

# *Miraculous Medal to Saint Catherine Laboure*



From Marypages

## **The Blessed Virgin Mary appears in Paris (1830)**

**Memorial: 28 November; formerly 31 December**



**Z**oe Laboure was born as the ninth of eleven children on May 2, 1806, to a farm family, and from an early age felt a call to the religious life. Shortly after joining the Sisters of Charity at age 24, Catherine Laboure replaced her given name, Zoe, with the name by which we know her today: "Catherine Laboure". She had not been at her Parisian convent long when she began seeing visions of the Virgin Mary in the chapel. The fact that Catherine Laboure rested her hands on the lap of our Blessed Mother did not make her a saint. She personally worked no miracles, nor did she practice externally heroic charity like other great saints. Catherine Laboure was not materially poor as were the children of



Fatima and Bernadette.... She sprang from upper middle class parents among the meadows and vineyards of Burgundy, France. Her father was educated man and an excellent farmer-living in the village of Fain-les-Moutiers not far from Dijon.

## **1<sup>st</sup> apparition of the Blessed Virgin: 19th July, 1830 Chapel Rue du Bac 140, Paris**

**I**t is 11.30 pm; Sister Catherine Laboure (24 years old) wakes up as she hears her name called three times. She opens the curtains of her cell and sees her Guardian Angel in de form of a 5 year old child. He says: "follow me to the chapel, where the Virgin Mary awaits you". Catherine Laboure hastily dresses herself and follows him to the chapel. The chapel is lit as for midnight-Mass, but she can't see the Blessed Virgin. She then kneels and prays.

**A**fter half an hour her guardian angel says: "there is the Blessed Virgin Mary". Catherine Laboure hears a rustle like that of silk and to the left of St. Joseph she sees the Blessed Virgin Mary descend and sit herself on the chair of the Priest. Within a moment she is on her knees in front of the Blessed Virgin, with her hands confidently folded on Mary's knees. This is the beginning of a two hour long conversation.



**T**he Blessed Virgin Mary tells her that God will charge her with a mission. In the process she will experience many difficulties. The Blessed Virgin already speaks of bad times ahead. The whole world will be plunged into confusion through all sorts of incidents. The Cross will be treated with contempt; it will be cast to earth. The side of our Lord will be pierced again. The Blessed Virgin says this with a very sorrowful look on her face. Encouragingly though, she adds:

**"BUT COME TO THE FOOT OF THIS ALTAR AND HERE GRACES WILL BE BESTOWED UPON ALL, WHO ASK WITH CONFIDENCE AND FERVOUR. THEY WILL BE GIVEN TO THE RICH AND TO THE POOR"**

## **2<sup>nd</sup> apparition of the Blessed Virgin: 27th November, 1830 Chapel Rue du Bac 140, Paris**



**I**t is 5.30pm, and the Sisters are in the chapel for the hour of Meditation. Suddenly Catherine Laboure hears, to her right, the same rustle as before; it is the Blessed Virgin Mary. She stops to the left near the painting of St. Joseph.



This whole apparition is conducted in scenes and sign-language. The Blessed Virgin "standing in space", dressed in a robe of sky red, glowing with light, carries in Her hands a golden globe topped with a cross. This, the Blessed Virgin offers to God, with Her eyes looking beseechingly towards Heaven, as if begging for mercy. Her fingers appear to have rings with sparkling gems stones, scattering rays of light in all directions. The small globe with the cross disappears and Mary reaches for the half globe, which is located below Her feet. Now the sparkling rays are reaching over the entire earth, but with a greater intensity on one spot. At the same time Mary makes her understand, that this globe represents the entire world and that the spot with the greater intensity of rays is France. The light rays are symbols of grace, which will be bestowed on those who ask. Then an oval frame forms around this scene with the following words in golden letters on the border:



**M**ary gave her this instruction: "have a medal struck on this model. All those who carry this will receive Grace in abundance, especially if they wear the medal around their neck and say this prayer confidently, they will receive special protection from the Mother of God and abundant graces". Then it is although the whole scene turns around and Catherine Laboure can see the back of the medal: in the centre is the letter M, from where a Cross ascends with at its base a cross-beam which passes through the letter M and below this the two hearts of Jesus and Mary, one crowned with thorns the other pierced by the sword of sorrow. The whole is surrounded with a crown of 12 stars recalling the vision of St. John in the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse or Book of Revelations. Catherine Laboure hears: "the M with the Cross and the two hearts say enough".



**D**uring the next year this apparition occurred five times and each time with the same instructions: "have a medal struck on this model, and all those who wear it will receive great graces, especially when worn around the neck". Sister Catherine endured many humiliations, but she persevered. It took two years before her confessor, Father Aladel, a Vicentian priest, had the medal struck. The original name of the medal is that of holy Mary's Immaculate Conception; only after 7 years was the name changed to the "Miraculous Medal". Because of the many answered prayers, the conversions and the cures, some 10 million medals were sold during the first 5 years. The short prayer: "O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to Thee", has since been prayed innumerable times by believers, so that the entire Christianity became familiar with Mary's "Immaculate Conception". It was Pope Pius IX who made it a rule of faith. This was received with great joy by the entire Church. Four years later, Mary came as though to confirm this, when She said to Bernadette at Lourdes:





**C**atherine Laboure died on 31st December 1876. When her body was exhumed 56 years later it was unblemished. Her eyes were as blue as the day she died. On 28th May, 1933 she was beatified by Pope Pius XI. This occasion was witnessed by 50,000 people, of which there were 8,000 children of Mary, veiled in white, all wearing the Miraculous Medal. On 27th July, 1947 Catherine Laboure was canonized by Pope Pius XII. Here again many believers were present, including more than 10,000 children of Mary, veiled in white.

## Body Catherine Laboure



**M**any healings, including those of people for whom there was totally no hope, were attributed to the "Miraculous Medal". Just in the American city of Philadelphia alone, between 1930 and 1950, more than 750,000 favours were granted and registered. Catherine Laboure is still lying in state at the right of the altar in the chapel Rue du Bac 140, in Paris and she still looks as though she only died yesterday!

**"These apparitions of Mary and the Miraculous Medal by Catherine Laboure are fully approved by the Holy See: 1836"**