

Familia Comboniana

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES OF THE HEART OF JESUS

795

April 2021



HAPPY EASTER OF RESURRECTION

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

GENERAL NOTES – MARCH 2021

1. Comboni Bishops

1.1. On 8 March, the Holy Father appointed as *Bishop of the Diocese of Rumbek* (South Sudan), Rev. Fr. **Christian Carlassare**, M.C.C.J., hitherto Vicar General of the Diocese of Malakal.

1.2. On 10 March, the Holy Father accepted the resignation from the pastoral government of the Diocese of Mbaïki (Central African Republic), presented by the Rt. Rev. Mons. **Guerrino Perin**, M.C.C.J., and appointed as Bishop of the same Diocese the Rt. Rev. Mons. **Jesús Ruiz Molina**, M.C.C.J., hitherto Titular Bishop of Are in Mauritania and Auxiliary of the Diocese of Bangassou.

1.3. On 31 March, the Holy Father appointed Bishop of the Diocese of Nebbi (Uganda) Rev. Fr. **Raphael P'Mony Wokorach**, M.C.C.J., hitherto Pontifical Commissioner of the Congregation of the Apostles of Jesus.

The Comboni Missionaries are honoured and assure the new bishops of their constant collaboration.

2. Postponement of the General Chapter

Having consulted the members of the General Curia, on Monday 8 March, the GC held a meeting via the internet with all the elected members of the Chapter the majority of whom expressed the view that it will be convenient to postpone the date of the celebration of the XIX General Chapter due to the world-wide emergency caused by Covid-19. The GC made this view its own and, on 25 March, sent a Letter to all the members of the Comboni Institute communicating the official decision to postpone the Chapter. The new date will not be communicated until June of this year.

3. Revisiting and Revising the Rule of Life

The RL Commission met via the internet on 23-25 and 27 March to discuss the new proposals sent in by the circumscriptions and

individual confreres. The proposals were discussed and inserted into the text of the RL, taking into account the journey already completed. Once the new text is checked and the Italian corrected, the Commission will hand over its work to the GC for discussion in the next General Chapter. The Commission has made itself available, especially the coordinator and the secretary, for any clarifications requested by the confreres, the GC or the pre-Chapter Commission. On its part, the GC thanks the Commission for the work it has done and hopes that the process of revisiting and revising the RL may bear fruit for the renewal of the confreres and the Institute in general.

4. General Assembly of Bursars

The continental video-conference meetings planned for early March (1/3 Africa, 3/3 Europe, 4/3 America-Asia) were duly held. The final evaluation meeting with the Council for Finance, scheduled for 12/3, was instead postponed and will be organised as soon as we have news concerning the General Chapter which will allow us to establish a calendar for that event.

5. Comboni Social Forum

The Comboni Family Commission which has been charged with the preparation of the Forum on social ministry, held two webinar meetings, one on 4 and 5 December 2020, and the other on 5 and 6 March 2021. It was decided that the meeting scheduled to be held in Rome from 3-7 July 2021, will not be held due to the pandemic but a third two-day webinar will be held in June.

6. General Secretary

The GC offers its heartfelt thanks to Fr. Umberto Pescantini for his many years of service first as General Secretary of Missionary Animation and afterwards as General Secretary of the Institute from 2005 until today. The GC greatly appreciates the service he rendered throughout all those years both for the competence and the dedication shown by Fr. Umberto in this work that is so important for the life of the Institute. We have all seen how swiftly and efficiently he replied to emails and carried out the work demanded of him as well as his

great availability to be of assistance whenever asked, leaving aside his work to attend to the needs of the confreres. As well as this service, Fr. Umberto has always been very involved in pastoral work and participated actively in the services of the community. We leave it to the Lord of the Harvest, who is always more generous than ourselves, to reward his faithful servant. The GC and the Curia community wish him great serenity and trust in the Lord in the new services which the Institute will entrust to him in the future.

7. Archivio Comboniano

After an interruption lasting eight years, the magazine *Archivio Comboniano* resumes publication. The latest issue, already sent to print, continues the historical-critical publication of the letters of the Founder Saint Daniel Comboni with the letters of April-May 1881. Besides the text of the letters, in the section *Studi e Ricerche*, a series of studies is published on the questions that marked the life and missionary action of Daniel Comboni during the last months of his life, such as the revision, by Propaganda Fide, of the borders of the Vicariate of Central Africa with the creation of new Vicariates, and the matter of Virginia Mansur, with a feminine profile of the missionary Sister. This number of *Archivio Comboniano* is the work of many hands and we are grateful to Fr. Fidel González, Fr. Jorge Carlos Naranjo, Fr. Danilo Castello, Fr. Benedetto Giupponi, Fr. Manuel Augusto Lopes Ferreira and Sr. Maria Vidale for their contributions which will certainly be of help in approaching the Founder in the final months of his life. Copies of *Archivio Comboniano* will be sent to the Circumscription superiors requesting them to send them to each of their communities.

8. Consulta

The GC will meet in Consulta from 12 to 16 April to prepare its report to the Chapter.

9. Comboni Year of Ongoing Formation

Due to the pandemic, the Comboni Year of Ongoing formation is postponed. Those in charge will send out the details regarding the period in which it will next be held.

Perpetual professions

Sc. Muhime Emmanuel (MZ)	Chikowa (MW)	06/03/2021
Sc. Lizcano González Jalver (CO)	Bogotá (COL)	15/03/2021

Priestly ordinations

Fr. Mbusa Augustin Makasyatsurwa (CN)	Butembo (RDC)	25/03/2021
Fr. Paluku Faustin (CN)	Butembo (RDC)	25/03/2021
Fr. Sitwaminya Fiston Mughanyiri Etienne (CN)	Butembo	25/03/2021

Holy Redeemer Guild

April	01 – 15 CN	16 – 30 EC
Maggio	01 – 15 ET	16 – 31 I

Prayer intentions

April – That the Secular Comboni Missionaries may always live in the pastoral dynamic of death and resurrection, in the certainty that the Spirit will continue to guide them on their journey. *Lord hear us.*

May – That, like Our Lady., “Health of the Sick”, the nations may join forces to respond to the worldwide humanitarian crisis, helping to restore health care, security and education to those impoverished by conflicts and disasters. *Lord hear us.*

Publications

Enzo Santangelo, *Dr. Giuseppe Ambrosoli, o bisturi de Deus*, Alô Mundo, São Paulo/SP, July 2020. As Fr. Dario Bossi explains in his presentation, in this book, Fr. Enzo leads us to encounter a shining figure who lived the Church and the mission exactly as Pope Francis understands them, as a field hospital. Following the life of this missionary makes us understand, especially now as we go through this time of a pandemic, that “care is given especially through love,

unconditional acceptance and counting upon the ability every person has to regenerate themselves”.

Enzo Santangelo, *Eu estava morto e agora vivo*, Alô Mundo, São Paulo/SP, 2021. This book derives from the need to help the families of drug addicts: by means of the *Pastoral of Sobriety*, many of them were taken in and helped to free themselves from the slavery of alcoholism or drugs. “We offer our compliments to the authors – Mons. Odelir José Magri, Bishop of Chapecó, says in his *Presentation* – and we invite the community to support this Pastoral so that many young people, enslaved and ‘killed’ by drugs, may once again live in the joy of liberation.

ITALIA

Fr. Alessandro Zanoli celebrates a century of life

On 14 March, Fr. Alessandro Zanoli celebrated a hundred years of life. He was born on 14 March 1921, in San Giovanni in Persiceto, in the province of Bologna. He spent his 74 years of priesthood in Troia, London and Africa where he spent forty years. He is presently a member of the Castel d’Azzano community.

The Superior General, Fr. Tesfaye Tadesse, has written to him on behalf of the General Council, wishing him a “Happy Hundredth Birthday” and thanking God in these words: “For your hundred years of life, eighty of which you lived as a Comboni Missionary, ever since you pronounced your first vows on 7 October 1941. We thank your parents and your family in San Giovanni in Persiceto for having given you to us. Saint Daniel Comboni thanks you for having followed Christ according to his manner in the missions and in our communities in Italy, South Sudan, England, Uganda, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan and in Kenya.

Thank you for having made your life a great gift to our young seminarians, novices and scholastics whom you served as their Formator. Thank you for the many years of teaching in our academic institutions and colleges in Eritrea, Sudan and Kenya. Thank you for your years of service in the mission in administration and formation. We thank you for all you have done but especially for the person you are”.

In an interview published on YouTube, Fr. Alessandro said that “all his years were beautiful but especially those lived in the mission”. When asked for his happiest memory he replied: “When they sent me to the mission in Sudan”.

Acse: activities and bursaries

Activities. Due to the red zone, the service of activities has been subject to limitations, but substantially everything is going ahead, especially on-line. However, the service of food distribution and the dental clinic are operating normally. As many as 30 A2 and B1 students will sit for their exams in Italian to qualify for entrance to the University of Perugia.

Bursaries. With the help of some collaborators, this year we are able to open a small bursary worth €900 to 52 migrant university students. 41 of these are from Africa (16 from Cameroon) and 11 from Asia: 27 are men and 25 are women. They attend the universities of Tor Vergata, La Sapienza, Roma Tre, the Gregorian, the Salesianum, etc. The faculties they attend are varied: Medicine and Surgery, Engineering, Agriculture, Communication Science, Economy and Business Management, Cooperation etc. In all, 27 faculties.

Civil Service. On 8 and 15 March, Fr. Venanzio Milani and the secretary Claudio Panzironi took part in the selection of Civil Service operators. Two will be assigned to Acse and they will start work in May.

The meetings with schools have come to a halt. Fr. Milani, along with Prof. Fantera, the Lawyer Giannetti and the migrants lawyer Alen Ehsani, had two meetings with the students of the Morgagni Liceo and one with those of Keplero. As soon as possible, they will visit other schools as planned. The theme covered in a period of two hours is that of emigration and immigration as well as an introduction to Acse.

Assembly. The Assembly for the approval of budgets and especially to bring our Statute up to date with the norms of the Third Sector has been scheduled for 9 May.

VIA ZOOM

Second webinar on social ministry

After the webinar carried out on 4 and 5 December 2020 (see Familia Comboniana n° 792, January 2021), on 5 and 6 March the second webinar was held with more than 260 participants.

Both webinars were planned and carried out by a commission appointed by the whole Comboni Family entrusted with the duty of preparing a Forum on social ministry at the level of Institutes that follow

the charism of Saint Daniel Comboni. As we know the event was postponed twice due to the pandemic and for this reason the commission organised these webinars open to all – Comboni Missionaries, Comboni Missionary Sisters, Seculars and Lay Comboni Missionaries – with the aim of “gathering the fruits of the work and the journey made, studying the content and beginning to create operative outlines for a mission that is ever more attentive to the expectations of the poor and open to a change of missionary paradigm whose aim is effective social transformation”.

The second webinar started from the path of reflection by the Comboni Family on its ministerial commitment in social life, from which there emerged the need to create a map of experiences in the field. “An effort of such importance – we read in the final document – is unheard of, especially in as much as it is a process of shared and participated reflection involving the entire Comboni Family. The initiative has already documented more than 200 experiences and this exceptional figure offers us the possibility of a different way of looking at what we are doing: for the very first time, we may now take a comprehensive look at the social ministries of the Comboni Family based upon systematic data; what emerges from this is the possibility of unprecedented comparison and dialogue and also an opportunity to journey together in a synodal way”.

In this “mapping” of social ministries, some instruments for data collection were provided.

Naturally – as already emphasised – the mapping work goes on: it is a living instrument, continually being updated, on the basis of which we may “create spaces of encounter between these experiences, for shared action-reflection. With this encounter, it is possible to create pathways that lead to the elaboration of pastorals that are specific or derived from the environment”.

IN PACE CHRISTI

Bro. Rudolf Olbort (30.03.1940 – 07.01.2021)

Rudolf was six or seven years old when, in 1946, instead of starting school, he was forced to leave his Czech homeland together with his family and another three million German-speaking people. He was born on 30 March 1940, in the small city of Milbes, in the Republic of Czechoslovakia. His native city became part of a military training area

and was razed to the ground. Göggingen/Baden-Württemberg became his new fatherland.

The boy wanted to become a priest but, however much he tried, he could not keep up and failed to pass his High School exams. Fr. Hermann Bauer, Rector of the Josefinum seminary, advised him to become a missionary Brother. "Those hands of yours will best be used to do other things", he said to the boy. In fact, Rudolf had exceptionally strong hands and arms.

He then moved to Josefstal as a Brother postulant, without saying a word to his parents. When his father went to visit him and saw him working in the cowhouse, he was so angry he wanted to take him home immediately. Rudolf, however, wanted to stay there and told his father that he was prepared to wait until he came of age and would then return anyway. His father reluctantly agreed and Rudolf completed his novitiate at Josefstal (1959-1961), taking first vows on 29 June 1961, and perpetual vows on 18 March 1967. His first posting was to the farm in Josefstal.

In South Africa, where the Calvinist Boer party had formed a national government, the missionaries had to buy farms and commence their work in order to maintain themselves. On their own properties, they could open schools and clinics, build churches and instruct the people. However, they needed workers. This is why many Brothers were trained in agriculture. So it was that, immediately after the novitiate, in 1961, Bro. Rudolf started attending the agricultural school at the Benedictine monastery of Neresheim, completing the course and passing the master's exams.

In 1969, he was assigned to South Africa where he was placed in charge of the large farm at Steelpoort which had only just been bought by Bishop Anton Reiterer. The economic and political situation of the country gradually began to change and the mission farms began to lose their importance as the source of income for the missions. Bro. Rudolf was well aware of this.

In 1975 he was recalled to his original province and given the task of accompanying the young apprentices and candidates at Josefstal. On Sundays he would go to the parishes to preach and hold missionary conferences. Many conferences and sermons by Bro. Rudolf are kept in the archives. Those who have known Bro. Rudolf for the last 30 years would hardly recognize him by reading his texts. His talents were recognised and appreciated also by his confreres and province as shown by the fact that, in 1980, he was made a member of the DSP provincial council, becoming the first Brother ever to do so.

His activities were suddenly interrupted in 1988 when he suffered a severe stroke at the early age of 48. He was obliged to learn to speak like a child and he lost his power of movement. He found it very hard to express himself. It is understandable that his patience was at times sorely tried as he struggled with his condition and the failure of his confreres to understand him.

He was assigned to the Mellatz community where he recovered little by little and made himself useful both in and outside the house but he never became the man he formerly was. He was aware of this and it caused him much suffering.

In October 2014, he moved to Ellwangen, leaving his small flock of sheep at Josefstal where they formed a sort of zoo together with some urus and goats. He looked after his sheep as long as he could. Of his own accord, he withdrew to the facility for elderly confreres in Ellwangen where he fell victim to Covid-19 and died on 7 January 2021. (*Fr. Reinhold Baumann, mccj*)

Fr. Josef Uhl (06.03.1934 – 09.01.2021)

Fr. Josef never attached any great importance to his academic qualifications and it is interesting to see that his doctorate thesis was not on any of the Christian philosophers but on the atheist philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach. This tells us much about Fr. Josef: he always wanted to hear the other side of the story and was always an independent thinker. For this reason he afterwards took a deep interest in Islam. Not for nothing was he appointed professor of philosophy at the theological seminary of Khartoum in Sudan.

Fr. Josef was born on 6 March 1934 at Unterschneidheim, near Ellwangen, into a very ordinary family. Being a very intelligent child, it was obvious that he should continue his studies. With other boys from his village, he entered the Ellwangen Josefinum missionary seminary. Having done the novitiate in Bamberg (1953-1955) where he took first vows on 19 May 1955, he was sent to study in Rome where he was awarded a doctorate in philosophy. On 9 September 1960, he consecrated himself to God and the mission by taking perpetual vows. He was ordained priest on 8 June 1963.

He was expected to teach philosophy to the novices and scholastics since the novitiate had been moved from Bamberg to Mellatz. It was the time of Vatican II, a time of new ideas and social upheavals. The number of theology students began to diminish drastically and the plan of partly internal studies was abandoned. The scholastics themselves

questioned the theological faculty of Bamberg as a centre of studies. The small group of scholastics preferred to do a “*Freisemester*” in other universities with Professor Josef Ratzinger. The opening of the international scholasticate in Innsbruck put an end to the uncertainty. In those years, discussions began on the possible reunion of the two Comboni congregations. Fr. Uhl took an active part in the discussions as a member of the *Reunion Study Commission*. For a number of years, he was also a member of the General Council of the German congregation.

In 1974, the time came to leave for the mission. Fr. Josef did not opt for South Africa, the traditional MFCJ mission but for an African mission of the FSCJ. He was therefore assigned to Malawi. Unable to obtain a visa, he was sent to Kenya. In close collaboration with the FSCJ, Fr. Uhl and some other German confreres, especially some Brothers, took charge of the parish of Nakuru and opened the technical school of Gilgil. It was a pilot project both as regards the school and also the collaboration between the two still-separated congregations. Fr. Uhl began the pastoral work, something completely new to him at that moment.

Ten years later, in 1983, the reunion of the two congregations was already realised and the General Council called him to Rome, appointing him General Secretary for Evangelisation. In that office he prepared, among other things, the opening of the Institute in Asia with visits to various countries. In his explorative journeys, he literally reached the gates of China. During the fifties, the Josefinum students used to present a play on the missionary life of Saint Francis Xavier, who died on the island of Shangchuan, on the threshold of China. Fr. Uhl played the part of Saint Francis. As in the story of Saint Francis Xavier, Fr. Uhl was also denied entry into China.

In 1997, Fr. Josef was assigned to the province of Khartoum as professor of philosophy at Khartoum seminary where, at that time, the philosophy students from all the dioceses of Sudan studied. It was an enormous challenge for him due to the Moslem environment and the fact that he did not know Arabic.

In 2011, at the age of 74, he ceased teaching and was assigned to his original province. With the permission of the Provincial Council of the DSP and at the request of the General Council, Fr. Uhl went to Limone and the house where Comboni was born, to receive visitors, many of whom were German-speaking, and introduce them to the life of Saint Daniel Comboni, the history of the Institute and that of the missions.

Due to health problems, he had to leave his work in Limone and he moved to the centre for elderly confreres in Ellwangen where he spent the last years of his life. At Christmas he contracted the coronavirus and died on 9 January 2021 in the city hospital. (*Fr. Reinhold Baumann, mccj*)

Fr. Giocondo Penden (08.08.1939 – 09.03.2021)

“Fr. Giocondo was a man of the Word – writes Fr. Jeremias dos Santos Martins – and made the Word the centre of his life. He lived through intense years of mission in Mozambique where he died after almost 50 years of work in that country. He experienced both the sufferings of war and times of peace, always close to the people, very much a part of the scene”.

The son of Angelo and Milena Mantiero, Bro. Giocondo was born on 8 August 1939 (though the registry indicates the next day) and was baptised two days later. He came from a family of eight children of whom one sister, Flavia, became a religious, while four became Comboni Missionaries: besides Giocondo, his sister Celina and the twin brothers Rinaldo and Sergio (who died in Mexico in 2013) became members of Comboni Institutes.

In October 1950, Giocondo entered the Comboni minor seminary in Padua where he attended middle school. In 1953, he moved to Brescia for secondary school studies and entered the Florence novitiate in 1955. On 7 December 1956, he was asked to continue the novitiate in Portugal where, on 9 September 1957, he made his first religious profession. In 1958, he returned to Verona for high school studies and in 1959 he went to Rome to study philosophy. It was there that he showed the first symptoms of a lung disease that forced him to spend five years in Arco (Trent) for hospital treatment. He made his perpetual profession there on 9 September 1963. His health had now improved and in 1965 he returned to Verona to study theology but in 1966 had to go back to Arco for further treatment. In 1968 he went to Venegono Superiore (Varese) to study theology and on 14 July of the same year he was ordained priest in his home parish of Novoledo, by the Bishop of Vicenza, Mons. Carlo Zinato.

From 1969 to 1971, he stayed in Rebbio (Como), assisting in formation at the minor seminary and, in 1972, went back to Portugal to wait for his entry visa for Mozambique, then a Portuguese colony.

In May of that year, he went to the diocese of Nampula where he worked in catechesis and ministry at the missions of Mueria, Cabaceira, Namahaca, Lurio and Carapira.

Fr. Giocondo was “almost a martyr”, his sister Flavia writes, “since he was seriously wounded in 1983. One evening, just when he had finished Mass, some thieves entered the chapel; one of them shot Fr. Giocondo through the neck and he fell to the floor in a pool of blood. The thieves then plundered the mission and one of them came back to the chapel and took the watch from Fr. Giocondo’s wrist as well as his sandals, believing him to be dead. He pulled a face at him and went away. Giocondo was not dead, just pretending”.

After receiving first aid from a confrere, Bro. Silvano Bergamini, today resident in the Padua community, Fr. Giocondo “remained paralysed for almost a month. Then he began to move his fingers and gradually his power of movement returned and he was able to walk, write and work. Fortunately, the bullet had not injured his spinal cord”.

A year later, he was back in Africa and, in 1988, was transferred to the diocese of Beira where he dedicated himself to pastoral work in the parishes of Buzi and Alto de Manga. He was also charged with translating the Bible into the local language, Cindau, which he did over a period of five years. Besides speaking Portuguese very well, he also spoke two local languages, Cindau and Makua.

From 1999 to 2002, Fr. Giocondo worked in ministry in Beira, at the Centre for Missionary Animation. In 2008, he went to Rome for the renewal Course and returned to Mozambique the following year.

“He spent his last years at the postulancy – we read in the testimony of Fr. Jeremias – as spiritual director. His simplicity of life, his apostolic zeal and his spirit of prayer and service were an example for the new generations of Comboni Missionaries.

He wanted to stay in Mozambique despite his poor health. The missionaries and the inhabitants of Nampula, in the north of the country, where he had his first missionary experience, as well as those of Beira, in the centre of the country, remember him always as ‘an original missionary’. He had a sharp, creative and perspicacious mind. He had the advantage of a good sense of humour which made his odd ways likeable, not to mention his rather careless way of dressing and his deportment. He knew what to do in difficult situations, thanks to his creativity and ingenuity. If Saint Peter happened to be in a bad mood the day Fr. Giocondo arrived, he would have found a way in without St. Peter knowing!”

He died at Matola on 9 March 2021 due to the Covid-19. On Thursday 11 March, his funeral was celebrated at Michafutene cemetery. In his memory, Mass was celebrated on Tuesday 19 March, at the church of Novoledo.

Fr. Luigi Cocchi (07.04.1923 – 21.03.2021)

Fr. Luigi was born on 7 April 1923 at Vedano Olona (VA), in the diocese of Milan. He joined the Combonis in 1944 and took first vows on 15 August 1946 in Venegono. In 1947 he went to Verona, the Mother House, as a fourth-year theology student. He was ordained priest in Verona on 31 May 1947.

In the month of August, he left for England to work in formation at the Apostolic School in Stillington where, on 15 August 1949, he took perpetual vows. In 1951, he was appointed bursar and, in 1953, superior. He took part in the General Chapter of the Institute.

In 1958 he went to Mirfield as acting superior. In July 1959, he returned to Italy and in November left for Asmara to teach at Comboni College where he was also the bursar; he stayed there until 1 August 1964.

Once back in Italy, he was sent to the Apostolic School in Rebbio where he was in charge of teaching and ministry.

From 1969 to 1973, he again worked in Great Britain at Mirfield seminary as Vice-Rector and teacher. He then moved to Sunningdale. It was there that, in 1972, he celebrated his Silver Jubilee of ordination. Here are some extracts from what he wrote on that occasion to his fellow jubilarians: "Many things have happened during these years and we have been at the centre of one of the most radical upheavals in the history of the world and the Church. I remember the words spoken to us by Rev. Calabria the day we were ordained, words which I will never forget: 'Never get used to being priests!' Thanks be to God, I have not yet become used to it. For me, the priesthood is an ever-new conquest, a daily confrontation with the world in search of truth, a search that is sometimes spasmodic and neurotic, and even an encounter with the Gospel ... that sometimes becomes contestation. I never thought things would be like this 25 years ago! I thank God that I have always been with young people. A degree of flexibility has helped me to stay young. Sometimes change costs us dearly but rewards us by stopping us from becoming fossilised. Besides, every new experience is an enrichment. My convictions after 25 years? Heart before efficiency: love for one's work and the people involved. Faith and trust before and above perfection and organisation: yes to faith, no to Puritanism".

In 1973 he returned to Italy as superior in Brescia until 1976 when he was assigned to the Sudan. He was sent to Egypt to study Arabic.

In 1978, he arrived in South Sudan where he was appointed to Kwòrejik. He was then appointed superior, teacher and procurator in Juba. In 1982 he went from the South to the North to work as a teacher and procurator at Comboni College

Fr. Salvatore Marrone, speaking from Omdurman of the extremely positive memories that all the confreres who knew Fr. Luigi had of him, said: "He was a very positive presence in Comboni College for his mental clarity but also for the way he helped to see and understand things. He was a very much respected teacher of English, the classical gentleman. He was also the one who introduced computers into Comboni College. He practically computerised the school to assist the students. He has a great sense of humour. He de-dramatized, was able to listen and to relate to others. He had a beautiful friendship with the African confreres: for example, he worked a lot with Fr. Teckie Hagos, with whom he had a deep friendship, based on such respect and sympathy that it was edifying for all of us. He stayed all the time in the school because, not knowing Arabic, he always celebrated Mass in English. Nevertheless, he was always helpful no matter what was asked of him. His was truly an edifying presence. All the confreres remember this beautiful person very positively".

In 1997 Fr. Luigi was assigned to Kenya. Regarding that period, we follow the testimony of Fr. Giuseppe Caramazza. "I lived for almost a decade with Fr. Luigi Cocchi. He came to the New People Centre in Nairobi in 1997 and stayed there until 2014. He was coming from Sudan and he was asked to take the economy in hand, something he did with great care. I had the impression that Luigi always wanted to keep up with the times. In Khartoum, he had understood that the computer would be a revolution. He went to London to learn and to help others, in Sudan, to use this new invention. In Nairobi, too, though he was on in years, he always took an interest in technical advances (he wanted to see how I produced videos and radio programmes, from the recording to the final production), and in news about Africa.

I used to ask him to look at the text of the magazine before publication. This he always did with care and competence.

In community, he always (almost) showed the wisdom that came from long years of experience in difficult places and times. He greatly loved Africa and the Africans. In this way, he gave very good example of attachment to one's vocation and service to others. I am certain he will continue to support the 'Comboni cause' from above".

In 2016 Fr. Luigi moved to the “Fr. Giuseppe Ambrosoli Centre” in Milan where he died on 21 March 2021. Just two weeks short of his 98th birthday.

LET US PRAY FOR OUR BELOVED DEAD

THE FATHERS: Léonard, of Fr. Kévin Simtokena (T); Joseph, of Fr. Michel Esseh (TCH).

THE MOTHERS: Lesvia, of Fr. Jorge Decelis Burguete (PE); Joaquina, of the Sc. Jamito Paulino (MO); Aimée of Fr. Lazare Sowah (T).

THE BROTHERS: Inocêncio, of the Sc. José Jeremias Salvador (MO); Joaquim, of Fr. Antonio Marques Martins (P); Albino, Fr. Fabio (I) and Fr. Bruno Gilli (T); Renzo, of Fr. Carlo Faggion (BR).

THE SISTERS: Maria José, of Fr. Feliz da Costa Martins (EGSD); Teresa, of Fr. Lorenzo Tomasoni (I).

THE COMBONI MISSIONARY SISTERS: Sr. Veronica M. Landonio, Sr. Rosetta Fumagalli, Sr. Franca M. Surcis; Sr. Angela Tortorella, Sr. Valentina Congia, Sr. M. Chiarina Calcagno, Sr. M. Giovanna Galbiati, Sr. M. Aloisia Cerlini, Sr. Mariangela Losa, Sr. Nunzialba Carsana, Sr. Adelina Franzini, Sr. Santina Costalunga, Sr. Clemenza Barri, Sr. M. Letizia Zona, Sr. M. Giulia Dominioni.

MISSIONARI COMBONIANI - VIA LUIGI LILIO 80 - ROMA
