



SAINT JOHN — Bishop Christian Riesbeck, CC of the Diocese of Saint John (centre) celebrates a mass commemorating the 16th anniversary of the death of Communion and Liberation founder, Monsignor Luigi Giussani in the Virgin's Chapel in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Saint John. He is joined by Father John Roderick (left) and Father Aaron Knox. (Natasha Mazerolle photo)

Celebrating the life of CL founder, Monsignor Luigi Giussani

By NATASHA MAZEROLLE
Correspondent

SAINT JOHN — More than 20 people gathered in the Virgin's Chapel of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception (Immaculate Conception Parish) in Saint John on Friday, February 19 to celebrate the 16th anniversary of the death of Monsignor Luigi Giussani, servant of God and founder of the ecclesial movement Communion and Liberation (CL). The event also marked the 39th anniversary of the pontifical recognition of Communion and Liberation and was led by Bishop Christian Riesbeck, CC of the Diocese of Saint John..

Communion and Liberation began in the 1950s as a student movement (Gioventu Studentesca, or Student Youth) when, as a school teacher, Msgr. Giussani noticed that the faith so was so prevalent in the culture was not taking root in the hearts of young people. He insisted that in order to become relevant faith must be tested, and that Christ must be encountered and re-encountered

every day.

In a 2018 letter to (now) St. John Paul II, Msgr. Giussani wrote, "Not only did I never intent to 'found' anything, but I believe that the genius of the movement, whose birth I witnessed, was the perceived urgency to proclaim the need to return to the elementary aspects of Christianity. That is, passion for the Christian fact as such, in its original elements. That's it."

This language of encounter is at the heart of Bishop Riesbeck's ministry as well. "The encounter with Jesus is obviously dear to my heart because I come from a community of priests where the primacy of evangelization is very much on the forefront," the bishop said in his homily. "The communion with Christ is primary, and expresses itself in community with others, seeing the presences of God in our day-to-day existence. This is what gives us hope that we are not abandoned."

Bishop Riesbeck thanked members of CL for their presence in the diocese and affirmed them in continuing to follow what they have found in the method of Fr. Giussani. "That's

something that I see in the movement, the importance of first encountering Christ. Seeing him in our day-to-day and giving others to encounter him as well, especially through the example of our witness of our lives," he said. "I encourage you to all continue living this freedom in communion with the Lord and one another."

Communion and Liberation has over 60,000 members, with a presence in over 90 countries worldwide. It includes the Fraternity of CL — those who live their belonging to the Church within a communal dimension, following the charism of Fr. Giussani; *Memores Domini* — consecrated lay people; the Priestly Fraternity of St. Charles Borromeo, the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Assumption, and the Fraternity of St. Joseph. For more information visit www.clonline.org. For information on CL in Saint John, email jeff@maz-family.com.

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