



# **St. Louise de Marillac, Mystic of the Holy Spirit**

To speak of Louise de Marillac, mystic of the Holy Spirit, it is important to understand her journey. When she has her light of Pentecost,... her [life of] prayer is rigorous, she has an austere relationship with God who is, for her, a severe God, difficult, etc.

When she met Vincent Paul, he would wait at least 3 years before sending her to persons in poverty. However, in 1629 when she starts her first visit to the Confraternities of Charity, she will be a little overwhelmed and I have always been surprised to see in her writings...in her... a totally different orientation of her prayer. Whereas she used to pray to a rather demanding, rather austere God, we see her from 1630/31 addressing Jesus as the Son of God, of course, [but] Jesus in the midst of the world and close to persons in poverty.

This is what will lead her for many years; it is only much later that she speaks of the Holy Spirit. I don't know if she refers to her light of Pentecost or not but she will describe a little bit all the action of the Holy Spirit in the Church and in the Communities. (It's a bit difficult because her language is not easy at all and I don't want to get into an explanation.)

But we see a whole evolution in Louise's thinking... so we should not be surprised that our relationship with God can go through totally different stages throughout our life in Community.

I think she must have done this also with the first Sisters who came to serve persons in poverty, called by Vincent Paul or by the Lazarists or the Ladies

of Charity. I think that they had a desire (how shall I put it) to live as good Christians... well, the 17th century was not very precise about this in the parishes. But very quickly, this will enter Louise's mind; she would instruct the Sisters, listen to them when they returned from their services, see with them the difficulties they encounter, and help them to integrate their services into a relationship with Jesus Christ.

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