

The Miraculous Medal

**“O Mary, conceived
without sin,
pray for us who
have recourse to thee.”**



The Feast of the Annunciation
March 25

The Medal of the Immaculate Conception

We all know the story of the Annunciation: The angel Gabriel appeared to a Jewish teenager, announced that she had found favor with God, and, if she were willing, would give birth to the long-awaited Messiah. Despite her profound humility and awe, she told the angel she was the servant of the Lord and consented to the plan God had prepared for her.

As God sent the angel to Mary, He now sends her as a messenger to us, appearing to certain individuals and requesting that they too carry out a plan which God has prepared for them.

Take, for instance, St. Catherine Laboure, a nun who lived in France in the 1800s. Soon after entering the Daughters of Charity convent in Paris, she began to see visions, including Christ, who appeared to her during Holy Communion and the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

In July 1830, Catherine was awakened during the night by a child calling,

“Sister Catherine!” A boy stood by her bed and was radiating light from inside his body. He informed her that the Blessed Mother was waiting for her, then led her to the chapel which also was ablaze with light. Catherine and her guide proceeded toward the sanctuary, and she was instructed to kneel next to the chaplain’s chair. Once in position, Catherine heard a stirring of silken skirts emanating from near the sanctuary. She watched the Blessed Mother bow toward the tabernacle then sit in the chair. Overwhelmed with happiness, Catherine placed her hands on her Blessed Mother’s knees and listened as she spoke to her about many things. Most importantly, the Blessed Mother told Catherine God had a mission for her, a mission which would cause her suffering but would bring great glory to God. After the Blessed Mother left, the child led Catherine back to her room in the convent.



It was not until the First Sunday of Advent that the mission was revealed to Catherine. During the nuns’ evening prayers in the chapel, she again

heard the rustle of silk. To the right of the altar, the suspended Blessed Mother stood upon a white globe, crushing a snake underfoot. Jewels adorned her fingers with some radiating light upon the globe under her feet. Catherine understood that these rays of light represented graces that the Blessed Mother gave to those who asked for them. Some of the jewels gave no light, representing graces for which people did not ask. Then an oval formed around the vision and words appeared inside: “O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.” Interiorly, Catherine heard the Blessed Mother tell her to create a medal based on this model



and that “[t]hose who wear it blessed about their necks, and who confidently say this prayer, will receive great graces and will enjoy the special protection of the Mother of God.” Then the image flipped around to show the back of the medal. A large M appeared with a cross on top of it. Below the M were the images of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Twelve stars adorned the inside of the oval.

Catherine revealed all to her confessor, and eventually the Archbishop of Paris approved the manufacturing of this medal. Initially, the medal was called “The Medal of the Immaculate Conception,” “Mary’s Medal,” and “The Medal of the Daughters of Charity,” but after cures began to be reported by those wearing it, it came to be called the “Miraculous Medal.”

Catherine never took public credit for her part in bringing about this medal and refused to confirm that the Blessed Mother had spoken or appeared to her. She was often quiet when others discussed the medal and believed “the important thing now is to make it [the medal] widely known.” She wanted people to focus on the Blessed Mother, not on her—just as Mary wants us to focus on Jesus: “Do whatever He tells you.”

Let us strive to imitate the willingness to listen for and say yes to the promptings of God as Mary did during her lifetime and as she still does now in Heaven.

Let us ask for her help and encouragement when we feel too weak or too frightened to say, “I am the servant of the Lord.”

Let us pray

Mary, I venerate you as Our Lady of the Annunciation and the Mother of the Redeemer. You shared in the great work of the Redemption of the world. You gave the God-Man His body and blood, by means of which He was to suffer and die for the sins of the human race. By your close union with Jesus in life, you became His coworker in sanctifying souls.

I thank the Holy Spirit for working in you the great miracle of the Incarnation of Jesus. Through the same Spirit, Jesus takes up His abode in me in Holy Communion. Jesus continues to dwell in me by letting me share His Own Divine Life through grace. Make my heart glow with the same love that filled your heart when you adored the living presence of Jesus within you. Help me to imitate your humility, sinlessness, and love, for which God chose you to be His Mother.



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Sources:

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