



AIC INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER IN HONOUR OF SAINT LOUISE DE MARILLAC

9TH MAY 2018

This year, on our Day of Prayer, we will reflect on the **very important work** of visiting the charities that St Vincent de Paul, our founder, entrusted to Saint Louise de Marillac in May 1629. **These reflections have been taken from a text by Father Corpus Delgado, CM, written in October 2015.**

Louise de Marillac's visits contributed towards the revitalisation and better organisation of the Confraternities of Charity:

- ❖ Louise discovered the importance of working in communion, **as a team**: she was always accompanied by other women on her visits.
- ❖ Louise was aware of the difficulties of Charity. She brought herself closer to concrete reality and participated in **simple acts**, typical of the country way of life (providing fresh food and hospitality). She brought with her medicine, clothing, primers for schools, etc.
- ❖ While on the road, Louise's life was **centred around the Lord**, whom she greeted whenever she saw the tower of a church or chapel, whom she visited in the person of the poor and whom she worshipped through the Blessed Sacrament in the places where her transport stopped at the end of the day.
- ❖ The **method** that Louise put into practice revealed her sense of the importance of training. When she arrived at the place that she had to visit, she gathered all the members of the Confraternity together and listened carefully to the report that they made of their work and their difficulties. Through her questions, she tried to complete the information herself and from this began her innovative work: *"Louise first praised the good, then reproached the bad, before moving on to deal with particular problems,*



and most of all, she encouraged a holier life, a deeper commitment and more diligent work”.

- ❖ Louise **informed St Vincent in great detail** of all the difficulties encountered and suggested solutions to him, hoping for his approval. St Vincent became worried about Louise’s health during these long conversations and insisted that she told him *“immediately if her lungs were not exhausted from so much talking and her head overwhelmed by so many concerns and cares”* (SVP 1:137).
- ❖ Not content with simply making recommendations to the members of the Confraternities, Louise put them into practice herself – she put her **pedagogy in action**: for a few days she would take on the duties of the Superior, then those of the Treasurer, then those of the person visiting the sick. In this way everyone had a living model for their work.
- ❖ Louise also raised another concern: **education**. In the places where there was already a teacher, Louise supported her in her work and gave her means to improve her lessons. Where there was no teacher, she chose one of the liveliest young members and carefully prepared her to be able to perform this very important service.
- ❖ During the visits to the Charities, Louise discovered the importance of working in close **collaboration with the parish priest and bishops**: in order for the Confraternity of Charity to function smoothly and for the service to the sick to be fruitful, it was always important to be able to count on the parish priest (cf. C.8.).

Let us pray together: *Dear St Louise, as we celebrate another anniversary of your ascension into Heaven, we would like to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for the legacy you have left us as **Visitor of the Charities** and all that you did to motivate, organise and revitalise the first Confraternities. You endeavoured to promote the participation of women in the Church. You are an example to us, the more than 100,000 AIC volunteers in the world, of how we should carry out our service for the benefit of the most disadvantaged people. You always made sure that leaders undertook their roles with excellence and transparency. You highlighted the importance of education and training and showed us that like you, we should **centre our lives around Christ** so that we may always have an attitude of love and mercy towards people living in situations of poverty.*

Saint Louise, we ask you to intercede for us before God, our Lord, so that we may know how to fulfil the mission that He has given to us and follow His will.

Pray the Lord’s Prayer, Hail Mary and Glory Be and repeat three times the words: Saint Louise de Marillac, pray for us.

AIC’s Suggestion:

Attend Holy Mass as a group and afterwards follow this Day of Prayer, also as a group.