

THE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE FROM THE COMBONI MISSIONARIES

# COMBONI MISSION

*Autumn 2011*



*Mission Sunday  
23 October*

*“As the Father has sent me, so I send you”*

(Jn 20,21)

# COMBONI MISSION

Autumn 2011

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## From the Editor

# Hopes and Fears

Most people hoped that this time the meteorologists had got it right and at least here in these isles it would have been as predicted – a 'barbecue summer'. However our worst fears were realised when it really wasn't for most people the perfect holiday weather. Life is like that: highs and lows, dreams and disappointments – All part of our rollercoaster life!

In this current edition of our magazine we witness the great hopes of South Sudan. After decades of war and suffering the Southern Sudanese people look forward with hope as they set out on the path of their newly-gained Independence building peace and prosperity:

*"We rise raising the flag with the guiding star and sing songs of freedom with joy for justice, liberty and prosperity shall for evermore reign." rings out the new Anthem.*

In other parts of Africa there are only fears to be faced – war- poverty-disease, the scourge of famine.

East Africa and in particular Somalia undergo once more the terrible scenes of starving children and distraught parents fleeing for their lives towards a possible salvation from

death. They leave behind their own dead amongst the cattle and parched lands.

The Comboni missionaries moved by the current situation in Africa launched an appeal, "in favour of the African Continent plagued and weakened by famines, wars, violence, poverty, disease, oppression and other injustices."

It is against this background that we face our daily tasks and trust that God will always give us "the joy and desire to go out to meet humanity taking Christ to all." (P. Benedict XVI for World Mission Day).



*Fr. John*

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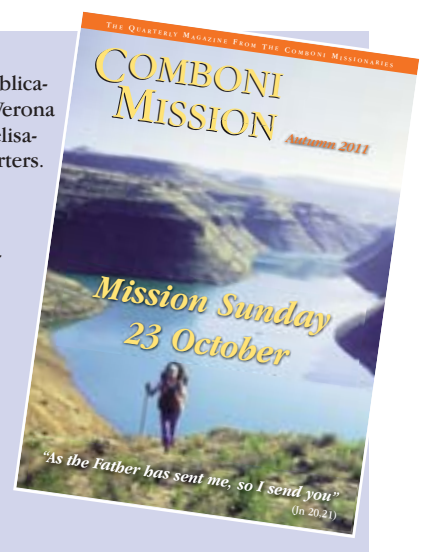
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**In Brief CHURCH NEWS**

By Fr John Clark mccj



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Fr. John Clark

**They never stop coming**

Between ten to twelve million people (50% are children) are fiercely battling against the ravaging scourges of drought and famine in the Horn of Africa countries of Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea and South Sudan. The crisis of the Horn of Africa has been hailed as the worst for the past sixty years. The lack of water due to the failure of seasonal rain has produced repeated serious harvest shortages. The on-going civil war in Somalia (which has been without a government for over the last twenty years) daily worsens the already calamitous situation of these desperate drought victims in dire need to survive and literally helpless to act. Very urgent is their need for clean water, food, temporary shelter and medical supplies. Among the many charity organizations: Trocaire, Sciaf, and Cafod who have plenty of experience of supplying people in emergency are struggling to keep up with demand. Aid agencies believe it will take some £1 billion to deal with the given crisis until 2012. "The more

money raised, the more lives saved". Up-to-date there has been a very generous response. Nevertheless, it is very disturbing to look at images of skeletal old people and newly born infants in the daily press and television, After all, human beings are not commodities and we do have a responsibility to share.

**Norway shocked into grief**

Norway is a country just smaller than Scotland. Until recently it would have been considered to be one of the safest places to live in the world. However, three million Norwegian people will never forget its 22/7 when seventy seven people were cruelly blasted out of existence. Sixty nine of them were shot dead. Most were between the ages of 14 to 18. They were idealistic teenagers intent on building a better world for all. As young political activists they were attending the Youth political summer camp of Norway's Labour Party outside Oslo on the idyllic island of Utoya. After the two acts of insanity committed by a very sick perpetrator, the people of Oslo and various authorities of the land expressed their condemnation.

There was utter revulsion. Vast numbers of flowers, candles and messages left outside Oslo Cathedral soon became the national shrine to the dead. How many people have seen a King and Queen praying and crying in public for their people? Christians and Muslims were seen together burying the dead.

Pope Benedict, Cardinals O'Brien, Sean Brady, and Archbishop Vincent Nichols sent condolences to the families of the victims of the massacre, assuring them and the people of Norway of our prayers and solidarity.



Comboni Press

**CONTENTS**

Editorial  
Hopes and Fears  
**PAGE 2**

In Brief  
Church News  
**PAGE 3**

Egypt and Eritrea through  
the eyes of Solomon  
and Jemil  
**PAGES 4 - 5**

Comboni Missionaries  
appeal on behalf of Africa  
**PAGES 6 - 7**

Forced labour clouds  
boom in Amazon  
**PAGES 8 - 9**

Spirit in the city  
**PAGE 10**

South Sudan -  
Bishop Mazzolari  
**PAGE 11**

Mission Sunday Message –  
Pope Benedict XVI  
**PAGES 12 - 13**

Hugo Chavez  
**PAGE 14**

In loving memory  
**PAGE 15**

A new Sudan  
**PAGES 16 - 17**

Roundup  
**PAGES 18 - 19**

Amazon is weeping  
**PAGES 20 - 21**

You Write  
**PAGES 22 - 23**

Holy Redeemer mass guild  
**PAGE 24**

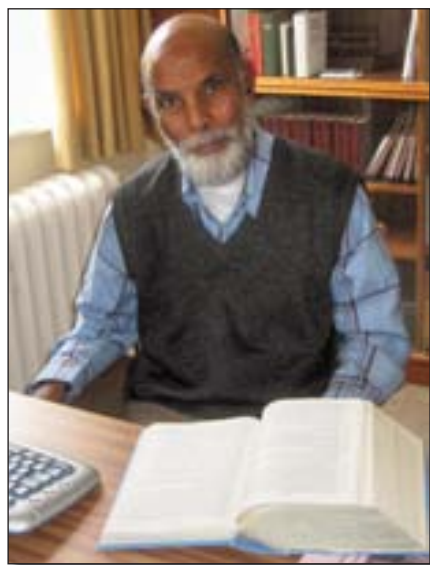
# *Eritrea and Egypt through the eyes of Solomon and Jemil*

***We were happy to welcome two Eritrean priests to our house at Sunningdale during the summer. They both came as part of their summer break and to help with the many Mission Appeals of the London Province. Whilst here they were happy to tell us a little about their work in Africa.***

## **ERITREA**

I am Abba Solomon Meharena a priest from the diocese of Asmara. I am presently a lecturer of philosophy and sociology at the theological institute of Asmara. Actually I am here because my bishop Mon. Menghestaab Tesfamariam sent me to help in the mission appeal work of the London Province.

Eritrea the country from which I come is in the horn of Africa along the coastal lines of the Red Sea. The Eritrean population is estimated to be four and a half million. The people of Eritrea belong to three different religions, namely Christian, Islam, and Animism.



*Fr. Solomon Meharena*

## **ECONOMY**

Eritrea is a poor country with a pro capita income approximately 365 pounds per annum. The majority of the Eritrean people are engaged in the pastoral and agricultural sectors of the economy. It is obvious that these sectors are dependent on the abundance of rainfall. But

unfortunately the country is frequently affected by drought. This means that there is often no rain and therefore no adequate harvest or sufficient grass for the cattle.

Secondly, the country has not enjoyed a continuous peace, which is a condition for prosperity. One might say that Eritrea has passed from war to war. It experienced a thirty year liberation war and after seven years of peace it was engaged in war with Ethiopia. And from 2000 up to now it is experiencing an uncertain climate between peace and war.

This uncertainty creates a state of fear.

This fear seems to justify the national service, to which every Eritrean is called upon to defend his country. The whole working force of the Eritrean population is mobilized both to defend and build the nation. But there is also a cultural revolution, namely abolishing tribalism, provincialism regionalism and religious

antagonism. These are noble aims, but they have negative effects as well.

Since the national service is unpaid and does not seem to have a time limit, families are broken up and are living in abject poverty, since the father who is the only breadwinner, is called for national service. This is the situation in which families are. It is in this situation that the church is called to proclaim the gospel.

## **CHURCH AND STATE IN ERITREA**

It must be pointed out that religion in Eritrea is under state control. In fact, there is within the Home Office a department that is in charge of religious affairs. The Orthodox Church, Islam, the Catholic Church, and the Evangelical are officially and legally recognized by the Eritrean government. But it must also be pointed out that the Orthodox and Moslem leaders are paid by the government and dependent and are subservient to the government. Instead, the Catholic and the evangelical are independent. The Catholic Church in particular is trying to make sure of its independence. Thus, the Catholic Church works with implicit understanding that it is independent and the government seems to treat it as the other Churches. Thus there is



*Asmara Cathedral, Eritrea*

misunderstanding between the two, since there is no legal framework to define the competence of each.

## THE FUTURE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The future of the Catholic Church seems to be bright. People are coming back to the church. These past years of hard life have taught them much. They are no more trusting men. People are not only returning to church but they seem to put their trust only in God. As indicators of these, we have more vocations and ordinations to the priesthood are increasing.

All in all, in my view, the future of the church in Eritrea seems to be bright.



*Fr. Jemil with refugee children*

## FR JEMIL ARAYA WRITES: Refugees in Cairo

As of April 2011, there were 40,933 recognized refugees and asylum seekers registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees regional office in Cairo, including Sudanese, Iraqis, Somalis, Eritrean, Ethiopians in addition to some other 35 nationalities. Of the persons of concern to UNHCR the largest group is Sudanese nationals (57%), followed by Iraqis (17%) and Somali nationals (17%). The remaining 10% was composed of different nationalities, mainly from Africa. Some 9,956 persons are children between the age of 6 and 18 years old (26% of the population) of primary and secondary school age. There are also thousands of people who failed to be recognized as refugees by UNHCR office in Cairo and became closed file cases who are not included in the above statistics.

More than 80 percent of Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt are

Southerners. However, the number of Sudanese refugees in Egypt mainly from the Nuba Mountains has been growing rapidly in recent months due to the fighting which erupted in Darfur, Blue Nile, Abyei and Nuba Mountains very recently.

## COMBONI MISSIONARIES WORKING WITH REFUGEES

The majority of refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt live in overcrowded apartments dispersed throughout the poor quarters of Cairo where they join the urban poor in competing for limited resources. However, refugees are unable to access subsistence, work, state education, and national health care on the same basis as nationals because of Egypt's reservation to the 1951 Convention related to the Status of Refugees. Therefore for the last 20 years the Comboni missionaries in Egypt have worked tirelessly with the Sudanese refugees in order to render basic needs that human beings need to live decently.

## EDUCATION AND MORE EDUCATION

Apart from the pastoral work we do among the refugees, the main thing we valued was providing education which is a key factor for human development. For this reason we opened Schools in the poor neighborhoods of Cairo where the refugee children could have access to education within the areas they live. We opened three centres and the total number of the students is above 1300 every year and the level of education is from Kindergarten to secondary school in Sakakini, and in St Joseph and St Bakhita from Kindergarten to grade 8, then they join secondary school in Sakakini School. We do provide also medical service and breakfast for all the students in the centres as the families could not afford medical treatment and nutritious meals.

Our human resources in teaching are the refugees themselves. In this way we have created employment and at least one hundred people are employed as teaching and non-teaching staff in our centres. Bringing Sudanese teachers also helped the refugee students to maintain the values of their culture, history and identity. Although we were using the Egyptian curriculum until 2007, in 2008 we had switched to the Sudanese Curriculum for the following reasons. The refugee students were not allowed to sit for the Egyptian national certificate



*Class for the many refugee children*

exams because of age limit and residence permit, for this reason many young people dropped out of school and were involved in gang activities fighting among themselves.

## ADAPTING TO THE NEEDS

Once we introduced the Sudanese curriculum many of the young people who were involved in these gang activities came back to school and sat for the Sudanese national certificate exams. Our school will continue using Sudanese curriculum in the coming academic year. However we shall introduce more English language in the lower classes because South Sudan has chosen English as its national language.

## HOPING TO RETURN TO SOUTHERN SUDAN

Yet, not many South Sudanese refugees and immigrants returned to their newly created country of Republic of South Sudan due to the ongoing war in Abyei, South Kordufan and Blue Nile. At the same time lack of infrastructures, health and education sectors will affect the voluntary repatriation of the refugees but once peace is assured there is no reason for them to remain in Egypt because of the challenges they are going through especially the crises in Egypt's post revolution. Although work was not allowed for refugees in Egypt some fortunate women worked as house keepers for wealthy Egyptian families and some foreigners. This enabled them pay the house rent and buy food for the family. After the revolution many of them lost their jobs and life has become harder than before.

***Therefore, I would like to thank our benefactors and people of good will for the support and generosity and may the Lord reward you abundantly.***

By Comboni Missionaries

# Comboni Missionaries Appeal for Africa

Rome, Wednesday, August 3, 2011 – The bishops of the Comboni Missionaries, the Father and the Mother General of the two Institutes of the Comboni Missionaries, gathered in Jerusalem from the 21st to 30th July. At the conclusion of their meeting and moved by the dramatic situation in which most of the African peoples live, decided to write a statement in favour of the African Continent which is plagued and weakened by famines, wars, violence, poverty, disease, oppression and other injustices. Below is the appeal of the missionaries.

daily occurrences and create situations of growing injustice and increasingly dramatic poverty, if compared with the rest of the world.

Many problems of underdevelopment seem to have become largely part of Africa's destiny: bad government, lack of the rule of law, conflict and violence in all its forms, low school attendance, high infant mortality, endemic diseases such as malaria and HIV / AIDS, resource squandering, poverty in which most of the population live and the plight of refugees and displaced persons.

However, Africa today has once again become a Continent coveted by major world powers and the multinationals. There is only one goal: to plunder systematically Africa's forests and natural resources such as oil, diamonds, uranium, gold, coltan, etc. with the endorsement of local authorities willing to sell out their Countries in return for personal, ethnic or party gains.

## APPEAL FOR AFRICA

**Fifth Meeting of the  
Comboni Missionaries'  
Bishops - Jerusalem,  
31.07.2011**

### With Africa in the heart

On the occasion of our meeting in

Jerusalem we the Comboni Missionaries' Bishops coming from Latin America (3) and Africa (9), the Father and the Mother General of the two Comboni Institutes, feel a strong need to launch an appeal in favour of Africa.

Africa, despite its potentials and the vastness of its natural resources, is still the Continent where war, violence, oppression, poverty and disease are

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Comboni Bishops and Superior General in Jerusalem



*War is a daily occurrence*

We have noticed recently, with a growing sense of dismay, a purposely ambiguous plan: the implementation of the so-called “model projects”, touted as a means to use the newly discovered resources to kick off a new development; these projects, in fact, while not contributing to the people’s benefit, increase their material, moral and social poverty.

One cannot be blind to what is happening now. Lies are widely used: the lack of information about what is happening in the mining and water supply industry is systematic. The contempt for the deteriorating situation of people who are living in these areas is disturbing. The expropriation of lands is carried out with violence and a sense of impunity especially at the expense of poor peasants. Numerous are the land conflicts and social strife, with frequent loss of lives. The disappearance of the values of solidarity for unrestrained, lawless and personal gain is relentless. Corruption at all levels is shockingly increasing, damaging and distorting people’s mentality. In short, the decline is not only social but ethical and moral: prostitution is worryingly on the rise, especially among young people; family life is weakened because of frequent cases of marriage infidelity due to easily accessible money; husbands leave their family commitments and their wives who are left struggling by themselves; there are conflicts among parents who resign their parental duties and responsibility of educating their children and so on.

Rather than fighting poverty, the newly acquired wealth has been openly

squandered, causing degradation and inequality. It is being used to buy weapons and fueling endless conflicts. Instead of being a blessing, wealth has unfortunately become a curse for most of the people.

Africa has, therefore, to be helped to start, at last, to use all these riches that belong to her for herself, her sons and daughters, after so many years of injustice and exploitation. With prophetic vigour we need to find again

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and propose to powerful people of this world the way that respects the human being and an economy that defends his/her dignity and freedom of self-determination.

In such a situation, we the bishops of the Comboni missionaries, heirs of Comboni’s tender love “for the poorest and most abandoned,” feel that the Church cannot keep silent, but must openly speak in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, who in this land of Palestine preached love for the underprivileged. The Church has also the right to ask herself and people: “Who owns Africa’s natural resources?” For us bishops there is no doubt that Africa’s natural resources belong to the peoples of Africa. The Church’s involvement is, therefore, a must. “Africa is already moving; and the Church is moving with her, offering her the light of the Gospel. The waters may be turbulent. But with our gaze on Christ the Lord we shall make it safely to the port of reconciliation, justice and peace.” (Final Message of the Second African Synod, n. 42).

While we wait with confidence the message of our shepherd, Pope Benedict XVI to Africa and the world, we make ours the appeal of Bishops at the Synod for Africa in October 2009,

***“To the great powers of this world, we plead: treat Africa with respect and dignity” (Id. n. 32)***

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*The suffering people of Darfur*

By Vladimir Hernandez - Para, Brazil

# *Forced labour clouds loom in* **Brazil's Amazon**

*Fr John Downey presents us, through a Brazilian correspondent, with a portrait of social conditions from where he himself worked from 2001 – 2006 in Northern Brazil*



*Jose recounts how they were watched all day by the guards.*

## **Business is booming in Maraba, a small town in the Brazilian Amazon.**

The region's cattle farming, charcoal and logging industries are attracting jobseekers from all over Brazil.

But the good times have not managed to dispel a social ill that has long plagued this region: slave labour.

In the state of Para, where Maraba is located, government officials say that over the past two years they have rescued more than 1,000 workers who were being held on farms or in charcoal camps against their will.

People being forced to work have been found in raids across Brazil but Para is where the government is focusing many of its efforts to stamp out slavery.

Officials from the Labour Ministry usually act after getting a tip-off, or if one of the enslaved workers manages

to escape and alert the authorities.

In most of the cases, the rescued workers are found in extremely poor sanitary conditions, and some have even suffered physical assault.

## **Horror stories**

In Maraba, the Catholic Church's Pastoral Land Commission (CPT) runs a centre to help workers who have recently been released in government raids.

Here, they are treated for any injuries and offered temporary accommodation before they try to make their way back to their homes.

During their stay, they are also able to tell their stories to the authorities who are trying to investigate what happened to them

"We were watched all day by security guards, who would not let us leave the farm," says Jose Nobre Ribeiro Mafra.

"They had us working all the time. We had no water or services. They never let us wash our clothes, which meant I could spend several weeks with the same dirty clothes," he adds.

"The only place I had to clean myself up was a pond where the cattle in the ranch would urinate and defecate," says Jose Pereira de Souza, another worker who is now being helped by the Pastoral Land Commission.

"Once I tried to complain, and the farm manager attacked me with a knife. I managed to avoid the blow, but then he hit me hard in the head. Not even the dogs on the farm were treated like this," he says.

The background of many of the rescued people is strikingly similar: rural worker, poor, desperate to make a living in one of the most deprived and unequal areas of Brazil.

## **Economic influence**

The sole mention of slave labour or human rights is a delicate matter in this part of Brazil.

Several land activists have been killed in recent years, as well as government officials who investigate allegations of abuse by ranchers.

One of the most high-profile cases was the murder in 2005 of Dorothy Stang, an American nun who spent decades in the Brazilian Amazon helping rural workers.

Jose Batista from the Pastoral Land Commission says that ranchers often exert their economic influence with powerful people to avoid investigations when allegations of slave labour are made.

The ranchers themselves say that slave labour "does not exist" in Para.

Jimmy de Senna Simpson, a Brazilian



*A charcoal burning factory*

farm owner with Scottish ancestors, is a director in the Rural Producers Syndicate, the landowners association in Para.

He receives us with a certain hostility as he blames the media “for misleading everyone about what happens here”.

However, after agreeing to talk to the BBC, he expands his views.

“Most of the allegations (about slave labour) are false. There are many who

make false claims in an attempt to get some money out of it. And the authorities often come, judge and sentence without checking the facts.”

For this rancher the allegations of slave labour are more related to misinterpretations and cultural differences.

“We are very humble people with archaic customs. If you go to a farm and find someone sleeping rough, on the

floor, or in a dirty shed, that can be something normal here.

“It is not right to call this slavery. Nobody is being mutilated or chained. Actually, conditions have improved in recent years,” he says.

In 2008, government figures show that 811 workers were rescued from slave-like conditions in Para. This dropped to 303 last year.

But so far this year, the Brazilian Labour Ministry has conducted raids on farms in at least nine states, freeing more than 200 workers. Half of them were found in Para which suggests this is an ongoing battle for the authorities.

Across Brazil, more than 3,000 workers were rescued last year in government raids, down from more than 5,000 in 2008.

Although this year the number of rescued workers is so far in the hundreds not thousands, it is too early to say if the situation is improving.

When President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva came into power eight years ago, he launched a national plan to eradicate slavery.

After two terms in office, President Lula’s policy has brought about the rescue of thousands of workers held against their will.

But slavery seems to be a social challenge that future presidents will still have to deal with.



*Comboni Press*

*For the workers here life is tough*

by Sr. Valeria Ruiz, Comboni missionary

# Spirit in the City

# 2011

**S**pirit in the city is an annual festival of faith held in the heart of London. For this sixth year, this event was hosted by the four Catholic churches in the West End - Our Lady of the Assumption & St. Gregory, Corpus Christi, Notre Dame de France and St. Patrick's, Soho. Once again, through a series of events in the churches and on the streets, we aimed at reaching out and taking our place in the heart of London in a unique way. The intention was to create opportunities to raise the deeper questions of life, to search for new ways to connect with God and others around us.

The festival began on Wednesday 22nd June with a unique opportunity to watch "The Jeweler" a play written by Pope John Paul II. On Thursday 23rd and Friday 24th, celebrations took place which included processions, prayer events, catechesis and evangelization in the streets. A specifically Catholic festival took place on Saturday 25th at Soho Square Garden with an entire afternoon of performances for the general public. These included Christian music, workshops, prayers and reconciliation services - out on the streets.

This year, we, Sisters Valeria and Marianna, were directly involved in this event as members of the organizing team, this gave us a great joy. It was encouraging to see several members of our community joining the festival as well as the PIME sisters and other members of our parish.

As our XIX Chapter Acts put it so joyfully: "We have seen the Lord" and we found in these words the



*Sr. Valeria (left) with friends*

conviction which builds our mission today, so that we wanted to be part of this since we know that the drive towards mission and evangelization gives us as Comboni Missionary Sisters our essential identity. It was an amazing experience for us, to celebrate and share our faith by our presence as part of the Catholic community and to be able to bring our faith directly into the busiest entertainment streets of the city. The Blessed Sacrament procession was a powerful moment of being witnesses of our faith as well as a moment of belief in the Body of Christ. We walked from Corpus Christi Parish towards Notre Dame de France, passing through Covent Garden Market, which is now a busy shopping mall with many boutiques and eating-places. It was impressive to watch the crowd looking at Jesus exposed in the monstrance as the priest carried it past. Many joined the procession, asking for prayers and healing, praising the Lord with a reverence I have never seen before. Finally,

during "evangelization in the streets", the encounter with native and foreign people, we became aware of how the process of evangelization is happening with us, around us and through us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

"Spirit in the City", looked at from our Comboni Spirituality, is a new missionary initiative which challenges us today as baptized people to be aware of what the Lord is asking of us, what he is doing in our personal lives, in our churches and in the wider world.

Jesus said: "Go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News to all creation". I believe that we are being invited in these days, by these words, to pledge our allegiance to the Lord in the context of a church which is losing its missionary strength. Initiatives like "evangelization in the streets"; talks, reflections and processions especially among young people help us to recover and to live deeply our missionary identity.

May we have the vision and courage to hoist the sails to capture the wind of our charisma and spirituality and to say with Saint Daniel Comboni our Founder: "I find an immense joy at being catholic and I can touch with my hands how infinitely good God is and how he never abandons those who put their trust in him". Let us entrust to the Lord this local church and its initiatives and pray that "Spirit in the City" will continue by his grace. May we feel ready to give a charismatic and prophetic response with witness, proclamation and dialogue through personal and community involvement.

from Independent Catholic News

# South Sudan:

## *Remembering Bishop Mazzolari “through thick and thin”*

Tributes have been paid to a bishop in what is now South Sudan who has died after leading his people through one of Africa's worst conflicts. Italian-born Bishop Cesare Mazzolari, who died on Saturday, 16 July, aged 74, was appointed to Rumbek diocese in the middle of Sudan's 21-year civil war, a conflict which left more than 2.5 million people dead and forced millions of others to flee their homes.

As Rumbek and the surrounding area came under ongoing aerial bombardment, Bishop Mazzolari, a Comboni missionary, risked his own life, at one point being kidnapped by rebel fighters for 24 hours.

Soon after becoming Apostolic Administrator for Rumbek in 1990, he re-opened mission centres devastated by war and helped organise humanitarian assistance for thousands of refugees as well as negotiating freedom for slaves and child soldiers.

Named Bishop of Rumbek in 1999, he continued to grapple with the effects of widespread violence and deprivation, which continued after the 2003-4 ceasefire period when thousands of refugees flooded in from Darfur.

Living long enough to see independence for South Sudan from the north earlier this month, he died apparently of a heart attack while concelebrating at a Mass in his diocese.

Paying tribute to Bishop Mazzolari, Bishop Eduardo HiiBORO Kassala of neighbouring Tambura-Yambio diocese recalled being one of his students in the 1980s in Yambio. In a message sent to Aid to the Church in Need, Bishop HiiBORO wrote: “Bishop Mazzolari carried us through thick and thin. He was a dear man – gracious, gentle and humble. His contribution towards an independent Republic of South Sudan cannot be questioned.”

Aid to the Church in Need also

received a communiqué from Rumbek diocese, in which priests, religious and faithful described being “shocked and deeply saddened” by the bishop's death. It reads: “His fatherly care and compassion, generosity and selflessness were sources of hope and comfort to all those he encountered. Over the years, we have been inspired by his dreams for the people of South Sudan.

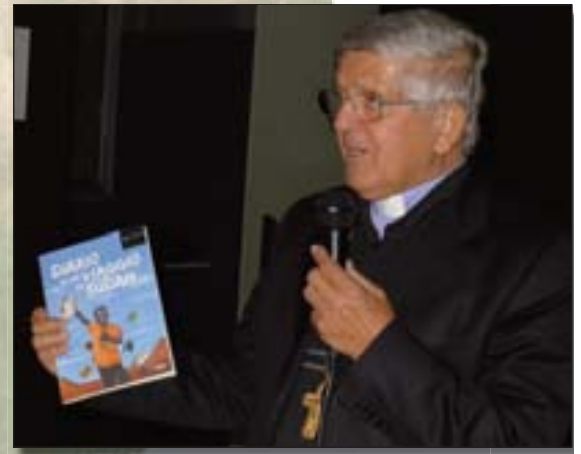
“His pastoral initiatives, his extraordinary administrative ability, his competence in leadership, his energy for fundraising and development, his simple life-style and humility, his tenacity and patience and his unwavering dedication to God.”

Regina Lynch, Aid to the Church in Need's director of projects, underlined the charity's long commitment to helping Bishop Mazzolari with the overwhelming pastoral needs of the diocese amid continuing crises. She said: “It took somebody with his courage and his energy to respond to a situation which was really very difficult, especially before the [2005] peace agreement [which officially ended the civil war. A lesser person would never have been able to manage it.”

Aid to the Church in Need's support for projects backed by Bishop Mazzolari included repairing churches bombed during the war, rebuilding a seminary school in Mapuordit which had been abandoned, funding a vehicle for the Healing the Healers counselling



*Bishop Mazzolari (centre) with a group of friends*



*Bishop Mazzolari*

programme for war trauma victims as well as Mass stipends for priests in Rumbek diocese.

The charity also funded aeroplane flights so the bishop could travel to distant parts of his enormous diocese where roads were very poor as well as constructing homes for religious Sisters starting afresh in parishes decimated by violence.

Born in Brescia on 9th February 1937, Cesare Mazzolari was ordained a priest in San Diego, USA, on 17th March 1962. He spent 19 years working among African-American and Mexican mine workers. In 1981, the Comboni Congregation sent him to Tambura-Yambio diocese where he worked in Nzara parish as a curate and became a sought-after Spiritual Director at St Joseph's Minor Seminary at Rimenze, Yambio. From there, he went to Juba to serve as Comboni Provincial of Southern Sudan for six years.

Pope John Paul II appointed him apostolic administrator of Rumbek in 1990, and he was consecrated bishop in January 1999.

Pope Benedict XVI sent a message of condolence, thanking God for Bishop Mazzolari's “lifelong dedication as a Comboni missionary and for his selfless service to the people of Africa”.

# Holy Father's Message for World Mission Day, October 23 2011

*“As the Father has sent me, so I send you”*  
(Jn 20:21)

## Renewing enthusiasm

Blessed John Paul II forcefully confirmed the necessity of renewing the commitment to bring the Gospel proclamation to all with “the enthusiasm of the very first Christians”. It is the most precious service that the Church can render to humanity living. Therefore that same invitation re-echoes every year in the celebration of World Mission Day: “Missionary activity renews the Church, revitalizes faith and Christian identity, and offers fresh enthusiasm and new incentive. Faith is strengthened when it is given to others! It is in commitment to the Church’s universal mission that the new evangelization of Christian peoples will find inspiration and support”.

## Go and proclaim

This objective is constantly renewed by the celebration of the liturgy, particularly by the celebration of the Eucharist, which always ends by proclaiming the risen Jesus’ command to the Apostles: “Go...” (Mt 28:19). All those who have met the risen Lord have felt the need to proclaim him to others, as did the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. After recognising the Lord in the breaking of bread, they “set out that instant and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven assembled” and told them what had happened to them on the road (Lk 24:33-34).

## To all

The beneficiaries of the Gospel proclamation are all peoples. The



*The Pope on a missionary journey to Africa.*

Church “is missionary by her very nature, since it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father”. This is “the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize”. Consequently, she can never withdraw into herself. She is rooted in particular places in order to go beyond them.

This task has not lost any of its urgency. We cannot be content when we consider that, after two thousand years, there are still peoples who do not know Christ and have not yet heard his Message of salvation.

Not only this: but there is an ever greater number of people who, although having received the

proclamation of the Gospel, have forgotten it or abandoned it and no longer associate with the Church.

Cultures are changing - a change that leads to a mentality and a life-style that disregard the gospel Message, as if God did not exist, and that exalt the search for well-being, easy money, a career and success as the aim of life, even to the detriment of moral values.

## The joint responsibility of all

The universal mission involves everyone, everything and always. The Gospel is not an exclusive possession of those who have received it, but it is a gift to be shared, good news to be passed on to others. And this gift-commitment is entrusted not only to some, but to all the baptised, who are



*Many still await the Good News of salvation.*

“a chosen race ... a holy nation, God’s own people” (1 Pt 2:9), in order that they may proclaim his marvellous works.

All activities are also involved in this. Mission Day is not an isolated moment in the year, but a precious occasion for pausing to reflect on whether and how we respond to the missionary vocation: an essential response for the life of the Church.

**World – Wide mission**

Mission is a complex process and includes various elements. Among these, in missionary animation particular attention has always been given to solidarity. It involves supporting institutions necessary for establishing and consolidating the Church through catechists, seminaries, priests; and also giving one’s own contribution to improve the living conditions of people in nations where poverty, malnutrition, above all infantile malnutrition, diseases, lack of health care services and education are most serious. This, too, is part of the Church’s mission.

“It is unacceptable”, the Servant of God Paul VI declared, “that in evangelization the themes of human promotion, justice, liberation from every form of oppression, obviously with respect for the autonomy of the political sphere, should be neglected.”

To ignore the temporal problems of humanity would be “to forget the lesson which comes to us from the Gospel concerning love of our neighbour who is suffering and in need”; it would be inconsistent with the behaviour of Jesus, who “went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness” (Mt 9:35).

*“May World Mission Day reawaken in each person the joy and desire to “go” out to meet humanity taking Christ to all. In his name I wholeheartedly impart my Apostolic Blessing, especially on those who toil and suffer most for the Gospel.”*

(Pope Benedict XVI)

Comboni Press



*A chosen race... a holy people.*

By kind permission of Hugh O'Shaughnessy – the Guardian



A version of this article appeared on the Guardian comment free section.

# Hugo Chavez,

## Venezuelan President,

### keeps the faith



*Hugo Chávez walks out of the plane after returning from Cuba where he had undergone surgery.*

It was a less ebullient Hugo Chávez than usual who addressed his compatriots from Havana, where he was recovering from a second major operation to remove a cancerous growth. He looked as though he'd had a brush with mortality and his message gave valuable clues to his attitudes to life and death.

After a reference to the works of the national hero Simón Bolívar, Chávez started his televised message saying that he had been inspired by words from the Book of Ecclesiastes about the

rhythms of time. The book's tone throughout is that one should fear God and beware of "vanities". Chávez dwelt on the lessons the book, many of whose verses are in common western usage, offered about the past and the future. Among these are: "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven; a time to be born and a time to die ..."

Later he went on to say how he called for help to "my lord Jesus, to the God of my fathers, as Bolívar would say, to the cloak of the Virgin, as my mother Elena would have said, to the spirits of the savannah" to deliver a message of hope. Having achieved that objective the Venezuelan president expressed his gratitude in the first instance to the Almighty. "Thank you, my God; thank you, my people; thank you, my life. To victory!"

The first deduction from such a speech couched in very oratorical terms must be that it does not indicate that Chávez is a particularly pious person. His invocations – which might be considered "churchy" or "preachy" in an Anglo-Saxon context – are nothing no more than common currency, in politics and in life, of a region of the world where, from Mexico to Patagonia and from Santo Domingo to São Paulo, the Catholic church has been strong for centuries and where the deity and the Virgin Mary (and her cloak) are familiar concepts.

Yet the Venezuelan leader's use of them is remarkable in one sense. When the US attempted to overthrow Chávez in a 2002 coup d'état, Wiki Leaks has revealed, it was supported by Cardinal Velasco, the then archbishop of

Caracas, in defiance of a request from Pope John Paul II that the Venezuelan bishops should not soil their hands with any link to the conspiracy. But this revelation has not moved Chávez to change the religious images in his discourse. When first elected to office 12 years ago he, as a social reformer, had had strained relations with the Catholic hierarchy, a body of generally conservative men who distrusted and opposed his activities and supported the status quo in an oil-rich country where half the population was below the breadline. And things were not helped by the frank, not to say coarse, language this former parachute colonel used about them.

At the same time he has constantly argued that his political strategies are of a piece with Christianity. "Our Bolivarian revolution is very Christian and I have a friend who isn't Christian, but lately has said he is a Christian in the social aspect: his name is Fidel Castro," Chávez said in Rome in May 2006 when he had a meeting with Benedict XVI. "I talk to [Castro] a lot about Christ each time we see each other, and he told me recently, 'Chávez, I'm Christian in the social sense.'"

The president's reference to "the spirits of the savannah" is also novel. Chávez's use of this phrase will convince some that the current rumours circulating in Caracas that he has cast his lot with the santeros, who worship the forces of nature and who are strong in Cuba, are accurate. The ghosts of earlier religions, conceived locally or imported from Africa with the slaves, are never far below the surface in Latin America.



# *In loving* **memory**

The names sent to us of  
all those who have died are  
entered in our

## **LIST OF THE DEAD**

They are placed on the Altar in  
our community Chapels and  
remain there during the month  
of November.

At each mass they are  
remembered that they may  
have eternal rest with the Lord,  
and that their families and  
friends, may be consoled in  
their loss.

Maccabees 12: 43 – 46II: “And  
making a gathering, he (Judas)  
sent twelve thousand drachms of  
silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to  
be offered for the sins of the  
dead, thinking well and  
religiously concerning the  
resurrection, (For if he had not  
hoped that they that were slain  
should rise again, it would have  
seemed useless and vain to pray  
for the dead) and because he  
considered that they who had  
fallen asleep with godliness, had  
great grace laid upon them.

It is therefore a holy and  
wholesome thought to pray for  
the dead, that they may be loosed  
from their sins.”

*St. Teresa of Avila  
interceding for  
the souls in Purgatory*

by Fr. J. Caramazza

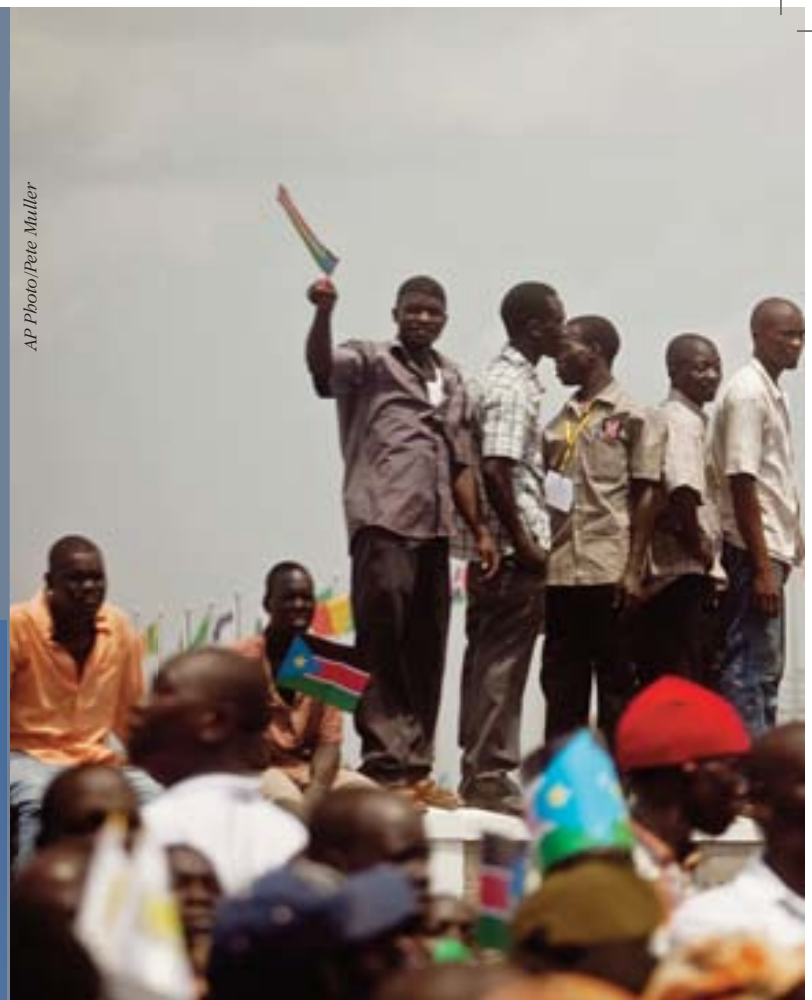
# A New SUDAN

Oh God, we praise and glorify you for your grace on South Sudan land of great abundance upholds us united in peace and harmony.

Oh motherland, we rise raising the flag with the guiding star and sing songs of freedom with joy for justice, liberty and prosperity shall for ever more reign.

Oh great patriots, let us stand up in silence and respect saluting our martyrs whose blood cemented our national foundation. We vow to protect our nation.

Oh God, bless South Sudan.



AP Photo/Pete Muller

Comboni Press

These are the words of the national anthem of South Sudan, which became independent on July 9th. After a long struggle, South Sudanese see the possibility to rebuild their lives in their own terms, no more afraid to be citizens in their own country. A celebration spoiled by the government of Khartoum's decision to inflame the hearts and prepare for war. Two of the main objections that can be raised today: the uncertainty about Abyei region and the continue genocide perpetrated in the north.

### The greed for oil

When North Sudanese forces seized and ransacked the disputed border town of Abyei in early June, it looked like the country would return to war. Though President Omar al-Bashir supported the referendum that led to South Sudan secession, he made it clear that his government would not recognise the new nation if Abyei was part of it. Abyei contains rich pastureland, water and and oil fields. The region has emotional, symbolic and strategic significance. A number of leading figures from the south's dominant party, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, come from the area. North Sudan depends for nearly 90% of its revenues on oil from the fields in the south. For both nations, losing Abyei could, potentially, lead to economic collapse.

### Proposed Peace Plan

In 2005, Bashir was cornered by international pressure into signing a Comprehensive Peace Pact. One must note that comprehensive hardly referred to the South. It certainly did not refer to the many other issues of violence and genocide engulfing Sudan. The war in Darfur continues – we should not forget that scores of Sudanese officials, among them Bashir, are sought by



the International Criminal Court accused of masterminding a genocide – as well as the ethnic cleansing of the Nuba mountains. And there are other marginalized areas where the government shows all its interest by the use of the machine gun on its own people.

### Genocide in the Nuba Mountains

Andudu Adam Elnail, Episcopal bishop of Kadugli, Nuba Mountains, wrote “Once again we are facing the nightmare of genocide of our people in a final attempt to erase our culture and society from the face of the earth. It is not a war between armies that is being fought in our land, but the utter destruction of our way of life and our history, as demonstrated by the genocide of our neighbours and



*Christianity has been a force in bringing peace to South Sudan.*

relatives in Darfur. This is a war of domination and eradication, at its core it is a war of terror by the government of Sudan against their people”.

President Bashir and his brothers in arms are fighting for their survival. They need unrestrained control over natural resources to hold on to power. Without bargaining chips they would not be able to garner enough international support to counter internal divisions. Yet, Northerners are tired of the dictatorial ways of Bashir. Cracks are emerging in Bashir’s inner circle.

South Sudan has a history of violence and oppression. It is also true that South Sudan has always found people who supported its struggle for self determination and identity. The Comboni Missionaries – editors of Southworld.net – are among them. They worked in the South since the very beginning, opening schools and health centres, offering spiritual and human development as well. Even during the darkest moment of its history, they remained at the side of the Southerners. This is why they were repeatedly expelled by the government of Khartoum.

It is no different today. There are still many who believe in the South, who believe in the Southerners. We all wish South Sudan and its people to see their newly found independence as an experience of peace and growth.

Long live South Sudan.



*The late Comboni Bishop Mazzolari with local people.*

Comboni Press



districts of social failure, destitution and crime. They are permanent targets for prejudice, discrimination, marginalization and bitter persecution. It is hard to put into words what it exactly means for them to be shunned, insulted, humiliated, ignored, intimidated, attacked and killed. One thing is sure: to dispossess these Indians of their land is tantamount to killing them. Without land, they become a people of destitute beggars, rogues and enslaved victims of alcoholism. Being totally disempowered, they experience severe cultural disintegration and live

own agency becomes utterly unquenchable. Against this background, a group of 20 indigos, young and old, consistently met and were trained in matters of health, culture, human rights, Brazilian and International Laws concerning Indigos, education, political organization and mobilization, information technology, self-esteem and indigenous theologies and spiritualities.

The Macuxi and Wapichana are deeply spiritual peoples, strongly believing in the creational powers of Mother Earth and are intimately attached to their ancestral dead. They too can boast of their many martyrs who sacrificed their lives defending their lands. The Diocese of Roraima through PIC has tried hard to become the Church of the Indigos, univocally defending their rights to their lands and encouraging the revitalization of their languages and cultures. It vehemently advocates Indigos self-determination.

In all, the talk clearly showed how vulnerable displaced Indios can skillfully articulate and with dignity harbour ambitions, expectations and ideals even under circumstances of extreme marginalization.

A lively Eucharist celebration followed with a splendid buffet afterwards. Fr. Anthony Wolstenholme concluded the day's meeting with afternoon benediction. A good time had been had by all in true Comboni style.

*John Clark, MCCJ.*

### Meeting of European Mass Media Directors in Germany

From 27 – 29 May the Comboni Missionaries responsible for the editing of our missionary magazines and hosting radio and website channels throughout Europe (London Province, Spain, Portugal, Germany and Poland) met in Ellwangen, Germany. Throughout the three days new techniques and current experiences were explored. We live in a highly technological and fast moving world of communications and one in which we should try to keep abreast of changes. It was decided to continue this interchange of support and updating as an annual event.

By Comboni Press



*Fr. Clark speaks about his work in Brazil.*

## GRAND OPEN DAY IN CARMYLE

Over eighty happy faces descended on St.Joaquim's Parish, Carmyle, from different parts of Western, Central and Northern Scotland on 25th June, 2011. Once again it was our annual gathering when relatives, friends and benefactors of the Verona Fathers, come together.

Fr. John Clark gave a power-point presentation entitled: CITY OUTCASTS. The talk was based on his five years of work with 30-40,000 displaced Macuxi and Wapichana Indians and PIC (Pastoral for Indians in the City) who live in Boa Vista, Capital of Roraima State, Brazil. Considered as rejects, garbage, sheer waste, they live in bairros branded as wild

in acute poverty. Their identity becomes fragmented like a "broken mirror" whose pieces will never offer a complete image again. Their experiences of being unwanted and unwelcomed deeply injure their self-esteem, self-respect and self-confidence.

On an extremely positive note, the speaker stressed how God helps those who help themselves. It is a given fact that everyone wants to take direct control of their lives and to better their lot. No-one wants to feel cut off and disabled. People have their own creativity and have to act for themselves. Especially where social exclusion is a hard fact of life, the ardent desire to participate, to give one's own opinions, to help decide, to make things happen through their

By Comboni Press



Participants at Ellwangen, Germany

## LEEDS

### Open Day celebrates Sudan Independence

Saturday, July 9, 2011 will be remembered when God's words came true to the people of the newest country in the world: the Historic Celebration of the Independence of the Republic of South Sudan.

After years of conflict and bloodshed and for many, martyrdom, freedom was proclaimed for South Sudan. Many of the friends of the Comboni Missionaries gathered in Horsforth, Leeds, coming from

places as far as Preston, York, Huddersfield and Leeds.

To enliven the liturgy of the day was an African group of musicians from Uganda and South Sudan journeying from London. They celebrated in true colourful African style this marvellous day in the history of the Church in Africa.

The key note address given by Sr. Maureen McBride Leader of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions, who together with many religious men and women responded to the initiative of the Sudanese Bishop's Conference in Juba to work towards

rebuilding the infrastructure mainly in areas of education, health care and pastoral administration. Centres, since 2009, have been built to accommodate new teachers and health workers along with local catechists to work for the new Sudan.

Fr. Panato in his homily said, "that July 9 was like a dream come true; to see this day dawning was for all the Comboni missionaries the fulfilment of many long years of struggle. It was to witness the fulfilment of the labours and perseverance of all missionaries always present amidst the people."



The choir in full swing at the mass

By Comboni Press



Sr. Maureen McBride speaks to the gathering.

By Fr. John Downey mcccj

# *The Amazon is weeping...*

# Fighting for a seat at the table...

## Violence in the city and country

Between city and country life there is little to choose from.

In three months in Sao Paulo – the industrial capital of Brazil with a population of 17 million - 3,000 people have been murdered (compared for instance with 3,000 deaths in Northern Ireland in 20 years...) There are between 60 – 70 murders each weekend. In the country since 1996, when 19 landless rural workers were killed in what has become known as the 'Eldorado dos Carajas Massacre'



Sr. Dorothy Stang

there have been 212 conflict-related killings in the state of Para alone; that's more than one murder a month in the last 15 years, not counting those committed in other Brazilian states. It is estimated that in the past 20 years 1,150 rural activists have been slain in land conflicts across Brazil. Murders mostly carried out by gunmen hired by loggers, and farmers to silence those who protest against illegal logging in the forest.

## Assassinated defending the forest

More recently (May 24, 2011) a further act of violence against the defenders of the Amazon forest occurred in the state of Para, North Brazil. Jose Claudio and Maria do Espirito Santo, his wife, were driving by motorbike to the town centre. Suddenly gunmen opened fire with a shotgun and a 38 calibre revolver while crossing a bridge.

The gunmen had concealed themselves in some undergrowth at the head of the bridge while waiting in ambush for the couple to pass. Both were killed instantaneously. The gunmen cut off one of Jose's ears and took it back to the instigators of the crime as evidence of deed done.

Both Jose and Maria were pioneers and engaged in the care of the forest against illegal violators and profiteers. Due to the high value of timber the reserve was constantly being invaded by farmers who sought to expand cattle ranching activities in the region. The sale of forest trees is a lucrative

internet)



Funeral of Sr. Dorothy Stang assassinated defending the land



*Illegal logging in Para - The forest victim of plunder*

business: a chestnut tree is currently worth US\$1,400 in the international market.

### **Mourning**

Hundreds of co-religionaries, friends and townspeople gathered at the home of the slain couple to pay their respects. Many spoke of the continuous threat to

their own lives and of great characters that had shed their blood for the sake of the poor peasants living in the Amazon countryside amongst whom were – Chico Mendes, Sr. Dorothy Stang, Fr. Ezequiel Ramin and many others. The struggle for the right to work and live on the land continues on Brazil.

*internet*

### **Chamber of Deputies**

When the news of the death of Jose and Maria was announced in the Brazilian parliament it was met by cheers and rejoicing by those parliamentarians who support crime and are the large landowners of the region. This illustrates the corruption and impunity of those in high places of Brazilian politics.

The Church's entity – the Pastoral Commission for the Land – reiterates the state's responsibility for this crime. It states that "People's lives and our natural environment become worth less if they are seen as obstacles to the much vaunted 'economic growth'. It is an idea that has been championed by successive federal governments, legislators of the National Congress who pass laws that promote environmental destruction, and by the judiciary who have proven to be extremely efficient in meeting the demands of the rural elite but far slower in trying the crimes committed against the rural workers and their allies. The violence feeds off this guarantee of impunity.

Paraphrasing the Gospel, we cannot be silent in the face of such barbarism, because if we stay silent, the forest will cry." (Lc.19, 40).

*internet*



*The rivers provide a necessary lifeline for the poor*

Mailbag

# You Write

**Letters from readers are most welcome  
but we regret we cannot publish them all.  
Some may be shortened due to lack of space.**

**You can also email us at:  
combonimission@eircom.net OR leeds@comboni.org.uk**

*Comboni Mission  
8 Clontarf Road  
DUBLIN 3  
IRELAND*



*St. Peter Claver College, Mirfield, Yorks.*

Dear Father,

Just to let you know how much I enjoy your magazine. One of my daughters brought it in and I remember how I used to receive it regularly. My two sons Simon and Christopher frequented the former Junior Seminary at Mirfield and we are always most grateful for the good all round education they received. My husband and I had nine children but now I am alone as he has since passed away.

I remember you in my prayers and ask for your prayers for our family.

May God bless you all.

*Mrs J. Tingle  
Birstall,  
Leeds*

Dear Fathers,

God bless and thank you so much for the uplifting magazine; it's lovely to hear all your news every quarter.

*Mrs. C. Barnes,  
Burton-on-Trent*

Dear Fr. John

I was very pleased to read Sr. Breda Noonan's 'Encounters' in the recent magazine. We were in the same class at school – St. Anne's Convent of the Ladies of Mary, in Surrey.

Please give her my best wishes and admiration of all the good work she has done.

*Marina Snell,  
Surrey*



*Sr Breda Noonan*

Dear Frs.

It is through your work in the world that the Church is as strong as it is today.

*Comboni Mission*  
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SCOTLAND



*Zimbabwe*

I have a close experience with Africa having worked in Zimbabwe as a midwife. My fiancé was also in Zimbabwe for 30 years and had to flee the country with his life after suffering torture. The Archbishop

who warned him of the impending danger was later murdered. Africa has always held a special place in my heart.

*Mary Eugene,  
Howley,  
Warrington.*



*Sudan*

Dear Comboni Fathers,

My husband and I thank you for continuing to send us 'Comboni Mission' magazine which we thoroughly enjoy. So many sad stories of all kinds of calamities yet through them all God's light still shines!

I am enclosing a donation for your Sudan projects. We would ask you to keep us in your prayers.

Assuring you of our prayers and our love.

*Anne & Joe Appleton,  
Failsworth, Manchester*

Dear Father,  
Many thanks for the information and moving magazine. The quality of the articles and layout is always first class. Many thanks to the Comboni Fathers as a blessing amongst us.

With love and prayers.

*Angelo & Alice,  
Leeds*

How delighted I was to receive 1st Prize in your missionary raffle. I am not usually that lucky!

Enclosed a little share of it to help you in your missionary work.

Thank you and may God bless you in all that you do.  
Sincerely

*Mrs. K.  
Nottingham*



*Don't Forget your Deceased Loved Ones  
in this Year's November Masses.*

*Why not have them remembered the whole year round, too!*

# The Holy Redeemer Perpetual Mass Guild

Holy Mass is celebrated every day for all members, living and dead. Quality Membership Certificates in full colour, mounted in beautiful folders, make an excellent gift, or a gesture of condolence, or simply a reminder of spiritual union with our missionaries. Certificates will, on request, be sent directly to those you wish to receive them.



Contact your mission office in Leeds (for England and Wales), Dublin (for Ireland), or Glasgow (for Scotland) and ask for details and application forms.

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