



Why should *you* become a Comboni Lay Missionary?

- ▶ Consider sharing the hope and love of the Gospel message as you walk with the poor in their struggles.
- ▶ Ponder the blessing of your own faith and how much more it will mean if you share it with others.
- ▶ Imagine the opportunity for spiritual and personal growth. You will share your faith, skills and educational background with people from many cultures - and you will learn from them.
- ▶ Picture yourself living in a community with other lay people as you serve God and God's favorite people - the poor.

Nearly 140 years ago, St. Daniel Comboni founded the Comboni Missionaries' congregation of priests, sisters and brothers to work with poor and abandoned people in African countries.



St. Daniel Comboni

As a young priest, Daniel Comboni was moved by the extreme poverty and oppression that existed throughout much of Africa.

He was a passionate promoter of human rights, as he struggled against the slave trade in Central Africa, set up centers for the education and training of Africans, and became the first bishop of Khartoum (Sudan).

Today, the Comboni Missionaries are present in 40 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and North America. They minister to the poor and powerless, helping them to improve their quality of life and grow in Christian faith.

From the beginning, St. Daniel enlisted the aid of lay people who were committed to the ideal of empowering local people to carry on the work of the church. The Comboni Lay Missionary Program of North America is one way for today's laity to continue that commitment and to share their lives and faith with the marginalized throughout the world.



For more information:

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Comboni Lay Missionaries

of the
U.S. and Canada



We're a Catholic community of lay 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.



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

Why is there a need for lay missionaries today?

The Comboni Missionaries' vision of the church is one that includes lay and religious persons working together in small Christian communities to empower the poor and marginalized.

St. Daniel Comboni welcomed religious and lay men and women to participate in his mission work. Lay missionaries and religious members of the congregation enjoy a special relationship in the spirit of Comboni. They share in the work, charism, spirituality, and apostolic community of the Comboni Missionaries.

What services are provided by lay missionaries?

Comboni Lay Missionaries live the Christian life in their ministries, including pastoral work, education, health care, and rural development. They live the Gospel by sharing their own skills and trades to empower the people, encouraging them to become leaders in their local churches and communities. In all that they do, the lay missionaries' message shows respect for human dignity and freedom.

How long do Comboni Lay Missionaries serve?

After 14 weeks of Orientation, candidates sign a renewable contract to commit themselves to three years of service.

Usually, they are sent out in teams of two or three to mission sites. They live in community during Orientation and while they are participating in overseas mission service.



Who are the Comboni Lay Missionaries?

The Comboni Lay Missionaries are Catholic women and men who feel called to live the Gospel. They have a strong faith commitment and are interested in joining Comboni priests, sisters and brothers in mission service with the poor in selected countries of Africa and Latin America.

North America is not the only region where Comboni Lay Missionaries are recruited and trained. There are currently 10 other programs operating out of 9 countries: Mexico, Peru, Brazil, Congo, Uganda, Spain, Portugal, Germany, and Italy.



Who can join?

Catholic lay women and men, between the ages of 24-54, married or single, are welcomed into the program. (Couples with dependent children will be considered on a case-by-case basis.) Candidates must be college graduates or have necessary skills for trades that are appropriate in the mission environment, and they must have at least one year of work experience.

Where do lay missionaries serve?

In places where there is poverty, sickness and injustice. St. Daniel Comboni dedicated himself to the poorest and most abandoned parts of the world, and the Comboni mission family of today continues to do likewise. To see which countries lay missionaries are serving in, visit our website at www.laymission-comboni.org

How are the candidates prepared for mission work?

The program provides a 14-week Orientation program. The staff and knowledgeable resource people give classes in Theology and Scripture, and workshops on cross-cultural living, communication skills, conflict resolution, mission spirituality, the Comboni charism, relationships and intimacy overseas, staying healthy, etc. Time is set aside each week for studying the area of assignment and communicating with the pastoral team overseas.

There are also regular community activities such as morning prayers, mass, weekly reflection group meetings, weekly pastoral practice, community evenings, and a retreat.

Following the Orientation program, newly contracted lay missionaries will travel overseas to begin language study for approximately three months.

What is required?

- ▶ Candidates must demonstrate a strong faith commitment as Catholics and have a sincere desire for mission service overseas.
- ▶ They must be emotionally mature and in good physical and mental health.
- ▶ They must be able to interact and cooperate with people of different religions, traditions and cultures, to live simply, to sacrifice and be flexible, and to be willing to learn.
- ▶ They must be willing to work in community with the local church and the Comboni Missionaries, and be open to ongoing spiritual development.

What happens when the three-year commitment ends?

Upon returning to the U.S. or Canada after the three-year assignment, the lay missionaries are offered a program to integrate their mission experience and evaluate their commitment. If it has been a positive experience, they may renew the contract.

There are also opportunities to share their mission experiences with members of the North American church.