

Faith and Light a school for Unity and Ecumenical Work

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Introduction

In the deep silence, a loud cry outburst from the side of Lord Jesus, a prophetic cry. The cry of the parents. The cry of the weak person.

In that Holy Saturday, that long Saturday where the cave was empty, where despair filled the hearts of the apostles. With this own ways and means from where we don't expect or know he looked for us. His light beamed from the moldy and cold cave giving us Faith and Light. A new Crossover passing us from death to life, from despair to hope, from our self – slavery to freedom.

Yes our saviour cared for us, He cared for his church. At the end of all ages he gave us **Faith and Light** to be a new baptism not with water but with water and blood flowing from Jesus' wounded side. Faith and Light became a new birth to us. It gave us new eyes, new hearts, new hands, new ears and new view of God, man and universe.

The Faith and Light communities gained also lots of spiritual fruits and the most important one is a deep ecumenical awareness.

Faith and Light doesn't want to be another church and it doesn't want to live to the side of the church. We are communities which responded to Lord Jesus' call to live with the weak and **proclaim** the good news to the poor among the church and to receive from them also. It calls you to adhere and hold on to the church that you belong to, to the traditions that you practice and encourages you to live, grow, accept the other, respect him, respect his traditions and way of growing and be delighted for his growth. Faith and Light knows that the way of unity between churches is a long way. In spite of that, in a secretive way, it gives us this longing for seeking and a deep feeling towards the other, different from us. It calls us for a love adventure. An adventure in the desert accompanied by the Lord.

Faith and Light communities, a school for unity and Ecumenical work

1. Our unity is similar to the Trinity unity (Jn 17,21-23)

“That all of them may be one, Father just as you are in me and I am in you” John 17:21-23. This is the call of Lord Jesus and His will, it's similar to the unity of the trinity.

- a) The Father pours himself in the son. The Son accepts the Father and by his turn pours himself to the Father.
- b) The unity of the Father and the Son doesn't make them lose their hypostasis. Each one kept His hypostasis safe without mixture.

We in Faith and Light communities experience how to give ourselves, we test everyday how to accept the other (every time I mention the word “other” “the brother” “the weak person” I try to replace it with a word like “another church” “another rite or tradition”

“Orthodox” “Catholic” “Anglican”...). In our communities we train on telling the other you are loved, welcomed, you’re good looking. We learn not to change the others in order to love them but accept them as they are. We learn how to make the difference a source of joy and richness instead of being a source of pain and division. We learn how to say, you are loved in spite of your differences, in spite the differences of your traditions, culture, language, color, rules and regulations, weakness and power, illness and health, success and failure, the private relation with your bishop. You are my happiness, your existence only is enough for me.

And here I would like to ask you, my beloved brother: Do you love me in spite of your differences? Do you accept me? Do you think that I deserve to be with you, just to be there? Do you find me beautiful? Would you invite me? Would you help me? Would you carry me? I’m waiting for you to ask me the same questions.

2. Love unites us

Faith and Light is a school of love. We can’t imagine it if we didn’t actually test this. Is there a power that could gather us and unite us our hearts stronger than love?

Through gathering around the weak person we learn a new language of love, heart language, eye language, we learn how to love from all our hearts, minds and strength. To love with all our senses, all our entity, to love the person that God placed in front of us. Practise how to form a united community that is related with other groups in the country and the world.

Through this way, we discover also our wounds and pain, our harshness, we discover our weakness and incapability of love. We stop accusing the others for their weaknesses and failures. We discover our isolation and our desire for being the only wonderful people. We learn love without any charge “It is not self-seeking” 1 Corinthians 13:5.

Do you love me, the Orthodox, with all your entity?

3. Faith and Light is a school for regaining trust

Fear and mistrust are the worse things that could threaten love. “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear” 1 John 4:18. In Faith and Light communities we experience that we are welcomed as we are. We are loved as we are with a feeling of **intimacy** and the spirit of a united family. We get rid of fear, throw our masks and leave intimacy and leave our hearts open to God’s gifts. This trust is what attracted me to Faith and Light from the beginning. I’m not invited to work but to live as I am. I felt the difference between living as a priest among a group that loves and accepts you and between just working as a priest.

Do you love me, the Orthodox, and accept me as I am?

4. Faith and Light is a school for modesty

In Faith and Light we learn how to recognize ourselves as we are and accept each other, and how to surrender everything to God. We discover our need for others. We learn to say I need you, I need your church. I can’t live without you. You are my consolation and happiness. I need everyone of you. I need the weakest one of you. We learn not to be proud with anything but with our Lord Jesus Christ’s cross. We learn how to keep our minds silent sometimes, not to talk through brains, not to concentrate on words but on the heart. We experience that communicating between people happens in a profound way, without words. And that the presence, gives us more that words and ideas.

Do you feel your need for me? I, as an Orthodox, need you!

5. Faith and Light is a school for reconciliation

We learnt reconciliation through Jesus suffering on the cross. In Faith and Light communities we experience pain and difficulties but we don't drown **in grief** but see light rising from the grave, from the resurrection through the cross of Jesus Christ. We experience our wounds and pain and face them. We know that we won't reach resurrection without the cross so we live with the hope of resurrection and that the blood flowing from the cross heals the wound of all of us. In our communities we feel deep grief for our division. We recognize that the challenge is really big but we don't give the thorns a chance to strangle the hope seed that was grown inside us. We focus on the harvest that grows from the good land and not on what is wasted "in the rocky places and what fell along the path." We don't ignore our differences because this won't solve the problem. We take them seriously and with respect, because it means to the other a very important matter and maybe a holy matter.

6. Washing of the feet

Washing of the feet became a tradition that **distinguishes** our communities which are spread around the world. We experience through it how to kneel in front of the others, in front of their feet, wash them, kiss them and wipe them. We ask forgiveness from them taking Lord Jesus as our example. With a move full of modesty and recognition with other people's dignity and their sonship to God. We learn also our need to be washed. We learn how to say forgive me I offended you.

I, the Orthodox, ask you when did you wash my feet?

I ask you to forgive me!

I ask myself when I did wash your feet, kissed them and wiped them with my hair?

7. In Faith and Light we learn how to break our harshness

In Faith and Light we learn how to be soft in God's hands, how to break our harshness, we learn how to leave our defence weapons. For when the boy wants to learn how to write he leaves his hand **submissive** in his teacher's hand. Also the sail of the ship is made of material and not wood in order for it to cooperate with the wind to take it to the safe side. By that we allow to get into a new experience led by the Holy Spirit. In order to receive what God wants and not what we want. We surrender till he takes us where he wants. We learn how to break our solid mold "Believe me woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem... Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth" (John 4:21-23). How to give up Jerusalem that we have in mind to see the good of the heavenly Jerusalem?

I'm ready to travel with you using a soft sail. Are you ready for that?

8. The weak person unites us to the same alter

In Faith and Light communities we gather to a one living alter, on the chest of the weak person and not on the blocks of our harshness and pride. We learn through gathering around the weak person, who is the heart of our communities, how to give ourselves as a living sacrifice on the living alter. So we worship with "spirit and truth" and feel a heavenly presence between us.

We learn how to climb naked the steps of the alter, holding hands together, with our eyes looking at where Jesus is living. We open our ears to hear the good news from Jesus. That weak person will be a Host and Eucharist. So we will taste another kind of food which feeds and gives us life. Feeds our hearts and sanctifies our lives. We carry him inside us in

order to spread him around the world. So the weak person would be for us a window into life, a window into the world.

I, the Orthodox, invite you to his Eucharist and to this new start!

9. In Faith and Light we find the hidden treasures

In Faith and Light we learn how to look at the weak person to find inside him the Hidden Jesus. So we leave everything and sell everything to follow Him “like a treasure hidden in a field” (Matthew 13:44). In Faith and Light we learn how to see the good in the ugly, power in weakness and life in pain. We know that we have to have spiritual eyes and blessing from above, from the Holy Spirit in order to see and penetrate the thick material screen to find the hidden treasures inside the weak person. We can read by our hearts an alive icon of Jesus in spite the pale colours and the cracks in the wood.

We kneel in front of this icon gently and look at it with the eyes of Jesus. We recognize at the same time also our call to be an image of Jesus and His face in front of the weak person.

This is what we seek in our communities, we learn how to be an image of Jesus, an understandable icon of Jesus and a living Gospel for people to read, especially the weak. By that they will discover His gentleness by ours, His love by ours, His kindness by ours, they would see His heart and face through us.

Do you find in me, the Orthodox, in spite of my ugliness a living icon of Lord Jesus?

10. In Faith and Light we build together

In Faith and Light communities we practise living together as one living together as one loving family. A group that dies for each other. It sacrifices to live together to the full. We learn how to sit next to the weak person, hold his hand and look at his eyes to tell him, you are not alone, I’m here for you. At the same time I need you.

We learn how to touch gently, how to share our warmth and peace with others. We learn how to “be with” not “do for”. Is there a more clear image of the church, and of the kingdom of heaven better than this? Isn’t this what differentiates kingdom? It’s a loving community.

This is our call that our communities should become the kingdom of God and that we should lead people to it so they can taste through us the sweetness of the kingdom and the happiness of living together. For people should recognize us and see our fruits, the fruits of the Holy Spirit prevailing all our lives and our relations with the parish, our wife and kids. Our mission is for Faith and Light to be a sign of hope and of the kingdom. We would be answers for many questions.