

The Miraculous Medal: A Call to Confident Prayer

The story of the Miraculous Medal begins on the night of July 18-19, 1830. Saint Catherine described it in words like these.

A little child awoke her shortly before midnight with the words, "Come to the chapel. The Blessed Virgin awaits you." They arrived to find the chapel ablaze with lights. Moving into the sanctuary, the child said, "Here is the Blessed Virgin." With a rustling sound, a lady in a silk dress came down the altar steps and sat in the Director's chair. Catherine knelt at the Blessed Mother's knee and rested her hands in our Lady's lap. She lifted her head and looked up into her Mother's eyes.

"My child," said our Lady, "the good God wishes to charge you with a mission." Then our Lady described to Catherine what would happen to her later, certain visions, the trials she would undergo, and the ultimate success. Mary instructed her to tell her spiritual director everything. She spoke about the times and the persecutions and trials that would come to her country. But there was also hope.

"Come to the foot of the altar," Mary said, pointing to the front of the sanctuary. "There graces will be shed on all, great and little, who ask for them. Graces will be especially shed on those who ask for them."

Mary went on, "There will be an abundance of sorrows, and the danger will be great. Yet do not be afraid. Tell them not to be afraid. The protection of God shall be ever present in a special way." She added, "I shall be with you myself. Always, I have my eye upon you. I will grant you many graces."

The Mother of God repeated her message, emphasizing her words. It was a refrain of hope. They were words of promise, to be clung to, as a child clings to its mother's hand.

Several months after those events, the Virgin Mary gave Saint Catherine Laboure the Medal of the Immaculate Conception November 27, 1830. It took two years to receive permission to make the new medal. From the beginning, the medal was incredibly popular. And amazing conversions and answers to prayer occurred immediately, just as Mary had promised. The medal quickly got its popular name, the "Miraculous Medal."