

Miracles of Grace and Apostles of the Medal

Volumes have been written recounting the extraordinary graces received by those who have worn the Miraculous Medal. A boy diagnosed with inoperable brain damage, after receiving the Medal and being inducted into the Confraternity of the Miraculous Medal, was inexplicably healed and sent home by the dumbfounded doctors. Charles Lindbergh inadvertently fell asleep during his historic solo trans-Atlantic flight, but awoke to the sound of his Miraculous Medal banging against the cockpit window. An American soldier at the Battle of Normandy walked away from a gunshot to the chest because the Miraculous Medal in his breast pocket halted the bullet. Alphonse Ratisbonne, a young atheist from a prominent banking family, wore the Medal for nine days on a dare; on the ninth day, the Virgin appeared to him in splendor in the Church of Sant'Andrea delle Fratte in Rome and he was instantly converted. He later became a Catholic priest and co-founder of a religious congregation dedicated to bringing about the conversion of his people, the Jews. His conversion story then inspired a young seminarian, Saint Maximilian Maria Kolbe, to found a worldwide organization known as the Militia of the Immaculata. St. Maximilian

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referred to Miraculous Medals as Our Lady's "bullets." Saint Pio of Pietrelcina kept bags of Miraculous Medals in his room and in his pockets, giving them out to the numerous groups and individuals who came to visit him. Mother Teresa of Calcutta would often kiss a handful of Miraculous Medals and offer them to the poor. She called it the "Medal of Charity."

Proper Use and Care Just as we honor the flag of our country or a photo of our loved ones, so too, we should treat the Miraculous Medal and other Sacramentals with the greatest reverence and respect. Ideally, the Medal should be worn around the neck with a chain or string, or else pinned over the heart. An old or tarnished Medal can be carefully cleaned or even buried, but should never be casually discarded. The Miraculous Medal is an effective tool for explaining the truths of the Catholic Faith, and every Catholic should keep a supply on hand and look for opportunities to give them to souls in need. Perhaps the Medal you give away today will be the instrument God uses to bring about another miracle!

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The Miraculous Medal



What is the Miraculous Medal?

The Miraculous Medal is what the Catholic Church calls a 'Sacramental.' It is not an object of worship, nor is it a good luck charm. It is a blessed object that the Church uses to prepare and dispose the faithful to receive the gift of God's grace. The Miraculous Medal explains through words and images the great things that God has accomplished in His lowly handmaid, whom He chose from all eternity to be the Mother of His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

Meaning and Symbolism of the Medal

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The front side of the Medal depicts the Virgin Mary as she appeared to Saint Catherine Labouré. She stands on a globe, with a serpent beneath

her feet. This recalls the Old Testament prophecy of the mysterious “woman” who is at enmity with the serpent, and who collaborates with her “offspring” in crushing the serpent’s head (Gen 3:15). The same imagery reappears in the Book of Revelation (or the Apocalypse), which describes a battle in the heavens between the devil, depicted as a seven-headed dragon, and a mysterious woman, crowned with twelve stars, who “brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with an iron rod” (Rev 12:5).



The symbolism points to the gratuitous gift of Our Lady’s Immaculate Conception, by which God preserved her in advance from every stain of sin in view of the future merits of Christ, her Son and Redeemer. By virtue of her Immaculate Conception, the Virgin Mary is “full of grace” (Lk 1:28) and is the chosen vessel through whom Christ wills to give grace to souls. Thus we see rays of light, representing God’s grace, flowing from her outstretched hands and the inscription around the perimeter of the Medal: “O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.”

On the reverse side of the Medal, there is the letter ‘M,’ surmounted by a Cross. This reminds us of how the Virgin Mary stood at the foot

of the Cross during the last hours of her Son’s earthly life (Jn 19:25-27). The ‘M’ and crossbar are interwoven because she played an intimate role in the work of our Redemption, giving her free consent to God’s plan and providing the Lamb of Sacrifice (Lk 1:38). Thus, from the earliest centuries, Christians have referred to her as the ‘New Eve’ who collaborated with Christ, the ‘New Adam,’ in undoing the sin of our first parents. Beneath this, we see two hearts, one crowned with thorns, and the other pierced by a sword. This reminds us of the inseparable union between these two hearts, which have loved us so much, and which suffered together, in keeping with the prophetic words addressed to the Virgin Mother when she presented the Christ Child in the Temple: “And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that, out of many hearts, thoughts may be revealed” (Lk 2:35). Around the perimeter, we again see a ring of twelve stars, reminding us of St. John’s vision in the Book of Revelation: “And 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 twelve stars” (Rev 12:1). They recall the twelve Apostles and the twelve tribes of Israel.



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Origin On November 27, 1830, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to a French nun named Saint Catherine Labouré and asked her to have a medal struck in her honor. She said: “All who wear it will receive great graces.” Sister Catherine related the events to her confessor, who then helped to obtain the necessary permissions from her superiors and from the Archbishop of Paris. The first two thousand medals were struck in 1832 and distributed among the faithful. It was originally called the ‘Medal of the Immaculate Conception,’ but so many extraordinary graces were reported by those who wore the medal that it came to be known as the ‘Miraculous Medal.’ It spread like wildfire in France and throughout the world.



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