

FAMILIA COMBONIANA

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES OF THE HEART OF JESUS

846

December 2025

HAPPY CHRISTMAS



THE HOLY SEE

Appointment of Mons. Tesfaye Tadesse Gebresilasie, M.C.C.J.

On 21st November, the Holy Father appointed Mons. Tesfaye Tadesse Gebresilasie, M.C.C.J., Auxiliary Bishop of the Archeparchy of Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), a member of the Dicastery for the Oriental Churches.

We, the Comboni family, receive this news with joy and gratitude, happy and honoured by the service the Holy Father has entrusted to him for the benefit of the universal Church.

We accompany Bishop Tesfaye with our affection, our fraternal closeness, and our prayers, asking the Lord to sustain him in this new assignment.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Message from the General Council on the occasion of the meeting with the members of the Comboni Survivors' Group (CSG)

"GRATEFUL FOR THE PROGRESS MADE"

Taking to heart the words of our late beloved Pope Francis who reminded us that "true encounter means not only speaking, but also listening with the heart", we are very grateful for the journey undertaken, through a series of Meetings over a number of years, between the Comboni Survivors' Group (CSG) in the British Isles and the Leadership of the Comboni Missionaries with the last encounter held at Archbishop's House in Westminster on October 2nd 2025.

This journey has witnessed on one hand, the great courage displayed by Members of the CSG in sharing their difficult experiences of the past and, on the other hand, the dedication of the Leadership of the Comboni Missionaries in listening, responding and committing to meaningful change, step by step, over these years. Significant in this latter regard is the official and independent Audit of the Comboni Missionaries in England and Wales by the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) in July 2025 (<https://catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Comboni-Missionaries-Audit-Report.pdf>); and the newly published 'Safeguarding Policy' for Comboni Missionaries throughout the world (<https://www.comboni.org/contenuti/117188>). All those participating, it must be said, have continued to work together with openness, honesty and respect while painfully aware of the lasting impact of childhood abuse and the life-long burden it creates for survivors and their families. Last but

not least, we owe a profound debt of gratitude to H. E. Cardinal Vincent Nichols for his wisdom, guidance and encouragement in chairing our Meetings.

Noteworthy in relation to the last Meeting was the degree of personal satisfaction at the point now reached with the acceptance of a past which cannot be changed, yet understanding that it is possible to move forward toward inner peace. Again, there was recognition of the spiritual depth of this work of healing which is both demanding and yet rewarding – a pathway of solidarity and compassion shared by those involved in this process.

On the part of the Comboni Missionaries, the Leadership remains committed to on-going dialogue with, and pastoral care for, Members of the CSG although going forward this will be focused in Britain, building on the well-established pattern of communication developed between the local Provincial Superior and the Co-ordinator of the Comboni Survivors' Group.

Annual meeting of the Economic Council in Rome

The annual meeting of the Council for the Economy (CdE) was held at the General House in Rome from 25th to 28th November, bringing together continental representatives, technical advisors, and the general treasurer. The next meeting will be held online in January 2026.

In his introductory remarks, Father Luigi Codianni, Superior General, expressed his gratitude for the service rendered by the members of the CdE and highlighted three priorities for the future: more sustainable economic management in the circumscriptions, greater investment in the training of treasurers, and adequate preparation for the implications of the ongoing process of merging the circumscriptions within the Institute. He also asked the CdE to accompany the provinces in this phase of change, ensuring that the reorganisation is transparent and sustainable from an economic and administrative perspective.

Father Angelo Giorgetti, general treasurer, summarised the most important topics of the discussion as follows: "The Institute's current financial situation was assessed and the budgets for 2026 were prepared, and these will be submitted to the General Council for approval. We then reviewed the main points that emerged from the recent intercapitular assembly regarding finance, with reference to the implications of the merger process and the support requested from the Council of Ministers to address the resulting technical issues. Finally, we focused on evaluating and planning the training programs currently underway: the 'Economo's Gymnasium', courses at the scholasticates and the International Formation Centres for Brothers (CIF), and those for new circumscription treasurers."

November 28th was enriched by a Jubilee pilgrimage to the Basilica of St. John Lateran, with a Eucharistic celebration presided over by Father Giulio

Albanese, director of the Office for Social Communications and, since March 2023, director of the Office for Missionary Cooperation between Churches of the Diocese of Rome.

Holy Redeemer Guild

December	01 – 15 PE	16 – 31 U
January	01 – 15 A	16 – 31 BR

Prayer Intentions

December 2025

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.*

January 2026

That the Word of light and truth may continue to bring hope to the men and women of our times and find the people of our age ready to respond to the call of God and missionary commitment.
Lord, hear us.

Comboni liturgical calendar

DECEMBER

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

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	Our Lady of Guadalupe, <i>Patron of the Americas</i>	Mexico

BRAZIL

Retreat and provincial assembly

From 20th to 26th October, members of the province gathered for a retreat and provincial assembly, held at the 'Mother of Good Counsel' Convivium Centre in Jundiá (São Paulo).

The retreat, led by Father Alfredo Gonçalves of the Congregation of the Carlist Fathers (Scalabrini), took place from 20th to 24th October, days of intense prayer, characterised by silence, listening, and sharing, in light of the experience of Jesus of Nazareth. Reflection focused in particular on the synthesis between the 'mountain' (the experience of prayer as a dialogue with the Father, to align oneself with his plan), the 'path' (missionary service in the existential peripheries), and the 'table' (the life of fraternal communion and synodality). The retreat was highly appreciated, especially for the fraternal atmosphere and the concreteness of the reflections offered by Father Alfredinho.

After the retreat, the provincial assembly was held (October 24-26), which included on its agenda the evaluation of the last three years, planning for the next three years, the election of the provincial superior, and the survey for the selection of provincial councillors. These were intense days, with many important issues for the life of the province. (*Father Raimundo Rocha, mccj*)

Forum of the Comboni Family on integral ecology and COP30

From 11th to 18th November, 39 representatives of the Comboni Family, from 15 countries and working across four continents, gathered in Belém do Pará to participate in the Comboni Family Forum on Integral Ecology, on the occasion of the 30th Conference of the Parties (COP30) in the Amazon.

The missionaries participated in various institutional spaces for meeting and discussion organised around COP30, particularly the Cúpula dos Povos and the Tapiri Interreligious Centre. They also dedicated three days to working together during the Forum, sharing moments of spirituality, presenting integral ecology initiatives implemented in the various missions, and sharing what they saw and heard in the COP30 spaces.

They felt touched and challenged as members of an 'outgoing' Church, allied with ancestral and scientific knowledge, in an ecumenical and interreligious dialogue that opens minds and hearts. They celebrated the lives and witness of many martyrs who made common cause with the cry of the earth and impoverished communities.

Inspired by the Comboni charism and the legacy of the Church's social doctrine, especially the teaching of Pope Francis and the appeals of

Laudato Si', the participants renewed their commitment, as the Comboni Family, to integral ecology and, among other actions, proposed:

- promoting ecological conversion at personal and community levels;
- developing initial and ongoing formation processes in integral ecology;
- cultivating an embodied, liberating spirituality based on networking;
- promoting the initiatives of the *Laudato Si'* Platform of Initiatives, such as 'Sowing Hope for the Planet', the 'Season of Creation', and 'Laudato Si' Week';
- deepen your understanding of the Church's teaching, particularly the recent document entitled *A Call for Climate Justice and Our Common Home: Ecological Conversion, Transformation, and Resistance to False Solutions*, launched by the Churches of the 'Global South' through the continental bodies of Latin America and the Caribbean (CELAM), Asia (FABC), and Africa (SECAM).

The overall evaluation of the participants was very positive. (*Father Raimundo Rocha, MCCJ*)

CONGO

Silver Jubilee of Our Lady of Good Help Parish – A Story of Grace and Hope

The parish of Our Lady of Good Help, in Bibwa, a district of Kinshasa, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, celebrated its Silver Jubilee on 26th October, 2025. The theme for the day was: 'A Story of Grace and Hope'. The solemn Eucharistic celebration was presided over by Father Clet-Clay Mamvemba, secretary-chancellor and representative of Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo, Archbishop of Kinshasa, and concelebrated by about fifteen priests, in the presence of several hundred faithful.

In his homily, Father Clet-Clay congratulated the parish community on their progress and their commitment, and encouraged them to continue their work of evangelisation with the same fervent dedication, in a spirit of communion, in the love of Christ, and in service to the poorest.

He also thanked the Comboni missionaries and other religious congregations working in the parish for their missionary commitment. Father Clet-Clay then urged Christians to celebrate the Jubilee in thanksgiving for the wonders accomplished by the Lord over the past 25 years, following a path of conversion and reconciliation among the members of the parish community. Finally, he invited the community to look to the future with hope: "After these 25 years, let us look to our future without fear and move forward together in hope, to make our parish life ever better."

Founded as a Christian community in 1992, thanks to the pastoral efforts

of the Xaverian missionaries and the local clergy, the parish was officially erected on 22nd October 2000, and entrusted to the Comboni missionaries. The first parish priest was Father Antonio Aparicio. On that memorable day, Bishop Daniel Landu, of venerated memory, celebrated the Eucharist in the presence of the students of the local school, the Christians of Bibwa, Wungu, and other nearby parishes: Sant'Angela, Santa Lucia, San Matteo, and San Giacomo.

According to Mr. Macaire Eyupar, deputy coordinator of the Jubilee organising committee, the community is very satisfied with the work done by the Comboni missionaries: "They arrived here when the place was deprived of everything. The good work they have done in Bibwa is now before everyone's eyes: the construction of the church and parish facilities, the support of the Christian community, the construction of the school, the digging of wells, the assistance to malnourished children, and much more."

The parish of Bibwa has grown to the point of giving rise to three new parishes: St. Paul VI and Blessed Pauline Jaricot, entrusted to the Comboni missionaries, and St. Peter and Paul, entrusted to the diocesan clergy.

Since its establishment, the parish community has felt itself on a journey, inspired by the words of Cardinal Joseph-Albert Malula (1917–1989), of venerated memory: "Your faith will mature when it is expressed in concrete acts of charity, sustained by hope in God, who cannot err or deceive us. I urge you to participate actively in the life of your parishes, experiencing ecclesial communion within your base communities, participating in the Eucharistic celebration, which is the centre of all authentic Christian life, and fulfilling the pastoral tasks that our Mother Church entrusts to you."

Father Clet-Clay urged the parish community of Bibwa to respond courageously to the many challenges they face: by providing themselves with good parish, school, and healthcare infrastructure; by increasing their sense of belonging and communion; by practicing synodality and prioritising ongoing formation; reducing poverty among the majority of the population and putting an end to the insecurity caused by the neighbourhood's young delinquents (known as *kuluna*).

Father Séraphin Adobo, pastor of the parish, is confident that, with God's grace, the community will address these challenges through prayer and intensified formation of young people and members of the various groups and commissions.

The Eucharistic celebration concluded with the blessing of the new statue of the Virgin Mary, new restrooms, and a new podium, funded entirely by contributions from the faithful. (*Brother Kakule Silusawa Lwanga, mccj*)

DEUTSCHSPRACHIGE PROVINZ

130 years of Comboni presence in Bressanone

The German-speaking Province (DSP) of the Comboni Missionaries celebrated the 130th anniversary of their presence in Bressanone-Milland with two days of celebrations, on 18th and 19th October, in the presence of the Superior General, Father Luigi Codianni, and the Vicar General, Father David Domingues. Approximately thirty people from Graz and the surrounding area—where the institute is engaged in pastoral work—joined the celebrations during their parish trip to North Tyrol and Alto Adige.

The anniversary celebrations opened on Saturday, 18th October, in the chapel of our house, where Father Baumann Reinhold retraced the 130-year history of the Comboni presence in Bressanone. In his address, he recalled how, at the end of the 19th century, the Austro-Hungarian Empire was the protecting power of the missions in Sudan. When Verona and Limone sul Garda, the birthplace of Saint Daniel Comboni, became part of Italy in 1866, the Habsburg Monarchy expressed a strong desire to have, if not the mother house, at least a significant branch of the Comboni Institute in its territory.

Until then, all candidates for the mission—mostly from the territories of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the German Empire—had to learn Italian in order to study theology in Verona. Due to the so-called ‘Jesuit laws’, it was not possible to establish religious communities in Germany before the First World War. But the imperial government in Vienna insisted that the Combonis have at least a larger headquarters in a German-speaking city.

In May 1895, a plot of land measuring approximately 14 hectares was purchased in Milland, on the outskirts of Bressanone. Since the Mill Hill Missionaries already had a headquarters in the city, the Comboni missionaries were initially prohibited from recruiting candidates in South Tyrol. Consequently, our students came primarily from what is now Austria, Slovenia, and Germany.

Since then, the house has become an important centre of missionary formation which, in the first decades, averaged 65 members, including fathers, brothers, scholastics, and novices. The two world wars profoundly affected the German-speaking confrères: many were called to arms and never returned.

The highlight of the jubilee was the solemn bilingual Mass—in German and Italian—celebrated on Sunday the 19th in the parish church of Milland, dedicated to Saint Joseph Freinademetz. The provincial superior, Father Hubert Josef Grabmann, presided over the celebration; the homily

was given by the superior general, who offered a reflection on the mission as the heart of the Comboni identity.

Among the concelebrants, in addition to the Vicar General, were Fathers Radol Austine Odhiambo, General Councillor, Otii Alir Moses (Graz), Sierra Moreno José Aldo (South Africa), Weber Franz, and Fathers Donati Tullio (Trento, Italy) and Benedetti Donato (Limone, Italy), testifying to the strong ties with the Italian province.

After the Mass, the participants gathered for standing refreshments. The three scholastics of the Graz formation community—Ilolube Tandir Blondel (CN), Osuna Félix Jesús Daniel (M), and Wairimu Wilson Njoroge (KE)—and a Ugandan Comboni lay missionary residing in South Tyrol had prepared *chapatis and maandazi*, which added a touch of African flavour to the *fraternal agape*, on World Mission Sunday.

The celebration also had a symbolic significance: the parish church of Milland was consecrated exactly forty years ago, on 19th October 1985, ten years after the beatification of Josef Freinademetz, who was canonised in 2003, along with Saint Daniel Comboni.

The two-day celebration concluded with a community lunch in the great hall of the Comboni house, amidst songs, friendship, and gratitude for a long history of missionary commitment. To mark the anniversary, *Radio Maria Südtirol* broadcast an interview with Father Franz Weber on the theme *Mission, the fundamental theme of my life*.

Special thanks go to Brother Tremmel Friedbert, the Comboni community of Bressanone-Milland, and all the staff for the preparation, organisation, and success of these days of celebration and fellowship.

EGYPT/SUDAN

Father General visits Sudan

“When you look at a forest from a distance, you don’t see a path through it. It’s when you get closer that you see an opening.” With these words, our longtime lay collaborator, Mansour Mahani, from Omdurman, describes the reopening of the Comboni Boys’ School in Masalma, Omdurman, last September, despite all the difficulties and many fears.

The wisdom contained in these words aptly describes the visit to Sudan of the Superior General, Father Luigi Codianni, which took place from 4th to 21st November. Father Luigi’s presence during this turbulent time of war was that a closer look would enable the Institute to look at Sudan differently.

He arrived in Port Sudan on Tuesday, November 4. On Wednesday and Thursday, he had the opportunity to visit the new headquarters of the

Comboni College of Science and Technology, the secondary school, and some of our schools in the suburbs. He also met online with the Auxiliary Bishop of Khartoum, Most Rev. Daniel Adwok, departing for the plenary assembly of bishops in Malakal. The bishop expressed his desire that the Comboni missionaries continue both their work of catechesis and pastoral care, as well as their commitment to education. He also emphasised the importance of being realistic in this time of war and thanked the Comboni missionaries for their testimony of resilience in Kosti.

After obtaining (after some delay) the necessary permits, the general and provincial superiors departed on Friday the 7th for Atbara to meet with Archbishop Michael Didi and hear from him what the local Church's vision might be in this difficult time. On Saturday the 8th, they continued their journey to Kosti where they arrived on the morning of Sunday the 9th, in time for Mass.

The Superior General was able to visit the parish centres and schools (especially Kadugli, Neighbourhood 63, Lea, and Goz el-Salam) and was deeply impressed to see the confrères of Kosti happy to stay, despite all the difficulties. Even among the people, the determination to move forward and not give up is palpable.

After further delays in obtaining permits, the Superior General and the Provincial Superior departed on Thursday the 13th for Omdurman, where they joined Father Yousif William and Father Lorenzo Baccin, who had moved to the Missionaries of Charity house two weeks earlier. On Friday the 14th, they visited Khartoum (Comboni College, Villa Gilda, Saint Francis School, the cemetery, and the cathedral) and our provincial house in North Khartoum. The desolation of downtown Khartoum is barely interrupted by a few people walking through the deserted streets; Yet, here and there, you see shops under repair and men working to rebuild what remains of their homes and workplaces. Our provincial house, on the banks of the Nile, is rapidly being reclaimed by vegetation, a further sign of the resilience of life and the passage of time; however, overall, we can be grateful that the structures have suffered only minor damage. On Saturday the 15th, the two visitors visited the parish of Masalma, with its two schools. It was striking to hear how the teachers were willing to work with almost no pay to get the children back to school. On Sunday the 16th, the fathers celebrated the Eucharist with the Christian community of Thaura (block 48).

The visit allowed us to understand that, for now, it is best to reopen our presence in Masalma; for this reason, we are now asking the archbishop to appoint one of us as parish priest. We are also planning some maintenance work (the main part involves repairing the bullet-riddled sheet

metal, rebuilding some of the walls, furnishing, and restoring electricity and water supplies).

The Superior General concluded his visit to Port Sudan with personal meetings with the community members and an online meeting with the provincial council and the general councillor for APDESAM. The reflection on future scenarios was lively and full of hope. On the final day, the Superior General attended Mass at the Christ the King Centre in Inqaz, a southern suburb of Port Sudan, where—thanks also to the solidarity of the DSP and the Italian Province—new school buildings were built last year. This too is a sign of hope, as the local community prepares to once again become a centre where catechesis and liturgies can be held regularly.

The war in Sudan continues to rage, as the terrible news from Darfur reminds us. The forest is thick, and at times the path can seem dark and impenetrable. But, one step at a time, the path opens up. (*Father Diego Dalle Carbonare, mccj*).

EUROPE

European Formation Assembly in Verona

From 4th to 7th November, the European Formation Assembly was held at the Motherhouse of the Comboni Missionaries in Verona, Italy. Sixteen missionaries from 12 nationalities who are engaged in youth vocation ministry and in basic and ongoing formation on the European continent, participated.

With the exception of the London Province, all European circumscriptions—Italy, Portugal, Spain, Germany, and Poland—sent representatives. Also present were Father Elias Sindjalim, General Assistant; Father José de Jesús Villaseñor, General Secretary for Formation; Father Sylvester Hategek’Imana, of the central team for ongoing formation in Rome; and Father Fernando Domingues, Provincial Superior of Portugal and continental coordinator for formation.

The topics discussed included youth ministry in Europe, ongoing formation (with the assistance of Father Sylvester Hategek’Imana), and accompaniment on the path of formation and vocational discernment.

“We discussed the complexity of this continent and the difficulties of meeting today’s young people. At the same time, however, we are inspired by the hope that the Comboni charism will always remain a great gift to the Church and society, including Europe, and by the great thirst of young people for an embodied spirituality and testimonies of solidarity,” said Father Stefano Giudici, formator at the scholasticate in Casavatore (Italy).

Currently, 39 young Comboni missionaries are attending theology courses in Europe, mostly Africans, distributed across four houses of formation: two scholasticates—in Casavatore (Italy), with 16 scholastics, and in Granada (Spain), with 15—and two formation communities—in Graz (Austria), with 3 scholastics, and in Maia (Portugal), with 5. In total, the Comboni Institute has 198 scholastics.

ITALY

L'ACSE thanks Sister Lucia for her service to migrants in Rome

On 8th November, members, volunteers, and friends of the Comboni Association for the Service of Emigrants and Refugees (ACSE) gathered at their Rome headquarters to bid farewell to Comboni missionary Sister Lucia Cacelli with a Eucharistic celebration. After six years of service at ACSE, Sister Lucia was assigned to a new mission at her institute's motherhouse in Verona. At ACSE, Sister Lucia taught Italian to migrants and was particularly involved in food distribution: every Thursday, the Association distributes approximately 100 food parcels to migrants.

Those attending the celebration warmly thanked Sister Lucia for her generous commitment to serving migrants and wished her a fruitful apostolate in her new assignment. On this occasion, the person who will replace Sister Lucia at ACSE was introduced: Sister Ornella Monti, formerly a missionary in Kenya.

Sister Lucia carried out her missionary service in several countries in Africa (including the Central African Republic, Congo, and Cameroon) and Latin America (Mexico, Costa Rica, and Guatemala), dedicating herself to teaching, the advancement of women, the training of catechists, and the preparation of Comboni candidates. (*Father Venanzio Milani, MCCJ, President of ACSE*)

University of Padua – Conference on Father Ezechiel Ramin – ‘A Life for Human Rights’

On Thursday, 13th November 2025, a conference entitled ‘Father Ezechiel Ramin — A Life for Human Rights’ was held at the Antonio Papisca Athenaeum for Human Rights at the University of Padua. The two speakers, Father Giovanni Munari, Father Ezechiele's companion in formation and mission in Brazil, and Antonio Ramin, Ezechiele's brother, were introduced by Father Gaetano Montresor, who was almost the same age as Ezechiel. They spoke during the International Relations Course, at the invitation of Professor Marco Mascia.

A hundred people, mostly young students, attentively and interestedly followed the two speakers' rich presentations. The entire conference was filled with emotion.

Father Munari presented a well-documented historical overview of Brazil's sociopolitical situation over the last sixty years: successive governments, economic decisions, and their devastating social consequences for both the population and the region, up to the severe social and environmental crisis of recent years.

In this Brazil, Father Ezechiel Ramin lived and worked for just over a year and a half, from January 1984 to July 1985. He was assassinated on 24th July 1985, immediately after keeping his rendezvous with his killers while in sincere and courageous solidarity with the farmers, who were unjustly denied the land they deserved.

Antonio Ramin began his story with a powerful statement: "Father Ezechiel is not dead. He was killed!" Why was he killed, and by whom? Ezechiel had chosen to protect the dignity and lives of the farmers, as their mothers, wives, and children had asked of him. This choice was the fruit of a long journey that began in his family, where Ezechiel had been imbued with civic and moral values, particularly that of justice, to which he would remain faithful until his martyrdom.

Only at the tragic moment of his assassination did his family discover that Ezechiel no longer belonged only to them, but to the Church and the world. Arriving in Brazil, a country of enormous proportions—the parish of Cacoal covered an area the size of the Veneto region—he embraced his role as a priest, following Christ in that reality, facing enormous challenges in the field of human rights, particularly the defence of life and justice.

From the trial records, we learn that each of the men who shot him received a sum equal to approximately 50 euros. Antonio's final statement was timely: "Father Ezechiel speaks more today than he did in life."

A young university student named Catherine read some passages from Father Ezechiele's writings, selected by her brother Fabiano.

The conference concluded with a presentation by attorney Mariano Paolin, former notary actuary in the diocesan beatification process and in the international rogatory letter from the Brazilian court held in Padua. Attorney Paolin, together with a Brazilian colleague, succeeded—after forty years of fruitless attempts—in obtaining the official document regarding the land where Father Ezechiele's meeting with the farmers took place and the nearby site where he was killed. The document certifies that Father Ezechiel had not violated any private property: the land was public.

PERÙ

Golden Jubilee of San Martín de Pangoa Parish

This year, the parish of San Martín de Pangoa celebrates its 50th anniversary. Located in the heart of Peru, on the edge of the Amazon, it is part of the Apostolic Vicariate of San Ramón. Its territory, covering over 6,000 km², stretches from the eastern slopes of the Andes to the Ene River.

The area was initially entrusted to a Franciscan priest. After his tragic death in the Tambo River, for 22 years it was cared for by the nearest parish, which guaranteed Masses on Sundays and major holidays. Sixteen years ago, it was entrusted to the Comboni missionaries.

The vast territory is home to several native communities belonging to the *Nomatsiguenga* and *Asháninka* ethnic groups. This was the main reason why the Comboni Province of Peru decided to assume the mission in 2009, in line with one of the continent's priorities: work with indigenous peoples.

In truth, the Comboni presence in Pangoa dates back to 2003, when Father Gianni Pacher, assigned to the nearby community of Palca, took charge of the parish for six years and built the San Daniele Comboni parish college, which today hosts nearly 800 students. He also began to care for the rural area, with over 200 indigenous communities, towns, and hamlets.

With the official opening of the Comboni community, the parish grew. Numerous chapels and communities were established, some several hours' walk away. Since then, 16 Comboni missionaries have worked in Pangoa, including priests, brothers, and scholastics engaged in missionary service.

Three years ago, a new parish was created, separating the more distant area, known as the Alto Río Ene Mission. Father Pedro Percy Carbonero carried out his missionary work there for many years.

As part of the celebrations for the 50th anniversary of its foundation, a photographic exhibition was held on the history of evangelisation in these lands, dating back to the 17th century. A drawing and painting competition was also held dedicated to the parish's patron saint (Saint Martin de Porres), whose feast day falls on 3rd November, the central day of the celebrations, with a procession and solemn Mass. The Eucharist was presided over by Father Alfonso Tapia, vicar general of the vicariate, followed by a moment of fraternal sharing in the parish hall. In the preceding days, a choir recital, a parade of people 'dressed up' as various saints, and an artistic evening had taken place.

Currently, three Comboni Missionaries are present in Pangoa: Father Díez Maeso Lorenzo, Father Miąsik Maciej Tomasz, and Scholastic Mwaba Mathews. They are engaged in missionary service in the vast mission, giving priority to the native *Nomatsiguenga* communities. They constantly strive to learn their language to better lead celebrations and provide adequate training for Christian leaders. A cultural and social support centre for the native communities is under construction.

The first tangible fruits of the evangelisation carried out among the indigenous *Nomatsiguenga* communities are evident: there is already an aspirant Comboni Missionary and several Christian leaders; by the end of the year, we will have the ordination of a permanent deacon. In the urban area, however, we already boast a permanent deacon and several pastoral groups led by committed lay people who, in their simplicity, persevere in the hope of becoming more numerous and better organised in the future. We try to support them in the best possible way: to ensure their commitment is constant and ever more sincere, we train them in the School of Evangelization that the vicariate manages for lay ministries. (*The Comboni community of Pangoa*).

SOUTH AFRICA

Visit of the General Treasurer

From 11th to 23rd November, we had the honour of hosting the General Treasurer, Father Angelo Giorgetti, for the first time. During his visit, he collaborated with Brother Paulo Felix, Provincial Treasurer, to audit the provincial accounts and addressed some technical issues regarding the accounting system at the provincial headquarters in Kensington. He also met with local treasurers and members of the Provincial Secretariat for Finance in Silverton, Pretoria.

From 17th to 22nd November, together with Brother Paulo and Father John Baptist, Provincial Superior, Father Angelo held a training course at the scholasticate in Pietermaritzburg on the following topics: finance and the 19th General Chapter; accounting principles; the legal and organisational structure of the Institute; the Total Common Fund, and the challenges of our economic system. During the meeting, Father John Baptist presented the *Code of Ethics* and the *Safeguarding Policy document*.

The visit was an important opportunity for fellowship with the entire Institute. Father Angelo, with professionalism and great availability, raised awareness among the community about the responsible management of resources and the economic implications of the mission, recalling the example of Saint Daniel Comboni.

We are deeply grateful for his presence and trust that what he learned will bear abundant fruit for our province and for the future of the Institute.
(Father John Baptist Opargiw and Brother Paulo Felix)

IN PACE CHRISTI

Father Elia Pampaloni (24.7.1939 – 5.10.2025)

Elia was born in Conselve (Padua) on 21st July 1939. He grew up in a very religious family, composed of his father, Giovanni, a professional organist, his mother, Maria Scapin, a housewife, five children, and two sisters. His brother, Pio, a few years older than him, entered the episcopal seminary and would later become a diocesan priest, serving as a seminary professor for many years. Elia followed suit in 1949, entering the Apostolic School run by the Comboni missionaries in Padua, where he attended the fifth grade of elementary school and three years of middle school. In 1953, he attended the Apostolic School in Brescia for high school.

In October 1956, he entered the novitiate in Gozzano for his first year. In October 1957, he went to Sunningdale, England, for his second year, concluding with his first religious vows on 9th September 1957, after obtaining his General Certificate of Education (Oxford). The following year, he began philosophy courses, first at the Sunningdale scholasticate (1958-1959), then theology at the motherhouse in Verona (1959-1960), before moving to the scholasticate in Rome (San Pancrazio) for his final courses at the University of Propaganda Fide, where he obtained a licentiate in theology. On 9th September 1963, he made his perpetual religious profession and was ordained a priest on 28th June 1964. He extended his stay in Rome to attend a two-year specialisation course in liturgy at the Pontifical Athenaeum of Sant'Anselmo.

When he became a priest, Elia was 25 years old. The Second Vatican Council was in full swing. This is important to note, because all priests and missionaries of these years found themselves faced with the challenge of having to confront a world that was profoundly changing and that also required the Church to have a new sensitivity, new pastoral attitudes, and new responses. Father Elia would fulfil this role of bridge between tradition and a drive toward the future, both in Italy, within the Institute, and in Africa. These two specialisations helped him understand and personally engage in the process summarised in the term '*aggiornamento*'—a term in vogue at the time. He sought to deepen his studies primarily for his own sake, but then he successfully conveyed 'the newness' in his teaching, first to the scholastics of Venegono Superiore (Varese), where from 1966 to 1970 he taught liturgy and sacramental dogmatics, and then in Africa.

In a questionnaire for the preparation of a personal profile of aptitude and professional preparation, filled out by Father Elia shortly before leaving for Africa, we read: "In the post-conciliar period, I encountered great difficulties in teaching. Venegono Superiore went through a period of crisis due to the constant changes in teaching staff and the lack of clear ideas about what a scholasticate should be." When asked, "What types of work do you think you're best suited to?" he replied, "I think I'm suited to a pastoral life, because of the teamwork involved. I think I'd be uncomfortable working alone."

In Africa

In the summer of 1970, Father Elia arrived in Uganda and remained there, with a few brief interruptions, for almost 50 years, moving between the dioceses of Lira and Gulu, in the north of the country. He was not one to remain in an office. He enjoyed being with people. This need for contact with reality drove him to study and learn first *Lango*, spoken in the Lira region, and then *Acholi*, spoken in Gulu, as well as *Kiswahili*, which, along with English, is the official language of Uganda.

From July 1980 to June 1989, he returned to Italy as a formator for young missionaries at the scholasticate in Rome, in Via Luigi Lilio. The challenge was to implement a type of formation that could incorporate the spirit expressed by the 1979 General Chapter, the new Rule of Life, and the new way of understanding the mission, living community life, spirituality, and consecrated life.

In July 1989, he returned to Uganda, where he served for three years as parish priest of Kitgum, in the far north of the country. His confrères elected him provincial superior of Uganda, a post he assumed on 1st January 1993. During those years, the Comboni group in Uganda remained among the largest in the Institute. In 1997, Father Elia participated in the General Chapter, where he distinguished himself for his ability to engage with his confrères, as well as for his vision and commitment to renewing, without disruption, what he deemed important.

After completing his service as provincial superior in 1998, he was assigned to the scholasticate of Karen, Nairobi, Kenya, as superior. In January 2001, he returned to Uganda, briefly assigned to the community of Kalongo, in the diocese of Lira, working in the parish and providing spiritual care to the sick at the hospital, where Father Giuseppe Ambrosoli worked. In November 2001, he became superior of the Kitgum community and director of the catechetical centre. Since 1st January 2002, he was a provincial councillor. In September, he was assigned to serve as parish priest at Gulu Cathedral. In 2005, he was chosen as provincial director of ongoing formation and provincial secretary for evangelisation.

In July 2007, he returned to Italy for a period of rest at the General Curia in Rome, where he became spiritual director. But he had left his heart in Kitgum, and he returned there in September 2009, remaining there until December 2015, when he moved to the diocese of Gulu, first to Opit, then to Layibi, until September 2024, when he was forced to return to Italy for health reasons. He spent a short time in Brescia, then settled at the 'Brother Alfredo Fiorini' Centre in Castel d'Azzano.

He arrived there in an extremely fragile state, but precisely because of this fragility, he won everyone over. When all the defences that usually serve as a shield or mask to hide what you are deep down and that you do everything to avoid showing in public are stripped away, that's when the truest aspects of yourself emerge.

The real Father Elia

We had the grace of meeting Father Elia, perhaps at the moment that, for him too, was the moment of truth. And he revealed himself to us for what he truly was: a good, sweet man, always smiling, positive, with a profound and authentic humanity. He wasn't afraid to ask for help when he felt disoriented at home, or when he realised he'd lost something he couldn't find. He asked for help with sensitivity, accepted any kind of help, and never failed, in the end, to show his gratitude for the little or nothing that, in most cases, could be done for him.

Elia made us understand how important, in a reality like ours, small gestures and little things are, even the seemingly most useless or insignificant ones. I believe that old age has this beauty: it becomes a distillery of humanity, which benefits those who experience it and even those who encounter it occasionally. In Elia's case, I can say without fear of being wrong that his entire missionary life was built with the same material he used in everything he did.

The Lord called him to himself suddenly, on the night of 5th October, coming to take him very gently, in his sleep, to awaken him in the place He had always prepared for him. Elia lived in this house for only a year, a short time, but long enough to make himself known and loved both by us, his confrères, and by the workers and healthcare personnel.

His funeral was celebrated on 9th October in the community of Castel d'Azzano: *it was a celebration of thanksgiving* for a life spent serving the Ugandans and training future missionaries.

Father Elia went where his Good was, the One he had always sought, the One who changed his life and his heart, the One he made known to others, and the One he loved deeply until the end.

As for the love that Jesus invoked for his followers, we can say we have known it in Elia's testimony. We can attribute to him these words of the

Master: “And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world was” (Jn 17:5).

At the end of the service, there were several testimonies, including those from Africa: all of them emphasised the closeness and attentiveness that Father Elia showed to those he met, always helping as much as he could. *The result was a true Comboni Missionary*, just as the holy Founder had dreamed of his missionaries. (*Father Giovanni Munari, mcccj, and FM*)

LET US PRAY FOR OUR BELOVED DEAD

THE MOTHER: Bruna, of Father Gianni Gaiga (PE); Manزالie Monique, of Father Claude Ondongar (EGSD); Maria Auxiliadora, of Father Dunn Álvarez Henry Oswaldo (†); Ornella, of Brother Alberto Degan (I)

THE FATHER: Giampietro, of Father Fabio Baldan (I); Gervais Paluku Kalwana, of Father Kakule Muvawa Emery-Justin (DRC)

THE BROTHER: Antonio, of Father Domenico Cariolato (I); Juan, of Father Arellano Hernández José (EGSD); Giovanni, of Father Lenzi Francesco (I); Gesuino, of Father Serra Teresino (I) and Sister Gina Serra (I);

THE SISTER: Carmen Vicente, of Father Serrano Aparici Vicente (E)

THE GRANDMOTHER: Paulina, of the scholastic Wilson Njoroge (KE)

THE COMBONI MISSIONARY SISTERS: Sr. Gambarin Maria Luigia; Sr. Stellato Donatina

