Laity in Service

Introduction **Leader:** Look around at the most vital movements in the Church today. The glowing sparks of the practical love of Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac are still ignited in the hearts of women and men today. With our help, Vincent and Louise are continuing to change the world through

- A lay-centered church focused on the People of God and poor persons
- A recovery of the ideal of a church for those living in poverty
- A concept of holiness that focuses on ministry rather than on personal sanctification
- A practical vision of the role of women in service

Vincent and Louise's most important contributions were among the laity. These lay groups were called confraternities which were established everywhere Vincentian priests went. The most significant of these is the Ladies of Charity which is a community of volunteers found in almost every country in the world. (adapted from Vincentian Mindwalk, John Freund, 10/17/21 https://johnfreund.net/2021/10/17/vincentian-crickets/)

Leader: O God, come to our assistance.
ALL: **O Lord, make haste to help us.**
Leader: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
ALL: **As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be world without end. Amen.**

Hymn: "The Servant Song," Richard Gillard

© 1977, Scripture in Song/Maranatha! Music/ASCAP. All rights reserved. Administered by Music Services, Inc. Used with permission.

Psalm 113 (Pray, alternating sides.)

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!
It is like precious oil poured on the head,
running down the face, down on the collar of the dress.
It is as if the dew were falling on the mountain,
For there God bestows a blessing, even life forevermore.
(adapted from New International Version)

ALL: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be world without end. Amen.

Laity in Service (con't)

Reading 1: *"Divine Providence willed to make use of women to show that it was His goodness alone which desired to aid afflicted peoples and to bring them powerful helps for their salvation. […] The Ladies of the Company of Charity recognized the needs of the poor and that God gave them the grace to aid these peoples so charitably and so magnificently that Paris has become the admiration of and an example for the entire kingdom. […] If all the good which seems to have been accomplished here is not only useful but necessary, is it not reasonable to ensure its continuation? […]*

Reading 2: *"It seems to be essential for the Company of the Ladies of Charity […] to continue its functions […] Through their ministry, […] the Ladies themselves entered on the pathway to sanctification which is perfect charity, such as that which they have practiced […]"*

(Louise de Marillac, Notes on the meetings of the Ladies of Charity, A. 56, page 789)

Reflection and Sharing

How has my ministry as a Lady of Charity impacted my life?
Share an experience of God's action as a result of ministry.

Response: St. Vincent adds (Read, alternating sides.)

+*"The works of God have their moment; God's providence brings them about at that time and neither sooner nor later."* (Coste, Volume 5, page 400)

+*"People look upon you as servants of God and workers of the Gospel. I mean good servants and that is why you are esteemed and assisted."* (Coste, Volume 4, page 117)

+*"Three can do more than ten when Our Lord puts His hand to things."* (Volume 4, page 122)

+*"Put your trust in God's great goodness and offer yourself frequently to God that He may accomplish His good pleasure in and through you."* (Coste, Volume 7, page 218)

ALL: "*The poor person must be conscious that she is acknowledged as an individual, that she is respected, loved, treated on an equal footing and capable of giving as much as she receives.*" (adapted from Rev. Joseph Jamet, C.M.)

Our Father

Closing Prayer **Leader:** *St. Vincent prays, "I ask Our Lord to redouble your strength, to sustain you with the essence of His Spirit, to gladden you with the hope of His glory and the success of your work and to fill the family with peace and confidence in His divine guidance. I ask God to give you a twofold share of His Spirit: the first share to unite you to Him, to act in His holy presence and for love of Him; and the other, for the guidance of the souls entrusted to you.* *(Coste, Volume 4, page 214, 220)*

ALL: Amen.

Blessing **Leader:** The Lord bless and keep you. **ALL: Amen.**
Leader: The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. **ALL: Amen.**
Leader: The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. **ALL: Amen.**

Numbers 6:24-26 (New International Version)

****

Prayer Texts

John 12:16 " … where I am, my servant also will be…"
Romans 7: 6 " … we serve in the new way…" (NIV)

prepared for the Ladies of Charity by Sr. Carol Schumer, D.C