

FAMILIA COMBONIANA

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES OF THE HEART OF JESUS

845

November 2025

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

GENERAL NOTES FROM THE 39TH GENERAL CONSULTA – October 2025

Appointment of new circumscription superiors

With the elective phase of the new superiors and delegates of the circumscription for the three-year period 2026-2028 having been completed in all circumscription, the general council, on 31.10.2025, made the following appointments of the new superiors of the circumscriptions for the three-year period 2026-2028:

Circumscription	Name	Post
BR	Fr. Raimundo Nonato Rocha dos Santos	Provincial
CN	Fr. Kakule Muvawa Emery-Justin locum	Provincial
DSP	Fr. Turyamureeba Roberto	Provincial
E	Fr. Llamazares González Miguel Angel	Provincial
EC	Fr. Rodríguez González Juan Martín	Provincial
EGSD	Fr. Dalle Carbonare Diego	Provincial
ET	Fr. Weldeghiorghis Asfaha Yohannes	Provincial
I	Fr. Ciuciulla Pietro	Provincial
KE	Fr. Wanjohi Thumbi Andrew	Provincial
LP	Fr. Padilla Rocha Rubén	Provincial
M	Fr. Pacheco Zamora Mario Alberto	Provincial
MZ	Fr. Bwalya Andrew	Provincial
MO	Fr. José Joaquim Luis Pedro	Provincial
NAP	Fr. Ochoa Gracián Jorge Elías	Provincial
P	Fr. José António Mendes Rebelo	Provincial
PCA	Fr. Sanchez Gonzalez Enrique	Provincial
PE	Fr. Mitchell Sandoval Nelson Edgar	Provincial
RSA	Fr. Opargiw John Baptist Keraryo	Provincial
SS	Fr. Schmidt Gregor Bog-Dong	Provincial
TGB	Fr. Katsan Fodagni Kokouvi (Fidèle)	Provincial
U	Fr. Kibira Anthony Kimbowa	Provincial

Circumscription	Name	Post
A	Fr. Aguilar Sánchez Víctor Manuel	Delegate
CO	Fr. Benavides Orjuela Jorge Alberto	Delegate
ER	Fr. Jemil Araya Jemil	Delegate
RCA	Fr. Billo Junior Bertrand Chrisostome	Delegate
TCH	Fr. Vailati Marco	Delegate

The Council wishes all the newly elected members to undertake this delicate service with enthusiasm, inspired by the knowledge that our Founder, St. Daniel Comboni, watches over them.

Formation appointments

On 17.10.2025, the General Council made the following appointments:

- Fr. Lipenga Patrick Elias, formator and superior of Kinshasa scholasticate as from 1.1.2026;
- Fr. Zolli Fernando, formator at Kinshasa scholasticate as from 1.11.2025;
- Fr. Francisco José de Souza Machado, father master and superior of Nampula novitiate as from 1.1.2026;
- Fr. Sylvester Hategek'Imana, bursar of the Ongoing Formation Centre as from 1.11.2025.
- Fr. López Antonio, formator of Chicago formative community as from 15th September 2025.

Official Publications

Code of Conduct

On October 7, 2025, the General Council approved and issued a decree publishing the new version of the Code of Conduct, entitled *Holy and Capable Missionaries – Guidelines for the Ministry and Fraternal Care of Persons in Certain Specific Situations*, which will take effect on 1st January 2026. The requirement for every Comboni Missionary to sign a declaration of acceptance of the Code of Ethics is already in force, but starting next year, this requirement will be extended to every novice during their first year of novitiate.

The revision of the current Code of Conduct was entrusted on December 19, 2023, to a commission composed of Father Rafael Gonzalez Ponce, Father Markus Körber, Father Fidèle Katsan Fodagni Kokouvi, and Father Jeremias dos Santos Martins, and coordinated by the Vicar General, Father David Costa Domingues. The fruit of their work was presented to the inter-capitular assembly, which appreciated the new contents of the document.

Safeguarding policy

On the same date, the General Council approved the text of the document *Guidelines for the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Adults* (also known as the *Safeguarding Policy*). The document provides guidance to all confrères and staff employed in our structures, communities, and works managed by the Comboni Missionaries on preventing the abuse of minors and vulnerable adults who come into contact with us and our structures. Its purpose is “to establish and maintain an environment that is respectful, aware, and protective of the rights and needs of minors and vulnerable adults.”

The publication of this document, which must be available and accessible in all our environments—in addition to being published on the official websites of the entire Institute—will be complemented by a process of ongoing training and development to foster an increasingly deeper and more thoughtful culture of care and trust among us.

Research on specific pastoral areas

With its letter on mission (“Going Beyond,” May 1, 2025), the General Council mandated the General Secretariat for the Mission (SGM) to conduct a study to document the reality of specific pastoral care in the territory. We need to understand, both quantitatively and qualitatively, the state of our Institute’s commitments within these specific pastoral care programs, so that we can then move beyond them through shared research and reflection.

The SGM, together with the Mission Council, is about to launch this study on every continent. The General Council, therefore, requests the full cooperation of the circumscription superiors and provincial secretaries of the mission, as well as the availability of the communities involved in specific pastoral care. This is a crucial exercise to initiate the process of requalifying our missionary service based on ministeriality, as requested by the 19th General Chapter (CA 2022, 31).

Meeting of circumscription superiors in their first term

The meeting of superiors in their first term will take place in February and March 2026. It will begin on Sunday, 22nd February, and end on the morning 7th March. The detailed program will be released after the December consulta.

The study of languages during formation

The General Council, considering the changing geography of the Institute, requests that all formation houses include in the curriculum of candidates and scholastics the study of English for non-English speakers and of Italian for English speakers.

Missionary Service

Having completed the evaluation of missionary service (MS) required by the General Chapter (CA 2022, 26.7) presented during the intercapitular assembly, the General Council decided as follows:

1. Missionary service is to be maintained.
2. Concerning the modalities of how it is carried out:
 - 2.1 *Place*: The General Council has reviewed and modified number 438 of the *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis et Studiorum* (RFIS), as follows: «This period of missionary service should preferably be carried out *ad extra*, in view of the assignment to the mission». This decision will take effect on 1 November 2025.
 - 2.2 *Exemptions from missionary service* – The General Council decides that exemptions from missionary service will be established by the Council itself on a case-by-case basis, based on the specific needs of certain missions to which the candidate is assigned. The candidate's age will no longer be a reason for exemption.
 - 2.3 Without prejudice to the above, the provisions already established by the *RFIS* remain in force..
3. *Pastoral Year* – The Pastoral Year is not a substitute for missionary service.

Comboni Year of Ongoing Formation (ACFP)

The General Council announces that the next Comboni Year will be held from March to December 2027. The Italian language course for confrères enrolled in the course who need it will take place from January to March 2027.

The house in Paris

The General Council has decided to sell the house in Paris. The Vicar General has initiated discussions with the local diocesan curia, given that the property is in the name of the diocese. In selecting a buyer, priority will be given to the religious sector. If no proposal is received from this sector, the services of real estate agencies will be used. Father David Domingues will handle relations with the Diocese of Nanterre. The General Council does not currently believe it is possible to continue a pastoral presence in Paris after the suppression of the community.

Upcoming journeys of the general council

Fr. Luigi Codianni:

- from 3rd to 21st November 2025: Sudan – Visit

Fr. David Domingues

- from 9th to 13th November 2025: Poland – Visit
- from 17th to 25th November 2025: NAP – Meeting
- from 27th November to 2nd December: Quito – Handover Meeting for the Americas-Asia Continent

Fr. Elias Sindjalim

- from 3rd to 7th November 2025: Verona – Continental Assembly for Formation in Europe
- from 7th to 12th November 2025: Graz – Visit to the formative community
- from 19th to 26th November 2025: Maia (Portugal) – Visit to the formative community
- From 16th to 19th December 2025: Nd'jamena – Handover Meeting for the ASCAF continent

Fr. Austine Radol Odhiambo

- from 7th to 12th November 2025: Graz – Visit to the formative community
- from 15th to 18th December 2025: Madrid – Handover Meeting for the continent of Europe
- from 23rd December 2025 to 21st January 2026: Kenya – Holidays

The next General Consulta

The next consulta will be held from 8th to 13th December 2025.



Perpetual professions

Gama Felix Blessings	Cairo/EGSD	04.10.2025
Muhindo Muhiwa Fiston	Cairo/EGSD	04.10.2025
Kakule Wasingya Bienfaif	Butembo/CN	10.10.2025

Ordinations

Hernández Cruz José Manuel	Coatzacoalcos/M	11.10.2025
Samuel Miguel	Nampula/MO	25.10.2025

Holy Redeemer Guild

November	01 – 15 SS	16 – 30 T
December	01 – 15 PE	16 – 31

Prayer Intentions

November – For the children of our world who see selfish adults destroying our climate protection with their decisions. That they may be brave enough to stand up and defend their future. *Lord, hear us.*

December – Lord Jesus, fount of peace, help us to be generous missionaries, to bring your message of brotherly love to those who live in anguish, to be brothers of the needy and to free the oppressed, in the manner of Saint Daniel Comboni. *Lord, hear us.*

Comboni liturgical calendar

NOVEMBER

	Commemoration of deceased confrères, relatives and benefactors	Date to be established year-by-year
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DECEMBER

3	Saint Francis Xavier, priest, <i>Patron of the missions</i>	Feast
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Meaningful anniversaries

NOVEMBER

21	Madonna del Quinche	Ecuador
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DECEMBER

1	Blessed Clementina Alfonsina Anuarite Nengapeta, virgin and martyr	Congo
3	Saint Francis Xavier, priest, <i>Patron of the missions</i>	<i>Feast,</i> Mozambique, Spain
12	The Blessed Virgin Mary of Guadalupe, <i>Patron of the Americas</i>	Mexico

CURIA

5° Comboni Course for Elderly Confrères

“Life is now...” – The motto of the Comboni Course for Elderly Confrères (CCA) aptly expresses the meaning of the initiative, which aims to help

PARTECIPANTS	Date of birth	Ordination Perpetual vows	Nazionalità	Mission
Fr. Francis Manana	15.07.53	29.11.87	RSA	RSA
Fr. Carmelo Del Río	08.02.54	02.08.81	E	U
Bro. Mario Camporese	27.04.54	18.04.93	I	C
Fr. Antonio Jerez	18.04.45	16.07.88	E	EC
Fr. Ernesto Ascione	10.09.41	26.06.66	I	BR
Bro. Hernán Romero	15.01.52	30.07.88	PE	PE
Fr. Germano Serra	26.01.56	04.06.89	P	U
Fr. Juan José Tenias	06.05.43	06.04.69	E	T
Fr. Longinos López	26.06.48	22.12.78	E	E
Fr. Efreim Tresoldi	23.03.52	15.09.79	I	RSA
Fr. Giovanni Maneschg	23.12.41	29.06.68	I	DSP
Fr. Herbert Gimpl	12.09.46	25.05.74	D	DSP
Coordinating team				
Fr. Alberto Silva	01.08.55	26.07.81	P	C
Fr. Sylvester Hategk'Imana	29.07.61	26.06.94	U	C

participants not look back with regret, but rather to value the present as a *kairos*, an opportunity for grace and human and spiritual growth.

Now in its fifth year, and designed for confrères aged 70 or over, the course features 12 missionaries from various countries, including Spain, Portugal, South Africa, Germany, Peru, and Italy.

Some of us have already met, while for others, the course is an opportunity to get to know each other better and strengthen our ties of brotherhood. It started on 7 October and will end on 7th December.

The motivations that drove each participant are diverse, but—as was evident from the first day of sharing—they can be summed up in the desire to experience a time of physical rest, to take a break from the daily grind, and to dedicate more time to prayer, reflection, and study.

The goal of the course, as explained in the booklet prepared by the two coordinators, Father Alberto Silva and Father Sylvester Hategk'Imana, is to help each person experience old age with serenity and fruitfulness; to grow in their relationship with the Lord; to develop an inner freedom that makes us less tied to role, power, and activism; and to deepen our personal relationship with Saint Daniel Comboni, our Founder.

Among the means proposed to achieve these goals are personal prayer, to which more time is dedicated; community liturgy, to be experienced

with greater calm and participation; the presentation of specific themes related to the physical, psychological, spiritual, and missionary dimensions of old age; the six-day spiritual exercises; and a pilgrimage to Limone sul Garda and Verona.

In his introductory speech, Father Giulio Albanese helped us situate this experience within the broader context of ongoing formation, providing a clear understanding of the complex global reality from a political, economic, and financial perspective. He also recalled the ecclesial situation in Rome, with its many challenges, noting that only 6-7% of Catholics in the diocese are practising Catholics.

The first three days of the second week were led by Father David Glenday, who invited us to rediscover the gift of our Founder, Saint Daniel Comboni. With simplicity and depth, he posed some fundamental questions to help us have a more personal encounter with him. Each day, Father Glenday's insights were followed by moments of sharing in which each person shared how Comboni's example and message have influenced and continue to inspire their own missionary journey.

In the coming weeks, and especially during the spiritual retreat, we will have the opportunity to revisit this theme and deepen our relationship with St. Daniel Comboni. (*Father Efrem Tresoldi, mcccj*)

CONGO

The young confrères from the province of Congo, who have been on mission for three to seven years, gathered at the Casa San Giuseppe in Kisangani from October 20th to 29th for an ongoing formation session.

The confrères expressed their gratitude to the provincial council for their attention and, in particular, to Fathers Fernando Zolli and Fidèle Katsan for their coordination. The meeting began with a presentation by Father Justin Kakule on the importance of ongoing formation as an opportunity for spiritual renewal, personal growth, and conversion. It was an opportunity to exchange missionary experiences, share joys, and emphasise the importance of prayer, psycho-spiritual guidance, and interculturality as a strength. Challenges were also highlighted, including the absence of a provincial assembly, the scarcity of necessary resources to carry out the mission, the lack of appreciation for the qualities and abilities of the confrères, and a tendency toward tribalism and regionalism.

The topics addressed included socio-political and ecclesial realities, spiritual life, religious vows, the Comboni charism and mission, as well as community and interior life. To address these challenges, proposals were put forward: a provincial assembly, a biennial meeting of the confrères

during the first ten years of the mission, a call to foster fraternity and communion in opposition to tribalism and divisions, and to be mutual witnesses of a moral life.

ECUADOR

The diocesan phase of the cause for the beatification of Father Alberto Ferri has been opened.

On 22nd October, a ceremony of great significance for the local Church, our province, and the entire Comboni family in the country was held at the Archbishop's Curia of Portoviejo, Ecuador: the opening of the diocesan phase of the cause of beatification of the Servant of God Father Alberto Ferri, a Comboni missionary (*see FC, September 2025*).

The celebration was presided over by the Archbishop of Portoviejo, Msgr. Eduardo Castillo, who introduced the postulator of the cause and the members of the diocesan tribunal charged with gathering testimonies about Father Ferri and examining the heroism of his virtues. In his address, Msgr. Castillo recalled the missionary's reputation for sanctity and emphasised the spiritual and pastoral value of this step for the Church and the Comboni family.

The opening of the cause represents the culmination of a long preparatory process, the fruit of years of research, collection of testimonies, and documentation of significant events in the life of the Servant of God, along with an examination of the "graces received" attributed to his intercession.

EGYPT/SUDAN

Enrolments at the CCST in Sudan

Comboni College of Science and Technology (CCST) is developing a web platform for teaching Sudanese Arabic sign language, aiming to facilitate communication with people who are deaf or hard of hearing. The site is designed to teach the language through multimedia resources and is aimed at Arabic-speaking Sudanese users who wish to learn it for personal, professional, or educational reasons.

The primary goal is to promote concepts such as inclusion, integration, communication, equal opportunities, and awareness in Sudan, particularly among teachers, families, and organisations that support deaf or hard-of-hearing communities.

The website will also facilitate access to accredited translators from the Sudan National Union of Deaf Persons, making it easier for institutions to include people with hearing impairments in their activities. Recording of

video lessons began on 30th September with an accredited translator provided by the Sudan National Union of Deaf Persons.

The digital platform is being developed by a professor from the College's Computer Science Department, in collaboration with three recent graduates of the Computer Science and Information Technology programs. The project is part of a broader initiative led by the Italian Association for Solidarity Among Peoples (AISPO) and funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation-Addis Ababa Office, which aims to promote the integration of people with various types of disabilities.

In the same context, the English Department is collaborating with AISPO to translate 1,200 business plans submitted by people with disabilities in the Red Sea State from Arabic to English. (*Father Jorge Naranjo, mccj*)

Feast of Saint Daniel Comboni

On the evening of Thursday, October 9th, the feast of Saint Daniel Comboni was celebrated in the Church of *Cordi Jesu*. As is the case every year, in this church – the first dedicated to the Heart of Jesus in Africa and founded by Saint Daniel Comboni himself on his final journey to Sudan – Comboni missionaries gathered, along with numerous faithful from various parishes in Cairo.

This year's special grace was the ordination of the scholastics Fiston Muhiwa (from Congo) and Felix Gama (from Malawi), as deacons, during a Mass presided by Msgr. Claudio Lurati, Apostolic Vicar of Alexandria, Egypt. The two scholastics had made their religious profession the previous Saturday, 4th October.

The celebration was enlivened by songs and the participation of various groups – Eritreans, Egyptians, Sudanese, and others – who, with enthusiasm and a spirit of communion, contributed to making this moment a true sign of fraternity. At the end of the liturgy, those present shared a moment of fraternal agape.

Other celebrations in honour of Saint Daniel Comboni took place in the province's missions, with the opportunity – for the first time in years – to reach some parishes in Sudan, such as Sinja and Sennar, where Father Luigi Cignolini presided over the ceremonies.

For the first time, students from our 'Comboni BA' schools marched through the streets of Port Sudan.

In Beirut, the celebration of Saint Daniel was also enriched by the presence of the Latin bishop, Msgr. César Essayan, who sees in our founder's charism a message for the Church in the Middle East and invites it to open itself to Catholicism and to welcome refugees and foreigners.

Another note of hope comes from Masalma (Omdurman): for the first time since the beginning of the war, our school, reopened a few weeks ago thanks to the initiative of the parish's lay people, celebrated the feast of Comboni with students and their families. This sign gives us hope for a future return to Khartoum.

El Fasher falls

After months of exhausting attacks and bombings, on 27th October, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) captured El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur. The city had been under siege for months, and the local population was suffering from hunger.

The fall of El Fasher clearly shows that the war is still far from over, especially in the western regions of the country. This comes just as, according to the UN, at least one million people have already returned to Khartoum. We Comboni missionaries are also preparing to return to the capital, with the intention of reopening the Masalma mission and welcoming the Superior General during his visit, scheduled for November.

Returning to Omdurman and the visit of Father General

Today, 29th October, Fathers Yousif William and Lorenzo Baccin travelled to Omdurman, where we hope to reopen our presence. Let us accompany them with our prayers, so that God may protect and guide them in this delicate mission.

On 3rd November, Father Luigi Codianni, Superior General, will arrive in Port Sudan. He will stay for 15 days, during which he will also visit Kosti and Khartoum. This visit also calls for all possible prayers, as it will be of great importance for our ongoing discernment at both the provincial and institute levels. (*Father Diego Dalle Carbonare, mccj*)

ITALY

Father Stefano Fazion's 25 years of faith and missionary courage

Last 21st September, the parish of Oliosi (Verona) was transformed into a collective embrace of faces, emotions, and gratitude. Family, friends, brothers, and the entire parish community gathered to thank the Lord for the 25th anniversary of Father Stefano Fazion's priestly ordination, a Comboni missionary originally from the area.

But this is not just the story of an anniversary, but also of a journey, made of courageous choices, unconditional availability, and a service that has never ceased to put others at the centre.

Mission as a way of life – Father Stefano spent much of his missionary life in the Central African Republic, where he faced significant challenges, but always with his gaze fixed on Jesus, as Saint Daniel Comboni recommended.

During his homily, Father Stefano said: “Providence has never been lacking, and the closeness of the Lord has strengthened me every day.” These words don’t sound like slogans, but rather like lived truths.

His story is one of unexpected twists and turns. After studying theology in the Democratic Republic of Congo, he planned to undertake missionary work there immediately; however, he was instead asked to return to Italy, where he was assigned to the community of Venegono Superiore (Varese) with the task of accompanying groups of young people. For six years, however, his heart always yearned to leave for the mission, but with the willingness of one who knows that service is not where we want to be, but where we are called to be. When he was finally asked to go, the destination was not the DR Congo, but the Central African Republic. And he, once again, said yes.

The Mountain as a Metaphor of Life – During the Eucharistic celebration at which he presided and concelebrated by two other Comboni Missionaries (Fathers Eliseo Tacchella and Raoul Sohounou) and two diocesan priests (Father Valerio and Father Bogdan), Father Stefano shared a reflection inspired by the spiritual exercises he had attended in Limone sul Garda a few weeks earlier, at the birthplace of Saint Daniel Comboni.

The metaphor he used was powerful: “Life is like a mountain path. The summit can be glimpsed, but the path is uncertain. There are climbs, obstacles, pauses, views to contemplate, and moments when you need the courage to turn back to seek and find a new direction.”

This image speaks to everyone, but especially to young people. In a world that often demands immediate certainties, Father Stefano reminded us that “you don’t need to know every detail of the journey: what you need, instead, is the courage to begin, the patience to walk, and the faith that we are never alone.”

Father Stefano’s testimony is an invitation to live life as an authentic adventure, to say “yes” even when the path changes, to serve with dedication even when it is not easy, and to believe that the summit isn’t just a point to reach, but a new way of looking at the journey. Because true courage is choosing to move forward, keeping your gaze fixed on the goal you want to reach, even if, at times, you don’t know the path ahead. True service isn’t doing great things, but doing everything with love.

Father Stefano walked part of this journey of service and courage with Brother Alberto Visintin, who, for the occasion, wanted to be present in Oliosi.

Towards Rome, with high hopes – Father Stefano is now leaving for Rome, where he will take a refresher course. But it's not a point of arrival: it's a new beginning. His backpack is full of experiences, of faces encountered, of steps taken with effort and joy.

And his message remains clear: every journey, even the most arduous, is a gift. (*Father Raoul Sohounou, mccj*)

GERT resumes its reflection on the Comboni mission in Europe.

Comboni missionaries in Europe live in nine different countries. Their languages and cultures are also diverse. However, there are also similarities, cultural movements, and social events that stem from a common foundation.

To address the challenges this reality poses to missionary commitment, the Comboni missionaries have developed several tools for reflection and study.

First, there is the *European Group for Theological Reflection* (GERT). This group comprises members of the Comboni family from all European circumscriptions who address research topics based on their specific areas of expertise. Almost all GERT members have an academic background and experience in university teaching. The results of their research are published and circulated among members of the Comboni family.

A second tool for reflection is the *Limone Symposium*. This is a biannual event held in Limone sul Garda, the birthplace of Saint Daniel Comboni. In the past, the symposium has addressed topics such as the *new evangelisation in Europe*, the *migrant question*, *synodality and mission*, and others.

On 29th September, GERT members and a representative of the Italian Mission Secretariat met in Rome to plan the journey of these two groups. After sharing the work done and the goals envisioned for the future, it was decided that the European Mission Secretariat and GERT will collaborate in organising upcoming symposia.

The goal is to continue the reflection on the mission undertaken by GERT and, at the same time, continue to engage with expert voices from outside the Comboni Institute, as is the case during the *Limone symposium*. We intend to grow in our understanding of our times, of the social and ecclesial issues affecting Europe, and therefore act promptly to proclaim the Gospel and promote peace, justice, and the protection of creation.

Brescia – Annual meeting of the relatives of Comboni Missionaries

On Sunday, 5th October, the Brescia community gathered, as is traditional, for a day of celebration with the missionaries' families, friends, collaborators, and lay people who share the same journey of faith and commitment.

The meeting was led by Father Elias Sindjalim, General Councillor, who offered an overview of the Comboni Institute's current situation, from statistical data to the dream of Saint Daniel Comboni: '*Save Africa with Africa*' – a vision that is now being realised with a renewed face of the Institute and new commitments undertaken across the continents.

Father Elias invited those present to thank the Lord for the gift of the Founder and to ask for his intercession to courageously continue the work of evangelisation, especially in the most challenging situations (see the dramatic situation in Sudan, where war has been raging for two years). Being missionaries today means keeping attention focused on forgotten realities, particularly in Africa, and speaking out for the experiences of local Christian communities.

The mission, however, is not only distant. In Brescia, the Comboni community is also involved in the '*Abraham's Tent*' initiative and the *Afrobrix* project, a cultural and creative journey that unites citizens and people of African descent in building a more just and supportive society.

During the meeting, the Brescian missionaries who dedicated their lives to the mission were remembered with gratitude. Among them were Bishop Lorenzo Ceresoli, Father Elia Ciapetti, Brother Francesco Ragnoli, Father Luigi Polini, Father Assunto Tebaldini, Bishop Giovanni Migliorati, Bishop Cesare Mazzolari, Bishop Gianfranco Masserdotti, and many others. Their testimonies continue to inspire family and friends, nourishing the same missionary spirit of the past.

The day concluded with the Eucharistic celebration, presided over by Father Elias, in the Church of the Good Shepherd. A fraternal lunch followed, completing the atmosphere of joy and sharing. (*Father Girolamo Miente, mccj*)

Feast of the Peoples 2025 and interreligious prayer in Padua

The Feast of the Peoples, held in Padua on 28th September, is an initiative of *Unica Terra*, an association founded in the Comboni house in 1991, with the participation of volunteers, postulant brothers, young people from the Missionary Commitment Group (GIM), and Comboni confrères.

Since its inception, the festival has always had two distinct yet complementary elements: the actual celebration, a joyful and colourful event

featuring dances, songs, music, vibrant colours, and delicious food; and interreligious prayer, a space for spiritual encounter between people of different faiths.

Over the years, the festival has grown: from the Comboni courtyard, it moved to Prato della Valle, the large, symbolic square of Padua, where it became part of the City and Provincial Volunteer Day. Among the myriad gazebos, the 29 stands of the Feast of the Peoples Association stood out. The Feast of the Peoples in Padua is one of the finest fruits of the commitment of the Comboni Lay Missionaries (CLM).

Interreligious prayer – “I am peace” – An integral part of the Feast is interreligious prayer, celebrated this year a week later, on October 5th, in the courtyard of the Comboni House. The chosen theme was *“I am peace.”*

Prayers recited and sung in different languages, symbolic gestures, songs, dances, and traditional costumes – signs of other cultures and religions – brought to life an intense moment, experienced with participation and passion, completing the Feast of Peoples.

An image accompanied the prayer: ‘the freshness of peace’. A proverb says: “If you look at the reeds with peace, they will give you coolness; if you look at the reeds with anger, they will beat you.” These words connect peace with a feeling of refreshment and benefit: peace, whether internal or external, brings calm, serenity, and well-being, like a cool breeze that brings relief and regeneration.

During the celebration, the figure of Brother Roger Schutz of Taizé, assassinated in 2005 during evening prayer in the community church, was remembered. A monk known for his dedication to reconciliation, peace, and ecumenical dialogue, Brother Roger was a concrete sign of communion among Christians of different denominations and among all believers in God.

He wrote to young people: “There are so many people today who aspire to a future of peace, to a humanity freed from the threats of violence. While some are gripped by anxiety about the future and feel immobilised, there are also, throughout the world, young people capable of inventiveness and creativity. Some are bearers of peace in situations of crisis and conflict. They persevere even when trial or failure weighs on their shoulders.”

Pope Francis’s prayer for peace also resounded: “Now, Lord, help us! Give us peace. Teach us peace. Lead us toward peace. Open our eyes and our hearts and give us the courage to say: *“No more war! With war, everything is destroyed!”* [...] May these words be banished from the heart of every man: division, hatred, war! Lord, disarm the tongue and the

hands, renew the hearts and minds, so that the word that brings us together is always *brother*, and the way of our life becomes *shalom*, *peace*, *salaam!*”

Two symbolic gestures accompanied the invocations for peace:

- the lighting of a candle placed alongside others to create a corner of light and warmth, a sign of shared peace;
- the pouring of water, a personal contribution which, mixed with flour and herbs, served as a conclusion of the prayers.

This latter gesture, guided by Comboni Brother Simon Tsoklo, was a libation for the ancestors, a part of traditional African religion, to offer them *n'tifafa*, “the freshness of peace,” accompanied by an invocation in the Ewe language spoken in southern Togo.

The participants – Various religious representatives took part in the prayer: the Buddhist monk Dambadeniye Dammarama Maha Thero; the Brahmin Pal Ramesh; Brother Simon Tsoklo, a Comboni Missionary; Father Gaetano Montresor, a Comboni Missionary; Renata De Matteis and Davide Bergamasco, followers of the Bahá'í faith; Sandro Vitulo, Secular Franciscan Order; Ait Alla Lousshaine of the Islamic community; Flora Grassivaro, Gukson Capone, Davide Chirulli, The Federation of Families for Peace; Giacomo Colombatti, The Community of Sant'Egidio; Cecilia Silva, The Filipino community; Emanuele Breda, Suyu Mahikari of The Spiritual Association. (*Father Gaetano Montresor, mcccj*)

MOZAMBIQUE

Priestly ordination of Samuel Miguel in Nampula

On Saturday, 25th October, the parish of Our Lady of Grace in Murrupula, in the province of Nampula, witnessed the priestly ordination of Deacon Samuel Miguel. Archbishop Inácio Saúre of Nampula, who presided over the ceremony, urged the new priest in simple and straightforward words: “Do not become a ‘fake’ priest, leading a double life, but always be an authentic priest and missionary in the manner of Comboni, ready to serve with a missionary heart and to make your service to the poorest and most forgotten the centre of your mission.”

The celebration was attended by numerous diocesan priests and confrères from the Comboni communities and parishes of the Archdiocese of Nampula and the Diocese of Nacala, particularly from the community of Carapira, where Samuel carried out his diaconal ministry and missionary service. Also present were local authorities, some Comboni Sisters, Lay Comboni Missionaries, seminarians from Nampula, friends, and benefactors.

In his closing message, Father José Joaquim Luis Pedro, provincial superior, addressed Samuel and said: “You were not ordained for yourself, but for the people, for the mission, and for the Kingdom. Be like Moses: climb the mountain, listen to God, and come down with an enlightened face. Be like Isaiah: let the burning coal touch your lips and purify them. Be like Jesus: if you are not good news for the poor, you will not be good news for anyone. Be like Saint Paul: let your life be one of urgency, not accommodation. Be like Comboni, our Founder. Therefore, be an instrument, not a protagonist. Celebrate every Mass as if it were the first, the last, and the only one. Never trivialise the mystery.”

Pointing to the people present, he added, “Listen to the People of God: let them be your first catechism. Never stop studying. An ignorant priest is a pastoral danger.

Finally, Father José Joaquim informed everyone that, although Samuel studied theology in São Paulo, Brazil, he has already been assigned to the Comboni Province of Kenya, where he will continue the work of evangelisation among the neediest and abandoned, in line with Comboni’s great dream of evangelising Africa with Africa.

The news was greeted with a massive ovation from everyone. This surprised the provincial superior, who quickly commented, “I am happily surprised by your reaction. Usually, when I announce that a priest is about to leave for a distant mission, people show signs of disappointment and discouragement. Instead, you were able to rejoice and encourage Samuel. Congratulations on your missionary spirit.”

Father Samuel, visibly moved, first thanked God for the gift of his vocation, then all the faithful present and those who had prayed for him, accompanied him, and advised him up to that moment. He extended a special thanks to the Comboni missionaries for their support during his formation. Finally, he invoked the protection of Our Lady of Grace, patroness of his parish, to help him remain faithful to his mission.

Father Samuel chose the motto for his ordination: “Do this in memory of me” (*Luke 22:19*). These words remind us of Jesus’ desire to always be with us and the need to perpetuate the mystery of his presence in the Eucharist.

On Sunday, the 26th, Father Samuel celebrated his first Mass in the small community of San Pietro di Cavina, where he spent his childhood and where most of his family lives.

(Fathers Sérgio Vilanculo and Alberto Vieira, Comboni missionaries working in Mozambique).

PROVINCE OF CENTRAL AMERICA

Feast of the relatives of Guatemalan Comboni Missionaries

The Comboni missionaries first arrived in Guatemala in 1989. Today, the *chapines*—as Guatemalans are affectionately known—number eight: four priests, one brother, and three scholastics (one of whom is already a deacon, one in the Kinshasa scholasticate, and the third in São Paulo). There are also three postulants and several aspirants.

Taking advantage of the fact that October is the month chosen by the Catholic Church to focus reflection and action on the universal mission, this year it was decided to invite all the family members of the confrères originally from the country to spend Sunday, 26th October, together at the “Casa Comboni” in Guatemala City.

It was a truly fitting choice. Father Juan Diego Calderón Vargas, superior of the Province of Central America (PCA), which encompasses three countries: Costa Rica, Guatemala, and El Salvador, also shared this opinion: “It was the first time an event of this kind had been held, and it was truly a day of fraternity and missionary spirituality, experienced as one large family. We experienced the mutual joy of getting to know one another and sharing our charism with those who inspired and supported our missionary vocation, amid joy, prayers, and a few tears from the eyes of our parents and family members.”

Two “guests of honour” were invited to share their vocational journey and their experiences of faith and mission. The first was Father Luis Filiberto López Pastor, who, after four years in the scholasticate of Kinshasa (DR Congo), was ordained in 2006. He then spent eight years in the Democratic Republic of Congo and eleven years in his home province, the PCA. The second was Brother Jonatan Josué Chajón Gordillo, who made his first religious profession in May 2021 and recently completed his scholasticate at the International Formation Centre for Brothers (CIF) in Bogotá, Colombia.

A particularly touching moment was listening to the audio messages sent by three Comboni Missionaries from Chapines currently on mission in Ethiopia, Brazil, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

As a symbolic gesture of fraternal communion, during the Eucharist, the family members lit a candle in the name of each of the Guatemalan missionaries scattered around the world.

A festive lunch followed, featuring typical Guatemalan dishes: *chuchitos*, *tostadas*, *tacos*, and *rellenitos*.

SOUTH AFRICA

Comboni Jubilee Pilgrimage to Magaliesburg

On Friday, 10th October 2025, all members of the Comboni Family in South Africa (fathers, brothers, sisters, scholastics, and postulants—about forty, in all) participated in a pilgrimage to celebrate the Jubilee of Hope and the Solemnity of Saint Daniel Comboni, our beloved Founder and Father. The destination of this first Comboni pilgrimage was the Shrine of Mary, Mother of Mercy in Magaliesburg, in the Archdiocese of Johannesburg, approximately 80 km from the Metropolitan See of Johannesburg.

In his introductory remarks, Father John Baptist, Provincial Superior, welcomed Msgr. Buti Tlhagale, Archbishop Emeritus of Johannesburg, who was kind enough to accompany this pilgrimage. He then thanked all the members of the Comboni Family for their participation in this first Comboni pilgrimage. He also emphasised the presence of the scholastics and postulants—the present and youthful future of our Comboni Institute—and that of the elderly confrères, the living memory of the Institute, recalling the words of Pope Francis: “If young people are called to open new doors, the elderly hold the keys.”

He recalled that Comboni envisioned us as “holy and capable missionaries,” always ready to devote our lives and energies to the poorest and most abandoned. “The poor await our response through concrete initiatives on their behalf.” Father John Baptist concluded with the words of our founder: “Courage for the present, but above all for the future!”

Bishop Buti Tlhagale shared some reflections on the great mission of the Church and Comboni’s pioneering role in the evangelisation of Africa. After reciting the rosary while walking around the Marian shrine, the Eucharistic celebration took place, followed by a fraternal agape. St. Daniel Comboni, pray for us! (*Father John Baptist Keraryo Opargiw, mccj*)

20th Anniversary of the death of Father Giorgio Stefani

On 19th October 2025, on the eve of the 20th anniversary of the passing of Father Giorgio Stefani, we members of the Comboni Family gathered at St. Augustine’s Catholic Parish in Silverton, Pretoria, joining the parishioners to celebrate the life and mission of our late confrère, Father Giorgio.

Father Fabio Baldan, Provincial Superior of Italy, led a delegation composed of some of Father Giorgio’s close family members. The Holy Mass was presided over by Father John Baptist Opargiw, Provincial Superior in South Africa, while Father Fabio delivered the homily.

Father John Baptist, on behalf of the Institute, thanked the parishioners for organising the ceremony in memory of Father Giorgio, a missionary with a deeply compassionate heart, especially towards the poor and suffering. He also expressed his gratitude for the presence of Father Giorgio's family, emphasising that it was a moment of true communion and solidarity, celebrated in the context of World Mission Sunday.

During his homily, Father Fabio reiterated that our Christian and missionary life breathes with the two lungs of prayer (which connect us with God, others, and Mother Earth) and love. He confirmed that Father Giorgio's life and mission fully embodied this truth, and invited everyone to pray that he may continue to be a source of inspiration for young people, especially those of St. Augustine's Parish, where he served for many years. Father Gordon Rees, Father Antony Mkhari, and Angelo Stefani then shared moving testimonies about the late Father Giorgio. Finally, Father Antony presented a locally made portrait of Father Giorgio Stefani to the youngest member of the Stefani family, Giorgio Stefani Jr., who bears his name.

After the Mass, everyone was invited to a community lunch, during which they enjoyed a variety of dishes prepared by Silverton parishioners from various cultures.

May the memory of Father Giorgio Stefani live on among us, in our missionary service to the poorest and most abandoned.

IN PACE CHRISTI

Father Provvido Crozzoletto (14.06.1938 – 31.08.2025)

Father Provvido Crozzoletto was born on 14th June 1938, in Fasana, a small hamlet of Adria, in the province of Rovigo. He was one of six children born to Gino, a labourer, and Iolanda, a housewife: a simple, close-knit family steeped in faith. After elementary school, he began working as a carpenter, a profession he enjoyed and in which he immediately demonstrated skill and precision. To perfect his skills, he attended evening classes in drawing and arts and crafts, achieving excellent results.

But behind the apparent simplicity of that industrious life, a greater dream quietly developed. In March 1958, when he was almost twenty, he wrote a letter to the Comboni Institute in Verona, asking to be accepted among its members. His heart was already firmly set: "For about six years I have been working as a carpenter... but I feel the Lord calling me elsewhere." A few months later, he entered the House of Gozzano to complete his basic education, then continued his studies in Crema (middle and high school) and Carraia (high school). In 1960, his mother, Iolanda, died of cancer.

In September 1964, he began his novitiate in Florence; two years later, he took his first religious vows. He then moved to Verona to study philosophy and theology. On 9th September 9, 1969, he made his perpetual profession. On April 4, 1970, he was ordained a priest in the Cathedral of Adria.

After a brief period as a vocations promoter in Italy, he left for Uganda, where he was assigned to the Diocese of Lira. The country's political difficulties forced him to return to Italy, but he was immediately sent to Kenya. After an English course in London, he went to Kipalapala, Tanzania, to study Kiswahili.

From 1973 to 1977, he served among the Borana people in Sololo, in northeastern Kenya. He carried out an intense ministry there, characterised by simple relationships and a profound dedication to the people. After many years of missionary outreach in the United States and Canada, he returned to Kenya in 1981 and served in Kariobangi, on the outskirts of Nairobi, and then again in Sololo, as superior of the community.

In 1990, he was again assigned to North America, where he served as a missionary outreach leader; since 1999, he has also been a provincial councillor. His life has been divided between missionary outreach and ministry, always with a serene spirit and openness.

In 2003, he moved to La Grange Park, then to Montclair, and finally to Newark, continuing his commitment to proclamation and witness. In 2015, he returned to Italy, to the community of Padua, as vice superior and vocations director. Even in his most fragile years, he maintained the joy of his vocation and his love for the mission.

In July 2023, he was welcomed into the community of Castel d'Azzano, at the "Brother Alfredo Fiorini" Centre, to receive the care he needed. On 31st August 2025, he peacefully concluded his earthly journey, surrendering himself to the Lord he had served throughout his life.

His funeral was held on 3rd September, in the Basilica of Santa Maria Assunta della Tomba in Adria, his hometown, after which his body was taken to the Cremation Garden in Copparo (*by F.M.*).

Final farewell to Father Provvido

We are here to bid farewell to Father Provvido, whom we would all like to embrace affectionately for the last time. There are people who, when they pass away, leave a lasting mark on our lives. Provvido is one of them. This celebration is intended to be our final great embrace and a token of our thanks to him.

At funerals, it's common to retrace the important stages of a person's life. But this time, I intend to do as he himself did on the occasion of the

celebration of his 25th anniversary of priestly ordination in 1995. Instead of speaking about the missions where he had worked, he preferred to recount his spiritual journey. For us, retracing one's own spiritual journey means speaking of the common thread that united everything and explains why we did certain things. Therefore, I too will follow his lead. What was his spiritual journey? I'll try to reconstruct it by revisiting pages he wrote at different times.

"My encounter with Christ occurred when I was a carpenter. I was just over 17. One day, I was sent to Padua to collect a piece of carved wood. On the stalls of a nearby market, I discovered a book. It was the Gospel. I had never read it. For me, it was truly a revelation. I was fascinated. I can say that Christ captivated me and seduced me. From there, everything started, especially the invitation to follow him as a missionary.

Father Provvido discovered his true mission immediately after his ordination in 1970, at the age of 32. He was sent to Uganda, but had to settle in Kenya. He always remembered Sololo's mission among the Borana people of northern Kenya: "I was fortunate to go to a place where Christ had never been proclaimed." There, he began to work on building a small Christian community, comprised more of people than structures. Some of these people left a profound impression on him, showing him how the Christian life could be lived in absolute simplicity.

He wrote: "I remember a boy who had only attended second or third grade. He was a pastor. He knew that in his world, it wasn't worth knowing how to write and read, but he always carried a small Gospel with him. One day I asked him, "Do you understand what you read?" He replied, "Not everything. But the important thing isn't understanding." I said, "What matters, then?" And he said, "The important thing is to do what's written." Intrigued, I asked, "Explain to me what you mean." His words struck me: "If it says to forgive, I forgive. If I read that I must help the enemies of the neighbouring tribe, I help them. And if I'm told I must trust in God, I trust. If it says to pray, I pray." I asked him, "And what do you pray for?" His answer was precise: "I pray for peace. I pray that all the inhabitants of my village are people of peace." Gillo—that was the boy's name—never became a Christian, he never asked to be baptised, but he did what was written in the Gospel.

Gillo died in 1984, when Kenya was hit by a severe drought that caused famine, destroying crops and decimating livestock, especially in the northern areas of the country. This event affected Father Provvido deeply: "It's not often that you see people dying from work. When it happens to you, it's a shock. All of a sudden, you see firsthand how unjust the world is. There were times when my faith was put to the test. Three times I

found myself in a situation of terrible famine. It's easy to see hunger on TV. It's more difficult to see people you know dying of hunger. On those occasions, I would retreat to the hill near the mission and pray, asking God questions... But my mind is too small to understand the infinite ways of a God who, even when it doesn't seem like it, loves us. I came down from that hill a little more serene, ready to resume my service to the Borana brothers and sisters." Such was the missionary life of Father Provvido: the life of a man who never locked himself in a comfortable living room or sacristy, but who always reached out to people, especially those he saw as most in need. He had a very sensitive heart: he was moved by pain and suffering, and outraged by injustice.

But he melted before beauty. And he saw such beauty in diverse places: "I have always been enchanted by sunsets, wherever I was: at home, in the African desert, facing the sea or a mountain range, in the Grand Canyon, in the endless snow-covered lands of Canada... I have never seen one like another: all original, with different nuances, colours brilliantly painted with infinite mastery."

For him, all of creation was beautiful, and every person expressed a surprising blend of beauty and charm. He said: "I am convinced that every life is original: God does not use a stencil or a photocopier. Each person's life is unique, and with their death, a life experience disappears that will never be repeated on this earth." This made him particularly attentive to people and encounters. A few days ago, I received a message from a family in Canada seeking information on Father Provvido, and they sent me a photo of him, happy and perfectly integrated into a family that still remembers him after decades because he marked their lives.

It's not that Father Provvido has not encountered difficulties. He confided, "I have never intentionally hurt anyone. However, in my life, I have met people who judged me badly because they knew everything about me. I'm sorry. We kill more people with the tongue than with the sword. It's easier to criticise than to understand. In any case, I forgive everyone who has hurt me in any way." These words make it clear that not all his encounters and relationships have been peaceful. This is what happens when you enter life and get caught up in conflicts.

And death? He prepared himself for a long time to meet it. Already fifteen years ago, he imagined it might be close by and began to take stock: "After God, I feel the need to thank many people: my parents, my brothers and sister, my sisters-in-law and brother-in-law, my 17 nieces and nephews. I'm sorry I can't give you much: only photos and fond memories. I assure you, it has always been invigorating for me to return home."

The thing most precious to him was his vocation: “The Sermon on the Mount (reproduced as a Gospel passage for the funeral – ed.) won my heart and has fascinated me throughout my life. Jesus called me to follow him. Imagine: he found me worthy of following him. It’s hard to believe. I’ve never stopped thanking him for calling me to be his missionary in the footsteps of Daniel Comboni. How could I repay him? How could I praise him adequately?” And he hastened to add: “If you are hearing these words, then it means I am already in the loving Kingdom of God. Know, then, that I offered the last breath of my life trusting totally in him. Throughout my life I have recited this short prayer several times a day: ‘Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’”

To those who asked him: “After all you have done and after all the vicissitudes you have experienced, would you do it again?” He replied: “I would do it again immediately.”

Father Provvido is all this! His was an everyday missionary life, spent for others, following a calling greater than himself and feeling, until the very end, an instrument of a project that surpassed him. Still, he thoroughly enjoyed being part of it.

Thank you, Provvido. Now rest from your labours. Give our regards to all the people you meet. And pray for us. (*Father Giovanni Munari, mcccj*).

LET US PRAY FOR OUR BELOVED DEAD

THE MOTHER: Jovita, of Father Estrada Santoyo Gabriel (M).

THE BROTHERS: Fernando António, of Father Jerónimo Alberto Vieira da Costa (MO); Dante, of Father Valentino Benigna (I); José, of Father Rojo Buxonat Laureano (E).

THE SISTER: Juanita, of Father Daniel Magaña Chávez (M).

THE COMBONI SISTERS: Sister Mecchi M. Eugenia; Sister Basso M. Marcella; Sister Buttiron Regina Maria; Sister Cavalleri Pier Imelda.