



*Collection:* **APPARITIONS**

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© Editrice Shalom s.r.l. - 27.11.2005 The Blessed Virgin Mary  
of the Miraculous Medal

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e Caterina da Siena (Word of God)

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# “Wear it too!”

“Given its extraordinary diffusion, among all Marian Medals, the so-called ‘Miraculous Medal’ stands out above the rest. It originated from the apparitions of the Virgin Mary in 1830, to a humble novice of the Daughters of Charity, the future saint Catherine Labouré. Due to its rich symbolism, the Medal, which was created in compliance with the indications given by the Virgin to the Saint, was called the ‘Marian microcosm’: in fact, it recalls the mystery of the Redemption, the love of the Heart of Christ and the sorrowful heart of Mary, the Virgin’s role as a mediator, the mystery of the Church, the relationship between heaven and earth, temporal life and eternal life.

A new impulse in the diffusion of the Miraculous Medal was given by Saint Maximilian Maria Kolbe (1894-1941) and by the movements originating from him or inspired by him. In 1917 in fact, he adopted the Miraculous Medal as a distinctive sign of the Army

of the Immaculate Conception founded by him in Rome, when he was a young priest in the Minor Conventual Friars. Like the other medals of the Virgin, the Miraculous Medal is not a talisman, nor must it lead to vain credulity. The Virgin's promise, according to which "the people who wear it shall receive great graces" requires humble and tenacious adherence to the Christian message by the faithful, perseverant and trusting prayer, and a coherent lifestyle" (*Directory on popular piety and liturgy*, 206).

This book aims to be a simple and agile tool that might enable us to gain some knowledge of the history and origins of the Medal and to learn to love and honour the Virgin who gave it to us as a sign of belonging to her.

A chapter that hasn't been printed is however missing, it is that which each of us can write with our own existence: experiencing, bearing witness to and spreading the message of the Miraculous Medal.

And so:

- Always wear the Medal in order to live in the grace of God and to benefit from the protection of the Immaculate Virgin.
- Recite the invocation of the Medal every day, with which the Virgin wanted to be greeted and invoked: **“Oh Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee”**, perhaps with the addition suggested by father Kolbe: **“Oh Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee and for all those who do not have recourse to thee, especially for enemies of the Church and for those who are recommended to thee”**.
- Make the Medal known; in particular give it to the sick, to those who are suffering, to those who have lost their faith, make it known to children and young people. You will receive graces and celestial comforts.

*We thank the rector of the Chapel of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, Father Guénolé Feugang, and Sister Maria Giovanna Vitulli for their help and availability.*



**Saint Catherine Labouré's  
mother and father.**

# “Have a medal struck according to this model”

## SAINT CATHERINE LABOURÉ

Catherine Labouré was born in France in Fain-les-Moutiers, a small town in the dioceses of Dijon, in Burgundy on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May 1806, to Pietro Labouré and Luisa Maddalena Gontard.

Her mother died on the 9<sup>th</sup> of October 1815 when she was 9 years old.

In the summer of 1818, when her older sister Marie Louise left the family to become a nun in the same Congregation that she would later enter, with Marie Antoinette, Catherine willingly took her place in the management of her father's farm.

It was during this period that she had a dream that was indicating her vocation. She dreamt

that she was in a small church in her own town; Mass was over and she was about to leave when an unknown elderly priest with a penetrating gaze asked her to approach him, but she instinctively stepped back with a sense of fear, even though she was fascinated by his gaze. Leaving the church to go to visit a sick woman – in the dream – she found the same priest in the doorway and he said to her: “*Serving the sick is a praiseworthy vocation. My daughter, you are running from me now but one day you will happy to come to me; God has plans for you, don’t forget this!*”.

Catherine kept the mystery of the meaning of these words in her heart until such time as, when visiting the Superior of the Daughters of Charity in Chatillon-sur-Seine, upon entering the parlour, she saw a portrait of St. Vincent de Paul, the founder of the same Congregation and that of the Lazarist Fathers, and in him she recognised the elderly priest from her dream.

## *Rue du Bac*

In the same city of Châtillon, the Daughters of Charity had a House and here Catherine entered as a postulant on the 30<sup>th</sup> of January 1830 and on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April she began her novitiate in Paris, in Rue du Bac. At that time, the Community was made up of 150 professed sisters and 80 novices.

Just four days after her arrival in Rue du Bac, with her community, Catherine had the possibility of participating in the procession that brought the body of St. Vincent de Paul from Notre Dâme to the church of the Lazarists, just a stone's throw from Rue du Bac. During these days, almost always upon returning from the celebration of the novena, Catherine began to receive mystical graces, such as the customary vision of Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament and other visions.

Catherine immediately referred the vision and her worries about the fate of the king Charles X to her confessor, Father Giovanni Maria Aladel (from the Congregation of the

Lazarist Fathers) but he did not take them into consideration.

## THE APPARITIONS OF OUR LADY

The first apparition of Our Lady occurred during the night between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of July of that same year, the second one occurred on the 27<sup>th</sup> of November and in December there was a third one, the latter confirming and repeating the request to have the medal struck. Let's take a look at the Catherine's own account of what happened:

### *First apparition (18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> July 1830):*

*“With the onset of the feast of St. Vincent (19<sup>th</sup> July 1830) the good Mother Martha (directress of the novices) gave us a lesson on devotion owing to the saints and especially on devotion to Our Lady. This made me really desire to see the most blessed Virgin and I went to bed with the thought of seeing my good Celestial Mother that same night: I had*

*been wanting to see her for a long time. We had been given a little piece of fabric from one of St. Vincent's robes, I cut half of it off and swallowed it. I fell asleep thinking that St. Vincent would have given me the great grace of seeing Our Lady.*

*At half past eleven I heard someone calling me by my name: 'Sister Labouré! "Sister Labouré'. Having woken up, I looked in the direction that the voice was coming from, which was on the side of the passageway by the bed, I pulled back the curtain and saw a young boy dressed in white, aged from between four and five years old, who said to me: 'Come to the chapel; Our Lady is waiting for you'. I immediately thought: I'll be heard! But the child readily replied: 'Don't worry: it's half past eleven, everyone is sound asleep. Come on, I'll wait for you'.*

*The little boy led me into the presbytery beside the director's armchair, where I knelt down while the little boy remained standing all the time. It seemed as though a lot of time*

*had passed, every now and again I looked around, for fear that the sisters on watch would pass by the apse.*

*Finally the long awaited moment arrived. The child warned me saying: 'Here's Our Lady, here she is!'*

*I heard a noise, like the swish of silk vestments, coming from the area of the apse, near the painting of Saint Joseph and I saw the Most Blessed Virgin who came to stand on the steps of the altar, on the side of the Gospel.*

*It was the Most Blessed Virgin, she looked quite similar to St. Ann, only her face was different. I was uncertain about whether it was Our Lady. But the little boy who was there said to me: 'Behold Our Lady!'*

*It is impossible to describe what I felt at that moment and what was happening within me. I felt as though I didn't recognise Our Lady. And so that little boy spoke to me, no longer with the voice of a child, but that of a tall and robust man, and he said certain*