

# Along the Shepherd's Path

## *Formation That Transforms Hearts*

In April 25–26, 2026, a beautiful event took place. In the picturesque Transcarpathian region of the “Ukraine” Province, 33 participants gathered—friends, their children, and parents from the “West” Vice-Province communities of the Christian movement “Faith and Light”—for a time of formation. As always, they radiated the most essential values lived within the community: light, peace, joy, and love.



The theme was: “The Lord is my Shepherd.” Truly, the Lord is the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for His flock. He never abandons even a single sheep but goes in search of it, finds it, heals it, and cares for it as long as needed. Our Shepherd became one of us, humbly gave Himself for the salvation of humanity, and then, like the Lamb who was slain, appeared risen! The joy of His glorious Resurrection accompanied the friends and parents of Faith and Light from the very first hour to the last—throughout all the time spent together—and, we hope, will remain with them in their daily lives, in their homes and families as well.

“Community nurtures a sense of vocation: just as Simon of Cyrene helped Jesus on the Way of the Cross, so a friend, through friendship, helps another—and in fact receives a great gift, just as Simon did when he realized he was carrying the cross of the Lord Himself,” shared Olena Bushchak, a guest from the “Veselka” community (Lviv), who is always warmly welcomed.



After watching a fragment from the film *The Passion of the Christ*, everyone was deeply moved by the sufferings of Jesus and reflected on whether they would have been ready at that moment to serve God like Simon; and whether they are ready each day to serve those who carry their own crosses—supporting parents, friends, and other companions.

Father Yevhen Fizer, the devoted chaplain and shepherd of the Mukachevo community “Messengers of Joy,” delivered meaningful and heartfelt homilies during the Mass. As participants recalled before departing, his calm voice might make you feel sleepy, yet at the same time you want to listen to every word, because his wisdom—so simple and profound—leaves a lasting impression. Father Yevhen also offered a beautiful example of fidelity to one’s vocation.



Each person has a purpose—the reason for which they were created. Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus chose as her mission to pray for those in need, since she lived in a cloistered monastery and could not go out to preach or serve in distant lands. In this way, she fulfilled God’s will and served others, even if not in a “typical” missionary way. There is no good deed that Jesus does not accept and bless. So let us not hesitate—let us follow the example of Saint Thérèse and, in our own way, bring comfort to our Good Shepherd.



*Dear friends, remember your value. Every tear and every smile of yours is shared by the whole community. Every good deed—whether seen or unseen—is a support for all of us and a treasure beyond any riches. Be angels of goodness and carry the Good News to the world!*

*Friend of the “Rocky Castle” Community (Khust, Ukraine)  
Maria Brovdiy*

## ***Together in prayer and joy***

*«Throughout these days, we experienced a deep sense of unity and grace. Together we participated in the Holy Mass, lifting our hearts in sincere prayer and thanksgiving. Our voices joined in song, filling the space with warmth and faith, as each hymn became a shared expression of hope and love. We learned together—through talks, reflections, and simple conversations that opened hearts and built understanding.*

*There was also so much joy: in smiles, in laughter, in quiet moments of support, and in the feeling of being accepted just as we are. These were not just activities, but living encounters—moments where God’s presence could be felt in community, in friendship, and in the beauty of being together. Each shared prayer, each song, each word spoken or heard became a small step along the Shepherd’s path, leading us closer to one another and to Him», - shares her impressions, Vice-International Coordinator Olena Perets.*



*“Each member of the community is very important. And the friends in ‘Faith and Light’ are not volunteers or helpers, but essential persons in a place where they are loved and truly valued,” emphasizes Olena Bushchak.*

The Lord desires no harm for us but longs to nourish and bless us: “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10). His generosity is also evident in how the communities of the “Faith and Light” movement continue to grow. New members and children who have grown older join the circle of friends and, like pieces of a puzzle, add bright colors to the “picture of emotions,” as ten-year-old Sasha Danko, the son of one of the friends, beautifully expressed.



All these colors harmonize, just as the three handmade sheep—symbols of friends, companions, and parents—did. Each one is unique, irreplaceable, and incredibly important.

This little flock holds onto one another, supports each other, and when one grows weary, the others do not allow them to drift away from the Shepherd and get lost in the dark forest of problems and fears. Such is the simple yet challenging mission of friendship.

