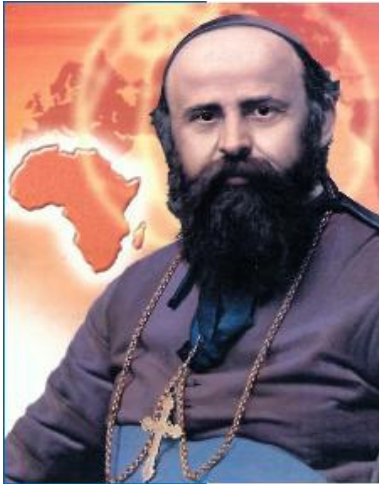


Lives
of
Saints

St Daniel Comboni

1831 - 1881

Feastday: 10th October



“The works of
God are born
at the foot of
the Cross.”

St Daniel Comboni



I was born in 1831 in Italy. Preparing for ordination as a secular priest, I studied not only theology but languages and medicine. I felt a special calling to preach the Gospel in Africa. I spent the first three years after my ordination in Italy, then, in 1857, I set out for Africa and worked for two years along the White Nile. Ill-health, however, obliged me to return to Italy. There I continued to lay plans for my work in Africa.

In 1867 I established in Verona, Italy, the Sons of the Sacred Heart, whose members were to devote themselves exclusively to the African mission. This institute later became a fully-fledged religious congregation of priests and brothers. Today it bears the name of the Combonian Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus, or the Verona Fathers. The Missionary Sisters of Verona were established some time later.

In 1872 I was consecrated bishop to head the Vicariate Apostolic of Central Africa. This was an immense missionary diocese embracing the Sudan, Nubia and territories south of Africa's great lakes.

I published a lot of scientific work, particularly on African geography and ethnology, I spoke six European languages, as well as Arabic and three African languages, compiled a dictionary of the Nubian language, appealed to Europe on behalf of Sudanese suffering because of a devastating famine and struggled against the slave trade.

I insisted that my missionaries, men and women alike, be specially trained to understand Black society and the perils of the mission lands. I wanted them to recognize the need of fully understanding the mentality of those who they worked with. Meanwhile, I cultivated the friendship of the African civil authorities, and worked effectively through them to end the widespread slave trade and its abuses. Many see me as a pioneer of superior methods of evangelization, working always to regenerate Africa through Africans.

I was canonized by Pope John Paul II on October 5, 2003.