

Happy event: Joël's Baptism at La Pirogue «The Canoe» - Saturday March 30, 2024

The Faith and Light community « La Pirogue» was born in September 2012 and was recognized in February 2017 in the presence of the provincial coordinator of “France entre deux mers”.

Monthly meetings take place on the 3rd Saturday of the month in a parish hall and end with early mass on Sunday at 6 p.m., in Sainte-Bernadette church.



June 16, 2023 — Joël enters the catechumenate.
Mime of the song « Peace will have your face ...» with some members of his Community.

Joël's story

Joël LESINK became a member of The Canoe in 2015, following the death of his parents.

We knew that when he was born, he had been entrusted to child welfare care and that he was adopted at the age of 12 by a couple in their fifties who were not able to have children at that time. They used to welcome Joël during weekends and holidays, they loved him very much and wanted to give him a future.

One day his mother told me: *«with my husband, we said to ourselves that if we did not adopt him, no one else would, given his handicap»*. We knew that his parents were Catholic and took Joël to mass when they were still able-bodied. But we knew nothing about Joël's background concerning the Church. We first inquired with his diocese of birth, which confirmed us that this child had not been baptized.

Joël worked in a ESAT (Establishment and Service for Assistance through Work) and after he retired in 2021, then, he moved into a residential home for the elderly in our Poitiers-Ouest district. He participates in the monthly mass at home and regularly comes to our Faith and Light meetings.

How did he come up with the idea of being baptized?

One day, a friend from the community came to announce that she was going to ask for confirmation. We explained him what that meant and Joël spontaneously asked to be confirmed too. When we asked Joël «*do you want to be baptized?*» he replied, «*I love Jesus*». With our chaplain we thought it was a good reason. And, after an exchange with the priest of our parish, he was able to enter the catechumenate in June 2023.

The 2023-2024 guidelines «in the footsteps of Jesus in Galilee» has been a great help, with the large map of Palestine at the time of Jesus permanently displayed in the catechesis room where we meet, to complete Joël's Christian education.

Joël was present at the Decisive Call last March with children from the catechism class and was baptized at mass on Easter night 2024 with six other catechumens from our parish. The following Saturday, a vigil was organized by a theologian from our diocese. Joël, a neophyte, participated enthusiastically: he placed a paper dove in front of the icon of the resurrection. He made his first Communion during the Pentecost vigil, in the presence of our small community and the parish, where he is fully integrated.

Seeing the joy on Joël's face reinforced our belief that Faith and Light can be an alternative family for those who have often had a difficult start in life. When the natural family no longer exists, our role as a community, is to listen to their desires, to accompany them with kindness in their life journey and sometimes even in their spiritual journey. What a joy!

Danièle LAVAUD
«The Canoe»'s coordinator



Vigil on April 6, 2024 - With Joël, hosted by Isabelle Parmentier.



Saturday, March 30, 2024 - Joël's Baptism (57 years) by Father Claudy GUERET at Sainte-Thérèse Church in POITIERS, assisted by two deacons, Hubert-Marie and Maurice.