If you are suffering, whoever you are, come in, eat, sleep and regain hope. Here, you are loved.

The founding moment of Emmaus, in the story of Abbé Pierre himself and of other important figures in the history of Emmaus, was the day in 1949 when Abbé Pierre first met Georges Legay, the man who was to become the first Emmaus companion. In the eyes of history, in France and abroad, that founding moment was Abbé Pierre’s appeal for action on 3 January 1954. To begin with, the 1954 encounter with Georges Legay spurred both Abbé Pierre and his secretary Louise Cézard into action, procuring their resources to organise in them a good personal uplift, the same way that many of their situations were later to. Even after, Abbé Pierre would make upon the circumstantial and consequences of that encounter, writing about them clumsily. In terms of this, the historic 1954 appeal was more than just a request for aid triggered by the bitter winter and the night of 3 to 4 January, as the Légion d’honneur recipient for this situation to continue. “Let us love one another enough to do this without delay. Let one, two, three, thousands upon thousands of us, begin to make it impossible for this situation to continue...” Abbé Pierre

For several nights, Abbé Pierre was critical, so I joined the rough sleepers. She died clutching the eviction order used to turf her out onto the street the day before yesterday. On 3 January, the French nation. Thank you! Each and every one of us can help the homeless lives it had taken; it was an appeal to be applauded.”

The 60th anniversary of Abbé Pierre’s 1954 appeal is therefore an opportunity to commemorate each one of the decisive encounters and amazing transformations that have marked Emmaus’ history. About most of all, it is a chance to take hold of that experience and it to kick-start action all over again. More than ever, the “uprising of kindness” lives on.