

## MARIE THERESE DE LAMOUROUS – A Model for the Work of Justice

by Barb Belle  
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The Women & Justice Issue Team is continuing to study “Marie Therese’s Life and Ministry as a Guide for Justice.” We have been learning about the details of her life and work while we discern together how she can inspire us in setting our team direction.

Many parallels can be drawn between the spirit of Marie Therese and other SHEros such as Dorothy Day, St. Clare, Mother Teresa, and other present-day faith leaders. These women share a strong focus on relationships and community building, mentorship, leadership, and pastoral abilities. This is why we use social media to tell the HER-stories, that may have been overlooked in our HIS-story books.



Marie Therese was an acting “pastor-shepherd” while most priests were exiled during the French Revolution. She gathered people for Sunday worship, taught catechism classes, prepared individuals for sacraments, and ministered to all of their spiritual needs. Sounds like the same work that many women have done in the past and continue to do on a daily basis to keep the faith alive. This is why our team advocates for women as deacons in the church.

Marie Therese worked with women who took up prostitution after their husbands were killed during the French Revolution. This is why our team works to bring awareness about the conditions of modern-day human trafficking.

Marie Therese built connections and demonstrated leadership qualities that also inspire our team to affirm women who balance home, personal faith development, and professional lives. This is why we continue to fight for equal pay and working conditions that are free from harassment.

We have created a prayer experience that connects what we learn from Marie Therese about reading the signs of the times, with action steps we can take in our world to continue the work of justice. If you or your community are interested in more information, please contact Barb Belle [msbarbbelle@yahoo.com](mailto:msbarbbelle@yahoo.com).

We connect the qualities that characterized Marie Therese’s life (especially perseverance, dedication, and responsiveness to the signs of the times) to our own efforts in continuing the work for justice. We want to hold up the efforts of Marie Therese as a model that can guide the Marianist Family in forming communities and working for justice today and in the future.

In these difficult times, when we cannot physically go to church, may we **BE** the church. Is it possible that we are being called to extend our efforts to engage in a dialogue that begins a new initiative? Our team is open to other ideas you might have about spending time in prayer and discussion to establish a greater knowledge and awareness of the life and work of Marie Therese as well as ways to plant seeds for social justice.

Please contact us ([msbarbbelle@yahoo.com](mailto:msbarbbelle@yahoo.com)) if you would like some assistance in discerning action steps that you or your community can take to model Marie Therese and work for the rights of women in the Marianist Family, the Catholic Church, and our society as a whole. Let’s not let Marie Therese be the forgotten founder.