

AT THE CHAPEL

Amongst medals, the most widespread is the **medal of the Immaculate**, known throughout the world under the name of the **miraculous medal**.

It began after the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin to a novice **Saint Catherine Laboure** in this chapel in **1830**.

Through its rich symbolism, the medal summarized the mysteries of Christian faith.

It relates the mysteries of the Incarnation and Redemption, Mary's unique position in God's plan, the love of the Hearts of Christ and Mary for all men, Mary's universal motherhood, the mystery of the Church and the relationship between heaven and earth.



The
Chapel
Pamphlets

English

THE MEDAL A GIFT



Chapel of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal
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On the reverse side of the medal, there is an initial and depiction that introduce us into the mystery of Mary.
The letter "M" is surmounted by a cross.
The "M" is Mary's initial, the cross is the Cross of Christ. The two symbols interlaced show the indissoluble bond that links Christ to His Holy Mother.
Mary is associated with the Mission of the Salvation of Humanity accomplished by her divine son Jesus and through her compassion she takes part in the very act of the redemptive sacrifice of Christ.
Below, two hearts with flames that represent the love of Jesus and Mary for us.
The heart, crowned with thorns is the Heart of Jesus. It recalls the cruel episode of the Passion of Christ as told in the Gospels, before He was put to death. It signifies the Passion of His love for man.
The heart pierced by a sword is the Heart of His Mother. It recalls the prophecy of Simeon told in the Gospel, that was made when Jesus was presented in the Temple by Mary and Joseph. It represents her love for Christ and for us: for our salvation, she accepted the sacrifice of her own Son.
The linking of the two hearts expresses that the life of Mary is intimately linked to that of Jesus. We, too, can unite our heart to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary.
Twelve stars are engraved around the border.
They depict the twelve Apostles and represent the Church, a beacon to the world. The medal invites us, each one of us, like Christ and His mother, to choose the way of Love, as far as giving ourselves totally.

...The sorrowful side

2

The words and drawings engraved on the front of the medal have a triple message.
O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.
This invocation explicitly reveals the privilege that was bestowed on the Mother of God: the Virgin Mary was preserved from original sin, she was "immaculate" from her conception. The first to be saved, she benefited in advance of the merits of the Passion of her son, Jesus Christ, in view of her divine motherhood.
She is standing on a half globe with her feet crushing the head of a serpent.
The half globe is the earth, the world. For the Jews and the Christians, the serpent represents Satan and the forces of evil. The Virgin is the Woman "robed with the sun, her head crowned with 12 stars" described by St John in the Apocalypse. She herself is engaged in the spiritual combat, the fight against evil, of which our world is the battlefield, she also calls us to enter into God's logic, which is not the logic of the world. It is the authentic grace of conversion that the Christian asks for through Mary's intercession, to then transmit it to the world.
Her hands are open and her fingers are adorned with rings studded with precious stones, from which rays of light fall to earth. The brightness of these rays, like the beauty and light of the apparitions, invite us to have confidence in the faithfulness of Mary (the rings) towards her Creator and her children, in the efficacy of her intervention (the rays of grace) and in the final victory (the light). In this way, the Virgin invites us to have recourse to her in the difficult moments of our life, and with total confidence in her all-powerful and loving intercession.

...The luminous side

1

The night of the 18th to 19th July 1830

Catherine had been at the Seminary of the rue du Bac for three months. On the eve of the feast of St Vincent, before she fell asleep, she prayed to him to obtain for her the grace of seeing the Blessed Virgin. At 11h30 in the evening she heard a voice: "Sister, Sister...". Catherine woke up, pulled open the curtain of



her bed and saw a child dressed in white.

He said: "Come to the chapel, the Blessed Virgin is waiting for you".

Catherine got dressed and followed the child, her guardian angel, to the chapel. All the candles and torches were lit. The child led her to the sanctuary, to the priests' chair. Catherine knelt down.

The child announced: "Here is the Blessed Virgin". She heard the rustling of a silk dress and saw a lady sit down

on the chair. Catherine hesitated to believe. The child repeated louder: "Here is the Blessed Virgin". Catherine rushed towards her, her hands resting on her knees. "It was the sweetest moment of my life". With her left hand, the Virgin showed her the foot of the altar and said: "My child, the Good Lord wants to entrust you with a mission. It will be difficult...you will be contradicted but you will have graces. Do not be afraid...come to the foot of this altar. There, graces will be poured on all those who ask for them with confidence and fervor. They will be given to the young and the old". Catherine also received a request for Father Aladel, her confessor: "The Blessed Virgin would like you to be the founder of a "Confraternity of the Children of Mary".

The medal takes shape ...

An oval shaped picture was formed around the Blessed Virgin; at the top the following words were inscribed in gold:

"O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee".

Catherine then heard a voice:

"Have a medal struck on this model. All those who wear it round the neck will receive many graces. The graces will be abundant for those who wear it with confidence"

...On the reverse

A few moments later, the reverse side of the picture was shown. On it, Catherine saw the letter M surmounted by a cross, and underneath the holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

One day while meditating, Sister Catherine was concerned about what was to be written on this side, but then heard a voice: "The M and the two hearts convey enough".

In December 1830

During prayers, at 5h30, Catherine again heard the rustling of a dress, this time behind the altar. The Blessed Virgin was near the tabernacle, a little behind it, and confirmed Catherine's mission. She said: "You won't see me any more". It was the end of the apparitions. Catherine told all of this to Fr Aladel, who advised her not to pay any attention to all these "imaginings"

And anyway the seminary was nearly over. Catherine was about to leave rue du Bac. On the 5th February 1831 she arrived at the Enghien Hospice, in Reuilly, a poor area of Paris .



Saturday 27th November 1830

On the eve of Advent at 17h30, after the meditation lecture at the Chapel, Catherine heard the "rustling of a silk dress"; she looked and saw the Blessed Virgin standing at the height of the picture of St Joseph (actual position of the Virgin with the globe). The Blessed Virgin was standing, clothed all in white: a white silk dress the colour of dawn and a white veil that reached the ground, her feet on a half globe .

The Virgin on the Globe

First of all the Virgin was holding a ball in her hands, which represented the globe. Her hands were raised in a relaxed manner, her eyes turned towards Heaven. "Her face was beautiful. I can't describe it". Catherine heard: "This globe represents the world, France and each person in particular...".

The Virgin with the Rays of light

And then suddenly, Catherine saw that her fingers were adorned with rings "studded with beautiful precious stones that threw out rays of light" that got wider towards the bottom.

The Blessed Virgin looked at Catherine, and she heard: "these rays of light are the symbol for the graces which I give to those who ask me".

The Blessed Virgin made Catherine understand how generous she is towards those who pray to her, and what joy she feels when giving them graces



It is all over...but just beginning

Heaven came down to earth. A medal was given to us. The one who saw the Blessed Virgin would serve Jesus Christ through the poor for 46 years: old people in the old people's home, the poor of the area, the wounded from the revolutions and the war.

The Medal, struck in 1832, was to have a lightning expansion. It spread around the United States (1836), in Poland (1837), in China, in Russia (1838). Ten years after the apparitions, there were more than 10 million medals.

The mission that was assigned to Fr Aladel also took shape. On the 8th December, 1838, the first **Confraternity of the Children of Mary** was born. This association set up on the 2nd February 1840, spread around the provinces and then reached Paris. It received the approbation of Pius IX in 1847. M. Aladel published a manual of the Children of Mary, new editions succeeding each other at a fast rate.

In 1969, the Association took the name **Jeunesse Mariale**, present today all over the world. On the 8th December 1854, Pius IX proclaimed the **dogma of the Immaculate Conception**. Four years later in Lourdes, a young shepherd girl called Bernadette was visited by a "beautiful lady" who introduced herself: "I am the Immaculate Conception". In view of her divine motherhood, the Virgin Mary therefore received the privilege of an immaculate conception. Preserved from Original Sin, her body could not corrupt in the tomb. By this **Dogma of the Immaculate Conception**, Pius XII proclaimed on the 1st November 1954, that God raised the Blessed Virgin body and soul to the glory of Heaven. Our body, like that of Mary's, will also participate in this eternal glory, not at the end of our earthly life, but at the final resurrection.