



# The Holy See

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## *LETTER OF JOHN PAUL II*

### *ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF MONS. LUIGI GIUSSANI*

1. I was overwhelmed with emotion to learn the news of the death of dear Mons. Luigi Giussani, after a long period of illness that he accepted with a spirit of serene abandonment to the divine will and generous participation in the mystery of the Cross of Christ. His departure from this life is a cause of sorrow to his relatives, to the presbyterate of the Archdiocese of Milan, to the "Liberation and Communion" Movement which he founded and to a great many other people who esteemed and loved him as a zealous minister of God. I feel spiritually close to everyone with intense affection at this painful moment of leave-taking.

2. I had various opportunities to meet Mons. Luigi Giussani and to admire his ardent faith, which he expressed in a Christian witness that could inspire extensive and convinced acceptance of the Gospel message, especially among youth. I thank the Lord for the gift of his life, spent without reserve in consistently following his priestly vocation, in listening constantly to the needs of his contemporaries and in courageous service to the Church. His entire apostolic action could be summed up by the frank and decisive invitation to a personal encounter with Christ, which he knew how to present to those who approached him as a full and definitive response to the deepest expectations of the human heart.

3. Fr Giussani proposed the "company" of Christ to a multitude of young people, today adults, who regard him as their spiritual "father". Having set aside all prospects of an academic career, he devoted himself to the formation of students in need of landmarks and models in which to find inspiration. At the beginning of the 1960s he initiated his evangelizing activity, presenting the truth of the faith with an open, ongoing dialogue, with consistent docility to the Magisterium of the Church and, above all, with an exemplary witness of life. So it was that the "Communion and Liberation" Movement was born and with the passing years developed, thanks to the apostolic enthusiasm of this fervent Milanese priest who knew how to involve so many followers in a

passionate missionary programme.

Christ and the Church: here lies the synthesis of his life and his apostolate. Never separating one from the other, he spread around him true love for the Lord and for the various Popes who were personally acquainted with him. He was also deeply attached to his Diocese and to his Pastors.

4. Fr Giussani, an advocate of human reason, was deeply versed in literature and music and firmly convinced that the appreciation of art can lead to the Mystery. He was followed by the members of the Movement he founded, which has now spread to numerous countries across the world, and was listened to with respect even by people of different faiths and professional backgrounds. I like to remember him as a teacher of humanity and a champion of the piety engraved in the human heart.

5. As I raise fervent prayers of suffrage, which I entrust to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, for this faithful servant of the Gospel, I ask God to grant that all who knew and met him on their way, experiencing the marvels that the Lord worked in them through his witness, may follow faithfully in his footsteps and keep alive his charismatic insight. At this moment I am thinking with special affection of his spiritual sons, gathered in the *Fraternity of Communion and Liberation* and in the Lay Association "*Memores Domini*".

May Mary, gentle Mother of the Redeemer, watch over one and all. With this hope, I warmly send to Cardinal Dionigi Tettamanzi, Archbishop of Milan, to the Prelates and priests who are gathered there, to all who are mourning the death of beloved Mons. Giussani and to everyone present at his funeral, the comfort of my Apostolic Blessing.

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