



Secrétariat - France : 49 rue Lamartine, 78000 Versailles, + 33 (0) 1 39 67 17 25, contact-fr@pse.org - Cambodge : contact-kh@pse.ngo - Site : www.pse.org

...there are few areas of the world where one witnesses so brilliantly the transformation from little ragamuffins into schoolchildren ... for a better, more fruitful life ...
(Mr James Morris, Executive Director of the UN World Food Programme, after his visit to FCS)

Christian (Papy) passed away on 24th September

His funeral took place in Phnom-Penh and Paris. In this special newsletter, some extracts of the Parisian ceremony.

From the President, J.M. Bouchard.

Don't worry Papy, we will carry on! Some 16,000 people: children, alumni, staff, officials and friends, came to Papy's funeral to show their respects. I was there, it was impressive.

He died at peace, at a time when the film "les Pépites" was being released and he was able to see the first edition of the photobook "les Pépites", when media interest was high, when we were celebrating the 20th anniversary of PSE's activity in Cambodia.

At peace, because, as he said in an interview he did for the press, he knew that the next generation was in situ, that the Cambodian team was in place, that Board of Directors, management team, network, sponsors, corporate patrons are all supportive and that what he had initiated and built with Mamie and with all of us, will continue with the same, or perhaps even more, enthusiasm, stimulated by his passing.

I said in the August newsletter, "we are celebrating and we are carrying on". I would like to say today: "take a break, Papy, you've deserved it, you have done so much for "our children", do not worry, we will carry on."

Together, and with Mamie, and I know I can count on you, we will continue with the same drive, the same focus to lift "our children" from destitution. We owe it to them; we owe it to him.

Thank you, Papy!

From Arlette, one of Christian's sisters:

My dear Christian, we are sad and we will miss you. Everyone will remember your love of endless discussions on all subjects: films, politics, music, morality, philosophy, religion ...

At home, we were always ready for your favourite phrase: "Let me explain ..." You loved dialectics, you could defend everything and its opposite with great conviction! You refused to be constrained by conventional thinking. This is how you developed your own ideas about the world, outside the norm.

You loved to transmit and to teach. You were delighted when one of your sisters wanted an explanation about a maths or physics problem. It was a little long, always ended in laughter. In the end, we had understood every-



thing! That was your pedagogic side.

You, an idealist dreamer, you who had been called "Penguin dreamer" in the scouts, you met Marie-France, the woman who complimented you perfectly, your "other half", as you called her. You were both intuitive, hyper sensitive, empathic and generous.

From Matthias, Christian's son in law:

Daddy, thank you for your life, for you, as you were!

Thank you that you weren't self-sufficient, but that you looked for Mamie and found her, your Marie-France and with her, your family, and a thousand and one adventures to undertake, and as many dreams to fulfil! Thank you for your spirit to let you be surprised by life, by others, and sometimes maybe by yourself.

Thank you that a quiet retirement was not going to be enough! Thank you for your madness, the madness of Mamie and you, to go

to the end of the world to "still do something useful" as you said. Thank you for your open heart, touchable by the "untouchables" of this earth. Thank you for your tears of anger and sadness in front of the children from the rubbish dump and their disoriented families! Thank you that those tears did not paralyse you but strengthened your determination to try the impossible!

Thank you that everything you saw, the suffering that you shared, didn't make you hard, but softened you instead. That you did not sink into a resigned pessimism, drained of energy!

I am, as are our sisters Genevieve, Helene, Alix and Aline, in awe of what you have built with Marie-France!

I still remember your departure, with great fanfare, for your first trip round the world with your lovely children. What a splendid lesson of life, what an openness to the world you offered to them!

What really touched me personally, was that you, who had suffered from the education of our time where demonstrating tenderness was prohibited, you decided to show your affection to all these children so badly treated. Despite their numbers, you showed them that they were unique.

And, as you said to Patrick when he left us, life is short so, see you soon my brother.

Farewell Christian.

Thank you that equality, fraternity and solidarity were not a motto posted at the entrance of your house, but were fundamental constituents of your heart wide open to all. Thank you that your faith in our God did not shut you in your church but instead made you respectful of other beliefs and convictions and even eager to meet with others.

Because of all that, perhaps, you could leave us in an immense peace and we believe and know you are in the tender arms of our God!

Yes, for all that, for you, Daddy, - as you were, thank you!

**From Fr. Vincent S n chal's
Sermon:**

Rarely in life do we meet exceptional people, people who make you better than you were before you met them.

People who help build your self-confidence.

People who care for you and go to look for you, even at night, when you are out wandering.

People who love you and make you feel how unique you are.

People who make you laugh, and give you joy, even during the most difficult situations.

People who want you to grow and progress, and for whom transmitting and inspiring others are the foundations of their own happiness.

People who want to cry and scream when they see your misfortune, who will wade through the mud and filth to join you and get you out.

People who dare smile at you and take you in their arms and forgive you while you are feeling shame for your failures.

People who give everything for love to the point of dying in simplicity. People who use their creativity to do good, whom we want to follow to the end of the world.

People whose bravery and faith are infectious.

People whose breath of life lifts you and makes you light, like air

lifts dead leaves towards the sky and make them dance with the birds.

The life of this kind of man or woman is a gem that is worth more than all the gold in the world.

When I first met you, Christian, I first saw a couple. The one you were forming with Marie-France, who was the answer to your prayers and to the challenge you had launched to the Lord.

I fondly remember your 50th wedding anniversary, in Phnom Penh. How beautiful it was to see both of you, sitting next to each other, surrounded by family and friends, to give thanks.

Your shared love, your dreams in common, have been the source of great things! In an extraordinary complementarity between you.

Another point on which you taught me a lot, dear Christian, is your capacity of incarnation. You and Marie-France became Cambodian citizens indeed! When you think about it! Papy as the children called you. You, Papy, you have become Cambodian! Not because you would have had your nose flattened ... But because you had a Cambodian heart! But more than a passport, it is the openness and trust towards the people of the countries where you lived that was remarkable.

This was already the case in the

Maghreb where you were happy to invite the locals to your table frequently.

This was the case at IBM, where you worked to ensure that African branches were managed by locals. And you have travelled in your campervan, tirelessly, to meet others, along with your children not only during those two unforgettable round-the-world trips but also during PSE annual tours in France and Europe.

And you made sure the PSE schools be directed by beautiful Khmer personalities. Your desire to be close to the Khmers even led you to ask to be cremated, because you wanted your Cambodian friends to be able to be associated to your departure. And even the Queen Mother herself came to pay homage to you.

Your openness to others, your curiosity of their customs, their way of life and their religion is an unforgettable model and your ability to make yourself close to those faraway greatly edified me.

And finally, let us speak of the rubbish dump. Your discovery, with Marie-France, of the dumpsite of Stung Meanchey, in Phnom Penh, was like discovering hell on earth. We will all keep in mind the image of you, walking in boots through the black, viscous mud, amid countless flies, to get in contact with these emaciated,

dirty children, unschooled and often abused. It was a descent into hell. You dived in to this human hell to release thousands of children and give them a future.

Two weeks ago, I contemplated at length that drawing of a PSE schoolboy placed near you: you could see an impassable valley separating two mountain plateaux. On the left-hand plateau were drawn violence, poverty, hunger, disease, death. On the right-hand plateau were drawn health, school, work, shops. And in the middle, the budding artist, who wanted to pay tribute to you, had drawn a stretched body from one plateau to the other, with feet touching the left-hand plateau and arms reaching out to the right-hand plateau, making a bridge from your body on which many children went to get education, health, a dignified life.

I must stop there, Christian.

Your extraordinary life was a wonderful gift to all of us, that I cannot limit to a few words.

Only God knows what he has in store for you. Surely joy, you who were already so joyful down here. With your clown like nose, producing smiles, adults' smiles, children's smiles.

Farewell, Christian.

You precede us and give us courage. Farewell, our friend.

From Marisa :

How can we translate into words the intense emotion we have felt during these last few days and what we feel today? How can we summarize in a few lines all the hard work, all the projects, ideas, discussions, laughter and tears, dreams that we shared with Christian and Marie-France?

Let's look at the countless messages thousands of young Cambodians, sent to Papy, thanking him and expressing great affection and admiration for this man who was for them a father, a friend, a teacher, a saviour, their hope and future, all that at the same time. Today, they are orphans and filled

with intense grief.

But ... they are not the only ones to feel orphaned. The energy, enthusiasm, inspiration, courage and the pursuit of justice of Papy and Mamie, overflowed frontiers. Christian leaves us all orphaned.

Christian believed in, and dreamed of, a better world. He believed and always said everyone must live their own dreams. That life without dreams is not a life.

He believed that once you have seen a child die crushed under garbage, your life was changed forever.

He believed that you could only find solutions by "listening" to the

children and respond directly to their needs.

He believed that letting a child feed on the rubbish dump, was "not worthy of mankind."

He believed that a mother must be able to feed her children, and not see them starve.

He believed that you had to take care of families, without them, the children could not escape.

He believed that education is the key to the future. Without education, Peace is not possible.

He believed that Love grows wings and creates solutions where there is only despair.

And he put his faith in the children. These scavengers who come to see him today, married, with good jobs with their own wonderful children, eyes full of joy and hope.

Today, together, we can say to you: Christian you can rest now. You can rest because we are an army who will continue to protect, heal and give hope to all children who suffer. You can trust us. Now it's our turn.

Thank you Christian, for all your dreams and for having let us share them with you.

Rest in Peace, next to your beloved children.
