

FROM THE PASTOR

My dear brothers and sisters,

Today (November 27) is the Feast of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal (it is suppressed because today is Sunday, but we can still celebrate it in small ways). The story of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal is beautiful, how Our Lady appeared to St. Catherine Laboure in France. I encourage you to look up the story. At the heart of the story, Our Lady appeared to St. Catherine and showed her an image and told her:



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 round the neck. Those who repeat this prayer [see below, “O Mary conceived...”] with devotion will be in a special manner under the protection of the Mother of God. Graces will be abundantly bestowed upon those who have confidence.

Sr. Catherine spoke with her spiritual directory and eventually got permission to make the medal. This was called the Medal of the Immaculate Conception, because the inscription around Our Lady says, “**O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you.**” Over time, however, it would be popularly named “**The Miraculous Medal**” since many incredible miracles occurred when people wore these medals with Faith. St. Maximilian Kolbe passed these out, encouraging people to wear them and pray the *Memorare*:

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help or sought thine intercession, was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins my Mother; to thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful; O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy clemency hear and answer me. Amen.

St. Maximilian witnessed incredible miracles of healing and conversion as a result of Our Lady’s intercession.

St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta constantly handed out Miraculous Medals (she claimed that she gave out 40,000 of them). She saw the power of Our Lady moving in these gifts. In the book *Mother Teresa of Calcutta: A Personal Portrait*, the author recounts how he witnessed this in a powerful way. When in Nicaragua with Mother Teresa, they met with Daniel Ortega in order to get permission to open a new house for her Sisters to work with the poorest of the poor. Ortega gave a fiery thirty-minute speech on why his guerilla war was justified. At the end, Mother said, “Yes, yes, works of love are works of peace.” She then went up to Ortega and gave him a Miraculous Medal for each of his seven children, his wife and for himself, saying, “You need it! But you must wear it round your neck, like this...” pointing out how it was to hang. The next day, they received permission to found their first house. (*Mother Teresa of Calcutta: A Personal Portrait* Leo Maasburg pp. 65-67) **Miraculous Medals** and *Memorare* prayer cards are available for you this weekend. I hope you take advantage!

This weekend is also the **First Sunday of Advent**, our preparation time for Christmas. As we did last year, Bishop Libasci has requested that we have an **image of the Christ Child** in our Sanctuaries and our homes throughout the Season of Advent. We are so inundated by the secular understanding of Christmas that we too easily forget that this is the birthday of the Christ-child. The hope of the Bishop is that the presence of the Child prominently displayed in our homes and Churches will be a reminder of the true meaning of our preparation and celebration. This is a powerful time of preparation for the celebration of the coming of the King. May we not be overwhelmed by the hustle and bustle, but enter into the joy of the Season!

An Advent prayer for you:

Come, long-expected Jesus. Excite in me a wonder at the wisdom and power of Your Father and ours. Receive my prayer as part of my service of the Lord who enlists me in God’s own work for justice. Come, long-expected Jesus. Excite in me a hunger for peace: peace in the world, peace in my home, peace in myself. Come, long-expected Jesus. Excite in me a joy responsive to the Father’s joy. I seek His will so I can serve with gladness, singing and love. Come, long-expected Jesus. Excite in me the joy and love and peace it is right to bring to the manger of my Lord. Raise in me, too, sober reverence for the God who acted there, hearty gratitude for the life begun there, and spirited resolution to serve the Father and Son. I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, whose advent I hail. Amen.