

Holy Family Visits The Basilica Shrine of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal  
by Barbara Mahler



With our “Pilgrim’s Passports” in hand the Residents, Sisters, Staff and Jeanne Jugan Associate Volunteers continued our “Jubilee Pilgrims of Hope” journey. Earlier this year, albeit in much cooler weather, we began our three-part pilgrimage with a visit to the National Shrine of St. Rita of Cascia. The triple-digit record breaking temperatures today did not deter us from continuing our journey to The Basilica Shrine of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal designated by Archbishop Perez as a “Jubilee Pilgrimage” site.



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In a recent audience with young people from Peru who were in Rome to participate in the Jubilee of Young People, Pope Leo XIV urged them to “not keep everything they experience these days as a memory of the past...do not let all this remain

merely as a memory in some beautiful photos,” he said. (Vatican News, July 28, 2025.)

As Pilgrims of Hope perhaps there is a parallel in our journey to the Basilica Shrine of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. It is evident that we older folks have photo memories of our visit as well as the “bringing home” – and the deepening of our devotion to our Blessed Mother as Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal.

**Some reflections from our visit...**



Stephanie struggled to find words to describe her peaceful feelings. She was impressed that Father John took the time to go up and down the aisle blessing the articles that had been purchased at the Gift Shop.

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Additionally, Father John went up and down the aisles again enabling each of us to venerate Saint Catherine Laboure's relic.

Although Fran was unable to join us this time, she shared an event that she has held in her heart for many years: a young woman and a young man who didn't know each other met at the Shrine. They had each come to pray for our Lady's guidance in finding a suitable life partner. Their first date – for coffee - occurred that evening and yes you guessed it! They married and had four children!

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I listened intently as Dorothy, at 95 years young, a lifelong resident of Philadelphia recounted her childhood memories of walking to the Shrine each Monday evening. Dorothy shared, “we walked to the Shrine every Monday night for the 7:30 P.M. devotional prayers.”

“In fact,” she continued “I know all of the prayers by heart...without the book! We belonged to St. Benedict’s Parish – about four or five blocks up and as an adult I belonged to the St. Vincent de Paul Society and collected food for the poor, delivering what we collected directly to those who needed it.”



“Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal and Saint Catherine Laboure are part of my vocation story,” Sister Kathleen related. Sister tells of volunteering as a teenager at the Home of the Little Sisters of the Poor, “in the shadow of The Shrine.” She recalls being inspired by the “similarities between the spirituality of the Vincentians, who served as chaplains at the Home, and that of Saint Jeanne Jugan.” I was “inspired too by the symbol of Mary of the Cross (Jeanne Jugan’s religious name) on its reverse side - the ‘inseparable hearts of Jesus and Mary’ and Jeanne Jugan’s mantra ‘to come to Mary is to come to Jesus,’” Sister Kathleen related. Sister had read that only Saint Catherine’s confessor knew that she was the “Sister of the Visions” – that she had never told anyone that she was “Mary’s Instrument” – the one who received her mission from Our Blessed Mother to have the Miraculous Medal made. Even though during the next 46 years Saint Catherine was aware of the countless miracles God



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was working through the Medal, she still chose to remain anonymous. (Central Association of the Miraculous Medal, 2025.)

Saint Catherine Laboure, Sister Kathleen's chosen role model, fits well her unpretentious spirit as Sister continues in Saint Jeanne Jugan's footsteps in service as a Little Sister of the Poor.

Sister Maria Catherine lights a candle praying at Saint Catherine Laboure's altar.



As a newcomer to Philadelphia I was I was delighted for the opportunity to continue on my faith journey and was anxious to visit The Basilica of the Miraculous Medal. Curious to

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discover as much as possible prior to our actual visit I took a virtual tour on the website. (Central Association of the Miraculous Medal, 2025.) During my virtual tour earlier in the day, after learning that there is an “Intentions” box I typed and printed my special intention and dropped it in during our visit as I continue to pray for a healing miracle for my son. “O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you.”



This medal and chain that I still have today was a gift – for my Confirmation I believe – 70 years ago! My memory of praying the Act of Consecration to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal as a child in school was refreshed. “O Virgin Mother of God, Mary Immaculate we dedicate and consecrate ourselves to you under the title of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal...”

## **References**

[Pope's homework for Peruvian youth: 'Bring back the Good News of Christ' - Vatican News](#)

[The Central Association of the Miraculous Medal \(CAMM\) - The Miraculous Medal](#)