



## Message upon the death of Pier Alberto Bertazzi

Dear Friends,

Today our very dear friend Pier Alberto Bertazzi went to join Fr. Giussani, who was a father to him, having introduced him since his boyhood to the unique experience of the relationship with Christ, to whom Pier Alberto gave himself totally, living as a *memor Domini* an affection for Him that was more powerful than any adverse circumstance. He said of himself, “Staying, in Sixty-Eight, was a matter of pure affection, because there was something that had come before us, and even at that moment it was more decisive than any other provocation, more fascinating than any other project, and more comforting than any company proposed as an alternative.”

Among the many things for which we can never be grateful enough is the gift of our name, which he gave us when he was not much more than twenty: “I remember that we wanted to talk about two things: liberation—in other words, the need we shared with everyone else—and communion, the thing that, in our experience, is capable of achieving it. Communion and liberation: the two things to hold dear.” Fr. Giussani was immediately enthused: “So there you have it, we are the name that the university students gave themselves,” he said in 1969.

His life communicates something crucial to us, something Pier Alberto expressed with these words in 2014: “The beginning in which we participate is for us the origin of a thing that is either true or it never began. The fact that the beginning is mine is not the product of the long career I may have had, even with some leadership position or responsibility. I participate in that beginning not because I was there—even if I was there too, friends; I was there!—This is not the reason that beginning is interesting for me; rather, it is so if it is something that is alive now, or rather, in some way if it is something that is born today for me.” What simplicity is needed to repeat Pier Alberto’s words. “If He is here, the important thing is that I strive to recognize Him, that I strive to follow Him. In the beginning you can fail to grasp that this is a necessary work. Then, however, it becomes indispensable that you be there, with the memory of His presence, which is not just the recollection of what happened to you in the beginning, but is also the fact of recognizing Him now! This is the point.”

At the end of August, Pier Alberto wanted to be present at the Fraternity Diaconia in La Thuile, even though the worsening of the disease had weakened him a great deal. Speaking in what would be his last contribution, he told us, “I believe that it is fundamental for us to keep in mind the method that God followed in our history. It is as if He took us as He did the Jewish people. The unquestionable nature of a method about which you feel full, you feel that nothing is lacking, you feel that it leads along the right road.” Thank you, Pier, for having been a friend to us up to this point! Calling us to conversion to the present event, reminding us of the road that the Spirit chose for us to lead us to Destiny, the Destiny that now you are finally seeing face to face.

Fr. Julián Carrón

Milan, September 15, 2021