

## SPIRITUAL TESTAMENT

Now it is all ended.

Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit.

These are the last words of Jesus on the Cross and I want them to be my last words, for this special moment when my life on earth comes to an end.

In my sleeping-waking moments I have visualised this scene. A coffin with my mortal remains for the Eucharist on the occasion of my return to my Father's house, to take the place He has prepared for me. It must not be a sad funeral but a moment of joy.

Let us be happy, it is my meeting with the Lord. Finally, I shall be able to see Him as He is, to contemplate Him for ever and to sing His praises.

Finally my Spirit is freed from the prison of this body, finally I have left my wheelchair; I can run in the green fields full of flowers and leap like a deer along the streams of water.

Free in my track suit and trainers. For so many years my legs have been immobile; now I can run as when I was a child in the countryside when I used to climb the trees.

Do not be sad, join in my prayer of praise and thanksgiving. Let us sing the Magnificat, and Mary will join us in our praise.

Thank You, Lord, for the gift of life.

Thank You for having made me Your son.

Thank You for having made me heir to Your reign.

Thank You for my parents, Pietro and Peppina, who have sacrificed their life for me, looking after all my needs. They have helped me to carry the Cross; they, too, said 'yes' to Your wish.

I will never cease thanking You, Lord, for having called me to You through the Cross, on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1968. A heavy cross for a young seventeen-year-old.

I rebelled, I did not know You, yet, Lord.

It is only because of my mother's acceptance of the cross, when the doctor suggested that my life should be ended, that I am here writing about what I remember, before my sight fails and I cannot write.

She embraced the Cross first, and took care of me so lovingly. She never left me for an instant, right up to the end.

Thank you, Mamma, we will continue to be together for ever, together with dad. Our Cross is the passport and key to enter Paradise.

Difficult years of suffering, solitude and desperation.

So much hate, swearing, tears; so many of my mother's prayers.

Ten long years of darkness without hope.

Everything was ended and then.

Your light, Lord, illuminated my way.

You have not abandoned me. You were within me, You were waiting only for me to be aware of Your presence.

You were like the fire under the ashes, ready to come alight in my life and to make me reborn in order to come out from the shadow of death which had formed inside me.

Good Friday, 1978. Father Aldo Modica came to my house with a group of people from the 'Rinnovamento dello Spirito'.

He began the prayer: Father Aldo put his hands on my head, invoked the Holy Spirit and suddenly there was a great warmth and tingling in all my body; it was as if new strength entered into me and something old went away.

I said 'yes' to You, I was born again to a new life. I am a new man. You have healed my spirit and this is worth much more than physical healing.

A feeling of great joy filled my heart, the fire in my heart began to burn away all that desperation and hate and all that was rotten inside me.

Finally I understood that You, Lord, had a project of love for my life and You wanted my collaboration, my 'yes'.

Here I am Lord, I am Yours, do with me what You will.

Immediately I felt a great desire to know You; the God who had been hidden within me calls me so that I may discover Him.

Then I felt a great thirst and wanted to read Your Word, for a whole long year. My thirst was so great, I was hungry for You and You, Lord, fed me with Your Word and quenched my thirst with the Water of Life.

Lord, You wanted me to become a witness for You and You gave me the gift of writing with my mouth in order to tell the world about You in my writings. So many letters, so many people in my house, so many journeys by car to give others the joy You have instilled in my heart, the wonders You have carried out in my life.

You, Lord, have changed my suffering into joy, all my life has become a continuous song of praise to You, because everything is a gift, everything is a grace. The Cross, too, is a gift, a precious gift for me and for others.

You have enabled me to meet so many important people. I will never forget the meeting with the Holy Father Pope John Paul II in 1988 for the centenary of Don Bosco, the Pope who made the sign of the Cross on my forehead.

The Rector Major of the Salesians, Don Egidio Vicanò, and Don Vecchi, Monsignor Angelo Comastri, Cardinal Sodano, Father Raniero Cantalamessa and so many priests and nuns, so many, many people.

I want also to remember my Bishops, Monsignor Nicolosi and Monsignor Malandrino, who have watched my spiritual growth during my suffering; so many students from the Seminary, who wanted to celebrate one of their first Masses in my house and also those from other dioceses who came to celebrate Mass in my room.

I will continue to pray from Heaven, that the Lord may send so many vocations and that those leaving the Seminary may become godly priests.

I thank You, Lord, for the good priests who have come to me and who have helped me to grow spiritually. Don Re, Father Attilio Albino, Camillian, whose red cross on his breast moved me so, the Cross of charity; each time he knelt by my bed and I asked for his blessing; Don Giardina, Don La Porta who helped me on my way to Consecration with the C.D.B. On 31<sup>st</sup> August 2004 I made my Perpetual Profession. I had desired this consecration for so many years and You, Lord, granted this wish, too.

I advise you, young people to live your life as Consecrated people, do not miss such a great grace;

if you feel inside you that the Lord is calling you, say 'yes' to Him and do not be afraid.

The world may delude you, Jesus will never delude you, He is your companion for life. Let His Love conquer you.

Thank You, Lord, for the people you placed near me, for those who have carried my Cross with me:

for so many years Enzo Giurdanella lent me his hands and feet and I lent him my eyes. So many other brothers and sisters who have helped me to carry the Cross: my brother-in-law Paolo and Rosa who embraced the Cross with me, who have seen to all my needs from when they were engaged. Paolo has never left me, he has taken me everywhere, taking care of me even in my most humble needs.

Jesus, You have served me and taken care of me through their presence, because I can see the expression of Your Love in them.

The joys of this life have been great but they have been marked also by great grief. The death of my nephew Piero, my first nephew; he returned to the Father's house when he was 28, leaving a great emptiness in the hearts of everyone. He, too, was marked by the Cross from when he was small; with simplicity and humility he lived out the true values of life, leaving a permanent memory in the hearts of so many friends. I feel Piero alive in my heart and I can hear his affectionate greeting: Ciao uncle Nino. Now we will be together again, Piero. My love for you.

I will never forget my nephews and nieces and the youngest niece, Simona, who gives me such joy and happiness with just the way she is; she is my social assistant.

Then there is my great warm-hearted friend Giorgio Criscione; he and Father Renato Carmelitano were my witnesses when I made my Perpetual Profession; then there is Enza Mazza, always present to keep me company.

I love them all, they all love me and I will continue my mission from Heaven. I will write to you from Paradise.

Do not leave me without doing anything. Prayer goes directly to God's heart, by means of the Immaculate Heart.

So much grace will come from Heaven.

The Virgin Mary has always been close to me and I see her in my mother, always ready, attentive to all my cries, ready to comfort me, to dry my tears, to heal my wounds.

I see Mary here, at the foot of my bed, as she was at the foot of the Cross, suffering for her invalid son, at the bedside to caress her own son who is sick.

Yes, Mother Mary, thank You because I am Your Jesus for You, and You, Mary, are my Mother. Be near me in the hour of my death and take me to Jesus.

In this so longed-for moment, my meeting with the Lord, my earthly life ends and Life begins, the real Life, which will never end.

So much suffering, in these last years. The sores which destroy me, the bronchitis which suffocates me. The Cross is becoming heavier and heavier.

With the great celebration on 6<sup>th</sup> May for the 33<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of my Cross, in the Church of S. Giovanni, when Monsignor Comastri, Bishop of Loreto, came, a period of my life ended and another period started, more painful but more fruitful. Since then I have not been able to celebrate the Anniversary of my Cross in church. My health, the sores and bronchitis have not allowed it.

My room has become my world. I have had to give up going to Mass, too. No more long walks, no more contact with people; inside, in bed, suffering as my companion. I have more time to meditate, to pray, to offer and at times even to cry.

So many times I have even felt as if God had abandoned me; I have become discouraged, I have shouted out: Where are You, God?

But You, Father, are always near me, You uphold me and give me strength and courage to rise again after my fall and to continue, with more ardour than before, the journey with Jesus and my Cross.

This Cross which I have taken up is like a faithful Spouse who never leaves me.

The Lord gives me strength in the Holy Eucharist every day. Giovanna Modica, my extraordinary minister of the Eucharist, brings me Jesus every day. The casket with the Host is placed on my heart and so my bed becomes the Altar, where my body is offered to the Lord day and night. When Jesus is placed on my heart, my body is transformed and becomes one and the same sacrifice with that of Jesus. As I take Communion, the fusion of Love between the Divine and man is even stronger and more complete.

Who am I, Lord, that you should have so much Love for me? You make me feel useful to so many brothers and sisters, even if I am in my bed. You enable me to move around the world, You make it possible for me to embrace the whole world even if my hands cannot move. You are my strength, my joy. You are everything for me.

You, Lord, give me great consolation in my suffering, You give me gifts to lessen the bitter Chalice of pain.

So many visits and two special ones. The Reliquary of Our Lady of Tears in Syracuse on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Weeping. I experienced the joy of having the Reliquary in my little room. Mary's Tears here, next to me, and an intimate dialogue with the Holy Mother. I have given all of myself to Mary, entrusting myself to her Love as a Mother, in order to make myself more and more as Our Father wishes, in order to go on saying 'yes', like the 'yes' She spoke to the Angel of the Annunciation and at the foot of the Cross. Her comfort and support never fail me.

Another special visit was that of the Reliquary of Saint Domenico Savio, on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Sanctification of my great little Saint to whom the Lord has entrusted me, so that I may imitate him in Holiness. On 6<sup>th</sup> May when I fell, it was his Saint's Day; ever since then he has been the Saint who has protected me. Death rather than sins. Having him here in my little room has been like a gift from the Lord, in order that I may go on accepting my Cross more and more and make it a Gift for others.

Every day at Holy Communion I offer my prayer, my suffering and my life for the needs of the holy Church. I offer all this always for the Pope, the Bishops, my Bishop, Priests, students at the Seminary, Missionaries, Vocations, all the Salesian Family and for all those who entrust themselves to my prayers. I will continue my Mission from Heaven.

Thank you, Lord, for having called me to You through suffering. Thank you for the faith You have in me, to help You in the Plan of Redemption for Souls.

I have tried to be a faithful servant, even if many times I have put You on one side. I ask Your forgiveness, Lord, if I have offended you. Sometimes my little faith has made me waver under the weight of the Cross. Forgive me if I have doubted when

the catarrh was choking me and when I feared I was dying. I said: My God, where are You?

You, God, have made it possible for me to overcome all the difficulties. When the attack passes, the joy returns even more than before. Your Light surrounds me and a smile comes back to my lips. Light shines in my eyes.

Have Mercy on me, Lord. Save my Soul.

I ask all my brothers and sisters for forgiveness, if on many occasions I have been lacking in charity, if I have offended someone without meaning to do so, if I have not known how to listen to their problems, if I have not been humble or charitable or if I have been indifferent. Forgive me from your heart and let there be no rancour, in order that no shadow remains in your heart and that we may be always in Communion with God and our brothers and sisters.

Believe me, it was worth suffering.

Beautiful things cost and the more beautiful they are, the more they cost: and what is there more beautiful than possessing Paradise, eternal Life?

The Suffering of this earth passes, the body goes back to Mother earth, goes back to being dust, the Spirit returns to its Creator and those Sublime Hands which created it, moulded it and gave it the Breath of Life.

The Spirit is free again and goes on to contemplate its Creator for ever.

There is no more suffering and pain. I no longer need anything, neither bed nor wheelchair, nor someone to push me. Now I am free, I can go and run where I will.

My story on earth is ending, but continues to live in your heart beside all those who have loved me.

Now I feel even more useful, because I help everyone with my Prayer, even if I cannot accompany this with my suffering, but with my Love for you.

Pray for me, that I may be worthy of standing before God. Sing songs of joy, because this is a festive day, a never-ending feast, because it is my meeting with the Lord.

My writings will go on being witness to me, so I will continue to give joy to others and speak about God's Great Love and about the wonders He carried out in my life.

All my life has been a continuous hymn of praise to God. I want to praise Him with my life, with my cross and with all myself.

Thank You, Lord, because You wanted to entrust this cross to me. If it had not been for that fall from the fourth floor, I would never have known all this grace You have granted me.

It has been an upward life of suffering. The door to enter the Kingdom of God is narrow and suffering is the way which leads to Salvation.

The cross is the key which opens the door to Paradise for us and I have had the strength and the joy, day after day, to climb the hill of Calvary to be crucified with Jesus, to die with Jesus on the Cross, and to have in my heart the certainty of the Resurrection and to live for ever.

Do not cry, be joyful in the Lord.

As Don Bosco said, I await you all in Paradise.

Alleluia, Jesus is the Lord.

Yours for ever, Nino Baglieri CDB.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nino Baglieri". The ink is dark and the writing is fluid, with a small mark above the 'i' in "Nino".

Consecrated Don Bosco