

Up Sails !

The international letter of Faith and Light N° 56, June 2023



Strasbourg 2023



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Annual paper subscription: 20 €

Faith and Light international

3 rue du Laos 75015 Paris France

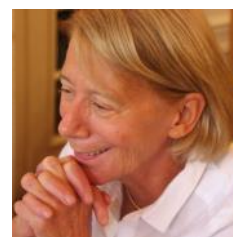
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Strasbourg 2023



Corinne Chatain
General secretary

In a month's time, 170 delegates representing every province in the world will gather in Strasbourg, France, for the international meeting and general assembly held every five years. The meeting will take place from 4 to 12 July.

This year's theme is "Called and sent like Peter", with sub-themes for each day:

- **Tuesday 4:** "Come after me" (the call).
- **Wednesday 5:** "Master, we are sinking" (fear).
- **Thursday 6:** "Go out into the deep and cast your nets" (trust) with a time for talking about the history of Faith and Light.
- **Friday 7:** "The least of you is the greatest" (the temptation to power) with a round table on Faith and Light prayer and ecumenism.
- **Saturday 8:** "You are the Messiah" (profession of faith) with a time to talk about the mission of Faith and Light.
- **Sunday 9:** "You must wash each other's feet" (serving like Jesus) with a round table discussion on how to breathe new life into our communities.
- **Monday 10:** "He lived and believed": witnesses to the resurrection
- **Tuesday 11:** "Feed my sheep" (mission of the leader) with a time for discussion on the mission of the leader.

The week will begin with the General Assembly. We will have reports from the President, the International Coordinator and the International Treasurer on the past five years. This will be followed by amendments to the constitution, priorities for 2023-2028, discernment, and elections for the international coordinator and members of the Board of Directors.

Each day, the small sharing groups will meet to reflect together on what was said in the morning during the speaking times. There will also be practical workshops: decorating candles, making a Faith and Light logo, etc. And workshops for reflection: the role of the provincial vice-coordinators, how to announce Faith and Light today, etc.

There will also be times for festivities and celebrations, such as the washing of feet and an ecumenical celebration.

Yes, a very busy week, and very important for the future of our movement. That's why I'd like to suggest that you say this prayer every day:

*Most good God,
you know what each person needs
and you give it to him every moment.
Soon we will be gathering
in Strasbourg for the General Assembly.
Send us your Holy Spirit
as on the day of Pentecost.
May your Spirit enlighten our hearts
May it help us to choose the people
that Faith and Light needs today.
May he fill these people with his gifts:
wisdom and listening
intelligence and interiority
humility and trust in you.
Come, Holy Spirit, come into our hearts.
It is you who has raised up Faith and Light
so that the least and the weakest
who are your beloved
may be surrounded by friendship
and affection.
Enlighten our minds and purify our hearts.
Confirm each of us in our vocation
to Faith and Light.
Make us live like Jesus and with him
now and for ever. Amen.*



St. Joseph of Calasanz

The Faith and Light community of St Joseph de Calasanz in Yaoundé (Cameroun) came into being on 17 March 2017 in the "Baptême de Jésus" Parish in Cité Verte.

The community was founded by Sister Anne-Marie, who brought together a number of families with children who have intellectual disabilities and young people. The community's first leader was Jean-Louis Tchouta, who have himself a physical disability.

Our community has eight families who attend our monthly meetings, which are held on the second Wednesday of the month, either in the parish or in the families' homes. Sister Anne-Marie remains our sister counsellor and the parish priest of the Congrégation des Pères Piaristes is our chaplain.

A few friends remain loyal to us, participating in the life of the community in a spirit of faith and listening. Not forgetting Madame Enama Adelaïde, our treasurer.

People with disabilities benefit from training by psychologists once a week for a token fee from parents.

As part of the Church, we celebrate Christmas with our "children", followed by the Harvest Festival, which introduces them to sharing, and our Feast of Light on 2 February.

There's no shortage of diffi-



culties: the care provided by our psychologists and our children's health are of great concern.

SR A.M. NGONO



Children's work session with one of the psychologists.



Jean-Louis is in little Olivier's family. After the massages, he fitted him with prosthetic hands.

Cameroon has 10 communities and is part of the "Our Lady of Africa - the savannah" province, along with Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Togo and the Central African Republic.

"The small key"

ON SUNDAY 26 FEBRUARY, THE ELECTIONS FOR THE NEW VICE-COORDINATOR OF THE CAMPANIA COMMUNITIES TOOK PLACE IN ACERRA. FABIO BRONZINI, COORDINATOR OF THE PROVINCE OF ITALY CENTRE "KIMATA", WAS ALSO PRESENT.

It has been an honour for me to be asked to act as an outside eye and to lead discernment for the Campania region. Wherever I go in Faith and Light, I find welcome, affection and friendship. I experienced all this at Acerra during the meeting of the five Campania communities.

Discernment led to the election of Antonio Piscitelli, a "historic" friend of the community, who succeeds Gaetano Russo, another great friend in "Il Germoglio" community in Naples. We thank him warmly for having guided the region over the last few years.

The day was very intense, with many moments of exchange and reflection. I hope that it was useful for the communities to be able to reread together certain points of the Constitution of Faith and Light



Fabio hands the candle to Antonio

where responsibility is defined as a service and a commitment to all the members of the communities.

In the preceding days, the communities of Campania had asked the Bishop of Naples for a special blessing. The response, full of precious words, was not long in coming:



22 February 2023

Dear communities of the Faith and Light movement, Thank you for your testimony and for your commitment on behalf of brothers and sisters who have special needs and who share with humanity the great need for love that characterises each of us.

A community is precious, it does not have the rigidity of an associative commitment, but welcomes in a fluid way those who love the values that bring a group of people together, passionate about achieving simple objectives, in an inclusive way, as much for those who commit themselves by putting their heart and responsibility into it, as for those who want to live a simple experience of sharing, if only for a moment. If there is a "small key", it is that of a community in which fraternal love attracts and encourages commitment, self-giving and openness to others. And when "the other" "looks at me", he questions me and makes me take responsibility. It's the way the other looks at me that pushes me to take care of myself. And when you meet these special brothers and sisters, who hold the primacy of tenderness (in

this they are certainly unbeatable), we realise that a person's true worth does not depend on the quality of their work, but on their capacity to love and be loved; we realise that every word we hear from them is an epitaph engraved on the walls of our hearts; we realise that every smile is a sun that breaks through the clouds of worries that each of us tries to face day after day.

The new vice regional coordinator will be chosen from among you. May this be a time when, invoking the Spirit, you will listen prayerfully to the Word of God, so that it may help you to establish the most appropriate profile to enhance the commitment of your communities. By establishing this profile in advance, you will have at your disposal useful criteria for freeing yourselves from the logic of roles linked to people, in order to think more about the good of the people you have to serve.

May the Spirit enlighten you and may the Lord Jesus bless your path!

Don Mimmo Battaglia
Metropolitan Archbishop of Naples



Merciful Father

Over a weekend in March, our community had the pleasure, along with other Faith and Light communities, of taking part in the Lenten retreat held at the Shrine of St Andrew Bobola in the Mokotow district of Warsaw.

The theme of our meeting was "Merciful Father". During the retreat teaching given by Father Rafał Szejka SJ, we looked for God's mercy in the parable of the prodigal son, the painting by Rembrandt entitled "The Return of the Prodigal Son" and in the Stations of the Cross. On the 10th anniversary of Cardinal Bergoglio's election as Pope, we listened to what Pope Francis has to say about the merciful Father.

In small groups, we meditated on the respective stations of the Passion, then celebrated the Way of the Cross together.

During the break, we sat down at a communal table where a delicious meal awaited us.

After food for the body, it was time for food for the soul. Each of us had the opportunity to experience God's mercy individually during adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the sacrament of reconciliation and Mass.

Here is a short photo report.



Disability and integration

IN ISSUE 54 OF "UP SAILS!", WE INTRODUCED PAOLA AND NORA, WHO HAVE BECOME CATECHISTS IN RESPONSE TO THE POPE'S CALL FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES TO HAVE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE CHURCH...

On Saturday 11 March, Paola Colombo and I, who have been catechists in our parish for some time together with Liliana Ghiringhelli, were invited to the Catholic University of Milan to attend a meeting organised by the Italian Bishops' Conference's National Pastoral Service for the people with disabilities. We met many people there, in particular Sr Veronica Donatello, who is in charge of the Service. She was very happy that we were there. We felt so much joy and emotion because it was the first time we had taken part in such an important event. We were joined by Liliana and Gianni Muia, Don Mauro Santoro and other priests. Among the many volunteers were Angela Grassi, Faith and Light's international vice-coordinator, and Elisa Cassone, from the Gratosoglio community.

At 9:30 everyone sits down and we get started! The conference began with a mime from Mark's Gospel about the paralytic. We were well prepared, while Livio played soft music in the background. We finished by praying together and sitting down again.

We then listened to talks on the theme of "Disability and integration", starting with



Nora and Sr Veronica

Sister Véronique. Everyone explained that in this complicated world, many people are struggling. But we need to start thinking about parishes as places that are open to all, truly open to all. A welcoming community is built on people's "talents". Finally, Monsignor Mario Delpini, Archbishop of Milan, spoke to us about slowness: "Slowness teaches the community that efficiency must not be the goal. Instead, the aim must be to build the community, to strengthen it. Haste is a limit, slowness is a value. This is a theme that my community and I experienced two years ago at the youth camp



Mgr Delpini

in Marina di Massa: we realised just how much fragility surrounds us and how it helps us to live our moments together in slow time.

Two young girls translated everything into sign language, to get the message across to those who couldn't hear. A wonderful thing!

There was a great turnout and many testimonies.

In the afternoon, there were sharing groups. Paola and I talked about the liturgy for young people and our experience as catechists, creating a lot of astonishment among those listening to us. I had the opportunity to take a photo with Sister Veronica. She and I were delighted with this wonderful day and I even gave her a hug.

Thank you for this conference, because talking about so many problems reveals so many things.

Your reporter
NORA BUCCHERI



Liliana and Paola



Paola and Nora

Celebrating and choosing Life

Our Faith and Light "Soleil" community in Dijon, France, had the great joy of presenting a show entitled "Choose Life" on 19 March at St-Nicolas church in Beaune, in the presence of our archbishop Antoine Hérouard.

For you, Sister Emmanuelle, what does Choosing Life mean?... So began the show with this question to Sister Emmanuelle, from the Carmelite convent in Flavignerot, a community with which we are twinned.

In the midst of magnificent sets designed especially for the occasion, and accompanied by the Ainéo worship group from a parish in our diocese, we took the audience on a journey through the Bible, helping them to discover the gift of God and the words of Life he has bequeathed to us for living happily within ourselves and with our neighbours.

The show was made up of a number of scenes, mixing and alternating joy, enthusiasm and wonder, moments of song and dance, and moments of prayer and meditation.

Our big-hearted friends, with their simplicity, truth, depth and joy, touched the hearts of those who came to the show.

Jesus, source of living water, Bread of life, the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep...

Life was truly celebrated in all its beauty and depth!



The words of the chorus of this song, repeated twice, still ring out:

Choose Life
Open your heart
to God's gift
Be alive
for the Lord
Let yourself
be consumed
by his Fire!



MARC BIENVENU
For the "Soleil" of Dijon



A very simple meeting



we've understood from the story with a mime: René and I play pilgrims, we're on our way with our bags and sticks towards Emmaus. We meet Jesus (played by Jean-Marie in a white cape), we walk with him but we don't recognise him. Until he shared the bread. So, happy to have found him again, we head back to Jerusalem to proclaim to all our friends that he is alive.

To show the joy of the group, people line up and dance to the music. The first in line carries a lantern.

When the music stops, the first person passes the lantern to the second and goes to the back of the line, which starts again with new music, with a different rhythm: this is to show that even if everyone is different, the joy is the same and we share it with everyone. It was really cheerful, and we'll have to do it again!

Afterwards, it was time for prayer, and as Father Augustin was there, we were able to celebrate a lovely festive Mass in the chapel. Père Augustin has a talent for leading us in enthusiastic alleluias. Thérèse also treated us to a beautiful piece of flute music during communion.

Back in the refectory, we mix and share the snacks that everyone has brought along: as well as sandwiches, pastries and cakes, we even get some chocolate eggs



Hello to all friends of Faith and Light. On 16 April, we are meeting at Bois-Seigneur-Isaac.

To prepare for the theme of the meeting, we are spreading sheets on the tables with representations of the story of the disciples of Emmaus.

We then receive an explanation of the Easter theme, a discovery of life on a pilgrimage route. We sing "Il est Vivant" and "Nos cœurs sont brûlants" with gestures.

In small groups, we are invited to look closely at the paintings on the tablecloths and discover their message. All this to ask ourselves the question: what would I like to say to Jesus, for example: "Thank you Jesus for our community".

We try to express what

that some of you have brought along: thank you, bells!

We celebrated Jimmy and Viviane's birthdays, and then it was time to tidy up and sweep the room that had welcomed us.

Thank you all for a wonderful meeting.

JEAN-PIERRE
Emmaüs N°9, may 2023

An unusual marathon!



On 23 April 2023, the "South Lebanon Jordan" province organised a marathon for its members, their families and friends. The event was a great success, with around 500 participants, including children from the Sagesse school and university. The marathon was an opportunity for members of the province to get together, support each other and take part in a fun and healthy activity. The event was under the patronage of His Excellency the Maronite Bishop of Beirut Boulos Abed Al Sater and the Mayor of Chiyah Edmond Gharious.

Organising this event required a great deal of effort and dedication on the part of several members of the province, including Bachir Koudsi, Ralph Otayek, Elias Samia, Georges Amar, Maria Amar and Maya Metni, accompanied by the sports coach from the Sagesse schools. They worked hard to ensure that everything was perfect, from logistics to security and fundraising for people with disabilities.



Mgr Boulos

On the day of the event, the excitement was palpable as participants gathered at the start line. Runners began warming up, chatting to their friends and sharing their personal goals for the race. Some simply wanted to finish the course, while others had ambitions to beat their personal best.

The race itself was magnificent, with a course that meandered through the streets of the city. Participants were divided into several age and gender categories.

The runners were cheered on along the route by Faith and Light, who shouted encouragement and handed out water and snacks.

As the runners crossed the finish line, they were greeted by a crowd who congratulated them on their achievement. Runners shook hands, hugged each other and shared their race experiences. The joy and camaraderie was palpable as everyone gathered to celebrate their achievement.

After the race, the Faith and Light members went for a walk accompanied by the bishop, the mayor, the participants and all the celebrities.

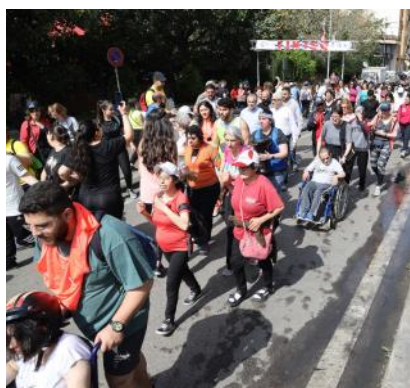
Beyond the fun and camaraderie, the Faith and Light marathon was also a great stress reliever, a chance to let off steam and focus on something positive. For others, the marathon was a chance to get away from the daily grind, set a goal and focus on their mental and physical health. The event was supported by numerous sponsors and advertised on radio and television.

Finally, the winners were announced and medals were handed out.

In the end, the marathon was an unforgettable experience for all the participants. It showed the strength of the province and everyone's ability to achieve incredible things when supported and encouraged by others.

Thanks to the efforts and generosity of many.

MERRY HAYAA



"South Lebanon Jordan" province is made of 31 communities

Testimony

Come and see

ANA AND JORGE ÚBEDA BERÁSTEGUI ARE THE COORDINATORS OF THE "TERRA ET MARE" PROVINCE. GALILEA 153, THE MAGAZINE OF THE CENTRE FOR LITURGICAL PASTORAL CARE IN BARCELONA (SPAIN), ASKED THEM TO PRESENT FAITH AND LIGHT TO ITS READERS.

Faith and Light is a movement of Christian meeting communities. Faith and Light places at their centre people with intellectual disabilities, one of the most abused, excluded and invisible groups of people throughout history, different cultures and also religions.

Welcome and inclusion

It's hard to explain what it means to live in community with these people, so we invite you to meet us: come and see. If you ever visit us, you'll see that people with learning disabilities, like all of us, need to be with others, to belong and to be welcomed. Giving these people the opportunity to interact and participate, to be listened to, understood and welcomed, reveals their abilities, their gifts and their joy. In this way, you will see that we are welcoming and inclusive communities. If you stay a little longer, you'll see that while people with disabilities need us, we need them too.

They bring us, the supposedly normal, face to face with our own fragility, dependence and needs, with their joys and shadows. They become a way of encountering the deepest, most authentic and most beautiful part of ourselves and of human nature. It will no longer be a question of overcoming disability but of sharing it, experiencing it as something that unites us and welcoming it. In this way, you will see that we are communities of recognition and acceptance. If you start walking with us, you will see that people with an intellectual disability have the need and the capacity to develop a full spiritual life, whatever their difficulties.

Participation and accessibility

But to develop this spirituality, we need to recognise it as a relationship with God who loves us, calls us and seeks our companionship, and we need to develop the opportuni-



ties, supports and scenarios in which this spiritual life takes place within communities and their churches. In this way, Faith and Light communities are communities of participation and accessibility. If you stay with us, you will finally see what has been there all along: a discovery that makes us prophetic communities. You will see that people with disabilities are God's beloved children, created in his image and likeness, who lead us to him and reveal to us the face of a God who, in a mysterious way, also has a disability.



**The province "Terra et Mare"
(Spain East)
counts 23 communities.**

Testimony

Yvon, our friend, our brother

Dear friends,
As you may already know, we are mourning and saddened by the sudden departure of our friend and brother Yves 'Yvon' Fonteneau. He passed away during the night of 15 to 16 March 2023. Today we would like to share with you, very briefly and simply, a few words about Yvon as we knew him. Yvon was born in Paris on 9 March 1953. He came to L'Arche in Paris in 1986, at the age of 23. In 2002, having felt the need to live more in the country, he moved to Trosly-Breuil and arrived at La Ferme.

Initially a member of our community, he continues to work at the ESAT. First in the market garden, then as a subcontractor. In 2017, he took a well-deserved retirement... but continued to be very active at La Ferme, welcoming visitors and looking after the garden.

The Parisian titi became a farmer, until the very recent installation of a henhouse: Yvon had been taking faithful care of the three hens at La Ferme for two years.

Those who knew him can attest to the fact that his true vocation was hospitality. Attentive to everyone, very considerate, very benevolent, always ready to help, to render service, to carry suitcases, to prepare a sandwich or a coffee, to show people around, etc.

He was also a courageous and strong-willed man. With great discretion, he overcame the many problems caused by his frail health to look after others and give generously of himself. He was a man of great character.

He was also a man of faith. The cross always around his neck (right up to his last moments), assiduous in serving at the altar during Masses, assiduous at times of prayer.

A man of unity, a man who built bridges, who forged solid friendships and remained faithful to them. A week ago, on Thursday 9 March 2023, Yvon gathered many friends to celebrate his 70th birthday. It was a wonderful party, a day of joy and celebration. Yvon was



happy, surrounded and full of enthusiasm. We have chosen to share with you a few photos taken on the day of the party.

We are saddened by his sudden departure, and grateful for all that he has given, all that he has been for us, during these 20 years at La Ferme.

With our friendship,

The Community of La Ferme

Testimony

Gabriel, the messenger of God

GABRIEL COBB, A 22-YEAR-OLD AMERICAN ATHLETE, IS DEFINITELY NOT LIKE THE OTHERS. AT THE END OF MARCH, HE ADDRESSED THE UNITED NATIONS ON THE OCCASION OF WORLD DOWN'S SYNDROME DAY, INTRODUCING HIMSELF QUITE SIMPLY AS GABRIEL, GOD'S MESSENGER, AND "WITHOUT LIMITS".

On 17 March 2023, Gabriel Cobb and his parents will certainly remember! What a destiny for this young American with Down's Syndrome, who became a triathlon athlete and spokesperson at the United Nations to show that anything is possible and that he has "no limits". It was on 21 March, World Down's Syndrome Day, that Gabriel was invited to speak to a United Nations group, which met for several days to reflect on the challenges faced by families raising children with different expectations and stages of development.

Why was Gabriel's testimony important? Because the young man is a well-known sportsman, who does triathlons (swimming, running and cycling in a single race). Although his first triathlon was in 2018, he has since completed nine others. "I've done it, I'm a triathlete", he exclaimed to a round of applause from (...)

"My biggest challenge is the lack of muscle tone. It affects every muscle in my body and I need 30% more energy to do an activity", he said, before thanking "his trainers, family and friends who have encouraged him to push the limits". "I pray that I in turn will give them joy and inspiration", added the young man, who makes no secret of his strong faith. (...)

As for his emotional father, he admits that he still finds it hard to believe! *"Gabriel is not a professional speaker, but somehow God thinks he has a message to share."*

The parents confided that before arriving at the United Nations, the family stopped off at the nearby church of Sainte-Agnès to pray. The main man confirms this. "My faith is the most important part of my life. I like to attend Mass every day and proclaim it loud and



clear." "After all, I am Gabriel, God's messenger," he laughs.

In front of the audience, Gabriel was keen to emphasise the role played by his family in his life. "I have two loving parents who have always held their heads high. (...)

"The fact that we have come this far, that my son can have a full life, that he has opportunities, both at school and in all other areas, and that now he is being asked to speak at the United Nations, is a beautiful message of hope and support for all the families involved," said his father.

As a society, we have come a long way in our understanding and appreciation of people with special needs and other abilities.

There's no doubt that Gabriel's little something extra is a fine message for society as a whole. And the final word goes to the hero of the day: *"I have Down's syndrome and I have no limits!"*

BÉRENGÈRE DOMMAIGNÉ
Aleteia 28/03/23

Testimony

A blessed time in Ukraine!

I felt..... as if I'd visited paradise: the sky, the clouds, the flowers, the birds, the squirrels, the butterflies, the pines (living and dead), the sun, the rain, the wind, the snow.

Unbelievable beauty! Why didn't I notice it until now? Because it's only now that God has opened my eyes!

Three hours of silence were enough for me, during which God opened my ears and I heard his voice! I recognised his voice! God works in silence. God cares!

"Almost a week has gone by since the retreat, but my joy is the same, God is leading me, I just have to listen to him, hear him and trust him. The King lives in my heart...

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be here!"

This is the comment sent to us by Mariana Albrecht, a participant in our silent retreat.

From 9 to 12 March 2023, our Ukraine province organised a silent retreat for friends. The theme of the retreat was "You alone are worthy of praise".

We are very happy that after the long isolation during the Covid and the war, we were able to organise a few days of silence for the members of our communities. Father Mykhailo Stanczyshyn gave the teachings. His words focused on the fact that we should thank the Lord for what we have. During these four days, the participants had the opportunity to take part in daily Mass, meditate on the Holy Scriptures, listen to Father's teachings, simply be in silence and pray.

The fact that a member of Faith and Light for over 20 years who is currently serving in the Ukrainian armed forces (he returned to the front three weeks ago) was able to take part was a great gift for us. In addition, three women members of Faith and Light, whose husbands are also at the front, were able to join us. We were delighted that our retreat became a place of rest and support for them. We are grateful to God and our servicemen

and women for giving us the opportunity to hold our event, which was an inspiring and blessed time of restoration.

IRYNA



Testimony

To God, Professor Marie-Odile Rethoré

I HAD THE PLEASURE OF MEETING MARIE-ODILE RÉTHORÉ SEVERAL TIMES. SHE WAS A GREAT FRIEND OF MARIE-HÉLÈNE'S; THEY WERE BORN THE SAME YEAR, THE SAME MONTH. MARIE-ODILE WAS VERY FOND OF FAITH AND LIGHT AND CAME TO THE FAITH AND LIGHT PROVINCE THAT I COORDINATED IN THE 90S, TO GIVE A REMARKABLE TEACHING. SHE WAS A TRULY "ADMIRABLE" WOMAN.

CORINNE



In the words of one of her patients some twenty years ago, Dr Aimé Ravel began to see that she was keeping in shape and maintaining her usual dynamism, and he said to Professor Rethoré: 'You are eternal! I must say that I thought so too.'

Born in 1929, three years after Jérôme Lejeune, Marie-Odile Rethoré was an emblematic figure at the Institut Jérôme Lejeune, a pioneer in genetics and in the care of people with intellectual disabilities. On 17 April 2023, she passed away at the age of 93.

A doctor by vocation, as she herself tells it, she specialised by becoming a geneticist, and focused on the issue of disability. In 1957, she defended her doctoral thesis in medicine and devoted herself to the study of chromosomal diseases, in particular trisomy 21. In 1995, she was elected to the Académie Nationale de Médecine. She was the second woman, after Marie Curie, to become a full member.

A close collaborator and right-hand woman of Professor Jérôme Lejeune for more than forty years, notably at the Necker hospital, she dedicated her life to continuing the work begun together and of which he had made her the heir. I still remember," she said, "the day before he died, I was at his bedside and we



reminisced together about all the patients we had cared for until the end of their lives. At the end of this long litany, he looked at me and said 'all the others, I entrust to you'.

In 1998, four years after Professor Lejeune's death, the Fondation Jérôme Lejeune set up the Institut Jérôme Lejeune, and she became its first medical director, alongside Doctors Clotilde Mircher and Aimé Ravel. She held this

position until 2017. Many of the doctors on the team can testify to the immense legacy she passed on to them. She taught me everything," says Dr Jeanne Toulas, a paediatrician at the Institute. She passed on to me the most important thing of all: her way of looking at patients. In her eyes, they weren't disabled; she saw their talents, their wealth, their beauty. They were never reduced to a disability, but considered as a whole, with their family environment, their school environment... she taught me to look at each person in a profoundly human way." She was also an excellent clinician, with a wealth of knowledge and a keen ability to analyse and diagnose.

"She also acted as a mediator between the children and their families," adds Dr Clotilde Mircher, geneticist and head of the Institut Jérôme Lejeune's consultation unit. On many occasions, she accompanied parents in the discovery of their child, helping them to get to grips with him or her, to discover them beyond the shock of their disability. She used to say that our patients deserved the best: the best of medicine, the best of research, the best specialists... She wanted to give everyone, professionals and families alike, the desire to take care of them".

Aware that there will never be an immediate cure for intellectual disability, she has worked hard every day to support her patients, to help them enjoy a rich and dignified life, in particular by avoiding over-disability and associated pathologies. She says: *"I wanted to be a doctor so that I could provide support, and I've never regretted it."*

Her life as a doctor was also marked by numerous publications and training courses in which she took part. She wrote over 160 scientific publications, and was the author or co-author of numerous articles and books. She also received numerous honours, including the Légion d'Honneur, the Ordre National du Mérite and awards from the Académie des Sciences de Paris.



Marie-Odile, standing behind Professor Lejeune

Driven by a great love for her patients and their families, she devoted her life to caring for the thousands of people she saw in consultation over a period of sixty years, and whom she affectionately called her 'treasures'. *"She gave them her whole heart,"* says Dr Mircher.

Aware that there will never be an immediate cure for intellectual disability, she has worked hard every day to support her patients, to help them enjoy a rich and dignified life, in particular by avoiding over-disability and associated pathologies. She says: *"I wanted to be a doctor so that I could provide support, and I've never regretted it."*

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JERÔME LEJEUNE INSTITUTE



For Alain, your patient for over fifty years, you have been an angel on earth. Thank you, Alain. You will be reunited with all your treasures, happy to see you again, including Alain who preceded you by a few months.

Nicole, mother

It is with immense sadness that we learn of the death of this wonderful woman, a person filled with kindness and humility. Madame Marie-Odile Réthoré, I remember the day you welcomed us with our wonderful daughter Chloé, to explain her illness and help us plan for her future. We arrived at the Institut Lejeune empty-handed, but left full of hope. Today, Chloé is all grown up, and neither she nor we will forget you for all you have done. Our God will welcome you fully because you are a great lady.

Family K.

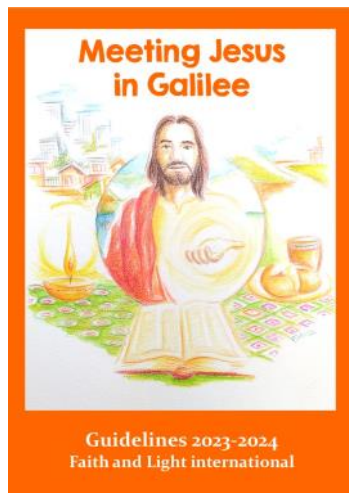
The first memory that comes back to me was at the H.C.O., which she often visited. I asked her if she would have liked to study Jesus' karyotype? Her first reaction was to shrug her shoulders and say that it was of no interest. A few seconds later, she added: "You know, for a woman to give birth to a boy without the intervention of a man, there must have been a miracle at his conception in the womb of his mother Saint Anne." I realised that she had given me the scientific explanation of the Immaculate Conception!

On the second occasion - it may have been the same day - I volunteered to drive her home. Isabelle was there and it was she who told her about Julie, asking, "Do you think she realises her disability?" Julie must have been about five years old. Marie-Odile answered her point-blank: "But she's known it since she was born, poor dear! Her tone was always a bit gruff, but her heart was made of gold! A great woman!

Ghislain du Chéné

HAS JUST BEEN PUBLISHED

Guidelines 2023-2024



The international coordination of Faith and Light has asked the Brazilian provinces to draw up a guidelines for the meetings of all the communities in our great family. What we offer to Faith and Light is a small contribution compared to what we receive from it.

The guidelines reflects the country that produces it. The riches of our people and our environment have long been seen as the world's backyard. Our autonomy as a nation is a road still strewn with challenges. We are suffering the consequences of a global economy that emphasises the accumulation of wealth, to the detriment of the realities of our peoples. Pope Francis continually denounces this economic model, which places the human person on a lower plane.

We would like to highlight some words that will recur in all the meetings: **Daily - Time of fidelity or fourth time - Give meaning to my life.**

To download on the website:

<https://www.foietlumiere.org/en/community/guidelines>

10 days confined with Mary Waiting for the Spirit

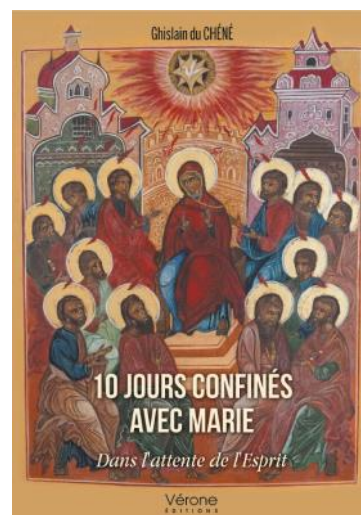
After "Moi, Marie, femme de Cléophas", published in 2016, Ghislain du Chéné has published "10 jours confinés avec Marie - Dans l'attente de l'Esprit".

The Acts of the Apostles is rather discreet about the period between the Ascension and Pentecost; we only know that the disciples were assiduous in prayer and that Matthias was elected to replace Judas. Yet these ten days must have been a very important time of preparation for the mission, and Mary carried this community, the first Church, just as she had carried Jesus for nine months. She was the only one who had already received the Spirit, and she agreed to take care of the disciples.

The author wanted to understand what had happened in the Upper Room, and in this book he has imagined how those ten days unfolded, with times for teaching, testimonies, sharing, celebration and prayer.

Discover a story that allows you to revisit many characters from the Gospels, to attend a foot-washing celebration, and to hear what Mary's good advice might have been to the disciples before they set off on their mission, so that they might be joyful and bold witnesses.

Editions Vérone, 144 pages, 14,50 €, in French



For our reflection, Ghislain du Chéné

Get up, take your stretcher and walk

(Mc 2, 9)

For the thirteenth year, men (students, young professionals, fathers, grand-fathers, priests) walked from their parishes in the Paris region to the Sacré Coeur in Montmartre (in Paris) to walk in the footsteps of Saint Joseph with the brothers for a day.

For my part, this was the third time I had set off with a chapter from a neighbouring parish. This year, we were asked to reflect on the theme of welcoming vulnerability. The stretcher I had taken with me was that of Jean Vanier: I wanted to welcome all that had been revealed about his behaviour, which was very different from what he had shown us, and to reflect on what we needed to learn from it in order to talk about it calmly, both with those who had known him well - like me - and with others.

We started in the morning on the banks of a pond, in fine weather that stayed with us all day, despite the rather pessimistic weather forecast. We stood in squares and each person gave their intentions for this day of walking, prayer and meetings. Then we set off for Paris, full of energy and the desire to share, carrying each other's burdens (cf. Gal 6:2). With my stretcher, I had also taken these words that I had heard a few days earlier in a Parisian church: *"It wasn't John who did you good and prepared you to welcome Julie, it was Me. I brought you to him, and he will be thanked for what he did for you; he was only an instrument, so it's not to him that you should give thanks, but to Me. What you can do is pray for him."* I realised that I had done what the famous Chinese proverb says: *"When the wise man points at the moon, the fool looks at the finger"*. It was as if I'd attended a magnificent organ concert and admired only the musical instrument, not the organist and even less the composer.

Several people came up to me to talk, after hearing what I had said at the time of the sharing, and we had a good exchange. I found it very calming to realise that I had to give



Photos : Michel Pourmy

thanks to God and to God alone, and from that day I brought back the words of Saint Paul, which have never left me: *"At all times and for all things, give thanks to God"* (Eph 5:20).

On arrival at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, we welcomed a number of people with disabilities who joined us to take part in the time of gathering, not all of whom had been able to walk with the chapters. Many people were busy bringing in extra chairs so that everyone could sit down, but many remained standing. There was a very beautiful mass, followed by a rosary recited by several groups around the basilica, accompanied by police



motorcyclists to ensure the safety of these street prayers... Then the programme continued with vespers, conferences, a time of adoration and compline, but I confess I didn't stay until the end.

Nonetheless, it was a magnificent day, and it's good to see events full of fervour, which makes you feel less alone. In any case, I left very comforted, ready to give thanks to God for everything, and not to miss my target...



International Agenda

- **2-4 June:** formation session for the Belgian coordinating teams, Wépion
- **3-5 June:** formation session for chaplains from the "Our Lady of Guadalupe" province (Mexico), led by Father Antonio Garcia, provincial chaplain, Zoom
- **10-11 June:** "France Entre deux Mers" provincial meeting, Boulaur abbey
- **11 June:** pilgrimage for the Italian communities of Lombardy, Sanctuary of Our Lady of Caravaggio
- **16-18 June:** retreat for the communities of Ohio and the USA East Provincial Council, Ohio
- **17 June:** Lebanon South-Jordan Provincial Council, Fanar, Lebanon
- **24 June:** celebration of the fortieth anniversary of Faith and Light in Poland, Gniezno
- **25-30 June:** retreat for young adults from Ireland, Trosly-Breuil, France
- **30 June-7 July:** holidays for the Italian provinces, Cesenatico
- **2 July:** national day for the communities of Luxembourg
- **2 July:** time of prayer in the Seychelles, Victoria
- **4-12 July:** Faith and Light general assembly and international meeting, Strasbourg, France
- **10 July:** "Lebanon South-Jordan" provincial pilgrimage, Baabda
- **16-24 July:** holidays for the communities of Slovenia, Kančevci (1/5)
- **23-29 July:** holidays for the communities of Slovenia, Pohorje (2/5)

International solidarity

Project to support

The international meeting and General assembly in Strasbourg (July 2023) will bring together over 150 leaders from all around the world. It is therefore essential that representatives from all countries are able to attend, starting with those that are most difficult and isolated. Many countries are too poor to be able to afford the cost of bringing their leaders to this meeting. Many communities are working hard and with great imagination and courage to raise funds to enable delegates from Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Central and South America to attend this international meeting. But this will not be enough.

All donations are welcome, even the smallest ones!

<https://www.foietlumiere.org/en/donate/international-meeting-2023>

All donations are welcome, even the smallest ones!



Family album

Howard Brand



Dear Friends,
Cornerstone community is sad to announce the loss of Howard Brand. He has been part of cornerstone community since the the early 90's. Howard had cerebral palsy. He was an absolute delight to have as part of his community. He brought so much Joy and love to our fiesta's. Please hold Howard, his family, friends and the cornerstone community in your prayers as we mourn his loss.

We ask also for prayers for the people in the North Island as the struggle with the devastation of cycle Gabrielle. For those who have lost loved one, and for those still not found, for those who have lost their home and livelihoods. we ask our God to enfold them in his loving arms.

We also think of the earthquake victims, and the conflict in the Ukraine.

Mary de Leijer (New Zealand)

Frédéric Cornille



Frédéric was elected coordinator of the "France Loire Rhône Auvergne" province in February 2023. He was the coordinator of the "Enfants de Lumière" community in Lyon.

He succeeds Éric and Elisabeth Signoret.

We thank him from the bottom of our hearts for his "yes". And we also thank Eric and Elisabeth for all the work they have done.

Welcome Pénélope!

On 3 June, I was delighted to go to Caen for the christening of my sixth little granddaughter: three week old, Pénélope. Needless to say, she's magnificent!

I can't resist the temptation to introduce her five brothers and sisters: Louis, Arthus, Calixte and Faustine.
Corinne



Great news

We have just learned that a community is being set up in Congo Brazzaville. We welcome it and wish it every success.

Marie-Hélène's letter



Being a father

Why a special focus on the father? Don't children need both parents, their father and their mother? Why distinguish one from the other, when in marriage a man and a woman seek the intimate communion of their hearts, their souls and their bodies. Together they build a home. They bring children into the world. Together, they lead them, day after day, to become man and woman in their turn.

There are two reasons for this reflection. Firstly, the father, more than the mother, is contested by our contemporaries. Yet he is the main beam of the family and, by the same token, of society (a beam that does not weigh down but supports). Secondly, more often than mothers, fathers feel overwhelmed by the arrival of a disabled child. His temptation in the face of trial, in the face of suffering, is that of the apostles at the time of Jesus' arrest. They foresaw the horrible hours of the Passion. They cannot bear it. They flee.

The father is at the forefront of today's attacks. While there is no mention of the murder of the mother, there has been a lot of talk about "the death of the father". In the media, the father is often portrayed in two ways, in two opposing caricatures. Sometimes he is the authoritarian, abusive father. His presence is oppressive. Rebellion against him is a condition for liberation. Sometimes, on the other hand, the father resigns. By dint of being reproached for their excessive authority, their psychological and pedagogical errors, fathers who have been made to feel guilty fade into insignificance.

Fathers must overcome these two temptations: authoritarianism and abdication. This is all the more necessary when the child he was

expecting with joy and pride is disabled. His wounded pride can lead him to demand too much of the toddler. They want the child to progress, to learn, to "pull through" at all costs. This same inverted pride can lead him to distance himself from the child, and even from his home. The father of a very disabled little girl once told me: "If I've worked so much overtime, it wasn't out of professional





necessity. If I went to the football match on Sunday, it wasn't because I liked the sport. It was because I couldn't bear to face my daughter and my wife.

Who then is the Father?

He is (along with the mother) the giver of life. In his paternal vocation, he gives it by conceiving the child and, day after day, by bringing the child's freedom to maturity.

In this growth, the child vitally needs the atmosphere of peace that comes from the unity of his parents. Their love for each other is as important to him as bread and milk. "Husbands, love your wives" (Eph 5:25) says Saint Paul. A wife is often capable of any courage, if she feels her husband's gaze of tenderness and trust. A mother once wrote to me: "My husband never talks to me about his feelings towards me. However, when he was away on a trip - it's rare for him to leave - he sent me a little note in which I read: "I admire you for your courage, I thank you for your smile and the way you carry Xavier. I love you". In his shyness, he never mentioned those three lines to me. They help me to live

every day. Husbands, if you don't dare to speak out, why not write?

Children need security. What gives him that security is the presence of his father. "Daddy's here. Everything is transformed. Fear subsides. Anger disappears. Joy springs forth. Undoubtedly, there are the demands of the profession, of social or Christian commitment. But we have to make sure they don't lead to dispersion, to demands in all directions. You can be present, in heart and spirit, even on the other side of the world. You can be physically at home but absent because you are absorbed in your own preoccupations, tense, unavailable, untouchable.

No father can 'love' as God himself loves his children. But everyone can strive to do so. It's important not to play a character, to recognise your limits. What is essential is the desire of the heart. The desire to bring to its fullness the life of a man or woman in the making that has been entrusted to us, knowing that we are never alone. Our spouse is there. God, too, who wants to make us his collaborators.

The child is there, saying or thinking: "Daddy!

**May your Spirit enlighten our hearts.
May it help us to choose the people
that Faith and Light needs today.
May he fill them with his gifts:
wisdom and listening
intelligence and interiority
humility and trust in you.**

