



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER: 9TH MAY 2019 FEAST OF SAINT LOUISE DE MARILLAC

This year, we would like to celebrate our Day of Prayer on the Feast of Saint Louise de Marillac, by discovering more details about her life. Here are some notes that F. Celestino Fernández, CM, wrote about her in his publication **“Louise de Marillac, a bold and creative woman”**¹:

Louise de Marillac is ***“one of the most complete women in the history of the Church and in the history of humanity ... one of the most intelligent and astute persons who provided assistance and advocated on behalf of the liberation of those persons who were poor. [...]***

One of Louise’s most outstanding and original characteristics was that of providing effective organization to the practice of charity. So much so that many present day experts in the field of social action are surprised by the organizational system that Louise established more than three and a half centuries ago. Without any exaggeration her system could be classified as a true revolution in the field of social action. [...]

Louise realized that following Christ meant moving beyond good intentions and becoming involved in the sufferings of humankind. She put aside a theoretical Christology in favor of a Christ who became incarnated in the marginalized, a Christ who became a servant in order to proclaim and be good news for the poor. [...]

During her journeys, Louise met innumerable nameless, faceless people who seemed to be almost inhuman, a legion of depressed individuals who were counted as nothing in society. She had to confront the oppression of countless people who were condemned here on earth, people who were mortally wounded and left for dead on the side of the road. Louise experienced the hell of the extreme marginalization of seventeenth century France. [...]

Louise was also very clear that the poor demand more than alms or medicine or clothing or some form of permanent assistance. They demand the total surrender of one’s life. [...]

Mademoiselle Le Gras concluded that the poor were not some pious hobby or pastime but rather represented a profound and passionate plea of God that demanded an urgent and bold response.”

¹ Extracts taken from the translation of P. Celestino’s original publication, ***Luisa de Marillac, audacia y creatividad*** by Charles T. Plock, CM, available at:
https://famvin.org/wiki/Louise_de_Marillac:_a_bold_and_creative_woman

In 1629, our founder Saint Vincent gave this wonderful woman the mission of visiting the Charities with these words: **“Go, therefore, Mademoiselle, go in the name of Our Lord. I pray that his divine goodness may accompany you, be your consolation along the way, your shade against the heat of the sun, your shelter in rain and cold, your soft bed in your weariness, your strength in your toil, and, finally, that he may bring you back in perfect health and filled with good works”** (CCD:I:64-65).

Let us pray:

Saint Louise, we ask you to intercede for all of us AIC volunteers so that, like you, we may be organised and make adequate use of our resources for the benefit of the most vulnerable people.

Saint Louise, like you, let us see Christ in the faces of those who suffer and be capable of treating them with love and kindness to alleviate their suffering.

Saint Louise, ask the Lord to make us as AIC volunteers able to fulfil the mission that He has entrusted to us and may we always follow His will.

Pray an Our Father, Hail Mary and Gloria and repeat three times: **Saint Louise de Marillac, pray for us.**

Final prayer:

Lord God the eternal and all-powerful Father, we thank you for having chosen us to continue the work begun by St Vincent and St Louise on behalf of the poorest and most forsaken people, within the International Association of Charities. Give us the grace to be faithful to the vocation to which we have been called. May we not be afraid to pass on your great love to those who suffer and please, encourage others in this vocation so that every day, there may be more AIC volunteers in the world. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

AIC's suggestion:

Attend Holy Mass as a group and then follow this Day of Prayer as a group.