

Familia Comboniana

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES OF THE HEART OF JESUS

769

December 2018



HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Perpetual professions

Sc. Tomety K. M. Agbéko Christ Roi (T) Cacaveli-Lomé (TG) 30/11/2018

Priestly ordinations

Fr. Pellegrino Mario Vincenzo (I) Marsala (I) 03/11/2018

Fr. Mose Chrisantus Keengwe (KE) Nyahururu (KE) 03/11/2018

Holy Redeemer Guild

December 01 – 15 PE 16 – 31 U

January 01 – 15 A 16 – 31 BR

Prayer intentions

December – That we may allow the light of Christ incarnate to shine in us as we proclaim that light to all who await the Lord in the darkness and solitude of suffering. *Lord hear us.*

January – That the conclusions of the VI General Assembly of the CLM may help the members of the movement to grow in unity, fraternity, collaboration and missionary commitment both within and beyond their own countries. *Lord hear us.*

Publications

Fr. Tonino Falaguasta Nyabenda, *“L’Africa del Comboni e le periferie di Papa Francesco”*, Missionari Comboniani, Cordenons 2018. In this booklet, the pages that tell of Comboni (white pages) alternate with those (yellow pages) that speak of other saints. This is as if to stress that – as Father General writes in the preface – “Attention to the needs of the poor and most abandoned has always been a constant in Christianity. Saint Daniel Comboni simply followed illustrious examples and so his story has come down to us today”.

Fr. Aurelio Boscaini, *“Padre Renato Bresciani, Testimone di accoglienza”*, Fondazione Nigrizia, Verona 2018. This is a brief biography of the founder of Acse, written on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Comboni Association for the Service of Migrants and Refugees. Fr. Renato, as we read in the preface by Fr. Giovanni Munari, antici-

pating what Pope Francis never ceases to tell us, “has for as many as thirty years been the champion of welcoming and defending the human rights and dignity of our immigrant brothers and sisters, especially Africans”.

BRASIL

“Justiça nos Trilhos” wins award

On Tuesday 27 November 2018, in Geneva, during the UN Forum on Business and Human Rights, “Justiça nos Trilhos” (Justice on-track) received the Human Rights and Business Award Foundation award, together with a donation of \$ 50.000.

“Justiça nos Trilhos” is an organisation supported by the Comboni Missionaries which works alongside the local communities in a remote area of Brazil – among the indigenous people, small farmers and people of African descent – to observe human rights and environmental abuses committed by mining companies and steel producers, especially the Vale multinational.

The members of the Administrative Council of the Human Rights and Business Award Foundation who launched this annual award to recognise the exceptional work done by those who confront the impact on human rights caused by businesses, declared that “Justiça nos Trilhos’ incarnates that profile, working rigorously and conscientiously for many years in difficult circumstances and always in close collaboration with the local community”.

CONGO

Congress of the Cenacles of Missionary Prayer

The first Sunday in November is the day on which the XVIII Congress of Cenacles of Missionary Prayer (CMP) is held. This year, the Congress was celebrated on Sunday 4 November 2018 at Limete-Kinshasa, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, on the theme: “CMP involved in the culture of justice and peace”.

In his presentation, Fr. Boniface Gbama Nsusu emphasised how “the work of education towards a culture of peace is extremely important. This is because education, the key to the sustainable development of any society, is the most powerful weapon against poverty. No country can eradicate poverty without education. Developing a cul-

ture of justice and peace is the duty of all. Each person at their own level is called to undertake to make this world a better place. This, however, also requires sacrifice and of this Jesus is the exemplar (1 Peter 2:21)". That same Sunday, a new choir was founded with the name of "Afriquespoir". The Congress concluded with a Eucharistic celebration and a fraternal meal.

EGSD

Golden Jubilee of Priesthood

The Comboni Missionary Fr. Giuseppe Scattolin was ordained priest on 30 November 1968, the Feast of St. Andrew Apostle. The celebration of the Golden Jubilee of his priestly ordination took place on 16 November 2018, at 6p.m. at the church of Cordi Jesu in Cairo. "I thank God for his mercy and love – Fr. Giuseppe said –. I thank everyone who helped me during these years. May the Spirit guide us along the way of Christ". Many Happy returns Fr. Giuseppe, and may God bless you.

ETHIOPIA

Opening a new mission

On 17 November 2018, a new mission was opened at Galye Rogda, close to Wolkite, in the eparchy of Embdibir, among a group of Gumuz who took refuge in the area during the time of Emperor Menelik, more than a hundred years ago.

These people, who now number well over a thousand, received the Gospel only recently, even though the Combonis did open a mission station among the Gumuz in 1939 at Wombera, a place far from Galye Rogda. This group welcomed the faith thanks to the visits by our Catholic catechists coming from other parts of the Gumuz area. They went there for the first time accompanied by Fr. Juan González Núñez.

The apostolic solicitude of Eparch Abune Musie Gebreghiorghis and the evangelising zeal of the Missionaries of the Order of the Imitation of Christ (OIC), an order following the Catholic Malankarese Rite of the Christians of Saint Thomas, with the help of God, did the rest.

The bishop fully recognised the work done by the Combonis in the first evangelisation of the Gumuz of Galye Rogda and also the gener-

ous contribution of the Institute in the construction of the beautiful church of this mission.

A village has grown up around the church as well as a school run with apostolic care by the Sisters of Saint Anne.

ITALIA

Good News

Thanks to the cooperation of Radio inBlu, from Monday to Friday at 12.03, radio inBlu transmits throughout Italy the Africa Radio News prepared by Nigrizia and produced by Afriradio. It can also be heard in streaming on inBlu radio <https://www.radioinblu.it/live/>

This is more than just good news since it is three minutes of news from Africa very unlikely to be heard from other sources.

InBlu is a national Christian radiophonic project (cf. TV 2000) at the service of the transmitters present in the country. It proposes a complete set of programmes (transmitted via satellite, via internet, via app for mobile phones and via FM in the city of Rome) which each station can integrate within its programme schedule following a plan of collaboration and sharing. Radio InBlu is received by as many as 123 local radio stations.

Comboni Missionaries in Limone: 50 years of history

The celebration of fifty years of Limone history, begun on 15 March of this year, was concluded on 18 November with a solemn Mass of thanksgiving in the church of San Benedetto, presided by Fr. Venanzio Milani, superior of the Multimedia Centre in Verona. These events were interwoven with meaningful “encounters” such as those with relatives, friends and supporters in October and a solidarity dinner organised by the Limone Alpini on the vigil of the conclusion. The money raised was sent to Mons. Menghesteb, Archbishop of Asmara, for his human promotion projects in Eritrea.

We started literally from scratch. The house of Comboni’s birth was run down and in need of renovation. There was no electricity, water or roads. Over the past fifty years, many people lovingly helped to enhance this place and make it an oasis of peace and inspiration.

Fr. Guido Bertuzzi (Superior in Limone from 1972 to 1979) provided a strong impulse so that this place, so dear to the hearts of every Comboni Missionary, should become a place of spirituality and voca-

tions promotion. During these fifty years many young people have passed through Limone: GIM and all sorts of volunteer movements. The fifty years of Comboni Family presence in Limone coincided with its opening up to the world of tourism, mostly German-speaking (95%). In this way, the unfolding of history surprisingly took us back to the “fascination of our origins”: Germany, Austria, South Tyrol, Limone and Verona, the cradle of the Comboni missionary movement.

As a token of gratitude, the Comboni Family donated to the Parish an ebony crucifix (indicating the roots of the mystic of the cross). They also donated to the Town Administration a column of the *togu na* (Dogon, Mali), whose symbolic value was explained by Fr. Milani: “For all Comboni Missionaries, the city of Limone represents our place of origin where our Founder Daniel Comboni was born, and this town therefore represents the source of life of the Institute. Daniele Comboni was always very attached to his native land and always showed his appreciation for his fellow countrymen who, in turn, responded with affection and gratitude, supporting him and the Institute in many projects over the years and even today. Daniel Comboni, somewhat like the *togu na* column, is a reference point in the history of Limone.

New Lectors and Acolytes

The Institute has been enriched with four new Lectors and four new Acolytes. These ministries were conferred on Sunday 18 November during a Mass presided by Mons. Salvatore Visco, Archbishop of Capua, in the parish church of Santa Maria dell’Aiuto in Castel Volturno. Among the concelebrants there were Combonis from the community of Castel Volturno and Fathers Tesfamariam Ghebrecristos Woldeghebriel and Körber Markus Lorenz, both formators of the scholasticate of Casavatore (Naples).

After the homily, the Comboni scholastics Moisés Zacarias (Mozambique), Valverde Arce Byron José (Costa Rica), Djekoundamde Florent (Chad), and Tekle Melaku Wolde (Ethiopia) were elected to the ministry of Lector. Deivith Harly Zanioli Gonçalves (Brazil), Angella Gabriel (Uganda), Oduor Kevin Otieno (Kenya), Paluku Vindu Moïse (RD. Congo) were elected to the ministry of Acolyte. The Bible was handed to the Lectors while the Acolytes received a chalice and a paten with the hosts and wine that were consecrated during the Mass.

Meeting of the European Mission Council

The European Mission Council (ECM) met from 20 to 22 November in Verona. The ECM is made up of Frs. Giorgio Padovan (Italy, coordinator), Dário Balula Chaves (Portugal), Martin Devenish, (LP Provincial and responsible for the Mission Sector), Théotime Akpako (Poland), Franz Weber (DSP), Javier Alvarado (LP), Roman Medina (Spain) and Mariano Tibaldo (General Secretary of the Mission Secretariat).

The meeting began with a discussion on some aspects of the European situation at the social, ecclesial and political levels. A degree of racism, xenophobia and fear towards migrants was noted but also examples of generosity and welcoming by many people. Each of the ECM participants spoke of the priorities and the progress of their own provincial mission secretariats.

Much of the time was devoted to the European Mission Workshop due to be held in Verona from 1 to 6 July 2019. The workshop is intended to implement the content of the Limone Symposium 2018 in the respective provinces, combining reflection with practical proposals adapted to the various dimensions of the provincial mission (missionary animation, lay people, JPIC, communications, etc.).

This was the second meeting of the ECM; its importance consists in coordinating the various missionary activities in Europe. In fact, mission problems go beyond the geographical boundaries of a circumscription and it is only from a continental perspective that they can be tackled effectively.

PERU

Regional CONFER meeting

From 19 to 21 October 2018, the regional CONFER (Conference of Religious in Peru) meeting of members from the central-eastern dioceses of the country (Huanuco, Huancayo, Tarma and Pucallpa, and Ayacucho) was held at Pucallpa. The participants belonged to 18 nationalities and 4 continents, due to the presence of religious women from India, the Philippines, Madagascar, the Congo and elsewhere.

We reflected upon two themes: "New wine, new wineskins", presented by Fr. Pedro Veliz Valencia, a Capuchin, on religious life in the world of today, and "The visit of Pope Francis" (January 2018), pre-

sented by Fr. Juan Carlos Morante, SJ, who stressed the precious message of the Pope for Peru and all Amazonia.

The reflections and activities of the meeting were carried out in an atmosphere of universality – like a little Pentecost with no frontiers – and, at the same time, of fraternal joy with a boat trip on Lake Yarina-cocha, a visit to the zoological gardens, the traditional presentations by the diocesan delegations and dances from the Amazon rainforest...

It was a beautiful and unforgettable experience for me, a Comboni, as I was aware how the Institute will dwell next year on the theme of "multiculturalism", a challenge to our presence in the world of today. (Fr. Luis Weiss)

POLONIA

Visit by Father General

From 30 October to 10 November we were happy to have with us Fr. Tesfaye Tadesse. The main purpose of his visit was to preach the spiritual exercises but there was also time for meetings and conversations with all the confreres and for a visit to the Shrine of Jasna Gora in the concentration camp of Łagiewniki and Birkenau. We thank Father General for giving us of his time and for his example of evangelical simplicity and fraternity. (T. Basiński)

RCA

Message to the Central African Republic

The General Council is close to the Central African people and Church who once again mourn their dead after an attack by the ex-Seleka rebels and the UPC armed group on the Bishop's House in Alindao where about 26,000 displaced people were being sheltered.

Having sacked and burned the cathedral, the rebels turned on the refugee camp killing at least 42 people. The number of confirmed dead has since risen to 70 or more. The General Council condemns all forms of violence in the Central African Republic as well as in all other parts of the world and joins in prayer with the mourning and suffering inflicted upon the people and the Church in that country.

SOUTH AFRICA

Thematic Forum

In Johannesburg, Fr. Dario Bossi took part from 12 to 15 November 2018, in the Thematic Forum on mining activities organised by various groups, one of which was the network *The Church and Mining Activities*, founded by the Combonis.

There were 350 participants at the Forum coming from 50 countries, 28 of which were African. Almost half the participants were individuals, organisations and movements associated with the Christian churches; also present were representatives of some episcopal conferences and the Vatican Dicastery for Integral Human Development.

The Forum confirmed the gravity of the theme of mining activities and extraction which threatens populations and territories in various parts of the world and the growing interest of the Church in these matters was clear to all. (*Fr. Dario Bossi*)

TOGO

Training session for local bursars

From 6 to 9 November a training session for local bursars was held in Lomé, chaired by Fr. Pietro Ciuciulla, Assistant General responsible for Francophone Africa and the economy. The subject presented was the management of the goods of the Church as laid down in Canon Law and the General Directory of Finance of the Institute. It also gave the local bursars the opportunity to present their reports and their projects for 2019.

IN PACE CHRISTI

Fr. Jacob Sodokin (22.12.1973 – 28.10.2018)

“Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel; he has visited his people and redeemed them” (cf. Lk 1, 68). These words of old Zachary sum up very well what the Province of Togo-Ghana-Benin has lived through in recent weeks. God has visited the province and found here a beautiful flower which, in his goodness he gathered. We are speaking of Fr. Jacob Sodokin, a young missionary of 45 years who, after serving in Mozambique for 12 years, went to Rome for the Comboni year. On his return he was appointed parish priest of the parish of Saint Francis of

Assisi in Fidjrossé-Cotonou (Benin), a post he had officially assumed on 2 September 2018. A renewal of the parish was expected and this hope flourished in the hearts of all until suddenly, on 28 October 2018, the Lord visited the Province and the parish of Fidjrossé and called to himself the new parish priest who was then preparing to celebrate the XX anniversary of the dedication of the parish. Fr. Jacob responded, sending the whole province into a state of mourning. The funeral rites took place on 14 and 15 November in the parish with a large congregation of parishioners, confreres, relatives, friends and acquaintances.

The requiem Mass was presided by the Archbishop of Cotonou, Mons. Roger Houngbedji, and concelebrated by Mons. Adoukonou, and numerous priests from all parts. In his homily, Fr. Victor Kouande, the provincial, invited all present to welcome the surprises which God brings because, he said: «God is always new and his newness surprises us». He then thanked God for the gift of this missionary. Addressing the people, Mons. Adoukonou emphasised the fact that Fr. Jacob (whose name means Israel), like Jesus (the new Israel), «gathered us together as a family twice: first when he was installed as parish priest and now, for his funeral». Fr. Jacob has already accomplished well his mission, he added, and this is why the Lord called him to himself. After the Mass, the mortal remains of Fr. Jacob were taken to the major seminary of Saint Gall in Ouidah for burial. (*Fr. John Hanson Agboli*).

Fr. Jacob was born on 22 December 1973 at Adoukandji, Benin. He did his novitiate in Kinshasa (Congo) where he took first vows on 27 May, 2000, and completed the scholasticate in São Paulo, Brazil where, on 12 June 2004, he made his perpetual profession. He was ordained priest in Benin on 2 April 2005 and was then appointed to Mozambique where he worked until mid-2017. On finishing the Comboni Year, he returned to Benin.

This is part of a testimony given by Fr. Giocondo Pendin. “I lived with Fr. Jacob for two years in Muxungué, in pastoral work, and for two years at Matola in the postulancy. He was a good man, simple and peaceful. He seemed a bit shy but could speak his mind fearlessly. He had a very human way of dealing with the postulants: I never once saw him lose his patience or speak impatiently or angrily. He was never inflexible with anyone and when anyone did anything wrong, he would calmly call him aside and explain his mistake. Everyone was happy with him and trusted him”.

Fr. Udo Baumüller (24.09.1931 – 02.11.2018)

Born on 24 September 1931 at Nuremberg, as a boy he entered the seminary of the "Missionary Sons of the Sacred Heart of Jesus " in Ellwangen. Having finished secondary school, in 1954 he went on to Bamberg and began his novitiate on 9 May of that year, taking first vows two years later in 1956. Towards the end of his theological studies in Bamberg, he consecrated himself to God and the mission on 29 June 1960 by taking perpetual vows. On 13 March 1960, Archbishop Josef Schneider ordained him priest.

In the following years, he placed at the disposal of his confreres his many talents in various places and activities of the local communities. After spending some years as formator in the minor seminary in Josefinum/Ellwangen, he was made editor of the missionary magazine "Stern der Neger" while, at the same time, he was kept busy in media work and public relations. He edited our Holy Redeemer Guild calendar for a number of years. The calendar was important for the upkeep of the houses and the missions. Representing the Institute, he participated from the beginning in the publication of the missionary magazine "Kontinente", founded by fourteen German missionary societies and congregations in 1964. He was a member of the management in Essen up to 1970.

He then went to work first at Mellatz (1970-1983), then at Bamberg (from 1985 to 1993 he was in charge of the small parish of Staffelbach) and again in 1994 at Mellatz, where he was local superior, missionary animator and responsible for the ecclesial group based at the house. The fact that our house in Mellatz became a centre of spirituality for many people, providing a great variety of courses and meetings, was largely due to Fr. Udo.

He was a vivacious person, likeable and with a good sense of humour, very gifted and interested in daily events and up to date with theological reflections and discussions; as a priest he was open-hearted. At times he exaggerated his use of certain expressions but, at the same time, he provoked interesting and useful discussions: he was a man with clear ideas and positions which he sometime defended vehemently. In his journeys to Africa, Latin America and Asia, Fr. Udo came to experience the missionary commitment of the confreres in the worldwide multicultural and continually growing Church. His

missionary slides, displays and articles were of great help to the conferees in the work of missionary animation.

He experienced a life of ecumenism from his youth. The parish church of St. Konrad in Nuremberg was destroyed by bombs during the Second World War. The Catholic community, which now had no church of its own, was allowed to use the protestant church for liturgical celebrations. This did much to improve relations between Catholics and protestants. "On one occasion", Fr. Udo recounts, "the protestant priest spoke of his missionary work in New Guinea. That conference touched my heart and I understood that that was my deepest desire. The Holy Spirit really does blow and work where he wills". This was certainly the foundation stone of his ecumenism which he practised also during his time at Mellatz. For many years, Fr. Udo represented the Catholic group in "Ökumenekreis Lindau", which meets regularly even today, alternating between Lindau and Mellatz.

He enthusiastically agreed to make a maze in the garden of our house. The maze is an ancient symbol of the journey of man, totality, the cosmos, the world and perfection. No one knows how many people, down the years, have entered the maze to find themselves and God who completes and fills their lives. The maze at Mellatz is a monument to the life and faith of Fr. Udo and keeps his memory alive.

Fr. Udo's personal spirituality intensified as he advanced in years, through contemplation and daily prayer. In his life he not only proclaimed the fundamental Christian values of love but also lived them in daily life with patience and faith. (*Fr. Werner Nidetzky mcccj*)

Let us pray for our beloved dead

THE MOTHER: Giuseppina, of Fr. Goffredo Donato (MZ).

THE BROTHER: Cesare, of Fr. Giorgio Aldegheri (I).

THE SISTERS: Rosa, of Fr. Miguel Torres Madrigal (NAP); Teresa, of Bro. Giovanni Bonafini (U); Elizabeth, of Fr. John Downey (LP); Madalena, of Fr. Tiziano Laurenti (LP).

THE COMBONI MISSIONARY SISTERS: Sr. M. Chiara Mazzucco, Sr. M. Annunziata Albiero, Sr. Veronica M. Weldemariam, Sr. M. Romilde Spinato.

MISSIONARI COMBONIANI VIA LUIGI LILIO 80 - ROMA
