



*"Hope does not disappoint"
(Rom 5:5)*



*We build together
to bring hope to life*

Happy Feast of Saint Louise!

Today, 9th May 2025, the Church invites us to celebrate the feast of Saint Louise de Marillac. This year, we do so in the context of the Jubilee Year of Hope, and ever mindful of the gift that Pope Francis' life was for the Church. Following Christ is a call to holiness for all of us, a call to which Saint Louise and Pope Francis responded in a very similar way: both, as good pilgrims of hope, chose to follow a path of self-giving, of giving themselves without measure, especially to the poorest.

Louise, accompanied by Vincent de Paul, embodied hope and charity in a life marked by trust in God, love and self-giving to people living in poverty. From the moment of her personal encounter with Christ, she chose to follow him with conviction and passion, experiencing both the love of God and the love for one's neighbour, enlightened by the Spirit, in a continuous process of conversion. During her pilgrimage, she had to step outside herself and her world and set out on a journey, open and guided by the voice of the Spirit, on the basis of deep discernment in prayer. She kept a joyful, available and open heart, the fruit of a hope that does not disappoint, in order to keep a loving gaze on the Lord whom she was able to see in people living in all kinds of poverty: the hungry, strangers, the sick, prisoners, all those marked by suffering, the forgotten and those whose life or dignity was not respected. She lived the Gospel with dedication, bringing God's love to people living in poverty, with hope, tenderness and compassion, and discovering in her mission God's plan for her life, a plan of service to people living in poverty, which she accepted and experienced with joy.

Pope Francis, with a spirituality similar to that of Saint Louise, and through his tireless example, urged the Church to be more concerned with the issues of the people, continually inviting us to be a Church that is open, outgoing, compassionate and merciful towards the poor, the marginalised and the excluded, in order to care for them and heal their wounds.

Both Saint Louise and Pope Francis sought to encourage other members of the Church to live out the mission to which we are all called: to bring the Gospel to others, promoting communion and participation. Saint Louise did so through her testimony of a life devoted to God and to others, as well as through working together with Saint Vincent and the Congregation of the Mission, the Confraternities of Charity (AIC) and the Daughters of Charity. Francis did so through the synodal process. Both, as pilgrims of hope, showed us how the Holy Spirit impels the Church to experience new forms of communion, participation and mission. We give thanks to God for the life and witness of Saint Louise and Pope Francis.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, true light that enlightens every person, kindle in my heart the flame of your love. Make me a beacon that radiates hope, charity and faith in the midst of the darkness of this world. Like Saint Louise, may I not keep the gift I have received for myself, but share it generously. May my life be a humble and steadfast light, so that others, seeing my works, may glorify your name. Saint Louise de Marillac, missionary of Christ's love, help us to be light in the world. Amen.

Sources: Vinícius Augusto Teixeira, CM, *Saint Vincent and Saint Louise, Pilgrims of Hope*, 2024; International Vincentian Family Office, *Pope Francis and Saint Louise de Marillac, Models for a Synodal Church*, 2025; *Novena to Saint Louise de Marillac, Day 9*: <https://www.corazondepaul.org/lectio/dia-9-novena-a-santa-luisa-de-marillac>.