



Volume 12, No. 4  
Winter 2007

# Comboni

## Mission Newsletter

### Beyond Politics - Ministering to Iraqi refugees

**T**he Italian Hospital in Amman, Jordan, run by the Comboni Missionary Sisters, has cared for the poor and abandoned since 1926. Known locally as the “Hospital of the Poor,” the medical facility is renowned for personalized care and medical excellence.

In recent years, the hospital,

along with the rest of Jordan, has seen a huge influx of Iraqi refugees. Catholic News Service reports that there are over one million Iraqi refugees living in Jordan – a resource-poor country of only six million.

While Jordan is able to offer little in material aid, the Sisters minister to all those in need and their hospi-

tal is a haven for refugees seeking medical treatment.

Comboni Sr. Mary Carmen describes the current situation at the Italian Hospital of Amman and the day-to-day challenges of ministering to some of the hardest-hit victims of the Iraq War.

*By Sr. Mary Carmen, cms*

**I**t all starts at 6 a.m. Daybreak brings the arrival of the first shift of nurses and their cheerful voices echo down the halls as they come to start their shifts. From 6 to 7.30 a.m., everyone is busy giving morning care to patients and preparing them for breakfast.

For the Comboni Missionary Sisters, this is a time of silence, community prayer and celebration of Mass. By 8 a.m., though, we have joined “the ranks.” The out-patient department and various ancillary services come alive with the arrival of early patients and employees. This is always a time of pressure for the hospital staff, particularly at the Charity Coordinator’s office where all the refugees with their referral forms require immediate attention. Little by little, we attend to everyone.



*Sr. Mary Carmen works with one of the 2,000 babies born each year at the Italian Hospital, the “Hospital of the Poor,” in Amman, Jordan*

*(continued on page 3)*

## A note from the Provincial...

Holding a two-week-old baby the other day, I contemplated the miracle of a new life. Like Nicodemus of the Gospel, I felt like saying, "Can an old man be born again?" And I heard Jesus' kind answer, "Yes, but not the way you think. Flesh gives birth to flesh, spirit to spirit."

At Christmas we rejoice at the physical birth of Jesus. But we also celebrate countless births of Jesus in spirit throughout our world. Whenever we help the hopeless recover their human dignity and freedom, we see the face of God.

We celebrate His presence just as the shepherds and wise men did when they "saw the Babe lying in a manger and they worshiped

Him." Christmas is not confined to the stable in Bethlehem!

I think of Jesus being born also in the new attitude emerging in Muslim-Christian relations. A letter sent Oct. 11 by 138 Muslim scholars to Pope Benedict XVI and other Christian leaders shows a new attitude. The letter stressed that the common ground is commitment to loving one's neighbor.

The open letter reads:

"Only this can guarantee success in a genuine relationship between culturally and religiously diverse communities."

The letter continues, "... as faith always goes together with good works, as the Koran never fails to repeat, love of God is inseparable

**"Whenever we help the homeless recover their human dignity and freedom, we see the face of God. We celebrate His presence just as the shepherds and wise men did."**



from love of neighbor."

On Oct. 21, the Pope, addressing the religious leaders gathered in Assisi, echoed the same message and commits the Catholic Church "... to continue along the road of dialogue to promote understanding among various cultures, traditions and religious wisdom. I ardently desire that this spirit spread more and more, especially where the tensions are strongest, where freedom and respect for the other are denied and men and women suffer the consequences of intolerance and misunderstanding."

The Spirit of Jesus was certainly present in a new way in Chicago and Los Angeles where the Comboni Missionaries of the North American Province recently assembled for a deeper understanding of Comboni spirituality and community life. Both elements are at the core of our vocation and constitute our identity. Comboni spirituality consists in a deep trust in the pierced Heart of the Good Shepherd, in embracing the poor and the cross they carry without fear or reservation.

It will take the rest of our lives to live this out, but as we begin to do it, the miracle happens and Jesus comes to make "common cause"- Comboni's expression-with the people He loves, with us.

Very Rev. Louis Gasparini, mccc

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Very Rev. Louis Gasparini, mccc

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**A \$12 annual donation is suggested.**

## Comboni

Mission Newsletter

### Award-winning

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## Ministering to refugees *(continued from page 1)*

The most active area of the Italian Hospital is always the maternity ward. In this noisy section, almost 2,000 babies are born and cared for each year. This is a place where mothers are always surrounded by relatives, both close and distant, all happy and excited with their “baby bundles.”

The Italian Hospital of Amman receives patients from a variety of nationalities, cultures and religions. We work hard to make everyone feel welcome, and if it’s not always possible in words, we express welcome in deeds, in treating the patients with kindness and compassion – a language everyone understands. While we know drugs cannot cure all the illnesses, human touch and compassion can at least soothe the pain and sustain these people through the ordeal they go through in a foreign land, and the fear and darkness of an uncertain future.

Certainly it seems they feel at home in our hospital, and this is our major satisfaction and greatest joy – to minister to the sick and witness Christian love in this Muslim land. Our own employees are both Christian and Muslim in nearly equal numbers. In this way, we understand and help each other as equals and work together for the future, with real hope of peace for all.

Our mission here as Comboni Missionary Sisters is not to announce the Gospel explicitly in words, but rather in deeds, neither in changing nor solving the huge political problems of this complex and difficult world of the Middle East, but to give light and love to all around us indiscriminately.

We strive to make life more hopeful and bearable for those we

encounter in our ministry with the sick. For most suffering people, especially the refugees, that means knowing someone cares and listens to them. But what may be more difficult to treat is their psychological trauma, particularly in the Iraqi patients, as a result of all the violence and fear they have witnessed in their own homeland, and all the loneliness and deprivation they may experience as refugees in Amman.

Certainly their situation could not be much worse. There is very little hope for this generation of Iraqi refugees to go back to their homeland. All they hope for is to live in peace *somewhere*. Iraqi Christians especially, a generally persecuted minority, have a great need to find someplace to survive.

Unfortunately, what has happened to these poor people under Saddam Hussein, and especially during this last war, is most terrible! There is now much resentment against the American government.

Our refugee patients try their best to adapt to the situation and appreciate what we do for them here. They must live with the knowledge that before, Iraqis of all religions lived side by side as neighbors with much respect for each other, but now their past is destroyed and the damage is irreparable. Now there is only fear, absolute chaos, and uncertainty about the future.

For us Com-

boni Sisters, life in the Middle East presents a very special challenge. There is endless room for the realization of our priority mission to serve “the poorest and the most needy wherever they may be,” and to work for our goal of “justice, peace and the integrity of creation.”

We are only eight sisters in this non-profit hospital, the oldest and only Christian health institution in Amman. Our presence, though small, is still very meaningful and esteemed by the local population and also by the refugees, who always find a helping hand in their needs. But above all, we offer a listening heart and open door when all the others are closed to the suffering.

St. Daniel Comboni’s spirit impels us today as it did in the past to so many of our sisters who worked and gave their lives in the Middle East. Though the circumstances may have changed, we continue to give the best of ourselves at the service of the Gospel, sure that as consecrated women, we have a role to play for the regeneration of this part of humanity. ▼



*A Comboni Missionary Sister works with a family in Jordan*

# Knock the devil off his horse

by Peter Ciuciulla, mccj



When I entered the theater with three friends to watch “The Devil Came on Horseback,” we swelled the audience to a total of seven. No one else came in. After this last showing of a one week run, I asked the attendant why they’d keep a movie of such importance for so short a time. “Look around! How many people do you see? The time we keep a show depends on you,” the attendant said.

“The Devil Came on Horseback” exemplifies general indifference to the unspeakable tragedies forced upon our brothers and sisters worldwide. The genocide going on in Darfur, Sudan, as witnessed by former U. S. Marine Captain Brian Steidle fill the big screen. Through his photographs and reports, we witness the systematic destruction of a people with no one taking serious action to stop it. The inaction of the international community pushed Steidle to leave Darfur and come back to the United States to let people know what’s happening in that far away land, homeland of the Fur people.

Chad, neighbor to Darfur and poorest of poor countries, receives refugees as they flee torture and genocide. I served as a missionary for 12 years in Chad, so the story Brian tells through his documentary is not something

completely new to me. But something strange happened to me as I watched it unfold. My heart beat faster when I saw Steidle and his sister going back to Darfur through Chad where they had been visiting refugee camps. It pumped with emotion when I saw them walking a dusty path – a dusty path I know well. I asked myself: why does my heart beat faster? Why does tension build in me as I wait to see what’s going to happen next?

The answer came spontaneously: because I know those places, I’ve walked on that path, I have friends there ... and I started recalling faces and situations. What’s become of those I shared life with? I had wet eyes that afternoon as Brian had by the end of the movie. What I’ve learned from my tears is that when we know, we care. And that’s maybe why the theater was so empty that afternoon. People don’t know, so they don’t know to care.

In the documentary, we see the indifference persisting as people listen to Brian’s testimonial and look at his graphic photos. Even staring reality in the face, they say they don’t believe. Denial is a form of refusal to accept, or worse yet, approval of what’s happening. This behavior is unacceptable - more shocking than the raw images themselves. How can we close our eyes, our ears, our minds

to this tragedy? How can we approve it through our inaction? I don’t have the answers. The best I can do is to search my heart for compassion and love and to convert my concern into action in one form or another.

In the show we see, thank God, not only indifference but also people who care about Darfur and decry the genocide going on there. And I know personally many people who are activists in the cause for Darfur. But there is a long way to go in increasing awareness and commitment if, on a quiet afternoon in October, only seven people immerse themselves in the facts about the genocide of their own brothers and sisters.

The purpose of this documentary is to increase the number of those who care about other human beings dying tragically by the thousands in Darfur so that together we can stop the genocide. We can’t afford to wait. The devils coming on horseback don’t. They’re always on the run to kill and destroy.

There are many ways to take action now. One is to go to the website of the movie [www.thedevilcameonhorseback.com](http://www.thedevilcameonhorseback.com) and start your journey towards compassion, love and solidarity. And if you’re lucky, you’ll discover the mysterious trail of tears. From there, I trust that you and God together will find a way for you to take further action. ▼

“We can’t afford to wait. The devils on horseback don’t. They’re always on the run to kill and destroy.”

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## Chaos to Quiet: Limone's gift

In a recent trip to Italy, I had the pleasure/challenge of seeing Rome along with countless other people, who with no malice of intent, I hope, blocked my vision, squashed me in the subway, caused my wait in lines to top out just below the last degree of human endurance, stole *my* cabs, and filled restaurants to capacity so that while I waited in line, my stomach seemed to echo the growls of the lion spirits in the Coliseum. The “rock concert” style audience waiting in St. Peter’s Basilica to see the Pope stole my chance both to get a glimpse of His Holiness and to enjoy the great basilica itself. During my time in the ancient city gone riotously modern, I had no time for a reflective moment anywhere, even though I walked on holy ground just about everywhere I went!

What I missed in Rome, however, I found in Limone, that ancient little town kissed by the gentle waves of Lago di Garda. Forget crowds and rushing around and noise and relentless distractions. Here was pax – peace. I guess I was still wound up from the Rome thing because when I made my first stop for food at a little restaurant by the lake, I immediately – even before I sat down – ordered a drink. The waiter smiled and said, “There’s no rush here. Take your time. We are a place of calm.” I breathed deeply and let go of all my tension right there on the spot.

Later, relaxed and pleasantly full, I made my way up the steep hill to the home of St. Daniel Comboni where I thought I was going to visit

the museum, say a prayer, meet a couple of priests and be on my way. Instead, I found a kind of time warp feeling as the Comboni home, lemon groves and surrounding grounds pulled me back in time to the birth of St. Daniel and then forward, slowly and reverently, as he grew into childhood and heard his call to become a priest.

When I saw his chalice, his bishop’s cross and ring, I felt I should stand in awe and reflect on St. Daniel’s accomplishments as a priest, missionary and bishop. Instead, I found myself full of thoughts about his childhood. I stood in the room where he was born, passed through the kitchen where he ate every day, visited the room where he slept as a boy, looked out his bedroom window and saw what he saw every morning, that breathtaking view of Lago di Garda.

It struck me deeply that the olive trees here and there on the property had taken root long before Daniel was born, had stood in their places when he was little, had probably born his weight numerous times as he climbed their gnarled trunks and perched on their branches, perhaps waiting to surprise his mom as she came to pick olives.

When, I thought to myself, did



*The shores of Lago di Garda as seen from St. Daniel Comboni's bedroom window*

he hear God’s call? Legend has it that, as a child, he called out the name of Africa as though he had a connection with that great continent even before he went to the seminary at age eleven. People, they say, had trouble understanding why he’d go around yelling “Africa” when he didn’t know anything about it. Perhaps Daniel Comboni presents a strong, concrete example of the words of God to Jeremiah, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born, I set you apart.” (Jer. 1:5)

Jeremiah answered, “I am only a child,” (Jer. 1:6), but he did what God asked of him. So did young Daniel. So may we all. ▼

*-Mary Bertolini*

## A tale of two missionaries: **perspectives on immigration**

### *A Letter from the Provincial Superior of Mexico*

By Fr. Rafael Gonzales Ponce, mccj

**M**exican immigration to the United States represents an urgent challenge to our Christian consciences.

Most Mexicans migrate to the US to earn a living for their families. Those without papers – so-called “illegal immigrants” – pay a high price for their choice. They face constant insecurity, scorn of their human rights, racial discrimination and moral degradation. Their “American dream” can soon become a nightmare.

On one side of the Rio Grande River, the Mexican economy cannot sustain living conditions for the working class - especially in rural communities. There is simply not enough work.

And on the other side of the river, the United States is crippled

According to the Bank of Mexico, 23 billion dollars entered Mexico by way of remittances in 2006 and it's estimated that Mexicans with no papers contribute millions of dollars to the United States economy.

Even recognizing the positive effect immigration brings to cultures, we cannot deny the suffering it has generated in recent years. As more and more people are forced to look outside their homelands for survival, the prevailing global system keeps making the rich richer and the poor poorer, often at the expense of their human dignity.

This extreme imbalance will not be solved with intolerance, but with a common responsibility and a dialogue between people

who are willing to work toward a solution.

On both sides of the border, there are people of good will fighting for the fundamental dignity of

human beings. Likewise, on both sides is corruption and self-interested manipulators who benefit from the subjection of others.

But as brothers and neighbors, Mexico and the United States need each other and never before have our histories been interlaced with such a common destiny.

Based on the United Nations

### every person ...

- legal or illegal, is worthy of and should be afforded certain fundamental rights.

- has a right to freely circulate and choose their residence. Every person has the right to leave their own country and to go back.

- has the right to stay in their own country, to have a job, a correct salary, security and the possibility of development.

### sovereign states ...

- have the right to control their borders and to protect their territory for the common good of the people.

-Father Rafael

**“This extreme imbalance will not be solved with intolerance, but with a common responsibility and a dialogue between people who are willing to work toward a solution.”**

by partisan political campaigns. The country has thus far failed to implement an immigration policy that guarantees human rights and controls abuses from authorities and dealers of cheap manual labor.

About 25 million people of Mexican origin live in the US. An estimated five million are considered unauthorized migrants.

Declaration for Human Rights and various documents of the Catholic Church, in particular the Pastoral letters of the Catholic Bishops of the United States and Mexico on migration, published in 2003, I summarize some principles that may be helpful for reflection and action:

- Every person is worthy of and should be afforded certain fundamental rights, legal or illegal.

- Every person has a right to freely circulate and choose their residence. Every person has the right to leave their own country and to go back.

- Every person has the right to stay in their own country, to have

a job, a correct salary, security and the possibility of development.

• Sovereign States have the right to control their borders and to protect their territory for the common good of the people.

Now is the pivotal moment in history for our nations to work together and form a migration plan that meets the needs of so many of our brothers and sisters. We need a plan to exterminate the seeds of poverty. We need a grand vision that proposes alternatives to the present unjust economic models of development.

But this cannot be accomplished without new forms of international dialogue and the participation of all segments of society.

The Catholic Church in particular has the mission to help instruct and form mature consciences in their rights, obligations, and potentialities (both of those who migrate and of those who welcome.) We must challenge ourselves to create sanctuaries of solidarity and promote respect for all human beings, especially the most mistreated.

We will have done so much if we can only free ourselves from our fears and from the tendency to see the others as enemies, favoring, at all levels, mechanisms for knowing each other and for collaboration. The Gospel, we know well, has the transforming ability to create a “new land” of justice and peace that is only possible with true fraternity of peoples.

“Come, you who are blessed by my Father... for I was a stranger and you welcomed me... (Mt 25:34) ▼

## ***A Letter from the Director of Hispanic Ministries, Archdiocese of Cincinnati***

*By Fr. Bill Jansen, mcccj*

*“The presence of brothers and sisters from different cultures should be celebrated as a gift to the Church.”*

*“Welcoming the Stranger Among Us”*

*-United States Catholic Conference of Bishops*

As Director of Hispanic Ministry for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, I minister to a great number of Hispanic Catholic immigrants from most countries of Latin America. When asked why they keep arriving, I answer that they simply want to survive and provide a future for their families. Hardworking honest families have always looked to the United States where their values would be respected and where they could join their culture to a rich multi-cultural society.

The pastoral letter, “Welcoming the Stranger Among Us” says:

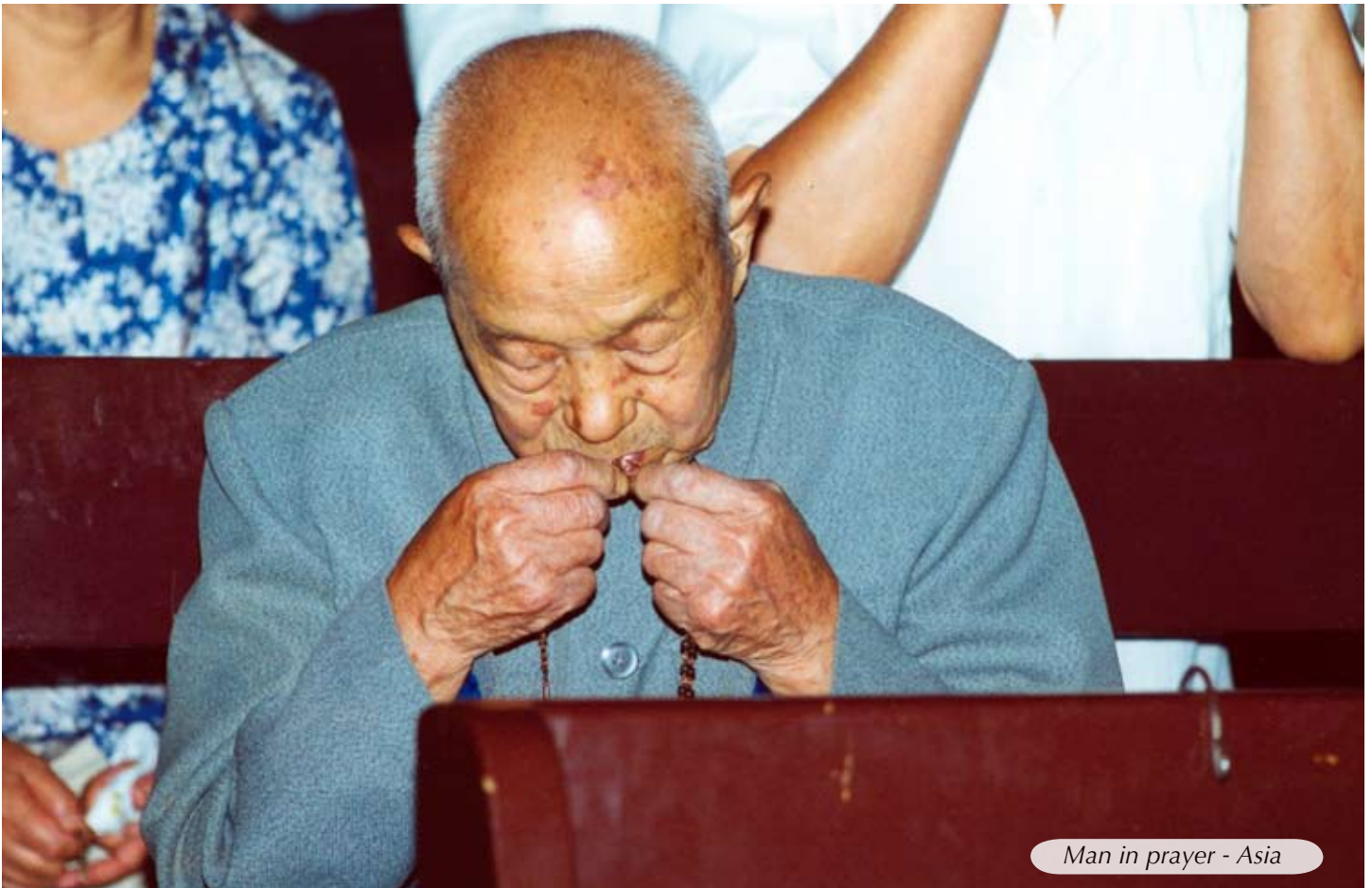
“The Church supports the human rights of all people and offers them pastoral care, education, and social services, no matter what the circumstances of entry into this country.”

This is my job. Unfortunately an atmosphere of hate, prejudice and downright meanness enhanced by racism has invaded the debate about immigrants. When the good people I serve tell me how they are treated, I wonder about the Christian principles of those who cultivate such hateful treatment. Families are torn apart, children are separated from their parents, and the work of years building a life is destroyed.

Attempting to reestablish and maintain hope in the lives of our immigrants is a pastoral challenge. We who work in the pastoral service of Hispanic immigrants nourish a profound respect for their rich culture, active faith and solidarity with the only institution which can offer them hope, their Church. ▼

**“When asked why they keep arriving, I answer that they simply want to survive and provide a future for their families.”**





Man in prayer - Asia



Ralph May, a Comboni Lay Missionary teaches a girl how to grow vegetables - Peru



Comboni Bishop Cesare Mazzolari confirms a young girl - Africa



Self-support project - Africa



Comboni Brother Johann Bachmann - Peru



*Comboni Fr. Jose Delgado - Chad*



*Parishioner - Guatemala*



*Comboni Sister and little friend - Africa*



*Youth group - Asia*

## **BORN IN A STABLE IN BETHLEHEM OF JUDEA**

over two thousand years ago, Jesus started a global warming that has never stopped. Like the torch in the Olympic relay, the spirit of mission has passed from Christ to the apostles and on down through the centuries to every baptized person on earth. None has received and run with that torch more fervently than St. Daniel Comboni. He took the message of the love of Christ for all human beings deep into Africa and passed on the blazing spirit of evangelization at the equator itself. Those God has called into the Comboni Missionary family live among the poorest and most abandoned people on four continents, warming them through a ministry with and among them that exemplifies firsthand what it means to love with the Heart of Jesus. This type of global warming is not about to let up but will grow even stronger as more and more people join in fanning the fire Jesus started with His first breath in that stable in Bethlehem.

# Global Warming

It starts from the heart



## Around the Continent

### Celebrating service in Monroe, Mich.

• November marked 55 years since the first Auxiliary meeting was held in Monroe. Shirley Noland, who has given nearly sixty years of hard work, love, dedication and service to the Comboni Missionaries, was a special honoree. Gert Bazick, who was not present, has been a member for 55 years.

• On Nov. 6 a special memorial Mass honored 17 deceased members, friends and benefactors of the Comboni Ladies Auxiliary who have died in the last year. Comboni Fr. Peter Ciuciulla officiated at the Mass held at St. Joseph Chapel. Family members brought votive candles and placed them on a table where one large candle burnt representing all the deceased loved ones throughout the years.

• From the members of the Comboni Ladies Auxiliary: "Wishing everyone a most Blessed Christmas & Happy New Year!"

### Lay formation program and the 5 "W"'s of mission

During the fall months, the Comboni Lay Missionaries held the formation program for the new lay missionary candidates. Candidates examined many aspects of mission: community, prayer, Catholic social teaching, Church history, social justice, cross-cultural adaptation, contemporary international issues, and many others.

In October, the Lay Missionaries were invited to attend a weeklong collaborative formation

workshop with three other lay mission groups in North America, hosted in Ossining, New York. It was a time of sharing with people from other programs, and a reaffirmation of our common commitment to mission.

The Lay Missionaries also held a Mission Evening at the Comboni Mission Center in La Grange Park on Oct. 29. We gave two presentations and facilitated a discussion on the "who," "what," "when," "where," "why" and "how" of mission.

The Lay Missionaries' Commissioning Mass will be Dec. 16. All are invited! For more information, call 708-588-1602.

### Cross-Country Swap in Covina, Ca. and LaGrange Park, Ill.

Comboni Fr. Luis Carranza has left the Comboni Mission Center in La Grange Park and is

now doing his missionary work at Holy Cross Parish in Los Angeles. During his time in La Grange Park, Father Luis was particularly active ministering to the Hispanic community in Chicago and spent much of the summer on Mission Appeals throughout the Midwest.

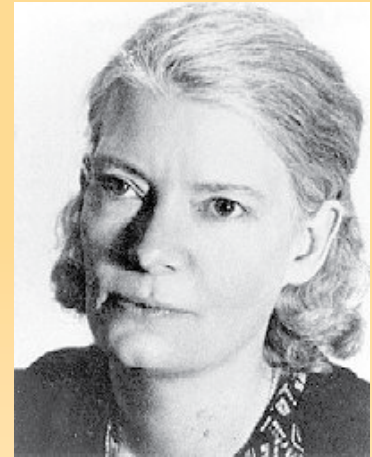
Coming from the community in Covina, California, Comboni Fr. Angel Camorlinga has joined the community in La Grange Park. He will work with Comboni Fr. David Bohnsack on vocation promotion.

### National Philanthropy Day



*Members of the Comboni Lay Missionaries with participants of the lay collaborative formation workshop in New York.*

## Spotlight on a Mission Soul : Dorothy Day



*Dorothy Day*

Catholic worker, mother, former communist, pro-lifer, radical pacifist, devotee of St. Theresa's Little Way – Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker movement, led a life of controversy and seeming contradiction.

But like St. Daniel Comboni, she was driven by a deep and abiding love for the poorest and most abandoned, and she worked tirelessly on their behalf.

And that just might have made her a saint.

Born in New York City in 1897, Dorothy was raised in Chicago and grew up an agnostic and radical activist seeking spiritual enlightenment.

She was heavily involved in the women's suffrage, labor movement, and the sexual revolution of the post-World War I era. A lover pressured her into an abortion in 1919.

After this experience, which she called the greatest tragedy of her life, Dorothy began to seek a deeper truth and spirituality than what she found in her bohemian lifestyle. She initially saw that truth in the beauty of the natural world and her work with the poor.

"How can there be no God," she later reminisced, "when there are all these beautiful things?"

When Dorothy became pregnant again in 1926, she was determined to have her child, Tamar Teresa, baptized into the Catholic faith.

Later that year, Dorothy herself was baptized and began the great work of her life – spreading the hope of the Gospel through hospitality to the poor and a crusade against injustice.

In 1932, Dorothy met Peter Maurin, an eccentric kindred spirit and vagabond visionary. Together he and Dorothy formed the "Catholic Worker" newspaper and later opened Hospitality Houses for the poor and homeless whom Peter called the "ambassadors of God."

Over 100 of these Hospitality Houses are still functioning all over the United States, and the circulation of the "Catholic Worker" has climbed to over 90,000.

Like St. Daniel Comboni, Dorothy dedicated her life to the most abandoned. The void St. Daniel saw in Africa is the same void Dorothy tried to fill in the United States. She worked for, lived with, and died among the poorest and most abandoned. In the drama of her life, she found first beauty, then truth – and ultimately God - in the poor.

"Those who cannot see the face of Christ in the poor are atheists indeed," she said. "I firmly believe that our salvation depends on the poor."

Dorothy died in 1980, seven years after her arrest for participating in a banned picket line supporting the rights of farm workers. In her lifetime she was honored by

*"Those who cannot see the face of Christ in the poor are atheists indeed. I firmly believe that our salvation depends on the poor."*  
– Dorothy Day

Pope Paul VI, Mother Theresa of Calcutta, the Jesuit magazine "America" and with Notre Dame University's Laetare Medal.

Dorothy wrote of St. Therese of Lisieux, one of her favorite saints:

"She practiced the presence of God and she did all things--all the little things that make up our daily life and contact with others--for His honor and glory. She did not need much time to expound what she herself called 'her little way,' which she said was for all. She wrote her story, and God did the rest. God and the people. God chose for the people to clamor for her canonization."

And now the people are clamoring for Dorothy's canonization. In 2000, Cardinal John O'Connor, Archbishop of New York, initiated her cause for canonization with the following words:

"If any woman ever loved God and her neighbor, it was Dorothy Day!" ▼ *-Katie Walker*

## Humility 101 in Room Kariobangi

One of the most important aspects of successful immersion for the missionary is understanding the group you are working with. This may sound like a simple task, but I assure you it is not. Just when you think you understand what is going on, something comes up that completely turns your ideas upside down. I suspect this is God's way of keeping the missionary humble.

After two years here in Kariobangi, I have scraped through the surface layer but by no means have I reached the core of what it is to be a slum dweller in Africa. I do live in the slum. I do live with the people, as the people live. But in the back of my mind is the assurance that if the day came when I could no longer cope, I could return to the United States and resume my life there. Even here I have the Comboni community of fathers and sisters ready to assist in times of need, whether it's an emotional, spiritual, or financial need. A poor local Kenyan girl



Women at the KWPP learn many trades, including weaving. The cloth is sold as a source of income for the women

does not have this security blanket. So as missionaries, by nature, we never really get to the core. Perhaps this should not even be seen as our true objective.

Here at the Kariobangi Women's Project, we are just beginning our third term of the school year. At the end of each term, we hold a day long reflection and students are invited to voice their opinions on anything and everything that concerns them at the Project.

I truly was delighted to put the students' feedback from the first and second terms side by side to display the growth they have achieved in only six months. The instructors were also delighted. I am so fortunate to be working with a dedicated group of people, some of them former Project trainees, who not only understand these girls but have gone a long way in helping me to understand them as well.

In a few hours, I'll head to the airport to see off Paul Wheeler, Director of the Comboni Lay Mission Program in North America, and his brother Paul, who have spent the past week with me.

It has been a great pleasure to share pieces of my encounter of mission with Paul. Their stay was short and their exposure to Kenya limited to the environs of Nairobi, but it is my hope they leave with some idea of the joys I feel and the trials I am faced with as a white American woman living and working among poor



Morning prayer at the Kariobangi Women's Promotion Project

and marginalized black Kenyans.

Typical of Kenyans, and in my experiences, Africans in general, people here were welcoming and congenial. The children were thrilled to see three white people passing so they could scream for what some of them is their only English phrase – "How are you?" The young women at the Project were shy and protected, as is their characteristic behavior with all strangers, and the staff was intrigued with American mannerisms. In particular, Neil, Paul's brother, took his cup of tea from the table at the end of "chai break" and walked around the compound with it. Kenyans are most unaccustomed to the notion of eating on the run.

The reality here, however, is that I never have been as busy or as tired at the end of the day as I am in Africa. But being in mission, and deepening my relationship with God, have given me energy and strength I never dreamed I had. ▼

- Susan Coopersmith

## Change the world when you pass on to eternal life!

After you remember those you love in your will or trust, how will you change the world with the assets you leave behind when you pass on to eternal life?

**Rosella Schmaltz** remembered the Comboni Missionaries through a gift made through her trust. So did **Alice Vagt** through the trust made possible by her late sister Zulma's bequest.

We remember all three of these deceased benefactors through the Fr. Hamlet Accorsi Legacy Society, which honors friends in Canada and the United States who tell us they've included the Comboni Missionaries in their estate plans.

Members' names appear on a plaque outside the main chapel at the Provincial House in Cincinnati, and they're remembered in prayer every day.

The Society also remembers **Francis McVeigh**, who left a gift to the Comboni Missionaries by naming them as a beneficiary of a

life insurance policy. Many people choose to use old life insurance policies as a means of remembering charitable causes, when those policies have outlived their original intent.

Of course, the most popular means of helping any charitable organization after one passes away has always been through one's will. And the Comboni Missionar-

For information on including the Comboni Missionaries in your will, trust, or other estate plans, call our Development Office at 513-474-4997

ies have recently been named in the wills of several benefactors who are now with Our Lord. They include **William J. Richard** and **Mary Bradley** from the United States, as well as Canadians **Ruth Willis**, **Selina Norris**, **Kathleen**

**Lane**, and **Fr. Joseph Sbrocchi**,

For information on including the Comboni Missionaries in your will, trust or other estate plans, call our Development Office at 513-474-4997. In preparing your will or trust, be sure to use our legal name and address:

- In the United States, please use: Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus, North American Province, 1318 Nagel Road, Cincinnati, OH 45255.

- Those in Canada should use the address of our office in Kitchener: Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus, 148 Madison Avenue South, Kitchener, ON N2G 3M6.

You can also write to these addresses to let us know you've remembered the Comboni Missionaries in your estate plans. That way we can immediately enroll you in this society's prestigious ranks. ▼

## 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.

- 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 for 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.

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

Here are the rates you'll get for a guaranteed retirement income for life! The following rates reflect CGAs for the life of one individual.

65	6.0	70	6.5	75	7.1	80	8.0	85	9.5	90+	11.3
66	6.1	71	6.6	76	7.2	81	8.3	86	9.9		
67	6.2	72	6.7	77	7.4	82	8.5	87	10.2		
68	6.3	73	6.8	78	7.6	83	8.8	88	10.6		
69	6.4	74	6.9	79	7.8	84	9.2	89	11.0		

## Trip to Uganda steeped in Comboni history

*Roxanne Schorbach and Comboni Fr. Angelo Biancalana travelled to Uganda in September to lay plans for a trip of Comboni friends and benefactors in February 2008. Roxanne's reflection discusses the extensive ministry of the Comboni Missionaries in that country.*



Women and children wait in a small dispensary behind the Comboni house in Anaka, an IDP camp in Uganda

What captured me in Uganda was witnessing the charisma of St. Daniel Comboni at work among the people he dedicated his life to serving.

The first Comboni Missionaries came to Uganda from Sudan in 1910 and settled in Omach, along the Nile River. I was able to see evidence of their 97 years of mission work everywhere we traveled. Churches, schools, hospitals, health centers, radio stations, vocation centers and so much more built, run or supported by the Comboni Missionaries. Clearly, the priests, brothers and sisters have integrated themselves deeply in the community.

On the first day of our trip to the north, Sherry Meyer, manager of the FM station "Radio Pacis" met us at the airport. Comboni Fr. Tonino Pasolini and Sherry are responsible for planning and coordination of the radio station. The station broadcasts around the clock, publishes a monthly bulletin, has an internet café, a restaurant across the street and employs 75 people. Radio Pacis received the "New Radio Station of the Year" trophy by the

British Broadcasting Corporation for all of Africa in February 2007.

Later in the day, we visited a small health center run by the Comboni Sisters. We sat with some of the patients in a covered, open air patio and observed their comings and goings. Mothers sat with babies on benches waiting to be treated for their ailments. There was a reassuring look in their eyes. They knew this was a place they could come for help and be well cared for.

The next day in Lodonga, we met Comboni Fr. David Baltz who is responsible for 23 chapels in the parish. He is well-known for riding his bicycle to each chapel – even one that is a 45 mile round trip. As he is a "muzungu," Swahili for "white man," and always rides his bicycle, some of the locals think he's slightly crazy. In many minds, all muzungu are rich, so why would Father David, in his right mind, ride a bicycle when he could drive? We had the pleasure of accompanying him in a small truck to Dondi Chapel where he baptized 15 babies. Father Angelo baptized the 16th, and he did it in the Logbara language!

Later we toured "Pagak," a camp for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), started in 1994. At times, the camp has swelled to over 19,000 people – all seeking refuge from the ongoing threat of the

Lord's Resistance Army, the rebel militia responsible for the abduction of over 60,000 men, women and children. The camp is so well established that children from neighboring camps walk miles to attend school here. In Uganda, according to World Vision Statistics, there are over 935,000 children living in IDP camps.

When we arrived, most of the men and boys were off playing soccer, so we visited the women and small children. We watched as they peeled cassava, sorted peanuts, and prepared various kinds of seeds and beans for cooking. Being able to walk among these people was inspiring and shocking at the same. They have lived in camps so long

"As he is a 'muzungu,' Swahili for 'white man,' and always rides his bicycle, some of the locals think he's slightly crazy."

that many children have never known normal Ugandan life. Instead, they live in constant fear of LRA abductions.

On our way back to Gulu,

we visited St. Mary's College in Aboke, a girls' school run by the Comboni Sisters. St. Mary's gained international attention in October 1996 when the LRA abducted 139 of the secondary school students. Comboni Sr. Rachele Fassera, the deputy head mistress of the school at the time, negotiated the release of 109 of the captive students.

This trip has truly changed my life, and I look forward to returning in February. ▼ - Roxanne Schorbach

## Pastor, teacher, missionary enters eternal life

Comboni Fr. Paul Longo, after fighting a battle with cancer for over ten years, went home to God on September 10, 2007. He was 78 years old. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Father Paul at the Comboni Mother House in Verona, Italy on Sep. 12.

Intensive therapy through the years and a will to stay active kept Paul busy with various ministries until last October when he was finally obliged to retire to Verona. Even there, with heavy treatments of chemo therapy, he was up and about until shortly before he died.

Father Paul was a native of Piove de Saco, Padova, Italy. He was ordained on June 7, 1952. God called him to mission ministries in Italy, Africa and the United States, where he served in Chicago and Cincinnati.

His gifts were strong in both the spiritual and academic arenas. Among his many ministries,



*Fr. Paul Longo, mcccj*

Father Paul taught dogmatic theology, worked in Rome for the Propagation of the Faith, shared his love of St. Daniel Comboni, served as a formator, tended to spiritual needs in a parish setting,

worked as a mission animator among seminarians, served as Chancellor of the Diocese of Arua in Uganda, and made many friends along the way.

Those who knew Father Paul appreciated his brilliant mind and the vast wealth of knowledge he carried with him. Equally impressive was his ability to almost instantaneously access that information and apply it to situations as they arose.

Comboni Fr. Louis Gasparini, Provincial Superior of the North American Province, in offering his condolences to family and friends, said of Father Paul, "Paul was always looking for the Truth, but while he was looking, he was also living it."

Together, let us pray Paul finds peace with the God who called him to serve as His priest and that the part he had in the spread of the Good News be carried on through us. ▼



### Cinci Creche - Comboni tradition

In 1947 began a tradition in Cincinnati that is honored every year - the Nativity Display at the Comboni Mission Center. It remains a favorite way for adults and children of all ages to experience the beauty and timeless message of the Christmas story. In the small quiet room, when lights go down and the Bethlehem scene springs to life, the materialism of Christmas fades away. Without distraction, people join shepherds and wise men to visit the newborn Jesus and adore Him in their hearts. Treat yourself to this experience: Dec. 9-30, 6-9:00 p.m. Free admission. Canned goodas/donations gratefully accepted. Closed Christmas Even and Christmas Day.

## Book Preview:

# Stolen Angels: The Kidnapped Girls of Uganda

The Comboni Missionaries take a lead role in a new book by Canadian journalist Kathy Cook. “Stolen Angels: The Kidnapped Girls of Uganda” tells the story of 30 schoolgirls abducted from St. Mary’s Aboke School, run by the Comboni Missionary Sisters in Northern Uganda, and the heroic crusade to get them back.

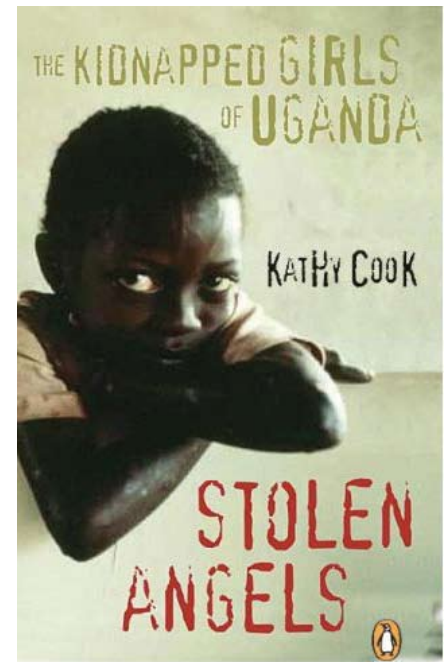
“The book details the tragedy of Northern Uganda and focuses on the incredible bravery of the various Comboni Missionaries living there,” Cook said.

Published by Penguin Books, the book has received excellent reviews in Canada. Canwest News, the country’s largest newspaper

chain called it “a gripping reading ... encompassing the moral absolutes of depravity and redemption.”

From Penguin Books:

“Using searing first-hand accounts, award-winning Canadian journalist Kathy Cook uncovers the horrific life of child sex slaves and soldiers in Uganda’s Lord’s Resistance Army. “Stolen Angels” tells the story of 30 Ugandan schoolgirls abducted in Oct. 1996 by Joseph Kony, the LRA leader who was indicted for war crimes by the international criminal court. The girls became child soldiers and sex slaves – pawns in a forgotten African war. A heroic group of mothers and interfaith



clerics waged a crusade to rescue them.”

“Stolen Angels” is available online and in Canada and will soon be available for purchase in the United States.

# Comboni

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[www.ComboniMissionaries.org](http://www.ComboniMissionaries.org)



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