

Up Sails!

THE INTERNATIONAL LETTER OF FAITH AND LIGHT N° 43, MARCH 2020

50 years



Faith and Light
A treasure to share





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50 years!

A treasure to share

Our boat has just experienced a storm following the revelations from l'Arche about Jean Vanier. A storm like the one the disciples of Jesus experienced when it broke out in the middle of the Lake of Galilee. And like them, we are afraid and we react in unexpected ways. But Jesus tells us today what he said to his disciples: Do not be afraid! I am with you! (Read our message from Maria Silvia and I): "Today, Faith and Light more than ever" on the homepage of the Faith and Light international website.

Today I want to speak of joy and peace. As you know, next year in 2021 we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the birth of our great and beautiful family. 50 years of Faith and Light!

We launched a contest to choose a logo and a theme. We have the winners! But the choice was difficult. We received 104 theme proposals and 170 logos. Thirty provinces participated in the contest with all their hearts and we thank you very much. As soon as we can, we will publish these logos on the Faith and Light international website in a special page dedicated to the jubilee.

- The winning theme is "A treasure to share" from the "Graines de moutarde" (Mustard Seeds) community in Ville d'Avray, France. You will find a report on the community on page 4.
- The winning logo has been created by Cristina Casanovas Montemayor from the "Two Rivers" community in Barcelona, Spain. Cristina has Down's syndrome and has been with Faith and Light for many years. She introduces herself a bit more on page 6.

Finally, before receiving more information, remember that the logo and the theme of the winners are the ones that we will all use during celebrations, events, meetings... throughout the year 2021, on the occasion of the celebration of our 50th anniversary. Of course, you are free to choose the typography and the presentation of the logo according to your language and culture.

Congratulations again to the winners and congratulations to all of us from Faith and Light because we have a logo and a beautiful theme that will help us celebrate our anniversary in the best possible way with joy!

Warm wishes.



The winners of the contest

The theme: A treasure to share

Who is the community "Graines de moutarde" (Mustard Seeds)

**A treasure to share !
But what is our treasure ?**

At our last meeting we organized a brainstorming session. Everyone can answer the question: "G2M" what is it?

Joy, friendship, good humor, life, meeting, fiesta, prayer, meals, birthdays, mimes, youth, the gospel in action, Armelle's smile, mutual help, noise, true relationships, moments of sadness, beauty, humor, sharing, tenderness, weekends, songs, arguments, forgiveness, Julie, Pauline, Vincent, Valérie, Lucie, Emmanuelle, Pierre-Emmanuel, Karishma, Babeth and each one of us...

In Lourdes we will celebrate our 30 years of companionship within Faith and Light. We are from 1 year old to over 80! We meet in Ville d'Avray but also come from the towns of Houilles, Rueil, La Garenne-Colombes or Versailles in the Parisian suburbs.

Our specialties:





fashion show



The Wedding at Cana



Feast of Light



Participation in the 50th anniversary of the diocese



Prayer

Here are some flashes about our community. And we would still have many other treasures to share...

A connection with the sky thanks to Matthias and Guy, parents and children who give us the freshness and the happiness of simply sharing with us these moments, as true friends.

But the most beautiful treasure is knowing that we are ALL children of God, bearer of Christ.

BLANDINE AND MARIE-CATHERINE

The Logo



Hello everyone, my name is Cristina Casanovas Montemayor, I was born in Barcelona on September 20, 1989, I am 30 years old and I have Down's syndrome.

I met with Faith and Light in the parish of Saint Pius X. My parents registered me to prepare for my first communion because in this parish they propose a special catechesis for children like me. The day of my communion was June 9, 2002, I was about 13 years old.

One day in the parish, there was a Faith and Light meal and they invited us. We went out with them, we had contact with everyone, boys and girls in the community. At the end, we signed up. It was in 2003 and since then we continue.

Like I say, "I love Faith and Light" because I have a lot of friends. We meet once a month, we are all together, we welcome each other, we read the meditation of the month. There are many songs, we are accompanied by guitar players, there are games, an artists' workshop, etc. And at the end we share a meal together.

I work at the Cordada workshop in Barcelona, very close to the junior high schools where I went and to the parish Pius X. (You enter when you are 20 and take an adaptability test). It is a professional workshop. In this workshop, I have many classmates who come from the school where we have been and we continue our friendship. We are not all together, each one has his own department where, depending on our capacity, we can do our work.

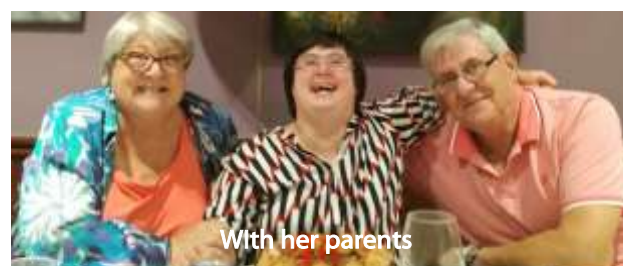
During the break, everyone does what they want, I listen to music. I have two friends, we are still together, Carla from my school and Cristina from another school. We have other friends who have the same hobbies as we do and others who don't, but we are comrades and that is what is important.

The educators are very nice, I like them very much.

At the meal time, there are two servings and we have friends who follow a diet.

Leaving work is very important. We are all looking forward to going home, our parents are waiting for us at home with a snack ready to eat. When they come to pick me up by car, I ask them to turn on some music and I tell them what I ate that day. When I eat my snack at home, I make my coffee with milk, then I go to my room to do what I love: listening to music, colouring mandalas, I sing and dance...

CRISTINA CASANOVAS MONTEMAYOR



"COME AND SEE"

THE "ANNUNCIATION" AND "CAPACITY TO LOVE" COMMUNITIES FROM SANTIAGO IN CHILE, AS WELL AS SEVERAL MEMBERS FROM OTHER COMMUNITIES, MET FOR THEIR ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE TO FARELLONES ON THE THEME: "COME AND SEE". ON THE PROGRAMME: TIME OF REFLECTION ON THE WORD OF GOD, EUCHARIST, FORMATION SESSION, CEREMONY OF THE WASHING OF THE FEET AND, OF COURSE, TIME OF CELEBRATION. TESTIMONIES.

An example to follow

With this pilgrimage, I wanted to strengthen my attachment to my beautiful community. Our theme was: *Come and See*. Come and admire these young people and their families and observe that they are peace, honesty, simplicity, kindness and transparency. We are going forward with the same objective, which is to testify to the world that these are people who have the biggest hearts and that they are a living example to be followed.

Whilst the world is a cauldron of conflict, we were all united, praying and asking for peace.

PABLA VERA, mum



Wanting to accompany them

On Saturday 19 October, I woke up very excited because I had an important goal, joining the pilgrimage!

I have always seen this slightly special group in the parish, but I never bothered to get to know them better until Martina decided to join the community as a friend, which made me want to accompany her.

Sharing the life of this community has been a marvellous experience. I have seen the investment of the parents who have children with disabilities and I have

also been touched by the way in which they place God at the centre of their lives.

Not only have I got to know different people, but also, they are interested in me, in my story. They have listened to me. This place breathes love, fraternity and respect.

One of the most beautiful things is realising that these children, young people and adults have the freedom to live, to express themselves freely, to speak without fear, to sing, to dance, to love God and do this without fear. Here, we understand the

*We must be as children
to enter the Kingdom of God.*



Chile is part of the province "Jesus, Light of the Andes" which also brings together Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

- Chile: 5 communities
- Colombia: 1
- Ecuador: 1
- Peru: 13

strength of the Word: we must be as children to enter the Kingdom of God.

Thank you to all those who have made this pilgrimage something unique and very special. Thank you for having given us the chance to live this experience and may God allow us to experience it again!

CARLA SALAS, friend



For each other

During this pilgrimage, I learnt to love sharing with others. It was gratifying to speak with people who have a disability. They give their love in a selfless way. I also realised that even though we did not know each other very well and I have not exchanged much with some of them, a bond was created with them automatically and made us be there for each other.

It is an experience that I would like to have again.

VALENTINA ALLENDE, friend



Jesus is the way

A WEEKEND AT THE ABBAYE NOTRE DAME DE MELLERAY (FRANCE CENTRE) BROUGHT TOGETHER SIXTY PEOPLE ON THE THEME OF THE GUIDELINES AND ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI.

Melleray is a beautiful place north of Nantes (France Centre), at the edge of a large pond. It is a former Cistercian abbey that was handed over, in 2014, to the Chemin Neuf Community (a Catholic community with an ecumenical vocation, arising from the charismatic revival).

Our new Province Coordinators, Michel and Christine Tillé, who are also part of Chemin Neuf, are happy to bring together their two communities of heart and welcome the sixty members of the six invited Faith and Light communities: "Laetitia" (Laval) "The Messengers of Joy" (Château-Gontier), "Way of Joy" (Segré), "Joyfulness", "Angels and Light" and "Jesus, my sun" (Angers)!

Christine introduced a rainbow spring, beautiful but a bit closed, a bit rigid like us at the start of the weekend!

After a welcome vigil and a good night on the Friday evening, we started our day with a time of praise: "Shout joy, Christ is risen!"

Then we received a teaching on "Jesus is the way". We remembered that Jesus had a mum, friends, that he ate, drank water and wine, cried, celebrated, suffered, loved... like us today. And that God has many qualities! love, joy, tenderness, loyalty, listening. He is generous, creative, fair, a friend and He gave us Jesus!

The "hearts of the community" (people with disability) went for a walk to discover the beauties of creation whilst the parents and friends shared...

A beautiful mass followed with the Chemin Neuf community that welcomed us: about forty young people in white albs, praying and singing beautiful songs with the guitar! What joy!

In the afternoon, we discovered the story of St Francis of Assisi with texts, slides and mimes in which many took part: Francis meets a leper; Francis helps the mayor and the bishop to reconcile, the Brothers of Francis serve a good meal to the bandits... How close to us is St Francis!

Praise, joy, simplicity, poverty, service of the brothers, prayer...

We continued with the making of a beautiful stained glass window representing St Francis.

In the evening, a celebratory vigil brought us together: we looked forward to the games, songs and dances!

On Sunday, we welcomed the testimony of Karol, a



young Polish man, who lives with his wife and his young children here in Melleraye; at a young age, he discovered that God *knew him well* then, in a community, the joy of praise: *it comes out of me, it opens up my heart!*

A beautiful mass brought us together in the Church with the young people from Chemin Neuf and the many Sunday worshippers: Alleluia, Alleluia!

In the afternoon, "the hearts of the community" were invited to make a Faith and Light picture, decorated with small rounds of wood, whilst the parents and friends shared once more... Then our province chaplain, Thierry, told us that Pope Francis asked chaplains to accompany our communities, then he called and blessed the chaplains present.

Christine showed us the rainbow spring, which is now all unrolled and flexible, like

each one of us after this marvellous weekend or rather this retreat that has deeply touched us and brought us joy!

And finally, a big surprise awaited us: a beautiful present with lots of coloured ribbons that we gradually unwrapped: inside, a rainbow spring that each person could take home and carry on unrolling each day, singing the wonders of the Lord!

SOIZICK CRUSSON
"Laetitia" Community



A young woman talks to the group: *We are silent together, we say a Hail Mary and if you have any prayer intentions, please contact me, I am the queen of prayer!*

Two young girls sing to us: *When he speaks to me, I see la vie en rose* (Edith Piaf), everyone joins in with the chorus!



A mum prayed in the morning in her heart and asked Jesus to speak to her daughter who was not well; without knowing this, at noon, her daughter returned home and said to her: *I really like it when Jesus talks to me!*

Befriend me

70 PEOPLE FROM FIFTEEN COMMUNITIES OF THE "CANADA EAST" PROVINCE, INCLUDING SOME WHO CAME FROM 500 TO 700 KM AWAY, MET, AS USUAL, AT THE CAP DE LA MADELEINE SHRINE IN TROIS RIVIÈRES FOR A PROVINCIAL MEETING ON THE THEME "BEFRIEND ME". THREE DAYS SPENT WORKING IN UNISON IN INCESSANT JOY, TESTIMONY TO THE CONSTANT CARING OF OUR MOTHER IN HEAVEN.

Let us relive this meeting by going through the key points of it. The theme, "Befriend me", was supported by an extraordinary mime of the Little Prince, practiced in the privacy of our meeting room then presented in the basement of the Basilica in the presence of people from l'Arche, Faith and Light, Faith and Sharing as well as many parishioners and pilgrims. This theme was elaborated on in a sub theme: "The fragility that brings us together".

We began with an "ice breaker" activity. We identified with an animal, a place, a flower, a plant or a tree giving the reasons for our choice. A very interesting activity!

Andrew Dean and Emilia Quintana, our province coordinators, explained to us what their responsibility covered. Then Roger Boisvert, our treasurer, made us climb mountains of figures like seasoned climbers. The figures perhaps cannot count on us but we can count on Roger to decode them for us! Then there were the community presentations. This day, like the others, was broken up by times of prayer and singing, prayer that was founded on the rock and



songs that put us within reach of each other.

Then I gave a teaching on "fragility" and the points of reflection for the sharing in small groups.

Afterwards, we had a picnic cruise on the Saint Maurice river. This was a real event. For the first time, we



left our place to dive into the adventure and thus made friends away from our comfort zones.

In the evening, we experienced the washing of the feet. This para liturgy, aptly named by Jean Vanier, operates a divine work in us, makes the rain of graces fall on our dry hearts



and our bruised feet that dare not walk any further on paths of hope. A washing of the feet well prepared for by Simon's harp and a film about Jean Vanier.

Then came the preparation for the Little Prince mime in small craft groups. This activity saw the birth of the vain ones with enormous hats; wealthy businessmen, kings in lavish outfits commanding respect and flowers that spread their petals around people's necks.



The blessing



The gathering in the basement of the Basilica saw a beautiful unity of the family of Jean Vanier and Marie-Hélène Mathieu. A film presented to us the journey of Jean Vanier and his work, which left a deep impression on many

hearts. Moreover, the many testimonies that followed the film amply attested to it. The mime of the Little Prince convinced us of the importance of cultivating loyalty and attachment to our little flower - humble and simple - more likely to fulfil our desire for relationship than the thousands of mirages that hit us from all sides (power, wealth, glory). So, let us water the small flower of our community for our greater happiness.

Simone Desgroseilliers invited us to introduce ourselves to four people with an intellectual disability so that they in turn bless us. What a deeply touching moment where God himself blessed us through the prophets of his tenderness.

The Eucharist that followed only built in us a huge thanksgiving for all the love of God in our lives. Alleluia!

In the evening, the communities showed us the extent of their talents in an amateur show where each person made us sing, dance and laugh. An amateur evening of professionals, radiant with sympathetic listening, rich with enlightening wisdom; humble and simple as crystal clear water; eager to open up to the large family; strong with an unmistakable diligence.

NORMAND VEILLETTE
VICE-PROVINCIAL COORDINATOR

"Canada East" province
is made of
17 communities

Renewing our commitment

ERIKA GONZALES IS A VICE-PROVINCIAL COORDINATOR. SHE ACCOMPANIES SOME OF THE COMMUNITIES IN PERU, THE COMMUNITY IN ECUADOR AND THE COMMUNITY IN COLUMBIA, WHICH ARE PART OF "JESUS, LIGHT OF THE ANDES" PROVINCE. ERIKA TOOK PART IN THE INTERNATIONAL YOUTH MEETING IN GUARDAMAR IN 2017. HERE, SHE TELLS US ABOUT HER VISIT TO THE COLUMBIAN "ROAD TO BETHANY" COMMUNITY.



The "Road to Bethany" community was recognised in 2013 and is going forward with much devotion and faith under the coordination of Raquel Franco and her coordinating team. The community needed a discernment process to elect a new leader as well as the formation and accompaniment of its members. This is why this visit was organised.

The community worked for several months to propose a very rich programme. I finally arrived at Bogota airport where I was warmly welcomed by Raquel, the community leader, and Soledad.

Our activities began on Friday morning with the visit to the Santa María de la Provi-

dencia school, an institution for children with a disability. Some young people from this institution are now members of the community. Sister Johana Ardila took us on a tour of the facilities and introduced us to the teachers. We then learnt more about her congregation: The Daughters of St Mary of Providence, whose founder was San Luis Guanella (1842-1915). He worked (like Jean Vanier) for those with an intellectual disability. Our objective was to create bonds of fraternity with this congregation because we have the same charisma. We were able to talk about Faith and Light in Bogota and throughout the world.

We hope to be able to form a new community with the support of Sister Johana.

In the afternoon, I was able to share some of my experiences and the history of Faith and Light in Peru. Raquel told the story of Faith and Light in Bogota. In 1999, Father Hermann Rodriguez contacted families to create a community. The first was called "The Boat of Jesus". At the same time, a second community, "Navigate to the Light" was created. But they did not persevere. In 2010, a new community, "Saint Michel" was formed but did not continue either. The members of these communities kept a light burning in their hearts and had the firm intention of start-



Craft workshop



Pilgrimage in Monserrate

ing up again. In 2012, the “Road to Bethany” community was born. Its perseverance has borne fruit and it was recognised in 2013. In 2014, Elvira de Gomero (vice provincial coordinator at that time) organised formation sessions and elections. Raquel Franco was elected as coordinator. She has fulfilled this service with love and great commitment. The day ended with the sharing of some delicious empanadas (small puff pastry turnovers filled with meat or fish).

Saturday began very early (9h30). All the members wore a T shirt from Columbia. We celebrated on the theme: “Jesus is the road to the beauty of our cultures.” Each person took part very actively and joyfully in the meeting. We were lucky enough to have the presence and spiritual ac-

companiment of Father Hermann. Soledad gave a presentation on the International Meeting in Lebanon, which she had taken part in.

In the afternoon, Marisol gave a presentation on the youth meeting in Brazil. Then I explained the 2018 – 2023 priorities set by the assembly in Lebanon. Finally, I led the formation session about the role of the community coordinator and the importance of the coordinating team. During this time, the disabled people took part in a craft workshop. Then, Vivian (a young girl with disability) came into the room just to tell her mother that she loved her very much. It was a very beautiful moment.

Then came the process of electing a new coordinator. After the discernment, the community chose Rosa Elvia,

Vivian’s mum. We understood that the presence of Vivian, her daughter, was the Holy Spirit that manifests itself through the little ones to tell us not to be afraid, that God loves us and that he will always be with us. We ended the day with thanksgiving.

The following morning, we had a pilgrimage to the Monserrate shrine and attended the Eucharist so as to give thanks for the success of our meeting and for all the blessings received.

I thank God, Faith and Light, the Province Team and the whole community for this wonderful opportunity to carry on forming new leaders and renewing our commitment to Faith and Light. I thank each one of the people who organised this meeting. Thank you again for the trust and support received. May God continue to shower his blessings on this community in Bogota.

Amen! Alleluia! Alleluia!

ERIKA GONZALES



Rosa Elvia and Erika

FORMATION FOR THE CHAPLAINS

FROM 24 TO 26 OCTOBER, WE ORGANISED A FORMATION SESSION IN ROME FOR THE CHAPLAINS FROM THE THREE PROVINCES IN ITALY: "FIUME DI PACE", "KIMATA" AND "SEAS AND VOLCANOES".

THERE WERE 29 PRIESTS AND BISHOPS, FOUR NUNS AND FIVE LAY PREACHERS. HOWEVER, APART FROM THE NUMBERS, THIS TELLS US HOW MUCH WE NEED TO MEET, THE RICHES OF THESE DAYS WERE MANY.

Report in Italy



To gather together as brothers and to tell each other, even in our free moments, the stories of our vocations to the school of Faith and Light, how fulfilling is to have a vocation as priests, nuns, lay people.

Word of Bishop Intini:

A Spiritual Assistant knows how to look into the eyes of people, accompanies the persons with disability and their families, is a spiritual guide, knows people, establishes relationships based on trust, he accompanies those relationships, is there during the moments of need. The responsible assistant, as a priest in the sacramental life, is bonded to the Eucharist and so is a man of prayer, transparent in relationships, sweet but firm, energetic against evil he recalls the body of Christ.

He recognises Christ in the centre in the suffering limbs of our church and is Eucharist, prayer and sacrifice for our community.

Central image is the awareness of being an injured healer. The assistant is aware of his

fragilities and heals them.

The fragility becomes a school to learn from.

Three verbs entrusted for the action of assistants:

- **To Cure:** *to cure yourself is fundamental to be able to cure somebody else, love the other as you love yourself.*
- **To Accompany:** *the art of accompanying must be practiced.*
- **To Integrate:** *the logic of integration is the logic of the membership of the body of Christ that is the Church.*

Word of Archbishop Youssef Antoine Soueif

The second word is given by Cyprus's Archbishop's. He begins with the phrase: *I can't see perishes and dioceses without Faith and Light communities. I have experienced their richness and to me it is a richness.* Stunning to hear this coming from an Archbishop. *Faith and Light is Prophecy. It is Prophecy bonded to the scriptures. To announce the scriptures is the main element to let others know about the Kingdom of*

God. Our prophetic vision is to live in the kingdom of God. Maranatha come now our Lord. The Lord lives between us.

The holiness of the everyday life, in the everyday life is realized the kingdom of God. God became flesh, men, person.

The prophecy becomes announcement and commitment, the prophet commits in the silence of holiness and then tells the King what they felt, because you can talk to Him about it.

Faith and Light is the Church, church is the people of God. Faith and Light is a call to live the prophetic dimension. The word needs it. Fulfill yourself of the love of God to let it show itself. God frees mankind. Let Him free you.

The prophet knows how to read the history of salvation.

I have to recognise that God exists, I must recognise what He is doing in my story, in the story of the community.

The prophet recognises the past to live the present, discovers the signs of times, he doesn't live in the nostal-

gia of the past because Jesus is here, "hic et nunc" (here and now). The challenges of today are felt as something positive, the prophet face up to them and brings a breath of hope, he knows how to transform death into life, the prophet is a paschal person.

The prophet lives the integrity of his call in the "Kerigma" (essential content of the faith in Jesus Christ announced and transmitted to the first Christians). In the Eucharist becomes flesh. The church must be lived in service. Wash the feet of the poor.

The persons with disability are prophets, heroes in humanity. A church must be able to welcome everyone.

It is possible to understand from what we have been saying, that the confrontation between the groups that followed the reports was very deep. We have come to understand each other through the script that moved deep provocations in us.

The celebration has accompanied our meeting putting in the centre the Eucharist. Even the feast with the roman community of San Gregorio, with the video on the Spiritual Assistances, has promoted some reflection cues.

The last day has been knowingly led by don Marco Bove, international chaplain, that promoted a path on his vocational call on Faith and Light. *God chooses us to love for free, he loves me as I am. This is the Gospel of Faith and Light: the spiritual life of people with fragility, God that shows himself through the small. But this call is grace.*

And so father Marco gives us a time of silence and some questions that help us do in depth:

- Has my experience in Faith and Light has enriched my life and my ministry?
- How does sharing with the most fragile people help me to understand the Gospel of fragility?
- What is the path of conversion for me? Which temptations should I look out for? Which temptations should Faith and Light lookout for?

The sharing that follows the moment of desert is full of life told and renewed.

We truly needed this moment of formation, we can't wait eight years to resubmit it because is a time of needed grace.

LILIANA GHIRINGHELLI

"River of Peace"

- Northern Italy: 22 communities
- Galilee: 2

"Kimata"

- Central Italy: 24 communities
- Cyprus: 3
- Greece: 2
- Albania: 1

"Seas and Volcanoes"

- Southern Italy: 21 communities





MADAGASCAR IS 25!

TO CELEBRATE ITS 25TH ANNIVERSARY, THE COMMUNITIES FROM MADAGASCAR ORGANISED A PILGRIMAGE. MORE THAN 300 OF THEM, FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, MET AT ANTANANARIVO. IT IS THANKS TO THE GENEROSITY OF THE FAITH AND LIGHT COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE WORLD THAT A TOTAL OF 3900€ OF SOLIDARITY COULD BE ALLOCATED TO THEM. ON HER RETURN, MARIE-FRANCE VIOLETTE, THE VICE-INTERNATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR AFRICA AND THE INDIAN OCEAN, BORE WITNESS.

A pilgrimage full of joy and emotion. There were many persons with disability there, many with a severe disability. One mum came with her two children with severe disability. It wasn't easy for these people to take a journey lasting between 4, 6, 12 or 14 hours depending on where they came from. They arrived, some in wheelchairs, others carried on the backs of their mums, very tired but filled with joy.

During our stay, we elected three community leaders.

The issue of the code of conduct was broached. I was able to organise a workshop that brought together the community and regional leaders. There was a lot of interest in it. It seemed to me that this is a tool that has been long awaited. They will shortly send the documents, which have already been signed in Tana, to their province coordinator. Thank you for this document.



We spoke about the financial situation of our international treasury and, of course, the 50th anniversary of Faith and Light. The message was 100% received: it is vital to find finance for the large

meeting in 2021 that will be held in Mauritius. Everyone decided to sell artisan goods that they will send to Mauritius and, if possible, to Réunion. With Judex's help, I have committed to selling them.



Jocelyne and I have already symbolically opened an account with 40 euros by buying these products. So, I have returned home with a suitcase full of miscellaneous items that I will sell in Mauritius.

Our next province assembly will be held in Mauritius in September 2020 as planned at our province assembly on Reunion Island in 2018. It will be held in the presence of Maria Sylvia for the discernment of the "Rainbow" Province Coordinator, which Jocelyne has taken interim responsibility for.

The fruits:

- We have found two chaplains: Father Romuald who is Madagascan and Father David, a Columbian, who has agreed to take on the role of provincial chaplain. He is young, dynamic and close to people with disability.
- As there are large distances between the communities, this meeting allowed, first of all, the sharing of the joy of meeting as well as the problems.
- Our Madagascan friends have been able to do projects together for the 50th anniversary of Faith and Light.

- We have found a person, Sidonie, who is a community leader, to support Marcellin, the vice-provincial coordinator.

Faith and Light brings much joy to those with a disability and their families. In Madagascar, they are deprived of many things but they overflow with joy and smiles.

The celebration was beautiful, they were so happy to celebrate this 25th anniversary of their movement.

Thank you to all those who contributed to the realisation of this event! It is thanks to international solidarity that this pilgrimage was able to happen and that all these people experienced an unforgettable moment in their lives.

MARIE-FRANCE VIOLETTE
Vice-international coordinator



Madagascar is part of the "Rainbow" province which also includes Mauritius, Reunion and the Seychelles.

- Madagascar: 11 communities
- Mauritius: 11 and Rodrigues: 8
- Reunion: 4
- Seychelles: 5



Online Formation

The weekend of October 11-13 was a special opportunity for Faith and Light in the US. Tim and Maria-Cecilia Buckley had offered to do some formation sessions with the Faith and Light USA West and East communities during the previous year. Thanks to technology many Faith and Light community members from around the country utilized Zoom conferencing and had the opportunity to gather and gain from the wisdom and experience of Maria Cecilia and Tim on a monthly basis. The plan was to meet online for several months and then to end with a retreat where we would physically come together and share the spirituality of Faith and Light led by Tim and Maria-Cecilia.

Unfortunately, many of the participants from St. Louis were unable to attend the retreat. Those of us who attended gained so much from the gathering that we hated for our friends to miss out on this opportunity. Graciously Tim and Maria-Cecilia agreed to come to St. Louis to repeat the retreat. The St. Louis Community is vibrant and generous. Families agreed that if anyone wanted to come to St. Louis we could host them in our homes to keep costs down. We were blessed to have visitors from Massachusetts, Michigan and Georgia in addition to our

facilitators, Tim and Maria Cecilia from Colorado.

Friday evening there was a meet and greet and a small prayer service. We were graced by visitors from the St. Louis L'Arche community. We planted the seed of our weekend theme and "Growing Together in Faith and Light" rolled out with stories about who we were. Of course we sang and prayed and ate lots of goodies.

Saturday was filled with sessions that enlightened, stimulated and made us think about how to apply what we were hearing to our own specific roles in our communities. We had a few L'Arche assistants join us. The agenda was full and fulfilling. Those who hosted out of town guests were able to share even more as they retired to their respective homes.

Sunday was the day for our community to shine. A pizza party for lunch brought together the whole community with special attention and activities with our core members. The wedding feast gospel will forever be prayed with new insight as Tim and Maria-Cecilia urged us to become the gospel and not just read it. A special guest was Mira Chemlir who had been one of Jean Vanier's first assistants in Trolley. Mira's presence is a gift to St. Louis and a reminder that we need to know where we have been if we are going to have clarity on where we are going.

Our thirst for formation has been whetted by this wonderful weekend.



Tim and Maria-Cecilia

I suggest that all regions discuss how to do this on a regular basis. The technology offered by the internet gives us opportunities to share in ways we have not had in the past. As we evolve and grow in sharing our message of Joy and Light in a world that can be so sad and dark, let us rely on each other and the wisdom of those who have travelled this road before us.

HELEN RISSE
Vice-provincial coordinator

- USA West : 16 communities
- USA East: 25

HIT ÉS FÉNY

The Faith and Light communities of Serbia celebrated the 25th birthday of the movement in Vojvodina. Members from all active and several dissolved groups took part in the event. We've organized a drawing competition, and our friends with special needs could depict their experiences in Faith and Light. The living founders of the communities were also present, and they told us about the beginnings.

A mass of thanksgiving and celebration was held by father József Nagy, our long term supporting priest. He is one of the persons who helped bringing the community to Serbia from neighbouring Hungary.

With love,

ETELKA VARADI
Vice-provincial coordinator



HEART OF LOVE IN CHARTRES



Carsharing, 26 of us leave our homes on the afternoon of 9 November. Most of us are members of the Heart. With us are a few guests and, of course, Father Germain, our Chaplain.

We all arrive in Chartres and at the St Yves hotel, close to the cathedral, at the planned time! We find the room assigned to us for our meals, meetings and entertainment.

First act

Unpacking of the picnic brought by each person. The weather is... autumnal!

Second act

The little train is waiting for us in the Cathedral square and helps us to discover, without getting tired, the old parts of the city, which have been renovated. Our guide-driver gives the necessary explanations about the bridges, the old houses, the churches... He reassures us on the "Massacre"

street where the former slaughterhouse stood. We are all seduced by the charm of these old streets with evocative names, by the washhouses and the quays. Everyone was delighted with this walk.



Third act

We speed up to be on time for the visit to the master glassmaker in the lower town. They work as a family, both with diplomas and "best worker in France" medals. They really represent the craftsmanship of glassmaking in this city where the cathe-

dral is celebrated for its windows and its famous "Chartres blue", which is the oldest of the range of blue stained glass and the clearest, in a word, "exceptional"!

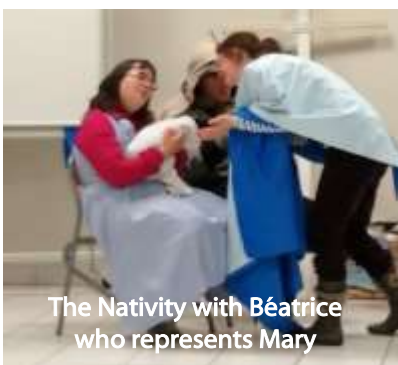
Fourth act

Return to the hotel for dinner and the evening. Whilst some prepare the tables and meals, Father Germain shows Alexandre and Daniel how to play the djembe drum, others dance with ribbons and others practice the mimes planned for the evening. The future living tableaux begin to take shape with their actors. But shush!

The evening begins: songs of praise, ribbon dances and mimes about the life of the Virgin Mary are going to follow: Eve and the forbidden fruit, Annunciation to Mary and the visitation, it is already Christmas, Gloria sung by everyone, angels of all sizes, radiant shepherds waving ribbons! Jesus at twelve years old, his



Dances with the ribbons



The Nativity with Béatrice who represents Mary



La Piéta with Marion who represents Mary

disappearance at the Temple in Jerusalem, his seriousness in the midst of the lawyers, the wedding at Cana. It is easy to mime joy when you are happy! However, days of mourning come, Alexandre mimes the crucifixion leaving the Virgin grieving her loss and caressing his face. A few slips of the tongues from Odile, director, calling Mary Marion made us laugh! The last mimes evoke the Resurrection and the Pentecost with flame bonnets on the heads!

To end, mimed songs of praise, songs to Mary, non-religious dances...

Our group, this evening, has been a true "heart of love"

Last act

After a short night and a good breakfast, it is time to go to the cathedral for the 11am mass, banner unfurled. We are made very welcome by the Chartres parish: reserved seats in the 1st row, word of welcome from the parish priest, taking part in the offering procession. The cathedral displays its splendours and we enjoy the communion song and the final song to Mary.

After the mass, each person lingers to take with them a lit-

tle of these beauties that a guide has to explain to us after lunch and, in fact, the visit was interesting for everyone, with simple words and appropriate questions.

This weekend will leave its mark on each of us.

Returning to our homes, still the same autumnal weather but with sunshine in our hearts!

Text: Christiane
Photos: Régine



Jesus goes to Jerusalem with his parents



Mimed songs



Testimony

The gift of responsibility

SIMONE, A MEMBER OF FAITH AND LIGHT FOR 35 YEARS, IS TODAY LEAVING HIS RESPONSIBILITY AS COORDINATOR OF THE "SAN ROBERTO" COMMUNITY IN ROME. AFTER THREE YEARS OF SERVICE, HE WROTE THIS MESSAGE OF RECOGNITION ON FACEBOOK. YES, AGREEING TO SERVE IN FAITH AND LIGHT REALLY IS A GIFT.

Today, my responsibility at the helm of the "San Roberto" Faith and Light community comes to an end. Three beautiful and intense years with many moments of joy and also painful moments. I have experienced the difficulties of a community that is going forward, growing and aging and I have received the richness of a great gift: that of guiding it.

I have made mistakes and I have learnt a lot, over and over again, after 35 years in Faith and Light. I have listened and I have made decisions. I have welcomed and I have been supported in everything that I have done, putting all my love into it, even if everything that I have done hasn't always worked out as I wished it to.

From these years, I will keep in my heart many happy memories as well as the wounds that my community has known so well and has shared: I offer all this to the person who comes after me. To Joseph, who is now taking on this sweet yolk and this light burden, I wish a beautiful path with us all.

Finally, I thank you all. First of all, thank you to the community for having given me this gift of responsibility, for having supported me with friendship and trust and also tolerating me!

Last but not least, I thank the Lord. With him, who made me feel strong and was close to me even in the most difficult of times.

Alleluia and long live the "San Roberto" community!

SIMONE CASCINO MILANI



Testimony

Celebrations at Notre Dame de Valcluse

SUNDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2019 WAS A BRIGHT DAY FOR THE "NOTRE DAME DE VALCLUSE" COMMUNITY IN THE SOUTH OF FRANCE, THAT WAS ABLE TO EXPERIENCE TWO STRIKING EVENTS: THE CONFIRMATION OF FRANÇOIS, A YOUNG MAN AGED 22 YEARS OLD WHO HAS AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY AND THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF THE COMMUNITY.

For these two great occasions, Monsignor Marceau, the bishop of the diocese of Nice, came to celebrate mass. The "Sainte Claire" community from Nice and "Horeb" community from Toulon as well as representatives from the community in Briançon and the local l'Arche community got together at our community. The fruit of this magnificent sharing was a beautiful inter-community meeting. Many worshippers came to surround those with a disability, their parents and their friends and were thus able to discover the fraternal impetus, the love that emanates from our communities carried by the Holy Spirit. They left transformed in the way they understood disability and faith experienced at this level.

Heaven sent us a ray of sunshine that only appeared on that day because the previous and following days were particularly rainy.

Thank you Jean and Marie-Hélène for putting a dazzling sun in our hearts on that day: action songs accompanied by maracas livened up this joyful mass introduced by the song: *Par toi, par moi, par nous vit la communauté, (through you, through me, through us the community lives)*, more topical than ever!

François, encouraged by Thibault who understands him so well, managed to enter the church and mingle with the crowd to receive the Holy Spirit: what an intense moment of spiritual emotion!

Homemade aperitif and a stand outside made it possible to meet up and get to know one another. The meal, which everyone had prepared, ended with the *Happy birthday* of our community, lit up by a multitude of small, lit candles that set our hearts alight. The after-



noon was punctuated by contributions allowing each community to tell its story and, again, action songs. This fraternal atmosphere continued to sow joy.

Before the final goodbye, the Faith and Light prayer finished filling us with the Holy Spirit, the divine Love integrating each and every one of us into this magnificent Faith and Light International family.

Thank you again Jean and Marie-Hélène for creating Faith and Light. Thank you, Monsignor Marceau, thank you to the Beatitudes community that receives us so generously and warmly once a month, to its priests who celebrate the mass for community. Thank you to the "Sainte Claire", "Horeb" and l'Arche communities. Thank you to Joël Arslanian, our province coordinator, and his wife, thank you to all of you who came and surrounded us on this beautiful day.

BERNADETTE
Community Leader

Testimony

"Wood and Light"

JOHANNES KARLSSON, MEMBER OF THE FAITH AND LIGHT COMMUNITY "FLOBY" IN THE CITY OF VEDDHOLMEN IN THE SOUTH WEST OF SWEDEN, WRITES TO TELL US WHAT HE LIKES: WALKING IN NATURE, RIDING A HORSE... AND HIS CARPENTER JOB.

My name is Johannes Karlsson. I am 28 years old and living with my family on a horse farm situated a little more than one hour north east of Gothenburg, Sweden. We belong to a Faith and Light community. Every year we celebrate New Year's eve together with our community at our place. Sometimes Faith and Light arranges formation for all our communities in Sweden, or province council meetings, here at our place.

I enjoy walking in nature, looking at animals and to go horse-riding together with my assistant.

When I finished school in my twenties, we discussed what I would do in the future. Since I was very fond of wood-handcrafting at school, I wanted to continue with that. We started to arrange a carpenter workshop at our farm. But we had no tools. Suddenly my former music-teacher wanted to sell a complete carpentry workshop. My teacher was very happy selling it to us.

Now, my assistant Daniel and I are producing, prayer stools, wooden candlesticks, cutting boards and a lot of other things. We are selling them through different channels, but mostly via mouth to mouth, and during the Faith and Light summer camp. What makes me really happy is that I can send the money I earn to my friends in Faith



and Light in Bangladesh. One of my friends there is Munna, I have a photo of him.

Our little wooden carpentry is named "Wood and Light".

JOHANNES

Testimony

Meeting with Imad Saleem (Love and Joy)



Imad and Nadia at the international secretariat

On Tuesday 26 November, Imad Saleem, the founder of the “Love and Joy” movement, on a visit to Paris, dropped in on the Secretariat of Faith and Light International. With the help of Nadia, a specialist teacher near Paris, for the translation, we met him with Corinne and we spent a good hour exchanging, sharing and we began to form solid bonds.

“Love and Joy” was born in Iraq after the war against Iran at the beginning of the 90s. Imad was mobilised in the army for 10 years and he had a lot of time to reflect and pray; one day he had this hunch that the most fragile people could bring a lot more than what could be given to them. After speaking with his spiritual manager, he began to convince parents that their children should not be hidden and, with the help of the Chaldo-Assyrian Church, “Love and Joy” was born. It is very similar to the Faith and Light communities and they talk about their trinities: those with an intellectual disability, their families and their teachers. The name of trinity is linked to the Holy Trinity. Jean Vanier went to Iraq to meet them and he did not look to integrate them into Faith and Light or l’Arche so that they could keep their own identity and their spirituality.

There were almost 40 communities in the country before the tragic events of 2014, now there are just a few but the Christian population went from 300 000 to 3 000! There has been a lot of emigration to the USA, Australia,

Lebanon, Iraqi Kurdistan... and “Love and Joy” communities have been born all over the place in the USA (San Diego, Michigan), in Sweden and Emad went on a tour of these communities, which led to him visiting France.

We have much in common and these communities, which were born into the Iraqi diaspora, would be happy to not remain isolated and could meet Faith and Light communities, for example, on the occasion of the Feast of Light.

I remember that Mirna was invited to take part in a large meeting in Qaraqosh in 2011. On her return, she told me how difficult life in this large country was and how much courage it took for the 350 participants to cross the country, which – already – was very dangerous (it was less than a year after the attack on the Our Lady of Intercession cathedral in Bagdad).

It is important to pursue and continue to form bonds with our friends from “Love and Joy”, their faith is so strong that they can bring us a lot and they need to meet friends whose faith (and light) can comfort them because what they see in the western countries where they have been able to find refuge is not great enthusiasm and this encourages them rather to stay in their communities... We have so much to bring one another!

GHISLAIN DU CHÉNÉ

Testimony

The saga of the Guidelines

THANKS TO THE SMALL SLIDE SHOW ON THE WORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT, YOU HAVE A BETTER PERCEPTION OF WHAT WE DO HERE. THE SENDING OUT OF THE GUIDELINES, SUPERVISED BY CÉLINE FOR THE PAST 10 YEARS, IS STILL A HUGE TASK. ALMOST EVERY PARCEL IS DIFFERENT, SOME PROVINCES TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ADD OTHER DOCUMENTS. HOWEVER, THIS YEAR, WE EXPERIENCED AN ADVENTURE WORTHY OF A BAD THRILLER...

Every year at the International Secretariat of Faith and Light, we package, prepare and send the Guidelines to each province during the summer. This year the dispatch conditions were more than picturesque! Returning to the experience. As a rule, we frank the parcels online. However, this summer, part of the site was undergoing maintenance and we were unable to frank the parcels going beyond Europe... this represented 18 large parcels, that is to say, the equivalent of 500 guidelines. What were we going to do with just a few weeks until the merchandise had to be sent to the provinces? We were stuck... Having taken the problem to an advisor at the Post Office, he suggested a special contract where the parcels would be franked by one of their services. Phew! We therefore chose this option for all the parcels going to Africa, Asia and Latin America. Reassured, we prepared all the parcels and meticulously filled in the forms, by hand, with the recipients and addresses. D day arrived, the 5000 Guidelines in French, English and Spanish left for the four corners of the world in the post lorry. Mission accomplished! Or almost...

The following morning, there was a sudden phone call from the manager of the Post Office collection service who informed us that our parcels had disappeared, that they had not been franked as planned by the department in question and that they had probably been taken directly to Roissy airport... Impossible to monitor and track them. What had become of them? The intermediary centres where the parcels proceeded before reaching Roissy were contacted, no-one had seen them. Would they even be sent without being franked? Were



they going to arrive at their destination? And in what state? It was an anxious summer...

In September, I rang the Post Office again for news. An unpromising phone call. They knew nothing, had no trace of the parcels. They were embarrassed by such a loss... What were we going to do? I contacted the provinces and countries concerned. Several had not yet received anything, but to my great surprise, some had received their parcel but sometimes not the right one... The one for Rodrigues arrived in South Africa and the one for South Africa finally arrived at its destination mid-October! To our great joy, the parcels gradually arrived and I received more and more encouraging responses. At the end of September, a miracle, all the parcels arrived apart from 3 countries. I quickly resent them.

Today, there still remains one mystery: at the beginning of October, the Guidelines destined for Benin came back to the office for no reason but the leader in Benin confirmed to me that they had received the 25 copies of the Guidelines that they had ordered!

CÉLINE DOUELLE

For our reflection

EASTER OR THE BAPTISM OF PETER

The dream of Peter

When Jesus entered Jerusalem on the back of a small donkey, *the people took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord – the King of Israel!"* (Jn 12, 13). Peter was not far behind and beamed with joy, he was not the last to shout his admiration for Jesus. He must have thought that the time had come when Jesus was going to restore the kingdom to Israel. And then, if someone was needed to sit at his right, well wasn't he the one who Jesus said he was going to give the keys to the kingdom to (cf. Mt 16, 19)?

Questions about Jesus

But Peter quickly became disillusioned and he asked himself questions, a lot of questions about Jesus. It began one evening, during the meal on the first day of the feast of unleavened bread when Jesus got up and began washing the feet of his disciples! Peter no longer understood anything: the future king of Israel behaving like a slave? He refused and tried to argue thinking of the baptism of Jesus: *Wash all of me, my head, my hands, my feet as John did for you in the Jordan!*

And then, after a long time of prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane (too long, to the point where Peter and his companions fell asleep), came the arrest and Jesus was taken away to the palace of the High Priest. Peter was lost! When asked if he knew Jesus, he answered: *No, I do not know him*, what he actually meant was: "I believed I knew him but I must have missed something."

Everything falls apart

Peter wasn't there at the foot of the cross, he had left crying, such was the extent of his sorrow. Everything was falling apart... And then two days later, when Mary Magdalene

came, breathless, saying that Jesus was no longer in the tomb, Peter and John ran there. Peter entered and was puzzled when faced with the folded-up linens. John had to explain to him what had happened: *He foretold this!*

It is the Lord!

A few days later, life returned to normal and the fishermen had become fishermen again on Lake Tiberias. One beautiful morning, after a night of fishing without catching anything, a man called out to them from the bank where he seemed to have prepared something to eat. *It is the Lord!* John shouted. Peter took off his clothes and dived in to be



*Will you love me
despite everything?
Will you love me
to the end?*

the first to reach Jesus. This bath was the response to his desire to receive the baptism, but this baptism was not the one from the Baptist but the one Jesus had talked about: *I have a baptism with which to be baptised, and what stress am I under until it is completed!* (Lk 12, 50). Peter dressed again in white clothing (could it be any other colour?) and Jesus entrusted his mission to him. This mission had one single condition: to love, love, love to the end!

Our mission

We are also called on a mission and you don't have to pass a lot of exams for it. We have to love to the end. Parents can say to their adult children: *We have loved you very much to make you grow and to make you what you are today; it will soon be your turn to love us as we loved you. We are going to become weaker, more fragile. We rely on you to love us to the end. Do not flee from appearances that may frighten you but know that it will always be us in front of you.*

In our Faith and Light communities, you frequently hear a person with an intellectual disability say to a new member: *Do you love me? which means: Do you love me as I am? Despite my appearance, despite my shouting, despite my silences, despite EVERYTHING? Will you love me to the end? Not only when I am pleasant, not only for a meeting but also give me signs of friendship between two meetings? My friendship is demanding, but it is total!*

Loving to the end

So, loving to the end is like a renewal of our baptism inviting us to become again, if we have forgotten, that we are called to be priests, prophets and kings! Not kings in the sense Peter understood it, we will probably not be called to sit at the right hand of the King of Heaven, there are those for who these places are reserved, but our Faith and Light friends will certainly be able to invite us to take a seat in the VIP area!

We are also invited to follow the path that Peter followed from Palm Sunday to the shores of Lake Tiberias; let us not be discouraged and let us say, as Julie said to me one Good Friday evening, after crying a lot during the telling of the Passion (but she had a beautiful smile while telling me): *That's it, now he can rise again!* If you listen to Julie, you can understand what it means to love to the end, and so everything is allowed, even singing Alleluia on Good Friday like the pilgrims in Lourdes in 1971!

Ghislain du Chéné





Family album



What's new in Italy

Don Piero Milani



The "Seas and Volcanoes" province (Italy South) informs you with great joy: we have a new chaplain. It is Don Piero Milani, vicar of Santa Maria de piedigrotta in Naples. Don Piero is 49 years old, has known Faith and Light for many years and deeply loves disabled people and the communities. We asked him to accompany the province team and we strongly embrace him. For the moment only remotely but soon – we hope – in person.
The Province Team

Fabio Bronzini



Still in Italy but changing province: "Kimata" (Italy Centre, Cyprus, Greece and Albania) have elected a new province coordinator. Fabio de Rome

succeeds Pietro Vetro. We warmly thank both of them.

News from Poland

A community with young children was born in Warsaw. The "Mateusza" community in Białystok has become too big and has to be divided.

News from Cyprus

A new community was born in Cyprus. It is called "Hope". It is the third community on the island.

Sadness in "UK North"

It is with sadness that I inform you that the community in Keithley has taken the heart-breaking decision to leave Faith and Light. They have had problems in recent years and have decided that it was time to stop meeting. Keep all of them in your prayers.

Karen Donan
Provincial coordinator

50th anniversary competition

We took advantage of our meeting on 24 November to launch the competition for the 50th anniversary logo and theme in our community.

In pairs, equipped with paintbrushes and a large sheet of paper, we had a great time. At the end, we all come together to perform a beautiful gesture... we washed each

other's hands (covered in paint) then we blessed each other: *"I love you just as you are, I bless you and I am at your service"*, super highlight! Considering the theme was the opportunity to recall the history of our movement and have a good brain storming session on the future... "Jesus is the way to the future"...

Clémentine
"Little Prince" community, Paris.

To the 2019-2020 Guidelines team



We are really happy with the Guidelines this year! I only hear enthusiastic testimonies from everyone here in the Netherlands. And this is not always the case...

It is so practical, so applicable, it creates unexpected twists... We particularly love the Kett teaching. At our last meeting, there was no mention of Kett! So, our chaplain invented it because he loves it so much! May God bless you.

Hetty Gommans, Netherlands



Mgr Janos Székely



Monsignor Janos, the former chaplain of the "Cornflower" community in Budapest, Hungary, has been appointed Bishop of Szombathely. The list is now up to 22 Faith and Light chaplains appointed bishops!

Father Jean Gasenge



It is with sadness that I am informing you of the death of Father Jean Gasenge Berchmas, Jesuit, on 20 November 2019. He was the first to welcome Marie-Hélène Mathieu to Rwanda and he helped us a lot in Faith and Light as chaplain right at the start. May his soul rest in Peace.

Godeberthe Mukagasana
"Eastern Africa" provincial coordinator

David Meza

Dear Faith and Light family, Our dear David from the "Our Lady of Joy" community in Peru has gone to meet God the Father but he remains with us with his smile, his peace and his deep love of Faith and Light.

From David, I learnt that you can love in silence and that the smile is a universal language for communication. Thank you to Hector and Angelica, his much-loved parents, for having given us David, their only son. May his infinite tenderness and his strength light up our lives and that of the communities. David, we will always love you, you will live forever in our hearts.

Elvira Gomero, Peru
Vice international coordinator



Aliette Défossés

I have learnt of the death of Aliette at the age of 82 years old. Aliette has been very involved in Faith and Light and in the "France Centre" prov-



ince for a long time. Mum of Emmanuel, who has a disability, she had been a community leader for a long time and also had responsibilities on the provincial council. I was very close to her; we had the same name and were certainly cousins! We got to know each other at a formation session for community leaders in Paris a long time ago. Agathe Desfossés Rimbault-Joffard.

Guy Dumas

Former treasurer of the "Canada East" province, Guy Dumas joined the Father on 6 December. Here, at the International Secretariat, we were able to appreciate his availability, his abilities and his kindness. We extend our sincere condolences to his family and friends.





Read, write, testify

The Way, the Truth and the Boat

In Sweden, Norway and Denmark we have written a book about Faith and Light. It contains the story of how the movement started, a presentation of Jean Vanier and his teaching, and several testimonies of what Faith and Light has meant for people in the communities.

It also tells about what we do when we meet in our communities, and how we do our mimes: In Faith and Light, a drama is not just an act - we are actually in the story, we live it, play and experience everything that happens. Here's something that we can't find in ordinary congregations, where people often are inhibited by comparison and shyness. Here we can take off the masks and become as children again.

Several friends in the communities have shared their testimonies and experiences. It is stories about how valuable the relationships with the disabled are, how it can contain wordless comfort, and sometimes also quite funny situations. It is thoughts on how much we can learn from our disabled friends. They are often totally dependent on people around them to get what they need, and in the same way we are also totally dependent on God to be able to live as His children.

In the book there are also some testimonies from the disabled. One girl from Denmark says: When I'm in Faith and Light, I forget all the demands and problems for a while. Here I am just myself, and the others see me as I really am. I feel free and 'normal'.

Four families have told about their experiences of living with disabled children. They tell about the difficulties they have met, but also how they feel blessed by their children who have a very special and natural relationship with God.

One family says: Today we can testify that he is a great gift to us all each day. He reminds us of what is essential in life.



Another family says: Our daughter often says, "Mom, I'm so happy that I'm alive! I want to thank God for being able to stand when my assistant helps me!"

We are all in the same boat, travelling together. You can actually say that Jesus is the boat because the Bible says that it is in him we live, move and have our being. He says that if we remain in him then he will remain in us. The picture of the boat on Faith and Light's logo reminds us that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Boat.

ANNE-METTE PLEIJEL JOHNSSON

The book in English will be available soon in pdf at the international secretariat

An idea for 2021!

What if you too told about the life of Faith and Light in your province? It could be a great tool to make yourself known on the occasion of our 50 years ...

International agenda

- **7 March:** provincial council "Danube" (Hungary, Romania, Serbia), Budapest, Hungary
- **8 March:** provincial council "Luzitana", Folgosa, Portugal
- **13-18 March:** meetings of the international coordinating team and board of directors, King Mariout, Egypt (postponed to October)
- **14-15 mars:** provincial council "Campo Belo" (Brazil Center), Belo Horizonte
- **14 March:** provincial council "France North", Damery
- **18 March:** provincial council "France East", Nancy
- **27-29 March:** formation session for the communities of Norway, Solestra
- **28-29 March:** provincial meeting "France Rhône Azur", Vénasque
- **28 March:** provincial council "Jésus, Light of the Andes" (Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru), Lima, Peru
- **4-5 April:** Easter retreat "Poland Centre East", Lublin
- **25 April:** formation sessions for the communities of "Jésus, Light of the Andes"
- **25 April:** provincial council "Canada East", Montréal
- **3 May:** Feast of Light for the "Canada East" province, Laval
- **8-10 May:** general assembly of the province "Northern Lights" (Denmark, Estonia, Norway, Sweden) Haslev, Denmark
- **15-17 May:** retreat Rainbow, Ave et Auffe, Belgium
- **22-24 May:** provincial council "Northern Lights", Vaddholmen, Sweden

International solidarity

We wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to the provinces that have sent their 2019 contributions. The donations campaign that we carried out in December has so far brought in 15 220 €.

We also extend our heartfelt thanks to our donor friends for their loyalty and generosity. Our donors are almost exclusively French. Why don't we have donors from other countries? If each of you sent us the names and addresses of people who know and love Faith and Light or members of your families who might help us financially, it would help to enlarge our international solidarity file and better support all the projects that need it.

An international committee is at work and will listen to you. It is open to all discussions and ready to welcome all your suggestions and ideas. To do this, you can write to Guénaël Reynaud, who is in charge of finances at the International Secretariat: greynaud-fli@orange.fr – Tel. + 33 1 53 69 44 30.

And God is able to provide you with any blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. (2 Cor 9, 8)

Marie-Hélène's letter



HOLY SATURDAY IN OUR LIVES



We have probably all known days in life where everything seems to be at an end. The horizon has disappeared. The road has come to a dead end. A broken career, the desertion or sudden death of a loved one, the announcement of the disability of a small child that you feel so unable to take on, the accident that leaves you hemiplegic. Sometimes a specific event causes despair. Sometimes it comes from a situation that is too difficult, stress accompanied by a permanent inner dissatisfaction. You feel extremely “ugly” and do not know how to get out of it. All this plunges us into a feeling of failure where life no longer has meaning.

On the evening of Good Friday, the apostles did not expect anything else. Jesus had been taken down from the Cross, his body placed in a tomb sealed by a rock. Everything was over. They were shaken, weighed down by grief and shame. It had all happened so quickly. It was only six days ago that Jesus was being cheered by a jubilant crowd. The day before yesterday, he was there in the midst of them, at this vigil on Holy Thursday, bathed in seriousness and sadness. Never before had Jesus seemed as close, as loving in his words and his gestures. *Abide in me as I abide in you...* (Jn 15, 4).

He washed the feet of each of them with infinite tenderness. During the meal, he gave them his body and his blood to be with each and every one of them in a perpetual communion.

It was all over. Judas, their friend, their brother, committed suicide. Peter denied. The past was terrible but the future was no better.

However, mysteriously, this Holy Saturday that should only have been about mourning and pain kept a place of silence and hope. It was Mary's heart. She remained in deep pain. She had seen her son made a mockery of, insulted, put to death, nailed to a cross. A death all the more terrible as Jesus had been abandoned by his friends and he died through the violence and hate of men. The spear that pierced the heart of Jesus, her beloved son, also pierced the heart of Mary.

*There will never again
be a permanent solitude
There is no longer the cross
without the dawn of a resurrection.*

She did not understand what had happened. She did not know what was going to happen. But not for one moment did her faith waiver. Yes, indeed, her son is the Son of God. Yes, the world was saved. On that Easter Saturday, the hope of the world took refuge in Mary's heart. In her suffering, Mary did not withdraw into herself. She only wanted to live in the moment, in an intense communion with Jesus.

Yesterday, just before he died, Jesus entrusted her with a mission: to now be John's mother. *Here is your son* (Jn 19, 26). The Gospel tells us that from this moment, the disciple took her home. Forgetting about herself, she was going to comfort John. I do not see John and Mary having great conversations. Comforting is being with the one who is alone, in despair.

No doubt, Mary pushed John to join Peter and the other apostles who were so stricken. We can think this, because on Easter morning, Peter and John run to the tomb together. In front of the empty tomb, John, prepared through Mary's faith, *saw and believed* (Jn 20, 8).

When we have days when, as on the evening of Good Friday, darkness has invaded our lives, perhaps we can dare to make this quite simple gesture of John: take Mary home, that is to say, into our hearts.

Even if we don't usually pray, even if our faith is undermined by circumstances that are too difficult and incomprehensible, we can at least call on Mary to help. St Bernard said: *Never was it known that anyone who turned to Mary was left unaided.*

Mary is all present, all loving and all powerful. She helps us to leave the past that is destroying us and frees us from a future that worries us. She takes our hand to experience the present in love. One step at a time. She

helps us to find Jesus who is the way. She leads us to those around us who are also hurting and need our tenderness, or to others who can help us find meaning in our life once more.

Since the first Passover, we have known through faith that in our lives, there will never again be a total disaster, permanent solitude, there is no longer the cross without the dawn of a resurrection.



¹ "La lumière d'une rencontre", Mame Editions, page 75.

*Will you love me
despite everything?*

*Will you love me
to the end?*