

Press Release



The Vincentian Family celebrates the Feast of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal with two days of prayer and fraternity and will culminate with a meeting with the Holy Father as part of the General Audience of Wednesday 24 November

On the occasion of the feast of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal which will be celebrated on November 27th, the Vincentian Family will gather together for an audience with Pope Francis. This will mark both the culmination and the continuation of a journey that began on November 11, 2020, when Pope Francis blessed the image of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal in the Vatican. The pilgrimage of this image began on the occasion of the 190th anniversary of the apparitions to Saint Catherine Labouré. This initiative was promoted by the Congregation of the Mission in Italy in collaboration with the worldwide Vincentian Family.

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.* Then once again, on November 27th, 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.*

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.

The meeting with Pope Francis will take place on Wednesday 24 November at 8.30 in the Vatican Basilica as part of the General Audience. Thousands of people will accompany the image of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, members of the various branches of the Vincentian Family: the International Association of Charity, Vincentian Marian Youth, parishes, school groups, and members of the various parishes that received the image during the pilgrimage. For the members of the Vincentian Family, this meeting with Pope Francis will be a special time of grace. The members of the Congregation of the Mission, together with the members of the different branches of the Vincentian Family, will undertake a mission of evangelizing and animating the Christian communities in Italy ... a program referred to as **Three Days with Mary ... Animating the Christian Communities.** This program is directed to the parishes and is composed of listening to the parish members, celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, an encounter with the poor and the helpless, a time for *lectio divina* and prayer. During those three days, three elements of the Christian life will be developed, namely, called, live, sent forth. The initiative will begin in a parish in Rome and another in Palestrina.

The meeting with the Pope will be preceded with a Marian Vocational Vigil which will take place on November 23 at 20:45 (Rome Time) in the Basilica of Saint Andrea della Valle. Like Mary, all are called to respond with the “yes” of Mary. This gathering will journey along the path of the Virgin, the acceptance of her call and will include reflections on the apparitions of the Virgin to Catherine Laboure. This Vigil will be led by Father Luigi María Espicoco, Ecclesiastical Assistant at the Dicastery for Communication and the music will be provided by the Choir from the Diocese of Rome.

The following day, at the conclusion of the Audience with the Holy Father, the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, Father Tomaž Mavrič, CM, will celebrate the Eucharist at altar in the Cathedral Basilica of Saint Peter at 12:00 hours.

NB: Journalists and media operators who intend to participate in the greeting of the Holy Father in the Vatican Basilica as part of the General Audience, scheduled for Wednesday 24 November 2021 at 8:30 am, must send a request, through the online accreditation system of the Press Office of the Holy See, at <https://press.vatican.va/accreditamenti>. The request can be made according to the indications given in the annex which can be consulted within the event in the accreditation system.

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