

FAMILIA COMBONIANA

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES OF THE HEART OF JESUS

841

June 2025

A QUESTION OF HEART



GENERAL COUNCIL

First professions

Title	Name	Place	Date	Prov.
Bro	<i>Kuegah Adadé Leopold Jean Marie</i>	Cotonou	03/05/2025	TGB(T)
Sc	Mbaihiamel Bebarem Alexis	Cotonou	03/05/2025	TCH
Sc	Nzuzi Nlandu Arlain	Cotonou	03/05/2025	RDC
Sc	Beninga Yassika Belfort Cedrique	Cotonou	03/05/2025	RCA
Sc	Tewuia Kodjo Emile	Cotonou	03/05/2025	TGB(T)
Sc	Ameyou Dosseh Akpemada Emmanuel	Cotonou	03/05/2025	TGB(T)
Sc	Mbusa Wabike Emmanuel	Cotonou	03/05/2025	RDC
Sc	Dute Kofi Epiphane	Cotonou	03/05/2025	TGB(T)
Sc	Ogou Hounkpe Isidore	Cotonou	03/05/2025	TGB(B)
Sc	Ouapita Darwin Quentin Miguel	Cotonou	03/05/2025	RCA
Sc	Batoba Pata Patrick	Cotonou	03/05/2025	RDC
Sc	Gandjiede Raoul Anihouvi	Cotonou	03/05/2025	TGB(B)
Sc	Bakenakou Lidaou Romain	Cotonou	03/05/2025	TGB(T)
Sc	Ajavon Kodjo Samuel	Cotonou	03/05/2025	TGB(T)
Sc	Kambale Kasivika Shukuru	Cotonou	03/05/2025	RDC
Sc	Baruti Bangala Victor	Cotonou	03/05/2025	RDC
Bro	<i>Namanya Johnson</i>	Lusaka	10/05/2025	U
Sc	Chilongo Ask	Lusaka	10/05/2025	MZ (Z)
Sc	Bongele Anaclet	Lusaka	10/05/2025	U
Sc	Kwesiga Stephen	Lusaka	10/05/2025	U
Sc	Mbewe Philip	Lusaka	10/05/2025	MZ(Z)
Sc	Gannah John Makafui Korbla	Lusaka	10/05/2025	TGB
Sc	Bwambale Bendict	Lusaka	10/05/2025	U
Sc	Phiri Charles	Lusaka	10/05/2025	MZ(Z)
Sc	Oliha Martin Hujang	Lusaka	10/05/2025	SS
Sc	Fiador Godwin	Lusaka	10/05/2025	TGB(G)
Sc	Musaasizi Andrew Kaggwa	Lusaka	10/05/2025	U
Sc	Millan Moses Juma	Lusaka	10/05/2025	KE
Sc	Silvano Joseph Woodman	Lusaka	10/05/2025	SS

Title	Name	Place	Date	Prov.
Sc	Okec Morish Abraham	Lusaka	10/05/2025	U
Sc	Musasizi Gerald	Lusaka	10/05/2025	U
Sc	Asiimwe Darius	Lusaka	10/05/2025	U
Sc	Zegarra Morán Zai Manuel	Messico	10/05/2025	PE
Sc	Pamal Cojolon Víctor	Messico	10/05/2025	PCA
Sc	Litardo Chocho Ronaio Omar	Messico	10/05/2025	EC
Sc	Quispe Altamirano Luis Felipe	Messico	10/05/2025	PE
Sc	García Lemus Carlos Ulises	Messico	10/05/2025	M
Sc	Américo António Mutepa	Nampula	24/05/2025	MO
Sc	Tomasse Domingos Rossane	Nampula	24/05/2025	MO
Sc	Domingos Francisco Caetano	Nampula	24/05/2025	MO
Sc	Armindo Aurélio Penieque	Nampula	24/05/2025	MO

Perpetual professions

Sc. Tap Simon Yomkuey	Tali (SS)	13.04.2025
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Ordinations to the priesthood

Sergio Mario Vilanculo	Matacuane/Beira/MO	17.05.2025
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Holy Redeemer Guild

June	01 – 07 ER	08 – 15 LP	16 – 30 P
July	01 – 15 KE	16 – 31 M	

Prayer intentions

June – We pray that, following the example of Jesus, the Good Shepherd whose heart is pierced, we may create relationships of mercy and welcome in our daily realities. *Lord, hear us.*

July – We pray that, as missionaries, we do not rely solely on human and structural resources, but above all on the humanising power of the Gospel. *Lord, hear us.*

Comboni liturgical calendar

JUNE

27	<i>Friday after the 2nd Sunday after dopo Pentecost, The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Patron of the Institute</i>	Solemnity <i>Togo-Ghana-Benin</i>
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Meaningful anniversaries

JUNE

1	Anniversary of the foundation of the Institute	
3	Saint Charles Lwanga and companions, martyrs	Uganda
5	Saint Boniface, bishop and martyr	Memoria (DSP, South Tyrol, Austria, Germany)
7	<i>Saturday before Pentecost</i> – The Blessed Virgin Queen of Apostles	memoria
28	Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary	memoria

CURIA

Presentation of the book *Missionari Insegnamenti* – in honour of Father Fidel González Fernández

On 26th May 2025, an academic event was held in the Thesis Hall of the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome in honour of Father Fidel González Fernández, on the occasion of his 80th birthday, in recognition of his extensive work as a professor at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and the Pontifical University of Propaganda Fide, as well as his service as a member of the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, of which he has been a member for 40 years. The event was attended by: Fr. Mark A. Lewis, S.J., rector of the Pontifical Gregorian University; Fr. Paul Oberholzer, S.J., director of the Department of Church History at the same university; Fr. Mark Inglot, S.J., professor of the faculty and president of the Committee for Religious Sciences; and Fr. Jaime Calvera, a Comboni missionary and director of the publishing house Mundo Negro in Spain, who published the book in homage to Father Fidel González, entitled *Missionari Insegnamenti (Missionary Teachings)*, which collects the contributions of over thirty-four authors from various university, ecclesiastical, religious and cultural institutions from all over the world.

Fr. Filippo Lovison, a Barnabite and publisher of the book, expressed his thanks to the figure of Father Fidel, also offering an explanation and motivation for the publication of this work dedicated to him. Numerous professors and university lecturers who accompanied Father Fidel during the years of his teaching attended the event, as well as a large group of Comboni missionaries, eager to be present to honour a member of their Institute. Fr. Fidel González expressed his heartfelt thanks to those present, and for the work required for the publication of this precious work, which

enriches the already extensive catalogue of the Mundo Negro publishing house, specialised in themes regarding Africa and the missionary world. (Fr. Jaime Calvera, mcci)

APDESAM – ASSEMBLY OF THE MISSION

Review of the Comboni mission in view of a *Mission Charter* in English-Speaking African Countries.

The coordinators and representatives of the Secretariats for the Mission of the Countries of Anglophone Africa and Mozambique (APDESAM) met from 6th to 9th May in Nairobi (Kenya) with the aim of developing a *Charter for the Mission* in the subcontinent. The assembly was convened and prepared by the Council for the Mission of APDESAM, in coordination with the General Secretariat for the Mission.

The first day of the assembly began with the celebration of the Eucharist in the chapel of the provincial headquarters of Kenya, presided over by Father John Baptist Opargiw Keraryo, provincial superior of South Africa and coordinator of APDESAM, who in his homily, inspired by the biblical readings of the day, emphasised the need for a mission centered in Christ, regardless of how demanding and ‘costly’ it may be.

The provincial superior of Kenya, Father Andrew Wanjohi Thumbi, officially welcomed the participants, while Father José Joaquim Luis Pedro, provincial superior of Mozambique and coordinator of the APDESAM Mission, presented the program of the meeting, underlining the importance of a Mission Charter to help us achieve a common missionary methodology.

The day was dedicated above all to listening to the reports of the different circumscriptions of the macro-region, which illustrated the numerous services that the Comboni Missionaries carry out in the different countries.

The points that emerged most frequently from the various reports were, among others, the importance of integral ecology, youth ministry, the involvement of Comboni lay missionaries as key collaborators in missionary work, evangelisation through social media, first evangelisation, the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation sector.

Through the Zoom platform, the General Secretary of the Mission, Father González Galarza Fernando explained the collaboration between the General Secretariat for the Mission, which is based in Rome, and the Secretariats of the Circumscriptions and the Subcontinental Council for the Mission. The mission style adopted by the XIX General Chapter was then presented, and further considerations were made on the requalification of our missionary service, based on an incarnated spirituality, fraternal community life and a specific pastoral care focused on continental

priorities. Thanks to a continuous and in-depth reflection on our *ad gentes* charism, the subcontinent has long identified some priority human groups such as nomadic peoples whose economy is based on pastoralism, the inhabitants of slums, and the youth.

EUROPE

Brothers' Meeting in Rome – 'Embracing Hope'

From 29th April to 1st May 2025, about twenty Comboni Brothers working in Europe gathered in Rome for a dynamic and inspiring meeting on the theme: "*The Brother: A Man of Hope*". Participants came from the General Curia and the provinces of Spain, Germany, Poland, Italy, and Portugal.

The meeting was "dynamic" for several reasons: it took place in Rome, rather than Verona, to celebrate the Jubilee Year, and included not only moments of reflection and prayer, but also visits to communities and initiatives that embody Christian hope in action.

The opening speech was given by Father Luigi Codianni, Superior General, who emphasised the importance of living the vocation of the Brother with passion. He invited participants to rediscover the charism of the Comboni Brother not only as a gift functional to the mission, but above all as a deeply personal and communal spiritual experience. Finally, he launched an appeal for a renewed commitment to:

- look to the past with gratitude,
- live the present with passion, and
- embrace the future with hope.

The second day was dedicated to the theme of hope. Participants listened to the testimony of Eraldo Affinati, founder (with his wife) of the Penny Wirton School, which offers free Italian lessons to immigrants. Affinati emphasised that, in addition to teaching methods, what really matters is the welcoming style that builds meaningful relationships – relationships that lead to the sharing of life itself.

In the afternoon, the Brothers visited several "places of hope" in Rome:

- the ACSE (Comboni Association for the Service of Emigrants and Refugees),
- a branch of the Penny Wirton School,
- 'Casa Magnificat', a shelter for women victims of trafficking, and
- the '*Sulla via di Agar*' project, which offers community and hospitality to women and men on the path to escape from trafficking and gender-based violence.

These visits deeply moved the participants, who described them as “encounters with territories of hope” and “places of the incarnate Gospel.” On the last day, the Brothers rose early to attend Mass in the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, next to the tomb of Pope Francis, to whom they addressed a heartfelt thank you for his 12-year pontificate as a beacon of hope for the Church and the world.

They then participated in a biblical reflection led by Brother Giandomenico Placentino, a monk of the Monastic Community of Bose in Ostuni. The focus was on *Genesis* 6:5 – 9:17, exploring the story of Noah and the flood as a symbol of renewal and divine hope. Particularly intense was the reflection on the Hebrew word *tebah* (ark), which also means ‘basket’, thus connecting Noah’s ark to Moses’ cradle. The *tebah* is not only a means of navigation, but also a sign of trust and abandonment to God. There is, therefore, a clear appeal addressed to the Comboni Brothers to trust in the providence of God and to create around themselves ‘workplaces of kindness’, where mutual care between people and animals symbolises hope as active compassion.

The meeting concluded with a pilgrimage to the Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica and a final mass in the Vatican Grottoes. Father Codianni, in his homily, emphasised the unique vocation of the Brother – an expression of gratuitous love and obedience, made visible through concrete service and work. In this way, the hands of the Brother become the hands of Christ in the world.

In the end, the participants expressed their deep feeling of gratitude towards the organisers, the hosts, the speakers and the communities visited. And now they are joyfully looking forward to next meeting. (*Brother Antonio Soffientini, mccj*)

Assembly of Missionary Animation in Europe

From 12th to 15th May, in Palencia (Spain), the assembly of the missionary animation of the Comboni missionaries at European level took place. The theme was: “*Mission and Missionary Animation in Europe today*”. 29 confrères involved in this sector participated, coming from Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom-Ireland, Italy and Portugal. Also present were two Secular Comboni Missionaries, a representative of the Lay Comboni Missionaries (LCM) and a Comboni Missionary Sister.

Three objectives of the assembly:

1) to take an honest look at the past to realise the immense wealth that the Institute boasts in terms of missionary animation, starting from our founder himself, Saint Daniel Comboni, who was an unsurpassed

missionary animator, but also to evaluate in a frank and critical way the path taken to date in Europe;

2) examine the present day of the Church, the Mission and missionary animation on the continent, evaluating the diversity of the models followed and the challenges that reality presents to us;

3) dare to look to the future, with the intent of adequately preparing missionary animators, providing them with the necessary tools to carry out their task with an attitude of hope, in a continent that from being an 'evangeliser' has become a place where people are needed to be evangelised.

The reports and the various group works have helped us to understand more clearly the reality of a very indolent Christian faith, as it manifests itself today in our European countries. On the other hand, it was reiterated that precisely this state of affairs makes the ministry of missionary animation essential. We said to ourselves that it is a great opportunity that we have to be able to give the first announcement again, through missionary animation, and return to the sources of our faith: Jesus Christ and his Gospel.

The bishop of the diocese of Palencia, Msgr. Mikel Garciandía Goñi, celebrated the Eucharist with us on the feast of St. Matthias the Apostle, and encouraged us to be bearers of the joy that must animate a true missionary spirit, in every corner of Europe where we are present.

The contributions shared by the participants in the assembly were interesting and stimulating, offering us a glimpse of the rich variety of missionary animation initiatives implemented in the countries where we work.

An important aspect present everywhere is our clear desire to collaborate with the local Church, with other missionary institutes and within our Comboni Family.

The assembly concluded with the Eucharist presided over by the provincial superior of Spain, Father Miguel Ángel Llamazares González. (*Father Javier Alvarado Ayala, mccj*).

EGYPT-SUDAN

The death of Father Cosmo Spadavecchia

The death of Father Cosmo Spadavecchia was an important moment for our province in which we paused to thank God for the gift of the mission. The life and apostolate of Father Cosmo were characterised by his simplicity and his talent for creating dialogue. Few have learned Arabic as well as he did, and few have served for so many years and with such total dedication both the Sudanese and the Coptic Catholic Church.

To remember him and entrust him to the Lord, we celebrated a funeral mass in Sakakini, where he had lived for most of his missionary life. In his homily, Bishop Claudio Lurati emphasised that Father Cosmo was the first to open the doors of a Catholic parish in Egypt to the Sudanese, when in the 1980s their “exodus” began due to the second civil war. May the Lord bless Father Cosmo with eternal life, and always grant us to be pastors after his own heart.

Latest news from Sudan

Starting on 4th May, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have been attacking Port Sudan for about two weeks almost every day with drones sent from operational bases on the Red Sea (most likely from Somalia). This is an unexpected development in the war: in recent months, in fact, the regular army had won victories on the ground, especially in Khartoum.

While the situation in Port Sudan remains tense, many are choosing to return to Khartoum, to put the homes and structures they abandoned due to the war back in order. We hope that the right time will soon come for us too.

Our four confreres in Port Sudan, as well as the three from Kosti and Father Yousif William, in Khartoum, are all well. Thanks be to God. (*Father Diego Dalle Carbonare, mcccj*)

ETHIOPIA

Provincial Assembly – “Revisiting the Future”

Twenty-three confrères of the Ethiopian province of the Comboni missionaries gathered from 6th to 9th May at their house in Hawassa to celebrate the 2025 provincial assembly, with the modification of the Provincial Directory as the main item on the agenda. Four confreres were absent due to health problems or school commitments.

Father Isaiah Nyakundi set the tone for the four days of work with the opening motivational reflection on “*The province we dream of.*” Father Isaiah, a Kenyan, has been working among the Gumuz for a dozen years. Father Asfaha Yohannes, provincial superior, after welcoming the confreres who recently arrived in Ethiopia, presented his report on the state of the province under five headings: socio-political-economic situation, formation, personnel, mission, and economy.

The assembly then began to study the new Provincial Directory, chapter by chapter, discussing and approving it. The draft was prepared by the respective provincial secretariats. The confreres were involved in preparing the section on community life. Due to time constraints, the section on

economics will be studied during the next 'Comboni Day', an annual on-going formation event scheduled for October.

Bishop Merhakristos Gobezeayehu Getachew, the new Apostolic Vicar of Hawassa, attended the assembly on the afternoon of the third day. He shared with the participants his personal journey of three months as bishop, in particular what he found in visiting all but one parish. He also shared some plans for the future of the vicariate, begun by the Comboni missionaries over sixty years ago. Today, the vicariate is home to a third of Ethiopia's Catholics.

Bishop Merhakristos presided over the final Mass and stayed for dinner and the "social" that followed, welcoming with all the members of the assembly the announcement "*habemus papam*."

The provincial secretaries for finance, mission and formation presented their reports to the assembly, which was followed by reports from the three pastoral zones: Guji, Sidama and Gumuz. After the reports, there was an opportunity to ask questions and share ideas on what the Comboni missionaries are doing and what they can do in the near future.

The Provincial Superior presided over the concluding mass, during which scholastic Asmare Gawo Gebre renewed his vows. Asmare completed his theology studies in Kenya and now begins his one-year missionary service in Gilgel Beles, among the Gumuz.

Speaking of the '*conversion*' of St. Paul, mentioned in the first liturgical reading, Father Asfaha emphasised the need to allow God to open our eyes to see the reality around us in a new light.

Both the Provincial Assembly and the Comboni Day are two events in which the confreres, through their participation, express and strengthen their sense of belonging to the province. (*Father José da Silva Vieira, mcccj*)

MOZAMBIQUE

Ordination to the priesthood of Sérgio Mário Vilanculo

On 17th May, in the parish of São João Baptista, in Matacuane, in the city of Beira, the dream came true of someone who, since he was a child, had told his parents that he wanted to become a priest. Sérgio Mário Vilanculo, originally from Beira, was ordained a priest by the laying on of hands of Msgr. António Manuel Constantino Bogaio, auxiliary bishop of Beira, a Comboni missionary.

Since early in the morning, the large space in front of the parish church of Matacuane had begun to fill up with people – many also coming from

nearby parishes –, all eager to participate in the celebration of Sergio and his family.

In addition to the provincial superior, Father José Joaquim Luis Pedro, and the confreres from Tete, Nampula and Maputo, numerous diocesan priests and religious, religious and Comboni missionaries also attended. In his homily, Msgr. Constantino emphasised that “it is always the Holy Spirit who anoints and sends us to announce the Good News to the people.” He added: “The missionary priesthood of Vilanculo is a gift that comes from the heart of Christ and from the prayer of the people of God.” He then encouraged the young priest to “live his missionary vocation with joy and commitment and to recognise in the voice of his superiors the will of God, who constantly calls us and sends us to new challenges and new fields of mission.” Finally, he encouraged him to “never stop cultivating a life of regular prayer, to live in obedience and brotherhood, and to be persevering in the proclamation of the Gospel, following in the footsteps of Saint Daniel Comboni.” The provincial superior then urged Sergio to live the ministry entrusted to him in a spirit of gratitude, inspired by the phrase from Sacred Scripture that he himself chose for his ordination: “*In everything, give thanks!*” (1 Thess. 5, 18a), explaining: “Gratitude prevents bitterness and enables the priest to serve the people of God with greater joy.”

Some Christian friends also took the opportunity to address words of appreciation, encouragement and solidarity to Father Sergio, promising to accompany him always with their prayers.

The celebration was followed by a fraternal agape, concluded with a moment of entertainment, with local cultural refinements that infected everyone, thanks to the originality and joy expressed by the various groups involved.

The next morning, Sunday 18 May, the parish enclosure was once again filled with people who had come to attend the first Eucharist of the new priest, celebrated in the parish that had seen him born and grow and that now welcomed him with great joy and emotion, thanking God for his vocation and his availability for the mission.

Father Sérgio expressed his thanks to God for the gift of the priesthood, and to his family and all his brothers and friends for accompanying him on his vocational journey.

The day ended with a meal among Sergio's closest relatives and friends in his family's home.

Father Sérgio was appointed by the General Council to the Province of Mozambique and assigned to the Catechetical Center of Anchilo, as a collaborator in the editorial staff of Vida Nova, a diocesan magazine of

formation and information, which the Comboni missionaries have edited for over 65 years.

The confreres of the province wish the new priest peace and joy in his new ministry. (*Father Jeremias Martins, mccj*)

Four novices take temporary vows in Nampula

On May 24, four novices took their first temporary vows in the novitiate of São Francisco Xavier in Nampula, northern Mozambique. Two of them, Armindo Aurélio Penieque and Domingos Francisco Caetano, come from the Archdiocese of Nampula; the other two, Américo António Mutepe and Tomasse Domingos Rossane are from the Archdiocese of Beira.

Their first vows concluded the second stage of their formation for the priesthood: a journey guided by the following words of Jesus: “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain” (*Jn 15:16*).

The liturgical celebration was presided over by Father José Joaquim Luís Pedro, provincial superior of Mozambique, who, addressing the newly professed, underlined the essential aspects of the missionary vocation and consecrated life: «The pastoral commitment towards the least in society, the poor and the marginalised is the heart of our mission as evangelisers and the reason for our call to missionary life, as the responsorial psalm reminded us: “The Lord hears the cry of the poor” and as we can read repeatedly in the *Writings* of our Founder, Saint Daniel Comboni». Celebrated in a warm and familiar atmosphere, the ceremony was attended by over a hundred guests, including confreres, priests, deacons, religious brothers and sisters, as well as the families and friends of the newly professed.

At the end, there was no shortage of messages of communion, joy and encouragement addressed to the newly professed by their families and friends, as well as by Father Mateus Albino and the scholastics Rodrigues Dioqueltino Jaime, Felizardo António and Felizardo Azevedo. The master of novices, Father António Manganhe, firstly thanked God for the gift of the missionary vocation of these four young people, then, on behalf of the formative community, he expressed his gratitude to their families and to all those who accompanied them during the formative process, supporting them with prayer, financial help and a friendly and brotherly presence. (*Father Natal António Manganhe, mccj*)

IN PACE CHRISTI

Father Piero Lampetti (21.02.1933 – 12.02.2025)

Piero was born in Villagrande, a hamlet of Mombaroccio (Pesaro), on 21st February 1933. He was the second son of Enrico and Gina Maggioli. After him, three other sons followed; the third was Aldo, born in January 1935. Enrico worked a good piece of the land as a sharecropper, and Gina helped him out. The grandparents also lived in the family: everyone was supported by a strong faith and peace reigned supreme. Piero went to church every morning with his mother for mass. During the summer holidays, he regularly met a boy there, Modesto Generali, who was 5 or 6 years older than him. What struck him deeply was the devotion with which he saw him pray. He learned that he was a seminarian, and he wanted to follow him to the seminary. He told his mother Gina and she went to Modesto's mother to ask where her son was studying. She answered: "With the Comboni missionaries in Pesaro." "Pesaro!" replied Gina, "It is not very far from Villagrande." Modesto's mother, smiling at her, says: "Today he is close, of course. But when Piero finishes his studies, he will go to Africa and then... he will be very far away indeed." [Modesto entered the seminary in Riccione at a very young age and was ordained a priest in Milan on 12th June 1954. He immediately left for the missions in Mexico, where he remained for 42 years. He died on 10th January 2024, at the age of 96].

One day, Modesto's mother, visiting her son in the seminary in Pesaro, spoke to the superior of the community, Father Pizzioli Carlo, about the 'new vocation' that had blossomed in Villagrande, and he hurried to visit the Lampetti family, undoubtedly arranging Piero's entry for the start of the new school year. The third son, Aldo, was also present and dared to intervene: "I want to go to Pesaro with Piero as well." "So be it!", a smiling Father Carlo answered.

On the appointed day, the mother and her sons walked the 15 kilometres from Villagrande to Pesaro and presented themselves at Villa Baratoff. They brought with them the letter from their parish priest assuring the superiors of the excellent quality of the 'new candidates'. In the evening, the two brothers were taken to different dormitories. "But we cannot be apart," said Aldo decisively. And he explained: "We have a single pair of scissors and a single brush to clean and polish our shoes." Father Carlo smiled: "An excellent reason! You will sleep in the same dormitory and in neighbouring beds." In 1945, life was hard in the seminary with little food and a much to learn. The lack of central heating made their hands sore

and covered them with chilblains. But the two boys never complained: they learned that to be missionaries, one must not be afraid of sacrifice. In a few years, Aldo 'outpaced' his brother Piero in his studies and became a priest in September 1959. He would occupy important roles both in his mission in Brazil and in the Institute. [He would also be the General Treasurer. Unfortunately, he would precede Piero in death, in São Paulo, Brazil, on 4th May 1993, at only 58 years of age].

After completing his middle school exams in 1948, Piero was assigned to the seminary in Brescia for two years of high school. In October 1951 he went to Florence to begin his novitiate, and, on 9th September 1953, he took his first religious vows. For the three years of high school and his first philosophy studies, he moved to the scholasticate in Verona, at the Mother House. He remained there until June 1956, when he was sent to the apostolic school that the Comboni missionaries ran in Trento as prefect of young students. For four years, he attended theological courses at the diocesan major seminary.

On 9th September 1959, Piero made his perpetual religious profession. On 2nd April 1960, he was ordained a priest in the cathedral of Trent by Archbishop Carlo de Ferrari, a Stigmatine. Immediately afterward, he was sent to Sulmona (L'Aquila) for missionary animation, but also as the community treasurer. Two years later, in June 1962, he left for Uganda. He was 29 years old. He stayed there for 17 years, first in Kitgum (1962-72), in the north, in Gulu diocese, and then in Patongo (1972-79), as parish priest, always among the Acholi ethnic group. Not far away, Dr. Giuseppe Ambrosoli, now a blessed, lived and worked in the Kalongo hospital. Father Piero was his 'proud' confessor. Those were terrible years in the African country. In 1971, President Milton Obote was overthrown in a coup led by army chief Idi Amin Dada. The following year, Amin ordered Uganda's non-citizen Asians – about 60,000 people – to leave the country, and the country's economy collapsed. In 1972-73, Uganda clashed with Tanzania. Meanwhile, Amin tormented the nation with his tyrannical follies. In 1976, he declared himself president for life. In 1978, Uganda invaded Tanzania, aiming to annex the Kagera region. In response, Tanzania invaded Uganda, uniting the various anti-Amin forces under the Uganda National Liberation Front and forcing Amin to flee abroad. Yusufu Lule was installed as president, but was quickly replaced by Godfrey Binaisa. The country descended into civil war and poverty.

In June 1979, Father Piero returned to Italy for holidays with the intention of staying on for a few years. He spoke about it to Father Salvatore Calvia, Superior General, who sent him an official letter in which he wrote: "The superiors of the Italian province are more than happy to welcome

you to their homeland, certain that your presence will be useful for you, for a spiritual and cultural recovery of renewal, but also for our houses in Italy, for your experience and for all that you can give to the benefit of formation and missionary animation. Therefore, I assign you to Italy from 1st March 1980.”

Father Piero was assigned to the community of Pesaro for the ministry of missionary animation. He soon also became superior of the community. He remained there until 1993. During those years, Villa Baratoff ceased to be an ‘apostolic school’ for the formation of future missionaries to become a centre of permanent formation and a meeting place for youth groups and others, of spiritual exercises for the Comboni missionaries and for other social and ecclesial realities of the Marche region.

Once the renovation work was completed, Father Piero moved to Lucca, where he was entrusted with the nearby rectory. He dedicated himself passionately to the ministry and spiritual accompaniment of the people who frequented the Comboni community, which stands out from other parishes for the constant presence of some priests who were always available to listen and welcome those who knocked on the door. Here Father Piero received the news of the death of his brother Aldo.

In March 1995, Father Piero received the letter of assignment to the London Province from the Superior General, Father David Glenday. On 1 July he was already in London, in the house of Dawson Place, in charge of missionary animation. In January 1997, he went to Sunningdale, in the county of Berkshire, again with the same assignment: he celebrates the mission appeals in the parishes, telling of the Comboni mission and sensitising people to collaborate with missionary activities in the world.

In December 2001, he returned to Italy for health reasons. The general administration assigned him to the Italian province on January 1, 2002. Father Piero then returned to his beloved Pesaro, first in convalescence, then as an active member of the local community. He remained there for 20 years, until, in January 2022, he was forced to move to the ‘Fratel Alfredo Fiorini’ Centre in Castel d’Azzano. There he passed away in the Lord on 12th February 2025, surrounded by the affection of his confreres and the care of the medical staff.

During his funeral ceremony, community leader Father Giovanni Munari said: “Father Piero always had fond memories of the confreres and the people he met in Uganda. He candidly confessed that he sometimes had difficulty understanding them, but was quick to add that he had always loved them with all his heart. His face also lit up when he thought back to the many years he spent in Pesaro where he had cultivated relationships and friendships that accompanied him until the end of his life.”

Father Giovanni continues: “What kind of person was Piero? He was not an intellectual, nor did he like great and flowery speeches. Nor was he attracted by beautiful discussions, even those of a theological nature. He went through the phase of the Second Vatican Council in his own way, grasping perhaps its most important aspect, that of a renewal that had to take place first of all in the hearts of people and that consisted in freeing oneself from many frills of the past to give centrality to life and everything that accompanies it [...] Piero stood out for his sweetness, his kindness, his always accommodating and positive character. He loved being with people, especially with his family, with his confreres, nieces, nephews and friends. As a good Pesaro native, he loved the sea, he liked fish, he appreciated good food and being together.”

After thanking the Lampetti family “for having given us Piero and Aldo and for being close to us on many occasions” and, in particular Emanuela, “for how she accompanied her uncle, together with his nephews”, he concludes: “Like a ship that sails the ocean and disappears on the horizon, Father Piero leaves behind him a long luminous trail. It is a trail of gratitude, affection, recognition and nostalgia. But what is life for if not to seek good and spread it generously?”

The relatives wanted Father Piero to be laid to rest in his homeland, the Marche. Therefore, on 21st February (his birthday), in Fano, in the church of San Cristoforo, a requiem Mass was celebrated for him in the presence of some priests, relatives, friends and lay Comboni missionaries from Pesaro and Fano.

Father Luigi Sala (4.2.1933 – 23.2.2025)

Luigi was born in Azzano San Paolo, in the province of Bergamo, on 4th February 1933, to his father Antonio and his mother Giacoma (known to all as ‘Giacomina’). Luigi was Antonio’s first child, but when he was born, he already had a brother and six sisters at home. In fact, his mother had been married to Antonio’s brother, with whom she had 7 children in a few years. After the premature death of her first husband, she married her brother-in-law, who took care of them all. After Luigi, 7 more children were born. Shortly after Luigi’s birth, the family moved to Colognola, a neighbourhood in the city of Bergamo, where Luigi attended elementary school. In 1944, the boy entered the apostolic school of the Comboni Institute in Crema, where he attended middle school, repeating a year. In September 1949 he moved to the seminary in Brescia for the two-year high school period. Father Ernesto Calderola, superior of the seminary in Brescia, spoke warmly of him in his report:

«Luigi is skinny, but healthy. A very lively in character, even if sometimes thoughtless. He is serious and committed to his duties. Good spirit of sacrifice and strong attachment to his vocation».

In October 1951, Luigi entered the novitiate in Gozzano. On 9th September 1953, he took his first temporary vows. For the three-year period of high school he was in Verona, at the Mother House, until June 1956, when he obtained his classical high school diploma. Then he moved to the scholasticate in Venegono Superiore for theology courses. On 9th September 1959, he made his perpetual religious profession. On 19th December he received the diaconate from Cardinal Giovanni Montini, the future Saint Paul VI, and on 2nd April 1960, he was ordained a priest, again by Cardinal Montini, in the cathedral of Milan. He wanted to leave for the missions immediately, but his superiors assigned him to the apostolic school of Rebbio (Como), as a Latin teacher for the first-year middle-school students.

In June 1962, he was assigned to the missions of the Arua Region, in Uganda. He took it for granted that he would have to go to England to learn English. But Uganda insisted that he leave immediately. His first experiences of evangelisation coincided with the Second Vatican Council, which was a real watershed for everyone. However, he did not consider himself either pre- or post-conciliar. He lived – and would continue to live – the missionary experience with his own personal touch. He wrote: “I love people. I feel and understand that my missionary life is first of all sharing the life of hardship of these poor people, walking together, taking on their problems... In short: being a missionary means making common cause with the least, as Comboni used to say.”

He began at the Warr-Zeu mission (1962-1968) as assistant priest. He then moved to Pakwach, first as assistant priest and then as parish priest (1968-1976). In 1970 he went on holiday to Italy and asked to attend an English course in London, but Kampala rushed him and he interrupted the course.

At the beginning of 1973, he returned to Italy for a short period of rest. After a few months, he returned to Pakwach, leaving his father ill. On 16th September 1973, his father Antonio died. In June 1978, he took a vacation in Italy to recover his health. In September, he returned to Warr-Zeu, but remained there for just over a year. In December 1979 he was in Parombo as parish priest, where he remained until March 1982, when he returned to Italy. Father Luigi met with the major superiors in Rome, who told him of his new destination: the province of Italy. He was asked to serve 6 years in his country. But after just over 4 and a half years, in May 1987, he was unexpectedly assigned to Uganda. Once again, he was told that he had to leave as soon as possible. He never learned English well. But he would end up speaking

the various local languages like the locals, and learn to tolerate “the poor figure he cut with the authorities or in the offices of the capital Kampala.”

At the end of 1987, Father Luigi was back in Uganda, assigned to the large parish of Angal, assigned to pastoral ministry. He visits schools (there are many throughout the diocese), meets teachers, organises seminars and courses for the leaders of small Christian communities... The Comboni missionaries had also started an important high school for young people. Father Luigi, however, saw that something was missing and threw himself into its body and soul. And so, he created a school for the professional training of young people, the Comboni Technical School.

In Bergamo and in his familiar environments, he found people who agreed to get involved. And so, he began to build, opened and finally took over the running of what would soon become an important point of reference for the young people of the region. The technical school began to churn out carpenters, electricians, bricklayers, mechanics... He explains: “We must develop the manual skills and creativity of our young people.”

With the excellent workers who graduated from school, he built kindergartens, sports centres... In the mechanical department he started the production of wheelchairs for the disabled, extremely important in isolated places like northern Uganda.

In Italy, Father Luigi created a group called ‘Friends of Uganda’. Year after year, they supported him in the construction work - the expansion of the hospital, the technical school, the church and other structures in West Nile. Dozens of artisans, professionals and technicians regularly went from Italy to spend short periods in Uganda dedicating themselves to Father Luigi's projects. Among them, in the optical field, the birth of optical laboratories stands out (in Angal, Hoima and Arua) which were created by the numerous Italian opticians who went there, installing and making operational the instruments donated by various Italian companies, by the Higher Institute of Optometric Sciences of Milan, by Federottica Nazionale and by Federottica Bergamo. Father Luigi remained in Angal until December 1996, when he was sent to Parombo for three years. In November 1999 he was in Akanyo until December 2005, when he was able to return to his beloved Angal, with the intention of never moving again.

Father Luigi was tired. He had serious health problems. His heart was causing him problems, to the point that, at the beginning of 2012, he was forced to return to Bergamo and put himself in the hands of serious cardiologists. He stayed in Italy longer than usual, because he needed appropriate care and specific medical checks. He reached the point of fearing he would never be able to recover. In the end, everything fell into place. He returned to Angal, where he remained until June 2014, when he agreed to go to the mission in

Opit, diocese of Gulu, among the Acholi ethnic group. But at 81 years old, it was not easy to change linguistic zones. He therefore asked to return to Italy permanently.

In June 2015 he went to Rome, where the superior general, Father Enrique Sánchez, gave him a letter with his new destination: the Italian province, starting on 1st July. After a brief visit to his hometown, he went to the community of Brescia, where on 2nd April 2020 he celebrated the 60th anniversary of his priestly ordination. In May of the same year, he moved to the Ambrosoli Center in Milan. In August 2022, his superiors decided to assign him to the 'Fratel Alfredo Fiorini' Centre in Castel d'Azzano (Verona).

Father Luigi was now unable to move, to speak, to interact with others or to express thoughts and emotions. However, he was calm: being completely dependent on others did not seem to bother him.

Towards the end of 2024, he became very weak, to the point that those responsible for the centre decided to hospitalise him. He seemed to recover a little and returned to the community. On 23rd February 2025, he passed away peacefully, assisted by his confreres and medical staff. The farewell Eucharist was presided over by Father Giovanni Munari, head of the community for elderly missionaries in need of care, concelebrated by several dozen confreres. Some of Father Luigi's relatives from Bergamo were present. In his homily, Father Giovanni recalled that "the farewell we give to a confrère, placing him in the hands of the mercy of the Father of us all, we want to do so as people who live beautiful and profound relationships with each other, but also as missionaries who have spent a life for others, keeping little or nothing for themselves, and as Christians who believe that death is not the final punishment of a life of suffering, but a point of passage to something truly great."

The funeral was celebrated on 28th February, in Colognola. Then the body was taken to the cemetery to be laid to rest next to his deceased loved ones.

LET US PRAY FOR OUR BELOVED DEAD

THE FATHER: Manuel Mesias, of Father Tacuri Samaniego Pedro Secundino (EC).

THE MOTHERS: Teresina, of Father Dal Santo William (I); María Nieves Molina, of Mons. Ruiz Molina Jesús (RCA).

THE BROTHERS: Freiman Honasis, of Father Casti Sánchez Jhon Jani (U); Manuel, of Father Ricardo Andrade García (M); Dino, of Father Giuseppe Scattolin (I).

THE SISTERS: Dorotea, of Father Szpara Adam Witold (C); Helena, of Brother António Marques Martins (P †).