

## Seong-Hwa Ceremony for Gilles Piolat

by Jean-Paul Chaudy, Pastor for the Unification Community of Lyon

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*One of the last trip of Gilles, on August 16*

The newspaper headlines of last Wednesday told the story of a hiker who had been found dead on the path toward the summit of the mountain overlooking Poët-Laval. It turned out to be our brother Gilles, who had gone hiking, as usual, but this time he was alone. He climbed the path almost to the top, and there... he left his physical body and continued alone toward the spiritual world with the same enthusiasm as when he went for a walk with his family or his friends every day during the summer.

If everything seemed to be going well for Gilles, the situation was much more chaotic for Ichiko, his wife, because she had to deal with a totally unexpected situation. She had to take a deep breath and face up to this situation without faltering. First she had to announce the news to her six children and then struggle with tortuous paths of administrative paperwork and preparations for the Seong-Hwa ceremony. Fortunately her brother-in-law, Claude, came to the rescue with a few friends.



The ceremony of placing Gilles' body in the casket was done in the presence of his family in the little town of Beaurepaire where he was born 58 years ago. This was followed by the ascension ceremony with more than one hundred participants.



Ichiko opened the ceremony welcoming all those present. After the lecture of a peace message, Jean-François Moulinet gave a brief explanation on the signification of this ceremony. He insisted on the fact that this unexpected event invites us all to reflect on the value of everything we could experience with Gilles and, from a larger perspective, on the value of all of our relationships.

Everyone sang Gilles' two favourite songs, "Colchiques dans les Prés" (Autumn Crocuses in the Fields) and "The Song of the Garden". In one it is autumn crocuses blooming and in the second it is lilies.

A number of participants then offered testimonies about Gilles: Remy Taupier, his junior high school friend who played ping pong with him and was surprised upon returning to France from the global team, to see Gilles a member in the church centre; Brigitte Wada who worked with him in CARP; Isabelle, his eldest daughter, who commented on the slides on Gilles' life prepared by his children which reinforced Gilles' presence during the ceremony; one of his colleagues at the elementary school where he taught spoke about how Gilles was not so interested in meetings and administrative tasks but totally invested himself in caring for and educating the children in his class and how he always had something good to say about every student, even those with the lowest results or the least disciplined. These testimonies showed Gilles to be very courageous and persevering. He was loved and respected by all, very devoted, attentive and passionate. David Perry read several texts in English, in particular that from President Young-Shik AN and of Dieter SCHMIDT and Claus DUBICZ and the members of German CARP (The programme and the testimonies can be found attached).

Following Ichiko et her six children, everyone could light and offer an incense stick in front of Gilles' portrait and his coffin covered by the flag of the Family Federation. Guillaume, Gilles' son, then offered a musical tribute to his father playing a piece from Bach on his violin. Ichiko concluded the ceremony thanking everyone for their presence and in particular her brother-in-law Claude who had been so helpful in the previous days.



We then drove to Manthes, the village where Gilles grew up and the village of his parents and his ancestors. The family farm, now managed by Claude, has been in the family since the French revolution. A large crowd was waiting to welcome Gilles at the church. Being a teacher at the local school he was well-known and much appreciated. Bathed in bright sunlight 250 people placed flowers on Gilles' coffin and paid their

respects to Ichiko and the children. It was particularly moving to see the children of his class placing their red roses on his coffin. A last prayer, a last song and a heart-felt farewell to our brother who moved forward on the path toward heaven.

After the ceremony in the cemetery, the extended family and some friends were invited to Claude's farm for a time of sharing food, drink and memories of Gilles.

## Seonghwa Ceremony for Gilles Piolat

Beaurepaire, France – Friday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2013

Message from European FFWPU President, Rev. Young Shik An

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Dear Gilles, as the representative of our Founders, Father and Mother Moon, here in Europe I want to express their deep appreciation to you, Ichiko and your family for your many years of dedication to God and attendance to the providence to liberate God by loving humanity.

Your life was completely transformed by God through meeting the teachings and example of our True Parents and by their blessing you in marriage with Ichiko. Your wonderful six children have expanded your international family as an example of that noble love for God and desire for world peace which proceeds from the International Marriage Blessing Ceremonies.

You have practiced the precious teaching of living for God and others from your time working with CARP in Europe to your teaching role in your hometown. I am sure that your wife, children and relatives are very proud of you as you peacefully ascend to the next stage of life.

This is a time of joy in which to celebrate your earthly life, because it is a joy to leave behind a legacy of serving God and of contributing so sincerely to the establishment of a world destined to become 'One Family under God'.

As our True Parents teach us:

*When we are bound together in true love, we can be together forever, continually rejoicing in each other's company. The attraction of true love brings all things in the universe to our feet; even God will come to dwell with us. ... A life lived for the sake of others, a life of true love, is the absolute prerequisite for entering the kingdom of heaven.*

Thank you, dear Gilles – I have no doubt that you will continue to be connected in heart with your beloved family and Church community as you watch over us from the next world.

May God speed you on your way to His Kingdom, Cheon Il Guk.