



Mary and St Louise, Models of Obedience.

On the Feast of the Annunciation we read the beautiful story in St Luke of how the Angel Gabriel came to Mary. In just a few words he explained all that Mary needed to know: she would conceive and bear a child who would be the Son of God! And she says, “Let it be done to me according to your word!”

How does she accept this mission from God? What sustains her?

She listened to what the angel had to say. She questioned it when she said, “How can this be?” But she continues to listen and to obey – let it be done to me! Mary says, “Yes”. A full hearted, completely open, “Yes”. An openness that was filled with the life of Jesus Christ – literally!

Louise de Marillac struggled to hear what God wanted to communicate to her. She was troubled about her life when she hadn’t been able to keep a Vow she made in her youth to enter a Convent.

On Pentecost in 1623, she says that her, “mind was instantly freed of all doubt.” It was the gift God gave that she could finally listen to what it was God had in store for her! Her worries seemed to melt away.

Just as in Mary’s experience with the angel, she heard things that she couldn’t understand – to remain with her husband and that a time would come when she would be able to take vows but yet be in a place of coming and going; that she had nothing to fear from a new spiritual director; and the assurance that it was God who was teaching her.

In this Light of Pentecost, the Lumière of St. Louise, she tells us how she listened! She had struggles yet she was open to listen and to discern exactly what was God's will for her. In her own way she said, "Let it be done to me according to your Word."

This "light of Pentecost" stayed with her all her life. She wrote it down on a paper and kept it close. She remembered it and celebrated it almost as an anniversary. One time, she wrote to St. Vincent asking to receive his blessing at Mass because, "The great feast (Pentecost) which is approaching is a powerful reminder for me of all the special graces that His goodness granted to me some 22 years ago, which obtained for me the happiness of giving myself to Him in the way your Charity knows." L. 118. To Monsieur Vincent, May 25, 1645

In 1633 she finally gathered 5 or 6 young women in her home to help them to learn how to be Servants of the most abandoned in their society and to find Jesus Christ there.

Her home became that place of "coming and going" that she heard about in the Light of Pentecost. The young women learned how to dedicate themselves to God. They became Daughters of Charity. Louise taught them to take Mary as their model.

In a retreat meditation on Devotion to the Blessed Virgin, Louise said, "Let us take Our Lady as the model for our daily lives and bear in mind that the best way to honor her is by imitating her virtues... We should also imitate her humility which led God to do great things in her." M. 33. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin

Mary is the model of all obedience. She listened to the Word of God and followed it. Louise modeled that same action of listening for what it was that God was asking of her and then following it. It was not always easy. The Yes of Mary and the Yes of Louise were followed by many other times of saying "Yes" to what God revealed to them.

In our own lives, we are called to do this day after day. We listen to the Word and keep it. Let us ask of God the Grace of fidelity to say, along with Mary and St. Louise, "Be it done to me according to your Word."

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