

Please join us as we pray the Miraculous Medal Novena every Saturday immediately following the 8:00 AM Mass.



The Medal of the Immaculate Conception — popularly known as the Miraculous Medal — was designed by the Blessed Virgin herself! No wonder, then that it wins such extraordinary graces for those who wear it and pray for Mary's intercession and help.

The First Apparition

The story begins on the night of July 18-19, 1830. A child (perhaps her guardian angel) awakened Sister (now Saint) Catherine Labouré, a novice in the community of the Daughters of Charity in Paris, and summoned her to the chapel. There she met with the Virgin Mary and spoke with her for several hours. During the conversation Mary said to her, “My child, I am going to give you a mission.”

The Second Apparition

Mary gave her this mission in a vision during evening meditation on November 27, 1830. She saw Mary standing on what seemed to be half a globe and holding a golden globe in her hands as if offering it to heaven. On the globe was the word “France,” and our Lady explained that the globe represented the whole world, but especially France. The times were difficult in France then, especially for the poor who were unemployed and often refugees from the many wars of the time. France was first to experience many of those troubles which ultimately reached many other parts of the world and are even present today. Streaming from rings on Mary's fingers as she held the globe were many rays of light. Mary explained that the rays symbolize the graces she obtains for those who ask for them. However, some of the gems on the rings were dark, and Mary explained that the rays and graces were available but did not come because no one had asked for them.



The Third Apparition and the Miraculous Medal

The vision then changed to show our Lady standing on a globe with her arms now outstretched and with the dazzling rays of light still streaming from her fingers. Framing the figure was an inscription: *O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.*



The Meaning of the Front Side of the Miraculous Medal

Mary is standing upon a globe, crushing the head of a serpent beneath her foot. She stands upon the globe, as the Queen of Heaven and Earth. Her feet crush the serpent to proclaim Satan and all his followers are helpless before her (Gn 3:15). The year of 1830 on the Miraculous Medal is the year the Blessed Mother gave the design of the Miraculous Medal to Saint Catherine Labouré. The reference to Mary conceived without sin supports the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary—not to be confused with the virgin birth of Jesus, and referring to Mary's sinlessness, "full of grace" and "blessed among women" (Luke 1:28)—that was proclaimed 24 years later in 1854.

The vision turned and showed the design of the reverse side of the medal. Twelve stars encircled a large "M" from which arose a cross. Below are two hearts with flames arising from them. One heart is encircled in thorns and the other is pierced by a sword.



The Meaning of the Back Side of the Miraculous Medal

The twelve stars can refer to the Apostles, who represent the entire Church as it surrounds Mary. They also recall the vision of Saint John, writer of the Book of Revelation (12:1), in which "a great sign appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of 12 stars." The cross can symbolize Christ and our redemption, with the bar under the cross a sign of the earth. The "M" stands for Mary, and the interleaving of her initial and the cross shows Mary's close involvement with Jesus and our world. In this we see Mary's part in our salvation and her role as mother of the Church. The two hearts represent the love of Jesus and Mary for us. (See also Lk 2:35).

Then Mary spoke to Catherine: "Have a medal struck upon this model. Those who wear it will receive great graces, especially if they wear it around the neck." Catherine explained the entire series of apparitions to her confessor, and she worked through him to carry out Mary's instructions. She did not reveal that she received the Medal until soon before her death 47 years later.

With approval of the Church, the first Medals were made in 1832 and were distributed in Paris. Almost immediately the blessings that Mary had promised began to shower down on those who wore her Medal. The devotion spread like wildfire. Marvels of grace and health, peace and prosperity, following in its wake. Before long people were calling it the "Miraculous" Medal. And in 1836, a Canonical inquiry undertaken at Paris declared the apparitions to be genuine.

There is no superstition, nothing of magic, connected with the Miraculous Medal. The Miraculous Medal is not a "good-luck charm". Rather, it is a great testimony to faith and the power of trusting prayer. Its greatest miracles are those of patience, forgiveness, repentance, and faith. God uses a Medal, not as a sacrament, but as an agent, an instrument, in bringing to pass certain marvelous results. "The weak things of this earth hath God chosen to confound the strong."

