

The 50th anniversary of Faith and Sharing is coming



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Faith and Sharing will celebrate its 50 years of existence in 2018. Indeed, the first retreat where Jean Vanier gave the Word in 1968 led to the creation, in North America, of this little community that one calls Faith and Sharing.

The Spirit of Jesus did its work and many people may bear witness to what Faith and Sharing may have brought into their lives. Priests, brothers/sisters and laity all have been touched one way or another. Year after year, Jean came back to preach retreats, talk in prisons and penitentiaries, offer conferences in psychiatric hospitals and give interviews on radio and television.

Subsequent to this new type of retreats, from Halifax to Vancouver and from Timmins (Ontario) to Jacksonville (Florida), new groups were formed and had the desire to meet: to listen and share the Word in prayer groups; to feed themselves with the Bread of life that is both the Word of God and the Eucharist; to live the fraternal communion by sharing a meal and engaging with one another and with brothers and sisters of the community in general.

10th and 25th Anniversaries.

Representatives from dioceses and regions where Faith and Sharing were formed got together in Toronto, Ontario after living this "community of encounters" for ten years. And then, the 25th anniversary came. From everywhere we gathered called, like Moses in his time, by the theme inspired by the book of Exodus "I have heard their cry...Now, go and free my people" (Ex 3,7.9-10). Jean was again one of those who was preaching the Word.

And you! Where were you at the beginning of Faith and Sharing in 1968, 1970 ...? When did you learn about this little ecclesial community? Who invited you to Faith and Sharing? How many retreats did you attend? How did the retreats, the prayer and sharing groups, or the monthly prayer meetings change your life? What are your best memories?



How will you celebrate the 50th anniversary?

As far as we are concerned, we think that the 50th anniversary could be celebrated for the life that Faith and Sharing created, for the Spirit's calling to social engagement, the new found friendships, the courage awakened.

The North-American committee will not organize any activities for this occasion. However, we invite you to get together, for example by diocese or region, and think about how you could commemorate Faith and Sharing and the good done by those encounters that brought so many people to recognize and meet Jesus in others, in particular in the small and destitute ones.

Discuss it at your meetings with your groups, between coordinators or within your teams. For the dioceses or regions where there are no more Faith and Sharing activities, what do you think of a reunion of people who used to participate either to monthly meetings or annual Faith and Sharing retreats?

We invite you to share your ideas of activities (potential or actual) for the 50th with other Faith and Sharing groups. For this purpose, a web page will be created as well as space will be saved in the next Heart to Heart Bulletins. May each of us be inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit! 💜