

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

**GENERAL NOTES OF THE 58TH General Consulta
Rome 17 May-23 June 2021**

Appointments

Appointment of Mons. Menghsteab Tesfamariam

On 4 May 2021, the Holy Father appointed our confrere Mons. Menghsteab Tesfamariam as Archbishop of Asmara President of the Bishops of Eritrea and member of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches. Our congratulations and good wishes.

Appointment of the General Archivist pro tempore

The General Council wishes to thank Fr. Piergiorgio Prandina on behalf of the whole Institute for the task he has accomplished with sacrifice, dedication and competence for more than fourteen years. The GC appoints Fr. Umberto Pescantini as General Archivist pro tempore, as from 1 June 2021. It also wishes to express its heartfelt thanks to Fr. Pescantini for having accepted this new office.

General Secretariat of Formation

Appointment for the Cotonou Novitiate

- The General Council has appointed **Fr. Akpako Parfait** as Father Master of the Cotonou Novitiate as from 1 July 2021.
- The General Council has appointed **Fr. Francisco de Matos Dias** as the *Socius* of the Father Master of the Cotonou Novitiate as from 1 July 2021.

Appointment of the Formator in the community of Granada

Fr. José Luis Román Medina has been appointed Formator of the Scholastics in the community of Granada as from 1 August 2021.

Journeying towards the XIX General Chapter

Telematic meetings in view of the Chapter

During the first half of June, two telematic meetings were held for the Precapitular Commission– 8 June – and the Chapter Delegates – 14 June. Before these two meetings, the GC decided to circulate a telematic questionnaire to all the Chapter delegates to gain a better understanding of the epidemiological situation in all the circumscriptions, the travelling conditions and the point reached in the process of preparation for the Chapter at circumscription level. What emerged was a quite reassuring picture from the point of view of the vaccination of Chapter members and access to vaccines around the time of the Chapter for any who might still need to be vaccinated. Any difficulty in moving to Rome would also seem to be marginal. As to the process of preparation, the picture is less flattering with only half of the circumscriptions in a sufficiently advanced stage of preparation. Uncertainty as to the date of the Chapter probably discouraged a more speedy preparation. Once this is decided, it is expected that the Chapter will regain momentum. **The CG encourages all the confreres to take in hand and complete the personal questionnaire – if they have not already done so – and send it to the Precapitular Commission before 31 July 2021** (send to: questionariocapitolo2021@gmail.com).

Orientations from the Chapter members

On 14 June, 64/69 of the Chapter members met telematically. After the presentation of the picture that emerged from the analysis of the questionnaire, a discussion was held with the necessary opinion poll so as to bring out the orientations of the delegates on some questions about which the GC must decide.

➤ One of the points was that of facilitating the Chapter: its postponement has made it impossible for Bro. Biemmi to attend. When asked if they still wanted an external facilitator for the Chapter, 86% of the votes confirmed this.

➤ As to the possibility of holding a Chapter telematically according to the conditions indicated by the Congregation for Consecrated Life, published on 28 May, the majority (52%) were against it. The remaining 48% said they were in favour of a Chapter in two phases: the first, a sort of assembly devised to gather all the information necessary – to be held telematically – and a second, aimed at discernment, decision-making and holding elections – to be attended in person.

- In reply to the question as to where to hold the Chapter, 71% preferred it be held in Rome, at the Generalate.
- As to the final question regarding the date when the Chapter is to be held, the indications expressed were more difficult to interpret: over the period of six months, from February 2022 to July 2022, no one month was clearly preferred except that of June which received the highest relative number of preferences (36%).

The decisions of the General Council

On the basis of this process of discernment in stages, the GC took its decisions; it decided to ask permission of the Congregation for religious (CIVCSVA) **to postpone the already convoked Chapter and to re-convoke it in Rome, at the House of the General Curia, from 1 to 30 June 2022.** A letter containing the official request has already been sent to the Prefect of the CIVCSVA and we are waiting for a reply. When, as expected, the reply confirms the decision, the GC will publish a new letter of convocation with all the details relative to the time frame of the process;

- ❖ The final dates for the presentation of reports to the General Administration (before 30 September);
- ❖ The conclusion of the preparation of the report of the General Council (before 31 October);
- ❖ The final dates for the presentation of the circumscription and continental reports (before 30 November);
- ❖ The first meeting in Rome of the Precapitular Commission (probably in January 2022).

As regards the reports of the Circumscriptions, Continents and the General Administration, the GC believes they should cover the life of the Institute up to September-October 2021, when the mandate of the GC would normally expire.

The choice of Rome has as its most desirable option the use of the Generalate House. If, by a stroke of bad luck, the epidemiological situation should render it impossible to guarantee the necessary social distancing and the use in general of the Chapter Hall, it will be necessary to choose a more suitable venue in the vicinity of Rome. The use of our house – if this were possible – would have unquestionable economic advantages, allowing us to use internally part of the resources made available for the Chapter by the budget of the General Administration, and so facilitate the economic sustainability of the Generalate. The choice of June 2022 also helps to avoid interference by the Chapter with other activities of the Centre for Ongoing Formation such as the CYOF, the ongoing formation of student confreres and specialisations. The CYOF will be held in an

abbreviated six-month form with the “Roman” phase ending at the end of May and the rest of the course being held outside Rome.

Electoral process of the Chapter – substitutes

A certain number of circumscriptions have not yet indicated their priest confrere substitutes since the candidates with a relative majority did not receive one third of the votes. The same applies, in all circumscriptions, to the Brothers. The next communication from the GC will give details of how to complete the electoral process, indicating the substitute delegates.

Comboni Social Forum

The GC thanks the Comboni Social Forum Commission of the Comboni Family for the three webinars that replaced the in-person assembly that ought to have taken place in Rome. The three meetings helped to deepen and value the work we do as the Comboni Family in the social pastoral field.

Laudato Si Action plan (LSAP)

At the request of Pope Francis, the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development has formulated a plan for the implementation of Laudato Si’ which aims to render all the Catholic communities of the world sustainable in the spirit of integral ecology before the end of 2030. The Plan proposes **specific paths** for different categories of communities, one of which is that of the religious Institutes. The Unions of Superiors General (**USG+UISG**) are **partners** of this Dicastery. The General Secretariat of the Mission has held webinars with all the continents / subcontinents to explain and study this proposal of the Dicastery. The GC is aware of how urgent and important it is to take this plan to heart. Without delay, we encourage the communities, circumscriptions and continents to become operative to grow in awareness concerning the relevance of this plan of action and to consider formally joining the LSAP platform.

Beatification of Fr. Giuseppe Ambrosoli postponed

Due to the epidemiological situation relative to the Covid-19 pandemic, it has become necessary to postpone the celebration of the beatification of our confrere Fr. Giuseppe Ambrosoli (originally scheduled for the Feast of Christ the King 2021, in Uganda). It would have been impossible for the family members of Fr. Ambrosoli and the representatives of the parish community of Ronago and of the diocese of Como to guarantee their presence in Uganda. The new date has

not yet been indicated by His Grace the Archbishop of Gulu but the ceremony ought to take place after Easter 2022.

Postponement of Episcopal Ordinations

For reasons relative to the epidemiological situation in Uganda, it has also been proposed to postpone “sine die” the Episcopal Ordination of our confrere Mons. Raphael Wokorach P’Mony at Nebbi (Uganda). The Episcopal ordination of Mons. Christian Carlassare has been postponed until he has completed his convalescence.

Meeting of the Comboni Family

Seeing the continuation of the Covid-19 pandemic, the General Councils of the Comboni Family met again via Zoom on the morning of 5 June. During the telematic encounter, different themes were discussed: foremost among them was the mapping of the experiences of social ministry and its possible evolution. The Councils then evaluated the commitments undertaken as the Comboni Family in the letter written together on the theme of collaboration: “Beyond collaboration: under the gaze of Comboni”.

MSC Chapter

The X Assembly of the Secular Comboni Missionaries will take place from 16 to 24 July inst. At the Diocesan House of Saint Fidenzio, Verona. We are united in spirit with our secular missionary sisters who will hold and live this important stage in their journey as an Institute and we pray that the Holy Spirit and the charism of St Daniel Comboni which unites us may accompany them in the discernment they must carry out. Fr. David Glenday will render the service of Facilitator of their General Assembly (Chapter). Fr General will preside at Holy Mass at the conclusion of the Assembly on 24 July at 11.00. He will bring to them the closeness and prayers of all Combonis.

Rule of Life

The Central Commission for the revision of the Rule of Life considers its work complete with the forwarding to the GC of the draft proposal for the revision of our Rule of Life. The Commission thanks the GC, the confrere consultants for all the riches they shared and all the confreres for the trust placed in them. The Commission hands over to the Precapitular Commission the work done on the original text in Italian and also the translations into French, English, Portuguese and Spanish. All confreres who so desire may access this document through their circumscription superiors. The Commission wishes all

the confreres and especially the Chapter members a happy continuation of the work for renewed Comboni missionary vitality.

Sustainability Fund

The GC is continuing the work of planning for the creation of the sustainability fund in the spirit of the previous General Chapter (CA 2015 n. 80). Therefore, the provinces of Europe and the NAP will shortly be invited to collaborate in the creation of this fund which will help us to share, with responsibility and commitment, the goods of the Institute to respond ever better to the needs of the mission.

Apostolic Constitution “Pascite gregem Dei”

On 23 May 2021, the solemnity of Pentecost, the Holy Father emitted an Apostolic Constitution entitled “Pascite Gregem Dei” which brings modifications to Book VI of the Code of Canon Law (CIC), on “**penal sanctions in the Church**”: “...I promulgate the revised text of Book VI of the Code of Canon Law as ordered and revised, in the hope that it will be an instrument for the good of souls and that its prescriptions will be applied by the Church’s pastors, whenever necessary, with justice and mercy, in the awareness that it is part of their ministry, as a duty of justice — an eminent cardinal virtue — to impose punishment when the good of the faithful demands it. ” (from the constitution).

The revised text of the CIC will come into effect on 8 December 2021. This revision is the outcome of the most recent documents of the Church on abuses and has the dual aim of sanctioning some new delictual figures and respond to the lack of clarity regarding the penal sanctions that must be applied in certain new situations of abuse verified in the Church. The corrections are an appeal to pastors to have recourse to the penal system when necessary, bearing in mind *the restoration of the demands of Justice, the amendment of the offence and the reparation of scandals.*

The GC invites the confreres to read the Apostolic Constitution and also the new text of Book VI of the CIC.

Covid-19 preventive measures

The epidemic exists and will continue for some time

It is necessary to be aware that we cannot hope for an immediate future that is Covid 19-free. Consequently, we need to learn how to live doing what we must alongside Covid 19; the sickness caused by the virus will, perhaps, be less serious due to the vaccines (we hope), but will still be present and capable of making itself felt here and there, creating continual and unforeseen obstacles to our plans. **But it is**

possible to coexist with the epidemic and minimise its consequences by consistently adopting some practices that must continue to be scrupulously observed, always:

- the correct use of face coverings that must cover the nose and mouth when with others, especially indoors;
- social distancing;
- keeping hands scrupulously clean.

None of these measures may be abandoned even during periods when the epidemic seems to have faded: new waves may start at any time as we are now seeing. If any of us behaves incorrectly, being careless regarding these measures, he should be aware that these measures are firstly for the protection of those among us who are most vulnerable rather than of oneself. **It is a matter of protecting one's neighbour!**

Resistance to vaccination among ourselves

A similar consideration also applies to vaccination. **The GC has been informed that a good number of confreres are opposed to vaccination.** For people like us, who are continually on the move, meet many people and are in close contact with the confreres **it is not possible – unless there is a doctor's explicit advice to the contrary – to refuse vaccination.** For those of us who have to travel, it is absolutely necessary to be vaccinated at the first opportunity: any doubts or objections to this must be set aside.

If possible one should be vaccinated with one of the vaccines recognised by the European Union; See the Internet for an updated list of recognised vaccines: (<https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/human-regulatory/overview/public-health-threats/coronavirus-disease-covid-19/treatments-vaccines/vaccines-covid-19/covid-19-vaccines-authorised>). It may be advisable to explain to those giving the vaccination that you have to travel to Europe. This applies especially to those due to take part in the CYOF, Priest and Brother students and, of course, to Chapter members. The possibility of the Chapter gathering and taking place depends upon the possibility that the delegates travel to Rome and their ability to stay together for some weeks without our assembly becoming a catalyst for the spread of the sickness among ourselves.

Each confrere must keep up to date in his own country regarding the evolution of the regulations about the vaccination passport which is coming into use in Europe and will be adopted by more and more countries.

The Chapter members (and all confreres who have to come to Rome): **it is necessary to monitor the Internet sites of the Italian Embassy which regularly publishes updates**, as the epidemiological situation evolves both in the country of departure and in Italy concerning the measures to be observed. **It is advisable that in each circumscription there be a delegate who accepts this task.** Any questions for which, after accurate research, no answer is found, may be shared with the Precapitular Commission and/or the General Secretariat.

Perpetual professions

Sc. Agede Simon (GH)	Tabligbo (T)	11.06.2021
Sc. Houinsou V. A. Saurel (BEN)	Tabligbo (T)	11.06.2021

Ordinations to the priesthood

Fr. Chichole Paul Makokha (KE)	Indangalasia (KE)	11.06.2021
Fr. Agbonou Kouami A. (René) (TG)	Kegue-Lomé (T)	26.06.2021
Fr. Azameti Komi (Benoît) (TG)	Kegue-Lomé (T)	26.06.2021

Holy Redeemer Guild

July	01 – 15 KE	16 – 31 M
August	01 – 15 MO	16 – 31 MZ
September	01 – 15 NAP	16 – 30 PCA

Prayer intentions

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

August – That in all people the sentiments of fraternity and of belonging to the same human family may be strengthened so that we may build up together the values of justice and peace. *Lord hear us.*

September – That the celebration of the XIX General Chapter of the Comboni Missionaries may light up their way in humble service to the mission of the Church. *Lord hear us.*

CYOF

Programme

With the decision of the General Council regarding the date of the next General Chapter of our Institute, it is also possible to communicate the organisational phase of the next Comboni year of

Ongoing Formation (CYOF). It will be carried out in line with the proposal that was sent out in good time to the circumscription superiors and which we now reaffirm:

- Given that the current language of most of the activities of the Course will be Italian, it is necessary that all participants have sufficient knowledge of this language, to gain the best possible benefit from their participation. The study of Italian may begin early in September and continue until Christmas.
- The activities proper to the Course will start on 3 January 2022 and continue until the end of June. The final part will be held outside Rome. The Ignatian month is planned at the end of the Course but for those unable to attend or who do not feel up to it, there will be a course of spiritual exercises.
- We would ask all the non-European participants to start the formalities for acquiring a long-stay visa for religious purposes. For this reason, they are asked to send to the General Secretary, Bro Daniele Giusti, photocopies of the main pages of their passports, also indicating the approximate date of their intended arrival in Rome.
- We do not have the email addresses of all the participants; we therefore ask the circumscription superiors to make sure that those taking part in the Course know this programme and we ask everyone to contact Fr. Fermo Bernasconi at the following address: fermoberna@gmail.com.
- We are aware that we are still in a pandemic and we greatly hope that the Course can be held without difficulty. To facilitate the smooth running of the Course, it would be very useful for all the participating confreres to be vaccinated against Covid-19. This, of course, depends upon the possibilities available in each place.

MEETINGS VIA ZOOM

Meeting of the General Councils of the Comboni Family

The annual meeting of the General Councils of the Comboni family – Comboni Missionaries, Comboni Missionary Sisters, Secular and Lay Comboni Missionaries – was held on Saturday 5 June, from 9.00 to 13.00, telematically. The opening prayer was prepared by the Secular Comboni Missionaries.

It was a morning of sharing about the journey that each of the Institutes is living in this particular moment, still so deeply marked by the Covid-19 pandemic. The main themes followed by the gathering were the presentation of the ongoing process of Mapping social

ministry in the Comboni Family and the evaluation of common commitments undertaken with the letter of 10 October 2017, entitled “Beyond collaboration: under the gaze of Comboni”.

Sr. Ida Colombo and Bro. Alberto Lamana gave an up-to-date report on the mapping process, starting from the origins of the proposal and up to the presentation of data and its publication online on combonimission.net.

The dialogue that followed contributed to recalling and clarifying the objectives of the mapping and to valuing this path as a valid journey as we continue to build bridges of collaboration between the different Comboni realities, in line with the long experience we have lived since Nairobi, in 2007, at the Social Forum of the Comboni Family which took place contemporaneously with the World Social Forum.

After a brief pause, the lay Comboni Missionaries Alberto de la Portilla and Marco Piccione guided a reflection verifying the progress made hitherto, bearing in mind the seven collaboration commitments mentioned in the letter of 2017. Finally, reference was made to two meaningful events for the whole Comboni Family: The General Assembly of the Secular Comboni Missionaries and the XIX General Chapter of the Comboni Missionaries. All are committed to accompanying these events with their prayers.

The meeting ended with a prayer led by Fr Jeremias dos Santos Martins and the hope that the next reunion may be held in person.

Webinar – ASCAF

On 18 June a previously planned webinar was held to share information and experiences relative to ecology and to present the «Laudato Si action Platform » (LSAP) promoted by the Dicastery for the Promotion of Integral Human Development. Around 15 confreres from the Comboni circumscriptions of Francophone Africa (ASCAF) participated, among whom were the superiors of the circumscriptions of Chad, Congo and Togo-Ghana Benin.

The webinar had three phases. The first was a sharing of past and ongoing experiences from each circumscription in the field of integral ecology. The guiding theme found in all these experiences is the word “sensitisation”. All the circumscriptions were involved in sensitisation, though with different projects and methods.

The second was the presentation of the Laudato Si Action Platform (LSAP) by Fr. Joseph Mumbere.

Finally, there was a *brainstorming* of proposals of possible ways of involving the circumscriptions in the global ecclesial movement for

ecological conversion in the spirit of *Laudato Si* and the development of integral ecology, following the initiatives of the LSAP.

The *brainstorming* gave rise to various ideas, one of which was the need to sensitise the confreres at the base, so that all are helped to take up the message of the Pope; the importance of preparing confreres in these areas of ongoing formation and lastly, the need to read the encyclical to gain greater awareness and sensitivity. By making the message our own, we will be able to transmit it more easily and ensure the same knowledge and vision in others.

CONGO

Visit of Cardinal Fridolin to the Scholasticate of Kinshasa

The “Bienheureux Isidore Bakanja” Scholasticate of the Comboni Missionaries in Kinshasa (DRC) has had the joy, on Tuesday 1 June 2021, of receiving Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo, Ofm, Archbishop of Kinshasa. At the invitation of Fr Léonard Ndjadi Ndjate, Provincial of the Congo, Cardinal Ambongo came to meet the community of the Scholasticate. Three especially important events were at the heart of the visit: the anniversary of the foundation of the Institute on 1 June 1867 (154 years ago); the Golden Jubilee (50 years ago) of the priestly ordination of Fr Roberto Ardini and the Silver Jubilee (25 years ago) of the Scholasticate.

The Cardinal arrived at about 16.00. After an exchange of cordial greetings and once he had been welcomed by Fr Eugène Yao, Formator and Superior of the Scholasticate, the scholastics, together with some confreres and Sisters based in Kinshasa met in the large hall to attend the conference given by the Cardinal. The conference was attended by the Congo Provincial, the Scholastics and their formators, Comboni priests, Brothers and Sisters as well as the Cardinal’s secretary, his master of ceremonies and sacristan.

In his address, the Cardinal expressed his joy at meeting the Comboni Missionaries to celebrate the important events that increased his joy even further. He thanked God for the gift of the missionary vocation and for the services rendered by the Comboni Family to the Church in Kinshasa. Starting with the figure of Saint Justin, a philosopher and apologist of whom the Church keeps the memoria on 1 June, the Archbishop presented the spiritual journey of the saint, speaking of the search for God (*quaerens Deum*) summarised in four aspects: the desire for God, the search for God, the acceptance of God and the service of God and humanity. It is these aspects that enable us to develop intimacy with God and determine the quality of our religious

life. He ended by inviting the scholastics to attend to their formation and to “become full of” theological knowledge with the aim of transforming it into pastoral service for the good of the people and of the Church. By doing so, all they bring to the peoples to whom they are sent will be an expression of their profound encounter with God.

After the conference, there was a short break to take some family photos. The Cardinal then presided over the Eucharistic celebration concelebrated by six priests and served by Rev David Nyinga, a Comboni deacon. In the course of his homily, Cardinal Ambongo again spoke of the joy with which we offer the Eucharistic sacrifice to thank God for the happy events that unite us. He greeted all who agreed to join with the Combonis to share the joy of these events. While thanking the Comboni missionaries for organising the feast, he noted that the celebration of a jubilee brings us back to the commitments accepted before God, the Church and society.

Fr Roberto, speaking at the end of the Mass, mentioned three icons that sum up his life as a missionary priest: his sandals, his rucksack and *pilipili*. The provincial thanked His Eminence for participating in the celebration, for his commitment to justice, peace and the development of the Congo and also for his confidence in the Comboni Missionaries.

The two new parishes erected in Bibwa: Saint Paul VI and Saint Pauleen, and the present leadership of the POM entrusted to the Comboni Missionaries, are most evident expressions of this. When Mass was over, a fraternal dinner was shared by His Eminence and his assistants. In memory of the day, the Provincial presented the Cardinal with the book “La Famille Combonienne en prière” and the scholasticate, for its part, presented him with some typically African cloth. We thank our pastor for his visit as he came to confirm us in the faith and to strengthen us in our missionary service. Long live the Mission! (*Fr Léonard Ndjadi Ndjate and Sc. Jean Koffi Attigan*)

Integral ecology training session

From 21 to 24 June 2021, the National Episcopal Conference of the Congo (CENCO), through the Episcopal Commission for Natural resources (CERN), held a training session for bishops on the subject of integral ecology at the Congo Caritas Centre, on the theme “The Church in DRC faced with the challenges of the environment and natural resources for the protection of the Congo Basin and the protection of our Common Home”.

Its aim was to promote an effective commitment by the local Churches for the protection of the Congo Basin, the second lung of the planet

after Amazonia. In particular, the session had the purpose of increasing the potential of the bishop members of CENCO on questions relating to the management of natural resources, the environment, climate change and advocacy, to render them capable of defining broadly their diocesan pastoral on questions of the environment and natural resources in view of the betterment of the lives of the inhabitants, especially in the context of the impact of the Covid-19 epidemic.

Representatives of the state, delegates of civil society, representatives of public and private companies, students of the sciences and the organisations of the Church at local and international levels were invited to take part and to lead the conferences. The interventions sought to take stock of the situation of the sectors under examination (mining, oil, forests and biodiversity, water and energy, land and climate change), so as to identify challenges at local, national, regional and international levels with respect to the legal framework of the DRC and international instruments (Accords, Resolutions etc.), and propose necessary action and recommendations to the Church. There were also stands where some businesses, administrative structures, universities, ONGs and research centres were invited to help the participants become familiar with the products of their work. It was in this context that the Laudato Si Missionary centre took part in the session.

Also present, apart from the bishop members of CENCO, were the General Secretaries of the CENC and the ACEAC, the executive secretaries of the Episcopal Commissions, the director of the POM, the members of USUMA-ASUMA and of the UCC-IPCM, the director of the liaison office of CENCO with parliament, the Secretaries of the Provincial Episcopal Assemblies and the focal points of the CDRN at the ecclesiastical province level. (*Fr. Emmanuel Kasika Kambale*, Vice Director of the Laudato Si Missionary Centre in Kinshasa)

ETHIOPIA

Attack on a bus

Our scholastic Esayas Yoseph, who recently made his first profession, was returning from a holiday at home with his family in the town of Dembidollo in the far north-west of the Federation when the bus in which he was travelling was forced to stop at a place about 20 km from the city. The 40 passengers were ordered to alight and then robbed of their personal effects as they passed in front of a line of young armed men.

Esayas endangered his life simply by uttering a few timid words of objection: a pistol was violently thrust against his mask. However, his reaction distracted the robbers' attention from his passport and Comboni cross which he managed to keep. A few minutes later, the bus was in flames and the passengers, safe and sound, were able to continue their journey on foot along the road to Dembidollo. It was about four o'clock in the morning and still dark.

Esayas also walked with the others and they all thanked God, Allah, that they were still alive, prayed for peace and shared stories like that of Esayas' father who had suffered several attacks and was even robbed of his money. We join them in thanking God!

ITALIA

Dictionary of the Cultural History of the Church in Latin America

The Pontifical Council for Culture has launched a new initiative of its kind: the publication "online" of a *Diccionario de Historia Cultural de la Iglesia en América Latina* in the hope of being able to publish it one day in printed form. The project began in 2006 after a meeting in Lima with the representatives of all the Episcopal Conferences of Latin America and the Caribbean. The initiative was promoted by the Dicastery of the Pontifical Council for Culture also at the behest of the Superior Authority. It was supported by the Presidents of the Council, first by Cardinal Paul Poupard and later by the present President Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, and by the various Secretaries of the Dicastery, starting with Fr. Bernard Ardura and the present Delegate Mons. Carlos Azevedo, with the collaboration of various heads of the Latin American section of the afore-mentioned Pontifical Council. In 2006, Comboni Fr. Fidel González Fernández, a former teacher of History at the Pontifical Urbanian and Gregorian Universities, was called to take charge of the project.

The scope of the Dictionary

The Dictionary is intended to provide an easily accessed source that shows the contribution that "The Christian Event" made to the identity, unity and originality of Latin America. In the ambit of Latin American historiography, there exist many works of cultural, economic, political and religious synthesis and analysis, both in individual countries and in the continent as a whole. One clearly evident lacuna is the lack of an instrument properly concerned with

the *Catholic Event* in the cultural formation of the continent in the past five centuries.

The present situation of the dictionary

When the Dictionary was presented at the Vatican in December 2014, it had 650 articles. At the end of June 2021, it had reached 1525. During the Covid-19 pandemic, 145 new articles were incorporated and the format was updated to render it easier to use.

The number of consultations is at present around twenty thousand per month.

Technically, the Dictionary has been placed online and served by a technical team from the UPAEP (The Autonomous Popular University of the State of Puebla, Mexico), which has now collaborated with the Pontifical Council for Culture for about 25 years.

The collaboration is given gratis by the collaborators and the UPAEP. To consult the dictionary, go to: <https://dhial.org/>

KENYA

Priestly ordination

On Friday 11 June, the Feast of the Sacred Heart, the Comboni Missionaries working in Kenya and the entire Institute were blessed with the gift of a new Comboni priest.

Archbishop Hubertus Van Megen, Apostolic Nuncio to Kenya and South Sudan presided at the inspiring Mass and ordained Fr Paul Chichole Makokha, flanked by the local Ordinary Mons. Joseph Obanyi Sagwe. Archbishop Hubertus surprised many when he greeted those present in Luhya, the local language and then leading the Mass in Kiswahili, the national language of Kenya.

Fr. Paul, the newly-ordained priest, comes from Mumias in the diocese of Kakamega, about 400 km from Nairobi, the capital. The ordination took place at Fr Paul's parish of Our Lady of the Assumption in Indagalasia. The parish, created three years ago and staffed by the Vincentian Fathers, hosted the ceremony with pride and extreme care.

Also present were more than a thousand people full of joy, a large number of local priests, Sisters, Brothers and members of the Comboni Family. The protocols and fear of the Covid-19 were somewhat mitigated by the fact that the Mass was held outdoors. The sun scorched the area of the parish but the participants were protected by large tents.

In his homily, the Nuncio exhorted the new priest to be a father, not a functionary, a father who gives his life for many, as Jesus did. A father

who carries out his missionary task with commitment after the example of St Daniel Comboni who gave his life in Sudan.

He also reminded Fr Paul and explained to the people that the Comboni Missionaries work in difficult places and that a long period of formation and a deep life of prayer are therefore required. The Nuncio also emphasised the fact that, despite many difficulties, the Comboni missionaries have never given up and encouraged Fr Paul to emulate the attitude of Comboni towards the challenges of the missionary life.

Fr Austin, the Provincial, in his address at the end of the Mass, thanked Fr Paul's parents for having given their son to the Comboni Missionaries. He advised them not to renounce their role as parents because Fr Paul, even though he is now a priest, still needs moral and spiritual support.

He also thanked the Nuncio for agreeing to ordain Fr Paul and expressed his gratitude to Bishop Joseph Obanyi Sagwe, the Parish priest and the parish community. In turn, Mons. Obanyi Sagwe thanked the Nuncio for agreeing to come to his diocese and officiate at the ordination ceremony. Responding to Fr Austin, he said that the Comboni Missionaries are indeed free to seek more vocations in his diocese.

The announcement by Fr Austin that Fr Paul was appointed to Kenya and assigned to work at the parish of Lokichar (Turkana), where he did his missionary service was received with great joy by those of the faithful of Lokichar who were present. (*Fr Andrew Bwalya mccj*)

TOGO-GHANA-BENIN

Feast of the Sacred Heart, celebration of two events

“Celebrating the Sacred Heart of Jesus means celebrating two events: firstly, the unshakable love of God for humanity and, secondly, the response of humanity transformed by this love, to God”.

With these words Fr Timothée Hounaké-Kouassi, the provincial, began his homily during the solemn Mass at which he presided in the parish church of the Holy Spirit in Tabligbo (Togo), concelebrated by all the confreres working in Togo.

This year, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the solemnity of the Sacred Heart, in the province, was celebrated in each of the zones.

After the office of Lauds sung by the Comboni postulants, the confreres meditated on the message of the General Council for the occasion presented by Fr Anicet Maté Labite, formator of the postulancy. The culminating moment of the feast was the Eucharistic

celebration during which Saurel Houinsou and Simon Agede professed perpetual vows.

In his homily, the provincial emphasised how the feast of the Sacred Heart “is meant to have us rediscover our relationship with God”. Commenting on the second reading of the Mass (Eph 3,8-12.14-19) in which St Paul invites the Ephesians to be rooted and founded upon love, he affirmed that this is the only condition for “understanding the length, the height and the depth ... of the love of God. Only by doing so can we be signs for our world of today”.

In order to succeed, “we must go ahead fearlessly, relying on the Holy Spirit, on the life testimony of the confreres who preceded us, some of whom are buried in the land of our mission here in Togo-Ghana-Benin. We must also commit ourselves more to daily prayer and spiritual accompaniment”.

Before addressing the newly-professed, Fr Timothée mentioned two characteristics of the Heart of Jesus: healing and a source of grace. It is in this heart that their consecration finds its meaning. They are invited to consecrate themselves entirely and without reserve because “A half-hearted consecration brings no joy”.

At the end of the Mass, each confrere present received the Comboni Cross from the hands of the provincial.

UGANDA

Silver Jubilee of priesthood

The provincial superior of Uganda Fr Kiwanuka Achilles Kasozi has invited all the confreres to join in prayers of thanksgiving for Fr John Mungereza who, on 22 June 2021, celebrated the 25th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood with the following message: “Dear John, we cannot be with you in person but, since no roadblock, curfew or checkpoint can stop prayer, we unite with you in lifting our hearts up to God in a prayer of thanksgiving and praise. God willing, when the Covid-19 passes into history, we shall gather to celebrate this great gift of God which is your priesthood. May the Lord bless you”. We all make these sentiments our own.

IN PACE CHRISTI

Fr Mansueto Zorzato (26.11.1930 – 27.04.2021)

“May the Lord console us all at the death of our dear Abba Mansueto Zorzato, the Novice Master of many of us local Comboni Missionaries.

May Abba Mansueto rest in the peace of the Lord in Hawassa where he lived and served God, the Church and the people for many decades". With these words, Superior General Fr Tesfaye Tadesse began the long message he wrote on the death of Fr Mansueto.

Fr Mansueto was born in Solesino, in the province of Padua, on 26 November 1930. He entered the Venegono novitiate and made his first profession in Gozzano on 9 September 1949. He went to Rebbio for the scholasticate, then to Carraia and the postulancy in Padua where he made his final profession on 9 September 1955; he was ordained priest in Milan on 26 May 1956. After a few years in Crema as vocations promoter, he was sent to Sunningdale to study English and was then appointed to Ethiopia where he arrived in 1971, and where he spent his entire missionary life.

In the words of Fr Tesfaye:

"You were a man of faith. One of the things we learned by living with you was that you were a real man of God in the habit of spending hours in prayer in the chapel. This was the fruit of your deep faith that made you calm, patient and full of hope, even when things were difficult. To some of us you seemed too calm while those around you were disturbed. But this came from the deep faith you had in God and His loving intervention.

Your life of discipline and serious commitment as a consecrated Comboni Missionary priest was an example and inspiration for many of us young Comboni Missionaries. You were very much centred upon what you were called to be. You were calm and reserved. At times, you seemed aloof but we discovered that you were aware of things and showed concern and interest in finding solutions to problems and that you liked to intercede and pray.

In your many years of service as parish priest, local superior, master of novices, provincial superior, spiritual director and confessor, it was evident that you were a man of profound wisdom. You practised and helped others to learn the sacred tradition of discernment. Thank you for your deep spiritual wisdom.

Even though you were mainly involved in the internal services of direction, formation and spiritual direction, you were also very much involved in pastoral work. Even when you were sick, you still offered to help in pastoral work.

You helped many people and showed them the charity of God, even sharing whatever resources you had. But you did things, as the Gospel says, without publicity or showing off. You were discreet and humble with no need of the praise of others. You wisely helped the

poor without making them dependent and you did not like them to think it was you who helped them.

Dear Abba Mansueto, pray for all the sick and those dying of Covid-19. Please continue to pray and interceded for our country of Ethiopia and for its people whom you loved. Pray for peace and reconciliation in the different parts of Ethiopia where there is war and conflict”.

Fr. Mansueto had already been ill for some time. He fell victim to the Coronavirus and passed away in Hawassa on 27 April 2021.

Fr Antonio Ino (25.06.1930 – 02.06.2021)

Fr Antonio was born on 25 June 1930, at Lacedonia, in the province of Avellino (Italy). Three years after completing secondary school, he entered the Comboni novitiate in Gozzano where he took first vows on 5 August 1955. He was then sent for the scholasticate to the seminary of Viseu: “I had to attend the Diocesan Theological Seminary – he writes – work as a prefect, study theology ... and, of course, learn the language. For four years that was my life!”. On 5 August 1958, he took final vows and, on 29 June 1959, he was ordained priest in Viseu Cathedral. After his ordination, he remained in Portugal for eighteen years in different posts: Vice-rector, spiritual director, superior, formator and mission appeals organiser.

“I was sorry to receive the news of the death of Fr Antonio –

Fr. Jeremias dos Santos Martins wrote: he was a personal friend of mine and of my family and I greatly esteemed him. My father used to be very pleased to welcome him and offer him hospitality as his presence was always pleasant and full of wisdom.

I first met him when he was the superior of the Maia community (junior seminary) when I was about sixteen. There were many of us and he, on Sunday mornings, used to give us a meditation. It was always very concrete as it touched upon the problems of adolescence and responded to the disquiet we were going through at that particular time. We all found him interesting and we happily took part in those meetings because Fr Antonio was not only very concrete but also entertaining when he illustrated with examples what he was explaining. He was a good communicator. He used to say: ‘I make be short on ideas but never on words!’”.

In 1973, Fr Antonio was appointed to Mozambique where he remained – apart from a year he spent in Rome doing the Renewal Course – until 2003. We may say that his name left its mark on the missionary history of evangelisation in this country where he worked for about 30 years.

He spent the first ten years in Buzi, in Beira diocese where he experienced “The independence of Mozambique. Those were unforgettable days of joy, happiness ... and freedom (25 June 1975). In 1977, the terrible civil war began. Attacks, destruction, massacres, robberies, escapes by night, kidnappings, hunger ... nationalisation. Up until 1984, I lived alone in the sacristy. Fortunately, there was a group of four Comboni Sisters who rented a house among the people after the nationalisation”. From 1984 to 1988, I worked in Beira to start the middle diocesan seminary. In 1988, I returned to Italy for a year “To pull myself together and prepare for the formation of Mozambican Comboni postulants”. He worked there from 1990 to 1994.

From that period until 2003, he was the spiritual director in the major seminary of St Augustine (philosophical diocesan seminary), at Matola: “In those days – he wrote – there was a multitude of diocesan seminarians!” Most of the Mozambican bishops and priests knew him very well from his time in that role which lasted many years.

Fr Antonio was later re-assigned to Viseu in Portugal, where he remained for the rest of his life, devoting himself especially to the ministry of the confessional. Many priests, bishops and laypeople would come to him; they especially appreciated his counsel.

“He was a cheerful man – Fr Jeremias again writes – generous, attentive and always well-disposed, a confrere and a genuine Comboni Missionary. In my case, he was a travelling companion, a friend, a counsellor at the more difficult times in my ministry, especially during the years following the peace accord and national reconstruction in Mozambique. Those were times of great uncertainty when it was necessary to take decisions with an eye on the future”.

Fr Antonio died at 8.30 am on 2 June, at the Comboni community of Viseu. He would have celebrated his 91st birthday on 25 June.

LET US PRAY FOR OUR BELOVED DEAD

THE FATHER: Basilio, of Bro. Castro Jayson (Mario) Torregosa (C).

THE MOTHER: Ameteledet-Abraha-Amine, of Fr. Merke Zemicael Tesfazion (I).

THE BROTHERS: Raffaele, of Fr. Claudio Altieri (†); Alfonso, of Bro. Fernando Cesaro (I); Giuliano, of Fr. Aldo Pozza (NAP).

THE SISTERS: Anna, of Fr. Giuseppe Puttinato (†); Angiolina, of Fr. Giacomo Molinari (I); Cecilia, of Fr. Enzo Balasso (EC).

THE COMBONI MISSIONARY SISTER: Sr. Maria Casarotto.

THE SECULAR COMBONI MISSIONARIES: Rita Alberti, Pasqua Berloco.

MISSIONARI COMBONIANI - VIA LUIGI LILIO 80 - ROME
