



## FEAST OF ST. LOUISE DE MARILLAC MARCH 15 (1660)

Leader: O God, come to my assistance.  
All: O Lord, make haste to help me.  
Leader: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.  
All: As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.  
Leader: God has done great things for her, and holy is God's name.

**Reading I:** Psalm 62:2-9

God alone is my rock and salvation,  
my fortress; I shall never be shaken.

How long will you assail a person,  
will you batter your victim, all of you,  
As you would a leaning wall, a tottering fence?

Their only plan is to bring down a portion of prominence.  
They take pleasure in falsehood;  
they bless with their mouths,  
but inwardly they curse.

For God alone my soul waits in silence,  
for my hope is from him.

He alone is my rock and salvation,  
my fortress; I shall not be shaken.

On God rests my deliverance and my honor;  
my mighty rock, my refuge is in God.

Trust in him at all times, O people;  
poor out your heart before him;  
God is a refuge for us.

Those of low estate are but a breath,  
those of high estate are a delusion;  
in the balances they go up;  
they are together lighter than a breath.

Leader: O God, creator of unfailing light, give that same light to all those who  
Call to you for help. May our voices praise you; may our lives witness  
to your love; may the work of our hands give you glory.

All: God has done great things for her, and holy is God's name.

**Reading II:** Matthew 25:34-40

*Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.'*

*Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?'*

*And the king will answer them, 'Truly, I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'*

**Reading III:** Brief biography of St. Louise de Marillac

Louise de Marillac was born probably at Ferrieres-en-Brie near Meux, France, on August 12, 1591. She was educated by the Dominican nuns at Poissy. She desired to become a nun but on the advice of her confessor, she married Antony LeGras, an official in the Queen's service, in 1613. After Antony's death in 1625, she met St. Vincent de Paul, who became her spiritual adviser. She devoted the rest of her life to working with him. She helped direct his Ladies of Charity in their work of caring for the sick, the poor, and the neglected. In 1633 she set up a training center, of which she was Directress in her own home, for candidates seeking to help in her work. This was the beginning of the Sisters (or Daughters, as Vincent preferred) of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul (though it was not formally approved until 1655). She took her vows in 1634 and attracted great numbers of candidates. She wrote a rule for the community, and in 1642, Vincent allowed four of the members to take vows. Formal approval

placed the community under Vincent and his Congregation of the Missions, with Louise as Superior. She traveled all over France establishing her Sisters in hospitals, orphanages, and other institutions. By the time of her death in Paris on March 15, the Congregation had more than forty houses in France. Since then they have spread all over the world. She was canonized by Pope Pius XI in 1934, and was declared Patroness of Social Workers by Pope John XXIII in 1960. Her feast day is March 15 (Catholic Online. “St. Louise de Marillac.” [www.catholic.org](http://www.catholic.org) Catholic Online. Web. 10 March 2016).

**Optional time for private or shared reflection:**

St. Louise de Marillac wrote: “Above all, be very gentle and courteous toward your poor. You know that they are our master and that we must love them tenderly and respect them deeply” (*Praying with Louise de Marillac*, Gibson and Kneaves, 72).

**Closing prayer:**

Leader: O God, you reveal that those who work for charity and justice will be called your sons and daughters. Like St. Louise de Marillac, help us to work without ceasing for that love and justice which brings true and lasting peace. 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.

All: Amen.

**For further reading:**

Audrey Gibson and Kieran Kneaves. *Praying with Louise de Marillac: Companions for the Journey Series*. Winona MN: Saint Mary’s Press, 1995.

Thomas McKenna. *Praying with Vincent de Paul: Companions for the Journey Series*. Winona MN: Saint Mary’s Press, 1994.



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