

«My mind  
was instantly freed  
of all doubt... »



F. Petit 1892)



Photo © N.JUNG esprit-photo.com

The LUMIERE  
of Pentecost:  
from Saint Louise...  
to our day

*400th anniversary of the Lumière of Pentecost (1623-2023)*

*Louise de Marillac*



## A life made whole by the Spirit

Louise de Marillac, deprived of affection during her childhood, deeply wounded by the Capuchin Sisters refusal to admit her to their order, had no other choice than to obey her family and marry Antoine Le Gras.

The couple's happiness was short-lived: Antoine was often ill, and their son had weak health. Racked with guilt, she considered leaving her husband and abandoning her child.

The feast of Pentecost in 1623 represented a turning point in her life. During Mass, a great calm filled her heart. She felt the presence and light of the Holy Spirit.

Louise then received a crystal-clear certainty: the promise of a new life and the assurance of being spiritually accompanied by Vincent de Paul.

At that same time, the idea of visiting people who are poor grew in her. Vincent de Paul encouraged her in this. She was active, and her organizational skills were valuable for the Confraternities of Charity. She came out of her solitude and bloomed.

However, was this the path indicated by the Lumière of Pentecost? Louise prayed and implored the grace to discern God's will for her. The Spirit acted and helped her to wait for God's time in patience and trust.

In 1633, thanks to her encounter with Marguerite Naseau, her doubts vanished. She received several young women and guided them in the service of people who are poor.

Behold, the promise of Pentecost at work! Louise was so sure that she opposed Vincent's reticence. Her contagious faith and trust allowed these first Sisters to understand the true sense and goal of their work: the service of Christ in the person of all those who suffer.

Through Saint Louise and Saint Vincent, God gave birth to the Company of the Daughters of Charity.



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*Louise de Marillac*



## A life enlightened by the Spirit

On June 4, 1623, Pentecost Sunday, Louise received a clear promise during Mass: she would make vows one day; she would act on behalf of her neighbor with others; she would meet a new spiritual director, Vincent de Paul. She confessed that “it was repugnant to me to accept him,” but she acquiesced!

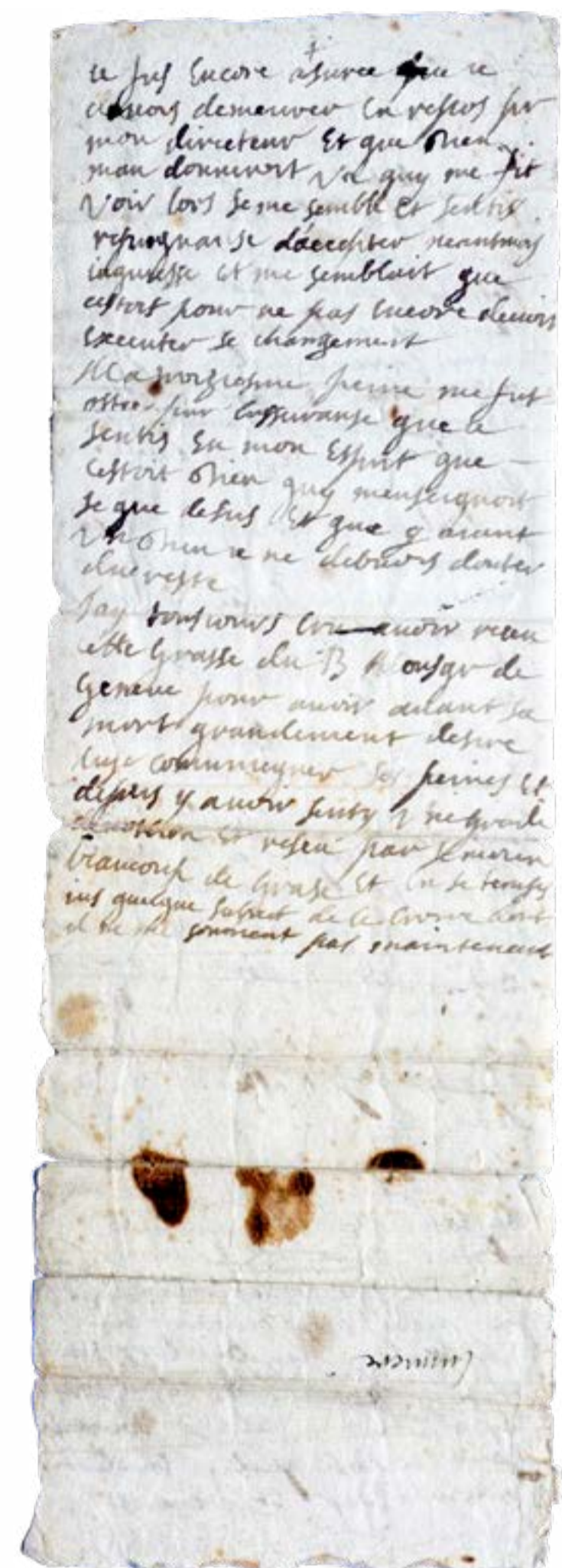
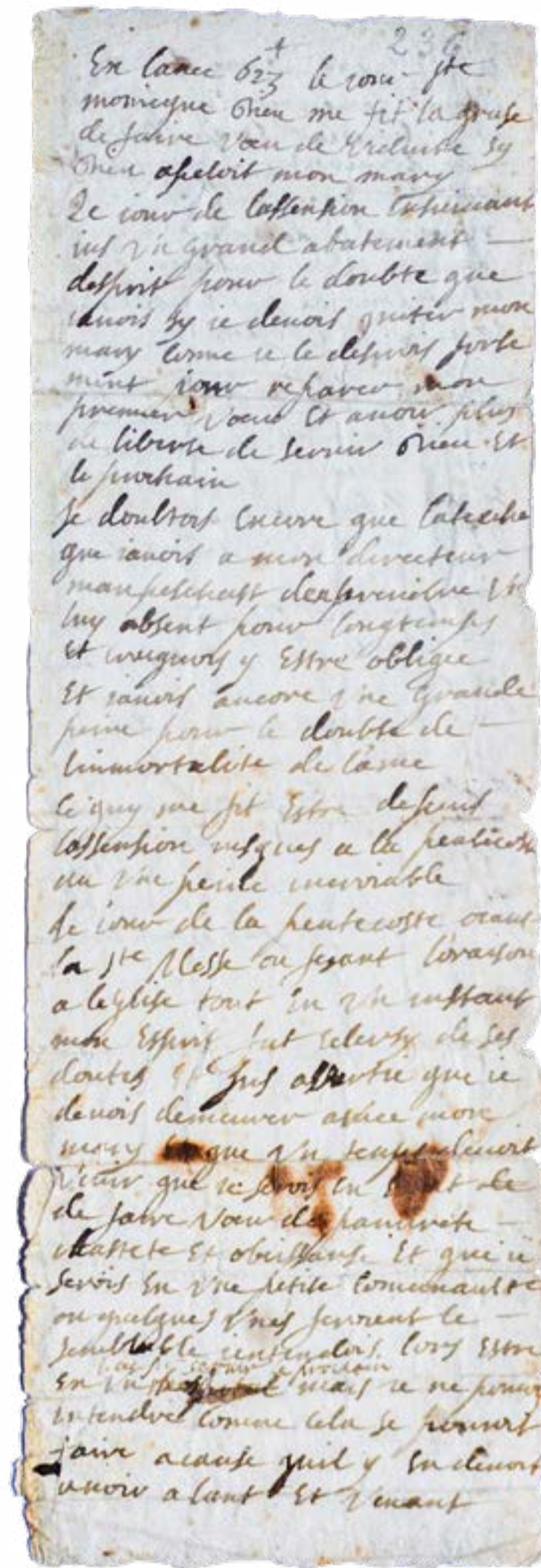
This acceptance is the first effect of this illumination, a turning point in her life, a YES to the path indicated by God.



Robert Rigot : Sainte Louise de Marillac (1957)



Robert Rigot : Sainte Louise de Marillac (1957)



Robert Rigot : Sainte Louise de Marillac (1957)

«I adore you, o my God... I trust in your mercy. I beg you, because of the love you have for your creatures, to send the assistance of the Holy Spirit so as to produce the full effect of the plan which you holy will has had, from all eternity, for my soul and for all souls redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ».

«I must have great trust in God and believe that His grace will be sufficient to enable me to fulfill His holy will, however difficult it may appear to be, provided the Holy Spirit is truly calling me. I shall know this by listening to the advice which He will permit me to receive».

*Louise de Marillac*



## The Spirit begets something new

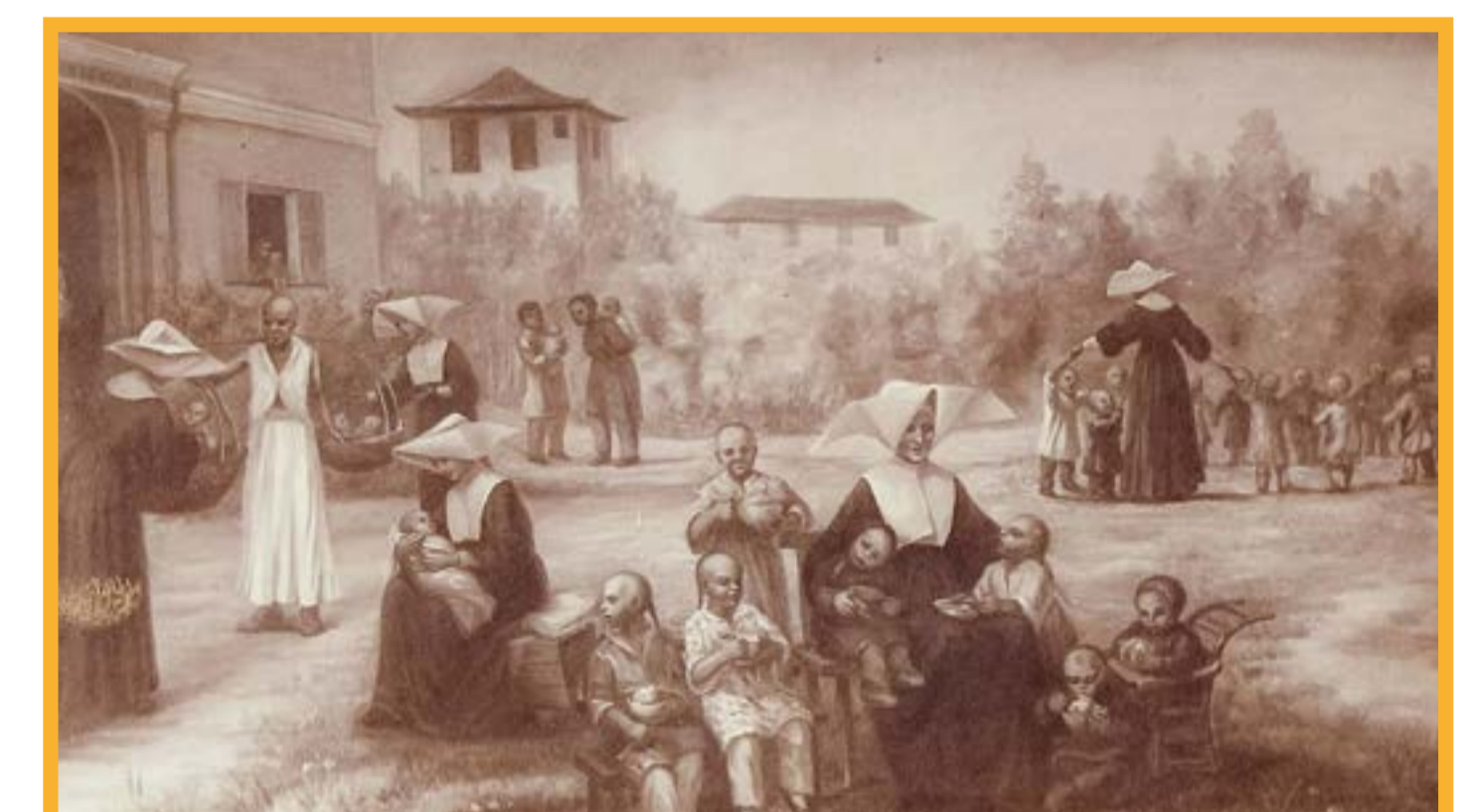
Louise explained to the first Sisters their identity, their vocation. They did not fit in with the usual structure of consecrated life in that time. It was a new way of giving oneself to God for the service of those who are poor, every poor person and everywhere!

Living in a state of charity in the midst of the world and not in a convent.

To the end of her life, Louise would be vigilant and take action to make sure that the Daughters of Charity live and be established according to God's plan, in fidelity to the Lumière of Pentecost.



Robert Rigot : Sainte Louise de Marillac (1957)



*«I beg the goodness of Our Lord to dispose our souls for the reception of the Holy Spirit so that, burning with the fire of His holy love, you may be consumed in the perfection of this love which will enable you to love the most holy will of God».*



*«It would be well if every morning each Sister would individually pray for the blessing of our good God in order that they might act in the manner of His Son while He was on earth as they carry out the works of charity to which they have been called. Better yet, they should pray that the same Spirit that acted in Him should act through them. They should begin their day by reflecting that they are accompanied by Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin and their guardian angel».*



*«My dear Sisters, if we want to please our good God, we must not look so much to what we want to do but to what He wants us to do».*

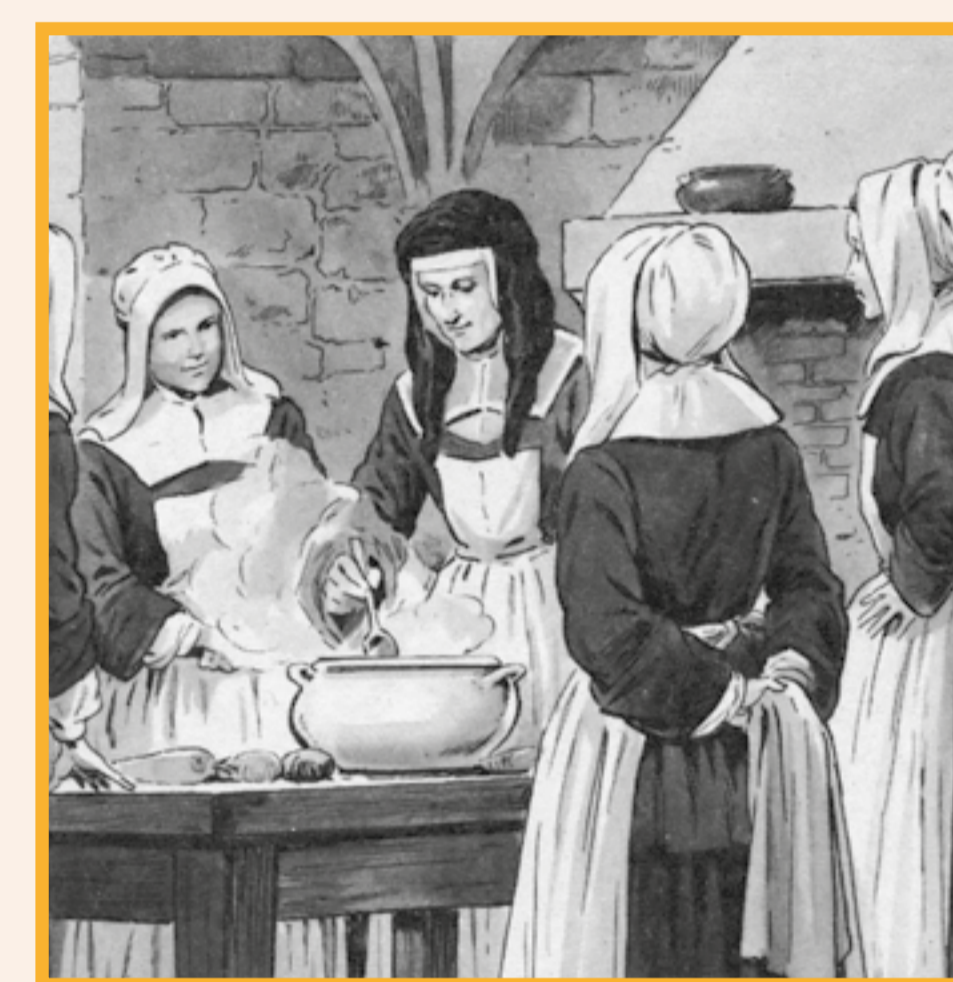


## The Spirit forms the servants of the poor at the school of Mary

Louise, as a good educator, simply and energetically encouraged the Sisters to go more deeply into the mystery of their vocation. They are called to serve Jesus Christ in the person of those who are poor and to find Him in them.

In addition, it was important to develop in them the virtues necessary for their state as servants and for life in community, the foremost virtue being union, the daughter of humility.

Louise invited the Sisters to let the Spirit flood their being, to welcome the fullness of love that He comes to pour into their heart, in order to become servants after the example of Christ the Servant and Mary the Handmaid.



Robert Rigot : Sainte Louise de Marillac (1957)



«If we deviate in the slightest from the conviction that they [people who are poor] are the members of Jesus Christ, it will infallibly lead to the weakening of these beautiful virtues in us... Renew then, my very dear Sisters, your first fervor. Begin by a true desire to please God, recalling that His Providence has brought you to the place where you are established and has united you so that you can help one another to grow in perfection».

«Are you being very courageous? Are you imitating the Good Shepherd who risks His life for the welfare and safety of the flock under His care? I think so. Although we do not often meet with occasions when we are called upon to risk our lives, we do not lack those in which we must sacrifice our wills so as to yield to the desires of others, or so as to overcome our habits and inclinations in order to... conquer our passions in order to avoid arousing those of others. This, my dear Sister, is how we must act if we are to maintain cordiality, to practice forbearance and to live in that close union which marks the charity of Jesus Crucified and which I beg God to grant us».

«Let us always adore and love the guidance of Divine Providence, the true and only security of the Daughters of Charity».

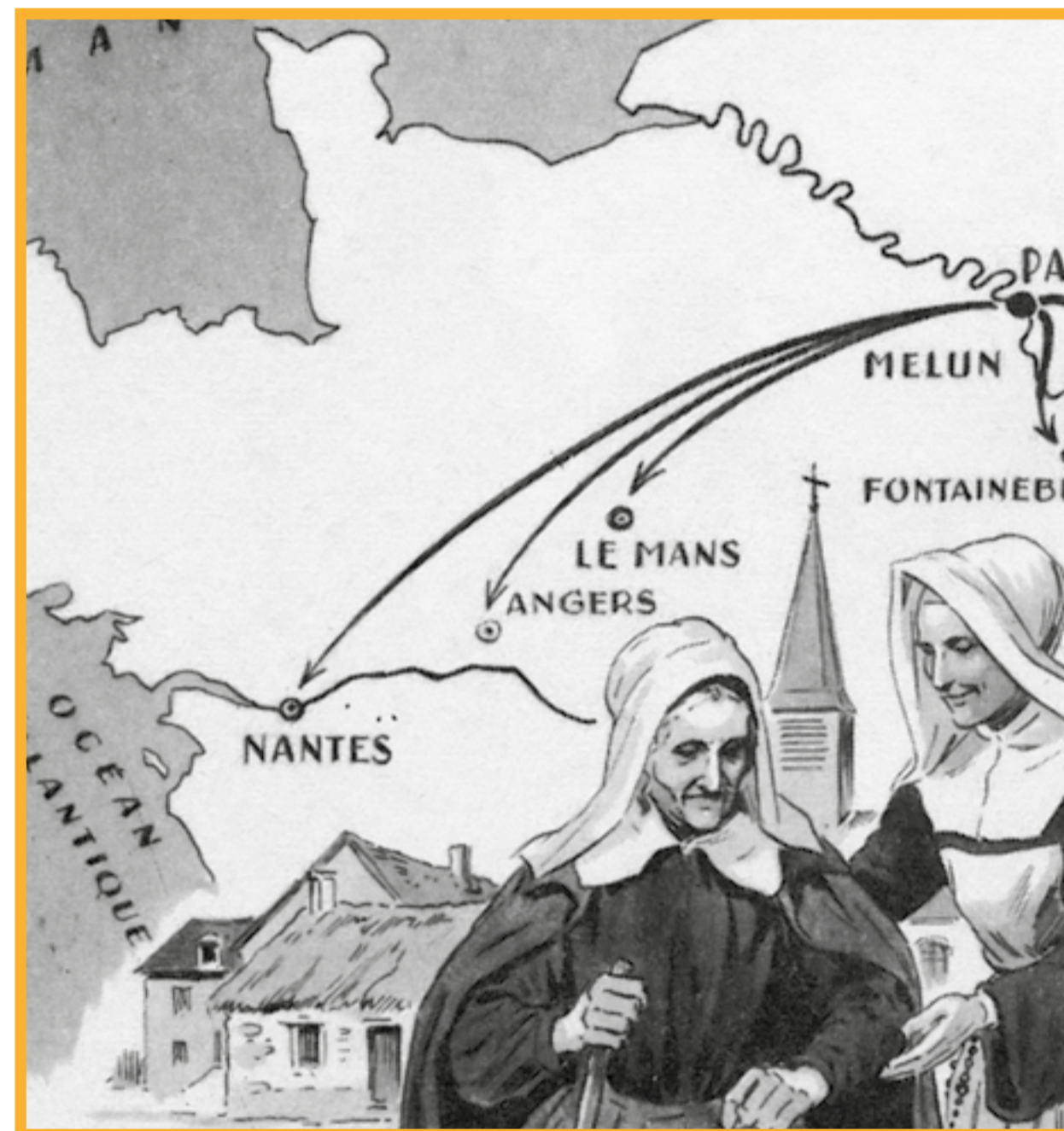
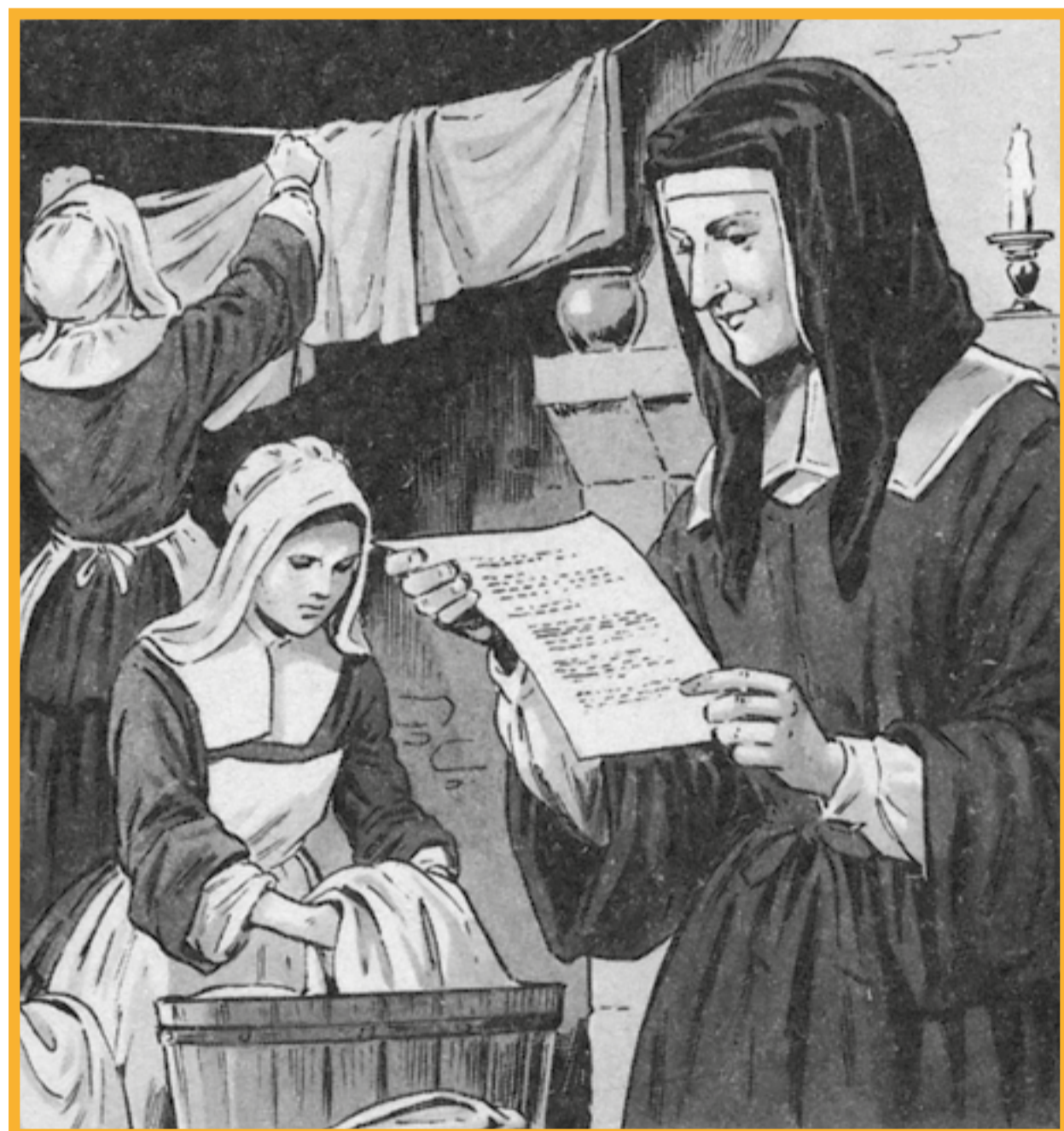
*Louise de Marillac*



## The Spirit drives the Daughters of Charity to the ends of the earth

From the very beginning, Saint Louise and Saint Vincent, with the audacious courage of the apostles, sent forth the Daughters of Charity on the highways of the world. In 1652, convinced that the charity of Christ knows no boundaries, they sent the first group of Sisters to Poland.

Over the years, the Spirit opened other paths: Italy, Spain, Portugal, Turkey, Mexico, Brazil, China, United States, Madagascar, Tunisia, Australia...



Robert Rigot : Sainte Louise de Marillac (1957)

«At last the time chosen by Divine Providence for the departure of our dear sisters has arrived. It is with sadness that we let them go because we will be separated from them; but it is also with joy because we are certain that they are going to carry out the will of God and are going to be united with you so as to fulfill His plans for the kingdom of Poland».

«It is not enough simply to be willing to go wherever they are sent. They must be willing to remain where obedience has placed them until obedience removes them».

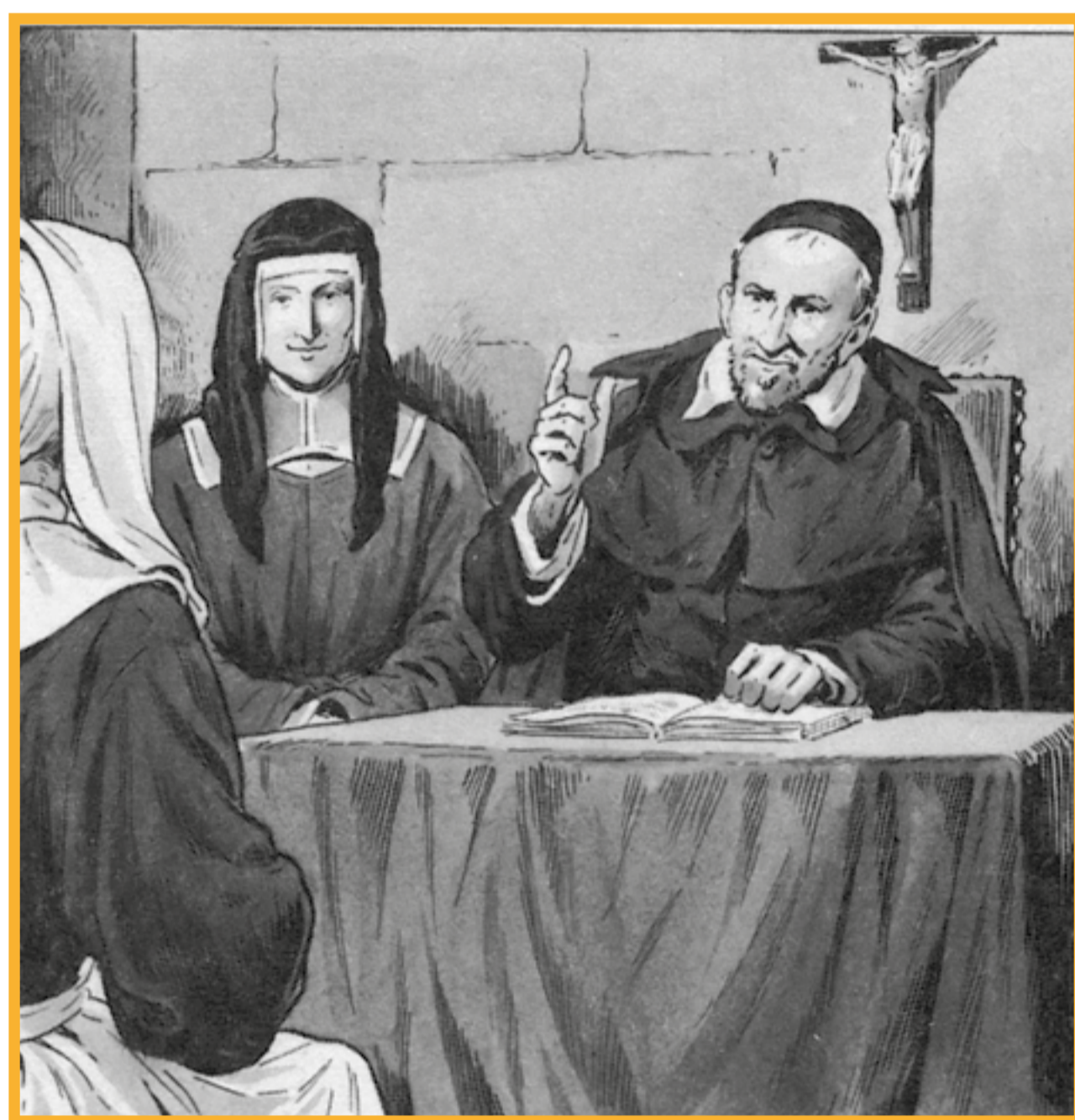
«How fortunate you are, my very dear Sisters, to have the guidance you do! Store up a provision for when Divine Providence calls you elsewhere. Do not think about when this will happen, but live in detachment. Remember, my Sisters, to pray for our entire Company, for each sister in particular and for the tasks God asks of us».

*Louise de Marillac*



## The Spirit guides the Company's steps

Louise de Marillac, pacified in God, was ready to improve the foundations of the Company. With Vincent de Paul, she put in place some structures that proved essential after the first years of existence and experience. The first Council Meeting in which some Sisters participated took place on June 28, 1646. Vincent introduced it:



Robert Rigot : Sainte Louise de Marillac (1957)



«By the grace of God, dear Sisters, the establishment of this little Council is a beginning of the order and foundation Providence is laying in your Company. We have met here to give some thought to certain needs – as is done in all well-regulated Communities – to tell you how you should act here, and to see how Mlle. Le Gras or the Sister Servant should conduct the meeting».

«What are we looking for, my dear Sisters? Is it not to please our Sovereign Lord? Let us wait in peace for His wishes to be shown us by our superiors. It is our practice, my very dear Sisters, to remain submissive to Divine Providence».

«I praise God with all my heart for the guidance of His Divine Providence in the affairs of the Company. We have such reason to adore Him for it that we would be the greatest ingrates in the world if we did not confide ourselves to it. It is Divine Providence alone which must keep us and provide for all our needs, particularly those which human prudence can neither foresee nor meet».

*Louise de Marillac*



## The Spirit acts in us and with us

The Daughters of Charity's service today in Africa, Europe, Asia, America, Oceania.



*«I praise God with all my heart for the guidance of His Divine Providence».*



*«The means to prevent the destruction of the Company are to reflect frequently on the grace which God has given to us by calling us to it and to ask Him for the grace to persevere in it. The final means is to strive to acquire the spirit of the Company through the love which we must have for Our Lord and by the practice of humility, simplicity and true charity».*



*«Pray for the entire Company and ask Our Lord to send laborers for His work if He wants it to continue. Requests come from so many places that it is impossible to satisfy all of them».*

*«Let us avoid, as much as we can, the desire to make known what God is doing through us».*

*Louise de Marillac*