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# Faith and Light international

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## LETTER TO ALL THE FAITH AND LIGHT COMMUNITIES

*"So it is in the Writings that the Christ would undergo death, and come back to life again on the third day; And that teaching about a change of heart and forgiveness of sins is to be given to Jerusalem first and to all nations in his name You are witnesses of these things. And now I will send to you what my father has undertaken to give you, but do not go from the town, till the power from heaven comes to you..." (Lk 24, 46-49).*

Dear ones, I feel the need at this very particular moment for the life of our communities of Faith and Light, to reach out to you with a word that can help us calm our heart, to interpret in the light of faith what we are experiencing and to look forward with confidence to continue the path that the Spirit of the risen Jesus has shown us from the beginning.

In difficult times we must not take refuge in the past, we must not even flee the present, we must instead return to the origin, to the source. The words of the evangelist Luke are those that Jesus addresses to his disciples after his passion. It is a moment of great crisis, because Jesus died and everything seems to be over now: the promises and hopes that they had placed in him have been lost. But Jesus is risen and in the light of the Word of God, he helps them to interpret in the right way everything that has happened, making them a promise: the gift of the Holy Spirit to support them and guide them on the way.

These days we heard the news that l'Arche International shared about the beginning of their history and about Jean Vanier, and we felt lost. Thousand thoughts and a thousand emotions: unbelief, sadness, anger. Why all this? Why this trial for us and our friends from l'Arche, whom with us and like us believed in a project to which Jean dedicated his life?

Going back to the source can help us find some light. We all know very well that L'Arche and Faith and Light are not a work of man but of God, of the Spirit of God who inspired and supported the birth of something that nobody imagined would bear so much fruit. This is the first and greatest sign of the work of the Spirit: *"You will recognize them by their fruits..." (Mt 7:16)*. So, the path that we have shared in these years comes from God, it is a good fruit and its roots are deep.

What has left us bewildered today is that God himself used fragile and sinful men, a man like Jean, whom, according to what the report revealed, was unable to guard a weakness that deeply hurt women who had trusted in him in their accompaniment. We want to express our compassion and our friendship to them, but today all this has hurt us too. God alone is a judge, but we absolutely cannot accept these behaviours, because they are very far from the spirit of L'Arche and of Faith and Light, they are totally contrary to what Jean himself taught us throughout his life.

The mystery of evil is greater than we can understand and therefore we cannot accept what has happened. But the experience that we all live at Faith and Light, in sharing and in preserving the fragility of many of our friends, has been a source of great fruitfulness for us. It was the strength that has changed our life and made us discover the face of God in a more authentic way. All this is a gift that comes from God and from the communion with the little ones. Through the friendship and ties we have experienced and live in our communities; we have learned to recognize and also welcome our frailties and our wounds. Faith and Light has been for many of us a path of growth and healing, a real call.

Now would all this be lost? Certainly not. The Holy Spirit still guides us and gives us the strength to resume the journey. It is he who still today asks all of us not to let ourselves be confused by evil in order to find peace. In the letter to the Galatians St. Paul writes: "*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, a quiet mind, kind acts, well-doing, faith, Gentle behaviour, control over desires*" (Gal 5:22). We therefore ask the Holy Spirit to take us by the hand, to fill our hearts, to support our steps and to help us look forward, with confidence.

Let us ask together, in prayer and in silence to be like Mary, our sister in faith, also in a moment of bewilderment "*kept all these words in her heart, and gave much thought to them*" (Lk 2:19). The Lord will know how to transform this time of trial into a new occasion of grace. We remain united in prayer.

Good journey to all.

Don Marco Bove  
International chaplain