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Comboni

Mission Newsletter

Taking evangelization to a deeper level

By Fr. Peter Ciuciulla, mscj, and
Mary Bertolini

If you Google the words *what is evangelization*, you'll find a gazillion hits and could lose a day of your life sorting through them. I got the best response from an old priest in Africa. "Evangelization," he said, "is to sit with people and let God happen." It's one of the wisest things I've ever heard.

Comboni Missionaries carry *evangelization* almost as a middle name. It's our life. As Christians, we all need to know the answer to this question in one form or another because we are all called by Baptism to be missionaries.

First Evangelization in the traditional sense means that missionaries go to places where the Good News of Jesus has never been heard before. People are introduced to a God who is not somewhere up in the sky, but who comes down and becomes one of us, who walks our path and shares our life.

To be introduced to this Mystery of God means to become free, to be able to choose. In sharing the story of salvation, the missionary does not take away freedom, but enhances it.

Through ongoing evangelization, the missionary unfolds the story of Jesus to the people and then waits actively, through ministry, as they decide whether or not to accept the Gospel invitation.

Through an introduction and acceptance of the Gospel, people

learn a different way to view themselves and their situations.

When they look at Jesus, the Son of God come to earth, they say, "He went through suffering like we go through, and He chose to go through this for us because He wanted to share with us. He died for us; therefore, we must be worth something. If God becomes a man and goes through all of this just for us, we must have value."

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A nomadic woman from Fr. Peter's time in North Chad.

North American Province welcomes new Missions Director

Comboni Fr. Peter Ciuciulla has carved out new territory for evangelization. I've been in villages where no priest has ever been before," Father Peter said. "Even though these people have never heard the Gospel, they are still very religious. They know there is Someone somewhere, but they can't give Him a name."

After 12 years of evangelizing in Chad, Father Peter has been transferred to the Comboni Missionaries' North American Provincial headquarters in Cincinnati. He serves as the new missions director of the North American Province.



Father Peter takes time out to enjoy his first encounter with snow.

His job will be to stay in contact with all the missionaries in the field and be a "link" between them and the office. Father Peter will help the missionaries when they need something such as supplies, medicines or donations.

During his first six years in Chad, Father Peter was the parish priest at a small church "in the middle of nowhere," but being with the people was what he loved most about his missionary activities, he said. "They were very welcoming, and I realized my presence there was very important."

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Taking evangelization to a deeper level

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This new found value brings them to understand that they do not have to sit and wait in helplessness but that they are capable of taking their lives into their own hands.

They do need help, yes, but once empowered, they don't wait passively. They do whatever is within their means first, then they ask for help, but their attitude gives the message, "Help me, please, but do not make me dependent on you; help me in a way that will keep me free from you."

Jesus teaches us by example that we are not only to bring the Good News, but we are also to live out the Message with and among His people. He lets us know that evangelization is an ongoing process that includes

"Through an introduction and acceptance of the Gospel, people learn a different way to view themselves and their situations."

—Fr. Peter Ciuciulla

the building of trust, relationships and collaboration.

Committed, ongoing missionary interaction with people strengthens and validates their new found self-value. For example, when I went to Chad, there was no parish council. The priest ran the parish. But, little by little, the parishioners learned they had an active voice in decision making, along with the pastor.

With time, people formed small groups and met once a week to discuss the happenings of that week. They could share anything they wanted. One person might have a sick child, another might have a problem with livestock, perhaps another would talk about road conditions. They didn't just share; they discussed how

to help themselves in whatever ways they were capable.

One of my first experiences with my Chad parishioners was to find them each morning standing in long lines at my door to ask for money. I didn't judge or blame them. They were trying to alleviate their poverty in a way that worked for them in the past, but

I fought from the beginning to free them from this dependency.

I met a lot of opposition but eventually—success. One person in particular gave me an ongoing battle, but after six years, this "sworn enemy" came to me and said, "Thank you, Father. Thank you for suffering to make me a free man and not a beggar."

That freedom he spoke of took root in him when he realized he was of value to the God who became one with human beings.

St. Daniel Comboni was a man well ahead of his time. When others



Children from the Southern Chad tribe of Sar wash clothes in a rainwater ditch.

were caught up in the debate as to whether or not Africans had souls, he was developing a plan whereby those same African people could hear and accept the Gospel, then become their own evangelizers in the form of lay catechists, religious and priests.

Not only did Saint Daniel develop his plan, he put it into motion and saw it succeeding before he died. He believed and proved that the way to save Africa is with Africa.

Missionaries understand the process of evangelization, and we

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Award-winning

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who follow in Saint Daniel's footsteps know his plan and try our best to be faithful to it. Still, however, we struggle with one of our greatest challenges, that of finding the words to open the door for Jesus to walk through.

"Missionaries understand the process of evangelization, and we who follow in Saint Daniel's footsteps know his plan and try our best to be faithful to it."

—Fr. Peter Ciuciulla

We wish we could just burst in and say, "God loves you, God is here, God is sharing life with you," and that would start a Christian community—presto! But it doesn't work that way.

It is through Jesus' example, the sharing of experiences by veterans of the mission fields, and our own living of mission that we come to realize that sometimes the best words are those not spoken, but

demonstrated. What better way to show people who Jesus is than to be Jesus to them?

One of my experiences of this was during a long, tiring trip to visit people in our 6,000-square-mile parish. (A little larger than the state of Connecticut.) I was conversing with an old man, and I was tired. I wanted to be excused and be on my way so I could get myself a good night's sleep. I was so tired it was hard to concentrate.

He finally brought our time together to a close by giving the signal to "take the bread from the table." We were not sharing a meal; this was a simple concrete gesture that meant it was time to wind things up. I could see my little bed waiting for me. But instead of saying good-bye, he went to the back of his house and returned with the equivalent of ten cents.

"Your journey home will be long. Take this to buy yourself some



Fr. Peter Ciuciulla celebrates a Palm Sunday Mass in Chad.

tea along the way." I tried to refuse the money, but he insisted. "You were kind enough to sit and talk with me. It is the least I can do."

"Sit and let God happen," the old priest said. It works! ▼

Fr. Peter Ciuciulla, mccc, is a native of Sicily, Italy. He is the new director of the Comboni Missions Office in Cincinnati, Ohio. Father Peter comes to us after twelve years of mission experience in Chad, Africa.

North American Province welcomes new Missions Director

(Continued from page 1)

When evangelizing, Father Peter starts by taking care of people's needs and earning their trust.

"These people feel important when a missionary comes from so far away to be with them," he explained. "They are abandoned by everyone else, and this helps them understand they are special to God because the missionary is evangelizing for God."

Father Peter said he starts by taking care of the people—preaching without words.

"Later the people will ask why I am with them," he said. "That's when I can begin to explain that I came because I have something to share, and that is God."

As the people are introduced to God and the Gospel, Father Peter said many transformations take place.

There was one instance in Chad when someone in a drunken rage killed a fellow villager. The family

"These people feel important when a missionary comes from so far away to be with them ..."

—Fr. Peter Ciuciulla

of the victim was not Christian, and they decided to take revenge on the murderer, a practice that was imbedded in their culture. Since the murderer ran away, they were determined to kill his sister in his place.

"I went to talk to the family," Father Peter said. "I told them the Word of God says that revenge belongs to God only and that we cannot take it into our hands."

Even though this family was not Christian, they had a deep sense of religion and knew they owed obedience to a Supreme Being, Father Peter said.

"The answer the family gave me was: 'If the God of gods says so, we will not take revenge,'" Father Peter recalls.

Father Peter's experience in the mission field will serve him well as he works with the missionaries of the North American Province.

—Audrey Kunkel

Lay missionaries help revitalize parish in Peru

Ralph May has been working as a Comboni Lay Missionary in Peru with his wife Theresa and daughter Hannah since September 2005. We first mentioned the May family in an article in the Fall 2006 Comboni Mission Newsletter. Theresa has been spending much of her time working as a youth minister and catechist in the parish. Ralph, formerly a farmer from Idaho, has been teaching English and agricultural classes. Here is an update on their activities.

Theresa, Hannah and I have lived in a poor barrio on the outskirts of Trujillo, Peru for more than a year. Living in the midst of terrible poverty and a different language and culture has been a difficult, but also an intensely rewarding experience for me.

The meeting rooms and kitchen facilities at the main church of the parish *Señor de los Milagros* (Lord of Miracles) were constructed in 1981. In the 25 years since, they've fallen into a state of serious disrepair. Many things were not finished

due to lack of funds. When we arrived there were broken windows and nonfunctioning lights. Some rooms, like the bathrooms and kitchen, were virtually unusable. Since our arrival, the activities and usage of the facility have substantially grown, requiring a big change if the building was to serve the community in the future.

With the financial backing of the Jerome Knights of Columbus, the Jerome Rotary Club, the Twin Falls Knights of Columbus and other generous donors from Idaho, we launched a renovation project on the first anniversary of our arrival, Sept. 4, 2006.

Several good friends in the parish, who were very experienced in construction, acted as foreman and workers for the project's duration. I acted as project chief and spent two to four hours every day on the site, overseeing the work.

One part of the facility that had not been finished was the stage, which is used for parish functions, but more often used by the parish preschool with its 75 children. The finished stage has thrilled the teachers.

The bathrooms, abandoned due to disrepair and neglect, did not require a great deal of time or money to get them in good working order. They are now very popular as more than half

the homes in our parish do not have flush toilets.

Kitchens here, much simpler than in the States, sometimes have no more than a sink and counter. The building was constructed with feeding programs in mind. Unfortunately, that has not taken

The community in Peru gives heartfelt thanks to the wonderful organizations and individuals who made this transformation possible.

—Ralph May

place. However, with the new kitchen, Theresa has started a program in which the parish feeds breakfast to all children who come to Sunday Mass. Also, with this renovation, there is talk about starting a soup kitchen to help combat the extreme poverty that surrounds us.

During the renovation, two youth groups started coming each night to learn traditional dances. In all, about 50 young people come to the parish nearly every night to dance and enjoy time with each other.

With this like-new facility, so much more is now possible, and many people of the community are expressing their renewed hope and excitement.

The community in Peru gives heartfelt thanks to the wonderful organizations and individuals who made this transformation possible. The barrio of *Rio Seco* has been truly blessed by their generosity! ▼

—Ralph May



Before renovation.



During renovation.



After renovation.

Comboni priest celebrates 45 years of mission

After months of hiding in the mountains of South Sudan, several thousand starving people began to walk back to their villages in the valley of Lopit. Having been holed up to escape the terror and constant violence of the Sudanese government army, the people streamed down the mountainside to their waiting saviors, the soldiers of the Sudanese rebellion.

Comboni Fr. Joe Bragotti and the local bishop were waiting as well. They had joined the troops who carried, among other things, several bags of corn and millet seeds. Not good to eat, but when people are starving, any kind of food can become the impetus behind a frenzied stampede.

So the troops stood guarding the bags of seed.

And the people kept coming down the mountain—tall and thin, very thin.

After several tense hours, a group of elders came forward and, surprisingly, they did not go to the commander to ask for food. They went straight to the bishop. One of them pointed at Father Joe and asked:

“Is this the priest who will stay with us and give us Jesus?”

“To my great regret, I had to tell them that I was not the one. But I promised that everywhere I went I would tell their story,” Father Joe recalls. “It was gratifying to know that, as a Comboni priest, I had something to give that no power on Earth could give—the Living Lord.”

This year, Father Joe celebrates 45 years of priesthood and service to the poor and most abandoned people. Many stories such as this crowd his memory and enrich the time he has spent as a Comboni Missionary.

Aside from his service in the missions, Father Joe has been a

Fr. Joseph Bragotti



“Father Joe has been a prominent face for the Comboni

Missionaries for many years...

Besides editing the *Comboni*

Mission Magazine for more than

12 years, Father Joe is an accomplished photographer,

founder of the Comboni Press

Network and writer of the ‘Global Christian’ column that gained a national following.”

—Fr. Louie Gasparini, mccc

prominent face for the Comboni Missionaries for many years according to Northern American Provincial Superior Father Louie Gasparini. Besides editing the Comboni Mission Magazine for more than 12 years, Father Joe is an accomplished photographer, founder of the Comboni Press Network and

writer of a Global Christian column that has gained a national following.

“In his work and travels, Father Joe has eloquently and outspokenly spread the message of St. Daniel and the Comboni Missionaries to thousands of people,” Father Louie said.

And whether spreading the Comboni charism to Africans, Europeans or Americans, Father Joe couldn’t have asked for a more exciting or adventurous life. He grew up during World War II and by age 8, he had survived air raids, street battles, and worse. He recalls carrying a cross as an altar boy and leading a procession through streets filled with armed soldiers, machine gun positions, rumbling tanks and pointed guns.

Little did Father Joe realize then that guns would be a familiar sight to him in the years to come. In his missionary work in Uganda and Gulu, among others, Father Joe has often been caught in the crossfire of violence that underlies many of Africa’s most heart-wrenching problems.

One night in Kampala, Ugandan terrorists, mistakenly thinking the house belonged to a rich neighbor, invaded a convent where Father Joe was chaplain. There was shooting and some stealing, but at the last minute, he and his companions talked their way out of it. Miraculously, they all survived.

As God protected Father Joe that night in Kampala, so has He guided and protected him for the past 45 years. Whether in his work as a missionary, journalist, photographer or, most importantly as a priest, Father Joe has enjoyed an inspiring career leading people to Christ. ▼

—Audrey Kunkel and
Katie Walker

A good samaritan in Gulu

Jesus said, “Love thy neighbor.” The lay association, Comboni Samaritan of Gulu, has taken this message to heart. Coordinated by the Comboni Missionary Sisters, the association is dedicated to helping the neighbors who need love most of all.

The Comboni Samaritan, which assists more than 5,500 people affected by HIV/AIDS, has earned the “2006 Best Practice Award” from Civil Society Capacity Building Program of Kampala, Uganda for improving the quality of life of these neighbors.

What makes their practice one of the best? It is aimed at the realities of life in Gulu and at meeting both the physical and spiritual needs of the community.

Comboni Samaritan of Gulu’s approach involves more than just treating the illness of the people. It aids them in every aspect of their lives. For 1,450 people

on antiretroviral therapy, this means not only free medical treatment, but also transportation, meals, hut repair and even burial arrangements.

The organization also recognizes the practical needs of the people. They provide HIV positive mothers of newborn babies with free milk to avoid transmission of the virus through breast-feeding.

They empower HIV/AIDS patients by giving them a creative outlet that fosters self-reliance. Through their Cooperative Saving Society, these patients produce art and

craftwork like woven baskets, beaded necklaces and embroidery.

Support does not end with the patients. HIV/AIDS hurts more than just one individual life. It also damages the families of those it kills. Comboni Samaritan reaches out to 1,500 orphans and at-risk children.

The services it provides them will last a lifetime. They offer these children psychological support, career counseling, and skills training. But the service the Comboni Missionaries say is most valuable is the spiritual guidance they provide.

Comboni Samaritan of Gulu not only tries to make the present more bearable, but it also focuses on a brighter future. Its members are planting hope, as well as trust, in God. ▼



Two Gulu women in IDP (internally displaced persons) camps raise their voices in song at an activity sponsored by the Comboni Missionary Sisters.

Lay Mission Program welcomes new director

The Comboni Lay Missionaries recently welcomed Paul Wheeler as their new director. Paul brings a wealth of experience and passion to his new post.

“I believe very deeply in this life of witness,” Paul said, “and I look forward to contributing to the Comboni Mission family.”

Paul will also contribute his extensive mission experience. He served as a lay missionary with the Society of African Missions in Liberia, the Ivory Coast and Washington D.C. before becoming a financial and data manager for a company in Chicago.

But he found the business world did not satisfy his desire to spread the Good News and minister to the poorest of the poor.

“I felt called to return to mission work,” he said, “because I found that Gospel values such as peace, justice, reconciliation and forgiveness are timelier than ever and the mission work of the Catholic Church provides a valuable and concrete contribution toward a more peaceful and just world.”

Under Paul’s leadership, the Lay Missionaries will continue to bring a “Christian response to the problems in today’s headlines.” ▼



Paul Wheeler

—Katie Walker

—Sr. Fernanda Pellizzer, cms

Holy Cross Parish celebrates 100 years of change and diversity

A Comboni Missionary presence since 1970

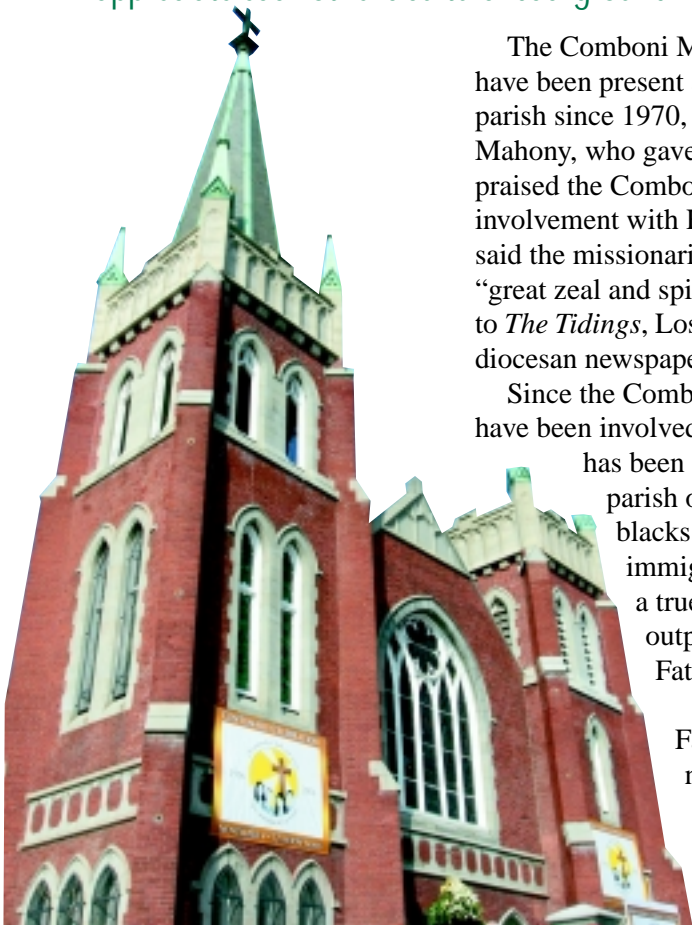
The church was packed with hundreds of people, many of them Hispanics, raising their voices in praise as they thanked God for 100 years of sustaining Holy Cross Parish in Los Angeles.

The impressive gothic-style church was filled with more than 1,000 people who joined with Comboni North American Provincial Superior Fr. Louie Gasparini and Los Angeles Cardinal Roger Mahony at the centennial Mass and celebration. The day celebrated the history of

the church and chronicled the challenges and accomplishments of the parish.

Over the past century, Holy Cross not only weathered earthquakes but also triumphed and flourished in the face of racial and ethnic changes in a parish that went from almost all white in the beginning to African American, to Hispanic today.

Father Bill's goal as pastor of Holy Cross was to "bring the English and Spanish-speaking together and help them to appreciate each other's cultural background."



Holy Cross Church.

The Comboni Missionaries have been present at this diverse parish since 1970, and Cardinal Mahony, who gave the homily, praised the Combonis for their involvement with Holy Cross. He said the missionaries exhibit "great zeal and spirit," according to *The Tidings*, Los Angeles' diocesan newspaper.

Since the Comboni Missionaries have been involved, Holy Cross has been an inner-city parish of mostly blacks and Hispanic immigrants. This is a true missionary outpost, says Father Louie.

Comboni Father Bill Jansen, now stationed in Cincinnati, remembers his arrival as pastor of Holy Cross in 1983. He

said the number of problems facing Holy Cross' neighborhood overwhelmed him. The minority Hispanic parishioners, most of them living below poverty level, were often exploited through racial prejudice. The Hispanic population, however, has continued to grow at Holy Cross and today makes up 90 percent of parishioners.

Father Bill's goal as pastor of Holy Cross was to "bring the English and Spanish-speaking together and help them to appreciate each other's cultural background."

Today under the pastoral leadership of Comboni Father Tesfaldet Asghedom, the parishioners have grown strong in faith together, said Father Louie. The parish is now a "lively community full of bustling activity and growth." ▼

—Audrey Kunkel and Katie Walker



A parishioner hears Mass at Holy Cross Church's centennial celebration.

Who will accept the Challenge?

Hidden in remote corners of the North American Province are energetic, faith-filled souls who, like St. Daniel Comboni, are eager to answer the call to mission and spread the Gospel message to all corners of the world.

It especially falls to three Comboni fathers to seek out young men with enthusiasm for the Gospel and interest them in life as Comboni missionaries. Frs. David Bohnsack, Angel Camorlinga and Manuel Baeza Gama have been entrusted with beefing up Comboni recruiting efforts from their home bases in Chicago and California.

The three vocation directors, beginning with Father Angel in 2005 and Fathers David and Manuel in 2006, are just getting started in their mission and are often on the move talking in diocesan churches, college campuses and schools. Among other things, they have set-up a Web site, www.mccjvocation.com, advertise in Catholic newspapers, and network

with vocation associations in various dioceses.

Father Angel especially enjoys talking to youth groups about his experiences in the missions.

“We are able to speak to the young people and explain our work. We go fishing with them, we take trips to the mountain camps, and we lead

Interested in a vocation?
Visit our Web site at
www.mccjvocation.com

weekend retreats. In this way, we hope to create a vocation culture,” he said.

Though separated by almost half a continent, the vocation directors see themselves as a team, and all three attended the National Religious Vocations Conference in July. The conference, according to Father David, gave a solid foundation to the vocations office and emphasized

that, “it’s not about getting numbers but helping youth discover their vocations. In our case, helping them discover if they are called to be a missionary in the charisma of St. Daniel Comboni.”

Like any mission, vocation recruiting has its challenges. Father David says making initial contact with the youth in order to expose them to the possibility of a vocation sounds easy enough, but in reality is the biggest obstacle the directors face.

According to Father David, getting into the Catholic schools and universities can be a problem.

Campus ministers sometimes view vocation recruiters with suspicion, feeling they have come to harass the students in order to increase vocation numbers.

“It’s frustrating,” Father David said. “You want to have contact with youth and help them think about their spiritual life, grow in faith and consider where the Lord may be calling them, but all you meet is a closed door separating you from the students. We are learning to be patient but persistent.”

Despite the challenges the vocation directors face, they know that God’s call cannot be ignored. When youth are attracted by the life of faith and service the missionaries lead, the vocations will come.

“Comboni Missionaries live a vibrant community life made up of many nationalities. We live as a family; our houses are places of hospitality centered on the Eucharist and open to the world.” Father David noted. “The needs of the mission are many, and the gifts and talents that each person brings add richness to the Comboni family and to the larger evangelizing community we are sent to serve.” ▼

—Katie Walker

New Communications Staff

The Communications Department at Provincial Headquarters has a new staff. Mary Bertolini, left, a long-time friend of the Comboni Missionaries, has been named director of communications. A former lay missionary with service in Peru, Mary has many years’ experience teaching in inner-city schools. She also helps at a Comboni parish in Cincinnati. Katie Walker, a journalism student at Northern Kentucky University, joins the staff as an intern, filling the post of managing editor of the *Comboni Mission Newsletter*.



Mary Bertolini and Katie Walker.

Lay Missionary guides Nairobi women on path to graduation

For the women of Nairobi, the Kariobangi Women Promotion Project (KWPP) offers hope for a better future. The Comboni-run project assists impoverished women in the poor Kariobangi neighborhood by teaching them basic life and business skills and nurturing them on their path to economic stability. Susan Coopersmith, a Comboni Lay Missionary, has been working with the KWPP since May 2005.

While working with the instructional staff at the KWPP, I often have opportunities to meet with students. It might be to check the balance of their school fees or to interview the students before and after they participate in a one-month internship.

These and other instances can open the door to discussions on the diverse life problems the young women encounter. I may discover that a student cannot pay fees because she refused to submit to the sexual advances of a parent or guardian. Perhaps a student has been misled by a relative promising a luxurious lifestyle in the big city, only to find herself responsible for the relative's daily chores and sleeping on a mud floor in a windowless room.

The internship is an innovation I introduced after a discussion with our Industrial Placement and Business advisor. I learned that many of our graduates, after having been placed in jobs, stopped reporting to work after only a short time. Despite our

efforts to instill a work ethic in the students, something was missing.

That something, I believed, was experience on the ground. It is one thing to report daily to the KWPP, where a woman is treated with respect and dignity, but it is entirely different to be one among many in a factory where the manager is perhaps impatient or intolerant of any infractions.

In my interviews with the students before their internships, many expressed fear and an unwillingness to take the risk to go into the field. With encouragement and occasional visits from their social workers and instructors, interns successfully completed the month's commitment.

I think their own comments upon returning best express the success of this pilot project.

"I used to be afraid to face the world, but now I know I can do it."

"I used to feel I was nothing, but now I know I am someone."

"I never thought I could have a job, but now I know I will."

"I am now prepared to see what God has in store for me."

The statements above are some of the signs of the Kingdom I can see in my service as a Comboni Lay Missionary. I am not working



Susan Coopersmith (center) stands with graduates from the Kariobangi Women Promotion Project.

as a preacher or pastoral agent, but as a layperson. I have the responsibility to inculcate the Gospel in the concrete realities of life by bringing

"I am not working as a preacher or pastoral agent, but as a layperson. I have the responsibility to inculcate the Gospel in the concrete realities of life..."

—Susan Coopersmith

the values of the Kingdom—peace, justice, truth, forgiveness and service—out into the community where I live.

When I shop in the marketplace, when I stop to greet the drunkards and the glue sniffers others kick aside, when I pray with my small Christian community, when I grant forgiveness rather than seek revenge on the thief who has just stolen my shoes, it is my hope that others will see the Kingdom of God is near. ▼

—Susan Coopersmith,
Comboni Lay Missionary

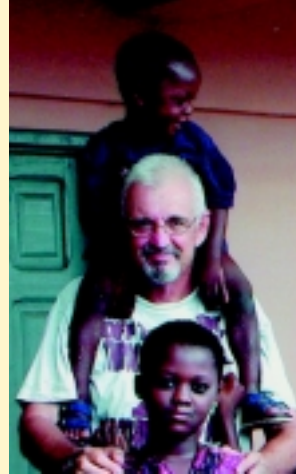


Susan Copersmith (far left) awards graduation certificates with Comboni Sr. Carmen to women from the Kariobangi Women Promotion Project in Nairobi, Kenya.

Have you ever considered becoming a Comboni Lay Missionary?

We're a Catholic community of men and women who live out our faith by walking with the poor of other lands, helping to build a more just and compassionate world. Following a 14-week training program, our lay missionaries serve a three-year assignment in Africa or Latin America. Join us on a journey of love and compassion as we reach out to our brothers and sisters around the globe. Visit our Web site at www.laymission-comboni.org.

Join us on a journey of love and compassion as we reach out to our brothers and sisters around the globe.



Letter to the Editor

Many greetings from the Holy Land of Jesus!

It is so good to know there are people thinking about the missionaries. Please continue to pray for me, for us all, that we may try to follow the Lord and be contagious with Him to all.

We Comboni Sisters live in Bethany at the border of Palestine and Jerusalem. The famous separation wall is being built even now, not far from where we live—only five meters. It surrounds our house and takes away the light given to us by the Lord through the

sun. We are powerless. Nobody asked us how we felt about the wall. People can't pass and are sent back. Separation doesn't unite.

It is not easy to say what is going on in the different parts of the Holy Land. If you see TV, a bit can be known, but the truth is that real peace is a long way off. Justice goes with peace, and we pray for both.

We are here with the people. We see, we are humbled with them, and we suffer with them. Many poor Palestinians come for help to our

house. They have no money to pay for electricity, for the telephone, for their sick children, or for education. Many leave this area because they cannot live without work or do not want to be separated from their families. We do what we can to help and invite all to trust in the good Lord and His mysterious ways.

Prayer gives us all strength to be patient and wait in hope for a better future—for nothing is impossible with God.

—Sr. Gianfranca Silvestri, cms

LETTERS:

If you have something to say through a letter to the editor, just drop us a line at Editor, Comboni Mission Newsletter, 1318 Nagel Road, Cincinnati, OH 45255. We can't print everything, we might edit for space, but we'll give your views a good, close look.



Benefactors change the lives of people they never meet

After 20 challenging years as a missionary in South Africa, Comboni Fr. Luis Carranza has been transferred to the United States. Here his primary responsibility will be mission promotion and raising awareness about missionary work in South Africa.

In South Africa, one of Father Luis's favorite responsibilities was helping young people receive an education. In South Africa education is often unattainable, Father Luis said. Payments are even required to finish high school.

This is where the Comboni Missionaries depend on the generosity of donors to enable young

people to go to college and break out of the cycle of poverty.

"When benefactors give to the Comboni Missionaries, that money

"By giving to charities like the Comboni Missionaries, you can be sure your gift will directly touch the neediest through the hands of a missionary."

—Fr. Louis Carranza

can be sent overseas to pay a school directly so that a certain boy or girl can be educated," Father Luis said.

"The kids who benefit are the ones who have proven they are hard workers."

Lately the situation in South Africa has been worsening. In order to redistribute all funds, the government has now taken control of much humanitarian aid. Often the money never ends up helping the people it was sent for.

"By giving to charities like the Comboni Missionaries, you can be sure your gift will directly touch the neediest through the hands of a missionary," Father Luis said. ▼

Help the missions and help yourself!

You can make a significant gift to the work of the Comboni Missionaries without sacrificing the security of your investments. You benefit in several ways with a charitable gift annuity (CGA) from the Comboni Missionaries:

To learn more about charitable gift annuities from the Comboni Missionaries, complete and return the envelope in the centerfold. There's no obligation!

- ▶ You get a **fixed payment for life** that almost always exceeds what you can get with certificates of deposit.
- ▶ There can be **tax advantages** on both the initial gift to the Comboni Missionaries and on the payments you receive from your CGA.
- ▶ You'll enjoy **income security** for yourself and/or someone you love.
- ▶ You may be able to **avoid capital gains tax** on part of the assets you transfer to the Comboni Missionaries if you fund your gift with appreciated stocks.
- ▶ Best of all, the gift you make when you establish your CGA will **support the work of missionaries**, who are working with the poorest of the poor around the world.

Here are the rates	65	6.0	74	6.9	83	8.8
you'll get for a	66	6.1	75	7.1	84	9.2
guaranteed retirement	67	6.2	76	7.2	85	9.5
income for life! The	68	6.3	77	7.4	86	9.9
following rates reflect	69	6.4	78	7.6	87	10.2
CGAs for the life of	70	6.5	79	7.8	88	10.6
one individual.	71	6.6	80	8.0	89	11.0
	72	6.7	81	8.3	90+	11.3
	73	6.8	82	8.5		

Looking toward 2007 with hope

As soon as one year ends, images from the past come to our memories and new resolutions become part of our new beginning. Finishing something implies something in the past; it means we have been walking. And so it is here at the Comboni Missionaries International Theologate.

In the last year, a person with an important role, Fr. David Bohnsack, came to our Hyde Park Theologate. He assumed his new role as vocation promoter last July. His presence inspires and gives new, fresh life to the community and, at the same time, makes us remember our own first steps in the Comboni Institute.

The theologate students have also had new experiences. Some scholastics finished their English studies at DePaul University and started a new path in their lives at Catholic Theological Union (CTU). For them, this is just the beginning of their four-year study of theology in a multicultural school. Eric, Mario

Manuel and Frederic have already discovered that CTU is a world of possibilities and challenges.

For the other scholastics, Mario Alberto, Yves, Philippe, Sydwell and myself, that world is not new; however, each day brings new insights as our studies continue. A common novelty for all was the new CTU building, a center in which to study and share our faith.

The priests in the Theologate, Fathers Mario, Raphael and Archie, continue with their daily responsibilities. Masses, meetings, and pastoral ministries are part of their every day life. Teaching and forming scholastics are not easy tasks. There is also mission, the mission that our Institute asks of them. I am sure the Holy Spirit will accompany them this year as He did in 2006.

All of us, in diverse stages of our missionary life, want to fulfill God's will in our lives. We all are missionaries and



The Comboni Missionaries International Theologate.

we realize this is a great gift from God. We want to share Him with the whole world. Books, classrooms, meetings, celebration of sacraments, pastoral ministry speeches are all part of our mission.

Though it is not easy, God, through St. Daniel Comboni, inspires us to do our best. We thank God for all He gave us last year and with confidence and hope, we rely on His presence this year too.

*—Juan Diego, seminarian,
Comboni Missionaries
International Theologate*

Comboni

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