

MR. PIERRE PARODI

Recipient of Jamnalal Bajaj Award for Promoting Gandhian Values Outside India-1988

To make a hard choice is uncommon, particularly when it takes the character of renouncing pleasure and comfort in favour of a life of spiritual and moral quest. The recipient of the First Jamnalal Bajaj International Award, Pierre Parodi of France, turned his back on the prospective career in banking and chose to be a doctor, not for pursuing a lucrative practice, but for serving the community.

With an open mind, Parodi received the ideas of Gandhiji under the guidance of Lanza Del Vasto or Shantidas; and, honest to himself, he decided to apply them to the alien environment prevailing in the materialistic West. As a Member of the Ark Community, founded by Shantidas, Parodi has used his intellectual and physical capacities to promote the cause of peace, non-violence, brotherhood and fundamental humanism inherent in all the religions. This he did with theoretical exposition of Gandhian thought as well as through programmes of social action. He has toured extensively, lecturing on various facets of Gandhian.

The Ark Community represents an alternative to the Western lifestyle. But Parodi voluntarily accepted this change. On the individual plane, the life in the Ark Community, modelled on Gandhian Ashram life, represents an ongoing spiritual search, attempted through the observance of prayer, silence, sharing, and a commitment to nonviolence. But the organisation has also a social aspect, in which the emphasis is on fighting against social and political evils like war, injustices perpetrated against the have-nots and the weak and the irrelevance of the existing system to the real aspirations and urges of the people. As a devoted Member of the Ark Community, Parodi fulfils the obligation on the individual plane and participates in peace work, development with alternative technology and solidarity with the people's movements going on in several countries for the attainment of freedom. He has shown courage to criticise the rulers of his own country against its stand on war, and has used his communication skills effectively to organise more Ark Communities in different parts of the world. A good organiser, Parodi has acquired international fame for establishing a model of Gandhian work in South Morocco. His efforts have been termed as "an example of development."

By conferring on Pierre Parodi the First Jamnalal Bajaj International Award for Promoting Gandhian Values Outside India, the Trustees of the Foundation take pleasure in honouring a person who has fully committed himself to non-violence in individual-life-and in the field of social action.

