

The Medal of St. Benedict.

PART I:

There is, indeed, no medal which possesses such wonderful power, and none so highly esteemed by the Holy Church as the Medal of St. Benedict. Whosoever wears this Medal with devotion, trusting to the life-giving power of the Holy Cross and the merits of the Holy Father St. Benedict, may expect the powerful protection of this great Patriarch in his spiritual and temporal needs.

The origin of the Medal probably dates back to the time of St. Benedict himself, of whom we know that in his frequent combats with the evil spirit, he generally made use of the sign of the Cross, and wrought many miracles thereby. From the writings of St. Gregory the Great (540-604), we know that St. Benedict had a deep faith in the Cross and worked miracles with the sign of the cross. St. Benedict also taught his disciples to use the sign of our redemption against the assaults of Satan and in other dangers. St. Maurus and St. Placidus, his first and most renowned disciples, wrought their numerous miracles through the power of the holy Cross and in the name and by the merits of their holy Founder.

Through the efforts and devotion of Pope Leo IX, the Medal of St. Benedict was enriched with special blessings, and its veneration spread everywhere. The use of the Medal was solemnly approved and recommended to the faithful by Pope Benedict XIV in 1742. We do not know just when the first medal of St. Benedict was struck. At some point in history a series of capital letters was placed around the large figure of the cross on the reverse side of the medal. For a long time the meaning of these letters was unknown, but in 1647 a manuscript dating back to 1415 was found at the Abbey of Metten in Bavaria, giving an explanation of these letters. They were the initial letters of a Latin prayer of exorcism against Satan. This will be explained later on.