

**In Memoriam**  
**Father Jean-Yves Calvez SJ**  
3 February 1927 – 11 January 2010



**Social Weeks of France pay homage to Father Jean-Yves Calvez**

In the name of Social Weeks in France, the renewal of which was inspired by Jean-Yves Calvez, along with Jean Gelamur and Jean Boissonnat, and mindful of the many testimonies that have been arriving since news of his passing reached us, I wish to commemorate him in this place, for his Jesuit companions and other people close to him, knowing that his thoughts and his stature as a believing man will continue to guide us, especially in the difficult times we are now experiencing.

**Justice and charity**

In these days, with the risk of confusion for Christians between justice and charity, due to the great value placed on interiority and individual initiative, Jean-Yves Calvez draws a clear line for us. Social justice, as a form of social organisation and public life that seeks to apportion wealth equitably and provide access to what is essential for human development to everyone, is an inescapable demand that cannot be neglected by Christians. It is evident that there will always be a need to go beyond what is prescribed by law and justice.

Charity is what urges Christians to want a just society above all. As an untiring seeker for justice, Jean-Yves Calvez was in this sense a modern prophet, and precisely in the name of that justice he waged his fiercest battles against the idea that inequalities are a necessary condition for the extension of freedom. In keeping with this conviction, the last "Social Weeks" held in Villepinte have reasserted the importance that Christians give to universal social protection based on law, and have decried the way that resources for such protection, under the pretext of modernisation, are being reduced, with the risk that life will become even more difficult for those who are the most vulnerable.

### **Confidence in humanity**

In these times when the collective will for the common good *seems* to have become paralysed, when corruption *seems* to dominate those countries whose leaders were placed in power precisely to counter injustice, when the laws and regulations established over the years to protect the weak from abuse of power *seem* to have become irrelevant, when public opinion (much better informed than before about its responsibilities) *seems* reluctant to assume the consequences in a democratic way, Jean-Yves Calvez teaches us to look beyond these appearances and manifest our confidence in human beings, in their capacity to give a human form to their destiny and their ability to transform interdependencies into deliberate solidarity. This confidence is not naive, but a confidence born of profound understanding and observation of reality, an understanding and observation nourished by dialogue and enlivened by Hope in the Risen Christ.

### **Strength**

Finally, I would like to honour Jean-Yves Calvez's strength.

Paul Ricoeur claims that moral strength does not consist only in a person's willingness to make commitments and take responsibility. It is also a matter of being combative and exigent toward the human community we are part of. Jean-Yves Calvez was a fighter. He fought not only against his opponents, but also against our conformism, our apathy and our illusions. He was an alarming "redistributor of lines," even within the Catholic Church, but he did it his own way, that is, with a humility that left us confounded, with a wisdom and a spirit of truth that left us disarmed, always with that smile of his that betrayed the child and youth that he was. Thus was he able to shake us out of our immobility. Christ's call to put out into deep water was expressed through him. "If nothing moves in our lives," he said only recently in this same church, "this means there is something amiss." Dear Father Calvez, we will keep on going.

Jérôme Mignon  
France

*Original French*