



Les Fils de la Charité
Région France

Jean Angenard
1918-2005

Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart... (Mt 11,28-29)

He was born on April 2, 1918 in Luitré in the Ile et Villaine department.. His parents were farmers and he had five brothers. He entered the Sons after three years of seminary in St-Brieuc; made his first religious profession on December 8, 1941 and was ordained a priest on March 29, 1943. He was then assigned as parish assistant at Bon Pasteur parish in Paris until 1949. Then he went to Villeneuve St-Georges until 1955, then at St-Jean Baptiste parish in Belleville (Paris) where he was chaplain of “la Vaillante” until 1959.

Those who you him in those days keep the memory of a man who made easy contacts, simple, affable, dynamic and gifted with the children and the youths in the ministry of these times: Summer “camps” and great “youth centers”.

In 1959 he was appointed pastor at St-Liboire parish in Le Mans, where he gave the best of himself. When he got there things were not easy, the construction of a new church had gone wrong. He was able to get things back on track very well thus deserving the trust of the Institute and of the diocese. He animated that parish in the spirit of Fr. Michonneau, whose assistant he had been, preparing with care the liturgies and homilies. He started and supported Catholic Action (A.C.C. - Christian Workers Movement and Y.C.W.-Young Christian Workers). His successor in St-Liboire says that he found there a very living and innovating parish; they had realized with the four parishes of the right shore a common financial management and taken in charge by lay persons. At the time, and even much later, it was not the usual practice.

In 1971, distancing himself from the Institute, he asked for an appointment in the diocese. Tiredness after twelve years at St-Liboire, a new appointment he has asked for and that never came, 1968 and the ideological period that followed and that also left its mark in the Institute, all that explains that he wanted to distance himself. Without cutting ties neither with the St-Liboire team nor with the Institute, since the superiors had sent in his new parish some seminarians who needed to rest. With the years he maintained and strengthened these ties, even taking part in the short retreats and revisions of life with the Ste-Therese team.

And so he was at Tulloch, a rural parish about a dozen kilometers from Le Mans (1972-1977), then at Bouillon, a fully booming town (1978-1993).

His origin and his character were rural and he was happy in these rural parishes where he did very good work. There, as before, he was a genuine pastor, kind and close to the people, simple, welcoming, helpful, listening a lot.

He leaves the memories of a man who dedicated himself very much so that the Church would go ahead, who called the laypersons to take their responsibilities. He gave his all to Catholic Action in the rural world: MRJC (Young Christians rural movement) and the CMR (Christians of the rural world). He was very appreciated by the diocesan priests with whom he readily formed a team and collaborated. He went on like that as parish assistant in a parish in the city of Le Mans: le Christ Sauveur, next to Ste-Thérèse parish (1993-2000).

He combined a character of fighter, of an efficient organizer, of a willful man, who knew where he wanted to go and took the means to get there... with a paradoxical discretion that startled more than one. In fact, he needed time to reflect at length and to mature decisions without haste. And it was not in his nature to occupy the first ranks. He preferred going unknown. He was afraid to bother. It was his character.

It is in that same state of mind that he lived his last years at St. Joseph where he arrived in 2000. That decision took him a long time. He had hesitations about coming back to the Paris region, far from the Sarthe, then he came “when he had to”.

In the house, he did not want to disturb, did not want to be a burden for the community, and did not want expensive health care, even less prolongation of life by medical means. These refusals to be cared for could at times make him grouchy. But he was ready to die and wanted to die slowly. He suffered because he was diminished, cut from the others by his deafness, he could not write anymore and could hardly read.

That did not keep him from being very mindful of his brothers, very kind to them, as he had been all his life. One of his past parish assistants recalls with what tact Jean had announced to him the death of his mother and how he had been very present at all the mournings of his family.

In St. Joseph he had that same attitude, worried about the health... of others, very attentive, fraternal and in also living solidarity.
He prayed a lot.

His first superior at the seminary said about him when he was 20 years old: “*He is not a very strong man, but he never complains*”. He could have said the same thing of his last days.

He had added in the words of those times: “*Simple soul, limpid and righteous who will lead the souls to God*”.

A few days ago he was taken to the hospital due to a weakness that sent him into a coma. He woke, but was disappointed to still be there.

The Lord heard him and Jean died in the night of Sunday to Monday, 16 to 17 of October at Corentin Celton hospital.

Regional Council of France

Translated by *Lorenzo Lortie fc*