

# Familia Comboniana

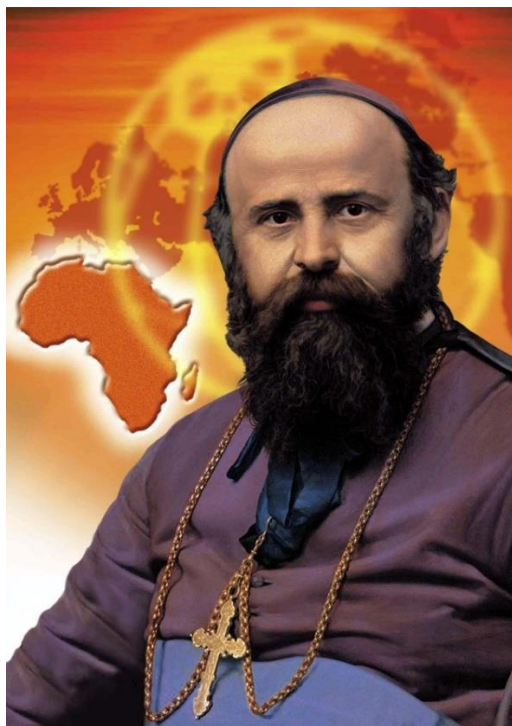
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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES OF THE HEART OF JESUS

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811

October 2022



*The thought that we sweat and die for the love of Jesus Christ and for the salvation of the most abandoned souls in the world is too sweet for us to be frightened away from this great undertaking.*

**10 October – St Daniel Comboni**

## GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

### Perpetual professions

Sc. Valverde Arce Byron      S. Luís Petén/PCA      30.09.2022

### Ordinations

Fr. Manuel Novais Quembo      Chemba/MO      01.10.2022

Fr. Moisés Zacarias Daniel      Chemba/MO      01.10.2022

### Holy Redeemer Guild

October      01 – 07 RCA      08 – 15 TCH      16 – 31 RSA

November      01 – 15 SS      16 – 30 T

### Prayer Intentions

**October** – Let us pray for the XXI General Chapter of the Comboni Missionary Sisters, that after 150 years, transformed by the Charism, they may live as Missionary Disciples sent to the existential peripheries. *Lord hear us.*

**November** – For the young people, the present and future of our societies, that they may discover their vocations and place them at the service of the weakest. *Lord hear us.*

### Comboni Liturgical Calendar

#### OCTOBER

**1** St Teresa of the Child Jesus

Virgin and Doctor of the Church

*Patron of the missions*

Feast

**10** St Daniel Comboni, Bishop

*Founder of the Comboni Family*

Solemnity

**20** Blessed Davide Okelo and Gildo Irwa

Martyrs

Opt. memorial

### Meaningful anniversaries

#### OCTOBER

**1** St Teresa of the Child Jesus

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <p><b>10</b> St Daniel Comboni, Bishop<br/><i>Founder of the Comboni Family</i><br/>Italy, Khartoum, South Sudan,</p> | <p>Solemnity<br/>Curia, Egypt</p>     |
| <p><b>12</b> Nossa Senhora Aparecida</p>  | <p>Brazil</p>                         |
| <p><b>16</b> Santa Margherita Maria<br/>Alacoque, virgin</p>  |                                       |
| <p><b>19</b> Santi Giovanni di Brébeuf<br/>and Isaac Jogues, priests and companions,<br/>martyrs</p>                  | <p>NAP (United States and Canada)</p> |
| <p><b>20</b> Blessed David Okelo e Gildo Irwa<br/>martyrs, opt. memorial.</p>   | <p>Northern Uganda</p>                |

### **Comboni Liturgical Calendar**

#### **NOVEMBER**

Commemoration of deceased confreres, relatives and benefactors

**Date** yet to be fixed

### **Meaningful anniversaries**

#### **NOVEMBER**

**21** Madonna del Quinche Ecuador

### **Publications**

**Vittorio Mottin, edited by**, *Dom Aldo Gerna. Un cammino profetico*, Etabeta, June 2022. The book – a biography and testimonies – is in thanksgiving for the 90 years of Mons. Gerna, a Valtellinese by birth, a Brazilian by choice. “I have presumed too much – the author of the prologue writes – and I apologise, by trying to enter into the life of a bishop in this short book. However, I could not fail to keep the memory of a person visited by the Grace of God”.

**Giuseppe Crea, mccj, and Aureliano Pacciolla, edited by**, *Logoterapia e psicodiagnosi*, ed. Alpes, 2022. The aim of this book is to contribute to psychodiagnoses starting from a humanistic-existential approach centred upon a sense of life and logotherapy, by Viktor Frankl.

## BRAZIL

### **Seventy years of Comboni presence**

During the last weekend of September, celebrations were held for the 70th anniversary of the presence of the Comboni Missionaries in Brazil. An emblematic context of the urban peripheries was chosen – the District of Sapopemba, in São Paulo – one of the areas in which our mission was most challenged and was most able to respond prophetically.

Numerically significant delegations came from the states of Minas Gerais and Paraná and good representation from Maranhão. The families of Sapopemba welcomed the more than one hundred visitors opening the celebrations with a moment of celebration and dances, on the evening of Saturday 24 September.

On Sunday morning, with about 300 people participating, a debate was held on theme of “The Mission of the Church in the Peripheries”, in the presence of deputy and human rights activist Juliana Cardoso and Professor Fernando Altemeyer.

In the afternoon, there was a Eucharistic celebration enriched with symbols, memories and surprises, thanks to the contribution of all the communities present. A thousand copies were distributed of an illustrated booklet on Comboni History, the 2023 Comboni Calendars and small ampules containing pieces of the holy ground where Fr. Ezechiel Ramin became a martyr.

The event received broad coverage by the social networks and TV Aparecida.

The Provincial council believes it is important to hold similar events of this sort among Comboni parishes, to exchange experiences and increasingly cultivate the spirituality and charism that unite us.

## CONGO

### **A week of formation for young confreres**

From 4 to 10 September, at Kimwenza, Kinshasa-DRC, a week of ongoing formation was held for young confreres ordained or perpetually professed during the past five years. It was the first such event after the pandemic. Fourteen young Congolese took part in the meeting which

was led by Fr Víctor-Hugo Castillo Matarrita, Superior of the student confreres in Rome.

In an atmosphere of mutual listening and research, the first two days were devoted to becoming aware of the personal situation in which each one assumes the new service entrusted to him. The move from the period of formation to the reality of the mission is not always understood. Becoming aware of it may be an opportunity to assume better responsibility for one's ongoing formation.

During the third day, Fr. Léonard Ndjadi and Bro. Kakule Lwanga, who participated in the XIX General Chapter (June 2022), shared their experiences and presented the Chapter Acts, insisting above all on the methodology used that enabled the formulation of priorities, dreams, guidelines and commitments. There was no shortage of questions

The fourth and fifth days were reserved for deepening our spirituality, identity and community life, three dimensions that intertwine and give consistency to our consecration for the mission.

On Sunday the 11th, we celebrated the Eucharist in the parish of Divine Mercy. The parishioners greatly appreciated our presence. It was also a privileged moment to do some missionary animation and vocations promotion. The experience was rich in fraternity, sharing, reflection and prayer in which all of us felt involved. The mission goes on.

### **Neither heroes nor saviours, only poor missionaries and servants of a mission greater than ourselves**

This is what Fr. Léonard Ndjadi Ndjate, Provincial Superior, writes, recounting his journey to Buta for the opening of the new mission, "out of fidelity to the preferential option for the least in society".

Congo seems to be a large Christian country but in reality, there are extensive areas where the work of evangelization has stopped with the departure of the missionaries and the situation has worsened due to the scarcity of diocesan priests. The diocese of Buta has only ten priests. The Comboni presence in this remote area of the country with no outlet to the sea and abandoned by all, is a sign of hope for these people who have been left for more than twenty years with no sacraments or liturgy, no preaching of the Word and with no missionaries.

So it was that Fr Léonard, Fr Franco Laudani and Fr Roberto Ardini left Kisangani to go to the parish of Blessed Anuarite. Since flights by the SJL airline had been suspended, they decided to travel by car, fully aware of the consequences of this decision: the journey was long, tiring

and difficult during which the car became stuck more than once. However, after three days of travelling, they reached the parish where “The faithful immediately gathered to greet us, to thank us and tell us how much they expected us”.

On Sunday, 9 October, our confreres will be presented to the faithful and the diocesan authorities will install the first Comboni Parish Priest of Buta. (*Fr. Léonard Ndjadi Ndjate*)

## CURIA

### **Meeting of the Comboni bishops in Rome**

One apostolic administrator and twelve Comboni bishops met in Rome from 12 to 18 September under the guidance of Mgr. Claudio Lurati and Father Cosimo De Iaco. The purpose of the meeting was to promote communion and mutual support in the challenges that the mission and government of their dioceses present.

Fr. Tesfaye Tadesse, Superior General, and Fr. Luigia Coccia, Superior General of the Comboni Missionary Sisters, made a brief intervention on Friday 16, in which they presented the current situation of the two Institutes. Card. Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, a Comboni Missionary and Prefect of the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue, was able to participate only on the morning of Saturday 17.

When the meeting was over, the Comboni prelates wished to address a message to the entire Comboni Family in which they underlined two important events: first of all, “the killing of Sister Maria De Coppi in Mozambique which confirms that the mission is the total giving of one’s life, making common cause with the people. Her martyrdom calls us to be faithful to our charism. The second event is the upcoming beatification of Fr Giuseppe Ambrosoli, a Comboni priest and doctor who worked for thirty years at Kalongo hospital in Uganda. The characteristic that has mostly been evidenced is the natural and spontaneous union between his faith in Jesus, to whom he turned daily in prayer, and meeting that same Jesus in the sick people he treated”. Analysing the changing times in which we live and the situation of the Church, it has been written that “We know that the Kingdom of God and its presence do not depend upon the vitality of individual communities in any given place. The flourishing Churches of North Africa, Nubia, Syria and Turkey have disappeared. Some have withered and others have flourished. The Church is a sign of the Kingdom, not its historical

realisation. This is why we work in hope, proclaiming the Kingdom of God in that portion of the vineyard the master has assigned to us, without worrying if our work will survive or pass into history. What counts is the work of God”.

DSP

### **Comboni parishes in Europe**

The Comboni missionaries who work permanently in the Comboni parishes and rectories of the European circumscriptions – Italy, DSP and LP – met in Bressanone, from 30 August to 1 September 2022. The meeting was attended by 15 Comboni Missionaries (8 from the DSP, 5 from Italy and 2 from the LP) who deemed the initiative very useful and interesting, a precious time for sharing and reflection, in an atmosphere of fraternity and research

In particular, two interventions were highly appreciated and helped the missionaries to deepen the theme. The first, by Br. Enzo Biemmi, on the theme *The parish: what sort of missionary conversion?* and then the report and testimony of the layman Reinhard Demetz, pastoral vicar of the diocese of Bolzano-Bressanone

The idea of organizing a seminar at European level on the theme "Comboni parishes: paths for a missionary parish" was born in the context of the European Council of the Mission at the end of November 2021, in Santarém (Portugal). A similar meeting is already planned for the provinces of Spain and Portugal.

On September 30 in Latina, at La Sapienza University, a conference was held on the figure of Bro Alfredo Fiorini. Among those present were the Bishop, Msgr. Mariano Crociata, Prof. Carlo Dalla Rocca, dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy and Medicine, and Com. Guido Franceschetti, Governor of Rotary district 2080. Dr. Carossi presented Bro. Alfredo as a doctor, Fr Venanzio Milani, Comboni Missionary, as a missionary brother and Dr D'Onofrio presented him as a poet.

There were also interventions by the lawyer Pasquale Lattari, of the Assn. Alfredo Fiorini, Prof. Bersani of La Sapienza University and the parish priest of San Domenico di Terracina, Don Cavone. The initiative was successful and was attended by a remarkable number of people

## MOÇAMBIQUE

### **Sister Maria De Coppi, CMS, mother, sister and martyr (dies natalis: 6 September 2022)**

I would feel guilty if I did not write something about Sister Maria De Coppi. Her last words in the message to her niece Gabriella, also a Comboni Sister, reveal the woman she was: serene and confident, proud of her missionary vocation, full of hope and with a heart open to the life of the people of Mozambique and willing to unconditional service, "to the end".

"Here the situation is very tense... There is danger and the situation is *sad, very sad. All the people sleep in the forest... Pray for us: may the Lord protect us and this people. Good night.*" These are probably the moving words of a woman convinced that her life is united in a spousal way to God and to the lives of the people.

I arrived in Mozambique when Sr. Maria was the provincial of the Comboni Sisters. She lived in Nampula while the provincial of the Comboni Missionaries, Fr. Francesco Antonini, lived in the catechetical centre where I spent my first months in Mozambique, learning the Macua language and culture. We were together with other missionaries who had recently arrived in Mozambique. Sr. Maria came to visit us and to speak with the Comboni Sisters who participated in the course.

That was the time when, on January 3, 1985, Sister Teresa Dalle Pezze was killed on the road to Nacala. Maria De Coppi, together with the provincial of the Comboni Missionaries, left in the military convoy for the funeral: they could not miss the funeral, even if times were very difficult. Who would have said that 37 years later Maria would also be killed in Mozambique, giving her life for the people she loved so much?

In Mozambique, she lived through much of the country's history of war and peace, hope and suffering. From the beginning, I was struck by the fact that she never stopped visiting the communities, alone or accompanied, in military convoys, to reach so many insecure places, where the Comboni Sisters were. With great confidence and courage, she would set out on her journeys, no matter what the danger.

I also remember Sr. Maria's ability to listen. She was always willing to listen both to the missionaries and the people. With patience and humility, she would sit down to listen to life stories: stories of war, death, hunger, the lack of all essentials, hopes for better days... these were



everyone's concerns, and she listened trying to keep hope alive and, when she could, to give help in the most urgent situations.

Her ability to listen was transformed into collaboration. Maria tried to collaborate with everyone: the provincial of the Comboni Missionaries, the pastoral agents, all the missionaries. She always encouraged us to live as a "missionary team", that is, as a community of missionaries who shared their dreams and projects, prayer, pastoral work, money, food and moments of leisure. She did this as a Provincial but also after finishing this service.

It was nice to see the missionaries gathered in the evenings on the verandas of the missions, telling of their lives during the day: the weariness of war, the difficulties of the people, the joys of evangelization and the growth of life in the midst of death. Maria was a champion of these encounters and her presence always instilled much serenity and hope.

The words of Óscar Romero can open us to Christian hope at this time: *"Martyrdom is a grace of God that I do not think I deserve, but if God accepts the sacrifice of my life, may my blood be a seed of freedom and the sign that hope will soon be a reality."*

The life of Sister Maria, given in this simple and at the same time heroic way, will be the seed of many lives consecrated to the mission in the land of Mozambique. From heaven, she will continue to pray for Mozambique and its people, imploring peace and good for all.

May her life and her death keep alive in us the passion for the frontier places of mission, especially at this time when the Comboni Missionary Sisters are commencing their General Chapter. (*Fr. Jeremias dos Santos Martins*)

## PERU

### **V Assembly of the Comboni Lay Missionaries of America**

The coordinators of the Comboni Lay Missionaries (CLM) of America and the Comboni Missionaries who accompany them in the various circumscriptions met from 5 to 11 September 2022 in the Comboni parish of Chorrillos, in Lima. The theme chosen to guide the work was "United for a Synodal Church at the Service of Mission". The previous assembly was held in 2016 in Mexico.

The participants represented the following American countries: Brazil (1), Mexico (3), Colombia (3), Guatemala (4), Costa Rica (1), Ecuador

(2), United States (2), Peru (10, of which some did not participate full-time). The Central Committee was attended by Alberto de la Portilla (Spain), coordinator of the CLM, and Bro. Arlindo Ferreira Pinto (Rome), contact person for the Comboni Institute.

The Assembly was a significant moment of exchange of experiences, reflection – on the vocation and identity of the laity – and sharing the riches of the various Latin American cultures. Ottorino Poletto, Provincial Superior of Ecuador, opened the assembly with the celebration of the Eucharist.

On Sunday, 11 the CLM visited the Christian communities of Pamplona Alta, on one of the hills of the suburbs of the city, where the CLM of Lima and some Comboni priests and scholastics are pastorally engaged. It was a good opportunity to reflect on the needs of the mission and understand how timely and urgent Pope Francis' missionary appeal for an "outgoing Church" still is.

## PORTUGAL

### **Provincial Assembly**

From 20 to 23 September the Comboni Missionaries serving in the province of Portugal gathered at the house of Viseu for their annual Provincial Assembly. The meeting had the following objectives: to know the Chapter Acts and the priorities established by the Chapter (helped in reflection by Fr. Tomasz Marek, delegate of Poland, via zoom); review the activities of the pastoral year; plan the activities of the next pastoral year; prepare the elaboration of the Six-Year-Plan (with an extraordinary Assembly planned for February 2023).

On the second day, in the context of the 75 years of Comboni presence in Portugal, Msgr. António Luciano dos Santos Costa, Bishop of Viseu, presided over the Eucharistic celebration. He thanked us for our work in the diocese during these decades (it was here that the first Comboni Missionaries were established in 1947) and invited us to continue to be faithful to our missionary charism, which animates the People of God to open themselves to the universal mission.

During the assembly we also celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the priestly ordination of Fr. Dário Balula Chaves, thanking God, all together, for the gift of his missionary vocation.

The meeting ended with the planning of activities for the pastoral year 2022-2023 and the choice of the motto that will animate us: "Mission calls: rejoice in God and make haste with Mary".

## SUDAN

### **Degree project in North of Sudan Virtual reconstruction of Sonqi Tino**

The Church of Sonqi Tino was built in the tenth century in Northern Sudan. For centuries, probably from the fourteenth to the twentieth century, it remained hidden by the sands of the desert.

In 1967, as part of an archaeological campaign promoted by UNESCO for the exploration and rescue of the archaeological heritage in the desert region of Batn el-Hajar, the Sapienza University Antiquities Service began work on a Christian site close to Sonqi West during the exploration conducted in 1963-1964 by UNESCO – Sudan Antiquities Service.

Fr. Giovanni Vantini, a Comboni Missionary, was a member of that expedition appointed by the Holy See, as the Vatican was among the financiers of the project. The archaeological expedition saved the frescoes on the walls of the church which were then distributed between the Museum of the Near East of the Sapienza University of Rome, the Vatican Museums and the National Museum of Khartoum.

Three final year students in the Degree Course in Computer Science of the Comboni College of Science and Technology (CCST), Ezekiel Yom Mayiel, Rita William and Rasho obtained the architectural drawings of the church, made by Giuseppe Fanfoni in 1967, a map with the original location of the frescoes, prepared by the archaeologist Loredana Sist, and the images of the frescoes.

With this material in hand, in 1971 they recreated the church that would have been covered and destroyed by the waters of Lake Nubia.

The church consisted of a square building made of clay brick (9.30x8.30 m), later expanded with the addition of structures. Its plan included nine rooms arranged according to a well-known cruciform scheme that had its fulcrum in a central room, open on all four sides and covered by a dome.

In 2021, the Institute of Cultural Heritage-National Research Council of Italy trained some students and university staff on the application of Computer Sciences to cultural heritage. Now, thanks to the graduation

project of these students, the church can be visited through this virtual reconstruction, by clicking on the following link

## IN PACE CHRISTI

### **Fr. Pasquale Bernareggi (01.01.1930 – 05.09.2022)**

What could we say about a confrere who had arrived in the community a week previously in a situation of serious fragility, unable to express himself and totally dependent on others? We knew very little about his life, his past, his missionary experience. But we tried to collect some fragments, convinced that in the fragments we could find some useful elements to help us appreciate the gift that Fr. Pasquale was for the mission.

He was born in Concorrezzo, Milan, on January 1, 1930. He had just turned 92 and on 9 September, St. Peter Claver, he would have celebrated 70 years of consecrated life, since he made his first vows on 9 September 1952 and his perpetual vows on 9 September 1958. Seventy years of missionary service are really something: a whole life spent in the service of the Gospel, which Fr. Pasquale spent part in Uganda (24 years) and part in Italy.

A few months after his ordination (March 14, 1959), he left for the first time for the mission in the company of two confreres currently present in the community of Castel d'Azzano: Fr. Gennaro Campochiaro and Fr. Velluto Ponziano. On April 20, 1961 they travelled together from Rome to Entebbe and the next day they left for Gulu. From there they were sent on to different missions: among the Acholi, the Logbara and the Karimojong.

It happened that Fr. Pasquale was sent to the Karamoja region that the Combonis had always considered a “difficult mission”, an area of first evangelisation from the point of view of the faith and a frontier mission in consideration of its climatic, social and environmental conditions. Fr. Pasquale adapted to this reality and bore in his body the consequences of obedience.

How he carried out his ministry in that area, we do not know, but we know that he learned the language well and the people loved him. Relatives tell us that the time spent in Italy was dedicated to supporting the mission for which he had offered almost 25 years of his life. That difficult mission, in fact, spared him neither health problems nor the

hardships of war and social tensions that forced him to leave the country in a dramatic situation.

He then spent almost 40 years of his life in the communities of the Italian Province, first engaged in ministry and missionary animation and then as a sick person, in the centres of Verona, Milan and Castel d'Azzano. He lived through many years of immobility, illness and aphasia which, before questioning us, challenged the faith and patience of Fr. Pasquale.

My last memory of him huddled in his bed, undressed, a few hours before he left this world, made me think of a well-known painting by El Greco, entitled "The Trinity". The artist represented Jesus, taken down from the Cross, all twisted but supported by the Father, while the dove of the Holy Spirit hovers above. We came out of the hands of God the Creator at the moment of birth and end our lives in the hands of the merciful Father.

Does not the meaning of the difficulties we encounter lie in preparing ourselves, as St. Paul told us, to be conformed to the image of the Son, obedient, humble and suffering?

Fr. Pasquale died on 5 September, just a week after coming to Castel d'Azzano.

On 8 September his funeral was celebrated at the Verona Mother House, where it was preferred to move him for greater safety, given that currently in Castel d'Azzano there were several confreres who had tested positive for Covid and forced into isolation.

The funeral was attended by confreres from the Mother House, Castel d'Azzano, our community in Milan and a dozen family members. Fr. Fabio Baldan, Provincial Superior, was also present. Renzo Piazza, superior of the community of Castel d'Azzano, presided over the funeral. (*Fr. Renzo Piazza, mccj*)

### **Bro. Luciano Cariani (07.01.1927 – 08.09.2022)**

Bro. Luciano was born in Cento, in the province of Ferrara (Italy) on January 7, 1927. He did his novitiate in Gozzano and then in Sunningdale; he made his first vows on April 25, 1951 and his perpetual vows on April 25, 1957. "My vocation – he explained in an interview a few years ago – was born and raised like the famous seed that the farmer sowed, not knowing how or when it sprouted, even if he slept. So, it must have happened to me too".

He lived in a family of eight where love and faith grew together. Then, Catholic Action (1943). Years afire with politics, the post-war period (1945). The meeting with Nigrizia (1946) – I learned afterwards that he was one of the Comboni Missionaries – where I found this appeal: 'Technicians sought for the mission, not for a day but for a lifetime'. All steps that the Lord helped me to take with simplicity and enthusiasm, until I left for the mission: January 3, 1949. From that first step (1949) to today (2008) I have never had any doubt that this was my path desired by Jesus. I'm amazed too when I think about it..."

He was an exceptional Brother: animator, trainer, treasurer, expert in every professional field, electrotechnical, mechanical, hydraulic, carpenter, bricklayer and every other profession!

Perhaps, however, his greatest quality was the capacity of attraction he had on those who met him, especially on young people, whom he fascinated by telling them about the mission and making it almost come to life!

He had a deep relationship with God through prayer and a great willingness to lend a hand in Sunday celebrations when, with intense joy, he was an assistant to the celebrant, reading the Word of God, acting as an acolyte and distributing Holy Communion.

But... he was no saint... he would get upset and angry if, when teaching someone, he found them lacking in attention. He was always concerned with the fact that he had not learned Sidamo properly and he often insisted that others take the lead instead of him ... yes, he had his weaknesses.

The event that forced him to return to Italy was so unexpected and sudden that there was not even a way to thank him as we ought to have done, both on the part of our missionary communities and the people among whom he worked. I was with him in Hawassa, to organize the space necessary for a group of young people from my country who came to visit, accompanied by the assistant parish priest, and to stay overnight.

We were laying mattresses on the floor when suddenly Luciano turned around and said to me: "Joseph I can no longer see properly; I go to alone to my room and pray vespers". The next morning, very early, he asked me to take him to Addis Ababa and so I did. They found he had had a stroke that had affected his eyes. This diagnosis was later confirmed in Italy, where he was taken immediately. It was a great shock to him as he was used to writing hundreds of letters to friends.

In Italy, he first went to Brescia, then to the Mother House in Verona and finally, in 2020, to Castel d'Azzano.

In this community of ours he enjoyed relatively good health until two days before his urgent admittance to the hospital of Borgo Trento (Verona), where he died on Thursday 8 September, the feast of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, to whom he was particularly devoted.

His funeral took place in the Verona Mother House, for security reasons, given that a new wave of Covid was starting in the community of Castel d'Azzano.

In addition to a good number of confreres from the communities of the area and some diocesan priests, the Mass was attended by numerous friends and family members who filled the chapel of the Mother House. Bro. Luciano was well known and popular, both for his activity of missionary animation and for his cordiality and ability to maintain friendly relations with those with whom he came in contact.

Fr. Renzo Piazza, superior of the community, presided at the Eucharist and Fr. Giuseppe Cavallini, his friend and missionary companion, gave the homily. Present were the Provincial Superior of Ethiopia, Fr. Sisto Agostini, and Fr. Fabio Baldan, Provincial Superior of Italy. There were numerous testimonies of friendship and esteem of friends and confreres at the end of the Eucharist. Bro. Luciano was buried in the monumental cemetery of Verona. (*Fr. Giuseppe Cavallini, mccj*)

### **Bro. Fernando Cesaro (21.07.1933 – 13.09.2022)**

Bro. Fernando was born on 21 July 1933 in Campo San Martino, in the province of Padua (Italy), into a family characterised by faith. He was the fifth of thirteen children, eight of whom entered religious life: five joined the Salesians, two the Combonis and one was a consecrated lay person.

He entered the novitiate in Gozzano and then went to Sunningdale where he made his temporary vows on 9 September 1953 and his perpetual vows on 9 September 1959 in Uganda.

He carried out his mission in different provinces: in the London Province (1953-56), in Uganda, where he remained for twenty years (1956-76), in Malawi-Zambia, until 1979, then in Kenya (1979-81) and in the General Curia until 1990, when he returned to Kenya, where he worked until 2017. Having returned for good to Italy, he stayed first at the Verona Mother House and finally in Castel d'Azzano.

At the centre of his life was the person of Jesus, whom he loved with all his heart. He prayed a lot, with great inner freedom. He also knew how to joke about the "uselessness" of prayer. "It is useless to pray," he said, "because God never gives you what you ask of him. I ask him to take away some pain... and he never listens to me. I just have to do his will. That's all that matters."

He nourished his faith and prayer by listening to the Word for which he attended closely. In the long periods spent in solitude in bed, in the company of his sorrows, he prayed and was constantly in the company of Jesus and Mary. He had asked for three things: a Rosary beads, an image the Crucifix and a picture of Michelangelo's Pietà to be pasted on his bedside table.

The relationship of friendship he had with Jesus was a mirror of his way of relating to others. His friends were many. He cared for them and nourished their friendship by sharing his interiority and the best of his long and laborious missionary life. The visits of the confreres to our community is one of the gifts that God has given us and continues to give us.

Bro. Fernando was happy when, after a community meeting, the confrere-visitor ended his visit with a personal face-to face meeting with him. Encounters that were never trivial. He always knew how to elevate the discourse to what really matters, to the values for which he had given his life: Jesus Christ, the Church, the mission.

His was a selective friendship: he cultivated it with those who, like him, lived an experience of deep humanity and intense relationship with God, which translated into joyful and gratuitous service for their brothers and sisters. He was a brother who sought and lived fraternity.

What did he share about his life? He spoke of the mission, but he was not interested in telling what he had done, but rather with whom he had been and with whom he had shared faith in the Lord. He had prepared a detailed list of the superiors with whom he had spent his 75 years of life among the Comboni Missionaries: 61 in total. He was not interested in talking about the work he did or the buildings he erected.

During the last period of his life, Bro. Fernando was hospitalized twice: first at the hospital of Borgo Roma and then in Villafranca. He was happy when I brought him a greeting from his sister, Sr. Severina, from Uganda, and when he received the Eucharist: he saw Jesus coming to visit him in his hospital bed.



Br. Fernando's dream of being with the Lord forever came true on Tuesday, September 13, 2022, around the ninth hour, the eve of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross; for days, in his mind, heart and lips he had nothing else, he wanted the Lord to come and get him and asked himself: "How much remains of the night?".

On September 16, his funeral was celebrated in Castel d'Azzano. Fr. Stefano Giudici, friend and missionary companion, presided at the Eucharist and Fr. Renzo Piazza, superior of the community, gave the homily. (*Fr. Renzo Piazza, mccj*)

### **Fr. Daniele Coppe (01.02.1937 – 20.09.2022)**

Fr. Daniele was born 85 years ago, on 1 February 1937, in Meolo, in the province of Venice and the diocese of Treviso.

With generosity he had accepted the Lord's call and entered the family of the Comboni Missionaries. At the age of 23, in 1960, we find him in the novitiate of Gozzano; two years later he made his first vows: on 9 September last, he had, in fact, celebrated the 60th anniversary of his religious and missionary consecration.

He made his perpetual vows on 9 September 1965 and was ordained a priest on 28 June 1966. Immediately afterwards, he left for the mission of North-East Brazil, where he remained, in four periods, for 23 years. Those who worked with him speak of a missionary who never spared himself; available, welcoming and conciliatory in the community, he was mainly engaged in pastoral work.

Thirty-three more years of his life were spent in Italy, engaged in missionary animation and ministry. Primo Silvestri was a good collaborator in this activity and always proved to be available and hardworking in the parishes where the community of the Mother House rendered its service.

Sister Death came to meet him on Tuesday 20 September, a little suddenly, at the hospital in Borgo Roma (Verona) where he had been hospitalized for pulmonary complications. He had recently finished the days of isolation provided for by the contagion for covid 19, but probably the virus had further weakened him, being an elderly man already fragile due to his years, his ailments and fatigue.

On September 23rd we celebrated his funeral in Castel d'Azzano. Renzo Piazza, superior of the community, presided over the celebration. Family members were present, some confreres from Verona Mother House and Fr. Fabio Baldan, Provincial Superior.

From Castel d'Azzano Fr. Daniele was taken to his village, where, in the afternoon, Holy Mass was celebrated in the presence of some Comboni Missionaries, his family members and numerous fellow villagers. Fr. Daniele was buried in the cemetery of Meolo. (*Fr. Renzo Piazza, mcccj*)

### **Fr. Giuseppe Farina (16.09.1932 – 23.09.2022)**

Fr. Giuseppe was born on 16 September 1932 in Montecchio Maggiore, in the province and diocese of Vicenza (Italy), in a deeply Christian family imbued with missionary spirit and tradition. An uncle, Giuseppe, born in 1905, had preceded him as a Brother on the roads of Africa. Another relative, Bro. Erminio Ferracin, class of 1911, was very dear to him. He also had some Comboni Sisters among his relatives ... their example marked his youth and helped him to decide to serve the Lord. He entered the novitiate in Florence (1954-56) and made his first profession on 7 October 1956. He took final vows on 15 August 1962 and was ordained priest on 27 June 1976.

On 16 September last, he had turned 90, 66 years of which he lived consecrated to the Lord: 20 as a brother and 46 as a priest; 28 spent in Africa and 38 in the communities of the Italian Province.

More precisely, in 1958 he was assigned to Khartoum, where he remained until 1970, as a local bursar.

After a year in Crema and five in Rome for the scholasticate and philosophy studies, he alternated periods in South Sudan, Khartoum, Italy, then again South Sudan until his definitive return to Italy in 2002, where he dedicated himself mainly to missionary animation.

Speaking of himself and the mission received, he quoted St Paul: "I have proclaimed the Gospel, I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith". The good fight for him, for so many years, was to provide the mission with the material resources necessary for its livelihood. The superiors recognized in him the qualities of the good administrator and he carried out this service with great trust in God and in St. Joseph, his patron ". He wrote: "I can honestly say I never used anything for myself but everything for the poor and often through many missionary confreres and Sisters".

The Lord had allowed him to share a characteristic of his holy founder, Daniel Comboni: impudence in asking for help for beloved Africa. Many confreres and Bishops of Sudan are grateful to him for this ministry

which he has exercised effectively and disinterestedly for so many years.

Arriving in Castel d'Azzano unwillingly, as the days passed he began to fit in and found himself at ease. His health improved as did his relationships with God and with men. He became milder, more serene, more sociable, more lovable.

He was one of those rare confreres who wanted to express their will on "when we are gone". In addition to his spiritual testament, he left indications that show his attachment to the priesthood and to the religious and missionary vocation: the Word of God and the stole on the coffin, the Crucifix of vows and the missionary rosary in his hands, the choice of the Word of God, centred on the resurrection, for the celebration of the funeral.

Thank you, Fr. Beppino, for trying to speak the language of signs when words failed you.

On Monday 26 September we celebrated the funeral of Fr. Giuseppe, who died peacefully on Friday 23 September, in the community of Castel d'Azzano. The Mass was presided over by Fr. Renzo Piazza. Some relatives were present, the parish priest, representatives of the pastoral unit, the confreres of Verona Mother House and the community of Padua. Fr. Giuseppe was buried in the cemetery of Verona. (*Fr. Renzo Piazza, mccj*)

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

**THE FATHERS:** Augustino, of Fr. Otií Alir Moses (DSP), Giulio, of Fr. Massimo Robol (MO).

**THE MOTHER:** Lucía Inés, of Fr. Juan Diego Calderón Vargas (PCA).

**THE BROTHERS:** Fernando, of Fr. Piero Lampetti (I) and Fr. Aldo Lampetti (†); Giancarlo, of Fr. Ferruccio Gobbi (I).

**THE SISTER:** Rosa, of Bro. Óscar José Araújo G. da Cunha (P).

**THE COMBONI MISSIONARY SISTERS:** Sr. Vitangela Castellano, Sr. Maria De Coppi, Sr. M. Veronica Fassi, Sr. Annunciata Ferronato, Sr. Gemma Luisa Toffanin, Sr. Emiliana Niboli, Sr. Anna Elsa Viola, Sr. Flora Fumagalli.

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**MISSIONARI COMBONIANI - VIA LUIGI LILIO 80 – ROMA**

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