

Familia Comboniana

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES OF THE HEART OF JESUS

822

October 2023

THE SOLEMNITY OF SAINT DANIEL COMBONI 10th OCTOBER 2023



GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

GENERAL NOTES OF THE 20TH CONSULTA

Appointments

The General Council has appointed Fr. Martín Vargas Francisco José superior of the scholasticate of Granada as from 1st October 2023. The GC wishes Fr. Martín Vargas fruitful work and, at the same time, thanks Fr. Román Medina José Luis for the service he rendered in Granada as superior and formator, and also wishes him fruitful missionary work.

Election of the Continental Brother Representatives

The General Council has received the results of the process of electing the Continental Brother Representatives at the continental levels of America/Asia and ASCAF. Consequently, the four Brothers responsible for the Assembly of Circumscription Superiors of the continents are:

- ASCAF – Bro. Abotsi Koffi Afunonemu (Pascal);
- APDESAM – Bro. Ngunza Mboma Gédéon;
- America/Asia – Bro. Dimanche Godfroy-Abel;
- Europe - Bro. Basinski Tomasz.

The GC accompanies those elected to this service of animation of the Brothers of the Continents/Subcontinents and encourages them to continue the reflection on the specific ministry of the Comboni Brothers in the different contexts in which we carry out our mission

Letter concerning extraordinary contributions

As is traditional, this year too, the GC has ordered that an extraordinary contribution be requested to finance the activities planned by the various sectors and districts of the Institute. Unfortunately, in recent years, there has been a significant decrease in extraordinary contributions. Only 7 out of 27 circumscriptions responded to the invitation to collaborate. We are aware of the difficult times we are going through and the numerous uncertainties that the future holds for us, especially in the economic field. But precisely by virtue of this, we are called to live responsible solidarity as a vector to emerge from the crisis capable of making us redesign the future, having the 'common good' as the criterion for positive and active action, which involves the responsibility of all.

Synod

The XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops will take place in two sessions, spaced one year apart: the first from 4th to 29th October 2023, the second in October 2024.

The process of this XVI Synod began in October 2021 on the theme, *For a Synodal Church: communion, participation, mission*. Since then, there has been a lot of listening, dialogue, and reflection to understand what it means to be a 'Synodal Church'. This procedure, intended from the beginning to be highly dynamic, sought to involve everyone, listening to the *sensus fidelium*, the living voice of the universal Church, in an enormous effort to consult the entire People of God. It was an exercise in synodality in universal communion, which listened to Churches, communities, groups, movements and individuals as places in which the Holy Spirit acts. The process is not over: it is the same Spirit, who incessantly guides and accompanies the Church through the times, who still speaks through the history and culture and faith of every people and nation.

The GC thanks all the confreres who were involved together with the living communities with which they walk; he also thanks the confreres who will participate in the Synodal Assembly.

He invites the entire Institute to 'experience' the Synodal Assembly carefully and to perceive it as a truly missionary event: let us feel united in supporting this event in prayer, hoping that it will be a true *kairós* for the entire missionary Church.

Six-Year Plan

The GC thanks the circumscriptions that have already sent in the drafts of their six-year plans. It reminds the other circumscriptions that the drafts of the six-year plans must arrive in Rome by the end of November – addressed to the General Secretary's email – to be examined in the December consultation and returned to the circumscriptions for approval by the respective Councils and for their implementation. The General Secretary will be responsible for distributing the material he receives to the sector Secretariats and to the other members of the General Administration.

Schedule of GC Visits

Fr. Luigi Codianni

- ▶ 16-19 October: Graz (with the General Secretary of Formation)
- ▶ 26 October – 3 November: Lisbon (Meeting of Provincials of Europe)
- ▶ 12-24 November: Malawi/Zambia (with Fr. Domingues)

Fr. David Domingues

- ▶ 3-6 October: Chicago, the formation community and elsewhere
- ▶ 6-28 October: Mexico
- ▶ 12-24 November: Malawi/Zambia (with Fr. Codianni)

Bro. Alberto Lamana

- ▶ 1-17 October: Mexico
- ▶ 1-10 November: Egypt (with Fr. Sindjalim)

Fr. Elias Sindjalim

- ▶ 12-27 October: Congo
- ▶ 1-10 November: Egypt (with Bro. Lamana)

Perpetual professions

Sc. Jacob Muia Nzomo (KE)	Kacheliba (KE)	23.09.2023
Sc. Mutinda Joshua Musyoki (KE)	Kacheliba (KE)	23.09.2023

Ordinations

Fr. Mugerwa John Bosco	Bujumbura-Hoima (UG)	02.09.2023
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Holy Redeemer Guild

October 01 – 07 RCA 08 – 15 TCH 16 – 31 RSA
 November 01 – 15 SS 16 – 30 T

Prayer intentions

October

That the Synodal journey of *communion, participation and mission* we are celebrating may involve us as Church, so that she may truly become the home of all. May the breath of the Spirit keep the communities alive in their pastoral and missionary journey. *Lord, hear us.*

November

That the memory of our deceased sisters and brothers, ancestors, friends and relatives may make us more aware of the attractiveness of the communion of saints as an anticipation of the joy that awaits us. *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 Daniele Comboni, bishop	Founder of the Comboni Family	Solemnity
20	Blessed David Okelo and Gildo Irwa	Martyrs	Optional memorial. North Uganda

NOVEMBER

Commemoration of deceased confreres, relatives and benefactors	Date to be established
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Meaningful anniversaries

OCTOBER

12	Our Lady of Aparecida	Brazil
16	St Margaret Mary Alacoque, virgin	Universal
19	Ss. John di Brébeuf and Isaac Jogues, priests and companions, martyrs	NAP (Canada and USA)

NOVEMBER

21	Our Lady of Quinche	Ecuador
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COMBONI'S GREAT INTUITION HEARD ONCE AGAIN IN THE VATICAN

Pope's catechesis on St Daniel Comboni

In the general audience on Wednesday, 20th September, Pope Francis, in line with the catechesis that he has chosen to carry out in this period on the passion for evangelisation, recalled the figure of Saint Daniel Comboni. Citing some of his most significant and well-known phrases, he highlighted how they were the expression of “a person in love with God and the brothers he served in the mission”. He never tired of repeating that “Jesus Christ suffered and died for them too.”

And he addressed them – the Africans – thus: “The happiest of my days will be the one in which I will be able to give my life for you”, said the Pope, underlining that “Comboni affirmed this in a context characterised

by the horror of slavery of which he was a witness. Slavery ‘thingifies’ man, whose value is reduced to being useful to someone or something. But Jesus, God made man, elevated the dignity of every human being and exposed the falsity of slavery. Comboni, in the light of Christ, became aware of the evil of slavery; he also understood that social slavery is rooted in a deeper slavery, that of the heart, that of sin, from which the Lord frees us. As Christians, therefore, we are called to fight against every form of slavery. Unfortunately, however, slavery, like colonialism, is not a thing of the past. In Africa so loved by Comboni, today torn apart by many conflicts, after the political struggle, an equally enslaving ‘economic colonialism’ has been unleashed (...). It is a drama to which the most economically advanced world often closes its eyes, ears and mouth. I therefore renew my appeal: ‘Stop suffocating Africa: it is not a mine to be exploited or a soil to be plundered’ (*Meeting with the Authorities*, Kinshasa, 31 January 2023)”.

Summarising Comboni’s missionary life, Francis said: “After an initial period in Africa, he had to leave the mission for health reasons. Too many missionaries had died after contracting diseases, due to a lack of knowledge of the local reality. However, if others left Africa, not so Comboni. After a time of discernment, he felt that the Lord was inspiring him with a new way of evangelisation, which he summarised in these words: ‘*Save Africa with Africa*’ (*Writings*, 2741f). It was a powerful intuition, which helped to renew the missionary commitment: the evangelised people were not just ‘objects’, but ‘subjects’ of the mission.”

“Comboni’s great missionary passion, however,” Pope Francis went on to remind us, “was not primarily the fruit of human commitment: he was not driven by his courage or motivated only by important values, such as freedom, justice and peace; his zeal was born from the joy of the Gospel, it drew on the love of Christ and led to love for Christ!”

BRASIL

Lay people in action: ‘Hearts burning; feet walking’ (cf. *Lk 24,32-33*)

The city of Balsas, in the state of Maranhão, Brazil, hosted the 2nd Regional Meeting of Comboni Spirituality Groups, also known as GEC. Representatives of the GECs of Piquiá, Timon, São Luís and Balsas participated in this meeting. Also present was Father Raimundo Nonato Rocha dos Santos, Provincial of the Comboni missionaries in Brazil. The meeting took place at Our Lady of Guadalupe Formation Centre on 16th and 17th September.

The Comboni Spirituality Groups have existed in Brazil since 2016: they are groups of lay people identified with the charism and spirituality of Saint Daniel Comboni, who, inspired by this same charism, seek to carry out pastoral, social, missionary animation and support activities for the Comboni mission.

The two-day meeting in Balsas offered the GEC moments of spirituality and missionary formation, of coexistence and renewal of their missionary commitment. Furthermore, the participants joined the diocese of Balsas to celebrate the triduum in memory of Monsignor Franco Masserdotti, a Comboni missionary and Bishop of Balsas, who died 17 years ago in a road accident

Currently, there are 14 Comboni Spirituality Groups spread throughout Brazil. In Maranhão, they are present in Balsas, Pastos Bons, Timon, São Luís and Piquiá. Each group meets regularly in their territory and together they promote a regional meeting every two years. The next meeting will be held in July 2025, in Piquiá, in Açailândia municipality.

Daniel, servant of the slaves

On the 20th anniversary of the canonisation of our Founder, the Comboni Father Enzo Santângelo, in his recent book (the eightieth), presents Saint Daniel Comboni who recounts passages from the history of his mission. Even though evangelising the African continent was considered an impossible undertaking in the nineteenth century, Comboni, with his proclamation of the mission as the essence of Christianity, shook the Church with his missionary ardour, ignoring criticism, slander, deprivation, and persecution.

Fatalism, suffering and slavery constituted the fate imposed on blacks by white greed. Moved with compassion by the miserable condition in which many African peoples lived, Comboni spent his short life (just 50 years!) coming to their aid, breaking the chains of slavery, and training them to be protagonists of their own history.

'Save Africa through Africa!' It is the battle cry with which Comboni begins his missionary and apostolic journey. In many letters he describes the fate of defenceless men and women who, torn from their huts, are dragged to the eastern coasts of Africa, to be embarked on abominable slave ships, headed towards a monstrous destiny of suffering, slavery, exploitation and death.

The book aims to present Daniele Comboni who describes the African continent with its customs, the fauna and flora with their beauty, the traditions, the terror of the desert and all the African human potential of that

time. It is the description of a great writer, full of detail and spirituality, especially when he visits the Holy Land.

The legacy left by Comboni to all those who are inspired by his charism is to announce the Good News, help the poorest and most abandoned ethnic groups on earth wherever they are, «Defend and preserve nature», and «give one's life, as Christ gave it.» This is the new prophecy!

Comboni Family Missionary Animation Assembly

The members of the Comboni Family present in Brazil gathered in assembly in September 2023, at the provincial house of São Paulo. Some Comboni Missionary Sisters, Comboni Missionaries, Lay Comboni Missionaries and lay representatives of the Comboni Spirituality Groups were present.

Those were beautiful days, lived as a family, with moments of spirituality, sharing the work of missionary and vocational animation, evaluation and revision of the Vocational Accompaniment Plan, and planning of the work for the next year.

The participants also had a period of formation on the theme “Vocational animation in today’s context, the map of vocations, where to concentrate energies and actions”, led by Mons. Juarez Albino Destro, Rogationist, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Porto Alegre. (*Padre Raimundo Nonato Rocha dos Santos, mccj*)

EGYPT-SUDAN

Sudan – War updates

The war which broke out on 15th April between the regular army and the Rapid Support Forces continues to devastate Sudan. According to international sources, if we add the 5 million displaced people caused by the current conflict to the displaced people present in the country before the war, Sudan is the nation with the highest number of displaced people in the world: over 7 million!

Three of our six communities in Sudan have been temporarily abandoned, with much regret, because they are among the oldest communities in the Institute, dating back to the times when our first confreres returned to Khartoum and Omdurman after the Mahdiyyah (1881–1898).

Lebanon – New developments at the formation community

The ‘Father Daniel Sorur’ formation community in Lebanon has settled in Maad, about 30 km north of Beirut. To begin the new formation year, the scholastics, together with their formator and the provincial superior of

EGSD, spent a few days on retreat, reflecting, among other things, on the writings of Father Daniel Sorur, one of the few young Sudanese freed from slavery by Saint Daniele Comboni who then became a priest. The figure of Father Daniel Sorur is significant for the new formation house, because, after some years spent in Rome, he completed his formation in Cairo and Beirut.

Egypt – Ongoing formation for bursars

Around ten confreres present in Egypt participated in a three-day seminar on book-keeping. The workshop took place at the Centre for Arab Studies 'Dar Comboni' from 25th to 27th September, with the invaluable help of Msgr. Claudio Lurati, Apostolic Vicar of Alexandria in Egypt, who shared with the group the rich material that he had already shared with scholastics and other confreres when he was General Bursar. The workshop was extremely useful because it comes at a time when the Province is trying to standardise some accounting and reporting practices, in order to increasingly standardise all the accounts

KENYA

New professions and ordinations

On Friday, 25th August, in the parish of Christ the King, in Lokichar, in the diocese of Lodwar, two Comboni missionaries, Joseph Etabo Lopeyok and Tob Emmanuel Got, were ordained priest and deacon respectively by Msgr. John Mbinda, bishop of Lodwar, in a colourful ceremony attended by many Christians from all over Kenya.

In his homily, Msgr. Mbinda underlined the centrality of prayer in the life of an ordained minister: "Prayer is your strength against the adversary. Don't forget to pray! If you always remain in prayer, you will not fall."

Political leaders from Turkana South were also present at the event. The area's Member of Parliament recognised the crucial services that the Catholic Church is rendering to the people of Turkana, and pledged to continue working alongside it.

Comboni missionaries have been operating in the diocese of Lodwar since 1975, serving for many years in Katilu and Lokori. Today they minister in the parishes of Nakwamekwi and Lokichar. They have always distinguished themselves in the ministry of first evangelisation, in the construction and management of schools, drilling wells and missionary animation activities.

Fr. Joseph is the first Comboni Turkana. Originally from Lokichar, he did the pre-postulancy in Huruma (Nairobi) from 2011 to 2012 and then

entered the postulancy of Ongata Rongai. In 2015 he went to Lusaka, Zambia, for the novitiate. Having made his first religious profession in 2017, he was assigned to the scholasticate of Lima (Peru) where he remained until 2022. Returning to Kenya for the year of missionary service, he made his perpetual vows on 10th February 2023.

Deacon Tob Emmanuel Got comes from the parish of Our Lady of the Assumption in Makutano, West Pokot County. After his pre-postulancy and postulancy (2012-2015), he attended the novitiate in Namugongo (Uganda), from 2016 to 2018. After his first vows (1st May 2018), he was assigned to the scholasticate of Casavatore-Naples, remaining there until 2022 when he returned to Kenya for the year of missionary service. He made his perpetual vows on August 23rd, two days before his diaconate ordination.

Three weeks before the great Lokichar ceremony, on 5th August, another Comboni missionary, David Oduor Ochieng, was ordained a priest in the church of St. Michael, in Sigomere, in the Archdiocese of Kisumu, by Msgr. Maurice Muhatia Makumba, Archbishop of Kisumu.

The provincial superior, Father Andrew Wanjohi, made public the destinations of the three newly ordained: Father Joseph Etabo Lopeyok was assigned to Mexico; Deacon Tob Got Emmanuel will continue his service in the parish of Nakwamekwi; Father David Oduor Ochieng will carry out his first mission assignment in Mozambique. (*Father Andrew Wanjohi, mccj*)

ITALY

Brother Maran celebrates his hundredth birthday

Last 1st August, at Castel d'Azzano (Verona), in the community for elderly Comboni Missionaries in need of care, one of the residents, Brother Romano Maran celebrated his hundredth birthday. Among those present were Father Tesfaye Tadesse, Superior General, Father Fabio Baldan, Provincial Superior, the Mayor and members of the municipal administration, representatives of the parish, numerous members of the Comboni Family: priests, Brothers, Sisters, Seculars and lay people, together with a substantial group of Brother Romano's nieces and nephews. Everyone joined the Comboni members of the community (about sixty), together with the staff. The entertainment program took place in an agile and pleasant way, punctuated by musical intervals. The 'birthday boy' also received a special blessing from Pope Francis.

Brother Romano was born in Selvazzano in Padua province on 1st August 1923. He grew up in a large Christian family (ten children), where he

learned to pray and work. At 15, he felt the desire to become a missionary. At the age of 19, in 1942, he entered the Comboni novitiate of Venegono Superiore (Varese), where he made his first religious profession on 7th October 1944.

It was a time of war and departures for Africa were at a halt. At last, in 1947 Brother Romano left for the Sudan where he worked for 17 years, in the North and South of the country, until 1964, when numerous missionaries were expelled by the government of Khartoum, with the sole accusation of spreading the Gospel and helping the most needy people. After a three-year stay in Italy, Brother Romano left for a second mission: Uganda, where he remained for 16 years (1967-1983). The third stage of the mission was the longest: in Malawi-Zambia, for 25 years. In 2009, after having spent a total of 58 years of missionary work in Africa, at the age of 86, Brother Romano returned to Italy, first to the mother house of the Comboni Missionaries in Verona and then to Castel d’Azzano.

During the celebration, Brother Romano summed up his long life in two words: “I tried to live charity and mercy.”

Now, favoured by good mental clarity and good health, Brother Romano dedicates his day to prayer until late in the evening, alternating rosaries and adoration of Jesus in the Eucharist. At 100 years old he is still an active missionary praying for vocations and supporting the mission of the Church throughout the world.

Taking his theme from the testimony of Brother Romano, Father General, during the Eucharistic celebration, urged all the confreres to intensify their prayer of missionary intercession. (*Father Romeo Ballan, mccj*)

A beautiful missionary animation initiative

Eleven young people from various Italian cities this summer lived the experience of a missionary camp in Benin, led by Father Souhouéno Cakpo Edènan Raoul, a Comboni missionary originally from this land, today a missionary animator in the community of Venegono Superiore (Varese). The journey began in the streets of Abomey-Calavi, 15 km from Cotonou. “Our coming to this country – foreign to all of us, distant not only geographically but also culturally – has placed us faced with the temptation to look critically at diversity, such as, for example, in the food, the idea of time, setbacks to plans or the lack of public services...”, the young people wrote in a report about the trip. This was a constant temptation which began to wane, “when we truly experienced the encounter with the ‘other’, with the faces of people who have made themselves known in a completely authentic way.”

The young people in the group have had many extraordinary experiences that they will not forget: “There is a before and an after Africa: the so-called ‘African sickness’ exists, and we cannot forget, we can never be the same again. The camp begins when it ends!” (*Father Sohouénou Cakpo Edènan Raoul, mccj*)

PCA

Ordination to the diaconate

The tradition of the Institute would have it that first professions and perpetual vows are made on 9th September, the feast of Saint Peter Claver, our Patron and protector of the missions in Africa.

And it was he who once again accompanied Roger Alexander Cerritos Abarca, a Salvadoran Comboni priest, on the day of his diaconal ordination in our parish of St Daniel Comboni, in El Salvador (PCA), during the Eucharist presided over by Comboni Bishop Mons. Vittorino Girardi.

The faithful of Roger’s home parish, those of our parish and many other friends participated in the joyful celebration. We were able to appreciate the gift of the diaconate as a service and what it entails for the Church, in the sacraments that the new deacon can administer and in sharing the gospel, while he himself – the deacon – is, by his own life, good news for all.

Furthermore, there were several moments that made us retrace Roger’s journey, from family to education: Costa Rica, Mexico, and Kenya...

Once again we pray to our saints, Peter Claver, Daniel Comboni and Mons. Oscar Romero, in this time of preparation for Roger’s priesthood, that they help us with their holiness to live ours and that there are in our lands many young people willing to say their ‘yes’ to Christ in the mission.

PERÚ

Sixth Comboni Youth Congress

“Young person, Christ lives and wants you alive!” This is the motto of the VI Comboni Youth Congress (CONJUCOM) which was held from 3 to 6 August in the Comboni parish of Nuestra Señora del Carmen, in the district of El Carmen (Chincha).

The young people from the various Comboni communities in Peru met to revive their faith in Christ Jesus through Comboni spirituality. The Comboni community and the families of El Carmen warmly welcomed the 250

young people, so that they could experience this meeting in the best way possible.

The program of this meeting was varied. It started with a big parade in the areas of the district: young people from Huánuco, Palca, Pangoa, Trujillo, Arequipa, Pamplona, Lima, Sunampe and, of course, El Carmen took to the streets, with their talents and best clothes, to share their joy and their faith. It was a moment full of emotion, in which the young Comboni Missionaries created 'joyful confusion' in the streets of El Carmen. Subsequently, they participated in the Eucharist presided over by Msgr. Héctor Eduardo Vera Colona, Bishop of Ica, who, accompanied by the provincial superior of Peru, Father Nelson Mitchell, and other Comboni priests, entrusted this congress to God through Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Mgr. Héctor thanked the Comboni Missionaries for their presence in the El Carmen district, for the work and missionary spirit they share with the Afro-Peruvian community.

An intense moment of Eucharistic adoration and a procession followed, before reaching the Nuestra Señora del Carmen secondary school, where the various activities of this sixth CONJUCOM took place. The young participants experienced moments of prayer, presentations, workshops, dynamics, dances, testimonies of volunteering and/or social help experiences.

The families of El Carmen witnessed how young people live their faith with joy, determination and hope. The Eucharist celebrated every morning was the driving force for experiencing this congress. The recitation of the holy rosary around the main square of the district was like hearing the Virgin Mary, our mother, encouraging the young people to follow her son Jesus without tiring. The young people sang and danced to praise the Lord, they learned to know the spirit Comboni missionary through the presentations, workshops, and testimonies of the different members of the Comboni Family (priests, brothers, sisters and lay Comboni missionaries).

With hearts full of joy, they shared part of their cultures through traditional dances and the CONJUCOM 'little fair', where delegations brought typical products from their regions.

The three days were very few for young people full of energy and enthusiasm, and determined to live and share their faith in the living Christ who wants them alive.

The 6th Comboni Youth Congress ended with the hope that what had been experienced would bear fruit in the young people of each of the delegations present. With a concluding Mass, presided over by father

Nelson Mitchell, the young people were sent off to their various communities.

The venue for the next CONJUCOM 2026 was announced: the beautiful city of Trujillo, which, with its symbol, the *caballito de totora* (typical boat), encourages young people to set out to live their faith, having Jesus as their guide. (*Brother José Valverde Paredes, mccj*)

Spiritual exercises 2023

From 7th to 12th August, at the provincial house of Monterrico, the annual spiritual exercises of the Province were held, with a good number of participants: twenty-one Comboni missionaries, a Comboni Sister, a lay Comboni Missionary, a Sister from the Congregación de las Hermanas del Buen Socorro, and two Augustinian nuns.

The retreat, cantered on the theme '*Let us walk together*', was preached by Sister Carmen Toledano, Spanish, prioress of the convent of Augustinian nuns. The proposed meditations, followed with great interest by all participants, addressed various biblical figures from the Old Testament and some episodes from the New Testament. Sister Carmen demonstrated excellent preparation in biblical exegesis, explaining the texts from a community and missionary perspective, to the great benefit of all the participants.

The silence experienced during the six days definitely contributed to creating a beautiful climate and encouraged prayer. We enjoyed moments of true fraternal communion, especially in the Eucharistic celebrations. We thank God for being able to participate in this important initiative of the Province.

IN PACE CHRISTI

Father Guillermo de Jesús Medina Martínez (16.07.1968 – 09.09.2023)

Father Guillermo de Jesús, better known to all as 'Memo', was born into a deeply religious family on July 16, 1968 in San Luis Potosí, Mexico, son of Víctor Manuel Medina and M. Guadalupe Martínez.

Despite a promising future as an engineering student, Memo decided to leave everything to respond to the call of the Lord, embracing the Comboni missionary life. He began his formation in the postulancy of Xochimilco, Mexico, in 1992. In 1995 he entered the novitiate of Sahuayo, Michoacán. After completing the novitiate with his first religious profession on 16th July 1997, Memo was sent to the international scholasticate of Elstree, England, for theological studies. Having completed his theology, he returned to Mexico for his priestly ordination, which took place on

10th August 2002. Assigned to his province of origin, he was assigned to the community of Guadalajara, to work in vocational promotion; two years later, he was sent to the postulancy of Xochimilco as a formator.

In 2007 Memo was assigned to the province of South Africa, where he carried out various services: local bursar, provincial secretary, coordinator of ongoing formation, parish priest... In 2014 he was assigned again to Mexico where he served as provincial bursar until 2022.

Memo had always had a passionate heart for the mission and legacy of Saint Daniele Comboni. He expressed several times the desire to return to Africa, a mission that left memories of beautiful experiences in his heart. But when, finally, he could go on a mission outside his country again, the destination was not Africa but the Province of the United States. Memo had a simple heart and never wanted to disagree with the decisions of his superiors; he was willing to go wherever he was sent and always did so with joy and at peace with himself, knowing that obedience brings peace to the missionary's heart.

At the end of his role as provincial bursar in Mexico, he was offered the opportunity for a period of interior renewal. Thus, before starting his new mission in the USA, he went to the Holy Land (as Daniele Comboni had done before venturing into the arduous mission of Africa). What Memo didn't know was that in the Holy Land he would find himself face to face with a cross that he would have to embrace until the last day of his life. And this he did with extraordinary generosity and serenity, following, even in this, in the footsteps of Saint Daniel Comboni.

It was while he was in the Holy Land that the rather serious symptoms of apparent appendicitis first began and Memo was repatriated to Mexico to resolve what seems like a temporary health problem. Arriving at the Oasis, our home for the sick and elderly in Guadalajara, on 25th December he underwent emergency surgery.

While a normal recovery was expected, on Easter Sunday Memo had to undergo surgery again, but now his health was already in a poor state. He was urgently transferred to Mexico City where he began a series of treatments in the hope that it was not too late.

Unfortunately, on 7th September we received the terrible news that there was nothing left to do for Memo: the disease had quickly spread and nothing could be done for him.

The most extraordinary thing about this deeply painful experience was seeing the serenity of Memo who, aware of his condition, never lost the peace and serenity that characterised him. Those of us who saw him in the last days of his life can attest to how serenely he faced his situation until his last moments, without ever showing resentment or desperation,

with the attitude of someone who experiences his pain with deep faith and trusting in the Lord and knowing that whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. Memo died on 9th September, at 3.20pm.

At his funeral, one of his brothers, on behalf of the family, expressed gratitude towards the Comboni Institute, saying through tears: "My brother could not have found himself in a better family". (*Father Marcial Hernández Almaguer, mccj*)

Brother Guido Zabeo (15.12.1939 – 11.9.2023)

Guido Zabeo was born in Cadoneghe (Padua) on 15th December 1939. He was soon left without his father, and his mother Ida had to provide for him, his three brothers and two sisters. In August 1952, Guido asked to join the Institute of the Comboni Missionaries. Father Alberto Buffoni, vocation recruiter at the Apostolic School of Padua, invited him to a month-long experience during the summer. This is his opinion of him: "Very willing and docile. More than sufficiently intelligent."

In September, Guido joined the seminary in Padua. The following year, however, on the advice of his superiors, he decided to become a missionary brother and entered the Professional Training School (SDP) that the Comboni Missionaries had at Thiene. After the preparatory course in 1953, he enrolled in the two-year specialisation course in mechanics and carpentry, and then in a complementary course in masonry, obtaining a "certificate of qualification" in June 1956.

On 13th September 1953 he went to the novitiate in Gozzano. On 15th September 1958, he took his first vows and was sent to Mirfield (England), where the Comboni Missionaries were building a house to host a new community. Guido was a good bricklayer and threw himself into his work with enthusiasm.

In July 1962, he was requested as a construction worker in the prelature of Balsas (Brazil), headed by Msgr. Giovanni Battista Parodi, mccj. On 9th September 1964, in the mission parish of Loreto, Maranhão, Guido made his perpetual religious profession. He remained in Brazil until June 1977, always engaged in construction, but also a member of the regional council for some periods.

In Italy, in October 1976, the general administration "is looking for a solution to the increasingly serious problem of assistance to elderly and sick confreres who need care in Verona," wrote father Severino Peano, Vicar General, on behalf of Father General, Tarcisio Agostoni, to father Florio Chizzali, superior of the Combonian region of North-East Brazil. The letter continues: "Some time ago, they made an appeal to various regions and provinces in this regard, but the appeal has so far remained unanswered.

Now, however, during the dialogues with the Brothers who are attending a course in Rome, we have ascertained that Brother Guido Zabeo is willing to accept this assignment and would also be happy about it, because – he told us –, after 14 years of work in the mission, he would have the chance to have a new experience and lend a hand to his home province. His only concern is that of creating a problem for you, who have always given him all your trust, as well as not being able to complete the work of promotion that Msgr. Rino Carlesi, new Bishop of Balsas, had entrusted him and to which he had committed himself. He does not intend to say his full ‘yes’, without your approval and blessing.”

It was only after many months of frequent correspondence between the general management, the provincial superior of Italy and the regional superior of North-East Brazil, with the complication of an operation which Brother Guido was forced to undergo in July 1977, that the Verona Centre for the Sick had the joy of having a nurse entirely dedicated to them.

Brother Guido remained at the Centre in Verona until the end of June 1983, when he was given the green light to return to North-East Brazil. He reached Balsas in July of the following year, and was appointed provincial treasurer-procurator, a post he filled for eight years, until June 1992.

In July, he returned to Italy and spent a year in the Comboni community of Messina. The following year, he moved to Florence, as a house maintenance worker. From July 1993 to July 1994, he was in the postulancy community in Florence, looking after the house and then moved to the Centre for the Sick in Verona, as a nurse, until 1997, when he was required, again as a nurse, at the ‘Ambrosoli Centre’ in Milan, where he was placed in charge. He continued in this role until 2005, when the Superior General, Father Teresino Serra, told him that he could return to Brazil: “I know you left your heart in that mission land and that leaving again is a source of great joy for you”.

In February 2006, Guido went to the house of Msgr. Gianfranco Masserdotti, new bishop of the diocese Balsas, in. His joy was brief. He received a new letter from Father Teresino Serra reassigning him to the Italian province from 1st July 2007. His new appointment was to Brescia Centre for the Sick but he was also involved in various missionary animation activities and initiatives of the diocese.

At the beginning of 2010, he was sent to the Rebbio (Como) Centre for the Sick, responsible for the care of sick confreres. In November 2012, he was needed in Arco, again as a nurse for the elderly confreres. After just over a year, he returned to Rebbio, where he stayed for two and a half years.

But he was now growing old and in May 2016, he was admitted for treatment to the 'Brother Alfredo Fiorini' Centre" in Castel d'Azzano until September, before settling permanently at the Milan Centre until 2022.

On 28th August 2022, he returned to Castel d'Azzano. He had given 20 years of service to his sick brothers, but now he is the one who needs to be cared for. He accepted it as the most natural thing in the world.

In early September 2023, his general situation rapidly deteriorated. He is immediately taken to the emergency room. A quick visit suggests to the doctors that he be admitted immediately to the medical department of the hospital in Borgo Roma, Verona, where he is diagnosed with a severe lung infection. Unfortunately, Brother Guido did not respond to medicine or to the administration of oxygen. On 11th September, around 2.30 pm, he passed away.

On the 14th, his funeral was celebrated with Father Renzo Piazza, superior of the community, presiding. Father Fabio Baldan, provincial superior, and other confreres of the community concelebrated the Mass. Brother Guido's relatives and friends were also present. Immediately after the ceremony, the remains were taken to the Verona cemetery for burial. (*Father Franco Moretti, mccj*)

LET US PRAY FOR OUR BELOVED DEAD

THE FATHER: Abalo Valentin, of Bro. Christopher Yata (KE).

THE MOTHERS: Ghidei Reti, of the scholastic Merhawi Mahder Metay (ER); Rosaline Eya Agbovi, of Fr. Augustin Soedjede (TG).

THE BROTHERS: Fernando, of Fr. Jeremias dos Santos Martins (MO); Giuseppe Romeo, of Fr. Guido Cellana (I); Juan José, of the scholastic Fernando Uribe Mendoza (ME); Rodolfo, of Fr. Giovanni Vedovato (I); Angelo, of Bro. Fernando Cesaro (†).

THE SISTERS: Sr Joaquina, of Fr. González Fernández Fidel (C); Anamaria, of Fr. Giovanni Munari (BR).

THE COMBONI SECULAR: Jacinta Pereira Das Neves (P).

MISSIONARI COMBONIANI – VIA LUIGI LILIO 80 – ROMA
