



Associates

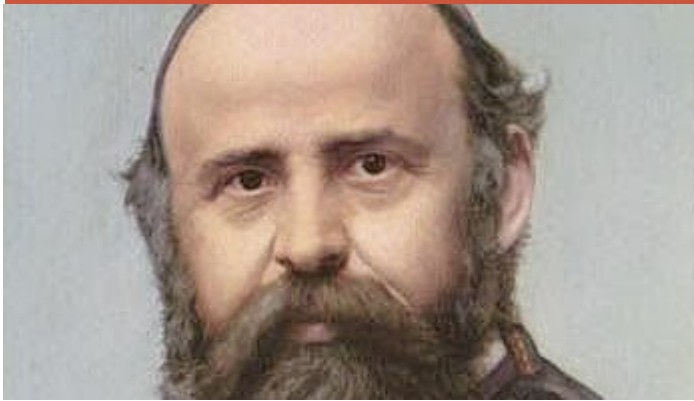
Comboni Missionary Sisters



COMBONI MISSIONARY SISTERS

“The Comboni Missionary Sisters are consecrated women of God called to mission around the world”

Founded by Saint Daniel Comboni in 1872.



**About 1200 sisters;
from 35 countries;
present in 5 continents
(36 countries)**



**Live in
intercultural
communities**



**Are called to be bridges
of encounter among all
cultures and religions.**



Formation Program Units

1. Foundational Materials

- Daniel Comboni – History / Life
- Comboni Missionary Sisters – History/Core Values
- Charism – Gift from God
- Charism of our Founder: Spirituality & Mission
- Charism of our Institute: Spirituality & Mission
- Reflection Day: Becoming a Cenacle
- Comboni Missionary Sisters – Spirituality (I)
- Comboni Missionary Sisters – Spirituality (II)
- Comboni Missionary Sisters – Mission/Ministry

2. Vocation Theology: How do the Laity “fit into all of this”?

- Baptism & Vocational Call
- Role of the Laity in the Church
- Laity always present in Comboni’s mission & work
- Reflection Day: Cenacle of Apostle, fragility and grace
- Call of a CMS Associate

3. Holy & Capable: Women of our History

- Maria Bolezzoli, first General Superior
- Teresa Gregolini
- Giuseppa Scandola, our first holy sister.
- Federica Bettari, intrapreneur General Superior
- Spirituality and Strategies of Reconciliation
- More Resources





Introduction

CMS
ASSOCIATES

1

The laity *always played* an active role in *Comboni's vision* of sharing in the mission of the Pierced Heart of the Good Shepherd on the Cross.

2

Desire association with the Sisters as a means for personal growth and holiness.

3

Share in the Comboni spirit, charism, values and heritage through *regular times* of prayer, worship and celebration, with the Sisters and other Associates.

4

Believe in the dignity and giftedness of each person.

5

Are a sign of God's presence in our broken world.

We, Comboni Missionary Sisters in the USA Delegation, are aware that sharing our charism with the laity is a **gift** of the Spirit and a **part** of our **charismatic identity**. Therefore, we desire to establish an **official** Comboni Associate Program.





1. Foundational Materials

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- Comboni Missionary Sisters – Mission/Ministry





St. Daniel Comboni

Today we will focus on the figure of St. Daniel Comboni, as we prepare to journey to become Associate of the Comboni Missionary Sisters.

Together we pray:

Heart of Jesus, at the beginning of this new session, we ask you to help us to be available to whatever the Father will ask of us and to graciously accept the joys and sufferings, which will come our way. Unite our humble desire to your infinite love, so the Father's will may be done in us. Amen.

Song - Open My Eyes Lord by Jesse Manibusan
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eo6gZAUuQ3E>

Reading Time

Please read the next pages and after 20 min. of reading in small group of three we will share following the instruction of the blue box.

Song- Comboni
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IIQhd7aI8TI>

Together we pray:

Mary, Mother of Mercy, help us dare to live the mystery of encounter, so as to be mission today, in the footsteps of St. Daniel Comboni and to the Sisters who have gone before us. Amen.

Deep Dialogue

In brief share with the group the following questions, don't interrupt the person that has the word.

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What did you hear during this profound dialogue that has not been expressed with words?



St. Daniel Comboni – History/Life

Early Life

- Born near Lake Garda, Italy on March 15, 1831
- Son of a gardener and a homemaker
- One of eight children, and the only one to survive
- At age 12, he was sent to St. Charles School, sponsored by Father Nicolas Mazza



Saint Daniel Comboni, from whom the Comboni Missionaries take their name, had a life marked by a deep and enduring passion for Africa. He was born in Limone, on Lake Garda in northern Italy on March 15, 1831 and died when he was only 50 years old in Khartoum, Sudan on October 10, 1881. Comboni was canonized on October 5, 2003.

St. Charles School

Influenced by priests and missionaries at the school, particularly Father Angelo Vinco

Returning from a mission to Central Africa, Father Vinco began to bring boys and girls ransomed from slave markets to be educated

At 15, Comboni read “History of the Martyrs of Japan” and decided that he wanted to be a missionary.



Unwavering faith and commitment

At the age of 17, Comboni took an oath to consecrate his life to the apostolate of Central Africa. Felt pushed toward Africa.

Africans were missing from their place at the table. Members of one human family under one common Father in heaven. His specific spirituality rendered him capable of carrying out his particular mission.

“Through God’s Grace, amidst changing circumstances, I never faltered in my vow. From that moment on, I had no other end in view than to prepare myself for that holy enterprise”

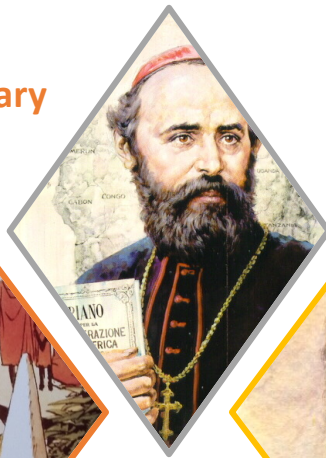
—St. Daniel Comboni



St. Daniel Comboni – History/Life



Missionary



Bishop



**Founder of
Religious
congregations
exclusively dedicated
to
missionary work**

**Mission
Educator and
vocation
promotor**

**Social Activist
Committed to
social justice**

"The Missionary must be prepared for everything: for joy and sadness, for life and death, for embrace and abandonment, and I am ready for it all".

Saint Daniel Comboni - Missionary, Father, Prophet

Missionary

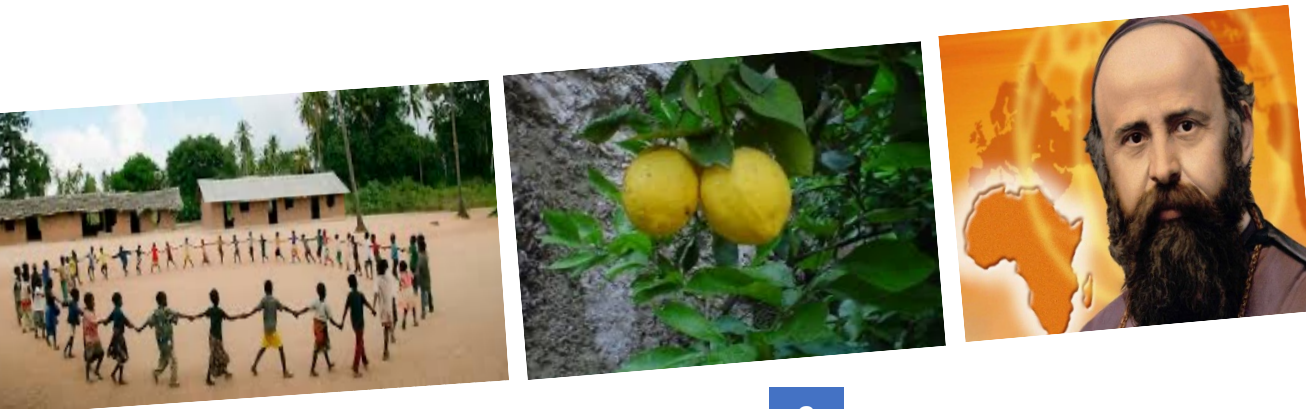
At a time when Africa was the place of great expeditions and explorations, Saint Daniel Comboni developed a love for Africa and the Africans that would last all his life. In 1857 from Verona, where he had trained for the priesthood, he went as a young missionary to Sudan. He returned to Europe several times for health reasons, vocation recruitment and fund raising. He was entrusted with a vast mission that included the whole of Central Africa and in 1877 was named the first Bishop of Khartoum where he died just four years later.

Father

St. Daniel Comboni soon realized that to ensure continuity to his mission to the vast African continent, he needed to form a group of priests, lay brothers and sisters. He started in 1867 in Verona by putting together a group of men - missionary priests and lay brothers - and in 1872 he founded the Comboni Missionary Sisters.

Prophet

St. Daniel Comboni looked at Africa with faith and respect and saw potential where others saw only extreme and crippling poverty. He also designed a *Plan* where he saw Africans as architects of their own destiny. The kernel of the plan was to 'Save Africa with Africa'. The most profound aspect of Comboni's prophetic vision was in his understanding of martyrdom: he yearned to be so fully united with his Lord that he would willingly sacrifice his life for the Lord and for Africa; like the grain of wheat that would die and produce a harvest for the whole of Central Africa.





Comboni Missionary Sisters- History

Today we will reflect on the mean of Charism and Spirituality, as gift from God. This session will help us to understand better the charism of St. Daniel Comboni and the Comboni Missionary Sisters.

Together we pray:

Through your Son Jesus, grant us the grace of letting ourselves be transformed by our encounter with you: regenerated by your merciful love, may we always find ways of responding the cries of our wounded and excluded brothers and sisters. Amen.

Song – Inspire Us by Sr. Ann

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eo6gZAUuQ3E>

Reading Time

Please read the next pages and after 20 min. of reading in small group of three we will share following the instruction of the blue box.

Testimony- Nomads

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wpOir_VLGPU

Together we pray:

Merciful God our Father, in union with the Heart of Jesus, we ask that the love which flowed from His pierced heart, transform us and sustain our missionary dedication, so that Your Kingdom may be establish in the whole world. Amen.

Deep Dialogue

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Comboni Missionary Sisters - History

- Bridges of reconciliation and forgiveness
- Weaver of dialogue for unity among all cultures and peoples in our fragmented world.

The Comboni Missionary are women consecrated to God for the mission "*ad gentes*". We came into being in 1872 and because of the prophetic inspiration of Daniel Comboni, we were founded as an exclusively missionary institute. Comboni was missionary who was passionate about Christ and about Africa and who always and everywhere gave priority to the poorest and most excluded people.

Comboni totally believed that the peoples of Africa could, through the power of the Gospel, become protagonists for the regeneration and liberation of Africa. He recognized the importance and necessity of the presence of consecrated women in the evangelizing mission of the Church, believing that their presence "constituted an indispensable element that was essential in all respects."

This vision of his is alive in us today wherever we are: in the African continent where we have our roots as well as in Europe, the Americas and Asia where, in response to the signs of the times, we are also present .

Comboni had a clear idea of the kind of person the missionary sister should be; he demanded that they be "women in love with Jesus Christ, forever walking the road of the mission in order to be sisters and companions on the journey of the least important ones."

Today, united in this single ideal we form an exclusively missionary family. We come from 35 nations and we work in 33 countries on four continents. At the moment there are over 1309 sisters ministering throughout the world. Our style of life, lived in multicultural communities, is already a proclamation of the good news and a sign of the Kingdom of God .

Our Congregation has been enriched by the personal and cultural diversity of each Sister. The experience of intercultural living at the heart of the "Cenacle of apostles", (community), opens us to new horizons. As we allow ourselves to be permeated by the presence of God and the reality of mission, we become regenerating communities, women of hope, prophetic signs and a witness in a world challenged by the phenomenon of globalization .

Making "common cause" calls us to a profound sense of gratitude for the peoples whose lives we share, those who welcome us, trust us, pardon and love us. Their welcome is an invitation to build more meaningful relationships, so that in humility and truth we can share more deeply that which is closest to our hearts: the Gospel message .

Comboni Missionary Sisters - History - USA

Our history in the USA officially began on October 12, 1950 with the arrival of the first group of Comboni Missionary Sisters in New York from Italy. They brought with them the desire to serve among the Afro-Americans who, at that time, were still suffering from segregation in the USA society. Serving in collaboration with the Redemptorist Missionaries, four Sisters formed the community of Richmond, Virginia in St. Augustine Parish (Fulton) which had two missions: Saint Gerard's in South Richmond and Holy Rosary in Churchill. The remaining four Sisters were welcomed in Chastang, Alabama where they taught in an Afro-American Boarding School for orphaned boys and girls sponsored by the Josephite Missionaries.

Fundamental Time 1950 - CMS-USA



1953

A second group of eight Sisters arrived. Purpose: reinforcing and expanding our presence in this Country



1954

A community was established in Mobile, Alabama.



1955

We purchased Lakeside Avenue in Richmond, Virginia, which then became our Provincial House/Headquarters



1956

Lansdale, Pennsylvania

Vocations



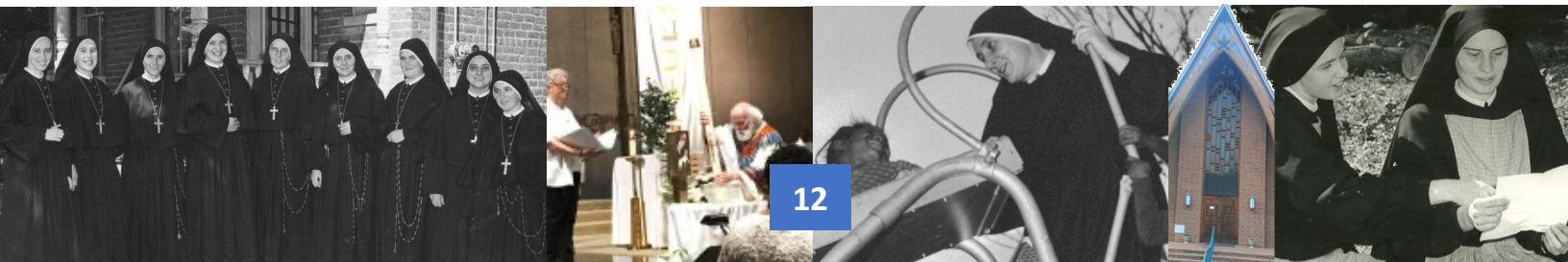
1957

Cincinnati, Ohio

Diocesan Mission Office and the Social Services Office among the Afro-American community

Holy Angels Day Care Center

We accepted to staff the St. Gerard Maternity Home for unwed Afro-American single mothers



Comboni Missionary Sisters - History - USA

Closing Alabama and Open in New Jersey Catechetical Center and Youth Ministry in the Trenton Diocese

1973-4

During this period- very similar ministries in Coatesville, Pennsylvania after almost 40 years of service to the Archdiocese of Philadelphia in St. Mary's Manor for the Aged.

1965

Novitiate-Lakeside First Profession 1965

During the sixties – Formal professional training of our Sisters in various Colleges

1982-2010

Open in Chicago-Parish Ministry: Afro American, Hispanic Mission Education / Vocation Promotion

1995

Baltimore, Maryland.

2000

Our community collaborates with agencies such as VIVAT International and the Catholic Mobilizing Network. Parish Pastoral Ministry and support of professional development for our sisters.

Richmond community members are involved today, 2019, with Catholic Diocese of Richmond by providing service at diocesan level at the Pastoral Center working with Ethnic Ministries, Parish level working in social and refuge ministries.

Also sisters work with organization such as AHLMA, LCWR. They restructure in Holy Angel Kinder Garden in Comboni Sisters Mission Center which his main focus in the promotion of Intercultural Living “One World Encounter in the Love of God” (OneWe)

As we journey along the second decade of the Third Millennium, we are presently serving in two communities: Richmond, Virginia and Baltimore, Maryland. During the last few years we have dedicated much time and energy in reassessing our ministries – attempting to read the ‘signs of the time’ – so as to better respond to the actual needs of today’s USA Society and Church. Our communities focus mainly on faith and spiritual formation, mission awareness, ministry among immigrants, advocacy for social justice and the formation and professional training of our Sisters.

Charism, gift from God

Today we will reflect on the mean of Charism and Spirituality, as gift from God. This session will help us to understand better the charism of St. Daniel Comboni and the Comboni Missionary Sisters.

Together we pray:

Jesus Redeemer of humankind, we thank you for having called us to follow you in this missionary family consecrated to Your Heart.

Contemplating the mystery of the Cross, the only source of salvation, draw us to yourself and render our heart like yours. Amen.

Song – Open my Eyes Lord by John M. Talbot
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y__Q34inR8A

Open my eyes, Lord
 Help me to see your face
 Open my eyes, Lord
 Help me to see

Open my ears, Lord
 Help me to hear your voice
 Open my ears, Lord
 Help me to hear

Open my heart, Lord
 Help me to love like you
 Open my heart, Lord
 Help me to love.

And the last shall be first
 And our eyes are opened
 And we'll hear like never before
 And we'll speak in new ways
 And we'll see God's face in places we've never known

I live within you
 Deep in your heart, O Love
 I live within you
 Rest now in me

Reading Time

Please read the next pages and after 20 min. of reading in small group of three we will share following the instruction of the blue box.

Together we pray:

Merciful God our Father help us to allow ourselves to become involved in the suffering and hope of the people among whom we live, so as to be witnesses of Your love to all people. Amen.

Deep Dialogue

In brief share with the group the following questions, don't interrupt the person that has the word.

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Charism, gift from God

The charism is a GIFT, it is GRACE: it is not something which I construct, neither did the Founder construct it. It is Grace. God, in His love for all of Humanity, blesses some people with this gift, so that in welcoming, cultivating and living it, they put it at the service of others. God, through His Spirit, works incessantly, so that this *Seed-Gift-Charism*, sown in the heart of our Founder first and then in the heart of every Comboni Sister, may produce fruits for a more fraternal world.

The charism is not static, because the Spirit of God is dynamic and It makes sure that the charism grows and develops becoming *journey, history, experience*; in the past, for the world and the mentality of the past; today, for the world and the mentality of today.

The charism becomes flesh; the Word, Gift of God *par excellence*, becomes flesh in you, in me... in whoever is ready to welcome it for the good of the Mission we are called to.

God makes himself a Gift in Daniel Comboni's life, in his experiences, in his restlessness as well as in his passion and love... the Father's Spirit works, makes him fruitful and strengthens this passion so that he may put it at the service of the poorest and most abandoned of his time. And He does the same in each one of us.

What the Spirit of the Risen Lord did in Comboni, He has done and still does in every Comboni Sister of yesterday and today. *"My Father still goes on working, and I am at work too."* (Jn. 5,17)

Charism is typically linked to natural talents. It is spiritual. For example, Saint Daniel Combon was moved with compassion for the suffering peoples of Africa and was sensitive to the needs of his time. Comboni's gift to the Church was the manifestation of Jesus' Crucified Heart of the Good Shepherd on the Cross and his merciful love to the needy and poor of all ages, classes and races, especial/y those who do not yet know Jesus Christ. Saint Daniel Comboni stated, "I have only one life to consecrate to the salvation of those souls. I wish I had a thousand to spend them all to such a purpose!"

Reflection for this week:

1. In what way do I feel that the Spirit has been working in my history, so that the Combonian Charism may become Life within me?
2. How do I feel that the Spirit is working today, making sure that the Combonian charism continues to grow in me?
3. How do I collaborate with God's Grace so that it may not be vain in me and may produce fruit?

Reflection

Your Charism -

You are a gift!

You carry the gift within you!

How do you see yourself gifted?

What are your gifts?

How do you share these gifts?

Spirituality

Spirituality can be described as

- the breath of the Spirit guiding us (from the Hebrew, Ruah)
- the way or manner in which a person or group gives expression to and lives their religion
- the invisible but real qualities that shape the life of a person or community
- the process by which God continues to work in the chaos of our lives and our world -bringing order, identity and purpose
- direct knowledge of the Spirit here and now that has a transformative effect on one's life
- "a lived experience, a set of practices and a consciousness that aligns us with a sense of the sanctity of All Being" - Michael Lerner
- the way in which we live what we believe

Spirituality concerns what we do with desire, what we do with the fire inside of us and how we channel our love. Spirituality asks the question: "What do we thirst or long for?"

Spirituality is a way of discipleship involving a personal relationship with Jesus that leads to action in the world.

A spiritual person is one who is aware of another whole dimension in life and consciously integrates that dimension in their living, one who seeks, human person. desires, thirsts for what is not necessarily experienced in the physical world, one who lives according to the spirit - freely dependent! on God's grace - deeply desiring the ONE who is always at work transforming the human person.

Deep Dialogue

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Charism of St. Daniel Comboni

This session will help us to understand better the charism of St. Daniel Comboni, his spirituality and mission.

Together we pray:

Lord Jesus, you have called us to follow you in the spirit of Comboni. May we live in your love and remain faithful to the Father's will. Give us the grace of making our own the sentiments of your Heart, so as to become instruments of Your love for others. Amen.

Song – St. Daniel Comboni by Student Choir of Catholic Archdiocese of Juba

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KQjcijvQl3M>

Reading Time

Please read the next pages and after 20 min. of reading in small group of three we will share following the instruction of the blue box.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rI-ZxBLQ2wE>

Together we pray:

O Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Apostles, you presented the incarnate Word to all peoples. Guide all men and women of the new millennium to the One who is the light that enlightens every person, and transform us into his generous co-workers. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Song – Inspire Us by Sr. Ann

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eo6gZAUuQ3E>

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Charism of our Founder: Spirituality & Mission

God the Father revealed His love for us by sending Jesus Christ, who through the Holy Spirit, continues His work of salvation to this very day. Daniel Comboni, animated by the same Spirit, accepted the call of our Lord and with apostolic passion dedicated his life completely to the cause of the coming of the Kingdom of God amongst the peoples of Africa, in order to reveal to them the love of Christ, the Good Shepherd. Realizing with profound intuition, that a consecrated woman has a particular mission to perform in the missionary activity of the Church, he founded the institute of the "*Pie Madri della Nigrizia*" (Comboni Missionary Sisters).



The life of Daniel Comboni is characterized by a total surrender to God for the regeneration of Africa in which he believed trustfully and in which he hoped even in the most difficult situations right up to his death. This disposition is rooted in a powerful confidence in God and in a vigorous and unshakable faith in Him, who had called him and who vouched for the work accomplished in His name.

Comboni contemplates the Heart of Christ and assimilates His profound sentiments. His apostolic passion for Africa reveals a fervent and vital participation in the ardent desire of the Pierced Heart of the Good Shepherd who freely offered His own life for humanity.

Comboni is configured to Christ, even so far as experiencing in himself the sacrifice and the total annihilation of the Cross. He assumed the sufferings of the peoples of Africa, faced obstacles, misunderstanding and a premature death. The missionary fecundity of our Founder has its source in the Cross which he embraced with joy and hope, recognizing it as the only source of salvation for Africa.

- "The works of God are born at the foot of the cross"
- Devotion to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary
- Special devotion to St. Joseph
- The Holy Family as a model for our human family
- The pierced Heart of the Good Shepherd on the cross—love which encompasses the entire human family

Mary, associated with her Son in the work of redemption, had a pre-eminent place in the heart and prayer of Comboni. He looked upon Mary as the Mother of the whole of humanity and as particularly attentive to preparing the coming of Christ among peoples who do not yet know Him. In his arduous apostolic undertaking, he invoked her "as the precious comfort of the missionary." To her he entrusted and consecrated himself, his missionaries and the work of regeneration of Africa.

Charism of our Institute: Spirituality & Mission

This session will focus on the Charism of the Comboni Missionary Sisters, today we will learn about their spirituality and mission.

Together we pray:

O Father, who through St. Daniel Comboni have shown us a marvelous example of love for you and the people of Africa, grant that through his intercession we too may be transformed by the love which flows from the Pierced Heart of the Good Shepherd. Amen.

Meditation – The Mission

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oag1Dfa1e_E

Reading Time

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Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rI-ZxBLQ2wE>

Together we pray:

Lord, grant that by imitating the holiness of St. Daniel Comboni and his missionary zeal we may consecrate ourselves entirely, as a community of apostles, to the regeneration of our poorest and most abandoned brothers and sisters, to the praise of your glory. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Song – Inspire Us by Sr. Ann

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eo6gZAUuQ3E>

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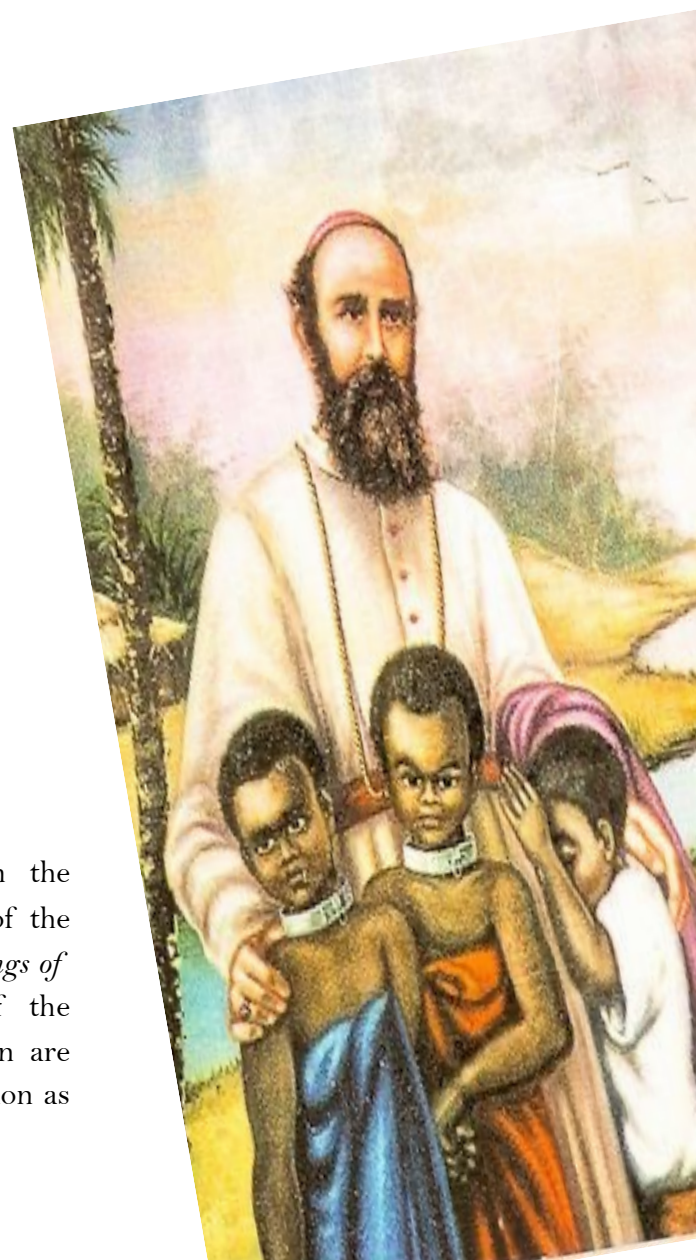
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A Plan for Africa

- Inspired with the plan at the canonization of St. Margaret Alacoque
- “Save Africa with Africa”
- Encounter
- Collaboration
- Dialogue
- Evangelization and education of Africans, who would in turn minister to others



Combonian spirituality finds its primary source in the charismatic experience of the *Plan* and in Chapter X of the *Rule of 1871*. These sources, together with the *Writings of the Founder*, of our sisters and of the history of the Congregation indicate how contemplation and action are one and the same; two dimensions of living the mission as women of the Gospel today.

St. Daniel Comboni - Spirituality

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The Hymn to the Cross

The "Hymn to the Cross" that Comboni wrote in 1877 at the end of a particularly painful period in his life.

"The Savior of the world marvelously conquered souls by the strength of this Cross, which destroyed paganism, razed the idolatrous temples, vanquished the powers of hell, and became the altar, not of one single temple, but of the whole world. This Cross which came forth from the summit of Golgotha and then filled the universe with its power, this Cross was adored in the temples, and in the royal cities received the highest veneration; it was revered on the standards of armies and invoked on the mainmasts of ships. By the Cross priests were consecrated and monarchs enthroned with sacred rites. Carried on their breasts by heroes it brought courage to all. Earth, sea and sky recognize the power of the Cross and everywhere it is honored.

It was in the midst of troubles and thorns that the work of our redemption was born and grew: its development is wonderful and its future is surely consoling and happy. The Cross has the strength to transform Central Africa into a land of blessing and salvation. From the Cross there issues a strength, which is gentle and does not kill, which comes down on souls and renews them like a refreshing dew; from the Cross there issues great power, because the Nazarene, raised up on the tree of the Cross, stretched out one arm to the East and the other to the West, and gathered his elect from the whole world into the embrace of the Church; with pierced hands, and like another Samson, he hurled down the columns of the temple where for so many centuries men had adored the power of evil. It was on these ruins that he raised up the Cross; worker of marvels, which attracted all things to itself:

"Si exaltatus fuero a terra, omnia traham ad meipsum". (MDC No. 233)

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Reflection Day



Becoming Cenacle

An essential element to be found in the Combonian charism is the formation of a community, not a generic one, but a Community Cenacle, convoked by Jesus, around Him; a community, the center of which is Jesus, who gives Himself to us and enables us also to give ourselves: Eucharist – Service; therefore, communities of people who are called to be Apostles; Communities [which are] Cenacles of Apostles for the Mission.

This is the call to which each of us, with her own struggles and difficulties, allows herself to be formed by the Master. In fact, it is not a closed, defined reality, rather, it is an experience of life which, more often than we would like, is imbued with our incoherence, fragilities, weaknesses, contradictions, prejudices...

It is vital to remember that Daniel Comboni knew that it meant ‘*becoming*’, and not, as we often say and write, “The Combonian Institutes *are* a Cenacle of Apostles” No! Comboni never said this. In his Writings, n° 2648, he says:

“This Institute becomes a little Cenacle.” The ‘*already and not yet*’ helps us to clarify that one thing is to be, and quite another is to **become**. This is the reality.

Therefore, we receive, with humility and hope, this vocation to become a Little Cenacle which is a journey, a process, a dynamism, and, as Comboni says, **little**, and not grand. We are neither the first nor the only ones to live this dynamic of ‘*becoming community cenacle*’.

The first attempt at becoming Cenacle of Apostles of Jesus was a disaster. Luke tells us about it (ch.22), making reference to the Last Supper, the first night of the Passion: while Jesus opens his heart to them on the Gift of God Himself, on the chalice which is already there, on the covenant of His blood, one of His own is meditating on how to organize his betrayal

Tips

- Take 5 min of silence before you start your reading.
- Select one biblical reading.
- Underling the insight that pay your attention.
- Write your response in your diary.
- Choose one insight that you would like to share with the group.

Inspirational Video

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#search/cms.ym.usa%40gmail.com/FMfcgxwBVWJTPqwXTwZlIDKrVnkCKrQf?projector=1>





The other apostles, very insensitively, begin a discussion about who among them is the most important. Peter who boasted of his capabilities and proclaimed his readiness to give his life for Jesus, in reality will have to eat his own words *in the face of his own weakness and fear which will lead him to deny Jesus*.

We can just be thankful that the evangelists left us a trace of the disaster that the apostles were, of how much it cost them to convert to what they had been called to. They tell us the story of their tremendous fragility, their lack of sensitivity, their ambition, cowardice, fear of committing themselves.

Jesus, the MASTER, day after day, transforms them. John (ch.14) tells us how, in his taking leave of them, Jesus speaks to their hearts with words which express the faith he has in them, despite the fact that he knows so well their weaknesses.

Later, Paul, based on his own personal experience, makes us understand that each of us, like him, is a bundle of contradictions: we demand much from others when, instead, we experience that we ourselves are not as we would like to be but we are, instead, what our weaknesses make us. The same thing happens to each of us: we can all say that *'the spirit is ready, but the flesh is weak'* (Mt 26,41b). What is beautiful is that we count on His Grace.

The apostles, in order to understand the teachings of Jesus, and to understand each other, will have to make a personal and community experience of the Risen Lord. They will have to welcome, personally and as a community, the Spirit of the Risen Lord, in order to grow. Jesus had said this to them: *'It is good that I go away so that you may receive my Spirit (Jn16,7)'*. From this point onwards, they will begin gathering as community-cenacles, attracting many other people. *"Look how they love each other"*. ... and the community grew. St. Paul and St. John's letters will tell us that this is the goal, but that the journey to get there continues to be arduous.

Suggested texts - Add other texts if you wish to.

Lk. 22,14-34: Jesus takes his place at the table with the disciples.

Rom. 6, 13-25: I don't do the good which I desire, but the evil which.....

2Cor. 12,8-10: My grace is enough for you

Jn. 14,1-17: Do not let your hearts be troubled.

We are invited to look with hope even at our limits and fragility, in the process of becoming ... in order to live communion in our Communities.

1. How have I lived, in daily life, in family, my fragilities?

2. What are the things within me that make me feel that I am still journeying towards becoming a person **who creates communion** ?

3. On which occasions do I feel that the Spirit of Jesus continues forming me as a person who actively builds communion?

4. What is my experience of His Grace in my weakness in my family and working place life?



CMS
Associates

Comboni Missionary Sisters- Spirituality

During this session we will touch the CMS-Spirituality, learn about their devotions and their desire to become holy and capable women of the Gospel.

Together we pray:

Gracious and compassionate God, we pray:
To live deeply, with purpose.
To live freely, with detachment,
to live wisely, with humility,
to live justly, with compassion,
to live lovingly, with fidelity,
to live mindfully, with consciousness,
to live gratefully, with generosity,
to live fully, with enthusiasm.

As we journey from this session we ask for the gift of wisdom, hope knowing that you are always with us. Amen.

Song – “Whatever Be the Love” by Lori True
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VzNFVZb69ak>

Reading Time

Please read the next pages and after 20 min. of reading in small group of three we will share following the instruction of the blue box.

Together we pray:

Father, through St. Daniel Comboni you have given us a marvelous example of love for You and the African people. Grant that through his intercession, we too, may be transformed by the love which flows the Pierced Heart of the Good Shepherd.
Give your Church the joy of missionary discipleship by imitating the missionary zeal and holiness of Comboni. We may consecrate ourselves to the regeneration of our poorest and most abandoned brothers and sisters. Amen.

Deep Dialogue

In brief share with the group the following questions, don't interrupt the person that has the word.

What image came to your mind during this quiet moment?

After all members of the group have shared

What struck you during the sharing of other people into the group?

After all member of the group shared think about

What did you hear during this profound dialogue that has not been expressed with words?

Jesus Christ is the same
Yesterday, today, and forever.
Hebrews 13:8



Comboni Missionary Sisters- Spirituality

The Comboni Missionary Sisters are called by the Spirit of God to continue the mission of their Founder, Saint Daniel Comboni, by patterning their lives on the life of Jesus, the Pierced Heart of the Good Shepherd. Jesus walked among the people, valuing the dignity, uniqueness, and beauty of each person, loving each unconditionally, sharing their lives and rendering service.

The Sisters thus strive to follow Jesus as they recognize and accept their own human experience of joy and sorrow, hope and fear, strength and weakness.

The spirituality to which Saint Daniel Comboni was drawn is a Christ-centered spirituality, known as Combonian spirituality.

Our Combonian vocation will be lived more authentically in as much as we draw from our Founder's writings a deeper knowledge of his teachings and of the Spirit, which filled the life he so wholeheartedly dedicated to the Church and to Africa and its peoples.

The "heritage" of our Founder is passed on to us through the history of our Institute. It calls for an unconditional surrender to Christ for the mission and the acceptance of events and difficulties even to the point of ultimate sacrifice.

Faithful to the spiritual patrimony of our Institute, we live the charism in a creative and dynamic way. In faith we open-heartedly embrace it; we nurture it in prayer and study, which will lead us to an ever new discovery of its wealth.



Total dedication and a deep faith and confidence in God

The Heart of Christ

Love of the Cross





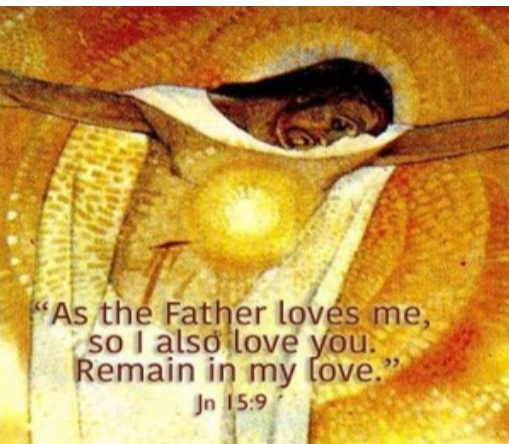
Comboni Missionary Sisters- Spirituality

Total dedication and a deep faith and confidence in God

Following the example of our Founder, animated by a powerful sense of God and seeking his glory, we live and work "for God alone." We place all our hope in Him, constantly drawing from Him the strength to persevere even in the midst of situations which at times may seem incomprehensible to us.

Mary

We entrust our life to Mary. In our actions and our prayer, we turn to her who hastens the hour of salvation, smoothes away obstacles, prepares hearts and sends ever more new apostles for the coming of the Kingdom of God in the world.



"May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be with us and may we be faithful and joyful in consecrating our lives for the sake of his Glory."

St. Daniel Comboni Writings #1151



Love of the Cross

Contemplating Jesus Crucified we try to assimilate even more the mystery of His death for the salvation of the world. We find in it the authentic significance of the "spirit of sacrifice" understood as a willingness to lose all, to suffer and to undertake anything for God and the Mission.

Living in situations of poverty, injustice and oppression, and sharing in the sorrow and anxiety of the people, we are called upon to assume this suffering, which offered in union with the sacrifice of Christ, acquires an inestimable value for the coming of the Kingdom.



Comboni Missionary Sisters- Life

We continue to learn about CMS spirituality and go deeply in way to let it touch our heart. Life is not a destination but a transformation. Lord, help us to be transformed within the radiance of your grace.

Together we pray:

Through you Son Jesus, grant us the grace of letting ourselves be transformed by our encounter with you: regenerated by your merciful love, may we always find ways of responding the cries of our wounded and excluded brothers and sisters. Amen.

Song – Inspire Us by Sr. Ann

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eo6gZAUuQ3E>

Reading Time

Please read the next pages and after 20 min. of reading in small group of three we will share following the instruction of the blue box.

Together we pray:

Merciful God our Father, in union with the Heart of Jesus, we ask that the love which flowed from His pierced heart, transform us and sustain our missionary dedication, so that Your Kingdom may be establish in the whole world. Amen.

Song Himno a Comboni by Hna. Rosmary,cms

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RH9NhDqlW9E>

Deep Dialogue

In brief share with the group the following questions, don't interrupt the person that has the word.

What image came to your mind during this quiet moment?

After all members of the group have shared

What struck you during the sharing of other people into the group?

After all member of the group shared think about

What did you hear during this profound dialogue that has not been expressed with words?



Comboni Missionary Sisters- Core Values of our Life

Value is defined as an enduring belief or ideal, which motivates our attitudinal choices. We believe in the value; we choose it for its intrinsic importance. We are changed by it and manifest it in the way we live. Values are incorporated into our belief system and empower us to make choices in light of these values.

We are called to live out the Gospel Values contained in our charism through our three core values of *prayerfulness, simplicity of life, and “making common cause”* with the people among whom we live.

These three core values relate to outstanding characteristics in Saint Daniel Comboni’s life: his enduring confidence in the presence of God, his deep love for the Heart of Jesus and the Cross, his apostolic passion for the most needy and forsaken, his mission methodology of “Save Africa with Africa,” and, finally, his total loyalty to the Church.

Grace is a gift only known in the context of faith – it cannot be seen. Grace is the Spirit’s presence within us; the presence of God. We believe that we are totally dependent on God’s grace. Through reflection and study on the life of St. Daniel Comboni a *Spirituality of Risk* was found to be evident in his life.

As women of the Gospel, we feel the urgency of continually deepening our *Spirituality of Risk* to:

Spirituality of Proclamation-remain with Mary at the foot of the Cross and be present to those who are crucified today as women who have been *freed, enflamed and transported by the divine blaze (Writings 2742)*. Even though they knew that they would not be believed because they were women (*Luke 24:10*), the witnesses of Calvary become audacious and courageous witnesses who announce his Resurrection to their brothers and sister

Spirituality of Patience -live the struggle of our personal history, the history of our Congregation and of the peoples of the world like the Women of the Apocalypse, respecting the HOUR of awaiting new life and new movements of the Spirit of God (*Writings 464*)



Comboni Missionary Sisters- Core Values of our Life



Spirituality of Forgiveness- take the first step toward reconciliation, overcoming dualism and ambiguity in our language, healing our memories, offering and welcoming forgiveness for renewed relationships “*ad intra*” in the *Cenacle of Apostles* and “*ad extra*,” as a gesture which transforms the world.

Spirituality of the Hidden Stone- like the anonymous women of the Gospel who lose themselves in the crowd; the women of history in the making who protect and sustain life at all levels; women who know how to diminish so that others may grow, knowing that witness has been given (*spirituality of the hidden stone*);



Spirituality of Compassion- make common cause in our daily life and in that of the peoples with whom we live, allowing ourselves to be touched by their wounds, and to enter into their sufferings: *All that is within me trembles with compassion*

(*Hosea 11:8*) to the point of breaking set patterns, denouncing violence and making oneself *anathema* so that others may benefit (*Rm 9:3; Writings 3553*)

Spirituality of Encounter- Mission in the spirituality of encounter “Today the centrality of the call of the Spirit to the Congregation leads us to consider mission as the ‘theological context’ of the spirituality of encounter: a mission lived through a **Spirituality** of being familiar with God, of **remaining** in the intimacy of a relationship with Him, so as to share His deep desire of gathering our scattered lives into unity.

If we are to overcome our struggle and persevere ‘on the journey of ENCOUNTER’, we must listen to the Word and fix our eyes on Christ hanging on the Cross with His arms open, drawing to Himself all of humanity (Jn.12.32): Humanity which is beautiful in its infinite diversity, always journeying, sometimes lost, sometimes in rebellion, seeking life, sometimes far from the Creator.” (CA, 2016, no.5.1)



- Proclamation**
- Patience**
- Forgiveness**
- Hidden Stone**
- Encounter**



Comboni Missionary Sisters- Mission/Ministry

Today we will focus on the mission and ministry of the CMS. Whatever be the challenge, God of Source opens our hearts to live the truth you teach us through the testimony of the CMS.

Let us pray:

Loving Creator, we are ONE humanity, invited through the gift of life to live in harmony with each other, with all species and with our planet Earth. May we honor this invitation by the *way* we live and interact with each other and with all of Creation. We ask this through Christ Our Lord, Amen

Personal Reflection

“Spirituality / mysticism is not a journey reserved for some people particularly gifted in things religious. Rather, it is a path that the Christian life offers us so that, in all that we do and live, we recognize ourselves as sustained by God, we feel at one with Him and, based on this union with God, we return to the world with a new attitude.....”

The Mystic – Anselm Grun
“Spirituality

*Pope Francis invites us to live the **spirituality of encounter**: capacity to perceive and to listen to other people, the capacity to seek together the way, the method, which means also not to be afraid of things.*

(Pope Francis)

Reading Time

Please read the next pages and after 20 min. of reading in small group of three we will share following the instruction of the blue box.

Together we pray:

O Father, you who want all peoples to be saved; awaken in every believer a strong missionary desire to witness and announce Christ to all those who do not yet know him.

Through the intercession of St. Daniel Comboni strengthen all missionaries in their work of evangelization and raise up new vocations for the missions. Amen.

Deep Dialogue

In brief share with the group the following questions, don't interrupt the person that has the word.

What image came to your mind during this quiet moment?

After all members of the group have shared

What struck you during the sharing of other people into the group?

After all member of the group shared think about

What did you hear during this profound dialogue that has not been expressed with words?

Song – The Servant Song

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kdmgpMfnjdU&list=RDSZJxU1oPgeg&index=9>



Comboni Missionary Sisters- Mission/Ministry

Ministry is a way of being, of living history, of being in touch with what we see and touch, both internally and externally, always seeking the meaning and mystery of reality.

Ministry, therefore, is contemplation, trying always to seek the soul and ultimate meaning of all that surrounds us, in humanity and in the universe. We are invited to learn to be a part of history with love, appreciating its multiplicity and diversity, its smallness and its greatness so that no one is excluded (*Lineamenta, August 2009*).

Our Combonian ministry is one of consecrated women who: love the hidden mystery of life, show concern for all life's various phases and stages, pay attention to the questions and worries of humanity, and express solidarity with people's endeavours to live life with dignity. We are consecrated women who care and listen to the cries of humanity and of the universe and are capable of freely offering ourselves to the mission of Jesus Christ.

The basic guide for our ministry is found in Jesus' own words, "I came so that they may have life and have it to the full (John 10:10)" and in Comboni's *Plan for the Regeneration of Africa* which encompasses the various aspects of our mission methodology.



Comboni Missionary Sisters- Mission/Ministry

Today, in many different ways, thousands of people across four continents live the legacy of St. Daniel Comboni – expressing the caring heart and presence of Jesus – to our broken and suffering world. Sisters, Associates, Comboni Friends, employees, board members, volunteers, and friends give modern shape to his spirit as they share God’s love with each person.

Women of Reconciliation

- We live in an era marked by violence, fragmentation and conflict. There is no mission more important in this NOW of our history than that of being builders of that reconciliation that the world awaits. Our desire is to tread this path both among ourselves and in the company of all peoples, sharing with them our weakness and our need for conversion of heart. Our desire is also to embrace love without boundaries and to search for the truth as a principle of our lives.
- Inspired by the daring of our Founder in the area of justice and the liberation from slavery, and in the light of the challenges of today, we believe that justice, peace and the integrity of creation are priorities of our missionary call.

Women of Open to New Challenges

We are aware of the new areas of evangelization: the world of communications, the international organizations working for justice, peace and the integrity of creation and for sustainable development challenge us.

Women of Dialogue

- The search for truth in view of the common good urges us to journey with people of other faiths. The heart of this journey is DIALOGUE; this calls for knowledge and respect. Our spirituality calls us to be open to the spiritual experiences of other religious traditions: Traditional Religions, Islam, ecumenical dialogue and sects.

Women of Collaboration

- With his strong sense of catholicity, Comboni urged everyone to participate in the enterprise for the Regeneration of Africa. While we collaborate with Religious Institutes and the local Churches, we are also called upon to share our charism with the laity, to welcome their witness and to network with them.



Comboni Missionary Sisters- Mission/Ministry

In our USA Delegation, Saint Daniel Comboni's founding mission and vision is carried out in by our ongoing commitment to:

- Sharing the Good News
- Formation of Leaders especially among the laity
- Commitment to Justice & Peace and Integrity of Creation
- Ministry with Immigrant Populations
- Global Mission Education
- Religious & Pastoral Ministries



As an apostolic congregation the Sisters commit a majority of their time and energy in carrying out the mission of the Congregation in service ministries. Comboni Associates in keeping with the mission of the Congregation are encouraged to participate in carrying the mission to their places of work or in volunteer activities. With the support of the Associate Director, the manner of involvement in ministry of each Comboni Associate is discerned through prayerful reflection upon personal gifts, talents, interests and availability.



One World Encounter in the Love of God (OneWe)

The Comboni Sisters want to be bridges of peace in this society. For this reason, with the initiative of One World Encounter, they hope that peoples from different cultures and religions will come together to see diversity as a gift from God, to experience oneness with creation, God and humanity, to encounter people whom others would not imagine meeting, to acknowledge the richness of different religions and denominations.

Intercultural Congregations

The initiative ONE WORLD ENCOUNTER in the Love of God (OneWe for short) falls under the scope of both interactive action and intercultural perspective. This ministry is based on Pope Francis' vision: creating "the culture of encounter" in the United States.

Mission: Build culturally inclusive faith communities where diversity is embraced and where parish communities become united, stronger, and happier places of worship.



**Facilitating
Grassroots
Encounter**



**Building
Bridges
Among Cultures**



**Unifying
Around
Common Mission**



**ONE
WORLD
ENCOUNTER**
in the Love of God

*"Faith and Culture go hand
in hand."
(St. D. Comboni, W. 6214)*





2. Vocation Theology: How do the Laity “fit into all of this”?

- Baptism & Vocational Call
- Role of the Laity in the Church
- Laity always present in Comboni’s mission & work
- Reflection Day: Cenacle of Apostle, fragility and grace
- Call of a CMS Associate



Baptism & Vocational Call

Today session will embrace our baptism & vocational call as baptized Catholics, we have already set out on a faith journey that continues to grow and develop throughout our lives. Consequently, our relationship with God becomes a vital part of that journey whereby the only response is a life of prayer.

The Church gives us many prayers for vocations, but it is important to realize that prayer itself is a vocation. As a Catholic, praying and vocation cannot be separated from one another. Since prayer is considered necessary to discern a vocation, the very act of praying leads us to who God created us to be. All prayer is a consequence of our first vocation, which was baptism. From this initial sacrament, all the other vocations of life spring forth. The experience of praying and preparing to receive from God becomes a vocational reality as the divine initiative of love leads us to the vocation of Christian living and renewal of the Church.

Opening Prayer - (The Grail Prayer)

Lord Jesus, I give you my hands to do your work. I give you my feet to go your way. I give you my eyes to see as you do. I give you my tongue to speak your words. I give you my mind that you may think in me. I give you my spirit that you may pray in me. Above all, I give you my heart that you may love in me your Father and all humankind. I give you my whole self that you may grow in me, so that it is you, Lord Jesus, who live and work and pray in me. Amen.

Reading Time

Please read the next pages and after 20 min. of reading in small group of three we will share following the instruction of the blue box.

Significance of the baptism of Jesus

Jesus was not baptized as an infant. It was customary in his time to baptize adults. Therefore, he was baptized by his cousin, John the Baptist, in the River Jordan. John is the one who leapt in his mother, Elizabeth's, womb, when Mary went to visit her during her pregnancy. So we can surmise that John knew something of Jesus' special nature.

That's perhaps why John seemed reluctant to baptize Jesus. John knew that the son of God did not need to be baptized because he had not sinned.

But Jesus told John to baptize him and he did. When Jesus came out of the water, the Holy Spirit came down as a dove and the voice of God spoke, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." Following his baptism, Jesus began his public ministry.

Deep Dialogue

In brief share with the group the following questions, don't interrupt the person that has the word.

What image came to your mind during this quiet moment?

After all members of the group have shared

What struck you during the sharing of other people into the group?

After all member of the group shared think about

What did you hear during this profound dialogue that has not been expressed with words?



Faith Sharing Prayer Groups

Comboni Associates are invited to participate in small monthly prayer groups for faith sharing. Often the faith sharing is based on the previous Sunday's readings in the form of Theological Reflection as described below. Faith sharing in such a way increases our awareness of God's presence in our lives and the lives of others



The Skill of Theological Reflection

Reflection is something we do all the time. When we think about the meaning or significance of a book, a movie, or an event, we are reflecting. In Theological Reflection we use Scripture, Church teaching, sacramental events and contemporary life as the basis for our reflection. The most common example for Theological Reflection is the Sunday homily. The Presider uses Scripture as a foundation to talk about its meaning in our personal lives. In a theological reflection exercise you become the homilist; relating some aspect of Church teaching to your daily life in a way that helps you recognize God's presence and action in your life.

The following steps will help you learn Theological Reflection.

- Begin by reading the text/poem. Read slowly and thoughtfully.
- Identify the central theme of the text. What is it about?
- Sit with the text until a focal point emerges.
- Relate the focus or theme to a personal life experience(s). Ask yourself, how or where does my own life relate to this theme? There are no wrong answers.



Return to the text. Do you see something new that you hadn't noticed before? Have you gained a new insight into your own experience? As you begin to get more familiar or comfortable with Theological Reflection you might ask yourself, how does your experience relate to other aspects of Catholic tradition?



Baptism & Vocational Call

Following our baptism call

Likewise, all who are baptized are initiated through their own baptism to live their lives as followers of Christ: to love God and to love their neighbor.

How we do this is our vocation in life, our calling. We may do this as single or married people or as priests, deacons, or those in consecrated life (Sisters, Brothers, and others in vowed religious life).

Encouraging vocational call in others

In addition, this is also an ideal time to talk with our children, grandchildren, and other people we know about their own vocation. As Cardinal Sean O'Malley of Boston, chairman of the Bishops' Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations, said, "It is our responsibility to encourage young people to be generous in their response as they discern the possibility of a call to service in the Church. We must also ask parents, families, and our parish communities to assist with this work." He added that "vocations are everyone's business."

Closing Reflection

We pray in response to the presence and action of God in our world. We pray because we believe. We pray as a response of faith to the reality of God's existence in our lives.

We pray to express our earnest hope that our salvation is at hand. We pray because it is our vocation to meet God and encounter his holy will more directly than in any other way. Seen in this human framework, prayer is a great mystery. Nevertheless, God desires our attention in prayer and calls us tirelessly to prayer. We may forget our God, follow false idols, or accuse God of deserting us, but our true God relentlessly summons us and reveals himself to us throughout salvation history. From this ongoing revelation, prayer must become the foundation for every choice and every action in our life. Once God and his desire for us are encountered in prayer, we must then allow our vocation to emerge by being attentive to the rest of our daily living. Prayer alone must become the source of all we choose in life because prayer is the vocation given to us by the will of God.

Discussion Questions

1. Make a list of all of the prayers you have learned throughout your life. Include blessings at meal times, prayers before going to sleep, and prayers for special occasions. Which of these have you forgotten or ignored? Which prayers have become your favorites?
2. How do you experience prayer and vocation in your life?
3. How has your experience of prayer as a member of CMS Associates influenced your faith life?





A relevant note regarding the prayer of Comboni is this: it was based upon the word of God with its three most basic qualities: it is alive as it is God speaking to us, it is effective and it is disturbing.

“Prayer is the surest and infallible means to succeed in doing the works of God, even when they are at their most difficult and challenging point, and so I have with great insistence asked many Bishops and the most respected Institutes in all parts of the world to pray fervently everyday to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and to the illustrious Patron of the Universal Church for the conversion of Africa. In this important matter we are dealing with a true gentleman, God, who keeps his word and will stand by it forever. To the “petite” and “querite” of the holiest souls in the world there must, therefore, correspond the certain and unfailing “accipietis et invenietis” of our loving Lord, who died for poor Africans too. It is because of this that I am sure of the happy outcome of our holy work, of the special aid of God for me in my weakness, and of his help for all those who humbly work for the Gospel, those men and women he has given and will continue to give me for the arduous and important African mission.”
(MDC No. 184)



The Role of the Laity in the Church

As members of the people of God, the laity are "made one body with Christ" and share in his office of priest, prophet and king. Each layperson is needed to do the work of Christ's body in the world. "God placed the parts, each one

of them, in the body as he intended," St. Paul explains in the First Letter to the Corinthians. The laity share in the saving mission of the church with a special vocation to reach people: in the home, at work, in clubs and groups, at sporting events.

Jesus said to them

"Come by yourselves to an out-of-the-way place and rest a little. People were coming and going in great numbers, making it impossible for them to so much as eat. So, Jesus and the apostles went off in the boat by themselves to a deserted place (Mark 6:31-32)."

Reading Time

Please read the next pages and after 20 min. of reading in small group of three we will share following the instruction of the blue box.

Let us pray

- God, you who are loving Creator, gentle Savior, and Spirit of light and love, I come before you to give you thanks and praise for all your gifts to me.
- I ask for the grace to be more sensitive to your presence...that I may be aware of how you act in my life.
- I pray for the openness to you working in me now, that I may hear your voice and learn your will for me.
- I ask for the grace to be free from any fears, expectations, anxieties or attachments that might keep me from doing your will.

Deep Dialogue

In brief share with the group the following questions, don't interrupt the person that has the word.

What image came to your mind during this quiet moment?

After all members of the group have shared

What struck you during the sharing of other people into the group?

After all member of the group shared think about

What did you hear during this profound dialogue that has not been expressed with words?

The Role of the Laity in the Church

By **Mike Nelson**/Catholic News Service

"There are different forms of service," says St. Paul, "but the same Lord" (1 Cor 12:5). "In the church there is diversity of ministry," says the Catechism of the Catholic Church, "but unity of mission" (No. 873).

In other words, building the body of Christ on earth takes many people working together — recognizing and utilizing their God-given gifts in service of one another. Nowhere is that more necessary than at the parish level, where lay ministers are indispensable to the work of the church.

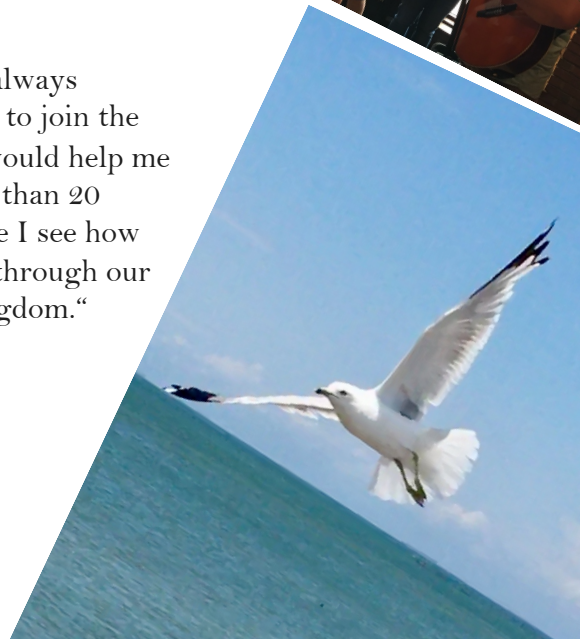
Like at the Church of St. Mary in Lake Forest, Illinois, where bereavement and outreach ministers serve the needs of those grieving, dying or in pain by bringing them "the presence of Christ," in the words of pastoral associate Lore Nugent.

Or at Holy Trinity Church in San Pedro, California, where choirs lead parish assemblies in sung prayer, "giving voice to God's word and bringing people closer to God," says choir member Edra Widener.

Or at Sts. Peter and Paul Church in rural St. Paul, Nebraska, where religious educators minister to children and their families, "teaching them by sharing not just faith but the things in our lives that have formed us as disciples," says Becky Knox, director of religious education.

For Knox, religious education was a natural link to her profession as special education teacher. "I had experience in the classroom, and I felt I was being called to use my gifts and talents in the service of the church," she explains. "This ministry keeps me on my toes, keeps me thinking about how we can better serve our youth and families."

Widener had sung in choirs and glee clubs all of her life. "There was always singing and dancing in my family," she smiles. "But I'd never thought to join the choir at Holy Trinity until my mom became ill. Singing in the choir would help me from feeling overwhelmed completely; it was my saving grace." More than 20 years later, she says, "participating in music is a joy, especially because I see how we support the assembly in proclaiming and receiving the Scriptures through our singing. It's about strengthening the community and building the kingdom."



The Role of the Laity in the Church

Nugent, like Knox, entered parish ministry as a religious education teacher, and eventually took on further leadership roles and positions at the parish after completing the lay ecclesial ministry program at the University of St. Mary of the Lake in Illinois.

As pastoral associate, she oversees the bereavement ministry team and those who minister in hospitals and nursing homes. "We have the opportunity to walk with and give consolation to families, to share painful and challenging times in their lives," she explains. "It's an opportunity to bring Christ's healing to those who need it most, and just to be present for them is really an honor and a blessing."

In fact, she smiles, "I can't even call what I do 'work,' because it is such a joy to serve in this ministry."

To the laity in the pews who feel unsure of how or even whether to serve, Nugent suggests they spend time discovering their gifts with the aid of pastoral staff.

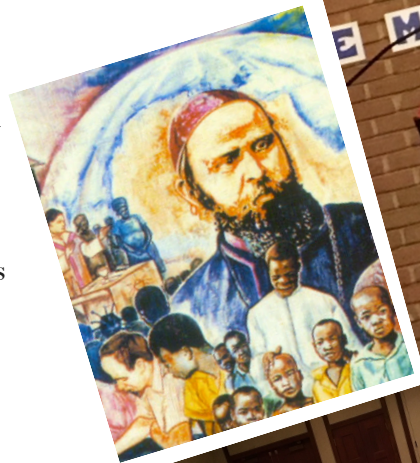
"It's about sharing your faith journey with someone else," she says. "It's part of evangelization, discovering how Christ enriches every aspect of our lives. And that's the heart and mission of our church."

Widener believes it is important to extend an invitation. "I see many people who, like me, have dealt with death or sadness in their families," she says. "And not only do they find healing and joy in being part of a choir where they find support and camaraderie, they can support others through using their own gifts."

"We are all learning," adds Knox. "It's a lifelong process. That's why we come to church, why we pray to the Lord, so we can better understand what our faith teaches us -- and our faith teaches us to serve. You can be supported in your role, and you can support others."

Catholic journalist Mike Nelson writes from Southern California.

The laity as the faithful who have been baptized who aren't clergy, brothers or sisters. As members of the people of God, they are "made one body with Christ" and share in his office of priest, prophet and king. (Lumen Gentium)





Laity Always Present in Comboni's Mission & Work

The following three dimensions of the combonian missionary laity arise from their specific condition and belonging to the Church, from the ministry they are called to exercise and from the charism from which they draw inspiration:

Lay status "By reason of their special vocation it belongs to the laity to seek the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will" (LG 31). "Their primary and immediate task is ... to put to use every Christian and evangelical possibility latent but already present and active in the affairs of the world. Their own field of evangelizing activity is the vast and complicated world of politics, society and economics, but also the world of culture, of the sciences and the arts, of international life, of the mass media. It also includes other realities, such as love, the family, the education of children and adolescents, professional work, suffering" (EN 70; cf. RMi 59, 72, 82). The lay people who have "the primary task" of operating "in the affairs of the world", must get involved and exercise their lay status also in the ecclesial ministries, such as those connected with the Word, catechism, liturgy, ecclesial communities, charitable deeds, administration of the goods of the Church, teaching of religion in schools, etc. (cf. RMi 73-74; Santo Domingo 97, 99).

Missionary status The Baptism, together with Confirmation and Eucharist, is the root of the missionary commitment of every Christian: "right and duty based on their baptismal dignity" (RMi 71). This missionary status can take different forms, according to the possibilities and gifts of every one: "Within missionary activity, the different forms of the lay apostolate should be held in esteem, with respect for their nature and aims..." (RMi 72). For some this commitment takes the form of leaving one's own country, while for others it may be expressed through the mission animation of the local church and the support to the missionary activities "ad gentes". In "missionary laity", differently from the organizations of volunteers that aim only at technical development, the stress is on the faith-motives which is the specific and indispensable characteristic of the missionary activity as such, that is thus seen as a "lay ministry" within the lay status for building the Church. The role of the lay missionaries is to announce the Gospel through their style of life, manifesting the faith that is the foundation of their service. The testimony of married lay people is particularly important because they do their missionary service as family.

Comboni missionary spirit The charism of Comboni, gift of the Spirit to the whole Church, goes well beyond the present Comboni Institutes that draw their inspirations from it. There are lay people, men and women, who feel that the charism of Comboni affects, inspires and touches their Christian and apostolic lives which - expressed in an ecclesial way - thus become an expression of a missionary vocation that draws its specific inspiration from the charism of Comboni. So Daniel Comboni is also theirs. These people, who live the Comboni charism as lay people, enrich it and develop its lay and secular dimension. These people nourish their missionary and combonian spirituality with our testimony of missionaries identified in the charism of the Founder. Their access to the writings and charismatic experience of Daniel Comboni provides them with the essential elements of his charism and of his missionary spirituality of the Heart of the Good Shepherd. They are consequently aided to adopt the fundamental principle of the missionary methodology of Comboni: "Save Africa with Africa", acting as promoters and propagators of the local laity. The various initiatives of the "Comboni Lay Missionaries" already in progress in some provinces, assisted by some of our confreres, are concrete manifestations of the "secular" vitality of the charism.



Reflection Day



We become
what we
contemplate

CENACLE OF APOSTLES: FRAGILITY AND GRACE

The Lord knows what clay we are made of. He knows perfectly our weaknesses and fragility. He knew that of his disciples and he knows mine and yours. So, why then does he call us to live something that is beyond us?

The answer is that before being clay, we are the image of God: *“In his image he created him, in the image of God he created him”* (Gen 1,26). Right from the very beginning, God knows that clay and grace go well together. He teaches us that *“without me, you can do nothing”* but *“when you will receive my Spirit, you will do greater things than me”* (Jn 14,12).

The Lord knew, and knows, that being made of clay means being fragile, that during the journey, this clay becomes deformed and broken. For this reason, creation continues all throughout life.

“But the vessel he was making came out wrong, as may happen with clay when a potter is at work. So, he began again and shaped it into another vessel, as he thought fit.” (Jer. 18,4)

God knows that in each of us there is a hidden treasure. He becomes incarnate. He becomes like us: fragile, weak, child, putting himself at our level to tell us this. He gives us what he loves most, his own Son, so that this Mystery is revealed to us: we are clay jars inhabited by God. We are the precious pearl for which the Son has given all, his own life, to possess it and give it back to the Father. *“I have not lost any of those you have given to me”* (Gv 18,9). It is precisely because He knows us and knows the value of each of us that when only one is lost,

“He leaves the heapfold and goes in search of the lost until he finds it’. If he loses one, ‘he sweeps and looks until He finds it’. And if one goes off, he waits for it, ‘he runs towards him and embraces him and holds a great feast because His treasure has returned, he has come home safe and sound”

(Lk 15,20-32).

As we said so many times during the meeting of the Commission, and as we shared also in the video, what can help us in our interpersonal relationships is to become aware, or to grow in awareness of the fact that within each of us there is a divine nucleus.

Tips

- Take 5 min of silence before you start your reading.
- Select one biblical reading.
- Underline the insight that pay your attention.
- Write your response in your diary.
- Choose one insight that you would like to share with the group.





It is a grace to remind ourselves that the God who is in me is also in you. This divine presence constitutes us, unites us, and makes us become communion, community.

Sometimes, instead, we relate to each other in a superficial way, only on a very human level and out of our own character. On this journey towards becoming Cenacle, it is helpful for us to remember that the struggles we live in community life happen because we focus our gaze on the jar and we fail to see the treasure contained within it: the Divine Life, the Divine Nucleus in me and in you.

If we remember that we are inhabited by God, that this Divine Presence is the Essence of our Being, our way of relating to each other becomes easier, more fraternal and respectful and the Community Cenacle finally becomes a reality.

Love of neighbor is thus shown to be possible in the way proclaimed by the Bible, by Jesus. It consists in the very fact that, in God and with God, I love even the person whom I do not like or even know. This can only take place on the basis of an intimate encounter with God, an encounter which has become a communion of will, even affecting my feelings. Then I learn to look on this other person not simply with my eyes and my feelings, but from the perspective of Jesus Christ. His friend is my friend. Seeing with the eyes of Christ, I can give to others much more than their outward necessities; I can give them the look of love which they crave. Here we see the necessary interplay between love of God and love of neighbor which the First Letter of John speaks of with such insistence. If I have no contact whatsoever with God in my life, then I cannot see in the other anything more than the other, and I am incapable of seeing in him the image of God.

Love grows through love. Love is “divine” because it comes from God and unites us to God; through this unifying process it makes us a “we” which transcends our divisions and makes us one, until in the end God is “all in all” (1Cor 15:28).

(Benedetto XVI, Deus CaritasEst, 18)

How do I live fragility and Grace in relation to myself and to others?

How has my understanding of the presence of God within me and within others changed?

How does this influence my way of relating to myself and to others?

Suggested texts - Add other texts if you wish to.

Gen. 1,27; 2,7: in the image of God he created him ...

Jer. 18, 1-10: the Potter

2Cor. 4,7-18: We carry this treasure in vessels of clay

Gal. 2,20: it is no longer I who lives, but Christ lives in me

Lk. 15,1-32: the Prodigal Son

1Jn. 3,13-24; 4,1-21: Let us love each other because love comes from God



Call of a CMS Associate

The charism of Daniel Comboni, assumed and kept alive by the members of the various Institutes that draw their inspiration from it, is a gift granted by God to the whole Church.

So it can be shared also by other ecclesial institutions beyond the historical situations and ways in which it has existed so far. After Comboni, in the Institute this "lay status" lost sparkle (as a consequence of the historical period and also because of a diminished "combonianity") and for a few decades little was done to keep up awareness and sensitivity for this state. The Vatican II and subsequent Church teaching and documents have once again raised the interest and commitment of the laity for the mission. It becomes therefore important that we Comboni Missionary Sisters, who in different ways have always supported the missionary activity of the laity, prepare with a positive and encouraging attitude of trust to receive and cooperate with these lay men and women, and acknowledge their powerful to the mission of the Church as missionary disciples who desire to life under the lent of the CMS charism becoming a cenacle within their family.

Reading Time

Please read the next pages and after 20 min. of reading in small group of three we will share following the instruction of the blue box.

May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of glory, grant you a spirit of wisdom and insight to know God clearly. May God enlighten your innermost vision that you may know the great hope to which you have been called, the wealth of God's glorious heritage to be distributed among the members of the church, and the immeasurable scope of God's power at work in us who believe.

Ephesians 1:17-19



Deep Dialogue

In brief share with the group the following questions, don't interrupt the person that has the word.

What image came to your mind during this quiet moment?

After all members of the group have shared

What struck you during the sharing of other people into the group?

After all member of the group shared think about

What did you hear during this profound dialogue that has not been expressed with words?



Call of the CMS Associates

We are a community of laypersons who seek to grow in personal holiness by our association with the Sisters' charism (spirituality and mission), and core values of prayerfulness, simplicity of life, and "making common cause" with the people among whom we live.

We join the Sisters in living out our missionary call by becoming instruments of Christ's compassion "for the poorest and the most forsaken" according to our ability and strength.

The goal of the process of discernment is "to help us to become as closely attuned as possible to God's purposes for us, thereby discovering our own happiness as well" (Kathleen Fischer, *Women at the Well*, 1988). God's will for us must be considered in the context of our life situation – our gifts and limitations, our desires and responsibilities. To decide well, we must know the issue under consideration. Some very important questions must be considered:

Closing Prayer

Ever loving God, you who are the source of all light and in whose light we find life, I am deeply grateful for your presence to me now.

I rejoice in the ways you have revealed your will to me, and I ask the grace to accept your will and to live out your call, whatever it may be.

I make this prayer confident in your great love for me.

AMEN

- What exactly am I deciding?
- Does this represent a choice for life for me and for everyone involved in the decision?
- Will this decision move me toward greater personal wholeness and holiness?
- How free am I to make this choice?
- What limitations do my personal responsibilities put on this choice?



3. Holy and Capable- Women of our History

- Maria Bolezzoli, first General Superior
- Teresa Gregolini
- Giuseppa Scandola, our first holy sister.
- Federica Bettari, intrapreneur General Superior
- Spirituality and Strategies of Reconciliation
- More Resources



Maria Bolezzoli – First General Superior

By listening to God and to history, the voice of the Church, we will continue to be guided and to open new roadways that only those who come after us will be able to grasp the project.

Maria Bolezzoli was the only daughter of Michele and Teresa Zata, born in Verona on 25th January 1828. Her family was of comfortable means, and she was able to train as a teacher. From an early age she felt drawn to enclosed life but made the decision to remain with her parents who needed her.

After they died she offered to help her Parish Priest, Don Zefirino Agostani, of the Parish of St Nazaro and carried out parish works, especially with poor girls. She then joined the Pius Union of the Ursulines.

She was initially reluctant when asked by Comboni to take on the responsibility of the young aspirants to the African Mission. Eventually, with the encouragement she received from Cardinal Di Canossa, Bishop of Verona, she gave in to his persistence, seeing it as a manifestation of the will of God for her. On 6th September 1874, she moved from the parish of St Maria in Organo and entered Mother House: her “yes” to the will of God, was absolute.

After the death of Comboni, **Mother Maria Bolezzoli** writes to all the Sisters:

“Dearest Daughters, take courage! Be strong and generous, don’t lose heart and don’t be dismayed, but constant and brave, maintain the place assigned to you by Divine Providence. Do not turn back but walk confidently in the footsteps mapped out for you by our magnanimous Father. Listen to how he calls you from the summit of the mountain which he has now reached. He cries out to you: Onward! Onward! He keeps the flag flying and he invites you to climb. Steep is the path, thorny the road, but your Father mapped it out for you, so place your feet into his footsteps. Do not doubt. He will hold out his hand to you and help you in this difficult mission. Keep your eyes always on him and you will certainly overcome all your difficulties. Be worthy imitators of your Father here below and with him you will share his glory above. ... But I ask you to be constant and faithful to the end. Always conserve among you that beautiful peace and holy harmony ...

(Mother Maria Bolezzoli, 18th of October, 1881)

Her Last Testament was:

Love one another. My greatest satisfaction in the next world will be to see that you love one another and bear one another’s burdens. Remember that we are children of the same father.

(M. Bolezzoli)

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Teresa Gregollini- To Love to the Point of “Anathema”

Paul, in one of his letters wrote that he was ready to be excommunicated if it were necessary for the salvation of his “brothers” (Romans 9:3). Teresa is not known to have said these words, but found herself in a situation where she experienced what Paul meant. She accepted to pass through a similar humiliation out of love for a sister, so that she was not left alone in the hands of “the enemy”. [1]

On that 12th April 1884, “the day of mourning” as Mother Costanza Caldera later called it, when her master arrived at the lake side at Rahad, where the Mahdi was camped, she immediately began to hear, like a blow to her heart, whispers spreading through the camp, that a sister had apostatised.

The truth was that Concetta had not apostatised, she would never have done that, but the trap laid for her had been cunningly set, diabolically set, and it had succeeded. Now the sister found herself alone and apart, in the enclosure reserved for the Mahdi himself. Teresa, as sister and as “mother”, felt doubly responsible for her: how could she turn her back on her?

Who will separate us from the love of Christ?

Though the price, to pronounce the formula accepting the Islamic faith, was high, Teresa did not draw back. She only asked that the other sisters, prisoners like herself, not to be left alone, not be scattered, but remain together, united, to make “common cause” right to the end, even in the moments of greatest trial. That chalice though, which none of her companions refused to drink, seemed in the end to be reserved in a special way to her.

Yes, for Teresa, it must have been both a relief and a suffering to see at least two of them manage to flee to liberty, in October 1885, and her desperation must have been limitless when Bettina and Caterina, after Concetta’s death, managed to escape in November 1891, while she was forced to remain in exile forever. Alone, because tied by chains which only death could break.

An unheard of sacrifice, which made her truly a “mother”

“I remember my mother well and tell you, that in my difficulties I call on her as though she were near me. She was a saint in the real sense of the word and I feel her spirit hovers over my house”

That is what her “Beppino” wrote of his mother, some years after her death, which occurred 75 years ago, in October 1931. The only surviving child of those Teresa bore while a prisoner, after her inevitable marriage with Dimitri Cocorempas, Joseph kept a remembrance of his mother which was made up of intense love and intense veneration. She was a saint; he used to say to those who asked him to tell them about her.

Teresa, on her part never hid her deep, intense love for the children she bore. She did even more, she loved her spiritual children, to the end: the unhappy people of Nigrizia, bound and oppressed, with whom she herself had been called to share the harshness of slavery.

Only the grain which falls into the soil, Jesus had said, can be the source of new and authentic life.

Undoubtedly Teresa understood both in the moment in which the darkness seemed to increase around her and when what was happening to her seemed to make no sense, that she instead had been loved with a special love, and for this reason was called to live at a profound level, and in close union with Jesus, the mystery of the Cross.

She was a true missionary, a faithful witness, therefore to God in Jesus Christ: a humiliated God, mocked, beaten and at the last, placed in a tomb and forgotten. But that was only the night which came before the dawn of the Resurrection for Jesus!

Giuseppa Scandola



I wish each of you:

A deep encounter in your hearts with this holy Sister, Maria Giuseppa, so that:

- We might follow in the footsteps of her life
- *We might live the mission as she lived it, with passion, enthusiasm, heroic faith and charity.*
- That she might intercede to the Lord for the gift of holy missionary vocations, also for the Comboni Sisters.

Sr. Maria Giuseppa was a woman who knew how to educate. The love of the Lord pushed her to make faith grow also, for example, among her own relatives, through a ministry of letter writing. She was able to inflame the hearts of her relatives, so that they, in turn, could ignite a flame in the hearts of their children. She writes to her Sister, Francesca: *“Let me tell you to remember to care more for the soul of your children than for their bodies ... Try to inculcate good in your children. Don’t lose a moment ... Speak with them always, so that the flame of His love may grow in these young hearts”* (Khartoum 27 June 1880, AMN 3, p.72). She urged them so that they might know how to educate these young nieces and nephews to know the Plan of God for them.

Sr. Giuseppa shares in her letters the beauty, the vivacity and the struggle of her missionary life. She writes to her niece Caterina: *“Those little girls that you saw in the photo are here with us, together with many others. There are white, black and yellow girls, Turks and schismatic, Muslims, Jews and a few Catholics. We do what we can for them. We teach them all the good we can ... Tell me what you think? Would you not come here with me? And your Sister? Perhaps you are both already committed to another way of life? Well, do whatever pleases the Lord. You can do good everywhere.”* (Aswan, 16th of September 1900, AMN 3, pp.122-123).

The missionary life of Sr. Giuseppa, communicated through her letters to her relatives, stimulates in

Caterina, her niece, the search for God’s plan for her. Caterina feels stimulated to seek what 2

Deep Dialogue

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God's will for her might be, and she expresses this concern to her Aunt who is far off. Sr. Giuseppa answers her: "From your letter, I perceive that you might have a desire to become a Religious Sister." She advises her to seek a spiritual guide who might help her to discern her vocation. Then she invites her to widen her horizons:

"You see, in Verona there are many Religious Institutes. Ask, seek, pray, try to understand in which one the Lord wants you. Happiness can only be achieved in realizing the vocation which God has for each of us." (Aswan, 13.05.1901, AMN 3, p.130)

Our Sister feels also the responsibility of ***being an intermediary in the vocation of her niece***. She does not hide from her that the missionary vocation is a vocation to a courageous and arduous mission. But everything is possible for one who is called. "*In my extreme poverty, I will help you with my prayer*" she wrote to her niece. She knew that, given the huge distance between them, she could not do more than this. But she continued to give her advice: "*Don't wait for the Lord to say to you directly: Caterina, Come! He will say it in your heart, especially in the celebration of the Eucharist and in Holy Communion. Take advantage of that, and decide soon. If a vocation comes from the Lord, he will not leave you, so that you might always be strong in Him*" (Aswan, 27th of July 1901, AMN 3, p.132)

However, Caterina feels unable to take a final decision. "*I am telling you once again to be attentive. If the Lord is calling you to some convent, don't go deaf on him. Do not do this to the Lord who is so good. Responding to the invitation of the Lord always requires courage, and abandoning oneself to Him.*" She wrote further, "*And you, my dear, what is keeping you from becoming a Sister? Hurry up! Time is passing. The Lord has said: 'Whoever does not leave Father, Mother, Brothers and Sisters, is not worthy of me' Come on. Take courage! The lord does not abandon anyone. He even takes care of our parents if we really leave them for love of Him*" (Aswan, 7th of July 1902, AMN 3, pp.137-138).

God, almighty and merciful Father, by the merits of Jesus Christ, true god and true Man, and through the intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church, and Mediatrix of every grace, deign to glorify Sr. M. Giuseppa Scandola, a faithful and heroic missionary who spent all her life in order to spread your reign in africa, particularly in the Sudan Mission.

I give you praise for all that she did and suffered in communion with You and through her intercession I ask to listen my prayer, granting me the grace which I now ask..., if it is for your glory and for the good of the Church.

Glory be to the Blessed Trinity (3 times)

Sr. M. Giuseppa Scandola

She was born in Boscochiesanuova near Verona, North Italy, on 26th January 1849. Maria grew up in a poor but hard working family where the spirit of prayer and a principled life were truly valued. Daniel Comboni, the Founder of the Comboni Missionary Sisters "pie Madri della Nigrizia", met Maria by chance at Erbezzo first and at Boscochiesanuova later. There, he shared his inspired desire to found a Congregation of Sisters for Africa.

Won over to the missionary ideal, Maria became the second Comboni sister and one of the first five sisters to reach Africa in 1877.

there she consecrated her entire life to the evangelization of the African people in particular in the Sudan. In Berber, el Obeid, Khartoum, Shellal, Asswan, Lul, she gave herself to the people in an ever increasing loving dedication and sacrifice. She reached the supreme act of offering her own life to God in exchange for that of a young, missionary priest, Fr. Giuseppe Beduschi, who, thanks to her generosity was then able to continue for many years his apostolic mission in Africa.

Sister Maria Giuseppa Scandola in her silent way, teaches us that "there is no greater love than to lay down one's life for another" and that true love is this: "to know the Father and Jesus Christ who wants everyone to be saved".

For this she lived, suffered and prayed, for this she died on 1st. September 1903 at Lul (Sudan).

Federica Bettari

From the writings of *Mother Federica Bettari*

“Sisters, I would like each of you to feel that what I am about to say, is addressed to each of you personally: You are the Congregation! Open wide your soul before the One who reads the very depths of yourself and examine your faith, your prayer and your charity. If you feel free within, serene, available, if you feel yourself energized in the gift you have received, of renunciation, of love, of joy, repeat your humble and sincere thanksgiving. This is the spirit of the Congregation, because this is the spirit of Christ and of the Founder. But you are the one who must live it ..

Who lowers the level of our beautiful missionary family? It is I; it is you. Who allows the lymph of the Spirit to pass, giving life, vigor and fecundity to this same family of ours? It is still I; it is still you. It is us; in my and your prayer

Let us seek together to overcome our anxieties and our fears with an unshakeable faith in the power of the Spirit; the differences and the tensions which occupy us to the point of losing our inner freedom, with the charity which opens us to the Love which saves and makes us new; our pessimism and lack of trust with the hope that thrusts us from the situation we are in today towards new horizons.

(Gasparini, Fulgida - *Adesso è l'Ora, Profilo Spirituale di Federica Bettari*, p. 142)

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Verona
13-17 maggio 2013



Simposio sul
Piano per la
Rigenerazione
dell'Africa e sulle
Regole del 1871

Suore Missionarie Comboniane

Spirituality and Strategies of Reconciliation

Reconciliation is a spirituality, besides being a strategy for conflict resolution. It is essential to recognize the relationship between spirituality and strategies in order to face the problems that often accompany the ministry of reconciliation. Concentrating on strategies, methods to follow, etc., failing to give equal importance to the spirituality of reconciliation, would lead to consider it a technique to be taught and learned. This is the risk for agencies and organizations that have access to vast funds. There is a balance between spirituality and methodological strategies: a spirituality that does not employ clear methods and foresees objectives and aims, ends up to be only words without impact on social life. A methodology that does not stem from spirituality cannot have real strength; there must be mutual interaction.

We can find God in the entire journey towards reconciliation: in the depth of fears, in the terror of dark nights, in the tearful restoration of friendly relationships. The path through conflict that leads to reconciliation will be full of encounters with the divine.

This reality breaks the chain of conflict introducing in the process of interpersonal and social encounter, the unforeseeable presence of Grace. Reconciliation allows us to live with the past without being its prisoners. It is the only way enabling us to fend through the darkness of conflict in order to reach out to the open spaces of peace and harmonious togetherness.

Before being a collective commitment, reconciliation is a personal journey that cannot be imposed; each one must decide for oneself to forgive the offender. It is a process that starts from the victim, moved by profound motivations marked by gratuity and open to eternity, motivations that reflect the Gospel logic of the "grain of wheat fallen to the ground ... that dies and produces abundant fruit" (Jn 12,24) a fruit that many will enjoy.

The transformation of relationships which comes from acts of reconciliation, brings to life social situations completely different from what seems to be today's mentality. From gestures of reconciliation new styles of life spring up giving credibility to the prophetic strength of the Gospel and make the Kingdom of God present among us.

Verona

13-17 maggio 2013



Simposio sul Piano per la Rigenerazione dell'Africa e sulle Regole del 1871

Suore Missionarie Comboniane

Reconciliation is possible to the extent in which conditions of freedom are established that promote truth, justice, compassion and peace :

- To compose the truth: demands that the logic of the facts and their meaning be reconstructed in a listening attitude that respects the other in order to find shared solutions.
- To give impulse to justice: means to re-establish harmony with sentiments of mercy and compassion while admitting personal responsibility.
- The fostering of compassion is an essential element in the achievement of communion; it springs from a humble and benevolent heart always ready to accord beforehand a measure of trust that gives life a chance to emerge.
- Peace is a fruit to look for by cultivating a heart reconciled with self, with others, with God and with creation in the simplicity of everyday life constantly oriented to the promotion of the good.

All this is finely expressed by biblical wisdom in Palm 8485: 'Truth and mercy will meet; Justice and peace will embrace'. In divine wisdom the opposite will come together and define evangelical relations. These four elements must be present in the true processes of reconciliation



SOME TEXTS FOR PRAYER

John 10: 1-18 The Good Shepherd

John 13:1-20 The Cenacle, the washing of the feet,

John 15:1-17 Remain in my Love

John 19:17-37 The Crucifixion

Mathew 11:28-30 Meek and humble of heart

Philippians 2:1-11 Have in you the same sentiments ...

Luke 4:14-19 Proclamation of the Kingdom

Isaiah 42:1-4 The Suffering Servant

Isaiah 49:1-6 The mission of the Servant

Isaiah 50:4-9 Humiliation of the Servant

Isaiah 52:13-53:12 The Suffering Servant

Rule of 1871 – Chapter X

Writings of Comboni 3158-59 – Homily in Khartoum

More....

Women of the Gospel: <http://www.comboniane.org/who-we-are/women-in-our-history>

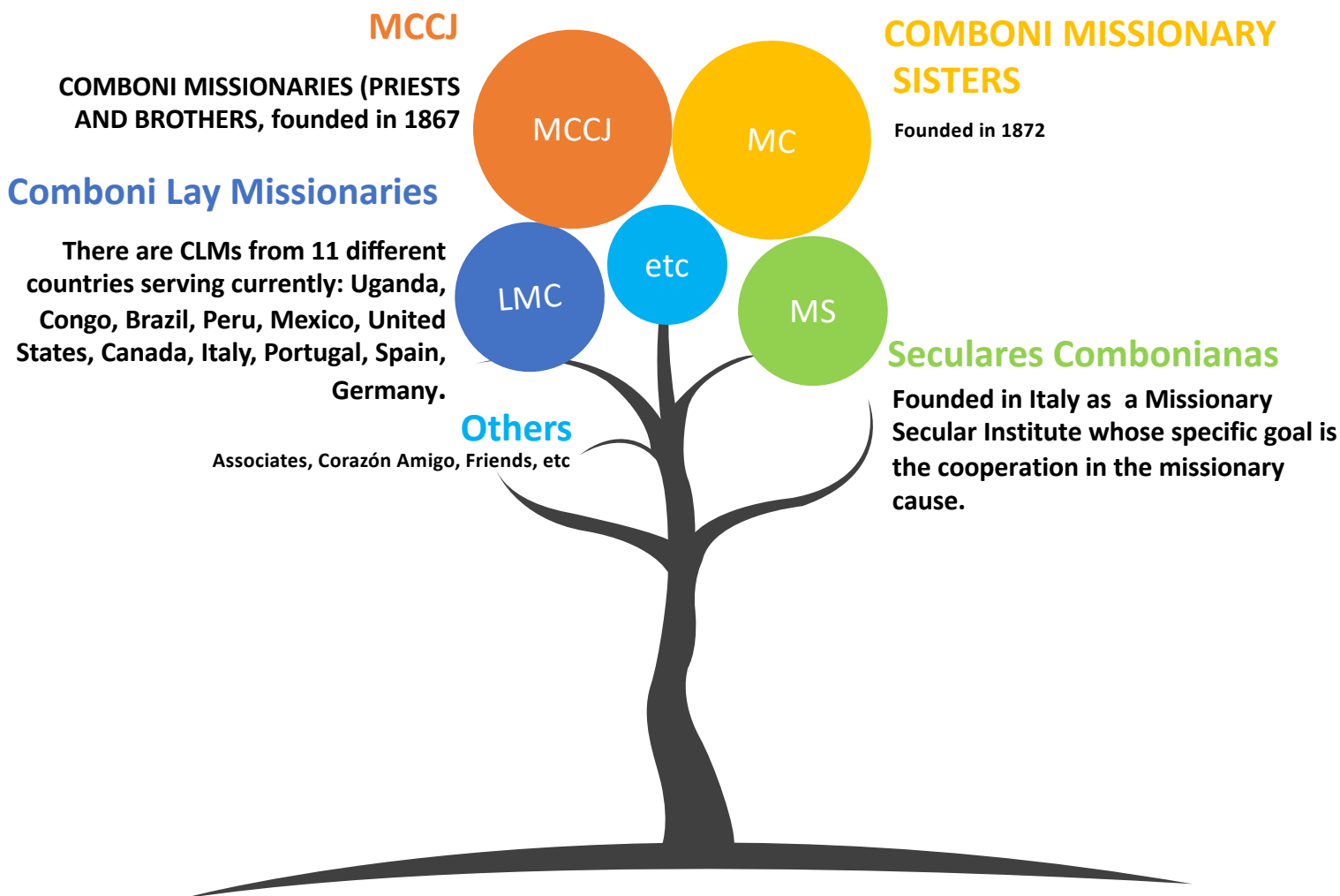
St. Daniel Comboni Quotes:

http://www.comboniani.org/?page_id=3183

COMBONI FAMILY

The Comboni Family is made up of laity, sisters, brothers, and priests around the world who follow the charism of St. Daniel Comboni.

We are in 41 countries around the world, and number in total around 4000.



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