



BIOGRAPHICAL TIMELINE

1922 October 15: Luigi Giovanni Giussani was born in Desio (a small town in Brianza, north of Milan) to parents Angelina Gelosa and Beniamino Giussani.

1928 Begins elementary school.

1933 October 2: Enters the diocesan seminary of St. Peter Martyr in Seveso.

1937 Transfers to the seminary of Venegono.

1939 Forms a group with several seminarian friends, calling it “*Studium Christi*”.

1945 May 26: Is ordained a priest by Cardinal Ildefonso Schuster. He continues his license in Theology while teaching in the minor seminary of Seveso. In autumn, he began pastoral work in a parish on the outskirts of Milan, which he later had to give up due to a severe respiratory disease.

1946 Beginning of long periods of recovery, which last until 1949.

1950 Having regained his health, he returns to teaching in the seminary and spends weekends doing pastoral work in a parish in downtown Milan.

1951 Occasional meetings with high school students inspire a growing desire to dedicate his life to educating young people.

1954 Continues his doctorate in Theology with a thesis on *Reinhold Niebuhr's Understanding of the Christian Meaning of Man*. He begins teaching religion at the classical high school Liceo Berchet in Milan. In the following years, he began teaching in other area schools as well.

1955 He is appointed Diocesan Assistant to Gioventù Studentesca (GS), or “Student Youth” the pastoral outreach for high school students in the area.

1957 He involved all of GS in the Mission to the City initiated by Archbishop Montini. Guiding GS, he renewed its educational proposal. He also involved GS students in an education to charity which he called “Charitable Work,” volunteering in Bassa, an economically depressed neighborhood of Milan.

1958 A group forms around Giussani, the heart of which would later mature into the *Memoires Domini*, an association of consecrated lay faithful who live in community.

1960 Makes his first visit to Brazil, harbinger of the departure of the first “giessini” (GS students) who would travel to Brazil as missionaries.

1964 Begins teaching Introduction to Theology at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan.

1965 Spends the summer in the United States to study the formation of various groups within parishes. Upon his return to Italy, he leaves the leadership of GS, where the first signs emerge of the crisis that would reach its peak in 1968.

1967 Leaves his teaching post at Berchet high school.

1968 In the months marked by student protests throughout Italy, he laid the groundwork for a renewal of what became the CL Movement.

1969 The name “Communion and Liberation” appears for the first time.

1971 Oversees the founding of the Benedictine monastery at Cascinazza (outside Milan). Meets with the Archbishop of Krakow, Poland, Karol Wojtyła. Meets the Swiss theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar, and through whom meets Joseph Ratzinger.

1975 Begins a friendship with a group of Spanish families, who would begin the CL community in Spain. On Palm Sunday, March 23, participates in the pilgrimage initiated by Pope Paul VI along with the Movement. Meets with the Holy Father after the event.

1976 Participates in the Equipe of the Responsibles of CL University students (CLU), which would be a turning point in the history of the Movement.

1979 January 18: is received by John Paul II. March 31: Attends the first audience with John Paul II with the CLU students.

1981 The *Memoires Domini* is recognized by the bishop of Piacenza, Bishop Enrico Manfredini.

1982 February 11: The Pontifical Council for the Laity officially recognizes the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation, with Giussani as the founder and President for life.

1983 Is named a Monsignor by John Paul II.

1984 Leads the CL community in a pilgrimage to Rome for an audience with John Paul II marking the 30th anniversary of the Movement.

1985 Participates in a meeting in Avila, Spain, with the cultural association Nueva Tierra. Fr. Julián Carrón was one of the leaders of the association. In September, Nueva Tierra decides to combine and to follow CL, and they attend an audience with John Paul II with the priests of CL. Giussani also oversees the founding of the Priestly Fraternity of the Missionaries of St. Charles Borromeo.

1986 Makes a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

1987 Speaks at the Assembly of the Christian Democratic Party of Lombardy in Assago (Milan). Travels to Japan to meet a prominent Japanese Buddhist, Shobo Habukawa. Participates in the Synod of Bishops on the Laity as a member by papal appointment.

1988 The *Memoires Domini* are recognized by the Holy See as a Private Universal Ecclesial Association, with Giussani as the founder and president for life.

1990 Begins a path of discernment with a group of individuals that would become the Fraternity of St. Joseph, a lay consecrated community.

1991 Ends his time teaching at the Catholic University in Milan, having reached the mandatory retirement age.

1992 Leads a pilgrimage to Lourdes for the 10th anniversary of the Fraternity of CL.

1993 The Holy See recognizes the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Assumption, a branch of an order to which he was connected since 1958. Began directing the new “Books of the Christian Spirit” series published by Rizzoli, which would include over 80 books.

1995 Begins to public articles in secular newspapers in Italy, including *il Giornale*, *la Repubblica*, and *Corriere della Sera*. Receives the Catholic Culture prize from the School of Catholic Culture in Bassano del Grappa, in Veneto.

1997 Begins directing the musical collection “Spirto Gentil” through an agreement with Deutsche Grammophon and other record labels. The series began with a recording of Pergolesi’s *Stabat Mater* and would include 52 other works. English version of his book *The Religious Sense* is presented at the United Nations in New York.

1998 May 30: Gives an address in St. Peter’s Square during a John Paul II’s meeting with Ecclesial Movements and new communities.

2002 February 11: Receives a long letter signed by John Paul II on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Pontifical recognition of the Fraternity of CL.

2003 Signs an editorial letter of the news outlet TG2 RAI for the funeral of the members of the Italian military killed in the Nasirya bombing.

2004 For the 50th anniversary of the birth of the Movement, he sends his last letter to John Paul. Receives permission from the Archbishop of Madrid for Fr. Julián Carrón to move to Milan to collaborate with him in guiding CL. October: writes his last letter to the entire CL Movement on occasion of the pilgrimage to Loreto, which marked the 50th anniversary. Late December: his health begins to decline rapidly.

2005 February 22: Dies in his home in Milan. February 24: The funeral Mass is celebrated in Milan’s cathedral (the Duomo) by then Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, as the personal representative of Pope John Paul II. He also gives the homily. Giussani is buried in the Famedio section of Milan’s Monumentale Cemetery, reserved for the city’s accomplished citizens.

2008 His tomb is transferred to a separate chapel built for him in the same cemetery.

2012 February 22: At the end of the Mass celebrated in Milan’s Duomo on the seventh anniversary of the death of Fr. Giussani, President of the Fraternity of CL Fr. Julián Carrón announces that he has presented the request to open the Cause of Beatification and Canonization of Msgr. Giussani. The request was accepted by the Archbishop of Milan, Cardinal Angelo Scola.

**For me, everything took place
in the most total normality,
and only the things that
happened, while they were
happening, aroused wonder,
so clear it was that it was God
who was doing them by making
them the fabric of a history that
was happening to me
—and is happening to me—
in front of my eyes.**

Luigi Giussani