

Saint Catherine Labouré
FRANCE, 1830



Catherine Labouré was born on May 2, 1806 to a family of farmers. On April 21, 1830, she entered the religious order of the Daughters of Charity at the mother house on the Rue de Bac in Paris. Here Catherine, in 1830, received the famous apparition of the Immaculate Virgin Mary, who told her: “Have a medal minted according to what you see before you: whoever wears it around their neck will receive great graces.” During her entire period of residence on the Rue de Bac, Catherine also received the grace of seeing Jesus in the consecrated Host, at the moment of Holy Communion as well as during exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

Catherine herself describes the moment of the apparition in this way: “While I was making Eucharistic Adoration in deep silence, I seemed to hear from the side of the apse a sound like the rustling of a silk dress. I looked up and saw the Blessed Virgin. She was of medium height and indescribable beauty. A white veil was draped over her head and flowed down almost to her feet, which were standing on a half-globe. Her hands, raised to the level of her waist, supported in a very natural way another globe which was smaller and golden, surmounted by a cross of pure gold. She had her eyes turned toward Heaven. While I was intent on contemplating it, she lowered

her eyes toward me and said these words to me: “This globe which you see represents the entire world, France in particular, and every individual person.” And the Virgin added: “The rays are a symbol of the graces which I shower upon those who ask them from me,” in this way making me realize how sweet it is to pray to the Blessed Virgin and how generous She is to those who invoke her. And then, I saw an oval-shaped background form around the Blessed Virgin, on which in an upward direction, forming a semicircle from Mary’s right hand to her left, could be read these words, written in golden letters: “O MARY, CONCEIVED WITHOUT SIN, PRAY FOR US WHO HAVE RECOURSE TO THEE.” At this point, the globe which the Blessed Virgin had offered to God disappeared. Her hands, laden with graces, were bent toward the globe on which She rested her feet, subduing the head of a greenish serpent with yellow spots. Suddenly the scene was turned around and I was presented with the “back of the medal,” which displayed the monogram of Mary surmounted by the Cross; in the background were two Hearts: that of Jesus crowned with thorns and that of Mary pierced by a sword. All around, serving as a frame, there was a royal crown of twelve stars. At that point I heard a voice which said to me: “Have a medal minted on this pattern. All those who have such a medal blessed and wear it, especially around the neck, and recite the short invocation (“O Mary, conceived without sin...”), will rejoice in the special protection of the Mother of God and receive great graces. These graces will be in abundance for those who wear it faithfully.”