LAURE BAGROS 1981-1996



*Laure died of leukemia after a long struggle to survive. Her edifying spiritual evolution is described here by those who lived closest to her. This picture was taken a few months before she died.*

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*Extracts of her mother's account as requested by a Christian magazine in France.*

"A sparkling, lively and strong-willed little girl, Laure was born to our family whom she loved so much, and she was growing up beaming with humor and happiness... when her life took an abrupt turn on 30th September 1993 (which was also Therese of Lisieux's death anniversary), as we were told she was developing leukemia.

After several long months of chemotherapy, she seemed rescued and was able to go back to school. Her long blond head of hair, which had been her pride, was growing again, yet much darker and curly. We marvelled at her courage.

However, the terrible news struck again in the summer of 1995: Laure was relapsing. She screamed her revolt, cried over her recovery and calmed down with these words: *"Mother, with your help I will manage."*  Another nine months of struggle until we had to face reality: nothing more could be done after the marrow transplant had proved at long length inefficient. Laure spent her last months on earth in total relaxation and confidence in Jesus. She said*."So many people think of me and pray for me!"*

*"She passed over to Life on the day of the Annunciation [1996]. She is now Mary's beloved little girl"* her best friend remarked. Laure had asked us to open her private diary on the day of her death. Reading it we grew aware how close to Therese of Lisieux our daughter had become. We discovered Laure's missionary spirit:

*"If I recover, my mission on earth will be of importance, but if my mission is in heaven, it will be yet different." "I am going to regret life on earth, but I won't any more in heaven"*  Her humility, too, was striking: *"I have never had any diploma, nor have I only once had a chance to feel proud of any achievement before the others. Maybe in heaven I will experience something great, but without pride."*

What has she left behind? Her great love for her family and the assurance of her everlasting happiness as well as of the help she was going to give us... a help that we can already start experiencing."

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*Extracts of her father's letter to me a few days after Laure's death*

Laure's last minutes were of an extreme emotional intensity, yet lived in utter Peace and serenity. Not knowing her level of perception, we kept praying aloud and singing some of those religious hymns Laure loved so much. She passed away without a sign of fear or pain, leaving our arms for those that were stretched out to her in infinite Love.

[...] I would like to give you some precious messages of Hope and of our Laure's happiness: *"I wonder how I can be so happy while I am so ill!" "You know, Dad, you mustn't worry about me, for if I recover it will have to be a miracle since the doctors are now helpless; but if I don't recover, I can't even imagine how happy I will be. But I am worried about you."*

Her last meal was the Communion I brought her on Sunday evening, before I left her. [...]

She had currently been reading a book by Father Laurentin: *"Fioretti of the Virgin Mary".* We have found her signet on page 99, Our Lady of the good death.

I am writing you this letter listening to our joyful Christian Hymns. [...]

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*Extracts of the funeral homily by Father Maxime d'Arbaumont, Antony, France*

[...] I have been granted the opportunity to meet Laure shortly before Christmas, and very soon it became clear to me that she had kept the freshness of childhood alive in her heart. But beyond that beauty my soul was deeply touched and somehow dazzled by her purity, a purity that was even reflected in her body, like she said*: " I am a child although I am fifteen, and I hope my heart is as pure as a child's."*  and again: *"I often ask the Lord and Mary to clean my heart and to help me keep it pure."* Laure, with your spontaneous cheerfulness, your humor and liveliness in spite of a ruthless disease, you were astonishing, baffling for your surroundings, beaming because you had taken Jesus seriously and had abandoned yourself into His arms, saying before you were confirmed: *" I hope to be found worthy of the sacrament I am going to receive."*

[...] In hospital, Laure, you never missed a chance to give testimony of your faith. You said the Rosary every evening and kept surprising the nursing staff and your visitors. You went even further on the path of Love: it had been your deep longing to induce Arnaud, a little boy totally ignorant of Jesus, to be christened, which sacrament he actually received, aged seven, just a fortnight before he died. So a few days ago you were able to write in the small diary that your mother was allowed to open on the day of your death: *"Arnaud, what a joy, Arnaud is going to wait for me at the gate of Paradise to introduce me."* Like Therese of Lisieux you had understood that*" loving Jesus means wanting to have him be loved."* So your father told me that your last food on earth has been the Eucharist, the Body of Christ, on the last evening before you departed.

These testimonies have been gathered and translated for *"New Wings"* by Chantal Kunz-Bagros, Riedholz - Solothurn, Switzerland, September 2012