FAMILIA COMBONIANA

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES OF THE HEART OF JESUS

856 **November 2026**

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

GENERAL NOTES OF THE 47TH CONSULTA OF OCTOBER 2026

NOMINATIONS

►Father Patrick Benywanira – Vice- delegate of the Central African Republic (RCA)

The General Council has appointed Father Patrick Benywanira as Vice-Superior of the Delegation of Central Africa as of 27th October 2026, substituting Father Ouandora Seigneur Malthus.

►Father Jorge Carlos Naranjo Alcaide – President of Studium Combonianum

The General Council has appointed Father Jorge Carlos Naranjo Alcaide President of *Studium Combonianum* as of 1st November 2026, substituting Father Manuel Augusto Lopes Ferreira.

MISSIONARY SERVICE – CLARIFICATIONS

In light of the General Council's decision to send scholastics—whenever possible—to circumscriptions for missionary service (MS), with a view to their definitive assignment to those same circumscriptions following their diaconal ordination, it is appropriate to clarify—in accordance with no. 441 of the *Ratio Fundamentalis*—that this service begins on the date the scholastic actually arrives at the destination community, a fact which must be recorded in the minutes of the circumscription council.

At the end of the first twelve months, the documentation required for admission to perpetual profession and to sacred orders shall be prepared. Following perpetual profession and diaconal ordination, the scholastic shall continue his service in the same community until his priestly ordination.

Since the scholastic will need to return to his province of origin for his priestly ordination, it is requested that the celebration be planned well in advance and that arrangements regarding the taking of vacation time be agreed upon.

PROCESS OF REQUALIFICATION

Following the meetings with the commissions held in September, the General Council wishes to share some points that emerged during the process of the reconfiguration of the Institute.

First and foremost, it expresses its gratitude to all the confreres and the commissions for the effort put into preparing the initial drafts—the "Directives"—which serve as an important foundation for discernment regarding the configuration of future regions.

Among the aspects highlighted, it was noted that this reconfiguration is, above all, a journey of conversion and renewal, aimed at strengthening fidelity to the charism of Saint Daniel Comboni, refining the Institute's missionary priorities, and fostering greater co-responsibility.

In this process, particular emphasis is placed on strengthening the sense of belonging to a region and valuing community life. The goal is for communities to become, increasingly, places of fraternal communion, discernment, and shared mission—moving beyond a focus on individual tasks toward a collective missionary project.

Furthermore, reflection continues regarding initial and ongoing formation, financial coordination, and the governance structures of the future regions, all in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity.

In preparation for the extraordinary consulta scheduled for the end of January 2027, the General Council invites every community to review the draft of the *Directories*, discuss their contents, and contribute to further deepening them through comments and proposals. At the same time, it entrusts this journey to prayer and to listening to the Spirit, encouraging everyone to move forward with confidence and co-responsibility toward the 2028 General Chapter, which will be tasked with evaluating the progress made and taking the necessary decisions for the future of the mission of the Institute.

SUSPENSION OF ASSEMBLIES / CONTINENTAL SECTOR MEETINGS

To avoid an excessive number of assemblies and meetings, the General Council reiterates what has been stated elsewhere regarding the priority that must be given to the process of reorganising the Institute's structures; it further indicates that, from 2027 until the General Chapter, continental and sectoral assemblies and meetings will remain suspended.

FUNDRAISING FOR EMERGENCIES IN VENEZUELA AND COLOMBIA

The General Council expresses its gratitude to the circumscriptions and individuals who responded to the fundraising appeal to assist the victims of the earthquakes in Venezuela and Colombia. The total amount raised reached €20,000 for Venezuela and €40,000 for Colombia. Regarding the

disbursement of these funds, the contribution for Colombia will be sent to the local Comboni delegation, which will be tasked with determining the most appropriate methods for its distribution. For Venezuela, the funds will be disbursed to Caritas Venezuela.

OBLIGATION TO REPORT THE ABANDONMENT OF THE INSTITUTE

Should a confrere, for any reason, leave the Institute while in a country other than his country of origin, the provincial superior is required to promptly inform the competent authorities of his separation from the Institute. This notification is essential, as any visas or residence permits were obtained by the Institute on the basis of the confrere's membership of the Institute and the mission entrusted to him. If the confrere intends to remain in the country after leaving the Institute, it is his responsibility to regularise his status with the relevant immigration authority.

Failure to fulfil this obligation, or a delay in doing so, may result in sanctions for the Institute, which could be held accountable for any breaches of obligations toward the competent authorities, potentially leading to administrative and legal repercussions.

Provincial superiors are therefore urged to ensure that such situations are reported promptly, in order to guarantee the regularity of the confrere's status and to protect the Institute from any potential liability.

JOURNEYS OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

The entire Council

from	to	Place	purpose
9 November	14 November	Italy (Palermo)	

Father Luigi Codianni

from	to	place	purpose
16 November	20 November	Italy (Verona)	Prov. Ass. With Fr Radol
26 November	29 November	Paris	with Fr Domingues
30 November	4 December	Italy (Verona)	Com. Acc. Europe with Fr Radol
17 December	22 December	EGSD (Cairo)	Centenary of "Cordi Jesu"
3 January '27	10 January '27	Chad	Ass. Del. with Fr Elias

Father David Domingues

from	to	place	Purpose/notes
17 November	22 November	Poland	Visit communities
26 November	3 December	Parigi	with. P. Codianni
9 January '27	22 January '27	PCA	Prov. Retreat & Prov. Ass.

Padre Austine Radol Odhiambo

from	to	place	purpose
16 November	20 November	Italia (Verona)	Ass. prov. With Fr Codianni
30 November	4 December	Italia (Verona)	Comm. Acc. Europe with Fr Codianni

FATHER ELIAS SINDJALIM

From	to	place	purpose
3 January '27	10 January '27	Chad	Ass. del- with Fr Codianni

SCHEDULED CONSULTAS

The next consultas will be held:

- from 7 to 12 December (ordinary consulta)
- 25-30 January (extraordinary consulta on the process of reorganisation)

Perpetual professions

Sc. Ouma Joseph/U	Guatemala City	11-10-2026

Ordinations

N'gbolo-Mecko Christ Jordy Larry / RCA	Bangui	27-09-2026

Definitive separation from the Institute – 2026

Sc. Kibulandumu Glody	30/04/2026	CN
Sc. Kakule Kasomo Patrick	01/05/2'26	CN
Sc. Ndemisa Giresse Otsha	15/05/2026	CN
Sc. Musaasizi Andrew Kaggwa	16/10/2026	UG

Holy Redeemer Guild

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

Prayer Intentions

November

As we celebrate this month the 10th World Day of the Poor, we pray that those with responsibilities in nations may restore justice to the poor and help them rediscover dignity and hope. *Lord, hear us*.

December
That the youth may open their hearts to the call that Jesus addresses to them and have the courage to set out on this journey, remaining faithful to that calling throughout their lives, *Lord, hear us.*

Comboni Liturgical Calendar

NOVEMBER

1	Commemoration of deceased confreres, relatives and benefactors	To be chosen each year

DECEMBER

3	Saint Francis Xavier, priest, *Patron of the missions*	Feast

Important anniversaries

NOVEMBER

21	Our Lady of Quinche	Ecuador

DECEMBER

1	Blessed Clementina Alfonsina Anuarite Nengapeta, virgin and martyr	Congo
3	Saint Francis Xavier, priest *Patron of the missions*	*Feast* Mozambique, Spain
12	Our Lady of Guadalupe, *Patron of the Americas*	Mexico

Publications

Don Bosco Onyalla, CSSp, *Bishop Caesar Mazzolari – A Servant after the Heart of Jesus among South Sudanese* (*Il vescovo Cesare Mazzolari – Un servo secondo il cuore di Gesù tra i sud-sudanesi*), Paulines Publications Africa, Sept. 2026. Nairobi, Kenya.
Fifteen years after his passing, a new biography commemorates the life and missionary ministry of Monsignor Cesare Mazzolari—a Comboni bishop who dedicated nearly thirty years of his life to the people and the Church in Sudan and South Sudan. The author, who was ordained a priest by Monsignor Mazzolari in 2005 for the Diocese of Rumbek, regards the bishop as his own spiritual father.

The biography traces the stages of his life, from his years of service in Italy and the United States to his long-term missionary commitment in Sudan—where he arrived in 1981—and subsequently in South Sudan, serving as provincial superior, apostolic administrator, and finally, Bishop of Rumbek. The narrative draws upon an extensive interview conducted in 2009, as well as the testimonies of fellow missionaries who walked alongside him. What emerges is a portrait of a shepherd deeply connected to his people—a man who accompanied them with faith and dedication, even amidst the most challenging moments of their history.
Monsignor Mazzolari passed away on 16th July 2011—just days after the declaration of South Sudan's independence—while concelebrating the Eucharist at the cathedral in Rumbek.
This volume offers an opportunity to rediscover the witness of a missionary who made his closeness to the South Sudanese people a lifelong commitment, right to the very end.

Giuseppe Crea, *Comunione, conflitti e salute mentale (Communion, conflict and mental health),* San Paolo Edizioni, October 2026, pp. 305 – Community life is an experience that is as precious as it is demanding. It is through our relationships with others that we develop self-awareness, strengthen our sense of belonging, and learn to share values, projects, and ideals. Yet, these very relationships—when they become difficult or conflict-ridden—can test our personal equilibrium and the quality of our life together.
In this volume, the author explores this complex interplay, focusing on how the psychological and relational dimensions influence one another within a community. An individual's well-being cannot be viewed as a purely personal matter; it is shaped by the climate of daily interactions, while simultaneously helping to determine the quality of those relationships, the capacity to navigate tensions, and the potential for building authentic bonds.
Drawing on both scientific research and the guidance of the Church's magisterium, the author invites us to view communal life with greater awareness—without overlooking its inherent fragilities or the inevitable struggles it entails. From this perspective, conflict is not merely an obstacle to be removed, but a reality to be understood and addressed through appropriate tools, human maturity, and a willingness to engage in dialogue.
A particularly valuable feature of the book is the set of practical exercises provided at the end of each chapter. These worksheets offer opportunities to reflect on past experiences, examine community dynamics, and identify

potential paths for growth. In this way, theoretical reflection becomes a concrete invitation to improve the quality of life shared with others.
The book is addressed to all those who wish to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges of living in communion, recognising that caring for mental health and attending to relationships are essential components for any community striving to fulfil its mission with balance, responsibility, and a genuine spirit of fraternity. *(FM)*

Romeo Ballan*, Passi di testimoni – Calendario Missionario Universale,* Editrice Velar, Bergamo, October 2026, pp. 232.
Now in its fourth edition—expanded to include new figures and missionary events, and enriched with an analytical index—this special calendar offers a daily itinerary, a pilgrimage that presents a different stop each day. It invites encounters with the faces and stories of individuals—some well-known, others less familiar, or perhaps entirely absent from our existing cultural and religious knowledge.
These figures and events are bearers of good news: men and women, priests and consecrated persons, Christians and non-Christians, saints, the beatified, and people of good will who dedicated themselves to others, contributed to the well-being of the human family and all of creation, and left a positive mark on the proclamation of the Gospel and the history of nations.
As Monsignor Domenico Pompili, Bishop of Verona, aptly puts it: "I read it every morning. This calendar helps me live in harmony with the entire world." Copies may be requested from the bursar's office at the Motherhouse in Verona. Retail price: €11; for Comboni missionaries: €5.

Cilimba Pius Albert Joseph, *Christian Realism and Democracy in Reinhold Niebuhr: Between Political Theology and Political Philosophy*. ["Realismo cristiano e democrazia in Reinhold Niebuhr: tra teologia politica e filosofia politica"]. This is the licentiate thesis presented to the Pontifical Urbanian University, Rome, in October 2026.
In this work, the author—a Comboni missionary from Malawi, ordained as a priest in 2015 and with some twelve years of missionary service in Kenya—examines the thought of Reinhold Niebuhr, a 20th-century American scholar (1892–1971). He focuses on the problem of self-interest in political life, understood as egocentrism and the tendency to pursue one's own interests at the expense of the common good. Niebuhr views democracy as the political system best suited to limiting the negative effects of self-interest through checks and balances—that is, institutional controls and counterweights.
The thesis has a twofold objective: to evaluate whether Niebuhr's conception of human nature—deeply influenced by Christian theology—can

provide a sufficient philosophical foundation for his democratic theory; and to determine the disciplinary status of his realism, specifically whether it belongs primarily to the realm of theology or philosophy.
The thesis demonstrates that Niebuhr's thought does not offer a sufficiently rational foundation for his democratic theory. His realism occupies an intermediate position between political theology and political philosophy. Nevertheless, his contribution remains significant for contemporary politics, as it highlights the persistent tension between the human aspiration for justice and the enduring presence of self-interest in political life.

CURIA





***Medal from the Pontifical Salesian University in Rome* awarded to Father Essognimam Elias Sindjalim.**
The Pontifical Salesian *University Medal* (often referred to as *The Medal of Excellence*) is the prestigious official academic distinction that the UPS in Rome confers upon its most deserving students. On 13th October 2026, the Rector of the UPS, Fr. Andrea Bozzolo, presented it to our confrere, Father Elias, in recognition of his excellent academic achievements upon completing his studies for a Doctorate in Psychology—a degree for which he successfully defended his thesis in March 2026. Congratulations!!!

DEUTSCHSPRACHIGE PROVINZ

Annual Assembly



From 5th to 9th October 2026, the annual assembly of the German-speaking Province (DSP) took place in Ellwangen, bringing together 39 confreres from our six communities. The Superior General, Father Luigi Codianni, and his Assistant General, Father Austine Odhiambo, also travelled from Rome for the occasion.
Father Turyamureeba Roberto, the Provincial Superior, welcomed the new confreres who have joined the Province: Father Hounaké Kouassi

Timothée, from Togo, and the scholastic Oboula James Vitalis, from Kenya. Three scholastics from the formation community in Graz—Wairimũ Wilson Njoroge, Ilolube Tandir Blondel, and Osuna Félix Jesús Daniel—also participated in the meeting.
Key topics included the annual reports from the Provincial Superior and the Provincial Treasurer, the merger of the European provinces, the presentation of the Congregation's Code of Conduct, and the development of a safeguarding policy for each local community.
Via videoconference, we heard from a Jesuit who played a pivotal role in the process of unifying the Jesuit provinces in Europe. We also met with the Comboni Lay Missionaries of the German-speaking Province.
During the solemn closing Mass, celebrated on the eve of the feast of Saint Daniel Comboni, we all renewed our vows and our consecration to God for the mission.

ETHIOPIA

Hawassa – Inauguration of the Comboni Youth Centre
On 22nd October 2026, the Comboni Youth Centre (CYC) in Hawassa was officially inaugurated and blessed by Bishop Merhakristos Gobezayehu Getachew Yilma, Vicar Apostolic of Hawassa, in the presence of members of the Comboni Family, local clergy, religious sisters, members of religious orders, and the lay faithful. The event marked an important milestone for the Comboni Missionaries and the local Church.
The CYC was conceived as a place for youth development, spiritual renewal, and missionary animation. It will serve as a space for reflection and community gathering, where young people can deepen their faith, strengthen their relationship with God, and grow together in unity and peace.
The complex consists of two buildings housing a chapel, a refectory and kitchen, a large meeting hall, two smaller rooms for smaller groups, a library, a computer room with a digital library, 28 en-suite rooms, and two dormitories. The facility is further complemented by a grotto and a multipurpose sports field.
The inauguration ceremony began with a Eucharistic celebration presided over by Bishop Merhakristos, who congratulated the Comboni Family—both in Ethiopia and worldwide—for their contribution to the realisation of the project.
"This celebration," he emphasised, "is intended to bless not only the buildings, but also—and above all—the young people who will use them to seek and listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd, and who will then

return home to become ‘shepherds’ themselves for others. What takes place within these spaces will help fulfil the dream of Saint Daniel Comboni: ‘To save Africa through Africa’.“ “May Heaven grant that other places like this might spread throughout the entire continent, so that young people may encounter and come to love Jesus.”
The Provincial Superior, Abba Asfaha Yohannes, expressed his gratitude to the many donors who made the creation of the CYC possible: “I wish to extend my deepest thanks to our generous benefactors who turned this dream into reality: the Italian Episcopal Conference (CEI), the Papal Foundation, the Nigrizia Foundation, the last two General Councils of the Institute, and several of its provinces. Their financial contributions and invaluable ideas were instrumental in shaping this space into what it is today.”
He also extended his thanks to all his confreres in the province—especially the two previous Provincial Superiors and their respective councils—for their tireless work. Furthermore, he acknowledged the significant contribution of the late Father Nicolino Di Iorio, whose dedication to the project during its construction phase was essential: “His memory remains alive within the walls of this Centre, as evidenced by the beautiful statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary that adorns the complex—a gift from his parish community in Celenza, Italy, and his family, who continue to support the Centre and the mission in Daye.”
At the conclusion of the Eucharistic celebration, Monsignor Merhakristos blessed the two buildings, the grotto, and the surrounding grounds. The ceremony ended with a fraternal agape meal, in which all those present took part. *(Father Hippolyte Awoumessi Apedovi, MCCJ)*

The new archbishop of Addis Abeba receives the pallium
Archbishop Tesfaye Tadesse Gebresilasie—formerly Superior General of the Comboni Missionaries and, since 12th June, Metropolitan Archbishop of Addis Ababa (Ethiopia)—received the pallium on October 27 at the Pontifical Ethiopian College in Rome. It was presented to him, on behalf of Pope Francis, by Cardinal Claudio Gugerotti, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Oriental Churches.
The celebration, enlivened by traditional songs, drums, and dances, brought together priests, religious sisters, representatives of the Comboni Missionaries, laypeople, and many members of the Ethiopian community residing in Rome.
The pallium—a white wool band adorned with crosses—serves as a symbol of the Metropolitan Archbishop’s communion with the Pope and of his pastoral responsibility.

In his remarks, Archbishop Tesfaye thanked the Holy Father and all those present, while also expressing his concern regarding the conflicts, instability, and food shortages affecting the country—exacerbated, in part, by climate change. He reaffirmed his commitment to remain close to the Ethiopian people and to journey alongside them in the pursuit of peace. The celebration concluded with a fraternal luncheon, accompanied by traditional songs by the Ethiopian community. *(Father David Domingues, MCCJ)*

ITALY

In Brescia one breathes Comboni air

On Sunday, 4th October 2026, about seventy people—family members, friends, and Comboni lay associates, together with the entire Comboni community in Brescia—experienced an event-filled day: a celebration for the families of Comboni missionaries from the Brescia area.

The event consisted of three main parts: a meeting with Father David Costa Domingues, Vicar General of the Comboni Institute; the celebration of Mass at the "Buon Pastore" (Good Shepherd) parish; and a communal lunch, prepared and served with great care by the house staff.

Following a warm welcome, Father Girolamo Miante—the superior, who is soon to leave the community for a mission in Togo—introduced the ten or so confreres present and remembered those who have recently returned to the Father's house. He also shared apologies—sent via email or phone—from family members who were unable to attend. Finally, he introduced Father David, who greeted the gathering—family members, Comboni lay associates, and friends—saying: "Please feel truly welcome, for you are, in every sense, members of the Comboni family."

Father David then spoke about the Comboni charism, which stems from the love of Christ and sends us forth to share that same love—a love that demands respect for every person we encounter, recognising their capacity to be the protagonists of their own lives and histories.

As an example of the Comboni presence, he shared an experience from Kenya, where 'street' youth are offered a path to reclaim their lives. He remarked: "It is an initiative that is leading these young people toward a profound transformation—moving from a difficult existence on the fringes of legality to a life lived with dignity through their own work." Father David also spoke about his twenty years of mission work in the Philippines, highlighting his 'presence' among the 'invisible'—those whom affluent society fails to see or consider. It is a presence that accompanies, offers courage

and hope, and serves as a sign of Christ's love—a hallmark of the Comboni missionary.
Furthermore, he provided an update on the status of the Comboni Institute's personnel as of 1st January 2026. There are currently 1,449 Comboni missionaries: 621 from Africa, 577 from Europe, and 251 from the Americas and Asia; of these, 277 are completing their formation. The number of Comboni brothers, however, is on the decline.
Father Girolamo then spoke, announcing his upcoming departure for a mission in Togo. He expressed his happiness regarding the nine years he spent in Brescia and thanked everyone for the fraternal bonds formed during that time. He also introduced Father Gaetano Montresor as the new superior of the community. With great simplicity, Father Gaetano shared some reflections on his own life journey and missionary experience.
The group then moved to the nearby Church of the Good Shepherd for the celebration of Mass, presided over by Father David and concelebrated by his confreres from the community. In his homily, the Vicar General spoke once more about the mission—a gift entrusted to everyone, which each person has a responsibility to help bear fruit. "Mission is never a personal endeavour; it must always be shared, because, by its very nature, it is communal."
The luncheon that followed was a wonderful occasion, filled with the joy and beauty of being together. As the time came to part ways, everyone agreed to meet again next year. *(Father Gaetano Montresor, MCCJ)*

Mons. Antonio Maria Roveggio close to the altars
On 10th October 2026, at the Motherhouse of the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus in Verona, the diocesan phase of the inquiry into the "enduring reputation" for holiness and signs attributed to the Servant of God, Bishop Antonio Maria Roveggio, was concluded. The Eucharistic celebration, presided over by Father Pietro Ciuciulla, Provincial Superior for Italy, took place on the Solemnity of Saint Daniel Comboni. At its conclusion, the final session of the diocesan tribunal formally closed this significant stage of the process. All documentation will now be forwarded to the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints in Rome for the next steps in the proceedings.
Born in Cologna Veneta in 1858, Roveggio joined the Institute founded by Saint Daniel Comboni and departed for the missions in Africa. On 8th February 1895, at the age of only 36, he was appointed Vicar Apostolic of Central Africa. Consecrated a bishop in Verona on 2nd April of that same year, he chose the phrase *In omnibus Caritas* ("Charity in all things") as the motto for his episcopal coat of arms.

With tireless dedication, he travelled along the Nile aboard the steamer *Redemptor*, encountering numerous peoples, establishing new missions, and enduring hardships, illnesses, and various adversities. He passed away in Berber, Sudan, on 2nd May 1902, at the age of just 43, while on his way back to Egypt.

During the final session, the General Postulator, Father Cosimo De Iaco, emphasised that the testimonies and documents collected confirm the enduring reputation for holiness of Bishop Roveggio. His life remains a luminous testament to charity, prayer, courage, and total dedication to the peoples of Central Africa. Five aspects make his spiritual legacy particularly relevant today: solidarity with the poor and the exploited, the primacy of prayer, communion and missionary co-responsibility, the Heart of Christ as the source of mission, and a firm hope in the future of evangelisation.

The conclusion of the diocesan phase—part of a cause initiated in 1952—marks a significant milestone on the path toward beatification. The witness of Monsignor Roveggio continues to invite the Church and the Comboni family to live out the mission as a total gift of self, in charity and humility, with trust in the Gospel and in the capacity of peoples to be the protagonists of their own journey.

'Cuore Amico' Prize– Of one heart to generate Hope

"On Monday, 19th October, the primary school at Comboni College in Khartoum will reopen!" With this announcement, Father Diego Dalle Carbonare, Provincial Superior for Egypt-Sudan, shared a message of great hope during the 'Cuore Amico' ('Friendly Heart') Award ceremony, held at the Church of San Cristo in Brescia—a site often referred to as the 'Sistine Chapel of Brescia'.

The award, now in its 36th year and often described as the "Nobel Prize for missionaries," was presented to three individuals dedicated to humanitarian projects: Father Diego Dalle Carbonare, for the renovation and reopening of Comboni College in Khartoum, Sudan; Sister Beatrice Loda, for the reconstruction of the Foyer Nabanga in the Vanuatu islands, which was destroyed by an earthquake in 2024; and lay missionary Stefania Cremaschini, for her work supporting healthcare in Peru through the provision of medicines and medical equipment.

In their remarks, the recipients reflected on how the people they encountered throughout their missionary journeys became, in turn, their own teachers in life and spirituality. The projects supported by the award share a common goal: to foster hope through healthcare, education, and training.

Particularly poignant was the testimony of Father Dalle Carbonare, who spoke of the many Sudanese children who had been unable to attend school for three years. “School is the true antidote to war”—it is a place where ethnic, religious, and social divisions can give way to sharing, friendship, and fraternity.
Enrolment for the new academic year at Comboni College has far exceeded expectations—a tangible sign that, even in a nation scarred by war, education can pave the way towards a future. *(Father Gaetano Montresor, MCCJ)*

ACSE – A frontier of encounter, a workshop of fraternity
The *XXXV Immigration Report,* a document produced by Caritas Italiana and the Migrantes Foundation, presented in Rome on October 18th, is titled *Confini e frontiere* (Borders and Frontiers). These two terms frequently appear in discussions about migration and are sometimes used as synonyms—though they are not.
Confine (border)—derived from the Latin *finis*—denotes a limit, a line that demarcates a space, a possession, an identity, or a responsibility. It can become the point that determines who is inside and who remains outside—at times even marking the boundary where the recognition of another person’s dignity ends. A border separates the “this side” from the “other side.”
Frontiera (frontier)—derived from the Latin *frons*—evokes the idea of ‘looking ahead’, of a space that lies ‘before us’. At a frontier, people interact, meet, and sometimes clash; yet, a face-to-face encounter remains possible.
While a border separates, a frontier fosters connection. The language of the border is composed of terms like ‘repelling’, ‘externalising’, ‘repatriating’, ‘remigrating’ (returning to one’s place of origin), ‘irregularity’, and the construction of walls. At a frontier, by contrast, the focus is on encounter. Citizens, families, third-sector workers, doctors, and teachers inhabit this space, engaging in a quiet, diligent form of encounter—one that news reports often struggle to convey, or choose to ignore altogether.
Frontiers can transform into borders when hospitality—the act of opening a door, helping someone cross a threshold, and enabling a ‘conviviality of differences’—is absent.
These terms may sound like mere philosophy, but they become reality the moment they take on the faces and names of actual human beings. This is precisely what the Comboni Association for Emigrants and Refugees (ACSE) strives to do—and, above all, to embody—every single day in Rome.

Located in the historic Monti district, just a short distance from Via dei Fori Imperiali and Via Cavour, the ACSE headquarters has opened its doors since 1983 to promote and live out a culture of welcome. The organisation has now maintained a permanent base for 43 years; however, its history began much earlier, in 1969, with the pastoral vision of Father Renato Bresciani. Since then, the ACSE itself has been, in a sense, a "migrant," moving between various locations before arriving at its current home.

It is impossible to calculate how many people have crossed this threshold over the years, seeking—and finding—a warm welcome and support. Through Italian, computer, and English language courses, legal assistance, a dental clinic, the weekly distribution of food parcels, and the provision of scholarships, the association seeks to address concrete needs and offer opportunities for individuals to build their own future.

It is also difficult to determine exactly how many nationalities have come together at ACSE. In this regard, the records of the dental clinic—which will mark thirty years of operation in 2027—offer some insight: over the years, people from as many as 96 different nationalities have passed through its doors.

And, since we are looking at figures, let's add a few more. From September 2025 to the present, the Thursday morning volunteers have welcomed 692 individuals from 71 different countries. Men outnumber women. Requests primarily concern support in learning the Italian language and dental care. In terms of nationality, those from Peru top the list, followed by people from Ukraine, Bangladesh, Egypt, Tunisia, Sri Lanka, Morocco, and many other nations.

Behind these numbers lie real people, stories, expectations, and hopes. There are also the volunteers—the women and men—who make all of this possible, dedicating their time, energy, skills, and personal resources to the activities that take place every day of the week. It is a commitment that, at times, even involves a personal financial contribution.

Thanks to them, ACSE becomes much more than just an association; it transforms into **a workshop where fraternity is lived out and put into practice**.

There is no single recipe for fraternity. Perhaps there are certain essential ingredients—welcoming others, listening, withholding judgment, showing respect, and recognising rights. Yet, above all, fraternity is a collective, artisanal endeavour. It is collective because we are all called to play a leading role through our actions. It is artisanal because each person must contribute something of their own: their commitment, their calling, their abilities, their creativity, and even their imagination. Fraternity is not built

in the abstract, but through concrete gestures, daily relationships, and a willingness to get involved. This is what volunteers do: they give their time and place their skills at the service of others.
One final reflection. I believe that ACSE is deeply rooted in the Comboni charism. It is so because Comboni missionaries—men and women—together with lay people, strive each day to carry forward Father Bresciani's original vision, adapting it to the reality of migration in Italy today.
Furthermore, it is rooted in the charism because the words of Saint Daniel Comboni, spoken in Khartoum on 1st May 1873, in his "programmatic homily"— "I make common cause with each one of you"—are brought to life daily through the style of service and the activities that ACSE offers.
"Making common cause": perhaps this is the very expression that best describes what happens every day within our association. People from different backgrounds, histories, and cultures meet, listen to one another, and walk together. And, one gesture at a time, they build a fraternity that is not merely an ideal to be proclaimed, but a reality to be lived. (*Brother Antonio Soffientini, MCCJ*)

MEXICO

Father Rafael Huerta, 50 years of missionary priesthood
On 5th October, at the San Francesco d'Assisi parish in the municipality of Tepatitlán—located in the Los Altos region of the state of Jalisco—Comboni missionary Father Rafael Huerta celebrated his 50th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood.
Family members and a large group of parishioners were present to share in this significant milestone. Concelebrating alongside Father Rafa were several of his confreres from the communities of San Francisco del Rincón, Sahuayo, Zapopan, and Xochimilco.
During his homily, Father Rafa reflected on moments from his long missionary career, focusing in particular on the 22 years he spent in Ethiopia engaged in pastoral work—a period he described as "the happiest and most fruitful years of my missionary life."
With humility and a deep sense of gratitude, he acknowledged his own human frailties, while affirming that everything he was able to accomplish—whether great or small—was possible only because of God's immense goodness toward him. It was the Lord who sustained him and gave him the strength to continue his missionary journey.
For this reason, he emphasised that it is crucial not to focus too much on oneself, but rather to keep one's gaze fixed on the Lord. It is He who,

through pure grace, enables each person to carry out His will to the best of their ability.
Father Rafa also recalled the beginnings of his vocation. At that time, his sole interest was to become a missionary. Becoming a Comboni religious would come later; his primary desire was simply to set out and proclaim the Gospel wherever in the world the need was greatest.
And, as it turned out, God's Providence led him—almost by the hand—all the way to Ethiopia. It was there that he was able to live among the people and in their service—not to proselytise, but to strive, at every moment, to bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, our Lord, the only One capable of transforming our lives.
During the celebration, Father Lauro Betancourt, representing the provincial council, thanked the parish for the affection shown to Father Rafa over so many years. Although he spent many years serving on missions abroad, he was always welcomed with warmth by the community whenever he returned. "This attitude," Father Lauro emphasised, "is an important sign—one that can encourage a missionary to remain ever more faithful to the Lord and to his own vocation."
At the end of the celebration, those present gathered for a moment of celebration and sharing. Refreshments were served, and, accompanied by mariachi music, family members, faithful, and confreres shared a meal in an atmosphere of genuine joy and fraternity, thus setting a festive tone for a day dedicated to thanksgiving for Father Rafael's 50 years of priestly and missionary life. *(Father Fernando Cortés, mccj)*

Superior General and his Vicar visit the Province
From 18th to 26th September, the Comboni Province of Mexico hosted a visit from Father Luigi Codianni, Superior General, and Father David Costa, Vicar General. The primary focus of their visit was a meeting with the regional commission tasked with overseeing the process of unifying the provinces, as well as visits to the various Comboni communities throughout the country.
Their first stop was the novitiate. The day after their arrival, the community—along with two first-year novices—joyfully welcomed the two superiors. In a spirit of fraternity, Father Luigi and Father David shared key insights regarding the current state of the Institute, focusing specifically on the reorganisation of its administrative circumscriptions and the ongoing process of updating its formation programs.
Using statistical data and an analysis of the 'vocational geography', they outlined the major challenges the Institute must now confront: the high number of elderly and infirm confreres, coupled with a steady decline in

the overall number of members—a situation that, they noted, is a source of significant concern for the General Administration.
This underscores the necessity of merging provinces to strengthen the Institute's missionary presence and ensure its long-term sustainability. It is precisely this objective that prompted the Superior General and the Vicar General to visit Brazil recently, and now Mexico.
The novitiate community presented its own situation, giving the superiors a closer look at the formation journey and an opportunity to exchange assessments and future perspectives. The visit concluded with the celebration of the Eucharist and a time of fellowship along the traditional canals of Xochimilco, aboard *trajineras*—distinctive local boats, somewhat akin to gondolas.
There were also ample opportunities for personal, one-on-one dialogue. Both at the novitiate and at the provincial headquarters, the confreres and the communities had the opportunity to meet individually with Father Luigi and Father David, in an atmosphere of listening and communion. The visit was thus experienced as a meaningful moment of fraternity with the Institute's General Administration.
The second stop was the community of La Moctezuma, where the Comboni missionaries serve at the Martyrs of Uganda rectorate and support the vocational centre. Here, too, the visit was marked by meetings with the community and the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist together with the faithful—followed by a simple, fraternal gathering at table.
In the evening, Father Luigi and Father David met with the community at the provincial house. They expressed their gratitude for the service provided to the many confreres who pass through—whether returning from their missions or arriving from various local communities to address matters related to their missionary work.
The two superiors encouraged the community to make the provincial house not merely a place of welcome or a transit point, but also a space where every confrere can find serenity, restore his energy, and renew his missionary zeal.
The following day, a meeting was held with the regional commission tasked with the unification of the provinces in the Central America-Mexico region. The North American Province (NAP) was also represented, as it may eventually be integrated into this new regional configuration.
The commission presented the progress made thus far, focusing primarily on raising awareness among the confreres regarding potential changes and drafting an initial outline for the future regional project for this part of the continent. The meeting also served as an opportunity to share

reflections, pose questions, and offer suggestions, fostering an open dialogue between members of the General Council and the Commission.
Before concluding their stay in Mexico, Father Luigi and Father David also visited the community at the Missionary Animation Centre (CAM). There, they met with the community and the staff involved in publishing the magazines *Esquila Misional* and *Aguiluchos*, as well as those working across the various departments and areas of this provincial initiative.
The visit concluded with a sense of gratitude. The presence of the Superior General and the Vicar General served to strengthen the bonds of communion, address current challenges, and look with confidence toward the path that lies ahead for the Institute. We offer our heartfelt thanks to Father Luigi and Father David for having shared this part of the journey with us, and for their guidance in the process of restructuring our presence through unification. *(Father Mario Alberto Pacheco Zamora, MCCJ)*

MOZAMBIQUE

80 years of Comboni presence – "Put out into the deep"
Celebrating 80 years of presence in this "beloved homeland" means, above all, heeding the invitation Jesus extended to Peter and the other disciples. It means feeling compelled to go further and to go deeper. Peter's response must also be our own: "At your word, I will let down the nets" *(Luke 5:4)*.
The Comboni presence in Mozambique began in July 1946 in Mossuril, in the province of Nampula, with the arrival of an experienced missionary from Sudan: Father Giuseppe Zambonardi. Since then, how many gazes filled with love and compassion have there been, right up to the present day! How much "Mozambican blood" flows through the veins of our Comboni Institute! There is so much mutual gratitude and appreciation for the privilege of having shared life with simple yet profound people—people who have enriched both our personal lives and our history as an Institute.
Four key moments—I would summarise this journey through four particularly significant periods in the life of the Mozambican people: from 1946 to 1964; from 1965 to 1975; from 1976 to 1992; and from 1993 to the present day.
The first period was marked by the "mystique of beginnings." When an undertaking is launched, one often encounters men and women who possess a vision, who nurture dreams, and who are able to see beyond what the majority perceives. They are true visionaries, and nothing—nor anyone—can divert them from their vision. They live, work, pray, and sleep without ever losing sight of the goals they are pursuing.

Mossuril soon became too small for the ambitions of these young missionaries, who were as deeply in love with Africa as their founder had been. They grew deeply attached to this people and this land, deepening their roots and extending their branches toward unexplored territories: Carapira, Netia, Nacarôa, and Alua.

The bishop who visited them during this early phase in Carapira was struck by such missionary boldness and exclaimed: “These missionaries are either mad or heroes.” The distinguished visitor was not wrong—the missionaries were both mad and heroes!

The second period encompasses the years of the armed struggle and the quest for independence. During this time, the missionaries stood with the people. Gathering in an assembly, they drafted and circulated a document titled *Imperativo di coscienza* (*Imperative of Conscience)* in February 1974, which contained an urgent appeal for the bishops to abandon all ambiguity and take a clear stand in favour of Mozambique’s independence. The document led to the expulsion of 11 Comboni missionaries, along with the Bishop of Nampula, Msgr. Manuel Vieira Pinto. It was shortly before Easter 1974.

The third period of our presence spans the years from 1975 to 1992. In 1977, the country once again descended into civil war. From that point on, Mozambique saw its hopes dashed. The war lasted 16 years, and throughout this time, the missionaries kept the hope of the Mozambican people alive. Wherever the people suffered and sought refuge, the missionaries accompanied them. They even established two communities in Malawi to remain close to the Mozambican refugees. Once again, a fundamental aspect of the Comboni charism became clear: to cast one’s lot with the poor and the oppressed. Finally, with the coming of peace on 4th October 1992, the fourth period—the postwar era—began. Amidst both joy and wariness, the Comboni Missionaries, together with the people, lifted their heads once more, hoping for a new dawn that would never fade. They did not surrender to the dire situation in which the country found itself; instead, they set to work, participating in the reconstruction of a society and a nation shattered by war. They invested in the formation of laypeople, as well as candidates for both Comboni and diocesan missionary life.

“Going beyond” – Celebrating eighty years means cherishing a grateful memory of all that has been accomplished. It is fitting to acknowledge the invaluable contribution made toward building a society that is more just, more humane, and more in harmony with God’s plan. It is right to “doff our hats” to the pioneers and to all those who have followed in their footsteps up to the present day. Yet, this is not enough. We must go further,

refining how we interpret reality so as to discern God's plan for us at this specific moment in the history of Mozambique and its people.
Our history, while sown with successes, has also been marked by days of sadness and weariness. Throughout it all, however, the gaze of the Master has remained fixed upon us with affection, instilling both confidence and faithfulness.
Missionary challenges – Looking toward the future, we see several challenges before us:

- Keeping the flame alive: turning our gaze toward the fields that are green and ready for the harvest, while opening ourselves to the power of the Spirit poured out upon us.
- Actualising the charism: inculturating the Combonian charism—for it is only through sharing it with others that it can remain alive and relevant, rather than being locked away in a granary.
- Forming young people: providing solid accompaniment to young missionaries in light of the vocational boom in Mozambique, while reinforcing the principle of "saving Africa through Africa."
- Renewing love: walking side by side with the Mozambican people, building a bright present—stone by stone—where the future begins today, and setting out into the deep!

(Father Jeremias dos Santos Martins, MCCJ)

TOGO

A message born of the community
From 20th to 23rd October 2026, the provincial house of the Comboni Missionaries in Lomé (Togo) was transformed into a small production studio. Twenty-two participants—animators and communicators from the Togo-Ghana-Benin province—took part in four days of hands-on training. With smartphones in hand, microphones switched on, and computers open late into the evening, they got to work.
I facilitated this training session alongside two highly skilled African colleagues: Charles Ayetan, a journalist from Togo, and Jacob Brahim Konfé, a UI/UX and motion designer from Burkina Faso. Our goal was both simple and ambitious: to empower each participant to produce multimedia content for social media and for the communication needs of their communities and the province, including the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools.
From writing to directing—We started with the basics: writing for the web, conducting interviews, and creating reportage. We then moved on

to smartphone filming—covering framing, sound, and lighting—as well as editing using CapCut and Canva.

The second day was dedicated to AI. We began with ethics: truth, copyright, deepfakes (an AI and machine learning technique used to create or alter videos, images, and audio recordings so realistically that they appear authentic), and ecclesial responsibility. This was followed by the art of "prompting" using Gemini and NotebookLM, and a practical workshop on using AI agents to automate repetitive tasks.

On the third day, the focus shifted to "creating" for social media: conceptualising and recording audio and video podcasts; using AI for music and voice—such as jingles, theme music, voice-overs, and audio translation; and planning a video broadcast, including developing a rundown and filming in groups.

On the final day, the groups produced their own broadcasts. We watched the videos produced together and concluded with the presentation of certificates.

What I witnessed—I was delighted to see the passion the twenty-two participants had for digital communication. It was not merely a passing curiosity, but a genuine desire to learn, experiment, make mistakes, and start again. Above all, I discovered creative abilities and true talent among my confreres: some have a natural eye for framing, others possess a voice made for radio, and some show a surprising narrative intuition…

In just a few hours, many went from being mere spectators of communication to becoming its creators. The broadcasts produced on the third day are proof of this: real stories, told by those who live them. This confirms a conviction I have held for years, ever since my time serving in Chad: the mission already contains its own communicators. They simply need to be given the tools, the trust, and a space where they can share.

Towards a shared and decentralised form of communication—The seminar in Lomé also nurtures a greater dream: a common platform for sharing content—news, personal accounts, videos, podcasts, and photographs—across all the Francophone provinces.

My hope is that the provinces of Togo-Ghana-Benin, Chad, the Central African Republic, and the DR Congo can embark on a true journey of transformation in how they communicate.

A shift from a model based solely on print to one centred on a shared platform. No longer a few people writing for the many, but many people telling stories together—in other words, a decentralised form of communication, where every community becomes an editorial team and every confrere becomes a witness capable of sharing a story.

In Lomé, this journey has begun. Twenty-two people have already shown us the way. *(Father Fabrizio Colombo, MCCJ, President of CREC International)*

IN PACE CHRISTI

FR. ESQUIVEL HERNANDÉZ DAVID ARTURO (06.05.1956 – 22.09.2026)

David was born in Mexico City on 6th May 1956, to José Luis and Amelia Hernández. On 10th May, he was baptised at the parish of the Holy Spirit. He is the eldest of six children, and the only boy; one of his sisters was adopted. The family was devoutly Christian and Catholic. In an interview with *Mundo Negro* (March 2023), in which he retraced the stages of his life, he recalled: "When we were small, my father would take us to Mass every Sunday. Back then, the Mass was still in Latin, with the priest celebrating with his back to the congregation. For us children, it felt like an endless torture. But once we left the church, Dad would always buy us ice cream. The following Sunday, we would go again—driven by that 'devout' motivation."

During those years, education in Mexico was highly "secular." Nevertheless, David was enrolled in a Catholic school. Even as a young child, he knew all the mysteries of the Rosary by heart, partly because his family recited it every day. "I also remember that my grandfather had subscribed us to a magazine published by the Jesuits, *Exemplary Lives*, which I used to read with great enthusiasm. In one issue, I came across a short biography of Saint Daniel Comboni; I liked it a lot, though I didn't find anything particularly special about it. His life was just like many of the other 'exemplary lives' featured."

Searching

After finishing high school, in 1974, David enrolled in an engineering program at the National Polytechnic Institute in Mexico City. In November of that year, he was invited to attend a spiritual retreat organized by the Marist Brothers: "Those four days completely opened my eyes, and I said to myself, 'I will follow Jesus Christ! That is what I must do!' "

He took some time, however, to let his decision mature. Then came a turning point: "One night in February 1976, the Holy Spirit was truly stirring my soul. I couldn't sleep. I kept mulling over what I should do. My father had taken on a second job to pay for my studies—he dreamed of me becoming an engineer, and I liked the idea, too. But my vocation was growing stronger by the day. Confused, I went the next day to see Father Pedro Herrasti, the coordinator of those retreats for university students. Always

optimistic and calm, Father Pedro suggested that I set aside my studies at the Polytechnic for a while—taking a year or two to figure out what I was truly looking for. In any case, I could always resume my studies later."
Father Pedro also told him about the various religious orders present in Mexico: the Dominicans, Jesuits, Marists, and the Missionaries of Guadalupe—all well-known in the country. He also mentioned the Comboni Missionaries, who are dedicated to the evangelisation of Africa. The name of the institute reminded David of a short biography of Daniel Comboni he had read years earlier. He decided to get in touch with them. He was given the address of their house in Xochimilco, located on the other side of Mexico City. He went there and was welcomed by Father José Moschetta. "It was a warm welcome." He wanted to make sure that my desire to become a missionary wasn't just an excuse to escape something else. But once he learned that I was doing well in all my exams, his concerns were put to rest. A few months later, he invited me to attend a vocational retreat. I felt so at home with the Comboni seminarians and the other young participants that I said to myself, "I will stay here."
David knew that telling his family wouldn't be easy. For a while, he put it off. Then, three months before entering the seminary, he was forced to bring it up—rather abruptly. His mother, who was very emotional, burst into tears. "She couldn't accept the idea. In fact, even eight years later, on the eve of my priestly ordination, she was still hoping I would change my mind about becoming a missionary. My father, on the other hand, said nothing—though I knew he was suffering inside—but he supported my vocation unconditionally."

Formation… In love with Chad

In August 1976, at the age of 20, David began his formation in the postulant house in Xochimilco, where he took a preparatory course in philosophy. On 13th September 1978, he entered the novitiate in Cuernavaca, where he took his first religious vows on April 19, 1980. In May, he travelled to Issy-les-Moulineaux, near Paris, to study French and begin a four-year theology program at the Institut Catholique de Paris (ICP). On 30th April 1983, he made his perpetual religious profession, and on 29th December of the same year, he was ordained a deacon by Bishop François Favreau of Nanterre. On 27th June 1984, he earned his baccalaureate in theology.
While at the ICP, he met a seminarian from Chad named Bernard Bessita. "He became, first, a point of reference, and later, a guide in my life. We immediately felt a connection and forged a strong friendship. Bernard introduced me to many Chadian individuals and families, whom we visited frequently. So, when I finished my studies and was asked where

I would like to carry out my missionary ministry, I did not hesitate; I wrote down only one name: Chad. My formators cautioned me, explaining that missionary work in tha country was quite demanding due to the heat and the many languages one would need to learn. I, however, stood by my choice."

Ordination and… Doba

In August, David returned to Mexico. On 8th September 1984, he was ordained a priest at the Church of San Felipe de Jesús by Monsignor Manuel Perez Gil González, Bishop of Tlalnepantla. Two months later, he was already on a flight to Chad. Because the country was at war, he landed in Bangui, the capital of the Central African Republic, where he remained for three months. On 6th February 1985, he arrived in Sarh, finally setting foot on Chadian soil and realising his dream.

His first assignment was to the parish of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus in the town of Doba, in the Diocese of Moundou. He was immediately appointed parish priest. "My three fellow priests were heavily involved in the rural areas of this vast parish, and I—having no prior knowledge of the local context—had to learn everything: the *Ngambay* language, catechism programs, how the various groups functioned, youth ministry, the *Kem Kogui* group for children… I was kept busy—and worried! —from morning till night. I realised just how much we missionaries depend on catechists. I was very fortunate to have three experienced catechists by my side who helped me immensely, as did the French Oblate Sisters of Saint Thérèse, who were also serving in the parish. Six fantastic years followed, during which I felt 100% like a missionary. Moreover, I was living within a young, growing Church, where there were fewer than twenty native Chadian diocesan priests across the country's four dioceses."

Meeting Chadian priests was not easy, as they lived in parishes located very far apart from one another. "And yet, even though we didn't see each other often, I forged a deep friendship with them." My friend—now a priest—Bernard Bessita had already told them about me [he would later become known for his pastoral commitment and his presence in the most remote, desert regions of Chad, Editor's Note]. I soon became known to all as "Bernard's friend," and this led them to treat me with a special kind of brotherhood."

Before long, Father David was appointed secretary for vocational animation and formation. From July 1989 to June 1990, he served alongside the Bishop of Doba, Monsignor Michele Russo, a Comboni missionary.

Return to Mexico and … Bodo

In July 1990, Father David's home province requested his return. "They asked me to come back, and I obeyed. For three years, I dedicated myself to promoting vocations at the Centre for Missionary Animation and Vocation Promotion in Cuernavaca; then, for three more years, I was tasked with working on the newly established diocesan seminary. In January 1993, I was elected as a provincial councillor, and on 2nd February, I was appointed vice-provincial superior."

In 1997, after completing the Comboni year of ongoing formation in Mexico City, he was given the green light to return to Chad. This time, however, he was assigned to serve as superior of the rural parish of Saint Michael the Archangel in Bodo, in the Diocese of Doba. "I had a wonderful experience there, too. We served 15 sectors, which included numerous Christian communities, and I formed friendships with many people. Believe me: I learned more from my encounters with the people than I ever did from books. Doba was my baptism, and Bodo was my confirmation in the mission."

Licentiate in spirituality and … N'Djaména

In 2000, he returned to Mexico City, in the Colonia Moctezuma neighbourhood, for a specialisation course in spirituality. In 2001, he obtained a licentiate, and in 2002, he earned a master's degree from the Colegio InterAmericano de Estudios Profesionales (CIEP), an educational and training institution located in Mexico City.

In October 2002, Father David was in N'Djaména, staying at the delegation's residence; serving as the superior of the community, he was actively engaged in ministry. On 1st January 2003, he was elected as a provincial councillor. In the aforementioned interview, he remarked: "I worked in various missions—Sarh, Moïssala, and Laï. In the latter, from 2006 to 2007, I was involved in diocesan offices and other services, such as promoting justice and peace regarding land disputes between farmers and herders, as well as defending women's rights—a specific area of work that we consider very important in Chad. Yet, I cannot deny that I have always held my first two parishes close to my heart—perhaps, in part, due to a touch of sentimentality." On 1st January 2006, he was elected as a provincial councillor for the second time.

In June 2008, he was in Mexico City at the postulant house for a "sabbatical year," which lasted until December 2009, when he was appointed as a formator of the postulants.

In January 2014, he went to Issy-les-Moulineaux, near Paris, for further studies. He remained there until the end of 2016, at which point he returned to Mexico for medical treatment.
In July 2018, Father David was assigned once again to Chad. He went there and remained for about a year while awaiting his specific assignment. In October of the following year, he was assigned to the parish of Bodo as superior of the Comboni community. He remained there until August 2022.

Interview
In September 2022, he went to Madrid as a guest of the provincial headquarters, where he spent a period of personal accompaniment and recovery—a particularly delicate time for him. It was during this stay that he gave an interview to the magazine *Mundo Negro*, conducted by Father Musaka Zoé.
After briefly recounting his life as a missionary, he was asked: "If you had to start all over again, would you become a missionary once more?" His answer was crystal clear: "I have never regretted it… although, I must admit, these last few years have been the most difficult. Perhaps it's my age. Or perhaps it's due to some rather 'complicated' relationships with a few of my confreres. But in any case, looking back, I must say that I am very happy. Everything in my life changed from the moment I came into contact with people from other continents and cultures. It may sound like a utopian dream, but I feel like a 'citizen of the world'."
Since the interview was for a column on vocations, he was asked what he would say to the young people of today. He replied: "I would tell them not to limit themselves to the virtual world of social media, but to dare to venture into the real world. To see, touch, smell, and taste—it changes everything. To catch the scent of the earth when the rains begin; to see the green of the dampened fields; to hear the chirping of birds in the morning and the sounds of bats at night; to listen to people heading out to their fields at dawn; to marvel at Sunday Masses, with people dancing in a steady rhythm and singing with all their might to the frenetic beat of the drums, praising God…"
He continued: "The invitation of Jesus Christ remains as valid as ever." Personally, it has made me a "human being" and continues to make me a slightly better "brother". And you, young person reading this, know that it demands the very best from you—so that, by developing all your potential, you may become a better human being and a true brother. Have courage; be bold! Cast off your moorings, leave the quiet bay, and come sail on the open sea."

In March 2023, Father David was in Mexico. He requested permission to live outside the community for a period, and his superiors granted it.
On September 19, 2026, he was admitted to the hospital for surgery due to peritonitis. His critical condition and a post-operative infection necessitated a second operation. Sadly, there was nothing more that could be done for him. He passed away on 22nd September. *(Mundo Negro; Father Musaka Zoé, MCCJ; and Father Franco Moretti).*

Fr. NAMBASI JOHN BOSCO MANGENI (12-09-1974 – 26-09-2026)

John Bosco was born on 12th September 1974, to Gershom Owori and Serena Nabwire in Buwerero, a village located in the Jinja parish, within the Lumino sub-county of the Busia District, in the Eastern Region of Uganda. He was baptised on 12th November 1989, at the Chapel of Saint Augustine, and received the sacrament of Confirmation on 20th November 1993, at the Nyangole parish.
He attended Bwekyeyo Primary School, followed by Masaba College for his lower secondary education (O-level). During school holidays, he served at the Catholic church in Busiro. Later, he attended Tororo College to complete his upper secondary education (A-level), and during his holidays, he taught at Lunyo Hill Secondary School.
He was an active member of the Legion of Mary movement and sang in the youth choir of his home parish.

Formation

In 1997, he earned a diploma in administrative sciences from the Uganda College of Commerce (UCC) in Soroti. Shortly thereafter, he entered the postulancy of the Comboni Missionaries in Jinja, where he attended the inter-congregational philosophy program. In 2000, he obtained a diploma in religious studies and a baccalaureate in philosophy, graduating with the distinction *magna cum laude probabus*.
Meanwhile, in 1999, he also earned a diploma in socio-political sciences—focusing on governance dynamics, public administration, and international relations—in Kampala, Uganda, graduating with the highest academic standing (First Class). On 28th August 2000, he began his novitiate, staying with a few other novices in the community of Lunzu (near Blantyre, Malawi), until the official inauguration of the new interprovincial novitiate in Bauleni (Lusaka, Zambia), which served as the formation centre for novices from the entire circumscription. On 5th May 2002, he

professed his first religious vows at the Minor Basilica of Namugongo (Uganda).
Shortly thereafter, he was sent to Rome to pursue theological studies at the Gregorian University, where he earned a baccalaureate in Theology in 2005. On 8th December of the same year, he made his perpetual profession. On 5th January 2006, he was ordained a deacon at the Church of Saints Vincent and Anastasius at Tre Fontane by Bishop Robert Sarah, Secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples. In June, he obtained a diploma in Formation Sciences from the Gregorian University and returned to Uganda for his priestly ordination, which took place on 1st July 2006, at the Cathedral of the Uganda Martyrs in Nyangole, administered by Archbishop James Odongo of Tororo. The following day, he celebrated his first Mass at the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes in Lumino (Busia).

Kenya e Uganda
In July 2006, Father John Bosco arrived at the provincial headquarters in Kenya and was immediately sent to Musoma, Tanzania, for a Swahili (Kiswahili) course at the Maryknoll Language School. Within three months, he had perfected his existing knowledge of the language. In October, he began his ministry at the Kariobangi parish, on the outskirts of Nairobi, where he remained for six years.
In February 2012, he returned to his home country to spend some time with his elderly parents. His father passed away on July 7. Father John Bosco was then assigned to the provincial headquarters in Mbuya, Kampala, serving as assistant to the provincial treasurer, Father Luigi Gabaglio.
In October 2014, he was appointed provincial treasurer and procurator. At the beginning of 2019, he enrolled in a specialized program in accounting, administration, and management at Makerere University in Kampala. He completed the course in December 2021 and graduated in April 2022.
From February 2023 until November of the same year, he served as parish priest of Kasaala, in the Diocese of Kasana-Luweero. In December, he was assigned to the Mbuya parish, though he resided with the community in Banda, where he focused on vocational promotion and missionary animation.

Sudden Death
On 26th September 2026, Father Nambasi was travelling by motorcycle along the Kampala-Jinja Road, returning from a visit to his mother. Near Mukono—possibly while attempting to avoid a *boda-boda*

(motorcycle taxi), or perhaps after being struck by one—he veered slightly into the opposite lane. A truck approaching at high speed struck him. The accident proved fatal. The news of his passing has caused deep sorrow among his family, his fellow religious brothers, and the communities he encountered throughout his long missionary journey. His death was all the more shocking for being completely unexpected: Father Nambasi was not ill; he was simply returning from a visit to his mother, to whom he was deeply devoted.

The funeral: from sorrow to hope

On 29th September, the funeral Mass was celebrated at the Church of Our Lady of Africa in Mbuya. In his homily, the Archbishop of Kampala, Monsignor Paul Ssemogerere, remembered Father Nambasi as a God-fearing, enterprising, and orderly man—a person of integrity who remained deeply close to the faithful. Even a seemingly minor detail served to reveal his way of life; the Archbishop noted: “The parish priest, Father James Patrick Jumba, told me that the accident occurred while the deceased was travelling by motorcycle, even though the parish has other vehicles at its disposal. This shows just how simple a person Father Nambasi was.”

The celebration was marked by conflicting emotions: on one hand, the sadness and grief of such a sudden loss; on the other, a faith that opens the door to hope.

Monsignor Ssemogerere urged those present not to be overcome by their suffering, but rather to transform their mourning into trust in God. The readings chosen for the Mass focused on the Passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ—the very core of the message that Father Nambasi proclaimed to the faithful in his homilies. The Archbishop remarked: “Those who live with Christ are called to die with Him, in the certainty that they will share in His life. This is a message that Father John Bosco proclaimed with his words and bore witness to through his own life. For this reason, his death also serves as an invitation to embrace his spiritual legacy.” Msgr. Ssemogerere urges the faithful to follow the example of a priest who lived in dedication to Christ, responding fully to his own vocation, and reminds every one of the responsibility inherent in their baptismal calling: to consecrate one’s life to Jesus.

Father Nambasi, the archbishop notes, knew how to recognise and follow his calling. After gaining initial professional experience as a qualified accountant, he chose to dedicate more than twenty years of his life to the priesthood and to missionary work. “Death is always a reality we would rather not face. Father John Bosco was not ill; he was going to visit his

dear mother. We are, therefore, called to be always prepared. We thank God for his life as a Comboni missionary, through which he reached and touched the lives of so many people," the archbishop stated.

A priest who was close to the people

During the service, Father Nicholas Onyait, parish priest of Our Lady of the Annunciation parish in Kasaala, read a commemorative tribute prepared by his Comboni confreres. It paints a portrait of a man deeply devoted to his family—especially his mother, whom he would visit every weekend. This strong family bond went hand in hand with a profound dedication to the communities entrusted to his pastoral care.

"Father Nambasi loved the people; he took a genuine interest in their daily lives and truly valued human relationships. Another defining aspect of his personality was his passion for languages and cultures. An author of texts in the Samia language, he composed several liturgical books in his own mother tongue. This was more than just a cultural interest: through language, he helped make prayer and liturgical celebrations resonate more deeply with the sensibilities and lived experiences of his people."

"His pastoral commitment extended well beyond the administration of sacraments or preaching. Father Nambasi was not afraid to address issues that directly affected the lives of Christians, including instances of injustice. He was a builder of community, capable of strengthening family and social ties through the proclamation of the Word of God," the confreres' tribute concludes.

Following the funeral service, Father Nambasi was laid to rest at the Comboni novitiate in Namugongo. *(Lominda Afedraru, Father Franco Moretti, MCCJ)*

LET US PRAY FOR OUR BELOVED DEAD

THE FATHERS: François, of Father Gbégnon Sénou Isaac (BEN/MO); René, of the scholastic Mbaïornom Dénis (TCH); Gershon Kofi Ketti, of Deacon Dzikunu Winfred Etse (GH)

THE MOTHERS: Laurentine, of Father Kasereka Amini Wasingya (CN); Marie Agnes Yanama Nkiesina, of Father Musaka Zoé (CN); Josephine Fony, of Father Idro Denis (U); Mariangela, of Father Giorgetti Angelo (I); Djoka Massan Véronique, of Father Fessou Kokou Hola (Maurice) (T); Juliana Akua Afordoje, of Father Boadi John Bliss (GH)

THE BROTHERS: Father Pedro (SJ), of Father Armada Díez de Rivera Rafael (E); Biagio, of Father Celestino Cieli (†)

THE SISTERS: Sister Manuela, of Father Villarino Rodrigue Antonio (E/CO), Kornon Bertine, of Father Horbé Richard (RCA/TCH)

THE SECULAR COMBONI MISSIONARY: Milani Graziana (I