

# Emergency COVID-19 Appeal

## Caring for the Elderly Comboni Sisters

Dear friends, we all know how much the COVID-19 pandemic has affected people in many different ways. Our hearts and prayers are very much with those who suffered from the disease and lost members of their family. It was well publicised that the Lombardy region in northern Italy was the first in Europe to be severely affected by Covid-19. Regional Lombardy councils and hospitals were unable to keep up with the alarming speed of contagion and ensuing deaths. Our own community of Bergamo Sisters which consisted of 61 nuns, were affected by the Coronavirus. Most of them fell seriously ill and unfortunately we lost 15% of our Bergamo community.

The worldwide members of our Comboni Community united in providing personnel, practical assistance and support to the Sisters in Bergamo. A number of Comboni missionary doctors and nurses from the Middle East, Kenya and Zambia, made themselves available and travelled during the peak of the pandemic in order to replace the dwindling lay staff and helpers at the Bergamo home. From the moment the community in Bergamo was affected by Covid-19, the running and management costs increased tenfold. The Sisters have incurred enormous expenses to ensure the safety and protection for the Sisters and lay helpers. Substantial expenditure for external food management to replace staff absent because of the infection. The need for extra nursing/health staff to deal with the impact of the emergency, sanitation and disinfection of the rooms, coverage of funeral expenses, caused additional substantial outgoings.

All these extra expenses had a heavy impact on the budget of not only our Bergamo Community, but also another four Comboni Sisters Nursing homes extending to Verona and the Veneto region, where about 400 hundred elderly and sick sisters were being cared for. For this reason we are now launching this appeal in support of the elderly sick Comboni Sisters who have spent 40 or more years of their lives helping those in need, mainly in Africa and Middle East but also in their local community when needed..

We are grateful for the help you can give towards assuring the care of our elderly sisters. This will also, indirectly, facilitate the younger sisters to continue in the missions overseas among the poorest people and communities.

**On behalf of Sr Luigina Coccia, Superior General, our sincere and heartfelt THANK YOU for your generous donation. Please be assured of our prayers for you and your loved ones. Comboni Missionary Sisters UK with the Comboni Lay Missionary Community UK**