

# Familia Comboniana

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES OF THE HEART OF JESUS

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777

September 2019

## GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

### Appointment

During the Angelus on 1 September 2019, the Holy Father Pope Francis announced that a Consistory will be held on 5 October next, for the creation of thirteen new cardinals, “whose provenance – he said – expresses the missionary vocation of the Church which continues to announce the merciful love of God to all the people of the earth”.

We are happy to inform you that among these will be one of our own confreres Mons. Miguel Angel Ayuso Guixot, recently appointed President of the Pontifical Council for Religious Dialogue.

We extend to him our most heartfelt congratulations!

### Perpetual professions

Sc. Fazili Makanzu Germain (CN)	Butembo (RDC)	03/07/2019
Sc. Revolledo Villanueva E. Antonio (PE)	New Taipei (ROC)	19/07/2019
Sc. Orishaba Elias (U)	Alenga (UG)	20/07/2019
Sc. Opiyo Constanz (U)	Alenga (UG)	20/07/2019
Sc. Kambale Kasika E. (CN)	Castel Voltumo (I)	21/07/2019
Sc. Trevisan Stefano (I)	Castel Voltumo (I)	21/07/2019
Sc. Nkwe Lugiri Claude (CN)	Bangui (RCA)	14/08/2019
Sc. Welemu Anatole (MZ)	Lilongwe (MZ)	20/08/2019

### Ordinations

Fr. Kasereka Amini Wasingya (CN)	Butembo (RDC)	04/07/2019
Fr. Tomety Kossi M. A. Christ Roi (T)	Aneho (TG)	27/07/2019
Fr. Sebutinde Michael (U)	Kitovu-Masaka (UG)	03/08/2019
Fr. Musonda Cosmas (MZ)	Lusaka (Z)	06/08/2019
Fr. Gbegnon Sénou Isaac (T)	Cotonou (BEN)	10/08/2019

## Holy Redeemer Guild

September 01 – 15 NAP 16 – 30 PCA  
October 01 – 07 RCA 08 – 15 TCH 16 – 31 RSA

## Prayer Intentions

**September** – That the Comboni Missionary Sisters, gathered for the Inter-Chapter Assembly, may reflect upon and understand more deeply the processes in hand with the eyes and heart of God. *Lord hear us.*

**October** – that the extraordinary month of mission desired by Pope Francis, may awaken in all Christians enthusiasm for the “*missio ad gentes*”. *Lord hear us.*

## Publications

**Romeo Ballan-Maria Rosa Venturelli**, *Il tesoro della missione, Ottobre Missionario Straordinario.*

This year pope Francis has proclaimed for the whole Church “*An Extraordinary October Month of the Missions*”, during the centenary of the Missionary Letter *Maximum illud*, of Benedict XV (1919). With this initiative – the first of its kind – the Pope is asking everyone to intensify the process of *missionary conversion* of the activity of the Church, according to the programme announced in *Evangelii gaudium*.

In line with this appeal of the Pope, two Comboni Missionaries have prepared a *pastoral supplement to missionary information and formation*, for parishes, communities, groups, etc. The supplement provides an outline for each of the days of October: a reflection on a theme (doctrinal, historical, biographical...), a testimony, a prayer and an ethnic proverb.

The text is easy to read and brings the mission “*close at hand and into the heart*”: ideas, proposals, suggestions to *immerse oneself* in the worldwide nature of the mission; to discover, deepen and make known the *treasure of the Mission*.

Publisher: Fondazione Nigrizia Onlus, Verona, 2019; pp. 144; general price: € 10; to our communities and CMD: € 5. Available from: Fondazione Nigrizia.

**Fugain Dreyfus E. Yepoussa**, *Réinventer le système éducatif centrafricain. Une urgence de vivre-ensemble*, Edilivre, Linselle (France), May 2019. Among the factors which are making the

Central African Republic into a ghost country, Fr. Fugain reveals the collapse of the educational system and emphasises that it is only through education that the social fabric of *vivre-ensemble* may be rebuilt, capable of giving birth to new Central Africans and the joy of belonging to a nation of peace and prosperity.

**Tonino Falaguasta Nyabenda**, *Daniele Comboni: l’Africa del Comboni e le periferie di Papa Francesco*, Missionari Comboniani, Cordenons (PN), June 2019. In this booklet, reprinted within a year, Fr. Tonino presents – as Fr. Tesfaye says in the preface – the fundamental stages in the life of Comboni, with intermittent messages of some Saints who, in the history of the Church, have been examples of mercy and charity.

**Dawit Wubishet**, *Kibrit*, August 2019. Kibrit – meaning a match in Amharic – is the title Fr. Dawit has given to his book of “Spiritual Thoughts” which is also the title of the CD containing twelve original songs by the author himself. These two productions are being published on the eve of the Extraordinary Mission Month. The 150 meditations in the book bring God close to us and ourselves to Him while the various choruses of the songs bring us to praise God with their intuitions on the spiritual life and the Christian mission.

### **General Secretariat of the Mission Continental Assembly of Mission Promoton**

The Continental Assembly of Mission Promotion (MP) for America/Asia took place in Lima from 1 to 5 July on the theme “*Old and new Areopagi of Comboni Mission Promotion*”. The general aim was to devise new MP strategies and rethink its methods in light of the present-day challenges in the continent. All the circumscriptions of the continent were represented except the NAP and the delegation of Asia.

The Assembly was prepared by means of a detailed questionnaire on the means and methods of MP, social networks and marketing, and the number of confreres involved in this sector.

Various aspects were considered, using the classical method of see-judge-act.

On the first day, following a presentation of the economic, social and political situation of the Latin American continent and Peru in

particular, Fr. Mariano Tibaldo, General Secretary of the Mission, gave his report on the orientations and prospects of MP in the Institute.

During the second day, Mons. Alfredo Vizcarra S.J., Bishop of Jaén, who spent some years as a missionary in Chad, expounded the theme of the challenge of the mission 'ad gentes' in the American continent and that of the Pan-Amazon Synod planned for next October in Roma, which Mons. Vizcarra will attend.

On the third and fourth days, various themes were debated with the help of lay Peruvian professionals and confreres one of whom was Bro. Bernardino Frutuoso, Director of the *Além Mar* and *Audácia* magazines in Portugal. The theme of the relationship between the JPIC and MP was presented by Fr. Juan Goicochea and the team of the Chorrillos parish.

On the final day, the Assembly participants visited the Lima "Centro de Animación Misionera" and some MP initiatives in the field of JPIC at the Comboni parish of Chorrillos.

### **European Comboni Workshop on Interculturality**

In order to study the theme of interculturality, chosen for our reflection during 2019, the provincial superiors and the members of the secretariats for the mission of the six European Comboni circumscriptions organised a workshop that was held from 1 to 6 July at the Mother House of the Comboni Sisters in Verona (Italy). Roughly forty missionaries took part, including two Sisters, one Secular and one Lay Comboni Missionary. The theme of the workshop, which took the place of the Limone Symposium this year, was "Interculturality and mission. Intercultural praxis as a missionary challenge". The programme gave priority to a highly participated and collaborative methodology, giving due time to personal reflection, active listening and sharing during group work.

On the third day, Rev. Paolo Boschini, a ground-breaking priest in a Modena parish and professor of philosophy at the University of Bologna, stimulated the participants explaining that "In the situations through which we are living, there are no cultures but mixtures, there is no identity but a hybrid. There exist not so much cultures but intertwining worlds, many overlapping horizons, none of which is self-sufficient. The wave of sovreignism invading Eu-

rope is dictated by a cognitive distortion. We imagine that cultures exist but these are constructions, often a *posteriori*".

The workshop proved to be a substantial source of encounters, ideas and proposals to be evaluated in the field of a mission which in Europe is increasingly outside conventional ambits. It is a Mission that goes out to the streets, the squares and outskirts where lives and hopes circulate and interweave in a journey towards the construction of that *multiversal* vision of life which sees cultures with close ethnocentric connotations as belonging to the past, in order to "allow ourselves to be embraced – as Rev. Paolo Boschini noted – by an all-embracing horizon".

## ASIA

### **We thank God for the gift of the missionary vocation**

On 20 July 2019, the small parish of Saint Anne, in the district of Wugu, New Taipei City, became the centre of a celebration of "three in one", in the words of the Archbishop of Taipei, Mons. John Hung Shan-Chuan, SVD, who presided at the Eucharist. Three events were celebrated: the ordination to the diaconate of Sc. Eduardo Antonio Revolledo Villanueva, the parochial feast-day and the installation of the new parish priest.

The ordination was a truly missionary celebration in that it united people coming from the four continents in which the Combonis are present and was concelebrated by 18 priests – eight Combonis and 10 others, both religious and diocesan – from Portugal, Italy, Poland, Austria, Mexico, Paraguay, Togo, Congo, Vietnam and the Philippines. Two African Brothers in formation were also present. Among those who attended were members of the faithful from nearby parishes where the Combonis have served, a group of twelve pilgrims from Vietnam with their parish priest and a Vietnamese couple who took the place of the parents of Eduardo, assisting him when the time came to put on the dalmatic.

During the same celebration, the bishop also installed Fr. Margarito Garrido III as the new parish priest of Saint Anne's and successor to Fr. Gerardo Oviedo, now assigned to the community of Vietnam.

The previous day, 19 July, representatives of the Comboni communities of Macao, Vietnam and the Philippines gathered together with the community of Taipei and a group of friends to cel-

celebrate a more intimate Eucharist for the perpetual profession of Sc. Eduardo. The Mass was presided by Fr. David da Costa Domingues, Delegation Superior. In his homily, Fr. Dave encouraged Sc. Eduardo to always be in love with God.

Eduardo had come to Asia for his missionary service after his theological studies in Nairobi. He spent the first eight months in Vietnam learning the language and teaching English. In October 2018 he moved to the community of Taipei to continue his missionary service in a more pastoral environment where the Comboni run two parishes in the outskirts of the city. He has since begun to study Mandarin at the languages department of the Catholic University.

## BRASIL

### **Week of vocations and mission promotion**

Some members of the Comboni family – a priest, a Brother, a Sister and some lay people belonging to the Comboni Spirituality group – almost all from the diocese of Balsas, conducted a week of vocations and missionary promotion in Balsas (MP), in the parishes of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour and Saint Anthony.

There were various celebrations together with inspiring testimonies, moments spent in an atmosphere of fraternity and missionary fervour. Those days, organised also in view of the Great Parish Mission Week which will take place in November, also in Balsas, provided as well the opportunity to celebrate the 25 years of consecrated life of Sister Maria do Socorro Ribeiro, a Comboni Sister from Balsas, on the feast of the Assumption, the day of religious and consecrated life in Brazil.

The missionary week was an initiative of the parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour and was carried out with the commitment and participation of the Comboni Spirituality group and of some invited men and women religious.

## CENTRAFRIQUE

### **Perpetual vows and ordination to the diaconate**

The Comboni family in Central Africa has recently experienced two inspiring moments: the celebration of the perpetual profession

and the ordination to the diaconate of our young confrere Claude Nkwe Lugiri, who came to the RCA on 11 September 2018.

During the nine days of preparation, the confreres present in Bangui alternated visits to the parish of Our Lady of Fatima to pray with the parish community and to do mission promotion there. The most interesting aspect was the high degree of participation by the parishioners – despite the persistent state of insecurity – many of whom no longer live within the jurisdiction of the parish, having been forced, in 2015, to move out after they fled from the killings and seeing their houses burnt to the ground.

The perpetual profession took place on 14 August, during a Eucharistic celebration presided over by Fr. Médard Longba Guende, the Delegate. On the following day, the solemnity of the Assumption, Claude was ordained deacon by the laying on of hands by Mgr. Guerrino Perin, Bishop of M’Baïki, a Comboni Missionary who came to Bangui for the occasion. This occasion was also marked by a great attendance and the mobilisation by the lay faithful wearing the ceremonial dress of their groups and movements, of numerous priests and religious, Comboni Sisters, representatives of the religious communities, the relatives of the Central African Combonis, friends, benefactors and parishioners. The Ambassador of the Democratic Republic of Congo to the Central African Republic was also present.

## CONGO

### **Ongoing Formation Meeting**

During the month of August 2019, 21 confreres, priests and Brothers from the Comboni provinces of Francophone Africa and Rome participated in an extended meeting on ongoing formation which was held at the Comboni house of Kimwenza, in Kinshasa.

These confreres whom we may describe as “young”, due to their ages and their years of priesthood or perpetual vows, have some serious and important responsibilities in their provinces. They work in the circumscriptions of TGB (2), RCA (1), Chad (6), DRC (9) and in Rome (3) and are from various nations: Togo, Congo, Benin, Central Africa, Italy, South Africa, Portugal and Mexico. Consequently, in this year dedicated to interculturality, this was one more opportunity to study how to live in accordance with this grace and the challenges it presents.

Many of them had known each other for years, having lived together during their years of basic formation or missionary service and so were happy to meet again.

The confreres who accompanied them during those days in the role of animators were Fr. Fidèle Katsan, Fr. Elias Sindjalim, Fr. Vincenzo Percassi and Fr. Fermo Bernasconi.

The aim of the encounter was to implement what had been indicated as important by the Chapters and the General Council, which was to assist the confreres to live well their first years of missionary ministry, to see the value of all the opportunities in their consecrated and missionary life, and so overcome any possible difficulties in the transition from basic formation to daily life.

For this reason, priority was given to a personal and deep review of each one's experience, assisted by some material provided by way of input: personal reflection, sharing in small groups and a time for dialogue in assembly. Personal prayer, the study of the charism of Comboni and the liturgical celebrations provided the grace to bring everything together to the central point of our life: the gift of God.

## ECUADOR

### **Afro-Ecuadorian Pastoral Meeting**

From 4 to 7 July, at the "San Juan Diego" Spirituality Centre in Esmeraldas, the XXX National Afro-Ecuadorian Pastoral Meeting was held; it also marked the completion of forty years at the side of the Afro population.

Over four days of reflection and sharing, a number of topics were taken up. Among these were the need to give a higher profile to the situation and the values of the Afro people in society and to insert into the political constitution of the country the importance of an Afro "ethno-education", the creation of basic ecclesial communities and the formation of leaders in the field of Afro pastoral.

The challenges of our times were also outlined: to concretise a pastoral that would reinforce the family and support integral formation as well as valuing the contribution of the Afro population to social identity without descending into folklore.

The themes and the challenges were also presented in the message which, at the end of the meeting, the participants

addressed to the Ecuadorian Church and society, together with the renewal of such commitments as the defence of nature, in union with the Synod for Amazonia, programmes of formation, the preparation of Afro missionaries for the black families and all that can help to strengthen the Afro pastoral presence in the country and in the ecclesial context.

## ERITREA

### **Visit of the Superior General**

Fr. Tesfaye Tadesse, Superior General, visited the delegation of Eritrea from 15 July to 6 August 2019. This visit was, for the delegation, a time of grace and a blessing of God.

Fr. Tesfaye had not been able to visit the delegation, either as Assistant General responsible for the APDESAM circumscriptions since 2009, or as Superior General. Some of the younger confreres who had never been able to leave the country had never had the opportunity to meet or to know him personally.

With good relations now established between Ethiopia and Eritrea, Fr. Tesfaye, an Ethiopian citizen, was able to come and move around among all our communities: Asmara, the scholasticate, the Minor Seminary of Decameré and the community of Delle in Gash Barka. He also took part in a three-day workshop on interculturality.

He was also able to meet the heparchs of Eritrea, one of whom is the Comboni Archbishop Menghestab Tesfamariam, Metropolitan of the Archeparchy of Asmara.

He then preached the annual retreat for about 35 confreres and Comboni Sisters.

Fr. Tesfaye was warmly received everywhere he went in this his “adopted country”, as he calls it.

We are thankful to God for this event and we are grateful to Abba Tesfaye who has come to understand better our situation and who inspired and encouraged us to continue with our mission despite the problems and the difficult situation that our Church is going through at this particular time. (*Fr. Habtu Teklay*)

## ESPAÑA

### **“Caravan Abriendo Fronteras”**

One of the Comboni priorities in Europe is to work with migrants, especially those from the African continent. Many of us have experienced the warmth of an African welcome when we lived in that continent and we are saddened when Africans suffer discrimination when they come to Europe. We are therefore ready to cooperate with any initiative that upholds the rights of migrant people.

As a result, we have given our support to the “Caravan Abriendo Fronteras” (“Caravan that opens borders”) which, from 12 to 21 July 2019 travelled throughout the south of Spain to denounce European migrant policies and the great failings of the institutional reception system in the Andalusian region and in the whole of Spain. On 13 July, in Granada, a round table conference was held for an exchange of experiences of supportive welcoming, chaired by Fr. José Rafael Pérez Moreno.

## ITALIA

### **Perpetual profession and ordination to the diaconate**

A family celebration held by the Combonis on Sunday 21 July, at Castel Volturno (CE), for the perpetual profession of Stefano Trevisan, from Bolzano, and Emmanuel Kambale Kasika, from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

After the Mass which was enlivened by African music and rhythms, Fr. Giovanni Munari, who presided at the Eucharist, thanked for their meaningful presence the confreres, the formators and all who made possible this unforgettable moment and, especially, the community of the parish of Santa Maria dell’Aiuto, entrusted to the Combonis, as well as the diocesan Caritas which made available the hall of the Fernandez Centre.

A week later, on 28 July, Stefano and Emmanuel were ordained deacons at the parish of San Gaetano of Thiene, at Pescopagano (PZ), by the laying on of hands by Mgr. Lucio Lemmo, Auxiliary Bishop of Naples who, in his homily, stated that no one must ever feel a stranger in the Church and recalled the importance of prayer in the life of a missionary.

“I can only thank the Lord – Stefano said after the celebration – for the gift of my vocation and to have been able to spend five unforgettable years studying Theology and in prayer at the Scholasticate of Casavatore/Naples and for my pastoral work in Castel Volturno and Pescopagano”.

Emmanuel, too, expressed the great joy he felt during the three weeks of preparation and in the diaconal celebration both for the encouraging words of the Bishop and the closeness of so many Comboni confreres and many other people he came to know during his five years at the Scholasticate.

For the coming months, both will form part of the community of the student confreres in Rome – Stefano will complete his Licentiate thesis and Emmanuel will continue with his second year for a Licentiate – before being appointed to the mission.

### **Castel d’Azzano: a visit by the Bishop of Mantua**

In the beginning of July, Mons. Marco Brusca, Bishop of Mantua, visited the community of Castel d’Azzano, taking time for a meeting with all the confreres and to celebrate the Eucharist.

A few days later there appeared in the diocesan weekly *La Cittadella*, a reflection by the Bishop – included below – entitled “The ‘protection barriers’ of many missionaries”.

While visiting the Combonis of Castel d’Azzano (Verona) I was suddenly faced with the sight of 54 missionaries, with an average age of 89 whose years of missionary service amounted to two thousand years! They are waiting to hear me speak. But I prefer to engage in conversation: “Which, in your opinion, are the priorities of the Church today?”. Hands are raised to ask for the microphone. The first to speak has been blind for 30 years but sees clearly with the eyes of his heart: “What is needed is the kerygma: people do not know they have a Father who loves them”. The other interventions followed the same line: “To make the Gospel known; to teach people how to pray: to guide people in the faith. These veterans reflect the method of Pope Francis: “Whenever we try to recover the freshness of the Gospel, new paths are revealed ... words full of renewed meaning for the present world” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 11). The seal of the meeting lies in the words of Bro. Antonio Marchi who reminds me of “the many people of Mantua who, like protection barriers of love, accompanied me along the pathways of the world”. This image is the response I

found on the faces of those missionaries: their faith firm as granite is like a robust protection barrier but the certainties that this confused world is in need of come only through the medium of love. And this is the Gospel!

### **Castel d’Azzano: visit by Cardinal Montenegro**

On Friday 23 August we had a visit from another VIP, Cardinal Franco Montenegro, Bishop of Agrigento (and Lampedusa!), who was on holiday at the time. After answering some questions from the editors of Nigrizia, he spent considerable time with the confreres and presided at the Eucharist.

His Eminence is originally from Messina where he met Fr. Andrea Polati, Fr. Lorenzo Bono, (“I took his room when he left for Africa ...”), Fr. Rizzi and Fr. Russo, who, on returning from his journeys would tell us of his “successes” in mission promotion: the gift of a car or a fat cheque ... He never ignored an opportunity to sow the seed.

He then dwelt upon a very topical problem that grips not only his diocese but the whole of Europe, that of the migrants. “Who knows! Would Comboni today speak only of ‘Africa, Africa’ or would he say ‘Italy, Italy’, seeing that today Africa is coming here. We departed to go to Africa and now it is Africa that is coming here to us, but it is the same Africa we knew and encountered”.

He concluded the Eucharist with these words: “We have spoken of migrants, of difficulties, of fears and He comes and says to us: ‘Listen, what matters is love’. It is precisely this we must keep in our hearts: this desire for love, this ability to welcome everyone. You Combonis have a close relationship with the Heart of Jesus and that open Heart, if we enter into it, will show us what love is”.

## MALAWI-ZAMBIA

### **Priestly Ordination**

The deacon Cosmas Musonda, 31, was ordained priest by Mons. Telesphore Mpundu, Archbishop Emeritus of Lusaka, on 6 August, at Lusaka cathedral. Together with Cosmas, a further four Diocesans, three Capuchins and two Jesuits were ordained. The cathedral was filled with relatives and friends coming from various parishes of the capital city. The celebration lasted more than three

hours and took place in an atmosphere of joy, typical of the festive Zambian liturgies.

Starting with the Gospel of the day about the Transfiguration of Jesus on Mount Tabor, Mons. Mpundu said to the newly-ordained: "I believe you are part of the generation of priests who will have as your mission the 'transfiguration' of the Church in Zambia, in Africa and in the world. You are diocesans, Capuchins, Jesuits and Combonis... but always remember you are all missionaries. The Church in Africa is already a missionary Church. You must not, therefore, disappoint the local church of Lusaka from which you come".

Fr. Cosmas studied theology at the scholasticate of Sao Paolo and he has been appointed to Brazil where he will take up his first assignment.

On Sunday 11 August, Fr. Cosmas celebrated his first Mass at the parish of Saint Andrew Kaggwa, in one of the Lilanda quarters (in the Archdiocese of Lusaka). Fr. Cosmas is the fourteenth Zambian Comboni priest and the first from the Comboni parish of Lilanda.

### **Provincial retreat and perpetual vows**

The missionaries of the Comboni Province of Malawi and Zambia met together from 15 to 20 August for their annual retreat. Fr. Pietro Ciuciulla, a member of the General Council in Rome, directed the spiritual exercises at "Msamba Catholic Centre", run by the Teresian Sisters, in the property of the Comboni parish of Msamba, in Lilongwe, the capital of Malawi. The retreat was a time of grace, appreciated by all the participants and a blessing for all the Province. This year it was even more relevant since the missionaries are involved in the process of reflection and discernment for the election of the new Provincial and his Council.

At the end of the retreat the ceremony took place of the perpetual vows of the Malawian scholastic, Anatole Welemu, who has completed his theological studies in Naples and is carrying out his period of missionary service at Zalewa in the Comboni parish of Lisungwe, in the Archdiocese of Blantyre.

## MOÇAMBIQUE

### **A Visit by Fr. Jeremias dos Santos Martins**

Fr. Jeremias dos Santos Martins, Vicar General, spent from 2 July to 8 August visiting the circumscription. Besides visiting the various communities and individually meeting all the confreres, from 22 to 28 July he participated in the Provincial Assembly held at Carapira, in the diocese of Nacala. Those present included four novices and 33 confreres from locations in the dioceses of Maputo, Beira, Tete, Nampula and Nacala.

Il Mozambique, which for several years has experienced strong economic growth, is still a country of great social inequality and is still a mission field where the Combonis continue to receive a favourable welcome.

The province has 44 Combonis, many of whom are young and from 14 different countries, who seek to serve the country and the Church in three particular priority sectors: pastoral work, with special emphasis on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC), the self-sufficiency of the local Church and of the province and the formation of young candidates to the missionary life.

Fr. António Manuel Bogaio Constantino, provincial superior, described the visit of Fr. Jeremias as “a moment of grace: he visited all the areas of the province and met all the confreres. He invited us to keep our eyes focused so as to be able to read the signs of the times in this Mozambican society in continual change, to bring to the field new methodologies that respond to the pastoral challenges of society both in the city and the rural areas where we work, and to be good witnesses of the Gospel. In conclusion, he encouraged us to continue giving our support to the people, especially those most affected by hurricane Idai”.

### **Provincial Assembly**

The Assembly was prepared using a questionnaire that was sent to the communities. The synthesis of the replies was taken as the program for the work of the Assembly itself which was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, reflection was directed towards the theme “Mission going forth in urban and rural pastoral”, for the purpose of identifying the more suitable way to work out a Reference Paper for missionary pastoral work, in the actual context of the Mozambican Church. The second phase was

dedicated to reading the reports from the various sectors and to evaluating activities carried out from 2017 to 2019, to verify the degree of implementation of the Six-Year Plan and to plan the work for the next three years.

Fr. Rafael Sapato, Vice rector of the UCM acted as moderator and assisted the participants to identify pathways for an adequate pastoral in the Mozambican Church today.

On his part, Fr. Jeremias, in his intervention during the Assembly, presented the Comboni mission as a pilgrimage, mentioning some examples of what he sees as the “mission going forth”.

The conclusions of the Assembly, the group work and the plenary gatherings were handed over to the Provincial Mission Secretary, who, using this material, must now elaborate a Reference Charter that will help the Province to live out its missionary service bravely and courageously, in the light of the charism of Comboni.

The missionaries also visited the communities of Lumbo and the Isle of Mozambique – thus returning to the point of departure since it was there that the first missionaries disembarked when they first arrived in the country – so as to start again with a renewed spirit. They also visited the cemetery of Carapira, to ask the men and women missionaries buried there to continue to intercede for the Combonis of the Province and for the people of Mozambique whom they loved and served so well.

## POLONIA

### **V Comboni Missionary Feast**

On the afternoon of Sunday 25 August, the Combonis of Krakow organised the V Missionary Feast in which some hundreds of people took part, together with their families.

The fine weather allowed people to enjoy the organised events: dressing up in the clothes of mission countries, preparing dishes with mission recipes, playing the drums, archery, football. Playing with African toys, etc. there was also an opportunity to know more about the missionary work of the Combonis among the Dinka in South Sudan where Fr. Krzysztof Zębik, present at the feast, and Bro. Jacek Pomykacz work.

The donations received have been earmarked to support our parish of Yirol. The feast was organised with the help of the community – Bro. Basiński Tomasz, Fr. Miąsik Maciej Tomasz, Fr.

Akpako Theotime Parfait and Fr. Nguonzi Deogratias – and about thirty volunteers, most of whom are members of our youth missionary movement, TUCUM, of the university pastoral group KOMPAS and of the Comboni Lay Missionaries (CLM).

## PORTUGAL

### **Silver Jubilee of priesthood**

On 7 July 2019, Fr. José Domingos Fernandes de Oliveira, 54, celebrated his Silver Jubilee of priesthood together with his parish community of Vila Chã, at Vila do Conde (Portugal). On the following week-end, he celebrated it with his parishioners at São Tiago de Antas, Famalicão.

Fr. José Domingos took first vows on 29 May 1988 and perpetual vows on 11 October 1993. He was ordained priest on 10 July 1994. He exercised his priestly and missionary ministry in Uganda for about 18 years. Since 2017 he has been a member of the Comboni community of Famalicao, in Portugal.

## IN PACE CHRISTI

### **Fr. Mario Mazzoni (28.11.1925 – 29.06.2019)**

Fr. Mario Mazzoni was born on 28 November 1925 at Talamaona. In 1937, with his parents, he moved to Appiano Gentile. He entered the minor seminary of the Comboni Missionaries at Rebbio di Como in 1938, continued his studies at Brescia and, in 1943, entered the Comboni novitiate in Florence. He took first vows on 15 August, 1945. He attended the lyceum at Rebbio di Como. After an initial period at Brescia for theology, he completed his studies at Venegono Superiore where, on 22 September 1950, he took the final step of perpetual vows. On 19 May 1951 he was ordained priest in Milan by the laying on of hands by the Blessed Cardinal Ildefonso Schuster.

At Lucca he was placed in charge of vocations promotion in all of Tuscany and, over a period of four years he became familiar with many of the parishes of the region.

Towards the end of 1955, the superiors called him to Verona to visit the diocesan seminaries. The purpose of this work was to bring a missionary spirit to the future priests. The Encyclical “Fidei

Donum” of Pope Pius XII gave a great impulse to the missionary spirit in the entire Church during those years.

Numerous seminarians chose the missionary vocation. The need to experience the African missions personally led Fr. Mario to leave for Uganda in August 1957. It was a very positive experience that helped him to continue his work of mission promotion in the seminaries throughout the whole of Italy.

Towards the end of 1962 he was appointed to the missions of Ecuador. His first mission was Quinindé, with a population that was 90% of African descent living along the rivers who dedicate themselves to growing bananas. On 10 March 1963, he miraculously escaped shipwreck in the river of the same name. Unfortunately, a young twenty eight year-old Comboni, Bro. Giovanni Piacquadio, lost his life.

In 1965 the Bishop of Esmeraldas invited him to the mission of Muisne, on the Pacific coast. The population belonged to the Manabite ethnic group but also had a number of blacks.

In August 1966 the Superior general asked him to go to Peru to collaborate with the german-speaking Comboni Brothers. He arrived in Lima by plane on 8 October of that year. He was appointed to the mission of Yanahuanca, located 3500 metres above sea-level. It consisted in a valley with 45 towns that had been practically abandoned for more than a decade. He found neither house nor church but the work of evangelisation, especially in the schools, enjoyed much more freedom than in Ecuador. The population was 95% descendants of the Incas and spoke Kechua.

In August 1968, after six years in the mission, he returned home for holidays passing through Bogota where he took part in the Latin American Eucharistic Congress. The coming of Pope Paul VI aroused great interest throughout the continent.

Fr. Mario returned to Appiano Gentile where he was received by his numerous relatives and friends. Early in October he joined the Renewal Course in Rome after which, in April 1969, he was nominated a member of the General Chapter which began early in May and ended on 8 December of the same year.

On 4 February 1970 he again went to Peru, travelling by sea on the liner “Verdi”. The provost and a good number of the youth accompanied him to Genoa. After a voyage of 24 days he reached the port of Callao.

His destination was Lima. Cardinal Juan Landázuri entrusted to him the parish of The Twelve Apostles in the outskirts of the city, a parish with around 30,000 inhabitants. He worked there pastorally for ten years, giving priority to the youth and the families, without neglecting mission promotion on a national level.

At the end of 1979 obedience brought him to San Sebastian in Spain and, a year later, to Madrid. In January 1981 the Bishops of Peru appointed him National director of the Pontifical Missionary Works. This new work, aimed at increasing the missionary spirit in all of the Church in Peru, which meant that he travelled throughout the entire territory of Peru, a country with 2,500 km. of coastline, from the Andes to the immense Amazon forest. The Episcopal Conference of Peru reappointed him for a further three terms, up to 2001. In 1991, together with Fr. Romeo Ballan, he organised the great Latin American Missionary Congress IV.

Having left the Pontifical Missionary Works, in May 2001 he celebrated his fifty years of priesthood at Appiano Gentile. After his return to Peru, he was invited to open a Mission centre at Trujillo and, in 2006, he was sent for two years to the Missionary Centre of Santiago in Chile.

In 2012, returning from Lima where he dedicated himself to mission promotion and family pastoral ministry, he returned to Italy and was sent to the community of Rebbio (Como). In 2018 he was sent for medical treatment to Milan where he died on 29 June 2019. (*Rev Giuseppe, Parish priest of the Parish of San. Stefano, Appiano Gentile, Como*)

### **Fr. Anton Lipp (10.08.1932 – 16.07.2019)**

To commemorate his Golden Jubilee of ordination, Fr. Anton chose as an expression of thanksgiving the verse of St. Paul: "We are not dictators over your faith, but are fellow workers with you, for your happiness" (2 Cor, 1, 24).

The attitude which characterised his life as a young man and later as a priest was that of one desirous of making others happy, of being a source of joy for others. He often began his Sunday homily with an amusing appropriate anecdote. His sense of humour often appeared in the local newspapers or during speeches on the occasion of a jubilee or birthday. Furthermore, he was grateful for everything that was done for him. When he would leave the chapel after the daily community Mass and pass in his

wheelchair in front of the sacristy, he would thank the celebrant saying: "Thank you for a most beautiful service". On the occasion of birthdays or special celebrations, he would often place a post-card bearing a proverb, an amusing photo or a simple greeting, on the door of the confrere.

Fr. Anton was born on 10 August 1932 at Stillau, about 25 kilometres from Ellwangen. In 1943 his parents sent their intelligent son, then eleven years old, to a boarding school in the nearby village of Dinkelsbühl. When his brother Konrad, two years younger than he, entered the reopened missionary seminary of Ellwangen in 1945, Anton joined him. Having passed final secondary exams, and having completed their philosophical and theological studies, both were ordained to the priesthood: Anton was ordained in 1958 at Bamberg and Konrad was ordained in 1959 at Bressanone. Fr. Anton was immediately assigned to the mission of South Africa and applied to the Consulate for a visa. While waiting for the permit, which was often refused in those days, he dedicated himself to the pastoral service of the parishes in the area of Bamberg. When the permit finally arrived, his brother Konrad was also ready to leave. Unfortunately, Fr. Anton already had health problems and the doctors advised against going to the mission. Those problems worsened later on.

In the meantime, he began to gain increasing familiarity with the pastoral work in rather small parishes. He stayed at first for six years at Essingen, living for long periods at the parish house. When the DSP accepted his request to dedicate himself for good to parish work, in dialogue with the diocese of Augsburg, he was appointed to the parish of Opfenbach, to which the Mellatz novitiate belonged. He was therefore able to live in community. In 1990 he moved from Opfenbach to the parish of Schrozberg. In 1997 he had a stomach operation and was afterwards moved to the parish of Regglisweiler. In 2008, at the age of 75 years, he retired to the vacant parish house in Schrozberg together with his housekeeper, Emilie Friz. A serious stroke left him physically disabled and he only spoke with difficulty. At first he was able to manage his situation with the help of Mrs. Friz but when she fell ill with cancer, he was taken in 2016 to the infirmary at our Ellwangen house where he had spent the years of his youth. Since he needed round the clock assistance, he spent his final weeks in a hos-

pice in Tannhausen, just two kilometres from the home of his parents. He passed away there on 16 July 2019.

Fr. Anton found it difficult to live in an all-male community. Instead, in a parish he enjoyed the usual contact with both male and female collaborators and family members of all ages. He was a welcome guests and was welcomed when he visited the elderly and the sick.

In the beginning, his wish to work in a parish and to live outside community had been accepted by his Province as a temporary measure. It is probable that, for him, it was the appropriate path. In the end, he enjoyed the support of the community that provided him with what he needed during his final, difficult years. (*Fr. Reinhold Baumann*)

### **Bro. Vincenzo Dall'Alda (01.08.1926 – 26.07.2019)**

Bro. Vincenzo was born on 1 August 1926 at Borgo Sacco (Trent). "From boyhood – he wrote for *Raccontiamoci* in March 2013 – I had a strong desire to be a missionary. I knocked on the doors of various Institutes but they all rejected me! I went to study with the Rosminians to become a priest but I found the studies hard... but I never lost heart, my vocation was to become a missionary and I never looked back. I became a Comboni Brother and discovered that, even though I was not great at the studies, in practical matters I managed fairly well!"

That was how he joined the Combonis in Florence. A year later he was sent to the novitiate in Sunningdale (England) where he made his first profession on 7 October 1948. Two years later he was appointed to the NAP where, on 7 October 1954, he took final vows – in Cincinnati – and where he exercised his missionary ministry for as many as 19 years (1950-1969).

After spending seven years in Italy (1970-1977), he was sent to the mission in Kenya for another long period abroad (1977-1995). From 1995 to 2005 he ministered at the General Curia in Rome. In 2006 he was assigned to Italy. He spent the remaining years of his missionary life in the community of the Mother House in Verona and in Castel D'Azzano where he died on 26 July 2019.

His funeral was celebrated on the morning of 29 July with the Superior of the community of Castel d'Azzano, Fr. Renzo Piazza presiding. After the Mass, Fr. Teresino Serra – who had known Bro. Vincenzo in Cincinnati (USA) during his novitiate and had later

lived with him in Kenya and at the Curia in Rome – expressed his gratitude and admiration for this “real Comboni Brother” who succeeded in combining diligent work with missionary prayer and spirituality.

In recent months at Castel D’Azzano, Bro. Vincenzo suffered quite a lot. He was practically immobile. Bro. Virginio Manzana, his room companion, stressed the patience of Bro. Vincenzo who never complained and the concern of the personnel who lovingly cared for him.

In his homily, Fr. Renzo Piazza mentioned that, in the past, the *Annuario* used to add to the description “Comboni Missionary Brother”, the words: “*ad omnia*”, meaning a person available for all the humble services: the kitchen, reception, the house or the sacristy. Apparently unimportant services but services that often qualify the life of a community. Bro. Vincenzo lived like a Brother, working like a Brother, showing that fraternity is possible.

Bro. Vincenzo, Fr. Renzo said, “did not like wasting time. It was at the reception that he came into contact with the world. He not only took the phone calls but spent his free time writing to confreres scattered throughout the world with words of friendship, encouragement and fraternity. He wrote much, to people he knew as well as to others who he did not know, brought together by the missionary vocation. His notes, written by hand in simple words contained a message of hope and consolation. Those who shared a community with him bear witness to his love for prayer, faithful and persevering, which he showed in his personal relationship with Our Lord and his care and love for the liturgy through serving in the sacristy.

As a Brother *ad omnia* he was a faithful and wise steward of the things of the house.

The final years of his life were marked by sickness and suffering but not once was he heard complaining. The long period he spent confined to bed, with little possibility of relating to others and difficulties in plenty caused me to ask myself what sense there was in spending months and years in this condition. I am reminded of what St. Paul says: ‘While this exterior man is being destroyed, the interior man instead is being renewed day by day’. Perhaps those who saw his wounds and cared for them may find it hard to accept these words”.

### **Fr. Konrad Nefzger (01.04.1939 – 06.08.2019)**

Fr. Konrad Nefzger was born on 1 April 1939 at Unterschönau, in Germany. He spent most of his life in Africa. After his ordination on 26 July 1964, he was sent to the Province of South Africa where he worked in the missions of Maria Trost, Driefontain, Middelburg and Bongani. He returned to Neumarkt in the DSP just for three years, from 1970 to 1973, as superior of the community and then definitively in 2019, since his health, as an eighty year-old, was deteriorating. He passed away unexpectedly but peacefully on 6 August at Ellwangen (Germany).

Already in 2015, Fr. Konrad had broached the idea of leaving South Africa and returning to his native country of Germany because of his poor health: he was suffering from diabetes and shingles. Nevertheless, he felt that the time had not yet come and that it was not yet time for him to leave South Africa.

When he first arrived in RSA where the Combonis had established their presence in 1924, he was sent to Maria Trost, Lydenburg. In RSA Fr. Konrad practised various ministries: parish priest, superior of the local community, provincial superior, probus vir and bursar. Besides these “official” ministries, he also served the community in many different ways since he was in charge of the garden and the maintenance of the diocesan pastoral centre at Maria Trost. He was also known as the one who decorated the most beautiful candles for birthdays, jubilees, special celebrations and also Paschal candles for many parishes of the diocese of Witbank. He was also the ‘gardener’ of a special garden at the mission of Maria Trost, the cemetery where are interred the mortal remains of many confreres, over fifty of them, who worked in RSA, together with those of other pastoral workers of the diocese, Sisters and secular priests. The garden was always well cared for and full of flowers.

In 1995 he published the first “History of the Comboni Presence in South Africa”. Fr. Konrad wrote it, as is mentioned in the introduction, above all “to help those newly arrived in the province and the people of Witbank to know how our first missionaries had helped the Church of Witbank to grow and then left for other places. (...) Through work and prayer they gave themselves generously and lovingly to lay the foundations of the local Church”.

I remember Fr. Konrad in the parish of Mashishing (Lydenburg), among the people: he spoke Zulu correctly, helping adults, young

people and children to understand the Word of God, always using practical examples from daily life. I can still see him in a cloud of dust as he travelled to and from the parish in his small VW Golf. I remember him for his simple lifestyle, at times neglectful of himself and more concerned with helping the most needy. I recall his faithfulness to his daily personal and community prayer, with typical German precision.

I like to remember Fr. Konrad smoking his pipe, sitting peacefully on the veranda of the house, enjoying watching people moving around the pastoral centre and chatting with some of those taking part in the courses. I recall his sense of humour: he was always ready with a joke or a story about one of the many events in the life of the first missionaries.

Dear Fr. Konrad, now that the Lord has called you to himself for good, I ask you to accompany very closely the Comboni mission and to watch over the province of South Africa. Intercede with St. Joseph that, following the example of the many missionary Comboni confreres who worked in this country, that there may be many new vocations, especially Comboni vocations. (*Fr. Jeremias dos Santos Martins*)

### **Fr. Mula Eutiquio Muso (08.03.1971 – 30.08.2019)**

Not only the Delegation of Asia and the Province of Kenya, but the entire Comboni Family was deeply shocked by the news that Fr. Eutiquio, a Filipino Comboni Missionary, had been struck down by a massive heart attack and had died in Nairobi, Kenya, at the early age of 48 years on 30 August 2019.

Fr. Eutiquio joined the Postulancy of Manila in 2000, at the age of 29. He had belonged to the lay missionary group in the Philippines where his vocation matured. His companions at that time, who remember him well, were happy when he became an official messenger of the Gospel in the Comboni Institute. They are now deeply saddened by his premature death.

Fr. Eutiquio, known for many years as TQ, was born on 8 March 1971 at Tagum City, Davao del Norte, in the Philippines, into a working class family. He took first vows at Calamba, Laguna, in the Philippines, on 6 May 2004 and then went to England for theology. A year later he was transferred to the Nairobi Scholasticate where he completed the remaining three years of theology. He was then assigned to the Philippines for missionary service in

Cebu. He took perpetual vows and was ordained deacon in Manila in July 2009. He was ordained priest at his birthplace, Tagum City, on 12 February 2010.

He was appointed to Kenya and, having studied Swahili he was sent to the Pokot region for ministry and administration in the parish of Kapenguria. After working for two years, he was entrusted with the formation of the postulants at Ongata Rongai. He then returned to the Pokot region as administrator of the parish of Kacheliba.

He had recently been charged with the administration of New People magazine when his work was brought to a sad end by his unexpected death.

Fr. Eutiquio was a simple and concrete person, inclined to be reserved. He had a natural gift of leadership and administrative ability. He was a committed and enthusiastic missionary in the best Comboni tradition. He is now a reference point for our Asian candidates, together with Maglajos Balili Abito, who also passed away suddenly in 1995, ten days after his first profession. (*Fr. David da Costa Domingues*)

## **LET US PRAY FOR OUR BELOVED DEAD**

**THE FATHER:** Stephen, of Fr. James Gitonga Iriga (ET).

**THE MOTHER:** Estela, of Fr. David Tena Escobar (M).

**THE BROTHERS:** Luigi, of Fr. Salvatore Bragantini (I); Bruno, of Fr. Sergio Cailotto (†); Giovanni, of Bro. Andrea Cagna (I); Porfirio, of Fr. José Jacovo Carmona Miranda (TCH); Eduardo, of Fr. Guillermo Aguiñaga Pantoja (M); Giuliano, of Fr. Giacomo Palagi (MO).

**THE SISTERS:** Carla, of Fr. Marco Canovi (U); Teresa, of Bro. Arnaldo Braguti (M); Maria, of Fr. Tarcisio Marin (PE).

**THE COMBONI MISSIONARY SISTERS:** Sr. M. Palmira Giberti, Sr. Anna Roncalli, Sr. M. Emilia Gerosa, Sr. Angeliana Marzotto, Sr. M. Agnese Bonazza.

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