

Paris, November 27, 2008



**Les Fils de la Charité
Région France**



Philippe GUÉROUT (1925-2008)

“I say thank you to everyone.
I ask forgiveness
to everyone.”
John Paul II

Philippe had made his own for his
death this last will of John Paul !!

Philippe was born on July 30, 1925 in Le Havre. His parents had five children. One of his brothers entered the Trappist monastery in Soligny of which he became the abbot. One his sisters older than him is a nun in Venasque. He had his schooling at St. Joseph College in Le Havre, and then entered the Grand Seminary of Rouen. He was twenty when he asked to be admitted with the Sons of Charity. We recognize some features of his personality in this letter to Fr. Bach: *“In thinking of me, do not count on a good recruit in any way: accompanied and helped, I think I could do something, but alone and with weak brothers, I think it would not be marvelous.”*

Later on as he was about to take his vows, he wrote: *“You surely want to know what attracted me to the Institute? These words of Father Anizan: ‘I do not know of a vocation that reproduces Our Lord as faithfully and completely as does ours’ have finally convinced me. I always felt that I was attracted to the poor and the disinherited, more than by the crowds because I don’t have much important human means!”* Then he adds: *“For how long? If it so pleases God, always! It is entirely and without reservation that I want to give myself to God. I’m not much of a gift to him and if I began to set conditions, there would not be much left.”*

Philippe took his first vows in 1946 and was ordained a priest on June 4, 1950 at Curé d’Ars parish in Kremlin-Bicêtre.

His appointments sent him at St Pierre des Corps for 7 years, then at Bègles for 10 years. In 1967 he goes to Escaudain where he will stay 15 years. Then to Auxerre from 1982 to 1987, La Rochelle until 1993 and Le Mans until 2002. Since that time he is one of the most active and welcoming members of St Joseph House in Issy where is totally unexpected departure has filled the house with sorrow.

During more than 50 years Philippe worked in towns that were away from the Paris urban area. The testimonies about those years all agree. Philippe was a good man who only listened to his heart. The reflection and work meetings to establish pastoral planning did not really interest him. On the other hand he liked to take his bike and go visit the isolated, the sick and the elderly persons; that was his life: crying with those in tears, happy with those who were joyful. And so he was very well liked and people would keep on talking about him a long time after he had left a parish. Two Sons who are a bit younger than him say that they owe him their vocation. One was supported by Philippe who was then in St Paul to found a boy scouts troop in St Bruno The other who was in Seminary in Tours had been approached by Philippe to help him out in summer camp. Both got up in the morning before the kids and did a half hour of mental prayer. That was decisive for him.

Philippe has been an educator for young people. He has always known how to educate them to their adult life, especially through the boy scouts movement for popular areas. Today many adults involved in citizen's movement owe him a lot.

Since he is at Issy Philippe surprises everyone. He is everywhere. At the students' support group, at the library to pick up CD's for Jean Marie whose sight is very bad, at the Neighborhood Committee, at the swimming pool (he is a very good swimmer), at meals or outings with the elderly persons of the city, visiting his "grandma" at the Lasserre Residence or his old pal doctor in Perreux. He is known by the members of the C.W.M. and of the French movement for help in the Third World. He answers calls to help with alphabetization or helps for confessions at Ste Lucie and St Etienne parishes and at St Nicolas College. Last surprise: on his desk the sermon he had prepared on his computer (of which he was an addict) for the feast of Christ the King that he was getting due to celebrate on Saturday November 22 in the chapel of the Corentin Celton hospital.

With the St Joseph he was happy to help his brothers, being at the entrance office, mailing letters for others, visiting those down with illnesses either in the house or the hospital, going with one or the other for a visit to the doctor. And he always did it with a smile; he was a brother pleasant to live with. One has also to underline his great faith and love for the Virgin Mary.

But his health was getting worse. A date had been set for heart surgery to put a new valve and other things. All had been very well explained to him. His last meal on Friday evening went on with the usual good humor. The following morning he was found dead in his bed.

He gave his body for medical research.

Regional Council of France

Translated by *Lorenzo Lortie f.c.*