

All Means, especially the Miraculous Medal...

In the program that Friar Maximilian had drafted for the MI, the Immaculata's strategist described the means that the newly established association would have to use in the work of evangelization: "1. To entreat the Immaculata possibly every day with this *ejaculatory prayer*: 'O Mary, conceived without sin, pray *for us* who have recourse to you, and *for all* those who do not have recourse to you, especially the *Freemasons*.' 2. To use *all legitimate* means, according to one's possibilities in the various states and conditions of life, as occasions arise: which is entrusted to the *zeal* and *prudence* of each; let the special means be *the Miraculous Medal*" (KW 21).

In the course of the years, Father Maximilian would not hesitate to state that, in addition to the supernatural means – prayer and sacrifice – all legitimate means inspired by love and all inventions are to be at the service of the Gospel through the Immaculata: "Art, literature, theater, cinema, books, journalism, radio, etc., etc." (SK 991 Q). His mind and heart were always drawn toward new horizons in order to reach every person as soon as possible and to share the gift of Mary, the new life of grace. He would never forget to remind himself and others, however, that in this enterprise we are called to be personally engaged: "But before everything else we ourselves must be hers, even to the utter annihilation of our ego, to a *total holocaust*, without reserve and without limits ("penance, penance, penance"). Everything for her sake, then: our soul, our body, all the faculties of the soul and of the body, talents, energy, science, art, etc., etc... everything! Everything: the past, the present, and future, life, death, eternity. In a word, everything, everything without even the slightest, tiniest reservation" (ibid.).

While he valued all means, Maximilian reminds us that among them the Miraculous Medal, which Our Lady herself gave us through her appearances to St. Catherine Labourè, has to be cherished in a special way. The Medal is a small yet powerful tool for touching hearts, a mini-catechism on Our Lady's role in the history of salvation. How many stories of spiritual and physical healing, of conversion and openness to the workings of grace are connected to the Miraculous Medal...! The Medal is not only the exterior sign of our total consecration to Mary (cf. KW 991 Q), but also a tool we can all use to introduce her to others: "Behold your Mother!"

Let us discover the simple effectiveness of offering the Immaculata's Medal to a friend, a family member or even a stranger. We'll be surprised by what the Lord can do through small means accompanied by faith and love.

ADP