

## DATES TO REMEMBER

1673 Birth of Louis Grignion in Montfort-sur-Meu

1684: Birth of Marie-Louise Trichet in Poitiers

1685: Montfort at the Jesuits' College

1693: Montfort in the Seminary of Saint Sulpice

1700: Ordination - Father de Montfort's first Mass

1701: Montfort in Poitiers. Meeting of Father de Montfort and Marie-Louise Trichet

1702: Marie Louise is admitted as a poor person to the General Hospital of Poitiers.

1703: Marie-Louise takes the habit at the General Hospital of Poitiers where she remains for 10 years.

Father de Montfort lives in Pot de Fer Street, he writes the Love of Eternal Wisdom - return to Poitiers

1705: Mission in Montbernage

1709 Mission at Ponchâteau - the Calvary

1713: Missions in the Diocese of La Rochelle. Brief return of Father de Montfort to Poitiers

First announcement of Marie-Louise's departure for La Rochelle.

1715: Marie-Louise leaves Poitiers for La Rochelle. Father de Montfort, in Mervent, writes the Treatise on True Devotion and the Rule of the Daughters of Wisdom.

1716: Mission at Saint Laurent sur Sèvre. Death of Father de Montfort on April 28th.

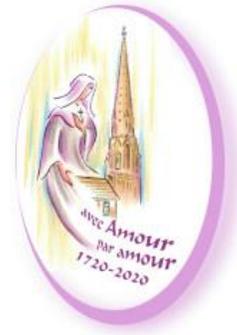
1720: Arrival of Marie-Louise and the Daughters of Wisdom at Saint Laurent sur Sèvre.

1722: First religious professions in Saint-Laurent

1724 -1758. Marie-Louise is at the origin of 38 new Daughters of Wisdom foundations.

1757: Marie-Louise is questioned by some sisters who wish to take her place.

1759: Marie-Louise, on the 28th April, blesses her Sisters, recommends the poor to a charitable lady and dies. Her last words: "My Lord and my God".



300th anniversary of the arrival of the

Blessed Marie Louise of Jesus

to Saint Laurent

How can we evoke the personality of Marie-Louise Trichet without putting in the foreground, from the beginning, the remarkable figure of the spiritual genius who was Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, this man in love with God, planted where the wind of the Spirit blows, a tireless traveller who travels the earth and proclaims the Gospel to the men of his time, a mystic in love whom a burning desire for Wisdom constantly relaunches in a desperate search... However, one would run the risk of placing Marie-Louise at the only level of this spiritual brotherhood, **by considering** her simply **as** the providential complement of Louis Marie, as the humble and obedient executor of his prophetic inspiration, **as** the realization of his apostolic intuitions?

**This woman** of faith, generous, courageous and energetic, blessed with an inner freedom, **original** in the simplicity of her spiritual approach, deserves to be known **for herself**, to be seen **as a unique being** in her uniqueness, positively welcoming the opportunity of her own destiny. If Marie-Louise sets an essential, powerful and warm note in the great Montfortian concert that exalts the charism of a saint, she also discreetly sings to us her song of mystical love, revealing to us **her personal spiritual theme**, which remains identical to herself beyond all events and all possibilities of life, which is God's call and which demands her response.

Born in 1684 into a large family of the Poitiers bourgeoisie in the 17th century, marked by the terrible economic situation of the time, Marie-Louise was marked by a whole culture that helped her to see clearly on her journey. Little by little, she placed herself on the margins of her social environment to be more **at the heart of human realities**.

The project that imposes itself on her spirit faithfully accompanies her, speaks to her at every bend in the road, makes her understand **that humanity is the only treasure in God's heart.**

She soon frees herself from the limitations and burdens of the surrounding civilization, and even disapproves of the faith of her childhood and youth, becoming **herself that convinced faith** that gives witness to a **Presence, that faith which** is evangelical when the contemplated Word takes on body and life, releasing an energy and ardor that warms the Poor. One day they will know how to recognize in Marie Louise **"the Good Mother Jesus"**.



A whole human experience found in the hospital of Poitiers, so much suffering perceived, allowed Marie-Louise to intuit the designs of her destiny. In her prayer, she tries to decipher the meaning of what she is living, to give herself a rhythm for her own growth. She would like to question her future... she believes she is discovering the truth of her existence elsewhere... farther away... a different one...

It is then that he is presented with a suggestive opportunity in a dialogue in the confessional with Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort. **The communion of soul** with this priest of the hospital offers the young woman, in search of a future, a seductive and moving promise that coincides with her inclinations and aspirations. And soon everything is in order, illuminating her present with an unpredictable clarity, directing her search towards an existence out of the ordinary. If Marie-Louise had not dared, in a total and joyful outburst of her whole being, to live an absolute and very costly obedience to the invitation of this singular man, of this **"madman"** de Montfort, of this saint, we can think **that she would have failed herself and her vocation.**

From the moment the choice of religious life, marked as a symbol by the **Cross of Poitiers**, becomes evident, Marie-Louise allows herself to be enveloped in the mystery of Christ, **Eternal Wisdom Incarnate and Crucified.** She is attracted by a constant dispossession, by a continuous movement towards the wounded man... She enters into the great movement of God's tenderness. Her hometown might have exasperated Marie-Louise's sensitivity. Many times she could have let herself be crushed in this suffocating context. But nothing can crush the one who wants to remain upright, animated by an intense desire, open to a mysterious power that gives her the strength to go beyond herself... The rough journey of a life shaken by contrary winds, shaken by unbridled storms. A sometimes deserted itinerary that knows Montfort's thirst, his implacable and desperate silence, his endless absence that calls everything into question... A broken path of tears, of detachment, of extreme poverty, whose most eloquent sign is undoubtedly **the departure for La Rochelle.** At the end of each crisis, we return to this secret and intimate land for each human being, to this haven of peace where the spirit is kept in the Presence... Marie-Louise, freeing herself of all heavy burdens, knew how to discern God's will and adhere to it. Chosen by Louis Marie to be the first of a congregation of women consecrated to Christ Wisdom and called to live the folly of the Gospel, Marie Louise was concerned to obey and respond to the fraternal trust of the founder, but she was not afraid to consider another solution when her desire for religious life cried out for her impatience, to take personal action to carry out her project. It is because she knew how to recognize the signs of God on her path that she was able to endure so much time in a precarious life and yet so radiant in its instability. Her generous support makes her the artisan of her own destiny.





At Montfort's death, a foundational logic was set in motion, but the necessary task of continuity and expansion could have set back Marie-Louise, who was then only thirty-two years old and surrounded by few sisters. But the spiritual experience, inaugurated and proposed by Louis Marie, had reached the depths of her heart; the prophetic words

she had made resound in the depths of her spirit; the cry of apostolic daring, which she had pronounced with force, had germinated in the interior of her conscience. In the face of the event, fidelity to the fraternity and to the charism of Montfort was the only way that could correspond to her restlessness and her intimate inspiration. Marie-Louise gave her consent to the encouragement that invited her, committing herself to assume the responsibility of a heavy legacy alone.

From now on, Marie-Louise will use all her trust in Providence, all her spiritual dynamism and all her human energy to work for the construction of the Wisdom. In obedience, she will always place her action under the gaze of the Superior of the Company of Mary and in the light of the Rule of the Daughters of Wisdom written by Father de Montfort. With discernment and delicacy, he will know how to recognize and use the necessary human support, like that of the Marquis de Magnanne. A house of formation will soon be established at Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre, the cradle of the Congregation.

At the moment of an interior word, Marie-Louise has incessantly placed her existence in the exact measure willed by God. Decentralized, free, generous, eager to offer her spiritual vigor in a concrete experience, she has taken advantage of the proposal of a saint to guide her future: ***"I have reflected on what you have told me and I want to live with the poor"***. In this way she fulfilled her humanity marvelously, participating in the realization of God's plan of love, which had gratified Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort with a charism of predilection and tenderness for the wounded man.

