

# We are all pilgrims at the Lord's call

Guidelines 2010-2011



Faith and Light  
celebrates its 40th anniversary  
Alleluia!



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*Cover Photo : Jean Vanier, Marie-Hélène Mathieu and the members of the International Council in pilgrimage at Mar-Moussa (Syria), september 2004.*

Illustrations : Brother Réginald Pycke, Community of Saint John

## Introduction

The next two years promise to be quite exceptional for the life of Faith and Light communities throughout the world! 40 years old! We are going to celebrate this jubilee with a single heart and announce to the world what we experience in our communities. We are all, disabled people, parents and friends, called to become and remain "**Messengers of joy**"!

This year, we will set off, we will all be pilgrims at the call of the Lord and we will go on a pilgrimage with the friends of the Lord. We know some of them. We are going to discover others, unexpected, but who are all well represented in the Scriptures: Oholiab, Moses' craftsman who reminds us of the road taken over the past year; Shuah, the youngest son of Abraham who talks about his father; Asaph, David's bard, who is going to teach us the joyous prayer of praise...

Thank you to Father Guy Vanhoomissen for the stories each month that bring the scriptures so close and so alive to us. Thank you to Kirsten, Denis and Sophie for the practical suggestions that you will be able to adapt to your community and your customs.

*"May the Lord be your joy! Praised by all the Earth, sing your kindness..."*  
(Ps 31)

With all my heart, I wish each and every one of you a Happy Anniversary!

*Corinne Chatain*  
*General Secretary*

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1) *Theme of the 40th anniversary celebrations, see page 9.*

## To members of the Coordination Team

### "The Dispatch", 2011–2012 celebrations information

In order to keep you informed of the progress of the preparations for the 2011–2012 celebrations, the Project Team is publishing "The Dispatch" each month that gives various pieces of information and puts forward a 'toolbox' of practical advice. Do not hesitate to ask your Province Coordinator or the Vice Coordinator who guides you about it. You can also contact the International Secretariat directly.<sup>2</sup>.

### Identity and Mission

Each month, after Father Guy's story, you will find an extract from the booklet entitled "You will shine in the world like bright stars" that you will have received at the same time as the Guidelines. This document will give you reflection tips to deepen the identity and mission of Faith and Light, that is to say, getting to know the road travelled over the past 40 years, allowing the penetration of the initial inspiration that brought so much hope to thousands of people in all continents and allowing the announcement to the world that we are "Messengers of Joy".

Take the time to read a few passages at each team meeting and perhaps it could also enrich the time of sharing in the community.

### To work!

Let us take sufficient time to prepare the year. We could meet for a week-

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end so as to peacefully experience the four times of each meeting and not plunge straight into 'business'. The unity of the Coordination Team is always reflected in grace on the community and on each of its members.

## **A few suggestions for the organisation of the year:**

- Evaluate the past year, if you haven't already done so
- Set priorities: welcome new members, give birth to a new community...
- Set a schedule of community and Coordination Team meetings, not forgetting to plan a Day of Announcing and Sharing and of course, the Festival of Light. Plan something quite special for Easter 2011.
- Learn the new "Messengers of joy"<sup>3</sup> song or choose an action song that we can use all year to mark the beginning of each meeting.
- Depending on resources, organise a community weekend, a retreat or a holiday camp.
- Twin with a religious community, if you haven't done so already, and maintain links with it: give news, request their prayers for such and such a person who is in trouble, entrust an important event to them, visit them...

## **The time of prayer**

The proposal that follows is no longer to be taken to the letter. It is not a matter of 'ready made' celebrations but directions that should be adapted each time to your community with imagination and creativity. It should be treated as a canvas to be worked on and padded out by the Coordination Team.

It is proposed that you, where possible, keep the same outline, the same reference framework for each time of prayer. It would be good for the participants to know what will happen. And the moments when you stray away from it will only be looked at with relief!

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3) *Words and music will be sent at the beginning of the year...*

## Outline

- To begin prayer, start with the sign of the cross
- Song
- Introduction by the celebrant or leader
- Reading(s), from Bible or other
- Symbolic gesture, mime, etc.
- Time of meditation and internalisation, in silence or with background music
- Intentions, shared prayer: each person is encouraged to formulate a prayer if they so wish
- "Our Father", said together
- Final prayer, said by celebrant: this prayer can be inspired by the proposal in the Guidelines or any other text, but it should have been prepared in advance.
- "Messengers of Joy" song or action song.
- Sign of the Cross

## Throughout the year

We can make Guidelines for each member of the community, (4 sheets of A4 folded in half). On the cover, a drawing of the shell (see page 81), the symbol of the pilgrims on the road to Saint-Jacques de Compostelle (tomb of the Apostle James, in North West Spain). And to remind us that we are on the road to the 40th anniversary celebrations, we can decorate a figure '40', reproduce the official celebrations logo (see page 80), and write on the date and place of our province pilgrimage.

On the inside, on the first page write our name, our community name and the meeting dates for the year. We can also keep a page to write birthdays on.

We will bring it to each meeting and decorate one page with the theme

and the drawing of the month that we have liked, that has touched us, a prayer intention...

Now we are ready. Fasten our bags and cases and set off!

## From the 1971 pilgrimage to Lourdes to the 2011-2012 pilgrimages throughout the whole world

*Message from Marie-Hélène Mathieu, founder*

Returning from an extraordinary week of meetings and sessions in the Seychelles and Mauritius with Corinne, I was struck by the enthusiasm for the idea of pilgrimages across the world in 2011-2012 despite all the difficulties and obstacles. It must be said that the letters from Henri, Ghislain and Father Isaac had the wherewithal to stir us up. Their tone reminded me of what we experienced 40 years ago when we set off, myself, Jean Vanier and a few parents, on the first Faith and Light pilgrimage and, since then, so much else that has been experienced in the community, country and province.

The question has been put to me: why does Faith and Light have such a deep attachment to the 'pilgrimage' process?

First of all, **we were born from the pilgrimage** to Lourdes. At the Massabielle Grotto, at the spring, we received our **baptism**.

Four years later, **the pilgrimage to Rome** and the welcome from Paul VI was like a **confirmation** and three times afterwards (1981, 1991, 2001), we felt called to go to Lourdes to thank Jesus and Mary for all the graces received at Faith and Light and to go back with renewed hope to experience and announce Faith and Light. This time, the call is different: give thanks for all the road travelled but also go out into the whole world and reveal our 'treasure' to it.

A pilgrimage disrupts and strips us. It is necessary to leave your house, your home, your work, your little habits, and your slippers to find again the essence of happiness, the Gospel of the Beatitudes.

On a Faith and Light pilgrimage, we leave together for a place where Jesus awaits us. He personally invites us: "If you want, come..." with **your weaker brothers and sisters** who, themselves, are always prepared to join in. They are also our **"lead climbers"** and **we follow in their footsteps**.

Astonishingly, **the Charter from the first pilgrimage** already stated the essence of our mission. Helping **the disabled person** to discover that they are **specialy loved by God**, capable of a real relationship with Him and even a true holiness and **testifying to it in the Church. Responding to the suffering parents** so often isolated, in distress and at times in despair. **Appealing to friends, especially young ones** (18 – 35 years old) to join us, not to be used as volunteers but to weave a relationship of loyalty and kindness with the weak and let themselves be transformed by it. To experience all that, create small, close-knit communities as schools of love where you learn to love one another just as you are.

It was quite simple, but revolutionary. We had to confront a lot of criticism and obstacles, but we also met a lot of enthusiasm on the part of those wanting to experience this challenge. Each person looked for, one by one, family, young person, chaplain... Between 1968, the pilgrimage launch date and Easter 1971, 300 new communities were created. It was the condition for taking part in the pilgrimage.

Today, we are reviving the grace of the first pilgrimage, already in preparation throughout the world of our celebrations, with three essential and inseparable dimensions:

- To work so that **all our communities** are **more and more very living places of love**, peace and joy around the weakest. May those who see us live be able to say, like the first Christian communities: "See how they love one another" and that we are always inviting. And if our community is a bit 'sleepy' in the warmth, do not hesitate to set up a 'day of renewal'.
- Today, like 40 years ago, let us rally ourselves with a renewed enthusiasm to **create new communities**. Why not imagine at least three or four per province, carried by the prayer and support of other communities? And in the same spirit, why not favour the **birth of family communities with young children**, a lot of who do not meet in the older communities? It is so hard for parents to be confronted with the expectation, the birth, and the education of a disabled child and such a light when they know that a Faith and Light community with young children proposes welcoming you. I do not forget either that when Ghislain, Isabelle and their little Julie joined us for the 1991 pilgrimage, it was because an urgent invitation to young families had been launched.

- «**Messengers of joy**», this is the very beautiful theme of these celebrations about which so much has already been beautifully written. For myself, reviewing the first pilgrimage, I can say that the pilgrims and all of Lourdes with us, discovered a great mystery: **there where there is love, suffering, at times very profound suffering, can coexist with joy**. In Lourdes, the weak person, so thirsting for communion, felt that they were loved and that they were the centre of the festival. Their joy was gradually realised. On our departure, on Easter Monday, was the birth of our movement and the cry of the people of Lourdes, so panic stricken at our arrival, 'never have we seen a pilgrimage with such joy and such peace'. The alleluias that rang out from morning to evening were the tender sign.

**"I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled"**, said Jesus. This fire is already kindled. Today other fires are lit everywhere in the world where there will be a pilgrimage. May the world know that the source of its salvation is in the presence of Jesus the Saviour, hidden particularly in the hearts of the little ones and those who put their hand in His.

*M-H.M.*

## "Messengers of joy"

"We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard" (1 Jn 1, 3)

### Why this theme?

What we see and hear at Faith and Light is joy: the joy of celebration! The joy of meeting! The joy of friendship! The joy of helping each other! The joy...! This is what we experience in our community meetings, in our celebrations and pilgrimages, and in everyday life.

It was the joy of Easter that caused this large family that is Faith and Light to be born. It is what we are celebrating: 40 years of life, 40 years of joy experienced by all our members and especially the favoured of God, the weakest people (Lk 10, 21).

The source of this joy is Jesus Himself when He invites us to: "*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.*" (Mt 11, 28).

In coming to a Faith and Light community, we bring our pain, suffering and tears; in sharing this burden and creating bonds of friendship, we can celebrate, sing, dance and find rest, peace and the joy of Jesus together. This joy is paradoxical: it is difficult to imagine joy despite a disability and suffering, the joy that is born of fraternity with disabled people.

Today, we want to announce our joy to the world. It is a real challenge because so many people live in solitude, sadness and grief, and are in situations that could lead to depression, anxiety or despair.

Everyone at Faith and Light is there to *turn wailing into dancing, sackcloth into clothes of joy* (Ps 29, 12).

We are here to bear witness to the joy that dwells within us, to this joy that comes from the Holy Spirit<sup>4</sup>, to this joy brought by Jesus<sup>5</sup> and that no one can take from us<sup>6</sup>. Let us continue to spread the joy throughout the world.

*Father Isaac Martinez  
International Chaplain*

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4) Ga 5,22

5) Mt 2,10; Lk 2,10; 13,17; 19,6; 19,37; Jn, 15,11

6) Jn 16,22

# Pilgrims like Oholiab, Moses' craftsman





## The Word of the Month

Our family is descended from a long line of craftsmen. Working with gold and silver is no secret to us. Acacia and cedar wood are our trade. And I cannot tell you of our workshop filled with brightly coloured material and silky fabrics. We count rich, Egyptian backers amongst our customers. However,

this is not what I want to talk to you about but an episode from our march to the Promised Land.

One day, whilst we were at Mount Sinai, Moses came to find me, "Oholiab, son of Ahisamak, can you help me to build the Tent of Meeting?" I couldn't get over it. I was proud of my workshop, but how could I build a dwelling for the Master of the universe with these poor materials? Was God really going to live amongst His people and come to stay amongst us? We had done nothing to warrant such a choice and we were not worthy. It was with some hesitation that I set to work building the Dwelling.

I have never regretted saying "Yes". It truly was a call from the Lord. Quite often, we do not even understand at the time. Things only become clear later on. I am not surprised that our master Moses often said to us: "Remember the whole journey you are making with the Lord". Yes, it is good to have a memory of what we experience with the Lord.

And now, I look at the journey made. We were not anything grand, the children of Israel. A small group of slaves, people on the edges of society with no economic or military power. But the Lord does not look as men do. Men look at appearance whilst God looks at the heart. He looked at us with love. And there was that Passover night when we set off. The pilgrimage of a lifetime began. It was not easy every day. Often there were questions: How could we believe in the love of God when looking around and seeing such dramas? I asked the Lord to increase my faith, to believe in spite of everything. I am convinced God was there, even in our trials and perhaps even more so at those times.

I would like to bequeath this legacy to my children. Yes, the Lord is good.

He saved us from slavery and death. He accompanied us to the Promised Land. We can continue our march with confidence.

**Reference text:** Make a memory and proclaim the benefits of the Lord (Dt 26, 5-11).

## Identity and Mission of Faith and Light

*"You rarely join a community by chance. You go there because you have met someone or because have asked us for a service or to pursue a spiritual road in response to the desires or questions that dwell within us. You stay at Faith and Light because you have created bonds, because you have entered into a relationship with it and you have received a call that goes beyond us..."*

Cf. Booklet "You will shine in the world like bright stars", pages 6 to 7.



## Welcome and Reunion

Each person will bring something that symbolises what has been experienced up to now in Faith and Light: an object, a photo, a text... We will place it on a table. During the time of celebration, we will tell why we have brought this object and what it means to us.



## Sharing

After the "weather forecast", we start singing the song chosen this year that will mark the beginning of each meeting. The leader or organiser presents the theme for the year: All pilgrims! En route to the 40th anniversary of Faith and Light. The organiser can read or tell in his own words the story of the month.

We have responded to the call of the Lord to take to the road with Him.



The Lord asked Moses to build the "Tent of Meeting". Let us be aware today that the Lord is coming to live amongst His people, that He is present in our lives, in the life of our community and in the joy as well as the sorrow. He is our treasure.

With Oholiab, let us remember what Moses said to us: "*Remember the whole journey you are making with the Lord*".

The leader can tell "the holy story" of the community, its birth, and the events that have marked its history, its fertility... Photos can be shown of former leaders and the community album could be looked at together. And if there isn't one, this would be a good opportunity to start one!

### **To better remember...**

On the small bits of paper, the Coordination Team will have written the large steps or strong times (joyful and painful) of the community since its birth. A basket is in the middle on a stool. With background music, a ball is passed from hand to hand. When the music stops, the person with the ball takes a piece of paper and has to mime, with the person to their left and right, the event indicated.

Or, together, we could watch the film about the first international pilgrimage to Lourdes in 1971 that marked the birth of our movement<sup>7</sup>.

### **In small groups**

Tell their "holy story":

- How I came to be in the community?
- Why have I stayed?
- What has changed my life?

### **Artist's workshop**

All together, we are going to build the "Tent of Meeting" (see template page 81). During the time of prayer, a 'Treasure' (small box in gold paper) will be placed in the middle, the treasure of the presence of God. The tent

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<sup>7</sup>) Available from the International Secretariat. There are also DVDs of the 1981, 1991 and 2001 pilgrimages. 5 € each. Also available: "35 years of history", told by Marie-Hélène Mathieu, 10€.

and its treasure will be placed in the centre of our prayer corner. The tent can be decorated, if desired, by writing everyone's name on it.

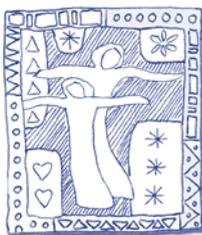


## Praying

*God our Father,  
Our whole life is under your scrutiny.  
Grant us to fix ours on You,  
So that we can recognise Your work,  
In the events of our life  
And that we may find our joy.  
Through Jesus Christ, Our Lord.*

## Prayer of a poor person

*Thank you Jesus for being so close. Thank you for the treasure of Faith and Light.*



## Celebrating

We are in a circle. In the centre, we place our "tent of meeting" on the ground. Each person in turn fetches the object they brought and explains what it means to them and how this object accompanies them in their times of joy or sorrow. Then they are going to place it beside the tent. Between each testimony, let us sing a joyful song of thanksgiving.

## My personal Guidelines<sup>8</sup>

A small personal notebook will be made at this first meeting or will have been prepared in advance by the Coordination Team. It will be brought to each meeting. Throughout the year, you will write or draw what you like in the day, a prayer intention or stick in the drawing of the month...

Today, we could simply write: "*Thank you, Jesus!*"

8) See page 4.

# Pilgrims like Shuah, Abraham's son

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## The Word of the Month

My father, Abraham, was already very old when I was born. This is perhaps why I was a bit of a daddy's boy. He liked to confide in me. I still see him under his oak tree, his fingers stroking his beard and I hear his voice: "You know, Shuah", he said to me, "never to fear putting trust in God. Go ahead when the Lord invites us". At one time or another, with covered and emotional words, like something precious and fragile, he spoke to me of this adventure to which the Lord had summoned him and how he had responded to the call of God.

Abraham was living in the Ur of the Chaldees when God called him: "Go, leave your country, your family and your father's household". What an uprooting! Leave everything just like that? And go where? North, South, East or West? God simply said, "Leave for the country that I will show you". My father was a man of faith. He did not know what God had planned for him in the long term but he knew that he could trust in Him. They tried to keep him there, to change his mind. He was told that he was deluding himself. Nothing moved him. He took to the road and left. And truly, I myself have learnt much of the way in which he responded to the call of God, of the difficulties and trials he encountered whilst always remaining serene and a believer.

How do you explain this peaceable strength that inhabited him? "God knows", he said, "God will provide, God will not abandon us". I am not surprised that for many my father has become the epitome of a man of faith. It is as if he was living all the events of his life in the presence of God. It was said of him that he was God's friend. But what struck me the most was the way he left without knowing where he was going. God had simply spoken of a country that he would be shown. When we abandon ourselves to God, when we truly listen to Him, the Lord let's us grasp that he is there! And around us, everything else takes on a different dimension. Oh, without doubt, faith always remains faith – this is not about the obvious – and of course there are days where you do not understand or you ask questions. Isn't it all a dream? Am I going the right way?

My father showed me that life is like a long pilgrimage, that it is necessary to set off without hesitation. The Lord will accompany us towards the land that is our true homeland.

**Reference text:** The call of Abraham (Gn 12, 1-4).

### Identity and Mission of Faith and Light

*"Today, if you want to continue to shine in the sky like stars in the universe", it means not only looking at the road travelled but also returning to our initial inspiration, to what is fundamental..."*

Cf. Booklet "You will shine in the world like bright stars", pages 2 to 4..



### Welcome and Reunion

The chaplain or the community leader presents each person, on their arrival, with a shell-shaped necklace (see page 81) upon which is written: "Jesus, You have called me to set off. I, (name), I want to say "yes". This shell will be used at the commitment celebration. We put them in a basket.



### Sharing

After the "weather forecast", we start singing the song chosen this year that will mark the beginning of each meeting. The leader or organiser can read or tell in his own words the story of the month.

Like Abraham, we are called to set off in trust, we are all pilgrims. *"Never fear putting trust in God."*

The Lord is calling us to set off to give thanks for the birth of Faith and Light forty years ago. Our commitment in the community is a response to the call of God.

We can go back to the text from Marie-Hélène Mathieu that explains the meaning of the 2011-2012 pilgrimages (see page 6). If you haven't done so already, the community leader can officially announce the province pilgrimage in which we are going to take part and give as much information as possible.

### In small groups

Of course, I am not Abraham. I don't think of being called for such grand things. However, God calls me to the greatest thing, which is to love, be trustworthy, to leave myself behind and to set off with Him.

- What small step am I going to take to, like Abraham, set off to follow the road shown to me by the Lord?
- What small step am I going to take to love those who irritate me and that I really cannot love? How am I going to create a bond of friendship with them? How do I go about it?
- What small step are we going to take to prepare for the province pilgrimage?

### Commitment celebration

The leader and the chaplain are side by side. The candles are lit. The chaplain, in his cassock, calls the first person. They go up to him and say: "*Jesus, you have called me to set off. I, (name), I want to say **yes**.*"

Then the leader speaks to this same person, saying: "*The community calls you and asks you to undertake ... (for example: think of birthdays, take photos during meetings, help sending out invitations, always coming with a beautiful smile, etc.). The person replies: "Yes, I make the commitment".*

Through these words that are spoken, we renew in joy and trust our commitment within the community. The chaplain then places the shell around their neck, the symbol of the pilgrim.

We can end this celebration by saying the Faith and Light prayer together (see page 77).

At each meeting, we could wear this shell around our necks, thus reminding us that we are on the road, that all this year is aimed at the celebration of our fortieth anniversary.



## Praying

With Saint Patrick

*I go along my road with the strength of God to protect me,  
the wisdom of God to guide me, the eye of God to uphold me,  
the ear of God to hear me.*

*May Christ go before me and show me the way.*

*May Christ be at my side and accompany me.*

*May Christ be behind me and protect me.*

*May Christ be beneath me and carry me when I fall.*

*May Christ be within me and fill me with His Spirit.*

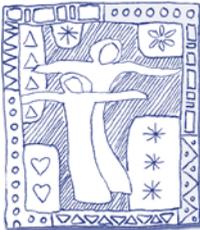
*May Christ be all around me and protect me from harm.*

*May Christ be above me and bless me.*

*Amen!*

## Prayer of a poor person

*Lord Jesus, I want to follow you.*



## Celebrating

### Game

### Forward!

Designate a person to be the engine. The game is about following the engine, in single file imitating its way of going forward. The engine moves in an erratic way (bell foot, duck, jumping...) and changes direction at any moment. Be careful, the engine stops and turns quickly, everyone must stay frozen, whatever their position. Giggles are guaranteed!

## Artist's workshop

Each member of the community comes up in turn to place their foot on a large white sheet of paper spread out on the ground. With a brush dip-

ped in poster paint (or with a felt tip), draw around the foot to make the imprint on the sheet. It is great fun for children (and even for adults) to paint the sole of the foot and why not dance on the sheet! I am showing that I am well on the road, my feet on the ground of my community and the Lord at my side showing me the way.

### **My personal Guidelines**

You can write: "*Yes, Jesus, I want to follow you*", or draw the shell or the outline of a pilgrim.

# Pilgrims like Asaph, David's bard





## The Word of the Month

You always speak of the Psalms of David. And people are right to do so. The good King David is our reference, the inspiration of our prayer. He was a true poet. My own talents are rather on the side of music. The Lord gave me a sense of rhythm.

Whilst quite small, I accompanied the songs of my brothers with anything to hand. Later, during worship, it was I who caused the cymbals to resound. Oh, how the lyres, harps and trumpets take on significance when the cymbals clash. I have also written a few words to sing to the Lord and invite believers to be faithful. One of my psalms reminds us that offering up animals is not enough and that God expects a right life from us; true worship does not work without concern for others.

I have specifically worked on the structuring of the Psalter. The Psalter is a large anthology of 150 poems. In Hebrew, it is called the *Tehillim*, which means "praises". It is the road to happiness for man, a road that leads to praising the Lord from start to finish: "*Blessed is the man* (Ps 1, 1)... *Let everything that has breath praise the Lord! Alleluia!* (Ps 150, 6).

By the way, have you noticed that there is a collection of texts that are called the "psalms for climbing"? Why climb and which way? Yes, you've guessed correctly. These are the prayers that pilgrims use when climbing to Jerusalem for the great pilgrimage celebrations. You don't know these texts! Go and read them. These are Psalms 120 to 134, fifteen quite short texts, in different formats, with various subjects. You will certainly find something there to suit your own pilgrimage, the pilgrimage of a lifetime. These fifteen songs are like the steps that you go through on a quest of God. You begin in deep distress from which you cry to the Lord (Ps 120, 1) in order to finish with the beatitude of the divine blessing of Sion (Ps 134, 3).

The Psalms are a marvellous school of prayer. Read them. Keep re-reading them. They talk of a road of tears, of cries, of praise, a road given by God to unite us with Him in our life. Sing these canticles with all those who climb, with all those who have set off on the road of life. At times, grief makes us



sing; at other times, it is with joy that we sing our hope. By praying these Psalms, we discover a "climb", which is not only done with the feet but much more with the enthusiastic heart

**Reference text:** Psalms for climbing (Ps 120-134)

### Identity and Mission of Faith and Light

*"Parents, disabled people, friends... All are turned to each other: their movement, like a dance, shows a loving joy shared in a reciprocal energy. A mystery beyond comprehension, but the image of which reflects our communities in a beautiful way."*

Cf. Booklet "You will shine in the world like bright stars", page 8.



### Welcome and Reunion

We are welcomed with music. We sing until everyone has arrived.

### Artist's workshop

To praise and sing to the Lord, we can begin our meeting by making musical instruments to accompany our songs (see templates page 82). Accompanied by these beautiful instruments, we can sing our hearts out all day long.



### Sharing

After the "weather forecast", we start singing the song chosen this year that will mark the beginning of each meeting. The leader or organiser can read or tell in his own words the story of the month.

Through David and his bard, we rediscover the beau-

ty of songs of praise. Saint Augustine said that "*He who sings prays twice*". The Psalms are a marvellous school of prayer. All pilgrims sing whilst walking and it a prayer that the Lord loves.

Today, we are going to give a special place to the praise prayer with songs and music.

- Which songs do I like? Why?

A community member will make a careful note of all the songs mentioned. They could form the basis of the community songbook.

### In small groups

We can compose the community Psalm. Each small group writes a verse that we read during the time of prayer.

*Glory to You, Lord for...* (joys)

*Have mercy, Lord, on...* (requests)

*Lord, keep close to You...* (our deceased parents or friends since we are in the All Saints period)



### Praying

*God our Father,  
In order to bring us closer to you,  
You offer us this time of pilgrimage.  
Increase the desire in us to walk in Your presence,  
Be with us in our walk towards You,  
Now and forever.*

We are invited to praise and thank the Lord. We get into a circle. A candle is passed from hand to hand. When we have the candle, we say a prayer of praise to God, a thank you for His presence in our lives and that of our brothers and sisters. Between each intention, a song of praise can be sung accompanied by the instruments we made earlier.

### Prayer of a poor person

*Lord, I offer You my song.*



## Celebrating

If we are unable to make our own instruments, we could ask everyone to bring a musical instrument or it will be the opportunity to invite a few musical friends. Together, we can learn the 40th anniversary celebrations song or a new action song.

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## Games

- The Coordination Team will have prepared small pieces of paper, upon which a word can be read such as: Sun, Love, Road, Child, Heart, Fire, Jesus...

Form small groups of five people. The first group picks up a piece of paper and must quickly find a song, which uses this word and sing it. Then the group passes the word to the other team until there are no songs left.

Or

- Each team chooses a song then finds actions to mime it. When it is finalised, mime the song without singing it. When you have guessed what song it is, sing it together with the actions.

Or

- It is now or never to play musical chairs. Stand in a circle behind the chairs (one less than the number of players). When the music starts, the players walk around the chairs. When the music stops, the players sit down. The one with no chair is out, joins the orchestra and a chair is removed from the circle. The game begins again with one player and one chair less...

### My personal Guidelines

I write the chorus of my favourite song.

# Pilgrims like the shepherds from Bethlehem





## The Word of the Month

We, the shepherds, have no say in the matter. The scribes and pharisees only look at us with contempt. It seems we are thieves and dishonest, that we do not respect the commandments of the Law of Moses. I never went to the synagogue in Bethlehem but I am certain that I wouldn't be allowed in. Why? Because that is how it is! For all time animals are animals and the poor are treated like all poor people, rejected, shunted to one side and ostracised.

My life took place on the around the pastures, the sheep and my dog were my usual company and I slept under the stars. Throughout the long sleepless nights, I asked myself questions: why were we outcasts? Why couldn't I wear beautiful clothes? Why was life so difficult for some? Also at times, when the stars shone and the night was calm, I was at peace, I forgot my ripped tunic, my bruised feet, the cold that chilled my bones or the heat that shrivelled. It was as if God was close to me, by my side, that he supported and consoled me. It was he who became my shepherd.

However, that night was different. A voice crossed the silence, soft and clear whilst audible and mysterious. The sheep remained huddled together. The voice was once again heard. It spoke of birth and poverty, of glory and peace. Like a caress on a cheek which is never received. Never had God felt so close, tender and kind.

And I came here to Bethlehem with my shepherd friends. Why did we go there? Driven by the desire to leave our daily life, to change our life? Whatever it was, with my friends, I found myself before the newborn, tenderly placed in a manger, as small, poor and naked as any of my lambs. And I could not help thinking, "He is the lamb of God". A peaceful silence reigned in the stable. The child slept and his parents looked at him as only parents can look at their child. The love of the Most High was almost perceptible, a love so different to what we imagine!

On returning home, I was also different. Why had the sight of this child

changed my life at this point? It is as if he had breathed in my ear that I was "son of God", loved by the Father of all men. A new light guided my steps. I couldn't help keeping all that in my heart. Everything was the same but everything was different. It was impossible to forget this night of grace that had transformed my life. Yes, I have believed since that day, "God is with us!"

**Reference text:** The birth of Jesus (Lk 2, 1-20)

### Identity and Mission of Faith and Light

*"Reveal the gift of intellectually disabled people: together, we form a Faith and Light community where each person welcomes his own weakness and meets the other in his. We testify that it is where God awaits us."*

Cf. Booklet "You will shine in the world like bright stars", pages 28 to 29.



### Welcome and Reunion

Everyone brings a small present (that they have made themselves) for a member of the community. We decorate the room together so that it is as beautiful as possible!

We will have also brought a passport photo that will be used in the artist's workshop.



### Sharing

After the "weather forecast", we start singing the song chosen this year that will mark the beginning of each meeting. The leader or organiser can read or tell in his own words the story of the month.

Christmas! Let us set off with the shepherds, ex-



cluded and poor, towards the manger. This meeting with the newborn child placed in a manger, "the lamb of God" can transform my life, just as it transformed that of the shepherds.

We can **bring to life, together**, the story of the month.

• **First scene**

- A small sad shepherd speaks about his life.
- A person comes forward, hugs the shepherd, strokes his cheek and consoles him.

• **Second scene**

- The room is in darkness, silent, then more and more clearly, soft music is heard. In a corner, about ten people with a poncho or a white sheet over their shoulders (sheep), are sat, huddled together. Close by are the sleeping shepherds.
- An angel appears: "*Do not fear, I bring you good news of great joy...*" (Lk 2, 10-14). Other angels join him and sing the Glory of God.

• **Third scene**

- The shepherds set off and arrive before the child. They kneel and say: "*He is the Lamb of God!*"
- All the community responds: "*Yes, He is the Lamb of God! God is with us!*"

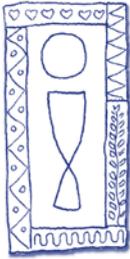
We end with a beautiful Christmas Carol.

**In small groups**

- The life of the shepherds was transformed by their meeting with Jesus. Who are the people who have transformed my life? Can I say who and how?
- Everyone receives the outline of a small shepherd (see page 82)
- How is Christmas being celebrated around us?
- Where am I going to celebrate Christmas?
- What is the meaning of Christmas for me?

**Artist's workshop**

We colour in the outline of our little shepherd and stick our photo in the place of the head. We are then all represented around the infant Jesus on a large board that will decorate the prayer corner.

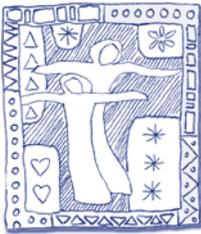


## Praying

*God Most High who performs miracles for us  
Blessed be You!  
Your Son visited us.  
In the poverty and obscurity of our lives.  
Let us receive Him with thanksgiving  
And recognise his presence in each fraternal meeting.  
Now and forever and ever!*

### Prayer of a poor person

*Thank you my God. You have given us Your son. I, too, am Your child.*



## Celebrating

In a lot of countries, Christmas presents are given but you can also give them for the "Festival of Kings", as is done in Spain, Italy...

- **Discovering presents**

Write numbers on small pieces of paper. Each number corresponds to the presents brought by each person. A rope is stretched from one end of the room to the other. Peg the numbers to it in a random order. To background music, two people go up to the string, blindfolded, and when the music stops, they unpeg the number and receive their present.

The presents could also be placed directly on the string... provided they are light! Also go and collect them in twos, blindfolded.

- If possible, we could organise a celebratory meal, even something very simple, to celebrate together the coming of Emanuel, God with us.

### Christmas riddles

We could compose a few very simple Christmas riddles, for example:



- My first is an abbreviated Saint  
My second can do  
My all is the shelter given to Mary and Joseph (St-able)
- My first is a tin  
My second is dim  
My all is a flickering and warm light (Can-dull – candle)
- My first is short for Elizabeth  
My second is the French for 'the'  
My third is a neat edge  
My all is the town where Jesus was born (Beth-le-hem)
- My first is Micky's duck friend in brief  
My second can open doors  
My all carried Mary to Bethlehem (Don-key)
- Now you play ...

*D  
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R*

### **My personal Guidelines**

At the end of the meeting, everyone collects their little shepherd to stick in their booklet.

# Pilgrims like Balthasar, Wise Man from the East





## The Word of the Month

I am not a wise man for nothing. I have been called a seer, charlatan, astrologer, magician and who knows what else! It was even believed that I was a king. Actually, my science – or my speciality, if you like – is observing the stars. Not to escape the world and forget what is happening on Earth, but quite the contrary, to decipher the mystery of the universe. Those from the four corners of the planet consult me. However, there was one night – I could not believe my eyes – a star shone in the sky as never before seen. I had never seen that. The star of my life! It was there like a calling and this time, it was I who got going. After putting a small amount of incense in my casket – it is a speciality of Sheba, my country – I left to follow the star.

On the way, I met Melchior, another wise man. It had been a long time since I had last seen him and my heart leapt with joy. He too had seen the star. It did not surprise us to find a bit further along that Gaspar was also on the way. On the way to where? We did not yet know, but we soon realised that all of us, people of Madian and Epha, of Sheba and of Qeda, were on the road to Jerusalem. It was the star of the King of the Jews that had appeared to us. Astonishing isn't it? I had always thought them a bit narrow-minded and rather fanatical, very different from us at any rate. They did not worship the same gods. Had they received a special revelation? I had imagined a quite different destination. But the stars lead us along unexpected roads.

In fact, we did not remain in Jerusalem. We were sent to Bethlehem, the city of King David. And it was here that the star stopped just above a dwelling where a child had just been born. No throne of silver or sceptre of gold. There wasn't the splendour of a royal court or sumptuous ceremony. It was about something more true and just. For there was no doubt that the star had led us to the right place. The joy that filled our hearts was the sign. As usual, God had disrupted our plans and upset our preconceived ideas. And I too began to sing with the poor people and some shepherds who were there: "Glory to God in the highest and peace on Earth to all men".

My science was of no help here. A new world was opening up in front of me! It was the same for Melchior and Gaspar. The meeting with the child changed our lives. And that day, we understood that in order to find the truth we must take another road, not the road shown by Herod but that by which we found the newborn child.

**Reference text:** The visit of the Magi (Mt 2, 1-12)

### Identity and Mission of Faith and Light

*"It is a prerequisite to welcome others as they are. At Faith and Light, our vocation is to welcome another person and to see the presence and love of Jesus in their heart. This welcoming opens us up to the difference and encourages us towards ecumenism..."*

Cf. Booklet "You will shine in the world like bright stars", pages 24 to 25.

From 29 January to 2 February, the Province Coordinators are meeting for the first time as a council in Lourdes. It will be the occasion to officially launch the 40th anniversary of Faith and Light celebrations throughout the world. Let us keep this meeting and all the following events in our prayers. May the Lord bless this jubilee!



### Welcome and Reunion

On arrival, each person receives a star upon which is written: "*Glory to God in the highest and on Earth peace to men*" (See templates page 83).

We will use it during the time of sharing.



## Sharing

After the "weather forecast", we start singing the song chosen this year that will mark the beginning of each meeting.

After presenting the theme of the month, we can **relive together** this beautiful story of the Three Wise Men. Make provision for a costume, a poncho or an accessory for each person, all the community is involved.

### Characters

- A narrator
- Mary and Joseph
- The angels
- The shepherds and their sheep
- The Three Wise Men and their camels
- A carrier for the star

**Accessories:** a star that is approximately 60cm attached to a stick, presents from the Wise Men.

In the left corner: a cradle with the infant Jesus. To the right, the shepherds.

**First scene:** Balthasar in his observatory

- He introduces himself
- The star appears
- Balthasar puts the incense in a casket and attaches it to the back of his camel.
- He sets off following the star

**Second scene:** Balthasar meets Melchior and Gaspar

- Balthasar meets Melchior, his camel is also carrying a casket
- They are both happy
- They see Gaspar coming, he, too, is carrying a present
- Balthasar, Melchior and Gaspar continue the journey together, always following the star with their caravan of camels
- A crowd joins them on the road

**Third scene:** the Three Wise Men arrive at the manger

- The shepherds are already there worshipping the infant Jesus
- The Three Wise Men kneel and offer their gifts
- Everyone, shepherds and Wise Men sing "*Glory to God*".

Through wanting to follow Jesus, we are often taken along unexpected roads without knowing where we are going. But we know that they lead us to love.

It is the road taken by Jesus that we are following, that our community and all the communities throughout the world are following. God reveals Himself to everyone: the Three Wise Men sing with the shepherds. A new world is opening up: the Faith and Light community is an image of it.

Be we knowing or ignorant, wise men or shepherds, God has given us a unique gift. In turn, everyone could tell of the gift to the person on their right. It can be written on a star. With all these gift stars, we make a mobile that will be hung in our prayer corner to show the glory of God.

### In small groups

- I have neither gold, incense nor myrrh. What can I give to Jesus?
- What is my gold, incense or myrrh?

Like the Wise Men, we come from different places, we are all different. This is what makes us rich. We have different activities and do beautiful things outside of the community.

- What can I tell about what I do outside the community? (I belong to a theatre group? A sports team? A catechism group? ...) We can share these various activities.



### Praying

*Holy Father,  
Those who have left their country  
And journeyed in hope,  
You led them to Your Son:  
Grant us who are also on the road*



*The sight of His face one day  
And to enter into His joy.  
He who lives and reigns for ever and ever.*

The month of January is marked by the week of prayer for Christian unity. The Wise Men came from three different places following the star together to the manger. At Faith and Light, we come from different Churches but we are united around Jesus. Let us keep in our hearts, the greatest wish of Jesus: "*May we be one*".

### **Prayer of a poor person**

*Jesus, my star, You show me the way that leads to You.*

### **A beautiful interfaith dialogue**

One day, he asked me quite unexpectedly to teach him to pray, Mohammed had made a practice of regularly coming to talk with me. He was a neighbour. So we had a long history of sharing...

One day, he found the formula for arranging a meeting: "*It is a long time since we dug a well!*"

Once, jokingly, I asked: "*What are we going to find at the bottom of our well? Muslim or Christian water?*"

He looked at me, half laughingly and half sad: "*All the same, we have been walking together for such a long time and you still ask this question... You know, at the bottom of that well is where God's water is found!*"

A Tibhirine monk

### **Artist's workshop**

**A star mobile** (see template page 83)

Equipment: wooden sticks, fishing line, thick paper, scissors, needle.

Cut out stars of different sizes and shapes from a slightly thick paper.

Make the sticks into a cross and tie them together with the fishing line.

Hang the stars from the time of sharing from it.



## Celebrating

- In our costumes, dance a large farandole around the room or outside singing the Gloria to offer the joy in our hearts to Jesus.
- If we can, gather around a large table to share 'galettes des rois' (king cakes) or any other traditional cake from our country.

To make the galettes or king cakes, in the invitation letter, suggest meeting in small groups, under the 4th time or "time of friendship" framework.

Why not invite a few mums to make the traditional cakes of another country and so give an international dimension to our meeting? (See page 83).

### Present game

Equipment: newspaper, string, sellotape, scissors, shoebox.

Link the right arm of one player with the left arm of another. Each pair must wrap the box in newspaper, secure it with sellotape and tie it with string only using their free arm. It isn't easy! A jury will decide the best packet, the funniest, the most original, the most imaginative... in such a way that each pair receives a prize!

### My personal Guidelines

I draw a star and I write the gift that I discovered during the time of sharing.

# Pilgrims like Anna, the prophetess

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## The Word of the Month

Since the death of my husband, I have been going to the Temple regularly. I like to spend time there praying and repeating the words of King David. "Blessed are those who dwell in your house, Lord; they are ever praising you!" I no longer climb the steps to the Holy Place as quickly as before – I will soon be 85 years old – but it is always a joy to be able to pray and repeat, "I love the house where you live, O Lord, the place where your glory dwells".

The other day, the air was sharp – as it is on some winter days – and the sun was shining brightly. On approaching the Beautiful Gate, I noticed Simeon, a good and just man who was deeply religious. I have never met anyone who examined the Scriptures with such attention, nor who awaited the coming of the Messiah with such intensity. His whole life had been changed by it already. He was deeply engrossed in conversation with a young couple. The mother was carrying a newborn in her arms. The father had two pigeons in his hands. Young parents often came to the Temple because the Law of Moses tells us to dedicate any firstborn boy to the Lord.

Simeon had just given the child to his mother and was praying aloud: "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel ". Simeon continued, "Your child will be a sign of division and will be disputed by many. And a sword will pierce your own heart too". The mother looked at Simeon. She also looked at me. She said nothing other than Amen almost silently, coming from deep within herself. All her being seemed to pray, "my soul praises the Lord! Holy is his name!"

And myself, returning home, I began to sing to the Lord and I could not help sharing this moment of grace with all those I met. Thank you Lord for this meeting.

**Reference text:** Presentation at the Temple (Lk 2, 22-40)

## Identity and Mission of Faith and Light

*"Announce to nations that the person with a disability can become a source of unity and peace: the salvation of the world still comes from the presence of God in the weakest. Our road is a road of humility. We are not seeking to do big things, we are simply called to walk with the humblest and smallest."*

Cf. Booklet "You will shine in the world like bright stars", pages 30 to 31.



## Welcome and Reunion

The preparation team will have already set up the prayer corner and lit a candle. As far as possible, the room is semi-dark. On arrival, everyone is given a tealight that they will light at the large candle in the middle of the prayer corner and put it on the side.

Thanks to our candles, the room is going to light up. When everyone has arrived, we begin to sing a joyful song about the light.

If we are welcoming members of another community, each person receives a flame-shaped badge with their name on it (see template, page 84).

## Artist's workshop

We can make candle jars that will decorate our room throughout the whole meeting (see template, page 84).



## Sharing

After the "weather forecast", we start singing the song chosen this year that will mark the beginning of each meeting. The leader or organiser can read or tell in his own words the story of the month.

After her meeting with the holy family and Simeon

in the Temple, the prophetess Anna praised God and spoke of the child to those she met because her heart was overflowing with joy. Anna became a "Messenger of joy".

The leader or chaplain could spend time explaining the theme of the celebrations that are going to mark 40 years of Faith and Light <sup>9</sup>.

### In small groups

- What makes me particularly joyful?
- How can the joy experienced in the community be shared?
- Can I also be a "Messenger of joy" like Anna? How?
- Have I already met "Messengers of joy"? What have they told me? Has it changed something in my heart, my life?

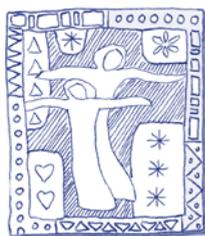


### Praying

*Lord Jesus, you came amongst us,  
Glory of your people,  
Light for us all.  
When the weight of days is felt,  
First awake in us the faith,  
be the light in our lives.*

### Prayer of a poor person

*Jesus, You are the light of my heart.*



### Celebrating

The room is decorated on the theme of light with warm colours: red, orange and yellow. Garlands, balloons, paper flowers...

The festival of light is an occasion to celebrate: don't be afraid to make up a community dance. To lively

9) See page 9



music, form one or more circles that open and close, make spirals and arabesques, move forwards and backwards...

### **Chinese shadows game**

Equipment: white sheet, torch, hats...

In the invitation letter, ask each person to bring an object or item of clothing. Each person has fun going behind the sheet with a hat, cap, umbrella, making a gesture or striking a particular pose... but who is hidden behind the sheet?

### **Portrait game**

Equipment: sheet of paper, torch, felt tip, sellotape

Stick the sheet of paper on a wall. One person sits in profile in front of the paper. A second person lights the profile with the torch so that a Chinese shadow appears on the paper, finally a third person draws the outline... Surprising!

## **My personal Guidelines**

I write: "*Jesus, you are the light of my heart*" and I illustrate the page in my own way

# Pilgrims like the prodigal son





## The Word of the Month

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*Lydia* – It is strange that the parables of Jesus always have something new in them whilst we think we know them. You think they are little stories, which you can quickly tell, but when you re-read them and meditate on them, you always discover something new. I had this experience again with the story of the son who had left his father's house.

*Clement* – It is a beautiful story but not very realistic! Do you know any father who would act like this? The son is owed nothing! No, it doesn't work. If that was my son... I wonder even if I would give him beans to eat!

*Lydia* – It is true that to us, it is give, give but Jesus correctly tells us that it is different with God.

*Clement* – Yes and that worries me. There is something in me that resists it. Basically, I do not agree with this story of the Prodigal Son!

*Lydia* – Why do you say the "prodigal son"? Don't you think that it is primarily about the Father?

*Clement* – No, Jesus talks about the son's escapade.

*Lydia* – Careful! You are forgetting the start: "a man had two sons". That makes three people. And then Jesus was talking to scribes and pharisees, those thought to be the real obedient sons. They reprimanded Jesus for being on the side of those outside the law, of those who did not respect the Law of Moses. And Jesus dared to say that he came precisely to call those people to the Kingdom's banquet. What provocation! And to those men said to be just, Jesus spoke clearly. He was only copying his Father, a Father with the true heart of a father. This Father only had one thing to say: "My son, I would so like to see you again".

*Clement* – You are right. Do I look like the other son, he who didn't leave and thus did not need to return, he who thought himself best best whilst he had a dry heart, he in whom the father's forgiveness revealed jealousy and resentment? I am without doubt closer to the older son and Jesus invites me to a real conversion.

Lydia – Yes, you are invited to enter the joy of God. Let the Lord look at you. This is why we exist. To accept this is to start living.

**Reference text:** The Prodigal Son (Lk 15)

### Identity and Mission of Faith and Light

*"The person with an intellectual disability helps us to discover our own fragility, a fruitful fragility that transforms. Their vulnerability makes us discover our own vulnerabilities. Our disabled friends invite us to discover our own spiritual abilities. They cause to rise in us, if we know how to hear them, new aptitudes for sensitivity and love"*

Cf. Booklet "You will shine in the world like bright stars", pages 8 and 9.



### Welcome and Reunion

The chaplain welcomes each person by name, saying: "(Name), *God your Father loves you as you are*". He then gives them a pretty card upon which is written:

*"Lord our God,  
We have searched for your roads,  
But we have also followed our own.  
Do not get tired of forgiving our straying.  
Today again, bring us back to you".*

Then we come together to read the text.



## Sharing

After the "weather forecast", we start singing the song chosen this year that will mark the beginning of each meeting. The leader or organiser can read or tell in his own words the story of the month.

Lent is a favourite time to allow ourselves to be transformed by the Love of the Father. Like the prodigal son, we left the paternal home, took the wrong

road and then came back.

To better understand the extent of our Father's love and expectation of us, we can **relive together** the Gospel of Luke 15 which relates three parables of the joy of God: the found sheep, the silver coin and the prodigal son.

### In small groups

- Sometimes, I am on the wrong road, I have taken the wrong path. What pushes me further from my Father?
- When I realise that I have taken the wrong road, how do I return to Him?
- What does the Father say to his son? Are these words relevant to me today?
- The joy of God! How and when can I give joy to my Father?

## Artist's workshop

On a large sheet of paper, draw a house or copy the template. In front of the house, stick the outline of Jesus with open arms. Then cut out the outline upon which is written our name and stick them all around Jesus. This board can decorate the prayer corner. (See page 84)



## Praying

*Lord our God,  
We have searched for your roads,  
But we have also followed our own.  
Do not get tired of forgiving our straying.  
Today [this evening, now,...] again, bring us back to you.  
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.*

We can experience the Way of the Cross together (Jean Vanier meditation)<sup>10</sup> or organise a penance celebration.

### Prayer of a poor person

*Father, you always forgive me when I return to you.*



### Celebrating

We could organise a simple and joyous "bowl of rice" meal and make a beautiful table decoration with simple foliage.

### Game: Find your way

Equipment: musical instruments or whistles, blindfold

Some community members are going to be obstacles spread around the room. All the players are stood up, with an instrument or whistle and are relatively far from one another. The blindfolded person must walk across the room, without bumping into the human obstacles. Each time they approach an obstacle, it makes a noise using their instrument as an alarm. The rule is that the blindfolded person crosses the room without stopping... Change player after a few minutes!

### Catch me

Form two groups: the 'catcher' and the 'catchees'. The 'catchers' form a circle holding hands and hold them up while the music plays. The 'catchees' enter and leave the circle. When the music stops, the players lower their arms. The people within the circle are taken and join the circle of 'catchers'. The circle gets bigger and the game continues until there is only one 'catchee' left.

## Day of Announcing and Sharing

Lent is the occasion to organise the Day of Announcing and Sharing (see

<sup>10</sup>) See the Faith and Light International site: <http://www.foietlumiere.org/site/136.html>



pages 88 and 89). This year, it has a particular significance: through our efforts, we will contribute to the solidarity for the jubilee pilgrimages.

### **My personal Guidelines**

I stick in the drawing of the roads of shadow and light (see page 84) and I draw my silhouette. Where am I? On the road of light?

# Pilgrims like Simon of Cyrene





## The Word of the Month

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That year, I made the trip from Cyrene to Jerusalem. It had been a long time since I had visited the Holy City on a pilgrimage. Already the African coast was disappearing over the horizon, and, on the boat, we began to sing psalms to prepare us to celebrate the Passover on Mount Sinai. My wife and two small boys, Alexander and Rufus, were in my thoughts.

A strong storm and head winds upset our voyage. Were we going to arrive on time? We all called to the Almighty, "Lord, you know our deepest thoughts, may your will be done". We had escaped the tornado but we arrived too late to celebrate the Passover and eat the paschal lamb. Also, we were in a real state, dirty and exhausted as if we'd come out of the fields. Good, we still had time to go to the Temple and thank God for having escaped the great waters of the sea as our ancestors did in times past when they crossed the Red Sea.

In the back streets of the city, there were crowds celebrating, but this year there was a special atmosphere. A Galilean, who had been spoken of a lot during the past few months, had been condemned to death: a certain Jesus, who hailed from the small town of Nazareth. His name was not unknown in the country, but we hardly knew more. And it was there on the road to the Cyrenian synagogue that we came face to face with the Roman cortege. This Jesus was being led to his crucifixion. It was impossible to go on, as the crowd was so dense. Assuredly, this pilgrimage was going to be a complete failure.

I was angry about this business of a false prophet being condemned by our leaders. Suddenly, a Roman officer called to me, first in Latin then in Greek when I couldn't understand him. With forceful gestures, he ordered me to carry the cross of the condemned man and walk behind him. I wanted to flee. What would my wife, my family and my neighbours think seeing me there? Me, a man known in Cyrene for his position and his contacts, obliged to give aid to a vulgar agitator, condemned for subversive ideas and his dismissal of our most sacred traditions! It was impossible to run away.

The soldier left me no choice. Therefore, I turned to the condemned man. He was exhausted, weakened, disfigured, and almost dead. In his eyes, there was no violence, no hate but on the contrary, an immense kindness and gentleness such as I had never seen before. My eyes were wet with tears and without understanding, I set about following him carrying his cross.

During the journey, it was strange, I saw my past life, my supports, my concerns and worries. My life seemed futile, vain and empty! I began to regret the past. I asked forgiveness from God and men for the hardness of my heart. At Golgotha, the soldiers signalled for me to leave and I didn't ask for my rest. However, within me, something had changed. No, I was no longer the same. I wanted to know more about this man. His disciples confirmed that he was alive. I joined them. It is he, the Living One, who gave me a new life. Today, I am a Christian. I believe that after my death, I will be resurrected with him and already now I see his resurrection.

**Reference text:** Simon of Cyrene (Mt 27, 32).

### Identity and Mission of Faith and Light

*"In Faith and Light, it is not about doing good for the poor but being healed amongst them. Communing with a poor person changes us, transforms us, makes us more human and builds a road to knowing God."*

Cf. Booklet "You will shine in the world like bright stars", pages 10 to 11.

Easter being 24 April, this meeting will be held in the spirit of the holy week that is the central mystery of our faith. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

The first international Faith and Light pilgrimage took place at Easter 1971. This date marks 40 years of our movement.

Several communities could arrange to meet together to celebrate this anniversary and propose that the parish holds a Eucharist or celebration at the end of

which, we could invite the parishioners to a glass of friendship.



## Welcome and Reunion

The Coordination Team will have sent an invitation card to each member of the community to celebrate 40 years of Faith and Light. Each person is invited to come in party clothes.

Two members of the community hold a large white sheet. On arrival, each person goes under the sheet:

it is the passage from death to life.

If we meet on Easter Sunday or after, all those who are already there say: "*Christ is risen, Alleluia!*", and after going under the sheet, the person replies: "*Christ is truly risen, Alleluia!*".



## Sharing

After the "weather forecast", we start singing the song chosen this year that will mark the beginning of each meeting. The leader or organiser can read or tell in his own words the story of the month.

Following Jesus by carrying his cross like Simon of Cyrene leads to resurrection. We go from death to

Life! Today, we are celebrating the paschal mystery as well as 40 years of Faith and Light. Beyond the suffering is the joy that characterises Faith and Light, such is the mysterious reality that we experience and that we want to announce to the world. We are "Messengers of joy".

We can **relive together** the birth of Faith and Light or simply **read** the story (see pages 90 to 93). <sup>11</sup>

### In small groups

- How did his meeting with Jesus transform Simon's life?
- How has my meeting with Jesus transformed my life?
- What is the greatest joy brought to me by Faith and Light and that I want to share with others? On multicoloured paper hearts, we write this message of joy. We will use them during the time of celebration.



### Praying

*Lord Jesus,  
On taking the road to Jerusalem to die,  
You invited us to enter into your Passover.  
Allow us to walk behind you into the light of life.  
You who reigns forever and ever.*

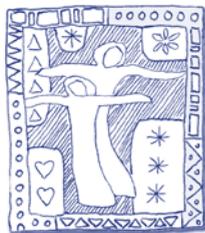
In the form of a litany, we can thank God for all the Faith and Light communities throughout the world.

### Prayer of a poor person

*Jesus, I want to walk beside You.*

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11) The story of Faith and Light is available as a cartoon that can be downloaded from the Faith and Light International website: <http://www.foietlumiere.org/site/398.html>



## Celebrating

- On a board, we stick the multicoloured hearts and their messages of joy. They could be stuck, symbolically, in the shape of a "40".

Or

- We could organise a show about the birth of Faith and Light with singing and dancing to express our joy.

Or

- We could also prepare and share a large cake with 40 candles.

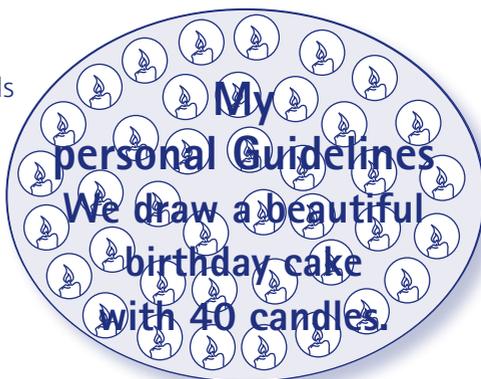
## 40 years game

Equipment: print flags<sup>12</sup> for the countries where Faith and Light is present (see list of countries, page 87). Print the map of the Faith and Light world<sup>13</sup>, Blu-tack or sellotape.

Each person in turn picks up a flag (the name of the country is written on the back) and must place it on its country. Some are quite difficult to know. After three wrong guesses, you can look at the name on the back!

## Artist's workshop

We make two anniversary cards (see pages), one for Jean Vanier and the other for Marie-Hélène Mathieu, with a big thank you for the birth of Faith and Light 40 years ago!<sup>14</sup>



12) Images of flags of the world: [www.cyber-flag.net/](http://www.cyber-flag.net/)

13) See website : [www.foietlumiere.org/site/152html](http://www.foietlumiere.org/site/152html)

14) Jean Vanier : 29, rue d'Orléans 60350 Trosly-Breuil, France

Marie-Hélène Mathieu: 90 avenue de Suffren 75015 Paris, France

# Pilgrims on the road to Emmaus





## The Word of the Month

The road from Emmaus to Jerusalem is not very long. A good ten kilometres. A two hour walk and you are there. However, it is a journey that remains engraved in my memory forever. It was a spring evening in the year 30 or 31.

That evening, I had left Jerusalem with Cleophas. Two days previously, we had witnessed the ignominious death of Jesus of Nazareth. We liked to listen to him when he spoke of the Kingdom of God. The sick came to him and he cured them all. Truly, he was a friend of the poor, small and disabled people. The rich also came to listen to him and many doctors of the law. He had a way about him of talking of God who he called "Abba, Father". With Jesus, we were the sons and daughters of God, all children of the same father. It was as if the Kingdom of God was already here. But that upset many, starting with the scribes and priests who risked losing their privileges. For their part, the Romans feared a revolt from the people. Therefore, they had condemned him to death during an unfair trial. For us too, it was also the end. Haggard, dazed and lost, Cleophas and I, we were returning, on the road home. What were we going to do? Continue to live! But how?

On the road, a stranger joined us. We talked to him about what was in our hearts. Apparently, he didn't know about the death of Jesus of Nazareth. He in turn challenged us. We did not understand anything he told us. Jesus was a real prophet. He had remained true to his mission. His death was the sign of the supreme gift. It was the road to life for all men. If you read the Holy Scriptures, you would see that all this had been announced and prepared for. What had happened to the Galilean prophet was part of God's plan. It was us who had not understood. Jesus was delivered for our sins. Death had not destroyed him. He was alive. He was resurrected. He had passed to the true life. That is what he told us and that I am trying to retell with my poor words.

I must add that our hearts were burning as the stranger spoke to us on the road and explained the Scriptures. In our night, a little light was beginning

to break through. Outside, however, night was falling. Fortunately, we had arrived at Emmaus. Cleophas invited me to his home to eat. The traveller made as if to continue on his way and we insisted: "Stay with us because it is late and the day is on the wane". While we were at the table, he took the bread and blessed it, he broke it and gave it to us. It was him! On the breaking of the bread, we recognised him. How were we blind up to that point? But as soon as our eyes were opened to his presence, he became invisible to us. No, he had not been kept in the nets of death. He was more alive than ever. He was the way, the truth and the life. How could we not announce this message and be messengers of his joy?

**Reference text:** The appearance of Jesus to the disciples in Emmaus (Lk 24, 13-35).

### Identity and Mission of Faith and Light

*"During its short history, Faith and Light has followed roads that have been as surprising as unexpected; roads of hope for thousands of people throughout the world."*

Cf. Booklet "You will shine in the world like bright stars", page 2



### Welcome and Reunion

On arrival, each person is invited to cover their eyes with their hands whilst saying: "*Open my eyes, Lord, to your presence*" then remove their hands and say: "*Praise the Lord!*" The whole meeting will be particularly beautiful to celebrate the presence of God.



## Sharing

After the "weather forecast", we start singing the song chosen this year that will mark the beginning of each meeting. The leader or organiser can read or tell in his own words the story of the month. Everything should be done to create an atmosphere of reflection and internalisation.

The Emmaus pilgrims did not understand and Jesus came to explain all that had happened to them. But they did not recognise him immediately. Jesus is always present in our lives and often, it isn't realised. Jesus always comes to us and reveals himself, he asks us: "*What is in your heart?*" Jesus is always with us. It is the mystery of faith, Jesus is present in the Eucharist and present in the Word.

We can **re-live together** the story of the Emmaus pilgrims and let this mysterious presence of Jesus penetrate, so that everything is internalised to prepare us for this heart to heart that we are going to experience in small groups.

## Artist's workshop

On a coloured piece of paper, cut out a paperchain of 3 small characters for each member of the community. On one set of faces, draw sad faces with covered eyes. When we turn them over, the faces are smiling and the eyes wide open (See page 85).

### In small groups

Risen Jesus is with me wherever I am, he wants to open my eyes and heart. Has he come to me at a difficult time in my life? Or has he asked me today: "What is in your heart?" The answer that we can give Jesus is so personal and perhaps at times so painful... So, answer him in an intimate and silent heart to heart. We can play soft meditative music, a Taizé chant. Then, after a few minutes, we can share this question together:

- Are there people who have opened my eyes, have made me grow? Af-

ter having spoken, each person receives a paperchain of figures with closed eyes and turns it over: the smiling faces appear!



## Praying

*Lord Jesus,  
On Easter morning,  
Your disciples came to the tomb,  
And it was empty;  
On Easter evening,  
Your disciples were on the road,  
And you joined them there.*

*Let us also believe in your resurrection,  
And announce to our brothers and sisters  
That you precede us in life,  
Now and forever and ever.*

We prepare a very beautiful mass or a liturgy of the Word to celebrate the presence of Jesus.

At the end of the time of prayer, we pull out the piece of paper upon which is written the name of our "Cleophas" (a member of the community). We particularly keep this companion in our prayers until the next meeting, we can also make up little signs of friendship for them...

## Prayer of a poor person

*Jesus, you open my eyes and my heart. I will be a messenger of joy.*



## Celebrating

### Game: Zip Zap

We all sit in a circle. One person is in the middle. Everyone is named once. The person in the middle points to one of the players in the circle and says to them either: "Zip", "Zap" or "Zip Zap". If they say "Zip", the person pointed to must say the name of the person to their left. If they say "Zap", the person pointed to must say the name



## *Pilgrims like...*

of the person to their right. If the person pointed to cannot remember the name of the person next to them or is wrong, they replace the person in the middle. If the quiz master says "Zip Zap", all the players change place and form a new circle.

*M*  
*A*  
*Y*

### **My personal Guidelines**

I stick in the paperchain of smiling faces and write the name of the person that I am going to pray for until the next meeting.

# Pilgrims like Philip, on the road to Gaza





## The Word of the Month

Herod was a tyrant of the worst kind but he has made our town a beautiful city in the Greek style, with a theatre, public baths and modern port facilities. I like it at Caesarea. It is the Roman administrative capital but for us, there is also a significant Jewish community here and there are many disciples of Jesus of Nazareth here. In Caesarea, there is even a famous convert, our brother Cornelius, a centurion from the Italian regiment.

However, it isn't Caesarea that I want to talk about but what happened to me on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza. With hindsight, I have to recognise that something happened to me there. It was truly the Spirit of God at work. It is astonishing how the Spirit of God makes us leave our familiar surroundings and take to new roads.

You know of my zeal to proclaim the Good News to our brothers and sisters in Samaria. It is a real joy for me to share what is in my heart and it makes me feel alive. I wasn't called an evangelist for nothing. Oh, not because of my success but the work of the Spirit. On this point, my four daughters – I am happy to say – take after their father.

But I digress. Let us get back to my Ethiopian. One day, pushed by I do not know what inspiration, I was going to Gaza. The road was virtually empty. A chariot with four superb steeds had stopped beside the road. Clearly a dignitary! Sat on the seat, the owner – a Koushite with a swarthy complexion – was reading a passage from the prophet Isaiah. He did not understand a word. The prophet spoke of a mysterious servant of God who had been rejected, put to death and then supremely exalted. The Ethiopian asked if I could explain it to him. What a joy to be able to explain the Scriptures to him, telling him what Jesus had done and how, condemned and put to death, he rose again on the third day. The man was so touched that he requested that I baptise him there and then. He too wished to enter the new life given by baptism in the name of Jesus.

You can imagine my astonishment. Baptising a stranger from the far-off

country of Koush? But that is how it was. The Spirit of the Lord removes all our borders. The Good News of Jesus Christ was not only given for us Jews. It is for all men without exception. Later, I learnt that this officer of the Queen of Ethiopia had, in turn, shared his Christian faith with his countrymen. Praise be to God. Alleluia!

**Reference text:** Philip baptises an Ethiopian (Ac 8, 26-40)

### Identity and Mission of Faith and Light

*"Being alive is embarking on an adventure where we believe that God is calling us together, in our frailties, to be fruitful for one for another. Our wisdom is knowing how to make gestures that extend to the future: extending the hand beyond our communities, beyond the walls dividing the world, disabilities, religions, races, social class..."*

Cf. Booklet "You will shine in the world like bright stars", page 32.



### Welcome and Reunion

The chaplain or leader blows on each person who arrives saying to them: *"You are the temple of the Holy Spirit, go and announce the love of God"*



### Sharing

After the "weather forecast", we start singing the song chosen this year that will mark the beginning of each meeting. The leader or organiser can read or tell in his own words the story of the month.

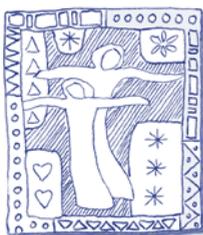
At the last meeting, we saw that the meeting between the Emmaus pilgrims and Jesus ended with



the fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness and self control (Gal 5, 22). Each person is going to pick up a piece of paper. Until Pentecost next year, we will try to live and make this fruit of the Spirit grow in us.

### Prayer of a poor person

*Jesus, give us the breath of your Spirit.*



## Celebrating

### Chinese whispers

Equipment: 2 baskets (one for each team), pieces of paper upon which is written a country name.

Each of the two teams form a circle or a line. The first player from each team picks out a piece of paper.

They must make up, for the other team, a small sentence that contains the country name shown on the piece of paper.

They are going to whisper it into the ear of the first player of the other team who whispers it to the second and then the third... until the last person who should say the sentence out loud.

The more complicated the sentence, the more laughter is guaranteed!

### My personal Guidelines

I draw a boat with a sail and I write: "*The Spirit of God crosses all borders*". On the sail, I write the fruit of the Holy Spirit that I will keep in my heart.

# Pilgrims like Titus, Paul's companion

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## The Word of the Month

Yesterday, I received a letter from Paul of Tarsus. It was good to hear his news. He invited me to join him at Nicopolis, in Epirus, for the winter. I was very pleased but did not know if it would be possible. There was so much still to do to organise the community and give it suitable structures. I try to take everything into account, listen to everyone and only then to agree to the best decision. That always takes more time than you think it will.

Obviously, with his temperament, Paul forged on and went ahead. What zeal to announce Jesus Christ and the power of his resurrection! The Lord had really found in Paul the person needed to announce the Gospel but at times I could hardly keep up and I wasn't alone. It is good to launch projects. However, good administration needs to follow! For there was no lack of practical issues in our communities.

Perhaps you remember the assembly in Jerusalem. I was there. A lot of questions arose and people could not agree amongst themselves. With Paul, we resisted those who wanted to impose Jewish practices on us and change our diet. I had no inclination to be obliged to follow Jewish customs to become a Christian. "Yes! That is part of who we are. It is our identity", they said. Fortunately, Paul and others supported our argument. Paul was quite sharp, I must say, and at times he did not fail to lose his temper. On that basis, I shared his opinion, but I guess it was necessary for him to talk and negotiate. And to be patient. It took time for ideas to become reality.

So, on to the organisation of the gathering at Corinth. It has always seemed to be an obvious fact that between Christians, the most affluent should help the most poor. But this was not easy to get accepted in fact. It is funny how men talk and act in a different way when it is a question of appealing to the purse. Moreover, it is true that Paul had a brush with the community in Corinth. I suffered a lot of it, but fortunately today the contacts are renewed and the bad quarrels have died down.

It is sometimes said that Paul described me in the letter addressed to me.



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*cover the message of life and joy that you send to us in our meeting with our brothers and sisters.*

On arrival, each person receives a piece of the puzzle and we make it. When everyone has arrived, we read the sentence that appears together.



## Sharing

After the "weather forecast", we start singing the song chosen this year that will mark the beginning of each meeting. The leader or organiser can read or tell in his own words the story of the month.

Each person is responsible for the growth of the community. Each person is a unique piece of a puzzle that forms the community. It is important to ensure that each person has their place, unique and irreplaceable so that the community is beautiful, so that each person can grow and blossom. On old-fashioned typewriters, letters in relief were fixed on top of an iron stalk. A touch worked the stalk and the letter was printed after hitting an inked ribbon. When one of the letters was broken, an 'e' was missing for example, the text was illegible. It is the same in our community. When someone has not got a well-defined and full place, the community is obsolete.

We can remake the puzzle after having removed one or several pieces to illustrate how missing pieces make the puzzle useless.

### In small groups

We are all responsible for the growth of our community, even if we are not part of the Coordination Team. So let's dream a little.

- What do I dream of for myself?
- What do I dream of for my community?
- What do I dream of for the province?



## Praying

*God our Father,  
You welcome us just as we are.  
Make us able to receive your Word in truth  
And discover the message of life and joy that you send to us  
in our meeting with our brothers and sisters  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

### Prayer of a poor person

*Thank you, Jesus for the friends you have given me.*

## Artist's workshop

### The community necklace

We are going to make a necklace for each person (see page 86). Each pearl represents a member of the community. If we are on holiday, we can carry it or attach it to our personal prayer corner, it will be a little sign to remain close to one another.



## Celebrating

### • Mime and draw

Equipment: a board, two drawing books, two pegs, two felt tips, two baskets, small boxes with, on the front, characters from the Guidelines (you can also add animals (camels, sheep), some accessories... on the reverse side, the letter "D" for draw, "M" for mime and "CHALLENGE" for the game with two teams together.

The teams play one after the other. The player from the first team picks up a piece of paper and must either draw the word, or mime it to their team who must guess it. If they get a "CHALLENGE", the two teams play at the same time for the same word.

The teams play until the baskets are empty.

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- Pelota

The woollen pelota is rolled into a ball so as to form a ball shape. Everyone is in a circle. The first person throws the ball to another person keeping the end of the wool in their hand asking: "(Name) *what do you dream of for the community?*" After having caught the pelota and answered the question, they hold the strand of wool in their hand and throw the ball to another player asking the same question, then the next. At the end the whole ball is unravelled and you are in the middle of a beautiful canvas, which ties us to each other.

### My personal Guidelines

Each person writes their name vertically. They pass it to their neighbour. They find a quality that begins with each letter of the name.

Example: Mary

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A mazing  
R egal  
Y outhful

# Pilgrims to Jerusalem on high, with John, the seer from Patmos

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## The Word of the Month

I, John, your brother and travelling companion, have not announced nor predicted disasters and plagues. Disasters and plagues, unfortunately, are already here. Just look around you: earthquakes, hurricanes, droughts, wars and massacres, refugees by the thousand, devastating epidemics, urban violence, religious fanaticism and all sorts of drugs. It is all already here! However, when I was exiled on the island of Patmos, I saw even more. And a voice told me that day, "what you see, write in a book and send it to the Churches".

What I have written is a book of light and darkness. It is the story of humanity, a story full of noise and fury. We live in difficult times. It has always been so. And the light that comes through a curtain of clouds, isn't it more telling than the light of the midday sun? Very often, people only remember the spectacular parts of my book: the trumpets or cavalymen, or even the Beast or Dragon. You know that this Beast is the Roman Empire and, in its wake, all the totalitarian empires from all eras. As for the Dragon, these are the powers of evil at work in the world. However, it is neither the Beast nor the Dragon that matter. They have already been crushed by the judgement of God. In reality, it is the Risen Christ, the sacrificed but upright lamb who is central to my work. He is the Living One, the faithful and true Witness who loves us and delivers us from our sins through the love he shows us.

He let me see extraordinary things. All that is what you will also see one day. And this is what I am trying to say when I speak of new heavens and a new Earth. It has been said that I am naïve and foolhardy, that I do not know what is going on around me and that I am a dreamer. No, I see more, I see the end, this end that we are all travelling towards. No one can say how this will be but the Lord has let me feel something. We cannot picture or imagine what will happen but we hope for it.

Pilgrims, we are not living beings destined to die but mortal beings called to live. We are on the way to the New Jerusalem, the Jerusalem on high, not a human realisation but a community founded in God. There, there will no longer be damage or chaos. There will no longer be night or



darkness and the glory of God will illuminate us. No, I have not written about the Apocalypse to frighten you but to feed your hope. Amen, Come Lord Jesus. Come soon. *Marana tha!*

**Reference text:** Heavenly Jerusalem (Rev 21)

### Identity and Mission of Faith and Light

*"Let us dream of a world where those who are far apart are united by friendship. Let us dream of a world where no one is put aside and isolated, where those who are destitute are supported, where those who are suffering are consoled. Let us dream of a world where everyone is in contact with a support community."*

Cf. Booklet "You will shine in the world like bright stars", page 32.



### Welcome and Reunion

Each person brings an image or object symbolising their patron saint or a great figure of faith. This image will be used during the time of sharing in a small group.



### Sharing

After the "weather forecast", we start singing the song chosen this year that will mark the beginning of each meeting. The leader or organiser can read or tell in his own words the story of the month.

We are not just any pilgrims. We are not living beings destined to die but mortal beings called to live. Our life is like a pilgrimage to the heavenly Jerusalem, to heaven. There, where there is no night or darkness and where the glory of God illuminates us.

One day, we will meet him face to face. Yes, God is there and he is all our hope and all the Christian hope. Am I, like John, certain of it?

### In small groups

- Whilst saying a few words about the life or work of our patron saint (or a person of faith that we particularly like and who is already at the end of their pilgrimage on Earth), we pass the image or the object around that we have brought to the meeting that represents or symbolises them.
- Why do I like this person?
- What has touched me most about their life and what they have done?

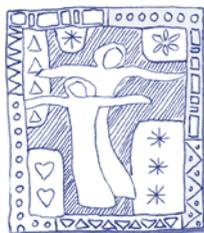


### Praying

*God faithful and sure,  
All that you do in and amongst us,  
Is destined to last forever:  
Allow us to answer your call  
And consider our earthly life  
As a road of eternity.  
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.*

### Prayer of a poor person

*You are my hope, risen Jesus.*



### Celebrating

We can put on white ponchos, or a scarf or a white hat because one day, we will all be lit by the glory of God.

We could organise a "banquet", place the table in a U shape and end the day with a big farandole...

### My personal Guidelines

I write the name of my patron saint or the person of faith that I like.  
I can also draw heaven.



## Faith and Light prayer

Jesus, you came into our world  
to reveal the Father to us, your Father and our Father.

You came to teach us to love one another.

Give us the Holy Spirit,  
according to your promise,  
so that he will make us

instruments of peace and unity,  
in this world of war and division.

Jesus you have called us to follow you  
in a Faith and Light community,

We want to say 'yes' to you.

We want to live in a covenant of love  
in this large family you have given us,  
where we can share

our sufferings and difficulties,  
our joys and our hope.

Teach us to accept our wounds,  
our weakness

so that your power may be revealed.

Teach us to find you  
in all our brothers and sisters  
especially in those who are the weakest.

Teach us to follow you  
in the ways of the Gospel.

Jesus come and live in us and in our communities  
as you first lived in Mary.

She was the first to welcome you in herself.

Help us to be faithfully present, with her, at the foot of the cross,  
near the crucified of the world.

Help us to live your Resurrection.

Amen.

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## I 2011–2012 Pilgrimages Charter

It was in spring 1971, for the Easter festivities, that the first International Faith and Light pilgrimage was held in Lourdes. Forty years later, community members are again setting out on pilgrimages in various places around the world. They want to be "**Messengers of joy**" everywhere.

### **The charter of the first pilgrimage already expressed the essence of our mission:**

- Assist the disabled person to discover that he/she is especially loved by God, capable of a genuine relationship with Him, and real holiness.
- Respond to the suffering of his/her parents so often isolated, in disarray, even in despair.
- Call friends, especially young people (18-35 years), to join us, not to serve as volunteers, but to forge a relationship with the disabled person and be transformed by it.

### **Today we want to reconnect with the grace received in Lourdes in 1971:**

- Progress is undeniable, but much remains to be done around the world so that each person, including the profoundly disabled person, is recognized as a person in his/her own right, able to exercise his/her gifts and discover the joy of friendship.
- More than ever today, the very existence of people with a disability is being brought into question. We want to continue to faithfully support the parents, brothers and sisters, because their ordeal is real and their questions are many.
- Friends, especially young people, are very important to us. By becoming close to those considered the weakest, their presence is of course a gift for everyone, but on their side, they discover, often with wonder, the beauty of what is experienced in the community and the precious gifts of people with disabilities. How many young people have not been transformed in their personal lives through this experience? Do not be afraid to associate new friends and young families with small children to our pilgrimages, whether they have a disability or not.

By our pilgrimage together, we want to celebrate the gift of God, share what we have received, and boldly testify our identity and our mission.



Today as yesterday, the pilgrimage is first a journey of faith for all people; those with disabilities, families and friends. The aim is to meet the Lord in personal prayer, listen to the Word, take part in liturgical celebrations. Each pilgrimage is a source of dynamism, conversion and new life.

The pilgrimage is also an opportunity to strengthen ecclesial ties and increase our love of the Church. Undertaken with Christians of different denominations and in the respect of the different ecclesial traditions, it is a special source of enrichment. The ecumenical dimension, present from the origins of Faith and Light, is constitutive of our identity and our mission.

The community dimension of our pilgrimage is essential. We are in communion with those who preceded us. We are united with each other in the community, and linked to all the members of Faith and Light across the world. We form a people marching together, journeying at the rhythm of the smallest member. We will also take the smallest into account for the animation, the organization of each day, the lifestyle, etc.

On the road of life, sometimes we fall, or turn around and go back. Tensions are plentiful, and we may offend each other. The reconciliation process gives us the opportunity to heal our wounds, to overcome our selfishness, to regain confidence. The community is a place of healing, forgiveness and growth.

Where there is love, even great suffering can coexist with deep joy. In Faith and Light communities, the weak person, hungry for communion, feels he/she is loved, accepted, that he/she can fully participate in the celebration. The person's joy irradiates and passes from one person to the next and becomes contagious. From the midst of our tears, joy is born, which leads us to the dance. The suffering of Good Friday becomes the joy of Easter.

Our pilgrimage is not an end in itself. It is not only a visit to a holy place, nor the performance of any number of gestures. We want "to go elsewhere to return different", return home, glad to have announced "in messengers of joy", all that we live in Faith and Light.



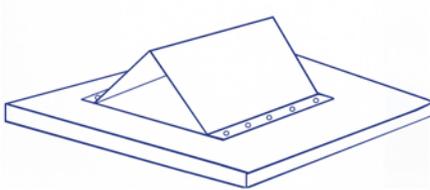
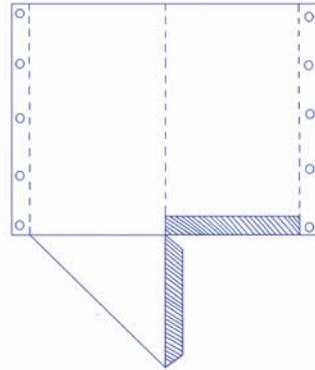
### III Artist's workshop

#### 1. Mini treasure tent

Equipment:

For the base: card. For the tent: Bristol paper (or a slightly rigid paper), drawing pins, glue. For the treasure: small cardboard box, gold paper, selfotape

- 1) Cut out the template
- 2) Fold along the dotted lines
- 3) Glue the hatched strip to the inside of the tent
- 4) Place it on the card, hold it there with the aid of drawing pins pushed into the side strips of the tent



#### 2. The pilgrim shell

In the XII century, pilgrims returned from Saint Jacques de Compostelle with shells. The pilgrims fixed them to their cloak as a sign of their long pilgrimage. The two parts of the shell represent the two precepts of love: to love God above all else and their neighbour as themselves. Their shape resembles a hand reminding the pilgrim of the good that goes through their hands.

Equipment: card, scissors, cord



### 3. Musical instruments

#### *A tom-tom*

Equipment: metal or wooden boxes (tea box), paint, brushes or stickers, dried grains, coarse salt, sand (to fill boxes), sellotape.

Decorate the box with paint or stickers.

Fill boxes with dried grains, coarse salt or sand varying the amounts from one box to another. Seal with sellotape.



#### *Rainmaker*

Equipment: cardboard tube, nails, hammer, thick paper, glue, sellotape, felt tip, paint, brush, rice, dried grains, pasta, small pebbles...

Put about fifteen nails in the cardboard tube.

Cut out two circles that are larger than the end of the roll from the slightly thick paper. Fit it around and block the end by fixing the circles with sellotape.

Put the grains or small pebbles into it...

Secure the other end.

Paint and decorate the rainmaker. Illustrated here is a funny painting technique with cotton buds in the style of Australian aborigines.



#### *Maracas*

Equipment: yogurt pots or small jam jars, sellotape, felt tips, paint, brush, dried grains, pasta, small pebbles...

Put the pebbles or grains into two yogurt pots.

Fix the two pots together using sellotape.

Decorate to your taste. Here, they are decorated with some coloured stickers and feathers.

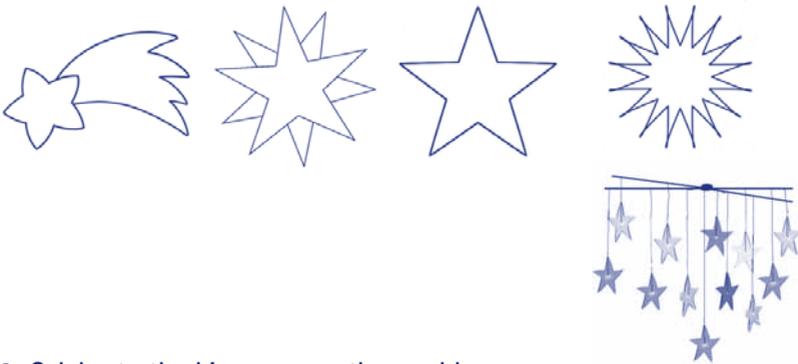


#### 4. Small shepherd from the Nativity



We can find all the characters from this Nativity on the website:  
<http://nounoubricabrac.centerblog.net/rub-Bricolages-Pour-Noel-creche-a-colorier-et-a-realiser-soi-mem>

#### 5. A star mobile



#### 6. Celebrate the kings across the world

United States: King Cake

<http://www.easy-cook.net/recette.php?id=2435>

Southern France: la brioche des rois

[www.easy-cook.net/recette.php?id=briocherois](http://www.easy-cook.net/recette.php?id=briocherois)

Portugal: le Bolo Rei

<http://www.easy-cook.net/recette.php?id=2565>

Denmark: King's rice with almonds

<http://www.easy-cook.net/recette.php?id=rizroiaman>

...

### 7. A flame shaped badge



### 8. Tea lights

Equipment: small recycled glass jars, strands of natural raffia, foliage (ivy or other small foliage), tealights  
Very easy to make and very decorative, don't forget to put the candle in!

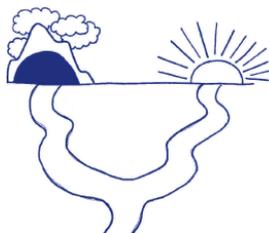


Or decorate a strip of tracing paper, put it around the glass jar, secure with sellotape, put the candle in and light it!

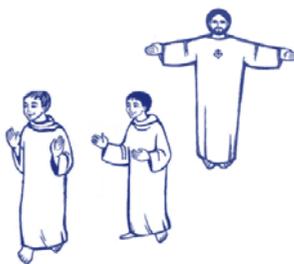


These pretty tealights were made by a community in Marseilles (France).

### 9. A road of shadows or light?

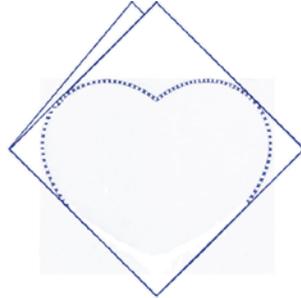


### 10. A house, Jesus and us



## 11. A heart card

Equipment: paper, scissors  
Cut out a 21 cm x 21 cm square  
Fold the card in half then in quarters  
Place the card with the square points at the top and bottom facing you.  
Draw the curved part of a heart at the top of the folded paper, cut it following the dotted line. Decorate it.  
Open the piece of paper to get four joined together hearts that form a flower. We all sign it inside!



Or decorate a simple heart with all our names written on it and, for example, the caption: "At the end of the road, I will be asked: 'Have you loved?'. And I, without saying anything, will open my heart filled with names."



## 12. A paper chain

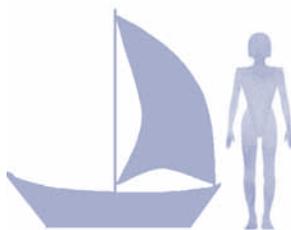


Equipment: coloured paper, scissors, glue  
Copy an outline on a sheet of paper. Fold in three, cut it out leaving the arms linked together. On the faces, draw a sad face with covered eyes, on the other side, a smiling face with eyes wide open.

### 13. A boat propelled by the wind and a silhouette to dress up

Equipment: cardboard sheet, scissors, glue, paint or felt tips. To dress up the silhouette: crepe paper, little bits of material, ends of wool...

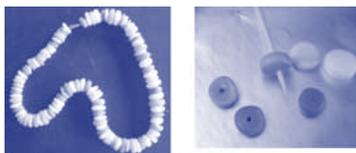
The figures can be dressed with crepe paper or little bits of material, stick the ends of wool on as hair... Cut out the boat using the template from thin card and place the five figures.



### 14. A necklace

Equipment: Salt dough, air drying modelling clay, tooth picks, elastic thread.

Roll out as many pearls as there are members of the community. Pierce each pearl with a tooth pick. Thread the pearls onto an elastic thread. Close.



If there are lots of us, the pearls can be slightly flattened with a rolling pin or bottle.



## IV. Faith and Light countries

Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria,  
 Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi,  
 Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic,  
 DR Congo, Denmark, Dominican Republic,  
 England,  
 Germany,  
 Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia,  
 France,  
 Galilee, Georgia, Gibraltar, Greece,  
 Honduras, Hong Kong, Hungary,  
 Iran, Ireland, Italy, Ivory Coast,  
 Japan, Jordan,  
 Kenya, Kuwait,  
 Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg,  
 Madagascar, Malaysia, Martinique, Mauritius and Rodrigues, Mexico,  
 Netherlands, Norway, New Zealand,  
 Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal,  
 Reunion Island, Romania, Russia, Rwanda,  
 Scotland, Serbia, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa,  
 South Korea, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria,  
 Taiwan,  
 Ukraine, USA,  
 Wales,  
 Zambia, Zimbabwe.

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## V. The day of Announcing and Sharing, your participation in solidarity

Currently 2/3 of the countries where Faith and Light has a presence have economic difficulties; it is there that Jesus and Providence have led the growth of Faith and Light!

Contributing to solidarity is responding to a missionary call. It is also wanting to share our goods, our gifts and, where necessary, working for that.

It is not primarily about "demanding" money from community members, but mainly about making them sensitive to the life and needs of communities in difficulty.

In this year when several pilgrimages are going to be organised in the provinces, when we are all called to become messengers of joy, it is a vital time to organise an "Announcing and Sharing" Day!

**Announcing:** it is making known outside of our community the beauties of our meetings, showing our joy at being together, making others want to join us, giving rise to the creation of new communities that will come to journey at our side for the province pilgrimage and so much more!

**Sharing:** it is involving others who are not community members in the pilgrimages that are going to take place throughout the whole world, including them in our process, letting them take part in a special way. It is letting them contribute to the success of the pilgrimages in the less developed provinces and for whom the pilgrimages will have a very particular meaning: showing our joy with disabled people in countries in difficulty will be an extremely strong paradox but one that will really express what is experienced in the Faith and Light communities throughout the whole world.

The "Announcing and Sharing" Day should therefore first of all sensitise our families, our friends and many others still to the pilgrimage process. The information should be accurate and illustrated: boards with a map and photos of the place of pilgrimage will allow us to show where we are going, leaflets giving a budget evaluation of the operation (including a part for solidarity) and specifying the methods of payment, the possible



opportunities of tax advantages will be ready to be distributed. Sponsoring of disabled people will be able to be suggested with opportunities for gifts (it will therefore be necessary to know the cost per person for the pilgrimage) or prayer promises.

Preparations for this Day that will mobilise the whole community are going to give a new impetus! All the practical details for organising this day are to be found in newsletter no. 5, go and look at it, it is all there!<sup>16</sup>

This will enable us to allow the biggest number possible in all the provinces to take part in the pilgrimages and thus celebrate in the most beautiful way 40 years of Faith and Light.

Finally, don't forget to designate a reporter and photographer in all our communities, the donors will be very happy to receive a mail showing them what their gift has been used for!

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<sup>16</sup>) On the Faith and Light International website: <http://www.foietlumiere.org/site/550.html>

## VI. Short history of Faith and Light

### 1) Mime

#### First scene:

Gérard and Camille, Loïc and Thaddée, leader of the diocese pilgrimage, hotelier

Gérard and Camille are the parents of Loïc and Thaddée. These two children have severe motor and cerebral disabilities: they cannot walk and talk, they are dependant in everything. Camille says: *"I do not even know if they recognize me"*. They are a real family but life is quite difficult.

In 1968, Camille and Gérard decide to go on a pilgrimage to Lourdes to ask Mary to help them. But in good faith, the organisers of the diocese pilgrimage tell them *"Sorry, but your children are too disabled, they will not be able to understand the meaning of the pilgrimage and they could bother the other pilgrims..."*

Camille and Gérard are terribly disappointed, and they decide to go to Lourdes come what may, under their own steam, even if it is very complicated.

In Lourdes, the hoteliers are worried about seeing the two children:

A hotelier: *"But Madame, their place is at the Notre-Dame reception"*.

One hotelier, however, accepts them but on one condition:

*"Your meals will be served in your room so as not to bother the other guests..."*

Camille and Gérard have a heavy heart. They left to find hope and comfort from Mary who appeared to Bernadette; the weakest one of the town. But in Lourdes, they felt lost, marginalised and as set aside within the Church. Song.

However...

#### Second scene:

Camille, Gérard, Jean Vanier and Marie-Hélène Mathieu

On their return, they had the opportunity to share their pain with Jean Vanier and Marie-Hélène Mathieu and two other parents. Jean has created the first l'Arche home five years before, a house where people with an intellectual disability share their life with helpers. It is a family life. Six years ago, Marie-Hélène has founded the Office chrétien des personnes handicapées in Paris to help and support parents.



Song: "*Friends, sing our joy! God is living, Alleluia!*"

#### **Fourth scene:**

Jean and Marie-Hélène, community leaders

This Easter Monday, Jean and Marie-Hélène organise a meeting of the three hundred community leaders before leaving:

– Jean and Marie-Hélène: "*We want to say goodbye and thank you! Good-bye! Thank you!*"

But everyone says:

– Community leaders: "*We do not want to go back to loneliness. We want Faith and Light to go on!*"

We heard them.

– Jean said: "*Do what the Holy Spirit inspires you to do! Keep meeting each other in your communities. Celebrate, go on a pilgrimage.*"

It was thus that Faith and Light is born.

Now, everyone gets into the coaches, the trains and the planes,..., a bit sad that it is already over, but in a deep joy. Everyone is certain of one thing in his/her heart:

– A pilgrim: "*What we have just experienced is not over. But it is truly a start...*"

Many communities are going to carry on meeting. In Faith and Light we discover what is essential, in experiencing each month, times of meeting, sharing, prayer and celebrating... out of friendship. In welcoming all those who are alone and who will come. In calling so many other persons who are in distress and who are isolated.

Faith and Light is about meeting, friendship, prayer, celebration and joy!

In 1975, the Faith and Light communities throughout the world went on a pilgrimage to Rome. For the first time, they are received by Pope Paul VI in the St Peter basilica:

He speaks personally to each pilgrim with a disability: "*You are loved by God as you are. He dwells in your heart. Trust in Him. Look: He gives you a room among other Christians, in His church. In His name, I bless you, and I bless the parents and friends that God has given you.*"

Today, there are more than 1600 communities in 77 countries worldwide who can sing like us... and with us! They prepare themselves to celebrate the Faith and Light fortieth anniversary through pilgrimages all over the map.

Song.

## 2) Key dates in our history

**1968:** At this time, it was thought that people with an intellectual disability did not have a place on pilgrimages. It was considered that they were not able to experience this process and that their presence could be disturbing to the other pilgrims. In response to the appeal from the parents of Thaddée and Loïc, two children with an intellectual disability, Jean Vanier and Marie-Hélène Mathieu organised a pilgrimage to Lourdes with them. Three years of preparation followed giving rise to strong reactions, both of enthusiasm and reserve.

**1971:** At Easter, 12000 pilgrims from 15 countries, of whom 4000 are persons with an intellectual disability, accompanied by their parents and their friends, especially young ones, came together. Elated, they wanted to carry on the adventure. Jean Vanier suggested: *"Carry on meeting in small communities, do what the Holy Spirit inspires you to do"*. Thus was born Faith and Light on that Easter Monday in Lourdes.

**1975:** Paul VI welcomed Faith and Light in St Peter's Basilica. *"You are loved by God just as you are", "You have a chosen place in the Church"*. Faith and Light, still a very small and fragile plant, received the confirmation of its vocation from the Holy Father.

**1981:** Coming from 23 countries, the Faith and Light communities returned to Lourdes to give thanks to Jesus and his Mother who helped them to discover the beauty hidden in their sisters and brothers with a disability. It is they who can break down the barriers of indifference, fear and selfishness.

**1991:** At Easter, 13 000 pilgrims from 60 countries met once again in Lourdes. Faith and Light has become ecumenical and continues to look at unity around the smallest: *"Father, unite us all"*. Great progress has been made in the care and integration of disabled people but now their lives are threatened, before their birth and even afterwards. Faith and Light, ecumenical movement, wishes to have a presence around parents with doubts, fears and pressures.

**2001:** In April, more than 16 000 people from 73 countries in 5 continents met in Lourdes, on the theme *"Come drink from the Spring"*, to celebrate Easter. Lourdes 2001 was an immense process of joy and unity, showing that happiness primarily depends on love. All over the world, communities unable to make the journey, organised pilgrimages in conjunction with the large international gathering.

**Today,** more than 1600 communities in 77 countries are on the road to celebrating 40 years of Faith and Light on the theme: *"Messengers of joy"*.

## VII. "Up Sails!"

Since March 2009, Faith and Light has published a newsletter every quarter about the life of Faith and Light across the world.

Take out a subscription for every member of your community in order to experience the pace of the international family. You will undertake wonderful journeys: from the Sudan to Japan, from Armenia to New Zealand, from Zimbabwe to Syria...

- By email: [foi.lumiere@wanadoo.fr](mailto:foi.lumiere@wanadoo.fr)
- On the website : <http://www.foietlumiere.org/site/english/550.mv>
- By mail: International Secretariat, 3 rue du Laos 75015 Paris France (give your postal address)
- By telephone: + 33.1.53.69.44.30

Free subscription in French, English and Spanish.

## VII. Internet sites

- Faith and Light International: [www.foietlumiere.org](http://www.foietlumiere.org)
- Blog from the International Coordinator: <http://fli-afoi.blogspot.com/>
- Chants from the Taizé community: [http://www.taize.fr/fr\\_article4799.html](http://www.taize.fr/fr_article4799.html)
- L'Arche International: <http://www.larche.org/accueil.fr-fr.1.0.index.htm>
- L'Office chrétien des personnes handicapées and the magazine Ombres et Lumière: <http://www.och.asso.fr>
- More than 4500 craft, collage and modelling activities: <http://www.te-teamodeler.com/>
- Games and mimes on the Faith and Light Canada East site: <http://pages.infinit.net/place/foi192.htm>



## IX. Evaluate to progress

At the beginning or end of the year, together or as a Coordination Team, let us take the time to evaluate the life of the community.

The small booklet "*Day for a renewal*" can help us<sup>17</sup>. Here are some tips that have been taken from it.

Each person answers these questions:

- What have I liked the most this year in the community?
- What have I liked least?
- How do we experience the time of prayer?
- How do we experience the time of celebration?
- How do we get to know one another and how do we share our faith when we meet?
- How do we deepen our friendship between meetings?
- Do we have roughly the same number of intellectually disabled people, parents and friends? Has our community got a chaplain?
- Do we have a Coordination Team that prepares and evaluates our meetings?
- How important is the use of the Guidelines?
- How can we make our Coordination Team more creative?
- How do we pray for Christian unity, how do we contribute to this unity? What do we do to try to meet people from other faiths?
- How do we experience our membership to the international Faith and Light family? How is this membership expressed?
- How would we describe the atmosphere in our community?
- How does our community integrate itself into a parish, the local church to which it belongs?
- How often does our community meet?
- To what extent is our community open and welcoming to new members?
- How many of us are there?

<sup>17)</sup> Available from the Faith and Light International website: <http://www.foietlumiere.org/site/136.html>

- If we are more than forty, do we imagine giving birth to a new community? Do we pray about giving birth to a new community?

If we choose to do this evaluation as a community, we form small groups. The leaders will note what each person has said. The evaluations will be looked at in the Coordination Team meeting with a view to preparing for the next year.

Some communities take a weekend, or a day outside, often in the religious community with which they are twinned, in order to have the whole time for reflecting together in relaxation and friendship.



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*Always  
consider yourselves  
pilgrims  
on the move  
towards the Lord*

*St. Augustine*

