# Operational Guidelines implementation 2009 - 2011

Training Booklet nr. 16

## Table of contents

**Introduction : Assessment of the progress made**  
2

**Chapter I - AIC projects**

1 - The 2009-2011 Operational Guidelines  
4

2 - The « Co-therapist Mothers in action » project  
6

3 - The « Paloma » project  
9

4 - The « Shared meals » project  
13

**Chapter II - International organisations programmes**

1 - The Commission on the Status of Women: Beijing + 15  
17

2 - The Millenium Development Goals  
19

3 - 2010: European year against poverty and social exclusion  
21

**Chapter III - Man and woman created equal in dignity**

1 - Decalog on woman’s dignity  
27

2 - Equal in dignity  
29
About 300 AIC delegates will participate in the next International Assembly of Delegates in Madrid (Spain) from 30 March to 3 April 2011.

We should take advantage of this opportunity to carry forward our AIC mission: We should act against all forms of women’s poverty and exclusion by implementing projects which change their lives.

A few years ago AIC started focusing its thinking and actions on women’s poverty. At the same time we have worked together with the Vincentian Family to create a Systemic Change process so that our actions would really change the lives of the poor.

Let us recall:
- 2009, Mexico: women’s discrimination, one of the major causes of poverty.

Our 2009-2011 Operational Guidelines (hereafter «O.G.»), see p.4, suggest three levels;

⇒ Personal: both we and destitute women are concerned
⇒ Our AIC actions
⇒ Society as a whole

Where do we stand?
This booklet can help you to assess the progress made.

- How can our projects meet our Operational Guidelines and create a real systemic change? (chapter I)
- What are the results of the MDGs on women’s lives? (chapter II)
- What are the biblical and theological foundations of man and woman’s equal dignity? (chapter III)

This new stage should be beneficial to all AIC groups and prepare the 2011 Assembly:

Education,

*a pathway to build together*

*AIC Mexico*
Chapter I

Are we aware of how implementation of the operational guidelines and systemic change answers the issue of women’s poverty in AIC projects?

1 - The 2009 - 2011 Operational Guidelines

Aware that:
- culture and female poverty are linked;
- cultures can change;
- for change to occur, people have to change.

The AIC members commit themselves to:

1. Support women on the path to personal change, responsibility and awareness:
   We are convinced that:
   - Each volunteer can change her way of thinking and acting;
   - Change should come from the person and her awareness of the situation;
   - Each woman should find within herself the resources to construct her own life plan;
   - Each woman is capable of bringing about change in her own culture.

2. Within AIC, rise to the challenge of women’s poverty
   By:
   - Creating and developing discussion fora in order to pool problems, unite efforts, create links and find solutions;
   - Steering hearts and minds towards a better gender balance;
   - Training to promote and defend human rights, especially women’s rights and encouraging political action with a view to creating and applying laws on behalf of women.
3. Create personal and social awareness within society

By enhancing:
- Networking to promote women;
- Lobbying to involve society as a whole;
- Awareness and use of communication media to promote women’s dignity.

By reaffirming the basic AIC values:
- Respect for women’s dignity;
- Solidarity among women;
- Strengthening of family bonds;
- Training to foster a deep and true vincentian spirituality.
2 - The « Co-therapist Mothers in action » Project (Cali, AIC Colombia)

The project aims to provide and totally meet the requirements of a community of 80 mothers of children with multiple disabilities.

These mothers are mostly single-parent mothers who go to a Ladies of Charity Center for the disabled where AIC volunteers are working. They are trained to become their child’s co-therapist and taught theoretical and practical knowledge about disabilities (symptoms, insufficiencies etc.) and current treatments.

During this workshop the mother administers treatment directly under the guidance and leadership of a group of interdisciplinary instructors i.e. a physiotherapist, a professional therapist, a
speech and ear specialist, a psychologist and 15 AIC volunteers who daily support the Centre’s activities.

**Operational Guidelines and Systemic Change Implementation**

The purpose of this project is to apply *systemic change* considering both the disabled children and their mothers. This project focuses on poverty not only due to personal and economic resources, but also in the context of a society which is still prone to discrimination.

Moreover this project applies the following 3 AIC *Operational Guidelines* as follows:

- This project mainly takes care of these mothers’ psycho-emotional and spiritual health helping them to accept disability and to promote their personal development. This project gives people a chance to meet and undergo spiritual training in a friendly environment but it also provides workshops dedicated to family, art, therapy and relaxation to assist them in their holistic development.

  - 1st and 2d O.G.:
    - « Change should come from the person and her awareness of the situation; 
    - Each woman should find the resources to construct her own life plan within herself;
    - Creating and developing discussion fora in order to pool problems, unite efforts, create links and find solutions. »

- This co-therapist training for mothers is new because its purpose is to bring about a cultural change in society’s attitude to disability and rehabilitation
The project was created to bring about a cultural change in the concept of, and approach to, rehabilitation in cities where it is conducted behind closed doors, and where local authorities increase patients’ dependence and adopt a purely clinical approach rather than a patient focused rehabilitation process.

⇒ Preamble of O.G.: « Aware,
- That culture and women’s poverty are linked;
- That each culture can change. »

Another basic aspect of this project is its social importance since it wants to bring about a cultural change in society’s attitude to disability and rehabilitation. Moreover thanks to a support network focusing on the project’s impact and benefits which can be copied by other municipal authorities, it will attract other mothers recently faced with the same disability problems.

⇒ 2d and 3d O.G.: « By enhancing:
- Training to promote and defend human rights, especially women’s rights, and encouraging political action;
- Lobbying to make society as a whole aware of its responsibilities;
- Networking in order to promote women. »
3 - Paloma Project
(Alicante - AIC Spain)

The Paloma Project (Dove Project) from Alicante in Spain meets the following 3 Operational Guidelines 2009-2011: «support women to make them personally responsible», «enhance their commitment to solve women’s poverty... » and «making society as a whole aware of its responsibilities ... ».

- Indeed, in accordance with the call of our founder Saint Vincent de Paul who said: «Let us love God but let it be by the strength of our arms and the sweat of our brows» and with our neighbourhood’s needs, The Saint Vincent de Paul Charity Association set up the Paloma project in 1990. Thanks to this project we have created a Centre for women in dire straits. This centre welcomes them and meets their requirements but it also gives them a «lifeline» so that they can survive by their own means.

We have created training workshops. They are currently managed by 43 volunteers (from AIC, VMY and various supporters of our association). We have organized cooking, cleaning, cutting and sewing, literacy and school training workshops.

⇒ 1st O.G : « We are convinced that:
- Change should come from the person and her awareness of the situation;
- Each woman should find the resources to construct her own life plan within herself;
- Each woman is capable of changing and of bringing about change in her own culture. »
We evolved with time and adapted to new requirements. At present we have workshops on Spanish language learning, parent education, home assistance for the elderly and self-esteem as well as a legal, psychological and social service. Moreover, while the mothers participate in the workshops, we organize education, playgroups and day care for the children.

These women can go to a Caritas outsourcing service in order to gain access to the work market which constitutes an important change.

In 2009, we welcomed 735 women of whom 193 remained on a waiting list without being able to participate in the workshops. This year, because of the economic crisis it is more and more difficult for women who have access to our Centre to find a job. Consequently we are facing acute emergency situations daily to meet their food requirements. We had to launch an urgent appeal to official authorities to obtain food for the women who participate in the workshops and for their families.
2d O.G. : « By:
- Creating and developing discussion fora in order to pool problems, unite efforts and find solutions;
- Creating a better gender balance. »

- Among the women who go to the Paloma Centre there are a lot of migrants who have left their land and families to find the necessary resources to survive in another country. Consequently they come to look for work, they want to learn how we live in Spain in order to work as domestic help. During our cooking workshop we teach them these skills and thanks to the outsourcing service they can more easily reach the labour market. This is the workshop’s main goal, but even so the result exceeds our expectations.

- Whether these mothers’ requests are clearly stated or not, we lend them a friendly ear, open arms and personal attention. The Paloma project generates new friendships and new human and social networks and this is our very purpose.

3d O.G.: « By enhancing:
- Networking in order to promote women;
- Lobbying to involve society as a whole. »

The Paloma project was also designed according to the Systemic Change model i.e.:

- Each woman who calls on us is responsible for her own change, she is neither a victim nor in search of protection.

- The actual context of the project is under constant scrutiny and we always adapt to new circumstances.
We work hand in hand with women and their families in the biological, psychological and social fields, we respect their religions and provide spiritual guidance.

We assess and coordinate all the interdisciplinary aspects: users, volunteers, techniques and external resources.

We have established networks with municipal social services, the « Centros de Acogida de Mujeres Benacantil, Oblatas, Adoratrices », Health centres, Charities, the Red Cross and « Alicante Acoge » in order to ensure coordination and avoid a useless waste of resources.

Self-support is ensured early on in the project by defining aims and results as well as income and expenses.

In summary, we work with and for the poor, we adapt to prevailing circumstances and assess our activities and in the spirit of Saint Vincent de Paul, we keep in mind that « there is no charity without justice ».
4 - Project « Shared meals »
(Loehne - AIC Germany)

a) Introduction

Within AIC for the last few years, we have focused our thoughts and actions on women’s poverty and on the Systemic Change process. The two above mentioned projects provide a direct answer to women’s poverty but within AIC there are many other projects which are not solely aimed at women even if they are often the major beneficiaries. Each project can be designed within the framework of the Operational Guidelines and can bring about a Systemic Change. We are fully aware that it is only by creating united communities and social awareness that the situation of women, the destitute and children will change.

The following project is aimed at elderly people and has brought about an important change

b) Project

A group of volunteers at Loehne, a small German town in the Paderborn diocese had organized hot meals during the whole week for elderly parishioners. This canteen was not far from a school. After some time the school’s headmaster informed the group that some pupils did not have a daily hot meal because their families were badly off, and had to make do with some « fast food » after classes.

The volunteers discussed this request together and with the beneficiaries and decided to widen the scope of their project by including the young pupils with the following two objectives:
1. providing the children with a healthy meal and,

2. giving the elderly who often live on their own, the opportunity of meeting young people and of establishing contacts and exchanges with another generation.

A daily hot and healthy meal is a must for children, teenagers and elderly people.

In addition to providing healthy food, the project has an educational purpose: meals are an opportunity for teenagers to meet elderly people, to learn how to behave when eating together and to feel responsible towards others.

This decision represented a turning point in the project while being in accordance with the AIC Operational Guidelines which state that « Each volunteer can change her way of thinking and acting » and it emphasizes the importance of « creating and developing exchange fora ».

The organisation of this project with two different target groups required the cooperation of various groups and institutions: the town council, the protestant and catholic churches, the city’s health service, the Lions Club, the school, the children’s parents and the elderly who were the project’s beneficiaries.

All those contacts contributed to increase AIC’s visibility in this small town.

The AIC volunteers (over 20) are committed to preparing the meals, raising the funds, maintaining all the necessary contacts with official institutions and being available to their « guests ». In a nutshell, they are committed to improving their city’s civil society.

This type of action implements the 3rd Operational Guideline:
- « Strengthening networking,
- Lobbying in order to involve society. »
We can derive a few suggestions from these projects for a Systemic Change implementation.

A few conclusions can be derived from the three above-mentioned projects, they show us that the implementation of the AIC Operational Guidelines lead to a Systemic change. Here are a few examples:

1. When we act, let us be bold enough to contemplate u-turns and brave enough to implement them.

2. Let us carry out a thorough analysis to obtain a new perspective and introduce it in the project.

3. Let us have a holistic vision and consider a whole series of basic human requirements both individual and social, spiritual and physical and more specifically health, education, spiritual development, employment etc.

AIC-Madagascar : Tsiry Project, 2009 laureate of the Vincentian Family Prize for Systemic Change
4. Let us emphasize programs enabling people to remain autonomous and fight the very causes of poverty.

5. Let us develop a vision which is shared by the various stakeholders: poor communities, beneficiaries, donors, Churches, governements, NGOS, the private sector, trade unions, media, organisations, international networks etc.

6. Let us include beneficiaries at each project stage: children, teenagers, women or elderly people.

7. Let us assess our activities under all interdisciplinary aspects: users, volunteers, techniques and external resources.

8. Let us determine aims and results, income and expenditure at the beginning of a workshop to create a self-supporting project.
CHAPTER II

In international organisations have the programmes for women’s empowerment progressed?

1 - Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) : Beijing + 15

The adoption in 1995 of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Equality, Development and Peace was a consolidation of previous efforts to link the issues and major obstacles for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women. From March 1 to 12, 2010, the CSW at its 54th session undertook a 15 year review of the implementation of this declaration.

Emphasis was placed on the sharing of experiences with a view to overcoming remaining obstacles and new challenges including those related to the Millennium Development Goals.
Member States, representatives of NGO's and of UN entities participated in the session and a huge crowd of women from all over the world gathered at the UN in New York. The CSW was established in 1964 by the Economic and Social Council to prepare recommendations and reports for the Council on promoting women’s rights that have been defined in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly. CEDAW has been ratified by many countries but is far from being put into practice everywhere.

The United Nations has been an important arena for galvanizing progress on women’s rights and empowerment over the past 60 years (CSW, CEDAW, 4 World Women’s Conference) but too little has changed for the world’s women.

**ONG lobbying: an important step forward**

Very recently, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution to establish the **UN Women’s Agency** for gender equality. This is the result of a four year advocacy campaign of the NGO’s. They now have to turn their efforts to ensure that the new body has the human and financial resources necessary to succeed.
The Millenium statement was adopted at the UN in September 2000 during a summit about the role of the UN in the new millenium.

It includes 8 objectives with measure indicators to be reached by 2015:

1. eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. achieve universal primary education
3. promote gender equality and empower women
4. reduce child mortality
5. improve maternal health
6. combat VIH/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. ensure environmental sustainability
8. global partnership for development

www.undp.org/mdg
Ban Ki Moon the UN Secretary General called upon the heads of state to participate in a summit in New York from 20 to 22 September 2010 to advance these objectives. The NGOs are invited to speak up on the web in preparation for this summit.

The world has the necessary knowledge and resources to achieve the Millennium Goals. Evidence is shown by the fact that a certain number of countries have significantly increased primary education, controlled malaria and tuberculosis and improved children’s health. Infant mortality decreased from 12.6 million in 1990 to 9 million in 2007. However, progress was hampered by the economic crisis, the growth slowdown, the reduced number of donor countries and the climate change. It is particularly limited in the field of women’s health: about 1500 women die every day during pregnancy or childbirth. The increased number of women with HIV/AIDS is very worrying. Violence against women hinders the achievement of the objectives while entailing a high economic cost and great personal distress.

The UNDP (UN Development Program) prepared a report with a thorough assessment of measures to be taken to increase sustainable development and lessen poverty in the world and to emphasize the millennium goals’ interdependence.

see site: 

www.undp.org

Questions:

Do you know a MDG office in your country?

Are you lobbying it?
3 - 2010: European year against poverty and social exclusion

About 84 million Europeans are poverty stricken: they feel unsafe and lack what most people take for granted. Poverty can bring about all sorts of problems: not having enough money to buy clothes or food, living in dire straits or even being homeless. Poverty also means that there is no alternative way of life and hence social exclusion.

In accordance with its fundamental principle of solidarity, the European Union together with its member Countries decided that 2010 would be the European Year against poverty and social exclusion. Its key objectives are strengthening people’s awareness of the subject and renewing the EU and its member countries’ political commitment against poverty and social exclusion.

The 2010 European Year’s main theme is to bring the plight of the poor and social outcasts to the public’s attention while encouraging European citizens and other people involved to commit themselves to this important problem. This European Year also tries to question poverty related stereotypes and collective perceptions. In supporting the European principles of solidarity and partnership, 2010 gives a strong signal: the causes of poverty should be tackled head on in order for everybody to play an active part in society.

The civil society organisations and the social partners together with the participating countries and the European Commission will organize numerous activities during 2010. Two European
conferences will take place in January and December. Moreover, an art event will establish a connection between the art world and the victims of poverty and social exclusion. Special training sessions will provide the media and decision makers with a new look at these complex subjects. Local and national events will be held in each member country as well as in Iceland and Norway: awareness campaigns, workshops and information seminars in schools. Films, magazines and other media will be produced to make communities aware of poverty and social exclusion. The people directly concerned by these problems will be able to take advantage of this opportunity to obtain information about their rights.

Alongside public authorities, persons who experienced poverty will act as ambassadors; this will increase the visibility and credibility of the events organized during the European Year while encouraging other citizens to get involved.

**Questions:**

*Have members of your association participated in some of the above-mentioned activities?*

*Have they participated in the organisation of local events?*

*Have they obtained and circulated information sheets?*
The European AIC Associations prepared a statement together showing AIC’s action on 3 MDGs. It will be submitted to the public and private organizations with whom we work.

In Europe, 80 million people - 17% of its population - live in poverty conditions. 19 million children are at risk of poverty.

We, the AIC national associations in Europe, more than 100,000 volunteers working in 12 countries, are directly concerned by the fight against poverty, and by the Millennium Development Goals.

Every day, we face difficult situations locally, most of the time painful ones, and we realize that at this rate of public involvement, the Objectives will not be reached. We provide a positive environment to people living in poverty, make them partners of their own recovery to become autonomous, and work with them to find within themselves the self-confidence needed to evolve in life.
AIC presents, hereafter, some concrete examples of projects, best practices and results in Europe

**MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.**
AIC engages, through simple food aid at first, in leading people to social integration activities.

- **AIC ITALY**
  
  **City:** two existing centers in Biella and Cossato (Piedmont). Two more soon to be opened in Avigliano (Potenza) and Candelo (Piedmont).
  
  **Name:** “Empori” (i.e. “Food aid centers”)
  
  **Description:** The objective is to take advantage of legal impositions on supermarkets in order to be able to meet poor families’ needs for fresh and nutritious foods. A network of social organizations, like AIC, collects the food from supermarkets and re-distribute it to the most vulnerable, following the same criteria. AIC plays an important role in the “listening centers” where the families are assessed and accompanied throughout the year.

- **AIC UKRAINE**
  
  **City:** Charkov
  
  **Name:** Help for Street children
  
  **Description:** Together with professionals from the De Paul Trust the AIC volunteers travel the different places of the town where street children usually live. They bring them food and medical care if necessary. By and by they try to draw the children to their center where they are offered some activities.
**MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education.**  
AIC’s actions aim to complete formal education with a personal accompaniment in order to allow each child to get back on his or her feet, and project him or herself into the future with hope.

- **AIC SPAIN**  
*City:* Bilbao, BiscayVizcaya  
*Name:* “Cultura y Ocio Infantil” (i.e. Culture and Leisure for Children”)  
*Description:* The objective is to bring support to 35 children from 2 to 12, living in precarious families (conflict, drugs, low incomes, unemployment, alcohol) risking social exclusion. To allow them having a full human, intellectual and physical development, they promote affective and school support, develop self esteem and offer outside and extra curricular activities.

- **AIC UKRAINE**  
*City:* Stara Krasnoshora (Bukowina)  
*Name:* Smily Kids  
*Description:* The volunteers organized themselves in two groups to support primary school children whose parents are alcoholics. During regular meetings, the volunteers try to strengthen the children confronted with difficult situations in their families. They also follow a kind of alcohol prevention program to avoid future dependency.
MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
AIC provides concrete support to women, so that they can become autonomous, defeating dependency.

- AIC FRANCE
  City: Bordeaux
  Name: Computing workshops
  Description: The objective is to give women living in precarious situation the opportunity to be trained in computing.

- AIC GERMANY
  City: Mannheim (Rheinland – Pfalz)
  Name: Frauenoase Mannheim (i.e. oasis for women)
  Description: As it became more and more difficult to organize meals for the homeless, because women were verbally mobbed by men, the CKD volunteers decided to found a new project: “Frauenoase” (Oasis for women). They rented a “women only” apartment. Every day, 18 to 25 women come there to prepare a meal together. They also get instructions and consulting service from professional to solve their personal problems.

AIC is a world wide network gathering 200 000 volunteer women, organized in local teams and national associations in 52 countries.

Our action materializes through concrete projects fixed in local reality, individual or collective – at present, more than 16 000 are listed – spanning from subsistence, health, education or training to fighting violence against women.

AIC, Rampe des Ardennais, 23, 1348 Louvain la Neuve, Belgium
www.aic-international.org - info@aic-international.org
CHAPTER III

If man and woman are created equal in dignity, why are women so often subjected to discrimination?

Let us think it over in the light of our faith.

1. Decalog on woman’s dignity

This is a decalog on woman’s inviolable dignity by Pope Benedict XVI on 9 February 2008.

1. Man and woman are equal in dignity they are called to be united in specificity, reciprocity, complementarity collaboration and communion.

2. This dual unity of man and woman is founded on the dignity of each person created in the image and likeness of God who created “man and woman” as written in the Bible.

3. This dual unity avoids an indistinct uniformity and dull and impoverished equality as well as a irreconcilable and conflictual difference.

4. Consequently when man and woman demand to be autonomous and totally self-sufficient they run the risk of being closed in a harmful utopian or even aggressive self reliance.

5. Seeking to eliminate, cloud or confuse the sexual differences inscribed in the human nature is against God’s design and against truth.

6. The masculine mentality ignores the novelty of christianity. Nothing goes more against the christian faith and religion than woman’s marginalisation.
7. Consequently we must unconditionally reject and condemn acts of violence consummated in regard to women making them the object of mistreatment and exploitation. To solve this scourge, society has to get to the root of the problem.

8. The Church and the christians should recognize the sacred dignity that belongs to women in law. They must contribute to eradicate the violence we are witnessing against women only because of their gender.

9. God entrusts to women and men a specific vocation and mission for example within the family where the roles of both spouses, of mother and father are always necessary.

10. Society and the Church need women. They require their indispensable and valuable collaboration in the building of a better present and future while appreciating the typical «genius of women».

Thank you women for being women. The world and the Church need you.

Jesús de las Heras Muela
2. Equal in dignity

Analysis of the document « Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World » (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 31 May 2004).

We would like to present a few ideas of this letter since it will become a precious instrument to defend woman (and man) in her (their) dignity and her (their) basic values.

This letter gives the opinion of those who establish a radical distinction between sex (explaining the physical differences between man and woman) and gender (culturally derived and explaining that society establishes a distinction between the male-female roles). This distinction endeavours to go beyond the supremacy of one sex over the other by decreasing the importance of the physical (sex) while increasing the cultural (gender). This is supposed to be the only means of achieving total equivalence between man and woman.

In the Book of Genesis account about creation, we discover that humanity according to God’s project « is articulated in the male-female relationship. It is this sexual humanity (both man and woman) which is explicitly declared the image of God ».

Men and women are called to exist « side by side » but also « one for the other ». They reflect the image of the Triune God whose Persons are revealed as being in a communion of love.

« It should be emphasized that human beings are persons ». This is valid both for man and woman without any difference: « they have equal dignity and courage ». Moreover we have to consider « the importance and the meaning of sexual difference as a reality deeply inscribed in man and woman ».
It seems that Saint Paul says that « in Christ » there is no difference between man and woman. He rather means that « in Christ the rivalry, enmity and violence which disfigured the relationship between man and woman can be overcome and have been overcome ». « From there new perspectives open up for a deeper understanding of the dignity of women and their role in human society and in the Church. »

The « genius of women » (an expression often used by John Paul II) plays an irreplaceable role in the family and consequently in society as a whole. According to this letter the members of the family « learn to love inasmuch as they are unconditionally loved, they learn respect for others inasmuch as they are respected; they learn to know the face of God inasmuch as they receive a first revelation from it from a father and a mother full of attention in their regard ».

At the same time, women are called to be active in the world of work and in the organisation of society with their feminine specificity. We can read the following: « This implies also that women should be present in the world of work and in the organisation of society and that women should have access to positions of responsibility which allow them to inspire the policies of nations and to promote innovative solutions to economic and social problems ».

Consequently if women need or want to carry out other tasks, they « may be able to do so with an appropriate work schedule and not have to choose between relinquishing their family life or enduring continual stress with negative consequences for one’s own equilibrium and the harmony of the family ». 

In other words, the document does not pretend to leave aside women’s fight for their rights which have not been respected in the past. What has to be found is the appropriate means to concentrate women’s defence and promotion effort.
The document also analyses “the topicality of feminine values in the life of the Church”. More specifically “the power of love”, love which inspite of its apparent weakness is capable of defeating and overcoming wickedness, sin and the world.

“In this way women play a role of maximum importance in the Church’s life by contributing in a unique way to showing the true face of the Church, spouse of Christ and mother of the believers”.

The reading of this letter, like all documents of the Church, gives food for thought thanks to the gift of faith. There is no doubt that these are universal values, within the reach of all men and women of good will.

*  

2010 - 2011 Spiritual Sheets:
“Let us be guided by St Louise, Coordinator of the first confraternities of charity”

Following the Jubilee Year, the Executive Board decided to deepen the life of Saint Louise de Marillac.

The Spiritual Sheets will be at your disposal, as one goes along on the Website www.aic-international.org.

Thanks to Maru Magallanes and Marla Barros who elaborated these sheets from a conference of Sr Elisabeth Charpit and to all the translators.
International Association of Charities

A world-wide association of mainly women, with about 200,000 volunteers in 52 countries.

Founded by Saint Vincent de Paul in 1617 to fight all forms of poverty and injustice and to give women a recognised active life helping the community in a spirit of solidarity.

Editor: Natalie Monteza
Tel.: 32 (0) 10 45 63 53
e-mail: info@aic-international.org
www.aic-international.org

Subscription for 1 year:
10 Euros
To the account of your national AIC Association

The following people collaborated on this issue

Editing
Laurence de la Brosse
Loly Camacho
Marina Costa
Christa Foelting
Pepita Herrero Cremades
Aliette de Maredsous

Layout
Tayde de Callataÿ

Translation
Christiane Krauss
Charles King