

Up Sails!

The international letter of Faith and Light N 49, December 2021



O God so great, who has made you so small?

Love

St Bernard





Summary

Editorial

- 3

Reports

- Celebration in Belgium 4
- Letter from Cyprus 6
- Canada: A Valley of Peace 8
- Slovenia: Our Lady of Lourdes 10
- Portugal: Hello, Monsignor! 11
- Pilgrimage to Chile 12
- Poland: The pilgrimage of the Black Virgin 13

Testimonies

- Bishop Isaac Martinez 15
- 50 years of joy, thanksgiving and hope 17
- "Together" 20

For our reflection

- Fifty years, Issue fifty 21

Family album

23

International news

25

International agenda

25

Meeting with friends

- The Night of disability 26

Marie-Hélène's letter

- Educating is desiring 27

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That night in Bethlehem...



Raúl Izquierdo
International coordinator

It is cold, very cold. Mary, the mum, affectionately covers her little Jesus who has just been born. The dad, Joseph, looks all around him and also glances at the animals in the stable: an ox and a donkey, who are giving off a bit of warmth but they don't exactly smell of roses. Joseph is lost in thought because the future is not clear to him. Mary looks at him and smiles to reassure him. Right now, all that matters is the child who sometimes cries and sometimes sleeps peacefully.

Suddenly, the fragile tranquillity of the moment is broken by the appearance of two silhouettes in the night. Joseph is frightened and goes on the defensive but Mary feels that they are simply shepherds attracted by curiosity. As they approach, Mary and Joseph see something different and special in their faces. They have huge smiles. One of them is finding it difficult to walk, his hands are big and hot. The younger of the shepherds has Downs Syndrome and looks like his father. They are silent. Mary holds Joseph's hand as if to tell him that

there is nothing to fear and much to thank for this visit.

That night, the youngest shepherd sings and dances around the child with a tambourine. There is no particular rhythm, the musical notes are not recognisable but it is a beautiful melody. The infant Jesus opens his eyes and Joseph claps his hands. The father of the young shepherd laughs and Mary watches silently, keeping all this in her heart of a wife and mother.

The youngest shepherd looks at Jesus tenderly and asks Mary if he can kiss him. So, he kisses him again and again lovingly and with the utmost delicacy. He drools over the baby and Jesus laughs, he likes it, it comforts him. He rests the baby in his mother's arms. The older shepherd bows as a sign of respect and they leave together to go back to where they came from.

Joseph turns to Mary. In his eyes, there is emotion and surprise at this meeting. They did not bring riches nor delicacies nor jewels... But they brought their hearts and affection. Mary looks at the sky and sees a star that is shining more brightly than the others. There is room for hope. She hugs her baby to her heart and Joseph hugs both of them. Further away, the old shepherd also hugs his son.

Tonight, let us be vigilant, let us open our hearts, let us understand that God loves us so much that he was born in our midst. Can we imagine it?

Merry Christmas dear Faith and Light family!



Celebration in Belgium

IN 2021, FAITH AND LIGHT, ORGANISING PILGRIMAGES FOR AND WITH INTELLECTUALLY DISABLED PEOPLE, CELEBRATED ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY. AND FOR THE SIX COMMUNITIES FROM BRUSSELS AND WALLOON BRABANT, THE CELEBRATION OF THIS EVENT TOOK PLACE ON SUNDAY 3 OCTOBER AT THE SAINT JEAN BERCHMANS CHURCH, ET-TERBEEK IN THE PRESENCE OF MONSIGNOR KOCKEROLS.

Review of the day

There were 120 people, happy to be meeting up again, who came from Nivelles, Rixensart, Waterloo, Uccle, Laeken and Neder-Over-Hembeek. It was wonderful to (re)discover the distinctive features of each community thanks to a slide show prepared by each of them before separating into workshops to decorate the meal tables, put the finishing touches to the souvenir bookmarks, sing and prepare the Gospel mime that would be presented at the Eucharist.

For the highlight of this day was unquestionably the Eucharist with the homily: *"The Church needs you"* Jean Kockeroles said. Then, a time filled with emotion and thanksgiving during the projection of



photos and the names of the deceased members of our communities and finally with the blessing by the chaplains of each community as a sign of being sent on a mission.

And the day ended joyfully with tea, one of the three pillars of all meetings: sharing, prayer and celebration.

A short history

In Belgium, it was at the initiative of Father Roberti SJ and Father André Delpierre that Faith and Light first gained a foothold in Brussels and then in the Walloon region from large celebrations bringing together parents,



friends and people with an intellectual disability. These gatherings took place in Brus-

sels, Wavre, Verviers, Florennes, Ciney...

Structuring into small meeting communities started at the end of the 70s. The first community to flourish in Belgium was "La Cordée" in Wavre and, immediately after, others were born in the Herve region ("L'Eclaircie") and in Florennes ("Les Véroniques").

In the Brussels and Walloon Brabant region, other communities would very quickly appear: "La Moisson" in Etterbeek, "Les Vendanges" in Laeken and "Emmaus" in Nivelles. Added later would be "Alleluia" in Louvain-la-Neuve, "Source d'Espérance" in Waterloo, "Le Train de la vie", "Les Enfants du Père" in Rixensart and finally "Béthanie" in Uccle. Today, there are thirty communities in Belgium, six of which are in Brussels and the Walloon region.

These six communities met on Sunday 3 October to celebrate together the 50 years of life of a movement that is seeking a new lease of life, even if the heart of the message of Faith and Light remains more relevant than ever: *"Every person is a sacred history, created in the image of God"*. It is up to each of us to discover the beauty of the other one and to enter into a true relationship of friendship.

"CATHOBEL"
Episcopal Conference Press
Office



Bishop Jean Kockerols
Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Mechelen-Brussels.

Belgium is a province with 29 communities



In Ayia Napa, during a summer camp

The "Faith and Light" message arrived in Cyprus 35 years ago in September 1985 when a group of young people from the Lebanon communities visited the island and contacted a few families from the Maronite community so as to start some communities in Cyprus.

In February 1986, thanks to the efforts of Mary Katsioloudi, "Our Lady of Grace" the first community was created. One year later, in 1987, the second community on the island became a reality: "Saint Charbel". A few years later, in 1995, a third community, "Hope", joined the large Faith and Light family, this time with members from the Orthodox Church. Faith and Light still continues to grow today in Cyprus, sending messages of joy, love and hope to Kormakitis, a Maronite village in the occupied zone in the north of the island.

To begin with, Faith and Light Cyprus was part of the Middle East zone. In 2002, we went to the Alps-

Mediterranean zone and since 2008, together with Central Italy, Greece and Albania, Cyprus has been part of the Kimata province (Wave in Greek).

Faith and Light Cyprus has taken part in international pilgrimages: to Lourdes in 1991 with 58 pilgrims and in 2001 with 54 pilgrims; to Rome and Loreto in 2011 to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Faith and Light.

This year, Faith and Light communities throughout the

world, having a treasure trove of all these memories, these true friendships and human relationships developed thanks to their monthly meetings, their pilgrimages, their summer camps and other activities, share the joy of 50 years of life. Despite the constraints of the pandemic and the cancellation of various pilgrimages and planned international events for this significant anniversary, the communities found a way to meet again online on Easter Sunday



and celebrate their 50th anniversary since this was the date, in 1971, that started this enthralling journey.

Each country is preparing to celebrate separately, at a national level, the 50th anniversary of Faith and Light. Cyprus too.

Pope Francis has also sent a message to Faith and Light during this jubilee year expressing his deep satisfaction with the generous activities undertaken on behalf of persons with disabilities, their family and their friends. He has also expressed the hope that this significant anniversary *"will generate ever more renewed attention to this laudable activity and will be the opportunity for an ever more generous commitment of love for life and for those who are experiencing situations of great difficulty."*

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the foundation of Faith and Light, the national coordinator of the communities in Cyprus, Marios Hadjirossos, declared that it is difficult to believe that a weakness, a disability, the refusal to accept two children with disabilities on a pilgrimage to Lourdes, would end up founding an international ecumenical movement.

We are celebrating and we are remembering this first pilgrimage organised to Lourdes in 1971 exclusively for people with an intellectual disability, their families and their friends. He also pointed out that the

activity of the communities does not stop there. The Faith and Light boat will continue to travel for many years to come.

GEORGES MOUSSAS
The article appeared in the local newspaper "Ο Τύπος των Μαρωνιτών" (The Maronite Press)



The first coordinating team

Cyprus is part of the "Kimata" province which includes Italy Centre, Cyprus, Greece and Albania.

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



2011, pilgrimage to Loreto, Italy

A valley of peace worth the trip

THE "CANADA EAST" PROVINCE WAS FINALLY ABLE TO HAVE ITS PROVINCIAL MEETING FROM 24 TO 26 SEPTEMBER. WE MET AT VAL OF PEACE, A CHEMIN NEUF COMMUNITY. A MEETING THAT HAS BEEN A SETTING FOR MANY PRECIOUS STONES. LET US OPEN THIS JEWELLERY BOX TOGETHER...

Friday evening

The first precious stone that sparkled was the welcome with a witty remark from Simone, our interim coordinator, as well as a prayer and a blessing from Abbot Marcel Jacques. The visual presentation and those taking part completed it. The welcome is invaluable since it prepares hearts to better taste the main meal, as does a good starter...

The second stone shone from the reflection of the Annual General Assembly, from the report from Simone and Roger, our Treasurer. Simone reminded us of the many Zoom meetings to prepare for the 50th anniversary of Faith and Light as well as the meetings, also via Zoom, of some communities.

The third stone was a campfire, the first experience of this kind, that lit up this evening, reminding us that there is no night that cannot be got through with a light.

Saturday

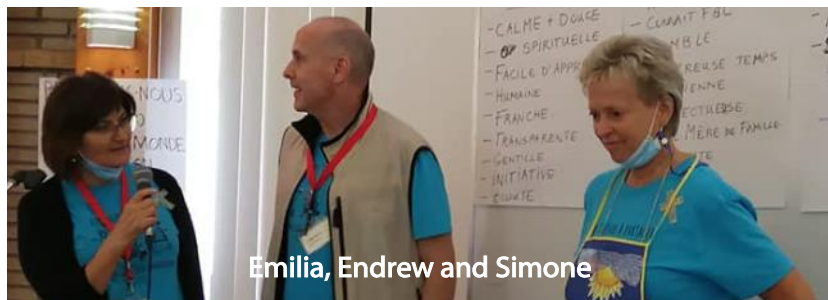
The fourth stone was the Eucharist that threw its first slivers on this dawning day.

The fifth stone will have been the discernment led by Emilia and Andrew, the Vice International Coordinators. Simone Desgroseilliers was unanimously elected to the post of Provincial Coordinator. The Coordinating Team was also renewed by the addition of two new people: Valérie Morpeau and Régine Lessard as Vice Coordinators. A discernment is important because it helps establish the coordination on a person

wholeheartedly given to the promotion of the movement and it also ensures the renewal of the driving forces through the addition of new people.

The sixth stone was the showing of the Faith and Light 50th anniversary film; we travelled around the world to music, visiting various communities.

The seventh stone was the assessment of the life of our communities; we realised the



Emilia, Andrew and Simone



The new provincial team

importance of sharing our joys and our sorrows in order to better communicate with each other and make a family as well as to open up other possibilities and light up our paths.

An eighth stone was the craft workshop; this made it possible to prepare the miraculous catch with its multicoloured fish that caught our attention like very useful magnets during the fiesta.

The ninth stone was the fiesta that began with a Zoom meeting with Jean-Baptiste Desgagnés, our hero with the perfect note, who composed “a precious treasure” for our jubilee as well as the theme song of “Canada-East”. As for games, first of all we were treated to a completely twisted story of Faith and Light told by an amnesiac; a pure gust of madness blew that evening if I remember rightly... Another game called on people to get a bit wet; everyone felt like a fish in water...

Sunday

The tenth stone included the whole of Sunday morning, beginning with the Eucharist with the Gospel mime and a homily narrated by the assembly. Simone also introduced the new guidelines by giving a broad outline of them. Some very touching testimonies also illuminated this morning. A sending off celebration allowed each person present to be given a Faith and Light pin, a cross from our friend Victorie as well as a candle with a



blessing from our “people hearts”.

Then we left Val of Peace with a bit more BEING and a bit more PEACE and it is no MEAN feat BEING AND PEACE!!!

Let us thank GOD for having received such an abundant harvest of graces throughout the whole weekend...

NORMAND VEILLETTE

**"Canada East"
Is made of
15 communities**

Slovenia: Our Lady of Lourdes

Since Covid prevented us to meet in Lourdes, France, the Slovene province of Faith and light decided to celebrate the 50th anniversary in Brestanica. Pilgrimage was held on September 11, 2021 in the church of Our Lady of Lourdes which is one of seven Slovene basilicas and one of the largest churches in the country. The church is also called the 'Slovenian Lourdes' since money for its construction was donated by Slovenians from all over the country and from abroad. The statue of Our Lady of Lourdes for the main altar was blessed in front of the Lourdes grotto in France.

The celebration was held between 11 a.m. and 4. p.m. During the first hour of gathering there were two organized activities outside the basilica: learning of gestures for the translated official song for the 50th anniversary and workshop where pilgrims made souvenirs and gave donations to the international Faith and light.

Then the pilgrimage continued in the basilica where we had a one-hour talk with don Marco Bove and Angela Grassi, there was also time for questions from communities. After a half an hour break there was adoration in the basilica. We concluded the pilgrimage with holy mass led by Slovene Faith and Light bishop Anton Jamnik.



There were around 450 pilgrims from six Slovene regions, each region wearing a different colour of T-shirts made specifically for this occasion. At the end each pilgrim received a small candle from don Marco and Angela as a reminder of the pilgrimage. The pilgrimage was recorded by Slovene national television and Slovene catholic television. There was also an article in the Slovene catholic newspaper Družina and Slovene catholic radio station Ognjišče*.

We thank the Lord for this beautiful and festive event. It was a joy to see so many people with disabilities celebrating with their families and friends. The blessing of Our Lady of Lourdes was with us.

KRISTINA AND DAMIJAN MLINARIČ
Provincial coordinators of Slovenia

*www.youtube.com/watch?v=ombActMkh1M



Hello, Monsignor!

On Saturday 9 October, a delegation from the "Luzitana" province team was received at the Episcopal Palace in Porto by Bishop D. Manuel Linda. The delegates were introduced to the bishop. They also presented the priorities set out in the current mandate. As the diocese of Porto has the largest number of Faith and Light communities in Portugal (ten recognised communities, two in formation and some contacts to start communities), it is important to create closer bonds and an effective communication with the shepherd of the diocese.

Bishop D. Manuel Linda welcomed each person joyfully, particularly Afonso who was representing the heart of the movement: the people with an intellectual disability. He emphasised their importance for the Church and the place that they should have in the parish and pastoral activities.

Invitations and challenges have been issued so that after this lockdown, Faith and Light communities can meet again and have a celebration that is so much part of their character, with the certainty that the journey and its challenges will be experienced together and with mutual support.

PROVINCIAL TEAM



Catarina Carvalho, Luís Vieira (provincial coordinator), Bishop D. Manuel Viera, Ana Isabel Rodrigues and her son Afonso, Padre José Augusto Oliveira (provincial chaplain)

The priorities of the new team

The assembly has set 4 priorities for the new provincial coordinating team:

- Consolidation
- Spirituality
- Mission and announcing
- Communication

The vice coordinators are making a great effort to closely accompany the communities because they have all become very vulnerable through the after-effects of the pandemic.

At this time, there are several active project teams and in each of them, there is at least one member of the province coordinating team:

- Mission and announcing
- Communication
- Celebrating the 50th anniversary of Faith and Light
- Revision and updating of the statutes of the Association of Faith and Light in Portugal
- Code of conduct (adaptation of the international legislation to Portuguese legislation)
- World Youth Days 2023 (WYD2023)
- Formation teams/Coordination of young people

Pilgrimage to Chile

FROM 15 TO 17 OCTOBER, THE "JESUS, LIGHT OF THE ANDES" PROVINCE CELEBRATED THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF FAITH AND LIGHT AND THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE "ANNUNCIATION" COMMUNITY FROM SANTIAGO.

We began on Friday with the great reunion! After almost two years of not seeing one another in person, we had a special time of welcoming, singing, dancing and a video about the history of Faith and Light.

On Saturday, other pilgrims arrived with Father Julio Dutilh, the chaplain of the "Annunciation" community, who accompanied us during the day and celebrated the Eucharist, we painted a fresco related to the theme: "The seed in fertile soil". Then there was the celebration of the washing of the feet, followed by a time of sharing in small groups on the theme of forgiveness. The young people showed off their talents in a song and dance show.

On Sunday, we went on the pilgrimage in pairs to the Church of Santa Teresita de Los Andes, very close to the house where we were staying.

After dinner and the group activities, we finished with a sending off mass presided over by Father Samuel Arancibia, a friend of Faith and Light. Then each member lit their candle at the altar candle and received a small plant which should be taken care of like



we take care of and nourish our communities.

Some of these activities were broadcast throughout the province via Zoom.

Finally, we said goodbye to each other by sharing the moments that we had experienced and our hearts filled with the love of God, Mary and the Holy Spirit, giving thanks for this precious experience.

Thank you Faith and Light!

XIMENA XAÑARTU
Photos: Manuel Camus



The pilgrimage of the Black Virgin



Two years ago, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of Faith and Light, we planned a big pilgrimage for the Polish communities and also guests from foreign provinces to our most famous Marian shrine of Czestochowa in Jasna Góra, where the miraculous icon of the Black Virgin is.

The pilgrimage should have taken place on 17 July 2021. Unfortunately, the pandemic prevented us organising such a large event. We had to think about another way of celebrating...

And so, the idea was born of taking a reproduction of the icon around all the provinces in Poland, visiting the communities and the homes of their members. We could not gather



in great numbers in Jasna Góra, so she came to us. The pilgrimage of the icon began in September 2020 and will end soon.

The Pauline Fathers (who are the guardians of the shrine) remembered the planned date of our pilgrimage and suggested that the communities send a few delegates to the mass. And this is what happened. On Saturday July 17 2021, representatives from the communities in various regions of Poland met at the shrine to thank God before the image of the Virgin Mary for the 50 years of Faith and Light.

The Eucharist was celebrated by two of our chaplains, Father Damian Wyżkiewicz and Father Andrzej Nowak. In his homily, Father Damian declared that the pandemic had removed the possibility of organising a national pilgrimage. For a long time, it has also taken away what is the basis of Faith and Light, that is to say, regular community meetings. But we have what is called the fourth time, the time of loyalty and friendship... and

it is precisely during this time that the copy of the icon visited our communities and our homes. She brought peace, joy and strength. Many people were deeply touched by her visit. Father Damian also recalled that the first words of our Charter define the most important task of Faith and Light, namely, to ensure that people with an intellectual disability and their families find their place in the Church. It should therefore be natural for each parish to welcome a Faith and Light community.

We prepared songs, designated people for the readings and the universal prayer. There was also an offertory procession: the Faith and Light logo, a heart and a pearl necklace as an expression of the spiritual beauty of a person with disabilities. We ended the Eucharist with the Polish song "W jak wspólnota", that can be translated as "C for Community", composed by one of the communities and interpreted with gestures and hand clapping.

After the mass, we gathered in front of the Church and we noticed that there



Poland is made of four provinces:

- Poland Centre East: 13 communities
- Poland North: 16
- Poland: West 27
- Poland South: 32

was a large number of us. We joyfully found familiar faces. No-one counted us but certainly several dozen people came from different places. Some came alone, others in small groups of two or three and still others in larger groups. We took photos and we talked a bit amongst ourselves. Some went to the Pilgrim House to eat, stay together and listen to each other. The weather was good and our hearts happy. Each person felt the joy of this meeting, the joy of being at Faith and Light and having experienced important times there, of having found something essential. It is a great gift.

May we share this treasure and may there also always be more people to welcome it!

SYLWIA
"Apache" Community



Testimony

Bishop Isaac Martínez

POPE FRANCIS HAS APPOINTED FATHER ISAAC MARTÍNEZ CHUQUIZANA, UNTIL NOW HEAD OF FORMATION FOR THE PERU-BRAZIL DELEGATION OF THE MISSIONARIES OF THE HOLY APOSTLES AND INTERNATIONAL CHAPLAIN OF FAITH AND LIGHT FROM 2009 TO 2019, BISHOP OF CAJAMARCA, IN THE ANDEAN REGION OF NORTHERN PERU. HE ANSWERS QUESTIONS FROM MIRIAM CASTRO FOR THE FATHER MÉNARD FOUNDATION WEBSITE.

Can you tell us a bit about yourself and your family?

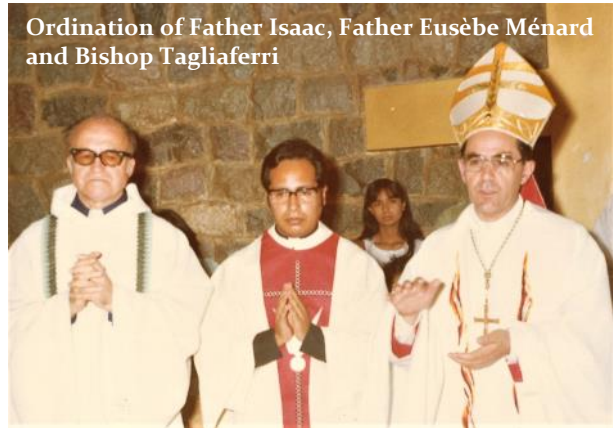
I was born in the Huarochiri province (Lima), in Peru. We were a family with nine children, seven boys and two girls. One of my brothers developed a brain tumour and was paralysed down one side of his body and he died in 1985, two years after his diagnosis. Another of my brothers is Father Abad Martínez, also a member of The Missionaries of the Holy Apostles. I went to agricultural college and I began to feel the desire to become a priest. It wasn't very complicated, nothing special. I wanted to try to speak to people about what Jesus is teaching us, to proclaim the Gospel. So, I left my village when I was 16 years old to study to become a priest.

However, I could not enter the Holy Apostles seminary because I was very young and they only accept late vocations and I had to be twenty years old. I didn't want to wait. So, I began my training at the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart Seminary, where I studied philosophy and theology. I stayed there four years but with the intention of joining the Holy Apostles. At twenty years old, I spoke to Father Eusèbe Ménard, who welcomed me without a problem. So, I continued my studies until my ordination as a priest in 1979.

When and how did your first apostolate occur?

In 1985, I was sent to the town of Pebas, in the Amazonian rainforest in Peru. This work experience lasted two years. I learnt a lot about working with people and planning pastoral work in partnership with the bishop. It was missionary territory. At the start, it was difficult,

Ordination of Father Isaac, Father Eusèbe Ménard and Bishop Tagliaferri



especially due to the constant heat and humidity, but the people were very welcoming and I did excellent work with them. I worked primarily with indigenous communities.

After two years, I had to leave this place as I had been authorised to resume my studies. As I intended to carry on my work in the Amazon, I decided to study missiology, the discipline that deals with the work of missionaries. At that time, this speciality was offered in three places: Sao Paulo in Brazil, Rome in Italy and Ottawa in Canada. The General Council at the time decided to send me to St Paul's university in Ottawa. Subsequently, I was elected as general leader of my community for two consecutive mandates, that is to say 10 years. During this time, the missionary community expanded and formation houses were opened in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia and Vietnam.

And you have actively taken part in the Faith and Light movement...

The mission of the movement involves integrating people with an intellectual deficit into

society and the Church. In some countries, there is still a lot of rejection and little acceptance. Unfortunately, some families are ashamed when one of their members has mental issues. In developing countries, I have witnessed very sad and very difficult situations where those with an intellectual disability are chained up to stop them going outside.

In 1983, I started to work as chaplain to a Faith and Light community in Chaclacayo, in the Lima region. In 2009, I was asked to serve as international chaplain. In 2019, I ended my second mandate, which was a beautiful stage in my life. I am currently chaplain of the "Jesus, Light of the Andes" province.

In your opinion, within the Church, has there been an improvement in the acceptance of people with intellectual disabilities?

There is a greater openness in the Church, particularly in places where *Faith and Light* communities are present. In these parishes, disabled people are visible and take part in the ceremony, for example, bringing the offering to the altar. Gradually, the mentality of society has changed although there is still rejection. This refusal is caused by fear of approaching these people and getting to know them. To begin to overcome this fear, it is important to support the visibility of the people with intellectual disabilities.



My formation and my experiences as a priest have been inspired by one person: Jesus.

He is my daily source of inspiration, in my life, in my relationships with others, with God and with nature. His way of being, his contact with people, how he approached, particularly, those who are rejected, abandoned and strangers.

Father Isaac is the 25th chaplain from Faith and Light to become a bishop

Testimony

50 years of joy, thanksgiving and hope

As we approached 2021, we were preparing all our hearts, full of dreams and hope; we had great plans to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary. The pandemic, while deeply affecting families, hasn't diminished enthusiasm. The strength of the spirit of Faith and Light and the love for the disabled person has never been stronger and has pushed us to go forward.

In hope and joy, we began to go forward differently, through screens, video calls and everything that it was possible to use to be together and to continue to live as a community. The province teams have reinvented themselves and courageously confronted the situation so as not to leave our friends alone. Our goal was to accompany them, to maintain the life of the communities and to experience our jubilee joyfully.

The families, from their homes, have become small communities and have taken part in various activities, all united as one to celebrate the jubilee.

I remembered the moment when Jesus called me to board the boat, how my life has changed since I met a community and how I made friends with a person with disabilities. I remembered my fears and doubts faced with the responsibility, but especially how much I have received during these 33 years. I was in thanksgiving for that day when I dedicated myself to Faith and Light.

2021... We began to celebrate the remarkable event where, on Easter morning 1971 in Lourdes, from the hands of Mary, we received the seed of Faith and Light. This seed has given rich and abundant fruits in the world. In Latin America, there are 135 communities in 14 countries.

This Jubilee is a celebration of thanksgiving, hope and trust, following the road travelled by our founders, Loïc and Thaddée, 50



In Paraguay

years ago. In their footsteps, we remain faithful to the gift of Faith and Light, making it fruitful and sharing the treasure received. We are writing the history of the communities in the pages of a guestbook, leaving space for those who will come after us and will continue the mission.

This year, we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the wonderful life of the communities where each person with disabilities supports us with their friendship, peace, love, joy and faith. They are the heart of our communities, how precious the testimony of love of their parents is. Friends like me accompany them, help them to grow, protect them... We have the chance to share, smile, to be close, to celebrate, to sing with them and discover Je-



In Brazil

sus in their presence. Today, we thank God for being part of this wonderful trio.

Raul and Maria Silvia, during the Coordinating Council meeting, asked us to open our hearts and keep the flame of hope burning. Don Marco, during the sending off ceremony, asked us to continue the mission with humility, courage and trust. In her Holy Week message, Marie-Hélène reminded us of the story from 50 years ago. These messages have given us the courage and enthusiasm to go forward joyfully, knowing that we are accompanied and united in the same spirit. The flame lit 50 years ago has been kept burning as it was on that Easter morning, warming our hearts. I know that the flame will not go out and will continue to burn as long as each of us faithfully cares for it with the strength of the Holy Spirit.

In the six provinces of Latin America and the Caribbean, the Jubilee has been an explosion of joy, renewal, commitment, loyalty and thanksgiving. The province chaplains celebrated Eucharists to give thanks to God. It is lovely to see the young people of our communities, altar servers, testifying to or giving life to the Gospel through mimes. The presence of people with disabilities has been a good opportunity to make them visible and announce Faith and Light to parish communities.

During this year, the virtual or actual pilgrimages have been special events in the life of the communities. Each province, in its own way, went on a pilgrimage on the theme: “A



Pilgrimage "Heart of America and the Caribbean"

treasure to share”, “Keep the flame burning”, “The seed on fertile ground”. This jubilee was celebrated with the same spirit, the same enthusiasm in all the provinces. Each community went on a pilgrimage and lived this experience singing: “Celebrate in every land” and on the same theme. The banners with the logo flew high.

The community meetings took on a special importance this year. The history of each community has been relived, through songs, mimes and with traditional costume. These meetings have strengthened, renewed and built on the life of the communities and their provinces, looking with hope to the future of Faith and Light.

In June, the “Heart of America and the Caribbean” province had a spiritual retreat about our mission and the call of Jesus, inviting us to give our five loaves and two fishes and through them, our commitment and our loyalty with the certainty that Jesus is the light that illuminates our road.

There are still pages to be written with the life of the communities. The story of Faith and Light is not over. It is time to revitalise ourselves, gain strength, to grow... It is in this spirit that we have organised formation days for the coordinators, coordinating teams and the new coordinators who will take the baton, by emphasising the themes: Identity and mission, the role of the Coordinator, the community, the structures, finances and a workshop with times of meeting.

In September, the “Jesus, Light of the Andes” province organised a young people’s meeting. A wonderful and unforgettable experience that will remain in hearts. Some communicate in the official language of Faith and Light: the smile. A meeting of prayer, friendship and celebration.

The celebrations are not over. The “Talent Festival” took place in November, everyone sharing their gifts; songs, dances, mimes, musical instruments are already at work...

The boat that set out to sea fifty years ago is still navigating the seas of the world. Let us make the message from Pope Francis our own: “Be a small boat on which everyone can find a place” and we know that Jesus is there waiting for us.

Happy fiftieth anniversary to every community, to every person with disabilities, to the parents and friends who are part of this adventure of love where we find the space not only to love but also to be loved.

ELVIRA GOMERO
Vice International Coordinator



Youth meeting



Chile



Téestimony

"Together"

IN ISSUE 48 OF "UP SAILS"!, WE ANNOUNCED THE PREPARATION OF A MUSICAL COMEDY ABOUT FAITH AND LIGHT. IT IS HERE, THE MUSICAL COMEDY "TOGETHER" WAS PRESENTED ON 15 NOVEMBER IN THE VINGER CHURCH IN NORWAY.

A musical about the history of Faith and Light since its birth fifty years ago was written by Tore Thomassen and performed with himself and local Faith and Light actors in the church in Vinger. Tore is a Norwegian lyricist, composer and musician.

The musical was introduced with a promise of a beautiful story, and three roses were placed on the altar ring. In the introduction it was announced that something beautiful will happen. Songs about candles and candle lighting was good and familiar. Time was turned back again. Everything became dramatic and dark. The story of Faith and Light started like this: Two people with an intellectual disability came quietly up the aisle. Up by the altar ring, they were met by some gray, hooded and impersonal people. The hand movements clearly showed that there was no room for them: *Go away! Disappear! Go home! Go there! Do not come here!* This simple and silent dramatization was not to be misunderstood. The sinister atmosphere was recognizable to many. If you are different, you do not belong here.

This was followed by a song: *"Jesus is with us in the boat"*. Comfort in the midst of pain. He has always been there. He knows each one. The contrasts became really great when red hearts were raised and lowered in the pews. Smiles could be seen on peoples' faces: *"We are a small community with a big heart."* Life becomes easier. We are TOGETHER and everyone belongs. Darkness is replaced by smiling faces and joy.

This is Faith and Light. The beginnings were gloomy and sad, but much has changed during 50 years. The artist and local actors expressed this beautifully and strongly through drama, poems, stories and not least through all

the wonderful songs Tore Thomassen has dedicated to Faith and Light.

The sense of community and all we have in common was strongly demonstrated. A strong and beautiful story about rejection that in the end became a blessing. A story about inclusion, friendship and love, and a community that transcends all boundaries

BIRGITT AARESTAD

Provincial coordinator Northern Lights



Pour notre réflexion

Fifty years Issue fifty



Shout aloud and sing for joy

We are ending our jubilee year with the publication of *Up Sails!*, which has the issue number... 50!!

Coincidence, serendipity? What if we take a small look at this figure to find a message for Faith and Light?

For the Americans, it is the number of states, from Alabama (USA East) to Wyoming (USA West), two states without a community... perhaps an incentive to be a missionary in these two provinces?

In mathematics, this figure has the peculiarity of being the sum of two square numbers: $5^2 + 5^2$ or $7^2 + 1^2$. The second possibility shows that a jubilee year is the year that follows seven periods of seven years.

In the Bible, we have very detailed explanations in the last three chapters of the Book of Leviticus: *You shall count off seven weeks of years, seven times seven years, so that the period of seven weeks of years gives forty-nine years. Then you shall have the trumpet sounded loud; on the tenth day of the seventh month — on the day of atonement — you shall*

*have the trumpet sounded throughout all your land. And you shall hallow the fiftieth year and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you: you shall return, every one of you, to your property and every one of you to your family. That fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you (Lv 25, 8-11). The word jubilee comes from the Hebrew *yōbhēl*, which can mean “a trumpet made from a ram’s horn” whose sound announced the start of the jubilee year. Therefore, it is primarily a time of returning to our roots, of celebrations and feasts, which is expressed very well by the verb jubilate, as the prophet Isaiah said: *Shout aloud and sing for joy, O Royal Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel!* (Is 12, 6).*

Despite everything, we have celebrated this anniversary in the most beautiful way possible, with the greatest joy possible! The Colours of Asia province played on the number 50 by organising a celebration via video conference on Pentecost Day 2021, 50 days after Easter, recalling that Faith and Light was born in Lourdes at Easter 1971, each year being like a day. And this will go on until 2022,

some provinces having wished to take their time in order to be able to announce and invite as widely as possible, such as France and Belgium who will go to Lourdes at the end of October 2022.

Finally, it could be said that 50 years, it is almost the length of a working life. In fifty years, Faith and Light has really come a long way, making our joyful news known in the four corners of the world, in 86 countries, or nearly 45% of UN member states. There is still a way to go for the Faith and Light message to reach all those who are waiting for it. At the beginning of October, Pope Francis told the delegation that he received for a private audience: *The presence of Faith and Light has been and is a prophecy because the most fragile people are often rejected and regarded as useless. And your prophecy is even more important today, to fight the culture of rejection and to remind everyone that diversity is an asset and must never become grounds for exclusion and discrimination. [...] May the sun of faith and hope that rises above the clouds of our fears and insecurities accompany you always on the journey that still awaits you.*

Yes, there is still a long way to go for the next 50 years: may those who will accompany Faith and Light during this second life be as attentive to the mission. The fire is ready, we only need to strike the match to bring, with a faith as big as a mustard seed, our light to the ends of the earth!

GHISLAIN DU CHÉNÉ





Family album



Alison Jane Renshaw

It is with much sadness that we announce the passing of Alison, coordinator of the community in Maltby, United Kingdom. She was an extraordinary woman, beautiful inside and out and she was loved by many people. She will be greatly missed at Faith and Light, in her parish and in her community. Alison was a very reserved person and did not like having her photo taken. Therefore, here is a photo of the magnificent flowers that her parish had made for her.

Rest in peace beautiful lady.
Jo Collingwood
Vice Province Coordinator



Margaret Griffin

Fighting illness for very many months, Margaret passed away on 24 August. Her funeral took place in Trebeurden in Brittany on Tuesday 31 August.

For 40 years, she was an active, loving and enthusiastic member of Faith and Light, where she happily carried out several roles, whether in her community, "La Barque de Cataglou", and more widely in the "Paris et le Levant" province or at various international pilgrimages to Lourdes.



In great union of prayer.
Valérie Amice
Province Coordinator

Victorine Clément



Poem in memory of Victorine who departed from us last August. She was part of the "L'Etoile" community in Montreal, Canada.

*Yes Victorine, you will remain
in all our sorrows
on them, a vibrant image of a
serene victory.*

*Yes Victorine, you have always
been a gift to us
And you will continue to be
so through a grace of the
Most-High.*

*Enter happily into the joy of
your master.*

*You who through drawing,
so often created it
Place yourself
in the embracing
arms of Mary
You who has cherished it
with all your heart.
And contemplate St Joseph
in Heaven in his glory
You who prayed to him
so much in his Oratory.
And your drawing sent
to Rome to the Holy Father
will surely bring him
A plenary joy.
Our hearts are celebrating
for your life Victorine
For this, we bow down
before God.*

*From God Victorine, your life
manifests its kindness
To God, for you, we say t
hank you with joy.
Farewell Victorine; to God
Victorine; to God Victorine.
Normand Veillette*

Father Pierre Restif



We were very touched by the entry into heaven of Pierre. He was a friend. We knew him for 25 years. We give thanks



Album de famille



for his great availability, his generosity and his unwavering and demanding love for his friends with an intellectual disability, especially the most disabled of them. It is he who encouraged us to ensure that our disabled friends are able to approach the sacrament of reconciliation whilst many did not see the need for it... It is he too who taught us that the most people with disabilities could, with a pipette, or a drop of The Blood of Christ, receive communion like all of us.

His fight against any discrimination has been one of his major battles. I remember discussions with him about the exclusion of our friends who live in homes without any spiritual help or presence of the Church. Fortunately, there is Faith and Light!

We will be in union of prayer, filled with the trust in our hearts that we will have one more intercessor, and a formidable one, for our movement and our province, "France West".

Jean-Claude and Thérèse Petit

Elisa

A month ago, we had the crazy and wonderful experience of giving birth to a little girl. One month ago, Elisa discovered her parents for the first time. They did not know how to dress their baby nor how to change a nappy. We are learning every day to be parents and Elisa, very patiently, repays us with a very

attentive look and a beautiful smile when she is asleep.

Jussara Aidar
"Bride of Friendship
Provincial Coordinator



Ninia

Ninia was born in August, daughter of Ekaterine Gachiechiladze, the "Between the Seas" province treasurer. Welcome "pretty little Ninia"!



From Mexico

The "Notre Dame de Guadalupe" province expresses its gratitude to the "Saint Anne" community for the steadfastness, efforts, devotion and love with which it organised 18 virtual meetings. May God bless you. Gather the fruits of your tireless work at the service of our friends with an



intellectual disability. Thank you for having shared your meetings with all the province communities.

The Provincial Team

My 'Guest Book'!

I have finally – after three years – received the guest book to which many of you contributed; 120 pages of testimonies so touching that I have been deeply moved reading them! This flashback over 10 years so beautiful, so rich in meetings, in friendships transports me back to that period of my life that remains engraved on my heart forever! Thank you, thank you and may God bless you all. You remain very present in my prayers. I love you.

Ghislain du Chéné



International news

A new team For Poland North



From left to right:

Anna Szymanowska (secretary) Anna Dreger and her brother Karol (vice coordinator), Father Andrzej Nowak, (province chaplain) Joanna Walczak (province coordinator), Mateusz Potyrała (treasurer) and Małgorzata Polska (vice coordinator). The team will soon be completed by a person who will accompany the Szczecin communities.

An upgraded logo

We are pleased to present to you the new logo of the international level that keeps the spirit of the initial emblem painted by Meb in 1971. It is in the three official languages of Faith and Light and is available from the International Secretariat.



A new chaplain for the Luzitana province

Father José Augusto Oliveira, from the Porto diocese, was appointed province chaplain on 25 April, Good Shepherd Sunday.

Father José Augusto is the priest of Nogueira e Silva Escura, in Maia (Porto diocese). He was at the origin of the Avintes community, then its chaplain. He was part of the Portuguese delegation that took part in the International Assembly in Lebanon in 2018.



International Agenda

- **17 December:** International Coordinating Team meeting, (Zoom)
- **21-23 January:** Iberatlantic province council meeting
- **29-30 January:** France and Belgium provincial council meeting, Paris
- **30 January:** 35th anniversary of Faith and Light in Mexico (Zoom)
- **5 February:** Feast of Light, Poland South
- **6 February:** Feast of Light, Luzitana, Folgosa, Portugal
- **6 February:** Feast of Light, Notre Dame de Guadalupe (Zoom)
- **6 February:** Feast of Light, France West, St Etienne de Montluc and Rennes
- **20 February:** inter-community day, France Centre, Angers
- **25-27 February:** UK province assembly,
- **4-6 March:** International Coordinating Team meeting, Porto, Portugal
- **12-13 March:** formation session for community coordinators from France, Issy les Moulineaux

Meeting with friends



Whilst disability affects 12 million people in France (80% of whom are invisible), "La Nuit du handicap" (The night of disability) is calling each of us for a pleasant and celebratory event!

The aim of this event is to ease the meeting between those who have a disability and those who don't so as to change our view of disability, create a bond and build a more inclusive society.

**Meeting is an opportunity...
and a celebration!**

Open to everyone and free of charge, the participants will be able to share a pleasant time, enjoy various activities, put the world to rights and so be part of a more supportive society that is rich in its diversity. **So, be it for 5 minutes or 5 hours, everyone is invited to take part!** It is a national event that is conceived and carried out in each town by a team of volunteers in partnership with local associations for disabled people and with the support of the local council. 20 towns in 2018, 25 in 2019 and 17 in 2021 have invited their inhabitants to make their differences a richness.

Highlights include:

- Discover disabled sport and adapted sport: "Savate, french kickboxing," adapted to people who are disabled, , Cécifoot, adapted table tennis...
- Learn about the world of disability: discover braille workshop, assistance dogs, white cane races, wheelchair races...
- Share a time of friendship: circle song (collective improvised singing that offers participants an experience of listening, sharing and exploring the improvisation of body/voice links), donkey rides and motor rides for disabled people...
- Shows: signed songs, wheelchair dancing, concerts, theatre...

About "La Nuit du handicap"

Association law 1901, "La Nuit du handicap" aims to promote people with disabilities, by



holding a celebratory event, free of charge and open to everyone.

Many associative partners from the field of disability participate in it with the aim of:

- Facilitating the meeting between people who are disabled and those who aren't
 - Changing the way people look at disability
 - Creating lasting bonds in each town
- Because the meeting is a celebration!

The 5th event is launched. It will take place on Saturday 11 June 2022.

Come and bring your friends!

To find out more: www.nuitduhandicap.fr

Marie-Hélène's letter



EDUCATING IS DESIRING

We are not made to be parents of a disabled child, I have heard this sentence many times. It has been said by a dad. Desperate, he has just learnt that his little two day old daughter has a brain injury. Another time, it was a couple. Their eight year old son, Guillaume, has behavioural issues that spoil family harmony. Overwhelmed by the situation, crushed by the science of “shrinks” in the establishment where their child is welcomed, they no longer have hope.

We learn almost everything... but you do not learn how to suffer. Nor do you learn how to educate your children. When the child is disabled, we have to improvise in both areas. We must learn to educate, to grow without almost ceasing suffering.

However, some have managed it and provide indisputable testimonies. They are like stars, our beacons. Through them, a small flame of hope can be born in the heart of those who seek it so much.

To the parents of Guillaume, terrified by feelings of rejection and violence that sometimes overwhelm them towards their child, I confide how normal this reaction is. When we are too riddled with guilt by our own mental blocks, by the hardness of our own heart, the words of St John are there to give us a little of peace: “*Whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts and he knows everything*” (1 Jn 3, 20).

The humble discovery of our inner “badness” is often the first step towards more light. Recognising our weakness calls us to turn to the one who can heal us.



By daring to entrust to us what is most dear to the world, this tiny child that he looks at with love, God does not abandon us. He wanted to know suffering throughout his life and finally on the cross. He doesn't ask us for qualifications in pedagogy or psychology. What is he asking from us? We educate a bit by what we say, a lot by what we do, but especially by what we are.

"We educate by what we are." It is precisely the problem of Guillaume's parents, broken down: they feel so “ugly”. However, the important thing is not what we feel, but what we desire. Desiring to love is already loving. “Only the infinity of desire is all powerful”, said Catherine of Siena. And if our hearts no longer dare to desire, the Lord is satisfied with the desire to desire. His love is there, a river of living water, as soon as a contrite and thirsty heart is open to mercy.

It is not by concealing our flaws that we will help a child to grow. The child feels what we really are, through all that escapes us but that reveals us. He models himself not on what we seem to be nor on what we believe we are, but on what we desire. This is why it is so important to be true to him, to discretely ask him to forgive our mistakes and become, with all the necessary nuances, his companion on the road, throughout the stages of his growth.

Then, to help our child grow, we need a grace of communion with him, in his suffering, his shortcomings, his hidden riches especially. In his mother's womb, the little one grows, through an unconscious communion with her being. Education is that communion that has become more and more conscious, which continues differently after his birth.

To educate a child is knowing ourselves as we are but with the desire to become as God wants us and will make us become if he finds us humble and trusting.

It is also accepting this child as he is. Better is to welcome him, listen to him, help him to grow, not according to our wishes but with this desire to lead him to where God is waiting for him. It is seeking advice and support from astute and competent people. "Love is not enough" wrote Bettelheim, an educational psychologist. To put it better: "love leads to looking for the best ways to help the one we love". Many parents, without having undertaken special studies, rely on certain works about the psychology of the disabled child, for example "The Pedagogy of Resurrection" (Father Henri Bissonnier, éditions Fleurus) whose very title opens up hope.

At the same time, it is necessary to restore confidence to the parents who have not been able to have this special training. Everyone, to educate their child, has gifts that are not found in books. On the birth of the baby, we have within us enough to give him the nourishing ground that he needs to grow harmoniously. An atmosphere of kindness, peace and joy, that is as necessary to him as air and milk.

It is finally to progress together every day, relying on the strength that God gives us

when he gives us a mission. By daring to entrust us with a tiny child, he gives us the treasure most dear to his heart.

