

At St. Clare's we are developing our devotional life. At present there are three regular areas of devotion in the parish:

The Rosary

Each day (Monday to Friday) after the morning Mass the Rosary is recited. The Mysteries of Light instituted by Pope John Paul II are prayed for the intentions of life. That means that each decade of the rosary is offered for an intention connected with life. First: That all babies in the womb be born into loving and life-giving families, and be baptised in the living waters of baptism; Second, for a renewal of the Sacrament of Marriage; and a blessing on every child in the world; Third, for a renewal of Kingdom Values, that in every situation Human Life will be honoured and respected; Fourth, that the light of the glory of God will transform all darkness, all lack of love or respect for human life; Fifth, for a worldwide celebration of life from its conception to its natural end.



Eucharistic Adoration. Each Saturday morning, following the 10am Mass, the Blessed Sacrament is exposed until 12.00, at the end of Confessions. This is a special time when parishioners are encouraged to call into church and spend sometime in prayer with the Lord Jesus. During the *Year of the Priest*, inaugurated by Pope Benedict, parishioners are asked to come and spend time in prayer for all the priests in the world, for spiritual renewal. St Clare, our patron, had a great and lively devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. It is fitting that we too, should have the same lively devotion.

Novena Devotions

On the first Saturday of the month during the 10am Mass, we have Novena Devotions to our Lady of the Miraculous Medal.



The medal of the Immaculate Conception – popularly known as the Miraculous Medal – was designed by our Lady herself! No wonder then, that it wins such extra ordinary graces for those who wear it. And pray for our Lady's intercession and help.

The story begins on the night of July 18/19th 1830. A child (perhaps her Guardian Angel) awakened Sister (now saint) Catherine Laboure, a novice in the Community of the Daughters of Charity in Paris, and summoned her to the chapel. There she met with the Virgin Mary and spoke with her for several hours. During the conversation Mary said to her, 'My child, I am going to give you a mission.'

THE SECOND APPARITION

Mary gave her this mission during the evening meditation on November 27th 1830. She saw Mary standing on what seemed to be half a globe and holding a golden globe in her hands as if offering it to heaven. Our Lady explained

that the globe represented the whole world. The times were difficult then, especially for the poor who were unemployed and often refugees from many of the wars of the time. France was first to experience many of those troubles which eventually reached many other parts of the world and are even present today. Streaming from rings on Mary's fingers as she held the globe were many rays of light. Mary explained that the rays symbolise the grace she obtains for those who ask for them. However, some of the gems on her fingers were dark, and Mary explained that the rays and graces were available but did not come because no one asked for them.

THE THIRD APPARITION AND THE MEDAL

The vision now changed to show our Lady now on a globe with her arms outstretched and with dazzling rays of light still streaming from her fingers. Framing the picture was an inscription: *O Mary conceived without sin pray for us who have recourse to thee.*

The Meaning of the Front Side of the Medal

Mary is standing on a globe, crushing the head of a serpent beneath her foot. She stands upon the globe, as Queen of Heaven and Earth. Her feet crush the serpent to proclaim that Satan and all his followers are helpless before her (Gn. 3:15). The year 1830 on the medal is the year that our Lady gave the design of the Miraculous Medal to St Catherine. The reference to Mary conceived without sin supports the dogma of the Immaculate Conception which was proclaimed 24 years later.

The vision turned and showed the design on the reverse side of the medal. Twelve stars encircling a large 'M' from which arose a cross. Below are two hearts with flames arising from them. One heart is encircled with thorns, the other is pierced by a sword.

The Meaning of the Rear Side of the Medal

The 12 stars can refer to the Apostles, who represent the entire Church as it surrounds Mary. They also recall the vision of St John, writer of the Book of Revelation (12:1), in which '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.' The cross can symbolise Christ and our redemption, with the bar under the cross as a sign of earth. The 'M' stands for Mary, and the interweaving of the cross and the 'M' shows Mary's close involvement with Jesus and our world. In this we see Mary's part in our salvation and her role as Mother of the Church. The two hearts represent the love of Jesus and Mary for us. (Lk2:35)

Then Mary spoke to Catherine, 'Have a medal struck upon this model. Those who wear it will receive great graces, especially if they wear it around the neck.' Catherine explained the entire series of apparitions to her confessor, and she worked through him to carry out Mary's instructions.

With the approval of the Church, the first medals were made in 1832 and were distributed in Paris. Almost immediately the blessings that Mary had promised began to shower down on those who wore her medal. The devotion spread like wildfire. Marvels of grace and health, peace and prosperity followed in its wake. Before long people were calling it the 'Miraculous' Medal. And in 1836 a Canonical inquiry undertaken in Paris declared the apparitions to be genuine.

There is no superstition, nothing of magic, connected with the Miraculous Medal. It is not a 'good luck charm.' Rather it is a great testimony of faith and trusting in prayer. Its greatest miracles are those of patience, forgiveness, repentance and faith. God uses a medal, not as a sacrament, but as an agent, an instrument in bringing to pass certain marvellous results. 'The weak things of this earth God has chosen to confound the strong.'

NOVENA PRAYERS

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Come Holy Spirit fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit, and they shall be created. And you shall renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray

O God who did instruct the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant us by the same Spirit to be truly wise and ever rejoice in his consolation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O Mary, conceived without original sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.
(3 times)

Memorare

Remember O most compassionate Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your assistance, or sought your intercession, was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly unto you, O Virgin of Virgins, my Mother. To you I come; before you I kneel, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in your clemency hear and answer them. Amen.

Novena Prayer

O Immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ and my Mother, penetrated with the most lively confidence in your all-powerful and never-failing intercession, manifested so often through the Miraculous Medal. I, you loving and trustful child, implore you to obtain for me the graces and favours I ask during this Novena, if they benefit my soul and the soul for whom I pray. (Here privately form your prayer requests).

You know, O Mary, how often my soul has been the sanctuary of your Son, who hates iniquity. Obtain for me then, a deep hatred of sin and that purity of heart which will attach me to God alone so that my every thought, word and deed may tend to His greater glory. Obtain for me also a spirit of prayer and self denial, that I may recover by penance what I have lost by sin, and at length attain to that blessed abode where you are the Queen of angels and of all people. Amen.

Act of Consecration to our Lady of the Miraculous Medal

O Virgin Mother of God, Mary Immaculate, I dedicate and consecrate myself to you, under the title of our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. May this medal be for me a sure sign of your affection and a constant reminder of my duties towards thee. Ever while wearing it, may I be blessed by your loving protection and preserved by the grace of your Son. O most powerful Virgin, Mother of my Saviour, keep me close to you every moment of my life. Obtain for me, your child, the grace of a happy death; so that, in union with you, I may enjoy the bliss of heaven for ever. Amen.

O Mary, conceived without original sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.
(3 times)