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### The Back of the Miraculous Medal

The cross symbolizes Christ; the "M" stands for Mary, who stood beneath the Cross, as her Son was crucified. The two hearts represent the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

The twelve stars recall the vision of St. John: *And a great sign appeared in heaven: A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars (Apocalypse 12:1).*

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## A Gift from Heaven

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## **St. Catherine Labouré**

Catherine Labouré was born in France on May 2, 1806. She entered the convent of the Daughters of Charity on April 21, 1830. Later that year, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, appeared to St. Catherine.

### **The First Apparition**

During the night of July 19, Catherine was awakened from her sleep by a beautiful child. The child spoke, "Sister Labouré, come to the chapel. The Blessed Virgin is waiting for you." Catherine entered the chapel, knelt down at the communion rail, and prayed. A short while later, the Blessed Virgin appeared and spoke to Catherine: "God wishes to charge you with a mission. You will have the protection of God and St. Vincent (de Paul). I will always have my eyes upon you." Then, the Blessed Virgin departed.

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### **The Second Apparition**

On November 27, the Blessed Virgin appeared, standing upon a globe, crushing the head of a serpent with her

feet. Rays of light streamed from her hands. Surrounding the image of Our Lady were the words "O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to Thee."

The Blessed Virgin told Catherine, "Those who repeat this prayer with great devotion will be in a special manner under the protection of the Mother of God." She then instructed Catherine: "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 around the neck."

### **The Miraculous Medal**

After conducting a thorough investigation to verify the authenticity of St. Catherine's visions, the Church approved the making of the medal. The first medals were cast and distributed in 1832.

### **Miraculous Healings**

In February 1832, a deadly cholera epidemic claimed the lives of more than 20,000 Parisians. The sisters of Charity began to distribute the first

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### **Miraculous Conversions**

Still more significant than physical healings, or miracles of nature, are miracles of grace (spiritual conversions). Perhaps the most notable conversion obtained through the Miraculous Medal is that of Alphonse Ratisbonne, a wealthy Jewish banker and lawyer, who vehemently opposed the Catholic Church.

At the request of a friend, Ratisbonne agreed to wear the Miraculous Medal. Some time later, he entered a Catholic Church and saw a vision of the Blessed Virgin in the same manner as the image on the Miraculous Medal. Struck with awe, Ratisbonne repented. He was baptized and later became a Catholic priest.

### **"Help My Unbelief!"**

We live in an age of unbelief, an age in which many people refuse to believe in God, in the supernatural, and in a hereafter. Some people desire proof, or signs (cf John 6:30). Indeed, our Lord

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