

# Wear the Miraculous Medal!

What better gift could a person give to someone than saying: here, wear this, and whenever you need help, call on me!

This is what the Blessed Virgin Mary did for all of us—yes, you and me—when she miraculously appeared to a young nun in Paris in 1830.

In the convent chapel, while the entire community was at prayer, Mary appeared to the 24 year-old nun—still in her novitiate—and asked that what we now call the miraculous medal be cast and widely distributed.

Besides the scapular, the miraculous medal is the greatest sacramental that the Blessed Virgin Mary—in 2,000 years—has come on earth to ask that we wear.

When Mary appeared in the Daughters of Charity chapel at 140 rue du Bac in Paris, she was “flesh and bone” said St. Catherine Laboure.

When Catherine was only 9 years old—shortly after her mother died—she went before a statue of Mary in her home, threw her arms around it, and said “Now dear Blessed Mother, you will be my mother.”

Mary did truly take her as her own daughter.

At the age of 18 or 19, Catherine had a dream that an elderly priest was calling her to care for the sick. Catherine felt called to be a nun, but her father initially opposed the idea and sent her to Paris to work and live. There, she visited the motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity on rue du Bac. Inside, she saw a portrait of the very same elderly priest she had dreamt about. She inquired who he was. A nun told her that it was a portrait of their founder—St. Vincent de Paul.

He had obviously called her, by God's grace, personally to his order and to taking care of elderly men in the hospice run by the sisters. Not one of the men in Catherine's care died without receiving the last sacraments.

But the great visions Catherine received were during her novitiate period in 1830.

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It was to see Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament*

“I was favored with a great grace. It was to see Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament,” said Catherine.

She reported all of her visions to no one except her confessor, who frankly didn't really believe she was seeing Christ.

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He advised her to keep silent and continue working, humbly—something St. Catherine did all of her life.

The early visions seemed to prepare her for seeing the special visions God had obviously chosen St. Catherine for—a special gift from Mary.

On the night of July 18, 1830, she had her first vision of Mary. She was awakened by a young child—really an angel—who called her to the convent chapel, telling her that the Mother of God was awaiting her.

She followed the child to the chapel. There was the most resplendent sight. The chapel was brightly lit and a woman entered, the most beautiful woman, with light shining about her!

The young child said, “Here is the Blessed Virgin.” The Mother of our Lord sat on a chair and St. Catherine, who had asked her to be her mother at age 9, now flung herself at Mary’s feet on the steps of the altar and “put my hands on her knees.” This tender scene is painted on the ceiling of the convent chapel at rue du Bac for all to see.

Mary gave St. Catherine several prophecies during this vision. She also told the young nun that, “The good God, my child, wishes to entrust you with a mission. It will be the cause of much suffering to you, but you will overcome this, knowing that what you do is for the glory of God.”

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Mary also told her words that are now inscribed on the chapel wall: “Come to the foot of this altar; there, graces will be showered upon all.”

The Blessed Virgin Mary, after conveying her messages to Catherine, disappeared like a “light that is extinguished.”

The Mother of God waited a few months before appearing to the young saint again, entrusting her this time with the special mission.

On November 27, 1830, St. Catherine was praying with the entire community in the chapel. Suddenly, the Virgin Mary appeared. Streaks of light came from her fingertips, representing “the many graces Our Lady grants to those who pray to her.”

Mary had appeared to St. Catherine “in all her perfect beauty.”

At first, Mary held a globe—representing the entire world, especially France, and each person in particular.

Then Our Lady, seen by no one else in the community, appeared on the globe and—printed in gold letters—words formed an arch over her head. The words in French said, “O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.”

Then the Blessed Virgin Mary revealed the other side of the medal. St. Catherine saw a large M, surmounted by a bar with a cross on top. Beneath are the two hearts of Jesus and Mary—the heart of Jesus surrounded with thorns and the heart of Mary pierced with the sword of sorrows. A total of 12 stars formed an arch over this scene.

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*Have a medal struck after this model. All who wear it will receive great graces; they should wear it around the neck.*

A voice, interiorly, told St. Catherine, "Have a medal struck after this model. All who wear it will receive great graces; they should wear it around the neck."

Again, St. Catherine told her confessor what she saw and heard.

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Mary's request to the archbishop of Paris. When Catherine kept insisting that the Virgin Mary was not satisfied (she had been told this interiorly), he decided to approach the archbishop and relate everything.

The confessor, once again, doubted her, and he dragged his feet in passing on

After due consideration, the archbishop decided in 1832 that the medals should be cast. Two million medals were distributed.

Soon, miracles were being reported, numbering in the hundreds and the thousands—all kinds of miracles.

One of the most spectacular was a Jew who put on the medal after receiving it from a good friend. He went to a Catholic church and, while praying, received a vision of Mary. He became not only a convert, but a priest and went to Israel and spent years converting his fellow Jews.

After the apparitions and on receiving the habit of the order, Catherine was transferred from the Daughters of Charity motherhouse to the hospice they ran for old men.

She worked quietly and humbly at the hospice until her death at age 70. No one knew throughout the years which nun had received the special visions that led to the casting of the miraculous medal. But it was known that the person was one of the Daughters of Charity.

Catherine felt the message was of great importance, for this meant she was doing the will of God and His mother. The messenger—Catherine and other saints God chooses—are only the instruments of God. She didn't want to draw any attention to herself. She kept silent, so silent, that when St. Pius XII declared her a saint, he called her the "Saint of Silence."

She accomplished her task of making Mary's requests known and complied with—bringing the fruit of many miracles to thousands who wore the medal.

When St. Catherine was nearing death, she told the mother superior that she was the sister who had received the visions that led to the miraculous medal.

The mother superior kept this knowledge to herself, until after Catherine's death on Dec. 31, 1876. St. Catherine had been a Daughter of Charity for a few years short of half a century. Immediately after St. Catherine's death, the entire community—and then all of Paris—learned that Catherine was the one who had seen Mary.

The street leading to the convent was lined with hundreds of Parisians who came to pay their final respects to this nun—this great nun who was so willingly used by God and Mary to give all of us such a special gift, the Miraculous Medal.

Mary had promised, “Graces will abound for persons who wear it with confidence.”

It is the same today—181 years later! What is needed is a great resurgence in people wearing this great gift from the Blessed Virgin Mary herself. She was the model and the originator of the medal.

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*Graces will abound for persons who wear [the Miraculous Medal] with confidence.*

St. Catherine’s body was exhumed in 1933 for beatification proceedings. It was found to be incorrupt. Today her body is in the very chapel where Mary appeared to her. It lies under a side altar within a glass coffin, her blue eyes are wide open and she is wearing the religious habit worn in her day.

The words on the medal “conceived without sin” were an answer to prayer. Several leading clergy, including the future Pope Pius IX, had been praying that God would send a sign, a confirmation from heaven, that Mary was indeed conceived without sin. They felt sure that Mary was herself preserved from original sin, and therefore conceived without sin. These men prayed to God for a sign—and the medal was the answer!

Mary was conceived—not just born—without sin. This, therefore, proves that souls are implanted by God in everyone at the moment of conception. All of us, however, are conceived with original sin on our souls—implanted at the moment of conception in our mothers’ wombs.

In 1854, Pope Pius IX declared the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. He had a great devotion to Mary. Then in 1858, Mary reaffirmed the pope’s declaration when on her 16<sup>th</sup> appearance to St. Bernadette at Lourdes, France, she declared, “I am the Immaculate Conception.”

Today, millions flock to Lourdes yearly—while thousands go to the Chapel of The Miraculous Medal in the heart of busy Paris, at 140 rue du Bac.

The chapel is the final resting place of the incorrupt body of one of the Church’s greatest and most privileged saints—St. Catherine Laboure.