

# A day for a renewal in the community

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**Faith and Light international**

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## Introduction

### To the community coordinators, the provincial and vice-provincial coordinators

*Dear friends,*

*During this year, Faith and Light communities are all invited to live out "a day for a renewal in the community". You will here find a simple proposal to help the coordinating team to prepare this festive and joyful procedure adapted to the community and all its members.*

*This guide is a small very concrete instrument of growth, a gift which we hope will fascinate you.*

*For fifty years we have seen the birth and growth of Faith and Life communities. They bear fruit all over the world: some are very old, some die, many are in the prime of life or still very young, some others are in formation. This is the rhythm of life we live in our communities.*

*As in our professional and family lives, the communities go through times of blessing and fertility, but also of hardship and crises... At these times in particular it is very good to feel accompanied, supported and strengthened, and to look together not only at what is going badly, but also at what is fine and good !*

- *Are we conscious of the precious gift entrusted to us by Jesus?*
- *Are we convinced that our Faith and Light communities are important for our world, that they can help it to become more human?*
- *In our community, how can we renew our fervour, deepen our call, choose again our priorities, with regard to the Charter and Constitution ?*

*These questions are those of your communities, even if they are lived out and expressed differently from one continent to another, one zone to another, one country to another...*

*Is it not of utmost importance today, that each community may be able to deepen its own vocation ? That each one can take some time to celebrate its history, recognize the gift of all its members, see what is good, choose*

*one or the other concrete priority in order to be more faithful to its mission, to grow and bear still more fruit, according to the wish of Jesus ?*

*It is in each community that we have to begin! Even if, later on, we may need to think about the results of these community procedures during the regional and national council, so as to discern certain priorities for the region and for the country.*

*The hope of the international coordinating team is that in every country, the community leaders and their coordinating teams may really be encouraged and supported by vice provincial coordinator and the provincial coordinator, in order to live out this **Day for a renewal in the community** with their community.*

*May you receive this project with enthusiasm, prepare it with all your heart, adapt it as well as possible and experience it as a gift !*

*We rely on you to think, with your own council, about the best way to make your communities to live out this special time.*

*We send you our heartfelt wishes for a good trip on your way to a lot more new life !*

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## Suggestions for the community coordinating team

### 1. General Remarks

These guidelines are suggestions for your coordinating team. Use them or adapt them in the way that best fits your community.

- **When to live the “Community Day”?**

The “Community Day” was planned to be lived in one whole day. However, if the community desires (and is able to do so...) it can be lived in a weekend with all the community.

If it is impossible for the community to spend a weekend or a whole day together, it is recommended to live this program in two parts, in two different afternoons: the first day living together the “morning program”, and the second day the “afternoon program”.

- **Why are we having this “Community Day”?**

All the communities in the world are called to live a community day like this together.

- It is good to be together! (that is what community is all about).
- It is good to remember together how we have started our community and why each one of us has come to Faith and Light.
- It is good to remind each other how Faith and Light is special.
- It is important to rediscover the richness of our friendship links, of our family life among ourselves and with our Faith and Light community.
- We need, every once in a while, to remind ourselves together what **the mission** of Faith and Light is and to look at where our community is in relationship to this mission (Cf. Charter of Faith and Light).

- We will look together at what could help our community to continue to respond to this mission.
- We will share with the person who accompanies our community: what we live, what we need, our strengths, our weaknesses and our ideas on how to improve our community life.

- **The goals**

The goals of the Community Day are to help all our communities in the renewal of our call and mission, and through this, to facilitate the growth of each member.

- **The supporting presence of the “accompanier”**

When possible, the community will be accompanied during this important process of reviewing and celebrating its life. The vice-provincial coordinator (or his/her delegate) would be with the community as a loving presence that supports and calls us to grow.

## **2. Some advises**

Read the Faith and Light Charter together at the coordinating team planning meeting, as a starting point to prepare for the Community Day. Share with each other how the Charter impacts each one now – which words, phrases or paragraphs catch your attention. If possible, take time to pray with the Charter together, too.

Choose a passage of Scripture that is relevant to your community. Use it as an inspiration for reflections and prayers during the day that the community will live together.

Use songs and background music to help gather people together, to help create atmosphere, to pray and give thanks.

The chaplain has an important role in preparing times of prayer (especially thanksgiving, mealtime, Eucharist or a Liturgy of the Word). Do not be afraid of using moments of silence.

Take some time to prepare the atmosphere so that the physical space tells people we have a special gathering today. The arrangement is designed to encourage interaction and participation and create a prayerful and joyful atmosphere.

It is important to involve/include all members. The small sharing groups are to be as balanced as possible with the members in the heart of our communities, family members and friends, and every effort made to hear what each member has to say. These groups are made up of about 5 – 8 members.

Plan to take time to set up all the materials before the beginning of the gathering (on the wall, community banner, songbooks, photocopied sheets for the exercises of the day ...).

### 3. Material preparation

Some materials will need to be prepared ahead of time. If you use **the boat** for the history of the community, you will find a model page 16. You will want to make it big enough for all to see. You will need **a human figure** and **a strip of paper** for each member, and **clouds**, or **sun and rays** for each small sharing group. The empty boat and the **waves** are already on the big paper before the beginning of the meeting, displayed facing the group.

The puzzle for the afternoon would also be prepared in advance. It can be helpful to have some copies of the **Faith and Light Charter and Constitution** available.

It is important also to have a copy of the **Dynamics for the sharing groups**, morning and afternoon, for each group (page 13).

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## Day for a renewal in the community

### Morning: reviewing the history of our community

#### Welcome

Begin with prayer, include all members, sing some songs... Be creative!

Give a brief explanation of the Day of Renewal, its goals, activities, and how we will live it.

#### Remembering the history of our community

(All together, in circle)

The **empty boat** and the **waves**, on a big piece of paper, are already on the wall in front of the community.

Some members tell the others the history of the community: how the community started, how the members have experienced God's grace through the community.

The community members remember the important moments in the community history (all are invited to participate and say something if they wish) and one person **writes each of these moments on one of the waves**, below the big boat.

#### Sharing in small groups (3 activities)

- **1<sup>st</sup> activity: with the human figures**

Each person receives a human figure. Each person writes his/her name on the figure. We can also have coloured crayons/markers to colour the figures.

Each person shares the answers to the following questions:

- **Who invited me to this community?**
- **Why did I come?**

Each person will glue his figure on the boat.

- **2<sup>nd</sup> activity: with the strips of paper**

Each person receives a strip of paper.

Each person shares the answer to one of the following questions:

- **What makes me stay in this community?**
- **What do I like about us being together in community?**

Each person **writes or draws** his/her answer on the strip of paper he/she has received.

- **3<sup>rd</sup> activity: with the symbols of the clouds, sun and rays**

Some sharing groups will receive the clouds; others will receive the sun and rays.

The groups with the clouds will share about the following question:

- **Which problems, difficulties, struggles has our community experienced (or is experiencing now)?**

The groups with the sun and rays will share about the following question:

- **What gives life, joy and well being to our Faith and Light community?**

The answers from the group are written on the symbols (clouds, sun and rays).

### **Break**

We have a little break, we get up, we move around, we sing...

**Bringing together our Faith and Light symbol** (all the community together)

Each member of the community reads/presents his/her strip of paper and glues it on the boat.

Each sharing group presents to the whole community their answers written on the clouds or sun and rays.

The symbols clouds, sun and rays are glued to the paper, forming the Faith and Light symbol.

## **Prayer**

We strike up songs of praise and thanksgiving for what we have received and lived with our Faith and Light community.

## **Lunch together, if possible**

All the community members help preparing, serving and cleaning up, according to their capacities and gifts.

## **Afternoon: Reviewing the life of our community**

**Introduction** (all the community together, in circle)

Brief explanation of the afternoon

## **Sharing in small groups** (3 activities)

Each sharing group uses the questions inspired by the Faith and Light Charter and Constitution.

- **1<sup>st</sup> activity: to answer the questions proposed**

Each group **will have a copy** of the questions to answer.

The group members **share and answer** these questions.

The conclusions of the group for each question are written on a paper.

## **Questions**

- How do we pray together as a community?
- How do we celebrate together as a community?
- How do we get to know one another and share our faith when we meet?
- How do we deepen our friendship between our meetings?
- Do we have almost equal numbers of persons with intellectual disabilities, family members and friends? Do we have a chaplain who participates in our community?
- Do we have a coordinating team that prepares and evaluate our meetings? How much importance do we give to using the Guidelines?

- How can we be more creative in our coordinating team?
  - How do we pray for/contribute to the unity of all Christians?  
How do we try to get to know people from different Denominations?
  - How do we experience our belonging to the international family of Faith and Light and how do we express this belonging?
  - How would we describe the atmosphere of our community?
  - How is our community a part of the parish/local church?
  - How often do we meet as a whole community?
  - How open and welcoming is our community to new members?
  - How many members do we have?
  - If we are more than forty, are we praying and considering about giving birth to a new community?
- **2<sup>nd</sup> activity: to reflect on the answers given by the group**  
Each group will look at their answers and reflect on the following:
    - Two things we are doing well.
    - Two things we could do better.
    - Two things special to us (a song, a tradition, a story, a game...) that we want to share with other communities.
 Someone takes notes of what the group chooses.  
All the answers will be collected by the community leader.
  - **3<sup>rd</sup> activity: putting a Faith and Light puzzle together** (optional activity)  
Each group will put together the pieces of a “Faith and Light” puzzle (some ideas are: it could be made of the letters forming “Faith and Light” in several languages, or the Faith and Light symbol, or the picture of our community together, or the picture of our community banner...).

### **Bringing together our reflection** (all the community together)

Each group will present to the whole community their reflections.

All together we will choose what we will do within the next year:

- one thing we want to do better.
- one thing we want to start doing.
- one thing we want to share with other communities.

Someone will take notes that will be given to the community coordinator.

Each group will also give to the community coordinator the papers with all the answers from the afternoon sharing in small groups.

If the vice-provincial coordinator (accompanier or mentor) is present, he/she will confirm the strong points and will encourage the community to move ahead in the priorities it has chosen.

### **Prayer**

According to the community's tradition, and the specific needs and possibilities of our community, we celebrate together in Worship, Eucharist, Liturgy of the Word, Washing of the Feet, praying with the Faith and Light Charter, Reconciliation Service.....

If it will not be used during the Sending Forth, it is important to include the Faith and Light Prayer...

### **Sending forth**

We may meditatively say the Faith and Light Prayer together as a renewal of our commitment to our community and to the Faith and Light family.

There can be a simple ceremony of sending forth all members of the community.

### **Fiesta**

Let us use our imagination to find the best way to close joyfully this nice day!

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## Dynamics for the sharing groups

### Morning

#### 1<sup>st</sup> activity: with the human figures

- Each person receives a human figure.
- Each person writes his/her name on the figure. We can also have coloured crayons/markers to colour the figures.
- Each person shares the answers to the following questions:  
*Who invited me to this community?*  
*Why did I come?*

Each person will glue his figure on the boat.

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> activity: with the strips of paper

- Each person receives a strip of paper.
- Each person shares the answer to one of the following questions:  
*What makes me stay in this community?*  
*What do I like about us being together in community?*

Each person **writes or draws** his/her answer on the strip of paper he/she has received.

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> activity: with the symbols of the clouds, sun and rays

Some sharing groups will receive the clouds; others will receive the sun and rays.

The groups with the clouds will share about the following question:

*Which problems, difficulties, struggles has our community experienced (or is experiencing now)?*

The groups with the sun and rays will share about the following question:

*What gives life, joy and well being to our Faith and Light community?*

The answers from the group are written on the symbols (clouds; sun and rays).

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## Afternoon

### **1<sup>st</sup> activity: sharing and answering questions about the community life**

The conclusions of the group for each question are **written** on a paper.

#### **Questions:**

- How do we pray together as a community?
- How do we celebrate together as a community?
- How do we get to know one another and share our faith when we meet?
- How do we deepen our friendship between our meetings?
- Do we have almost equal numbers of persons with intellectual disabilities, family members and friends? Do we have a chaplain who participates in our community?
- Do we have a coordinating team that prepares and evaluate our meetings? How much importance do we give to using the Guidelines?
- How can we be more creative in our coordinating team?
- How do we pray for/contribute to the unity of all Christians? How do we try to get to know people from different Denominations?
- How do we experience our belonging to the international family of Faith and Light and how do we express this belonging?
- How would we describe the atmosphere of our community?
- How is our community a part of the parish/local church?
- How often do we meet as a whole community?
- How open and welcoming is our community to new members?
- How many members do we have?
- If we are more than forty, are we praying and considering about giving birth to a new community?

**2<sup>nd</sup> activity: reflecting on the answers given by the group**

Each group will look at their answers and reflect on the following:

- Two things we are doing well.
- Two things we could do better.
- Two things special to us (a song, a tradition, a story, a game...) that we want to share with other communities.

Someone takes notes of what the group chooses. All the answers will be collected by the community coordinator.

**3<sup>rd</sup> activity: putting a “Faith and Light” puzzle together** (optional activity).

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## Model for the Faith and Light symbol

The boat for sharing the history of our community:

- Figure.
- Sun and rays.
- Clouds and Waves.
- Strip of paper.

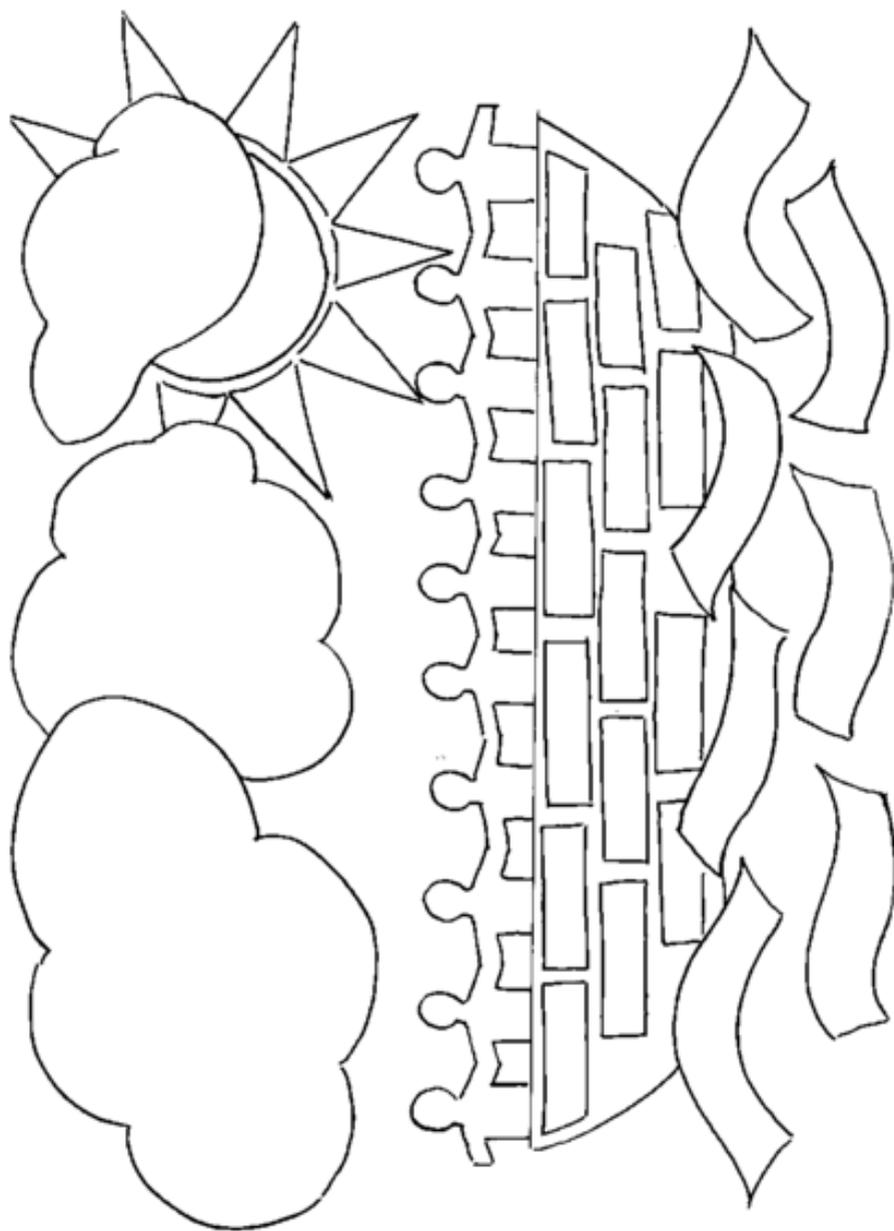
Each person will receive a figure and a strip of paper.

Each group will receive a cloud (or clouds) or the sun/rays.

You may use coloured construction paper or colour the pieces with light crayons after the answers are written on them. Or you may write on the strips with markers of different colours to make the boat colourful!

Feel free to make a better model!

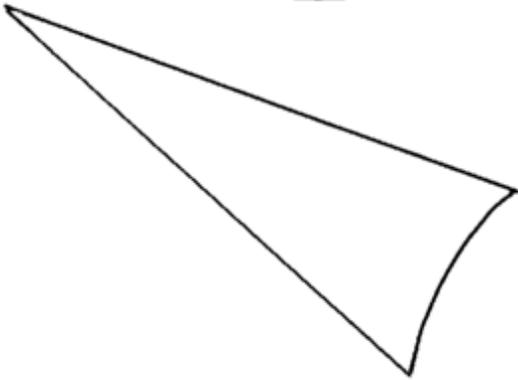
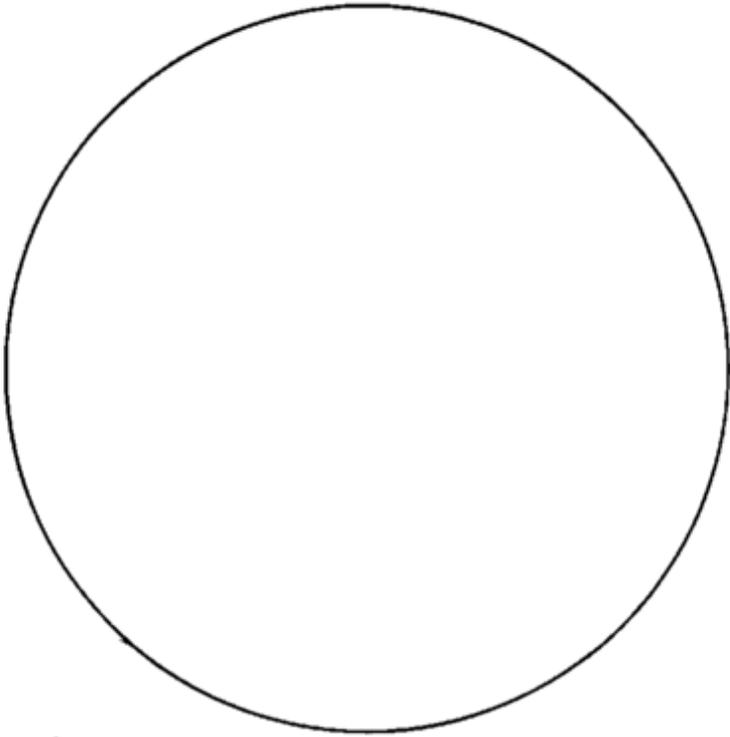
Faith and Light symbol



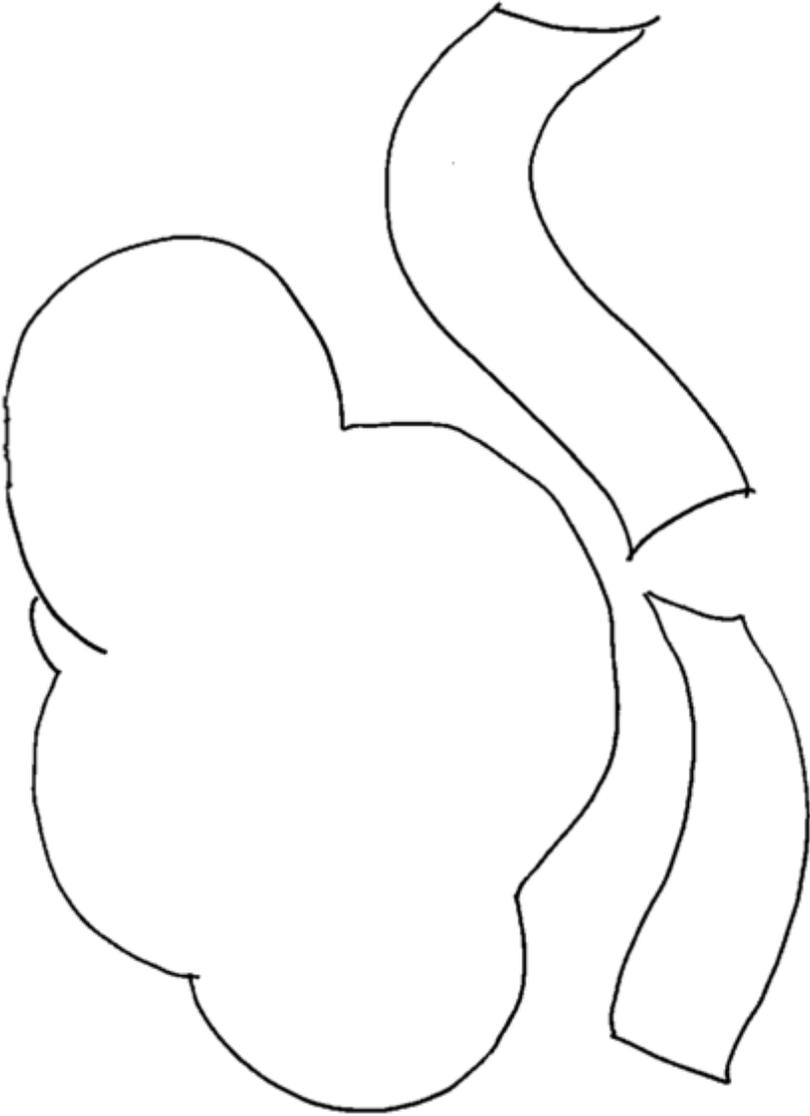
## Figures



## Sun and rays



## Clouds and waves



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## 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 community of Faith and Light,  
We want to say "yes" to you.  
We want to live in a covenant of love  
in this big 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.  
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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## Available documents

at the international secretariat or on the intranet of the website  
[www.foietlumiere.org/en](http://www.foietlumiere.org/en)

**Never again alone, the adventure of Faith and Light,**  
Marie-Hélène Mathieu ([www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com))

- Charter and Constitution
- Annual guidelines
- Leader's handbook
- Our first guidelines
- Identity and mission of Faith and Light
- On holidays together
- General rules of financial management
- A few easy recipes to raise funds
- Spirituality of Faith and Light
- Letters to my brothers and sisters, Fr Joseph Larsen
- The Mysteries of Faith and Light, Ghislain du Chéné
- The Way of the Cross, Ghislain du Chéné
- How to prepare and live a retreat
- Retreats in Faith and Light
- Ecumenism in Faith and Light
- Fioretti, Fr Joseph Larsen
- Experiencing the essential of Faith and Light  
in the midst of a pandemic
- The way of the heart, chaplains bear witness
- Messages of the Churches to Faith and Light

Leaflets

Faith and Light posters

"Up Sails!", the Faith and Light international letter



# See, I make all things new

Rev. 21, 5

