



**Les Fils de la Charité
Région France**

Monday March 10, 2008

**Pierre Dubois
1938-2008**

“The worker-priest intuition was born in the encounter of a wish to share the Gospel and of the awareness that a people who is very close to us is deprived of the Good News of Jesus Christ.”

Pierre was born on April 27, 1938 at Is-sur-Till in the Côte d’Or department, in a worker’s family of the Ardennes. His father was a carpenter for the French national railways and a great do-it-yourselfer. He has an older brother and a younger sister. Pierre had inherited from his family his joviality, his sense of greeting people around a nice table where it is so nice to get together.

He studied at the Reims minor seminary, then after a year of grand seminary still in Reims, he asked to enter the Sons of Charity; he took his first vows in November 1962. He was ordained a priest on April 4 1965 at Charleville Mézières in the Ardennes. He was then assigned to the Sons’ team in Bègles.

Above all Pierre was a true pastor, a pedagogue, full of ideas that he knows how to share. He has a particular care to adapt the liturgy, the catechism, to make propositions that did not lack in daring. That is Bernard Deshoulières’ testimony, who was in the team with him for 12 years in the St-François rectory. And he adds: “When his parents come, the house does not lack atmosphere and his father would help in many ways, such as this day when he built a confessional and went to the hardware store and asked for a wire netting to *filter the sins*, he told the salesman.” Pierre was an excellent cook and he liked to invite and please people in doing so. Just before last Christmas, when he could hardly stand up and could not appreciate a good meal anymore, I saw him prepare a delicious capon for the priests of the Bègles sector.

In 1972 Pierre was looking for work as a cook; the beginnings were hard, a job here and a job there, until he got hired in the kitchens of CRAMA (an insurance company) where he will remain until his retirement. He became more and more competent, he got a diploma as a pastry cook (he did not like sweets) and became head cook. Of course he committed himself first in the General Confederation of Labor, then in a group for the protection of consumers, then a political involvement in the communist party. That is when he had many ties in the neighborhood and in the city with the elected members of the town; he even became a city councilor for a while. These commitments led him to become a member of the Christian Workers Movement. Marcel Annequin wrote to us: “I worked a lot with Pierre in the C.W.M. in Bordeaux. For years he was chaplain of that sector. Pierre with his riches of faith and heart, with his weaknesses also, has contributed like the disciples of the Gospel to make Jesus go “on the other shore”, that of the working class persons far from our Christian traditions.”

What happened with the Sons of Charity? As religious we are rather on the move. After 20 years in Bègles, the Sons Council proposed a change to Pierre in order “to renew your life as a worker-priest, to live with a team on a daily basis, to share your worker-priest experience in a new sector.” Pierre, certainly through faithfulness to his friends, refuses to leave. A new demand a few years later, a new refusal. The Sons, that is the Council, do not insist anymore. But that situation has created with the local pastoral team more or less easy relations according to events and to the character of one or the other. Fortunately things improved with the last team of Sons that left Bègles in 2001: better relationships, Pierre giving some help, sharing in the liturgical life where his homilies short but profound were appreciated and his allowing the team to come in touch with the militants of the area.

Pierre was very close to the worker-priests team of his sector or with the worker-priests Sons. He was regularly present at the Sons worker-priest workshop and also the workshop on political commitment. He was very close to Roland Claverie and in spite of his bad health had insisted on attending his funeral last year in St-Ouen.

In the building where he lived, he had good and simple ties with his neighbors, He enjoyed his apartment on the 14th floor, he kept his door opened, even when he was away (which brought a few thefts, but it did not care). The architect in charge of the renovation of the area came often to discuss with him. As to the youths of the neighborhood, they all knew him and liked him.

For a good while now Pierre was very sick, with a cancer of the pancreas. He went through chemotherapy with courage. Until the end he thought he overcome it. He went on with his meetings and his service to the parish and the nuns as well as he could. He was proud to have written, last October, the editorial of the bulletin of the Pastoral Sector of Bègles-Bercier. It bore the title “Renewal” mentioning the coming feasts of that period, September 8 with Mary, then Saint Vincent de Paul, little Teresa, Saint Francis, etc... and inviting the readers to “go directly to the poorest whose number is increasing nowadays and to find again our roots thanks to a life of Love shared with our Big Brother Christ.”

Pierre was surrounded by very close friends, the worker-priests, the CWM members, the diocese, especially Jean-Yves the pastor of the Bègles parish who often dressed him and fed him when he was unable to do so himself. He died during the afternoon of last Wednesday as his sister Françoise and his brother-in-law were arriving from Meurthe et Moselle. The following day, as he had given his body for medical research, the chaplain of the Bagatelle hospital organized a farewell celebration with the body present. His family and his closest friends were there.

For Regional Council of France, *Jacques Robbe fc*

Translated by *Lorenzo Lortie fc*