

Funeral of Guido Dumon – Friday 24.05.24

Luc Van den Brande

Dearest Bettie,

Dear Jan and Inge, Bart and Iris, Lennert, Elias and Fons, family and friends,

Today we gather around Guido, who throughout his life brought people together and gave everyone a place. When we spoke just over two months ago at the EPP Congress in Bucharest about the challenges facing Europe, expressing our mutual concern about the shift to the right in the political landscape, even within Christian democracy, and recalling anecdotes, I never imagined that our farewell would be so nearby.

He passed away at Pentecost, when the Spirit inspired the apostles and continues to do so repeatedly. This was certainly the case for Guido when we recall the images of his life. For his entire life was inspired, focused on those close to him as well as on the world.

Guido was steadfast in his faith, serving in his parish, where he felt fulfilled in being of service to his parish community. For him, faith without action had no meaning.

His education as a bachelor's in philosophy and in moral and religious sciences was the foundation of his thinking and actions.

A life of leadership, commitment, and service: as District Leader of KSA-Brabant, as National Delegate of KSA, VKSJ, and KSJ, and later as National Delegate of KWB and in the educational service. The development, training, and guidance of young people were immensely important to him. It was therefore no coincidence that he was for many years the highly respected chairman of the umbrella organization of free CLB centers (VCLB).

His transition to General Secretary of World Solidarity broadened his commitment and was the anchor point of his later significant roles as an advisor and subsequently as chief of staff to Reginald Moreels, a Christian Democrat with vision, with whom Guido formed a strong duo.

Europe and the world became his ports of call in so many places.

Skilled, inspired, involved, compassionate, ready for action, modest, always simple: this was how he passionately lived his life. He was my confidant when he assisted me in my work at the Council of Europe and later as my chief of staff when I was president of the European Committee of the Regions.

With nostalgia, I look back on the days—and sometimes nights—of discussions, reviewing notes, preparing speeches, where his expertise and sharp mind were invaluable, and he gave his best.

I still use his analyses and papers on the countries that are part of the Council of Europe today. At the Committee, he was a master mediator, finding a solution for every problem, placing great importance on building a team. Often very quickly but always well-founded.

Guido remained true to his convictions and had the courage of his beliefs, also in his social and political engagement. Principled but tolerant, with a great sense of justice. In the

European activities of the then ACW, in CD&V locally and regionally, and not least as Secretary-General of the European Seniors Union (ESU) where he was 'Mr. Hundred Thousand Volts' for the European EPP seniors. A convinced Christian Democrat on all fronts. But he was also a family man. Perpetually in love with his Bettie, proud of his children. He loved to talk endlessly about them.

I am grateful for the many beautiful moments I was privileged to share with him. Often incredible and unpredictable. It was not always serious; the twinkle in his eyes, sometimes the amicable contrarian provocation, his booming laugh. It felt good to be with him. He was a wonderful, warm person.

Guido, this farewell is difficult, hard to grasp.

You were generous, giving to help and serve others. They always came first.

And know that your life was one where the light stood high in the mast, so we will see it longer, and it will fade more slowly on the horizon.

Adieu, à Dieu, to God, dear friend, we will carry you forever in our hearts.