

## Symbolism of the Miraculous Medal

The Miraculous Medal was originally called the Medal of the Immaculate Conception, but, because of the numerous accounts of miracles by those who wore it, people began to call it the Miraculous Medal, and the name stuck. The Medal is a visual reminder of our salvation through Jesus Christ.



The front side of the Miraculous Medal depicts Mary Immaculate, her hands open, full of light. St. Catherine Labouré saw Our Lady appear like this and heard her say, “Have a medal made according to this model. Everyone who wears it around their neck will receive great graces.” Mary stands upon the globe as the Queen of

### FRONT SIDE:

Heaven and Earth. Her feet crush the serpent to proclaim that Satan and all his followers are helpless before her (Gn. 3:15). The year 1830 on the Miraculous Medal is the year the Blessed Mother gave the design of the Miraculous Medal to St. Catherine. The reference to “Mary conceived without sin” supports the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary — referring to Mary being sinless, “full of grace,” and “blessed among women” (Lk. 1:28). The dogma of the Immaculate Conception was proclaimed 24 years later in 1854, and then confirmed when Mary appeared to St. Bernadette Soubirous in Lourdes, France, in 1858.



On the reverse side, the Cross and the letter M symbolize the close relationship of Mary to the suffering, passion, and death of her Son. The cross can symbolize Christ and our redemption, with the bar under the cross a sign of the earth and the Altar, for it is on the Altar at Mass that the Sacrifice of Calvary continues to be present in the world today. The M signifies “Mary” and “Mother.” The interweaving of Mary’s initial and the cross shows Mary’s close involvement

### BACK SIDE:

with Jesus and our world. In this, we see Mary’s part in our salvation and her role as Mother of the Church.

Beneath the Cross, bar, and the M are two hearts side-by-side: the Sacred Heart of Jesus crowned with thorns and the Immaculate Heart of Mary pierced by a sword. The two hearts represent the love of Jesus and Mary for us. The twelve stars signify the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles, who represent the entire Church as it surrounds Mary. They also recall the vision of Saint John, writer of the Book of Revelation (12:1), in which “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 12 stars.”

## Pray For the Greatest Miracles: Part 2

Alphonse went on a business trip with his Catholic friend, De Bussieres, to Rome. One day, they stopped at the church of Sant'Andrea delle Fratte in Rome. De Bussieres, having business with some monks, had left a disdainful Alphonse to wait for him in the chapel of that church. After about ten minutes' absence, the Baron returned to the chapel. As he recounted, "When I came back into the church I saw nothing of Ratisbonne for a moment; then I caught sight of him on his knees, in front of the chapel of St. Michael. I went up to him, and touched him three or four times before he became aware of my presence." He then began to say things like, "It is all true. It all makes sense." He then asked his friend if he could speak with a priest.

"I took him immediately to the Gesu to see Father de Villefort, who begged him to explain himself. Then Ratisbonne drew forth his medal, kissed it, showed it to us, and exclaimed: *'I have seen her! I have seen her!'* and his emotion again choked his utterance. But soon he regained his calmness, and made his statement.

"I had been but a few moments in the church when I was suddenly seized with an unutterable agitation of mind. I raised my eyes; the building had disappeared from before me; one single chapel had, so to speak, gathered and concentrated all the light; and in the midst of this radiance I saw standing on the altar, lofty, clothed with splendour, full of majesty and sweetness, the Virgin Mary, just as she is represented on my medal. An irresistible force drew me towards her; the Virgin made a sign with her hand that I should kneel down; and then she seemed to say, *That will do!* She spoke not a word, but I understood all!"

Alphonse continued to grow in sanctity and zeal. He was ordained a priest in 1847, and devoted the rest of his life to converting others of his race to the Catholic Faith. His conversion, although a spectacular and widely publicized event, was but a sample of the many thousands of lesser known wonders wrought by the wearing of Our Lady's great sacramental. Nor was its use meant to be limited to another place and former time.

The little French nun, now known as St. Catherine Labouré, whom the Blessed Virgin used as an agent of God's grace, remained unknown to the world during her lifetime. Not even her fellow Sisters at her convent or in her Order were aware of her connection to the Miraculous Medal until after her death in 1876. She was canonized in 1947, and today her mortal remains lie, still incorrupt for all to see, in the chapel on the Rue de Bac in Paris, where the Blessed Virgin first appeared to her.