

**Homily at the Requiem for Johannes Römel,
Bonn March 22, 2024**

Readings: Romans 8:31b-35, 37-39 and Luke 24:13-35

Sisters and brothers, dear ones,

In the past few days full of grief, dejection and sadness, the lines of a Dutch psychiatrist and sensitive poet kept coming to mind:

*"So many types of grief,
I don't mention them.
Just one: Renunciation and Separation.
And cutting doesn't hurt so much,
But being cut off."*

M. Vasalis

"It's not the cutting that hurts so much, it's the being cut off."

I think that what we all feel deeply and what unites us so strongly cannot be expressed more accurately and succinctly.

You, the brothers and relatives, you, his friends, you, confreres from the General Council and from all over the world, we, the confreres of the Province of St. Clement and you, co-workers and partners in the mission, and all those who are otherwise with us were connected to him.

No longer that engaging smile, those sparkling eyes, those clear formulations, those sharp analyses, his humorous comments...

Father Johannes Römel was a man of the Way. He was also – literally – constantly on the Way, on the Road. His most treasured gospel pericope was the story of the disciples at Emmaus. Companion, guide, fellow searcher, mindfully researching: "This is the direction in which we must go ..." With an eye for everyone on the road, with attention for the hesitant, with an encouraging word for the weary, in the knowledge deep faith and trust: We do not walk alone, someone walks with us, the risen Lord...

Johannes was a man of reflection, carefully looking for ways to discern and understand the signs of the times, what the Holy Spirit wants to tell us now, and then trying to put this into action with care, but also with determination and purpose - too if he

was sometimes or by some people experienced as too hesitant.

Father Johannes was a spiritual man, a man of prayer and meditation. For many he was a spiritual leader, a beloved retreat leader, a man of words, music, visual language, in search of connection and depth. He was a man of God and at the same time a human being of flesh and blood with all his weaknesses and imperfections. That's why he was such a likeable and loved fellow human being, confrere, friend.

Johannes was a person of the future, of hope, of trust. That's why he has a great fondness for the Emmaus story. He loved images in art with Emmaus as a theme, he played with them in his meditations, his reflections...

And in view of all the turmoil of existence, he knew how to draw strength and confidence from this that our God, the God of Jesus Christ, always and unconditionally lives up to his name: I will be there! I am with you.

Father Johannes has completed his life's journey. Far too young by human standards... We feel orphaned...broken. "And we were hoping so..."

And despite all the pain in our hearts, we are also deeply grateful for his testimony of life, that we were allowed to travel with him, that he was our life companion.

He has reached his final destination...we believe that he has returned home to his Redeemer.

We will certainly miss him, but we also know him very close... we will continue to share and experience his spirit.

Johannes, à Dieu – Goodbye to God! Rest in peace. Be an advocate for us now and stand with us...

Jan Hafmans
Provincial St. Clemens