

# Up Sails !

The international letter of Faith and Light N 67, December 2025

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**Merry Christmas!**



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Raúl Izquierdo García  
International Coordinator



# ★ « Merry Christmas ! » ★

*The angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be to all the people. For there is born to you today, in David’s city, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. This is the sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth, lying in a feeding trough.” (Lk 2,10-12)*

**Dear Faith and Light communities around the world!**

**G**iven that the theme of this year's guidelines is angels, it seemed appropriate to wish you a Merry Christmas with the words of the angel who announced this news, offering you my most sincere wishes:



**Wisdom**, to discover where the angels are today, those people who speak to us about God, especially through their lives, who show us paths and possibilities, who help us to discern what is essential.

**Courage**, because the angel reminds us not to be afraid, with God everything is possible. And if we have fears, which is human, they must not paralyse us or stop us, but being aware of them, we continue to move forward.

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**Joy**, because the birth of Jesus is a true joy. At Faith and Light, we know how to celebrate. God loves us so much that he wanted to become human to share our condition and our fragility. What joy to know that we are so loved!

**The ability to surprise us and the desire to seek Jesus**, because he was born in a place where no one was expecting him. A child in the cold of the night, surrounded by animals in a manger, in a remote village.

And today, Jesus continues to be born in the midst of our history, but where? We need to seek him, desire to find him, put in place the necessary means and let ourselves be guided by the map of the Gospel.

I pray for each one of you, for your families and your communities. I pray for peace in many places around our planet and for those who suffer the most, whatever the cause.

United in Jesus.

Raúl Izquierdo García  
International coordinator of Faith and Light





## Report in Brazil

# The fiesta



**O**n August 18, the communities of North Brazil (Reborn province) gathered to celebrate the feast of the Assumption, and took the opportunity to introduce their new provincial chaplain: Father Djavan Ribeiro Araujo. ❤️

Denisson Barros Vieira,  
Vice international coordinator







## «Hope does not disappoint us»

**F**rom Saturday, May 17 to Sunday, May 18, four Faith and Light communities in Korea came together for a retreat. A total of 91 people participated, including Father Maximilian, chaplain of Light of the Orient province; Father Cho Byung-hwan, chaplain of the Cheongju Dandelion community; and Father Ahn Hyo-seok, chaplain of the Mokpo Lighthouse community.



The theme of the retreat, “Hope does not disappoint us” (Romans 5:5), was beautifully in line with the Jubilee theme, “Pilgrims of Hope.”

Each year, the four communities in Korea gather for one united activity, which varies from year to year - sometimes a pilgrimage, sometimes a cultural event or trip, and at other times a retreat. This year was a retreat year, and we met at a retreat center nestled in Jirisan, the largest and most beautiful mountain in the south of Korea. Surrounded by the freshness of early summer and the gentle sound of water flowing through deep valleys, we spent two days sharing love, friendship, and the Word of God - truly a time of joy and renewal.

The first day began with a welcome Mass, followed by fellowship, praise, and a lecture by Father Cho Byung-hwan.



After dinner, everyone gathered to pray the Rosary to the Blessed Mother. At the beginning of each decade, members from each community performed a mime depicting the life of Jesus.





# Report in South Korea



During each Hail Mary, roses were offered with devotion, and all communities joined in this act of love and prayer. The next day began with morning prayer, followed by songs of praise, a lecture by Father Ahn Hyo-seok, and small group sharing where participants reflected on their experiences during the retreat. As a sign of unity, we also enjoyed a creative activity: colouring the Faith and Light logo together.

Although the time was short, through the two inspiring talks we were reminded that this is the Jubilee Year, and we were invited to reflect more deeply on its spirit. We gained new strength and hope to live as confident children of God, without losing faith even in difficult circumstances. Meeting friends from other communities renewed our sense of solidarity and friendship.



We left refreshed, our hearts strengthened and encouraged, ready to return to our daily lives with renewed hope. ●

Provincial coordinators of Light of the Orient,  
Yunil Yang (Tatiana)  
Geongok Cheon (Clara)



Above all, it was a blessing to pray and praise God with peaceful hearts in such a beautiful setting. As always, within the Faith and Light family, we once again experienced that unique warmth, sense of belonging, and comfort that no other group can offer.







# A wonderful meeting in Juba

The communities of South Sudan met on June 28, 2025 in the Church of St Kizito in the town of Juba, in the presence of the parish priest and several chaplains. Around a hundred people with disabilities, parents and friends gathered to take part in a formation session on our Faith and Light journey, an opportunity to deepen relations between the communities and meet those that have just been created.



With our most fragile friends, we learn to be patient and humble, and to care for others.

We discover abilities, talents and strengths within ourselves that we never knew existed.





# Report In South Sudan





# Faith and Light in Bydgoszcz



September for our community (Barka from Bydgoszcz, Northern Poland Province) was an exceptionally intense month, full of important events both at the community level and at the provincial level. It was a time marked by meetings, important decisions and deep spiritual experiences.



# Report in Poland

At the beginning of the month, our first post-holiday meeting took place, which traditionally becomes a time of strengthening ties, summarizing previous activities, planning new ones for the coming year, and exchanging ideas and experiences after the holiday break. This is a moment to reunite our forces and renew our sense of common mission in the spirit of Faith and Light.

The following days (19-21 September) were the time of the meeting of our province during which we elected a new Provincial Coordinator. The election is an act of responsibility for us, in which we entrust the helm of responsibility to the one who will lead the life and work of the province in the coming years.

Our warmest thanks go to Asia (Joanna Walczak), the previous Provincial Coordinator, and her team for their hard work and commitment.

We are so grateful that the new Provincial Team, headed by Ania (Anna Kalisz), decided to take responsibility for our province for the next 4 years. We wish them a lot of strength, perseverance and commitment to awaken in our communities



the Spirit of Faith and Light resulting from our Charter and Constitution.

On the last Sunday of September, the activity of our community is transferred to the local, parish level, where the parish indulgence has become central. This event became an opportunity for a solemn liturgy, joint prayer and testimony. It was a moment of sharing the personal experience of faith, the life of community and showing what Faith and Light are.

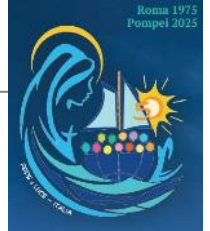
The testimony is a living proof of the relevance of the charism and mission of our Movement, as well as an inspiration and strengthening for others.

So we hope that this time will result in the development of our community, and perhaps the joining of new members. ●

Marta and Marcin Wierzchosławscy

Coordinators of the Barka community from Bydgoszcz, Province North Poland





# “He has done great things for us”

The pilgrimage of the 49 Italian communities, gathered to celebrate 50 years of Faith and Light in Italy, took place from September 18 to 21, 2025, at the Shrine of the Virgin of the Rosary in Pompeii, near Naples.

A total of 520 pilgrims from the three provinces of Fiume di Pace (River of Peace), Kimata and Mari e Vulcani (Seas and Volcanoes), as well as delegations from Croatia and Slovenia, and friends of the Kimata province from Greece, Cyprus and Albania, celebrated 50 years of friendship and spiritual growth.

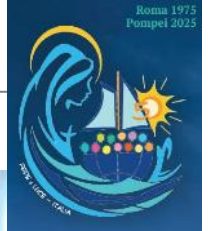
Our theme was “He has done great things for us”, and each day was inspired by the Magnificat. For Mariangela Bertolini, the “mother” of Faith and Light in Italy, this canticle of Mary was the beginning of a journey in the face of the great fragility of her daughter Maria Francesca, known as Chicca, but also the foundation of numerous communities, in Rome and in various regions.

The Italian history of Faith and Light began with another pilgrimage to Rome for the 1975 Jubilee. A video was shown, summarizing the milestones experienced over the past fifty years: the first steps in Italy after Lourdes in 1971; the journey towards national unification; the creation of the three provinces in 2009 into which the Italian territory is organized; and the work of the national Association “Faith and Light Italy”.





## Report in Italy



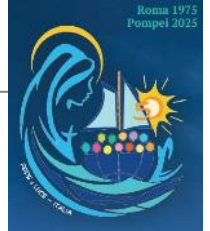
There are so many moments to keep in one's heart: a young girl with a disability, Antonella, dancing the Magnificat during the mime (in her eyes, we see the infinite sweetness of God's embrace); the net with the names of communities past and present, carried to the stage by people with disabilities, their relatives and friends; the prayer vigil with the mime in the form of shadow puppets in the Sanctuary of Pompeii, meditating on "the Mysteries of Faith and Light." (\*)

At Faith and Light, you feel at home, you feel joy, you feel welcomed, as evidenced by the joyful exchanges in the hotels, the messages entrusted by everyone and the enthusiasm of our young presenters Marta, Angelo and Nicolò.

**Sister Veronica Donatello**, head of the Italian Bishops' Conference's National Service for the Pastoral Care of People with Disabilities, shared this reflection with us: *"Only 25% of families of people with disabilities have friends. You are champions of friendship. You have to show your charisma to everyone. For you, people with disabilities are not people to be assisted, but people with whom to share a journey of faith. You have the gift of calling out to Christian communities, parishes and dioceses. Be like a bell announcing: We can't exclude anyone from the Lord's table; let's learn to become a community!" Invite everyone to the table of life. Step out of your contexts, don't be afraid: there's a people of fragile people waiting. Be the leaven that mixes with the new flour, have courage."*



## Report in Italy



**Raúl Izquierdo**, our international Coordinator, was present with his wife Laura, and he told us how he discovered Faith and Light at the age of 18: "Over the years, I have discovered a God who loves the smallest, a God fashioned in the mud of humanity. Faith and Light has helped me to grow up in simplicity and helps me to keep a childlike heart, teaching me to be more aware of my weakness, but also of my abilities. God continues to use Faith and Light to remind us that he loves people beyond their merits and abilities."

At the final Mass, **Father Benoît Malvaux**, national spiritual assistant for Faith and Light, summed up what had emerged from the four days: the Magnificat was like a guiding thread, reminding us of the importance of the smallest in God's eyes. Mary accompanies us in our trust in God, who has sustained us through so many trials, and in our friends. Many parents have felt chosen by God when a child with disabilities was born. Mary, too, was chosen and guided along a path she could never have imagined. We entrust ourselves to her when we no longer know what is the best decision to make. To her, a strong yet discreet presence in our lives, we entrust our future.



Here are a few testimonials from participants: "Many people came from far and wide to celebrate an important anniversary; it's like being at home, because you feel good and happy," testifies Daniela, from the Rho community (Milan). "Franco, from San Giovanni Battista in Bari, adds: "It was a wonderful experience, well worth the effort.



And Angela, from Rome, concludes: "We hope that Faith and Light will live on for another 50 years, or even more, because we're very strong!"

Then the young participants: "We return full of hope, full of joy and rich in friendship. Let us sing the Magnificat again, for the Lord has done great things for us and through us." ●

Angela Grassi

Vice international coordinator

(\*) Meditation "The Faith and Light mysteries" by Ghislain du Chéné, available on the international Faith and Light intranet.



## Report in France

# On the path to holiness...

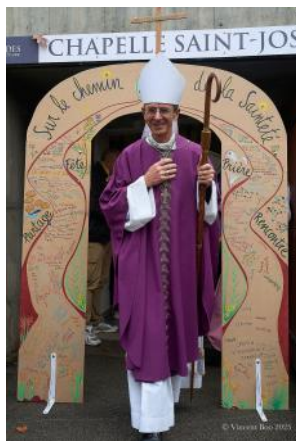


On October 31, November 1 and 2, the communities of the Province of “France Entre Deux Mers” (south-west France) met in Lourdes, on the theme of “a path to Holiness”.

The 250 participants sang, danced, laughed, played, prayed and decorated candles in their workshops... The “A Bras Ouverts” (A.B.O.) association, which was celebrating its 35th anniversary and is close to Faith and Light, joined us for a torchlight walk and All Saints’ mass. At the Chapelles de Lumière, our meeting ended with the celebration of mass on

November 2, presided over by Monsignor Pierre-Antoine Bozo, the new coadjutor bishop of the diocese of La Rochelle, who is also very close to Faith and Light.

At the end of the celebration, each pilgrim passed through the Gate prepared by the organizing team, and was then sent out into our daily lives under the gaze of God. Radiant faces testify to the strength of the moments shared and the love of God present in each of us, the baptismal joy of the catechumens for our future lives towards holiness.





# Report in France



Thanks to everyone, and in particular to the animation team, Francis and Claire Delor, coordinators of the France Entre deux Mers province, and Michel and Christine Tillé, coordinators of the France Centre province, who joined us for the party. ●



Vincent Boo  
Vice international Coordinator





# Faith and Light in the Middle East : a flame of hope in a time of trial

In a world of accelerating change and intensifying challenges, the flame of “Faith and Light” remains alight, fuelled by the strength of the spirit and the depth of love that unites us.

With their hearts full of hope and their eyes set on the future, the coordinators of the Middle East provinces (Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, South Sudan, Kuwait, Armenia and Iran) met in Lebanon, in



that our strength is not measured by our numbers, but by our “resilience” and our ability to preserve the warmth of encounter in our communities in spite of all the storms.

**What did we bring with us to the meeting?**

- Our joys and challenges in order to transform our tears into lessons for growth, and our points of growth into strength, in order to achieve true “sharing”.

- A realistic review of our priorities (2025-2028), adopting what is constructive and preserves the dignity of each member, especially the most vulnerable among us.

- Caring for shepherds: we devoted a time of prayer to the healing of leaders and the renewal of their vitality, and with the support of their peers, for a return to their communities with renewed energy, relying on



a monastery that cradles our prayers and aspirations, from Thursday November 6 to Sunday November 9, 2025.

With the theme “Faith and Light in times of trial”, this meeting was a real break from the daily grind and a means of making decisions together. In these troubled times, we realize





## Report in the Middle East

the Lord's promise: *“Come to me, all you who labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest.”*

■ **Wisdom in decision-making:** we discussed ‘discernment’ together, to ensure that every step we take is a faithful response to God's voice and the needs of our brothers and sisters.

■ **Future plans:** Together, we have launched practical initiatives, including the **Arabic Translation Team**, to serve as a bridge to knowledge, and online training programmes to ensure our continued growth.



This meeting is a renewal of the « Alliance » that binds us together. It is a confirmation that we are one body; if one member suffers in one province, all suffer with him, and if one member rejoices, all rejoice with him.

■ **Acknowledgements.** On behalf of the Faith and Light provinces of the Middle East, and their coordinators, Jean Kassis, Bachir and Mary Koupsy, Magdy Fawaz, Ashraf Zakhary, Claude Semaan, and Wael



Wageh (on behalf of Rania Feleep-Labep), as well as the Vice international coordinator Souleiman Kassouha, we would like to express our gratitude to:

- To Father Tony Karam for his participation, his abundant love, and his Mass.
- To Father Nicolas Elhaddad who, with generosity of heart, shared with us prayers, formation and moments of joy, and who,





## Report in the Middle East



through his gift, offered his support for the continuation of the journey.

- To the teams from both provinces (South Lebanon and Jordan / ILA Trinity: North Lebanon, Armenia and Iran) for their visit and participation in the formation on discernment.

- To the Nomination Committee of the South Lebanon and Jordan Province, represented by Nohad Daaboul, Aïda Kechichian and Father Tony Karam.

- To the sisters of the Mar Elias Al-Rass Convent for their warm welcome and generous hospitality.

- To Jean Kassis, Bachir and Mary Koudsy for all the preparations that made this gathering a living stream of love and peace. ●

Souleiman Kassouha  
Vice international coordinator





**Gems...**

**Wendy loves writing poems  
and prayers to Jesus!**



**Wendy Chevelle** is a member of the Faith and Light  
“Fish Hoek” community, based in Cape Town, South Africa.

Dear Lord Jesus Christ,  
We celebrate your birthday on Christmas day.  
Let us share songs of joy, hope and love.  
And thank you for Faith and Light,  
For letting us be together  
And we ask that for future and hope for 2026,  
that it will be a good year for us.  
Please keep us when we go on holiday,  
when we are with each other  
and when we are on the roads.  
And you keep us safe.  
Love you guys.  
Amen





## Gems...

Dear Lord Jesus Christ,  
Thank you for Faith and Light  
Thank you for our families and friends.  
We belong to you Jesus Christ,  
and we thank you for your Love,  
Peace and Joy.  
Thank you that we can live in peace  
and that we can pray for one another.  
Amen

Dear Lord Jesus Christ,  
We must pray for peace in our world today  
and for our human rights.  
Let us pray for each other in Faith and Light.  
We love you Lord Jesus.  
Amen

Dear Jesus Christ,  
We can praise you with songs and music,  
we worship you  
because you love us.  
We love you Jesus,  
and even when our heart is broken  
we praise you with songs  
and beautiful music to celebrate you.  
Amen

# From Marseille to Rome...

In spite of some logistical concerns, I had been looking forward to this jubilee pilgrimage to Rome for a long time. I was delighted to be able to register, because I enjoy these pilgrimages organised by the Diocese of Marseille: Lourdes, the Holy Land, Jordan... Each time, I experience something special that is good for my inner life and my faith.

But then, why live it with Faith and Light? I am not a member of a community, but sharing a summer camp with them has become familiar to me. I appreciate the joy we share there and, above all, the great simplicity of our relationships. This is one of the traits that people with disabilities teach us. In their presence, we learn to simplify our relationships, to make them more direct, without pretence or calculation. And that is so restful! This simplicity in relationships is also found in their faith, in their way of praying and giving thanks. For example, they do not complain.

In their prayers, they are much less demanding than we, their companions, who have greater physical and intellectual capacities. It's surprising, isn't it? We were all pilgrims of Hope, but deep down, these friends showed me that hope is lived in the



present: in the smiles they wear today, alive and happy in the friendship of Christ. Everything else can come later. Isn't that the Hope we wanted to rediscover by going to Rome?

The diocesan events were a little complicated for us because our group, which was a bit slow-moving, almost always arrived late. But I will always remember the diocesan Masses at St. John Lateran and St. Peter's in Rome.

Thank you to Monsignor Aveline and the pilgrimage service team for allowing us to share such experiences together! ●

Isabelle





## Testimonies



I had the privilege of travelling with the Faith and Light group on a pilgrimage to Rome: I was given a 4:45 am meeting time for a coach trip departing from Marseille. I quickly forgot about the early start and my concerns about travelling with a group of strangers. Whether they were companions like me or people with disabilities, everyone showed me their joy and greeted me with big smiles. I quickly realised that their differences made them unique and extraordinary individuals.

We set off for Rome, 16 coaches leaving from Marseille, all recognisable by our yellow scarves, for a jubilee pilgrimage on the theme of Hope.

From the outset, I knew that this pilgrimage would not be a quiet retreat, but rather a joyful hubbub at times: between finding luggage, broken lifts and the cobblestones of Rome, I discovered the virtue of patience alongside them. And yet, amid the difficulties, and there were many, a sense of peace reigned. A glance, a smile, a burst of laughter... and everything was fine again.

Five days to discover artistic masterpieces and learn more about the lives of saints and Christians who came before us. We were called to reaffirm our faith, celebrate the love of our God, and embark on a journey of conversion.

First Mass at the Gesù Bambino sanctuary in Arenzano, during which the preacher suggested four graces to ask for on this pilgrimage: the grace of goodness, the grace of freedom (to be more ourselves), the grace of living in brotherhood (to realise that Christ came to save all men) and an individual grace.

Passing through the four holy doors, visiting and attending Mass in the basilicas, and praying before the tomb of Pope Francis filled me with wonder, but what touched me most was experiencing it all together with the whole group, united as one.

The general audience with Pope Leo XIV and the papal blessing remain a very powerful moment: God makes himself present in a unique way in human frailty. I thought I was coming to 'accompany' others, but it was the members of the Faith and Light group who guided me to our Lord through their trust, their patience, their indestructible joy, their sincerity, their simplicity, their embodied faith. They are so rich in love.

I give thanks for my encounter with the Faith and Light group: a human and divine adventure. By going to Rome, I rediscovered the Gospel lived out in daily



life thanks to and with my new friends. ●

Michèle

## Testimonies

**W**e set off, 1,000 pilgrims from Marseille, for the 2025 Jubilee in Rome, with our weaknesses, our broken lives, our bitterness, our physical and mental illnesses. I am one of them. I am on the Faith and Light coach. Some of us have known each other for a long time. We are one big family, brought together for this wonderful adventure to the Eternal City.

It was a long journey, but it was filled with songs, prayers and lots of laughter (good humour was always guaranteed) with our driver Patrice, who was always attentive to everyone's needs.

On Wednesday, there was a papal audience in St Peter's Square. Once again, we had difficulties with our bus, which couldn't start because of a problem with the doors opening. Finally, we arrived at St Peter's Square well behind schedule and tried to make our way to the area that had been allocated to us. It was very difficult. Despite the rain, our hearts were happy to be in the midst of this huge crowd welcoming the Holy Father. When we finally arrived near our seats, which were all occupied, our leader Sophie and Emmanuel, a future deacon, found someone from the Holy See who opened a barrier for us. We were propelled towards the platform closest to the Pope.



It was an emotional moment when someone asked us not to move because the Pope was coming to greet us. I was stunned and couldn't believe what we were experiencing. What a surprise for us.

To our great surprise, but with immense joy, the Pope came to meet us and stayed with each of us for a moment. When he reached me, I was overcome with emotion. I couldn't believe my eyes and my heart was stirred by the sight of the Pope, our shepherd, our earthly father. I genuflected, then the Holy Father took my hands and we looked at each other for a moment (an interminable moment, with no noise around me, time suspended). I managed to tell him that I was praying for him.

The Lord has helped me and supported me many times in my life. He has saved me from many pitfalls and torments, and again on Wednesday, 22 October, He told me of His love and that I was His beloved daughter. I give thanks to God for this jubilee year. ●

Hélène



## Testimonies

**A**fter a year of preparation, my baptism at Easter 2025, followed by confirmation and first communion, the Lord guided me on Sophie's path in September 2025: how grateful and thankful I am to Him for this encounter... At her side, I made my first pilgrimage from 20 to 24 October 2025, becoming a 'Pilgrim of Hope' with the Diocese of Marseille, alongside Faith and Light.

It was a week of surrendering to God, of resilience and patience, but also an enriching week that opened my heart to encounters: accompanying Florian, a 33-year-old man, and the other members of the group, we experienced extraordinary moments that filled our eyes and hearts with wonder.

We passed through the four Holy Doors together, shook hands with Pope Leo XIV, prayed for one another, and shared so many moments of joy over numerous plates of pasta with tomato sauce... The evenings of adoration and singing on the bus are precious memories.

It is a week and a year that will remain etched in my memory forever, friendships

forged for many years to come: praise be to the Lord, may He bless the pilgrims from Marseille and around the world.

AMEN! ●

Agathe Chretien





For our reflection, Ghislain du Chéné

## The Night of the Witnesses

Every year, Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) organises an event in France called 'La Nuit des Témoins' (The Night of Witnesses). ACN is a Catholic aid organisation founded in 1947 to help war refugees. Recognised since 2011 as a Pontifical Foundation, it serves Christians around the world through information, prayer and action wherever they are persecuted, oppressed or in material need. It is present in 23 countries.

I regularly attend this always very moving evening, and the testimonies of those who come to talk about the situation in their countries touch me deeply because I know that in the countries where the witnesses come from, there are often Faith and Light communities. Last year, I even had the pleasant surprise of meeting Monsignor Samson Shukardin, former chaplain of the community in Pakistan.

I also know that in every country where Christians are persecuted, there are families with disabled children, and for them, it is a double punishment. In all these countries, Christian organisations come to the aid of these families. In the Middle East, in particular, organisations such as ACN and Œuvre d'Orient provide assistance to centres that help people with disabilities.

During this year's celebration, which took place in Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, I also had the pleasant surprise of hearing a song, "Venez, les bénis de mon Père!" (Come, blessed ones of my Father!), composed by Grégoire François-Dainville, Chief executive officer of the Jérôme Lejeune Foundation, another well-known Faith and Light organisation! I still remember the lecture that Professor Jérôme Lejeune gave in Lourdes at Easter 1991 on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of Faith and Light; his unforgettable voice still resonates within me. In this song, where we can hear both "You, the little ones and beloved of God" and "You who are excluded and all those who are killed", I understand that the persecuted of our world form a single and, unfortunately, too large family...

It is important to establish good contacts with all those who work tirelessly to help Christians under threat in so many countries around the world; the members of our communities will benefit from this. In addition to the three organisations I have already mentioned, we can also mention – for France – the MEP (Paris Foreign Missions Society) and Fidesco (The Emmanuel Community).



 **AED**  
AIDE À L'ÉGLISE EN DÉTRESSE



# Christmas message from Don Marco Bove

The angel came to her and said,  
**“Hail, full of grace,  
the Lord is with you.”**  
(Lk 1:28)

The Christmas message still has the power to surprise us. In the angel's words to the Virgin Mary, we find above all an invitation to joy, “rejoice”, much more than a simple greeting. We always have many reasons to worry and be sad, to withdraw into ourselves and not see the signs of hope and flashes of beauty around us.

However, the angel invites Mary and all of us to joy, which is not a simple emotion, but a mission. That is why he reveals to her, and to us, the reasons for this joy, the secret of all authentic joy. What is this secret? The angel reveals to her that she has been touched and filled with God's grace, that is, with his gratuitous love, with his tender gaze, which is why Mary is full of grace. God's love always precedes and surprises us.

The angel also reveals to her that because of this love, God himself gives himself in communion, “the Lord is with you”, which is why she will never be alone, but will always be able to count on his presence.

The sign of this love and communion will be the child who will be born, Jesus, who will indeed be called ‘Emmanuel’, God with us.

For us too, knowing that we are loved and recognising God's presence at our side is a source of joy and great confidence. It takes away our feelings of loneliness and abandonment and gives us the certainty that our lives are precious in his eyes.

That is why joy becomes a task, because it must be shared. By offering our love and closeness to those who feel alone, we can make the joy of Christmas our own and pass it on to others.

This is the gift and mission of each one of us and of our Faith and Light communities, so that the joy offered to us may reach everyone and become a sign of closeness and communion for the most fragile and isolated.

May the joy of Christmas accompany us beyond these holidays and may God's closeness enable us to experience authentic communion.

Merry Christmas from the Lord.

Don Marco Bove  
International Chaplain of Faith and Light

# International news

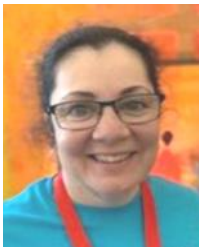
## Happy renewal

**Andrew Dean and Emilia Quintana** have agreed to renew their mission as Vice International Coordinators for another five years. They support the provinces of North-West America, Eastern USA and Eastern Canada. **THANK YOU !**



## Canada East

Congratulations to **Rita Janian**, who was elected Provincial Coordinator on 27 September. She succeeds Simone Desgroseillers, to whom we extend our warmest thanks.



**Mireille Lachance** is the new Provincial Secretary, succeeding Suzanne Belisle. Thank you Mireille for accepting this new mission. We share our deep gratitude to Suzanne, for the 14 years you have dedicated to serving the communities of Eastern Canada on a provincial level!

## Thank you sincerely !

Thanks to a **generous donor from Norway**, who sent a donation of **€4,200** to International last May, a significant solidarity initiative was carried out to support projects in the following provinces:

- “Santa Maria de Guadalupe” in Mexico to support their provincial meeting.
- “Reborn” in Brazil to help them in conducting their formation session for the coordinators.
- “North and Central Egypt” to help them fund their two formation sessions on intellectual disability led by the British Foundation for Training and Consultation in Egypt.



## Endre Csany

We extend our warmest thanks to our dear Endre, who has completed his mission as Vice International Coordinator for the provinces of Between the Seas, Danube and Ukraine with dedication and enthusiasm.



## Marie-Lourdes Meunier



A huge thank you to Marie-Lourdes for saying YES to the wonderful mission of Vice Provincial Coordinator for the communities of Rodrigues Island (Indian Ocean).



# International news

## Olena PERETS Vice international coordinator

We are delighted to announce that **Olena PERETS** has agreed to succeed Endre CSÀNY as Vice International Coordinator. She will accompany the provinces of **Between the Seas** (*Georgia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Russia, Slovakia*), **Danube** (*Hungary, Romania, Serbia*) and **Ukraine..**

\*\*\*

My name is Olena Perets, I am 39 years old. I have been part of the international movement "Faith and Light" for about 12 years. I belong to the community "Rocky Castle" in the city of Khust in Transcarpathia (Ukraine). I live and work here. I am not married and am a Greek Catholic Christian. Faith and Light is not just a ministry or activity for me, but my calling from God. I love and accept this path that the Lord is leading me on

I have two higher education degrees: the first is in Social Pedagogy and Practical Psychology, and the second is in Corrective Pedagogy. I am currently studying resource-oriented counselling so that I can better help those who are close to me in my personal life and in my ministry.

I work in the field of education and rehabilitation of children with intellectual disabilities at the Educational and Rehabilitation Center of the Khust City Council. This work, as well as my membership in the Faith and Light movement, has become an important and beloved calling for me, in which



I feel the presence and support of God.

I am fluent in Ukrainian :) and I communicate in English with the help of DeepL Translate. But I am ready to learn :) God did not bless me with all talents :) But I love to organize various events in the communities of the Faith and Light movement: retreats, formations, spiritual meetings, and summer camps. I also love to travel, go to the mountains, and relax by the sea.

For four years, I served as vice-provincial coordinator for the "West", located in the Transcarpathian region, and for six months I was acting provincial coordinator for Ukraine.

Now, for a year, I have been just a friend in my community. This year was a good time to recharge — an opportunity to regain strength and inspiration to continue serving the Faith and Light movement.

I believe that the Lord guides my path and knows where it leads.

With prayer and gratitude !

Olena Perets

# International news

## Provincial assembly in Croatia

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has anointed me! He has sent me to bring good news to the poor..."*

Inspired by these words from the Gospel of Luke, we prepared the provincial meeting held at Vrhovec, at the Carmelite Sisters of the Divine Heart of Jesus, from October 24th to 26th. It was a moment of great significance for this historic moment of our movement.

The main task over the past few months was to recognize the people who, through their experience and their understanding and living of the spirit of Faith and Light, would be able to pastorally lead the province and its two groups of communities over the next four years.

With the experience and faithful guidance of the vice international coordinator, Angela Grassi, the elections were creatively designed, leaving room for sincere reflection and the sharing of challenges within the communities, so that the future provincial team would know what awaits them.

In doing so, we recognized the points of our growth and the priorities into which we will invest our efforts in order to create and carry out activities that will help the province grow in faith and in the quality of community life.

In our communities, we are building a house on rock, with firm foundations in the Charter and Constitution of Faith and Light, as well as in the international experience of community



life that has been developing for over 50 years.

Believing this with all my heart, I said my YES for the next mandate, as did the new vice coordinators Jadranka Ivkić and Sanja Ana Tomić, and the new secretary of the association, Marika Coupe. It is a great grace to serve the Lord in this way for all who see their unique spiritual vocation in our Church precisely in Faith and Light, and who desire to grow in faith through it.

We also expressed our gratitude to the former vice coordinators, Lidija Zadro and Zoran Zadro, Tihomila Viljetić, and the provincial chaplain, Rev. Robert Jugović.

Thank you to everyone who offered their hands and hearts, making this gathering so rich and wonderful. A special thanks to Angela Grassi, who wisely guided us through this delicate process, to Marija Loots for translating from Italian, and to Dora Dežmić for the beautiful photographs.

We continue to sail on together, with Jesus in our boat - whether the sun warms us or storm clouds follow.

**Dijana Stanic**



# International news

## Provincial assembly in Croatia



# Family Album

## Thank you to our loyal interpreters!

The official languages of Faith and Light are French, English and Spanish, as evidenced by the website [www.foietlumiere.org/en](http://www.foietlumiere.org/en), which is available in all three languages.

We regularly call on our translators and interpreters to adapt official documents and facilitate communication during videoconference meetings of the board of directors and the international coordinating team, as well as during major international face-to-face meetings, such as the general assemblies held every five years and the coordinators' councils.

We would also like to express our gratitude to all those who translate the Guidelines, Up Sails, and all the basic documents into the 35 other languages of Faith and Light, including Polish, Italian, Portuguese, Arabic and several Asian languages.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to each of the translators and interpreters for their availability, their loyalty and for everything they do with passion in the service of the mission of Faith and Light! And we are very happy to introduce you today to the people who collaborate very regularly with the secretariat:

### Verena

My name is **Verena Saura Sánchez**. I live in Spain, in the sunny city of Alicante, on the Mediterranean coast.

I interpret mainly from French into Spanish, and sometimes I help out a little with English if needed...

I discovered Faith and Light thanks to my colleague and friend José Antonio Alberola, who was already interpreting for Faith and Light, and who one day asked me to come and interpret in Lourdes

in...2011! After Lourdes, I went to Wépion, Leeds, Pierrefonds, Poland, Rome, Guardamar and Salamanca for ICT and Board meetings, general assemblies and youth gatherings... ❤️



### Joëlle

My name is **Joëlle Kielwasser**, I have been living in Belgium for 25 years but I am originally from Alsace in France. I discovered Faith and Light during my studies in Paris 35 years ago and I have never left! What an enrichment it is to move forward in life as a community, to support one another and to rejoice together... I am a professional interpreter and work from German, English, Greek and Spanish into French.. ❤️

*Photo : in a translation booth, during a general meeting of Faith and Light.*





# Family Album

## Dan



My name is **Daniel Noble** and I am from the United Kingdom, but I currently live in France. I interpret from French and Spanish into English. I discovered Faith and Light in 2024 at the international meeting in Porto, where I had the opportunity to meet some of the wonderful people involved in this organisation. ❤️

## Rebecca



My name is **Rebecca Ireland** I live near London in the UK, but previously spent several years living in Belgium. As well as languages, I enjoy playing music, swimming and going for walks in the countryside. In 2012, Faith and Light held its General Assembly in Leeds. I happened to be studying interpreting (French and Spanish) at the university nearby

and I was invited to come and join the Faith and Light interpreter team. Thirteen years later, I'm still here!

Through Faith and Light I have met people from all over the world. Thank you for the fun gatherings and the many friends I have made along the way! ❤️

## Matesa

My name is **Maria Teresa von Hildebrand Mulcahy**. I add Mulcahy, following the tradition of Spanish-speaking countries, which gives equal importance to the mother's surname as to the father's. My father is German and my mother is Irish, and I was born in Colombia, where most of my large family still lives. I was fortunate to grow up speaking three languages simultaneously: French, English and Spanish (I speak very little German!).

The years passed and almost fifty years ago I married Yannis Xylouris, a Cretan, which means that I also speak Greek.

I have four children and nine grandchildren. My three eldest children and their seven grandchildren live in the same city as me, Heraklion, the main city of Crete.

My youngest son lives in Brussels with his family.

It was during his wedding in India in 2018 (yes, he married an Indian woman from Gujarat, thereby adding another country to our 'coat of arms') that the sister of a family friend told me about L'Arche and the possibility of working with them as an interpreter.

I started with L'Arche in 2020 and that's how I heard about Faith and Light International and Céline, to whom I wrote to offer my services. And here we are.

In the photo, I am presenting the birthday cake for my youngest grandchild, Kalki, for her second birthday at the end of October 2025. ❤️



# Family Album

## Marta

My name is **Marta Wierzchoslawska**, “I live in Poland, I’m 25 years old, a wife, and a mother of three children. I’m a Polish and English interpreter. I was invited to Faith and Light community in 2016 by my teacher. A few years later, I joined the “Up Sails” translation team and now I’m helping our vice international coordinator with translations. ❤️



## Sebastian

My name is **Sebastian Sinski**, and I am originally from Poland. My story with Faith and Light began almost by chance, during the General Assembly in Strasbourg.

At the time, my university professor asked me if I would be willing to go as an interpreter, after her colleagues at Faith and Light had been looking

for a Polish student who was also fluent in French and Spanish. I said yes... without realising that this adventure would have such a profound impact on my life.

Since that first step, I have become a loyal friend of Faith and Light. At every multilingual assembly or meeting, I have the joy of putting my love of interpreting at the service of the community; for me, it is a true commitment of the heart: to build bridges, to enable everyone to understand and be understood. ❤️

and my working languages are English, French and Portuguese. A year ago, I started studying German. It is a great honour for me to be part of an excellent team of colleagues from all over the world. Thank you to FLI for always placing your trust in me. ❤️

## Erika

Hello, everyone. My name is **Erika Gonzales**. I live in Lima, Peru, with my mother and siblings. I discovered Faith and Light a little over 20 years ago when I joined a Faith and Light community in the parish near my home. I went there looking for a place where my autistic brother Anibal would be accepted, and I ended up becoming part of a large international family.



Today, my community no longer meets, but we remain friends with the few members. A little over 10 years ago, I started translating for Faith and Light International, and since 2021, I have been working as an interpreter. My mother tongue is Spanish



# Family Album

## Nadia

My name is **Nadia Sandrine Minhindou**. I am Gabonese and live in the suburbs of Libreville, in a small neighbouring town called Akanda. I interpret from French, English, Spanish and Portuguese, so I have four working languages.



I discovered Faith and Light thanks to a colleague, Béatrice Manigat, who now works for the United Nations. She did me the great honour of suggesting that I work with you, which

is a source of great happiness and immense pleasure for me. I am a practising Catholic, I love people and I am very happy to accompany you. ❤️

## Antoinette

My name is **Antoinette Makhoul Akoury**, and I have been involved with Faith and Light in Lebanon since 1980. I am a physiotherapist working with elderly



people. I am married and have a 27-year-old son and a 24-year-old daughter. I discovered Faith and Light while hitchhiking with my sister. We met Roland, who had just come from L'Arche in Trosly, where he had

spent a year and a half, after which he returned with the desire to launch the movement in Lebanon. So we started it together.

I translate – with joy and passion – mainly from Arabic to French and from French to Arabic, but also from English to Arabic. ❤️

## Nancy

My name is **Nancy Salcedo**, I am Mexican and I live near Mexico City. I am a trained interpreter and I speak English, French and Spanish. Towards the end of my studies, I did some voluntary work in France, and that is how I discovered L'Arche, a great treasure that I still carry in my heart.

Since 2005, I have been working as an interpreter and translator for them. At the 2017 General Assembly in Belfast, I met Verena and we worked together; it was a wonderful experience, she is an excellent colleague. A few years later, Céline needed an interpreter for a meeting with the Faith and Light Board of Directors, and that's how I met you.



Thank you, Verena, for recommending me!

I already knew a little about Faith and Light thanks to your connection with L'Arche.

Over time, and thanks to my participation in communication during various video meetings, as well as at the Assembly in Strasbourg, I learned a great deal and was deeply touched by the immense generosity with which the members of Faith and Light organise, support and bring the movement to life, ensuring the well-being of each person.

I now feel fully integrated into the Faith and Light family and am always grateful for their appreciation and recognition of my work as an interpreter.

I really enjoy working with Erika in the booth, we make a good team; and getting to know the other interpreters has been a real pleasure. ❤️

# Family Album

## Xavier

Hello, my name is Xavier Nys. I first encountered Faith and Light in 1997 or 1998 at the Rocher community near Charleroi (Belgium).

In 2000, I was given a new assignment near Tournai (Belgium), where Viviane Le Polain, then a member of the international team, lived. As I am a trained interpreter, Viviane hired me.

I translated for the first time in Hungary in the early 2000s. Since then, I have been translating regularly at international meetings.




This has given me the opportunity to meet some wonderful people from all over the world (I cannot name them all). Faith and Light has allowed me to experience the universality of our Church first-hand.

I would like to thank the international secretariat, which goes out of its way for the movement and does everything it can to make our work easier.

As we approach Christmas and Epiphany, let us not forget that God's message of love is not reserved for a select few, but must be proclaimed to all humanity in its diversity. Our faith is not European, it is Catholic and must therefore be proclaimed to all nations, tribes, peoples and languages. (Rev 7:9) Everyone should be able to hear it in their own dialect (Acts 2:6), that is, in their own culture.

We know that we all share the same humanity with its strengths and limitations, as those who are at the heart of our community and who open us up to universality remind us. It is in this rich and diverse humanity that God joins us.

Holy Feast of the Nativity 

## Magdalena

My name is **Magdalena Pokorzynska**, I live in Poland. I interpret Polish to English and English to Polish.

A former chaplain of the community Fr. Łukasz Małkiewicz (the present provincial chaplain) became my Religious Education teacher in the upper middle school and presented the Faith and Light Movement during classes. Then, he invited me for a pre-summer camp meeting.

I also talked to Izabela Rabiasz (vice international coordinator), who invited me for a summer camp. There my journey in the community has began. I met those people and loved them. Now I serve my friends, my community and my movement in various fields: as a community coordinator, provincial treasurer, interpreter and Up Sails translator. In Faith and Light I have found my place in life! 





# International agenda

## DECEMBER

- Advent retreat in Vilnius, Lithuania, December 5-7
- St. Nicholas Day with Ukrainian communities, December 6
- USA East celebrates the arrival of Christmas. Participants are invited to sing a song or play an instrument, visio, December 6
- Christmas market for Faith and Light communities in Russia, Moscow, December 13
- Meeting of young people from the two Spanish provinces in Valladolid, December 13
- Luzitana province jubilee pilgrimage to Fatima Shrine, Portugal, December 13
- Christmas celebration with the communities of Ojisek and Dakovo in Croatia, December 20
- Christmas tree festival with the Living Waters community, Nelson, New Zealand, December 27
- Mass and Christmas party for communities in South Lebanon, December 27
- Réveillon de Foi et Lumière Paris et le Levant, Paroisse St Séverin, December 31
- Prayer for Peace in Ukraine, Lviv, December 31

## JANUARY

- Provincial team meeting of Terra et Mare, videoconference, January 8
- Finance meeting, South Poland, January 14
- Formation weekend for community coordinators and coordinating teams in France, Lyon, January 16
- Faith and Light gala in Slovakia, January 25
- Faith and Light gala in Brno, Czech Republic, January 25
- Feast of Light: Libiaz, South Poland, Dunmore, Ireland, Kretinga, Lithuania, January 31

## FEBRUARY

- Feast of Light: in Paris, Lebanon and Portugal, February 1st
- Provincial meeting in Ukraine, Bryukhovychi, suburb of Lviv, February 13
- South Poland Provincial Council meeting, Siewierz, February 28

## International solidarity

### Projects supported during the last trimester

- Provincial meeting and election in Rodrigues (Rainbow province), November 28-30.  
Support provided: € 600.
- Formation session for coordinators from Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil, November 28-30.  
Support provided: € 1068
- Solidarity for our brothers and sisters in West Africa. Support provided: € 3405

## Would you like to make a donation ?

Online on our secure website  
<https://www.foietlumiere.org/en/donate>



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# The friends of Faith and Light



**Saint Matthew Financial Corporation:  
a capital management firm guided by your values.**

**Saint Matthew Financial corporation is an independent capital management firm founded with a simple purpose: to place finance at the service of families, their concrete needs, and their Christian values.**

**W**e assist parents, associations, professionals and entrepreneurs in building, protecting and transferring their wealth/inheritance, paying particular attention to sensitive or complex family situations.

Our approach is based on three pillars:

- listening, to understand each family's history and concerns,
- expertise, to offer comprehensive and reliable wealth management solutions,
- ethics, by aligning all of our advice with the social doctrine of the Church.

**Supporting families over the long term: protecting, passing on, preparing for the future.**

Within Faith and Light, many parents wonder how to secure the future of a vulnerable child, how to organise the transfer of family assets, or how to ensure that their financial choices are in line with their deeply held beliefs.

Saint Matthew Financial corporation has made it its mission to answer precisely these questions, offering personalised, transparent and tailor-made support.

We intervene in particular to:

- secure the savings of a vulnerable child or young adult,
- organise the transfer of assets in a fair and protective manner,
- preserve the income and living environment of a loved one,
- optimise family taxation,
- clarify sometimes complex or anxiety-inducing wealth situations.

**Management faithful  
to Christian values**

Saint Matthew Financial corporation stands out for its concrete commitment: 5% of our turnover is donated each year to projects run by Catholic associations working in the social, educational or charitable fields, confirming our commitment to the common good.

Our investments are selected according to the principles of the Social Doctrine of the Church, with rigorous efforts to exclude sectors that are contrary to human dignity and a constant effort to favour investments that contribute to the common good: social housing, health, education, clean energy, ethical SMEs, Catholic projects, etc.



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# The friends of Faith and Light

## Concrete solutions for Faith and Light families

### Protecting a vulnerable child

- Prudent and secure investments,
- Guaranteed capital,
- Solutions to ensure regular income,
- Support with legal and administrative procedures.

### Prepare and organise the handover

- Clear and understandable wealth management strategy,
- Appropriate tools (life insurance, capitalisation contracts, donations, dismemberment, etc.),
- Measures to protect vulnerable children while preserving family harmony for lasting peace.

## Managing your assets over the long term

- Tax optimisation
- Retirement planning
- Real estate or financial investment
- Advisory or delegated management adapted to your needs and risk profile, with complete transparency.

**A firm that is approachable, people-oriented and committed to the common good**

Our team shares the same conviction: wealth management must first and foremost be an act of protection and love towards those we care about.

We therefore do everything we can to offer families stable and reassuring support, faithful to their values and essential priorities.

Because preparing for the future is a deeply family-oriented and spiritual act, we are at your side to help you do so with confidence, peace and clarity, inspired by the Christian principles that guide our daily actions.



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# Marie-Hélène's letter



## Five fish and two loaves

**W**e often face deadlocked situations. But for the Lord, there are no dead ends. Anything is possible, provided he finds men and women who trust him and are willing to give, like the young boy in the Gospel, their five loaves and two fish so that Jesus can perform the multiplication of the loaves.

This is somewhat the 'holy' story of Faith and Light. Two severely disabled children; parents who were saddened that they could not enrol them in a pilgrimage; a team with limited resources who committed themselves to helping them—this is how the first international Faith and Light pilgrimage came about. From this pilgrimage sprang communities on every continent that simply want to show parents and everyone around them that their child with disabilities is precious in the eyes of God.

They have their place in society and in the Church, where they are called to be honoured as one of the weakest members of the Body.

The Lord has done wonders for us. He continues to lift up the humble, to fill the hungry, to extend his mercy to all who trust in him. But his love urges us to go further, to reach out to other parents in solitude, to call on friends who are able to understand and commit themselves. To reveal the treasure hidden in our wounded brothers and sisters. To create around them and with them places where they can grow humanly and spiritually...

We have few resources, we are small. But our hope is great because we have already experienced how much God loves us and how powerful his grace is. ●

Marie-Hélène Mathieu  
*Ombres et Lumière (Shadows and Light)*  
sept 1990



Faith and Light community from Singapore