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INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER: MAY 9TH, 2017 FEAST OF SAINT LOUISE DE MARILLAC

Opening Prayer:

We want to thank you Almighty Father, because together with Saint Louise, whose feast we celebrate today, we have been allowed to serve you during these past four hundred years. Lord God, you were present with us, the AIC volunteers, at our recent International Assembly which was celebrated in Châtillon, the place of our birth, the place where the Holy Spirit inspired Saint Vincent de Paul to undertake this incredible ministry. Blessed be God and now we give you thanks for your merciful love! Blessed be God and again we give you thanks for having chosen us from all eternity to collaborate with you in building up a world of justice and equality. Grant us, Lord, the grace to be faithful to our vocation and we ask this in the name of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever. Amen.

During these past four hundred years of service, Saint Louise, our **First Visitor**, has had a profound influence on the AIC volunteers. In 1629, our Founder, Vincent de Paul, sent forth Louise to engage in this work and to spoke to her the following words: *Go, therefore, Mademoiselle, go in the name of Our Lord. I pray that his divine goodness may accompany you, be your consolation along the way, your shade against the heat of the sun, your shelter in rain and cold, your soft bed in your weariness, your strength in your toil, and, finally, that he may bring you back in perfect health and filled with good works* (CCD:I:64-65).¹

Let us now pray together:

Dear Saint Louise, intercede on our behalf so that we might follow your example and enter into a relationship with those who live in situations of poverty... a relationship of love and kindness and respect. May we help those men and women discover their strengths so that they might engage in a process that will change their situation. Yes, we request that you help us to imitate your organizational skill. May we also present reports about our activities and may we be transparent in the manner in which we utilize our financial resources. Finally, among all of us as volunteers may there be understanding, kindness, collaboration and good will. May Christ be the center of our life just as He was for you. Amen.

¹ CCD:I:64-65 refers to Vincent de Paul, *Correspondence, Conference, Documents*, translators: Helen Marie Law, DC (Vol. 1), Marie Poole, DC (Vol. 1-13b), James King, CM (Vol. 1-2), Francis Germovnik, CM (Vol. 1-8, 13a-13b [Latin]), Esther Cavanagh, DC (Vol. 2), Ann Mary Dougherty, DC (Vol. 12); Evelyne Franc, DC (Vol. 13a-13b), Thomas Davitt, CM (Vol. 13a-13b [Latin]), Glennon E. Figge, CM (Vol. 13a-13b [Latin]), John G. Nugent, CM (Vol. 13a-13b [Latin]), Andrew Spellman, CM (Vol. 13a-13b [Latin]); edited: Jacqueline Kilar, DC (Vol. 1-2), Marie Poole, DC (Vol. 2-13b), Julia Denton, DC [editor-in-chief] (Vol. 3-10, 13a-13b), Paule Freeburg, DC (Vol. 3), Mirian Hamway, DC (Vol. 3), Elinor Hartman, DC (Vol. 4-10, 13a-13b), Ellen Van Zandt, DC (Vol. 9-13b), Ann Mary Dougherty (Vol. 11-12); annotated: John W. Carven, CM (Vol. 1-13b); New City Press, Brooklyn and Hyde Park, 1985-2009.

Pray the Our Father, Hail Mary and the Glory be... and then three times repeat the following words:
Sacred Heart of Jesus, in you we place our trust.

We wanted the themes that we discussed in our International Assembly to be closely related to the message that Pope Francis expressed in his encyclical letter, *Laudato Si* and also with the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals... hence the theme of our Assembly: **400 years with Saint Vincent, on a journey towards the future in our Common Home.**

Let us pray together:

Dear Saint Louise, Pope Francis invites us to reestablish the broken bonds between God, humanity and our planet and he also asks us to engage in the struggle for global unity. We ask that you strengthen us in the ways that we care for our earth so that we might ultimately provide future generations with an even better future. Intercede on our behalf so that we might develop concrete actions that will preserve our environment. May we utilize our valuable resources in a responsible manner, especially that precious gift of water... and may we find ways to share these precious gifts with all the people whom we encounter in our work.

Pray the Our Father, the Hail Mary and the Glory be... and then pray the following words three times:
Saint Louise de Marillac, pray for us.

In the towns and villages that Louise visited, she became aware of the ignorance of the people (children, young people and adults). She felt that God was calling her to organize schools of charity. In the rules for the Confraternity, she wrote the following: *the above mentioned widows shall contribute to the support of this good work ... they shall teach the little girls of the villages while they are here. They shall strive to train local girls to replace them at this task during their absence. They shall do all this for the love of God and without any remuneration (SWLM:728-729, [A.54]).*²

Let us pray together:

Dear Saint Louise, four hundred years ago the spirit of God inspired you and Vincent de Paul to anticipate the development objectives proposed by the United Nations (education, the eradication of poverty and hunger, etc.). Since 2011, our Priority Lines of Action have proposed education as a means of eradicating poverty. We place ourselves in your hands and ask you to help us accomplish our work in an efficient and effective manner. Show us the paths that we must follow in order to fulfill that which the Lord expects of each of us.

Pray the Our Father, the Hail Mary and the Glory be.... And then three times pray the following words:
O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you.

Translated:
Charles T. Plock, CM

² SWLM:728-729 [A.54] refers to Louise de Marillac, *Spiritual Writing of Louise de Marillac*, edited and translated from the French by Sister Louise Sullivan, DC, New City Press, Brooklyn, New York, 1991.