**Sr. Rosalie Rendu**

Sister Rosalie Rendu, a member of the Daughters of Charity for 70 years, who worked within the confines of perhaps the poorest area of Paris, was buried with the trappings of a state funeral from the church of Saint-Medard on February 9th, 1856. The rich and poor joined the procession behind the crucifix leading her to her final resting place. Religious and government partisans forgot their differences for a few hours to pay tribute to this humble, yet remarkable woman. The mighty and the downtrodden wept together. The following day Parisian newspapers described the singular event and paid tribute to Sister Rosalie.

To this day, a steady flow of pilgrims visits her grave. Many leave flowers or small marble plaques expressing gratitude. These outpourings testify to the truth of the inscription on the tomb, "To our good mother Rosalie, her grateful friends, the poor and the rich." An avenue in Paris where she labored bears her name. Newspaper articles still recall her accomplishments.

On 21 August 1997, Pope John Paul II beatified Frederic Ozanam, the principal founder of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, at Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris. In his homily, the Holy Father evoked Sister Rosalie's name. He stated, "The bonds among the members of the Vincentian Family have been strong since the origin of the Society because it was a Daughter of Charity, Sister Rosalie Rendu, who guided Frederic Ozanam and his companions toward persons who were poor in the Mouffetard section of Paris."'

But who exactly is this woman who was herself beatified on November 9th, 2003?

What does her life have to say to men and women of our era who seek to reach out to those in need?

“The bonds among the members of the Vincentian Family have been strong since the origin of the Society because it was a Daughter of Charity, Sister Rosalie Rendu, who guided the young Frédéric Ozanam and his companions toward persons who were poor in the Mouffetard section of Paris.” Pope John Paul II, Homily at the Beatification of Frédéric Ozanam, Paris, 21 August 1997.

Suggestions for your personal reflection and sharing based on your own knowledge and your reading of: Sullivan, Louise. Sister Rosalie Rendu: A Daughter of Charity on Fire with Love for the Poor. Chicago, Illinois, Vincentian Studies Institute, 2006.

1. Who was this woman, born in a tiny village in the Jura Mountains, who would go on to become the “Apostle of Charity” and whose funeral would bring together 40,000 persons of every stratum of society, the rich and the poor, the powerful and the voiceless, believers and the enemies of everything religious? What were the influences in her young life, her experience of God and the early character traits that foreshadowed the future model for service and mentor for Ozanam and his companions? ( Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4.)

2. Sister Rosalie as Model of Vincentian service and Mentor for the early Society: As the members of the Society took their first steps in the service of those who were poor, what did they learn of Vincentian service from Sister Rosalie and the other Sisters of the little house on the rue de L’Epée-de-Bois? What was the source of Sister Rosalie’s energy for service and how did she try to instill this dimension into her young collaborators? (Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8.)

3. Creativity and Daring: How did Sister Rosalie model Vincentian collaboration? How did she and her collaborators respond to the Vincentian Question: “What must be done?” (Chapters 9, 10, 11, 12.) N.B. pp. 199-225 deal specifically with the Society.

4. Sister Rosalie becomes Blessed Sister Rosalie. How is she remembered by her Friends the Rich and the Poor? After getting to know her better, how will you especially remember her? (Chapters 13, 14.)