

Familia Comboniana

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES OF THE HEART OF JESUS

770

January 2019



HAPPY NEW YEAR

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

COMMITMENTS OF THE GC

Fr. Tesfaye Tadesse Gebresilasie

28 December 2018 – 22 January 2019: Visit to the province of Central America (with Fr. Alcides)

28 January – 16 February: Visit to the province of the Congo (Part One – with Bro. Alberto)

17 – 25 February: Rome: activities of the USG

26 February – 5 March: Visit to the Congo (Part Two)

Fr. Jeremias dos Santos Martins

14 January 2019 – 28 February: Visit to the province of Kenya and a meeting with the provincials of Africa

Fr. Ciuciulla Pietro

28 December 2018 – 24 January 2019: Visit to the delegation of Chad (with Bro. Alberto)

15 – 26 February: Meeting with the provincials of Africa

Fr. Alcides Costa

28 December 2018 – 23 January 2019: Visit to the province of Central America (with Fr. Tesfaye)

1 – 15 February: In Kenya

Bro. Lamana Cónsola Alberto

28 December 2018 – 24 January 2019: Visit to the delegation of Chad (with Fr. Ciuciulla)

27 January – 19 February: Visit to the province of Congo (with Fr. Tesfaye)

19 – 24 February: In Nairobi

Perpetual professions

Sc. Gbegnon Sénou Isaac (T) Muxúngue (MO) 11.11.2018

Bro. Kakule Silusawa Lwanga (CN) Butembo (DRC) 01.12.2018

Sc. Geraci Alessio Lima (PE) 02.12.2018

Bro. Kanyomozi Bruno (UG) Namugongo (UG) 08.12.2018

Priestly Ordinations

Fr. Mwamba James (MZ)	Kapatu-Kasama (Z)	01.12.2018
Fr Ricardo De Sousa Borges Rego (BR)	Varzelandia	15.12.2018
Fr. Sakie Tchawe (Noel) (T)	Noèpé-Lomé (TG)	22.12.2018
Fr. Alohoungo Abib Ayodele Sylvain (T)	Cotonou (BEN)	15.12.2018

Holy Redeemer Guild

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

Prayer intentions

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. *We pray to the Lord:*

February – That the witness of our inter-generational and inter-cultural communities may be a sign that God enfolds everyone in the embrace of his infinite love. *We pray to the Lord*

Publications

Fr. Juan González Núñez, *Adís Abeba. Guía histórica de la capital de Etiopía*, ed. Mundo Negro, 2018. This “literary stroll” allows the reader to penetrate the history and the present reality not only of the city of Addis Ababa but also of the country whose capital, from its very beginnings, bore the name *New Flower*.

General Secretary of the Mission

America/Asia Continental Mission Council

On 14 December 2018 the America/Asia Continental Mission Council (AACMC) held a meeting using the Skype programme. This was the first official meeting of the AACMC following their draft – during the American Missionary Congress held in S. Cruz de la Sierra (Bolivia) – of some basic criteria for the composition and functioning of the Council and the presentation of the project to the Circumscription Superiors.

During the 14 December meeting the duties of the AACMC and the themes to be covered during the coming year were defined. While some duties of the Continental Councils have already been developed

in the Vademecum for continentality, others will also be defined as the work of the Council goes on and these must assume a more continental perspective. At any rate, agreement was reached on some basic duties: to prepare the assemblies for the various sectors of the mission, to verify the implementation of what is proposed in the assemblies of the mission sector (proposals which ought to be taken up by the assemblies of circumscription superiors) and to stimulate continental reflection. It was emphasised that the nature of the Continental Councils is to be a consultative instrument with respect to the assembly of circumscription superiors.

Some themes to be dealt with by the AACMC over the coming year were specified, among which was the organisation of the assembly for Missionary Animation in Lima. It is important that this assembly should deal with the *ad gentes* dimension of Missionary Animation in Latin America. This concern – highlighted in an official letter to the provincial of Peru Fr. Francisco Martín Vargas, the provincial in charge of the MA sector – emerged after the American Missionary Congress of Santa Cruz (Bolivia), where the aspect of the mission *ad gentes* outside the confines of Latin America was only marginally touched upon; moreover, many young people present at the Congress had expressed their desire for more intense MA in the continent. There are other themes on which the Council can offer a significant contribution to the provinces, assisting them to go beyond their territorial dimension and to foster common action: the Synod for Amazonia planned for October 2019 and the question of how to integrate and elaborate common action by the circumscriptions of Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and Brazil, and, especially, what the Comboni Missionaries may offer the Synod. Finally, the theme of Afro pastoral and in particular how the AACMC can help each circumscription of the continent to implement the proposals of the Combonis who work in Afro pastoral, formulated after the Encuentro de Pastoral Afro in Cali (Colombia).

The majority of the above-mentioned themes are proper to Latin America and have an authentically contextual characteristic. The AACMC, like the European Mission Council before it, is elaborating its own competence and is assuming its own profile. The essential task of each Continental Mission Council is to mediate the priorities of the mission and the proposals of the continental assemblies and their implementation at circumscription level. It is also important that the AACMC should devote more time in its discussions to the priorities

that pertain to the circumscription of Asia which are the *ad gentes* dimension of the mission and interreligious dialogue. (*Fr. Mariano Tibaldo, General Secretary of the Mission*)

BRASILE

Priestly Ordination

The young Brazilian Comboni missionary Ricardo Borges Rego was ordained priest on 15 December 2018, at Varzelândia (MG), where his family lives. It was a great feast, enlivened by the Comboni Family and shared with the parish and the always hospitable people of God. Ten members of the Comboni Family including postulants and scholastics, one Sister, a Brother and some Priests were involved in mission and vocations promotion with a full week of activities and visits to the families of the area. They witnessed to concern for the poorest by visiting the more isolated families.

The ordination was led by Comboni Bishop Mons. Odelir Magri who celebrated the liturgy in a simple manner. The hymns were those of the Small Christian Communities and the celebration was very inculturated.

Fr. Ricardo's first Mass was enlivened by Comboni parish of São Sebastião, in San Paolo where Ricardo lived and where his vocation matured. The Mass was Afro-American, very well prepared together with Ricardo. We felt the spirit of Comboni and of Africa which danced and celebrated with us.

The family of Ricardo was also very much involved: his mother took part in the procession, dancing and bearing the gifts for the offertory. The community was deeply moved by their pride and joy in this missionary son of theirs.

Such moments also revive our vocation, the joy of being a missionary family, the memory of our commitment and our communion with the peoples and communities to whom we were sent. We experienced the presence of the dancing Spirit of God present among us.

ERITREA

Reopening of the Asmara Scholasticate

The scholasticate of Asmara was first opened in 2008 following restrictions on leaving the country imposed by the government of Eritrea. In 2016, it was closed for lack of candidates. On 22 September 2018 it was reopened with three scholastics and two formators.

On that day, Fr. Habtu Teklay, Delegation Superior, in the presence of the Delegation Council, confreres from the community of Asmara, of the postulants and of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters, celebrated a Mass of thanksgiving for the reopening. During the event he encouraged the scholastics to deepen their prayer life, to take their studies seriously, to create a good atmosphere in the life of the community and to be involved in pastoral services.

The house is located in the outskirts of the city of Asmara, a few kilometres from the seat of the delegation close to the parish of Sembel Kidanemehret where the Fathers and the scholastics exercise their ministries and apostolate. The prison of Sembel is also located close by.

Among the people of the parish, some are well off, others less so while others are very poor. The location of the scholasticate was chosen so that the members of the community could live close to the people and share their daily life.

On 9 July 2018 the long-awaited peace came to the country and normal relations were established between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Now, people may move between Asmara and Addis Ababa. We hope to see democratic change in Eritrea. If the authorities allow young people to leave the country, our scholastics will be able to meet scholastics from other countries and so experience the interculturality which the Institute considers one of our non-negotiable values.

ETHIOPIA

Golden Jubilee of Priesthood

The fiftieth anniversary of the ordination to the priesthood of Fr. Juan Nuñez, who spent most of his life at the service of the Catholic Church in Ethiopia, was marked with great solemnity by a Eucharistic celebration in the Coptic Rite at the Cathedral of Addis Ababa. His Eminence

Berhaneyesus D. Cardinal Souraphiel, Metropolitan Archbishop of Addis Ababa, the Nuncio Mons. Luigi Bianco and Mgr. Lisanechristos Mathewos, Bishop of Baher Dar who was also accompanied in his formation by Fr. Juan, presided at the Mass, together with a further fifteen priests and the members of our Provincial Council in Ethiopia. A number of Comboni Sisters working in the country, together with a large number of other religious and faithful participated joyfully and actively in the celebration.

Cardinal Berhaneyesus, like many other priests and lay people praised Fr. Juan in their concluding speeches, expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the Comboni Missionary for his generous and untiring service given over many years to thousands of seminarians, religious and lay faithful in Addis Ababa and in other dioceses of Ethiopia. In fact, Fr. Juan Nunez's work was very diversified: first in evangelisation followed by formation work in the seminaries, in the leadership of the Comboni Institute, both at Provincial and General levels, as director of the Spanish missionary magazine Mundo Negro and responsible for the publication of various books on themes concerning Ethiopia as part of the missionary commitment in this country. Various groups of the faithful, together with former students of Fr. Juan, expressed their gratitude presenting him with some typically Ethiopian objects. Final blessings were invoked upon him wishing him many more years to dedicate to his mission at the service of the people. Ad multos annos

ITALIA

Fiftieth anniversary of Acse

In 1969, the Comboni Association Service for Migrants and Refugees (ACSE) was founded by Fr. Renato Bresciani. Initially, it was mostly for immigrant Sudanese students but later became a service for all immigrants. This year it is celebrating its Golden Jubilee.

St. John Paul II said that ACSE constituted a truly frontier initiative and a school for social workers which, in turn, would have inspired other similar initiatives. In fact, there followed such organisations as Caritas, the Community of Saint Egidio and the Astalli Centre as an evangelical expression of the imagination of charity.

For the celebration of the Jubilee, there are plans for many meetings on the theme of immigration which, it is hoped, will involve a considerable number of immigrants from Africa and the other continents. We will start with the presentation of ACSE from the figure of the Founder to the recent history of the Association. The Honourable Rutelli who knew and helped Fr. Bresciani very much, will be present. There will be testimonies by volunteers and immigrants ... from the first to those of today. Senator Manconi will hold a conference on the present state of the question of immigration, taking into account the security decree. Invitations have been sent to the Presidents of the Camera, of the Region and of the Municipality as well as the Mayor of Rome.

Other meetings will be concerned with welcoming and integrating (Zanotelli and the Mayor of Riace), immigrant health and the dental surgery, an evening of music with the "ACSE Choir", a meeting of volunteers and immigrants and the participation in the feast of peoples in Rome etc.

Apart from Strenna that briefly presents the life of Fr. Bresciani (edited by Fr. Aurelio Boscaini) and the history of ACSE (edited by Fr. Venanzio Milani), a more substantial book is being completed on the history of ACSE which is expected to be published in January.

A mobile display is also being prepared and an ACSE hymn is being composed under the direction of Fr. Fabrizio Colombo.

It is to be hoped that these celebrations may be an occasion to increase awareness in public opinion regarding immigration and find ever more volunteer collaborators, also among immigrants, at the service of migrants so that immigrants may be welcomed better and be helped by a real process of integration.

MALAWI-ZAMBIA

Islam reflection group

The group met from 26 to 28 November 2018 in Lilongwe, Malawi. It is composed of Comboni representatives from Anglophone and Francophone Africa and is meant to be an instrument to deepen some themes on Islam and offer pastoral proposals regarding relationships between Christians and Moslems. The General Council insisted on this point in their letter to the participants, reminding them how important it is that "the reflection group should not only have a formative

finality but [...] it should also give pastoral indications that are concrete and practicable”.

In particular, the Lilongwe meeting dealt with marriage in Islamic legislation and the pastoral implications of marriage between Christians and Moslems, the expansion of Islam in Africa and the areas of conflict between Christians and Moslems. Fr. Richard Kyankaaga, head of Dar Comboni in Cairo, spoke of the areas of interreligious conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the participants agreed on some priorities such as: to make the circumscriptions aware of the content of the encounter; to animate the local Churches on important aspects of Islam and its presence in Sub-Saharan Africa; to present a report of the meeting to the annual assembly of provincials and to encourage them to animate their circumscriptions to discuss themes regarding the presence of Islam; and, finally, to update the website www.awlaadibnhagar.org, a means of information on Islam for Comboni Missionaries.

Islam is a presence on the world panorama, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, which we cannot ignore. It is on positive relations with the faithful of this religion that peace in coming years will depend. Therefore, knowledge of Islam, efforts to collaborate with Moslem people and also the duty of helping Christians to overcome the prejudice and suspicion that undermine social relations and peaceful coexistence, ought to be the pastoral challenges during the coming years. *(Fr. Mariano Tibaldo, General Secretary for the Mission)*

MOZAMBIQUE

Perpetual vows and diaconal ordination

On 11 November 2018, the scholastic Isaac Sénou Gbegnon, born in Godomey, in Benin, consecrated himself to the mission in the Institute in the presence of Fr. António Manuel Bogaio Constantino, Provincial Superior of Mozambique, at the parish of Saint Daniel Comboni in Muxúngwè, located in the Archdiocese of Beira where, two years previously, he had gone to carry out his missionary service.

On 25 November, the last Sunday of the liturgical year and the solemnity of Christ King of the Universe, Isaac was ordained deacon, together with five diocesan seminarians, by Mons. Claudio Dalla Zuan-

na, Archbishop of Beira, at the parish of the Sacred Heart in the area of Macuti.

In his homily, Mons. Dalla Zuanna stressed the importance of the diaconal munus in the Church and gave some advice on the exercise of the diaconal ministry. He then thanked the families for having given their sons and for collaborating in their formation for the service of the local Church.

During the thanksgiving, with a typically African gesture, the main celebrant and the seven new deacons left the presbytery and joined in the singing and dancing of the assembled faithful to thank God for these new vocations.

IN PACE CHRISTI

Fr. Tito Giuntoli (11.11.1926 - 18.10.2018)

The son of Giovanni and Adele Franchi, Tito was born on 11 November 1926 at Altopascio, in the province of Lucca and the diocese of Pescia. Having joined the Institute, he took first vows in Florence on 7 October 1944 and perpetual vows in Venegono on 23 September 1949. He was ordained priest in Milan on 3 June 1950. He stayed in Italy up to 1954, teaching at Pesaro, Carraia and Rebbio.

in 1954 he was assigned to South Sudan (where he stayed until 1964) as curate and superior. He continued his missionary work at Torit, Lyria, Isoke, Lafon and Cukudum, and who knows how much good he could have done had the expulsion order not been issued.

In a letter of his (published in Nigrizia, February 1961), which he wrote from Isoke, we are told that “despite the constant development of recent years, there are still more than 20,000 pagans attached to the mission whose conversion we must hasten before it is too late. Besides our constant efforts to evangelise these people who are usually well disposed towards us, we must add the care of the various already formed Christian communities scattered in the villages of an area with a radius of seventy km ... For such a great task the workers are too few. Unfortunately, many difficulties stand in the way of the entry of new personnel; and so we find ourselves in a really critical situation”.

Indeed, it was the increase in missionary personnel that was one of the reasons for the marvellous growth of the Church: the 17 priests

and 11 Brothers before the war had increased respectively to 55 and 30 in 1958. These numbers might seem small given the size of the territory but they were encouraging at the time.

Having returned to Italy, Fr. Tito stayed for two years in Florence working in missionary animation before returning to the mission, this time to Patongo, Uganda (1966-1971). There he worked in ministry and was also the local superior. He was sent there especially to assist the refugees from South Sudan who had been admitted to a refugee camp in the area.

Back in Italy, he went to Florence to work in missionary animation and then to Pordenone, first as formator of the Brothers and again in missionary animation (1971-1979).

In 1980, once again appointed to South Sudan, he was given the tasks of being novice master at Rejaf (1979-1988), local superior at Juba and was then appointed to work in the provincial house (1988-1992).

In 1993 Fr. Tito was appointed to Khartoum North as provincial bursar, then as provincial procurator and finally to ministry.

In 2006 he returned to Italy for reasons of health and went to Milan for treatment. He then spent two years in ministry in Florence and Lucca. In 2010 he again went to Milan community for treatment and died there on 18 October 2018.

Bro. Elia Dalla Fontana (11.03.1932 – 21.11.2018)

Bro. Elia was born in Schio where Saint Giuseppina Bakhita lived, and whom he knew when he was a child attending catechism. After completing the novitiate in Sunningdale (1951-1953), he took first vows on 9 September 1953. After some years in England, he was sent to the mission in Uganda where he worked for about 26 years (1956-1982). It was something he often spoke of with nostalgia and pleasure. In Uganda he also made his perpetual profession, on 9 September 1960. In 1982 he returned to Italy where – apart from a brief period in Ugandan territory in 2007 – he remained for the rest of his life: first at Messina – for almost eleven years – in vocations promotion and GIM and then, for two years, at the General Curia helping to run the house and also in other communities: Lucca, Gozzano, Arco, Brescia and finally Castel d’Azzano.

Referring to that first stay in Uganda, Bro. Gilberto Bettini recalls: “Bro. Elia was a very happy and welcoming person; he saw to the meals and the running of the house. He was a great friend of the students of Comboni College and advised them regarding the spiritual life and vocations. While working he began to feel ill with back pain; he had to leave Lira and go to Italy at the end of 2007 seeking better medical treatment”.

Those who knew Bro. Elia appreciated his sincere and frank personality in his relations with everyone. He was always ready for a joke, sometimes rather biting but, between one joke and another, his deep humanity was evident and he went straight to people’s hearts.

During his homily at the funeral Mass on 24 November, Fr. Renzo Piazza recalled his passion for music: “He learned how to play the harmonium and he liked singing operatic pieces ... even in the corridors of Castel d’Azzano. When he left us, there was but one hour to go to the feast of Saint Cecilia, patron of music and musicians”.

Bro. Elia had many friends some of whom chose him to be godfather at Confirmations or witness at weddings. Many enquired after him when he was ill or sent a message when they heard of his passing. “He was a frank and optimistic person – a former Comboni student said of him – The product of a famous Milanese clothes company, he went to build churches and dispensaries in Uganda, and then he accompanied to maturity the motley band that we were!”.

“In Layibi – as Fr. Elia Pampaloni recalls – he took care of the students at the secondary school when they were sick. They liked his friendly manner and his cheerful approach. He also knew how to correct them in no uncertain terms, something which the students willingly accepted as his words came from his sincere and loving concern”.

“I met Bro. Elia in October 1963 – Bro. Rinaldo Pendin writes – when he first came to Uganda. He was at Aliwang mission in the diocese of Lira and I was at Alanyi. I was immediately fascinated by his jovial character and he kept me talking to him while he helped the cook in the kitchen to prepare good meals. He was very sociable with everyone and made the time after supper enjoyable. Being a good builder, he put up many chapels in Aliwang mission and in the other places where he was sent to work. He could play the keyboard well and so created solemnity when he played during Mass accompanying the hymns.

He did a great apostolate among his workers and all sorts of people he met every day. Everyone liked his familiar way of chatting, especially the sick and the elderly whom he often visited in their huts.

I saw him for the last time in June 2018 as he was moving around in his wheelchair in Castel d’Azzano. Despite his sufferings, he was always jovial and peaceful, just like when he was young. He always had great esteem for the Comboni Brothers”.

Fr. Peter Magalasi (31.12.1929 – 8.12.2018)

Fr. Peter Magalasi, son of Bariipi and Anyongo, was born at Diyan-ga (Maringindo, Western Equatoria) on 31 December 1929. He was baptised by Fr. Carlo Arrighi when he was eleven years old, at Raffili, Bahr-el-Gahazal, on 8 December 1940 and confirmed the following year on 20 Aprile 1941, by Mons. Rodolfo Orlor. He felt called to the priesthood and entered the seminary where he studied philosophy and theology. He was in second theology when he expressed the desire to become a Comboni. Fr. Longino Urbani, Rector of Sacred Heart Seminary in Gulu, encouraged him, affirming that his desire to be a missionary was authentic. Mons. Domenico Ferrara, Prefect Apostolic of Mupoi, introduced him to the Combonis and he was admitted to the novitiate in Florence (Italy). He made his first profession on 9 September 1956, finished theology and was ordained priest on 7 July 1957 in Verona. After his ordination he was sent to Rome to study Canon Law at the Urbanian University.

Once he had completed his studies and taken perpetual vows on 9 September 1959, he returned to South Sudan. From July 1960 to June 1962, he worked as a teacher at St. Paul’s Major Seminary of Tore River. He afterwards went to Mboro, close to Wau, as assistant parish priest and, a year later, in 1963, became parish priest of Wau. Those were difficult years for the Church in South Sudan. In 1964, all the foreign missionaries were expelled. Tore seminary was closed and transferred to Kit with Fr. Magalasi as a teacher and spiritual director but only for a short period. In fact, in 1965, both priests and seminarians fled to Uganda and continued their training there. Fr. Magalasi continued with his work of teaching and made sure he was pastorally involved at week-ends.

In 1971 he was assigned to the province of Ethiopia-Eritrea and worked at the parish of Fullasa, in Ethiopia, again as a teacher. He

stayed there until 1973. In 1972, the signing of the Addis Ababa Peace Agreement allowed the Church in South Sudan to recommence its work with new energy; as a result, in 1973 Fr. Magalasi returned to South Sudan and went to Rejaf and Kit, also as spiritual director of the Brothers of Saint Martin de Porres. In June 1980 he was assigned to Rumbek where he worked tirelessly for the community of the cathedral. He also visited the chapels up to Cueibet and Bargheil. In the meantime, a second civil war had begun that caused great suffering to Church personnel. In 1984, near Tonj, the vehicle in which Fr. Magalasi was travelling was attacked and he was robbed. As a result of that attack, he decided to leave Rumbek and move to Maringindo, the land of his childhood. He settled at Nagero where he provided pastoral assistance to the local population. In 1986 he was assigned to the community of Lomin in Kajokeji. He stayed there until 1987 when the community was closed due to insecurity.

In July 1988, the superiors proposed Fr. Magalasi undertake a period of ministry in Italy in the field of missionary animation. There he was able to rest a bit and recover from the traumas he suffered in the previous years. It was during that time that he developed a special devotion to Blessed Clementine Anuarite, a Congolese martyr. In 1991 he was assigned to the Congo where he stayed for sixteen years, working in three different parishes: Ango, Bambilo and Duru. While he was at Duru, on 17 September 2008, the mission was attacked by the LRA militias and the missionaries had to flee together with the faithful, taking refuge in South Sudan.

After a period at Yambio, Fr. Magalasi joined the community of the postulancy at Layibi (Uganda), cooperating in the formation of the Brother candidates. In June 2013 he began what was to be a year with Bishop Emeritus Mons. Joseph Gazi Abangite, at Yambio. However, his health worsened and he was taken to the community connected to the hospital of Lacor. There he spent the remaining years of his life. The Lord called him to himself on 8 December 2018, at the age of eighty nine years.

LET US PRAY FOR OUR BELOVED DEAD

THE FATHER: Heriberto, of Fr. José Aldo Sierra Moreno (RSA).

THE MOTHERS: Zilia, of Fr. Pius Daprè (DSP); Mercedes, of Fr. Miguel Navarrete Arceo (M).

THE COMBONI MISSIONARY SISTERS: Sr. Idangela Meroni, Sr. Carmen Méndez Martín; Sr. Pier Paola Filini.

THE SECULAR COMBONI MISSIONARY: Marziani Giuliana, Fabbri Wilma.



WISHING YOU ALL
A GOOD JOURNEY IN LIFE

MSSIONARI COMBONIANI VIA LUIGI LILIO 80 - ROMA
