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Monthly Module #6

The Miraculous Medal: The Silver Bullet of Evangelization

Miraculous Medals are a power conversion tool available to evangelists everywhere. Easy to carry and easy to explain to others make this sacramental a part of your everyday evangelization efforts.

Introduction to Sacramentals

Holy medals are a sacramental. They are a private devotion used by the faithful. Sacramentals are not sacraments. A sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Jesus Christ to convey grace. In baptism, water is poured on our head, or we are immersed in water as a sign of dying to ourselves and being united in the life and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That outward action is a symbol of a real, inward change. Baptism is the first sacrament in which we are born again, adopted as children of God, made members of God's family and Church, original sin and all actual sins are forgiven, and we receive an indelible mark on our soul. We are claimed for Christ. Each of the seven sacraments are given to us to draw us closer to God. Sacraments are means that Jesus gave us to receive God's life in us for our eternal salvation.

A sacramental is a sacred sign which draws us to the sacraments. Types of sacramentals include blessings (such as blessing your food before a meal), exorcisms (minor or major), holy water, holy oils, bells, incense, candles, crucifixes, images, medals, palms, ashes, and scapulars. As we are both body & soul, physical objects can help us use our memory, will, and intellect to draw us back to God and the sacraments. Sacramentals are both expressions of piety and they are sanctifying.

Sacramentals allow us to sanctify ministries in the church, states of life, circumstances in life, and are generally helpful to mankind to help him keep his heart and mind on God. Both sacraments (which confer the grace of the Holy Spirit) and sacramentals (which prepare us to receive grace and dispose us to cooperate with it) flow from the "Paschal mystery of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ. From this source all sacraments and sacramental draw their power." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1670)

St. Paul Street Evangelization has found the use of sacramentals to be particularly fruitful for evangelization. It is a tangible reminder to a person of the churches love and care for them and a reminder of what Jesus did for them. More than a few people have owned sacramentals and found them helpful during their conversion to the Catholic Church.

The Miraculous Medal Saves a Life

By Steve Dawson, National Director

I want to tell you my experience with evangelization and the Miraculous Medal of the Blessed Virgin Mary. After my conversion to the Catholic faith over 10 years ago, I felt strongly that God wanted to use me for the conversion of sinners and the salvation of souls. I wanted to get involved with evangelization, to respond to the mandate of Jesus to preach the Gospel to all nations, but I had no idea how I should go about doing it. At this time in my life, I never even considered street evangelization, it wasn't even a blip on my radar. But I did have other ideas.

First, I started to talk about Jesus and His Church to friends and co-workers. I did this with mixed results, and in several instances was blessed by God who allowed me to take part in conversions and reversions to the Catholic Church. This was great, but I only had so many friends an coworkers, and I still felt called to do more. Again, I didn't know what I should do, until I heard a story about St. Maximilian Kolbe and the Miraculous Medal. I heard that St. Maximilian used to evangelize those he had never met before by offering a person a blessed Miraculous Medal. He felt that as a sacramental, the medal was a channel of grace, Our Lady's "Silver Bullet", and God often could use it to bring about conversion in a person's life. I then heard the story of Alphonse Ratisbonne, a rabid anti-Catholic agnostic, who converted to the Church and became a priest after receiving a vision of our Blessed Lady after having been given a Miraculous Medal. These story's inspired me to purchase 1000 Miraculous Medals in bulk. I was going to use the method of St. Maximilian and see what happened.

The method I employed was simple. When I was at the grocery store, gas station, or any random place, I would pick a person and would casually ask if they would like a free Miraculous Medal. Most of the time they would say "No thank you", and I would answer, "OK God bless" and walk away. Yet, sometimes they would accept. As I would give them the medal I would say, "Here you go. The Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to St. Catherine in 1830 and promised that whoever wore this medal would receive great graces from God. So many miracles occurred because of it that it became commonly known as the Miraculous Medal". That simple.

Here is what I found. Most of the time, the people that I gave the medal and told the story to smiled, said thank you, and that was it. But sometimes, that simple gesture would start further conversation that God was able to use to bear fruit. For example, I was with some friends at a restaurant and I offered our waitress a Miraculous Medal, which she accepted. This started a conversation about the Catholic faith, which led to a conversation about abortion and other moral teachings of the Church. We talked for about 10 minutes in total and we left, thinking we would never see her again. 6 months later I went back to that restaurant and the waitress was there and she recognized me. She ran up and proceeded to tell me that the day we talked the first time, she had just found out that she was pregnant and that she was going to have an abortion, but after we talked, she knew that we were sent by God as a sign for her to keep her baby. Of course I responded by saying: "Great! We're gonna get that baby baptized right?!"

Now what is the point of all this? It was at this moment that I realized that God could use us to change hearts through short and simple conversations with people that we had never met before. That baby is alive today because of the Miraculous Medal and a 10 minute conversation that I had with a person who was a complete stranger. This experience in my life, along with several others, was part of the formation that I received that convinced me that God could use seeds planted through public evangelization of strangers to change hearts.

You can do this too! Purchase some Miraculous Medals from us at bulk wholesale pricing today:
http://streetevangelization.com/store/

How to Use the Miraculous Medal in Evangelization

- **What is the Miraculous Medal?**

The Miraculous Medal owes its origins to an appearance of the Blessed Virgin Mary to St. Catherine Laboure, a member of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul.

The description of the Miraculous Medal from the Catholic Encyclopedia is as follows: “On the second occasion, Sister Catherine records that the Blessed Virgin appeared as if standing on a globe, and bearing a globe in her hands. As if from rings set with precious stones dazzling rays of light were emitted from her fingers. These, she said, were symbols of the graces which would be bestowed on all who asked for them. Sister Catherine adds that around the figure appeared an oval frame bearing in golden letters the words "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee"; on the back appeared the letter M, surmounted by a cross, with a crossbar beneath it, and under all the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, the former surrounded by a crown of thorns, and the latter pierced by a sword.

At the second and third of these visions a command was given to have a medal struck after the model revealed, **and a promise of great graces was made to those who wear it when blessed**. [As Steve mentioned in the story above:] One of the most remarkable facts recorded in connection with the Miraculous Medal is the conversion of a Jew, Alphonse Ratisbonne of Strasburg, who had resisted the appeals of a friend to enter the Church. M. Ratisbonne consented, somewhat reluctantly, to wear the medal, and being in Rome, he entered, by chance, the church of Sant' Andrea delle Fratte and beheld in a vision the Blessed Virgin exactly as she is represented on the medal; his conversion speedily followed. This fact has received ecclesiastical sanction, and is recorded in the office of the feast of the Miraculous Medal.” (Glass, J. (1911). Miraculous Medal. In The Catholic Encyclopedia. New York: Robert Appleton Company. Retrieved December 11, 2013 from New Advent: http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10115a.htm)

- **How can I use the Miraculous Medal to Evangelize?**

First, wear have the miraculous medal blessed, and wear it. Second, purchase them in bulk (we have them available at the lowest possible cost) and memorize the lines: "The Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to St. Catherine in 1830 and promised that whoever wore this medal would receive great graces from God. So many miracles occurred because of it that it became commonly known as the Miraculous Medal."

People love receiving miraculous medals! Give them to those who tell you that a family member is sick, give them out to people you meet while out eating (such as your waiter or waitress), give them to co-workers, to strangers, to Catholics, and to non-Catholics. To learn more about the miraculous medal, see these fascinating articles:

1. http://www.thegreyfriars.org/index.php/component/content/article/52-various-articles/117-mother-teresa-and-the-miraculous-medal-by-fr-james-mccurry-ofm-conv%22
2. http://www.ewtn.com/library/MARY/MEDALMI.HTM

3. http://www.holytrinityparish.net/LOM/LOM_Docs/On%20Legionary%20Things-The%20Miraculous%20Medal.pdf