

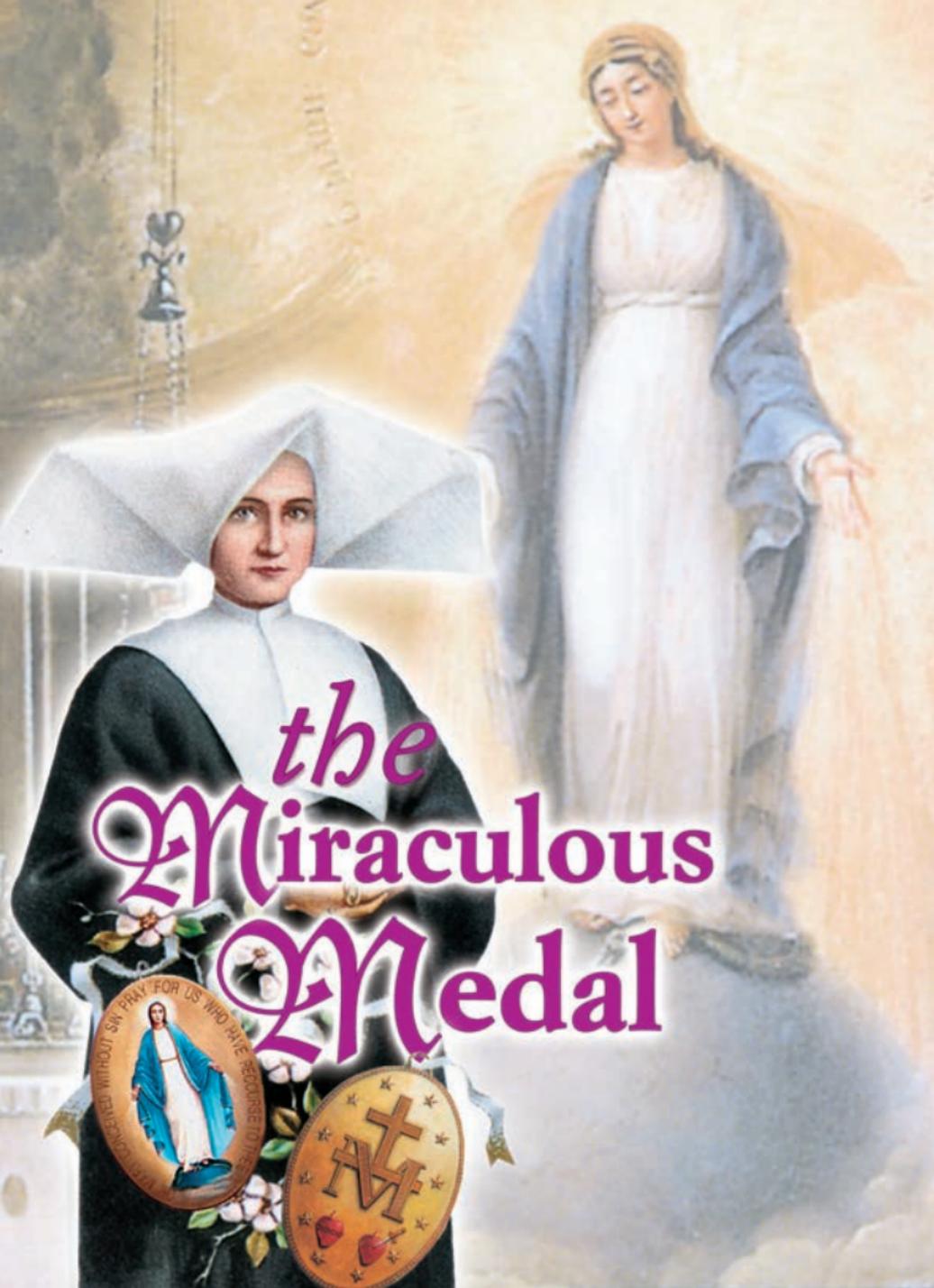
the
Miraculous
Medal



SHALOM



Collection: **MARY SPEAKS AGAIN**



the
Miraculous
Medal



Text edited by: **Fr. Giuseppe Brioschi sdb**

Revision by: **The Barefoot Carmelites of Matino (Lecce)
and Father Nazzareno D'Ascanio OFM Conv.**

Translation from Italian: **Helen M. O'Gorman**

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TOTUS TUUS

Editrice Shalom

Via Galvani, 1 (Industrial Estate)
60020 Camerata Picena (An)

Tel. +39 071. 74 50 440 a.r.

from Monday to Friday
from 9.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m.

Fax +39 071. 74 50 140

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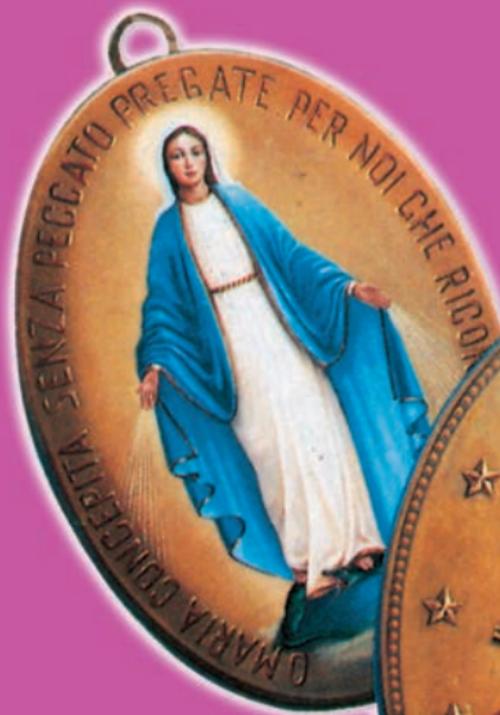
e-mail: ordina@editriceshalom.it

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“Wear it too!”

THE INVITATION IN THE WORDS OF THAT TIME

“From the very first instant, this Medal was a tool of so many spiritual and temporal favours, many healings, protections and above all, conversions, and since then, the unanimous voice of the people has called it the ‘Miraculous Medal’ ”.

Pious XII

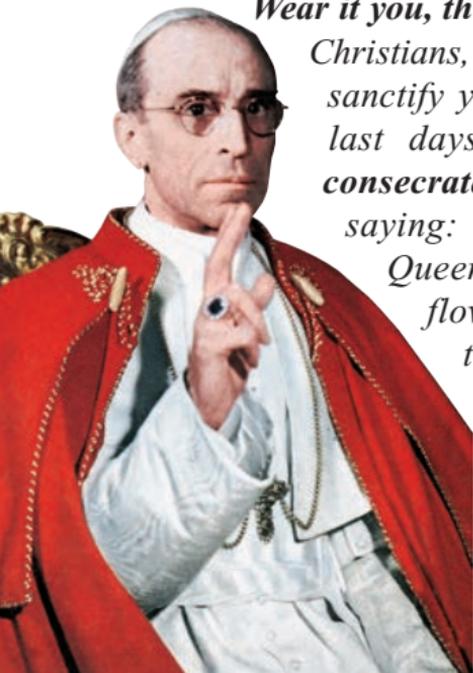
“Is there anyone who doesn’t know of the ‘Miraculous Medal’? Right in the heart of the French capital, it was revealed to a humble daughter of Saint Vincent de Paul, whom we experienced the joy of enrolling in the list of Saints, this Medal, which bears an image of ‘Mary conceived without sin’, has distributed spiritual and material miracles throughout all quarters. And a few years later, from the 11th of February to the 16th of July 1858, the Blessed Virgin Mary revealed herself in the land of the Pyrenees to a pious and pure daughter, born into a poor and hardworking Christian family. She comes to Bernadette, she makes Bernadette her confidante, her collaborator, a tool of maternal love and of the all-powerful mercy of her Son, to give the world back to Christ by means of a new and incomparable spread of redemption”.

Pious XII, Le pèlerinage de Lourdes.

“May faith in Mary conceived without sin grow and become more and more widespread, this sweet and attractive faith, so ready to have the blessing of heaven come down onto earth... Oh! If only we knew Mary’s gift, if only we were aware of her great love for us!

Therefore, dear children, wear this dear Medal, this most sweet memorial of the best of mothers; learn and love to repeat: ‘Oh Mary conceived...’. Morning star, she will be happy to guide your first steps and to preserve you in innocence. Wear it, you young Christians; repeat often amidst the numerous dangers that surround you ‘Oh Mary conceived...!’. Stainless Virgin, she will keep you safe from all danger. Wear it you, fathers and mothers, and the Mother of Jesus will bring abundant blessings onto you and your families.

Wear it you, the elderly and the sick. Aid of Christians, she will come to help you, to sanctify your pains and console your last days. Wear it you, oh souls consecrated to God and never tire of saying: ‘Oh Mary conceived...’. Queen of Virgins, she will make flowers and fruits take root in the garden of your hearts, which will be the delight of the Spouse and form your crown on the day of the wedding of the Lamb.



Wear it you too, oh poor sinners; even if you have plunged into the abyss of the greatest misery, even if God's avenging arm is suspended over your head, about to strike you, even if despair has gripped your soul, raise your eyes towards the star of the sea; Mary's compassion remains with you: take the Medal, and cry from the bottom of your heart: 'Oh Mary conceived...'. Refuge of sinners, she will take you away from the precipice into which you have had the misfortune to fall; she will lead you on the flowered pathways of justice and good".

Father Aladel, St. Labouré's first confessor.

AN INVITATION THAT IS RECONFIRMED TODAY:

"The faithful should love to wear medals bearing the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary, almost always hanging around their neck. They are a testimony of faith, a sign of veneration to the holy Mother of the Lord, an expression of faith in her maternal protection.

The Church blesses these objects of Marian piety, recalling that they 'are needed to call upon God's love and to increase faith in the Blessed Virgin', but it warns the faithful not to forget that above all, devotion to the Mother of Jesus requires 'a coherent testimony of life'.

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".*

Taken from the Directory on popular piety and liturgy (206).

ONE OF THE MANY MIRACLES:

In a Missionary hospital in Macao, the doctor had abandoned a poor pagan: “There’s nothing more that can be done, sister. He won’t get through the night”, he had told a Missionary sister of Mary.

For the nun however, although there was nothing more that could be done for the body, there was still the soul to be saved! In fact, the man had been hospitalised three months earlier and had remained obstinately closed and hostile; countless times he had pushed away the Catechist sister who was attempting to open up his soul.

Our Lady’s Medal, furtively put under his pillow, had been angrily thrown to the ground in a hostile manner. What to do? It’s 6 p.m. The face of hell is already revealing a few symptoms of the agony ahead. Having seen the refused Medal on the bedside locker, the nun whispered to a student nurse in the ward: “Try to hide this Medal when you are making up the bed, between the sheet and the mattress, without him noticing you. All we can do now is pray, and...wait”. The nun slowly recited the rosary on her beads. At 9 p.m. the agonising man opened his eyes and cried out: “Sister...”, the nun bent over him, “Sister...I’m dying... Baptise me!...”.

Trembling with commotion, the nun took a glass of water from the bedside locker, poured a few drops onto his perspiring forehead and said the words that give

grace and life. The face of the dying man was transformed in an unexplainable manner.

The anxiety that was wrinkling up his features disappeared almost magically, while a gentle smile came to his lips: “Now I’m no longer afraid of dying,” he murmured, “I know where I’m going...”. He died kissing the Crucifix.

This is only one of the numerous examples that could be mentioned as proof of how the Medal is Miraculous in reality, not just in its name!

Graces of conversions, healings, protections and miracles of all kinds are attributed and continue to be attributed to the Miraculous Medal. 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.



Mamma di santa Caterina Labouré

Fai coniare una medaglia su questo modello...



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 2nd of May 1806, to Pietro Labouré and Luisa Maddalena Gontard and she was baptised the next day with the name Catherine, but within the family she was called Zoe. She would start using her first name again when she entered the convent.

The ninth of eleven children, she was born into a well-off family of farmers, she was well loved by everyone due to her lovable character. She fully enjoyed the beauty and serenity of a life in direct contact with loved and loving nature, in the carefree manner of children, up to the age of nine years, when her mother died on the 9th of October 1815.

Like other Saints before her, such as Saint Teresa of Avila, Saint Teresa of the Infant Jesus and other Saints in the same circumstances, little Zoe asked the Holy Virgin to fill the painful emptiness left by her mother.

Crying uncontrollably, the little girl put her forehead up against the feet of a statue of the Virgin and then, raising her gaze towards her, with all the energy she can muster up within her injured heart, she said: *“Now you will be my Mother!”* The Blessed Mary did not disappoint the expectations of her little daughter and showed herself to her as a most tender mother in an entirely special way, as we shall see later on.

Her father Pietro, unable to manage the numerous family on his own, made a painful decision to leave Zoe and her young sister Marie Antoinette and to entrust them to the care of one of their aunts. For two years the girls were housed by their aunt Margaret in Moutiers-Saint-Jean and here Catherine, as we will call her from now on, prepared for her First Holy Communion which she will receive on the 25th of January 1817, with a fervour that will surprise everyone and that will actually be defined as “mystic”. Later on, receiving numerous marriage proposals, she invariably replied: *“I’ve already found my spouse, I found him on the day of my First Holy Communion and I have dedicated myself entirely to him!”*.

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; she worked in such a



satisfactory manner according to her brothers, her father and the employees that when she expressed her determination to follow her sister Marie Louise, everyone tried to stop her, her father above all. Favouritism for this daughter hadn't lessened in Pietro Labouré, it increased and he dreamed a future for her that was that of a wealthy bride and mother. For now everything seemed to be falling apart, with the hope of removing "those notions" from her head, he sent her to Paris, where Charles, one of his other sons, was running a hostelry.

Catherine's collaboration in Paris was very useful, but she felt very ill at ease among those yelling and unrefined patrons, so much so that one of her sisters-in-law felt a sense of compassion for her and took her with her to Chatillon-sur-Seine, where she managed a boarding school for young noble ladies. Here Catherine was the object of derision by the young women when they realised that she wasn't able to read or write, they taunted her saying: "The directress's sister-in-law can't read or write!" and they'd laugh wholeheartedly. This also humiliated her sister-in-law, who immediately saw to getting her some private lessons unknown to everyone, in a short time and in a providential manner considering what she would have written later on, Catherine filled up her emptiness with elementary knowledge, but she remained lacking in grammar and the use of the French language as she had become accustomed to her dialect from Burgundy.



The dream of a vocation

It was during this period that she had a dream that was indicating her vocation, but the meaning of this dream remained unknown to her at the time. 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. This occurrence confirms her choice of Institute in which to bring about her religious vocation. Given that her stay in Paris and in Chatillon-sur-Seine did not bring about the desired effect, her father Pietro was forced, with a great sense of disappointment, to leave his favourite daughter to fulfil her vocation.





Padre di santa Caterina Labouré