

Venerable Maria Giuseppa Scandola A consecrated woman for Nigrizia

*"The Mission for us starts again from Lul,
after years of silence and suffering.
It takes "a saint" to rise from the rubble,
to carry on the mission with creativity and hope.
It is a strong invitation to Combonian holiness".*

We are celebrating our 150 Years since Daniel Comboni founded our Institute in 1872 and we are approaching the big event of the XXI General Chapter in October 2022.

At this very special time, we ask for the intercession of the Venerable Maria Giuseppa Scandola a woman of listening and of action, a woman who was transfigured by the contemplation of the Lord Jesus on the cross and opened her arms to the African people. Today we are called to contemplate that mystery of grace within ourselves and within our community.

"I knew you"

God calls the prophet Jeremiah in 626 B.C. during the reign of Josiah and his prophetic ministry will continue until after the fall of Jerusalem, thus also passing through the reigns of Jehoiakim, Jehoiakin and Sedekiah (Jer 1, 3-10). It mentions the fall of the holy city, but also the fall of future kingdoms.

"Will you come with me?"

Like prophet Jeremiah, Maria Giuseppa Scandola (Marietta) initially saw herself unable to follow the vocation presented to her by Daniel Comboni. But becoming aware of the need for the Gospel to be proclaimed in African land, her desire to follow him was fulfilled. Like Mary, Our Lady, Marietta answered "yes" to the invitation of the Lord Jesus.

"Courage, be strong and brave"

At the same time Mother Maria Bollezzoli, the Comboni Sisters first General Superior encouraged her sisters in Africa writing to them in 20 October 1881 to have **"Courage, and to be strong and brave"**. Today, as at that time, we too live in times of bewilderment, confusion, suffering and have many crosses. May this exhortation penetrate our hearts and souls, helping us to walk forward.

"Don't look back"

*"Walk frankly in the footsteps traced by your magnanimous father, Daniel Comboni.
Hear how he from the summit of the mountain cries out to you, 'Onward, onward ...'*

It is the time of moving forward, of hope that opens up the new horizon; it is the time to nurture the seed of the Gospel in all the continents where we are present as missionaries.

"I am the vine and you are the branches" - Jn 15:1-11

Branches of extraordinary holiness and beauty have travelled across the 150 years of life of our missionary sisters Institute. Generations and generations of 'holy and capable' sisters have travelled across continents, countries, villages; they have crossed oceans and seas, forests and deserts, laying the SEED of the Gospel in every land with the testimony of their simple, humble, capable lives.

"It takes a saint to rise from the rubble"

Twenty years after Comboni's death, the mission in Africa of St Daniel Comboni started again from Lul, South Sudan, with the call of Sr Maria Giuseppa Scandola who at 56 years of age said 'yes' again to the Lord and to the suffering and torn African peoples.

"My Calling - our Calling today"

In God's eternal time there still resounds for us a call to rise up, to get out of our humdrum daily routine, to go towards new horizons of life and evangelisation *Ad Gentes*. COME ON!

Sr. Maria Rosa Venturelli - postulator