

From Fr Antoine SONDAG who died on 7 November 2020 - RIP

A Dieu

If you are watching this video, if you are listening to my voice, it will be because I have died.
I have had cancer and it seems that the treatment was unsuccessful.
At this moment, I am moved by three attitudes that can be summarised in three words.

The first word is thanks.

Thank you to all those whose paths I have crossed.

Thank you to all those who have helped me.

Thank you to all those whom I have met.

Thank you to all those who have allowed me to know that life is beautiful.

Thank you to those who have given me big things including life itself or little things like the small encounters that make up the charm of each day.

Life is a gift and we must be able to say "thank you"

Thank you to those who are unknown to me or remain anonymous, those who will not see this video and who do not know me but who have helped me at one time or another by giving me a hand or a smile.

Thank you above all to those whom I have forgotten to say thank you to and who will never know it.

We are often invited to say thank you. Thank you to whom? Thank you for what?

Thank you for being there, thank you for life.

And we Christians, we say thank you. We are often invited to say thank you and we even have a word for saying thank you : Eucharist.

My second attitude at this moment is to ask for forgiveness.

Forgiveness from those whom I have wounded, intentionally or unintentionally.

Forgiveness from those who have felt abandoned, hurt, or not having been taken into consideration.

To these people, and to others, I ask forgiveness. And even more so, forgiveness from those many people I could have helped, to whom I could have given a helping hand, but did not do so.

All those wounded at the side of the road whom we are invited to assist and, like so many others, I passed by without looking at them.

The third attitude at this time is hope.

Nothing deserves to last and not much will remain, nothing will remain of my life and yet, I have this conviction, this insight, this hope that this life is not in vain, that my life was not in vain, even if nothing of it remains.

Or perhaps yes, my name, my memory will remain in the memory of the One whom we call God.

Right now, I have no image or representation of that hope.

I am no longer worried about finding the right word, the right images, with the rigour of reasoning or the critical spirit that has inhabited me for so long.

But now we welcome, I welcome, the gratuity of what I would call, to use a clumsy word, survival.

I welcome, to use another clumsy word, the one whom we call God, that Jesus, who has helped us to get through life and who also helps us to go through death.

I welcome this gratuity, I welcome this gift.

And perhaps my death itself will have been that final, sublime Eucharist.

I close my eyes on this painful, dramatic yet magnificent world.