



*Opening Prayer*

*Father all powerful and ever living God,  
in the wonder of the Incarnation,  
your eternal Word has brought to the eyes of faith a new and  
radiant vision of your glory.*

*In Him we see our God made visible and so are caught up  
in love for the God we cannot see.*

The last line of this prayer, which we find in the Preface of the Mass for Christmas, sums up the Vincentian Spirit. With the eyes of faith, we see Christ in the poor. Once glimpsing Him, we are caught up with the love that He has for us, by being present among us and we are inspired into acts of charity for our brothers and sisters.



**The Words of St Louise**

Prayer, fasting and almsgiving are similar to the vows that religious make; Prayer is a form of obedience, fasting is chastity and almsgiving is poverty. We may offer them at the crib in place of the gifts of the three kings. Prayer is our incense, fasting is our myrrh and almsgiving is our gold. (SWL p 736)

## AIC Reflection

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In prayer we try and open ourselves to God and discern His will for us. So often, we become caught up with petitioning God for our needs or the needs of others.

Fasting has become popular today with people who are trying to lose weight. They eat normally for five days and have two days where they eat only the minimum. The idea is that this gives the body a rest and gives it time to process toxins from our system.

Almsgiving is not just about giving money, it is about giving ourselves and our time. Remember that love is the best gift we can give.

### Reflection

- How can I make my prayer time an opportunity for God to guide me?
- What do I need to fast from in order to cleanse my soul and clarify my spirit? Business, gossiping, unhealthy TV or books.....
- Can I be more generous in my giving...of my time and energy...of my love?

### *Concluding Prayer*

*Faithfull God, may I simplify my life so that my full attention is on what matters: loving you and loving my neighbour. Grant me the grace to free myself from all that may stifle and hinder my spirit and my service. I ask this through Emmanuel, Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen*

