

A family came from a community

(article taken from the Mauritian Catholic weekly La Vie Catholique)

In Mauritius, many families with a member living with a disability continue to experience a sense of isolation, often exacerbated by a lack of information and society's perceptions.

Yet, for over 40 years, Faith and Light has offered a practical solution: creating communities where everyone, whether children or parents, can find their place. Still little known to the general public, the movement now wishes to raise awareness and make its mission better known.



"What Faith and Light has given me is the strength to know that I am no longer alone," says Corinne Duval-Latreille, national coordinator and a committed mother. This experience, shared by many parents, lies at the heart of the project: breaking the isolation by creating a "second family", founded on trust and shared experiences. *"We speak the same language,"* she explains, highlighting the deep connections that are developed within the community

Structured and accessible meetings

The meetings, held once a month, follow a specific framework inspired by international practice. Each year Guidelines are proposed, with themes such as 'angels' for 2025-2026, to support the communities on their spiritual journey.

Each meeting is divided into four parts. First, the "check-in or sharing circle", a key moment where everyone shares their experiences:

"It's a space where we can talk about what we're going through [...] and learn from others." Next comes the Gospel reading, made accessible through visual aids, mimes and even the use of sign language or pictograms to help understanding. Workshops play a central role: dance, music, sensory or creative activities. "Children learn a great deal through their senses," explains Corinne Duval-Latreille.



Corinne Duval-Latreille

So many lives transformed!

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Many parents have come to know the Faith and Light family and have grown alongside their children through this journey. This week, "La Vie Catholique" magazine is offering some of these parents a space to share their experiences within the committee.

"I discovered Faith and Light after Mass, thanks to a friend who told me about it and invited me to join this community," shares Patrick Lamoureux, a committed parent. In 2018, he joined the community in his parish at Sainte-Marie-Madeleine.



Patrick Lamoureux and his families

For Patrick, this community offers so much, whether to parents or children with disabilities. "Friendship, sharing and spiritual education are central elements of life within the community," explains this father. For him, this space teaches his children to be loved, but also to be independent. Not to mention that many of them also learn to live independently and find employment. The question "why is this happening to us?" often arises when a child has a disability.

But Patrick Lamoureux says that Faith and Light helps many realise that their child "is a gift in their life as a parent". His 39-year-old daughter has changed and is now more fulfilled after joining the community. "Zordi li lir Levanzil, li fer gato, li sosializ plis. E li ena kamarad" (Today, she reads the Gospel, bakes cakes, goes out more and has friends), says Patrick happily. At the provincial retreat held every three years, she finds it much easier to reach out to others.



In 2023, provincial meeting in Thabor

Experiencing a transformation

It's the same story for Marie-France Violette, who is now the vice international coordinator of Faith and Light. Lucas's mum, she discovered the association through her husband Judex, who opened the doors to the community at the parish of Roches-Brunes.

"Being part of the community means experiencing a transformation," explains Marie-France, who emphasises that this brings healing to the heart of parents. "Often, when you have a child with a disability, the questions, the judgement and the stares push some people to isolate themselves, but Faith and Light helps these parents to see beyond that," she shares.

Marie-France Violette confides that within the communities, everyone speaks the same language, because they experience the same realities and know true love through their children. "These children don't know how to pretend; everything is authentic and true," explains Judex Violette. This committed father also says to dads, who are often less involved than mums, "don't be afraid, come and see how the children live, how they express themselves and experience things like nowhere else."

Progresser vers l'autonomie

Personal fulfilment is also experienced through a spirit of sharing and caring for others. "After Mass, we make pancakes and cakes to sell, and the money goes to international solidarity for the countries that need it most," explains Judex Violette Member of the Board of Directors of Faith and Light, he explains that these are realities they witness first-hand, which become a school of life.

This commitment, experienced both as a member and as a leader, led to the creation of the "Centre de la Trinité", a place that offers these young people with disabilities a space to build professional skills discover different career paths and progress towards independence in the labour market.

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Marie-France et Judex Violette