



# The Story of the Miraculous Medal

Feast Day of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal... 27 November 2021

Feast Day of St Catherine Labouré...28 November 2021



Have you ever seen a person wear a medal around their neck with a blue string? It is most likely the miraculous medal...

- There is a great story told about how this medal came to be...
- It all happened in Paris in France in 1830
- Very simply, it tells how the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to St Catherine Labouré (1806-1876). She gave her a task, to have a medal made
- The Blessed Virgin Mary showed St Catherine the medal she wished her to make....
- The picture opposite shows the two sides of the medal.



# When St Catherine Labouré met the Blessed Virgin Mary.....

- The encounter between the Blessed Virgin Mary and St Catherine Labouré happened three times in the Mother house Chapel of the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul at rue du Bac, between July 1830 and December 1830
- During that time, the Blessed Virgin Mary showed Catherine an image of a medal. She gave St Catherine Labouré a task- to have one such medal struck and to make sure it was distributed throughout the whole world.
- This medal was known as the Medal of the Immaculate Conception. It later got another name.





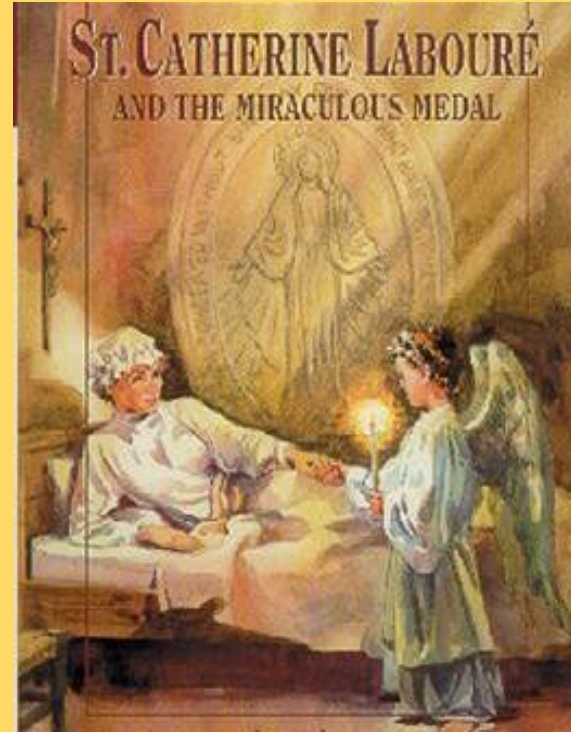
# Open this link to find out more about St Catherine Labouré

- <https://www.filles-de-la-charite.org>
- You will find the life of St Catherine Labouré on this link
- You can also take a virtual tour around the Chapel at rue du Bac where the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to St Catherine Labouré



# 18 July 1830

- Catherine Labouré was starting out her life as a Daughter of Charity, when she prayed to Jesus so she might see the Blessed Virgin Mary
- One night, Catherine woke up at 11.30 p.m. because she heard someone calling her name; she saw a mysterious child in front of her bed, inviting her to get up. The child said, '*The Virgin Mary is waiting for you.*'



# Who was the Child?

- Catherine identified the child as her own guardian angel. He led her into the Chapel where Mary was waiting for her sitting on the right side of the altar. Catherine said:
- *“Then, I flung myself close to her, falling on my knees on the altar steps, my hands resting in her knees. That was the sweetest moment of my life. It would be impossible for me to say what I felt.”*



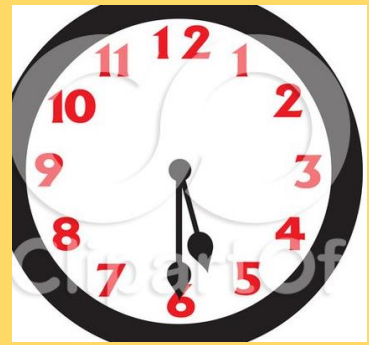


# St Catherine described what Mary looked like...

- *“She was average height, and so beautiful that I cannot describe her. She was standing, her dress was sunrise-white silk and “virgin style”, that is, high-necked and with smooth sleeves. A white veil went down from her head to her feet. Her hair was divided and she wore some kind of bonnet with a 3 centimetres wide crochet on it, gently laid on her hair. Her face was quite visible; her feet were upon a globe, or better, a half-globe, or at least I saw half of it.”*
- The Saint said she knelt down in front of Mary and rested her hands on Mary’s knees as a reverence.



# Second Apparition, 27 November 1830



- During the second apparition on November 27th 1830 around 5.30 p.m., the Virgin Mary entrusted Catherine with the template of the Miraculous Medal.
- The Virgin said that the medal would be a sign of love, a promise of protection and a source of grace for those who would trust in it.
- The Virgin herself showed Catherine what the medal should look like.
- Catherine said that Mary's feet were upon a half-globe during the apparition, which symbolises the Earth, and were crushing a green and yellow snake's head.
- The Virgin's hands were adorned with rings and precious stones, which projected rays of light of different intensity and colour downwards. Mary explained Catherine that those rays ***"symbolise the graces I shed upon those who ask for them"***.





# The Front Image of the Medal

- Catherine saw some kind of oval frame appearing around Mary, and a writing from her right hand to her left hand, creating a semicircle of words written in gold: ***“O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to Thee”***.
- That became the front image of the Miraculous Medal: Mary crushing the snake's head, as forewarned by the Bible (“And I will put enmity between you and the woman [...] he will crush your head and you will strike his heel”, Gen 3,15).
- Rays of light shot out from her hands, symbols of the graces granted by God, and the invocation ***“O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to Thee”*** framing the whole picture.



# The Reverse of the Medal

- The apparition continued, and the mystic picture seemed rotating in front of Catherine's eyes, showing her what the reverse side of the Medal should depict:
- ***“There was the letter M (first letter of the name Mary) topped by a cross with no crucifix and with the letter I (first letter of the name Iesus, Jesus) as base.***
- ***Below there were two hearts, one was surrounded by thorns (Jesus' heart), the other pierced by a sword (Mary's heart).***
- ***Twelve stars surrounded the whole picture. Then everything dissolved, as something that is switched off, and I was left there, full of something I don't know, good feelings, joy, comfort.”***





## Here is the explanation of the reverse side of the Miraculous Medal:

- The **M for Mary** supports the cross without crucifix. The monogram **I for Jesus** (Iesus) intersects the M and the **Cross**, and symbolises the salvation brought by Jesus and Mary, the indissoluble relationship that ties Jesus and his Most Holy Mother, becoming a witness of the Salvation of humankind carried out by his Son Jesus and making her a participant in Christ's sacrifice.
- The **heart crowned with thorns** is the Sacred Heart of Jesus, while the heart pierced by a sword is the Immaculate Heart of Mary.
- The **twelve stars** symbolize the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles.
- The Virgin herself is also called Star of the sea in the prayer Ave Maris Stella.





# The Meaning of the Miraculous Medal

- The Virgin spoke again to Catherine, telling her to have a medal forged following that model: ***“All the people who will wear it will receive great graces especially if they wear it on their neck; graces will be generous for those who will wear it with trust.”***
- Catherine encountered much resistance, but in the end, the Medal was forged in 1832, in about 1500 pieces, but its power showed immediately through so many healings and conversions that it was necessary to forge a million pieces. That’s why it became known as the miraculous medal.
- Today we can find billions of reproductions of the Miraculous Medal, in gold, silver and less noble metals. We can find it in all religious articles shops, and of course in online stores.
- The Miraculous Medal: **miraculous, shiny and painful**



# The Medal is Miraculous

- The Medal the Virgin Mary showed to Saint Catherine, so that she could have it forged and distributed, is called a miraculous medal, referring to the many healings and conversions it caused.
- In February 1832, Paris was devastated by a terrible cholera epidemic, which caused more than 2,000 deaths.
- The Daughters of Charity distributed the first 2,000 medals on that occasion, and healings began to show right away, along with conversions. That is why Parisians began to call it '*miraculous*'.



# The Medal Shines..

- The **rays of light** shine out from Mary's hands. The rays are the symbol of the graces Mary grants to all of her children and of her loving mission as intermediary between man and God.
- The **rays of grace** falling on Earth **spread** out love and salvation, and the light they emanate symbolise Mary's triumph, the first among those who were and will be saved, immaculate since her conception, bringer of a special grace thanks to the Son she carried in her womb. In this role of Mother and Saviour, Mary kills the snake, cause of all humankind's evil.





# The Medal shows pain

- On the reverse side of the medal there are two monograms, of Mary and Jesus, their hearts are pierced; they tell a never-ending story of pain and **love** and **sacrifice**.
- In particular, **Jesus' heart crowned with thorns** symbolises His sacrifice of love for men, while his **Mother's heart, pierced by a sword**, symbolises Christ's love, who lives and burns within her, and through her it transfers on all humankind.



# Why do people wear a miraculous medal that is blessed?

- It shows a person's faith in God
- It shows a person's love and honour for Jesus and Mary
- It shows dedication to the Church
- It shows membership and belonging to the Church
- It shows support for those who live on the margins of society





