



FROM ASCENSION TO PENTECOST: A MINI-RETREAT IN THE SPIRIT OF ST. LOUISE DE MARILLAC

In 1623, Louise de Marillac (Mademoiselle LeGras) was in a state of inner turmoil. She deeply desired to serve God and her neighbor more fully, but could not see clearly where God was leading her. As she prayed during Mass on Pentecost, she received a great grace – she called it her lumière – that freed her from all doubt. She understood that she was to remain with her ailing husband until another way would open for her, all in God’s own time. From then on, Louise regarded the period between Ascension and Pentecost as a time of special grace. She encouraged her Sisters to make a retreat during this time of waiting and praying for the Holy Spirit to come in fullness. Following are quotes from St. Louise for each of the eleven days between Ascension and Pentecost. May her words stir up the desires of our hearts to be open to the Spirit’s consoling and compelling grace.

Come, Holy Spirit

Day 1:

I shall often recall the dispositions of the holy Apostles as they prepared for the coming of the Holy Spirit, especially their serenity in awaiting Him.

Day 2:

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.

Day 3:

I must...labor diligently, O my soul, to ...let the grace, with which the Holy Spirit wills to fill all the powers of my being, act in me.

Day 4:

I felt interiorly moved freely to place myself in a disposition of total availability... I must perseveringly await the coming of the Holy Spirit although I do not know when that will be. I must accept this uncertainty, as well as my inability clearly to perceive at this time the path which God wishes me to follow in His service. I must abandon myself entirely to His Providence so as to be completely His.

Day 5:

Our entire family should have great devotion to the Feast of Pentecost and total dependence on divine providence.

Day 6:

Reflecting on my lowliness and powerlessness, I shall invoke the grace of the Holy Spirit in which I shall have great confidence for the accomplishment of his will in me, which shall be the sole desire of my heart.

Day 7:

O Eternal Light, lift my blindness! O Perfect Unity, create in me simplicity of being!

Day 8:

The Holy Spirit...will certainly remove any obstacle to his divine operations by the ardor of his love. He will establish the laws of holy charity by endowing [you] with the strength to accomplish tasks beyond [your] human powers so long as [you] remain in a state of total detachment.

Day 9:

Since the Holy Spirit is the union of the Father and the Son, the life which we have freely undertaken must be lived in this great union of hearts.

Day 10:

My dear Sisters, I continue to ask God for His blessings for you and pray that He will grant you the grace to persevere in your vocation in order to serve Him in the manner He asks of you. Take good care of the service of the poor.

Day 11:

No desires, no resolutions, the grace of my God will accomplish in me whatever He wills.