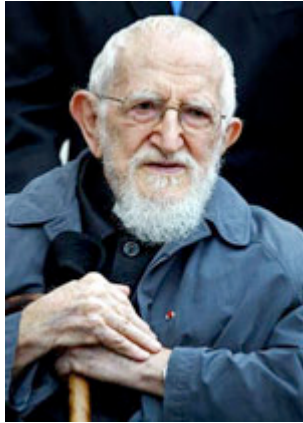


29<sup>th</sup> January 2007

# *The World*

## *Death of Abbé Pierre*



Abbé Pierre

Abbé Pierre died on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2007 at 5.25 am in Val-de-Grâce military hospital in Paris, aged 94 years old. He succumbed to a lung infection.

Abbé Pierre was known as Henri Antoin Grouès. He was born on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1912 in Lyon. In 1928, aged 16 years old, he made the decision to join a monastic order, but he had to wait until he was seventeen and a half to fulfill this ambition. In 1931, he renounced his inheritances and offered all his possessions to charities. He entered the monastery of Crest in 1932, where he lived for seven years. He was ordained a Roman Catholic priest and a curate in Grenoble in April 1939, only a few months before the invasion of Poland.

Abbé Pierre was elected deputy for Meurthe-et-Moselle department in both National Constituent Assemblies in 1945-1946, as an independent close to the Popular Republican Movement (MRP). Abbé Pierre became vice-president of the “world organisation” in 1947. In 1951, before the end of his

mandate, he returned to his first vocation: helping the homeless.

on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1949 he founded the Emmaus movement, which aims at helping poor and homeless people and refugees. He became famous during the extremely cold winter of 1954, in France, when homeless people were dying in the streets. On February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1954, he gave a well-remembered speech on Radio Luxembourg. His call for help ended up raising 500 million francs in donation, Charlie Chaplin gave 2 million. Abbé Pierre’s fight also contributed to a law in France which forbids evicting someone from their house or apartment in wintertime.

On the other hand, some conservatives have criticized his support to the ordination of women and married clergy. In 2005, he wrote a book that also supported parenting and adoption by homosexual marriage. He was also decried because he said that the best defense against world wide AIDS epidemic was fidelity in love.

Abbé Pierre was a good and generous man. He thought more of his neighbours than himself. He has held the hand out to the most penniless of us.

Brooke Davis