priest: *He is my servant.* Father Aladel went to the Archbishop with the Blessed Mother's request. The Archbishop ordered two thousand medals, which were struck on June 20, 1832.

The spread of devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary through the medal, urged by Saint Catherine, was carried out so rapidly that it was miraculous itself.

Catherine Labouré kept this secret all her life, revealing it only to her confessor. She passed on to her eternal reward on December 31, 1876, and was canonized on July 27, 1947.

Fifty-seven years after her death, on May 21, 1933, her body was exhumed as part of the beatification process. Observers, including medical professionals and Church authorities, were astonished to find her body remarkably well-preserved. Her skin remained intact, her limbs flexible, and her facial features recognizable, giving the appearance that she had just fallen asleep. This phenomenon is recognized by the Catholic Church as incorruptibility. Many interpret this as a sign of her holiness.

Today, St. Catherine Labouré's body is enshrined in a glass reliquary beneath the side altar of the Chapel of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal – located at 140 Rue de Bac, Paris, France.

By the time of St. Catherine's death in 1876, over one billion medals had been distributed in many regions throughout the world. This sacramental from heaven was at first called simply the Medal of the Immaculate Conception, but 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.

Ô Marie conçue sans péché, priez pour nous qui avons recours à vous.
O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.

Sources include: catholic.org, amm.org

Bring Socials with the Saints to your parish, listen to our podcast, and more! Visit: PilgrimCenterOfHope.org/Socials

PILGRIM CENTER of HOPE – Guiding people to Christ

PilgrimCenterOfHope.org | 210-521-3377

Please donate to continue our mission of hope! *Every bit helps*.



St. Catherine Labouré

Nun, Visionary, Servant

Born: May 2, 1806
Died: Dec. 31, 1876
Canonized: July 27, 1947, by Pope Pius XII
Feast Day: November 28
Patronage: Elderly, Nursing Homes

Catherine Labouré was born in France on May 2, 1806 as the ninth of 11 children to Pierre and Madeleine Labouré. Growing up, Catherine was known for being a quiet and practical child, as well as extremely devout. In 1815, Catherine's mother passed away. After her mother's funeral, Catherine returned home and picked up a statue of the Blessed Virgin. Holding it close, she said, "Now you will be my mother."

Catherine received her First Holy Communion at the age of eleven on January 25, 1818. From that day on, she rose at four o'clock each morning and walked several miles to assist at Mass and to pray for grace and strength before the start of her workday. Her only desire was to give herself without reserve to the Lord. By this time, Catherine's elder sister, Marie Louise, had left to join the Daughters of Charity religious sisters. Little Catherine directed and supervised their family home. She looked after everything: she made the bread, cooked, did the housework, carried daily meals to the workmen in the fields, and cared for the animals.

Once, when she was in the village church, she saw a vision of an old priest saying Mass. After Mass, the priest turned and beckoned to her with his finger, but she drew backwards, keeping her eyes on him. The vision moved to a sickroom, where she saw the same priest. He said: "My child, it is a good deed to look after the sick; you run away from me now, but one day you will be glad to come to me. God has designs for you. Do not forget it!" She did not know what this vision meant.

As is the European custom, Catherine's father invited various suitors to seek her hand in marriage. Her reply was always: "I shall never marry; I have promised my life to Jesus Christ." She prayed, worked, and served the family well until she was twenty-two, when she asked for her father's

permission to become a Daughter of Charity. He flatly refused. To distract her, he sent her to Paris to work in a coffee shop run by her brother, Charles. During the entire year she spent there, Catherine maintained her resolve to become a religious sister.

One day, while visiting the hospital of the Daughters of Charity, she noted a priest's picture on the wall. This was the same priest Catherine had seen in the vision! She asked a nun who he might be, and was told: "Our Holy Founder, Saint Vincent de Paul." Later, after much persuasion from her Aunt Jeanne, Catherine's father granted permission for her to enter the convent.

In January of 1830, Catherine Labouré became a postulant in the hospice of the Daughters of Charity near Paris. Three months later, she was again in Paris, to enter the formation school at the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity. Shortly after she entered her new home, God was to grant her several extraordinary visions.

On the eve of the Feast of Saint Vincent de Paul, July 19, the Sister Superior spoke to the novices about the virtues of their Holy Founder, and gave each of them a piece of cloth from his surplice. Catherine earnestly prayed, asking that, through the intercession of Saint Vincent, she might see the Mother of God with her own eyes. She fell asleep.

A brilliant light and the voice of a child awakened her. "Sister Labouré, come to the Chapel; the Blessed Virgin awaits you." Catherine replied, "We shall be discovered." The little child smiled, and assured her, "Do not be uneasy; it is half past eleven, everyone is sleeping... Come, I am waiting for you." Catherine rose quickly, and got dressed. The hall lights were burning. At the angel's touch, the locked chapel door swung open. Amazed, Catherine found the chapel ablaze with lights, as if prepared for midnight Mass.

Quickly she knelt at the communion rail, and suddenly, she heard the rustle of a silk dress. The Blessed Virgin, in a blaze of glory, sat in the director's chair. The angel whispered: "The Blessed Mother wishes to speak with you." Catherine rose, knelt beside the Blessed Mother, and rested her hands in the Virgin's lap. Mary said to her: *God wishes to charge you with a mission. You will be contradicted, but do not fear; you will have the grace to do what is necessary. Tell your spiritual director all that passes within you. Times are evil in France and in the world.* A pain crossed the Virgin's face. (This was a few days prior to the Second French Revolution, also called the July Revolution.)

Mary continued: *Come to the foot of the altar. Graces will be shed on all, great and little, especially upon those who ask for them. You will have the protection of God and Saint Vincent. I always will have my eyes upon you. There will be much persecution. The cross will be treated with contempt. It will be hurled to the ground and blood will flow.* After speaking for some time, the Lady was gone. Led by the 'little child,' Catherine left the chapel, and returned to her place in the dormitory.

On November 27, 1830, the Blessed Mother appeared to her again. Catherine, raising her eyes to the main altar, saw her beautiful Lady standing on a large globe. Mary's silken robe shone with the whiteness of dawn. A white veil fell to her feet, and beneath the veil, she wore a lace band binding her hair. A small, golden ball was in her hands, which she offered to God with her eyes heavenward. Suddenly, Mary's hands were resplendent and flashed in a brilliant cascade of light, so bright that the globe on which Mary stood was no longer visible. Catherine understood that the rays symbolized the graces shed on those who sought them. The gems on Our Lady's fingers had no rays. Catherine understood this to symbolize the graces for which people did not ask. Mary's arms swept wide and down. Surrounding her head was an oval frame with the words, *O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.*

The vision of the Virgin turned completely around. On the other side appeared a huge 'M' with a cross about it. The letter rested on a bar, beneath which appeared two hearts. The first heart was encircled by a crown of thorns, and the second was pierced by a sword. Catherine understood this to mean that we have been purchased by a God who was crucified in the very presence of his own mother, the Queen of Martyrs. The Virgin spoke, giving a direct order: *Have a medal struck in this form. All who wear it will receive great graces. They should wear it around the neck. Graces will abound for persons who wear it with confidence.*

Catherine asked how she was to have the medal struck. Mary replied that she was to go to her confessor, Father Jean Marie Aladel, saying of this