



MI Monthly Intention

Immaculata, please intercede...

...that we rediscover our contemplative nature and thus are able always to recognize the presence of God in our journey.

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Medal of the Immaculate Conception



Dear MI Members and Friends,

As we continue to reflect on those core principles/elements of the MI I would like to write about the importance of the Immaculate Conception medal. Many have never heard it called the Immaculate Conception medal but that is its true name. Today, it is better known as the Miraculous Medal for the single purpose that so many miracles have been attributed to its sacramental grace.

Early in 1917 in Rome, young seminarian Friar Maximilian Kolbe heard the story of the conversion of the Jewish agnostic, Alphonse Ratisbonne, through the Immaculate Conception medal. You can Google search many articles on him (<http://www.marypages.com/ratisbonneEngl.htm>). Meditating on the mediation of Mary Immaculate in the conversion of a soul deeply moved and inspired St. Maximilian to found the MI and to use the Miraculous Medal as its uniform and, as he would say, *weapon/bullet* with which to wound the hearts of mankind with the love of Mary. St. Maximilian celebrated his first Holy Mass at Sant' Andrea delle Fratte before the image of Mary which commemorates the apparition to Alphonse Ratisbonne.

The Miraculous Medal was designed by the heavens. The Blessed Mother appeared in 1830 to a young novice Daughter of Charity,

Catherine Labouré, in Paris. She told Catherine to have a medal made as she indicated and revealed. When it was stamped in 1832 and circulated, countless miracles began to be reported. Within two years eight million medals were circulated.

A Mini Scriptural Catechism

On the front of the medal is the Blessed Virgin Mary standing on the globe with her foot crushing the head of the serpent (Gen 3:15). "I heard her voice say: 'The globe of the world represents each and every human being.'"* Mary stands with her hands outstretched, rays coming from her jeweled fingers to the globe. When Catherine asked Mary what was the meaning of these rays she was told that they were the graces she had for those who would ask for them (Jn 2:1-11). Surrounding this scene are the words, "O Mary, conceived without sin (Lk 1:26-33), pray for us who have recourse to you (Lk 1:41-42)." These words were a precursor to the proclamation of the dogma, proclaimed in 1854, Mary's Immaculate Conception, and her mediation in the life of mankind (LG 8). The year of the apparition, 1830, is stamped on the globe. On a side note, April 6, 1830, Joseph Smith and five others organized the Mormon Church in Seneca Co, New York.



The back of the medal reveals a large M surmounted by a cross (Jn 19:25). Below this are the two hearts – Jesus’ Sacred Heart pierced by a lance (Jn 19:34); encircled by a crown of thorns (Jn 19:1-5); and a cross coming from the heart (Jn 19:16-18); and Mary’s Immaculate Heart pierced by a sword (Lk 2:34-35); with a flower coming from the flames arising from each heart. The oval is lined with twelve stars which can refer to the twelve tribes of Israel, the twelve apostles and the Woman of the Apocalypse (Rev12:1).

The medal is a mini scriptural catechism of faith from Genesis – Mary, the promised Woman crushing the head of the serpent because she is Immaculate – to Revelation – the Woman giving birth to the Son, triumphant over the evil one who seeks to destroy her Child/and all those who will be her/His children. Salvation history is played out on this medal, with Mary’s intercessory role as the Immaculate Conception integral. No wonder St. Maximilian was so taken by this sacramental and tool of evangelization.

St. Maximilian and the Medal

The Blessed Mother gave St. Catherine Labouré the design for the Immaculate Conception medal in 1830. Twenty-four years later, 1854, Pope Pius IX declared the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. Four years after Our Lady appeared to Bernadette in Lourdes telling her her name, “I am the Immaculate Conception.”

St. Maximilian embraced this rich time of history and revelation in the church and established the MI upon our relationship with Mary, the Immaculate Conception. The medal of the Immaculate Conception

symbolized Mary’s active presence in the Church as Mediatrix of all graces that flow from the Heart of Christ. St. Maximilian wrote, “She wished to affirm her Immaculate Conception and her extraordinary power with God.”** Mary told Catherine, “All those who will wear it will receive great graces, especially those wearing it around their necks. I will bring many graces to those who place their trust in me.” “Our dependence of Mary is even greater than we can imagine. All graces, absolutely all, come to us from God through the Immaculata who is our universal mediatrix with Jesus” (St. Maximilian writings, 1219).

In an article written in 1926 for his publication, St. Maximilian wrote, “How favorable it would be to hear: *Mary is the Queen of the world!*” He continues, “How could we speed up this moment?” One of the means is, “Distribute the medal wherever possible, even to children so that they might wear it around their necks, to the aged and especially to the young so that, under her protection, they may have the force capable of pushing away the many temptations and traps that in our times menaces them. Distribute it also to those who do not go to church, who are afraid of confessing, who make fun of religious practices, who laugh at the truths of faith, who are plunged in the mud of immorality or who live in heresy outside of the Church; oh! especially to those, the medal of the Immaculate must be offered, to incite them to want to wear it and at the same time fervently plead for their conversion through the Immaculate” (Kolbe’s writings, 1122). This article was written in 1926 but is just as pertinent to the cries of today. As the Year of Faith draws to a close and Pope Francis

The Vatican website can be located here: www.annusfidei.va/content/novaevangelizatio/en.html.

Videos also are available: www.usccb.org/beliefs-andteachings/how-we-teach/newevangelization/year-of-faith/videos.cfm.

calls us to get out of our comfort zones and reach out to those on the byways and those emarginated from the Church let us distribute the medal of the Immaculate Conception to claim souls back for God, being instruments of Her immaculate and merciful hands.

Sharing the love of Mary

A young woman in the MI works at a very nice jewelry store in southern California. When a customer comes in looking for a gift she immediately takes them to the Immaculate Conception medal and tells them the story and the miracles of grace that accompany it. Co-workers and the boss encourage her and send her customers that are looking for that perfect gift. As a youth in the MI and in my missionary formation we never went anywhere without medals to give out. So many opportunities have come to give it to someone: to a fearful girl before getting on a fast ride at Disneyland; to a young woman having an affair with a married man; to two kids traveling alone to see family (one evangelical and the other Catholic); to people traveling to funerals of their loved ones; to waitresses, salesclerks, policemen; to girls going into abortion mills; as a Baptismal gift; to so many



fallen away Catholics.... The opportunities are countless. Some MI Villages teach about and distribute the medal to the First Communicants or Confirmadees in their parish. You have acknowledged the great gift of Mary in your lives through your total consecration. Share her love.

Mary's Love

“In Alphonse’s (Ratisbonne) own narration he recorded that our Lady said nothing, only told him to kneel and not to resist. What a lesson to every believer and nonbeliever! Just look to Mary and do not resist her motherly glance of affection.”*** I want to close with this beautiful thought of St. Maximilian, “She turns her gaze upon the whole world, upon each person, in the secret of their hearts and knows the thoughts and desires of each one. She looks into the hearts to discern any manifestation of love, any small act of goodness, with the goal to be able, in return, fill them with graces and bring them with her after death” (Kolbe writings, 1122).

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*Immaculate Conception and the Holy Spirit, Fr. H..M. Manteau-Bonamy, OP, Marytown Press, p.92.

**Ibid.

***Maximilian Kolbe: Authentic Franciscan, Fr. Anselm Romb, OFM Conv., Marytown Press, pgs. 106-7.

POINTS TO PONDER AND REFLECTIONS



Look up the meaning of sacramentals in the Catechism of the Catholic Church 1667-1679.



Carry miraculous medals with you in order to give them generously to others. Medals can be purchased from the MI National Office or the Fr. Kolbe Missionaries.



Pray to Our Lady to move you to give the medal to whom she wants.



Share your stories of giving out the medal of the Immaculate Conception in your Villages and send in a written account to me to share with our readers.



Keep in prayer the MI Midwest Conference, September 6-7. Further information: www.consecration.com

Faith

-Fr. Patrick Greenough, OFM Conv.
MI National President

Not an emotion or a feeling.

Not a subconscious urge for something supernatural.

Not something private that cannot be shared.

Not an opinion.

Not opposed to reason.

Faith will never satisfy the intellect.

Faith leaves the intellect suspended.

Reason tells us nothing about God, all is revealed through Faith.



Br. Camillus, OFM Conv, MI member with a profound faith, has embraced his illness of Lou Gehrig's disease. He is visited by Marytown Volunteer, Dale, and Fr. Kolbe Missionary, Antonella Di Piazza.

Faith leads to Contemplation.

Faith is not merely expressing the right words of a creed.

Faith is standing at the foot of the cross.

Faith is getting out of the boat and walking on water.

Faith believes that God can do the impossible.

Faith is not one hour on a Sunday morning but 24/7.

Faith is not a sprint in times of crisis but a lifelong marathon.

The Magnificat is Mary's manifesto of Faith.