

fixed her eyes upon me, and a voice said in the depths of my heart: This globe you see represents the whole world, especially France, and each person in particular.”

There now formed around the Blessed Virgin a frame rather oval in shape on which were written in letters of gold these words: “O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.” Then a voice said to me: “Have a medal struck upon this model. All those who wear it, when it is blessed, will receive great graces especially if they wear it around the neck. Those who repeat this prayer with devotion will be in a special manner under the protection of the Mother of God. Graces will be abundantly bestowed upon those who have confidence.”



Catherine then described the back of the medal: “I saw on the back of it the letter “M” surrounded by a cross, with a cross bar beneath it, and under the monogram of the name of Mary, the Hearts of Jesus and of his Mother; the first was surrounded by a crown of thorns and the second was pierced by a sword.”

Catherine spoke to no one about her visions except her spiritual director, Fr. John Aladel. After two years of discernment, he discussed these visions with the Archbishop of Paris. The Archbishop finally gave his permission for the medals to be made.

The first 2,000 medals were delivered on 30 June 1832. The use of the medals spread very quickly. Pope Gregory XVI put one of them at the foot of the crucifix on his desk.

For the 46 years between the time of the apparitions until Catherine’s death, only she and her confessor knew who it was to whom the famous Miraculous Medal was revealed. Catherine lived her life in simple humility, serving elderly men as a Daughter of Charity.

Catherine’s remains may be seen today at the Mother House of the Daughters of Charity in the very chapel where the Blessed Mother appeared to her more than 185 years ago.



The Story of St. Catherine Labouré and the Miraculous Medal

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St. Catherine Labouré was the Daughter of Charity who received and passed on a request from the Blessed Virgin Mary to create the Miraculous Medal worn today by millions of Christians, both Roman Catholic and people of other faiths and no faith.



Mother Teresa of Calcutta used a simple "tool" as a symbol of the charity and love she wanted to convey: the Miraculous Medal. Mother Teresa would take a fistful of medals, kiss them, and hand them out to those whom she encountered, especially poor persons. Very seldom would someone leave her presence without receiving a Medal from her. For Mother Teresa, the Miraculous Medal was a sign of Mary's love and God's care for each and every person.

Catherine Labouré was born on 2 May 1806 in the tiny village of Fain-lès-Moutiers, northwest of Dijon, France. She was the 9th of 11 children. After her mother died when Catherine was 9 years old, she moved to Saint-Rémy. She became the "head of household" and managed the farm and family. She was given to visions and intuitive

insights. One day, while visiting the hospital of the Daughters of Charity, she noticed a picture on the



wall and asked one of the Daughters who it was. She was told that it was their holy founder, St. Vincent de Paul. It was the same priest that Catherine had seen in a dream while sleeping. Catherine asked her father

if she could join the Daughters of

Charity. In January 1830 Catherine entered the Daughters as a postulant and in April of the same year she entered the novitiate in Paris.

It was during 1830 that Catherine was blessed with the apparition that led to the devotion of the Miraculous Medal. She was living at the Daughter of Charity Mother House on the Rue du Bac in Paris. Her formation directress had given each novice a piece of cloth from St. Vincent's clothing. Catherine prayed that she might see the Mother of God. The night of July 18-19 an angel awoke her from sleep saying: "*Sister Labouré, come to the chapel; the Blessed Virgin is waiting for you.*"



When Catherine went to the chapel, she found it ablaze with lights. Catherine knelt near the sanctuary, then moved into it when she saw Mary in a chair. When she lifted her head from prayer, the Blessed Virgin, in a blaze of glory, sat in the chair just beyond Catherine's reach.

Catherine rose, went over and knelt, resting her hands in the Virgin's lap. Mary placed her arms around Catherine and said: "*God wishes to charge you with a mission. You will be contradicted, but do not fear; you will have the grace. Tell your spiritual director all that passes within you. Times are evil in France and in the world.*"

The Second Apparition occurred on 27 November 1830. This is how Catherine described what happened: "...while making my meditation in profound silence...I seemed to hear on the right hand side of the sanctuary something like the rustling of a silk dress. Glancing in that direction, I perceived the blessed Virgin standing near St. Joseph's picture. Her height was medium and her countenance, indescribably beautiful. She was dressed in a robe the color of the dawn, high-necked, with plain sleeves. Her head was covered with a white veil, which floated over her shoulders down to her feet. Her feet rested upon a globe, or rather one half of a globe, for that was all that could be seen. Her hands, which were on a level with her waist, held in an easy manner another globe, a figure of the world. Her eyes were raised to Heaven, and her countenance beamed with light as she offered the globe to Our Lord. As I was busy contemplating her, the Blessed Virgin