

FAMILIA COMBONIANA

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES OF THE HEART OF JESUS

854

September 2026

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Perpetual professions

Sc. Mamadou Cristal (RCA)	Cairo	09-07-2026
Sc. Kambale Meschak Kasoro (Congo)	Cairo	09-07-2026
Sc. Kasereka Mwami Charles	Cairo	09-07-2026
Sc. Kpogo Komi Jules Ametefe Aimé (TG)	Lomé	11-07-2026
Sc. Amado Komlan Gademon Prosper (TG)	Lomé	11-07-2026
Sc. Davon Kossigan Sylvestre (TG)	Lomé	11-07-2026
Sc. Aguiar Vignon Michel (BEN)	Lomé	11-07-2026
Sc. Dzikunu Winfred Etse (GH)	Lomé	11-07-2026
Sc. Twesigwe Andrew (UG)	Lomé	11-07-2026
Sc. Mumbere Kavuthe Delphin (Congo)	Nairobi	20-07-2026
Sc. Konosi Atambanakabange André (Congo)	Isiro	25-07-2026
Sc. Ocen Moris Paul (UG)	Arua	31-07-2026
Sc. Apetokou Kossivi Paul (TG)	CMM *	13-08-2026
Sc. Nyiker Chanjwiok Abdakka (SS)	CMM *	13-08-2026

* Cité Mama Mobutu (Congo)

Ordinations

Wanyama Mark Musungu (KE)	Busia	11-07-2026
Mutheu Moses Mwatunge (KE)	Nairobi	25-07-2027
Muhindo Muhiwa Fiston (EGSD)	Butembo	02-08-2026
Mwaba Mathews (PE)	Lusaka	04-08-2026
Gum Santino Mawan Guor (SS)	Rumbek	16-08-2026

Holy Redeemer Guild

September 01 – 15 NAP 16 – 30 PCA
October 01 – 07 RCA 08 – 15 TCH 16 – 31 RSA

Prayer intentions

September

We pray that the Lord of life may give us eyes to contemplate the beauty of creation, hearts to care for it with love, and hands to serve it with justice, renewing in us the Spirit who makes all things new. *Lord, hear us.*

October

We pray that all members of the Comboni Family, sustained by the Holy Spirit and inspired by Saint Daniel Comboni, may proclaim the Gospel with joy and be signs of light, hope, and tenderness among the peoples to whom they are sent. *Lord, hear us.*

Comboni liturgical calendar

SEPTEMBER

9	St. Peter Claver, priest, Patron of the Institute	Solemnity
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OCTOBER

1	St. Teresa of the Child Jesus, virgin and doctor of the Church, <i>Patron of the missions</i>	Feast
10	St. Daniel Comboni, bishop, <i>Founder of the Comboni Family</i>	Solemnity
20	Blessed Davide Okelo and Blessed Gildo Irwa, martyrs	Opt. mem.

Meaningful anniversaries

SEPTEMBER

9	St. Peter Claver,	Chad, Colombia
14	Exaltation of the Holy Cross	Feast

OCTOBER

12	Our Lady of Aparecida	Brasil
16	St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, virgin	everywhere
19	Ss. John de Brébeuf and Isaac Jogues, priests and companions, martyrs	NAP (United States and Canada)

BRASIL

Padre Mossi appointed chaplain of the church of Nostra Signora del Rosario dei Neri

On Sunday, 12th July 2026, the Togolese Comboni missionary Father Mossi Kuami Anoumou assumed the role of chaplain at the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black People (*Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Pretos*) in the historic centre of Salvador, the capital of the state of Bahia. The Confraternity of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black Men, founded in 1685 and composed primarily of enslaved Africans, became part of the

Franciscan Third Order in 1714. However, they lacked a dedicated place of worship. Eventually, they secured a plot of land in the historic Pelourinho district on which to build a church; completed only in 1823, it was named the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black People. Since then, this sacred building has stood as a symbol of Afro-Brazilian presence and memory, preserving the history, faith, traditions, and cultural heritage of the Afro-Brazilian population.

One of its distinctive features is the blending of Catholic liturgy with expressions of Afro-Brazilian culture – manifested, among other ways, through dance and the sound of the *atabaque* (a percussion instrument) – within an atmosphere of intense community participation.

Father Mossi is responsible for Afro-Comboni pastoral ministry in Brazil. For the Comboni missionaries, being entrusted with the chaplaincy of the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black People represents a further strengthening of the Brazilian province's commitment to Afro-descendant communities—a service initiated in Salvador more than forty years ago. This assignment represents a significant vote of confidence by the Archdiocese of Salvador in the missionary work carried out by the Comboni Missionaries.

Father Mossi's duties include celebrating the Eucharist in honour of the Blessed Virgin of the Rosary and other saints venerated by the confraternity, leading spiritual retreats, administering the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and promoting catechesis. He is also charged with preserving and highlighting the history, culture, and devotion surrounding Black saints – such as Saint Anthony of Categeró, Saint Iphigenia, and Saint Benedict – as well as Saint Barbara, who is venerated in African-derived religions through a syncretic connection with *Lansã*, the orixá of winds, lightning, and storms. He is expected to welcome all who wish to worship God – the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ – regardless of social status, ethnicity, or gender. Another key part of his role is to guide the confraternity as it continues to promote initiatives aimed at safeguarding popular religiosity, Brazil's cultural richness, and the religious, artistic, and historical heritage of the Afro-Brazilian population.

Father Mossi hopes to proclaim and bear witness to the Gospel – with God's grace and the support of the Comboni community – by honouring Afro-Brazilian identity and culture and fostering a dialogue between the Gospel message and the social, economic, and cultural realities experienced by people of African descent.

Indeed, this is the goal of the Afro-Brazilian pastoral ministry and the purpose of his presence in Salvador as a Comboni missionary dedicated to this specific field of pastoral work. (*Comboni Missionaries of Brazil*)

Father Ezekiel Ramin: 41 years of remembrance, faith, and witness

Forty-one years have passed since the martyrdom of Father Ezekiel Ramin, yet his memory lives on. He walks the streets, the communities, and the paths of prayer, and above all, he lives in the hearts of so many people who, even today, recognise in his life a living testimony of faith, vocation, and commitment to the poorest.

This year, 2026, the commemoration of Father Ezekiel began on 19th July with a pre-pilgrimage in the community dedicated to him at Mirante da Serra, in the state of Rondônia. More than 150 people walked a four-kilometre route, accompanying their steps with prayers, hymns, and reflections. At the end of the walk, over 500 people gathered to celebrate the Eucharist. The community then shared a meal with all the participants—a simple yet meaningful gesture of gratitude and fraternity, echoing the early Christian communities: “Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people” (*Acts 2:46-47*).

From 22nd to 24th July, the commemoration continued at the Holy Family and Saint Jude Thaddeus parishes in Cacoal, Rondônia. A triduum was celebrated across various base ecclesial communities to honour the life and mission of Father Ezechiele. The communities gathered around the Word and the Eucharist – the memorial of Christ the Liberator – to remember a man who had chosen to dedicate his life to the service of the Gospel and of the poorest and most abandoned.

The theme of the 11th Pilgrimage – *Father Ezechiel Ramin: A Living Witness of Vocation and Mission* – guided the celebrations, alongside the motto taken from the Acts of the Apostles: “They met in their houses for the breaking of bread” (cf. *Acts 2:46*). Thus, in remembering Ezechiel, the communities also reflected on their own vocations. They prayed and thanked God for his life, his witness, and the mission that – forty-one years later – continues to challenge hearts and inspire commitment.

A particularly moving moment was the Eucharistic celebration held on the eve of the pilgrimage at the Holy Family parish church. Around a thousand people gathered to celebrate their faith and honour the memory of the Comboni missionary. Joining them were the Bishop of Ji-Paraná, Dom Norberto Foerster; three Comboni priests; three diocesan priests; and a permanent deacon from the Lower Madeira mission area in the Archdiocese of Porto Velho.

Then came the day of the pilgrimage itself. On 26th July, in Rondonlândia (State of Mato Grosso), more than two thousand pilgrims set out on a three-kilometre journey of faith and hope, walking to the chapel built near

the site where Ezechiele Ramin was killed on 24th July 1985. He was only 32 years old.

That journey taken together, forty-one years later, speaks of something far greater than a mere commemoration. It tells us that a life given in service does not end with death. It shows that the seed planted by Ezekiel continues to sprout within communities that walk together, pray together, and commit themselves to the lives of the poor.

The commemoration concluded with the celebration of the Eucharist. A large number of people from various parishes and dioceses gathered around the altar: religious sisters, seminarians, two deacons, twelve priests, and two bishops.

But the pilgrimage does not end here. Father Ezechiele Ramin's dream is still alive. It lives on in communities that refuse to resign themselves to poverty and injustice, in people who choose to organise and defend the dignity of the poorest, and in those who continue to believe that the Gospel can transform history.

The causes for which Ezechiele gave his life remain the causes of faith communities journeying together. And while his own steps came to a halt 41 years ago, the journey continues. (*Father Cosmas Musonda, mccj*)

RD CONGO

Concert for Integral Ecology in Kinshasa

On 27th June 2026, the Laudato Si' Missionary Centre – in collaboration with the Comboni community's Ecology Commission in Kinshasa and the Afriquespoir choir – organised a concert of praise to God to celebrate the commitment of those who safeguard and care for creation.

Through a rich repertoire of traditional, classical, and popular songs – opening with the Centre's own hymn, *Lord, we praise and adore You for the wonders You perform* – the concert served as a reminder that praising the Creator is a pillar of integral ecology. Only by recognising God as the Creator and Lord of the universe can we rediscover ourselves as responsible stewards of our common home.

A particularly significant moment was the song *Po po botiaki ntembe?* (*Why did you not believe?*), composed by the late Father Jean-Pierre Makamba. It denounces the root causes of the environmental and social crisis: the indiscriminate exploitation of resources, deforestation, river pollution, the greed of those who appropriate common goods, and a development model that prioritises profit over the well-being of people and creation.

The reflection was enriched by various testimonies of concrete action. Young people from the Laudato Si' Movement presented initiatives for waste sorting and reducing plastic use. The Comboni community's Ecology Commission outlined projects for recycling and reusing tires and other materials. Other presentations showcased the production of organic cosmetics, the promotion of natural products, efforts to combat deforestation, and the 'One Child – One Tree' project, which aims to make the city of Kinshasa greener.

These testimonies demonstrated that caring for creation involves small, daily actions and initiatives capable of engaging the entire community. The day concluded with a toast to friendship, looking ahead to future gatherings and initiatives of the Laudato Si' Missionary Centre — all in the spirit of a lifestyle increasingly respectful of nature and grounded in fraternity. (*Father Fernando Zolli, mccj*)

GERMAN-SPEAKING PROVINCE

Regional flower and plant exhibition in Ellwangen – The joy of change

Seven years elapsed from the project's commissioning to the completion of the work, leading up to the inauguration of the regional horticultural exhibition on 24th April 2026. It took seven years of planning, development, and hard work to get everything ready. A horticultural exhibition implies a wealth of flowers and plants, but also a great deal of creativity. In this instance, 60,000 plants, shrubs, and trees – mostly native species – were planted. The exhibition will remain open until 4th October of this year.

For those who may not know, the Jagst is the small river that, for many years, separated various neighbourhoods from the centre of Ellwangen. It is likely this very geographical feature that gave rise to the city's official name, 'Ellwangen an der Jagst' – meaning 'Ellwangen on the Jagst'. The Jagst River no longer acts as a divider; from now on, it unites: "Change is possible" – a truly fitting secondary slogan!

To ensure everything ran smoothly, more than 1,000 volunteers undertook – and continue to undertake – important tasks. In the first three days alone, around 23,000 people visited the exhibition: a figure almost equal to the city's entire population! While the biodiversity of the Jagst River has been enhanced, the city itself has also benefited from the new opportunities offered by this small waterway.

There is another interesting aspect, too: the exhibition features a "Church Garden" managed on an ecumenical basis. Significant and engaging events centered on life, faith, and the Church take place here, all under the

banner *'You are welcome!'* It is impressive to see how Evangelical, Catholic, New Apostolic, and Evangelical Methodist Christians collaborate side by side. Denominational affiliation has never been – and still is not – an issue for the Exhibition. This is demonstrated by the presence of the diocesan bishop, Klaus Krämer (Rottenburg-Stuttgart), and his Protestant counterpart, Regional Bishop Ernst-Wilhelm Gohl of the Evangelical Church in Württemberg. The two presided over the ecumenical service on the Exhibition's first Sunday. About 10,000 of the faithful attended the event—numbers comparable to celebrations led by the Pope in Rome.

Our community house in Ellwangen is located right within the Exhibition grounds. We have made the old seminary chapel available to visitors as a place for rest and quiet reflection. Furthermore, four of our confrères are present in the 'Church Garden' to speak with anyone seeking a conversation. On Wednesdays, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., anyone interested can approach one of these 'listening volunteers'. We four community members – with five or six shifts each in the Church Garden – cover nearly half of the staffing for the 'listening benches'.

Today, 'Ellwangen an der Jagst' can also signify 'closeness to one's neighbour and to creation'. There is no shortage of simple, discreet, yet meaningful signs. People come to us, too, and through their encounters and mutual exchange, they become gifts to one another – Catholics and Christians from other churches alike. Their concerns – foremost among them the desire for a credible Church and disappointment over its persistent hesitation – ultimately have an encouraging effect. We wonder what will remain after the Exhibition closes on 4th October 2026. In any case, the Exhibition is currently the most important and deeply felt topic of the summer in Ellwangen and the surrounding municipalities.

Faced with such a zest for life and such widespread public participation, we missionaries should feel an ever-growing need to listen and observe attentively, seeking to understand what is truly happening around us and what really matters. In this way, we too can draw benefit and encouragement from this experience and—why not? —rejoice in it together with so many others. (*Father Anton Schneider, MCCJ*)

EGYPT-SUDAN

Cairo – Perpetual vows and diaconal ordinations

"The harvest is great, but the labourers are few!" (*Mt 9,37*). With these words of Jesus, three of our scholastics who completed their theological training in Beirut – Mamadou Cristal, from the Central African Republic (CAR); and Kambale Meschack Kasoro and Kasereka Mwami Charles,

both from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) – invited friends and fellow religious to share in their joy on the occasion of their perpetual religious profession and diaconal ordination, celebrated on 9th and 10th July, respectively.

The celebration of perpetual vows, presided over by the Provincial Superior of Egypt-Sudan, took place at Cordi Jesu, the church built on the very land Saint Daniel Comboni himself received to found his institutes in Cairo. Father Kakule Muvawa Emery-Justin, Provincial Superior of the DRC Province, was also present at the celebration.

The diaconal ordination took place at Sakakini Parish – frequented in particular by the Sudanese and South Sudanese refugee community in Cairo – and was presided over by Msgr. Claudio Lurati, Apostolic Vicar of Alexandria.

A large number of young people attended both celebrations; they were invited to recognise, through the journeys of our three young confrères, how the Church is enriched by a variety of charisms and vocations, and how mission unites people from diverse peoples and nations.

Both liturgies were celebrated in Arabic, English, and French. Their missionary character is a hallmark of the celebrations we Comboni Missionaries frequently organise in Cairo and serves as a concrete witness to the missionary nature of the universal Church.

This takes on even deeper significance at a time when, in Egypt as in many other parts of the world, refugees and foreigners struggle to find their rightful place in society. (*Father Diego Dalle Carbonare, mccj*)

Khartoum – Comboni College reopens

When war broke out in Khartoum on 15th April 2023, Comboni College was a thriving educational institution. There were 1,055 pupils enrolled in the primary school, 827 students attending the secondary school, and 786 taking courses at the College of Science and Technology.

Within hours, their lives were upended. Students, their families, teachers, and the Comboni community were forced to flee the capital in search of safety as fierce fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) ravaged the city, destroying buildings and infrastructure and shattering the hopes and dreams of thousands.

Khartoum remained under RSF control until March 2025, when the SAF recaptured the city, paving the way for the gradual return of residents and the start of the long process of reconstruction.

When we were finally able to return to Comboni College, the scene that met our eyes was heartbreaking: all the electrical wiring across the campus had been ripped out; the plumbing system had been destroyed;

computers, air conditioners, and digital equipment had been looted; and the walls were riddled with bullet holes and artillery strikes. In the courtyard – where generations of children had played, laughed, and dreamed – the bodies of RSF fighters killed during the battle still lay.

Yet, amidst such devastation, the Comboni missionaries realised how fortunate they had been. Unlike many nearby buildings – reduced to rubble, burned down, or severely damaged – the main structures of Comboni College were still standing. Having survived the war, they could serve as the foundation for a new beginning. On Saturday, 4th July 2026, after more than three years of forced closure, Comboni College in Khartoum announced that its primary and secondary schools would reopen in September for the 2026–2027 academic year, welcoming students as it always did.

The College of Science and Technology – which had been forced to relocate its operations to Port Sudan in November 2023 – is seeking funding to rehabilitate its facilities in the capital, with the hope of resuming academic courses in 2027.

The reopening of Comboni College in Khartoum—an institution that has educated generations of Sudanese and South Sudanese students since its founding in 1929—represents far more than just the resumption of school activities: it is a tangible sign of hope for the nearly six million inhabitants of Khartoum State as they work to rebuild their city, their communities, and their future. (*Father Jorge Naranjo, mcccj*)

ESPAÑA

Provincial Assembly

From 22nd to 27th June, about thirty Comboni missionaries gathered in Palencia for their annual provincial assembly. The meeting began with the sad news of the sudden death of Brother Arístides Holgado Salvade, who had dedicated his life to missionary work in Mozambique, Ecuador, Colombia, and Spain. He was unable to overcome complications following open-heart surgery.

This news required the Provincial Superior, Father Miguel Ángel Llamazares González, and some assembly members to return to Madrid to attend the funeral. Despite their grief, the remaining participants continued with the scheduled agenda.

The first day was dedicated to ongoing formation, focusing on the theme ‘*Mission in Spain Today*’. Jesuit Father Pablo Guerrero Rodríguez led a reflection on an idea gaining traction in missionary circles: “Spain, too, is mission territory.”

The second day addressed a topic of great importance to the Institute: the reunification of its administrative circumscriptions. Father Pietro Ciuciulla, Superior of the Italian Province, outlined the vision guiding this process. Working groups voiced the fears and doubts raised by this re-configuration journey, which is expected to culminate in the 2028 General Chapter.

Towards the end of the assembly, a break was organised to allow participants to explore the Palencia area. The group visited the Church of Santa Eulalia in Paredes de Nava and later the San Pedro Museum in Becerril de Campos.

The final day was dedicated to reports. Father Miguel Ángel presented his report, followed by those from the secretariats for mission, formation, and finance.

The assembly concluded with a thanksgiving celebration marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the priestly ordination of two missionaries, Enrique Bayo and Rafael Armada. The next provincial assembly will be held at the end of June 2027. (*Father Gbama Nsusu Boniface, mccj*)

Visit of Father Austin to the province

From 5th to 19th July 2026, Father Radol Austin Odhiambo, the General Councillor responsible for the Comboni provinces in Europe, paid an official visit to the Spanish province, accompanied by the Provincial Superior, Father Miguel Ángel Llamazares González.

The visit – part of the discernment process regarding the reconfiguration of the European provinces – was had the aim of listening to the communities, gaining firsthand insight into their realities, and engaging in fraternal dialogue with the confrères.

Following an initial meeting in Madrid on 7th July, Father Austin visited the communities in Moncada, Barcelona, Palencia, and Palas de Rei. He met with the confrères to share reflections on the life of the Institute, the mission, and the future prospects of the Comboni presence in Europe. He could witness the commitment of the Madrid, Barcelona, and Palas de Rei communities to missionary animation and collaboration with local churches, as well as the valuable witness of fidelity offered by the Moncada and Palencia communities, which primarily care for elderly and sick confrères. He did not, however, visit the two communities in Granada, as he had already met with them in December 2025.

Father Austin's visit served as a source of encouragement and inspiration, urging the confrères to live out the gift of their missionary vocation with joy and a spirit of fraternity within the European context. It reinforced the awareness that mission knows no boundaries of space or time, and

that the call to live out this vocation is lifelong – regardless of age or location – even in Europe that has now become a ‘mission land’.

At the conclusion of his stay, Father Radol expressed deep gratitude for the warm welcome he received and encouraged everyone to continue their journey of renewal with confidence: “I encourage you to continue this journey with confidence and hope.” Referring to the process of reconfiguring the European provinces, he noted that, “if we know how to entrust ourselves to the Lord, this process too can become an opportunity for growth, communion, and renewed missionary zeal.” (*Father Miguel Ángel, mcccj*)

A summer camp for growth

From 19th to 26th July, a summer camp organised by the children’s magazine *Aguiluchos* took place in Huétor Santillán (Granada). There were forty-seven participants, including 28 children, 14 camp counsellors, and two junior counsellors, as well as Comboni missionaries and cooks.

It was a week of community living, formation, prayer, and fun, experienced as a genuine journey of human and Christian growth. Each day was dedicated to a different theme – ranging from self-awareness to understanding the world around us, and from poverty and humility to love – through activities designed to foster the children’s holistic development. A special highlight was the 2026 FIFA World Cup final, which the group watched together on a big screen. Spain’s victory over Argentina brought great joy and helped create a festive atmosphere, further strengthening the bonds among the participants.

For the counsellors, an *Aguiluchos* camp is much more than just a summer camp. Eva Tobalina describes it as “a safe place and a second family,” where children learn human values and themes related to the mission. For Ignacio García Navarrete, who has been collaborating with us for 16 years, an *Aguiluchos* camp is a place where “the values of mission, fraternity, and service are lived out in a friendly and joyful way.”

For young Alberto Rojas, who became a counsellor after participating in previous camps as a junior counsellor, the camp also represents a new stage of growth: “You do not stop being a child when you become a counsellor; a new phase simply begins, allowing you to keep learning and growing.” Comboni scholastic Jonathan Rodríguez, attending his second camp, noted: “Sharing these days with the children and accompanying them through moments of community, prayer, and fun was a deeply enriching experience.” “I am leaving with a heart full of joy and gratitude.”

The camp concluded with the celebration of the Eucharist, presided over by Father Zoé Musaka. Amidst the fatigue, joy, and tears at the moment of parting, everyone returned home with the awareness that the

experience continues throughout the year. And the children, with their characteristic spontaneity, have already asked the best question: “When will we have the next camp?” (*Father Justus Oseko, mccj*)

ETHIOPIA

Annual spiritual exercises

As happens every year, members of the Comboni family serving in Ethiopia gathered for a period of spiritual renewal. The annual spiritual exercises took place from 24th to 31st July at the Galilee Centre in Bishoftu, a retreat house run by the Society of Jesus.

This year, the gathering was organised by the Comboni Missionary Sisters and led by Father Raymond Manyanga, a Jesuit from Tanzania. Participants included 12 Comboni Sisters, 11 Comboni Missionaries, and six Handmaids of the Church—a local religious congregation founded by the Comboni Bishop Armido Gasparini in the Vicariate of Hawassa.

The theme chosen for the retreat was ‘*Creative Fidelity*’, an invitation to rediscover and revitalise the missionary charism left by Saint Daniel Comboni. Although a member of the Society of Jesus, Father Raymond highlighted key characteristics of the Comboni family, such as community life and a special focus on mission work in the most challenging contexts.

From the outset, the retreat leader invited participants to identify a specific intention for this privileged time of encounter with the Lord, guided by the question Jesus asked the blind man Bartimaeus in the Gospel of Mark: “What do you want me to do for you?” (*Mk 10:51*).

Building on this question, the meditations guided participants along a journey regarding the life of prayer – viewing it as a path to gaining greater self-awareness, recognising the gifts received, and rediscovering the value of communal prayer.

Throughout the retreat, other themes vital to consecrated and missionary life were also addressed: unity in diversity, the meaning of religious vows, and the importance of supporting – through prayer – the specific pastoral service entrusted to each member by their superiors. The final meditation focused on the figure of the Apostle Peter as portrayed in the Gospels. The retreat took place in a serene atmosphere conducive to prayer, offering all participants the opportunity to renew their relationship with God and return to the essentials of their missionary vocation.

The spiritual exercises were further enriched by the celebration of the memorial of Blessed Giuseppe Ambrosoli, a Comboni missionary, and – on the final day – the memorial of Saint Ignatius of Loyola.

At the conclusion of the retreat, the participants were left with a deep sense of gratitude for this precious time of listening, prayer, and fellowship. It was an experience to be lived out – as Father Raymond reminded them – in a spirit of *creative fidelity* to the charism received and to the mission. (*Father Hippolyte Apedovi, mccj*)

ITALIA

The province joins the Laudato Si' Initiatives Platform

On 24th May, the eleventh anniversary of the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, our province formally joined the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform. In fidelity to the decisions of the last General Chapter, the province made this choice recognising that the commitment to social justice and the commitment to environmental justice are inseparable today, amidst a grave crisis that disproportionately affects the poor. Human and non-human creatures are raising their voices together, feeling far removed from the promise of abundant life that is close to the Creator's heart.

The 2022 Chapter chose to respond to the challenges of this current era of change in light of the Word of God and guided by the fundamental principle of integral ecology, which connects pastoral, liturgical, educational, social, economic, political, and environmental dimensions. More specifically, it committed the Institute to «joining the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform – promoted by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development – at various levels (communities, circumscriptions, and the Institute itself)” (CA '22, 30.1), in operational collaboration with the *Laudato Si'* Movement. In practice, this entails a tailored journey of commitment and conversion that each institution or group undertakes in its own way, moving toward sustainability in the spirit of the *Laudato Si'* encyclical. Participants include not only religious communities but also families, parishes, dioceses, educational institutions, groups, and movements.

The Italian province had already developed a *Laudato Si' Vademecum* to guide its missionary life in light of this necessary conversion. The document provides the Magisterial framework for this commitment and outlines concrete pathways in five areas: the management of food, waste, mobility, relationships, and lifestyles, as well as the economy and utilities. This *Vademecum* will serve as the reference point for our commitment to the Platform; through it, we will be able to share the insights we have gained, the progress we achieve, and our efforts to engage other individuals and groups.

Following the Province's formal commitment to the Platform, the next step lies with the individual Comboni communities in Italy. It is precisely in the local areas where we live that we can bear witness – in a tangible way,

within the fabric of our relationships – to the inspiration of integral ecology. The Province's Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Commission stands ready to assist communities wishing to embark on this journey, offering guidance, suggestions, and proposals.

As Pope Francis reminded us: "Along with the importance of little everyday gestures, social love moves us to devise larger strategies to halt environmental degradation and to encourage a 'culture of care' which permeates all of society" (*Laudato si'*, 231). (*Father Dario Bossi, mccj*)

Commitment for peace in Sudan – Suggested initiatives

On 7th July 2026, the superiors of the Comboni provinces of Italy and Egypt-Sudan issued an open letter inviting their confrères in Italy to join in a missionary commitment for peace in Sudan by sharing content on the subject and observing a day of fasting and prayer on July 28. The text of the letter follows.

Dear Comboni confrères of the Italian Province,

We are writing this letter—signed by the Provincial Superiors of Italy and of Egypt-Sudan—to highlight the extremely critical situation facing the most beloved land of Saint Daniel Comboni.

We wish to draw attention to the precariousness and violence threatening the Sudanese people and, subsequently, to share some initiatives we are undertaking through an inter-provincial working group that also involves various Catholic and civil society organisations. Finally, we would like to make a proposal concerning how we, as Comboni communities, can get involved in our own local areas.

The grave situation in Sudan today

As is well known, the conflict in Sudan – which began in April 2023 between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) – has triggered one of the world's most severe humanitarian crises. Tens of thousands of people are estimated to have been killed, over 14 million have been forced to flee their homes, and more than half the population is currently in need of humanitarian assistance.

Fears of further mass atrocities are mounting in North and South Kordofan, where the RSF are continuing their sieges and appear to be preparing an attack on the city of El Obeid. There is a risk of a repeat tragedy involving crimes against humanity like those perpetrated in El Fasher between May 2024 and October 2025 – atrocities documented in a recent Amnesty International report. Humanitarian agencies warn that El Obeid is already facing an emergency due to severe food shortages, a lack of clean water, and the risk of cholera outbreaks.

The Vatican has also expressed concern at the UN Human Rights Council regarding the imminent threat of a new tragedy. The magazine *Nigrizia* is closely monitoring developments, maintaining constant contact with Comboni missionaries and other witnesses on the ground in Sudan.

Initiatives being taken in Italy

For over two years, around twenty Italian and Sudanese civil society organisations have been working to raise public awareness about the severe humanitarian crisis in Sudan¹, including interventions at the Italian and European Parliaments. Two official statements were issued in late 2025: the first, in October, called for urgent action by the Italian government to open humanitarian corridors in El Fasher; the second, in December, demanded an end to Italian military cooperation with the United Arab Emirates, which in turn supplies weapons to the RSF. A seminar held in June 2026 at our Generalate in Rome examined the links between the Sudanese gold trade and the war, once again revealing the deep complicity of the United Arab Emirates. A press conference on this subject will be held in Rome on July 28.

Proposals for the Comboni communities

At this particularly grave and delicate time, we invite our confrères in the Italian Province to join the commitment for peace in Sudan:

- propose discussions within your communities and local areas, and share the news we are frequently publishing on this topic;
- let us also join with the Christian communities with whom we share our faith and journey for a day of fasting and prayer, coinciding with the press conference on 28th July, so that the concern and missionary commitment of so many people for peace may be heard far and wide.

Let us entrust ourselves to the God of Peace, to Mary, Mother of Reconciliation, and to the intercession of Saint Daniel Comboni, that paths toward resolving the conflict in the war-torn land of Sudan may be opened.

Verona and Khartoum, 7th July 2026

Father Pietro Ciuciulla, Provincial of Italy
Father Diego Dalle Carbonare, Provincial of Egypt-Sudan

¹ ACLI, Amnesty International Italia, ANPI, AOI (Association of Italian ONG), ARCI, Baobab Experience, Caritas italiana, CIPAX, International Committee for Peace in Sudan, the Saint Egidio Community, the Sudanese Community in Italy, Disarmed Economy-Focolare Movement in Italy, Emergency, FOCSIV, Nigrizia Foundation, Medecins Sanz Frontieres, Comboni Missionaries in Italy, Italian Peace and Disarmament Network, Un Ponte Per.

MALAWI-ZAMBIA

Chama – Brother Pedrito make his perpetual profession

On 21st June 2026, Brother Mario Pedrito made his perpetual religious profession at St. Daniel Comboni Parish in Chama, eastern Zambia. The Eucharistic celebration, presided over by the Provincial Superior, Father Andrew Bwalya, brought together fellow religious, parishioners, family members, and friends in an atmosphere of great joy and shared participation.

In his homily, Father Andrew recalled Jesus's words, "Do not be afraid," urging Brother Pedrito to live out his vocation with courage, faith, and perseverance, always trusting in God's providence, even during times of difficulty.

Originally from Netia in northern Mozambique, Brother Pedrito made his first vows in 2017, underwent four years of formation in Nairobi (Kenya), and was assigned to the Malawi-Zambia Province in 2022. He currently serves at the Chama mission, where he manages the agricultural project and coordinates social pastoral activities, contributing to both community development and the work of evangelisation. His perpetual profession marks a significant moment of thanksgiving and hope for the Church and the Comboni Family.

MÉXICO

Spiritual exercises and provincial assembly

From 27th to 31st July, about twenty confrères participated in the annual spiritual exercises, preached by Father Juan Martín Rodríguez González, the Provincial Superior of Ecuador. Using simple, fraternal language and sharing his own spiritual and missionary experiences, Father Juan Martín invited those present to reflect on our history and return to the origins of the call received from the Lord; from that foundation, he encouraged them to live out – in a spirit of thanksgiving and readiness – what God calls us to be today.

It was an intense five-day period during which the weather, the house's beautiful natural setting, and the warm welcome from the host community helped everyone place themselves in God's presence, renew their strength, and continue the journey of following Christ according to the Comboni charism.

Provincial Assembly – After a weekend of rest, the provincial assembly began on August 4th, attended by a good number of fathers and brothers.

The first two days were dedicated to the topic of merging the Mexico Province with the Central America Province (PCA). Also present were Father Jorge Elías Ochoa Gracián, Provincial Superior of the North American Province, and Father Enrique Sánchez González, Provincial of the PCA.

We received valuable input from Dr. Ana Lilia Vera Perdonó, who gave a presentation on globalisation in relation to our reunification process. Globalisation transforms us and invites us to speak about what unites us. Drawing on her presentation and the reality we are living, we took time for both personal and group reflection. It was a highly enriching reflection that will help us navigate this process with confidence and hope.

A significant milestone in the process will occur between 18th and 27th September, when Father Luigi Codianni and Father David Costa Domingues (Vicar General) meet in Mexico City with the commissions established in Mexico and Central America to handle the region's reorganisation.

The third and final day of the assembly, August 6th, was devoted to reports from the various secretariats and the Provincial Council, allowing us to evaluate the progress made this year and plan for the year ahead. There was also time for leisure, sports, and socialising, all of which helped foster a cheerful, fraternal atmosphere throughout the assembly.

PERÚ

Provincial retreat – ‘With our hearts in Cana’

During the six days of spiritual exercises (July 20–25, 2026), held at the provincial house in Monterrico, Lima (Peru), silence, reflection, and listening were our faithful companions. There were 36 of us – brothers, priests, and scholastics – guided by the retreat master, Father Bautista Lucas Erasmo Norberto, a Mexican Comboni missionary.

The participants experienced a profound sense of communion with Jesus Christ. Each day was marked by three moments of encounter with God and sanctification: Morning Prayer, the celebration of the Eucharist at midday, and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the afternoon. These three key moments provided the spiritual framework for exploring the chosen theme: *With our hearts in Cana*.

The preacher guided the participants in retracing, verse by verse, the account of the Wedding at Cana (*John* 2:1–11), where Jesus performed the first of his “signs” and “revealed his glory” (v. 11).

The shared reflections highlighted the spiritual richness of this passage, focusing particularly on living out the mission starting from the Heart of Christ – a heart that compels us to believe, love, hope, and proclaim.

By linking this passage from the Gospel of John to the spirituality of Saint Daniel Comboni, Father Erasmo emphasised how our founder understood that mission can only spring from a heart deeply united with Christ and affectionately close to the people.

The missionary is thus called to build up the good and to cherish the humanity God has entrusted to him, following the example of Jesus, who makes Himself present in the concrete lives of people.

In practical terms, the teachings of these spiritual exercises were distilled into three essential attitudes for the modern-day Comboni missionary: knowing how to be present – close to the people – just as Jesus was at the Wedding at Cana; learning to view reality with attentiveness and compassion, like Mary, who recognised the people’s needs; and obeying Jesus’s words with trust, like the servants who filled the water jars.

In conclusion, Father Bautista invited every missionary to let the message of Cana resonate in their hearts—a message about transforming life’s adversities and human frailties into a place of hope. (*Sc. Latoundji Afolabi Olouwatogni Magister François*).

Sustainable Economy – Community of Goods and Comboni Mission

From 29th July to 1st August, the international scholasticate in Lima hosted a training course on sustainable economics, aimed specifically at scholastics and treasurers of the Peru Province. Twenty-three participants attended.

The General Treasurer, Father Angelo Giorgetti, assisted by Fathers Gianni Gaiga (Provincial Treasurer and Procurator) and Mitchel Sandoval Nelson Edgar (Provincial Superior of Peru), led the sessions in accordance with the directives of the 2022 XIX General Chapter.

The meeting aimed to illustrate how to integrate the sharing of goods, transparency, and sustainability into missionary life. Sustainability is understood as a balance between economic, social, and ecological dimensions, while always trusting in the Providence that inspired Saint Daniel Comboni. The Institute becomes sustainable when every member shares who they are and what they have – even if it seems insignificant – drawing inspiration from the Gospel passage regarding the sharing of the loaves (*Mt* 14:13–21).

The key guidelines for achieving this sustainability require every missionary to pursue evangelical and professional growth, practice transparent management, foster a spirit of sharing goods, value people, and participate in the Total Common Fund (FCT). On a practical level, the course emphasised general commitments such as preparing budgets, seeking resources as a community, promoting missionary awareness among the People of God, establishing sustainability funds, and maintaining responsible accounting practices.

Another significant aspect of the training was the topic of accounting, understood as an "economic memory" capable of faithfully recording and communicating financial events, thereby ensuring consistency between missionary life and economic life.

The FCT was presented as a genuine instrument of communion. Although it carries risks regarding liabilities or the misuse of assets, it is recognised as an opportunity to live out evangelical poverty and solidarity. Indeed, emphasis was placed on preventing inconsistencies and financial misconduct through a collaborative approach, honesty, and prudence.

Finally, the importance of implementing sustainable projects—from conception to completion—was highlighted, taking into account the intentions of donors who favour local, long-lasting initiatives aimed at the most vulnerable.

In conclusion, Father Giorgetti stated that sustainability should be understood as an act of faith and a sharing of resources that unites financial transparency with the evangelising mission.

7th Comboni Youth Congress 2026 – Passion for Mission and Life in Communion

From 3rd to 7th August, approximately 170 young people from our parishes gathered in the city of Trujillo, at our 'Lord of Miracles' parish, to participate in the 7th Comboni Youth Congress. Held under the theme '*Comboni Youth: Passion for Mission and Life in Communion*', the event proved to be a genuine experience of faith, formation, culture, joy, and mission.

The young people were hosted by families from Trujillo's pastoral communities, thereby experiencing firsthand the meaning of brotherhood and communion.

Over the course of the five days, participants reflected on various aspects of their lives and vocations:

- *Day One* – "Young person, who are you?" – They were invited to recognise their own identity, cherish their youth, and learn from Mary how to say 'yes' to God, living out their faith with authenticity and courage.

- *Day Two – “Young person, what is Jesus saying to you today?”* – The focus was on deepening one’s personal relationship with Jesus and the commitment to respond to His love through faith and service. Comboni spirituality and the MIES Plan – inspired by the missionary journey of Saint Daniel Comboni – were also introduced.

- *Day Three – Culture* – Participants explored Trujillo’s historical and cultural heritage by visiting Chan Chan, the Huaca Arco-íris, and Huanchaco. They also shared the cultural richness of their respective regions through food, handicrafts, traditional clothing, music, and dance.

- *Day Four – “Young person, God is calling you”* – Reflections centred on vocation, the obstacles that can prevent young people from discovering it, and the importance of building a culture of vocation grounded in spiritual life, fraternity, solidarity, and critical awareness.

- *Day Five – Sent on mission* – The identity of Comboni youth ministry was presented as a ministry that is spiritual, communal, rooted in solidarity, international, and always in motion. The young people proposed several actions to strengthen their pastoral ministry.

The message summarising the entire experience draws inspiration from Saint Daniel Comboni: ‘Save Africa through Africa’ – interpreted today as the challenge of *evangelising young people with young people*, forming missionary disciples committed to Christ and to those in need of hope.

The Congress concluded with a Eucharistic celebration and the announcement that the next gathering will take place in Pangoa, in Peru’s Central Jungle region, in 2029.

The experience leaves the young people with a challenge: not to stop at what they have lived through, but to bring it back to their own communities and transform it into concrete actions of faith, vocation, community, and mission.

In short: the 7th Comboni Youth Congress was an experience that helped young people discover their identity, encounter Jesus, cherish communion, discern their vocation, and commit themselves to being young missionaries at the service of the Church and their neighbours. (*Amelit Galván, Pangoa parish delegate*)

PORTUGAL

Father Manuel Augusto Ferreira celebrates fifty years of priesthood

On 18th July, the parish of Arcozelo das Maias celebrated the 50th anniversary of Father Manuel Augusto’s priesthood – an occasion marked by thanksgiving, remembrance, and affection from a community that regards him as one of its own cherished sons.

The Eucharistic celebration, presided over by the Bishop of Viseu, Msgr. António Luciano, and concelebrated by numerous Comboni and diocesan priests, brought together family, friends, and community members. It was in Arcozelo das Maias that Father Manuel Augusto was born and baptised, and where his priestly and missionary vocation took root. Here he was ordained and, over the years, celebrated other significant milestones of his ministry.

Throughout his five decades as a priest, Father Manuel has lived an intense missionary life, placing his special gift for communication at the service of the Church. As a journalist – through articles, reports, and personal accounts – he has sought to build bridges between peoples and cultures, giving a voice to missionary realities and helping many discover the beauty of the Gospel and the *missio ad gentes*.

Among the many roles he has held, his tenure as Superior General of the Comboni Missionaries stands out; this service took him to meet communities and missionaries across various continents and allowed him to guide the Institute in its missionary commitment. These were years defined by travel, encounters, and decision-making; all lived in close contact with the challenges of evangelisation and the realities faced by the poorest and most vulnerable.

The celebration of his 50th anniversary was thus far more than a personal milestone: it was an opportunity to thank God for a life dedicated to the mission and to acknowledge the deep bond Father Manuel shares with his home community. At the conclusion of the service, the people of Arcozelo das Maias reaffirmed their affection and promised their prayers, wishing him joy as he continues his priestly and missionary journey. The celebration continued with a communal dinner marked by fellowship, shared memories, and togetherness, accompanied by a screening of moments from Father Manuel's long missionary journey. (*Abel Dias*)

SOUTH SUDAN

The first Comboni priest from Rumbek diocese

Deacon Gum Santino Mawan Guor, the first Comboni missionary from the Diocese of Rumbek, was ordained a priest on 16th August. Bishop Christian Carlassare – Bishop of Bentiu and Apostolic Administrator of Rumbek – conferred the ordination at the Holy Family Cathedral during a celebration marked by great joy.

A large crowd attended the festive Eucharistic celebration, joined by more than ten Comboni priests and brothers, as well as members of other religious congregations present in the diocese.

During the same ceremony, Bishop Carlassare ordained two local priests and one deacon.

“Do not build barriers around your priesthood. You are ordained by the people and for the people. Your priesthood must have a human face,” the bishop urged during his homily.

Father Santino’s ordination marks a historic milestone: hailing from Romic parish, he is the first Dinka from the Diocese of Rumbek to become a Comboni missionary destined to serve beyond South Sudan’s borders; he will begin his first missionary assignment in Chad.

Father Santino could not hide his emotion: “Today is a day of immense joy for me. I am the first Comboni priest [from here], and soon I will go to proclaim the Gospel in another nation. I am very excited about this. And I am certain that the entire community of the Diocese of Rumbek shares in this joy.”

With these three new ordinations, the diocese now has 14 diocesan priests and one deacon.

Father Santino, 36, completed his theological training in South Africa and carried out missionary service in his home country. (*Father Majambo Lutumba Placide, mccj*)

TOGO-GHANA-BENIN

Lomé – Six new perpetual professions

“Our lives are in God’s hands. Let him do with them what he wills: we have irrevocably sacrificed them to him. May he be blessed.” (*Writings*, 434). These words of Saint Daniel Comboni echoed in the minds of many of those present at our provincial headquarters in Lomé on 11th July 2026, when six of our scholastics made their perpetual profession, consecrating their entire lives to the *missio ad gentes*.

Their names are: Kpogo Komi Jules Ametefe Aimé, Amado Komlan Gademou Prosper, and Davon Kossigan Sylvestre (all three Togolese); Aguiar Vignon Michel (Beninese); Dzikunu Winfred Etse (Ghanaian); and Andrew Twesigwe (Ugandan).

Present in the chapel were about thirty confrères from nearly all the communities in the province, the families of the newly professed, numerous members of the faithful, and many friends of the mission. The Eucharistic celebration was presided over by Father Katsan Fodagni Kokouvi (Fidèle), the Provincial Superior, who received the vows on behalf of the Superior General, Father Luigi Cordianni.

The liturgical music, provided by the federation of choirs from the Cacaveli Christian community, imbued the celebration with profound spiritual

intensity and contagious joy, giving voice to the thanksgiving of all those who were present for the gift of six new lives offered entirely to God for the mission.

In his homily, Father Katsan explored the meaning of religious profession in light of the Word of God, our *Rule of Life*, and the spirituality of Saint Daniel Comboni. He stated: “The vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience – far from being mere acts of renunciation – are a way of participating fully in the life of Jesus, a ‘prophecy and anticipation’ of the Kingdom of God, and a consecration that conforms the person making them to Christ, the Father’s first missionary. [...] These six perpetual professions mark a new chapter in the realisation of the missionary dream of Saint Daniel Comboni, who dedicated his entire life to the evangelisation of the most abandoned peoples. Following in the footsteps of Christ and of the Founder – who made mission the very reason for his existence and for whom mission meant making common cause” with the peoples entrusted to us (cf. *Writings*, 3159) – these six young men have chosen to share the destiny of the peoples to whom they will be sent, particularly the poorest, the most forgotten, and those who have not yet heard the Gospel proclaimed.”

A particularly moving moment occurred at the end of the Eucharist, when the Provincial Superior and Father Sandro Cadei—acting as *probus vir*—approached the parents of the newly professed men and embraced them fraternally, expressing the entire Institute’s gratitude for the generous gift of their sons to the mission. “By welcoming, accompanying, and supporting your sons’ calling, you have become authentic collaborators in the universal mission of the Church,” he told them.

The celebration was followed by a festive gathering, marked by an atmosphere of joyful fraternity.

IN PACE CHRISTI

BROTHER KARL JOSEF KOLB (18.10.1950 – 06.07.2026)

Karl Josef was born on 18th October 1950, in Wilflingen, a hamlet of Langenenslingen near Riedlingen on the Danube. He was baptised on 24th October and received the Sacrament of Confirmation on 7th July 1960.

From a young age, he was inspired by the missionary zeal of Brother Bruno Haspinger. On 3rd March 1969, he entered the Comboni postulancy in Josefstal, where he underwent training as an apprentice mechanic. The following year, he entered the novitiate in Mellatz and

received the religious habit on 1st May 1970. There, he discovered a passion for gardening and agriculture, activities requiring patience, perseverance, and the conviction that all growth is ultimately a gift from God. He professed his first vows on 18th June 1972 and was assigned to the novitiate community to handle maintenance duties.

In July 1973, he was assigned to the Spanish province, first to the community in Palencia and later to that of Barcelona, where he managed administrative tasks. While in Spain, he renewed his temporary vows three times (in 1973, 1974, and 1975). He intended to go to Peru as a missionary and, in preparation for this assignment, took advanced Spanish language courses.

Unfortunately, his path took a different turn than expected, and Brother Karl Josef returned to his home province, believing he could better fulfil his vocation there. He was assigned to the Josefstal Mission House near Ellwangen to serve as a formator for aspiring brothers. In June 1977, he was transferred to the minor seminary in Milland-Bressanone, again serving as a formator. Here, on 4th June 1978, he professed his perpetual vows as a missionary brother of the Congregation of the Missionary Sons of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (MFSC).

In July 1984, he returned to the Josefstal Mission House, where he remained until January 1980, working in agriculture while also being actively involved in the missionary youth movement.

Many also remember him as a passionate musician: he played the accordion at community gatherings and enriched numerous liturgical celebrations in Ellwangen and the surrounding area with his powerful, harmonious voice and fine musical ear. He was also responsible for the music during daily liturgies.

As the sacristan, he meticulously prepared liturgical celebrations to ensure everything was conducted with dignity. Much of what seemed natural and taken for granted was, in fact, the fruit of his industrious hands and faithful service.

However, his deepest vocation revealed itself when he decided to dedicate himself to caring for elderly and sick confrères. To this end, he underwent training in Ursberg, near Augsburg, between 1989 and 1991. From then on, this service became his primary apostolate, first in Josefstal and Ellwangen, and afterwards, from late 2014, in Milland-Bressanone.

The sick do not need grand speeches; they need someone who has time for them, who knows how to listen and help – in short, someone who knows how to be present. Brother Karl Josef was able to offer all of this.

He was a man of many talents. He worked in the vegetable garden, helped in the kitchen, carried out numerous repairs, and was an unsurpassed caretaker of the house. He even cut his confrères' hair and found a solution for almost every practical problem. In doing so, he embodied the tangible fraternity that sustains our missionary life. His sudden passing on 6th July 2026, due to cardiac arrest at the hospital in Bressanone, came as a shock to us all. We remember him with deep gratitude for his life and his faithful service.

May the Lord grant Brother Karl Josef eternal rest, and may perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace! (*Provincial Superior, mccj*)

BROTHER ROMERO HERNÁN ARIÁS (16.01.1952 – 08.07.2026)

Brother Hernán Romero Arias was born on 16th January 1952, in Marco (Jauja Province, Diocese of Huancayo, Peru) to Zakarias Romero Limaylla and Nériða Ariás Cancho. He was baptised at the parish of Santa Fe de Jauja.

In late 1970, Hernán entered the National University of San Marcos, enrolling in the basic academic programme. In 1977, he began his medical studies, obtaining his professional degree as a physician and surgeon on 9th December 1981; on 15th January 1982, he received the certificate authorising him to practice medicine in Peru.

During his university years, he met the Comboni missionaries and felt a calling to missionary life arise within him. Upon completing his studies, he asked to join their Institute.

In July 1982, Hernán began his postulancy in Lima, where he enrolled for a two-year me at the Pontifical and Civil Faculty of Theology of Lima, taking courses in Latin, introduction to philosophy, history of philosophy, Greek, ethics, salvation history, philosophical anthropology, ontology, epistemology, and the concept of God in philosophy and natural religions. In October 1983, he entered the novitiate in Huánuco, where he professed his first religious vows on 8th May 1985. A doubt lingered in the mind of one of the superiors as to whether Hernán had ever been confirmed; Hernán himself could not recall, and his parents were also uncertain. Ultimately, it was decided to definitively resolve the matter through a solemn confirmation ceremony at the Huánuco Cathedral, celebrated by the episcopal delegate on 3rd June 1985.

In July of that same year, Hernán was assigned to the scholasticate in Rome and enrolled at the Pontifical Urban University. He attended all the courses for three years, up until June 1988. On 19th December 1986, he was instituted as a lector. In the meantime, however, a distinctive and

significant decision was taking shape within him: to become a missionary brother.

On 28th February 1988, he wrote to the General Council requesting to renew his vows as a 'Comboni Brother'. On 28th March, Father Francesco Pierli wrote to him: "I have received your letter announcing the completion of your scholasticate in Rome and your readiness for the mission, as well as your account of the evolution of your vocation. I am deeply grateful to the Lord who, through the various events of your life, has helped you re-discover the original inspiration of your missionary vocation as a Comboni Brother. I regard this decision of yours as a grace God has bestowed upon our Institute, to promote the vocation of the Comboni Brother with conviction and vigour. [...] Therefore, I am assigning you to the Province of Zaire, effective as from 1st July 1988."

In late July, Hernán returned to Peru for a family holiday. On 30th July 1988, at the age of 36, he made his perpetual vows at the provincial headquarters in Lima, in the presence of Father Pierli. Shortly thereafter, he left for Paris to take a French language course. By early 1989, he was in Kinshasa to continue his French studies. In July, he arrived in Mungbere, located in the Diocese of Wamba in northeastern Zaire, not far from the South Sudan border. He did not stay long; his goal was to assess the local mission hospital. In October, he traveled to Antwerp, Belgium, to attend a course on tropical diseases at the Institute of Tropical Medicine, obtaining his certificate in late March 1990. He returned to Mungbere as the hospital director. There, he finally put his medical profession at the service of the poorest. For six years, he served as medical director and the only physician and surgeon at the small facility. Through competence, sacrifice, and dedication, he helped the hospital grow and become increasingly capable of meeting the population's needs.

In 1995, he was joined by Father Gian Maria Corbetta – also a doctor – who, over the next thirty years, would expand the hospital into what is now the largest diocesan hospital in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

However, Brother Hernán was not a man for large institutions. He preferred the simplicity of remote missions, closeness to the people, and direct contact with the sick. Consequently, once Father Corbetta arrived in Mungbere, Hernán asked to be transferred to the small diocesan hospital in Duru, in the Diocese of Dungu-Doruma, near the South Sudan border. For eight years, until 2003, he was once again the only physician-surgeon in that vast area. Later, he was joined by Brother Juan Carlos Salgado – then a nurse –, who would later become a doctor and also serve at the hospital in Mapuordit, South Sudan.

Brother Hernán spent 14 years in northeastern Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo), earning the esteem and trust of the local population through his professional expertise and tireless dedication to the sick. On 1st January 2002, Brother Hernán was elected provincial councillor. In September 2003, he attended the General Chapter in Rome and was elected a councillor on the new General Council, the highest office a brother can hold within the Institute, becoming the first non-European brother to fill this role.

Even in this position, one of his most characteristic personality traits became evident: he had no desire for high-ranking positions or prestigious roles. Consequently, after just three years, in 2006, he stepped down and asked to return to mission work: first back to Duru, then to the Bamokandi mission, and finally to Dondi-Watsa in the Diocese of Isiro, continuing his service in small frontier hospitals.

In 2008, Brother Hernán requested a move to Peru. For four years, he dedicated himself to teaching religion at a secondary school in Pangoa, a district in the Junín region located in Peru's central jungle, where the Amazon rainforest meets the foothills of the Andes. In 2013, he returned to Rome for a sabbatical year of spiritual renewal. At the end of that experience, in 2014, at the age of 62, he once again felt the desire to return to Africa as a doctor.

This time, he chose South Sudan and was assigned to the Mary Immaculate Hospital in Mapuordit, in the Diocese of Rumbek. For three years, until 2017, he worked in the surgery department and the operating room. Yet, it was above all in the dressing room and in the treatment of chronic wounds that he demonstrated a special sensitivity. Patients with difficult-to-treat – and often overlooked – wounds became one of his primary concerns and, in a way, one of his most cherished areas of work.

In 2018, he requested a transfer to Italy. He was assigned to the 'Fratel Alfredo Fiorini' Centre in Castel d'Azzano (Verona), home to elderly, sick, and retired Comboni missionaries. For two years, he served his very elderly confrères with humility and affection, offering the same discreet, ready assistance he had once provided to the sick in African missions.

In 2020, the Comboni province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo recalled him, asking him to once again take charge of the Mungbere hospital, the very facility where he had begun his medical service in 1988. He accepted the challenge, aiming to allow Father Gian Maria Corbetta to return to Italy after 25 years of service as medical director and to help downsize the facility to ensure its future

sustainability. However, after two years, Brother Hernán stepped down from the role after the Diocese of Wamba – the hospital's owner – decided to maintain the facility's current size and confirmed Father Corbetta as medical director.

In early 2023, at the age of 71, Brother Hernán returned to Peru and was appointed superior of the provincial headquarters in Lima; this allowed him to care for his elderly mother, whom he looked after until her death in 2025.

Yet, his missionary story was not over. In January 2026, he requested to return to South Sudan to work at the Mapuordit hospital. From April to June, he served once again in the dressing room, caring with particular passion for the poor suffering from chronic ulcers. The hospital staff welcomed him warmly, recognising him as the doctor and missionary who had previously worked there from 2014 to 2017.

On 1st July 2026, Brother Hernán left home, mentioning that he needed some rest, and set out on a journey toward the Democratic Republic of Congo. Travelling by *boda-boda* (motorcycle taxi), he reached Mvolo, then Mundri, and finally Maridi. He likely crossed the border on 6th July, entering the territory of the Diocese of Dungu-Doruma, the land where he had lived and served for so many years.

According to the chief of the Wando *Chefferie*, Brother Hernán was arriving from South Sudan and preparing to enter the DRC via the Bitima crossing. Upon reaching the locality of Solo, he was recognised by some locals. Seeing him on foot, they offered him a ride to assist him on his journey. Brother Hernán politely declined, saying it was unnecessary and that he preferred to continue alone. From that point on, all trace of him was lost.

The area he ventured into is known to be a sort of no-man's-land. No one knows exactly what happened. On 6th July, Brother Hernán was found dead on the banks of the Solo River.

In its message of condolence, the Diocese of Dungu-Doruma remembered him as “a man who was always at the bedside of the sick,” highlighting his “impeccable and indisputable surgical precision.” These are simple words, yet they capture the essence of an entire life.

Brother Hernán sought neither great accolades, nor high-ranking positions, nor prestigious facilities. He chose instead small hospitals, the outskirts, the poor, wounds that were difficult to treat, and places where essentials were often lacking and where the presence of a doctor could mean the difference between life and death. (*Brother Dr. Rosario Iannetti, mccj, and Father Franco Moretti*)

FATHER BORDONALI BRUNO (01.07.1942 – 13.07.2026)

Bruno was born on 1st July 1942, in Mairano – part of the municipality of Brandico in the province of Brescia – to Giovanni and Giuseppina Baronio. He was baptised on 5th July at Brandico parish church, where he also received the sacrament of Confirmation on 21st August 1950. After completing primary school, he began working. In 1968 – at the age of 26 – he decided to become a Comboni missionary brother. As a late vocation, he was accepted into the apostolic school in Crema. In just two years, he prepared for his middle school final exams, and on 27th June 1969, he obtained his diploma from the ‘Dante Alighieri’ Middle School in Crema.

On 29th August of that same year, he began his two-year novitiate in Venegono Superiore, concluding it with the profession of his first temporary vows on 9th September 1970.

However, he had changed his mind. Indeed, on 17th July 1970 – in anticipation of taking his first vows – he wrote to his superiors: “I intend to join this Congregation by taking the holy vows. I was accepted into the novitiate as a brother candidate. Now, however, I ask to continue my studies to become a priest.” In fact, Bruno was not the only one to make such a decision; his superiors had already established a course at the former Carraia High School (Lucca) for ‘brothers’ transitioning toward the priesthood.

In October 1970, Bruno went to Carraia to attend a teacher-training institute, covering two years’ worth of coursework in a single year. He then travelled to Asti to take the qualifying exam for the third year of the course, gaining very good results. The following year, having completed the required coursework for the final two-year cycle, he returned to Asti for his final exams and obtained his teaching diploma in July 1972. This paved the way for higher studies in philosophy and theology at the Pontifical Theological Faculty ‘Marianum’ (1972–74) – where he graduated *summa cum laude* – and at the Jesuit Theological Faculty in Granada (1974–1976).

On 27th June 1976, he was ordained a priest at the parish of Brandico by Msgr. Pietro Gazzoli, Auxiliary Bishop of Brescia.

Like all Comboni missionaries, he dreamed of leaving immediately for the mission field, but he was asked instead to go to Verona to serve as a vocation promoter. He soon joined the provincial secretariat for formation and vocation promotion.

On 1st July 1979, Father Bruno was assigned to the Ecuador province as an assistant pastor in Quinindé, an agricultural parish on the coast

near the Andes, deep within the tropical rainforest and about a hundred kilometres from the capital, Esmeraldas. He was very active in pastoral work, but this assignment was short-lived; his confrères realised that he possessed skills that could be better utilised in missionary animation, particularly at the newly opened Centre in Cali. By July 1982, Father Bruno was at the Centre, working enthusiastically to consolidate its operations. He then received an offer from Rome to take a specialised course in youth ministry at the Pontifical Salesian University, running from October 1983 to February 1984. He gladly accepted. Upon his return, he resumed his ministry at the Centre.

In July 1987, he was appointed rector of the diocesan seminary in Esmeraldas, though he also had to serve the nearby parish dedicated to the 'Virgen del Camino'. He remained there until June 1989.

Clearly, Father Bruno did not like to stay in one place for very long (usually three to four years). He had an adaptable nature that suited him for a wide range of situations; yet he found it hard to put down roots in any single location.

Within the Comboni group – comprising about fifty fathers and brothers – there were differing sensibilities. One small group focused on missionary animation, viewing it as a step forward in building a missionary church. However, others begin to propose—and push for—'*specific pastoral approaches* that seem to pull in two directions: a social focus, advocated by those eager to engage with the Afro-descendant community (a significant presence in the Esmeraldas area), and a spiritual focus, championed by those calling for greater commitment to the spiritual realm.

Father Bruno and his confrère, Father Lorenzo Caravello (who passed away on 13th July 2021, at the age of 85), obtained permission to launch a '*contemplative missionary community*' experiment in Tachina (seven kilometres from Esmeraldas). Their stated goal is to "pray more and better" on a personal level, while also making themselves available for spiritual direction, preaching retreats and spiritual exercises, and similar initiatives, all alongside manual work to help support themselves. The experiment lasted four years, until December 1993, when the two were assigned other duties within the province.

Father Bruno was sent to Quito to serve as superior of the postulancy (having already demonstrated a talent for working with young people); he was also appointed provincial secretary for vocation promotion and formation. On 1st January 2002, he was elected Vice-Provincial and appointed coordinator of the Commission for Justice, Peace, and

Integrity of Creation. On 1st January 2005, he was elected Provincial for a three-year term.

In 2008, he returned to Italy due to health issues. He sought to slow down his work pace and take better care of himself. In November, he was assigned to the care centre for elderly confrères in Arco as community superior. He remained there for five years, until the end of 2013, when the facility closed, and the confrères were transferred to other care centres.

Father Bruno then asked to return to Ecuador. In July 2004, he went to Esmeraldas to serve as parish priest of Our Lady of Mercy (Nostra Signora della Mercede). Two years later, in July 2016, he returned to Italy for good. He spent a few months in Trento but then moved to the Brescia community, where he stayed for nine years engaged in missionary animation, until declining health prompted him to move to the 'Brother Alfredo Fiorini' Centre in Castel d'Azzano in February 2026. He passed away on 13th July 2026, at the Borgo Roma Hospital (Verona) during a hospital stay necessitated by complications arising from renal failure.

His funeral was celebrated in the Centre chapel on 17th July. On 18th July, a funeral Mass was celebrated in Brandico, followed by burial in the local cemetery. (*Father Giovanni Munari, MCCJ, and Father Franco Moretti*)

LET US PRAY FOR OUR BELOVED DEAD

THE FATHERS: Jorge, of Father Filipe Miguel Oliveira Resende (E); Antonio Manuel, of Brother Paulo Manuel Félix Ferreira (P/RSA); Kodjo Joachin, of Father Babley Kombla Djibodi (Daniel) (T/KE)

THE MOTHERS: Ayelech Bitito, of Father Endrias Shamena Keriba (ETH/RSA); Maria Tina, of Father Recalde Randito Tina (RP/A); Maria Isabel, of Brother José Manuel Salvador Duarte (P)

THE BROTHERS: Fausto, of Father Raffaele Cefalo (†); Renzo, of Father Giovanni Fantin (†); Eklú Raphael, of Brother Adigbo Komlan Cyprien (TG); Aldo, of Father Sisto Agostini (ETH) and Armando Agostini (†); Donald Francis, of Father Martin Devenish

THE SISTERS: Rosa, of Father Tagliaferri Livio (I); Sr Petronilla (Baptismal name, Giovanna), of Father Egidio Ferracin (†)

THE COMBONI SISTERS: Sr. Pisanu Anna Efisia (I); Sr. Ambrosi M. Faustina (I); Sr. Battistella M. Lucia (I)