

Testimony of Isabelle Sepulchre (during the vigil on 25-09-2013)

(translation)

Dearest Claire,

A little more than two years ago, we left, my husband Marc Antoine, our daughter Claire and myself to Anandapuram, in order to participate in our first "Damien Workshop". Having met our group of nine, you had decided to advance your trip to India, scheduled that year for the months of September-October, and you made us the immense gift of your presence among us.

Before your arrival, the rain was missing, but the evening of the day you landed a generous storm broke. You told us it was a blessing. For us, the blessing, it was you, Claire, we have learned to know you better over these two weeks spent together.

Whether in the midst of Anandapuram residents, or during our joyful evenings in the company of your old friend, Mr Vedadri, you burst into laughter, referring to the years of your career, illustrated by old faded photos that we discovered in the glow of your hurricane lamp, we gradually have been able to imagine what was your daily life at Polambakkam. A life that had filled you in giving you – as you told us - what you dreamed of : a medical work in the villages, serving chronic patients that you could follow for many years, in this bitter struggle against the leprosy bacillus, that you have been able to reduce to almost nothing.

We have been impressed by all the visitors coming every day to the "round room" and whose presence told us, if need be, how much you were considered as a trustful and wise person by the Indian population in Kanchipuram and far beyond.

When you asked me, just one year ago, that I become "your regular doctor", you could not have made me happier ! In July 2012, for the first time in your long life, a bad fall in your bathroom made you suddenly move from the group of 'caretakers' into the group 'patients', probably one of the most difficult event to live for a doctor.

Somehow, I tried to be with you, gently, in this new phase of your life. Throughout my visits, I have been impressed by the liveliness of your mind, even if you were often feeling 'in the mist', by your great inner freedom, and especially by your ineradicable desire to stand up again to walk alone.

And when, for the last time, you have been kneeling down, you were already - did you know ? - in the arms of the One who came to meet you, this morning, in the Communion, He who has always been walking at your side and who has so much filled your house, that it was needless for you to name Him.

Yes ! By your life, all of humility and greatness, by your unforgettable work and your loving presence, you've made, dear Claire, our world more beautiful, and it is with joy that we allow ourselves away in your wake, confident that you will always remain our friend and our guide... In boldness and worship !