

Familia Comboniana

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES OF THE HEART OF JESUS

797

June 2021



GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

First professions

Sc. Nunez Alex Geraldo (BR)	Xochimilco	08.05.2021
Sc. Angulo Barbano Larzon Alexander (EC)	Xochimilco	08.05.2021
Sc. Martinez Cervantes Eusebio (M)	Xochimilco	08.05.2021
Sc. Mercado Sandoval Diego Martin (M)	Xochimilco	08.05.2021
Sc. Guarcax Yac Romeo (PCA)	Xochimilco	08.05.2021
Sc. Sanchez Irigoien Max Ivan (PE)	Xochimilco	08.05.2021
<i>Bro. Chajon Gordillo Jonatan Josué</i> (PCA)	Xochimilco	08.05.2021
Sc. Kambale Kasoro Meschack (CN)	Cotonou	08.05.2021
Sc. Kasereka Sivanzire Julien (CN)	Cotonou	08.05.2021
Sc. Katembo Maliro Grace (CN)	Cotonou	08.05.2021
Sc. Kokonzoni Koso Apollinaire (CN)	Cotonou	08.05.2021
<i>Bro. Muhindo Mulango Roger</i> (CN)	Cotonou	08.05.2021
Sc. Nteyamba Ilundu Etienne (CN)	Cotonou	08.05.2021
Sc. Mamadou Cristal (RCA)	Cotonou	08.05.2021
Sc. Amado Komla Gademon Prosper (T)	Cotonou	08.05.2021
Sc. Assey Yao Justin (T)	Cotonou	08.05.2021
<i>Bro. Dagbeto Sewanou Ghislain</i> (T)	Cotonou	08.05.2021
Sc. Davon Kossigan Sylvestre (T)	Cotonou	08.05.2021
Sc. Kisibo Adolf (U)	Lusaka	15.05.2021
Sc. Adaba Esayas Yosef (ET)	Lusaka	15.05.2021
Sc. Bebre Asmare Gawo (ET)	Lusaka	15.05.2021
Sc. Kariuki Joseph Victor Lagat (KE)	Lusaka	15.05.2021
Sc. Gum Santino Mawan Guor (SS)	Lusaka	15.05.2021
Sc. Nyiker Changjwok Abdallah (SS)	Lusaka	15.05.2021
Sc. Adaklumegah Mamertus (T)	Lusaka	15.05.2021
Sc. Dzikunu Winfred Etse (T)	Lusaka	15.05.2021
Sc. Adrabo Jerry (U)	Lusaka	15.05.2021
Sc. Carlos Joaquim Jorge (MO)	Nampula	22.05.2021
Sc. Queliso Amade (MO)	Nampula	22.05.2021
Sc. Riquito Selemane Muaualo Rodrigues (MO)	Nampula	22.05.2021
Sc. Saul Arnaldo Bazo (MO)	Nampula	22.05.2021
Sc. Dang Tanh Sang Dominic (A)	Quezon City	23.05.2021
Sc. Nguyen Van Tien (A)	Quezon City	23.05.2021
Sc. Romeo Avenido Boncales (A)	Quezon City	23.05.2021
Sc. Weldemariam Estifanos Yonas (ER)	Decameré	15.05.2021
Sc. Mahder Metay Merhawi (ER)	Decameré	15.05.2021
Sc. Andeberhan Yohannes Nahom (ER)	Decameré	15.05.2021

Ordination

Fr. Kalibuku Teddy (MZ)

Chipata (MZ)

01.05.2021

Holy Redeemer Guild

June 01 – 07 ER

08 – 15 LP

16 – 30 P

July 01 – 15 KE

16 – 31 M

Prayer intentions

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.*

July – That closeness and a culture of encounter in daily life may restore hope and a feeling of life to those who are sad and closed in on themselves. *Lord hear us.*

Publications

Edited by Daniele and Fausto Cefalo and Angela Iannuzzo // *Vangelo non ha colore. Un Comboniano in Africa. Padre Raffaele Cefalo*, Ariano Irpino, April 2021. Through the many notes, accounts and letters written by Fr. Raffaele, his brothers Daniele and Fausto and his niece Angela enable us to relive the more important moments of the life of Fr' Raffaele, from the years of his vocation to the final times, retracing especially the more than forty years of passionate mission in Africa. As they underline in the final note, the book, embellished by a number of photographs, is "a sort of long final letter to all who were with him, by his side, during his many years of Mission; a way of renewing his profound appreciation and gratitude".

The book is available online on this link:

https://issuu.com/agostinocefalo/docs/il_vangelo_non_ha_colore

Juan González Núñez mccj, *Oh Dios, ¿estás ahí?*, edit. Mundo Negro, Madrid 2021. Writing from the mission of Gilgel Beles among the Gumuz of Ethiopia, reflects on the mystery of the existence of God, motivated by this period of confinement due to the coronavirus pandemic. Fr. Juan invites us not to expect "a sentimental effusion". The book, he says, is "doctrinal", yet accessible to all and, above all, it is written both for believers and non-believers. The book may be ordered from Mundo Negro.

Tomasz Marek mccj, *Ordynator Miłosierdzia (Ordinario della Misericordia)*, Misjonarze Kombonianie, Warszawa 2021. In view of the forthcoming beatification of Fr. Giuseppe Ambrosoli, the book presents the story of his life. It contains testimonies by people who met the future saint personally and have received graces through his intercession. The purpose of this publication is to animate the Church in Poland in a missionary sense and present to the youth a truly extraordinary man.

Maciej Miąsik mccj, *Święty Daniel Comboni Życie dla misji (San Daniele Comboni. Una vita per la missione)*, Misjonarze Kombonianie, Kraków January 2021, 78 pages in B6 format. A brief biography of Comboni with various photos, intended to be a presentation of our Founder and his work to assist in the missionary animation of the Church in Poland.

Giuseppe Crea, *In un mondo terribilmente diverso. Nuovi processi formativi per la vita consacrata*, Edizioni Ancora, 2021. To recognise the educational journey that shapes the life of every creature and integrate that journey into the work of vocational growth means opening oneself to the permanent presence of God in the history of humanity. This is the itinerary that the consecrated life is called to follow, giving meaningful answers especially in this time of darkness and uncertainty which the pandemic has disseminated even within the walls of convents.

This book is an invitation to rediscover the riches of the many sources available, to learn how to integrate the weaknesses and fragilities with the vivacity of a process of growth that invites change and conversion.

Rafał Leszczyński mccj, *Gawędy Misyjne (Racconti missionari)*, Misjonarze Kombonianie, Kraków 2020. A collection of stories of the missionary life of the author in various countries. It presents in an accessible way the traditions, beliefs and various aspects of the lives of the people with whom the author lived. It also contains descriptions of tragicomedies and even grotesque situations that life so often brings.

Secretary General of Formation

Chart of young missionary vocations today

Fr. Elias Essognimam Sindjalim, Secretary General of Formation, has recently presented an up-to-date chart of young vocations in the

Comboni Institute, from which it emerges that Africa is the continent of hope: “It is a moment of blessings as it was from Europe after the Second World War”, Fr. Elias says.

As can be seen from the list included on the first pages of this number of *Familia Comboniana*, of the thirty-seven novices who made their first profession, 8.1% are from Asia, almost 19% from Latin America and 72.9% from Africa. As regards the students of theology and the Brothers in their final phase of initial formation, there are 147 in this formation year of 2020-2021 of whom 86.39% are Africans, 2.04% are Asians, 10.88% are Americans and 0.68% are Europeans. Of the 147 students, 10% are Brothers.

The circumscriptions with the highest number of candidates to the missionary life and young people in formation are The Democratic Republic of Congo, Togo-Ghana-Benin, Mozambique, Malawi-Zambia and Uganda. Numbers have recently increased in South Sudan and in Kenya.

Video-message from Mons. Christian Carlassare

Mons. Christian Carlassare, Bishop of Rumbek, was the victim of an armed attack in his residence on the night of 26 April. He was taken to hospital in Nairobi and sent a video-message of which this is the text.

“I greet you all and thank ACI-Africa for allowing me to transmit this message. I am speaking to you from my hospital bed but full of hope. First of all, I wish to thank the Christians of the entire world who prayed for me and are now giving me courage and confidence in the Lord.

Then, I recognise the solidarity and the strong position statement of my elder brothers, the bishops of Sudan and South Sudan, who see in this attack on one member, an attack on all the Church.

I am thankful for the sincere commitment of the government [*of South Sudan*] from the presidency to the local authorities in defending the truth and taking legal action to correct the harm that took place in Rumbek so that it does not happen again.

The social media have also given ample coverage to the incident. May it not be just to embarrass or confuse but to provide information as to the facts. I have read such headlines as “Rumbek attacks the bishop” and “Internationalist South Sudan has attacked the bishop”. What a shame!

Many South Sudanese have written to me saying: “We apologise for what South Sudan has done to you”. And I replied: “Please be at

peace. It was not the people of South Sudan who attacked me. It was not the Dinka or the Agar. It was a small group of people without human values and they are a disgrace to their community”.

Rumbek did not attack its bishop; Rumbek neither attacks nor kills bishops as happened some years ago. Rumbek does not ill-treat religious Brothers or Sisters. Rumbek abuses no one. This is what we want for Rumbek. The opposite must never happen again. I invite the community leaders and local heads to identify the violent members of their community and apply the traditional law that does not tolerate violence, especially when it can be avoided.

Do not allow the violent members to hold the entire community to ransom. The Dinka culture has no place for violence. Violence is not part of any culture anywhere in the world.

The teaching of the Church is clear: what we say must come from the Gospel. This is the message we must preach both by our words and the example of our lives.

The Gospel passage I read the Sunday before I was attacked was about the Good Shepherd and we see the difference between the shepherd who loves his flock and the one who tends his flock merely out of self-interest.

I regret having to admit that this worldly mentality, which is that of the devil, sometimes influences us, people of the Church. We want to bring development just for ourselves and our clans. In this way, we commit all sorts of iniquities. But please, let us be converted; let us change our minds. This is the path to follow.

And so, from this hospital bed, I bow before God and interceded for the Church of Rumbek. I pray for the conversion of sinners. I offer the pain I am suffering that our Lord Jesus Christ may purify the Church of Rumbek from all its errors. And that this sort of thing may never happen again. That there may be no place for violence, divisions, or selfish interests that come from the devil.

But let us work to build up a Church according to the teaching of Jesus. A Church that is one, united; one that is holy, like the Gospel that makes people holy; Catholic, a Church that embraces everyone, regardless of clan, tribe or skin colour; Apostolic, that comes from Jesus to us through the Pope and the Bishops.

It was Pope Francis and the College of Bishops who sent me to you, the people of Rumbek, for this mission: to make a Church that is one, holy, catholic and apostolic.

I desire with all my heart to accomplish this mission for love of you and South Sudan. May I be a sign for all of you as I rise from this bed and

start to walk again. May Rumbek, too, rise once more and walk in the ways of peace and unity”.

MEETINGS VIA ZOOM

Meeting of Mission Secretariats

On 27 April last, the provincial superiors and those in charge of the secretariats of the mission of the European circumscriptions met telematically with the General Secretary of the Mission (GSM) to initiate a shared reflection on the “Laudato Si Action Plan”, of Pope Francis and promoted by the Decastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, six years after the encyclical was issued.

It was an occasion for sharing some initiatives inspired by Laudato Si (LS) already commenced by the Comboni Missionaries in Europe. The GSM then presented the proposal of the Decastery which is open to the entire Catholic world – especially the religious Institutes – to commit themselves to a seven-year process to set in motion concrete conversion to integral ecology.

The Institutes of consecrated life, their provinces and even single communities may take part in the initiative and join the first group of participants taking on the commitment between 24 May – the conclusion of the special anniversary year of Laudato Si – and 4 October 2021, at the conclusion of the month devoted to ecological conversion known as The Time of Creation.

The initiative of the Laudato Si Action Plan has three parts: 1. The public acceptance of the commitment to complete the ecological transition within seven years; 2. The launching of a systematic and verifiable process to implement the ecological transition; 3. To journey together, in communion with the Church and all social realities committed to changing the unsustainable socio-economic system that is driving the world towards irreversible climate change, with devastating effects on the environment and the most vulnerable and marginalised populations.

Other webinars were also held between provincials and the heads of mission secretariats: one was held on 14 May for America/Asia; the second on 28 May for Anglophone Africa and Mozambique (APDESAM). A third webinar is planned for Francophone Africa (ASCAF) for 18 June from 15.00 to 17.00 (Roman time).

Meeting of the Brothers of the European Continent

On Friday 30 April and Saturday 1 May, a meeting was held of the Comboni Brothers who operate in Europe. This, too, was an online meeting using the Zoom platform. More than 30 confreres participated on both days. All the circumscriptions of the continent were represented by one or more brothers with the exception of the London province which has no Brothers.

On the first of May, the feast of St Joseph the Worker and traditionally connected, in the Comboni Institute, with the role of the Brother, the Brothers of the communities of Milan and Castel d'Azzano (not forgetting Brescia and Verona) took part.

The two days of the meeting were mainly spent in listening, debating and making proposals also in view of the process of preparation for the upcoming XIX General Chapter.

On the first day, there was a thorough debate on the theme of formation with the presence of Bro. Matthias Adossi (formator of the Nairobi CIF) and Bro. Abel Godfroy Dimanche (formator of the Bogota CIF). All those present were in agreement as to the importance of starting a journey of common meetings between the two CIFs to work out common formation journeys while respecting the geographical and cultural differences of each continent. Also on Friday 30 April, Bro. Alberto Parise, a member of the General Secretariat of Mission in Rome, spoke on the theme of ministeriality, presenting the work of social mapping that had already been amply discussed during the Webinars on social ministeriality.

On Saturday, 1 May, the hearing continued in two parts:

- Firstly, Bro. José Manuel Duarte presented the Comboni Work of Human promotion (CWHP) of the European continent in Camarate (Portugal).
- Secondly, Bro. Joel Cruz Reyes, from Mexico, presented the journey accomplished by the Brothers of the American continent, dwelling upon the recently established reflection group.

The encounter ended with work in language groups and the final prayer. Among others who were present during the two days, was our Superior General, Fr Tesfaye Tadesse, with a brief greeting and also Fathers Jeremias dos Santos Martins, Vicar General and Elias Sindjalim Essognimam, General Secretary of Formation.

ASIA

First professions

On 23 May, the solemnity of Pentecost, the Comboni community of Quezon City and all the Delegation of Asia enjoyed a moment of great joy: the first religious of three young men: Romeo Avenido Boncales, originally from the Philippines, and Dominic Dang Thanh Sang and Peter Khoa Nguyen Tien, both from Vietnam.

The restrictions imposed by the Covid pandemic had been relaxed a few days earlier and, as a result, the solemn ceremony providentially took place in the presence of a good number of guests including friends, benefactors and some representatives of other institutes, while observing the pandemic regulations. The Mass was also streamed online and enthusiastically followed in the countries of origin of the newly-professed.

The professions took place during the Eucharistic celebration with the Delegation superior Fr. David Domingues presiding. With his usual good humour, he tried to raise the spirits of the participants after the long period of isolation due to the pandemic. At the end of the Mass, those present greeted the three young men with loud, prolonged applause. The occasion was rendered all the more memorable by the beautiful floral decorations in the round chapel, the choral singing and the delicious food shared by all.

It is worth noting that this was the first group of novices to make their profession since the reopening of the Novitiate in the Delegation of Asia two years ago: to the well-deserved satisfaction of the Novice Master Fr. Victor Tavares Dias and his socius Fr. Pierpaolo Monella.

The newly-professed were afterwards informed as to where they would go to study theology: Romeo is to go to South Africa and Peter and Dominic will go to Nairobi, in Kenya. Their experience in Africa will serve as a concrete preparation to make them fully qualified Comboni Missionaries.

CURIA

Bro. Mario Jayson celebrates 25 years of religious profession

On 26 May, Bro. Mario Castro Jayson Torregosa celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of his first vows in the chapel of the Generalate House in Rome. The celebration was presided over by Vicar general Fr. Jeremias dos Santos Martins, with the participation

of about sixty confreres belonging to the three communities of the Curia and confreres passing through.

Bro. Mario Jayson, 53, was born in Tarlac, in the Philippines. His parents are still living: his father Basilio is eighty years old and his mother Loreta, 82. Bro. Jayson is the fourth of six children: three boys and three girls. He joined the Combonis in Manila when he was 26 and took first vows on 26 May 1996. From 1996 to 1999, he frequented the International Brothers' Centre (CIF) in Nairobi (Kenya). He was then appointed to Uganda where he worked for 17 years. He has been a member of the Curia community since 2016.

At the start of the celebration, during which the liturgical memoria of St. Philip Neri was observed, Fr. Jeremias invited those present to thank God for the gift of the life Bro. Mario Jayson, for the confreres now working in the Philippines and for the gift of the missionary vocation of the 37 novices who took their first vows during the month of May in the various novitiates of the Institute, including three in Asia. During his homily, Fr. Jeremias briefly mentioned the life of St. Philip Neri, and commenting on the Gospel of the day (Mark 10,32-45), said that "There are two things to be kept as a treasure: the first is that the Lord always goes before us, accompanies us and makes our work bear fruit; the second is that our life, unless it becomes a service and gift for others, has no meaning".

After the homily, Fr. Jeremias invited Bro. Mario Jayson to speak saying: "Your presence among us is mostly characterised by simplicity, welcoming and consideration for the confreres and other persons".

Bro. Mario Jayson then spoke giving a brief account of his 25 years of missionary life from his formation in Manila and Nairobi to the mission in Uganda and at the Curia in Rome.

"I am happy to celebrate these 25 years of religious and missionary life together with you all. I thank God for my vocation, I thank all the Comboni missionaries who accompanied and assisted me to become part of the different social situations where I worked and for keeping me on the right path. One of these is Fr. Alberto de Oliveira Silva, here present who was one of my formators in Manila and later the delegation superior. I also wish to thank the community of the Curia for having organised this celebration. I do indeed feel very welcome".

After his brief testimony of thanksgiving, Bro. Mario renewed his vows after which he asked all present to pray for him that he may be always faithful and available to continue the journey he started 25 years ago.

ESPAÑA

Mundo Negro

Mundo Negro publications, owned by the Comboni Missionaries in Madrid, continues its process of renewal with the publication of new books to be added to the more than 100 books already in the 2021 Catalogue. Over the past four months, the following books have been published: *Santos y beatos africanos* (2nd edition), short hagiographies of 949 African Blesseds and Saints of our Church; *La cortina de bambú*, 20 testimonies by the author Fr. Daniel Cerezo, on the persecutions and difficulties being inflicted by the Chinese government today; *Cuando se narraban los cuentos en África*, a selection of Bubi stories by the Guinean author Justo Bolekia, a collection of Bubi wisdom of times gone by and today; *Oh Dios, ¿estás ahí?*, a reflection by the author Fr. Juan González Núñez, on the Creator in the time of the coronavirus, written from the mission of Gilgel Beles (Ethiopia).

ITALIA

Extraordinary ACSE Assembly

On Sunday 9 May, the Assembly was held face-to-face in Rome of the ACSE associates of the year 2020 to approve the new Statutes, bringing it up to date with the state third sector rules. ACSE is, therefore, part of the Volunteer Organisation. A new Governing Council was elected with these members: Fr. Venanzio Milani (President), Sr. Mariarosa Venturelli (Vice-President), Fr. Lino Spezia (Services Co-ordinator), Sr. Lucia Cacelli (Councillor), Maurizio Pieri (Treasurer), Gianfranco Caporossi (Secretary) and Nataliya Vorobyova (Councillor). A discussion was also held on the possibility of having ACSE become a Foundation to guarantee its foundational identity. In general, the Assembly did not seem to be against this proposal.

Despite the pandemic situation, ACSE has continued in 2020 to render its services, even though, in some cases, in a somewhat reduced form. All of this was possible due to the generosity and courage of the associates and volunteers. The services rendered:

- Italian courses for migrants: 10 classes online and 2 face-to-face (a course for the illiterate). In May and June, 46 students will sit for the exams between A1 and B2.
- An employment desk and legal assistance: appointments continued

as did the processing of requests for jobs and assistance.

- Foodbank: each week, food parcels were given and continue to be given to more than 100 families and individuals.
- Computer courses face-to-face and English lessons online.
- Dental clinic: except during the first national lockdown, the clinic has continued to function with about twenty procedures per week. Even the head and neck Screening Project, in collaboration with the Umberto I Polyclinic and Sapienza University, has continued to function with about 60 migrants assisted each month.
- Scholarships: 52 have been financed for 2021.
- Vaccinations: thanks to the Pope's almoner Cardinal Krajewski, a number of ACSE migrants were vaccinated.

Meeting of GIM animators

A meeting was held in Pesaro from 28 to 30 May, of the GIM (Youth Missionary Involvement) of the Comboni Family. The previous meeting was held in September 2020, but the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic prevented further face-to-face meetings. At last, they could meet again.

The emergency caused by the rapid spread of the virus transformed the GIM meetings during this pastoral year. They started, as usual, in person but then went ahead using various online platforms that all of us, despite our reluctance, had to learn how to use.

Many young Italians have had direct experience of the pandemic due to bereavements in their families or among their friends, without forgetting, among other things, the economic losses suffered.

What does this pandemic experience mean for the young people, what signals has it given and what is the meaning of doing pastoral work among young people during a COVID-19 pandemic? We tried to provide answers to these questions with the help of an expert, the psychologist Filippo Mondini.

Filippo helped us to again give priority to relationships and to listening, to continue along the path of accompanying processes without allowing ourselves to be overcome by the consumerism of the modern world. After Filippo's introductory report, we spent Saturday busily reviewing and "finally" re-thinking the options and dynamics of the GIM meetings.

This is a reflection that, for some time, the teams are working on, a process begun but not yet completed, but which must be gradually implemented.

Of course, during the two days of meetings, we also spoke of the proposals for summer camps, another important moment of youth

pastoral animation that will bring together young participants from all over Italy.

The celebrations were a time for thanking God of life for this service that we are called to render in Italy to the young men and women we encounter on the journey.

We wish all of you a good summer in the service of life and look forward to seeing you at our next meeting.

MALAWI-ZAMBIA

Ordinations in the parish of St Matthias Mulumba

On 1 May, the Comboni Missionaries of Malawi-Zambia had a feast to celebrate. At the parish of St Matthias Mulumba, entrusted five years ago to the Combonis, Deacon Teddy Kalibuku, from Lilanda (Zambia) was ordained a priest and the scholastic Emmanuel Muhime, from Mulanje (Malawi), was ordained a deacon. The celebrations were presided over by the Bishop of Chipata Diocese, Mons. George Cosmas Zumaire Lungu.

The ordinations had already been postponed more than once due to the covid-19 pandemic.

At last, the day came for the celebrations which were held in the open air to respect the preventive measures in force in the country, especially in the diocese of Chipata, a region of the Eastern Province of Zambia.

The place was adorned with the five missionary colours and various Comboni flags that indicated the theme chosen for the celebration: "Baptised, ordained, sent". The liturgy, attended by numerous Combonis and members of the faithful, was musically enlivened by the parish choir. The mass was broadcast by Radio Maria, the diocese and by Lumen TV of the Zambian Episcopal Conference, based in Lusaka.

Apart from the liturgical moments of the two ordinations – Fr. Carlos Alberto Nunes recounts for us – "The assembly of the faithful manifested immense joy when Mons. Lungu invited the priests and acolytes to take part in an elegant liturgical dance accompanied by a hymn of thanksgiving to praise and thank God for the gift of the vocations of these two Comboni Missionaries".

Fr. Teddy Kalibuku has been appointed vocations promoter in Zambia and will work in the community of the Centre for Missionary Animation and Vocations Promotion at Kalikiliki, Lusaka. Deacon Emmanuel Muhime, who is doing his period of missionary service in Chikowa

mission (Zambia), has already been appointed to go by Fr general to go to Brazil; he is due to leave soon after his ordination to the priesthood, the date of which is to be chosen soon.

Nine novices make their first profession

On 15 May, nine novices of the novitiate of Lusaka, the capital city of Zambia, made their first profession before the provincial superior of Malawi-Zambia, Fr. Michael Nyowani Mumba, and the provincial superior of South Sudan Fr. Louis Tony Okot Ochermoi. The celebration was very simple but filled with great enthusiasm and joy.

The newly-professed are from Kenya (1), Ethiopia (2), South Sudan (2), Uganda (2) and Ghana (2). Due to the pandemic, the celebration took place in the chapel of the novitiate with a limited number of participants: our confreres from nearby communities, three Comboni Sisters, a priest from the nearby Missionaries of Africa community and a representative of the employees. The main celebrant Fr. Michael Nyowani, addressing the newly-professed, said that, to follow the path of Jesus as missionaries, fidelity and confidence in God are required to face the challenges we may meet in the course of our lives.

Fr. Michael received the vows of the novices from Ethiopia, Uganda and Ghana while Fr. Louis Okot received those of the novices from South Sudan and Kenya, both representing the respective provincials. The newly-professed expressed their gratitude towards all who accompanied them from the start of their vocational journey until today. For the next stage in their basic formation, they joyfully received their appointments to the scholasticates of Casavatore (Italy), Kinshasa (DR Congo), Nairobi (Kenya) and Pietermaritzburg (South Africa).

We thank God for the gift of these nine new confreres whom we shall continue to accompany on their vocational missionary journey.

MEXICO

Consecrated to the mission

On 8 May, in the chapel of the continental novitiate of Xochimilco, seven novices from the American continent made their first religious profession, desirous of consecrating their lives to God with vows of poverty, chastity and obedience: Alex from Brazil, Eusebio and Diego from Mexico, Max Ivan from Perù, Alexander from Ecuador and Romeo from Guatemala in the Comboni province of Central America (PCA).

Comboni Fathers and Brothers, some religious, friends and family members were united in prayer and in the Eucharistic celebration, though in a limited number due to the pandemic preventive measures, to welcome these young men as members of the Institute.

The newly-professed will continue their studies in the continent, in Brazil, Peru and Colombia. Theirs is not an easy journey but they will continue to struggle, pray, work and study... to get to know the Comboni Family, to discover the value of the mission, to love it and make it loved so that others may come to know and love it.

MOÇAMBIQUE

First profession of four Mozambican novices

On Saturday 22 May, four young Mozambicans – Saúl Arnaldo, Queliso Amade, Riquito Selemane and Carlos Joaquim – made their first religious profession at the Comboni novitiate of Nampula in the north of the country. The provincial superior Fr. António Manuel Bogaio Constantino presided. The ceremony was enlivened by the choir of the young men who frequent the Comboni pre-postulancy located close to the novitiate house.

Despite the pandemic regulations, it was a beautiful festive moment for the newly-professed and their relatives who were present, as well as the confreres, the Comboni Sisters, the Lay Comboni M and other religious from the northern region of the country.

In his homily, Fr. Constantino expressed his joy at seeing that there are still young men who wish “to give their lives in the service of the Kingdom of God by joining the Comboni Institute”, a clear sign that “the charism of St Daniel Comboni is still alive and that our evangelisation is beginning to bear fruit for the universal Church”. He then emphasised some fundamental values for daily religious and missionary life: listening, obeying, accomplishing and welcoming. He concluded by saying: “Now is the time to welcome and allow yourselves to be welcomed by the Comboni Family; it is a time for growth in the identity and daily belonging to the Institute, seeking to be, as far as possible, faithful to the tradition and missionary culture we have inherited from our Founder Saint Daniel Comboni”.

The newly-professed will go ahead with their theological studies in various international scholasticates: Riquito Selemane Muaualo Rodrigues in Casavatore (Italia); Carlos Joaquim Jorge in Kinshasa (DR Congo); Queliso Amade in Nairobi (Kenya) and Saúl Arnaldo Bazo in Granada (Spain).

IN PACE CHRISTI

Fr. Seyum Cahsay Hagos (23.02.1927 – 29.01.2021)

Fr. Seyum was born on 23 February 1927, the national Marian solemnity of Kidane Meheret, in Awo, near Alitena, in the diocese of Adigrat, to a profoundly Catholic family. He came to know the Comboni Missionaries in Asmara seminary where they were teaching. Fr. Pio Ferrari received a letter from the young seminarian who wanted to become “a Son of the Sacred Heart” like him. The understanding was that Seyum would have been admitted to the Institute after he completed his philosophical and theological studies in Asmara and Adigrat and after his priestly ordination (2 June 1963), with the blessing of his Bishop who finally, though reluctantly, gave his consent.

Fr. Seyum helped Fr. Emilio Ceccarini, Fr. Pietro Moro and Fr. Aristide Guerra to found a Comboni seminary at Decamerè (now in Eritrea) and only in 1965 did he enter the Comboni novitiate in Florence where, on 9 September 1967, he made his first religious profession. In Florence, he witnessed the floods (4 November 1966) that swept through the city and how many suffering people were left homeless, an element that seemed to repeat itself in almost all the places to which he was assigned: Gondar, Decamere Seminary (where he was based during the 14 worst years of the war) and in Addis Ababa.

Fr. Seyum was a formator and spiritual director in the seminaries. He was severe most of all with himself and he was greatly appreciated by those who are now priests in various parishes and missions, or bishops like Mons. Menghesteab Tesfamariam.

In his priestly ministry he was constant, generous and prudent: early in the morning he would go to various churches or convents, often in the cold and wet, walking long distances and sometimes being ridiculed by people in minibuses or on the road, who recognised him as a Catholic priest.

The service he could offer the Church was for him a priority and this led him to embark on the task of translating into Amharic an almost complete volume of the documents of Vatican II, the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Code of Canon Law of the Oriental Churches.

He had an accident in 2011: his foot was crushed by a minibus against a kerbstone and, unfortunately, Fr Seyum could no longer walk long distances and had to agree to be assigned to the Provincial House on 1 August 2012.

He had a second accident, a fall, on 12 July 2020, which left him bedridden for the rest of his life, in continual pain. When he was discharged from the hospital, he was happy to return home to his confreres where he was lovingly assisted by some nurses but he soon had to come to terms with a general weakness which caused some damage to his memory and coordination.

During the final days of his life, perhaps unconsciously, he refused all food or drink. He prepared for the call of the redeemer which came on the national Marian solemnity of the Dormition, Friday 29 January 2021, at 16.50.

The funeral Mass was celebrated at the provincial house and presided by Cardinal Berhaneyesus with more than 20 concelebrants from various parishes and congregations. There were also many Sisters and lay people, among whom were some relatives of Fr. Seyum. He was buried in the cemetery of Saints Peter and Paul in Addis Ababa

In his homily, Fr. Sisto Agostini, the provincial superior, asked Fr. Seyum, as the “grandfather” of the young Ethiopian Combonis, to pray for the gift of new vocations for the Institute, and for Ethiopia as well as for a dignified life for mothers, children, the elderly and the very young.

Many testimonies were received among which was that of Mons. Menghesteab Tesfamariam, the Metropolitan Archbishop of Asmara who said, among other things: “For me, Fr. Seyum was an exemplary priest who had a spirit of poverty and humility. I especially admired his honesty and frankness”.

In his long message, Fr. Tesfaye Tadesse, Superior General, thanked Fr. Seyum for his life of faith, his spirit of research and the vast knowledge he had of history, geography, archaeology, agriculture and botany as well as for his great service of translation, translating and revising already translated texts and for his profound sense of communion, especially with those who suffer. (*Fr. Sisto Agostini*)

Fr. Candido Poli (11.12.1923 – 24.05.2021)

Fr. Candido Poli died on Monday 24 May, due to a heart problem. He was 97 and lived in the Comboni community of São José do Rio Preto, in Brazil where he spent almost 51 years of his missionary life in various communities, all of them in the North East, devoting himself mainly to ministry.

He was born in Villa del Conte (Padua, Italy) on 11 December 1923. He entered the Florence Comboni novitiate where he made his first profession on 7 October 1943. He first went to do the scholasticate in

Venegono, then in Verona and then back to Venegono where he made his final profession on 24 September 1948. The following year, on 11 June 1949, he was ordained priest in Milan. After some years in Pesaro as the local bursar, he was appointed to North East Brazil and the parish of Alto Parnaíba as local superior and then to Rio de Janeiro as procurator.

In 1962, he was appointed to Portugal with the first group of Comboni missionaries to go to that province. He worked there for 16 years, first in Viseu and then in Maia, Famalicão and at the parish of Paço de Arcos. In 1979, he returned to Brazil where he stayed until the end.

The provincial superior of Brazil, Fr. Dario Bossi, communicating the news of the death of Fr. Candido, said: "He had a hard-headedness that he must have inherited from our Founder, Saint Daniel Comboni. However, when he realised that this caused some difficulty or unease, he knew well how to regain friendships by sharing some of his memories, all of which were very human and beautiful, of his family, of some stages or episodes of the mission or of the funniest events of his life".

A few years ago, he wrote: "For two years now, I have been in the Comboni House for the Sick and Elderly, with six others. I am the first in years (93 but – and I am not ashamed to admit it – also the biggest joker. From time to time I have to tell a few jokes; all of them clean, of course! My slogan is: happiness is the best therapy! Good humour keeps the doctor away! Those who come to confession do so with bowed heads and a hard face; they go away with heads high and smiling, ready for another battle!"

Fr. Candido often spoke of the great pastoral challenges during the beginnings of the mission in the "sertão" of North East Brazil. For example, the time of the "desobrigas" (Lenten confessions): the long journeys and visits, how hard it was to find water and the joy when it was at last found.

Speaking of the time when he was bursar of the Pesaro community, he said: "Few in number and with many limits, the Apostolic School in Pesaro was due to close due to the water supply from the city which only rarely reached Villa Baratoff. A monk once prophesied that water would be found behind the chapel but, having dug down ten metres they found nothing and stopped digging. Even though we had a bit of a debt of eight hundred thousand lire, I asked the bank for a loan and we drilled a further twenty metres through solid rock. We found plenty of water! My mouth waters to think of the missionary pastoral now being done in that house! In Brazil, too, there is the problem of water

and so we have to dig a well; I dug it myself and found water 17 metres down! But I found abundant faith, especially among people who saw a priest perhaps once a year”.

A few days before he died, Fr. Candido tested positive for the Covid-19 and so his funeral was celebrated with a reduced number attending. On that occasion, Fr. Dario thanked the confreres – especially Frs. Francesco Lenzi and Sandoval da Luz – who accompanied Fr. Candido during his final years, always making him feel cared for and loved”.

LET US PRAY FOR OUR BELOVED DEAD

THE MOTHER: Walete Mariam, of Fr. Melaku Tafesse Amente (LP).

THE BROTHER: Tarcisio, of Fr. Renato Modonesi (I).

THE SISTERS: Angela, of Fr. Hans Maneschg (DSP); Crecencia, of Bro. Luis Gil Dávila; Giuseppina, of Fr. Giacomo Molinari (I).

THE COMBONI MISSIONARY SISTERS: Sr. M. Vincenza Romele, Sr. Mariangela Biffi, Sr. Francalisa Magon.

THE SECULAR COMBONI MISSIONARY: Sr. Maria Celeste Moreira de Paiva.

MISSIONARI COMBONIANI - VIA LUIGI LILIO 80 - ROMA
