

PRESS CENTER

of the Vincentian Family



PRESS RELEASE

Pilgrimage with Mary On the 190th Anniversary of the Apparitions of the Blessed Mother to Saint Catherine Labouré

On Wednesday, November 11th, the Holy Father will bless the sacred image of the Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal in the Vatican in the presence of the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, Father Tomaž Mavrič, CM and a small delegation of persons responsible for organizing Mary's pilgrimage to the various communities throughout Italy on the occasion of the 190th anniversary of the apparitions to Saint Catherine Labouré.

In the midst of the difficult situation in which the world finds itself as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in the midst of a society marked by conflict and tension on every continent, the spiritual children of Saint Vincent de Paul begin, with this Marian pilgrimage, a journey to proclaim the merciful love of God.

On the night of July 18-19, 1830, the Blessed Mother appeared for the first time to Catherine Labouré, a young Daughter of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul. This was a rather lengthy encounter in which the Blessed Mother stated: *The times are very evil. Misfortunes afflict France and the entire world will experience misfortunes of every sort ... But come to the foot of this altar, there abundant graces will be spread over all those who ask for them with confidence and fervor. They will be given to the great and the small.* On November 28, 1830, the Blessed Mother appeared again to Catherine Labouré, holding in her hands a small globe (representing humankind). Catherine contemplated her beauty and accepted the mission to make a medal: *the persons who wear this medal will receive great graces.*

Today, the world is deeply troubled. Poverty is spreading and has become more accentuated as a result of the pandemic. On November 15th we will celebrate the Fourth World Day of the poor, with the theme, *stretch forth your hand to the poor.* In his message for that day, Pope Francis wrote: *The present experience has challenged many of our assumptions. We feel poorer and less self-sufficient because we have come to sense our limitations and the restriction of our freedom. The loss of employment, and of opportunities to be close to our loved ones and our regular acquaintances, suddenly opened our eyes to horizons that we had long since taken for granted. Our spiritual and material resources were called into question and we found ourselves experiencing fear. In the silence of our homes, we rediscovered the importance of simplicity and*

of keeping our eyes fixed on the essentials. We came to realize how much we need a new sense of fraternity, for mutual help and esteem

The members of the worldwide Vincentian Family, faithful to the Word of God, inspired by the charism which calls them to serve God in the person of the poor and encouraged by this initiative of the Blessed Mother to go on pilgrimage, want to remind us that the Blessed Mother continues to invite men and women to approach the foot of the altar.

In his message on the occasion of the Missionary Vocations Festival, the Superior General, Father Mavriç, recalled the following words of Saint Vincent which the Congregation of the Mission has recently reflected upon: *our vocation is to go not to one parish, not just to one diocese, but all over the world* (CCD:XII:215). He then went on to say: *I hope that these words of Saint Vincent help us to revitalize our foundational vocation as missionaries and to do this from the perspective of our universality and internationality.*

Today, one hundred ninety years later, Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal continues to watch over humankind and engages in this pilgrimage in order to visit and meet with the ecclesial communities throughout Italy, thus fulfilling the promise of love that is contained in her message: *I will always be with you, trust, do not be discouraged.*

Our Lady will begin this pilgrimage on Tuesday, December 1 and will continue through November 22, 2021, with the following schedule:

12/01/2020 – 01/01/2021: Lacio, Marche, Umbría
01/02/2021 – 02/03/2021: Campania
02/04/2021 – 02/28/2021: Calabria
03/01-2021 – 03/31/2021: Sicilia
04/01/2021 – 04/30/2021: Apulia, Basilicata and Bbruzzo
05/01/2021 – 05/31/2021: Toscana and Liguria
06/01/2021 – 06/30/2120: Piamonte and Lombardia
09/12/2021 – 10/13/2021; Emilia Romagana and Treveto
10/19/2021 – 11/22/2021: Cerdeña

Through means of this Missionary and Marian initiative, the coordinating group of missionaries, members of the Congregation of the Mission, under the leadership of Father Valerio Di Trapani, are promoting the spread of evangelization material: a pocketbook on Saint Catherine Labouré (Vincentian Liturgical Center), a pocketbook on the Miraculous Medal (Vincentian Liturgical Center), the Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Novena Prayers (Vincentian Liturgical Center), the liturgy for receiving the image of Our Lady, pamphlets about the Vincentian Family in Italy, banners about the event, and articles on the Miraculous Medal.

The various branches of the Vincentian Family, parishes and other ecclesial institutions are invited to participate in this Marian pilgrimage that will last for three days (fulfilling all health requirements that have been established as a result of COVID-19). Events will include: celebration on receiving the image, eucharistic celebration, celebration of Mercy, Marian-Vincentian catechesis, meeting with children, youth and adults, prayer for vocations, Marian cenacles in the

homes of the poor and the infirm (nursing homes and drop-in centers), financial initiatives to support the Vincentian missionary works.

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