

Familia Comboniana

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES OF THE HEART OF JESUS

796

May 2021

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Message of the General Council to all Circumscription Superiors regarding the attack on Mons. Carlassare (26 April)

Dear Confrere, The General Council has been informed that last night our confrere Mons. Christian Carlassare, who was nominated bishop of Rumbek by Pope Francis on 8 March, while staying at his residence, was wounded in the legs by unknown assailants who shot him several times. At present, neither the identity of the attackers nor the reasons for this attack are known. We have learned from the Provincial of South Sudan that Mons. Carlassare is at present in a stable condition: it seems that he suffered only flesh wounds to both legs and that the damage seems to have only caused such a loss of blood that a transfusion was necessary. The CUAMM doctors at Rumbek Hospital are treating him while waiting to transfer him to Juba. Mons. Carlassare has asked that we reassure all the confreres that he is doing quite well and invite them to pray especially for the people of Rumbek who – as he said - *“Are suffering more than I am”*. He also said he forgave his attackers.

We share the sentiments of the many people who have expressed their dismay at this umpteenth violent episode against the defenceless and innocent. At the invitation of Mons. Carlassare, let us pray for the many people of good will who, in South Sudan, are suffering due to the enduring insecurity and violence. We pray for the rapid recovery of Mons. Carlassare so that he may be consecrated bishop, as planned, on 23 of May and resume his apostolic ministry at the service of the Church and people of South Sudan. May Saint Daniel Comboni continue to protect his confreres and intercede that our prayers may hasten the coming of peace and concord in the land he loved so well.

Message of the General Council regarding the attack on Mons. Carlassare (27 April)

Regarding the news published in various organs of the press concerning the attack suffered by Mons. Carlassare, the reasons for it and the people behind it, the General Council of the Comboni Missionaries is grateful and confident in the work being done by the police and the competent authorities.

It is significant in this regard that the highest civil authority in the country has spoken out, expressing the hope that the enquiries may be speedy, thorough and impartial. Even when painful, the truth ascertained is always a starting point for the healing of the wounds both of those who suffer them and those who inflicted them. We await with watchful confidence the outcome of the investigation.

We are grateful to God that the wounds suffered by Mons Carlassare are not life-threatening. We are especially grateful to him for pointing out to us the attitude we should adopt, as Christians and missionaries, towards what has happened: mercy towards the guilty and solidarity with the simple and kind-hearted people who represent the vast majority of the population of Rumbek and elsewhere, daily victims, in silence and far from the glare of mass publicity, who live in an environment of violence and intimidation which has become all too common in relations between the various expressions of South-Sudanese society, and, unfortunately, beyond it.

Let us pray especially that the desire for vengeance may not prevail. We entrust this prayer of ours to the intercession of Saint Daniele Comboni so that, in this dramatic moment in the life of the Church and the people of South Sudan, he may show his paternal care by raising up in the hearts of all the hope of peace and justice which the Resurrection of Christ brings to shine upon all sorrowful and complex events.

GENERAL NOTES 55TH Consulta

During the 55th Consulta held from 12 to 16 April, the General Council examined the following questions, made the decisions and provided the indications given here in detail.

1. The Journey towards the General Chapter

1.1. Election of Chapter members

The process of electing Chapter Delegates ended on 10 April with the election of the last delegate.

This is the final list of Chapter members:

1	CG	Fr. Tesfaye Tadesse G.	By Right
2	CG	Fr. Jeremias dos Santos Martins	By Right
3	CG	Bro. Alberto Lamana Cónsola	By Right
4	CG	Fr. Alcides Costa	By Right
5	CG	Fr. Ciuciulla Pietro	By Right
6	A	Fr. David Costa Domingues	Elected
7	BR	Fr. Amaxsandro Feitosa da Silva	Elected
8	BR	Fr. Bossi Dario	By Right
9	BR	Bro. João Paulo da R. Martins	Elected
10	BR	Fr. Raimundo N. R. dos Santos	Elected
11	C	Fr. Marek Tomasz	Elected
12	C	Bro. Parise Alberto	Elected
13	CN	Fr. Dimonekene Sungu Edmond	Elected
14	CN	Bro. Kakule Silusawa Lwanga	Elected
15	CN	Fr. Kobo Badianga Jean Claude	Elected
16	CN	Fr. Ndjadi Ndjate Léonard	By Right
17	CO	Fr. Villarino Rodriguez Antonio	Elected
18	DSP	Bro. Bernardi Ivan	Elected
19	DSP	Fr. Grabmann Hubert	By Right
20	DSP	Fr. Turyamureeba Roberto	Elected
21	E	Fr. Llamazares G. Miguel Ángel	Elected
22	E	Fr. Pedro Andrés Miguel	By Right
23	EC	Fr. Jaramillo Arias Pablo E.	Elected
24	EC	Fr. Poletto Ottorino	By Right
25	EGSD	Fr. Kyankaaga J. Richard	By Right
26	EGSD	Fr. Mbuthia Simon Mwara	Elected
27	ER	Fr. Habtu Teklay Tiluq	Elected
28	ET	Fr. Agostini Sisto	By Right
29	ET	Fr. Asfaha Y. Weldeghiorghis	Elected
30	I	Fr. Baldan Fabio Carlo	By Right
31	I	Fr. Codianni Luigi Fernando	Elected
32	I	Fr. Ivardi Ganapini Filippo	Elected
33	I	Fr. Moschetti Daniele	Elected
34	I	Bro. Soffientini Antonio	Elected
35	KE	Fr. Radol Odhiambo Austine	By Right
36	KE	Fr. Wanjohi Thumbi Andrew	Elected
37	LP	Fr. Devenish Martin James	Elected
38	LP	Fr. Pelucchi Alberto	By Right
39	M	Bro. Cruz Reyes Joel	Elected

40	M	Fr. Guitrón Torres Rafael	Elected
41	M	Fr. Sánchez González Enrique	By Right
42	M	Fr. Villaseñor Gálvez J. de Jesús	Elected
43	MO	Fr. António M. Bogaio Constantino	By Right
44	MO	Fr. José Joaquim Luis Pedro	Elected
45	MZ	Bro. Gédéon Ngunza Mboma	Elected
46	MZ	Fr. Guarino Antonio	Elected
47	MZ	Fr. Mumba Michael Nyowani	By Right
48	NAP	Fr. Ezama Ruffino	By Right
49	NAP	Fr. Ochoa Gracián Jorge Elias	Elected
50	P	Fr. Fernando Domingues	By Right
51	P	Fr. Manuel A. da Silva Machado	Elected
52	PCA	Fr. Calderón Vargas Juan Diego	By Right
53	PCA	Fr. Romeo Barrios Morales	Elected
54	PE	Fr. Carbonero M. Pedro Percy	Elected
55	PE	Fr. Martín Vargas Francisco José	By Right
56	RCA	Fr. Longba G. Godefroy-Médard	Elected
57	RSA	Fr. Burgers Jude Eugene	By Right
58	RSA	Fr. Mkhari Antony Abednego	Elected
59	SS	Fr. Maku Joseph	Elected
60	SS	Fr. Okot Ochermoi Louis Tony	By Right
61	SS	Bro. Pomykacz Jacek Andrzej	Elected
62	T	Fr. Agboli John Hanson Fr. K.	Elected
63	T	Fr. Hounaké Kouassi Timothée	By Right
64	T	Fr. Plinga Menguo-Mana (Job)	Elected
65	TCH	Fr. Fidèle Katsan	Elected
66	U	Fr. Alenyo John Peter	Elected
67	U	Fr. Kibira Anthony Kimbowa	Elected
68	U	Fr. Kiwanuka Achilles Kasozi	By Right
69	U	Bro. Lumami Mwanza Patrick	Elected

1.2. Chapter delegate Substitutes

The General Council wishes to encourage the circumscriptions which have not yet done so to proceed speedily with the election of the substitutes where the person who came second in the elections did not receive sufficient votes to qualify as a substitute.

1.3. Observers and Guests

Regarding the participation of observers and guests, once a final decision is reached concerning the date of the Chapter, the matter of identifying possible observers and guests will be dealt with.

1.4. Appointment of the Precapitular Commission

During the Consulta, there was discernment on the choice of confreres who will make up the Precapitular Commission and the Capitular who will act as coordinator of the Commission. The confreres are here listed in alphabetical order:

- Fr. Andrés Miguel Pedro (coordinator)
- Fr. Baldan Fabio Carlo
- Fr. David Costa Domingues
- Fr. Katsan Fidèle
- Fr. Kiwanuka Achilles Kasozi
- Fr. Ndjadi Ndjate Léonard
- Fr. Raimundo Nonato Rocha dos Santos
- Bro. Soffientini Antonio
- Fr. Villasenor Galvez José de Jesus

The Council extends its thanks to them on behalf of all the confreres for accepting this complex and burdensome service. The Council assures them of their support and accompaniment in the run-up to the Chapter.

1.5. Timetable of the online in-person meetings in preparation for the Chapter

The General Council will organise a series of online meetings and, where possible, face to face in-person meetings to interact with:

- The Precapitular Commission: on 13 May around mid-day, online, to help those involved to get to know each other better, to evaluate, to better focus upon and detail the terms of reference of the Commission and for discernment on the timetable of the process towards the Chapter
- The members of the General Administration: on 17 May, in person, at 9.00 in the Chapter Hall with the following Order of the Day: information concerning the journey towards the Chapter and directions concerning the report of the General Administration, Secretariats and Offices
- All Capitulars, online, in June; during this meeting, there will be dialogue in view of the final decision regarding the date of the Chapter.

1.6. The June Consulta

The June Consulta will have as its purpose, besides the usual points of the agenda, to deal with the questions associated with the General Chapter, i.e.:

- The decision on the date of the Chapter
- Defining the timetable for the presentation of the reports from the circumscriptions, continents, secretariats and offices and the following journey towards the Chapter;
- The competence of the Precapitular Commission and what the Capitulars expect from it.

In deciding the date of the Chapter, it is necessary to bear in mind that this may affect the availability of Bro. Biemmi to participate in our Chapter. In the meantime, the GC encourages the confreres who have not yet done so to answer the questionnaire and to make use of all available means, including the internet, for the processes of meetings and gatherings in view of the preparation of the reports.

2. Formation (SGS)

2.1. Assignment of Novices to Scholasticates and CIF

The GC has assigned 37 novices to the Scholasticates and CIF. In some cases, it was necessary to take into account the local situation of the Covid-19 epidemic and the associated problems of travelling and obtaining visas.

2.2. Granada

The number of novices who are due to take first vows this year exceeds the present capacity of our scholasticates. For this reason, having taken into account the past dialogue with circumscription superiors during the Assembly of the newly-elected in 2020 on a similar situation, the CG has decided to assign 4 scholastics to the community of Granada in Spain where they will be received and continue their formative journey with a formator who will be appointed in the coming months.

The community of Granada is, in fact, capable of receiving a group of scholastics in a context with easy access to an academic institution and other structures of a formative nature, as well as good opportunities for pastoral commitments for our group of scholastics.

3. SGE (economy)

3.1. Investments

The General Treasury and the General Council have devoted some time to careful evaluation of the situation of our investments faced with the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic and its effect on markets and the economy.

3.2. Appointment of the new member of the Council for Finance

Due to the need to appoint a new member to the Council for Finance to represent the circumscriptions of APDESAM, after previous consultation with the circumscription superiors, the GC appoints Fr. Zieliński Maciej Mikołaj, Provincial Bursar of Kenya, as the new member of the Council for Finance, for three years.

4. Note for confreres who have returned from abroad to their countries of origin

4.1. General Regulations

The General Council reminds the confreres that the persistence of the pandemic situation, which is still raging and is still far from being resolved, makes it still inadvisable to undertake any international movement that is not motivated by sound, unquestionable and verified reasons. It therefore emphasises the need – already foreseen by the directors – that all confreres who intend to move from one circumscription to another should speak of this with their circumscription superiors. It is up to them to dialogue with the circumscription superior where the confrere wishes to go and evaluate restrictions regarding vaccinations, quarantine or other regulations regarding freedom of movement within the destination country, even when this is the country of origin of the confrere. It is in fact necessary to previously identify the place of quarantine, where this is necessary. Not all the communities and very often family members are able to meet the requirements of quarantine.

4.2. Specific regulations for returning to Italy for reasons of health

As regards confreres returning to Italy for proven and verified reasons of health, the Italian Province has planned a specific process associated with health considerations which involves the Vice-Provincial Superior in charge of the sick and the confrere supervising the Commission for the Elderly and Sick Confreres (CANAM). Except in cases of emergency, notification of the intention to return to Italy must be made in good time since the capacity of the communities responsible for assisting the sick is limited by the continually evolving health regulations of the various regions and these must be verified in real time. The contact details of the confreres responsible are available in the Annuario Comboniano.

5. Appointment of the new Bishop of Callao (Peru)

The Holy Father has appointed H. E S.E. Mons. Luis Alberto Barrera Pacheco, M.C.C.J., as the new Bishop of the diocese of Callao (Peru) transferring him from the diocese of Tarma.

Ordination to the priesthood

Fr. Turinawe Vicent (UG) Kabale (U) 10.04.2021

Specializations

The Sudan University of Science and Technology has conferred **Fr. Jorge Naranjo** a PhD in Education and Quality Management on Tuesday 6 April 2021 at the headquarters of the Supreme Council for Quality and Excellence of Khartoum.

Fr. Naranjo's research is entitled "Evaluation of the Educational Quality of Comboni Schools in the Light of the European Foundation for Quality Management Excellence Model in Khartoum State".

Fr. Naranjo qualified with full marks. In its comments, the academic committee which examined the research suggested that the University publish the complete work given the importance of the topic it covers, the innovative character of its approach and the different perspective offered by a foreign person on education in the history of Sudan.

On Thursday 15 April 2021, at the Catholic University of East Africa – Tangaza University College – Institute of Social Transformation, in Nairobi (KE), **Fr. Stefano Giudici** successfully defended his thesis entitled "Exploration of the relationship between social critical consciousness and pastoral ministry in International Missionary Congregations: a case study of the Comboni Family in Kenya". The thesis is in view of receiving a "PhD in Social Transformation with specialization in Pastoral Ministry".

Holy Redeemer Guild

May	01 – 15 ET	16 – 31 I	
June	01 – 07 ER	08 – 15 LP	16 – 30 P

Prayer Intentions

May – That, Like Our Lady, "health of the sick", the nations my 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.*

June – That the Holy Spirit may help us to discern the will of God for our pastoral ministry and to be always witnesses of cooperation and communion. *Lord hear us.*

Publications

Fr. Daniel Cerezo Ruiz, *La cortina de bambú. La misión del encuentro en China*, ed. Mundo Negro, Madrid 2021. Behind the bamboo curtain, Fr. Xie Minghao (as Fr. Cerezo was re-named in China) presents “A mosaic of stories worthy of the best travel books ever written – we read in the prologue – though the author goes even further by bringing us closer to the people”. Some leaders have passed years and even decades in prison or concentration camps without being accused or tried in court, giving us an example of strength and serenity supported by faith. Others live the faith clandestinely and in fear while others work in homes for the elderly and the hospitality centres. From this, there emerges a dimension of mercy and charity of the faith that impresses those who approach Christianity.

Justo Bolekia Boleká, *Cuando se narraban los cuentos en África. Sabiduría bubí de ayer y hoy*, ed. Mundo Negro, Madrid 2021, pp. 246, illustrations by Fernando Noriega. “Entering the *bubi* world – according to the author – means accessing one of the oldest and most dynamic African environments”. The reader finds in this book some stories in which life is described, from the simpler relationships (father-son, husband-wife) to the more complex, between humans and their environment, “with all th teachings that adults transmit or impose upon the young generations”.

The book (not a book of stories for children but a book for adults) is available from the Mundo Negro administration at the price of €15.

Retreat online

From 5 to 9 April, Fr. David Glenday preached a retreat online for the confreres of the NAP on the theme “Having one common Father” (Comboni, S 2742), begging the grace of being His children in the mission of today.

Those interested in obtaining a recording may contact Fr. David by email: dkglenday@gmail.com

CONGO

50 years of self-giving

On Thursday 8 April, Fr. Alfredo Ribeiro Neres celebrated the Golden Jubilee of his priestly ordination. The Eucharistic celebration, followed by the feast, took place in the chapel of the Comboni novitiate in Magambe, Isiro, in the presence of the Comboni Family, men and women religious, the employees of Magambe and some friends. The Bishop of Isiro-Niangara, Mons. Julien Andavo, participated personally in the Eucharist of thanksgiving presided over by Fr. Alfredo.

In his homily and testimony, Fr. Alfredo told the “pre-history” and the history of his vocation. Referring to the pre-history, he revealed that his parents, after their wedding in 1930, agreed to pray every day that one of their children would become a priest. “I didn’t know that. Nobody else knew. They kept it secret until the day of my ordination”. Concerning his desire to come to the Congo, he said: “When I was eighteen, I heard that seven young Belgians who were on their way to the Congo as lay missionaries had been killed in a plane crash. I offered myself to the Lord to replace one of them and go to the Congo. After some years, I had forgotten my promise but the Lord remembered it”. Alfredo was working in Lisbon for a cosmetics firm where he was in charge of an important sector of the business with a large salary when he decided to leave everything “to go and proclaim the Gospel”. It was when he heard a reading from the Gospel of St Mark (16,17-20) and the words of Fr. Angelo La Salandra during the Mass of the Ascension in May 1959 that he decided to become a Comboni Missionary.

Fifty years later, he says: “I fell full of joy for all the Lord has done in my life. Even in times of sorrow and difficulty, it brings joy and peace to my heart. I was therefore called to hand on, share and bring alive this joy among the people whom the Lord places on my path every day. I feel I should love other people and it is the love of Christ Himself that I receive and give. I urge people to love the Lord and the Virgin Mary. I must continue with this same energy and never fear for the future”.

ITALIA

Missionary sending

On Saturday 10 April, in the parish church of di Milland, Bressanone, dedicated to the Ladin missionary Saint Joseph Freinademetz, Fr. Stefano Trevisan, a 37-year-old Comboni missionary received the missionary mandate after a course of formation and studies which,

among other things, involved a six-month stay in Ireland. Fr. Trevisan is called to carry out his missionary service in South Sudan.

The celebration was presided over by Bishop Ivo Muser who presented the missionary cross to the young man. On 28 June 2020, Mons. Muser had ordained him in Bressanone Cathedral. Fr. Stefano, originally from San Vigilio di Marebbe, a former ski instructor, after visiting Africa in 2009, decided to take the path of the priesthood and the mission among the Combonis.

“May your missionary service – Mons. Muser said to him – be marked by a commitment to justice, peace and care for planet Earth as our common home. And may you, following the example of Saint Daniel Comboni, always work not only for the people but with the people, so that they themselves may become the protagonists of their own lives”.

In his “farewell” homily, Fr. Stefano read a passage from the homily of St. Freinademetz before his departure for China: “The Lord invites me to go away with Him to these brothers of ours beyond the seas ... It is hard for me to leave my beloved parents ... but man is not for this world. He is something more; not to enjoy life but to work wherever he is called by the Lord. And so, full of confidence and peace I go where he calls me”.

He then dwelt upon the meaning of departure with the words of the Brazilian Archbishop Hélder Câmara: “Departing means giving up turning around on ourselves as if we were the centre of the world and of life. Humanity is greater and it is that which we must serve. Departing is first of all opening up to others, discovering them and going out to meet them; opening ourselves to ideas, even those contrary to our own. A good traveller is concerned for his discouraged and tired companions. He takes them as he finds them. He listens to them intelligently and carefully, above all with love and renews their courage. Departing means setting out and helping others to start setting out to build a more just and human world”.

Homage to Comboni in Guinea-Bissau

In Verona Cathedral, Bishop Giuseppe Zenti presided, on 30 April, at an evening Mass for the dead on the 30th day after the death of Mons. Pedro Zilli, a Brazilian PIME missionary who had been Bishop of Bafatá (Guinea-Bissau) since 2001. Three Combonis took part in the concelebration since Mons. Zilli was a missionary bishop who was very close to the charism of Saint Daniel Comboni, as Fr. Romeo Ballan explained during the Mass. It happened that, just a few months after the canonisation of our Founder in 2003, Mons. Zilli set up a new parish dedicated to Saint Daniel Comboni and entrusted it to the *Fidei*

Donum priests of the diocese of Verona. It was probably the first parish that took the name of the new saint and, we may add, in a country far from the lands where Combonis are present. When Mons. Zilli visited our Mother House in 2010, the community presented him with a large picture of Comboni for the faithful of Bafatá.

PORTUGAL

Provincial retreat 2021

This year, due to the pandemic situation, the annual retreat of the Portuguese Province (led by Fr. Adelino Ascenso, Superior General of the Sociedade Missionária da Boa Nova) was held in a special way: each community was given a timetable so we could feel spiritually united and the reflections were presented via Zoom. In this way, it was also possible for the confreres of the Spanish province to participate.

It was a moment of grace! With the missionary experience of Fr. Adelino (who was a missionary in Japan), the Asian culture and experience of the faith were at the forefront and the foundation of his sharing ... The invitation “to till inhospitable ground and to climb mountains” and then “with the silence of God and the deconstruction and reconstruction of the image of Christ” descend with fire into the periphery ... having as an icon that of the Good Samaritan. In all this journey, we take account of the presence of the “little stones” that enter the gears of our life and make this process difficult: “The danger of the lack of spirit; the deadening of the passion; the fear of gazing deeply; the challenge of interculturality and inter-generationality”.

In his conclusion, he suggested a basic attitude: “The attitude of humble listening: what is the Spirit saying to us in the midst of all our failures and all our searching? What is the Spirit saying to each of us in the midst of this disconcerting pandemic situation? Jesus is the one who directs our gaze and encourages us to risk all in the art of being, surprising us and causing us to wonder at the beauty that comes from the strength of first love”.

We thank Fr. Adelino for his sharing, for his inspiration and for having helped us to discover “the image of a Christ who is weak, friendly and compassionate”.

TOGO-GHANA-BENIN

Golden Jubilee of Priesthood

On Saturday 24 April, at the parish church of Marie, Mère du Rédempteur, there was a solemn Mass to celebrate the fifty years of

priesthood of Fr. Sandro Cadei, a moment of great joy which saw the gathering of religious men and women, priests and lay-people, each of whom was marked by the person and missionary service of Fr. Sandro.

In the course of his homily, Fr. Severin Gakpe, one of the “sons” of Fr. Sandro, invited the faithful above all else to thank God for his marvels, he who chooses whomsoever he wants and chose Fr. Sandro to perpetuate the gift of himself that Jesus made through the Eucharistic sacrifice.

Fr. Gakpe presented a panorama of the years spent by Fr. Sandro in the various missions of the Comboni province of Togo-Ghana-Benin and elsewhere, with the conclusion that his life was prophecy and incarnation of the love of God; always ready to serve and to welcome, he lived and still lives the works of mercy in the true sense of the word. What enables him to do so, in his opinion, is his “insane love” for God: Fr. Sandro “is madly in love with God” and this accompanies him in all the services he carries out in the Institute whether pastoral, formative or administrative.

The Provincial, Fr. Timothée Hounaké, while thanking all those invited, was generous with his words on the goodness and availability of the person being celebrated, emphasising that it is his love of personal prayer, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and ongoing formation that enable Fr. Sandro to incarnate these two virtues.

Fr. Sandro, in a joyful voice, noted his similarity to the “Founder”: both are from the province of Brescia, were ordained and sent to the mission at the same age, and expressed the wish that he, too, might take the path of holiness even though “in this field, Saint Daniel Comboni was far ahead of him”.

The celebration concluded with a happy feast while observing the demands of anti-Covid-19 measures.

IN PACE CHRISTI

Mons. Paulino Lukudu Loro (23.08.1940 – 05.04.2021)

I met Mons. Paulino Lukudu Loro in 1975, when I was Apostolic Administrator of the diocese of El Obeid. It was my first mission in Sudan. Both of us were 35 years old and we immediately became friends. We remained friends even when I went to other missions: Nyala, in Darfur and Abyei among the Denka of South Sudan. Our friendship continued also when I again met him in Juba in 2010: he was the Metropolitan Archbishop of Juba and I was the Comboni Provincial of South Sudan.

I have to use my imagination to describe the early part of his life; he never liked to speak of his personal past. His attention and concerns were concentrated on the sad situation of his country that was engaged in a civil war that lasted until 1955.

He was born in Juba (South Sudan) on 23 August 1940. During his childhood and his youth – he completed his schooling in the mission schools – the missionaries had, since the thirties, begun many projects for the development of the country: schools of all sorts and levels, programmes for the control of tropical diseases, large hospitals and small dispensaries everywhere, coffee and tea plantations, teak, and many other projects. In 1964, the Khartoum government expelled them all: in South Sudan there were many Catholics, only a few priests who were young and overworked; there was confusion everywhere.

In that sad situation, young Paulino will have recalled how life in his village of Kwerijik, near Juba, was very different before the expulsion of the missionaries and felt the call of God who was inviting him to become a Comboni missionary. It cannot have been easy to move from his simple hut in Kwerijik to the Comboni novitiate in Florence; in fact, some of his companions soon returned home, but he remained. He took temporary vows on 9 September 1967, perpetual vows on 9 September 1969 and was ordained priest on 12 April 1970, in Verna Cathedral.

He afterwards returned to his own country and, for a short time, served the Church in South Sudan together with the other Sudanese priests. Then, in 1974, after the Addis Ababa Accord, the Congregation of Propaganda Fide decided to reconstitute the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in Sudan. Fr. Paulino became Mons. Paulino, Apostolic Administrator of El Obeid. He was 32 years old and from one day to the next became a 'bishop' (he would be consecrated on 27 May 1979) of a diocese three times the size of Italy.

The diocese of El Obeid is located in the north of Sudan, and one of the first duties of the bishop was, therefore, to learn the Arabic spoken in the north which was very different from that spoken in the south.

The diocesan structures were still in their beginnings and much had to be improvised. The world of Islam certainly was of no help to the life of the Church and most Christians were immigrants from the south of the country, homeless and uprooted from their tribal culture.

During that period, he came twice to visit the mission of Nyala where I was. He really was a shepherd visiting his flock. He took an interest even in the small things of the confreres entrusted to him: their health, serenity and whether they were happy to be in that mission. In 1983, he became Metropolitan Archbishop of Juba while I was then asked to

direct the Course of spiritual orientation at the national seminary in Khartoum. Even though far from each other, our friendship and fraternal spirit were very much alive; we met again in 2010 when I was sent to Juba as Provincial of the Comboni Missionaries in South Sudan.

Like all the other Sudanese dioceses, Juba was in a pitiable state; the civil war had prevented any sort of stable organisation or even minimal progress in the various diocesan institutions. Even the national seminary in Juba had been abandoned and had become infested with monkeys and rats. But the people were still there, as always. The institutions and buildings could wait for better times. Consequently, his attention, at the start of his episcopal ministry in Juba, concentrated on the people: the religious, his priests and the many poor people who came knocking at his door every day.

He reorganised the life of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart and the Brothers of Saint Martin de Porres, two local congregations of diocesan right. During the civil war, the life of the diocesan priests had been rather difficult. The new archbishop made them feel again like a family where he was the elder brother. Also to the poor, Mons. Paulino was always a good father who never sent anyone away empty-handed.

He intensified the educational programme of the diocese. Each parish had, and still has, its own primary and middle schools with thousands of pupils. Each parish also had a small dispensary where the poor could find a nurse and free medicine for the commonest diseases.

With the help of some religious congregations, he opened, also in Juba, an excellent school for nurses which today continues to train paramedical personnel for the whole of South Sudan.

In 2011, at the end of the civil war which led South Sudan to independence from the north of the country, with the help of some Combonis, he erected a diocesan FM radio station to inform, instruct, to heal the wounds of war and to help discern the path to follow. 55 years of civil war had left everything and everybody worn out. In an almost inhuman condition, with his closeness to the people, his courage to hope against hope and his openness and humility to collaborate with those who had more energy than him, he succeeded in bringing courage and hope to an entire people that had been deprived of all hope and abused for so many years.

South Sudan has always been the victim of blatant injustice; for example, there was only one secondary school in the whole country, in Rumbek. To counter this situation that actually paralysed the youth of South Sudan for many years, Mons. Paulino, in the early 2000s,

fostered the opening of the Catholic University of Sudan in Wau. It was a humble beginning but it opened the hearts of many young people.

On the contrary, he cared nothing for himself. His house remained exactly as the Italian Comboni bishop had left it when he was expelled, with no renovation works, until 2019. It consisted of a sort of reception and a low house with a small veranda.

During the 36 years that Mons. Paulino was Archbishop of Juba, the reception area had altered its purpose: it became a refuge for poor people looking for help, a meeting place when there was a dispute to be settled and a place of listening for people who had problems and did not know which way to turn. A Sister took care of the poor while the bishop saw to others personally. The people wanted it that way and he did this very willingly and always.

One final meaningful aspect of his identity was his love for his priests. There was as yet no House of the Clergy and so the Archbishop took the elderly and sick priests into his house. I happened, on a few occasions, to have breakfast with them. There was a real sense of family among them. An old priest is not always the nicest person to meet or with whom to live. This was true also at the Archbishop's house in Juba. "But they are my priests", he said to me. "They have given their lives for the Church like myself and, in good times and in bad, we are still brothers".

The way I see it, this was Mons. Paulino: a Comboni, a man of God, a bishop of the Catholic Church which, in times that were not easy for the Church in South Sudan, spent himself entirely for the good of his people, of his country and the Church that God entrusted to him.

The apostles who saw the Risen Lord were the pillars of the primitive Church, a completely new reality. Mons. Paulino, having seen that the Church could make his country revive and bring it into a completely new phase, was a pillar of the young Catholic Church in El Obeid and in Juba.

Significantly, the Lord called him to Himself on Easter Monday, 5 April 2021. The example he leaves us will help these two Churches to follow the Lord for many years with confidence, optimism and joy, as they learned to do under his guidance for all those years. (*Fr. Luciano Perina, mccj*)

Bro. Bruno Haspinger (26.05.1940 – 07.04.2021)

Bruno was born on 26 May 1940, at Tesido in Val Pusteria/Alto Adige (Italy). His parents owned a small farm and had nine children. Bruno was not the only one in his village to become a Comboni missionary. Four other young men from the same village entered Milland and

became Comboni Brothers, one of whom was the artist and painter Bro. Johann Oberstaller. Bruno was very impressed by him and the other brothers he met in Milland.

After a brief postulancy, he began the novitiate at Josefstal on 2 February 1959, at the age of 18. He took first vows on 1 May 1961. On 18 March 1967, he devoted himself definitively to the Congregation by taking perpetual vows.

Bro. Bruno, together with Bro. Adolf Sailer, visited many schools and youth groups in the towns of the vast area of Ellwangen to speak to them of the missions and the missionary vocation of the Brother and not without success. Many young men entered as candidates and began their professional training in the new workshops. Some of them went on to the novitiate and became missionary Brothers.

Bro. Bruno gradually became the spokesperson of the Brothers and soon his influence on the events of the province in general greatly increased. He fought to have the Brothers receive a formation and have a position comparable to that of the Fathers, a technical formation or specialisation instead of theological studies, convinced that the Institute should not have "two classes of people". He undertook the construction of workshops close to the new house of Josefstal. When the Josefinum seminary in Ellwangen was closed in 1981, he opposed its sale and sought to have it become the seat of the provincial superior.

He restructured the old house of Josefstal to use it as a youth centre. He also contacted the founder of the KIM (Kreis Junger Missionare/Young Missionaries Club), Fr. Hubert Leeb OFS.

The KIM was a new form of the Catholic youth movement of the time which also had the aim of directing some of the youth towards the priestly/ religious/missionary vocation. Several groups were formed in the area of Ellwangen. Josefstal became a well-attended youth centre with groups coming to it from all over the diocese.

Towards the end of the seventies, within the German Church and its youth pastoral, there emerged a social and political dimension which was also due to the influence of Latin American liberation theology. These themes were also discussed among the Combonis, especially in Brazil and Ecuador. Bro Bruno himself was very much aware of them.

As a result of this new sensitivity, Bro. Bruno began, in 1982, the Ellwangen Centre for Information and Training"; he changed its name, in 1999, to "World Solidarity Centre ". In the Josefinum seminary that was closed in 1981, an exhibition was set up on themes of international justice and a start was made to providing a library specialised in these themes.

In 1990, Bro. Bruno was assigned to the mission of Brazil and began his service in the diocese of Balsas. There he took part in founding an organisation for farmers, the ACA, an association of small farmers who opposed the large, corrupt landowners. Many friends, especially in the area of Ellwangen, supported Bro. Bruno.

In 200, the bite of a dangerous snake forced him to return to Europe and he was assigned to the community of Milland/Bressanone. In the meantime, the Xaverianum seminary had been closed. At the suggestion of Bro. Bruno, the building became a “House of Solidarity” for meetings and as a refuge for migrants and people on the margins of society.

After a period in Brazil from 2006 to 2008, cut short for reasons of health, he was appointed procurator of the DSP based in Ellwangen. In 2015, he returned to Milland.

His health problems worsened but Bro. Bruno was always enterprising and a source of ideas until March when all the members of the community were infected by the virus. Bro Bruno was taken to hospital with three other confreres and died there on 7 April 2021. On his desk he left the articles prepared for the 2022 Holy redeemer Guild Calendar, many photographs to be digitalised and other projects.

Even though he was never a member of a provincial council and never had any positions of great responsibility, except for one occasion when he was a delegate at the 1979 Chapter, and in his later years as vice-superior of the community of Bressanone, Bro. Bruno was involved in almost all the important decisions of the DSP over the past forty years. He was a source of new ideas and inspiration which he sometimes presented very directly, with little diplomacy, rather roughly and occasionally offensively, though he never bore a grudge. When he was convinced of something, he managed to get it accepted with no fear of disagreement or opposition. In this he was similar to Daniel Comboni – despite all the differences – since he, too, was a tireless fighter for a better world, took the side of the oppressed, clashed with authorities and sometimes found himself caught in a vice of contradictory opinions. (*Fr. Reinhold Baumann mcccj*)

Bro. Virginio Manzana (16.10.1928 – 12.04.2021)

Bro. Virginio Manzana was born on 16 October 1928, at Desenzano (Brescia Province and Verona Diocese). He did his novitiate in Florence (1948-1950), made his first profession on 19 March 1950 and took perpetual vows on 19 March 1956.

Bro. Virginio spent his missionary life in various places: Italy (1950-56), South Sudan (56-64), again in Italy (64-66), Uganda (66-74), Kenya

(74-77), Italy (77-80), Uganda (80-88), Italy (88-91), Congo (92-99) and returned for good to Italy in 2000. He liked to share his opinions and memories. He had a good memory and willingly shared his memories of the mission, often providing unheard-of and interesting historical details. He left us at the age of 92. He had enjoyed fairly good health and independence but cancer silently undermined his health.

Bro. Virginio gave exact instructions for his funeral. He wanted a candle placed on his coffin as a sign of the faith he received in baptism and chose a reading from St. Paul, written from prison at the end of his life, in which he repeats his attachment to the Lord: "I have fought the good fight ... I have kept the faith".

We may say that Bro. Virginio was a battling Brother who fought the good fight of the mission in Sudan, Uganda, Kenya and Congo for almost 40 years, at a time when the mission was a really difficult challenge, travelling a complicated matter, malaria everywhere and relations with authorities conflicting. He was one of those expelled from Sudan in 1964.

On the theme of mission, he was able to make others curious, to get them interested and enthusiastic. Even his later years spent in the nursing homes were lived as real battles to combat his poor health. His last battle was against the coronavirus with three long periods of quarantine and isolation. He also fought to improve himself: sometimes his sudden and unexpected outbursts led him off the straight and narrow and he could even be a bit rough.

"I have kept the faith". The faith was his precious treasure, received in baptism, transmitted by a patriarchal family of sound and deep traditions to which he was always greatly attached and which he deeply venerated. His memories of catechism lessons, the parish priest, his first communion and the discovery of his vocation were never lost.

He told how he dreamt as a boy of becoming a priest. Perhaps the difficulty of studying or some health problems pointed him in another direction and so he became a Brother.

For many years, he loved Arica through his profession as a mechanic and the thousand practical little jobs that are part of the world of the Brother. Repairing cars allowed the Gospel and the workers of the Gospel to continue their journey and their service to suffering humanity.

He was happy and proud to be a Comboni Brother: he regularly took part in the annual meetings in Pesaro where he never failed to share his

reflections and, in the final evaluation, he always commented that “the loudspeakers of the house were not loud enough”.

Virginio will never receive a Nobel Prize for his poetry and his name will never be inscribed among the greats of literature but during the final years of his life, he did something truly significant. He had a passion for poetry and, through poetry; he became a witness of the past, of the family, of the values of long ago, of the mission and of his beloved Africa. He was also up to date with the latest issues: safeguarding creation, love for nature, bullying and, in his own way, the dignity of women.

Through poetry he revealed something of himself, his affections and his values he showing interest and appreciation for the personnel, singing their praises. He filled his days writing, consulting dictionaries, looking for words that rhymed, looking for help with his PC which would jam up every time a physiotherapist went by! A few days before he died, he was still discussing how many copies he should print of another collection of his.

He fell asleep in the Lord on 12 April 2021, in the community of Castel d’Azzano (VR) and was buried on 15 April 2021 alongside the Comboni confreres in Verona monumental cemetery. (*Fr. Renzo Piazza, mccj*)

LET US PRAY FOR OUR BELOVED DEAD

THE MOTHER: Cesira, of Fr. Daniele Moschetti (I).

THE BROTHER: Lorenzo, of Fr. Egidio Tocalli (I).

THE COMBONI MISSIONARY SISTERS: Sr. Luisa Emilia Zoia, Sr. Santina Lena Pagani, Sr. M. Grazia Teruzzi, Sr. Sandra Lisa Campedelli, Sr. Italina Serato, Sr. Rosalba M. Bertoni, Sr. Giannantonia Comencini, Sr. Ezia Sala, Sr. M. Domenica Calligaro, Sr. Pier Stella Agostini.