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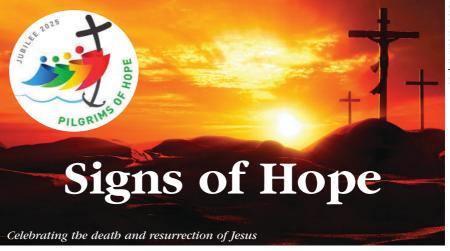
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From the Editor



ear Confreres, we received the news that the Holy Father has appointed our Superior General, Fr. Tesfaye Tadesse Gebresilasie, as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Addis Ababa.

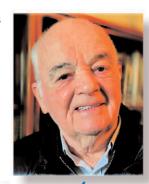
We receive this news with a mixture of feelings and emotions, foremost among them gratitude to God for the gift we have had in Fr. Tesfaye as our Superior General, as well as a fellow brother. We recognise that his selection represents a gift to the particular church, for whose growth we as an Institute collaborate.'

This was the communication from our General Council announcing the appointment of Fr Tesfaye Tadesse (see cover page and pages 4-5). Comboni Mission extends prayers and blessing for a fruitful ministry!

We are on the way as Pilgrims! The Jubilee year calls Christians to action. Pope Francis called "for "signs of hope" in this Jubilee Year, including the desire for peace in the world, openness to life and responsible parenthood, and closeness to prisoners, the poor, the sick, the young, the elderly, migrants and people "in difficult situations." Pope Francis has called on affluent countries to forgive the debts of countries that would never be able to repay them, and address "ecological debt," which he described as "connected to commercial imbalances with effects on the environment and the disproportionate use of natural resources by certain countries over long periods of time." In our Winter edition of 2024, we published the Jubilee Year prayer and more information. Let's celebrate with joy!

Our photo, at the top, reminds us of this important period in our Church lives - Lent and Easter - May our time of reconciliation, and prayers for peace in the

world, bring us to the joyful Feast of the Resurrection! A prayerful Lent and **Blessed Easter** to all our friends and benefactors! Alleluia



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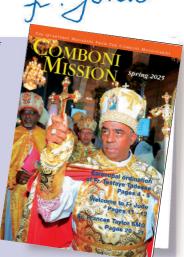
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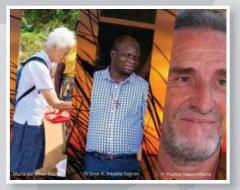
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Father Tesfaye Tadesse ordained Auxiliary Bishop of Addis Ababa

The newly ordained bishop extends his thanks to all and asks for prayers and support. by Fr Jose Vieira mccj



Monday, February 3, 2025 Fr Tesfaye Tadesse, former Superior General of the Comboni Missionaries, was ordained Auxiliary Bishop of the Archeparchy of Addis Ababa, in Ethiopia, on 2nd February 2024. Cardinal Berhaneyesus Souraphiel,

Domingues, Comboni Wokorach Raphael P'Mony, Archbishop of Gulu, Uganda, and Ndjadi Ndjate Léonard, Auxiliary Bishop of Kisangani, DR Congo, some Comboni provincial Churches, from the government and superiors from English-speaking African provinces, many confreres

bishops Comboni sisters from Ethiopia and from abroad, a huge number of local and religious priests, sisters, faithful, representatives from other Christian from the diplomatic corps.

The liturgy was conducted in



Bishop Tesfaye with family and friends



Bishop Tesfaye with fellow Bishops at the end of the ceremony

Ge'ez, with the English translation shown on the screens. Some hymns were in Amharic, including a song written by Fr Dawit Wubishet, a Comboni from Ethiopia doing a sabbatical in the USA.



Choir members at the celebration

During his homily, Cardinal Berhaneyesus spoke about the episcopal ministry. "'We are happy to receive the new auxiliary bishop today from the Holy Father and the Comboni missionaries," he said. Cardinal Berhaneyesus urged Bishop Tesfaye to be a good shepherd especially for those in need, "a father for the poor, displaced and refugees."

The offertory procession was animated by dancers from the refugee community of Kunama people of Eritrea.

The ordination ceremony was followed by a number of speeches. Mons Massimo Catterin, charge d'affaires at the Addis Ababa Nunciature, was the first speaker. "Episcopate is the name of a service," he underlined.

Fr David Domingues, Vicar General of the Comboni Missionaries, thanked God for the gift, the life and the ministry of Bishop Tesfaye in the Institute and in the Church. "We are indeed proud of you," he exclaimed.

Archeparch Menghesteab recalled that it was him who invited Bishop Tesfaye to join the Comboni Missionaries. "Many years ago, I thought I fished a small fish, but gradually he became a big fish. I see Bishop Tesfaye as my dear son", he explained.

The Provincial Superior of the Combonis in Ethiopia, Fr Asfaha Yohannes, and the leader of all Evangelical Churches in the country were among the speakers.

Bishop Tesfaye concluded the speeches with a word of thanks in Amharic, English, Italian, Spanish and French. "I continue to count on your prayers and support", the newly ordained bishop said.

After the liturgical celebration guests were served a delicious lunch with traditional Ethiopian dishes and some entertainment.

Fr Tesfaye made his profession of faith during an evening prayer in the Cathedral on the eve of his ordination.

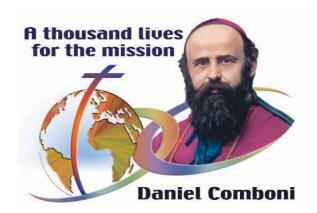


Celebrants gather in the Cathedral at the end of the Mass.



Fr Tesfaye awaits to be called forward for ordination.

Getting to know the Comboni Missionaries



A love for nature.
Ready to accept life's challenges. Twelve years of missionary life in Zambia transformed her mentality and spirituality. Sister Eulalia Capdevila Enriquez speaks to us.

y parents gave me the name Eulàlia, a name which implies an entire life program. Since I was little, I learned that it derives etymologically from ancient Greek and means "well-spoken". I became very aware that words have the power to build the world, to bless it, to beautify it. Later I discovered that they can also be used to destroy it

Childhood Memories

From my childhood, I remember the hours spent with my sisters and my brother, and also my cousins, among fruit trees. We were farmers and my love for the countryside, plants and trees grew naturally. I also remember how I loved silence because it excited me to think about the time my father spent alone in the fields, without extraneous noises, patiently waiting for all the plots to receive water from the well.

Sr Eulalia: "To honour my name"

www.southworld.net



From my mother, a migrant, a creative and enterprising woman, I learned to explore life and not to be satisfied with what I have learned, but to always look beyond and accept new challenges. Despite her work, she continued to be a catechist in our parish and also organized the first training for catechists.

From my father, I learned as a child that there was a continent called Africa. He always told us about his experiences in Cameroon, where he spent some years as a lay missionary. I grew up in this environment where the narratives of Africa and those of Jesus were harmoniously intertwined. During my adolescence, the news showed the terrible famine in Ethiopia and, later, in other African countries.

An unfair world

I wondered how people could die while we had a place to grow crops and get food. For the first time, I felt that the world was unfair and that I had to do something. I wanted to lend my voice to announce the Good News honouring my name and also to lend my hands so that no one would ever go hungry. That was the greatest challenge that a shy and fearful teenager could have chosen. I entered the School of Agricultural Engineering thinking that I would be useful one day somewhere in Africa, but the truth was that I still did not know where to go.

In 1997, together with the young people of my parish, I participated in the World Youth Day in Paris. There were more than a million of us young people and I will never forget the evening when John Paul II gave us a catechesis on John 1:38: "Master, where do you live? Come and see".

That evening I realized that if I did not believe in the word of Jesus, I would not go anywhere. I had to take a big step. I told Jesus that I trusted him. That same year, in October, I met by chance, at a prayer meeting, a lay Comboni missionary who invited me to meet his group.

Beginnings of a missionary vocation

I took the big step and for a year I greatly appreciated the missionary atmosphere and the formative process that we had, accompanied by the Comboni Missionaries. Before the end of that period, one of them said to me: "I think you should meet the Comboni Missionary Sisters".

From that moment my life was transformed, because I found my place in the world by living my missionary vocation as a consecrated woman according to the Comboni charism. In the first years of formation, I laid solid foundations for my desire to give myself to others, especially to the most disadvantaged, without forgetting that following Jesus is a continuous journey of human and spiritual growth. I entrusted myself - and I entrust myself - to the charism of Daniel Comboni, with his spirituality of the pierced heart of Christ that beats with love for all humanity and his methodology of "saving Africa with Africa".

Missionary life in Africa

My first missionary experience in Zambia has shaped me in such a way that I feel "blessed". My words have always been equal to the generosity,



Zambia : alone in the fields iStock credit:dmbaker

hospitality and humanity that I have experienced in this country. The best thing I can do as a "well-spoken" person is to remain silent, and then, humbly, join in the thanksgiving that my most disadvantaged brothers and sisters in Zambia sing every day, despite the difficulties they suffer.

I have lived my missionary vocation for 12 years in Zambia. The experiences have accumulated, but I will tell you only three moments. The first took place in a chapel in the rural villages, where I gave a group of young people three days of formation on faith and another, more practical, on agroforestry.

Young Christians in rural areas, almost all parents, depend entirely on fishing, livestock breeding and agriculture. One day a boy was caught stealing all the posters we had made in the local language. He confessed that he wanted the materials to be taken to other non-Catholic youth living in more distant villages.

Following this incident, the youth group leaders decided to respond and organized an expedition to visit those villages, so the formation began to open up to other groups outside our parish. The missionary leadership that these young Christians demonstrated was for me the best formation for the Mission I have ever had.

The second moment was when we undertook a project to develop a youth catechesis manual. We wanted to develop it in the local language with the participation of young people from the main parishes of the Diocese of Mongu. The response and commitment they showed exceeded all my expectations. We worked intensely for a year.

Once published, the young people voluntarily and with great joy dedicated themselves to introducing it in their parishes and also in the teachers' college. They were young people announcing the Good News to other young people at the same time. Once again, I felt the universality of the missionary spirit that is embodied in people of all origins and ages.

The third moment was when we started to raise awareness among the local population about caring for creation because the burning of trees for charcoal production was turning our area into a desert.

The initiative started very humbly, but with the support of the local traditional chief, today there is a centre, called Mother Earth, that continues to raise awareness about the need to care for and manage natural resources wisely. In addition, the centre hosts several training initiatives on organic farming, nutrition and other sustainable practices, whose operation is guaranteed by a community of Comboni Sisters.

I like to think that experiences like these have transformed my mentality and my spirituality. This school of life and humanity has allowed me to relate to all aspects of life. We must preach Jesus and, at the same time, try to alleviate the pain of our brothers and sisters.

Lives of faith

Last year, 14 Catholic missionaries met violent deaths worldwide:
nine priests and five lay people were killed. These missionaries and
pastoral workers were not in the spotlight, but worked to bear
witness to their faith in everyday life.

MISSIO England/Wales

In the mystery which unites them to the Passion and Resurrection of Christ, these witnesses of faith also share in the pain of Christ for all the innocent who suffer unjustly. The gift of their lives reflects Christ's salvation offered to all humanity, and manifests God's love for all.

During the Angelus on 22 September 2024, when speaking of the murder of Juan Antonio LÛpez, Pope Francis stressed the importance of protecting those who work for justice, saying: 'I join in the grief of the local Church and in the condemnation of all forms of violence. I am close to all those who see their basic rights trampled upon, as well as to those who work for the common good and in this way respond to the cry of the poor and the earth.'

François Kabore, 55, was a volunteer in a Catholic community in Burkina Faso. He was leading a prayer session for around 30 Catholics on 25 February in Essakane when he fell victim to a brutal jihadist attack, along with 15 others who also died.

Fr William Banda, 37, a Zambian Missionary (Kiltegan Fathers), was shot and killed by an unknown



person on 13 March whilst he was preparing to celebrate Mass in Tzaneen Cathedral, South Africa. (Image: Diocese of Polokwane/CAN)

Edouard Zoetyenga Yougbare, 60, a devoted family man and catechist in Burkina Faso, was kidnapped by an armed group whilst looking for his lost mule. He was tortured and killed on 18 April and found seven kilometres away the next day.

Fr Paul Tatu Mothobi, 45, a Stigmatine Missionary from Lesotho, was found in his car with a gunshot wound to the head on 27 April in South Africa. According to statements, he had accidentally witnessed a woman being murdered



and was shot to suppress his testimony. (Image: SACBC)

Fr Ramón Arturo Montejo Peinado, 45, was murdered in a robbery on 4 June in a car park in Colombia. Local police have said that the perpetrators from Venezuela have been caught.

Juan Antonio López, 46, founder of the National Commission for Integral Ecology in Honduras, had received death threats due to his work to protect the environment and fight local corruption and organised crime.

Armed men on motorcycles shot and killed him in his car on the evening of 14 September, after he attended a Eucharistic celebration.

Edmond Bahati Monja, 36, coordinator of Radio Maria in the Democratic Republic of Congo, was killed by gunmen on 27 September. It is suspected his demise was linked to his investigations into the violence perpetrated against the population by armed groups in the region.

Missionaries killed in 2024



Fr Christophe Komla Badjougou, 46, was a Fidei Donum Priest in Cameroon, originally from Togo.

He was shot and killed by armed robbers outside the house of the Missionaries of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in YaoundÈ, on the evening of 7 October. (Image: Diocese of Yagoua)

Fr Marcelo Pérez Pérez, 50, an Indigenous Jesuit Priest in Mexico, was shot and killed by two murderers on 20 October whilst returning from celebrating Mass in the parish of Nuestra Seòora de



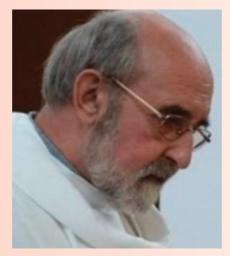
Guadalupe in San Cristobal de las Casas. He was known for his commitment to the respect of human rights and democracy. (Image: Kairos)

Fr Fabián Enrique Arcos Sevilla, 53, disappeared on 30 October in Ecuador following a robbery at his house. Four days later his body was

found, with obvious signs of torture, in a landfill north of Ambato.

Police have confirmed that the perpetrators have been found.

Fr Lech Lachowicz, 72, was attacked late in the evening of 3 November in Poland by a man who, according to police, intended to rob him by breaking into the presbytery



armed with an axe. He died six days later in hospital as a result of his injuries.

(Image: FB Civitas Christiana Olsztyn)

Fr Juan Antonio Llorente Espín,

76, a Franciscan Priest, was attacked by a man with a stick and glass bottle at the Santo EspÌritu del Monte monastery in Spain on 9 November. The perpetrator, who suffers with a mental health disorder, broke into the monastery and attacked the friars. Those injured were taken to hospital where, sadly, Fr Juan Antonio died two days later due to his severe head injuries.

Steve Maguerith Chaves do Nascimento, 43, a husband, father of a six-year-old girl, and a committed parishioner, was killed on 8 December in Brazil as he was parking his car before Mass. Security



footage showed two men on a motorcycle approaching his car before shooting him in the head. (Image: Reproduction-Contigo)

Fr Tobias Chukwujekwu Okonkwo, 26, was shot multiple times and killed by a group of unidentified people on 26 December while driving on an expressway in Nigeria.

Fr Tobias was also a pharmacist and ran various health facilities, such as the nursing and midwifery schools, and the medical laboratory of the Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in southern Nigeria.

All information is supplied by Fides, the Vatican-based news agency of Missio, and by Vatican News.

Please join us in giving thanks for the work and witness of these people. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

Amen

Latin American bishops launch campaign to protect human rights activists

hree months after the murder of Juan López, a Honduran church worker and environmental activist whose death was publicly mourned by Pope Francis, the bishops of Latin America are raising awareness of attacks against those fighting for social justice in the continent.

Three newly created Latin American cardinals joined Cardinal Michael Czerny, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, and Emilce Cuda, secretary of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, at the Vatican Dec. 9 to launch a campaign, titled "Life Hangs by a Thread" ("La vida pende de un hilo"), that aims to support and promote human rights activists.

The campaign, supported by the pontifical commission and the Latin American bishops' council, will amplify the stories of human rights defenders who have been threatened or killed; establish social dialogue meetings between business leaders, trade unions and church representatives; organize training sessions to teach communication and negotiation skills for activists; and provide concrete support for local church initiatives oriented toward social justice.

From 2013 to 2024, 38 Indigenous leaders were killed in the Peruvian Amazon and more than 500 cases of abuse against Indigenous children were documented, primarily linked to mafias that infiltrate illegal mining operations in the region, said Cardinal Carlos Castillo Mattasoglio of Lima, Peru.

"The church cannot stop encouraging, inspiring, accompanying local initiatives in the world," he said. "There are so many responses, the people are not silent, they are organ-



Indigenous leaders gathered for Mass

iStock credit: Salvador-Aznar

izing themselves, but it is discouraging to do it alone."

Cardinal Jaime Spengler of Porto Alegre, Brazil, president of the Latin American bishops' council, known by the acronym CELAM, said that on the continent "there are many social leaders and civil actors who are at risk."

"The blood of hundreds of murdered leaders in Latin America and the Caribbean call for justice, and we cannot remain indifferent," he said. "To honour their memory, we have the duty to make known their efforts to denounce the culture of death that develops from a capitalist and extractive economic model and transnational crimes related to drug trafficking."

Czerny said the role of the Vatican is to support the church in Latin America in confronting problems and to encourage the church in each country to raise its voice against the violence.

"It is there where the governments are really listening," he said. "Our encouragement is to the bishops' conferences, to the bishops, to those who work with them, to bring these

cases, these tragedies, these atrocities, to public opinion and to the government."

For that reason, the stories of human rights defenders will be shared through the Platform for Peace, Democracy and Human Rights organized by the Latin American bishops, which brings together church organizations throughout the region to promote peace and defend human rights.

After widespread debates in the 1970s, the church declared that "the challenge of the Gospel includes the preaching of social justice," Cuda said. "Social justice is the real and effective way of putting (the Gospel) into practice, with words and gestures."

In Latin America, therefore, "these martyrs, who die for the Gospel, for the documents that the Holy Father promulgates and that come from the Roman Curia, such as Laudato Si' and Fratelli Tutti: these people are the 'saints next door,' and we must recognize, as the Holy Father invites us to do, the holiness also of these people, and not only of those who lead ascetic lives," Emilce Cuda said.

A Hearty Welcome to Fr Jude... as one who serves

(Lk 22:27(c)

Recently arrived to take up ministry in the London Province of the Comboni Missionaries is Fr Jude Burger. Fr Jude hails from South Africa and we are glad to welcome him as he introduces himself to our many readers.

Welcome Fr. Jude and fruitful mission!

rgrew up in a big family on the Cape flats near Cape Town, South Africa. There were nine of us and our parents, on a regular day. Then there were those living with us which included cousins, aunts, and those looking for temporary shelter. Being the second eldest, there was a lot of fetching and carrying to do. Running to get bread and milk everyday was my chore. Our parents, both fulltime workers, ensured that a Christian atmosphere prevailed in our house. What we had was ours to share, and no one was excluded. I learned what it means to be a

Christian in our home. Taking care of younger siblings, looking out for the needs of the other, constantly forgiving and asking for pardon, the laughter and tears, all shaped my Christian sensitivities and formed me into who I am. Love was a doing word in our house.

My second home was the parish. Next year, 2026, our parish will celebrate its centenary. In the parish I was an altar server and really enjoyed being close to the altar and learning the ways of God and the Church. I

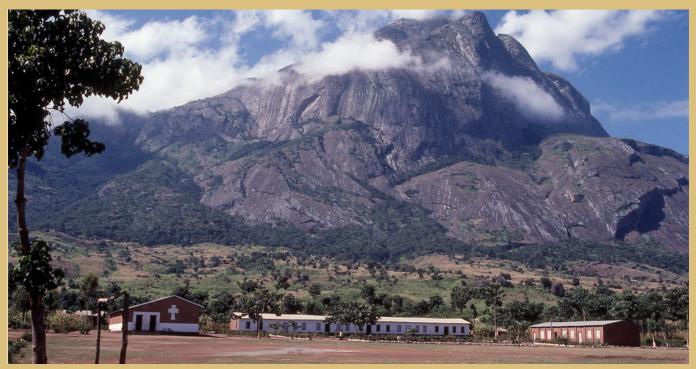
Fr Jude greets Pope Francis



joined the intermediate group of the Legion of Mary. Our task was to visit the homes of all those who had children baptised the previous year. On each visit we would pray a decade of the holy Rosary, encourage the family and then look out for them at the Sunday Mass. But the work I loved the most in the Legion of Mary was our custom of praying a Rosary Novena in the homes of those who had suffered a death in the family. To stand in solidarity with those in grief, and to encourage those who were trying to make sense out of the loss they suffered, simply by being present and praying the holy Rosary. Families used to wait for us expectantly and their joy at seeing us was palpable. Together we experienced Christ in our midst.

My calling to missionary life came while I was engaged in the work of the Legion of Mary. Part of me wanted to continue the Christian ministry of encouragement and solidarity on a fulltime basis in Apartheid South Africa. I had good examples to follow which included my parents who were active in the Church. The priests who worked in the parish were staunch missionaries. The Dominican convent in the parish was a testament to missionaries who had left their home countries and were living and serving the Gospel in strange lands. I could not join the missionaries immediately for I was made aware that, as an Afrikaans speaker, my services would be needed in those areas of the Archdiocese where only Afrikaans was spoken. It was only after eleven years of working in the Archdiocese that I could enter the Institute of the Verona Fathers.

Having done the novitiate, I was assigned to Malawi/Zambia. I was warmly welcomed by the people. My invitation was to remove my sandals, as Moses did at the burning bush, and enter into this new land with sensitivity and consciousness. God was present among the people and work-



A Catholic Church and village at the foot of the mountains
:redit:iStock:Robert-Ford

ing in ways I had yet to learn. The process was more challenging than I had anticipated. I worked among rural people, their lives attuned to the cycles of nature. Waiting for rain, praying for rain, dancing in the rain became dominant forces of prayer and encounter with God. Being a cityboy, this was completely new to me! In Lusaka, Zambia, the Church is built on the Small Christian Community (SCC) model. The SCC's meet weekly for prayer, and they support families in crisis. At the height of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Zambia, the SCC's were a vital link of support to bring the Church's ministry to those affected. It was a most beautiful experience, Christ in the midst of his suffering people.

After twenty-five years of priesthood, I was chosen to do the Religious Formation Ministry Programme in Dublin, Ireland. I had worked in the field of formation for ten years in three different formation houses. This experience-based programme helped me to draw my formation ministry experience together. Formation is a most necessary field of mission. Christ taught his disciples. He took them aside privately and instructed them. After Resurrection he continued to teach them. Formation ministry is Christ forming his disciples to be with him and teaching them to embrace and grapple with the challenges facing his Church today. I thank God for my

experience in formation and I cannot over-emphasise the importance of this field of mission.

Being really blessed by God, I was afforded the opportunity to do three units of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). Each unit lasted three months. I did this at the St. Vincent's University Teaching Hospital in Dublin, Ireland. The programme equips you to accompany people

Fr Jude celebrating Mass

patient from the moment he/she enters the hospital until he/she leaves it. Medics may give up on a patient and withhold medication and medical care towards the end of life. The chaplain is Christ present to the patient and accompanies the patient from the beginning of their altered life to the end. The profound learning I amassed here is invaluable. I apply this learning constantly, for in a man-



who are temporarily uprooted from their normal routine and who are compelled to enter into a space where they are told what to wear, eat, where to sleep, and that they do not have the freedom to move as they please. This is broadly applied to patients in a hospital, inmates in a prison, and displaced people in various situations. I applied my learning mainly to patients. The chaplain is responsible for accompanying the ner of speaking, we are all temporarily displaced until we fully rest in God.

Just before my arrival in the UK I had done a course in Ignatian Spirituality in Rome. This course sharpened my senses to see God in all things and to consciously align myself to Christ who offers himself for the salvation of the world. I am so blessed to be Christ's missionary in this part of the Church.

Constant has been my hope in you

Psalm 71,6



HOPEFULNESS versus HOPELESSNESS

It is so hard to battle these days through life's storms with hope in our hearts. We are meant to be hope-filled people. Is it possible, however, to maintain persistent hope when we live in such difficult times? To be peace-filled, hopeful people, keeping hope alive and peaceful, what a challenge... After all, the troubles of this world can lead us to feel so hopeless.

Avoiding the eleventh hour from despair can take a lot out of you. The 'why have you forsaken me' moment, MT.27,46, can be painfully lonely and baffling. I often think how Our Lord must have went through the mill in the darkness of that violence He suffered on Good Friday before He experienced the tranquil peace of His Easter Sunday Resurrection. Even death is not the end, there is always the promise of three days later. Hopefulness versus hopelessness. It is so easy to throw in the towel when we feel like giving up. There is always the danger of becoming discouraged in us, isn't there?



The dying and rising have certainly shaped our post pandemic lives. We have had to face Covid-19 pandemic which saw the loss of many things and plunged our personal worlds of certainty into crisis and much instability. We have witnessed how the present economic crisis has seen millions of people starving and freezing as the rich get richer and the poorer get poorer here in these very isles of Great Britain and Ireland. To exacerbate matters and create more fear, apart from the biblical catastrophes global climate augurs, a nuclear World War III seems to be looming on the horizon. As I write, God only knows

how the current Israeli-Palestinian War will turn out to be. A voice was heard in GAZA (not RAMAH), sobbing and loud acclamation. MATTHEW 2,8!

"If there is no hope, we are not Christians. That is why I like to say: do not allow yourselves to be robbed of hope," Pope Francis admonishes. Hope-filled people inspire and boost the enthusiasm of others.... They can stand strong in the wild storms of life. No matter how much thick gloom descends on our path of life, God remains the reservoir of our strength.

Hope is grounded in a very strong faith in God. We need to partake of that spiritual strength which comes only from God who provides for encouragement and hope. We need the light of hope. Through His resurrection Christ overcame one of the greatest crises of despair that ever existed. Jesus was a carrier of hope. He inspired and filled people with hope. Let us try to do the same. Fr .John Clark MCCJ.

Return to the Upper Room

simon Peter climbed the stairs and entered the room; the place of their last meal with Jesus. After a night of horrific nightmares, he had woken in a cold sweat and his body shaking with fear. Regret had filled his mind and his heart was empty of any self-regard. He was ashamed and disgusted with the memory of Passover night.

It was now the second day, the Sabbath. Jesus was now in the tomb and everyone had scattered; just as their Lord had predicted. Simon began to recall the events that led to the arrest of Jesus. The betrayer came with armed soldiers and a group of Pharisees. In fear and confusion at their baying for the blood of Jesus Peter had cut off the ear of the High Priest's servant. Jesus healed the man and had called out for calm; but hadn't the Lord told them to bring swords? And if so, why not use them?

He had followed the crowd and entered with John into the court-yard of the High Priest's house. It was like a knife twisting into him as he recalled what happened next. Every word of Jesus, spoken in this very room had come true. Simon's denial; three times! three times! He had denied knowing Jesus. Every cock crow from then on would pierce his heart. He considered now how much Jesus knew him; far more than he knew himself. He had always been an impetuous man quick to jump to conclusions without fully grasping the facts; running head-long into action and to hell with the consequences. Some called him courageous; others foolhardy and reckless. After his denial he had felt he could never trust himself again.

He tried hard to recall the early hours of the Passover feast. The mood was sombre as Jesus began to speak. His words were slow and deliberate; as if he was desperate for the disciples to remember them.

'Do you still not understand?'

Peter recalled how often Jesus had said those words in the last three years. And here he was in the emptiness of the upper room still bewildered and not grasping the truth of his Master's words. Pressing through



Peter and John run to the tomb iStock credit: ilbusca

the darkness of his own negativity; words of Jesus began tumbling into his mind. Something about Satan sifting them like wheat; and Jesus had prayed that Simon's faith would not fail -'And when you return strengthen your brothers.'

Many words came now; all talking of the future; pointing towards seeing the Lord again.

'After I have been raised, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.'

These words brought both comfort and fear.

'How could I face him again after my cowardly denial?'

'Don't be a fool Peter, Jesus is dead and gone - he's not coming back'. The words mocking, was Satan himself sifting him like wheat?

Again, the words of Jesus came, sweeping away the darkness:

'You will have sorrow; but your sorrow will turn to joy.'

Really! Would he once again be filled with joy? He began to delve back further; recalling the miracles; the sick being healed; Lazarus raised from the dead; he remembered the joy of Martha and Mary; his own walking on the water and his Lord saving him. Did he really walk on water? It seemed a distant memory now. And what about the time Jesus sent them out; two by two. He wasn't even with them! Yet the lame were walking; the blind seeing; the deaf hearing. All in the name of Jesus; how quickly he'd forgotten; the brotherhood walking in the footsteps of their Lord and Saviour.

'Do you still not understand Peter!

He shouted aloud, berating himself; and his words echoed around the empty room. But then the doubts returned with a vengeance.'

'Come on Simon you know he died on the cross. He's not coming back. He's a liar and a charlatan.'

He fell to his knees and cried out to God,

'Bring me back oh Lord. Let your face shine on me and I shall be saved!'

A peace began to settle upon Simon Peter; as he remembered the first time the Lord had called him.

He was a fisherman, well used to the nets being empty. Jesus had shown them where to cast the net.

'What does this man know about fishing?'. He laughed as he remembered his words. And then the fish came; hundreds of them. And Simon had bowed down before Jesus aware suddenly of his own sinfulness:

'Go away from me Lord I am a sinful man.'

Then the comforting and confusing words of Jesus:

'Don't be afraid Simon; from now on you will catch men.'

Peter saw the scene clearly, as if it were yesterday and he rose from the ground. He knew the devil would be back; but he was beginning to understand that his life did not end in the High Priest's court-yard; where not even the fire would warm him. The Lord had promised they would see him again. He still did not fully grasp the how of it; but the why of it began to warm his heart; and then he remembered those mysterious words of Jesus:

'You are Peter and, on this Rock, I will build my Church and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.'

The fear of death had somehow removed all of this from his mind in the High Priest's courtyard that fateful night. Self-preservation the only purpose in his mind and heart.

'There is no church yet' thought Peter; but one day there will be.'

He left the upper room, and running down the stairs he leapt out into the sunlight. He moved now with a sense of purpose and renewed hope; for tomorrow was the third day.

Giving hope in face of challenges

Three Comboni Missionaries are sharing their experience with displaced people, young drug addicts and Christian communities.

www.southworld.net

ozambique. Sister María del Amor Puche talks about the difficulties faced by people caught between guerrilla groups and refugee camps. Insecurity and fear. Commitment to women. Small microcredit projects.

I live in Balama, in the Diocese of Pemba, in the Province of Cabo Delgado in Mozambique. The parish has about 75 communities that we visit regularly. A few kilometres from the mission, there is an active guerrilla group that has been causing internal displacement and carrying out killings for the past five years. As a result, we all live in fear. In the diocese, they have looted, destroyed, and burned about eight missions, leading to their closure. Two years ago, one of our Comboni Sister was killed, and last year, two other nuns were kidnapped in this area. Although they were later released, the fear was

immense. All of this has led to great instability and suffering for the people. It is truly a persecuted Church. In the vicinity of the mission and several nearby villages, there are three refugee camps where many people live in poverty. Each camp can house around 300 families, with an average of 13 to 14 members per family. The living conditions there are dire: there is a severe lack of food and water, and essential services such as schools and hospitals are non-existent.

People are living in extremely harsh conditions, relying on makeshift tents supported by just a few sticks.

People are living in extremely harsh conditions, relying on makeshift tents supported by just a few sticks. While we did receive some humanitarian aid from organizations that used to operate in the area, they have recently departed. We are doing our best to assist, but our efforts are limited. It feels like a small drop in an ocean of suffering. Amid this pain, as Comboni Missionaries sisters, we work with displaced women. We have



Sister María del Amor Puche with children and women in a refugee camp. File swm

sewing, listening and literacy groups... They are a great help to the women because, in addition to what they learn, they can express all the pain they carry inside. There is a lot of suffering in their lives and these small communities allow them to listen calmly and without judgment.

For four or five months, we have been supporting several microcredit initiatives. We give them a small amount of capital to start a resource-generating activity. During the meetings, we offer them basic and simple training in home economics so that they feel supported and understood.

We are actively involved in various pastoral activities, particularly in training young people. It's disheartening to witness so many individuals experiencing insecurity and lacking access to education. Some young people have left the area, while those who have remained have formed small groups. We strongly believe that education has the power to bring about positive change. By providing training, we can lay the groundwork for a new mindset and a better future for both men and women, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to their communities.

Mozambique. Keep moving

After fifteen years, he returns to his homeland. He shares his feelings and plans for the future after a year as a parish priest. My name is Father José A. Intuela Sagras, a Comboni Missionary from Mozambique. I was ordained priest in May 2014. My first mission was in Chad, where I lived for nine years. In June 2023 I returned to Mozambique and was assigned to the parish of São Francisco Xavier de Benfica, on the outskirts of the capital, Maputo. Although I had not expected it, I welcomed this new ministry.

A month later, I arrived at Benfica to begin my service and was surprised by the enormous generosity of the parishioners. Not only had they mobilised to renovate my room and buy several sets of sheets, but they had also prepared a welcome cake for me.

I felt the warmth of the welcome that we Africans appreciate so much. The people were very happy because they had not had a regular priest since 2020. I saw the joy on their faces and I said to myself: "Lord, will I be able to live up to the expectations of these people who have put their trust in me?" Countless times during the months I have been here, I have entrusted myself to the Lord to help me be a good pastor.

During this time, I was able to meet all the heads of the different ministries and sectors and understand the reality on the ground. I felt like a moving train and I tried to get used to what was happening. The people and my Comboni brothers

The people were very happy because they had not had a regular priest since 2020.



Father José A. Intuela Sagras with young people from the parish. File swm

helped me a lot during this time. I am indeed Mozambican, but I have been living outside my country for more than 15 years and I come from Quelimane, a city in the centre of the country, so I knew little of the reality of Maputo. I still have great difficulties with languages.

Here they speak mostly Changana and Ronga, two languages that are very similar but very different from the ones I use, so I am working hard to learn them because I am convinced that the Gospel must be proclaimed in the language of the people. In any case, we use Portuguese in the formation meetings and in the liturgy, although we do some readings in Changana and Ronga.

Little by little I took note and identified the main challenges in catechesis, liturgy and the formation of pastoral workers, children, adolescents, young people and couples. We have monthly parish councils and we focus on the areas where we propose improvements. At the end of last year, we had a general parish meeting where we were all able to take stock of the activities that had been carried out and those that had not been completed, as well as identifying the difficulties that have now become pastoral priorities.

I cannot forget that we live in a very young country, where there are many children, adolescents and young people who face many difficulties, both spiritual and social, and it is necessary to accompany them. In this sense, we realised that it could be very helpful to have a structure where they could meet and interact with each other. We saw that sport has an enormous power to unite and we created a simple multi-sports field. The aim is not only to practise sport but also to attract young people and then propose activities for their human, social and spiritual growth.

Colombia. With the poor and drug addicts.

"In my community, we decided that this year I would dedicate part of my time to reaching out to dozens, perhaps hundreds, of men, women and young drug addicts who roam the Charco Azul neighbourhood in Cali. I started by approaching a bench



Father Franco Nascimbene talks to a woman in the community centre. File swm

In that place, at any time of day or night, there is always a small group of people sitting and taking drugs.

they had built under a tree". Father Franco Nascimbene, an Italian Comboni missionary, tells us.

In that place, at any time of day or night, there is always a small group of people sitting and taking drugs. For a month I sat with them two or three times a week to listen to them and chat. Sometimes it is not so easy. One young man talked all the time and never said a sentence that had anything to do with the previous one: with him, the dialogue failed.

Another man spent more than half an hour insulting me because 'I was full of money that the Vatican sends me and I do not want to give it to him'. Then there was the fellow who kept asking me to invite him to lunch. Other encounters are more pleasant: like the one I had with three teenagers whom I asked where they got the money to buy drugs, they admitted to stealing but explained to me that they were "good thieves" because they don't steal in the neighbourhood, but in other areas... I also spoke with a

young mother who explained to me that she had been taking drugs for 15 years, but that since she had children she had given up "hard" drugs and smoked only "marijuana". When I asked her why he hadn't stopped, she told me that she couldn't.

We also spoke with a "theologian" addict who went on about the rosary and devotion to Our Lady of Mount Carmel and the difference between praying and asking. What is the meaning of these encounters? I don't know exactly. For the moment, I think that in an environment where everyone feels despised, it can be "Good News" for them to meet a priest who is not ashamed to sit among them and listen to them. What will come of it? I don't know... time will tell and the Spirit will inspire...

The generosity of the poor never ceases to amaze me: a few weeks ago, I visited a house where three elderly people between 75 and 90 years old live. They are brothers, they are very thin and have never had children or a partner. They no longer have the strength to work. When I asked them how they managed to eat, they replied that there is always a neighbour who brings them something.

So, I joined the neighbours who bring them food from time to time. Recently, I was reading a biblical text that said that anyone who contemplates Jesus crucified is saved. At Mass, after reading the Gospel, at the time of the homily, I went to sit in the middle of the church with the microphone in my hand... and I invited everyone to look at Jesus on the Cross.

SUDAN

A 20-month civil war has plummeted Sudan into a devastating humanitarian crisis with widespread violence, starvation, and displacement, but its people persist with hope, urging international action for peace and aid.

Vatican News By Francesca Merlo



Hajj Ahmed, a resident of the Old-Omdurman neighbourhood, looks at his house after it was damaged by shells in Omdurman

hen speaking to aid workers about Sudan's ongoing war and crisis, there seems to be a question, which is often asked, but to which nobody really ever responds. It's a pressing issue that no person seems able to justify: Why do we prioritise some conflicts over others? Why do some conflicts continue to rage on the sidelines, while our gaze turns elsewhere?

While we recognise the varying, morally despicable, economic gains triggered by warfare and the arms trade, we should not stand mute before the suffering endured by the people. Our silence is inexcusable.

All eyes on Sudan

If all lives are equal, why is more not being done to protect the lives of the

people in Sudan? When we read that since the war erupted in April 2023 over 61,000 people have been killed in the Northeast African country and 12 million more are displaced, it is difficult to understand why this news is not making the headlines. Added to this, according to the United Nations, twenty-six million Sudanese are facing acute hunger - a staggering number that speaks of the world's worst hunger crisis.

War has spread throughout the nation, but 20 months into the conflict between the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Forces, observers have expressed particular concern for the people of Sudan's western Darfur State, where aerial bombardments and shelling in civilian loca-

tions have increased. According to Telley Sadia, head of CAFOD in Sudan, "It's a complex situation," and civilians are bearing the brunt of this relentless conflict.

Sadia, along with the Caritas branch of the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) in Sudan, is one of the voices adding volume to the cry of the Sudanese. In an inter-



Sudanese girls who fled the conflict in Sudan's Darfur region look at makeshift shelters near the border with Chad

view with Vatican News, he recounts the horror of the incessant fighting: "The fighting has continued without stopping," causing widespread displacement, with countless lives upended.

Sadia notes that all attempts at brokering peace have failed. He recalls early talks being mediated by the United States and Saudi Arabia, and later Egypt, but without success. "For over a year now," he says, "there have been no negotiations. There might be a break of some days, hours, or even a week, but then fighting resumes. Every time it resumes, lives are lost, properties are destroyed, and infrastructure is ruined. It's a cycle of fighting, displacement, hunger, and suffering."

The human toll

Just as the figures lead us to imagine, the human toll truly is staggering, with women and children bearing the worst of it. "Children have lost the most in this crisis. They've lost

The fierce hope of a forgotten nation

their parents, education, and future. They are traumatised by the violence," says Sadia, adding that, unsurprisingly, some have been swept up into an even more vicious cycle of violence as they are reunited to join the fighting. "Anything is to be expected in situations like this", he warns.

The crisis has also unleashed a ferocious wave of aggression on the women, who, separated from their

families and struggling to provide for their children, often fall victim to genderbased and conflict-related sexual violence. "Sudan's cultural norms make it difficult for victims to come forward," warns Sadia, describing the stigma surrounding such attacks. However, he says some women are coming forward and reporting these cases to us and organisations on the ground can provide psychosocial support to help traumatised survivors undertake a process.

the army to maintain security but later broke away and started fighting the government.

A call to act

Amidst the overwhelming despair and devastation, the people of Sudan seem to have not lost hope. Sadia emphasises that there is a "fierce strength" coming from the Sudanese, who continue to support one anothtions. Aid is not just about survival but about reclaiming lives and seizing their futures, says Sadia.

To the people of Sudan

So, to the people of Sudan, Sadia's message is one of solidarity and perseverance. "We stand with you," he says. "We stand with you both in our humanitarian efforts and spiritually," and he assures them that they will do so "until this crisis is resolved."



healing

To the international community

To the international community, who sends weapons but not food, making it a part of this noise while remaining silent, Sadia says, "it's time to act." He reminds us that Sudan's problem is a global problem and that "pressure from the international community can bring the warring parties to the negotiating

table for a meaningful ceasefire and resolution." We must act now before the situation gets even worse, he says.

In all this, the Church's voice remains steadfast. Pope Francis' constant call for disarmament offers hope that "his message may reach people of faith and conscience, encouraging them to engage in peace efforts. It's a sign of commitment and hope for those suffering due to the violence," Sadia affirms.

Food and medical assistance

The situation is bleak, very bleak. There is a lack of access to healthcare and a total collapse in agricultural activity. Starvation looms large, and disease is increasingly becoming the leading cause of death reported across Sudan. Malnutrition has weakened people, and simple diseases are killing them.

As Sadia states, "People are dying of starvation and malnutrition. Agricultural activities have ceased, and there's no harvest. People are surviving on handouts, but these aren't enough to meet daily needs."

He notes that famine was declared in Zamzam, a camp in northern Darfur, "though the government contested the claim." Not surprising, given that it is part of the cause. He explains that the government refers to the Sudanese Armed Forces, led by the president, who is the de facto leader. The opposing faction is the RSF, a force that initially worked with Neighbouring Chad has welcomed an estimated 630,000 refugees and returnees from Sudan. Here, Caritas workers are seen providing support to a group of women. Photo courtesy of Caritas Mongo (Chad)

er and share resources.

He remarks that those affected but not directly impacted by the fighting hold on to hope that the crisis will one day end. "The Sudanese haven't lost hope entirely," he asserts, "but they need international support to address their immediate needs and rebuild."

Humanitarian aid can create a lifeline for those in despair. "When displaced people receive humanitarian aid, such as clean water, cash assistance, or dignity kits, it gives them hope," he explains.

The support that CAFOD, along with other aid organisations on the ground, gives the people of Sudan helps to restore a sense of dignity and purpose among the affected popula-

Believe in peace

As the crisis in Sudan, along with so many more across the globe, continues to unfold before our eves, we continue to wonder when it was that we became indifferent to the pain of others. When did we begin to normalise the shooting of guns and the dropping of bombs; when did it become okay for children to fight in wars and for mothers to starve? The plight of Sudan cannot be overlooked. The call for action from the international community is urgent, and the hope of the Sudanese reminds us that there are people who, despite it all, still believe in peace.

Venerable Mother Magdalen Taylor

- Friend of the destitute

Ministering and collaborating with the Comboni Missionaries at St Joseph's parish church, Roehampton, are the Sisters of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God. The Sisters continue to be inspired by the courageous and saintly example of their Founder Frances Taylor. We have the pleasure of allowing you to read and learn from the life of this wonderful woman. We pray for her canonisation.

Sr Nora Coughlan SMG

Frances Taylor (Venerable Mother Magdalen)

Frances Margaret Taylor, later known as Venerable Mother Magdalen, was a pioneering social reformer and the founder of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God. Born in 1832 in Stoke Rochford, Lincolnshire, she was the youngest of ten children of Reverend Henry Taylor, the rector of the parish. Her father's untimely death when she was only ten years old deeply affected her family, and they relocated to London. This transition introduced Frances to the harsh realities of urban poverty, sparking her lifelong mission to serve the marginalised.

Early Life and Compassionate Beginnings

Frances exhibited an extraordinary sense of responsibility and empathy from a young age. At just 16, she volunteered during a devastating cholera outbreak in Devonport, Plymouth, risking her life to care for the sick. This early exposure to



Venerable Frances Magdalen Taylor

human suffering foreshadowed her future dedication to social justice.

Aged 22, Frances joined the nursing effort during the Crimean War (1854-1855), working alongside Florence Nightingale in hospitals overrun with disease and injury. The appaling conditions she encountered shaped her resolve to advocate for the vulnerable. Her observations from this period were meticulously recorded in her book Eastern Hospitals and English Nurses, which remains a vital historical account. Its influence reached Parliament, where extracts were read aloud during debates, and it underscored the need for systemic reform in military healthcare.



Frances cared for the wounded in the Crimean war (iStock. Credit: Keith Lance)

Conversion to Catholicism

Frances's transformative experience in the Crimea extended beyond her professional work. She was profoundly moved by the steadfast faith of dying Irish Catholic soldiers. Their prayers and hope amidst suffering inspired her to seek instruction in the Catholic faith. Upon her return to England, she converted, despite the societal and familial challenges associated with becoming Catholic in

19th-century England.

Frances became part of a remarkable wave of Anglican converts that included St. John Henry Newman, with whom she developed a friendship rooted in their shared literary and theological pursuits. It was Frances who first published Newman's poem The Dream of Gerontius in her magazine The Month. This poem would later be immortalised in music by Sir Edward Elgar.

Founding the Poor Servants of the Mother of God

In 1872, Frances formally established the Poor Servants of the Mother of God to address the urgent needs of the poor in London. Her congregation focused on providing education, healthcare, and refuge to the most vulnerable, including street children, destitute women, and the sick.

One significant episode from this period highlights her courage and faith. When faced with unruly assemblies of over 50 boys in her "ragged schools," Frances single-handedly maintained order, transforming many of these boys into disciplined and hopeful young men. Her dedication



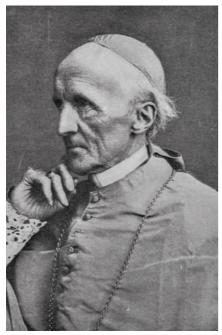
Boys from the 'ragged schools'. (iStock. Credit: Duncan 1890)

earned her the admiration of local authorities and inspired other women to join her mission, forming the nucleus of her congregation.

Another pivotal moment was her decision to establish England's first free hospital in St. Helens, Lancashire, in 1884. Horrified by the injuries and untreated wounds of coal miners and factory workers, Frances fought relentless opposition to open the Providence Free Hospital. She trained her sisters as nurses and ensured the hospital was accessible to all, regardless of creed or means.

Friendship, Challenges, and Advocacy

Throughout her life, Frances maintained close relationships with influential figures who supported her mission. Cardinal Manning, a lifelong ally, praised her courage and perseverance, while her friendship with Lady Georgiana Fullerton, a philanthropist



Cardinal Manning a strong ally of Sr Frances (iStock.credit:ilbusca)

and writer, provided both spiritual and financial support.

Frances faced significant opposition, not only from anti-Catholic factions but also from societal norms that resisted change. One particularly challenging episode occurred when she was accused of being a traitor due to her Catholicism. Frances, however, responded with such grace and kindness that she won the respect of her critics and demonstrated the unifying power of faith and service.



Sisters of the Congregation at the Kairos centre Roehampton

Expanding the Mission

The Poor Servants of the Mother of God grew rapidly under Frances's leadership, establishing soup kitchens, night schools, homes for women, and visiting the sick in deprived areas of London such as Seven Dials and Drury Lane. Frances also took on projects outside London, including assisting with the coal miners' strike in Lancashire and establishing homes for women in Liverpool at the request of Monsignor Nugent.

One extraordinary episode occurred during a smallpox outbreak in the Poor Law School of North Hyde. Frances and her sisters cared for over 700 boys, nursing them in makeshift tents and preventing further deaths. Cardinal Manning, deeply moved by their bravery, praised their selfless service.

In another instance, Frances travelled to Rome to seek guidance from the General of the Jesuit Order. Known for her humility, she requested only ten minutes of his time, keeping her watch in hand to ensure she did not overstay. Her respectful yet determined demeanour left a lasting impression, prompting the Jesuit leader to remark, "She is a queen—no,

an empress! A woman devoted to good works."

Legacy and Canonisation Cause

Frances Taylor died in 1900, leaving an enduring legacy of faith and service. Today, her congregation continues her mission in schools, care homes, and retreat centres across the UK and beyond. Her mortal remains rest at the Kairos Retreat and Conference Centre in Roehampton, a testament to her life of sacrifice and devotion.

In recognition of her holiness and impact, the Catholic Church has opened her cause for canonisation. Frances's life is a powerful reminder of the transformative power of love, courage, and unshakeable faith in the dignity of every human being.

As Frances herself often said: "Serve God always, but not always in the same way."

Becoming an Associate

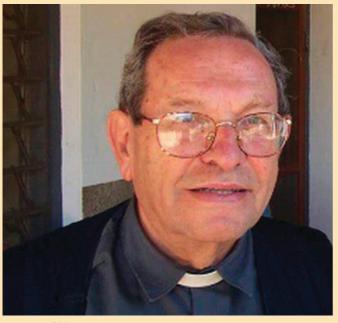
The Poor Servants of the Mother of God invite individuals drawn to Frances's spirit and charism to join as associates, committing to Gospel values and continuing her legacy of compassion and service.

A Long Love Story

In Dublin, in January, a large audience was gathered to witness the publication and presentation of the book entitled: 'Fr. Tiboni, one of the holiest men we have ', by Dr. Filippo Ciantia, tracing the life of this Comboni missionary priest. The following is an edited version of the life of this wonderful saintly Comboni priest.

by Dr. Flippo Cianti

ietro Tiboni is fully a son of his native Trentino and of the beautiful Ledro Valley. His missionary life began and developed in the community of Tiarno di Sopra and the Ledro Valley, in its beautiful and also harsh environment. His heart and mind were opened and shaped during the processions to the little church of Madonna de Cross towards Tremalzo, attending mass in the parish church, sharing the life of his community: cohesive, proud and bound to its traditions and the Catholic religion. In the very church where he had been baptised and confirmed, he admired the statues of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. The vision of their three hearts wounded by Love, won him over to a vocation to which he would dedicate his entire long and adventurous life. Under two large cherry trees, on the family farm, he prayed "I want to be a priest and a missionary". Like him, three other children from Ledro were missionaries, his sister Germana, who took the name Sister Maria Carmela, and the priests Guido and Elvio Cellana.



Fr Pietro Tiboni

His first mission, in 1957, one hundred years after St Daniel Comboni's first trip to Africa, was in southern Sudan, where, while he saw the persecution and suffering of a people, he began to bear witness to an uncommon charity.

Thus, a long love story was born. St Daniel Comboni's passion for Africa won Peter's heart and would never leave him again. The famous Professor Cornelio Fabro had noticed in him the makings of a scholar and teacher and wanted to keep him at the university in Rome with him. But Tiboni felt called to something else: "My vocation is Africa! I am a Comboni missionary and I admire all Comboni fathers and sisters because they are ready to give their lives."

His first mission, in 1957, one hundred years after St Daniel Comboni's first trip to Africa, was in southern Sudan, where, while he saw the persecution and suffering of a people, he began to bear witness to an uncommon charity. He went so far as to carry a sick young man on his shoulders, take him to the mission and treat his wounds until he was healed. His charity aroused admiration in his students: many of them would later become bishops and cardinals.

In 1964, he suffered the mass expulsion of the Comboni missionaries, and had to, despite himself, return to Italy, where he excelled in teaching at the Scolasticate in Venegono. In the crisis of the church in the post-council period, Tiboni accompanied his students to the priesthood, saving many vocations with his ability to inspire

them to study and love the church.

He wished to return to Sudan, but was assigned to Uganda, where, through difficulties and hardships, he realised the need for priestly vocations to be born, nurtured and lived in a living community. How to do this? Where to start? It was then, in December 1970, that he met in Kitgum, in Gulu diocese in Northern Uganda, a group of lay missionaries belonging to the Communion and Liberation Movement. Their experience, strange and new, fascinated him. "I must be with them!"

Meeting Giussani a few months later, in May 1971, was the spark that ignited his missionary passion and his desire to contribute to the growth of local priests. The Kitgum Pastoral Community (KPC) was born, a Christian community embodied in the context of Amin's Uganda, without racial or tribal divisions.

The novelty of this "place" of hope in the savannah in the heart of Africa did not escape power. Tiboni was expelled by the dictator Amin's government. In Italy, he joined the General Council of the Comboni Missionaries. He made a fundamental contribution to the growth of the congregation, while taking care of the young soldiers belonging to the Communion and Liberation movement stationed in Rome. A friendship was born with these young men that still lasts today, years after his death.



The author at the book launch with Fr Ruben, Comboni Provincial

Finally, in 1979, he was able to return to his beloved Africa, where he found "his priests" who had grown up in the KPC and participated in the ordination of his students. In the dramatic situation after Amin's overthrow, amidst revenge and poverty, he publicly proposed the birth of a movement of communion and life, which spread quickly, like a fire in the savannah. So many people

He wished to return to Sudan, but was assigned to Uganda, where, through difficulties and hardships, he realised the need for priestly vocations to be born, nurtured and lived in a living community.

adhered to the proposal of a new life in Christ, entrusted to the maternal care of Mary. People were reborn to new life as at the beginning of Christianity: they were like the roses of the desert, unexpected and worthy of wonder. Friendship was a great virtue of this man of God: Tiboni had hundreds of friends since then, especially among the poor and marginalised. Each friendship was unique and special. Like the most desired one with Luigi Giussani, like with the Benedictine monks of the Cascinazza monastery on the outskirts of Milan.

Tiboni increasingly widened his "missionary range of action" and became the soul of a CL spread in Kenya, Rwanda, and Burundi, involving people and groups in apparently lost situations, allowing joy and peace to be reborn and flourish in the desert of violence and misery.

He became such a well-known and authoritative figure that for many years was one of the most popular guests at the Meeting for Friendship among Peoples in Rimini.

He left the leadership of the Movement to his Ugandan friends and followed their growth like a true father, entrusting them to others. He was sure that the Other, his great Friend and Master, would always accomplish what he started.

After a long illness, he died at 9.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 13 June 2017, at Lacor hospital in Gulu.

On the evening of his death, Brother Elio Croce, a faithful companion during his last painful years in Gulu, wrote: "He has completed his Mission here on earth, but he will continue it up in heaven, offering himself and praying for us all as he did throughout his life and especially in these last times, nailed to the cross like Jesus."



Burial of Fr Pietro Tiboni in Kitgum, Uganda

Father Pietro Tiboni was buried in the Church of Christ the King in Kitgum, on a clear and sunny day, embraced by a crowd of friends who, like us, are grateful to God for the gift of his life.

