



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER: Feast Day of St. Louise de Marillac - MAY 2020

Humanity is now living in an extremely hard time. We do not know where and when this pandemic will end. How will we face the future?

When we celebrate the feast of St Louise de Marillac, let us reflect on how St. Louise, confronted with incredibly difficult moments, lived:

She overcame many hardships - her illegitimacy, leaving the convent school, not being admitted to the cloister as a nun, being given St. Vincent de Paul as her spiritual advisor - and yet all of these worked for the good of God. With God's grace, what seemed to be insurmountable obstacles were what in fact led her to her lifelong relationship with St. Vincent and her leadership to the Confraternities and founding of the Daughters of Charity.

But God was there, and she wrote:

"On the Feast of Pentecost during holy Mass or while I was praying in the church, my mind was instantly freed of all doubt. I was advised that I should remain with my husband and that a time would come when I would be in a position to make vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and that I would be in a small community where others would do the same. I then understood that I would be in a place where I could help my neighbor but I did not understand how this would be possible since there was to be much coming and going.

I was also assured that I should remain at peace concerning my director; that God would give me one whom He seemed to show me. It was repugnant to me to accept him; nevertheless, I acquiesced. It seemed to me that I did not yet have to make this change.

My third doubt was removed by the inner assurance I felt that it was God who was teaching me these things and that, believing there is a God, I should not doubt the rest." (from "Louise de Marillac's Pentecost Experience, June 4, 1623")

LET US PRAY TOGETHER

In this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, we should trust God's will and plan for us. It may seem that all is hopeless, but with God all is possible.

"St. Louise de Marillac, on the celebration of your feast day, help us to trust in God's plan and be the light of God for those in despair and hopelessness."

Together with LOUISE, we will pray to the Virgin Mary, according to Pope François who invited us to pray together, during this month, the Month of Mary.

All the volunteers will therefore find a moment to pray at home as they cannot do it in church.

"Under your protection we take refuge, Holy Mother of God.

In the present dramatic situation, full of suffering and anguish that afflict the whole world, we have recourse to You, Mother of God and our Mother, and we seek refuge under Your protection.

O Virgin Mary, turn your merciful eyes toward us in this pandemic of the coronavirus, and comfort those who are lost and who mourn their loved ones who have died, sometimes buried in a way that wounds the soul. Support those who

are distressed for the sick people to whom, to prevent contagion, they cannot be close. Stimulate confidence in those who are worried about the uncertain future and the consequences for the economy and work.

Mother of God and our Mother, implore for us from God, Father of mercy, that this hard trial may end and that a horizon of hope and peace may return. As at Cana, intervene with your Divine Son, asking him to comfort the families of the sick and the victims, and to open their hearts to trust.

Protect the doctors, nurses, health personnel and volunteers who, in this time of emergency, are on the front line, risking their lives to save other lives. Accompany their heroic fatigue and give them strength, goodness and health.

Be at the side of those who, night and day, assist the sick, as well as the priests who, with pastoral care and evangelical commitment, seek to help and support everyone.

Blessed Virgin, enlighten the minds of men and women of science, so that they may find just solutions to overcome this virus.

Assist the leaders of nations, so that they may work with wisdom, solicitude and generosity, helping those who lack the necessities of life, planning social and economic solutions with clear-sightedness and a spirit of solidarity.

Mary Most Holy, touch the consciences so that the considerable sums used to increase and perfect armaments should instead be used to promote adequate studies to prevent similar disasters in the future.

Beloved Mother, make the world grow in the sense of belonging to one great family, in the awareness of the bond that unites us all, so that we may come to the aid of the many forms of poverty and situations of misery with a spirit of brotherhood and solidarity. Encourage firmness in faith, perseverance in service, constancy in prayer.

O Mary, Consoler of the afflicted, embrace all your children in tribulation and obtain that God may intervene with His almighty hand to free us from this terrible epidemic, so that life may resume its normal course in serenity.

We entrust ourselves to You, who shines on our path as a sign of salvation and hope, o merciful, o merciful, o sweet Virgin Mary. Amen. May ST LOUISE DE MARILLAC intercede for us."

PRAYER IN CLOSING

Merciful Father,

We give you thanks for having made us know Jesus your incarnate charity.

We also thank you for having given us St. Louise de Marillac, Pioneer with St. Vincent de Paul in the organization of Works of Charity.

May the Holy Spirit set our hearts on fire so that we may follow in her footsteps and be "actors" of charity like her, wherever we are to combat the many forms of misery facing the world: spiritual misery, lack of respect for life, genocide, mass massacres, crimes against humanity, endless wars, irresponsible exploitation of natural resources, lust for power, injustice, corruption, fear of the truth, spirit of hatred and revenge...

St. Louise, intercede for us so that we may know how to heal wounded hearts: the victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, divided families, prostitutes and abandoned children, widows and orphans; prisoners, refugees and homeless; the sick...

Saint Louise de Marillac, pray for us,

Saint Vincent de Paul, pray for us.