



Rome, 28 June 2019

*“They said to each other: «Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?»” (Lk 24,32)*

*Then he was carried away under the impetus of that love set alight by the divine flame on Calvary hill, when it came forth from the side of the Crucified One to embrace the whole human family; he felt his heart beat faster (S. Daniel Comboni, W 2742)*

Dear Confreres,

The true and profound encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ always makes the heart burn in the bosom of the one who experiences his presence near him, enabling him to listen to his word.

This produces a twofold movement in our lives: on the one hand it makes us love the Father more and more and invites us to live as children and on the other hand it puts us on the way to meet our brothers and sisters, urging us to live our lives as brothers. The encounter with Christ introduces us to the presence of the Father and inspires us to live as sons and brothers.

Each of us, the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus, has experienced this personal encounter with Christ to the point of making it the decisive moment of his own life and of his own vocation (cf. RL 21.1). We have made our own God’s plan for mankind today and, therefore, strive to have the same attitude that the Lord Jesus had (cf. Phil 2.5) and thus become the presence of God’s love and mercy in the world. In this solemnity of the Sacred Heart, we are called, as every year, to renew our consecration to God and to the mission that he has entrusted to us. The invitation is to be more and more in conformity with him and to ensure that our heart beats at the same pace as the heart of God and burns of love for every man and woman on the planet, especially for the poorest and most abandoned.

We are missionary disciples, sent to testify and to make visible by our lives the heart of God that is kindled with love for all his creatures, called to share a love that saves and gives life. *Comboni’s unconditional love for the peoples of Africa had its origin and model in the saving love of the Good Shepherd, who offered his life on the Cross for humanity. “Trusting in that most Sacred Heart... I feel more inclined to suffer... and to die for Jesus Christ and for the salvation of the unhappy peoples of Central Africa»” (RL 3).*

The Solemnity of the Sacred Heart this year coincides with the period in which we are praying to choose the new superiors of our circumscriptions: we ask the Lord for the gift of superiors who are according to His Heart. Let us also ask him, in this year when we are reflecting on the interculturality, the grace of knowing how to recognise ourselves as sons and brothers who share the same faith, the same baptism, the same consecration and the same mission.

Happy feast of the Sacred Heart

*The General Council*