



CONSOLATA MISSIONARIES

The Superior General

**COMMEMORATION OF THE DEAD OF THE INSTITUTE**

**15 NOVEMBER 2022**

**We are mortal and we are community!**

*“I thank you for the beautiful expressions of condolence for the death of our dear missionary. Certainly, the Institute has had a very serious loss, he was so necessary. But God's will be done. From Paradise for the affection, he had for the institute, he will continue to protect it, and he will implore many graces to fulfil its mission.”*  
(Allamano's response to the condolences of Father Gays for the death of Father Costa, 2 September 1918)

*“Being aware that our life ends is a reason to love it more: by accepting that life has a limit, we try to live it more intensely, more joyfully, loving and accepting to be loved, because even if short, life is a fragment of eternity”.* (Enzo Bianchi)

*“It is consoling and salutary, in praying for the dead, to meditate on Jesus' trust in his Father and thus to let oneself be enveloped by the serene light of this absolute abandonment of the Son to the will of his Abba. Jesus knows that the Father is always with him (Jn 8:29); that together they are one (Jn 10:30). He knows that his own death must be a baptism (Lk 12:50), that is, an immersion in the love of God”.*  
(Benedetto XVI, homily of November 5, 2007)

Very dear missionaries, family members, benefactors, friends;

As every year, we celebrate the memory of our departed ones. The events of our time, the deaths of so many of our missionaries, relatives and friends, recall the meaning of our life in the confrontation with death. We are all aware that no one is immortal. We remember it every time we attend the funeral of one of us. Death touches us all and accompanies us every day. We also learned this with the pandemic. And, once again, we need to work out its meaning, which is extremely difficult to be understood by ourselves.

The deceased are part of our family, common events unite us to all of them, made up of joys, hopes, pain, fragility, hardships... Up to the inevitable bottleneck of death, in a journey that unites everyone.

The occasion of the celebration and of the memory is propitious for reflecting and living a special communion with our deceased ones, remembering them in our prayer with affection and gratitude.

Even in faith in the resurrection and in the certainty that death is not the last word of God about our humanity, we must recognize that death is frightening, it is the obligatory passage towards full Life. A passage to be faced without escapes, with human and Christian realism! Card. Carlo Maria Martini, archbishop emeritus of Milan, ill with Parkinson's, gives us an example of this. "In the context of an imminent death", feeling "already arrived in the last waiting room, or the penultimate one", he confesses that he "complained to the Lord several times" about the need to die. Martini does not hide his inner struggle to get to accept that hard, dark and painful street: "I made peace with the thought of having to die when I realized that without death, we would never be able to make an act of full trust in God. In fact, in every demanding choice we always have emergency exits. Instead, death obliges us to trust God totally". Faced with the mystery of death, which requires "total trust", Martini concludes: "We want to be with Jesus and we express this desire of ours with our eyes closed, blindly, putting ourselves in everything in his hands.". In the face of death, the gift of the Christian faith appears richer, the only one capable of throwing a new and definitive light on the meaning of life, of God, of pain, of history ... A light that makes the difference.

Our days are not in our hands, to paraphrase a psalm, and this illuminates our life with a different meaning. Not all days are the same, we cannot always start over, we are both living and mortal, and this applies to everyone. Not everything is equivalent, revocable, controllable, death reminds us of this. And the celebration, the fraternal remembrance helps us to grasp its meaning, together. To remind us that no man is an island.

Jesus never promised that his friends would not die. For him the greatest good is not a long life, an infinite survival; the essential is not in not dying, but in already living a resurrected life. Eternity has already entered us long before it happens, it enters with the life of faith, whoever believes in Him has eternal life. The Lord teaches us to be more afraid of a wrong life than of death. To fear an empty and useless life more than the last frontier that we will pass by clinging tightly to the heart that will not let us fall.

Prayer for the dead is an act of authentic intercession, of love and charity for those who have reached the heavenly homeland; it is an act due to those who die because solidarity with him must not be interrupted but still lived as a communion of saints, that is, of poor men and women forgiven by God: it is the way par excellence to enter into the prayer of Jesus Christ: "Father, let no one be lost... that all may be one!".

We trust that the prayers and the celebration of the Eucharist, for the mystery of the communion of saints, can really benefit our deceased loved ones and hasten, if needed, their entry into the "Paradise" of God, where their tears will be dried and there will be no more mourning or suffering, but only true, full and definitive joy and peace.

Together with the whole Institute let us raise to the Lord the most beautiful prayer for our deceased ones: "*admit them to enjoy the light of your face*"!

Don Tonino Bello used to pray in this way to Mary Most Holy, thinking of death:

*“When the last hour comes for us too,  
and the sun will go out on the glimmers of the twilight,  
stand beside us so that we can face death.  
And an experience you had with Jesus,  
when the sun went out and it became very dark on the earth.  
Repeat this experience with us.  
Standing firm under our cross, watch over us in the hour of darkness,  
Infuse the sweetness of sleep in our tired soul.  
If you give us a hand, we will no longer be afraid of it...  
Indeed the last moment of our life  
we will experience it as the entrance into the cathedral of light  
at the end of a long pilgrimage, with a lighted torch.  
Once in the churchyard, after having extinguished it, we will lay down the torch.  
We will no longer need the light of faith, which has illuminated the way.  
By now it will be the splendours of the temple that will enlarge our pupils with happiness.”*

To each and every one: good and holy celebration, courage and forward in Domino!

  
Fr. Stefano Camerlengo, IMC  
Superior General

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