

### Third Apparition of the Blessed Virgin

Catherine felt sure that she would see Our Lady again. Sometime during the month of December her hope was realized. At the afternoon meditation, she had another vision similar to that of November 27th. There was one remarkable difference however. Our Blessed Mother, who according to Sister Labouré appeared to be about forty years of age, instead of remaining near the picture of Saint Joseph, passed in front of it and stood at the back of the tabernacle, a little above it. The invocation **'O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to Thee'** was traced in letters of gold and encircled the apparition as before. Catherine saw again at the back of the oval the monogram of the Blessed Virgin surmounted by the Cross, and beneath, the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

In Catherine's own words: *I saw the Blessed Virgin near the tabernacle, to the back of it. She was dressed in white...under Her feet was a white ball. She was so beautiful that it would be impossible for me to describe Her beauty. Her hands, which were raised to the level of the waist, in a very easy fashion, were holding a ball which represented the globe, surmounted by a little golden cross. Suddenly Her fingers became adorned with rings and with precious stones of great splendor. The rays which issued from them showered a dazzling light on all sides and filled the area below them, so that one could no longer see the feet of the Blessed Virgin. The larger stones gave larger rays, and the smaller ones, smaller rays. To tell you what I learned at the moment when the Blessed Virgin was offering the globe to Our Lord would be impossible to repeat...what I experienced.*

Saint Catherine again received the order to have a medal struck according to the model. This was the last time Our Lady was to appear to her and she distinctly heard this message. **You will not see me any more, but you will hear my voice during your prayers.** And then, Catherine tells us, *everything disappeared from my sight, like a candle that is blown out.*

And from that day forward, till she departed this world in 1876, with only those few exceptions authorized by Heaven above, for a period of forty six years, *the Saint of Silence* was to keep these visions a secret, pondering them in the depths of her heart.

#### Final Notes

The original order of 20,000 medals proved to be but a small start. The new medals began to pour from the presses in streams inundating France and the rest of the world beyond.

By the time of Saint Catherine's death in 1876, over a billion medals had been distributed in many lands. This sacramental from Heaven that at first was simply called the *Medal of the Immaculate Conception*, began to be known as the *Miraculous Medal* due to the unprecedented number of miracles, conversions, cures and acts of protection attributed to Our Lady's intercession for those who wore it.

#### One Final Thought

On the day before her death, December 30, 1876, one of the Sisters asked Saint Catherine Labouré: *Are you going to leave us without telling us anything about the Blessed Virgin?* The saint replied: **The Rosary must be said better. The Immaculate Conception must be honored, and that purity, of which She is the most beautiful symbol, must be dear to our children.**

\*(excerpted from *Mary's Miraculous Medal*)



## Our Lady of The Miraculous Medal



**'O Mary conceived without sin,  
pray for us who have recourse to Thee'.**

**\*First Apparition in Saint Catherine's Own Words**

The Feast of Saint Vincent de Paul was approaching, when our good Mother Martha, on the evening before, gave us an instruction on devotion to the Blessed Virgin, which gave me a desire to see the Blessed Virgin, so that I went to bed with that thought on the same night, that I should see my good Mother. I had desired to see Her for such a long time. As a piece of linen from a surplice of Saint Vincent's had been distributed, I cut off half of it which I swallowed and I went to sleep, in the thought that Saint Vincent should obtain for me the grace to see the Blessed Virgin.

Finally, at half past eleven in the evening I heard myself being called by name: '**Sister Labouré!**' Waking up, I looked in the direction where I heard the voice...I pulled aside the curtain. I saw a child four or five years old, who said to me: '**Come to the chapel, the Blessed Virgin is waiting for you.**'

I dressed quickly and made my way alongside this child, who had remained standing, without coming any further than the head of my bed...I followed him, keeping him always on my left. Everywhere we passed was lighted up, which astonished me a lot. But I was even more surprised when I went into the chapel and the door opened itself, though the child had scarcely touched it with his fingertips. My surprise was even more complete when I saw that all the tapers and candles were alight, which reminded me of the Midnight Mass. However, I saw nothing of the Blessed Virgin.

The child led me into the sanctuary, to the side of the director's chair, where I knelt down, while the child remained standing the whole time. As I found the time rather long, I looked around to see if the sisters who kept watch in the house were passing through the gallery.

At last the time had come. The child let me know. He said to me. '**Here is the Blessed Virgin. Here She is!**' I heard a sound like the rustle of a silk gown coming from the side of the tribune near Saint Joseph's picture, which finally came and alighted on the altar steps on the gospel side and went to sit in a chair like that of Saint Anne's. Then looking at the Blessed Virgin, I just made one leap towards Her and knelt down on the altar-steps, with my hands resting on Her lap...

**My child,** Our Lady said, **the good God wishes to entrust you with a mission. You will have much difficulty, but you will overcome these difficulties by thinking that you are doing it for the glory of the good God. You will know what comes from the good God. You will be tormented by it till you have told it to him who is entrusted with your guidance. You will be opposed, but you will always have the grace. Do not fear. Tell everything which happens within you with confidence...with simplicity. You will see a certain thing. Give an account of what you will see and hear. You will be inspired in your prayer.**

Our Lady then told Catherine about the misfortunes that were to come upon France and the whole world. Her face was sorrowful and Her eyes filled with tears as She foretold the sad events. **Come to the foot of this altar. There graces will be poured out on all those, rich or poor, who ask for them with confidence and fervor. I will be with you myself, I will always keep my eyes upon you, and I will enrich you with many graces.** Catherine adds: Graces will be bestowed, particularly upon all who ask for them, but they must pray. They must pray! I got up from the steps of the altar, and I saw the child where I had left him. He said to me, '**She has gone.**' I believe that this child was my guardian angel who made himself visible so that I should see the Blessed Virgin. He was either four or five years old.

When I got back to bed, it was two o'clock in the morning, for I heard the clock strike. **I did not go to sleep again.**

Four months passed, and Our Lady returned to Rue du Bac. On the day of the second apparition, Catherine was once again seized with a great desire to see the Blessed Virgin. Here is the story in her own words.

*I thought that the Blessed Virgin would grant me this grace, but my desire was so strong that I was convinced that I would actually see Her at Her most beautiful.*

On the 27th of November, 1830, which was a Saturday, and the eve of the First Sunday of Advent, while making my meditation in profound silence, at half past five in the evening, I seemed to hear on the right hand side of the sanctuary something like the rustling of a silk dress. Glancing in that direction, I perceived the Blessed Virgin, standing near Saint Joseph's picture. Her height was medium, and Her countenance, indescribably beautiful. She was dressed in a robe the color of dawn, high-necked, with plain sleeves. Her head was covered with a white veil, which floated over Her shoulders down to Her feet. She wore a narrow lace band round Her hair. Her face was not concealed. Her feet rested upon a globe, or rather one half of a globe, for that was all that could be seen. Her hands which were on a level with Her waist, held in an easy manner another globe, a figure of the world. Her eyes were raised to Heaven, and Her countenance beamed with light as She offered the globe to Our Lord.

Suddenly, Her fingers were covered with rings and most beautiful precious stones. Rays of dazzling light gleamed forth from them, and the whole of Her figure was enveloped in such radiance that Her feet and robe were no longer visible.

The jewels varied in size as did also the rays of light they threw out. I could not express what I felt, nor what I learned, in these few moments.

As I was busy contemplating Her, the Blessed Virgin fixed Her eyes upon me, and a voice said in the depths of my heart: '**This globe which you see represents the whole world, especially France, and each person in particular.**'

I would not know how to express the beauty and brilliancy of these rays. The Blessed Virgin added: '**Behold the symbol of the graces I shed upon those who ask me for them.**' And She made me understand how pleasant it was to pray to the Blessed Virgin, how generous She is to all who implore Her intercession...How many favors She grants to those who ask Her for them with confidence and the joy that She experienced in granting graces! At this moment I was not myself, I was in raptures!

There now formed around the Blessed Virgin a frame rather oval in shape on which were written in letters of gold these words: '**O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to Thee.**'

Then a voice said to me: '**Have a medal struck upon this model. All those who wear it, when it is blessed, will receive great graces especially if they wear it round the neck. Those who repeat this prayer with devotion will be in a special manner under the protection of the Mother of God. Graces will be abundantly bestowed upon those who have confidence.**'

At the same instant, the oval frame seemed to turn around. Then I saw on the back of it the letter M, surmounted by a cross, with a crossbar beneath it, and under the monogram of the name of Mary the Holy Hearts of Jesus and of His Mother; the first surrounded by a crown of thorns and the second transpierced by a sword. I was anxious to know what words must be placed on the reverse side of the medal and after many prayers, one day in meditation I seemed to hear a voice which said to me: '**The M with the Cross and the two Hearts tell enough.**'

No mention is made in Sister Catherine's notes of the twelve stars which surrounded the monogram of Mary and the two Hearts. However, they are always figured on the back of the medal. It is certain that this detail was given by the sister at the time of the apparitions.