

THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL

HOW IT CAME TO BE

On November 27, 1830, Mary, the Mother of Jesus, appeared in a vision to Catherine Laboure, a novice in the Sisters of Charity convent in Paris, France. Our Lady manifested the pattern of a medal to Catherine. Mary promised that "All who wear it will receive great graces; they should wear it around the neck. Graces will abound for those who wear it with confidence."

MIRACLES

In 1832, the first medals were made and distributed in Paris with the approval of the Church. The medal quickly became known as the "Miraculous Medal" because of the many miracles of health, peace, blessings, protection, and conversion that were worked through the medal.

The medal itself has no power; however, God acts through the medal just as He worked through Moses' rod for the Israelite victory (Ex. 14:15-31), and handkerchiefs touched to Paul for healings (Acts 19:11-12).

THE FRONT

Let us now examine the meaning of the medal. The front is the joyful side. Mary stands on the globe as the Queen and Mother of all. Her feet crush the serpent, to show that Satan is helpless before her (Gen. 3:15). As God's chosen instrument, her hands are open, shedding the graces that Christ won for us. Etched around the rim is the prayer "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee."

THE BACK

The back of the medal is the sorrowful side because it shows the sufferings of Jesus and Mary. The Cross is on top of the M, showing that Christ is the Savior of all, including Mary. The hearts of Jesus and Mary are pictured; Jesus' heart has a crown of thorns, representing the sufferings He underwent to free us from sin and to show His infinite love for each and every person.

Mary's heart is pierced by a sword of sorrow (Lk. 2:35) as she joined in Christ's suffering for love of us, even standing at the foot of the cross. The twelve stars represent the twelve tribes of Israel, the Apostles, or perhaps the stars in St. John's vision, in which "a great sign appeared in Heaven, a woman clothed with sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars" (Rev. 12:1).

MARY IS OUR MOTHER

Just as we ask others here on earth to pray for us, it is only natural that we ask the Mother of Jesus to pray for us from Heaven. At Cana, it was Mary's intercession that brought forth a miracle from Jesus (Jn. 2:3-5). Mary is our Mother, too, because when Jesus gave her to John from the cross, John represented all of us (Jn. 19:26).

WHY THE MEDAL?

Wearing the medal is like having a picture of our parents or grandparents in our home: it reminds us of our love for them and their love for us. Just as we don't worship the pictures of our parents or grandparents, we don't worship Mary or the medal. Rather, wearing the medal is a sign that we are thankful to Mary for giving us the greatest Treasure in our lives: Jesus Christ.

HEAVEN

In Heaven, Mary prays for us and loves us as her children. In return, we should love her and show our love for her and her Son by wearing her Miraculous Medal and praying the prayer on it every day. Mary will always keep us close to her Divine Son and lead us safely home.