

Marie Louise of Jesus

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Marie Louise Trichet was an 18th century woman, a woman of faith, a woman of action and a woman of prayer. She has a message to offer today's Christians, particularly those who dedicate themselves to the service of the elderly, the sick and the poor.

Marie Louise met Louis Marie de Montfort, a young French priest, when she was a young girl of 17. A woman of prayer, attentive to the voice of God, she heard God speaking to her when Montfort, in the confessional, told her that God sent her to him. Montfort invited her to leave her middle class family and come to live and work at the General Hospital in Poitier, which was a home for the poor, the vagrants and those whom King Louis XIV, the Sun King, wanted off the streets of France. Here for ten years, she served the vulnerable and the needy in the most menial of tasks. While she was living in the Hospital, Father de Montfort gave her a religious habit. It was the dress of a poor woman and had a rosary of large beads and a crucifix on the breast. Soon after, Montfort left the Hospital, while Marie Louise carried on courageously.



She heard the voice of God once again, when Montfort called her and the second Daughter of Wisdom, Catherine Brunet to come to the city of LaRoche, where they would open a school for the poor girls of the city. Marie Louise, a woman of action, was not afraid to leave the known and to take on new ministries to help those in need, especially poor young girls who were not being educated at that time.

A year later, Father de Montfort died unexpectedly. Marie Louise was left with three other Daughters of Wisdom and a commitment to the poor. She now had the task of governing a new Apostolic Institute at a time when women religious had scarcely begun to venture outside the cloister. She travelled to St. Laurent, the burial place of Father de Montfort and here she would guide her new Congregation with sound judgment, love and kindness. Many young women seeing the dedication of the sisters joined the new congregation. New foundations were opened, always for the poor and most neglected. She committed herself personally to each of these foundations. Her tenderness and compassion was so evident that she was called "Good Mother Jesus".

Marie Louise's love and concern for her Daughters of Wisdom was shown when about 10 years before her death at age 75, she embarked on a journey on horseback to visit all her sisters in their communities.

Although Marie Louise lived in the 18th century her legacy is still evident today not only in France but in many countries throughout the world. Marie Louise is a sign of the marvels God can do working through ordinary people like you and me.