

Guidelines 2004 - 2005



International
Faith
and
Light

Together in community
With the Gospel of John

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Dear friends,

For the third and last year, our communities will walk together guided by the St John's Gospel. We couldn't possibly leave out the last part of this Gospel which reveals to us the secret heart of Jesus and how much he thirsts to love and lead each one of us into the mystery of divine Love?

Jean Vanier likes to repeat that the Gospel of John is **the Gospel of friendship and communion of hearts**. This Gospel is really for us! It shows our communities once more the path to walk.

Look at the summary of these « Guidelines » and the theme which is proposed for each month : this year, there is a continuous invitation to live out more fully friendship, pardon, fidelity and communion of hearts.

Not only when we meet in our communities, but throughout all our life, we can and must help each other to **live every moment in the love of Jesus**. He loves us. We try **humbly** to love Him and express this love to each other, when we tenderly wash each others' feet.

I am really grateful to the enthusiastic team which has prepared these « Guidelines » : Marina Rizk, Nathalie and Mathieu Neny, Françoise Vouga, Father Joseph Larsen and Father Reginald for the drawings. We had an inter-denominational team this year, under the gentle and efficient leadership of our General Secretary, Corinne Chatain. What a joy!

This autumn, you will receive a warm invitation from your national coordinator to live a rather exceptional experience « **Towards a renewal of the**

community ». This renewal is to be lived out during the course of the year. You will choose a suitable time : one day (or two days would be even better, if it is possible). The aim is to reread your history, give thanks, celebrate and try to find how to respond more fully to the call of Jesus for your community today. Together you will choose priorities and the most important points of growth.

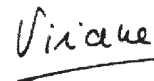
The tool which you will receive in order to live out this renewal has already been tried out in the International Council and in several zone and Continental councils. I can tell you that we have all been thrilled to unwrap this gift, to discover the treasures that it contains, so that each community can reflect on and evaluate the life of the community. We have a feeling that this action will be valuable for your community and for the whole movement ! It would also be a wonderful way to prepare the 35th anniversary of Faith and Light !

Would you accept to take this step, which is a sign of hope, with all the communities in the world ?

While you wait for further details, we suggest the following : do not hesitate to take into consideration this renewal process when you are drawing up your annual calendar... !

Speak about it with your Regional or National Coordinator. He/she will help you live this process.

I hope with all my heart that the work of each one of us will help us all to grow together in the love of Jesus. I wish all the communities a pleasant journey.



Viviane le Polain
International coordinator



Letter from the Guidelines team

As Viviane tells you in her letter, our team was interdenominational. We have experienced the joy of working together and listening to each other. We had common prayer according to the different traditions of our Churches. We also celebrated the washing of the feet: a deep and enriching ecumenical experience. «That we all may be one»! We hope that these pages will strengthen our deep desire for unity.

Let us then be guided by the meditation that Jean Vanier offers each month «The Word». We have italicized it in order to mark its importance.

This year we suggest that you already in September start to make a little «diary» for each member of your community. When we meet we can write, glue, draw a symbol, a prayer, a story... Returning home, we place it in our prayer corner, open and read it each day. This will be a good way to nourish our personal life.

The proposals made for each gathering are only suggestions. Each community is free to choose among the different activities proposed and adapt them to their situation. The communities are so different and unique!

May each community make use of proposals that are in agreement with its sensitivity, culture and its possibilities... everything that can help each member to grow on a human and spiritual level.

We are well aware that the Guidelines start in the month of September when the countries of the Northern hemisphere return from their holidays while our friends in the Southern hemisphere do not return from their holidays until the month of February. They therefore have to adapt it each year and that is hard work! A huge «Thank you» also to all our translators who translate the Guidelines into Russian, Japanese, Polish..., a sign of communion and unity of all the communities throughout the world!

Have a good year with the apostle whom Jesus loved!



Corinne Chatain
General Secretary



To you, members of the coordinating team

A new year! Let us take enough time to get the life of the community going again. Let us start off with the evaluations made in June. Let us reflect on the way to advance in the points of growth, the expectations of the members of the community. But before setting off on all sorts of projects, it would be good if each member of the team or everyone together, could recite this beautiful prayer of commitment (see appendix 2, page 84).

Let us form, or form again the small groups of friendship taking into account the geographical proximity, the equilibrium (persons with a disability, families, friends)... the possibilities for commitment of the leader (a member of the coordinating team). It is good to renew the composition of the group each year, so that all the members of the community have the chance to get to know one another better. This is a real task which will need preparation by one or two persons and which will be adjusted in the coordinating team.

As early as the month of September, it will be necessary to draw up a programme for the whole year, to propose community projects : the preparation for the Feast of Light (see appendix 2, page 84); the Announcement and Sharing Day (some ideas have been suggested to you for Lent,(see appendix 3, page 86), for a day or a weekend « for the renewal of the community », a pilgrimage to the religious community with which we are twinned, a holiday camp...

To prepare the month of September meeting

Let us read together, slowly, Jean Vanier's meditation so that it penetrates our heart. The themes for this year are so beautiful. What can we do in order to deepen them at each meeting? A banner on which would be written « *Faith and Light a community...* » and each month we could add « *of love* », « *centred on Jesus* »... Or, again, make a large panel with the boat of Faith

and Light, around which, at each meeting, we could add the theme for the month. This would decorate our place of meeting...

How can we produce the little «diary», in a team, or in the community?: several sheets of paper bound by a twig of willow, or something more elaborate?... Let us use our creativity, our imagination.

The whole meeting will be placed under the sign of service. We can ask each person to bring a small apron, or we could make them ourselves: very simple, a strip of material (or of crêpe paper) to be tied round the waist.

We can choose to live out together the celebration of the washing of the feet. In order to prepare it well, let us look at appendix 4, page 88.

If we want to make the collection of hands proposed for the time of Fiesta, let us arrange to have sheets of paper in all colours, scissors, ribbons... For the «message game», we shall use small party balloons to be blown up on the spot.

If we have been to camp together, we can ask each member to bring several souvenirs which could decorate the prayer corner, or maybe simple souvenirs from the holidays.

Let us remember to keep chairs reserved for those who are late...

*Faith and Light:
A community of love*

*Jesus the servant who asks us to serve others
(Jn 13)*



Faith and Light: a community of love

*Welcome and gathering anew*

The whole meeting will be placed under the sign of service. The coordinating team welcomes everyone personally by placing a drop of perfume in his/her open hands, saying to him: « My friend, receive this perfume as a sign of welcome and friendship ». We can also welcome each person by offering him/her a flower or by washing his/her hands.

Each person will place his souvenir, from a camp or a moment during their holidays, in the prayer corner.

*The Word*

This year, we will continue to deepen the Gospel of John. This gospel is different from the other three because it not only reveals the central elements of the life and teaching of Jesus, through the parables, but it also gives particular teachings on a few events in his life. These events teach us how, we too, are called to grow in faith and in our love of Jesus.

The first twelve chapters of John's Gospel portray Jesus as a man powerful both in words and deeds. He attracts people who begin to believe in him and follow him. However, we also see that his presence and words give rise to fears and opposition. People like Jesus when he heals them and gives them food. They find it difficult when Jesus seems to be telling them « foolish » things and asks them to change their way of life.

This year we shall begin the Guidelines in chapter 13. This chapter which marks a turning point in Jesus' life. Until then Jesus appeared as the strong

Messiah. **He appears as a Messiah who is humble and weak**, a Messiah who is no longer a strong leader but a **servant who kneels before his disciples**.

In Faith and Light, this gesture of washing each others' feet is well known to us. We do it in our communities, especially on Holy Thursday or at the meeting just before this feast. It is good to remember the deep significance of this gesture. It reveals the humble and gentle face of God, a servant-God. It also shows us how we are called to act towards each other.

Often we only turn towards God when we want to ask God to do something for us, to help us out of a difficult or painful situation. This chapter shows us God on his knees before us like a servant, a slave, someone small, the least important in society. We can fully understand Peter's reaction «No, you will never wash my feet!» For Peter Jesus is the master and teacher. Peter would be ready to wash his feet but not the opposite.

Jesus kneels humbly before us to help us stand up and not remain imprisoned in our anger, our wounds, our depression. Jesus is there like the most humble servant. He did not come to judge us, but **to love us**. He is the God of kindness, compassion and forgiveness. **He reveals himself to us as a God who is little and poor**.

But Jesus also wants us to serve one another. His commandment or I will rather say his testament that he gave a few moments after kneeling before his disciples is: «**Love one another as I have loved you**». He loved them by showing them that he was their gentle and humble servant.

Isn't this the heart of Faith and Light? Creating communities where we love one another, where each person is helped to be him or her self and to grow in love and peace? At the beginning of this year, it is good for us to remember that our mission is to create a community of love «**It is by your love for one another that everyone will know that you are my disciple**» says Jesus (John 13, 35).



Sharing

▶ Together

Let us look again at the essential phrases that Jean Vanier uses to describe service: Jesus wants us to serve one another... The leader explains: « It is by your love for one another that everyone will know that you are my disciples ». In the Gospel we see each of the disciples doing a service. Judas keeps the purse, they go shopping, Jesus asks them to distribute the bread...

The leaders of the small groups of friendship call each member of their group and tie a simple apron round their waist.

Let us reflect on what we can do to serve our community, our family, our friends, in our place of work

In groups of four let us use our imagination and choose a service which we shall mime in front of the members of the community. They must guess what it is.

▶ In sharing groups

What does it mean to serve?

What is the service that Jesus asks me to give in my family, in my neighbourhood, in my Faith and Light community?...

Has everyone a service to offer in the community? Which? What would I like to do?

Can I tell about a moment when I offered someone a service or when someone offered me a service?



Prayer

Together, we prepare the prayer corner. We sit down while there is an atmosphere of silence created by music. Then we sing a song.

The prayer leader reads John's Gospel 13, 34-35 and may also repeat some passages from the words of Jean Vanier on the importance of service.

We can live out the celebration of the washing of the feet (appendix 4, page 88) or make and recite a prayer in the form of a litany :

« *Jesus, make me a servant for each person I meet.* »

Reply : « *Kyrie eleison* »

« *Jesus, give courage to all those whose employment is the service of persons who suffer.* »

Reply : « *Kyrie eleison* »

« *Jesus, help me to serve... by...* »

Reply : « *Kyrie eleison* »

Then, each person will bless his/her neighbour or each member of the community may make a small sign of the cross in the palm of each hand (and then perhaps a kiss on the palm) with these words : « May the Lord bless you ».

The prayer ends with a song.

► **And/or the Prayer of the Poor**

What is the Prayer of the Poor? (see appendix 5, page 90)

Who are the poor? Persons who know they are little : ill, tired, old, disabled, contemplative, perhaps all of us...

The prayer of the poor is a prayer of the body. The body speaks and says : « *Here I am, Jesus, for you. I only want to be with you with all my poverty* ».

My body expresses this prayer when we sit with our backs straight, our open hands placed on our knees. Our heart will respond spontaneously.

We can repeat gently, slowly, a word of love which will help us to remain faithful, for example : « *Jesus I am here for you* » or « *Jesus, I want to serve you* ».

Faith and Light: a community of love

*fiesta*

Together we can make the little «diary» which will accompany us throughout the year. We will write down the service which we want to offer, and we will decorate it as nicely as possible... Ask everyone to sign it...

Hands are the symbol of service. We can draw our hands on coloured paper and cut them out. Then everyone writes his/her name on the hand as a sign of the service he/she wants to offer to others. We can make a pile of all these hands to show that we are all at the service of one another in the community.

Or

The hands game

One person is sitting on a slightly raised stool. He/she is wearing a jacket back to front, the sleeves at his /her back. Another person places him/herself behind him/her and puts on the sleeves. We ask the seated person all sorts of questions. He/she replies and the person behind makes the gestures.

Or

The message of friendship game

We are in a circle, each with a small party balloon (blown up) and a felt-pen. Each person writes a word or phrase or makes a drawing on his/her balloon, on the theme of friendship. We throw the balloon to the person of our choice. He/she who has received the balloon reads the message out loud. We continue the game until everyone has received a message of friendship.

◆ Meal or snack

We bless the Lord, we give him thanks for this meal or this snack. The community is divided into two teams which, will, in turn, serve each other.

BETWEEN NOW AND THE NEXT MEETING : A FEW SUGGESTIONS



The time of fidelity

▶ **Within the small groups of friendship**

When we meet in our group of friendship, we can do the activities proposed, but also read again a passage from the meditation of Jean Vanier, in order to deepen.

At our first meeting, we can get to know each other by bringing a picture or an object which are special to us. We can say why we have chosen it and what it tells about us. We can also prepare together some biscuits for the mime at the October community meeting, « *Those invited to the feast* ».

In remembering Jesus, the servant, we offer a small service to one of the members of our group friendship, between now and the next meeting.

▶ **In our personal life**

We focus on our little « notebook » in our prayer corner. We read again what we have written at the last meeting.

Every morning or every evening we can say a prayer which we particularly like for one or several friends of the community, or simply pronounce these words : « *Lord, bless my friend...* ».

Each day we can live the prayer of the poor, « *Jesus, I am here for you* ».

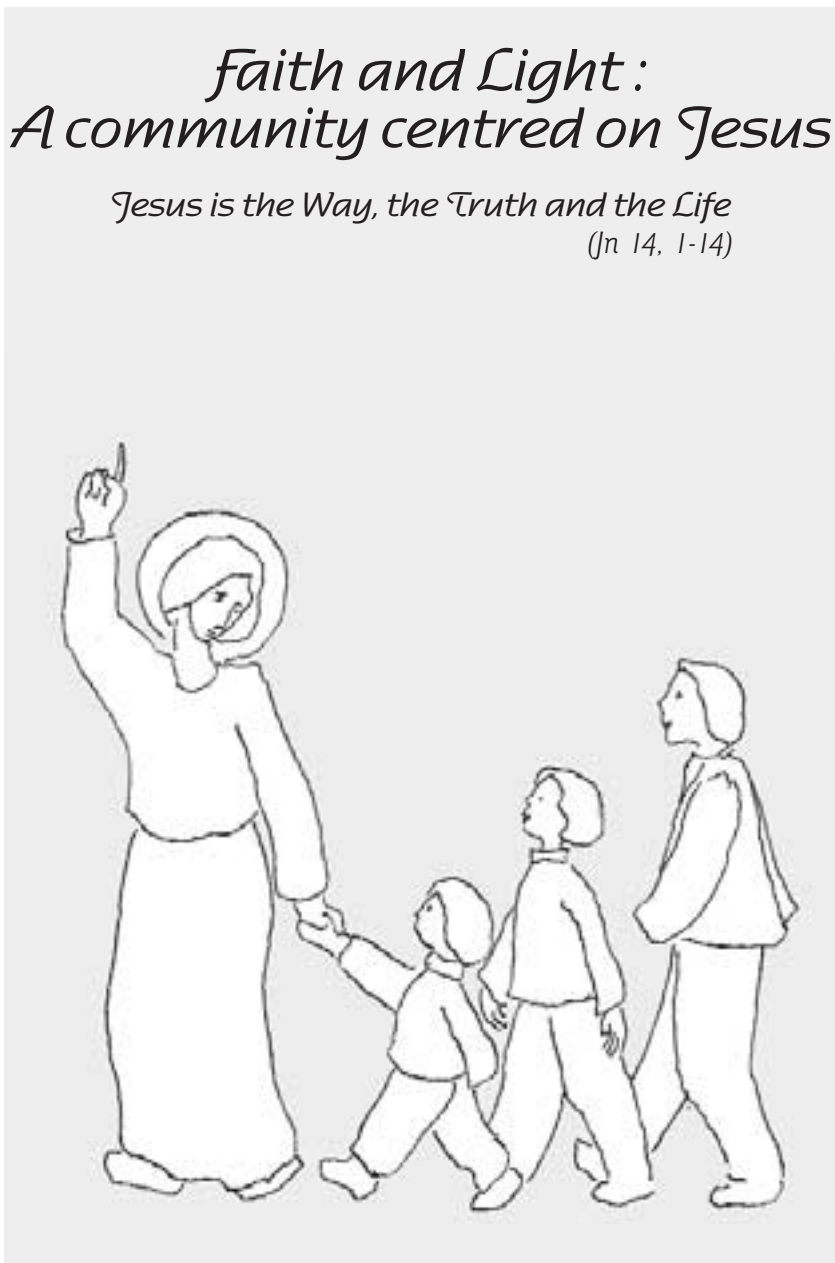
**In the coordinating team
to prepare the month of October
meeting**

Let us reflect on the life of our community: do we really give Jesus first place? As Jean Vanier says in his meditation for the month of October: « *Our life as a community is there to help us get to know our friend and beloved brother, Jesus. Jesus is there to help us love each member of our community, to prepare our meetings well, to be faithful, to have beautiful celebrations... do we ask for his help each day?* »

According to the activity we have chosen, we shall bring twigs, a small amount of string or raffia, to make a small cross during the time of prayer as well as sticks of chalk in order to draw steps on the ground. If this is impossible, we can cut out footsteps in thin cardboard to make a path.

*faith and Light :
A community centred on Jesus*

*Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life
(Jn 14, 1-14)*



faith and Light : a community centred on Jesus



Welcome and gathering anew

The paths of life are numerous and varied. They do not all lead to the same goal. Only that on which Jesus welcomes us, leads us to the Father.

Steps are drawn on the ground (or imprints put on the surface) outside the house. They lead us to the meeting place, towards the persons who are receiving us. As a sign of welcome, they offer each person bread and salt (as in Oriental countries) or some fruit...



The Word

After having washed his disciples' feet and given them his commandment, the new commandment of love, Jesus starts talking intimately to his disciples. **It is not a speech ; Jesus shares his thoughts with his disciples**, revealing the secrets of his heart, his promises. **He unveils to them how much he loves them** and

entrusts them with his mission. He tells them that they will accomplish the same works that he himself did, and even greater ones still ! The disciples must have been astonished !

In our times of great technological advances, with television, emails, electronics..., many people wonder where the world is going. Such extraordinary technology and yet at the same time so much injustice in the world ; such a gulf between the rich and the poor, continual wars, conflicts, genocides, broken family relationships... We know the story of the world's crises and suffering. Many people are searching for a spiritual life, some are looking for some way which allows them to escape pain and to settle into a kind of tranquillity of the mind. In sharing his thoughts with his disciples, Jesus told them that **he is « the Way »**. If we stay close to him, if we trust him, if we allow him to live within our hearts, **he will lead us to true happiness and towards communion with God and with others.**

Philip, one of the twelve, expresses the deepest yearning of his heart, a yearning shared by many others : « Lord, show us the Father and that will

Faith and Light : a community centred on Jesus

October

be enough for us ». Yes, in the midst of our broken world, show us God, the God of happiness, the God of joy. Jesus replies : « Don't you know Philip that **anyone who has seen me has seen my Father** ».

Jesus shows us a path towards happiness, towards God, towards a simple love, a love given faithfully to others. It is not a question of doing acts of great courage or virtue or extraordinary gestures of love or living a strict ascetic life or studying lots of theology. It is a path of fidelity to Jesus, remaining close to Jesus, day after day, loving the members of our family, of our community, and people at work and at school. God came to live in our world. God took on a human face. God took on a human body. He suffered as we suffer. **God came to say to each of us : « I want to become your friend ; I want to walk with you so that you may live out my new commandment ».** God, through Jesus, comes to all of us, but on the condition that we are humble and that we ask him for help. The Gospel is the good news. Faith and Light is good news. Our life as a community is good news.

We know, however, that life is not always easy ; community life is not easy. But our friend Jesus is always with us. He comes to help us to love, to be happy, to accept life and reality as they are ; not to run away or hide ourselves in sadness, anger or self-pity. **Our friend Jesus comes to help us to live together, to share our joys and sorrows. Jesus is truly the Way, the Truth and the Life, because he is one with the Father.** He is God who became flesh to be with us. Our life as a community is there to help us get to know our friend and beloved brother, Jesus. Jesus is there to help us love each member of our community, to prepare our meetings well, to be faithful, to have beautiful celebrations... **Do we ask for his help each day ?**



Sharing

► **Together**

Let us look at some of the passages from the words of Jean Vanier.

Faith and Light: a community centred on Jesus

The chaplain, the community leader or another person will explain these words of Jesus: « *I am the Way, the Truth and the Life* » taking up the symbol of the steps that lead us to him.

We could carry out an inquiry, like those that are sometimes made in the street. « *What does the name of Jesus say to you?* » Can we reply to the question which Jesus himself put to the disciples?: « *For you, who do you say am I?* »

◆ In sharing groups

Can we remember a time when our community was really centred on Jesus?
How can our community be centred on Jesus?

What is it that helps me most to meet Jesus? Silence, nature, visiting the sick, a particular person... We draw or we write in our little notebook, what we have said.

Jesus wants to help me. Do I need his help every day?

What time do I give to Jesus to meet him, to speak to him?

What does he ask me for? What do I give him?



Prayer

We all prepare the prayer corner together. The chairs are arranged in a circle.

At the centre there is a seat which is more beautiful than the others, decorated with materials in bright colours, on which is placed an icon of Christ or a cross. All around, candles are lit and there are flowers.

Sitting in a circle we sing a song on the day's theme.

The prayer leader reads verses 12 to 15 from chapter 15 of St. John: « *Love one another...* » We sing « *Jesus, Jesus, here I am* » or « *Jesus, Jesus...* »

The prayer leader says: « *Let us pray together the prayer which the Lord has taught us* ». Together we say the « Our Father ».

faith and Light : a community centred on Jesus

October

Each person receives two twigs, put together in the form of a cross with a small piece of string. The cross of Jesus is at the heart of our lives, it is also the sign of the resurrection. We tie it together in silence.

The prayer ends with a song on the theme : Jesus at the heart of our life. We take our little cross home for the prayer corner.

▶ **And /or the Prayer of the Poor**

The prayer of a poor person is a prayer of « *being with* » between friends. Often friends do not need words. They are happy to be together, available to each other. That is how we pay attention to the desires of Jesus. We put our open hands on our knees and we say in our heart a loving word like : « *Jesus, you can count on me* » or « *Jesus, you know that I love you* » or again : « *Jesus, I shall stay here as long as you want me to* ». We recognise that we are poor, but so much loved.



Fiesta

The circle **game**

If we can, we draw a large chalk circle on the ground and put the chairs facing inwards towards the centre of the circle. In the middle, one person is sitting, symbolising Jesus. Each person is called to go towards the centre, but only when he has replied to a question or a request (to sing, to do an imitation...). The closer we get to Jesus, the closer we get to each other. We can end by singing and holding each others' hands.

▶ **Meal or snack**

We can take a snack or share a simple meal in the big fiesta circle. The persons who welcomed the community for the time of reunion, today welcome each person individually for the snack, in order to show the joy we have in being invited to share a meal. Each person finds their place in the circle and make sure that everyone is comfortable, then we savour the food that has been prepared and the joy of being together.

*faith and Light : a community centred on Jesus***BETWEEN NOW AND THE NEXT MEETING : A FEW SUGGESTIONS***The time of fidelity***▶ Within the small groups of friendship**

Do we know how to ask Jesus every day for help, for help to others? We can exchange on what we do not dare to ask for and why. Then we shall ask each person for some help : could someone accompany me on an outing or look after our child so that we can go out together as parents... ?

One of the small group of friendship can make little houses out of modelling dough or cut out of cardboard.

On one side we write the name of each person, on another, we stick a picture of Jesus.

These will be given to each person at the time of welcome.

▶ In our personal life

Every morning or every evening, we can read a passage from the Gospel for the day and make a note of the words that have struck us in the little notebook that we keep in our prayer corner.

We can also repeat the Prayer of the Poor proposed during the last meeting.



**In the coordinating team
to prepare the month of
November meeting**

After having meditated on the words of Jean Vanier, we can read together this passage from the book « A disrupted life » by ETTY HILLESUM : *« I promise you, I promise you, my God, I shall search for a lodging and a roof for you in the greatest number of homes possible. I am starting to look for a roof for you. There are many uninhabited houses, where I should introduce you as guest of honour... »*

Do we have, like ETTY, the great desire that each person become a temple of God ?

Today we can share a meal together, take the time to confide our difficulties, our need of help, but also our joys.

If we can, we shall prepare for each person, John Henry Newman's prayer « Radiating Christ » which will be distributed during the time of prayer (see page 26) or St John's phrase (14, 23).

With the Sharing time in mind, we can prepare the mime of the meeting of Jesus with Zacchaeus. For the time of Fiesta, whether we choose « *the importance of each person* » or modelling dough... we shall bring all the necessary equipment.

faith and Light : a community which recognises...

faith and Light :
A community which recognises
the importance of each person

Jesus promises to come and live within us
(Jn 14, 15-26)





Welcome and gathering anew

On his/ her arrival, each person receives a little house with this phrase: « (First name) *Jesus wants to come and live with you in your house* ». (Everyone will be asked to bring it back at the Christmas meeting)



The Word

When Jesus shared his thoughts with his disciples, this became an extraordinary promise. He promised to send the Holy Spirit to this small group and to each one of them individually, and more still, **he promised to come with his Father to live in each one's heart.**

**« If anyone loves me he will keep my word,
and my Father will love him
and we shall come to him
and make our home with him »** (Jn 14,23)

Faith and Light is founded on this promise. It reveals the importance and value of each human being whatever their culture, capacities or incapacities. Each person has been created in God's image and even more, to become the place where God makes his home.

For the Jewish people the Temple in Jerusalem was the House of God. We should read again and again the main texts in the Book of Kings on the House of God (1 R 5 and 8) to help us realise the importance of the pilgrimages to Jerusalem for the Jewish people: they went to worship God in the Temple. The Temple was not only the sign of God's majesty, but also and above all the sign of God's love for his people. Jesus spoke of his body as the sanctuary. **Here, he reveals that each one of us, if we keep his word, will become the home of God.**

By washing his disciples' feet, Jesus is asking us to serve others, to respect, welcome and love them. **Now he tells us that every single one of us is**

faith and Lighta community which recognises...

called to become the house of God, the tabernacle where God resides. Doesn't Paul remind us of that in his letter to the Corinthians: « Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you? » (1 Cor 6, 19)

Etty Hillesum wrote in her diary about her desire to reveal this mystery to each person. Yes each and every person is God's house: « I promise you, I promise you my God, that I will search for lodgings and a roof for you in as many houses as I can... there are so many vacant houses where I will introduce you as the guest of honour... »

Let's take advantage of Jesus' words to say again to each one of our community members how important he or she is and the gift of God that we see in him or her.



Sharing

Let us read again some passages from the words of Jean Vanier.

▶ **Together**

We can read this beautiful story

« François is thirteen years old. He has an intellectual disability. The whole parish participates in celebrating his First Communion. After the Mass, his family and friends are invited to his home. Drinks are served. The godfather starts off: « What a pity that the little boy hasn't understood a thing. » His mother's eyes fill with tears. François, even if he has not understood everything, understands well enough that his mother is distressed. He goes up to her, kisses her and says to her: « Don't worry, Mum, God loves me just as I am ». François has said what is essential in the good news which Jesus has come to announce to us »¹.

Are we always certain, like little François, that Jesus loves us just as we are with our weaknesses and our riches?

¹. « Dieu m'aime comme je suis » Marie-Hélène Mathieu, Editions Saint Paul, 1998

faith and Light : a community which recognises...

Are we always certain that Jesus understands and that his only desire is to come and live in us?

Let us tell each person how important he/she is and what is the gift of God that we see in him.

We can live out, all together, the meeting of Jesus and Zacchaeus (Lk 19, 1-10). After having called Zacchaeus down from the sycamore tree into which he had climbed ; Jesus is going to share a meal with him and his family. In this way he wants to say to him : « *You are my friend* ». Jesus says the same thing to each one of us : « *Come down from your tree, I want to come and stay with you. Open your heart, receive me. I will teach you the joy of loving.* »

► **In sharing groups**

Jesus says to me : « *I want to come and stay with you* ».

Do I open the door of my heart to him? How?

When I let Jesus live in me, what do I do for him to be comfortable?

How do I know that Jesus is living in the other person?

Am I sure that he/she is also important for Jesus?

We can draw the meeting of Jesus and Zacchaeus, their meal together, or again write a word of love to Jesus in our little notebook.



Prayer

When everyone is sitting down, the leader reads slowly the text of Saint John 14, 23. We remain in silence for a few minutes.

Then someone reads :

Jesus, you who are at home in the depth of my heart

All: Make me search for you in the depth of my heart.

Jesus, you who are at home in the depth of my heart,

All: Let me find you in the depth of my heart.

Jesus, you who are at home in the depth of my heart,

All: Let me keep your company in the depth of my heart.

Faith and Light: a community which recognises...

A song is sung, then the leader distributes to everyone a copy of John Henry Newman's prayer «*Radiating Christ*» or the word of Saint John (14, 23). He reads it slowly. We remain silent for a few moments, so that it enters our hearts.

Radiating Christ

*« Lord Jesus, help me to spread your perfume everywhere.
Flood my soul with your Spirit and your Life.
Penetrate me and possess all my being so totally
that my life be only a radiance of yours.
Shine through us and be so totally in me
that each soul I come in contact with
feels your presence in my soul.
Make all lift their eyes and no longer see me but only you, Jesus. »*

*Stay with me, and I shall begin
to shine as you shine,
so to shine as to be a light to others.
The light, O Jesus, will be all from You,
none of it will be mine ;
it will be You shining on others through me.
Let me preach you without Preaching,
not by words but by our example.
By the catching force, the sympathetic influence of what I do,
the evident fullness of the love
my heart bear towards you.*

Amen

John Henry Newman

Each person turns towards his neighbour on the left and says to him : « *(First name), you are the house of Jesus* ».

We end with a meditative song (perhaps a Taizé song which can be repeated).

▶ And/or the Prayer of the Poor

Jesus lives in our hearts. We want to welcome him, stay with him, spend time with him. We want to love him. It is not easy not to move, to keep one's back straight, and one's hands open. To love is to give oneself. We feel poor, incapable of having great ideas, but our body can express our love. Very gently, we repeat a word of love : « *Jesus, live in me* ».



fiesta

In small groups, we prepare the modelling dough (proportions : a glass of fine salt, two glasses of flour, diluted with a little tepid water) and we model hearts, making a small hole on top for hanging it up. We decorate them, or write our name or our gift on them...

They can be used as garlands for the Christmas meeting.

We can make large paper flowers for the mime of the cracked pitcher.

Mime « Everyone is important »

A water vendor goes to the river every morning, fills his two pitchers, and heads towards the town to distribute the water to his customers.

One of his pitchers is cracked and loses water. The other which is brand new brings in more money. The poor cracked pitcher feels humiliated. One morning it decides to confide in the water vendor : « *You know, it says, I am aware of my limitations. You lose money because of me, because I am half empty when we get to the town. Forgive me.* »

The following day, on the way to the river, the water vendor calls the cracked pitcher and says :

- *Take a look at the side of the road...*
- *It's pretty, it's full of flowers,* replies the pitcher.
- *That's thanks to you,* answers the water vendor. *You're the one who waters the verge every morning! I bought a packet of flower seeds and I*

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sowed them along the road, and you, without knowing or meaning it, you water them every day... Never forget : we all have our weaknesses but God, if we ask for it, knows how to make miracles with them. »

(Parable of Father Lafleur, Santo Domingo)

One person reads the story.

The water vendor walks with one person on his right, another on his left. They represent the pitchers (they can be «dressed up» in a big sack or a brown poncho). They walk along a path on the edge of which all the members of the community are crouching, their faces on the ground. At each step, one of the «pitchers» scatters little pieces of blue paper. When the water vendor turns round to show the cracked pitcher the way they have come, all the members of the community rise slowly like flowers opening, lifting up the flowers which they had been holding hidden away.

◆ **Meal or snack**

We decorate the table with the pitchers and the flowers used during the time of the Fiesta.

BETWEEN NOW AND THE NEXT MEETING : A FEW SUGGESTIONS



The time of fidelity

◆ **Within the small group of friendship**

During this time of Advent, we are getting ourselves ready for Christmas. Each person takes a paper on which is written the first name of a member of the community. He/she will be his/her «shepherd» for the whole time of Advent by carrying him/her in his /her prayers. But he/she can show him/her friendship in all kinds of ways of attention and consideration, little objects of friendship (drawings, handwork, bunch of flowers...), little services, anonymous messages, (cards or SMS). Each person is at one and the same time «shepherd» and «lamb». At the Christmas meeting each

faith and Light : a community which recognises...

« *lamb* » will say whether he has recognised his « *shepherd* ». If not, the « *shepherd* » will make him/herself known.

For the meeting of December, the groups of friendship will make stars on which they will write a word like : peace, joy, light, love... that will be given to each member at the time of welcome... We prepare everything that is needed for decorating the meeting place : angels, stars, garlands...

► **In our personal life**

In our little notebook, we can stick or recopy the prayer of John Henry Newman or the phrase of St John and read it every day.

We can also live out the prayer of the poor every day for several minutes.



**In the coordinating team
to prepare the month of December
meeting**

With the help of our chaplain, if possible, together we could live through a time of retreat for a few hours, and use the theme of the December meeting. Christmas is a time when we pass from shadows to light, from selfishness to love, from chaos to peace. We should give to the whole of our meeting this spirit of awaiting in fervour, joy, and peace.

We prepare everything that is necessary to make a beautiful crèche, several ponchos or white sheets for the angels (time of prayer) and a small candle for everyone. We can also prepare a Nativity jig-saw puzzle or one of a sky full of stars with a beautiful comet. Then remind each person to bring back his/her little house and the heart in modelling dough which will decorate the crèche.

faith and Light :
A community of peace

Jesus comes to bring us peace
(Jn 14, 27)





Welcome and gathering anew

On his/her arrival, each person receives a star on which is written a word (peace, joy, love, light...): « (First name) receive the peace of Jesus » or « Receive the Light of Jesus »...

Together, we assemble our stars and garlands and we decorate the room with the angels and everything that the small groups of friendship have prepared, with a background of Christmas hymns.



The Word

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the angels sang : « Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to all those he favours » (Lk 2, 14).

What is this peace announced by the shepherds and to all of us, this peace promised by Jesus when he shared his thoughts with his disciples : « **Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you, but not as the world gives it** » (Jn 14, 27).

Is peace just the absence of conflict and war ? We know that it cannot reside simply in a balance of power between people, cultures or countries. We can live alongside some people and never really meet them, never know their pain and their needs. **True peace is the fruit of love, the fruit of an encounter where each person recognises the other as a person of value.** Peace is not just the absence of conflict, but it is born and grows through the unity and trust between people.

A new stage began for humanity when the Word was made flesh, when he was born in the cave in Bethlehem. God is not the Almighty One living far away from human beings. He became the brother of each man and woman. **He became one of us.** To do that he needed Mary in whom he became flesh, who loved and nourished him ; he needed Joseph to protect, love and educate him. He needed his neighbours and the community of Nazareth. **He became the gentle and hidden God who needs us.**

faith and Light : a community of peace

In becoming flesh, the Word revealed in a special way how much he loved people, each one of us. **God is love. God is watching over us. God wants to guide us like a good shepherd. This is what peace is. We are not alone with all our concerns, our difficulties and our inner and external conflicts. God is with us.** He came to reveal to us God's goodness and forgiveness and to call us to love and to be the instruments of peace.

*Sharing*▶ **Together**

Let us read again some passages from Jean Vanier's words.

We read the text of the Gospel of Saint Luke (2, 8-15): the appearance of the angels to the shepherds.

We reflect together on this phrase of Jesus: «*Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you, but not as the world give it*». (Jn 14, 27)

What is this peace that the angels announce to the shepherds?

What is this peace which Jesus promises us?

▶ **In sharing groups**

What is it that gives me peace in my heart?

When I am anxious or perhaps anguished, how do I find peace again? Who can help me?

What can I do to bring peace to those around me: at home, in my work, in the community...? We can write or draw in our little notebook what we can or would like to do to bring peace, by decorating it as prettily as possible.

*Prayer*

In the prayer corner, we prepare the crib together. All around it, we put our little houses modelled in dough, the stars...

If possible, the room will be in darkness. We will sit round the crib and sing a Christmas Carol. An angel arrives, he carries a

lighted candle and goes to put it in front of the crib, and then he disappears.

The leader reminds us of the text of Luke 2, 8-15 (the appearance of the angels to the shepherds). Several angels arrive and give a little candle to each person. We go, slowly, one after another to light our little candle at the big one and we put it close to the crèche. We stop for a moment to pray for peace and that love may reign in our hearts : we can say aloud an intercession for the world, a country, a family, our community, a work colleague...

We sing a hymn of peace or recite a prayer for peace.

We end the prayer by all exchanging a sign of peace saying : « *The peace of Jesus* », then we sing « *Gloria, gloria...* »

► **And / or the Prayer of the Poor**

We start with a quiet Christmas carol (for example : Silent Night, Holy Night) which we sing together, or which is played by a cassette or an instrument.

Our hearts are peaceful and calm. Our bodies also are calm, and relaxed with our hands open. Our only care is to be with Jesus. It is true that our thoughts can wander, but our bodies do not move. Our bodies speak with their own language a word of love and peace. They can be helped by a little word of love, murmured in our hearts, like : « *Jesus, my Prince of peace* » or « *Jesus, my peace* ».



fiesta

Have we discovered who is our « *shepherd* » ? We can guess three times ! When we have discovered him/her, we exchange our little houses.

If we have not discovered him/her, the « *shepherd* » reveals him/herself and offers us his/her little house.

The Nativity or the star-filled sky puzzle

A picture of the Nativity or of a star-filled sky is on a large sheet of paper.

Faith and Light: a community of peace

We cut the paper into little pieces, one for each person present. Each piece is numbered. The leader calls the numbers one by one, and the person who has the number which has been called comes forward to put the puzzle together.

When it has been reconstituted, let us all dance round it singing...

We could simply sing traditional Christmas carols. Why not invite a choir to come and sing with us, and teach us some new songs.



◆ Meal or snack

We can prepare a traditional Christmas meal for our community. Each family can bring an item for the meal or snack which will be shared by all. We can also prepare, all together some simple food.

On this occasion we could invite a priest or pastor of our parish as well as the chaplain of our community.

BETWEEN NOW AND THE NEXT MEETING : A FEW SUGGESTIONS



The time of fidelity

◆ Within the small groups of friendship

Let us continue to live out this time of Christmas in peace and fervour. We shall get together to spend an evening singing traditional Christmas carols and telling each other stories. During this meeting, we will light a candle for each person who is far away from us and with whom we will not spend Christmas. We will remember and pray for him/her.

We can also go to pray in front of our parish crib, and take time to admire it. Try to find out what each character is thinking. Which character would I like to be?

This is also the time for little gifts and we can also make a cake or a small donation for someone we know is lonely, or who is having a difficult time.

▶ **In our personal life**

When we wake up in the morning, we can write in our little notebook the name of a person to whom we want to give a sign of peace during the day (for example, by a smile, a little word, a simple gesture like a hand on the shoulder...) or in the calm of the evening, the following day...

We can again pray the Prayer of the Poor in a spirit of peace. We can try and make it a little longer than usual.



**In the coordinating team
to prepare the month of January
meeting**

The month of January is the month for Christian unity. Let us carry in our hearts this great desire of Jesus: « *That all may be One* » by meditating on the words of Jean Vanier.

We could invite a person from another denomination to our meeting, so that they could speak about their faith and traditions. We could also ask our country or zone coordinator or the International Secretariat for the address of a community belonging to another denomination, to which we could write, send photos... in order to tell our brothers and sisters that we love them and feel so close to them, in spite of our differences.

We prepare a picture of the Faith and Light boat for the Sharing and Prayer times. We choose the prayers we are going to reproduce from among the prayers of the different Churches (proposed in appendix 6, page 92). If we can, let us reproduce or copy the Prayer for Unity, which we can give to each person during the Sharing time (see appendix 7, page 93).

faith and Light :
A community working towards
unity among all Christians

Unity the fruit of love
(jn 17)





Welcome and gathering anew

The members of the coordinating team welcome each person saying: « *We are different, but we are friends* ».

We can play the game of different groups. We listen to the instructions and join our group as quickly as possible, for example: we can make a mark on the wall: « *Those who are taller than this mark, get into a group quickly on the left* ». « *Those who are shorter, get into a group on the right* »... « *All the girls on this side, the boys, here* », « *Those who are wearing a red garment, there, a blue ones, here* »... « *Those whose name starts with an A* », « *Those who are older than eighteen* »...

We are all different, we realise it ourselves! At the end of each call, the groups get together and form a circle, we declaim: « *We are different but we are friends!* »



The Word

The prologue to John's Gospel shows us the Eternal Word of God who was at the beginning, who was with God and who came down into humanity by becoming flesh. He became one of us to reveal to us the face of God, to make the goodness, compassion and forgiveness of God known to us. In this prayer in Chapter 17 of John's Gospel, Jesus, after sharing the secrets of his heart with his disciples, and talking to them about their mission and the Church, looks up towards the Father. He no longer looks down on the earth. He has nothing else to say. **He prays.** It's as if God's plan had been accomplished but at the same time Jesus is praying for it to be accomplished. What is this plan? That we human beings all together return to God. **We are all called to be ONE, as Jesus and his Father are ONE.** The Word became flesh to reveal the face of God and to bring together all God's children in the unity of love.

This unity will come about because it is in each of us:

Faith and Light: a community working towards unity

«I have given them the glory that you gave me
that they may be ONE as we are ONE.
I in them and you in me.
May they be totally one». (Jn 17, 22-23)

The way towards unity is to let Jesus live in each one of our hearts and in each one of our communities. It is Jesus himself who will unite all the disciples. That means that each of us must open the door of our heart to Jesus. If each one of us is filled with Jesus, we will inevitably be united together.

Ecumenism is not first and foremost the fruit of human effort; it is not enough for us to be together. Our fears, prejudices, our inner violence and need to prove that we are right and better than others, must be purified by the Holy Spirit. **To do that, we need to recognise our inner wounds, all the seeds of division and fear in us. God alone is capable of carrying out this work of unity, but we have our part**: we should not remain closed up in the security of our own group. **We need to open our hearts and reach out to people belonging to other traditions and other Churches, to share with them our desire to know Jesus and to love him better.**

Let us remember that in Faith and Light ecumenism also springs up from encounters with those who are at the heart of our communities, those who are weakest and most vulnerable. We are working for unity with them, because of them. They are the ones leading us towards unity, they are showing us the way. This unity will come little by little, with the grace of the Holy Spirit, if each day we seek to live in the love of our brothers and sisters, if we listen to them, if together we allow Jesus to live in our hearts, if we pray in trust to the Father «Father make us one».



Sharing

► Together

Let us look again at some passages of the words of Jean Vanier.

Faith and Light : a community working towards unity

January

In the centre of our circle, we place the picture of the Faith and Light boat. In this boat, there are a lot of people, all different. We fix the prayers of the different Churches on to the hull of the boat (see appendix 6, page 92).

The chaplain or the leader will explain very simply what Ecumenism is : « *The way towards unity is to let Jesus live in us and in each one of our communities* ». Let us read again the last passage of the words of Jean Vanier. « *This unity will come little, by little with the grace of the Holy Spirit, if each day we seek to live in the love of our brothers and sisters, if we listen to them, if together we allow Jesus to live in our hearts, if we pray in trust to the Father "Father, make us one"* ». What word strikes us most, seems most important to us ?

We can read the witness of Roy Moussalli (see appendix 8, page 94). This account gives us the chance to think about the Christian Churches of the Middle-East, in the country of Abraham and Jesus.

If we have the chance to welcome a person from another denomination for this meeting we will listen to him/her speaking about his/her faith

Together, we will write a card, a message of friendship to a community from another denomination than ours.

In our little notebook, we shall write the name of this community, its town, its country with the words : « *Father, make us one* ».

▶ **In sharing groups**

Why am I sometimes afraid of people who are different ?

How can I open my heart to receive someone who is different ?

Why is friendship the first step towards unity ?

What practical thing could I do for Ecumenism ? We can write our reply in our little notebook. Each person could receive the prayer for unity, stick it in his/her notebook and read it every day (see appendix 7, page 93).

Faith and Light: a community working towards unity*Prayer*

Everyone gathers in the prayer corner. We place on the altar the boat which we have used for the time of sharing, where we have fixed the prayers of the different Churches. They can be read by different persons in succession. In between each

prayer, we can sing « *Father, make us one* ».

The leader reads this text from the Taizé service and everyone replies : « *Lord, sanctify us* ».

Living God, come and make of our souls a temple for your Spirit

Lord, sanctify us.

Baptise your Church completely with fire, so that divisions cease.

May it be raised before the world like a column and a support of your truth.

Lord, sanctify us.

Grant to each one of us the fruits of your Holy Spirit: brotherly love, joy, patience, goodness, faithfulness.

Lord, sanctify us.

May your Holy Spirit speak through the mouth of your servants, who announce your word, here and everywhere.

Lord, sanctify us.

Send your Holy Spirit, the comforter of those who suffer or who are victims of the hatred of men.

Lord, sanctify us.

Save all the peoples and their governments from all hatred and create a true community of nations through the strength of your Spirit.

Lord, sanctify us.

The prayer ends with singing once more : « *Father, make us one* ».

◆ **And / or the Prayer of the Poor**

The great desire of Jesus is that all who believe in him should be one. It is in this spirit that we offer a little of our time to Jesus to share his suffering and thirst for unity. We shall make an effort to be sitting straight up, with-

Faith and Light : a community working towards unity

out moving in an attitude of being all for him. If our thoughts wander, we recall them with our word of love, for example «*Jesus, I am praying with you*».

At the end, we can sing «*Father, make us one*».



fiesta

Game : Unity in diversity. Farm noises.

The players form a circle round the «*Farmer*» who is blindfolded. They walk round him and when he stamps with his feet, they stop. The «*farmer*» picks out a player, of course, without seeing him, and asks him to imitate the noise of a farm animal, like a cow, a pig or a horse. The «*farmer*» must guess who is hiding behind the animal. If he succeeds, the roles are reversed, if not, the turn continues.

▶ **Meal or snack**

We can make bread rolls in different shapes or cook rice in different ways.

BETWEEN NOW AND THE NEXT MEETING : A FEW SUGGESTIONS



The time of fidelity

▶ **Within small group of friendship**

Let us take time to get to know other denominations better, their traditions, by photos, articles, websites... (Numerous links are listed on the website of World Council of Churches <www.wcc-coe.org> We can also use a research tool like «*Google...*»)

It would be good to go and pray for unity in a place of worship other than our own.

Everywhere where it is possible, we should participate in an activity organised within the framework of the Week of Christian Unity. Otherwise, we could say together the prayer for unity (see appendix 7, page 93).

*faith and Light : a community working towards unity***◆ In our personal life**

We can say the Prayer of the Poor, as was suggested during the meeting and repeat each day the Prayer for Unity, or make up one in our little notebook, and end our prayer by singing : « Father, make us one ».

**In the coordinating team to prepare the month of February meeting**

This year, Lent starts at the beginning of February. But February is also the month of « The Feast of Light » ! Each community should adjust as best it can taking into account its meeting date (see suggestions, Annex 2, page 84).

Let us meditate on several passages of the words of Jean Vanier and let us reflect. Has everyone in the community his/her own place? Do we entrust enough responsibilities to our young friends?...

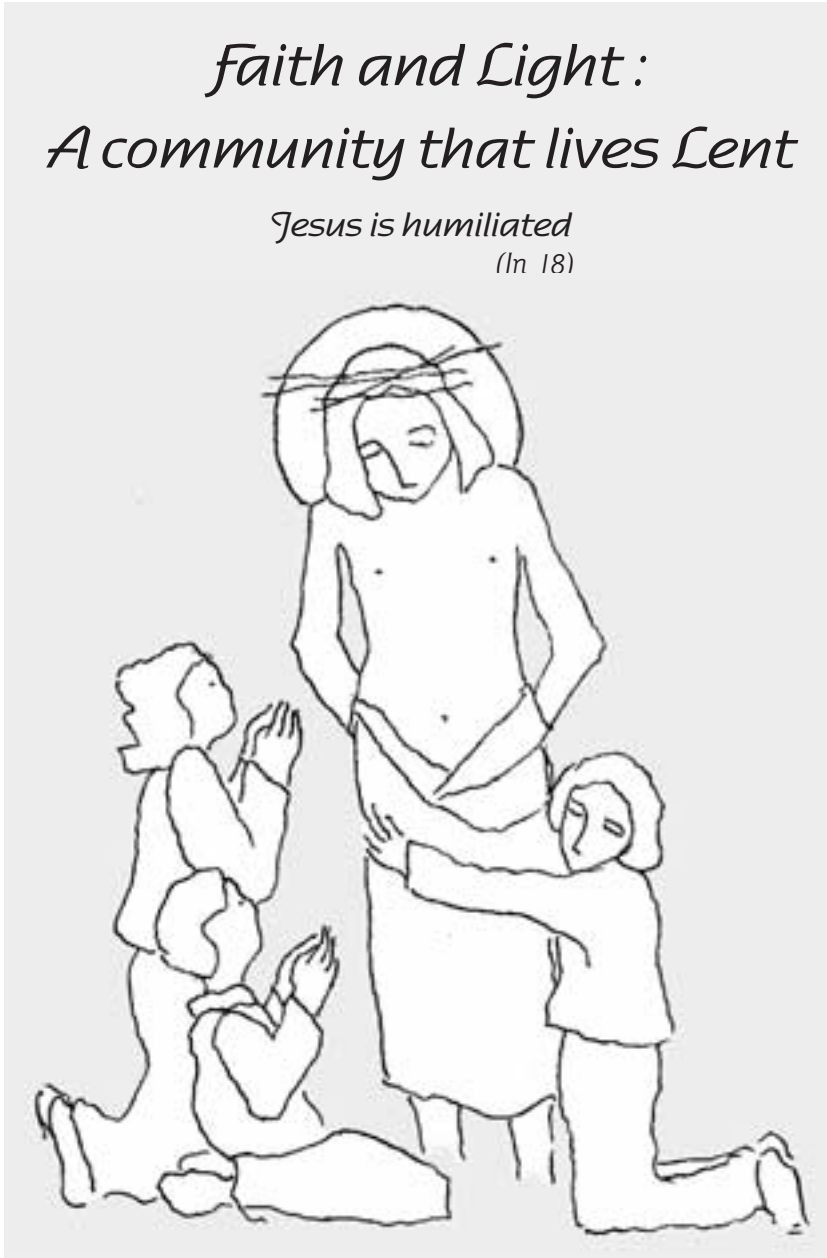
What are the « gestures of love » ? which we could think of during the time of Lent? Little gestures of impoverishment which would let Jesus enter more deeply into our heart: a little less television, less makeup, fewer video games, cigarettes... We could invite each member of the community to think about this before the meeting, and write this « gesture of love » on a little card which will be placed in a welcome basket.

If we choose to do the mime about the king, proposed for the time of sharing, let us ask each person to bring an accessory, so that everyone can participate: a bundle, a stick, a tunic in rags... Let us, as a team, prepare a fine crown for the king, a sceptre and a simple brightly coloured tunic, made out of shining material or crepe paper...

And, finally, for the time of prayer, we collect cuttings from newspapers expressing the sufferings, the divisions of our time (headings, photos) and pictures of Jesus on the cross.

faith and Light:
A community that lives Lent

Jesus is humiliated
(In 18)



Faith and Light : a community that lives Lent*Welcome and gathering anew*

Before announcing the Good News, Jesus retires into the desert. Far away from everything, poor and fasting. So he is ready to taste the presence of God his Father. Lent is this time of voluntary deprivation which allows us to concentrate on the essential. Each person is invited to put into the basket the little card on which has been written the « gesture of love » which he/she commits him/herself to offer to the Lord during the time of Lent.

Lent is a time given to all Christians for them to get rid of what is a burden to all of us. A basin could be placed at the entry of the room and each person could go there to wash his/her hands solemnly as a sign of purification.

*The Word*

*At the end of February, we will enter the period of Lent to remind us of the time Jesus spent in the desert before beginning his mission and the years that the Jewish people lived in the desert after their liberation from slavery. For us, **these days of Lent are a time when we think about the suffering of Jesus, the pain of the world and of those close to us. We prepare ourselves to relive the mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus. In fact the resurrection of Jesus takes on its full meaning when we understand better what Jesus was suffering and the feeling of helplessness that his disciples went through.***

Throughout Lent the members of the Orthodox Churches are invited to observe a strict fast (no meat, no dairy products...) as a sign of the hunger that we are called to have for God. In the Catholic Church, the faithful are invited to fast on Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, as well as on Good Friday and to go without meat on Fridays. In the Anglican and different Protestant traditions, there are various practices which insist, above all, on the preparations of our hearts. **All Christian denominations call on their**

Faith and Light: a community that lives Lent

February

members to show greater love and kindness towards people who are in pain and in need. **We are all also called to discover our own hunger for God and our hunger to be instruments of love in our world.** During Lent Christians try to give more space and time each day to pray and be in the presence of Jesus, especially on the night of Holy Thursday and during his Passion when he lived great pain and anguish.

During the three years of his public life Jesus did many important things. But when his « hour » had come, he no longer defended himself. He was betrayed by Judas; the disciples were afraid and they ran away. Jesus remained alone. He was condemned to death, beaten and mocked by the soldiers. The crowd shouted « Crucify him! Crucify him! » When he was in Galilee, people used to run to him bringing the sick so that he could cure them. When **he himself was in need, no one came to his help. He remained alone in total poverty.**

However, it is through his humiliations that he shows us his love. He remains faithful to the end:

« Who, being in very nature God
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped
but he emptied himself.
Taking the form of a slave,
becoming as human beings are,
and being in every way like a human being
he was humbler yet
even to accepting death,
death on a cross. » (Ph, 2, 6-8)

We too have suffered; we too have sometimes been humiliated; we have felt rejected. How can we look at our suffering in the light of Jesus' humiliations? How can we experience Lent together?

Faith and Light: a community that lives Lent*Sharing*◆ **Together**

Let us look again at some of the passages of the words of Jean Vanier.

The person who is leading the sharing explains that it is by his humiliation that Jesus shows his love. We can read slowly the text of Paul to the Philippians 12, 6-8.

To illustrate this text, we can mime the story of a king. He is sitting on a throne, dressed in a shining robe, he is wearing jewels and a sparkling crown. Round him we see his poor subjects, dressed in rags and carrying heavy burdens, who go here and there, wandering and suffering. Seized by compassion, the king begins to get rid of his jewels and his shining robe. He gets down from his throne in order to join his people and to carry, in their place, the weight of their suffering.

◆ **In sharing groups**

Have I already felt humiliated, despised, abandoned or lonely?
 Looking back on it, can I say what helped me? Who helped me?
 How can Jesus, my community, help me to be cured of my wounds?
 What are the gestures of love I can make towards someone who is suffering?
 How can I get closer to someone who is suffering, who is humiliated?
 We write or draw in our little notebook this gesture of love which we have decided to offer during this time of Lent.

*Prayer*

We are sitting in a circle. In the centre, on the floor, there are some newspaper cuttings (headings, photos) which speak of suffering. There are also pictures of Jesus on the Cross.

Faith and Light : a community that lives Lent

february

The leader explains that Lent is the time when we join Jesus who, by love, accepts for us the suffering which will lead him to death. He explains, particularly, the moment of his agony. He can read chapter 12 of St Paul to the Philippians, verses 6 to 8, chapter 26, verses 36 to 40 of Matthew, on the solitude of Jesus. He underlines the suffering of the world, the suffering in each of us. Perhaps solitude and contempt are the most bitter of all sufferings?

We sing a meditative song of compassion. Perhaps a song which is repeated, like the « *Kyrie eleison* ». Then we can pray for all our intercessions. We can read Psalm 131, which is a psalm of confidence in the childlike spirit (or again psalm 121, 91, 62, 23).

Each person is going to take one of the papers found in the centre of the circle and will keep it during Lent in his prayer corner at home.
The prayer will end with a song.

Or

We can organise a celebration of ashes, as is the custom in the Catholic Church the first Wednesday of Lent.

In the Old Testament, people had the habit of tearing their clothes and of putting ashes on their faces in moments of distress. They made themselves into objects of pity in the eyes of God, imploring his mercy. One by one we go up to the priest who traces a cross on our forehead, saying « *Be converted and believe in the Gospel* ».

Or

We can repeat one of the Orthodox prayers for the time of Lent (see appendix 9 page 96).

Or

We can organize a penitential celebration according to our Church's tradition ; reenact the washing of the feet in community or participate in a service with our brothers and sisters belonging to another Church.

Faith and Light: a community that lives Lent

◆ **And / or the Prayer of the Poor**

We imagine we are in the Garden of Gethsemane, close to Jesus. We can do nothing to comfort him, but we can stay there to watch with him, like a faithful friend. Our heart suffers with him. From time to time, we say a word of love, like a sigh of compassion: «*Jesus, I am suffering with you*».



fiesta

We form a circle, a person has just gone to the middle of it. A small group watch him/her attentively and go out of the room. The person in the middle takes off, puts on, changes something in his/her appearance. The group come back and then guess what has been changed. He/she can be helped by applause, when he/she is getting close to the right reply and heavily applauded when he/she has found the answer.

The spoon **game**

We form three teams, each comprising a dozen persons one after the other. In front of the first person of each team there is a pot full of water. An empty pot is placed behind the last person in the line. Each one is holding a spoon in his/her hand. When the game starts, the first person in the team fills his/her spoon with water and empties it into the spoon of the person behind him/her... and so on. The aim is to fill the empty pot. At the end, we shall laugh to see how much water has been able to get there!

This game can also be played with a little ball, some seeds, little stones...

◆ **Meal or snack**

We can share together simply a bowl of rice or bread and tea ; following the traditions of our country, thinking of those who have nothing. We can give what costs a normal meal or more and we decide together to whom we shall give the money collected.

BETWEEN NOW AND THE NEXT MEETING : A FEW SUGGESTIONS



The time of fidelity

▶ **Within the small groups of friendship**

We could together visit a person who is perhaps suffering, who is alone.

We can also live together a time of reconciliation. We note or draw on a piece of paper what makes us sad, makes us angry, repels us, with whom or what we wish to be reconciled. We talk about it together if we feel we need to. We put all these pieces of paper in a big bowl and we burn them. We take the ashes to draw a sign of the cross on the hand or the forehead of our neighbour.

We could also participate together in a Lenten celebration. If we are Catholic or Orthodox, we could receive the sacrament of reconciliation.

The small groups of friendship will prepare the cards with the text of Saint John, which will be distributed to each person during the time of prayer at the next meeting.

▶ **In our personal life**

Every day, we can live the Prayer of the Poor with Jesus at Gethsemane and read again about the gesture of friendship which we chose at the last meeting. We can also pray, for those we know and who are alone and are suffering.

Let us try to give them something we love, Let us deprive ourselves of something through our love for Jesus, who has given up everything for us.



In the coordinating team to prepare the month of March meeting

Let us meditate on the words of Jean Vanier, so that they penetrate our hearts. Let us reflect on compassion. Do we get proper formation so that we can accompany the members of our community who suffer most?

What do the words of Jean Vanier say to us, in the coordination team, on the two types of compassion? How can we all grow in competent compassion and in the compassionate presence of love? How can we help the whole community to grow in these two forms of compassion?

We shall carefully prepare the trios who will live together throughout the month of March. If we choose to do the Mime of compassion, let us reflect on situations which are very simple and significant.

Let us find an image of Jesus crucified, with Mary and John. Let us arrange a simple way of showing it off, of reproducing it and giving it to each person during the time of prayer. On the back, we can write the phrase of St. John 19, 25-27.

If you wish to organize your «Announcement and Sharing Day» in March, see Appendix 3, page 86.

Evaluation of the Guidelines

A questionnaire on the evaluation of the Guidelines is proposed in appendix 13 page 99. Your thoughts, remarks and suggestions are essential for the small editorial team for the Guidelines next year.

Would you please take the time to work on this together and send it to the International Secretariat before 10 March? Thank you!

*Faith and Light :
A community of compassion*

*Jesus is crucified
(Jn 19)*



March

faith and Light : a community of compassion



Welcome and gathering anew

When everyone is there, the members of the coordinating team form their « trios ».

The leader explains the meaning of this: all day long, we stay in threes. We need faithful friends full of compassion.



The Word

It is still Lent, we are still walking humbly with a humiliated Jesus. He went to the very end of love. People refused his message of love; they did not want to admit that he was the Son of God, the Messiah. Many people rejected him.

He was condemned to death, stripped of his clothes and crucified on a cross. He suffered terribly. He had come to liberate hearts and to give each person his Holy Spirit. But people did not want him. He appeared as a nuisance. When he was doing great things, people ran to him. When he was humiliated even his friends abandoned him.

*At the cross there were a few women « his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala » and the disciple whom Jesus loved. They were not afraid. They wanted to stay with Jesus until the end. Their hearts were full of compassion. It is important for us all to understand what compassion is. In the gospel of Luke Jesus says « **Be compassionate just as your Father is compassionate. Do not judge, do not condemn. Forgive** ». (Lk 6, 36)*

There are two different forms of compassion: compassion that requires competence and compassion that is essentially a presence of love. When someone is hungry, we need to find the means to give them something to eat. We have to do everything possible, competently, to try to eliminate or relieve the pain and to help each person to live according to his human and Christian dignity. For that we need **competent compassion**. When someone is suffering from rejection or humiliation, they **need faith-**

ful friends, a compassionate presence of love. We are called to be with the person in pain, giving them support and sometimes helping them to find meaning to their suffering. It's easy to be with people who are successful; it's more difficult to be with someone who is living loss or failure. Compassion is being with those who feel alone. It is at the heart of our Faith and Light communities. **In the Church there are different vocations and missions**: some people are called more to **do things** for those who are in difficulty; others are called more to **be with** them, to be a presence of love and trust for them.

At the cross, Mary, the Mother of Jesus, the other women and the disciple whom Jesus loved, showed the importance of being with Jesus when he was poor and humiliated. Their presence and silent communion were like a balm for the wounds of Jesus; they consoled his heart.



Sharing

▶ **Together**

We sit down in trios. The person who is leading the sharing explains the meditation of Jean and the two kinds of compassion: the compassion that requires competence and the compassion that is essentially a presence of love. To illustrate this presence of love, we can read the testimony « *Learning to be with* » (see Appendix 10 page 97).

In trios we can do a mime showing the two forms of compassion, in order to understand them better.

Competent compassion: for example, an accident, two persons rush to give first aid to the wounded person lying on the ground... Or, the three of us together hold each by the arm. The leader says: « *John is cold* », he is shivering, his two companions do the same... hug him closely to keep him warm, cover him with a blanket... Compassionate presence of love: a lady whose husband is in hospital. One comes to see her at home. The other two members of the trio take her by the hand, without saying anything.

Faith and Light: a community of compassion

When John was rejected, humiliated, two friends welcome him, smile at him, kiss him.

We can talk about persons whom we know who have such a great need to be loved and be surrounded with care.

◆ In sharing groups

Has someone felt compassion for me? How?

Have I felt compassion for someone? How did I show it?

Are there people in our country, in the world, who never receive compassion?

What can we do?

Can we feel compassion for those who are far away from us? How?

How can we live out our compassion in our community?



Prayer

An image of Jesus crucified with Mary and John close by him, is placed prominently in our prayer corner; surrounded by flowers and lighted candles. The trios sit down beside it.

The leader explains: we remember that Jesus on the cross, his mother and St John also formed a faithful trio. He/she distributes to each member a picture on which is written the passage from John, 19, 25-27 (Jesus and his mother) and reads it aloud.

We pray for persons who are suffering and whom we do not know how to help, like Mary at the foot of the cross, with a heart full of compassion, of silent communion.

In our groups of three, we share something we suffer in our life, a moment when we needed of the compassion of a friend, or when we would have liked to have the presence of such a friend. Then we remain together in silence, praying for one another, holding each others' hands. The leader will allow enough time for this silent prayer. During this prayer time, those who wish so can draw in silence the cross of Jesus with Mary and John.

We close by forming a big circle all together, holding each others' hands. We sing a song on the day's theme.

Let us slip our picture into our little notebook.

◆ **And/or the Prayer of the Poor**

We imagine ourselves to be at the foot of the cross of Jesus, faithful like his mother and his friend John. It will be easy to find a word of love. Really to love to the end, we could stay longer than usual. Word of love: «*Jesus, I am with you*».



fiesta

Game : We can invent a series of tests to be done with feet attached together, in trios (or duos). For example :

- ◆ A race with or without obstacles
- ◆ Each trio has a balloon attached to one foot. They

must burst the balloon of the other teams, without losing their own

- ◆ We can also be attached by the arms. The test, for example could be :
 - to serve the snack
 - to transport water from one point to another
 - to throw a ball into a basket

◆ **Meal or snack**

We sit down with our two friends. We share a very frugal meal or snack (a bowl of rice or a piece of bread), as a sign of compassion for those who are suffering from hunger around the world.

BETWEEN NOW AND THE NEXT MEETING : A FEW SUGGESTIONS



Le temps de la fidélité

◆ **Within the small groups of friendship**

Edith Stein, the mystic, assassinated in Auschwitz wrote: «*What we must learn also, is to see others carrying their cross and not be able to take it away*»

Faith and Light : a community of compassion

from them. It is more difficult than to carry one's own, but we cannot pass by on the other side». This is so true, what she has written. People can carry sufferings which we cannot take from them. This powerlessness is very hard to bear, it is sometimes even harder than to carry one's own cross. But there is one thing we can do : not to run away, to be there beside this person in silence. Ask the Lord to give you a heart full of compassion like Mary.

We can share some precious and comforting moments of our life. Simply being there, present one to each other.

For the April meeting, we can decorate eggs for the festive table.

♦ In our personal life

We can repeat the Prayer of the Poor while contemplating our icon or holding a small cross in our hands.

Each day we can decorate the cross in our prayer corner.



In the coordinating team to prepare the month of April meeting

Jesus is risen! We meditate on the words of Jean Vanier so that they penetrate our heart. Jesus wants to help us to pass from the dream of an ideal to the reality of our life which is often suffering, but where he is present and awaits us. How do we help each person in the community to live in truth so as to be able to meet Jesus?

Let us take the time to pray together or to participate in the Eucharist or Lord's Supper as a team to prepare our hearts for the Resurrection of Jesus.

Let us prepare for each person a copy of the prayer by Charles de Foucauld (See page 60) or the Faith and Light prayer (see appendix 12, page 98).

*Faith and Light:
A community of prayer*

*Jesus calls Mary of Magdala by her name
(Jn 20, 1-18)*





Welcome and gathering anew

The living Jesus opens Mary-Magdala's eyes, by calling her by her first name. She passes from mourning to the light of the Resurrection.

On his/her arrival, each member of the community passes through a black or coloured curtain, after having been called by his/her first name and comes into the light. As is done by our Orthodox brothers and sisters, the person who is welcoming then says: « Christ is risen ! » and he/ she replies, « Christ is risen indeed ! ».



The Word

We can imagine the confusion of the disciples after the death of Jesus. They had thought that Jesus was the strong Messiah, the victorious Messiah. They had left everything behind to follow him. But they didn't understand Jesus when he said he was going to suffer much, be sentenced to death by the chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he would rise up again on the third day (Mt 16, 21).

There is a danger for many of us of trying to hold on to an ideal: *an ideal of what a marriage should be, an ideal community. People sometimes idealise the Church. But then one day we discover the reality - there is conflict and pain; we discover other peoples' weaknesses and our own; we realise that we and they are not as we had thought. The disciples had idealised Jesus. Then when they saw him become weak, they left him. They felt lost, sad and gave up all hope. For them everything seemed to be over.*

Mary of Magdala went to the tomb early in the morning of the first day of the week. She brought spices to embalm the body of Jesus. When she arrived at the tomb what did she see? The tomb stone had been removed and his body was no longer there. She panicked and wondered who had stolen his body! She ran to the house of Peter and the beloved disciple and told them « They have taken the Lord out of the tomb and we don't know where they have put him. » (Jn 20, 2). Peter and the beloved disciple went running to

the tomb and saw that his body was no longer there. They left Mary of Magdala all alone. She was crying. The body of her beloved Jesus had been stolen! Then she turned around and saw a man, that she thought was a gardener, and who said to her: «Woman, why are you crying? Who are you looking for?» The man was Jesus, who had risen from the dead but **Mary didn't recognize him. She was blinded by her own tears.** Then Jesus said to her: «Mary». **He simply and gently called her by her name, because he loved her.** She threw herself at his feet saying «Rabboni, Master». She realised that it was Jesus, and that he was alive. **She recognised him by the tone of his voice.** It really was him. He had truly risen! Jesus then told her to go and announce the good news to the disciples: Jesus is alive!

Jesus rose from the dead so that we may believe that we too are called to rise up. **Jesus wants to give us this grace so that we do not remain blinded by our sadness or sense of grief and loss. He wants to help us make the transition from living an ideal - and then being disappointed when this ideal doesn't work - to living in reality and discovering through this sometimes painful reality, that Jesus is present.**

Mary of Magdala was able to make this transition because she heard Jesus call her by her name. We need to have quiet time with Jesus so that we can hear him call us by our name and throw ourselves into his arms. Faith and Light is a community where we learn how to pray and live with the risen Jesus.



Sharing

► Together

We can read together Jean Vanier's meditation: reread certain important passages and mime the apparition of Jesus. Then everyone can be called by his/her first name. He/she will reply in a clear and cheerful voice: «Here I am, Lord!» Each person will write his/her first name in his/her little notebook and decorate it and write: «Jesus loves me, I love myself».

Faith and Light : a community of prayer◆ **In sharing groups**

Do I dare to open my heart to Jesus? How?

When I pray, how do I address Jesus? As a friend, as God, as someone who can do miracles?

Can I confide a moment, an event when I passed from sadness to joy?

When Jesus calls me, how does he say my first name?

*Prayer*

Together we construct a cave in our prayer corner made of paper for making cribs or wrapping paper. Beside it we try to make a kind of little garden with flowers. It is the cave of the tomb of Jesus. It is empty.

The stone has been rolled aside. We get into a circle and sing a song of supplication. Then we stay silent for several moments.

The leader who is standing beside the tomb of Jesus in the little garden, calls each person by his/her first name. The person who has been called, advances and says : « *Here I am!* ». The leader, following the formula of our Orthodox brothers and sisters on Easter day, then says : « *Come and take the light from the Light which never wanes and glorify the Christ risen from among the dead* ». He/she gives him/her a small lighted candle and the text of the Faith and Light prayer or the prayer by Charles de Foucauld. In order to signify a change of life, a friend accompanies him/her slowly while rejoining the group, but he/she goes to a different place.

Everything happens in an atmosphere of prayer. A background of meditative music can help to create this solemn atmosphere.

We recite together the prayer by Charles de Foucauld or the Faith and Light Prayer (see appendix 12, page 98).

Prayer by Charles de Foucauld

My Father, I abandon myself to you.

Make of me what you want.

*Whatever you make of me, I thank you.
I am ready for everything, I accept everything
provided that your will is done in me
and in all your creatures.
I desire nothing else, my God.*

*I commit my soul into your hands.
I give it to you my God, with all the love of my heart,
because I love you,
and it is a need of my love to give myself,
to place myself in your hands without measure,
with an infinite trust
for you are my Father.*

Then we sing an Alleluia verse or a song of commitment which will close our time of prayer.

► **And/or the Prayer of the Poor**

Jesus calls us by our first name. And we say: « *Yes, Jesus, here I am* ». This is a prayer of commitment. It is the prayer of a poor man, who abandons himself in all his poverty. His body expresses his strong decision. From time to time he repeats his word of commitment, his word of love.



fiesta

The name **game**

We are sitting in a circle, a person is standing in the middle. The aim is to go and sit down. He/she calls two persons by their first name. They must then change places as quickly as possible. The one who does not find a place goes into the middle...

A dance

To the tune of: « *One by one, dance! Two by two, dance, three by three...* » or any other well known lively tune: at the first refrain two persons in the

Faith and Light : a community of prayer

centre dance together, at the couplet they call two new persons... each person is thus invited by turn and at the end everyone finds themselves dancing in a circle.

▶ **Meal or snack**

The table is decorated with eggs (symbol of new life), little nests, fruit, candles and we have prepared a traditional dish of our country for the feast of Easter.

BETWEEN NOW AND THE NEXT MEETING : A FEW SUGGESTIONS



The time of fidelity

▶ **Within the small groups of friendship**

We can pray together the Prayer of the Poor. We prepare a prayer corner with an icon, a Bible, a candle and an object of Nature. We sit in a semicircle in silence.

One of the small groups of friendship can make a large dove which will be used for the time of prayer at the meeting for the month of May.

Another group will prepare little cards on which will be written one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Gal 22-23) decorated as prettily as possible.

▶ **In our personal life**

Every day we would want to pray again the Prayer of the Poor and read a passage of the Gospel of the Resurrection. We can open our little notebook where we have written our first name.



**In the coordinating team
to prepare the month of May
meeting**

The meeting for the month of May calls us to mission. We are now perhaps too numerous to be really present to each person, so that each person knows the others and loves them. So don't let us be afraid, and let us think about forming a new community! That is such a fine thing, even if it is difficult and requires sacrifices. Let us contact families with young children. They are still often too isolated. Let us go and talk to the young people... Let us make an effort to create new life! The Holy Spirit will give us the words, the strength, the ideas...

As time passes the mission of our community will perhaps change too. We are too old and have not got the necessary resources. But our vocation is still to give life. Don't let us give up! We can pray with all our heart that new communities will see the light in our region, in our country, especially communities which will be able to receive young parents and their little children and young friends. Let us ask our leader if there are concrete projects, and encourage them. We are not fully aware of the power of prayer. As Jean Vanier says: « *We need to have a quiet time with Jesus so that we can hear him call us by our name and throw ourselves into his arms. Faith and Light is a community where we learn to pray and live with the risen Jesus* ».

For the May meeting, let us prepare everything that is necessary to make a fresco : a wide strip of paper or material, paints, felt pens... and let us ask each person to bring one or two pieces of fruit to make a fruit salad.

faith and Light :
A missionary community,
called to announce the good news

Jesus breaths upon his disciples and tells them
« Receive the Holy Spirit »

(Jn 20, 19-23)





Welcome and gathering anew

On his/her arrival, each person receives a little card on which is written one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. He/she is told: «(First name) You have received the Holy Spirit, from now on share this gift of (peace, joy...) with your brothers and sisters».



The Word

In May we celebrate Pentecost, the celebration of the gift of the Holy Spirit which was given to the disciples and which filled them with a new inner strength. It is good to remember that the Holy Spirit is always with us and that we should celebrate that everyday! After the washing of the feet and the intimate sharing with his disciples, Jesus said to them:

*« If you love me, you will keep my words ;
I shall ask the Father
and he will give you another Paraclete,
to be with you forever,
the Spirit of truth,
whom the world can never accept. » (Jn 14, 15-16)*

On the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, Jesus appeared to the disciples. That morning he had appeared to Mary of Magdala and sent her forth to his « brothers » to tell them that he was alive ; they did not believe her (see Mk 16, 11). When Jesus appeared to the disciples who were behind locked doors in the upstairs room, he simply said to them « Peace to you ! » and he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. Imagine their joy when they discovered that Jesus was alive ! Jesus said to them again :

*« Peace to you !
As the Father has sent me, so am I sending you ».
Having said that he breathed on them
and said : « Receive the Holy Spirit. » (Jn 20, 19-22).*

Faith and Light : a missionary community

The disciples of Jesus are sent into the world to spread the good news. Jesus' mission was to announce the good news to the poor, freedom to captives, and liberation to the oppressed. **Now, this same mission is theirs.** **The good news is that God loves the poor, the weak, and the suffering.** **Disciples of Jesus are called to reveal the true face of God, God's face of kindness, compassion and love.** They reveal this face of God not only through their words, but also through the way they live. They cannot reveal Jesus' compassion in our divided world unless they themselves receive a new inner strength which enables them to do what they can not do all alone. It is a mission of peace, bringing the peace of Jesus to others, which means communicating his loving presence of Jesus to each person and to each community.

This is the mission of every Faith and Light community: to reveal the kindness, compassion and forgiveness that Jesus gives: to reveal the importance of each and every person, especially the most vulnerable; to reveal the joys of community life. But in order to do that, we need to receive a new inner strength. We need to trust that Jesus is saying to each one of us « Receive the Holy Spirit ».



Sharing

▶ **Together**

Let us read again certain passages from the words of Jean Vanier. In our community we are called to reveal the kindness, the compassion, the love of Jesus... The

Holy Spirit sends us out on mission.

As an illustration of this meditation we can tell the Story of the Smile (see appendix II, page 97). The smile of this woman is known by us all today. She has become a missionary without knowing it.

We can reflect on the mission of Faith and Light, of our community, of our own mission.

We can all read these three phrases and make very simple gestures at the same time. They will remind us of the sign of the cross. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit :

Faith and Light : a missionary community

May

« God the Father, my creator, high above me, You protect me and cover me with your love. » (We raise our arms towards heaven)

« God the Son, beside me. You walk with me, lead me and accompany me ». (We stretch out our arms in the form of a cross)

« God, the Holy Spirit, within me. You support me and give me strength and courage. You comfort me and renew me. » (We cross our hands over our heart).

The Holy Spirit, who lives in my heart, wants to shower his gifts on me and give me joy. We can express this joy by paintings or drawings... on a fresco (strip of material or paper) placed on the ground or hung on a wall. If we have made banners with each month's theme, we can look at them and reread our mission...

► In sharing groups

How can I become a living image of the spirit of Faith and Light?

What can be my missionary gesture for this month?

What is the gift of the Holy Spirit that I should like to receive?

Who are the next three people to whom I am going to speak about Faith and Light?

We shall write their names in our little notebook. We shall also stick in it the card where we have written the name of the gift received at the beginning of the meeting.



Prayer

We are sitting in the prayer corner. If possible a large dove is attached to the ceiling, above our heads. Otherwise, it will just be placed on the floor.

We sing a song to the Holy Spirit.

We can pray the Litany to the Holy Spirit, responding to each other :

Heavenly Father, you who are God,

Put in us your fire of love.

Faith and Light : a missionary community

Spirit of the Lord who, at the beginning of the world, moved over the waters and made them fertile,

Put in us your fire of love.

Spirit, by whose inspiration the holy men and women of God have spoken,

Put in us your fire of love.

Spirit who testifies to Jesus Christ,

Put in us your fire of love.

Spirit of truth who teaches us all things,

Put in us your fire of love.

Spirit of wisdom and understanding,

Put in us your fire of love.

Spirit of counsel and strength,

Put in us your fire of love.

Spirit of grace and mercy,

Put in us your fire of love.

Spirit of kindness and gentleness,

Put in us your fire of love.

Spirit who descended on Jesus Christ in the form of a dove,

Put in us your fire of love.

Spirit who fills my heart with charity,

Put in us your fire of love.

Spirit who appeared to the disciples in the form of tongues of fire,

Put in us your fire of love.

Spirit who distributes their gifts to each person according to your will,

Put in us your fire of love.

From all harm, *deliver us*

From all sin, *deliver us*

From all evil spirit, *deliver us*

Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, *forgive us, Lord.*

Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, *grant us our request, Lord.*

Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, *have mercy on us, Lord.*

We implore you, Lord to help us without ceasing, by the power of your Holy

Faith and Light : a missionary community

May

Spirit, so that, purifying the stains on our hearts by his mercy, he will preserve us from all evil.

By Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

The prayer ends with a hymn to the Holy Spirit.

Or we can take the text of St Paul in the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians (22-23) and we can make a quite simple litany with the fruits of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. For example: « *Spirit of peace, come into my heart. Spirit of love, come into my heart. Spirit of joy, come into my heart.* »

► **And / or the Prayer of the Poor**

By praying this prayer regularly we will be transformed, without knowing it. We discover a new way of being, that of the gift of oneself, an attitude of love, that of Jesus. Today our little word of love will be even more fervent than usual: « *Come, Holy Spirit* ».



fiesta

Game : The Holy Spirit sends our communities on a Mission

When the leader of the game says: « *The leader says* » followed by an order like: « *Follow after me* » the community must imitate him/her. If the leader of the game omits to say « *The leader says* » before the order, the community does not move.

Examples of orders :

1. Follow after me... : take one step ahead. 2. Love each other... stretch your arms towards your neighbours 3. Become as little children... you crouch. 4. Pray... join your two hands together. 5. Help the poor... make a gesture of putting a coin of money in someone's hand. 6. Impose your hands... stretch your arms out horizontally in front of you. 7. Shake the dust off your feet... shake your two feet...

► **Meal or snack**

We shall prepare a fruit salad together, with all the fruit brought by everyone. Delicious !

BETWEEN NOW AND THE NEXT MEETING : A FEW SUGGESTIONS*The time of fidelity***▶ Within the small groups of friendship**

Let us reflect together on the way each one of us will put our gift to the service of the community.

We could invite persons from our parish or from our family (brothers, sisters, cousins, godchildren...) to the June meeting.

The coordinating team will have proposed a theme and each group of friendship will prepare a scene which we will mime during the sharing time.

▶ In our personal life

We will begin or end each day by saying the Prayer of the Poor. We will read again softly the gift we have received while repeating the words of Saint Teresa : « *All is grace* ». We pray for the three persons to whom we are going to announce Faith and Light.

**In the coordinating team to prepare the month of June meeting**

What are the fruits of the « Annoncement and Sharing Day » which we organised in March ? If we have not already arranged it, let us profit from the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit received at Pentecost to begin now ! Get to work : the joy of announcing and living solidarity ! (See appendix 3, page 86). For the next meeting, let us arrange something very simple for the welcome : some fruit, water, a small piece of bread. Let us also prepare a loaf of bread for the prayer time and remember to focus on the mosaic on the cover as it illustrates next month's gospel.

*Faith and Light :
A community that helps us
to live each day*

*Jesus in our daily life
(n 21)*





Welcome and gathering anew

After a hard night's work, the disciples are received by Jesus who has prepared a meal for them. Like him, we receive each other by taking care of each other. We start the meeting by sharing some fruit, a piece of bread or a little water. Let us take time to give each other news and exchange on our daily life.



The Word

Jesus' second appearance to his friends took place in Galilee. The disciples had gone back to their homes.

They were waiting for a new gift of the Holy Spirit. **Not really knowing what to do, they went back to doing their old jobs.** Seven of them decided to go fishing with Peter. They worked all night long but didn't

catch anything. At dawn, they saw a man about 100 yards from the shore. He shouted to them « My friends, haven't you caught anything? » They replied « No ». The man said to them: « Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some. » So they threw the net out and could not haul it because of the quantity of fish. The beloved disciple recognised immediately that it was Jesus: « It is the Lord! ». Peter then jumped into the water to join Jesus. The others arrived with the boat, dragging the net full of fish.

Knowing that these men were tired after working all night, **Jesus prepared breakfast for them with bread and fish cooked on the charcoal fire.** Jesus is so kind and thoughtful! **He takes good care of his friends! Our communities are called to help each one of us live our daily life in our family, in our home and at work.**

Through this miracle, Jesus helps to understand that Faith and Light is God's work, that **our life as a community is inspired by Jesus.** It was Jesus who inspired Marie-Hélène and Jean to organise the first international pilgrimage to Lourdes in 1971. Since then, Jesus has helped Faith and Light to grow and develop throughout the world. Jesus was at the origin of each one of our

Faith and Light : a community that helps us to live

communities. **How can we remain faithful to Jesus and be attentive to what he wants for Faith and Light and for our community today?**

June



Sharing

▶ **Together**

Let us read again some passages from the words of Jean Vanier. Let us also take time to look at the Guidelines cover as it illustrates the Word for this month. There are numerous schools of holiness. Faith and Light is one of them... The leader explains that, little by little, the spirit of Faith and Light so penetrates our heart that it influences our everyday behaviour. Many people say that Faith and Light has transformed their life... Are we more open to those who disturb us? More patients in respect to our own disability? More cheerful in the face of an unexpected event? More ecumenical in our thoughts and in our acts? More faithful to our friends? More used to being present to others and listening to them? More spontaneous, more true in our behaviour? More tender in our words and in our gestures? More loving of Jesus. More welcoming to persons of other denominations or other religions?

We can mime different attitudes, before Faith and Light and after: before in the metro with the person who bumps into me... now, I can smile at him/her. At work with the colleague who annoys me all the time and is so talkative... now, I have more patience. In the evening when I come home tired... now, I take the time to pray.

▶ **In sharing groups**

Has Faith and Light changed me a bit? How?
How can I stay gentle and humble of heart at each moment of my life?
Am I, like Jesus, attentive to the small details of the life of my friends? How?
Do I ask Jesus to change my heart in the small details of my life?
Perhaps, I can start to ask him to help me to change one detail in my life.
I can write it down in my little notebook.

Faith and Light: a community that helps us to live*Prayer*

We are sitting in a circle. A big loaf of bread is placed on a cloth and a nice drawing illustrating this Gospel passage are placed on the floor in the center.

The leader reads from the Gospel of St John (chapter 21, 13-14): «*Jesus comes, he takes the bread and gives it to them: and so with the fish.*» A living tableau can represent this scene: Jesus (the chaplain) blesses the large loaf, breaks it, and gives a small piece to each person. Then he can give a short explanation of the meaning of the blessing: Jesus blessed the bread and the fish, as he did the multiplication of the loaves and blessed the bread and wine at the last supper. This was a Jewish tradition.

In our secularised world, the blessings which our parents still knew, have often disappeared. In former times, beautiful signs were made, not by superstition, but because Jesus was at the centre of daily life, for example: before the meal, the mother traced with a knife three crosses on the bread before cutting it. Each person made the sign of the cross before the meal. Before going to sleep, the children joined their parents, who traced on their foreheads the sign of the cross. By this same gesture ill persons were blessed. In the Middle East, when a child coughs, the mother traces a cross on his/her mouth, and in numerous southern countries, people still make the sign of the cross on leaving their house, before driving their car or before they go swimming.

In Faith and Light we have kept the beautiful custom of singing the «*Benedicite*» before the meal, preceded by a beautiful sign of the Cross. The sign of the cross is «*the sign of the friends of Jesus*», the sign of the cross on which he wanted to die in order to give us life.

In thinking of Jesus, the prayer leader will draw the cross of Jesus on himself, saying: «*Jesus, I think of you with my head*» (hand on forehead). «*I love you with my heart*» (hand on heart) and «*I want to do a lot of things for you with my arms*» (a hand on each shoulder, one after the other), then, all together. Then, we make this gesture again with words which express all our faith: «*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen*». The leader can propose that we bless each other by mutually tracing a cross on the forehead. We can sing the Taizé song: «*Veni Sancte*

Spiritus » or « *Jesus, Jesus* ». Together, we say the Faith and Light Prayer (see appendix 12, page 98).

▶ **And/or the Prayer of the Poor**

Jesus gives himself to us with all his tenderness and thoughtfulness. We entrust ourselves to him. We let ourselves be blessed by him. Our open hands are ready to receive every thing from him. And our word of love is : « *Thank you Jesus, my friend.* »



fiesta

Game : The importance of details.

We place different objects on a table which we cover with a cloth. When the game starts, we raise the cloth for several seconds and each person looks attentively at what is on the table. Then we cover it all again.

Each person can say what he/she has seen. The second time we remove one or several objects... Which ones have disappeared? We can adapt this game in several ways : the leader of the fiesta is telling us about the importance of details in daily life. He/she is interrupted by the entrance of a person dressed in an unexpected way : hat, makeup, bundle... He/she goes out and everyone must describe him/her in detail.

▶ **Meal or snack**

Today we will start the meal or the snack with a Benedicite (grace). Each family will have prepared sandwiches of different sorts which we put together and share.

BETWEEN NOW AND THE NEXT MEETING : A FEW SUGGESTIONS



The time of fidelity

▶ **Within the small groups of friendship**

In the group of friendship we will prepare and share a family meal. We shall bring photos of our families, of our work, of our leisure activities and look at them together. If we have no photos, we can bring an

faith and Light : a community that helps us to live

object which reminds us of our work, our daily life. We could explain what it represents in our life.

◆ In our personal life

As usual we can say the Prayer of the Poor. The poor is the person who expects everything from other people. This month, we want to receive rather than give. We want to be blessed by Jesus. This is a gesture of humility and confidence. We can pronounce a blessing each morning on several people who are in need or who are dear to us. We write their names in our little notebook.



In the coordinating team to prepare the month of July meeting

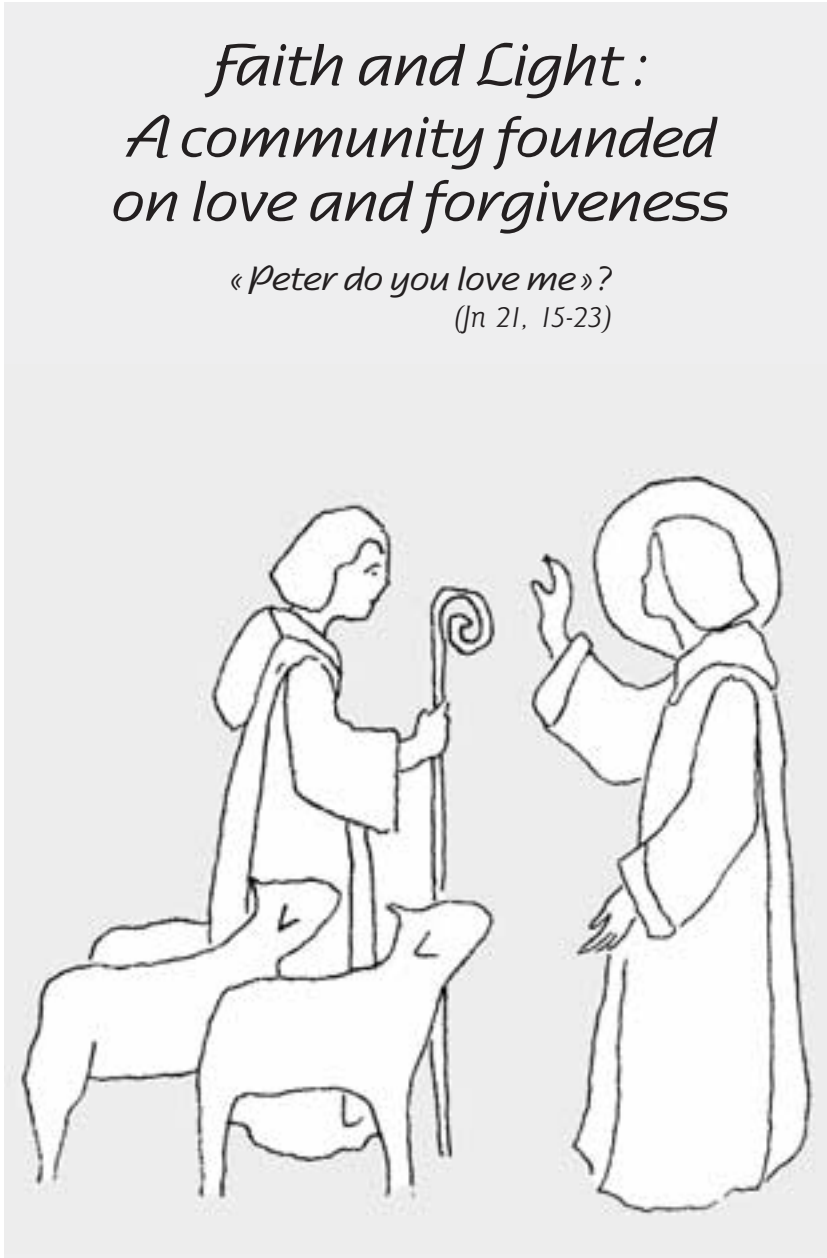
Sometimes, in certain communities in the Northern hemisphere, the July meeting is suppressed because a good number of members are away on holidays. We must think of those who are not going away and feel even more lonely. In thinking of them it would be important to remain faithful to this meeting, even if we are few in number. Often it is the opportunity to make more personal bonds of friendship.

The chaplain of our community, or the leader will help us to deepen Jean Vanier's words. Perhaps he/she could focus on this phrase : « *They will know that you are my disciples by the love you have for one another* ».

For the next meeting we shall prepare carefully the sharing time mime, making sure that everyone participates and deepen the word of God. How do we help each member, especially those who are disabled and who are at the heart of our community, to develop and grow in love and truth?... How, can we as coordinating team grow in this respect? Do we speak to the people with intellectual disabilities as if they were children? Do we give responsibilities to each one? How do we, as a coordinating team, live out the last paragraph of Jean's meditation for July?

*faith and Light :
A community founded
on love and forgiveness*

*« Peter do you love me » ?
(Jn 21, 15-23)*



Faith and Light : a community founded on love*Welcome and gathering anew*

A small group welcomes each person with musical instruments. If we have no musicians in the community, we can make our own instruments: simple glass jars, more or less filled with water on which we tap rhythmically with a spoon, or pieces of wood, or even shaking a tin box full of beans or small stones...

*The Word*

After the breakfast that Jesus had prepared for his disciples on the shore of the lake, Jesus took Peter aside and asked him three times: « **Simon, son of John, do you love me?** » Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him this question three times. It reminded him of the painful moment when he denied Jesus three times and said that he did not know him. Each time, Peter replied: « **Yes Lord, you know that I love you** ». And each time Jesus said to him « Feed my lambs, take care of my sheep, be their shepherd. »

Jesus had called Peter « the rock » and designated him to be the leader. But Peter had denied Jesus and had fled at the moment of the crucifixion. After such a terrible mistake we would have thought that Jesus would have tried to designate another leader. **Peter did not seem to be worthy to be the shepherd of the flock that Jesus entrusted to him. But through all his pain and humiliation, Peter became more humble.** He no longer replied to Jesus: « I will lay down my life for You » as he did after the washing of the feet. Now he answered more simply and humbly: « Yes Lord, you know I love you. » **Jesus forgave Peter, with all mistakes, his fears, his weaknesses and he confirmed Peter as the shepherd of his flock.**

Jesus asks each one of us this same question: « Do you love me? » Don't we ask each other this same question: « **Am I loveable?** Does someone really love me? » Don't we ask each other: « Will you be my friend? »

Faith and Light : a community founded on love

July-August

Love is a commitment through which we reveal to another person that he or she is important and precious, a place where God dwells. To love people means to listen to them, to be faithful to them. To love is to understand others, to take them into consideration, to help them to grow in love and knowledge of who they are. To love is to forgive, not seven times but seventy times seven.

This is the heart of Jesus' message :

*« Love one another as I have loved you.
They will know that you are my disciples
by the love you have for one another. »*

Isn't that the desire of each of our communities to be a sign that we are the disciples of Jesus by the way that we love and forgive each other ?



Sharing

▶ **Together**

Let us meditate on some passages from the words of Jean Vanier. We can relive the dialogue between Jesus and Peter or invent a very simple song by singing these words : *« You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart (hand on heart), with all your soul (hands crossed on your chest) with all your mind (hands on your forehead) and with all your being (hands which rise from your feet upwards towards the sky).*

▶ **In sharing groups**

Do I remember moments when I felt loved? When? By whom?

Is it easy to forgive? Can I forget?

Have I already asked for forgiveness from a person that I have hurt? How did I do it?

How did I feel afterwards?

We can write in our little notebook, the name of a person from whom we should ask forgiveness.

Faith and Light: a community founded on love*Prayer*

We are sitting in a big circle. In the middle there is a big lighted candle and an open Bible.

The leader proposes a way of expressing, with our bodies, according to our own culture, the sentiments of compassion, kindness, humility gentleness, patience, forgiveness. Two by two, we make this gesture and each one says to the other: «*Jesus loves you. I love you too*».

We repeat together the Our Father, but when we get to «*Forgive us our sins*», we stop and it is the leader who says solemnly: «*Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.*» We repeat this phrase all together and then we continue the Our Father.

The prayer ends with a song of forgiveness and friendship.

◆ **And/or the Prayer of the Poor**

A poor person can only give his poverty. That is what we are going to do. We take up our usual position. Make our gesture of offering as expressive as possible. We know that we will be accepted just as we are in our poverty. We are happy about it. Perhaps a little smile appears on our lips. Our word of love: «*Yes, Jesus, I love you!*» or «*Jesus, forgive me*».

*fiesta***The headband Game**

A bandage is tied round the head of a person placed in front of the community. The first name of a member of the community is written on the forehead of this person. This person must identify the person whose name is written on his forehead, by asking various questions to the other members of the community. In order to help

faith and Light : a community founded on love

July-August

the members «wearing» the name, to ask questions, we can put beside them cards with little drawings on them. For example, someone making a cake for their friends, someone praying, another one which we see someone helping another... If we cannot find any drawings, here are some suggestions for questions (we speak of the person whose name is on the forehead). Why is this person so precious to the community? What does he/she bring in particular to the community? (A smile...) What does he/she do to show that he/she loves us?...

Without words

Before starting the game, each person gently strokes the hand of his/her neighbour as a sign of friendship.

Then the community leader takes a large ball of clay and says to his/her neighbour: « *Watch out, my friend, I am throwing you the earth!* » The ball is thrown until it has passed through everyone's hands. We then divide it up into little balls, and share it out until everyone has a piece. We flatten out the piece with our hands, then in groups of three, we make imprints of our hands all mixed up with one another as a sign of friendship. Thus, everyone will have a piece of clay with two or three hands mixed up on it. By offering the imprint of our hand we are saying to our neighbour « *I want to be your friend* ».

► Meal or snack

Today: a coloured meal!

Just as Jesus prepared a breakfast for his disciples with love, today we will prepare the meal or the snack with particular care with the aim of giving a great surprise and pleasure to our friends. It's up to you artists! We put the cakes, bread rolls and pastries on the table. In several little bowls we put sugar items, coloured sweets, aromatic herbs, little flowers... Then we have a competition for the best snack. We gather in small groups and for several minutes, try to win the competition of the best decorated snack, with the aim of offering it to one of the other teams with... a great deal of pleasure and a lot of singing.

faith and Light : a community founded on love

BETWEEN NOW AND THE NEXT MEETING : A FEW SUGGESTIONS



The time of fidelity

▶ **Within the small groups of friendship**

During our leisure time or our holidays we can collect « treasures » for the other members of the group of friendship (shells, pretty pebbles, stones, dried flowers, drawings...). We will get together to give each other these 'treasures', and share about the memories which these evoke. For some of us holiday means that we have fewer personal contacts. Therefore, let us think of regularly giving a little sign of life to the other group of friendship (SMS, cards, telephone calls, informal invitations...).

▶ **In our personal life**

The Prayer of the Poor will open or close each day with the feelings of poverty expressed during the last meeting. We will read in our little notebook the name of the person we want to forgive or from whom to ask forgiveness.

We will pray, every morning, a prayer of humility, gentleness and kindness towards someone who irritates us.

Prayer of commitment

Lord,

You have called me to be part of the (name) Faith and Light community.

With a poor heart, but full of trust,

I promise to carry in my prayers and in my heart each one of its members.

*I promise to do everything in my power to see that in Faith and Light
he/she meets a true community of friends
with whom they may be able to receive the light of faith,
grow in confidence and hope,
shine with peace and joy.*

*Jesus, help me to remain faithful to your love
in the mission that you have given me in the heart of my community.*

May Mary, your mother, fortify me by her example of love and service.

Amen



February the Feast of Light !

Why was the 2nd February, feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple (Candlemas) adopted as the feast day of all the Faith and Light communities in the world? There was no great discernment or official decision. This day was given to us quite naturally.

The first pilgrimage in 1971 took place at Easter, and already on 1972 a community in France (Allier) decided that they would have their annual celebration at Candlemas, the day when Jesus was presented as the Light of the World and where the symbol of the lighted candles is so meaningful. The idea of this celebration spread world wide through Faith and Light communities like a blaze, the meaning was so obvious. At the Presentation of Jesus in the temple, like in Faith and Light, parents were gathered together with their small child, and some friends, a man named Simeon and a woman named Anna.

Parents who are members of Faith and Light have felt or often feel in their very flesh the sermon given to Mary by Simeon : « *A sword will pierce your heart* ». And we see, all too well, that their child is a child of contradiction. He reveals deep thoughts that are hidden in people's often ambivalent hearts, including our own. A weak person who is disabled, ill, dying or homeless, disturbs us deeply, but they can transform us if we allow them to take us by the hand.

The Feast of Light takes place in many different ways according to the countries, regions or communities. If the Feast of Light can rarely be celebrated on February 2 because it is difficult to get the community together on that date, we can nevertheless encourage that we pray « together » on that day regardless of where we are. Whether we are alone in our prayer corner, with a few others, our friendship group, or with the monastery or the contemplative community that prays specially for us we are in communion with the Faith and Light communities all around the world. We form a great chain of prayer and thanksgiving for Faith and Light.

A Faith and Light community can organise its celebration with the parish or the ecclesial community to which it belongs. At the welcome the priest or

the pastor, briefly presents the community. Faith and Light songs will have been specially chosen, for example «*My friends, let's sing all our joy*». The members of the community, parents, friends, persons with a disability will take part in the procession of offerings, or may make the collection. At the end of the celebration, the community leader or a member of the coordinating team will wholeheartedly announce Faith and Light and invite those present to a friendly drink or to a meal or even to a party. On their departure, we will make sure that each person receives a leaflet and a small note on the life of the community, its address...

The Feast of Light can also be organised by two communities who will get together in one of the parishes or local Churches to which they belong. The preparation and the actions are more or less the same.

Finally, the regional or national council can also gather all the communities for a meeting in common.

Whether we choose the one or the other way of celebrating, the Feast of Light must be prepared meticulously. The contacts with the parish or the local Church must be made already by the month of September. This celebration could be the occasion on which to invite new persons. If we lack new friends, for example, let us direct our efforts towards them.

On the Feast of Light we can also organise the «*Announcement and Sharing Day*». As the announcing has been largely emphasised during the celebration, it is left to us to prepare activities which will allow a generous participation in solidarity.

Faith and Light

« Announcement and Sharing Day »

During the time of Lent it is very suitable to organise the « Announcement and Sharing Day ». We can organise it in February during the Feast of Light, or in March.

The preparation of this day which will mobilise the whole community, will give everything a new boost! Here are some ideas for a good procedure :

- ◆ To prepare, all together, the activity which will be used as the main support of the day.

Either a show, mime, concert, (as in Japan and in France) or a sale : cakes, pancakes, jam in nicely decorated little pots, flowers, jumble sales, yard sales, bazaars, lotteries... calendars (as in The Lebanon) or cards, which can be produced so easily with a computer ! The International Secretariat can send you photos of communities throughout the world. Or you can even plan a meal or a dinner dance... In the Philippines fizzy drink cans, decorated with the Faith and Light boat are used as collecting boxes where each person can put a few coins, they are called « Mumucans »... Invite all your friends, relations, neighbours, acquaintances...

- ◆ Announce Faith and Light in the parish ; on local or Christian radio stations, in local newspapers... Distribute widely the Finances leaflets.
- ◆ Everyone should be present that day with their best smile.
- ◆ When everything is over, make an assessment in the coordinating team, to see what was good and what should be improved next year and write this down. We forget things so quickly! And finally, don't let us forget to send the money collected to the national coordinator.

Testimonies :

« We decided to make Christmas cards and sell them for the « Announcement and Sharing Day ». On arriving home, two persons with Down's syndrome who had participated in this work told about their day

with enthusiasm and pride: « We did drawings of cards to help the other Faith and Light communities ».

They contributed. It is important to let the weakest ones also be the givers. This really confirms them. They know they are fully members of the community. »

« Each member of the community arrived, on « D day » with a bowl of pancake batter. A restaurant owner lent us hotplates and we made our pancakes on the cathedral square. We had decorated everything with big many-coloured crepe paper flowers and set up a small stand with documentation. A huge success! After we had spoken about Faith and Light at the end of Mass and invited all the parishioners to come outside, they were all there queuing up to buy pancakes. In an atmosphere of festivity and laughter, the last pancake was sold by auction for 35 euros. »

« We organised this jumble sale in order to offer a financial participation of solidarity to the very poor communities, but also to show everyone our feeling of brotherhood and our joy of being together, each one of us with our differences, our poverty and our riches. We are offering the visitors free copies of the journal « Ombres et Lumière ». The journal is so well conceived, so rich in testimonies and all sorts of addresses and can help and support families living with suffering and disability so much.

This Sunday, we were all there, faithful to the rendez-vous, from seven o'clock in the morning to seven o'clock at night, and the Lord blessed us the whole time ! »

Living together the washing of the feet

The meaning of our action

On the night before his death, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples with much love and humility and said: «*For I have given you an example that you also should do as I have done for you*».

What humility, what an example of service, of goodness! Jesus teaches us by this gesture, to put ourselves at the service of one another with love and gentleness. He teaches us to go spiritually on our knees before our brothers and sisters, especially the poorest ones. We are going to wash each other's feet, in an atmosphere of prayer, of silence, knowing that it is a time of grace. Saint Bernard liked to say that the washing of feet was a sacrament, that is to say, a moment, when, Jesus, by his love, joins us.

To be sure, washing each other's feet is a symbol. However, it reveals our desire to forgive, to be forgiven, to serve with humility, to become smaller, poorer. Thus, to wash each other's feet becomes for each one of us a prayer. This gesture has also a particular significance from the point of view of unity. If we cannot always eat together at the same Eucharistic table as our brothers and sisters of other denominations, we can already be deeply united to each other in living through the washing of feet together.

The procedure

Before beginning, several persons will have prepared the room. The chairs will be arranged in (a) circle (s) (one or several depending on the number of participants). At the center, there are placed a Bible, a candle and a basin, a jug filled with water and a towel. Water will have been placed in reserve, outside the circle, to refill the jug if necessary.

The celebration begins. The candle is lighted. We sing some quiet songs and recollect ourselves to find peace and interior silence. After the songs, the leader will explain the meaning of the evening ceremony «*We are going to wash each others' feet as Jesus has asked us to do*». And he reads the text of the Gospel of John (13, 1-17).

Then he kneels down in front of the person who is on his right in the circle and washes his two feet very slowly, with a great deal of love and respect. This is a sacred gesture. He wipes the feet. When he has finished, he remains on his knees before the person. This latter person puts her hands on the head of the other, and they both pray in silence. This is a gesture of mutuality and reciprocity. After several moments of prayer, the one who has had her feet washed, rises and kneels before the person on her right and washes his feet... and so on, until each member of the community has had his/her feet washed.

During all this time of the washing of feet, we can arrange for background music or softly sing a refrain (from Taizé, for example).

Certain persons with difficulties must be helped in order to be able to accomplish all these gestures. However, it is important for them to experiment with this responsibility of service. When the gesture of the washing of feet appears to be difficult, even impossible to carry out, it is up to each leader to intervene with kindness to make one or other of the participants not feel guilty, and suggest, for example, the simple washing of hands.

In sharing groups

After this celebration, we remain in a circle and we share our reflections on several questions.

- ◆ Why does this gesture collect us together, unite us?
- ◆ What are the actions, the words, the attitudes in my life which can construct unity?
- ◆ When I find myself with a person very different from myself, in whose presence I feel « frozen », or whom I find disagreeable, can I try to imagine in my heart, that I am kneeling down to wash his/her feet and then, that he/she in their turn, is washing mine.



At the end, we sing together « *Ubi Caritas* » and recite the « *Our Father* » holding each others' hands.


Jean Vanier

The Prayer of the Poor

The Prayer of the Poor is the prayer of those who are not able to reflect deeply: persons who are tired, sick, old, disabled; but also the prayer of those who want to become little before God: the contemplatives.

During this prayer we are simply present and we completely give ourselves just as we are. Our presence alone becomes a sign, a word: « *I want to remain with you because I love you* ».

The prayer of the poor is a prayer of fidelity, even if interior agitation presses us to do something else. It is not easy to persevere in a situation without any 'real' use, without a result of which we can be proud. It is only a « *being with* ». But in Faith and Light we know that this attitude is a sign of love: « *You are so precious to me: You are worth more than all other things that could attract me at this moment* ».

The Prayer of the Poor is, in reality, a prayer of the body. When we have nothing to say, we can at least express ourself with our body. We get into a comfortable position that lets us rest peacefully, without movement. We put our open hands on our knees, a gesture of the gift of ourself. We breathe slowly and regularly. And we stay there. Repeating a single word, a word of love; will be very important in helping us.

We remain there in trust, in silence of the heart, for at least ten minutes, letting Jesus love us and transform us.

I should like to share several testimonies with you

I have made a promise to God: Lord, I know that during this morning hour of prayer, I shall spend a certain time dreaming or trying to solve problem. I don't know how to stop it. I shall try again. The most important thing is that I shall give this moment to nobody but you. Even if I cannot unite myself completely to you, nobody else will take this time from me.

(Joseph Cardinal Bernardin « The Gift of Peace» p. 97)

« What I should like to share with you, is this difference which shocks me, between two worlds : the world of the poor and my orphanage and that of the university where I work. I see myself walking across the playground with two or three little children clinging to my skirts and showing so much sincere affection with so much simplicity. What a difference between this world and the « important » one and the « pretentious » university : where man is a wolf towards man. It is as if I were falling from the planet Mars into the middle of a combat for false values. This confirms for me each day, that our society of today has an enormous need for the spirituality of Faith and Light to shine on it. »

« Zeljko and a friend are coming back from a Faith and Light meeting. They are in a bus and see a very old man climbing in. Zeljko gives up his seat and the old man engages him in conversation. But he understands nothing : Zeljko, who is intellectually disabled, expresses himself in funny phrases with lots of words all mixed up. The old man ends by saying, « Well, son, tell me what language you are speaking ? » Zeljko replies : « But I'm speaking Christian, the language of love. »



Father Joseph Larsen
International Chaplain

Faith and Light

Prayers from different Christian Churches

« Lord our God, look upon your people with mercy and pour upon them the gifts of your Spirit. May your love of the truth grow in us so that we will long for the unity of all Christians, with all our heart and with all our strength. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Saviour. »

(Catholic Church, Roman Missal)

« Lord God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour and prince of Peace, take from our hearts all feelings of contempt and pride and all desire of vain glory. Give us burning hearts so that we will hold each other in tender and brotherly affection. »

(Book of Common Prayer, Anglican Church)

« We see today the division of your Church, and it seems to us that everywhere we are threatened by decline. ». « Grant us to wait in patience for the time when your Church will rise up from the shadow of death. »

(John Calvin)

« God of mercy, grant us to have only one intention, for knowledge and mutual understanding. With our hearts turned towards Jesus Christ, our Lord, that we can praise and glorify you with a sole voice, you, our heavenly Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. »

(Martin Luther)

« Lord God, make Pentecost come to all countries, and increase every day the number of those who are saved. Unite us together with you, Lord Jesus Christ our Master Unite us among ourselves as members of your body, in the unity of the Holy Spirit. »

(Methodist Church)

« Grant us to glorify and to praise you with united and hearts and lips and venerate and exalt your name, the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and forever and ever »

(Orthodox Church, Liturgy of St Basil)

Prayer for Christian Unity

Lord Jesus,
who have prayed that all should be one,
we pray for the unity of Christians,
just as you want it, by the means you choose.

May your Spirit allow us to experience
the suffering of separation,
to recognize our sin
and to hope beyond all hope.

Amen !

(From the prayer of the Abbé Couturier)



Communities in Syria working for unity

Three questions to Roy Moussalli, international vice-coordinator of Faith and Light. Roy is Syrian, committed to a community for twenty years. As a result of his different responsibilities in Faith and Light, he has been drawn to work for unity among the Churches in his country and the Middle East!

In a country where nine Christian denominations are represented, how do the communities live out Ecumenism ?

Each community is linked to a parish and finds there its necessary support (bishop, priest, friends, movements...). In the mixed communities the leaders come from the denomination of the parish where the community meets. This makes integration easier. I have no examples of discrimination among members, nor even among the leaders of the communities.

Are the heads of the Churches involved ?

Faith and Light is supported by the bishops of all the Churches. One can even say that the Orthodox bishops who adopt a community cherish it like a beloved child.

Faith and Light is one of the rare movements covering the whole of Syria. It is the most widespread, and the only one integrated into the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. The pilgrimages communities make go for example to a Catholic or an Orthodox Church and vice-versa with the presence of the two bishops.

The story of the Don community at Homs impressed me. It has existed since 1985 and has passed through a time of « artificial respiration » in order to stay alive. It is composed of a large majority of Orthodox members and meets in a school. The Orthodox bishop at that time did not want to receive Faith and Light into his church. He considered Faith and Light to be Catholic. With the arrival of a new Bishop, who knew the movement and wanted to receive the community, it was now the turn of the members to

resist. They wanted to keep their independence! After a certain time, the community asked the bishop for his support and their integration. His reply was : « *We have been waiting for you for a long time* ». It was like the return of the prodigal son. The community now has a place of meeting at their disposal, a chaplain committed to them (with wife and children). They have rediscovered the riches of their Church and its liturgy. With a lot of young people they are getting ready to start a new community.

What is your hope ?

Faith and Light communities in the different Churches was a utopia ten years ago (by common consent). It has now become a blessing. Some time ago the tendency was, for each Church, to want to attract to itself the members of the other Churches. With Faith and Light things have been reversed : we encourage each person to find his/her place and the place of the weakest in his/ her own church.

Prayer of Saint Ephraim

This prayer, accompanied by prostration is said in the Orthodox Church for the first time on the evening of the Sunday immediately preceding Lent. It is repeated in most of the services of Lent, particularly during the Liturgy of those who are going to be blessed.

*Lord and Master of my Life,
deliver me from idleness, from discouragement,
from the desire for power and useless words.
And give to your unfaithful servant
the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and charity.
Yes, my Lord and my God
may I know my sins and my transgressions
and not judge my brothers,
for you are blessed for now and evermore.
Amen.*

Prayer to Mary for the time of Lent

Holy Virgin, pure and wholly immaculate,
You who gave birth to the source of life
Save our Church from adversity
and in your goodness,
let us live in peace.

Testimony : Learning to « be with »

Two years ago, I discovered the apartment of a friend in my community when I visited him for the first time. This friend has both a physical and psychological disability. He had a stroke at the age of eighteen. He lives like street people, the only difference being that he has an apartment in which all sorts of rubbish is piling up. He does not allow anyone to clean it. It is impossible to do anything to help him.

The first time I went to see him, I was really shocked, and I said so to him. Afterwards, I tried to find several people to come and help me clean, but he took this initiative as an intrusion, a sort of offence.

Yesterday, I went to visit him again. I simply sat down beside him on the floor in the middle of the rubbish and we talked. He read me a poem. I think my role is simply to visit him, to talk to him, listen to him, sit with him and to stop wanting to do something for him, like cleaning his apartment.

When I left him, I felt at peace, he was at peace too. Understanding how to « live with » is easy, but doing it practically is far from being so !

Testimony : A smile in the Metro

It is very early in the morning, everyone is on their way to work. The metro compartment is full. I and my fellow passengers are squeezed shoulder to shoulder without being able to move. My briefcase is pressed against me. When we arrive at the station 'Etoile', a lot of people have to get out, and a lot of people have to get in, It's a terrible crush. The people on the platform rush to enter, each one struggling to find a small corner. But one man making his way, remains in front of the door, without wanting to move out of the way at all. A woman wanting to pass, lifts up her eyes to this rigid man and smiles at him. A miracle happens: the man moves forward, letting the travellers enter. The woman with the smile disappears into the crowd. The metro starts off again. Her smile remained in my heart and I said to myself: « Perhaps she is a member of Faith and Light ! »

Faith and Light

Prayer of Faith and Light

Jesus, you came into our world
to reveal the Father to us, your Father and our Father.
You came to teach us to love one another.

Give us the Holy Spirit, according to your promise,
so that he will make us instruments of peace and unity,
in this world of war and division.

* Jesus you have called us to follow you
in a community of Faith and Light,
We want to say «yes» to you.

We want to live in a covenant of love
in this big family you have given us,
where we can share our sufferings and difficulties,
our joys and our hope.

Teach us to accept our wounds, our weakness
so that your power may be revealed.

Teach us to find you
in all our brothers and sisters
especially in those who are the weakest.
Teach us to follow you in the ways of the Gospel.*

Jesus come and live in us and in our communities
as you first lived in Mary.
She was the first to welcome you in herself.

Help us to be faithfully present, with her, at the foot of the cross,
near the crucified of the world.

Help us to live your Resurrection.
Amen !

N.B. The prayer can be said by alternating two groups or by alternating an individual and the group. The short prayer is found between the asterisks.

The evaluation of the guidelines 2004-2005

To be sent to the International Secretariat before 10 March 2005

Name of my community :

First name and name of leader :

Address :

Country : Zone :

1. **Does the Guidelines of 2004-2005 meet all your requirements?**
2. What do you appreciate **most** ?
3. What do you find **less good** ?
4. What are the **appendices** that you **use** ? (Indicate their number)
What are the ones that you **don't use** ?
5. Has your community **formed small groups of friendship** ?
How are they constituted ?
Who animates them ?
What are their main **activities** ?
What are the **fruits** of the small groups of friendship ?
6. In what other ways do you live the **time of fidelity** ?
7. Could you describe a **typical meeting** of your community indicating freely what is good, less good, not good ?
8. What are your **suggestions** for improving the next « Guidelines » ?
If possible, it could be of great help for improvement of next year's Guidelines that you tell us what you think about the suggestions given, give us fresh ideas, and inform us of your experiments starting from the present issues.

- ◆ Welcome
- ◆ The word
- ◆ Sharing together
- ◆ In sharing groups
- ◆ Prayer
- ◆ Prayer of the poor
- ◆ Fiesta
- ◆ Small groups of friendship
- ◆ Living Faith and Light in our daily life
- ◆ As a coordinating team

« Helping Faith and Light Communities to Re-discover a truly Christian Spirit »

In our time, spiritual values are often ignored : people do not know Jesus and his Good News, or his Church. In this context, it may sometimes be difficult for a Faith and Light community to maintain and deepen a truly Christian spirit.

The Charter of Faith and Light states that our communities are Christian communities. In every one of our gatherings, time is set aside for prayer, reflection and deepening. Our Guidelines get their inspiration from the Gospel and from the liturgical season.

At present, a growing number of family members and friends have no Christian education ; do not try to put the message of Jesus at the heart of their life and at the heart of Faith and Light. They attend the gatherings mainly to help, or out of a sense of concern, good will or fellowship, recognizing the human value of persons with intellectual disabilities, but seemingly unaware of the spiritual dimension that is essential to being human.

Many friends, mainly the younger ones, often have a wonderfully generous heart and quite easily connect with persons with intellectual disabilities. They have particular gifts to create a joyous environment and to organize recreational activities, but they sometimes tend to believe that Faith and Light is only a movement for leisure, games and sports... They have difficulty understanding that, while leisure activities may have an important place in Faith and Light, they must always be oriented toward deeper human, spiritual values.

What is to be done, then ? How might we help ?

It is obvious that rules cannot be written that would fit every culture and every situation. We will simply try to call to mind a few concrete orientations and suggestions :

Orientations :

1. A Christian life implies faith in Jesus and involves prayer, as well as love and compassion. If there are communities where faith is not explicit, there are others where compassion is not lived or where prayer has become a ritual, not a living relationship with Jesus. Faith and Light communities need to be committed to both faith and prayer, and to compassion and love. These are the poles of the Christian life. Each pole leads to the other.

2. Faith and Light communities have a particular appeal for persons with intellectual disabilities and their families. The communities aim at helping all their members discover the importance of every person, particularly the weakest. It is primarily through the quality of love and respect for each person that a community can be gauged.

Their love leads the communities to strengthen the bonds of friendship among all their members, and mainly with those who suffer most. This love also leads them to live a true community life with genuine celebrations and times for mutual forgiveness.

3. The Gospels tell of Jesus' compassion for wounded people. These persons are important to him. St Paul says that God has chosen, « the foolish and the weak to confound the wise and the strong ».

If it appears difficult in a community to openly announce the Gospel, it is still very important that the deepest themes of human and Christian life be approached in the times of sharing and reflection, and also in the mimes. Love and hatred, life and death, truth and falsity, the sense of life and of suffering, mercy, forgiveness are themes that may be introduced, starting with the parables of Jesus (The Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son...).

Suggestions :

1. Those who are involved in the launching of a new Faith and Light community need to be very aware of how important beginnings are. It is necessary that the first persons who carry responsibility have a deep desire to live according to the Charter : to know, proclaim and to convey the essential of its content, so that they may build a feeling of love, trust, peace and joy among all.

2. It is most important for all Faith and Light communities (old and new) to have a strong foundation in the vision and values of Faith and Light as a Christian movement and to receive ongoing formation that includes deepening in the spirituality of Faith and Light.

3. Every member should be fully informed of what a Faith and Light community is : a Christian community where one is called to live in relationships of compassion and friendship with persons who are weaker. If some aspects of the movement are new or unfamiliar for a newcomer, he/she is simply asked to accept and to respect them. He/she may be asked to take part in one or several meetings to get a more accurate sense of Faith and Light as a community movement and, then, to meet with the community's coordinating team to decide together whether to go forward with the community.

4. In those communities where prayer, the Eucharist or Worship are more or less neglected or not valued as they should, it is important for the members aspiring to a fully Christian life to be personally encouraged by the chaplain, the community coordinator or the members of the coordinating team to feed their faith and to root themselves in the life of their parish or that of their own Church.

Members (be they persons with intellectual disabilities, family members or friends) who desire to share their life of faith may choose to come together between the regular community gatherings for a time of prayer or participation in worship / Eucharist. This small group

Faith and Light

would carry, in a special way, the intentions of the whole community and of every one of its members. If this initiative is taken, it could be open to all members of the community who wish to join.

5. A community in trouble on the spiritual level needs assistance. The person who accompanies the community (Regional, National or Provincial Coordinator) has a particular responsibility to know the situation and to give concrete support. He/she is the keeper of what is essential to Faith and Light. He/she is also the servant of communion. In such a situation, his/her presence will be full of patience, humility and trust in God who is at work in everyone's heart.

Practically, he/she could offer a day or a weekend of reflection or a retreat on the essential aspects of Faith and Light as they are presented in the Charter, and on the spiritual capacities, needs and thirst of the person with intellectual disabilities. The presence of a priest/pastor/minister, full of faith, sensitivity and friendship would be most helpful also.

6. Every community, even one where the religious dimension is really present, needs to continually assess the quality of its faith and love. All of us may lapse into routine and a sense and look for comfort and satisfaction with the ways we pray and express our faith and love individually and as a community. Keeping up and deepening a truly Christian spirit requires that we encourage one another to renew our enthusiasm and our fervor in the mission with which Jesus entrusts us.

This could be done through : strengthening the small sharing groups ; having days of reflection and of retreat, formation sessions, times of fidelity that include prayer, sharing of faith, worship / Eucharist ; promoting integration and inclusion in the church community/parish ; having a chaplain who actively participates as a member of the community's coordinating team ; periodically praying with the Charter of Faith and Light...

The Guidelines are a very important resource and tool for the life of our communities. Regularly reflecting and praying together with the Guidelines will help the coordinating team and the community to be grounded in a Christian Spirit.

International Council, February 2004

Available documents

Building community

Charter and Constitution	free
Guidelines for the first year	3 €/ \$US
Leaders' pack handbook for the community leader	3 €/ \$US
Leaders' pack handbook for the regional/national/provincial/zone leader	3 €/ \$US
Handbook for the elections (to be published)	3 €/ \$US
Sharing our responsibility in Faith and Light	3 €/ \$US
Annual guidelines (by 10 ex : 35 €/ \$US)	4 €/ \$US

Deepening our life together

Deepening our spirituality in Faith and Light	3 €/ \$US
How to prepare and live a « Faith and Light » retreats (<i>new</i>)	3 €/ \$US
The ecumenism in Faith and Light	3 €/ \$US
Fioretti	2,30 €/ \$US
Formation weekends and sessions in Faith and Light	3 €/ \$US
On holidays together	3 €/ \$US
Finances in Faith and Light	1,50 €/ \$US
« At the heart of our communities » (made by l'Arche in several languages)	4 €/ \$US

International pilgrimage Lourdes 2001

Video « They are opening up a way » (PAL/SECAM/NTSC)	7,50 €/ \$US
« Venez boire à la Source » : special issue of « Ombres et Lumière » (French only) (free contribution)	
Faith and Light badge	1,50 €/ \$US

Getting to know us better

Leaflet (new édition)	free
Messages of John-Paul II to Faith and Light	free
Letter to my brothers and sisters in l'Arche and Faith and Light (J.Vanier)	free

Some others books to help you

Mieux vaut allumer une lampe que maudire l'obscurité (M.H.Mathieu) (French only)	7 €/ \$US
Dieu m'aime comme je suis (Marie-Hélène Mathieu) (French only)	13 €/ \$US
Community and growth (Jean Vanier)	17 €/ \$US
The scandal of the service (Jean Vanier)	9 €/ \$US
I meet Jesus, small format/large format	5,50 / 9 €/ \$US
I walk with Jesus, small format/large format	5,50 / 9 €/ \$US
Pilgrims together, a vision of ecumenism (Jean Vanier)	free

And also the videos of Jean Vanier :

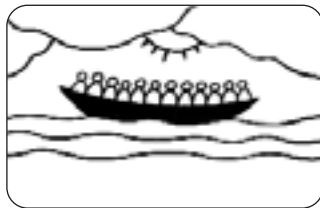
(further information can be requested from Faith and Light International or on the website of Faith and Light International)	
The 25 meditations of Jean Vanier on the Gospel of John (in English)	
By videocassette (PAL/SECAM) :	35 €/ \$US
Serie of 4 videos (PAL/SECAM) :	120 €/ \$US
Quest for peace (video in English) (PAL/SECAM) :	20 €/ \$US
(NTSC standard have to be ordered at l'Arche - Daybreak Canada)	

(The prices indicated have no commercial character but represent a share of the cost of printing. Port in sup)

Personal notes

Faith and Light: a community of love

Septembre

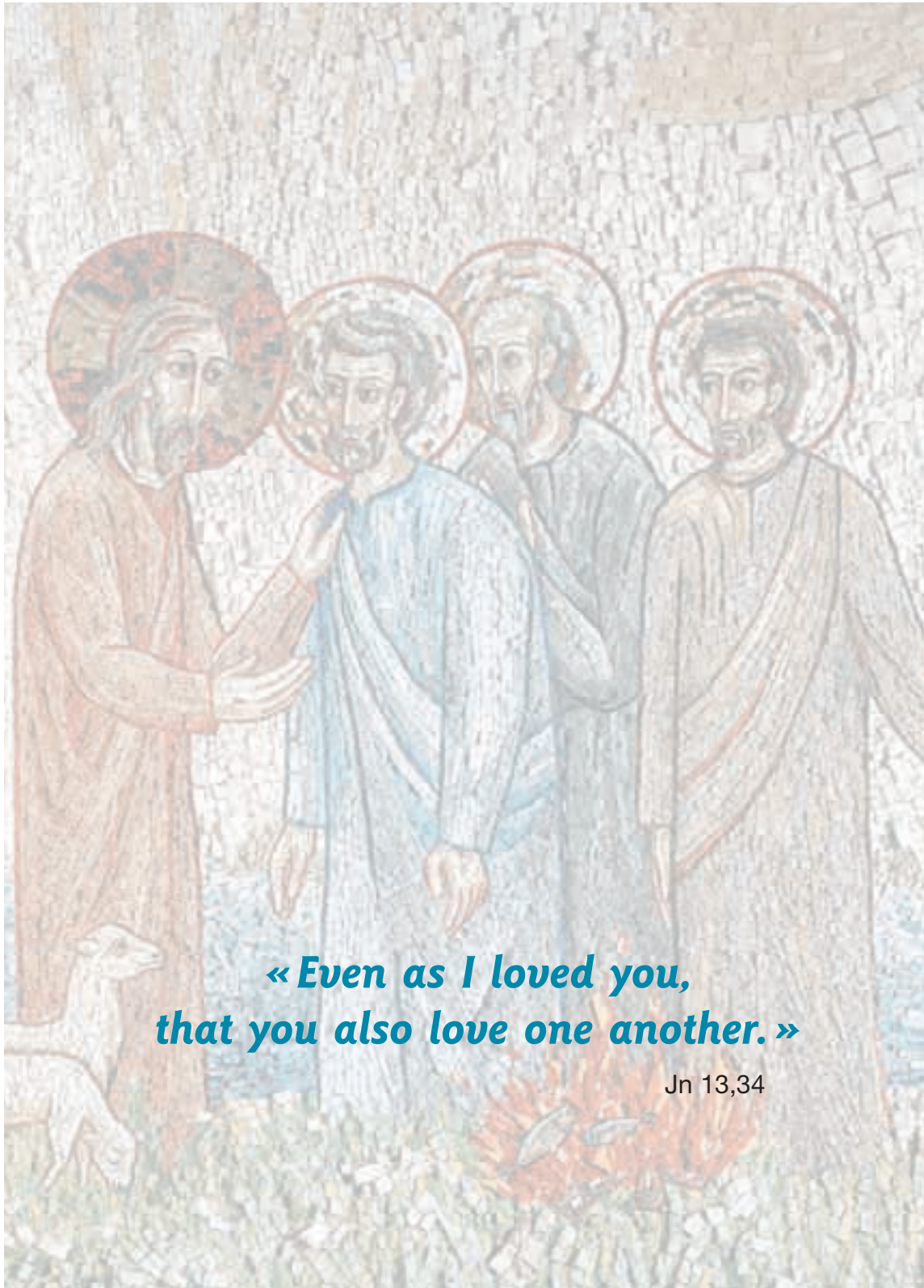


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Cover picture: mosaic from the church « Redemptoris Mater » in Rome



**« Even as I loved you,
that you also love one another. »**

Jn 13,34