



You are reckless and you are cowards if you claim to prefer charity to the fight for justice

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ABBÉ PIERRE

tam-tam: the Emmaus news wall

“You are reckless and you are cowards if you claim to prefer charity to the fight for justice”
Abbé Pierre



Editorial
By Patrick Atohoun, Chair of Emmaus International

The year 2017 will mark 10 years since the passing of Abbé Pierre. It was in order to keep his memory alive and raise the profile of Emmaus' work that the Jesolo World Assembly decided to launch a memory strategy designed around the struggles our founder waged. Perhaps more than anything else, to rediscover Abbé Pierre's archives is to take ownership of his struggles for peace, justice, solidarity and dignity, and

to realise just how relevant these struggles remain. These are not the struggles of the past. Through their work, Emmaus groups all over the world are taking up Abbé Pierre's baton in the struggles he began. We must revisit these struggles within each and every Emmaus group across the globe, since they must not remain the property of the Emmaus movement alone. It is our responsibility to carry them across our movement's

borders and bring them to a wider audience. We must prove by example that Emmaus' work can provide an answer or an alternative to the poverty and inequality which a single system imposes upon every region in which the movement is present. Indeed, this is the very purpose of the strategy which will be launched in November 2016 and whose success depends upon each and every one of you.



All aboard

→ Let's walk in the footsteps of Abbé Pierre!
A website will soon be made available to you to allow you to (re)discover the wealth and relevance of Abbé Pierre's struggles. You will also be invited to share an initiative from your group which follows in his footsteps. Let's make today's struggles visible in the run-up to the 10-year anniversary of Abbé Pierre's death!

→ Abbé Pierre in the theatre
«The Voice of the Voiceless», a play dedicated to Abbé Pierre's life and struggles, has had great success in Paris. Using this art form Nicolas Vitiello, the writer and an actor in this play, has displayed the modernity of Abbé Pierre's message and struggles.

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Emmaus international

Emmaus on the move

Throughout his life, Abbé Pierre fought tirelessly against the causes of poverty, campaigning for peace, justice, solidarity and dignity and working to realise his vision of an economy whose very purpose is to protect fundamental human rights.



Sabina Arnaut Jahic
Emmaus FIS (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

PEACE

“Help he whose suffering is greater than your own” is a principle which enables us to return meaning to the lives of those most excluded from society whilst fostering social cohesion. This bedrock of the Emmaus movement is thus a powerful first step towards peace. Given the tragedies currently unfolding, we must work to take this ideal beyond our communities, and to bring it alive across the globe. Emmaus FIS was created to assist refugees and displaced persons following the conflict which our country endured. Today, we continue to meet the basic needs of the most vulnerable. The peace march and the workshops which we organise every year bring together people from all over Europe. These initiatives are a way of building peace”.



Koudbi Koala
Emmaus Benebnooma (Burkina Faso)

JUSTICE

“Justice and democracy were at the very heart of Abbé Pierre's tirades. He had understood that these were the very cornerstones of peaceful coexistence, and that justice and solidarity went hand in hand. In Burkina Faso, many young people do not have the basics they need to survive. The Emmaus groups in the country strive to foster justice both through solidarity initiatives and by working in partnership with civil society to call the country's politicians to action. We believe that working in politics does not mean bullying your opponent into submission, but rather fighting to defend his most fundamental right. Civil society's commitment to ensuring the country's transition to democracy in 2015 proved that this belief is justified”.



Tania Schubert
Emmaus Igualdade (Brazil)

SOLIDARITY

“Throughout his life and through his struggles, Abbé Pierre was the very embodiment of solidarity. Emmaus is a movement based on solidarity and working for a more human world in which fraternity reigns supreme. In America, our group recently took part in an urban waste recycling project, funded by the solidarity initiatives of Emmaus groups. Another Emmaus group trained us in recycling and environmental protection. These projects have enabled us to improve our working conditions and release funds for further initiatives. Continuing our work will allow us to take up our rightful place as a link in the chain of solidarity which Abbé Pierre and the first companions began to assemble all those years ago”.



Moon Sharma
Emmaus TARA Projects (India)

DIGNITY

“From the very beginning, Abbé Pierre focused his work on allowing those excluded from society to restore their confidence and self-esteem, and turn the right to dignity into a political struggle. He was not afraid to challenge leaders when he saw that human rights were being violated, and he believed that every man and every woman should enjoy his or her fundamental rights: food, water, health, work, assistance in a foreign land and the freedom of movement. Our group espouses and fights to promote this philosophy. We believe that poverty is not simply a question of money, but also one of access to rights, social inclusion, self-esteem and the way a person is perceived by others”.



Maud Sarda
Label Emmaüs (France)

SHARING

“Abbé Pierre was always a fervent advocate of an economy which served humankind. At Emmaus, we give men a second life and objects a second chance. With the launch of the first online solidarity boutique, Label Emmaüs, we hope to prove that Emmaus values can adapt to the e-commerce world. Established as a cooperative company, Label Emmaüs will employ those making the transition from companion to Emmaus staff member, train companions in the use of digital technology, and re-invest its profits in solidarity projects. Through this economic and solidarity initiative, we wish to walk in Abbé Pierre's footsteps and bring many ‘consumers’ together”.

Next port of call... Villafranca (Italy)

Chair of Emmaus International from 1999 to 2007, Renzo Fior worked alongside Abbé Pierre for many years, and witnessed his final struggles first-hand.

How do you remember Abbé Pierre? What really left its mark on me were his simplicity and his ability to connect with everyone he met. He saw things through until the very end. When someone presented him with a problem, he wouldn't dismiss it with a diplomatic response, but instead would search for real solutions. He was also very humble, inquisitive and eager to learn, and wasn't afraid to seek advice. Towards the end of his life he was less involved; he wanted the movement to find its place without him.

How did he view the fight against poverty? Abbé Pierre had understood that poverty throughout the world was not an inevitable phenomenon, but rather the result of structures and political choices. He liked to find answers, but above all, he sought to understand the causes of poverty, and to tackle them. This link between action on the ground and political campaigning is crucial in understanding Abbé Pierre. Having lived through the war, he also knew that the fight against poverty was an international issue, and that eradicating the scourge depended upon achieving global peace.

What were his final struggles? In the first decade of the new millennium, he wrote a letter to George W. Bush upon the invasion of Iraq. He did so as he was acutely aware that



this was a war waged against the people. During my time as Chair, he also supported immigrants who were squatting in houses by spending a night with them in their dwellings. If he were still alive today, I think he would fight to promote interfaith dialogue, because he never would have accepted the killing of human beings in God's name.

What responsibilities must the movement now shoulder? Times may have changed, but Abbé Pierre's struggles remain relevant. Emmaus has a responsibility to continue these struggles, broaden their scope and raise their profile. We must also continue our efforts to raise awareness of poverty and ensure that responsibilities for combatting the scourge are properly shouldered – Abbé Pierre fought to do just that his entire life. Emmaus cannot simply stand aside and watch what happens; it must find solutions.