

Homily
Mass for VI anniversary of the death of Giussani
by Bishop Felipe Estevez, Auxiliary Bishop of Miami
St. Michael's Parish, Miami, USA
February 26, 2011

Seek first the Kingdom of God and the rest will be given to you abundantly. When you seek the Kingdom first, you live the present moment. You are not concerned- you are concerned but not worried- about tomorrow, about what is to come because you trust that the Kingdom matters and the Kingdom brings joy and peace.

A day like today six years ago, Father Giussani, a priest from Milan, Italy returned to the God of his hope, and all those who are members of the family of Father Giussani, friends of Father Giussani, many of you are gathered here in St. Michael's and I know that Father Marino is so happy that you are here today. The word of the God tells us right from the prophet Isaiah, from the beginning of our readings today that God will never forget you, God will always be there for you because God is a faithful God. I like to think of that faith in that God like a rock, pretty much along the lines of Hebrew 11:1, a magnificent text on faith. In Hebrew 11:1- and I particularly invite the children to come back to that reading- you see that the author of the letter says that faith is that certitude, that conviction, that deep conviction about the invisible, about what true reality is, and that reality is that you are loved, that you are loved in mercy, by an infinite lover, and that's what faith is about, it's to be assured that we are loved and therefore we believe and we hope in the destiny of that God; destiny which Father Giussani enjoys to the maximum, to the plenitude of his heart. I like to think about what Father Giussani said about this quality faith in a life, and he said, "The mystery of mercy remains the last word even on all the awful possibilities of history. For this reason, existence expresses itself as the ultimate ideal in begging." We are all familiar with the image of begging; it's part of our daily life. In the idea of begging, Giussani says: "the real protagonist of history is the beggar, Christ, who begs for our own hearts and our own hearts that beg for Christ."

You know, Father Giussani always had that quality of thinking faith, of thinking faith deeply, personally, internalized the faith of our catechism, the faith of our tradition. He was such an insightful articulator of that faith in expressing it in such a fresh and inviting way, and he says, "Christ is the beggar, who thirsts for our love, as we thirst for the love of Christ." And so he concludes later on saying- another quote of Father Giussani, "We need to become poorer, more poor, therefore certain of some great, great things" and ultimately those great things are the mystery of God's love, so present to us all.

Today, I would like to share what Giussani has meant most to me in that articulation of the faith in such an attractive manner. It is his friendship with Christ, the encounter with Christ, and friendship with Christ, Christ who comes to me. The many presences of Christ that come to our encounter are always that love that seeks the beloved, or the beloved that needs the lover. That encounter as simple as it may be in a sacrament, in a person, that encounter is unique and irrepeatable, and as Benedict XVI said, when he- a personal friend of Father Giussani- was elected Pope, in that first speech, he talked about how great is that encounter with Christ that our hearts are transformed by it and we become light for others. It's a transformative encounter meeting the Lord, meeting the Lord as the first disciples did, and as you and I know, many Catholics- you know they are glad that they are Catholics- but they don't have that enthusiasm for the faith received, and even less of a concern to spread it. That is why, the call for the new evangelization, which is to really learn anew our faith and to learn it with such an enthusiasm. Because of the vitality of this faith, we cannot help but share it with others- we are impelled to evangelize and share that good news, that experience of friendship with Christ with others. There are Catholics in our midst who see their faith as the way of less effort, kind of a minimal effort, and we need to invite our brothers and sisters to rediscover the treasure, the pearl that Christ is. When one discovers that pearl, one cannot but live to love Him and to share Him with others.

Today in this mass it is also for me to thank, to thank the Lord, Eucaristia, to thank the Lord for the movement of Communion and Liberation in our own archdiocese, which has blessed us in ways that were totally unexpected six years ago when it truly began flourishing here in Miami. Communion and Liberation is a movement that has a lot to offer, and has a unique contribution to offer to the life of the local church of Miami. I give thanks for the house of Memores Domini, this house of young men, consecrated to the Lord, who have given their lives for Christ, who thanks to the presence of Pepe Rodelgo's initiative has flourished in our midst. The School of Community for Priests that for two years, thanks to the effort of Dr. Jose Pedro Redondo, has taken place at our College Seminary. So many seminarians from all the dioceses of Florida, both at St. John Vianney and at St. Vincent de Paul have renewed their faith and thought anew their faith thanks to the School of Community. And the quality of the international program at St. Brendan High School, where students coming from Italy and Spain are welcomed by different homes here in the archdiocese; and the friendship that has developed between these families is certainly a program that we are very proud of. Last but not least, the presence in St. Michael's of Communion and Liberation and before at Visitation Parish, where Father Marino was pastor, in Visitation and there here in St. Michael where he is presently reigning [Laughter]. That openness of the parish to this movement is a great blessing to the parish and it is a great blessing to the movement. Particularly in its development in the United States, which as Father Marino has said to me so many, many times, it is in the parish, the context in which the movement is to flourish. So as you can see we are very, very proud of what has happened in these six years which began exactly on the day that Father Giussani was passing away in Milan, and we were here in Miami praying for him. We look forward to the day

when a High School, or an Elementary School, a school, will be led by Communion and Liberation and show in that way the richness of the pedagogy of the vision of Father Giussani in full gear, and I hope that those that will be educated in that school and their parents and families will realize what a gift this charism is for our present and our future in this new evangelization.

As we celebrate the Eucharist this evening, which is the sacrament of selfless love, the selfless love of Christ who loves us to the extreme, and the purpose of the Eucharist is to give us his life and to nourish us in the abundance of his love. This total self-giving of Christ is what attracts the world to become disciples; it is a love that has such quality, has such beauty that in a way others cannot but be attracted to follow the Lord.

Amen.