

Familia Comboniana

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES OF THE HEART OF JESUS

816

March 2023

Perpetual professions

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Sc. Adanlesossi Koku Delanyo (Crépin) | Lomé Cacaveli (T) | 2 February 2023 |
| Sc. Djato Wilfried | Lomé Cacaveli (T) | 2 February 2023 |
| Sc Kasereka Edgard Valyene | Kimwenza (DRC) | 8 February 2023 |
| Sc. Nsinga Rombert | Ngeta (U) | 05 February 2023 |
| Sc. Mugerwa John Bosco | Ngeta (U) | 05 February 2023 |
| Sc. Idro Denis | Mgeta (U) | 05 February 2023 |
| Sc Joseph Etabo Lopeyok | Utawala (KE) | 10 February 2023 |
| Sc David Oduor Ochieng | Utawala (KE) | 10 February 2023 |

Ordinations to the priesthood

| | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Muhindo Michel Kyasalya | Butembo (DRC) | 16 February 2023 |
| Kasoso Rab-Saba Raoul | Kinshasa (DRC) | 18 February 2023 |

Holy Redeemer Guild

March 01 – 07 CO 08 – 15 E 16 – 31 DSP
April 01 – 15 CN 16 – 30 EC

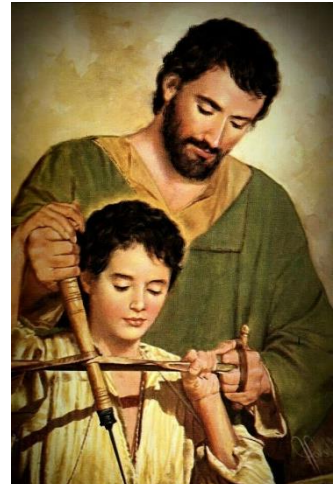
Prayer Intentions

March

That, through the intercession of Saint Joseph, the guardian of the Holy Family of Nazareth, our Institutes may always have what they need to live and continue with dignity the mission they share, and that they may be helped to administer well all that been entrusted to them. *Let us pray.*

April

For those who live in the great overcrowded cities, that they may find there a place of welcome, work opportunities and respect for their welfare. *Let us pray.*



Meaningful anniversaries

MARCH

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| 15 | Birth of St. Daniel Comboni | |
| 17 | Saint Patrick, bishop | LP (London Province) |
| 19 | Saint Joseph, spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary | Central African Republic |
| 24 | St. Oscar Arnulfo Romero | El Salvador, Latin America. Day of prayer and fasting in memory of the missionary martyrs. |
| 27 | B. Giuseppe Ambrosoli | (Day of death) |

APRIL

| | | |
|----|--|--|
| 25 | San Pedro de San José de Betancur, religious | DCA (Central America, Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua) |
|----|--|--|

Publications

Enzo Santângelo, mccj – Heitor Frisotti, mccj, *Cristo da África ao Brasil – Messias e Profetas*, Alô Mundo, São Paulo, January 2023.

With this new book, Fr. Enzo Santângelo and the co-author, the late lamented Fr. Heitor (Ettore) Frisotti, present a panorama of exceptional figures, a collection of biographies, a living exemplification of love for God and one's neighbour. With an agile and essential style, without rhetoric, the problem of apartheid and religious discrimination in Africa and Brazil is also addressed.

CURIA

Meeting of Comboni Circumscription Superiors in Rome

On Sunday 26 February, with the Mass presided over by Fr. Tesfaye Tadesse, Superior General, the meeting of the 27 Circumscription Superiors - newly elected or re-elected for the three-year period 2023-2025 - began at our General House. The meeting, which will last until 19 March, has the aim of preparing the Superiors for the "service of authority" in a synodal key, strengthening the bonds of communion between the various Circumscriptions and the General Administration, and reflecting on the *Guide to the Implementation of the XIX General Chapter*.

Fr. Tesfaye began the Eucharist by thanking all the provincial superiors and delegates "for having accepted the gesture of trust of the confreres and for being here today as their 'servants and coordinators' ". Around the table of Jesus - where he is at the centre - we begin this time of

ongoing formation [...]. We pray to God, our Father, that you continue to take care of his vineyard. He is the vinedresser. Jesus is the vine. We are called to be the branches”.

After Mass, the Superiors and members of the General Administration gathered in the chapter house for a brief self-presentation and to view the proposed agenda for the three weeks of their meeting.

Monday 27th was a day of retreat led by Father Teresino Serra. On Tuesday 28, group work began, followed by plenary sessions. There were two themes: “The life of the Institute” and “The service of authority”. Two questions were posed to facilitate reflection and sharing: “What signs of life, challenges and dreams do you see for the Institute and your province at the beginning of your mandate?”, and “How do we see yourselves and how do you feel at the beginning of this period of service? You share expectations, fears and hopes, and the weight and value of past experience”.

The work will continue based on precise themes: “Expectations for the six-year period and implementation”, “The service of authority”, “Management of particular situations”, “Accompaniment of confreres”, “Management of health problems” ... The purpose of the meeting is clear: “the best” have been chosen, but now you need to be “excellent”.

On Sunday 26, the provincial superiors and delegates of the circumscriptions received with deep sorrow the news of the sinking of a boat which, due to strong winds and stormy seas, crashed onto the beach of Steccato di Cutro (Crotone/Italy), causing the death of about 70 migrants, including many children. The superiors said they were in total communion with the Comboni Family (Comboni Fathers and Brothers, Comboni Sisters, Secular and Lay Comboni Missionaries) present in Italy, who reacted to the tragic event with a statement, in which it appealed to the competent authorities of Italy and those of the European Union to do everything possible to ensure that similar tragedies never happen again and to undertake to welcome refugees from the southern hemisphere because they too are human beings who only seek a more dignified life.

CONGO

The visit of the Pope and two Provincial Meetings

The Comboni missionaries in Congo have recently experienced three intense moments that marked their faith and the life of the local Church: the visit of Pope Francis, the post-chapter provincial assembly, and the annual retreat.

Finally, after a long wait, on 31st January last, Pope Francis arrived in Kinshasa for a pastoral visit. Numerous avenues in the capital had been adorned with bright, glittering signs and with giant posters on which the writing stood out; Pope Francois! Boyei bolamu! (“Welcome, Pope Francis!”). Throughout his stay in the capital, many video clips of singing and dancing choirs were ‘posted’ on the web, and the local television stations broadcast beautiful programs on the Pope’s mission. The official logo of the visit had been printed on a variety of objects: jackets, T-shirts, caps, polo shirts, chairs, brochure covers, prayer books, flags etc. It also made a good impression on the podium where the altar had been placed, at Ndolo airport where Mass was celebrated in the presence of 1,500,000 faithful. At the Stadium of the Martyrs, where the Holy Father met with young people and catechists, the organisers estimate that over 100,000 people came to hear the message of Pope Francis.

The theme for the Pope’s visit was very well chosen: “All reconciled in Jesus Christ”. During the entire night preceding the celebration of 1 February at the airport, a river of faithful poured into the large esplanade, both to secure a place and to prepare for the Eucharist with the sacrament of reconciliation. The number of confessors also included numerous Comboni confreres.

In the afternoon, after the Mass, the Pope met with some victims of the violence that has been tearing eastern Congo apart for years. In his speech, Francesco clearly accused the international media for their silence on this dramatic situation. He clearly condemned the unjust occupation of the eastern part of the country, the massacres of the population and the illegal and uncontrolled exploitation of the country’s natural and mineral resources. He cried out: “Hands off the Democratic Republic of the Congo! Hands off Africa! Stop suffocating Africa: it is not a mine to be exploited or a land to be plundered”. He then forcefully asked that “the populations be left in peace”. He therefore pointed the finger at local and international political leaders and accomplices of this war, forcefully inviting them to change their perspectives and attitudes. He had no hesitation in saying that the country suffers from a lack of good governance and the absence of prominent personalities capable of acting in the interests of all. He repeatedly encouraged everyone to thank God for the riches and goods present on the Congolese soil and underground, to “take care of our common home and commit ourselves to build a universal brotherhood”.

The icon of the bloody diamond, used by the Pope to describe the current situation in Congo, has touched many consciences, transforming itself into a heartfelt appeal to conversion to act and restore Congo’s dignity.

Speaking to the religious and priests who flocked to the cathedral, the Pope exhorted them to be serious in their apostolate, avoiding spiritual mediocrity, worldly comfort, superficiality and the pursuit of one's own comfort.

Pope Francis' visit reminded us all of our responsibilities and encouraged us to live our Christian commitments and our religious and missionary consecration, with particular attention to the poor.

A total of 79 Comboni missionaries (priests, brothers and scholastics) participated in the great Mass celebrated by the Pope and in the meeting with the religious in the cathedral of Our Lady of the Congo.

Provincial Assembly – After the moment of grace represented by the Pope's visit, the Comboni missionaries celebrated their post-chapter Provincial Assembly, during which they "welcomed" the Acts of the last Chapter, promising to implement them in the context of their mission in Congo. We have listened, dialogued, discerned and chosen our priorities for the next six years in the light of the XIX General Chapter, namely the sustainability of economic life, formation ad intra and ad extra, and mission in its specific form of missionary animation and commitment to Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC).

Struck by a situation of insecurity and injustice, of poverty and the illegal exploitation of our land, we feel the need to commit ourselves with greater determination to justice, peace and the integrity of creation. Hence, the option for the creation of a JPIC observatory in our province. Together, through various workshops, we have tried to make room for the Spirit and to let him speak to enlighten us in our discernment.

During the Assembly, we were honoured by the presence of Fr. Elias Sindjalim, Assistant General in charge of Francophone Africa. His presence was a sign of our communion with the Institute and of the Comboni fraternity. He encouraged us to go deeper to give quality to our missionary presence in Congo, prioritising fraternal communion and fidelity to the Comboni charism.

At the end of the Assembly, a group photo was taken, portraying all the participants wearing a scarf with the image of Comboni on it, to celebrate the silver jubilee of the foundation of the Afriquespoir publishing house. Jean Claude Kobo, the magazine's director, urged us to take more responsibility for distributing the magazine in our various apostolate circles, convinced that it is a valid means of animation for making the local church grow in its missionary dimension and of self-support. Not to mention his ability to further expand our network of friends.

The Provincial Assembly recorded a large participation of confreres from our various missions and houses of formation.

In the grounds of our guesthouse in Kimwenda, we have a small cemetery for the confreres who have left us to return to the Father's house. Brother Ivan Cremonesi is also buried there. On February 8, 2023, we commemorated the first anniversary of his death. The confreres present at the assembly celebrated Lauds around his tomb as a sign of recognition and gratitude for his services to the Congo mission.

Annual retreat – At the end of the Provincial Assembly, the confreres stayed for the annual retreat led by the Reverend Sister Josée Ngalula, a Sister of Saint Andrew, a theologian and a member of the International Theological Commission. The theme of the retreat was: “Driven together by the Holy Spirit for the mission”. Through biblical meditations, Sister Ngalula led us to become aware of the many graces of God that each of us brings with us, not for ourselves, but for the mission - a mission that must be accomplished in fraternal communion and deeply rooted in Christ. Our deepest joy must not be based on external results - which are sometimes accidental - but in the fact that we have done God's will and that our name is written in heaven (Lk 10:17-41). In short, our merit does not lie in what we do, but in our ability to live joyfully and transmit to the world the experience of encountering Jesus Christ, both personally and as a community. Once this is done, we can say: «We are useless servants. We have done what we had to do” (Luke 17:10).

The Comboni Circumscription of the Congo thanks the Lord for these moments of multiple graces that we have experienced. They have strengthened us in our missionary vocation, they have allowed us to consolidate a truer and more authentic fraternal communion, and they have reinvigorated us to set out on the mission with joy, moved by the Spirit of God and by the passion of St. Daniel Comboni.

The main lines of our program have been defined in light of the orientations of the XIX General Chapter. The application of the “appreciative approach” in the effort to program our six-year plan has helped us to work on a clear outline: a) a phase of listening to our social, ecclesial and Comboni reality; b) a phase of discernment, which led to the choice of priorities and precise commitments to be implemented in the six-year period 2023-2029. In the end, we entrusted this new beginning to the Lord, through the intercession of St. Daniel Comboni.

Our mission is difficult, yes, but beautiful and exciting, and we want to live it fully “together”, like a cenacle of apostles, like a family.

Fathers Sisko Barin and Léonard Ndjadi Ndjate

XXXV Meeting with Africa

The *XXXV Meeting with Africa*, organised by the magazine *Mundo Negro* and by the Comboni Missionaries of the province of Spain, was held in Madrid on 4 and 5 February. With the title “Transformers”, this edition gave space to the protagonism of African women, on which the five engaging conferences, all led by women, three of whom were from the African continent, were focused.

The meeting was opened by Cameroonian Sonia Mankongo, who illustrated to an audience of about 120 people the general situation of women in Africa, with their struggles, difficulties and achievements. She was followed by three other speakers who addressed more specific aspects: Maria Luna, a member of the Justice and Solidarity group of the Spanish Conference of Religious (CONFER), presented the civil achievements of the women of Maiduguri, in the Nigerian state of Borno; Asha Ismail, founder of ‘Save a Girl Save a Generation’, told first-hand about her fight against female genital mutilation, a traditional practice that is still causing immense pain among African women and others; Maria Luisa Puglisi, a religious of the Adoratrices Handmaids of the Blessed Sacrament and of Charity (since 2000 regional contact person for Europe of *Talitha Kum*, the International Network of Consecrated Life against Human Trafficking) illustrated the work that her congregation carries out in Spain, welcoming and accompanying women, mostly African, who are victims of trafficking and exploitation.

The main attraction of the event was the participation of Ms. Yvette Mushigo, coordinator of the Synergy of Women for Peace and Reconciliation Network, based in the Congolese city of Bukavu, who received the “*Mundo Negro Prize for Fraternity 2022*” presented by the provincial superior, Father Miguel Ángel Llamazares González. Yvette Mushigo is Congolese and coordinates a network of women from DR Congo, Burundi and Rwanda, with the aim of putting an end to hate speech, to creating cohesion and making people aware of women’s rights, still too little respected in the areas of conflict in eastern DR Congo.

On Sunday 5 February, the XXXV Meeting with Africa concluded with a Mass celebrated according to the Congolese rite, presided over by Father Boniface Gbama in the parish church of the Holy Trinity in Madrid.

KENYA

Perpetual vows and ordinations to the diaconate

February 10 and 11 were two days of intense activity overflowing with 'grace from above' for the Catholic community of the parish of Utawala, dedicated to St. Daniel Comboni. At the centre of the party were two young confreres, Joseph Etabo Lopeyok and David Oduor Ochieng, who were preparing to make their perpetual vows and receive diaconal ordination. On the other hand, the entire parish community, the two families of the ordinands, and numerous members of the Comboni Family present in Kenya were celebrating them. The perpetual professions took place on Friday 10 and the ordinations on Saturday 11.

The two events were moments of great celebration and profound spirituality. Joy, together with some healthy pride, was immense: Etabo is the first member of the Turkana ethnic group to make his final profession in the institute of the Comboni Missionaries who are preparing to celebrate the 50th anniversary of their presence in Kenya.

The provincial superior, Father Andrew Wanjohi, spoke during his homily of the joy of belonging to the Comboni Family and of the availability of each confrere to be "sent". Addressing the two newly professed directly, he reminded them of the fact that, despite being now "radical members of the province of Kenya", they are called to always remain willing to comply, with spontaneous and respectful adherence of will, to the needs of the whole institute.

Referring then to the Gospel passage of the day, Mark 7:31-37, which tells of the healing of a deaf-mute operated by Jesus in a locality of the Decapolis (pagan region), Father Andrew pointed out how the man who was healed, despite Jesus' instruction "not to tell anyone about what had happened", could not contain the grace he received, and began to proclaim to everyone the beauty of his encounter with Jesus and the joy he felt at being healed. He added: "You too, newly professed, must feel the need and urgency to shout to everyone the joy of your encounter with Jesus".

The eleventh of February was the day of the diaconal ordination. Christians from various parts of Kenya filled the celebration with colour, showing off the most typical clothes of their own cultures. Monsignor Bert van Megen, Apostolic Nuncio in Kenya and South Sudan, presided over the celebration. A close and sincere friend of the Comboni Missionaries for a long time, while commenting on the recent visit of Pope Francis to South Sudan, he could not help but speak with affection and nostalgia about the role played by the Comboni missionaries in that tormented nation.

The first reading of the ritual mass spoke of Moses, and Archbishop Me-gen stressed that, only after having acquired meekness, could the great leader intercede for the people. Hence his clear invitation to everyone - Christians and missionaries - to walk alongside the people and share their life so as to be able to intercede for them. Furthermore, they will also have to have the courage to oppose any kind of injustice and denounce abuses perpetrated by corrupt leadership. Like Moses, the newly ordained will also have to assume the role of suffering prophets. After all, the Comboni Missionaries have a long tradition of struggle and resistance alongside oppressed and crucified populations, paying dearly for their courage. But this is not surprising in an institute founded by a lover of the Cross like St. Daniele Comboni. "Your Founder knew that he needed missionaries who were courageous, generous and ready for anything, given the work environment in which they would find themselves. Be worthy followers of this Father and Founder". The ceremony ended with a lavish meal prepared by the parishioners and the community of Utawala

Inauguration of the new provincial house in Kenya

Msgr. Philip Arnold Anyolo, Archbishop of Nairobi, inaugurated the new provincial headquarters of the Comboni Missionaries in Nairobi on 14 February 2023, during the provincial assembly.

Father Andrew Bwalya, superior of the provincial house community, addressed words of gratitude to the archbishop for having accepted the invitation to come and bless the new house.

After the ribbon cutting, the bishop blessed the various rooms of the new provincial headquarters. Then all the members of the assembly went to the chapel for the celebration of the Eucharist.

During his homily, the archbishop thanked the Lord for the new and beautiful house: "Certainly, he will allow the missionaries to spend days of rest here and find new energy to resume the work of evangelisation. It must also be a place where you can live in community as disciples of Jesus".

The provincial superior, Fr. Andrew Wanjohi, sincerely thanked the Archbishop for agreeing to honour the occasion with his presence. He also thanked all those who contributed, directly or indirectly, to the construction of the new structure.

ITALIA

News from the Comboni Emigrant and Refugee Service (ACSE) in Rome

The activities of ACSE continue with the prompt and generous commitment of members and collaborators. From 31 January, a new service is being offered to patients. In fact, an agreement has been agreed with the Faculty of Pharmacy and Medicine, of the University of Rome “La Sapienza”, to start a “Traineeship in Dental Hygiene”.

Course enrolments – Enrolments for the courses of Italian, IT and dental hygiene are going ahead together with new applications for food parcels. At the moment, more than 700 people are being assisted: 170 have enrolled in the Italian, IT and “tailoring and dressmaking” courses; 140 people are receiving dental treatment; each week, around 400 people receive food parcels. Last year, 2,987 food parcels were handed out to 404 people (around 20 tonnes of food).

The migrants receiving assistance are from 48 different countries including Egypt, Somalia, Bangladesh, Peru, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Tunisia, Syria, Uganda, Cameroon, Albania, Venezuela, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Gambia, Ivory Coast, Eritrea, Senegal and Sierra Leone. There are about 20 Ukrainians.

Scholarships – The initiative ‘Adopt a University Student’ has been launched. Thanks to the collaboration of individuals, the Comboni Institutes and the national Migrants, this year, 40 scholarships of €900.00 each will be distributed. This is not a large amount, but for students, it is a real godsend. In the last 2 years, 12 migrants, helped by our scholarships, have graduated. One of them, Kone Abdoul, a political refugee, received the prize awarded to the 500 most deserving students of all Italian universities.

Courses in Italian and IT – In 2023, students doing Italian courses are divided into 11 groups: 4 online and 7 face-to-face. The courses are from A0 to A1, A2, B1 and B2. There are more and more requests for the “Celi B1” level exam, valid for obtaining Italian citizenship. In addition to language courses, we offer cultural initiatives, such as visits to the Quirinale, the Palazzo delle Esposizioni, the Capitoline Museums, guided tours of the historic centre of Rome, etc.

Two IT courses are offered: one basic and one for obtaining the International Certification of Digital Literacy (ICDL).

Dental surgery – The work of the dental office continues regularly with five weekly shifts, between morning and afternoon. The shifts are covered

by 5 dentists working together with 2 or 3 collaborators. About 30/35 patients a week are treated.

Guidelines – Fr. Venanzio Milani, President of Acse, is keen to clarify the guidelines of the work of the Association: 1. promote the culture of respect for life and people; 2. qualify the services rendered; 3. promote volunteering; 4. be present in campaigns in favour of migrants; 5. interact with other associations or similar bodies. And he specifies: «Qualifying more and more professionally the services currently rendered and looking for new ones, according to the new needs, remains our priority. But we must always keep in mind that, beyond the services offered, it is necessary to develop relevant attention and sensitivity for the single individual migrants, trying to get to know them in their identity and values. Knowing them is essential for those who seek to accompany the migrants on the path to social inclusion and cultural interaction»

MEXICO

The bishops of Mexico have inaugurated a “novennium” in honour of the Virgin of Guadalupe, inviting everyone to take part

The nine-year period announced is in view of the Global Pastoral Project (2031-2033) to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the apparitions of Our Lady of Guadalupe (9-12 December 1531) and the two thousandth anniversary of our redemption in Jesus Christ. The bishops write: «This Project intends to present Jesus Christ, alive and risen, close to us, a travelling companion, who broadens our horizons and gives us confidence in the face of the complex realities in which we live [...] The third decade of the third millennium of the Redemption providentially has a special meaning for our Mexican nation, because a few years after the arrival of the Gospel in these lands, in the year 1531, Our Lady of Guadalupe made the goodness and novelty of the Christian proclamation, which unfortunately had been wounded by the sword of conquest, re-echo with her words”.

The bishops see this project as their response to the concrete appeal that the Holy Father Pope Francis addressed to them on the occasion of his visit to Mexico, in the Metropolitan Cathedral, on February 13, 2016, when he exhorted them to «promote a serious and qualified project, committed and demanding, capable of going beyond functional or merely circumstantial circumstances and criteria».

The pastoral project uses the classic *Review of Life* method, commonly identified by the three verbs that fix the passages: “see”, “judge/interpret”,

and “act” as a people redeemed by Jesus Christ, under the loving gaze of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Among the various commitments, there is also the very concrete one of “identifying and accompanying the vulnerable groups of our society: migrants, ill-treated women, the homeless, victims of continual natural disasters, vulnerable young people, the sick and prisoners, among others”. There are three very evident missionary aspects in the pastoral project: that of an “*Outgoing Church*” which strengthens the experience of the Continental Mission; that of the *Ad Gentes* mission, which makes us present in all the existential-geographical peripheries; and that of recognising and adopting, in our pastoral processes, pastoral conversion, synodality and the richness of the so-called “Guadalupean Method of Evangelisation”. Like Pope Francis before them, the Bishops of Mexico also say they are happy to see that the vitality, joy and spirit of celebration of the Mexican people can be found in particular in the country’s adolescents and young people. The bishops rely on them, and invite them to “carry out pastoral projects aimed at accompanying and helping young people in danger of violence, drug trafficking, prostitution, trafficking in human beings, etc..., providing them with healthier environments designed to help them develop their youthful spirit”.

MOÇAMBIQUE

Episcopal ordination of Msgr. António Bogaio Constantino in Beira

On the morning of Sunday 19 February 2023, Msgr. António Manuel Bogaio Constantino, appointed Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Beira by Pope Francis on 13 December 2022, was ordained to the episcopate. The solemn celebration took place in the Multipurpose Pavilion of the Railway in Beira, the second-largest city of Mozambique and the capital of the province of Sofala, in the central part of the country.

Msgr. Claudio Dalla Zuanna, Archbishop of Beira, presided over the consecration, together with the ordaining bishops Msgr. Inácio Saúre, Archbishop of Nampula and president of the Episcopal Conference (CEM), and Msgr. João Hatoa Nunes, Coadjutor bishop of the Archdiocese of Maputo and Vice President of the CEM. Also present were the bishops Msgr. Francisco Chimoio, Archbishop of Maputo, Msgr. Diamantino Antunes, Bishop of Tete, and Msgr. Hilário da Cruz Massinga, Bishop of Quelimane. Among the Comboni missionaries were Fr. David Costa Domingues, Vicar General and representative of the General Council, and Fr. José Joaquim Luis Pedro, provincial superior of Mozambique.

After pronouncing the ordination prayer, Msgr. Claudio continued the celebration with the so-called Explanatory Rites: the anointing with Holy Chrism, the presentation of the book of the Gospels, the ring, the mitre and the crozier, the installation and the embrace of peace. Rites that manifest the service to which the bishop is called: to feed, together with all the bishops, with meekness, fidelity and fullness of heart, the flock of God scattered over the whole earth.

During his homily, the Archbishop of Beira exhorted his Auxiliary Bishop to assume the mission that the Lord has entrusted to him, seeking to give himself to the service of the Church and the neediest people. "May the mothers of rural areas, who have never seen a bishop, feel supported by your pastoral mission", underlined Msgr. Claudio.

For his part, in his first speech as bishop, Msgr. Bogaio Constantine explained that he received the noble, thorny and demanding mission of pastor with "fear and trembling", however, moved by the great desire to "serve, serve and again to serve the Church". Then, turning to Msgr. Claudio, his superior in the episcopate of Beira, he promised to collaborate with him, adding: "Your pain will be my pain, and your joy will be my joy". Addressing the assembly, the new pastor launched the following challenge: "You can count on me, as I count on you, but everyone must assume their own responsibilities". To his confreres, he said: «Now I am a bishop, but without ceasing to be a Comboni missionary».

NAP

Kathleen Carroll receives the 2023 "Distinguished Communicator of the Year" award

Writing can be difficult and communicating a clear message even more so. However, Kathleen (Katie) Carroll, editor of *Comboni Missions Magazine*, writes inspiring, deeply felt and informative stories every year.

This is one of the many reasons why Katie was chosen as the Distinguished Communicator of the Year 2023 by the Salesian Guild of Cincinnati. She received the award during the association's annual celebration, held at the Comboni Missionary Centre, on January 28, 2023.

Katie's nomination for this award was supported by her colleague Lindsay Braud. In designating her, Lindsay wrote: «In everything she does, Katie plunges headlong. Without a moment's hesitation, Katie jumps on a plane and travels the world to get a story and pictures to publish, even if it means spending two weeks in the Central African Republic, surrounded by violence and without knowing a word of the local language».

For the past six years, Katie has worked for the Comboni Missionaries, telling their stories and sharing their charism. Her career, however, began at F & W Publications and then continued over many years of service at Franciscan Media (a multimedia company that includes the magazine *Il Messaggero di Sant'Antonio - St. Anthony Messenger*). Recently, she also took on the role of communications expert for the Sisters of Divine Providence in Melbourne, Kentucky. With each new engagement, Katie learned new skills to enrich an already outstanding resume.

"Katie's work as editor of the Comboni Missions Magazine always strikes a good balance between news from the Catholic world, personal stories from the missions, and the difficult realities encountered in mission life," Lindsay continues in her motivation letter. "The world may be filled with darkness, but light always overcomes darkness. Katie helps bring that light into our magazine. Stories, which sometimes highlight difficult situations, always bring hope. And this is because Katie herself seeks the best in each person who can offer the magazine the same idealism as hers, in order to then share it with the world ».

It was only right to present this year's award at the Comboni Missionary Centre as it allowed Katie's collaborators and missionary friends to take part in the beautiful celebration. Father Ezama Ruffino, provincial superior of the Comboni North American Province, concelebrated Mass with Father Dan Dorsey of the Glenmary Home Missioners. A catered dinner, award presentation and keynote speech by a keynote speaker completed the evening.

In her acceptance speech, Katie said, "Writing is really, really challenging. Our missionaries are amazing. It's really easy to write good stories when you have good stories to tell. I am fortunate to tell stories that are also meaningful. It is a privilege to work for the nuns and the missionaries."

The Salesian Association is a community of Catholic communicators in Greater Cincinnati. It offers its members the possibility of cultivating mutual spiritual relationships and experiencing true closeness with their Creator, through a spirit of communion, shared faith and community dialogue. It is a very *sui generis* organisation: it has no membership fees, no officials, and holds only one meeting a year. It has been active since 1944.

UGANDA

Helping young confreres to understand the importance of the transition from initial formation to ongoing formation

From 6 to 8 February, a group of scholastics engaged in their first mission experience and brothers with temporary vows met at the Ngeta mission for an initial moment of the Ongoing Formation Program. The meeting was facilitated by Fathers Collins Sampa Mwesih, Edward Kanyike Mayanja, and Anthony Kimbowa Kibira, the Provincial Superior. It was an opportune moment to share the experiences that our confreres are having in the context of the mission. The accent was placed on the “dream”, articulated by the XIX General Chapter, of helping our confreres to make a significant transition from initial to ongoing formation.

Three scholastics ordained to the diaconate

On Thursday 9 February 2023, the Bishop of Lira, Msgr. Lino Sanctus Wanok, ordained three of our scholastics as deacons: Robert Nsinga, Denis Idro, and John Bosco Mugerwa.

Before the ordination, the Bishop wanted to meet the three candidates, explaining to them why he had decided to ordain them on a Thursday: it is his policy to celebrate ordinations on that same day of the week on which Christ instituted the sacraments of the Eucharist and the Priesthood (Holy Thursday). “The faithful must be able to grasp and deepen the close link that exists between the two sacraments”, he specified.

During his homily, Archbishop Wanok reminded the three candidates that their ordination is not a “promotion”, but a radical “insertion into a service”. “You must never forget that being a Christian means becoming ‘servants’, following the example of Christ, who ‘emptied himself, assuming the condition of a servant’” (cf. Phil 2:6-11).

He then thanked the Comboni missionaries for having planted the seed of faith among the Lango of the diocese of Lira, specifying: “You are our ‘grandparents in faith’ and I warmly urge you never to abandon your grandchildren”. Present at the celebration were many members of the Comboni Family – priests, brothers and sisters – as well as a good number of diocesan priests and other religious congregations.

Father Anthony Kimbowa Kibira invited everyone to experience the celebration as a moment of inspiration, “especially those young people who are wondering what they should do with their lives”. He then expressed his “dream” of being able to soon attend the ordination of the first Lango Comboni priest.

IN PACE CHRISTI

Fr. Benito Amonini (8th March 1977 – 31st January 2023)

Benito was born on March 8, 1937, in Piateda, in the province of Como, a town located in middle Valtellina. He was the fourth of six children (3 boys and 3 girls). As a boy, he felt called to the priestly life and entered the minor diocesan seminary of “Sant’Abbondio” in Como. After finishing high school, in September 1953, Benito entered the Comboni novitiate in Gozzano. On 9 September 1955, he took his first vows and moved to Verona for three years of studies. In September 1957, he began the theology courses at the major seminary of Trento, while carrying out the function of prefect in the Comboni Apostolic House. of Trent. On 9 September 1961, he made his final vows and on 7 March 1962, he was ordained a priest. He asked to go to the mission, but the superiors assigned him the job of Vice-Rector of the Apostolic School of Trento. In 1964 he was assigned to the minor seminary of Rebbio as vocations promoter; in 1971 he became superior there.

After 10 years of service in Italy, Fr. Benito left for the mission of Zaire (now DR Congo). He was appointed superior of the Ndedu mission, of which he soon became parish priest. In 1976, he was assigned to the mission of Nangazizi, as director of the Catechetical Centre and superior of the Comboni community. He stayed there until June 1984.

In July 1984, Fr. Benito was recalled to Italy and assigned to the community of Rebbio, as superior and teacher in the minor seminary. He remained there until September 1986, when he moved to Brescia as superior and in charge of missionary animation. By 1 January 1990, he was in Kisangani, assigned to the parish of St Camille.

He would remain in Zaire for almost 30 years, interrupted only by holidays in his homeland or brief refresher courses in Rome. In 2001 he was sent to Bibwa to start a new mission on the outskirts of the capital Kinshasa. In 2009 he had commitments in the Parish of the Sacred Heart in Yanongwe where he is also the bursar of the community. In December 2011, he was asked to go to Butembo, where a community for missionary animation, youth ministry and teaching young Comboni postulants had recently been opened.

He returned to Italy at the end of 2018, knowing that it was for good. He wrote to the confreres he left behind in the Congo: «I feel the duty and the need to say goodbye before leaving Congo with the intention of not returning. This decision was made after several months of reflection and consultation. After 56 years of priesthood and 40 years spent in Zaire-Congo, I want to prepare for my last “commitment”, the one that will lead

me to an “encounter” with the Lord, trying to learn to rest, relax, pray, contemplate and “communicate” in a new way with the mission that has seduced me since the minor seminary, and that I have lived intensely, doing many things, even making mistakes, going through trials, and trying to love. I’m not running away (I lived through fear and war during the 10 years I spent in Kisangani, from 1990 to 2000!). I love Congo and each one of you as best I can... Slowly, I am preparing to leave this earth, thanking the Lord for what he has been able to do in me and through me in the many years of mission”.

In October 2022, Fr. Benito was taken to Castel D’Azzano (Verona), to the Centre for Sick Comboni Missionaries. He arrived in a very poor state of health, with hearing and speech difficulties. He lived mostly in silence and in prayer. He was also admitted to the hospital due to critical health issues. The end was near and he was brought back to Castel D’Azzano. He seemed to have recovered somewhat, but the signs of growing weakness were evident. On January 30, 2023, Father Benito passed away peacefully in his sleep, while Father Luigi Cadè held his hand.

Fr. António Marques Martins (16th May 1941 – 4th February 2023)

Father António Martins was born in Portugal at Canas de Sabugosa (today, Canas de Santa Maria) on May 16, 1941. He met the Comboni Missionaries through Fr. Angelo la Salandra, who had been Parish Priest of Canas de Santa Maria for some years. He entered the Comboni Seminary of Viseu in 1954 and for ten years we were companions in the various stages of formation: five years in Viseu, two years in the Novitiate of Famalicão (which concluded with temporary vows on 9 September 1961), and three years of philosophy in Maia. For the theology courses, he was assigned to the Scholasticate of Venegono while I instead was sent to that of Rome. We both made our perpetual profession on September 9, 1967.

We were ordained priests in Viseu, together with five other Comboni missionaries, on 13 July 1968, by the then bishop of the diocese, Msgr. José Pedro da Silva. While I had the grace of being able to leave immediately for the missions of Mozambique, Fr. Martins was asked to stay in Lisbon in the important commitment of spreading our monthly magazine *Audácia*.

In 1970 he was sent to Mozambique to teach Portuguese and history at the School of Arts and Crafts in Carapira (Nampula). A few months later, however, the National Military Chaplaincy requested the service of a Combonian priest as a military chaplain, and the lot fell on Father António. After the course at the Military Academy in Lisbon, he left for Angola,

where he arrived in November 1971 and was assigned to Uige, in the north of the country.

Fr. Martins returned to Portugal in February 1974 and was assigned to the community of Famalicão, with the task of coordinator of missionary animation. I met him there in 1976 when I was assigned to the Portuguese province and replaced him as superior of the community. From Famalicão, Fr. Martins moved to the community of Maia, where he remained until 1980, again in charge of missionary animation. Everyone knew his surprising ability to empathise with people and to weave true and profound human relationships, which promptly brought a large number of friends and benefactors to the community.

In 1980, the opportunity finally arrived for him to leave for the mission. He was sent to Peru, appointed to the parish of Cerro de Pasco, at an altitude of 4,330 metres, where he remained for four years. It was not an easy mission: the cold and lack of oxygen in the air caused tiredness and headaches, forcing the missionaries to periodically return to Lima to recover their strength. In 1984 he returned to Portugal to resume the work of missionary animation first in the community of Famalicão, then in that of Maia, where he also assumed the service of vocations promotion.

From July 1989 to June 1990, he had the opportunity to have a Sabbatical Year in Rome, at the Community of the Curia. By July, he was already in Brazil, at the parish of Ouro Preto do Oeste, Rondonia. In 1993, he was assigned to the parish of São José do Rio Preto and, in 1997, to a parish in Rio de Janeiro. In July 1999, he returned to Portugal and to the community of Maia where he remained until 2007. In July 2007, he returned to Peru for a second period of work until 2013, doing ministry in the parish of El Carmen-Chincha; in 2011, he was also appointed superior of the local Comboni community.

Returning to Portugal, he worked as an animator of vocational pastoral care in Famalicão and then a member of the community of the Postuladado Unificado and Centro Vocacional Juvenil of Maia until July 2020, when he was assigned to the community of Viseu, a house adapted to welcome the elderly and the sick. There he continued his ministry of Reconciliation and Consolation to the confreres and the people of the neighbourhood.

It was in Viseu that Sister Death called on him. On the evening of 3 February, he retired to his room, but the next morning he was found dead, probably of a heart attack. There were dozens of confreres from all our communities and some diocesan priests from nearby parishes at his funeral Mass celebrated on February 7. *Fr. Manuel Horta, mcccj*

Fr. Carlo Pasinetti (26th September 1929 – 27th February 2023)

Fr. Carlo, who was born in Borgo di Terzo (BG) on 26/9/29 returned to the house of the Heavenly Father on 27/2/23 in our community of Rebbio (Como) at the beautiful age of about 94 years.

He was ordained a priest on 6/26/55 in Milan Cathedral by then Cardinal Giovanni Battista Montini, later Pope Paul VI, canonised by Pope Francis on 14 October 2018. Fr. Carlo, a new priest, began to carry out his missionary service in Italy for 4 years (1955-59) as formator of the Combonian seminarians in Trento and Pesaro. He then spent almost 2 years in London to learn English, so necessary for his future missionary work in Africa. He arrived here in July 1961 and, full of enthusiasm, offered his service in Uganda in these missions: Morulem, Gulu, Aboke, Opit and Moroto (northern Uganda) where for 3 years he cooperated in the formation of candidates of the Congregation of the Apostles of Jesus, founded by our confrere Fr. Marangoni.

In 1974, the same Fr. Marangoni invited him to Nairobi where he collaborated in the formation of priests called “The Apostles of Jesus”.

In 1980 he received the task of developing the male congregation of Missionaries called “Contemplative Evangelisers” (Contemplative Evangelisers) and was elected Father General of the same, having been recognised for his great formative ability.

A missionary in love with Christ and the souls to be led to him, he offered himself for multiple priestly ministry services - in Kenya - from 1987 until 2015. Several missions have the privilege of having had him with them: Moyale, Gilgil, Rongai, Amakuriat, Ongat, Nairobi and Marsabit.

In those years of fruitful apostolate, Fr. Carlo worked in catechesis, the evangelisation of adults and assistance to the sick and needy, with a smile on his face which made him liked by all. He truly lived the command of Jesus: *Learn from me for I am meek and lowly in heart* (Mt 11:29).

A man of profound culture and lively intelligence, Fr. Carlo focused his talents and energies on the world of schooling. He understood that only by focusing on the education of male and female youth could Africa have achieved the capacity to defeat its age-old situation of poverty and dependence on the colonial world and thus achieve true progress and civilisation according to the main lines of the social doctrine of the Church.

The years went by also for Fr. Carlo and on July 1st 2015, with great reluctance, he had to leave his beloved Africa and return to Italy. He was 86 years old and was sent to the Comboni community of Rebbio (Como) which welcomes and assists elderly confreres who are still self-sufficient. Physically, Fr. Carlo experienced the transformation common to all the elderly. At first, he starts to use a walking stick to avoid falling and then

he has to use a Zimmer frame to lean on. However, his mind was still clear and, with his telephone, computer and Skype, he continued undaunted to maintain ties with friends in Kenya and London. His family members kept in touch and took turns coming to visit him to take him to some place on the lake for a nice lunch crowned with the ice cream he was so fond of. Also, every now and then, they brought him to their homes to give him the joy of family warmth.

Gradually, his legs became weaker and he began to fall frequently. Fr. Carlo understood that the call of God would come soon.

On Sunday 26 February, Fr. Carlo, seriously ill, stayed in his room. On that day, the last day of his life, God gave his family the great grace of a last farewell (his sister, brother, nephew Maurizio and others were present).

This moving farewell was blessed by the prayer of his family together with some confreres with the gift of the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, which the Church gives to the sick to instil serenity, health, peace, and the forgiveness of sins. A Sacrament which, for the believer, becomes the tender embrace of Jesus and the heavenly mother Mary. After a night spent serenely, on Monday 27 at 8.30 Fr. Carlo opened his eyes encountering the Light of that God for whom he had consumed his entire long life. We thank you Heavenly Father for donating Fr. Carlo to his family, to the Comboni family, to Africa and to the world. Now it's your turn, dear Fr. Carlo, to pray for everyone so that one day we will meet again with you in an eternal embrace. (*Fr. Egidio Tocalli, mccj*)

LET US PRAY FOR OUR BELOVED DEAD

THE MOTHERS: Ángela García de Martínez, of Fr. Anastacio Martínez García; Maria, of Bro. Mariano Zonta.

THE BROTHERS: Aurelio, of Fr. Enrico Radaelli and Secular Comboni Graziella; Jesus, of Fr. José Luis Vale Insua; Luciano, of Fr. Fausto Beretta; Salvatore, of Fr. Gennaro Campochiaro.

THE SISTERS: Nives, of Fr. Gianluigi Pitton; Oliva, of Fr. Alberto Villotti; Sr. Maria do Carmo, of Fr. José de Sousa; Gabriella, of Bro. Silvano Bergamini.

THE COMBONI MISSIONARY SISTERS: Sr. Andreis M. Ester; Sr. Ferrario M. Albina.