



Messengers of joy



Guidelines 2011-2012



Faith and Light International



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Cover Photos: Pilgrimages in Aparecida (Brazil), Steyl (The Netherlands), Loreto (Italy) and Lourdes (France)

Back: Inauguration celebrations of the 40th anniversary, Lourdes February 2th 2011

Illustrations: Amgad Edward (coordinator of the Egypt North province)

We are all messengers of joy

The pilgrimages to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of Faith and Light have been underway throughout the world since the official launch of the jubilee on 2 February 2011 at the end of the first Council of Coordinators meeting.

The theme of this meeting was: *“I have come to bring fire on the earth and how I wish it were already kindled”*. On the last day, the province coordinators, meeting around a large brazier, were sent on a mission. Because the pilgrimages that had been organised or were in the process of being organised during this year were not an ending but a beginning! A beginning of a mission to proclaim to the world who we are and what we experience in our communities. Each of us, intellectually disabled people, parents, friends and chaplains, we are all called to be messengers of joy and love, witnesses to the miracles that God has done for us.

Each month, we will be called to proclaim the joy of the Beatitudes. The joy of doing the will of the Father, the joy of living the Gospel, of welcoming the poor, the joy of gentleness, of compassion and of peace.

How do we proclaim this joy to the world? We can continually invite new friends and new families to join us: “Come and see!” We can leave our comfort zone... There are still so many people alone and in pain. And when there are enough of us, we can multiply. What a beautiful perspective this new fruitfulness of Faith and Light is!

There is the growth of the community as well as our own growth. To nourish our personal life between two meetings, we have chosen a “great witness” who, through their life and their message, will help us to look more deeply at the theme that we have experienced as a community. We can place their image in our prayer corner and each morning or evening, we can pray with them.

A huge thank you to:

- Father Isaac, international chaplain for the monthly meditations.
- Tim Dobbin (Anglican pastor, province chaplain to Canada West) and Marian Crawford (Methodist pastor and province chaplain to UK North) for the times of prayer.
- Sophie, Anne, Veronika and Jean-Michel for the practical suggestions for the other times of the meeting.

It was a joy and a grace to work together, even if with some this was via the Internet!

To each and every one of you, big or small messengers of joy, have a beautiful and fruitful year!

Corinne Chatain
General Secretary

To you, members of the coordination team

As every year, here are a few tips that could help you in the preparation and leading of your community meetings. These are only tips. As you know, all the suggestions that are made in the Guidelines are not to be taken to the letter! You should adapt them to the personality, culture and traditions of your community.

Throughout the year: a bonfire

In order to remind us every month that we have to spread this fire of love everywhere, we suggest you make, at your first meeting, a large board representing a bonfire (see page 86). Each month, we will add a flame upon which we write the Beatitude of the meeting.

The time of prayer

We offer suggestions which each community can adapt according to its own context. We have found that a framework for the time of prayer can be helpful. People can settle into a rhythm of prayer when they know what to expect. Of course, you may wish to vary the outline according to the needs of your community. You may already have established your own outline!

Suggested outline

- Welcome by the chaplain or worship leader
- A song that helps to still us (eg. 'Be still and know, that I am God...')
- Short scripture reading, the reference text
- A symbolic action or a mime
- Quiet reflection in silence or with background music
- Shared prayer with opportunity for everyone to offer an intention
- Our Father with joined hands

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- Final prayer or blessing by chaplain or worship leader
 - Concluding song with actions

The prayer of a poor person

The prayer of a poor person has been suggested several years ago by Father Joseph Larsen, a former international chaplain in Faith and Light. Today, many communities practice this prayer and it bears much fruit in our personal life.

We can experience this together when we do the community prayer during the meeting, or in small sharing groups, or in friendship groups, or at our own home and also of course in the coordination team meeting...

The prayer of a poor person is a prayer of the body which says: I am there because I love you. I am there because you are precious to me. I have put aside all other things, for you, you are more important than anything'. Our presence becomes a sign, a word, a word without words. It is the way friends show their friendship: *'I am happy to be with you'*.

It is not easy to persevere in a blatantly useless situation, without a result to be proud of. It isn't only *'being with'*. However, at Faith and Light we know that it is a sign of love, a school of love. Gradually the heart changes. We are no longer focussed on ourselves but on the Beloved.

Sit on a chair in a well-balanced position which lets you remain still, without losing concentration. We put our open hands on our knees and close our eyes, thus creating an inner space that nothing can enter. The back is straight. We breathe slowly and calmly. We can help ourselves with a word of love that we repeat inwardly, for example, *'I am there for you Jesus'*, or simply the name 'Jesus'.

We remain there, trusting, in the silence of the heart, for at least ten minutes, letting Jesus love and transform us. At the start, we will have a lot of distractions. The peace only comes after a while, perhaps only towards the end. We should not worry, it is our poverty. Peacefully, let us return to our little word of love. The prayer of a poor man is going to change us. It is going to bear a lot of fruit, fruit of an astonishing quality, *'Faith and Light'* quality.

Great witnesses

In order to help us to look more deeply into the theme of the month between each meeting, we have chosen a few great witnesses who, through the testimony of their life, can nourish our personal life and encourage us to become witnesses in our turn. The few lines that are proposed at the beginning of each month, could be included in the invitation letter to the next meeting or distributed on the day...

Coordination team

It would be good for the coordination team to meet at the beginning of the year for a weekend in order to have the time to experience the three times of any meeting: sharing, prayer and celebration... and of course to organise the year!

A few proposals for organising the year:

- **Evaluate the past year** (see questionnaire page 85).
- **Set priorities** for the year to come: how will we welcome new members? How can we open our community so that it grows and shines? How can we be good messengers? How can we nourish the fourth time, the time of loyal friendship?
- **Plan and organise:**
Community and coordination team **meeting dates** taking into account the availability of our chaplain, his presence for the whole meeting (and not just dashing in and out) is so important.
The participation of our community in the **province 40th anniversary pilgrimage** if it hasn't already taken place.
The Feast of Light, a unique opportunity to announce Faith and Light.
The Day of Announcing and Sharing in order to take part in international solidarity (see page 93).
Community weekend, if possible in the religious community we are twinned with.
A holiday camp, a retreat...

Let us not forget, at each coordination team meeting, to do an assessment of the previous meeting, to remind ourselves of the theme so as to better make the link to the next meeting. And let us not get ourselves bogged down just with work, let us experience, share together, pray and celebrate... It is not always feasible or easy but, this year, could we make an effort to organise some community meals where everyone shares what they have brought rather than getting out their own sandwich or little plastic box?

Finally, after each meditation, you will find a paragraph that refers, like last year, to the document: “You will shine in the world like bright stars”¹ (Identity and Mission of Faith and Light). This little booklet helps us to see the road covered over the past 40 years and go back to our initial inspiration, thus helping us to respond to the call to be messengers.

¹ Available from the International Secretariat, 3 rue du Laos 75015 Paris, France
foi.lumiere@wanadoo.fr

The joy of fulfilling the will of the Father

*"Happy are they who fear the Lord and greatly delight in his commandments"
(Psalm 111.1)*





The word of the month

“My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work.” (Jn 4.34) For all of his life Jesus sought to do the will of the Father who sent him. This was his mission, the only thing he sought. From his childhood, he sought to do the will of the Father: *“Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?”* (Lk 2.49). He did everything that his Father entrusted to him, not doing anything of his own accord, nor seeking his own will, but rather speaking what the Father entrusted to him. The teaching he proclaimed came from the Father. The reason he was sent was that no one entrusted to his care would be lost, but that all might be raised to eternal life.

Jesus fulfilled the will of the Father as he gave his life and remained faithful unto the end. He submitted himself to the will of the Father, especially in the most difficult and painful moments. In these instances he could freely say: *“Father, if you will, take this cup away from me, but no that my will be done, but yours.”* (Lk 22.42). And this he fulfilled up to his sacrifice on the Cross: *“It is accomplished”* (Jn 19.30) He glorified the Father by fulfilling the work entrusted to him.

Jesus realized the Father’s will and proclaimed the Good News of the Kingdom Of God, by cleansing the lepers, making the crippled walk, healing the man with the withered hand, cured the centurion’s servant, giving life to the only son of the widow of Naim and the daughter of Jarius, liberating those possessed by the devil, forgiving the woman in the house of Simon the Leper. That is to say, bringing life, happiness and joy to all those who live under the weight of painful and sorrowful burdens, because salvation reaches the total person: body and soul, including their relation with others and with the Father.

In “Faith and Light” we realize the will of the Father by announcing to the world that every person with a disability is a person with all the rights of every human being, those loved by the Father, and are called to live in depth

the life of Jesus, who is the fountain of grace and peace for all the community, for all Churches and for all of humanity.

We fulfill the will of the Father by bringing life and hope to all persons with intellectual disabilities, having discovered their inner beauty, the immense value in the eyes of God, and seeing that they be accepted, respected and loved in the heart of their families and in all of society. All of this fills us with joy, which we announce and share with the world.

Reference text: Jn 6.37-40

Focus on text of the month

- Fulfilling the will of God is a source of joy.
- The will of the Father is that we announce the unique gift of Faith and Light to the world.

Coordination team

- “You will shine in the world...” page 6: “A call from God that guides us”.
- Two great witnesses: **Gérard and Camille Proffit**



Gérard and Camille, now with the Lord, were the parents of Loïc and Thaddée, both severely disabled. Farmers from the centre of France, they were the first instigators of the pilgrimage from which the movement was born. Thaddée was in the care of a centre a long way from their home. Every month, Camille spent a day with him and spent two nights on a train to get to him.

Camille, at home and alone since the death of Gérard, occupied from morning to night with Loïc who gave her no respite, said: “*Each one of the so small gestures can become an eternity if I make them with love. Everything that I experience in my earthly house, I want to make a way to his house, the way of love, where God awaits me.*”²

By going to the end of their parental love, by totally abandoning themselves

² *Ombres et Lumière Issue 120, 1997.*

to the will of the Father, by bringing their five loaves and two fishes, they have allowed a great many families to leave their isolation and discover the joy of friendship.

The will of God on us is that we be witnesses, like Gérard and Camille, to the unique value of each person, to the love of God for them and to share the treasures of their hearts.



Welcome and reunion

On arrival, each person receives a reproduction of the bonfire (see page 86) in the shape of a bookmark, a fire that will guide us and burn a little more each month. On it could be written: *"I am burning with love for you, be happy!"* This bookmark can be kept throughout the whole year in our Guidelines.



Sharing

• Together

The community leader reads, or re-tells in his own words, the word of the month.

We can recount or mime the meeting between Jesus and the Centurion (Lk 7,1-10). The Centurion placed total trust in Jesus and Jesus himself was full of admiration. Never had he seen such faith. Indeed, it is these same words of the Centurion that Roman Catholics say during each Eucharist before the communion.

• In small groups

Generally, we all have the desire to do the will of God.

- How can the Holy Spirit reveal this will to me?
- What can I say about how the Holy Spirit acts in me? How does it drive me? How does it guide me?
- What is God's will for Faith and Light? For my community? For me? To what is he calling us?

- Do I, like the Centurion, trust in Jesus? Am I sure that his will in me will be a happiness?

or

We can recount or mime the birth of Faith and Light. Emphasise the words: **“Do whatever the Holy Spirit inspires you to do”** (see page 89). Jean Vanier asked the first pilgrims to Lourdes in 1971 to be attentive to the will of God in them and to go forth in faith and trust. This 1971 pilgrimage was a moment of unspeakable joy.

Commitment celebration

At the beginning of this year (for the countries of the northern hemisphere), it is good to relive together this commitment ceremony. Here is a suggestion.

The leader and the chaplain are side by side. The candles are lit. The chaplain, in his cassock, calls the first person, who goes up to him and says: *“Jesus, you have called me to set off. I, (name), I want to say **yes**”*.

Then the leader speaks to this same person, saying: *“The community calls you and asks you to undertake ... (for example: think of birthdays, take photos during meetings, help sending out invitations, always coming with a beautiful smile, etc.). The person replies: “Yes, I make the commitment”*. Through these words that are spoken, we renew in joy and trust our commitment within the community. Then, we can give the person a small card on which we could draw a log (see page 86), and write his/her name and the mission given for the year.

We can end this celebration by saying the Faith and Light prayer together and by singing “Messengers of joy” (see page 90).

Our bonfire

We can make the board representing the fire together or make it before the meeting: criss-crossed logs and a large central flame upon which is written: “I have come to bring you joy, be my messenger” or: “I am burning with love for you” (see page 86).

Each month, we will add a flame with the theme of the month. Today: *“Happiness is doing the will of the Father”*.



Praying

In preparation for the year (for those in the Northern hemisphere!) the worship leader reviews the suggested outline for the time of prayer (see page 3). She or he decides on an outline that might work for the community.

Now we could get used to prepare our prayer corner with a particular care, to be beautiful! Few things are enough: a pretty cloth, a cross, an icon, the fire panel, a few flowers or foliage. This year, we could use many candles to symbolize the bonfire that we are called to spread ...

We gather around our prayer corner and place the drawing of the fire we have prepared on the floor. After singing, we listen to our Bible verses again (Jn 6.37-40) as we hold the flames that we were given when we arrived. We ask the Holy Spirit to show us how God wants us to share the message of Faith and Light this year. We then place our flames on the fire to show our commitment to being messengers. We take some time to be quiet before we pray for each other, concluding with the Lord's prayer. After the concluding prayer written below, we sing the song of the pilgrimages "Messengers of Joy"³ (see page 90).

Prayer

Loving Father, your Son's food was to do your will.
Thank you for gifting us with Faith and Light.
This year we want to share your gift.
Please send us your Spirit of joy and obedience
and show us those whom you are calling
to join us on our pilgrimage.
We ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen!

³ Available from the International Secretariat for 2 €

Prayer of a poor person (see page 4)

“Jesus, I trust in you.”



Celebrating

- **Dance of joy!**

We are in a circle. The leader of the game calls two people to the centre. They say their first name and make up a dance to lively music. All sorts of dances could be invented. While they dance, all the community must chant their first names: *“Jean, Chantal, Jean, Chantal, Jean, Chantal...”* After a few minutes, the leader of the game calls two other people... The more bizarre the dance, the more funny it will be! In addition, it is an excellent way of remembering each person’s first name...

- **Game of trust**

In pairs, we stand one person behind the other. The person at the front is the car, the one behind is the driver. The “car” is blindfolded and pretends to have a steering wheel in their hands. The “driver” has their eyes wide open and holds on to the shoulders of his “car”. Before starting, the driver agrees with his car on the signals to be used to steer it. For example, pressure on the left shoulder for turning left, pressure on both shoulders to brake, a pull backwards to reverse, etc.

Montreal, Friday evening at 5pm, you have no choice, you must leave the city as quickly as possible. You start and begin to drive slowly at first, then more and more quickly. You carry out a number of turns, steps back, you slow and accelerate beautifully, everything accompanied by the squealing of tyres and grinding mechanics.

Of course, even a driver exasperated by the rush hour must take the greatest care of his car and that of others. Be careful! Are you ready? To the car!

After a few minutes, you swap roles ...

The Joy of living the Gospel

*"Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it!"
(Lk 11.28)*





The word of the month

We are the disciples of Jesus, and as disciples, we try to live the Gospel. We are concerned to hear the Word of God and put it in practice. Blessed are they who live the Gospel. Jesus lived what he taught. His behavior, his activities, his gestures, his words, his works, all was in accord with his teachings. He announced the Gospel by his very life. He lived the Beatitudes, loved, forgave. He is, we may say, the living Gospel. The apostles, who lived, followed and ate with him, who were witnesses of his healings, and his treatment of others, were converted by the power of the Spirit, in the living Gospel.

What does it mean to live the Gospel? It means to live, to be, to think, to feel and to work like Jesus as the Gospels tell us. Mark for example, tells us that Jesus not only listened to the leper; moreover he touched him and cured him, and thus initiated a personal and intimate relationship. Not only did he physically heal the crippled man; he also forgave his sins. His healing is holistic, total and complete. Not only did he call Mathew to follow him; he also ate with him as well as with sinners and publicans. In other words, he entered in contact with all persons without making distinctions or differences of lifestyle. He healed on the Sabbath day, giving more importance to life rather than to norms and rules.

But in order to live with perseverance and with faithfulness to the Gospel, in the reality of our world, which many times follows other values, prayer is necessary. Jesus was completely given over to his mission, to announce the Kingdom of God: going from one place to another, from people from diverse regions; preaching, teaching, and healing in synagogues and plazas. And what was the secret of his actions, his tireless work, with such zeal? His intimacy with the Father. He prayed, meditated, and reflected constantly, day and night and in all places.

In Faith and Light with careful listening, meditation, contemplation and putting into practice the Word of God, by means of intimate relationship with the Father, and by living the Gospel, we are making the fraternity of our communities become more profound and authentic. The acceptance

of our little brothers and sisters becomes easier, and the spreading of our message is more effortless. All of this fills us with deep joy. It is a joy which we cannot keep only to ourselves, or live only among ourselves, but rather which we must announce, proclaim and share to all the ends of the earth.

Reference text: Lk 11.27-28

Focus on theme of the month

- Listening to the Word of God and putting it into practice is a source of joy.
- Praying, living the Word of God and listening to our brothers makes us witnesses.

Coordination team

- “You will shine in the world...”, page 22 “Times of friendship”
- A great witness: **Thérèse de Lisieux**



It only took 24 years for Thérèse Martin (1873-1897) to become “the greatest saint of modern times”. At the age of 15, she entered a Carmelite convent. Thérèse chose to place total trust in Jesus and to make herself smaller and smaller in order to abandon herself to Him. In 1896, she discovered the deep meaning of her vocation: “*In the heart of the Church, my Mother, I will be love*”. For that, she lived in little things her “*way of confidence and love*” that she wanted to send to the world. This happened after her death with the publication of “The Story of a soul”. This book was going to conquer the world (translated into more than 60 languages): “the little way” born from the Gospel is a way of holiness. Thérèse said of the Gospel: “*This book is enough for me. What gentleness, learning directly from the mouth of Jesus*”. Let us try to live, as did Thérèse, in the joy of living the Word of God joyfully.



Welcome and reunion

Everyone will have been asked to come with some small pebbles. The community leader takes these small pebbles and, in exchange, gives each person a small satchel of earth upon which is written: “*It is the good soil that receives the Word of God*”.



Sharing

• Together

The community leader reads, or re-tells in his own words, the word of the month.

Today, we can re-enact, through a mime, the parable of the Sower (Mk 4, 1-10 and 13-22).

• In small groups

My heart is sometimes stony, sometimes made of good soil.

- When do I stay on the side of the road?
- I can also be the man of the moment. When trouble or strife happens to me, do I turn to God or distance myself from him?
- I can also have a heart full of thorns: money troubles, the desire to please, jealousy... choke the Word of God in me. How can I get rid of these thorns?
- How can I keep on listening to the Word of God so that it takes root in me and bears fruit?
- What is “living the Gospel”?



Praying

This month the Bible is our focus in our prayer corner. We give thanks for the living voice of Jesus who speaks to us through the Bible. After we have listened to our Bible verses (Lk 11.27-28) we can say to our neighbour as we hold our bags of soil “May you be good soil which receives the word of God”. As we pray for one another we ask for the gift of openness to whatever the Spirit may be saying to us through the Bible. We conclude our intentions with the Lord’s Prayer. After the concluding prayer written below, we sing a song celebrating the Bible, the Word of God.

Prayer

Almighty God
we thank you for the gift of your holy word.
May it be a lantern to our feet,
a light to our paths,
and a strength to our lives.
Take us and use us
to love and to serve
in the power of the Holy Spirit
and in the name of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(From Westcott House, Cambridge)

Prayer of a poor person

“Speak, Jesus, I am listening to you”.



Celebrating

- **Tell a story**

We are in a circle, the game leader begins: “Once upon a time...”. The person to his right continues, for example: “three little white cats...”, the next

person: “who went on a trip...” ... Each person says no more than five words. At the end, who can tell the story?

- **Homophones**

A player is chosen to leave the room. During this time, we choose a homonym (for example, bear, sea, plain, pear) and a word to replace it. When the player who left returns, the others must say sentences using the homonym chosen but replacing it with the all purpose word. For example: “He ate the ‘bag’”, “The ‘bag’ of shoes matched the dress” (bag = pear, pair). The player must try to find the correct word. When she has guessed it, the player who spoke last leaves.

Artist’s workshop

On the same tray or on two different trays, we put the good soil on one side and a bit of soil mixed with the pebbles we brought in on the other. Each person plants a few seeds (lentils, wheat ...). One person from the community or a family will take care of it. They will bring it back next month and we can see which has germinated, which has grown and which has withered.

Our bonfire

We add a flame upon which is written: *“Happy are those who hear the Word of God and put it into practice”*.

The joy
of welcoming our teachers:
the poor

*“Happy are those who consider the poor and the weak”
(Psalm 40.2)*





The word of the month

Blessed be God, who, through Jesus shows us his choice for our teachers: the poor, the suffering, the abandoned, the unloved. Jesus came into the world to make the blind see, the lame walk, lepers clean, the deaf hear and the dead arise. In other words, to bring comfort, joy and happiness to the people living in anguish, pain and suffering.

The mission of Jesus is to proclaim the good news to the poor. Moreover, he identifies with the marginalized and excluded from society, with those who hunger and thirst, with immigrants, those who are naked, sick or in prison. What we do to each one of these is what we do to Jesus himself. It is a requirement to be concerned about the welfare of those who are the poorest and most abandoned.

Jesus announces the liberation of the captives and the oppressed. So much slavery exists today in our world: moral, social, economic slavery. Like Jesus, our mission is to release our brothers and sisters from their shackles so that they can live in the freedom given to us as the sons and daughters of God.

Jesus came into the world to proclaim a year of grace of the Lord, a year of grace, a time of celebration and festival, a time where everything is restored. There is a new beginning. In Faith and Light we are always in this time of celebration and joy. It is a time of celebration and joy for people with intellectual disabilities who have found a place where there is affection, love and tenderness. It is a time of celebration and joy for the service, attention and care of their families. It is a time of celebration and joy for friends and chaplains who bear witness to surrender, detachment and generosity. It is a time of festivity, for all those who bring us closer to *“our Lord, the Father full of tenderness, our God from whom comes all comfort”* (2 Cor 1.3-4). It is a time of grace, of celebration and joy, that we are invited to share with the world during these two years of pilgrimage. These are moments of joy that give us a taste of what will be eternal joy.

Reference texts: Lk 4,16-21 and 14,15-24

Focus on theme of the month

- Jesus shows us the love of God for the poor, our masters.
- Jesus comes to bring consolation, joy and happiness to all.
- Jesus gives us the joy of experiencing our poverty together.

We can build our meeting around the parable of the banquet guests (Lk 14,15-24).

Coordination Team

- “You will shine in the world...” page 14: “Be friends with the rejected person”.
- A great witness: **Mother Teresa of Calcutta**



Mother Teresa (Agnes Gongea Boiaxhiu) was born in 1910 in Macedonia. At 18 years old, she joined the Sisters of Loreto in Ireland and was sent to Calcutta as a teacher then became headmistress of the school. Disturbed by the poverty that reigned in the country, in 1950, she founded, the Missionaries of Charity and adopted the sari as her religious habit. She created places where the dying, lepers, the poor and abandoned children were welcomed.

All her life, Mother Teresa would bring consolation and joy to the poorest. Today, 610 missions are present in 123 countries.

Can we, throughout this month, deepen and live these words from Mother Teresa: *“In the poor person, we really touch the body of Christ. In the poor person, it is Christ starved whom we feed; it is Christ naked whom we clothe; it is Christ homeless whom we shelter (...) Let any person who comes to you leave again the better and the more joyous for it.”*



Welcome and reunion

The coordination team welcomes each person by saying: “*Thank you for having come to the Lord’s banquet!*”. At the same time, give each person their place setting for the meal, tied with a coloured ribbon. If the table is set, they can go and put them on it, if not, place them in a basket and at the time

of the meal, a member of the community will give each person their place setting.

When everyone has arrived, we can look at our little plants from last month together...



Sharing

• Together

The community leader reads or re-tells in his own words, the word of the month.

We can re-enact the parable of the banquet guests together through a mime.

• In small groups

When God wants to talk to me or call to me, do I have something more important to do? I haven’t got time to pray, no time to do this service, do not feel like answering with a smile because I am in a bad mood... and I don’t much like this person...

I often have trouble accepting, welcoming those who are different to me. They embarrass me, frighten me. However, Jesus tells us that the poor, the unloved, the rejected, those smaller than me are the favoured and that they have a unique gift to bring to the world.

- What can those who are smaller and poorer than me bring to me?
- Do I accept what this gift can do for me?
- How can I make time for him, discover what I need from him?



Praying

Next month, we celebrate Christmas. We are going to be “shepherds” and “sheep”. The name of each person is written on a small, star-shaped card. A name is pulled out and kept secret. During the whole of Advent and until our next meeting we are going to care for our “sheep”, pray for him and give lots of attention... During the December meeting, each “sheep” should guess who their “shepherd” is and give them a homemade gift.

This month we recognise the ways in which Jesus meets us in the faces of those who are vulnerable and in our own vulnerability. We acknowledge that those who are pushed to the margins are often those whom God has blessed with special gifts, gifts which bless all of us. We listen again to our Bible verse (Lk 4.16-21). Perhaps in the silence we can reflect on someone who in his or her vulnerability has blessed us, and pray for them.

During our time of prayer this month we also remember with thanksgiving those who have passed into the nearer presence of God – members of our community, family members, close friends. We can mention them by name. We may want to scatter some petals in our prayer corner as a gesture of thanksgiving for what they have given us. We finish our time of prayer with the Lord’s prayer, recalling that our Father is the one who gives his life to each of us.

After one of these following prayers, we conclude with a song celebrating the littleness of Jesus.

Prayer

Recalling that Jesus meets us in the brokenness of others, we may use this prayer of Mother Teresa’s or some sections of it.

Lord, when I am hungry,
 give me someone who needs food.
When I’m thirsty,
 send me someone who needs water.
When I’m cold,
 send me someone to warm.

When I'm hurting,
 send me someone to console.
When my cross becomes heavy,
 give me someone else's cross to share.
When I'm poor
 lead me to someone in need.
When I have no time,
 give me someone I can help a moment.
When I'm humiliated,
 give me someone to praise.
When I'm discouraged
 send me someone to encourage.
When I need someone's understanding,
 give me someone who needs mine.
When I need someone to care for me,
 send me someone I'll need to care for.
When I think only of myself,
 turn my thoughts to others.

Here is a prayer for our loved ones who have gone before us

Father of all, we pray to you for those we love
 but see no longer.
Grant them your peace; let perpetual light shine upon them;
and in your loving wisdom and almighty power,
work in them the good purpose of your perfect will,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
 Amen.
(From the Book of Alternative Services, Anglican Church of Canada)

Prayer of a poor person

"Thank you Jesus for what I am."

Artist's workshop

Decorated napkin rings (see page 84).



Celebrating

It's now or never to organise a "banquet" by putting on a beautiful celebratory table. There is no need for anything too sophisticated. A white napkin, candles, flowers and branches...

Each person in the community is unique, if they are not there, we miss them. Each ingredient in a dish is necessary to make the recipe taste good. Let us pool what each person has brought and be filled with wonder at the result! If we have one or more guests, we can ask them to bring a small decoration for the cake... So, because of them, it will be more beautiful!

Games:

• Who is it?

We are sat in a circle. The game leader chooses a person to sit in the middle. On his/her forehead, written on a band or a post it note, is the name of a member of the community. The player must discover who it is by asking all sorts of questions: "Is it a man or woman? Do they wear glasses? Blue eyes...". The person discovered sits in the middle...

• Introduce your neighbour

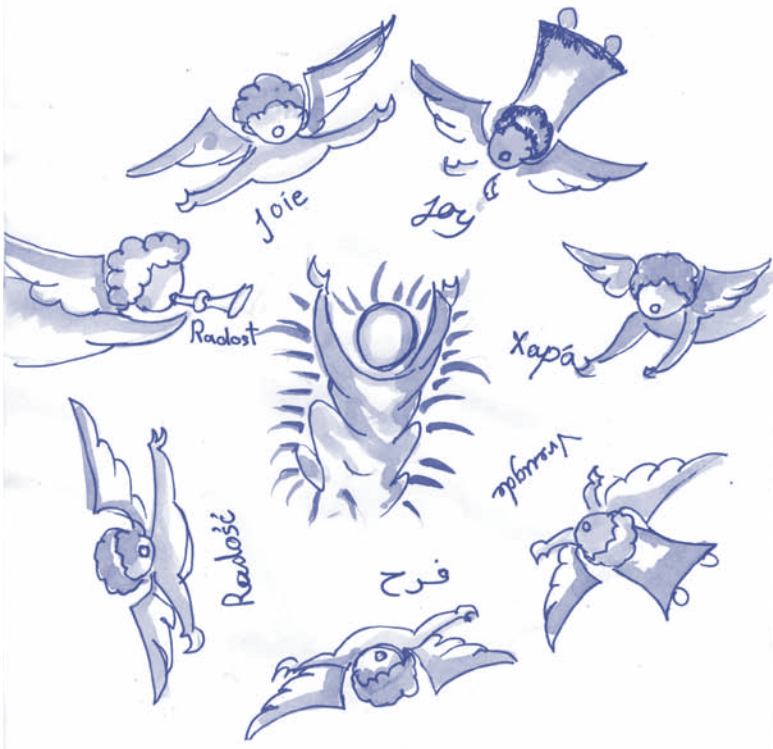
We are sat in a circle and each person in turn introduces their neighbour by attaching an adjective to their first name beginning with the same letter, for example: "Marvellous Monica, Handsome Harry, Clever Carl...". On the second round, we try to make up a short sentence with a rhyme: "Our marvellous Monica can play the harmonica, Harry went to Paris to find a girl to marry, Carl is clever whatever the weather ...", of course everyone can help to find a funny rhyme...

Our bonfire

We add a flame upon which is written: "*Happy are they who welcome the poor and weak*".

The joy of being poor of heart

«Happy the poor in spirit»
(Mt 5.3)





The word of the month

“And she gave birth to her firstborn son, wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because they had no place in the Inn” (Lk 2.7). Thus begins the life of Jesus, in poverty and away from his village. Jesus wanted to be present in our world in simplicity, humility and detachment. He stripped himself of his divine status, took the place of a slave and became similar to us; He humbled himself and became obedient to death on the cross. There, precisely, is the power of his message. It is announced in total freedom from the one who *“has no where lay his head”* (Mt 8.20), who can give up his life freely and who is totally dependent on God’s providence. Thus, Jesus makes us part of his very own life of his life that is a giving of himself, a pouring out, a generosity, a total love.

With the birth of Jesus, love came into the world and fear disappeared. God sent his Son into the world for love and in love there is no fear. There is no more fear in those who follow Jesus because their confidence is placed exclusively in the providence of God, the one who is our help, shelter and strength Jesus is always present to raise up us again in any difficulties that we may be living, and to give us hope when everything seems to be lost.

“I come to tell you good news, which will be of great joy for all people: today a Savior is born for you” (Lk 2.10-11). Knowing that a Savior was born for us fills us with immense joy. Jesus came to make us live in continuous joy: the joy of his birth, of the birth of John the Baptist, of the Annunciation, of the Magnificat, of the angels. Nothing can stand in the way of this joy, a joy that we enter fully when we finally meet with him.

It is the joy of those who know that they are loved by the Father, in whom they have put all their trust. It is the joy of people with an intellectual disability who know that they are loved in their humility and simplicity. It is the joy shared by each and every member and community of Faith and Light, the joy we share with the world that is so full of worries, concerns and anguish. May the joy of the birth of Jesus spread to the four corners of the globe that hymns of praise resound throughout the world.

Reference text: Lk 2.1-20

Focus on theme of the month

- Jesus came in poverty.
- The birth of Jesus brought love into the world and made fear disappear.
- Jesus came to let us live in joy.

Coordination Team

- “You will shine in the world...”, page 8: “Reciprocation in equal relationships”.
- A great witness: **Francis of Assisi**



Born in Assisi (Italy) in 1181, into a wealthy family, Francis led a life of idleness. However, he felt a deep dissatisfaction. Aged 24, before the cross in the church of San Damiano, Francis finally found the answer he was looking for. He left his wealth and chose “Madame Poverty”. With a few companions, he founded the order of the Lesser Brother. Dressed in a simple tunic with a rope belt, they lived on handouts, at the service of the poorest and lepers.

On Christmas night 1223, in a cave, Francis installed a manger and brought in a donkey and an ox; it was the first living Nativity! Gradually, over the centuries, the tradition spread into all families.

Francis made himself poor to announce to men and to all of creation, the message of joy, hope and love from the Gospel, the message of perfect joy. We all know the little anthology “The Fioretti” (the story of small miracles like small flowers). At home, in the calmness of our prayer corner, we can re-read a few extracts so that our heart is bathed in the freshness and joy of Francis, the poor of heart⁴.

⁴ Full text in French: <http://www.santorosario.net/francais/fioretti.htm>

In English: <http://www.sanpiodapietrelcina.org/english/littleflowers.htm>

In Spanish: <http://www.santorosario.net/espanol/floreillas.htm>



Welcome and reunion

It is impossible to enter the room because a rope is held at waist height. This symbolises Eastern monasteries: the entry door is low and it is necessary to stoop to enter, as a sign of smallness before God. Each person is invited to say: “Jesus, very small in the manger, I come to you” and to go under the rope.

We place the small present that we have made for our “sheep” in a basket. Their name is written on a small label. During the celebration time, we will try to discover who it is!



Sharing

The community leader reads or re-tells in his own words the word of the month.

We can re-enact Luke’s story all together.

• **First scene**

Joseph and Mary are on the road. Mary is on a small donkey. The road is long and they are tired. They look for a place to spend the night. They can only find a stable. Joseph makes Mary as comfortable as possible because she is soon going to bring a child into the world. Night has fallen, there are many stars in the sky.

• **Second scene**

By the light of a small lamp, Mary wraps baby Jesus in swaddling bands and lays him in the manger, whilst Joseph kindles the small stove to warm the child and his mother. Then he approaches, blesses his child by placing his hands on his head. And both sit, side by side, close to the sleeping child. Tenderly holding hands and with one heart, they gave thanks to God.

• **Third scene**

At daybreak, Mary, Joseph and the child are asleep. A melodious song gently awakes them, at first distant, but which comes closer and closer: “*Glory to God in the highest ...*”.

One by one, the shepherds and their sheep approach singing and kneeling. The eldest tells them what has happened: “*We were guarding our flocks in the night when we saw a great light. We were very afraid. In the middle of this light, an angel appeared and said to us: ‘Do not be afraid, I bring great joy, for you and all mankind: today a saviour is born, who is Christ the King, in the town of Bethlehem. Go on your way! You will recognise the newborn, he is wrapped in swaddling bands and laid in a manger’. And then, a host of angels appeared and started to sing this song that accompanied us here.*”

• **Fourth scene**

The angels kneel around the child.

Mary stands up and for a few moments remains standing, hands crossed over her heart, her eyes closed. (*During the time where Mary carefully keeps and meditates these events in her heart, we remain silent, it is a moment of great internalisation*). After a few moments, Mary fetches the baby Jesus who she introduces to the shepherds with Joseph... Then, Christmas carols, the Gloria and songs of joy rise to the sky. And the shepherds start to dance and sing around the manger...

They leave messengers of joy, proclaiming God and exalting him for all that they have seen and heard.

In small groups

- What do we do to ensure that Christmas is always an immense joy? A simple and deep joy like that of the shepherds.
- Jesus came like a poor person and got to know the poorest first of all. Do I know why? Why didn't he come as a king on a golden throne?
- John Paul II said: “*Jesus made himself so small so that no-one feared him*”.

Jesus came to our meeting, small and weak like us, so that we could be his friend.

- And me, in the community, am I afraid to go to those who are smaller and weaker than me?
- What can I do when meeting those who are smaller and weaker?
- How can I create bonds of trust and friendship with them, bonds of loyalty?

Artist's workshop

- **Make a model of the baby Jesus.**

With plaster or salt dough, each person makes a model of the baby Jesus (see page 86). It is put next to the nativity during the time of prayer and is taken home to be put in our own prayer corner.

- **Baubles** (see page 87) to decorate the feast table.



Praying

This month we gather around a nativity scene in our prayer corner. We place the basket with the gifts for our 'sheep' near the crib. We may sing a gentle Christmas carol such as 'Silent night' to quieten our hearts. We listen to our Bible verses about Jesus' birth, reflecting on Jesus' littleness and the gift of his love which chases away our fears. Perhaps during this time we can pass around a small figure representing the baby Jesus. We may hold him to our hearts, speak a word to him. During our intentions, we pray especially for our 'sheep,' finishing our intentions with the Lord's prayer. Our chaplain or worship leader can lead us in the prayer of Fr. de Robiano. We can finish with another carol.

Prayer

*Lord, in this stable where you rest far from palaces of marble and gold,
you say to me: happy are those who have a poor soul..
Looking at Mary, everything offered, the queen with the heart of gold, the
Immaculate,
You tell me: happy are the pure of heart.*

Showing me Joseph, the man of silence and prayer, of courage and faith,
You tell me: happy are the humble.

Coming into this world that hesitates to receive you and finds nowhere for
you,

You tell me: happy are the merciful.

With the Father who gave you to us, with the Spirit who lives in you, invi-
sibly,

You tell me: there is no greater love than to give your life for one you love.

Thank you Lord!

Prayer of a poor person

“Jesus, you live in my heart”



Celebrating

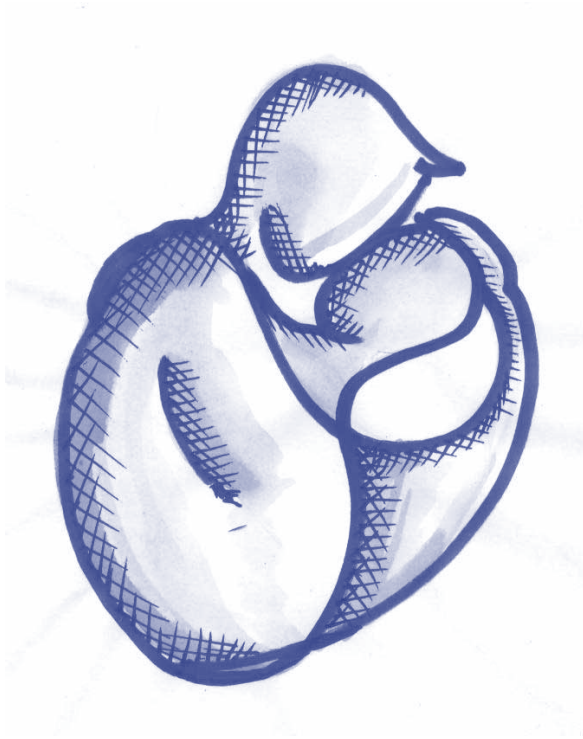
- We can prepare a feast table for the meal or tea: a few quite simple decorations. Beside each plate or in the centre of the table, put small bundles of straw to remind us that Jesus was born in poverty and that at this joyful time, others are in pain and destitute.
- When it is time for dessert, the youngest of us gives out the presents. One after another, we have three guesses to discover who has been our “shepherd” and why we think it is this person. When the turn is ended, the “shepherds” who haven’t been discovered, reveal themselves.

Our bonfire

We add a flame upon which is written: “Happy are the poor of heart”.

The joy of meekness

"Blessed are the meek"
(Mt 5.4)





The word of the month

“Learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart...” (Mt 11.29). We see the gentleness of Jesus in his attitudes and his way of dealing with people. Let’s take the example of children: children are brought to Jesus in complete trust. Jesus calls them, embraces them, and blesses them. He holds them

up as models of how to receive the Kingdom of God. When he discovers that the mother of Peter is sick, Jesus himself goes to her, takes her hand and lifts her up. She is healed. Jesus extends his hand to the man suffering leprosy, touches him, and cures him. Jesus says to the paralysed man, who is lowered from a roof through an opening made by his friends: *“Son...”* In his various encounters Jesus manifests tenderness and goodness through his behavior. That’s why people follow and want to touch him. They bring him those who are sick in confidence that he’s going to respond to their pleas. Meekness implies serenity, tranquility, and calm in relations with others. Through being meek, people perceive Jesus as available to them, as someone they can approach in trust.

Even in his most trying moments, such as his passion, we see Jesus showing an extraordinary tenderness. It did not prevent him from defending himself: *“If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?”* (Jn 18.24). On other occasions he had to intervene with force in order not to deviate from the mission that the Father had entrusted to him, or in order to expel the vendors from the temple. This shows that the gentleness is not weakness, but rather a strength from the Spirit that overcomes evil with good.

In Eph 4.1-6, Paul tells us that one of the qualities required for a community to live in unity is gentleness. He invites us to live our vocation in humility and gentleness. In this month of Prayer for Christian Unity, let us redouble our efforts to live as one body and one spirit, because this is the hope to which we have been called.

Many communities of Faith and Light are already living ecumenism in different ways. They are living the unity that Jesus wants. It’s a great joy! This is the joy that we want to share with the world. It’s how we participate in the creating perfect communion amongst all believers, with the Father and with Jesus.

Reference text: Mt 11.28-30

Focus on theme of the month

- One of the qualities required for a community to experience unity is gentleness.
- We are called to form a single body, a single spirit.

Coordination team

- “You will shine in the world...” page 24: “Ecumenism”

- A great witness: **Charles de Foucauld**



Charles was born in France in 1858. He began with a military career leading a dissolute lifestyle. After various encounters, he converted at the age 30. His ideal of poverty and renunciation pushed him to become a hermit in the Algerian Sahara. During this life that he spent amongst the Tuareg, studying their language and culture, he liked to preach not through speech but through the example of a gentle and humble man.

Charles, the man of peace, was assassinated in front of the door of his hermitage. He was 58 years old.

“My apostolate must be an apostolate of goodness. If asked why I am gentle and good, I reply: because I am the servant of the One whose goodness is still greater”. By looking at the image of Charles representing Jesus, I ask the Lord to make me a witness of his kindness and goodness.



Welcome and reunion

We sit in a circle. Each person in turn places a small drop of perfumed oil on the back of the hand of the person next to him or says a word of kindness from the heart or simply: *“Happy are the gentle”*.



Sharing

• Together

The community leader reads or re-tells in his own words the word of the month.

All together, we can re-enact, through a mime, the passage from the Gospel of Mark where Jesus embraces and blesses the children (Mk 10,13-16)

• In small groups

Jesus came in gentleness and revealed himself to the gentle. Let us find out how we can be gentle in order to welcome Jesus:

- By letting ourselves be driven by God,
- By accepting and loving yourself just as you are,
- By accepting difficult events without rebellion or resignation but by offering them,
- By not wanting to dominate other...

One of the greatest qualities required to experience unity is gentleness. In Faith and Light, we have a mission to walk together, Christians from various denominations, and to discover the wealth that we can bring one another. We can look at some excerpts from Ghislain du Chéné's letter and reflect on the way in which we can put some of the suggestions into practice (see page 91).

- What can help me to welcome the person who is different to me?
- Are the words of Jesus "*Let us be one as the Father and I are one*" significant to me?
- How can I be an architect of unity even if I am not directly involved?



Praying

This month we are celebrating the gentleness of Jesus and giving thanks for the unity that springs from it. We choose a song to calm us before we listen again to the Bible verses (Mt 11.28-30). Perhaps we can place a bowl of water in our prayer corner. After the reading, we can come forward in pairs and bless each other by making the sign of the cross in water on each other's foreheads. We can use the words, 'May God bless you and use you as an instrument of unity.' During our intentions we can give thanks for the gift of gentleness, especially in our friends with disabilities. We also pray for the unity of all Christians, and especially for the unity of the churches represented at our meeting. We conclude our intentions with the Lord's Prayer. A suggestion for our closing song is 'Father, make us one.'

Prayer

Lord God,
thank you for the unity you give us in your presence:
draw your Church together, into the one great company of disciples,
together following our Lord Jesus Christ
into every walk of life,
together serving him in his mission to the world,
and together witnessing to his love
on every continent and island,
in the power of your Spirit,
to your praise and glory.

Amen.

(from the New Zealand Prayer Book)

Or this prayer from Charles de Foucauld,

Father,
I abandon myself into your hands;
do with me what you will.
Whatever you may do, I thank you:
I am ready for all, I accept all.

Let only your will be done in me,
and in all your creatures -
I wish no more than this, O Lord.

Into your hands I commend my soul:
I offer it to you with all the love of my heart,
for I love you, Lord, and so need to give myself,
to surrender myself into your hands without reserve,
and with boundless confidence,
for you are my Father.

Prayer of a poor person

"Jesus, I am nestled in your heart."



Celebrating

- We sit in a circle. Each person in turn is going to make a gesture that, for them, best expresses gentleness (rocking a baby, caressing a cheek, a kiss on the forehead...)
- We can also make up a community dance.

Artist's workshop

On a sheet of paper or card folded in half, we draw or write what makes our faith: Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection... We can send it to the International Secretariat who will send it to another community from a different faith. We will then see that what unites us is greater than what divides us.

Our bonfire

We add a flame upon which is written: *"Happy are the gentle"*.

The Joy of Compassion

"Blessed are those who weep"
(Mt 5.5)





The word of the month

“As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, if you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace!” (Lk 19.41-42)

Jesus cries because Jerusalem would not listen to his message and did not want to know his message of peace. He had compassion for the people: *“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Mt 9.36)*. Like Jesus, we too, when we look at all the men and women of our planet, see them with compassion. They too are tired and weary.

Reality can deceive us. The world is shifting away from the values of the Gospel, following idols that take the place of God: money, possessions, power, and knowledge. What do we do? In order to face this reality, in order to help our brothers and sisters to look for well-being that is permanent and enduring, rather than fleeting satisfaction, one thing alone is necessary. We need to focus on Jesus and the Gospel in order to return to what is most important. He is the Way towards our self-realisation, he is the Truth sets us free, and he is Life given to us in all its fullness.

Simeon took Jesus in his arms and said: *“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace... for my eyes have seen your salvation... a light for revelation to the Gentiles; (Lk 2.26-32)* At Faith and Light, we carry Jesus in our arms and so we can bring rest and encouragement to where there is fatigue and gloom, light to where there are shadows and darkness, hope to where there is anguish and despair, faith to where there is anxiety; and love to where there is chaos and division. But let us not forget what Simeon said to Mary: *“A sword will pierce your own heart!”* We often live out our mission in tough situations. It is only through an intimate and deep relationship with Jesus, trusting prayer to the Father and the support of community members that we persist in our faith.

As we celebrate our 40th anniversary, we are trying to give a new thrust, a new energy and vitality to everything that we have been doing, so that we

February

may all glorify God and say with Jesus: “*Never have we seen anything like this*” (Mk 2.12).

Anna praised God and spoke of the child to all those who were looking for the redemption of Israel. With Anna, let us continue to praise and to give glory to God, speaking about Jesus, and proclaiming to the world the joy that we live in Faith and Light. There are so many families waiting to receive the Good News of salvation for the many people with an intellectual disability.

Reference text: Lk 2.22-39

Focus on theme of the month

- Feast of Light (see page 92)
- Bring the joy that marks Faith and Light to those who are in pain.

To announce this joy, we participate, as a community or with other communities, in the parish Eucharist. We can propose leading the songs, organising the offertory ceremony, preparing the universal prayer... and after having introduced Faith and Light, let us invite the parishioners to join us for an aperitif... Let us also invite former members and those who do not come regularly. And what if each of us comes with a friend who will take part in the whole meeting?

Coordination team

- “You will shine in the world...” page 28: “Reveal the gift of the intellectually disabled person”.
- A great witness: **Monica**



Monica was born in 331 in North Africa. She had always loved to pray in solitude and contemplation. Her heart was open to the love of the poor and ill. She visited them, took care of them and fed them. She washed the feet of the poor and of travellers. Her whole person reflected modesty, gentleness and peace. Married to a violent and brutal pagan, she had a son, Augustine. Throughout her

life, she prayed for their conversion. Monica's endless tears climbed to God like a silent prayer. The Lord, taken by compassion, heard her prayer and granted it. Her husband died a Christian and her son, Augustine, became a light and model for all.

Augustine said of his mother: "*Monica was an example of patience, gentleness and hope*". Following the example of Monica, let us try to live this month by having total confidence in God and turning towards those who are in pain, in the certainty that the Lord will have compassion for them.



Welcome and reunion

On arrival, each person receives an image (see page 87) upon which is written: "do not worry. If you are suffering, if you are crying, I will console you, I will wipe away each one of your tears".



Sharing

- **Together**

The community leader reads or re-tells in his own words the word of the month.

We can re-enact the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple through a mime (Lk 2,22-39).

It is in our poverty that Jesus awaits us, to comfort us, to bring us light! If we know how to be sufficiently humble to recognise our wounds and not hide or repress them, then our calls for help will be heard. Jesus will perhaps not answer directly, but he will do it by means of his "angels" who at times take human form! We all have had in our lives meetings with people who came to bring us support, comfort and light: when Gérard and Camille returned from Lourdes with so much pain and suffering at not having been accep-

ted, who would have believed that they would have found Jean Vanier and Marie-Hélène Mathieu on their road?
(Cf Ghislain du Chéné, “Up Sails!” Issue 8.)

• In small groups

Today, we can organise some small groups **between parents**, whilst the friends and disabled people meet together.

Between parents

- What are the times of suffering in my life?
- Have I also met an “angel” on my road? We write their name on a small card and place it in the prayer corner.
- How did they bring me consolation and light?
- How can I bear witness to the joy experienced within the community despite all the suffering that is assembled there?

Between friends

We can ask the same questions.



Praying

This month we are rejoicing in Jesus’ loving kindness towards us and towards all of God’s creation. What an incredible gift to know that we are loved just as we are! It is a love that sustains us no matter what challenges we are living. We can choose a song to quieten us that speaks of God’s compassion and forgiveness. We listen again to one or two verses from our Bible passage (Lk 2.22-39). During our time of quiet we may place the ‘burden’ we have written down in the container, or we may name it aloud, or in the silence of our hearts. Or we may be outside around a fire, in which case we might thank God during this time for our ‘angels.’ We finish our intentions with the Lord’s prayer and conclude with a song of praise and thanksgiving.

Prayer

Lord, pardon me for what you know better than me.
If I begin again, Lord,
grant me your pardon once more.

Lord, forgive me if,
when I have committed myself to doing something,
you find that I have failed to keep my promise.

Lord, forgive me if,
I have said with my words that I want to come closer to you,
and my heart does the opposite.

Lord, forgive me if,
I have sinned with my eyes, or with wicked words,
with the desires of my heart or the faults of my tongue.

Lord, deal with me with mercy
and not with justice.

Ali ibn abi talib (Muslim prayer)

or

Father of lights,
from whom comes every good and perfect gift:
keep us in the light of Christ,
to shine in the world,
that all may believe in you,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
Amen!

Prayer of a poor person

“Jesus, you always console me.”

Artist’s workshop

- We can make two-faced masks, sad and happy (see page 87).
- Or cut out a small mask from grey or black card and stick coloured stars on it to symbolise the light entered in our lives.



Celebrating

- With our masks, those who want to, can do a mime using the smiling or sad side; the others must guess the situation.

- **The race to light**

We form teams of 10 people. It is a relay race. The first player from each team must cross the room as quickly as possible with a lit candle, touch the wall and come back and give it to player 2 who goes off in their turn. If the candle goes out on the way, you have to go back to the start and begin the course again. The quicker the person the more the applause and the slowest will be the most consoled!

Our bonfire

We write the Beatitude of the month: "*Happy are those who cry, they will be consoled*".

The Joy of Faithfulness

*“Blessed are you
when people revile you and persecute you... on my account”
(Mt 5.11)*





The word of the month

“If they persecuted me, they will persecute you” (Jn 15.20). “In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world” (Jn 16.33). Through his death and resurrection, Jesus defeated evil. The Prince of this world has no power over him. And through Jesus, we are also victorious.

We are not afraid of persecutions, nor adversity, nor criticisms that might arise because of His name. There have always been difficulties as a result of the proclaiming of the death and resurrection of Jesus. Difficulties exist today and will exist in the future. Currently, in many places men and women suffer for their faith. But that should not diminish our zeal to keep proclaiming Jesus as the only teacher, the only Holy One, the only Lord. On the contrary, when we encounter problems, difficulties and persecution, we need to proclaim Jesus with greater passion and strength. We are not alone: the Spirit is working with us in our lives, in our communities and in the world.

Jesus, who announced peace, love, forgiveness, reconciliation, and who *“went on doing good”* endured persecution from his childhood. During his ministry he was continually in danger. One day, those who were listening to him in the synagogue, pushed him out of the city, and tried to throw him off the cliff. In a discussion with Jesus, Jewish leaders took up stones to stone him. Even the Jewish authorities wanted to take him prisoner. But he always remained faithful right up to his death on the cross. Faithfulness in our commitment to the end is what fills us with joy because our reward will be great in heaven. The Lord will say: *“Well done, good and faithful servant, as you have been faithful in the small deed, I will entrust you with the greater! Enter into the joy of your Lord!”* (Mt 25.21).

In this time of preparation for the great feast of Easter, and in the midst of persecution that we might be suffering, let us tell the world of the joy of our faith in Jesus: in Jesus, who lived in unbroken communion with his Father through prayer; in Jesus, who tirelessly proclaimed God’s Kingdom;

in Jesus, who revealed the love and mercy of the Father and gave his life for the salvation of humanity.

Reference Text: James 1.2-4 and 12-15

Focus on theme of the month

- We are preparing for Easter.
- Like Jesus, by remaining faithful, let us announce the peace, love and joy of being forgiven.

Coordination team

- “You will shine in the world...” page 10: “The support of a community”.
- A great witness: **Maximilian Kolbe**



Maximilian was born in Poland in 1894. He was ordained as a priest in 1918. He founded a newspaper, a publishing house and a Catholic radio station. His love for Mary and his missionary enthusiasm led his life. For six years, he was a missionary in Japan and, on his return, he found Poland conquered and occupied. Arrested, he was deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp. As a reprisal against an escape, ten men were condemned to starve to death. Maximilian offered his life in the place of the father of a family. His presence in the death bunker transformed the agony with songs and prayers. He died on 14 August 1941 with his companions.

“The essence of reciprocal love is to learn to forgive one another in a more perfect, immediate and total way. Then we can say the Lord’s Prayer with great confidence: Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them theirs.”

Let us ask Maximilian to help us remain faithful, in times of joy as well as times of difficulty and even to live this word of Jesus: “Forgive us...”

From now until the next Easter meeting, we can meet together in small

groups for a time of prayer together and a bowl of rice. And let us enthusiastically prepare the Day of Announcing and Sharing that is one of the sole resources for international solidarity (see page 93).



Welcome and reunion

The coordination team will have prepared a small parchment (small sheet of paper that is burned around the edges) for each member of the community upon which is written: "I ... (each person writes their own name), God loves me throughout eternity. Since ... (each person writes their date of birth), God has been with me and made me experience his love." This small parchment can be rolled and tied with a strand of raffia.



Sharing

• Together

The community leader reads or re-tells in his own words the word of the month.

We can re-enact, through a mime, the agony of Jesus at Gethsemane (Mk 14,32-50).

• In small groups

- Am I always faithful to Jesus or do I flee like the apostles when difficulties and persecutions arise?
- How do I talk about Jesus at home, in my family?
- Have I already been made fun of? How can I forgive those who do me harm?
- What can help me remain stimulated beside Jesus?

Artist's workshop

- Make a large cross from mesh.

- Another group prepares paper flowers, which will be used during the time of prayer, (see page 88).

Or

- As a sign of fidelity to Jesus, we make a small plaster or salt dough cross that can be worn around the neck or on the wrist and that can be taken home. Two small pieces of wood could simply be put together.



Praying

- We can organise a **celebration of forgiveness**. After having given God's forgiveness, the chaplain gives each person a flower. We go and fix it on the cross and we can go and wash our face in a beautiful bowl placed on a pedestal next to the cross. When it is covered with flowers, we sing a song of thanksgiving.

Or

- **The washing of the feet** is a sacred gesture⁵. Today, the chaplain or community leader can put the emphasis on Jesus who washed the feet of those who would abandon or betray him. At the end, we sing "Our Father", the prayer that Jesus himself taught us.

Prayer of a poor person

"Jesus, I am close to you and I am watchful"



Celebrating

- To calm background music, we can learn to do paper folding (origami), make candles or do any peaceful craft that fills our heart with peace and silence.

⁵ Look up on the site: www.foietlumiere.org

March

- **A kiss for everyone**

We sit in a circle (if there are a lot of us, make two circles). One person is in the middle and turns a bottle on the ground. When it stops, the leader goes and kisses the person chosen by the bottle. This person then spins the bottle... until everyone has had their little kiss.

Our bonfire

We write the Beatitude of the month: "*Happy are the faithful*".

The Joy to Love unto the End

"Blessed are the merciful"
(Mt 5.7)





The word of the month

“No one has love greater than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (Jn 15.13). The love of God is so great that He gave us his very own son. The love of Jesus is so great that he gave up his own life on the Cross. He loved us to the end, to the giving up of his life. He no longer calls us servants, but friends, and he invites us to love the Father and each member of the human family with the same intimacy and depth with which he loves us. This powerful love which heals wounded hearts, which gives us strength to love others, which transforms persons, cities and nations; which creates deep bonds of friendship, of solidarity and communion.

“Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5.43-48). Our heavenly Father loves without limits, without distinction, without boundaries. He is the one *“who makes the sun shine upon the good and evil, and the rain fall upon the just and unjust”*. That is to say, the perfection of love consists in loving everyone. It is not about loving only those who love us, or greeting only those who greet us. Rather, it is about overcoming and eliminating all that stops us from loving and going right to heart of love: love for our enemies. Loving in this way is how we build a civilization of love which we all long for. This is what is required for a world that is more united, harmonious, committed.

“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Lk 6.36). The Lord forgives all our sins, heals all our illnesses. He is the epitome of love and tenderness merciful, slow to anger and abounding in love. The very life of Jesus, his actions, reveal this compassion. He was close to the sick, he sat at table with the publicans and sinners. He revealed that in heaven there is much joy over one sinner who repents, and that the Father goes out to meet those who return to him. Compassion brings us close to the poor and the suffering whom we find in our path, and in the end, we will be judged by the mercy which we have shown to the least of these.

The Faith and Light family was born in the midst of a great song of praise, on the feast of Easter in 1971. It was born from the love of the most vulne-

able is society. Let us continue to share this great joy to the ends of the earth today.

Reference text: Jn 20.11-18

Focus on theme of the month

- Jesus loved us to the end, giving his life for us.
- Jesus calls us to love his Father, our Father and our neighbour, especially the smallest. He wants to give us the joy of loving and being loved.

Coordination team

- “You will shine in the world...” page 14: “Being friends with a rejected person”.
- It is time, as a team, to **evaluate the Guidelines** (see page 94).
- A great witness: **Vincent de Paul**



Vincent was born in France in 1581. Becoming a Catholic priest at the age of 19 years old, he was captured by pirates on a voyage and held prisoner for two years. He managed to escape. His whole life was devoted to the poor, sick orphans, elderly, slaves and lepers. He founded the Congregation of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity that are still very much alive and active today. He also brought help to the victims of religious wars whoever they were. His fame as a lover of the poorest was such that King Louis XIII called for him and died in his arms. He died, aged 79 years old,

sat by the fire, murmuring the secret of his life: “*Trust! Jesus!*”

Let us ask Jesus for the trust, humility and charity, which marked the whole of Vincent’s life. Let us request the eyes and the heart of the poor to recognise Jesus in all those we meet.



Welcome and reunion

On arrival, each person receives a small card upon which is written a sentence from the “Hymn of love” (see below). It is to be carefully kept in a pocket throughout the day. At prayer time, each person can read their sentence and take it home.

Hymn of love (1 Co 13,1-8)

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels,
but do not have love,
I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.
If I have the gift of prophecy
and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge,
and if I have a faith that can move mountains,
but do not have love, I am nothing.
If I give all I possess to the poor
and give over my body to hardship that I may boast,
but do not have love, I gain nothing.
Love is patient,
love is kind.
It does not envy,
it does not boast, it is not proud.
It does not dishonor others,
it is not self-seeking,
it is not easily angered,
it keeps no record of wrongs.
Love does not delight in evil
but rejoices with the truth.
It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.



Sharing

• Together

The community leader reads or re-tells in his own words the word of the month.

We can re-enact, through a mime, the appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene (Jn 20,11-18).

The chaplain or the community leader will be able to explain why Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene, the rejected one: because she had loved a lot.

• In small groups

- I often prefer my comfort, my tranquillity... What disturbs me? What stops me from loving?
- I am willing to help because it doesn't disrupt my life. However, how to truly love, become a real friend, be with someone who is different from me and not do something for him?



Praying

He is risen! Alleluia! This month we are rejoicing in Jesus' rising from the dead that we may share in the very life of God.

We may open and close the time of prayer with songs that celebrate Jesus' resurrection. In our prayer corner, we may have a vase of flowers near our cross. Our

Bible passage for this month appears on the card we received when we arrived. Perhaps we can read the passage in turn, each person who wishes and is able to read, taking a verse. We pause afterwards to be quiet. During this time, we may wish to say aloud a word or a phrase that stood out for us as we listened to the passage. We may wish also to take a flower from the vase and place it on the cross. We move into our time of intentions. We may wish to focus this month on giving thanks for any particular gift of Jesus' resurrected life that we enjoy. We pray «Our Father» before the following concluding prayer. We end with a joyful Easter song.

Prayer

God of our salvation,

you have restored us to life,
you have brought us back again into your love
by the triumphant death and resurrection of Christ.
Continue to heal us,
as we go to live and to love to the end
in the power of your Spirit
to your praise and glory.
Amen!

Prayer of the poor person

“Jesus, teach me to love”.



Celebrating

- The coordination team will have hidden small Easter eggs in the garden or in the meeting room. Let us go and look for them.

- **Egg and spoon race**

Make up groups of three. Each person has a spoon in their hand upon which an egg is placed. On the signal, they go to the start and cross the room as quickly as possible without dropping the egg. The winner is of course the person who gets back first with the egg still on the spoon! Best to use hard-boiled eggs...

- **Shaving balloons** (outdoor game)

Blow up balloons and hang with a string. Cover them with shaving foam. The aim of the game is to “shave” it without bursting it. If it bursts... there will be a surprise!

Artist’s workshop

- Decorate eggs (see page 88).
- We can also simply wrap the eggs (hard-boiled or chocolate). They will decorate the meal table where we are going to eat (See page 88).

Bonfire

We write the Beatitude of the month: *“Happy are those who have loved a lot”.*

The Joy of "seeing" God

"Blessed are the pure in heart"
(Mt 5.8)





The word of the month

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. (Psalm 50.12-13) People who have a pure heart “see” God, they experience his presence in their lives, they perceive his action in the world.

We may have experienced this ourselves. It may have been in prayer, at the Eucharist, at a community meeting. We may have wished that these moments could have lasted forever. Such was the case with the apostles Peter, James and John. They had direct contact with the Father. It was Jesus himself who allowed them to share in this experience, leading them up the mountain where he was transfigured.

Removed from the world, they were able to live a very intimate moment with Jesus as they listened to the Father. It was a moment in time they wished would never end.

We often live in the midst of the world, in our cities, in the midst of the noise and the bustle. We find it difficult to stop and to be silent, to listen to what God wants to communicate, to feel his presence and “see Him”. For this reason, it is necessary to create the right spaces to encounter God. We can be at home, in church, outdoors, even in liturgical celebrations. We can find some minutes of silence, minutes dedicated to contemplate Him and listen to Him. He has so much to say to us, so many secrets to reveal, so many things to tell us.

“I would like to take advantage of everything and every circumstance to ensure that all of you, pure and beyond reproach reach the day of Christ” (Phil 1.10). Purity of heart is achieved by working constantly, to remove from our lives everything that prevents us from seeing God, in order to remove everything within that contaminates us, to cast aside all bad intentions and deeds. This process of purification and cleansing continues throughout our life and will only be complete when in our final union with the Father. “Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is” (Jn 3.2).

“Who will ascend the Mountain of the Lord, who may enter His holy presence? Those with clean hands and a pure heart” (Psalm 24.3-4). This means those of righteous intention, those who are simple, loyal, generous in service, sincere, and transparent. These are some qualities of the pure in heart which we cultivate at Faith and Light in order to enter his holy presence. Through these qualities, lived with joy and enthusiasm, “we will see God”. This is what we announce to the world!

Reference text: Mt 17,1-8

Focus on theme of the month

- Pure hearts “see” God, the Holy Spirit lives in them.
- Pure hearts feel the presence of God in their life and actions in the world.

Coordination team

- “You will shine in the world...” page 22 “Times of friendship”.
- Three great witnesses: **François, Jacinthe and Lucie, the Fatima shepherds**



Fatima in Portugal is one of the most important places of Catholic pilgrimage and welcomes more than five million pilgrims per year. In 1917, on the 13th day of the months of May, June, July, September and October, the Virgin appeared to the little shepherds François (9 years old), Jacinthe (7 years old) and Lucie (10 years old). François and Jacinthe died as children and were beatified by John Paul II in 1989. Their short life was full of prayer. Lucie died at the age of 97 years old after having spent her life at the Coimbra Carmelite Convent. The Fatima message is one of conversion, prayer for peace and penitence. In 1967, Pope Paul VI went on a pilgrimage to Fatima to ask for peace in the world. John Paul II went there in 1982 as thanksgiving after the assassination attempt on him and, on his knees, consecrated the Church, the men and the people at the immaculate heart of Mary.

With François, Jacinthe and Lucie, let us ask the Lord to give us a pure and a loving and praying heart to “see” God and to be like them, humble witnesses to the presence of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.



Welcome and reunion

On arrival, each person receives a heart upon which is written: “Happy are pure hearts”. We carry it close to our heart throughout the meeting.



Sharing

• Together

The community leader reads or re-tells in his own words the word of the month.

We can re-enact, through a mime, the Transfiguration of Jesus (Mt 17,1-8).

– First scene

The room is plunged into semi-darkness. Jesus is dressed all in white. He sets off with Peter, James and John. The road is long; they are going far and struggle to climb the mountain. Arriving at the top,

the three apostles sit down, tired.

– Second scene

All of a sudden there is a bright shining light. The face of Jesus is shining like the sun and his clothes like the light. The apostles kneel, holding their arms out towards him, filled with wonder.

– Third scene

Moses and Elijah, the prophets, appear in their turn and speak with Jesus. The light fades. The apostles listen to them and think. Then Peter says to Jesus: “Lord, we are happy to be here! We are so good together. If you want, I will put up three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah so that the moment lasts forever”.

– Fourth scene

The light becomes very bright again. A voice from above says: “This is my

son whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" This time, the disciples fall with their faces to the ground. They are terrified. Moses and Elijah disappear. Jesus goes up to the apostles and touching the head of each of them, he says: "Stand up and do not be afraid!"

The apostles stand up and see only Jesus.

Jesus also wants to take us to one side so that we can see him. But for that, we must have a pure heart. Together, we can reflect on the qualities of a pure heart, for example: honesty, simplicity, humility, trust...

Each person in turn says to their right-hand neighbour: "(name), *you have a pure heart because you are always kind*"... "*You have a pure heart because you smile*", "... *because you are loyal*"... We can write the quality that we have been told on the small heart received on arrival.

• In small groups

- When do I stop and allow a little place for God?
- What can I do to hear him and feel his presence?

God also wants to take me to one side so that I can "see" him.

- What are the times in my life that I have wanted to stop so that they last forever?



Praying

Our prayer corner this month is filled with light using white cloths and candles. We choose a song of worship. As we hold in our hands the hearts we have written on, we listen to the Bible verse. In a quiet time, we thank God for the quality that is written on our heart and thank Him for the times in our lives that have been special to us. Turning to a neighbour we can share a special memory. In our intentions, we ask God to help us to have pure hearts, concluding with the Our Father and after the following prayer, we sing a song of thanksgiving.

Prayer

Loving God,
we thank you that there are times when

May

we have known the light of Jesus in our lives.
We pray that you will help us
to give to you
the space and the time needed
that we may truly 'see' you.
Create in me a pure heart, O God.
Amen!

Prayer of a poor person

"Jesus, I am happy to be with you".



Celebrating

Discover without seeing

In a bag are placed different objects, as varied and original as possible. Each person takes it in turn to have 30 seconds to feel an object without taking it from the bag and describe what they are feeling. After 30 seconds have passed, they say what they think the object is and take it out of the bag.

Artist's workshop

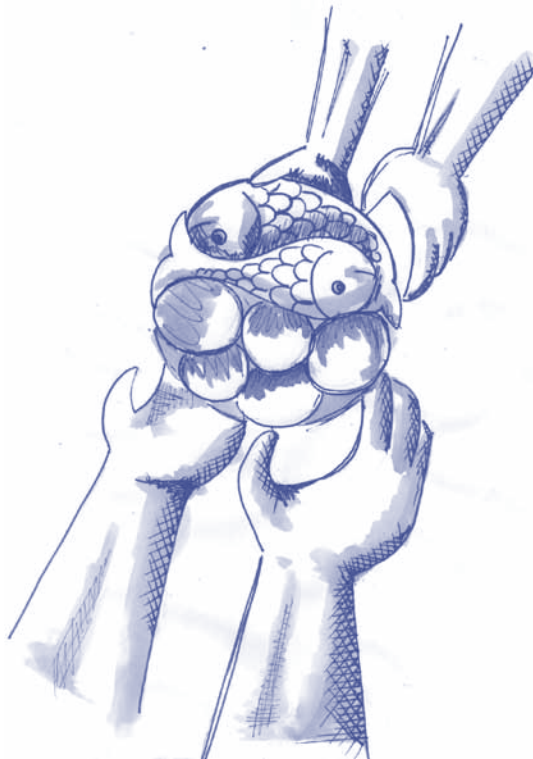
Make an easy stained glass window of the transfiguration of Jesus (see page 88). Of course, a different image can be chosen: a sun, the Faith and Light boat... It can be taken home and placed in our prayer corner.

Our bonfire

- On the central flame, stick the heart that we received on arrival and upon which is written our pure heart quality.
- We add a flame with the Beatitude for this month: *Happy are the pure of heart for they will see God*".

The Joy of Justice

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice"
(Mt 5.6)





The word of the month

“Certainly this man was innocent!” (Lk 23.47). The words of the centurion summarize the life of Jesus. A life surrendered completely to the service of the Kingdom of God, to the *«eternal and universal kingdom: the kingdom of truth and the life, the kingdom of holiness and grace, the kingdom of justice, love and peace.»* (Preface to the Solemnity of

Jesus Christ King of the Universe). His life was one dedicated entirely to the good of his fellow beings that requires us to surpass the justice of the scribes and Pharisees.

Jesus, with his example, attitude and teachings, invites us to *“seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness”* (Mt 6.33).

Everywhere we hear cries for justice, a justice that sometimes is late in arriving. The Lord calls us and sends us to promote justice. How do we respond to this mission? There are so many needs that seem impossible to solve. We can become paralyzed and fall into despair: injustice, extreme poverty, lack of respect for people and their rights, devastation of nature, hunger. However, we can contribute effectively to building a different world. How? By doing everything within our reach right in the place where we find ourselves, and with the resources at our disposal.

Jesus shows us that there are solutions to difficult situations. Let's look at a case: in our world there are several places where many people suffer from hunger. What can be done? What did Jesus do when he saw the people that followed him? He had to do something so that they could eat. He asked Philip, *“Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?”* Philip answered him, *“Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little”* (Jn 6.5-7). We would have reacted and responded in the same way. How do we feed five thousand people? But Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, gives a clue to the solution. He says, *“There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish”*. But, they ask: *“But what are they among so many people?”* The boy gave his loaves and the fish to Jesus. And the miracle is accomplished! Yes! People could eat and there were still twelve baskets of leftovers. Yes! The miracle occurred because someone

was willing to share what he had. He knew how to share, and was able to give. This is one of the solutions that the Gospel puts to us in order to help those in need, those who suffer from hunger: Share! Give from what we have to those who have not. In the same way, it was also in the first Christian communities that there was nothing lacking among them.

That is our experience in Faith and Light. When we share, when we give what we have, all of us will have enough and there will always be plenty leftover. And that is what we can communicate to the world: our joy of sharing, knowing that *“it is more blessed to give than to receive”* (Acts 20.35). We are secure in the knowledge that we are contributing to the arrival of *“a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness is at home”* (2 Pt 3.13).

Reference text: Psalm 111

Focus on theme of the month

- The Lord calls us and sends us to bring justice in the world.
- By offering our five loaves and two fishes, by simply sharing a bit of what we have, Jesus ensures that each of us receives what he needs.

Coordination team

- “You will shine in the world...” page 26 “A large international family”.
- A great witness: **Oscar Romero**



Born in El Salvador in 1917, this Catholic priest dedicated his life to the defence of human rights and especially of those of the poor farmers in his diocese. He denounced all injustice: massacres, torture, and disappearances... He became Archbishop of San Salvador and was assassinated in 1980 whilst celebrating mass in a hospital. On the day of his burial, the army and paramilitary forces fired on the crowd, killing 40 people and injuring 200. Benedict XVI said that he *“was a great witness of faith”*.

“We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God’s work... We plant seeds that one day will grow.”

Let us also bring, every day, our five loaves and two fishes for the Kingdom of God. Through a smile, a simple visit to someone who is alone, to an ill person, through a kind word... all sorts of small gestures that will bring peace and joy.



Welcome and reunion

A basket full of small sweets or simple “candies” is placed at the entrance of the room. On arrival, everyone receives one (or more!).



Sharing

• Together

The community leader reads or re-tells in his own words the word of the month.

We can re-enact, through a mime, the multiplying of the bread (Jn 6,1-14);

• In small groups

The miracle took place, the crowd was able to eat their fill because a young boy knew how to part with what he had, to give to Jesus his five small barley loaves and his two fishes. Faced with the injustice of hunger, war, of any misfortunes, the only solution is to share even if what we have to bring seems quite small.

- And me, do I easily share what I have even if it is not a lot?
- How do I see sharing in the community? In my everyday life?
- Do I also share my joy and pain? How?

Like the crowd following Jesus, I too need nourishment.

- What nourishes me in the community?
- What “nourishment” can I give to others?
- Are the Eucharist and the Word of God real nourishment for me?

Artist’s workshop

The sharing flower (see page 89). This board can decorate our prayer corner.



Praying

This month we reflect on God’s reign of justice and the small part in the reign which God calls us to play. Let us remember that often it begins with sharing whatever we are able, no matter how little it might be. We suggest this month that we invite a priest to celebrate Eucharist with us, or that our chaplain/worship leader leads us in a simple service of the word. We

may consider using the Taize order of service if we are short on ideas! Here it is:

Song, psalm, reading, song, silence, intercessions, Our Father, final prayer, songs (see http://www.taize.fr/en_article337.html).

Prayer

Come Lord!

Come in your way, in accordance with the ways you know.

Come where there is injustice and violence.

Come to the refugee camps in so many parts of the world.

Come where drugs dominate

Come also where the rich have forgotten you, who live only for themselves.

Come where you are unknown.

Come in your way and renew the world today.

Come also into our hearts,

Come and renew our life,
Come into our heart so that we ourselves can become the light of God,
your presence.
Come Lord Jesus.
Benedict XVI

Prayer of a poor person

"Jesus, I give you my five loaves and two fishes."



Celebrating

- Each person will have brought a speciality that they like to cook and we will therefore share all the riches of each person, even if they are quite small.

• I am still hungry!

We sit in a circle. The first player says: *"I am hungry, I could easily eat a dozen eggs!"*. The person sat to their right says: *"I am even more hungry, I could easily eat a dozen eggs and 1 kg of potatoes!"*... and so on, each person adding a dish at the end of the list. The player who loses his memory (or appetite) or gets the order wrong does a forfeit.

Our bonfire

We add a flame with the Beatitude for this month: *"Happy are those who are hungry and thirsty for justice"*.

The Joy of bringing Peace

"Blessed are the peacemakers"
(Mt 5.9)





The word of the month

In our world we are confronted with so many events that give rise to fear, anxiety and anguish: wars, all kinds of violence, waves of intense cold, earthquakes, tsunamis, heat waves, floods, hurricanes. When we think about all these, we see the fragility of human life. In order to cope with these situations and to live in peace, we realize that we need

to hold on to Jesus, *our peace*, and the Gospel, “*the good news of peace*” (Acts 10.36).

Jesus both proclaimed and gifted us his peace: “*Peace I leave you, my peace I give you; I do not give to you as the world gives*” (Jn 14.27). The peace of Jesus is founded on love, forgiveness, reconciliation, truth and justice. Through laying down his life, Jesus broke down all the walls that separate us the enmity in order, to make a new humanity, uniting us as one body. Therefore, there is no longer Jew nor Greek, neither circumcised nor uncircumcised, neither barbarian nor uncivilized, neither slave nor free, but only Jesus: he is all and in all. We are all children of the one God, the Father, and we drink of the same Spirit.

Peace is the fruit of the Spirit and a gift of God, who encompasses all dimensions of our humanity and represents life in all its fullness. In order to live and develop this gift, we need to open ourselves to the universal and to know that we are all brothers and sisters. We need to overcome social, ethnic and national barriers. We need to accept difference, cultivate dialogue and respect among individuals, families, communities and countries. We need to be tolerant, to create space that promotes the maximum development of the human person, and to have a coexistent, harmonious and fraternal society. We need to ensure that everyone has access to employment, a home, and healthcare. We need to promote solidarity and cooperation amongst all people.

“*Strive for perfection, encourage each other, having the same desire among yourselves, live in peace and the God of love and peace will be with you always*” (2 Cor 13.11). There is joy in Faith and Light, a joy which we all live because we belong to a family which strives for heart communion. We

are a family that lives the joy of the littlest, the most vulnerable. The joy that we radiate promotes peace, especially among those families, communities, villages and cities, where Faith and Light is.

Reference text: Is 2.2-5 and 11.6-9

Focus on theme of the month

- The peace of Jesus is built on love, forgiveness, reconciliation, truth and justice.
- We are all brothers and sisters of the same God and Father, led by the same Spirit.
- The joy of belonging to the same family makes us all witnesses of peace, the architects of peace.

Coordination team

- “You will shine in the world...” page 30: “Announce to the nations”.
- It is time to make an evaluation of the year (see page 85).
- A great witness: **John Paul II.**



Karol Wojtyła was born in 1920 in Wadowice, Poland. Ordained as a priest in 1946, he became the youngest bishop of Poland and Pope at 58 years old. A real globetrotter for Christ, he visited more than one hundred countries, a tireless messenger of peace and reconciliation. During the whole of his pontificate, he fought for life, for ecumenism and for bringing together religions and against dictatorships and injustice. The signs of a liking that he has ceaselessly shown with regard to ill or disabled people and to the wounded in life, remain for us a real gift from God. At the end of his life, in great weakness, he became the face of Jesus, weak and offered⁶.

“You, who are weighed down with suffering, you are at the forefront of

⁶ See “Ombres et Lumière” Issue 181 (May-June 2011): *Blessed Jean-Paul II, why pray?* (in French)

those God loves. Like all those that he met on the roads of Palestine, Jesus looks upon you with tenderness; his love will never fail you.” (Meeting with the wounded of life, France 1996.) Let us also try, throughout this month, to look upon those we meet with tenderness.



Welcome and reunion

Each person receives a small dove upon which is written: “Be an architect of peace” (see page 89). It can be worn around the neck or attached to our jumpers during the meeting.



Sharing

The community leader reads or retells in his own words the word of the month.

• Together

To illustrate this theme of peace, we can read or recount the testimony of Anne-Mie (Peru), which shows how much peace must first be anchored in our heart, experienced with our brothers and sisters in the family and the community in order to be able to be announced to the world:

We have three daughters: Marie-Pia (18 years old) and Anja (10 years old), both severely disabled, and Anne-Marie (4 ans) is not disabled. Anne-Marie goes to school and her small class was celebrating the “Lantern Festival”. Anja was aware of this and when the celebration day arrived and she had to stay at home, she sensed her limits and she started to cry. Inconsolable, she threw herself on the floor protesting and crying that she wanted to go to the festival with Anne-Marie. It was time to go. The house looked like a lunatic asylum. Anja, totally uncontrollable, tried to attack Anne-Marie. Marie-Pia plucking her hair out and chewing her nails. The little one, afraid

and sad, clung to my skirt. I, who had always thought herself capable of dealing with any interpersonal situations between my children, I felt defeated and helpless. It was like a giant wave from which we could not free ourselves and that was drowning us. My God, help me, do not let such chaos reign in my house.

What sadness, what loneliness! Ivan, my husband and I felt totally powerless. We were supposed to happily go to school with Anne-Marie, whilst Anja stayed home screaming almost like an injured wild animal. I had no one to call. At that moment, the phone rang: "Hello?". It was Doris, a friend from our Faith and Light community who was asking for news of the girls. She heard the cries, I explained what was going on. Doris said to me: "Don't worry, I will come and collect the two oldest and take them for a walk". A few minutes later she arrived with Géraldine, another friend from the community. Anja and Marie-Pia welcomed them with faces full of joy and left us with big kisses, all happy to be going to the beach, to play and eat ice cream! However, now little Anne-Marie started to cry because she no longer wanted to go to school but to go out with her Faith and Light friends! We had to enthusiastically remind her about the Lantern Festival to console her. Finally everyone left happily.

How could we complain when, at the touch of a button, a family such as Faith and Light, which shows its presence and its loyalty in such a delicate and efficient way, surrounds us!

Anne-Mie Cuculiza (Ombres et Lumière Issue 85)

• In small groups

The testimony of Anne-Mie shows how much peace is based on loyalty, love, forgiveness, reconciliation, truth and justice.

- Have I too experienced moments of rebellion and jealousy? Can I talk about it?
- How was peace restored? By whom?
- How do I always keep it present in my heart?
- How can I bear witness of the joy that this peace I experience gives me and gives to others around me?

Artist's workshop

- All together, decorate a large dove of peace (see page 89) for the time of prayer.

Or

- Decorate the small dove that we received on arrival.



Praying

The focus of our prayer corner will be a large symbol of peace for example, the big dove prepared during the workshop or all the little doves received on our arrival. After a song, we listen to our Bible verse and quietly think about Jesus coming to give us peace. Then, the chaplain or the leader of the prayer will bring peace to one of us and we will pass it on to our neighbor. His

hands are joined, we take them in ours and say: “*The peace of the Lord be with you always*”, he replies “*And also with you*”.

Our intentions can focus on praying for peace in our families, our communities, our world. After the following prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi, we conclude with a blessing: «*May the peace of God which passes all understanding, keep our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, and the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit remain with us always. Amen!*»

Prayer

Where there is hatred, let me show love,

Where there is injury, pardon,

where there is discord, union,

Where there is doubt, faith,

Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,

Grant that I may not so much seek

To be consoled as to console,

To be understood as to understand,

To be loved as to love.

For it is giving that we receive.

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

And it is in dying that we're born to eternal life.

Prayer of a poor person

"It is you, Jesus, who gives me peace".



Celebrating

- We can write a message of peace to the communities who experience great suffering due to war, famine or unfortunately all sorts of other catastrophes. We will show them how much we are thinking of them and praying for them, how much of a large international family we are.

• Scarves dance

Each person will have been asked to bring a scarf. On a background of lively music, form a large circle. Each person waves his scarf in the air. In the middle, one person invites two others to join him. They knot together their scarves and go and invite two others... and then the next until a large farandole has been formed.

Our bonfire

We add a flame with the Beatitude of the month: *"Happy are the architects of peace"*.

The joy of life in its fullness

*“Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb”
(Rev 19.9)*





The word of the month

All those who love God and neighbour with all of their life and being, all those who love unreservedly, and unconditionally, all those who love with the same intensity and depth as Jesus, especially those who most vulnerable, live life in all its fullness. They participate in the banquet, blessed with eternal joy and the infinite love of God.

We live in the hope that one day... *he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.* (Rev 21.4).

This is what we hope to experience when we live in the new heaven and new earth. And while we are in the world today, we keep looking toward the future without fear, addressing the real challenges presented to us with the strength and the energy that the presence of the Lord gives us, who is with us “*until the end of time*”. We do this in the certainty that His promise will be fulfilled.

We remain faithful to the mission entrusted to us. We seek to follow the example of Jesus. We act like him when dealing with persons whom we encounter, with as much gentleness, with as much respect, with as much understanding and love. Jesus knew how to identify and value their gifts, talents and qualities. Like Jesus, let us commit ourselves to proclaiming the kingdom of God. Like Jesus, let us stay close to those who are sick, disabled, lame and blind. Let us know how to heal them, to give them new life, to allow them to rediscover their enthusiasm for life. Like Jesus, let us know how to free people from the forces of evil, to reveal the love of God the Father and to demonstrate in practical ways his forgiveness to sinners, by getting alongside those whom others shun: lepers, Samaritans, and pagans. Like Jesus, who gave himself for us and revealed the fullness of his life through his resurrection, let us know what it is to offer ourselves to the very end. In Faith and Light, we already enjoy a foretaste of the life that we will receive in all its fullness in our eternal union with him. Whenever we give advice, whenever we share, whenever we serve others with enthusiasm and joy, whenever we make known the value and the beauty of people with an

August

intellectual disability, we are already entering the joy of the eternal wedding banquet. Let us proclaim and share the joyful news with all our brothers and sisters throughout the entire world.

Reference text: Is 21.1-7

Focus on theme of the month

- Joy of receiving life in abundance!
- Joy of living in the hope of the day when God will wipe away any tears from our eyes.
- *“Love your neighbour as yourself, then you will have Life.”*

Coordination team

- “You will shine in the world...” page 16: “Discernment”.
- A great witness: **Ignatius of Antioch**



Ignatius was born in about the year 35 in Antioch (Syria). Ignatius, who also called himself “Theophorus” (God-bearer) was probably a disciple of John. He was a favoured witness of the teaching of the apostles and the first Christians. After becoming a bishop, he was arrested with the most determined of the Christians in Antioch and condemned to being eaten by wild animals during Roman festivals. We have the letters that he wrote to various Christian communities during his voyage to Rome. They are poignant in their confession of an unflinching faith, for the joy that they express and for the impression of Jesus Christ that they propose to any Christian.

“Allow me to obtain pure light. There is within me a water that lives and speaks saying to me: come to the Father”.

Let us be in thanksgiving for all this year, when month after month, we have discovered (or re-discovered) how much God loves us! Let us give thanks for the gift of life and for the gift of Faith and Light!



Welcome and reunion

If anyone has a musical instrument at home, they can bring it in and put it on a table on arrival. It can be quite simple: maracas, harmonica, bell... They will add rhythm to our songs throughout the meeting. "Hail him through our songs!". Let us hail him for all that we have experienced and shared together throughout the year.



Sharing

• Together

The community leader reads or re-tells in his own words the word of the month.

To illustrate this word, the chaplain or the community leader can recount the conversation between Jesus and an expert in the law (Lk 10,20-28).

• In small groups

All year, we have tried to follow Jesus, to love, forgive and live the Gospel. Jesus proclaims the praising of God the Father because he reveals and gives life to the little ones. We are already catching a glimpse of it in the community. This love that we experience, we will experience it more strongly in Heaven.

- How do I imagine Heaven?
- What do I hope for?
- Why will I always be with people I loved on Earth?

I am, we are, so important in the eyes of God, that he wants to give us the life and joy that never ends.

- What makes me so important in the eyes of God?
- If I were represented by a symbol or image, what would I choose?



Praying

Prayer of a poor person

"Thank you, Jesus, for giving me life."



Celebrating

- We can devise a big celebration of the love of God for the smallest with songs, dances, a meal or tea that symbolises the banquet of the Marriage of the Lamb... Think about bringing CDs to improvise community dances.

• Messengers of joy

This game takes up the themes of the past eleven months.
Two questions per month are suggested.

There are two possible ways of playing

Write all the questions on bits of paper that are folded up and put in a basket. Each person picks out a piece of paper in turn.

or

Make up teams. Each team receives a questionnaire. The winning team is the one that answers the most questions correctly.

• September

What is the first Beatitude?

What is written on the bookmark that we received at the first meeting?

• October

Who was the great witness in October?

What should we have made?

- **November**

In the parable of the banquet guests, they all found various excuses not to attend. What were they?

- **December**

Who was the sheep I prayed for during Advent?

I am the source of the original Nativity, I lived in the 13th century, who am I?

- **January**

Who does Jesus want us to be like to enter the Kingdom of Heaven?

What is the name of the great witness who converted at the age of 30?

- **February**

Why is 2 February the Feast of Light?

Who is the great witness who accompanied us this month? (clue: she is the mother of a great Saint)

- **March**

Just before his passion in Gethsemane, what did Jesus ask his disciples?

What object have we made as a sign of loyalty to Jesus?

- **April**

What is the text that Paul wrote to the Christians in Colossae? Can I remember a passage?

What was the prayer of a poor person this month?

- **May**

Who were the two prophets talking to Jesus at the Transfiguration on the mountain?

What are the Christian names of the three little shepherds from Fatima?

- **June**

Quote two passages from the Gospel or Old Testament, which talk about the dove.

What was written on the dove that you received on arrival?

- **July**

If we talk about Oscar Romero, which Beatitude do we think of?

On the day of the multiplying of the bread, how many loaves and fishes did the child bring?

Artist's workshop

- If we have good musicians in the community, we could compose a thanksgiving, praise or meditation song that will become the community song. Or more simply, to a known tune, compose words that summarise what we experience together...
- We lay out on the wall or floor, a roll of paper or an old sheet. Each person can paint the symbol that represents them on it.

Our bonfire

We add a flame with the Beatitude for this month: "*Happy are the guests at the Marriage of the Lamb*".

Evaluate the year to progress

At the beginning or end of the year, together or as a coordination team, let us take the time to evaluate the life of the community. The small booklet «*Day for a renewal*» can help us⁷.

Here are some tips that have been taken from it.

Each person answers these questions:

- What have I liked the most this year in the community?
- What I have like least?
- How do we pray together as a community?
- How do we celebrate together as a community?
- How do we get to know one another and share our faith when we meet?
- How do we deepen our friendship between our meetings?
- Do we have almost equal numbers of persons with intellectual disabilities, family members and friends? Do we have a chaplain who participates in our community?
- Do we have a coordinating team that prepares and evaluate our meetings?
- How much importance do we give to using the Guidelines?
- How can we be more creative in our coordinating team?
- How do we pray for/contribute to the unity of all Christians? How do we try to get to know people from different denominations?
- How do we experience our belonging to the international family of Faith and Light and how do we express this belonging?
- How would we describe the atmosphere of our community?
- How is our community a part of the parish/local church ?
- How often do we meet as a whole community?
- How open and welcoming is our community to new members?
- How many members do we have?
- If we are more than forty, are we praying and considering about giving birth to a new community?

If we choose to do this evaluation as a community, we form small groups. The leaders will note what each person has said. The evaluations will be looked at in the coordination team meeting with a view to preparing for the next year.

Some communities take a weekend, or a day outside, often in the religious community with which they are twinned, in order to have the whole time for reflecting together in relaxation and friendship.

⁷ Available from the International Secretariat

Artist's workshop

Bonfire



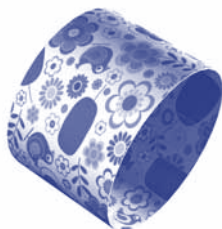
Log for closing ceremony



Decorated napkin rings

Card, scissors, motifs cut out from paper napkins or any other decoration.

- Using the template cut out a strip of card: 22cm x 6cm and cut along the dotted lines.
- Cut out the motifs from the napkin.
- Remove double the thickness of the napkin.
- Paste where you want to put the motif on the card with a brush or a small sponge.
- Apply the motif by its centre and delicately smooth out with a brush full of glue and leave to dry.
- Bend the strip, insert the notches into one another. It is ready!



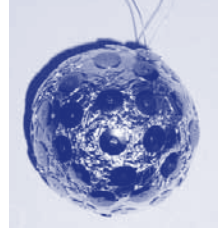
The baby Jesus, a few examples of models



You could also make a small cradle in a large, decorated matchbox, add some straw or a piece of material...

Baubles

- Foil, gilded or various coloured drawing pins, string.
- Make a ball shape with the foil.
 - Stick drawing pins into the bauble.
 - Attach string to bauble with a drawing pin.



A bookmark



Do not worry when you suffer, when you weep.
I will console you. I will wipe away each one of your tears.
You will then be happy and blessed by my Father.

A two-faced mask

Card, scissors, thin elastic.

- Cut out two circles of card per person with a diameter of 23/24 cm.
- On one of the circles draw a smiling face and on the other a sad face.
- Stick them together back to back.
- Make a small hole in each side and thread through the elastic.



Paper flowers

Different coloured crepe paper, scissors, and fine wire.

- Cut out larger and smaller circles depending on the size of flower you want in three or four thicknesses of paper and cut out fringes.
- Wind the wire around the base of the flower and cover the stem with green paper (you could cover the wire and base of the petals with PVA glue to make the job easier).



Painted eggs

Eggs, paint, brushes, sticks, potatoes or support, varnish.

Hollow out eggs or use polystyrene eggs. Thread a thin wooden stick into the egg. Place the stick in a potato that has been cut in half or any support that keeps the stick upright so you can paint the egg without getting paint on your fingers. Then varnish it. Leave it to dry and carefully remove the stick.

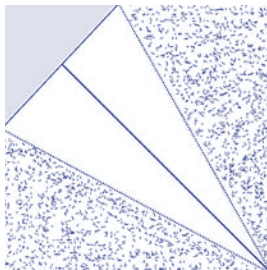


Surprise Easter eggs

Hard-boiled or chocolate eggs, coloured paper napkins, scissors, and small tie.

– Without unfolding the square napkin, fold it to a point, cut out the grey part at the top left.

– Place the egg in the centre of the napkin and wrap it around the egg. Attach a small tie and unfold the petals.



A stained glass window

Card, craft knife, tracing paper or “stained glass” paper, glue or sellotape.

– Copy the drawing of your choice on to the card, for example, shown here is the transfiguration.

– Cut out the parts that you want to appear as “stained glass”.

– Cut the tracing or “stained glass” paper to match the cut out parts of the card and stick or sellotape on to the reverse.



The sharing flower

Scissors, different coloured sheets of paper, glue, and small labels.

- Cut out two large circles to make the heart of the flower and 7 petals from the different coloured sheets of paper.
- Stick the 7 petals on one of the circles. Stick the second circle on top of the petals.
- On some small labels, each person writes what they want to share and we stick it on the petals. This board could decorate the prayer corner.



The dove of peace

Card, scissors, red, yellow and green crepe paper.

We can copy this dove of peace on a large board. We could decorate it using the “Picasso dove” method by cutting out thin strips of red, yellow and green crepe paper. Then we glue them in twists around its beak, under its wings and on its claws to give it life and make it a beautiful messenger of peace and joy.



Mime “Do what the Holy Spirit inspires you to do!”

Jean and Marie-Hélène, community leaders

This Easter Monday, Jean and Marie-Hélène organise a meeting of the three hundred community leaders before leaving:

- Jean and Marie-Hélène: “*We want to say goodbye and thank you! Goodbye! Thank you!*”

But everyone says:

- “We do not want to go back to loneliness. We want Faith and Light to go on!”
- Jean said: “*Do whatever the Holy Spirit inspires you to do! Keep meeting each other in your communities. Celebrate, go on a pilgrimage.*”

It was thus that Faith and Light is born.

Now, everyone gets into the coaches, the trains and the planes... a bit sad that it is already over, but in a deep joy. Everyone is certain of one thing in his/her heart:

- A pilgrim: “*What we have just experienced is not over. But it is truly a start...*”
- Many communities are going to carry on meeting. In Faith and Light we discover what is essential, in experiencing each month, times of meeting, sharing, prayer

and celebrating... out of friendship. In welcoming all those who are alone and who will come. In calling so many other persons who are in distress and who are isolated.

Faith and Light is about meeting, friendship, prayer, celebration and joy!

In 1975, the Faith and Light communities throughout the world went on a pilgrimage to Rome. For the first time, they are received by Pope Paul VI in the St Peter basilica. He speaks personally to each pilgrim with a disability: *"You are loved by God as you are. He dwells in your heart. Trust in Him. Look: He gives you a room among other Christians, in His church. In His name, I bless you, and I bless the parents and friends that God has given you."*

Today, there are more than 1600 communities in 79 countries worldwide who can sing like us... and with us! And be real messengers of joy in the world!

Messengers of all joys⁸

Lyrics and music: Louis-Marie Grimaud

Messengers of all Joys, Jesus is for us the way.

Messengers of God's Peace, We are witness of his bliss.

Messengers of pure Love, He guides our steps everyday.

Messengers of all Joys, God's spirit is here to stay

Each one of us is different, each one of us is important.

It's nice to talk, to learn, to hear, to smile to those from far and near.

Our arms reach out in love and peace from all countries, across the seas.

May joy sing out all our delight! Let's all be messengers of Light!

Jesus has called each one of us that we may love and cherish friends

Yes, thank you Lord I feel secure. Among my friends, I feel true love.

The Lord protects me from all harm, he gives us Hope and Love that calms.

No wonder we are called to be Faithful messengers of His peace.

If tears and wounds still haunt your past, for Jesus' friends, they do not last.

Your fears will go and will not stay. Our lives are Joy to all to say.

Evil cannot prevail within, God's Love will always help us win.

Let's go and sing for all to hear, let's be the messengers of Joy!

⁸ CD is available from the International Secretariat for 2 €.

Let us be one! Letter from Ghislain du Chéné, Easter 2011

During an international meeting, I attended an Anglican service with Paul who has Downs Syndrome. At the time of receiving communion, we followed the procession, making, as we had been advised, the gesture of crossing our arms across our chest to receive the blessing of the celebrant. On our return to our seats, I heard Paul burst into tears, and say to me: “*Why wasn’t I able to take communion?*” It touched me and made me ask myself other questions: Why was Paul more sensitive than me to this cruel separation between the various Christian denominations? Why was it so difficult to make our friends with a disability understand that there are divisions between Christians even though Jesus prayed, “*that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me?*” (Jn 17, 21) (...)

The priority that we should quickly put in place is to learn to get to know each other better!

- Get to know each other better in order to better understand each other and get to know where we are alike and where we differ. There is a very good Faith and Light document that needs to be read and re-read.⁹
- Get to know each other better by going to the meetings of others. Inevitably there will be Christians from other denominations not far from our communities. How much effort do we make to invite them, to make them aware of Faith and Light or to help them to start a Faith and Light community in their church? Certainly, it is easier in some countries than in others, or in towns than in the countryside, but it is vital to get a good knowledge of our local environment.
- Get to know one another better in order to know what we can do together. There are differences that enrich us through the beauty and diversity of the liturgies and that are not obstacles to joint celebrations.
- Get to know each other better in order to testify to the scandal of these divisions. I have already told you that anger can be the source of beautiful prayers, of prayers that touch the heart of Jesus. Therefore we should not hesitate to proclaim our sorrow and pain like Paul.

Once this first step is taken, we can then go on to the second stage, which will be wonderful for us! Why not do what l’Arche has started to do in Australia? It is a method called “host and guest” that makes it possible to get to know other denominations. Each one, the host then the guest, understands, as a community, how much the other church benefits them and helps them to follow Jesus.

Ecumenism is one of the priorities of Christian churches who wish to achieve full communion. I believe that this cannot only be done from on high - it is not through the reflections of theologians or through the dogmas that it will be achieved. How-

⁹ “*Ecumenism in Faith and Light*” available to the International Secretariat, 3 rue du Laos 75015 Paris, France foi.lumiere@wanadoo.fr

ver, if this real willingness of the heads of the churches meets the cry from the hearts wounded by our churches, then we will really make progress. **It is necessary for the husband to meet the wife to give rise to the unity to which we all aspire!** Therefore, I invite you to send us stories like that of Paul. We will bring them together in one document to illustrate how the smallest of us suffers because of this lack of unity. It will show that the “people of God” also want to be advisors on the communion between churches, and that they want to put their heart and soul into this work!

Until then, I invite you to pray regularly in your communities from two texts of the Gospel: the prayer of the husband (John 17.21-23) and the prayer of the wife (Luke 1.46-55).

And on April 24, let us sing together our message of joy: “*Christ is risen! Yes, He is truly risen!*”

Feast of Light

Why have we adopted 2 February, feast of the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple as the day of celebration for all Faith and Light communities in the world? There hasn't been a big discernment or official decision. This date came about quite naturally. From 1972, a French community (Allier) decided that its annual celebration would take place at Candlemas, the day when Jesus is presented as the Light of the world and where the symbol of candles is so telling. The idea of this celebration spread across the whole world like wildfire, as is evident. At the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple, as at Faith and Light, parents are reunited with their small child and his/her friends, Simeon and Anne.

The parents, members of Faith and Light, are felt and feel more often still in their flesh, the prediction of Simeon to Mary: ‘A blade will pierce the heart’. And we see that their child is a sign of contradiction. He reveals deep thoughts which hide in the hearts. The person weak, disabled, ill, dying... deeply disturb us but it transforms us if we want to put our hand in theirs.

The Feast of Light takes place in very different ways depending on the province and communities. If the Feast of Light can rarely be celebrated on February 2nd because it is difficult to gather the community on that date, we can still encourage each other to pray «together» on this special day, wherever we are: alone, in our little prayer corner, or in small groups, or in a friendship group, or in connection with the monastery or the contemplative community praying for us, in communion with the communities around the world, forming a chain of prayer and thanksgiving for Faith and Light.

The Announcing and Sharing Day, your participation in solidarity

Currently 2/3 of the countries where Faith and Light has a presence have economic difficulties; it is there that Jesus and Providence have led the growth of Faith and Light!

Contributing to solidarity is responding to a missionary call. It is also wanting to share our goods, our gifts and, where necessary, working for that.

It is not primarily about “demanding” money from community members, but mainly about making them sensitive to the life and needs of communities in difficulty.

In this year when several pilgrimages are going to be organised in the provinces, when we are all called to become messengers of joy, it is a vital time to organise an Announcing and Sharing Day!

Announcing: it is making known outside of our community the beauties of our meetings, showing our joy at being together, making others want to join us, giving rise to the creation of new communities that will come to journey at our side for the province pilgrimage and so much more!

Sharing: it is involving others who are not community members in the pilgrimages that are going to take place throughout the whole world, including them in our process, letting them take part in a special way. It is letting them contribute to the success of the pilgrimages in the less developed provinces and for whom the pilgrimages will have a very particular meaning: showing our joy with persons with a disability in countries in difficulty will be an extremely strong paradox but one that will really express what is experienced in the Faith and Light communities throughout the whole world.

The Announcing and Sharing Day should therefore first of all sensitise our families, our friends and many others still to the pilgrimage process. The information should be accurate and illustrated: boards with a map and photos of the place of pilgrimage will allow us to show where we are going, leaflets giving a budget evaluation of the operation (including a part for solidarity) and specifying the methods of payment, the possible opportunities of tax advantages will be ready to be distributed. Sponsoring of persons with a disability will be able to be suggested with opportunities for gifts (it will therefore be necessary to know the cost per person for the pilgrimage) or prayer promises.

Preparations for this Day that will mobilise the whole community are going to give a new impetus! All the practical details for organising this day are to be found in newsletter no. 5, go and look at it, it is all there!

Box of treasures

This will enable us to allow the biggest number possible in all the provinces to take part in the pilgrimages and thus celebrate in the most beautiful way 40 years of Faith and Light.

Finally, don't forget to designate a reporter and photographer in all our communities, the donors will be very happy to receive a mail showing them what their gift has been used for!

Evaluation of the 2011-2012 Guidelines

Please return responses to the International Secretariat before 15th April 2012

Name of my community:

Country:

Province:

Do the 2011-2012 guidelines meet your requirements?

What do you like **the most**?

What do you find **less good**?

Which **appendices** have you **used**? (Indicate their number)

Which ones **didn't you use**?

How do you live **the time of faithfulness**?

What are your main **activities**? What are the **fruits**?

What are your **suggestions** for the next guidelines?

If possible, it would help the next guidelines team a lot, if you could indicate what you think of the suggestions for the different times and also send us any new ideas that you have tried at meetings.

- Welcome
- Word
- Sharing together
- Sharing in small groups
- Prayer and prayer of a poor person
- Celebration
- Time of fidelity

Available documents

For community building

Charter and Constitution	free
Annual Guidelines	5.50 (per 10: 5 €)
Guidelines for the first year (new edition)	5 €
DVD gesture songs (in French only)	8 €
Leader's pack (CD)	3 €
You will shine in the World like Bright Stars (Reflection on the Identity and Mission of Faith and Light)	2,50 €
Sharing our responsibility	3 €
General rules of financial management	free
A few easy recipes to raise funds	1 €

For deepening our life together

Day for a renewal in the community	free
Deepening our spirituality in Faith and Light	3 €
Letters to my brothers and sisters, Joseph Larsen	2 €
Morning and evening prayers	1 €
Retreats in Faith and Light	1 €
How to prepare and live a retreat	1 €
Ecumenism in Faith and Light	1 €
Fioretti, Father Joseph Larsen	2 €
Formation week-ends and sessions in Faith and Light	1 €
Let's go on holiday together	1,50 €

Getting to know us better

DVD: «The Faith and Light Story» told by Marie-Hélène Mathieu presentation in english, french, spanish, italian	10 €
Papal messages to Faith and Light	free
Leaflets	free
Finances leaflets	free

Faith and Light Prayer

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.



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I *came to bring fire
on the earth,
and how I wish
it were already kindled.*

(Lk 12,49)