Faith and Light

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 CHRISTMAS LETTER 2020

Dear friends,

What a year it has been. Who could have ever foreseen such a world epidemic? It is certainly a time we owe such a lot appreciation to all the people on the frontline, the list is endless, we are so grateful and hold you all in close prayers. It is certainly a time we will never forget. And could we ever have foreseen the revelations of Jean Vanier, the crime he committed, by the man we thought we knew. I believe we have all suffered so many emotions but let us remember those brave women, the cross they have carried all these years. Let us keep them close in our prayers, life will never be the same for them. Let us remember why Faith and Light came about over 50 years ago, the parents of two boys with disabilities called Thaddee and Loic had a desire to take their boys to Lourdes. A desire that was made into a reality. Next year will be our 50th anniversary a time to move forward into the future.

*As I think of Mary, when Angel Gabriel was sent by God to visit her, He said “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.” At this point Mary does not say “IMPOSSIBLE! no way can this be true!!!!” N0 Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I have no husband?”  Mary assumes it can be. She questions God in a way of absolute faith. And the angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.  For with God nothing will be impossible.” And Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.* Mary accepted what the Angel told her because she had faith in God. What ever the rest of this year and next year holds remember God is always there, He gives us the Hope of our tomorrows. It has been so amazing to hear, how Faith and Light communities have coped through these times without physically meeting. Suddenly we have communities having their meetings on zoom. We have used the technology available and the good old way of post, sending knitted hearts to each community member, letters, cards, and gifts. Some communities in Wales who have friends in group homes arranged for every member to receive an afternoon tea, and they organised the home to have zoom set up for all members to be sat in their homes eating tea at the same time! Mary on her way to work in her car, passed one of the group homes and every time she passed, she hooted and waved, and her friends waved back. Faith and Light is family and family keeps in touch.

I want to share this testimony of Sandra’s who is co-leader of one the newest communities in UK North and it reminded me why Faith and light is so special and what a wonderful global family we are part of. Sandra Scully, who co-leads our Parish Faith and Light Group, describes how a remarkable event in Lourdes gave her a whole new outlook on life. "Whilst accompanying my severely disabled grandson on pilgrimage to Lourdes we came across a small community of Faith & Light made up of adults with intellectual disabilities. They were “Reliving the Gospel.” They understand in their being things that words cannot convey. It was in the form of a Mime. It placed the person into the situation described in the scriptures. It was not a role play nor putting on a show. It was simply reliving the sacred scriptures as a true story happening in the here and now. Jesus and Mary are present in our lives’ smallest details and those who were reliving the scriptures were picked from all the community members. The person with the disability, family members, friends, the priest: everyone was involved; nobody was left as the audience. Everyone could share and explain what touched him/her in the message. Sharing was done through words, non-verbal activities like a drawing, body language or a collage. Just watching and listening I felt the Holy Spirit within my heart as I looked upon my grandson. He cannot speak words yet through the Holy Spirit it was revealed to me how special and blessed we are to have Dean in our lives. He truly is a special gift from God. He teaches us how to love and appreciate the smallest things in life. Now we have become part of the global family of Faith and Light. So, to anyone who would like to volunteer to help in our community please come along and see the beauty of people with disabilities. They are magnificent teachers of love, joy and happiness."

Let us all take time during this advent to remember those who have lost loved one’s.

Let us pray for those not well, God, knows their names, may God place His healing hands upon them.

Let us pray for our friends in faraway countries. Let us remember especially those in our communities that are alone, at this time.

Glaedelig Jul (Danish) Roomus Joulupuha (Estonian)

 Shona An Nollaig (Irish Gaelic Nadolig Llawen (Welsh Gaelic)

God Jul or Gledelig Jul (Norwegian) Nollaig chridheil huibh (Scottish Gaelic)

 God Jul (Swedish) Feliz Navidad – (Spanish) Happy Christmas

**May God bless you all,**

**Take care and Keep safe.**

**With love Ann**