



Rome, 12 June 2026 – Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Message of the General Council for the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Dear Confreres,

On the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, we are invited to return to the source of our vocation and mission. By contemplating the pierced Heart of the Good Shepherd, we recognise God's immeasurable love for humanity: a love that becomes closeness, compassion, mercy, and the total gift of self.

The Heart of Jesus is not merely a symbol of our faith; it is the place where we learn God's way of loving and the criterion by which we discern our missionary life. In it, we discover a love that excludes no one, that allows itself to be wounded by the suffering of the world, and that continues to seek those who are lost, forgotten, or cast aside.

Saint Daniel Comboni found in the Heart of Christ the secret of his missionary passion. From that contemplation was born his love for the most abandoned peoples and his ability to share their history until he truly felt them to be his brothers and sisters. For us too, "sons" of so great an Apostle of Africa, mission finds its origin and renewal in allowing ourselves to be shaped by the Heart of Jesus, so that our outlook, our choices, and our relationships may increasingly reflect his sentiments.

Pope Francis reminded us that "the Heart of Christ, which symbolises his personal centre from which his love for us flows, is the living core of the first proclamation" (*Dilexit Nos*, 32). Only by remaining united to this centre can we prevent mission from being reduced to efficiency, organisation, or mere activity. Before being workers, we are disciples; before speaking about Christ, we are called to allow ourselves to be transformed by his love.

We live in a world marked by deep wounds. Wars, violence, inequalities, forced migrations, and both old and new forms of poverty continue to affect millions of people. Many men and women seek hope, a listening ear, and dignity; many young people search for a future; numerous communities live in situations of fragility and uncertainty. Faced with these realities, the temptation of indifference or resignation is always lurking.

The Heart of Christ, however, calls us to courageous closeness. It invites us not to pass by, not to shut ourselves within our securities, but to share the lives of the peoples to whom we are sent. Mission is born precisely from this movement of the heart: going out of ourselves to encounter the other, recognising him or her as a brother or sister loved by God. By giving priority to the least, the most marginalised, and the poorest, to the point of longing, in the words of Daniel Comboni, to hold in our arms and give a kiss of peace and love to those unfortunate brothers and sisters of ours (cf. *Writings*, 2742). Yes, as Comboni missionaries, we are called to be a sign of this love that welcomes and reconciles, that creates fraternity and generates hope on the peripheries of the world.

Our presence in the various Churches and among the different peoples of the world gains credibility when it becomes a witness of communion, especially within our international and intercultural communities. The diversity of our origins is not an obstacle to mission but one of its most eloquent signs: the Gospel can unite what the world so often divides.

On this feast, therefore, let us ask for the grace of a *missionary heart*, capable of compassion, listening, and closeness; a heart free from every form of closure and willing to be troubled by the sufferings of the poorest and most abandoned; a heart able to recognise the presence of God in the human and existential peripheries of our time.

We entrust to the Sacred Heart of Jesus our Institute, the communities in which we live, the peoples whom we serve, and all those whom we carry in prayer and in our daily work. May this Heart renew within us the joy of the Gospel, rekindle the fire of mission, and make us credible witnesses of his love in the world.

With fraternal affection, we wish you a holy and joyful Feast.



The General Council