

FAMILIA COMBONIANA

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES OF THE HEART OF JESUS

852

June 2026

The Sacred Heart of Jesus

12 June 2026



GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Perpetual professions

Bro. Valverde Paredes José Jean	Nampula/MO	09.05.2026
Sc. N'gbolo-Mecko Christ Jordy Larry	Bangui/RCA	09.05.2026
Bro. Kambale Mathwatere Ghislain	Beni/Busili//CN	14.05.2026

Ordinations

Muliza Vincent James	Blantyre/MZ	09.05-2026
Celso Samuel Pedro	Nampula/MO	09.05-2026
Gil Fernando	Nampula/MO	09.05-2026

Holy Redeemer Guild

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

Prayer intentions

June – Faced with growing social and political polarisation, conflicts, and wars in our world, may the Lord help us to build bridges, not walls, so that love may prevail over the barriers that seek to divide us. *Lord, hear us.*

July – We pray for the victims of trafficking that the Lord may break the chains of their slavery, and that, through the intercession of Saint Daniel Comboni and Saint Josephine Bakhita, we may all fight with courage and tenacity against this scourge. *Lord, hear us.*

Comboni liturgical calendar

JUNE

12	The Sacred Heart of Jesus, <i>Titular of the Institute</i>	Solemnity (Togo-Ghana-Benin)
----	---	---------------------------------

JULY

28	Blessed Joseph Abrosoli	Memorial
----	-------------------------	----------

Significant anniversaries

JUNE

1	Anniversary of the founding of the Institute	
3	St Charles Lwanga and companions, martyrs	Uganda
5	Saint Boniface, bishop and martyr	Memorial DSP (South Tyrol, Austria, Germany)
13	The Immaculate Heart of Mary	memorial

Publications

METIN SEDOTE ALEX CANISIUS, *Cessez d'étouffer l'Afrique*, Éditions Afriquespoir, March 2026, Kinshasa.

The author is a Comboni missionary of Beninese nationality, currently working at the Afriquespoir Centre in Kinshasa. The book's title is taken from Pope Francis's speech, delivered in Kinshasa on 31st January 2023: "This country and this continent deserve to be respected and listened to; they deserve space and attention: hands off the Democratic Republic of the Congo, hands off Africa! *Stop suffocating Africa*: it is not a mine to be exploited or a land to be plundered. Let Africa be the protagonist of its own destiny!" These words resonated widely around the world. Responsively received, they fuelled numerous debates and were perceived as a heartfelt appeal to external political powers for greater respect and better cooperation for development and peace on the continent; a call to reevaluate the African continent's place on the world stage. But three years later, those words seem to have been reduced to a historical speech whose impact would have been merely emotional.

With a preface by Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo Besungu, Archbishop of Kinshasa, and an afterword by Father Elias Sindjalim, this book was born from the need to reclaim the message of Pope Francis, now considered a precious legacy. As an African and a missionary priest, the author begins with the reality of an Africa thirsting for justice, peace, and integral development to provide an analytical reading of this message.

"Far from being limited to a simple commemorative commentary, this book offers a critical, theological, and sociopolitical re-examination of this legacy, intertwined with Africa's long history and its burning current affairs," states the cardinal, for whom "one of the great strengths of this book lies in its explicit rooting in the fundamental principles of the Social Doctrine of the Church."

Indeed, it is in a sort of methodological triangulation between the aforementioned message, the Social Doctrine of the Church, and the mis-

sionary perspective of Saint Daniel Comboni, summarised in the expression “Saving Africa with Africa”, that the author finds and proposes elements of response to the Pope’s appeal. Stopping the suffocation of Africa means saving Africa with Africa, showing solidarity with it and respecting the dignity of the person, the universal destination of goods, and the principle of subsidiarity.

Furthermore, in a context in which Africa is perceived as “an immense spiritual lung for humanity in the midst of a crisis of faith and hope,” in the words of Pope Benedict XVI, and considering that “the world needs Africa,” as Cardinal Pietro Parolin affirms, the author concludes his work by expressing the hope for a renewed commitment of the Church in Africa. If, beyond the errors of the past, the Church has always been close and present in the lives of African peoples, today it must continue to contribute, thanks to its experience in humanity, to the renewal to which the continent aspires, in the socio-political but above all socio-cultural fields.

BRAZIL

Santa Rita – Brother Jonatan and Brother Riquito renew their vows

On 19th April 2026, in Santa Rita, Paraíba, Brother Jonatan Josué Chajón Gordillo and Brother Riquito Selemane Muaualo Rodrigues renewed their temporary vows, concluding a three-day missionary and vocational ministry in the communities of the parish of Sant’Antonio, with the participation of Father Musonda Cosmas and Father Dofonnou Dodji Eméric Lionel, both engaged in this ministry.

The first two meetings took place in the rural area of the parish, with young people and adults. For two days, the life of Saint Daniel Comboni, our missionary and religious life, the meaning of the three religious vows, and the testimonies of Riquito and Jonatan were presented. The third day was dedicated to adolescents and young people from the urban area, with the testimony of Father Dofonnou’s life. The Mass for the renewal of vows was celebrated in the parish church, presided over by Father Cosmas Musonda, provincial councillor, who was responsible for receiving the renewal of religious profession. (*Brother Riquito Selemane Rodrigues, MCCJ*)

Boa Viagem – Perpetual vows of Brother Alfredo Monteiro de Sousa

On 2nd May 2026, Brother Alfredo Monteiro de Sousa professed his perpetual vows during a solemn celebration held in the community of St. Joseph, in the district of Águas Belas, municipality of Boa Viagem, in the state of Ceará. The presence of family, friends, and confrères from other

communities made this the first perpetual profession celebrated in Águas Belas even more significant. The event was prepared with a vocations triduum and visits to local families.

Alfredo, who returned to Brazil for this important event, will soon return to the mission of Marsabit, in northern Kenya.

The son of farmers and raised in a family of six, Alfredo learned from an early age the value of working in the fields and a simple life. He would travel more than four kilometres to attend Mass with the community of St. Joseph. He soon became a young catechist and minister of the Word. After attending a vocational retreat, he decided to become a Comboni missionary. He began his formation in 2008 at the Preparatory School in São Luís do Maranhão. He then moved to the Postulancy in Fortaleza, where he studied Social Work and Sociology. After two years of novitiate in Xochimilco, Mexico, concluding with his first profession on May 12, 2018, he was assigned to the International Centre for Brothers in Nairobi, Kenya.

To a group of young people who asked him how he would summarise his vocational journey, Alfredo laconically replied: “It has been—and continues to be—a journey characterised by fidelity, loyalty, and radicality in following Jesus Christ and the charism of Saint Daniel Comboni.” (*Father Raimundo Rocha, mccj*)

São Paulo – Eleven scholastics renew their vows

On 2nd May 2026, eleven young Comboni missionaries from the ‘Our Lady of Guadalupe’ Scholasticate in São Paulo renewed their vows during the Mass celebrated in the parish of the ‘Divine Holy Spirit’, in the eastern part of the capital. The liturgy was presided over by Father Francisco de Assis Coqueiro, provincial councillor. During his homily, Father Francisco presented the vows as a “profound response to God’s call,” later explaining the significance of each of the three vows.

The scholastics prepared for the renewal of their vows by participating in a triduum, with moments of personal and community reflection, and finally, a spiritual retreat on the theme ‘*Called, Consecrated, and Sent*’. During the Mass, they were encouraged to be faithful to the vows they were about to renew, to be obedient to their superiors, and to live their consecration with joy and enthusiasm in their mission for the Kingdom of God.

The Eucharist was concelebrated by seven priests, including one diocesan, one Servite, and five Comboni Missionaries. After the Mass, there was a community lunch prepared by members from three parishes: Divine Spirit, Saint Magdalene, and Saint Sebastian.

It was a beautiful moment of sharing faith and missionary spirit, of love

and trust, in which one could feel the realisation of Comboni's dream: "I die, but my work will not die." (*Sc. Maximiano Alumakiyo Maganga, mccj*)

EGYPT/SUDAN

Launching the sign-language platform in Port Sudan

On Saturday, 9th May, a web platform for learning Sudanese dialect sign language for deaf people was launched at the Comboni College of Science and Technology (CCST) in Port Sudan. The platform was presented by Father Jorge Naranjo, Dean of the CCST and Chairman of the Board of Directors; Mohamed Jib Allah Ali Jib Allah, President of the National Union of Deaf People of Sudan, and Amna Abd Al-Qadir, Secretary of the Council for Persons with Disabilities of the Red Sea State.

The platform offers two-level courses, with a final exam, and facilitates access to accredited translators, thus promoting employment, social inclusion, and greater availability of qualified translation services.

The project has a national reach and has been welcomed by the institutions and organisations present, including international bodies and organisations working in the field of disabilities.

The event was also attended by representatives of UNICEF, the Federal Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, the Directorate of Special Education of the Ministry of General Education of the Red Sea State, various organisations of persons with disabilities, Comboni schools, the Catholic Church and the Episcopal Church, as well as groups from the Italian Association for Solidarity Among Peoples (AISPO) and the CCST involved in the project. Blind singer Ameen Omer Hamid concluded the ceremony with a special song composed for the occasion.

The initiative was funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation and organised by AISPO, the CCST, and the Sudanese National Union of Deaf People, which will contribute to its widespread use throughout the country. (*Father Dr. Jorge C. Naranjo Alcaide, mccj*)

SPAIN

Meeting with the relatives of Comboni Missionaries and the 'Friends of the Mission'

As is traditional, this year the community of the provincial headquarters in Madrid organised two eagerly awaited annual meetings: on 17th May, with approximately 40 family members of confrères from central Spain, welcomed in the 'Sala Farè', and on 29th May, with over 60 'Friends of the Mission' in the larger 'Exhibition Hall' of the *Mundo Negro* magazine.

The moderator for both meetings was Comboni missionary Father Rafael Armada, recently returned from South Africa after 20 years of missionary work there. To both groups, Father Rafael gave a compelling account of his experience in the African country.

To open both events, Father Rafael showed a clip of the song *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika* ('God Bless Africa'), the post-apartheid South African national anthem. He explained: "This hymn is a true prayer, and it is always used to begin any important event in Nelson Mandela's country."

Father Rafael recounted some of the most significant experiences that marked his years in South Africa, particularly in Acornhoek and Waterval, where he arrived in 2001, shortly after his priestly ordination. "They were years of intense pastoral activity, in a context marked by the spread of HIV/AIDS. I immediately found myself involved in accompanying support groups in clinics, especially women's groups, visiting infected people, and organising HIV awareness workshops," he recalled.

He returned to Spain in 2010 and remained there for six years, mostly studying journalism, before returning to South Africa to work at the Diocesan Pastoral Centre in Lydenburg, in a team with other pastoral workers and leaders of various associations in the Diocese of Witbank.

Another important aspect of his missionary experience was missionary animation in Silverton, distributing the Comboni magazine *Worldwide*, of which he was editor for over five years. He recalled: "On weekends, I would go out with two lay people to do missionary animation in the Pretoria and Johannesburg areas."

Since 1st May 2026, Father Rafael Armada has been a member of the Spanish Province. Born in Madrid into a large family of ten children—five boys and five girls—he entered the Comboni postulancy in Granada in 1992. He completed his novitiate in Santarém, Portugal, and, after professing first vows in 1996, was assigned to the international scholasticate in Nairobi, Kenya. (*Father Gbama Nsusu Boniface, mcci*)

Book Fair

Throughout 2026, Mundo Negro's books and publications will be featured at nine book fairs throughout Spain. The first took place in Granada.

Under the motto '*A commitment to Africa and the Mission*', Comboni missionaries are present in the squares and streets of several cities hosting these cultural events, which for us also present an opportunity for qualified missionary outreach. Our publications reach a diverse audience that goes beyond practising Christians, and this is part of our missionary charisma.

So far, in addition to Granada, we have been in Valencia, Salamanca, and León. Soon, we will be in Valladolid's Plaza Mayor and at the major Madrid Book Fair, undoubtedly the most important in terms of duration, attendance, and sales.

Toward the end of the summer, *Mundo Negro* will participate in the book fairs in Palencia, El Casar (Guadalajara), and Murcia. While selling books to raise awareness about Africa and demonstrate our commitment to our mission is important, it's equally important to be able to greet subscribers to *Mundo Negro* and *Aguiluchos* magazines, as well as the many friends, family, and acquaintances who visit our stands.

ITALIA

Brothers Conference 2026 – ‘Gathered to go beyond together’

The Conference of Comboni Brothers of the Italian Province was held from 28th April to 1st May 2026, at the General Curia in Rome. The theme of the Conference was ‘*Going Beyond*’, echoing the invitation extended by the late Pope Francis to the 2022 Chapter members. This invitation was also the focus of a recent letter from the General Council on the Mission addressed to the entire Institute.

The meeting was attended by over 20 Brothers from the Italian Province, the Curia, and other European provinces who were already present at the General Curia for the meeting of Comboni media leaders in Europe.

The conference program offered opportunities for listening, meditation, discussion of challenging realities, and fellowship.

The participants arrived on the evening of 28th April. The 29th was dedicated to listening to three missionary testimonies: Brother Alberto Degan presented his experience with Afro-Ecuadorians in Guayaquil; Brother Simone Bauce shared his experience with two indigenous peoples in the Brazilian Amazon; Brother Pablo Ostos shared his vocational story, focusing on his experience in Mozambique.

In the afternoon, there was a meeting with the *Cammino di Agar*, an association part of the diocesan coordination of Rome, committed to the fight against trafficking and supporting women and children in vulnerable situations. The association draws inspiration from the biblical figure of Hagar, Sarai's Egyptian slave, who became Abraham's wife but was sent away with her son Ishmael to ensure the inheritance of the son he would have with Sarai. Hagar, desperate in the desert, is rescued by an angel who promises her that her son Ishmael will become the father of a great nation. A figure of suffering and exclusion, Hagar is nevertheless a

woman sought after and loved by God, from whom she receives protection and dignity.

Three brothers from the Curia also collaborate in the significant service provided by the association. Two moving testimonies from transgender people were heard, and the exhibition '*Voices from the Margins – Stories and Images of Transgender Women in Rome*' was visited, set up in a hall. The day concluded with a pizza together.

The morning of the 30th was dedicated to a deeper study of the Bible. Brother Giandomenico Placentino, a monk and leader of the Bose Community in Ostuni (Brindisi), proposed a journey on the theme '*Going Beyond*', starting with four texts from the *Acts of the Apostles*:

- *Acts* 1:15-26 (the choice of Matthias);
- *Acts* 6:1-7 (the choice of the seven deacons);
- *Acts* 10-11 (the conversion of Cornelius and Peter);
- *Acts* 15:1-35 (the assembly in Jerusalem).

A time of silence and personal reflection followed. Before the meeting concluded, it was possible to ask Brother Giandomenico a few questions and share some reflections.

The afternoon was dedicated to visiting two organisations that have been present in Rome for years. The first was the *Comboni Association for the Service of Emigrants and Refugees* (ACSE), a work begun by Father Renato Bresciani (1914-1985), a Comboni Missionary, and still managed by the Institute today. The association will soon become the *Comboni Organisation for Human Promotion* (OCPU) and will serve as a point of reference throughout Europe.

The second was *Spin Time*, which today is, in effect, a model of self-recovery and an example of urban regeneration, a multifunctional space whose governance is shared among the various stakeholders that comprise its ecosystem and whose doors are, in fact, always open to the city. It is a compass in the discussion on the right to housing and a point of reference for the Esquilino neighbourhood. Begun in October 2013 with the occupation of a 10-story building (21,000 m²) in the Esquilino district of Rome by the housing rights movement *Action*, *Spin Time* represents a social and cultural offering of accessible services, a place that continues to question itself and give itself new stimuli and objectives.

May 1st, the feast of St. Joseph the Worker, patron saint of the Brothers, was dedicated to the input of Father Luigi Codianni and Brother Alberto Lamana, Superior General and General Councillor, respectively. They reflected on various issues of concern to the Institute: the process of merging the circumscriptions; the reinterpretation of the Comboni charism from a non-Eurocentric perspective; economic sustainability; Comboni maga-

zines around the world and the Missionary Animation Centres (CAM); evangelisation as a Comboni Family; and the Brothers' presence in specific pastoral activities and in the OCPU. The meeting concluded with a Eucharistic celebration, followed by lunch.

A family atmosphere reigned throughout the conference. Even though not all the Brothers knew each other, after the initial moments of meeting, everyone felt at ease, thanks to the brotherhood and communion demonstrated by all participants.

The commitment to continue this annual event was renewed. Next year it will be organised at the European level, again around 1st May. (*Brother Simone Bauce, mcccj*)

Brescia – Remembering Mons. Giovanni Migliorati (1942-2016)

A very intense 'missionary' evening was experienced on the evening of 12th May in Bassano Bresciano, a town in the lower Brescia area, where the Christian community, together with the Comboni community of Brescia, commemorated the tenth anniversary of the death of Bishop Giovanni Migliorati, Bishop of Hawassa (Ethiopia), a native of this town, where his brothers and family live.

The Eucharistic celebration was presided over by Father Giovanni Baccanelli, Bishop Giovanni's companion both during the early stages of formation and during his mission in Ethiopia. In his homily, in addition to recalling the years they spent together, he emphasised—starting from a phrase by Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* ("I am a mission on this earth", 273)—this very aspect embodied in the bishop's missionary life: "The mission was at the heart of his personality, his spirituality, and his pastoral action."

After the celebration, there was a fraternal gathering, followed by the recitation of the rosary in the courtyard of the oratory for world peace and the Comboni mission. Afterwards, everyone gathered in the new parish hall for a testimony meeting in memory of the bishop, with the participation of Father Giuseppe Cavallini, director of the magazine *Nigrizia* and a long-time missionary in Ethiopia, where he collaborated with Bishop Migliorati. Father Giuseppe helped those present grasp the reality of Ethiopia at different periods of its recent history. It is in this context that Bishop Giovanni, first as a missionary priest and then as bishop, lived and worked. "He was a determined man, totally dedicated to building, collaborating, and fostering the growth of the local Church. Knowledgeable of the culture and of several local languages, he combined wisdom and commitment to inculturate the Gospel in the hearts of the people. We could say—using the new mission paradigm that characterises today's Comboni

reflection—that Bishop Giovanni was a man of great determination, deeply committed to the work of the local Church. Giovanni truly lived and committed himself to a ‘*decolonial mission*’, which aims to dismantle the racial, cultural, and economic hierarchies inherited from colonialism.” Bishop Migliorati died in Brescia at the age of 73, a “good and faithful servant,” and his intense commitment still bears fruit. (*Father Girolamo Miante, mccj*)

Padua – Feast of Friends

The Comboni community of Padua celebrated the ‘Friends’ Festival’ on Sunday, 10th May 2026, after a year-long hiatus due to renovations to the house to make room for the new university residence. The gathering was attended by approximately fifty friends, volunteers, and collaborators, united by the Comboni spirit.

After a welcoming moment, Father Gaetano Montresor introduced the members of the community, remembering deceased or transferred confrères, and illustrating local activities—including the People’s Festivals—missionary initiatives, and formation programs inspired by *Laudato si’*.

Father David Costa Domingues, vicar general, explored the values of the Comboni mission, recalling the charisma of Daniel Comboni and emphasising the commitment to the least fortunate. He also presented some international missionary experiences and offered an overview of the Institute’s current situation, highlighting the strong dynamism of African vocations. The day concluded with a Eucharistic celebration and a convivial moment in an atmosphere of brotherhood, joy, and sharing.

Florence – Twinning between the Laudato Si’ Oasis of Florence and the Borgo Laudato Si’ of Castel Gandolfo

May 16, 2026, will be remembered as a special date for the Florentine region and its ecclesial community. On a day marked by alternating showers of refreshing rain and bright bursts of sunshine, the Laudato Si’ Oasis of Florence celebrated its twinning with the Borgo Laudato Si’ of Castel Gandolfo, a project strongly supported by Pope Francis as a concrete laboratory for ecological conversion and universal brotherhood. The twinning ceremony took place in an atmosphere of profound joy. Following the example of the Borgo Laudato Si’, the Laudato Si’ Oasis of Florence also becomes a living laboratory for ecological conversion and peace.

The entire day was expertly coordinated and moderated by Lorenzo Orioli, president of the Associazione Oasi Laudato Si’ Firenze ETS, who skillfully coordinated the various interventions, emphasising how the Oasis

was created precisely to translate Pope Francis' encyclicals, *Laudato si'* and *Fratelli Tutti*, into concrete actions.

The welcoming address was entrusted to Father Pietro Ciuciulla, Provincial Superior of the Comboni Missionaries in Italy. His words struck a deep chord, recalling how, for our Institute, the care of creation is not an accessory issue, but an essential component of our mission. Father Pietro reaffirmed the Comboni Missionaries' tireless commitment to justice, peace, and the integrity of creation, highlighting how environmental protection is inextricably linked to the dignity of vulnerable peoples.

The heart of the event was the guided tour led by Paolo Luzzi, a Franciscan tertiary and a distinguished botanist. The experiential tour of the Oasis is divided into seven spaces, each inviting reflection: the Garden of Peoples, the Garden of St. Francis and the Flowerbed of St. Hildegard, the Fruit Garden, the Olive Garden—dedicated to olive therapy—the Room of Butterflies and Bees, the Garden of Welcome, and the *Malbes* of St. Daniele Comboni.

The most solemn moment saw Cardinal Fabio Baggio, undersecretary of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, plant an olive tree from the Vatican Gardens, symbolising the bond between Florence and the Vatican. In response, the Oasis donated a rare specimen of *Florentine Iris*, the primordial iris from which the Florentine lily derives, a symbol of a fragile beauty that requires care and love.

The twinning between the *Laudato Si'* Oasis in Florence and the Borgo *Laudato Si'* in Castel Gandolfo represents an important sign of hope today. In a time marked by environmental crises, wars, and social divisions, this initiative demonstrates that it is possible to build paths of peace, sustainability, and fraternity through collaboration between ecclesial communities and local communities.

Before concluding the morning, attention shifted to an in-depth presentation of Paolo Luzzi's book, *Racconti di alberi e fede* (Tau Editrice, 2025), a precious work enriched by a preface by Cardinal Baggio himself. Luzzi offers a fascinating journey linking botany to spirituality, highlighting how trees have been central to biblical tradition and symbols of faith. During the discussion, it became clear that the ecological crisis cannot be solved with technology alone, but requires a conversion of the heart. Trees, in their silent reaching upward, become masters of this new interior posture toward God and the Earth.

The day concluded with a fraternal agape, during which participants shared food and the joy of encounter. Under the Florentine sky, between the rain-soaked lawn and the warmth of the rediscovered sun, the

twinning confirmed a certainty: caring for our common home is a mission that, if lived together, can truly generate hope for the future.

Rome – ACSE Assembly

The members' meeting was held at the ACSE headquarters on Sunday, 17th May. Overall, 2025 was a positive year for the continuity and variety of services, with strong participation from members, board members, service managers, and numerous volunteers (over 80) in various activities. The board of directors and service managers met regularly to assess situations and make appropriate decisions. These meetings were complemented by meetings within individual sectors and numerous informal and personal meetings, designed to ensure a smooth and participatory management of activities, greatly benefiting migrants.

At the end of 2025, 1,094 migrants were using ACSE services (dental care, Italian language courses, food distribution, etc.). As of May 15, 2026, the number was 1,315. The migrants assisted represent 71 nationalities.

The various services – 13 Italian language courses are offered, including 7 in-person and 6 online. There are 39 scholarships for university students. In 2025, 53 distributions of food and other supplies were made, for a total of 3,850 parcels and over 80 tons of food and hygiene supplies. During the assembly, Brothers Antonio Soffiantini and Pablo Ostos Hunoc of the Opera Comboniana Promozione Humana (OCUP) community were introduced.

The Assembly, in addition to offering the opportunity to identify possible new directors, unanimously extended the current Board of Directors until the end of 2026, with the commitment to convene an extraordinary assembly to elect a new Board of Directors in January 2027.

Padua – IN THE WAKE OF LAUDATO SI'. EMBRACING LIMITS – Personal care and safeguarding the environment from a 'One Health' perspective.

The fourth and final evening of the program *In the Footsteps of Laudato Si' – Embracing Limits*, dedicated to the theme of *Personal Care and Environmental Protection from a 'One Health' perspective*, took place on 22nd May 2026, in Padua, in the Comboni Hall of the Comboni House.

The first presentation, by Dr Vitalia Murgia of the Association of Doctors for the Environment, was entitled: *Using Medicines and Personal Care Products with Respect for the Environment*. This was followed by a presentation by Professor Fabrizio Bianchi of the National Research Council (CNR) in Pisa on the topic: *Towards Green Healthcare: Less Impact of Treatment on People and the Environment*.

Anthropologists Amalia Campagna of the University of Milan and Viola Di Tullio of the Free International University of Social Studies (LUISS) Guido Carli and the University Institute for Advanced Studies (IUSS) in Pavia then discussed the topic: Caring for the Environment and the Environment of Care. A dialogue between medical and environmental anthropology.

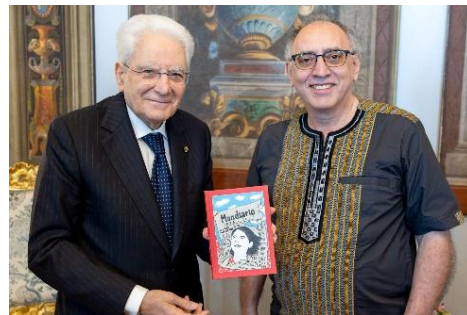
It was a reflection and dissemination event aimed at arguing that accepted limitations are not deprivation but a resource for a different, authentic, sustainable, and accessible well-being. Limits can represent the surest way to address “that unique and complex socio-environmental crisis” (LS 139) from which we all suffer, especially the poorest and most vulnerable.

Indeed, we need to achieve a balance within the environmental and social system that avoids the tragedy of a ‘zero-sum’ society, in which, on the one hand, illness is produced and, on the other, pathologies resulting from misguided policies are treated. Pope Francis, while confirming that it is always possible to hope, invited us to develop a loving awareness of this common home—creation—in which all beings, including human beings, live; a shared home, in which we act according to the values we hold dear (LS 220).

Following the approach of *Laudato si’*, it is on the basis of “three fundamental and closely interconnected relationships: with God, with our neighbour, and with the earth” that the commitment to set out “on a path that needs to change” (LS 66, 202) arises. A commitment to embrace our rightful place in the order and dynamism that the Creator has established and to urgently undertake new ways of living with “creativity and enthusiasm” (LS 220, 221).

Quirinale – Presentation of the *Mondiaro* to President Sergio Mattarella

On Wednesday, 27th May, a delegation of confrères, led by the Provincial of Italy, Father Pietro Ciuciulla, and accompanied by the Superior General, Father Luigi Codianni, was received at the Quirinale by President Sergio Mattarella, who presented them with a copy of the *Mondiaro* 2026-27, the school diary for elementary school students. The delegation also included Brother Antonio Sofientini, who started the initiative to involve President Mattarella; Jessica Cugini, editor of *Il Piccolo Missionario (PM)* and principal author of the *Mondiaro*; Fathers



Dario Bossi and Aurelio Boscaini, director of *PM*; and Roman journalist Brando Ricci, editor of *Nigrizia*.

It was a delightful meeting with Mattarella (and all the staff at the Quirinale were equally gracious) to present the *Mondiaro*, dedicated to the 80th anniversary of women's suffrage in Italy, the Constituent Assembly, with particular attention to the added value represented by the 21 'constituent mothers', primarily the contribution of the five who were part of the group of 75 charged with physically drafting the Constitution, and the birth of the Republic (June 2, 1946).

Jessica, in her presentation of the work, emphasised the pedagogical and educational importance of understanding how our Republic was born and of ensuring that even the new generations, originating from distant lands, consciously participate in the life of the country that has welcomed them, allowing themselves to be involved in its democratic history.

Taking advantage of the opportunity, we wanted to remind the President of the conflict that has been ongoing for over three years in that country dear to our hearts: Sudan. Brando Ricci, in presenting the dramatic situation facing the country of Saint Daniel Comboni, recalled the intertwined interests of foreign powers in the conflict. Father Codianni expressed his hope that the Italian ambassador would soon return to the country.

In an off-the-cuff response, the president stated that he was aware of what was happening in Sudan, describing what Sudan is experiencing as the most serious humanitarian crisis in recent years. He thanked the Comboni Missionaries (he was generous with praise) for the work they do in many countries around the world, including through their magazines (*Nigrizia*, *Il PM*, and therefore information and formation), and by remaining among the suffering people (providing education and healthcare, etc.), thus ensuring that hope is never lost. This also applies here in Italy, among migrants (to whom the Comboni Missionaries in Italy are particularly attentive and to whom they devote so much energy).

Italy and the Italian people, the President was keen to emphasise, are the fruit of the amalgamation of many contributions, sometimes from entire ethnic groups (and today from millions of migrants), of those who have landed on our soil since Roman times.

Our most sincere thanks to President Mattarella for receiving us as he did.



MALAWI-ZAMBIA

Priestly ordinations and first professions

On 2nd May 2026, the Comboni missionaries of the Malawi-Zambia province experienced the joy of the priestly ordination of Vincent James Muliza, a Comboni missionary originally from Malawi. The Eucharistic celebration took place at the parish of St. Kizito in Lisungwe, in the Archdiocese of Blantyre, Malawi. Archbishop Thomas Luke Msusa, the local Ordinary, presided over the rite in the presence of over a thousand people from diverse walks of life.

Among those present were Father Andrew Bwalya, Provincial Superior, members of the Comboni family, diocesan priests, men and women religious, and numerous faithful. Civil and traditional authorities also took part in the colourful ceremony.

The celebration was lively and deeply communal, characterised by songs, joyful ululations, and dances, expressing the great joy of the event. In his homily, based on the day's readings, Msgr. Msusa reminded the assembly of the silent voice of God who continues to call people to participate in his plan of salvation. He stated, "Like Abraham in the first reading, God seeks individuals through whom he can bless his people." Addressing the young people present, he urged them to learn to listen to the silent voice of God amidst the many powerful voices they encounter every day. He then encouraged them to have the courage to step out of their comfort zones and embrace God's plan for their lives, as Abraham did.

Addressing the ordinand, Archbishop Msusa invited him to model his priestly and missionary vocation on Jesus, who, as proclaimed in the day's Gospel, "had nowhere to lay his head." He urged him to embrace his religious vows with faith and to recognise his vocation as a mystery and a gift. Regarding the mission, the Archbishop highlighted three fundamental dimensions. First, he urged deacon Vincent to be prophetic, proclaiming the Gospel whether it is accepted or rejected, and courageously denouncing sin and evil, even at the cost of persecution.

Second, he urged him to remain close to the people, especially the poor and most abandoned, in the spirit of Saint Daniel Comboni. Finally, he encouraged him to sanctify the Church and the people of God through the celebration of the sacraments.

At the end of the Eucharistic celebration, Father Andrew thanked God for the gift of Father Vincent to the Institute and to the Church. He then expressed his gratitude to the Archbishop for ordaining Father Vincent in his home parish and to the parents of the newly ordained priest for offering their son to the Church and to the Comboni Institute. Recalling the

vivid image of Saint Daniel Comboni, who believed that a missionary must have “the knees of a camel and the stomach of a pig,” Father Andrew encouraged Father Vincent to be a priest, religious, and missionary distinguished by prayer and zeal.

Wearing gowns with Comboni symbols and writings, several groups from the parish and other communities offered gifts to Father Vincent as a sign of gratitude and appreciation for his generous response to God’s call. The celebration concluded with a convivial meal.

It was a double blessing for the Malawi-Zambia Province, as on the same day, in Namugongo, Kampala, Uganda, four novices from our province made their first religious profession. Unable to benefit from the gift of bi-location, the provincial superior remained in Malawi for the priestly ordination.

The newly professed and their respective scholasticate assignments are: Michael Mwambila Sakala (Kinshasa), Fiskani Juweka Gondwe (Graz), David Phiri (Lima), and Damianal Steven (Nairobi). The newly ordained Father Vincent James Muliza has been assigned to Costa Rica for his first missionary assignment.

The Province of Malawi-Zambia thanks God for the gift of these confreres and wishes them fruitful ministry in their respective assignments.

(Father Andrew Bwalya, mccj)

MEXICO

Three novices make their first profession at Xochimilco

On 26th May, three novices professed their first temporary vows at the continental novitiate in Xochimilco, Mexico City. César Adrián Avitud Guerrero, Aristóteles Hegel Ortega Trinidad (both Mexicans), and Luis Enrique Fuentes Mejía (originally from El Salvador) consecrated themselves to God for the mission in our institute. Family, friends, and numerous Comboni Missionaries, men and women, were present, wishing to be close to them on this first step in a journey that will lead them to dedicate their lives to the proclamation of the Gospel.

The celebration was presided over by Father Mario Alberto Pacheco, Provincial Superior. Concelebrating with him were Father Enrique Sán-chez, Provincial of Central America; the novitiate formators, Fathers Leonardo Leandro and Abel Torres; and Father Elías Arroyo, who will be the new novice master.

In his homily, Father Mario invited the three newly professed to follow in the footsteps of Saint Daniel Comboni in giving themselves to God for missionary service and to imitate Abraham’s willingness to leave their

homeland to embrace other cultures, wherever they are sent, because “religious life consists in seeking God and then bringing him to others.” At the end of the Mass, Father Enrique urged them to give themselves completely: “Today the Institute needs you. Come and give the best of yourselves.”

César Adrián will continue his studies at the International Scholasticate in Lima, Peru; Luis Enrique Fuentes has been assigned to the International Scholasticate in Casavatore, Italy; and Aristoteles Hegel will go to the International Scholasticate in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

MOZAMBIQUE

Perpetual profession of Ronaldo Mateus Mulima

Mozambican scholastic Ronaldo Mateus Mulima professed perpetual vows on 26th April, the Fourth Sunday of Easter, known as ‘Good Shepherd Sunday’, the day on which the Church celebrates the World Day of Prayer for Vocations. The ceremony took place in the parish of St. John XXIII in Chitima, Tete Diocese. Mulima is originally from Meti, one of the communities of the parish of Lalaua, served by the Combonians, in the Archdiocese of Nampula.

The Sunday Eucharist was presided over by Father José Joaquim Luís Pedro, provincial superior. Also attending the ceremony were Fathers Juan Arenas, parish priest of ‘St. John XXIII’, James Kasitomu, Moisés Daniel, Crespim Baraja, Jonasse Seventine, and Josef Ababayehu, as well as scholastic Felizardo Azevedo.

In his homily, Father José Joaquim emphasised the importance and necessity of perpetual consecration, emphasising that it is a free decision, the fruit of lengthy discernment, which commits the missionary religious to faithfully live the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience throughout his life. He also recalled that this task cannot be carried out hypocritically, but with responsibility and seriousness before God and the Institute.

The celebrant also highlighted the testimonial value of perpetual profession, which challenges young people and adolescents to consider consecrated and missionary life as a life choice. Drawing inspiration from Saint Daniel Comboni, he recalled that the mission is carried out even amid suffering and misunderstanding, and that the consecrated person is called to guide the sheep toward the only door that is Christ.

The celebration took on special significance as it occurred in the year the Comboni Missionaries celebrated 80 years of presence in Mozambique, a historic milestone that strengthens the Institute’s commitment to evangelisation and missionary service to the local Christian communities.

“This perpetual profession of our brother Mulima shows us how consecration to God is a gift and, at the same time, a sign of hope, because it guarantees the continuity of our Comboni mission in Mozambique,” the provincial superior concluded.

Four young men join the ranks of the Combonians in Mexico

The charism of Saint Daniel Comboni continues to live and bear fruit on Mozambican soil. Proof of this is the priestly ordinations of Celso Samuel Pedro and Gil Fernando, the diaconal ordination of Ronaldo Mateus Mulima, and the perpetual vows of Brother José Jean Valverde Paredes. All this took place during the same celebration held on Saturday, 9th May, in the parish of Santa Cruz, in Muahivire, in the city of Nampula.

The Eucharistic celebration was presided over by Msgr. Inácio Saúre, Metropolitan Archbishop of Nampula and President of the Episcopal Conference of Mozambique (CEM). Also present were Father José Joaquim Luís Pedro, Provincial Superior, and Father José de Jesús Villaseñor Gálvez, General Secretary for Formation, who came from Rome. Numerous confrere priests, men and women religious, along with a multitude of faithful, were present at the celebration. The liturgical chants expressed the profound meaning of the celebration: praise and thanksgiving to God for the vocational gift of these four young men. Truly, God’s goodness never ceases to work wonders!

Mission requires holiness – In his homily, Archbishop Saúre insisted that “mission requires holiness and a witness of life.” He also emphasised that the priesthood should not be seen as a goal, but rather as an important step toward the true objective: “being a good disciple of Jesus Christ in the service of the Kingdom of God.”

Bearing in mind the youth of the ordinands, the prelate, after recalling Pope Francis’ words – “Young people are God’s present time” – also urged them to value the wisdom and experience of the elderly. He then added: “These brothers of ours are not ordained to solve all the social problems of families, whether their own or those of others,” because the true purpose of the mission is evangelisation, which encompasses the spiritual, human, and community dimensions.

Joy and Commitment – The assembly enthusiastically sang, in Macua, the song *Elulu yopiwe nathapele Apwiya Muluku anira sottikiniha!* (“Acclaim with shouts of joy, praising the Lord God who has done wonders!”). The families of the newly ordained expressed special gratitude to God, who calls, welcomes, and consecrates, and pledged to continue praying for their family members. They said to them: “In days of tiredness, do not forget that there is a family praying for you.”

“Go where nobody else wants to go” – Father José de Jesús also expressed his joy in seeing that God continues to call so many young people, despite their fragility, to go and proclaim the Gospel to all the peoples of the earth. He encouraged the four young confreres not to forget the importance of this day and to remain available for the mission, following in the footsteps of our Founder, St. Daniel Comboni, especially among the poorest and most abandoned: “Today the Lord has placed the cup and the bread in your hands... Never forget this day. Do not be afraid to go where no one wants to go.” He finally reminded them that the mission is not an individual work, but must always be lived in communion with others and with the entire Church: “You are never alone. Comboni and the entire Church walk with you.” (*Father Sérgio Vilanculo, mccj*)

PORTUGAL

Padre Manuel appointed PMS National Director

Father Manuel Augusto Lopes Ferreira has been appointed national director of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) in Portugal for a five-year term, a position he accepted with openness and a sense of ecclesial service. Interviewed by the Ecclesia Agency in Fatima, the new director emphasised the risk that the idea of an *‘outgoing Church’* will remain merely a slogan, without translating into concrete initiatives capable of renewing the missionary thrust of communities.

According to Father Manuel, the PMS must be tasked with animating and supporting the missionary life of the Church, starting with significant events such as World Mission Sunday, but also through a broader network of initiatives that foster communion between local Churches and the Pope. For him, mission cannot be limited to the local context, but must maintain a universal perspective, in harmony with the Church, which is *‘catholic’*.

While acknowledging Portugal’s rich missionary tradition, Father Manuel observes that today’s pastoral challenges are different and more demanding, and risk absorbing significant energy. Therefore, he emphasises the need to preserve the global missionary dimension and to concretely support those who choose to embark on missionary experiences, including diocesan priests and priests from religious institutes.

The new director also expressed appreciation for the willingness of priests who wish to pursue missionary experiences outside their own dioceses, considering this a positive sign to be encouraged. The PMS, he concluded, must help the mission perceived as an integral part of the life of the Church,

supporting communities and strengthening the connection with the universal mission.

Scholastics renew their vows – The five scholastics of the Maia formation community—Américo Mutepa (Mozambique), Cédrique Beninga (Central African Republic), Charles Phiri (Zambia), Domingos Caetano (Mozambique), and Stephen Kwesiga (Uganda)—renewed their vows in our house in Famalicão on 1st May, the feast of Saint Joseph the Worker, during the annual meeting of the Cenacles of Missionary Prayer. The celebration was presided over by Father José Rebelo, provincial superior, who, in his homily, emphasised, among other aspects, that “the greatest challenge we face is identification with Christ, with his attitudes of self-denial and service to others. The religious vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience are a concrete way of shaping our hearts and lives in the image of Christ. It proposes a lifestyle oriented towards detachment.”

Father José Rebelo concluded his reflection by invoking the intercession of Saint Joseph, “so that we may increasingly move from the logic of sacrifice to the logic of self-giving, and experience the beauty and joy of giving ourselves out of love.”

Annual Alumni Reunion – On 2nd May, the Viseu community hosted the annual reunion of our Comboni alumni. The event brought together approximately 60 people, including the confreres present. In the morning, there was a meeting during which the provincial superior presented the situation of approximately thirty Portuguese Comboni missionaries spread across four continents. The Eucharist was presided over by Father Manuel Augusto L. Ferreira, who initiated these meetings. One of the topics discussed was the need to renew the governing bodies of the Alumni Association, which have remained in place since its founding in 1996.

Provincial Retreat – From 18th to 23rd May, spiritual exercises were held at the Casa Diocesana of Aveiro, in Albergaria-a-Velha. The course, held every two years, was attended by 25 confreres, two of whom were from the Spanish province, and was led by the Jesuit priest Father Hermínio Rico. The six days of reflection were a significant moment of prayer and spiritual growth.

IN PACE CHRISTI

FATHER GERMANO SERRA (26.01.1956 – 14.03.2026)

Father Germano Joaquim dos Santos Serra died in Uganda on 14th March 2026, likely due to a cardiovascular problem. He had recently turned 70.

He was temporarily in the Namalu community. When he failed to attend morning Mass, his confreres went to his room and found him unconscious, with a nosebleed. Transported to a nearby dispensary, he was diagnosed with very high blood pressure and was transferred to Matany Hospital, but he died in the ambulance on the way.

Father Germano Serra was born in Fânzeres, in the municipality of Gondomar, on January 26, 1956. Although he felt a calling to missionary life at the age of 12, he entered the Comboni postulancy in Coimbra at the age of 23—thus becoming an example of what was then called a ‘late vocation’. There, he attended his first two philosophy courses (1979-1981) at the Higher Institute of Theological Studies.

Previously, Germano had attended a technical college and worked in a metalworking company in Porto. For a time, he also attended an engineering school, but he later dropped out. Among his interests was taking care of his body, which he kept in excellent shape, especially in the summer months.

On 1st October 1981, he began his two-year novitiate in Santarém. Coming from a technical background, he encountered many difficulties in his philosophy and theology studies required for the priesthood. He was a concrete and pragmatic person, little inclined to speculation. His superiors even tried to steer him toward the vocation of a missionary Brother, but he never abandoned his desire to become a priest.

After professing temporary vows on 21st May 1983, Germano was assigned to Uganda, where he arrived in 1984, after perfecting his English language skills in Ireland. Along with the other scholastics, he attended the National Seminary of Ggaba, earning a Diploma in Theology. In 1987, he returned to Lisbon to attend some theology courses he had not previously taken. On 28th November 1988, he made his perpetual religious profession and was ordained a priest on 4th June 1989, in the parish of Fânzeres, Gondomar, by Msgr. Florentino de Andrade e Silva, bishop emeritus of Faro.

After spending three years at the Comboni seminary in Viseu as a vocations promoter, he returned to Uganda in 1993. His desire was to work among the people he knew best and with whom he had spent all his holidays during his years of formation in Kampala. His wish was granted,

and he was assigned to the Karamoja district, first to Namalu, then to Matany, in the diocese of Moroto. There, he was introduced to the Karimojong language and traditions by Father Mario Mantovani (who was killed in an ambush in August 2003, along with his young confrere, Brother Godfrey Kiryowa).

In 1998, Father Germano immersed himself even more deeply in the local culture, undergoing the tribal initiation rite and thus earning the respect of the population as an authentic Karimojong.

Meanwhile, he developed a desire to dedicate himself to the ‘scientific’ study of the Karimojong language. Despite having received no specific linguistic training and no lexicographical skills, he believed he could not squander the precious legacy left by the great scholars of this language, particularly Father Pasquale Crazzolara (†1976) and Father Bruno Novelli (†2003).

Father Novelli had completed the Karimojong grammar begun by Father Crazzolara and had begun editing the dictionary. Both were written in the characters of the phonetic alphabet (IPA – International Phonetic Alphabet): a tool that shows exactly how words are pronounced, using a system of universal graphic symbols in which each sound corresponds to a single sign.

Father Novelli died when the dictionary was only six letters short of completion. “It was a mammoth construction, without a roof and with no defined plan,” Father Germano observed one day. On the advice of some specialists, he therefore decided to rely on the material left by Father Novelli – over 600 pages of handwritten notes containing, in addition to the meanings of the words, also examples of their usage – and he devoted himself with determination to completing the work.

He assembled an international team to produce the dictionary: a lexicographer from Brighton, England, a Ugandan typist, an English-language proofreader living in Spain (a professor at the University of Salamanca), a Karimojong proofreader, a graphic designer specialising in layout in Portugal, and linguistic consultants from Makerere University in Kampala. The result was a 765-page work, containing the meanings of terms and their usage (with numerous examples).

The work was supported by the Italian Episcopal Conference, while the printing was done by the Missionary Solidarity Movement of Viseu. Only a few copies of the Karimojong-English dictionary were printed, primarily for libraries and study centres. However, the entire volume is available online. The same applies to other valuable resources for understanding the Karimojong people and culture, including publications and audiovisual materials. This commitment is fully justified by the importance of language for evangelisation: it allows for authentic communication and deeper

access to people's hearts. The dictionary therefore represents a valuable tool for those who wish to approach the richness of a culture and connect with its people.

After completing this work, Father Germano began working on the translation of liturgical texts, with the dream of making everything available through a website dedicated to the Karimojong language and culture.

At times, he was forced to leave Uganda for medical treatment, but he always carried Karamoja in his heart. This was the case when he was the victim of a serious motorcycle accident on his way to Kampala: he risked losing a leg and had to be treated in Italy. In April 2013, however, he was forced to undergo heart surgery. He then suffered a serious attack of acute appendicitis, shortly before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Outside periods of medical treatment, he devoted much of his time to language work, spending hours on the computer.

From 7th October to 7th December 2025, he attended the Comboni Senior Citizens' Course in Rome. In January 2026, he returned to Namalu, but not before spending a couple of weeks in his homeland for medical treatment. Upon hearing of his death, Father Fernando Domingues, Provincial Superior of Portugal until the end of 2025, stated: "I had tried to convince him to continue his life and his missionary service in Portugal, given his poor health; however, his generosity and his love for the Karimojong people were stronger than any of our reasons, and he decided to leave." He never returned.

His funeral was held on 17th March in the parish church of Matany, in the community to which he had been assigned, so as to have a hospital nearby in case of need. Presiding over the Eucharistic celebration was Father Kibira Anthony Kimbowa, the new provincial superior. Numerous diocesan and Comboni priests concelebrated, including those from the Kenyan communities of Amakuriat and Lodwar. A large group of Comboni missionaries and a large number of faithful from the dioceses of Kotido and Moroto were also present.

In keeping with Comboni tradition, Father Germano had expressed the desire to be buried in the land of his mission. The family and the parish community of Fânzeres therefore celebrated a Holy Mass for his eternal repose on 21st March. (*Father José Rebelo, mcccj*)

FATHER GIUSEPPE SCATTOLIN (29.12.1942 – 27.04.2026)

Giuseppe Scattolin was born on 29th December 1942, in Pinzolo, Italy, to Pietro and Celestina Dalle Nogare. He entered the novitiate in Gozzano in 1961 and took his first vows on 9th September 1963. As a scholastic, he spent three years in Rome, one in Venegono Superiore, and one in

Crema. He took his perpetual vows on 9th September 1968 and was ordained a priest on 30th November of the same year.

From 1969 to 1971, he studied Arabic in Zahle, Lebanon, and then English in Sunningdale, England, from 1971 to 1972.

From 1973 to 1978, he taught at the Comboni School in El Obeid. He is remembered as part of a group of young confreres who promoted renewal and were deeply committed to interreligious dialogue, often in conflict with the love for tradition and protocol of the late Bishop Paulino Lukudu Loro, then Bishop of El Obeid.

After a refresher course in Rome in 1979, he moved to Cairo, where he worked in Zamalek, Cordi Jesu, and later in Sakakini, teaching at the newly founded 'Dar Comboni' Institute from 1986 to 1990. His presence in Egypt remained always linked to research and teaching at Dar Comboni until 2021, the year of his permanent return to Italy, punctuated by periods of further specialisation in the United States (1990-1992) and England (1999-2000). Except for a few years as parish priest in Sakakini in the 1980s, he was not directly involved in pastoral ministry, except for his involvement in the Neocatechumenal Way, of which he was among the first members in Egypt.

Academic qualifications obtained:

- Licentiate in Theology (Milan, 1969)
- Certificate in Arabic (Bikfaya, 1971)
- Licentiate in Arabic Language and Literature (Cairo University, 1978)
- Doctorate in Islamic Studies (PISAI, Rome, 1987)
- Diploma in Islamic Studies (Yale University, 1992)
- Master's Degree in Spirituality (Heythrop College, London, 2000)

He spoke fluent Italian, Arabic, English, French, and German; he was proficient in both reading and comprehension of Greek, Latin, and Persian. His literary production amounted to over fifty books and scientific articles in Italian, Arabic and English. Among these: *Mystical Experiences in Islam* (2000); *Islam in Globalisation* (2004); *God and Man in Islam* (2004); *Islam and Dialogue* (2004); *Spirituality in Islam* (2004); *The Diwan of Ibn al-Farid* (2004, critical edition); *Between Monotheism of Isolation and Monotheism of Communion. A Reflection on Islamic Monotheism* (2008); *Al-Tajalliyāt ar-rūhiyya fī l-islām* (2008); *Ta'mmulāt fī al-taṣawwuf wa-l-ḥiwār al-dīnī. Min ajl thawra rūhiyya mutajaddida* (2013).

He was a member of the Academy of the Arabic Language at Cairo University and of the scientific committee of the OASIS Foundation in Italy. In 2018, he received an award from the Faculty of Letters at Cairo University for his studies on Sufism. In his research and teaching, he collaborated with the Gregorian University, the Pontifical Institute of Arabic and

Islamic Studies (PISAI), the Dominican Institute of Oriental Studies (IDEO), and Al-Azhar University, the Egyptian capital's university and the most important religious centre of Sunni Islam.

He passionately promoted dialogue between academics, missionaries, and laypeople, as well as with anyone interested in learning and sharing knowledge. The 'Zamalek meetings', which he organised for several years, remain a precious memory for many participants, even during the most delicate moments of the 'Arab Spring' and the subsequent period of uncertainty in Egypt.

In 2020, he was hospitalised twice: in June for a kidney infection and in December for COVID-19. These illnesses weakened him, and he eventually had to accept a transfer to Italy, to the community of Rebbio, not far from his hometown. Like Comboni, it can be said that for Father Giuseppe, while obedience brought him back to Italy, his heart remained in the place of his mission, on the banks of the Nile.

He passed away on Monday, 27th April 2026, in a hospital near Rebbio, due to a sudden cerebral haemorrhage. He is survived by a sister, Maura, and two brothers, Umberto and Mariano; his brother Dino passed away in May 2025, following a domestic accident.

The funeral was held on 20th April in the parish church of Rebbio. For the occasion, His Beatitude Ibrahim Isaac Sidrak, Patriarch of Alexandria of the Copts, President of the Assembly of Catholic Patriarchs and Bishops in Egypt, sent the following message: "On behalf of the Assembly of Catholic Patriarchs and Bishops in Egypt, of all Catholic institutions, and on my own behalf, I express my condolences for the passing of Comboni Father Giuseppe Scattolin. The Church expresses its condolences, praying that Christ, risen from the dead, may welcome his spirit into Heaven. May the Lord grant consolation to all in the Church, the congregation, and his family, along with perseverance and faith, and may He also grant the Church and the Comboni Institute pure vocations like that of the late Father Giuseppe. Christ is risen—he is truly risen."

Father Giuseppe will be remembered—and deeply missed—for his critical spirit. Passionate about dialogue and driven by a keen sense of social justice, he was never superficial. In Father Giuseppe, we recognised that to be a researcher means not only possessing great intelligence, but above all having a heart capable of caring for people and the world. A world like ours needs more dialogue-makers and a more authentic passion for truth. May he continue to inspire us in the wake of his legacy. (*Father Diego Dalle Carbonare, mcccj, and Father Franco Moretti*)

FATHER VALENTINO BENIGNA (13.02.1936 – 10.05.2026)

Valentino Benigna was born on 13th February 1936, in Foresto Sparso, in the province and diocese of Bergamo, Italy. He attended the first five years of primary school in the village. On 21st October 1948, he entered the diocesan seminary of Bergamo as a first-year student in middle school. After completing his middle school diploma, he was admitted to the two-year high school program, at the end of which he passed the entrance exams to the classical high school. Three years later, he was admitted to the preparatory year of theology and attended the first year of theology.

On 11th May 1958, in a letter to the Superior General of the Comboni Missionaries, he requested admission to the institute's novitiate. On 23rd September 1958, he went to Gozzano (Novara) to begin the two-year novitiate. On 13th November of the same year, he took the habit, and on 9th September 1960, he made his first religious profession. Shortly thereafter, he was in Venegono Superiore to continue the scholasticate he had interrupted at the major seminary in Bergamo. On 7th April 1962, he was ordained a priest in the Cathedral of Milan by Cardinal Giovanni Battista Montini, the future Pope Paul VI. He was immediately assigned to the apostolic school in Crema as a vocations promoter. He remained there until June 1966, when he was sent to Mozambique, assigned to the mission of Marara, Tete Diocese. In 1972, he moved to Brona and in 1975, back to Marara. He returned to his homeland and on 3rd January 1976, was elected vice-provincial of the Province of Italy. He lived in Rome on the Via Laurentina, in a wing of the house of the Roman Province of the Friars Minor Conventual, where the Comboni Provincial Council had temporarily moved its headquarters.

In 1978, he was sent to Brazil. He travelled to Portugal to learn Portuguese, but in July he was assigned to the Postulancy for Brothers in Aveiro. He remained there until June 1979, when he left for Brazil, assigned to the scholasticate of São Paulo. In July 1984, he was in Timón, in the northeast (Caxias do Maranhão), as parish priest until December 1990. In January 1991, he was in Santa Luzia do Paruá until December of that year.

In January 1992, Father Valentino returned to Mozambique, to Songo, in the Diocese of Tete, as superior. In 1999, he was at the provincial headquarters in Maputo until June 2000. He returned to Italy and was assigned to the community of Milan, at the 'Padre Giuseppe Ambrosoli' Centre for the Sick, charged with ministry and missionary animation in the adjacent rectory.

In September 2005, he received a letter of assignment to Brazil. He worked first in Contagem, in the state of Minas Gerais, until 2009, then in São Mateus, where he remained until 2013, and finally in São Luis, until March 2016, when he returned to Italy for a year. In January 2017, he continued as the local bursar in São Luis.

He left Brazil permanently in July 2020 to retire to the Rebbio (Como) Centre for the Sick. He died on the morning of Sunday, 10th May 2026, at the age of 90. The following day, a memorial Mass was celebrated in the chapel of the Centre. His remains were then transferred to Foresto Sparso, his hometown, where his funeral was held on Wednesday, 13th May, and his body was interred in the local cemetery. (FM)

LET US PRAY FOR OUR BELOVED DEAD

THE FATHER: Roman, of Father Chwaliszewski Wojciech (PO-M)

THE MOTHERS: Gidena Kasai Fusuhm, of Father Mehari Abraha Iskias (M); Eugenie Adjobli, of Father Hakpa Komlatsé Aimé (MZ)

THE BROTHERS of: Brother Ramos González Armando (EC); João, of Father Alexandre Ferreira (KE)

THE SISTER: Ana María, of Father Guirao Casanova Antonio (E)

THE UNCLE: Albereto, of Father Marcelo Oliviera (P)

THE BROTHER-IN-LAW: Fernando, of Father Horácio Ribeiro Rossas (P)

THE COMBONI MISSIONARY SISTERS: Sr. Sara Saleh Takla Aboelmessih (EG); Sr. Mostes M. Patrizia (I); Sr. Albrigi Maddalena (I); Sr. M. Esperanza Rosillo Jiménez (I); Sr. Schenato Josepha (I)