

A shortcut of the Creed

The Miraculous Medal is not an amulet. Appeared to Sister Catherine Labouré in 1830, it is as a symbol, an abstract for all, a shortcut of our creed, "a free and concentrated expression of faith" according to the words of Father René Laurentin, analyzing its meaning:

"The obverse shows the light, the radiance of God that he has chosen as the prototype of the proposed salvation to all men in Jesus Christ so that all are light in his light."

"The reverse side shows the austere and hidden message: the love and the Cross, the springs of salvation, illustrated by the Lord's Passion and Compassion of Our Lady that all are called to share."

Love is symbolized by "two hearts, one crowned with thorns, that of Jesus and the other pierced by the sword mentioned by Simeon (Lk 2:35): that of Mary. Over its initial (M) dominates Cross. Twelve stars are around."

"We recognize the vision outlined by the Apocalypse (12:1): 'A great wonder appeared in heaven: a woman surrounded by sun, the crown of twelve stars'. In the Apocalypse, this woman is the Church and, through it, more discreetly, the Mother of Christ, who personifies the Church. The medal has in the foreground Mary to which is addressed the invocation inscribed on the obverse:

'O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee'."

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Medals of Virgin Mary

206. The faithful like to wear medals bearing effigies of the Blessed Virgin Mary. These are a witness of faith and a sign of veneration of the Holy Mother of God, as well as of trust in her maternal protection.

The Church blesses such objects of Marian devotion in the belief that "they help to remind the faithful of the love of God, and to increase trust in the Blessed Virgin Mary". The Church also points out that devotion to the Mother of Christ also requires "a coherent witness of life".

Among the various medals of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the most diffuse must be the "Miraculous Medal". Its origins go back to the apparitions in 1830 of Our Lady to St. Catherine Labouré, a humble novice of the Daughters of Charity in Paris. The medal was struck in accordance with the instructions given by Our Lady and has been described as a "Marian microcosm" because of its extraordinary symbolism. It recalls the mystery of Redemption, the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and of the Sorrowful Heart of Mary. It signifies the mediatory role of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the mystery of the Church, the relationship between Heaven and earth, this life and eternal life.

St. Maximilian Kolbe (+ 1941) and the various movements associated with him, have been especially active in further popularizing the miraculous medal. In 1917 he adopted the miraculous medal as the badge of the "Pious Union of the Militia of the Immaculate Conception" which he founded in Rome while still a young religious of the Conventual Friars Minor.

Like all medals and objects of cult, the Miraculous Medal is never to be regarded as a talisman or lead to any form of blind credulity. The promise of Our Lady that "those who were the medal will receive great graces", requires a humble and tenacious commitment to the Christian message, faithful and persevering prayer, and a good Christian life.