

Outline for New Member LOC Orientation

Opening:

Welcome members with a prayer and/or song and an overview of what they can expect from this session. Song Options: Servant Song, 'The Door is Open' at <https://soundcloud.com/famvineurope/famvin400-song> or the song of your choice.

1. Our Beginnings (What and Where)

a) *** *The story of our origin – Options include:*

- The Story of our Origin, LOC Manual, page 1 (included in attached documents)
- Video AIC Journey 1617 to Today - Link:
<https://famvin.org/en/2016/08/21/august-22-1617-journey-aic-begins/>

- Vincentian Book, page 43

b) *LOC in the USA – Options include:*

- Ladies of Charity in the USA, Vincentian Book, pages 16-17 (in documents)
- LOC Manual, page 3 – last paragraph

c) → *Creation of our local association*

This will be different for each association – example in documents is from Metro Kansas City

2. Our Mission, Vision, and Virtues

a) *** *LCUSA Mission*

b) → *Local association Mission and Vision*

This will be different for each association; examples in documents are from Metro Kansas City and St. John's University

c) *LOC Prayer* – This is a communal prayer that members are encouraged to pray at 9 am. Monday morning prayer (page 24 in Manual)

d) *Virtues and Symbols*

- *** Virtues - *Options include:*
 - Charity, Simplicity, Humility – in documents is KC example
 - Could use LOC Manual, page 5
 - Could use Vincentian book, pages 63-76
- Colors – Royal blue and gold; Symbols – cross (faith); anchor (hope); heart (charity)

St. Vincent de Paul

St. Louis de Marillac

St. Elizabeth
Ann Seton

3. *** Our Saints – Our Inspiration (Who and Why)

- a) *St. Vincent de Paul*
- b) *St. Louise de Marillac*
- c) *St. Elizabeth Ann Seton*

Options include:

- In the documents are a set of information on all three saints. If you use these three documents, discuss how Ladies of Charity is the ‘Strength’ for St. Vincent, St. Louise, and St. Elizabeth Ann.
- Vincentian book, pages 11, 13, and 15 or pages 19-22
- Websites <https://vinformation.org/en>, <https://famvin.org/>
- If you choose something different, make sure the source you use is a Vincentian source.

4. Vincentian Service (How)

a) **Call to Service – Options include:**

- 3 Roads Homily by Fr. Dick Gielow, C.M.
- Serving with a Vincentian Heart video at <https://famvin.org/en/2018/08/19/ladies-of-charity-serving-with-a-vincentian-heart/> or at <https://youtu.be/6obsI57JJA>

b) *** → **Local association service opportunities** – this will be different for each association but could contain:

- What are the opportunities to serve?
- What are the fundraising opportunities?
- How can you get involved? – the contacts.
- Hours volunteered for the past year for your association.
- Amount raised and donated to benefactors for your association.

c) **Ladies of Charity USA and AIC International – Options include:**

- For LCUSA, could include examples of the LCUSA tri-fold, the multi-page history of LCUSA from the assembly program book, the Manual, and the Servicette.
- For AIC International, could include the Activity Report 2020-2023 that was in the assembly materials.
- St. John’s University has created a PowerPoint that contains much of this information. See Section 4 PowerPoint in the documentation. Some of this information is specific to St. John’s University. A text for the PowerPoint is included in the documents.

d) Service Stories

The service stories in the documents are from Karen Brinker, the Spiritual Moderator for Metro Kansas City. These are two of her experiences from working at our Catholic nursing home. These are examples and are intended to inspire volunteerism. You are welcome to use these, but it would be better if you use experiences from your association for this section.

Closing:

Before closing, ask new members to introduce themselves and share their reasons for becoming Ladies of Charity, what inspired them from today, what service would they like to be involved with, etc. (If your group is large, you may choose not to do this.)

Pray a service prayer together. Options include:

- The Vincentian Mission Prayer by St. John Gabriel Perboyre, CM
- Prayer from Spiritual Writings of Louise
- Concluding Prayer

You may choose to close with a song as well as one of the prayers above. Suggested song is Vincent's Song – You Did it to Me. Link to this song is:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V9yx7vasHCo>

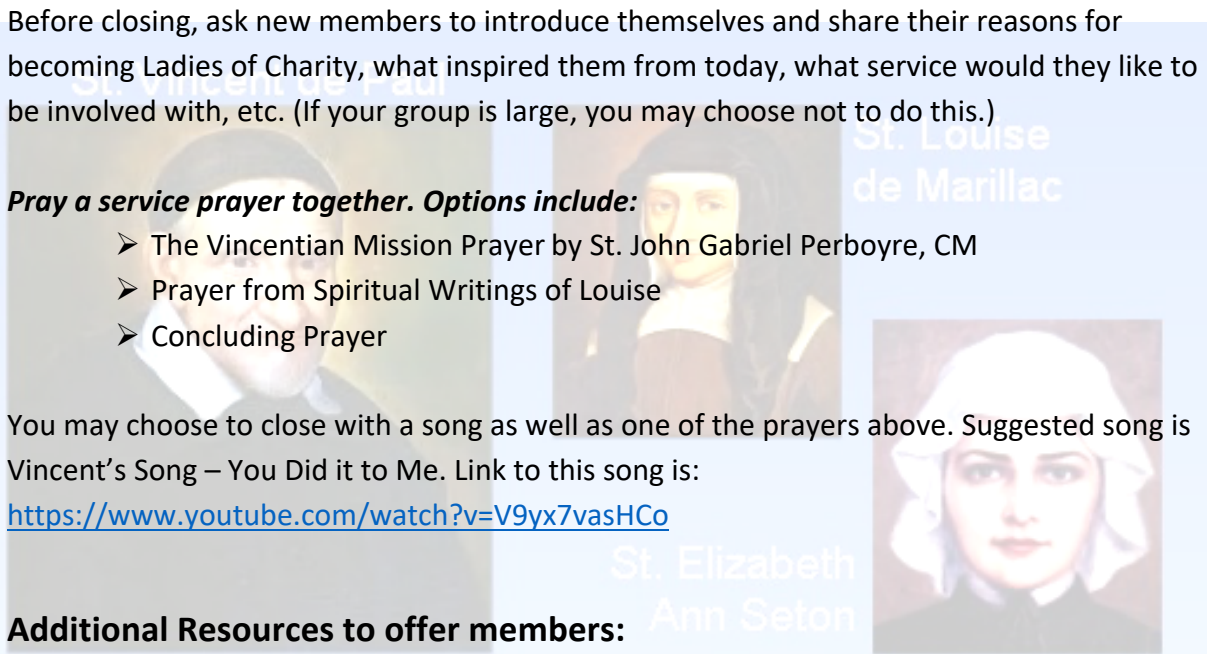
Additional Resources to offer members:

LCUSA: <https://aic.ladiesofcharity.us/>

AIC: <https://www.aic-international.org/en/>

FAMVIN: <https://famvin.org/>

Add your local website if you have one and provide this info to those attending the orientation.

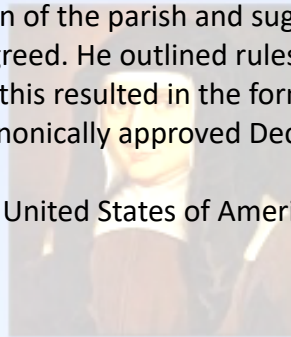
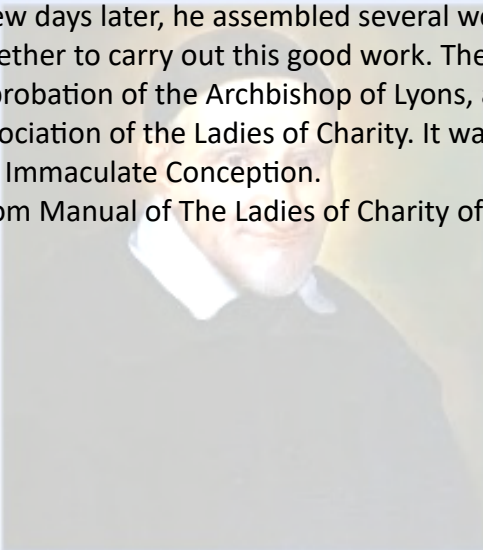


The Story of our Origin

Ladies of Charity was the first of the great foundations of St. Vincent de Paul. At the time, St. Vincent was pastor at Chatillon-les-Dombes in the Diocese of Lyons, France. Before Mass on a Sunday in August 1617, a parishioner told him of a family living on a farm close by who had become ill and was in dire need. St. Vincent was so affected by the recounting of their suffering, and he told the story with such feeling to his congregation, that many went to the family with food and other necessities. After Vespers, St. Vincent went to the farm and there he saw the abundance of provisions donated in response to his appeal. He realized the efficacy of his words. *“These good people are exercising great charity,” he said, “but it is not well regulated. This poor family will have too many provisions at one time and some of them will be spoiled and wasted; in a short time these persons will be reduced to their former state of need. Would it not be possible to convince these good women to give themselves to God to serve the poor permanently?”*

A few days later, he assembled several women of the parish and suggested that they band together to carry out this good work. They agreed. He outlined rules that received the approbation of the Archbishop of Lyons, and this resulted in the formation of the first Association of the Ladies of Charity. It was canonically approved December 8, 1617, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

(From Manual of The Ladies of Charity of the United States of America, page 1)



St. Elizabeth
Ann Seton



Ladies of Charity in the USA

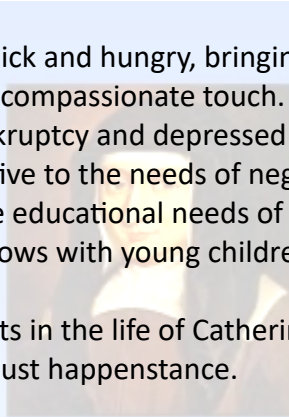
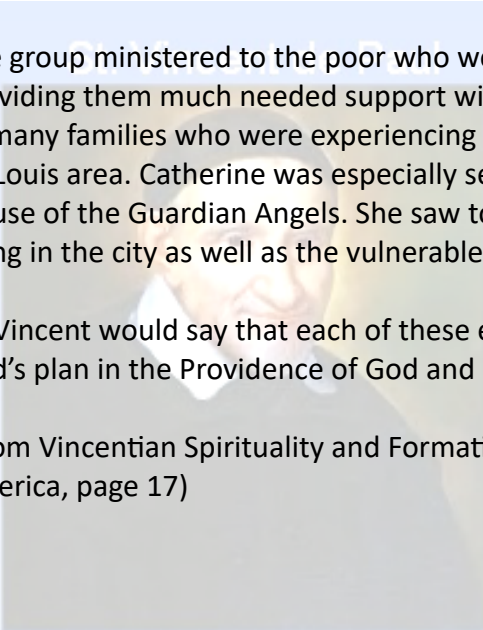
Catherine Harkins, at age 23, had a dream in which she saw St. Vincent winding his way through the streets of Paris, gathering up children who were poor and neglected. In the dream, he directed Catherine to do the same. After several recurrences of the dream, Catherine shared the dream with her confessor, a Vincentian priest at St. Vincent's Church in St. Louis, MO. The priest suggested that it was probably more than a dream and guided her to pray.

Following the wisdom of St. Vincent de Paul, Catherine gathered a group of eleven women into a society whose goal was to serve those who were poor. They soon learned of the international organization of Ladies of Charity and with the help of their Spiritual Director became affiliated with the mother branch in Paris. Catherine Harkins became the first American President on December 8, 1857.

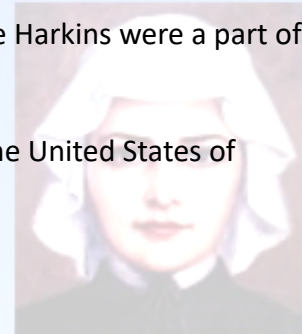
The group ministered to the poor who were sick and hungry, bringing remedies and food, and providing them much needed support with a compassionate touch. They addressed the needs of many families who were experiencing bankruptcy and depressed living conditions in the St. Louis area. Catherine was especially sensitive to the needs of neglected children at the House of the Guardian Angels. She saw to the educational needs of the underprivileged children living in the city as well as the vulnerable widows with young children.

St. Vincent would say that each of these events in the life of Catherine Harkins were a part of God's plan in the Providence of God and not just happenstance.

(From Vincentian Spirituality and Formation for Ladies of Charity of the United States of America, page 17)



St. Elizabeth
Ann Seton



LOC in Metro Kansas City (example)

Sister Mathilde Comstock D.C. arrived in Kansas City, Missouri in 1952, to administer the work at St. Vincent's Maternity Hospital for unwed mothers and St. Anthony's Baby Home. She formally sought volunteers to provide hands-on care and fundraising projects. In April, 1952, fifty ladies gathered at Sister Mathilde's request and became known as Ladies of Charity – St. Anthony's Auxiliary. In April, 1965, the Association was patently erected, and on September 1, 1976, the Association received its charter from the Association of Ladies of Charity of the United States.

(From Ladies of Charity of Metropolitan Kansas City, Roster and Bylaws, page 2)



Mission and Vision

LCUSA Mission Statement

To provide Vincentian leadership to women acting together against all forms of poverty.

LCUSA Vision Statement

LCUSA-AIC provides Vincentian leadership of transformation assisting persons who are vulnerable to move from marginalization and despair to participation and hope.

(From Manual of The Ladies of Charity of the United States of America, page 7)

Metro Kansas City Association Mission Statement (example)

To provide opportunities for faith-filled women working together to assist people living in poverty and at risk through humility, simplicity, and charity.

Metro Kansas City Association Vision Statement (example)

We strive to use our time, talents, and treasure to provide assistance to all people living in poverty and at risk with a long-term goal to break the cycle of generational poverty.

St. John's University Association Mission Statement (example)

To create, form, and establish an organization to provide charitable services to the members of underserved communities in Queens County, New York; the charitable work is provided by the "Ladies of Charity", an organization made up of members of the St. John's University community consisting of alumni, administrators, staff, and faculty; to offer aid and assistance to the poor, homeless, and the needy through the collection and dissemination of food, clothing and other items; to encourage interest, awareness, and activism in local and national political arenas with reference to the plight of needy families; to provide financial aid and other reasonable economic assistance for the ultimate benefit of all needy people; to hold, conduct, and organize meetings, discussions, and forums to consider community opinions on issues affecting needy individuals and their families.

Although the mission and vision statements are similar, the major difference is that the national mission is to provide leadership to the local associations. Local missions provide the opportunities and service to people in need.

LOC Prayer

9:00 am Monday Morning Prayer

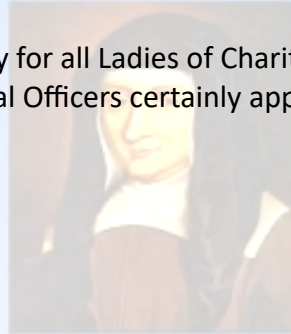
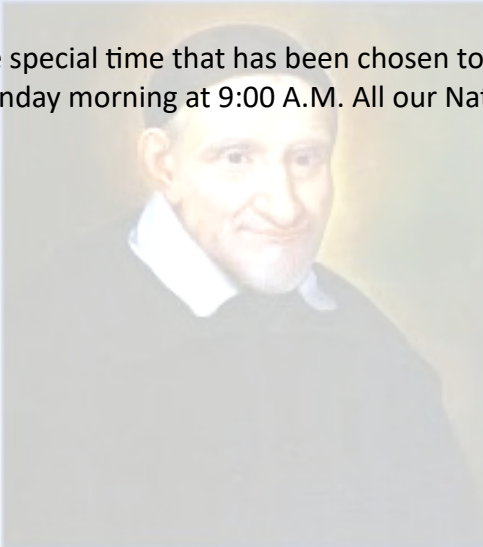
My God, I humbly beg you
to make me an instrument of your love.

Give me the grace of performing
all my actions to help my neighbor
with charity, humility, and simplicity.

It is my hope, Lord,
that fidelity in the practice
of these virtues may obtain the reward
which you have promised

to those who serve you in the person of the poor.

The special time that has been chosen to pray for all Ladies of Charity and their works is every Monday morning at 9:00 A.M. All our National Officers certainly appreciate your prayer.



St. Elizabeth
Ann Seton



Charity

Our name is Ladies of Charity. There are three definitions of ‘charity’ in the dictionary. They are:

First – ‘An organization to help and raise money for those in need.’

Yes – *that defines our association.*

Second – ‘The voluntary giving of help or money to those in need.’

Yes – *that defines what we do.*

Third – and this one was tagged as ‘archaic’ – was ‘love of humankind’.

Yes – *that defines who we are.*

There was a list of synonyms that I would like you to think about:

- You are a lady of *compassion*
- You are a lady of *care*
- You are a lady of *concern*
- You are a lady of *warmth*
- You are a lady of *friendliness*
- You are a lady of *friendship*
- You are a lady of *kindness*
- You are a lady of *goodwill*
- You are a lady of *sympathy*
- You are a lady of *unselfishness*
- You are a lady of *feeling*
- You are a lady of *humanity*
- You are a lady with *love of humankind*
- Because You are a *Lady of Charity.*



St. Louise
de Marillac



St. Elizabeth
Ann Seton

Simplicity

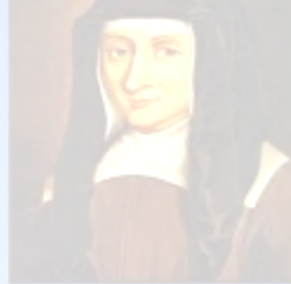
One of the virtues that St. Vincent lived by is Simplicity. As Ladies of Charity we strive to serve the poor with charity, simplicity, and humility.

How are you living the virtue of Simplicity? What does Simplicity mean to you?

St. Vincent defines Simplicity as being genuine. He would tell us to:

- Tell the truth, be honest
- Be consistent in words and actions
- Be direct and free of deceit

Let us all strive to live the virtue of Simplicity each day just as St. Vincent did during his life. When you're in a difficult situation or relationship, use your virtue of Simplicity.



St. Elizabeth
Ann Seton



Humility

What the Bible tells us about Humility

Proverbs 22:4 The reward for humility and fear of the Lord is riches and honor and life.

Matthew 23:12 Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, “All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.”

Philippians 2:3-4 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interest of others.

Qualities of Humble People

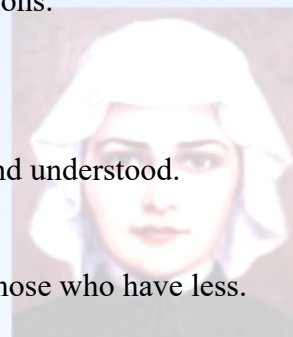
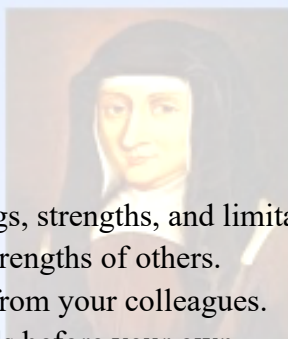
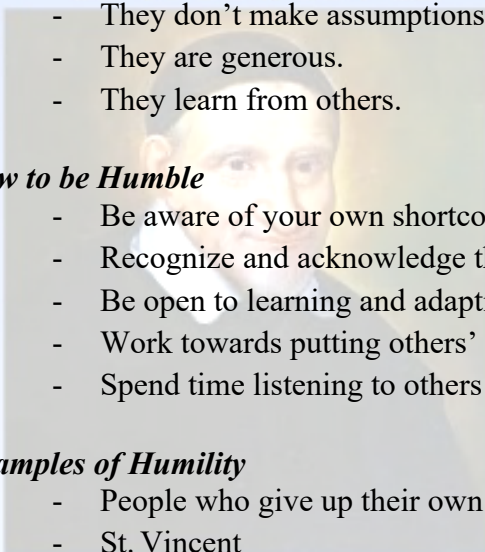
- They put others first.
- They spend time listening to others.
- They don't look down on others.
- They don't make assumptions.
- They are generous.
- They learn from others.

How to be Humble

- Be aware of your own shortcomings, strengths, and limitations.
- Recognize and acknowledge the strengths of others.
- Be open to learning and adapting from your colleagues.
- Work towards putting others' needs before your own.
- Spend time listening to others and ensure they feel heard and understood.

Examples of Humility

- People who give up their own privileges in order to serve those who have less.
- St. Vincent
- St. Louise
- St. Elizabeth Ann



St. Louise
de Marillac

St. Elizabeth
Ann Seton

St. Vincent de Paul

Today I want to talk to you about who St. Vincent de Paul was. I'm sure you all already know a lot about him. If you want to take notes, there are four things that I want you to take away from this talk – The first three are:

1. His trust in God
2. God's providence in his life
3. His compassion
4. I'll tell you the 4th at the end.

St. Vincent lived at a time in France when priests and bishops were well paid and could support their families, so his father sold a pair of oxen to get him into the seminary. When a priest would say his first Mass, it was celebrated with pomp and ceremony with the right people to make a 'good living'. Vincent celebrated his first Mass with just a server at his side. He was a priest to serve God, not for financial gain. He trusted in God to take care of him and his family.

God's providence for Vincent's life was very evident when he was asked to tutor the children of the de Gondi Family in Paris. The Count and Countess Gondi were a very wealthy family in Paris. Vincent had a bigger influence on the parents than the children, helping them to be charitable, prayerful, and to care for the poor. We'll continue to hear about the de Gondi family as Vincent's story progresses.

When Vincent was serving as a pastor in Chatillon, he founded Ladies of Charity. One Sunday, a parishioner told him of a family in the parish that was in need. Vincent talked about the family in his homily and over the next two days, the family was overwhelmed with generosity of the parish. But Vincent realized that the food delivered to the family needed to be organized as they had too much for a few days then had nothing. He met with the women of his parish and organized them into the first Ladies of Charity – the first Vincentian organization. This is where we first see his deep compassion for those in need.

Once again, we see God's providence at work when the de Gondi family begged for him to return to Paris. Madame de Gondi began a Ladies of Charity chapter in Paris where she recruited many of her wealthy friends. These wealthy ladies would financially support several of Vincent's efforts.

Count de Gondi was the General of the King's Galleys. This was before steam engines so convicts and prisoners were chained to the oars in the galleys. Vincent visited the galleys and was in horror of the conditions – damp, filthy, crawling with vermin, the men covered with sores and ulcers – he described it as a picture of hell. Vincent did not see these men as convicts and prisoners, but as children of God and wanted to help. He raised enough money to build a hospital for their care which included support for the hospital to continue this ministry. Vincent's compassion for all people was a core part of who he was.

Vincent along with two other priests began to preach to poor rural areas in France. He soon realized that the priests needed ongoing training. With funding from Madame de Gondi, he began the Congregation of the Mission for priest training. They became so popular that the retreats

were opened to everyone, and this was funded by the Paris Ladies of Charity. Once again God's providence to place Vincent with the de Gondi family allowed him to evangelize.

We really see Vincent's compassion when he was in Paris and saw a beggar mutilating a newborn baby in order to use it as an object of pity. He grabbed the child and brought the baby to an orphanage. What he found at the orphanage horrified him – starvation, neglect, and filth. He once again received help from the Paris Ladies of Charity, and also the King and Queen of Austria (another example of God's providence), to build an orphanage. This orphanage could hold 4,000 children. Of all of the good works that Vincent did, this was his favorite and he knew each child by name.

During the 30 Years War in Europe, Vincent saw that many people were dying of hunger and the number of aging poor was dramatically increasing. His compassion for these people pushed him to action. Yet another time, he called upon the Paris Ladies of Charity to support a public soup kitchen and a home for the elderly.

I hope you can clearly see that St. Vincent trusted in God, believed in God's providence in his life, and had a deep compassion for everyone he met that was hurting or in need. I told you at the beginning that I would give you the last 'take away' at the end of this talk. The one thing that I really want you to take away from this is that St. Vincent is 'the heart'. When we look at the 3 major Vincentian saints, I look at St. Vincent as 'the heart', St. Louise as 'the mind', and St. Elizabeth as 'the soul'.

It's hard to get a good understanding of St. Vincent without understanding his relationship with St. Louise. Their friendship would revolutionize the religious life of the Catholic Church and its ministry to the poor. St. Louise founded the Daughters of Charity which dramatically changed religious life. Up to this point, all women religious were in cloistered convents. The Daughters of Charity worked among the poor and took vows annually. Louise was a very smart, radical thinker. She developed methods and instructions for managing most of the charities that St. Vincent founded and the Daughters of Charity worked in these charities.

One last note about St. Vincent – his dying word was "Confido" which means "I Trust".

St. Louise de Marillac

Today I want to tell you about St. Louise de Marillac. I have four things that I want you to take away from this talk. They are:

1. God's divine providence along with her deep faith and quest to do God's will.
2. She was very smart and a radical thinker.
3. She possessed practical, creative, and organizational skills.
4. Where St. Vincent was the 'heart', St. Louise was the 'mind'.

Louise had a difficult young life. She was born out of wedlock – illegitimate. As an infant she was placed in a Dominican convent school where she got a solid education. Her father loved her and visited often but he died when Louise was 12 years old. She was moved to a boarding school where she received a 'practical education' in cooking, housekeeping, etc. These skills served her well in later years.

She had an arranged marriage at age 22. She had a son, Michael. After about 7 years of marriage, her husband's health worsened, and he passed away five years later. Louise blamed herself and became angry and depressed.

St. Vincent was appointed Louise's spiritual director. In the beginning, they really didn't like each other. Vincent didn't want to be a spiritual director for a young widow. He had many demands from the Ladies of Charity and had just established the Congregation of Missions. Eventually, they both acknowledged that God's providence had brought them together. Louise had a great desire to know God and accomplish his will and Vincent taught her to trust God and herself.

Their friendship would revolutionize the religious life of the Catholic Church and its ministry to the poor.

Louise soon understood Vincent's principles and took them to heart.

- The poor are Jesus Christ.
- Personal service must be compassionate, gentle, respectful, devoted, and from the heart.

Vincent asked Louise to go 'on mission' to visit the various Ladies of Charity groups. This journey began the intense collaboration between the two.

When a young peasant woman came to Vincent asking to serve the poor, he sent her to Louise who sent her to work with the Ladies of Charity. When more young women came to work with the Ladies of Charity, Louise discerned that these women needed a community. She founded the Daughters of Charity.

The Daughters of Charity dramatically changed religious life. Up to this point, women religious were in cloistered convents. The Daughters of Charity were one of the first to work among the poor and took vows annually.

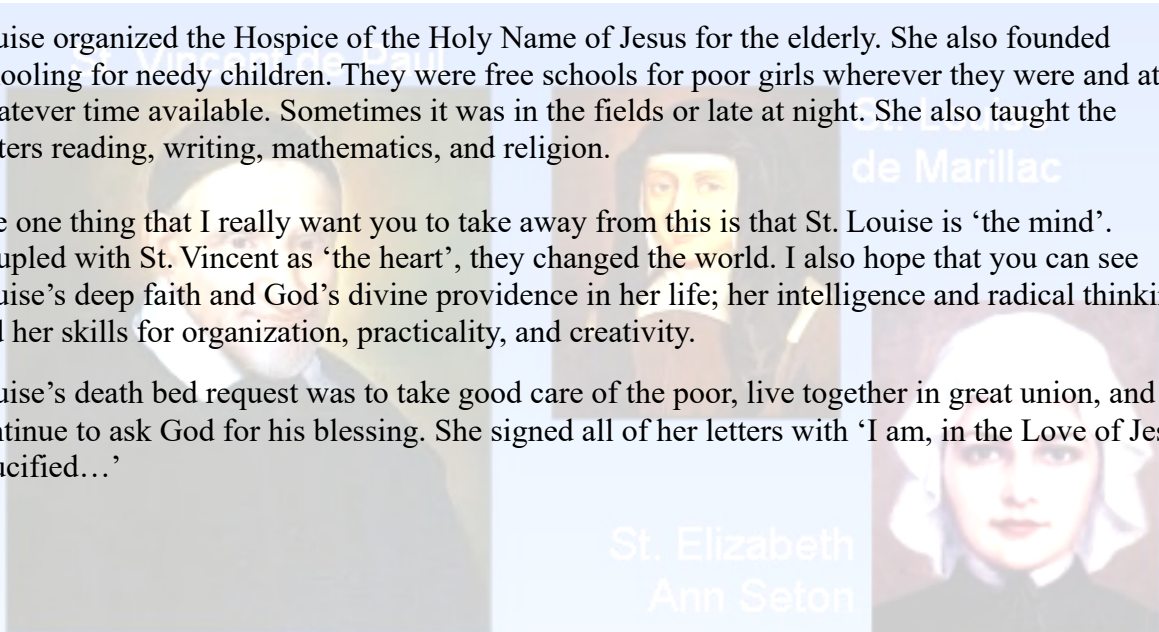
Louise and the Daughters of Charity supported many of Vincent's efforts as follows:

- Foundlings/orphanage – Louise provided training on feeding, clothing, prayer, and education.
- Hospitals – Louise negotiated agreements and directed how hospitals should be run.
- Galley Slaves – Louise wrote rules on how to treat the men, how to dress, and how to stay safe among the slaves.
- Ladies of Charity – Louise assumed increasing direction of the Ladies of Charity groups.

Louise organized the Hospice of the Holy Name of Jesus for the elderly. She also founded schooling for needy children. They were free schools for poor girls wherever they were and at whatever time available. Sometimes it was in the fields or late at night. She also taught the Sisters reading, writing, mathematics, and religion.

The one thing that I really want you to take away from this is that St. Louise is 'the mind'. Coupled with St. Vincent as 'the heart', they changed the world. I also hope that you can see Louise's deep faith and God's divine providence in her life; her intelligence and radical thinking; and her skills for organization, practicality, and creativity.

Louise's death bed request was to take good care of the poor, live together in great union, and continue to ask God for his blessing. She signed all of her letters with 'I am, in the Love of Jesus Crucified...'



St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

As I joined Ladies of Charity, I wasn't sure why we considered St. Elizabeth Ann as one of our founding saints, especially when she lived about 200 years after St. Vincent and St. Louise. Through researching her, I now understand. St. Elizabeth Ann brought the Vincentian spirituality to the United States. She also founded the Sisters of Charity religious order. For our association, the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth have had a key role in the origination of Seton Center, Villa St. Francis, Duchesne Center, and Cristo Rey High School.

Today I want to tell you about St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. I have 4 things that I want you to take away from this talk. They are:

1. Her mind, heart, and being were focused on eternity.
2. She had an amazing prayer life – she prayed without ceasing.
3. Doing God's will was her life's goal.
4. Where St. Vincent was the 'heart' and St. Louise was the 'mind', St. Elizabeth Ann was the 'soul'.

It is said that Saints are canonized not for what they do, but for what they are. To understand the depth of what St. Elizabeth Ann was, you need to understand a little about her life's journey.

In her life, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton experienced more heartache and pain than most of us can even imagine. She lost her husband at just 29. She had two of her five children die in her arms. She was left a penniless widow, who had every reason to lose faith and hope.

She was born in New York City in 1774 and raised a devout Episcopalian. She grew up with riches and in affluent social circles. At age 19 she married William Seton, a wealthy businessman and moved to Wall Street. Her husband's business went bankrupt, and her father soon died. Then William contracted tuberculosis. They sailed to Italy to seek treatment but were quarantined on arrival. William died eight days after being released from quarantine. Elizabeth visited Catholic Churches while in Italy and was called to convert to Catholicism because she came to believe in the Real Presence of God in the Eucharist. Her family and friends rejected her because she became Catholic, thus leaving her penniless.

She was determined to earn a living and keep her children with her. She knew that her best asset was her education. A priest invited her to Baltimore to begin a Catholic school for girls. As she began the school, other women came together and Elizabeth Ann began the first religious community in the U.S., the Sisters of Charity. She based the community on Vincentian Spirituality. She considered the Daughters of Charity that was founded by St. Louise, but there was one rule that she couldn't live with – any widow joining the congregation would need to give up their children.

Elizabeth Ann died of tuberculosis at the age of 46. But in the end, she became the world's First American-Born Saint in 1975 — perhaps the most important Catholic in our country's history because of her work to begin the Catholic school system.

That gives you an idea of her life's journey. Now for who she was.

Eternity was the motivation of St. Elizabeth Ann's life. To her, eternity was more than just everlasting life, it meant God, happiness, and reunion with loved ones. Her understanding of eternity began at a very young age. When she was four years old, her little sister died, and she was asked why she didn't cry. She said because her sister Kitty was in heaven with her mother who had died the previous year. St. Elizabeth Ann was not only concerned with eternity for herself, but for everyone she knew. She sat and prayed with her husband until the end. She focused on building a strong faith in her children. Beginning the Sisters of Charity order and the Catholic school system were both focused on bringing as many souls as possible to eternity with God in Heaven. One of her quotes; "Eternity, eternity, when shall I come to you at last? In eternity we will love with a glance of the soul."

St. Elizabeth Ann's prayer life as a child and teen was exceptional, but as an adult, prayer truly became her way of life. Her prayer life was built on the True Presence of God in the Eucharist. It is said that she had instant communication with the Father early in her life. St. Elizabeth Ann attributes her strength and successes to prayer; including the terrifying ordeal of her husband's death, her call to become Catholic, her establishment of a religious community, and the beginning of a school. Another one of her quotes; "God raises me to feel near him, and drives away sorrow. He is my guide, my friend, my supporter."

St. Elizabeth Ann's brother-in-law described her to her grandchildren as 'a kind of John the Baptist'. She was a voice crying out in the wilderness of a new land. She had two essential vocational callings; to the married state and bringing salvation to her husband and children, and to religious life. The two main thrusts of her religious life were education and the poor. When she took her vows, she wrote, 'To speak the joy of my soul at the prospect of being able to assist the poor, visit the sick, comfort the sorrowful, clothe the little innocents, and teach them to love God.' This was her whole religious vocation and it shows that she was a spiritual daughter of St. Vincent de Paul.

The one thing that I really want you to take away from this is that St. Elizabeth Ann is 'the soul' because of her focus on eternity, her unceasing prayer life, and her dedication to doing God's will.

Call to Service

Three Roads – based on Homily by Fr. Dick Gielow, CM

Everyone needs to walk these three roads to enter the kingdom. It's not a multiple choice.

Road 1 – The Road to Damascus. What happened on the road to Damascus? Paul's Conversion. As Catholics, we were called to conversion at our baptism. But what about now? What's your call to conversion today? What do you need to do to be great in the eyes of God? Is Jesus a passenger in your car? Is Jesus in your living room watching TV with you? If Jesus was sitting next to you, would it change your words or actions?

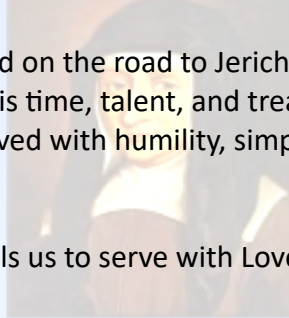
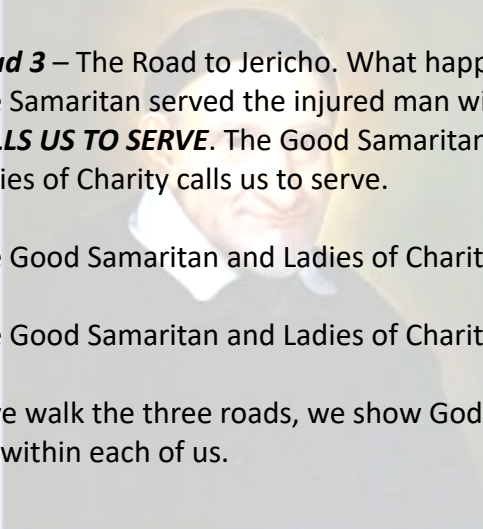
Road 2 – The Road to Emmaus. What happened on the road to Emmaus? The risen Jesus was walking with two disciples, but they did not recognize him until the breaking of the bread. How do we walk this road? We should see Christ in everyone. Recognize him. Don't judge people.

Road 3 – The Road to Jericho. What happened on the road to Jericho? The Good Samaritan. The Samaritan served the injured man with his time, talent, and treasure. The road to Jericho **CALLS US TO SERVE**. The Good Samaritan served with humility, simplicity, and charity – just as Ladies of Charity calls us to serve.

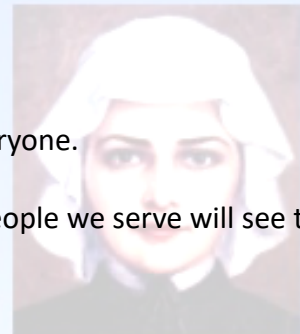
The Good Samaritan and Ladies of Charity calls us to serve with Love.

The Good Samaritan and Ladies of Charity calls us to see Christ in everyone.

If we walk the three roads, we show God we want heaven, and the people we serve will see the joy within each of us.



St. Louise



St. Elizabeth
Ann Seton

LCUSA and AIC International

LCUSA was organized in 1960 and serves as a body of cohesion for local, national, and international associations. It arranges national meetings and provides for an annual national assembly. Regional vice-presidents promote and assist in the formation of new associations. LCUSA is available for advice and assistance if requested. It provides publications such as the Manual, the Servicette, and handbooks for presidents and spiritual formation. They provide a website that contains a wealth of information as well as an interesting map showing locations of each LOC association across the United States.

The International Association of Charities (AIC) is a federation of groups of lay women located in various countries, organized and working on a national or local level in the tradition of St. Vincent de Paul. In the US, the groups are known as Ladies of Charity, but in other parts of the world, they have various names. The purpose of AIC is to unite all its members in efforts of the church to alleviate poverty and to improve the lives of the disadvantaged. If you choose to use the PowerPoint document from St. John's University, here are the talking points. Note that some parts are very specific to SJU and will need to be modified for your association. Also, the LCUSA board members change every two years and get outdated quickly.

SJU PowerPoint Script

1. LCUSA is an acronym to refer to our national organization. Ladies of Charity USA is headquartered in Kansas City Missouri
2. The country is divided into five regions. We at St. John's are in the Northeast region - the purple NY block. Currently only NY is in the northeast where there are ten associations.
3. This is a listing of our Northeast region. You can see SJU is the only association in southern New York.
4. National elections occur every two years during the national assembly. The current board was elected at the 2022 Assembly and took office January 1 of this year. The current president is Holly Walters from Buffalo, NY. Besides the offices of President, President-elect, Secretary, and Treasurer, each region has a Vice President and two Directors.
5. These are the representatives in the Northeast region. I am the Regional Vice President. Kathy Roseti and Fran Simkulet are the Directors. We work together on behalf of the region as well as each serve on at least two national committees. Since our SJU association's establishment in 2009, we have contributed a national president (Mary Ann Dantuono), National Treasurer, (Vicky Shoaf) and two regional Directors (Marilyn Martone and myself).
6. Once a year a national assembly is held, rotating among the regions to encourage participation of as many members as possible. Here is the SJU group at two different assemblies. The 2022 assembly was in Knoxville, TN in late August. It was cancelled in

2020 and held virtually in 2021. This year it is in Buffalo, NY in early September. We hope for a good turnout particularly from the Northeast.

7. Our association at St. John's hosted the 2016 assembly when it was last held in the NE. Here are three of our members manning the registration table.
8. Resources for additional information are available. This is the LCUSA website. (<https://aic.ladiesofcharity.us>) You may sign up for weekly email blasts on this site. They are short but keep you in the loop on what is going on. Click on SUBSCRIBE in the top area. LCUSA is also on Facebook. The news magazine, Servicette is published twice per year. All members should receive a copy in the mail. All issues are also available online.
9. In an age characterized by efficiency and computerization, the face of humanity, suffering, and loneliness easily becomes obscured. The reality of human pain and misery may be lost in the midst of an impersonal world. The Ladies of Charity, recognizing this lack of human awareness, seek every opportunity to make Christ present by serving the material and spiritual needs of the sick, the poor, and the marginalized of our society. The Ladies of Charity are associations of women who participate in the Vincentian mission of prayer and service. Because the needs and resources of each community are different, our activities are as diverse as the 200 communities in which we are present. Our special concern is the needs of women and children.
10. Here is a listing of various service foci in which associations throughout the country participate. It is a wide variety, influenced by resources and need.
11. The International Association of Charities operates under the acronym of AIC. While the term "Ladies of Charity" is used in many countries, officially the national organizations are referred to as AIC-USA, AIC-France, AIC-Colombia, etc.
12. This map illustrates the 53 national associations throughout the world. Each country participates as a member of the international assembly of delegates. Decentralized regional leadership enables each country to adjust to the realities and needs of their region in efforts to combat poverty. Each country or region chooses their projects and methods. The international office or Secretariat is headquartered in Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium, and supports the Executive Board in carrying out its mission. The overall objective of the international office is to support its members while it provides training, encourages collaboration, and offers spiritual development to all of its members.
13. Elections for the executive board are held every three years during the international assembly. This group photo was from Guatemala in 2015. The assembly scheduled for March, 2020 in Bogota Colombia was cancelled due to COVID. The 2023 gathering was in Frascati, Italy.
14. As a result of COVID, the 2020 elections were held virtually. Our current president is Rose de Lima Ramanankavana from Madagascar. (*Note: as of 2023, our president is Tayde de Callataj from Belgium*). Suzanne Johnson, top row, middle, is the US delegate

and was elected to the international executive board. She is from Los Angeles and is a past president of LCUSA.

15. As a civil society organization, AIC belongs to global networks. Through representatives in these networks, AIC makes sure that the voices of disadvantaged people are heard at an international level and included in relevant international discussions.
16. Because of our SJU association location in NYC, currently two of us (Mary Ann Dantuono and Pat Mule) represent AIC at the United Nations. They collaborate with other Vincentian Family members present at the UN. All of their reporting is done directly to the international board in Belgium.
17. This is the homepage of the AIC website. It is a great source of information on activities, goals, and structure.
18. Welcome to you all. I look forward to us all coming together this year and getting to know one another.



St. Paul



St. Louise
de Marillac



St. Elizabeth
Ann Seton

Service Stories (examples)

Service Story – Joy

A Villa St. Francis (Catholic nursing home) experience:

I knew it would happen but I still wasn't prepared. When volunteering in a nursing home, eventually one of the people you serve will leave this world. This first happened to me about nine months after I began. Her name was Joy. She was sweet, happy, and faith-filled. As most residents, she had routines. I knew where she kept her rosary and how she wanted it placed on the table. I knew that she wanted a box of Kleenex on her right. I knew she was ready to leave Mass after the last song and before the daily announcements.

The last time I transported Joy from Mass back to her room was the Friday before Christmas. She was excited because her grandchildren and greatgrandchildren were going to visit her later that day. We sang "Joy to the World" as I rolled her back to her room. As usual, Joy was filled with joy. I am so happy she was able to spend time that day with her family.

The week after Christmas, the nurse said she needed to rest. The following week, she was sleeping. The week after, her name was gone from her room. I asked about her, but I already knew she had passed away. I prayed for her that day at Mass and cried on the way home. I was so blessed to know this amazing lady with a wonderful spirit.

Joy was just one of many that I have gotten to know through my work at Villa St. Francis. I know their names, their likes, their routines, and their spirit. What a blessing for me! I know people will come and go as I continue serving at the nursing home, but even if I'm sad when they go, each of them has touched my heart in ways that no one else has ever done. May God bless all of them.

JOY is also an acronym - **J**esus first, **O**thers next, **Y**ourself last. Thank you, Joy for giving me an example of JOY.

Service Story about the Fruits of the Spirit

I'm going to describe a person and I would like you to picture this person.

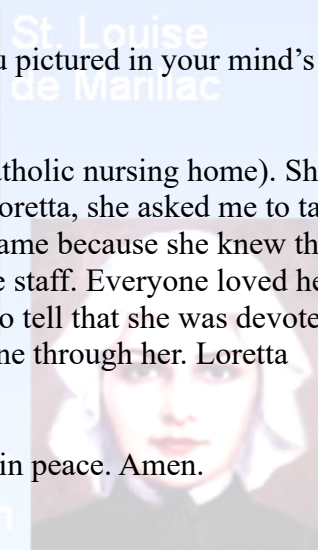
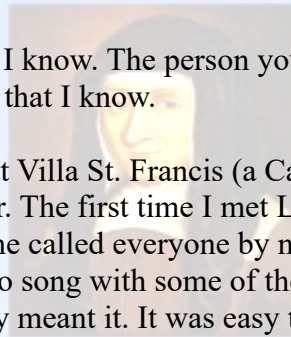
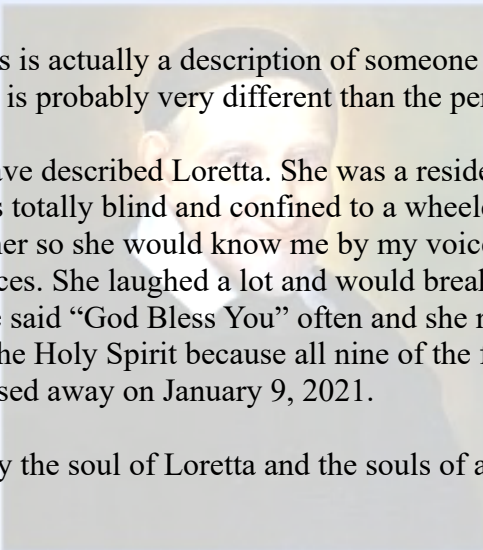
- She's faithful and attends Mass daily or as often as she can.
- She's kind and gentle to everyone she meets.
- She has a joyful laugh and uses it often.
- She is patient with the people around her and thankful for anyone helping her
- Her love of people and the peace of Christ shine through her.
- The Fruits of the Holy Spirit live within her and define her.

Can you picture this person? Do you know someone like her? Can you picture what she looks like and where she lives? What is her family like?

This is actually a description of someone that I know. The person you pictured in your mind's eye is probably very different than the person that I know.

I have described Loretta. She was a resident at Villa St. Francis (a Catholic nursing home). She was totally blind and confined to a wheelchair. The first time I met Loretta, she asked me to talk to her so she would know me by my voice. She called everyone by name because she knew their voices. She laughed a lot and would break into song with some of the staff. Everyone loved her. She said "God Bless You" often and she really meant it. It was easy to tell that she was devoted to the Holy Spirit because all nine of the fruits of the Holy Spirit shone through her. Loretta passed away on January 9, 2021.

May the soul of Loretta and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace. Amen.



St. Louise de Marillac
Ann Seton

Service Prayers

Vincentian Mission Prayer

By Saint John Gabriel Perboyre, CM

Divine Savior, transform me into Yourself.

May my hands be Your hands.

May my tongue be Your tongue.

Grant that every faculty of my body

May serve only to glorify You.

Above all, transform my soul

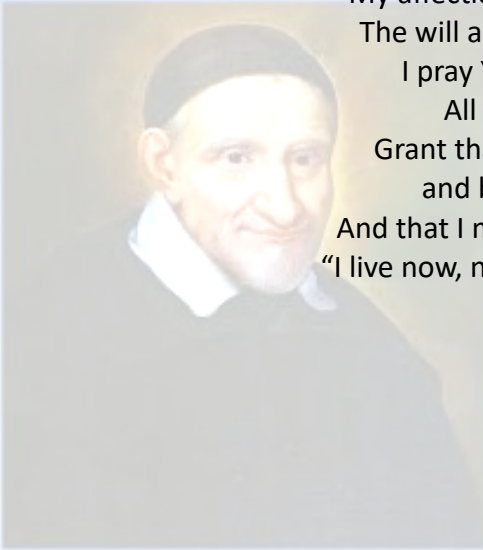
And all its powers,

That my memory, my will and
My affections, may be the memory,
The will and the affections of You.

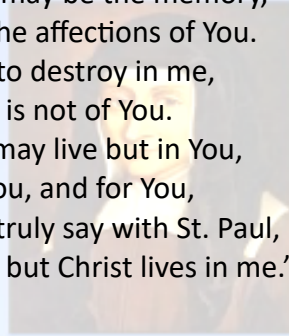
I pray You to destroy in me,
All that is not of You.

Grant that I may live but in You,
and by You, and for You,
And that I may truly say with St. Paul,
“I live now, not I, but Christ lives in me.”

St. Vincent de Paul



St. Louise
de Marillac



St. Elizabeth
Ann Seton



Prayer based on Spiritual Writings of Louise

Letter L.217 p.260 (written in 1648)

God my creator,
fill me with holiness so that my work will be useful to your work.
May I realize that it is not enough to visit the poor and provide for their needs,
but my heart must be free of all self-interests.
May I have continually before me, my model, Jesus Christ.
As a member of the Church I am called to be a disciple;
as a member of a Vincentian group,
may I especially imitate Jesus
whose constant attention was on those who were poor.
I ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

St. Vincent de Paul

Concluding Prayer

Gracious God, may we take the words of Louise de Marillac to heart as we go about our responsibilities to serve our neighbor. You will bless our work and it will result in Your glory if we strive to meet the needs of those we serve. May our actions be done with great gentleness, compassion, and love. May we serve from the heart, showing affection, inquiring about needs, obtaining necessary help for those in need without being too bothersome or too eager. Grant us the grace never to leave the side of a person without having done some good work. We pray for your blessing and for your grace, Gracious God, so that we may act in the way that Jesus acted while He was on earth because it is Jesus' work that is being done. May the same Spirit that was present in Him be present in us. We believe that Your Son Jesus, his Mother Mary, and the guardian angels of those we serve accompany us. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

St. Louise
de Marillac

St. Elizabeth
Ann Seton