

# Collaboration Between Two Exceptional People

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By John Freund, CM on August 27, 2016

J. Patrick Murphy reminds us in his booklet Mr. Vincent of the collaboration of two exceptional people – Vincent and Louise. In Louise de Marillac Vincent found the perfect partner to build his business model and bring about change that shocked the world. Louise, like Vincent, was imperfect and troubled but together they were inspirational.

## **Lesson: Imperfect people are all we have; accept them where they are and work with them.**

For 35 years, they journeyed together, learning to know, esteem and respect each other as they collaborated intensely establishing missions all over France and beyond.

We are blessed to know the outcomes of the intersection of these two lives. In their final chapters they were true collaborators and equals.

However, in the early chapters, any collaboration between these two, so very different in backgrounds, experiences, personalities and ways of operating, seemed doomed only to end in disaster. But their journey together changed themselves, France, the Church and Religious life.

We see their dedication to the same goal, the service of Christ in the poor that attracted them to one another, as both gave their life to following the promptings of God. They were true collaborators and equals. However, we rarely see that they experienced some disagreements, tensions and conflicts which challenged their relationship.

A particular difference of opinion was over finding a new motherhouse because of the increase in numbers of country girls coming to join the community. Louise wanted to be close to St. Lazare. Vincent was not particularly keen on that idea.

Difficulties sometimes arise between people collaborating because they are human beings and human beings have conflicts. Vincent and Louise's relationship wasn't destroyed by this – in fact, it was strengthened and they were able to work for the glory of God and the good of the poor. They did cross swords. There were hard times for both of them and they were stressed because they were so busy, but their collaboration was always directed towards the mission.

But there is even more. At the heart of collaboration I find its true value and it is nothing short of Eucharist itself. Christ offers new life to us through his dying and rising. Just as the bread and wine of Eucharist had to give up their individual properties to become something greater than a single grain or a single grape, so too, we surrender our individual properties.

As we work together, we learn how to die to self and to our ways of doing things. We experience the power of God at work in our midst, slowly transforming us into His own Body and Blood.

**This is the value of collaboration.**

**May all our collaborative efforts lead to transformation!**

Vincent and Louise are proof that whatever our background, whatever our personality, whatever our life experiences, whatever trials we have, and whatever conflicts and tensions we experience, these are not impediments to doing good and achieving goals. Vincent and Louise stand out for us as models of true collaborators in ministry, indeed for those in every walk of life.

Just as Vincent and Louise learned to collaborate as equals, so too Vincentian Family branches can learn the deeper meaning of the AIC/LCUSA motto "Together against all forms of poverty" ... and change the face of our world.

# COLLABORATION

