

Appendix 1: Overview of the study

Study Commission on the Abuses Committed by Abbé Pierre (CEVAP)

In July 2024, a report submitted by Groupe Egaé citing seven claims of sexual assault against Abbé Pierre was made public. In early September, in a second report, it became a matter concerning 24 victims. Meanwhile, four researchers who had worked for the Independent Commission on Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church (CIASE) stated that they had received three testimonies related to Abbé Pierre. The revelations gave rise to strong emotions and great indignation.

It is in this context that the principle of a socio-historical commission was adopted on 27 August 2024 during a joint meeting of the Emmaus International Executive Committee, the Emmaus France Board, and the Abbé Pierre Foundation.

The Commission, which was assembled by Céline Béraud, will endeavour to determine the scale of the sexual violence committed by Abbé Pierre since 1950 and understand the details of what happened. It will also seek to shed light on and analyse exactly how it was possible that more than 70 years went by before Abbé Pierre was held publicly accountable. Why weren't the victims able to speak or be heard? In what ways did the victims face having their painful experiences euphemised or silenced? How did Abbé Pierre himself build up his charisma to exercise power over his victims and ensure such a long period of impunity? These mechanisms must be identified within not only the Church and the Emmaus Movement, but also the other social contexts in which Abbé Pierre was an important figure respected for his efforts to help the poorest communities.

The Commission shall also, to the extent possible, determine how much information the Movement had about Abbé Pierre's behaviour at different periods in its history, what attitude people in positions of responsibility held towards this information, and whether the official bodies of the Movement were made aware of this behaviour and responded to it in a particular way.

The research

The Commission will endeavour to first compile a bibliography of what has been written about Abbé Pierre and reread those texts in light of what is known today. With that in mind, it will conduct a press review of articles published since the early 1950s.

The testimonies already shared will be collected. A request has been filed with CIASE. It has also been agreed that the Commission will, with the assent of the victims, have access to the full reports of the interviews conducted by Groupe Egaé during its listening work in 2024.

The Commission will also conduct field research through archival work and its own interviews.

The archival research will take place mainly at the National Archives of the World of Work in Roubaix, France, and the archives of the Catholic Church (French National Archives of the Church (CNAEF) in Issy-les-Moulineaux; diocesan archives of Grenoble, Versailles and Paris; and the Vatican archives).

Interviews will be conducted with victims, their family and friends, and witnesses. The Commission will thus be able to arrange interviews with those to whom it wishes to speak, including witnesses, experts, and Abbé Pierre's friends and family. It will mobilise the means necessary to place in context the testimonies it receives and try to pinpoint the potential factors that could have played a role in Abbé Pierre's behaviour.

And finally, part of the research will take place in North America, which Abbé Pierre visited on numerous occasions. Special attention will be paid to his trips to the United States in 1956 and Canada in 1963, during which serious misconduct occurred. This North American component of the research will be led by Martin Meunier, full professor at the School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies and research chair on Quebec, Canadian Francophonie and Cultural Changes at the University of Ottawa.

The research team and the scientific committee

From a disciplinary perspective, the makeup of the research team reflects the variety of investigative methods and analytical approaches that will be used.

Céline Béraud, sociologist, director of studies at EHESS, member of the Centre for Social Sciences of Religion (CéSor), president of the Commission.

Denis Pelletier, historian, director of studies at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (EPHE), member of the Group of Sociology of Religions and Secularism (GSRL).

Charles Mercier, historian, professor at the University of Bordeaux, member of the Laboratoire Cultures, Education, Sociétés (LACES).

Martin Meunier, full professor at the University of Ottawa (in charge of the research in North America). The team will also include a junior researcher, and it will be assisted by a research engineer.

The research team will be supported by a scientific committee:

Axelle Brodriez-Dolino, historian, director of research at the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), member of the Centre d'histoire sociale des mondes contemporains (CHS).

Karlijn Demasure, theologian, professor emerita at Saint Paul University in Ottawa.

Philippe Portier, political scientist, director of studies at the EPHE, member of the GSRL.

Marie-Jo Thiel, medical doctor and theologian, professor emerita of ethics and moral theology at the University of Strasbourg.

The scientific committee will meet at least four times in the course of its work. A **representative of Emmaus International** will attend the meetings.

Timetable and deliverables

- February 2025: start of the Commission's work
- September 2025: first progress report
- First six months of 2026: presentation at the World Assembly of Emmaus International on the latest work of the Commission
- September 2026: second progress report
- February 2027: submission of the Commission's conclusions to Emmaus International
- Second quarter of 2027: publication of the results of the Commission's work (form to be determined)