocation promotion for one year to give time to reflect better on the way it should be carried out, due to some difficulties encountered in the Postulancy programme.⁵⁹⁵ From then onwards Lomin became the reference point.

This failure can be attributed to the *type of methodology* used at the very first stage. Though the students may have had good *spiritual inputs*, these may not have been understood due to a too evident *paternalistic approach*

⁵⁹⁵ Provincial Council, 1/2007, 23-27 January, no. 3e, no.7a, no. 13a. FSSPJ.

that did not allow the applicants to be aware of the full implications of a *missionary commitment for life*. In this case, the students were not helped to be fully aware of, or to take responsibility for their vocation in its practical implications of having to cope with their poverty of means. Thus, this *possibly mistaken methodology* may have been the cause for giving, even to good students, false expectations, with bad long-term results.

Lomin Community

The main activities of the community were evangelization, the accompaniment of the candidates to the Postulancy, the Comboni Comprehensive College and St. Martin Carpentry Workshop.

The confreres who served in the Comboni community of Lomin during the terms of office of Fr. Luciano Perina (2005-2010) were Fr. Eugenio Magni, Superior, Fr. Hector Ayon Oyiamute, Bro. Erich Fischnaller (RSA/SS) and Fr. José Manuel García Oviedo in 2005; in 2006, Fr. José Jesús Aranda Nava joined the community; in 2007, Fr. Jimmy Milla Aventore; in 2008, Fr. Albino Adot Oryem and, in 2010, Fr. Ezio Bettini to replace Fr. Magni.

In 2010, the members of the community were Fr. Louis Okot Tony Ochermoi, Superior, Bro. Erich Fischnaller, Fr. Albino Adot Oryem, Fr. Jimmy Milla Aventore and Fr. Ezio Bettini.

In 2005 the Sacred Heart Parish, Lomin, had 24 chapels and was divided into six zones with two trained Catechists and two attending a Lumko course in Arua (Uganda) - that was four out of 26 Catechists. Sr. Maria Silvia Flores of the Comboni Sisters was in charge of the youth, and Sr. Maria Adela González of the health unit and of the women, Sr. Massima Dessi was helping with the altar servers going for home visits and other activities. Sr. Caterina Cirimelli was teaching in the Comboni comprehensive college and helping in the pastoral activities.

On 1 June, 2006, the sad event of the death of Fr. Ferrazin deeply affected the community since he was involved very much in the pastoral activities of the Parish and in the translation of the Sunday liturgical readings of year A, B, C. and other books into Bari.

In August 2006 Bishop Erkolano asked for the Minor Seminary to be located temporarily in Lomin with the opportunity for the Seminarians to attend the Comboni comprehensive college. The proposal was accepted to start in 2007.

The Comboni Comprehensive College included three departments: the nursery school for children (kindergarten), the primary and the secondary

school. In 2006, the building of an “A” level block allowed senior five to be opened officially in the same year. One dormitory for the boys, one block of with four classrooms for the primary school and the administration block were ready for use by the beginning of 2007.

The academic year 2007 witnessed an increase in the number of students, the school for children (kindergarten) had 210 pupils and 10 teachers, the primary school had 750 pupils and 35 teachers and the secondary school, 500 students and 40 teachers. The Seminarists of Yei Diocese were also integrated into the college. On the whole, the Comboni Comprehensive College of Lomin carried on making progress and was a reference point for many students of our Parishes seeking a good education during the years ahead.

Mapuordit Community

Mapuordit, in the Diocese of Rumbek, as we already know from its long history, is considered the place of the restart of the Diocese during the time of war and was *carrying on its mission of evangelization, education and health care*. Mapuordit apostolic community, during its journey, was formed by the communities present and ministering in the Parish, the Comboni Missionaries and the OLSH Sisters, first, and then also the Apostles of Jesus.

The confreres who had been part of the community of Mapuordit during Fr. Perina’s term of office, starting from 2005, were Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino, (who went for a renewal course and was then was assigned to Agang-Rial) Fr. Raymond Pax, Bro. Rosario Iannetti, Fr. Giovanni Girardi, Superior and Parish Priest until his assignment as Episcopal Vicar for financial affairs in Rumbek Diocese in May, 2005, and then to Barghel), Bro. Alberto Lamana Consola (then in Khartoum studying Arabic), Bro. Damiano Mascalzoni, Fr. José Javier Parladé Escobar (in Yirol) and Fr. Mario Riva (in Rumbek) in 2005. At the beginning of 2006, the community was made up of Bro. Rosario Iannetti, Bro. Damiano Mascalzoni and Fr. Luis Alfredo Estrada Meza,⁵⁹⁶ while Fr. Antoine Kondo Komivi joined in March,⁵⁹⁷ making four members; Fr. José Javier Parladé Escobar remained in Yirol.

At the end of 2006, Bro. António Manuel Nunes Ferreira joined, while, in 2008, Bro. Mascalzoni went for his preparation for perpetual vows; in

⁵⁹⁶ Provincial Assembly 2006, Nairobi, 8-14 January, p. 14-15. FSSPJ.

⁵⁹⁷ Provincial Assembly 2007, Nairobi, 14-20 January, p. 16. FSSPJ

2009, Bro. Andres Gaspar Abarca, Bro. Paul Levi Wagbia and Fr. Daniele Moschetti (in December), were also assigned to the community.

The time from 2008 to 2010 was a very strange period in Mapuordit, with many sudden changes of personnel and different styles and rhythms of pastoral work. In 2010, the community was composed of Fr. Antoine Kondo Komivi, Bro. Rosario Iannetti, Bro. Andres Gaspar Abarca, Wagbia Paul Levi and Fr. Daniele Moschetti.

The CPA opened a new chapter for the community of Mapuordit. The Diocese of Rumbek was stressing its commitment for Justice and Peace, Health care and Education. It was a time for reconstruction and the community felt it was important to work in synergy with all the institutions present in our area: Churches, Government, NGOs and other groups.

The Parish was dedicated to Saint Josephine Bakhita, whose feast is celebrated on 8 February. The Catechists were the people with whom the pastoral ministry had been carried out since the beginning. They were leading the Sunday celebrations in their Christian communities and animating them, preparing the catechumens for the reception of sacraments, visiting the families, praying for the sick, in communication with the Parish Priest. All the initiatives followed the pastoral guidelines of the Diocese. Regular workshops for the formation of Catechist were given. The new Parish church was started and was also in the process of being built during those years.

In the field of Women's promotion, the Catholic Women associations were present in the centre and in some chapels and taken care of by the OLHS Sisters. A program of human development (adult education, health education, sewing and dress-making) was in progress, but the great challenge was to get female pastoral agents to follow these programs.

Youth Ministry was taking care of the youth which was the largest population in the Parish and out-churches and was one of the *areopagi* (*fields of work*) in the area of evangelization. The Parish was favouring initiatives for them to help them in their human and spiritual growth and structures were built for them for this purpose.

The active groups in the Parish were the *youth group*, the *alleluia dancers* for girls, the *altar servers*, the *Justice and Peace group*, the *choir group*, the *small Christian communities*, the *women's group* and *family life group*. Particular mention must be made of the *St. Joseph and Sacred Heart's communities of blind and poor people* started by Fr. Pellerino to care for blind and disabled people cast off by different communities.

The Minor Seminary was transferred by the Diocese from Kitale (Kenya) to Mapuordit in 2007. The Apostles of Jesus were in charge of the

Seminary while the Seminarians were attending the Parish Senior Secondary School.

Health Ministry was carried out by the *Mary Immaculate Hospital* with several outreach health and social programs, as well. Bro Iannetti Rosario and Bro. Andrés Gaspar were the confreres directly involved in this ministry.

The schools: the Comboni Schools in Mapuordit consisted of two primary schools, Mapuordit with about 1600 students and Makur Agar with 600 students. The secondary school counted around 150 students. The schools were run by the OLSH Sisters with Sr. Mary Bachelor as the Principal, and were going on well. In 2007, Mapuordit also had 26 satellite schools with 150 teachers and almost 4000 students. Worth mentioning in 2009, was the Diamond Jubilee of Sr. Mary Bachelor, 60 years of religious life and 15 years in Mapuordit; she was very much loved by all the people. A huge effort was put into education and it was continually growing.

Agang-Rial community

The Parish of Agang-Rial was entitled to Mary Mother of God and was also taking care of the pastoral areas of Cueibet and Barghel.

In 2005 the community consisted in only two confreres, Fr. Estrada Meza and Fr. Mitiku Habte, since Fr. Luciano Perina had been elected Provincial Superior of South Sudan. In the same year 2005, Fr. Estrada Meza was moved to Mapuordit in exchange with Fr. Pellerino, and then, Fr. Clement Orango joined the community, as well, but left in 2006.

In 2006 the community consisted in Fr. Mitiku Habte, Fr. Clement Orango and Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino. Fr. Giovanni Girardi was in Agang-Rial for Barghel project, at 30 Km from Agang-Rial. In the absence of Fr. Mitiku Habte and Fr. Clement Orango, assigned elsewhere, Fr. Girardi, since November, 2006, was helping in pastoral work almost all weekends.⁵⁹⁸

In 2008 the community consisted in Fr. Pellerino, Fr. Girardi (for Barghel project) Fr. Mario Riva and Bro. Mario Rossignoli.

The Parish situation was, somehow, in a state of pre-evangelization, with poor commitment on the side of Catechists and other pastoral agents. There were periodical conflicts among tribes, provoking fear and internal displacement. However, the disarmament done in the area was a step

⁵⁹⁸ Provincial Assembly 2007, Nairobi, 14-20 January, pp.22-23. FSSPJ.

forward towards peace. The semi-nomadic life of the people was also a real challenge to following up the Christian communities.

The evangelizing activity developed throughout the 25-30 prayer centres run by their respective Catechists with organised workshops of formation twice per year.

The pastoral activities were carried out by the confreres and Sisters visiting the chapels outside on Sundays, using the means available like the car, the bicycle or going on foot. Confreres were also giving a hand in the school by teaching some subjects. This was an opportunity to get in contact with the youth.

Some meetings were planned and some pastoral work projects shared; seven-day workshops for Catechists were organised; youths were prepared at length for Confirmation; various meetings with youth, justice and peace and YCS groups, were held, mainly followed up by Fr. Mitiku Habte and Fr. Clement Orango. Women's promotion and education meetings were held by the Comboni Sisters with regular visits to Catechists in their outstations, even during the rainy season months, with *safaris* of 3-4 days.

Youth Ministry was started with the involvement of one of the Comboni Sisters, Sr. Lorena Morales: it included formation in a catechumenal style, moments of prayer, sports, etc. which was also an animation to the Parish life. Similarly, some activities with children were started and a prayer centre too in *Panakim* area with celebrations and other activities. Fr. Mitiku Habte attended a workshop organised by Fr. Salvatore Ferrao, a Jesuit Father from Rumbek, on Justice and Peace and resolution of conflicts; civil, military and church authorities were also present.

Little by little other groups and activities could be organised: first of all the Parish and church committees, Justice and Peace Reconciliation groups, YCS (Young Christian Students), St. Vincent de Paul's groups, women's groups.

In the youth groups, particular attention was given to formation for Christian maturity and behavioural change based on the Bible. One needs to take into account that the majority of youth were born during the war and had lost the sense of hope and responsibility.

The community of the Comboni Sisters was involved in education with Sr. Giulia Fusi in charge of the Comboni primary school with 600 students. There was also adult education, health activities, dispensary for TB and leprosy patients and pastoral with Sr. Lorena Morales in charge of women's promotion, YCS and CRE in the school.

The community took care of the construction of the new church in 2006. Bro. Valentino Fabris directed the work. At Provincial level, however,

there was the proposal of handing over to the Diocese of Rumbek the Parish of Agang-Rial in order to take up the Parish of Yirol, where Fr. José Parladé was already preparing the way. The handing over was done in 2007.

Commitments with special arrangements

The special arrangements of these commitments were that the confrere given by the Province of South Sudan to the Dioceses was *ad personam*, that is, with no replacement, in case the confrere, for various reasons, should no longer be available for that service. However, when another confrere was available, he would be possibly assigned there for reasons of community life.

Nyamlel pastoral commitment

The community was made up of Fr. Michael Barton and Fr. Raymond Pax, who joined him in March 2006, but being only two confreres, when one of them was away visiting people, the other would be left alone, making the presence not so easy. Fr. Barton was both Superior and Parish Priest. The mission centre, St. Theresa Parish, had a church ten metres wide and around forty metres long with a high roof composed of timber and iron sheets.

The area served by the mission was over one hundred kilometres in diameter. It stretched from Wedweil and Uthum to mission chapels bordering with the areas served by Gordeim and Raja. There were about eighty-five chapels and places of prayer, divided up into twelve centres. There were eighty-five Catechists, some prayer leaders and some helpers.

In Nyamlel there was also a community of Sisters from Indonesia who arrived on Holy Thursday 2006, Sr. Jeanne, Sr. Jevianna and Sr. Ernestin; their commitment was for school education and work with women's development. They were also involved pastorally and were going to visit the out-churches on Sundays, bringing the Eucharist with them, as well.

A young man from the school was the Parish Catechist and a carpenter was helping in the Parish as a handyman and builder.

In the past there had been twelve classrooms covered with iron sheets, a library and several small storerooms. There was also a complex composed of four dormitories, a grinding mill and seven storerooms that were used as a Catechist centre. All were roofed in iron sheets with walls thirty centimetres thick and in good condition.

The floors of all these buildings were of brick tiles, some of which were also covered with cement. The rectory of the Parish had eight large and very high rooms, built on a slab which was more than two feet high and floored with brick tiles. This slab formed a veranda on both sides of all the rooms. In many of the old missions, this was a plan used for the Fathers' house.

The Sisters' house had been restored and another house of six rooms was also restored for women's development. Adjacent to the Sisters compound there were four classrooms that had been restored for the secondary school. Next to these there was a block of eight large rooms with no roof which was waiting to be restored.

The mission complex was about three kilometres from the market and airport. Other mission buildings had been given to the DOR hospital staff, and to Cordaid, a Dutch NGO, for their compounds. At the time, the NGOs present in Nyamlel were: Cordaid, Conconn, and WFP.

In 2006 there were eighteen hundred baptisms, three hundred confirmations and eighty-five marriages. Most of this work was done by Fr. Barton between the end of the school in January and the beginning of school in April. Over half of the mission was inaccessible by car during the rainy season and many of the chapels only had mass twice a year.

Fr. Barton was also the headmaster of the school and Nyamlel, several times, came first in the external exams set by the Diocese of Rumbek. The school had three hundred pupils. Fr. Barton attempted to open the secondary section but failed because of a strike of the secondary school teachers, one week after they had signed their contracts. Many of the Catechists and all the teachers trained at Bakhita formation centre, Kitale, had deserted the school because they had better offers from the government and the NGOs.

Many of the returnees from the North were ready to take an active interest in the church and there was a good number of marriages in church among them. There was another Comboni school at Marial Baai and a third one in another place. Since his arrival, Fr. Pax was mainly taking care of the centre but, once he got acquainted with the place, he started going more and more to visit the chapels outside. It is worth mentioning that many of the people in the administration were students at Nyamlel before the coming of Fr. Barton.

Luckily, a new road to Nyamlel was built, making much of the Parish accessible during the rainy season and making even Aweil and Wau accessible all the year round. However, the need for a third member was very much felt, especially during the absence of Fr. Barton, but it was not

possible since Fr. Barton had been given to Rumbek Diocese *ad personam* for this commitment.

The Provincials of South Sudan and of Khartoum both had the opportunity to pay a visit to Nyamlel and even the Bishop of Wau, Mgr. Rudolf Deng, visited the mission.

Barghel Project

In 2007, the project *Ireneo Dud Vocational Training Centre*” in Barghel (Cueibet District) was under the care of Fr. Giovanni Girardi. The aim of the project was to train young people from the Diocese of Rumbek in various skills: bricklaying, carpentry, mechanics, plumbing, electricity, metalwork and farming. The idea was to help the rebuilding of the country through the preparation of qualified personnel.

According to the plan, it was planned to have a three-year programme: in year one, every student would receive education in all disciplines; in year two and three, the students would specialise in one discipline, according to their abilities and interests; agriculture would be a compulsory subject for all three years.

Fr. Girardi was made available by the South Sudan Province as the project leader, supported by the Diocese, while the training programme was to be developed in collaboration with ESMEA, and SUDIN, an Italian NGO from Udine. The long-term aim was that it should become a secondary technical school within ten years.⁵⁹⁹ During the Assembly of 2009, Fr. Girardi reported on the progress made at the Ireneo Dud Vocational School in Barghel and asked the Province to consider whether it was possible to assign a new confrere to follow and share with him the progress of this project.

Ayod pastoral commitment

Background: until 1983, Ayod was a quiet little village with few people and no history. It became well known when the Nuer military leader of Ayod, Cmdr. William Nyuon, joined the SPLA guerrilla movement against the Khartoum Government. In Ayod there were some Catholics, but with no community or Catechists, they all fled to Khartoum when the war started.

⁵⁹⁹ Provincial Assembly 2007, Nairobi, 14-20 January, op. cit., p. 23. FSSPJ.

At this moment I do not want to recall all the historical events of the Catholic community and their Catechists, which would be very interesting, but not appropriate at this moment, and so I will just give the main outline in order to understand how the presence in Ayod began.

The whole thing started with a certain Peter Gatkuoth David, who was baptized in 1987 in the Presbyterian Church and became the right arm of the Rev. Pastor Peter Rit, in Longor. At Christmas, 1988, the same Rev. Peter Rit, preparing the catechumens for baptism, warned them about the danger of *a big Church* called *Catholic*. Peter Gatkuoth was very much impressed by such words about this *big Church*, since he did not know anything about it and, by instinct, (these are his own words) he prayed that this *big Church* should arrive also in Ayod.

A certain Catholic Catechist from Leer, John Chuol Kueth (of Beer / Leer), happened to arrive in Ayod. Peter Gatkuoth and his friend John Gatdet asked him questions about this *Catholic Church*, especially because they heard him talking about the Eucharist (Communion) saying that *if you receive the body and blood of Jesus, you will get eternal life*, but he also continued saying, *in order to receive it, you first need to have your marriage blessed by a Priest*.

This was the starting point of a long search and enquiry about the *Catholic Church*, *Priests* and places where the Catholic Church was already present, like in Leer, where Catechists James Duol Kai was the main leader. It also became a long struggle of relationships with the same Presbyterian Church and the pastors.

In 1991, a certain Catechist, *Joseph Pal Mut* by name, a Catholic and founder of many Catholic Churches in Gambela and Itang *Sudanese refugee camps* (on the borders of Ethiopia), and Eastern Nuer areas (and, later on, the leader of the Nuer Catechists League), helped the *Catholic sympathisers* of Ayod to find the strength to have their church built in order to pray together as a Catholic Christian Community.

In 1993, having heard that in Ayod the Catholics had built a church, Joseph Pal Mut went to visit them. Peter Gatkuoth went to greet him and asked to be officially received into the Catholic Church. Joseph Pal Mut received him only after Peter Gatkuoth went to talk to the leaders of the Ayod Catholic Church and received their consent. After having served in several places, in 1995, Peter Gatkuoth went to Leer with all the other Catechists and, since Bishop Paride Taban (of Torit Diocese) was there on a pastoral visit, he took the opportunity of receiving from him the Sacrament of Confirmation.

In 1996, Peter Gatkuoth accompanied a large group of Catechists to Leer for a meeting of all the Catechists. Fr. Antonio La Braca, Bro. Hans Ritterbecks and Sr. Giovannina Zucca had just arrived in Leer on 20 February, 1996. He asked him to visit Ayod. However, Fr. La Braca was not allowed to do so by Cmdr. Tito Biel for security reasons. The chance came in 1998 when Fr. La Braca returned to Leer from the Comboni Assembly of Nairobi to Juaibor by small plane. Then, after 5 days' walk, accompanied by two Catechists, Fr. La Braca reached Ayod. Unfortunately, people were not told of their arrival and had gone fishing.

They celebrated Easter together, just the six of them, and then they proceeded, again on foot, to Waat visiting, praying and baptizing children, then to Akobo in 25 hours without interruption, eating only a few handfuls of *boiled sorghum* and drinking a cup of water here and there (since there was no water around) until they reached the Sobat river. Fr. La Braca wanted to proceed to Maiwut, but he was not allowed to do so by the SPLA commander for security reasons. He went back to Waat and then to Lankien, where he prayed and baptized people. He became ill but, fortunately, he was able to return to Leer on board a private plane going there.

In October, 1998, Fr. La Braca went back to Juaibor and then Old Fangak and continued his itinerant visits on the Eastern Nuer land; at Christmas, 2000, he went to Jiech/Haat; in December, 2001, to Jiech/Haat (but spent Christmas in FANGAK); in November, 2002, Ngariang/Reang/Pakuam/Paguong/Kany Nhial/Ayod.; in 2003, to Kuerjaani; at Christmas, 2004, to Ayod/Mogok/Haat, accompanied by the Comboni Sister Elena Balatti; at Christmas, 2005, to Ayod/Mogok/Haat; in 2006, Ayod: on 16 April, Peter Gatkuoth David became an LPA (Lay Parish Animator), Cmdr. James Tharjiath was also present. At Christmas, 2006, Fr. Alberto Modonesi, who had just arrived, went to Ayod and Fr. Christian Carlassare, also newcomer, went to Haat.

On 1 October, 2007, Fr. La Braca went to Italy for a Sabbatical Year. In April, 2008, Fr. Carlassare went to visit Ayod/Mogok/Haat and in April, 2009, to Ayod/Mogok. In June, 2009, Fr. La Braca returned from Italy and, having received permission from his Superiors, he withdrew from his usual pastoral work and went to Ayod to begin his *eremitical life*,⁶⁰⁰ leaving the

⁶⁰⁰ A *hermit*, especially one who lives alone for religious reasons.

- Missionary presence in Fangak, edited by Fr Christian Carlassare, (files of Old Fangak Parish mcej community).

-Provincial Assembly, 2010, Juba, 14-20 January. FSSPJ.

active pastoral work to the care of the confreres of Old Fangak. Afterwards, at Christmas, 2009, Fr. Wellington Alves went to Ayod/Mogok and in April/May, 2010, Bro. Raniero Iacomella and Fr. Carlassare went to Ayod to build the Church in semi-permanent material.

Comboni permanent presence in Ayod: Fr. Antonio La Braca started his *eremitical life* in Ayod on 6 June, 2009. The first problem he encountered was about reconciling his *eremitical life* with the *active pastoral care*, so much needed in the area. In May, 2010, Fr. Carlassare, the Parish Priest under whose care Ayod area belonged, visited Ayod and asked Fr. La Braca to share some services.

Fr. La Braca continued with the previous pastoral care with adult people and youth, then he started some catechism classes and to prepare people for the Sacraments. He also encouraged and supported the effort of the local community to build a primary school in semi-permanent material and offered classes of CRE, himself.

Communities inherited after the CPA

Malakal, Wau and Raja geographically belonged to the South Sudan Province, but because of the arrangement made by the General Council at the time of the *Group of the New Sudan*, when the new Delegation was instituted, on 1 January 1995, these three areas, plus Juba, were entrusted to the care of Khartoum Province. With the CPA of 9 January, 2005, all this was reversed to the former status. However, due to the specific situation of each one of them, the procedure had to be studied properly.

Malakal Community

With the CPA of 2005, Malakal Diocese again came under the Circumscription of the South Sudan Province; Fr. Alberto Modonesi and Bro. Abele Redaelli asked to leave Malakal town and go to exercise their missionary activity in Ayod, Jongley state.

The issue was not easy because the Province had no commitment in Ayod and no personnel to take up a new mission permanently. Moreover, Old Fangak was taking care of that area. So they were temporarily assigned to Old Fangak, but with the issue of where they belonged still unresolved. Would they prefer to remain under Khartoum Province or pass to South

- Catholic Church Ayod, Fr Antonio La Braca, mcej, personal notes, in Italian, (files of Old Fangak Parish mcej community).

Sudan? Bro. Redaelli chose to go back to Khartoum and Fr. Modonesi was assigned to the South Sudan Province and to Old Fangak for the time being.

Wau and Raja Communities

For Wau and Raja the issue was similar to that of Malakal, but more complex because of the commitments the Khartoum Province had already taken before the CPA of 2005. The matter of personnel, then, was the same: either Khartoum was to agree to give to the South Sudan Province the personnel who knew Arabic, or it would have been impossible for the South to provide Arabic speaking personnel for them. The issue was left until the time of the 2011 referendum, when people would decide whether to remain one Sudan or two countries. Once the choice was made for an independent South, then new decisions were taken accordingly.

Provincial Institutions

In the Province there were three initiatives/undertakings which started gradually and then became big commitments and the Provincial Council had to decide what to do with them and how to assure continuity, both financially and as regards personnel. These initiatives/undertakings were *Mary Immaculate Hospital* of Mapuordit, *St. Martin Workshop* of Lomin and the *Comboni Vocational Training Centre (VTC)* of Leer.

After much discernment in the Provincial Assemblies and in the Provincial Councils, they were taken up as *Provincial Institutions* that the Province would try to support and develop under its leadership

Mary Immaculate Hospital, Mapuordit

History shows that Mapuordit hospital was founded through the hard work and commitment of Bro. Dr. Iannetti, Surgeon and Director and of Bro. Alberto Lamana Cónsola, at technical, logistical and administrative level, and of Bro. Damiano Mascalzoni who arrived at the end of 2004, as we have seen in the previous Administration. This history continued with the new Administration of Fr. Perina with the assignment of other Brothers like Bro. António Manuel Nunes Ferreira, in substitution of Bro. Mascalzoni, and Bro. Andrés Gaspar Abarca.

In 2005 the Paediatric Ward, the Medical Ward, the Maternity Ward and the Laboratory were built in permanent structures with the help of *Italian Cooperation*, for a total of 80 beds.

- Between 2007 and 2010, a boarding school with two dormitories for a total of 48 nurses was built.
- 2008 the Eye Clinic with one permanent clinical officer and other doctors periodically coming from abroad and performing cataract operations.
- 2010 an HIV/ART clinic sponsored by WHO (World Health Organization) for HIV patients.

Before 2009, the hospital had been run through the Diocesan Health Commission from 2002 to 2005, then by AAA (Arkanjelo Ali Association) from 2006 to 2008. In 2009, the three Comboni Brothers present in Mapuordit hospital obtained clearance from the Provincial Assembly of the MCCJ to have direct responsibility for the management of the Hospital, asking AAA to stand aside. The PC decided accordingly.⁶⁰¹ Afterwards, it was run by the Comboni Missionaries with a first *Memorandum of Understanding* with the Diocese of Rumbek valid from February 2009 to January 2014, up to the setting up of a new Board of Governors under the leadership of the Diocese of Rumbek.

St Martin Workshop, Lomin

In 2005, Bro. Erich Fischnaller was assigned to the South Sudan Province: he carried on with the commitment in the construction of the College and other requested constructions in the Parish. While doing so, Bro. Fischnaller conceived a multifunctional workshop which he would call **“St. Martin Workshop”** and obtained the permission of the Provincial Superior, Fr. Luciano Perina. At the time of acquiring the land for the construction, discernment was made by the Province⁶⁰² and the local community, which led to the decision of acquiring the land in the name of the Comboni Missionaries.⁶⁰³

The reason for this decision was that it would leave the Comboni Missionaries free to hand over the workshop to any organization (or group of people) that could continue operating it, not limiting its choice to the

⁶⁰¹ This was a really major policy shift on the part of the MCCJ. When Bro Rosario was first assigned to Mapuordit it was clear that the MCCJ did not intend to take up corporate responsibility for MIH.

⁶⁰² Provincial Council 1/2005, Nairobi, 30 Jan.-4 Feb., approval of the project of building a carpentry workshop. FSSPJ.

⁶⁰³ 29 June 2005, Land agreement, between the Comboni Missionaries of South Sudan Province (leaseholder) and Kajo-Kaji County Administrator (land owner), signed 27 July, 2005. FSSPJ.

Local Diocese, as it would have been if the land title had been acquired in the name of the latter (as it was for the schools).

Welding and brick making, in 2005, were considered as a necessary complement to the mainstream activity and also of the carpentry. However, little by little, the activity and the production increased beyond internal needs, thus making three separate units: **Carpentry, Welding and Brick making**.

Weaving: in 2006, a lady volunteer from Austria, Mrs. Eva Hoenle, visited Lomin. She came up with the idea of introducing the weaving component, aimed at the development of women's skills. She was initially allowed to do it in one of the rooms of the workshop but she later found resources to add a building to the existing St. Martin Workshop. The Women's Workshop, called **Lady Lomin**, started in October 2008.⁶⁰⁴

Agriculture and visitors house: in 2008 also the agricultural component came in because of the extra land of the workshop that required clearing. Instead of just clearing it, it was thought better to cultivate it. This, however, was a very minor component of the workshop complex. Besides gardening, a small bakery was also established in this period. In the same compound a visitors' house was constructed, because the workshop always attracted many visitors who had become a burden to the Comboni community. Hence the building for the visitors was added.

All this was aimed at increasing people's skills and the development of the place. Thus, Bro. Fischnaller placed his skills at the service of the environment (people, community, institutions...). All developments triggered by this understanding were first discussed at community level and later cleared by the Provincial Superior, Fr. Perina, who always granted permission to proceed, as long as Bro. Fischnaller was able to find financial and material resources to do what he had in mind.

St. Daniel Comboni Vocation Training Centre, Leer

The beginning of Leer VTC dates to early 2006 when the then community of Nyal conceived the idea of establishing a Vocational Training School in the new seat of the community (i.e. Leer, where the PC had decided the new community should be established). Having presented the idea to the Provincial Council and, having obtained permission to proceed, two plots

⁶⁰⁴ Lady Lomin, waving workshop, <http://www.ladylomin.org/en/welcome>

of land were purchased in Leer in July, 2007, in the name of the Comboni Missionaries.⁶⁰⁵

The purpose of vocational training was to provide the most needed skills like agriculture, metalwork, carpentry and others as required. Agricultural skills, however, appeared to be the most necessary according to the local community's understanding. In early 2009 the plot of land for the VTC was fenced off and one semi-permanent building was built.

In April 2009, Bro. Nicola Bortoli started the school with a first intake of 10 students, with the support of teachers drawn from VSF Swiss (Kenyans, on temporary basis), one local teacher from Leer, two Ugandan teachers already present in Leer (on a part time basis) and one Comboni Sister. Of the 10 original students, 7 left as soon as they realized that the school was not considered a secondary level institution.

In November 2009 Bro. Hans Dieter Ritterbecks joined the community as Administrator of the VTC. In the meantime, Bro. Bortoli was appointed a member of a Ministerial Committee for the harmonization of Vocational Training Curricula and Entry Requirements at the Ministry of Labour, to which the VTC was subject.

In 2010, the syllabus prepared by the team of Leer VTC for agriculture became the national curriculum. The entry level was fixed at P8. The training provided by Leer VTC received certification from the Ministry of Labour.

In 2010, the second group of 9 self-sponsored students, aware that they were joining a VTC, entered, while the first group of 3 students completed its training and received a Ministry endorsed Certificate. Though the number was small, the fact of receiving the certificates from the Ministry of Labour was a great event that encouraged other students to join.

Secretariats

The Secretariats have always been very important instruments in the life of the Province in order to work out plans and initiatives according to their purposes and to take care of implementing decisions taken by the Provincial Council. However, in the situation of South Sudan with its emergencies and obstacles to systematic planning, their effectiveness was

⁶⁰⁵ 3 July, 2007, Polytechnic School and Agriculture School Field, Comboni Missionaries Leer, Diocese of Malakal, Guttuon place, Franco Duoth Diew, Commissioner of Leer County, Unity State, South Sudan. FSSPJ.

sometimes lacking and frequently they were overruled by higher decisions without proper consultation.

Whatever the case, they have been always an important point of reference for reflection and implementation of decisions taken and the confreres involved in each Secretariat always tried their best to achieve the purpose for which they were set up. Nonetheless, the boundaries of their sphere of work and the heading under which certain issues belonged were sometimes not very clear.

Secretariat of Evangelization and Animation

This was surely the leading Secretariat among them all because it had to serve the very purpose of being missionaries and in the precise local context of South Sudan. The office of Missionary Animation was also joined together and the office of On-Going Formation, as well.

The Secretariat of Evangelization did not have an easy task: it had to work hard to prepare the content of the Annual Assemblies, prioritise the topics, find the people capable of giving valuable inputs and have an overall view of the evolving situation within the country and the needs of evangelization, taking into account the reflections and the proposals of the confreres during the previous Assemblies, as well.

During Fr. Perina's term of office the most important issues were the reflection going on with the *ratio missionis* which was then a very important help for other related issues in the field of pastoral/missionary work in the communities. The Secretariat was relevant regarding the inputs into the Six-Year Plan and other themes aimed at raising awareness of *Mission* linked to *Prophesy* and other topics. On-going formation was also linked to it since it had to serve the evangelization purpose.

As for JPIC, it too was under the umbrella of this Secretariat, but was dealt with by its specific sector. During this Administration there was no full-time confrere appointed to this office, though the work was done, as much as possible, to raise awareness on the issue. New interest was given to the *World Social Forum* (WSF), which is the largest gathering of civil society to find solutions to the problems of our time and that started in Brazil in 2001. Starting with *the WSF in Nairobi, Kenya, in January 2007*, a couple of confreres were sent every year to attend in it, wherever in the world it was held.

Office of On-Going formation

(Under the Secretariat of Evangelization)

The office of on-going formation had the important task of helping the confreres to continue fulfilling their vocation as missionaries who needed to be supported in their spiritual and practical difficulties in the different situations in which their missionary ministry was carried out. Pertinent to this Secretariat were the themes of the Assemblies, the Retreats (at personal/Provincial level), the meeting of young and experienced confreres, and others according to the context of mission and the particular situations the Church, the Dioceses and the country were going through. As for the meetings of young confreres, a certain amount of unease was felt because of some excesses and the negative comments which followed after *Entebbe 2007*. On the whole, participation was poor.

Secretariat of Vocation Promotion and Basic Formation

The Secretariat of Vocation Promotion and Basic Formation was the one that had to work much more in the practical field since the confreres in charge had to deal directly with Church Institutions, Parishes, Schools and Youth. It was their work that assured continuity in the area of Basic Formation. The Aspirants interested in the Comboni missionary life were in direct contact with the confreres of this Secretariat.

In reality, it can be said that it was the Secretariat which, much more than all the others, had to work hard daily, to animate and follow up the students coming to them for discernment. Moreover, they had to move *physically* to the places where Schools and Parishes allowed Animation and Vocation Ministry activity among the youth.

It has to be said, as well, that *Vocation Ministry* and *Basic Formation* were dealing with very *sensitive issues* like the *methodology* used in carrying out their task in a very poor and needy environment caused by war and displacement. The outcome of this work depended very much on the character of the persons and the approaches they were using.

In this area, there was a lot of work done at the individual level by the Vocation Promoters, but what was possibly lacking was a Secretariat of Vocation Promotion and Basic Formation able to formulate a proper journey of preparation for the Aspirants before the Postulancy. Then, there was the unease concerning joint formation with the Province of Kenya and the subsequent weakness of the new Postulancy of *Bomas* (Nairobi) and the matter of the formation of the Brother candidates in Entebbe (Uganda).

The free access to further education given to the students to the Brotherhood resulted in their seeing this as their first priority; their vocation was just a means to this end. The impossibility of managing all these issues, then, led to the suspension of the Vocation Promotion activities in 2007.

In 2008, the Provincial Council, at the invitation of the General Assembly, resumed the Ministry of Vocation Promotion,⁶⁰⁶ to be taken up at community level, but it was not enough to guarantee the process at the Provincial level with an adequate vocational journey for possible candidates.

Pre-Postulancy and Postulancy

In 2005, during the time of Fr. Mawa, the South Sudan Province decided to have its own Postulancy in Nairobi. A house was purchased for it in Bomas of Kenya, Kemisa Road, Nairobi (Kenya),⁶⁰⁷ though the students were going to the same “Consolata Philosophical Seminary” for their studies. Bro. Fabris and Bro. Ritterbecks were given the task of adapting it to the purpose.

During this time the Province had also taken steps with the Province of Khartoum to improve collaboration between the two Provinces and one of the agreements was to send some new Postulants to the Postulancy of Khartoum.⁶⁰⁸ In this way the South Sudan Province had a newly-opened Postulancy in Nairobi with its students divided between Nairobi and Khartoum. Moreover, the candidates for Brotherhood, who needed a different curriculum of studies and a profession, were gathered in a rented structure in Entebbe, Uganda, where they could attend the university or other third-level studies, before joining the Postulancy.

Unfortunately, the situation became difficult, for both the Pre-Postulancy (with Pre-Postulants for the Priesthood and for the Brotherhood) and the Postulancy. Fr. Mawa decided to leave the Comboni Missionaries and in March 2008 and the General Administration asked the Province to end the experiment of the Pre-Postulancy and to close the Postulancy.⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰⁶ Provincial Council, 1/2008, 13-16 February, no. 5, Resuming the ministry of vocation promotion. FSSPJ.

⁶⁰⁷ Provincial Council 2/2005, 25-31 May, 2005. FSSPJ.

⁶⁰⁸ Provincial Council 3/2005, 16-20 September. FSSPJ.

⁶⁰⁹ Provincial Council 2/2008, 13-15 May, (General Direction on 27 March 2008) no. 4/e. FSSPJ.

In 2010, Fr. Louis Okot Tony Ochermoi was given the task of coordinating the activities of Vocation Promotion⁶¹⁰ with the intention of reopening the Postulancy soon. However, the real reopening came with the next Provincial Administration with Fr. Louis who, when appointed Secretary of Vocation Promotion and Basic Formation, took particular care to create a sound foundation for a fresh start.

Lay Comboni Missionaries

The issue of the Lay Comboni Missionaries was a very important but also a very difficult one throughout the time of the South Sudan Province. The matter was followed up, in particular way by Bro. Rosario Iannetti, both for the Province but also in relation to Mary Immaculate Hospital. However, plans were never really implemented, except with Paul and Agnes (a Polish couple) who got involved in Juba with SCRn and USRATUNA in the years 2009-2010.

Matteo Perotti, who had served in Wau since April, 2011, should in fact be called a *lay volunteer* rather than *LCM* and similarly all the other people who came to give a service for a period of time. It seems the South Sudan Province still needs more time to resolve this issue.

Secretariat of Finance

It is not necessary to state the importance of this Secretariat in the daily life of our mission and confreres. Together with the day-to-day duties and responsibilities of this field of work, during this Administration, the most important work was to get the *Total Common Fund*, working properly by tackling its overall implications in the *mission approach* and in its administration.

Another very important issue was the preparation and competence of the community treasurers to work out their responsibilities properly, knowing that not all confreres were born professional accountants. One very critical task was also to follow up projects and initiatives which needed wider and better supervision.

A big issue was the training of Provincial Treasurers. Without mentioning Fr. Girardi of the previous administration, in this present six years period, there were four different Provincial Treasurers: Bro. Fayad,

⁶¹⁰ Provincial Council 2/2010, 23-25 June, no. 7. Formator and reopening the Postulancy. FSSPJ.

Bro. Ritterbecks, Fr. Modonesi and Bro. Nunes. Besides the problem of competence, there was also that of how to *integrate the model of the Total Common Fund*, and its rules, in the concrete reality of the mission, so that its communitarian spirit might become *a new way of doing mission*, also in the financial field, bringing confreres to a deeper responsibility in this regard.

Bridging Time

The journey of the Province during the two terms of office of Fr. Luciano Perina and his Councils marked the span of the *interim period of time* allotted by the CPA to prepare for the national referendum which was to take place on 9 January, 2011. All the communities and the undertakings were contributing, in a way or another, to raising the level of awareness in the effort to build up the country of Sudan with a new perspective, promoting integration and acceptance of variety among ethnicities and empowerment in evaluating situations and finding adequate solutions.

The effort put into education at different levels of society, church, school, health, youth, women and communities at grass-roots level was an empowerment of people of different walks of life and ages to reach a higher freedom of judgement of what was best for the country - not through the manipulation and exploitation of people, but through a better capacity of reasoning gained through the positive practical experience of living values in concrete daily life and caring for each person in an environment of peace.

A very great contribution in the formation of positive attitudes and of a critical discernment of mind, capable of a more objective judgements, was given through the SCRn, the *Sudan Catholic Radio Network*. Seven radio stations out of nine (six diocesan plus *Don Bosco Radio*) were on the air before the Referendum. The great efforts of the Province during Fr. Perina's term of office on the SCRn were bearing fruit at this particular time. The remark of Fr. Cyril Odia of *Radio Don Bosco*, Tonj, summarises the *important mission* of the network: "*The Radios have been a call back to normalcy. No more fear, no more darkness. Remove the radio stations and there will be a state of panic all over.*"⁶¹¹

Shared programs in English, news, civic education, and other educational programs, were broadcast, taking into account the variety of

⁶¹¹ Fr Cyril Odia, Radio Don Bosco, Tonj, in: "A call back to normalcy", Final Evaluation Report Commissioned by Sudan Catholic Radio Network (SCRn), July, 2011. FSSPJ.

situations in South Sudan. Each radio station, then, was integrated in its locality and broadcast or produced culture-sensitive programs. Radio was reaching and educating a wide section of the population. Illiterate people, with no access to written literature, could greatly benefit from its vision promoting *a reconciled society built on human and spiritual values, rooted in justice and honesty*.⁶¹²

What was undertaken during the *interim period of time* foreseen by the CPA did not always run smoothly, to say the least; it had its ups and downs. Violations, misunderstandings and suspicions were causing concern and the fear that it might not reach a positive conclusion. The implementation was a very difficult task, but one could see the signs of a slow but unceasing process of growth in people. One could witness a better integration among people of different ethnic groups, through positive work at the level of church, government, education, school, health care, and other organizations.

Prejudices were gradually disappearing and reciprocal trust was growing, with freer movement of people travelling in regions and among people who were formerly *traditional enemies*; there was more trust in services meant to help the citizen in different spheres of life; the telephone and internet networks enabled the citizen to enjoy the new acquired freedom and facilities.

During the six years of the CPA, our Comboni presence had offered a positive service in creating this new environment through the dedication of our communities, parishes, schools, hospital services, vocational centres and, as already mentioned, the SCR.N. All these realities, under the guidance of Fr. Perina's two terms of office, had delivered their contribution to the building up of a nation, Sudan, with a positive outlook and the prospect of a better future.

The time for the *referendum* was drawing near; just a few days separated people from the final decision on the fate of the Sudan. Would what had been said at the beginning by Dr. Francis Mading Deng about the Northern Political Leadership create such a sense of wellbeing and trust in people that Northerners and Southerners would feel confident to walk together in a new United Sudan, with a vision which would enable the variety of populations to look trustfully on a real *New Sudan with a new vision* as Dr. John Garang was advocating before his tragic death? Hard to say!

⁶¹² SCR.N (Sudan Catholic Radio Network), vision.

Moreover, the whole issue of the other three regions that were also part of the CPA, Abyei, South Kordofan (the Nuba Mountains) and the Blue Nile was left to future unknown times with no foreseen solution.

The whole machinery needed for the preparation of the *referendum for self-determination* was already late in its organisation. The *census*, an essential pre-requisite for the referendum, was not taken in time, and people were asking themselves how it would be possible to get it done in such a way as to get the referendum at the established time, on 9 January, 2011. Everything was pointing to the possibility that it might have to be postponed. The groups of people and politicians sceptical of the referendum were working hard to discredit the whole matter so that it might fail totally, thus giving the whole country a sense of powerlessness and destroy the hope for good governance.

The political leaders and certain Sudanese media were sending conflicting messages to the public. Reciprocal accusations between President Omar El Bashir and Salva Kiir of not complying with the CPA requirements accusations against the electoral body that was organising the referendum, harassment and intimidation, both in the North and in the South, against the media in order to avoid dissenting coverage, warnings about the risk of a return to war in case of delay or denial of this exercise and other issues, were creating apprehension and uncertainty.

Some of the international media were also sending mixed messages contributing to a sense of fear, uncertainty and concern that the referendum would end in a *bloodbath*. The Washington Post of 12 September, 2010, raised concerns about the referendum with an article entitled: *South Sudan independence vote at risk*; Al Jazeera English, 16 October, 2010, *South Sudan plagued by war fears*, on 10 October, 2010, *Bashir warns of new Sudan civil war*, on 22 November, 2010, *Sudan party issues vote ultimatum*; Sudan Tribune, 19 October, 2010, *Sudan says referendum may need to be postponed*; Al-ManarTV, 15 December, 2010, *Saudi FM warns Sudan referendum could lead to more violence*.

Following concerns from the UN about delays, representatives of both regions affirmed a commitment to hold the referendum on time. A media campaign was also launched to raise awareness and increase the turnout. Registration for the vote started on 15 November with Salva Kiir's appeal to register *en masse*.⁶¹³

⁶¹³ South Sudanese independence referendum, 2011,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Sudanese_independence_referendum,_2011

To conclude with, since the conflict between Northern and Southern Sudan, in the press, was almost always presented as a religious struggle between Moslems and Christians, an interview of Al Jazeera English 22 December, 2010, reported what instead was the real truth: *Racism is what undermines Sudanese unity and is the main source of the country's inability to remain unified in a state of peace.*⁶¹⁴ All the monitoring bodies were working hard to ensure that the *referendum on self-determination* could be carried out in a climate of *freedom, transparency and credibility*.

The term of office of Fr. Perina went through all of this and, at its conclusion, one can say that the great effort in all the fields of action, religious, social, political and informative, all contributed to a positive environment preparing the Referendum of Self-Determination with deeper knowledge and responsibility at every level of Sudanese society.

A Final Consideration

Finally, I cannot fail to conclude with a brief comment on Fr. Luciano Perina and his term of office. As I said at the beginning, he was the person chosen *to lead the confreres* of the South Sudan Province *back into the promised land* of South Sudan. Taking an overall glance at the whole period of his term of office, I have to conclude that it was by no means an easy task because of the many interwoven, sensitive issues like the return to Juba, dealing with the Local Church, social and a political reality still in the making and other intricate issues emerging from the former presence in Southern Sudan and in Juba that needed solutions.

He took up commitments in areas where evangelization appeared most needed, especially among the Nuer, the Dinka and the Mundari, and managed to lead the Province through a growth which, after the CPA, was affected by the positive new opening up of the situation, but also with the apprehension that the country might well revert to its former situations of struggle and war. The Sudan Catholic Radio Network, thanks to the joint commitment with the Comboni Missionary Sisters, reached a very positive stage, with a wonderful service to the population, by the end of his term of office.

When I asked him to send me something written about his term of office, he mostly wrote about the many missionaries whom he appreciated so much and had the chance to know during his numerous visits to the

⁶¹⁴ Al Jazeera, 22 December, 2010, Racism undermines Sudanese unity, <http://www.aljazeera.com/video/africa/2010/12/2010122218520433724.html>

communities. He could find the good side of every person's character. Frequently he praised people even more than they deserved, and made their negative aspects such a point of amusement that, without them, life would have seemed very dull indeed.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CIRCUMSCRIPTION From 2011 to 2016

Provincial Superior:
Fr. DANIELE MOSCHETTI

The Provincial and his Council

Fr. Daniele Moschetti was elected Provincial Superior of the South Sudan Province for two terms of office, the first one starting on 1 January, 2011, until 31 December, 2013.⁶¹⁵ His councillors were Fr. José da Silva Vieira, Vice Provincial, Fr. Antoine Kondo Komivi, Fr. Titus Henry Makokha substituted by Fr. Christian Carlassare by the end of the year 2012, and Bro. Damiano Mascalzoni.

The second term was from 1 January, 2014 to 31 December, 2016.⁶¹⁶ His councillors were: Fr. Kondo Komivi Antoine (Vice Provincial), Fr.

⁶¹⁵ Fr. Enrique Sánchez G., Superior General, Rome, 26 October, 2010, Appointment of Fr. Daniele Moschetti as Provincial Superior of the Province of South Sudan, as from 1 January, 2011. FSSPJ.

- From the Superior General, Rome, 15 February, 2011, Appointment of Fr. José da Silva Vieira as vice Provincial Superior of the Province of South Sudan till 31 December, 2013. FSSPJ.

⁶¹⁶ Fr. Enrique Sánchez G., Superior General, Rome, 15 October, 2013, Appointment of Fr. Daniele Moschetti as Provincial Superior of the Province of South Sudan, as from 1 January, 2014. FSSPJ.

- From the Superior General, Rome, 25 January, 2014, Appointment of Fr. Antoine Kondo Komivi as vice Provincial Superior of the Province of South Sudan till 31 December, 2016. FSSPJ.

Christian Carlassare, Fr. Victor Kouande Adekoun, and Bro. Nicola Bortoli. When Fr. Kondo Komivi went for the Comboni Year and Bro. Bortoli resigned, Bro. Yohann (Hans) Eigner and Bro. Jacek Pomycz were elected to substitute them. Fr. Kouande Adekoun was appointed Vice Provincial .

Fr. Moschetti was the first Provincial Superior after the CPA agreement to start directly with his residence in Juba and to witness the independence of the South, after the referendum of 9 January, 2011, which became the “*Republic of South Sudan*” on 11 July of the same year.

His term of office was full of crucial events, both good and bad, which will be dealt with at the proper time. It was a difficult time, both at church and political/social levels in the country and, as a consequence, in the South Sudan Province. However, he threw himself wholeheartedly into the concrete situation of the country and its need of evangelization and human promotion and did not spare himself in proposing and organizing events which brought a positive result in the life of the Province, of the Church and of Society.

At times, one had the impression that the pace of his life was too fast and impossible to keep up with. Nevertheless, the positive realities proposed and carried out, even if not immediately, would bear fruit over a longer period of time. What was achieved during his term of office, “*for sure*,”⁶¹⁷ was and would be of great benefit in all the fields of action and institutions, Province, Church and Society.

I will begin with some notes on the *Referendum for Self-Determination* as the most important achievement in the political and national reality, then, I will proceed to the Provincial Assembly of Juba, which started on 31 March and ended on 6 April, 2011. Usually, the General Assemblies would take place sometime in the month of January, as the most suitable time in the yearly schedule of the Comboni Missionaries in South Sudan but the Assembly of 2011 was moved to the above time in order not to interfere with the national referendum which took place on 9 January.

- From the Superior General, Rome, 24 July, 2015, Appointment of Fr. Kouande Adekoun Victor as vice Provincial Superior of the Province of South Sudan till 31 December, 2016. FSSPJ.

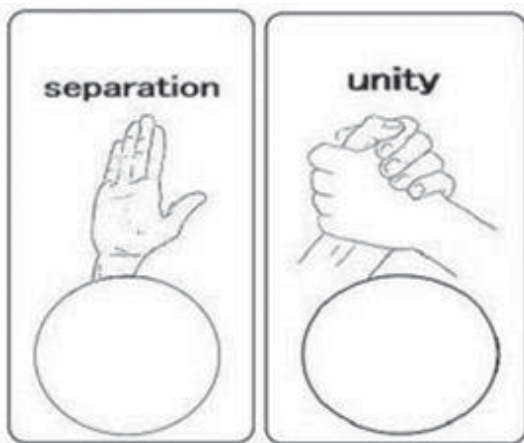
⁶¹⁷ “*For sure*” was an expression Fr. Moschetti always used, expressing “his strong and clear belief” in the various undertakings he was proposing and dealing with in relation to other people and institutions.

The Referendum for Self-Determination

I ended the previous chapter on the Administration of Fr. Luciano Perina dealing with the imminence of the Referendum on Self-Determination, now the referendum had taken place from 9 to 15 January, 2011, and people had voted for *secession*. During the past six years after the CPA, the North had practically failed to make *unity* attractive to the Southerners. Khartoum's continuous tricks and its use of all means to maintain top power positions, confirmed what had already happened in the past: *too many agreements had been dishonoured*. They failed to show to the *Southerners*, as I already said, that they were welcome to live together with the *Northerners* and, for the Southerners, this was the *final chance* to express their choice on the matter, and they manifested it clearly!

On 7 February, 2011, the referendum commission published the final results, with 98.83% voting in favour of independence. The predetermined date for the creation of an independent state was set for 9 July, 2011. The SPLM proposed naming the country *South Sudan*, with *Nile Republic*, *Jubian Republic*, and *Kush Republic* as other possibilities. The country was then officially named ***The Republic of South Sudan***.⁶¹⁸ Abyei, South Kordofan (the Nuba Mountains) and the Blue Nile remained issues for future agreements.

On 30 January, 2011, BBC Africa, announced that, according to the first complete results of the region's independence referendum, 99% voted for independence, to secede from the North.⁶¹⁹ The final report of the *Carter Centre* on the 2011 *Referendum on the Self-Determination* of Southern Sudan reported that several million Southern Sudanese cast ballots in all 25



⁶¹⁸ South Sudanese independence referendum, 2011, op. cit.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Sudanese_independence_referendum,_2011

⁶¹⁹ South Sudan referendum: 99% vote for independence, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-12317927>

states of Sudan and eight other countries and voted nearly unanimously for separation.

The *Centre* continued by saying *that the referendum for the self-determination* of Southern Sudan was required by the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and that it showed that Southern Sudanese people could utilize the resources at hand and achieve tangible results even in the face of hardships, and that the referendum was the culmination of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in Naivasha, Kenya, in 2005, between the Government of Sudan and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement. *Despite inadequate resources, it said, referendum administration officials remained committed to the successful implementation of the referendum.*

The Centre recalled that, although the referendum for Southern secession was peaceful, it represented the *culmination of a longer struggle* in Southern Sudan, one that frequently spilled over into armed conflict. That struggle stemmed from grievances of economic and political *marginalization*, with power concentrated in Khartoum at the expense of other areas of Sudan, and economic development centred in the capital.

Marginalization was particularly acute in the South and, when coupled with *periodic campaigns of Islamization* by Northern governments, led to political and armed resistance. The South's call for self-determination began as early as 1947 and persisted through the next 64 years, through two civil wars between the Government of Sudan and rebels in the South. Though the stated goal of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) was a united Sudan, many of its members supported secession.⁶²⁰

As for the peaceful performance, the United States Institute of Peace observed that, although numerous predictions asserted that the referendum on the secession of Southern Sudan would lead to renewed civil war, *despite ongoing violence in many parts of Sudan and South Sudan, the referendum process was largely peaceful.*

The credit for this was attributed to two main factors, one domestic and the other international, due to interventions by Africans and Westerners. On this matter, of course, people in Sudan and South Sudan were putting the

⁶²⁰ The Carter Center, Observing the 2011 Referendum on the Self-Determination of Southern Sudan Final Report.
https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/news/peace_publications/election_reports/finalreport-sudan-2011-self-determination-referendum.pdf

emphasis on the *domestic factor*, while members of the international community were placing it on *international engagement*.⁶²¹

Whatever the case, it was a great lesson in *civilisation* for everybody, locally and internationally. What I personally noticed from several people interviewed by the media and asked what happened during the referendum, they always answered: “Nothing!”, “nothing happened!” The answer was perfect, meaning that there was no violence. However, nothing made me more annoyed than these and similar superficial answers without a clear positive comment on them, because, on the contrary, “something happened indeed and very extraordinary!” something which *never happened!* In a country where war and violence was *at home*, something so wonderful happened that people conducted this so delicate exercise with the highest grade of *civilisation, according to the rule of law and peacefully*, something never before witnessed on occasions such as this.

9 July, 2011, Independence Day

The obvious follow up of the Referendum on Self-Determination was the setting of the date for the declaration of independence: this was to be on 9 July, 2011.

The Carter Centre declared that on July 9, 2011, the state of South Sudan was formed following a decisive and peaceful vote for secession from Sudan in January, 2011.⁶²²

UNMIS, *United Nations Mission in the Sudan* announced that, on 9 July, 2011, with its independence, South Sudan became the newest country in the world and that the birth of the *Republic of South Sudan* was the culmination of a six-year peace process and that a new chapter in a region that had seen little peace in the last 50 years had started.⁶²³

“Mabrook Janoob Sudan!” people yelled. “Congratulations South Sudan!” The ninth of July, 2011, was the dawn of Africa’s 54th State, South Sudan, a new nation after years of struggle. “Freedom!” they shouted! The celebrations erupted at midnight with thousands of revellers pouring into

⁶²¹ Jon Temin and Lawrence Wocher, United States Institute of Peace, Special Report, Learning from Sudan’s 2011 Referendum. March 2012.
<http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/resources/SR303.pdf>

⁶²² The Carter Center, op. cit.

⁶²³ UNMIS, United Nations Mission in the Sudan,
<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/unmis/referendum.shtml>

Juba's steamy streets in the predawn hours of Saturday, hoisting enormous flags, singing, dancing and leaping onto the backs of cars.⁶²⁴

Particular delight for the two great events, *the Referendum for Self-Determination* and *Independence Day*, was expressed by the two major Superiors of the Comboni Missionaries and Comboni Missionary Sisters in South Sudan who, in the footsteps of St. Daniel Comboni, saw these events as something already envisaged in hope by the Founder of the Catholic Church in Sudan, in his Plan for *Africa to be saved by Africans*. During the journey of growth in *self-awareness* and *maturity*, the *Referendum for Self-Determination* and the *Day of Independence* become the fulfilment of a dream which the people of South Sudan had long suffered and lived for; now, finally, it had become true.

The message of the two Provincial Superiors was:

To all our Sisters and Brothers in the Comboni Family and all the friends of Sudan! Peace be with you!

Last 9th January 2011, feast of the Baptism of the Lord, on the occasion of the historical event of the Referendum for Southern Sudan, we exchanged prayers and words of encouragement among us. We reminded ourselves of Comboni's legacy: "Courage! Have courage in this tough hour and foremost for the future! Never give up!"

Six months later, on 9 July, 2011, we will witness the declaration of Independence of South Sudan. We are here again to share with you some few thoughts on what we are going to celebrate.

In his Plan for the Regeneration of Africa, Comboni wrote in lapidary terms: "The Catholic, who is used to judging things in a supernatural light, looked upon Africa not through the pitiable lens of human interest, but in the pure light of faith". (Writings 2742J)

*It is with the lens of "pure faith" that we look at the present reality of the people of Sudan. Comboni asked his followers to be women and men who can perceive the potential of those who are belittled, and encouraged the full realization of their reality...*⁶²⁵

Without any doubts, this message of the two Provincial Superiors, on such a big occasion, was full of meaning, not only because the deep

⁶²⁴ The New York Times, Jeffrey Gettleman, *After Years of Struggle, South Sudan Becomes a New Nation*. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/10/world/africa/10sudan.html>

⁶²⁵ Sr. Giovanna Sguazza, Provincial Superior and Council of the Comboni Sisters and Fr. Daniele Moschetti, Provincial Superior and Council of the Comboni Missionaries, South Sudan, Juba 9 July, 2011, *Independence South Sudan, New Wind, Spirit and Hope*. <http://www.comboni.org/en/contenuti/105524-request-of-prayer-for-the-independence-of-south-sudan>

aspirations of the South Sudanese people were thus fulfilled, but also because the two Institutes of the Comboni Missionaries lived continually with the same people the hope of a real freedom from all oppression.

However, the people who by far most closely followed up the issue of the election in 2010, the referendum in January, 2011, and the celebration of Independence in July 2011, were the teams of the SCRN (Sudan Catholic Radio Network) and its nine radio stations. They really worked hard in creating a positive awareness among people of all the Catholic Dioceses of South Sudan and Nuba Mountains. There were no words enough to express gratitude to both Missionary and Local Personnel and their professional commitment. Since these events were the main priorities of the Radio Project, it was clear that this *opera significativa*, which started with the canonisation of Comboni, bore fruit in plenty.

The great event of *Independence* also brought other positive developments within the Comboni Missionaries of South Sudan such as the updating of their website, another internal event which was greeted with the following words,

new country, new website, the infant state brought to birth a new website, www.combonisouthsudan.org and its first message was a reference to the words of the Presidents of the two Republics, South Sudan and Sudan:

On July 9, 2011, the Day of the Independence, during his address, South Sudan's first President Salva Kiir Mayardit appealed to citizens of the new republic to focus on unity based on cultural and ethnic diversity, which he said was a source of pride. "You may be a Zande, Kakwa, Lutuko, Nuer, Dinka or Shilluk, but first remember yourself as a South Sudanese," Kiir told thousands of joyful citizens.

In turn, Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir said that the newly independent Republic of South Sudan's success "will be our success. We fulfil our commitment to help the new state of South Sudan in its



RoSS-Coat of Arms

*first steps, because we want it to succeed, and because its success will be our success.”*⁶²⁶

These were all words of *good auspices*, after the decades of struggle, words which were really needed for the new-born republic, but also in relationship to the Republic of Sudan: a promise of a relationship of new prosperity and collaboration for the positive growth and development of both. Finally, the new website of the Comboni South Sudan gave its first brief response to acknowledge the birth of the new Republic.⁶²⁷

The Superior General of the Comboni Missionaries, Fr. Enrique Sánchez González, shared in this independence celebration after having received a personal letter of invitation from the President of the Republic of South Sudan, Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit, first Vice-President of the Republic of Sudan and President of the Government of Southern Sudan.

(Ref. Letter from GOSS, Appendix to Part Two, Section Three, Chapter Two, point no. 2)

Interviewed by Fr. José Vieira about what he had felt in his heart when, looking at all that manifestation of joy from the guests' stand, the speaker said: "I declare South Sudan independent"; Fr. Enrique Sánchez González said: *I felt wonderful and, at the same time, grateful, to see that for this people a new page of their history was opening and it will certainly be a history marked by great and beautiful things but also by many challenges, especially at the beginning.*

Regarding how he saw the future of South Sudan, he said: *I see South Sudan as a country that is still to determine and build itself. However, it is encouraging to see how much people want this, desire and expect it. I believe this is a factor that will surely help to achieve these goals.*

As for the role of the Church in South Sudan, he answered that *the Local Church has to go through this moment not as a break with the past but as a continuation. As part of the Local Church we have accompanied these people in their long journey towards their freedom and independence. We have to continue with our policy of being close to the people, opting for the poorest and responding in solidarity to those in greatest need at this moment.*⁶²⁸

⁶²⁶ New country, new website, <http://www.comboni.org/en/contenuti/105963-the-site-of-the-comboni-missionaries-of-southern-sudan-has-been-updated>

⁶²⁷ South Sudan, <http://www.combonisouthsudan.org/index.php/south-sudan>

⁶²⁸ Fr. José Vieira, mcccj, 'to be a Comboni is to be Sudanese', interviewing Fr. Enrique Sánchez González, Superior General of the MCCJ, SSCOMBONI@NEWS, South Sudan Province Newsletter, September 2011, pp. 25-28.

Surely, for the Superior General and for all the Comboni Missionaries, thinking of all their Confreres and Sisters who gave their lives for the Good News of Jesus and for the people, this was a real living experience in the depth of their hearts. Some of these prominent Priests, Brothers and Sisters were remembered in a particular way in the book produced by Fr. Salvatore Pacifico with the title *Servants of the Gospel, Witnesses in the Footsteps of Saint Daniel Comboni in Sudan and South Sudan*.⁶²⁹ (It was written to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Plan of Daniel Comboni for Africa)

Situation of the Province: Personnel (Easter, 2011)⁶³⁰

Before entering into the issue of the Provincial Assemblies, I would like to present the status of the personnel at the start of the new Administration so to be aware of the running commitments in the Province.

SOUTH SUDAN

Provincial House, JUBA (Southern Sudan)

Provincial Superior:

Fr. Daniele Moschetti (1 January, 2011)

Provincial Councillors:

Fr. José da Silva Vieira, Vice Provincial

Fr. Antoine Kondo Komivi

Fr. Titus Henry Makokha

Bro. Damiano Mascalzoni

Provincial Bursar and Procurator

Bro. Antonio Manuel Nunes Ferreira

Secretary of Finance

Bro. António Manuel Nunes Ferreira

Secretary of Vocation Promotion and Formation

Fr. Louis Okot Tony Ochermoi

Secretary of Missionary Animation

Fr. Gregor Schmidt Bog-Dong

Secretary of Evangelization

Fr. Markus Lorenz Körber

Coordinator of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

Fr. Raimundo Nonato Rocha dos Santos

Coordinator of On-Going Formation

⁶²⁹ *Servants of the Gospel, witnesses in the footsteps of Saint Daniel Comboni in Sudan and South Sudan*, Paulines Publications Africa, Nairobi, 2014.

⁶³⁰ *Annuario Comboniano*, op. cit., Easter, 2011.

Fr. Daniele Moschetti

Coordinator of Comboni Lay Missionaries

Fr. José da Silva Vieira

Probi Viri

Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino

Fr. Antonio La Braca

Comboni personnel

Bishops 2, Fathers 28, Brothers 11, Scholastics 1.

Provincial Bulletin

"SSCOMBONI@NEWS"

Languages Spoken in the Province

Arabic, Bari, Dinka, English, Nuer.

Dioceses Where Present

KENYA, Nairobi: Bakhita House, Bethany House.

SUDAN

Juba: Juba, Tali.

Malakal: Leer, Old Fangak, Ayod.

Rumbek: Mapuordit, Yirol, Barghel

Wau: Nyamlel, *Wau, Raja. (re-assumed)*

Yei: Lomin

Juba Archdiocese - Archbishop's House, from 12 December, 1974

H. G. Archbishop Paulino Lukudu Loro

Juba - Provincial House opened on 10 October, 1981; closed due to war on 31 December, 1994; re-opened on 1 January, 2006; on 1 January, 2008, residence of the Provincial House. Location: Hay Hamarat.

Fr. Daniele Moschetti, Prov. Superior

Bro. Jorge Arturo Rodriguez Fayad, Superior

Bro. Antonio Manuel Nunes Ferreira

Fr. Hector Ayon Oyiamute

Bro. Valentino Fabris

Fr. José da Silva Vieira

Bro. Alberto Lamana Cónsola

Fr. Joseph Ukelo Yala (in Torit)

Tali, Christ the King Parish, community opened on 1 January, 2008, first evangelization, education, dispensary, among the Mundari People

Fr. Markus Lorenz Körber, Superior

Bro. Damiano Mascalzoni

Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino

Fr. Gregor Schmidt Bog-Dong

Malakal Diocese

Leer Parish, St. Joseph the Worker, community opened on 12 March, 1996, transferred to Nyal in 1998 due to war, returned to Leer on 1 January, 2008. First evangelization, education.

Fr. Francesco Chemello, Superior

Bro. Nicola Bortoli

Fr. Raimundo Nonato Rocha dos Santos

Bro. Hans Dieter Ritterbecks

Old Fangak, Holy Trinity Parish, Fr. Antonio La Braca, present since 10 October, 1998, community opened on 1 January, 2006, first evangelization, education among the Nuer.

Bro. Raniero Iacomella, Superior

Fr. Christian Carlassare

Fr. Wellington Alves de Sousa

Fr. Antonio La Braca (Ayod since June 2009)

Yei Diocese

Lomin (Kajo Kaji) Parish, Sacred Heart of Jesus, community closed on 8 August, 1987, due to war, re-opened on 1 January, 2000. Evangelization among the Kuku, Comboni Comprehensive College, Carpentry Workshop, among the Kuku.

Fr. Louis Okot Tony Ochermoi, Superior

Fr. Albino Adot Oryem

Sc. Phillip Kenyi Andrugá

Fr. Ezio Bettini

Bro. Erich Fischnaller

Fr. Victor Kouande Adekoun

Fr. Jimmy Milla Aventure

Rumbek Diocese

Mapuordit Parish, St Josephine Bakhita, community opened in February, 1993, first evangelization among the Dinka, education, hospital.

Bro. Rosario Iannetti, Superior

Bro. Andrés Gaspar Abarca

Fr. Antoine Kondo Komivi

Yirol, Holy Cross Parish, community opened on 1 June, 2008, Rumbek. first evangelization and education among the Dinka.

Fr. Fernando Colombo, Superior (Rumbek)

Fr. David Octavio Aguilar Guzman

Fr. Titus Henry Makokha,

Fr. José Javier Parladé Escobar

Barghel (Rumbek)

Fr. Giovanni Girardi

Fr. Mario Riva

Wau Diocese

Wau, St. Daniel Comboni Parish, founded on 27 June 1999. (re-assumed in 2011, after independence)

Fr. Isaac Martin Arnanz, Superior

Sc. Peter Alphonse Ladu Loro

Bro. Giuseppe Redaelli

Fr. Lorenzo Tomasoni

Nyamlel, St. Teresa of the Child Jesus, Wau Diocese, founded in 1934, closed during expulsion on 3 March, 1964, re-opened on 1 February, 2001, commitment *ad personam*.

Fr. Michael Donald Barton, Superior

Raja, the Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, closed on 17 July, 2000, due to war, reopened on 4 April, 2006. (re-assumed in 2011, after independence)

Fr. Caligari Eugenio

Bro. Soardi Tarcisio

Nairobi

Bakhita House, guests' and logistic house for the Nuba of the Diocese of El Obeid, entrusted to the Comboni Missionaries on 1 October, 2001.

Mgr. Macram Max Gassis (KH)

Fr. Pasquale Boffelli

Bethany House, Diocese of Rumbek, opened in 1994, guests' and logistic house for the Diocese of Rumbek.

Mgr. Cesare Mazzolari

Waiting for assignment

Fr. Mario Benedetti (CN) (refugees)

Fr. Luciano Perina

Sc. Jacek Andrzej Pomykacz (PO)

Sc. Yakob Solomon Shole (ET)

In another Circumscription

Fr. Luis Alfredo Estrada Meza (M-out of community)

*(Full list ref. Appendix to Part Two, Section Three,
Chapter Two, point no. 1)*

With the independence of South Sudan, 2011, the two communities of Wau and Raja, which were taken care by the Province of Khartoum, were automatically re-assumed by the Province of South Sudan. The issue of the Arabic speaking personnel was dealt with and solved in dialogue with the

Province of Khartoum and the communities themselves. Nyamlel, instead, was started under the care of Rumbek Diocese before the CPA agreement, though in Wau Diocese territory, and continued under Wau after the CPA.

The Assembly of 2011: *Sudan will never be the same again*

“Give the reason for the hope that is in you” (1 Pt. 3:15)

The Provincial Assembly of 2011 took place in Juba at the Comboni House from 31 March to 6 April, 2011, just a couple of months after the *Referendum for Self-Determination* and three before *South Sudan Independence Day*, 9 July, 2011. These two most important events in the history of South Sudan were also creating the atmosphere of the Assembly, as well.

The chosen theme was the message of the Catholic Bishops of Sudan (SCBC) who met in their *Extraordinary Plenary Session* in Juba, from 15 to 22 July, 2010, and whose motto was **“Sudan will never be the same again”**, addressed to the people, the leaders, and all people of good will in Sudan during that time. It was a message of hope and a call to action during that historic moment of change in Sudan.

In their message the Bishops stated that:

After centuries of oppression and exploitation, after decades of war and violence which have marked and marred the lives of so many Sudanese in South and North with no respect for human life and dignity, now, after 5 years of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), we have reached a time to move on and prepare for change.

We believe it is not the will of God for human beings to endure such suffering and oppression, particularly at the hands of fellow human beings, and so we bring a message of hope and encouragement to our people and all people of good will.

The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the person is at the core of a moral vision for society. Our belief in the sanctity of human life and the inherent dignity of the human person is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching. Our tradition proclaims that the person is not only sacred but also social. How we organise our society directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community.

Our Church teaches that the role of the government and other institutions is to protect human life and human dignity and promote the common good. Human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and

*responsibilities are met. "The Church has always had the duty of scrutinising the signs of the times and interpreting them in the light of the Gospel" (Vatican II, The Church in the Modern World). The Church is a teacher of truth for humanity and has the right and duty to speak on political and social issues that affect the people.*⁶³¹

Thus, the same theme of the message of the SCBC was taken up and reflected by the Provincial Assembly of 2011, with all its implications for our missionary ministry, as Comboni Missionaries, in those exceptional circumstances. The Bishops, in fact, had described these events which had to take place as *a dramatic change affecting the life in both countries, Sudan and South Sudan*. The Province of South Sudan, therefore, could not ignore these strong words in its reflection and planning.

Sudan will never be the same again:

Mr. John Ashworth's input⁶³²

On the second day of the Assembly, Mr. John Ashworth, an adviser of the SCBC and of the Episcopal Church and a member of the JPIC commission, was invited to give an input on the theme of the Assembly, ***Sudan will never be the same again.***

In his input he presented a broader overview of Sudan and looked at the current political situation and its implications for the Church and for the Missionaries today. Dealing with the root causes of the North-South conflict, he presented three factors which contributed to it: one was the ***identity factor***, meaning that the *Arab identity* had dominated. In his opinion, while the tendency was to focus on the religious factor as a key reason in the conflicts, in reality, it was going beyond that and was rooted in the *imposed Arab identity*.

The second was a ***centre-periphery factor***. Sudan had a highly centralized ethnicity. Some few tribes had concentrated power and dominated, while all the rest had been marginalized. Darfur, for example, had been marginalized and did not share in the country's resources. The third was the ***Oil factor***. However, this was not one of the first root causes

⁶³¹ SCBC, Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference, *Extraordinary Plenary Session* in Juba, from 15 to 22 July, 2010, "Sudan will never be the same again", a message of hope and call to action.; posted on 10 September, 2010, in: CRS Voices Catholic Relief Service, <http://www.crs-blog.org/sudanese-Bishops-sudan-will-never-be-the-same-again/>

⁶³² Sudan will never be the same again, John Ashworth, SCBC adviser, Provincial Assembly, 31 March to 6 April, 2011, Appendix 2, p. 2-5. FSSPJ.

since it was discovered in the 1970s, but it had become, though, a decisive factor in the conflicts.

Speaking of the NCP (National Congress Party) he admitted that often it was blamed for what was going on. But all the root causes came before the NCP was established. The trouble was not the Northern People, but the Northern Political Establishment. That was why there was a long war in the country. The CPA came and put an end to that war in 2005.

In his view, rather than a peace agreement, this was a ceasefire. What it did was to move the conflict from the military arena (war) to the political arena. The conflicts went on, somehow, and could also have gone back to military conflict at some point. However, the CPA was a major step forward on the road map to peace, but it was a ceasefire that gave people an interim period of six years.

For Southern People, the main point of the CPA was the *Referendum of 2011*, and since the referendum passed off peacefully, Khartoum could not challenge its results. The meaning of the statement made by the Bishops on the occasion of the Referendum, that *Sudan will never be the same again*, was that there was a new situation, not because Sudan could split into two, but because people had been empowered, were heard and were given a choice, which they expressed in the referendum.

As for the effect of the referendum on the future mission of the Church, Mr. Ashworth believed it would not affect the Church in the South but, indeed, the Church in the North which was going to be persecuted. The effect would surely be felt at the level of the Bishops' Conference called to decide whether to remain one or to split into two.

Other open issues for the future were the *national debt*, the *oil the border issue*, *citizenship* and the *currency*, *Abyei*, the *Misserya*, the role of the SPLM/A in a democratic country, the NCP as an Islamic militarised party, the Interim Constitution based on the CPA and the new Constitution of the Republic. Then, the issue of violence and violence trauma, the problem of the youth with no schools, jobs, occupations, who could easily be manipulated by people of violence, and the returnees to South Sudan; the Arab insurgency, oil and the services offered by the NGOs

The Role of the Church: according to Mr. Ashworth's view, the Church could play an important role in education and in teaching people to become good citizens; also in trauma-healing and reconciliation; the Church could assist public figures to act according to Gospel values.

However, there were also some internal challenges that the Church needed to address. The Northern Bishops were witnessing the emptying of churches. In the South they were happy with the new country. Mr

Ashworth's stance was how to find enough time for nation-building issues and for a dynamic that could really make Sudan (both North and South) *never be the same again*. This was where, in his opinion, the Church could play a very important role.

Sudan will never be the same again:

Fr. Antonio La Braca's input

The input of Fr. Antonio La Braca was more on the line of a reflection coming from within the Comboni Missionaries. He started off by affirming that, *if Sudan would never be the same again*, after the mentioned events, *the Church in Sudan was also expected never to be the same again*, and the same *would also be true for the Comboni Missionaries*. He took as points of reference the letter written by the General Superior entitled *back to the essential*⁶³³ and the XVII General Chapter, to enlighten the confreres in this regard.

Quoting Fr. Enrique Sánchez's words, he sustained that in his letter the Father General was saying that *it was too much to expect that there would be any changes where people had settled down for comfort..., expecting to become parasites..., in laziness..., and with a loss of enthusiasm to serve others*. Moreover, *it was an illusion to think that the Institute would be successful if many were neglecting study and prayer with the Word of God*.

His attention then focused on community life, on how to leave aside negative criticism and engage in quality moments of dialogue, as Brothers promoting faith, doing mission, making sacrifices, allowing openness. He invited everyone to reflect on the way consecration was lived, without being trapped in the mentality of the world. He warned about the risk of assuming a *club mentality*, as a place wherein to convey personal ideas and manage personal projects; instead, he defined the community as the place where the Lord is waiting to lead us along the path of what is essential in our lives in order *never to be the same again*.

The Six-Year Plan, 2011-2016⁶³⁴

As a follow up of the reflection made during the Assembly, and the most important input brought from Church and Civil Institutions, the Six-

⁶³³ Fr. Enrique Sánchez González, Torniamo all'essenziale/pensando ad alta voce, "Going back to the essential/thinking in a loud voice", MCCJ Bulletin, no. 243, 2010, pp. 1-10.

⁶³⁴ Comboni Province of South Sudan, from the: Six-Year Plan, 2011-2016. FSSPJ.

Year Plan, 2011-2016, had to lay down its priorities to be implemented along the next six-year journey of the Province in the various fields of work, evangelization/pastoral, educational, civic/political, health and all the rest.

If on the one hand the Catholic Bishops described the event which had to take place as *an historic moment, a moment of change*, which would result in Sudan (*Sudan and South Sudan*) never being the same again, on the other, also the Comboni Province of South Sudan was witnessing many changes at all levels. Moreover, the Province itself was part and parcel of this new process. Henceforth, the *Six-Year Plan had to give an answer to these challenges and changes* as a Congregation, a Province and as the Church in the world's newest country, while helping the country to really become *one nation from every tribe, tongue and people*.⁶³⁵ The outline of the Six-Year Plan was as follows:

1. The Priorities

The main priority for the next six years remained *first evangelization*. Much time and energy had already been spent and there was the true belief that, after July 9, 2011, *South Sudan would never be the same again*, and likewise the Church and the Comboni Missionaries.

Beside the *first evangelization* priority, the areas where the Province needed to place more attention and effort were: the restarting of *Vocation Promotion* and *Basic Formation*, *Urban Ministry*, *Justice*, *Peace*, *Reconciliation and Integrity of Creation*, *Ongoing Formation* for local clergy, religious and lay people.

2. Identity and Spirituality: On-Going Formation

A Missionary who lacks a strong awareness of God and a lively interest in his glory and the good of souls is without the right attitude for his ministry, and will end by finding himself in a kind of emptiness and intolerable isolation" (W 2698).

Having quoted these words expressing the personal experience of the Founder, St. Daniel Comboni, the *Six-Year Plan* went into the specific life of the missionary.

⁶³⁵ Ref. Sudan Catholic Bishop conference (SCBC) meeting in plenary session in Juba from 6 to 8 September, 2011, **One Nation**, Statement addressed to the people of South Sudan. One Church from every Tribe, Tongue, and People. Juba, 8 September, 2011.

At a personal level, the missionary was to be *a man of God*, fostering the importance of personal prayer and spiritual growth, a witness of his consecration, a helper to confreres in difficulty, while taking advantage of the annual Provincial retreats.

At community level, the missionary was to be *a man of communion*, as envisaged in the *Cenacle of Apostles*, with the help of a community charter during the journey.

At apostolic level, the missionary was to be *a man of mission*, going deeper into the history of the Province and the Comboni family and creating ecclesial communion.

At a structural level, the missionary was to reflect and journey together with the confreres in the continent. *The creation of a community/centre of ongoing formation and accompaniment in Africa was scheduled by the General Administration by June,, 2012.*

3. Mission

His life (that of the missionary) must be open to zeal for spiritual things and must be marked with great love of study and the desire for perfection and the interior life” (W 2489)

What was emphasised here was the faithfulness of the missionary to Mission, the need to exercise and improve his pastoral skills and his Comboni missionary methodology, to take care of the evangelization and apostolate of Catholic Families and the formation of Seminarians and Lay People.

There were two priorities in this field: *the mission among the pastoralists* and *urban ministry*.

The mission among the pastoralists was considered an *important area of first evangelization* because *the regions of the pastoralists had been marginalized* over many years. The implementation of this mission required *stability of personnel, human promotion, education, formation of leaders, new forms of evangelization* and pastoral attention to the pastoralist population. Henceforth, every two years, the Secretariat for Evangelization was asked to organize a forum, *Comboni among Pastoralists*.

As for urban ministry, in the few years since the CPA, South Sudan had witnessed a huge growth of primary and secondary cities and towns. Aware of this phenomenon of urbanization and profound transformations in today’s world the trend had to be taken into consideration and studied, first at the level of the Secretariat for

Evangelization, and then in dialogue with the Archbishop of Juba for opening an *inserted community* in the periphery of Juba.

4. (JPIC) Justice, Peace, Reconciliation and Integrity of Creation

Witnessing the cries of people suffering from poverty, conflicts, tribalism, violence, bad governance, structural and social injustices, land grabbing, political and ethnic manipulation, mismanagement of natural resources, emerging issues that threaten human dignity and faith, a call for action, according to the mandate from the Holy Scripture and the Catholic Social Doctrine, it was felt as a compelling duty to have a *full-time person in charge of JPIC* and to have JPIC contact persons within the communities,

5. Formation and Vocation Ministry

Discipleship is fundamentally adherence to the person of Jesus Christ and acceptance of his teaching and his vision of life and of St. Daniel Comboni as the model of missionary discipleship.

For Vocation Ministry a confrere fully in charge was to coordinate the work in the whole Province and Dioceses of South Sudan.

For Basic Formation it was planned to *reopen the Pre-Postulancy in Juba*, after some solid work of Vocation Promotion. For the *Postulancy*, the Brother candidates were to be sent to the Postulancy of Layibi (Gulu, Uganda) for formation, while the candidates to Priesthood were to be sent to the Postulancy in Nairobi, in both cases after the Pre-Postulancy in Juba. The need to prepare one formator for the Postulancy was foreseen.

For the Missionary service of the Scholastics, all the communities were invited to be open to receive and follow the scholastics in missionary service.

6. Missionary Animation and Lay Missionaries

At the level of Missionary Animation, there was the creation of a website, www.combonisouthsudan.org, the resumption of the Provincial newsletter, SSCOMBONI@NEWS and the commitment to use *New People Magazine* for missionary animation. In collaboration with the symposium committee, 2011, an historical and vocational exhibition for vocation ministry and missionary animation, to be used during visits to schools, Parishes and Dioceses, was prepared.

Lay Comboni Missionaries: the person in charge was to try to animate former Comboni Seminarians and local lay people who showed interest in developing a Comboni spirituality.

7. Finance

The Province was committed to the *Total Common Fund system*. The choice for the TCF was confirmed with the commitment to improve the ways of implementing it, to take care of the *Formation of Local Bursars, of income-generating projects, of evaluating the real estate of properties, land law and fund-raising*.

8. Persons and Communities

Confreres newly assigned to a mission were to be offered a possible introductory course organized at Provincial or local level to facilitate their introduction into the culture of the place, through a proper study of the local language or of Arabic. Every two years, the Secretariat of Evangelization was to organize, at Provincial level, a seminar of *Introduction to the Province of South Sudan*.

Confreres under 45 were to continue their already established meetings to better accompany the young confreres in their first assignments.

Confreres over 45 were also to continue their already established meetings aimed at accompanying all the confreres during their missionary life in the Province.

Elderly and sick confreres were to be assisted according to their particular situations. Every confrere at the threshold of 70 years of age were to be given the option of participating in a specific course to help him accept old age positively, integrating it into his missionary identity.

Specializations: *particular attention was to be given to specializations*, responding to the growing need for professionalism in our work and Province.

9. Reorganization

Inclusion of communities: the inclusion of Wau and Raga communities in the South Sudan Province had become a reality on 1 July, 2011, with the independence of South Sudan.

Handing over: the foreseen plan was to hand over the Parish of Lomin to Yei Diocese in 2014, the Comboni Comprehensive College at the end of 2012 and *Wau Parish* in December 2013. Before that date,

the community was asked to build the house of the Local Priests within the premises or in nearby area of the Parish.

Catholic Radio Network (CRN). It was agreed by the two General Administrations of the Comboni Missionaries (MCCJ and CMS) that the Provincial Council was to hand over to the SCBC the commitments of Administrator and Editor of the News Desk of the network by December, 2013. Meanwhile, the Provincial Superior was to continue to be part of the board of the CRN.

Merging/Clustering of Provinces. In order to make a collegial Provincial decision on *clustering/merging* of structures/Provinces – as from 2011, the Provincial Council was to coordinate and follow the reflection on the possible clustering with other Provinces, in particular with Kenya.

9. Evaluation

An evaluation of the present *Six-Year Plan* was to be made during the Provincial Assemblies in 2013 and 2016.

Opening of the Provincial Website

The ninth of July, 2011, brought a new gift to the Province: the setting up of the Provincial website www.combonisouthsudan.org. In a time when information and internet network was an essential tool to link up with a global world, the website became an instrument of great importance to convey and share ideas and reflections on Comboni mission and life, on ***who the Comboni Missionaries are, what they do, where they are***, and of the ***fields of work*** such as *Pastoral work, Justice and Peace, Education, Capacity building, Health, Radio, Agriculture*.⁶³⁶

Annual Provincial Assemblies 2012-2016

The Provincial Assembly of 2011, as we have already seen, was held at the Comboni House in Juba, from 31 March to 6 April, 2011, with the theme taken from the letter of the Bishops (SCBC) of 2010 in preparation for the referendum on self-determination: *Sudan will never be the same again!* There was also a biblical reference to help the reflection: *give reason for the hope that is in you (1 Pt. 3:15)*.

⁶³⁶ Provincial website: <http://www.combonisouthsudan.org/index.php/who-we-are>

The Provincial Assemblies continued until 2016, and I will now take into consideration their topics, since they reveal what type of priorities were touched upon and what was going on in the concrete reality of the Province, communities and commitments.

The Provincial Assembly of 2012

Africae Munus, the commitment of Africa!

The Provincial Assembly of 2012 took place at Juba Comboni House from 16 to 21 January. The topic was *Africae Munus*:⁶³⁷ ***the commitment of Africa!*** It was taken from the Post-Synod Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Benedict XVI to the Bishops, clergy, consecrated persons and the lay faithful, on the Church in Africa in service to reconciliation, justice and peace. The exhortation was starting with a quotation from the Gospel of Matthew, *you are the salt of the earth ... you are the light of the world* (Mt.5:13-14).

The Assembly began at Saint Kizito's Parish after the Eucharistic celebration in memory of Fr. Ottorino Sina, known by the people as Philip, a confrere in very high esteem by people for his missionary witness and pastoral dedication. It really fitted in well with the theme of the Assembly.

The Apostolic Exhortation put *authentic conversion* at the base of everything. The truth of this conversion, according to the exhortation, is experienced in the sacrament of penance and reconciliation which brings about a spirituality of communion. The inculturation of the Gospel and the evangelization of culture are considered essential for this communion.

This recalls the need for an in-depth study of African traditions and cultures, bearing in mind, however, that *the Holy Spirit is the true agent of inculturation*. It sustains the need of having a positive approach and appreciation for cultures, to safeguard African cultures and, at the same time, to *separate the good seed from the weeds* (AM 32-41).

The care for the human person is directed towards the family, the elderly, men, women, young people and children in such a way that brings harmony, within an African vision of life, where life and creation is respected, and good governance is promoted for the good of every person. Then, dialogue and communion among different religious believers

⁶³⁷ Post-Synodal apostolic exhortation of pope Benedict XVI to the Bishops, clergy, consecrated persons and the lay faithful, on the Church in Africa in service to reconciliation, justice and peace. *Ouidah, Benin, 19 November, 2011, the seventh of Pope Benedict XVI Pontificate*. Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2011.

becomes a reason for a deeper communion and not for division and struggle.

Fr. Manuel Ginete, a Vincentian Missionary working with Solidarity with South Sudan (SSS) in Juba, was invited to introduce *Africae Munus* and to favour a reflection on how it could be implemented in the various ministries and human promotion activities. Group work followed the input under various aspects, trying to look for new ways of implementing the different topics tackled by the apostolic exhortation.

One significant consideration was that the first Synod of Africa stated that: *We (the Church) are the family of God* ⁶³⁸ the second Synod asked: *What does it mean to be the family of God? It means to be salt & light* in the three areas of *reconciliation, justice and peace*; because of its strong faith in Christ, the Church is a necessary factor in bringing about change.

His Grace Paolino Lukudu Loro, invited to the Assembly as *Archbishop*, and as a *Comboni confrere*, updated the Assembly on the current situation of the Church in South Sudan and expressed the gratitude of Africa to the missionaries. He concluded that the Comboni Missionaries are the best people to carry on this mission of reconciliation, because *they belong to all the tribes*, and that this new commitment to evangelization should begin!

Within this framework, it was clear that the second Synod of Africa was to become a key factor in the whole approach of the Province to evangelization in the following years.

The Provincial Assembly of 2013

Human development in the context of evangelization in South Sudan today

The Provincial Assembly of 2013 took place in Juba, from 15 to 19 January. 2013. The chosen topic was: *Human development in the context of evangelization in South Sudan today*. The need to enter in a deeper way into the issue of *human development/promotion* as an integral part of evangelization was clearly seen. It implied deeper research in order not to confuse our evangelizing vocation and mission with the work of many other NGOs and to clarify the existing difference.

As Comboni Missionaries, the *holistic approach* to evangelization was a tradition since St. Daniel Comboni, himself. At the present time, however, with the presence of innumerable philanthropic associations and NGOs, it

⁶³⁸ John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*, given at Yaoundé, in Cameroon, on 14 September, Feast of the Triumph of the Cross, in the year 1995, the seventeenth of Pope John Paul II Pontificate. Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1995, no. 63.

was widely seen as necessary to clarify the specifics of the Comboni Missionary vocation, methodology and values. The presence of the Superior General, Fr. Enrique Sánchez González and Bro. Daniele Giusti, one of the General Councillors, was very important for the reflection.

Fr. Sánchez González started his input with the topic *Cherishing the gift of our vocation* with reference to 1 Timothy 6:1-14 and 2 Timothy 1:3-14. He then went on to comment on **four priorities**: *Spirituality*, *Mission*, *Attention to Person* (e.g. elderly confreres and those in difficult situations) and *Governance* (e.g. clustering / merging of Provinces).

Regarding the first priority, *Spirituality*, he emphasised that, we need a strong spirituality to be effective missionaries, but he noticed a gap between the values proposed and the life that missionaries choose. Regarding the second priority, *Mission*, the new generation of missionaries will have fewer resources, so the style of mission must change by adopting a *humbler* attitude, accepting limits, doing things in a simpler way and learning to collaborate with the Local Church.

Finally, the fourth priority, *Governance*, makes us all face the fact that there are fewer and fewer missionaries. How should we prepare for the future? We need to make such changes as *clustering/merging* Provinces and to make organisations and structures independent of the Comboni presence.

Human Development: the issue was a concern for all confreres, but since the Brothers are, in a special way, connected to this ministry, the presence of Bro. Giusti and Bro. Paolo Rizzetto was a good opportunity to tackle both the issue of *Human Development/Promotion* in the context of evangelization and that of the *Mission of the Comboni Brother*. Bro. Giusti tackled the broader issue of *Brotherhood*, as such, as a *journey of reconciliation*, while Bro. Rizzetto pointed directly on the vocation and role of the Brother in *human development/promotion*.

Bro. Giusti presented the theme of *Brotherhood: journeys of reconciliation*, of Fr. Manuel Joao Pereira, General Secretary of On-Going Formation, as the theme accompanying the Comboni journey for the year 2013⁶³⁹. He proposed it as a personal and community journey marked by conversion of heart, as an indispensable means for continuing to grow towards a fraternity that is ever more complete and fruitful.

His thought was that *personal reconciliation* is a *precondition* for fraternity and considered the commitment to fraternity and reconciliation as

⁶³⁹ On-going formation, Fr. Manuel João, *Brotherhood: journeys of reconciliation*.

a mission in a divided world. From Comboni history, he came up with proposals for reconciliation that could be implemented today, as well.

Bro. Paolo Rizzetto, instead, went straight into the vocation and role of the Brother in *human development/promotion*. He emphasized the importance of avoiding any kind of dichotomy like the false dichotomy between *evangelization and human promotion*. He maintained that *the place of work* remains the first and privileged platform of Evangelization, which he considered in a *holistic way*, as the sharing with people, who are in contact with the missionaries, of the experience of their belonging to Jesus, in their main fields of action.

His view was that *work* was the *place* of human encounter, a privileged place where webs of relationships occur. Often, relationships need to be *free* of the confounding factor of hierarchy that characterizes pastoral relationships. A *peer relationship* is a privileged place of encounter, hence a privileged place of mission. His desire was that the Brother should be conceived and understood first, and foremost, as *a worker owned by Christ*, before any other consideration on the role and function he may exercise in the service of pastoral action.

Quoting Pope Benedict XVI, he affirmed that there cannot be evangelization without the belief that *...Christ is the cornerstone of each and every human endeavour*. A cornerstone might be hidden but at any given moment, all the rest of the construction hinges on it.

There was a discussion about the relationship between *profession and evangelization*. It was stated that in the mission, it may happen that Brothers do only their professional work like the NGOs, or take over the Priest's work. On the contrary, they should bring Christ into the concrete situations of people's lives so that they become mature in their spirituality and combine it with their work.

Brothers are *mainly defined by their work*; the difference between Priests and Brothers is not great, in his view. They can and do share all services except the Sacraments. However, not all credibility lies in what is done, but in the fact that people recognize Brothers and Priests as people of God

The Provincial Assembly of 2014

South Sudan today and tomorrow

The Provincial Assembly of 2014 took place in Juba, from 17 to 22 March, due to the serious events of December 2013, which brought the

country into civil war. The chosen theme was *South Sudan today and tomorrow* and the facilitator was Mr. John Ashworth.

After an introduction in which he emphasized how *Religion* was an important aspect in Africa, he recalled the role played by missionaries, religious communities and institutions in the history of South Sudan. He went on to say that, in the difficult times of war, the Church was the only working institution that played a big role in bringing peace, through involvement in dialogue, peace-making and advocacy.

He then tackled the recent events that brought the country into a deep crisis that exploded with the fighting that started on the 15 December, 2013, and continued with the massacre of thousands of Nuer civilians in Juba town, and the retaliation which followed, causing other large massacres of civilians in other towns like Malakal, Bor and Bentiu.

Regarding the kind of prophetic role the Church in South Sudan can play today, he was aware of the great need for proper reconciliation and the need to develop a sense of identity. He considered the statement of the Catholic Church and the Protestants on 17 and 18 December, 2013, respectively, as positive. The Church (Churches) could be involved in peace mediation but this offer was not yet accepted. The pastoral exhortation of the South Sudan Bishop's conference on 30 January, 2014, *Let us Refound our Nation on a New Covenant*⁶⁴⁰ was a very appropriate tool to talk about peace, reconciliation and unity and suggested that some items from the exhortation should be used every time in preaching to call for peace and unity: the *Forty days of prayer for peace* was another one.

Mr. Alfred Lokuji, on the same theme of *South Sudan today and tomorrow*, dealt with the topic *South Sudan: the Unborn "Nation"*. He went into the complex pieces of the (nationalism) puzzle and the need for truth, justice and reconciliation. Then he went into the topic of the Unborn Nation, mentioning what South Sudanese have in common and how they differ. He took up the context of SPLM/Governance of the time, with the ethnic implications as possible ingredients of genocide.

He dealt with transitional justice (*post conflict*), the abuses of human rights that have occurred, the issue of impunity that must be defeated and concluded that, *peace and reconciliation* is not just about holding hands while saying *Let's be friends and forget the past*. He was of the idea that, as

⁶⁴⁰ Pastoral exhortation from the Bishops of Sudan and South Sudan (SCBC) *Let us Refound our Nation on a New Covenant*, Juba, South Sudan, 30 January, 2014. <http://laboursouthsudan.org/blog/Bishops-sudan-south-sudan-let-us-refound-our-nation-new-covenant>

the Catholic Church and other Churches have played a big role in the process of independence of South Sudan, they can still continue to play a positive role in this situation too, in order to lead the process of reconciliation in the country.

The Provincial Assembly of 2015

Comboni Missionary Disciples, Called to Live the Joy of the Gospel in Today's World.

The Provincial Assembly of 2015 took place in Juba from 19 to 24 January. The theme was *Comboni Missionary disciples, called to live the joy of the Gospel in today's world*. This was the theme chosen by the incoming XVIII General Chapter and taken up by the Province as a preparation to it. The facilitator was Bro. Alberto Parise, a Comboni Brother working in Kenya.

Bro. Parise started with his input in the form of a reflection with reference to the *Plan of Comboni* for the regeneration of Africa as a *mystical experience* that started with an experience of failure by all the missionaries who attempted the work of evangelization. Comboni, after a journey of trials, found in the *Pierced Heart of Jesus* a love which led him to a conversion of attitude and perspective: fully trusting in God, the relationship with Jesus Christ transcending failure and death, internalizing the experience of God and coming out with a plan consisting in a simple idea: *The Regeneration of Africa by means of Africa*.

From this background he went on to tackle the challenges facing the Comboni Institute today. Among the most important, he envisaged the *trajectory* of mission from *geographic criteria* to a *socio-religious* one, with the notion of *missionary situations* (Rule of Life 14, 2), the *Nigrizia situations* (1997 Chapter) and *frontier situations* (2009 Chapter).

He tackled the issue of missionary methodology from the *missionary manual* of Fr. Vignato to the new approaches of the Chapter of 1969 and the present approaches after a long theological and anthropological journey accomplished in between. He came then to the present challenges of pluralism within the Comboni Institute, dispersed in too many directions, with the challenge of *communion, continuity* and the tension between *self-preservation* and *evangelization necessities*.

Bro. Parise envisaged in the apostolic exhortation on the proclamation of the Gospel *Evangelii Gaudium* (the Joy of the Gospel) of Pope Francis, a call to a *pastoral and missionary conversion, a renewal of attitudes and structures, a rethinking of goals, structures, styles, and methods of*

evangelization. He recalled the sharing during the meeting/workshop on the 150th anniversary of the *Plan of Comboni* where there was widespread interest in developing evangelizing communities in constant, nurturing encounter with Christ as *A Cenacle of Apostles*.

Bro. Parise recalled how much Pope Francis emphasized the mission of the evangelizing communities:

*“A Church which goes forth, taking the first step, being involved and supportive, bearing fruit and rejoicing..., an evangelizing community that knows that the Lord has taken the initiative, he has loved us first (1 Jn 4:19)..., an evangelizing community that gets involved by word and deed in people’s daily lives..., an evangelizing community that is also supportive, standing by people at every step of the way..., an evangelizing community that is always concerned with fruit..., finally an evangelizing community that is filled with joy and knows how to rejoice always.”*⁶⁴¹

Applying the above aspects also to the Comboni communities, Bro. Parise envisaged them opened to *pluralism*, necessary to better understand the Gospel, involved in dialogue and collaborative ministry; *intercultural communities* that witness to the Gospel, being kept together in fraternity and focused on Christ and God's Reign; communities with a *lifestyle close to that of the people*, that allow *continuity* with pastoral plans evaluated and developed according to ministerial criteria, with *simple structures*, open to human encounter; communities that *live the charism together* and in *collaboration* within the rest of the Comboni family.

The Provincial Assembly of 2016

Comboni Missionary Disciples, Called to Live the Joy of the Gospel in Today’s World!

The Provincial Assembly of 2016 took place in Juba from 25 to 29 January, 2016, after the XVIII General Chapter of 2015. The theme was the same as that of the 2015 Assembly, *Comboni Missionary Disciples, Called to Live the Joy of the Gospel in Today’s World*, but now as a follow up of the General Chapter, with the stress on the implementation of its resolutions. Fr. Daniele Moschetti, the Provincial and Fr. Louis Okot, a Chapter Delegate, guided the presentation of the *power point programme* on the *Chapter Acts*.

⁶⁴¹ Pope Francis I, *Evangelii Gaudium*, apostolic exhortation on the proclamation of the Gospel, no. 24, 24 November, 2013, Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

The Assembly opened with a day of recollection guided by Fr. Antonio La Braca with two topics: the first referred to the theme of the XVIII General Chapter of 2015, *CA nos. 21, 23 and 25*, and the second was his personal sharing on the 50th anniversary of his ordination.

Regarding the first topic, he stated that, *to live the joy of the Gospel is difficult due to challenges we face as missionaries in our Province of South Sudan*. Secondly, that there was an *invitation to be converted and evangelized* through community and the sharing of work together as disciples. To have *simple structures* close to the people and living a *simple lifestyle* would help to welcome them, without seeking a comfortable life. He then put a question: *how do we live our vow of poverty?* and invited all to promote faith and real trust in God, in all that one does, on the example of Peter's faith in the word of Jesus.

The second topic, the 50th anniversary of his ordination, in reality, was a presentation of his lived experience of discipleship, of what it meant for him and his family to follow Jesus. With *wonder*, he shared about his vocation from his family and the times of crisis overcome through prayer.

He felt a deep gratitude for the close relationship he developed with Jesus Christ, with the help of his formators, the biographies of saints, spiritual reading and the Blessed Virgin Mary experienced as the protector of his vocation. He thanked God because of the impact his presence had on the life of the Nuer people, especially the simple and the poor.

He shared his missionary experience in South Sudan *as a hermit with trepidation*, his deep crisis after he lost his younger Sister and his mother, who died twenty days after his return, and how the crisis ended with a deep act of faith, which gave him real solid strength. He commits himself to prayer life, with adoration three hours a day, to be closer to and listen from God. His prayer is for all the people he promised to pray for, those for whom no one prays, and for the Nuer, the Church and the Congregation.

Grateful for his experience he encourages confreres not to lose any time of God's grace, *until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, Eph. 4,13*.

During this Assembly Fr. Daniele Moschetti and Fr. Louis Okot shared about the experience of the XVIII General Chapter. They presented a *power point programme* on the *Chapter Acts*, with a specific input from each.

Fr. Daniele Moschetti focused on the situation of the Institute before the Chapter using a document of the General Administration. He picked out some of the key, sensitive points like the ***social context*** looking for

development in different fields of our society, the *context of the Institute* and the *changes*, confreres going out, others coming in, those leaving the congregation, those dying and *Basic Formation*.

The statistics regarding *Basic Formation*, in the last six years, along the different steps, showed that 400 young people in Formation Houses were preparing to become Comboni Missionaries, but with the challenges of how to find formators for them and how to prepare them for the purpose. He stated that the confreres who left the Institute from 2009-2014 were 146, and that, in those six years, there were some confreres who did not feel comfortable staying in the Congregation. Some of those leaving were incardinated in various Dioceses for different reasons.

Concerning the issue of *reorganisation*, Fr. Moschetti affirmed that the experience gained in the last six years had shown that the Institute still needed to continue its process of reorganizing / reformulating many statements / approaches so as to try its level best to minimize some risks and challenges. Moreover, from 2009 to 2014, the total number of the confreres within the Institute had decreased by 226 confreres. However, there was hope that a large number of young people would join formation, especially from African Provinces. Regardless of all the challenges and struggles, confreres were still living their missionary life with joy, perseverance, zeal and enthusiasm in the service of the Lord.

Fr. Moschetti also described the time of the Chapter as a positive experience lived together as Brothers who were struggling *to see* where God wanted *the mission* and the *Comboni Missionaries* to go. This Chapter was marked by the presence of many African Combonis (30%), active and well identified, that made the Chapter a sign of the start of a new era for the Comboni Institute, and a sign of hope. The diverse cultures of the Chapter members were not a problem but a gift, a joy, a source of vitality and hope.

Fr. Provincial noted how the Chapter was lived with intensity and serenity resulting in the unproblematic election of the new General Council and the approval of the final document. The final document, short and concrete, offered inspiration along the lines of *Evangelii Gaudium*, with some extremely useful and practical indications for the renewal of the Institute.

He acknowledged that the Chapter was deeply marked by the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* and by the *Magisterium of Pope Francis*, and that all the capitulars were very well acquainted with Pope Francis and were following up the development of his vision of the Catholic Church in this troubled time for the world.

He assured the gathering that the work done in community to prepare the contributions to the Chapter was taken seriously by the preparatory commission and by the Chapter Delegates representing all the confreres and that the present Assembly was to mark the beginning of a one-year journey of personal and community reflection on the Chapter Acts, so as to come up with a vision, ideas and proposals for the Six-Year Plan (2017-2022).

Fr. Louis Okot spoke of the Chapter as a moment of fraternal sharing. This Brotherly environment could be seen and felt in each member of the Chapter, with no tension regarding inputs and point of views presented by confreres from different Provinces.

He talked about the richness of the Institute and showed how the limits of the Chapter that were pointed out by the members were challenges. He further continued saying that JPIC was perceived to be an integral means for evangelization and, therefore, it was necessary for everyone to commit themselves to this ministry. He concluded stating that there was now a strong call for our missionary life: to leave our comfort zone and be closer to the poor by sharing their daily reality.

Having said this, we now go back and consider other specific topics.

Clustering / merging of Provinces

Following the decision of the General Chapter of 2009, the General Administration invited the Provinces to start a process of reflection about the necessity of *merging/clustering of structures/Provinces*. The confreres of the South Sudan Province were asked to express their opinion about which Provinces they would like to start the process of merging. Many were thinking that confreres would choose to merge with Khartoum and Egypt, but instead, the trend went for Kenya, since there was already a long history of cooperation and for the fact that communication was easier. Moreover, by that time, the Khartoum government had closed the border between the two countries, confirming the problem.

In order to make a collegial Provincial decision on the issue, from 2011, the Provincial Council was to coordinate and follow the reflection on the possible process. Consultation among the confreres of South Sudan and Kenya started and the majority of the confreres voted to start the discussion and the process of merging. The Provincial Councils of South Sudan and

Kenya met in Juba on November, 2012,⁶⁴² and drafted a road map to merging.

For three years there were to be joint meetings of the Provincial Councils and other initiatives. However, along this process a consistent group of confreres showed resistance and a change of opinion. After a final plenary consultation, the answer was negative. Confreres of both Provinces preferred to postpone this issue indefinitely, while continuing to cooperate in the fields of Formation, Mass Media and others.

The Symposium: One Church from every Tribe, Tongue and People *on the role of the Church in the independence of South Sudan*

SCBC: One Nation. In 2010, the Sudan Catholic Bishops Conference (SCBC) issued a pastoral letter with the motto *Sudan will Never be the Same Again*. After 9 July, 2011, during their *Extraordinary Plenary Session* in Juba, from 6 to 8 September, 2011, the SCBC issued another pastoral letter to all the citizens motivating them towards nation-building, emphasising unity and integration. While expressing their joy and their thanksgiving to God for the peaceful birth of the new nation, the Bishops directed their statement to the people of South Sudan titled **“One Nation.”**

Reminding what was said in the season of prayer for independence, that South Sudan must be **one nation from every tribe, tongue and people**, they tackled the issue of the challenging phase for all citizens and tribes of building up the country into one nation.

*(Ref. Letter from SCBC, Appendix to Section Three,
Chapter Two, point no. 3)*

The Symposium took inspiration from the above mentioned pastoral letter and was entitled **One Church from every Tribe, Tongue and People.**⁶⁴³ It was held in *Nyakuron Cultural Centre*, Juba, from 13 to 16 October 2011, agreed upon and promoted by the Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference (SCBC), with the hard work of organisation taken up by the Provincial Superior of the Comboni Missionaries, Fr. Daniele Moschetti, in collaboration with the German Province.

The German Province contributed with a very valuable exhibition prepared by Bro. Yohann (Hans) Eigner for the celebrations of

⁶⁴² Minutes of the Provincial Assembly, Juba 15-19 January 2013, Appendix 2, Clustering, p. 37- ff. FSSPJ.

⁶⁴³ Ref. Sudan Catholic Bishop conference (SCBC) meeting in plenary session in Juba from 6 to 8 September, 2011, **One Nation**, op. cit.

independence of South Sudan and for the Symposium of October, 2011. Unfortunately, it could not be displayed during that time, since the parcels did not reach in time. It was then put on display in the Provincial House and the smaller size was used for Animation and Vocation Ministry.⁶⁴⁴

Cardinal Gabriel Zubeir Wako and Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro led the symposium with the participation of more than 700 people, including Catholic and Episcopal Bishops, government officials, international experts and partners, representatives of the ecumenical community, the media, and Priests, Brothers, Sisters and Laity, both Local and Missionaries, from the Republic of South Sudan and the Republic of Sudan.

The contributions from the participants were extremely valuable. After the opening address of H. G. Paolino Lukudu Loro, Archbishop of Juba, the Symposium went straight into the historical memories and progress of the Church in the past and the status of the Church during the present time and then projected itself towards the future and the most important challenges the Church was called to face.⁶⁴⁵

The Speeches

About the past, Øysten H. Rolandsen, of the Peace Research Institute of Oslo (PRIO), took up the theme *from the colonial backwater to an independent state*, reflecting on the history of South Sudan; Fr. Joaquim José Valente da Cruz, MCCJ, developed his topic under the title *a new era of mercy and peace* on St. Daniel Comboni's dream of a developed and free South Sudan and the commitment of his followers to fulfil it. Sr. Adele Brambilla, the Superior General of the Comboni Missionary Sisters, went into the *prophetic ministry of the Comboni Missionary Sisters* in the history of evangelization in Sudan according to the vision of St. Daniel Comboni.

Barani Eduardo Hiboro Kussala, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Tombura/Yambio took up the witness of life given by a great missionary who worked among the Zande people with the topic *witness to Christian values in the footsteps of Filiberto Giorgetti*.

⁶⁴⁴ Provincial Assembly, Juba 16-21 January, 2012, Appendix 3, Word of the Provincial . FSSPJ.

⁶⁴⁵ Ref. Sudan Catholic Bishop conference (SCBC), *One Church from every Tribe, Tongue, and People*, Symposium on the Role of the Church in the Independence of South Sudan, John Ashworth (ed), Paulines Publications Africa, 2012.

The personal oral and emotional testimony of Bro. Valentino Fabris was very moving. He was a 90 year-old Comboni Brother, and had spent much of his time in technical schools, in Wau, Juba, Khartoum, and Nzara; his witness brought a flavour of joy and happiness in the Assembly. It was a testimony of *happiness* and *gratitude* experienced along all his years of work in Sudan.

Finally, to conclude with the Church in the past, Dr. Anne Itto, SPLM Deputy Secretary General, presented the main events affecting the history of South Sudan and his suffering people through her personal testimony of life, which was also the hard experience of all the discriminated and marginalised Southerners. She witnessed the Church as *the conscience in the struggle*. While recognising that the first phase of liberation was now over, she concluded stating that *our unity is our strength* and warning that discrimination and marginalisation was not only a matter of the Arabs, but of everyone who was selfish. She concluded that there was still a second phase to be concluded: the liberation of the Nuba Mountains, the Blue Nile and other marginalised areas, and hoped the Church would continue to pray for a just, free and peaceful nation.

About the present, Fr. Philip Pitya spoke about the status of the Church during the present time with *the role of the Local Church towards the independence of South Sudan*. In this case, he specified, *role* was to be understood as the *place or position* occupied by individuals, communities or institutions in the liberation process, or action and contribution made along it; *Local Church*, was to be understood as belonging to a given specific geographical, historical and cultural region (place), indicating also the *incarnational nature* of the Christian Community. It should not be understood as *an island*, but in its connection with the global community or *Universal Church*.

Fr. Pitya went through all the phases of evangelization of the past with a quick outline of the first missionaries to the South, the political events with the British and the development of the Church, the Prefectures and Apostolic Vicariates with the Comboni Missionaries and the opening of the various mission stations; the liberating work of education in schools, especially in Okaru and Bussere, the training of Leaders, men, women, Catechists, Local Clergy and Religious. He gave also an account of the progress and endeavours of the Christian Protestant Churches, contemporaries of the Catholic Church.

The fidelity and perseverance of the Churches all throughout, especially during times of war, from the First and Second World Wars and the recent

liberation struggles, were seen by Fr. Pitya as the most valid contribution to reaching independence. In fact, *the Churches played a very important role praying for reconciliation, justice, peace, supporting morally the suffering and traumatized individuals, families and communities, particularly the orphans and widows; persuading the SPLA/M and militia leaders to remain united and keep the peace.*⁶⁴⁶

From among the local Women's Religious Societies there was the testimony of Sr. Mary Daniel Abut, Superior General of the *Sacred Heart Sisters*, who presented the history of her Congregation from its beginning, and throughout its growth as well as its achievements and the service the society had given and was giving to the people of South Sudan, the challenges they were facing at present, and the hopes it had of carrying out their evangelizing ministry as Women Religious born in the land of South Sudan and focused on the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

On the side of the Local Men Religious Societies, Bro. Bruno Dada, Superior General of the *St. Martin de Porres Brothers*, gave also his witness presenting the history, the achievements, the set-backs and the gradual growth of his Congregation. It was born to carry out the ministry of Teaching Brothers, teachers of religion for Catechumenates, primary and secondary schools and universities, at a time when such teachers were few, but also Catholic teachers for all subjects taught in school at all level.

At the beginning their name was *Sudanese Teaching Brothers*, but, during the exile in Uganda, prompted by Ugandan candidates desiring to join the Congregation and the revision of the constitution, the aims of the society was expanded beyond teaching to include pastoral work and social and technical activities, and the new given name was *the Brothers of St. Martin the Porres*. Bro. Bruno Dada recalled also the other Congregation of Brothers of Wau, *the Brothers of St. Joseph*, who had a similar vocation.

As a conclusion, the challenges he saw for the future were the growth of secularism which prompted several of their confreres to leave the Congregation for other commitments in society and the need of strengthening their religious identity to make their vocation of Brothers attractive to the young generations in South Sudan.

Holy Trinity Village, funded by Bishop Paride Taban in Kuron was also mentioned as a present dream of peace. This longing of the heart of every person, especially of the South Sudanese people who suffered and were traumatized by all the abuses they experienced in live, was coming true in

⁶⁴⁶ Fr. Philip Pitya, The role of the Local Church towards the Independence of South Sudan, Symposium on the Role of the Church, 2011, op. cit., p.127.

the experience of *Holy Trinity Village, in Kuron, South Sudan*. It was a village which was born out of the experience of Bishop Emeritus Paride Taban, after a great deal of time spent *searching for peace*, in South Sudan.

In Bishop Paride Taban's understanding, *development is peace*, and therefore the first tool was to *empower the people to produce enough food*, the second was to *make formal education accessible and acceptable for the girls, boys and adults in the pastoral communities*, the third tool was to *promote peaceful coexistence among the neighbouring tribes*. This would be a demonstration that tribes can work together without suspicions, thus, becoming the foundation for lasting peace among communities.

The final contribution to this section came from Rt. Rev. Enock Tombe Stephen, ECS, Diocesan Bishop of Rejaf Diocese, with the topic *the Episcopal Church of the Sudan (ECS) in the history of a divided Sudan*. He went through the various phases of the planting and growth of the Anglican Communion under the leadership of the different Archbishops until the present one, Archbishop Dr. Daniel Deng Bul.

The challenges faced were the ones already mentioned in the country where it played a great role in evangelization, humanitarian assistance, service delivery in the education and health sectors, peace-building and reconciliation. This was done with the support of partners abroad and Sister Churches under the umbrella of SCC and NSCC (Sudan/New Sudan Council of Churches), merged together since 2007. With the division of Sudan into two countries, the ECS had prepared itself to continue its mission to all Sudanese tribes and languages.

About the future, John Ashworth opened a window with a *reflection on the new Sudanese Countries and Churches*. His most important finding was that *during nearly five decades of war, the institutional Church stayed with the people through its Bishops, Clergy, Religious, Catechists and other personnel, alongside our Brothers and Sisters from other Churches*. Being the Church the people of God, *wherever there were people, the Church was there*. *For much of the time it was the only institution which remained intact on the ground*. *As well as its pastoral and evangelical role proclaiming the Good News, the Church delivered basic social and humanitarian services and provided leadership in absence of government or in the face of a hostile government*. *The Church mediated local and national conflicts, and played a decisive role in giving the voiceless a voice in the international arena*. *South Sudanese of all faiths looked to the Church for leadership and the Church gained tremendous credibility and*

*moral authority. The Church will continue to play a public role in both nations.*⁶⁴⁷

John Ashworth put emphasis on the fact that two nations were born, but with very different trends: One, South Sudan, moving towards an open democratic nation with a rich cultural diversity, where the Church would be free to play a role in public life; the other, Sudan, continuing with its Islamic military dictatorship, where ethnic and cultural diversity would be suppressed and the Church marginalised and likely persecuted. He then went into the clarification of the various issues affecting the SPLA in relationship to SPLA-North, not controllable from Juba.

Other issues he mentioned were the development in South Sudan, the security issue, the infrastructure, the mobile phone network and communications, the issue of the land and resources, health and education, foreign investment and the need for specific laws. Particularly sensitive, in Ashworth's view, was how the transition from an armed liberation movement to a democratic government would come about, *that may prove a delicate balancing act for the Church.*

Bishop Daniel Adwok Marko Kur, Auxiliary Bishop of Khartoum, developed his theme on the *Pastoral Challenges for the Church in the new divided Sudan* and deemed that *a new era of evangelization had dawned.*

After one hundred and eleven years of evangelization he was thinking that a renewed opportunity was offered, *a new era of evangelization*, with its pastoral challenges for the Church in the two new states of Sudan and South Sudan. He envisaged the great role of the *Laity*, with the *secular nature of their discipleship*, in the Church and society. The *social involvement of the Church, as the salt of the earth*, could, in his opinion, be another great opportunity.

Unity in diversity was another point the Bishop dealt with. In South Sudan it is important *to recognize the diversity of the Church membership originated by historical circumstances.* Many people who were living in *diaspora* had returned to their homelands and found that their people who remained behind were carrying the wrath and the trauma of the conflict over the years and *they need to find unity.* In his view, the Church was called to set out as a sign, a *Sacrament of Unity and Reconciliation* in a journey of *Hope.* This was true also in regard to *ecumenical collaboration.*

Dr. Barnaba Marial Benjamin, Minister of Information of the Republic of South Sudan, tackled the theme of *the Church from a Government*

⁶⁴⁷ John Ashworth, A Reflection on the new Sudanese Countries and Churches, Symposium on the Role of the Church, 2011, op. cit., p.162.

Perspective, as the spokesman of the government and on behalf of the government and the people of the Republic of South Sudan.

After his greetings on behalf of the President, Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit, of the people and government, he congratulated with the Catholic Conference of Bishops for the choice of the theme of the Symposium, *One Church from every tribe, tongue and people*, because it was reminding people the role of the Church, before, during, and after liberation. Quoting the great historian Herbert Luethy, Dr. Barnaba Marial affirmed that *Consciousness of the past alone can make us understand the present*. But then, what was the government expecting from the Church from now on?

Before specifying this question, he also gave a historical flash back from the time of Fr. Vinco, Fr. Knoblicker among the Bari and Ma'di tribes, St. Daniel Comboni with his motto *Africa or death*, on the Catholic side, and the Anglican Church Missionary Society (CMS) on the other. He recalled the struggle for liberation until the signing of the CPA and the happiness of the independence acquired on 11 July, 2011; then he went straight into his theme: *what role would the government expect the Church to play?*

According to Dr. Marial, it was important to know that both Church and Government were moving into the future, so *both Church and Government must move together in a harmonious manner, with a strong symbiotic relationship. They should be identical twins on the lap of one mother, and that is the unity of our people in diversity. They should both agree that this young state, only three months and six days old, must be built on democratic principles, a nation that prides itself on freedom and respect for human rights.*⁶⁴⁸

He went on to recall important points to be upheld, the freedom of worship and religion, the separation of religion and state with tolerance of all diversities, peace, respect of new Church structures. He mentioned the many challenges the Republic of South Sudan was facing: social, political, economic, cultural, developmental, service delivery, etc. saying that the present role of the Church was appreciated. Words of appreciation went to the Sacred Heart Sisters, to the St. Martin de Porres Brothers and then to Bishop Paride Taban during the liberation days and at present.

Government and Church, according to Dr. Marial, should cooperate in the education of the public in all areas, as was done during the referendum process, a job of civic education well done by both (Government and

⁶⁴⁸ Dr. Barnaba Marial Benjamin, Minister of Information of the Republic of South Sudan, *The Church from a Government Perspective*, Symposium on the Role of the Church, 2011, op. cit., p.180.

Church). He wished that, despite possible disagreements on both sides, things might be *ironed out through dialogue, debate and discussion*. Other areas where the Church could contribute were the issues of Abyei, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile.

He, then, concluded with the words of Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul, of the Episcopal Church of Sudan: *we are Southerners (South Sudanese) together; we are now first class citizens. Whether you are a rebel or not, we are all first class citizens of a country.*⁶⁴⁹ Both Church and government, with shared identity, embrace the future as *first class citizens of this new country*, the Republic of South Sudan.

A new way of being in mission: this was the theme presented by Sr. Katherine O'Flynn, FCJ, of Solidarity South Sudan Board (SSS), a collaborative project which involves over 170 religious congregations of men and women with the Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference. She gave a short account on the starting of this new venture from several converging events in 2004, which led to the eventual sending, in 2006, of a six-person delegation to South Sudan representing the UISG and USG (the two international unions of General Superiors of Religious Congregations).

A meeting with Bishop Joseph Gasi Abangite led to the invitation of the SCBC asking for support for re-building their country. In 2005, Sr. Adele Brambilla, General Superior of the Comboni Sisters, attended a session of the SCBC and became the bridge between UISG/USG and the SCBC. With the signing of the CPA in the same year, the issue continued the journey. A delegation was sent to South Sudan in March 2006 and Sr. Cathy Arata, a member of the visiting delegation, was asked to continue co-ordinating the project.

With the agreement of the SCBC, it was decided to focus in *health care, education, pastoral support and agriculture projects*. Education received a high priority because only 7% of teachers had been trained. In February, 2008, members of SSS arrived in Malakal, Wau and Juba and in August another group arrived in Yambio. 18 missionaries from ten different congregations based in four Dioceses. Two *Lead Congregations* were chosen: the De La Salle Brothers for Education and the Comboni Sister for Health Care. In 2011, the need for the two *Lead Congregations* was no longer there as there were already 28 missionaries from 12 congregations and 11 nationalities from all continents and 2 Lay missionaries.

Initiatives like the 101 days of prayer leading to the referendum were organised. Workshops on reconciliation and social teaching had been

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 182.

offered as on-going formation and capacity building of this new country. Fr. Joseph Callistus was the Project Director in South Sudan and Sr. Pat Murray the Executive Director in the head office in Rome.

Fr. Manuel Ginete, CM, continued the instruction about SSS with a *theological reflection on Solidarity with Southern Sudan*, with the topic *Prophets in Solidarity with God's People/Family of South Sudan*. He immediately tackled it by presenting *Religious or Consecrated Life as Prophecy*, issuing from a *Passion for Christ and Passion for Humanity*. He went on saying that "Passion for Christ/Passion for Humanity" was what led to the beginning of Solidarity with South Sudan (SSS).⁶⁵⁰

He then tackled various constitutive aspects of this new type of religious experience focused on solidarity such as: *the nature of prophecy, prophecy in religious life, the prophet Jesus as a model of the religious prophet, religious prophecy as cutting edge/counter-culture and solidarity as our 'rubric' or way of life*.

Regarding Solidarity (SSS) as a prophetic ministry, Fr. Manuel Ginete specified that SSS came to South Sudan at the invitation of the Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference, in order to help *rebuild the country* after years of war, devastation and stagnation, especially in the areas of reconciliation, reconstruction, rehabilitation, repatriation and re-education. This was an invitation that religious, *as present-day prophets*, could not refuse.

He then proceeded to bring to light the way Solidarity (SSS) was expressing its prophecy, *as an organisation and in its collaboration*. All this was also expressed in a *prophetic style of community life, a human community, a mixed community and a community of disciples* open to *hospitality* and leading its members to be more compassionate, more understanding, more inclusive, and imbued with the double passion, *Passion for Jesus Christ/Passion for Humanity*.⁶⁵¹

The launching of the Church into the new horizons of the future was given to Rev. Prof. Dr. Caesar Lukudu Jömbi, of the Archdiocese of Juba, with the topic, *the future of Church in the Sudan: how shall the Church in the Sudan be in 2020 or 2030?* He started by stating that *the One Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ will not change. However, the Local Church in the Sudan and South Sudan, which is a portion of the Universal*

⁶⁵⁰ Manuel Ginete, CM, *Prophets in Solidarity with God's People/Family of South Sudan, a theological reflection on Solidarity with Southern Sudan*, Symposium on the Role of the Church, 2011, op. cit., p.188.

⁶⁵¹ Ibid. pp. 198-2010

*Church of Jesus Christ, shall be flourishing and deeply rooted in its faith in Jesus Christ only if the Hierarchy in the Sudan revisit its vision, mission and core values.*⁶⁵²

Prof. Dr. Lukudu then went into the issue of the *vision and mission* of the Church and the urgency of a *new evangelization*, considered as a *duty* that calls for a *new discernment* in front of new possible choices in need of previous moments of *listening, understanding and interpreting*. He carried on looking into the sectors calling for a new evangelization and naming them: *Culture, Social, Extensive mixing, Economy, Science and Technology, Civic and Political life*. He then went specifically into each one of them.

Afterwards, he entered into the way and how evangelization could tackle the new situations. He envisaged this process to be started within the *Local Churches*, developing a *Collaborative Ministry* approach. *The decision to make a Diocese or a Parish more collaborative needs to be made by Bishops, Priests, Religious Sisters and Brothers, and Lay People together; all have to be willing to change themselves, rather than anxious to change each other. All those involved in leadership have to learn to share responsibilities, to trust others and take risks. They will also need to accept and live comfortably with decisions they may not personally have chosen to make.*

Finally, to make this *new evangelization* possible in the two countries of Sudan and South Sudan, he saw the need for the Local Churches to *draw up a curriculum* and *reopen the institutions* for training the agents of evangelization.⁶⁵³ He concluded by naming them.

The conclusive topic of the Symposium was finally given to Angelo Lokoyome who presented the *People's expectations of Being Church*. He acknowledged that, in all the adverse situations of the past and of the present, *the Church remains a beacon of hope in the two countries*. The survey conducted for the Symposium, which he was presenting, revealed that, in addition to the normal spiritual work, the Church, as a leading service provider, had helped the public with services in the areas of *Justice and Peace advocacy, in emergency relief, in education, in civic education, in good governance and others*. People confirmed that, without the Church, they would not possibly be here to tell the story.

⁶⁵² Rev. Prof. Dr. Caesar Lukudu Jömbi, *The Future of Church in the Sudan: How shall the Church in the Sudan be in 2020 or 2030?* Symposium on the Role of the Church, 2011, op. cit., p.211.

⁶⁵³ Ibid. p.218-219.

People also confirmed that, without the Church, *wrong politicians* and *self-imposed leaders* would have burned the old Sudan or the two countries to ashes. However, the Church needed to *change gears*, and continue engaging the people in authority and the general public to do the best. He then took the example of Nehemiah, in the Bible, and how he was able to engage people in the re-building of the walls of Jerusalem. In doing this he envisaged the need to be *democratic and participatory* in dealing with public issues. He concluded by giving a list of people's expectation in various fields to be taken into consideration by the Church for the future.⁶⁵⁴

Re-organising the Province

The start of the new term of office of Fr. Daniele Moschetti and his Council and the new reality of the post-referendum and the independence of South Sudan required that the Province be re-organised. The Six-Year Plan provided guidelines for this. Top priority was given to *first evangelization* and this was the most important matter to be taken into consideration throughout this process.

The fact that the two communities of Wau and Raja were automatically part of the Province was another reality to be taken into account and to be faced with their present set up and commitments. The hand-over of CCCL (Comboni Comprehensive College of Lomin) was another immediate concern. Even the hand-over of SCRNL, then called CRN (Catholic Radio Network) after independence, was something to be thought about.

The Secretariats also needed to be reorganised in such a way that they could deliver their service better, thus becoming a real help to the Provincial Council in the respective fields of work. In the following chapters both communities and Secretariats will be presented according to the reorganised plan.

The Communities

The new situation in which the communities found themselves after the referendum and the independence was of a new hope and enthusiasm of a reached freedom enabling the country and the people to build up new trust and confidence in the future. The pride and deep feeling, of being, at last, *first class citizen in one's own country* expressed in the Symposium, were

⁶⁵⁴ Angelo Lokoyome, *the People's expectations of Being Church*, Symposium on the Role of the Church, 2011, op. cit., p.221-24.

evident everywhere. Independence and freedom were realities deeply felt by everybody, everywhere, and the Comboni communities were walking along this path, with the future opened up to all the opportunities it offered.

What had been developed during the six years of the CPA was now seen as a big arrival point, but also as a springboard to get beyond with the best *omen* of a promising future. So the Comboni communities carried on empowered by these long awaited events. The stress on the *first evangelization factor* gave the communities in the former group more reasons to proceed on the line they had started, the others had to undergo a new discernment. The order of procedure of the communities will be the same of the former Administration.

Old Fangak Community

The community of Old Fangak, in 2011, underwent a big change and Fr. Christian Carlassare remained alone for almost five months (though accompanied for about 7 weeks by Fr. Aventore from the end of August to the middle of October).

Fr. Alves left Old Fangak on 26 April, 2011, for Brazil, whereas Bro. Iacomella left on 22 August, 2011, for the Comboni year. Fr. Gregor Schmidt was assigned to Old Fangak community during the last Provincial Council of the year 2011, but he arrived on 31 January, 2012. Fr. Alfred Mawadri visited Fangak by Easter, 2012, and was soon assigned to the community. He arrived in Fangak as newly assigned member of the community on 1 May, 2012, together with Scholastic Ketema Dagne Tadesse, who was sent to Old Fangak for a two-year pastoral experience before his perpetual vows.

During the year 2013, Mgr. Roko Taban Mousa, the Apostolic Administrator of Malakal Diocese, asked the Comboni Community to offer pastoral attention to the whole area making the Parish to reach the original boundaries, thus comprising of seven regions with a total number of 21 centres. On 12 April, 2014, Fr. Michael Barton, Joined Fr. La Braca in Ayod. And all the area of Ayod was entrusted to the pastoral care of the two Fathers there.

Priority during these years until 2016 was given to setting up the Centre Councils and Parish Council, and the formation of the Church Leaders as well, together with a strong pastoral programme for the youth.

Catechists used several publications and particularly a teaching book (catechism) to prepare the neophytes to receive the sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Communion and to teach the Catechumens.

Regular Bible sharing was encouraged in every centre as it was done regularly in Fangak on Saturdays. In Old Fangak there was a Sunday school organized for younger children that were introduced to prayer and the stories of Jesus, in parallel with the Holy Mass. Other centres, when able, could also introduce such an activity.

Pastoral formation was carried out in the Catechists' formation consisting in two formation courses during the year in March and September; for the youth formation, two meetings per year for the youth leaders was organised. There were other youth gatherings on Comboni Day with various competitions and weekly activities for the youth to encourage Christian values through education and sports.

The women's programme was carried out on a weekly basis with moments of formation and activities, including prayer with the group of *Koam Maria* (Legion of Mary), as well as the training on administrative skills of the *committee* with income-generating projects to support the centres. Topics like the Social Teaching of the Church, Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, Civic Education and others were organised, as well.

Besides the pastoral commitment, the community put a lot of effort into **education** carried out in collaboration with the local primary school of Old Fangak, teaching classes such as CRE (Christian Religious education), English, and others and formation for teachers. Upgrading of teachers was done through the education program of ***Solidarity with South Sudan*** in Malakal. Since 2014, the Comboni Missionaries have run a *class eight* of primary school to prepare students to sit the National Primary School Examination and get the Primary Leaving Certificate.

Finally, on 21 September, 2016, Fr. Krzysztof Adam Zębik joined the community of Old Fangak, while Fr. Carlassare left it on 19 October of the same year, transferred to another commitment in the Province. The confreres carrying on with the work in Old Fangak are now Fr. Alfred Mawadri, Fr. Gregor Schmidt and Fr. Krzysztof Adam Zębik.⁶⁵⁵

Leer Community

In 2011, after the Provincial Assembly of April, the Scholastic Yacob Solomon Shole was assigned to the community of Leer for his three year pastoral experience. Thus, the community of Leer was composed of Fr. Chemello, Superior and Parish Priest, Bro. Bortoli, bursar and Principal of

⁶⁵⁵ From Old Fangak community charter 2013 and new updates until 2016. FSSPJ.

the VTC, Bro. Ritterbecks, Administrator of the VTC and teacher, and Fr. Nonato, busy with the learning of the Nuer language.

In August, 2011, the metallic structures and the roof in iron sheets of the church were completed and, by the feast of the Assumption, on 15 August, 2011, the Christian community of Leer could pray under the roof of the new church, with the great joy of everybody. However, the walls could not be built and a bamboo fence was put as walls around it, waiting for the church financial committee to organise a consistent fund-raising for the completion of the church.

In February, 2012, before the starting of the course for Catechists, a hall in iron structure, built with the work of two young Nuer welders prepared for the purpose, was also completed: the course could start in the new premises, a bit warm, but much better off for teaching. A water system with taps was fixed both in the Catechists' hall and Youth's hall with toilets and shower rooms. All these were improvement which allowed a better living, though not yet fully satisfactory.

On the same month of February, on the 10th, Fr. Raimundo Nonato Rocha was appointed Parish Priest by Mgr. Roko Taban Mousa, Apostolic Administrator of Malakal Diocese. He entered immediately into the full commitment and the planning of the huge amount of pastoral and missionary work in St. Joseph the Worker Parish, Leer, its catechetical and educational activities, trying to give a special attention to the youth.

Leer was a very extensive Parish covering four counties which could well be divided into four Parishes, if there were personnel available. The main county centres were **Leer, Koch, Mayendit and Payinjar.**

Leer had five other main centres with two or three sub-centres each and each sub-centre two or three chapels each one.

Koch had two other main centres with two or three sub-centres each and each sub-centre two or three chapels each one.

Mayendit had two other main centres with two or three sub-centres each and each sub-centre two or three chapels each one.

Payinjar had two other main centres with two or three sub-centres each and each sub-centre two or three chapels each one.

The total was 4 county centres, 11 main centres, 45 sub-centres and more than 100 chapels. It was practically impossible for the Priests to reach the chapels. Priests could barely manage to visit each centre and sub-centre, sometimes twice, sometimes three, rarely four or five times per year. People would come from the other chapels to pray or receive the Sacraments in the main centres or sub-centres. Only because of the

commitment of the Catechists and the good will of the faithful could people in the very remote places have the chance of praying together on Sundays.

St. Joseph the Worker Parish had a catechetical centre serving the whole Parish and each year around 16 Catechists (4 per county) were going to Leer for a 5 months course. Meetings were also done with the other Catechists when visiting the centres and, when possible, on specific themes of formation and sacramental liturgy, linked with the catechetical centre programme.

Women groups like the *Koam Maria* (Legion of Mary) and the *Man Luka* (the Women of Luke) plus all the other women not belonging to these two groups were followed up.

For the *Youth group* in general, plus the *altar servers* and the *alleluia dancers*, Justice and peace and trauma healing workshops were organised with them.

At educational level the programme with the students of the VTC and the encounter with children and parents of the Pre-Schools (Nursery Schools) in the Parish and other two main centres were carried out. Sr. Agata Cantone was in charge of the running of the Pre-School for children in Leer, helped by the *parent teacher committee*.

The Scholastic Yacob Solomon was teaching in the VTC, and supporting the youth activities. In the middle of 2013, Bro Ritterbecks was called back for rotation in Germany, and Bro. Pierre Fafa Ayih was assigned to the VTC to collaborate with Bro. Bortoli. Scholastic Yacob Solomon was ordained a Priest in his home village in Ethiopia on 30 November, 2013, and assigned definitely to Leer. This was real good news for the community.

Unfortunately, at his going back to Leer, the grave event of the thousands of Nuer civilians massacred in Juba affected the whole Nuerland and in particular Unity State and Leer. The members of the two Comboni Communities, MCCJ and CMS, had to run to the bush and be evacuated from Leer. Leer was attacked and completely destroyed by the JEM Darfurian guerrilla in support of the government army. People were dispersed in the marsh bordering Leer County: an excruciating piece of history started again for the innocent Nuer civilians.

The members of two communities remained in Juba or went for some time of rest to their home countries. Fr. Chemello, who at the time of the destruction of Leer was not with them but was visiting the Christian Communities of Payinjar, after the Assembly he was instead temporarily sent to Old Fangak. At their return, Bro Fafa and Fr. Nonato Rocha were assigned respectively to St. Martin Workshop in Lomin and Justice and

Peace office in Juba. Only in June 2014, could Fr. Daniele Moschetti, the Provincial Superior, and Bro. Bortoli go back to Leer for an assessment, after the withdrawal of the Government army.

Having witnessed the severe condition of people, they thought of carrying on with some kind of relief programme. Bro. Bortoli and Fr. Yacob Shole were the first ones to go back on 28 July followed by Fr. Chemello on 17 September. On 1 October, Fr. Fernando González Galarza returned to Leer from Mexico, as Parish Priest in the place of Fr. Nonato Rocha, who went to Leer for the handing over of the Parish on 11 October, 2014. Of the community of the Comboni Sisters, only Sr. Lorena Morales could go back for short periods of time waiting for other Sisters to join her.

The presence of the Comboni Missionaries in this crucial time was of great support for the people and the Catholic Christian Community everywhere. Visits were planned to all the places, walking on foot or with the help of somebody with the motorbike. This went on normally until May, 2015, when, again, the Fathers had to evacuate. Koch, Mayendit and Leer were attacked and destroyed and the civilian population utterly harassed even more than previously in 2014. The behaviour of the Government army and the militia siding with it was disgraceful. Never had such atrocities been witnessed since the CPA agreement.

Bro. Bortoli decided to go back to Italy and the Fathers and Sisters decided to transfer to the area of Payinjar County, staying in Nyal, the old mission residence which had sheltered the Comboni community in the year 1998, when Leer was also destroyed. Nyal was the only place safe enough that could be reached also by other NGOs and WFP flights and relief.

In February, 2016 the Apostolic Administrator of Malakal Diocese, Mgr. Roko Taban Mousa, paid an apostolic visit to the people in Nyal, who were overwhelmed with joy. In September, there was also the visit of the Vicar General of the Comboni Missionaries, Fr. Jeremias dos Santos Martins, accompanied by the Provincial Superior, Fr. Daniele Moschetti. Year 2016 passed in this way and the two Comboni Communities, MCCJ and CMS, just there as a sign of hope to people with their own presence. What is wonderful to witness is the continuous growth of the Catholic Christian communities in prayer. At present, the Combonis in Nyal are Fr. González Galarza, Fr. Yacob Solomon, Sr. Lorena Morales, Sr. Araceli Avila Flores and Sr. Florence Gado Gjoua. Fr. Chemello, instead, was assigned to Tali Parish on 1 June, 2016.

Juba Community

During these six years, the community of Juba was made up of the following confreres:⁶⁵⁶

- **Fr. Daniele Moschetti** - Provincial Superior starting from January, 2011 (coordinated the Province, kept contacts with Bishops, listened to confreres and visited communities related to his responsibilities, kept correspondence with the MCCJ Institute and APDESAM, benefactors, collaborated with all Secretariats) and was the chairperson of the Religious Superior's Association (RSASS).
- Bro. Jorge Rodríguez Fayad - Superior, in charge of supplies and relations with workers, lecturer and Administrator at the Catholic University of Juba. He was assigned to Uganda in January, 2014.
- Fr. José da Silva Vieira, Vice Superior, in charge of mail, CRN news editor and collaborator with St Joseph Parish. He left Juba in December 2013.
 - *Fr. Fernando Colombo, Diocesan Administrator of Rumbek Diocese,*
 - *Fr. Joseph Ukello Yala, serving in Torit Diocese, Mission and Vocation Animation, Consultant and Spiritual Director in the Minor Seminary.*
- Bro. António Manuel Nunes Ferreira, Provincial Bursar and Procurator, Community Bursar, service of hospitality, kitchen and animal farm. He left the community at the end of 2013.
- **Bro. Bernhard Hengl** – arrived in April, 2012, with the task of SCBC fundraiser, project manager; building supervisor of St. Pauls' Major Seminary and of the hostel for Girls in Rejaf (Sisters of Charity) and of Juba Catholic University. Assigned to German Province in June 2016.
- **Fr. Guido Ollana** – arrived in July, 2012, lecturer and spiritual director at St. Paul's Major Seminary, coordinator of the community liturgy, secretary of community council, librarian and collaborator with St. Joseph Parish.
- **Bro. Giuseppe Redaelli** – joined the community of Juba in December, 2013 and in January, 2014, took up the task of Provincial Bursar and Procurator, Community Bursar; logistic, hospitality, shopping, workers,

⁶⁵⁶ From the Minutes of the Assembly, 2016. FSSPJ.

compound, kitchen, mission animation (distribution of New People and Calendars)

- **Bro. Hans Eigner** – arrived in January, 2014, In charge of buildings and at service of the Province and of the Religious in South Sudan (RSASS), supervision and maintenance of the Comboni facilities, workshop, help in the kitchen and hospitality. His major enterprises were the construction of the Comboni Pre-Postulancy *Barnaba Deng's Formation House* of Moroyok and of the *Good Shepherd Peace Centre* for *human, pastoral, and spiritual formation, peace-building and trauma healing* sponsored by the RSASS in Kit/Rejaf area.
- **Fr. Raimundo Nonato Rocha dos Santos** – assigned to Juba on 1 August, 2014, coordinator of Justice and Peace, coordinator of trauma healing for the Religious Association (RSASS), webmaster of the Provincial website and pastoral work among Internally Displaced People (IDPs). From 6 December, 2014, Superior of the community.
- **Fr. Paolino Tipo** – joined the community in July 2016. He was appointed for the office of JPIC of the Province and director of the *Good Shepherd Peace Centre* of the RSASS in Kit/Rejaf area.
- **Fr. Paul Idra** – assigned to South Sudan in March, 2016, went to Uganda for studies, waiting for appointment.

Activities of the Community

Juba community is merged with the Provincial House and the Procure. It does not run a Parish and has no specific pastoral plan. However, it offers pastoral and various other services.

- The community holds Sunday and weekdays prayer services and is a reference point for the Eritrean community in Juba;
- The community welcomes the Juba Archdiocese Vocation Promotion Team which organises meetings and retreats to young people on a monthly basis;
- The community hosts the monthly recollection day for Religious, Clergy and Laity of the Archdiocese;
- The community collaborates with St. Joseph Parish (for prayers), with the Justice and Peace Office of the Archdiocese, with RSASS and with the IDPs prayer service;
- The community supports education through the formation of Local Clergy and the sponsorship of some primary, secondary and university students (scholarships);

- The community offers space for the Lady Lomin Shop, which has been set up to promote women crafts from our mission in Kajo Kaji.

Yirol Community

The community of Yirol, in 2011 consisted of Fr. Colombo, Superior, Fr. Aguilar Guzman, Fr. Makokha, Fr. Parladé, but when the first three Fathers were assigned to other destinations, only Fr. Parladé remained and was joined by Fr. Hector Ayon Oyiamute, Fr. Antoine Kondo Komivi, who then left for the Comboni Year. At present 2016, the Comboni community of Yirol is made up of five members, Fr. Pedro Secundino Tacuri Samaniego, from Ecuador, Fr. Joseph Parladé, from Spain, Fr. Giovanni Girardi, from Italy, Bro. Jacek Andrzej Pomykacz, from Poland and Fr. Boris Ketemepi Komivi Dodzi, from Togo.

There is also a community of MSMMC Sisters (Missionary Sisters of Mary Mother of the Church). The Sisters came to Yirol in 2001 and were dedicating their service in the school, to pastoral initiatives of the Parish, youth women and visiting out-churches.

As for the youth ministry, it was mainly carried out by Fr. David Aguilar Guzman, Fr. Kondo Komivi and now is under the care of Fr. Boris Ketemepi through formation, workshops, sport activities and seminars. The Women Ministry is mainly under the care of one of the MSMMC Sisters, where women are empowered with various skills such as sewing, knitting.

In the field of education, the Parish is running three primary schools: Holy Cross Primary School with around 1,800 pupils, St. Daniel Comboni Primary School with around 1,200 pupils and a school implementing a program for adult education (ALP) with 300 students this year. Bro. Jacek Pomykacz is currently responsible for them. Since last year there is also a nursery school for children run by one of the MSMMC Sisters, Sr. Fidelis Kyomugisha."

At the same time, as it was said before, the Parish is taking care of many satellite schools by supporting them with scholastic materials. Some classrooms have been built with Parish support. The adult education is concerned with the illiteracy of many men and women. The adult education program is put in place to give a chance to the people to catch up with their education that for many reasons failed in the past.

There are many challenges ahead, but the good work done in the past years is an encouragement to carry on with dedication also for the future.

Tali Community

Along the journey, the people who faced the geographical, social and pastoral challenges at the service of the Gospel to the people of Tali Parish were Fr. Markus Körber (2007 - November, 2015, on sick leave), Fr. Joseph Pellerino (2008 - 2012), Bro. Damiano Mascalzoni (2008 - 2013), Fr. Gregor Schmidt (2009 - 2012), Fr. Salvatore Pacifico (2012 - 2013), Fr. Albino Adot Oryem (2011 - he died on 11 February, 2016), Fr. Martin Loku Mödi (since 2013).

At present, the community of Tali is made up of Fr. Martin Loku, Superior, Fr. Francesco Chemello, Parish Priest and Bro. Claudio Bozza, Local Bursar and collaborating with the clinic / PHCU (Primary Health Centre Unit).

Since May, 2014, the MCCJ community shared the house with four Franciscan Elizabethan Sisters (Sr. Anastasia Maina from Kenya, Sr. Chiara Ahlam Latif, from Egypt, Sr. Mary from Ecuador and Sr. Vittoria Faliva from Italy). They were waiting for their house to be built in order to move into their own residence. This has become true at the end of August 2016. Their commitment is in the school (nursery and primary), in the clinic, and in pastoral.

Tali Parish, at present, 2017, has 38 chapels and is divided into eight zones. At each chapel normally two volunteer Catechists are responsible for the Sunday Prayer, preparing the candidates for the reception of Sacraments, visiting the families and sick people and trying to animate the community in different ways. They are helped by a group of church councillors. Each zone has a coordinator who supervises the chapels in his area.

In Tali Parish centre, and in the majority of the outstations, there are the women's group, *the Legion of Mary*, the youth group, the altar servers (mostly boys), the dancers called *Crusaders* (mostly girls) and the choir group. Through the members of these different groups, the Good News is spread in the various social contexts of the Christian communities.

Visits to the 38 outstations are carried out regularly in order to strengthen the Christian communities, to offer formation, to celebrate the Eucharist and to administer the Sacraments. Due to the distances and difficult road conditions, especially in the rainy season, some pastoral journeys might take several days.

In collaboration with representatives of the archdiocesan administration, and by involving the members of the community in the various activities, there is a strong effort to boost interaction with the Local Church and to

strengthen the Christian communities in their commitment to faith. Several workshops are planned for the various groups. The focus, in a special way, is on the preparation and formation of the Catechists.

St. Daniel Comboni Primary School and Satellite Schools: school education is one of the greatest deficiencies among the population in South Sudan with an illiteracy rate of about 85% and apparently less than 5 % primary school leavers in the country. In Tali Payam those rates are even worse. Schools are only accessible to those living near Tali. Satellite Schools, if they operate, usually offer education only up to Primary 3. Furthermore, education is a male privilege. Most girls in our area are never enrolled, and hardly any of them will complete primary education because of early marriages.

Fr. Martin Loku Mödi, a South Sudanese, is the Principal of the school, Sr. Anastasia Maina is a teacher in the same Comboni Primary and Sr. Vittoria Faliva is in charge of the Comboni Nursery School for children.

Workshop and Agriculture: the workshop and agriculture activities have developed gradually along with the re-opening of our Mission in Tali. Since coming to Tali in 2008, a people's participation approach to develop the Mission together was followed. At present, the Mission has a small garage and a workshop equipped with simple structures to provide various needed services and a space for agriculture, for vegetables and orchards inside the Mission compound, with some domestic animals.

Health Activity: a small dispensary/clinic for health promotion is run in collaboration with the Franciscan Elizabethan Sisters. It is registered under the Ministry of Health as a PHCU (Primary Health Centre Unit). The clinic is now running the activity in a new building which has been opened in August 2016, with a proper set up. Sr. Chiara Ahlam Latif is running the PHCU with the help of Bro. Claudio Bozza. The clinic treats around 2,000 patients per month, with over 100 patients on Mondays and an average of 60-70 per day on the other days of the week. In Tindilo Payam (Rejaf and Ngalek/Kubiri) there are other two units where around 200-300 patients per month are treated, as well.

The PHCU has a *Leprosy Outreach Program* extended to the whole area of the Parish, in Tali County and Tindilo County. The villages are regularly visited by a trained leprosy team. This service is coordinated with the local Health Department and the State Ministry of Health. At present, the personnel of the PHCU are taking care of 195 leprosy patients.

Lomin Community

In 2011, the confreres who served in the Comboni community of Lomin during the terms of office of Fr. Daniele Moschetti (2011-2016) were Fr. Louis Okot Tony Ochermoi, Superior, Fr. Albino Adot Oryem, Sc. Phillip Kenyi Andrug, Fr. Ezio Bettini, Bro. Erich Fischnaller, Fr. Victor Kouande Adekoun and Fr. Jimmy Milla Aventore.

In 2012, Fr. Phillip Kenyi Andrug was ordained Priest, (*he went for studies in Rome, from 2014 until 2016*); in 2015, Fr. David Octavio Aguilar Guzman and Bro. Pierre Fafa Ayih Teko joined the community.

The community in 2016 was composed by Fr. Victor Kouande Adekoun, Superior and Parish Priest, Bro. Pierre Fafa Ayih Teko, Bro. Fischnaller Erich; Fr. José Jesus Aranda Nava (in July) and Fr. Isaac Martin Arnanz (in October) joined the community, as well.

Sacred Heart Parish, Lomin, has 38 chapels and 35 Catechists. In Lomin there is a Parish cemetery where three Comboni Missionaries are buried. In some chapels there are nursery schools for children supported and sponsored by the Parish.

The Parish started and completed the construction of the main church centre in Lomin and in Mondikolok outstation, which is supposed to become a new Parish. Both were inaugurated in 2015, the first on 12 June, the feast of Sacred Heart of Jesus and the second on 14 June. Both were inaugurated in the presence of H. G. Paolino Lokudu Loro, Archbishop of Juba, of Bishop Erkolano Ladu Tombe of Yei and Fr. Daniele Moschetti, Provincial Superior of the Comboni Missionaries.

The construction of chapels in the form of multipurpose centres took place in Kiri, Mogiri, Kokonye and Jale. During the week, they are used as nursery schools for children, as well.

Activities and Formation:

The Missionary Children group meets weekly and prays the Rosary for peace. The children are doing mission appeals on *World Mission Sunday* by going to the markets and to the families to collect some help in view of helping those in need in society.

The Women's Groups in the outside chapels have monthly meetings with one of the Sisters or among themselves.

Catholic Action and the Catholic Women Association are sharing with the Bible on the readings of the coming Sundays in families. The Parish Priest, Sr. Dorinda Lopes de Cunha and other collaborators take part in it. There are also formation workshops on topics mainly based on the theme of the year given in the Church.

The training of Catechists is carried out through formation workshops three times a year, with the participation of almost all of them. After these workshops there is also a follow up in their respective chapels through visits of the Parish Priest and the head Catechists.

Justice and peace workshops have been held in the Parish centre and also in the zone centres. Facilitators and experienced collaborators have been well prepared.

The formation of youths is carried out in schools, through the teaching of catechism and administration of Sacraments. The YCS (Young Christian Students) have weekly and monthly meetings in five different schools. At Parish level there have been some workshops open to all the youth.

The missionary animation of the Local Church has been done especially during the feast of the Parish, the Comboni feast, *World Vocation Sunday* and *World Mission Sunday*.

Education: the work of education is carried out through the teaching in Comboni Comprehensive College: support to needy students in both primary and secondary schools is taken care of. On 27 February, 2013, the Comboni Comprehensive College was handed over by the Comboni Missionaries to the Diocese of Yei and it is going on well with its service to education of youth.

Unfortunately I have to conclude with a sad note because of the present situation of grave insecurity due to fighting in the whole territory of Lomin Parish with January of New Year, 2017. Many people fled and took refuge in Northern Uganda, the Comboni Comprehensive College had to be shut down. The Parish and St. Martin Workshop were not shut down but few people remain there. The future of all the above wonderful initiatives is surely put at stake with no clear future.

Mapuordit Community

The confreres composing the community of Mapuordit at the start of Fr. Moschetti's term of office were Fr. Antoine Kondo Komivi, Bro. Rosario Iannetti and Bro. Andres Gaspar Abarca. The two communities of the OLSH Sisters and of the Apostles of Jesus, with Fr. Mark Ofuho, Rector of the Seminary, and Fr. Victor, were also helping in the pastoral running of the Parish

During this period of time the confreres continued their journey building up upon the achievements of the former confreres. On 9 July, 2011, Independence Day, the new just completed Parish church was inaugurated, with the first Holy Mass celebrated by Fr. Mark Ofuho, AJ, even though Fr.

Antoine Kondo Komivi, the Parish Priest, was still in Mapuordit, but appointed to Yirol by 2012. The church was packed. There was also the completion of the Parish hall, dormitories for Catechists and Parish office.

In 2012, Fr. Titus Henry Makokha, Sc. Jacek Andrzej Pomykacz, Fr. Mario Riva and Fr. Juan Martin Torres Alferez joined it. Again, in September 2012, Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino joined it; in 2014, Fr. Boris Ketemepi Komivi Dodzi, Sc. Placide Petit Majambo Lutumba, Bro. Hernan Romero Arias and in 2015, Fr. Fernando Colombo and Bro. Patrick Lumami Mwanza joined, as well.

In 2016, the community was made up of Fr. Iannetti Rosario, Superior, Bro. Gaspar Abarca Andres, Fr. Placide Petit Majambo Lutumba, Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino and Bro. Romero Arias Hernan.

The confreres realized that the main challenge of their time was the violence still present in the area, though the situation had improved, due to tribalism, matters of dowry distribution, adulteries, grazing land, stealing of cows. Periodical clashes between Atuot, Agar, Jang and Jur groups were causing deaths and migration of families from their villages.

Other challenges were coming from the fact that polygamy was still predominant among the people, famine especially between April and July, illiteracy, especially outside Mapuordit, education for girls still very low, poor health care in the families, a hardly noticeable participation of women in the social field, and the returnees coming back into the area.

The more widespread challenges faced at Diocesan and Parish level were the inculturation of the liturgy and Sacraments, Marriage in the Dinka culture, the scarcity of Local Clergy and Religious, no full commitment of the Catechists, poor commitment of the people to the Church (poor link between faith and life), belief in witchcraft, few people attending Sunday mass in the chapels, poor participation of adults in the Church.

In 2012, Mapuordit had 11 chapels and 30 full-time and part-time Catechists. The stress continued to be put on a self-reliant Church, according to the directives of the Diocese, the Post-Synod Apostolic Exhortations of Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Africa* and the Second African Synod, the Post-Synod Apostolic Exhortations of Pope Benedict XVI, *Africae Munus*. On Justice and Peace the community was following the Six-Year Plan of the South Sudan Province and the same African Synods through various workshops.

The collaboration with the OLSH Sisters and the Apostles of Jesus was going on well and was very fruitful. The community was putting good effort to foster a positive understanding, dialogue and collaboration with other entities, as well, like the other Local Christian Denominations as the

Episcopal Church of Sudan (ECS), the largest Christian group in our area, by organizing together some ecumenical celebrations during the year and encouraging a brotherly dialogue with its leaders and members.

The community was maintaining dialogue and collaboration with the local authorities and chiefs of the area and each one's role. The same was done with other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the area, avoiding competition and duplication of works.

The Comboni Schools in Mapuordit and Makur Agar had completed the construction of their various classrooms, libraries, stores, toilets, etc. in 2010 and 2011 in permanent materials. Due to the insecurity, at that time, the Comboni Primary in Mapuordit had 1,120 students, while some years previously it had nearly 2,000; Makur Agar, which had up to 600 students, had become very small, evacuated from the buildings and arranged under the trees near Akot because of insecurity, clashes and fear.

The Comboni Secondary School started with more than 300 students, but only 260 remained for the same reason; the Principal was Mr. Daniel Marial. Instead, the Headmaster of the primary school was the very experienced and revered Mr. Lino Deng Dut, the same very one who started the primary as head teacher with Fr. Michael Barton in 1993. The Financial Director and Administrator, at the time, was Sr. Rita Grunke, OLSH.

On 7 September, 2012, Fr. Pellerino was assigned again to Mapuordit, after some years in Tali, and again appointed Parish Priest, but only temporarily, till the arrival of the newly ordained Priest Fr. Placide Majambo, who is the present Parish Priest and Superior of the Comboni community. In November 2016 Bro. Iannetti left also Mapuordit assigned to Wau.

Commitments with special arrangement

Of these three commitments, Nyamlel and Barghel projects were to be handed over to the respective Dioceses within the Six-Year Plan. Ayod, instead, was foreseen to become a new regular Comboni commitment but the war situation complicated everything. However, the commitment, though in an emergency way, it is not put in doubt.

Nyamlel Pastoral Commitment

Nyamlel Parish continued with the previous commitments, Fr. Barton carried on alone both the school and the pastoral work. According to the

Six-Year Plan, the Parish and school of Nyamlel were to be handed over to the Diocese of Wau in 2013, and it was done on 31 January. The MMI (Missionaries of Mary Immaculate) took it over.

Barghel Project

The project *Ireneo Dud Vocational Training Centre*” in Barghel (Cueibet District) was carrying on under the care of Fr. Giovanni Girardi. Providentially, the AVSI, a Christian organization that was very much interested in the education through VTC in South Sudan, showed interest in the project. In collaboration with the Diocese of Rumbek and the Onlus SUDIN, AVSI took over the Barghel project in May 2014. Fr. Giovanni Girardi, who has always been open for this move, strongly supported it. Thus, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the two organizations and Rumbek Diocese.⁶⁵⁷

Ayod Community

In March, 2011, Fr. Carlassare carried on with his visits to the Lou Nuer of Wuror/Nyirol County and of Ayod/Mogok. During these visits, Fr. Antonio La Braca made Fr. Carlassare aware of the pastoral situation in the Christian community of Ayod. The need of priestly ministry was enormous but he himself could not respond adequately because he had dedicated himself to contemplation.

In December 2011, the Provincial Superior, Fr. Daniele Moschetti, visited Fr. La Braca in Ayod and understood the difficulty of Fr. La Braca to reconcile his call to be a hermit with the needs of pastoral work. During the Provincial Assembly of 2012, Fr. Antonio made an appeal to his confreres, pleading for pastoral help among the NUER GAWAR and LOU. Then, Fr. Moschetti met with Fr. Carlassare and La Braca and agreed that Ayod, though part of the Parish of Old Fangak, would be considered as a different pastoral area, with the hope it would become soon a Parish. In the meantime Fr. La Braca would continue offering his usual services while waiting for the right time. On Christmas, 2012, Fr. Gregor Schmidt Bog-Dong went to visit Ayod and Mogok. At Easter, 2013, Fr. Alfred Mawadri visited Ayod and Mogok, too.

⁶⁵⁷ Report of the Provincial Superior Fr. Daniele Moschetti” to the Provincial Assembly, Juba, 17-22 March, 2014. FSSPJ.

Unexpectedly, Fr. Michael Barton volunteered to join Fr. La Braca according to the request he had made during the Assembly. He was accepted and sent to Ayod. Fr. Michael had been in Leer for one month studying the Nuer Language. It was January, 2014, just few weeks after the massacre of Nuer People took place in Juba, Leer was attacked and destroyed. All our confreres had to abandon the place and Fr. Barton fled to Old Fangak where he remained for a couple of months.

On 12 April, 2014, Fr. Barton joined Fr. La Braca and celebrated Easter in Ayod. A few weeks later, Ayod was attacked and captured by the government army. The population fled and Fr. La Braca and Fr. Barton also moved with the people, first to Jiuny and then to Mogok,

Fr. Michael Barton was appointed Acting Parish Priest of the new Christian community, Acting Superior of the Comboni community and Director of the school. With the permission of the Authorities of Mogok he started a primary school from P.1 to P.5. The school started with 126 pupils in 2014 and reached 179 in 2016. While in 2014 almost two thirds of the students dropped out of school, in 2016 only a quarter dropped out.

At the end of 2014, Fr. Barton visited Jiech and Haat on foot. Then, he went to Wuror, Nyirol and Akobo counties twice during the dry season of the years 2015 and 2016. (Akobo is far away on the border with Ethiopia).

Regarding the church building in Ayod, the news went that the roof in iron sheets was taken away by the invading army, but there was no proper information about its metallic structure. At present, the Comboni community of Ayod/Mogok is fulfilling the agreed plan of having both *active pastoral work* and *eremitical life* contemporaneously, in an *active missionary and contemplative life* blended together.

Communities assumed after the independence

Wau and Raja were re-assumed with the independence of South Sudan and continued with their previous commitments. However, according to the Six-Year Plan, both Parishes were supposed to be handed over to the Diocese of Wau. Raja was handed over, but Wau was postponed to an indefinite future.

Wau community

From 1980 to 2004, the confreres who gave their service in the community of Bussere/Wau were, Fr. Luigi Penzo, Fr. Vittorino Dellagiacoma. Bro. Libero Duino Francesco Ribelli, Fr. Felice

Sciannameo, in Bussere; in Wau, Fr. Luigi De Giorgi, Bro. Aldo Marangio, Fr. Agostino Bertolotti, Fr. Antonio La Braca, Fr. Lorenzo Tomasoni, Bro. Giuseppe Redaelli, Hans Dieter Ritterbecks, Fr. Dr. Lorenzo Tomasoni, Fr. Eugenio Caligari, Bro. Rosario Iannetti, Fr. Tesfaye Tadesse Gebresilasie, Fr. Salvatore Pacifico.

The Parish of St. Daniel Comboni was founded on 27 June, 1999. Before June 1999 the community of Wau was formed by Bro. Rosario, who handed over Agok hospital to a Sudanese doctor before leaving Wau in August, 1999, for South Africa, in order to prepare for his final vows. The other member of the community was Fr. Eugenio Caligari who, at the end of June, 1999, left Wau for Italy for health reasons. He was the Parish Priest of St. Joseph Parish, in Wau for many years.

By June, 1999, the community of Wau was formed by Fr. John Peter Alenyo and Fr. Isaac Martin Aranz. The only activity was pastoral and the starting of the new Parish of St. Daniel Comboni. Fr. Salvatore Pacifico joined the community in 2002. When Fr. Tomasoni returned to Wau he worked in the clinic of the Salesian Sisters in Wau and also helped Sr. Bianca Benatelli in the temporary premises of the clinic of Solidarity with South Sudan (SSS). At week-ends he was going to Agok for pastoral work. Fr. Peter Alenyo left Wau in 2002 and Fr. Pacifico in 2004 when Fr. Elia Juma Androgo Morsal joined the community. The pastoral activity continued in the Comboni Parish.

From 2005-2010, the Comboni community went on with its service with Fr. Isaac Martin Aranz, Fr. Elia Juma Androgo Morsal, Fr. Dr. Lorenzo Tomasoni, Bro. Giuseppe Manara, Fr. Pietro Coronella and, in 2009, Bro. Giuseppe Redaelli, as diocesan Administrator and Sc. Peter Alphonse Ladu Loro, as well.

The confreres composing the community of Wau from 2011 to 2016 were Fr. Isaac Martin Aranz, Sc. Peter Alphonse Ladu Loro, Bro. Giuseppe Redaelli, Fr. Dr. Lorenzo Tomasoni, Fr. Luciano Perina and the medical doctor Bro. Paolo Rizzetto since 2012; from 2014, Fr. Ezio Bettini joined the community as advisor of the Diocesan Administrator and then left for Italy in 2016, while Bro. Patrick Lumami Mwanza arrived from Mapuordit in 2015. Bro. Dr. Rizzetto left for Mapuordit, where he took over the administration of the hospital on 1 July, 2016, Fr. Isaac Martin Aranz was transferred to Lomin on 27 September, 2016, as well.

From 1 July, 2016, the community was made up by Fr. Ghislain Amoussou Comlan, Superior and Parish Priest, Bro. Patrick Lumami Mwanza, Bro. Antonio Manuel Nunes Ferreira, Fr. Salomon Badatana Apélété Agnata, from September, 2016 and Bro. Dr. Rosario Iammetti who

joined the community on 24 November, 2016. A lay person, Mr. Matteo Perotti, is also part of the community since April, 2011.

Bro. Antonio Nunes Ferreira was working with Solidarity South Sudan (SSS) since April, 2016, while Bro. Lumami Mwanza, a nurse, was already working in the diocesan hospital of Wau since January, 2015. Bro. Iannetti joined him in the diocesan hospital, a structure built in the fifties and then confiscated by the government of Khartoum to become a military hospital until 2008. When the Diocese of Wau got it back, it re-habilitated it under the care of Bro. Giuseppe Redaelli and Sr. Dr. Maria Martinelli, a Comboni Sister medical doctor, with funds donated by the CEI (Conferenza Episcopale Italiana) between 2008 and 2011.

The hospital was re-built in different phases and started to be operational in 2010. The first renovated buildings of the Diocesan Catholic Hospital of Wau were blessed, with the official name of *Saint Daniel Comboni Catholic Hospital* (SDCCH), on 30 November, 2010, in the presence of His Grace Archbishop Josef Erwin Ender and Mons. Rudolf Deng Majak. The OPD was opened to the public on 18 January, 2011. The Comboni Sisters working there were Dr. Maria Martinelli, Director of the hospital, Dr. Marianna Santin, Sr. Bianca Benatelli and Sr. Joyce Ajio (in charge of the OPD).

Fr. Ghislain Amoussou Comlan and Fr. Salomon Badatana Apéléte Agnata are fully involved in pastoral work. The main activity and priorities are:

- To promote unity among the different tribes which compose the Parish.
- Lead the faithful to a deeper spiritual life through training and workshops.
- To be close to those affected by the present crisis and living in IDP camps or church premises.
- Emphasise the teaching of the Church with regards to the Sacraments and assure that the foundations are laid in a proper way.

With this present crisis, which led thousands of Christians to flee their homes, huge challenges lie ahead: first of all, the uncertainty about the future, anything can happen in no time, because of the atmosphere of fear within certain ethnic groups of the Parish.

People seek refuge in churches and feel protected being within such premises, as IDP Parishioners, but it implies supplying them with material goods and food. This crisis has created a loss of hope within people and on

top of that, the general economic situation of the country makes everything harder.

Even though there is an effort to get the Parish into a journey of self-reliance, the same effort is slowed down due to the circumstances and, once more, the need to put more trust in the Lord and in his Word is felt much stronger.

Raja community

The community of Raja was taken back by the South Sudan Province on 1 July, 2011. In the past, until the month of December, 1994, it was part of the South Sudan Province, but then the Province of Khartoum took care of it, since it was in the *government areas*, while the new Delegation of South Sudan was taking care of the *liberated areas*, instead.

The community of Raja was opened in January, 1935, a daughter of the community of Deim Zubeir opened in 1926. It was first opened in Ringhi, in 1932, about thirty miles west, on the road to Boro Medina but then it moved to Raja because in Ringhi there was not enough water. It was meant for first evangelization as all the other missions of South Sudan. The presence of Islam made the opening even more urgent.

Islam and the Arabs, in their attempt to penetrate the South, found it difficult to do it in areas inhabited by Dinkas and Nuer. They found it easier through the small tribes of the west. Actually, they had already penetrated the area, first with Zubeir, a slaves' trader, who in Deim Zubeir had a centre of recruitment of slaves, and then in Raja itself, where there was the tribe of Ferughe', that had come from Dar Fur and had settled in Raja.

Their Islamic stand was very strong. They did not accept in their villages a Christian school like in the other areas: in 1946 a school was opened by the missionaries in Khor Shamam, the centre of the Ferughe', but Christian Religion could not be taught. Arabic and Islamic presence remained always strong. It was particularly felt during the time of NCP (of El Bashir). One of the people who made the revolution with Bashir was a Ferughe' from Raja. He was behind the policy of the NCP in the South, especially in Bahr el Ghazal. His family controlled Raja till the CPA.

They tried by all means to weaken the presence and influence of the Church. Twice the MCCJ were sent away, even if only for a short time. It was not a case if in the referendum the unionists got 12% of the votes, against the 1.7% of the South Sudan. The MCCJ and the CMS were

expelled from Raja in 1964, together with all the other missionaries of South Sudan. The MCCJ returned back in 1985.

From this date onwards, the confreres who served in Raja were Fr. Alfonso Polacchini, Bro. Ambrogio Confalonieri, Fr. Gino Tosello, Fr. Nicola Lo Polito, Fr. Salvatore Pacifico, Fr. José Javier Parladé Escobar, Fr. John Peter Alenyo, Fr. Luigi Cignolini and Fr. Alberto Jesus Eisman Torres. Raja was closed on 17 July, 2000, due to the war, and reopened on 4 April, 2006, under the Province of Khartoum. The confreres who served between 2006 and 2010 were Fr. George Duku, Fr. Eugenio Caligari, Bro. Tarcisio Soardi, Fr. Paul Annis, and Bro. Ramirez Falcón Nicolás Martin. The CMS never returned to Raja. On 1 July, 2011, it became part of the Province of South Sudan.

Evangelization worked hand in hand with education. A school was opened in Raja (up to class 4) and villages schools (only the first two classes) were opened in the villages which were under its control: Mangayat in the East and Deim Jalab, Menamba (Ges Boro), Kata, and Boro on the West. To complete the primary, pupils had to go to Deim Zubeir (till class five). For the intermediate they had to go to Bussere, for the technical school to Tonj.

Nothing was done on the way towards Aweil and El Daen. In the nineties small Christian Centres were opened on the newly opened road towards Tumsah. Until 2009, Raja was serving also Deim Zubeir with all the communities on the way to Wau. In 2009 the Sudanese Clergy took charge of these areas until Sopo, a big centre 42 miles from Raja on the way to Wau.

Until 2010, there were Fr. Eugenio Caligari and Bro. Tarcisio Soardi. Fr. Martin Ramirez Falcón came back to Raja after his ordination in November, 2010, and was the head master of the Comboni Basic School. Fr. Salvatore Pacifico went to Raja in December, 2010, for an emergency situation, as Fr. Caligari and Bro. Soardi had left for holidays. With the independence of South Sudan, the confreres in Raja were Fr. Salvatore Pacifico and Fr. Martin Ramirez Falcón and Bro. Tarcisio Soardi, (belonging to the Khartoum Province). In 2012, Jervas Mawut Mayik Nyok joined the community and, in 2013, Fr. Ezio Bettini and Fr. Luigi Sergio Chesini.

From 2014 until the handing over of Raja to the Diocese of Wau, Fr. Jervas Mawut Mayik Nyok remained as the Superior of the community and Parish Priest, together with Fr. Luigi Sergio Chesini. Raja was handed over Raja on 6 January, 2015.

Activities: beside the Parish of Raja there were communities with Catechist leaders in Mangayat, Beluko, Khor Abuna, Deim Jalab, Ges Boro, Kurvaya, Kata, Boro and Medina. In five of these centres there was a kindergarten maintained by the Parish. On Sundays, the Eucharist was celebrated in the main church, and in Khor Abuna. Sometimes one of the Fathers was celebrating in one of the centres outside. Once a week (on Thursday) there was the celebration in UNMISS camp for the Kenyan catholic soldiers, who anyway, attended also the mass on Sunday in the Parish.

The School: in the 90ies, the Parish managed to open a boys' basic school, a girls' basic school and a senior secondary. The secondary was closed in 2011 as it was difficult to get proper staff; the girls' school was unified with that of the boys, for the same reason. A nursery school for children was integrated into the basic school. All together there were about 600 students roughly half girls, half boys. To get good stable teachers remained a problem. As P. 7 and P. 8 were still following the Arabic pattern, there were a few teachers seconded to the school by the Government. People were speaking Arabic, but English was coming up and the teaching in schools was already English up to class six included.

Dispensary: the Parish was running a dispensary till the town was recaptured from the SPLA in 2002. In the recent years some medicines were given out by the confreres, especially in the field of epilepsy and asthma. Epilepsy was very common and more than 500 cases were taken care with drugs. The idea was to stop this service at the end of 2011 and give full responsibility to the government, which had already been contacted in this sense.

Priorities: the first priority was the family; the fact that people were taking the *status quo* as the norm indicated the need for formation at all levels. The Catechists were few, there were no candidates, and leaders in general were also needed and with a more solid formation, as well as the youth and the establishment and strengthening of the Christian communities with mature committed members. Some income generating projects were followed up.

Provincial Institutions

“Opere”⁶⁵⁸ of the South Sudan Province

As already explained, these were commitments already taken a long time previously but which needed to be given a proper status as undertakings of the Province and Institute for reasons of continuity, both as regards personnel and finance. In 2013, Daniele Giusti,⁶⁵⁹ from the General Administration, was sent to make a proper assessment and duly reported back. He called these commitments *Opere* because of their particular status, as has already been explained: *Mary Immaculate Hospital, Mapuordit, St. Martin Workshop, Lomin, and Saint Daniel Comboni Vocational Training Centre (VTC), Leer.*

Mary Immaculate Hospital, Mapuordit

Continuing from the previous Administration, the projects undertaken from 2010 and developed until 2015 were:

- The building of a Pharmacy, an X-Ray Unit, an Isolation Ward, a Permanent Surgical Ward and a Septic Surgical Ward, plus the expansion of the *Medical Ward* and of the *Maternity Ward*, bringing the total number of beds of the hospital to the present capacity of 115.⁶⁶⁰

From 2011 to 2016 the Brothers involved in Mary Immaculate Hospital were Bro. Dr. Rosario Iannetti, as surgeon and director, Bro. Andres Gaspar Abarca, as anaesthetist; in 2014, Bro. Dr. Romero Arias Hernan, as doctor/surgeon, Bro. Patrick Lumami Mwanza, as qualified nurse and, the last arrived in 2016, Bro. Dr. Paolo Rizzetto who took over, as director of the hospital, from Bro. Dr. Iannetti.

⁶⁵⁸ The word “opera” in the Italian language and in this context seems to be more suitable than other words to define the idea of a permanently established institution delivering services to the human person out of the concern for integral human development stemming from Christian anthropology. Equivalents, but not so synthetically valuable, would be definition such as “social work” or “social endeavour/enterprise”.... For this reason this assessment will use the Italian word “opera” when referring indistinctly to any of the three endeavours assessed.

⁶⁵⁹ Bro. Daniele Giusti, assessment of 3 mcej “Opere” Namely: Bro. Rosario Iannetti for MI Hospital – Mapuordit, Bro. Erich Fischnaller for St Martin Workshop – Lomin and Bro. Nicola Bortoli for St Daniel Comboni VTC – Leer.

⁶⁶⁰ Nigrizia, 2013, vocazione e l’impegno di un medico missionario / **La corsia di Rosario**, *Efrem Tresoldi*, dicembre, p. 62

Since 2009 Mary Immaculate Hospital of Mapuordit was run by the Comboni Missionaries with a *Memorandum of Understanding* with the Diocese of Rumbek from February 2009 to January 2014. In 2013, Bro. Daniele Giusti, from the general administration, was sent for an overall assessment of three MCCJ “Opere” in South Sudan, which included Mapuordit hospital, as well. An evaluation and suggestions were given on the issue. The above mentioned memorandum with the Diocese of Rumbek regarding the Mary Immaculate Hospital of Mapuordit was renewed again from 2015 to 2020, with the institution of the Board of Governors (BoG).

On 24 November, 2016, Bro. Dr. Iannetti was transferred to Wau, while Bro. Dr. Paolo Rizzetto had already taken it over on 1 July 2016 as doctor and director until now.

St. Martin Workshop, Lomin

St. Martin Workshop carried on with its activity and also expanding it. In order to get the “Opera” into a proper set up for the future, Bro. Daniele Giusti, from the general Administration, was sent in 2013 for an assessment aimed at finding out the real situation and enable appropriate guidelines to be laid down for its future administration.

In 2014, after the assessment of Bro Daniele Giusti of the General administration, the Provincial Superior, Fr. Daniele Moschetti, assigned Bro. Pierre Fafa Ayih Teko to “St. Martin Workshop” to collaborate with Bro. Fischnaller in this “Opera”, so important and prominent in the Parish of Lomin.

Bro. Fischnaller and Fafa, until now 2017, carried on implementing the directives given by the former assessment and those coming from the present Directory of the South Sudan Province, under the guidance of the Provincial and his Council, connected to all the initiatives in the field of human promotion and social development, as an integral part of evangelization. In fact, this is a specific field in the context of evangelization carried out by the ministry of the Comboni Brothers. Unfortunately, as already mentioned, the present situation of insecurity in the area affected deeply also the normal running of St. Martin Workshop.

St. Daniel Comboni VTC, Leer

Since the request of 2006 and its approval by the Provincial and his Council, the community of Leer never considered the VTC to be just a *community affair*, especially in the matter of assuring it with personnel and

continuity but, due to several unclear reasons and understandings, the matter carried on dragging itself and had to be presented to the discernment of the Provincial Assembly in 2010 and the discussion went on. At the Provincial Assembly, 2011, the experience of Leer VTC was presented again to the entire Province for the final evaluation, and in the following Provincial Council meeting of April, 2011, Leer VTC was mentioned as a *Provincial Institution*.

Already in 2011, UNICEF (DDR Program)⁶⁶¹ jointly VSF Swiss, financed the School Fees of students and this initiative boosted the attendance, but with people lacking motivations. Courses became cohorts of 15-20 people, almost all VSF sponsored students. This initiative continued in 2012 but it was then stopped for lack of funds.

In January 2012 the Provincial Council approved a document referred to as "6 year Business Plan" submitted by the Leer VTC Team foreseeing a first evaluation at the end of 2013. It would appear that also the School Charter, drafted by the Leer Team on request of the PC, was seen and approved during the following Provincial Council meeting of April.⁶⁶² In 2012 other 20 sponsored students enter the school under VSF Swiss sponsorship. The construction of additional buildings to extend the capacity of the school and introduce metal work (welding and mechanic engineering) training went under way.

In the same year the decision of adding computer training to the existing agricultural training was reached and the computers acquired with the sponsorship of benefactors arrived soon in Leer. At the same time, also Bro. Pierre Fafa Ayih Teko, newly assigned to the community of Leer for the VTC, and expert in computers, arrived. Within December 2013 the computers were already operational. Besides offering complementary computer training to the existing streams, the availability of computers opened the way for the addition of a secretarial training stream for girls,⁶⁶³ to go under way in 2014. In 2013, 7 new students joined the VTC for the agriculture stream. The construction of the extension to host the metal work stream was completed and intake would start in 2014.

⁶⁶¹ DDR: Child Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Program in South Sudan. <http://www.ssddrc.org/ddr-in-south-sudan/child-ddr.html>

⁶⁶² PC Meeting January 2012 - min 7.7 and PC Meeting April 2012 - min 10.6. FSSPJ

⁶⁶³ It would appear that this was an already made decision reached in 2012. It was not clear, though, if this decision had received the approval of the PC.

In 2013 Bro. Daniele Giusti was sent for an assessment on behalf of the General Administration.⁶⁶⁴ This was supposed to be of help for an immediate better planning for 2014 and for the future. Unfortunately, the country plunged into a bitter civil war triggered by the Nuer massacre in Juba in December 2013, which witnessed the death of thousands of Nuer civilians. Leer was attacked and destroyed, the members of the community of Leer had to evacuate and the VTC remained closed ever since. This was an appalling education loss.

The *Opera Significativa*: the Catholic Radio Network

The “Opera Significativa” that started its journey with the canonisation of Daniel Comboni, in 2003, and was named SCRNL, *Sudan Catholic Radio Network*, after the referendum for self-determination and the independence of South Sudan, took the name of CRN, *Catholic Radio Network*. However, it carried on including the radio base in the Nuba Mountain, though in the Republic of Sudan.

Recalling the mandate given to the management of the project, that was to establish the radio network by setting up radio stations in each of the Dioceses of Southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains, it included, as well, the setting up of a News Desk and a Training Centre as supporting structures for the work of the stations. The News Desk had been operating consistently and it was an integral part of the production and contribution of the SCRNL to each station.

By this time, all the radios were supposed to be fully operational, in line with the mission and goals for which they were created, throughout this transitional period. By July 9, 2011, therefore, it can be said that, except for Yambio and Wau, the radio network had achieved its goal.

The after referendum period was a second face of the enterprise. The sustainability of the diocesan radio stations was the main challenge and the major concern. The SCRNL had to address the issue of the Financial Administrator seriously, together with that of the Executive Committee and the Board of Governors so that they may be fully functional in the

⁶⁶⁴ Ref. Rome, October 2013, Bro. Daniele Giusti, mcej. Report: St Daniel Comboni Vocational Training Centre Leer, Towards an improved organizational sustainability, assessment of selected MCCJ related social organizations in the MCCJ South Sudan Province, pp. 15-24. FSSPJ.

respective responsibilities for a good running towards a smooth hand-over of the whole network.⁶⁶⁵

Bro. Alberto Lamana was, since the beginning, the Financial Administrator and Technical Adviser of the SCRN, an untiring and full committed confrere who really believed in the important mission of the radio network and the positive effect radio would exercise on the building up of the country at religious, human, social and political level. He was called back to work in his own country of origin, Spain, and concluded his commitment just few weeks before South Sudan could celebrate its independence. A commitment worth the effort!

After July 9th, 2011, Independence Day, the SCRN, renamed CRN, carried on its precious work with Sr. Paola Moggi still as the chair person. Sr. Cecilia was in charge of Radio Bakhita and Fr. José Vieira in charge of the News Desk. However, being the time of the foreseen hand over near, it was of utmost importance to place the new personnel in charge of the future running in their position of responsibility. This was the task of the Board of Governors with the final decisions of the respective Dioceses, for their radios, and the SCBC for the whole CR Network.

In brief about the network

The Catholic Radio Network (CRN) is a media project constituted by community-based radio stations broadcasting in *Frequency Modulation* from Juba, Yei, Torit, Yambio, Rumbek, Tonj, Wau, and Malakal. CRN has also a station in the Nuba Mountains.

About itself, its vision, mission and values, all can be found in its website, *catholicradionetwork.org*. CRN is an apolitical body. It does not side with any political group or party. Its aim is to help the listeners form a mature civic conscience.⁶⁶⁶

❖ **CRN Centre**, Catholic Radio Network Centre, Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference - South Sudan Secretariat, P.O. Box 258, Juba, Republic of South Sudan.

Radio Stations by the beginning of 2017

1. ***Bakhita Radio***, Juba, **foundation:** 24 December, 2006.
2. ***Voice of Peace Radio***, Gidel, **foundation:** 22 April, 2009
3. ***Emmanuel Radio***, Torit, **foundation:** 16 June, 2009.
4. ***Sout al Mahaba Radio***, (**Voice of Love**) **Malakal**, 5 August 2009

⁶⁶⁵ Bro. Alberto Lamana, Radio Bakhita, Narrative to the General administration, 2011. FSSPJ.

⁶⁶⁶ Ref. CRN (Catholic Radio Network) <http://catholicradionetwork.org/?q=node/10515>

5. **Easter Radio**, Yei, founded: 21 January, 2010.
6. **Good News Radio**, Rumbek, foundation: 25 January, 2010
7. **Don Bosco Radio**, Tonj, foundation: 5 February, 2010.
8. **Anisa Radio**, Yambio, foundation: 5 July, 2011.
- Centenary FM 100, the Voice of Bishop Gasi, 12 April, 2016.
9. **Voice of Hope Radio**, Wau, foundation: 11 October, 2011.

Sr. Cecilia Sierra Salcido: farewell

Sr. Sierra Salcido left South Sudan on 1 December, 2011, and left some line marking her experience with Radio Bakhita:

“At the farewell party I saw Bakhita coming to life in all the people who have been prepared to carry on the work. What a different picture from the first years in Juba. Bakhita Radio was not only an institution but people, South Sudanese, young, happy, prepared and committed to continue and be true to a dream. I saw it and I smiled with satisfaction and gratitude. It was very good!”⁶⁶⁷

Looking at the result, after all the efforts put into it at different levels, everyone who was committed to this venture should feel proud of the result and also “smile” with satisfaction on the great achievement reached and the good fruits the whole undertaking would produce in the Country of the Republic of South Sudan.

Handing Over Process

In 2010, the issue of the handing over of the SCRNs was dealt with. All the members agreed that the future of SCRNs and the partner radio stations depended on how well the handing over by the Comboni Institutes to the Local Church was understood, managed and executed. However, the process of handing over remained unclear to many respondents, what it actually entailed in concrete terms, the steps to be followed and the time lines.

Some of the radio stations were still heavily dependent on the financial and technical support from the SCRNs, others, such as the radios in Wau and Yambio were not yet on air and would require an adequate transition period to be independent and to articulate sustainability strategies.

The suggestion of the SCBC was that the handing over should be postponed until 2015, however, keeping into account that the original timeframe to pass on the responsibility of the SCRNs to the SCBC was in 2011, it was agreed to hand it over in 2013. Meanwhile, the process went as

⁶⁶⁷ Sr. Cecilia Sierra Salcido, History of the Bakhita Radio, 2011. FSSPJ.

follows: Bro. Alberto Lamana was assigned to Spain, on 1 January, 2011, but remained until July of the same year; Sr. Cecilia Sierra Salcido left for Mexico on 1 December, 2011.

Sr. Paola Moggi, who was the directress since August, 2007, left for Italy in November 2013. Formerly, Sr. Moggi had invited Ms. Enrica Valentini, a volunteer sent by Caritas Como (Italy), to work in the Diocese of Wau. Ms. Valentini started and was the directress of *Voice of Hope*, then, the SCBC asked her to be the new CRN coordinator. Fr. José Vieira, in 2012, started working with Mr. Alfred Soka, a Catholic journalist from Kwörejik Parish, in order to prepare him for the job of CRN News Editor. When he started working, in June 2013, Fr. Vieira became his assistant. Meanwhile, a team to work with him was formed to carry on with the work, and he left for Portugal in December, 2013.

Sr. Elena Balatti ended her commitment in April 2015, when *Sout al Mahaba Radio*, of CRN Malakal, went off air for the second time due to fighting in Malakal town. The station of the Diocese of Malakal never resumed broadcasting since that time. By 2015, except for *Voice of Peace*, Nuba Mountains and *Sout al-Mahaba*, Malakal, all stations were managed by local staff. Sr. Mary Carmen Galicia Alfaro, directress of the *Voice of Peace*, Nuba Mountains, who started in 2006, ended in June 2016.

Another very important achievement was the presence of CRN in internet with its web page, with the news produced by the news-desk. The news-desk has an account in Twitter with the news it produces, as well, and Bakhita Radio has got a page and posts audio news through its social media page in Facebook.

Among the challenges encountered along the journey, one was the difficult relationship the radios sometimes encountered between the political authorities and the stations. At the start, the radio was welcome by the same authorities as a great opportunity to tell the truth and denounce what was wrong. Along the journey, however, certain broadcasted topics or programmes were looked upon as an interference with politics, so it happened that those stations were ordered to close down for a certain period of time and the persons responsible questioned on those issues.

A note of Fr. José Vieira worth mentioning is that CRN prepared a great number of journalists and presenters that now work with the Government and private TV stations and in some radios, including Eye Radio and Radio Miraya because more economically advantageous. *This was a frustrating experience, knowing the difficulty involved in training journalists who*

would then just leave for another station, however, it is my joy to see them leading the field of information in the country.⁶⁶⁸

Thus, all the radio stations are now run by prepared local personnel from the various Dioceses. The two Comboni Provincial Superiors, Sr. Giovanna Sguazza and Fr. Daniele Moschetti and, by the end of 2016, Sr. Evette Ann Seib and Fr. Moschetti remained members of the Board of governors and Fr. Louis Okot took now over from Fr. Moschetti.

Personnel at 1 January, 2014, Communities⁶⁶⁹

At the beginning of the second term of office of Fr. Daniele Moschetti, as Provincial Superior, these were the communities and their composition

Juba Comboni House

Fr. Daniele Moschetti	Provincial Superior
Bro. Jorge Arturo Rodriguez Fayad	Superior
Bro. Bernhard Hengl	SCBC
Fr. Guido Oliana	Seminary
Bro. Giuseppe Redaelli	Provincial Bursar

Juba Bishop's House

H. G. Paulino Lukudu Loro	Archbishop of Juba
---------------------------	--------------------

Leer Parish

Fr. Francesco Chemello	Superior
Bro. Pierre Ayih Teko Fafa D.J.	VTC
Bro. Nicola Bortoli	VTC
Fr. Raimundo Nonato Rocha dos Santos	Parish Priest
Fr. Yacob Solomon Shole	Pastoral

Lomin (Kajo Kaji) - Parish

Fr. Victor Kouande Adekoun	Superior - Parish Priest
Fr. Phillip Kenyi Andrugá	Pastoral
Bro. Erich Fischnaller	Workshop

Lomin (Kajo Kaji) - Pre-Postulancy

Fr. Louis Okot Tony Ochermoi	Superior - Formator
Fr. Salvatore Pacifico	Assist. Formator

Mapuordit - Parish

Bro. Rosario Iannetti	Superior / Hospital
Bro. Andrés Gaspar Abarca	Hospital

⁶⁶⁸ Written note from Fr. José Vieira to the writer.

⁶⁶⁹ Report of the Provincial Superior Fr. Daniele Moschetti to the Provincial Assembly, Juba, 17-22 March, 2014. FSSPJ.

Fr. Boris Ketemepi Komivi Dodzi	Pastoral
Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino	Parish Priest
Sc. Placide Petit Majambo Lutumba	Pastoral experience
Old Fangak - Parish	
Fr. Schmidt Gregor Bog-Dong	Superior
Fr. Christian Carlassare	Parish Priest
Fr. Alfred Mawadri	Pastoral
Sc. Ketema Dage Tadesse	Pastoral Experience
Raga Parish	
Fr. Jervas Mawut Mayik Nyok	Parish Priest
Fr. Luigi Sergio Chesini	Pastoral
Bro. Giuseppe. Manara	Bursar
Tali' Parish	
Fr. Markus Lorenz Körber	Parish Priest-Superior
Fr. Albino Adot Oryem	Pastoral
Fr. Martin Loku	Pastoral
Wau Parish	
Fr. Isaac Martin Amanz	Superior - Parish Priest
Fr. Ezio Bettini	Pastoral
Fr. Luciano Perina	Pastoral
Bro. Paolo Rizzetto	Solidarity - CHTI
Fr. Lorenzo Tomasoni	Medical
Yirol Parish	
Fr. David Octavio Aguilar Guzman	Superior
Fr. Hector Ayon Oyiamute	Pastoral
Fr. Antoine Kondo Komivi	Pastoral
Fr. José Javier Parladé Escobar	Parish Priest
Sc. Lwanga Gilingere Limingere KRT	Pastoral Experience
In particular ministry or experience	
Fr. Femardo Colombo	Rumbek
Fr. Giovanni Girardi	Barghel
Fr. Antonio La Braca	Ayod
Fr. Peter Magalasi	Yambio
Fr. Jimmy Milla Aventore	Out with permission
Fr. Joseph Okello Yala	Torit
Waiting for destination	
Fr. José Jesus Aranda Nava	
Fr. Michael Donald Barton	
Fr. Emmanuel Denima Darama	
Bro. Johann Eigner	

Fr. Femardo González Galarza
 Fr. Marcello Romano Monyo
 Bro. Heman Romero Arias
 Fr. Pedro Tacuri Samaniego Secundino

In other Provinces

Bro. Antonio Manuel Nunes Ferreira	Portugal-course
Bro. Damiano Mascalzoni Rome	C/CYOF
Fr. Fernando González Galarza	(M)
Fr. Monyo Marcello Romano	(U)

Provincial Secretariats

The reorganisation of the Secretariats in the time of office of Fr. Daniele Moschetti was done in order to allow them to deliver their service in a better way and be of real help to the Provincial Council in their specific fields of action and ministry. During this period of time their work was rather intense, sometimes the pressure was even too much, both through the positive and negative events which affected South Sudan since the time of independence.

In all the fields a deeper reflection and coordination was carried out that brought good fruits for the whole Province and a better help for the communities and for each confrere in the field of *Evangelization, Vocation Ministry* and *Basic Formation*, for the good of the future generations of Combonis in the Province, and in the field of *On-Going Formation And Finance*.

Secretariat of Evangelization

Since the start of 2011, an effort was made to revitalise the Secretariats. Subsequently, the Secretariat of Evangelization also underwent this process in order to better answer the needs of this most important field.

The Secretariat of Evangelization took its responsibility very seriously. The confreres in charge during this six year time were Fr. Markus Lorenz Körber (2011-2015), Fr. Gregor Schmidt Bog-Dong (since 2016). The Secretariat carried out a very intense work which produced good results in the various sectors of evangelization. The most important was the reflection carried out through various workshops in the sectors of *family, culture, pastoralists, and education*, within the Province of South Sudan and also at APDESAN level.

Charter of Evangelization: in 2011, there was, first of all, the work of elaborating the *Charter of Evangelization*, which was approved by the Provincial Council in November, with a positive comment of the General Secretariat of Evangelization in Rome (Fr. Mariano Tibaldo).

A *Symposium* entitled ***One Church from every tribe, tongue and people***, was organised from 13 to 16 October, 2011, in Nyakuron Cultural Centre in Juba, agreed upon and promoted by the Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference (SCBC), attended by over 700 participants from South and North Sudan. It was a successful and unique meeting of the two nations. A book on the Symposium was printed by the Paulines Publications Africa.

A **workshop on Pastoralists, From 14 to 17 April, 2012**, with 20 participants, was held in Comboni House, Juba, on the Comboni presence among pastoralists in South Sudan, *Dinka, Mundari and Nuer*. The facilitator was the Dutch-born ethnologist, Hans Stoks, from Kenya, who guided the reflection with very enriching inputs and proposals based on his long experience of living among the *Masai* of East Africa.

A **workshop on Reconciliation** (South Sudan) was held in Comboni House (Juba) from 15 to 18 April, 2013, the facilitator was Bro. Alberto Parise, a Comboni, from Nairobi. It was very enriching because of the relevance of the topic and the different speakers from various groups and organizations who revealed the complexity of South Sudan's reality today.

Language and Culture Network of South Sudan and Nuer-English and English-Nuer Dictionary.

The South Sudan Language and Culture Network was founded in August, 2013, by eight organizations (Comboni Missionaries, SIL, CDA, UNESCO, British Council, Bible Society etc...). The aim of this network was to share resources and propose initiatives, addressing both Government and the public, for appreciating and giving attention to language and culture in the country and working for the unity of the Nation, fostering justice, peace and reconciliation.

One of the initiatives of the network was the starting in January 2014 with a ***Nuer-English-Nuer dictionary*** involving hundreds of Nuer people. This project was put to a stand by, for a longer period, since the situation in the country was not conducive for an initiative of this kind in this historical period of time due to the war.

The workshop on pastoralists (*Ethiopia, Kenya and South Sudan/APDESAM*), was held in Comboni House (Juba) from 6 to 9 May, 2014, a workshop appreciated by all the participants. Bro. Alberto Parise was the facilitator.

In that circumstance, the Secretary General for Evangelization from Rome, Fr. Mariano Tibaldo, and representatives of various communities from Ethiopia, Kenya and South Sudan came together in order to elaborate a common vision and approach to the work of evangelization among nomadic/semi-nomadic people in East Africa.

A workshop on *Family Life and Human Growth in South Sudan*
From 14-17 April, 2015, with about 33 participants on was organized at Comboni House in Juba.

Education and Evangelization: this workshop was organised from 5-8 April, 2016, in Juba, with forty six participants, including Religious, Diocesan Priests, Catechists and other Lay People who work in Catholic Education Institutions, to look at how the Catholic Church is involved in evangelization and education, to deepen the awareness of how the two aspects are interrelated and in order to offer a *holistic pastoral approach* to the issue.

Office of On-Going Formation

The care put on the meeting of *young confreres* and *experienced confreres* brought good fruits of reflection according to their experience in tackling issues with a new approach and in evaluating the reality with the experience of consolidated confreres was a great opportunity at missionary and spiritual level.

At the level of On-Going Formation (OGF) the Province did a lot but, at personal level, a question mark remains, together with the invitation for constant personal on-going formation to be taken seriously. A lot of commitment was put in fostering a better preparation of confreres in key sectors through specific specialization.

All the communities carried on updating their community charter and, in his visits, the Provincial confirmed that confreres were faithful to their community commitments, for the annual retreat, recollection day, weekly and daily schedule. The material proposed by the General Administration and OGF Office in Rome was regularly circulated by email.

New comers were given the opportunity of learning the local language in the mission where they were serving. There was great collaboration between ongoing formation service and the Secretary of Evangelization, especially in organizing important yearly workshop.

Fr. Moschetti was taking care of the OGF in the Province in collaboration with Fr. Salvatore Pacifico who was regularly sending by email, reflections, articles and other interesting documents and informs

about retreats available for the confreres. He was sending to the communities, books, magazines, reflections and other material. Since its restart, the newsletter of the Province SSCOMBONI@NEWS is coming out regularly every three months with relevant contributions for the OGF of confreres.

Further studies and specializations:

During the six years, several confreres who were away for studies returned back to their ministry, while others went for other specializations, these are the confreres:

Bro. Antonio Nunes: Masters in community health for the duration of one year and a half in Viseu (Portugal). He returned to the Province in April, 2016, and joined the mixed community of Solidarity with South Sudan for three years at CHTI of Wau.

Fr. Phillip Andruga: a licence in spirituality for formators for two years at the Gregorian University, Rome. He was back in July, 2016, and joined the community of formation (Postulancy) of Ongata Rongai in Nairobi on behalf of the South Sudan Province.

Fr. Salomon Badatana Agnata: course of two years in Arabic language in Dar Comboni of Cairo in Egypt. He was back in July, 2016, and joined the Comboni community of Wau.

Bro. Jacek Andrzej Pomykacz: he has already taken a short course in Rome, at the General Administration, and in the next few years he can take other short courses in Nairobi or somewhere else where possible, to be ready at the right time to take some further responsibilities in the area of finance.

Fr. Pau Idra: back in July, 2016, from the Comboni Year in Rome, at present, he is in Kampala (Uganda) for a *master* in preparation for the service of Mission Animation and Vocation Promotion.

Comboni Missionaries' Publications

South Sudan Province (2011-2017)

From 2011 to 2017 the Province took care of promoting several publications on topics related to evangelization, history, culture and spirituality, especially as follow up of the relative workshops:

2011 - John Ashworth, ed., *One Church from every tribe, tongue and people, Symposium on the role of the Church in the Independence*

- of South Sudan, Catholic Bishops Conference (SCBC), Paulines Publications Africa. (*For the Catholic Bishops' Conference*).
- 2013 - Reconciliation and conflict resolution workshop.
- 2014 - *Servant of the Gospel, witnesses in the footsteps of St. Daniel Comboni in Sudan and South Sudan*, Paulines Publications Africa, Nairobi, 2014.
- Guido Olliana, *The joyful power of the Gospel. A Spirituality for the New Evangelization*, Paulines Publications Africa, Nairobi, 2014.
- 2015 - Family life in South Sudan.
- G. Caramazza and A. Parise, Ed, *Paths of Ministry among the Pastoralists*, Paulines Publications Africa, Nairobi, 2015.
- 2016 - *The truth will make you free: workshop on Evangelization and Education*, Comboni House, Juba, April 2015.
- Francesco Chemello Odiongo Gatwic, *A missionary experience in a context of war, history of the Comboni Missionaries in the "Liberated Areas" of South Sudan, (July 1st 1990-December 31st 1998)*, Fondazione Nigrizia Onlus, 2016.
- Fr. Fernando Gatkuoth González G., mccj, *An amazing story, the beginning of the Evangelization and the Catholic Church among the rural Nuer in Western Upper Nile*, Fondazione Nigrizia Onlus, 2016.
- Christian Carlassare, mccj, et al, *Nuer folktales, proverbs and riddles, Nuer-English*, Paulines Publications Africa, Nairobi, 2016.
- Raimundo Nonato Rocha dos Santos, mccj, *Justice and Peace manual, a tool for Parish Justice and Peace Committees*, Justice and Peace Office, Comboni Missionaries South Sudan, 2016.
- Few booklets have been printed by Fr. Gregor Bogdong Schmidt on *Nuer/English language* and one on education *Social Studies* and review for *pupils of primary 8*.
- 2017 - Guido Olliana, *The transforming power of the Gospel. The kairos of the mission: exploration in Comboni Missionaries perspective*, Paulines Publications Africa, Nairobi, 2017.
- Fr. Francesco Chemello, mccj, *The Comboni Missionaries in South Sudan, an outline of history, 1846-2017*, Fondazione Nigrizia, Onlus, 2017. (the present publication)

Secretariat of Vocation Promotion and Basic Formation (2011-2016)

Since 2011, the Secretary of Vocation Ministry and Basic Formation was Fr. Louis Okot Tony Ochermoi. Vocation Ministry was restarted in 2011, after a forced break since 2008. Fr. Louis Okot Tony Ochermoi was put as a full time person in charge of Vocation Ministry and responsible of the students entering the Pre-Postulancy.

The intention, according to the Six-Year Plan, was of opening the Pre-Postulancy in an inserted community in the outskirt of Juba. Being the old plot of the Postulancy not available, the Pre-Postulancy was opened in Lomin, Kajo-Kaji, on a temporary basis, in April, 2013. The consequence of this was a more limited exchange with confreres who could help the formative team with catechesis and a more stretched commitment of the Vocation Promoter in need to cover longer distances. The formative community was composed of two Priests, Fr. Salvatore Pacifico and Fr. Louis Okot Tony.⁶⁷⁰ Fr. Phillip Andrug and Fr. Victor Kouande were, as well, helping with catechesis.

Revival of Vocation promotion team in the Archdiocese of Juba: in Juba, at the beginning of the year 2012, 16 Religious Congregation (Salesian of Don Bosco Sisters, Salesian of Don Bosco, Sacred Heart Sisters, Apostles of Jesus, Daughters of St. Paul, Little Apostles of Charity – Ustratuna, Missionary Sisters of Blessed Virgin Mary, Caritas Sisters, Missionaries of Mary Immaculate, St. Martin Brothers, Daughters of Mary Immaculate and Solidarity with South Sudan, Franciscans Friars, Jesuits, Comboni Missionaries and Comboni Missionary Sisters) together with Diocesan Representative, revived the Vocation Promotion Team of the Archdiocese of Juba.

As a result, in April a vocation camping of 3 days in St. Vincent de Paul Parish, in Gumbo, was organized for 40 youth, with subsequent monthly meetings with them. The accompaniment was concluded with one day of recollection on the month of December at the Comboni House premises, with the participation of 35 youth. To put efforts together and accompany youth who desire to make a serious discernment in their lives and discover what the dream of God for them is, was a very positive experience

As a result of these combined vocations meetings, four young men applied to join the Comboni Institute. In 2013, there were 17 aspirants from

⁶⁷⁰ Minutes of the Provincial Assembly, Juba 15-19 January, 2013, Formation and Vocation Promotion, p. 15-16. FSSPJ.

- Ibid. Secretariat of Vocation Promotion, January, 2013, p. 44-47.

the different Comboni communities. The Pre-Postulancy formation was carried out in two phases. During the first phase they would receive in-puts on various topics in the Pre-Postulancy, the second phase, instead, was meant to bring a Pre-Postulant to a direct knowledge and experience of work in the missions, in dialogue with our communities. The duration would be decided by the Pre-Postulancy team.

The progress of Vocation Ministry could be seen every year with the dedication of the Vocation Promoter, Fr. Luis Okot Tony, with Fr. Salvatore Pacifico and the help of the confreres and Sisters of the Lomin communities. Meanwhile, a piece of land was purchased in Moroyok area, in the outskirts of Juba, for the new Pre-Postulancy and Bro. Yohann (Hans) Eigner was asked by the Provincial and his Council to oversee its construction, which he did wonderfully. Henceforth, the activities of Vocation Promotion and Animation could be organised from Moroyok.

Finally, the Provincial Council decided to merge the *Secretariat of Mission Animation* with that of *Vocation Promotion/Formation*. A person was found in Fr. Paul Idra to take full-time responsibility for Missionary Animation and Vocation Promotion. After the conclusion of the Comboni Year in Rome, in 2016, he would start to study for a *Master's Degree* in Uganda in preparation to this missionary ministry; meanwhile, the already present confreres would carry on in the commitment.⁶⁷¹

Fr. Barnaba Deng Formation House, Moroyok

On Saturday 2 May, 2015, the Pre-Postulancy, *Fr. Barnaba Deng Formation House, Moroyok*, was inaugurated by the Archbishop of Juba, H. G. Paolino Lukudu Loro,⁶⁷² in the presence of Fr. Tesfaye Tadesse, from the General Council, and Fr. Moschetti, the Provincial Superior.

Fr. Okot carried on as the person in charge of formation, together with Fr. Emmanuel Denima Darama and Fr. Salvatore Pacifico. Fr. Hector Ayon was also assigned to the Moroyok community, but his health had deteriorated and he died beforehand. Fr. Fernando Colombo was assigned there, as well, and remained until 2015. Fr. Joseph Ukelo, at a later stage,

⁶⁷¹ From the Minutes of the Provincial Assembly, Juba 25-29 January, 2016, Report of the Provincial Superior: Secretariats. FSSPJ.

⁶⁷² CNR, Fri, 1 May, 2015. Archbishop Lukudu inaugurates Comboni Postulants' House in Juba. <http://catholicradionetwork.org/?q=node/17566>
- Comboni Missionaries mark the 50th anniversary of Fr. Barnaba Deng's martyrdom. <http://www.combonisouthsudan.org/index.php/1389-comboni-missionaries-mark-the-50th-anniversary-of-fr-barnaba-dengs-martyrdom>

joined the community of the Pre-Postulancy in Moroyok bringing his contribution as one of the *South Sudanese Comboni elders*.

In the Provincial election of 2016, Fr. Louis Okot was elected as the new Provincial Superior for the next Administration, starting from 1 January, 2017. Fr. Christian Carlassare moved to Moroyok on 22 October, 2016 with the idea that, once Fr. Louis Okot left, he would be in charge of the Pre-Postulancy and, for the time being Vocation Promotion as well, while waiting for the assignment of a full time person. He received the official assignment with the Provincial Council of December, 2016.

Statistics of Basic Formation, 1999-2011

As for the former Vocation Promotion and Basic Formation in the period from 1999 to 2011, great efforts were made and work was done in this area; a good number of students went to the Novitiates and also to the Scholasticates. However, the only confrere to be ordained was Phillip Kenyi Andruga who was ordained Priest in 20 November, 2011, and is now the new co-formator in Nairobi Postulancy.

Year 2000

Scholastics 1

Paul Idra

Brothers in formation 1

Francis Okeny

Postulants 2

Year 2002

Postulants 5

Year 2005

Scholastics 1

Jacob Lotabo

Postulants 8

Years 2006-2007

Scholastics 4

Phillip Kenyi Andruga

Mike Maiku John Andruga

Evaristo Ravo Christopher

Jacob Lotabo

Postulants 8

Year 2008

Scholastics 4

Phillip Kenyi Andruga

Mike Maiku John Andruga

Geoffrey Paul Koma

Jacob Lotabo

Postulants 8

Year 2009

Scholastics 3

Mike Maiku John Andruga

Phillip Kenyi Andruga

Geoffrey Paul Koma

Postulants 3

Year 2010

Scholastics 2

Phillip Kenyi Andruga

Geoffrey Paul Koma

Year 2011

Scholastic 1

Phillip Kenyi Andruga

Statistics of the restarted Basic Formation

Pre-Postulants	Left	Postulants
2013		2014
3	2	1
		James Komakech Kenyi (3 rd year Nbi)
2014		2015
2	1	1
		Simon Yiomkuey (2 nd year Nbi)
2015		2016
7	2	6
		Santino Mawan (1 st year Nbi)
		John Sebit (1 st year Nbi)
		Cangjwok Abdallah (1 st year Nbi)
		James Lam Garang (1 st year Nbi)
		Alex Libario (1 st year Eg.)
		Daud Samuel (1 st year Eg.)

2016 Pre-Postulants

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Stephen Kubbita | 7. Emmanuel Anguzu |
| 2. James Assai | 8. Francis Obongomoi |
| 3. Gabriel Kucdit | 9. Charles Ohirahira |
| 4. Chaplain Ofere | 10. John Chol |
| 5. Abraham Otifo | 11. Moses Oburak |
| 6. Nelson Otware | |

2016 total 11 Prepostulants

8 Postulants

Of the restarted Vocation Promotion and Basic Formation, for the year, 2016, there is no presence of students in the Novitiate and in the Scholasticate, yet.

The Joint Postulancy (2013-2017)

After the short experience of collaboration with the Province of Khartoum and the independence of South Sudan, the Postulancy was continued, in collaboration with Kenya. In 2013, the formator was already identified but not officially appointed for the task, because he was to remain in pastoral work for some years. Since the academic year was

starting in August, the students' departure for Nairobi for 2014 had to be arranged in such a way that it would allow them time to insert themselves into the Kenyan reality and take some courses in computers and English language, before becoming immersed in their studies.

Fr. Aranda Nava, having returned to South Sudan from Mexico, was appointed as formator for the South Sudan Province. He continued until 2016, when Fr. Pillip Kenyi Andruga, after a two year course for formators in Rome, was appointed as a new co-formator of the Postulancy in Nairobi, thus leaving Fr. Aranda Nava free, after such a long time spent in formation.

On 10 October, 2015, the newly constructed joint Postulancy Kenya-South Sudan of Ongata Rongai, in Kenya, was inaugurated by Mgr. Dominic Kimengich, Bishop of Lodwar Diocese. Fr. Victor Kouande, Vice Provincial, attended the good and colourful celebration with many guests. The Province participated financially in its construction mostly with the proceeds of the sale of the house of *Mary Stella* of Mombasa. It is a joint initiative of the two Provinces and each has one confrere, in the formation team, Fr. Andrew Wanjohi and Fr. Jesus Aranda.

In July, 2016, Fr. Phillip Andruga ended the 2 years course for formators in Rome and came back ready to replace Fr. Jesus Aranda in the ministry of formation at the Ongata Rongai Postulancy.⁶⁷³

Secretariat of Finance

The Six-Year Plan stated that *the Province was committed to the Total Common Fund system*, and that the choice for the TCF *was confirmed with the commitment to improve the ways of implementing it*, and the taking care of the *Formation of Local Bursars, of income generating projects, of evaluating the real estate of properties, land law and fund-raising*.

A final document for implementing the TCF was sent by the General Bursar as a working guideline. It was approved in November, 2012, and signed in December with the hope that it may help in implementing the TCF in the Province. There were annual meetings of bursars which were basically intended for presenting reports of the community accounts and budgets, but there were also moments of on-going formation for the Local Bursars. The constant fluctuation or change of community bursars affected the implementation of their formation.

⁶⁷³ Minutes of the Provincial Assembly, Juba 25-29 January, 2016, Joint Postulancy, p. 75. FSSPJ.

As for the *income-generating projects*, there is the *rent of Jacaranda, Leer VTC, and Lomin Project*. The real estate properties were the *Provincial House (Juba)* and the former *Postulancy*. In 2011, with the help of a Lawyer, the Comboni Missionaries were registered *as a juridical person, owner of the land in Juba*. For the issue of *fundraising*, it is necessary to do more to support our TCF.⁶⁷⁴

Fr. Moschetti also put a lot of effort into collaboration with the Diocesan Office to gain back the land of Munuki for future activities. Unfortunately the land has been grabbed by several families and they do not want to move elsewhere even though they have been given other plots by the housing office of Juba.

During the six years, Comboni House has been undergoing a lot of renovation, the additions of rooms and the enlargement of the main hall. One room was reserved as a parlour for visiting guests in Comboni House of Juba. Furthermore, the intense work of the Procure, run by Bro. Giuseppe Redaelli, commonly called *Peppo*, was offering logistic support and keeping the link with the confreres and their needs in the different places of the Comboni presence. It had to follow up all the administrative and immigration issues of permits and other matters. The work has been outstanding, especially considering the difficulties which the country has encountered in the past three years.

RSASS - The Religious Superiors' Association in South Sudan

The RSASS association, *Religious Superiors Association of South Sudan*⁶⁷⁵, is a relatively young association since it was started officially in 2013. At the beginning of the 80s, as we have already seen in Part Two, Section One, the RSAS, *Religious Superiors Association of Sudan (only men)*,⁶⁷⁶ started in Khartoum for the whole Sudan and met for the first time on 22 July, 1982. Towards the end of the 80s, the war in the South intensified and RSAS could continue only in the North.

In 2013, a request to register RSASS was presented and the statutes were sent to the Vatican through the former Apostolic Nuncio of Sudan,

⁶⁷⁴ Minutes of the Provincial Assembly, Juba 15-19 January, 2013, Finances, p. 16. FSSPJ.

⁶⁷⁵ Juba, 30 April 2016, report of the chairperson and executive of "Religious Superiors Association of South Sudan" (RSASS), to the 4th General Assembly, 2016. FSSPJ.

⁶⁷⁶ First meeting of the representatives of the male missionary societies (RSAS) working in the Sudan, Khartoum 22-24 July, 1982. ACR 606/3.

- Ibid. Front Page. By this time, the Women's Religious Institutes were not yet organised.

Archbishop Leo Boccardi, but there was no answer. The issue was referred again to the present Nuncio of Kenya and South Sudan, Archbishop Charles Daniel Balvo, to retrieve the request of RSASS from the Vatican for the official registration of the Association, which was done.

At present, the details are as follows:

1. Total Number of

Religious Congregations in South Sudan:	46
<i>International Congregations:</i>	39
<i>Local Congregations:</i>	7
2. Men Religious Congregations: 13
3. Women Religious Congregations: 32
Solidarity with South Sudan is counted as one group but includes members from 18 different Religious Congregations mainly not present with their personnel and communities in South Sudan. In total they are 32 members: 12 men and 20 women.
4. Expatriate Missionaries and Religious: (men and women) 365
 South Sudanese Religious (men and women) *present in the country in some Local and International Congregations:* 150
Total Religious in South Sudan (Feb. 2016) 515
5. The Sisters are in total 250
6. The Brothers are 78 and the Priests 187.
 The total of religious men is 265
7. In South Sudan we have 7 Major Superiors, since the majority have their Provincial or General Superiors in other neighbouring countries or outside the continent. The major Superiors resident in South Sudan are:

Fr. Louis Oholong AJ	Regional Superior Apostles of Jesus
Bro. Daniel Loding SMB	General Superior St. Martin Brothers
Sr. Antonieta Bakosoro	General Superior Missionary Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Sr Evette Seib	CMS Provincial Superior Comboni Missionary Sisters
Sr. Mary Daniel Abut SHS	General Superior Sacred Heart Sisters
Sr. Rosa Adiero, Provincial Superior	Sacred Heart Sisters South Sudan
Fr. Louis Okot Tony Ochermoi, MCCJ Provincial Superior	Comboni Missionaries

*Other congregations are still planning to come to South Sudan in spite of the difficult situation. We pray for true peace for the people and the Church in South Sudan.*⁶⁷⁷

Comparison with the past: in 1982, at the first meeting of RSAS the Religious and Missionary Societies,⁶⁷⁸ both Local and Expatriate, there were just eleven of men, since women had not yet joined.

1. Apostles of Jesus (AJ), Fr. Thomas Oliha
2. Capuchins (OFM Cap), Fr. Ilario Tesfasghi
3. Comboni Missionaries (MCCJ) North Sudan, Fr. F. De Bertolis
4. Comboni Missionaries (MCCJ) South Sudan, Fr. Raffaele Cefalo
5. Maryknoll Missionaries (MM), Fr. William Knipe
6. St. Joseph Brothers (SJB), Bro. Karlo Farajallah
7. St. Martin Brothers (SMB), Samuel Lokibe
8. White Fathers (WF), Fr. Armand Garon
9. Mill Hill Missionaries (MHM), *representative*
10. Society of Jesus (SJ), *representative*
11. *Salesian Fathers (temporarily absent)*

The societies of women were the following but they were not yet organised as an association, either by themselves or together with men:

1. Comboni Missionary Sisters
2. Sacred Heart Sisters (SHS)
3. Missionary Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Mupoi Sisters)
4. Sisters of our Lady of Nazareth (Wau)
5. Maryknoll Sisters
6. Good Shepherd Sisters (El Obeid)
7. *Salesian Sisters (Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice)-August 1983, Tonj.*

If we compare the numbers of the present year with those of 1982, we can see how far the journey had gone, after 35 years, as regards the commitment of the Religious and Missionary Societies in South Sudan and how much the reality had changed. If St. Daniel Comboni were present here and now, he would surely rejoice to see that his plan, to involve all the

⁶⁷⁷ Report of the chairperson, Fr. Daniele Moschetti, and executive of “Religious Superiors Association of South Sudan” (RSASS) to the 4th General Assembly, 2016, Juba, 30 April, 2016. FSSPJ.

⁶⁷⁸ First meeting of the representatives of the male missionary societies (RSAS) Kh, op. cit.

Religious Societies in a common venture for the good of Africa, had been fulfilled.

Anyway, these figures can also be very useful for another comparison, that is, the type of approach the Religious/Missionary Societies adopted in the '80s within the *Local Church* and what type of approach is there at present, with this incomparable growth in numbers? Then, a second point upon which to reflect can be to check the concerns of the *Hierarchy of the Local Church* in the former 1982 experience and the concerns and experience of the *Local Church* at the present time, and how much Religious and Missionary Societies Experience, being an integral part of the Local Church, work from within it. In this case, the famous saying of Marcus Tullius Cicero that *history is a teacher of life* remains always valid.⁶⁷⁹

In 2015, Fr. Daniele Moschetti, Chairperson of RSASS, other members of RSASS executive, and other religious, participated in meetings of the Bishops, for the SCBC Plenary meetings or for the SCBC South Sudan extraordinary meetings. He confirmed that the Bishops, in general, appreciated the presence and active participation of Religious in any of these meetings.

The Religious and Missionary Societies making up the RSASS had been involved in the organisation of many activities in many different fields of work, religious and pastoral, vocation/animation, media, educational, social, Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation, medical, trauma healing and others. They were able to concretely run courses, workshops and other formation and awareness activities that were very relevant for the situation of South Sudan.

The most prominent proposal of the RSASS was to have a human and spiritual centre in Juba for the whole country. The issue was discussed in several meetings, approval was given by the SCBC, and so the RSASS unanimously approved it in 2014. On 11 October, 2014, with the presence of Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro and other Bishops, the ceremony of the breaking of the ground took place in the presence of many religious, supporters, and local people of the community of Kit.

It was named the *Good Shepherd Peace Centre* and was inaugurated in Kit, about 12 kilometres from the centre of Juba, on 15 October, 2016, with a Eucharistic celebration presided over by the Apostolic Nuncio to Kenya

⁶⁷⁹ *Historia magistra vitae est*, is a Latin expression, taken from Marcus Tullius Cicero's *De Oratore*.

and South Sudan, Archbishop Charles Daniel Balvo. Also present was H. G. Paolino Lukudu Loro, Archbishop of Juba.

The *Good Shepherd Peace Centre* is the first of its kind in South Sudan and has been designed to provide the South Sudanese Church and society with a suitable place for human, pastoral and spiritual formation, peace-building and trauma healing, for Bishops, Diocesan Clergy, Religious, Catechists, Youth and Women and for the renewal of the people of South Sudan in general. The task of planning and building this complex was given to the Comboni Engineer, Bro. Johann (Hans) Eigner who designed, supervised and carried it out with real expertise and enthusiasm, with the engagement of a contractor, down to the finest details.

Launching of the RSASS blog: the suggestion was made two years ago and implemented in order to publicise the different activities of RASASS properly.⁶⁸⁰

RSASS Elections, 2016: the elections for the new *Chairperson*, the *Treasurer* and *one Councillor* were due and were done at the end of the Assembly. Fr. Daniele Moschetti, the parting chairperson, was due to end his double term of office as Provincial Superior of the Comboni Missionaries in December, 2016. Meanwhile, he offered himself to assist the new leadership. He concluded with an encouraging quotation of the words of Pope Francis: *Wake up the World!* At present, Fr. Okot is representing the Province.

The Catholic University

The Catholic University of Juba, since its inception, did not have proper premises and Fr. Michael Schultheis SJ, who was in charge of it, asked the South Sudan Province to lend the premises of the former Postulancy for this purpose. It accepted and, from 2011, the University programme began. Bernhard Hengl, who arrived in April, 2012, with the task of fundraiser of the SCBC and project manager, is taking care of whole building plan.

Bro. Jorge Arturo Rodríguez Fayad was a lecturer and Administrator at the Catholic University of Juba until his assignment to Uganda in 2014. Fr. Guido Oliana was also teaching there as an occasional lecturer. The contract was supposed to end in 2015 but, since their premises were not yet ready, an extension of the deadline was requested and granted by the Provincial Council.

⁶⁸⁰ RASASS website: <http://rsasouthsudan.blogspot.com/>

Finally, the classes of students occupying the Comboni plot moved to the new university plot of Tong-Ping and only few offices of the administration remained behind, necessitating another six-month extension of the contract until 30 June, 2016. At present, the Catholic University of Juba is in its own premises carrying on with the important service of high level education under the leadership of the Vice-Chancellor Fr. Matthew Pagan.

Important events from 2011 to 2017

- The Referendum for Self-determination of South Sudan, 09.01.2011
- The New Republic of South Sudan, 09.07.2011, 54th African State.
- Fr. Enrique Sánchez González, Superior General, invited for the Independence Day celebrations by Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit, President of the Republic of South Sudan.
- Restarting of Vocation Ministry with Fr. Louis Okot Ochermoi in Juba, 2011, and of the Pre-Postulancy in Lomin.
- Death of Mgr. Cesare Mazzolari, Bishop of Rumbek Diocese, on 16 July, 2011.
- Fr. Fernando Colombo, after the death of Bishop Mazzolari, on 31 December, 2011, is elected Diocesan Administrator of the Diocese of Rumbek until his resignation at the end of year 2013.
- Ordination to the Diaconate and Priesthood of Fr. Phillip Kenyi Andruha, 20.11.2011,
- Starting of the Provincial webpage, combonisouthsudan.org., 2011.
- Upgrading of the Provincial Newsletter SSCOMBONI@NEWS, 2011.
- Ordination to the Diaconate and Priesthood of Fr. Alfred Mawadri, 14.1.2012.
- Handing over of the Parish and school of Nyamlel on 31 January, 2013, to the Diocese of Wau.
- Handing over of the Comboni Comprehensive College of Lomin on 27 February, 2013, to the Diocese of Yei.
- Handing over of the CR Network to the Dioceses at the end of December, 2013.
- The restarting of the Religious Superiors Association of South Sudan (RSASS) in 2013.
- The departure of Bro Valentino Fabris in 2013 and his death in Verona/I, 28.02.2016 (age 93)

- 15 December, 2013, eruption of fighting in Juba barracks, the starting of the massacre of Nuer civilians in Juba on the following days and the still on-going war struggle.
- On 17 and 20 February, 2014, the evacuation of the MCCJ and CMS communities from Leer was concluded.
- Return to Leer July 2014.
- Official start of the office of JPIC in Juba, on 1 August, 2014, with Fr. Raimundo Nonato Rocha dos Santos as the coordinator full time in charge and also coordinator of trauma healing for the Religious Superiors' Association (RSASS), updater of the Provincial webpage and pastoral work among Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).
- Ordination to the Diaconate and Priesthood of Fr. Placide Petit Majambo Lutumba, 26.10.2014,
- Handing over of the Parish of Raja on 6 January, 2015, to the Diocese of Wau, in the hands of Fr. Richard Batista, the newly appointed Parish Priest.
- Visit of Fr. Tesfaye Tadesse, Assistant General, from 17 April to 2 May, 2015, to Leer community, preaching a retreat for the Province, giving a talk at the general meeting of RSASS and officially opening the Moroyok house and community on 2 May, 2015.
- Opening in April, 2015, of Moroyok Pre-Postulancy, Fr. Barnaba Deng Formation House, built by Bro. Yohann Eigner, and its inauguration on 2 May of the same year.
- Leer: new evacuation in May 2015, return to Nyal, August, 2015.
- Celebration of 45 years of Priesthood of Fr. Hector Ayon and the 25 years of vows of Bro. Hans Eigner and Fr. Denima Darama Emmanuel.
- Golden Jubilees of Ordination: Fr. Antonio La Braca, 27.06.1965-2015.
- The death of Fr. Hector Ayon Oyamute, Juba, 28.06.2015 (age 71)
- Ordination to the Diaconate and Priesthood of Fr. Lwanga Gilingere Limingere, 28.06.2015 (Khartoum Province).
- Construction of the new joint Postulancy in Nairobi, Ongata Rongai, with the Province of Kenya. It was inaugurated on 10 October, 2015, by Mgr. Dominic Kimengich, Bishop of Lodwar Diocese.
- The Catholic University of Juba opened its 2015-2016 academic year on its own residential plot with Bro. Bernhard Engl in charge of the whole construction.
- Perpetual vows of Bro. Paolo Rizzetto, at San Donà del Piave (Ve), his home Parish, on 19 December, 2015.

- The death of Fr. Albino Adot Oryem, Lacor/Ug, 11.02.2016 (age 59).
- The inauguration of the *Good Shepherd Peace Centre*, by RSASS, in Kit, on 15 October, 2016, built by the Comboni Brother, Yohann Eigner.
- The perpetual vows of Bro. Patrick Lumami Mwanza on 20 November, 2016 and Bro. Pierre Fafa Ayih Teko D.J. on 3 December, 2016.
- 1.1.2017, the New Provincial Administration with Fr. Louis Okot Tony Ocher Moy starts.
- Lomin Parish and St. Martin Workshop had to be abandoned because of high insecurity risk caused by struggle and fighting in March, 2017.
- The 45th anniversary of Fr. Abel Mödi Nyörkö on 3 April, 1971-2016.
- 45th anniversary of ordination of Fr. Joseph Ukelo Yala on 23 April, 1972-2017.
- *Planned 60th anniversary of ordination of Fr. Peter Magalasi, on 7 July, 1957-2017.*

A brief word on missionary methodology

Missionary methodology has always been a very interesting, fundamental but also fragmented experience, frequently at the centre of discussion, with great differences in planning and confreres with different opinions as to what should be done. Its implementation differed according to the numbers of confreres. To reach a well-defined methodology in order to face the various situations of mission was an almost impossible venture. Confreres who would take a specific stand on certain issues could see other confreres taking an opposing stand in order to reach, they would say, the same goal.

For example, *to walk at the speed/pace of people*: how many times have we heard this said? Nonetheless it was the last thing confreres would follow, since it meant delaying certain urgent issues one wanted to reach in a short span of time (normally the one within the time of personal assignment to a place). *To learn the language and culture of people*: this was another hot issue, especially in our present globalised way of life. One would not have the patience and even the Major Superiors would make personnel changes incompatible with it.

Insertion into the *Local Church* was another difficult issue for the way it was understood and practised, both *on the side of the Missionaries* and on the side of the *Local Church itself*. Mutuae Relationes tried to clarify the role of the Local Church and that of the Religious Institutes, but the

comprehension and practice were not always satisfactory. In the past we saw the contraposition of the two missionary methodologies of Mgr. Geyer and Fr. Vignato who put either *evangelization or civilisation/education* first. In more recent time we can see the same struggle between *human promotion/development and evangelization* when they are understood in *dichotomy* rather than in complementarity through a *holistic* way of tackling the same Mission.

If we then touch the matter of self-reliance, or better of the three priority 'selves' of AMECEA and SECAM, of the eighties: *self-supporting, self-ministering, self-propagating*, this was another very big issue which was there to indicate the deeper nature of missionary activity, but confreres frequently continued to do mission with a *paternalistic/maternalistic* approach, giving their children (Churches) everything they needed and creating such dependency that, in the long run, would become catastrophic. Thus, they created and kept Christian communities running with no backbone and incapable of standing on their own two feet without continual external support. These communities had to find how to cope after missionaries were gone.

On the other hand we have the example of a few missionaries who assumed totally and strictly the new principle of *self-reliance*, not taking into account that there is also room for solidarity among Churches and for some extraordinary help which can become a real incentive to growth, yet without creating dependency.

I would say that, as regards methodology, broadly speaking, as Comboni Missionaries, there are strongholds that become points of reference, like the *mission ad gentes attitude, evangelization and human promotion, as a holistic approach, inculturation, self-reliance, keeping the speed/pace of people, insertion into the Local Church (post-Vatican approach) etc.* However, speaking from personal experience, the manner of implementing them greatly depends on personal interpretation with no real pattern to support implementation.

Even those Major Superiors who, in word and in print strongly proposed certain methodologies as *very important* for our time, as individuals, did not have the courage to ask reluctant confreres to comply with them, frequently with the justification of giving space to *new ways of the Spirit*, that frequently meant *doing it my way*.

On the whole, the development of a missionary methodology with a clearly defined framework of tackling reality still remains an open issue as does its implementation. However, divergent methodologies carried out by confreres should not lead to a sterile contrast between missionaries or

Parishes, but find points of convergence and communion.⁶⁸¹ The methodology should never become an end to itself, lest it become an ideology, but a way for the better growth of Christian communities in a pedagogical way.

The long journey of *Ratio Missionis* was an attempt to tackle this missionary methodology (possibly) with a more unified approach and understanding, keeping always as the first priority the need to evangelize every continent and area. Will it become a real means leading to a missionary methodology in the Comboni Institute or just a summary of various important and qualified reflections at continental and Provincial level?

If one considers the use the last two General Chapters made of it, after all the years and efforts made at the level of Institute, in order to give birth to the *Ratio Missionis*, one is led to think that they are just helpful points of reflection for personal and community growth, opening up the minds of confreres to very different methodological approaches, and leaving the situation unchanged, not a real help to move forward with a better vision and qualified authority.

On the other hand, it is true that it is not the *Ratio Missionis* that should bind confreres, but the living reflection and awareness emerging from the General Chapters and implemented by the General Council through the Provinces with their respective Councils, thus becoming the normal *Ratio Operandi*. However, is this enough?

South Sudan Province Personnel on 1 November, 2016

Bishops

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Paulino Lukudu Loro (Archbishop) | South Sudanese |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|

Fathers

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| 2. Ghislain Amoussou Comlan | Beninese |
| 3. Phillip Kenyi Andrug | South Sudanese |
| 4. José Jesus Aranda Nava | Mexican |
| 5. Salomon Badatana Apélété Agnata | Togolese |
| 6. Michael Donald Barton | American/USA |
| 7. Christian Carlassare | Italian |
| 8. Francesco Chemello | Italian |

⁶⁸¹ Ref. also to: G. Caramazza and A. Parise, eds, *Paths of Ministry among the Pastoralists*, pp. 13-23qa and other related topics, Paulines Publications Africa, Nairobi, 2015.

9. Emmanuel Denima Darama	Congolese
10. Giovanni Girardi	Italian
11. Fernando González Galarza	Mexican
12. Paul Idra	South Sudanese
13. Boris Ketemepi Komivi Dodzi	Togolese
14. Markus Lorenz Körber	German
15. Victor Kouande Adekoun	Togolese
16. Antonio La Braca	Italian
17. Martin Loku Mödi	South Sudanese
18. Peter Magalasi	South Sudanese
19. Placide Petit Majambo Lutumba	Congolese
20. Isaac Martin Arnanz	Spanish
21. Alfred Mawadri	Ugandan
22. Daniele Moschetti	Italian
23. Louis Okot Tony Ochermoi	South Sudanese
24. Guido Oliana	Italian
25. Salvatore Pacifico	Italian
26. Paolino Tipo Deng Amayldh	South Sudanese
27. José Javier Parladé Escohar	Spanish
28. Giuseppe Pellerino	Italian
29. Raimundo Nonato Rocha dos Santos	Brazilian
30. Gregor Schmidt Bog-Dong	German
31. Pedro Secundino Tacuri Samaniego	Ecuadorian
32. Joseph Ukelo Yala	South Sudanese
33. Yacob Solomon Shole	Ethiopian
34. Zębik Krzysztof Adam	Polish

Brothers

35. Antonio Manuel Nunes Ferreira	Portuguese
36. Pierre Ayih Teko Fafa D.J.	Togolese
37. Claudio Bozza	Italian
38. Johann Eigner	German
39. Erich Fischnaller	Italian
40. Andrés Gaspar Abarca	Mexican
41. Rosario Iannetti	Italian
42. Patrick Lumami Mwanza	Congolese
43. Jacek Andrej Pomykacz	Polish
44. Giuseppe Redaelli	Italian
45. Paolo Rizzetto	Italian
46. Hernan Romero Arias	Peruvian

Transferred to other Provinces during the year

Fr. Ezio Bettini	Italian
Fr. Fernando Colombo	Italian
Bro. Bernhard Hengl	German
Fr. Antoine Kondo Komivi	Togolese
Fr. Jervas Mawut Mayik Nyok	South Sudanese
Fr. Luciano Perina	Italian

Deceased

Fr. Hector Ayon Oyamute (<i>Died 28.6.2015</i>)-(71)	South Sudanese
Albino Adot Oryem (<i>Died 11.02. 2016</i>)-(59)	South Sudanese

Average age of confreres 2013	57.06
Average age of confreres 2014	56.22
Average age of confreres 2015	55. 29
Average age of confreres 2016	55. 49

Confreres who left the Province

1. Fr. Victor Kouandé (1.1.2017)

Confreres assigned to the Province

- No confrere was assigned by (1.1.2017)

This was the status of personnel in the Province while Fr. Daniele Moschetti was still Provincial Superior and immediately available at the start of the term of office of the new Administration.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CIRCUMSCRIPTION

From 2017 to 2019

Provincial Superior:

FR. LOUIS OKOT TONY

OCHERMOI

2017, the Provincial and his Council

In the session of the General Consulta of 10 October, 2016, Fr. Louis Okot Tony Ochermoi⁶⁸² was appointed Provincial Superior of the Province of South Sudan for three years, starting on 1 January, 2017.

The Councillors⁶⁸³ making up the Provincial Council were duly elected and the result of the vote, dated 5 November, 2016, was: Bro. Jacek Andrzej Pomykacz, Fr. Paolino Tipo Deng, Fr. Christian Carlassare, Fr. Fernando González Galarza. Fr. Christian Carlassare was elected Vice-Provincial.⁶⁸⁴

Fr. Louis Okot Tony Ochermoi and his four Councillors will lead the Province of South Sudan for the next three years. He is the second South Sudanese Provincial Superior after Fr. Abel Francis Mödi Nyörkö, who led

⁶⁸² Fr. Tesfaye Tadesse Gebresilasie, Mccj, Superior General, Rome, 15 October, 2016, appointment of Fr. Louis Okot Tony Ochermoi Provincial Superior of South Sudan, to start his term of office as from 1 January, 2017. FSSPJ.

⁶⁸³ South Sudan Province, Nairobi, 5 November, 2016, result of the vote for Councillors, Bro. Jacek Andrzej Pomykacz, Fr. Paolino Tipo Deng, Fr. Christian Carlassare, Fr. Fernando González Galarza.

⁶⁸⁴ Fr. Umberto Pescantini, Secretary Gen., Rome, 5 February, 2017, "*The Superior General (Fr. Tesfaye Tadesse Gebresilasie) confirms Fr. Christian Carlassare as Vice-Provincial of South Sudan till 31 December, 2019.*"

the Province from 1990 to 1994, in what probably was the most difficult time in the history of the Circumscription from 1980 onwards.

Fr. Okot is also taking up this post at a difficult time while the Republic of South Sudan is still in turmoil after the shocking events in Juba in December, 2013, the civil war which followed and the many rebellious groups which emerged during this unsettled period of time due to unrestrained violence against civilians, because of impunity and the lack of the rule of law and respect for civilians.

Having gone through so many difficult historical events in the history of Sudan and South Sudan, we can only wish that Fr. Okot and his Council and their leadership, may contribute through a message of mercy, love and reconciliation to reach *every tribe and tongue and people* in the Republic of South Sudan. Moreover, to build up together the *nation* in peace as the Catholic Bishops' Conference (SCBC) affirmed while addressing the people of the new Republic soon independence was achieved, so that all people may be *One Nation*.⁶⁸⁵

However, in this present time, the Catholic Bishops' Conference (SCBC) issued their Pastoral Message as Pastors who are like *the voice of one crying out in the wilderness*. "*We wish to give you (people) hope that you are not abandoned and that we are working to resolve the situation at many different levels.*"⁶⁸⁶

In different ways these messages are surely very vital tasks for Fr. Okot and his Council and for all the confreres in the Province of South Sudan in the planning of the six years to come.

The fact, then, that this Provincial Administration takes up its task on the 150th anniversary of the birth of the "Comboni Institute" founded by St. Daniel Comboni in Verona, Italy, on 1 June, 1867, with the name of *College of the African Missions*,⁶⁸⁷ is another good reason to wish Fr. Okot and his Council a *fresh start* with the same spirit of the Founder.

⁶⁸⁵ Ref. Sudan Catholic Bishop conference (SCBC) meeting in plenary session in Juba from 6 to 8 September, 2011, **One Nation**, Statement addressed to the people of South Sudan. One Church from every Tribe, Tongue, and People. Juba, 8 September, 2011, op. cit.

⁶⁸⁶ "**A voice cries in the wilderness**" pastoral message of the Catholic Bishops of South Sudan to the faithful and people of South Sudan. 24/02/2017. (Full text of the Message see Appendix, Part Two, Section Three, Chapter Three, point no. 1). http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2017/02/24/catholic_bishops_in_south_sudan_issue_pastoral_statement/1294691

⁶⁸⁷ - Writings, 1416, To CARDINAL ALESSANDRO BARNABÒ, N. 205 (193), *AP SC Afr. C.*, 7, ff. 1118 and 1121, Verona, 11 June, 1867. "Eminent Prince, I have the pleasure to announce to Your Most Reverend Eminence that the distinguished Mgr.

St. Daniel Comboni's belief that *Africa was to be saved by the African people themselves*, is a very good reason for Fr. Okot and the whole Province to call to mind all the beautiful examples of dedication of thousands of Comboni Confreres and Sisters that, in a selfless dedication have offered their lives to Jesus Christ, *to proclaim his Good News* to many generations of Africans, especially in Sudan and South Sudan, to make Christ welcomed and followed even at the cost of martyrdom.

The election of a South Sudanese Provincial during this 150th anniversary celebration is certainly a sign of God which Fr. Okot should not forget, since it is the fulfilment of the very purpose of the Holy Founder, St. Daniel Comboni.

The Provincial Assembly of 2017

The Provincial Assembly 2017 took place in the Provincial House of Juba from Monday 16 to Friday 20 January. It began with the welcoming address of the Provincial Superior, Fr. Louis Okot, followed by a half day of spiritual recollection led by Fr. Pedro Tacuri.

The particular occasion of the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the Comboni Institute was clearly remembered and was the leitmotif behind the whole Assembly, so that the *spirit of our ancestors* in the missionary life should not be forgotten. Of course, the Province of South Sudan has good reason, more than any other, celebrate this occasion in depth and enthusiastically since it was there that the Institute first started its work.

The reports of the Secretariats

The reports of the Secretariats showed the intense work carried out in each one of them, but were also displayed the difficulties they were encountering in performing their different tasks in this difficult time due to insecurity in the country.

Canossa has opened a Seminary in Verona for our dear African missions, which in better times will be called the *Institute of the Good Shepherd for the Regeneration of Africa.*"

- Writings, 2331, To CARDINAL ALESSANDRO BARNABO, N. 366 (344)-*AP SC Afr. C.*, v. 7 f. 1409v, W.J.M., The Seminary of Verona, 12 October, 1870. "Eminent Prince, following your wise counsel and your wishes, I have managed to establish the **College of the African Missions** in Verona in agreement with Mgr. Canossa."

- Writings, 2575, 2576, 2609.

The Secretariat of Evangelization

It underlined its strong commitment throughout the year 2016. Particular attention was given to the positive results achieved, especially with the workshop on ***Education and Mission*** which saw the participation of a wide number of participants from different Religious Congregations, Diocesan representatives and Government Education Authorities.

At the level of APDESAM (Assembly of the Provinces and Delegations of the English Speaking Africa and Mozambique) a workshop was organised on *Urban Ministry* in South Africa with a report and a request to take it up in the Six-Year Plan of the Province.

The Secretariat included also ***Missionary Animation, JPIC and On-going Formation***. All gave their reports. For the Office of JPIC, Fr. Raimundo Nonato Rocha made the Assembly aware of its growing importance in the mission field. A note of concern, however, indicated that the issue of *methodology* needed to be tackled in order not to adopt an NGO style of commitment, but truly foster evangelization as *proclamation of the Gospel*.

The *Justice and Peace Manual* – in English and in various South Sudanese languages – was printed, presented and made available to all the Comboni Communities. The office of JPIC works in collaboration with the Archdiocesan JPIC Office and the manual was also made available to all the Parishes and the JPIC committees.

Within the undertakings of the JPIC Office there was the annual commitment to be present at the WSF (World Social Forum) as Comboni Missionaries and as the South Sudan Province in order to share in the worldwide social concern.

The reports of the communities

The reports of all the communities, again this year, pointed out the particularly difficult situation in which they find themselves working due to insecurity, fighting and the abuse of human rights of civilians and the exponential increase in the loss of life. The past year, 2015, witnessed a very grave situation of human rights' abuses all over the country but especially in the area of Unity State, in particular in the area from the southern part of the town of Bentiu up to Leer town, by government military forces and their militias who obliged all the civilian people to flee to swampy areas and to Payinjiar County.

The July 2016 events, with the fighting between government forces and the opposition, created a very grave situation in Juba town and spread to other towns to the west and south of Juba, greatly increasing the level of insecurity. In the town of Wau the same situation became quite acute to the detriment of the normal activities. In such conditions all the activities, pastoral, educational and social were disrupted and many people from the Equatorial States fled to neighbouring countries, especially Uganda and Congo.

The deterioration of the rule of law and the persistence of impunity gave rise also to many indiscriminate actions of robbery and killing along the roads by criminals who did not hesitate to behave as if life had no value. Ethnic clashes were also on the rise together with clashes between clans destabilising the situation among ethnic groups and also within the same ethnic groups themselves. As a conclusion, the Communities found themselves working continually under this state of threat for themselves and their personnel, especially when in need of travelling to purchase what was necessary for their missionary, school and health activities, thus hindering their commitments.

Visit of His Grace Paolino Lukudu Loro, Archbishop of Juba

The visit of the Archbishop was planned for the first day of the Provincial Assembly with his shared speech and the celebration of the Eucharist and social meal afterwards. However, due to a persistent attack of malaria, he conserved his strength so as to be present and share his thoughts on the last day. His shared speech was informal and genuine, as Archbishop of Juba and as a Comboni Confrere: he welcomed all the confreres in the Assembly *as Confreres and Brothers*.

He congratulated the whole Assembly because there were many new Confreres and because of the new Provincial Council where Fr. Louis Okot Ochermoi was the ***new South Sudanese Superior*** of the Province and the newly-elected Council. Of course, he could not but mention that the challenges in front of him would be many and that he should hold firm in carrying out his appointed task.

In relation to the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the Comboni Institute, the ***College of the African Missions***, by St. Daniel Comboni in 1867, he affirmed that it is the task of the Comboni Missionaries, here and now, to continue the work of ***regeneration*** which Comboni and the Confreres and Sisters started and carried out in the past.

Since the purpose of his presence at the Assembly was to speak about certain challenges, he remarked that the Assembly had certainly already taken notice of them, since we all live in the present reality and emphasized the words of St. Daniel Comboni: *Save Africa through Africa*.

He observed that this is a big challenge because of culture, tribalism and ethnic differences which are creating trouble today and that our human failures, our weaknesses, our health and age become challenges for our missions today. Nonetheless, *while thanking all those who came before*, he continued by saying that, *the mission is now in your hands*.

A particular challenge, according to the Archbishop, is the present conflict we are in. This war and its consequences is the biggest challenge, together with the situation of insecurity it created. Already 29,700 South Sudanese are refugees in Uganda; this complicates their lives, creates traumas and gives rise to discrimination and fear.

He confirmed the difficulty the Church (including also other Churches) found to be heard and to create a situation conducive to stable reconciliation and peace in the country. He mentioned the meeting in Rome of the South Sudan Council of Churches with His Holiness Pope Francis on 27 October, 2016, and the Pope's strong desire to find a way leading to real peace in South Sudan for the good of all its citizens. His invitation was not to lose hope and work hard along this way. He also envisaged a possible visit to South Sudan.

Besides the socio-political challenges in South Sudan and the effort to facilitate an environment of peace through dialogue, he mentioned also the challenges related to the life of the Archdiocese and of the Catholic Church in South Sudan at present, especially the difficult situation created by the lack of Bishops at the head of several Dioceses. Then the fact that South Sudan depends on the Kenyan Apostolic Nunciature, too far from the concrete situation of the Church in the country. The result is the long time needed for decisions on important issues of the Church, especially the one related to the appointment of Bishops.

As a final point, the Archbishop called for the presence of more Comboni Missionaries in South Sudan because of their special *religious and missionary vocation*, two aspects which are much needed in the South Sudanese Church, in a particular way because the *missionary element* of the religious vocation makes them open to face challenges which a normal religious society does not feel ready to face. He, however, invited the whole assembly to be united and that the communities themselves should be a sign of unity.

The weakness of a community is a real challenge and when there are divisions and difficulties it is the mission itself that suffers. As for relations with the Local Church, especially with Juba Archdiocese, Archbishop Paolino said: **“We shall go on together.”** Together we shall continue to pray for peace in South Sudan.

Archbishop Paolino Lokudu Loro then disclosed how he first thought of becoming a Comboni Missionary at the time of Mgr. Silvestro Laharanya and how, by God’s Providence, he was accepted by the Institute to go to Italy in 1965 to start his Comboni formation, until he became a Comboni Missionary Priest.

Though weakened by malaria, and though he had to keep his speech short and could not stay together for the Eucharistic celebration and social, his talk was warmly welcomed by the Assembly and felt as a true encouragement to carry on with the mission which started 150 years ago, but which is still very much in need, as His Grace said, of renewed vigour in order to carry on with that *regeneration* so dear to the Founder St. Daniel Comboni: a task primarily falling on the leadership Fr. Louis Okot and his Council which will be worked out during the coming three years of service.

The Six-Year Plan, 2017-2022

The most important issue dealt by the Provincial Assembly 2017 was the formulation of the Six-Year Plan in line with the Chapter Acts of the 2015 XVIII General Chapter entitled ***Comboni Missionary Disciples called to live the joy of the Gospel in today’s world.***

The reflection centred on four main topics: the **Mission**, the **Person**, the **Reorganization** and **Finances**. The topics were following the four operational indications of the Chapter Acts, from which the inspiration was taken, as the Chapter heading goes that ***the Spirit calls us to dream and to be converted***⁶⁸⁸ in order to apply them to the reality of the South Sudan Mission planning for the coming six years.

Certainly, ***Mission*** was the main topic that focused all the other realities of the Person (the confreres devoted to the mission), the Reorganization of commitments and the Finances, which are supposed to be at the service of the same Mission according to the Institute and the South Sudan Province directives for the present time and situation.

⁶⁸⁸ Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus, XVIII General Chapter, Chapter Acts 2015, content, pp. 5; 17-21; 22-43.

Finally, it has to be pointed out that what was reflected and proposed by the Assembly still needs to be better integrated and coordinated by a team set up for the purpose in order to get a better text. Then the Communities should be given an opportunity to suggest revisions or add points which may have been overlooked. It will need to have the approval of the Provincial Council and finally of the General Council. This process may take other six or eight months before getting the final approved text to be implemented in the whole South Sudan Province.

The Mission

“We dream of an Institute ‘that goes forth’ (EG, No. 20), being missionary pilgrims who walk with the poorest and most abandoned (RL, No. 5), who evangelize and are evangelized through personal and community sharing of joy and compassion, working together for a humanity which is reconciled with God, with creation and with others (EG, No. 74).⁶⁸⁹”

The main point about Mission was to be aware that our presence in South Sudan as Comboni Missionaries finds its purpose in Evangelization, in places where the Church has not been founded or near to people that are marginalized in society. This is what inspires the Six-Year Plan and its priorities. It implies taking the former Evangelization Charter and revising it according to the new needs and priorities, keeping in mind the present trends of evangelization in Africa, and for South Sudan, in the area of APDESAM.⁶⁹⁰

Among the most felt priorities was the formation of Catechists, the strengthening of Small Christian Communities the need of to improve the teaching of the Church (e.g. Bible, catechism, etc.). In the area of human promotion in general, Education and Health Care are fields of evangelization to be fostered in all our missions. Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) activities are to be considered as an integral part of our evangelizing work through creating communion, proposing reconciliation, offering trauma healing and being a voice for the voiceless.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid no. 21, Mission.

⁶⁹⁰ Ref. Report on the English Speaking Africa and Mozambique Circumscriptions (APDESAM) for the XVIII General Chapter, 2015.

As for our lifestyle, the option was for a simple life-style so as to be close to the people we evangelize. In particular to take care of the poor and marginalized for whom Jesus had special consideration (Lk 4:18), like IDPs, refugees, abused women and children, oppressed minorities, the illiterate, the sick, etc. The approach to be promoted in our Parishes and Christian Communities is that of helping them to become more self-reliant so to create an Indigenous Church with the capacity to build itself up.

The involvement of Lay People in the Mission was also considered as very important. One proposed starting point was the *Comboni Friends*, the relatives of the South Sudanese Comboni Missionaries and the local people that keep contact in various ways with the missionaries such as former students, workers and committed Christians.

An important point which was brought up during the Assembly was *Urban Ministry*. In reference to this issue, in the former Provincial Administration and Six-Year Plan, the community of Moroyok was started, together with the Formation Ministry, to offer ways to develop an *Urban Ministry*. Due to the setback of the recent four years of war, the town development plan in that area was brought to a halt. If the situation in the country improves, surely the town will expand in that area as well and an environment of town-periphery will surely spring up around Moroyok as well. In Wau, also, Urban Ministry will certainly be needed, especially in tackling the challenge of tribalism and ethnic division since towns are melting places for all South Sudanese People.

Finally, the priority of the *Youth* could not be ignored; in fact, the majority of the population of South Sudan is made up of young people of school age and beyond. The issue of school education was already taken into consideration, but there are also other aspects to be considered so as to involve the youth of the country, especially in all our missions, in the spirit of Comboni, by possibly creating a Comboni Youth Movement where they could be accompanied in their vocational discernment together with our Comboni Aspirants.

The Secretariat of Formation already publishes material for our Comboni communities, this can be developed with other proposals and programmes that the Communities can use with the purpose of a possible Comboni Youth National Congress.

The Person

The first topic dealt by the Assembly was *Mission*. Mission, however, is not something abstract but a specific mandate from God: **“Whom shall I**

send? Who will go for us? Here I am, send me!”⁶⁹¹ It is a specific mandate of Jesus to “Go to into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature.”⁶⁹²

It is a specific person who is called by God, called and sent by Jesus and who is entrusted with the mission of proclaiming his Word, therefore, the Person is the most valuable entity in the process of proclamation, a person from within the Christian Community, the Church, called and sent for the Mission to the world.

It is clear that, without taking care of the Evangelizers, as Jesus took care of the Apostles,⁶⁹³ Mission would have no good result. In our present reality of Comboni Missionaries there are three aspects which are basic and cannot be left aside: **Interculturality, Spirituality and Reading and Revisiting the Rule of Life.** I quote from the Chapter Acts:

***Interculturality:** The certainty of our common vocation and of the charism itself constitutes a source of inter-personal communion enabling us to come to terms with the disruptive forces that may be triggered by diversity. This becomes the prophecy of our Mission for the construction of a new world order.*

47.6 The Local Community is the privileged place where these dynamics are lived: in shared prayer, in community encounters and in initiatives around the theme of inter-culturality, choices regarding our style of life and programmes. Each Member of the Community is responsible for this process, and in particular the Local Superior and the Circumscription Superior.

***Spirituality:** The encounter with Christ lived in the charismatic gift of St. Daniel Comboni makes us Comboni Missionary Disciples. We cultivate and deepen this communion with the Lord in order to continue being impassioned with the Mission and thus live an integrated Comboni spirituality.*

***Reading and revisiting the Rule of Life:** The Rule of Life forms part of our most genuine patrimony and still succeeds in expressing our identity, spirituality and Mission. Familiarity with it helps us grow in the values of missionary consecration, sharing and communion amongst us.*⁶⁹⁴

⁶⁹¹ Isaia: 6:8

⁶⁹² Gospel of Mk. 16:15. See also Mt. 28:19; Lk. 24:45-48; Jn. 20:21-23.

⁶⁹³ Mk. 3:13-19

⁶⁹⁴ Chapter Acts, 2015, op. cit., Person, Inter-culturality: nn. 47.5, 47.6; Spirituality: no. 48.1; Reading and revisiting the Rule of Life: no. 49.1.

In the process of the Six-Year Plan for the Province of South Sudan, what has been seen as very important was the introduction of new confreres to the concrete reality of Mission so that they may learn the local language of their specific mission and Colloquial Arabic if needed (for at least 6 months), and be helped to get familiar with the culture and history of the country in the bi-annual introductory course organized by the Religious Societies, RSASS.

The Secretariat of Formation, and in particular the person in charge of On-Going Formation, will have to set programs for different interest groups, such as under 45, over 45 and Local Superiors, so that they may exercise their ministries to the best of their abilities. Year 2017 is to be dedicated to the reading of the Rule of Life together in each community, as a tool of on-going formation. The update of each Community Charter is also to be done in 2017 and every time the community members change.

The Secretariat of Formation through the office of On-going Formation will have the responsibility of animating the Province on the theme of inter-culturality as a response to tribalism in the country and to promote the unity of ethnic groups in South Sudan.

As for the specific specialization of confreres in the fields of missiology, formation and psychology, youth ministry, urban ministry, JPIC, administration, philosophy and theology (for teaching in the Seminary), the Provincial Council is in charge of preparing a plan of specializations.

Of great importance is the collaboration with other Institutions and Institutes such as the Comboni Missionary Sisters, RSASS, Solidarity with South Sudan, the Dioceses and Pastoral Agents, St. Paul Major Seminary, Good Shepherd Peace Centre in Kit and others. A proposed invitation was put forward to have the Comboni Lay Missionaries working together with the MCCJ in South Sudan.

Reorganization

In the matter of **Reorganization**, looking at the immense areas of South Sudan with no evangelizing presence of any Church institution, whether Diocesan, Religious or Missionary, to think of a reorganization which implied a reduction of personnel and commitments would really be an unforgivable resolution at missionary level. Ethnic groups who have become more opened to the gospel in the last recent years would really suffer the complete abandonment of their situation and hopes.

Until now, the General Administration has maintained an attitude of understanding of the importance of giving priority of personnel for South

Sudan and there is a real hope that it may not just fall under the ***general rule*** without a true and deep discernment. However, it is of extreme importance that also in the South Sudan Province a reorganization of the scale of priorities be brought clearly forward in order to employ the personnel in the situations most in need of our presence and charism without a dispersal of energy.

The proposed Six-Year Plan envisages that the Provincial Council should study new arrangements in the following areas: to have Zonal Provincial Councillors by reviewing the election process in the Province, or assign each elected member as a zonal coordinator in the Province; to foster stable communities of about four missionaries and to allow confreres to work for a long period (possibly 9 years) in one place.

Another possibility is to carry on sharing provincial services with other APDESAM provinces and improving the service to the people by economizing structures in the areas of JPIC, Finance, Formation, Mission Animation and Mass Media.

It was also proposed to explore the feasibility of appointing a missionary to edit on a regular basis articles on South Sudan in a dossier to be added to the New People magazine for South Sudan. Finally, it suggested the appointment of a full-time confrere responsible for JPIC activities as is already the current practice.

Finance

Finances are a necessary factor in evangelization and the way they are administered and used can become a positive way of fostering evangelisation. On the other hand, they may become a counter-witness undermining the very evangelizing activity itself, as well. The reflection of the Provincial Assembly went along these programmatic lines: to evangelize by living a simple and sober life-style; trusting in Providence and sharing resources with the people we evangelize, creating a sensibility in them to participate actively with their own resources; to start all mission activity by building up the local community, and from this community's concern, to build structures to answer their needs. Solidarity within the Universal Church would then be a sign of unity and brotherhood.

In order to reach the above goal, it is the task of the Provincial Council to form a Financial Secretariat whose members are competent and qualified in different fields of administration to allow a proper evaluation of proposals in this area and advise the PC to take good decisions. The Financial Secretariat is to be composed of 3 members (one of them the

Provincial Bursar). One member of the Provincial Council will attend the meetings without the right to vote.

The Provincial Bursar is to be responsible for animating the members of the Province in the spirit of the TCF and help them how to raise funds for their projects approved by the PC. The budget of each project should foresee a certain amount for administration which goes into the TCF for the support of the community where the project is implemented.

Regarding the pending issues like the Provincial Properties, the Provincial Council and the administration office will settle them in order to make use or generate income with them. Also the structures of the Provincial House need to undergo a proper assessment in order to meet current needs.

Looking ahead with confidence

The 2017 Provincial Assembly of the Province of South Sudan was the last chapter of this ***Outline of History*** and it was providential that, it so happened since it took place in the anniversary year of the Celebration of the foundation of our Institute for Africa.

This ***Outline of History of the Comboni Missionaries***, coming out just on the very 150th anniversary of the foundation of the Comboni Missionary Institute, has collected the passionate dedication of thousands of Comboni Missionaries who have offered and spent their lives for a dream which started with Daniel Comboni himself. They shared in this dream of the ***regeneration of Africa*** through the Gospel of Jesus by preparing an immeasurable number of African People now ready to continue this challenging dream of ***regeneration***.

The time is long due for ***Africa*** to claim ownership on ***its own regeneration***, as Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro said in his speech to the Assembly. The way has long been open, the furrow is clear and cannot be mistaken. It is a furrow that is 150 years old: ploughed by St. Daniel Comboni, by the Confreres and Sisters and a great number of people, Lay People, Catechists, Leaders, Men, Women and Youth, Priest and Bishops who accepted the Good News of Jesus and its ***regenerating power*** and offered generously their lives, their sufferings, their tears and their hopes for it.

The present Province of South Sudan is called to make a new journey, to continue tracing this furrow by claiming ownership of ***this regeneration***, because the time dreamed by St. Daniel Comboni ***of regenerating of Africa through Africa*** is now accomplished. There will be no return to the past

but, confirmed by the examples of the past, the way is open to look forward with confidence towards the future.⁶⁹⁵ The theme of the XVIII General Chapter, animated by the Spirit of the Risen Christ, will help in this enterprise to be true ***Comboni Missionary Disciples called to live the joy of the Gospel in today's world.***

⁶⁹⁵ St. Paul, Letter to the Hebrews, Chapter 11.

Conclusion

My work ends here. It has been very demanding but also a joyful and meaningful experience. Recalling the words of *Marcus Tullius Cicero*⁶⁹⁶ who said that ***history is a teacher of life***, I did wish it for myself while working on this research and I do wish it was for all of you readers: I really cannot but agree with him deeply.

This work was for me a real teaching and a deep learning from all the wonderful examples of the lives of Confreres, Co-sisters and Lay People, Missionaries and Local Church. They dedicated and gave their lives for Jesus and his Good News. Through them people found *regeneration* and new life in fullness, with the joy of following Jesus, their Lord and Master, with love and a self-giving spirit. Frequently, without realising it, my eyes were wet with tears, not of sadness, but of deep emotion, in front of all these witnesses whose lives were mingled with history in such a deep way.

I accepted to take up, and put all my energy into completing this work for two reasons only: that the Lord may be glorified through their witness of faithful service and that this work may help each reader, especially the youth and the followers of Comboni, as it has helped me. In 36 years of experience as a missionary in Africa, 26 of which I spent in South Sudan, the example of my confreres helped me tremendously to live Mission, to approach people with love and to share it to the best of my ability, trying to keep the dream of St. Daniel Comboni, ***Save Africa with Africa***, as the top priority in all what I undertook and lived.

A lot of work was spent in consulting appropriate documents and sources and also to contact and enquire from confreres and people who lived through the mentioned times and knew better than me the reported historical events. Time was not in my favour! I tried to do my best, especially, with the help of Fr. Christian Carlassare, who really assisted me in the *structure* and was a *positive critical mind* behind my writing, together with another confrere who helped in my English text.

Surely, many historical events or details have been omitted, not due to their lack of importance but out of necessity. I will be very happy if other people will supply what my present work is lacking. Finally, my thanks go to all of you readers, hoping that you may have found some inspiration from the message that this *outline of history* tries to convey.

Fr. Francesco Chemello mccj.

⁶⁹⁶ *Historia magistra vitae est*, op. cit.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX to PART ONE

1846-1881

PART ONE - SECTION ONE (1846-1899)

Point no. 1

Ref. to page 9, **DANIEL COMBONI** (1831-1881)

(*Short Biography*).

Saint Daniel Comboni was born on 15 March, 1831, in Limone sul Garda, Italy, and died on 10 October 1881 (aged 50) in Khartoum, Sudan, Africa. He was beatified on 17 March, 1996, in Rome, by Pope John Paul II and canonised on 5 October, 2003, in Rome, also by Pope John Paul II. His feast day according to the Roman Liturgical Calendar is on 10 October.



He was born at Limone sul Garda, Brescia, Italy, into a family of cultivators employed by one of the local owners. Luigi and Domenica, his parents, were very attached to Daniel, being the fourth of eight children, but the only one to survive into adulthood: all the others died young, six of them in their infancy.

Poverty was the reason for which Daniel went to school in Verona, at the Institute founded by Father Nicola Mazza. There, Daniel discovered his call to priesthood, and completed his studies of Philosophy and Theology. Above all, he discovered his missionary vocation to Africa by hearing from missionaries of the Mazza Institute returning from Africa. On 31 December, 1854, the year of the proclamation of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, Daniel was ordained a priest by Blessed John N. Tschiderer, Bishop of Trent.

Three years later he left for Africa along with five other missionaries of the Mazza Institute. The impact of this first face-to-face encounter with Africa was tremendous. Daniel was immediately made aware of the multiple difficulties that were part of his new mission. But labours, unbearable climate, sickness, the deaths of several of his young fellow-missionaries, the poverty and dereliction of the population, only served to drive him forward, never dreaming of giving up what he had taken on with such great enthusiasm.

From the mission of Holy Cross he wrote to his parents: *“We will have to labour hard, to sweat, to die: but the thought that one sweats and dies for love of Jesus Christ and the salvation of the most abandoned souls in the world, is far too*

sweet for us to desist from this great enterprise". After witnessing the death of one of his missionary companions, Daniel, far from being discouraged, felt an interior confirmation of his decision to carry on in the mission, as he wrote: "*O Nigrizia o morte!*" - "*Either Africa, or death*".

In 1864, while praying at the Tomb of Saint Peter in Rome, Daniel was struck by an inspiration that led to the drawing up of his "*Plan for the Rebirth of Africa*", a missionary project that can be summed up in an expression which is itself the indication of his boundless trust in the human and religious capacities of the African peoples: "*Save Africa through Africa*". In 1867 and 1872 respectively, he founded two missionary Institutes of men and of women known more widely as the "Comboni Missionaries" and the "Comboni Missionary Sisters", or also known as the "Verona Fathers and Sisters".

On 2 July, 1877, Comboni was named Vicar Apostolic of Central Africa and ordained Bishop in August 1877. In 1877 and 1878 he and the missionaries in Africa were tormented in body and spirit by the tragedy of a drought, followed by mass starvation. The local population was halved, and the missionary personnel and their activities reduced almost to nothing. In 1880, with tireless determination, Bishop Comboni travelled to Africa for the eighth and final time, to stand alongside his missionaries and continuing the struggle against the pernicious Slave Trade. Just one year later, overwhelmed by his labours, by many deaths in quick succession among his collaborators, and by a wave of calumnies and accusations that were a bitter burden, the great missionary fell sick himself.

On 10 October 1881, only 50 years old, he died in Khartoum, among his people. But he was aware that his missionary work would not end with him: "*I am dying*", he says, "*but my work will not die*".⁶⁹⁷

PART ONE - SECTION TWO (1900-1964)

Point no. 1

Ref. to page 35, **ANTONIO MARIA ROVEGGIO** (1858-1902)
(*Short Biography*).

"Antonio Maria Roveggio was born in Cologna Veneta (Verona province, Diocese of Vicenza) on 28 November, 1858. He studied in the Seminary of Vicenza, and was ordained priest on 28 March, 1884. On 4 December, 1884 he entered the seminary for Nigrizia, founded in Verona by Mgr. Daniele Comboni, and undertook a year of probation in order to join the Institute.

Ten members of the Institute, including Roveggio who was the only priest, opted for the religious form, made the regular novitiate and took religious vows on 28 November, 1887. On 2 December, 1887 Fr. Roveggio was sent to Egypt along with three confreres (Fr. Angelo Colombaroli, Bro. Pietro Baldi and Bro. Giovanni

⁶⁹⁷ <http://www.combonisouthsudan.org/index.php/who-we-are/daniel-comboni>

Giori); in Cairo he was spiritual director of the Sons of the Sacred Heart and of the Pius Mothers of Nigrizia.

In 1890 he moved with his community to the Gezira, where a hundred young Sudanese Christians had fled from Khartoum shortly before the city fell to the Mahdists, and were working in an agricultural colony. On 10 January, 1895 he founded a mission station at Aswan, on the border with Sudan. On 5 February, 1895, he was appointed titular bishop of Amastris and Apostolic Vicar of Central Africa. Having gone to Paray-leMonial and Lourdes in the same year, he asked the grace of martyrdom. On 13 December, 1900 he left with the vessel “Redemptor”, together with some missionaries, and founded the LUL station (12 April, 1901), among the Shilluk.

In December 1901, he made his second trip to the South, intending to reopen the old Gondokoro station (abandoned in 1862). The Government of the protectorate of Uganda, which then administered the area, did not allow him to open any new stations. He returned to Omdurman (April 1902) seriously weakened by malaria fever. Despite the fever he departed by train for Egypt to prepare other foundations in the South. Death overtook him in the train station of Berber (2 May, 1902).⁶⁹⁸

Point no. 2

Ref. to page 35, **WILHELM BANHOLZER** (Apostolic Administrator)
(*Short Biography*)

Wilhelm Banholzer, Rottweil (Germany) entered the Congregation of the Sons of the Sacred Heart in 1895 and in 1897 he left for Egypt. Shortly after the founding of Lul, he was sent there as the superior of that station and remained there until his death (1914). After the death of Bishop Roveggio, he was Apostolic Administrator of the Vicariate until the arrival of the successor Mgr. Geyer (December 1904).⁶⁹⁹

Point no. 3

Ref. to page 35, **FRANZ-XAVER GEYER** (1860-1943)
(*Short Biography*)

Franz-Xaver Geyer was born in 1860 at Wiesdorf in Bavaria on 3 December, 1860. He studied at the Diocesan Seminary of Passau (where he encountered Mgr. Comboni). He entered the seminary for Nigrizia in 1881 in Verona, he was ordained priest on 23 September, 1882, and in December he left for Egypt. In 1896 Fr. Geyer entered the (Religious) Congregation, made his religious profession after only a year of novitiate and was immediately sent to Brixen (Bressanone) as Rector of the Seminary of the congregation for vocations coming from the German-

⁶⁹⁸ G. Vantini, *La Missione del Cuore*, Op. Cit., 33-34

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 73 (quotation)

speaking countries. There he was master of novices and founded the magazine *“Stern der Neger”*.

Fr. Geyer was the most outstanding among secular missionaries of Nigrizia for his experience of Egypt and Sudan. His appointment was approved by the Holy Father on 28 August, 1903: “Francis Xaver Geyer, titular bishop of Trocmad i.p.i., Apostolic Vicar of Central Africa”. His consecration took place in the Cathedral of Monaco where Fr. Angelo Colombaroli, on behalf of the Sons of the sacred Heart, was present.

During the previous twenty months, between the death of Mgr. Roveggio (May 1902) and his arrival (December 1903), Fr. Wilhelm Banholzer, who then resided at Lul, administered the Mission of Central Africa as Apostolic Administrator. On New Year’s Eve, 1904, he reached Halfaya, the railway terminal. The vessel *Redemptor* was waiting there to accompany him to Omdurman. His first thought was to pray for the soul of his predecessor Mgr. Roveggio. A High Pontifical Requiem Mass was arranged in the modest chapel built in Khartoum the previous year. Like his predecessor, he too wanted to have his residence in Khartoum, but for the time being he had to reside in Omdurman.

Geyer had already an ambitious but flexible plan, adaptable to the circumstances. He would have liked to open missions in Bahr el Ghazal, as had been the wish of Mgr. Roveggio, and at least one station in Uganda, the far south of its vicariate, before others could interfere. Sir Reginald Wingate Pasha, Governor-General of Sudan (whom he had known when he was in Egypt), pointed out that Uganda was then under the rule of Entebbe. Instead there is Boulnois Bey, Governor of Bahr el-Ghazal, who would view positively a mission in his province (Sanderson, p. 56). Mgr. Geyer accepted immediately, and in less than fifteen days he prepared the first Comboni expedition to Bahr el-Ghazal.

In Sudan he drew the admiration of the English to the point that, even during the war between Germany and England, he was always granted unconditional freedom and respect by the British in the Sudan. The best success and merit of Mgr. Geyer, as we can judge today, was that he kept open the Mission in Sudan even during World War I.

After the war, hopes for a return to the Vicariate of the Austro-German old and new missionaries were dashed and he resigned (June 1921). He retired to Germany where he founded the Society of the Guardian Angels for the spiritual assistance of German emigrants. He died in Banz at the age of 83 years, on 2 April, 1943.⁷⁰⁰

Point no. 4

Ref. to page 37, **SILVESTRI PAOLO TRANQUILLO** (1867-1949)
(*Short Biography*)

Born at Livigno, Sondrio, (Italy) he was a missionary in various Provinces of the Sudan: first at Kayango, Bahr el Ghazal, in the early years (1907 -1916), then

⁷⁰⁰ G. Vantini, *La Missione del Cuore*, Op. Cit. pp. 81-85.

in Khartoum Procure during the First World War (1916-19). In 1919 he was sent to open Rejaf (Gondokoro having been abandoned).⁷⁰¹ For the next three years (1920-23) he was Regional Superior of the Verona Fathers in Northern Uganda, having his residence in Gulu. After a one-year rest, he was appointed Apostolic Vicar of Khartoum to succeed Bishop Geyer who had resigned (1922). In 1930 he too resigned and retired. His authority included the area which would later become the MISSION SUI JURIS OF KODOK.

Point no. 5

Ref. to page 45, **Comboni Institute and General Superiors (All)**

THE INSTITUTE FOR THE AFRICAN MISSIONS

It was founded in Verona on 1 June 1867 by Daniele Comboni, under the authority of the Bishop of Verona, Mgr. Luigi di Canossa, who issued the Decree of diocesan erection on 8 December, 1871.

Rectors of the Institute

Fr. Alessandro Dal Bosco	1867-1868
Fr. Antonio Squaranti	1871-1877
Fr. Paolo Rossi	1877-1879
Fr. Giuseppe Sembianti (Stigmatine)	1880-1885

The Congregation of the Sons of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Mgr. Francesco Sogaro, successor of Mgr. Comboni in the Apostolic Vicariate of Central Africa, saw fit to transform the Institute into a religious congregation, entrusting its direction and training to the Jesuit Fathers. The novitiate of the Sons of the Sacred Heart began on 28 October, 1885.

Jesuit Superiors

Fr. Pietro Frigerio	1885-1887
Fr. Antonio Voltolina	1887-1892
Fr. Samuele Asperti	1892-1893
Fr. Giacomo Mogni	1893-1897
Fr. Antonio Voltolina	1897-1899

Meanwhile, the Rules and Constitutions were approved by the Holy See with the Pontifical Decree of Praise of 7 June, 1895. When the General Chapter opened in Verona on 19 June 1899, the Jesuits withdrew from the direction of the Institute, which from that time had its own General Superiors. The dates below show the day they took office.

⁷⁰¹ *Passione per l'Africa*, op.cit. pp. 509-522, 1919: Rejaf invece di Gondokoro.

Comboni Superiors General FSCJ (*Filii Sacri Cordis Jesu*)⁷⁰²

Fr. Angelo Colombaroli	21.6.1899
Fr. Federico Vianello	4.10.1909
Fr. Paolo Meroni	25.9.1919

In 1923 the FSCJ Institute split into two: the new German speaking one took the name of MFSC (Missionari Filii Sacri Cordis), the one with Verona as its centre carried on with the same name FSCJ.

FSCJ

Fr. Paolo Meroni	17.9.1925
Fr. Pietro Simoncelli	5.9.1931
Fr. Antonio Vignato	2.9.1937
Fr. Antonio Todesco	3.5.1947
Fr. Antonio Todesco	2.7.1953
Fr. Gaetano Briani	22.7.1959
Fr. Tarcisio Agostoni	18.7.1969
Fr. Tarcisio Agostoni	22.9.1975

MFSC by Decree of Propaganda Fide on 27 July, 1923.

Fr. Jakob Lehr	1923
Fr. Jacob Lehr	1926-1932
Fr. Josef Musar	1932-1938
Fr. Josef Musar	1932-1938
Fr. Johann Deisenbeck	1938-1949
Fr. Johann Deisenbeck	1949-1 955
Fr. Richard Lechner	1955-1961
Fr. Richard Lechner	1961 -1967
Fr. Gunther Brosig	1967-1973
Fr. Georg Klose	1973-1979

COMBONI MISSIONARIES OF THE HEART OF JESUS

With the General Chapter of 1979 the two Comboni Institutes, the FSCJ and the MFSC decided to reunite and took the new name of

“Missionarii Comboniani Cordis Jesu” (MCCJ).

The following were the new General Superiors.

Fr. Calvia Salvatore	(1979-1985)
Fr. Pierli Francesco	(1985-1991)
Fr. Glenday David Kinnear	(1991-1997)
Fr. Manuel Augusto Lopes Ferreira	(1997-2003)
Fr. Serra Teresino	(2003-2009)
Fr. Sánchez González Enrique	(2009-2015)
Fr. Tesfaye Tadesse Gebresilasie	(2015-

⁷⁰² Annuario Comboniano, op.cit. Capitoli, 1 January, 1979.

PART ONE - SECTION THREE (1964-1981)

Point no. 1

Ref. to page 122, **Extraordinary meeting of the Sudan Episcopal Conference**
(28 to 30 March, 1973) Agenda

1. THE MAJOR SEMINARY: BUSSERE
2. SENIOR SECONDARY SEMINARY
3. KATIGONDO & GABA SUDANESE SEMINARIANS
4. RELIGION TEACHING INSPECTORS IN THE SOUTHERN REGION
5. STATUTE FOR SUDANAID TO BE APPROVED
6. SUDAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
7. CATECHIST TRAINING CENTRES
8. LETTER OF S.C. PROPAGANDA FIDE ON THE SUBSIDIES TO THE ORDINARIES
9. COLLECTIVE PLAN TO STAFF VACANT PARISHES
10. REPORT OF BISHOP BARONI ON FUND-RAISING FOR RECONSTRUCTION IN THE SOUTH.
11. A PRIORITY LIST OF RECONSTRUCTION PROJECTS
12. WINDING UP OF PROCURE
13. PASTORAL WORK-STUDY WEEK FOR THE CLERGY AT JUBA AND WAU
14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

From 28 to 30 March, 1973, there was an extraordinary meeting of the Sudan Episcopal Conference with the Pro-Nuncio H.E. Archbishop Ubaldo Calabresi. All the Ordinaries were present except that of Rumbek, for unforeseen circumstances. There was also a guest from "Cor Unum" from Rome but the secretary of Sudanaid, Rumbek was not present.

H.E. Archbishop Calabresi opened the meeting with prayers and thanks for the success of the celebration of his 25th anniversary of priestly ordination (27 March, 1948) and for the fact that this extraordinary meeting became possible. He introduced the Rev. Fr. H. De Riedmatten from "Cor Unum" in Rome who came to explain how best to organize the reconstruction program and Rev. Fr. Arthur Dejemeppe who was to stay with Sudanaid Secretariat to coordinate and implement the projects. Among the priorities there were the following:

No.1 THE MAJOR SEMINARY.

Rev. Fr. Andrew Adyong was elected Rector by the Episcopal Conference held in Juba from 18-25 September 1972, but being unable to take up the post because of other responsibilities given to him, the Ordinaries unanimously voted for Rev. Fr. Paolino Lukudu, (Comboni Missionary) subject to the approval of his religious superiors. His vice rector was to be Fr. Joseph Nyekindi and the spiritual director Fr. Jocondo Anyngo.

BUSSERE

It was agreed (in the Juba conference of the SEC) that Bussere be the temporary location until a permanent one could be found. However, since the place was still occupied by the Anyayna Armed Forces, it was agreed that it should be moved temporarily to the premises of Juba Senior Seminary. The Rector and the Professors were to provide all the necessary equipment.

No. 2 SENIOR SECONDARY SEMINARY

A long letter of statements was read by the Rector about the Minor Senior Secondary Seminary on the administrative difficulties and accommodation problems and it was decided that it should be moved to Rimenze, since there was ample room for agriculture and the houses of the Fathers and Sisters could be used as dormitories, classrooms etc. Fr. Gottardi, a Jesuit Brother and Bro. Angelo of Wau were proposed to go there for the immediate repairs, subject to the approval of their superiors.

NO. 3 KATIGONDO & GABA SUDANESE SEMINARIANS

The Major seminarians of Katigondo & Gaba wrote a letter about their decreasing pocket money while the cost of living was increasing. It was decided that the Rectors of the seminarians concerned should assess their needs and send their findings to their Ordinaries with a copy to Bishop Caesar Asili, in charge of them in Uganda. Each ordinary was advised to keep in contact with their seminarians and take note of the mixed philosophy and theology courses.

N.4 RELIGION TEACHING INSPECTORS IN THE SOUTHERN REGION

The Regional Minister of Education Southern Region wrote a letter to both Protestant and Catholic leaders to appoint Religion Teaching Inspectors. The issue was very important, urgent and difficult to treat and it was suggested it be dealt with at a plenary session. However, it was decided that: the priest be appointed by the SEC; that the contract be permanent in nature, while the Ordinary might change the person; that the Ordinary of Juba be the one contacting the Regional government; that the priest in charge be staying in Church Premises and depend on the ordinary of the place, when on duty and submit a yearly report to the SEC of his activities. The SEC appointed Fr. Jacob Rondiang as Inspector in the Southern Region and asked Mgr. Paolino Doggale to present this decision to his council, hoping they might agree to it. Meanwhile, the Religion Teaching Training Course of Khartoum was transferred to Malakal. Mgr. Pio Yukwan was asked to supply a Priest to run the centre.

N. 5 STATUTE FOR SUDANAID TO BE APPROVED

A draft of the statute of Sudanaid was submitted to the SEC for approval and having being discussed and corrected it was approved unanimously.

1. The President: an Ordinary designated by the SEC.
2. The Vice-President: a member of the SEC designated by the SEC.
3. The General Secretary of Sudanaid be chosen according to by-laws.
4. A Councillor to be chosen according to by-laws.

It was decided that the General Secretary be the legal representative of Sudanaid and the Vice-President and the Councillor be the Deputy Legal Representatives and that Sudanaid would have to work according to by-laws.

The operating members of Sudanaid chosen for a period of time at the discretion of the SEC were:

1. President: Rt. Rev. Mgr. Pio Yukwan
2. Vice-President: His Lordship, Bishop A. Baroni
3. General Secretary: Rev. Fr. A. Dejemeppe
4. Councillor: Rev. Fr. Rudolf Deng

It was decided that Sudanaid have its office in Khartoum and provide all the necessary equipment and that Fr. Mark Lothong be sent to Swansea University to take one - year course in Social Policy and Administration to prepare himself and, in due course, to replace the General Secretary. There was also the suggestion that a lay person be prepared to take up the job in due time.

NO.6 SUDAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

A proposal of amendments to the constitution of S.C.C. was read in order to allow the participation of Southern Churches in it, form a permanent Secretariat and decentralize the work with a branch of the Council in each region, to choose replacements for the Director and A/Director. A full session of the S.C.C. was held on Friday at 5.10 p.m. at the Excelsior Hotel. It was unanimously voted to have one S.C.C. and a committee of six persons was formed to study the proposed amendments to the constitution.

N. 7 CATECHIST TRAINING CENTRES

There was a lengthy discussion on this urgent problem of the church and it was agreed that in each jurisdiction there be refresher courses for untrained Catechists, that there be an inter-diocesan one near to the Teaching Brothers of Kit, so as to give them the opportunity to take part in the course. This would be studied by the Superior General and the Ordinary of Juba. Each Ordinary should give a refresher course to 20 Catechists. The financial cost was presented and also the budgets for year 1973 and 1974

N.8 LETTER OF S.C. PROPAGANDA FIDE ON THE SUBSIDIES TO THE ORDINARIES

The answer given was that it did not concern them since their subsidies were insufficient. Some Churches that have already reached "self-sufficiency" were the ones concerned.

N. 9 COLLECTIVE PLAN TO STAFF VACANT PARISHES

A list was made of vacant parishes and a fixed number of Foreign Church Personnel for each Jurisdiction was to be presented to the Central Government and possibly with copies to Catholic Ministers. If the numbers asked for are granted, then the names will be supplied. The Mill Hill Fathers are willing to go and work in Malakal and a group about ten young Capuchins from Malta are eager to work in Southern Sudan.

The vacant parishes were:

- WAU: Mayen, Nyamlel, Gordhim, Kayango, Mbili, Thiet, Warap, Bussere
- RUMBEK: Yirol, Mundri, Porkele, Tore, Kajokaji.
- JUBA: Tali, Kwerijik, Kit, Lirya, Rejaf, Lowoi, Okaru, Isoke, Lerwa.
- MALAKAL: Tonga, Lul, Malakal, Tumierwau, Yoynyang, Riangnom, Detwok.
- MUPOI: Maringindo, Ezo, Naandi, Yubu, Rimenze.

N. 10 REPORT OF BISHOP BARONI ON FUNDRAISING FOR RECONSTRUCTION IN THE SOUTH

A report was given of the result of the fundraising for the reconstruction of churches, the purchase of vehicles for the parishes, a leper rehabilitation centre and Mass intentions available and a priority list was made.

N. 11 A PRIORITY LIST of Reconstruction Projects

- WAU: Warap, Thiet, Mbili
- RUMBEK: Rumbek, Yirol, Mundri, Porkele, Tore, Kajokaji, Yei.
- JUBA: Loa, Lirya, Kadule, Torit Sem. Kwerijik.
- MALAKAL: Oweci, Tonga, Lul, Malakal, Tumierwau, Yoynyang, Riangnom.
- MUPOI: Mupoi, Yambio, Yubu, Naandi, Ezo, Maringindo, Rimenze.

N. 12 WINDING UP OF PROCURE

Rev. Fr. Picotti, from the general Curia of the Comboni Missionaries, was sent to audit the General Procure in Khartoum and to check the accounts which he found in good order. There was the proposal to set aside a certain amount of money to have a procure in the South, but there was no full agreement and the matter was dropped.

N.13 PASTORAL WORK-STUDY WEEK FOR THE CLERGY AT JUBA AND WAU

The pastoral study-week was supposed to be held in Khartoum in March but there were difficulties in sending the priests there. It was decided to postpone it to November 1973, from 1 to 30, in order to give the priests still outside time to return.

N.14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

H.E. Archbishop Ubaldo Calabresi read a collective letter from the Priests of Rumbek Vicariate, objecting to the proposal of the change of boundaries of the Vicariate. The letter was given attentive consideration, but its tone was not appreciated. Nevertheless, the ordinaries decided to examine it later on.

Point no. 2

Ref. to page 135,

Homily of Father General to the Missionaries and Comboni Sisters on the occasion of the erection of the Catholic Hierarchy in Sudan

(Delivered in Khartoum 14.4.1975)

1. Some historical stages. 8 January, 1858, Comboni arrived in Khartoum during his trip to the South. On 22 August, 1877, he was consecrated Bishop, following a decree of Propaganda Fide, promulgated on 31 July, by which Comboni was nominated Vicar Apostolic of Central Africa.

The successors of Comboni were:

- Mgr. Sogaro (1882-1894)
- Mgr. Roveggio (1895-1902)
- Mgr. F. S. Geyer (1903-1913) 1913-1922 Vic. Apost. of Khartoum.
- 13 May, 1913, the first Division: the erection of the Apostolic Prefecture of Wau.

Since then, there has been a whole series of Prefects and Apostolic Vicars in all the subsequent ecclesiastical divisions. For many of us, our predecessors such as Monsignors Silvestri, Stoppani, Bini, Orlor and Vignato are still very close to us and we all know those still active. We also remember the first Archbishop Mgr. Baroni as well as Mgr. Mason, Mgr. Mazzoldi, Mgr. Ferrara and Fr. Cazzaniga.

All of them kept the Church going on behalf of the Pope, and not in their own name, and that responsibility of theirs was shared by the congregation with ***Jus commissionis***, which after the Second Vatican Council became difficult to be understand.

2. The establishment of the hierarchy. From this point onwards, the Ordinaries, on behalf of the Local Church of the faithful, the people of God, became co-responsible with them for their own Church and its welfare and therefore for its ministerial and charismatic apostolic activities as well as for the structures required by Vatican II such as Presbyteral and Parish Councils.

The Bishops and the Local Church remain in communion of faith and charity and of structures with the Pope and the Holy See, according to Scripture and the true Christian tradition clearly expressed since the time of St Ignatius of Antioch and St. Irenaeus.

With the erection of the Hierarchy and its taking possession, ***the Congregation gives up her jus commissionis*** and is no longer legally responsible (according to the Canon law) for the growth of the Church in Sudan. This responsibility falls entirely on the Bishop, the Local Church and its structures.

3. This does not mean that we are leaving. Our Congregations agree to stay, if requested by the Ordinaries and by the Local Church. God willing, we will remain also in South Sudan.

We remain:

- because the Sudan is the cradle of our Congregations;
- our Founder, many Fathers, Brothers and Sisters died and are buried here;
- currently the Local Church does not have sufficient resources to be self-sufficient and to grow.

4. We stay in a different way.

A) AT THE SERVICE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH, which has the authority and ultimate responsibility in regard to evangelization.

This service will need a legal instrument (convention) between the Local Church and the Congregations of the Comboni Missionaries and Comboni Sisters.

B) THE SERVICE WE WILL GIVE IS A LIMITED AND QUALIFIED SERVICE:

a) from our charism as a group and from the decisions of the Chapters:

Mission "ad gentes": positive choices: among the many needs of the Church and without much discussion about the meaning of mission, our Chapter has chosen this, and here in Sudan, there is need in plenty; Sudan, as it is today, is, in Africa, one of the territories most in need of the presence of missionaries for first evangelisation.

- **First Evangelization:** among the numerous requests and needs of the Church we choose the fields of first evangelization and plan to pass on to others places already evangelized: for evangelization I mean, however, not only the proclamation with our lives and our preaching, but the whole process that starts from the testimony of life and of the word up to communion with Christ, the creation of ministries and local priesthood.

- **The poorest and most abandoned:** the poorest and most abandoned in the faith, especially. Sometimes this expression was interpreted as if we were social workers.

To bring to faith the poorest and most abandoned, who are the most sensitive: not having the earthly and external delights, let them have at least the inner and heavenly joys. The poor, especially, are entitled to know Christ as Saviour, and we cannot give them only the bread of earthly happiness.

To bring the faith to the poorest and most abandoned means to distribute our work, taking care to avoid creating situations where we assist some groups daily while failing to assist others even monthly: to avoid spiritual bourgeoisie.

This does not preclude the care of leaders and of the elite; but we must not allow ourselves to be tied down by their welfare, their privileges, the comradeship and friendship which can prevent true ministry. We must try to make them more sensitive to the faith and to love of the poor with a more Christian concept of Justice.

b) Limited service by the temporary and precarious character of our missionary institutes. There are many types of missionaries. Some have a specific charism to bring to the Church: Franciscans, Benedictines, cloistered religious, etc. they can remain in the place where they go.

We, on the other hand, we have to establish the Church and then leave.

We say this not because we must ask ourselves: "when will we leave?" but because we are enlightened in the selection of priorities of work.

c) Priority Choices in today's Mission:

- Formation of priests and religious men and women;
- Formation of catechists and laity really responsible for those parts of evangelization which do not require priestly ordination.

Catechists and laity that form true communities around the Gospel and practice reciprocal Christian charity: communities which, in turn, become fertile ground for priestly and religious vocations.

In the current apostolate in Sudan, where the problem of schools is sensitive, let us work so that those who attend our schools may have not only the possibility of becoming a social and cultural elite, but also, and above all, an apostolic and religious elite. The crisis of Catholic schools has arisen because many schools produce a social and cultural elite - not one that is apostolic and religious – who devote much care and time to caring for priests and religious.

Among the priorities in the Mission today, I would like to note how in the Symposium of the African bishops at Kampala (1972), other pastoral priorities were listed: university and students' ministry; urban ministry, particularly in relation to internal migration movements, so large in African capitals.

And Khartoum is no exception. We have, in fact, the prospect of a strong South-Sudan working class.

d) From all these needs and priorities comes the need for other Institutes to join in, whether of Fathers, Brothers or Sisters. So far we have tried, more or less successfully, to meet all the needs of the Church, because we felt responsible for everything. Today the Local Church is responsible and she needs to call upon other resources:

- More permanent ones, in view of their permanent charism in the Church: Franciscans, male and female monasticism, etc.

- More specialized: specialized in pastoral ministry, urban ministry, media, health, social issues, education, etc.

We cannot deal with competence with all problems of evangelization and of development in a country of such different features as Sudan.

I saw with happiness the initial presence of other Institutes, who are already working or that are on their way. I thank the Lord and pray that more and more we may be present, not so much through a presence with more staff, but for a quality and specialized choice.

And, given the presence of masses of Southerners in the North, I hope in the presence of African priests of the South in the North too.

This multiform presence is a characteristic of this missionary period.

5. Our service, however, must be a service of co-responsibility and subsidiarity.

Avoid imposing, consciously or not, our point of view as individuals or as a group. Avoid also the absenteeism of those who leave all the responsibility to the Local Church.

Our service is a service of co-responsibility:

- as a group and as individuals, by mature men and women, who dedicate themselves to evangelise in an Institute full of experience;

- in sincere dialogue, which seeks the truth together: we are one Church;

- in participating in the existing ecclesial structures;

- by proposing with humility, wisdom and patience, especially as a group, those pastoral initiatives which, according to our experience and missionary vitality, can help, leaving the final decision to the proper authorities.

I am sure the local Hierarchy will do their best in the new situation in order to establish a climate of dialogue and mutual trust. They will do everything possible to establish those structures, such as Secretariats and Councils, which allow the inclusion of missionaries at those levels where the missionaries feel able to cooperate and work.

In this way, Fathers, Brothers and Sisters, each according to the graces received, may contribute profoundly to a serious service in Evangelisation.

I have not talked about so many other things (such as ecumenism, Islam, etc.) because they are realities that do not derive from the new situation of the erection of the Hierarchy: they are permanent problems like that of how to incarnate ourselves.

Concluding:

With a sense of joy and satisfaction, because for all the Ordinaries, priests and qualified laity we can name the Comboni Missionaries and Comboni Sisters who attracted, helped and educated them from start to finish. It is the plan of Comboni: save Africa with Africa, inspired by Sudan, which is being fulfilled.

With a feeling of hope, that this Church, more than young, very young, may thrive and find in us valid and humble collaborators.

With a feeling of thanksgiving and prayer to the good God that we express in the prayer of the faithful.⁷⁰³

Point no. 3

Ref. to page 143

January 1978: the communities in the South

List of confreres in the South in January 1978

Total Confreres 20: (11 Fathers, 7 Brothers and 2 absent)

Fathers

1. Fr. Michael Barton
2. Fr. Hilary Boma
3. Fr. Elvio Cellana
4. Fr. Luigi Cocchi
5. Fr. Abel Francis Modi
6. Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino
7. Fr. Alfonso Rossi
8. Fr. Raffaele Tessitore
9. Fr. Joseph Ukelo

10 Fr. David Urasi

11 Fr. Baltazar Quiroz Zarate

Brothers

- 12 Bro. Renato Bastianelli
- 13 Bro. Augusto Bazzanella
- 14 Bro. Ambrogio Confalonieri
- 15 Bro. Fahmi Munir
- 16 Bro. Francesco Ragnoli
- 17 Bro. Ottorino Gelmini
- 18 Bro. Giuseppe Manara

⁷⁰³ (Fr. Tarcisio Agostoni, *Superior General*, Ref. "Omelia ai missionari in Sudan" MCCJ Bulletin 109/4-7.

Absent

19. Fr. Hector Ayon
20. Fr. Peter Magalasi
21. Fr. Luigi Brambilla
- North America:* Fr. George Longokwo

Point no. 4

Ref. to page 149, June 1980, the communities in the South

List of confreres in the South in June 1980

Total Confreres 24: (17 Fathers, 7 Brothers and 1 in El Obeid)

Fathers:

1. Fr. Hector Ayon
2. Fr. Michael Barton,
3. Fr. Mario Busellato,
4. Fr. Elvio Cellana,
5. Fr. Luigi Cocchi,
6. Fr. Giuseppe Farina
7. Fr. Tito Giuntoli,
8. Fr. Peter Magalasi
9. Fr. Abel Francis Mödi,
10. Fr. Justin Ogen
11. Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino,
12. Fr. Luigi Penzo,
13. Fr. Pietro Ravasio,

14. Fr. Alfonso Rossi
15. Fr. Raffaele Tessitore
16. Fr. Joseph Ukelo
17. Fr. David Uras,

Brothers:

18. Bro. Renato Bastianelli
19. Bro. Augusto Bazzanella,
20. Bro. Ambrogio Confalonieri
21. Bro. Valentino Fabris,
22. Bro. Ottorino Gelmini,
23. Bro. Francesco Ragnoli
24. Bro. Mario Rossignoli

El Obeid Cathedral: *Fr. Hilary Boma,*

Point no. 5

Ref. to page 156,

Consultation for the appointment of the Representative of the Superior General.

COMBONI MISSIONARIES IN SOUTHERN SUDAN

**From the General Curia, Roma in view of the CONSULTATION
FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
SUPERIOR GENERAL.**

November, 1980 - Members having the right to vote: (29) - Only from the South.

1. Hector Ayon
2. Michael Barton
3. Renato Bastianelli
4. Augusto Bazzanella
5. Ezio Bettini
6. Mattia Bizzarro
7. Mario Busellato
8. Elvio Cellana
9. Luigi Cocchi
10. Ambrogio Confalonieri
11. Vittorino Dellagiacoma
12. Valentino Fabris
13. Giuseppe Farina
14. Ottorino Gelmini
15. Tito Giuntoli
16. Miguel A. Agudo Istúriz
17. Peter Magalasi
18. Arturo Nebel

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 19. Justin Ogen | 25. Alfonso Rossi |
| 20. Giuseppe Pellerino | 26. Mario Rossignoli |
| 21. Luigi Penzo | 27. Raffaele Tessitore |
| 22. Alfonso Polacchini | 28. Joseph Ukelo |
| 23. Francesco Ragnoli | 29. David Urasì |
| 24. Pietro Ravasio | |

Members having right of passive vote, to be voted, (mark your choice here below) (81)

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Hector Ayon | 35. Tito Giuntoli |
| 2. Vittorio Barin | 36. Gaetano Gottardi |
| 3. Michael Barton | 37. Silvano Gottardi |
| 4. Gino Bellezze | 38. Paolo Grumini |
| 5. Igino Benini | 39. Attilio Laner |
| 6. Mattia Bizzarro | 40. Peter Magalasi |
| 7. Pasquale Boffelli | 41. Max Macram |
| 8. Hilary Boma | 42. Giovanni Manzi |
| 9. Mario Busellato | 43. Isaac Martín Arnanz |
| 10. Benito Buzzacarin | 44. Antonio Menegazzo |
| 11. Antonio Calaveso | 45. Alberto Modonesi |
| 12. Carmine Calvisi | 46. Giacomo Misciatti |
| 13. Mario Castagnetti | 47. Alberto Mosna |
| 14. Franco Cazzaniga | 48. Arturo Nebel |
| 15. Elvio Cellana | 49. Justin Ogen |
| 16. Armando Ciappa | 50. Antonio Orlando |
| 17. Luigi Cocchi | 51. Pasquino Panato |
| 18. Bruno Colombina | 52. José X. Parladé Escobar |
| 19. Pietro Coronella | 53. Giuseppe Pellerino |
| 20. Eugenio Corti | 54. Luigi Penzo |
| 21. Severino Crescentini | 55. Luciano Perina |
| 22. Benito Cruciani | 56. Orlando Pigarella |
| 23. Rolando Dal Cason | 57. Tarcisio Pilati |
| 24. Francesco De Bertolis | 58. Carlo Plotegheri |
| 25. Vittorino Dellagiacoma | 59. Alfonso Polacchini |
| 26. Luigi Denicolò | 60. Giuseppe Puttinato |
| 27. Dorino Elisire | 61. Giancarlo Ramanzini |
| 28. Giuseppe Farina | 62. Pietro Ravasio |
| 29. Giovanni Fenzi | 63. Silvestre Esteban Robledo |
| 30. Davide Ferraboschi | 64. Angelo Rodorigo |
| 31. Pierantonio Ferrari | 65. Alfonso Rossi |
| 32. Marcellino Graziano Frison | 66. Ferruccio Rovelli |
| 33. Agostino Galli | 67. Rino Rufini |
| 34. José L. Garcia Pérez | 68. Tarcisio Scarpetta |

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 69. Giuseppe Scattolin | 76. Davide Urasi |
| 70. Ottorino Sina | 77. Giovanni Vantini |
| 71. Elio Soriani | 78. Miguel A. Villegas Serrano |
| 72. Cosimo Spadavecchia | 79. Alessandro Zanolli |
| 73. Raffaele Tessitore | 80. Guido Zanotelli |
| 74. Lorenzo Tiepolo | 81. Giuseppe Zoppetti |
| 75. Joseph Ukelo | |

And any member from any other Province (write name). Return this paper to the Secretary General, Roma, before January 10, 1981.

Point no. 6

Ref. to page 157.

Personnel present in Southern Sudan 1981: The personnel present in Southern Sudan before the canonical start of the proposed new Comboni Jurisdiction was the following:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Fr. Luigi Cocchi | Juba |
| 2. Bro. Renato Bastianelli | Juba |
| 3. Bro. Augusto Bazzanella | Juba |
| 4. Fr. Tito Giuntoli | Rejaf |
| 5. Fr. Mario Busellato | Rejaf |
| 6. Fr. Giuseppe Farina | Rejaf |
| 7. Fr. Mattia Bizzarro | Rejaf (Apostles of Jesus) |
| 8. Bro. Ambrogio Confalonieri | Rejaf |
| 9. Fr. Michael Barton | Kuorijik |
| 10. Fr. Hector Ayon. | Kuorijik (Chukudum) |
| 11. Fr. Luigi Penzo | Wau (Bussere) |
| 12. Fr. Vittorino Dellagiacoma | Wau (Bussere) |
| 13. Fr. Raffaele Tessitore | Kuajok |
| 14. Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino | Kuajok |
| 15. Fr. Joseph Ukelo | Mupoi |
| 16. Bro. Ottorino Gelmini Mupoi | |
| 17. Fr. Pietro Ravasio | Nzara |
| 18. Fr. Peter Magalasi | Rumbek |
| 19. Fr. Ezio Bettini | Rumbek |
| 20. Fr. Elvio Cellana | Tonga |
| 21. Fr. Miguel Isturiz | Tonga |
| 22. Bro. Francesco Ragnoli | Tonga |
| 23. Fr. Guido Bertuzzi | Loa (Ugandan refugees) |

APPENDIX TO PART TWO

(1981-2016)

SECTION ONE *(1981-1994)*

CHAPTER ONE *(1981-1984)*

Point no. 1

Ref. to page 184,

Comboni personnel and communities on 1 January, 1982.⁷⁰⁴

Comboni personnel in South Sudan

Priests

Raffaele Cefalo (Curia)

1. Mons. Baroni Agostino
2. Ettore Ayon
3. Michael Barton
4. Ezio Bettini
5. Mattia Bizzarro
6. Mario Busellato
7. Elvio Cellana
8. Luigi Cocchi
9. Vittorino Dellagiacoma
10. Giuseppe Farina
11. Tito Giuntoli
12. Miguel Angel Isturiz Agudo
13. Pietro Magalasi
14. Cesare Mazzolari
15. Justin Ogen
16. Luigi Parisi

17. Ettore Pasetto (a Limone)
18. Giuseppe Pellerino
19. Luigi Penzo
20. Alfonso Polacchini
21. Pietro Ravasio
22. Ottorino Sina
23. Alfonso Rossi (in Italia)
24. Raffaele Tessitore
25. Joseph Ukelo
26. Pietro Zambruni

Brothers

27. Augusto Bazzanella
28. Ambrogio Confalonieri
29. Valentino Fabris
30. Ottorino Gelmini
31. Francesco Ragnoli
32. Mario Rossignoli

⁷⁰⁴ Annuario Comboniano 1982, p. 80 (Updated on 1 January 1982)

Point no. 2

Ref. to page 204.

Comboni personnel in South Sudan September, 1982

The situation of the personnel and communities in South Sudan by September 1982: thirty three confreres, 27 priests and 6 Brothers, with a total of ten commitments in five dioceses:

Priests (27)

1. Hector Ayon
2. Michael Barton
3. Ezio Bettini
4. Mattia Bizzarro
5. Mario Busellato
6. Raffaele Cefalo
7. Elvio Cellana
8. Vittorino Dellagiacoma
9. Giuseppe Farina
10. Tito Giuntoli
11. Gaetano Gottardi
12. Miguel Angel Isturiz
13. Peter Magalasi
14. Alfredo Mattevi
15. Cesare Mazzolari
16. Justin Ogen
17. Luigi Parisi

18. Ettore Pasetto
19. Giuseppe Pellerino
20. Luigi Penzo
21. Alfonso Polacchini
22. Pietro Ravasio
23. Felice Sciannameo
24. Ottorino Sina
25. Raffaele Tessitore
26. Joseph Ukelo
27. Pietro Zambruni

Brothers (6)

28. Augusto Bazzanella
29. Ambrogio Confalonieri
30. Valentino Fabris
31. Ottorino Gelmini
32. Francesco Ragnoli
33. Mario Rossignoli

Point no. 3

Ref. to page 206.

Letter of Fr. Salvatore Calvia. Superior General, to Archbishop Ireneo Dud⁷⁰⁵

Most Rev. Mgr. IRENEO WIEN DUD
Catholic Church
P.O. Box 32
JUBA (Sudan)
Rome, December 24th, 1982.

⁷⁰⁵ Rome, 24 December, 1982, to: Most Rev. Mgr. Ireneo Wien Dud. ACR 606/1/2.

Your Excellency,

I would like to thank you, first of all, for having invited me to a session of your Episcopal Conference and even more so for the fraternal reception that you gave me on that occasion. My presence among you was meant to underline on my part the kind of "moral obligation" that we Comboni Missionaries feel to work specifically for Sudan. At the same time, I have understood that there is a strong need for continuous and mutual contact in order to fulfil this "obligation" of ours towards Sudan in agreement with the local Hierarchy. In connection with this, I would like to apologize if there might have been some misunderstanding among us in the past. I think that this has been due to various reasons; but never to ill will. Most of the difficulties may have arisen from the fact that initially we had to accept any kind of invitation, moving somewhat blindly in trying to satisfy the desires and needs of the Local Church of Sudan. However, now that we have the clear reference of our Rule of Life, approved by the Holy See since 1980, we hope we shall find it easier to better our mutual relationship, although we might have to straighten out some situations that are contrary to this Rule.

We are trying to give a more precise and autonomous structure to Southern Sudan as a Religious Province of Comboni Missionaries. Naturally, the birth of a new structure always entails some painful travail. In such travail we include our desire to understand better the plans and wishes of the Sudanese Episcopal Conference and also the desire to hold our proper place among the various pastoral agents that work for this Church; a Church that we accept as being governed by the local Hierarchy and in which both we and other Religious Institutes have to be coadjutors; active coadjutors, but always coadjutors.

What interests us most is to consider the future and establish among us mutual relations of understanding and help. Such relations are required by all sides and they are essential conditions for the success of our activity. In connection with this I would like to say, first of all, that we accept the priorities of the SCBC as they have been expressed in the meeting in Wau, namely: the formation of local personnel, the on-going formation of priests and religious, the activity of PALICA, particularly with regard to the formation of the laity, projects of human promotion and reconstruction in the various missions. These priorities are also those that we have set to ourselves.

The second point I would like to recall concerns our principle of complying with the call of the Local Church. Namely, we leave the initiative to the Bishops to invite us to Sudan. At the same time, we would like to point out that we cannot accept every invitation. This is not due to our judging a particular plan less worthy than others. If we cannot accept every time it is simply because we have to consider the possibilities and needs of our personnel, both from the numerical point of view and from the point of view of our community life.

In connection with personnel, I would like to make three remarks: the first is that we agree, ideally, that the personnel being demanded ought to be young and also new to Sudan. Nevertheless, we are bound to offer, at least for the time being, some Fathers and Brothers who have already worked in Sudan. Naturally we first send their names awaiting your reply whether it is possible to send them or not. At the same time, we are committed to the training of young personnel for Sudan too. The second remark concerns our insistence on the variety of pastoral agents.

We do not only accept the presence of other Institutes, but we encourage it in all ways. We are of the opinion that a Presbyteral Council made up of local priests and religious and of missionaries belonging to various religious institutes is much richer and more fruitful for the Local Church. As a third point, I would like to remark that community life according to our Rule of Life is not merely an internal affair for us. Community life comes into our relations with the Local Church, with other Institutes and with the international agencies for development. Consequently, commitments are taken up by our Delegate and never by an individual Comboni Missionary.

It seems to me that all this can and has to be solved through the Conventions. I reiterate here my surprise at noticing some resistance to these Conventions on the part of Your Excellency and of the others Bishops. Evidently, the Local Church has its needs as also the Institutes have theirs too, including Comboni Missionaries. We have to try all ways in order to balance these needs and our mutual tasks for a healthy collaboration towards the spreading of the Kingdom of God. See, for instance, "Mutuae Relationes" Nos. 18, 29, and 36 concerning the needs of the dioceses, and Nos. 8, 11, 46 concerning the needs of Institutes. These Conventions are official instruments in order to reach an agreed and stable harmony over these mutual needs. For this reason, they are used everywhere and in all territories where we are working. At the same time, they are strongly advised by the Holy See itself. It seems to me, too, that better contacts between the SCBC and the Conference of Religious Superiors, as we are reminded in *Mutuae Relationes* Nos. 58 and 65, could help a lot for mutual understanding and stronger cooperation.

I do not want to finish this letter without saying a few words about our plans on the distribution of our personnel. We should like very much to reach as soon as possible an equal and just distribution of our confreres in all the dioceses, especially in the original ones of the south: Juba, Wau, Tombora, Malakal and Rumbek. If any new diocese is erected we shall do our best to provide personnel for this, too. Since this is our ideal plan, i.e. an equal and adequate distribution in every diocese, I understand that a different Convention should be agreed upon for every diocese. Any Bishop has the right, of course, to propose his priorities and express his desires; I believe this will make it much easier for the Institute to look for adequate personnel to meet these needs.

As far as our presence in Juba is concerned, I should like to point out to Your Excellency that the present situation is only temporary, due to the urgency of

building the CSSJ. and Comboni House. I should like also to state very clearly and humbly that the CSSJ is the full property of the SCBC as from now, although we are ready to honour our promise to build all the parts of the project agreed upon and to run the CSSJ for five years. We should like, however, to have some local priest in the running and administration of the school as soon as possible, so that he could take over in due time. Even then, we shall not deny our cooperation, if required and if we can meet the requirements.

The Comboni House compound, according to our plan, should have different units: a Chapel, a Comboni Missionaries' residence, a Sisters' residence, rooms for visiting confreres, units for lay volunteers, a multipurpose Centre, a workshop and a kind of Procure. We are planning to have very simple structures and that they could be able to render essential services to our confreres and to all local pastoral agents as well. We have no intention of substituting what is already being done: we gladly support what the Diocese already does; and if we can do something in addition to that, according to our possibilities, this must be in order to render a better and a more efficient service to the Local Church.

Your Excellency, I have written this letter without any fixed plan.; it is only meant as the beginning - or a new start - of a friendly dialogue, for which I have had so great encouragement in our recent meeting in Wau. I hope that such meetings may become more frequent and that our letters may be from now on much clearer and serene and, last but not least, that the relationships between our confreres and all other local pastoral agents may increase in friendship and mutual understanding. I am convinced that this heartfelt communion will help us to reach the common aim: the growth of the Church of God in the Sudan to full maturity.

I take this opportunity to convey to Your Excellency my respectful regards and best wishes and to ask your prayers and your blessing.

Sincerely Yours in CJ

(Fr. Salvatore Calvia, MCCJ)
Superior General

Point no. 4

Ref. to page 211,

Dec. 1983: Electoral list for the Election of the Provincial Superior

Priests (33)

1. Archbishop Agostino Baroni
2. Fr. Ettore Ayong
3. Fr. Michael Barton
4. Fr. Guido Bertuzzi
5. Fr. Ezio Bettini
6. Fr. Mattia Bizzarro

7. Fr. Mario Busellato
8. Fr. Eugenio Caligari
9. Fr. Raffaele Cefalo
10. Fr. Elvio Cellana
11. Fr. Vittorino Dellagiacoma
12. Fr. Luigi De Giorgi
13. Fr. Dorino Elisire
14. Fr. Tito Giuntoli
15. Fr. Gaetano Gottardi
16. Fr. Miguel Isturiz
17. Fr. Giorgio Longokwo
18. Fr. Ignazio Lopez Toro
19. Fr. Peter Magalasi
20. Fr. Alfredo Mattevi
21. Fr. Cesare Mazzolari
22. Fr. Justin Ogen
23. Fr. Salvatore Pacifico
24. Fr. Luigi Parisi

25. Fr. Luigi Penzo
26. Fr. Alfonso Polacchini
27. Fr. Pietro Ravasio
28. Fr. Felice Sciannameo
29. Fr. Ottorino Sina
30. Fr. Erminio Tanel
31. Fr. Raffaele Tessitore
32. Fr. Gino Tosello
33. Fr. Joseph Ukelo

Brothers (8)

34. Bro. Augusto Bazzanella
35. Bro. Domenico Cariolato
36. Bro. Ambrogio Confalonieri.
37. Bro. Valentino Fabris
38. Marangio Bro. Aldo
39. Bro. Francesco Ragnoli
40. Bro. Libero Ribelli
41. Bro. Mariano Zonta (8)

Point no. 5

Ref. to page 223.

Policy Speech of Archbishop Paolino Lukudu Loro to the Priests, Brothers, Sisters and Missionaries of the Archdiocese of Juba

1 September, 1983.

Rev. Fathers, Brothers, Sisters and Missionaries,

1. I am here now to address you with my major policy speech for the first time as your new pastor, and open talks with you on the pastoral policy and the future behaviour in the Archdiocese. The responsibility has already been confidently entrusted to me and to each one of you by Christ, through the leadership of the Holy Father to evangelize the people of God in this Diocese through the word of the Gospel.

2. I wish to think that if it is fairly easy for each one of you to imagine the situation of my conscience right at this moment. What would you feel if you were me now? Where would you start to do what and how? Most of you would surely produce adequate replies to these questions if they were your responsibilities.

3. The Archdiocese is my homeland and I have often thought much more could be done on its pastoral mission than the present level, which you know better than I do. Mine, however, has been an observation of someone living outside the practical implication of the principles.

4. At this juncture, I intend to sincerely extend my heartfelt gratitude and vote of thanks to the now retired Archbishop Ireneo Dud, to Bishop Paride Taban and to

each one of you for your correspondence to the directives of the Holy Spirit, which has merited all that is positive today in Juba.

5. I feel it would be unwise of me to pretend to list all the graces granted to the Archdiocese through you. I have nonetheless to let you feel with thankfulness that today and now you are still here as priests, religious and missionaries keeping on in the mission you have chosen as the goal of your total life. I leave it understood that some, people like yourselves, were with you in the past but are no longer here due to various laudable or unfortunate purposes. May God grant his rewarding Fatherhood to every one of them, in life now or in the next.

6. Please, let each one of you deeply feel completely and satisfactorily fulfilled by this particular grace and all that you have performed pastorally in this Church of Juba till now. I do not need to go into analysis, but I conclude that certain times back you have been weak in many things in your career, as have all human creatures. I hereby call on you to forget and humbly have great confidence about all that, to reconcile with God, with people, and with your life ideal and to courageously start anew.

7. I want to confirm for you my faith and love in your priesthood, religious and missionary life. I believe and value even the least good and action, your energies and talents, provided they are exercised in accordance to God's plan (1 Pt. 4:10-11). This brings me to say a word about my relationship with all and each of you in the Archdiocese.

8. Each one of us will probably have to confess the prejudices we received or entertained about each other when we got the news of the change of Bishops and who was going to come to Juba. When rumours were getting more and more confirmed about my transfer to Juba, I questioned myself: Am I fit and happy to be in Juba? How will I relate with the diocesan priests-religious brothers and sisters-the missionaries-government and so on and so forth. I have no secret in manifesting to you that some voices I received were negative. This would be of utmost pride for me to get ill and cross about being accepted or rejected. But, I am reminded that "no prophet is ever accepted in his own land" (Lk 4:24).

9. I am sure each of you and your communities will have given some thought as to what type of person and Bishop I am. Maybe for some I am already catalogued and perhaps you would have preferred a Bishop other than me. I have no power to crucify your freedom of thought and desires. As things are now, however, let us all have faith in God, in each other and exercise true pastoral charity.

10. I must tell you with all sincerity that I have cast away every fear and willingly have accepted to come to Juba, to live and work as best I can with whoever will be with me in this Archdiocese. I shall try my best to combine or to fuse in myself at one and the same time, the qualities of a brother, father and pastor for each and all of you.

11. I want to be further sincere with you that my experience of nine years in my previous diocese, which is one of the most difficult dioceses of the Sudan, has given me some confidence and courage as a Church leader in our country. I shall

tell you that I will resolutely speak out to you in communities or privately, as it my duty to do. Keep this firmly in mind.

12. Let us enter into something vital. I anticipate you questioning me on what my policy and objectives are in this Archdiocese. I will reply first by asking you some preliminary questions:

- What is your identity in this Archdiocese?
- Are you a priest, brother, sister, Sudanese or expatriate missionary?
- How do you practically view your identity? In other words, what are you doing here to show to yourself and others that you are a priest, brother, sister or missionary?
- Are you personally happy, committed and fulfilled in the role you play?

As I touch the topic of the pastoral life, I have to assure you that Christianity is not starting with me now. My presence now in the Diocese as a new pastor is one of the best occasion to tell you that the time has come, historical and providential, to renew yourself and your commitment considerably and totally.

- Can it be that somebody among you here is doing nothing in this Diocese, or not doing enough and to the measure expected?
- Is somebody perhaps not exercising himself or herself in a field that is inadequate, unneeded and not rightly performed?
- What are you asked to do now?

I think that everyone does the right thing in the right direction, or else he or she will have to decide.

13. My dear Fathers, Brothers and Sisters, again, Mt 28:18-20, says that the mission of the Bishop and every baptized, is to go into the world and Christianize. The directory on the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops, says that the mission of the Bishop is to be a shepherd of souls as in Acts 20:28 and to build up the body of Christ (Eph 4:12).

14. The Holy Spirit directs me as well, as I do believe he is doing at this point, I have no other particular aim in this Archdiocese but to see that the “Pastoral Ministry” is being carried out efficiently and abundantly. I must declare to you and to the entire Archdiocese that the priority of my mission in the diocese is the **PASTORAL** or **EVANGELIZATION** of the people entrusted to us. Reserve a particular note to the word “Evangelization”.

15. This being spelled out clearly, the logical first conclusion is that I expect, desire and want every one of us to be shepherd and evangelizer and doing pastoral evangelization activities. All of us must be parish priests, each one according to his or her role and responsibility. I will channel my direction, understanding and judgment of what we are and possess in the Archdiocese, towards this main priority.

16. We shall need in the Archdiocese: experts, directors, courses, directives, means of transport, houses, churches, money, etc.; but for what, if not in order to successfully promote the mission of evangelization in which we shall meet our happiness and fulfilment?

17. The main exterior factors limiting the pastoral progress of the Church are lack of manpower and funds. The harvest is great, but the labourers are few. Let me ask a question: How many priests, brothers, sisters and catechists actually are in Juba for pastoral/evangelization? I further ask: All of you here present, in what activities are you engaged? where and how?

18. I am not in the least doubting or forming a diminished mentality about all that each of you does here. I still have a third question however: How serious is the pastoral evangelization of Sacraments in the Archdiocese?

19. We know that the Church is extremely and seriously concerned that the ministers and the faithful should receive, understand and give expression to the religious character and meaning of the Sacraments both for individuals and for the community. The Sacraments are in fact the main instruments of sanctification for the Christians through the Paschal Mystery of Christ and the Sacrifice offered to the Father during the summit of the liturgical celebration. The Bishop is ordered to try to keep all his efforts and that of his co-workers as well as of the entire community actually aware of this duty ("Bishops' Pastoral Ministry" 58, 87).

20. If the pastoral evangelization is weak, poor and inactive in the diocese, it may mean primarily that we are losing or have lost faith and perseverance in the salvific power and reception of the Sacraments, which are the inalienable sources of our personal spiritual feeding and growth of others. If we do not decide to settle this point, human as we are, we shall be useless and helpless to the people, even if we had a thousand priests, brothers, sisters, catechists and missionaries in the diocese.

21. The need for more Church manpower is a universal Church problem and we, as I see it here, should not think that we are the worst affected. No we have sufficient forces and qualities of efficiency to do much in Juba Archdiocese and we should and must exploit that.

22. Apart from the celebration of the Holy Mass, auricular confession, the administration of Confirmation, the blessing and consecration of oils, deacons and priests as well as Bishops by priests and Bishops, what is there that the brothers, sisters and laity cannot perform? Do we need a lot of people from abroad to come and tell us to prepare and administer the sacraments, if we believe in them? Are we not able to assess the situation of our people and produce objectives to implement?

23. Is it true that only priests can establish and lead small Christian communities, chapels and parishes? What are the brothers, sisters and catechists for in the Church? It may be that we do not know how to do it. Then we shall and must learn through courses, how to do so. We cannot continue to keep titles without meaning.

24. The question of old age is not yet a trouble for most of us. Those who feel it, have enough work proportionate to their strength and abilities.

25. Fathers, brothers, sisters and missionaries, before I propose to you my possible objectives to work out with you for our programmes of pastoral evangelization, I want to draw once more your attention to a point which I deem

very important. I term it the policy or the motto of the coat of Arms which explains the pastoral evangelizing priority. This motto is: *“Et Verbum Caro Factum Est”*, that is, “The Word became Man” In other words, this is the principle of “Incarnation” and the problem of the “inculturation” of God, Christ and his message into the people he come to live with (Emmanuel, *God-with-us*). You understand that there is very much to talk, think about, change and practice in regard to this matter for life. With this policy, I earnestly, sincerely, honestly and threateningly call and invite every one of you to put yourselves to the building and growth of the Local Church.

25. You know that for AMECEA, this is a hot and delicate area, and yet the Holy Father John Paul II is so open and serious about it. I warn you, let the local priest, brother or sister not think easily that this topic is for the expatriates. It is for all of us, and it may be more for us Africans who find it difficult through our fault to incarnate Christ into our people.

26. We ask the missionaries not to think that here Christ is theirs. Here he is an African, and here they are to try to live as Africans. Incarnation asks us all to be missionaries, that is, people who come, preach Christ, and go ahead. I am a Sudanese from Juba as are many others of us here, but the time must come when I will have to be absent from here forever, and others will take over. The missionary who is an expatriate has a still more definite period of contract when he or she must go to his home country or to other people and places.

27. In both of us, I wish that we value the importance of the Local Church, as Africans value life and want to continue it for generations to come, because it is a misfortune and a disgrace to interrupt it. If this is so, then let us all give first priority to people in this Archdiocese, those who should live the incarnated Christ who has to become a salvation for them. Before all else, we are bringing the message to man, so we must meet, respect, love, believe, develop, hope and look for his long lasting future in Christ.

28. Our African people sometimes live in bad residences, and yet are polygamous because they know that the most important and lasting thing is not houses, cattle, possessions but human beings. It is our privilege to speak out these things in all freedom, since my career requires me to teach them. I am no more talking like somebody who speaks ill of others or criticizes aimlessly or discriminately. I feel seriously to be like a father now to all for the sake of the Gospel. If I don't speak these ideas in Juba, where, when and who will rightly have courage to treat them?

29. This seems to leave the impression that I am against structures and buildings and some other things. You will see that we shall be engaged in all these things. What I call for is that the pastoral evangelization must be implemented under these conditions or in this way:

- It must be directly and immediately given to the people.
- The local personnel be valued, trusted and be given responsibility to maximum possible.

- Greater importance be given to the training and development of local personnel to efficiently run the structures of the diocese.
- Find ways, means and assistance, so that the Local Church may be sufficiently self-supporting.
- The missionaries should know that they are here to help establish the Local Church and its structures and not themselves and/or their structures.
- The spirit of unity, brotherhood, equality, trust and cooperation is observed instead of favouring superiority or inferiority complexes.
- Our structures should serve people and not vice-versa.
- Our God-given natural differences be accepted, respected and moderate for the common good.
- In this way our pastoral evangelization priority will be carried out through the “*Et Verbum Caro Factum Est*” motto in order to render the Local Church, by the grace of God: self-ministering, self-supporting, and self-propagating.

30. The pastoral evangelization through “*Et Verbum Caro Factum Est*” is summed up as follows: The employment of all church personnel in the Archdiocese for and in pastoral activities: **diocesan priests, Sudanese brothers, sisters, missionaries, and laity.**

Pastoral evangelization activities:

- Catechesis (Sacraments).
- Preaching the Word of God.
- Formation of the Christian life.
- Formation and care of deaneries, small Christian communities, chapels and parishes etc.
- Engagements in diocesan responsibilities, institutions, departments etc.

EMPLOYMENT OF energies, talents, skills, potentialities, initiatives, plans, desires, proposals, suggestions: spiritually, morally, physically and materially.

2. The spiritual, moral and pastoral renewal and up-dating of Church personnel in various fields by means of prayers, retreats, recollections, courses, spiritual readings, specializations, seminars, literature, spiritual direction, reception of sacraments, etc.

3. An updated and on-going physical, spiritual, political and moral study and assessment of the situation of the diocese: parish, chapels, diocesan structures and villages, in order to possess an accurate knowledge and picture of the diocese and be able to:

- Know exactly the problems (positive and negative) and adjust ourselves to them.
- Draw up pastoral programmes and plans.
- Write pastoral letters.
- Know exactly what to develop.

4. Increase of the number and efficiency of catechists in the diocese, provide and care for the betterment of their conditions.

5. Increase of prayer centres in the city of Juba and in the diocese: churches, chapels, multipurpose centres, schools, primary especially

6. Establishment and recruitment of priestly and religious vocations: vocation promotion and diocesan seminaries.

7. Formation of diocesan, parish and chapel committees.

8. Employment and preparation of the laity to take up services in the diocese and parishes.

+ **PAOLINO LUKUDU LORO**

Archdiocese of Juba

PART TWO - SECTION ONE *(1981-1994)*

CHAPTER TWO *(1984-1989)*

Point no. 1

Ref. to page 232, Comboni personnel on 1 October, 1984

MEMBERS OF THE PROVINCE

Annuario Comboniano updated 1 October 1984

Priests and Bishops

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Mgr. Agostino Baroni | 25. Salvatore Pacifico |
| 2. Mgr. Paolino Lukudu | 26. Luigi Parisi |
| 3. Mgr. Giuseppe Pellerino | 27. Luigi Penzo |
| 4. Michael Barton | 28. Alfonso Polacchini |
| 5. Guido Bertuzzi | 29. Pietro Ravasio |
| 6. Ezio Bettini | 30. Felice Sciannameo |
| 7. Mattia Bizzarro | 31. Ottorino Sina |
| 8. Mario Busellato | 32. Erminio Tanel |
| 9. Eugenio Caligari | 33. Raffaele Tessitore |
| 10. Raffaele Cefalo | 34. Gino Tosello |
| 11. Elvio Cellana | |
| 12. Luigi De Giorgi | |
| 13. Vittorino Dellagiacoma | |
| 14. Dorino Elisire | |
| 15. Tito Giuntoli | |
| 16. Gaetano Gottardi | |
| 17. Miguel A. Isturiz Agudo. | |
| 18. Ignacio López Toro | |
| 19. Pietro Magalasi | |
| 20. Feliz da Costa Martins | |
| 21. Alfredo Mattevi | |
| 22. Cesare Mazzolari | |
| 23. Abel Francis Mödi | |
| 24. Justin Ogen | |

Brothers

35. Augusto Bazzanella
36. Domenico Canolato
37. Ambrogio Confalonieri
38. Valentino Fabris
39. Aldo Marangio
40. Francesco Ragnoli
41. Giuseppe Redaelli
42. Libero Francesco Ribelli
43. Mariano Zonta

Scholastics

44. Albino Adot Oryem

Point no. 2

Ref. to page 241.

OPENING TALK held by H.G. Archbishop Gabriel Zubeir Wako on the occasion of the joint meeting of the SCBC and RSAS at Juba, 21 April, 1985.

Brothers and Sisters,

On behalf of the SCBC I welcome you all once more to this special joint meeting of the Bishops and the Superiors of the Religious and Missionary Congregations working in Sudan. Two of the Ordinaries were unable to come. I can however assure you all of their union with us since we all looked forward to this meeting.

A number of factors make this meeting timely. By the end of this year we shall have 11 congregations of men (two of them local) and 7 of women (four of them local) working in the Church of the Sudan. There is great need of coordination not only between these congregations and the Bishops in whose dioceses they work, but also among the congregations themselves. Since the creation of the hierarchy, no such meeting has been held. It is time that certain norms and directives regarding relationships, collaboration, and mutual understanding were formalized.

The religious and missionary personnel constitute the majority of consecrated persons in this Church. They have the peculiarity that, besides being for the most part expatriates, they work under two authorities regarding their inner life and organization, and regarding their work. These could become areas of conflict both on the personal level and on the organizational level.

We therefore have an important task before us. Like every task in the Church it calls for great openness to the Holy Spirit, readiness to accept and to do God's will, love for the Church, attention to the signs of the times, and conversion of heart.

In order to make our task the result of a joint effort, we ought to have a common denominator. I consider such a common denominator this Local Church. For it is the service of this Local Church that has thrown us into each other's hands, and each of us has to go further to the grassroots expression of this Church; to the dioceses and parishes.

But before we look into the reality of this Church, or attempt to promote greater collaboration and understanding among pastoral agents, we need to have some background to the whole issue of this Church. Certain problems are to be tackled from the roots. In presenting this background, I do not claim infallibility. I intend only to set people thinking.

a. The Sudan, in spite of its local hierarchy, is still essentially a missionary Church in the sense that large portions of its people have never heard the Gospel message; and where the Gospel has been preached, it has not yet sufficiently taken root in the mentality, the customs, the culture and the lives of the people there; it lacks a sufficient number of bishops, priests, religious, genuine and active laity

from among its own people; it lacks the material resources to provide for its needs; it is heavily dependent on missionary and material resources from outside.

b. The transition from missionary to local bishops (the creation of the hierarchy) was an abrupt one -- not the outcome of a planned, gradual hand - over. It took place in the absence of the missionary founders and functioned on its own before missionaries came in again to help.

c. For the first years after its creation, the hierarchy functioned practically as a protectorate. One had the impression that we were being tested. We entered dioceses without structures, and without experienced persons to acquaint us with our job, without priests or religious. Our growth was also much hindered because of certain elements in the Church of Sudan who went on creating division among the Bishops for petty reasons. The real growth of the hierarchy started around 1980, but with the scars of wounds inflicted between 1975 and 1980.

d. The Church in Sudan shares the vicissitudes of the Sudanese nation. In its recent history it registers 7 years of paralysis, followed now by 12 difficult years of reconstruction and rehabilitation. The 12 years would have been organic growth if the Church had not been forced to defend its borders while trying to grow internally.

e. Soon after the creation of the hierarchy, the Sudanese Church began to appeal for missionaries. That time was favourable. Unfortunately the missionary congregations were slow to respond. So we lost an opportunity we never succeeded to have in later years.

f. The local hierarchy took over at a time of strong nationalism, and strong criticism of past missionary methods and attitudes, particularly its attitude towards the local clergy and Religious. Old deep wounds take time to heal; even after that scars remain. Fresh scars do not need much of a scratch in order to become festering wounds again.

g. Most of the religious and missionaries working in the Sudan are not the result of the internal growth and strength of the Sudanese Church. Many have come in on the invitation of the bishops for specific needs and tasks. It is therefore possible that some religious and missionaries either do not fit in or do not meet the expectations of the Sudanese Church - or vice versa, the Sudanese Church does not meet their expectations. In some way the Sudan has lost the characteristic of a country of free 'missionary enterprise'.

h. The missionary in Sudan works with many uncertainties:

- the possibility of being expelled at any time;
- doubts as to whether their work is appreciated by the local ordinary and clergy;
- the sign of some sort of communications gap, or the inability to read the signs of the times, or the feeling of inadequacy in the face of difficulties and needs.

i. The local ordinaries also have their own uncertainties:

- the fear that the government might expel the missionaries;
- the fear that the congregations might withdraw their personnel;
- the fear that the missionary may decide to leave on his own;

- the fear that they may not meet all the demands of the missionary. He has to cope with the physical and psychological delicacy of the missionary, that oblige ordinaries to handle them with care, and in that way exposing themselves to criticism of the local clergy who on grounds of equality resent such care.

j. The Church in Sudan has many urgent and serious needs. With so many people with different experiences and backgrounds, the setting of priorities becomes extremely difficult. The vastness of the country and the diversity of cultural, economic and ethnic factors add to the difficulty. The result is serious differences regarding goals and methods.

k. The enormous needs and difficulties and the desire for quick results often make the Church personnel inward looking. The result is work madness, and little concern for building up relationships. The missionary's first question is 'what am I supposed to do?' not 'what kind of person are you?'

l. Materialism is taking a strong hold on the Church in Sudan. Too much importance is given to the material means to do one's work or to evaluating one's "power" and position in terms of material possessions - always reckoned as the means to carry out my job. Faith in divine providence is weakened. The spirit of service and sharing disappears. Because of it relationships grow quite cold between those who have and those who have not. Not to have becomes a reason for not doing.

m. We also work with the debilitating assumption that the non-religious clergy are an inferior class regarding holiness and capabilities, ignorant of the meaning and the importance of the religious life, and consequently unable to direct or guide the religious. Applied to Bishops, the assumption has devastating consequences. In every case, complexes of superiority or inferiority, of contempt or condescension render working relationships at times impossible.

n. The local (diocesan) religious congregations were off-shoots of founding missionary congregations. They felt they owed allegiance as they owed their existence to their founders. In the transition to the local hierarchy, they showed signs of uneasiness, and unfortunately got caught in the net of distrust, suspicion, probably inherited from the past.

o. Sometimes there is a sense of independence: tell me what I have to do and leave me alone. The "leave me alone" is written in capital letters especially when "I have raised the funds myself or provided the materials with my own efforts". Everyone tries to be as independent as possible. The question here is what is it that binds Church personnel to the local ordinary?

p. Often there is a lack of a forum for understanding within the diocese. The final word for the religious or missionary is not the local ordinary but the religious superior. The background serves to bring us down to earth -- to tell us where we are now. It must be pointed out that all this happens not because of ignorance of the principles or norms, it is rather the inability or the reluctance to apply principles and norms to concrete life situations. Such an application is possible only if there is a real conversion of heart, that is a real conversion to Christ in whose name we claim to work, real conversion to Christ's Body in whose service

we are, but not a vague Body, the concrete Body of Christ incarnated in this Community. This is why I called the Local Church our common denominator.

The Sudan is a Local Church still in the process of growth and implantation. All the personnel in the Sudan, bishops, priests, religious, laity, should have this common goal in mind.

It means organizing it so that it is able to provide for its own needs; a sufficient number of priests, religious, catechists from among its own people; a genuine laity; the necessary structures for organization and coordination; material resources to ensure that it grows into a holy Catholic, apostolic and missionary Church, and a communion of love.

This has to be the basic orientation of our lives and activities. All efforts at collaboration, coordination and understanding should lead to the realization of this one goal. Although the goal is one, we approach it at different levels of responsibility, different and distinct roles, and different charisms as the Holy Spirit directs us. The various gifts of the Holy Spirit enable people to contribute towards the building up of the Body of Christ and of building the beneficiaries into the Body of Christ.

The charisms of the various religious and missionary institutes build up the Local Church. We must not forget however that these charisms have grown up in response to a need of the Church at a specific period in history as felt and interpreted in a particular place. This fact certainly places on members of religious and missionary institutes a serious obligation to study how the particular charism of their institutes can operate effectively in the concrete situation of the Church to which they are sent. This is how we can speak of mutual enrichment. There can be no one-way traffic.

The two-way traffic I hinted at can create confusion or perplexity. What can one receive from a Church that lacks structures, that cannot provide for its own needs? This perplexing situation is at the base of the present difficulties of interaction we experience. We take too many things for granted - a fact that underlies all the various "should's" we throw at one another. We know the ideal but do we know where we stand? So, on the one hand the bishops say "in the Sudan", on the other the missionary institutes say "in Kenya, in Italy, in our congregation". I suggest therefore that we focus on our presence in this Local Church, take account of the social, economic, political and human circumstances in which it lives, take into account ourselves in our diversity of functions and vocations.

I have to add something about the diocesan religious congregations. Theoretically they have grown out of this particular Church. In practice they have not grown with it, and, it seems, not for it. As a part of the background study: during the civil war they interrupted their belonging to this Church; their founders practically turned some of them into personal institutions. So, now we can understand the rift between the local clergy and the local religious congregations. It is only when real close ties are established between the local ordinaries and these

congregations, that we can entertain any hopes for the real organic growth of the Church in this country.

I am sure the background reflections I presented have raised many questions in the minds of some of you. But I think these questions should be answered. If progress in understanding has been slow, it has been perhaps because we have been trying to run the race without taking an honest look at the hurdles on our way.

Point no. 3

Ref. to page 271, *Archbishop Ireneo Wien Dud*

Remembering H. G. Archbishop Ireneo Wien Dud

I include a brief biography of Archbishop Ireneo Wien Dud at this point in the historical account, but I would have preferred to include it among the Sudanese Martyrs in the second part. The reason for this is that, although



Archbishop Dud was not killed as were some other Sudanese priests, what he suffered in witnessing the killing and the harassment of his priests and Christian people by the Khartoum army or related allies, surely pierced his heart much more than if he himself had suffered martyrdom. We cannot allow such a great and outstanding figure as he go without mention.

He himself was subjected to all the political and religious pressures by the Khartoum Authorities to get him to comply, as the top figure in the Catholic hierarchy, with their requests in the religious, educational and political fields. To resist to all these machinations truly required the strength of a martyr in faith and heroic courage in order to protect his priests and all the church personnel from the above dangers. The eyes of all were looking to him to find inspiration and courage.

At the time of his death, the magazine *Nigrizia* carried an article by Fr. Elia Toniolo entitled: *"A dream come true: remembering the first Sudanese Bishop Ireneo Wien Dud"*.⁷⁰⁶

The first Sudanese Bishop died in Wau, South Sudan, on 24 April, 1983. Archbishop Ireneo Wien Dud was a Jur, born in the mission station of Mbili (Bahr el Ghazal) in 1912. His father was chief Dud Akot and his

⁷⁰⁶ Un sogno realizzato: ricordando il primo vescovo sudanese, Ireneo Wien Dud", E.

Toniolo, *Nigrizia*, June, 1988, p. 53; http://www.dacb.org/stories/sudan/dud_ireneo.html

mother, Akumo, was Dud's second wife. At twelve years of age, Wien Dud entered the catechumenate: on 8 June, 1923, he was baptized with the name of Ireneo. He began attending elementary school in Mbili and completed it in Wau where he began the intermediates. It was there that the Lord called Ireneo to join the first group who wished to enter the seminary. In the Seminary of Bussere (Wau) he completed secondary school and studied philosophy, always being top of the class. In 1940 Ireneo went to Gulu (Uganda) for theology. On 21 December, 1944, Mgr. Rudolf Orler, Bishop of Wau, ordained him priest.

Fr. Ireneo showed himself a true minister of God, full of initiative. The parish of Raffili, among the Belanda-Bor people, was his first place of work. In 1947 he was in Mayen among the Dinka-Twic. In 1951 he was appointed parish priest of the new mission station of Warap among the Dinka-Rek. (One should remember that he exercised his ministry in Wau, Raffili, Kpaile, Mbili, Tonj, and Warap. He was fluent in Jur, Dinka, Belanda-Bor, Bviri, English, Arabic, and Italian).

On 12 July, 1955, in the middle of the rainy season, the roads between Wau and Warap were impassable and it was dark when Fr. Ireneo opened the telegram brought to him by Mgr. Edoardo Mason, the new Bishop of Wau. The telegram said: ***“Fr. Ireneo Dud, elected Titular Bishop of Barcuso and Vicar Apostolic of Rumbek”***. It was a truly historic date. In fact, Mgr. Dud was the first Sudanese bishop: the dream of Daniel Comboni to save Africa with Africa was fulfilled. The new vicariate, created by the Holy See on 12 July, 1955, comprised three districts: Rumbek, Yei and Maridi, with a total of 420,000 people.

On 20 November, 1955, Mgr. Ireneo was consecrated in the new Cathedral of Wau. The sixth of April, 1975, remained a landmark date for the Church of Sudan. On 12 December, 1974, there was the erection of the Catholic hierarchy of the Sudan and on the sixth of April the Holy See implemented it with the consecration of three new Sudanese bishops: Mgr. Gabriel Zubeir (Wau), Mgr. Joseph Gasi (Tombura), and Mgr. Pio Yukwan (Malakal). Mgr. Ireneo was transferred to Juba, in Equatoria, the capital of South Sudan, as Archbishop of the new ecclesiastical province of Southern Sudan.

Meanwhile, the health of Mgr. Ireneo became more and more precarious: in July 1982 he resigned. He then returned to Wau in Bahr el Ghazal for a well-earned rest.

PART TWO - SECTION TWO (1995-2004)

CHAPTER ONE - (1995-1998)

Point no. 1

Ref. to pages 343.

Set up of the mccj communities on 15 March, 1995

Pakele/Kocoa (Uganda)

- Fr. Francesco Chemello (Deleg. Sup.)
- Fr. Alfredo Mattevi
- Bro. Mario Rossignoli

Narus

- Fr. Elia Ciapetti
- (Fr. José Oscar Flores López)

Nairobi (Kenya)

- Fr. Alfonso Polacchini (Superior)
- Fr. Giovanni Battista Zanardi (Deleg. Treasurer)
- Bro. Hans Dieter Ritterbecks (Logistics)

Nzara

- Fr. Elvio Cellana (Superior)
- Fr. José Luis Martinez Acevedo
- Bro. Valentino Fabris
- (Fr. Horácio Ribeiro Rossas)

Agang Rial (later in 1995)

- Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino (Superior)
- Bro. Domenico Cariolato
- Fr. Michele Stragapede

Mapuordit

- Fr. Michael Barton
- Fr. Claudio Lurati (until end of August 95)

Marial Lou

- Fr. Mattia Bizzarro
- Fr. Mario Riva

The Nuer Project

- Bro. Hans Dieter Ritterbecks (Nairobi)

Point no. 2

Ref. to page 350.

Personnel at the end of year 1995

Priests

1. Mgr. Cesare Mazzolari
2. Fr. Francesco Chemello (Deleg.)
3. Fr. Alfonso Polacchini

4. Fr. Alfredo Mattevi
5. Fr. Elia Ciapetti
6. Fr. Elvio Cellana
7. Fr. Giovanni Battista Zanardi (It)
8. Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino
9. Fr. Horácio Ribeiro Rossas
10. Fr. José Luis Martinez
11. Fr. Mario Riva
12. Fr. Mattia Bizzarro
13. Fr. Michael Barton
14. Fr. Michele Stragapede

Brothers

15. Bro. Ambrogio Confalonieri
16. Bro. Domenico Cariolato
17. Bro. Hans Ritterbecks
18. Bro. Mario Rossignoli
19. Bro. Valentino Fabris

Fr. Renato Kizito Sesana

(Kenya Province: gives him for one year to Rumbek Diocese)

Point no. 3

Ref. to page 374

End of 1998 – Situation of personnel

New assignments:

- Fr. Ezio Bettini, 30 October, 1998 appointed to South Sudan Delegation as from 01 January, 1999
- Fr. Alberto Jesus Eisman Torres, appointed to NZARA 01 June, 1998
- Fr. Silvano Gottardi, appointed to South Sudan Delegation 01 July, 1998. Parish Priest of Yirol (Holy Cross Parish).
- Fr. Mitiku Habte Cheksa 31 October, 1998 appointed to Narus / Torit Dioc.
- Fr. Roy Carlo Zuñiga, Appointed to the South Sudan Delegation 1 July, 1998. Appointed to Leer 1 September, 1998.
- Bro. Giuseppe Eugenio Belotti (*short experience in Narus no appointment*)

Change of Community

- Bro. Ambrogio Confalonieri, 17 June, 1997 temporarily appointed to Narus; 28 January, 1998 confirmed to Narus.
- Fr. José Luis Martinez, late December 1996 to Nzara; 17 March, 1997 appointment to Marial Lou.
- Fr. Alfredo Mattevi, appointed to Mapuordit 20 February, 1998
- Fr. Mario Riva, appointed to Agang Rial 13 February, 1998.

- Fr. La Braca, Juaibor, in the “Central Nuer region” opened in October, 1998.
- Bro. Hans Dieter Ritterbecks, Nuer project, May, 1995. Leer, January, 1996. Juaibor, October, 1998.
- Fr. Hector Ayon Oyiamute, appointed to Agang Rial.

Confreres who changed province:

- Fr. Giuseppe Ambrosi, returned to Kenya Province.

Perpetual vows:

- Sc. Martin Lako Mödi, Scholasticate of Elstree, perpetual vows on 10 October, 1998.

South Sudanese Radical Members

Serving the mission in other provinces

- Since 1995: Fr. Abel Mödi Nyorko, Fr. Joseph Ukelo Yala, Fr. Albino Adot Oryem, Fr. Peter Magalasi.
- Starting from 1997:
Fr. Louis Okot Tony Ochermoi (Peru); Fr. Aventore Jimmy Milla (Malawi/Zambia); Fr. Bosco Anthony Mawa (Uganda).

Serving the mission in South Sudan:

- Fr. Hector Ayon Oyamute.

In Basic Formation

With perpetual vows

- Sc. Martin Lako Mödi (Elstree Scholasticate)

With temporary vows

- Sc. Paul Idra, (Nairobi Scholasticate)
- Bro. Francis Okeny, Bro. Joseph Taban, (International Brother Centre-Nairobi)

At the end of 1998, the total number of radical members was 12; 9 with perpetual vows and 3 with temporary vows. 7 were on missionary service to other provinces and 1 in the South Sudan Delegation.

PART TWO - SECTION TWO (1995-2004)

CHAPTER TWO - (1999-2004)

Point no. 1

Ref. to page 392

Member of the Delegation of South Sudan on **1 January, 2000.**

Bishops

1. Mazzolari Cesare (*consecrated bishop on 6 January, 1999*)

Fathers

2. Jesus José Aranda Nava
3. Hector Ayon
4. Michael Barton
5. Ezio Bettini
6. Mattia Bizzarro
7. Mario Busellato
8. Elvio Cellana
9. Elia Ciapetti
10. Jessie Dimafilis Ventura
11. Giovanni Ferrazin
12. José Oscar Flores López
13. Fernando González Galarza
14. Gaetano Gottardi
15. Silvano Gottardi
16. Antonio La Braca
17. Ignacio Antonio López Toro
18. Eugenio Magni
19. José Luis Martínez Acevedo
20. Alfredo Mattevi

21. Mitiku Habte Cheksa
22. Raymond Pax
23. Giuseppe Pellerino
24. Jerónimo Pérez Caporal
25. Alfonso Polacchini
26. Mario Riva
27. Michele Stragapede
28. Roy Carlos Zuñiga Paredes

Brothers

29. Domenico Cariolato
30. Valentino Fabris
31. Raniero Iacomella
32. Francis Okeny
33. Armando Ramos Gonzalez
34. Hans Dieter Ritterbecks
35. Mario Rossignoli

Scholastics

36. Paul Idra

Point no. 2

Ref. to page 408

Personnel and Communities, 1 February, 2002⁷⁰⁷

Provincial Superior

Fr. Bettini Ezio (1.1.2002)

Provincial Councillors

Fr. González Galarza Fernando, (vice prov.)

Fr. Jesus José Aranda Nava

Bro. Raniero Iacomella

Fr. Giampaolo Mortaro

Provincial Bursar

Fr. Giovanni Girardi

Provincial Procurator

Fr. Luciano Giarolo

Secretary of formation and missionary animation

Fr. José Jesus Aranda Nava

Secretary of evangelisation, coordinator of JPIC

⁷⁰⁷ Annuario Comboniano, op.cit., 1 February, 2002

Fr. Fernando González Galarza
Coordinator of on-going Formation

Fr. Giampaolo Mortaro
Secretary of Vocation Promotion
Bro. Mario Rossignoli

Coordinator Lay Missionaries
Fr. Jerónimo Pérez Caporal

Comboni personnel
Bishops 1, Fathers 31, Brothers 6, Postulants 5

Newsletter of the Province
sscomboni@news

Spoken languages
Arab, Bari, Dinka, English, Ma'di, Nuer, Toposa

Dioceses of presence

KENYA Nairobi: Residence of the Provincial

SUDAN Rumbek: Agang Rial, Mapuordit, Marial Lou. **Torit:**

Lokichokio, Kapoeta. **Yei:** Lomin.

Malakal: Nyal, Old Fangak

UGANDA Arua: Moyo

Rumbek Diocese

Agang-Rial

Fr. Ignacio López Toro, sup.

Fr. Elvio Cellana

Fr. Jimmy Milla Aventore

Mapuordit - Parish

Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino, sup.

Fr. Silvano Gottardi

Bro. Rosario Iannetti

Bro. Alberto Lamana Cónsola

Fr. Raymond Pax

Marial Lou - Parish

Fr. Jessie Dimafilis Ventura

Fr. Jeronimo Pérez Caporal

Torit Diocese

Kapoeta – Parish among the Toposa people, taking care also of Narus

Fr. Giampaolo Mortaro, sup.

Fr. Elia Ciapetti

Fr. Mitiku Habte Cheksa

Lokichokio: Media Centre

Fr. José Oscar Lopez

Yei Diocese

Lomin (Kajo-Kaji) - Parish

Community reopened on 1 January, 2000, Evangelisation and Education.

Fr. Eugenio Magni, sup.
Fr. Mario Busellato
Bro. Ottorino Gelmini
Fr. Tarcisio Loro

Moyo - Vocation Centre (Arua Diocese)

Community opened on 1 January, 2002, pastoral work among the refugees and Vocation Promotion.

Fr. Giovanni Ferrazin, sup.
Fr. Paul Idra
Bro. Mario Rossignoli

Nairobi Archdiocese

Comboni House

Fr. Ezio Bettini, prov. sup.
Fr. Hector Ayon
Fr. Luciano Giarolo
Fr. Giovanni Girardi
Fr. Alfonso Polacchini
Fr. Giovanni Battista Zanardi (I)

Nairobi - Bakhita House

Welcoming House and logistics for the Nuba Mountains of El Obeid Diocese, given to the care of the MCCJ since 1 October, 2001.

Mgr. Macram Max Gassis (KH)
Fr. Pasquale Boffelli

Nairobi - Bethany House

House opened in 1994, welcoming house and logistics of the diocese of Rumbek.

Malakal Diocese: Nyal

Community opened on 10 October, 1998.

Fr. Fernando González Galarza, sup.
Fr. Guillermo Aguiñaga Pantoja
Bro. Raniero Iacomella
Fr. Antonio La Braca (in Old Fangak since March 1999)

Waiting for assignment

Fr. Michael Barton
Fr. Alberto Jesús Eisman Torres
Fr. Roy Carlos Zúñiga Paredes

In other circumscriptions

Fr. Jesus José Aranda Nava (KE)
Bro. Valentino Fabris (U)
Fr. Alfredo Mattevi (I)

Point no. 3

Ref. to page 408

MEMBERS OF THE PROVINCE, 1 February, 2002

Bishops

1. Cesare Mazzolari

Fathers

2. Guillermo Aguiñaga Pantoja
3. Jesus José Aranda Nava
4. Hector Ayon
5. Michael Barton
6. Ezio Bettini
7. Pasquale Boffelli
8. Mario Busellato
9. Elvio Cellana
10. Elia Ciapetti
11. Jessie Dimafilis Ventura
12. Alberto Jesus Eisman Torres
13. Giovanni Ferrazin
14. José Oscar Flores L6pez
15. Luciano Giarolo
16. Giovanni Girardi
17. Fernández Gonzalez Galarza
18. Silvano Gottardi
19. Paul Idra
20. Antonio La Braca

21. López Ignacio Toro
22. Tarcisio Loro
23. Eugenio Magni
24. Alfredo Mattevi
25. Jimmy Milla Aventure
26. Cheksa Mitiku Habte
27. Giampaolo Mortaro
28. Raymond Pax
29. Giuseppe Pellerino
30. Pérez Jeronimo Caporal
31. Polacchini Alfonso
32. Alfonso Rossi
33. Roy Carlos Zuñiga Paredes

Brothers

34. Valentino Fabris
35. Ottorino Gelmini
36. Raniero Iacomella
37. Rosario Lannetti
38. Alberto Lamana Cónsola
39. Mario Rossignoli

Point no. 4

Ref. to page 411.

List of personnel of the South Sudan Province updated in January 2004

Name	Nation.	In South Sudan	Language	Community
1. Fr. Guillermo Aguiñaga	Mex.	2000	Nuer	Nyal
2. Fr. Jesus Aranda Nava	Mex.	1999	English	Jacaranda
3. Fr. Hector Ayon	Sudan	1996	Didinga	Jacaranda
4. Fr. Michael Barton	USA	1993	Dinka, Bari	With DOR
5. Fr. Ezio Bettini	Italy	1999	Arabic	Jacaranda
6. Fr. Pasquale Boffelli	Italy	2001	Arabic	With Nuba
7. Fr. Elia Ciapetti	Italy	1994	Topossa	Narus
8. Fr. Alberto Eisman T.	Spain	2002	Arabic	1 year experience
9. Fr. Alfredo Estrada M.	Mex.	2003	English	To be assigned
10. Fr. Giovanni Ferrazin	Italy	1999	Ma'di	Moyo/in Italy
11. Fr. Luciano Giarolo	Italy	2002	English	Jacaranda
12. Fr. Giovanni Girardi	Italy	2002	English	Jacaranda
13. Fr. Fernando González G.	Mex.	1996	Nuer	Nyal
14. Fr. Silvano Gottardi	Italy	1998	Dinka, Arabic	In Italy/no return
15. Fr. Paul Idra	Sudan	2001	Ma'di, Arabic	Lomin
16. Fr. Antonio La Braca	Italy	1996	Arabic	Old Fangak
17. Fr. Ignacio López T.	Mex.	1998	English	Agang Rial
18. Fr. Tarcisio Loro	Italy	2000	Bari	In Italy/no return
19. Fr. Eugenio Magni	Italy	1995	English	Lomin
20. Fr. Jimmy Aventore M	Sudan	2001	Ma'di, Arabic	Marial Lou
21. Fr. Mitiku Habte Cheksa	Ethiop	1998	English	Mapuordit'?
22. Fr. Giampaolo Mortaro	Italy	2000	English	In Italy
23. Fr. Raymond Pax	USA	1996	English	Mapuordit
24. Fr. Giuseppe Pellerino	Italy	1979	Dinka, Arabic	Mapuordit
25. Fr. Jeronimo Pérez Cap.	Mex.	1996	English	Marial Lou
26. Fr. Luciano Perina	Italy	2003	Dinka, Arabic	Agang Rial
27. Fr. Rossi Alfonso	Italy	2000	English	Leaving for NAP
28. Fr. Bosco Sule Mawa	Sudan	2003	Ma'di, Arabic	Formator course
29. Fr. Wellington Alves	Brasil	2003	English	To be assigned
30. Fr. Roy Carlos Zuñiga	Peru	1998	Nuer, Arabic	Mabia
31. Bro. Valentino Fabris	Italy	1979	Arabic	Jacaranda
32. Bro. Iacomella Raniero	Italy	1996	Nuer	Nyal
33. Bro. Rosario Iannetti	Italy	2000	Arabic	Mapuordit
34. Bro. Alberto Lamana C.	Spain	2001	Dinka	Mapuordit
35. Bro. Mario Rossignoli	Italy	1988	Ma'di	Moyo
36. Schol. Jaime A. Nistal	Spain	E	Nuer	Nyal for 2 years

Point no. 5

Ref. to page 441.

A Catholic FM Radio for Southern Sudan

A Comboni Missionaries' Project

2nd draft Nairobi 28 August 2004

Extract/Summary

1 - Introduction

On the occasion of the Canonisation of Bishop Daniel Comboni, founder of the Comboni Missionaries and the Comboni Missionary Sisters, the two Institutes have agreed to support a project for Southern Sudan to remember its first bishop. They asked the missionaries working in the area to make a proposal on what would be most important and necessary for Southern Sudan in the aftermath of war. They unanimously named the catholic radio as essential for the implementation of peace and the development of the country.

2 - A profile of Sudan

Area: 2,5 million sq. km. **Population:** 33.6 million (UN, 2003) **Capital:** Khartoum. **Official Language:** Arabic. **Religions:** Islam, Christianity and traditional religions. **Life expectancy:** 54 years (men), 57 years (women) (UN). **Monetary unit:** the Dinar (1USD = 260 Sudanese Dinars). **Main exports:** Oil, cotton, sesame, livestock and hides, gum Arabic. **Average annual income:** USD 340 (World Bank, 2001)

Sudan is the largest and one of the most diverse countries in Africa, home to deserts, mountain ranges, swamps and rain forests.

Apart from an 11-year period of peace, it has been torn by civil war between the mainly Muslim north and the Animist and Christian south since independence in 1956.

The country's name comes from the Arabic bilaad al-sudan, or land of the blacks. Arabic is the official language and Islam the religion of the state, but the country has a large non-Arabic speaking and non-Muslim population which has rejected attempts by the government in Khartoum to impose Islamic shari'a law on the country as a whole.

The civil war has proved costly, with the result that many Sudanese have seen a fall in living standards.

3 - The Southern Sudan

Area: 850,000 sq. km. **Population:** 5/6 millions (difficult to estimate). **Capital** Juba. **Official Language:** English. **Lingua Franca:** Spoken local Arabic. **Currency:** there will be a new currency after the peace agreement.

On May 26, 2004, at Naivasha there was the signing of three protocols by Dr. John Garang, leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and by Sudan's Vice-President Ali Osman Taha, clearing the way for a comprehensive peace settlement. A formal peace deal is expected to be signed later this year, probably in Washington, by Omar El Bashir, president of Sudan and Dr. Garang, leader of SPLM.

The agreement signed by the parties to the Sudan talks in Naivasha is so important that it can lead to the creation of a new country on the African continent. It ends a war that has lasted 22 years, killed two million people, displaced over 4 millions and shattered the economy and social structures of Southern Sudan, an area as big as Kenya, Uganda and Burundi put together.

4 - A Radio for Southern Sudan

The war has brought about not only the destruction of social and economical structures, but also a mentality of survival and dependence from outside help, tribal divisions, distrust and fear of military and politicians, corruption and unaccountability, lack of respect for the poor and the troubled, etc.

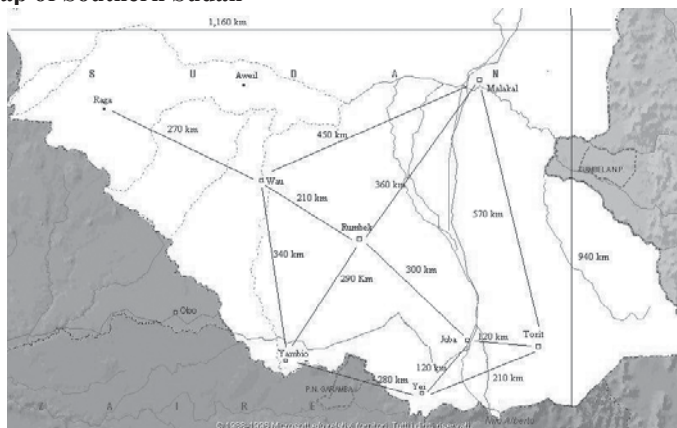
Now that peace is coming, it becomes urgent to face these problems and find solutions, otherwise there will be no future for peace and for Southern Sudan. We need to speak to all the people of Southern Sudan and help them in their journey towards honesty, accountability, self-reliance, peaceful coexistence, reconciliation, social and moral responsibility, etc.

The role the Catholic Church can play in the reconstruction of Southern Sudan is of paramount importance. Her recognized moral leadership in the country can be a great asset for the implementation of peace and the growth of the society.

Given the vastness of the area, the best way to reach most of the people is through a radio station. Almost all the families in Southern Sudan possess a radio. Thousands of wind-up radios have been recently distributed.

Good programmes aimed at educating the population in social, moral and civil matters will help very much in the rebuilding of the society and the formation of Christian communities.

5 - Map of Southern Sudan



6 - Media already present in Sudan

Sudan has one of the most restrictive media environments on the African continent. Radio and television are controlled directly by the government and are required to reflect government policies. Sudan TV has a permanent military censor

to ensure that the news reflects official views. There are no privately-owned TV broadcasters, apart from a cable service jointly owned by the government and private investors. Satellite dishes are becoming common in affluent areas and pan-Arab TV stations are popular among viewers.

The government operates Sudan's domestic radio services, which broadcast a mixture of news, music and cultural programmes in AM (MW). Private stations are not permitted. Foreign radio stations are also heard in Sudan, including the BBC World Service and Paris-based Radio Monte Carlo, which operate on FM in Khartoum.

Several opposition and clandestine radio stations broadcast to Sudan: *Voice of Sudan*, *Voice of Democracy and Peace* - operated by opposition National Democratic Alliance (NDA), broadcasts on short-wave. *Voice of Hope* - weekly broadcast by New Sudan Council of Churches, produced at studios in Uganda and the Netherlands and transmitted via Radio Netherlands relay station in Madagascar. *Voice of Freedom and Renewal*, *Voice of the New Sudan* - operated by armed opposition group Sudan Alliance Forces.

Newspapers: *Al-Ra'y al-Amm*, *Al-Ayam*, *Khartoum Monitor*, (privately-owned), *Al-Khartoum*, (privately-owned), *Al-Anba*. *The Sudan Mirror*, printed fortnightly in Nairobi brings news about Southern Sudan. It is produced and sponsored by NGOs and private groups.

Television: *Sudan National Broadcasting Corporation* (SNBC) - government-run, operates two channels, also available via satellite

News agency: *Sudan News Agency* (Suna) - services in Arabic, English and French

Internet: Internet services were introduced in 1997. There were some 56,000 internet users by the end of 2001. There is no internet connection in Southern Sudan as there is no telephone system. Some NGOs and UN officials have direct link to Internet via satellite.

7 - Audience

The population of Southern Sudan in their struggle to rebuild the country. It should not be a radio reserved for Christians and even less for Catholics only. It should address the whole of the population, with special attention to certain groups, like women and children, students and civil servants.

8 - Technical set-up

The radio system will be broadcasting in Frequency of Modulation (FM). Transmitters will be of 1KW or 1.5 KW with a radius of about 150 km. There will be a transmitter in each diocese of Southern Sudan (Wau, Tombora/Yambio, Rumbek, Yei, Juba, Torit and Malakal). Each transmitting station will work independently (broadcasting locally-made programs in vernacular, special diocesan occasions and celebrations, etc.) or connected with a radio production studio via satellite.

The production and on-air studios will be at first in an East African country where technical and professional skills are available and easy travelling is possible.

It will eventually move to Southern Sudan, when it is declared a suitable place for the production studios by the Bishops and the experts.

Connections between “mother station” and “daughter stations” will be via satellite link (VSAT). The production and on-air studio will have an uplink system (parabolic antenna, router, computer and uplink transmitter) while the broadcasting stations in the dioceses will have a downlink system (parabolic antenna, computer, downlink receiver). The system is devised in its simpler form and can be upgraded according to needs and financial possibilities.

Each diocese can set up a diocesan production studio and make local programmes.

9 - Choice and formation of personnel

Right from the start of the project, special attention will be given to the preparation of the personnel needed to run the radio: journalists, broadcasters, technicians, administrators, etc.

At the beginning, already qualified people will be chosen, especially for key positions. Later on through a program of formation, many will be prepared for the different jobs, with particular attention to the Sudanese.

Also a program of on going formation for those already employed and collaborators at various level will be set in motion.

The radio team will be made of men and women in order to have a greater richness and complementarity in the choices of voices, competences and sensibility.

10 - The Sudan Catholic Bishops Regional Conference (SCBRC)

The SCBRC will have the full ownership of the radio. The Combonis will help in the setting up and the running of the radio for the first years. Within an agreed period of time, the total management of the Radio (programming, production, administration, technical and financial resources, etc) will be handed over to the Catholic Church of Southern Sudan.

Each diocese is expected to provide the land for the radio station (the mast and a container with the transmitter, generator) and will be responsible for its running (fuel, technician and watchman). The diocesan production studio will be set up and run by the diocese.

The SCBRC will give a name to the radio station.

11 - The permission from the Government of South Sudan

The SCBRC, through an appointed representative, will seek permission from the South Sudan Government to run the radio. The process of getting the permit will be a complex one: because the project envisions local radio stations but connected together almost to become a national radio. A written permission should be obtained containing specifications of wave lengths, conditions of use and annual fees, so as to guarantee a safe and lasting-in-time running of the Catholic Radio. Without the written government permission the project of the radio will not begin to be implemented.

12 - Combonis involvement

The Combonis will be responsible for the execution of the project in all its parts: they will set up the transmitting stations and the production studio, prepare the personnel, provide the necessary material, test the system.

They also undertake to run the radio for a period agreed with the SCBRC.

1. The Combonis will provide the following personnel:
2. A manager to organise and oversee the implementation of the project.
3. An expert in program production and radio management. This person will be in charge of programming and running of the radio and of choosing and training the journalists, broadcasters, administrators and technicians (for maintenance and repairs).
4. A financial administrator to keep accounts, transfer funds, release money, raise funds and render final reports to SCBRC and donors. Another.

13 - Collaboration

The radio will cover most of Southern Sudan, and will focus on civil and religious formation of the population. There will be openness to collaboration with all sorts of groups: other Christian denominations, civil leaders, United Nations, NGOs, etc. without renouncing to the Catholic character of the radio.

14 - Financial issue

The project, after the approval from the SCBRC and the Combonis, will be presented to Organisations and donors for sponsoring. The project will start being implemented after two thirds of the budgeted sum is pledged by donors. The Combonis and the Bishops will be asked to give their contribution.

For the running of the radio, some sort of financial incomes will have to be sought, such as subsidies from outside, contributions from church collections, advertising, commercial activities, etc.

15 - Budget

A detailed budget is being prepared with the technical assistance of the Missionary Service SIGNIS, based on what is actually required for the setting up of the Radio. Another budget will concern the running of the radio in its first year (including spare parts, maintenance and renewal of material) and the formation of the needed personnel. As an indicative figure for the time being (in USD):

Objects	USD	For	USD
Transmitting stations	50,000	7 dioceses	350,000
Production and on air studio	200,000		200,000
Building of the studio	150,000		150,000
Satellite link	13,700	3 years	41,100
Salaries and incentives	50,000	3 years	150,000
Maintenance, spares, fees, etc	35,000	3 years	105,000
Formation of personnel	80,000		80,000
TOTAL			1,076,100

16 - Agreement between SCBRC and Comboni

An agreement between the Bishops of Southern Sudan and the two Comboni Institutes will be needed to guarantee the execution of the projects according to the desires of both parties. It would be of great help to have since the beginning an Executive Committee with representatives from all the parties involved that could take care of all the problems and issues arising from the implementation of the project.

PART TWO - SECTION THREE *(2005-2017)*

CHAPTER ONE - *(2005-2010)*

Point no. 1,
Ref. to page 448.

MEMBERS OF THE PROVINCE (updated 1 April, 2005)

Bishops

1. Cesare Mazzolari

Fathers

2. Guillermo Aguiñaga Pantoja
3. Jesus José Aranda Nava
4. Ayon Hector Oyiamute
5. Michael Barton
6. Pasquale Boffelli
7. Christian Carlassare
8. Alberto Jesus Eisman Torres
9. Luis Alfredo Estrada Meza
10. Giovanni Ferrazin
11. José Manuel Garda Oviedo
12. Luciano Giarolo
13. Giovanni Girardi
14. Fernando González Galarza
15. Silvano Gottardi
16. Antonio La Braca
17. Eugenio Magni
18. Bosco Anthony Mawa
19. Aventore Jimmy Milla

20. Mitiku Habte Cheksa

21. Joseph Ukelo Yala
22. Raymond Pax
23. Giuseppe Pellerino
24. Luciano Perina
25. Skiba Pawel
26. Wellington Alves de Sousa

Brothers

27. Nicola Bortoli
28. Valentino Fabris
29. Raniero Iacomella
30. Rosario Iannetti
31. Alberto Lamana Cónsola
32. Damiano Mascalzoni
33. Hans Dieter Ritterbecks
34. Jorge Arturo R. Fayad
35. Mario Rossignoli

Scholastic

36. Yacob Lotabo

PART TWO - SECTION THREE (2005-2017)

CHAPTER TWO (2011-2016)

Point no. 1

Ref. to page 523.

Members of the Province (Easter 2011)⁷⁰⁸

Bishops

1. Lukudu Loro Paulino
2. Mazzolari Cesare

Fathers

3. Adot Oryem Albino
4. David O.Aguilar Guzmim
5. Ayon Hector Oyiamute
6. Barton Michael Donald
7. Bettini Ezio
8. Boffe Il i Pasquale
9. Carlassare Christian
10. Chemello Francesco
11. Colombo Fernando
12. Estrada Meza Luis Alfredo
13. Girardi Giovanni
14. José da Silva Vieira
15. Kondo Komivi Antoine
16. K6rber Markus Lorenz
17. Kouande Adekoun Victor
18. La Braca Antonio
19. Makokha Titus Henry
20. Milla Aventore Jimmy
21. Moschetti Daniele

22. Okello Yala Joseph
23. Okot Ochermoi Louis Tony
24. Parladé Escobar José Javier
25. Pellerino Giuseppe
26. Perina Luciano
27. Raimundo N. Rocha d. Santos
28. Riva Mario
29. Schmidt Gregor Bog-Dong
30. Wellington Afves de Sousa

Brothers

31. Antonio M. Nunes Ferreira
32. Bortoli Nicola
33. Fabris Valentino
34. Fischenaller Erich
35. Gaspar Abarca Andrés
36. Iacomella Raniero
37. Iannetti Rosario
38. Lamana Consola Alberto
39. Mascalzoni Damiano
40. Ritterbecks Hans Dieter
41. Jorge A. Rodriguez Fayad

Scolastic

42. Andrugá Phillip Kenyi

Point no. 2,

Ref. to page 522.

GOSS: Fr. Enrique Sánchez González, General Superior's invitation to the South Sudan Independence celebration.

⁷⁰⁸ Annuario Comboniano, op. cit. Easter, 2011.

Government of Southern Sudan

(GOSS)

Office of The President

Ref: GOSS/PO/J/1.E.1

Date: 06/06/2011

**Most Rev. Fr. Enrique Sanchez Gonzalez, MCCJ,⁷⁰⁹
Superior General,
The Comboni Missionary Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus,
EUR, Rome,
ITALIA**

Dear Most Rev. Fr. Gonzalez,

Ref: Declaration of Independence of the Republic of South Sudan

I am extremely delighted to officially inform you that the 9th Day of July 2011 shall be a historic one for the people of Southern Sudan. It brings to an end the Interim Period and the Sudan Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), ushering the Sudan into a new political dispensation. It is a day when the 54th member of the African Union shall be born and its flag raised high in jubilation. Having emerged from the longest civil war in Africa, South Sudan is now entering an era of responsible statehood and shall observe principles of international law. We shall also adhere to the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and work to promote regional and international peace and security.

Therefore, on behalf of the people and government of Southern Sudan, as well as on my own behalf, it gives me great pleasure to request the honour of your presence at this momentous occasion for our people. The people of South Sudan shall remain ever indebted to your firm solidarity and the invaluable contribution made by your Congregation during our struggle for peace, which has led to the festivities of this day.

Please, Most Rev. Fr. Gonzalez, accept the assurance of my highest consideration as I look forward to your gracious attendance in Juba, capital of the Southern Sudan.

Yours sincerely

**Gen. Salva Kiir Mayardit
First Vice President of the Republic of Sudan and
President of the Government of Southern Sudan
JUBA, SOUTHERN SUDAN**

⁷⁰⁹ SSCOMBONI@NEWS, South Sudan Province Newsletter, September, 2011, p. 24. FSSPJ.

Point no. 3,
Ref. to page 546.

One Nation: Sudan Catholic Bishop's Conference⁷¹⁰

STATEMENT ADDRESSED TO THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH SUDAN

Take every care to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together (Ephesians 4:3)

We, the Catholic bishops of the Republic of South Sudan, meeting in Plenary Session in **Juba from 6th – 8th September 2011**, wish to express our joy and thanksgiving to God for the peaceful birth of our new nation on 9th July 2011.

The challenge for all of us now is nation-building, emphasising unity and integration. As we said in our season of prayer for independence, South Sudan must be **“one nation from every tribe, tongue and people”**.

This is a shared responsibility, not just for the government. We encourage all citizens of South Sudan, with their faith communities, civil society and political parties, to participate in building a new, prosperous and peaceful nation. We encourage a culture of hard work rather than entitlement or dependency. We commit ourselves and our Church to continue to play a proactive and prophetic role in public life, insisting on human rights and responsibilities, and the dignity of the individual, as expressed in the gospel values of Catholic Social Teaching.

A crucial part of nation-building is national reconciliation. Five decades of war has left the scars of trauma on our people, and new internal conflicts are taking place even as we meet. We are particularly concerned about the recent great loss of life in Jonglei State, as well as the ongoing conflicts elsewhere, including the Lord's Resistance Army in Western Equatoria and Western Bahr el Ghazal. We urge all those with grievances to settle them by peaceful means, not by taking up arms again. Violence is not the answer. We call upon all stakeholders in South Sudan to work for peace and reconciliation. We re-commit ourselves and our Church to the continual process of national reconciliation, at every level.

By its very nature, the Church contributes to the integral well-being of the people. Our Sudan Catholic Radio Network (with radio stations reaching the whole nation) and our Catholic universities play a very visible role in nation-building and reconciliation. However this work is ongoing at every level of our Church life through diocesan institutions such as schools, clinics, justice and peace commissions, aid and development activities, and our spiritual and pastoral ministry, which seeks to form people as good citizens and good Christians. In

⁷¹⁰ Sudan Catholic Bishop's Conference, ONE NATION, Statement addressed to the people of South Sudan, SSCOMBONI@NEWS, South Sudan Province Newsletter, September 2011, pp. 32-34. FSSPJ.

addition, in October 2011 we will hold a national symposium on the role of the Church in building a new nation, followed by cultural events nation-wide.

We welcome the formation of a new government in South Sudan. We are encouraged by attempts to broaden geographical and gender representation within the cabinet. We have great expectations of this new government, and commit ourselves to engaging constructively with them. We call upon government and citizens to ensure that corruption disappears at all levels of national life. At the same time, we recognise that “Rome was not built in a day” and that the development of a new nation is a process which will take time. While constantly holding the government to account and always expecting progress, we nevertheless caution citizens to manage their expectations, to be patient in their demands, to be fair to the government and to allow them time to move forward carefully and in good order.

We note with concern the slow delivery of basic services and infrastructure, increasing crime and insecurity, and the rising price of essential commodities which are causing difficulties in South Sudan. We call for a nation-wide effort to address these issues.

Our joy is tempered by the tragic events taking place in Darfur, Abyei, South Kordofan / Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile. Injustice and insecurity in the border areas impinges negatively on peace in our country and our region. Our hearts are also troubled by concerns about the treatment of South Sudanese and other minorities in the Republic of Sudan. Their pain is our pain. We offer them our prayers and solidarity. We support all those in the two Sudans and the international community who are seeking a just and peaceful solution.

Through the intercession of Saints Josephine Bakhita and Daniel Comboni, may God bless you all. God bless our new Republic of South Sudan, and our neighbour, the Republic of Sudan.

Given in Juba, Republic of South Sudan

8th September 2011

Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

PART TWO - SECTION THREE *(2005-2017)*

CHAPTER THREE *(2017)*

Point no. 1,

Ref. to page 610: in footnote.

“A VOICE CRIES IN THE WILDERNESS”

PASTORAL MESSAGE OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF SOUTH SUDAN TO THE FAITHFUL AND PEOPLE OF SOUTH SUDAN

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight” (Mark 1:3).

Preamble

These words of the prophet Isaiah, quoted by the evangelists Matthew and Mark, have been greatly on our minds. We, the Catholic Bishops of South Sudan, have frequently written pastoral messages urging change in our nation, but it seems they have had little effect. Nevertheless, the Spirit is again calling upon us to write a pastoral message, to reassure you that we are aware of your situation, to make your voice known to the world, and also to include some of the concrete steps which we intend to take.

Therefore we address this pastoral message to the faithful people of South Sudan to give you hope and courage. At our meeting in Juba from 21st - 23rd February 2017, along with the Apostolic Nuncio to South Sudan and Kenya, Archbishop Charles Daniel Balvo, we “read the signs of the times”⁷¹¹ and listen to what God is saying to us through the concrete situation in which we find ourselves. We have heard disturbing reports from all seven of our dioceses spanning the whole country, and have reflected on how we should respond. God is speaking to us.

The Situation in South Sudan

Our country is not at peace. People live in fear. The civil war, which we have frequently described as having no moral justification whatsoever, continues. Despite our calls to all parties, factions and individuals to STOP THE WAR, nevertheless killing, raping, looting, displacement, attacks on churches and destruction of property continue all over the country. In some towns there is calm, but the absence of gunfire does not mean peace has come. In other towns, civilians are effectively trapped inside the town due to insecurity on the surrounding roads.

While some fighting is between government and opposition forces, we are concerned to note that much of the violence is being perpetrated by government and opposition forces against civilians. There seems to be a perception that people in certain locations or from certain ethnic groups are with the other side, and thus they are targeted by armed forces. They are killed, raped, tortured, burned, beaten, looted, harassed, detained, displaced from their homes and prevented from harvesting their crops. Some towns have become “ghost towns”, empty except for security forces and perhaps members of one faction or tribe. Even when they have fled to our churches or to UN camps for protection, they are still harassed by security forces. Many have been forced to flee to neighbouring countries for protection. While the authorities may claim that they are free to return to their homes, in practice they fear to do so. In places the destruction has been described to us as “scorched earth”; what have people got left to return to? All of this is a

⁷¹¹ Gaudium et spes, Second Vatican Council.

form of “collective punishment”, which is outlawed as a war crime under the Geneva Conventions.

The level of hatred associated with the conflict is increasing. While soldiers might be expected to kill other soldiers in battle, the killing, torturing and raping of civilians is a war crime. However, not only are they being killed, but their bodies are being mutilated and burned. People have been herded into their houses which were then set on fire to burn the occupants. Bodies have been dumped in sewage-filled septic tanks. There is a general lack of respect for human life.

The perpetrators of these crimes, the so-called “unknown gunmen” who are usually in uniform and usually known, appear to act with impunity. We are still waiting for justice for the murder of our own dear Sister Veronica, a doctor who was gunned down by soldiers while driving a clearly-marked ambulance on 16th May 2016. Her killers were arrested, but we have heard no more and we await justice.

Our country is gripped by a humanitarian crisis – famine, insecurity and economic hardship. Our people are struggling simply to survive. While there have been poor rains in many parts of the country, there is no doubt that this famine is man-made, due to insecurity and poor economic management. Hunger, in turn, creates insecurity, in a vicious circle in which the hungry man, especially if he has a gun, may resort to looting to feed himself and his family. Millions of our people are affected, with large numbers displaced from their homes and many fleeing to neighbouring countries, where they are facing appalling hardships in refugee camps.

We are concerned that some elements within the government appear to be suspicious of the Church. In some areas the Church has been able to mediate local peace deals, but these can easily be undermined if government officials are removed and replaced with hardliners who do not welcome Church efforts for peace. Priests, sisters and other personnel have been harassed. Some of the programmes on our radio network have been removed. Churches have been burned down. Less than two weeks ago, on 14th February, security officers attempted to close down our Catholic bookshop. They harassed our personnel and confiscated several books. The ecumenical church leaders’ delegation which visited Pope Francis in Rome and Archbishop Justin Welby in London has been trying to obtain a meeting with President Salva Kiir since December 2016, but has so far been unsuccessful. We hear people saying that “the Church is against the government”.

We wish to inform all of you that the Church is not for or against anyone, neither the government nor the opposition. We are FOR all good things - peace, justice, love, forgiveness, reconciliation, dialogue, the rule of law, good governance – and we are AGAINST evil - violence, killing, rape, torture, looting, corruption, arbitrary detention, tribalism, discrimination, oppression – regardless of where they are and who is practising them. We are ready to dialogue with and between the government and the opposition at any time.

The Way Forward

We issue this pastoral message to the people of South Sudan, but we copy it widely to others, including the international community. We want the world to hear the true situation in which our people find themselves.

The Holy Father Pope Francis yesterday, 22nd February 2016, made an appeal for South Sudan from the Vatican. We have instructed our Caritas South Sudan and requested our Caritas Internationalis partners to act urgently to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in South Sudan, and we call on the rest of the international community to do the same.

Those who have the ability to make changes for the good of our people have not taken heed of our previous pastoral messages. This time we intend to follow up more proactively. In partnership with other churches through the Action Plan for Peace (APP) of our South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC), we intend to meet face to face not only with the President but with the vice presidents, ministers, members of parliament, opposition leaders and politicians, military officers from all sides, and anyone else who we believe has the power to change our country for the better. We intend to meet with them not once, but again and again, for as long as is necessary, with the message that we need to see action, not just dialogue for the sake of dialogue. “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Grant me justice against my opponent.’ For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, ‘Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.’” (Luke 18:2-5) Like that widow, we will come continually to bother those who are responsible in our country.

Again with our partner churches in SSCC, and with our church partners in neighbouring countries such as Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia and Sudan, we intend to bring the narrative of our people on the ground to the governments of those countries, so that they can understand our situation and make good choices to improve it, both bilaterally and through multilateral bodies such as IGAD and AU. Our own special contribution will include bringing in the Catholic Church in those countries, regional Catholic bodies such as AMECEA, and the Vatican at the global level. When we meet the leaders of each country, we will be accompanied by the cardinals and bishops of that country.

We reiterate our support for the SSCC Action Plan for Peace (APP) and its three pillars of Advocacy, Neutral Forum dialogues and Reconciliation. It was always intended that the APP should be implemented by the member churches, not by the SSCC Secretariat alone, so we have instructed our Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, at both national and diocesan level, to begin a dialogue with SSCC on how we can contribute to the work on the ground.

We believe that “technical” programmes are not enough. Hence we have instructed our Pastoral Commission to mobilise a national spiritual approach, as we did for the Referendum.

We ask forgiveness for anything we might have done to alienate any individual or party, and we assure you of our love and prayers.

Conclusion

You are the Church; we are the Pastors. We call upon you to remain spiritually strong, and to exercise restraint, tolerance, forgiveness and love. Work for justice and peace; reject violence and revenge. We are with you. We have heard what God is saying to us through you and through your sufferings on the ground, and by including it in our public pastoral letter to you, we are making it accessible to the world. We will continue to be “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness”. We wish to give you hope that you are not abandoned and that we are working to resolve the situation at many different levels.

Finally, with great joy, we wish to inform you that the Holy Father Pope Francis hopes to visit South Sudan later this year. The Holy Father is deeply concerned about the sufferings of the people of South Sudan. You are already in his prayers, but his coming here would be a concrete symbol of his fatherly concern and his solidarity with your suffering. It would draw the attention of the world to the situation here. We call upon you to begin a programme of prayer for this visit to go ahead. Let us use the coming months fruitfully to begin the transformation of our nation.

May God bless you.

About the Author



Fr. Francesco Chemello was born in Sandrigo, Vicenza, Italy on 27 June, 1947. After working as mechanical designer, he joined the Comboni Missionaries as a *late vocation in Crema*, where he was awarded his secondary school certificate in the Diocesan Seminary of Crema. From there he went for his Philosophy course to the *Istituto Teologico Fiorentino*.

After two years of Novitiate in Venegono, Varese, he had two years of theology at the *Missionary Institute of London* and completed the course of theology in Rome, at the *Urbaniana University* in 1980, with a Baccalaureate in Theology. He also completed a two-year course of Missiology at the same university with a dissertation, in Italian, on the topic “*The Missionary Catechumenate and the Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa*”, attaining a “***Licentiate in Missiology***” in 1981.

Assigned to the Province of Malawi/Zambia in 1982, he arrived in Chipata Diocese, Zambia, in September, for a Chinyanja language course. In January, 1982, he was assigned to Lirangwe Parish, in the Archdiocese of Blantyre in Malawi. He was chaplain and Parish Priest until 1985, Vocations Director for the Comboni Missionaries until 1989, and again Parish Priest of Mthawira Parish until December, 1990, and was sent for a renewal course in Rome until May, 1991.

In July, 1991, he was assigned to the so-called “*Liberated Areas*” of Southern Sudan and appointed to Isoke Parish, in the Diocese of Torit, Eastern Equatoria and, at the fall of Torit to the Government of Khartoum, he continued working among the Sudanese refugees in Kocoa, Pakele/Ajumani area, Northern Uganda. While there, in 1992, he was put in charge of the Comboni group of the “*New Sudan*” as “*Coordinator*” and from 1995 as “*Delegate*” of the “*Delegation of South Sudan*” until December, 1998.

He returned to Italy in 1999 and, after taking a Sabbatical Year, he went to Glasgow, his new place of appointment in the London Province of the Comboni Missionaries, in the middle of year 2000. He served as the person in charge of the Missionary Ministry in secondary schools and universities, helping also in the mission office until November, 2005, when he was again assigned to South Sudan.

He was then sent to the Western Nuer People area in Nyal (Unity State, Payinjiar County) in November, 2005, and to LEER at the beginning of 2007. He worked in direct evangelization and pastoral work, and in overseeing the building of the basic mission structures, until June 2016. The last period of time, from December 2013 onwards, was very trying, working at the service of the harassed and displaced Nuer people of St. Joseph the Worker Parish, in Nyal, Ganyliel and the rest of Payinjiar county, until his assignment to *TALI Parish*, in Terakeka, for missionary work, in June, 2016, where now he resides.