

Faith and light international
**Charter
and Constitution**



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The Charter of Faith and Light

F*aith and Light was born of a desire to help people with an intellectual disability and their families find their place within the Church and society. This was the main purpose of the organized pilgrimage to Lourdes at Easter of 1971. Twenty or thirty people from the Protestant tradition were among those who participated in this Catholic event.*

In order that the gifts of this pilgrimage would not be lost, it was necessary for the participants to be members of a community that brought together people with an intellectual disability¹, their parents and friends, especially young people. Following this event, which was a time of great blessings, a great number of communities maintained and deepened the links that had been created between their members. In the course of the years other communities were created throughout the world, developing in different Christian denominations.

Thus, since its inception, the movement founded by Jean Vanier and Marie-Hélène Mathieu, has been increasingly aware of its specific vocation within the Churches and in society, and of its ecumenical mission.

¹ *Each time the expression person with a disability is mentioned, it always means the person with an intellectual disability. This term is used throughout this document. There may be changes in a language according to different periods and cultures. Each country should adopt a term that is generally acceptable as long as it means to show respect for the person with an intellectual disability.*

I. The vocation of Faith and Light

Faith and Light is a community movement. At the heart of these communities are people with a more or less serious intellectual disability; children, adolescents or adults. They are surrounded by members of their family and friends, particularly young people. Each community is asked to be accompanied by a chaplain.

Faith and Light gives to persons with an intellectual disability the possibility of being recognized as unique persons, and using their gifts and discovering the joy of friendship.

To the parents, Faith and Light gives support in their trials and helps them to better appreciate the inner beauty of their children. A number of them, in turn, become a source of strength and an assistance to other parents who are crushed by their suffering and their daily difficulties.

The brothers and sisters of the people with an intellectual disability are called to appreciate that a person with a disability can be a source of life and unity; if this person disrupts their life, he/she can also transform and transfigure it.

Thanks to the person with an intellectual disability, the friends also come to understand that there is another world, a world other than that of competition, money and success; those who are weak and poor invite them into a world of tenderness and fidelity, of listening and of faith.

To the chaplains, Faith and Light offers the opportunity to rediscover in a new way the core of the Gospel message, the good news of Jesus Christ, announced to the poor and little ones, and to find there a source of renewal for their ministry.

The communities are not residential, but rather communities whose members meet at least once per month and create between themselves links which become deeper and deeper through the sharing of their difficulties and their hope: sharing times of festivity, prayer and the Eucharist and/or other worship celebrations. These communities are usually made up of about thirty people.

1. A community that meets

Each meeting includes a time of getting together to talk and to listen to one another. The essential thing is to form personal relationships within which we discover the suffering and the gifts of one another, where we learn to know someone else by name. Sharing in small groups enables each person to express him/herself through words or other forms of communication, e.g. drawings, modelling, mimes or gestures. In this way we seek to "be with", carrying one another's burdens, to encourage and support each other and to respond to the needs of each one. Through friendship, made up of tenderness and fidelity, we become signs of the love of God for one another.

2. A community of fiesta and celebration

From faithful friendship springs the joy characteristic of the Faith and Light community. It is God who calls us together and enables us to discover the covenant that unites us: we are no longer alone. Meetings are characterized by moments of joy when we sing or dance or share a meal. From time to time a day of celebration enables us to invite guests who are moved by the discovery of the capacity of someone with an intellectual disability to create this joyful atmosphere. When it comes to celebration the person with an intellectual disability is often less disabled than others, because he/she is not imprisoned by convention, worry about efficiency or fear of what others may think. People with disabilities live more simply in the present moment; their humility and transparency make them naturally disposed towards community festivity.

But in the community we must not forget those who are not able to enter into the celebration and shut in with their sadness and their fears. They also have their place at the heart of Faith and Light. They need to receive special attention so that gradually they may know the joy and peace that Jesus came to bring us, even when the difficulties and pains remain.

3. A community of prayer

Jesus came to announce the Good News to the poor. They are loved by the Father. Jesus gave His life for his flock. He feeds them with his Body. Jesus is present in our gathering and in our celebration. He helps us to live community life with love and fidelity. We meet him in a

special way in prayer, in the celebration of the Eucharist and/or in other forms of worship.

4. A community of friendship and faithfulness

Friendship deepens through time and presence. Between the monthly gatherings the members of the community choose to spend time together in smaller groups or just meeting one-to-one. They share stories, fears, dreams, hope, prayer, fun, service with others, a meal, and other activities which nurture friendship: it is “the time of fidelity”, also called the “fourth time”.

5. A community for taking root and integrating

Persons with an intellectual disability play an essential role in the human community, society and Churches. In order to exercise their gifts and to grow as persons, they need to fully belong to and to participate in these, giving and receiving.

“... The members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think are less honorable we clothe with great honor...” (1 Cor 12, 22-23).

Faith and Light takes great care in integrating its communities and their members in the activities of the wider Faith and Light family, society, their respective Churches, Christian communities, parishes, etc.

This vocation for taking root, which lies with every person and every community, leads us to discover also our ecumenical vocation and mission.

Today, Faith and Light communities have their roots in different Christian traditions: Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant. Most often the members of a community belong to the same Church. Some communities are inter-denominational.

All Christians are called to find a deep expression of their faith and their love of Jesus within their own Church. At community meeting, they seek how they may worship together, united as brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ.

All of them are called to discover and appreciate with joy the truly Christian values that have their source in their common patrimony.

Faith and Light believes that the person who is weak and disabled can become a source of unity in society and in each Church and also between Churches and nations.

In families where there is long-standing disagreement, which has never been resolved, reconciliation is often brought about through a serious crisis. Grievances are forgotten and hard feelings break down. Communion in the Cross prepares a resurrection in rediscovered brotherly love. Thus it may be between Christians of different denominations who meet around the weakest and most rejected person whose very life may be threatened.

Lack of humility and of simplicity of heart is a serious obstacle to communion between Christians. Persons with an intellectual disability, by the very radiance of their poverty, lead Christians of different denominations into the beatitude of poverty of heart and thus allow them to rediscover the spirit of God.

II. The inspiration of Faith and Light

1. Each person is loved by God

Faith and Light is founded on the belief that each person with an intellectual disability is fully a person with all the rights of a human being: above all the right to be loved, recognized and respected for himself or herself and in the choices he/she makes; the right also to receive whatever help is necessary in order to grow at every level, spiritual and human. Faith and Light also believes that every person, able-bodied or disabled, is equally loved by God and that Jesus lives in them, even if the person concerned can barely express this. Faith and Light believes that every person, even the most disabled, is called to deepen his or her life in Jesus, to receive all the spiritual richness from his/her Church, sacraments, liturgical tradition, etc... He/she is called to be a source of grace and peace for the whole community, and also for the Churches and for all humanity.

Faith and Light believes in the words of Saint Paul: "God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong" (1 Cor 1, 27).

2. The need for a community

In order to live his/her faith, everyone, even the person with the most severe disability, needs to meet real friends in order to create together a warm environment in which each one may grow in faith and love. Those who come to Faith and Light to meet people with intellectual disabilities must come in a spirit of receiving from them their specific gifts while sharing their own gifts with them.

In front of a severely disfigured person whose words and gestures are often difficult to understand or even non-existent, the spontaneous reaction is often to look the other way and flee. This reaction emerges often out of misunderstanding and fear but it can also reveal egoism and hardness of the heart. To create a real and liberating relationship with people with intellectual disabilities, "our hearts of stone must be changed into hearts of flesh". Jesus and his Holy Spirit can transform our hearts to enable us to welcome the poor and rejected person and to recognize them in all their human reality and spiritual depth. This transformation of love will lead us to recognize the face of Jesus in ourselves and in the other.

We are led along this path of conversion and of the faithfulness in love by the witness of Mary. Mary and the disciple whom Jesus loved, present with the suffering Jesus, show us a way of living this same loving and faithful presence with our friends in the community. Mary teaches us, like a caring mother, how to carry human suffering together and to live out of the resurrection.

In spite of and through suffering, the community becomes a place of peace and joy, mediator or revealer of the gifts that God has given to those with an intellectual disability: that is their capacity for welcome and for love, their simplicity and their rejection of conventions. In a society based on usefulness and power, people with disabilities may not be efficient but they are nonetheless prophetic in the area of the heart and of tenderness, and in what is essential in the human person. And so those who are poor evangelize the rest of us.

3. Accompaniment toward a deeper human maturity

In order to help people with intellectual disabilities to find peace of heart, hope and the desire to grow, it is certainly necessary to see them in the light of the Gospel, but also to understand their human

needs in their suffering, and to know how to respond. For this, we must gradually acquire human experience and the necessary knowledge. Those who are involved in Faith and Light must become competent in the way they accompany people who suffer or are in difficulties.

III. Faith and Light activities

1. A community movement

Faith and Light is a community movement. The essential lies in the links of trust and in friendship created between its members, links having their source in Jesus and reaching fulfilment in Him.

2. Meetings, holidays camps and pilgrimages

The communities may have many activities other than the regular meetings. They arise according to the needs and creativity of individuals and the inspiration from God. Among these initiatives are holiday camps, retreats and pilgrimages, etc.

On the other hand, certain communities organize means of welcoming and animating activities for people with intellectual disabilities to enable their parents to have a rest.

There are some activities that are not the Province of Faith and Light: for example, the creation or management of institutions, residential homes, schools, workshops or "holiday homes". These we leave to appropriately qualified associations, which could be inspired by Faith and Light.

3. Cooperation with others

While keeping the spirit and mission of Faith and Light, it is important that Faith and Light communities cooperate as much as possible with other associations and movements that are at the service of people with an intellectual disability and their families.

4. One world-wide family

Faith and Light communities across the world form the branches of one big international family. Within each continent, zone, country, we carry one another's burden, sufferings and joys. Solidarity in expressed by sharing financial support for the life of Faith and Light

but also by sharing the benefits of their particular gifts, their friendship, the wisdom of their experience, and their faithfulness in prayer. As members of a single family, communities seek to live in love and unity.

A Charter was proposed at the General Assembly on 26 October 1980 (Lourdes). It was adopted provisionally for one-year period of study and modification by National Coordinators. The Charter was unanimously adopted by the General Assembly in 1982 (Wetherby, England). Further modifications were adopted by the General Assemblies in 1984 (Rome), 1986 (Santo Domingo), 1990 (Edinburgh), 1994 (Warsaw), 1998 (Québec), 2002 (Rome) and 2006 (Madrid).

The Charter is adopted and amended by a majority of 75%.

Note: The St Paul quotations used above and drawn from the NRSV of the New Testament.



The Constitution of Faith and Light

I. Context

1. The purpose of the Constitution is to define what is a Faith and Light community and how it is formed, to present how the movement is organized, and to define the means of coordination at different circles of responsibility.
2. This Constitution cannot be dissociated from the Charter of Faith and Light, which is its preamble and defines its spirit.²
3. The Constitution conforms to the Statutes of the International Association of Faith and Light³, which define the objectives of the Association and the statutory legal requirements.
4. The Constitution cannot prescribe all aspects of the life in Faith and Light. When interpretation issues are raised concerning the mandates of the entities, the roles or the authority of any of the leaders, priority should be given to collective over individual responsibility, democratic over authoritarian behaviours, equality in the relationship over hierarchy, and community over individual task accomplishment.

II. Exercizing responsibility

5. Responsibilities of the members

All members of Faith and Light have the responsibility to renew and deepen their commitment to live the spirit of the Charter. It is also their responsibility to continuously enrich their life in the community, and to involve themselves in the organization of activities and in the support of the provincial and international family.

² All the rules governing the functioning of the movement cannot be written in the Constitution. For further details, it is necessary to refer to booklets and documents coming from the Board of Directors.

³ The Legal Statutes are available from Faith and Light International Association, 3 rue du Laos, 75015 Paris, France.

6. Responsibilities of Faith and Light

- It is the responsibility of Faith and Light to establish and maintain a structure that enables proper organization and decisions, and also to support the members and their communities in their continuous development and their fidelity to the most vulnerable members.
7. Any responsibility in Faith and Light is seen as a **service**. Service is the essential dimension required to safeguard and promote the essential values of Faith and Light and, at the same time, to foster the development of our mission in the world.
 8. In our movement, three circles of responsibilities exist: the **Community**, the **Province**, and the **International**. At each circle, care is given to maintain a balance between three elements to function harmoniously: a good **representation**⁴ of the members, an efficient **government**⁵ respectful of its people, and the **support**⁶ of competent resources to give life. Thus, people who exercise a responsibility are serving the members in one of these three functions.

⁴ The members are the owners of the movement. The **Community** with all its members represent the basic membership entity. Since it is impossible to regularly bring together hundreds or thousands of Faith and Light members at the provincial and international circles, it is necessary to institute representative bodies which we call, the **Provincial Assembly** and the **General Assembly**.

⁵ This governing body (those who decide) receives a mandate and a **delegated authority** from the members in their assembly. For the community, we call it the "**Coordinating Team**", for the Province, the "**Provincial Team**", and for the international, the "**Board of Directors**".

⁶ The governing body cannot be competent in all matters. Thus, a third function in the structure brings life through actions and activities. There are two dimensions to this "life giving": First, there is a need to ensure that leaders in the movement are identified and chosen in accordance with the spirit of the movement, that they receive appropriate formation to accomplish their role, and that they are well supported and accompanied in their mission. This is done through the **Coordinators' Council**, the **International Coordinating Team**, the **Provincial Meetings**, and the **International Meeting**. A second dimension to this function of giving life is to build capacity and expertise to accomplish various projects: this is done through **Project Teams**.

III. The Faith and Light community

9. A Faith and Light Community is made up of people with an intellectual disability⁷, surrounded by family members and friends (in more or less equal numbers) who meet regularly, at least once a month. A community may be created from a group of at least ten people who all share the common desire to create a community and adhere to the Charter and Constitution. Once there are more than fifty members, it becomes necessary to bring a new community into existence.
10. Once a year, all members of the community meet to reaffirm their commitment to the community for the coming year. Also, they evaluate the activities of the past year, establish priorities, and decide which activities will be organized in the coming year. The community delegates to a **Coordinating Team** the task of planning and organizing these activities.

Coordinating Team (Government)

11. The Coordinating Team is responsible for the life of the community. It meets between the monthly community gatherings in order to set priorities, to prepare and evaluate the community meetings, and other community activities decided by the members. It maintains the spirit and divides up the responsibilities. Its strength lies in its unity.

12. **Composition**

The team is made up of four to eight people, including at least one parent, one friend, a chaplain⁸ and, as much as possible, a person with an intellectual disability. The members of this team are chosen because of their wisdom and discretion. The coordinating team is to be renewed regularly.

⁷ In this text, we have used the expression “a person with an intellectual disability”. Language constantly evolves according to cultures and time periods. Each country should read in the expression commonly used, so long as it shows respect for the person.

⁸ Other expressions may be used, according to the tradition of each denomination.

13. The **Community Coordinator**⁹ is elected by the community members. He/she leads the coordinating team. His/her role is to foster unity, to guide, encourage and nourish the coordinating team and the community. The Community Coordinator leads the delegation to the Provincial Assembly.

14. **Mandate**

3 years, twice renewable.

15. The Community Chaplain is chosen by the coordination team or the community itself for a three-year term, renewable.

Probationary period and recognition of a community

16. A group wishing to become a Faith and Light community contacts the Provincial Coordinator of the closest existing Province. A Vice-International Coordinator is associated with the new group when the distances from an existing Province are too great.

17. When the necessary conditions are met¹⁰, the community begins a probationary period and an Interim Community Coordinator¹¹ is **appointed** for a one-year mandate, renewable. The role of the Interim Community Coordinator is the same as that of the Community Coordinator¹². During the probationary period, the community sends a delegation to the Provincial Assembly without voting rights.

18. When recognition is granted, the accompanying Vice-Provincial Coordinator or Vice-International Coordinator prepares and conducts the process of discerning and electing the Community Coordinator.

⁹ At each circle of responsibility, the coordinator or interim coordinator is always a lay-person. The coordinator may be elected as a single person, or as husband and wife.

¹⁰ The details and conditions for probationary period and official recognition of a community are listed in an accompanying document.

¹¹ An Interim Coordinator is **appointed**, a Coordinator is **elected**: this is the difference between the two.

¹² See paragraph 13.

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19. From the time a community is recognized, each of its members becomes an associate member of the international movement, Faith and Light.

Leaving Faith and Light or being asked to leave

20. A recognized community, which feels that it is no longer its vocation to adhere to the Charter and Constitution of Faith and Light, will leave Faith and Light after having reflected with the Provincial Team¹³ on the reasons of its decision and the means of its departure.
21. The Provincial Coordinating Team will close a community when a community explicitly or implicitly refuses to keep to the Charter and Constitution, or is unwilling to participate in the wider family of Faith and Light or to financially support the operation of the international movement.
22. Its departure or removal cannot be carried out without the Provincial Team being informed and giving its opinion. The Provincial Coordinating Team will help the community if the latter wishes to discover and define its new orientation. The community will no longer be called Faith and Light.

IV. The Provincial organization

23. The Provinces are defined as community groupings. They are the branches of the international family and bring together between 15 and 40 recognized communities. The number of communities by Province is flexible and depends on cultural, linguistic and geographic circumstances. There may be several Provinces in a country where there are more than 40 communities, and, conversely, communities from various countries can constitute a Province made up of countries where there are only a few communities. The size and composition of Provinces are periodically revised by the Board of Directors.
24. A Province with a large number of countries or communities might want to create or maintain national or regional entities to facilitate the accompaniment and the implementation of activities. These

¹³ If the community operates in a Province, or with the Vice-International Coordinator designated if the community is too far from an existing Province.

structures do not constitute an additional circle of responsibility in Faith and Light.

25. Provinces are set up as legal associations. It might also be helpful or required, in countries divided into Provinces or in different countries that belong to the same Province, to set up legal associations to represent Faith and Light before civil, legal or ecclesial authorities (funds rising, grants...). These associations do not constitute an additional circle of structure. The Vice-International Coordinator who accompanies the Province helps in the organisation of these associations.

Provincial Assembly (Representation)

26. The participants in the Provincial Assembly represent the members of the Faith and Light communities in the Province. First and last authority of the Province, it reflects the experience of the communities and its members and their concerns, and establishes large strategic orientations¹⁴. It elects the Provincial Coordinator and the Province's representatives to the General Assembly. It also approves the members list of the Provincial Nomination Committee.

27. Composition

Each community sends to the Provincial Assembly a delegation that reflects as much as possible the membership of the community. Care is given to allow for the participation of members with an intellectual disability. Each delegation from a recognized community has one vote at this Assembly. The Provincial Coordinator, the Vice-Coordinators and the Provincial Chaplain are also members of the Assembly with voting rights. The Vice-International Coordinator accompanying the Province is also invited without the right to vote.

28. Frequency

Every 4 years to be scheduled between the General Assemblies.

¹⁴ For example, the Assembly determines which provincial activities could be organized in the Province.

Provincial Team (Government)

29. **The Provincial Team**, led by the Provincial Coordinator, coordinates the implementation of the orientations decided by the Provincial Assembly and governs the movement in the Province. With the support of the accompanying Vice-International Coordinator, they ensure that Community Coordinators are **chosen** in accordance with the spirit of the movement, that they receive appropriate **formation** to accomplish their role, and that they are well **supported and accompanied** in their mission. This team also appoints the Vice-Provincial Coordinators from a list submitted by the Provincial Nomination Committee or by the communities, after discernment. The Provincial Team decides the program of the Provincial Assembly meeting, the number of delegates from each community, and the number of guests to invite.
30. **Composition**
The Provincial Coordinator, the Vice-Provincial Coordinators, the Provincial Chaplain, and the Provincial Treasurer and may include two other members to reflect, as much as possible the make-up of the Province. When appropriate, the provincial Project Team managers take part in certain meetings without the right to vote.
31. **Frequency**
If possible, twice a year.
32. In order to accomplish its tasks, the Provincial Team appoints Project Teams to organize and carry out activities for the benefit of communities.
33. The **Provincial Coordinator** leads the Provincial Team and establishes links with other Provincial Coordinators. He/she leads the provincial delegation to the General Assembly and also participates in the Coordinators' Council. He/she can be invited to accompany the communities in order to foster the Faith and Light provincial and international family.
34. **Method of election**
The Provincial Nomination Committee, with the assistance of the Vice-International Coordinator accompanying the Province, consults the communities and submits names to the Provincial

Assembly which elects the coordinator¹⁵. The Vice-International Coordinators or his/her delegate leads the election. In the exceptional situation where a coordinator has to be replaced during his/her mandate, the Vice-International Coordinator, after consultation with the communities, appoints an Interim Provincial Coordinator.

35. Mandate

4 years, renewable twice.

36. The **Vice-Provincial Coordinators** (one for every 6 to 8 communities) accompany, encourage and assist Community Coordinators and Interim Community Coordinators in their responsibilities. They visit each community that they accompany at least once during their mandate. They also create links between communities by proposing and supporting inter-community gatherings and activities (like formation).

37. Method of appointment

- 1) The Provincial nomination committee or the Vice-International Coordinator accompanying the Province consults the communities and prepares a list of names of candidates.
- 2) After discernment and with the help of the Vice-International Coordinator, the Provincial Team appoints the Vice-Provincial Coordinators, or the Provincial Assembly elects them.

38. Mandate

4 years, renewable twice.

39. A **Provincial Chaplain** is chosen by the Provincial Team for a period of three years, renewable twice. When the provincial team considers it necessary, this choice may be approved by the competent church authority.
40. Local conditions may make it difficult to appoint a Provincial Chaplain. The Provincial Team is then to seek an appropriate solution with the help of the Vice-International Coordinator accompanying the Province.

¹⁵ See Nomination Committee # 78.

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41. A **Provincial Treasurer** is appointed by the Provincial Team. He/she has the responsibility, under the authority of the Provincial Team, to administer the finances and to help find the funds necessary to operate the different levels of the Faith and Light organization. He/she participates in the Provincial Team meetings for matters related to finances, without voting rights.

Provincial Meeting (Giving life)

42. A Provincial Meeting takes place every other year, or every year if possible. The Provincial Team prepares and runs the meeting. This is where and when community leaders have an opportunity for sharing, reflection and formation, in order to deepen their faith in God and their commitment to the spirit of the Charter. This time of renewal is also an occasion of formation and celebration where a provincial community is created. If possible, members of the communities are also invited to the Provincial meeting.
43. The Vice-International Coordinator accompanying the Province is invited to attend the Provincial Meeting. If unable to do so, he/she may send a delegate.

Creation of new Provinces

44. When the number of communities in a Province grows to fifty or more, when the distances are too great, or for other important reasons, the Provincial Team can request that the Province be divided into two Provinces and make a proposal. The request is forwarded by the International Coordinator to the Board of Directors which makes the decision. One or both new Provinces may receive the status of recognized Provinces if they meet the criteria¹⁶.

Admission of a Province to a probationary period and Recognition

45. In a remote area where the movement is beginning, and there are at least 7 to 10 recognized communities, the accompanying Vice-International Coordinator may request admission of a new Province to a probationary period.

¹⁶ The conditions for probation and recognition of a Province are described in an accompanying document.

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46. The request is forwarded by the International Coordinator to the Board of Directors which makes the decision. If accepted¹⁶ the Board of Directors appoints an Interim Provincial Coordinator¹⁷ for a one-year mandate, renewable. This Interim Provincial Coordinator sets up and coordinates an Interim Provincial Team composed of the Community Coordinators. The Interim Provincial Coordinator has the same role as the Provincial Coordinator. The Provinces in probation have no voting rights at the General Assembly.
47. A Province is recognized when it meets specific conditions prescribed by the Board of Directors. When a Province is recognized, the accompanying Vice-Coordinator prepares and conducts the process of discerning and electing the Provincial Coordinator.

V. The International organization

General Assembly (Representation)

48. The participants in the General Assembly represent the members of the Faith and Light Movement from all over the world. First and last authority of the movement, it reflects the experience of the movement and its concerns, and establishes large strategic orientations. It discerns and **elects** the following members of the Board of Directors: the President, Vice-President, International Treasurer, International Coordinator, and two other members. It also approves the members of the International Nomination Committee.

49. Composition and voting right

Each Province sends to the General Assembly a delegation which reflects as much as possible the membership of the Province and which allows for the participation of members with an intellectual disability. Each delegation from a recognized Province has one vote at this Assembly. Also participate in the assembly, with the right to vote, the members of the Board of Directors and the Vice-international Coordinators. The General Secretary also participates without the right to vote.

¹⁷ See note # 11.

50. The Board of Directors decides the program of the General Assembly meeting, the number of delegates from each Province, and the number of guests to invite.

51. **Frequency**

Every 5 years. The General Assembly usually takes place during the International Meeting.

International Meeting (Giving life)

52. An **International Meeting** is organized by the Board of Directors at least every five years. It is a time of reflection and sharing where the participants have the opportunity to deepen their commitment to the spirit of the Charter. This time of deepening and renewal is also an occasion of formation and celebration where a true international community is created.

Board of Directors (Government)

53. The Board of Directors acts in accordance with the strategic orientations given by the General Assembly; it governs the movement in all areas and is entrusted with the mission and vision of Faith and Light. It delegates to the Coordinating Team the coordination of the movement. The Board of Directors appoints Project Teams to carry out projects in the international context. It approves the list of characteristics and skills for the identification of Coordinators and Vice-Coordinators.

54. On the recommendation of the International Coordinator, it periodically revises the size and the composition of Provinces; it approves the creation of new Provinces according to needs and according to the development of Faith and Light in the world, and appoints the Interim Provincial Coordinator of a new Province.

55. It approves and publishes all documents and booklets deemed necessary for the proper functioning of the international movement.

56. It corresponds to the Board of Directors as required by the French Law for associations.

57. **Composition**

President, Vice-President, International Chaplain, International Coordinator, the International Treasurer, and two other members. The General Secretary participates without the right to vote. The composition of the Board of Directors reflects the internationality and the diversity of the movement. When appropriate, International Project Team Managers and Vice-International Coordinators take part in some meetings without the right to vote.

58. **Method of election**

The International Nomination Committee consults the Provinces and submits names to the General Assembly which elects the President, the Vice President, the International Treasurer and two other members.

59. **Frequency**

At least twice a year.

60. **The President** leads the Board of Directors and has legal responsibility for the Association. In the event of an unresolved conflict or the impossibility to reach a consensus, he/she has an authority of appeal. The Vice-President replaces the President when he/she is not available.

61. **Mandate**

5 years, renewable once.

62. The **International Chaplain** is chosen by the Board of Directors for a term of five years, renewable once.

63. An International **Treasurer** has the responsibility, under the authority of the President, to administer the finances and help to find necessary funds for the life of the International Association.

64. A **General Secretary** is appointed by the Board of Directors. The mission of the General Secretary is determined by the Board of Directors.

Coordinators' Council and Coordinating Team (Giving life)

65. The **Coordinators' Council** gives life to the movement under the leadership of the International Coordinator. The role of the Coordinators' Council is to be a place of sharing between the

different coordinators in order to seek together the will of God for the movement and to be of service to people with intellectual disabilities and Faith and Light communities within the spirit of the Charter. The Coordinators' Council provides an opportunity for mutual support and formation for the provincial coordinators. It is a time of reflection when coordinators have the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the aims of Faith and Light and the ways in which the movement operates. It is also a time where a true international community is created.

66. Composition

International Coordinator, Provincial Coordinators, Vice-International Coordinators, International Chaplain.

67. Frequency

At least once between each General Assembly.

68. The International Coordinator, the International Chaplain, and Vice-International Coordinators form the **Coordinating Team**. This team is attentive to the needs of the different Provinces and responds to the best of its ability. It ensures that leaders in the movement are identified and chosen in accordance with the spirit of the movement, that they receive appropriate **formation** to accomplish their role, and that they are well **supported and accompanied** to accomplish their mission. It remains linked to the official channels of the different Churches in order to keep them informed of the activities of Faith and Light and to receive guidance from them.

69. Frequency

At least once a year.

70. Accountability

Between the General Assemblies, the Coordinating Team is accountable to the Board of Directors.

71. **The International Coordinator** leads the Coordinators' Council and the Coordinating Team. He/she must be concerned that Faith and Light grows and deepens according to the will of God and for the good of all its members, especially people with intellectual disabilities who are at the heart of the movement. He/she can be

invited to Provincial Meetings or Assemblies, in order to foster the Faith and Light international family.

72. Method of election

The International Nomination Committee consults the Provinces and submits names to the General Assembly which elects the coordinator¹⁸. The President or his/her delegate or a member of the nomination committee leads the election.

73. Mandate

5 years, renewable once.

74. The Vice-International Coordinators

The main role of the Vice-International Coordinators is to accompany, encourage and assist the Provincial Coordinators in their responsibilities... They visit each Province under their responsibility at least once during their mandate. They also encourage solidarity and create links between Provinces by proposing and supporting inter-Province gatherings and activities (like formation).

75. Method of appointment

The International Nomination Committee consults the Provinces and presents a list of names to the International Coordinator who submits a choice of Vice-International Coordinators to the Board of Directors for appointment.

76. Mandate

5 years, renewable once.

VI. Removal from office or resignation

77. The **removal from office** (or resignation) of a Coordinator or Vice-Coordinator can be requested because they have ceased regular communication or participation in the life of the movement for a prolonged period, because of a lack of availability, competence or any other serious problem. After consultation with the community/Province Coordinating Team members, the Vice-Coordinator accompanying the community/Province makes a request to the Provincial Team (in the case of a Community) or to

¹⁸ See Nomination Committee # 78.

the Board of Directors (in the case of a Province). The Provincial Team or the Board of Directors consults coordinators and leaders from the involved entities prior to making the final decision.

VII. Provincial and International entities

Nomination Committees

78. The International and Provincial Nomination Committees have the mission to consult communities/Provinces and to lead a discernment process of identifying suitable people to be chosen to a role of responsibility. The profile for the International and Provincial Nomination Committee is established by the Board of Directors.
79. The International Nomination Committee establishes a profile listing the characteristics and the required skills of Coordinators and Vice-Coordinators at Provincial and International level, to be approved by the Board of Directors.
80. The **role** of International and Provincial Nomination Committees is not to elect or to appoint a candidate, but to search for the most suitable candidates, to receive the nominations from communities or Provinces, to document these nominations according to the list of characteristics and skills established by the Board of Directors, and to submit the list of candidates for decision to the Assembly, in the case of an election of a coordinator, or to the coordinator in the case of the choice of a vice-coordinator.
81. The Board of Directors and the Provincial Team propose to their respective Assembly the members of the Nomination Committee. At the international circle, the Assembly approves their nomination for a mandate of 5 years, renewable, and, at the provincial circle, for a mandate of 4 years renewable.

Project Teams (Giving life)

82. The purpose of Project Teams is to expertly lead all sorts of projects: 'Guidelines' project, 'Pilgrimage' project, 'Financial Management' project, 'General Assembly' project, 'Communications and External Relations' project, 'Financing Campaign' project, etc.

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83. They are approved by the Board of Directors at the international level and by the Provincial Team at the provincial level. They are under their authority, are guided by them and are accountable to them.
84. A Project Team has a limited duration (the time to bring their project to fruition). The mandate entrusted to them at the beginning of the mission specifies the objectives, the agreed means and the deadlines within which the mission must be completed.
85. Provincial Project Teams have a link with the corresponding International Teams.

VIII. Adopting the Constitution

86. The General Assembly adopts the Constitution by a majority of 75%. Amendments are proposed by the Board of Directors and agreed to by the same percentage.

A Constitution was proposed at the General Assembly on October 1980 (Lourdes). It was provisionally adopted for a one year period of study and modification by National Coordinators. The Constitution was unanimously adopted by the General Assembly in 1982 (Wetherby, England). Further modifications were adopted by the General Assemblies in 1984 (Rome), 1986 (Santo Domingo), 1990 (Edinburgh), 1994 (Warsaw), 1998 (Quebec), 2002 (Rome) and 2008 (Lourdes).

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