

# 21st Century Servants in all continents

The burning breath of charity which enflamed the hearts of St. Louise and St. Vincent de Paul, gave to their intuitions and works a dimension of eternity which was inscribed with audacity in the reality of their age.

## A new Commitment

In 1633, in Paris Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac opened the way for a new form of commitment for women in the Church and in society. Together, they put into concrete charitable action, the spiritual impetuosity given some years earlier by the great St. François de Sales.

This quiet revolution had a name; the company of the Daughters of Charity, who celebrate this year 2003, 370 years of existence ! What audacity ! Women consecrated to God, not cloistered, who renew their vows every year, and who travel the world to help the poor and the sick.

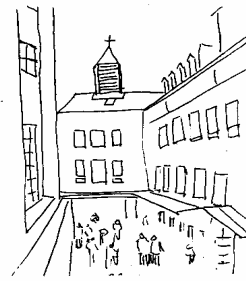
## Here, Charity in action

In this Marian Chapel, the Daughters of Charity fulfil a missionary responsibility linked to the message of the Virgin Mary to St. Catherine in 1830: to find again the way of confidence in God by confidence in Mary .

June 2003

The  
Chapel  
Pamphlets

English



## The Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul



## Charity in action for 370 years !

Chapel of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal  
140 rue du Bac – 75340 Paris Cedex 07

<http://chapellenotredamedelamedaillemiraculeuse.com>

The seal of the Company of the Daughters of  
Charity sums up their life.



Their main aim is to imitate the life of Jesus Christ, by devoting their lives to the service of the poor, because "The Son of God died on the cross for them as well as for us".  
The best example of this was Marguerite Naseau, the first Daughter of Charity who died at the age of 39 years, having nursed a plague stricken person. In the 19th century, Sister Rosalie Rendu followed in her footsteps. She will be beatified on 9th November 2003.  
Their only model, is the Son of God, who interiorly and exteriorly always showed : compassion, respect, kindness, love for his Father, and confidence in Providence.  
The daily Eucharist is the centre of their life and their mission. The Prayer of the Church is said in community.

## Christ is the Rule of the Daughters of Charity

2

\*Known today in France as "Equipes Saint Vincent" members of the Association International des Charité, A.I.C.

## A beautiful name !

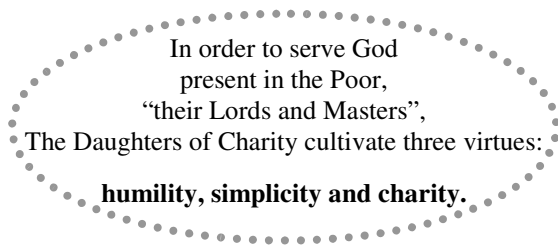
"Daughters of Charity"... A very simple name which never grows old...  
It is the original name. St. Vincent, moreover, used the word charity from 1617 for the Confraternities of Charity, associations of laywomen.\*  
Saint Vincent explained the spiritual meaning of this name to the first Sisters :  
"What do you think Sisters, that this beautiful name Daughters of Charity means ? Nothing less than Daughters of the Good Lord, because whoever lives in charity lives in God and God lives in him".  
The first rules of the Company stressed the meaning of this name : "They should often reflect on their name Daughters of Charity and make every effort to become worthy of it by their love of God and their neighbourhood."  
The title : "Servants of the Poor", was added to their name Daughters of Charity, as specified in the statutes of 1646 : "Servants of the poor, is the same as servants of Jesus Christ because it maintains that what we do to them, who are his members, we do to him.  
The Constitutions approved by Rome in 1983 have kept the same name : "Daughters of Charity".

## A beautiful name

1

## The service of the Poor

In each situation, the Daughters of Charity have responded to many different needs : health, education, promotion of women, pastoral work and catechetics, care of the aged and help to the marginalised.



All these actions of solidarity lead the Daughters of Charity to work in crisis situations or in the long term, alone or with others, following their own initiative or in response to an appeal, according to the needs they discover or those passed on to them.

THE SPIRITUAL  
TESTAMENT  
OF ST. LOUISE DE  
MARILLAC

JUST BEFORE HER  
DEATH IN 1660 :



*" Take great care  
of the service of  
the poor,...*



*... and above all be careful to live together, in great  
unity and cordiality, loving one another, in order to  
imitate the life and union of Our Lord...*



*...and pray  
fervently to the  
Blessed Virgin  
that she will be  
your only  
Mother ».*

## Family Spirit

St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac, two active people, two organisers, two realists... two mystics !

Both invented a **new social order** to help those who suffer : priests who would evangelise the poor, linking mission and charity; associations of laywomen for an efficacious and lasting service; women consecrated to God to serve the poor.

To all, they gave the same **aim : to help corporally and spiritually**, thus recognising the double dimension of body and soul. The poor also, the sick, the prisoners and all the oppressed, have like others the same desire for the Word of God.

Vincent and Louise rooted their mission in the Gospel. They lived an **active spirituality** which powerfully enlightens the world of today with regard to one of the most topical values of our times: solidarity.

In opening the Church to the concrete needs of man, they have united it to every day life.

In highlighting the strength and reality of baptism, they have made every Christian an active member of the Church.

Having showed the value of the capacities of women, they gave them full responsibility for the apostolate.

They gave primary importance to the spiritual life by their profound union with God.

By their real charity, affective and effective, they are models for those who wish to serve the poorest of the poor.

## Comunities of Fraternal Life

The commitment of the Daughters of Charity is an expression of their baptism. St. Vincent said "My dear Sisters you are given to God in a special way to live as good Christians".

Like the Apostles, hence their name "Society of apostolic life", they live in community taking their inspiration from the Blessed Trinity who is their model and their source.

The Daughters of Charity are consecrated to God by "non-religious" vows, which are annual and always renewable. To continue the mission of Christ they live the evangelical virtues of chastity, poverty and obedience. They have only one aim : the service of the poor which is their fourth vow. All leads to this end : their prayer, community life and service.

Attached to parishes and dioceses, the Sisters work in collaboration with others pursuing the same aim.

In France 1.500 Sisters are to be found in two "Provinces" animated by a Provincial and her Councillors.

The Mother House of the Company is here at 140 rue du Bac. The Mother General and her councillors reside here.

From the beginning, the priests of the Congregation of the Mission work with the Daughters of Charity.

## With the Virgin Mary

St. Louise de Marillac like St. Vincent de Paul were able to pass on to the Company their profound love for the Virgin Mary. She is for the Daughters of Charity mistress of the spiritual life and the model of docility to the Holy Spirit.

Two Marian feasts high up their life : the 25th March, Feast of the Annunciation, when they renew their vows and the 8th December, Feast of the Immaculate Conception when they renew their consecration to Mary .

By the daily recitation of the Rosary, they ask the grace to have a heart filled with mercy for those who suffer. St. Louise asked them to add a short prayer to every decade of their rosary, it is painted in gold letters in the dome of the Chapel : "I believe and confess your holy and Immaculate Conception..."

In 1830 in this same chapel, an extraordinary event occurred to renew this filial love.

God chose a novice of the Daughters of Charity, Sister Catherine Labouré, to reveal to the Church and to the world the privilege of Mary's immaculate conception and to give to the world the medal called Miraculous.

*« The Immaculate Conception,  
is the treasure of the Company »*

*Catherine Labouré*